



SEMIAHMOO
HOUSE
SOCIETY

PENINSULA
ESTATES HOUSING
SOCIETY

THE
SEMIAHMOO
FOUNDATION

August 27, 2020

Re: COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Semiahmoo House Society Community,

I am addressing this letter to the whole Semiahmoo House Society community: people we support, the families of people we support, home share providers, and all our staff members. For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be working together, with as few boundaries as possible to ensure that everyone is supported and safe.

August 27th Update

Community Services—Pods

Community Services have staff and people supported working in pods of between 8 to 10 people. This does not mean that the full pods get together all the time, but that this is the group of people who will be interacting with each other through our services, thus limiting the number of contact people we support and our staff will have, making it safer for all. Over the past few weeks, we have been “ironing out the wrinkles” in the pod system, and we thank you for your patience as we have done so. This pods system, and our acquisition of more locations for services, will allow SHS to continue to support people in the fall if COVID-19 comes back strongly. We do not intend to go back to our March response, when we did not fully understand the virus and we closed our facilities (although did continue to support some people with adapted community services). We understand the virus much better now and have safety protocols in place. Our goal is to support people as much as we can, given our resources and the safety protocols we need to follow.

SHS Online Campus

Many people SHS supports are engaging with the SHS Online Campus as students, participants, and hosts. If you want to be part of the Online Campus or have any questions about this service, please contact Matt Cruickshank at M.Cruickshank@shsbc.ca.

Home Share Emergency Funding

Emergency Home Share Funding has been extended to July and August and we sent in our request for funding for SHS Home Share providers on August 12th. We will let you know as soon as we receive the funding.

Proposed Federal Emergency Funding for Families

Families who have been supporting their loved ones who have disabilities during the pandemic may finally see some financial support. The Federal Government is proposing a Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB) that would provide \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks per household, for eligible Canadians unable to work because they must care for a family member with a disability because their day program is closed due to COVID-19. **This legislation has not been passed by parliament yet.** More information can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2020/08/government-of-canada-announces-plan-to-help-support-canadians-through-the-next-phase-of-the-recovery.html>

SPARK! Continues to Connect People

SPARK! Community Connection Services has been expanding their services, both online and in-person, in safe and meaningful ways. Through their online services they have livened up learning by doing things like SPARK trivia at *Hanging with Friends* gathering, having a *What To Wear Where* fashion show, collaborating with organizations like Kudoz for *Let's Connect* sessions and showcasing more about the skills and talents of the people in our service through "Teach Us!" days. In person they have collaborated in safe ways with the City Dream Centre, Pony Pals Riding Stables and the City of Surrey Pop Up Park Cleanup. These are places where people learned about aspects of living a full, rich, vibrant life through being an active member of the community.

SPARK! will continue exploring the new normal for community opportunities as a service, and are really excited about their upcoming collaborations! **If you are interested in SPARK, sign up on the SHS Online Campus for the next *Hanging with Friends* gathering happening on September 18th from 6:30-8 PM.** It's a night of learning, fun, conversation and connection all planned out for you!



Trish, Heather and Craig at the City of Surrey Pop Up Park Cleanup



Laura at the City Dream Centre Collaboration Day

Important and Ongoing Information

Self-Advocate Work

Semiahmoo House Society and The Semiahmoo Foundation has been supporting self-advocates to have a voice during the COVID-19 pandemic. I wanted to share with you some of the advocacy work that two self-advocate groups that we are associated with have been doing. The Provincial Self-Advocate Leadership Network (SALN) have been creating news releases and sending them to provincial and federal leaders, and the Self-Advocates of Semiahmoo (SAS) have created five public awareness videos about COVID 19. SALN news releases and SAS videos can be found on the new [SALNBC.com website](https://salnbc.com).

Guidance Counselor

Shab Khan, Registered Family Counsellor, MPCC, RPC, will be providing support to people connected to Semiahmoo House Society during the COVID-19 pandemic. The counselling is meant for people SHS supports, including people already on the Guidance Counselor's active list, people on her wait list, family members, and home share providers. Priority will be given to the people in the most critical situations (environmental, health, or emotional). The support given will be virtual—through phone, email, or secure online platforms. Contact information below:

Guidance Counselor contact information:

Shab Khan, Registered Family Counsellor, M.P.C.C., R.P.C.
Telephone: 604-536-1242 Extension: 276
Email: s.khan@shsbc.ca

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

If someone we support in home share or residential services does get ill with COVID-19, we have N-95 masks, face shields, and other PPE to distribute to people we support, home share providers, and staff members who are at risk. Due to limited supplies, these PPE are reserved for cases of confirmed COVID-19 infection (by Fraser Health) in staffed residential settings (group homes and Chorus) and home share homes only.

Additional Support

If you need additional support, please contact the relevant person listed below.

SHS Staff Member	Service/Program
Lise Boughen Director of Inclusive Living l.boughen@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 227	Staffed Residential (Group Homes) Chorus Apartment Supports
Gale Cooper Manager, Community Support Network g.cooper@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 231	Home Share Providers
Liz Deschenes Community Services Director e.deschenes@shsbc.ca 604-536-1242 ext. 234	Peninsula Child Care Acquired Brain Injury Services
Brianna Hopaluk Community Services Manager b.hopaluk@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 232	South Campus (formerly PD)
Teresa Randle Transitions Services Supervisor t.randle@shsbc.ca 604 536 1242 ext. 311	North Campus (formerly Transitions) Focus Group Encore
Anita Bhatti Recreation and Leisure Services Program Coordinator a.bhatti@shsbc.ca 604-536-1242 ext. 255	Rec & Leisure Services
Kristyl Downing Program Coordinator—ABIS k.downing@shsbc.ca 604-592-1006 ext. 230	Acquired Brain Injury Services
Seema Tripathi Employment and Innovative Services Director s.tripathi@shsbc.ca 778 888 5916	WISE Employment Solutions Culinary Arts Program (CULA) SPARK tidyAlot

Sincerely,



Doug Tennant

CEO, Semiahmoo House Society

Semiahmoo House Society's COVID-19 Principles

- 1) All our decisions will be made with the safety of the people we support and our staff members being our first priority**
- 2) We will support people with disabilities to have the same right to safety as all other citizens in BC**
- 3) We are person-centred and will adapt our services to support people in the way that is best for them, given safety and resource realities**
- 4) We are open-minded and will revise our plans when new information suggests this**
- 5) We will be responsible with taxpayer funds and will use alternate resources when necessary in our response**

Resources

While there is much media coverage of the COVID-19 virus it is important to be sure the information is reputable and up to date. Here are five sites that will keep you informed (google the name if this is not an electronic letter):

- [Public Health Authority of Canada](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [BC Ministry of Health](#)
- [CLBC COVID-19 Information Page](#)

SHS's communications about COVID-19 and our response can be found here:

<https://uniti4all.com/covid-19-information/>