



Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, offers specialized services to children with disabilities and their families from across the province. Sunny Hill serves children from birth to age 19. For more information, please visit www.bcchildrens.ca.

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty and province-wide health care services across BC, working with the five geographic health authorities to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. For more information, please visit www.phsa.ca.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Local landscaper creates wheelchair circuit for patients

Vancouver, B.C. – Plant seeds of inspiration, water with volunteer spirit, and you grow a sensory garden for patients at Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children.

That was the approach taken by landscaper Steve Jones of Urban Escapes, who gathered a generous team of local sponsors, volunteer labourers, nurseries, and landscapers to turn a forgotten corner into an outdoor wheelchair fun challenge circuit. The garden officially opened today at Sunny Hill, part of BC Children's Hospital, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

The team of volunteers worked under the aptly-named Growing Hearts, a community project established by Jones and supported by the landscaping industry to directly benefit children and their families.

Barb Kenny, Administrative Site Manager for Sunny Hill, remembers well the generous offer made by Jones. "We couldn't quite believe our good fortune," says Kenny. "Steve offered to build the wheelchair circuit and surrounding garden at no cost to us. It used to be just an empty grassy corner of the property, and now it's an amazing area for our children and their families."

The wheelchair circuit provides a vibrant, interactive area for play, stimulation, and reflection. Children and their families now have a winding walkway and wheelchair path with gardens and colourful stones to stimulate their eyes, water features to stimulate their ears and sense of touch, a gravel area for patients new to wheelchairs to practice on tougher terrain, and seats for anyone to take in a moment of peace and tranquility. The circuit is conveniently located outside the therapy division for easy access by young users and their families.

"The response from our local landscape industry was tremendous," says Jones. "As soon as I would ask for something, the suppliers would say 'I'm in'. I really wanted to inspire everyone around us by the work we do, and Sunny Hill seemed to be a great place to start."

Growing Hearts falls under the charitable umbrella of the BC Landscape & Nursery Association (BCLNA) which serves B.C.'s nursery growers, landscapers, garden centres, and related industries. BCLNA's Executive Director Werner Knittel attended the official opening and embraced the new venture.

"The BC Landscape & Nursery Association plans to expand Growing Hearts with further projects by drawing on the community-minded nature of our over 800 province-wide members," says Knittel. "BCLNA is the perfect match for these kinds of community projects."