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For immediate release

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## **Repurposing School Furniture to Benefit the Community**

**Comox Valley, B.C.** – Comox Valley Schools is focused on making a positive impact on the lives of children through an education system that is innovative, inquisitive and inclusive. The school district is also driven to make a positive impact on the community it serves.

One such way the District is making a difference is in repurposing used equipment. This year, a large stock of classroom furniture and gently used custodial supplies were donated to the Wachiay Friendship Centre to help outfit their expansion including its daycare centre, Clever Raven Head Start. Waldorf School has also been a recipient of furnishings that are no longer required or of use in schools.

The District has been donating gently used classroom furniture and items for a number of years. When René Lanoix, Manager of Custodial Services, joined the school district in 2018 he made a concerted effort to reach further into the community to find more organizations in need of the surplus items.

“We have lots of furniture that is dated but we were having a hard time finding groups that can use this kind of furniture,” explained Lanoix. “It’s fairly specialized.”

The school district has always donated furnishings in the past. Lanoix determined other schools in the Valley such as Waldorf might also benefit with furniture designed for a classroom setting, so he reached out to see if there was any interest. Word spread in the community and soon Lanoix was contacted by Wachiay, Waldorf and Wee Care Early Childhood Centre.

“The [Wachiay] daycare are expanding and would need more furniture, so they were quite interested. Between them, the Friendship Centre and Waldorf they received a lot of desks and chairs and equipment,” said Lanoix.

Lanoix explained that items that are not fit for donating are disposed of in the most environmentally friendly ways possible. Wood and metal furnishings are dismantled and disposed of appropriately at local recycling depots.

“It’s a continuous cycle,” shared Lanoix. “We keep getting items on a weekly basis from all the schools that are getting rid of furniture. There’s more coming in then there is space for.

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In total, more than 150 chairs as well as two truckloads of items were delivered to the three organizations who partnered in the rent of the truck to take delivery of donated items from the school district. Lanoix and his staff helped gather the furnishings and remove them from storage.

“We are grateful for their generous donation of tables, chairs, book-shelves, bulletin boards, and other various items,” expressed Barbara Schneider, Clever Raven staff member. “This was extremely beneficial to us and the timing coincided perfectly with the building of our new daycare at the Wachiay Friendship Center. We are able to re-purpose these items in our centre.”

In the [2019 – 2023 Strategic Plan](#), the Board of Education identified sustainable practice as a key priority. Repurposing and recycling is one part. Connecting with organizations and non-profit associations in need of surplus used furniture and equipment is helping the District meet the goal of lowering its footprint while assisting with the needs of the community.

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Image Credit: Clever Raven Daycare