

In Their Own Words

LINA (Parent participant and part time staff)

“I came to CFEC to join the Healthy Minds, Active Living program over a year and a half ago. Now I’ve finished my high school diploma in BC and working for CFEC too. Jean and CFEC have been a great support to my family and me. I’m getting the experience in the facilitation field, which is what I like and love to do, so it’s a great opportunity for me to be here. I’m thankful to her for giving me that chance. I’m very involved in the programs, working with Jean hand in hand. I know the amount of effort these programs take and in the end, we are very happy that people are having great support in all aspects of their life, not just in the programs, but also in all aspects. I’m so happy to be a part of CFEC, it is the greatest thing that has happened to me.”

ALEJANDRA (Supervisor for Grandview Terrace Childcare Centre)

“It is a wonderful opportunity for Grandview Terrace to embrace this (Get Ready 2 Read) partnership with the Canucks Family Education Centre, having this connection is extremely important. Helping families is the most rewarding part of my job. As a parent myself, every parent is very worried about leaving their child in any program, it’s their baby. The first steps are always difficult and I think the most important thing we can do as a program is making sure the parent is at ease and that the child is in a good place, happy and learning, and then the parent can move forward in finding work or studying or maintaining a healthy lifestyle. That’s the goal.”

LEAH (Manager of Childcare Services for Britannia Community Services Centre)

“We work in partnership with CFEC, and I think we have a lot of the same values. We work very closely with the families of the children that are in our care, so there is a natural partnership there. I personally work with Jean a little bit with the PIE parent workshops. She does the parenting portion of the program, and I have come in and spoken to some of the classes on various issues that challenge them as parents.”

JAMILA (Parent participant and part time staff)

“CFEC is like my family. I’ve been a parent at CFEC for over 3 years and now work in childcare for them as well, helping the kids and making lunches at Grandview. I picked CFEC because they help with free studies, school, lunch, and everything is taken care of. I want to get my high school education, to get my degree and finish school and if I tried going to other places, I wouldn’t be able to do it. I have four kids and they all go to school and CFEC has helped me help my kids, now that I am learning English, I can help them with homework and things like that.”

DEYANIRA (Parent participant)

“When my daughter was 4 years old, I found out about this program, that I could study while my daughter could be taken care of, and thought that it was great. I’ve been with CFEC for about 2 and half years now. I am studying English and a math class to finish my studies and graduate. I think many more parents could use a program like CFEC for themselves and their children.”

HERMELA (parent participant and part time staff)

“My relationship with CFEC means a lot to me. My youngest child basically grew up knowing and learning everything here. CFEC changes a lot; it changes lives. The people here help us a lot, especially for us single moms to finish our high school and make our

lives better and to be better people for ourselves and especially for our kids. I'm so happy to be involved with CFEC, and I can't thank Jean enough. She and CFEC changed my life; she changed my kids' life. I don't even know how to say thank you. She always says, 'Keep your eyes on the prize,' and I don't know how to say thank you to her for her support."

TOSHI (Math and English volunteer)

"I'm retired from the business world, so I decided to volunteer in tutoring math and English. I was referred to CFEC and started early this year. CFEC is providing real help to people who come from everywhere, and that makes it a very effective program. It provides real hands on help to people who are new to Canada and trying to help them understand, or get to know what Canadian society is like and be able to be function within the society. That's what we are as Canadians anyway; we help and extend help to people from other countries because we've all been there at some point. I'm here to enjoy myself and if I do that, I'll get more out than I put in."

TC CARLING (VP, Communications & Community Partnerships)

"I've been with the Canucks organization for 13 years, and now I'm a board member for the Canucks for Kids Fund. CFEC makes a huge difference not just for the kids, but also for the parents, the mothers, the caretakers, and that translates to better citizens and better people, it's really powerful. You're teaching one person, but the reach is huge. Once that foundation is set, and the importance of education is instilled, even at the adult level, it impacts the children, cousins, and other family members and students. It's a huge accomplishment."

