

## Inside:

### No One Stands Alone

...Page 2

### Keeping Pace with Change

...Page 4

### Return on Investment

...Page 6

### Tears and Hope

...Page 8

### Making it Happen

...Page 10



Helping  
parents,  
helping children

# No One Stands Alone

A Message from Barry Corrin, Executive Director



I won't be coy. This newsletter is a pitch to agencies that have a responsibility for providing preventative, self-help services to “at risk” parents as well as parents who simply want to do a better job of parenting. I ask you and other interested organizations and individuals to contact Parent Support Services Society of BC (PSS) to find out how we can help develop these services in your community.

The words and images in this newsletter will I hope, persuade you that investing in PSS is a cost-effective investment that will build capacity in your community. How do we do it? PSS has, for the last 30 years, been recruiting and professionally training volunteers and working with community partners to develop the community based 'Parent Support Circle' program that has supported hundreds and hundreds of parents throughout BC. The Circle program has helped parents overcome tremendous obstacles, to the point where they were able to raise happy, healthy children into productive adulthood and give back to their communities.

The family (however defined) is the core of community. Families are sustained and nourished by systems—networks of people and organizations—that support them and from which they gain their strength and health. Families draw on all that has come before them and all that surrounds them: their nuclear families, families of origin, extended families, friends, and neighbours, as well as the educational, health, social, and other public and private institutions within their communities.

This is a two-way system. Families contribute to others in their communities and receive from others when needed. Where there are children, parents ideally provide the shelter, caring, nourishment, support, and encouragement that their children need to become independent adults capable of doing the same for others.

Call it a family tree, the family of man, the cycle of life, or community, it's all the same. By any name, one thing is clear: For the system to thrive, the health of the individuals, the families they comprise, the organizations that support them, and the community as a whole must be priorities. In order not to jeopardize the quality of life in communities, each aspect of the system must receive adequate attention and support.

For the past 30 years, one part of the intricate system supporting the health of individuals, families, and communities throughout the province has been Parent Support Services Society of BC. By providing pragmatic support and practical information to parents with the courage to step forward and say they need help, we have helped the system to flourish. Our means of doing so are both effective and efficient.

One of the main factors in our success is that everyone in the Parent Support Services system works together and appreciates that no one stands alone. Unfortunately, these days there are fewer organizations like ours left standing, and fewer of us left standing together to support parents. Over the past number of years, the provincial government re-design of social services has resulted in the loss of familiar service providers, so there are fewer services in the community to support parents. These changes, created to improve future services, have also created uncertainty and impacted the most vulnerable individuals in our communities.

For our flagship, child-abuse prevention, Parent Support Circle program—currently delivered in approximately 30 communities across BC—this re-design means that funding previously provided by the province must now be sought from five newly created, administratively separate social-service regions.

Securing funding from these regions will not be straightforward. Although we have organized and developed child-abuse prevention services in the regions for the past 30 years, we have never had a direct financial relationship with them. Although we support parents, children, and families who are and have been clients of the Ministry of Children and Family Development in communities throughout BC, the regional administrative structures have not had to bear the cost. As a result, regional administrators have, in many cases, been unaware of the extent of services that Parent Support Services Society has been providing in their regions.

Our invitation to those who are charged with the responsibility for delivering supportive self-help service to parents is to talk with us and find out what Parent Support Services Society of BC has to offer. We invite you to consider purchasing and building upon the well-developed, parent-support, child-abuse prevention network of services that are already established in your communities.

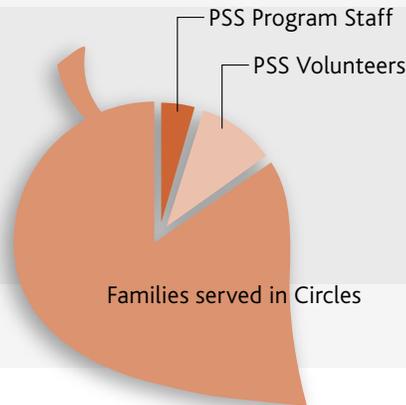
We know that, if you accept our invitation, you will find that our services are remarkably cost-effective because, as all families should, we have a support system. We do not stand alone.

