



Red Fox Active OUTreach



Annual Report



Figure 1 Red Fox Leaders after Pandora Park Day



Overview

Red Fox Active Outreach is a recreation and training program outreaching to the Aboriginal, disability and inner city populations to increase levels of physical activity, capacity, social responsibility and healthy choices. Through special events and community programming, Red Fox promotes healthy living, capacity building, cultural sharing and self-esteem. Red Fox Active Outreach is part of the Active Communities Vancouver programme with the City of Vancouver, which is part of the Provincial ActNowBC campaign to increase the health of all British Columbians. Vancouver Native Health Society is the host agency of Red Fox Active Outreach and three VNHS programmes collaborate with Red Fox.

Red Fox Active Outreach is the recipient of the 2009 Programme Excellence Award of the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), and the 2009 City of Vancouver Youth Outreach Award. It has been highlighted as a success story and model by Active Communities and the Physical Activity Strategy, two branches of ActNowBC.

Red Fox Active Outreach was established in 2006 when the Vancouver Park Board asked consultant Emma Sutherland to create and deliver programming to increase the activity levels of Aboriginal people, women and girls and people on low incomes. Emma has a degree in Women's Studies from Simon Fraser University, several years of fundraising school courses from BCIT, and over twenty years experience of supporting individuals and families in Vancouver's inner city to become more resilient and learn new skills.

The pilot of Red Fox, Red Fox Waking, ran from November 2006 to April 2007. It was during the pilot that Red Fox began partnering with Vancouver Native Health Society through the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project. The fit between Red Fox and Vancouver Native Health Society was so good that Red Fox asked VNHS to be its host agency. The first project was Red Fox Walking (October 2007 to January 2008); the second was Red Fox Running (February 2008 to May 2008). The third phase, Red Fox Active Adventures, ran from May 2008 to March 2009. Red Fox also coordinated Our Community Bridging Celebration (September 2008) with the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre and Trout Lake Community Centre.

- Since 2007, the Red Fox Program has delivered free recreation activities to over 40,000 children, youth, families and adults in East Vancouver.
- More than 300 youth and adults (primarily Aboriginal) have increased their life skills and employability by taking leadership training and then leading Red Fox activities in their communities.
- An average of 500 individuals participates in Red Fox programs and training every month, not including special events.

Red Fox Active Outreach creates new programs and special events, and enhances existing special events and community programming that is geared to Aboriginal, multicultural and low income residents in Vancouver. Funders include the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, United Way, the City of Vancouver, Active Communities, Telus and Gaming. Several of the agencies to which Red Fox delivers regular programming now provide financial support. These include: the Positive Outlook Program, Seymour School, Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre, Strathcona Community Centre and Britannia Centre.

The Red Fox Program is based on the traditional Aboriginal living code called the Medicine Wheel, which promotes balance in four areas of life: physical, mental, emotional and cultural. Red Fox Active Outreach embodies the Medicine Wheel by giving participants opportunities to eat healthy food, learn new skills, be active and have fun together. The project builds self-esteem among its participants and leaders, and this fosters hope among individuals and within the Aboriginal community. Red Fox Active Outreach works to ameliorate the legacy of oppression and trauma that Aboriginal people have endured since colonialization, so that people can begin to fulfill their potential, feel positive about themselves and each other, and contribute to the wellbeing of themselves and the community.



Red Fox leaders deliver “active play” stations including stilt-walking, pogo stick jumping, tug o’ war, juggling, hula hoops, active games, skipping, soccer and wall climbing. These movement education stations enabled the leaders and participants to have fun while developing skills and self-confidence in their abilities. Red Fox stations are based on the “Active Start” and “Active For Life” phases of the Canadian Sport for Life model.

The foundation of Red Fox Active Outreach is community capacity building. Inner city and Aboriginal youth and adults are recruited and trained to lead free Red Fox activities and special events at their local Aboriginal agencies, schools, community centres, neighbourhood houses, and parks. By providing recreation, health promotion and capacity building activities at the program sites, Red Fox Active Outreach enhances community programs that provide health and support services to Aboriginal and low income children, youth, adults and families. Red Fox Active Outreach provides fitness and recreation activities that complement the benefits of the existing community programs and special events and increased the health and capacity of the program participants.



