



**For immediate release**  
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## **Coast Capital donates \$10,000 to the Vancouver Island Crisis Society to support youth suicide prevention programs**

Coast Capital Savings has donated \$10,000 to the Vancouver Island Crisis Society's youth suicide prevention programs being presented to high schools students. There are two programs that the money will be earmarked for, a twelve-hour peer-to-peer support program called GRASP and an eighty-minute classroom presentation targeted to grade 8 and 9's.

GRASP stands for growth, resiliency, acknowledgement, suicide awareness and planning for safety. Students learn concepts such as healthy communication, coping, how to recognize warning signs in themselves and others, community resource information and, how to reach out for help to resources like the crisis line. The students receive a course completion certificate that they can attach to their resume.

The classroom presentations bring awareness to students around what happens when life becomes too stressful and how to reach out for support when they are alerted to warning signs in themselves or others. Whether they see the signs during school hours or on social media, they are encouraged to have that conversation person to person. A school counselor sits in on every presentation and encourages the students to come and see them whenever they need to talk during school hours or if they are worried about a friend.

"With budget constraints and cut backs from some of the program funders, we were unsure as to how many presentations we could facilitate in the upcoming school year," said Elizabeth Newcombe, executive director, Vancouver Island Crisis Society. "This donation from Coast Capital will ensure these programs are able to reach all high schools in School Districts Nos. 68 and 79. We know these programs save lives and are grateful that we are able to continue to offer them."

Last year 80 students completed the GRASP training and over 1000 students received the eighty minute classroom presentation Speak Out, Reach Out, Help Out. As a direct result of these presentations, there was an increase in the number of students calling the crisis line and utilizing the school counselors to access help for themselves and their peers.

Wendy Lachance, director of community leadership for Coast Capital Savings, said the credit union chose to support the Vancouver Island Crisis Society's youth suicide prevention programs because it's making a difference in the lives of youth.

"Coast Capital Savings is committed to helping build a richer future for youth in our communities," said Lachance. "Suicide is the second highest cause of death for youth between the ages of 10-24. By supporting the Vancouver Island Crisis Society's youth suicide prevention programs, we can help give youth access to support programs and change their lives for the better."

One young man took the opportunity to thank the facilitators that returned to his school and said, "It saved my life. I didn't really want to die, I just didn't know where or how to reach out." Although he still has dark thoughts sometimes, he now knows how to access support and has learned the skills to get through it.

The Vancouver Island Crisis Society has been providing 24 hour telephone crisis and suicide prevention, intervention service, including postvention programs for 42 years in the community and have been extended island wide for the past 2 years. Our youth suicide prevention programs in the schools have just seen their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Coast Capital Savings Credit Union is Canada's second largest credit union with total assets under administration of \$13.5 billion, 475,000 members and 50 branches in the Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Island regions of British Columbia. Product innovations include Canada's first free chequing account from a full-service financial institution and the country's most flexible mortgage product, the You're the Boss™ Mortgage, which was named 2010 Mortgage of the Year by canadianmortgagetrends.com. Coast Capital offers one of Canada's 10 Most Admired Corporate Cultures™. It is a member of Canada's Best Managed Companies Platinum Club and an Imagine Canada Caring Company. To learn more, visit [www.coastcapitalsavings.com](http://www.coastcapitalsavings.com).

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Vancouver Island  
Crisis Society

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Pictured from left to right: Heather Owen, Promotions & Public Relations Coordinator, Vancouver Island Crisis Society; Lisa De Leeuw, Branch Manager Coast Capital Savings; Elizabeth Newcombe, Executive Director, Vancouver Island Crisis Society; and Trish Wolfe, Manager, General Insurance, Coast Capital Savings.