

Highlights of First Call Achievements

Fall 2002



The First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition

- ◆ Public Education & the Dissemination of Research
- ◆ Community Mobilization
- ◆ Policy Advocacy
- ◆ Increasing Youth Involvement in Decision -Making

The First Call Coalition now includes over 60 provincial/regional partners, contacts in 50 communities around BC, mobilizations in 25 communities, and a network of over 3500 community organizations and individuals. All are working to increase the well being of BC's children and families by committing to **The Four Keys to Success:**

- ◆ A strong commitment to Early Childhood Development
- ◆ Support in transitions from childhood to youth and adulthood
- ◆ Increased economic equality
- ◆ Safe and caring communities

In the past 5 years First Call:

Created and Sustained the Spotlight on Children and Youth Campaign.

- ◆ Developed the Keys to Success Speakers Training Kit
- ◆ Conducted 3 Speakers Training sessions attended by over 70 people.
- ◆ Produced and distributed various direct mail advocacy tools
- ◆ Analysed research about what children and youth need for their health and well-being
- ◆ Developed "The Call to Action" and supporting brochures and posters
- ◆ Distributed a summary of good practice policy examples
- ◆ Mobilized 25 communities in BC around the *Keys to Success*
- ◆ Funded with supporting grants, 8 mobilizing communities
- ◆ Gathered all mobilizing communities at the March 2000 symposium to increase skills and network.
- ◆ Presented at well over one hundred workshops, conferences, and meetings both locally and nationally to a wide range of groups
- ◆ Facilitated expert speakers travelling to communities around BC
- ◆ Co-produced the *Keys to Success* public education video

Developed Communication Tools useful for Public Education and Advocacy Work

- ◆ First Call Web site which contains research papers, analysis of public policy, First Call policy papers, sample letters to politicians and editors, and links to our partners, other organizations and additional resources.
- ◆ Weekly e-mail and/or fax updates of partner organization events and news
- ◆ Articles on child and youth issues sent to partners for inclusion in their newsletters
- ◆ The First Call Newsletter published monthly and distributed to over 3500 contacts

First Call Mobilizations

First Call invited communities across BC to mobilize their communities to ensure that their children have the *Keys to Success*. 26 communities responded (for detailed list please see website: www.firstcallbc.org). Communities work to build strong local child & youth coalitions, promote public education, and contribute to provincial awareness campaigns. Examples of their work include: Duncan is revitalizing their old child and youth committee and uses 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. Numerous 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. Coalition building in Fraser North led to it becoming one of the national pilot sites for the Understanding the Early Years Community Mapping Project

Represented BC in Campaign 2000 (a national initiative):

- ◆ Collaborates with the National Campaign 2000
- ◆ Produces annual Report Cards on Child Poverty in BC
- ◆ Produces materials around Child and Family Poverty including: Action Kit, Fact Sheets and, with the BC Teachers' Federation, lesson plans
- ◆ Encourages communities across BC to join in the release of the Report Card and to implement local public education events such as Stone Soups and the hosting of the poverty awareness photo display "Photo Sensitive"
- ◆ Holds media conferences to release the BC Report Card coinciding with the National Report Card release in Ottawa
- ◆ Generates media coverage in print, radio, and TV
- ◆ Collaborated with producers to develop "Citizen Shame", a one hour TV documentary about the developmental impacts of child poverty.

10th Anniversary of the Federal All-Party Resolution to Eliminate Child Poverty in Canada

In 1999, First Call encouraged communities across BC to join national efforts to mark the 10th 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 event with 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.

Promotes the participation in Federal, Provincial and Municipal Elections by:

- ◆ Producing and distributing overviews of child and youth election issues.
- ◆ Sponsored All-Candidates meetings in various ridings.
- ◆ Obtaining and distributing party policies on child and youth issues.

Elections

For provincial, federal and upcoming municipal elections, First Call provides communities with tools to educate candidates and the public, organize events, and generate discussion on and media coverage of issues related to children and youth. A “How to Lobby Kit”, recent “Essential Facts for Candidates”, an “Election Survey” to be used to collect party/candidate positions on child and youth issues, “Speaking Out; A Guide to Making Your Voice Heard”, and a “Commitment to Action” form for individual candidates. First Call has also co-sponsored All-Candidates Meetings in the Vancouver area on child and youth issues.

Impacts Government Policy Decisions by:

- ◆ Collaborating with partners across Canada to support the Government’s National Children’s Agenda
- ◆ Facilitating, participating and or promoting roundtables, conferences and public meetings regarding various child and youth issues.
- ◆ Producing the First Call Position Paper on Early Childhood Development, which was accepted by the previous Provincial Government.
- ◆ Meeting with ministers and party caucuses to promote healthy child and youth policies
- ◆ Working 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 received by then finance Minister Paul Martin in the national postcard campaign.

Influencing Government Policy

Sharon Mason Singer, then Deputy Minister of the Ministry for Children and Families, announced December 12, 2000, that the NDP provincial government had accepted the First Call position paper on Early Childhood Development to guide them in the allocation of their Federal National Children’s Agenda funding. The government change in May 2001 and a significant shift in policy has since resulted a redoubling of our efforts to meet and educate the government on child and youth issues.

Increased Media attention to the issue of children and youth

- ◆ Generating and responded to innumerable media requests for interviews and information, including requests from national, regional and ethnic media.
- ◆ Preparing and distributing “backgrounders” on the impacts of provincial government policies. Particularly during the recent changeover in government.
- ◆ Supporting volunteers as they contribute articles to newspapers and other publications.

Partnered with VanCity Savings Credit Union Employees during 2000 and 2001

- ◆ Sent 450,000 appeals to VanCity personal and business accounts
- ◆ Displayed First Call materials at all VanCity branches
- ◆ Made presentations to the staff in 20 VanCity branches
- ◆ Raised over \$160,000 in support of First Call community mobilizations in the Lower Mainland, and other work on child poverty issues.

Facilitated 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.
- ◆ Youth organizations are represented at and regularly contribute to monthly First Call Coalition meetings

Some of our Future Plans

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

- ◆ Expanding our Speakers Bureau -volunteers trained to present to a range of groups.
- ◆ Augmenting our media strategy to get child and youth issues covered in the media
- ◆ Special outreach to the Youth, Aboriginal, Chinese, Indo-Canadian and various Faith Communities
- ◆ Developing and promoting clear policy statements around each of the *Keys to Success*
- ◆ Supporting community mobilizations around B.C.

Many thanks to our major funders:

The Vancouver Foundation,
Health Canada,
The Office of the Child, Youth and
Family Advocate,

BC’s Children’s Hospital Foundation,
United Way of the Lower Mainland,
The National Crime Prevention Centre
VanCity

First Call: the BC Child and Youth Coalition

L408-4480 Oak Street, Vancouver V5N 3V4

Phone: (604) 875-3629/1-800-307-1212

Fax: (604) 875-3569

E-mail: info@firstcallbc.org

Web Site: <http://www.firstcallbc.org>