

# YOUNG PARENTS SUPPORT NETWORK

## Fall 2013 Newsletter

### **Programs starting this fall:**

- Future Planning & Wellness
- Parenting Toolbox
- Parent Tot Wellness Spot

**Ongoing:** Monday morning drop-in

More information inside~

### **THIS ISSUE:**

Office Hours

Fall Programs

Our Social  
Enterprise  
Business

Our Funders

Organizations as  
Natural Systems  
~an article from  
the YPSN blog

Prenatal to  
Postsecondary  
Collective Impact  
initiative

**WE ALWAYS PROVIDE...**

Snacks, Bus tickets, and Childcare and of course, our programs are always free.



**OFFICE  
HOURS**

*Monday-  
Thursday  
9am -noon*

# *Fall programs*

Join us for **Monday Drop-in** every Monday (except statutory holidays) 10am-noon. For parents & children. Healthy food & bus tickets.

Our **Future Planning & Wellness Program** starts this month. Includes weekly groups on Friday mornings.

Individual coaching on Monday & Tuesday mornings. Free onsite childcare for both. Small grants, healthy food & bus tickets. Everything you need to start work on having the future you want for your family! Call us for more information 250.384.0552

The next session of **Parenting Toolbox** will be Wednesday evenings from 5pm-7pm October 9<sup>th</sup>-November 27<sup>th</sup>. Free onsite childcare, healthy food & bus tickets. Sign up now!



**The Parent Tot Wellness Spot** fall session will be on Wednesdays September 24<sup>th</sup>- November 26<sup>th</sup> from 11am-12:30pm at the *Vic West Community Centre*. For parents & children. Healthy food & bus tickets.

**PLAN YOUR FUTURE TODAY!**

Start having your future today! Interested? Ask about our Future Planning program.

# *We're socially enterprising!*

## **In 2014 we've been quietly launching our Social Enterprise Consulting Business...**

We spent much of 2012 refining our ideas for a social enterprise...

We spent much of 2013 developing our plan for a social enterprise offering non-profit consulting services...

After 2 years of preparation, we're pleased to announce that in 2014, we quietly launched our social enterprise and have begun offering evaluation, management and training consulting to non-profit organizations.

It's been successful in that we've been a little too busy to promote it!

How does it work?

We provide the services your organization needs. You make a donation to Young Parents Support Network. It's that simple.



For more information contact:

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## *Our Funders*

**Gratitude** to our funding partners for making our work possible!

- Public Health Agency of Canada
- United Way of Greater Victoria
- Province of British Columbia through the BC Gaming Commission
- Victoria Foundation
- Vancouver Foundation
- Coast Capital Savings
- Horner Foundation



# *Organizations as Natural Systems*

*Petra Chambers-Sinclair*

At Young Parents Support Network we try to act like a natural system.

What do I mean by that?

## **A Quick Guide to Natural Systems**

Natural systems create themselves. This is true of human biology, star systems, cities, viruses, economies, ecologies and grassroots movements.

Natural systems obtain the energies they require to operate, develop and evolve, or they end. Natural systems do not owe their existence to human planning and control. Natural systems are self-organizing.

When we judiciously choose not to control, we can allow the inherently self-renewing and adaptive nature of the resulting self-organizing systems to drive their own evolution.

A primary assumption inherent to working with self-organization and natural systems in organizations is that people want to take pride in their activities and naturally move toward self-actualization given the opportunity.

Another assumption is that if a particular development is in the highest and best interests of the system, the necessary supports will become available, including

the right people, the necessary funding, and unplanned opportunities.

## **Participation in Self-organizing Systems**

“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” writes Margaret Wheatley.

Organizations are formed of people and their relationships with one another. When people who are in relationship to one another become accustomed to a pattern of working with self-organization, they come to see that their participation is voluntary. Harrison Owen observes this in the minimalist ground rules he sets out for Open Space Technology, an approach to working with self-organization and groups. The Open Space participation rule is “whoever cares should come, and the fact that they care is sufficient to ensure their attendance”.

The four principles of Open Space Technology:

- 1) Whoever comes is the right people;
- 2) Whatever happens is the only thing that could have;
- 3) Whenever it starts is the right time;
- 4) When it is over it is over.

