

Trish Gauntlett

## Notary Foundation Grants: Spotlight on North Shore Community Resources

The Notary Foundation has been supporting the Help's at Hand Public Legal Information Project for more than 10 years. The Project provides public legal education and information through research, writing, and distribution of the *Help's at Hand* columns and *Did You Know?* fact sheets to community service agencies, law offices, community policing offices, family centres, seniors centres, libraries, newspapers, newsletters, and other organizations around BC.

The program has grown to the point that information is distributed to more than 85 community agencies and organizations across the province and through them, to thousands of British Columbians. In the coming year, we anticipate that this circulation will double. We welcome additions to our mailing list from anywhere in BC.

This past year, we have written columns and fact sheets on a wide range of topics, including public education on rights and responsibilities, consumer issues, family issues, and legislative changes that affect everyday living. The legal information is always presented in plain language, using real-life situations and, in the fact sheets, a "Q&A" format. More than 110 columns and fact sheets have been produced to date. We are currently revising them all, in light of recent changes to laws and regulations in BC; we will be placing them on our Website as soon as the revisions are complete—making them available to anyone who has access to the Internet.

The need for this information is great—and growing. In light of the closure (as of August 31, 2002) all of Community Law Offices and Native Community Law Offices in British Columbia, access to legal information will become even more difficult for the people who need it most. Many of our readers already have limited access to professional legal assistance. Where possible, the columns and fact sheets offer ways for readers to get further information about their own specific situations. We will continue to do research, and make the information current within the context of sweeping changes in this field.

Many people who contact community agencies are looking for legal information. The *Help's at Hand* columns use an accessible, consistent, and accurate way to provide this. In our North Vancouver office alone, community members take at

least 450 information sheets each month from our *Help's at Hand* display. Above all, with the help of The Notary Foundation, we are building capacity by giving community members the resources they need to seek solutions. ▲

The *Help's at Hand* and *Did You Know?* publications are researched and written by Fariba Aghdassi and coordinated by Kelly Meier.

North Shore Community Resources  
Suite 201–935 Marine Drive  
(Capilano Mall)  
North Vancouver, BC V7P 1S3  
Voice: 604 985-7138  
[www.nscr.bc.ca](http://www.nscr.bc.ca)

**Trish Gauntlett** is Manager of Information Programs, North Shore Community Resources.



*Kelly Meier (left) and Fariba Aghdassi, with Did You Know? public information racks*