



IT'S OUR ANNIVERSARY

Give a family food, you feed them for a day, Teach them how to cook, you feed them for generations.

Cowichan Community Kitchens invites all present and former staff and clients as well as The House of Friendship staff to attend our anniversary celebration. Reunite with old freinds and colleagues on Saturday June 16th from 2p.m. to 4p.m. at Centennial Park.

It was 20 years ago this month that a planning committee began investigating the feasibility of a Community Kitchen program in the Cowichan Valley. The concept of community kitchens is to provide a place where participants could learn to budget and cook nutritional meals for themselves and family members. This was in response to noticing that many seniors were not eating nutritious meals. The committee consisted of Eileen Razzo, Kay Wyckham, Melinda Gray, Deb Williams and Denise Code. It became evident during these early meetings that their was a need among young family groups.

Initial Funding was from Vancouver Sun Children's Fund, Kiwanis, Valley Native Friendship Center and St. Edward's Catholic Church.

In 1994 the group received a Grant from the Central Vancouver Island Union Board of Health(now the Vancouver Island Health Authority). By this time six kitchens had been established, with three more in the planning stage.

By 1995/96 the program was receiving core funding from the Ministry of Social Services and was operating under the umbrella of Hiiye'yu Lelum (House of Freindship).

In 1996 Lori Iannidinardo began her role as CCK Coordinator. By this time there were 10 Kitchens operating on a regular basis and 2 on a casual basis involving 61 parents cooking 3-5 meals per month for 201 family members.

Participants were referred to Community Kitchens from a wide variety of agencies and from persons already participating. We have branched out from young families and seniors to include people of all ages and abilities and many single persons starting out on their own.

We have also worked with Healthiest Babies Possible, a Youth Kitchen and Food For Fun – a program for young children – in Chemainus. Lori coordinated a Field to Table Project at a local organic farm for one year. Participants grew, as well as cooked their own food.

Since 1996 Community Kitchens has had up to 12 kitchens throughout the Cowichan Valley preparing on average 4 meals per family member for 9 or 10 months of the year plus a Christmas Bake in December.

CCK actively participates in Community Events such as fundraisers, festivals, farm tours and the occasional catering event. Participants contributed a pot of chili once a month during the summer to the homeless for the Meals on the Mound project. Each month the groups donate from one to four (or more) extra meals to someone in the community at large.

Core funding is through the Ministry of Child and Family Development, South Cowichan Rotary, CVRD, Municipality of North Cowichan, City of Duncan, Cowichan Way, individual Donors, and funds from Special Projects.

Our Advisory Board consists of Representative from the City of Duncan, a Public Health Nurse, a Community Nutritionist, and several other community members.

As we hit the 20 year mark we are presently running 5 kitchens, which have a combined total of 30 cooks preparing meals for 94 family members and an average of 41 community members per month.

Deb Williams is the only person from the original planning committee who is still with Community Kitchens, she functions as our Executive Director. Our current staff consists of Lori Iannidinardo coordinator and facilitator, Liz Gravonic and Sandra B., facilitators; and Lynn Engstrom, facilitator and administrative assistant.

Here's to 20 more. It's been a slice!