



Giving in Action
Supporting families throughout B.C.



2007 Annual Report

Established in 2006 by Vancouver Foundation, with support from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and Community Living BC, Giving in Action is a registered charitable organization that provides grants to families through two funds – the Family Independence Fund and the Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund.

GIA provides grants for projects such as home renovations – including lifts, elevators, ramps, flooring, door widening – and to purchase wheelchair-accessible vehicles.



In 2007, Giving in Action:

- received almost 700 inquiries from families
- approved 338 families across B.C. for grants
- approved \$6.1 million in grants through our Family Independence Fund
- approved \$4.1 million in grants through our Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund (*for a total of more than \$10 million*)
- helped purchase 200 vehicles
- helped fund 183 renovations.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Giving in Action | 4 |
| Family Independence Fund | 6 |
| Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund | 7 |
| FIVE SUCCESS STORIES | 8 |
| Out of a Tight Place – <i>Kyle Goldie</i> | 9 |
| Room to Grow – <i>Brent Langridge</i> | 10 |
| Ramped Up and Decked Out – <i>Matteus Preusse</i> | 11 |
| A New Life – <i>Jenny Hile</i> | 13 |
| Time for the Good Things – <i>the King family</i> | 14 |
| Board of Directors | 18 |
| Financial statements | 19 |

Giving in Action

The Giving in Action Society (GIA) is committed to helping BC families who have a relative with a disability.

This is GIA's first annual report. An annual report, as the name implies, is a reporting out on the activities of an organization over the past year. It's usually an organization talking about itself through a collection of facts and figures, audited financial statements, with balance sheets.

We thought we'd do our first annual report a bit differently. We thought we would let our grant recipients tell the story of how we are doing.

There are lots of facts that show we are doing our job. And there are columns of figures that show we are being fiscally responsible (they're on pages 19-22)

But the real story of this organization, and its often dramatic effect on people's lives, is told on pages 8-17. Here you will read five stories that show we are living up to our name. These are stories of giving in action; stories of grants that have made a positive difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.

These are stories told from the families' point of view. About their struggles and their successes. And the small part that Giving in Action has been able to play in those successes.

These are the stories behind the numbers. After all, you can't put a price on a child's smile, after a new wheelchair ramp and deck allows him, for the first time, to play outside safely.

In 2007, we achieved much more than granting money for renovations and vehicles – we got to know some very special families. We heard how Giving in Action grants improved and sometimes changed their lives, and we feel privileged to have played a role in that positive change.

Andria Teather

Executive Director, Giving in Action Society

The Honourable Donald Brenner

Chair, Board of Directors, Giving in Action Society



Family Independence Fund

The Family Independence Fund helps families throughout the province who have a family member or relative with developmental disabilities living at home.

Grants from the Family Independence Fund help with the care of the relative by providing grants for projects such as home renovations — including lifts, elevators, ramps, flooring, door widening or vehicle modifications — that enable the individual with the developmental disability to live in the family home and access their community.

The Family Independence Fund defines a developmental disability as:

- low IQ
- a condition that manifests before the age of 18
- a condition that is accompanied by impaired adaptive functioning.

Preference is given to families who indicate their request for support is part of a long-term plan for their relative.

Families who receive support from other government-funded programs are still eligible for Family Independence Fund grants. However, these additional funds must complement — rather than duplicate — the government support.

The Family Independence Fund was established with financial assistance from Community Living British Columbia (CLBC).



Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund

The Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund provides grants to families who have children or youth (newborn to 19 years) with special needs who are living at home.

The Fund offers capital grants to improve the individual's health, development or ability to participate in daily activities at home, in school and in the community. Eligible expenses include such things as home renovations and vehicle modifications.

This Fund defines children and youth with special needs as those who have significant impairments in one or more of the following areas: health, cognition, communication, sensory motor, social/emotional/behavioural or self help.

The Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund helps address family needs that are not currently met through government-funded programs. If a family receives support from other government-funded programs, they can apply to this Fund for grants, but only if the funds complement — rather than duplicate — the government support.

