

Staff Report



June 18, 2024

To Board of Education (Public Meeting)

From Sean Nosek, Superintendent/CEO

Re **2024 Community Matters Award Presentation: Starfish Packs**

This report is presented to the Board for information.

BACKGROUND:

Abbotsford School District has a long history of community involvement in our schools. Many individuals and organizations contribute countless hours of volunteer service to enable our students to achieve success in school. While the Board has taken the opportunity on many occasions to publicly thank these individuals and organizations, the Board recognized the need to establish a formal recognition process.

The Community Matters Award is presented annually to organizations or individuals who have exceeded their community service mandate and have made a significant, deliberate contribution to Abbotsford School District students. A total of seven nominations were received for the 2024 Community Matters Award. The Award Selection Committee was comprised of Trustees Rai and Kanda-Rajwan, and the Superintendent, Sean Nosek. They recommend that **Starfish Packs** receive this year's award.

For over a decade, the Starfish Pack program has grown to support 741 students at 42 different schools in Abbotsford. This has not only met the physical needs of students who would otherwise go hungry but also significantly improved scholastic outcomes for many of the students receiving support. The program relies on over 100 volunteers and one staff member to purchase, sort, and deliver Starfish Packs each week, all school year. Each week, volunteers fill packs with two breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, and snacks and then deliver them to local schools for the students to take home on the weekend. The program includes eight different menus for a variety of non-perishable foods, and fresh produce each week. Each menu is child-friendly and easy to prepare. The food packs cost approximately \$650-700 per student.

The Starfish Pack started in Abbotsford, expanded to over 24 cities throughout British Columbia and Whatcom County, and is now feeding over 3,800 children and their families.

In attendance to accept the award will be:

- Meghan Kellington, Starfish Pack Coordinator
- Rod Santiago, Central Executive Officer
- Neil Stark, Director of Advocacy & Social Equity
- Rebecca Thuro, Manager, Food Security