

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Erin van Steen to retire at end of the year**

NANAIMO, 12 November 2014: Erin van Steen, executive director of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation (NLSF), is retiring at the end of the year after 18 years at the helm of the non-profit organization.

NLSF is a volunteer, community-based organization that helps disadvantaged school children, and awards scholarships and bursaries to encourage high school graduates to pursue post-secondary education. The foundation's annual Stock the Lockers campaign raises funds for school supplies and other needs of local students affected by poverty.

"After all those years, I feel it's time to spend more time with my family," said van Steen. "The experience of working for the foundation has enriched my life, and I'm thankful for the generosity of our donors because I could not have done my job without their support. These have been some of the most demanding and exciting years of my life, and I have appreciated the opportunity to work for the betterment of local students."

Nanaimo has a high proportion of children from low income families for whom it is a struggle to make ends meet. To help students get ready to learn, the foundation has set up breakfast programs at eight schools, serving 5,500 meals a month, through a partnership with the Breakfast Club of Canada.

NLSF supports students by providing such necessities as shoes, winter coats, eye and dental care, school supplies, and funding special fees for items such as field trips, athletics, grad, rental of band instruments. The foundation also funds special initiatives when school budgets are tight; since 2009, \$29,000 has been distributed to 13 elementary schools to buy instruments to introduce children to the joys of playing music.

van Steen figures that during her time with the foundation she has had the privilege of disbursing more than \$6-million, including \$5.3-million in scholarships and bursaries.

"It was a lot of hard work, but it sure felt good meeting some of the needs out there through the help of our generous donors," she said.

For more information about the foundation, please visit the website at [www.NLSF.ca](http://www.NLSF.ca).

– 30 –

### **For more information:**

Marianne van Toor  
Communications Officer  
[m-van-toor@shaw.ca](mailto:m-van-toor@shaw.ca)