



# Life Connections

LET IT BE WRITTEN • LET IT BE SAID

EDITION 1

SEPTEMBER 2005

AN IN-HOUSE NEWSLETTER FOR THE VANCOUVER FRIENDS FOR LIFE SOCIETY



## THE LATEST NEWS

## Newsletter Naming Contest

### Welcome to Life Connections

While we're on the topic of the newsletter, the members have spoken on the name. The winner of a \$50 Pacific Crab Co. gift certificate who submitted **Life Connections** as a suggestion is Susan K. Thanks to all who participated. The banner line "*Let it be written, Let it be said*" was also submitted to the committee as an entry into the name contest. It was felt that this was too long for a newsletter name but made a great banner line. Thank you to John L. for your submission. For your efforts a Starbucks Card is being given to you in appreciation.

## Web Forum To Be Launched

Looking for a new way to communicate with the *Friends for Life* community? The website will soon have a new discussion forum where you can ask questions about programs, get advice from other members on your wellness goals, or just ask and answer general questions about the house. The forum is password restricted to members only.

Check out the next edition of **Life Connections** for news announcing the official launch.

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Acknowledgments

The new *Friends for Life* member and volunteer newsletter is here!

You've been asking for more information about what's happening at the house, new programs, special events and changes and general goings-on. Until now, the only way to make sure you didn't miss anything was to regularly visit the house and scour the bulletin boards or interrogate the hosts on what's new.

**Life Connections** will be produced monthly and be distributed by email, on the website at [www.friendsforlife.ca/lifeconnections/](http://www.friendsforlife.ca/lifeconnections/) and by printed copy available in the Welcome Centre. While this first issue has been a project of the members of the Communications Committee, future issues will be written by and for the members and volunteers. Check out the contributions guidelines at the bottom of page 4 for more information on getting published in the October issue due out September 29 (dates of course to be confirmed). We hope this newsletter will contribute to your wellness journey.



## Freshly Painted House

The house reopened Aug 22nd with a fresh inside coat of paint.

Doesn't she look fabulous? Come by and take a look at the new colours and enjoy the shine.

## Program Notes

FFL has some exciting new programs launching in the fall of 2005.

There's the **West Coast College of Massage Therapy (WCCMT) In-reach Program**, where FFL members will soon be able to book massage appointments at their New Westminster Campus. The new **Peer Wellness Coach Program** will get underway this fall, and will train volunteers how to coach new and existing members to begin or re-invigorate their wellness journey. We are getting ready to launch a **Community Kitchen Program** in partnership with McLaren housing; and, in October, a new 10 week **Smoking Cessation Program** will be available to members.

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*Introducing Marc Seguin - our first "members seat" on the board of Friends For Life since 2004.*

## *Introducing Azfir, Volunteer Services Assistant*

*By J. Evin Jones*

*Azfir comes to Friends For Life with a very diverse set of qualifications. He served for many years as Team Leader of Microbiology at Dynacare-Kasper, Canada's largest medical laboratory. He fled Edmonton five years ago to pursue his love of dance in Vancouver, and has never looked back. A dancer since the age of three, Azfir has had the opportunity to dance all over the world and fell into acting three years ago. With stage, film, and theatre credits, he's been very blessed to succeed in this incredibly competitive industry.*

*Azfir facilitates classes in dance, conflict resolution, body language awareness, and intercultural communication. He does independent contracts for companies seeking to improve their efficiency, and works to motivate and inspire their staff and volunteers. When he's not working, Azfir spends long hours in his laboratory developing a cure for boredom.*

*When asked what brought him to Friends For Life he replied simply: "Because I have lots of fun pants and I need somewhere to show them off".*

## *Introducing Dave Keefe, Member Services Assistant*

*By Dave Keefe*

*As I write this I am comfortably settling into my new desk, missing my boxer pup at home, and busily getting up to speed on all the exciting work I will be doing here at the Vancouver Friends For Life Society. In researching the Member Services Assistant position I was impressed by the incredible contribution made by the volunteers, members and staff of the Friends For Life Society. I look forward to furthering that work through my background in member services, program management and project management.*

*I moved here from Toronto last October, and I still consider myself as "new" to Vancouver. I guess that everything still feels new because there is just so much to do in Vancouver. It's really amazing to have such easy access to world-class beaches, hiking trails and bike routes.*

*I've really enjoyed receiving all the welcoming email and getting to know the staff, volunteers and members; and I look forward to meeting all of you in the future. It's great to be here.*

