

Temporary refuge at rec centres

Published: February 04, 2009 6:00 PM

Abbotsford recreation facilities will now double-up as places for people to seek temporary refuge, city hall has announced.

In joining the B.C.-wide Safe Harbour program, Abbotsford Mayor George Peary said all city-owned recreation centres will now be opened to people “experiencing discrimination or harassment.”

More than 60 people have been trained to offer services in Abbotsford, Peary said. Those services could include offering people a place to sit, a glass of water, a telephone to use, and information on how to seek further assistance.

“The City of Abbotsford has taken another step towards making our community safer and more inclusive,” said Peary.

“As designated Safe Harbour locations, the City of Abbotsford recreation centres are taking a leadership role in the community by welcoming diversity and treating all members of the community with respect.”

Places that will become Safe Harbour locations, Peary said, are Matsqui Recreation Centre at 3106 Clearbrook Rd., Abbotsford Recreation Centre at 34690 Old Yale Rd., MSA Arena at 2323 Emerson St., and Exhibition Park at 32470 Haida Dr. Each centre, the mayor explained, will display a colourful window decal and other signage to show the public that management and staff at that location have been trained in the program.

The Safe Harbour Program is a province-wide initiative and numerous communities across B.C. are already taking part. According to program organizers, there are now 450 Safe Harbour locations across the province.

Further information on the initiative is available at www.safeharbour.ca.