

# Physical Activity Strategy

## BC on the move

FALL 2009

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Photo: Kitimat Valley Run/Walk Festival Walk participants Marcy Rice, Michelle Frater, Allison Worboys, Kim Casquilho. Photo courtesy of Kathy Demelo.

### WALK BC

## Kitimat is Kicking it UP!

### Walking programs are building strength and stamina in BC communities.

As part of their mission to encourage and support active lifestyles, the *Kick it Up Kitimat* committee received support from Walk BC to host a community walking program and event.

The committee trained 21 volunteer walk leaders with an interest in physical activity to help make the program a welcoming experience for even the most uncertain participant. Participants could choose to take part in an eight or 13-week program. Leaders helped motivate and support 133 individuals with building enough endurance to take part in a 5 km or 10 km program at the *Kitimat Valley Run/Walk Festival* on June 20, 2009. In total 158 people attended this inaugural walking event!

Walk BC is thrilled to have so many community members in Kitimat help promote the importance of regular physical activity. Eighteen local organizations, including Hawk Air Aviation Services, the District of Kitimat Engineering Dept., RCMP and local Kitimat Fire Department, Northern Health and Haisla Recreation Department, are just a few who are helping to improve overall health by making this walking program so successful.

As a beginner, Tina (age 41) signed up for the 5 km training program:

*"I thought I would die on the first day, but it was easy to progress with the 3x-week plan. I was a bit nervous*

*continued on page two »*



A joint initiative of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon and the BC Recreation and Parks Association.

For more information, contact Lindsay Richardson, Walk BC coordinator, at [lrichardson@bcrgpa.bc.ca](mailto:lrichardson@bcrgpa.bc.ca) or at 604.629.0965 x 256



## BC on the move

### Walk BC

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*on race day, but felt well prepared, safe, and secure. I was very proud of myself when I finished the event, as it was a huge accomplishment for me. I have stepped away from my training group, as I am motivated to do things on my own now. I realize that these events are not just for the thin and extremely fit, they are for people just like me: beginners that want to be more active and healthy. I am actually looking for other events in the area to take part in the near future."*

**Walk BC Grants:** In the fall of 2009, Walk BC will be offering grants to assist communities with enhancing existing walking programs for inactive adults (aged 35-54). Grants will be offered once to a maximum of \$5,000. For more information visit [www.walkbc.ca](http://www.walkbc.ca).

**Walk BC Training:** In the fall of 2009, Walk BC will be traveling around the province to provide walk organizers, planners and leaders with training opportunities to engage inactive adults in walking programs. For more information visit [www.walkbc.ca](http://www.walkbc.ca). ●

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT & ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION (BEAT)

### Better Together

#### Collaboration in Land Use Planning Helps Ensure a Sustainable Built Environment.



A joint initiative of BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Union of BC Municipalities.

Photo: Designated pathways increase use and safety in urban areas. Photo is courtesy of John Luton.

For more information, contact Cara Fisher, BEAT Coordinator at [cfisher@bcrrpa.bc.ca](mailto:cfisher@bcrrpa.bc.ca) or at 604.629.0965 x 255

Over the past year, the BEAT has facilitated the development of 24 Active Transportation plans to help improve how our neighbourhoods are designed and create better environments for walking and cycling. An integral part of this work has been the partnerships and relationships developed with other organizations. Collaboration at the provincial and national level also helps address some of the more complex challenges to increase physical activity levels through effective land use planning.

BCRPA's BEAT initiative has partnered with Smart Growth BC and the University of BC's Lawrence Frank to offer presentations on creating healthier built environments. Dr. Frank's research is focused on the links between planning and health – if we build sprawling communities with no alternative transportation options to the private automobile, people will drive more, be less active and be susceptible to chronic disease as a result. Smart Growth BC recently produced a new toolkit for policy makers titled *"Creating Healthy Communities: Tools and Actions to Foster Environments for Healthy Living."*

The collaboration between these three organizations models other partnerships that are being developed: multi-sector approaches to addressing chronic disease prevention and health promotion. Similar links are being made around the province as health authorities



look to organizations such as Smart Growth BC to deliver workshops on *"Creating Healthy Communities"* for municipal government and health practitioners. Public health officers are ideal advocates for healthy communities in areas regarding clean water supplies, new development plans and encouraging more walkable, bikeable neighbourhoods.

These comprehensive and collaborative approaches lead to exciting developments like the *"Creating Healthy Communities"* toolkit and workshops, now available on the BEAT section of the Physical Activity Strategy website. The end result: agencies are better equipped to work together on issues of land use planning and health promotion.

**BEAT Summit – "Planning for Winter Communities"**, October 29, in Terrace BC. To register or for more information, visit the website. Travel subsidies are available on a first come, first serve basis.

Contact Cara Fisher, BEAT Coordinator to learn about workshops in your community this fall. ●

New Westminster City Employees Move for Health Day Walk with the Mayor in Queen's Park. Photo is courtesy of New Westminster Parks & Recreation.