## **By Mark L.**

Marc Seguin fills our first "members seat" on the board of FFL, since 2004, when a policy change opened a seat on the board for a member. His appointment involved a process that considered his letter of intention, extensive volunteer experience and involvement in the house that dates back to 1996 -- a dramatic year for Marc when he not only turned 30, but was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. Marc has acted as a special event host, brunch crewmember, strategic planning / house committee member and organizer of the 10-year anniversary celebration. He has been a key player for several years on the Wellness Services Task Team. *continued on page 3*

I first got to know Marc last year at the spiritual retreat for PWA's. The hills of Nanaimo were alive as Marc entertained us as Maria, the not-to-be nun. Marc originally made his way to Vancouver from Montreal in 1992 to pursue an acting career in Hollywood North. Tracking down Marc for a profile was trying to catch that moonbeam in your hand.

We both recently attended the PWA retreat at Loon Lake where Marc was in his element wearing different hats [mostly from the costume trunk] and a councilor wearing his St. John Ambulance badge always ready for the unexpected. Only on the last day just before the bus was to take us back to civilization was I able to briefly corner Marc relaxing on the deck. He was capturing the only few moments of sunshine we had all week. We continued our discussion serendipitously at a bus stop, on a bus, in the street and over a computer station where I interrupted Marc pursuing his passion for politics. He was sending an e-mail to Ottawa, voicing his concern over the G-8 summit. Marc studied politics at McGill University in Montreal where Marc obtained his BA in Humanistic Studies. It was the political and cold weather climate in Montreal that helped make his decision to move to Vancouver. Another reason was to give his mother space to find a new beginning after the sudden death of his father when he was at university. Growing up he had a very loving and supportive family that endured much with a tragic car accident taking the life of his baby sister. His greatest pride and joy is his nephew and godson Christopher Marc.

Marc is a Pisces whose interests include dinner parties with friends, the arts like jazz artist Stacy Kent or the work of visual artist Stephen Coventry, reading and Tai Chi.

When asked about his experience

on the board, he said it was the next stepping-stone for him considering his past involvement. He has seen many changes particularly with staff but feels very optimistic with the present well-meaning staff that is involved in a consultative process with focus groups and input from members. Many issues are being addressed such as member's satisfaction and access to programs but it is the issue of defining wellness for members that will result hopefully, in additional programming and a renewed direction for the house. As Director, Marc hopes to contribute to the ongoing evolution of the policy, governance and overall communications that help shape our organization. As the officer who occupies the Member seat, he wants to ensure that the Board continues to be responsive to the needs and concerns of the Membership

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### 12th Annual Art for Life: October 2

By Darren L.



Once again this important fund raising gala is fast approaching! This is the largest fundraising event that the Society does as a "hands on" project. It is put together by a highly motivated and dedicated group of volunteers overseen by event planner

**Anne Carlson.** Under her direction these volunteers will create a fantastic evening that will be the largest live art auction to date. Over 50 major works by renowned Canadian Artists will be up for auction, with the signature piece by **Christian Nicolay** represented by the **Elliott Louis Gallery**. Christian is a Multi Media Artist and will also be presenting a live musical performance at the Artist's Preview Show and Reception.

On another note the Silent Art Auction this year will also be our largest, presenting art pieces by the "up and coming". These pieces are by recognised artists but tend to be smaller works with a lower price point. This year, for the first time, buyers will have a chance to preview the works in the Silent Art Auction, as there will be a Preview show on September 9th at the **Jacanna Gallery**, 2435 South Granville Street. This evening will be open to the general public – so put it in your datebook!

Finally, there will also be over 150 luxury items for bid in the Silent Auction.

Then on the night of October 2nd it will all come together at the Four Seasons Hotel. It is really two events in one, a Dinner Reception and the Friend In Deed Awards Ceremony followed by a Dessert Cocktail Reception, all culminating with the live art auction and silent auctions running simultaneously.

So what does this all mean for you as a member? It presents an opportunity to come to the event as a paying guest either for the dinner or at the cocktail reception. If this isn't your cup of tea, then consider volunteering. We need a large number of volunteers to make the event a success and keep it as one of the premier fund raisers in the city.

For dinner or dessert reception ticket info, either look on the Friends For Life website, and *continued on p.4*

click on the Art For Life link – or go directly to [www.ArtForLife.net](http://www.ArtForLife.net). For volunteer opportunities speak to Alix, the Volunteer Coordinator, upstairs on the third floor.

