

CLICK for Kids

The CLICK (Contributing to Lives of Inner City Kids) newsletter - Fall 2014

With 8J9J, hope is alive

If you walked past the unassuming portable on the Britannia school grounds that houses the 8J9J alternative program, you would never guess that something absolutely life-altering is happening inside.

The 22 students inside are a diverse group – some coming from some of the most disenfranchised families on Vancouver’s east side. Many of the students are from First Nations families who had the devastation of the residential school system visited on their elders. The rich tapestry of the community is fundamental to the program, which gives these students a chance to experience success.

“It’s so far from a level playing field,” says their teacher Janet Eviston of the students’ chances for success without support.

If 8J9J – which despite its name takes students for Grade 8, 9 and 10 – did not exist, the students would not be in school. “These are students who were asked to leave regular school because it wasn’t meeting their needs. Sometimes their behavior in class was affecting them and their peers and preventing learning,” says Janet.

Back in the 60s and 70s, youth who came to school with problems that made it difficult for them to learn were simply kicked out or dropped out. Mary-Jo Campbell was the retired teacher who began forming 8J9J in 1971 (it was integrated as the first alternative program in the Vancouver school system in 1973). She saw something else in these kids beside troublemaker.

Mary-Jo began visiting drop-in centres in the late 60s and talking to youth who were in the “park gangs” of that era. She discovered that many of these young people – whom the society of the day was ready to discard – were very bright and creative.

“They were reluctant and hostile learners – hostile against authority figures,” says Mary-Jo. “But I saw many kids who were capable of going to university – they just needed a chance.”

Mary-Jo realized an alternative program could give them that chance. She envisaged a program that would include the core academic subjects but inspire and motivate reluctant learners through exposure to the arts – creative writing as well as the visual and performing arts.

One of the keys to 8J9J’s success is that it is a safe environment. Personal safety is a major issue for these students – physical safety (many of them face bullying and violence on a daily basis), as well as emotional and intellectual safety (they battle low self-esteem but in 8J9J they know it’s okay to make mistakes).

“They are honoured. Each student is equally important to the program. There is no judgement or ranking,” says Janet. “They have unconditional acceptance and welcome. They are not perceived as “less than” but “one of”.

One of the most successful parts of 8J9J is the world music program. Playing music is an opportunity that the families of these students simply might not be able to afford, notes Doug MacDougall, 8J9J’s youth and family worker. “The world music program would not have been possible without CLICK,” he says. “CLICK funding has kept it afloat.” While the students have won awards for their world music performances, the real reward is what the music gives them – a chance to feel successful and to experience, as they lose themselves in the rhythm of the drumbeat, pure joy.

“It’s miraculous what happens,” says Janet. “There are deep, deep smiles on their faces.”



Who needs more stuff?

For Tanis Teale and her extended family the choice was pretty simple. Another Christmas of receiving lots of stuff you really don't need or pooling all the money that everyone would spend on presents and giving it to CLICK to help kids in real need.

"We're doing it because children are our future," says Tanis. "We want to make sure they're not just fed, clothed and housed but have the chance to play sports, be exposed to the arts and have some structure in their lives which isn't always there with families living in poverty."

Having grown up in a family of six children, Tanis said she and her siblings really appreciated anything they received. She carried this sense of gratitude into adulthood and she and her husband Steve have raised their children to be socially conscious and act to make life better for those who are less fortunate. They sponsor an overseas foster child and also support Amnesty International. As for BC's dubious distinction of having the highest child poverty rate in Canada, Tanis believes many can be swayed by the beautiful mountains and ocean into thinking life in Vancouver is idyllic for everyone. "I'm not surprised that child poverty is so high here – look at the cost of living."



Tanis Teale (back, third from left) and her family have decided to have a different kind of Christmas by giving to kids in need.

When Tanis and her family gather in Vancouver for the holiday season, there'll be plenty of good food and laughter, fun times with grandchildren and a feeling of happiness that this Christmas the family gave a gift that truly touched lives.

President's Message



The phrase "it takes a village to raise a child" has been bandied about so much it has lost a lot of its punch and impact. But in a province that has the highest child poverty rate in Canada, boy, do we have to act on that – because the future of too many kids is at stake.

Poverty not only causes daily suffering for too many children and teens in our city – it robs them of self-esteem, hope and a chance for a stable, successful life. And that's not just too bad – it's tragic. That's why I have hope when I meet the incredibly committed teachers working in the CLICK-supported 8J9J Alternative Program, who work every day so kids whose lives are in semi-chaos due to poverty can believe in themselves.

