

VICA Members donate over \$20,000 in toys and groceries to Vancouver Island families

Victoria, BC (December 24, 2019) – In time for the holiday season, members of the Vancouver Island Construction Association (VICA) raised over \$20,000 for families in the communities they work and live in. Their generosity shone at a time it is needed the most; a time when families struggling to get by are reminded of what they can and cannot have.

Of the funds raised, \$12,500 were put towards grocery gift cards, distributed by elementary school principals to families who bear the uncomfortable burden of living paycheck to paycheck. While not the face of poverty, they struggle to support their family's basic needs but don't qualify for other charitable donations.

"We have identified quite a few families in need and with the increasing cost of living, even more of our parents are experience financial hardship," says Katrin van der Leeden, Grade 5 Teacher at Ruth King Elementary School. "These grocery gift cards from VICA and its members help to alleviate some of the stress and worry that our families experience around the holidays; and perhaps most importantly, their kindness has made a difference in the way our children experience the holiday season."

Recipient schools include George Jay and Oaklands in Victoria, Tillicum in Saanich, Ruth King in Langford, and Georgia Avenue Community School in Nanaimo. Each elementary school principal received \$2,500 worth of grocery gift cards to give to families in their communities that need it the most.

"These donations from VICA Members are a testament to the generosity of the individuals that make up our construction community," says Rory Kulmala, CEO of the Vancouver Island Construction Association. "We're proud to represent our local industry and pleased to partner with local school principals who help us support families throughout the year, even after the seasonal spirit of giving ends."

"Many families have needs but don't ask," says Leila Durzi, Family Liaison Worker at George Jay Elementary. "I know the families and the cycle. There's often a high need in January, after the holidays, as well as September because families have gone all summer without any support."

Funds for the grocery gift cards were raised at VICA's Christmas Luncheon through 50/50, a silent auction, and a change challenge, where guests empty their pockets and wallets to fill paint cans with cash. Heavy hitters in 2019 included Farmer Construction, 91 lbs; Slegg Building Materials and Gordon 'N' Gordon Interiors, 54 lbs; Story Construction, 49.8 lbs; and Knappett Projects, 45 lbs.

On top of the funds raised at the Luncheon, \$7,700 worth of new, unwrapped toys were collected at both VICA offices and donated to The Great Nanaimo Toy Drive, CFAF Santas Anonymous Society, the Ladysmith Resources Centre Association, the Parksville Society of Organized Services, and Santa's Workshop in Courtenay. For a list of VICA Member toy donors, visit www.vicabc.ca/toydrive.

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* Photos below. Additional high-resolution photos available upon request.

ABOUT THE VANCOUVER ISLAND CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

VICA is a member-based, industry-led association serving the industrial, commercial, institutional, and multi-family residential construction sectors across Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and coastal British Columbia, including Powell River. With bases in Victoria and Nanaimo, VICA connects the industry with skilled labour, training and education, and business development opportunities.



Left: Rory Kulmala, VICA CEO; David Hovis, Principal, Oaklands Elementary School
Right: Rory Kulmala, VICA CEO; Melanie Postle, George Jay Elementary School Principal; Leila Durzi, Family Liaison Worker



Left: Rory Kulmala, VICA CEO; Jeff Duyndam, Principal, Tillicum Elementary School
Center: Vicki Ives, Ruth King Elementary Principal; John Easley, VICA Manager, Member Engagement
Right: Serena Huppe, Services Assistant, VICA; The Great Nanaimo Toy Drive



Left: John Easley, VICA Manager, Member Engagement, Kelly Marion, VICA Manager, Marketing and Communications, Bill O'Brien, Job Developer, VICA Construct Your Future, Owen O'Rourke, VICA Coordinator, Communications and Events
Right: Lissa Alexander, Parksville Society of Organized Services; Rory Kulmala, VICA CEO