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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA



Surrey - Whalley Community Newsletter

A Message from MLA Bruce Ralston

As we move into the New Year I wish you, your family and friends a healthy and prosperous 2021.

The challenges of COVID-19 continue for all of us.

Read this newsletter to find out the progress made in the rollout of the vaccine so far. Vaccination is a public health program and is free.

My office is ready to answer your questions about any of these topics covered in this newsletter.

As our province is carefully navigating the second wave, you can help keep your friends and neighbours informed by sharing this newsletter and signing up for future editions.

Newsletters will be sent by email if possible, otherwise we will mail it to you if that is your preference.

Please contact the Constituency Office to request to be added to our distribution list.

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Vaccine Rollout Update

So far in B.C. we have seen over 75,000 people in the province who have received a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and more doses are being administered each week as delivery ramps up. The vaccine will help keep people safe and slow the spread of the virus in our communities. We have started with long term care residents and staff, frontline health workers, Indigenous people living in rural or remote communities, and people over 80 years old, followed by other groups of priority in sequence. Every British Columbian for whom the vaccine is recommended will have the opportunity to get it by the end of 2021.

Find out more about the COVID - 19 Vaccine rollout here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/vaccines>

In the Fraser Health Region, the first person to receive the vaccine was a 77-year-old Long term care resident named *Andy Yoon*. You can learn more about his experience in this article:

<https://bc.ctvnews.ca/grandfather-is-first-long-term-care-resident-in-fraser-health-to-get-covid-19-vaccine-1.5244827>

While the news of the vaccine rollout is most welcome, we must remember the importance of following the Provincial Health Guidelines and using the different layers of the protection that are available to us.

*Number of people vaccinated to
Jan 14, 2021 – 75,914*

Supportive Housing in Whalley

This winter, a provincially funded project consisting of 38 new supportive homes opened in Surrey. Located at 13245 King George Boulevard, Peterson Place has finished construction on 38 studio units, each with a private washroom and its own kitchen. The building also includes a commercial kitchen, dining and lounge areas, storage and amenity space, laundry and a medical room.

Residents started moving in on December 21st, 2020. These new homes will make a significant difference in people's lives here in Whalley and as MLA for Surrey Whalley, I am happy to see that our government is working hard to reduce homelessness and to make life better for vulnerable people in this community.

In addition to this, 40 new supportive homes are coming to Surrey at 13620 80th Avenue with construction scheduled to start in early 2021. These homes will be operated by the Phoenix Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education Society.

Supportive housing is a self-contained home with supports provided on-site, to ensure people can achieve and maintain housing stability. Supports include outreach workers, wellness checks, life skills training, employment assistance, connection and referral to community services and support groups. Residents have access to counselling as well as health, mental health, and addiction recovery services.

The Legion Veterans Village (LVV) project reached another milestone in December with B.C. Housing approving 91 affordable housing units for the mixed – use, multi-purpose project that will provide housing, healthcare and legion facilities dedicated to serving the needs of Canadian veterans and first responders.

Located at 10626 City Parkway, the Veteran Village will be a hub in Whalley providing much needed affordable housing.

“British Columbia places great importance in providing affordable housing, healthcare services and innovation to the province and there are no other projects that combine these elements so efficiently under the same umbrella as the Legion Veterans Village.”

“We look forward to seeing this project succeed in Surrey, especially here in Whalley so the rest of Canada can look towards this as a model and beacon for veterans and first responders with PTSD.”

TransLink increasing service on 15 Surrey Bus Routes in 2021

TransLink is increasing service on 15 bus routes in Surrey thanks to a strong upturn in ridership. TransLink is improving its service in the city “because bus boardings have recovered faster in Surrey’s sub-region than most other areas in Metro Vancouver.”

In November, ridership levels were at 51 per cent compared to November 2019 in Surrey.

You can find out more about the service changes in TransLink here:

<https://www.translink.ca/schedules-and-maps/service-changes>

TransLink has been working throughout the pandemic to give customers more space while on board and keep passengers safe.

B.C. Recovery Benefit

On December 18th, applications for the B.C. Recovery Benefit opened. The B.C. Recovery Benefit is a one – time direct deposit payment for eligible families, single parents, or individuals. Benefit eligibility is based on net income from your 2019 tax return. You must apply to receive the benefit. \$1,000 for eligible families and single parents with a net income of up to \$125,000. \$500 for eligible individuals with a net income of up to \$62,500.

You can apply online here:

<https://www.etax.gov.bc.ca/btp/BCRBP/>

Alternatively, you can also phone 1-833-882-0020

Phone lines are open Monday to Friday 7:30 am to 5:00 pm.

So far, 1.3 million people have been approved. \$563,617,798 has been dispersed. Once all deposits being processed are complete (within days) it will total \$651+ million.

