

Community kitchen to become self-sustainable

Pacific Community Church looks to hire a co-ordinator to run and grow the kitchen's operations

Amy Reid
Now staff
Twitter @amyreid87

SURREY — Pacific Community Church is inviting the community to a forum to hear an update on the Cloverdale Community Kitchen, an initiative aimed at serving those in need.

The meeting, set for Thursday, Nov. 13, will share information with the public about plans for the commercially-equipped kitchen to become self sustaining now that it's up and running.

"The kitchen is called Cloverdale Community Kitchen because it's truly Cloverdale's kitchen," said Jim Heuving, executive pastor with the church. "We want it to be used to address poverty and homelessness in Cloverdale... And we think

it happens around food. It's not the answer for everything, but it's a great starting point."

Heuving said many people associate homelessness with the Whalley area, but stressed there is a need in Cloverdale. He explained the Agricultural Land Reserve serves as somewhat of a barrier.

"There are particular needs to our little locality," he said, noting Langley has a significant amount of resources, while Cloverdale has few.

The church embarked upon the kitchen project after recognizing the need to tackle poverty in the area. Roughly 10 years ago, a grassroots initiative called Monday Night Café began with a small number of people reaching out to homeless and marginalized people in Langley.

In early 2012, an attempt was made to hold such a program in Cloverdale, using the church as a base. Meanwhile, the existing kitchen serving the poor in Cloverdale, run by the Cloverdale Christian Fellowship, was closed down as the mall used for their operation was demolished for future development.

It became evident to the church that a qualified kitchen was needed, and after

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fundraising \$400,000 and completing construction in December 2013, the kitchen now serves more than 100 meals a week, run by a variety of groups.

Now that the church has been able to build the kitchen, it's hoped it can become a "self-sustaining operation," noted Heuving.

The church hired B Agile Consulting to explore the next steps. Those recommendations will be shared during the upcoming meeting and include hiring a co-ordinator to develop and manage the operation. The co-ordinator would expand meal programming, work with the community, develop fundraising models in addition to running and building on the kitchen's operations. The church hopes to hire someone in the next couple of months.

From last December to August, the kitchen cost just shy of \$20,000 to operate, including administration, maintenance and

supplies. Cloverdale's Coldest Night of the Year run in February, which raised roughly \$64,000 for the kitchen this year, is planned as an annual fundraiser to keep the kitchen afloat. The church hopes to raise as much or more next February. Other funding goals include a partnership with the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society, grants and self-funding mechanisms through catering and meals-on-wheels alternatives.

In addition to helping address needs in the area, the church hopes the kitchen will also cultivate sustainable social enterprise models to provide employment and skill training through "food-centric" initiatives. It's envisioned as a networking hub for community partnerships, social enterprise and community resources.

To learn more about the kitchen's future, or to get involved, attend the forum on Nov. 13 at 7 p.m. at the church, located at 5337 180th St.

Meanwhile, the church is in the midst of organizing its annual Cloverdale Christmas Hamper program. Last year, the program provided 250 families with gifts and enough food to last for one month. To get involved, visit pacificcommunity.ca.

areid@thenownewspaper.com