

# CVCDA raising funds for Autism Centre

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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 Phillipa 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 laundry to build life skills. 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,



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**The proposed Autism Centre of Excellence at the Comox Valley Child Development Association.**

develop friendships through peer groups and summer day camps.

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 hosts a fundraiser dubbed, Chili and Denim, in September.

The event was originally set for later this month; unfortunately the organization had to postpone the event until Sept. 23.

If you purchased a ticket for this event, please return it to the Comox Valley Child Development Association. You will be refunded your full purchase price.

Phone 250-338-4288.

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

Behaviour consultants develop personalized programs for children and youth to encourage positive changes.

The program also provides opportunities for students to improve social and academic skills, and to

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