

Our Mission

West Side Family Place is a resource centre dedicated to supporting families with young children. It is a place to meet new friends, gain a sense of community, and to receive ongoing assistance that helps families to raise healthy, happy children.

Our Vision

To build a promising future by:

- encouraging the healthy development of the whole child
- nurturing families
- and strengthening community

Our Values

DIVERSITY

We provide services that are open and accessible, and that embrace and respect all families with young children.

DEDICATION

We are a highly committed team deeply devoted to fulfilling our mission.

QUALITY

We are committed to excellence.

INTEGRITY

We uphold the highest ethical principles and standards in both our professional and personal conduct.

PARTNERSHIP

We make a significant difference in our community by responsibly collaborating with our members, our community our volunteers and our supporting agencies.

Board Chair's Report

The past year was a busy one with a lot of growth for WSFP's Board of Directors.

The role of the WSFP Board is to work closely with—and to support—the Executive Director in ensuring the successful operation of Family Place. With Diane Ash becoming the new Executive Director and six new parents joining the Board this past year, we decided to put our focus on developing the strength and effectiveness of our Board and becoming more strategic in our approach. We conducted a 'Board Bootcamp' for Board members and staff, which included learning more about how to function as an effective Board, as well as a day of strategic planning to set goals for the year. We also set up a number of committees to focus on specific areas of need, including fundraising, Board systems and processes, and community relations. As a result of this foundation-setting, we were able to accomplish a number of key goals together with the staff in 2005 -2006 (see "Highlights 2005-2006").

In this coming year ahead, the Board looks forward to recruiting even more new Board members to help us achieve our goals, as well as much-needed fundraising to support the ongoing excellence of WSFP's programming and services.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing Board member Marie Nightbird, who was instrumental this past year in creating the positions of Privacy Officer and Personnel Officer on the Board and in conducting our first-ever performance review for the Executive Director. Our very best wishes to Marie as she moves on to serve on the Board of the Pacific Association of First Nations Women. Other Board members who retired in 2005 and who we also thank for their commitment and dedication include Pip Willis, Nori MacGowan, Ann O' Sullivan (WSFP's longest-serving Board member), and Isabeau Iqbal.

Stephanie Campbell
WSFP Board Chair

Highlights of 2005 -2006

“A year of continued growth”

Key accomplishments and notable events in 2005 -2006 include:

- Revision of Family Place’s mission and development of our vision and values
- Implementation of the first year of a two-year parent mentor project through a grant from the Vancouver Foundation and in conjunction with the 5 Family Place Partnership. Four volunteer parents from each centre have been trained to provide peer support and assistance to other parents.
- Extension of Wednesday afternoon Drop-In hours to 1:00 to 4:30 (from 1:00 to 3:00).
- Hosting of University of Victoria practicum student nurses, who brought knowledge, energy, and enthusiasm to our programs
- Repair of the front and back stairs
- Completion of a strategic planning session and strategic plan for Board and staff
- A successful summer raffle, with \$2,171 raised to support our programs
- Hosting of a variety of special events including our multi-cultural Canada Day pot-luck lunch, Thanksgiving potluck-lunch, and Breakfast with Santa.
- Increased member donations with \$6,090 donated to support our programs.
- Receipt of total in-kind donations equalling \$23,370 in revenue (included donation of time, services, and products to WSFP)
- Formed a working network—the West Side Early Childhood Development Hub—along with Marpole-Oakridge Family Place and licensed child care centres on the west side of Vancouver, to support early childhood development and the needs of families with young children on the west side of the city
- Initiated a new parenting program partnership with Family Services of Greater Vancouver, to enable us to offer additional parenting programs in conjunction with Family Services
- Interagency networking with the 5 Family Place Partnership, West Side Service Providers, Open Doors to Learning, Mainland Military Family Resource Program, and Tonari Gumi—the Japanese Community Volunteers’ Association



Executive Director's Report

Over the past year, West Side Family Place has continued to be a vibrant, busy family resource program that was regularly filled to capacity during the "Play and Learn" Drop-Ins. With 75% of our member families coming from other parts of Canada and countries throughout the world, Family Place provided the opportunity for our members to meet other families, make connections and learn and share in the important and challenging task of parenting. While membership, drop-in, and program registration fees are a necessary component of our annual budget, we continued to be able to welcome all families and provided complementary memberships, drop-in tickets and program registration fees for families whenever necessary.