We stand together with hundreds of local volunteer facilitators throughout BC who, in the past year alone, have

*“I came to PSS to learn how to deal with my anger and to learn alternatives to spanking my son. I needed to know Canadian laws about appropriate child discipline.”*

—Filipino Circle Member

# How cost-effective are Parent Support Circles?



## Cause and effect:

- 3.2 PSS Program Staff
- 70 Volunteer Facilitators
- 489 Families served in Circles, impacting 875 children
- 5,890 Volunteer Facilitation Hours (or 168 work weeks, or 3.2 years)

provided almost 6000 hours of service and who feel that the work of preventing child abuse, supporting parents, and creating healthier families and communities is its own reward.

We stand together with community organizations with which we partner to deliver our flagship Parent Support Circle program and other supportive, educational programs to parents in local communities.

We stand together with United Ways, business communities, municipalities, and donors who provide direct support because of their compassion for and commitment to children and families.

We stand together with all those who support us as we build an ever-widening network to create and sustain the health of communities, parents and children.

In the following pages, you will see the names of volunteers in your local communities who make up our parent-support community. You will read about the services we provide and the outcomes we are achieving. You will read comments from some parents who are participating in our programs, and are better able to contribute to your communities today because of the support they received from us yesterday. You will read about the training and skill development of volunteers. You will read the names of donors who support our work so that our services can be delivered for less.

In this newsletter, you will see that Parent Support Services Society of BC is part of the system that, as our mission statement reads, is "preventing child abuse and supporting parenting, families, and communities." And I believe you will find reason to provide the support that we need in order to continue with our mission in your communities.

Call us, talk to us. Plan with us to build on the Parent Support Circle program in the communities and regions where you live. Call now. ●

## What other programs do we offer?

In addition to Parent Support Circles, PSS offers many other parenting workshops and programs conducted by guest speakers and PSS Coordinators. In 2003-04, PSS conducted the following workshops in communities across BC: (*The number of times we conducted each one is in parentheses.*)

*Attachment Parenting* (3)

*Boundaries: The Search for Balance* (1)

*Discipline vs. Abuse* (4)

*Discipline or Punishment?* (6)

*Effective Communication for Families* (6)

*Experiencing Grief and Loss* (1)

*Filipino Families in Canada* (1)

*Guiding Behaviour* (2)

*Living and Loving in Your Stepfamily* (1)

*Parent Awareness Program* (A 7-month program) (2)

*Parent Pro-D* (1)

*Parenting Against the Tide: Creating Family Traditions* (1)

*Parenting Against the Tide: Value-Based Parenting in a Consumer Culture* (1)

*Parenting: Past, Present, and Future* (1)

*Parents, Children, and Bullying* (1)

*Parents, Kids, and Money* (1)

*Problem Solving* (2)

*Raising Kids with High Self-Esteem!* (6)

*Raising Respectful, Responsible Children* (1)

*Self-Care* (2)

*Sidestepping the Power Struggle* (6)

*Step parenting Seminars: Step parenting through the Eyes of Children* (1), *Helping Kids in High-Conflict Divorce* (1), *Latest Legal Issues for Stepparents* (1), *Dealing with an Uncooperative Ex* (1)

*Supporting Parents and Children through Separation and Divorce* (1)

*Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (S.T.E.P.) Program* (2)

*Who's in Charge?* (6) ●

# Keeping Pace with Change

In the three decades since Parent Support Services Society of BC (PSS) was founded, the populations of BC's Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, and Coastal areas have grown and diversified ethnically and culturally, and the pressures on many BC families have changed.



By structuring Parent Support Circles to meet the specific needs of grandparents, step-parents, and Aboriginal, Chinese, Filipino, Hindi-Punjabi, and Latin American parents, Parent Support Services has kept pace.

There is a natural life cycle that sees Circles constantly being created to meet needs in some communities while winding down in others when the need has been filled. Over the last 30 years PSS has served thousands of people in hundreds of Circles.

