

# CLICK for Kids

The newsletter of the registered Vancouver charitable foundation CLICK  
(Contributing to Lives of Inner City Kids) [www.clicktokids.ca](http://www.clicktokids.ca) - Fall 2012

## President's Message:



They won't make the front page or the six o'clock news, but every day there are uplifting stories happening in Vancouver's inner city neighborhoods. They involve individuals who have seen the effects of

poverty on children and have decided to do something about it. These local heroes work hard every day to create a caring, stable and enriching environment for children whose lives are often in chaos. That's not only huge for these kids – it makes Vancouver a better place for all of us.

In this issue of the CLICK newsletter, you'll meet two people who are making a difference in the lives of vulnerable kids. Terri-Lyn is an actress who inspires inner city kids to create original theatre productions. Iraj is a parent who is determined to make his inner city school and neighborhood better and safer for children and parents.

Many of the out-of-school programs supported by CLICK take place within schools, but don't receive funding from governments or the school board. Schools can be safe havens for at-risk kids, but even heroes like Terri-Lyn and Iraj can't do much without funding.

BC has the second highest child poverty rate in Canada and the highest poverty rate for children under the age of 6 in the country. Now, more than ever, we need these heroes.

People in the inner city are doing what they can to give at-risk kids a promising future. But they need our help. Our goal for 2012 is to raise \$50,000 to assist the programs that apply to CLICK for support. If you believe every kid counts in Vancouver, please donate online, or by mail by visiting our website: [www.clicktokids.ca](http://www.clicktokids.ca)

Thanks for caring and Happy Holidays,  
Catherine Atyeo

## Theatre program inspires inner city kids

"I just heard a brilliant idea here!" says Terri-Lyn Storey. "For our zombie costumes we can wrap ourselves in toilet paper. And you know why that's brilliant – because it's cheap!"

The ten elementary-age children surrounding Terri-Lyn are beaming and excited, jumping up and raising their arms to offer more ideas for the play they are creating together. Terri-Lyn quickly writes down all the ideas, which will form the basis of a script. The students are participants in a theatre club called FAME, which is one of the offerings at the Visions out-of-school program at Grandview Elementary in east Vancouver.

For inner city kids, who come from low income families and often suffer from lack of self-esteem, the process of creating and performing in plays is "a huge confidence booster", says Terri-Lyn, who is also a working actress.

"It can be life-changing for them," she says. "Instead of having their heads down low, they're standing strong and tall with their heads up, using big voices."

The FAME participants create two to four productions a year, with Terri-Lyn seeking donations from her theatre contacts for sets, props and costumes. They perform some productions for their fellow students at



Terri-Lyn Storey (at rear in centre) with some of her FAME student actors

school assemblies and others for the wider community. The group was particularly proud of the play they created in 2011 on the Stanley Cup riots in Vancouver - "Why Hate, Why Love, Why Riot", a title that came from a student. The play not only attracted two full houses but received local and national media attention.

Dave Taylor, coordinator for Visions, which also offers students sports, cooking and other activities, stresses that out-of-school programs are particularly critical for inner city kids. "It's tremendously important for them. They receive a nutritious snack, they can make friends and engage in activities, and it's a safe place for them."

The vast majority of the parents can't afford to pay for the Visions program – most are working poor and many are single parents – so support from community foundations like CLICK is critical.

For Terri-Lyn, the value of theatre to the children she mentors is about much more than creating and presenting a play. Working with children who have never had the chance to visit sites like the Vancouver Aquarium, it's about showing them their world can be bigger and better.

"It's about giving them hope. There are pivotal moments when you can crack something open and let light into their world. I'm here to make those moments happen for these kids."

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## Seeing poverty's effects, parent decides to act



Iraj Khabazian and daughter Nazanin

Iraj Khabazian knows first-hand the many challenges faced by families living in poverty in Vancouver. Pick the elements that make up the perfect storm of falling behind – being a new immigrant, coping as a single parent, looking for work that provides a living wage and gets you above the poverty line, health issues – he

has been there, in one way or another, himself. But Iraj wasn't only driven to make things better for

himself and his 10-year-old daughter - he wanted to improve the lives of other low-income parents in his immediate neighborhood and community. So he got a job as a family support worker while pursuing studies in forensic science. He also headed, and continues to head the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) at his daughter's inner city school, where he has increased parent participation and inspired other parents to become leaders.

### **Living in public housing in an inner city neighborhood in Vancouver, what do you see as the challenges faced by low-income families?**

It's the struggle just to afford the cost of living. So they must have two jobs, or work at jobs at odd hours or have jobs around the clock. This means they're not able to spend time with the family and not be able to do what they need to do as a parent. And that causes other problems like lack of supervision for kids. I've heard of kids being left home alone which is terrible. Some parents have disabilities, mental health issues and others challenges which make it difficult for them to be a functional parent.

