

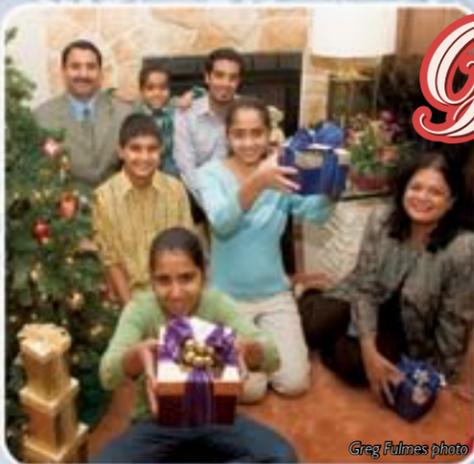
Our people. Our work. Our values.



# frontlines

[www.calgaryhealthregion.ca](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca)

December 19, 2006 Issue #173



Greg Pulmes photo

Region Employees Parmit and Harjinder Chohan recently adopted three children from India into their family. This is the first Christmas in Canada for Amandeep, 17, Kuldeep, 14, and Lakhwinder, 11, who lost both their parents in India. See holiday insert for more details. Left to right, back row: Harjinder, Lakhwinder, and Manpreet Chohan. Middle row: Vikram, Amandeep, and Parmit Chohan. Front: Kuldeep Chohan.

## Happy Holidays

FROM THE REGION

This December, some of us will light candles for Hanukkah and feast on fragrant potato latkes while giving thanks for historical miracles that have enabled our freedom.

Others among us are decorating trees with shiny garlands and wrapping gifts to put underneath them, while our homes fill with the scents of baking and the sounds of joy. And still others are preparing for journeys ahead that involve a significant amount of sacrifice and giving back to the commu-

nity – whether on a local or global level.

The holidays are upon us again. It's time to celebrate, to contemplate, and to give back to those who are not as fortunate. In this special festive edition of *Frontlines*, you'll read about some Region staffers' efforts to brighten up the season for individuals as far away as Tanzania and as close by as your own neighbourhood. Take a look at our holiday insert inside this issue for some compelling examples. ❄️

## A holiday message from Jack Davis



Jack Davis

Recently, I learned of some incredible work that a Calgary Health Region employee is doing in Tanzania to bring hope and support to an impoverished community. Home Care Manager Sharon Mkisi is the founder of Baraka Community Care Connections, a charity

which has built a nursery school for orphans, provides skill development programs to local people, and gives children an opportunity to grow up feeling loved and cared for. At this time of year, Mkisi raises money, some of which is donated by Region colleagues, to buy Tanzanian children a pair of leather shoes for Christmas.

Mkisi is only one of many Region employees whose acts of caring and selflessness extend year-round, whether at home or abroad. There's Tara Sawchuk, a Reservist and nurse at the Foothills Medical Centre, who is returning to Afghanistan only several months after serving a three-month stint in Kandahar. And then there are Parmit and Harjinder Chohan, who have given the gift of family to three children whom they recently adopted from India.

Collectively, your contributions have been nothing short of tremendous, and are valued by colleagues, clients and patients across the Region. Whether you are saving lives during working hours or volunteering to bring joy to others, you embody the spirit of the holiday season year-round. Some of the most recent examples of your efforts at home and abroad are featured in this issue of *Frontlines*.

But along with our many accomplishments, what has set this year apart is also the number of challenges that the Calgary Health Region has had to address.

The media will tell you that Calgary's rapidly booming - and aging - population has taken its toll on the health care system. The reality behind the city's growth is that our frontlines staff, who work the hardest to keep it all together, are often the most affected by negative headlines.

Our city's health care system has been particularly under siege this year, but relief is on the way - sooner than you might think. One need not look too far to see the skyline of our expanding city filled with cranes - and nowhere is this more evident than on the sites of our health region facilities. Armed with a capital plan of nearly \$2 billion, we are committed to expanding our current sites, building new ones, recruiting new staff members, and, most importantly, providing our staff with the tools they need to provide the very best in quality health care.

