

## Media Release - July 6, 2007

### Chocolate is Only Half the Story

October 14-27, 2007 may be a ways away, but already the organizers of the West Coast Chocolate Festival are accepting applications from adult and youth volunteers to attend their 'Chocolate 101' seminars over the summer to train as festival Chocolate Ambassadors, tour guides, workshop presenters and more.

"Chocolate may be *the* perfect reason for a festival," says Baker, "and it definitely inspires our unique, high-quality events that appeal to the senses and the soul."

"But the main reason our volunteers are so committed to this festival is our society's real mission: to use the festival to support youth, to coach and empower them to grow their talents and skills, and to bring youth into the mainstream of community life," says Baker. "This includes performance and visual art skills, as we showcase emerging talent at each festival event."

"Our training and work experience opportunities for youth include areas like writing press releases, creating powerpoint presentations, speaking and presentation skills, website development and internet marketing, designing and judging a chocolate poetry contest, culinary arts, as well as learning all about chocolate and helping others learn about this inspiring food."

"We're also looking for adults who love chocolate and volunteering, particularly mentoring and working with youth, and who are keen to learn more about this *food of the gods*," says Festival Co-ordinator Linda Baker.

"We welcome adults who see the enormous potential of our youth," says Baker, "particularly those adults with experience in event production, marketing, public relations, presentation skills, graphic design, internet marketing - any skill required to produce this festival is an opportunity to mentor youth."

Started in 2002, this year's festival grows to two weeks and over 18 events, including new School of Chocolate sessions, a free cocoa bean exhibit at Coquitlam Centre, an all-ages dessert party featuring culinary arts students and emerging artists and performers, and a much-anticipated Scotch & Chocolate pairing evening to complement the popular beer/chocolate and wine/chocolate pairing evenings.

Also in the planning stages is a first for the Lower Mainland - a unique expert-led tasting evening featuring chocolates of the world, complete with tasting notes, cocoa bean growing and processing presentation, and live music.

Chocolat ce Soir returns to the Port Moody Galleria/Inlet Theatre this year, a magical wine-paired dinner and floor show featuring guest chef, culinary arts students preparing the meal, and local hospitality/tourism students serving the 5-course meal. Emerging

talent will provide live dinner music, and entertain during the show that precedes the finale dessert course.

“Most people locally don’t realize the high profile this festival has around North America,” says Baker. “We have been attracting visitors who have never been to BC before, and have received numerous requests to share our unique event and festival templates with organizations around North America. We’ve also been the subject of two university projects - one in Australia and one in England.”

E-mail [info@chocolatefestival.ca](mailto:info@chocolatefestival.ca) to sign up or request information about the festival’s volunteer training and youth mentoring programs. Or contact Pam at 469-0265, or the festival office, 604-939-8068.

For full festival schedule and tickets, [www.chocolatefestival.ca](http://www.chocolatefestival.ca)