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Selkirk College Health Care Assistant Program Gets Bursary Boost in Kaslo

by Bob Hall on 04 May 2016

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Selkirk College Health Care Assistant Program students who received the Community Foundation of North Kootenay Lake bursaries gathered with foundation members and college staff at the Kaslo Learning Centre to acknowledge the generous donation.

The Community Foundation of North Kootenay Lake (CFNKLS) has provided a generous donation to provide bursaries for students who were enrolled the Selkirk College Health Care Assistant Program.

A special cohort of the 26-week Health Care Assistant Program started in January at the college's Kaslo Learning Centre. The offering was made possible through a partnership with the Victorian Hospital of Kaslo to share their resources and help provide the education needed in this critical area of the health care sector.

“Health care assistants and home support services will be increasingly important to maintaining local seniors comfortably and in their own homes,” says Barney Gilmore, CFNKLS Secretary. “The committee decided that it would be appropriate to award up to \$2,700 to the Selkirk College Kaslo Learning Centre to help these applicants finish this program with more manageable personal debts than would otherwise be possible. All applicants hope to stay in our area to practice their skills after graduation.”

CFNKLS is a philanthropic organization that benefits residents of Kaslo and Regional District of Central Kootenay's Area D. In late-February, CFNKLS announced it would be providing \$2,700 towards bursaries targeted at the Health Care Assistant Program.

“Having local staff provides long term stability to our facility,” says Robert Nellis, Resident Care Coordinator at the Victorian Community Health Centre. “As well, the quality of our residents' lives is enhanced by memories and stories of a sharing community. We much appreciate the cooperation of Selkirk College and CFNKLS for providing this important education for citizens in our community.”

Five Health Care Assistant students submitted bursary applications to CFNKLS and were each awarded a bursary. Lori Hill, Agwi Munoh, Sarah Heard, Marie-Anne Bernier and Laurie Hartland were all successful applicants for the funding.

Health Care Assistant students worked full time in a blended learning environment, in a classroom as well as online. The practicum component of their training began on May 2 and ends on June 30.

“Due to the logistics of commuting to another Selkirk College campus, most of us would not have been able to register in this course,” says Hartland. “The students would like to thank Selkirk College for responding to the requests of the residents of North Kootenay Lake by offering this Health Care Assistant Program right here in Kaslo.”

Hartland says her classmates agree that making the program a success took a community effort.

“Robert Nellis from the Victorian Community Health Centre and Recreation Coordinator Angela Burton were instrumental in ensuring that the program materialized,” Hartland says.

“Financially, community support included the Victoria Hospital Ladies Auxiliary and the North Kootenay Lake Community Foundation direct and local bursary awards. We also extend thanks to Dawn Lang and the Selkirk College ABE [Adult Basic Education] instructors and staff at the Kaslo Learning Centre for making us feel so welcome. We want to applaud our awesome instructors, Linda Clark, Diane Heim and Sarah Lechthaler for being the most knowledgeable and incredibly encouraging mentors.”

Students participated in the Selkirk College cap-and-gown ceremony in Castlegar for Graduation 2016 on April 22. Later this spring, the class will celebrate their achievement locally at the Kaslo Learning Centre.

“We were happy to assist the prospective HCA students through upgrading and deliver a HCA prep course,” says Ali Daly, Adult Basic Education Instructor at the Kaslo Learning Centre who supported the students through their application process. “This prep course provided a great opportunity for students to come together, refresh their study skills, review human body systems and functions, and practice with the online learning platform required for the HCA Program.”

CFNKLS is a Community Fund that has been serving the communities of North Kootenay Lake since 2005. Through the generous donations and commitment of local community members, the

society has built an endowment of more than \$900,000. This permanent endowment is invested through a partnership with the Nelson-based Osprey Community Foundation and enables the society to make annual charitable grants to community groups in Kaslo and Area D.

“An endowment fund is an investment in our communities and in our future,” says Gilmore. “We hope even more people will join us in supporting CFNKLS and helping to create thriving and resilient rural communities in North Kootenay Lake.”

Find out more about CFNKLS at <http://nklcommunityfund.org/apply-for-grants/>.