

### Sooke Residents Ready to Get Active, cont...

*“When you see other people doing it or other people losing weight, it makes you more motivated as well,”* Stope said. Urlacher sends reminders if points aren’t submitted, so the staff team encourages its members to keep up with the pace.

*“Some people have lost weight, some haven’t, but some have become more active,”* Stope said. *“We are trying to create awareness more than anything else.”* At the end of the challenge, the staff will have a healthy potluck lunch to celebrate their achievements. Stope and

Urlacher are also looking at bringing in a reflexologist to offer discount massages to staff. They are hoping to form a health and wellness committee to keep people from reverting back to their old habits after the challenge ends.

*“Our hearts are in the right place, it’s time that is our real problem,”* Stope said.

Sooke is also looking beyond local initiatives, with Brewster sitting on the Regional Active Communities Committee of Greater Victoria.

*“I really believe in Active Communities; I believe that this community is right for something like this,”* Brewster said. *“It’s exciting, and I think that the payoff will be huge. There are a lot of issues in this community in terms of addiction, youth and lots of issues that we need to work on, so I think that creating Active Community programs and services is going to benefit the community.”*

### Saanich Youth Super Size their Health

*Written in May 2007*

Saanich council started steering a course towards a healthier community when it made the 20% by the year 2010 physical activity commitment in 2005. Things progressed when the Active Community team, led by the District of Saanich Parks and Recreation department, kicked off the Active Saanich campaign in January 2006. In addition to running programs and events for the area, Active Saanich has since partnered with Active Communities Greater Victoria to bring in regional initiatives such as the Highway to Health activity tracker program.

#### **SUPER SIZE YOUR HEALTH**

With the help of community partners, Active Saanich has been reaching out to increase awareness of the benefits of healthy, active lifestyles, particularly to children and youth.

Saanich’s Youth Health and Fitness Expo (the Super Size Your Health Fair) was

back by popular demand in spring 2007. A class of marketing students at one of the high schools came up with the idea for a teen-oriented event bringing together various schools to focus on health, nutrition and physical activity. Community partners such as School District 61, Active Saanich, Pacific Sport and local businesses helped bring the fair to life.

*“So much of the information out there is geared at adults so they wanted to do something that was user-friendly when it came to teens,”* said Charlene Parker, District of Saanich Active Cities Coordinator and Active Saanich Team Leader. Almost 2,000 youths aged 13 to 18 from schools throughout the District attended the fair in both 2006 and 2007.

*“They are quite keen on the concept of nutrition and how to eat healthier and be healthier,”* Parker added. The fair featured guest speakers, hands-on projects, and booths from more than 30 local

businesses and organizations, supplying information on physical activity and nutrition.

A part from the fair, outside of school, youth can access Game

Bikes in the Upside Teen Centre at Saanich Commonwealth Place. The stationary bikes work as controllers for video games, with the participants’ pedaling and handlebar movements represented onscreen. Saanich Recreation bought the two bikes in 2006 to get inactive young gamers moving, through a partnership with the University of Victoria.

*“They are quite popular and we like the fact that the kids actually have to do something besides sit there and play,”*



Parker said. *“They get lots of use from the kids.”*

Vending machines in local recreation centres are also getting healthier, replacing potato chips and pop with options such as granola bars and milk.

*“They’re amazingly popular,”* Parker said. *“We’ve had the rec centres piloting it and we’ve had an excellent response, so we’re looking at doing that in all of our centres.”*

To get parents and educators of preschoolers pumped for the healthy school years ahead, Olympic rower and Vancouver Island resident Silken Laumann was invited to give the keynote address at the Making Tomorrow conference in May 2007 at the University of Victoria. Active Saanich partnered with UVic, Success by 6 and Scribe Graphics to help put on the Vancouver Island Preschool Association event, themed “Healthy Kids.”

*“[The Preschool Association] saw that we were doing a lot of stuff around being active and they were picking up on a lot of the media stories as well. They thought this was a really important topic to be getting out to parents and preschoolers and preschool leaders,”* Parker said. *“They thought this was a great, timely theme.”* The conference

brought in 500 registrants who gave excellent feedback.

Active Saanich is looking ahead to its first Active Families fair in fall 2007. It’s expected to draw about 90 vendors and include family activities. Island Parent Group, publisher of Island Parent magazine, is partnering with Active Saanich to put on the fair.

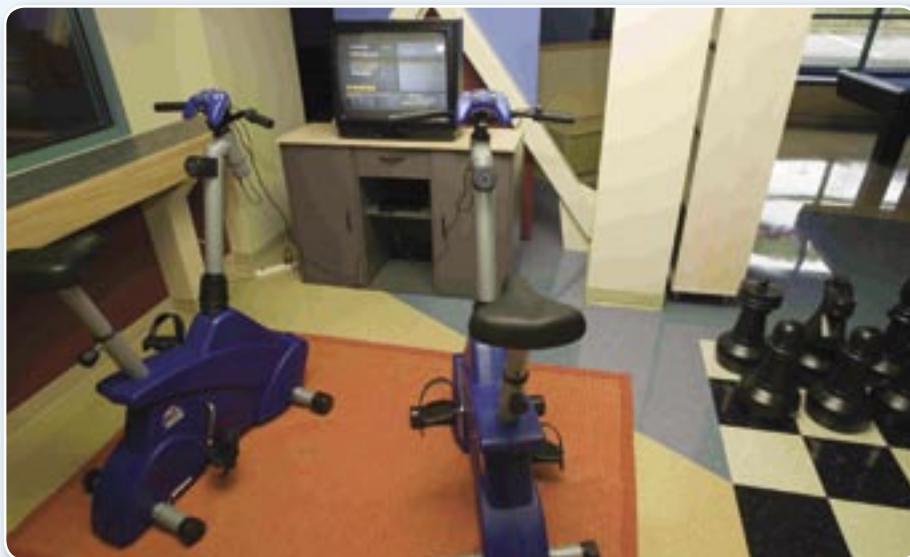
Another notable event was UBC Associate Professor Dr. Lawrence Frank’s Walkable Communities workshop on April 5, 2007, linking community design with physical activity. The event, hosted by Active Saanich through Active Communities, brought representatives in from municipal planning and engineering departments, councils and community associations, in addition to parks and recreation staff.

