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CITY NEWS

Students to Help City Recycle at Richmond O Zone

29 January 2010

The City of Richmond has enlisted 290 high school students from Richmond to help achieve its goal of 85 per cent waste diversion in the Richmond O Zone, an official celebration site of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games which opens Friday, Feb. 12.

“With many thousands of visitors a day expected, there is potential for a lot of waste,” says Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie. “We want to ensure that we capture and divert as many of the recyclables as possible to meet our goal.”

The City will be collecting several streams of waste in the O Zone including paper, cans, bottles and containers, cardboard, organics and garbage. Easily identified bins will be designated for the public, food vendors, other exhibitors and crew at the Torch Relay Community Celebration on February 9 and during the 17-day O Zone festival that runs February 12 through 28.

The high school volunteers, wearing bright yellow vests, will be stationed at recycling stations, in food service areas and will roam the site. With their help, people will know where to put what, reducing the potential for contamination.

“We should all be conscientious of the environment that we share and love, and do our part in little ways,” says McNair Secondary student Jane Zhang. “My part is being a Green Ambassador. By contributing towards waste diversion, I am not only showing international visitors how green Richmond is, but setting a positive example for my generation.”

Students from eight Richmond secondary schools, along with 20 adults, volunteered to be Green Ambassadors during the Games. They are joined by a student from Vancouver who saw the volunteer opportunity posted on the city’s website and asked to participate. For their minimum 15-hour contribution, the students will receive a pair of the much-coveted 2010 Red Mittens, the “it souvenir” of the 2010 Winter Games, as well as rain ponchos and small folding umbrellas to keep them dry while they work. Equipment and clothing for the program was donated, including a \$4,000 contribution from Eco Waste Industries of Richmond.

Food vendors will be trained on waste procedures during orientation sessions and be given best practice recommendations. Grease, fat and cooking oil from the vendors will be collected and recycled by West Coast Reduction.

The public tennis courts at Minoru Park will be turned into a temporary O Zone recycling depot for the event. All organics, including the paper beverage cups and plant-based plastic lids, will be composted.

The City is asking everyone to be as waste conscious as possible during and after the Games. Recycling bins will be set up along the dyke, Canada Line stations and major routes to and from the Oval, as well as at the O Zone. “We’re asking Richmond residents to see themselves as recycling ambassadors”, says Mayor Brodie, “helping out any visitors who might not be familiar with our program and picking up litter around the city.”

Richmond City Hall: 6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, British Columbia, V6Y 2C1

Hours: 8:15 to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday. **Tel:** 604-276-4000

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