



THE GRAND VIEW: COMMUNITY POLICING NEWS

Volume1, Issue 4 summer 2020

The Grandview-Woodland Community Policing Centre

WE'RE BACK!

After closing our Commercial Drive storefront office for more than 3 months, our dedicated staff and volunteers are eager to offer assistance to our Grandview-Woodland community again. Our centre is a volunteer organization run by an independent non-profit society, working in partnership with the Vancouver Police Department.

Although the Community Policing Centre may have a different look, with a plexiglass sneeze guard on the counter and a re-vamped front room, our staff and volunteers are still here to welcome and assist all members of our diverse community.

Our large group of volunteers represent a wide range of cultures, languages and life experiences and all share a commitment to give back to the community and make the Commercial Drive neighbourhood a safer place for everyone.

We can offer assistance with referrals to City of Vancouver departments, the Vancouver Police and other service providers as well as information on a wide range of safety, crime prevention and quality of life issues.

Our volunteers participate in bike and foot patrols, Speedwatch, Community Clean Ups, Graffiti Removal, Child Car Seat installation education, Project 529 Bike Registration, Lost & Found service, community outreach to local schools, daycares and senior centres and business crime prevention education.

Feel free to come in anytime to access any of these services, ask questions or just to say hello.



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LOCAL BUSINESSES SHOW THE SPIRIT OF THE DRIVE

The Covid-19 lockdown created real challenges for businesses on Commercial Drive. Many closed temporarily, several well-loved local businesses decided to close permanently, including The Flower Box, The Storm Crow Tavern, Federico's, Falconetti's, the Libra Room, Mark's Pet Stop and Cabrito among others.

In this newsletter we want to acknowledge the businesses that stayed open in spite of the pandemic to provide essential needs and services on the Drive. Two of the businesses that went above and beyond to contribute to the local community were Havana Restaurant and The Drive Smoke Shop.

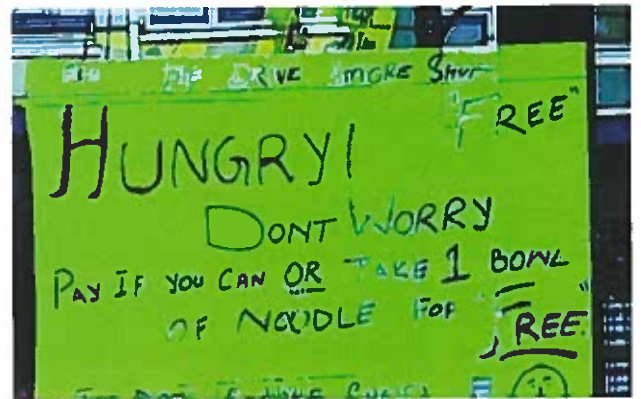
In mid-March when businesses and residents were trying to cope with an unknown future in the face of an unprecedented closure of schools, businesses, volunteer organizations and many other things Vancouverites depended on, posters of hearts and rainbows saying "Thank You" and "We are all in this together" started to appear in shop windows.

The poster in the front window of The Drive Smoke Shop, a small convenience store, was a bit different. It was a ray of hope and a beacon of generosity on the Drive. This hand printed sign offered free soup to anyone in need during those bleak times. Even those who did not need the soup were cheered and encouraged just by seeing this poster. It reminded passersby that even a small gesture of kindness can make a difference in building community.

A much larger business on the Drive, Havana Restaurant, made a larger but equally kind and encouraging gesture. This restaurant, like many others, was facing closure at the start of the lockdown. Their philosophy has always emphasized the value of supporting the local. Local farmers and producers are highlighted in their menu and local artists are featured in the Havana Theatre.

Rather than close entirely, Havana's management and staff joined other Vancouver restaurants in the [Staff Meal Initiative](#). During this time over 1600 meals were donated, \$2100 was raised for the Vancouver Food Bank and \$500 was raised for [MealShare](#). Although the meal program was originally meant to support restaurant workers and the hospitality industry, they quickly realized they could have a further impact and began donating meals to front line workers at hospitals, local charities and really just to anyone who needed a meal.