The employees of an agency are said to be the most valuable resource and in the case of West Side Family Place that is certainly true. Our dedicated staff team worked together collaboratively throughout the year to continue to provide programs and support services that help us deliver on our mission. There were also a number of staff changes during the last year. We said goodbye to Holta Cuci, Playroom Coordinator, who went on maternity leave in October 2005 and office administrator Rosanna Frasson who left us in December 2005. We welcomed back our office administrator Caroline Clarke, whose skill and expertise keeps our office running so smoothly. Magda Ruiz was hired as the Playroom Assistant in June 2005. Her capable and loving support of all the children's activities greatly enhances the Drop-In and children's portion of the parenting programs. Eva Svensson joined us as the Playroom Coordinator in November 2005. Her knowledge and experience in the field of early childhood development supports the Drop-In program in providing an ideal setting for young children to feel safe and appropriately challenged in their development. Thankfully, Trish Brown has remained in her role as Family Support Coordinator. She continues to provide her much-valued expertise in parent support and education, during the Drop-In and in parent education and support groups.

The commitment of our dedicated Board of Directors has provided excellent governance, leadership and direction this past year. Thank you to all the board members for your hard work and support.

*Diane Ash
Executive Director*

Programs

"Play and Learn" Drop-In

Family Place's Drop-In Program was very well attended, with an average of 35 families per session. There are over 740 parents/caregivers and 900 children visits per month.

Each month, over two hundred different families (over 500 families per year) benefit from the safe, creative and educational play environment of the Drop-In where there is a comfortable and supportive atmosphere for parents and caregivers.

On March 1, 2006 the Drop-In extended its Wednesday afternoon hours from 1 to 3 PM to 1- 4:30. Family Place extended these hours in response to members' requests for a later-afternoon Drop-In. The Wednesday afternoon Drop-In continues to provide an opportunity for families with babies who nap in the morning to come and socialize in the afternoon with other new parents while their children play.

Since the fall of 2005, an Early Childhood Health Nurse from the Pacific Spirit Community Health Centre, Barbara Narsaiya, has been part of our team. She joins us two Tuesday morning sessions per month, talking informally with parents and caregivers and answering questions they may have concerning the health of their children.

Our Outreach Drop-In program at Jericho Military Base also continues to provide programming for families on the base, as well as families in the neighborhood near the base who find it difficult to access Family Place.

*Eva Svensson
Playroom Coordinator*

Parenting Programs

In the spring of 2005 with staff and executive director changes at Family Place, we continued to offer our stable, ever-popular programs during this transitional time, including:

- STEP – Systematic Training For Effective Parenting
- Nobody's Perfect
- Circle of Sharing
- Parent-Child Mother Goose – Infant & Toddler

In the fall and winter of 2005 we were able to expand our roster of programs to meet the needs of as many of our families as possible. As well as the programs mentioned above, we introduced:

- Is Your Toddler Pushing Your Buttons – a very popular program which was co-sponsored with Family Services of Greater Vancouver.
- Financial Literacy – this was well-attended and provided valuable information to parents and nannies. This free program was co-sponsored with Family Services of Greater Vancouver and funded by Vancity.
- Discipline Versus Punishment – co-sponsored with Family Services of Greater Vancouver.
- One-session parent education workshops delivered by local community health nurses on such topics as discipline, toilet training, bedtime battles and temper tantrums.

For our longer-running programs such as Nobody's Perfect and Circle of Sharing, the bonds formed during these sessions have consistently fostered lasting friendships and support amongst the participants.

In the past year, 28 programs were offered to parents, caregivers and children. These programs served 315 families.

*Trish Brown
Family Support Coordinator*

Words from Our Program Participants

“Since the first day we found this place warm and welcoming, which helped us significantly to settle nicely in this beautiful city. The experience at Family Place also influenced our development as a new family. We learnt from you, we enjoyed with you and we flourished through you.”

