

nered with RCMP detachments in Langley, Mission, the Sunshine Coast, Fort St. John and Chilliwack.

Fitzpatrick was scheduled to give a presentation on the program to the Salt Spring Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday night. They will hopefully be reaching out to members to join in over the coming days.

"I thought the timing was right to roll the program out on Salt Spring

unsafe? For us to endorse it we would need to feel really confident that the businesses involved have looked at how to train and educate staff on how to be really inclusive and respectful of all the diverse people in the community."

Szakacs said some people outside mainstream sexual orientation or gender identity — particularly trans and non-binary people — have reported

At the same time, having that sticker in the window indicates that business is aware of issues in the LGBTQ community and that it's a welcoming place for people in that community."

Any businesses that would like to be included in this program can contact Const. Fitzpatrick at 250-537-5555. The commitment pledge, along with the decals, is provided free of charge.

HEALTH CARE

Help for substance use offered

Umbrella Society outreach partners with Island Health

BY ELIZABETH NOLAN
DRIFTWOOD STAFF

People who are struggling with drug or alcohol use on Salt Spring and would like to either make a change or just find a sympathetic listener have new opportunities for both starting this month.

A partnership between Island Health and the Umbrella Society for Addictions and Mental Health will see outreach worker Lesley Easton visit the island on a regular basis. She is currently on Salt Spring every Thursday, although this will change to every second week when her program expands to cover Galiano Island later this fall.

Easton provides a supportive and judgement-free relationship where people can be open about the challenges they are facing, and helps them connect to services and navigate the systems in place around recovery. Help can range from harm reduction to complete abstinence.

"Addiction can be very isolating," Easton said. "People can feel very alone and there's often a lot of shame around it. So having a person you can start the conversation with can really open up possibilities."

Once she has a location settled, Easton hopes to offer a one-hour drop-in session every other Thursday where people can make an immediate connection to Umbrella Society resources.

"We have many partnerships in the community that are working and would like to offer those services to residents on Salt Spring," Easton said.

Mainly, though, Easton will spend her time out in the community offering one-on-one

support, meeting people over coffee or going for a walk in the park. Many Umbrella Society workers have been there themselves when it comes to substance use issues, and they know how to help if people want it.

According to its website, the society helped 853 people connect to the outreach program during 2017, and 113 family members of people with addictions accessed family counselling services. Close to 3,500 one-to-one conversations took place. Services can include Umbrella's three recovery homes in Victoria or a rapid access addiction clinic.

Alcohol probably affects the most people when it comes to substance use on Salt Spring. The opioid crisis may not have hit the island as hard when compared to urban centres such as Victoria, but Easton can provide information on what it would mean to go on a methadone or suboxone treatment program. She says there are a lot of myths out there that she can help dispel.

Meetings with Easton can also help bridge the gap between wanting to find help and actually receiving it. She observed that wait lists for programs can be long, and sometimes the window of opportunity for change is missed if there's no support in the meantime.

Outreach services are free of charge, do not require any referral outside of a client reaching out to connect, and are open to all ages from youth to seniors.

"There's no time limit to how long we work with someone," Easton added.

"We can work with someone for as long as they feel it's benefitting them."

People who would like to connect with Easton can call or text her mobile at 250-208-6974, call her Victoria office at 250-380-0595, email Lesley@umbrellasociety.ca or visit www.umbrellasociety.ca for more information.



Islands Trust

Have Your Say

Monday,
September 17, 2018
12:30 p.m.

Galiano South Hall,
141 Sturdies Bay Rd.

Who should attend?
Anyone affected by
the proposed
bylaws

Enquires?
Kim Stockdill,
Island Planner
kstockdill@islandstrust.bc.ca
250-405-5194

