



March 31, 2022

Tristan Laurillard
Salt Spring Men's Shed Initiative
Via Email

Dear Tristan:

On behalf of the Salt Spring Community Health Society board of directors, I'm writing this letter in support of your pursuit of grant funding from the Salt Spring Island Foundation for the Salt Spring Men's Shed.

The Salt Spring Community Health Society (SSCHS) is a non-profit organization whose aim is to promote community health by seeking to expand local access to primary health care on Salt Spring Island and to support the establishment of an inter-professional community health centre offering primary health care, as well as mental health and social services.

In 2019, SSCHS undertook a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment. Among other findings in the report, it was determined:

- Many seniors' supports are not available or have long wait times, are inaccessible and/or are not affordable.
- 39% of respondents said emergency mental health services were unavailable certain hours, while 30% experience long wait times.
- Non-emergency mental health services have long wait times or are unavailable to half the respondents who seek them.

As a result of this report, SSCHS has been focused on community-led initiatives to help tackle the lack of mental health supports on the island. We have brought mental health first aid training to Salt Spring and are supporting a grassroots initiative aimed at expanding existing – and the creation of additional – peer support groups, and volunteer counselling. All these initiatives are focused on diminishing social isolation, destigmatizing mental illness, and improving community resiliency.

Men's Sheds are committed to equity and diversity and endeavour to reach at-risk males – and those who identify as men – who may not easily make connections in their community, have complex needs due aging, often suffer from disabilities, depression, addictions, and abuse, or live in low socioeconomic circumstances or are homeless. Additionally, as we understand it, Men's Sheds improve the overall health of the older male population by providing an opportunity for men to learn about wellness, illness prevention, and how to make more effective use of the healthcare system, and membership in a Men's Shed can break down the social isolation and stigma that are associated with various health conditions.

As the Salt Spring Men's Shed aligns well with our mission, vision, and many of our guiding principles, the board of the Salt Spring Community Health Society encourages the Salt Spring Island Foundation to financially support this initiative.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Williams

Jennifer Williams
President
Salt Spring Community Health Society