



bcpvpa Partnership Awards

We have all experienced a deluge of challenges over the past year, so our annual BCPVPA Partnership Awards were a welcome breath of fresh air, reminding us of the positive impact that can be made on a local level. Hearing that a retiree has made more than 10, 000 birdhouses for school-aged children to paint, decorate, and install around their communities is sure to bring a smile to your face.

This past spring, the BCPVPA presented our Partnership Awards to community members and groups who have had an immeasurable impact on students, schools, and communities. It was our first in-person event since 2019, so it was extra special to have members and friends gather in one place to honour these worthy recipients as part of our Chapter Council meeting.

Take a moment to read these good news stories from the 2022 recipients and learn how they have helped schools in BC.

JOHN REMPLE

Nominated by SD22, Vernon

"Thank you to the educators & support staff that nominated me for the award, and to all those that provided letters of their support. It is such an honour to receive this award along with others that contribute so much to their communities. I am amazed to receive this award – 10 years ago I made my neighbours' two sons birdhouses, and the project has grown so much since then."

– John Remple



John Remple has built and donated more than 10,000 birdhouses to schools in Vernon and the North Okanagan. It all started in 2010 when he gave his two kindergarten-aged neighbour boys a birdhouse to take to school for Show and Tell. He didn't realize what an impact they would make – soon, he was receiving requests from other classes for his birdhouses. He was happy to keep building birdhouses for the students, and sourced donations of plywood and other materials. When John and his wife moved to Vernon in 2015,

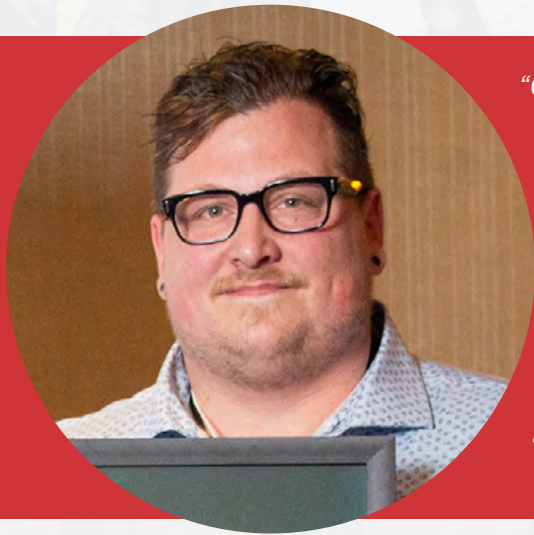
John continued to build his birdhouses – he donated them in the Vernon school district, and the requests started rolling in. He has mobilized companies to donate supplies, spent many hours in his workshop building birdhouses, and arranged for their delivery to schools. Students love painting and decorating the houses and learning about how to help local birds. John will even deliver the birdhouses unassembled, so classes can learn design and technology skills.



Photo courtesy of John Remple

CENTRAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

Nominated by SD33, Chilliwack



"Central Community Church is so humbled to accept this award on behalf of the many folks who invest their time, energy, and resources into caring for students in our community. Our goal as a church has always been to make a tangible difference in people's lives and to care for those who need help in times of need. While we have never done this to win an award, it's incredible to be recognized and to be reminded that what we do in our school partnerships matters."

– **Jonathan Kornelsen**, the Youth Pastor at Central Community Church

Central Community Church has been a great supporter of Promontory Heights Elementary and Kwiyeqel Secondary, both located in Chilliwack School District. They have made the Christmas season brighter by donating hampers and gift cards, and have helped fulfill school needs by partnering with Promontory Elementary to purchase a new projector for their gym and fresh paint for the school's staging.

At Kwiyeqel Secondary, they have partnered with Ricky's Restaurant to host breakfast for all

the students and staff each Monday. Not only do they help start every week with a tradition of sharing food together, but they also host BBQ events at the beginning and end of the year. Central Community Church doesn't forget about the school staff, bringing them coffee, tea, and goodies to share for staff meetings. The church also hosts the graduation ceremony every year, and during COVID-19 they even set up a live stream for extended family and friends to watch.



Photo courtesy of Central Community Church

Rob Tournour Masonry Ltd.

Nominated by SD62, Sooke

"We are humbled to receive this Award of Recognition from the BCPVP Association. 2022 marks 25 years in business for Rob Tournour Masonry Ltd., and for 25 years our goal has been to be leaders in our trade, providing an excellent workplace for our employees and opportunities for countless apprentices. Our philosophy has always been about community. Being nominated by Vicki at Ruth King was an unexpected surprise. Learning that we had been chosen as a recipient, a genuine honour."

– Rob Tournour, Rob Tournour Masonry Ltd.



Rob Tournour has run a family-owned masonry business based in Victoria for more than 20 years. Since its establishment, the business has supported community projects; whether it is assisting a school down the street, or half-way across the world, Rob Tournour Masonry Ltd. will lend a helping hand. Following the devastating earthquakes in Nepal, Rob Tournour Masonry Ltd. helped construct three schools and launched the charity Another Brick in Nepal to help the continued rebuilding of community buildings. The company has also worked with a local organization, Herowork, which helps Victoria charities to renovate buildings in need.

