

For immediate release

25 November 2019

## **Denman Island Receives Childcare Space Funding**

**Comox Valley, B.C.** – Comox Valley Schools has received close to \$1 million in funding from the Government of British Columbia to create much-needed licensed childcare spaces on Denman Island.

As part of the new provincial program Childcare BC New Spaces Fund, the province is helping fund the creation of 22,000 licensed childcare spaces throughout the province.

Through the program, the District received a funding grant of \$992,520 to construct a stand-alone dedicated childcare facility on the Denman Island Community School site.

For parents, guardians and caregivers on Denman Island, the funding announcement comes with huge gratitude and relief. Currently, the community faces acute shortage of licensed childcare as a result of rapid growth experienced in recent years.

Funding will allow for the creation of 20 additional childcare spaces for children ages 12 months to 5 years and alleviate the increasing demand on the Denman Island Preschool Society (Blackberry Lane Children’s Centre), the island’s only official childcare centre operating out of the Community Hall.

“The exponential and continuous growth has created a profound need for a new childcare centre, one that would allow the community to appropriately accommodate more children and attend to the diversified needs of a growing young family population,” shared Tom Demeo, Superintendent of Schools. “The creation of a new childcare facility will establish a legacy of support for these young families. Partnering with Blackberry Lane and the community to provide the necessary infrastructure on our school grounds means the interest and well-being of the community will flourish.”

Building designs for the care facility have already been underway. Comox Valley Schools aims to have the facility available for pre-school children as early as the summer of 2020.

Blackberry Lane Children’s Centre has been providing childcare for over 30 years. Originally developed as a co-operative childcare centre, Blackberry Lane has been through many iterations over the years from its origins as a cooperative space and a Montessori Preschool. In its current format, Blackberry Lane is a fully licensed and staffed childcare facility for children between the ages of 2 and 5 years old.

The school district has worked closely with the Blackberry Lane throughout the application process for new funds to meet the childcare needs of our growing community of young families and will continue the strong partnership throughout the build.

“We are so excited to be partnering with Comox Valley Schools to bring these much-needed new childcare spaces to our island community. This new childcare facility will not only allow us to offer more care, but this purpose-built facility with separate spaces for young children, a nap room and a fenced yard will also improve working conditions for our dedicated staff team,” shared Lindsay McGinn, Blackberry Lane director. “We so look forward to this new chapter in the long history of the Denman Island Preschool Society and want to thank past staff, volunteers and our loving community for all their support.”

-End-

For more information about the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund visit  
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019CFD0098-002154>

**Media Contact**

Mary Lee  
Manager of Communications  
Comox Valley Schools (School District 71)  
[mary.lee@sd71.bc.ca](mailto:mary.lee@sd71.bc.ca)  
(250) 334-5500