I very much appreciate the excellent work that you do. Whether you are one of our 23,000 employees or 2,200 physicians, I personally want you to know that we are there to support you when times are tough, as you continue to support the many people who come to the Region in pain, in need, or in distress. I would like to wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season, with many things to look forward to in the New Year, including our continued support as we move into an exciting period of growth for the Calgary Health Region. ❄️

Jack Davis  
President & CEO

### From a Calgary hospital to a Kandahar air field

## Region nurse prepares for second trip to Afghanistan

Barbara Balfour

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

When nurse Tara Sawchuk presses the play button on her laptop, a video clip from her recent travels pops up. In it, a little girl with a bullet lodged in her bladder and a pair of baby crutches at her side shyly sings the lyrics of Gwen Stefani's hit song, *Hollaback Girl*, to the nurses who have been taking care of her.

It's the first taste of Western pop culture for an eight-year-old Afghan child so terrorized by the Taliban that she has never even had the chance to hold a pencil. It's also new to her interpreter, a young man not much older than her whose legs were ripped off from the force of a rocket and who claps along to the beat from his wheelchair.

Long after the clip stops playing, the images stay embedded in the mind. It's a powerful reminder of why only months after returning from Afghanistan, Sawchuk is preparing to return there again in February. An Emergency Department nurse who has been working at the Foothills Medical Centre since 1996, Sawchuk says the civilians she treated in the Kandahar Air Field affected her the most.

"Nobody deserves to have a life so full of violence and poverty that you don't even have access to clean water and have never seen a toilet," says Sawchuk. Although her mandate was to treat all the soldiers for their injuries, occasionally the medics out in the field would find children with blast and bullet wounds and bring them in to be treated as well.

"The hardest patients to take care of were the little ones - because it was so unnecessary," she says.



The contrast between the causes for injuries she treated in Kandahar compared to back home in Calgary were particularly jarring. "In Afghanistan I would often be treating a 20-something young man, who was lying in bed hurt because he took on a responsibility way beyond his own life and normal scope of involvement. Here in Calgary, I might be looking after a similar aged young man who is hurt because of irresponsibility, poor choices and lack of maturity."

Born in Edmonton and raised in Calgary, Sawchuk joined the Army Reserves in 1993 after earning a Bachelor of Nursing Sciences at Queen's University.

SEE AFGHANISTAN, PAGE 2

CONTINUED FROM COVER

# Afghanistan place of violence, poverty

"I wanted a decent amount of time on the floor before going out to work in Emergency and Trauma," she explains. She was one of the Reservists sent out to ravaging fires in British Columbia about three years ago to treat broken bones, hurt backs and reactive airway disease.

On weekends she trains at the Mewata Armoury to prepare for her second deployment to Afghanistan after having returned to Calgary in late August.

"I was asked if I could come back, and I wanted to. I've been training for exactly this purpose. This time I will be more prepared, I will know what to take, and I will get down to business right away instead of having a wide-eyed, 'What's happening?' feeling," she says.

With 72 acute admissions a month, including all manner of life-altering injuries, the first time in Kandahar was far from easy. Temperatures soared to a scorching 60 degrees Celsius while itchy powdered dust flew everywhere.

When the bombs started falling at night, she would run to her bunker with a glow stick as her only source of light. She once sat through eight rocket attacks in 11 nights – one bomb landed only 100 metres away from her tent, and the impact made her feel like being shoved back in the chest while her ears were being sucked in and then out.

Another time a rocket landed in the mess tent where they were eating. That resulted in a mass casualty with 10

people hurt. "One of the most seriously injured people I cared for was from that group," she says.

There were limb amputations, patients covered in head to toe shrapnel and bullet wounds. People that she knew and had nodded at before.

"Always in the back of my mind, I would wonder, 'who's coming in today?'"

