



PACIFIC CENTRE
family services association

PCFSA is excited for the big move!



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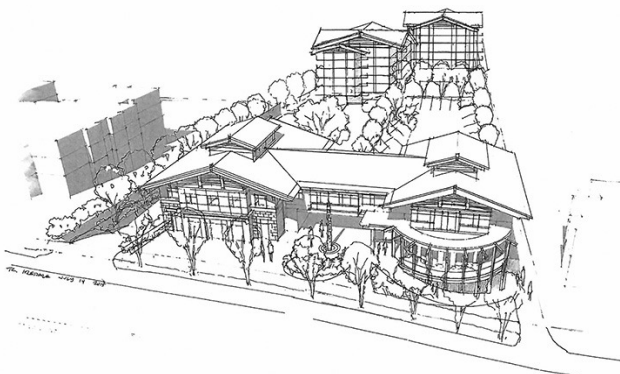
Family service provider excited about upcoming move

New building will allow for more privacy in counseling sessions

When they build it, youth will come. 'It' is a new purpose-built 14,000-square-foot building, the new home for the Pacific Centre Family Services Association.

Executive director Mitzi Dean said the beneficiaries won't just be the people working there, but those who are coming there to access their services.

"I have a vision of the area being a wellness sanctuary of regional significance for the community," Dean said. "It is desperately needed because (the West Shore) is growing so fast and our families need good quality services that are affordable and accessible."



The association parlayed the sale of the Havenwood estate on Heatherbell Road (currently housing the Coast Collective Arts Centre) seven years ago into the purchase of the two-acre property on the Colwood side of Goldstream Avenue, directly behind their current space on 345 Wale Rd.

The project will include a connector for the Galloping Goose Trail, which runs alongside the property line between the two roads. Dean said they expect to break ground in 2016, move in 2017 and celebrate their 50th anniversary in 2018.

"It will really improve our quality of service, maintaining consistency of available counselling

space. Many times (counsellors) have to share space,” she said. “(Soon) we can tailor choice and preference and constancy and stability for the people we serve. It will be best designed to be able to fulfil their function (instead of) working through logistics that (the current building) isn’t ideally suited for.”

The approximately 4,500-square-foot space the association operates out of in the West Shore Child, Youth and Family Centre will continue to house some of its programming, even after it occupies the 7,500-square-foot second floor of the new building.



The rest of the new space will be rented out to partners whose missions align with theirs, Dean said.

She hopes to see wellness advocates including massage therapists, midwives, general practitioners and others take advantage of the space. The association’s part of the building will include 21 counselling rooms, two group rooms and five administrator offices, and it will no longer share a space with the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

“We strongly believe in choice of access for families,” Dean said. “We have had it reported that having the Ministry in the building adds to the barrier to access our services. To increase choice to accessible services in different places and different design, in our mind, increases quality, so that is important.”

Grade 8 student Pascale Grenier, 13, is a graduate of Pacific Centre’s Skookum Cafe program, which offers skills and work experience for youth looking to make a move into the job market. She said her first-hand experience helped her understand the relevance of the programming in the community, both from the benefit it had on her life and those who took the class alongside her.

“I definitely think it’s good for the community. It’s helped a lot of people and educated a lot of youth,” she said. “There will be more room for more people to take more programs and have more space ... I think it’s definitely a positive to build a new space ... It was a little bit tight.”

Dean agreed that the organization’s space is cramped. And with one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada expanding at the rate it is now, taking a proactive approach will help mitigate future challenges down the road, she added. Staff are currently going through the extensive process of design and securing an architect. Finding the right engineering company is the next step, Dean said, but she looks forward to hearing feedback from the community as well.

“We welcome input and any questions that there are at any level. This is a

great opportunity for lots of different people to get involved in different ways. It is not often you have a community project where people can make a contribution and have a lasting legacy.”

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