

## President's Report

Since it was established five years ago the RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation has worked to build an educational legacy by making grants to support projects furthering public education in B.C. and overseas. In addition to continuing that work, this year the foundation became involved in two new projects.

We are pleased to announce that The RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation has established an endowment at each of the public universities in British Columbia that grant degrees in education. These institutions are: The University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, The University of Victoria, Thompson Rivers University, Malaspina College-University, and The University of Northern British Columbia.

Each of these universities will use the endowment to create at least one RR Smith Bursary in Education for students enrolled in an Education Degree program or a professional teacher-training program. From now on, these universities will award R.R. Smith Bursaries in Education annually. To qualify students must be enrolled in an Education program, demonstrate financial need, and have an academic record indicating that they are likely to succeed in the program. Students who qualify may apply through the university they are attending.

The \$150,000 used to establish these bursaries came from a donation that the BCTF made to the RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation. This donation was one of three charitable donations made by the BCTF in lieu of paying a fine to the court as a result of the teachers' strike last year. The directors of the RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation have worked carefully to comply with the agreements made in court when this donation was agreed to instead of a fine.

Last year at the AGM we announced that BCRTA branches wanting to support a particular project could, with the support of the R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation Board of Directors, establish a Branch Special Project. The branch could then direct any money they raised toward that particular project. The Vancouver RTA established a special project to support Escuela Estanquillos, a rural school in Atenas, Costa Rica. The project has been very successful and has raised a significant amount of money for that school. Based on the success of this first experience, we invite other branches to establish Branch Special Projects.

We are pleased to see BCRTA chapters becoming increasingly involved with the ongoing work of making grants annually to projects that support public education. Not only are branches continuing to contribute funds, many are also becoming involved by making applications for grants or by writing letters of support for others who are applying. Branches and individual members contributed \$9,694 to the fund this year and the BCRTA made a contribution of \$4,000. From these donations and interest earned by the endowment fund (\$1,760.71) the directors had about \$13,500 available for making grants. However, as the work of the foundation becomes better known the number of applications for grants also grows. This year there were 22 applications requesting a total of \$54,824.61 to support various projects.

The most notable growth was in the requests for grants to support branch heritage projects. In the past there has never been a year when there has been more than one request for a grant to support a heritage project. This year four chapters applied for such grants. The total amount of money requested for heritage projects alone was more than the total available for grants of all kinds. It was clear the RR Smith Memorial Fund Foundation could not continue to meet the need for funding heritage projects. The directors therefore decided not to make any grants for heritage projects this year but instead requested that the BCRTA, through its heritage committee, investigate ways to become involved in giving financial support to heritage projects.

The grants the R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation did make were as follows:

## Grants for 2006

- Escuela Estanquillos in Atenas, Costa Rica - \$1000 to buy school supplies.
- ACCES - Kenya - \$918 to pay the fee for girls completing grade 8 to take the secondary school entrance exams.
- CHES - \$600 to buy equipment to expand the program at Nangwa Technical School at Katesh, Tanzania to include girls.
- CHES - \$1000 to put on workshops on AIDS and personal skills such as managing a small business.
- Boys Endowment Education Fund in Kenya - \$1000 grant will provide a scholarship for boys to attend school.
- SPARKS Academy - Kabul, Afganistan. \$2500 grant to support an Early Childhood Development Center for children whose mothers were widowed in the war.
- AFRETECH - Nairobi, Kenya - \$1000 grant to establish a library including 20 computers and to provide text books for Cura Primary School.
- HUGGS Canada - \$1000 for a scholarship to provide one student from a poor rural village in India with a post secondary education.
- Families for Children - \$1000 for school supplies for a school in Dhaka, Bangladesh run as part of a home for lost, abandoned, or abused children.
- TOCA (The Olinda Children's Association) - \$1000 to provide school supplies for use in a school for children ages 5-12 from the favelas (ghettos) of Rio Doce, Olinda, Brazil.
- Chilliwack Opportunity Society - \$1500 to buy equipment for the literacy program for mentally and physically challenged young adults.
- NCJW - Vancouver Section - \$500 for the Books for Kids Program that collects and distributes books to economically disadvantaged children in the Vancouver Coastal Health region (infant to age 12).
- Princeton District Teachers' Union - \$500 to assist a needy child to attend Preschool in Princeton, B.C.

In closing, let me thank all those who, by contributing to the work of the R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation during the past year, have helped to build an educational legacy. In particular, I would ask you to remember the contribution made by Bob Peacock, a founding member of the R.R. Smith Memorial Foundation Board and treasurer at the time he passed away last June.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Minshull, President*