“This program makes you realize that you’re normal, not alone and I believe the program has made me a better parent.”

“I have felt so supported and cared for simply by stepping my foot through your door.”

“Nothing bonds parents and kids in community like song. When we all sing the same song, there’s lots of joy.”

“It’s a little island of warmth and sanity and you come away feeling refreshed and more optimistic about your parenting.”

“An opportunity to leave the house, socialize, let the children play with new faces. This place is great!”

“Without programs like this and the Family Place, parenting would be lonely and difficult.”

“You have made my move to Canada feel like I wasn’t so far from home.”

“A safe place to talk with other mums about real issues, difficult parenting and personal problems in a constructive setting.”

“It’s a great opportunity to meet new people and a wonderful chance for the babies to develop their social skills.”

“An important community resource for young families!”

We’re Listening

The Board and staff of WSFP are committed to receiving and responding to feedback from our members, volunteers and stakeholders as an ongoing process through our annual survey, registered program evaluations, stakeholder meetings and informal discussions.

Changes we have implemented as a result of feedback are:

- Expanded late-afternoon hours for the Wednesday Drop-In, from 1:00 – 4:30 pm.
- New one-session parenting programs.
- Toddler Mother Goose time changed to 3:00 – 4:30 to accommodate toddler naps.
- Decaffeinated coffee made available daily for members who wish to limit their caffeine.

Celebrating our Volunteers

Dedicated and hard-working WSFP volunteers—including the Board of Directors, playroom, office, maintenance and special event volunteers—contributed their skills, talents, energy and enthusiasm to provide much-needed support to WSFP.

- 16 volunteers provided 655 hours of direct service to the Drop-In and the Parenting Programs, providing an in-kind revenue of \$8,305
- 25 maintenance, database, web design, library and office volunteers provided 230 hours of their time, providing an in-kind revenue of \$5,752.
- 6 student nurses provided 468 hours of direct service to the Drop-In and Parenting Programs, providing an in-kind revenue of \$4,680

Thanks to Ellen, Marie, Mina, Sumi, Miki, Janice, Iris, Magda, Patti, Randy, Robin, Helen, Isabella, Soame, Jane, Martha, Dragana, Shelagh, Nobuko, Nicole, Linda, Helen, Joanne, Tom, Olin, Oliver, Tim, Jill, Erica, Franco, Cynthia, Kelly, Christine, Justine, student nurses, Amanda, Sim, Danice, Anita, Shanna, Stephanie, staff from the Habanero Group, and our hard-working Board of Directors: Ann, Nori, Pip, Isabeau, Stephanie, Michele, Shelley, Ellen, Mike, Nicole, Marie, Lorraine, Stacey and Kate.

We couldn't do it without you. We are only able to do what we do with the support and collaboration of our volunteers. All of us on staff offer our heartfelt gratitude to each and every volunteer for your generous contribution of time and talent.



“Our volunteers help our community grow!”

Our Donors

A very special thanks to David Richardson, Re/Max realtor, whose generous donation of \$10,000 will enable Family Place to run a much-requested and much-needed Friday morning Drop-In in 2006 – 2007. His ongoing financial support of Family Place is greatly appreciated by the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and especially the families of our community who are already thoroughly enjoying the extra Drop-In session.

Thank you to the many individuals and local business owners who have supported WSFP this past year through their financial and in-kind donations, including.

- Our members who donated \$6,090. These much-valued contributions help support the day-to-day operations of Family Place.
- Louis Picco, Chartered Accountant for his generous discount on Family Place's financial audit.
- Local businesses and individuals who donated \$950 goods and services for our Raffle including: David Richardson; Harrison Hot Springs Resort; Feenies; Le Petit Spa; Trinie Gee; Vancouver Symphony Orchestra; and Bard on the Beach
- Starbucks, 2270 W. Fourth Ave, for their continuing donations of coffee and pastries which are greatly appreciated by all program participants, volunteers and staff (\$1,500.00 in-kind revenue).
- Toybox for their donation of toys for the playroom.

