

Port Invests in Childhood Learning through Prince Rupert Growing Space Society

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PRINCE RUPERT, BRITISH COLUMBIA — The Port of Prince Rupert is strengthening the foundations of early learning in the community with its latest Community Investment Fund contribution.

With a \$9,000 contribution from the Fund, the Prince Rupert Growing Space Society was able to replace its supply of play mats. The centre's floors, well-worn due to the centre's popularity, require an extra layer of padding to ensure children have a safe landing for inevitable trip-ups.

The Society welcomes more than 200 visitors a week to its Ocean Centre Mall location, where they learn new skills by using the indoor playground, crafting area, and diverse collection of toys and books.

"We were able to replace the mats we purchased more than seven years ago with more durable, safer flooring that will meet the needs of children in the community for many years to come," said Elizabeth Melanson, President of the Prince Rupert Growing Space Society. "For many families and daycare providers in Prince Rupert, having a dedicated indoor space to escape the weather and get some extended physical activity is a blessing. And it really wouldn't be possible without the generosity and support of community groups and businesses like the Port."

"The fact that Prince Rupert has a volunteer society like the Growing Space is a testament to the importance placed on early childhood education and development in this community," said Don Krusel, President and CEO of the Prince Rupert Port Authority. "The work of this thriving family centre has supported childhood growth and maturity for several generations. It is a joy to sustain that legacy through our Community Investment Fund."

Born as a volunteer mom-and-tot group at the Civic Centre in 1975, the Growing Space ran at various locations in the community before settling in at its current location in Ocean Centre Mall in 1984. It has since become an important community asset for parents and caregivers of young six and younger.

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BACKGROUNDER:

About The Growing Space. The Growing Space operates with a membership base of 80 individuals, families and daycare services, and monthly passes can be purchased for a nominal charge. The centre also sees many drop-in visitors throughout the week, which cost \$4 for an adult and up to two children. The Growing Space also hosts between 15 and 20 private events each month on afternoons and weekends, typically birthday parties for young children.

About the Community Investment Fund. The Community Investment Fund is a share of the Prince Rupert Port Authority's annual income that is earmarked for local projects that contribute to the region's quality of life and create long lasting benefits. In combination with funding from other businesses, community groups and government agencies, the Community Investment Fund has enabled millions of dollars in local improvement projects since its inception in 2009. Each of these projects has filled an important role in supporting sports, recreation, performing arts, healthcare, education, the environment and other needs in the community.