This is a unique event that is an amazing way to get your feet wet in the “Social Scene” or to participate as a volunteer in a well organized, well run large event.

See you there!

### eBay Foundation Donation

The eBay Foundation has very generously donated \$5000 USD to Friends For Life for the **Dinner With Mom** and **Dinner With Jake** meal programs! (photo top right)

Huge thanks to dedicated volunteer Weston McMillan of eBay Foundation, for helping to make this happen!



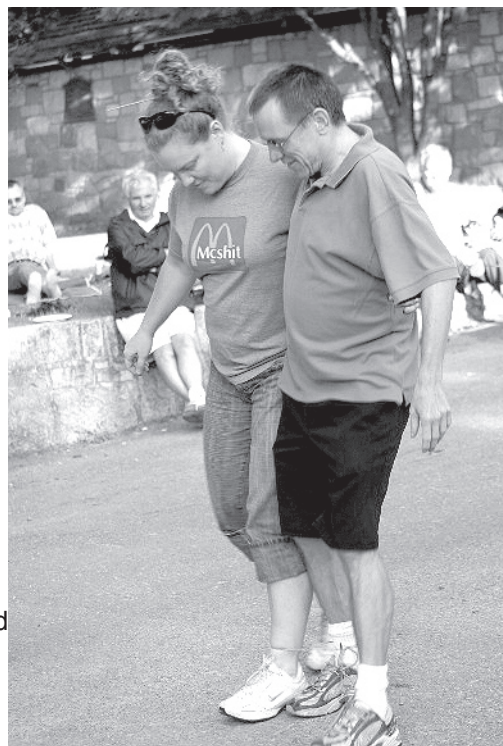
From left: Darren Lauscher, Danny Strilchuk and J. Evin Jones of Friends For Life (FFL), Weston McMillan of eBay, Paul LaFontaine, Derek Shepherd and Michael Reid of FFL.

### Hungry Hoards turn up for Volunteer BBQ!

As reported by Chopper 9

More than 30 volunteers turned out for the first annual Volunteer BBQ at Second Beach in Stanley Park. Mother Nature blessed us with a rare warm and sunny evening. The evening began with an unexpected surprise. Alix and Baz arrived at the picnic site at 4:30 pm sharp, ready to set up. Every detail had been planned down to the last dollop of mayo for burgers. However, within moments of arriving at the sight, Alix turned to Baz with a look of shock and reported “there is no BBQ pit here”. After staring at each for a few moments in stunned silence Alix jumped in her car drove off shouting “I’ll be back with BBQs”. She returned in world record time of 25 minutes with not one, but two BBQs. Thanks to Doug D. for providing the third.

A fun night was had by all - FFL volunteers are known for their patience and graciousness. Even while waiting for what seemed an eternity for food...they never complained and kept smiling. For the record, although Darren sustained the most serious injury, Bart and Vicki won the three-legged race.



Bart and Vicki are the winners!

Join the Friends For Life team at the WALK for LIFE in support of Friends For Life and the BC Persons With AIDS Society. The Walk is happening on September 25, 2005 11:30 AM – in Stanley Park.

It's easy! Click on the Walk for Life link on the Friends For Life website, [www.friendsforlife.ca](http://www.friendsforlife.ca) to learn how to register and join our team online. You can invite your friends and family to join our team. You can also invite them to sponsor you online. All funds raised at the walk go towards direct services for people living with HIV and AIDS in British Columbia.

Life Connections needs you to help with the next issue! So start taking photos or offering to help with writing or finding articles. The October issue is due out September 29th. The deadline for submissions is September 22nd. We need your article contributions in the areas of member accomplishments, member passages, “Hot topics”, Creative self-expression (poems, short fiction, etc), profile (member, volunteer, donor), or volunteer kudos. Send them on to [editor@friendsforlife.ca](mailto:editor@friendsforlife.ca) or use the contribution form available at the welcome center. Please include your full name and contact details so we can contact you if there are any questions. We do reserve the right to edit for space or content.

