

BCACG Symposium – September 30 – October 1, 2009

STRATEGY SESSION DISCUSSION and ACTION PLANS:

1. *How has your organization been affected by the recent gaming policy changes?*

- Uncertainty makes future planning difficult
- Uncertainty makes it difficult to leverage other funding.
- Shell game with arts groups. Gave \$9 million to Arts Council, but took \$9 million in gaming funds from arts groups. Some arts groups got zero dollars.
- Senior centres closing while senior sector is growing as baby boomers age putting additional stress on the healthcare system.
- Sports groups only getting 30 per cent of previous funding.
- Regular meetings with government so we don't hear decisions via the media.
- Work together as one collective, consolidated, united group, including both bingo affiliates and direct access.
- We should work more closely with other groups and associations. For instance BC Sports is working with hockey groups, lacrosse groups, soccer, etc.

2. *Where do you see BCACG playing a key role on behalf of its members?*

- Public education. Let public know that we are not a branch of government.
- Utilize the media - more stories about charities and how gaming funds are used.
- Communication – reasonable conversations.
- United voice throughout BC.
- Regional meetings to rally support.
- Advocacy – Develop a steering committee with a rep from each sector to determine our message and coordinate with charities to formulate an action plan. Advocacy Kit
<http://proartalliance.ca/images/PDFs/toolkit.pdf>
- Rally at legislature.
- Provide three key points, maximum four words each - to be distributed to charities so they can use it as a basis for talking to media.
- Write letters to the editors of local newspapers.
- Fact sheet on BCACG website – historic perspective, grant perspective, dollars, number of groups affected.
- Talk to MLAs, and key government people.
- Publish the message in province-wide print media. If we pay for a large ad, the newspaper cannot change the content.

3. Critical issues to address and action steps:

- Three-year grants create stability.
- Public acceptance of gaming.
- Impact of HST and reduced foundation funding.
- Need government to restore & stabilize funding.
- Increased cost to the province to provide services charities currently provide.
- Clearly distinguish the structure and process for bingo affiliation and DA grants.

4. Should we join forces with other groups?

- **Yes** –BCBC, Arts groups, Sports BC, BC Federation of Labour, Volunteer BC, city councils, Council of Senior Citizens, BCCPAC, Aboriginal groups, etc.
- One delegate cautioned about “spreading our wings” too far. That we should concentrate on our own issues before looking outside.

5. Did Derek Sturko’s answers affect your organization?

- Answer is clear - Derek gave us zero information that will help us.
- Need to address questions to politicians that make the decisions (Ministers & Premier).

6. Would you support legal action?

- BCACG is currently exploring options with three lawyers. We’re looking at national legislation, provincial legislation and the historical picture, including all legal documents and decisions.
- The government needs to be held accountable.
- Advocate, negotiate, agitate – don’t litigate if it can be avoided but be prepared to.
- Concerted plan of public education.

7. What resources would BCACG need to make a difference?

- Expand membership. With 6,800 charities receiving gaming grants, our membership should be closer to that number instead of 2000.
- Update membership database to increase flow of information.
- Be proactive; not reactive.
- Media clout. We need a media champion.
- We should all go back to our organizations and inform our members and they should be our advocates.
- Ask service providers to financially support BCACG.

KEVIN GASS, Vice-President, Corporate Affairs, British Columbia Lottery Corporation

Public research has shown there are two major issues throughout BC:

- 1) How dollars from gaming are returned to the communities; and
- 2) Perceived issue with problem gambling.
 - Corporate research has shown that two-thirds of British Columbians believe gambling is not okay.
 - 47 per cent believe that there are problem gamblers and we don't do enough to help them.
 - BCLC's statistics show that 4.5 per cent of gamblers are at risk.
 - BCLC has started "Game Sense info centres" for problem gamblers in BC.
 - Perception from problem gamblers is that they don't want to use the Game Sense centres because of people's perception that they indeed have a problem with gambling.
 - Two-thirds of British Columbians think that gambling is a personal choice.

Questions from the Floor

Q - Is it true of the 37 per cent that believe gambling is okay, 87 per cent of that group does so because they have the belief that all the money goes to charities?

A - Kevin wasn't sure but said it sounded reasonable.

NEXT STEPS and ACTION PLANS IF CAPACITY PERMITS:

- Increase BCACG membership (underway)
- Update BCACG's web site with results of this symposium. (underway)
- Find a champion to spearhead the cause, e.g. Rick Hanson, Sam Sullivan, Tim Jones, Jim Green.
- Create awareness that BCACG exists. (ongoing with media)
- Contact Direct Access groups currently not BCACG members.
- Talk to the media. (ongoing)
- Bring our membership up-to-date on issues. (via media and website)
- Need a list of charities that did not receive funding (underway)
- Raise funds for advocacy and advertise the value/importance of charities. (underway)
- Hire a professional lobbyist. (too costly at this time, funds in reserve for legal action)
- Update BCACG database with complete contact info for all BCACG members. (underway)
- Cut and paste newsletters and BCACG news into emails as well as pdf. (once emails obtained-newsletter will be sent electronically and posted on website)
- Send out short informative newsflashes to members that they can broadcast to their groups. (once dbase updated, will send announcements)
- Improve website: more flash, attention grabbing, information and resources. (funding required)
- Access professional sports e.g. Canucks. Charities grow the future players.
- Send out a request to all BCACG members to provide information on how many charities and members they represent. (need emails)
- Encourage casinos to support our efforts to reinstate the 33.3 per cent of gaming proceeds to charities. Ask that unclaimed winnings be donated to their affiliated charities exclusively.
- Survey Monkey: Ask BCLC to partner with us and fund this proposal.
- Ask press to help portray our case and cause. i.e. the social contract that government made with the citizens of BC for gaming to be brought to BC. (ongoing)

- Put a link to BCACG.com on your website to increase visibility. (members and non-members are encouraged to do so)
- Tell your stories and make the public aware that charities are funded by gaming dollars. (Members and non-members must communicate their existence or they won't exist in the hearts and minds of the public and voters.)

Cheryl thanked everyone for attending and the symposium was adjourned.