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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: COMMUNITY DONORS FUND COWICHAN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR ONE YEAR

Thanks to two generous donors, for the next year, young people in Cowichan will again have access to the Youth Employment Mentorship Program (YEMP) offered by Cowichan Valley Youth Services (CVYS).

The donors, who wish to remain anonymous, have agreed to fund one year of YEMP – a paid employment and life skills development program previously funded for two decades by Service Canada. In July, the federal government announced that it would no longer be retaining the program for funding, along with countless other youth-employment programs across the country.

“We could not be more thrilled to have the opportunity to offer this program again,” shares CVYS Executive Director, Zoe Lauckner. “These donors understand that an investment in today’s youth is a direct investment in the future health of our community. With this transformational gift, not only can we facilitate this life changing program this year, but can look to the future and begin fundraising to support YEMP beyond the next 12 months.”



YEMP is a 12-week paid employment and life skills training program offered to youth aged 15-29. For the first six weeks participants attend the program full time and receive on-site training and certifications followed by six weeks of ongoing support plus wage subsidies for employers.

“Our most recent cohorts of YEMP saw a 98% success rate among youth,” Lauckner shares. “With employment being one of the social determinants of health, we know by helping youth gain meaningful employment, they are empowered to change their lives.”

In the wake of youth and family-serving agencies closing their doors in the Cowichan region over the past six months, Lauckner shares how important it is for the community to invest in local programs that are proven to work.

“The Cowichan community is struggling with increased instances of houselessness, poverty, and problematic substance use every day. YEMP, as a low-barrier, paid

employment program with fulsome supports, offers a pathway away from those future challenges and empowers youth to forge their own path forward in a good way.”

The first cohort of the Youth Employment Mentorship Program is set to begin in late October of this year. To learn more about the YEMP program, you can contact Cowichan Valley Youth Services at 250-748-0232 or by email at office@cvyouth.ca

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