



Thanks to you, more students now receive the food they need to succeed

Dramatic Increase in Demand for Food Programs

With the rising cost of groceries, the Schools Foundation is seeing a dramatic increase in demand for food programs at local schools.

“During the 2015/16 school year, we served an average of 5,500 meals a month at eight Nanaimo schools. In comparison, in November we served 7,448 meals at 11 schools, and I’m regularly receiving more requests for food programs – one from Dover Bay Secondary, recently,” said Crystal Dennison, Executive Director of the Schools Foundation.

A partnership with Breakfast Club of Canada provides basic funding at a rate of \$0.50 per child per day for food programs at the 11 Nanaimo schools. In addition, Danone sends 32 cases of yogurt every two weeks, Minute Maid sends 2,400 tetra paks of orange and apple juice twice a year, and Egg Farmers of Canada donate coupons for free eggs.

Crystal is thankful for the Breakfast Club partnership, and she is particularly thankful for the local donations received recently. “The additional money allows us to provide a variety of healthy, nutritious breakfasts and respond to the urgent need for lunches and snacks. Hungry kids simply cannot learn on an empty stomach, no matter how smart the student or how good the teacher,” she said.

Community School Coordinator Susan M’Gonigle is very appreciative of the food program.

“Thank goodness for our donors,” Susan said. “We have our regular students who totally rely on our breakfast and lunch program. Not only do they receive a healthy and balanced nutritional start to the day, they also receive a healthy and balanced social start to the day. There are few things better than sitting down at the table with the kids and having a few laughs, sharing a few thoughts and supporting one another. Again, thanks so much from the bottom of my heart!”

“The eggs were a hard sell to begin with because many of the kids had never seen or eaten a hard-boiled egg before. But once the first brave soul tried one, then they all tried one and pretty soon they were the hottest ticket in town.”

*Susan M’Gonigle,
Community School Coordinator*



Child Poverty – misconceptions

According to Dr. Paul Hasselback, Medical Health Officer for the Central Vancouver Island region, almost 20 per cent of students – one in five children – in School District 68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith are living in poverty. “And there are a lot of misconceptions about child poverty,” he said.



Dr. Paul Hasselback

Only 5% on income assistance

“Of the 20% of students living in impoverished conditions, only 5% are from families on income assistance. The other 15% are in that marginal income level where trying to get through a month is a challenge. They may be fine for a week or two when there is enough money but not necessarily for the rest of the month.”

Part-time work, low wages

“Starting incomes haven’t changed much but the cost of housing has increased four times compared to prices back in the 1970s. Also, many jobs are now part-time, and people are working multiple jobs and having a hard time making ends meet.”

Housing, child care, student debt load

“Our region has a high proportion of single-parent families – many of them women – and many young families are ‘squeezed’ between lower incomes and higher costs for housing and child care. In addition, many are carrying high student debt loads because of the high cost of post-secondary education.”

Child poverty at all schools

“The least we can do is begin to recognize that we have an issue – all schools have the issue, some more so than others – but let’s begin by recognizing it as a community and start working together because we can do something about alleviating child poverty if we take a comprehensive approach.” said Dr. Hasselback.

Craft Market Fundraiser a Success

The first-ever ‘Handmade for the Holidays’ craft market was held on December 10. Despite the poor weather conditions, Christmas shoppers and 60 vendors made the event a success and raised \$2,100 for our Student Support program to help students-in-need. Special thanks to Terminal Park McDonalds for the donation of coffee and supplies and to Vault Cafe for the yummy cookies that raised \$225.



Thank You!

“I would like to give thanks for the scholarship I received. Having finished my first year of engineering at Vancouver Island University, I transferred to the University of British Columbia for my second year of studies. Moving to a new city and a new school is stressful, and being in a better financial situation helped relieve some of this stress allowing me to be more focused on school. This will help move me closer to my goal of graduating with a degree in Electrical Engineering.”

