



# Parent Support Services Society of BC

Newsletter

Winter 2017, Vol. 38, #3

## PSS Meets with the Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development



Executive Director Carol Madsen, and GRG Support Line Advocates, Christina Campbell and Jessie Caryl met with the Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development on Friday December 8th. Carol took the opportunity to introduce the Minister to our work at PSS: our Support Circles, the importance of our valuable volunteers and what the families we work with are telling us. Christina and Jessie outlined the work of our GRG Support Line and more. We shared the challenges faced by kinship caregivers. We also took the opportunity to let the Minister know our support for the \$10 a Day Childcare Plan, and our appreciation for the government's expansion of the tuition waivers. (See story page— 7) More on Minister's Visit page 11

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## 2017 BC CHILD POVERTY REPORT CARD



On Nov 21, First Call released the 2017 BC Child Poverty Report Card. The report shows 153,300, or one in five, BC children still live in poverty. The report finds **BC's child poverty rate**, at 18.3%, is a full percentage point higher than the national average of 17.4%, but down slightly from the 2014 rate of 19.8%.

The report also contains new 2016 census data highlighting the much higher poverty rates among some groups of children in the province, with recent immigrant children at 45%, off-reserve Aboriginal children at 31%, and racialized ('visible minority') children at 23%. Children living with a parent with a

disability in Canada have a 53% poverty rate.

The evidence of discrimination against women, who make up 80% of lone parents in BC, continues with nearly 50% of children in lone-parent families still living in poverty.

The report and still1in5.ca website are full of facts, [stories](#), and [maps](#) illustrating the need for a comprehensive provincial poverty reduction plan, and offer 21 additional [recommendations](#) to the provincial and federal governments for action.

Go to [still1in5.ca](http://still1in5.ca) and:

- [Read the full report](#)
- [Watch the webinar on key report card findings](#)
- [Read First Call's 21 recommendations to government](#)
- [Watch videos from the November 21 press conference](#)
- [See municipal child poverty rates from across BC](#)
- [Read stories of child and family poverty](#)
- [Ask Premier John Horgan to take action on child poverty](#)

### Kinship Care issues raised in Report Card.

As members of First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, PSS requested that the challenges faced by Grandparents and other kinship care givers be included the 2017 Child Poverty Report Card. Amongst the Report Card's 21 recommendations (which PSS fully support) are kinship care specific recommendations:

**12) The provincial government should review and enhance supports to grandparents raising grandchildren and other kinship care providers. The federal government should allow grandparents on CPP Disability who are raising their grandchildren to continue to receive the children's benefit after they turn 65.**

See full report card at [still1in5.ca](http://still1in5.ca)

We made sure our families voices were heard.

[Donate](#) Keep this momentum going!

[www.parentsupportbc.ca/donate](http://www.parentsupportbc.ca/donate)

First Call used a PSS photo of a GRG Family at Galiano Camp - with the family's permission – in the report card.

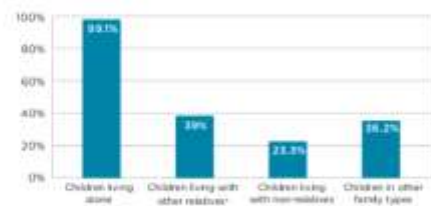


#### CHILDREN LIVING IN OTHER FAMILY TYPES

According to the low-income data published in the 2016 Census, in 2015 there were 14,490 BC children 0-17 years old not living in census families, a category that includes children living with their grandparents or other relatives without their parents present, living with non-relatives, and those living in foster care. 9,245 of the children in these family types were living in poverty, for a poverty rate of 38.2%, or more than one in three. However, children living on First Nations reserves were not included in the count.

Within this family type in BC were 3,605 poor children living with relatives, including those in foster care, with a poverty rate of 39%. A second sub-group of 1,090 poor children were living with non-relatives, with a poverty rate of 25.3%. The third sub-group of 550 poor children were living alone, and their poverty rate was near total at 99.1%.

