



July 6, 2007

### **Chocolate, Youth Mentoring Attract New Directors**

**Coquitlam, BC** Chocolate is a powerful draw for a festival, but using that festival to mentor youth is even more appealing for directors of the six year old West Coast Chocolate Festival Society. Four new people joined the non-profit Society's Board recently, as plans are being finalized for this year's expanded line-up of chocolate inspired events, October 14-27 in Coquitlam, Port Moody and Port Coquitlam.

Coquitlam lawyer Ann Carlsen, and festival Orientation & Training Co-ordinator Elaine Gagnon of Port Coquitlam, and Wendy Barber and Anne Elvidge of Coquitlam, join returning directors, most of them serving since the festival's inception in 2002.

Returning directors are Coquitlam accountant Remo Gaita, Delta event organizer and hospitality industry consultant Dawn Donahue, school district director Maureen Dockendorf of Port Moody, Coquitlam interior designer Sandy Priestly, Langley realtor and marketing professional Sabrina Pokomandy, Coquitlam community volunteer Pam Palmer, and festival founder and co-ordinator Linda Baker, a Coquitlam interior decorator and long-time community activist.

The festival and society are entirely volunteer-run, with Canada Summer Jobs Program funding enabling some student hiring for the last three summers. The festival is recruiting corporate sponsorships with funds tied directly to hiring more students, some year-round, to work on organizing, marketing and producing the growing line-up of festival events.

The festival produces unique chocolate pairing and sampling events, a wine-paired dinner and floor show, a ladies night out, chocolate factory tours, a dessert party, a Willy Wonka-themed chocolate chip pancake breakfast, cocoa bean exhibit, poetry contest, and new this year, a *Chocolate Trail* highlighting chocolate and related businesses around the Lower Mainland.

For full schedule and event tickets, [www.chocolatefestival.ca](http://www.chocolatefestival.ca) or 604-939-8068.