

# Cairnsmore Community Newsletter

March/April 2009

## NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Thanya Al-Saadoon • Kathy Coster  
• Larry Mattin • Kerry McIntyre •  
Jessica McPherson • Lorna  
McPherson • Veronica Scott •  
Kathy Williams

Safer Futures is a three-year federally funded project which officially draws to a close on March 31st. Over the years, we have enjoyed working with residents and members of the Cairnsmore Neighbourhood Working Group to improve neighbourhood safety – and to establish closer working relationships with community agencies, institutions and local government. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved.

Unfortunately, this will be the last issue of the newsletter to be published by Safer Futures. Community feedback both from residents and agencies shows the newsletter has been well received. It serves an important purpose. If you would like to become involved in keeping the newsletter going, please contact us.

Pam Alcorn  
Supervisor, Safer Futures

## CAIRNSMORE RESIDENT MAKES IT HER BUSINESS TO SUPPORT MARGINALIZED WOMEN

Cairnsmore resident, small business owner and community volunteer, Patti Delisle, has caught the attention of Readers Digest. Her picture and that of Cowichan resident Edna Thomas appeared in the magazine recently. Through her Eco Store and a new, grassroots organization called The South Island Womyn's Development Centre, Patti is helping marginalized women become more confident and self sufficient.

She is doing this by selling hemp-made products such as wash cloths and pot holders, made by the women. The proceeds are returned to the development Centre to benefit women." If you would like to know more about the South Island Womyn's Development Centre, please call **250-597-3643**.



## TERRIFIC THINGS HAPPING AT CVOLC

Principal Larry Mattin reports that lots of terrific things, along with some "great energy" are happening at the Cowichan Valley Optional Learning Centre (CVOLC). Both enrolment and attendance are up.

In mid-February, students hosted an open house to display their works (see picture above). The colourful framed art-work lined the walls of the grand old school to the delight of students and community residents.

Along with the art program, music and cooking are "taking off", he says. In fact, students of the cooking program hosted a spaghetti dinner following a neighbourhood Safety Walk last month (see article below). Several students also took part in the walk.

## CAIRNSMORE SAFETY WALK DRAWS PLENTY OF WALKERS

On Tuesday, February 24, the Cairnsmore Neighbourhood Working Group, Cowichan Open Learning C0-0p students and staff, and Safer Futures held a Community Safety Walk followed by a community dinner at the school

The objective of the walk was to assess safety issues in the neighbourhood, to document these concerns and to collectively brainstorm solutions. Working together as a group helps us to come up with a collective idea of what we need to do to improve safety, explained Pam Alcorn Safer Futures Supervisor.

About 40 people took part in the walk including the principal and some students from CVOLC, counsellors from the City of Duncan and the City Administrator, a representative from Warmland Cops and the RCMP, Canadian Mental Health (Cowichan Branch), a school board trustee, community residents, and the former owners of Bruce's grocery store.

The group set out at twilight. Some made notes of what they observed while a student from CVOLC captured the event on video. The film is part of a collective group assignment on safety in the area. Pam said they saw lots of garbage and litter, discarded needles and clothing and a tent where a homeless person was living.

Following the walk, the group talked about what they had seen as well as ideas for improving the area. A written report will be distributed soon. "There are no quick fixes for poverty, homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse and an overall lack of support services. Making neighbourhoods stronger depends on many people working together – residents, agencies, local businesses, schools, the police and local government. A connected community is a safe community – it's a collective effort," she said.

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Safer Futures: [www.saferfutures.org](http://www.saferfutures.org)

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The Government of Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre is a partner in this initiative.





**SERENITY HOUSE MOVING FORWARD**

Plans to create Serenity House, a home from young mothers and their babies, is making progress says organizer Lorna McPherson.

Lorna and her daughter, Jessica, are working hard to build the first home of its type in the Cowichan Valley.

Currently they are considering three possible locations. "We have a letter of intent to lease from School District 79 for the property beside Growing Together. We are also looking at an existing group home on Marchmont that is currently up for sale as well as a location in Chemainus," she said.

Lorna explained that the Serenity House board is discussions with a number of agencies and services including Children and Family Development, Lalum'utul'Smun'eem Child and Family Services, the Community Care Facilities Licensing Program, the City of Duncan and the District of North Cowichan.

The New Baptist Church will be donating all of their proceeds from My Brother's Keeper, an annual fundraising event coordinated by Laura Stark. This year the fundraiser will be held on March 28th at the church.

If you would like more information about Serenity House, please contact Lorna at [lm.mcperson@shaw.ca](mailto:lm.mcperson@shaw.ca)

**"OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE CREATING A CIRCLE OF CARING"**



An intercultural community gathering to share our childhood stories, Elders' wisdom and children's wishes.

**Help create a Cowichan Valley Child Rights Declaration**

- Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre
- March 28, 2009
- 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
- Lunch is provided
- Childcare available – please call to register 250-748-2133

Everyone is welcome to bring something from their childhood for show and tell.



**FAMOUS JAZZ SINGERS TO SING ABOUT SLAVERY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Diana Braithwaite and Chris Whitley are two of Canada's premier jazz singers – and they are coming to the Cowichan Valley. The Cowichan Intercultural Society is bringing them here for a week of concerts called Sugar and Gold. They will perform in schools and community settings from April 20 to 24th.

During their hour-long performance, Diana and Chris will recount the history of slavery, the Underground Railway, and human rights through music, slides and stories about Diana's own great, great grandparents. Their concerts are suitable for all ages (especially over age nine or so).

"We want to bring this fabulous duo to as many people in our community as possible," says Linda Hill, Youth Projects Coordinator Cowichan Intercultural Society.

If you or your organization would like to book a Sugar and Gold concert please call Linda at 250-748-3112. She will discuss the arrangements and the fee with you. If you would like a review of Diana and Chris's concert check out: [www.torontobluessociety.com/0802johnspicks.htm](http://www.torontobluessociety.com/0802johnspicks.htm)



**WHAT IS SAFER FUTURES?**

Safer Futures is a program of Cowichan Women Against Violence Society (a non-profit organization) that works with people in the Cowichan Valley to create neighbourhoods that are safe, healthy, and offer equal opportunities for a good life. A safe and healthy community is one that works to connect people, community organizations, business, and local government to narrow the gaps between advantage and disadvantage, and to ensure healthier, stronger, and more cohesive communities.

**LOTS HAPPENING AT ST. ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Last spring, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church hired a co-ordinator and started a new venture – garden plots for 'green thumbs' who yearned to get their fingers in the soil, but were no longer able to garden at home for one reason or another.

The project proved so successful that the Church has added another 16 beds for a total of 30 beds. "If anyone is interested in having a garden bed, we are taking names for a waiting list," said Jan McIntyre, st. Andrews Parish Nurse. "The names should help us know if we should try to establish more beds." Just drop into the church office and leave your name with Jacquie or call 250-746-7413

"If you are walking through our neighbourhood, take a few minutes to come and see the gardens. You may also meet some great gardeners," she said.

In other church news, the GriefShare Program starts on March 25, 1 – 3 p.m. This is a 13-week support group for those who have experienced the death of someone they loved. "To register please call the office 250-746-7413

Jacob's Well, the internet coffeeshop is open from Monday to Friday. "We serve Fair Trade Coffee. Drop by and have a great cup of coffee for a buck. If it's your first visit, it's free."

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