BC Child Poverty Rates for Children not Living in Census Families, LIM After-Tax, 2015



In 2015, the data showed 550 poor children living alone, and their poverty rate was near total at 99.1%

Note: \* Includes foster children. Source: Statistics Canada - 2016 Census Catalogue Number 99-400-X000124



Wall to wall cameras and bright lights for the launch of the 2017 BC Child Poverty Report Card, November 21st.

From Left to Right: Adrienne Montani— Provincial Coordinator First Call, Carol Madsen—PSS, and Shawn Bayes, Executive Director Elizabeth Fry Society.—Vancouver.

Out of this photo: Scott Graham—Associate Executive Director of the Social Planning and Research Council of BC and Georgia Brown— Grandparent Raising Grandchildren.

## PSS at 2017 Child Poverty Report Card Launch

Executive Director, Carol Madsen spoke briefly at the launch of the 2017 Child Poverty Report Card. The focus of her remarks were the challenges faced by kinship caregivers. “Today a 1/3 of our Parenting Support Circles are geared for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren or other kinship care providers”. These kin are caring for children when their parents are unable. She described the complex financial, legal, and social problems that our Support Line deals with.

“We hear the stories from the grandparents and other kinship caregivers who have ‘stepped up to the plate’, Madsen said, going on to describe the struggles with trauma, isolation and lack of supports for these families. “We hear about these families spiralling into poverty”. Madsen referenced the growing numbers of children being raised by kinship care families in BC (13000 + under the age of 19, 24,000 aged 0-24).

Madsen added “We know that those grandparents are struggling...with aging bodies...pitted between children and grandchildren”

PSS has heard from our families that the provincial government should review and enhance supports to grandparents raising grandchildren and other kinship care providers and that the federal government should allow grandparents on CPP Disability who are raising their grandchildren to continue to receive the children’s benefit after they turn 65. “We are pleased to see the Report Card reflect what we have heard from the families we work with”, Madsen stated following the launch.

Madsen concluded, saying that PSS supports all the recommendations in the Report Card, “No child should grow up in poverty.”



Executive Director, Carol Madsen presenting at the Child Poverty Report Card launch. Watch video of Carol’s presentation here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyEawxOGd88&index=4&list=PL-cs9nWTNwqU2CIXBIXob8\\_6QedkGPJmK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyEawxOGd88&index=4&list=PL-cs9nWTNwqU2CIXBIXob8_6QedkGPJmK)



## Message from Bernard Richard, Representative for Children and Youth

Hello everyone,

As we head into the holiday season, I'm grateful

for this opportunity to connect with you and bring you up to date on what's been happening at our office. The fall has been busy. On Oct. 26, we released *Room for Improvement: Toward better education outcomes for children in care*. Statistics show that children and youth in care generally trail well behind other students academically, especially in the case of Indigenous students. In this report, I make six recommendations, including that the Ministry of Education should provide specific funding to each school district to reduce gaps in the academic achievement of children and youth in care, and that MCFD assess the trauma-related needs of all children and youth coming into care. The full report is available here: <http://www.rcybc.ca/roomforimprovement>.

On Oct. 4, we released our report, *Missing Pieces: Joshua's Story*, about a youth with severe mental health challenges who committed suicide during his hospital stay. As a result of our investigation, I made one recommendation calling upon the new Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to lead the development and implementation of a comprehensive system that offers a full continuum of mental health services for children and youth. This recommendation has been accepted by government, and I will be monitoring to ensure it is carried out. The full report can be accessed here: <https://www.rcybc.ca/joshua>.

We have also recently released our *Annual Report and Service Plan*, which illustrates what we've been doing over the past year, and what we are planning to do over the next two years. It can be found here: <https://www.rcybc.ca/annualreport2016/17>.

