



Community News

April 2020
www.burnsidegorge.ca

Staying Apart, Together

These are strange times that we are currently living through. There is so much uncertainty for all of us and people are facing unprecedented challenges. As an agency, we are doing everything we can to support our community safely. Many of our staff are working remotely, providing outreach and support to the many youth and families we serve. We are also providing childcare for parents working in essential services.

At the moment we are working to get our food rescue program up and running again, although it will look a little different than before. If you live in the Burnside Gorge or surrounding areas and are in need of fresh food or personal hygiene products please contact our office at 250-388-5251 and we will do our best to assist you.

It is also very heartening to see such a strong community response in a time of crisis. From fundraising initiatives to volunteer call-outs, people are stepping up to help each other out all across the region. Our connectedness makes us resilient so let's continue to stay socially connected while we remain physically distant.



Community Resources for COVID-19

There have been countless numbers of people gathering and sharing resources to support those who are affected by COVID-19, be it financially, physically, or emotionally. Our teams here have also been gathering information to support the children, youth and families that receive our services and participate in our many programs. We would like to share some of these resources here for our community members as well! We are receiving new information regularly but this is as up-to-date as we have at this moment.

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

We encourage everyone to get their information on COVID-19 from trusted and legitimate sources. The BC Centre for Disease Control and the Public Health Agency of Canada are providing regular updates with facts and figures on the disease and its impacts. There is also a self-assessment tool for monitoring your symptoms and when it's appropriate to seek treatment.

<http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

All the updated orders, notices and guidance from the Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, can be found at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

FINANCIAL & OTHER SUPPORTS TO MEET DAILY NEEDS

Community Connect

An expansive list of local supports available for people impacted by COVID-19 as well as information on accessing provincial/federal financial supports for those affected financially: <https://www.covid19communityconnect.ca/the-master-list>

Credit Counselling Society

Resources to Help Canadians with the Financial Impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: <https://www.nomoredebts.org/coronavirus>

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

The SD61 District Team has collected some resources and learning activities for families, sorted by grade.

- For elementary student, grades K-5: <https://learn.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/elem-home-activites/>
- For middle school students, grades 6-8: <https://learn.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/middle-home-activities/>
- For secondary students, grades 9-12: <https://learn.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/secondary-home-activities/>

Getting Bookish in Burnside Gorge

By Avery Stetski, BGCA President

Thanks to a successful application to the City of Victoria's My Great Neighbourhood Grant program last fall there are two new little free libraries coming soon to Burnside Gorge. One will be installed in the Selkirk Waterfront, close to the Galloping Goose Trail, and the other will be installed in the large green median at Sumas and Manchester.

After the components are constructed there will be a call-out for (some-what) handy neighbours to help paint, assemble, and install the book boxes. Then it will be time to stock them with your good but no-longer-wanted books.

We hope to turn these assembly parties into enjoyable social events with food, refreshments, and most importantly, fun! It's a great way to celebrate our community and each other and will be much needed. So, stay tuned and look forward to joining your neighbours for a crafty afternoon once we're safely able to gather again!





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Note: Written contributions do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the BGCA or its staff.

BGCA Board of Directors

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To Advertise

Establish yourself as a community supporter with an ad in your community newsletter.

The deadline to purchase ad space is the 15th of each month prior to the month of publication. Please contact us for current rates.

Contributions

The BGCN welcomes submissions. Submissions are subject to editing as required for clarity and brevity. Please note that submission does not guarantee publication. Contact us for submission guidelines and deadlines.

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About us

Founded in 1991 in response to community need, the Burnside Gorge Community Association provides a continuum of programs and services that strengthen the lives of children, youth and families in Greater Victoria.

Programming includes: a range of childcare programs for ages 3.5 to 11; community and school based youth and family services; housing and asset development supports for youth and families; community recreation and special events for all ages; and a variety of community development initiatives.

As a non-profit organization, we rely on the support of individuals, businesses and partner organizations to continue providing a high level of service to our communities. If you're passionate about the work that we're doing there are a number of ways that you can get involved.

Join our team!

Want to join a fun and dynamic team? BGCA is a great place to work. To see current opportunities please see our website at:

<http://www.burnsidegorge.ca/opportunities/employment>

Volunteer!

Do you have some time to spare and a passion for community? We're always looking for volunteers to help out. Current opportunities are listed at:

<http://www.burnsidegorge.ca/opportunities/volunteer>

Become a member!