This constant growth and change has been the result of a lot of outreach. The whole idea of preventing child abuse hinges upon identifying parents who are

*"I now have a good relationship with my kids and my wife. I learn a lot from the other parents."*

—Latino American Circle Member

struggling, and encouraging them to reach out for support and information before problems escalate.

To make this happen, Bella Cenezero, Program Director for Vancouver/Coastal, Fraser, and Interior

Regions, works closely with geographic, ethnic, and demographic communities, consulting with community leaders, holding information meetings, participating in inter-agency coalitions, and undertaking a wide variety of promotions.

"I've immersed myself in the communities I work with, starting from my first year with PSS, and I think that's been key to the program's success," she says. But even where growth and change have been fast and furious, there have been challenges.

"The demographics of our volunteers are changing," she says. People seem to

switch personal and professional goals more quickly than in the past. More women (who comprise the lion's share of PSS volunteers) are combining work outside and within the home, so fewer of them are seeking volunteer opportunities. More of the people who do volunteer work are being squeezed out of it by the competing demands of work, children, and aging parents.

Increasingly, the longevity of a volunteer's commitment is measured in months rather than years, making it more difficult to establish and sustain relationships between facilitators and steering committees, steering committees and community partners.

Difficulties like these, coupled with ongoing funding challenges, make the constant growth of the PSC network in Cenezero's region all the more remarkable. Yet after nine years with PSS, what she continues to find most remarkable is the consistent, positive response from the parents who attend the Circles.

"One way of gauging whether the program is working is through what members say to new members joining the Circle," she says. "They say things like, 'I used to blame my kids for their behaviour but now I realize I was not being effective and that was causing my children to behave negatively.' When parents start to take responsibility with confidence and actively seek support, you know the Circle is working as it should."

Beyond that, some former Circle members have come so far that they are now volunteer facilitators. In fact, the Burnaby-based Chinese Circle was created when members of the original Vancouver-



based Chinese Circle recognized a need in a different geographic segment of their ethnic community, and stepped forward to become the facilitators and steering-committee members who would fill that need.

"This is our vision for Parent Support Circles," says Cenezero. "This is an example of the PSC model working at its best, and of the kind of self-perpetuating network we are striving to develop across the province." It's a tall order, and we can't fill it alone. But what makes Parent Support Services so remarkable is that we're not alone. After three decades, hundreds of people across the province continue every year to do their very best to fill that order.

That's worth supporting. ●

## Who Are Parent Support Circle Members?

A RECENT SURVEY of Parent Support Circle (PSC) members showed that 79% of respondents were female and nearly 75% were over the age of 31. The majority (65%) had children between newborn and 6 years of age. Fifty-six percent had children from 7 to 12, while 21% had children over 12.

More than three-quarters of respondents who indicated their family's total yearly income reported an income of less than \$30,000: 25% were living on less than \$10,000; 31% were living on \$10,000 to \$20,000, and 33% were living on \$20,000 to \$30,000. Fifty five percent (55%) indicated that they received some funding from the Ministry of Human Resources.

More than one-third (37%) of respondents indicated having contact at least once with the Ministry of Children and Family Development due to concerns about their child(ren). Fourteen (14%) had, at some time, had their child(ren) in care.

The most reported reasons for attending the Circle were: support (46%); to learn more about parenting (29%); or as

an extension of a parenting course such as "Nobody's Perfect" (10%).

The most reported improvements since attending the Circle were: increased knowledge about parenting (25%); improved relationships with others (21%); increased comfort knowing they were not alone (13%); increased confidence (13%); improved self-esteem (11%); reduced stress levels (9%); improved living situations (7%); and more positive attitudes (4%).

When asked how much of that improvement could be attributed to the Circle, 97% said they would attribute 70% or more of their improvements to the Circle.

Most respondents (43%) had been part of their respective Circles for longer than 18 months. Thirty-two percent had been part of their Circle for 6 to 18 months, while 25% had been involved for less than 6 months.

