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S'ólh Téméxw, August 16th, 2021: Heritage Abbotsford Looking to Engage Seniors

Abbotsford seniors with an interest in local history are invited to participate in a community-wide storytelling project celebrating the City's heritage. The Abbotsford Stories Project gives volunteers 65+ the opportunity to support local history through volunteerism, become more engaged with the community's history, and represent their own stories in the area. The end product will be a virtual display celebrating the (hi)stories of the community, gleaned through interviews and research compiled by the seniors themselves. Additionally, the stories will be added to Heritage Abbotsford Society's growing archive of diverse local stories and culturally significant places, provide knowledge for future history-themed walking tours, and will feature in the virtual program "Stories to Spaces: Local Community Places."

"Abbotsford is home to so many seniors who have fascinating stories. We want to hear from the folks who have memories of growing up here and also from those who chose Abbotsford as their home later in life. What was the city like when you arrived? What made it become your home?" says Natalia Deros, who manages the project.

"This thread between the past and the future will connect younger generations to the lived experiences and places of the past." Deros, who earned a Best News and Media Award from the BC Historical Federation earlier this year for her work on the Stories to Spaces project, plans on illuminating the layers of the individual's story through local and communal heritage.

Volunteers can choose to either interview other participants to hear their stories or choose to tell their own story to another volunteer. By contributing to the project, participants will give back to the community, preserve local heritage, and help unearth untold histories in the area.

"I often hear people say that they lived simple lives and don't think the stories of their life are of interest to others. But it's exactly those stories that creates connections to place and to others- like a first date at the Teddy Bear Café or meeting their best friend at a summer job. Places create communities; more than just a spot on the map,

a place holds meaning through the stories and emotional memory of those who lived, worked, and gathered there.”

The project is funded in partnership with the federal New Horizons for Seniors grant. Those interested in volunteering can contact Natalia Deros, Programs Manager, at HAS@heritageabbotsford.ca, or 604-853-0313.

About Heritage Abbotsford Society

Heritage Abbotsford Society is the registered charity which operates Trethewey House Heritage Site under a fee-for-service Agreement with the City of Abbotsford. The Mission of the Society is “to collect, record, preserve, and share the stories of Abbotsford. Functions of this mandate are to preserve, study and exhibit artifacts and archival material, and to educate and entertain the public. Operating from the Heritage Site, the Society provides heritage and youth educational programming and events to thousands of Abbotsford residents and visitors of all ages every year. Activities include tours of Trethewey House, and the Upper Sumas BCER station, exhibits and displays, including the one-room schoolhouse experience and the Heritage Gallery exhibits, along with walking tours, heritage-themed events and workshops, interpretive educational and outreach programs, and summer camps for youth and children. For more information, please visit www.heritageabbotsford.ca.