Are you interested in being a part of our mission? Become a member and take an active role in shaping our community. For more information contact the BGCA directly at:

info@burnsidegorge.ca

Centennial United CHURCH

Worship Service 10:55 am
Sunday School, Nursery, Senior Choir
Everyone Welcome!

649 Gorge Rd. East (at David St.)
Wheelchair ramp on Gorge Rd.

250-384-6424

www.cucvictoria.com



DON'T LET THE RAIN (or your finances) GET YOU DOWN

Take some shelter in our Family Self-Sufficiency program

The FSS Program can support you to...

- Face your financial fears and move forward
- Take control of your money
- Begin a debt reduction plan
- Access resources & supports
- Start Saving

To apply you need to be...

- Receiving a housing subsidy (not all housing providers qualify)
- Or receiving a 'rental assistance program' (RAP) subsidy
- Living with at least one dependent child

Call today to apply for this Life Changing Opportunity
We're taking applications!

FSS staff can be reached at 250-388-5251

<http://www.burnsidegorge.ca/family-self-sufficiency-program>

Colquitz Students Changing the World

By Wendy Lubinich, Youth & Family Counsellor

The Colquitz Middle School Change the World Club is a group of about 30 students who work hard all year to support people who find themselves in need. So far this year, they have helped with Cram the Cruiser, filled wool socks with toiletries for the homeless and now they have filled backpacks for youth in transition. After weeks of gathering donations, the 13 backpacks were dropped off at BCGA in early March for the Youth Self Sufficiency Program. BCGA and Colquitz Middle School have a long-standing relationship with the Change the World Club being a major contributor!



HAVE A HOPPY EASTER



Selkirk Waterfront Festival Postponed

In light of COVID-19 BGCA has made the difficult decision to postpone the festival until further notice. We are looking at possibly rescheduling for the early fall (and we hope you all will join us) but right now it's too uncertain to move ahead with a spring event. We will keep everyone updated with our decisions regarding the future of the festival. In the meantime, we wanted to share some of our favourite photos of past years to remind everyone of warmer days!



Point Ellice House - South Garden Restoration

According to heritage garden expert Cyril Hume, the gardens at Point Ellice House are one of the best surviving examples of Victorian-era gardens in North America. The importance of the gardens is reflected in the site's statement of significance; the gardens are a character defining element of heritage value, especially

all of the mature historic garden and landscaping features, which include the croquet/tennis lawns, pathways, rose bushes, flower beds, mature trees and shrubs, and the sequoia tree planted by Peter O'Reilly.¹

The gardens at Point Ellice House are an extension of the site's collection - they are a living and evolving part of our museum. The south garden was the 'working' garden for Point Ellice House - a site that provided food and year-round flowers for the O'Reilly family. Correspondence between Peter, Caroline, and their children (1870s to 1890s) demonstrates the O'Reilly's passion for planning, expanding, and caring for the gardens. On July 15th, 1881, daughter Kathleen wrote to her father, Peter, who was away for work as Indian Reserve Commissioner:

The garden is looking very pretty the roses that came from San Francisco have been lovely there are some very dark ones. The verbina are just coming out but the sweet peas are backwards as they were not sowed until we returned from Yale, the white jasmine has quantities of blossoms (BC Archives, A/E/Or3/Or32)



Throughout her youth, Kathleen helped Peter and Caroline in the gardens. In later years, she added her own important touches. Indeed, all O'Reilly family members took an interest in the gardens.² The south garden was a site of much activity for the family - it contained a greenhouse, well, kitchen/vegetable garden, cut flower garden, and orchard.



In more recent years, the south garden at Point Ellice House has been one of the most underutilized sections of this National and Provincial historic property. The garden became neglected sometime after the Second World War and during the late 1960s the south garden area was turfed over to become lawn. In the decades that followed, elm tree suckers were permitted to grow tall; once neatly pruned holly bushes were neglected and became towering trees. This unchecked growth overtook the historic fruit trees and blocked sunlight from reaching the once thriving garden space.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, provincial employees and contractors undertook extensive research in the south garden area. These projects contribute greatly to our knowledge of the area and provide guidance for our rehabilitation of the space. Although extensive conservation and rehabilitation of historical plants occurred during this period, a full rehabilitation of the south garden did not occur.