In this alternate universe, Tim Hortons was an indescribable boost to the soldiers' morale and a slurpee was a comforting luxury.

Back in Calgary on a leisurely stroll out with her dad, Sawchuk says she nearly had a heart attack when he idly kicked a piece of cardboard to the side of the road. In Afghanistan, it could have just as easily been a trap with fatal consequences.

Sawchuk, who took an unpaid leave of absence from her job at the Region to do this, describes her family as being "nervously supportive." As the debate continues about whether or not Canadians should be in Afghanistan, the answer for Sawchuk is a resounding yes.

"Many people back here don't actually have a grasp of what's going on there but they do have strong opinions. They say, 'Oh yeah, we shouldn't be there, we should pull out.' But if you look at what happened on the London buses, the trains at Madrid a few years back...Al-Qaeda and the Taliban have strong links. We will all be affected by this. We need to take an interest in things beyond our own backyard."



Photos courtesy Tara Sawchuk

## 2006 United Way campaign a great success

# Congratulations to the Region's United Way contributors

**Shannon M. Davies**  
COMMUNICATIONS

Often described as a microcosm of Calgary, the Region is proud to represent a city characterized by innovation, collaboration, and most importantly, compassion.

Commitment to this last quality is a common thread that binds our 23,000 employees. Seldom stopping to assess the magnitude of their work and most often underestimating their impact on our community, our tireless employees are always ready to step up and support partner organizations like the United Way.

The year 2006 was no exception. As of Dec. 6, the Calgary Health Region/Health Sector of Calgary had raised \$280,375 through annual United Way campaigns. This figure represents 84 per cent of the donations target, and has been bolstered by some record-breaking events and site fundraising within the Region.

Though the final donations total will not be announced until the New Year, we'd like to highlight some contributors whose work has notably benefited the Region's United Way activity this month.



Brian Hall, pictured above with Wellness Director Norma Wood (at right) and Loaned Rep Johanna Kwakernaak, is not only the Region's Finance Director, but also the 'Head Number Cruncher' for our United Way Campaign. Brian was presented with a gift briefcase in appreciation of his tremendous assistance leading the donations count over the past several years. On behalf of the United Way Steering Committee, thank you, Brian!



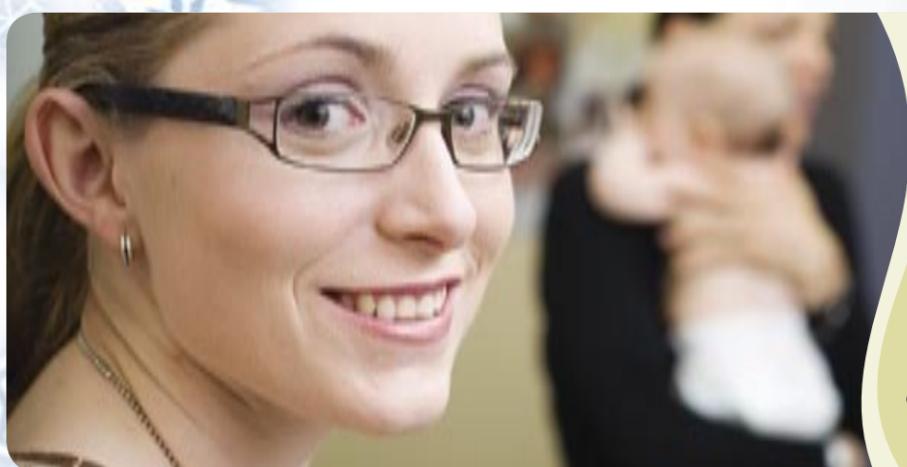
Paul Rotzinger photos

On Dec. 1, the annual Silent Auction at Southport returned, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Legal Services Team (pictured above). This year's extensive line up of auction items and an equally impressive raffle ticket prize brought in a combined total of \$6,880 – beating the 2005 record by over \$4,600! To all donors, bidders and raffle ticket holders, congratulations for your part in this great success!

