

## What is Adult Education?

Adult Education is a ministry-funded program where students can upgrade courses for entrance into post-secondary, build English language proficiency, gain computer skills, and complete high school. There are six schools located throughout Vancouver: in the West End (Roberts Education Centre), in Yaletown (Gathering Place Education Centre), on the downtown eastside (Downtown East Education Centre), near Science World (Main Street Education Centre), at Britannia Secondary (Hastings Education Centre), and near John Oliver Secondary (South Hill Education Centre). There are close to 300 adult educators providing this service to students. The adult educators are proud to be members of VESTA and are the only BCTF members who have full local bargaining.

The teachers at these schools instruct both high school and foundation courses to students who are of the ages of sixteen and greater. Because of this vast range of ages, programs have been developed within adult education to work around a variety of schedules. Classes are in session days and evenings and also on the weekends at some centres. Moreover, self-paced classes have been developed for those individuals who cannot commit to a specific time due to work or other factors. Unlike elementary schools the VSB must advertise the programs and seek out students because the system is market driven which means classes require a minimum number of students in order to be offered.

Through the diversity of programs and flexibility of hours, adult education is a vital part in the further education of adults and the integration of new individuals into an English-speaking country.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### November

- 01 TTOC Committee Meeting
- 02 Sustainability Committee Meeting
- 02 Living with Balance Workshop
- 07 Anti-Poverty Committee Meeting
- 09 Living with Balance Workshop
- 16 Living with Balance Workshop
- 17 Aboriginal Ed Committee Meeting
- 19 **School Board Trustees Election**
- 20 Adult Educators General Meeting
- 24 Pro-D Committee Meeting
- 28 Status of Women Committee Meeting
- 29 Health & Safety Committee Meeting

#### December

- 05 Anti-Poverty Committee Workshop
- 06 TTOC Committee Meeting
- 08 Sustainability Committee Meeting
- 15 Aboriginal Ed Committee Meeting

## In Memorium



It is with sadness that we report the passing of Kitty O'Callaghan, former Vancouver teacher, VESTA president, BCTF executive member and president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Kitty was an untiring activist on behalf of teachers and students and had a deep commitment to global social justice.

A celebration of life was held for Kitty at Moberly Elementary School on October 29. A memorial website has been established for those wishing to share comments and photos at [Respectance.com/kittycallaghan/](http://Respectance.com/kittycallaghan/). In lieu of flowers, the families would wish you to support Leukemia research.

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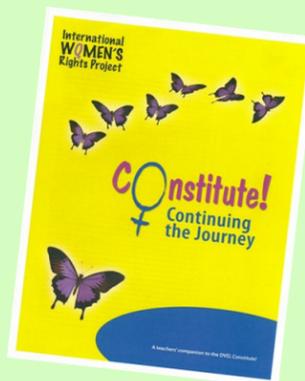
VESTA Status of Women Committee presents

### Celebration of Herstory: Canadian Women as Activists, Then & Now

**Monday, 2011 November 28**  
**4pm at the VESTA office**

**Join us to view the film *Constitute!***  
A celebration of constitutional activism  
and positive social change

**Hear the personal stories of women activists:**  
Anna Chudnovsky, Jolayne Fournier,  
Jane MacEwan & Jody Polukoshko



Refreshments provided



## School Board Trustee Election on November 19

### VESTA endorses the joint COPE/Vision slate for School Board Trustee

#### President's Message

Dear Colleagues,  
Teachers are among the most trusted voices amongst the public; and therefore, we need your help in electing a progressive school board in Vancouver. VESTA has a respectful working relationship with the current COPE and Vision trustees. For the November 19 elections, we have endorsed the joint COPE/Vision slate of school board candidates, but we can't ensure they will win without your help.

Please consider donating your time or money to COPE or Vision this month and supporting the following candidates:  
Bacchus, Patti—Vision  
Blakey, Al—COPE  
Bouey, Jane—COPE  
Clement, Ken—Vision  
Giesbrecht, Gwen—COPE  
Lombardi, Mke—Vision  
Payne, Cherie—Vision  
Wong, Allan—Vision  
Wynen, Rob—Vision

You are the most important aspect of the campaign! Our polling repeatedly confirms that teachers are the most trusted voices on public education.

Your voice and just a little of your time are needed to elect a progressive school board.

**YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN!  
VOTE AND ENCOURAGE  
OTHERS TO VOTE!**

*In solidarity, Chris*

Candidates for SCHOOL TRUSTEES Vote for no more than (9) nine	
● BACCHUS, Patti	VISION
● BLAKEY, Al	COPE
● BOUEY, Jane	COPE
● CLEMENT, Ken	VISION
● GIESBRECHT, Gwen	COPE
● LOMBARDI, Mike	VISION
● PAYNE, Cherie	VISION
● WONG, Allan	VISION
● WYNEN, Rob	VISION

### Spread the Word!

**Vote COPE/Vision for School Board**  
*Reprinted letter from Anna Chudnovsky (Thunderbird) to her friends*

Dear friends,

On November 19 a new school board will be elected. I'm writing to ask for your support in electing a COPE/Vision school board on that day.

