

Interim Report – Saturna Island Wellness Grant

With the contract signed in late March we set an ambitious goal to hold our first class on May 4, 2017. We knew from the onset that the most challenging task would be to find a certified instructor willing to travel to Saturna Island for one day every week. A search of the BC Recreation & Parks Association Fitness Registry found a number of individuals with the right qualifications. We were extremely lucky in that the first person we approached was very keen to be involved, and fortuitously also had falls prevention certification. A meeting over coffee in Sidney and we were off!

We advertised on all the local bulletin boards, made presentations at meetings of various island organizations, did a mail drop into all the post boxes on island and added an article to the monthly island newsletter.

We decided to start with a First Module of 12 weeks offering two – one hour classes every Thursday. The first class we designated Level One and geared it to individuals wanting to remain seated but still get some exercise. The second class we named Level Two and designed it to improve balance, strength and mobility.

We started on schedule, on May 4th with an open house to demonstrate to participants what the wellness program was about. We had 18 islanders turn out on the first day and everyone was very enthusiastic.

Classes continued every week through the spring and into the summer (July 20th) with good turnouts most weeks; our youngest attendee was 35 and our oldest 95 with an average age of approx. 64. Because we had recruited an experienced falls prevention instructor, every class received instruction in falls prevention in addition to printouts and exercise sheets.

The overall attendance for this First Module was slightly above expected (we had anticipated 15 students per week for a total of 180 person visits).

Level One class had 63 person visits, with a subscribed mailing list of 12 attendees

Level Two class had 121 person visits, with a subscribed mailing list of 30 attendees

As we continued through the late spring we recognized that there was a cohort interested in a slightly more strenuous class. So for the last three weeks we added a Level Three class. It ran from June 29 – July 20, and had 22 person visits, with a subscribed mailing list of 17 attendees.

We took a break for the rest of the summer as we expected interest to wane during August.

Also in May, our two island students enrolled with Body Blueprint to start their fitness instructor program. One student moved through the online modules with ease, one found it more challenging. By the end of the summer our first student was almost

finished her online course work and was ready for the final exam. The second student is still working very slowly through the modules.

We decided to implement our Second Module of 12 lessons starting on Thursday September 21st. We offered all three levels of one hour classes, employing our off island instructor for the first four weeks. Our first student mentored these classes with a goal to teach her first class as a qualified instructor on October 19th. She reached this goal and taught three classes on Thursday, October 19th with an attendance of 24 islanders in total (a record).

The response of the island to this program has been overwhelmingly supportive. And now that we have our own on island instructor, the response is increasing.

At the end of the First Module we surveyed the attendees to get their input re the program. A few of the comments are:

- I am very grateful for the opportunity, hope it continues all year.
- while the exercises are deceptively simple, they are very effective and I enjoyed them and benefit from them.
- I enjoy everyone's sense of humour, support and encouragement. I like being able to exercise core and upper body in the seated class while recovering from a leg injury.
- Great instructor!
- My posture has improved.
- Great idea, good program, it works for me!
- I enjoy exercising in company with helpful instruction.
- I think this is a hugely valuable resource for the Saturna Community

We are also noticing an increased interest in the exercise room at the Saturna Recreation Centre, and have plans to improve and expand this facility with input from our new instructor. A recent walkathon raised over \$3000 for another piece of equipment.