

SONSHINE LUNCH CLUB NEWS

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Average Daily Attendance at the Soup Kitchen

February - 101

March - 108

April - 101



July 2019



The Sonshine Lunch Club Reno Fund:

May 31, 2019 \$20,250.94

As you can see, the Reno Fund is currently short of its projected goal of \$30,000.

This goal was agreed to because of the daily use that the Sonshine Lunch Club makes of the kitchen and washroom area at St. George's United Church. A renovated kitchen is going to improve the working conditions in the kitchen and bring the facility up to Food Safe standards. This reno will definitely be a benefit to the lunch club for many years to come.

Should you wish to contribute to this worthy community project, please see "How to Donate" (on page 3) and remember to mark your cheque "Reno Fund". Thank you for your generosity.

Lunch Club Relocates During Renos

The long awaited reno began Monday, June 3 at St. George's United Church in Courtenay. This includes updating the kitchen and the washroom area; areas that are used every weekday by the Sonshine lunch Club.

This means that the Lunch Club will be relocated for the duration of the renovation. In June the SLC Board scrambled to find a location that would accommodate the soup kitchen for 3 months. Arnold Lamb, a director on the board, came up with the idea of using one of the parks, specifically Simms Park as it has a large covered area and plenty of space. Arnold followed that up with checking if there would be availability. The response was very positive. Mr. Snider, Courtenay Rec Director, said, "The Sonshine club is an important community service in this city and valued by both Council and its citizenship".

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Sonshine Lunch Club Relocates continued from page 1

Arrangements have been made for the Sonshine Lunch Club to use Simms Park on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays from 11:00 – 1:00 for 10 weeks. A grant has been given to cover the cost of the rental of the space and access has been arranged for the use of tables and water tap on the site.

Two of the downtown churches, St. George's and St. John the Divine will serve lunches from the front of their respective churches on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Praise God, our lunch guests will be fed without any interruption. Volunteers are working hard to find ways to prepare bag lunches that have variety and nutrition. Volunteers and guests will be able to enjoy the outdoors in a beautiful setting!

Elvis Presley alive and well at the Sid Williams Theatre.

Steve Elliott, a long time Elvis impersonator, played to an appreciative audience of all ages on April 14th. Steve sang a wide range of the King's hits including "Blue Suede Shoes," "In the Ghetto," and "Love Me Tender" as well as some of Elvis' well known gospel hits.

The event was a fund-raiser for the Sonshine Lunch Club. Through ticket sales, on-site donations and an auction of one of Steve's own art works, over \$3,000 was raised toward operating expenses of the SLC.

The Sonshine Lunch Club serves over 26,000 lunches a year. It costs almost \$2.00 per lunch. Food is purchased or donated. There are no paid staff. All the work is done by volunteers. All funds go directly to the cost of providing lunches in our community.

The Sonshine Lunch Club is grateful to Steve Elliott for his support of our ministry.



July 2019

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How to Donate

Donations to SLC can be made by writing a cheque payable to the Sonshine Lunch Club and dropping off or mailing to:
St. George's United Church, 505-6th Street, Courtenay, B.C. V9N 1M5.

If you are donating to the renovation project, please remember to mark your cheque "Reno Fund". *Thank you.*

Update on the renovation project at St. George's United Church (May 21, 2019)

May 31st was the final lunch served at the SLC prior to the start of the renovation of kitchen, janitor room and 2 washrooms at St. George's United Church. During the period of this renovation, the SLC will continue to provide bag lunches 5 days per week. It was disappointing to hear that another kitchen and serving hall was not found for this period but, God willing, we will have several months of good weather and, after witnessing the hard work and spirit of the SLC volunteers, this arrangement will be a success! June 1st will be a work party made up of St. George's congregation and the Wednesday SLC volunteers to pack up the kitchen contents. Hopefully, the renovation will be completed in 10 weeks. Our Contractor assures us that during the reno, there will be access to the freezers above the kitchen.

Luke Flaming of Flaming Homes is our Contractor. Luke recently moved his family to Courtenay and we welcome them to our community and are happy to have Luke heading up our project. Luke has extensive experience in the fields of renovations and building in Vancouver.

The new kitchen will be brought up to the standards of the Environmental Health and Safety Authority. It will include a dedicated handwashing sink, triple sink for cleaning and sanitizing hand washed pots and utensils and sufficient venting for comfortable air flow. A new, larger capacity and energy efficient hot water tank will ensure sufficient hot water for kitchen needs. After conducting a motion study, the food prep area will be located separate from clean up area which will ensure food safe practices and improve congestion and safety for volunteers.

Thanks to a grant from the Rick Hansen Foundation and the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, men's and women's washrooms located adjacent to the kitchen and serving hall will be extensively renovated to accommodate wheelchair access. Grants from the Comox Valley Community Foundation, Courtenay Rotary Club, The City of Courtenay, The Comox Fire-fighters' Association, First Credit Union, several individuals, the Sonshine Lunch Club, St. George's United Church, CV Regional District, Knights of Columbus and St. Vincent de Paul have been awarded.

