

FROM: CHILLIWACK ARTS &  
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Attached photo: Mayor Sharon Gaetz at Community Day.jpg  
Photo Description: Mayor Sharon Gaetz opening the Cultural Centre, along with children, at Community Day, November 6, 2010.  
Photo Credit: n/a

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## NEW CULTURAL CENTRE OFF TO A GOOD START

CHILLIWACK, BC— It has been a great start-up for Chilliwack's new cultural centre and it only looks to get better. Since opening the Centre with the *Red Carpet Affair* in September, over 19,000 tickets have been sold through the Centre Box Office, with a value exceeding \$326,000. This is equivalent to 56 sold out performances at the old arts centre, and exceeds initial projections.

"We've had a successful opening half of our initial season, and we are on target in terms of our budgeting and overall use projections for the Cultural Centre" notes Dave Stephen, president of the Chilliwack Arts and Cultural Centre Society, which oversees operation of the community facility on behalf of the City of Chilliwack. "It's our first progress report; and the signs are positive. Our show programming seems to be a good fit, and we've been pleased with the response from audiences and the

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### THE RENTAL BUSINESS IS STRONG

community. We are also very grateful for the ongoing support, not only of users, but by the donors and supporters of our key fund raising initiatives.”

However, it's just a start acknowledges Stephen. “We realize this is only part way through our first year, and there is still much work to be done.”

Beyond the scheduled show season for 2010/11, rentals and use of the facility have been encouraging according to the person who looks after bookings. “I have been thrilled with the level of interest and the number of contracts signed since opening,” says centre Booking Manager Theresia Reid, “And these companies are not just local; national and internationally-renowned artists are finding out about our new centre and are knocking on our doors!”

A couple of the most recent success stories on the Cultural Centre's main stage include more than 4,750 people attending the Chilliwack School of Performing Arts production of *Seussical the Musical*, as well as the touring production of *Forever Plaid* selling out three and a half weeks before the performance.

A big part of the activity at the centre has been programs and shows presented by the Core and Key partners. For those aspiring to be an artist, the Chilliwack Community

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### CHILLIWACK, YOU CAN BE PROUD

Arts Council, one of the two Core partners, has offered painting, drawing and digital arts courses at the centre, among dozens of others, since September. The ceramic arts classes, in particular, have grown in popularity, aided by the addition of ten electric potter's wheels, and two kilns in the new clay studio. Other popular classes include various dance sessions, and the Arts Council has presented shows in the centre's new main theatre to much acclaim.

The Chilliwack Academy of Music, the centre's other Core partner, is now equipped to teach vocal and instrumental lessons to potentially 1,000 students under one roof. Since moving to the Cultural Centre, the Academy has fulfilled their dream to start up new programs, including Suzuki "Pre-Twinkle" violin group class for 3-year-olds, Suzuki group piano, violin techniques class, and elementary and intermediate piano pedagogy, which is a post-secondary-level program.

The Chilliwack Art Gallery, which was formally opened in late September to an enthusiastic crowd of over 400 art supporters, has since welcomed approximately 4,000 visitors to their exhibits, including the *Gala Opening Show*, the *Dr. Norman Bethune Show*, the *Winter Show and Sale*, and the currently running *Home, Community and Northern Wildlife* all curated by a key partner group, the Chilliwack Visual Artists Association (CVAA) and staffed by some 50 volunteers.

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### **VOLUNTEERS: THE KEY TO SUCCESS**

Another key partner delighted to be part of the new facility, is the Chilliwack Players Guild, the resident theatre company for the Cultural Centre. “Now, our technical and creative options for productions are endless, with space in the wings and on stage we have never experienced before. You just cannot put a value on that!” comments Guild President Malcolm Mincher. “*Noises Off* and *Mother Goose—The Pantomime*, were both extremely positive experiences when working with the technical staff, Centre Box Office and marketing team.”

Additional goals reached include the number of first year donations received for both the *Take Your Seat* fundraiser, and the *88 Key Club* fundraisers. There are still plenty of theatre seats and piano keys waiting to be purchased and named.

Many of the successes mentioned are only made possible through the tremendous volunteer support the Cultural Centre has received from the community. About 150 Chilliwack and area residents have stepped up to ensure patrons experience the finest customer service at shows and exhibits, and have recorded hundreds of volunteer hours since the opening.

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### **Additional Information**

The Chilliwack Cultural Centre is a bold, beautiful new building with stunning architecture housing two unique performance venues, The Chilliwack Art Gallery, 21 music instruction studios, arts and crafts studios, meeting rooms, and offices. It is also the new home of the Chilliwack Academy of Music and the Chilliwack Community

Arts Council. Community partners in the project include The City of Chilliwack, the Chilliwack Visual Artists Association, and the Chilliwack Players Guild. In addition to the diverse and brilliant Season of shows, hundreds of lessons by locally renowned instructors are now offered to community members interested in making beautiful music, creating a masterpiece, or performing on stage. The core and community partners bring a support base of 1,000 community members to The Centre, ensuring guests experience the finest customer service and their time at The Centre is an absolute highlight. Attend a class or show today and experience a place where art comes to life!

*Chilliwack Cultural Centre highlights:*

- 597 seat performance theatre
- 168 seat recital hall / rehearsal space / dance studio / meeting space
- Chilliwack Art gallery (22-foot high display area)
- 21 music instructional rooms
- Arts and crafts studios
- Storage and Archival Resource Room

***For additional information and to arrange interviews, contact:***

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