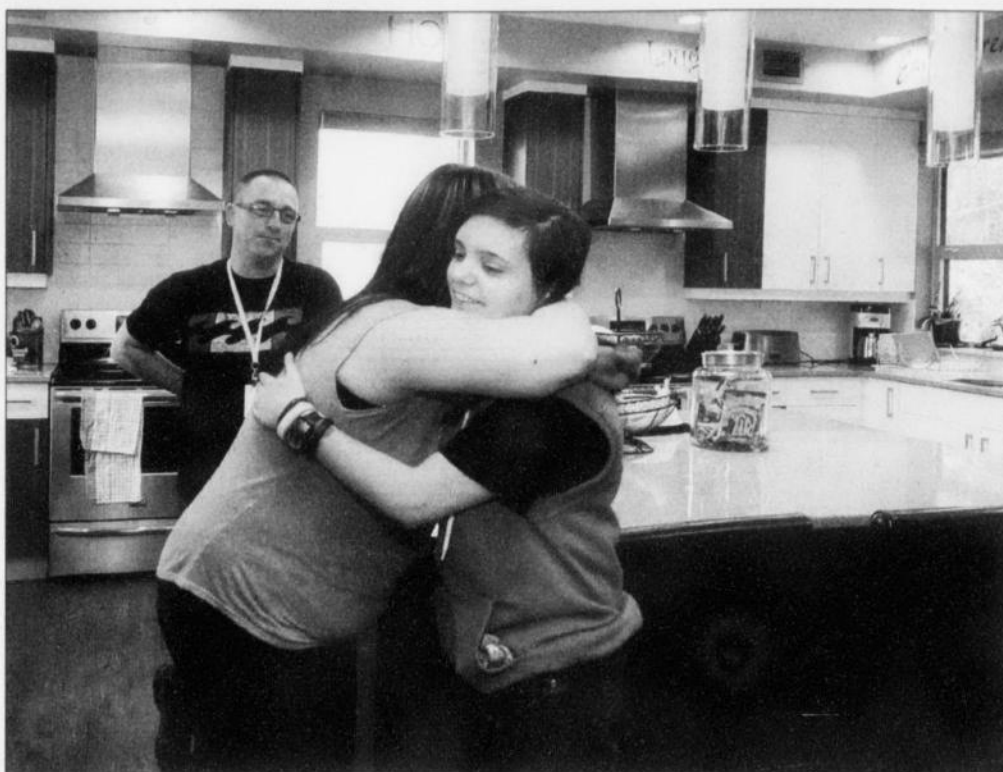




THE CAPITAL AND VANCOUVER ISLAND

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LYLE STAFFORD, TIMES COLONIST

Stephanie Hendrickson, whose daughter Sienna was born three months premature, hugs Jeneece Edroff, right, as partner Dustin McHardie looks on. The couple are staying at Jeneece Place while Sienna is at Victoria General Hospital.

Open a year, Jeneece Place plays a key part in the healing process

Families' home away from home celebrates with open house Sunday

CINDY E. HARNETT
Times Colonist

A year after opening its doors to parents with kids in hospital, Jeneece Place has become more than a place to stay — it's become a place to heal, operators say.

"That's a big part of what this place is: hope," said Rod Smith, director of development for the Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island, the organization that owns and operates the 10-bedroom house at Victoria General Hospital.

The facility, which provides a home away from home for families travelling to Victoria for a child's medical care, is celebrating its one-year anniversary with an open house on Sunday.

Parents sometimes leave Victoria General Hospital's intensive care unit discouraged about their child's ill-

ness or injuries, he said. A few minutes later, they find themselves sitting around the kitchen table at Jeneece Place with parents facing similar challenges.

"Parents come here and share their concerns, hopes and fears," Smith said. "Doctors have mentioned it's become part of the healing process."

That's true for Nanaimo's Dustin McHardie, who proposed to Stephanie Hendrickson at Jeneece Place on Christmas Day.

The couple's first child, Sienna McHardie, was born three months premature at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital on Dec. 10.

The infant weighed just one pound, 11 ounces, had a brain bleed and needed help breathing. She was flown to Victoria General Hospital for intensive care.

In Nanaimo, the couple live in a 12-metre trailer and have two small sea-

sonal businesses. Paying for months-long stays in hotels in Victoria was not affordable. And they didn't want to be separated at a time when they need one another.