## EVERYBODY ACTIVE

# Active Is... Inclusion!



## New Westminster Gets Everybody Active.



A joint initiative of BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon.

For more information, contact Donna Lee, Everybody Active coordinator, at [dlee@bcrrpa.bc.ca](mailto:dlee@bcrrpa.bc.ca) 604.629.0965 x 257

In the fall of 2008, the City of New Westminster was awarded an Everybody Active seed grant to increase physical activity levels in the community by finding ways that would make recreation and physical activity more inclusive and accessible. In order to really understand the issues, the City asked community members with low incomes for their input.

Five social service organizations assisted the City in connecting with community members. In total, 74 community members from varying low-income situations shared their thoughts on barriers to participation and provided suggestions to the Parks, Culture & Recreation and Development Services Departments.

Results from the group discussions and survey confirmed that adults with lower incomes face multiple barriers to participating in physical activity. Not surprisingly, "lack of discretionary income" and "high admission costs or program fees" topped the list. However, community members noted other barriers, such as issues related to anxiety or low self-esteem, and that some facilities are not easily accessible by foot. Others noted that our City's *Active Living Guide* is difficult to use due to complicated language and that the institutional 'feeling' of facilities is daunting.

Through these discussions with community members, the City of New Westminster realized that addressing one barrier (by providing subsidized or free admission) would not necessarily translate to increased participation.

"This grant has helped the City of New Westminster have a better understanding about barriers low income members of the community may experience when accessing our services - in addition to cost," said Sandy Earle, Active Communities Coordinator for the City of New Westminster.

Facility Manager Renee Chadwick says that New Westminster will continue working with service providers to create strategies that remove barriers to participation and train staff to be more effective in interacting with disadvantaged community members. "As a city, we can address some of these issues by changing how we do things, not necessarily by allocating more money towards subsidies."

Who would know better how to address barriers than people facing these challenges everyday? Some solutions identified by community members include:

- Create a sense of belonging – "These are our facilities too!"
- Provide training to raise the awareness and sensitivity of front-line staff
- Use plain English for brochures and signage
- Take programming out of the facility and to where targeted groups congregate
- Work with social service organizations to develop buddy programs which support those who are anxious or socially isolated
- Host more focus and outreach sessions

One discussion group participant stated, "This is the first time that I have been asked for my opinion and feedback."

What solutions can your community come up with to get everybody active? ●





BC on the move

COMMUNITY BASED AWARENESS

## Active Is... Enjoying the Commute to Better Health



More than 7,000 residents made cycling to work their physical activity for one week in BC.



A joint initiative of BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon.

Photo: Prince George Bike to Work Week – Kim Maclean, Garth Frizzell, Councilor Deborah Munoz, Mayor Dan Rogers. Photo is courtesy of Dan Adamson.

For more information, contact Meredith Mundick, at [mmundick@bcrrpa.bc.ca](mailto:mmundick@bcrrpa.bc.ca) or at 604.629.0965 x 253



The Fraser Basin Council rolled out the first annual Bike to Work Week (BTWW) in Prince George on May 11, 2009.

The campaign raised awareness to the individual and community benefits of increasing physical activity in the local workforce through commuter cycling. Increased productivity, better health and a reduction of harmful emissions that affect air quality are all positive outcomes of commuting to work. Event organizers encouraged all ages to bike to work but specifically targeted 30 to 65 year olds who had minimal previous cycling experience and encouraged individuals to try it for the first time showing how fun and easy it can be. Campaign coordinators used the Marketing Action Plan (M.A.P.) to help plan, promote and execute the marketing campaign, "M.A.P. is an excellent resource and one that I have shared extensively with other event organizers," says Jillian Merrick, Upper Fraser Regional Manager, "Break-down of time, costs, barriers, and benefits of each activity is extremely useful."

Six weeks prior to the week-long event a mass media campaign was launched including TV and radio announcements, print articles and advertisements. Posters, banners,

and bike route signs were also put up in the community with some posters featuring local riders. These community champions created enthusiasm for the upcoming event and prompted many workplace teams to join in the action. T-shirts were provided to team leaders, community champions, the Mayor and local newscasters and were available for purchase to team members. Using t-shirts to promote the campaign increased awareness around the event and identified participants on the street. A BTWW website was created to deliver information to team leaders, participants and sponsors and a blog allowed participants to share their personal experiences and link to uploaded photos on Flickr (a photo sharing site).

The week long event included a launch, a Bike With the Mayor ride, a Bike for a bagel, cycling safety and etiquette workshops, bike maintenance workshops, celebration stations and a wrap-up event where winning teams were announced and prizes were distributed. The celebration stations during the event were located on all major bike routes and had food, beverages and prizes for the cyclists. Each campaign component worked together to raise awareness to the community at large, inspire others to participate and demonstrated how much fun commuting to work can be!

In the end, over 70 workplace teams and 325 cyclists registered to participate, with 86 cycling to work for the first time. Their media campaign reached thousands of Prince George residents creating widespread awareness of the community-oriented initiative focused on celebrating the fun a community can have getting active together. ●



An initiative of these  
BC Healthy Living Alliance Members

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