### **What are some of the problems you've seen in your immediate neighborhood?**

Around 2008 we had problems with criminal activity but nobody was reporting it, people didn't want to get involved. There was lots of violence and drug dealing. I saw someone being stabbed in front of the school. For an hour and a half they lost sight of him and didn't know if he was in the school, the community centre or somewhere in the neighborhood. After a while the police found him. Now we have the police working with us and they have a unit in the area and more patrols, and officers have come to speak to parents at the school and the community centre. So things are a lot safer.

### **What are some of the issues faced by a PAC at an inner city school?**

Our PAC has tried to fundraise but we were only able to raise about \$3600 selling coupon books, cupcakes and hot dogs on sports day. We had a playground that was a mud pit but the education ministry's expectation is that parents must do the fundraising, and our parents won't come to school if they feel they'll have to open their wallets. So it's hard to talk about fundraising at our school.

## What would you say to people about poverty in Vancouver?

Poverty is real – it's not fiction. It affects people in serious ways, especially children. Poverty diminishes every little ounce of energy a parent has – they have to work so hard just to get by and they can't spend time with their kids. These parents want to be with their kids. That's why at our PAC meetings we serve dinner to parents and kids because often the only time these parents can spend time with their kids is at dinner. Poverty also means we have a two-tiered education system. Inner city kids don't get the same quality of education because their parents can't write a cheque for items like computers and technology that enhance a child's education.

## What role do programs funded by an organization like CLICK fill?

These programs are amazing. Some children find home so unsafe they would rather be on the streets than at home. So these out-of-school programs offer a safe environment for them where they can do their homework, share and explore new ideas and have a great time with their peers. Programs with mentors can mean the difference between kids being recruited by gangs or starting to believe in themselves and breaking out of the cycle of poverty.

## Thanks to our donors!



## Become a CLICK Community Partner

A huge thanks to this season's CLICK Community Partners for rolling up their sleeves and raising funds for kids in need: Choices Markets, Ten Thousand Villages, Music Tree, Sarah Jamieson and Dave Myles.

Why not join them and help CLICK (which runs totally on volunteer power) reach its 2012 goal of raising \$50,000? Your funds go directly to programs that make a difference to children and youth living in poverty in Vancouver.

Challenge your co-workers to match your donation to CLICK. Ask for contributions to CLICK at your staff Christmas party, or any holiday party, and add some fun by making contributors eligible for a prize draw. Have a 12 Days of Christmas fundraiser to raise \$120, \$1200 or – Wow! - \$12,000 for CLICK – and sweeten the pot by offering Christmas goodies to donors.

Contact us for more information about becoming a CLICK Community Partner: [contact@clicktokids.ca](mailto:contact@clicktokids.ca)



Dave Myles, a CLICK community partner, organizes a Sixties fundraiser that benefits CLICK



Sarah Jamieson (centre), pictured here with CLICK board members Pamela Redy (left) and Pauline Gardikiotis, organized a Halloween fundraiser for CLICK



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# This Holiday Season, Help CLICK Help Inner City Kids...

Dear Friends,

**The holidays are almost here...but for children living in poverty in Vancouver, the season isn't always merry.**

Inner city children live in families who are often struggling to cover their basic living expenses – let alone finding extra money for presents. Families will rely on food hampers and any support they can get from their community to make Christmas special.

## Why help?

**CLICK (Contributing to the Lives of Inner City Kids)** funds vital programs that work to break the cycle that Vancouver's inner city kids face daily due to poverty and its very significant effects. **BC has the second highest child poverty rate in Canada, and the highest poverty rate for children under 6.**

Give a gift that gives year-round. CLICK needs your help to help Vancouver's inner city kids. The programs we support offer safe out-of-school care, food programs, help with crucial skills such as reading and writing, and access to sports, arts and other activities that many children take for granted.

With thanks and warm wishes,

Catherine Atyeo  
President, CLICK

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Yes, Catherine, I want to help. Here's my cheque to support crucial programs for inner city kids in Vancouver.

\$20    \$50    \$100   \$  Other

Tax receipts provided for all donations over \$20.

Name:

Address:

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Please make cheque payable to: CLICK and mail to:

CLICK

c/o Britannia Community Education

1001 Cotton Drive

Vancouver, B.C. V5L 3T4.



To donate online, go to our website, [clicktokids.ca](http://clicktokids.ca) and click on the "DONATE TODAY" button which will redirect you to CLICK's donation page on CanadaHelps.

**Happy Holidays and thanks for helping CLICK help kids!**