



**Press Release  
June 22, 2007**

**WOODLANDS MEMORIAL GARDEN OPENS AT FORGOTTEN INSTITUTION CEMETERY  
Former residents and families gather at dedication ceremony to honour those buried in  
the graveyard that was forgotten.**

**New Westminster, BC** - The formal dedication ceremony at the Woodlands Memorial Garden created the mood to honourably remember the people with developmental disabilities who had been buried and forgotten at the Woodlands cemetery. The BC Association for Community Living (BCACL), the BC Self Advocacy Foundation and the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services came together for the official dedication ceremony of the Woodlands Memorial Garden.

More than 300 people attended the dedication ceremony, and many stayed on after the ceremony to reflect on the lives of the thousands of people who died at Woodlands and Essondale (now Riverview) institutions. The occasion was designed to honour those buried in the cemetery, bring closure to surviving family and friends, and wrap up the eight-year long Memorial Garden project.

The Woodlands Memorial Garden, located on the site of an institutional cemetery that was desecrated and forgotten, is the first of its kind in Canada. In 1977, the gravestones at the cemetery had been removed, erasing the names of the buried from public memory. Now, the specially designed Memorial Garden includes memorial walls with the names of all of those buried in the cemetery, salvaged gravestones, and a sculpture of a "Window Too High," resonating with former residents' memories of being unable to look outside.

"After many years of working on it, we are pleased that the Memorial Garden has become a beautiful reality, and trust that this community space will remind us of the value of all lives and reflect the importance of inclusion," said Laney Bryenton, Executive Director, BCACL. "The Memorial not only honours those who lived and died in these institutions, but also serves as a solemn reminder of the negative impact of institutions on those who lived within their walls.

"Across Canada, many thousands of people with developmental disabilities continue to live in large, segregated facilities like Woodlands, without the rights that most of us take for granted. BCACL and our partners are working to address this issue, and this garden is a strengthening of our commitment to carry forward the legacy of the individual human stories within such facilities."

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More information about BCACL is available at [www.bcacl.org](http://www.bcacl.org)

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