



**Dawson Creek Society
for Community Living**

Newsletter

Covid - 19 How DCSCL continues to cope with the many challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic.

Christmas celebrations - The 12 Days of Christmas will be replacing the Annual Christmas Gala.

**2020/12
Issue #3**

News & Features

News

Important Updates

New Provincial protocols, Annual Christmas Gala updates, Closures, and more.

Community Inclusion and Employment Services

From a new shredder in Supported Work, to virtually offered activities, to how we're dealing with the additional challenges posed by Covid-19, there has been a lot going on.

Seniors Services

Northview Assisted Living updates, Senior Meal Call program, Grocery Shopping Services, and the Rural Seniors Initiative.

2020 the year of challenges, growth, and resilience.

We began 2020, hearing whisperings of atypical 'viral pneumonia cases of unknown cause' in Wuhan, China; by March 11th, WHO made the assessment that Covid-19 characterized a pandemic, and our world changed nearly overnight. Gone were the days of travelling without restrictions. Masks quickly became a normal part of people's attire. Schools and businesses were closed. People gave each other a wide berth for fear of catching the dreaded virus. And yet, despite all the changes, the world continues to be in the viruses grip.

wsletter

Family Survey

Thanks to all those who took the time to complete the survey; we had the best response rate in years!

Residential Services & Home Share

Get up-to-date with all that has been going on in the various residential programs.

Resources

Inclusion BC updates, Mental Health, webinars and more.

Having entered the second 'wave' of the global Covid-19 pandemic, Canadians have proven to be a resourceful and resilient bunch, willing to make the changes necessary to get this virus under control. While the number of infected continues to climb, so does the number of measures taken to slow its spread. We have truly done a remarkable job of keeping ourselves and our loved ones safe, up here in the North, as shown by the low number of infected people, and our ability to regain control over it, when it has been experienced. DCSCS has taken extensive measures to protect the vulnerable people we provide services to, as well as our staff. We have ensured that all Provin-

cial, Regional, and WorkSafe BC Guidelines have been adhered to, and continue to work hard to remain ahead of the curve. Doing so has meant significant changes throughout the Society, including how we interact with community as a whole, limited program access, and in some cases, complete closure. We appreciate how hard this has been for many families; to lose the freedom to spend as much time, anytime, and anywhere we prefer, with our loved ones has been very difficult for all of us to accept. Whether it's a child, a sibling, parent, or grandparent, the challenges posed by this pandemic have been long-lasting, and with no definitive

end in sight, frustrations can easily boil over. It is our express desire to ease the burdens felt by families and loved ones and we continue to extend our assistance to help in any way we can. With the holiday season upon us, we are facing another very challenging time, possibly the most challenging yet. We ask for your patience and understanding as we navigate through the season together, safely, with many more holidays to look forward to. Merry Christmas and best wishes for a better year ahead!

2020 Christmas Celebration

12 Days of Christmas

Baskets with a special gift for each of the Twelve Days of Christmas, will be delivered to individuals on December 11th.

The fun will begin on December 13th and there will be something new to look forward to every day until the 25th, when there'll be something extra special to open up on Christmas Day!

A year of change...

It is with great disappointment that we must announce the cancellation of our much anticipated Annual Christmas Gala for 2020 due to the ongoing global pandemic, Covid-19. While we can't replace the Gala, staff have been busily planning a fun alternative for the Christmas season that can bring some cheer to the people we support, while ensuring everyone's safety and adherence to provincial guidelines.

On December 11th, be sure to be home, as a basket full of goodies will be delivered at some point throughout the day. If your loved one lives out-of-town, arrangements will be made to get one to you prior to the December 13th start date. If other arrangements

need to be made, please contact us.

From December 13th to 24th there will be a small gift to open each day, while on the 25th there will be an extra special gift just for Christmas Day!

And that's not all...

Staff are also planning a Friendship Gala for spring/summer 2021, to replace our missed Christmas Gala. We will set the date just as soon as we get the all clear from the Health Authorities that we can gather in large groups again. It won't be the same but you can be sure that it'll be a great time!

Please note, the Opportunity Centre is currently closed until further notice.



Opportunity Centre / Self Help Skills / Home Support

“It was nice to feel like the world is normal for a night and to just have fun.”