These 2 very different businesses showed the same commitment to support our community during those very difficult times and embody the true spirit of Commercial Drive.





GRANDVIEW STRONG

Our GWPCPC volunteers took photos of a wide variety of creative signs, cut outs and drawings that appeared in windows all over Grandview-Woodland during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. From hearts and rainbows to words of encouragement for neighbours, appreciation for health care workers and gratitude for all frontline workers, these handmade signs were an inspiration to all who saw them. For the past few months the Grandview-Woodland Community Policing Centre has been posting these signs on our social media. We have included many of them on this page as a way of thanking all of the local residents who used pens, paint, crayons or scissors to express what we were all feeling.

THE GWPCPC THANKS OUR SPONSORS:

Canadian Legion, Grandview Branch~ City of Vancouver ~Greentec~
ICBC~ Kaban Security ~Province of BC, Gaming Branch~RBC, 1st
& Commercial ~South Vancouver Lions Club ~Translink~
Vancity, Branch 12~Vancouver Police Department

BUILDING COMMUNITY ONE BLOCK AT A TIME

VPD Blockwatch is a community-based crime prevention program open to all Vancouver residents and administered by the VPD. It is based on the oldest principle of community safety in the world: neighbours watching out for neighbours.

Starting a Blockwatch group is simple: 2 people from different households on a block or in a condo or rental building apply, are screened by the VPD and then invite all their neighbours to join.

Blockwatch started on my street more than 20 years ago and over the years most participants have joined our email distribution list. Neighbours receive weekly bulletins from the VPD that include safety tips and local crime stats. In addition, the email group shares information about lost pets, block parties and alerts from neighbours about car break ins and other safety concerns in the area.

When Vancouver went into the Covid pandemic lockdown, this trusted Blockwatch communication group developed into a valuable tool for connecting people during a period of self-isolation. Because a level of mutual trust has been built up among our Blockwatch neighbours, we were able to offer to match seniors and others who needed help with neighbours willing to assist them. Offers of shopping for groceries, pet care or other needs were extended to seniors and people who were housebound due to return from foreign travel, illness or other issues. For those not connected through the Blockwatch email group, letters were put in their mailboxes.

This sort of emergency response during an unprecedented time was only possible because of the existing network of neighbours that Blockwatch has helped to build. Most residents have personal ties to a handful of their neighbours and these small groups naturally connect to share information and mutual help when needed. What Blockwatch does is expand this circle: every resident in a square block can be included in the program so they can share information and make connections with neighbours on their own street, across the back lane and on the next block.

This simple, free program has contributed tremendously to neighbourhood safety and community building in Vancouver for many years and when isolated residents needed assistance and connection during the recent pandemic self-isolation period, Blockwatch was there to help.

To get more information about how to start a Blockwatch group send your residential address in an email to: blockwatch@vpd.ca

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

GWPC volunteers are community-minded individuals who join for many different reasons. Some are interested in getting experience in their field of study (psychology, human resources, criminology, community development, etc.), some are longtime local residents who want to make their community a better place, some want to meet new and interesting people. Others, like the volunteer profiled in this edition of our newsletter, are new to Canada and find that the opportunity to volunteer in community policing gives them good insight into Canadian life



In this edition of the volunteer spotlight, we would like to introduce you to Shane, who has been a volunteer since August, 2019. In October 2019, he was the GWPC volunteer of the month, contributing over 40 hours in many different activities such as community clean ups, graffiti paint outs, and office shifts.

Shane originally decided to join the GWPC to gain more confidence and public speaking skills. Not only has he been able to do these things, he has also been able to make new friends and meet interesting people from different walks of life (students to members of the Union Gospel Mission). Shane has participated in different workshops, VPD events, and other outreach opportunities. In doing so, he has been able to learn about other cultures and has gained valuable experience and skills that

are useful in his daily life in Canada. Volunteering has allowed Shane to engage with different communities, while also giving back to the Grandview-Woodland area.