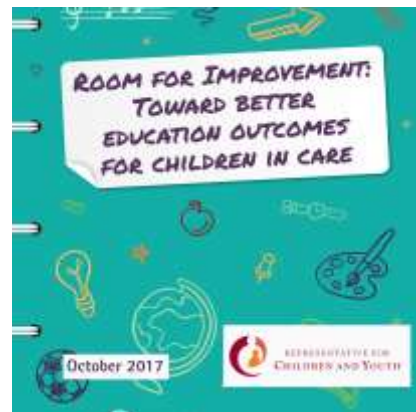
A highlight of the past few months was a youth-led, Indigenous youth engagement event we held in August in the Cowichan Valley called Ignite Your Spirit. The goal of the forum was to let Indigenous youth in care talk about and explore their experiences and to hear their recommendations for government. I was impressed with their honesty, passion and ideas to make things better for youth in care. We are planning to continue to engage with Indigenous youth and ultimately to present their recommendations to government and Indigenous leadership to create change based on what youth say they need.

Remember, if you or any youth or family you know need help dealing with government, getting connected to programs or services or speaking up, call us. RCY advocates are available Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-800-476-3933. We can also advocate for those receiving or eligible to receive CLBC services up to age 24.

Don't hesitate to call!

Sincerely,

Bernard Richard  
Representative for Children and Youth



# Parent & Grandparent/Kinship Support Circles in BC

**Support Circles**—Free, confidential, anonymous, meetings of parents and other caregivers who wish to learn new ways to nurture and protect their children.

To find out more call:

1-877-345-9777 or email [office@parentsupportbc.ca](mailto:office@parentsupportbc.ca)

## Join a Circle near you

We have Support Circles around

the province. They ebb and flow depending on demand and our ability to meet that demand. If you don't see a Circle in your area contact us.

### Central Island—Contact 250-468-9658

- Comox Valley—Aboriginal Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG/Kinship Care) Support Circle
- Duncan—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Ladysmith—Parents of Children on Autism Spectrum Circle
- Nanaimo—Parent Support Circle
- Nanaimo—Parents of Children on the Autism Spectrum Circle
- Nanaimo—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Parksville—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Powell River—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle

### Greater Victoria—Contact 250-384-8042

- Saanich—Parent Support Circle
- Saanich—Parents of Children who are Trans or Gender Creative Support Circle—Gender Spectacular
- Sooke—Parent Support Circle
- Victoria—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Victoria—Bridges for Women Parent Support Circle
- West Shore—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- West Shore—Parent Support Circle

### Lower Mainland—Fraser Valley—Contact 604-669-1616

- Abbotsford—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Burnaby—Cantonese Language Parent Support Circle
- Burnaby—Parent Support Circle
- Burnaby—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Burnaby—Filipino Language Parent Support Circle
- Burnaby—Korean Language Parent Support Circle
- Chilliwack—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle

**SEE MORE LISTINGS PAGE 6**

*"I've learned to be more patient with my kids since I started to go to the circle." Keep our Circles running — <http://www.parentsupportbc.ca/donate/>*



# Parent & Grandparent/Kinship Support Circles in BC (cont'd from p 5)

## Lower Mainland—Fraser Valley cont'd from page 5

- Coquitlam—Parent Support Circle
- Coquitlam—Korean Language Parent Support Circle
- Coquitlam—Mandarin Language Parent Support Circle
- Langley—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- New Westminister/Burnaby—Spanish Language Parent Support Circle
- Richmond—Filipino Language Parent Support Circle
- Surrey—Filipino Language Support Circle
- Vancouver—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Vancouver—(East Van) Filipino Language Parent Support Circle
- Vancouver—Mandarin Language Parent Support Circle
- Vancouver—Spanish Language Parent Support Circle
- Vancouver—Cantonese Language Parent Support Circle
- Vancouver—(East Van) Parent Support Circle

## Interior—Call 1-877-345-9777

- Kamloops—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Kelowna—GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Kelowna Parent Support Circle

## North—Call 250-962-0800

- Prince George— Friendship Centre GRG/Kinship Care Support Circle
- Prince George—Family Unity Parent Support Circle
- Prince George—Kikino—Parent Support Circle
- Prince George—Women at Hadih House Parent Support Circle

**Don't see Circle near you?? Contact our Provincial Office**

We have Support Circles that operate in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Filipino, Korean, and Spanish; for Fathers; for parents/caregivers of children on the autism spectrum; for parents/caregivers of children who are gender creative; for Indigenous parents/caregivers; for kinship caregivers; for parents in prison and more.