"We're so fortunate and lucky," Hendrickson said at Jeneece Place on Friday. With a place to stay, the couple has been able to focus on their child.

Sienna is now a pound heavier. She is expected to stay in hospital about another two months, Hendrickson said.

"I told Jeneece if my daughter grows up to be half the woman she is, I would be the proudest mother in the world," Hendrickson said.

Jeneece Place was the dream of 18-year-old Jeneece Edroff, who suffers from neurofibromatosis that causes tumours to grow along nerve pathways. She raised more than \$1 million for children's charities over seven years, and began fundraising for Jeneece Place in 2009.

"It's amazing who I've

got to meet here and the stories I've heard," Edroff said Friday.

Since opening its doors on Jan. 23, 2012, 325 families have stayed at Jeneece Place. The majority of the families — 94 per cent — are from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

The home, which is open year round and run by nine staff and 17 active volunteers, costs \$325,000 a year to operate.

A one-year anniversary open-house for the facility, located at 1 Hospital Way, is being held on Edroff's 19th birthday, Jan. 20, from 1 to 4 p.m. She will be in attendance for at least the first hour, she said.

While the anniversary is cause for celebration, Edroff continues to struggle with a tumour in her right leg. She plans to have it operated on at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota on Feb. 22 — despite a dispute with the province over payment for the surgery.

"I'm still going, no matter what,"
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\$1.3-million Juan de Fuca HQ planned

Borrowing approved for building in region's largest jurisdiction

BILL CLEVERLEY
Times Colonist

Capital Regional District director Mike Hicks plans to build a new \$1.3-million administration building for his Juan de Fuca electoral area on Sooke's western border in Otter Point.

Hicks, who has received CRD board approval in principle for internal borrowing of up to \$1.5 million for the project, is now looking to rezone three lots in Otter Point's Sooke Business Park to a new public institutional zone to permit a new Juan de Fuca administration building.

As CRD electoral area director, Hicks is the de facto mayor and council for the sprawling Juan de Fuca electoral area, which encompasses the west coast of Vancouver Island from Otter Point to Port Renfrew. Also included are the geographically separate communities of East Sooke, Malahat and Willis Point.

Cobbled together from the former Langford and Sooke electoral areas, it is the largest jurisdiction in the CRD with land mass of 1,512 square kilometres and about 4,480 residents.

Hicks says the project makes financial sense.

There will be no property tax increase associated with it, as the annual building costs will be equal to or less than the \$117,000 in rent and \$17,000 in utilities electoral area taxpayers currently pay for rental offices in Sooke.

The three lots in the business park at 7450 Butler Rd. cost \$400,000, and the anticipated cost to build the 4,500-square-foot, rancher-style office building is approximately \$900,000. If there is enough money left over, the hope is to build Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue its own garage and command centre.

Because Hicks is borrowing the money inter-



BRUCE STOTESBURY, TIMES COLONIST
Capital Regional District director Mike Hicks says the project makes sense.

nally from the CRD's office facilities capital reserve fund and there is no anticipated tax increase, there is no requirement to go to electors for approval to borrow the money.

The lease on the current office space expires in December, Hicks said.

"We can build a brand new, better office on our own land in the Juan de Fuca ... and I can have the place paid off in 15 years for less than rent we're paying now," he said.

The building would provide office space for about 10 people, including Juan de Fuca planning, building inspection, parks, emergency services and search-and-rescue, as well as meeting space.

Hicks, who says he has designed and built a few fishing lodges, said he sketched out the original building design on a napkin. He then took it to CRD staff and his alternate director, Wally Vowles, who helped refine the plans.

The new building will be situated at the entrance to William Simmons Memorial Park, Hicks said.

"It's going to be absolutely magnificent," he said. "We're going to have a hitching post so we can ride our horses to work."

Hicks hopes the building will go to tender in March with a June construction start and occupancy by Christmas.

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Fallow deer eating their way across Gulf Islands

Residents looking for solutions as invasive species 'strip everything'

JUDITH LAVOIE
Times Colonist

Invasive deer with voracious appetites are swimming between Gulf Islands and, as native trees and plants are munched out of

many swam from Mayne to Samuel Island and, from there, they have made it to Winter Cove on Saturna," said Todd Shannon, acting superintendent of Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

