

# We're All in This Together: Moving From Conflict to Community Through Theatre

"The Shadows Project: Addiction and Recovery" has brought together a cross section of the Downtown Eastside community to address the complex and vexing issue of addiction.

AS DRUG DEALERS, politicians, and other criminals celebrate the wealth and power they have gained off of other people's misery, families in the community struggle with the impact of addiction on their lives. This simple story serves as the backdrop for the contemporary fable, *We're All in This Together*, a community art production running from April 19 to 29 at the Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Avenue, Vancouver.

Featuring live music, a giant shadow screen, and a cast of thirty community actors, shadow-casters and musicians, *We're All In This Together* is a Downtown Eastside style of theatre inspired by the ancient tradition of shadow theatre.

In this contemporary fable, two families from different social backgrounds encounter humani-

ty's struggle with addiction and the irresistible golden treasure carried by a mysterious dragon. Out of the shadows emerge their dreams and memories, fears, hopes and visions.

The project, coordinated by Vancouver Moving Theatre (in association with Urban Ink's Fathom labs, and the Carnegie and Roundhouse Community Centres), illustrates the power of community art as a catalyst for healing and reconciliation. Based on the experiences of nearly one thousand people interviewed over a two-year period, the production has been written by a team of Downtown Eastside writers from a variety of backgrounds working in collaboration with professional writers. It will be staged by community members working in cooperation with theatre professionals, who will guide the direction, music, design, and other elements of the production.

Discussion forums about issues related to addiction and communities involving speakers from the community, government, and academia will follow each performance. Confirmed speakers include Bruce Alexander, author of *Roots of Addiction in a Free Market Society*, Duncan



PHOTO JOHN ENDO GREENAWAY

The mysterious dragon from *We're All in This Together*.

MacPherson, City of Vancouver Drug Policy Program Coordinator, poet and community activist Bud Osborn, Coco Culbertson, Lifeskills Centre, and Aline LaFlamme from Aboriginal Front Door. ■

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Performances will run Thursday to Sunday from April 19–29 starting at 8:00 pm at the Russian Hall (600 Campbell Avenue, Vancouver). Admission is by donation (\$5–\$20 is recommended). For more information and reservations visit <[www.vancouvermovingtheatre.com](http://www.vancouvermovingtheatre.com)> or call (604) 254-6911.



PHOTO JOHN ENDO GREENAWAY

A scene from *We're All in This Together*.

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**Affordable Housing, Condon** – *continued from page 27*

The affordable housing problem is not impossible to solve—it just requires the necessary political will. And it's not that many of the elected politicians don't understand what's needed. It's just that their constituents, often a vocal minority, espouse a strong “Not In My Back Yard”—NIMBY—response to affordable housing solutions. Such strong local opposition to affordable housing developments often dissuades local politicians from taking meaningful action. NIMBY-ism is based on the belief that proposed changes will have a negative effect on property values, cause traffic and parking problems, increase crime, and diminish the quality of life for residents. NIMBY-ism has been seen recently in battles over the development of mixed residential, infill, secondary suites, shelters, and transitional housing. This is despite the fact that good development with strong design,

and which serves a variety of incomes and uses, has been shown to increase home values, improved community vitality, and provide greater choice.

Despite well-publicized concerns about the need for more affordable housing, NIMBY behaviour persists for a number of reasons. Existing community members can have strong attachments to their neighbourhood “the way it is.” Affordable housing can seem threatening, but the more we can get our citizens to think about the future, the better will be the world for our children. What is the world you want your grandchildren to grow up in? We should all undertake one-to-one education with homeowners, fellow citizens, and neighbours—let them know that densification and the inclusion of affordable housing can be an exciting opportunity for us to reshape and improve our urban areas. ■