[We have Support Circles for parents and caregivers just like you!](#)

**Call 1-877-345-9777 or email [office@parentsupportbc.ca](mailto:office@parentsupportbc.ca)**

## Introducing Daniela Alvarado-Torres

Daniela is our new Community Engagement and Volunteer Program Coordinator. She is working out of our Burnaby Office. Welcome Daniela!



## Our Support Circles are:

- ◆ Open to all parents & grandparents with children & teens
- ◆ Offer free healthy snacks & often childminding
- ◆ Led by two trained volunteer facilitators
- ◆ Based on a self-help model, are confidential, & held regularly

# Kinship Care Youth May Now be Eligible for Tuition Waivers

## Our GRG Support Line has received the following exciting information:

Expanded Provincial Tuition Waiver Program Eligibility Criteria September 2017

Tuition for former youth in care will be waived for B.C students who are between 19-26 years of age (inclusive), attending a BC public post-secondary institution(s) and who have received care from the ministry or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA) through the Child, Family and Community Service Act for a minimum of twenty-four months (consecutive or accumulated) in any, or a combination of the following categories:

- Continuing custody Order pursuant to sections 41 (1) (d), 42.2 (4) (d) or (7) or 49 (4), (5) or 10 (a) of the Act
- Temporary Custody Order
- Special Needs Agreement pursuant to section 7 of the Act
- Voluntary Care Agreement pursuant to section 6 of the Act
- Youth Agreement pursuant to section 12.2 of the Act
- Extended Family Plan pursuant to section 8 of the Act
- Permanent transfer of Custody Order pursuant to section 54.01 or 54.1 of the Act
- Temporary Transfer of Custody pursuant to section 41(1)(b) of the Act

*“My granddaughter has experienced much of the same trauma as youth who have been in foster care, and faces many of the same barriers to post-secondary education. This could be a real life changer”*

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

**The intent of this new policy is to take an inclusive approach. If a individual falls outside of the above eligibility criteria, government will consider exceptions on an individual basis.**

***Some grandchildren being raised by their grandparents and other kinship care youth may be eligible for a tuition waiver.***


**To see if anyone you know might be eligible**

**GRG Support Line:**  
**1-855-474-9777 Toll Free**  
**[Grgline@parentsupportbc.ca](mailto:Grgline@parentsupportbc.ca)**

### **please call our Kinship Care Support Line:**

Parent Support Services Society has been relaying the concerns we hear from our GRG families regarding inequities in the access to the Tuition Waiver, since it was introduced a few year ago.

We appreciate the work of the Honourable Melanie Mark, Minister of Advance Education, Skills and Training and the Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development in implementing this expansion.



**We made sure our families voices were heard.  
Donate to help keep this momentum going!**  
[www.parentsupportbc.ca/donate](http://www.parentsupportbc.ca/donate)

## Lower Mainland —Facilitator Training



Interested in learning group facilitation?

Want to volunteer with Parent Support Services ?

Contact [office@parentsupportbc.ca](mailto:office@parentsupportbc.ca) for more information.

**Are you a grandparent or other kin considering or already raising your grandkid?**



**Not Sure What to Do?  
Stuck navigating systems?**

**Call our Support Line at  
1-855-474-9777 or email  
[grgline@parentsupoprtbc.ca](mailto:grgline@parentsupoprtbc.ca) &  
talk to our Advocates .**

### Volunteer Facilitators Needed

February 23-25, 2018  
Lower Mainland

20-hour Initial Training  
Full Attendance Required

Application Deadline:  
February 12, 2018

#### QUALIFICATIONS

- Good Listening and Interpersonal Skills
- An Interest in Improving Caregiver and Child Relationships
- Basic Understanding of Child Development and Parenting Issues
- Willing to do Community Outreach and Development

#### BENEFITS

- Extensive Facilitation Training & Continuing Education Will Be Provided
- Develop Skills for Career & Personal Growth
- Letter of Reference Upon Request (Minimum 1Year Commitment)

We ask our volunteers to commit to 3-5 hours a week for a minimum of 1 year. This allows our facilitators to develop close relationships with their Circle participants, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the parenting needs and resources each one of them requires.



