

## New Autism Centre announced

A location for a provincial autism centre was made official today when the Province and the City of Vancouver announced they have secured a home for the new facility. The new Pacific Autism Family Centre (PAFC) will be located at 2750 East 18th Ave., on land leased from the City of Vancouver next to the Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children.



PAFC will be a knowledge centre that brings together resources for research, learning, assessment, treatment and support to help children and families living with autism spectrum disorder. The Province announced their support for the project in the 2008 throne speech and has provided support to the Pacific Autism Centre Society (PACS), the non-profit group leading the project, as they develop a plan that will respond to the needs of the autism community. The Province has pledged up to \$20 million toward capital costs, pending the completion of a business plan from the society. PACS has committed to fundraise an additional \$14 million for capital and operating costs.

The Pacific Autism Family Centre is a community-driven project, initiated by community advocates and led by the Pacific Autism Centre Society. The society has held community consultations, formed a parental advisory group and asked the autism community to be involved in determining what services they would like to see available at the centre.

“We know the extraordinary challenges children and youth with autism and their families face each day,” said Mary Polak, Minister of Children and Family Development. “This new centre – and the services, supports and resources it promises – will respond to the needs of families, both in the Lower Mainland and via satellite offices throughout B.C.”

“Our government made a clear commitment to creating a national hub for research and a centre for parental supports that will help children and families affected by autism,” said Premier Gordon Campbell, undertaking one of his last duties before stepping down in favour of new Liberal leader Christy Clark. “The new centre will help make the latest information and research more accessible to B.C. families and improve collaboration between researchers and professionals across the province and around the world.”