



IMAGINE

Community Granting 2008-2018
A Decade of Healthy Community Action



northern health
the northern way of caring

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COVER PHOTO:

Project: Traditional Food Teachings
 Applicant: Hiit'aGan.iina Kuuyas Naay- Skidegate Youth Centre
 Community: Haida Gwaii- South Island

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document would not be possible without the partners, both internal and external to Northern Health, that have been part of the IMAGINE Community Grants program journey over the past ten years. The support and investments provided has greatly enhanced the program. The collaborative efforts and interest of those involved have enabled us to offer these grants to communities across the northern region year after year.

We must also thank the community groups that have engaged in our granting process and have shared their project ideas, challenges and accomplishments with each granting cycle. Without their work to create healthier communities and settings in the north, we would have no stories to share. Their actions are encouraging and inspirational.

INTRODUCTION

Northern Health believes that health happens in communities. This belief is reflected in our first strategic priority, which is to partner with communities to support people to live well and prevent disease and injury. By providing seed funding to community groups to initiate and champion healthy living projects, the IMAGINE Community Grants program aligns with this organizational priority. Through a commitment to ongoing quality improvement, the IMAGINE Community Grants program promotes this priority in a supportive, effective and equitable way.

We look at community granting as prevention in action. Granting is about improving the health of the entire population. It is about caring for our communities by preventing chronic disease and injuries and by keeping healthy people well. Economic analysis confirms that granting contributes to cost savings and cost avoidances (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2010; Masters et al. 2017). Beyond the direct cost savings/avoidances for the health system, community granting also strengthens community resilience and self-reliance, which further reduces societal costs (Canadian Community Economic Development Network, 2016).

This document summarizes the growth of the IMAGINE Community Grants program over the past decade. The purpose of the report is to share a brief overview of the IMAGINE process and program improvements that have been implemented over the duration of its existence. Through this report, we will highlight some of the amazing work that has been initiated at the grassroots level in communities and share the positive impact this funding has generated across the north.

SOURCES:

Canadian Community Economic Development Network. 2016. Evaluation and Social Return on Investment Resources. Available online: <https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/evaluation-SROI>. Accessed 16 June 2017.

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Public Health Agency of Canada. 2010. Investing in Prevention – The Economic Perspective. Available online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/investing-prevention-economic-perspective-key-findings.html>. Accessed 16 June 2017.

BACKGROUND

Since 2008, 822 IMAGINE Community Grants, totaling over 2.3 million dollars, have been awarded to support community-based groups to achieve clearly-defined and locally-led wellness goals by way of Northern Health engagement, partnership and grant funds. We work with community groups, service agencies, Indigenous organizations, schools, municipalities, regional districts, and other partners to support projects aimed at improving the health of northern populations. These initiatives prioritize the health of the community in areas such as: social and community connectedness, inclusiveness, healthy aging, child and youth health, food security, physical activity, injury prevention, tobacco reduction, and more. Preference is given to projects that: support partnerships and build relationships, identify a community need, promote healthy outcomes, reduce health inequities, build capacity within community and have high probability of living on after the funding ends.

Numerous partners have contributed time, energy and funds to deliver these granting opportunities within the IMAGINE program. Their contributions have supported Northern Health to promote its mandate of prevention in communities (Appendix A).

Through IMAGINE, communities are empowered to identify their own health promotion priorities and offer their own innovative solutions. What has emerged over the course of the program is numerous project plans that have been funded to ultimately keep people healthy in their home communities

Project: **Back to the Land**
 Applicant: **Hazelton Secondary School**
 Community: **Hazelton**

"This project has also given us another opportunity to work with some parents and community members. It is a way to build relationships within the community and build communication skills with students... Together, we will continue to go back to the land for nourishment. As a school community, we will work cooperatively to build healthy lifestyles and continue to invite community members to work with us."



THE IMAGINE JOURNEY

In the early years of IMAGINE, the opportunity was offered to groups across the region annually. The amount of funding available within the program for each cycle was dependent on the partners engaged and the available funds that these partner programs had within their operational budgets to provide. Population Health has historically managed the program, bringing internal programs together for these efforts each year. The shared contributions and expertise of program partners each year has been instrumental in IMAGINE's success over the past decade.



