

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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BIG Little Science Centre Gets Grant from Vancouver Foundation

Kamloops, BC – The BIG Little Science Centre has received support from Canada’s largest community foundation for its Enhanced Accessibility and Long Term Sustainability Program designed to improve the Science Centre’s displays and programs and to provide better access for students from area schools to the Science Centre

John Binsted, Vice President and COO of Vancouver Foundation, announced that the Foundation’s Education Advisory Committee has approved a \$20,000 grant for the first year of this project.

The project targets several areas of the BIG Little Science Centre operations. The funding will help with:

- proactive marketing of the Science Centre in School District #73 to increase participation rates for all schools particularly First Nations communities and disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- increasing the number of in-service programs for elementary teachers.
- preparation and distribution of hands-on science kits (targeting current provincial curriculum). d) Engaging Secondary and University educators to help enhance programming, science kit development, and volunteerism.

Vancouver Foundation administers a permanent endowment with assets of approximately \$546 million, representing the combined capital of over 830 funds created through bequests, from living donors and through other gifts. Grants are made from the income that is generated from investment of the pooled capital of these funds. Although Vancouver Foundation is located in Vancouver, the Foundation provides grants to registered, charitable organizations throughout British Columbia. In 2003, Vancouver Foundation distributed more than \$32.3 million to community organizations across British Columbia.

Gord Stewart, BIG Little Science Centre Executive Director, indicated that this is a significant grant to the project. “We are confident that this support will help to make this project a success and will also attract other donors, contributing to the long term sustainability of the BIG Little Science Centre”.

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BACKGROUND



VANCOUVER
FOUNDATION

Vancouver Foundation At A Glance

Vancouver Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening communities across British Columbia. As Canada's largest community foundation, it manages more than 830 separate endowment funds worth approximately \$546 million. In 2003, Vancouver Foundation distributed more than \$32.3 million to community organizations across British Columbia.

Vancouver Foundation helps donors support projects that enhance the quality of life in their communities. We do this by pooling the charitable gifts of donors to create permanent endowment funds and using the investment income from these funds to make grants that support a wide range of social, cultural, health, environmental, educational and other community needs.

Donors can choose from a wide variety of endowment funds, from start-up or unrestricted funds to advised and designated funds, allowing them to structure their giving to best suit their individual priorities. Vancouver Foundation's prudent fiscal management and low administration fees ensure that the vast majority of fund income goes to community projects, not overhead.

Vancouver Foundation makes timely grants to community-based programs throughout BC that build on the abilities of local residents to create long-term solutions to community concerns. We help people help themselves and their communities.

Many of the grants allocated by the Foundation are based on the recommendations of advisory committees, which are made up of more than 130 experts and community leaders who volunteer their time to review grant applications two to three times a year. Their experience and expertise allows Vancouver Foundation to keep abreast of emerging community needs and ensures that grants are distributed to where they will do the most good.

There is one advisory committee for each of our eight fields of interest: education; medical research and services; youth philanthropy; environment; health and social development; children, youth and families; arts and culture; and animal welfare.

Vancouver Foundation also provides philanthropic leadership to communities throughout BC by encouraging collaboration among charitable organizations and providing learning opportunities for staff of non-profit organizations.

In all our activities, Vancouver Foundation is guided by a commitment to achieve three principal goals:

- Invest donor funds prudently with the goal of optimizing long-term returns, so we are better able to help donors achieve their charitable objectives.
- Encourage and support the work of charitable organizations throughout British Columbia, so those organizations can strengthen the community in which they work.
- Provide philanthropic leadership and support initiatives which improve the quality of life in communities across BC.

With the inherent values of permanence and flexibility, we have the capacity to meet your charitable objectives and to serve the needs of communities throughout British Columbia for many years to come.

Key Facts

- Founded in 1943, Vancouver Foundation is the largest and one of the oldest community foundations in Canada.
- We manage more than 830 donor endowment funds worth approximately \$546 million.
- In 2003, grants and distributions to non-profit organizations totaled \$32.3 million.
- Half of our grants go to communities outside the Lower Mainland.
- Since 1943, Vancouver Foundation has distributed \$509 million for projects from daycares to theatres, medical research to crisis centres.
- Vancouver Foundation has eight main funding areas: education; medical research and services; youth philanthropy; environment; health and social development; children, youth and families; arts and culture; and animal welfare
- Over 130 community leaders volunteer their time on Vancouver Foundation advisory committees to review grant applications two to three times a year.
- Vancouver Foundation has many different types of funds, allowing it to be responsive to the donor's needs and philanthropic vision.

BACKGROUNDER

BIG Little Science Centre at a Glance

Introduction to BIG Little Science Centre

The BIG Little Science Centre (BLSC) was started in February 2000 by Gordon Gore, a retired science teacher who has dedicated his life to teaching science in an interactive environment. The Centre currently operates out of four classrooms leased from School District 73 at David Thompson Elementary in Kamloops. The current program format allows visitors a period of time to experiment on their own at any of 120 plus hands-on stations located in two classrooms. A third room is used for demonstrations while the fourth room is used for demonstrations and serves as a basic teaching laboratory with capacity for 32 visitors.

The BIG Little Science Centre Society was established in October 2002 and registered as a charitable organization in September 2003. The Society has a leadership of nine directors which meet monthly. The current Board represents a diverse range of experience and skills including education, accounting, business, science and the trades.

The Centre operated exclusively by volunteers up to march of 2005 when due to the resignation of the founder and chief operator for health reasons, the Society hired a full-time paid operator.

Notwithstanding this appointment, volunteers who contribute over 2,000 hours annually to the development, operation and governance of the Centre, are expected to continue to play a major role.

The BLSC enjoys considerable support as illustrated by the following:

- over 22,500 visitors to the Centre since opening including over 6,500 during the last school year.
- the President of BC Association of Physics Teachers wrote after a recent visit to the Centre by over 40 physics teachers “ The Centre is a veritable Science World North and fulfills a vital role in stimulating curiosity, delight and wonder in school age children. These experiences are of utmost importance since they lead children of the day to become scientists of tomorrow.”
- Bryan Tisdall President & CEO of Science World after a recent visit to the Centre, “I am writing in support of the inspiring efforts of the BLSC. We share with you a mission of inspiring young minds, encouraging creativity and inventiveness and building an awareness of the contribution of science and technology to the quality of our communities today and the transition to a knowledge based economy in the future”.

The BLSC Society’s vision for the future is to become a provincially significant science Centre offering enhanced programming and exhibits. It will be a centre of excellence for student learning through hands-on experiences and dynamic demonstrations, regular in-service programs for elementary teachers and showcasing traveling exhibits and local projects undertaken by elementary, secondary and university students. It will serve as a nucleus for sparking science activity, interest and volunteerism through mentoring programs.