### IT'S NOT TOO LATE

**There is still time to contribute to the Region's United Way donation!**

Call Johanna Kwakernaak at 410-1842 for more information and pledge forms.



## 2007 Report to the COMMUNITY

CREATING THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE.

Monday, February 5th, 2007, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

calgary health region  
leaders in health - a partner in care

Please join us at the Roundup Centre or at one of 19 Telehealth sites across the Region.

For more details visit: calgaryhealthregion.ca or call (403) 943-1208.

Health care in east Calgary to get a boost

# Construction of new east Calgary health centre to begin in summer '07

**Tim Morrison**  
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Residents in East Calgary will have more access to care as plans for the new East Calgary Health Centre have been approved. Construction could begin as early as this summer.

"This is great news for communities in East Calgary," said Carol Gray, Senior Vice-President of Community Service Development and the Northeast Community Portfolio. "Our research has shown the overall health of people in East Calgary lags behind people in other areas of the city. This new health centre will help close this gap by providing services that are specific to the needs of people in the area."

The research Gray refers to is the 2005 Health of the Region report, an annual study that reports health information for 19 local geographic areas in the Region. The information collected ranges from smoking rates to nutritional habits and environmental factors to life expectancy. The 2005 report indicates the population in East Calgary is less healthy than people in other parts of the Region.

As a result, a group of representatives from the City, United Way, Calgary and Area Child & Family Services, and the Region was brought together

to evaluate the health needs of people in East Calgary. Earlier this year, this group recommended a new health centre be developed to provide the following services:

- Health services for newborns, preschoolers and new mothers
- Diversity Services
- Wellness programs to help reduce smoking and obesity
- Child and Youth Health Services (including School Health and Speech Language Pathology)
- Chronic Disease Management
- Mental Health Services
- Health resources for seniors
- Oral Health Services
- Specialty clinics for asthma and adult diabetes
- Community Development initiatives such as Learning Village Collaborative
- Links to family physicians and community organizations

The East Calgary Health Centre will be located at 47th Street and 8th Avenue S.E., and will replace and expand on the Forest Lawn and East Community health centres. Other partners such as community organizations and physicians have expressed interest in being located at the site as well.

Because the required capital funding for the project has not yet been secured, the Region will pursue an

alternative model in order to build the new health centre. "Our plan is to have a third-party developer build and then lease the health centre to the Region until capital funding is secured, at which time we will purchase the health centre from the developer," said Bob Holmes, Senior Vice-President of Planning and Capital Development. "This will allow us to get the project up-and-running as soon as possible."

About 150 employees will be moving to the site from other locations. It is estimated that 15 to 20 new, fulltime employees will be required after the site is completed in late 2008.

- ★ East Calgary Health Centre
- Hospitals
- Community Health Centres

More information on this and other Region capital projects can be found at [www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/capital](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/capital)



Star Trek meets Alberta Children's Hospital

## Hands-free communications



Beam us up, Scotty! Registered Nurses Sheilina Karmali, Terri-Lee Shykula, and Elizabeth MacIntyre show off the new Vocera hands-free, voice-activated communications device, in use throughout the Alberta Children's Hospital.

**Blayne Meek**  
COMMUNICATIONS

Recently, the staff and physicians at the Alberta Children's Hospital added a very important accessory to their uniform. It's a small black badge that allows them to talk to other employees through hands-free voice communication.

The new cutting-edge technology is called Vocera, and thanks to a \$2.5 million donation from TELUS, the ACH was able to purchase it.

"Vocera has increased the effectiveness of our communication and cut down the use of pagers," said Terri-Lee Shykula, Registered Nurse in the Oncology Clinic at the Alberta Children's Hospital. "Compared to a

pager, Vocera is a more intimate communication tool that allows for an immediate response."

