



Friday, April 5, 2019

Media Release: Connecting Communities

Nanaimo Foodshare, Growing Opportunities and Leadership Vancouver Island (LVI) have partnered with Westwood Farm to support community agriculture activities and restoration of the farm and we are inviting the community to participate as volunteers with this great farming project.

The primary focus of the LVI program is to develop leadership skills, i.e. learn to lead self, others and community.* Part of the program is dedicated to community projects. Our team, **Connecting Communities**, has chosen a project titled Bridging the Gap, and we need our community's support to achieve our goals. The team's key project focus is to build a fenced garden area on the Westwood Farm property. The commitment includes securing funding, resources and supplies to accomplish this.

Nanaimo Foodshare has partnered with the land owner to support community agriculture activities and restoration of the farm. The historic Westwood Farm originally over 1,000 acres in size was purchased by Joseph Westwood in 1864. It is Nanaimo's oldest farm. It is close to Westwood and Cathers Lake and can be seen from the highway just beyond the SPCA. Westwood Lake is named after the family, and Cathers Lake is named after Earle Cathers Westwood, a former Nanaimo Mayor and MLA who once owned the farm. It has been an award-winning dairy farm in the past, and is now 48 acres in size.

The restoration of the farm will be done in stages. The first section to be farmed and fenced for deer protection is about 1.75 acres in size, and will require about 1,300 ft of 6' fencing and 200 – 8' fence posts.

In addition to the fence, our team committed to connect Nanaimo newcomers through the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS) to Nanaimo Foodshare and the farm, Bridging the Gap and fostering a real sense of community; ultimately **Connecting Communities**. The team is well on its way – a connection has been established between CVIMS and Nanaimo Foodshare; an in-kind donation has been secured from Coastland Wood Industries; and dates are finalized for farm tours, volunteer opportunities and celebrations.

VOLUNTEER Day – Saturday, May 11, 9:30am – 3pm (Everyone welcome)

There will be an opportunity to tour the farm, volunteer, break for lunch, and enjoy the day. Volunteer opportunities include rolling out wire fencing, preparing planting areas, planting and helping organize the farm for other events.

EVENT Day – Saturday, May 25, 9:30am – 3pm (Everyone welcome)

Join us for a special celebration recognizing sponsors, volunteers and community members who have made this project a success! There will be chances to tour the farm, plant seedlings, register to volunteer at upcoming events as well as a variety of other opportunities.

For more information please contact:

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Nanaimo Foodshare

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* LVI helps emerging leaders, their teams and their communities address today's complex challenges while demonstrating the power of collaboration to create long-term positive change. www.leadershipvi.com