

Rotary Club of Langley Central

## Tempt your palate, help at-risk kids

Mark your calendars for this Saturday, Nov. 5, the date of Langley's social event of the season: The Fraser Valley Wine Tasting Festival.

by Troy Landreville

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**T**asters and toasters, get ready to raise your glasses for charity Saturday night at the Willowbrook Shopping Centre. The Fraser Valley Wine Tasting Festival, hosted by the Rotary Club of Langley Central, has been a smash hit over its 22-year existence, raising more than \$750,000 for local charities and projects.

This year's soiree runs from 7-9:30 p.m. at the mall.

Festival committee member Tim Lounsbury said the wine and food tasting event is the Rotary Club of Langley Central's largest fundraiser of the year.

Funds raised are directed towards community programs. In recent years, the focus has been on helping at-risk youth in the Langleys.

It's quite the shindig, according to Lounsbury.

"Before, it was a wine-tasting festival, but it's evolved into a wine and food festival," Lounsbury said, noting that "it is quite a bargain," for \$50 per ticket.

"It's extremely popular," he said. "We consider to be the social event of the year."

Lounsbury praised BDO, Chartered



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Supporting the Fraser Valley Wine Tasting Festival are Rotary Club of Langley Central members: front row, from left – David Taft (festival co-chair), Grace Robertson (club president), John Morgan (co-chair), and Beverlee Rasmussen. Back row, from left – Rob Martin, Tim Lounsbury, Wayne Crossen, and Bill Evans.

Accountants and Advisors for its ongoing support. BDO is the festival's main sponsor and is in the second year of a five-year commitment to the fundraiser.

"Without their support, this event would not be as successful as it is," said Lounsbury, who offered up a big "Thank you" to Paul Coulтура, the Langley managing partner with BDO.

The Rotary Club of Langley Central's main area of concern is Langley's youth, specifically those at risk due to poverty or life circumstance beyond their control.

The club has built playgrounds, supported local inner city schools with program funding, and has offered support to local organizations working with youth.

And for the past two decades and counting, the club has hosted what its members consider to be one of the most unique and entertaining social evenings of the fall season, using wine and food tasting as a means to raise money for their projects.

An estimated 800 to 1,000 attendees take part in the annual festival, which is a great event for groups of friends, said committee member Beverlee Rasmussen.

"There is lots of food as well as almost 200 different wines to taste," Rasmussen said. "It's a party, a celebration, and a chance for the community to come together, have safe fun,

and raise funds for a much-needed program."

Guests sample wines from more than 30 wineries and wine merchants, taste signature offerings from five of Langley's finest restaurants and caterers, enjoy live music, and have a chance to win a trip for two to Las Vegas.

One hundred per cent of the money raised goes to charity, Rasmussen noted.

Two years ago, the funds raised were funneled into the Langley Boys and Girls Club, and in 2010, they were divvied out to a number of local programs.

Part proceeds from this year's festival will support an award-winning mobile outreach program coming to Langley, providing prevention and early intervention services to youth.

With the use of a modified 24-foot long shuttle bus operating Fridays and Saturdays from 7 p.m. to midnight, Project REACH OUT meets youth where they are. The buses travel to areas where kids naturally hang out – parks, recreation facilities, convenience stores, drop-in centres, malls, and other hot spots.

Staff engage youth through the bus or walkabouts, offering support and services such as one-to-one counselling, early/crisis intervention, and drug and sexual health education.

Tickets, at \$50 apiece, are available now at the Willowbrook Shopping Centre Information Kiosk. You can also purchase tickets online at [www.fvfwf.ca](http://www.fvfwf.ca).



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Fraser Valley Wine Tasting Festival committee member Beverlee Rasmussen held a signboard promoting Saturday's soiree at the Willowbrook Shopping Centre.