



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 30, 2009

**Streethome Foundation and CEO of BC Hydro team up for Seeing is Believing tour:
Goal is to explore innovative business solutions to homelessness in the region**

Vancouver, B.C. – BC Hydro President & CEO Bob Elton and Streethome President Jae Kim believe business has a key role to play in finding solutions to Vancouver’s homelessness crisis.

On June 30th, Elton and Kim will lead local business leaders on a Seeing is Believing tour, organized by Canadian Business for Social Responsibility (CBSR), in partnership with the Streethome Foundation.

The tour will visit the Potluck Café, RainCity Housing, Covenant House and Coast Mental Health. Through the unique Seeing is Believing program, senior executives will spend the morning learning firsthand about organizations that provide a continuum of solutions to homelessness – from supportive housing projects, to social enterprise and employment training initiatives.

The business leaders, from Coast Capital Savings, DDB Canada and Pacific Newspaper Group among others, will talk to community members who use the services of these agencies with the goal of deepening their understanding of the complex roots of poverty and homelessness. At the end of the tour, delegates will explore ways to leverage day-to-day business operations and resources to support homelessness and housing strategies currently moving forward in the region.

“The Seeing is Believing tour offers a powerful, personal experience for Vancouver’s business leaders to learn about one of our city’s most prevalent issues,” says Jae Kim, President, Streethome Foundation. “By engaging key business executives in a tour of this nature, we also have an opportunity to discuss solutions, such as our upcoming Six Year Homelessness Plan and how they can play a key role.”

Estimates place Metro Vancouver’s homeless population at approximately 3,200 individuals. More than half of the homeless people in Vancouver have been on the streets for over a year and that number is growing. Studies have estimated the cost of leaving an individual on the streets from \$55,000 to \$135,000 a year in public services. Comparatively, the cost of providing housing with support services for that person would cost about \$37,000 a year.

Wendy Campbell, Director of Programs, CBSR, says Seeing is Believing is based on a simple principle: you can’t solve a problem without seeing it. The program provides business executives with an opportunity to engage the community first-hand, better understand social issues and look at new and expanded solutions.

“Business has the skill and resources to make a real contribution to alleviate homelessness,” says Campbell. “The direct interaction between business leaders and community members fostered by the Seeing is Believing program has inspired organizations to leverage their resources towards creative solutions.”

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