



Community Action Toward Children's Health

For Immediate Release
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Central Okanagan says 'Yes! It Takes A Community To Raise A Child!'

People from all walks of life across the Central Okanagan have overwhelmingly answered yes to the question 'Does it take a village to raise a child?' and they have called for community action on six priorities. This call for action follows a comprehensive 3-year planning process conducted in neighbourhoods throughout the region led by the Community Action Toward Children's Health (CATCH) coalition. CATCH will announce the six priorities and release the Early Childhood Development Plan for the Central Okanagan on June 22.

CATCH is a partnership of individuals and organizations who endeavour to make the Central Okanagan the best possible place to raise young children by following their mission: "working together for the healthy development of children in their early years (conception to school entry) in the Central Okanagan"

Work on creating the Plan came from individuals concerned with raising healthy children who met in workshops across the region and considered powerful evidence from neuroscience and economics that shows why the early years in a child's life is the best time to invest in the future of that child. It's now known that brain development from conception to age six establishes competence and coping skills that will affect learning, behaviour and health throughout life. The community participants also heard that a one dollar investment in early childhood development saves at least two to seven times that amount in schooling, health care and corrective services costs. Local data paints a clear picture that a quarter of the children under age six in the Central Okanagan are vulnerable and not achieving the healthy beginning they need.

Everyone who participated is invited to attend the June 22 CATCH Network Gathering and Resource Swap and celebrate with the theme "Valuing Children is Everybody's Business". Elected officials and community leaders will join the celebration and hear what community members have agreed are the six priorities they want and need acted upon to support their goal of raising healthy children.

The event will be at the Coast Capri Hotel at 1171 Harvey Avenue in Kelowna, from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM on June 22, 2007. Refreshments will be served. To register please call or email Myrna at 769-3893 or mkalmakoff@shaw.ca

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