Sixty-three percent indicated that they attended their Circle every week, while 82% attended at least three times monthly. Barriers prevented 71% of respondents from attending as often as they would like. The main barriers were: time (25%), work (21%), and transportation (21%). ●

# Return on Investment



Rural parenting, and supporting a rural Parent Support Circle (PSC) network, presents unique challenges. But when the support is there—whether in the form of time or dollars, donuts or donated taxi services—the return on investment is beyond measurement.

"I've been employed with PSS since 1999," says Sandi Halvorson, Program Coordinator for Nanaimo/Parksville. "During that time, the longest-lasting groups have been in Parksville and Nanaimo. The facilitators there have been very stable and the communities supportive. For example, the Nanaimo group has been supported for years by Tim Horton's and Quality Foods, which donate snacks in alternate weeks." Although "snacks" may sound like a small item, they comprise a sizable, ongoing commitment for these two businesses, and what these commitments mean to the parents and volunteers, says Halvorson, "is huge."

"I really believe in the PSC program because I've seen it work," she says, and it often works as much indirectly as it does directly. "Circle members frequently talk about how they were able

to share a skill or an insight with another parent. I could think of a hundred examples, but the point is, when parents feel less stressed about parenting, it's much easier for them to find ways to 'give back,' both to the group that's supported them, and to the community that's supported the group."

At the same time, managing a network of Circles in a largely rural region presents distinct challenges, says Halvorson. "Generally speaking, the rural groups in my region have a more difficult time being successful," she says. Transportation can be a problem. Rural areas are often not well-served by public transit, and the cost and schedules of ferries to the smaller islands can complicate matters further.

## What are Steering Committees?

WHEN THE NEED FOR A PARENT SUPPORT CIRCLE (PSC) is identified within a community, the first step taken by the Regional Director is the development of a Steering Committee (SC). Comprised of concerned, connected, community members—often individuals who work with parents and families—the SC assists in recruiting facilitators, arranges vital details such as venues, and, importantly, publicizes the program to the community and potential referral sources.

"Once the PSC has been launched," says Bella Cenezero, Program Director for Vancouver/Coastal, Fraser, and Interior Regions, "the number-one role of the Committee is to do the ongoing promotional work that will ensure that the Circle is known, endorsed, and sustained by caring community members."

The SC members achieve this through networking, interviews with local media, and referring clients to the Circles. In addition, says Cenezero, SC members generate practical support by organizing fundraising events, such as dances and Christmas caroling that the Filipino community has done; requesting in-kind donations from local businesses, such as the snacks provided by Tim Horton's and Quality Foods in Nanaimo; soliciting funding and practical support from corporate sponsors such as Thrifty Foods in Victoria; and researching opportunities for grants and funding, such as the Langley Circle has done.

Committee members also provide professional expertise; support the facilitators; assist with arrangements for speakers, videos, or handouts at Circle meetings; collaborate with other organizations on projects such as parenting workshops; and much more.

"Parent Support Circles provide parents with a feeling of connectedness and support," says Cenezero. "Steering Committees provide facilitators with the same thing and ensure that the Circle is linked into the local community." ●

*"I am able to see things before they come and I am better able to deal with what comes."*

—Esquimalt Circle Member

As well, although facilitators may stay around longer than in large urban centres, when they do leave it is more difficult to replace them. If both facilitators leave at the same time (each group is led by a pair of co-facilitators), the Circle may not recover. "In Chemainus and Gabriola Island, both facilitators left at almost the same time," says Halvorson. "By the time I found new people, the group members had fallen away."

It would be easy to conclude from this that the challenges of sustaining Circles in rural areas are insurmountable—easy but not accurate. As Tina Pearson (see pages 8 & 10) observes, some Circles in small communities thrive for decades.

If the PSC model is as good as its supporters believe, why does it work some of the time and not others? Perhaps the best way to respond is to draw a parallel between a PSC network and parenting.

Parents are most likely to succeed when they feel adequately supported by community, family, and friends to cope with the stresses inherent in raising children. When that support is missing; when the stresses of child-rearing are compounded by problems with work, money, relationships, and unresolved childhood issues; and when all of that is combined with ineffective parenting skills;

statistics show that the likelihood of child abuse increases sharply.

