

## NEWS RELEASE

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### New play area opens at Beban Park Social Centre

#### Summary

The sounds of children playing just got a bit louder at Beban Park Social Centre. On Wednesday, April 15, the grand opening of the outdoor classroom and play space area took place with Mayor Leonard Krog, Councillors Janice Perrino, Hillary Eastmure and Ian Thorpe, along with several excited children. Also in attendance were members of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness who played an important role in the design of the space.

Construction began at the north end of Beban Park Social Centre last November. What was once a dirt surface area with large tree roots has been transformed into an accessible and inclusive wooden gated play area with paths suitable for those in wheelchairs along with a variety of sensory and nature-based amenities that include a sport court, seating, a pergola and areas for kids to climb among logs and a wood chip surface. In addition, there is an outdoor classroom area with a variety of play features and concrete tile floor allowing accessibility for those using mobility devices. Allowing for flexibility, inclusive amenities can be moved or changed as required. Active elements, such as basketball and outdoor hockey have been included to enhance the area. Despite the changes to the area, four of the five cherry trees were kept which add beauty and shade to the area.

Future additions include outdoor lighting, chalkboard, playhouse, wooden xylene phones, storage shed and "Memory Makers" which is interactive public art created by Tarcila Neves.

This area will be used heavily by the early years programming, spring and summer break camps and the after school care program; however, the space is also available for rental by contacting the Beban Park Allocation Clerk.

*Strategic Link:* Creating more accessible and inclusive space aligns with maintaining and growing current services which is one of the key focus areas from the Council's Strategic Framework.

#### Key Points

- Beban Park's new outdoor play area classroom is now open and features a variety of sensory and nature-based amenities that include a sport court, seating, a pergola and areas for kids to climb among logs and a wood chip surface.
- This area will be used heavily by the early years programming, spring and summer break camps and the afterschool care program; however, the space is also available for rental by contacting the Beban Park Allocation Clerk.
- Future additions include outdoor lighting, a chalkboard, a playhouse, a wooden xylene phones, a storage shed and "Memory Makers" which is interactive public art by Tarcila Neves.

#### Quotes

"This new outdoor classroom and play space is a wonderful example of how we can thoughtfully invest in our community. By creating an inclusive, accessible environment that encourages play, learning, and connection with nature, we are giving children and families a space that will be enjoyed for years to come."

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

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