

June 1, 2018

Access Awareness Day, a reminder that community life includes everyone

Access Awareness Day in BC is June 2 this year, and a time to recognize the importance of working together to ensure that everyone is included in community life.

"It's important to remember that an inclusive community is a stronger, healthier community, one where all citizens are able to share their talents, experiences and abilities," says city manager Deborah Sargent. *"Council praises the cooperative efforts of the Campbell River Access Awareness group in working with City staff to keep us moving forward with local accessibility projects that help keep everyone involved in community life."*

One stand-out project involves mats that provide more accessible beach access.

"I just would like to thank the City of Campbell River for installing this designated area for persons with a physical mobility to allow access to the beach at Ken Forde. Each day, this ramp is highly used for not only persons with a physical challenge, but anyone accessing the beach," says local resident and Access Awareness group member Ron Nicolaye. *"We had a truly uplifting experience with the entire family for a picnic and fire evening and sure was great to be part of the group as one. From my experience, I know if there were a few more of these designated areas, it most certainly would benefit our community. We understand the City is willing to make necessary changes for a better, more barrier-free Campbell River. Thank you City of CR for understanding the needs for all."*

"Campbell River's Access Awareness group has been active over a number of years to improve access in all City parks, facilities, streets and trails," adds recreation and culture programmer Judy Ridgway. *"The City is quick to respond to the group's recommendations and suggestions, positioning Campbell River well compared with other communities, and continuing to improve based on the education and awareness the group has helped generate."*

More highlights of Campbell River projects that involved the access awareness group:

- Accessible picnic tables at Robert Ostler Park, Dick Murphy Park and at Simms Creek
- Smooth-surface playground at Robert Ostler Park
- Accessible pathway to the washroom at Dick Murphy Park
- Audible traffic signals throughout town
- Consultation with the City during the building of the new Community Centre
- Consultation with Island Health on the design plans for the new Campbell River Hospital
- Accessibility audit of City parks and trails
- Design considerations for accessible parks and trails booklet
- Numerous recommendations for curb cuts, wider designated parking stalls, accessible places to play and shop around town, sidewalk improvements.

To further encourage accessibility, this year, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction has made \$500 in funding available to municipalities and community-based disability groups holding local accessibility events. Find more information, including accessibility initiatives and practises from across the province at: www.sparc.bc.ca.

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