DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
750 17th STREET, WEST VANCOUVER, BC V7V 3T3

COUNCIL REPORT

Date: May 5, 2014
From: Arleta Beckett, Manager of Community Development, Youth and Families
Subject: West Vancouver Child and Family Hub Update

RECOMMENDED THAT:

1. The report dated May 5, 2014, from the Manager of Community Development, Youth and Families, titled "West Vancouver Child and Family Hub Update", be received for information.

Purpose

To inform Council on the status of recent projects undertaken by the West Vancouver Child and Family Hub.

Executive Summary

N/A

1.0 Background

1.1 Prior Resolutions

N/A

1.2 History

The West Vancouver Child and Family Hub ("Hub") is a partnership of community agencies and municipal services working together since 2009 to provide a range of integrated services to promote the healthy development and well-being of families and young children in West Vancouver. The Hub is an initiative coming out of the Child Care Working Group and the District's Child Care Plan.

The Hub partners are: West Vancouver Community Centre Society; District of West Vancouver (Parks and Community Services), Vancouver Coastal Health, West Vancouver Memorial Library, School District 45, West Vancouver Family Place (operated by Hollyburn Family Services Society), Gordon House Child
Care Centre, Cedardale Child Learning Centre, and North Shore Community Resources.

The Hub targets children ages birth to five years and their families. Hub partners work together to link and provide a range of services including health and wellness services, early learning programs and services, family support programs, child care, and recreation.

The population of West Vancouver's children age 0-12 years is 4,835 (source: 2011 Census) and is broken down as follows:

- 0-4 years: 1,290 children
- 5-9 years: 2,030 children
- 10-12 years: 1,515 children

2.0 Policy

2.1 Policy

The Blueprint for Social Responsibility and Change (2008) provides a framework for a social action plan and identifies strategies to strengthen community social support systems for long term planning and sustainability in West Vancouver.


The Child Care Plan (2010) addresses both the immediate and long term child care service needs of the community.

http://westvancouver.ca/sites/default/files/2010%20CHILD_CARE_PLAN_FINAL.pdf

The North Shore Child and Family Friendly Charter ("Charter") commits participating organizations to work and expand community access to high quality programs and services that are culturally appropriate, accessible, and informed by research. The Charter recognizes that children and their families are a vital part of the community.


2.2 Bylaw

N/A

3.0 Analysis

3.1 Discussion

For the past twelve months, the Hub has focused on the social emotional development of young children in the community. For more than ten years, teachers across BC have participated in a developmental survey called the Early
Development Instrument ("EDI") that measures the health and well being of children as they enter kindergarten and mapped according to the neighbourhoods where they live. The University of British Columbia’s Human Early Learning Partnership ("HELP") has been collecting this data on five broad areas of development that are known to be good predictors of health, education, and social outcomes.

The most recent EDI survey was collected in 2013, at thirteen School District 45 elementary schools, and surveyed 325 children living in West Vancouver neighbourhoods. While there has been a steady increase in language and cognitive development of West Vancouver’s children over the past ten years, the data shows increasing vulnerabilities in the areas of social and emotional development.

These vulnerabilities may be the result of one or many contributors including families struggling with work/life balance, attention on academic skills and technology, and less extended family support are three of the many possible reasons.

The trend of increased vulnerabilities is concerning because children who develop strong social and emotional skills have better attitudes about themselves and towards others; they grow up to be less anxious and less aggressive towards others, and are more likely to succeed and to thrive in life.

Work needs to be done to create conditions in early childhood programs, schools, communities, and within families to build the capacity of children to recognize their emotions, to understand and empathize with others, and to make constructive choices. Fostering positive human qualities such as compassion, empathy, and confidence can help children manage difficult emotions such as fear, anger, and anxiety.

The Hub is one of seven communities in the province invited by the Dalai Lama Centre and HELP to pilot the Heart Mind Project, using the Heart Mind Index. The Index is based on a subset of 37 items from the EDI, and measures heart-mind well being according to five positive human qualities, which are anchored in evidence-based research related to the social and emotional development of children. These five positive human qualities are:

- Gets along with others
- Compassionate and kind
- Solves problems peacefully
- Secure and calm
- Alert and engaged

In September, 2013, representatives from the seven communities participating in the Heart Mind Project, attended a two-day session at UBC lead by staff from the Dalai Lama Centre and HELP. The purpose of the session was to increase
understanding of the EDI and Heart Mind Index and to plan for community engagement. The Hub's Heart Mind Project identified three goals and developed a corresponding action plan.

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<th>Heart Mind Project Action Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
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<td>1. Inform community leaders, the early childhood community and families about the importance of social development, and using the Heart Mind Index, recognize and discuss vulnerabilities in West Vancouver.</td>
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<td>2. Use community events as opportunities to inform and engage families and young children in activities promoting social and emotional well being.</td>
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<td>3. To support the social and emotional development of young children through parent and caregiver workshops, and to develop resources and new programs.</td>
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3.2 Sustainability

The Hub uses strength and asset-based approaches when responding to community need. As a result, service and program enhancement through partnerships has resulted in growth, especially in the area of the Hub’s Heart Mind Index partnership.

3.3 Consultation

The District, through the Parks and Community Services Division, works with the West Vancouver Community Centre Society; Vancouver Coastal Health, West Vancouver Memorial Library, School District 45, West Vancouver Family Place (operated by Hollyburn Family Services Society), Gordon House Child Care Centre, Cedardale Child Learning Centre, and North Shore Community Resources to implement the 2013-2014 Child and Family Hub work plan.

3.4 Communications Process

Achievements from the 2013-2014 work plan related to the Hub will be shared with Parks and Community Services staff, all Hub partners, with key colleagues at the North Shore Child Early Years Planning Table, and will be posted on the District’s website.

4.0 Options

4.1 N/A

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