

News Release

April 30, 2020

Beacon Community Services at SHOAL Centre providing free drop off tax services during COVID-19 **Grocery shopping and other supports also available for seniors**

SIDNEY, BC — Starting May 1st, Beacon Community Services' trained volunteers will again be offering free tax filing services for people of all ages with low to moderate incomes. The service is in addition to Beacon's efforts to support the community's seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic by delivering groceries and making reassurance phone calls.

Beacon Community Services has operated the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) for over 35 years. The program's volunteers are registered, screened and trained by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). The free tax service is available to those with simple tax situations, with maximum incomes of \$35,000/single or \$45,000/couple.

In 2019, more than 1,100 income tax returns were completed.

Due to COVID, **this year's service will be run as a drop-off only service. To use this service:** (1) Please bring your tax documents to the SHOAL Centre at 10030 Resthaven Drive, Sidney; (2) fill out the client form; (3) deposit everything into the envelope provided and then into the box at the front door. (4) Ring the doorbell to let us know you are done. A volunteer will contact you to go over your return before it is filed.

Although the SHOAL Centre has been closed to the public since March 13th, the staff have remained at work to coordinate services for local seniors. Since March 27th Beacon Community Services has also operated as the BC 211hub for the Capital Regional District (CRD). They have been processing the BC 211 requests for the region and working with other agencies across the CRD to ensure seniors are cared for. BC211's *Safe Seniors, Strong Communities* program matches seniors who need support with non-medical essentials, to volunteers in their community who are willing to help.

In the last month, on the Peninsula, Beacon staff and volunteers have served over 600 meals, supported nearly 90 isolating seniors and families with grocery shopping and delivery, and made nearly 2150 check-in phone calls. We continue to make 350 weekly check-in calls.

"None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers," said Glenys Cavers, Beacon Community Services' Director of Volunteer and Seniors' Services. "We're so grateful for every person who has been willing to give their time during this difficult period."

Cavers urged those who are over 65 and in need of assistance to call 211 or go to www.bc211.ca. Requests will be directed to Beacon Community Services at the SHOAL Centre.

Community members who want more information about the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) should contact Linda Lightbody at SHOAL; 250-656-5537 ext. 104 or lightbody@beaconcs.ca.

For more information about Beacon Community Services, see www.beaconcs.ca

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