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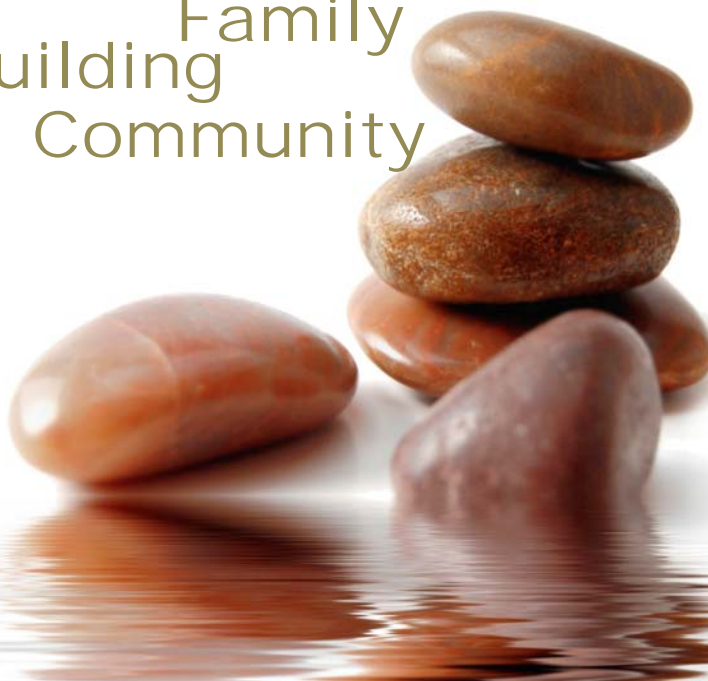
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# Strengthening Family Building Community



# Newsletter



## Message from Michael McCoy, Executive Director

Greetings all!

There was a recent article in the Vancouver Sun that addressed the field of social science research. The authors cited, were led by psychology and economics Prof. Joseph Henrich. What they found was that 96% of all psychological samples came from countries with only 12 per cent of the world's population. Specifically, the vast majority of research subjects were from, what the authors refer to as: Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) societies -- indeed, the U.S. alone provides 70% of psychological research subjects.

There has always been an appreciation and need for research to be made available, but what can we learn given this insight into research subjects?

Although it is sometimes helpful to make generalisations, we must not forget to appreciate the uniqueness of each individual and family. I believe the research findings emphasise that we must remain diligent to the foundation of critical thinking.

Information always needs to be challenged. Where and who does it come from and what is its relevance? We should understand that perception and research, do not necessarily tell the truth, but are rather like taking a snapshot and calling it a movie.

Thinking about this finding, emphasises to me, the importance of the work that Touchstone does. The most relevant information we need actually comes from the families and individuals that we work with and support. In the moment, it

is their situation and reactions that need to be honoured and not "fitted" or boxed into to the "WEIRD" perceived standard or norm. It is the uniqueness of their experience within their family world that needs to be respected. This remains a core principal when working within community. It is something that Touchstone strives to do in the work we are committed to. The communities of family, much like different cultures, bring a kaleidoscope of experience that needs to be heard and valued. Let's not ever make the mistake of believing that science can feel that for us --- that is a human experience – nothing weird about that.

## Volunteers make the difference



We'd like to express our gratitude to the following people who add so much to our programs and give so generously of their time.

### Restorative Justice Volunteers

Kathleen Barclay	Kevin Kientz
Carrie Chan	Magda V Laljee
Inga Chow	Grace Leung
Lisa Hazlett	Praew Posayanont
Mary C Hobbs	David R Richardson

### CAP-C Program Volunteers

Florence Chan	Bessie Leung
Linda Ding	Julia Logan
Jane Duo	Anna Tsang
Angelina Hill	Michelle Tsai
Debbie Ho	Wendy Wang
Jessica Huang	Ada Yang
Candace Kong	Amy Zeng
Judith Kwan	Sophie Zhang
Portia Li	Lindy Zhu

### Volunteers - general

Aly Fielding	Zoë Patko
Kathy Ross	

### Volunteer Board of Directors

Maria Salzl, Chair  
Jocelyn Wong, Vice Chair  
Lisa Martella, Secretary  
Lawrie Portigal, Treasurer  
Mahmood Awan  
Ian Chian  
Kim Howell  
Shawn Issel  
Joyce Ip  
Kelina Kwan  
Satnam Lalli

## Touchstone Partnership with Richmond School District

Touchstone Family Association (TFA) has a long history of partnership with the Richmond School District (RSD). One of the very first partnerships was our program, 'Learning Together', which began 14 years ago. This was a pre kindergarten experience for 4, 5 & 6 year olds. An 8-week course for parents and children to come and spend time in a kindergarten classroom before starting into the school system and designed to reduce anxiety and promote a successful first experience with school. TFA provided the programming and the school district provided the classroom, often with the classroom teacher being there; a welcoming face to recognize when they came back in the fall. Since 1996 we've run 3 programs per year in all quadrants of the Richmond School District, serving more than 30 families each year.

