

Community Living Month kicks off



Bailey Lytle and Kathy Davis take a break from all the activities at the One Day Together event.

COMMUNITIES ACROSS BRITISH Columbia are celebrating Community Living Month this October. An annual event, Community Living Month acknowledges the hard work of individuals, families and community members to create inclusive communities and opportunities for all British Columbians with developmental disabilities. In recognition of its importance, the communities of Vancouver, Burnaby, Victoria, Prince George, Kelowna and the Province of British Columbia have officially proclaimed October Community Living Month.

In Victoria, Community Living Month celebrations began a few days early with the One Day Together event on September 27. Organized by Garth Homer Society, Kardel, Community Living Victoria, Becon Support Services and CLBC, the event was a celebration of diversity, community and humanity.

Held at the outdoor area at Juan De Fuca Recreation Centre, the event featured a baseball tournament, face painting, a dunk tank, a three point basketball competition, a “Self-Advocates for a Brighter Future” tent, and a BBQ. Heather, one of the self-advocates featured in CLBC’s “Start with Hi” initiative was on hand to throw out the first pitch at the baseball tournament.

Heather enjoys being part of the Start with Hi initiative

“We wanted to make sure it wasn’t just a community living event but an event for the whole community,” says Kristen Kay of Becon Support Services.

Organizers promoted the event not only with local agencies, but also through malls, libraries and recreation centres. Self-Advocates were involved in every stage of planning and pulling off the event which attracted around 400 people of all ages from the community.

David Calder, an Olympic silver medalist in rowing at the 2008 Beijing Summer Games, was also on hand. He got up and talked to everyone attending about the importance of community, and how the support of his community was so important to reaching his athletic goals. David also presented the prizes to the winners of the afternoon’s baseball tournament. The event wrapped up in the early evening with dancing and music provided by the band “Trainwreck.”

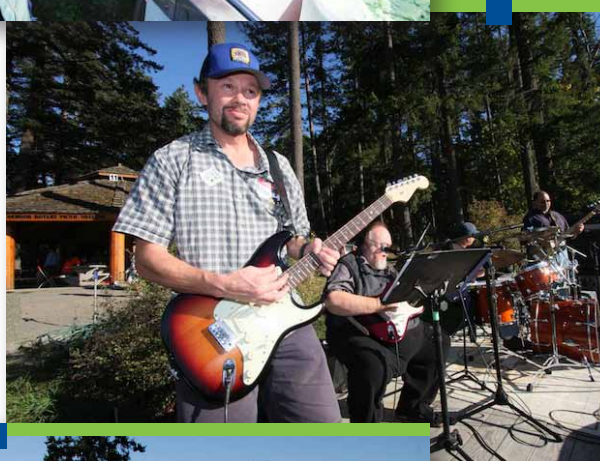
“I’ve heard back from several people who attended and they all felt it was a fabulous day and a wonderful event,” says Kristen. ■





Helen Rutherford, Edmond Choy and Rhonda Connell serve ice cream at the One Day Together event.

“Trainwreck” puts on a lively performance to end the festivities.



Olympic silver medalist David Calder talks about the importance of belonging to a supportive community.

“The inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community enables all citizens to contribute their gifts, talents and abilities and to procure their rightful place at home, at school, at work and in community.

The Provincial Government wishes to acknowledge the role that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, friends and supporters play in the development of inclusive communities for all citizens.”

From the official Community Living Month Proclamation from the Province of British Columbia