**CONTACT US AT:**  
[office@parentsupportbc.ca](mailto:office@parentsupportbc.ca)  
Or Call:  
(604) 669-1616

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**  
[www.parentsupportbc.ca](http://www.parentsupportbc.ca)

**TO REGISTER:**  
<http://www.parentsupportbc.ca/volunteers/>



United Way  
Lower Mainland

We also acknowledge the financial contribution of the Government of British Columbia

*Stay tuned for Facilitator Training in Your Area!*



Happy Holidays from the PSS Staff (Clockwise from bottom left: Bella Cenezero, Carol Madsen, Annette De Boer, Christina Campbell, Daniela Alvarado-Torres, Jane Bouey, Viktor Panfilenok, Sandi Halvorson, Jessie Caryl. Absent: Jessica Turner)



# Voices:

- a space for stories etc. from the folk we work with

## GRG\* HANDBAG

by Joy Sheldon, Ladysmith

“Who steals my purse, steals trash”

-Wm. Shakespeare

My physio tells me I shouldn't carry a heavy shoulder bag. It's bad for my posture. You can tell SHE ain't raising two little grandkids! In full toting mode, it probably weighs about twenty pounds. Definitely gives me a bad list when I walk. But, I'd be lost without it. And, besides, now that the grandson's getting bigger, he sometimes lugs it around for me.

I love my handbag. The reason I love it is because it's attractive and (along with the dashboard of my van) is my handy-dandy filing system. My best thrift shop coup yet. I purchased it for (hold your breath) ONE DOLLAR! Yep, just a measly buck to hold a veritable cornucopia of loot. Some useful, some merely a nuisance.

I call it 'every granny's friend'. One of the reasons I chose it is because of its multitude of pockets, most zippered. Six in all. The huge centre pocket is the recipient of ALL THINGS LARGE-my wallet, adult sized tooth and hair brushes, about two handfuls of makeup items that never make it to the makeup case (Yes, girls, as you get older you need MORE makeup, not less, just to cover the brown spots!), also various dental items including toothpaste. My small vial of eyedrops reside in a tiny interior side pocket for fast access.

However, it has been the recipient of other items not related to my health needs. I have also found mashed banana, orange peels, Bobie's Halloween 'kitty cat ears', a sweaty undershirt ('but it's too hot when I'm running, G'wma) and other undesirable items hastily planted by little fingers. 'But Murgatroyd (my neighbor's extremely obese tomcat) will be so hungry without some kitty treats, G'wama!' Also some rather large bolts and screws, a small rusty wrench, and other items of male paraphernalia picked up in the driveway. At Christmas time, the inevitable mucky remnants of a candy cane, bits of hair and a bob pin clinging grossly.

The toothpaste stain on its zipper is impossible to remove. I have now learned to 'baggie' all toothpaste, just in case. And, last but not least, a rock. Not a super-huge rock, but a rock nevertheless. A brown rock with a pretty blue line through it; I could see why the kids would want to add it to their collection.

That center pocket also receives all objects hastily thrown- the sunglasses ,any \$\$ greater than a toonie at the drive-thrus (all coins go into the van's pull-out cupholder), all receipts but especially the store ones which I recycle back to the kid's school, illicit gum and candy wrappers I can't, for instance, throw onto the floor of the church (or have confiscated just as THEY are throwing them), anything found on the floor of the van (as long as it doesn't crawl); and any item constituting an immediate hazard-such as sharp objects and errant marbles.('But G'wma, Gwampa said he'd give me that pocket knife one day and I have an important use for it now!'). The purse, in short, is usually a mess!

I now have a weekly 'dump out the purse' ritual. The reason for that should by now be obvious. Today its contents cover half my kitchen island. Being a senior, I sometimes find items I didn't know I had: a bracelet hastily purchased at a gas station, hand soap filched from a motel during my one solo holiday in nine years, an unscratched scratch ticket, a half-finished Sudoku puzzle, and an unopened fortune cookie-what glory-my 'after the kids are in bed' entertainment.