On behalf of the Property Committee of St. George's I wish to extend our thanks to the volunteers of the SLC for their input, support and patience during our renovation. Day after day you do an amazing job of blessing our community with your service and we will do our best to ensure that, come September, you return to a kitchen that will be a joy to work in!

By Nancy Milliken, Chair of Property Committee, St. George's United Church

Sonshine Lunch Club 2019 Board of Directors

Kevin Elsasser—President
Margaret McKenzie—Treasurer
Marion Edmondson—Secretary
Clinton Wise—Director
Wendy Irwin—Director

Donna Griffiths—Director
Teresa Blasco—Director
Arnold Lamb—Director
Connie Paget—Director
Brent Hobden—Director

Looking Back with Nelly Smit

Over the last SLC Newsletters, we have featured several of the people who were instrumental in the start-up of the Sonshine Lunch Club. This issue, Nelly Smit tells how she became involved with the lunch club with direction from the Lord. D.G.

Nelly Smit has been the leader of the Friday group from Bay Community Church for the last 22 years. She tells how the Lord directed her to serving at SLC in its infancy. "In 1996, I felt the Lord was asking me to step down from my leadership of Bay Community Sunday school" Early 1997, when one of her teachers told her the Lord was speaking to her about taking on more of a role in the children's ministry, Nelly knew "that she was the one to take over my place."

Nelly had met Archie Forest (the gentleman who started the lunch program that evolved into SLC) at the Comox Rec Centre. This was where Bay Church rented for the children's program Sunday mornings, while they were in a building program. It was also where Archie Forest worked as custodian. Archie, in 1996, had just started a lunch program called Soup and Sandwich club and was very enthused about being able to help feed those who were struggling in the valley. At that time, the lunch club ran only 2 days a week. Archie approached Nelly about adding another day, Friday, to the lunch club with the support of Bay Community Church. Nelly remembers, "for me, it was like a bright light came on. **This** was the next job the Lord wanted me to do. I said 'yes'; our church said 'yes'; and we started to set it up"

As part of preparing to take on organizing a lunch program, Nelly spent a month working with Archie Forest and the group from St. Vincent de Paul. Nelly and some of the Bay volunteers also spent a week in Vancouver with the Gospel Mission.

The congregation of Bay Community supported this new mission wholeheartedly. Many signed up as volunteers, others made soup, many prayed and many others supported the lunch club financially. Nelly's husband, Wolter (then pastor of Bay Church), took a servant roll of cleaning floors and washrooms before and after the Friday lunch program. Bay Community lunch program began Friday, December 5th, 1997. There were approximately 60 lunch guests and "we thought it was an awful lot of work. How could we do this all year?" (Today, it is considered a "slow day" if there are only 110 lunch guests.)

Wolter and Nelly became directors on the lunch club Board of Directors and were involved in writing of its constitution and by-laws. In July, 1998 the name of Sonshine Lunch Club (taken from John 8:12 "Jesus said ... I am the light of the world") was adopted and the lunch club was officially incorporated as a Charitable Society. At the same time, Nelly took over Archie Forest's position as a board member of Ad Hoc Emergency Resources Organization for a couple of years. Wolter Smit stepped down from SLC Board and was replaced by Laurie Bowes to fill the places of two directors from every participating church.

Nelly felt that it was becoming too difficult for Bay church members to make soup every week for the lunch club. So, she came up with the idea of asking different restaurants to help with a pail of soup once a month. Sharon Chrest helped with contacting businesses and doing 'pick-up' so that about 25 businesses signed up for different food items. Attesting to the great generosity of our community, most of the same businesses are still donating food 22 years later. "None of us, as volunteers, had ever worked in a community food service like this one. However, it did not take very long for all of us to feel God's love for those who also are His children and so desperately need to feel His love and care for them."

"We now have 42 wonderful committed volunteers (including our prayer team of 6) and serve some 100- 130 lunch guests each week. (We're even open on Good Friday). Once a year, we have a special birthday party for all our lunch guests with a birthday card and gifts. We make Valentine's a special **God Loves You** day with all the special extras."

"We are so thankful to God that He is using us to shine His light in our community and to bring His love in such a special way."

Nelly Smit, April 2019

Note: Presently, Nelly and Wolter Smit are getting prepared to move to the lower mainland, where they will be closer to their family. Nelly is looking for a person or a couple to fill her position as leader of the Friday group. Our prayers are that the sale of their home and availability in the complex, they have chosen, fits together seamlessly; that somebody comes forward to fill Nelly's role. The SLC Board would like to express their sincere thanks for the many years of service that Nelly gave to the Sonshine Lunch Club both in leadership of Friday group and serving on the Board. Special thanks also to Wolter for his years on the Board and his support.