~Family Member referring to Halloween Dance

2020 has proven to be a year of reflection and growth for community inclusion programs. There have been some real positives in the wake of this global slow down; a ‘getting back’ to what’s most important in life, but over the past few years, have been too busy to truly appreciate. Hopefully, once life has returned to something resembling normalcy, we will remember the lessons learned and never again take time with our family and friends for granted.

Another bonus to the struggles of 2020, has been the giant leap forward in people’s willingness to embrace today’s technology. These times have called for constant adaptation and new skills, for individuals receiving services, and staff alike. Learning to use virtual platforms, such as Zoom, Facetime, Microsoft Teams, etc., to ensure face-to-face check-ins with people, to provide visits with families and friends that are unable to visit, for a multitude of group activities, for meetings, etc., has been a top priority since the onset of the pandemic - to maintain services but more importantly to ensure mental health wellness.

As most of us are aware, people with any type of disability, are often quite isolated, even in the most ‘normal’ of times, however, Covid-19 has exacerbated the situation even further. It is for this reason, we have made every conceivable effort to ensure no one is left without some kind of personal contact, that personalized arts and crafts projects are being assembled and distributed, and why wonderful baskets of goodies will be soon arriving on people’s doorsteps! Together, we will get through this!

Some of what we have done and/or are doing with individuals receiving service (IRS):

- **A SOCIETY-WIDE THANKSGIVING LUNCH THAT FAMILY ZOOMED INTO**
- **TWO HALLOWEEN DANCES THAT CONSISTED OF SMALLER GROUPS**
- **COMMUNITY WALKS THAT ALLOW FOR APPROPRIATE DISTANCING**
- **TEACHING BETTER PLANNING, MORE EFFICIENT SHOPPING (1 STOP SHOP)**
- **ENHANCED EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS ON SAFETY, RESTRICTIONS, ETC**
- **FREQUENT HANDWASHING WORKSHOPS**
- **TRAINING ON PROPER DONNING AND DOFFING OF PPE’S (MASKS FOR IRS)**
- **HEALTH AND WELLNESS CHECK-INS, ENSURING MENTAL HEALTH STATUS**
- **YOGA & RELAXATION, AND MANY OTHER WORKSHOPS, VIA ZOOM**
- **FAVORITE ACTIVITY BOOKLETS/PACKAGES HAVE BEEN PROVIDED**
- **ENCOURAGING THE CONTINUATION OF REGULAR ACTS OF DAILY LIVING**
- **TEACHING HOME CLEANLINESS & DISINFECTING**
- **TEACHING DISINFECTION OF ITEMS BROUGHT INTO THEIR HOMES**
- **TEACHING PROPER USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO STAY CONNECTED**
- **ENCOURAGING POSITIVITY, ACTIVITY, AND ENGAGEMENT IN LIFE**
- **STAYING IN CONTACT WITH IRS & FAMILIES**

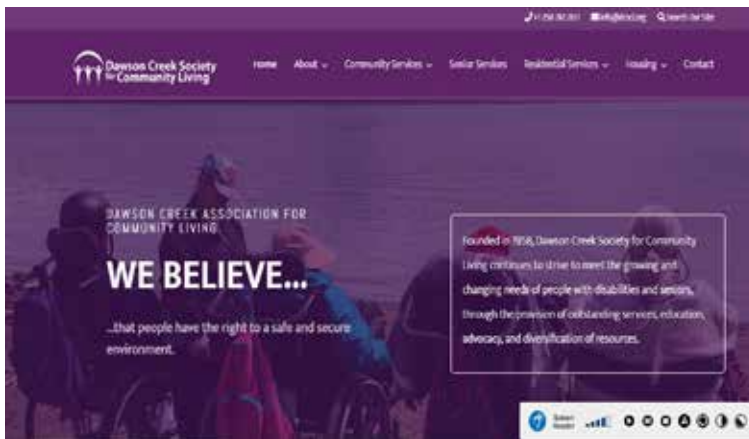
Supported Work

Thanks to the Investment Readiness Program, Supported Work was able to purchase a second commercial shredder, resulting in six new positions for individuals that have been waiting for a chance to become employed and/or to build employment readiness skills. It has also allowed us to extend the hours of some long-term staff, resulting in further financial independence.

The new shredder, in addition to our existing one, has made Confidential Shredding twice as efficient, meaning less lag time between delivery and destruction. We were also fortunate enough to secure a dust collector which has been able to significantly reduce the amount of paper dust in the shop.