*“We need to be able to build those connections and those partnerships to have a long-term impact on our community,”* Parker said. *“So we were really happy to have [Dr. Frank] and have that kind of attendance on the Island.”*

### RAISING AWARENESS

The Active Saanich brand has reached the community with its custom logo, book-marks (distributed to homes, libraries and schools), flyers and posters, linking the

- Working regionally to plan, implement and promote active programs, services resources and events
- Running the Highway to Health online activity tracker program
- Securing grant funds regionally from BCRPA’s Active Communities (\$5,000) and the UBCM Community Health Promotion Fund (\$11,275)
- Forming partnerships with businesses in the community
- Encouraging children and youth to eat healthy through the Eat Well, Get Moving program
- Offering an Active Parents Pass to provide new parents with access to recreation opportunities
- Offering discount recreation passes in April through the Taste of Recreation program
- Partnering with School District 61, Pacific Sport and local businesses to organize a Youth Health and Fitness Expo (Super Size Your Health Fair)
- Partnering with the Vancouver Island Preschool Association, the University of Victoria, Success by 6 and Scribe Graphics to host the Making Tomorrow conference, themed “Healthy Kids”
- Creating an Active Saanich trail guide
- 13 schools registered with Action! Schools BC



## Saanich Info

- **Population:** 108,265 (BC Stats 2006)
- **Region:** Vancouver Island
- **About Saanich:** The District of Saanich is the largest of Greater Victoria’s core municipalities. The community is home to fresh water lakes and a marine shoreline, with a variety of parks and cycling trails. Because of its close proximity to Victoria, the Saanich District is split between a rural and urban character.

(Source: [www.saanich.ca](http://www.saanich.ca))

## Saanich Youth Super Size their Health, cont...

local initiative with the provincial Active Communities Initiative, ActNow BC and 2010 Legacies Now. News stories and advertisements in the local media helped to spread the word that Active Saanich had arrived. Signs, posters and bulletins went up in buildings, parks, malls, bus shelters, community association newsletters, water bills, tax mail-outs and websites.

A new trail guide is in the works for fall 2007. By highlighting the local walking trails, the guide will be a tool for Active Saanich to encourage people to get active.

### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Parker, like others, has found the biggest challenge to be finding the time to develop the community into an Active Community. To make it happen, Saanich Recreation has allocated an almost half-time position to advance the team's plan. In addition, staff members at the recreation centres help with verbal promotions and day-to-day operations of the Highway to Health program.

While developing Active Saanich, the team realized that larger initiatives get "more bang for the buck" because of their higher public profile and less staff time, so have made these more of a focus of the team's work.

### EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

BCRPA held an Active Communities Active Workplace workshop on the Island on April 19, 2007. After the session, Saanich municipal employees were given orientations and have since participated in workplace challenges. Active Saanich is lobbying the District to hire a part-time health and wellness staff person to run the employee challenge to free other workers for community-based efforts.

*"Employee wellness has made a really big impact. We reach a ton of people in a very quick way,"* Parker said. *"We might reach one employee, but we've reached all their children and their family at the same time, and they've gotten on board and done it."*

Saanich is working on the launch of its Active Business campaign in conjunction with Active Communities Greater Victoria. The committee is planning to put together a kit for businesses to implement a workplace wellness program to get them on the Highway to Health.

### TRACKING SUCCESS

Active Saanich is tracking employee involvement in wellness programs with surveys before and after (number of participants and how many stuck with the program, number of minutes participants are increasing their activity levels by) to compare the impact of the program year to year. In addition, they are tracking numbers of participants in Move for Health Day (May 10) events, the Highway to Health program and recreation centres. The team also plans to make use of BCRPA Active Communities evaluation tools to monitor Saanich's progress in meeting the 2010 challenge.

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## WaterFit is a Hit in Esquimalt

*Written in June 2007*

Active Communities Esquimalt is changing lifestyles in its community—from the senior who could walk again after a WaterFit program, to a television reporter going through a fitness makeover in the limelight.

Esquimalt Parks and Recreation is developing local programs and events, as well as involving itself in regional initiatives with the Greater Victoria Active Community committee, such as the Highway

to Health activity tracker and the Active Parents Pass.

### GETTING THEIR FEET WET

The Active Communities Water-Fit-A-Thon on Move for Health Day (May 10, 2007) gave newcomers a free sample of a variety of aquatic classes. The sessions are geared for different levels and include activities like Aqua Yoga, Aqua Prepost Natal, Senior's Fit, Deep WaterFit

and Circuit Fit. The 35 participants were rewarded with nutritious snacks and draw prizes. A similar event, the Supersweat

