

## **The YMCA to Host National Tour of Policy Dialogues on the Health of Canadian Families**

Between now and the end of March 2012, community policy dialogues will take place at YMCA associations across the country with stops in Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Simcoe-Muskoka, Cambridge, Halifax and more. These events will allow Canadians an opportunity to share their diverse perspectives about the issues facing families, and discuss how local leaders can use their voices effectively to build momentum around this important social and economic issue

University of British Columbia Scholar Dr. Paul Kershaw, will present the recently released Family Policy Report for Canadians—*Does Canada Work For All Generations?*—along with province-specific findings. His research suggests that Canada has become a far more difficult place to raise a family. “The generation raising kids today is squeezed for time at home; they are squeezed for income because of the cost of housing, even when not ‘poor’; and they are squeezed for services like child care that will help them balance successfully raising a family with earning a living,” said Kershaw.

To guide the conversation, Kershaw will encourage Canadians to “think like a beaver.” “Beavers build dams, even though no beaver lives in them. Why?” asks Kershaw. “Because the dam creates a reservoir on which the entire community of beavers depends for its standard of living. For most of our history, Canadians thought the same way, building social policy as a ‘national dam’. It’s time we renew our beaver logic to adapt to the seismic shift in the standard of living with which the generation raising young kids now struggles.”

**What: Community Conversation on Health of Canadian Families & Family Policy**

**Who: Diverse stakeholders including parents, not-for-profit leaders and members of the business community**

**When: Tuesday, January 24, 2012 from 12.00 – 1.30pm**

**Where: First Metropolitan Church, 932 Balmoral Road, Victoria, BC**

*Dr. Paul Kershaw is the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) Scholar of Social Care, Citizenship and the Determinants of Health at the University of British Columbia. He is known as one of Canada's leading thinkers about family policy, receiving two national prizes from the Canadian Political Science Association for his research.*

*The YMCA - YWCA is one of Canada's oldest, largest and most recognizable charitable organizations. The Y is a powerful association of men, women and children of all ages and from all walks of life joined together by a shared passion: to strengthen the foundations of community. Dedicated to nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living, and fostering a sense of social responsibility, the Y ensures that every individual has access to the essentials needed to learn, grow and thrive. Rooted in more than 1,000 communities around the country, the Y is, and always will be, dedicated to building healthy, confident, secure and connected children, youth, families and communities.*