

Nanaimo Daily News.HARBOUR CITY STAR

Good Deeds: Groups team up to produce Vital Signs report

[Darrell Bellaart](#) / Daily News

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The Nanaimo Foundation, the United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island and the City of Nanaimo are working to produce Nanaimo's first ever Vital Signs report.

Sponsored by Island Savings and supported by Vancouver Island University, this community check-up will identify Nanaimo's strengths and highlight areas in need of attention. The project will "increase our understanding of Nanaimo's issues and trends and what our key priorities should be going forward," said Tim Mawdsley, director of Vital Signs with the Nanaimo Foundation.

An annual check-up is an "essential tool" to identify Nanaimo's most pressing issues, said Randy Bertsch, Island Savings chief operations officer. "It will no doubt guide Island Savings' ongoing investment program in Central Island communities."

Surveys, roundtables, census data and other sources will be mined to produce a reader-friendly report.

"It can track economic and environmental trends, health, learning, safety, and a number of other factors that all contribute to social issues," said John Horn, Social Planner, City of Nanaimo.

It will build on existing data collected by United Way.

"Better data means more informed ways to tackle pressing social issues and to help galvanize community investment," said United Way executive director Signy Madden.

The Vital Signs publication is part of a national initiative launched in 2006 by the Community Foundations of Canada.

This is the first Vital Signs research to be conducted in Nanaimo. The report will play a key role in the Nanaimo Foundation's strategic plan to increase its community development contributions.

Nanaimo's inaugural Vital Signs report will be made public Oct. 7.

Habitat for Humanity Eight volunteers, including folks from RBC, BMO and Coast Realty Group got dirty to help landscape the new Habitat for Humanity duplex at 553 and 555 Prideaux St.

The Habitat for Humanity project means home ownership for low-income earners.

This is the second year Habitat hosted a landscaping blitz for a partner family property.

Numerous companies donated supplies: Keltie Chamberlain Landscape Design, Easy Living Landscaping, Green Thumb Nursery, Sharecost Rentals, Macnutt Enterprises, Evans Turf Farm and Haylock Bros. Paving.

Habitat is now accepting applications for new partner families for a duplex project on Extension Road.

Criteria include annual income of between \$25,000 and \$52,000, inability to secure a mortgage and willingness to

complete 500 hours of volunteer hours. Applications will be accepted until Aug. 1. The build project will start in late summer.

"Often families don't realize they may qualify and we really encourage anyone meeting our criteria to apply," said Teresa Ludvigson, Habitat executive director.

Apply online at www.habitatmvi.org or call 250-758-8078 until Aug. 1.

Telus helps out Telus came to the aid of a summer camp for children with developmental disorders.

Nanaimo Unique Kids Organization is about to start its essential summer day Camp program, always a hurdle for the organization to implement.

NUKO's seven-week summer camp is for Nanaimo youth with such disorders as autism, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

This year for the first time, Telus offered support to ensure children can enjoy their summer to the fullest.

NUKO Summer Day Camp Telus recognized the importance of the program and provided funding.

"It is amazing to see such a large company stepping up to support a community program like NUKO," said Teresa Neilson, NUKO program manager.

"Having Telus recognize the impact and importance of the Summer Day Camp creates a lot of excitement here. It makes a huge difference for us to have that support" NUKO's seven-week summer day camp starts in early July.

Telus Community Action Team's \$1,500 donation will go toward admission fees, staff wages, equipment and other program costs.

For more information on Nanaimo Unique Kids Organization, please contact uniquekidsoffice@shaw.ca or call 250-585-6856.

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