Project: **Agwiiyeet'inim ahl gahlgim - We pass it on to our children**
 Applicant: **Lisims Early Learning Partnership**
 Community: **Lax galts'ap and Gitlaxt'aamiks**

"There were 23 babies welcomed altogether...we raised awareness by welcoming entire families and community to the event... These events were so emotional. To see 2 to 3 generations of families proudly welcoming their babies into community evoked emotions of happiness, pride and so much love! At the end, we encircled the families in a community prayer, holding them up with words of strength and encouragement- it was very spiritual and moving... As a result of this project we have strengthened our partnership with Nisga'a Valley Health. We meet regularly to plan next steps for our nation of pre and post natal."

Through this journey, a number of improvements have been implemented to contribute to the program's overall success. In 2015, through partner consultation and a UNBC student-led project, where previous applicants of IMAGINE were engaged for feedback, a number of recommendations were put forward and fulfilled for program improvement. Through these recommendations, Population Health leadership was able to hire a full time Healthy Community Development Lead with dedicated support to community granting to apply more standardization and rigor within the granting program. Prior to this role, the community granting work was completed off of the side of the desks of Population Health and program partner staff. This recent dedication and focus to the program has had very impressive results in the areas of grant development, communications, application and review process, adjudication, awarding, financial records, evaluation, customer service, and more.



Project: **Food Secure Kids**
 Applicant: **Northern Environmental Action Team (NEAT)**
 Community: **North & South Peace Region**

"We have designed other community food security programming to connect and weave through the framework we have created with Food Secure Kids... this is just the beginning of all of the positive impacts we can have on the health and wellbeing of residents in the northeast."



Improvement Highlights:

- Enhanced community support:** increased outreach to communities and support to applicants. Efforts are made each cycle to support applicants that have been previously unsuccessful. Prior to the process improvements, organizations were sometimes funded for the same project year after year. There is now greater focus on promoting and encouraging sustainability. We now offer granting calls twice per year to accommodate local projects with seasonal variability (summer and winter projects). Improvements have also been made to create user-friendly application and evaluation forms and the IMAGINE webpage is consistently up-to-date with information for communities.
- Improved communications:** granting success stories are shared widely through a variety of methods such as the *NH Matters* blog, *Healthier You* magazine, and mainstream media via newspaper articles and radio interviews and promotions. An annual communication strategy has been developed, along with a Google map to showcase all of our awarded grants across the region. The map serves a variety of purposes, including advertising, identifying communities and sharing project information. Since it was established in the fall of 2016, this map has received over 24,000 visits (as of April 2018).
- Health equity review:** developed in partnership with Northern Health Research and Evaluation, an application assessment tool to screen for populations who may be disadvantaged or experience vulnerabilities, has been created to support process. IMAGINE is an inclusive program and is open to all community groups.
- Improved records and evaluation:** improved tracking and evaluation processes allow us to more easily share how IMAGINE grants are impacting communities. One noticeable metric of success of this program is the demand it is under, shown by the number of applications received each cycle, and how we have been able to support numerous communities across the region with limited funds (Appendix B).
- Dedicated funding:** annualized funding commitments from Population Health and Primary and Community Care, as of 2018, will ensure that the program continues to offer multiple cycles of IMAGINE per year. The program will welcome any additional partner funding when available and will continue to seek partners with shared goals.

While the IMAGINE Community Grants program continuously focuses on improving how we broadly care for communities and support people to stay healthy, it is important to note that each IMAGINE Community Grant recipient is also improving care in their own way, in their own community. We are fortunate to be able to share these individual stories and to promote the great work happening across the region, through the project evaluations and community achievements shared with our program.



Project: **Moms & Tots Indoor Play**
 Applicant: **Village of Fraser Lake**
 Community: **Fraser Lake**

“In 2015 Fraser Lake’s largest employer Endako Mines went into care and maintenance which resulted in the displacement of over 400 employees. Many of these employees found employment in camp jobs, taking them away from home and their families for weeks on end. This has resulted in reduced family support for many young parents and grandparents caring for young children. The development of the Moms & Tots Indoor Play has allowed these parents and caregivers the opportunity to meet, develop relationships that lead to social support and to involve children in positive physical activity several times per week.”

