

PRESS RELEASE:
NEW RECREATION PROGRAM CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR
SURREY'S ABORIGINAL AND INNER-CITY CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Surrey, August 8th, 2016

Red Fox Healthy Living Society announced today the launch of a new recreation program for Aboriginal and inner-city children and youth, run in partnership with the Surrey School District and the Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast BC. The weekly *Active Play-Youth Leadership* program will bring an innovative model, which uniquely promotes health and physical literacy for children alongside employment and life skills for youth, to a number of new communities in Surrey.

Aboriginal children and youth make up a large and growing group in Surrey, according to a [recent report](#) commissioned by the city. However, the same report finds that they are significantly underserved, especially compared with Vancouver.

The new *Active Play-Youth Leadership* program is the first of its kind in Surrey. It will serve 90 Aboriginal and inner-city children and 10 teens every week at 9 elementary schools in Surrey including Old Yale Road, Holly and Lena Shaw. The program will be delivered in these communities over the summer, and is planned to continue in Surrey into the new school year. This expands a program model which has been serving Aboriginal and inner-city youth and children in Vancouver since 2007, and in other Surrey communities since 2015.

The *Active Play-Youth Leadership* program is designed with two goals: to help Aboriginal and inner-city youth develop the leadership, employment and life skills they need to overcome barriers to success; and to teach physical literacy and healthy-living skills to children in the same communities. The program is unique in the way it connects these goals by training and mentoring the youth to lead the children's recreation programs, giving the youth valuable work experience and the children role models they can relate to. One of the results is that child participants often go on to become Youth Leaders themselves.

"Red Fox programs offer a ladder of opportunities for children and youth to build healthy lives and really make the most of their potential," said Red Fox Executive Director, Emma Sutherland. "In Surrey we have already seen how much enthusiasm the kids and youth have to learn and develop, and how much need there is for greater opportunities. We're thrilled to be able to offer our new program in Surrey."

"It is great to have a partner like the Red Fox Healthy Living Society that is willing and has the expertise to work with our district to bring important services and educational opportunities to our students and our communities," said Surrey Board of Education Chairperson, Shawn Wilson.

"Partnerships between community organizations like ours are a key part in making sure we are supporting as many kids in our communities as possible," said Carolyn Tuckwell, President and CEO, Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast BC. "We are excited that Red Fox Healthy Living Society is able to expand their reach and that we get to be a part of it."

"I've been officially working with Red Fox for over a year now," said Destiny Walker, Youth Leader in the Surrey *Active Play-Youth Leadership* program. "I would never have the confidence or motivation to communicate and speak well with others if it wasn't for the wonderful Red Fox staff. I can't wait to get even more experience this year and be the best Youth Leader I can be."

The Surrey *Active Play-Youth Leadership* program is funded by the Ministry of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and the TELUS Vancouver Community Board, with support from the Surrey School District and Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast BC.

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ABOUT RED FOX:

Red Fox Healthy Living Society is a registered non-profit Society and Charity that serves Aboriginal and inner-city children, youth and families. We run recreation, food and cultural programs across Metro Vancouver that foster healthy, active living, leadership skills and employment training. Red Fox programs reach over 15,000 children, youth and parents each year. Red Fox is a recipient of the BC Recreation & Parks Association Program Excellence Award, and the Roger Inman Award for Community Economic Development.