The Vocera badge is controlled by voice activation. To initiate a conversation with another staff member, all the user has to say is "Call Mary Brown". The Vocera directories are set up by name and position title so if the user needs to talk to the charge nurse, but doesn't know who is working, they can simply tell Vocera to "call charge nurse".

If the staff member with whom the user is trying to speak is not available, they can leave a message for them on Vocera. Vocera also allows users to call external numbers, so if a staff member is unavailable, the user can page them or call their cell phone using Vocera.

In addition, Vocera allows users to

conference in more than one person, including a group call function where users can broadcast to an entire department.

While Vocera improves employee communication, it also cuts down the amount of overhead pages, creating a more relaxed environment for employees and patients.

So what do the patients think of this new gizmo? According to staff at the Alberta Children's Hospital they think it's pretty neat. "The kids like it when we show them the beam me up feature," said Shykula. In reference to the Star Trek style of the badge, if you tell Vocera to "Beam me up," it replies with science fiction-style music, proving that new technology can be functional and fun at the same time.

Teamwork key to quality care

## Interprofessional practice conference

**Joanne Anderson**  
COMMUNICATIONS

Are we there yet? That was the question posed to over 340 attendees from 38 different disciplines during an annual interprofessional practice conference held in November. Attendees spent the day networking and taking a closer look at the current state of interprofessional practice in the Region.

Dr. Frances Gordon, Principal Lecturer at the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom, was the event's keynote speaker. She spoke to attendees about the importance of understanding each other's work

and valuing different professional contributions to patient care as key components in developing a successful interprofessional culture.

"Patients need us to work together in their best interest," said Dr. Gordon.

Dr. Gordon said that when things go wrong in a big way, it often grabs the spotlight and gar-

ners attention. However, it is the smaller, day-to-day events that detract from the care we should be giving, that we should be more concerned about. Often mistakes happen because of a failure to communicate.

She suggested we need to take a different look at work roles in an attempt to overcome deeply embedded cultures. "Everyone agrees that more interprofessional practice is a good thing, but structures stop it from happening," she said.

So while we might not be there yet, Gordon encouraged the Region to keep working towards the development of an interprofessional culture.

In addition to Dr. Gordon's presentation, conference participants heard a panel discussion about the current state of interprofessional practice and where it will be in the future, attended break-out sessions on specific topics, and heard an inspirational presentation from Brian Keating, the Calgary Zoo's Head of Conservation Outreach.

"Patients need us to work together in their best interest."

# in the loop

## What's Up

The closing date for nominations for the **PEOPLEFIRST AWARDS** is on Dec. 31, 2006.

The PeopleFirst Awards are a celebration of excellence by employees, physicians, volunteers and partners of the Calgary Health Region who exceed the expectations of their jobs to reinforce the Region's goals. This is the highest award honor granted to individuals and teams in the Region, thanking them for putting people first. Last year more than 500 Region staff and volunteers were nominated for the People First Awards.

The PeopleFirst Awards will be presented during the annual gala celebration on March 22, 2007.

Information about the People First Award's guidelines, submission process and official nomination form are available on the Recognition Services web site. You can forward your nomi-

nation forms to Recognition Services, 10101 Southport Rd. SW Calgary, AB T2W 3N2.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Shawna Clement-Reader, Recognition Services, at 943-1357.

The **CENTRE OF ADVANCEMENT FOR HEALTH (CAH)** is now accepting applications for a limited number of summer research studentships to well motivated students with records of exceptional academic performance. The deadline is March 12, 2007.

The studentships are offered by the Calgary Health Region Adult Research Committee and Calgary Laboratory Services. This is an opportunity to participate directly in medical/health research in Calgary during the summer months (May to August). The intent of the program is to encourage such students to consider formal training and a career in medical/health research.

Visit the CAH website at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/md/cah/research/funding/index.html> to access the application form, instructions, and researcher project list for the competition.

