



COV Integrated Approach to Working with Vancouver's Marginalized Community

Chad Cowles, Superintendent

Stacey Carter, Lead Ranger & Homeless
Liaison



- Introduce the Vancouver Park Rangers
- Evolution of the Department
- Growing and complex social crisis
- Not an experience unique to Vancouver
- Guiding Principles
- Lessons learned

A Small Team with Big Hearts



Where it all began

- The Park Ranger Department has seen significant growth and development since its creation in 1999.
- At the beginning Rangers were Stanley Park seawall patrollers, ambassadors for tourists, and monitored sports fields and special events.
- Over time Rangers became the 'MacGyvers' of the Vancouver Park Board and did what was needed to serve the public.





Where we ended up

The Park Ranger Department has evolved into a highly respected and capable team and is one of the key crisis management departments for the City of Vancouver.

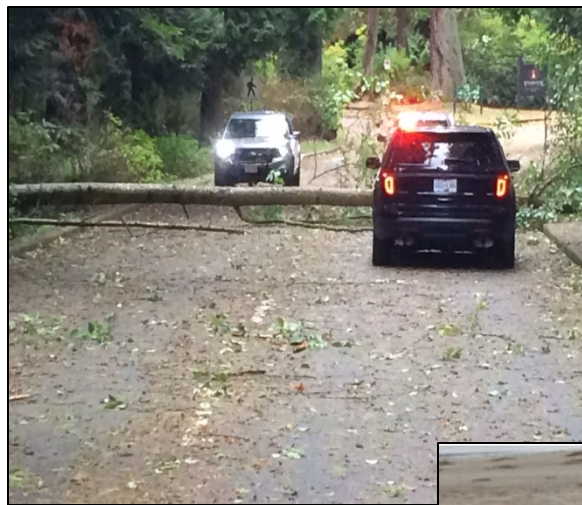
Present Role:

- By-law Enforcement
- Working directly with the homeless, street involved and at risk populations.
- Responding to an ever-increasing number of public complaints and requests for service.
- Participating in interdisciplinary teams, which include first responders, staff from other city departments and non-profit organizations.

Support Emergency Responders



Support Numerous City Departments



Growing and Complex Social Crisis

Officials take a lenient approach to homeless people who call Stanley Park home

IAN BAILEY >
VANCOUVER

PUBLISHED AUGUST 21, 2015
UPDATED JUNE 5, 2017



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Business association appeals Vancouver homeless discrimination ruling



Park rangers walk past a homeless person sleeping on a bench in Oppenheimer Park in downtown Vancouver, on Oct. 16, 2014. (Jonathan Hayward / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Growing and Complex Social Crisis

Archived - Vancouver Park Board holds clean-up blitz in Stanley Park

March 4 2016

Today, we made a conscious effort to go out and spruce up our most famous park," said Vancouver Park Board Chair Sarah Kirby-Yung.

Vancouver's crown jewel got an early spring cleaning today.

A seasonal clean-up blitz was fast tracked in 400-hectare Stanley Park as a result of recent citizens' concerns. About two dozen Park Board staff, including Park Rangers and gardeners, removed enough junk to fill a medium sized swimming pool.



What was removed from the park

From eight abandoned camps and elsewhere in the park, crews removed:

