



NEWS RELEASE

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BC Ambulance Service

PARAMEDICS FILL AMBULANCE WITH CLOTHES FOR HOMELESS

VANCOUVER - British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS) paramedics in the Lower Mainland will fill an ambulance with over 3,000 socks and underwear for the homeless and disadvantaged in support of the High School First Responders SockWars.

SockWars is in its fourth year and was initiated by BCAS Regional Medical Director and Emergency Physician Dr. Karen Wanger and Triage Nurse Debra Watts. The two were concerned that disadvantaged patients come into the hospital without clean socks and are discharged in their same clothes. They felt that if patients were provided with new and dry garments when they left the hospital, they would feel better which would positively impact their well-being and the health care system. Both Wanger and Watts have a connection with BCAS and were able to enlist the help of paramedics who often treat those in need.

“The first year, we collected 500 pairs of new socks,” said HJ Secondary School Teacher Paula Curtis. “This year, we held a competition between secondary schools in Richmond, Vancouver and Delta and have gathered more than 3,000 pairs of socks and underwear.”

BCAS paramedics volunteer their time to mentor and guide high school students who participate in the High School First Responders Program. The program began in 1998 with three Richmond secondary schools participating and now operates in 10 secondary schools throughout Richmond, Vancouver and Delta. Approximately 150 motivated young people participate in the program each year and learn how to treat a range of injuries and illnesses from their paramedic mentors.

“BCAS paramedics help the sick and injured everyday and we know how important it is for overall health to keep warm and stay clean,” said BCAS District Supervisor Jeff Watts. “We want to make a difference to everyone that needs our help.”

On Tuesday, Dec. 23, the BCAS paramedics will fill an ambulance with the collected socks and underwear and assist the High School First Responders in distributing them to St. Paul’s Hospital, Vancouver Hospital, Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, Covenant House and other shelters for the homeless or disadvantaged.

For more information or interviews please contact:

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