



Port Alberni Association for Community Living PAACL NEWS



The Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) program is pleased to present their community garden! What started as an idea became a reality due to the dedication of the program staff Kirstyn Rogers, Michael Bryant and several enthusiastic children and youth!

Funded by United Way Central/Northern Vancouver Island and the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund, the program was able to expand on its idea of one or two garden boxes to having a large-scale project. Resurrected to date are 19 large garden boxes, two eight-foot vertical growing arches; one standing garden box, one wheelchair accessible garden box, a vertical herb garden and multiple dwarf fruit trees all of which is COVID safe and wheelchair accessible. With such a large undertaking, we were able to provide some short term paid work experience for individuals from our Community Employment Program (CEP).

As we have been building we have also been growing, this year we have already produced peas, zucchinis, potatoes, cucumbers, garlic, radishes and turnips. Thank you to Guy Langlois of Shelter Farm for the generous donation of turnip starters. The goals of the garden are:

- For the children and youth of the program to learn about growing their own food and being excited to try new foods by choosing what they would like to grow
- To complement our cooking programs with garden-to-plate recipes
- To provide healthy food boxes for the youth to take home with them and share with their families