Public education is the framework on which a decent society is built. We all have a vested interest in having a quality, fully funded, public education system. You can make a positive difference in the lives of thousands of children on November 19.

Decisions by the BC Liberals have resulted in increased class size, reductions in support for ESL, special needs and First Nations students, and a reduction of 340 teaching positions in Surrey alone. Vancouver's

numbers would be similar.

We need school board trustees who aren't afraid to stand up to the government, no matter who it is, and demand better for our students.

COPE and Vision have worked together over the last 3 years in a majority role on the school board. Their commitment to our city's most vulnerable students and to the strengthening of our public school system is clear.

Over the past 3 years the COPE/Vision school board has:

- Fought to keep our neighbourhood schools open.
- Made public statements in support of teachers and schools in response to the stripping of class size and composition from our collective agreement (a fight we won at the BC Supreme Court).
- Called for a poverty reduction plan in the city.
- Oppose standardized testing and made available a letter allowing parents to withdraw their children from the FSA.
- Helped develop plans for the city's first Aboriginal focused school.
- Supported and advocated for community-based adult education.

I support the COPE/Vision slate of school board trustees. As a teacher in Vancouver, I know that a COPE/Vision school board will make all the difference to my students. Our COPE/Vision trustees can and will.

I hope you will vote COPE/Vision on November 19. Please consider forwarding this email to your friends, family and neighbours. The more people are willing to prioritize education in this municipal election, the more Vancouver students will benefit.

Check out [cope.bc.ca/](http://cope.bc.ca/) or [votevision.ca/](http://votevision.ca/) for more information. **It's your turn, spread the word!**

## What your Staff Rep does for you?

VESTA Staff Representatives play several important roles at VSB worksites and in the organization of VESTA itself.

### Your Staff Rep will:

- **Facilitate enforcement of the Collective Agreement (CA)**

As the union representative the Staff Rep is there to help everyone in implementing, understanding and enforcing the CA at the worksite.

- **Provide representational support to members**

The Staff Rep is to represent the members in dealing with administrators (and sometimes colleagues) in matters related to the CA. The right to representation is an employee right!

- **Facilitate collective support**

Teachers in strike action or in other disputes, such as grievances, with the employer are under considerable stress. The Staff Rep attempts to alleviate this by taking the onus of the fight from the individual to the collective. That's where VESTA, your union comes in!

- **Advocate, but not serve as a judge**

When there is a problem, judgment is made by others through the grievance process or other venues. The Staff Rep does not act as a judge, but ensures that processes are properly followed and supports members by providing representation at the school level.

- **Serve as a spokesperson**

When decisions are taken collectively by VESTA members on your staff, the Staff Rep's role is to communicate those decisions to the Staff Rep Assembly, the VESTA executive or the school principal, on behalf of the staff.

- **Represent the worksite at Staff Rep Assemblies**

Staff Rep Assemblies are held once per month and make the majority of the policy decisions for VESTA. They provide advice to the VESTA Executive Committee and give reps an opportunity to hear

from other staffs and to get the "big picture." Staff Reps are also able to bring motions or issues from their worksite. Decisions made and information imparted is then brought back to worksites for implementation, deliberation, and feedback.

*Being a Staff Rep is not easy – but it is a crucial role to play. For this reason, VESTA provides a half-day release per month for Staff Reps to support them.*

*Worksite staffs can, in turn, support their Staff Rep by attending meetings with them, offering to help, and checking in to make sure they're not overwhelmed. Thank yous are welcome too!*

## Fundraisers

### Some concerns

Teachers are not to collect money and participate in school-based fundraising activities during Phase One of our job action plan. It is important that we reflect on this particular action as it is something teachers do so frequently without really thinking about how it may impact many of our students. As teachers, we spend so much of our time collecting money from students at the beginning of the year that we often feel like accountants or fundraisers.

There have been some concerns around not being able to do Scholastic book orders in our classrooms and there may be some children who are disappointed, however; for a number of children and their families, this is a big relief. In addition to collecting money for school fees, when teachers encourage students to order books from Scholastic, and/or bring in money for school or charity based fundraisers, students whose families are struggling financially, may feel uncomfortable, stressed and/or excluded.

The constant reminders to bring in money are distressing for many of our

## Local Government Elections 2011 November 19

If you do not reside in the city of Vancouver contact or look online for the teachers' association where you reside for their recommendation or list of endorsed candidates.

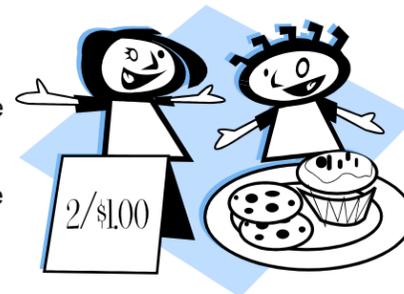
students. Sometimes lists of children who have not returned their money for school fees, agendas, fieldtrips, etc, are posted for all to see.