In winter 2021, company owner Rob Tournour reached out to a local school, Ruth King Elementary, after hearing their appeal for warm coats for students. He was asked if he could help support the school's breakfast and food program – he happily obliged, and added that he also wanted to help with a winter gift program, and to contribute something special for families before Christmas. Rob and his family delivered more than 50 wrapped gifts to students and their parents in the school parking lot. Rob Tournour Masonry Ltd. continues to support the food program, helping to ensure that the basic needs of students are met so they are ready for a full day of learning.



Photo courtesy of Rob Tournour Masonry Ltd.

EAGLE WING TOURS

Nominated by SD61, Victoria



"From the entire Eagle Wing Tours team, thank you for this honour. The 'Exploring the Salish Sea' program is a partnership in every sense of the word and would not have become reality without the vision and unwavering support of School District 61. It's a perfect fit for all. Students get a real-life learning experience in their big blue back yard. And we fulfill our long-time dream to inspire the next generation of ocean stewards!"

– **Brett Soberg**, co-owner and captain, Eagle Wing Tours

(pictured: Nathan Bird, Eagle Wing Tours)

Eagle Wing Tours operates with environmental stewardship as one of their leading principles: they were the first company in their industry to join 1% for the Planet. This commitment means they have adopted a carbon-neutral operating system and implement a per-guest wildlife fee which is used to support research and conservation.

Eagle Wing Tours also has a vision to inspire environmental responsibility by educating people about the wildlife of the Salish Sea. They have developed an innovative school program – the 'floating classroom' – which seeks to educate students who could be the next generation

of ocean stewards by creating emotional connections to the land through learning. Students are visited by an Eagle Wing staff member for an introductory lesson, and the following class is out on the sea! The 'Exploring the Salish Sea' program culminates in an event where they share what they have learned with a public audience at the Royal BC Museum. The program offers a way for land-based learning and Indigenous ways of knowing to be woven together with classroom learning. In the 2021-2022 school year, Eagle Wing Tours has coordinated the program with 60 classrooms, with approximately 2,500 students across twenty-five schools



Photo courtesy of Eagle Wing Tours

Chris Paulson & Rachelle van Zanten

Nominated by SD91, Nechako Lakes

"We are absolutely over the moon grateful to accept the BCPVPA award on behalf of our Spirit North team. Four years ago, we were blessed with the opportunity to provide land-based sports programs to the Indigenous youth in our community. To be able to share our passion for cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and paddling on the traditional unceded territory on which our family and community resides has been life changing. In exchange we have gained family, history, culture, and language from the members of our local Six Nations."

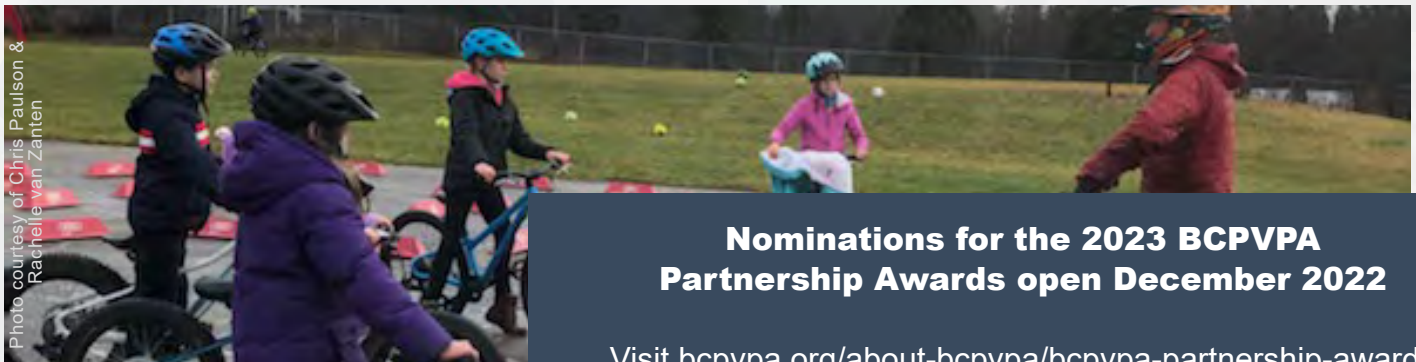
– Chris Paulson & Rachelle van Zanten



Chris and Rachelle grew up and began their sports careers in their hometown of Burns Lake. They both moved away from the region for periods of time after completing education but, as their time away from Burns Lake increased, they felt a pull for home. Upon returning to the district, they both wanted to give back to their community. This began with support of cross-country skiing at the local club, a sport they both loved and grew up participated in, and extended to multiple activities for all schools in Burns Lake. Fast-forward to the present, and Chris and Rachelle have been volunteering for a combined 54 years, Chris for more than 40 years and Rachelle for 14 years.

In 2018, both Chris and Rachelle joined the Spirit North team and focused their efforts on providing

land-based sports opportunities to Indigenous children in the area. They have collaborated closely with schools to establish and maintain a network of trails accessible year-round for learning opportunities. The maintenance of these trails requires many hours with a snowmobile to groom elementary school playgrounds, paths, and trails to ensure cross-country ski excursions remain available. With Spirit North, they offer coaching and support for students and teachers to provide lessons in cross-country skiing and mountain biking. Their most recent project was in collaboration with Nechako Lakes School District (SD91) and Decker Lake Elementary, constructing a 2-kilometre nature trail behind the school for year-round access.



**Nominations for the 2023 BCPVPA
Partnership Awards open December 2022**

Visit bcpvpa.org/about-bcpvpa/bcpvpa-partnership-awards