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Sustainable Vancouver

1,700 Vancouverites support eco-friendly entrepreneurs at the Spring Living Fair

By Anny Chih

Over 1,700 Vancouverites attended the 2009 Spring Living Fair held March 7-8 at the Main Street Heritage Hall in Vancouver. The fair, hosted by the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) chapter of Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE), gave local environmentally conscious entrepreneurs a venue to showcase their products and services, while fundraising to support sustainable lifestyles and employment in East Vancouver.

Continued as Spring Living Fair on page 2

1,700 Vancouverites support eco-friendly entrepreneurs at Spring Living Fair
 by Anny Chih..... Page 1

Save the planet together: carpool!
 by Megan Procopio Page 2

LOT welcomes Scotiabank as platinum sponsor
 by Austin Nairn..... Page 3

Sustainability and recession
 by Jim Wu Page 3

Get green by going green
 by Judy Lee Page 4

Free the children
 by Yulia Talmazan Page 4



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Spring Living Fair

Continued from page 1

This was the second annual Spring Living Fair, and expanded on last year's environmentally friendly marketplace to include a concert fundraiser and two fashion shows featuring clothing made from organic materials.

This year's Spring Living Fair marketplace, **Ethical Choices**, showcased green products from fifty local vendors. Environmentally conscious entrepreneurs sold everything from fair-trade soccer balls to environmentally friendly cleaning supplies and organic fruits and vegetables.

Vendors at this event also included entrepreneurs selling jewelry made from recycled metals and gems, and other art pieces through Atira's *Enterprising Women Making Art (EWMA)* project. The project was created in 2003 to provide free mentorship and art skills classes to victims of violence in East Vancouver. Since then, EWMA has helped dozens of women learn how to independently support themselves and their children through the sale of art.

Ethical Beats, the Spring Living Fair concert featuring eclectic band **Delhi 2Dublin**, generated approximately \$1,000 for Atira's EWMA project and the Eastside Movement for Business and

Economic Renewal Society (EMBERS). EMBERS works to assist local entrepreneurs start their own small businesses.

One such small business supported by EMBERS is **Monkey 100** – a clothing company which was also featured in the two Spring Living Fair fashion shows collectively called **Ethical Threads**. Monkey 100 creates bamboo t-shirts printed with unique images associated with environmentally conscious ideas. For example, the Monkey 100 *Fossil Fuel Series* features prints of windmills and fossils which are accompanied by statements: "As energy, wind is clean and perpetual. Capturing it requires imagination and a new vision of the future. If we allow ourselves to be swept up by this vision, where might it take us?"

Hopefully, it'll take us back to the Spring Living Fair next year for another weekend of environmentally friendly fun!

Atira accepts jewelry and art supply donations for the EWMA project. They also accept new and gently used clothing, furniture, household items, toiletries, and children's toys for their emergency shelters and transition houses. To donate, call 604.531.9143 (ext. 21) or e-mail donations@atira.bc.ca. For more information, visit www.ewma.info.

Save the planet together: carpool!

By Megan Procopio

Another Earth Day recently passed and British Columbians are fighting even harder to save our planet. The most tragic cost related to automobile use is the degradation of our environment. Every day, millions of vehicles pump pollutants into our atmosphere. Some of these pollutants fall into the earth, fouling streams and contaminating crops.

The transition of our society has shifted from acting as consumers to focusing on conserving. Companies are experiencing more pressure to become environmentally friendly and to implement more eco-friendly strategies for long-term operations. Carpooling is a cheap, easy to implement strategy that businesses can promote to their employees and initiate a change in their behavior. There are two ways to go about this:

- A. Provide company vehicles if they are available.
- B. Provide employees with a monthly fare to cover the carpooling cost of using their own vehicles together.

Bonuses and incentive plans can be issued to those who participate in the company carpool and a committee can be arranged to organize and promote this service. The structure and rules of carpooling must be established beforehand, such as scheduling, lateness, and costs in order to ensure a reliable carpooling system. Firms with company vehicles should use them towards this good cause by putting the vehicles

Continued as Carpooling! on page 3

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Sustainability and recession: a mismatch or a necessary combination

By Jim Wu

With the economy in shambles, can we expect companies to continue with their sustainability initiatives? The common answer would be no, as sustainability committees would be the first item for companies to slash in their attempt to weather the storm. According to an *Economist* article, a survey conducted by **Business for Social Responsibility** showed that a third of the multinational firms that participated in the survey "expected their spending on sustainability to fall as a result of the crisis." Increasingly as the recession intensifies, so would the cuts by firms on their sustainability expenditures.

