



News FOR YOU

H O U S I N G U P D A T E

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Green Collar Corps Eco-Institute



Nine tenants from the Culloden Court and Brant Villa sites in Vancouver have been attending an after-school eco-institute program called Green Collar Corps since fall 2010. The youth, aged 12 to 16, meet every two weeks with two facilitators to learn about a wide variety of sustainability issues from waste reduction and recycling to climate change and strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The program leaders also organize community outreach activities and field trips.

Brant Villa and Culloden Court youth on a field trip to the Grouse Mountain wind turbine.

"It's a really cool workshop," said 16-year-old Culloden Court resident Miranda Rutty about the eco-institute. "I've learned about recycling numbers on plastics and I definitely recycle more now. I'm also doing more awareness building with my family and friends. If they go to throw out a newspaper or a juice box, I mention that those are recyclable."

"It's been a great opportunity to learn more about the environment and contribute to the community," added 15-year-old Brittney Appleby who lives at Brant Villa. "Our complex now has a composting program and that's really reduced the amount of garbage we have. I'm thinking a lot more about what I buy and where it comes from and how to make changes in my life to be more sustainable."

The eco-institute will soon transform into the Sustainable Summer Eco-Internship, with the youth receiving paid work experience. The participants will organize environmental education activities for children and adults at their sites.

Energy tip: Sun's up; lights out!

With the longest day of the year approaching, many of us are still in the habit of turning on, and sometimes leaving on, our lights. Leaving lights on when they're not needed is a waste of electricity and contributes to higher hydro bills and climate change. Many of us have energy saving light bulbs now, but these can still use a lot of energy if they are left on all of the time. This summer, try using the natural light coming in through your windows instead. Natural light creates a sense of well being and will make your space feel larger.

Energy conservation: We have the power!

Reducing our carbon footprint is a priority for BC Housing. We have created a Housing Sustainability Plan which outlines the ways in which we are working to become more environmentally friendly. We are making changes at many of our buildings: installing energy-efficient windows and lighting;

replacing old boilers; upgrading hot water heating systems.

You have the power to use these energy-saving measures to save money and help our planet. To encourage environmentally sustainable habits, BC Housing has begun two projects: one aimed at youth; and another for adults and families. The Green

Collar Corps Eco-Institute is running at Culloden Court and Brant Villa. An adult and family program is being fine-tuned at Hall Tower 2 and Grandview Terrace. BC Housing will evaluate both programs in the fall with the aim to develop tools and resources that can be shared with other sites.

Adults and families committing to change

Tenants at Hall Tower 2 in Burnaby and Grandview Terrace in Vancouver are working with facilitators to reduce their energy consumption. Strategies are being developed with tenants taking on leadership roles.

A number of fun activities have already taken place and more are in the works including nature walks. A friendly competition is underway at Hall Tower 2 to see how many tenants on each floor will commit to sustainable behaviours such as closing windows to conserve energy and taking shorter showers.

Pro-D day program for Victoria youth

School professional days have been a lot more fun lately for young BC Housing tenants in Victoria's Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre catchment area. Twenty-five school-age children from Evergreen Terrace, Menzies, Bay and Chambers, and Scotia Green are participating in the program which includes a swim, a movie, and a pizza lunch.



A day-camp program on school professional days includes a swim at Victoria's Crystal Pool.



Food, glorious food!

Community kitchens on Vancouver Island



Tenant Maggy Reynolds in the Battin Fielding community kitchen.

Tenants are cooking up a storm at the Battin Fielding and Hampton House sites in Victoria. Weekly community kitchen groups were started at both sites in June 2010. The programs bring tenants together to learn new cooking skills.

Tenant Maggy Reynolds has been participating in the Battin Fielding program since it began. "I joined for the opportunity to become more involved with my community and to learn new recipes," she said. "I was raised on meat and potatoes and I've really learned a lot about healthier choices."

Maggy has since helped set up a composter at her site and is also involved in growing herbs for the community kitchen's use. Battin Fielding's community kitchen group now organizes a monthly stone soup for the whole building, while Hampton House's group cooks a tenant dinner about every two months. Community kitchen participants were also offered the opportunity to receive training in the safe handling of food, with nine tenants successfully completing Level 1 of the FOODSAFE program.

"We've seen big changes over the past year," said Allison Power, a food security nutritionist who coordinates both programs. "People are stepping out of their comfort zones and trying new foods and recipes. Others are overcoming fears and aren't afraid to make mistakes. While preparing food, tenants casually share thoughts, opinions and feelings about everyday challenges. They're making stronger connections with their community and lending a hand to each other outside of their community kitchen groups."

