



Boys & Girls Club Services  
of Greater Victoria

For Immediate Release

## **Victoria ..... April 3, 2007 – Trauma – The Root of Many Behavioural Problems**

Emotional trauma can result from one extreme and deeply felt experience, from a series of such experiences, or from a series of low-intensity events when we are especially vulnerable. You get punched by your father, raped by your uncle, or hit by a car – these are examples of experiences that create emotional trauma. A single brief exposure to an overwhelming event can throw a normally functioning individual into an abyss of emotional and physical suffering.

Youth who are struggling with the aftermath of trauma do so through many avenues - violent behaviour, suicide, depression, anxiety, self-destructive behaviours, and substance abuse. While research into trauma, its effects, and methods of treatment has only been undertaken seriously in the last 20 years, evidence is clear that healing cannot begin until the individual feels safe. Unbearable experiences become bearable when you are feeling safe and have supportive people around you.

For over 20 years Boys & Girls Club Services, in partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Vancouver Island Health Authority, have been working with people in our community to provide a safe place for thousands of youth to come home to. Our Care families are a fundamental part of the team that provides support and guidance to adolescents who need help in healing and moving forward. These are people who care about kids, who show respect and compassion, who provide a sense of belonging, who offer encouragement and recognition, and always another chance.

Regardless of what may be happening in a youth's life or how chaotic it may appear, youth will often return to their Care Home because they feel safe there. For this is their safe haven, a place where they are not judged, and a respite from the outside world. And it is a connection they hang on to for years after they have healed and moved on.

“My husband and I provided a “Care” home for many years and have had over 70 youth become part of our family. We were the “pilot project” for Supportive Recovery and enjoyed that for 3 years before becoming the “pilot project” for detox. There are so many youth that need these services desperately. This is a voluntary program, so the youth know they are free to leave at any given time. No one is forcing them to be here, they are doing this because they want to. That in itself is a huge step for these youth. It has been the most rewarding experience we've ever had and we have never looked back with any regrets,” said Janet Guthrie.

Care Homes, for youth ages 13 to 18, are offered through seven programs ranging from short-term acute detox, to longer-term residential support for youth. Care Families are contracted with a tax free retainer and a per diem fee to provide shelter, support, food, transportation and recreational activities. They have access to a trained Support Worker with 24 hours emergency support. Currently there are 36 Care Homes contracted through the community but there is a desperate need to find additional homes.

“We have kids who are asking for help, knowing that without the stability of a home or the support of our program they won't be able to get off their current path. The individuals involved in the Care Homes are incredible - they get professional support and training but ultimately they are the ones that make a real difference in the lives of the youth. At the end of the day it is the



Boys & Girls Club Services  
of Greater Victoria

Care Homes that give youth the courage to make changes in their lives.” Says Ellie James, Youth Care Home Program Manager.

The high need for quality care homes is reflected in the continuous referrals from the community. These are young people wanting to make a change in their lives -- teens trying to manage their substance abuse, looking to regain their self-worth and value, and empower themselves to set healthy goals. Youth who want to find an alternative life to the one that they are living.

Boys & Girls Clubs are seeking adults who have the patience, the compassion and the desire to make a difference. As part of a team, Care Homes offer the stability and support that teens need in order to make changes. This is a journey that transforms lives, for both the youth and those who share their lives. For more information about becoming a Care Home please contact Boys & Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria 250.384.9133.

### **About Boys & Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria**

Boys & Girls Club Services has been helping children, youth and their families in Greater Victoria since 1960. Started as a program to keep young boys off the streets, the organization has expanded to offer programs ranging from after-school and evening programming to youth leadership programs, summer camp, programs for young moms, parent support and a wide range of programs for youth at risk. There are currently over 100 staff that are employed by Boys & Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria. To learn more, visit [www.bgcvic.org](http://www.bgcvic.org).

-30-

#### Media Contact

Ellie James  
Manager, Care Home Programs  
Boys & Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria  
250.384.9133  
[ejames@bgcvic.org](mailto:ejames@bgcvic.org)

or

Kate Mansell  
Director of Development  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Victoria Foundation  
250.384.9133 or 250.478.3872  
[kmansell@bgcvic.org](mailto:kmansell@bgcvic.org)  
[www.bgcvic.org](http://www.bgcvic.org)