

Planning well advanced for the best Blueridge Good Neighbour Day (BGND) ever!

By Michael Bernard

Summer may seem a long, long way off but there is a dedicated group already into their third month of planning for our annual community celebration on Saturday, June 15.

"We started planning with the kick-off meeting on Nov. 23," says Stacie Graham, one of the BGND planners. "At this point we are starting to book food trucks organizations for community tables, and have started looking into donations and silent auction items.

"We are also looking to fill spots for volunteer jobs, so now is the ideal time to get in touch if anyone would like to be part of the planning process."

One of the more straight-forward ways residents can participate is to contribute or seek out donations for the silent auction, says Stacie. "We are also looking for local businesses to give financial support, or to sponsor items like a bouncy castle, the train ride etc. We are always looking for new and exciting entertainment for kids of all ages, but we need sponsors for all this!"

That helped top draw out one of the best crowds ever for the event, which had been dormant for a few years due to COVID.

"The chess tournament and pickleball courts were both new activities last year, and both will be returning in 2024! There will also be more variety in food trucks and vendors attending BGND. We are working on ideas for kids' activities and we are always looking for more."

Another task the organizing committee is taking on results from many people mentioning congestion being an issue in certain areas in 2023.

If there are other things residents noticed that could be enhanced, they can email to bgnd@blueridgeca.org.

Stacie stresses that the organizing committee also welcomes any financial donations from residents to support various BGND activities.

"The BCA definitely accepts donations. Cash gifts, gift cards, or in-kind donations help ensure we are able to offer a wide variety of activities for free at the event. It is important to stress that we want any donation to BGND to be a win-win for all, which means that the sponsor (individual or business) will be recognized at the event, as well as on our website and in the newsletter after the event." Again, the contact email for donations is bgnd@blueridgeca.org

One popular tradition that continues this year is the beer garden. But due to new regulations enacted by the school board, it will be held inside the school gym.

"We are currently working through the logistics of this," says Stacie. We are looking for a volunteer to help co-ordinate it. You can do it without attending a lot of meetings. It entails applying for a special events liquor licence and co-ordinating

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All aboard the Blueridge Good Neighbour Day express! Planning work is well underway for this year's event, which starts off at 11 a.m. with a giant parade down Berkley Road on Saturday, June 15. Organizers are hoping more volunteers will step forward to help them out. Email them at volunteer@blueridgeca.org

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BGND

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with this year's brewery. Please email volunteer@blueridgeca.org if you can help."

Also on the volunteer front, "we are calling all bakers," Stacie says. "We need people to commit to donating baked goods to the cakewalk! The more cakes we have, the more fun can be had at the cakewalk!! Cakes, cupcakes or any kind of sweet treat is welcome! And if you aren't a baker, purchased baked goods will also gladly be accepted!" For more information, please reach out to Nicole at nicole.m.parfitt@gmail.com.

Finally, BGND is introducing a new payment system, says Stacie. "Although it is a free event, there are a few things that you do have to pay for at the event, including the concession, cotton candy, and the cakewalk. In the past, these have been cash only, but for 2024 we are going to try a new system: Blueridge Bucks! Pay by credit card and then use your Bucks to purchase items at the concession, cotton candy machine, or try your luck at the cakewalk. More details to come soon!"

Association looking for students to apply for its annual scholarship

By Lesley Brooks

It's that time again! The time of the year when The Blueridge Community Association chooses a student who lives in Blueridge and is graduating from a North Vancouver high school. He or she is a young person who has been involved in volunteer community work and is planning to attend post-secondary studies at a Canadian college or university.



This year we have increased our scholarship to \$750 to help with rising costs of education.

Over the years, the association has recognized many incredible young people who live in this area and who have actively served as volunteers. We have previously recognized a broad range of volunteer activities: from helping to clean up local creeks and building wood planting boxes for our community garden to supplying and keeping neighbourhood free book libraries well stocked.

