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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Energy and Mines  
and Minister Responsible for Housing

### **Province invests \$20 million toward Autism Centre**

VICTORIA – With a \$20-million, one-time contribution toward capital costs, the Province is helping the Pacific Autism Family Centre achieve its goal to be a centre of excellence and a valued resource for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families.

What started as a dream back in 2008, is now quickly approaching reality. With an estimated project budget of \$27.7 million, the Pacific Autism Family Society will raise the remaining funds needed for completion and to ensure that the operation is self-sufficient.

The society plans to use a hub-and-spoke concept to serve the entire province. The hub, which will be located at 2750 East 18th Avenue on land leased for a nominal rate from the City of Vancouver, will link with smaller spoke locations throughout British Columbia. These spoke locations will be staffed with “navigators” to assist families and individuals.

Initiated by community advocates and led by the Pacific Autism Centre Society, the project is expected to be completed by June 2015. The society will announce further details on their operations and the programs and services that will be available through the centre in the coming months.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Rich Coleman, Minister of Energy and Mines and Minister Responsible for Housing –**

“The \$20 million provincial contribution will meet 75 per cent of the capital costs for the Pacific Autism Family Centre and help kick start the community fundraising campaign. This is a community driven project – one led by a passionate and dedicated group of people who will create a valuable resource for individuals with autism and their families.”

#### **Mary McNeil, Minister of Children and Family Development –**

“The goal is to create a collaboration of services that can be accessed by children, families and service providers across the province. It’s an opportunity for those same key stakeholders to work together to better serve children with autism spectrum disorders, and complement the array of government support programs available in B.C.”

**Gregor Robertson, mayor of the City of Vancouver –**

“The Pacific Autism Centre will provide a crucial new layer of support to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families, and the City of Vancouver is very proud to support it. Vancouver strives to be a city and community where all individuals are empowered to fulfill their true potential.”

“Community-driven partnerships like this one help make that aspiration a reality for citizens who might otherwise be left behind, and this centre of excellence will be a tremendous resource for our community.”

**Sergio Cocchia, president of the Pacific Autism Centre Society –**

“We are very excited to enter the next phase of development of the center. We want to thank the provincial government and the City of Vancouver for their leadership and continued commitment to support this very important initiative. Families and persons on the spectrum, around the province will benefit from this new ‘Centre for Excellence’.”

**Betty-Ann Garreck, co-ordinator/parent, Autism Kamloops –**

"PAFC, the regional centres and their "navigators" will be a major help to individuals with Autism and their families across the province."

**Quick Facts:**

- Autism Spectrum Disorder is a complex condition that impacts normal brain development and affects a person's social relationships, communication, interests and behaviour.
- The Province provides more than \$165 million annually for programs and services that support almost 7,500 children and youth with ASDs and their families – including assessments, funding for early intervention, and education funding for students with special needs.
- The PAFC will provide a range of services to families and individuals with ASD. These services will include information, assessment, treatment, support across the lifespan for skill development, and support for research.
- The Children’s Foundation is a non-profit organization that has been operating in BC since 1957 and provides a range of services to support families and children. The foundation is making land surplus to its needs and currently leased from the City of Vancouver available for the PAFC. It will continue to provide services on the site adjacent to the PAFC.

**Learn More:**

About Autism services offered by the Province: [www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/autism/index.htm)

For information on the Pacific Autism Family Centre: [www.pacificautismfamily.com](http://www.pacificautismfamily.com)

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