Figure 2 Seymour School Session

Meeting Project Goals

Physical Activity

The main raison d'être of Red Fox Active Outreach is increasing physical activity among the target groups. Sedentary lifestyles have been proven to be a leading cause of chronic health conditions and diseases, including obesity, diabetes, heart disease and poor mental health. Aboriginal people and people on low incomes have been shown to have lower than average levels of physical activity, and poorer health. Red Fox Active Outreach gives participants opportunities to be active, in ways that they can replicate on their own. Many observers comment on seeing children physically exerting themselves for hours during Red Fox sessions.

- Movement education stations showed children, adults and families ways that they can be active and healthy together close to home, with inexpensive props, and in small spaces. Eg. Skipping, hula hoops, soccer, juggling.
- Red Fox gives individuals and families opportunities to be active and make healthy choices together in their neighbourhood – at their schools, community programs and at local parks.
- Red Fox Active Outreach brings together the recreation and Aboriginal communities by enhancing existing support programs through active play and capacity building.
- The activities are designed to include all members of the family. This inclusion encourages Aboriginal families to participate as it gives them opportunities to have healthy, active fun together.

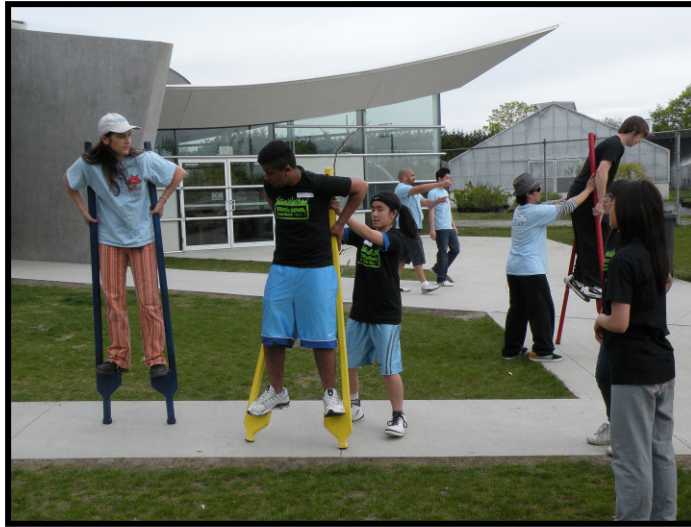


Figure 3 Youth Training Session

Capacity Building

Youth and Adult Leaders:

Red Fox provides a safe, supportive environment for youth and adults with barriers to employment to develop leadership, recreation and health promotion skills. This increases their employability and life skills and increases the capacity of the Aboriginal community. See Appendix II for Leadership Statistics.

- Between May 2008 and March 2009, there were 462 leadership opportunities for Aboriginal and inner city youth and adults.
- Red Fox Leaders receive life and employment skills training in nutrition, communication and recreation skills. Certified recreation courses include High Five and Everybody Gets to Play.
- The leaders receive honoraria, which provide them with a source of earned income, increasing their self-esteem and sense of achievement.
- In the Winter of 2009, the Red Fox Leaders participated in a special project creating new Red Fox stations and digital stories with the Therapeutic Recreation students of Douglas College. They were special guests in the classroom, and they were given orientations to post secondary education.
- Senior Red Fox Leaders attend planning meetings with schools and agencies, so that they can 'job shadow' the coordinator and learn community program development and special event coordination.
- The youth Leaders participate in monthly recreation outings, fostering appreciation and aptitude in sports including wall climbing, snow boarding, bowling and hiking.

Community Participants:

Red Fox delivers regular sessions to school and community programs that provide health and support services to Aboriginal and low income youth, adults and families in

the east side of Vancouver. Red Fox Leaders deliver recreation stations to program participants on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. The regular program delivery gives the individuals and families opportunities to develop skills on an ongoing basis.

