



# Aunt Leah's Independent Lifeskills Society

www.auntleahs.org

June 2009

## Annual General Meeting

On June 9th we will host our 20th AGM at our New Westminster offices (200 - 668 Carnarvon Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 5Y6). We will begin at 6:30 pm with appetizers and beverages. Guest Speaker Dr. Ron Abrahams will be talking about his work with marginalized women through his program at BC Women's Hospital. There will be two special awards presented to youth in our programs: The Rona Award presented to Natalie Ming from the Retail Training Program and The Jeremy Wright Award Presented to Johnny Rowbotham from the Support Link Program. We hope you'll join us. For more information call Theresa at 604-525-1204 ext. 224.

## Training Programs

The Retail Training Program started last year and it has come a long way in these many months. Sessions are full and partnerships are growing to enhance this program and provide great first job skills for the many youth involved. Our Independent Living for Families and Youth Workshops have been expanded and are now being offered weekly. Youth and new moms now have twice as many opportunities to receive education and training on a variety of essential life skills. The Restaurant Training Program will open this fall, providing a Community Meal in partnership with a lower mainland church.



Retail Training Program Graduates: Back Row - Michael Klym, Kayla Ranville, Misty Greyeyes, Kailee Matthies, Ayesha Elliott, Front Row - Angelina Oates (Training Program Coordinator), Braydon Waterhouse, Natalie Ming, Dinna McDonald, and Brook Calvert (Program Director).

## Summer Plans

We're enjoying a few more days of sun lately and plans are underway for our annual summer trips for the youth and moms in our programs. The foster teen boys and girls in the Support Link Program will be going to the Southern Gulf Islands to enjoy nature and the experience of camping. The moms from our Thresholds Program and the new teen moms at Aunt Leah's House will be traveling with their babies to enjoy the local sights of Victoria.

## AGM Guest Speaker:

Dr. Ron Abrahams provides pre and post-natal care to women in the Downtown Eastside through Sheway on East Hastings and an outpatient clinic at BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre. He also operates a private practice. Dr. Abrahams has been awarded the National Award for Excellence in Leadership from the Kaiser Foundation, which honours Canadians and organizations for their outstanding work in reducing the physical and mental harms associated with drug use and mental health problems. Dr. Abrahams has worked in partnership with Aunt Leah's Society and many other organizations for the past 20 years ensuring new moms and their babies stay together through the provision of safe supportive supervised housing.



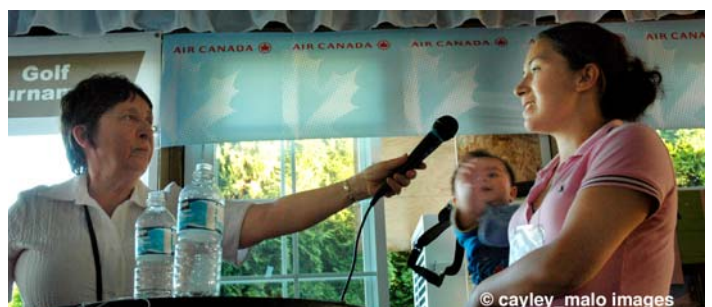
Dr. Ron Abrahams

## Aunt Leah's House

The most exciting news as we begin this new fiscal year is the return of "Aunt Leah's House". In February we participated in a four month pilot project to provide care for two teen moms. The pilot was successful and beginning May 15th we entered into a contract with the Ministry for Children and Family for a four bed resource for aboriginal teen moms. This is very significant for the organization. Many of you will remember the government cuts that led to the closing of the house in 2003. We are very excited that this founding program has been re-established.

## Golf Tournament

Aunt Leah's 4th Annual Golf Tournament will be held once again at the Country Meadows Golf Course in Richmond BC on September 11, 2009. Some exciting new changes are being put into place to make the competition more fun. Thank you to the Golf Tournament Committee for your dedication to this great fundraiser: Owen Clark, Leona Giffin and Don Sturgess.



Gale interviews Kim at our 2008 Golf Tournament

## Project GOAL

A few weeks ago, during one of our workshops, we encouraged the youth to think beyond their current needs, imagine the future and attempt to answer the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Together we made collages representing their long-term career goals and aspirations. Of the girls, future careers included youth worker, flight attendant, and dental hygienist. Of the boys, future careers included professional sports, plumber, and fire fighter. Statistics tell us that of today's homeless population in greater Vancouver, 60% of these individuals were once in foster care. It's exciting to realize that the kids at Aunt Leah's can realize their dreams. They can be like many of us when we were their age. It's easy to look at them and not see what makes them different. What they don't have enough of is support, family and community. Aunt Leah's provides this. Through your support, we are changing those frightening statistics, and the future for foster children.



YES Workshops: Making collages helps answer the question: "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

## Youth Week

Bowling at Rev's for Youth Week this past May was a huge success with our kids and we had a turn-out of over 20 youth, moms and babies from all of our programs.



Payge and Kaide Williams go bowling for Youth Week

## Mother's Day

Soroptimist International Metro Vancouver hosted a Mother's Day Dinner for past and present moms in our programs. The moms really enjoyed themselves and appreciated the great food, gifts and games that were offered. The event was held at Marpole Place and the Soroptimist members pitched in to ensure the occasion was celebrated in style.



Nelson, Serena and Jeremy at a Mother's Day Dinner

## Breaking Records

Aunt Leah's Fundraisers continue to break annual sales records and fundraising targets. Our Christmas Tree Lots raised nearly \$42,000 with 213 volunteers who worked a total of 843 hours. The Lonely Hearts Club Band music benefit, held January 31, 2009 at the Polish Community Centre, raised over \$27,000. We enjoyed wonderful performances by some great local bands. Together these two events raised over \$77,000 for youth and families in our programs.

## New Mailing Address

Our fundraising and administrative staff will be joining the programming staff at our New Westminster location. Our Thrift Store and Training Centre will remain at 675 SE Marine Drive in Vancouver. As of June 4th, our new mailing address will be:

**200 - 668 Carnarvon Street,  
New Westminister, BC V3M 5Y6  
Phone: 604-525-1204 Fax: 604-525-1295  
Email: [auntleahs@auntleahs.org](mailto:auntleahs@auntleahs.org)  
Web: [www.auntleahs.org](http://www.auntleahs.org)**

## Thank You!

Due to the recession, we know this has been a difficult financial year for many of our supporters and we are very grateful for your continued support. Your commitment to the foster children we serve is appreciated and we cannot do this work without you.