Supported Work is grateful to work with great businesses within the community. Despite the economic struggles that have been wide spread throughout the past year, local businesses have continued to keep most people working, and we've even had a new, first time employer of people with developmental disabilities, hire a new staff; and secured a significant Confidential Shredding contract with the City of Dawson Creek.

Thank you to the City of Dawson Creek and to Dairy Queen, for becoming our newest Inclusive Employers! And a special thank you to all those businesses that continue to support diverse workforces.



If you haven't already, check out our new website...

It was quite the undertaking, but our new fully accessible website is up and running. On it, you can find information on each of our programs, the latest news, applications for employment, the Opportunity Centre Scoop and Calendar, Housing applications, and so much more. Yet to come, is our Resource section, an expanded Gallery, access to the Annual Performance Improvement Report, and quick links to Sharevision and Comvida (for internal employees). If there are additional things you would like to see added to the website, or have a news article you think would be good to add, please bring your suggestions forward.

Check it out at www.dcscl.org

Seniors Count

Annual General Meeting

2020's Annual General Meeting was certainly different from past years, but proved to be an accessible and efficient alternative to the much more labour intensive AGM normally hosted. The feedback we received from attendees was very positive and it is likely that we will utilize this method in the future.

For anyone that missed it, but would like to see the highlights, the slideshow is available for viewing on our website.

Not yet on the website, but coming soon, is the Annual Performance Improvement Report. If you would like a copy, please contact the Administration Office and we will get one to you.

New to the Board of Directors this year is Ivea Armstrong and Sandra Vipond. Continuing with their terms are Sam Barber, Charlie Parslow, Brad Booker, Rhonda Fields, Inge-Jean Hansen, Elisa Valentin, and Ann Cameron.



“Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.”
~Albert Einstein

Northview Assisted Living

We are excited to announce that we have hired two front door clerks that are facilitating visits during the days and evenings at designated visitor times due to health restrictions related to Covid-19. In addition to onsite visits, staff are also assisting residents to use technology, such as Skype, Messenger, and other video chatting applications, as requested during one-on-one time.

To further enhance some sense of normalcy for the folks, meals are being offered in the dining room twice weekly for groups of 12 (to maintain social distancing regulations). Similarly, group activities for the same number of people, are being offered daily in the dining room. These have been well-received and there are many Christmas activities planned for the month of December.

By popular vote, this year's Christmas theme, is the North Pole. There will be outdoor Christmas lights, Christmas photo's, and some great holiday traditions to look forward to. The residents also voted on what the Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day meals will be, and they will be offered in the same fashion as the weekly meals - two groups of 12 for each meal. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, families will not be able to join in on the festivities in the complex, but folks may go home to their families over the holidays and will not be required to self-isolate upon returning.



Seniors Meal Call & Grocery Shopping

In March of 2020, we saw a need within the community and took action to fulfill it. Seniors were falling through the cracks and with the onset of the pandemic, the situation quickly worsened.

To keep seniors safe and reduce their potential exposure to the virus, we began a grocery shopping and delivery service. Recently, with the onset of the 'second wave', we have seen an increased need for this service and are doing our best to keep up with the demand.

By July, the effects of isolation and loneliness on the seniors mental health was becoming obvious, and so began the Seniors Meal Call program. The purpose of this project was, and still is, to fill gaps in existing food service areas, and to keep vulnerable people connected and healthy through the development of social inclusion opportunities within our housing developments. With each healthy lunch that's provided, an educational component is included, as is the opportunity to socialize in each building's amenity room. Additionally, to enhance the personal health and nutrition of each participant, one take-home meal is provided.

Coming soon, is our newest service, the Rural Seniors Initiative. It is set to begin on January 4th and will run until April 2nd. Seniors will have access to five freshly frozen meals per week for the small fee of \$3 per meal. Pending the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, house cleaning will be offered bi-weekly for the nominal charge of \$25 per month, and snow shovelling will also be available for \$25 per month. Seniors must be from the Peace River Regional District D and E, and can choose the option(s), that best suits their individual needs.

For more information or if interested in these services, feel free to contact Anne Pearson at the Administration Office or check out www.prrsi.com

As a Person With a Disability, Quarantine is What I Deal With Every Day

"I'm happy that for most of you reading this, the physical distancing and isolation you've experienced during the pandemic is temporary."

