

Grant boosts Nanaimo elementary school's gardening programs



Thanks to \$5,000 in money from the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation, Coal Tye Elementary School now has a community garden. The space will be used as a gathering place for students and an outdoor classroom. Judith Tye, left, Kris Holman, Crystal Dennison, Sandra Urbanoski, Victoria Drakeford and Doug English, principal, were at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

— Image Credit: KARL YU/The News Bulletin

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Students at Coal Tye Elementary School can dig in the garden thanks to the DIG grant from [Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation](#).

The school received \$5,000 through the foundation's [District Initiative Grants](#) and a community garden was built at the school. The garden area consists of a shed, picnic tables and garden boxes.

Doug English, school principal, said an exterior project to beautify the school was sought over a year ago. Staff and community members got together in September and started working on weekends to build the garden.

In-kind donations from parents, staff, businesses and community members, as well as the \$5,000, contributed to the garden, English said.

It can be used by students at lunch time and as a place to learn.

“Staff now have a sign-up sheet where they can sign up to come out to the garden to use it as a classroom, so to do some education around plants, the environment, sustainability and we’re going to look at doing a water system next, something that’s going to be a drip system from the runoff from the school, so that’s part of it as well,” said English.

The garden’s yield will offer students the opportunity to have salad and a dehydrator will be purchased as well, English said.

The grant money is offered through the foundation after \$320,000 was endowed by the late [Joseph T.A. Lee](#), a former student who died in 2009.

“The money came through a bequest that was set aside to develop programs within the district to help students with student leadership, social responsibility and community development, so really trying to support students and the educators to work closely with the community,” said Crystal Dennison, foundation executive director.

Dennison said the garden will give students the opportunity to develop leadership skills by taking on roles within a project and working together.