



LUSH Valley Food Action Society

WINTER 2009

LUSH
VALLEY

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2008

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

Office hours - Monday to Thursday 10 am to 4 pm

Sunday Food Film Series

January 18, 25 & Feb 1

see page 4 for more details

Fruit Tree Pruning Workshops in February & March—visit the website after February 1 to sign up

Vancouver Island Health Authority Food Security Conference

March 19-20 in Courtenay. Watch local papers FMI.

LUSH Valley is finally home!

With thousands of hours of volunteer labour, tens of thousands of dollars in donated materials, dozens of dedicated volunteers and a vision by board and staff—LUSH Valley has finally moved into their permanent home on December 1st.

While the LUSH Valley Hub is still unfinished everyone involved in its creation are very grateful to have a home and a centre for food security in the Comox Valley.

This past year was a hugely successful with LUSH Valley expanding their programming and budget by a factor of ten. The society has raised almost a quarter of a million dollars in grants and in-kind donations of goods, materials, services

and labour. LUSH Valley is hugely proud of that—considering the year began with only \$3,000 in the bank and a vision developed in co-operation with the community through Planning for Plenty.

In December LUSH Valley celebrated being granted charitable status by Canada Revenue Agency. This new status will greatly facilitate fundraising and donor recognition.

Looking back on 2008 Lush is pleased to say there were approximately 18,000 pounds of produce harvested for the Fruit Tree Project. A big thank you to all involved to make this a banner year.

For 2009 LUSH Valley is looking forward to launching the Food Rescue Program and a Social Enterprise.

WHO YOU WILL FIND AT LUSH VALLEY HUB

The Government of Canada, has contributed funding to the development of LUSH Valley Enterprises and operation manuals. We have two fabulous Job Creation Partnership participants who have been working hard since September. Beth Scott has taken the lead in developing business plans for LUSH Valley Enterprises (see page 3) including a small processing

operation and a demonstration Aquaponic Greenhouse.

Debbie Beddows is researching and creating everything we need written down to operate the HUB and deliver all of our programming including safety and risk management, policy implementation, processes and forms. Debbie also co-

ordinated the Fruit Tree Project through the autumn. Two Canada World Youth—Marie and Sasha are here collecting content for the new website and doing some general labour—there are some paint splattered jackets in their closets now. And Debbie Galenzoski is improving her job skills in Administration and book-keeping until February.

LUSH VALLEY ENTERPRISES—EARNING OUR OWN WAY

As an extension of the Fruit Tree Project LUSH Valley Food Action Society will create a social enterprise to create specialty food products in a commercial kitchen setting (the Hub) for sale. Utilizing excess community harvest and volunteer labour, LUSH will create value-added products such as quality jams and jellies, fruit sauces and spreads, salad dressings, and baked goods.

The social enterprise of added-value product sales fits with LUSH Valley's mission to focus on using local resources to meet local food system needs. The social enterprise also fits with the vision of LUSH Valley in utilizing local skills to teach community members food sustainability in their own homes and for the community in the creation of the product.

LUSH Valley products will appeal to any local shopper or visitor who wants a product that is of high quality and locally grown and produced.

In the current global community there is a strong push to purchase locally grown and produced foods. The 100 Mile diet is a familiar phrase used to address the concept. Lush Valley can also offer complete traceability of the product from tree to table. By purchasing LUSH Valley produced foods the consumer knows that the product they take home came wholly from the Comox Valley. In addition those purchasing LUSH Valley product have the added benefit of feeling good in that they are supporting a local non-profit, which according to our survey rates very highly in importance for local consumers. Utilizing excess harvests increases the consumer value of LUSH Valley products.

A staple for the LUSH Valley value-added product will be applesauce as apples are the most abundant excess crop. The Comox Valley market place currently has no locally grown or produced offerings of applesauce. Further research demonstrated there is no applesauce being produced even at the provincial level. This detail will add even more value to the consumer as it is a unique product although a basic household staple with multiple uses.

The business plan will be completed in March of 2009 which will then give LUSH Valley three months to raise the necessary capital and complete the processing kitchen to launch the enterprise. They have already secured much of the necessary equipment for the kitchen but will require investment capital to purchase the initial supplies and small wares and to develop and implement the promotional materials and program before the first harvest of 2009. As the business grows and becomes more profitable, the agency's intention is to increase their support of local farmers and growers by purchasing increasing amounts of raw ingredients and to create seasonal local employment in the processing kitchen.

The business and financial plan project profits starting in the second year of operations with the forecast for significant profits by the third year. These profits will be donated to LUSH Valley—the charitable society to reduce their dependence on government and other grants to deliver their other programming.

LUSH Valley will be holding a series of information and community forums in February and March to promote awareness of and support for this and other initiatives during 2009.

The Comox Valley Food System Cyber HUB will encompass the whole of the Comox Valley and be expandable to include other regions. Working with Tidechange.ca and volunteer designers, LUSH Valley is developing a single access, interactive Food System Portal to include links to all local food security and system initiatives and participants. The objective is to increase the ease with which food security/system information is accessed and knowledge is shared by creating a 'one-stop shop' with links to all local participants. LUSH also wants to decrease the number of places groups and agencies must update their information—the aim is that each group only has to update its own website and because the Cyber HUB will be linked to other community websites such as Valley Links, TideChange, Chamber of Commerce and provincial and national food security sites—they will always be up to date.