Kaleb Graham (2015 Wellington grad) completed his first year on a VIU Entrance Scholarship and is using his \$2,000 William & Peggy Mawhinney Memorial Scholarship towards his studies at UBC.



Helping students access tools to meet the job market of tomorrow

Grant Aids School Libraries for Coding & Robotics Clubs

It's lunchtime at Quarterway Elementary and ten students are huddled together in the library to participate in the new pilot Coding & Robotics Club that meets twice a week.

Teacher-Librarian Dominique Sullivan has set up four different stations where students are eagerly experimenting with a variety of coding and robotics equipment. They are drawing visual block coding with self-propelled Ozobots, wiring and learning circuitry with Makey Makey Kits from MIT, and writing coding for the Spheros robots. Soon they will progress to building Lego robots and learning the coding and software required to make them move.

Students are experimenting at a coding and robotics pilot project at Quarterway Elementary.

The Grades 6/7 students are particularly excited about the prospect of demonstrating their proficiency in coding to teachers during an upcoming Pro D at Dover Bay Secondary.

"We've heard that coding will become a requirement under the B.C. provincial curriculum in 2018 and decided to get a head start on fundraising for equipment students and teachers will need," said Mrs. Sullivan. "Teacher-librarians across the district are trying to provide equipment for learning in school libraries so students can access tools they'll need to meet the job market of tomorrow, regardless of their social/economic status."

They recently received a \$500 'Enhanced Learning Grant' that was established last year by participating School Trustees, who make personal financial contributions. The grant is administered by the Schools Foundation.

"We're thankful for the grant and feel supported by all levels in education in our community. The Schools Foundation is assisting us to apply for more grants so we can expand the club to other local schools, especially those with tight budgets. These kinds of projects are bound to get students excited about learning," she added.



Lauren, Mrs. Sullivan and David show off the Lego robot kit.



Merissa is playing piano keys she made with the Makey Makey kit.



Self-propelled Ozobots run on a student-coded path.



Kai and Noah are trying out the Spark Fun inventor kit.



Giving students the tools to make healthy and positive lifestyle choices

Partnership with RCMP ‘Y.E.S.2Know’ Youth Summits

Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation is partnering with RCMP Strategic Partnership Services to offer the ‘Y.E.S.2Know’ Youth Summits to give local students tools to make healthy and positive lifestyle choices to help them become strong young citizens.

Cpl. Dave Cusson, RCMP’s Strategic Prevention Service Co-ordinator, explains that ‘Y.E.S.’ stands for Youth Engagement Summit, and ‘2Know’ means to have knowledge now before making a decision.

“It’s a provincial initiative that’s offered in many communities as a prevention strategy for students in Grades 7-12,”

Cpl. Cusson said. “The content of each summit is guided by the needs and desires of the local community and can include themes such as social media, healthy choices and relationships, radicalization, drugs, social belonging, gangs and crime, conflict resolution, economics and jobs, bullying, cyberbullying, and mental health.”

The program has already been offered at Dover Bay and Wellington Secondary schools. Western Financial Group has donated \$2,859, and the Schools Foundation is approaching local businesses and applying for grants to access funding to offer Summits at five more local schools this year.

Save the Dates

- Donor Appreciation Tea:
Thursday, April 20 @ John Barsby Secondary
- ‘Hello Spring’ craft market fundraiser:
Saturday, May 6 @ NDSS
- Awards Night at Port Theatre:
Tuesday, June 13 @ Port Theatre
- Stock the Lockers fundraiser:
August 10 – September 1
- ‘Handmade for the Holidays’ fundraiser:
Saturday, December 9 @ NDSS



You raised \$45,712 for Stock the Lockers



Thank you for your loyal financial support of our Stock the Lockers fundraising campaign! In 2016, you raised \$45,712 for school supplies, food, and other unmet needs of vulnerable students at our local schools.

We wish you could have seen the happy faces of students who were able to start off their new school year with backpacks filled with the right school supplies. You truly were their heroes!