



**United Way**  
Central & South  
Okanagan Similkameen



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA  
**Early Years  
Centre**



**KCR**



*"Together We Learn"*  
CENTRAL OKANAGAN  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### **New Family Hub opens at Pearson Road Elementary**

**August 17, 2016 (Kelowna)** – Parents and guardians of children in Kelowna will be able to access a range of early learning, health and family services in one convenient location now that the Central Okanagan Family Hub – one of the province's new BC Early Years Centres – has opened at Pearson Road Elementary School to serve families with children under 19 years of age.

"We are very excited to open the doors to the Family Hub at Pearson Road Elementary – a one-stop-shop where families are at the centre of all services," says Ellen Boelcke, Executive Director for Kelowna Community Resources. "We believe that investing in the early years is where we can make the biggest impact – early prevention pays back tenfold. It is our vision to transform young lives for future success."

The *Central Okanagan Family Hub* is a collaborative network of local agencies that supports, informs and connects families with young children to community services. Located in Pearson Elementary school, the family centre offers a one-stop "family hub" where parents and caregivers can drop-in for information and programs. The centre's staff can help families access the services they need by providing referrals to parenting and early learning programs, emergency shelter or food, health services and other supports available in the community.

"This Family Hub is a concept utilized in several B.C. communities and we are thrilled to be not only a major funder but a community partner in its evolution," says Shelley Gilmore, Executive Director with United Way Central and South Okanagan/Similkameen. "We are very much in support of collaborative community solutions, and United Way and its donors want to be a part of building stronger communities through these collective impact initiatives. It's a very exciting project, one that we know will have an incredibly positive impact on the community."

This new centre is part of a commitment under the BC Early Years Strategy to implement a network of BC Early Years Centres across the province that will provide families with one-stop, convenient access to a range of services and supports, information and referrals. The Central Okanagan Family Hub – Kelowna is one of 47 BC Early Years Centres throughout the province. Westbank First Nation has also been designated by the province as an Early Years Centre and will be opening in the near future.

"The creation of this community hub will help bring people together to tackle complex problems through a neighbourhood lens," said Norm Letnick, MLA for Kelowna-Lake Country. "United Way is a valuable partner and a champion for a robust community here in Kelowna, and I am honoured to be able to work with them as we strive toward a stronger Kelowna and a stronger British Columbia."

The Hub is a unique collaboration of community organizations and service providers. After more than two years of consultation and planning with over 20 agencies, the centre is finally open. Initial funding for the Hub was provided by United Way CSO with \$97,000 confirmed annually for three years, the Office of the Early Years provided \$52,000, and the City of Kelowna offered an initial grant of \$9,550. Central Okanagan Foundation provided a training grant of \$1,400. The Central Okanagan School District provided the space at Pearson Road Elementary School and Kelowna Community Resources will be the host agency. They opened their doors to the public on June 13, 2016.

"The Central Okanagan Board of Education is pleased to be able to provide the space for such a valuable program," said Board Chair Moyra Baxter. "Watching the groups and agencies come together on behalf of our children and families has shown us what can be accomplished by dedicated community members, and the Board thanks everyone involved in this endeavour."

The community partners of the Hub include:

- Aboriginal CATCH
- ARC Program
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
- CATCH (Community Action Toward Children's Health)
- Central Okanagan Division of Family Practice
- Central Okanagan Foundation
- Central Okanagan Partners for Literacy
- Central Okanagan School District and Pearson Road Elementary School
- City of Kelowna
- Dr. Stan Szombathy – Pediatrician
- Interior Health
- Intercultural Society of the Central Okanagan
- Regional District of the Central Okanagan
- Kelowna Community Resources
- Ki-Low-Na Friendship Centre
- Okanagan Boys and Girls Club
- Metis Community Services Society of BC
- Ministry of Child and Family Development – Central Okanagan
- MCFD – Office of the Early Years
- Starbright Children's Development Centre (COFDA)
- Success By 6
- The Bridge Youth and Family Services
- The F.O.R.C.E Society for Kids Mental Health
- The Okanagan Sikh Temple and Cultural Society Kelowna
- UBC Okanagan School of Social Work
- United Way of the Central and South Okanagan/Similkameen

The Family Hub is open Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., with the grand opening scheduled for late September.

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**Learn More:**

**CATCH - <http://www.catchcoalition.ca/Hub>**

**Central Okanagan Family Hubs – Kelowna: <https://www.facebook.com/COFHP/>**

**B.C. Early Years Strategy:**

**[www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/child-care/families\\_agenda\\_early\\_years\\_strategy.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/child-care/families_agenda_early_years_strategy.pdf)**

**Provincial Office for the Early Years: [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/how-parents-can-support-young-children/provincial-office-for-early-years](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/how-parents-can-support-young-children/provincial-office-for-early-years)**

### **About United Way CSO**

For over 65 years, the United Way of the Central and South Okanagan/Similkameen has served the region from Lake Country in the North, to Osoyoos and Princeton in the South. Our mission is to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action. The United Way invests in three focus areas that support all that kids can be, move people from poverty to possibility and builds strong communities. We also invest resources in local capacity building and community initiatives that support our mission. For more information, visit [unitedwaycso.com](http://unitedwaycso.com) or call 1-855-232-1321.

### **About Kelowna Community Resources**

KCR is a not for profit community agency serving the Central Okanagan since 1983. We are a multi-service agency with services under five departments: Adoption, Community, Employment, Family and Immigrant services. For more information, visit: [kcr.ca](http://kcr.ca) or call 250-763-8008.

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