



Hello Everyone,

I hope all of you are keeping safe and finding productive ways of enjoying life within the COVID-19 restrictions. My cupboards and closets are done; I've got bags of still useful items ready to go to Crystal Ridge Community Church for other people to use. Though I'm thinking I may just put them out at the edge of the road for others to take as needed. Wearing a mask when I go out in the community has become second nature now.

At the January 2020 Crystal Beach Business Improvement Area (CB BIA) meeting Sandra Lyons and the BIA requested they assume management of the CB Farmers Market. ACB Board agreed with this proposal as a positive step forward for the Market. Sandra had plans to move the Market to Queens Circle and had secured TOFE approval to do so. ACB would continue to support the Market via social media as well as maintain the Recycle/Reuse/Upcycle component of the Market. Sandra applied for a position on the BIA Board as recommended by the Chair so it would become a BIA event with insurance coverage. Due to COVID-19, plans for this summer are uncertain at this point. Sandra Lyons is officially a CB BIA Board member now.

ACB was fortunate to connect with Lauren Bacon of the new shop on Erie Road, the Green House Floral Bar, who connected ACB with Grainger Burk, a professional arborist. Grainger volunteered his time, skills and equipment to properly prune two apple trees on Elmwood Ave. belonging to ACB member Liane Dudman. This is part of a project to rescue many of the apples that go to waste in Crystal Beach and organize three or four volunteers to collect them at harvest time and give to the food banks. Another resident on Bellevue Ave. is very willing to donate some of her apples but says her trees only produce every second year so we will keep her in mind for next year. I know we collected some of her apples last year and she has a bountiful tree. Some of the apple branches cut down were donated to Your Farm Gate, the butcher shop on Dominion Rd, for his smoker. The apple trees were also sprayed with organic dormant oil thanks to a loan of a sprayer from Don West.

Don West and Linda Leinweber have created nine new raised garden beds as requested by people in the Crystal Beach Co-op. They have perfected a smooth system for cutting the wood and putting together these beautiful beds. Needless to say the residents are very excited about being able to grow their own veggies. Funding for the wood and soil was provided by the Niagara Garden Network, which is funded by the Niagara Prosperity Initiative, funded by United Way Niagara and Niagara Region. Wayne Gale of Stokes Seeds again donated a large quantity of requested veggie seeds so the folks are eagerly awaiting some warmer weather to plant – though peas and some lettuce are in already. As always, Wayne Otten

of Turkstra Lumber was supportive in accessing the needed supplies. Richard Hutton from The Post interviewed some of the gardeners for an article as well. At our May ACB Board meeting via ZOOM we voted to fund three more garden beds: two in the Co-op and one in the community. We feel this is a very positive and productive endeavour.

[see garden photos below]

Another program in the Network, Links for Greener Learning, donated several pieces (about 30) which had been used as cold frames for three large beds. ACB member Ron Fournier volunteered his truck to pick them up in St. Catharines and delivered them to the CB Co-op where one resident has reconfigured them to build a greenhouse on his back patio. He is very excited to grow enough veggies for his family.

Note: it was an education to watch Ron precisely pack these 30 different sized pieces of heavy duty plastic stretched on wood frames, some 12 ft long, into his truck bed. And they all fit.

Regretfully graffiti defaced many structures at Waterfront Park. TOFE staff were very prompt in cleaning it up once notified. Phil Smith sponsored a reward of \$500 for information leading to the apprehension of the ***** who did it. ACB contributed \$200 as well to that fund. I've had no word on whether anyone has been arrested as yet.

Ridgeway Lions Club has created and served over 7000 meals as of mid May using a curbside pickup strategy at the Crystal Ridge Community Centre as well as delivering to people in the community three days each week. ACB was pleased to assist in identifying specific families for delivery. One resident of the Crystal Beach Co-op volunteered her front porch as a drop-off spot for about 30 meals and people come and pick up, though she often directly delivered to those she knew were in need. Two other Co-op residents also volunteered to distribute meals.

Crystal Ridge Community Church also provided lunchtime meals two days per week, on a curbside service basis, as well as a huge variety of staples and fresh produce that had been donated to them. ACB was pleased to work with them in delivering to about fifteen families. ACB presented a cheque for \$1,000 to the Church to support this endeavor.

ACB IT Director, Louise Pickett, connected with Harish Patel (the main produce vendor at the Market) and has developed a curbside pickup order form including seedling plants, fresh produce and herbs and spices (we all know Harish's produce). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Harish delivered directly to 27 homes Saturday, May 16. This weekend (Saturday, May 23) he will be setting up in the parking lot at the corner of Erie Rd. and Maplewood Ave., opposite the Crystal Ball Café for pickup (thanks to Robin Bannerman). Masks and gloves are required. If interested, please email louisepickett.acb@gmail.com.

The Economic Development and Tourism Services (now in house at TOFE) expressed their wish to again fund a tourism counsellor for the tourism shed which was located at the Market. Phil Smith has volunteered his "weather station" property on Erie Rd to house the shed as it would be more visible to pedestrian/vehicular traffic. Parkway Towing came to our rescue, volunteering their services to move the Tourism Shed from the Crystal Chandelier parking lot to "the weather station" on Erie Road. Their professional flatbed operator and several volunteers made the transfer smoothly and skillfully.

Usually ACB conducts income tax clinics at Crystal Ridge Community Church during March and April - of course this year we could not. But our usual volunteer, John Weisz, graciously offered to e-file tax returns for low income folks as a drop-off service. Folks have been appreciative of this and it is ongoing.

ACB had received a \$50,688.00 grant from Niagara Prosperity Initiative to conduct the Crystal Beach Market. The final report will be submitted by the end of May 2020 as it was a 2 year project. ACB has not submitted a request for funding for 2020 as the BIA will be managing the Market.

Regards,
Orma Bleeks,
ACB President