The Fund was established with financial assistance from the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development.

FIVE SUCCESS STORIES

Out of a Tight Place – *Kyle Goldie*

Room to grow – *Brent Langridge*

Ramped Up and Decked Out – *Matteus Preusse*

A New Life – *Jenny Hile*

Time for the Good Things – *the King family*



Out of a Tight Place

“It was so bad, Kyle hardly ever got a bath, before we did the renovations,” Lori Goldie says.

Her 18-year-old son has cerebral palsy and spastic quadriplegia, and is completely dependant on caregivers to meet all his physical needs. Lori sounds like a strong, determined woman who has overcome many challenges. But Kyle’s mother simply wasn’t able to lift him out of his wheelchair and into the bathtub, or back out again.

“So I’d be sponge bathing him – and let me tell you, that’s not easy to do when someone can’t even hold up their own head,” Lori explains, on the phone from her home in Quesnel, British Columbia.

Bathing Kyle wasn’t the only problem. “Before, we couldn’t even get his wheelchair into his bedroom,” says Lori. “So I was packing my son from the living room to the bedroom and back everyday. He’s only 85 pounds, but still, it was pretty hard for me. And where he could be in the house was very limited, because the wheelchair would only get into certain places.”

With the grant from Giving in Action’s Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund, Lori was able to put in a special lift, so she can now get Kyle in and out of the tub herself. She also expanded the bathroom and widened doorways in the house, making it far easier to get Kyle to the places he needs to go. Walls between the living room, kitchen and dining room were also removed.

“It’s all open now, so wherever we are, he can be involved in what we are doing. Family meals used to be so awkward, because we were all crammed in there. Now things are just so much easier,” Lori says.

“Honestly, without this grant, my son would be in a home, because I just wouldn’t be able to physically do it. I’m really grateful. It’s really made a world of difference,” Lori says. 🏠





Room to Grow

Obviously, a man with over 800 friends needs his own apartment.

Brent Langridge, an active 26-year-old with Down's syndrome, had his own room in his parent's Pitt Meadows home, but it was cramping his style. "He needed room to grow," his mom Wendy says, of her affable and outgoing son. So with a grant from Giving in Action's Family Independence Fund, Brent's parents transformed their downstairs rec room into a self-contained bachelor pad.

The results? "We kind of miss him," says Wendy. "He has become a lot more independent. We hardly see him anymore. He usually handles breakfast and lunch by himself. I still make dinner, but he usually just comes upstairs to get it, then takes it downstairs and eats down there!"

The family did most of the renovation work themselves, adding a kitchenette, living room, and a large master bedroom with a bright red wall — Brent's special décor request. Wendy says Brent has been doing a great job taking care of his place: "He cleans it, and tidies up after himself, which he wasn't doing when he was living upstairs," says his mom. "We told him he had to be responsible for the place, and he is."

The suite is spacious enough that Brent can live there with his wife, when he meets the woman of his dreams—one of this ambitious young man's many goals. In the meantime, Brent's keeping himself busy with his job at the Ramada Inn, and his Sun Hang Do martial arts training (Brent has already achieved red belt, black stripe level.) And of course, he has to keep up with his impressive Facebook page, where the popular guy has 820 friends (so far). Brent's many Facebook pals can watch videos of his martial arts workouts, or browse photos of the packed open house where Brent showed off his new abode to his community.

"Having his own apartment has taken Brent to a whole new level," says Wendy. "It's been a really great thing for our son. He's very happy, and we're very proud." ■

Ramped Up and Decked Out

Playing on his family's rotten, splintery deck was a nightmare for Matteus.

Matteus has spina bifida. His lower legs are paralyzed, and in those areas, he can't feel his skin. That didn't stop the enthusiastic little guy from wanting to play outside, like his older sister.

