

# MCSS eNews

## Quarterly Newsletter Winter 2014 - #1

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### VOLUNTEERS MAKE CHRISTMAS BUREAU SPECIAL



#### SETTLEMENT NOTES

*"If you know of someone new to Canada, encourage them to visit MCSS."*

#### QUARTERLY TIP

According to Stats Canada, one new immigrant settles in Mission every three days. By offering them programs that reflect their needs – from banking and finding a place to live – we make our community more welcoming.

MCSS team of volunteers made festive season special for more than 700 individuals and families.

### Message from executive director Sanjay Gulati: "Staying true to our mission"

At MCSS we all are committed to working together to stay true to our Mission of helping people, changing lives and building community. To that end I facilitated a number of workshops with staff to share and discuss the MCSS values. We held the last of three staff workshops at Rivendell second stage housing. We encouraged story sharing and conversation with staff and management present.

Similar meetings with staff were held at our Second Avenue office and at Haven in the Hollow Emergency Shelter. The meetings went very well with the staff participating and sharing their stories and linking them to our values. It is great to see that our staff teams are beginning to connect with the organization. Wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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# EARLY YEARS MOVES TO WINDEBANK SCHOOL

The MCSS Early Years Program moves to Windebank Elementary School from Family Place on James Street and opens on Monday, Jan. 12.

Hope said this move comes as part of a pilot project that was received from provincial government (through an application submitted by the Early Childhood Committee members) to offer families services that would help meet their needs in one, easily accessible location.

“Mission was chosen as one of only five sites in B.C. We will have three classrooms for our Child Care Resource and Referral Program (CCRR), the Family Place Drop-in Program, Nobody’s Perfect Parenting Program and the Community Action Program for Children program (CAPC),” said supervisor Laura Hope.

Other programs at this location will be the Aboriginal Family Place, Strong Start and Mission Early Literacy (Literacy in Motion).

“We will be hosting a Grand Opening on Feb. 18 so we hope you can come join us as we celebrate! “



## TEACHING COOKING, NUTRITION AT RIVENDELL

Community Kitchens came into Rivendell and facilitated a six-week cooking program for our residents. Although it was designed to be program that people commit themselves to, MCSS modified it to drop-in format to better accommodate Rivendell residents and their needs. The program not only teaches people how to cook nutritious meals, but also engaged residents in discussions about nutrition and how to reach nutritional goals on a tight budget. Each session consisted of a main course, dessert and a beverage. The residents break off into teams and prepare whichever part of the meal appealed to them the most. At the end of the sessions, each resident received a package with all of the recipes that they learned to make over the course of the six weeks.

On average, seven people attend each cooking session. Men represented 56% of the participants - a pleasant surprise. Verbal feedback received from the participants was positive and the level of engagement that was witnessed demonstrated they were enjoying the program.

## BETTER AT HOME PROGRAM GETS A SECOND YEAR

MCSS is pleased to announce it has received a contract for a second year for the Better At Home program which began Oct. 1.

Laura Hope, program supervisor, said the program offers transportation, light housekeeping services and friendly visits for qualified seniors in Mission.

“It’s a very busy program with more than 100 seniors receiving services,” Hope said.

## DELICIOUS MEALS, BUSY INCOME TAX SEASON

Another program offered by MCSS is Meals on Wheels which provides hot meals three days a week. The meals are delivered to seniors’ homes by dedicated volunteers.

“We recently changed service providers, and reports are the meals are delicious so we expect this program to grow even bigger over the coming months,” said supervisor Laura Hope.

The Seniors Connections is as busy as ever, offering support to seniors with a variety of services and will soon be gearing up for a bustling tax season.

“To thank our dedicated volunteers, who we would not be able to offer these amazing programs without their support held a Christmas Tea at MCSS on Dec. 11.”

**We are pleased to introduce Darlene Straarup, our new Manager Program and Services. She joined the MCSS team on Nov. 12.**

**Life Skills Program is part of Mission Community Services youth services program. Twelve-week program covers a range of topics from managing money and emotions to nutrition and drug education. Story below by Willis Otanga, MCSS youth support worker.**



**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: 12-week session teaches youth variety of important life skills**

The Life Skills Program is part of the MCSS youth services program. It serves youth who are either on a Youth Agreement (fondly known as YAG) or are working toward a YAG.

All youth working toward getting on a YAG are expected to attend and complete the program which is run in collaboration with Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) guardianship team.

There is always representation from both MCFD and MCSS. The program involves guest speakers from the community and is also intentional in terms of connecting Youth with relevant community resources.

Referrals to the life skills program come from MCFD and Aboriginal services.

The MCSS Youth Service life skills program is a 12 week program and covers the following topics:

1. **Money Matters** (Budgeting, banking, saving, credit information, taxes, and goal setting).
2. **Housing** (How to find an apartment, decoding classified ads, tenant rights, expectations of youth in care, rights of youth in care, etc.)
3. **Employment skills** ( Resume building, applying for employment, employment etiquette, maintaining a job, employee rights, and local employment resources)
4. **Healthy Boundaries.**
5. **Sexual Health** (Abstinence, birth control, STI's, local clinic resources)
6. **Managing emotions** ( Dealing with stress, anger, anxiety, conflict resolution, communication skills, depression, process of applying for disability, local resources)
7. **Drug and Alcohol education.**
8. **Internet Safety.**
9. **Food/Nutrition** (Tour to the grocery store, budgeting exercises, creative healthy hands on cooking tips, kitchen safety, etc.)

**RIVENDELL:  
For those  
looking for  
a fresh start**

What has been going on at Rivendell second stage housing (by the numbers):

Housed residents ..... 318  
Programs facilitated in house ..... 317  
Graduated from Rivendell to independent living ..... 21

Referrals to other agencies ..... 347  
Some examples of support we give at Rivendell: Connecting with family, building resumes and cover letter, listening, getting bus passes, helping them connect with resources out in the community and much more.

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## Projects, events keep MCSS connected: Stone Soup to Festival of Lights

MCSS participated in a number of community projects over the past several months, including:

**MY House project** – We are exploring a plan to accommodate a health unit and disability access to the building and rooms. Renovation work is continuing with a number of volunteers participating in the project.

**Stone Soup** – A brainstorming session was organized by the District of Mission and Bootstrap Consulting on October 30 at All Saints Church. A number of organizations were represented at the event. The Mayor and a number of counsellors were present along with local citizens running for public office. This was a “stock take” workshop to determine what we have and how to move forward with one voice. Summary notes and key points were presented to Mission council on Nov. 17.

**Festival of Lights** – This was a very successful event. It is estimated that 1000 people attended the event. Feedback from our sponsors, participants and community in general has been very positive. All the changes we brought into the program were well received and connected a variety of other cultures into the event though the South Asian community was well represented as expected.



Ingram family donated tree at Rivendell captures festive spirit.

**All Candidates Meeting** – This was another successful event attended by over 300 residents. Questions were directed to all the candidates with a focus on social impact in Mission. Feedback received from one and all was very positive as we were able to involve the audience through their questions.

**Pulling Together Retreat** – It was the first time this retreat, which is an annual event was completely organized and run by the Youth. Four workshops were conducted – Youth co, LGBTQ, Children Rights and Learning Styles (VARK). There were two sessions where questions were asked to a group of youth – school mergers, what would youth like to see in Mission, how do they want to be treated, MY House etc.

– Sanjay Gulati

Your opinion matters. Let us know how we are doing or how we can improve at Mission Community Services Society. Email us at [info@missioncommunityservices.com](mailto:info@missioncommunityservices.com)