

GVCSS seeks donations for 400 Christmas care packages for disadvantaged in Downtown Eastside

VANCOUVER BC (October 11, 2011) – The Greater Vancouver Community Services Society (GVCSS), BC's largest non-profit provider of home support and community living services, is eagerly seeking donations of household items for 400 Christmas care packages it will deliver this December to disadvantaged residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

GVCSS provides thousands of British Columbians with complex care, palliative care, Alzheimer and dementia care, respite services, life-skills support, convalescent care and household assistance such as meal preparation, shopping and laundry. Throughout the year, its staff, board and volunteers also collect food, clothing and personal care items for their clients.

The Christmas care packages are full of items that balance practicality with the festivities of the holidays, including such things as: soup, coffee/tea, mugs, socks, hats, gloves, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, chocolates and a holiday card. This year a special holiday gift is being delivered in the packages - a warm robe to ensure comfort this winter season. For clients with young children, there's also extra food and a gift for each child.

GVCSS CEO Ron McLeod says the delivery of Christmas care packages ensures that their disadvantaged clients experience the joy of opening at least one gift during the holidays.

"Many of the people we visit don't have a Christmas present to open and some not even food to eat," says McLeod. "Quite often, the Christmas card they get from us is the only one they receive. They're always deeply moved that someone cares about them enough to make sure they have something for the holidays."

In 2008, the GVCSS delivered 100 Christmas care packages. This year they aim to deliver 400. To meet that higher goal, the GVCSS is actively seeking donations. Individuals and organizations can offer support in any one of the following ways:

- Donate items or funds for care packages;
- Designate GVCSS for workplace giving or employee donation matching programs;
- Purchase individual care packages (\$40) in lieu of corporate gifts, or gifts for families and friends;

Assisting the GVCSS this year will be the Simon Fraser University Young Women in Business, who will be collecting new tooth brushes and toothpaste from SFU students in collection boxes on their campuses, and local Girl Guides troupe, who will be running a Chunky soup can drive. GVCSS has also received 400 soaps from the Rocky Mountain Soap Company, 400 signature toques from the Hudsons Bay Company and other supplies from Shoppers Drug Mart.

Individuals can make tax deductible donations online at gvcss.bc.ca/donationscarepackages.htm or by calling Laura Johnson at (604)714-3517.

<http://www.gvcss.bc.ca/donationscarepackages.htm>

About Greater Vancouver Community Services Society

GVCSS is one of BC's largest non-profit providers of Home Support and Community Living services, providing care and support to over 2,500 clients around the Lower Mainland, including seniors, individuals who are physically or developmentally disabled, and those with mental health and addiction issues. GVCSS' Home Support program operates in the City of Vancouver, while its Community Living program is active in Vancouver, Richmond and North Vancouver. For more information, visit gvcss.bc.ca

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