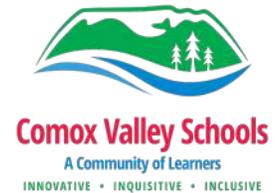


Comox Valley Schools (SD71)
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For immediate release

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Everybody Deserves A Smile (EDAS) returns and donations needed

COMOX VALLEY, B.C. – Everyone Deserves A Smile (EDAS) marks its 20th anniversary this year, having enriched the lives of many through its compassionate outreach. Active for 12 years in Comox Valley Schools, EDAS has become a cornerstone of giving back, with an astounding 22 schools participating this season.

This year, the initiative proudly expands its reach beyond the local community, touching lives in Campbell River, Port Alberni, Nanaimo, qathet, and Red Deer school districts. Throughout its impactful journey, over 26,000 care packages have been distributed to those in need or experiencing homelessness, a testament to the program's unwavering commitment to kindness and community support.

At the heart of EDAS's success is the dedicated team from Ecole Puntledge Park, spearheaded by Chantal Stefan, Emma Makinson, and the Puntledge teaching team. Their tireless efforts and leadership have been pivotal in orchestrating the program's activities and inspiring participation across the districts.

"After 20 years of living each season, I continue to be so proud of this epic collaboration of everyone working so hard to bring this project's heart and magical giving come to life. With everyone's demanding schedules, I find it so inspiring and heartwarming to witness our school district continue to passionately unite to empower students as change-makers" said Chantal Stefan, EDAS Team leader and teacher at Ecole Puntledge Park Elementary. "In turn our students are the ones to share their learning and motivate the broader community to do the same. What a gift!"

The spirit of community is evident as students and staff from various schools collaborate in preparing and distributing care packages. This year, the preparation days are scheduled for December 7th and 8th.

The Everybody Deserves a Smile project shines holiday light into the lives of individuals experiencing terrible darkness, but above all it impresses upon students - more powerfully than almost any other experience in their school years - the importance of the choices they make today in setting a course for their futures.

However, to ensure the success of this year's program, EDAS urgently requires donations by December 5th.

- For 900 Men/Non-Binary individuals: Woolen socks, XL-sized toques, and scarves.
- For 500 Women: Woolen socks, medium-sized toques, and scarves.

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The generosity of our community can make a significant difference in the lives of many. We encourage everyone to contribute to this noble cause and help continue the legacy of Everyone Deserves A Smile.

-END-

Media Contact

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Backgrounder

Below are the designated locations where physical donations can be dropped off:

- Ecole Puntledge Elementary (primary drop-off location)
- Comox Community Centre
- Vancouver Island Regional Libraries in Comox, Courtenay, and Cumberland
- Starbucks, Near Boston Pizza Location:
- Uptown Yarns
- Coastal Community Credit Union, Near Superstore
- Evergreen Club in the Florence Filberg Centre
- RE/MAX Realty, Courtenay
- Studio IPF: Inner Pursuit Fitness

For those who prefer financial contributions, EDAS offers the following methods:

- **E-Transfer:** Donations can be sent directly via e-transfer to Donate2ComoxValley@edas.ca. This method provides a quick and secure way to contribute financially.
- **Cheques:** Cheques made out to 'EDAS' or 'Everybody Deserves A Smile' are also accepted. This traditional method of donation is suitable for those who prefer to contribute by cheque.