GABRIOLA HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION

❄️ December, 2022

Welcome to our first newsletter!

An informed island is a healthy island.

Photo by Don Butt

The Gabriola Health Care Foundation respectfully acknowledges and recognizes the Coast Salish Nations on whose territory we live and work. In particular, we acknowledge and recognize Gabriola Island as the unceded territory of Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN). We respect the longstanding relationships that Coast Salish and Hul'qumi'num speaking Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers.

The Gabriola Health Care Foundation exists to provide an attractive and fully functioning community health clinic, and to improve the primary health care services provided to Gabriolans by helping to identify their health care needs, and, to the extent of our ability, to help address those needs.

This newsletter serves to replace a version sent earlier in error.

Greetings from the New President

Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley

As the incoming President of the Gabriola Health Care Foundation, I have some enormous shoes to fill. Chuck Connor has been the Board's President for the past 10 years and was instrumental in planning and building our beautiful Health Care Centre as well as ensuring we had the financial resources and systems in place to sustain the Centre. Both Chuck and Mike Phillips have stepped down after more than a decade of service. Like Chuck, Mike was critical in ensuring the facility and grounds were maintained to a high standard. But both Mike and Chuck have assured me that they are only a phone call away, so it is with that knowledge that I have agreed to take on this job.

This work is a team effort, and we have a wonderful and talented board to do the work. Harvey Graham, who has skillfully managed our finances for 16 years will continue as Treasurer. Nancy Rowan brings a wealth of health systems knowledge and will oversee our efforts to help recruit and retain physicians with support from Diane Cornish. Diane also brings her years of legal experience to oversee our governance processes and policies. Dr. Don Sutherland brings decades of experience in rural and international medicine as well as specializing in epidemiology – this knowledge helps us to understand the health needs of Gabriolans and to support the doctors' efforts to address those needs. This year we are blessed with four new, very talented board members. Marc Herrmann, who has a professional background in project management, will be responsible for facilities management and infrastructure planning as well as ensuring we have the administrative infrastructure to enable organizational continuity. Our Communications, Community Relations and Fundraising Committee includes entrepreneur, Don Elkington, who has successfully raised millions of dollars for arthritis research, Chris Loranger who brings technical writing, marketing, and graphic skills to the Foundation, and Carol Ferguson who you probably know as the Executive Director of the Gabriola Arts Council. Carol's organizational planning, event management and public engagement skills will be important to our outreach efforts.

Our focus for the next year will be on recruitment and retention of doctors and allied health professionals, ensuring regular communication with members and the community at large, ensuring we have the financial resources to achieve our objectives and, of course, maintaining and sustaining our Health Care Centre.

It is no exaggeration to say that our Health Centre is the envy of many communities. As one of the doctors who practised in the clinic said to me: "It is the most beautiful place I have ever worked". With your help, we will keep it that way and make sure our physicians have the support they need to serve our community.

The Clinic Corner

The GHCF values this opportunity to keep you informed about our clinic and our health care team. We will continue to work with the clinic and our health care partners to recruit physicians and expand primary health care services on Gabriola.

The Gabriola Health Care Foundation (GHCF) recruitment and retention committee is hard at work spreading the word with our partners at the clinic and Island Health. We are advertising digitally and in medical journals. We are also engaging our community members to reach out to their friends and family on Facebook and elsewhere to spread the word and encourage doctors and their families to consider relocation to our outstanding clinic and community.

Despite the impact of Covid 19 and the loss of two doctors, we are proud of our clinic's capacity to adapt and serve. Drs. Tracey Thorne, Erin Cusack, and Nurse Practitioner Jennifer Lewis have continued to respond to a relentless demand for services. In the past year the clinic provided over 12,000 appointments to our community. Over 900 of those required urgent / unscheduled visits with approximately 200 involving BC Ambulance Services. Wait times for your primary care practitioner continue to be lengthy so please be patient. As mentioned above, the recruitment and retention committee will continue to fill current vacancies, and to have an ongoing presence in the media to support long-term recruitment efforts.

In the meantime the clinic has welcomed two locums who will be with us until next summer helping to maintain the previously existing level of service. If you are a former patient of Drs Shadmani or Mierzewski do not hesitate to call the clinic for an appointment. You will be well served by Drs. Harry Neilsen and Aoife Green. Also, if you are seeing a specialist have them send your report to the Gabriola Medical Clinic and if a follow up appointment is required, Dr. Neilson or Green will contact you.

The clinic's urgent care and emergency services remain available to any community member in need. Please call 911 if you have an emergency and the paramedics will decide if you can be treated at the clinic or need to be transported to Nanaimo.

There are some things that you can do to support your own care. Keep track of your own medical services and lab results by signing up to Health Gateway online. Also, Life Labs has an online portal for your lab results at Care Compass. If you are unsure if you need your prescription renewed contact your pharmacy before calling the clinic. And, check well in advance so there is sufficient time to make a medical appointment if needed. Also, your immediate needs may be able to be met by calling the nurse line at 811.

The GHCF and the Gabriola Medical Clinic are making every effort to secure enough primary care resources to serve all Gabriolans. This is a challenging and long term process. We are engaging with the Ministry of Health, Island Health and the Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice in meetings with the long term goal of building local capacity. So far we have been successful in securing Islands Health support in adding a mental health nurse and social worker to the health care team. And, the community nurse uses the urgent treatment room to give wound care in a safe and secure environment.

Island Health’s Community Access Centre recommends accessing the following resources if you do not currently have a family doctor.