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Project: **Healthy Minds Community Garden**
 Applicant: **Healthy Minds Peer Support Group (formerly Fort St. James Peer Support Group)**
 Community: **Fort St. James**

Prevention or health promotion priorities: Positive mental health & prevention of substance harms; physical activity; food security & healthy eating; and social connectedness.

Description: Participants from the local peer support group identified the need for a community garden in Fort St. James. Through the initiative, the group provides locally grown food for those community members in need while raising awareness and reducing the stigma around mental health issues and supporting those on the road to recovery who want to lead healthier lifestyles.

Northern Health support: The IMAGINE funding supported the purchase of the start-up construction materials and supplies for the garden.

"I believe that the greatest benefit, among many, is that of community bonding, or socialization. People that would not normally mix are working, laughing and talking with each other...the garden is a unifying space. One participant in particular... has been isolating for over a year. We managed to get her out to the garden one day and that resulted in her riding a bicycle to the garden every weekend to help and mostly just socialize."

"... the health benefits of growing and eating whole foods has not been lost on those participating in the garden. The involvement of the school kids and the excitement in their eyes when they see what they have grown is priceless... the school is going to plant three beds as a result of the success of the program. We have also reserved a bed for Nechako Valley Community Services Society youth counselling program and two beds are reserved for clients of Carrier Sekani Tribal Councils youth program... we have two beds reserved for seniors as well. We have built two extra height beds for people with mobility issues. The entire garden is wheelchair accessible. I strongly believe that this garden will continue to grow and be of great benefit to all in this small community."



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Project: **Elders Day**
 Applicant: **Gitxsan Sports**
 Community: **Kispiox**

Prevention or health promotion priorities: Physical activity; injury prevention; positive mental health; and social connectedness.

Description: Youth from a local basketball team provide weekly visits to Elders in their home throughout the winter to chop and stack wood and shovel driveways and walkways for them. While the youth and their adult chaperones engage in physical activity, another focus of the project is positive mental wellness and social connectedness to bring the community together.

Northern Health support: The original application request was to purchase gloves, axes and shovels. To incorporate an injury prevention lens, we proposed the purchase of safety glasses to protect the youth and the group was pleased with the recommendation. With the supplies purchased, the group plans to continue this project for years to come.

“IMAGINE grants believing in our project gave us the confidence to start connecting with our community. It gave our children self-esteem and filled their hearts with how good it feels to give back to the community without expecting anything in return. It was unreal the feedback we received and the support from our community members. It was the perfect time to share with a boys under 12 basketball team, such an important and tender age to have such an experience.”



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Project: **Imagine Chetwynd**
 Applicant: **Chetwynd Visitors Centre**
 Community: **Chetwynd**

Prevention or health promotion priorities: Physical activity and healthy aging.

Description: The project creates opportunity for individuals of all ages in the community by offering free access to equipment that promotes healthy activity and fun! Through the sustainable initiative, community partnerships were strengthened and now locals and visitors to the area can experience new activities year round.

Northern Health support: The IMAGINE funding supported the purchase of the equipment and supplies for the project.

“Combined efforts to create or enhance activities within the community was a positive experience... Partnership with the Chetwynd Public Library through the development and management of the Facebook page and Tansi Friendship Centre through the distribution of equipment were strengthened through the project by working as a team to create all opportunities for our youth, seniors, adults and families.”



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Project: **Traditional Food Teachings**
 Applicant: **Hiit'aGan.iina Kuuyas Naay- Skidegate Youth Centre**
 Community: **Haida Gwaii- South Island**

Prevention or health promotion priorities: Food security & healthy eating; positive mental health; social & cultural connectedness.

Description: Youth engage in teachings around food sustainability and learn to access and process the foods available to them on Haida Gwaii. The project supports opportunities for social and cultural connectedness through teachings of traditional food harvesting and revitalizing this aspect of Haida culture.