Similarly, Parent Support Circles are most likely to thrive when they have stable community support in the forms of cash and in-kind donations from local sources, and long-term volunteers. Lack of this support can lead to the demise of an otherwise effective group.

And when funding cutbacks threaten the survival of the underlying structure, it shakes the foundation on which the entire network is built, and on which it has been humming along in quiet success for decades.

"A self-help circle is not the 'be all and end all,'" says Halvorson. It's not the right model of service for some parents, and it's not going to prevent every incident of child abuse. "But our Circles do meet the needs of some parents at some times," she says. "They're simple, cost-effective, and fit well with other community services."

"I think Parent Support Circles should be on the menu of services for parents in every community." ●



# Tears and Hope

Tina Pearson is in an unusual position. Beginning with PSS in 2000 as part-time Regional Coordinator for the North, she became the full-time Program Director for Victoria in 2003 while continuing to support the North. This provides her with insights into the challenges of running Parent Support Circle (PSC) networks in rural and urban areas.

Her observation is that, regardless of where they live, all Circle participants have the same basic needs: “They need to feel accepted, forgiven, and worthy of support no matter where they come from or what they may have done; a sense of connection with and belonging to a community of parents; and empowered to heal and have strong and positive relationships with their children. Moreover, they need access to information and resources.” Parent Support Circles provide all of this.

“The specifics of why parents need PSS change,” says Pearson, but the underlying needs remain largely the same.

Basically, all PSCs have certain needs in common, too: accepting communities, philosophical and pragmatic support, volunteer commitment, and, of course, parents. It might seem backward to say that Parent Support Circles need parents; after all, isn’t it the other way around? But the truth is that the single biggest factor in the success of the PSC program is the parents who come out week after week because they have the courage to admit that they need help, enough love for their children to reach out and ask for it, and the ability to support and help each other.

For many years, PSCs in several Northern communities enjoyed unparalleled success. Despite the challenges of sustaining Circles in rural areas (see pages 6–7) and despite the usual rise-and-fall life cycle of Circles, some groups in the North ran continuously from the late 1970s through the late 1990s.

However, over the last few years, many resource-based northern communities have suffered economic downturns. Many families in these communities, not just those directly affected by job loss, experience increased stress from the changes in the local economy, says Pearson. In addition to the loss of income and loss of face that hits some families directly, others feel the loss of a sense of belonging, shared prosperity, and hope for the future.

The changes have hit the PSC program, as well. While several Circles have continued to serve parents in Prince George, Circles in Terrace, Kitimat, and Hazelton have struggled as several long-term facilitators have moved away or stepped down after years of service.

Yet it is in these same communities, where the challenges can seem so daunting, that the rewards can be greatest. There is

power in those long-term ties to one another and the community. It is power that, when harnessed, has the ability to unite extended families, enduring friends, and long-time neighbours in an effort to overcome adversity together.

At their best, Parent Support Circles have the ability to galvanize that power and convert it into action. Circles can help parents rediscover their single most important motivation for beginning to build a future from what remains of the past: their children.

When they are adequately supported, Parent Support Circles have the ability to be catalytic. At PSS, we know because we’ve seen it. ●

*“I feel more confident, stronger, and supported. I feel good knowing that I have a place to come and share my problems.”*

—Prince George Circle Member

## What is the PSC Facilitator Training Program?

A **FACTOR IN THE SUCCESS** of each Parent Support Circle is a pair of skilled facilitators. These individuals must: alleviate new parents' fears and anxiety; present useful information in interesting ways; encourage participants to talk about emotionally painful issues; respond without judgment when participants share difficult experiences; guide participants to offer constructive suggestions; navigate occasional conflicts impartially; work in partnership with co-facilitators; recognize their own limits; and know when to ask for help.

Over the years, PSS has developed a training workshop for new facilitators as well as periodic training workshops for continuing facilitators. Participants described a recent Initial Training Workshop as, "intense, humorous, effective, awesome, inspiring, informative, fun, worthwhile, insightful, compassionate, exciting, relevant, succinct, thorough, and meaningful." Several

participants described it as "the most useful training I've ever had."