And I have hope when I hear about a family like Tanis Teale's who sees that, like a lot of us, they're drowning in "stuff". So they decide to pool the money they would spend on Christmas gifts, which none of them really need or want, and make a donation to CLICK.

Read about them in this newsletter - and believe that a caring and engaged community can save a kid. At Christmas and throughout the year.

Wishing you a joy-filled holiday season,
Catherine Atyeo

Any party can be a CLICK Fun-Raiser!



Mom Simone helped her daughter Hannah make her recent birthday even more meaningful by making it a CLICK Fun-Raiser. Parents who came with their children were invited to make a donation to CLICK. CLICK can provide materials for your Fun-Raiser!

Get in touch with us at: contact@clicktokids.ca

Matching Magic!

Thanks to all of you who donated to CLICK in the recent Chimp matching donation campaign. Your generosity produced a grand total of \$7,000 for the inner city programs that rely on CLICK for support.

Catch CLICK on Social Media

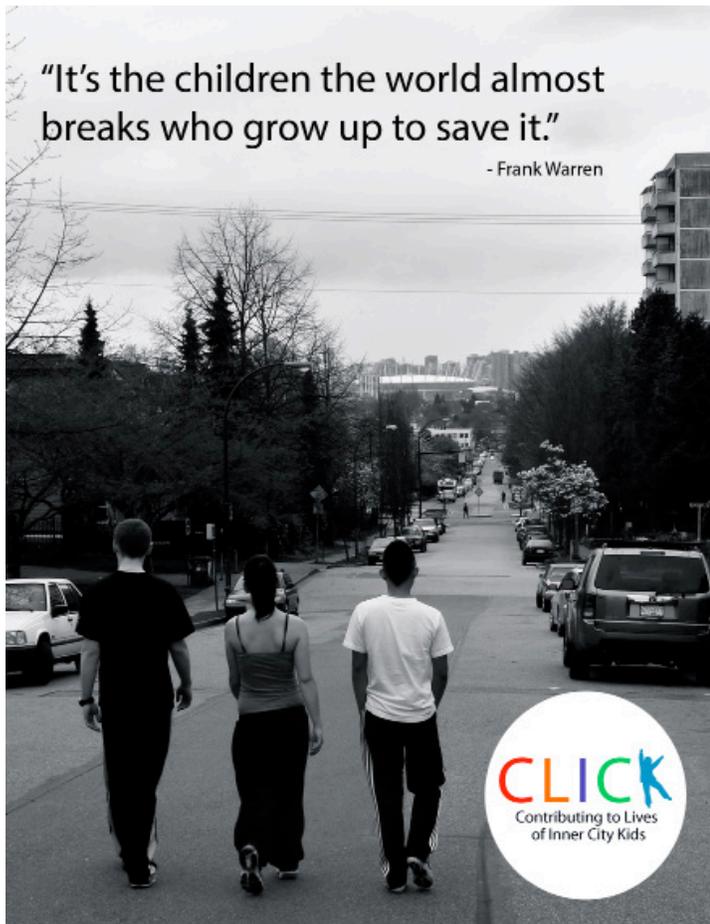
...like CLICK on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!

facebook
twitter



"It's the children the world almost breaks who grow up to save it."

- Frank Warren



When a child lives in poverty, every day of every month is a struggle.

BC has the highest child poverty rate in Canada. Almost 19% of kids in this province live in poverty – overwhelmingly in working poor families who are doing their best to make ends meet.

CLICK supports programs that make a direct, daily difference to kids who need the basics – like nutritious meals and safe and enriching out-of-school care - and opportunities that give them a chance at a stable and successful future.

Will you give \$10 or \$20 a month to help give a kid in your city a chance at a better future?

It's easy to be a CLICK monthly donor. Just go to www.clicktokids.ca, click on DONATE TODAY and choose the Monthly payment option.

You can get involved in 2015 Inner City Kids Week!

From May 11-15, 2015, CLICK will lead the annual Inner City Kids Week in Vancouver.

The week is an opportunity to raise awareness and funds for programs that support children and youth living in poverty in our city.

Here are only some of the ways you can show your care and get involved:

- Plan a fundraiser for CLICK during Inner City Kids Week
- Save the date! Plan to attend CLICK's fabulous fundraising reception and silent auction on Thursday, May 14, 2015
- Donate an item for the silent auction
- Ask your organization/company to put information about Inner City Kids Week on their website or in their newsletter (note: CLICK will supply this information)
- Spread the word about the need to support kids living in poverty in Vancouver by liking CLICK on Facebook and following CLICK on Twitter

For more information: contact@clicktokids.ca

www.clicktokids.ca

