

Town of Sexsmith- Reducing Barriers to Healthy Living

Sexsmith was recognized in 2013 for the Communities ChooseWell award of 'Reducing Barriers to Healthy Living' for its Portable Community Garden Project (a partnership among the Sexsmith Wellness Coalition, Family Community Support Services Summer Camp, St. Mary's Catholic School, seniors at Sunset Homes and the Sexsmith Playschool Society). This project created a portable (in clear rubbermaid-type bins) community garden which the school students planted and maintained until the end of June where it was then moved (down the street) to the summer camp location during the summer. The summer camp children cared for and harvested the fruits and vegetables that were grown. Berry bushes were planted at Sunset Homes for the seniors to access fresh fruit and a raised garden bed was put in at the playschool in the spring of 2014. This project has continued since it began with the school planting / watering and the summer camp watering / harvesting the garden. This project reduced the barrier to healthy eating by providing an opportunity for children/youth to gather knowledge and awareness of the process. It also promoted sustainability to growing healthy, fresh produce that is easily accessible with little to no transportation required as there is no full service grocery store in Sexsmith. This also gives the children/youth a sense of responsibility, accomplishment, community and pride when they enjoy the fresh, healthy foods that they had a hand in creating.

In 2014, the Town of Sexsmith was awarded a CN grant that allowed for planting of edible trees and shrubs along a pathway on main street as well as put in a community garden with raised garden beds surrounded by more edible trees and shrubs. As this project was completed in the fall, it will take a while before we see all of the benefits of having the accessibility of the fresh fruit and vegetables grown there. We can't wait to see what this growing season will hold.

