



July 30, 2020

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### **Volunteers with Get the Point team launch new community cleanup and outreach program**

A new Campbell River program combines community cleanup with peer outreach and support for people using substances and experiencing homelessness.

Get the Point volunteers clean up garbage and sharps around the community and provide items such as sunscreen, hats, water and harm-reduction supplies to people in need living outside. The volunteers also engage in conversations that support positive change.

Cleanups began in June and are conducted three times per week by volunteer “peers” – people who are experiencing homelessness, or who have in the past. A few of the volunteers currently live outside and want to contribute to this community project.

*“The program really helps because having people out there who were homeless or using and are now clean really gets others feeling like they can do it, too. And I think the community doesn’t understand, and this can help people see that homeless people and people who use want change, too,”* says peer leader Ray Goodwin. *“Everyone I talk to likes this program. It’s a lot easier to talk to someone if they aren’t just book learned. If you know someone’s been there, they get it, you know?”*

Cleanups are taking place downtown, as well as in Campbellton, Willow Point, the Dogwood and Cedar area, Quinsam Heights, and in park spaces like Nunns Creek and along the waterfront.

Get the Point is run by Kwakwaka'wakw District Council Health. The program was developed with input from the City and RCMP, and with support of the Downtown Business Association.

*“It was great to meet the enthusiastic and excited group of people heading out to help clean up downtown Campbell River,”* says Heather Gordon Murphy, chair of the Downtown BIA. *“We look forward to seeing the results.”*

Through the program, peer volunteers receive training and an honourarium. To date, seven different peer members have been part of the project and the number of people interested in helping continues to grow.

Several British Columbia municipalities run similar programs, with funding from a provincial grant as part of the response to the overdose crisis. Get the Point funding was received by the City, in partnership with Island Health and the Campbell River Community Action Team (CAT). The program will run into the fall as a pilot project and will be evaluated to see if there is a potential to continue in the future.

People with questions or suggestions are welcome to contact Leanne McIntee by email to [Leanne.mcintee@kdchealth.com](mailto:Leanne.mcintee@kdchealth.com).

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#### **Photos:**

***Heather Gordon Murphy of the Downtown Business Improvement Association meets with volunteers from the Get the Point downtown clean-up team.***

***Volunteer Luka Kellerhals with peer leader Ray Goodwin.***

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