

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As we prepare for a change in our routines and the school year comes to a close, this is an opportune time to reflect on the importance and value of parent involvement and leadership in public education. According to the *Canadian Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP)* 45% of British Columbia residents aged 15 and over (1.6 million people) volunteered in 2004. Each volunteer contributed an average of 199 hours, for a total of 315 million hours or the equivalent of approximately 164,000 full-time jobs. Parents working in PACs and DPACs are certainly part of this impressive contribution. They are often balancing child care, full-time jobs, family obligations and single parenting. The gift of time is something we at BCCPAC celebrate and honour. It's a remarkable gift that is building a better future for all British Columbians.

In this issue we are reprinting several relevant and "best of" articles from our archive of newsletters. We hope our membership will find revisiting this information useful. In this issue we also celebrate all volunteers by paying tribute to Elsie Lorimer on our cover. Mrs. Lorimer was a pioneer. She was the visionary who established the very first Parent-Teacher Association in 1915. In the last 95 years the rights, work, roles and responsibilities of parents have evolved. We've come a long way and the journey continues!

BCCPAC has grown, changed and experienced many successes over the past year. Funding cuts to operational and project grants saw BCCPAC restructure the office, utilize electronic communications and refocus on the needs of our members and parents. BCCPAC was not alone in these funding cuts, our member PACs and DPACs also saw their gaming grants cut in half. BCCPAC, PACs and DPACs united together in a letter writing campaign to bring awareness to the value of PAC spending in our schools. This resulted in the reinstatement of gaming funds to the 2008/09 level for the 2010/11 school year.

Collaboration has been an important goal this year as BCCPAC has worked with our education partners to strengthen relationships. In the fall, BCCPAC, along with our educational partners, co-wrote the Minister of Education to oppose the funding cuts being felt throughout the system. In November we worked collaboratively with the BC Teachers Federation (BCTF) to provide travel funding options for additional members to attend our fall conference. The BCCPAC Board of Directors has also met and dialogued with the BC School Trustees Association (BCSTA) on the value of parents and PACs in our school system which we hope is the beginning of the cultural change needed for the future.

Despite the challenges, our members remain our primary focus by supporting them through resources and information. BCCPAC developed the *Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Toolkit for Parents* providing a factual unbiased look at assessment. This toolkit was widely accepted and adopted by PACs, DPACs and administrators around the province. Expect additional resources to be revised and developed as we continue to provide support for members. The first two modules (of many) in the *Parent Leadership Series* have been posted to our website for easy access.

The 2010-2011 membership year (September 1 – August 31) is fast approaching. We are asking our current volunteers to help us become even more inclusive. It's a goal worthy of Elsie Lorimer to get every PAC and DPAC in the province to join us. We are looking to existing volunteers to keep up their good work by empowering others in their communities to join PACs and DPACs.

Our Spring Conference and AGM was pivotal in steering our organization. Based on consensus and collaboration and with the assistance, support, patience and hard work of staff, Board colleagues and other volunteers we aspire to keep moving forward. We need fresh strategies to face the challenges of a volunteer, membership based organization in the 21st century. *Building the Future: Children First*, was the theme of this conference and that is exactly what we, as volunteers have been doing since Mrs. Lorimer recorded the first minutes of a meeting in 1915.

Every school year by working together, we share our collective empowerment and enrich the lives of parents and children in British Columbia. Parents finding their voices, mentoring others to become involved and making a difference set us apart as a valuable group of volunteers across British Columbia. Elsie would no doubt be proud of each and every one of you.

Enjoy your summer and keep in touch.



BCCPAC President & CEO