Tia Health - for an online appointment with a Canadian doctor for prescription, referrals, requisitions, Mental Health and more

Walk In - Virtual care made by British Columbians for British Columbians. Includes prescriptions, medical care, blood tests, doctors note and imaging.

https://www.walkinvirtualclinics.com/- Includes virtual care, prescription, medical review and lab tests, specialist referrals, specialized care and medical notes.

All of the above are free services with a BC health card.

YOU CAN HELP US FIND A DOCTOR!
Visit www.beourdoctor.ca
Please tell all your friends to spread word that Gabriola is looking for family physicians.

Get Involved!

You Can Help us Recruit our Doctors

Have you spread word of our doctor recruitment campaign to your friends and family? It's critically important to us that you do because the vast majority of successful recruits in medicine is through word of mouth.

Please consider drafting a short note to everyone you are willing to tell about our need for doctors. Tell them about how great our island is—our beaches, parks, trails, school and our community members. It's people telling people that will bring doctors to our clinic. And be sure to give this link to everyone you ask for help: https://beourdoctor.ca/

😷 🏠. Help Us House Locum Doctors

Locums are doctors who fill in temporarily when our doctors go on vacation or attend conferences. The Foundation pays for short term locum accommodation. We, therefore, want to involve our community in the challenge of inexpensively housing our locums.

We have one Gabriola resident who offers our locums a suite for a very modest fee. We need more island residents to step up and do the same.

Do you have a suite in your home that you could rent to a visiting medical practitioner at a modest cost? If you do, please let us know. **(contact@ghcf.ca)**

Gabriola resident, Annette Lorek, bequeathes her home to the Foundation.

“The clinic has been a big part of my sense of wellbeing since moving to Gabriola. I’ve received great medical care but its mere existence brought peace of mind to me and my friends as island residents.” So said Annette Lorek when she informed the Foundation of her intent to bequeath her home to us. “I hope other residents of Gabriola follow my example,” she said.

Annette’s generosity and her faith in our Health Centre have given the Foundation board members not only a financial benefit, but a psychological one. Unsolicited, Annette has recognized a critical area of concern of the Foundation, and taken action to address it. Her act helps not just the Health Centre and the doctors who benefit from it, it helps all islanders. Might you consider the Foundation in your will? Please consider making a bequest in your will for the Foundation. And if you do, please let us know

Honouring Chuck Connor and Mike Phillips

Chuck Connor

Outgoing President

Mike Phillips

Outgoing Secretary

Chuck served on the board for 13 years, not only as President of the Foundation for the last 10 years, but as a hands on project manager, labourer, 24/7 on call trouble shooter, and much more. As President, Chuck read all of the government and health authority policy papers, studying them and identifying levers to achieve recognition of the facility's contribution to the health system and enhance services to our community. One of Chuck's major contributions, and at times the bane of his existence, was to assure that the facility was financially stable in both the short and long term. His attention to detail and development of a long term facility maintenance and equipment replacement plan is unsurpassed! Chuck's tireless dedication to the work of the Foundation could not have been achieved without the support of his wife Connie who was also a committed volunteer. She became involved as a labourer and painter in building the Centre. It is with gratitude and appreciation that I wish them well in this next chapter of their lives.

Mike is well known for his volunteer work on grounds maintenance at the health centre, and for his many years as a board member and most recently as the secretary of the Foundation. He has been our incredible and inspirational landscaper, providing all the healthy plants that beautify our facility. As a Foundation board member Mike is a man of few words, but when they come, we all listen. Foundation board members enjoyed his no nonsense approach to getting to the root of a problem and his diligence at cutting through red tape.

“I often stand back and look at the clinic and watch all the activity,” Mike said when speaking of his time with the Foundation.”Knowing that Islanders and visitors make tens of thousands of visits to the facility each year makes it all worthwhile for all of us who have been volunteers or donors (or both). Without the Community Health Centre, Gabriola would be a very different place. I am glad that we succeeded."

Well Mike, no more boring meetings to keep you away from the gardening you so love. Enjoy your free time and thank you!

Encouraging Developments in our Search for New Doctors

- The new optional family physician payment system will be available in February of next year. It is being well received by doctors, and is helping attract family physicians to BC.
- Lu Lazzerato, a member of the Foundations' Recruitment and Retention Committee, has taken on the role of a community navigator. She will introduce physicians and their families to our community, and its services, recreational opportunities, schooling, community events, etc.
- The campaign to recruit doctors has placed ads in medical journals across Canada, revised its *Be Our Doctor* website, and is expanding the committee's work on social media.
- Island Health has come to the assistance of the Foundation's *Be Our Doctor*campaign. They take our campaign brochures to conferences they attend. They promoted Gabriola at a recent Family Medicine Conference in Ontario that resulted in a physician who is interested in doing locums at the Clinic contacting us.
- The Rural and Remote Division of Family Practice recently conducted a survey of locums working in our area. Gabriola received several accolades.

Please Consider Assisting Us

Please consider donating to the Foundation. Whether a one-time or monthly donation, or a bequest, and no matter how big or small, your donation will help us sustain the Health Centre, plan for future needs, and deliver the support programs that our clinic staff and community partners have told us are important to community health. If every member contributed $10 a month, we could cover our recruitment and retention costs, or support community health programs, or increase our building reserve fund. You can donate by visiting our website homepage and clicking on the ‘donation’ link.

PHOTO CREDITS: Photo of the Health Centre courtesy of Don Butt; photo of Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley courtesy Chris Straw; photo of Chuck Connor courtesy of Sue Reid; photo of Mike Phillips courtesy Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley.

Gabriola Health Care Foundation

PO Box 295
Gabriola Island, BC V0R !X0

You received this email because you joined the Gabriola Health Care Foundation—and we're grateful that you did.

Unsubscribe