Observing Ramadan

The Fast of Ramadan has become familiar to Canadians since Canada has grown as a multicultural society. The Ramadan starts on October 5 this year. As we meet more neighbours and classmates from the Muslim community, it is important to understand the significance of Ramadan.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. It is during this month that Muslims fast. It is called the Fast of Ramadan and lasts the entire month. Ramadan is a time when Muslims concentrate on their faith and spend less time on the concerns of their everyday lives. It is a time of worship and contemplation.

During the Fast of Ramadan strict restraints are placed on the daily lives of Muslims. They are not allowed to eat or drink during the daylight hours. Smoking and sexual relations are also forbidden during fasting. At the end of the day the fast is broken with prayer and a meal called the iftar. In the evening following the iftar it is customary for Muslims to go out visiting family and friends. The fast is resumed the next morning.

During Ramadan, it is common for Muslims to go to the Mosque and spend several hours praying and studying the Quran. In addition to the five daily prayers, during Ramadan Muslims recite a special prayer called the Taraweeh prayer (Night Prayer). The length of this prayer is usually two to three times as long as the daily prayers. Some Muslims spend the entire night in prayer.

On the evening of the 27th day of the month, Muslims celebrate the Laylat-al-Qadr (the Night of Power). It is believed that on this night Muhammad first received the revelation of the Holy Quran. And according to the Quran, this is when God determines the course of the world for the following year.

When the fast ends (the first day of the month of Shawwal) it is celebrated for three days in a holiday called Id-al-Fitr (the Feast of Fast Breaking). Gifts are exchanged. Friends and family gather to pray in congregation and for large meals. In some cities fairs are held to celebrate the end of the Fast of Ramadan.

(excerpted from Ramadan.Net)

Family Centre Unveils New Website by Mahmood Tara

The Family Centre's new web site is now running on the web (at the same address http://web.uvic.ca/family-centre/). Except for a few pieces from the old site, it has been totally renovated during the whole last year to fit into the current needs of all UVic students and their families (especially those who live in the family housing complex). In the new web site, I used a user-based application design to compose a priority requirement list consisting of the preferences, needs and wants of Lam Circle residents. These requirements were converted further into web features that would desirably address the requested needs. Although the basic page design looks similar to UVic web pages (using the same standard), the site map and content are totally different.
New Website  continued from Page 1

In the new web site, there are lots of useful tools, features and links for everybody: parents, kids and the whole family. The followings are some of the major ones:

1. News and Events: Up-to-date (hopefully) pages of upcoming events, ongoing events and news special to students with families. This includes events in the Family Centre, UVic and Victoria.

2. Communication & Messaging Board: A handy board (with simple forms) through which you can post your sales, greetings, send a general message to all residents of Family Housing or even share your feedback, comments and concerns with us.

3. Kids’ Corner: Lots of fun and educational activities for kids of various ages.

4. Parent’s Corner: Many things just for parents, from a handy yellow page to Island Parent Magazine and much more. If you are thinking of going somewhere during the weekend, check out the calendar of events for Victoria.

5. Newsletter Online Subscription: Subscribe for the Family Centre monthly newsletter and get it in your mailbox automatically.

6. Useful active links: Whether you want to check the local stores’ flyers for the latest sales or to find out about your health issues, all this and more are all there for you.

As a new environment, there is definitely a lot to improve and we count very much on your help. You may contribute by suggesting new links, informing us about events or even by just posting your sales, messages, etc. to keep the web site live and active. I am very happy to see that many of you have already started using it!

I would like to acknowledge all the people who contributed to the construction of the new web site, especially Rogier Guys from UVic Communications for all his time and professional assistance, Sonya Chandler and Karen Lee for their helpful information assistance, Majid Khabbazian, Hosna Jabbari and my wife Vida for their great suggestions, and all of you who shared your concerns and suggestions about the web site during the last year. Thank you all and I hope you enjoy it!

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Food Matters

Community Garden Update
by Annalisa Robertson
Campus Community Garden
Volunteer Site Coordinator

This year the Campus Community Garden Task Force has been working towards the revitalization of the Campus Community Garden. We’re currently drafting a proposal to present to the university. Here’s a summary of the improvements we’re hoping for:

- A lease with the university securing our use of the land where the garden is currently located.
- A total physical makeover to accommodate more students, families with children, wheelchairs, workshops and volunteers.
- To form an organizational structure to oversee the garden.

