

Holiday Kudos for WestShore Leadership

Leadership is often defined as “as person who inspires others”. My definition includes that, but has more to do with local heroes who take action quietly behind the scenes, providing the kind of values-based leadership that gets things done. The West Shore is known as a place full of those kinds of people and groups, and as we welcome the holiday season, I am shining a bright light on the gifts of community-building these heroes bring to all of us. *Happy Holidays!*

First, local leadership kudos go to the **Westshore Rotarians** for all they do, and especially for their participation in the BEAR literacy program with Becher Bay young people. I had the privilege of attending and participating in a reading session at Hans Helgesen Elementary School recently, and it was beautiful to see seven or eight folks from the Rotary quietly reading with grade school First Nations children - many of whom were very shy, but who warmed up as the reading went on. **Second local leadership kudos** go to Becher Bay (**Scia'new Nation**) **Chief Russell Chipps** who was also there, reading to the children. He's a leader who works tirelessly for the health and prosperity of his people.

Chief Chipps is involved in some very important negotiations right now as a part of the Te'mexw Treaty process. Other treaty tables are advancing to ratification and there is cautious optimism about the progress of the local group. All our local municipalities have created a Treaty Advisory Committee to look at the implications of and represent municipal and local public interests in this process. The issues are complex and important to the future of the West Shore. These issues include environmental standards, economic sustainability, level paying field for business operations, regulations, land use and planning services, infrastructure, and taxes and revenues. **Third local leadership kudos** go to all the municipalities and their unsung representatives in this process - including **Langford, Colwood, Metchosin, Highlands, View Royal, Esquimalt, Sooke, and Saanich** - for tackling these key issues as a part of the Treaty process. This is another example of quiet behind-the-scenes and often unrecognized leadership.

Fourth local leadership kudos go to the folks at **Westshills, City of Langford** and the **Sooke School District** for recently announcing an innovative public, private partnership for the use of Goudy field in Langford as a site for one of the two new planned high schools when Belmont is finally sold. These kudos are shared with the **City of Colwood** and **Camosun College** which are also working collaboratively with the school district and other community stakeholders on a neighbourhood learning centre vision for Royal Bay incorporating city-owned land adjacent to school site. Let's hope the Ministry of Education will give the West Shore what everyone is hoping for this Christmas, and will finally announce funding approval for both these critically overdue facilities early in the New Year. Our Chamber members understand that educated employees are key to their success, and since education drives healthy and sustainable communities, perhaps the new Liberal leader, whenever she/he arrives would like to make an important sustainable economic development announcement on the rapidly growing West Shore?

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