

Canuck Place Children's Hospice Funding Announcement

Premier Gordon Campbell

April 10, 2006

Check Against Delivery

Thank you very much, Filomena, and thanks, everybody, for being here today. Thank you particularly to Robert and to Jaxson for coming and being with us today, because they remind us that Canuck Place is about the kids that we have in this province and how we can provide care and service and support to those children and to their families.

Actually, as we stand here in Canuck Place today, I think it's important for us to recognize how many people have been touched by Canuck Place, and the strength of the leadership that's been provided by Canuck Place for so long.

It's great to have Linda here with me today to share in this. But Iain Black is an MLA now for Port Moody–Westwood and was on the board of directors previously for Canuck Place. Greg Halsey-Brant is here, who is a former mayor of Richmond, a former MLA for Richmond Centre, and has always been committed to Canuck Place.

What's really been important is that there has been exceptional leadership from within the community to make this place a special place. I think that for people who have never been to Canuck Place, they are sort of a little worried about what it might be like when they go to Canuck Place. They would probably be surprised to hear that when you come here, you feel a sense of joy and love and support, which is pretty exceptional: that's because of the staff and the volunteers and the families and what people can do to make sure that young kids who are going through difficult times and their families that have the respite, the support and professional care that they need.

When you come here, and you listen to families eating in the dining room and chatting with one another, and you hear the laughter than can take place, it's sometimes difficult to believe that this is a place that is providing care for kids in very difficult circumstances. As you'll hear from Jaxson, there are always kids who have a great sense of spirit and excitement about the life that they're living and the world that they're in.

It's been 20 years since the Canuck Kids' fund was established, and the Canucks have been a critical part of this. From the moment we were told that they would like to make this home available as the first-ever hospice for children and respite place for families in North America, the Canucks have been here. Arthur Griffiths was here very early on saying let's try and do this together. Players and management and team leadership have been here since Canuck Place was opened in 1995.

Ian Haysom, who's now with Global Television, said to himself: This is something that all of us in British Columbia can get behind. And all British Columbians have got behind this.

Since Canuck Place was opened, 450 families have been touched by the services, the care, the love, and the support that Canuck Place has offered.

Every time that we look at leadership, often leadership carries with it responsibilities and obligations and some real challenges. In the past the government of British Columbia has offered support, and I can tell you the leadership that Filomena has provided and Wayne Duzita, as the chair of the board, has been exceptional.

We've tried to come, in the past, with \$800,000, here, and a million, there. Today I'm pleased to say that we can do even better than that.

Now, you know Jaxson. I should tell you this. They're used to having really big cheques with big numbers on them. Most of those cheques actually don't work in a bank.

But today I'm pleased to tell you that I have a small cheque. You see that small cheque? Do you see what it says: Canuck Place Children's Hospice? See that? See what that number is?

Voice: Yes, it's a small cheque but a big number.

Campbell: Small cheque, big number: \$3,500,000 we are pleased to provide to Canuck Place.

[Applause, Laughter]

That's \$3,500,000 to provide support to the staff here at Canuck Place, to provide support to the professionals that come and offer their gift of love and caring to the children and the families here at Canuck Place, so parents can get the respite that they need, so that they can give the kind of love and attention to their kids on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis year-round.

This is a place of heroes; it's a place of love. It's a place of exceptional leadership. It's a place where families can find the support they need to lead the fullest-possible lives for their children, for their families, and for themselves.

I want to say thanks to the courageous children who are part of Canuck Place and part of Canuck Place's legacy and leadership. I want to say thanks to the professionals who provided the inspiration to all of us for the support that's so essential.

And I want to say that I hope the Canucks will continue on and that Canuck Place will continue on. The Canucks have been a critical component, a cornerstone component of Canuck Place.

Tonight there will be an opportunity for people across the province, indeed across the country, to provide support to the Canuck Foundation and to Canuck Place. We'll all be

there with them; we'll all be there for them. We're doing that because of the families and the kids that are so much a part of the history and the legacy and the future of Canuck Place.

Thank you very much.