Stand by for more news from the garden!

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Big Thanks!

Thank you to UVic’s Computer help desk and their customers for the generous donation to the UVic Family Centre’s Emergency Family Fund to help student families in need.

BIG thank you to St Vincent de Paul Society for once again supporting our Breakfast Clubs at the Family Centre. They have many programs for those who may need help including:

- vouchers for used household items, emergency transportation vouchers, vouchers for used furniture, cloth diaper program, short term crisis counseling, referral to other agencies for assistance, advocacy, free income tax return assistance, hygiene products, food bank, layettes.

Please contact them at
St. Vincent de Paul Centre, Social Concern Office
828 View Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1M1
Phone: 250.382.0712; Fax: 250.382.0718

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The Nitty Gritty

Facts and questions about Family Housing

In this monthly column, we address questions about living in UVic Family Housing, as well as supply information, ideas and tips about regulations, personnel, and the general "nuts & bolts" of life on Lam Circle.

This month, we provide a handy list of important UVic numbers that you can cut out and keep by your phone.

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Who to Call...

Housing Services 721-8395
Maintenance Line 721-8650
Family Centre 472-4062
Health Services 721-8492
Campus Security 721-6683
Student Resource Ctr 721-8368
UVSS Info Booth 721-8355
Grad Students Society 472-4543
Childcare Bursary 721-8423
UVic Food Bank 721-8369
Women’s Centre 721-8353
Native Student’s Union 472-4394
Students of Colour Cen. 472-4697
Access UVic 472-4389
UVic Pride 472-4393
Ombudsperson Office 721-8357
Our Family Suggests...

In this recurring column, we will hear about activities and events suggested by residents of Family Housing. Is there something that your family likes to do? Send us your recommendations!

This month, Marilyn gives a great suggestion on attending the autumn salmon run.

Every year, our family loves to visit Goldstream Provincial Park during the fall when the salmon are spawning. The walk along the river is beautiful, and it provides a very up-close look at hundreds of salmon continuing the age-old cycle of birth and death. Often there are naturalists on duty who do a wonderful job explaining the spawning process and also much information about the local wildlife. There is a SalmonCam, an underwater camera hooked up to a screen in the Nature Centre, so the fish can be observed up close. The Nature Centre also offers warm drinks for sale, and many hands-on activities for children. Bring your cameras, and dress warmly -- just up Highway 1, before the Malahat begins, it makes a great day trip. And it's FREE!

For more information and directions, go to http://www.goldstreampark.com/

Friends of the Family Centre

Sonya is Running!  by Barb Whittington

For your information and celebration: Sonya, our esteemed Family Centre Director, has decided to run in the November Victoria municipal election. Instead of just complaining about civic affairs like so many people do, Sonya is hoping to be elected so that she can have a positive influence on the process and outcome of Victoria Council business. Her background as an involved Victoria resident, a community nurse and of course her understanding of the issues facing families make her a great candidate. We say congratulations Sonya, we admire you for making the tough decision to run for election.

Remember folks that November 19th is election day in Victoria, Saanich and other Greater Victoria regions. Get out and vote for the candidate of your choice.

We're making UVic more family friendly and maybe now we can work on all of Victoria!

Please go to www.sonyachandler.com for more information!

Meet the New Practicum Students

Hello everyone, My name is Takako. I'm from Japan. I have started my 3rd year child and youth care practicum at UVic Family Centre from September till April 2006. I had worked at the Family Centre as a volunteer for six months but this time I'd like to participate in more programs in order to share experiences with many children, youth, and their families. Also, I'd like to learn various cultures with this practicum, so please feel free to ask me anything and let me know your cultural experiences.

Kristen Pitre will be at the Family Centre from Sept to December as a nursing practicum student. She is a 4th year nursing student at the University of Victoria, and is interested in working in mother/babe or labour and delivery. Kristen enjoys swimming, hiking, and spending time with her friends and family.

Rebecca Taylor is a 4th year nursing student at UVic. She is working towards specializing in maternity. If Rebecca's not studying, she's either playing with her 1 yr old nephew, or organizing wedding plans with her fiancé!

Workstudy Positions Available at the Family Centre

The Family Centre has two workstudy positions available for UVic students who qualify for workstudy through the Financial Aid office. There are approximately 270 hours available for each position. Please contact Sonya for an application or more information -- 472-4062.

