



**NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release**

Leadership Victoria's June 10th Graduation Celebration

ORDINARY CITIZENS BECOME EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNITY LEADERS

Victoria, BC, June 4, 2009... Leadership Victoria is proud to announce the graduation of their class of 2009, Wednesday, June 10 at the University of Victoria's, University Club. Twenty-two participants representing government, civic, business and non-profit organizations will celebrate the completion of a nine month, action-study program with Leadership Victoria. Victoria Mayor, Dean Fortin will be on hand to offer his congratulations at the event that will highlight four team-driven Community Action Projects. This event is generously sponsored by the University of Victoria and Thrifty Foods.

This inclusive celebration recognizing the support of volunteer, donors and sponsors is the culmination of months of dedicated time and effort to Leadership Victoria, a program where participants learn from volunteer, subject matter experts and current leaders about team work, collaboration and consensus building. The Community Action Projects are the tangible legacy that these emerging leaders leave behind that contribute to the betterment of the Greater Victoria region. (See next page for full details on the 2008-2009 projects.)

Since its inception in 2000, the program has graduated 179 self and company-identified participants whose legacy has been 32 Community Action Projects, benefiting a multitude of multiple community agencies. Spaces remain for anyone interested in becoming part of Leadership Victoria's class of 2010. Applications and full details may be found at www.leadershipvictoria.ca.

Leadership Victoria is a community based, not-for-profit organization that provides individuals with opportunities to develop and practice a variety of life and leadership skills. Working collaboratively with eminent leaders from all sectors, Leadership Victoria constructs and delivers a challenging, life-enriching program that identifies, motivates and hones the skills of emerging leaders.

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2008 - 2009 Community Action Projects

Team “Laser Beam”

St. Saviour’s Church operates The Rainbow Kitchen, a community kitchen that serves lunches Monday through Friday to an average of 100 area residents per day. On the church property there is a community garden that provides produce for the kitchen. The garden was underutilized but had the potential to supply more crops to the kitchen. Team Laser Beam assisted the Rainbow Kitchen by enhancing its garden capacity in order to serve local, organically grown produce to clients based on a sustainable and community based methodology. They worked with Rainbow Kitchen representatives to collaborate on improvement ideas and further develop the implementation plan.

Team “Witty”

This team commenced construction on a new, permanent open air Nature Classroom at Witty’s Lagoon, which will become the first of its kind in the Capital Regional District. Unlike the other two teaching structures in CRD Regional Parks, (at Francis/King and Beaver Lake) this Nature Classroom will be purpose-built specifically to deliver environmental programs and will enable CRD staff to not only continue their existing programming but to extend their programs into the winter months. It is expected the Nature Classroom will serve as a staging area for the more than 80,000 community residents who visit Witty’s Lagoon each year, 9,500 of whom attend CRD Regional Parks guided walks and events. As the surrounding community grows, the construction of a permanent Nature Classroom provides a long lasting legacy for future park visitors to enjoy.

Team “Synergy”

In partnership with Pearkes Recreation Centre and Saanich Community Services this team worked to bridge the gap between generations through an Intergenerational Coffee House event, “*Eight 2 Eighty*”. The project involved recruiting youth and seniors to participate in the show. This free event was held on April 17, 2009 at the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre and included a fashion show, comedy, a live DJ and musical performances. The event created a template for future events that could blend generations in a community setting.

Team “Bonsai”

The focus of this project was child and youth advocacy. In particular, children and youth in the foster care system, many who are or will become at-risk Youth. The team worked to develop a structure and foundation for a child advocacy program. An intended “big picture” outcome is to implement a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program similar to the one running in the United States or to identify and implement a similar model that addresses the lack of a voice for the children of this province within the legal system. A successful community forum, was held on May 28, 2009 where relevant stakeholders, contributing professionals, organizations and other parties interested in the legal rights of children met to share ideas and foster collaboration around developing new opportunities for the voices of children and youth to be better represented within British Columbia’s legal system.