Food co-ops

There are food co-operatives in many parts of B.C., from Metro Vancouver to the Kootenays. Their purpose is to provide high quality, healthy foods at an affordable price. Search on the web or visit www.nowbc.ca for a list of food co-ops in the Vancouver area.

Food programs in south Vancouver



Brant Villa tenants Norma Appleby (left) and Barbara Reid at the Brant Villa Pocket Market.

What started last August as a once a month fruit and veggie market at Brant Villa has recently blossomed into a mobile program that makes monthly visits to Brant Villa, Orchard Park and Culloden Court. The programs ensure tenants have access to healthy, local foods at the lowest prices possible.

"The market always has good quality food and I like supporting local farmers," said Brant Villa tenant Norma Appleby, who is a regular on-site market user. "There's the convenience of it being close by and I like getting out and talking with my neighbours."

The mobile program uses South Vancouver Neighbourhood House's bus to transport fruits and vegetables to participating sites. The food day at Orchard Park is enhanced with a tasting kitchen where a dish is prepared using ingredients available from the mobile program. Tenants can try the dish and then, if they like it, make it themselves.

Intergenerational gardening programs are also being held at Orchard Park, Culloden Court and Champlain Place. Here older tenants are working with younger ones to share their expertise and guide them in how to grow their own food. Tenants can also take part in workshops on such topics as making your own salad dressings and canning.

People, Plants and Homes updates

Gardening is one of the most relaxing outdoor activities there is. There's nothing like digging in a bit of dirt to take your mind off your troubles.

The People, Plants and Homes program supports tenants who want to grow their own veggies as well as bring some beauty into their life with home-grown flowers. There are now new gardens at Edge Place in Victoria and at Maclean

Park in Vancouver. Tenants at Battin Fielding on Vancouver Island are enjoying additional gardening beds, while Greenbrook tenants in Surrey who are keen to garden had a great time building new planters for their back yards. Cedar Place tenants in Burnaby have also built and refurbished their own garden and it looks terrific. Way to grow!

Farmers' markets in B.C.

Looking to find fresh, local food but not sure where to find it? There are over 125 farmers' markets throughout B.C. They sell a wide variety of wholesome food including farm-fresh fruits and vegetables. Get turned on to good food; find a farmers' market near you by visiting www.bcfarmersmarket.org

BC Housing sites with community gardens

- Alderhaven
- Battin Fielding
- Bauer Villa
- Cedar Place
- Champlain Place
- Chimo Terrace
- Culloden Court (seniors)
- Doug Drummond Manor (planned for 2011)
- Edge Place
- Garden Villa
- Grandview Terrace
- Grant McNeil Place (planned for 2011)
- Hall Tower I and II
- Hampton House
- Len Shepherd Manor
- Maclean Park
- Mountainview Manor
- Nicholson Tower
- Orchard Park
- Rosewood Towers
- Skeena Terrace (seniors)
- Steeves Manor
- Sunnyside Manor
- Sunset Towers
- Ted Kuhn I and II
- Ross Tower
- Stratford Gardens
- Willows
- Woodcroft

Not on the list? Would you like to start a community garden at your site? Contact your Property Portfolio Manager.





Summer work experience opportunities for students

Metro Vancouver tenants ages 15 to 18 who are looking for their first jobs are encouraged to participate in STEP to Work. This popular job preparedness program runs from July 11 to August 26 and gives teens great opportunities to gain important skills and knowledge. STEP to Work consists of one week of job skills training and six weeks of paid work experience.

The deadline for applications is June 10, 2011. Information and application forms are available from www.bchousing.org/tenants/services/step or call 778-452-6452.

On Vancouver Island, BC Housing is expanding its partnership with the City of Victoria's STEP Up Leadership Development program. Participants will take a two-week Leaders in Training course after which they will help coordinate activities for children and families who live at selected BC Housing sites.

For more details and to apply for the STEP Up Leadership Development program, contact Vancouver Island Region Community Developer Tricia Irish at 250-978-2918.



Chronic pain self-management program changes lives

For six weeks last fall a group of tenants who live at Laurelynn Court in Burnaby gathered to participate in a chronic pain self-management program. The program, which is coordinated by the University of Victoria's Centre on Aging, teaches participants techniques to deal with problems often experienced by those who suffer from chronic pain including frustration, fatigue, and isolation.

Laurelynn Court tenants with program leaders.

"The exercises and discussion increased my confidence and awareness," said one participant, who has chronic neck and back pain. "I learned that I mustn't give up. Before the program, I often felt lost and like I couldn't improve. What I've learned will make a big difference in my day-to-day living."

