



For immediate release
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'Man Up!' reaching Abbotsford youth in a dramatic new way

Reality stage play captures at-risk imaginations and loyalties

Vancouver, BC - The Westcoast Boys Club Network Foundation (aka Boys Club Network or BCN) is pleased to present their acclaimed reality stage play *Man Up!* in Abbotsford from November 25 through 27, playing to a targeted audience of high school students, educators, youth workers, families and other stakeholders at the W. J. Mouat Secondary School Theatre. General admission tickets for the evening performance on November 27th are available to the general public (tickets required for entry).

Man Up! is the gritty, heart-wrenching, emotional and life-changing story of two determined eastside Vancouver educators, a group of at-risk boys on the sharp knife-edge of life, a handful of generous and visionary Lower Mainland businessmen from all walks of life, and the compelling four-year journey they took together - from the edge of frustration, hopelessness and despair, to the pinnacle of hopefulness and success. *Man Up!* Shares authentic, deeply personal stories of individual struggle, overcoming demons and realizing dreams.

BCN is a registered Canadian charity with a mandate to establish connectedness, trust and accountability to at-risk young men and help grow them into good men. The Network uses drama - more specifically the reality stage play - as a creative platform to spread their message of H.O.P.E. (**H**ope, **O**pportunity, **P**ositive mentorship, **E**ducation) to communities throughout the lower mainland, to ignite discussion, and to inspire stakeholders to set-up new BCN chapters.

BCN independently operates seven chapters in Vancouver, North Vancouver and West Vancouver secondary schools with the cooperation and assistance of school districts and stakeholders in youth work and law enforcement. Close to 100 mentors, representing all facets of Canadian life, from break-even to billionaire, mentor a membership of more than 200 boys. The Network is grateful to Mr. Gino Bondi, a long-time BCN mentor and new Assistant Superintendent, Abbotsford School District, for introducing *Man Up!* to the city of Abbotsford, with its diverse population and eight secondary schools.

BCN has strong district ties through several of its mentors, including founding patron Frank Giustra who was raised in the Fraser Valley, and who together with Francesco Aquilini, underwrites *Man Up!* in its entirety. Frank, whose role as BCN mentor is referenced in the 60-minute production, is as passionate about the *Man Up!* message as he is about the dramatic works of Lions Gate Entertainment, the multi-billion dollar film studio he founded in 1997. "Like many great stories, *Man Up!* is based on a compelling truth," says Giustra.

The truth in *Man Up!* is possibility - mentor-empowered possibility that transcends socio-economics and circumstance, and closes the gap between despair and happiness, failure and success. "What young people (boys and girls alike) should understand, and what I tell BCN boys all the time, is that, regardless of circumstance, ultimately we can all create our own truth. Ultimately, almost anything is possible. We just have to believe in ourselves, stay focussed and work hard," he concludes.

Man Up! messaging is entirely relevant to today's students and educators, and parallels Curriculum Learning Outcomes in BC Secondary courses Planning 10, Health & Career 9, Drama Curricula, and lessons in Focus on Harassment and Intimidation. The supplied Companion Study Guide for Educators and Reflections on Learning student worksheets address topical issues like anti-bullying, personal accountability, gratitude, philanthropy and empathy. Duration: 60 minutes plus 30 minute talk-back and Q&A.

Community tickets available exclusively through Eventbrite:

Reserve tickets for Thursday 27th @ 7pm: bit.ly/ManUpN27

W.J. Mouat Secondary School Theatre, 32355 Mouat Drive, Abbotsford. [Directions](#)

To inquire re show times and information contact: info@sd34.bc.ca

Caution: coarse language & content may offend some viewers

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About the Boys Club Network Establishing connectedness, trust and accountability.

The Westcoast Boys Club Network Foundation, aka the Boys Club Network tackles one of contemporary Canada's most misunderstood, mis-managed and under-funded social issues - that of mentorless, mis-guided young men (sons, brothers, caregivers), floating aimlessly in a sea of more publicized, well-funded social issues. High-potential Canadian boys and young adults who, through mere circumstance are losing their innocence, happiness and basic human potential to hopelessness, drugs, even crime and the streets.

Contemporary society has unwittingly, in many cases, left boys behind. When the equality pendulum swung so far back to close the very large gap of opportunity-inequity between girls and boys, many boys fell through the cracks. In time the pendulum will swing back to the centre, but in the interim we must help these boys find their way, find themselves, and finish school. We must help them channel destructive behaviours, frustration and anger, into positive behaviours, responsibility and empathy.

Founded by two Vancouver secondary school educators, Walter Mustapich and Jim Crescenzo, The Boys Club Network identifies and lifts these lost boys up, and with a proven curricula of H.O.P.E. **H**ope, **O**ppportunity, **P**ositive Mentorship and **E**ducation, restores their personal accountability, and their confidence in themselves, in adults, and in society's collective future.

The formula is a simple one, based on foundational principles of establishing connectedness, trust, self improvement through education, and accountability. Currently the Network operates independently with the cooperation of school districts in East Vancouver, North Vancouver, and West Vancouver, British Columbia. Now in its eighth year of mentorship, the Network has seven BCN Chapters and hopes to expand and reach out to the many more at-risk Lower Mainland and district youth waiting for a place in the program. For more information visit www.boysclubnetwork.com

About the reality stage play

In 2011, the Westcoast Boys Club Network Foundation achieved national media attention for their first reality stage production entitled *Let Me Up* which chronicled the real life story and redemption of a reformed BC gangster whose BCN experience changed his life forever. Thousands attended the professional productions, produced and underwritten by BCN, gaining raw, authentic insight into what happens when we fail our boys. Response was overwhelming and, from the close of the very first performance, it was apparent to everyone involved that *drama* - more specifically the reality stage play genre - was one of the most effective ways to reach and motivate at-risk boys. BCN plays are written, directed, staged by professionals, and performed by working film and stage actors. See show guide for bios. Download [Companion Study Guide for Educators and Reflections on Learning](#) student worksheet.

In 2012, the Network produced ***Man Up! - the true story of the Boys Club Network***. Thanks to the generosity and vision of founding patrons Frank Giustra and Francesco Aquilini, *Man Up!* has played to over 12,000 people, free of charge.

Producers: Walter Mustapich and Jim Crescenzo

Writer: Peter Grasso

Director: Michael Fera

Actors: Daniel Degtiarev, Michael Fera, Philip Grainger, Peter Grasso,
Dylan Playfair, Jonathan Mubanda, Dzinh Nguyen, Michael Vairo

For more information visit www.boysclubnetwork.com/events

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