

The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee
Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee

From: Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager- Community Services

Date: November 4th, 2020

Subject: Community Services Division Update

RECOMMENDATION

That the Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee and the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee receive this report as information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of Community Services division activities.

DISCUSSION

Community Arts: Programs- “*Skills for Recovery*” with the Salvation Army and “*Healing through the Arts*” the Victoria Women’s Transition House have resumed. Community partners are grateful to be collaborating once again on art and written/spoken word programs that provide wellness benefits to participants.

The “*HeArts Together Community Art Project*” with over ten collaborating community partners was featured in a CHEK news “Upside” segment. Due to privacy and COVID-19 safety restrictions protecting the isolated and vulnerable community members who have been creating hearts, staff spoke about the project and the very positive feedback we’re receiving from participants, organizations and the community. Stream the interview here- <http://bit.ly/HeArtsTogetherCHEKUpside>



Carly Manzon, painter

Saanich Municipal Hall Exhibition - until November 13:

Main Floor Window

Saanich Archives, “Spotlight on Service: Saanich Remembers WWI and WWII”

Main Floor Gallery

Carly Manzon, “Beauty of the West Coast”

Second Floor Gallery

Jaqueline Primeau, “Summer Breeze”

Arts Centre at Cedar Hill – Gallery Exhibitions – Coming Soon!

Planning is underway for resumption of exhibits at Cedar Hill with modified processes, aiming for a late fall start.

Diversity and Equity: Saanich has received a “Plan H – Community Connectedness” grant with our project partners; Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Guru Nanak Foundation of Victoria, Island Health and Emmanuel Baptist Church – Chinese Congregation. The goal of this granted activity is to connect socially isolated Elders, seniors and New Canadians living in Saanich. The project will be completed in 2021.

Financial Assistance: Preparations have begun for the 2021 LIFE program throughout the Greater Victoria Recreation Departments with the Saanich LIFE Programmer facilitating an inter-municipal meeting on Oct. 15th. At this time, only one option will be offered to our LIFE participants – 52 drop-ins with accompanying coupons (four 50% off coupons to a maximum of \$50 each). As per March 17th, 2020 as a result of COVID-19, the annual pass option has been temporarily unavailable throughout greater Victoria. A proposed 5% increase to the present low income threshold qualifying income levels has been recommended and proposed to the GVAC (Greater Victoria Active Communities) Committee. Renewals and registration for the 2021 LIFE program will commence on November 15th and the bonus “5-free pass” early bird incentive will be effective to Saanich applicants if they renew or register before January 1st, 2021.

Funding opportunities through the Canadian Tire Jumpstart program and KidsFUNd continue to serve a great need to the residents of Saanich to support children and youth throughout the fall with their recreational activities. The after school program at Tillicum School is now underway partially funded by a BCRPA and Jumpstart grant supported by Saanich Community Services. This after school program runs Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays supporting children in a FREE after school activity program between 2:45-4:45pm. With the addition of COVID safety precautions, numbers have been reduced to 20 children attending within their pre-determined school cohorts.

Older Adult Services: The second edition of the CONNECTIONS Older Adult guide has been released. The guide is the only printed material produced this fall for Saanich Parks, Recreation & Community Services and it has been well received. The guide included new information on COVID19 safety protocols introduced in the centres and how to register online. It also includes resource information, partner information and older adult programs now available. It was distributed to libraries, recreation centres, CRD and BC Housing units, senior centres, Health Units and by direct mail.

Parks Programs: Some outdoor programs are winding down for the season as the expected wet weather approaches. The fall Bird Watching for Beginners program runs through October with a few modifications from previous sessions. The walking programs will continue twice per week through the fall and winter months, rain or shine, for those looking to keep socially, and physically active outdoors.



Saanich Remembrance Day Ceremony: The global pandemic has directly impacted the hosting of Remembrance Day Ceremonies across Canada and with restrictions in place to limit events to under fifty participants the Saanich event will be scaled back to adhere to the PHO. The Royal Canadian Legion wants communities to recognize the importance of a live ceremony to honour Veterans and their sacrifices especially during the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War

For the first time, spectators will be discouraged from attending in person, due to the limited space and requirement to physically distance and a live feed will be streamed on the Saanich Facebook page.

Changes to this year’s Remembrance Day commemoration include:

- No Veteran’s parade, only two Legion members will hold Colour Party flags
- No Canadian Armed Forces parade. Saanich Council will be led into the ceremony using a smaller three piece pipe band.
- Wreaths will be limited to twelve, which will be pre-positioned six feet apart with only representatives from Saanich, the Government of Canada and BC and Military groups participating. Community groups will be allowed to lay a wreath a designated time following the event.

Child and Youth Services: Youth in Saanich have returned to our program offerings, reporting back to us in large numbers that they are adjusting to their new routines but are in great need of the social connections that our services offer to them. One such example came from a youth upon seeing the lights on and door open stopped by and said “thank goodness you are open!” Confirming the need for youth to have a safe space and programs during such an integral time in their lives.

A snapshot of the programs that have been running at full capacity include our LGBTQ+ meet up, our afterschool programs, girls crafting clubs, outdoor education programs, and our new Friday night socials at Cedar Hill Centre.

The Upside Teen Centre has been running a range of adapted programs since the middle of September. These programs offer safe, socially-distanced opportunities to youth between the ages of 10 and 18. The programs have been split into two separate age cohorts; and have been running in a pre-registered format to allow for regulation of numbers and contact tracing. While altering the format and style of programs has been a challenge, the dedicated staff team have adapted quickly and nimbly to the changes. One youth who has attended the programs nearly every day said “I am always so excited to come back after school!” One of the exciting additions to programs this year has been including a walking school bus from Royal Oak Middle School to the Upside Teen Centre, providing a safe way for youth to walk up to the Upside after school.



Although the Flipside Teen Centre has not been operational this season, our youth services team has been able to operate programs in the Tillicum area from Pearkes Recreation Centre and through the Parks building at Meadow Park. The programs have had excellent feedback, with one guardian calling to say “It has been great to have [my child] socializing and learning with her peers again, it was a hard spring and summer for her.”

Our Outdoor Adventure Club has been very successful this fall, embodying the true meaning of outdoor adventure and operating outdoors rain or shine. The Outdoor Club was able to participate in their first weekend hike of the year, meeting at Goldstream Park, learning about fire building, and trekking through the creek to see the waterfalls. Our instructor felt that there were some incredibly special moments that made a huge impact on the youth.

Child and Youth Services continues to advocate for equitable and accessible programs across all recreation centres for the young people in our community, working with internal and external partners to ensure youth are able to grow and become active, healthy, and well connected in our communities.