Written by Kristen Parisi as seen on www.today.com

As you sit (hopefully) at home right now reading this, you may be longing for many things you grew accustomed to. Maybe it's the simple banter from the breakroom at work, going to a friend's house for wine night or your weekly gym sessions. Are you feeling incredibly isolated and frustrated with the lack of control over your life and social interactions?

Your feelings are valid. The pain, frustration and fear you have felt the last couple of months are completely real and I understand what you are going through more than you can imagine.

Since a car accident at a young age left me paralyzed, I have been a full-time wheelchair user. Having a disability has often forced me to be isolated and socially distant, while everyone else my age was out having fun, "normal" lives. As a child, I couldn't play on sports teams with my peers or go to sleepovers and didn't have people I could regularly connect with who were in a similar situation as me. In college, I had surgeries where I was recovering alone at home during multiple summers, missing out on potential career opportunities or chances for new experiences.

I'm happy that for most of you reading this, the physical distancing and isolation you've experienced during the pandemic is temporary. The pain you're feeling will subside and many of these minor inconveniences that feel huge in the moment will end and you will get your life back, even if it's different.

There are many lessons you can take with you from this experience. Here are just a few that I think are important to remember:

1. Being still is not wasted time.

Our society conditions us to believe that if we're busy and out doing things, that we're important or being productive. That's just not so. Your forced stillness right now is vital to having a clear view of who you are and want to be. It's why people meditate. When this is over, schedule time for yourself to be just home, doing "nothing."

2. Cherish your in-person time with friends.

I can't tell you how frequently I have to miss out on parties and get-togethers because someone's house isn't wheelchair accessible or the gathering is at a place that's completely inaccessible. It was especially tough when I lived in New York and I didn't have a single friend with a wheelchair-accessible apartment.

3. Don't stress about a routine.

All of these "experts" discuss how important it is to keep a routine throughout your time in quarantine. As someone who has spent countless days separated from people and living a "Groundhog Day"-like life, I believe that a routine is not nearly as important as variety.

4. Life is not on hold.

I had a friend say to me the other day that it just feels like his life is on hold right now, and that's simply not true. I know it may feel that way, but life is never on hold just because you can't go outside. You can keep growing, learning, living and making life something worthwhile.

5. There's always something to look forward to.

Easier said than done, but I promise there's always something to look forward to. When I felt my most isolated in late 2018, Mumford and Sons announced a new album. That small glimmer became my something to look forward to and it got me through the darkest month of my life.

I have an elderly aunt in Los Angeles who said she feels like there's nothing to be excited about. I realized that we all have an enormous power to become someone's something.

6. Grieve what you have lost.

I hope that you haven't lost a loved one during this time, but we have all lost something. Maybe you lost your job, a trip, a graduation night. And I'm so sorry for what you have lost. You may have to find a creative way to properly grieve and it's OK to acknowledge this disappointment.

7. Checking in on your loved ones is crucial.

Even when life gets back to (somewhat) normal, please remember to call or text people. Someone may seem all right, but we all need extra support sometimes.

Residential Services

Including Canalta, 115th, and 1416 Residences, Supported Living & Home Share

Nearly a year into this global pandemic, we are still facing widespread restrictions that keep us from our loved ones, but we continue to persevere...

As with people all around the globe, those in our Residential Programs, continue to do their best to remain positive, patient, and grateful for all they have. However, with Covid fatigue setting in across the board, mental and physical health are of utmost importance and we are maintaining our focus on keeping people as active and as connected as possible. Zoom, Messenger, Facetime, and Skype have played pivotal roles in keeping people connected to their family and friends, as are occasional trips to their loved ones homes, where possible. Some individuals are lucky enough to be headed to their family homes for the holidays this season, while others will remain in their own homes where we will do our absolute best to provide them with a fantastic Christmas experience. Unfortunately, visitors are still not able to come inside individuals homes, however, a separate space has been arranged to allow for scheduled visits to occur. We sincerely hope that the situation improves post haste, and appreciate your understanding while we do our very best to keep your loved ones safe, and continue to be bound by provincial regulations.