With the introduction of Strong Start in 2008, Touchstone and the School District had the opportunity to partner again. In the fall of 2008 we started providing support staff for the Strong Start facilitator one time per week at Mitchell and Grauer elementary schools. In the fall of 2009, we increased our services to extend to Thompson Strong Start. In exchange, Richmond School District allowed us to use the Strong Start classroom in the morning for our Asian Family Support group.

Because Strong Start is so similar to Learning Together, a decision was made to approach the School District about developing our partnership by providing more support for Strong Start facilitators while disbanding the Learning Together program so that services would not be duplicated. Honouring our long term relationship, Touchstone and the District agreed to increase our existing partnership, and in the fall of 2010 increased TFA support staff at the Strong Start programs from 3 sessions per week to 6 sessions and we will be using the Strong Start classroom in the afternoon at Errington for our Asian Family Support group.

In the fall of 2010, the combination of 6 morning or afternoons at the Strong Start programs will be determined by RSD based on need as well as language (both our support staff speak English, Cantonese and Mandarin).

Michael McCoy presented a framed photograph to the School district at their May 3, 2010 Board Meeting to celebrate and recognize the years of this most successful collaboration.

## Eating Together Campaign Launch

At Touchstone we believe that families are the 'authors of their own change'. Sometimes, working through difficult issues in families is a matter of finding the time to sit together to talk, and then it comes down to communicating the things that annoy us without upsetting each other too much! One of the best places to practice this is at the kitchen table, or on the 'front porch'. Families are so busy nowadays that having a meal together has dropped off the priority list for many. There is an abundance of research on the benefits of sitting down for that family meal.

To draw attention to this simple first step in resolving family difficulties, we will be launching our "**Eating Together**" Campaign on Family Day (February 21, 2011), next year. Restaurants, grocery stores, hotels and other organizations throughout the Richmond area will be focusing on ideas to bring families together around a family meal to inspire true communication.

All families will have the opportunity to enter a draw for fabulous prizes during the week. We are currently seeking sponsors, prizes and any ideas that we can include to make our Family Day all Week – a memorable time for Richmond families. Please call Georgina to find out more about signature sponsorship opportunities or for more information 604-207-5046.

# Touchstone is proud to announce its new Storyline Program

This program is made possible with the help of 2010 Legacies Now and the Richmond Public Library.



This library at Touchstone is available to all our clients. Books are available on the honour system.

- Families are able to take any book they wish.
- No time limits on borrowing.

Should their child love the book and not want to give it up, we would appreciate another book being returned in its place.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Develop a love of reading amongst our families.
- Inspire the idea of reading to and with children.
- Introduce the idea of joining the library; it may be easier than you think!
- Let our families know about library programs they might like to attend or participate in.
- Provide registration forms and library cards for families who would like to join the library.

We invite visitors and friends of Touchstone to bring a book (in good condition), to be added to our library when possible.

Our gratitude to all the people who have already added to our rapidly growing collection

## Eating Together is Good for Families

Thanks to Richmond Mayor, Malcom Brodie for recognizing the importance of Family and Proclaiming February 21, 2011 Family Day. At Touchstone, we'll be celebrating all week!

### Why is eating together good for families?

#### Reason #1 Communicate

Time to connect, learn from each other, share news of the day, give attention to children/teens.

#### Reason #2 Model Manners

Display table manners, meal etiquette, social skills. Keeping the mood light, relaxed and loving. Leading by example.

#### Reason #3 Expand their world – one food at a time

A good time to try new foods, without forcing. Mix new foods with stand-by family favourites.

#### Reason #4 Prevent Disruptive Behaviour

Research shows that frequent family dinners are associated with lower rates of smoking, drinking, and illegal drug use in pre-teens and teenagers.

#### Reason #5 Improve grades at school

Research also shows that teenagers who eat dinner four or five times a week with their families have higher academic performance compared with teenagers who eat with their families less often.

### Quality time with teenagers

Sometimes it's difficult to get teenagers to stay through a complete meal at home, meeting together at a restaurant now and again is a good time to get everyone together and stay in one place to benefit from all the above reasons to eat together.

It is time to bring the 'family' back to the dinner table. Sharing dinner together gives everyone a sense of identity. It can help ease day-to-day conflicts, as well as establish traditions and memories that can last a lifetime.

Celebrate Family — it's the first community we belong to.....

## Cantonese and Mandarin Speaking Asian Family Support Group

This is an early crisis intervention and parenting skills education group that encourages participants to learn and develop effective resolution skills to manage their families and to build healthier social interaction between themselves and their children.