Northern Health support: IMAGINE funding covered project expenses that included honorariums and the purchase of equipment and supplies.

"The IMAGINE grant was the catalyst for a Traditional Foods Project Series in our community. With its support, we were able to get out on land and sea to harvest and process the traditional Haida, while at the same time connecting with Community Members and Elders. Through shared teachings, songs, traditions and meals, it provided us with an opportunity for healing, reclamation of cultural knowledge and decolonization of traditional foods."



Project: **Hepatitis C Bus Ad Awareness Campaign**
Applicant: **HepCBC Hepatitis C Education and Prevention Society**
Community: **Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Prince George, Fort St. John and Dawson Creek**

"... we wanted to educate the general population in several cities that hepatitis C can affect anyone (no stigma), that people can have hepatitis C for decades without knowing it, that it is now curable, and that it is a good idea for them and/or possibly family members to ask for one-time testing... the bus ads have given Positive Living North (PLN) a little boost as they work to confront hepatitis C in their communities. We feel that people in northwest BC's cities, anyway, are starting to talk about hepatitis C more openly now, without that hush-hush feeling. Seeing the bus ads going by every day gets that conversation going! Thanks for giving HepCBC and PLN this great opportunity to make a difference."



Project: **Wellness through the Arts**
Applicant: **Dease Lake Community Hall Society**
Community: **Dease Lake**

"15 Elders from the community participated... they proudly shared their projects that I had on display for those who dropped by to see what was going on. One visitor said they could feel the positive energy and that the hall came alive...I loved how the Elders felt comfortable to come by during the youth workshops, to share a meal, share their projects and work alongside the youth on their own projects. It really brought the community together... Workshops like these benefit by encouraging those to find their gifts, to use their gifts and to share their gifts."



Project: **Gitsegukla Bike Safety 2017**
Applicant: **Gitsegukla Headstart PAC**
Community: **Gitsegukla**

"We had great response from parents/guardians that are normally not involved in school events... Many bikes were repaired by local people... bikes were missing bike seats, handle grips, handle brakes and many tires were flat. Throughout the summer many children were riding their bikes because we were able to supply the parts. Thank you IMAGINE Grants for helping keep Gitsegukla kids safe on their bikes."



Project: **Dog Bite Safety Prevention**
Applicant: **Lakes Animal Friendship Society**
Community: **Burns Lake, Fort St. James, Vanderhoof, Gitlaxt'aamiks and Lax galts'ap**

"We planned on reaching the communities of Burns Lake, Fort St. James and Vanderhoof, and exceeded our goal by getting resources to elementary students in the remote communities of Gitlaxt'aamiks and Lax galts'ap. The total number of students was 2022... Students love lessons involving a real dog. It makes the materials about how to safely meet a dog, read dog body language and care for a dog so much more relevant."



Project: **Dragon Boating for All**
Applicant: **Dragon Lake Paddlers**
Community: **Quesnel**

"We hosted 239 guests ranging in age from 3 to 70+. We hosted 3 community groups and 6 school classes... We introduced water and boat safety while still tied to the dock and reinforced the understanding with each of the drills we introduced...Dragon boating is now a better known activity in Quesnel. We have been able to host more schools than ever before. We now have links to various community groups and they know that their group is welcome to go dragon boating as part of their programs."



Project: **Healthy Living Initiative Plans and Programs in Chetwynd**
Applicant: **Chetwynd Communications Society**
Community: **Chetwynd, Saulteau First Nations**

"Our goal was to fund the training, the acquisition of resources and the final certification for new activities in the community... the new coaches of the activities agreed to free complimentary lessons in the community for at least nine months... Our partnership with Don Titus Elementary, the Chetwynd Public Library, the District of Chetwynd, the Chetwynd Recreation Centre, Saulteau First Nations, the RCMP and the Tansi Friendship Centre has resulted in excellent participation and exposure... it is entertaining, involves the entire family and has volunteers who are friendly, eager and willing to give of themselves. 2018 will see at least an additional 1000 persons participating in our dance program."



