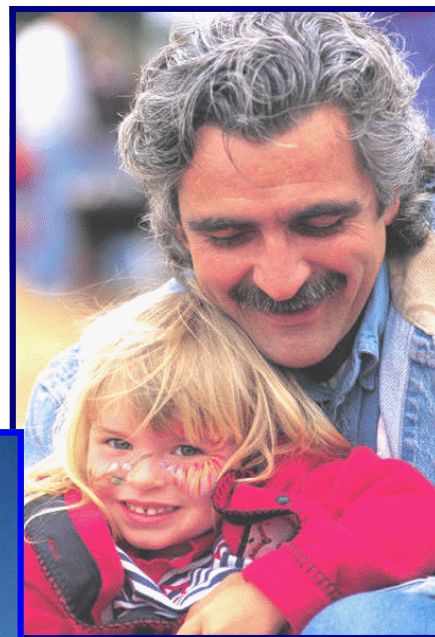


# **Men's Affordable Resources Society Of British Columbia**

## **2008 Annual Report**



**Helping Community Organizations and Individuals  
to Support Dads and Men**



## **MARS BC - ANNUAL REPORT**

***April 9, 2009***

The Men's Affordable Resources Society (MARS BC) was incorporated as a provincial non-profit society on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The society has taken the first year to organize its systems and get its feet wet on the issues. MARS BC participated in the Parental Alienation Awareness campaign of April 2008 which included radio ads and ¼ page newspaper ads all across the province. Last year we took the opportunity to point out that the Family Relations Act Review Committee was more than a little reluctant to even look at that issue. As a result of our advertising campaign, the Committee appointed a special person to research that issue for the Committee. We will be participating again this year and we will take the opportunity to point out the extreme lack of funding for fathers programs.

In the fall of 2008, MARS BC, along with 4 other organizations presented to the BC Finance Committee. We all presented the same end message – we need funding for fathers and men's programs around the province. Although our presentations did not get a recommendation in the report, as a consequence we have been able to more accurately identify where the resistance lies in the government.

Over the last month or so, we have worked at signing up members to the organization and we're extremely encouraged to report that we already have over 20 members from around the province. The organization is now a diverse blend of individuals and groups including: counsellors, men's centres, community centres, family law lawyers, child development centres, fathers support groups, supervised access coordinators, father focused groups, centres which deal with immigrant fathers and facilitators of adventure weekends for teenagers. This is a unique and interesting group brought together by one focus – creating more resources for fathers and men.

MARS BC has quickly become the organization that recognizes all the different challenges which are required to be addressed in order for fathers to become the best fathers that they can be. MARS BC stands ready to launch programs almost immediately around the province with appropriate funding.

It is now our task to raise awareness and lobby the provincial government to recognize the importance of fathers and create the appropriate funding levels to bring about the abundance of programs that we have been seeking. We believe we are very close!

***Respectfully submitted by MARS BC 2008 Board of Directors***

## 2008 MARS BC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **Bill Larose**

Bill Larose is a lawyer and mediator in Nanaimo focusing primarily on family law. He is on the Executive of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section of the Canadian Bar Association. Bill is a strong supporter of the Family Law Reform Task Force's Recommendations to make family law in British Columbia more responsive to the needs of families experiencing separation and divorce. He believes in more resources and support for men and families. Bill says, "The 'bottom line' is that supporting fatherhood promotes stronger communities and benefits society as a whole."

### **Robert Dean**

Robert is the Executive Director of the Tri-City Men's Resource Centre in Port Coquitlam, BC. He focuses his energy on helping children through supporting their dads. When Robert heard about the Men's Affordable Resources Society of B.C. and got the opportunity to be involved he jumped at it. He has stated: 'I don't believe society realizes the amount of damage that is being done to our children as a result of removing dads from their lives. The statistics are staggering, involvement in crime, drug use, alcohol abuse, dropout rates, inability to keep a job etc. all increase when dad is not in the picture. I don't think that there is a more important purpose, than to have a positive impact on children's lives.'

### **Theo Boere**

Theo has been the Executive Director of the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre since its inception in 2001 and has been active in creating and leading organizations to support dads, men, non-custodial parents and grandparents since that time. His underlying concern has always been to help children stay connected with their parents and extended families. His particular interest has been to foster creative possibilities and lobby for funding for resources around the province. These resources will help create programs that support fathers and men and their families, and will help them stay connected with their children.

### **Avi Tal**

Avi is a family & civil mediator, an expert co-parenting advisor and a conflict management consultant in Victoria. He is positively passionate about the human rights of children, working with families and individuals that are going through difficult times towards resolving complicated issues in a collaborative, timely and effective manner. Avi sat for many years as a board member of the Victoria Separation and Divorce Resource Centre and has been involved in many peacemaking initiatives throughout his life.

### **Clive Michael (CM) Justice**

CM is a special needs educational assistant in North Cowichan and a personal coach who currently runs the "Dads Make a Difference" program for the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre. CM is also involved with the Mankind Project staffing their initiation weekends and facilitating the follow-up Integration Groups locally for the last 5 years. CM has also been involved with the Cowichan Valley Men's Resource Centre since its inception.