Many participants had the same goals in joining this group. Through regular designed topic discussion, they felt at ease, safe to share challenges and learn to develop new positive strategies. According to Touchstone's annual surveys, participants have consistently expressed satisfaction as they felt respected and understood in this group.

Participants have demonstrated their expertise in crafts, talent performances, home-made desserts, food recipes, potluck gatherings and gift wrapping for some needed community services agencies and senior homes during different seasonal functions. Three past participants have shared their stories of how they have helped to transform their families which has encouraged other participants to maintain a more positive attitude as a result.

The group hopes to continue welcoming more new parents this September. We looking forward to making plans together for being the most positive and effective choices, establishing loving and caring families.



國粵語華裔家庭交流小組

每年於國粵語華裔家庭交流小組的參加者持續上升(由12-30人或以上),它是一個預防危機及教養子女,並鼓勵參加者學習,提高處理問題的技巧,促進和諧家庭生活和關係。

有不少的參加者最重要的是尋覓到共同的信念和目標。透過專題討論,她們能坦誠地分享遇到的挑戰,願意努力不懈去提升解決問題的技巧。根據點石家庭協會每年的意見調查,參加者一致認為滿意,因有被接納和被受尊重的感覺。致於導師亦能直接聽取她們的需要和意見。

隨著參加者的投入,她們更能發揮寶貴的潛能,於不同的節日活動中,齊心協力做手工藝,才藝表現,點心聚會,自製甜糕點,食物餐單及包贈禮品給有需要的社區服務機構和長者宿舍。近期有三個舊參加者被邀請分享她們的故事及如何受啓導下得以調解家庭關係和復合,且鼓勵現參加者持續以一個正面的態度去解決問題。這個小組於九月歡迎新的家長參加,透過正面和有效的選擇,建立友愛與和平的家庭氣氛。

馬淑君 Selina Ma

# Thank you!



## ENDOWMENT SPONSORS

Kronier & Sparrow Limited - \$10,000

A gift to our endowment held at Richmond Community Foundation is truly a gift that keeps on giving and growing — forever. The power of our endowment is that it can create a permanent source of funds for Touchstone's important programs which enhance the quality of life for over 400 families every year in the City of Richmond for the benefit of all.

## DIAMOND SPONSORS (Over \$5,000)

TCSI Consulting Limited

## RUBY SPONSORS (\$2,500—\$4,999)

iQmetrix Intelligent Retail

## AMETHYST SPONSORS (\$1,000-\$2,499)

CKNW Children's Fund  
Vancouver Shaughnessy Lions Club

## JADE SPONSORS (up to \$999)

Frank Guo  
Justin Wight



## TICKET DONORS FOR OUR SUMMER PROGRAMS

**Accent Inns**, Richmond – open passes to Canadians baseball games at Swangard Stadium all summer.

**Signature Sandman Hotel**, Richmond – 20 passes to a Canadians baseball game and transportation to and from the stadium.

**BC Hydro with Vancouver Whitecaps** – tickets for our Day Program youth to attend a game and meet the team.

**Pacific National Exhibition** – day passes enabling our Francis House residents to attend during the summer and additional admission passes for extra days.

## Contacts

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### Cantonese and Mandarin Inquiries


粵語及國語查詢，請電 604.207.5034

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Fax: 604.279.1814  
Email: touchstone@touchfam.ca

### Francis House Residential Treatment Home

5794 Chester Street  
Vancouver, BC V5W 3B5  
Tel: 604.222.2133  
Fax: 604.222.0228  
Email: csamulak@touchfam.ca

## We're on Twitter!

FOLLOW ME ON 

You can start following Touchstone on Twitter now at 'Touchfam'. Facebook coming shortly. We're hoping to attract lots of attention and build a strong fan base for letting you know about all the programs offered here as well as news affecting our families. Eventually, we are planning a blog and chat page too, so keep watching for more information.

## Events

**Our AGM this year promises to be exciting. Our speaker will be David Code. Do you think his message might be a little controversial?**

These days, we parents seem to be marrying our children instead of our spouses, because the truth is, we may find it easier to be with our kids than our partners. But overparenting leads to spoiled, demanding children with a multitude of special needs. (see more on David's website [www.davidarthurcode.com](http://www.davidarthurcode.com))

**Mark your calendar so you don't miss**

### Touchstone's upcoming events....

Sept. 16 Tee Cup Golf Tournament

Sept. 20 David Code Workshop  
Sept. 21 Annual General Meeting

Regular Fall programming will begin in September.

**More information is, or will be available on our website: [www.touchstonefamily.ca](http://www.touchstonefamily.ca)**



Councillors Derek Dang and Bill McNulty with ED Michael McCoy at the Touchstone Open House.