We often have fundraising goals with the individual or class that raises the most money winning some sort of prize. For many students, this may be putting unfair pressure on them and their families especially as they may wish to contribute, but don't have the financial means to do so. Requests for money, be it for school fees, hot lunch, book orders, fundraisers, etc. can be a major source of anxiety. Towards the end of the year, I asked the students to donate newspapers for a structures

activity. On Monday morning, a student was so proud when he handed me a stack of 24 Hours newspapers. He told me that he and his dad had gone around and collected them for our class on the

weekend. They had found a way to contribute to our school in a way that they could afford.

What we really need to think about, during this phase of our job action is how much school-based fundraising teachers and parents do to make up for a terribly underfunded public school system and the huge inequalities that exists between the have and have not schools in our district. Most importantly, we need to ensure that our students feel valued and have a sense of dignity that isn't tied to how much money they are able to raise for our schools.



## Enforcing Your Collective Agreement Using grievances to protect your rights and build solidarity

This article aims to help spread the word about grievances. Grievances, due to their name, sound like a bad thing. In fact, grievances are our tool for solving problems with the Employer when we have disagreements about the Collective Agreement. The CA is our book of rights, and it's negotiated through bargaining. It's changed and improved through both local and provincial bargaining, like what we're doing right now.

Whenever you approach your Principal because you think you have been denied your rights, you are gathering information for a grievance. Step 1 of the grievance process happens when a Staff Rep tries to solve a problem with their school-based administrator.

Sometimes Step 1 meetings happen when the Union office approaches the Board to solve a problem. Remember, Staff Reps are equal to the Principal in the implementation of the Collective Agreement. You have the right to ask questions and to stand up for your rights at your school.

Here are some things you can do when you think you have a

grievance. Take these steps before you call the VESTA office. Be proud of your Collective Agreement, and remember: We are strong when we stand up together for our rights.

- Check the Collective Agreement! There is a table of contents at the front and an index at the back.

- Collect the facts – talk to all of the people involved and ask questions

- Take notes – date them and record who was present at any meetings.

- Call the VESTA office once you have a clear idea which Collective Agreement clause has been violated so that your Grievance Officer can proceed.

The grievance process makes our Collective Agreement and our relationship with the Board stronger. Members can never be treated adversely for filing a grievance. The Collective Agreement provides protection for Staff Reps to address issues in schools and to be released to attend meetings if necessary.

In the VESTA office, Dan Graves deals with VESTA grievances. Dan is supported by a 12-member Grievance Committee that meets monthly to

discuss, strategize, make decisions about and work on grievances. We often do this work in conjunction with our BCTF Field Service Representative. The grievance process is a team effort. It requires the participation of many people and we appreciate the support of Staff Reps. Thank you for your tireless work defending our Collective Agreement!

## Are Women People?

Imagine putting your name forward as a candidate for the Canadian Senate, and having your prime minister turn you down because, legally speaking, you are not a person. This is exactly what happened to Emily Murphy in 1917. Also, as a judge, Murphy's first ruling was challenged and ruled invalid because she was not considered a person under Canadian law.

At the time, the British North America Act of 1867 guided such decisions. The Act referred to "persons," but many, including previous prime ministers, believed only men should be considered legal "persons". Even a 1925 Supreme Court of Canada decision confirmed this idea that "persons" did not include women. It wasn't until Emily Murphy and a small group of women's rights activists, later known as The Famous Five, fought to have women declared "persons" under the Constitution that change occurred. On October 18, 1929, women were declared persons under the law.

Take a moment to think about this historical ruling, and how different life in Canada would be today if not for outspoken activists like Emily Murphy.

To find further resources to help you inform and empower students, please take a look at the Status of Women link on the VESTA website at [www.vesta.ca](http://www.vesta.ca).

## Strike Soup by Chef Gerry

A cooperative soup building activity to support solidarity by having culinary fun! Staff members volunteer to bring ingredients to add to the large stockpot. All vegetables are approximate measurements. (Large staffs double the recipe and pots)

3 tbsp olive oil -- up to 4 tbsp  
2 cloves chopped garlic  
500 ml winter squash (peeled)  
250ml canned diced tomatoes  
500ml canned (rinsed) chickpeas  
2 tsp paprika  
1 tsp basil  
dash of cinnamon  
1 bay leaf  
Hot sauce to taste after serving.

500ml chopped onion  
500ml sweet potatoes, peeled, chopped  
125ml chopped celery  
200ml chopped sweet peppers  
750ml stock or water  
1 tsp turmeric  
1 tsp salt  
dash of cayenne  
1 tbsp tamari or soy sauce



In a soup kettle or large saucepan, gently sauté onions, garlic, celery and sweet potatoes in olive oil for about 5 minutes. Add seasonings (except tamari) and the stock or water. Bring to a boil and then simmer, covered, 15 minutes. Add remaining vegetables and chickpeas. Simmer another 15 minutes or so until all the vegetables are as tender as you like them. Add tamari last. Note: Mix it up, use different vegetables.