- Garbage
- Liquor bottles
- Tents
- Mattresses
- Discarded needles

Officials take to homeless Stanley Park

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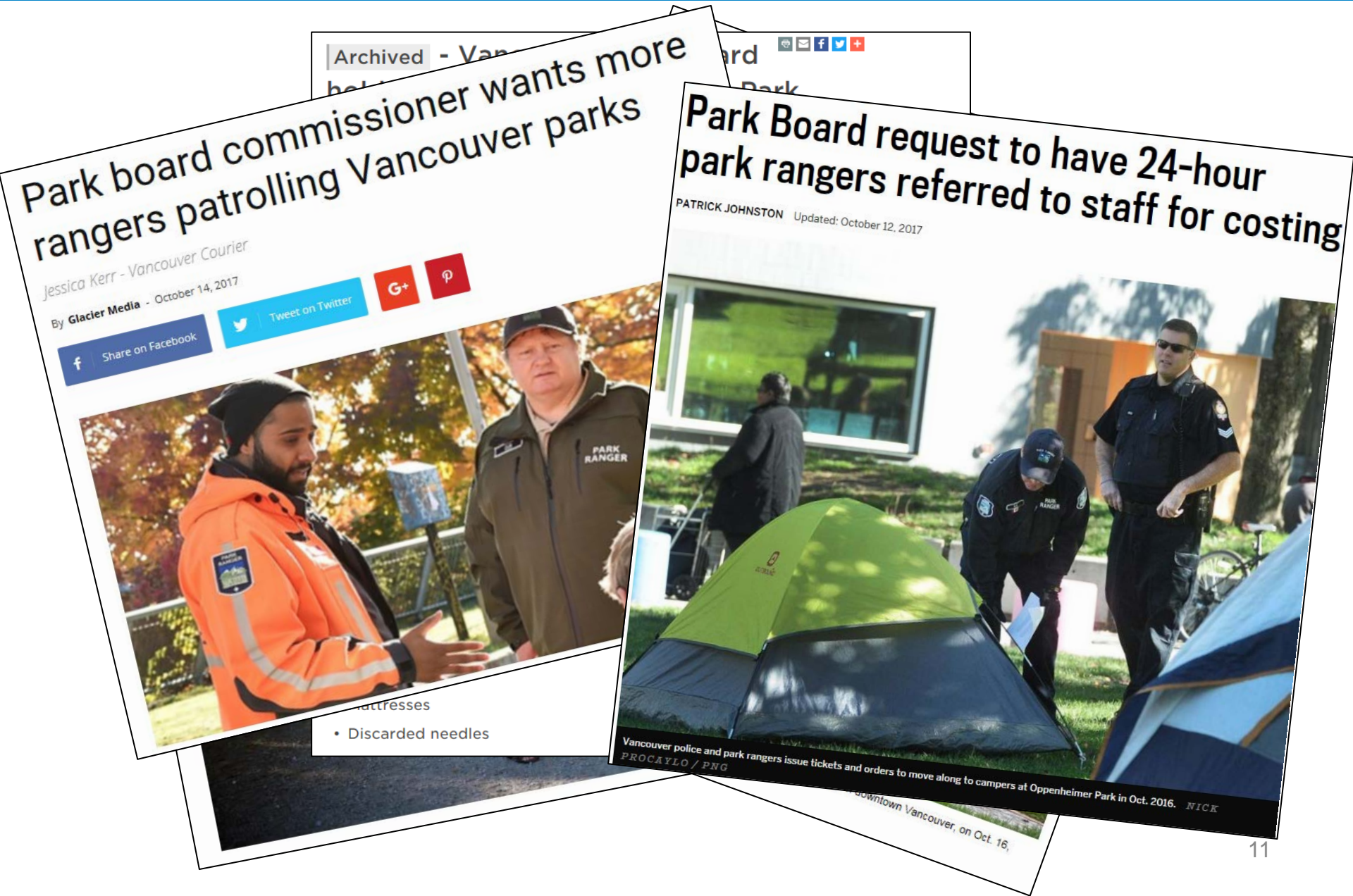