The site will include mapping functions to link land to growers, donors to recipients and to facilitate knowledge exchange as well as a community calendar for events, workshops and learning opportunities in the food movement. They are also community mapping all the locations where food is available—profit and non-profit. There will be local, regional, provincial, national and international links to the food security movement. LUSH Valley hopes this site will spur ideas and action and help to increase both the local food economy and food production and processing to increase food security in the Valley.

LUSH Valley welcomes the participation of volunteers in this project. If you would like to join the working group or have suggestions for content or links, please call Sue Moen at 250-331-0152.

NEW distance education course and certificate in SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD now available through St. Lawrence College in Kingston. This course and distance education certificate program are designed to meet the rising interest in, and need for "how to" training for local food system development that is sustainable, socially just, economically dynamic and ecologically specific to the country sides, cities and regions of Canada. Contact Andrew McCann, Co-ordinator at 613-767-4127 or amccann@sl.on.ca if you have any questions or would like to be involved in curriculum development. FMI: www.sl.on.ca/parttime/OnlineCredit-SustFood.html

FOOD RESCUE

LUSH Valley will co-ordinate a Food Rescue program modeled on that of Quest Outreach Society in Vancouver combined with a Food Runner Program similar to the Community Angel Food Runners program of the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society, in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island. The program will be situated in LUSH Valley Food Action Society's Hub Food Security Centre. The project will be launched in May 2009 to complement and enhance the excellent work being done by local food agencies to address the very real problems of hunger and malnutrition particularly among the homeless, low income families and persons with chronic illness, mental health or addiction barriers to food security.

Food rescue involves intercepting food from every sector of the food industry before it goes to landfills. The food is sorted, processed, and redistributed to organizations and people who need it most. All food waste products are turned into animal feed or compost.

Food Runners is a prepared and perishable food recovery program. Through Food Runners, quality food is donated from restaurants, hotels, cafeterias and schools and then delivered to meal providing agencies.

This program will be new and unique to the Comox Valley. It will be operated on a cost-recovery basis whereby recipient agencies pay a nominal storage and delivery fee to cover operational costs. We will divert food from the landfill, re-package and distribute it safely to local food agencies, or partner with livestock farmers to deliver animal food to them in exchange for meat when they butcher, or compost what is not usable. This final step will create soil amendment for the vegetable gardens at the Hub.

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Charitable registration number:

86665 3637 RR0001

* Note new Email

LUSH Valley Food Action Society is a non-profit community food security partner whose depth of professional representation and breadth of vision truly reflects the cultural, political and economic diversity and the potential of the Comox Valley food system. We are visionaries who build relationships and create opportunities for our community to improve health and wellbeing, and create social change through food security initiatives.

LUSH Valley acts as a catalyst for social change by: delivering sustainable food programming to Comox Valley residents; engaging community and government in re-localizing the food chain; aspiring to high standards of excellence and the goal of having a significant community impact in all activities. We succeed in this work with the help of committed volunteers, strong business and community support, and growing partnerships with funders. We are striving to increase and diversify our donor and revenue base through cost-recovery programming to the non-profit, government and private sectors, and the development of a Social Enterprise.

Board of Directors

President: Betty-Anne Juba

Vice President: Bunny Shannon

Secretary: Sharon Niscak

Treasurer: Chris Byrne

Directors: Judy Goldschmidt, Helena Hartwood, Lenore Lowe, Sue Rambow, Gaylene Rehwald

Executive Director: Sue Moen

Food Rescue cont'd

The purposes of the Program will be to:

- Decrease waste going to the landfill: Increase the amount and quality of food available to non-profit food agencies and programs which allows them more budget flexibility;; Increase partnerships between farmers and the non-profit food community and; Facilitate community composting education and implementation in the HUB's neighbourhood.

Anyone wishing to be part of this project—either as a volunteer, donor or recipient, please contact Sue Moen at 250-331-0152

UPCOMING EVENTS at LUSH Valley HUB 1126F Piercy Avenue Courtenay:

Sunday Food Film Series sponsored by CV Friends of Farming and World Community. Moved to ZenZero Action Centre 4th & England in Courtenay

Door and snacks by donation: Doors open 7 pm Film starts 7:30

January 18: *Ripe for Change* Emiko Omori 54 min.

January 25: *We Feed the World* Erwin Wagenhofer 96 min.

February 1: *Sowing for Need or Sowing For Greed?* Judith Bourque and Peter Gunnarson 56 min.

Board of Directors meetings: 1st Thursday of every month at 4 pm. All welcome

Annual General Meeting: Thursday March 12 from 5 to 7 pm (refreshments served)

For more detailed information and to stay current visit www.lushcomoxvalley.org or Tidechange.ca community calendar

Thank you to our partners and supporters in this fiscal quarter:

Vancouver Island Health Authority, United Way Central & North Island, Enterprising Non Profits, Hamber Foundation, Coastal Community Credit Union and The Government of Canada has contributed funding to this initiative