Our Funders

Family Place is grateful for the ongoing support of our funders:



**Windows of Opportunity
Open Doors to Learning**

Partnerships

Vancouver Coastal Community Health Nurses continue to regularly refer families to the “Play and Learn” Drop-In. They also provide support for families by attending two regular Drop-Ins per month where parents can chat and have their health-related questions and concerns dealt with. The nurses also facilitate early childhood growth and development and workshops.

We work together with the Mainland BC Military Family Resource Centre Society in providing an Outreach Parent/Child Drop-In and Toddler Parent/Child Mother Goose program at the Jericho Military Base.

Additional Partners include:

- 5 Family Place Partnership
- West Coast Childcare Resource and Referral Centre
- Post Partum Society
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver
- West Side Early Childhood Development Hub
- Kitsilano Neighbourhood House
- University of British Columbia
- University of Victoria – Faculty of Nursing
- West Side Social Service Providers
- Vancouver Open Doors To Learning Partners
- BC Association of Family Resource Programs
- Tonari Gumi –Japanese Volunteers Community Association

Board of Directors

Stephanie Campbell	<i>Chair</i>
Michele Pankratz	<i>Vice-Chair</i>
Shelley Carruthers	<i>Secretary</i>
Ellen Dawson	<i>Treasurer</i>
Michael Labossiere	
Stacey Lobin	
Nicole Macrae	
Marie Nightbird	
Lorraine Smith	
Kate Saether	

Retired Board members 2005 -2006

Isabeau Iqbal
Nori MacGowan
Anne O’Sullivan
Pip Willis

Staff

Diane Ash	<i>Executive Director</i>
Trish Brown	<i>Family Support Coordinator</i>
Eva Svensson	<i>Playroom Coordinator</i>
Magda Ruiz	<i>Playroom Assistant</i>
Caroline Clarke	<i>Office Administrator</i>

Our History

researched and written by member Joanne Lee-Young, April 2006

The West Side Family Place (WSFP) that exists today was originally created with a simple goal: to give mothers with young children a place to gather.

The founders, Ellen LeFevre and Mary Lynn Burke, were initially high school friends who then met up again years later, each with two young toddlers in tow. Their idea for WSFP came at a very specific time in history. It was the early 1970s, the beginning of the women's movement, and a confusing time to be a mother, according to LeFevre. There was also growing awareness of how hard it is to parent in isolation and the toll this was having on families.

To start WSFP, LeFevre and Burke applied and received funding from a program for meeting community needs administered by the Trudeau government. This helped to establish WSFP's first home in a little storefront on Sasamat and 16th Avenue in 1973. A few years later, WSFP moved to a bigger space with offices in the front and a warehouse-sized playroom in the back at Dunbar and Broadway.

Eventually, high monthly rental payments pushed WSFP to launch a fund for buying their own property. One of the biggest contributors was the provincial government via the B.C. Lotteries Fund. The City of Vancouver also stepped in with a matching civic grant. Its council members and clerks ironed out all sorts of zoning snafus. Other supporters included the Vancouver Foundation and the Woodward Foundation. Volunteers jumped in to help with renovations. Finally, in September 1990, WSFP moved into this two-storey house at 2819 West 11th Avenue. Having the new site in place meant that funds could now be directed towards paying staff and producing better programs.

WSFP's current location is complete with a comfortable playroom for art, make-believe and story-time activities, a kitchen for snack time, a living room for relaxed gatherings, plus an enclosed outdoor area with swings, slides and a sandbox.

WSFP was the very first such family place in Canada and it soon became the model for a whole network of similar organizations that now operate across the country. Today WSFP is a registered non-profit society and a member of the B.C. Association of Family Resources Programs. Staff and a volunteer Board of Directors work together to run WSFP.

The outstanding service WSFP provided to families of our community was formally recognized in 1987, when WSFP became one of the first recipients of the Distinguished Service to Families Award, given by the B. C. Council for Families.

These days, fathers and caregivers with young children are also frequent users of WSFP. There is also a strong focus on embracing people of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. People can borrow from a toy library. They can sign up for parenting education and support courses. They can participate in special events. They can drop in just to chat.

Essentially, WSFP today is *still* true to its original intent serving as a resource centre dedicated to helping families meet new friends, gain a sense of community and get support so that they can raise happy, healthy children.