

June 8, 2009

Campbell River Receives Grant to Promote Benefits of Physical Activity to Inactive Adults

Campbell River is one of 36 communities to receive a grant from BC Recreation and Parks Association.

The \$4,000 grant funding will support an Activity Ambassador Program in the community, explains Active Campbell River coordinator, Kris Johnson.

"We decided to develop an Ambassador Program as a result of a variety of community meetings last year that acknowledged the positive role of recreation and physical activity and identified the barriers that inhibit participation," Johnson says. The Ambassador Program will be developed to connect community agencies with facilities, provide greater awareness of existing programs and to offer opportunities that minimize the barriers and emphasize the benefits of recreation.

Ambassadors will be identified and become spokespeople in support of increasing the priority of recreation within service organizations. Ambassadors will also serve as contact points to bridge the interests of clients with the opportunities available within the community facilities. For example, an orientation tour may be requested through the Ambassador network to provide an introductory tour to a facility for people from a community agency who are not familiar with a facility or its programs.

A campaign kit is currently being developed that will support the launch of the Active Ambassador Program this fall by Active Campbell River members with the support of a variety of community agencies and local facilities. The campaign kit will provide resources and information about existing recreation programs and opportunities and will include educational materials to promote the benefits of recreation to service agencies to share with their clients, colleagues and managers.

"In the meantime, this is the perfect time of year to increase activity levels, and a great place to start is in the Beaver Lodge Lands," Johnson says. *"One of Active Campbell River's many activity-boosting initiatives was to install signage in the Beaver Lodge Lands to help make it more welcoming and user friendly for the public – and it's working to support people being more active."*

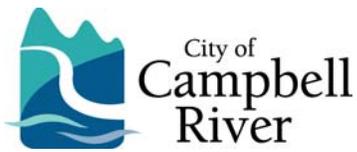
"In British Columbia, nearly half of adults aged 35-54 years old are not active enough to achieve health benefits," says Suzanne Strutt, CEO of the BC Recreation and Parks Association, the funding agency for the Ambassador Program grant. *"In order to make a difference, we are working with communities on a variety of levels to provide them with the tools, resources and support to get people moving – in the garden, in local parks or at their local recreation centre."*

The grant is one of several joint initiatives the BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon is implementing as part of its work with the BC Healthy Living Alliance, a coalition of organizations that came together with the mission to improve the health of British Columbians. The BC Healthy Living Alliance is funded through the Provincial Government and ActNow BC. For more information on these initiatives, visit www.PhysicalActivityStrategy.ca.

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About Active Campbell River

Active Campbell River's mission is to build on the strength of our existing community to educate, encourage, facilitate and support the residents of Campbell River and area to move towards a more active lifestyle. The ACR Committee is a widely represented group of community representatives and they began meeting in 2006 and produced the Active Campbell River Strategic Plan in 2007. For more information about Active Campbell River and being active in Campbell River, please visit www.activecampbellriver.ca or email kris.calver@campbellriver.ca .

About BC Recreation and Parks Association

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to building and sustaining active healthy lifestyles and communities in BC. Established in 1958, the Association is an advocate and central resource agency for members and stakeholders of the parks, recreation, physical activity and culture sector. For more information, visit www.bcrpa.bc.ca.

About Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon

The Heart and Stroke Foundation, a volunteer-based organization, leads in eliminating heart disease and stroke through the advancement of research and its application; the promotion of healthy living; and advocacy. For more information, visit www.hsf.bc.ca.

