

Monday, September 28, 2020

Dear Mayor Windsor and Council Members

I am the Past President of the Colwood Garden Society. I would like to give my support, and to encourage you also to give your support to the Central Saanich Community Gardens Society, and have many reasons to ask you to do so.

The Colwood Garden Society was created in 2014 for the purpose of building a community garden in Colwood. Our Community Garden is now a self-funding group, passionate about growing local food. But we didn't start out as self-funding. Colwood City Council provided us with the space (75' x 50' on City property) to build the gardens and seed money in the form of grant-in-aid to pay for capital costs (fencing, lumber, soil, etc.) Our society also received a grant from Rotary Club. The space donated by city hall is now a fenced in garden space with 47 10' x 4' rental plots, 4 double plots for use by Wishart Elementary School and Dunsmuir Middle School and 2 plots to grow and harvest vegetables for Living Edge, a market-style food bank.

Members of the Colwood Garden Society are volunteers, residents of Westshore, urban farmers, students, homemakers, working moms and dads, singles of all ages, children. Some of us are very affluent, some live well under the poverty line. Many were born in countries other than Canada, and some struggle with learning English. Most of us had never seen each other until we came together in the spring of 2018 to finally dig our first gardens. But we all had a common goal. We wanted to improve our accessibility to healthy, fresh produce, and to share our knowledge and experiences in order to help others with the same desires. We have become a caring community, with new friendships forming even outside of the garden space.

There is a great need for community gardens in the Greater Victoria Area. As our communities become more built up, local healthy food will become scarcer and we will depend more on food delivered from further locales. In these uncertain times, it is more important than ever to be able to help our food security by creating space for more local food to be grown. I ask all of you to support the Central Saanich Community Garden Society. These gardens offer our neighbours with healthy local food, builds friendly communities, supports learning and gives back to those in need through providing extra harvests for those in need.

I am always available to answer any questions you may have about our garden and our experiences with building, running and maintaining our space, and how we now manage on a self-funded basis.

Sincerely

Barbara Sibbald

Past President

Colwood Garden Society

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