Some facilitators are interested in, or training for, social-service careers, and training and serving as a facilitator can provide valuable practical experience. Facilitators who are involved in other careers often report that the skills they learn are invaluable in any workplace and all their relationships. Some facilitators were once Circle members and their progression is an important aspect of their growth as parents and citizens.

Although parent support is PSS' primary goal, facilitator training is an equally important focus. While parent support builds a family's capacity, facilitator training builds a community's capacity. It is one more ripple in the community pond and one more way that Parent Support Services is improving the society in which we live. ●



# Making it Happen



As in every community in which Parent Support Circles (PSCs) operate, the most important factors in the success of Victoria-region Circles are support and responsiveness. Tina Pearson, who is the Program Director for Victoria and former Coordinator for the North, has more than a little insight into this.

"The longest-running groups seem to be those where two primary factors have remained consistent," says Pearson: An acknowledged need for the group in the community, which serves as a starting point from which community support grows; and "committed, dedicated, and skilled" facilitators who can provide a safe place for parents seeking support.

In Victoria, much of the external support for the local PSC program comes from extensive networking with community-based agencies such as Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Sooke Family Resource Society, Blanshard Community Centre, Saanich Neighbourhood Place, Gordon Head Recreation Centre, and the Inter-Cultural Association.

"The excitement and surprises that emerge when people—community partners, facilitators—work together in an open and curious way, when they're willing to suspend judgment and think outside the box, are very rewarding," says Pearson.

In Victoria and elsewhere, she says, "the most important ingredient [within a Circle] seems to be an intimate connection that respects the actual realities and needs of the parents in the moment. This means that the relationships [between and among parents and facilitators] have a different flavour depending on the community, the location, and the kinds of parents who attend."

That flexibility is an important characteristic of the PSC program as a whole. As Bella Cenezero notes (see pages 4–5), Parent Support Circles and networks thrive because their design allows them to respond

to factors ranging from the changing needs of parents and communities, to new and different funding requirements.

This change-ability ensures funders, donors, and community partners that their contributions are meeting the ever-evolving needs of parents, families, and communities. The development of Circles for grandparents, stepparents, Aboriginal people, and new Canadians demonstrate that PSS uses resources in ways that mirror our constantly changing world.

*"I came to PSS for more interaction with adults and grandparents in the same situation as me."*

—Victoria Grandparent Circle Member

In Victoria, programs such as the Effective Parenting Workshop and the Stepfamily Workshop fill parents' needs for differing kinds and degrees of support. The more structured and focused, seven-month, skill-building Parent Awareness Program builds on, deepens, and entrenches what participants have learned in Circles and helps them take it a step further. It is part of the overall PSS vision that programs such as these will one day be offered throughout BC.

Despite a workload that keeps Pearson running off her feet—like virtually all PSS staff, whose commitment has kept the agency ticking along through extremely difficult times—she and her colleagues

have a vision for the PSC network. That vision includes:

- More parents participating in Circles.
- All Circles developing partnerships with other community-service agencies.
- Communities becoming increasingly sensitive to the needs of non-mainstream families, such as blended families and families from diverse cultures.
- Parents becoming empowered, taking charge of their lives, and feeling inspired to advocate for communities that support families, whatever their background and wherever they live.

It's an ambitious vision, but no more so than the one that led social worker Bill McFarland to create Parent Support Services Society 30 years ago, and enlist a handful of volunteers who now cumulatively number in the thousands, and whose tireless work has kept a simple but compelling idea alive:

- That all parents need support.
- That, with support, most parents can "do right" by their children.
- That their doing so creates better communities and a better world.
- And that Parent Support Services Society of BC can help make that happen.

Make a commitment. Send a donation. Provide funding. Because we are making it happen. And you can help. ●

# It's Auction Time!

Want to ride the VIA Rail? Go anywhere in BC by Greyhound? Enjoy the finest food at the finest restaurants? How about a vintage bottle of Ice Wine? A football signed by the BC Lions team? Maybe some marvelous music at the symphony, or a fabulous play?

