

PEOPLE, PLANTS AND PRIDE...

Growing Together

B.C. COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM NEWSLETTER

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Is 2020 the year to get your commUnity pride growing?

The Communities in Bloom program is an excellent way to inspire collaboration of residents, service groups, business owners and municipal staff to invigorate civic pride, encourage tidiness, and environmental respect through the enhancement of green spaces. It can help create a ‘transformation’ that will have lasting social, environmental and economic benefits in your community.

Evaluation components of the program are adjusted according to the participant’s population size and resources, while also appreciating local geographical challenges. Evaluated participants receive recognition through BC CiB website, social media, newsletters, GardensBC website, in addition to receiving a detailed Report with a Bloom Rating Certificate at the fall Provincial Awards. Non-evaluated (Novice & Friends) and Membership participants also receive recognition.

Please see the www.bccib.ca website for the 2020 Provincial Registration Form.

Registration Deadline – March 31, 2020

Provincial Communities in Bloom Conference 2019 in Coquitlam, BC

Hot Topics – Discussion Notes

Purpose – Participants shared about hot topics happening in the “In Bloom” community.

1. Share a Communities in Bloom success story and what factors made it a success.

- Youth Lounge at Mundy Park – Bringing families out who were engaged and strengthening neighbourhoods. Bringing out and engaging volunteers. They want to be involved and make a difference. Staff can see the difference that volunteers make.
- Winter Lights – Free, active, creative and safe 1.2 km walk around Lafarge Lake.
- Drop in Volleyball – Huge success. Many people showed up who had a lot of fun.
- Movie Night – Used a white screen and a 10 by 15 tent. Families came out with their blankets and enjoyed watching a movie in the park.
- Fun Nights at the Stadium – Sporting equipment were provided, and families came out to play various sports.

2. How can you take sponsorship to the next level from a traditional model to create greater value for your sponsor?

- Look at the other side of sponsorship. Build a relationship and take money off the table.
- Align with Corporate values and look at Goods and Services.
- Support Community groups by investing in content like radio ad space.
- Provide spaces for community groups to meet rather than having them wait for a room to open at a school.
- How do Community Groups approach potential sponsors? Encourage Sponsors to use their assets. Ask how you wish to be recognized (it is not about the tax receipt). Sell this benefit of sponsorship to gain funds.
- Research whether the project that is being proposed aligns with values. Example is a sports organization for youth and education. Easier if it is a benefit to Community. Hard to ask for funds. Ask for funds for a small group and personal benefit.
- Set up a meeting to get to know the sponsor without asking for money. Ask the sponsor before you need money to see what they could offer in terms of goods and services.
- Sponsors will look at what other sponsors are involved with your organizations and how are they contributing. Do Sponsor’s values align with the values of the organization?

- Have a fun experience to see what they can contribute.
- Be honest about your organization and know that you can’t compete with cancer or Kids with cancer fundraisers. Ask yourself how I can set myself apart. Make connections and stay away from the traditional models by only asking for money.
- Find aligned interests to keep the conversation going.
- Go for the long term.

3. In what ways can you engage businesses other than seeking funds?

- Employees can come volunteer in beautification projects.
- Providing services and equipment to CiB.
- Food donations.
- Hotels can partake by beautifying their hotel.
- Providing expertise in their given skill set.
- Clean up events/days.
- Giving a portion of property to community garden.
- Donating hotel rooms or rental cars.
- Clean and paint the town.
- Putting edible gardens along the streets with businesses.
- Advertising in parks instead of paying an advertising company.
- Wrapping electrical boxes with community partners.
- Community Business Fair.

4. How can you reach out and include new partners such as community groups, schools and residents?

- Curb appeal contest.
- Organize a town hall meeting to engage the community. Have a Committee of people who are engaged and want to be involved.
- Once per month events with volunteers.
- Adopt a program (s).
- Engage schools – Offer programs and tours.
- Challenges – Decline in public works involvement with focus on essential services.
- Have everyone working towards the same goal.
- Partnerships with the City.
- More advertising/upcoming events – Use Facebook and Instagram.
- Communication.
- Many volunteers work during the week and are only free on the weekends.
- Provide information that “it’s for everyone”.
- Use Social Media.
- Create contest of the year like “Best in ...”.
- Plan small neighbourhood events. Get to know your neighbor to develop a sense of community with your neighbour.
- Plan school events to educate.
- Plan evening events since everyone is so busy.
- Develop partnerships with other community groups.
- Challenges – How to get everyone involved? How to attract new people since life is busy? How to engage youth?