However, as companies cut and slash their budgets and resources, many of their cuts are actually promoting sustainability. According to the *Economist*, a number of firms are developing cheaper and alternative production and development strategies. **Mars** and **Cadbury** for example, "have separately announced plans to increase the amount of cocoa they source from sustainable sources" amidst fears of future shortages if production mechanisms do not change. Likewise, other firms such as **Gap** have indirectly promoted sustainability through expenditure cuts. This June, rather than fly in executives from 20 countries, the company will hold its strategy meeting for its corporate social responsibility online.

While encouraging, some green activists are disheartened that companies are experimenting with green technologies and strategies not to promote sustainability but rather to save money. **Jessica Vreeswijk** of **Terrabytes**, an environmentally-minded consultancy argues that "Green business isn't the focus for everyone, but for a company facing significant downturn in sales, sustainability and efficiency [may provide them with much needed cost-effective solutions]." Whether it is to cut costs or to develop their business more consciously, sustainability remains at the forefront of companies in spite of the recession. As the economist argues, "the financial crisis was triggered by a bout of corporate social irresponsibility on a massive scale that has tarnished the reputations of even the bluest of blue-chip companies." As such, the recession may harden the need for companies to promote further sustainability in their business models. **\$**

Carpooling!

Continued from page 2

to use in a carpool instead of having them sit idle in the parking lot. Companies should also provide guaranteed parking to those who ride together.

Given our current environmental issues and the stress on Vancouver's transportation infrastructure, carpooling is an effective, easy solution that companies can promote to their employees. Not only is carpooling a simple way for individuals to take part in the climate change challenge, it also helps individuals save money, while reducing congestion and conserving energy along the way. Commuters who don't have to drive each and every morning arrive at work less stressed, and many enjoy the company on an otherwise dull ride.

LOT welcomes Scotiabank as platinum sponsor

By Austin Nairn

We are pleased to announce that **Scotiabank** have recently become the Platinum sponsor of **The Leaders of Tomorrow Mentorship Program**®. Scotiabank has been a strong contributor to LOT for several years by serving as mentors, event hosts, and even hiring past LOT members. This is an exciting partnership as Scotiabank are an organization that clearly see the value of Leadership, Mentorship, Networking and Volunteerism, which are the four pillars on which the program is based.

Scotiabank is one of North America's premier financial institutions and Canada's most international bank. Through their team of 69,000 employees, Scotiabank and its affiliates offer a broad range of products and services, including personal, commercial, corporate and investment banking, to more than 12.5 million customers in some 50 countries around the world.

LOT students were recently hosted by Scotiabank's **Rob Wilkins** (District VP of Downtown Vancouver / Northern BC) and **Bruce Arthurs** (director of regional banking) for an Executive Roundtable Luncheon. Both Rob and Bruce have each been with the organization for more than 20 years and are currently mentors with Leaders of Tomorrow. They provided an

overview of their backgrounds and elaborated on the opportunities available to those looking to pursue a career in the banking or financial fields. This kind of industry-specific insight is invaluable for those involved in the program as they prepare to enter the workforce.

According to the **Canadian Automobile Association**, the average commuter spends approximately \$7,500 per year or \$15 per day to operate their car. These figures are based on a mid-size car driven 18,000 km annually (a 30km daily round trip) and include operating (fuel, maintenance, etc) and ownership (financing, insurance, depreciation). Sport utility vehicle and mini-van owners can expect to spend over \$9,000 annually!

Just imagine being able to cross a bridge without long traffic waits, and being able to reduce the commute to and from work by an hour if everyone just rode together. Carpooling reduces the impact of automobiles on our roadways and our environment very easily and decreases the number of vehicles on our roads. We cannot solve global warming alone, but together we have a better chance at winning the battle to save our planet. **\$**

Scotiabank is highly regarded for its outstanding corporate culture and strong commitment to helping build the communities in which it does business. Thank you to all of those at Scotiabank who have made this partnership possible and for more information about Canada's most international bank, please visit www.scotiabank.com. **\$**

Scotiabank mentor Cameron Willis and LOT student Bobby Dubeau connect for a picture, and a chance to catch up after Bobby's recent trip to London.



Scotiabank mentor Cameron Willis and LOT student Bobby Dubeau connect for a picture, and a chance to catch up after Bobby's recent trip to London.

Get green by going green

By Judy Lee

Growing up in Vancouver, I learnt to reduce, re-use and recycle. The three R's were as common of a lesson at school as it was at home. Like me, other consumers have pushed the demand for businesses to take part in integrated eco-friendly activities that extend beyond the offer of a 'green' product.

