



**GREATER VICTORIA
HOUSING SOCIETY**
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TENANT CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

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<https://greatervichousing.org/covid-19-resources>

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REGISTER FOR YOUR VACCINE ONLINE OR BY PHONE

Register online at:

[HTTPS://WWW2.GOV.BC.CA/
GETVACCINATED.HTML](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated.html)

In order to register online, you must provide your first and last name, date of birth, postal code, your Personal Health Number and an email address or a phone number that can receive text messages.

After registering, confirmation via email or text should come within 15-30 minutes, but could take up to 24 hours.

You can also register by phone at **1-833-838-2323**. This new provincial number replaces the phone lines the health authorities had been operating. Phone lines are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., every day, with reduced hours on statutory holidays.

COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICS NOW OPEN TO ALL INDIGENOUS PEOPLE 18+

All Indigenous people in BC age 18 or older are now able to [register online](#) (see above) or by phone for a COVID-19 first-dose vaccination appointment as part of the province's mass vaccination clinics. This provides an opportunity for First Nations who live away from home to be vaccinated on a priority basis, and an added choice for those who live in community but have not yet received their first vaccine.

Indigenous people and communities are being prioritized for access to vaccines because they face higher risks for infection and serious illness.



FEATURED ARTIST: KELVIN CARSTENS

Kelvin Carstens is an 85-year-old GVHS tenant who's been drawing and painting since childhood. He grew up in South Africa, and moved to Canada in his teens, where his happiest surprise was "how welcoming and kind everyone was, and still is to this day." He was nominated for this profile by his wife, a longtime admirer of his artistic skills, who said "it's about time he gets some recognition for his talent!" We think so too.

GVHS: Kelvin, your pieces are so vibrant. How did you get started making art?

KC: I'd been drawing since childhood. When I was about 17, after we'd moved to Canada, my parents asked me to paint an eagle. That painting got me lots of attention, and I was asked to do lots more by people we knew. I worked in oils for awhile, but then took up with acrylics as they're less fuss.

GVHS: What inspires you?

KC: I find pictures in the newspaper, whatever catches my fancy. There's some that specialize, but I draw everything, I like the challenge of new things. I'm entirely self-taught, too – no training ever.

GVHS: That's amazing! Can you tell me more about that?

KC: It's a lot of experimenting, all trial and error. The best thing I ever did was buy a colour wheel, and just keep trying until I got the colours right.

GVHS: Any words of wisdom for a beginning artist?

KC: You don't need fancy art supplies, and you're never too old. Just get a pen and paper and go outside. Find something you like and really look at it, try to see all its parts. You'll have many failures. Keep trying. And most important, have fun.

Do you know an artist whose work and story would be inspiring to others? Contact us at 250.384.3434 or

info@greatervichousing.org.

YOUR VACCINE QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

Many of you have voiced questions about the COVID-19 vaccine in the last few months. The medical officers and nurses at the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) have put together helpful information for all BC people. We are sharing a few of their most-asked questions and answers here.

You can find a link to the whole list of vaccine questions and answers, plus additional resources, at the end of this article.

Can we stop following the public health guidelines after we are vaccinated?

Not yet. We need to continue to adhere to all of the recommended public health measures even if we've been vaccinated. That's because we don't know how long the vaccine will last or how well it prevents us from transmitting COVID-19 to others, even if we don't have symptoms.

To stop the spread of the virus, enough people need to be immune either through natural infection or immunization. The WHO estimates that at least 70 per cent of the population would need to be immune to ensure widespread protection.

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YOUR VACCINE QUESTIONS, ANSWERED CONTINUED

Should I get the vaccine if I've tested positive for COVID-19 in the past?

If you've had COVID-19 you should still get the vaccine once you have recovered. This is because you may not be immune to the virus that causes COVID-19 and you could get infected again. It is important that you wait the full isolation period before getting the vaccine so that you do not expose people at your vaccination clinic to the virus.

Why is it important to get a COVID-19 vaccination?

The COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to protect you against COVID-19, which is a serious and sometimes fatal disease. In clinical trials, those who received a vaccine were 63% - 95% less likely to become sick with COVID-19 and were almost completely protected against severe illness (hospitalization and death).

When you get immunized, you help protect others as well, including those who are unable to get the vaccine. The more people in a community who are vaccinated, the harder it

is for the virus to spread and mutate.

Reduced access to stable housing, income, clean water and/or health and social services place some Indigenous peoples at higher risk of COVID-19. The vaccine is one way that Indigenous (and other) people can protect themselves from this virus.

Despite publicized vaccine efficacy rates that seem to indicate large differences between vaccines, when examined carefully, the evidence does not support that one vaccine is overall better than another one.

What is clear is that all of the vaccines available in Canada are excellent at preventing hospitalization and death, which is the main purpose of getting the vaccine. Delaying your injection in hopes of getting a vaccine you think might be better only leaves you and others unnecessarily at risk of contracting and becoming very ill or even dying from COVID-19.

The FNHA's Medical Officers strongly recommend that you opt to get the vaccine when offered one. ♦

FURTHER RESOURCES:

Health Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/vaccines.html>

BC Centre for Disease Control: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine>

FNHA: <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine-faqs>

NATURE PUZZLES USING ANYTHING

Draw a shape on a piece of paper, collect small objects like rocks, shells, moss, sticks, or other small treasures, and have your kids fit them into the shape! When they're done, take the pieces off and try again with different objects ~ every puzzle will be different.



DID YOU KNOW? VANCOUVER ISLAND EDITION

There's always more to learn about this incredible island!

- Archeological records reflect the presence of First Nations people on the land for at least 13,800 years before European arrival in 1778
- It is the 11th largest island in Canada, at 460km long and 100km wide, with 3400km of coastline
- Zeballos is one of the Island's smallest towns, with a population of 110
- The Island holds a few world records, notably the world's largest hockey stick in Duncan, and world's largest totem pole in Victoria.
- Vancouver Island sees over 20,000mm of rain per year, with Port Renfrew and Tofino seeing the most. Victoria, thanks to the rain shadow of the mountains and the mainland, sees the least.
- Della Falls, close to Campbell River, is Canada's highest waterfall, at 440m high.
- The Island has some of the tallest and oldest spruce trees and cedars in the world, with some up to 96m or 310ft tall, and over 800 years old.
- Vancouver Island is thought to have the densest population of black bears in the province, with about 7,000 bears roaming the island.
- The Island also has a population of anywhere between 600 - 800 cougars, which makes it the highest concentration of these animals in North America!
- Victoria's Chinatown is the 2nd oldest in North America after San Francisco. ♦