



# Red Fox Waking

**An Active Outreach project**

**Building a future that is fit and fun  
for everyone**



## Overview

Active Outreach is a new Active Communities Vancouver initiative developed to increase the activity levels of different groups of Vancouver residents that have been identified as needing support to be active and lead healthy lifestyles. These groups include Aboriginal people, women and girls, people with disabilities and people living on low incomes.

Red Fox Waking was an Active Outreach pilot project reaching out to Aboriginal families in East Vancouver, to increase their activity levels and access to healthy resources. The first of three phases of the Red Fox series, Red Fox Waking was hosted by Helping Spirit Lodge Society and funded by the Union of British Columbian Municipalities through a Health Promotions grant. The second phase, Red Fox Walking, is running now, in partnership with Vancouver Native Health Society.

Red Fox Waking was based on the acknowledgement that many Aboriginal families in Vancouver face barriers to being active. These include environmental barriers, such as living in an unsafe neighbourhood or lack of transportation choices, as well as social barriers such as low self-esteem or limited awareness of local resources. Red Fox Waking not only acknowledged the barriers, it worked to ameliorate them and it created new patterns of success and enjoyment for Aboriginal families. The children, youth and parents were oriented to local facilities and taught new skills to be active together.

An appreciation of strengths within the Aboriginal community was also a foundation of Red Fox Waking. Parent and youth role models were highlighted to the community, and new connections were forged between role models and community members eager to develop new skills and habits.

Valuable feedback on how to increase activity levels of Aboriginal families was compiled, and this feedback has been and will continue to be used in the design of future Active Communities Vancouver projects.



## BRIEF SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Active Outreach – Red Fox Waking supported the goals of Act Now BC and Active Communities Vancouver to increase activity levels of residents “20% by 2010”.
- Red Fox Waking fulfilled the objective of the Vancouver Park Board's Active Communities Plan to increase the activity levels of groups of Vancouver residents identified as needing support to be active: Aboriginal people, women and girls, people living on low incomes, and people with disabilities.
- Active Outreach developed new collaborative relationships between the Vancouver Park Board, the Vancouver School Board and the Aboriginal community, to meet our common goals of increasing the health, capacity and fitness levels of Aboriginal families. This foundation of success is being further developed through Red Fox Walking and the Active Adventures Passport program.
- Through the Red Fox Trail Tracker, a passport of 11 special events, Red Fox Waking demonstrated to Aboriginal families free, fun ways to be active together in the community, and close to home.  
[http://vancouver.ca/parks/activecommunity/pdf/passport\\_red\\_fox\\_trail.pdf](http://vancouver.ca/parks/activecommunity/pdf/passport_red_fox_trail.pdf)
- By providing leadership training and volunteer opportunities to Aboriginal youth and parents, Red Fox Waking strengthened the community by giving the volunteers confidence, skills and experience. Some of the volunteers continue to work with Active Communities Vancouver projects, gaining more skills, experience and confidence. Red Fox Walking takes the volunteer training further into the Aboriginal community, developing thirty community volunteers to lead activities for the 2008 Active Adventures Passport.



## **Objectives:**

### **a) Red Fox Waking built skills and abilities that address Aboriginal women and children's health promotion needs.**

- In safe environments with friends and family, the parents and children explored new ways to be active together, and discovered how much fun they could have at Vancouver Park Board facilities, and in the community.
- Children and families developed new skills in sports and games, and increased their fitness levels.
- The parents and children learned about nutrition and growing food with the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project.
- Aboriginal parents had access to culturally sensitive workshops and seminars on communication skills, self-esteem and conflict resolution.

### **Red Fox Waking strengthened collaboration between our local government and collaborating partners:**

- Through Active Outreach, Helping Spirit Lodge Society joined VACNet, the Vancouver Active Communities Network, creating new connections between the Aboriginal community, government, and the recreation community.
- Active Outreach provided resources and networking for Helping Spirit Lodge Society's program, Journey to Wellness.
- A collaboration between Active Outreach and Vancouver Native Health Society was developed through the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project, a program promoting nutrition and food security among Aboriginal families. The next phase of Red Fox, Red Fox Walking, is a partnership with the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project, incorporating food security and nutrition with fitness as its focus.

### **Red Fox Waking developed innovation and "best practice" for Aboriginal women and children**

- Red Fox Waking was designed to inspire Aboriginal children and families to be active, to become oriented to VPB facilities, to learn skills, and to contribute to the wellbeing of themselves, their families and their community. These goals were met: There were a total of 338 participants in the 11 Trail Tracker events, 60 participants in the workshops, and 10 parents and youth in the leadership training (see page 9 for statistics).
- Community capacity building was achieved on multiple levels: parents and youth received leadership training, confidence and work experience, children and families developed skills in games and sports, and families and communities were strengthened by participating in positive, active fun together.



- Five of the parent and youth leaders of Red Fox Waking volunteered for the 2007 Active Adventures Passport, which began just after Red Fox Waking ended. The volunteers will receive more leadership training and work experience in upcoming Active Communities Vancouver projects, increasing their employability and confidence.
- Role models from the Aboriginal community inspired and supported parents to be active with their children.
- Red Fox Fun, a program of circus arts, skipping and active games, was piloted through Red Fox Waking. It was designed to meet the needs and interests of the Aboriginal children participants. Red Fox Fun is now part of the Active Adventures Passport, to be rolled out to all East Vancouver schools in 2008 and all Vancouver schools in 2009. Because of its design, Red Fox Fun will be appealing and accessible to Aboriginal students in Vancouver.