Are you one of these amazing volunteers or do you know anyone who fits the description? If so, talk to your School Counsellor who will have the information about how to apply. You may also check out our website for details: <https://blueridgeca.org/scholarship/>

Need a Babysitter, Pet-sitter or even a House-sitter? Check us out!

By Ailie Heatherington



I have been listed in the Blueridge Community Association's sitter directory for more than a year now and have had a few amazing experiences. I was contacted to cat-sit over Christmas for a family and ended up also doing some babysitting for that same family.

The directory has been great for families who have last-minute babysitting needs since there are babysitters nearby in the neighbourhood ready to work. I'm looking forward to doing more pet-sitting and babysitting and getting to know more people in the community.



(To find a babysitter, a pet-sitter or house-sitter, OR if you want to offer your services, connect with <https://blueridgeca.org/sitter-directory/>)



Meet your Blueridge neighbours: Humans and Bears

*By Holly Reisner
Co-executive Director,
North Shore Black Bear Society*

If you are new to Blueridge, you will quickly realize that you have found a warm, welcoming community with people from all walks of life. Another part of the community, that you may not have considered, but which we hope you will soon grow to value as much as the people, is black bears.

Blueridge borders on forests and has ravines and green spaces running through it. These are wonderful spaces that allow us the privilege of walking, running and mountain biking in nature. But they are not just our recreational areas: they provide homes to black bears and other wildlife. As the human residents of Blueridge, and of the North Shore in general, it is our responsibility to learn how to co-exist peacefully with these animals, since they are our neighbours and an important part of our community.

Black bears often live close to urban areas. Unfortunately one reason is the availability of

Unnatural food sources such as garbage, organic food waste, the content of bird feeders and unharvested fruit trees among others. We must learn how to carefully secure these bear attractants, as every year bears are killed for accessing human resources of food. As a rule, bears trapped on the North Shore are not relocated; they are killed. The availability of this unnatural food also disrupts a bear's life cycle by interfering with denning: each year we see bears that are active throughout the winter because they can have the occasional meal from our bins. Why hibernate if there is food available? Additionally, the bylaws in the District of North Vancouver (DNV) prohibit feeding wildlife, even inadvertently, and provide significant fines for doing so.



Photo by Janko Ferlic



Photo by Janko Ferlic

But another reason bears choose to live close to us is for protection. The dominant male black bears will typically occupy prime habitat deeper in the forests of our watersheds. Female bears with cubs are pushed closer to our cities to avoid these male bears, who may kill their cubs to facilitate mating with the female. So, she rears her cubs in and around our municipalities to keep them safe. There is ample habitat, and natural food sources such as grasses, dandelions, berries, insect larva and salmon for them to thrive in the green spaces and forests close to us. It is sadly ironic that bears may be killed for living here, when they do so for safety.

At the North Shore Black Bear Society, our mission is to prevent unnecessary bear deaths by providing education on the nature and habits of these peaceful animals, and to support residents in securing their wildlife attractants. You may see us at our booth at community events (such as Blueridge Good Neighbour Day in June), presenting in classrooms for children of all ages, at other community groups that invite us, and doing door to door canvassing. If we knock on your door, please understand that we are there to support you by teaching you about your wild neigh-bears and how to live peacefully together with them. We may leave written information for you.

We also encourage you to report any sightings of bears, coyotes, cougars, bobcats and other wild species to us via our website www.northshorebears.com, by calling or texting our cellphone at **604-317-4911** or by calling the DNV's Bear Line at **604-990-2327 (press 2)**. These reports allow us to track the wildlife activity in our neighbourhoods and know where support is needed. Additionally, we try to respond to nearly all reports so we can offer information specific to your needs.

Our website is a great place to learn about these beautiful animals and how we can share Blueridge peacefully with them.





Blueridge Sharing Garden: Book a box and get your hands dirty!

By Emilie Currie and Corinne Bergdal

In anticipation of the upcoming gardening season, box rental applications are available for submission this month, ensuring a smooth transition as garden boxes become available.

