COMMUNITY

Anthea Fulford

As the door slides open there is a gust of wind, a murmur of voices, a gentle sound of soft footsteps, or the click of heels. There is a quick smile and a greeting of acknowledgment before entering into their class, into rooms lit by sunshine, or shadowed by clouds, as the seasons change.

There is buzz of the doorbell, the peel of the phone, deep tones of men talking, the loud grind from the coffee machine, and the laughter and chatter from the women as they prepare their cup of tea or coffee, before returning to their room, or sit in the bright colored chairs in the café space. And then there is the clatter of pots and pans, instructions given, and aromas that drift in the air from the cooking class in the kitchen.

A tiny newborn baby is being nursed by the mother, her index finger gently strokes the soft tuffs of hair, eyes upon eyes, a look only a mother has, as if still tied by an invisible cord.

In the large Hall tables are rolled out, chairs set, the urn simmers casting wisps of steam, and mugs clatter as they are set upon the trestle table. Plates of scones topped with strawberry jam and a cloud of cream are set in neat rows to decorate the table. There is a crush of the crowd as it enters the hall; smiles and greetings of people now familiar. Chairs are pulled out and places are taken, and the wheelie walkers stand like sentries along the wall. Then quietness as the music and singing of Morning Melodies commence; couples dance, ladies dance, the fox trot, a gentle waltz, or just a gentle sway, limbs stiff with age.

These are the sounds and sights of my day as I attend my Volunteer work. These are the sounds of new friendships, a new community, that has sprung from the embryo, that is now ten years old and called Balla Balla Community Centre.