



Pender Island Community Gathering (Lunch Program)

April 2017

Program Description

The Pender Island Community Gathering has been providing a by donation lunch at the Community Hall on Pender Island once a week since September 2016. Though not exclusively focused on seniors, about half of the lunch participants are 55 and older. In addition to the food, the lunch includes entertainment (usually live music), group activities and connections to community resources.

The program is a partnership between the Pender Island Health Care Society, Ptarmigan Music and Theater Society, and the Pender Island Community Hall. The Health Care Society provides the Lunch Program Coordinator, the venue and the food. The lunch is made by local cooks and they are working on making the cost of food preparation (cook and supplies) self-sustaining (through the donations received at the lunch). Ptarmigan Music and Theater Society has funding from a New Horizons for local musicians to perform during the lunches. The Community Hall provides a morning low-cost community café before the lunch for people to visit and chat. The Hall also sets up a technology support table for people to get help learning how to use their computers/devices and organizes youth interns (age 12- 15) to assist with the lunch set-up, serve at the café and help out as needed. Each week, activities are organized to precede the lunch, such as a mini-pedicures for seniors, sing-alongs, exercise classes, crafts workshops, fix-it café (to fix things like broken lamps, toasters, etc.), wellness workshops and whatever else peaks the interest of the community.

Future Plans

The Pender Island Community Gathering is fairly new, but they are already looking into opportunities to enhance the program. The program is attempting to increase the intergenerational aspects of the activities provided by involving more children and youth. They are also working in collaboration with a new community bus pilot project, which helps to provide transportation to the event. The Gathering holds a lot of promise, but the challenge will be sustaining the program after the grant funding runs out in late spring 2017.