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HAVING A BALL AT THE LANGLEY FESTIVAL

16 Teams Don Their Socks On This July 11th

Langley's International Festival Society (LIFS) will launch the Langley International Festival early this year with an international mini-soccer tournament on July 11th as an addition to its main event taking place between Aug 7th - 9th. Adults from across the Lower Mainland and Greater Vancouver areas, representing 16 countries, will play in this competition to celebrate their culture in the Langley community as part of the festival fanfare. Some of the teams in the tournament are from Peru, Mexico, and Iran (last year's winner) as well as many other countries.

LIFS Soccer Tournament Coordinator Jose Ingunza, who has played soccer since age ten in his home country of Peru, says that he's always had a passion for the sport.

Jose Ingunza's family moved to Canada from Peru some 15 years ago. At the time, like many new immigrants, Jose spoke no English and was having difficulty finding work due to the language barrier. Today the situation is very different; in spite the economic downturn, Jose is employed and even finds spare time to indulge in his favourite hobby - soccer. And he does that on more than one level.

When asked to reflect on the current economic situation and how it impacts the people around him, Jose jovially replies: "Some guys have difficulties as a result of economy doing bad. Some people got laid off, others are concerned for their jobs. But during the game all this disappears".

Besides being an active member with Vancouver's "Incas 33" soccer club, Jose volunteers his time as a coordinator for LIFS Soccer Tournament. When he was first approached by Carlos Trujillo, President of LIFS Board of Directors, he took his International Soccer Tournament suggestion to his friends at the club, and they jumped at the idea right away. This July 11th, the second tournament will be played at Willoughby Park in Langley as a part of the 8th annual Langley's International Festival. Featuring 16 teams, representing various countries, it's an event that forges friendships and brings nations together.

Most people would find moving to a new country and learning a new language a great challenge. But for a motivated person like Jose, that was not enough. He took the opportunity to do something more than

that through the sport he enjoys the most. He found it easy to get people to sign up for the tournament as people love the social aspects of it.

"This year we have a cash prize, so that makes the whole thing even more fun" says Ingunza.

For the most part, it would appear that for a lot of newcomers, the integration into the Canadian society can be hard unless there is a vehicle for meeting people and sharing common interests, and the soccer community and Langley International Festival do exactly that.

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Sponsors for this year's festival include the ??????. Partial net proceeds of the event will go to the ??????. For more information, visit the festival website at www.internationalfestival.ca or contact Shar Dubas at 604-530-4661