I don't see any signs of purse improvement till the kids are out of high school. And, as I quoted earlier:

'Who steals my purse, steals trash'

(But I need the trash!)

\* Grandparent Raising Grandchildren



<http://www.parentsupportbc.ca/donate/>

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Sarah Allan (President)** - Vancouver—*Lawyer*

**Kamy Zargarpour (Vice President/Secretary)** - North Vancouver—*Retired Information/Technology*

**Jade Chan (Treasurer)** - Richmond—*Accountant*

## **MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

**Louise Costello** — Victoria—*Retired Psychologist—PhD*

**Shaun Wilson**—North Vancouver—*Partner, KPMG*

**Randall Gillis**—Vancouver— *Child Psychologist— PhD*

**Melissa Cailleaux**—Prince George— *Community Health Director*

## **FUNDERS AND DONORS**

We acknowledge the financial assistance of:

- The Province of British Columbia
- United Way of the Lower Mainland
- United Way of Northern British Columbia
- United Way of Central and Northern Vancouver Island
- Lex Reynolds Adoption and Permanency Fund
- Law Foundation of BC
- Children’s Health Foundation
- Anonymous
- City of Prince George
- City of New Westminster
- Provincial Health Services Authority
- Odd Fellows—Vancouver
- Appreciation to all of our generous individual and corporate donors.



We are grateful to our supporters and community partners who work with us to create a better world for all children and families. Collaboration is the key to successful social change. Our partners provide meeting space, childcare, food for Circle participants. Others provide consultation, referral and promotion. Many individuals share their wisdom, time, efforts and skills for the success of PSS programs and resources.

**TO DONATE—<http://parentsupportbc.ca/donate>**

# New Website—Same Address

## www.parentsupportbc.ca



PSS has rebuilt our website. It is a bit of a work in progress, as there is still work to be done. We hope you will check it out. If you notice anything that concerns you, you think is missing, or is hard to locate—please inform our staff person responsible for this work [jane.bouey@parentsupportbc.ca](mailto:jane.bouey@parentsupportbc.ca). Also be aware that links you may have to pages on our old site will no longer work.

### Interesting Connection Revealed:

When PSS Met the new Minister of Children & Family Development, Honorable Katrine Conroy—she mentioned that she knew Parent Support Services Society Founder—and child advocate—Bill McFarland. PSS named our award for the advancement of excellence in Child Welfare after Bill. What a coincidence!



PSS Founder—Bill McFarland

Right: Ardeth Walkem - Walpetko We'dax—Recipient of the 2016 Bill McFarland Award for the Advancement of Excellence in Child Welfare. (with her children).



# APPRECIATING OUR VOLUNTEERS



## Join Us—Become a Member Support Us—Donate — Volunteer!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Ph. number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please note that membership is valid until the end of each fiscal year, i.e. March 31st, subject for annual renewal. Volunteer facilitators pay on a sliding scale based on income.*

Membership amount enclosed and paid by: Cash                      Cheque

\$5.00 - \$35.00 Volunteer Facilitator                      \$35.00 Individuals                      \$100.00 Agencies

Or via our website at <http://www.parentsupportbc.ca/become-a-member/>

*Volunteer and Individual Members are entitled to stand for election to and hold office on the Board of Directors of the Society elected at our Annual General Meeting (December 5, 2016). Members are entitled to attend PSS Workshops for free.*

## Join Parent Support Services Society of BC—be a part of creating a world where all children and their families are nurtured, valued, and safe

**I want to DONATE \$ \_\_\_\_\_** Registered Charity: BIN 10677 8780 RR 0001

Or you can donate via our website at <http://parentsupportbc.ca/donation>

**I want to VOLUNTEER!** - <http://parentsupportbc.ca/volunteer>

Return to: Parents Support Services Society of BC 204 – 5623 Imperial Street,  
Burnaby, BC V5J 1G1