Appeals Vancouver ruling

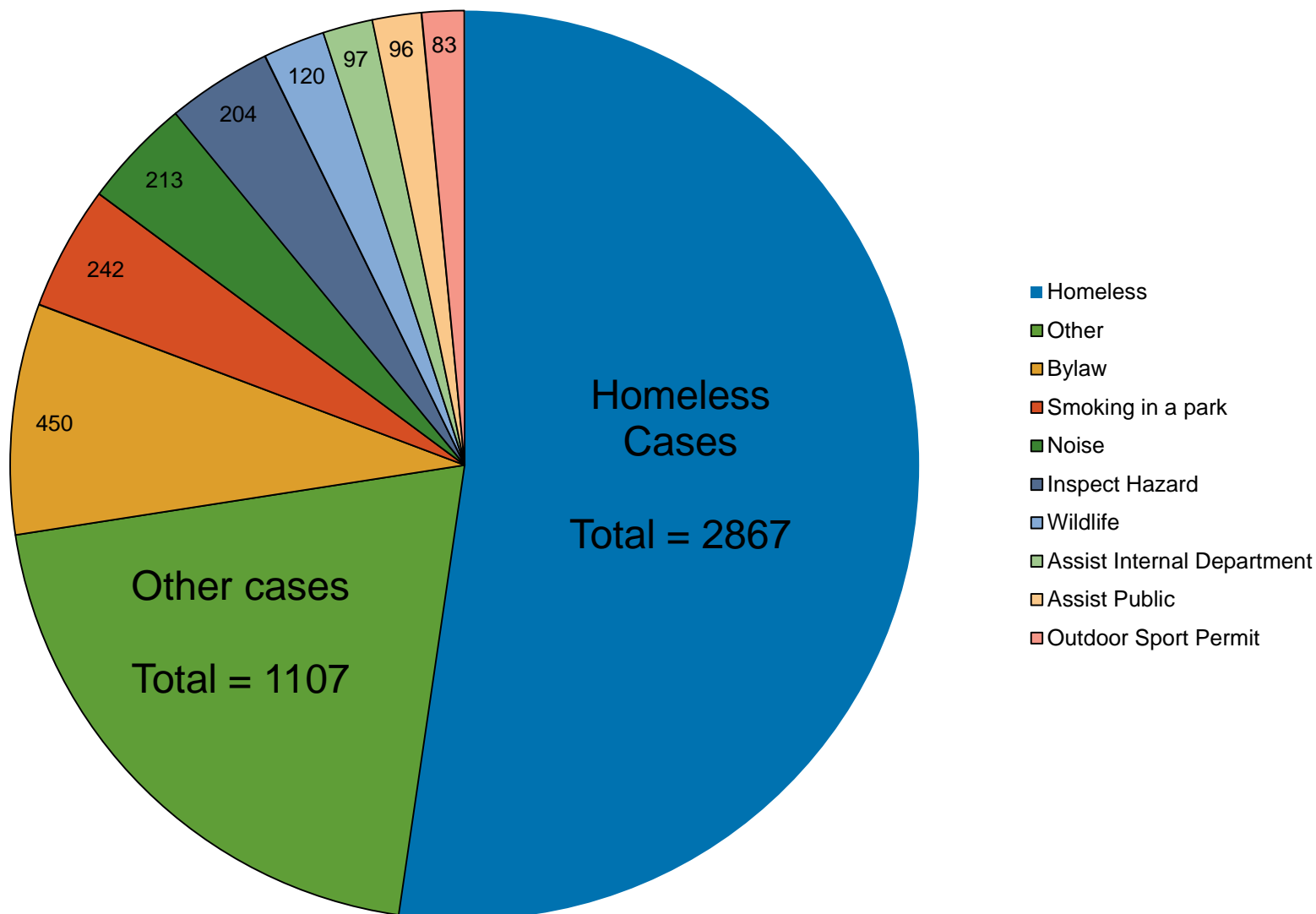


Oppenheimer Park in downtown Vancouver, on Oct. 16,

Growing and Complex Social Crisis



5479 Cases since January 1, 2018



We know we are not facing this alone

B.C. applies for injunction to remove homeless from Victoria tent city



YEAR IN REVIEW: Homelessness in the Interior

By Adam Proskiw



Cheralyn Redford is breaking a new Kelowna bylaw that makes sitting or sleeping on the sidewalk punishable by a \$50 fine. (ADAM PROSKIW / INFOnews.ca)

January 01, 2017 - 1:00 PM

THOMPSON-OKANAGAN – One of the hottest topics across the Interior this past year has been homelessness and how various municipalities have chosen to address it.

At the start of the year, [Kelowna hired a new homeless coordinator](#) to bring issues like housing availability to city council after local resources announced they were stretched thin.



Anita Place Tent City in downtown Maple Ridge. (THE NEWS/files)