- Foster relationships.
 - Instead of asking school to leave their property, ask school to help plant with teachers, parents and students.
 - Engage Service Clubs.
 - In Armstrong, they invited schools to help plant trees around the senior's homes.
 - "Paint the Town" Project – Volunteer communities. Discounted rates through the local paint stores and companies. Building permits passed by the City to benefit the City.
- 5. How does your organization/group engage residents in the community and what are some of the challenges?**
- With the Provincial CiB, volunteers grow into the position. Always someone different leading. Allow for change and rejuvenation.
 - Acknowledgement/Thank you events. Example of Youth Pop Up at Mundy Park – Youth drop in and get involved with what they like or something new.
 - Market to demographic using media.
 - Involve the schools.
 - Contact community facilities such as Glen Pine Pavilion.
- 6. How can your organization/group grow and retain your volunteer base?**
- Form volunteer committees.
 - Advertise to local residents
 - Seek out students who need to complete volunteer hours.
 - Offer volunteer incentives such as a reference letter.
 - Plan workshops to educate and build interest.
 - Make the experience fun and memorable.
 - Plan award/recognition with public press releases.
 - Program to find passion with "come to work" day. Similar to "bring a child to workday".
 - Recruit at City events.
- 7. In your role as a volunteer, what do you value the most and why?**
- "Freedom" to be able to see what needs to be done and go do it such as the volunteering at the Inspiration Garden.
 - Increase your connection to the community.
 - Self-recognition knowing that you are giving back to the community.
 - Being engaged, personal growth.
 - Pride knowing that I am doing this to grow and not to get paid.
 - I want to teach or learn from an experience – passing and learning from other.
 - The people who I work with.
 - Working with like-minded people, growing friendships.
 - Helped me to grow and develop skills by getting out of my shell.
 - Help when you know that you have something to contribute – What can I bring to the table.

- If you find it important/benefit people, then your engagement levels rise – Am I helping people?
- Being around people who you enjoy being around. Feeling like you are making a difference.
- Effort to give back to the community. Applying skills to increase public awareness.
- Making sure there is a two-way communication – Allowed to give input.
- Be in an environment that people listen to your ideas and try to bring them to light.
- Be given the opportunity to partner and develop programs.
- Two-way value knowing that you can give back.

Communities in Bloom 2019 Youth Panel Q&A

In partnership with Communities in Bloom, the City of Coquitlam put together a panel of 6 youth ranging from ages 13-18 to ask them their thoughts, opinions, and offer suggestions on how we engage youth volunteers in our communities. Below are summaries of answers taken from the questions being asked.

In your volunteer roles, how much input do you get in what you do?

It depends. Sometimes we get to choose what we want to do from a list of jobs. Once we've gained more experience and have learned from long-term volunteers, we get more say or input. *To summarize:*

- Get to choose from a list of jobs
- You don't need to be skilled to volunteer
- Learn from long-term volunteers
- Once you've gained more experience, you get more say/input
- take home the skills you've learned

How much adult supervision?

We are never left alone; we are always with a supervisor. The supervisor isn't hovering over us the whole time, which is nice.

What was the scariest thing on your first day?

The scariest thing was that I didn't know what to expect. The job descriptions were too vague, and I didn't know who was going to be there and if I was even qualified to do the job.

When you read the job description; does it reflect what you're doing currently in your role?

The job descriptions were too vague. It should say in the description that you don't need to have all of the skills right away; you can learn as you go. I think having written testimonials or reviews from current and past volunteer as part of the description, too, would be very helpful. Maybe add visuals to the descriptions, as well.

Did your parents encourage you to volunteer? Who influenced you to become a volunteer? How did you get started?

- “I started volunteering to find opportunities to make friends”
- “My sister influenced me to volunteer”
- “My mom pushed me to volunteer. She said it would be good for my future, but she didn’t tell me where to volunteer”
- “Metro Ford Soccer Association sent volunteer opportunities through email”
- “I wanted to be a part of a community”

What do you hope to gain the most from volunteering?

- Meet new people
- Build relationships
- Gain different experiences and education
- Gain point of views from different communities
- Learn about new activities going on in the community
- Fun!

Why would you want to leave a volunteer position?

- The position doesn’t suit me
- I want to try something new
- It didn’t work with my schedule
- Lost interest
- Reached my potential in that position or it wasn’t challenging enough
- Made me feel bad for not meeting expectations
- If the passion dies, it’s hard to stay committed, and it starts to feel more like a job

Does anyone have a paying job?

1 out of 6 said yes

How many hours per week of volunteering are you able to commit to while in school?

Only a couple of hours per week, unless there is a big event – then I can do more hours that week.

Pizza or Sushi?

- 5 said Sushi
- 1 said Pizza

Would you recruit friends to volunteer?

Yes, if I thought they would like it I would encourage them to volunteer. Everything is more fun with friends.

What is the best communication tool? (Email/text/call)

- Email (2)
- Instagram (3)
- Texting (1)

How would you like to be recognized in your role?

- One on one review with feedback

- Promotion
- Reference Letter
- Party

How do you keep your friends from vaping?

If they don’t want to stop, there isn’t much you can do. Maybe educate the dangers at a younger age. Utilize social media for daily reminders about the risks and consequence of vaping.

How can we make sure we incorporate everyone’s culture?

- Offer more inclusive activities, like Light’s at Lafarge
- Share more details about it
- Have volunteers from all backgrounds
- Utilize organizations from all cultural groups

If you could create your position, what would it be?

- “Holiday themed”
- “Event organizer”
- “Professional volunteer role. Youth want to do what adults are doing”
- “Promote and recruit volunteers”

How do you maintain life balance?

- Learn how to prioritize
- Learn time management
- Plan ahead
- Ask for help
- Let us vent!

Would you be an activist for your future in regard to Global Warming?

Yes, whatever you do now dictates your future.

How can you “wow” employers?

- Put reference letters on resume
- Loyalty and commitment to a job/role. If you stuck with it for a long-time that looks really good.
- Show personal development. Write reflections on your resume.

How do we attract youth to come out?

Communicate with parents

Would you like to hear feedback?

Yes, to help me grow and develop for future opportunities.

Contact Catherine for the Bright Ideas discussion notes.

Thank you to the 2019 Provincial Conference & Awards host the City of Coquitlam and Staff for these excellent notes