If you have any questions please contact the Centre for Advancement of Health at 944-1093 or [ggreer@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ggreer@ucalgary.ca).

Registration has now begun for a new **ONLINE COURSE ON HEALTH INFORMATION LAW (HILA-202)**. It is offered by the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and runs from Jan. 22 to April 2. The 10-week course costs \$260. Learn to understand the Canadian legal system and legislation as it impacts the management of health information and includes documents used in court as evidence, the legalities of record security, confidentiality and authorized disclosure of information. For more information visit [www.sait.ca/coned](http://www.sait.ca/coned) or call 284-7248.

A dinner for **NURSES CELEBRATING NURSES** will be held on May 7, 2007 at the Red & White Club. Early Bird gift certificate tickets will be on sale in December and January for \$25/ticket. This is ideal for Christmas parties, conventions or seminars, door prizes, staff gifts, or raffle items. Contact Chris Davies at (403) 932-7243 or [cda-vies@nurses.ab.ca](mailto:cda-vies@nurses.ab.ca), or Sarah Kopjar at (403) 282-4095 or [kopjar@shaw.ca](mailto:kopjar@shaw.ca)

## Transitions

We are very pleased to announce that **JANET CHAFE** has accepted the position of Director of Child and Adolescent Mental Health within Mental Health and Addictions Services, effective Jan. 8, 2007. Janet comes to this position with a wealth of knowledge and skills in mental health and health services leadership.

Please join us in congratulating Janet on her new role, and in thanking Colleen Karan who will be providing interim leadership until Jan. 8.

*Cathy Pryce, Executive Director,  
Mental Health & Addictions Services*

*Dr. Donald Addington, Head Regional  
Clinical Department of Psychiatry*

## International award for forensic nursing

Sheila Rougeau

COMMUNICATIONS



Linda McCracken

Congratulations to Linda McCracken, nurse clinician in the Foothills Medical Centre Emergency Department, for recently receiving the International Association of Forensic Nursing (IAFN) Achievement Award in Vancouver. This honor recognizes McCracken for her significant contributions made in the advancement of the scientific practice of Forensic Nursing through clinical

practice that improves the quality of care of victims and/or offenders of violence. McCracken's contributions have indeed been distinguishing.

Having worked in nursing for 33 years (28 of those in the Emergency Department), McCracken recognized early on that she could evolve her practice within the emergency care setting to be an important link in the medico-legal process of justice for both the victims and victimizers of violence that enter her care. Today, she is regarded as an unquestionable authority in the clinical forensic area at a regional and national level. She has spoken at numerous lectures, conferences and workshops, and was the driving force for implementing the Domestic Violence Screening Program in the Region – a program that looks at domestic violence from a health risk perspective and prevention tactic.

Her willingness to educate others on a daily basis and dedication to improving clinical forensic nursing practices has earned her the reputation as an innovator in the fight against domestic violence, trauma care and forensics in emergency departments.

Most importantly, McCracken is a compassionate nurse who truly comprehends the emotional, psychological and physical trauma endured by victims of crime. She is a worthy recipient of this international award for being a forensic nurse who makes a difference. ❄

## Shirts off for philanthropy!



An eager lineup waited to have their 2007 Hot Stuff calendars autographed by the Calgary firefighters who appeared in it. This annual fundraiser is a community favourite.

## FIREFIGHTERS DONATE \$500,000 TO BURN UNIT

**SCENE**  
in the  
**REGION**

Veronica Hoskins

CALGARY HEALTH TRUST

Hats off to Calgary firefighters for their support - and shirts off in the name of philanthropy!

Thanks to their fundraising efforts, on Nov. 23, the Calgary Firefighters Burn Treatment Society (CFBTS) were able to present the Calgary Health Trust with a gift of \$500,000 to support the Calgary Firefighters Burn Treatment Centre at the Foothills Medical Centre. They also announced a \$1.75 million endowment for the Centre. What all this led to was the kick-off of another annual fundraiser that's also a community favourite – the 2007 Hot Stuff Calendar, profiling Calgary firefighters.

