



## SPOTLIGHT ON GOOD WORKS

### THE NOTARY FOUNDATION SUPPORTS WOMEN IN NEED:

# Investing in the Future of Single Mothers

In May 2008, the Notary Foundation of British Columbia made a generous gift of \$25,000 to help YWCA Vancouver continue to provide the Legal Educator program, a vital service to women in need.

At age 20, Andrea Vollans became the mother of twin girls. Single, unprepared for the future, and overwhelmed by the needs of two babies, she knew she needed help. She enrolled in YWCA Vancouver's FOCUS pre-employment program and was connected to the YWCA's network of supports for single moms.

Her two girls attended YWCA early learning and care centres during the day while Andrea completed her high school education, followed by her Bachelor of Social Work at the University of Victoria.

Today, Andrea is investing in the futures of other single moms as the YWCA's Legal Educator. She provides



Andrea and her family when she graduated from UVIC

free legal services to clients from all YWCA's programs and services, regardless of geographic location, ethnicity, age, or current situation.

Many of her clients are experiencing violence in the home, are dealing with child custody issues, and do not have family or financial resources. Through the Legal Educator program, clients who would not otherwise have access to legal education or advice can receive one-to-one support.

**The YWCA has a special focus on supporting families led by single mothers...**

Women can also attend workshops to help gain a better understanding of the Canadian legal system and their rights, allowing them to make the best choices for themselves and their children. Andrea also works closely with YWCA staff who serve single mothers, women on the Downtown Eastside, and other marginalized groups by appropriately assisting and referring clients in need of legal support.

Her future goals are to expand the Legal Educator program to include a specialized advocate who helps women with child protection matters. Currently there is only one such advocate in the province; she works exclusively with mental health issues.

On a personal level, Andrea plans to eventually get her law degree so she can provide the legal representation so desperately needed by low-income and battered women.

The YWCA has a special focus on supporting families led by single mothers, who have the lowest incomes, the highest poverty rates, and many barriers to economic independence. The Legal Educator is one of 52 programs and services offered through YWCA Vancouver that served over 50,000 people throughout Metro Vancouver last year.

Programs include YWCA Crabtree Corner, a family resource centre in the Downtown Eastside that also receives funding from the Notary Foundation of BC; single mothers' support groups; housing communities for women and children; and employment services.

Visit our Website to learn more about how people like Andrea are making a difference in the lives of women and children in our community. ▲

Contact **Vanessa Wellington**, Donor Relations Manager at YWCA Vancouver.

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Andrea Vollans, YWCA Legal Educator