

NEWS RELEASE

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City supports local non-profit food service providers at recreation facilities

Local food organizations continue providing essential food services

Summary

The City of Nanaimo is supporting Loaves and Fishes Food Bank, Nanaimo Foodshare and Island Roots Market by providing access to recreation facilities that would otherwise be closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These organizations continue to provide very important services to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, through the "Empties 4 Food", the "Good Food Boxes" programs and the Island Roots Market.

The City of Nanaimo is assisting Loaves and Fishes Food Bank by providing space for sorting refundable drink containers donated by community members through the popular 'Empties 4 Food' program. The first off-site beverage container sorting event was held at Harewood Covered Sports Court on Saturday, April 25th from 9:30am-3:30pm and generated over \$6000 of revenue for the food bank. Loaves and Fishes Executive Director Peter Sinclair plans to hold similar events in the coming weeks. Bottle donations for Loaves and Fishes 'Empties 4 Food' program can be dropped off at a number of locations (www.nanaimoloavesandfishes.org/get-involved/empties-4-food).

Nanaimo Foodshare will be using the Centennial building at Beban Park Recreation Complex to prepare the food boxes for the "Good Food Boxes" program until the end of June. Deliveries are being provided by the Beacon Buddies and the many Foodshare volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information about the "Good Food Box" program visit nanaimofoodshare.ca.

The City is assisting in food security by working with the Island Roots Market by providing the Centennial Building, which will be used for packaging online food orders as well as a pick up location starting May 6th and is also assisting with the seasonal start up of the Island Roots Market at the Beban Park starting May 13th, which will operate under the new Provincial Health guidelines. For more information about the Island Roots Market please visit www.islandrootsmarket.ca.

In addition to supporting the ongoing actions by non-profit food providers to adapt their operations to the COVID-19 emergency, the City through the Health and Housing Task Force recently established a Food Security Working Group. This group of non-profit and community partners, is in the process of drafting a food security plan to address meeting immediate community food needs during the emergency with later consideration of longer term planning to enhance food security.

Strategic Link: The City's efforts in assisting these community organizations supports the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan Theme of 'Environmental Responsibility and Livability'

Key Points

- The City of Nanaimo is supporting Loaves and Fishes Food Bank, Nanaimo Foodshare and Island Roots Market by providing access to recreation facilities that would otherwise be closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Bottle donations continue to be welcomed by the food bank and can be dropped off at multiple locations across the City.
- The Island Roots Market Co-operative is preparing to open the Island Roots Market on Wednesday May 13th at the outdoor location at Beban Park next to the Centennial Building.
- Nanaimo Foodshare will be using the Centennial Building at Beban Park to fill food boxes for the "Good Food Box" program.

Quotes

"Challenging times bring people, organizations and government together to look out for the public interest and the City is delighted to play its role as we work through this together."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"With the unprecedented strain on our warehouse facility combined with a dramatic increase in empties coming in through our Empties 4 Food program, we are thankful that the City of Nanaimo has provided a facility to ensure empties can be safely sorted. This helps preserve a vital source of revenue for Loaves and Fishes Food Bank during this extremely difficult time. Yet again the City has proven to be integral to the success of Loaves and Fishes Food Bank."

Peter Sinclair
Executive Director
Loaves and Fishes Food Bank

"Island Roots Farmers' Market is very grateful for the continued cooperation and assistance from the City, allowing us access to unused facilities to process and distribute orders for our online market. The City of Nanaimo is helping us strengthen the food security of the region and support our local producers."

Michele Greene
Market Manager
Island Roots Market Co-operative

"The city support has been critical to our good food box program being able to quickly respond to the food needs in the community because of COVID-19. When our previous space closed, we needed a large space to pack and coordinate deliveries for the good food box that was safe for staff and volunteers. The city collaboration has streamlined our ability to expand the good food box in a space that really meets our COVID response needs. The city is really putting their heart into supporting community groups like ours to provide essential services. They have been creative and flexible, helpful and kind. Thank you to the city staff. You have put heart into the centennial building and food into the community."

Jen Cody
Executive Director
Nanaimo Foodshare

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