



## Media Release

For Immediate Release

May 26, 2011

### **UBC awarded research grant to study Recreation Commission's Newcomers Program**

**North Vancouver, B.C.** In April 2011, a three year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant of \$110,000 was awarded to Dr. Wendy Frisby in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of British Columbia to conduct a participatory action research project on the North Vancouver Recreation Commission's *Health and Wellness Project for Newcomers* initiative.

The *Health and Wellness Project for Newcomers* was presented with a 2010 Program Excellence award by the BC Recreation and Parks Association. The project supports newcomers in meeting their health and wellness needs through multilingual volunteer hosts, orientation tours of recreation facilities, translated health and wellness resources, multilingual healthy living workshops, and other community engagement initiatives. The Newcomers project was originally funded through a grant from the Union of BC Municipalities.

The UBC research project will begin in the Fall 2011 and will engage recent immigrant women, North Vancouver Recreation Commission staff and volunteers, and various community partners to assess strengths and areas of improvement in the Commission's newcomers program. The focus is on immigrant women because research has shown that they suffer most from what is known as the 'healthy immigrant effect' where their health tends to decline after migrating to Canada.

In collaboration with recent immigrant women, innovative techniques for exploring the impact of physical activity on the settlement process will be used. Techniques may include artistic methods such as photography or digital storytelling, along with individual and group multilingual interviews. Not only will the results highlight areas for improvement, they will also uncover the factors that lead to successful newcomer initiatives that will be of interest to other municipalities across the country. Immigrant and newcomer services organizations will be an integral part of this exciting project. Opportunities for involvement in the project include: membership on the project advisory committee, support in participant recruitment, and participation in data generation about the role that public physical activity programs play in settlement into a new country.

"This is such a wonderful opportunity to engage the community and learn how we can build on the strengths of the Newcomers program," says Leslie June, Manager of Community and Recreation Services with the North Vancouver Recreation Commission.

The research will be led by Dr. Wendy Frisby, a professor in the School of Human Kinetics, former Chair of Women's and Gender Studies at UBC, and a long-time resident of the North Shore. Dr. Frisby has led participatory action research projects with women on low income in Kamloops and the Tri-Cities area, and with Chinese immigrant women in the City of Vancouver.



-30-

For more information contact:

Anne Rodgers, Marketing & Communications, North Vancouver Recreation Commission  
T: 604-983-6347 Email: [rodgersa@northvanrec.com](mailto:rodgersa@northvanrec.com)

Cathy Mills, Research Project Manager, UBC  
Email: [mills2ca@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:mills2ca@interchange.ubc.ca)