

YOUNG PARENTS SUPPORT NETWORK

SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER

*What's
Collective
Impact?*

(See page 5)

JACQUELIN GREEN: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!

Our fabulous staff team!

Jessica
Liebster MSW,
Family
Support

Anna Copley
BA, Child
Development

Jacquelin
Green MA,
Executive
Director



Kim Toombs MA,
Family Support

Margo
d'Archangelo BA,
(hoping to have
her back real
soon!)

Petra Chambers-
Sinclair MA,
Innovation &
Development

(That's Robin,
Hannah & Robert
at the back! Find
them on page 4).

If you've been following the changes in leadership over here at Young Parents Support Network, you might be wondering what's up. Find out on page 2...

LEADERSHIP AT YOUNG PARENTS SUPPORT NETWORK



We've always operated with a team leadership approach, so recent changes in leadership amongst members of our leadership team have resulted in minimal ripples inside our organization.

But we recognize there might be some questions so we thought we'd take the opportunity to tell the story of YPSN's leadership over the past few years...

In September 2012, Margo d'Archangelo our long-time program coordinator, took over the role of Executive Director from Petra Chambers-Sinclair, who wanted to turn some of her attention to consulting and research. Petra remained with us in a new role as Innovation & Development Coordinator.

This spring, Margo took a leave to attend to family matters and has since determined she might be needed elsewhere in the long term. The Board of Directors has unanimously strong-armed (just kidding) endorsed Jacquelin Green as Young Parents Support Network's new Executive Director.

Jacquelin has been central to Young Parents Support Network's success for the 7 years she has been with our organization. Before Jacquelin worked with us she worked for Together Against Poverty Society and served as the Executive Director of Central Alberta AIDS Network. She will continue to guide the organization in her new role, and we hope that Margo will return to our staff team as soon as she can!

So no, we're not playing hot potato with the Executive Director role. At least not anymore!

Please join us in welcoming Jacquelin into her new official capacity. We know we're in very good hands.

Speaking of Leadership...

Chelsea Kelly, Director of the Board, co-led a research project, along with practicum student, Nicole Hunt, & staff member Petra Chambers-Sinclair into *Indigenous Women's Leadership* at Young Parents Support Network.

We look forward to sharing some of our learning soon~.



Very good hands...



SUMMER HOURS

Office hours will remain **9am-noon Monday-Thursday** until June 26th (all other times by appointment).

In July & August we will be available by appointment.

Call us! 250.384.0552

Or e-mail:
familysupport@ypsn.ca

SUMMER Picnics

Join us this summer for picnics in our very favorite park...

BanFIELD!

July 23rd & August 13th
~11am-12:30pm~

Food & family fun

LOOK FOR THE BALLOONS!

THANK YOU!

To Harbourside Rotary for their recent \$5,000 donation to support our work with young dads.

To Island Savings Credit Union for their recent donation of \$1,000 for food for hungry families

To the Victoria Firefighters for their recent donation of \$500

To the United Way of Greater Victoria, the Victoria Foundation, the Vancouver Foundation, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Sara Spencer Foundation, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Gaming Commission and our generous individual donors.



inFANT massage

may 23~JUNE 13

1-2:30pm



For mums &/or dads under 30 with babes 0-5 months
RSVP: 250.384.0552 or familysupport@ypsn.ca



THE STiCK PEOPLE in OUR FRONT PAGE PHOTO ARE ALSO IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF OUR STAFF TEAM!



ROBiN
FamiLY SUPPORT



Hannah
Child Development



Robert
Child Development

Thank you to Rosemary & Nedjo at **Chocolate Lily** *Web Tools for Non-profits* for assisting us in updating our website & switching webhosts. For non-profit web services we highly recommend:

<http://chocolatelilyweb.ca/>



Our Annual General Meeting

June 16th 5-7:30 pm

(More info on page 8!)

The end of our free store...

For the past 5 years we have operated a busy volunteer-run free store full of good-quality infant, children & maternity clothes donated by community members & consignment stores.

Hundreds of young parents have clothed their children at our free store, but recently we've had to close it due to the cost of insurance.

Thank you to everyone who has donated to our free store over the years. Your used clothing has made a huge difference to so many families!



WHAT IS COLLECTIVE IMPACT?

By Petra Chambers-Sinclair

I'm enormously excited about the new Collective Impact initiative in Victoria.

But some people are less than rapt.

In fact, a number of non-profit people just rolled their eyes when I mentioned it, and said:

"It's the new flavour of the year for funders."

"Just more hoops we have to jump through."

"Same shit, different shovel."

Or a deep, poignant *"Sigh..."*.