## Strategic Planning Success:

### A New Mission, Philosophy and Values Statement for FFL!

By J. Evin Jones, Executive Director

*FFL has a brand new Mission, Wellness Philosophy and Values Statement, which were adopted at the Society's strategic planning session held in April of this year. The Board, Staff and Wellness Services Task Team worked very hard to ensure that this year's strategic planning was as thorough and inclusive as possible. Leading up to the strategic planning, we held four focus groups with members who were randomly selected from our database. We also held focus groups with volunteers and hosted an evening where 15 representatives of different community partner organizations (i.e. BCPWA, YouthCO, Dr. Peter, etc.) came to provide input. Finally, a telephone survey was conducted whereby we received input from 110 of our members. Came the day of Strategic Planning, we had a total of 25 participants, consisting of the staff, Board, key volunteers and seven members.*

*My sincere thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make the strategic planning process meaningful, and I am confident that the new Mission, Wellness Philosophy and Values Statement will help to inform the work done at the Society for years to come!*

#### **Mission Statement**

*The Vancouver Friends For Life Society serves as a catalyst to enhance the wellness of individuals living with life threatening illness by providing complementary and alternative health and support services.*

#### **Wellness Philosophy**

*The Vancouver Friends For Life Society, by inviting members to participate in complementary and alternative health programs and services, assists members in assuming responsibility for their own health and well-being. Wellness is more than the absence of illness. Wellness is a physical, mental, social and spiritual state whereby people feel more personal control over their health. People living with life threatening illness do better physically*

*and psychologically when they gain the tools and resources to make their own best health decisions.*

*For some people, living with a life-threatening illness can lead to anxiety, fear, depression, and/or social isolation. Friends For Life believes it is of the utmost importance that people learn to take an active role in their wellness journey. At Friends For Life, we recognize that with compassion, support and knowledge, the experience of illness can be a catalyst for positive personal transformation.*

#### **Values Statement**

*Friends For Life believes in the capacity to heal therefore we recognize the importance of complementary and alternative health services and a holistic approach to health and well-being.*

*Friends For Life is committed to providing equal access to services across its membership. This includes providing all services free of charge within an accessible and safe environment.*

*Friends For Life recognizes the important role that a warm, welcoming environment and beautiful surroundings can play in enhancing the wellness experience.*

*Friends For Life applauds the active role of volunteers at the Society in delivering services, helping to inform programming directions and creating a caring community.*

*Friends For Life respects the role of members in providing a valuable and essential perspective in informing the strategic direction of the Society. Friends For Life honours the courage and compassion demonstrated by members in their wellness journey and values the essential perspective of those living with a life-threatening illness in informing decisions.*

*Friends For life staff, volunteers and members endeavour to reflect the diversity of all communities affected by life threatening illness. We are all genders and all sexual orientations. We value and celebrate our diversity. We are dedicated to creating respectful, safe and healing environments and expect that all who come to Friends For Life will extend respect to those they meet here. We at Friends For Life act to promote the inclusion of all.*

## Princess's Happenings

By Ray S.

It was the best of times, and the worst of times. What does time mean to you? I have all the time in the world. So why don't I fill my time with something healthy? So I will be taking the one-year wellness challenge. Just like the house needs a face lift, so do I.

I become very lazy in the fall and winter, so that's why I'm looking at a plan, a plan that will take me down the golden road to wellness. Maybe even a pot of gold is waiting for me at the end? Who knows; I don't.

My first plan of action is to relax more and I'm sure Shannon will be happy about that.

Also, in the next issue I will be writing about Qi Gong, and what it is all about. I look forward to giving it a try – deep breath! Stay tuned, you won't want to miss what happens next with Princess!

What do you think? I want to know how you keep fit, or what wellness means to you.

Drop me a line by email at [editor@friendsforlife.ca](mailto:editor@friendsforlife.ca) - all Questions will be answered!

Remember, keep smiling, I do, and it works.



## Pride Parade 2005

A Special Thanks Anthony, Allan and to all those Volunteers who stepped up to the plate and made our entry into this year's Pride Parade and to the other Volunteers who put together and manned the Sunset Beach booth; a great job well done. Our booth raised over \$700.00, with the selling of homemade cookies and Pride items.

6 September 2005

## Program Notes *(from page 2)*

Of course we need room to run all these new programs, so we are very happy to announce a new partnership with **Unlimited Yoga**, who will be donating the use of their studio space located at 1177 West Hastings. Check them out at [www.unlimitedyoga.com](http://www.unlimitedyoga.com).

Pick up a copy of **Lifelines** in September for full details.

## Final Credits

*Congratulations to all for realizing this inaugural edition of **Life Connections**. Thanks are to many: to those who had involvement way back with the barker; to those who participated in the strategic planning which guided and reinvigorated this forum; to the members of the Communications Committee; to those who sent in submissions and ideas; and, a special thanks to Andres for making this combined effort look so amazing.*