

Welcome everyone.

I want to acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and TsleilWaututh Nation. I would also like to reaffirm our promise to stand with the indigenous women of Canada in seeking justice for all indigenous murdered and missing women and girls. No woman will achieve justice and equity until all women achieve justice and equity.

I would like to start by thanking the dedicated and passionate women of our Board. Led by the excellence of our two primary consultants Lynell Anderson and Sharon Gregson, our team not only gets the work done, we strive to support each other through our feminist beliefs and commitment to each other both personally and professionally. I would also like to thank Nadine and our other consultants for the work they do to help us move \$10 a day forward.

Our work in the \$10 a day campaign remains our first and most important priority and while we celebrate success, our work load, rather than diminishing seems to have increased and at an astonishing pace. We celebrate the increase in the number of School Districts and Municipalities that have pledged their support. We celebrate the pilot centers that are making life changing differences for participating families. We celebrate the capital funding for non profit and community based programs as they work to increase spaces at the same time as they begin to build the public system. We celebrate the 90 % plus programs that opted in to the government's funding model and the decrease in fees for individual families.

The principles of the 10 a day must be implemented are equally important in order build a public system and eliminate the chaos that still remains for so many.

And so, as we watch and examine the government's roll out, we continue the pressure to increase wages for early childhood educators and to increase the number of pilot centres. And we take every opportunity possible to meet with local governments to explain how 10 a day might work in their community. We are committed to our mission that affordable, quality, inclusive early learning and care is one giant step towards equity and justice for women.

But equity and justice will not be achieved solely through a new public system of early learning and care. In November of last year, (2018) we applied to Status of Women Canada for funding to more deeply delve into our own organization and assess how and if we were moving our organization to a place of equity and justice. Quoting from our submission:

“In recent years, we have evolved the language we use to describe our philosophy and our work to reflect the evolution of feminism in this country: we acknowledge the homogeneity of our beginnings, and recognize that diversity needs to be a primary focus as we move forward in order to adequately fulfill our mission and reflect the full diversity of British Columbians“

And early this year we learned that our application had been successful and so we move into a 4 year space of personal and organizational discovery and advocacy.

“ Our commitment to centring diversity and equity means that we must take systematic and measurable steps towards this goal, both in terms of who informs our advocacy and who leads our work, and how. Success in this project means that the voices informing BC’s child care system will be representative of the full diversity of BC women and will lead to an even greater diversity of women realizing true economic security and prosperity I this province. “ (SOWC application)

As we take out initial steps together, we look forward to sharing our learning with our members in a variety of ways and places.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thanks our major funders:

Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)

City of Vancouver

Other

Vancity

BCGEU

Vancouver Foundation

(Estate Donation)

As well as the

BCTF

Vancouver & District Labour Council

New Westminster & District labour Council

And thanks to the Vancity Community Foundation for hosting both our BC Child Care Advocacy Fund and our Vancouver Foundation Grant.

At this I would like to take a moment to recognize one of our own Board members. She is often quietly reflective and is able to summarize multiple thoughts and ideas in a concise and illuminating way. She is a teacher's teacher and her program has been recognized internationally for excellence. She is a model of graciousness when times are tough and when it's time to celebrate. She is described on a national web site as "A pioneer of inclusion in early childhood education, this veteran educator welcomes children with all types of special needs and opened her centre to a wider age group, all while providing countless opportunities for play based learning" For a lifetime of dedication she was awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education this year. On behalf of us all Ruth (Bancroft) congratulations and many, many thanks.

In closing I would like to paid tribute to and borrow the words of one of our most important advocates in Canada. Cindy Blackstock a member of the Gitksan Nation says "Words don't change children's lives. Real action by the government and equality would."