Those interested can find applications on the community website at www.blueridgeca.org or by emailing garden@blueridgeca.org to be added to the waitlist.

Furthermore, plans are in motion to reconstruct several garden boxes, mirroring last year's successful effort. The rebuilding will take place in April, following the assignment of all boxes (and slightly warmer weather!). This initiative aims to enhance our communal spaces for the benefit of all residents and is made possible by the generous support of the District of North Vancouver's 2024 Sustainability Grant.

The gardeners and volunteers are planning to have another Seedling Sale early in the season followed by multiple Market Days as the season progresses and the garden gets growing. Please check out our Facebook page and other social media of Blueridge Community Association for updates.

We'd also like to remind the community about our partnership with Cobs Bread at Parkgate. As part of their fundraising program, Cobs Bread generously contributes to the Blueridge Sharing Garden. Residents can show their support by simply mentioning they support the Blueridge Sharing Garden at Cobs Bread, with five per cent of sales returning to our community.

We look forward to seeing you back in the garden soon!

Welcome to Blueridge!

This article is the first of many we plan to publish about new neighbours coming to our community. Lesley Brooks, our Blueridge Community Association official greeter, contacted Joe Graham and her family, and the mother of three found time in her hectic schedule to write about her family's move here.

By Joe Graham

I grew up in Quarn, South Australia, a small town of about 900 people on the edge of the outback about a 3½ hour drive north of Adelaide. In early 2010, I was at a bar in Melbourne where I met my now husband Connor, watching Canada win the gold medal in men's hockey at the Vancouver Olympics.

Fast forward 14 years, and we now live in Blueridge with our three boys, Austin (Grade 2), Lucas (kindergarten) and PJ, (one year old). We'd been living in a two-bedroom condo in Kitsilano for the past 10 years, but when baby #3 came along, we got serious about upsizing our space. While I was convinced the three boys could share one bedroom, my husband was anxious for more space. We were quite settled in our Kits home, with amazing neighbours in our building, a great school community, and a walkable neighbourhood. We were also quite lucky that we had a large backyard space outside our ground-floor condo, so finding something that was worth moving for was quite the challenge.

We looked broadly - from South Surrey through to the North Shore. While we put offers in across different cities, we ultimately got serious about North Vancouver because our middle son had always loved walking the trails here. We had heard years ago that Blueridge was a great community for families and had kept an eye out, but we were still hoping to stay relatively close to our school in Point Grey.

After having written lots of offers over the years and missing out, we decided this was "the one" to go all in on. The street and the house reminded my husband of the home in

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Straight up to Vancouver from down under: (from left) (Mom) Joe Graham, Lucas, Austin, baby PJ and (Dad) Connor.

Volunteers: A vital part of BCA's work

By Eric Andersen
BCA Chair

What has the Blueridge Community Association (BCA) been up to since your last newsletter in October? Quite a lot!

The Blueridge Cares project, led by BCA volunteers in **December**, and supported by our very generous community, again assisted local families who needed some extra help over the Christmas period.

The BCA belongs to the North Vancouver Community Associations Network (NVCAN), an umbrella group for the community associations in the District of North Vancouver. In **January**, a strong contingent of BCA members, including a few keen teenagers, participated in a Saturday four-hour workshop sponsored by NVCAN. There were good discussions, including feedback that the BCA's hard work is admired and even envied by other local associations.

In **February** every year, the BCA sitter (babysitting, pet-sitting, house-sitting) directory was updated. There are currently 16 baby- and pet-sitters (only), but there is a need for house-sitters this year. Please contact us if you are interested in offering your services.

In **April**, a BCA meeting is scheduled with two guest speakers. Mike Mayers from Metro Vancouver will present updates on the Lower Seymour Conservation Area. Holly Reisner from The North Shore Black Bear Society will report the latest on black bears coming out of hibernation.

On **May 14**, at our AGM, Mayor Mike Little will be the guest speaker on the new zoning regulations being introduced by the provincial government. Our mayor will explain the enormous ramifications these zoning changes could make on our municipality, including Blueridge. Bring your questions to the meeting!