Given the importance of the south garden to the history of Point Ellice House and the O'Reilly family, Point Ellice House Museum and Gardens is currently working to rehabilitate the south garden to its historical character. Of course, much has changed since the O'Reilly's time; reinstating the heritage aspects of this garden site must be balanced with the need to acknowledge present-day considerations such as an evolved site, industrial neighbourhood, urban deer, and a rapidly changing climate. Still, once fully rehabilitated, the south garden will account for approximately one third of the total cultivated gardens at Point Ellice House, just as it did many years ago.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily closed Point Ellice House, we expect to complete the first phase of this project in the late spring of 2020, reinvigorating the south garden as a site of learning, food production, and community engagement.

The layout of the garden will be slightly altered from Peter and Kathleen's time, but we will be using the south garden just as they intended. Based on research from museum and archival collections, we will be growing many of the plants that sustained family life at Point Ellice House for so many years.

Of course, we can't do all of this work alone - the support of volunteers and community members will be vital. Cultural sites such as Point Ellice House have always needed the support of community - now more than ever as we face the pandemic and temporarily close our operations. Please consider visiting our website and making a [small financial contribution](#) to support our efforts. And, when the project is complete and our site re-opens to the public, stop by to smell the sweet peas, or maybe have a fresh strawberry from the south garden.



1 Canadian Register of Historic Places. "Point Ellice House." <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=1129>. Retrieved October 8th, 2019.

2 Hume, C. "The Development of a Restoration Plan for the Garden at Point Ellice House." Volume 3, March 15, 1990, pgs. 32-47.
Molinaro, T. "Material History Research: Point Ellice House." March 20, 1991, pgs. 1-2.



Olympic Vista Seniors Housing, located at 3806 Carey Road, is one example of modular housing

Cool Aid's Responses to COVID-19: Building for the Future

Vulnerable Clients

Every year, Victoria Cool Aid Society helps 12,000 people in our community – and many of them are suffering mild to severe health challenges, that make them particularly vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To protect clients, and our frontline workers, Cool Aid has reacted swiftly to reflect best practices in preventing the spread of the virus. We are:

- Practising enhanced disinfection measures in all public areas including hand sanitizers and disinfecting spray
- Providing practical ways for our clients, staff and others to keep a safe, physical distance
- Altering methods of service delivery as necessary to protect public health
- Monitoring the situation constantly and updating our responses as needed

Community Generosity

Expenses are up considerably and we are so thankful for the amazing, generous outpouring of community support we are seeing online and through financial donations.

Already, we have received over \$12,000 to purchase grocery and other gift cards for our clients who do not receive meals at their location, enough for the next two weeks. (Donations can be made at CoolAid.org/giftcards.)

Significantly, we also received a \$150,000 emergency relief donation from the Rapid Relief Fund, coordinated by Victoria Foundation, Jawl Foundation

and the Times Colonist. The \$150,000 Cool Aid has received will be used to purchase:

- Urgently needed medical supplies such as N95 masks, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and hand sanitizer
- Additional staff support
- Additional grocery and phone cards for tenants and clients

To learn more about how Cool Aid is responding to the pandemic, visit CoolAid.org/covid.

Housing Is Healthcare: Building for the Future

All levels of government have recognized the need to protect vulnerable populations, like Cool Aid clients, not only to save their lives, but to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus to everyone in the community. We are all in this together.

All hands are on deck to provide safe sheltering spaces, with nutritious food and physical distance, which is more difficult when you don't have a physical home to self isolate.

This crisis underlines what Cool Aid and other organizations helping homeless populations have been saying: housing is healthcare. The move to self-isolation has put a spotlight on homelessness as a public health crisis. Housing improves physical health and resilience, improves mental health, and gives people the foundation they need to work on the challenges they are facing and become their best selves. Housing for all improves quality of life for the whole community.

Cool Aid believes that our collective responses include rapid housing for people who are homeless because everyone deserves home. We are urging government to rapidly accelerate:

- Building modular homes that can quickly be assembled
- Turning empty properties into housing

Victorians and British Columbians are creative, caring, thoughtful and hard-working. Let's work together to make sure that the solutions to COVID-19 also add to long-term, affordable housing that will address the underlying causes of inequitable access to healthcare and housing.

Let's continue to look after one another even as we care for ourselves.

Learn more about Cool Aid's housing, shelter, health care, food, employment, recreation and other support services at CoolAid.org.

Kathy Stinson is the CEO of Victoria Cool Aid Society.

Construction of Olympic Vista Modular Housing in July, 2011



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