

## NEWS RELEASE

Distributed October 21, 2019

### **Nanaimo Councillor, not-for-profit receive grant to fund inspiring new program**

*Women Lead! designed to enhance equal representation of women in leadership*

#### **Summary**

The City of Nanaimo is pleased to announce that Equal Voice Central Vancouver Island in Partnership with Councillor Erin Hemmens are the successful recipients of the Toward Parity grant, provided through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Department for Women and Gender Equality Canada.

The goal of Toward Parity is to work toward equal representation of women in local office. Councillor Hemmens' "Women Lead!" proposal was one of the 20 grant proposals endorsed to receive \$5,000 in funding. The grants are intended to be either seed funding to incubate a new idea or enhance an existing idea to gain support for gender equality in the community.

Women Lead! is an initiative that the Equal Voice Central Vancouver Island will launch with a Community Dialogue session outlining the importance of gender parity, a workshop specifically for young women (high-school to early 20's) hearing from local women politicians and leaders and an ongoing mentorship program.

*Strategic Link:* Social Equity

#### **Key Points**

- \$5,000 Toward Parity grant awarded to Councillor Erin Hemmens and the City of Nanaimo for Women Lead! program.
- Women Lead! program vision is to have an immediate impact on young women in the community inspiring them to consider possible careers in politics and/or toward leadership positions in other organizations or industries.

#### **Quotes**

"Delighted exceptional women in the Central Island are working for gender parity so successfully. Girls and women in our community need to see more women in political leadership if we want to build inclusive communities."

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

"I'm very excited to move forward, working with Equal Voice Central Vancouver Island on an initiative that will focus on creating opportunities that would allow young women to 'see' themselves in political and leadership positions. Together, we hope to leverage the expertise of women leaders in our community by involving them in our workshops and inspiring them to become mentors, provide advice and be positive and inspiring role models for young women. With community dialogue, we expect a broader impact as more and more people learn how gender parity benefits everyone in the community. "

Erin Hemmens  
Councillor  
City of Nanaimo

"We are pleased to be partnering with the City of Nanaimo, turning this grant initiative into an annual and ongoing program with community dialogue and more opportunities to inspire young women who will eventually become mentors for future generations. "

Ashwak Sirri  
Chair  
Equal Voice Central Vancouver Island

## Quick Facts

- According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), in Canada, women occupy 18% of mayor's positions and 28% of councillors' seats.
- One of Toward Parity's main goals is to create an action plan that will increase women's participation in municipal politics by increasing opportunities and reducing barriers.
- Throughout the City of Nanaimo's history, the City has only had one female mayor, and one or two women elected on Council.
- There was a positive shift during the 2018 General Local Government Election, in Nanaimo, as the City now has three women on a council of nine.

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