While we can't do much to change our current circumstances, we can certainly do our best to keep people busy. The Opportunity Centre and Self Help Skills program offer many virtual activities and workshops daily. People are encouraged to get outdoors as often as possible for some fresh air and a walk. With the Christmas season upon us, Christmas dinners are being planned, and many festive arts and crafts are under way turning the homes into works of art that the inhabitants are very proud of. We've even witnessed an uptick in people's creativity, with bonfires being burned, people going sledding, puzzles being built, new recipes being made, and Christmas tree's being sought out, cut down, and hauled home!

This is proof that while Covid-19 may have us down, it doesn't have us beat! Together, we will come out the other side of this with a whole new perspective on what's really important to us.

Updates

With everything that has been going on, there has been no mention of the Opportunity Centre construction / renovation project, and it's likely that most people think it has been forgotten, but we are here to put your minds at ease; the Opportunity Centre construction project and renovations have NOT been forgotten and is most certainly still in our future plans. For now, just keep your fingers crossed for a better, safer, and healthier 2021, and watch for continued updates.



**Inclusion BC
Anxiety Canada
Mobile Resources
Family Support Institute of BC**

External Resources

15 Ways To Stay Connected Inclusion BC

To stay safe this year, many people have had to reduce in-person time together that they value so much. Community Living BC asked individuals what would be safe and meaningful to them and came up with these 15 tips:

1. Set up a schedule to call someone once a week
2. Meet once a month for a physically distanced coffee
3. Plan a drive by dance party
4. Meet outside at a park
5. Go for a walk together
6. Join a virtual yoga or exercise class together
7. Drop-off or mail arts and crafts activities
8. Find a boardgame you can play together online
9. Organize a virtual dance party
10. Make and drop off cards for First Responders and Frontline Workers
11. Mail a letter and become pen pals
12. Host an outdoor social hour with neighbors
13. Join an online cooking class together
14. Facetime a different friend each week
15. Offer to run errands for someone once a week

Mental Health Various Resources

Anxiety Canada is a leader in developing free online, self-help, and evidence-based resources on anxiety. See their website at www.anxietycanada.com for expert tools for managing anxiety.

...
The CMHA has launched a special COVID-19 site to help people stay well in uncertain times. The page provides a wide variety of options for family caregivers about mental health care and you can visit it at www.mha.bc.ca/covid-19

...
BC's Northern Health Authority has published a guide called 'Emotional Support for Seniors'.

...
Care for caregivers is a website that focuses on professional caregivers' mental health and wellness with solutions to manage the specific strains and stresses resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Many family members are providing care to their family member and may benefit from the many resources available on the website:
www.careforcaregivers.ca

FSI Learning Explorations Family Support Institute of BC

The Family Support Institute of BC (FSI) is a provincial not for profit society committed to supporting families who have a family member with a disability. FSI is unique in Canada and the only grassroots family-to-family organization with a broad volunteer base. FSI supports and services are free to any family.

Upcoming webinars you might like to check out:
Dec 7th Parent Perspective "Care for the Care-giver"

Dec 8th Family Hangout

Dec 9th/16th/23rd Preventing Behaviours

Dec 10th/17th Housing Options

Dec 17th Creating Your Village

Find more resources or register for a webinar at

www.familysupportbc.com

Innovation. Education. Leadership Plan Institute

Plan Institute is a non-profit social enterprise that works to improve the lives of people with disabilities by collaborating on community-based projects, offering a suite of learning initiatives, and advocating for policy reform.

Multiple upcoming webinars to check out:

Registered Disability Savings Plan - Levels 1 & 2
Wills, Trusts & Estate Planning

Personal Support Network Facilitation

For more information on these, please go to

www.planinstitute.ca

Or to speak to someone about Disability Planning call toll-free 1-844-311-7526

Mask Considerations

DO choose masks that

-  **Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric**
-  **Completely cover your nose and mouth**
-  **Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps**

 cdc.gov/coronavirus

Mask Do's...

DO NOT choose masks that

-  **Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example, vinyl**
-  **Have exhalation valves or vents, which allow virus particles to escape**
-  **Are intended for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators or surgical masks**

 cdc.gov/coronavirus

Mask Dont's...

1. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others.
2. Remember that masks help prevent you from getting or spreading the virus.
3. Wear a mask because you could spread Covid-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
4. Everyone should wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household especially when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
5. Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The mask is not a substitute for social distancing.

1. Masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
2. Do NOT use a mask meant for a healthcare worker. Currently, surgical masks and N95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.

Sources

We asked, you answered....

Family Survey

It has been our pleasure to provide additional contact to the families, and increased supports to all your loved ones throughout this global crisis. Given the show of appreciation through your comments, we will happily continue our efforts to keep you well-informed, and the individuals safe, comfortable, and as entertained as possible.

We received some great suggestions for virtual activities and you will see some of them implemented immediately. While it's not the ideal mode of delivery, the majority of folks have adjusted very well, and in some instances, people that may not have participated in person, have chosen to do so virtually!

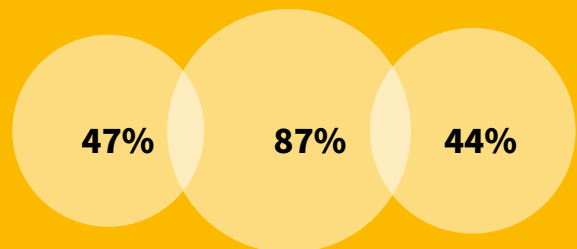
Some of what you said you would like to see:

- CONTINUE STAYING IN TOUCH THROUGH 2ND WAVE
- SUPPORT WITH ERRANDS IN CASE OF ILLNESS
- MORE VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES
- MORE FACETIME CALLS TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS
- MORE SOCIETY UPDATES, HOLIDAY/EVENT UPDATES
- MORE PICTURES, FEEL GOOD ARTICLES
- MORE SECTOR UPDATES, FAQ
- MORE ART ACTIVITIES, PAINTING
- CONTINUE TAKING GOOD CARE OF OUR LOVED ONES
- CONTINUED GOOD COMMUNICATION & SUPPORT
- CONTINUE 'OUTSIDE THE BOX' THINKING

“They ‘thought outside the box’ to provide additional care to my brother while there was minimal activity going on through community living programming. This greatly helped me and my brother and was much appreciated.”

~Family Member

2020 Family Survey



Participation


This year we had a total of 17/36 of all Family Surveys returned - up from 38% in 2019. Thank you!

Satisfied

We are very pleased that the vast majority of families are satisfied with services, despite pandemic challenges

Virtual

Nearly half of all respondents would like to participate in virtual activities with their loved ones.



Our Home Share Manager, Renee Brandon, has been writing throughout her lifetime and enjoys the laughter it brings. She believes that we are all artists in our own ways, and that rhythm and rhyme are universal ways for us all to connect. For your enjoyment, she has rewritten an old favorite, with a Covid twist....

Twas The Night Before Christmas

Twas the Second Wave of COVID and all through the House
No one was stirring , except for the mouse
The places were empty, all taking care
In hopes that the virus, soon we would scare

The children were restless, would not go to bed
While all the sugar consumed went to their heads
And Mama with her sleepmask and I in my cap
Had just settled schedules, computer's in lap

When out of the TV there arose such a clatter
Dr Bonnie again with restrictions that matter
Away to the email, I flew like a flash
Tore open the attachment , and oh what a mash

The masks we should wear, and not give a care
Morn, Noon, Night and let people stare
Measure the distance and plot out the space
So that the droplets can't jump right to our face

With hand soap and sanitizer so lively and quick
Clean, clean, you all, lickety split
More rapid than Health Workers, the people they came
And they whistled and shouted and called it by name

Now COVID, Now sickness, Now infection and Virus
The bug, the disease, the pandemic, it's tireless
To the top of Health Care, We all must still look
To Dr Henry, the fears must be took

She spoke a few words, and we all got to work
Filled in the services, essentials we wouldn't jerk
Laying new rules, social bubbles to shrink
Giving meetings and gatherings a whole new think

We spring to your aid, all our teams we unite
Standing together, we will win this fight
Till a vaccine is found, we must all stand our ground
And do what is right, till COVID disappears from sight.

~ Renee Brandon

2020 Re



It hasn't all



flections



been bad...





GROCERY DELIVERY

Are you a senior, isolated or quarantined or can't get out because of COVID-19? Would you like to order Groceries and have them delivered?

Payment available by debit card, credit card or e-transfer.

DCSCL staff will pickup groceries and deliver.

Please limit to approx. 20 items

Please call Anne at 250 782 2611 Ext 227

Delivery days are Tuesdays and Thursdays