

# Highlights of First Call Achievements

Spring 2001



The First Call Coalition does

- \* Public Education
- \* Community Mobilization
- \* Policy Advocacy

Over the past five years, the First Call Coalition has:

## 1. **First Call: the BC Child and Youth Coalition**

Built a network of 54 provincial/regional partners, contacts in 50 communities around BC, mobilizations in 20 communities, and a network of over 3000 community organizations and individuals.

## 2. **Spotlight on Children and Youth Campaign**

Developed and promoted the *Keys to Success* agenda for children and youth through the Spotlight on Children and Youth Campaign.

- \* Produced an analysis of research about what children and youth need for their health and well-being
- \* Produced “The Call to Action” and supporting brochures and posters
- \* Produced a summary of good practice policy examples
- \* Mobilized 20 communities in BC around the *Keys to Success*
- \* Provided supporting grants to 8 communities
- \* Gathered all mobilizing communities at the March 2000 symposium to increase skills and network.
- \* Presented at approximately one hundred workshops, conferences, and meetings to a wide range of groups
- \* Facilitated expert speakers travelling to communities around BC
- \* Co-produced the *Keys to Success* public education video

### **First Call Mobilizations**

First Call invited communities across BC to mobilize their communities to ensure that their children have the *Keys to Success*. 100 Mile House, Abbotsford, Armstrong, Chilliwack, Coquitlam, Duncan, Golden, Grand Forks, Kamloops, Kelowna, Port Alberni, Prince George, Salmon Arm, Smithers, Terrace, Vancouver, the Vancouver Aboriginal Council, Vernon, Victoria, and Williams Lake responded. They have worked on building strong community child & youth coalitions, doing public education, and contributing to provincial campaigns. Duncan is revitalizing their old child and youth committee and using the *Keys to Success* as their framework. A public health nurse is using the First Call materials to encourage small towns in the North West of BC to mobilize. Abbotsford produced a video to help do public education and shared it with other communities. Several communities invited Dr. Clyde Hertzman to speak to their significant stakeholder groups such as Health and School Boards, Chambers of Commerce, and Municipal Councils. Communities have worked on provincial campaigns on eliminating child poverty and promoting child, youth and family issues during elections.

3. **BC Campaign 2000** – each year since 1995 has:

- \* Collaborated with the National Campaign 2000
- \* Produced annual Report Cards on Child Poverty in BC
- \* Produced materials such as the Child Poverty Action Kit, Fact Sheets on Poverty, and collaborated with the BC Teachers' Fed'n on lesson plans on child poverty
- \* Encouraged communities across BC to join in the release of the Report Card and to implement local public education events. In 2000, 10 BC communities organized Stone Soups events.
- \* Held media conferences to release the Report Cards at the same time as the National Report Card was released in Ottawa
- \* Generated media coverage in print, radio, and TV
- \* Collaborated with producers to develop "Citizen Shame", a TV documentary about the developmental impacts of child poverty.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

In 1999, First Call encouraged communities across BC to join national efforts to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Federal all party resolution to eliminate child poverty in Canada. Abbotsford had over 200 people participate in a celebration and remembrance of the promise. In Duncan, the Mayor, personally, paid for a 50 foot banner that was put up over the highway. In the Lower Mainland, First Call sponsored the Shine a Light on Child Poverty Week. Sixteen events were organized by community groups (especially youth) around issues of poverty. First Call also organized a Wake Up Call with a downtown Vancouver Cathedral ringing bells and people standing on 3 major intersections with banners. The Vigil at Vancouver's Plaza of Nations brought 800 people together and included entertainment, speakers, food and children's activities. In 1999, forty-five thousand Child Poverty in BC Report Cards were distributed and there were 53 known media reports on the various Child Poverty Week events.

### **4. Federal and Provincial Elections**

- \* Produced overviews of child and youth election issues
- \* Sponsored All-Candidates meetings
- \* Obtained party policies on child and youth issues

### **2000/2001 Elections**

For both provincial and federal elections, First Call has provided communities with tools to ask questions and hold events. First Call produced on our web site the "How to Lobby Kit" with background, organizing and media information. Also available is an Election Survey to collect party positions on child and youth issues and to use as a tool to question candidates. First Call co-sponsored a well attended Federal All-Candidates Meeting in Vancouver on child and youth issues.

5. **Media** – in addition to the campaigns have:

- \* Generated and responded to numerous media requests for interviews and information, including from the ethnic media.
- \* Developed the media Response Team – a group of volunteers who write letters to the editor in response to child and youth issues.

6. **Policy Impacts**

- \* Collaborated with partners across Canada to support the National Children's Agenda
- \* Produced the First Call Position Paper on Early Childhood Development which was accepted by the Provincial Government.
- \* Meetings with ministers and party caucuses to promote healthy child and youth policies
- \* Worked with partners across Canada to encourage the federal government to make the 2000 budget a children's budget. First Call partners sent almost half of all the postcards sent to Paul Martin in the national campaign.

In May 2000, First Call met with the five provincial Ministers and their staff to present the First Call Position paper on Early Childhood Development. In July 2000, we presented to Gordon Campbell and the Liberal Caucus committee on Children. Both meetings were very positive. Sharon Manson-Singer, Deputy Minister of the Ministry for Children and Families, announced at the December 12, 2000, First Call Coalition meeting that the provincial government has accepted the First Call position paper on Early Childhood Development to guide them in the allocation of their Federal National Children's Agenda funding.

7. **VanCity Savings Credit Union Employees partnership**

- \* 450,000 appeals sent to all VanCity personal and business accounts
- \* display of First Call posters and brochures for two weeks at all VanCity branches
- \* presentations to the staff in 20 VanCity branches
- \* VanCity fundraising over 18 months to support First Call community mobilization in the Lower Mainland and work on child poverty issues.

8. **Communications**

- \* First Call web site – includes up to date information about First Call and invites visitors to take action. All First Call provincial and regional partners are listed with links to their web sites.
- \* Newsletter – produce and mail a newsletter to our 3800 contacts.
- \* Articles on child and youth issues are sent monthly to First Call provincial partners for inclusion in their newsletters.

## 9. Youth Involvement

- \* Youth have been active in planning, organizing and participating in major First Call events such as the Shine a Light on Child Poverty Week, the provincial symposium, and Dispelling the Myths: Funding the Child, Youth and Family Sector forum.

10. **First Call Endowment Fund** – has been set up in the Vancouver Foundation

Many thanks to our major funders: the Vancouver Foundation, BC's Children's Hospital Foundation, Health Canada, VanCity, the Office of the Child, Youth and Family Advocate, and the National Crime Prevention Centre.

## Some of our Future Plans

In addition to continuing to support the major initiatives noted above:

- \* Completing a Discussion Kit to complement the *Keys to Success* video and building a Speakers Bureau. Volunteers will be trained to present to a range of groups.
- \* Expanding an effective media strategy to get child and youth issues covered in the media
- \* Special outreach to the Youth, Aboriginal, Chinese, and Indo-Canadian communities
- \* Developing and promoting clear policy statements around each of the *Keys to Success*
- \* Encouraging community mobilizations, especially in the Lower Mainland.

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