Maple Ridge homeless camp vulnerable to heat exhaustion

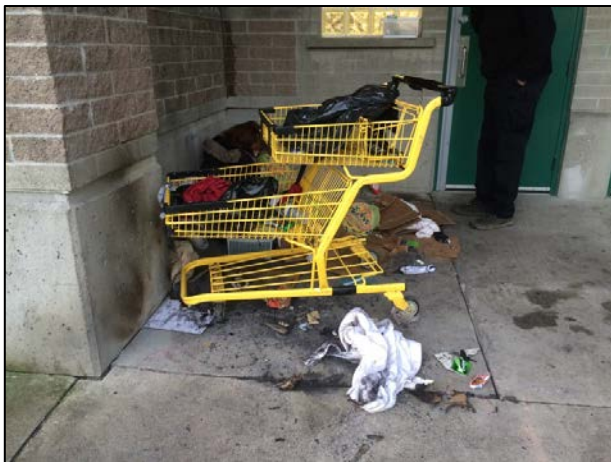
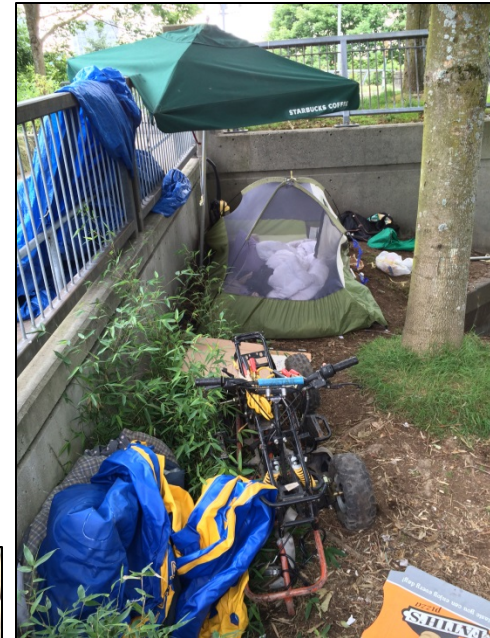
People at high risk of heat exhaustion include seniors, children, outdoor workers, and the homeless.

Opioid deaths up again

The Canadian Press - Mar 27, 2018 / 1:52 pm



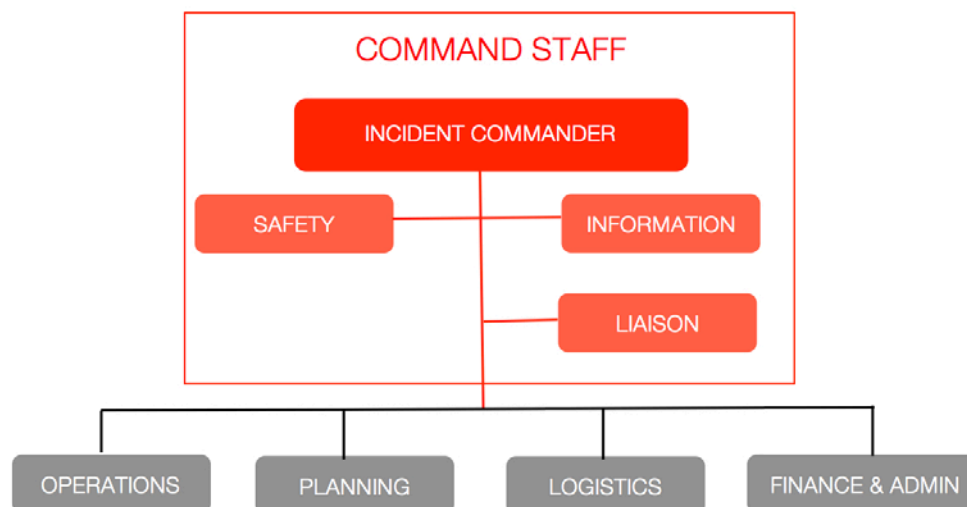
Homeless and At-Risk Populations



- Humanist Approach
 - Kindness
 - Compassion
 - No judgement, no ego
 - Develop relationships
 - Considerations of human rights
 - This created safer conditions for staff when seeking compliance with Parks By-laws
- Connect people with Outreach Services
 - Develop a network of social service providers



THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM



- Contraction and Expansion
 - Ensures consistency in responses: From daily wakeups to tent city management.
- Transfer of Command



What did we learn?

- We cannot do this alone
- Doing it alone had a negative influence on staff, physically and psychologically
- We needed a shift into a culture of safety
- **Teasing this apart** allowed us to map our way out.



Agenda - Part 2

- Communication style
- Safety culture
- Departmental compass
- Departmental foundation
- Standardized responses
- Networks and partnerships

SAFETY FIRST

**BE CAREFUL
BE AWARE
BE SAFE**



Navigating our way forward



Working with Vulnerable Populations:

A Park Ranger's Field Guide



Author: Stacey Carter



Standardized Response

The standardized response was written to give the Rangers a set of navigational beacons they could apply to any call.