MIKE EVANS (Community Education Coordinator)

"I became the Britannia Community Education Coordinator in 2002, and that's when I met Jean. After a few years of running parent support programs it gradually became more defined when she partnered with Hastings Adult Education. Certification is very important to the families and parents, and to be able to attain their high school education was and is a really good thing. In reality, CFEC has been able to feed some families, empower parents, empower the whole situation really, and have the children ready for school. CFEC is more than programming and mentoring. It's not giving up on people, hanging in there always."

TINA ROGERS (Acting Program Manager)

"This was a new experience for me being involved with CFEC, as I was just taking over for Jessica Hoffman's maternity leave as Program Manager in Community Partnerships. A couple of years ago, I volunteered for just the day with CFEC, and I was pretty amazed in a couple of hours, how connected I felt to the people, just sitting with them and helping them with their classroom work, and could clearly see from Jean's passion that she was actually changing lives, giving these people the support that they needed. Hearing the stories of the women here, it's so much more impactful to hear the stories behind the people about how they came to this country without any support and had no way to get an education, to learn English, to get a job, to support their families, and realizing that CFEC has such an integrated program, it does so much more than meets the eye."

JESSICA HOFFMAN (Program Manager of Community Partnerships)

"I'm the Program Manager of Community Partnerships for the Vancouver Canucks, and I've worked with Jean and CFEC since 2004. CFEC is my favorite initiative that I work for. Working with Jean, her passion for what she does is remarkable. I've been fortunate to watch the growth and development of CFEC in the past 8 years; going from a smaller group of participants to the hundreds of families it affects every day. I've come to know some of the families quite well that go through the programming here, and just watching them grow and develop and flourish not only within their programs, but in their lives outside the program as well. CFEC exemplifies how the importance of literacy, not only being book literate, but life skills literate, is so crucial. It's definitely more rewarding for me to be able to come to work every day and it's about making a difference in the world, seeing how this work pays off for these families."

ALEX MITCHELL (Executive Director, Canucks for Kids Fund & Director, Community Partnerships)

"I am the Executive Director of the Canucks for Kids Fund and the Director of Community Partnerships for Canucks Sports and Entertainment. I get to work with Jean pretty regularly to help facilitate the programs in any way that I can in terms of support, promotion, trying to bring in other partners, sharing the stories of CFEC, really talk about the families and the impact CFEC has in our communities through our assets, web, media and all that. CFEC is the full package, which makes it so unique. The barrier free programming is remarkable and it's honestly what I believe, keeps people coming back because it enables them not to worry about their families, transportation, meals, it's all taken care of. That unique approach is groundbreaking in so many ways, and has made a big difference. What many of the families don't realize is that they should be thanking themselves too. They are the ones taking the risks, making the time, really pushing themselves to achieve their goals, while still supporting their families, and I think that's amazing. The Canucks Family Education Centre has a very personal approach, I think that's what Jean's gift is, and that is what the wonderful volunteers have taken on as well."

ALLANAH MOONEY (President, Lion Heart Productions)

"I am the President of Lion Heart Productions, my own company that makes films for social causes and social change. My relationship with Jean began before CFEC was born, when I was the Manager in Community Relations for the Canucks, and I just knew right off the bat, I wanted to support Jean and the cause. I've had the great fortune to be part of a lot of great community initiatives, but I can really say after 25 years in communications, this project is one of the things I'm proudest of, I just knew it was a really intelligent approach to supporting families. There are much bigger implications I think most people don't understand, at CFEC we're breaking an intergenerational cycle of poverty, raising the esteem and creating healthier environments for families, in their homes and in the schools. CFEC is innovative, it's needed, and it's effective. Ten years later, we're still here, Jean has proved herself as a leader, and this organization and this idea has proved itself because it's still here in an environment and an economy where social programs are being cut all over the place."

This isn't a hand out; this is a hand up for people. They are the ones who show up and do the work. I think that anybody who works at CFEC or anyone who has been involved would say that this program is transforming people's lives."