

Local hopes Victoria rally will inspire ^[1]

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Source: Cowichan Valley Citizen

Format: Article

Publication Date: 10 Jul 2014

AVAILABILITY

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Childcare advocate Mary Dolan hopes a rally Saturday afternoon in Victoria will give a boost to the push for a provincial \$10 per day childcare program. "People need to pay attention to the quality of care that young children are getting," said Dolan.

From 2-3 p.m. the "stroller brigade" will be out in force at the parliament buildings in B.C.'s capital, and while many Cowichan Valley locals will be busy with Duncan Daze in their own community, Dolan said Cowichan Bay's Lori Iannidinardo will be representing the area at the event.

"We are now reaching out to parents and grandparents to make sure that they know that this is even possible," she said. "They don't realize that with their voice, we can do better, we can do

much better and make life less stressful for families."

A comprehensive, low-cost childcare program such as is available in Quebec is needed in B.C. for numerous reasons, Dolan said.

It would be good for businesses, she said, as it helps out employees, and by providing such a program it would significantly decrease the calculated Cowichan living wage, which sits at \$17 per hour. It's something that particularly interests young people, she said.

"Generation squeeze is a fact. The 40 year olds and under are not getting their fair share of the money, so they need to be speaking up and they're beginning to realize it and I think that's why the whole thing's getting more attention," Dolan said.

The main thrust of the plan is to offer childcare to families across the province at \$10 per day. Also included is a call to increase maternity leave and improve access to education for those who want to care for young children and make sure they have a living wage when they are finished.

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"We need nurses, teachers, doctors, lawyers; we need them to provide our services. And those people do come with families," Dolan said. "This is not going away."

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