

New day for Central elementary

By [Katie Bartel - Chilliwack Progress](#)

Published: **May 27, 2011 7:00 AM**

Central elementary has been granted funding for a program that will give inner-city kids the same enriching opportunities as kids in more affluent neighbourhoods.

Last week the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) awarded Central a three-year grant for the Second Day program, which will allocate \$40,000 in the first year. Funding for subsequent years has not yet been determined, but will be reduced, with the hope that by the end of the third year, the program will be self-sustaining.

Scott Wallace, principal of Central elementary, has been waiting a long time to bring Second Day back to his students.

Second Day is an after-school program that was first developed in 2008 by Wallace and Janet Hall, then principal of Bernard elementary, as a way of getting kids out of their homes and off the streets.

Second Day gave selected students a place to go after school, to engage in fun activities, like glass-etching, hip hop dance, cartoon-making and cooking. It also provided students with nutritional snacks.

"These were activities that these kids wouldn't normally get," said Wallace. "They were having fun, and they were being engaged."

But after just eight weeks, despite the success of the program, it was shut down due to funding constraints. Wallace never gave up on it.

For three straight years, he submitted and resubmitted applications to the RBC After-School Grants Project.

"We're really limited in the downtown, there are a lot of service gaps," said Wallace. "The services that are available are mainly user-pay services, and for families who don't have the means, their children don't get those same opportunities."

"We wanted to give these kids more opportunities."

But with just two grants awarded in B.C. every year, Central was up against a bevy of other needy projects. Repeatedly it was denied – until this year.

Wallace hopes this funding will be a catalyst for the program to grow.

"My big dream is to see Second Day running at all schools in the downtown, and eventually for corporations and local business and the city to kick in with funding," said Wallace. "Yes, it's a costly program, but it is so valuable."

Second Day will start back up at Central in October, and will run from 2:45 p.m. to 5 p.m. five days a week through the school year.

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