Likewise, if people can sense that change is in the best interest of a system, someone will likely volunteer to champion that change, either out of genuine interest, a desire for a new challenge, or a willingness to take on the task through commitment to the project or organization. In this way, responsibilities are not assigned in the traditional sense in a self-organizing system.

Anyone can offer an idea, including the idea of sharing responsibility, but only those who can embrace that idea with the required enthusiasm to permit its success will know this about themselves.

They become champions.

As Ervin Laszlo says, “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”.

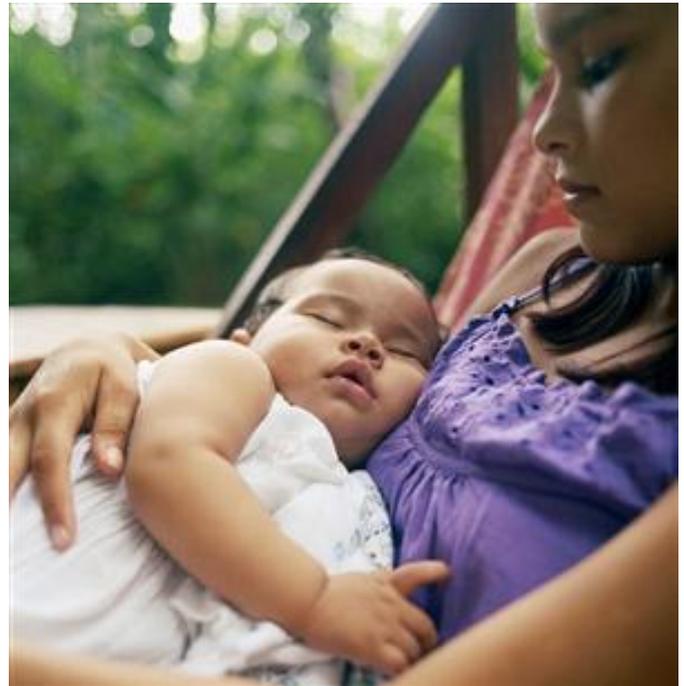
## **An Example**

The following is a story to illustrate self-organization at Young Parents Support Network (YPSN).

Some years ago YPSN shared support services with a young mother who wanted to go back to work, but had no money to cover daycare fees for the time it would take to find a job and receive her first pay cheques.

She felt stuck on welfare.

We had recently learned about the success of microcredit in the developing world, and wondered if it might have utility in this situation.



We shared the idea with the participant, who was interested, and so we started a pilot project.

The first year, we offered three \$300 microloans to young parents who wanted to return to work or school. Two were repaid in full, but the participant who first helped create the idea defaulted on her loan.

Four years later, she reconnected.

Her outstanding microloan was forgiven due to an exceptional hardship that she and her child had recently experienced.

After participating in services, she expressed her desire to give back to our organization. It just so happened that there was a large amount of money available through a government grant for preventative support in the area of mental health, but we didn't have the staff time to convene community meetings to ensure a meaningful application. She was

interested in working on a community engagement process regarding mental health support services, as she had struggled with her own mental health for years.

With the support of a staff member, she convened numerous community meetings and brought information back, which assisted us to determine the need for improved support services for Indigenous young parents. She also assisted us in developing a service delivery partnership with a local First Nation. As a result of this partnership, and the other community

engagement work done by this participant, we were awarded the grant of \$200,000.

A lot of money for a small organization!

This would not have occurred if we had tried to control the unfolding of events. These events emerged naturally, as self-organizing systems do. They became what they were inclined to become, and are still becoming.

Working with self-organization is extremely practical. It can transform a \$300 defaulted microloan into \$200,000 in funding.

# *Prenatal to Postsecondary (P2P) Collective Impact Initiative*

Here at Young Parents Support Network we're proud to be providing coordination to the new Prenatal to Postsecondary (P2P) Collective Impact initiative, thanks to funding from the Horner Foundation.

Current partners include Saanich Neighbourhood Place, Sooke Family Resource Society, Quadra Village Centre, Burnside Gorge Community Centre, the Community Social Planning Council, Success By 6, the Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island, the Horner Foundation and the United Way. We are currently working with Healthy Kids R Us, a collaboration with very similar goals comprised of school districts, Island Health, the Ministry of Children & Family Development, the Capital Regional District, and municipal recreation.

Please be in touch with Petra [petra@ypsn.ca](mailto:petra@ypsn.ca) for more information.