June 15 is Blueridge Good Neighbour Day, and our dedicated planning committee is hard at work on it. For the first time, Blueridge Good Neighbour Day will be hosted on a Saturday. We need more volunteers, however, particularly someone to approach businesses for donations for our silent auction. We also need a volunteer to coordinate the Beer Garden with this year's featured brewery—Central City Brewers and Distillers. Please contact us if you would like to have a table at BGND or if you'd like to make a monetary donation.



Eric G. Andersen

Dîner en Bleu will not occur this year for lack of volunteers to spearhead the event. Let's keep our fingers crossed that one or two people will take on the leadership of Dîner en Bleu for 2025! Please contact us if you are willing to fill this role.

We are always looking for volunteers for Blueridge Good Neighbour Day. So WIIFM?

This is not a mysterious foreign word, but an acronym for 'What's in it for me?' What are YOU looking for as a volunteer? We all have different reasons for volunteering. Are you giving back to the community? Supporting a special cause? Getting satisfaction and a sense of well-being from helping out? Enjoying meeting new people with similar interests and seeing a project through to completion? Finding rewards in a weekly or monthly commitment? Liking the praise your friends and neighbours express when they hear about your contributions?

We would love to hear your reasons for volunteering, and, with your permission, might even publish them in the next newsletter!

Welcome to Blueridge - cont.

Victoria where he grew up, and with the help of our family, we were lucky to have an offer that was accepted.

We moved in at the end of last July, so we had some time to settle in before school started. We've been so blessed with remarkable neighbours. The people we bought our home from organized a street party shortly after we moved in, giving us an opportunity to meet many neighbours. Halloween was extra special with some incredibly decorated houses close to us, so Lucas cannot wait until next Halloween again.

Austin, our eldest, attends Blueridge, and while he was really unhappy to leave his friends at his old school, he loves being able to walk to school with our next-door neighbour, AND also that he doesn't have to wear a uniform. Also great is having so many of his friends living within a few minutes' walk, which has definitely made his transition easier. Our middle son attends St Pius X (at Parkgate), and some of his friends also live close by. It's a bit harder having kids at two different schools, but it's also nice to be part of both communities and meet more people.

The biggest thing we've had to get used to is the bears! I thought I would be taking PJ for lots of walks through the forest but now am paranoid about running into a bear. My husband teases me that I'm fine with all sorts of deadly snakes and spiders that I grew up with—but give me a red back spider or a tiger snake over a black bear any day! Overall, we feel very fortunate to have a nice home, with good people all around.

We are so pleased we chose Blueridge!

Are you up for a Community Sign Board?

By Eric Andersen
BCA Chair

At the end of the 1990s, the District of North Vancouver (DNV) suggested that various communities in the municipality could get community boards, if they were interested. The District also suggested at the time that it would pay for the initial costs.



While there was some local interest, the Blueridge Community Association (BCA) board members did not jump at the opportunity, primarily because they couldn't think of an ideal place to locate the community board. By 2001, the concept just fizzled out and was never revived because the BCA didn't follow up with the district.

Over the summer, a resident suggested that we should get a community board, and the idea was discussed by BCA board members. The board could be used for a range of things: for event announcements, meetings, activities, and even birthdays and weddings, as have appeared on the Deep Cove community board erected where Seymour Parkway meets Dollarton.

Much work has to be done, including how to fund it, what the board materials would be, how the board will be used and managed, and not the least important matter, where it would be located.

To help us in our work, please use the QR code above or link to our website www.blueridgeca.org to suggest where you would like the board to be located in our area. We are giving you a handful of options, but please feel free to add a few of your own.

Some of the options we are considering include:

- next to the Blueridge Sharing Garden (on Carnation Street across from Seymour Heights Elementary School)
- at the bottom of Berkley at Mount Seymour Parkway
- at the trail head near Hyannis Drive (west)
- near or in front of a local school
- your own suggested spot.

