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# REVIEW

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## Group home opens quietly

*Officials feared opposition akin to Turning Point*

by Veronica Lawrence  
Staff Reporter

A new mental health group home opened in the heart of a residential neighbourhood in north Richmond with little fanfare earlier this month. The media wasn't invited to the opening, an official feared releasing information about the project would result in an outcry akin to what happened when Turning Point first proposed a 39-bed home for recovering drug addicts on Ash Street.

Rotarian House, the new mental health facility in northeast Richmond, is a six-bed centre intended to help people with serious and persistent mental health issues lead more independent lives. All of the residents of the complete care facility must be able to be regulated by medication. The centre was built for Richmond residents and already has a waiting list of 20 people.

Anna Mann, D'Angelo of Vancouver Coastal Health, the facilitator of the centre, said the facility is supported by the community.

"All the neighbours were consulted and there were no significant concerns," she said. "We were not aware of any opposition."

D'Angelo did admit that the flurry of opposition to Turning Point made the health authority wary of releasing information about the new mental health centre.

D'Angelo would not provide the exact location of the new facility.

She also said the bylaw in Richmond requires the public to be informed only when a facility with seven or more beds receive approval from city council.

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Thursday, August 21, 2008

The Richmond

# Growing up some fun

by Veronica Lawrence  
Staff Reporter

For the next two weeks, old MacDonald's got nothing on Aberdeen Centre.

The massive mall is currently hosting a farm complete with a petting zoo, a bug display and an organic farm lined with herbs, vegetables and an interactive rice paddy field.

Organic farms are defined as farms that are free from pesticides and chemicals, making for a more nutritious bounty of produce.

The organic farm at Aberdeen Centre was the brainchild of Joey Kwan, who works for the centre.

"I wanted to give people an experience that they wouldn't normally get in a mall," she said.

"The philosophy behind it is more about nature and the environment."

The garden is divided into sections which showcase the different crops and each

group of plants is labelled which helps spectators to learn about the farm.

"It's a very harmonious agricultural ecosystem," Kwan said.

The rice paddy field was an important component for Kwan and it features real baby ducklings swimming through the field to eat pests, oxygenate the water and encourage strong and healthy roots.

"Asian people eat rice every day but they have no idea how it grows, so we have a rice paddy field to teach," she said.

The farm was planted by Origin Organic Farms Inc. and features many of the same produce grown in the company's greenhouse.

There are nine different types of tomatoes featured in the display, including one species striped with red, and brownish-green tiger stripes called Safari



Mark Patrick photo

Connie Cheng poses with some plants at the organic farm inside Aberdeen Centre

tomatoes.

Connie Cheng of Origin said that plants in the display were chosen because they will appeal to Richmond residents.

"One of the reasons we chose these plants is because it's easy for people to grow them at their homes," said Cheng.

Whether you are an aspir-

ing gardener or a curious child, there is plenty to see and learn at Aberdeen Centre.

The Aberdeen Centre Farm runs until September 1.