

## **Bowen Island Gymnastics Club**

### **O.C.P. Review – IDEAS Forum Oct 22, 2009**

By way of this letter we are expressing interest in participating in the October 22, IDEAS forum and discuss who the Bowen Island Gymnastics Club is, our needs and thoughts for our future. We currently rent the BICS gym and with rising rents and no available gym time during school hours, we are limited as to the programs that we can offer the community. We dream of a facility that would allow us to offer programming during the day to preschoolers, seniors, and special needs children.

We would also like to discuss how interrelated our needs are with many other island groups. We are aware of about 20 acres of municipal land, which is already zoned for recreational use in the upper Cowan Point area, off Salal Rd. The space available on that land could easily accommodate a wide variety of facilities which are much needed by the community. This could also include a space for the Bowen Island Gymnastics Club.

Through brainstorming and informal talks with other community groups we have developed a sketch showing the potential on this land. Some of the ideas on this sketch include a community centre which may house a variety of functions such as a teen center, meeting rooms and a senior center. A much needed gymnasium space could also be incorporated into the facility and dovetail onto the Bowen Island Gymnastics space. And there would still be ample room for outdoor amenities such as playground, basketball court, Skateboard Park, connecting running trail, fitness circuit training area, and even a community garden.

From a larger community perspective we see this land as being in a location where future growth is imminent and it makes sense to develop a more centralized and comprehensive community facility on one piece of land. To the best of our knowledge a significant parcel of land does not exist that is so central and currently zoned for a community facility.

We would like to present our thoughts and these sketches at the IDEAS forum. The intent is to, discuss the possibilities and connect with other groups in the community. Our presentation would take less than 10 minutes time.

## **What can Bowen Island Gymnastics Club Contribute to the Community Needs?**

If we were able to build a facility there, we could work with other groups with both indoor and outdoor needs, such as S.K.Y., the Teen Center, the Skateboard group, and Family Place Outdoors. This facility would take the pressure off of BICS and provide much needed space to many groups. As parents, we have experienced firsthand the lack of indoor Recreational Facilities on Bowen.

### **Bowen Island Gymnastics Background:**

#### **We exist:**

- ◆ to provide the foundation for Physical Literacy and confidence in the Gymnastics Fundamental Movement Patterns: Landings, Balance, Rotation, Locomotion and Spring
- ◆ so that youth do not have to travel off-island in order to seek out off island gymnastics programs by offering Advanced Recreational to Provincial Level Competitive Programs for our youth
- ◆ to provide leadership opportunities and high-energy activities to for our youth as they grow, particularly as they move through their teen years.

#### **We value:**

- ◆ Fitness, Fun, Fundamentals, and Personal Challenge
- ◆ Long-Term Athlete Development
- ◆ Nationally Certified Coaches and support Education Development
- ◆ a positive gym environment
- ◆ that Gymnastics is considered by sports educators and professionals to be one of the three foundation sports for all other sports and activities (the other two being Track & Field and Swimming)
- ◆ no requirements for try-outs for our Advanced Recreational and Competitive Programs
- ◆ gymnasts working at their own pace in their preferred environment (with a choice of gymnastics as a foundation to other endeavours, with a team emphasis or in a traditional gymnastic format featuring meets and competitions)
- ◆ providing on-island coaching expertise and equipment to allow our gymnasts to take their gymnastics as far as they want

#### **History:**

Gymnastics has been provided on Bowen Island for about 15 years, starting with Bowen Island Parks & Recreation Commission (BIPRC). Then in 2001 it was strongly suggested by them for parents to form their own Club, much like other organized sports, due to the strain on BIPRC staff resources from the overwhelming popularity of the

gymnastics programs. The transition to forming Bowen Island Gymnastics Club (BIGC) occurred over three years from November 2001 until March 2004 when parent volunteers ran the day-to-day aspects (other than hiring and registration). In Nov 2003 parents voted to form the BIGC and by March 2004 this was the reality. Gymnastics, along with soccer, are the largest recreation programs on the island.

### **What we do:**

We run gymnastics programming on Wednesday and Friday afternoons and Saturdays for youth aged 14 months to 18 years old out of the Bowen Island Community School (BICS) gymnasium. Currently the total facility access time is 15.5 hours per week for all 200 youth.