**d) Red Fox Waking fostered increased information sharing and networking**

- Many community organizations, including the Vancouver School Board, the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project, community centre associations, and sports organizations came together to provide active fun and skill development for Aboriginal families. These partnerships will be strengthened in upcoming Active Communities Vancouver projects, including Red Fox Walking and the 2008 Active Adventures Passport.
- Helping Spirit Lodge Society is now part of VACnet, facilitating collaboration between the VPB and the Aboriginal community in the development of future Active Communities Vancouver projects.
- Valuable feedback from Aboriginal families about their access to VPB fitness facilities was compiled and this information will be used to develop future projects.



#### **MEASUREMENTS USED TO ASSESS OUTCOMES:**

Attendance and statistics were gathered for all special events.

Red Fox Waking was a community-driven project: There was a core group of thirty community members who participated in all or most of the events. Rapport was developed with First Nations workers at four schools and with staff from Aboriginal and recreation agencies. Feedback and ideas were solicited from the participants, volunteers, and school and agency staff from the very beginning and throughout the project, and many of the suggestions and ideas were incorporated into the project as it unfolded.

This 'casual' method was used to accommodate First Nations values and traditions, and therefore increase their participation and communication levels in the project. It worked: all the regular participants, volunteers, and staff gave time and effort to the project, and expressed both the value they placed on Red Fox Waking, their enjoyment they see it bringing to themselves and others, and their desire to support its success.

This oral testimonials served the function of bonding the different groups together, and allowing a voice for participants to share their vision.

## PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT:

### Red Fox Trail Tracker Attendance Statistics by Date

Date	Total No.	Children	Age Range	Parents	Aboriginal	Spec. Needs
Feb. 17	9	7	6 –15	1	8	3
Feb. 24	25	16	3 - 11	4	25	4
March 3	27	19	3 - 14	6	25	3
March 10	32	20	2 mo. - 14	9	31	5
March 17	23	16	3 - 14	5	21	5
March 20	81	62	3 - 14	8	56	7
March 21	14	11	3 - 12	1	13	0
March 22	16	13	3 - 12	3	16	3
March 23	62	52	3 - 12	5	45	6
March 31	28	20	3 - 12	6	27	3
April 14	19	17	3-10	2	19	2

Twenty parents attended; sixteen mothers and four fathers. Families were from Spirit Way (a second stage transition house) Selkirk, Queen Alexandra, Nightingale, MacDonald and Renfrew schools.

### Red Fox Attendance Statistics by Event

Event	Total No.	Children	Age Range	Parents	Aboriginal	Spec. Needs
Olympic Countdown and Nature Tour at Hastings Park	9	7	6 –15	1	8	3
Swimming at Britannia	25	16	3 - 11	4	25	4
Active Adventures and Garden Project	27	19	3 - 14	6	25	3
Skating and Garden Project at Trout Lake CC	32	20	2 mo. - 14	9	31	5
Active Adventures and Breakdancing	23	16	3 - 14	5	21	5
Active Family Carnival at Trout Lake CC	81	62	3 - 14	8	56	7
Swimming at Killarney Pool	14	11	3 - 12	1	13	0
Aboriginal Farm – Hiking, Gardening, Stories from Elders	16	13	3 - 12	3	16	3
Sporty Family Day – Bouncy Castle, Skipping with Jump Rope for Heart, Dodgeball	62	52	3 - 12	5	45	6
Active Adventures at Britannia	28	20	3 - 12	6	27	3
Skating	19	17	3 – 10	2	19	2

<b>Total No. of Volunteers</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>First Nations</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Women and Girls</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>People with Disabilities</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Ethnic Minorities</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>People with Low Incomes</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Single Mothers</b>	<b>7</b>

### **HOW OUTCOMES WILL BE SUSTAINED:**

- Red Fox Waking showed children and families that recreational activities can be done anywhere, including in their homes. People learned that they were very welcome at Vancouver Park Board facilities and that many of the perceived barriers are surmountable. Children and families who have active fun together want to have more active fun.
- Red Fox Waking is part of the larger Red Fox series, so Red Fox Waking has provided a foundation to build on in future Red Fox projects, including the current phase, Red Fox Walking.
- Children participating in the Red Fox Trail Tracker received sports equipment as prizes, to encourage and equip them to stay active after the project ends. The equipment is suitable to being active indoors, or in small spaces, requiring no transportation, extra equipment or money. Eg. Skipping ropes, stilts, soccer balls, and dance accessories.
- Sports equipment was given to schools, transition houses, parent support programs, and Aboriginal centres to encourage ongoing skill building and physical activity in the community.
- Families of Red Fox Waking participated in the Active Communities Vancouver Active Adventures Passport, and some of the parent and youth leaders volunteered for the Active Adventures Passport school days and special events. These volunteers will be supported to continue working for future Active Communities Vancouver projects and they will be eligible to receive more leadership training.
- Connections were forged between the recreation community and the Aboriginal community, through the delivery of fun, inclusive special events, training sessions and workshops. These connections will be fostered in current and future Active Communities Vancouver projects.



## **Working together for Success**

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