Find out more about the benefit here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/recovery-benefit>



Investing in Brighter Futures Surrey

[Investing in Brighter Futures Surrey](#) is an initiative of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition and a partnership between Vancity Community Foundation, DIVERSEcity, Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA) and Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC). The project's purpose is to increase the take-up of the *Canada Learning Bond* with eligible First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and newcomer children in Surrey. The bond provides up to \$2,000 for eligible children's post-secondary education.

Currently, **over 26,000 children in Surrey are eligible** for the Canada Learning Bond but have not yet requested it!

Funding for Children's Post-Secondary Education

Canada Learning Bond (up to \$2,000)

The [Canada Learning Bond \(CLB\)](#) is money that the Government of Canada adds to a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) for children from low-income families. This money helps to pay the costs of a child's full- or part-time studies after high school.

Eligibility

A child is eligible for the CLB if:

- the family's net income is less than \$48,535*
- they are born on or after January 1, 2004
- they are a resident of Canada
- they have a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN)

*The [family income cutoff](#) is higher for families with more than 3 children

British Columbia Training & Education Savings Grant (\$1,200)

The B.C. Government provides the [British Columbia Training & Education Savings Grant \(BCTESG\)](#), a one-time grant of \$1,200 for eligible BC residents between 6 to 9-years old, it is added to a RESP.

Our project assists CLB eligible families with everything from getting a SIN, transportation, and birth certificate costs, and helping prepare for the bank appointment. **For more information, please contact:**

Métis People:

Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC)
Donalda Greger, Navigator
dgreger@mNBC.ca / 604-202-7158

Newcomers:

DIVERSEcity
Meenu Dhillon, Navigator
settlement@dcrs.ca / 604-507-6060

Indigenous Peoples:

Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre
Association (FRAFCA)
Annette Christopher, Navigator
CLBNavigator@fracfa.org / 236-858-3152

Everyone:

Vancity Community Foundation (VCF)
Kyla Hackett, Project Coordinator
clb@vancity.com

Families in British Columbia are encouraged to start planning and saving early for their children's post-secondary education or training programs. To help parents with this the B.C. Government will contribute **\$1,200** to eligible children through the B.C. Training and Education Savings Grant (BCTESG).

The BCTESG does not require any matching or additional contributions, so parents and families who can't afford to put aside savings at this time can still start an RESP. There are 56 partners offering the grant, including most major banks and financial institutions.

The grant can be used for a wide range of educational programs, including vocational schools, apprenticeships, trade schools, colleges, universities, and other certified institutions.

Don't let your child miss out on a **\$1,200 grant!**

The B.C. Training and Education Savings Grant (BCTESG) is available to eligible children for a **three-year window only**.

Is my child eligible?

- Parent or guardian, plus the child are BC residents
- The child's birth year is listed here
- The deadline has not passed for the child's birth year group

BIRTH APPLY BEFORE

2011	Apply before 9th birthday in 2020
2012	Apply before 9th birthday in 2021
2013	Apply before 9th birthday in 2022
2014	Start applying on 6th birthday in 2020

You must **APPLY** for the grant. Ask about it at your local financial institution.

Learn More: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/BCTESG> or contact: BCTESG@gov.bc.ca.



**For more information please call
toll free 1 (888) 276-3624**

NEW Constituency Office Hours

Monday to Friday: 9:00am – 4:30pm

(Closed from 12:00-1:00pm)

Saturday: 1:00pm – 4:30pm

Services Offered by the Surrey - Whalley Constituency Office

- Provide information on locating the right government services and contact information for constituent's needs.
- Assist in understanding and providing information on government policies and programs.
- Assist in navigating through government bureaucracy.
- Ensure due process is being followed.
- Provide government documents, legislation discussion papers and other web-based forms if constituents don't have internet access.
- Resolve issues constituents may be having with provincial ministries.
- Arrange special messages for important occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, and other significant milestones.
- Photocopying, faxing or emailing documents.
- Assist constituents in drafting letters or completing documents.
- Provide contact information of advocates and organizations in the community to work on constituent's behalf.

We also offer the following, free of charge, to constituents of Surrey -Whalley

- BC Seniors Guide, available in English, Chinese Punjabi, and Vietnamese
- Healthy Eating Guide for Seniors in English (other languages available online)
- Newcomers Guide, available in English, Korean, Punjabi, Filipino, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, and Arabic.

For Kids we have:

- Parliamentary Alphabet Colouring Books
- Temporary Tattoos (Like these)



MASKS AVAILABLE

Just ask us!



Masks alone won't
protect you from
COVID-19.

Remember to wash your hands and practice
social distancing.

Limited quantities available. For residents of the Surrey-Whalley constituency only.

If you would like one of your own please contact the Constituency Office by phone at 604-586-2740 or by email at bruce.ralston.mla@leg.bc.ca

There are a limited number available so act quickly to get yours.