But no! (I said), this is different. This stuff is paradigm-altering.

Really!

It is a different shovel.

A shovel we might not even recognize, and it will (by necessity) require the coordinated commitment of funders over years, or decades, so it *can't* just be the 'flavour of the year' (like youth leadership, early childhood development, mental health or homelessness have been).

In fact, Collective Impact will *specifically* address the disheartening cycle that pits non-profits against each other in an eternal quest for increasingly scarce resources that are (seemingly randomly) earmarked for whatever new priority has captured the imaginations of funders *this year*.

In fact, it could eliminate the need to shoehorn effective programs into continually evolving funding parameters in an attempt to secure resources to provide vital services (and associated skillsets), altogether.

And while we're on the subject, *why do we keep cycling through funding priorities like a bunch of serial monogamists?*

- Because we are working with a dated intervention model based on a mechanistic view of the world;
- Because we are working with highly adaptive 'wicked problems' that are resistant to intervention;
- Because we are continually attempting to find the highest leverage problems in hopes that we can then identify the most efficacious solutions to our wicked problems.

Our intentions are good. Our outcomes aren't.

Collective impact offers an alternative.

A different shovel.

In a nutshell, Collective Impact offers a structure to leverage the principles of self-organization and complexity in service of large-scale, long-term system transformation.

In the current model, each non-profit seeks to redress whatever entrenched social problems are within its purview, while obsessively wooing individual donors and funders to ensure they can continue to do so. Individual donors and funders attempt to sift through the maze-like array of societies (some of whom are much better at wooing, but not always better at redressing) to determine which are likely to offer the most change per dollar.

In their 2011 paper *Collective Impact*, John Kania and Mark Kramer suggest that "it is no longer enough to fund an innovative solution created by a single non-profit or to build that organization's capacity. Instead, funders must help create and sustain the collective processes, measurement reporting systems, and community leadership that enables cross-sector coalitions to arise and thrive".

Collective Impact is not just about layering collaboration onto the existing model.

"Everywhere in the new sciences, in living systems theory, quantum physics, chaos and complexity theory, we observe life's dependence on participation. All life participates in the creation of itself"

~Margaret Wheatley

It identifies large-scale community priorities and mobilizes community members from all sectors: non-profit, government, business, First Nations, health and education in a coordinated effort to effect *significant* social change. The model includes basic structures, including one or more ‘backbone organizations’ for coordination; and shared measurement to ensure that efforts are based on research, including rapid local feedback.

“Like all complex natural systems, human institutions and societies function best when they are spontaneous expressions of the freely chosen activities of their interrelated members.”

~Ervin Laszlo

Organizations are still free pursue their missions, and are encouraged to self-organize (Collective Impact is not the Borg: it is not seeking to assimilate), but activities are nonetheless aligned within an all-sector community-wide initiative. Information regularly flows from organizations into the collective to inform the emergent process.

It is an emergent process.

In their 2013 paper *Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity*, Kania & Kramer write “The processes and results from collective impact are emergent rather than predetermined, the necessary resources and innovations often already exist but have not yet been recognized, learning is continuous, and adaptation happens simultaneously among many different organizations”.

It’s about using existing resources, some of them currently invisible, in new ways.

Kania & Kramer (2013) explain: “The rules for interaction from collective impact create an alignment within complex relationships and sets of activities which, when combined with shared intentionality, causes previously invisible solutions and resources to emerge”.

“In the world of self-organizations all the ‘heavy lifting’ of systems design and implementation is taken care of by the system itself”

~Harrison Owen

We’ve worked with self-organization at Young Parents Support Network for some time, and the conclusion we have come to is that when a system (or an initiative) wants to evolve, it becomes an active agent in the process. It might sound naïve and idealistic to say that invisible resources are just lying around untapped, when there are so many intelligent people seeking them on a daily basis. Our experience has been that one of the strongest

indicators of a system that wants to self-organize *is the appearance of unexpected allies and resources.*

Watch for them!

Collective Impact is currently being used at local and international scales to improve health outcomes, address food security issues, and vitalize communities. It is appropriate for any large-scale initiative that is a priority for a given community.

It's in its infancy in Victoria. So much so that I don't even know who the contact person for the initiative might be.

But, as I mentioned earlier, I'm *enormously* excited.

Watch for it!

Notice of Annual General Meeting

All young parents welcome...

June 16th 5-7:30 pm

2541 Empire Street

Join us for:

- ***Pizza 5pm @ Wesley Park (one block away~ off Wesley Place)***
- ***Childcare & Annual General Meeting 6pm***
- ***Cake 7pm***

RSVP: 250.384.0552