"He was two years old then, and he just loved being out on the deck. But his walker would get stuck because it was uneven. And when he crawled on it, because he can't feel his knees and his feet, he'd get all these splinters and cuts. Then, because of his nerve damage, those cuts take forever to heal. But because he couldn't feel how he had hurt himself, telling him not to go out there didn't make any sense to him," his mother Celia Preusse explains.

So the family had to be on perpetual alert—which didn't always work either. "Sometimes his sister would forget and leave the door open and out he'd go ... and then I'd end up having to gouge out all these horrible splinters," says Celia.


The stairs to the house, which is located in Sechelt, British Columbia, were even more of a worry. "When Matteus first learned to walk he was using a walker with four wheels. If he ever got out that door, it could have been so dangerous for him. And we had to carry him up and down It was awful, having so much frustration and inaccessibility right in our own home," Celia continues.

The grant from Giving in Action's Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund enabled the Preusse family to replace the stairs with a ramp, and connect it with an upgraded deck, which they refinished with a smooth surface. The renovation made an enormous difference in the family's life.

"Matteus just loves it out there, and there's no issue with him being out there. Wanting to get outside was a huge motivator for him in learning how to walk, and it was so great that we could just let him go. There are all these normal things we can do now which we just couldn't do, before. Now we can leave the door open on a sunny day, and he can play outside with his sister ... We can eat our meals out there. It seems



like such a simple thing, but it has made such a difference. And we could never have afforded it on our own,” says Celia.

“Life would be so incredibly frustrating, for him and for us, if we hadn’t got the help from Giving in Action. The great thing is, because he is so young, he’s not going to know a time when his home was less accessible for him. He’s just going to take all this accessibility for granted. And really, that’s how it should be,” his happy mother concludes. 



A New Life



"It's like having a newborn baby for 16 years," Wendy Hile explains.

Wendy's 16-year-old daughter Jenny has Wolf-Hirschhorn syndrome, a rare condition that causes problems including dwarfism, developmental delay, an inability to eat orally, heart problems, seizures and a sleep disorder.

"She's still in diapers. She has the cognitive ability of a two-year-old. She's dependant on a caregiver for every aspect of her life. She can walk a bit, but she mostly uses a wheelchair. She eats through a tube. She also has a lot of anger, and is emotionally very challenging. It was like coming home to an abusive person every day. And because of her sleep disorder, neither she nor her caregivers get much sleep," says Wendy, on the phone from Victoria, B.C. "Don't get me wrong - I love my Jenny, she's such a joy. But she's also incredibly exhausting to care for."

Wendy, a positive, friendly, efficient-sounding woman, is a single parent who also has another, older daughter. Jenny was living part time with Wendy, part time with her dad, and part time with her grandmother, while Wendy and Jenny's father both worked full time. That set up wasn't working for anybody.

"The stress of going back and forth was too much for her; Jenny just looked terrible," says her mother. "So I said I would do it all, and I did take everything over. But there was no way I could keep it up. At one point I thought I would have to put her into foster care, which I didn't want to do. But I didn't see any other option."

Then Wendy got a grant from Giving in Action's Family Independence Fund to create a separate suite for a live-in caregiver. The difference, she says, has been nearly miraculous.

"Jenny now has a full-time nanny, Jessie, who lives with her downstairs. It has to be that way, because if Jenny sees me, she won't go to anyone else," Wendy notes. "It's working really well. Jenny is flourishing; she loves her nanny. Jessie is there for her when Jenny comes home from school. Jessie prepares her all this completely organic food, so Jenny doesn't have to eat all canned food anymore... Jessie is also a physiotherapist, so she can do Jenny's exercises with her. Jenny has someone that can focus completely on her.

"It's been incredible for me too," says Wendy. "Finally, I can get proper amounts of sleep. I can go for a swim after work, I don't have to rush home. It's been such a relief. It's even made a big difference for my older daughter, Alyshait gave her the freedom to go on with her life instead of being there for me."

"It's like it's given all of us a whole new life." ■■■

Time for the Good Things



Imagine caring for eleven kids. Now imagine caring for eleven kids, most with severe physical and mental disabilities, with several in wheelchairs.