The program participants are the neighbours and peers of the Red Fox Leaders, so the sessions provide the Leaders and participants with a socially inclusive environment for them to develop their skills and be active. It enhances the quality of existing community programs by providing physical activities for children and families and by increasing the skill levels of program staff. The programs that Red Fox serves include:

- Vancouver Native Health Clinic: The Positive Outlook Program
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre
- Selkirk Elementary School: Aboriginal Friendship Club
- Admiral Seymour Elementary School: Aboriginal Friendship Club
- Admiral Seymour Elementary School: Cooking Fun for Families Program
- Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House: Aboriginal Family Night Program
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House: Multicultural Family Night Program
- Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre: Out of School Care Program
- Strathcona Community Centre: Out of School Care Program
- Britannia Centre: Out of School Care Program

Instilling Cultural Knowledge and Pride

- Red Fox leaders are given opportunities to share their cultural skills with others, by performing traditional songs, dances and drumming.
- The Resident Elder of Vancouver Native Health Society teaches the participants Aboriginal traditions, such as cooking and group dynamics, through the Medicine Wheel.
- Red Fox organizes special events geared to the Aboriginal community that combine cultural celebrations with healthy active living.
- Red Fox provides Active Communities Vancouver with Aboriginal cultural performances, creating a bridge between the Aboriginal and recreation communities.



Figure 4 Putting up the Tepee for Our Community Bridging Celebration

Healthy Eating

- Red Fox provides healthy snacks at many sessions.
- Red Fox Feasting gives youth opportunities to learn cooking and healthy eating skills.
- Red Fox enhances community programs and special events that provide healthy meals and snacks to Aboriginal and low income people by providing free recreation activities on site.
- ADAPT provides nutrition coaching and workshops to the Red Fox Leaders.
- Red Fox worked with Vancouver Coastal Health to develop the “Social Responsibility” page of the 2008 and 2009 Active Adventure Passports, showing youth and families ways that they can eat healthy food, be active, and take transit on a low income.

Social Responsibility

- The First Nations Workers of Selkirk, Strathcona and Seymour schools attest to the difference Red Fox Active Outreach made to the students of the Aboriginal Clubs of their schools: “The youth benefit a lot from helping out the younger children. It’s a safe way for them to develop leadership skills. All the children and youth look forward to learning new skills and having fun together”.
- Monthly recreation outings are held for junior and senior Red Fox leaders, to reward socially responsible behaviour, to give them opportunities to engage in positive leisure pursuits together, and to give the younger youth opportunities to learn from older role models.
- A point tracker system for the youth leaders was developed to reward socially responsible behaviour such as punctuality and conscientiousness. Rewards include a weekend snowboarding trip (March 2009) and to the 2009 BCRPA Symposium in Whistler, to participate in the Red Fox Presentation and to enjoy hiking and cultural activities.

Community Collaboration

Red Fox Active Outreach is a model of community agencies working together to meet common goals. Red Fox Active Outreach complements existing community programs and special events by bringing a physical activity component and by giving Aboriginal and inner city youth and adults opportunities to be in leadership roles. See Appendix III for a table of program collaborations.

Creating New Programs

Red Fox Active Outreach piloted the following new programs and special events to support the health and success of Aboriginal and inner city children, youth, adults and families:

Red Fox Feasting

This is a community kitchen with the families of the Aboriginal Friendship Club of Strathcona Elementary School. It is a partnership with the ADAPT program of Vancouver Native Health Society. ADAPT stands for Aboriginal Diabetes Awareness and Prevention Teachings. Parents and youth learn how to make low-cost, healthy meals while children engage in active play with youth Red Fox leaders. Then everyone comes

together to enjoy a healthy meal. Aboriginal culture is celebrated and transmitted to the participants in the following ways:

- The meals often include traditional food such as salmon, yams, beans and buffalo.
- The Resident Elder of Vancouver Native Health Society provides traditional teachings to the youth and parents and leads traditional prayers before the meals are served.
- Red Fox leaders sometimes sing and drum traditional songs before the meals are served.



