

NEWS RELEASE

Keeping People Housed Launching in August: Sunshine Coast Credit Union, The Co-operators and Sunshine Coast Community Services Society collaborate on new initiative.

Sunshine Coast, B.C. July 31, 2018 – In response to recommendations from community members at the BC Poverty Reduction Meeting hosted by Sunshine Coast Community Services (SCCSS) in March, SCCSS, Sunshine Coast Credit Union and The Co-operators have come together to create a new service that will play a role in addressing the key issue brought up across the province: housing.

In August, the Keeping People Housed initiative will launch to support individuals experiencing a temporary financial crisis. Tenants facing the potential for eviction, or the termination of their utilities, will be able to apply for a short term interest free loan through SCCSS. Applicants will be required to qualify based on specific criteria including minimum income verification. Keeping People Housed will also provide applicants with advocacy, financial literacy and referral support tailored to the needs of the individual in crisis. This SCCSS service is made possible because of the funding provided by Sunshine Coast Credit Union and The Co-operators.

“We believe everyone has a role to play in promoting community resiliency on the Coast. We are thrilled to see Sunshine Coast Credit Union and The Co-operators continuing to support our local community in such an impactful way,” said Catherine Leach, Executive Director, SCCSS. “Our role at Community Services is to provide programs that create opportunities for people on the Coast to achieve their full potential. We have developed new programs that address housing and employment which are issues impacting the health of our community.”

SCCSS is hosting an information session on August 8 for service providers on the Coast to learn about eligibility requirements, and ways to connect with the program. Applications to the program will be accepted starting on August 27th.

“We are honoured to be collaborating with these forward-thinking organizations to bring this important program to the Coast,” said Shelley McDade, CEO of Sunshine Coast Credit Union. “Supporting our community in this way is entirely made possible by more than 16,700 members that choose us as their financial institution. So thank you SCCU members for your role in keeping people housed on the Sunshine Coast.”

“Housing stability is a challenge affecting many individuals and families living on the Sunshine Coast,” said Valerie Georgescu, Co-operators advisor in Gibsons. “As a cooperative, we look for opportunities to provide solutions to unmet needs that lead to financial security and peace of mind for Canadians. We’ve seen first-hand how support programs like Keeping People Housed can positively impact the communities that they serve.”

This service is one of a number of new initiatives that SCCSS has recently developed to support their vision of an engaged, healthy and thriving Coast.

In 2017, a pilot project was created to support Arrowhead Clubhouse members to find meaningful employment in their community. With support from the Vancouver Foundation, SCCSS developed and implemented SEED (Skills Enhancement for Employment and Development) that will run as a pilot Project until 2019. This project aims to create positive work

opportunities that will shift negative perceptions, increase the employability skills of adults living with mental illness and increase the number of employment opportunities for these adults within the community.

“It has been amazing to watch the SEED participants talk about how having this employment opportunity has changed their lives,” said Carey Rumba, Manager of Community Action and Engagement at SCCSS. “We would love to include more local businesses in this program to expand the number of job opportunities available.”

In addition to Keeping People Housed and SEED, Community Services is in the preliminary stages of planning a redevelopment that will provide affordable housing for women and community services together in one location.

The proposed development will embrace a mix of women including single women, women and children, single women who are older, and young women who are aging out of care; creating a community of women and families who have similar life experiences such as struggles with homelessness, poverty and experiences of violence/abuse.

This development will bring the majority of SCCSS programs located in Sechelt to one main location. This will reduce barriers to service and increase opportunities for individuals and families, particularly for those with complex challenges, to access a variety of services in one location.

To learn more about Keeping People Housed contact Andrea Hobbs, Volunteer Coordinator, SCCSS at ahobbs@sccss.ca

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About Sunshine Coast Credit Union

With more than \$650 million in assets, Sunshine Coast Credit Union is a full-service co-operative financial institution serving 16,800 members through 3 locations and mobile service. Employing more than 80 people, SCCU is a recipient of CoachingWise, an International Coach Federation designation. Investing in one another to build a healthy community is how we began 75 years ago, a vision that remains true today. Together, we enrich lives & community on the Sunshine Coast. Learn more at www.sunshineccu.com/OurStory

About The Co-operators

The Co-operators Group Limited is a Canadian co-operative with more than \$41 billion in assets under administration. Through its group of companies, it offers home, auto, life, group, travel, commercial and farm insurance, as well as investment products. The Co-operators is well known for its community involvement and its commitment to sustainability. The Co-operators is listed among the Best Employers in Canada by Aon Hewitt and Corporate Knights' Best 50 Corporate Citizens in Canada. For more information, visit www.cooperators.ca

About Sunshine Coast Community Services Society

Sunshine Coast Community Services, the largest non-profit on the Sunshine Coast, has been making our community stronger, safer and more resilient since 1974. Our organization supports over 5000 community members through 35 programs in four main areas: Child Development and Youth Services; Community Action and Engagement; Child and Family Counselling; and Together Against Violence. Learn more at www.sccss.ca