

MEDIA RELEASE



Removing a Barrier to Education

December 11, 2009

It's been a tough year for teachers and students that want to enhance learning opportunities. Budget cuts have reduced the ability of local school districts to support educational field trips. Parent Advisory Councils who support programs that benefit students have been devastated by the cancellation of grants.

The new Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre in Sidney is a purpose built environmental education centre focused on the marine life of the Salish Sea. The award-winning Centre is equipped with live animal exhibits and technology, and is staffed by gifted educators. "This not-for-profit discovery centre was built to inspire and educate students about the ocean. We are ready to deliver but teachers have found transportation to be a huge barrier" says Angus Matthews the Centre's Executive Director.

Wilson's Transportation, a Victoria based, family-owned company, has been transporting kids for over 40 years. Wilson's Vice-President, John Wilson, is determined that students will not be deprived of the opportunity to access the new education centre. John Wilson has chosen to use revenue from Wilson's summer tour business and allocate it to help kids and teachers in our community. Wilson's Transportation is the official transportation supplier for the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre.

Wilson's Transportation will provide free buses for public school classes participating in education programs at the Centre during January and February 2010. The offer is open to classes from School Districts 61 (Victoria), 62 (Sooke) and 63 (Saanich).

Greater Victoria School District, Associate Superintendent, Sherri Bell is impressed. "We are fortunate to have a new \$5 Million environmental education centre here on the island. It makes so much sense for these specialized learning resources to be in a purpose built education centre shared by all schools in the region. Wilson's has unlocked the door and removed a major barrier. When the community supports education like this it opens doors that benefit students."

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Our Ocean Lives Here

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Christine Cunningham, Parent Advisory Council President of North Saanich Middle school said “This is great news because funds have been cut by more than half this year, so there’s not really a lot of money to put towards field trips for the schools. It’s wonderful that something is being done to help our students out.”

About the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre

The Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre is an aquarium and marine education centre focused on the amazing ecosystem of the Salish Sea. The Centre operates as a not-for-profit community facility that is self supporting through admission fees, grants and donations. The Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre is governed, funded and owned by the New Marine Centre Society. Funds for the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre were raised through generous community support, and a major donation from Shaw Communications. The Centre is located in a spectacular waterfront building in Sidney, BC.

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