



Comox Valley Schools

School District No. 71

Communications

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Inclusive Sports Festival highlights power of community and inclusion

Comox Valley, B.C. – The third annual Comox Valley Schools Inclusive Sports Festival brought students, staff, volunteers and community members together for a day of connection, movement and joy under sunny skies.

This year's festival welcomed 135 students in Grades 3 to 7, making it the largest event yet. Families, parents and guardians also played a major role throughout the day, volunteering at stations, cheering students on and helping create a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Held with support from dozens of volunteers, local businesses and community organizations, the festival created opportunities for students of all abilities to take part in inclusive and adaptive activities in a celebratory environment.

Students participated in sprint races, wheelchair races and eight activity stations featuring beach volleyball, soccer challenges, obstacle courses, inclusive boccia, dancing, bubble stations and other activities designed to encourage participation, teamwork and belonging.

"The Inclusive Sports Festival continues to be one of the most joyful and inspiring events of the school year," said Joe Heslip. "It is a powerful example of what can happen when schools, families, volunteers and community partners come together to create spaces where every student feels included, celebrated and supported."

Comox Valley Schools is extending heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make the event possible. The festival relied on the support, leadership and time of many individuals and organizations whose contributions were instrumental to the day's success.

Special recognition is extended to Alicia and the team from Supported Children's Development, along with Wendy from Project Inclusion, for leading the obstacle course station. Delaura and the team from Darryl Robbins & Company helped run volleyball activities, while Robyn from PacificSport Nanaimo supported wheelchair activities. Members of the Courtenay Fire Department once again brought enthusiasm and encouragement to the festival.

Additional thanks go to Dwayne and Pauline from Indigenous Sport and Recreation Council (ISPARC) for supporting physical literacy activities and operating the hydration station, Andrea from OneAbility Games for sponsoring participant ribbons and leading a boccia station, and SetBC from Vancouver for facilitating a launching station that provided students with another exciting and inclusive activity opportunity.

The district is also recognizing the many volunteers who gave their time and energy to support the event, including former staff members, teachers, principals, student volunteers, parents and guardians, educational assistants, all of whom helped create a welcoming and successful experience for everyone involved.

Festival founder and co-organizer Mat Zadvorny was recognized for his continued leadership and commitment to creating inclusive opportunities for students across the Comox Valley. Co-organizer Jina Taylor helped bring OneAbility Games, ISPARC and SetBC to the festival, while co-organizer Amanda Lange guided her G.P. Vanier Community Events and Planning Class in supporting activities and helping ensure the success of the day.

A sincere thank you is also being extended to the many community sponsors and partners whose support helped make the day possible, including Shoreline Orthodontics, Coastal Community Credit Union, The Laughy Family, Crown Isle Resort & Golf Community, Robbins & Company, Chinook Forest Products, Mainroad, McDonald's, The Butcher's Block, OneAbility Games, RE/MAX Ocean Pacific Realty, ISPARC and many others who contributed to the success of the festival.

The festival continues to grow each year and remains an important celebration of inclusion, accessibility, teamwork and community within Comox Valley Schools.

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See pictures from the day here: [Inclusive Sports Festival](#)