By involving eco-friendly activities, businesses will realize higher revenues, customer goodwill and loyalty. While associated costs can be a concern, a quick study of the growing and evident consumer demand is telling of the pervasiveness and permanency of eco-friendly practices. In fact, a majority of consumers purchase green products despite the present economic situation.

A lot of businesses are leveraging eco-friendliness as part of their brand. It's everywhere with hybrid cars, enviro-bags, recyclable packaging and the like. To differentiate a business in midst of green, green and more green requires a good sit-down to ponder the key strategies that align with the top-line objectives. The key is to build the brand around a unique story and remain authentic to your story. When that happens, the story breeds innovation without the 'me-too' adage.

Already in place in the market are some smart products and services seeping with creativity and technology.

- ✓ Solar-powered applications have broadened to include cell phones like Samsung Blue Earth revealed earlier this year.
- ✓ Rewards such as a recycling loyalty program, Philadelphia-based **RecycleBank** provides consumers redeemable dollars at cooperating retailers such as Whole Foods and RiteAid.
- ✓ Meters such as **AlertMe**, **Watson**, the work-in-progress **Google PowerMeter** provides households with real-time energy consumption data and their associated costs.

- ✓ Low-impact advertising such as grass art or power-washed sidewalks with stencils is powerful as a non-traditional means of acquiring stopping power and retention.

Inspiration from competing businesses vying for eco-friendly business and marketing angles can serve as motivation in a business' eco-friendly development. As well, push-and-pull demands can be served from existing and new governmental regulations and consumers respectively. To be mindful of how to best brand or re-brand a business with eco-friendly communications and practices, here are some tips:

- ✓ Align eco-practices with the business objectives.
- ✓ Integrate the marketing mix to fit with the business operations and communications.
- ✓ Create and be creative in the story behind the product and in the product or service itself.
- ✓ Measure and re-evaluate with feedback tools available online such as the **Greenwashing Index**.

Aligning a business with eco-friendly practices beyond the 3 R's is a challenge that surpasses a lesson in grade school. However, the long-term commitment will bring about environmental benefits that a business can enjoy and share with their impacted stakeholders like the community, employees and customers. So keep in mind, reduce, re-use, recycle and remember to go green. \$

THE VANCOUVER SUN **The Province**

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FREE THE CHILDREN

By Yulia Talmazan

What does it take to make top B.C. business professionals buy 908 goats for a remote village in Africa? Try the incredible passion and dedication exuded by a 26-year-old philanthropist and Nobel Peace Prize nominee **Craig Kielburger**. At the age of 12, when most other children are after videogames and flashy brands, Craig developed a vision for helping less privileged children. A vision that would inspire him and his older brother Mark to establish and successfully run **Free the Children** network that involves more than one million young people in 45 countries. In its 14 years of existence, Free the Children volunteers and staff built more than 500 schools and provided medical supplies, clean water, and income sources to people in the developing countries.

On May 14, **The Vancouver Board of Trade** and the **Rix Center for Corporate Citizenship & Engaged Leadership** held a special luncheon to present the inaugural **Engaged Citizenship Award** to Craig and **Marc Kielburger**. A contribution from the luncheon's proceeds was made by the Vancouver Board of Trade to build a school in Africa. Members of the audience could also purchase goats as a symbol of community sustainability at the event that for the first time in the history of The Vancouver Board of Trade was emceed by two young adults – **Chanelle** and **Matthew Segal** – at the heart of children helping the children initiative.

In his inspirational address, Kielburger shared the successes of Free the Children, reminding us that everyone can make a difference. Admitting to being "shamelessly idealistic," he insisted that one person is enough to bring change. Kielburger also reminded the audience that involving children in helping others will ultimately enrich their own life experiences. "If you want to help young people, get them to help someone else" was the message that resonated through his speech.

Kielburger talked about the expansion of Free the Children with the launch of a Vancouver Chapter and the upcoming *We Day 2009*, an annual celebration of the power of young people to change the world that will take place on September 29 at **GM Place** and will feature inspirational speeches and performances by leading activists, speakers and entertainers.

Greeted with a standing ovation from The Board's members at the end of his speech, Kielburger encouraged corporate leaders to "call a Minga" (native Indian for working together to build collective good), a tradition he learned about while helping out a community abroad. Looking beyond ROI and sales figures, Kielburger summoned corporate leaders to call Mingas, inspiring their employees to give back for greater good. \$

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