While the calendar is in itself a hot commodity, the CFBTS holds a variety of other events and initiatives throughout the year to raise funds and awareness in support of burn victims. Established in 1978 by Calgary firefighters, the Society has contributed more than \$3.5 million to the Burn Treatment Centre. With this year's donation, that

number is now at \$4 million.

And for burn survivors like Don Adamson, the impact lasts a lifetime.

"How do you thank someone for saving your life?" said Adamson. "I'm so incredibly grateful to the firefighters who saved me and to the staff on the burn unit for their care. And every time I come back to the unit, it's like having a visit with my extended family."

Proceeds support the burn unit with equipment upgrades, leading-edge technology, supplies for burn survivors, professional development opportunities for staff and many other enhancements.

"A lot of what we do wouldn't be possible without the gifts we receive from the firefighters," said Dr. Robert Lindsay, Medical Director, Calgary Firefighters Burn Treatment Centre, Foothills Medical Centre. "The support from the firefighters keeps us ahead of the game and allows us to provide the best treatment possible."

To learn more about the Calgary Firefighters fundraising events or to purchase a 2007 Hot Stuff Calendar, visit [www.cfbts.org](http://www.cfbts.org). Calendars cost \$20.

As part of the new strategic direction for communications within the Region announced in November, portfolio and department communications has been assumed by the Office of the Executive Vice-President & Chief Clinical Officer. This realignment will provide a strengthened service delivery and more direct communications support for portfolios and departments.

**WENDY BEAUCHESNE** has accepted the role as Director, Communications, effective Dec. 1. Wendy has a solid background in health care communications. She will oversee a team of Communications Advisors who provide support to the Region's portfolios and departments. Please join me in welcoming Wendy into her new role.

*Dr. Chris Eagle, Executive Vice-President  
and Chief Clinical Officer*

## Classifieds

**For Sale:** Sturdy wooden loft bed. Painted dark blue. Has ladder built on to one end. Mattress is four-inch foam. Room for desk/dresser or love seat underneath. \$125 OBO. Call 275-9027 to view.

**For Sale:** Fitness Plus six-month Super Plus membership, won at a fundraiser and not of use as I live too far away, in Cochrane. Value \$414.00. Willing to sell for \$250 OBO. Call Leslie at 932-6105.

**For Sale:** Nintendo Game Boy Advance, comes with 1 game (Narnia), charger, and case. In excellent working condition, less than a year old. Asking \$70. OBO. Call Sandy 226-2016

**For Sale:** Puppies Pyrenean -- Maremma and Golden Retriever cross pups, male and female. Great for acreage living, ready to go January \$250. To view pictures email [Carol.Pacaud@fluor.com](mailto:Carol.Pacaud@fluor.com). Phone (403)254-5167

**For Sale:** Rectangle pine table with 4 chairs, has drawer in it, excellent condition, \$150, matching coffee table \$40, excellent condition, call Paula at 283-9509 if interested.

**For Sale:** Brand New Costco Digital Piano, fully assembled, bought it for \$530, asking \$450. Call 943-2312 (daytime).

**For Rent:** 2 Bedroom, 2 Bath, 1022 Sq.ft Condo. Available Jan. 13/07. Open concept, ground floor corner unit with view of downtown and mountains. Gas fireplace and gas line for BBQ on patio. Insuite laundry. Utilities and UG prkg included in rent. Ten min. drive to downtown. Call 889-8828.

**For Sale:** 52" RCA High Def. widescreen TV. Features: Precision CRTs, DVI-HDTV input, PIP (picture in picture), POP, V-chip parental controls, autotuning and rolling transport wheels. 1-year-old. \$1,300. Phone 366-1596.

To submit an item or for the complete list of classified ads, including vehicles for sale and homes for rent or purchase, please visit News You Can Use on the internal Web.