Esther and Frank King didn't intend to take on that immense challenge. But while volunteering in Haitian orphanages or working as foster parents, they kept encountering kids that desperately needed loving parents and a good home.

"Most of these kids had suffered horrible abuses and sickness and pain. I knew I could give them better than they would get anywhere else," says Esther, whose sunny yellow top matches her warm – and obviously extraordinarily generous – disposition.

Taking these kids on has meant dealing with everything from muscular dystrophy to fetal alcohol syndrome, deafness to seizures and shaken baby syndrome, not to mention serious psychological trauma – all at the same time. But Esther's biggest problem wasn't dealing with her children's various handicaps – it was actually transportation.

"Just getting the kids from point A to point B was really difficult," she says. The family had converted an older mini-bus into a family vehicle, but it still couldn't carry the kids in wheelchairs. The vehicle was also a huge financial drain. "I was spending \$250 a week in gas just to drive around Chilliwack," says Esther. "And that was before gas prices went way up! It cost me \$150 to go into Vancouver, and sometimes I was going in four times a week to see specialists with the kids," she says.

The family's three-level home also presented serious difficulties. While large, it wasn't designed for wheelchairs. "When we adopted these kids, they were not wheelchair dependant. We found out after we adopted them that they had conditions that would make them wheelchair dependant," Esther explains.

The children who use wheelchairs are confined to the main floor, where there was only a small bathroom. The space was so awkward, once Esther wheeled a child into the bathroom, she was essentially trapped there with them. Furthermore, as the kids grew, it was becoming impossible for Esther to lift them from the wheelchair into the tub—which meant they weren't getting bathed as often as they should have been. "People would look at me disrespectfully. Some



would actually say, ‘Why don’t you bathe your kids?’ It was just horrible,” she says, wincing. For the kids in wheelchairs, even play was problematic. The main play space was on the second floor. “So the able-bodied kids would go upstairs to play, while the disabled kids would sit at the bottom of the stairs. That was heartbreaking,” says Esther.



The King family got funding from Giving in Action’s Family Independence Fund for a vehicle and for renovations for the main floor. They bought a mini-van, and modified it so it can carry two wheelchairs. They also sacrificed their two-car indoor garage in order to expand the main floor bathroom, create a play area on the main floor, and add a bedroom for 13-year-old Angel, who is in a wheelchair.

“I don’t want anyone at Giving in Action to underestimate how much this has meant to me,” says Esther. Her voice chokes with emotion. “I honestly don’t think I’d still be functioning, if we hadn’t gotten the help,” she says softly, when she can speak again.

“The bathroom has made my life 200 per cent easier. It means now I can do things I just didn’t have time to do before. Just to have a bathroom where I can maneuver Angel properly is amazing. There’s even enough space so she can do some things by herself, and she’s blossoming ... She’s taking more interest in how she wants her hair, what earrings she wants. They are all things a teenage girl should be doing. But there just wasn’t room for that kind of stuff before,” Esther says. “The van has also been a life-saver. I don’t know how we could have coped with the old bus, with gas prices this high.”

The benefits of the grant extend to other families as well. “I invite families with special needs kids over, and I can do that because I have the resources to support the special needs kids, like the bathroom, the play area, and the mini-van,” Esther explains. “How often can a kid with special needs go on a play date? It just doesn’t happen. But with the resources Giving in Action has given me, I can make it happen for them.”