"The program was a gift of encouragement and a real eye opener," said another tenant. "It taught me that I mustn't curl up in a ball but instead get busy and manage things. I've learned about exercise, healthy eating, and how to use my mind."

The program is offered free of charge to groups across the province; two of the Laurelynn Court tenants had heard of the program and were interested in it, so their community developer contacted the Centre on Aging and worked to set up sessions at their location.

If you would like to arrange for the program to be given at your location, please contact your local community developer (see back page for contact information).

Free money for education savings



The federal government's Smart Saver program contributes \$500 for a Canada Learning Bond for any child born since January 1, 2004 who is part of a low-income family. The program adds another \$100 per year to a maximum of \$2,000. It also matches any extra family contributions by as much as 40 per cent. The only condition is the money must be spent on post-secondary education. For more information: www.smartsaver.org

Stratford Gardens celebrates the completion of renovations



Extensive renovations and energy retrofits have extended the life of Stratford Gardens by at least 30 years.

BC Housing buildings around the province are undergoing much needed improvements thanks to funding from the Housing Renovation Partnership. The first site to celebrate renovations wrapping up was Stratford Gardens.

The Burnaby complex was built in 1972 and required major work. Doors and windows leaked and

provided little to no sound barrier, and much of the old cedar siding was deteriorating. Tenants now have new curtains to provide more privacy, and extensive landscaping including cutting back on overgrown hedges around the site's perimeter has reduced security concerns. Three of the six buildings received new roofs including

the recreation centre; building foundations were waterproofed; perimeter drainage around each building was replaced; and new patio areas were constructed. Onsite energy-efficient retrofits included low-flow toilets and bathroom fixtures, aerators, and new lighting.



Important Dates to Remember

- ▶ STEP to Work application deadline – June 10, 2011
- ▶ Fraser Region Adult and Seniors Buildings' Garden Party – August 18; Floral Hall, VanDusen Botanical Garden, Vancouver
- ▶ Vancouver Coastal Region Adult and Seniors Buildings' Garden Party – August 19; Floral Hall, VanDusen Botanical Garden, Vancouver
- ▶ Victoria Garden Party – August 25; Cadboro Dining Hall, University of Victoria
- ▶ Greater Vancouver Families Fall Fair, September 10; location to be announced.
- ▶ Applications for Special Event Funding for Tenant Activity Grants: available throughout the year. Contact your building manager or site representative for more information about any of these programs.

PEDAL free bike program

PEDAL offers free refurbished bikes to people in Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, and North Vancouver who wouldn't otherwise have an opportunity to own one. To find out if you qualify visit <http://pedalpower.org/free-bike-program>

Bicycling safety tips

Cycling is a great way to get around and get fit. But there are a few important safety tips to follow.

- Wear a helmet.
- Obey traffic rules.
- Ride near the right-hand edge of the road.
- Use hand signals for turning and stopping.
- Look out for cars at intersections, driveways and parking places.
- Give pedestrians the right-of-way.
- Always ride carefully.

Bike routes in your neighbourhood

Looking for a bike route or trails to ride on in your community? Visit www.hellobc.com and enter "bike routes" in the Search function to find some near you.

A new playground for Stamps Place

Younger tenants at Stamps Place are enjoying the new playground equipment recently installed at their site. Playgrounds allow children to develop physical skills while also encouraging social interaction. The new equipment at Stamps Place replaces a playground removed to make way for the coming Sport Court and also updates an older playground with a secure and attractive place to play.



The new playground at Stamps Place.

Concerns with a neighbour?

As temperatures increase so can conflicts with neighbours. Causes for neighbour disputes include concerns over pets, children, loud music, guests, smoking, car parking and garbage in yards, among others.

What can you do if a problem arises?

- Remain calm.
- Listen openly.
- Learn more about the complaint and situation to better understand why your neighbour is upset. For example, if your neighbour is complaining about noise late at night it might be good to learn if they start their day early or have young children who need to be in bed early.
- Ask yourself how important is your concern? Is it something minor that is worth overlooking, or would simply airing your concern be enough to address the issue.
- Ask yourself why this issue is important so you can better understand what you need for the situation to be resolved.
- If you chose to speak to your neighbour bring up your concern as respectfully as possible.
- Focus on simple, common sense solutions.
- Once a resolution has been agreed upon, focus on how you will treat each other in the future rather than what has happened in the past.

It's important to remember that finding a resolution with your neighbour is most often much better than any alternative solutions or solutions imposed by a third party as it allows the opportunity for both parties to receive what they want.

BC Housing Contact Information

News For You is published twice a year by BC Housing for the tenants of its public housing developments.

We welcome your feedback and inquiries.

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