It is a 7 step process that is adaptable and can be expanded or contracted to fit a specific situation.

The standardized response incorporates:

- Our Ranger program mission and values
- A safe and aware safety culture
- Our standard operating guidelines and procedures, and
- The education, training, and resource material we have provided the team



Step 1: Safety Assessment

SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Before approaching, take the time needed to conduct a thorough safety assessment with consideration of the following:

- Is the individual known to you or your partner?
- If known, consider your relationship with this individual. Is it friendly, stable, or stormy?
- Consider the individual's current state of mind.
- Assess the surrounding environment for both potential risks and immediate hazards.
- Note your escape route/routes and your designated safe zone
- Lighting conditions, visibility, weather



Step 2: Risk Classification – Level 1

RISK CLASSIFICATION

After conducting a safety assessment, determine the risk classification:

LEVEL 1:

All the following criteria must apply:

- Rangers have a stable relationship with an individual and have known him/her over time.
- Rangers feel safe and secure approaching the individual.

LEVEL 2:

Risk criteria: Any of the following may apply:

- Isolated location
- Mental health concerns
- Anti-authority behaviour
- Alcohol and drug use
- Individual unknown
- Individual known to be verbally aggressive or easily agitated
- Multiple individuals: possibly concealed within the camp
- Drug paraphernalia
- Dogs



Step 2: Risk Classification – Level 3

LEVEL 3:

Risk criteria: Any of the following may apply:

- Limited egress
- Mental health concerns
- Anti-authority behaviour
- Alcohol and/or drug use
- Multiple individuals
- Aggressive dogs
- Criminal activity: Drug trade, stolen property, prostitution

The above criteria overlap with risk level 2, yet have escalated to a degree where Vancouver Police assistance is required.



Standardized Radio Communication



Report to Dispatcher

All Rangers inform the dispatcher when they enter and exit a specific park.

Safety Timer

A 10 minute safety timer is conducted for all level 2 risk assessments. A Lead Ranger monitors a level 3 risk assessment.

10-33: Emergency/ Dangerous Situation

All units stand down and keep the radio clear until further notice.



Increased Resiliency through Collaboration





- Stable team with some flux
- Regular communication
- Strategic planning for large operations
- Discussion of problematic sites and safety issues

Municipal and Government Partners



CITY OF
VANCOUVER
Engineering Services

Non-government organization partners



STANLEY PARK



Oppenheimer Park Tent City - 2014



From this...



To this...



This is what success looks like





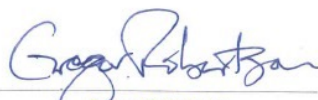
City Service Awards honour employees
in every sector of the City of Vancouver workforce.

SILOBUSTER AWARD FOR INTEGRATION

For outstanding efforts in leading the way to breakdown silos
and integrating work to successful results.

PRESENTED WITH GRATITUDE TO

Park Rangers



Gregor Robertson
Mayor, City of Vancouver

June 19, 2012

Date



Penny Ballen
City Manager





City Service Awards honour employees
in every sector of the City of Vancouver workforce.

INNOVATION

For examining an issue or challenge from a unique perspective
and creating a resourceful, unusual or cost-effective solution.

PRESENTED WITH GRATITUDE TO

Park Ranger Homeless Program



Gregor Robertson
Mayor, City of Vancouver

June 13, 2013

Date



Penny Ballem
City Manager





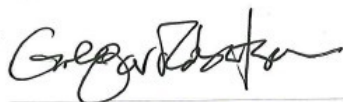
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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

For creating connections and enhancing
the City's reputation with the public.

PRESENTED WITH GRATITUDE TO

Carnegie / Oppenheimer Park Encampment / Housing Teams



Gregor Robertson
Mayor, City of Vancouver

June 11, 2015

Date



Penny Ballem
City Manager





Summary – how we mapped out our way

- Our hearts: compassion for the vulnerable population that we serve, and the same compassion for the staff on our team
- Guiding Principles: based on your department's Mission and Values
- Standardization: education, training, and procedures to meet the staff's needs.
- A collaborative response. None of us can do this alone.
- Most importantly: create and foster an inclusive safety culture, and exhibit safety leadership