Go "shopping" at the Parent Support Services 6th Great Internet Auction. Do your holiday shopping online, get a great deal,

and support Parent Support Circle child-abuse prevention programs, all while sitting in the warmth and comfort of your home, at your home computer.

There are over 150 interesting and unusual items to choose from. Check it out, it's simple. Just go to [www.gobid.ca](http://www.gobid.ca) and look for the *Parent Support Services of BC auction*. ●

## Thanks to Our Internet Auction Donors

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## Listen to CKWX!

SEVERAL TIMES DAILY throughout November, CKWX News 1130 is broadcasting announcements about Parent Support Services Society of BC.

Tune in and listen to a parent, a facilitator, the Program Director and Executive Director describe the work that PSS is doing in your community. **Thank you CKWX** for supporting parents, families, and communities. ●



**Parent Support Services** is funded by the BC Ministry for Children and Family Development, BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, Human Resources Development Canada, Township of Langley, Vancouver Foundation, Victoria Foundation, and the following United Ways: Cowichan, Fraser Valley, Greater Victoria, Lower Mainland, Powell River, Prince George.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society, its members, or its funders. Subscriptions are by membership. (See insert.)

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#### VANCOUVER ISLAND REGIONAL OFFICES

<b>Victoria</b> 941 Kings Road Victoria BC V8T 1W7 Tel: 250.384.8042 Fax: 250.388.4391 Toll-free: 1.800.377.0212 Email: parent@island.net	<b>Central Island</b> c/o 2045 Sanders Road Nanose Bay BC V9P 9C2 Tel: 250.468.9658 Fax: 250.468.9668 Email: parent@telus.net
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#### NORTH REGIONAL OFFICES

<b>Prince George</b> 1306 7th Avenue Prince George BC V2L 3P1 Tel: 250.561.0607 Fax: 250.562.8102 parentnorth@mag-net.com	<b>Northwest Corridor</b> PO Box 29002 Terrace BC V8G 5T3 Tel: 250.635.3366 parentnorth@hotmail.com
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**Parent Support Circles** are located in: Abbotsford, Burnaby (Chinese and English), Gibsons, Hazelton, Langley, Nanaimo, Nelson, New Westminster, Parksville, Powell River (Aboriginal, Grandparents, and English), Prince George (Family and Step-program), Richmond, Sechelt, Shawnigan Lake, Surrey, Tri-Cities, Vancouver (Aboriginal, English, Filipino, Latin American, Chinese, and Step-parents), Victoria (Aboriginal, Grandparents, and Western Communities, Blanshard, Esquimalt, Hillside, Fernwood).

# Imagine

## Imagine

A WHILE BACK, I was listening to a radio show called *Money Talks*. The host, Victor Adair, was running a contest and asked people to send in their thoughts on what they would like to see that would make this province a more wonderful place to live.

There is health care, the environment, the economy, and many other things that could be changed that would make this province a better place in which to live. But if I had the magic wand, I would create a province where the culture valued and supported parents and parenting.

Can you imagine waking up in the morning, turning on the radio, and hearing messages about the importance and value of parenting? Can you imagine a province where the challenges of parenting were openly spoken of and acknowledged in the media and where all the help and supports that parents needed were close at hand, a phone call away, and easily accessible? Can you imagine a province where it was considered acceptable and the norm for parents to seek help when they needed it, and not be judged for having done so? Can you imagine a province where a parent's effort was validated and where parents were made to feel a part of one large, supportive community?

At PSS, we *can* imagine all of that. In fact, that's our mission, our vision, our reason for going to work every day. At PSS, we are working with government, business, corporations, social service partners and private donors to make that ideal a reality. Come work with us; help us achieve our goal. Make our dream come true.

Take out a membership, adopt the 'Circle' in your community, become a volunteer facilitator or just call us and talk with us about how you or your business can help make our dream come true.

After all, this is not a contest. This is for real. ●

— Barry Corrin  
Executive Director

