

The Greater Victoria Festival Society has lost over \$100,000 in funding and sponsorships due to Covid-19. The 122nd and 123rd Victoria Day Parades and the 38th and 39th Santa Claus Parade in the capital City of Victoria BC, and two of the largest events in British Columbia bringing in millions in tourism dollars, laying the foundation of Tourism here in Victoria BC, raising much needed food and funds for our food banks and ensuring the mental health of our community is in dire need of funding.

With only 1 full time contractor, the Executive Director, the Society has not been able to apply for the CEWS as the decision was made to have the position as a contracted position therefore allowing a smaller salary and ensuring the longevity of the Society and its events. Currently with 5 events now, including the two noted above, our 7th Wicked Victoria, 3rd St Patrick's Day and the Irish Whiskey Hooley (which we host a week before the St Patrick's Day event in order to fund a portion of the event, the 4 FREE Family Events that we host for our community are at risk of not coming back. Our Operating basic costs have not changed. We discussed with our insurance agent about not renewing our insurance for 2020 and 2021 however we were advised that that may cause the possibility of much higher premiums in subsequent years if we continue to go forward. Rent, insurance and our ED wages all still need to be covered. The Executive Director has taken almost a 50% cut in pay in order to ensure that the Society remains afloat. It is a modest \$2000/month of a \$3675 monthly contract. In the early stages of Covid-19 when much if not all of the relief was going out for non profits it was agreed from our Board that we would not apply as we knew the need for many was greater for us during those first 6 months, and, as we had some funds still in the bank, we were confident it would carry us through. That was not the case. These events bring thousands to our City and will most definitely be a part of the economic recovery of Tourism on Vancouver Island and BC.

We need your help now to ensure that we are here for our community and as we move forward in our tourism economic recovery. We created in 2020 Light Up The City, which embraced our entire community and gave a sense of positive affirmation to families, businesses and organizations alike. We brought back our Christmas Lighting Competition after over 2 decades and we were integral in the successful reinstatement of the drive thru drop off donation locations that were ultimately approved through letters submitted by ourselves to Dr. Bonnie Henry. We are not asking for a lot but we need to get through this next year. We are asking for your consideration and your help.

Kelly L Kurta
Executive Director
Greater Victoria Festival Society