The gymnastics programming BIGC currently offers for both boys and girls are as follows:

- ◆ Rock'n Rollers for ages 14 months – 2 years old
- ◆ Jumping Jelly Beans for ages 2 – 3 years old
- ◆ Tiny Tumblers for ages 3 – 4 years old
- ◆ Kindergym for ages 4- 5 years old
- ◆ Gym Stars Programs for ages 6 – 13 years old
- ◆ Private Physical Literacy Gymnastics lessons for 2 Down's Syndrome Kids
- ◆ Advanced Recreation Interclub for ages 6 – 18 years old
- ◆ Jr and Sr Competitive Girls Gymnastics 6 -18 years

The focus of the programming is fun, safety, participation and skills development. Some of the athletes hone their gymnastics skills and want to go to shows, displays and competitions, run under the auspices of Gymnastics BC. To promote an enjoyable experience for all participants and members, our Club is committed to the Sport BC policy of providing a harassment-free environment.

### **Our Vision:**

Our vision is to be an integral part of the community of Bowen Island promoting the sport to all ages and abilities, and to offer gymnastics and multi movement opportunities for all from pre-schoolers to seniors:

- for the development of Physical Literacy in children , youth and special needs
- ◆ as a foundation for all sports
- ◆ as a fun sport activity to keep youth active and involved as they move through childhood into their teens
- ◆ to provide multi -movement cross training opportunities to those athletes wishing to train at high and/or competitive levels either in gymnastics or other sports/activities
- ◆ to adults for enjoyment, injury prevention and cross-training
- ◆ to promote and to expand the coach mentor program (Coach-in-Training) for youth in coaching, be it in gymnastics or other sports.

## **Challenges:**

There is a noticeable lack of gym time (only 15.5 hours total per week) so that our higher skilled gymnasts only get 7.5 hours per week in the gym while their peers in other clubs get up to 18 hours per week. This makes it hard for these athletes to grow at a noticeable pace which sometimes leads to frustration and quitting. The limited facility time is compounded by the fact that the Club's main island competition is other sports such as soccer and dance. The Board feels that with expanded facility access (more hours plus other days) would help to alleviate the frustrations experienced by the skilled gymnasts as well as providing programming options for those athletes wanting to have gymnastics as a foundation or cross training benefit.

The second issue regarding limited use of time in the gym space, is the amount of time spent each practice setting up before and then taking down and storing the equipment after each day. This is a most physical and arduous task that cuts in valuable training time each week. This also puts a lot of wear and tear on our equipment.

One of the main goals of the gymnastics club, since it began, has been to build a dedicated facility with necessary space, equipment and access to meet current and future needs. Bowen Island Gymnastics Club would also like to offer programs for pre-schoolers, special needs children and seniors during the week day school hours, as no such indoor recreational space currently exists for week day recreational programming. We would offer rental of the gym to various alternate school groups during the week, either to use the open floor space or the gymnastics equipment, under the appropriate instruction. BIGC could also offer much requested birthday parties for the families of Bowen Island that often go off island for party facilities and options. Our waiting lists and demands for more programming has made it clear to the Bowen Island Gymnastics Club that there is a need for the above, and feel that this facility will allow us to meet the existing and future recreational needs of Bowen Islanders, along with providing even more employment both to youth (coaches-in-training) and to our dedicated Nationally Certified Coaches trained coaches.

We will continue to build upon existing and/or developing partnerships and potential gym space rentals with Bowen Island Municipality/Parks & Recreation, Bowen Island Foundation, Family Place, the Learning center, IPS, the Bowen Youth Center , S.K.Y., the Skateboard group and others.

By serving our membership needs the Club also secures its financial well-being and organizational stability. Currently, we are limited in expanding our membership and programming opportunities by a lack of access time in our current building. The Club is actively pursuing new facility options to better meet the community & member needs.

## **In Summary**

As mentioned we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to present our ideas at the Forum. The talk would be informal and less than 10 minutes in length. And we hope will be inspirational to others of the possibilities for the future of the Bowen Island community.

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Regards,

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President

Bowen Island Gymnastics Club