



Saunders Family Foundation
Families Helping Families

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VOTE for a Thriving Community!

Sooke and West Shore (September 14, 2022) – It's election season again, the first municipal vote since COVID, climate emergencies, and inflation we haven't seen in decades. We are living in challenging times.

Whether the issues are local or global we all experience and feel the impacts of them here at home. Throughout these unprecedented times we have become more aware of the vital role that our community services and programs play in our individual and collective wellbeing.

So, as we head into our municipal elections this October, it's more important than ever for people to VOTE, and to VOTE for candidates who are committed to robust social programs, from childcare, recreation, arts, and literacy programming to family support outreach services, healthcare, long-term care, and hospice facilities.

With a mission to help drive higher voter turnout and increased accountability on the part of candidates running for public office in this election, the [Saunders Family Foundation](#) and [The Village Initiative](#) (TVI), a network of more than 40 community organizations, are teaming up to ask the community and its leaders to step up in this municipal election.

"We want to motivate more people to vote in this election, particularly people with young families who have been feeling the pinch of these chronic gaps in programs. If folks want to receive better services for their tax dollars, they should be sure to vote for the candidates committed to building a healthier community," said Dave Saunders, President of the Saunders Family Foundation.

Citizens across Sooke and the West Shore will be asking their municipal candidates to sign an [Accountability Partnership Pledge](#) to demonstrate their commitment to enshrine or strengthen important community health and social planning features in the Official Community Plans of regional municipalities.

Over the past 15 years, Sooke and the West Shore have seen significant development. The population has more than doubled, with thousands of new homes built, and along with them new businesses, schools, and other amenities.

But some critical public infrastructure has not kept pace with this historic growth and change. It's left children, youth, families, and seniors struggling to find programs and services to support a region that has more children 15 years of age or younger than anywhere else in BC, a healthcare crisis where about 50% of the population is without a family doctor, and a greying demographic looking to stay in their community as they age.

"We know that about 8,000 more people could be served in the Sooke and West Shore region each year if only the spaces were available. That's everything from daycare and after school programs, to vital supports for at-risk youth. So, as people head to the polls, we feel it's time for these important community planning issues to be included in our candidate conversations," said Scott Bradford, a member of TVI's Leadership Table and the Executive Director of Thrive Social Services which provides parenting support, mental health outreach, and a host of services for persons with developmental disabilities in Sooke and the West Shore.



This October, VOTE for a Thriving Community and municipal candidates who will commit to making sure important health and social planning policy objectives are reflected in the Official Community Plans of their municipalities.

You can learn more about our community's health and social planning needs by visiting [The Village Initiative's Election 2022](#) page, then post your pic and your pledge to vote on your social media feed with the hashtag #TakesAVillage.

Candidates who sign their Accountability Partnership Pledge will be acknowledged on the [Healthy WestShore Election 2022](#) page ahead of the election, so please remember to ask your local candidate if they've signed the pledge yet and if they haven't, ask them why not.

The next four years will help chart the course of our Sooke and West Shore neighbourhoods for decades to come, so Your VOTE is Vital.

It truly does Take a Village to drive positive change for our region's children, youth, families, and seniors, so please make time to VOTE for a Thriving Community this October.

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