



Greater Victoria Acting Together

Newsletter May, 2019

LEADERSHIP VICTORIA IS LISTENING!

Peggy Wilmot: A lifelong leader receives a 2019 Victoria Community Leadership Award.

Peggy Wilmot, as many of you GVAT participants know, is an inspirational leader. She has spent the last 35 years of her life in this city enriching the lives of so many of us. She has worked tirelessly, and so successfully, to make our community a better place to live, and she has done so with grace, kindness and a gentle sense of humour. So this Victoria Community Leadership Award is well deserved. And we are so fortunate to count her as one of our GVAT colleagues.

As a teacher and school principal, Peggy inspired young people in many classrooms. As a volunteer and activist, she has enriched her communities in so many ways: Project Connect, Together Against Poverty, Faith in Action, the Food Bank at St. John's, Downtown Service Providers, and now, for the past three years, Greater Victoria Acting Together (GVAT).

Peggy continues to " ... go where there is no path and leave a trail" as Ralph Waldo Emerson once said. She has faith in those around her and believes in a world where no one is left behind. The concepts that inspire us in GVAT run through her veins: collaboration, action, education, communication, empowerment, persistence, positivity, the common good.

She is an inspiration to us all! Congratulations Peggy!

www.leadershipvictoria.ca/past_winners

www.timescolonist.com/opinion/op-ed/comment-food-banks-a-band-aid-on-a-gaping-wound-1.1637099

canadianchristianity.com/bc/bccn/0109/i01homelessness.html

WHAT'S GOING ON NOW AT GVAT?

The Latest News.

After the great excitement on the November 2018 Discernment Day, and then the sad day when Flossie Baker had to leave us, you might have been wondering why the voices of GVAT seem to have gone quiet. Not quite! Listen and you will hear - there is a constant rumbling in the background and it is not Whidbey.

The GVAT Board and StratHub have been working hard over the past few months. Firstly, they have been busy with the search for a new "organizer". There has been considerable interest in the position, so their task of sorting through the applications to find potential candidates with just the right fit is not an easy one. We are nearly there - so watch this space.

Secondly the Group have been diligently exploring throughout the community for potential member organizations that might join us. We now can count twenty-one organizations among our number and these represent 47,000 citizens all told. We are sure that numbers such as these will inspire others to join us. People power is just what we need!

JOY, COURAGE, REWARDS, CONNECTIONS, ENERGY, OPPORTUNITY

Nine representatives of GVAT attended the 5 day Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), Regional Leadership Training sessions held in Vancouver May 13 to 17th, 2019. The goal of this training is to provide participants with a greater knowledge of the key concepts, and practices that are central to successful organization building at all levels. Most importantly they learn how to understand power; think and act strategically;



and how to engage in real conversations about the mission of our institution, while forming and maintaining collaborative relationships that ultimately lead to democratic action.

These workshops are held regularly across the USA, but the opportunity to participate in them here in Canada is less frequent. We encourage our members to consider attending them when the opportunity arises. They certainly benefit each participant as an individual, as well as providing the essential skills for contributing to making our organization successful in any strategies and actions we undertake.

Past participants have described the experience as life-enhancing! Listen to what this month's attendees have to say. Patricia Sanders told us that her "experiences ... shared with 29 other learners from Vancouver, Calgary, Seattle, and Montana, inspired a desire to continue to support and work to strengthen (her) own organization" The most "rewarding experience ... was the joy of having time and energy to connect with the eight other participants from Victoria. Patricia returned with a "greater sense of courage to hold conversations with people I don't know in the broader community"

So this training comes highly recommended. And the participants would be very happy to offer to share their experiences with anyone who might be considering taking up this opportunity in the future. We hope to offer more experiences from participants in the next issue.

WHERE ARE WE GOING FROM HERE?

The GVAT Action Research Team (ART) that is dealing with housing issues held their first meeting on May 8th here in Victoria. And what fruitful discussions came out of this! The first main decision set out the scope: that the group research should encompass not just the homeless but the diverse needs of different peoples. The team then identified the work of several organizations as being of interest: co-op housing; Together Victoria; Generation Squeeze; the CRD Housing Strategy; the Metro Vancouver Alliance and their work on Land Trusts; the potential use of both School Board and Church lands. Lots to go on with here! If you are part of this team, or interested in their work you won't want to miss the next meeting on June 17th, the venue to be decided.

Joe Chrastil, Regional Organizer IAF Northwest will be in Victoria to lend a supportive hand to both the Housing and Mental Health Action Research Teams as they begin to build a strong foundation for future practice, and winnable actions. There are two sessions to be held on Tuesday, June 4th at 7pm to 9pm, and Wednesday June 5th from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. Space is limited, but if you haven't already done so we suggest you register for either session at <https://www.gvat.ca/calendar>

GREATER VICTORIA RISING

On May 23, 300+ energetic people attended a Town Hall in Victoria to develop a vision for a Green New Deal to tackle climate change and inequality together. Common themes emerged such as a green transportation strategy, indigenous rights, ending fossil fuel subsidies, food security and tackling social reforms. Well publicized and supported by a diversity of groups including several GVAT organizations, students and youth were dramatically noticeable in the leadership. Early in the event, two organizers delivered a stellar welcome as an inclusive strategy encompassing all who were present. A follow-up Green New Deal brainstorming meeting is planned for Wednesday, June 19, 6:30 pm at First Metropolitan United Church in Victoria.

This event echoed several strategies used by GVAT and the timing couldn't be better for GVAT to be holding two intersectionality luncheon and dessert meetings on June 7th. Both GVAT sessions are now fully subscribed by member groups who will gather to determine how to act together on housing and mental health through the lenses of Climate Change and Reconciliation. What do these topics have in common with each other? Can we make a new story out of their interconnectivity? How can we use this moment to strengthen our organizations and each other? Our intrepid team of reporters plans to cover these two GVAT gatherings and keep you informed.