

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

COMMUNITIES & BCRPA TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE KIDS' PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS

2009 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children & Youth recently released.

Burnaby, BC (Tuesday, June 2, 2009) – Communities across the province and the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) are taking steps to get kids more physically active to ensure they have healthy habits throughout their lives. The recently-released 2009 Active Healthy Kids Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth gives an overall “F” for kids’ activity levels in Canada. However, work is already underway to earn a better grade for BC.

BCRPA Chief Executive Officer Suzanne Allard Strutt says a lot is being done at the community level. “Local governments are constantly looking for new ways to encourage youth to participate in physical activity. That includes plenty of consultation with kids and youth to ensure programs and facilities are what they want. At our recent annual awards, BCRPA recognized several communities, including Victoria, Burnaby and Vancouver, which made youth involvement part of their efforts to design facilities like community centres and mountain biking parks and part of the delivery of their programs.” She says the proof that this approach works is that kids are using the facilities and programs.

For its part, BCRPA is involved in a number of initiatives to promote or support physical activity for youth:

- BCRPA has partnered with ParticipACTION to deliver Sogo Active, a program encouraging young men and women to plan and track their physical activity levels online and assist their peers with getting more active.
- As part of the Canadian Sport for Life project, BCRPA is overseeing the Daily Physical Activity pilot projects across the province to ensure all youth participate in active, healthy lifestyles.
- BCRPA is leading the Sport and Recreation Integration Project to build closer relationships between municipal parks and recreation departments and secondary schools (also part of Canadian Sport for Life).
- BCRPA’s Active Communities Initiative supports groups across the province in getting people, including children and youth, more active through a variety of means such as free rec centre passes for grade 5 students in some communities, trail building, and community festivals.
- BCRPA leads the Move for Health Day initiative in this province, encouraging people (including families, children and youth) everywhere to get out, get active and have fun either individually or as part of a community event.
- BCRPA delivers HIGH FIVE® training to people working with children aged 6-12, aimed at ensuring recreation and sport programs are delivered in ways that support the healthy development of children.
- BCRPA delivers the Everybody gets to play™ program which ensures economically disadvantaged children and families have access to quality leisure experiences.

- BCRPA supports Burnaby's Alpha Secondary School in offering a two year Fitness Leader registration training program for students looking for practical experience to help them become fitness professionals when they graduate.

Allard Strutt says BCRPA's efforts are going a long way towards helping children and youth increase their levels of physical activity. "We know from other studies that British Columbians aged 12 and older are the most active people in Canada. But there's always room to improve. We want to ensure that every child and youth in BC not only has the opportunity to take part in recreation, but that our culture is one where they want to get active. This will ensure everyone in BC has a high quality of life for generations to come."

For more details from the 2009 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, visit: www.activehealthykids.ca

To learn more about BCRPA's programs supporting physical activity, including this year's provincial award winners and their projects, visit www.bcrpa.bc.ca

BACKGROUND:

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association is a not for profit organization dedicated to building and sustaining active healthy lifestyles and communities in BC. Established in 1958, the Association is a central resource agency for members and stakeholders of the parks, recreation, physical activity and culture industry, providing leadership, training and support to help meet national, provincial and local priorities. Through a diverse network of partners and extensive programs and services, BCRPA actively advocates accessibility and inclusiveness to recreation and physical activity and strives to bridge the gap between recreation and sport.

Active Healthy Kids Canada was established as a charitable organization in 1994 to advocate the importance of physical activity for children and youth where they live, learn and play. As a national leader in this area, Active Healthy Kids Canada advances knowledge to influence decision-makers at all levels, from policy-makers to parents, in order to increase the attention given to, investment in, and effective implementation of physical activity opportunities for all Canadian children and youth. Production of the Report Card has been made possible through financial support from the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Lawson Foundation, Kellogg's and the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

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