Figure 5 Enjoying a healthy meal together

Elders Sun Run Walking Club



Elders and staff from Vancouver Native Health Society and the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Society met weekly to train for the 2009 Vancouver Sun Run. Using their Active Communities Vancouver Walking to Wellness Passports and recording their steps with their pedometers, the participants explored Nature and Art Walks

throughout Vancouver while getting fit to walk the 10-kilometre Sun Run together. An Elder drumming and singing traditional songs often led the walk. Planning is underway to continue the walking program in Fall 2009.

Red Fox at POP



Members of the Positive Outlook Program of Vancouver Native Health Clinic participate in bi-monthly recreation activities and outings. HIV-positive, multi-barriered adults learn recreation skills so that they can teach their peers while engaging in physically active games and activities. The peer leaders encourage their neighbours to participate in the recreation activities, which are often held on the sidewalk in front of the Downtown Eastside Clinic.

2008 Our Community Bridging Celebration



Red Fox collaborated with the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre and Trout Lake Community Centre (Grandview Woodlands Community Association) to host a special event that attracted 1100 people (80% Aboriginal). Everyone enjoyed a day of cultural celebration, physical activity and health promotion. Highlights included youth Métis jigging, canoe rides on Trout Lake, a portable climbing wall and traditional Aboriginal games. Over twenty community agencies supported the success of the day.

See Appendix IV for more information.

2009 Olympic Countdown Step-Out Walk

February 2009. In partnership with the Vancouver Park Board. Red Fox provided cultural performances and active play activities to enhance the Olympic Countdown Walk. Red Fox Leaders met Olympic athletes and helped lead the Walk.

Community Special Events



Red Fox Active Outreach delivers active play and health promotion stations at City special events that promote social responsibility and healthy living.

See Appendix II for a list of all events between May 31, 2008 and March 2009.

Red Fox supported the following community festivals that promote social responsibility:

- Grandview Woodlands Safe Kids Day. Sponsored by the Grandview Woodlands Community Policing Centre
- BC Rivers Day Salmon Festival. September 2008. Sponsored by the False Creek Watershed Society
- Cedar: Aboriginal youth science appreciation day camp at UBC. July 2008
- Strathcona Host a City Happening Event: October 2008
- MoreSports Soccer Jam June 2008
- Mount Pleasant Days June 2008

Figure 10 Climbing at the 2008 ADAPT Conference

Articles

- On Vancouver Park Board Website
<http://vancouver.ca/parks/activecommunity/redfox.htm>
- Featured as an Active Communities Success Story
http://www.activecommunities.bc.ca/pdfs/CIA_Vancouver.pdf
- Featured as a Success Story by the “Everybody Active” program of the 2008 Provincial Physical Activity Strategy
<http://www.physicalactivitystrategy.ca/pdfs/Success%20Story%20Red%20Fox.pdf>
- Featured in Common Interest Winter 2009
http://www.ccec.bc.ca/upload/docs/newsletters/ci_winter_09.pdf
- A Red Fox Leader is showcased in a community newspaper (page 6).
http://www.cedarcottage.org/docs/kccpaper_08_mar.pdf
- Active Outreach will present on the Red Fox Program at the 2009 BCRPA Symposium.
http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/training_symposium/symposium/documents/2009Symposiumbrochure.pdf

Community Partners

- Vancouver Native Health Society
- Vancouver Park Board
- Vancouver School Board: First Nations Education Department
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre
- Urban Native Youth Association
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Grandview Woodlands Community Centre Association (Trout Lake)
- Strathcona Community Centre Association
- Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre Association
- Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre
- Britannia Secondary School: Outreach Alternative Program
- Britannia Community Centre
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House
- Selkirk Elementary School
- Admiral Seymour Elementary School
- Strathcona Elementary School
- Vancouver Native Health Clinic: Positive Outlook Program
- Kids Up Front plus many others



Figure 11 Snowboarding for the first time.



For more information, contact Emma Sutherland, Active Outreach Coordinator, at activeoutreach@gmail.com or 604.319.2571.
<http://vancouver.ca/parks/activecommunity/redfox.htm>

