

Chili and Denim postponed

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The Comox Valley Child Development Association is campaigning to raise \$500,000 to construct and equip a new Autism Centre of Excellence.

So far, more than \$150,000 has been raised.

On the heels of World Autism Awareness Day April 2, the B.C. government kicked in \$100,000. The remainder is from private donations.

Designed by local architect Philipa Atwood, the renovation will add about 2,000 square feet to the building at 237 Third St. in Courtenay. The facility will incorporate a design based on the newest evidence about environments that work best for children and youth with autism. It will include intervention rooms, a gymnasium linked to an outdoor play area, and a kitchen and laun-

dry to build lifeskills.

The facility will also use lighting and colours to create a tranquil environment conducive to learning.

“There’s nearly 200 families just in the Comox Valley whose children are diagnosed with autism,” CDA executive director Joanne Schroeder said. “We just don’t have the space to deal with all the folks who are coming to our door, so this will be tremendous.”

Construction of the centre is planned to begin next March. The hope is to fill the building with children and youth by next fall.

The association’s Chili and Denim fundraiser that had been slated for May 27 has been re-scheduled for Sept. 23.

The association has been helping local families for more than 40 years. The autism program was established in 2005.



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