

NEWS RELEASE

Seventh annual Stock the Lockers campaign to help local students in need

2016 campaign aims to raise \$50,000

Nanaimo, 28 July 2016 -- A new school year is just around the corner, and it is a real challenge for many local families especially those with more than one child in their household, says Crystal Dennison, executive director of Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation (NLSF). "School supplies, clothing, shoes, school fees are expensive," she adds.

NLSF is holding its seventh 'Stock the Lockers' campaign and aims to raise \$50,000 to help local students whose families can't afford the extra expense of school-related costs. The three-week campaign kicks off at Staples' North Nanaimo store, 6581 Aulds Road, on Thursday, August 11 at 10 am.

"Starting the school year off with the right supplies helps ensure that all students are able to come to school ready to learn," says Dennison.

Poverty is very real among many students in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District that historically has a high child poverty rate.

According to Dr. Paul Hasselback, Island Health's medical health officer for the central Island region, of the more than 13,000 students expected in schools this year, almost 3,000 will come to school with less than sufficient resources. That means for some students arriving at school without breakfast or without the needed school supplies. For others, this might mean not participating in school sports teams or other extracurricular activities, or not sharing in school outings.

"Despite issues of poverty, many students are successful in their academic achievements," says Dennison. "Giving them a helping hand in the form of school supplies, adequate foot ware for PE, clean clothes, breakfast, lunch, and other unmet basic needs allows them to focus on their education and helps support them on the road to making a better future for themselves."

"Generous donors are making a difference in the lives of local students and helping them to get an education, which is so important in today's society" she adds.

The needs are great, and Dennison works closely with principals, teachers and school staff who know which children require help.

Donations for the Stock the Lockers campaign are taken at the two Staples stores in Nanaimo, Coastal Community Credit Union branches, Ladysmith Credit Union and the two Country Grocer stores. Contributions can also be made on-line through the foundation's website: www.NLSF.ca.

Tax receipts will be issued by mail for donations over \$20.

For more information, please contact Dennison at 250-753-4074.

About Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation

Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation is a community-based, registered charitable organization that raises money and awareness to help vulnerable students in School District 68, which historically has a high child poverty rate. While the original purpose was to raise funds for scholarships and bursaries, the foundation's mission has expanded over the years to helping provide meals, school supplies, and other needs of students affected by financial hardship in their homes.

In addition to responding to urgent needs of students, the Schools Foundation supports other programs. The 'elementary music initiative' provides funds to buy instruments and introduce children to the joy of making music in schools where budgets are tight. High school graduates have access to scholarships and bursaries to help with the high cost of post-secondary education. An estate bequest has provided funds for special projects that focus on student leadership, community development, and social responsibility.

For more information

Crystal Dennison
Executive Director
Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation
250.753.4074

Marianne van Toor
Communications Officer
Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation
m-van-toor@shaw.ca
250.753.2669 | 250.751.9911

On local Poverty Issues:

Dr. Paul Hasselback
Medical Health Officer for Central Island Region
Island Health
c/o IH Media Relations: 250.739.6303