

March 1, 2021

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## CITY THANKS CERMAQ FOR STEPPING UP SPECIALIZED RECREATION FUNDING

The City of Campbell River extends thanks to Cermaq for stepping up 2020 funding support for specialized recreation. In friendly competition with MOWI and Grieg Seafood, Cermaq topped the other donations.

*“Recreation participants and our programmers truly appreciate these valuable contributions that help connect people with disabilities in our community,”* says Michele Sirett, the City’s recreation manager.

Prior to the pandemic, the City offered a full complement of specialized recreation programs for people with disabilities, including active and social programs, plus sessions for specific interests and skills, such as sewing, pottery and musical theatre.

*“When the pandemic required us to halt many in-person programs, people really missed connecting with their friends and peers through these opportunities,”* Sirett adds.

A new weekly program called Coffee and Connections began on Zoom, offering a chance for people to see their friends in a casual and safe environment.

From there, Zoom programs expanded to include Groove Dance, an evening social program and singing.

During the summer, when programs normally take a break, Coffee and Connections continued and was looked after by one of the peers, Alexis Samaroden. In September, the City was able to offer this program at the Community Centre, with COVID safety precautions in place.

Alexis continues to be a volunteer leader and says, *“I feel really happy when I go because during COVID, I’m not mingling with a bunch of people, but I see the same close friends each week. The Community Centre programs have taught me some leadership skills, and I’m learning how to protect myself during COVID, plus having some in-person programs back in a safe way, I feel less isolated now. It gives me something to do and a sense of purpose to do something and not be stuck at home.”*

Cermaq recognizes the difference their contribution makes.

*“We actively support the communities in which we live and work through hundreds of thousands of dollars per year in community sponsorships and in-kind funding for projects, programs or initiatives, and we know communities and society are made stronger by diversity and inclusion. At Cermaq we know how important it is to feel valued by the community,”* says Linda Sams, Sustainable Development Director for Cermaq Canada. *“The programs offered by the specialized recreation program are a wonderful example of providing opportunity for social and community connection, which as we know, is more important than ever during this pandemic.”*

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## COVID-19

Please note: We have new procedures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We are gradually – carefully – resuming in-person services and limited public access to City facilities. For the most recent information on City services, please see our website ([campbellriver.ca](http://campbellriver.ca)). Reach us with general inquiries by email ([info@campbellriver.ca](mailto:info@campbellriver.ca)) or telephone **250-286-5700**.