

Help kids be kids

BY THERESA MCMANUS, THE RECORD JULY 14, 2010

The Elizabeth Fry Association of Vancouver is ensuring that children are able to experience some summer fun.

The association is introducing free summer day camps as part of its program to support the unique needs of children who have parents involved in the justice system. Beginning July 12, the association is hosting 96 children aged six to nine in six weeklong camps.

"When parents commit crimes, children pay a price," said executive director Shawn Bayes in a press release. "They lose access to their parent, and when that parent is the mother, they often lose their sole caregiver, their home, their school and their friends. One in three will themselves commit a crime. We can help change that by creating supported opportunities for normalcy. And what's more normal than summer camp?"

Four camp leaders will guide 16 children each week in typical camp experiences such as sports activities and outings to a Vancouver Canadians baseball game, Maplewood Farm and tea at the Hotel Vancouver. Campers will also learn vital coping, leadership and team-building skills.

"We didn't want cost to be a barrier, so EFry Summer Day Camp is free to participants and lunch is provided," Bayes said. "We hope to recover some of the \$250 per child operational costs through private sector donations."

Nike Canada and the Forani Group are supporting the camp through donations of sports equipment. Space is still available, so interested parents or caregivers can call 604-520-1166 for registration details.

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Great Vancouver provides support services to women, girls and children at risk of involvement, involved in or affected by the justice system. Its programs are intended to break the cycle of poverty, addiction, mental illness, homelessness and crime.

MYSTERY AT HERITAGE GRILL

The Heritage Grill is adding a new form of entertainment to its menu.

Already home to musical acts and drag show nights, Heritage Grill owner Paul Minhas and chef Ron Wiginton have joined forces with mystery producer Trevor Jenkins to stage the Heritage Grill's first participatory mystery show. The event will include a four-course meal and live dinner theatre.

A press release notes that professional actors will perform scripted lines and also interact with the audience.

The event also includes an opportunity for participants to stand up and tell their best joke, with the winner (selected by applause) receiving a prize.

The mystery theatre production is taking place on Sunday, July 25 and

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costs \$50 per person (alcohol not included). For information and reservations, call 604-759-0819.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

The Shadow and Dreams Theatre Company is performing Shakespeare's Twelfth Night over several weekends this summer.

The theatre company invites people to bring a picnic and relax in the park for the shows. Performances of Twelfth Night take place on: Saturday, July 17; Sunday, July 18; Saturday, July 24; Sunday, July 25; Saturday, July 31; and Sunday, Aug. 1.

All shows start at 2 p.m. in the Queen's Park bandshell.

ROTARIAN HELPED THE CITY

A longtime member of the Rotary Club of New Westminster passed away July 6 at Peace Arch Hospital in White Rock.

Don McKenzie, a member of the club since 1956, is a past president of the club and a past district governor. The former Royal City resident attended elementary and secondary school in New Westminster and ran a business based in the city.

McKenzie was previously recognized by the Rotary Club of New Westminster for having had 50 years of perfect attendance at Rotary meetings.

A BIG LITTLE IDEA IS GROWING

The Biggest Little Garden project may have originated in New Westminster, but it continues to attract interest around the world.

Fraserside Community Service launched the program in May 2007, with a plan to create eight to 10 gardens in the first year. Instead, 54 of the three-tiered garden containers were distributed in the inaugural year.

The free program provides the means for New Westminster residents living in apartments or townhouses to have access to home grown, fresh vegetables. Fraserside has received interest in the program from places around the world, and some nearby communities are now implementing the program.

"We have franchised this program," said Diane Cairns, director of Fraserside's Living Well programs. "Burnaby is looking at getting it next year."

In New Westminster, Fraserside distributed about 50 planters in each of the first two years and 70 in each of years three and four. Others are being sold for \$175 to help fund the program.

"We have sold many," Cairns said. "There are others in New Westminster as well."

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