Children's Corner

WIN A BACK TO SCHOOL PACK! The Andersen Family has once again donated some fantastic back-to-school kits to the children and youth of family housing in memory of their daughter, Denise! To enter to win one of these awesome kits, draw a picture of a Hallowe'en scene to decorate the Family Centre. Be creative! We will choose the winners and print some of the artwork in next month's newsletter.

Annual CSEC Halloween party!

Monday, October 31st, a BBQ at 5:30pm and a bonfire at 6:30pm, with treats for the kids. The location is the same as usual, in parking lot #7 near McKenzie and Gabriola Roads.
Family Centre Programs
Check our website for full program descriptions:
http://web.uvic.ca/family-centre/

Family Centre Cooking Co-operative
Every other Monday (Oct 10 & 24), 7pm

Storytime & Playgroup
Tuesdays, 10am to 12pm.

International Community Kitchen
Tuesdays 4 to 6pm. ***Canceled for October.***

Playgroup
Wednesdays, 10am to 12pm.

Breakfast Club
Wednesdays & Fridays, 7:30 to 9am.

Cool Science
Every Second Thursdays, 4 to 5pm. (Oct 13th and 27th)

Adult Yoga Series
Thursday evenings until December 5 from 6 to 7 pm at Childcare Complex B.

Knitting Night
Second & Fourth Friday, 7 to 9pm. (Contact Family Centre for October dates.)

Super Saturday Mornings
Saturdays (beginning Oct 1), 9:30 to 11am.

Ladies Running Group
Do you need someone to run with for motivation, company or safety? Come join us for a run Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings at 6:30am. We meet outside the family Centre and jog for 25 - 45 minutes. All ages and fitness levels welcome. Hope to see you there! Please contact Heather at 384-1396 if you have any questions.

Thanksgiving Arts and Crafts
Wednesday, October 5th, 2005, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Come join us at Childcare Complex B to learn more about the Thanksgiving holiday and to make fun Thanksgiving crafts!

Nobody's Perfect
The Family Centre will host the first "Nobody's Perfect Parenting classes" for parents from multicultural backgrounds. This class is designed for international/immigrant parents with children between the ages of 0 to 5. The session starts on October 7th (1:30-3:30pm) for seven weeks on Fridays. Please register for the class through the Family Centre. For further information contact Takako or Tomoko at 472-4062.

Community Programs
The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria has the following two opportunities available for youth. Meetings start this Sunday, September 18. Meetings will take place at ICA from 1-3pm (930 Balmoral Road at the corner of Quadra St). Please note that both programs are eligible for Planning 10/CAPP portfolios that are necessary for graduation from high school. Please contact Suki at 885-1310 or youth@icavictoria.org for more info.

SUNDAY DROP-IN IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE YOUTH GROUP (12-18 years old)
Trips, sports, arts, workshops, and much more! Let us know what you'd like to do and we'll try to set it up. This is a great place for youth who are new to Canada to meet people, share their experiences, and practice their English in a safe environment. Also a supportive and fun space for youth who sometimes feel like they're juggling two or more cultures. Food, friends, fun, and free! This group is open to youth 12-18 years old and meets on Sundays from 1-3pm.

BUDDY PROGRAM (12+ years old)
Matching newcomer youth with Canadian youth volunteers. Buddy volunteers help newcomers become more familiar with their new community as well as helping to improve conversational English. Volunteers are invited to the Sunday Drop-in Immigrant and Refugee Youth Group.

I THEE WED
Our newsletter editors are getting to be famous! Their play I Thee Wed was a hit in the Victoria Fringe Festival after a great run in Toronto too. I insist that this be in the newsletter although Lisa and Karen like to keep quiet about their successes. We don't want to keep quiet about it. They are wonderful newsletter editors and amazing writers and actors. I am so glad Karen and Lisa that you live in Family Housing and add your creative energies to the circle. Congratulations and thanks, you two!
--Barb

from the editors: Thanks, Barb! Just FYI, we will be doing the show as a fundraiser for the First Unitarian Church of Victoria on November 19th. Please email onthelam@gmail.com for more information.

News & Views Needs Your Contributions!
We welcome submissions of all kinds -- send us your thoughts, opinions, suggestions, stories, poems, recipes, tips or ideas! The email is fcnews@uvic.ca, or you can drop your submission off in the envelope on the board outside the Family Centre.

DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER: Oct 20