Let's hear from you!

Blueridge Residents Again Show They Care

Blueridge, you do care. Families came to the Blueridge Cares campaign and asked for help for the holidays, to make them a little more merry and bright, and you delivered! Many happy smiles were worn by kids, teens and parents who received help from Blueridge Cares this year.



Thanks to our generous sponsors, we have funds left to help neighbours throughout the year on a case-by-case basis.

There were so many people who came together, from Blueridge and beyond to make Blueridge Cares a success. First I want to thank the team of neighbours who helped make this all come together.

- Jeff Powell
- Eric Andersen
- Ted Bancroft
- Mahnaz Fardghassemi
- Fariba Leilaby
- Barry Fenton
- Cris Fraenkel
- Carolann Fraenkel
- Jonathan Unrau

And our business sponsors:

- Canadian Men's Health Foundation
- Pink Plumbing
- Elderberries Child Care Centre
- Stong's Market
- Mount Seymour United Church
- District of North Vancouver - Maplewood Farm

And the neighbours who purchased and wrapped gifts:

- Barry and Marnie Armstrong
 - Tina Brown
 - Dena & Ryan Cheney
 - Patti Davis
 - Celina Dorame
 - Jennifer Draper
 - Mathé Grenier and Anthony Slowey
 - Stephaine Griffith
 - Marg and Al Isaac
 - Diane Koch
 - Jennifer Brun Moore
 - Sophia Morris
 - Mahtab Rae
 - Elsbeth Turner and the Ladies of St. Simon's Episcopal Church
- plus 14 more anonymous helpers



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Our latest Blueridge Award winners

Here are our most recent Blueridge Spirit Award winners, individuals who are recognized for their passion and enthusiasm in contributing to our community. This “pay-it-forward” award is passed by the previous winner of the award.



Amanda Guest has served as vice-chair of the Blueridge Parent Advisory Council for three years. Amanda is dedicated to making the school the best it can be for its kids. In addition to organizing all of our parent volunteers, she is often signed up to volunteer herself. You can find her at the school popping popcorn, sorting hot lunches, or running a grade lead event like our annual tree chip and bottle drive. Most recently, she spearheaded the week long Scholastic book fair!

Rachel Harper took on the role of chair for the Blueridge PAC during the challenging time of COVID. She implemented community traditions such as the school’s Welcome Back BBQ, Santa’s Breakfast, Family Movie Night, and a Parent Social held in the school gym. Her husband, Greg Harper, is also a strong supporter of the school and the Blueridge community. He was also a member of the Blueridge Good Neighbour Day planning committee, helping with kids’ events and site planning.

Important Dates to Remember

- BCA meeting with two guest speakers: Mike Mayers from Metro-Vancouver discussing the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve; Holly Reisner, North Shore Black Bear Society Tuesday, April 9 – 7.00 PM. Location: Blueridge Elementary School – 2650 Bronte Drive
- BCA AGM – Guest speaker: Mayor Mike Little – Tuesday, May 14 – 7.00 PM – Canlan Sports North Shore – 2411 Mount Seymour Parkway
- Blueridge Good Neighbour Day – Saturday, June 15 – 11.00 AM – 3.00 PM – Blueridge Elementary School
- Blueridge Bulletin - SUBSCRIBE ANYTIME at blueridgeca.org , (hit the subscribe button, left side of page)

Your BCA Board




Your BCA Board this year: front row (from left) Lesley Brooks, Ted Bancroft and Anne Danielson. Standing (from left) Fariba Lullaby, Barry Fenton, Lauren Gorgounis, Nima Sahebi, Elmira Nazar and Eric Andersen. Missing are Ruth Hanson, Mahnaz Fardghassemi and Toby Barazzoul.



PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH!!

The BCA is on these social media sites, follow your favourite.

 Facebook: Blueridge Community Association

 Instagram: Blueridge__Community

Web: www.blueridgeca.org

Email: info@blueridgeca.org • newsletter@blueridgeca.org