In the King family home, pictures of the kids cover the walls. Their handprints, from tiny to large, decorate a door in the kitchen, and the children’s heights are all marked on an adjacent

doorway. The love in the home is almost palpable. With the grant from Giving In Action, this extraordinary family now can spend less time on logistics, and have more time for the good things in life. 🏠



Giving in Action Board of Directors

Giving in Action's Board of Directors has final approval on grants recommended by the Advisory Committee. Current board members are:

The Honourable Donald I. Brenner, *Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of B.C*

Peter Kingston, Vice-President, *Finance and Administration, Vancouver Foundation*

Faye Wightman, *President and CEO, Vancouver Foundation*

Advisory Committee

The Family Independence Fund and the Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund Advisory Committee is made up of individuals from across the province of British Columbia. The Committee reviews and makes recommendations on grant applications. Advisory committee members for 2006/2007 were:

Dan Collins, *Chair*

Nigel Livingston

Lillian Allison-Sanders

Phil Long

Sherman Chan

Mary Parkin

Janice Duivestein

Patrice Pratt

Janice Evans

Lorraine Ward

Muriel Hansen

Financial Statements of



Giving in **Action**

Year ended December 31, 2007

Period from incorporation on May 16, 2006 to December 31, 2006

GIVING IN ACTION SOCIETY

Statements of Financial Position

December 31, 2007 and 2006

| | 2007 | 2006 |
|-------------------------|--------------|------|
| Assets | | |
| Current assets: | | |
| Cash | \$ 2,267,389 | \$ - |
| Receivables | 1,754 | - |
| | 2,269,143 | - |
| Capital assets (note 4) | 4,723 | - |
| | \$ 2,273,866 | \$ - |

Liabilities and Fund Balances

| | | |
|--|--------------|-----------|
| Current liabilities: | | |
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities | \$ 10,955 | \$ 11,515 |
| Fund balances | 2,262,911 | (11,515) |
| Commitments (note 6) | | |
| | \$ 2,273,866 | \$ - |

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

GIVING IN ACTION SOCIETY

Statements of Revenue and Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances

| | Restricted Fund | | Administration Fund | | Year ended | Period from |
|--|-----------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| | 2007 | 2006 | 2007 | 2006 | December 31, | incorporation on |
| | | | | | 2007 | May 16, |
| | | | | | Total | 2006 to |
| | | | | | | December 31, |
| | | | | | | 2006 |
| | | | | | | Total |
| Revenue: | | | | | | |
| Contributions from Vancouver Foundation (note 5) | \$ 8,111,096 | \$ 165,045 | \$ 1,050,000 | \$ - | \$ 9,161,096 | \$ 165,045 |
| Interest income | - | - | 59,381 | - | 59,381 | - |
| | 8,111,096 | 165,045 | 1,109,381 | - | 9,220,477 | 165,045 |
| Expenses: | | | | | | |
| Salaries and benefits | - | - | 191,786 | - | 191,786 | - |
| Consulting | - | - | 90,516 | 6,135 | 90,516 | 6,135 |
| Advisory Committee | - | - | 36,118 | - | 36,118 | - |
| Communications | - | - | 15,864 | - | 15,864 | - |
| Other | - | - | 56,122 | 5,380 | 56,122 | 5,380 |
| | - | - | 390,406 | 11,515 | 390,406 | 11,515 |
| Grant distributions | 6,555,645 | 165,045 | - | - | 6,555,645 | 165,045 |
| Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses | 1,555,451 | - | 718,975 | (11,515) | 2,274,426 | (11,515) |
| Fund balance, beginning of period | - | - | (11,515) | - | (11,515) | - |
| Fund balance, end of period | \$ 1,555,451 | \$ - | \$ 707,460 | \$ (11,515) | \$ 2,262,911 | \$ (11,515) |

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

The Society is controlled by Vancouver Foundation through its ability to appoint the directors of the Society, and to date has received all revenue contributions from Vancouver Foundation. In 2006, Vancouver Foundation established the Family Independence Fund with contributions of \$30,000,000 from Community Living British Columbia. Also in 2006, Vancouver Foundation established the Children and Youth with Special Needs Supports Fund with contributions of \$10,000,000 from the Province of British Columbia - Ministry of Children and Family Development. The contributions of \$40,000,000 were invested in Vancouver Foundation's Consolidated Trust Fund. When needed, Vancouver Foundation releases these funds, as contributions to the Society.

For the full financial statements, visit our website at www.givinginaction.ca





Giving in Action

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