



## Grade school students tour mine and museum

by Bill Gillies

In the shadows of the world's mining exploration capital, a few blocks east of Chinatown and a block south of the squalor of East Hastings St., lays the oldest elementary school in Vancouver, British Columbia. Lord Strathcona was erected in 1891 to educate the children of mostly immigrant working class families living and working in the area. The same demographic exists there today, and last year the neighbourhood was described by Stats Canada as the poorest postal code in Canada.

Today, the heritage brick school is still active, with a population of over 400 grade school students. Many extracurricular activities and school programs such as breakfast and lunch are heavily supported by donations. The additional burden of fund raising on top of the daily school schedule falls on the shoulders of the teachers and management. It is a continual struggle to provide the basics and some

extras for the kids who have few other options financially.

In the fall of 2007, a contribution of several thousand dollars raised from a dozen companies in Vancouver's mining community funded a field trip to the BC Museum of Mining at Britannia Beach. The 120 children of Strathcona's Grade 6 and 7 classes were treated to a day of hands-on learning which integrated well with their classroom science and geology program. It was an exciting and rewarding day for teachers and students alike. In October of 2008 with global market conditions testing uncharted territory and companies cinching their financial belts ever tighter, it was uncertain whether the money could be raised to repeat the field trip. But tough times for the miners was met with an even tougher determination to continue providing these students with this rare educational opportunity.

Doug Sherrett, one of the teachers,

thanked the sponsors for contributing in these difficult times. Perhaps the best tribute to the mining community came from two graduating Grade 7's who had made the trip last year. Interviewed by local media prior to boarding the buses and excited about a return to the BC Museum of Mining they were quoted as saying,

"I want to be a geologist", and "I want to discover a way to make mining more environmentally friendly."

The future of mining is just around the corner, maybe just a few blocks east of Chinatown and a block south of Hastings.

Sponsors of this year's field trip were Abacus Mining and Exploration, Association of Mineral Exploration British Columbia, Capstone Mining, Constantine Metals, Goldbrook Ventures, Redcorp Ventures, Silverstone Resources, Yukon-Nevada Gold, International Stage Lines and *Resource World Magazine*. ■