Project: **CDC Hydrotherapy Pool Poolside Lift**
Applicant: **Child Development Centre Society of Fort St. John and District**
Community: **Fort St. John**

"The positive feedback we have received about the lift from families and community users is fantastic. The increased accessibility and ease of use with the addition of the lift is highlighted often by users...This lift has increased safety, capacity and accessibility and allowed the CDC to provide quality services to help children and families we serve reach their therapy goals. Community users have increased access as well and with no other therapy pools available in the area, the CDC therapy pool is a very beneficial resource for their development."



Project: **Snowshoeing for Happier Healthier Kids**
 Applicant: **Buckhorn Elementary School**
 Community: **Prince George**

“The IMAGINE Grant has provided an incredible long term impact at Buckhorn Elementary School by providing the funding to purchase quality snowshoes... Due to the fact that Buckhorn is at a rural setting and has a large property to enjoy these snowshoes, this enhances the ability for the staff to encourage outdoor physical activity...”



Project: **Hudson's Hope Geocaching**
 Applicant: **District of Hudson's Hope**
 Community: **Hudson's Hope Region**

“The greatest impact was getting community members outdoors and enjoying active living... You could feel a real community spirit and people were proud of our accomplishment of this program, as they helped make it happen.”



SUMMARY

The IMAGINE Community Grants have consistently nurtured community partnership and supported ideas and initiatives that promote health and wellness across the entire Northern Health Region. Ultimately, our goal is to work collaboratively with communities to help them reach their individual health promotion and prevention priorities. It is the communities that are enhancing and inspiring healthy settings, where people live, learn, work and play and we value our role as supporter and storyteller of their efforts.

Northern Health is committed to this work and will continue our journey in community granting by: exploring opportunities to enrich our process; sharing project stories and photos; connecting communities to one another for collaboration opportunities; and engaging with new partners to ensure that we can continue to empower communities in their efforts to create safe and healthy populations and communities across northern BC.

Appendix A: IMAGINE Community Grants- Program Partners

FISCAL YEAR	FUNDING PARTNERS	FISCAL YEAR	FUNDING PARTNERS
2008/09	Population Health PHSA- Cardiac Services	2013/14	Population Health Cardiac & Cerebrovascular Services Road Health Blood Borne Pathogens-HIV Preventive Public Health- Harm Reduction
2009/10	Population Health PHSA- Cardiac Services Road Health	2014/15	Population Health Cardiac & Cerebrovascular Services Primary and Community Care Blood Borne Pathogens-HIV Preventive Public Health- Harm Reduction
2010/11	Population Health PHSA- Cardiac Services Road Health NH/PHAC- Healthy Minds Healthy Youth Grants	2015/16	Population Health Cardiac & Cerebrovascular Services Primary and Community Care Indigenous Health
2011/12	Population Health Cardiac & Cerebrovascular Services Road Health Blood Borne Pathogens-HIV	2016/17	Population Health Cardiac & Cerebrovascular Services Primary and Community Care Indigenous Health
2012/13	Population Health Cardiac & Cerebrovascular Services Road Health	2017/18	Population Health Primary and Community Care Indigenous Health

Appendix B: IMAGINE Community Grant Allocations 2008-2018

FISCAL YEAR	APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED	GRANTS AWARDED	COMMUNITIES REACHED	NEW APPLICANTS	TOTAL FUNDING AWARDED
2008/09			48	24		70,440
2009/10			51	20		69,730
2010/11			67	37		117,700
2011/12			120	38		342,760
2012/13			108	35		319,600
2013/14			98	34		291,500
2014/15			88	34		278,520
2015/16	206	885,717	91	46	59	342,715
2016/17	137	559,674	68	36	38	249,241
2017/18**	294	1,261,149	83	63	54	298,150
Total	637	\$2,706,540	822		151	\$2,380,356

Note: With improved record-keeping since 2015/2016, we now track the number of applications received, the total funding requested from community and the number of applicants new to the program for each cycle.

*Communities reached indicates individual communities reached per funding year. Some communities may have received funding for multiple projects through multiple groups in one community per year. (i.e. Prince George, the largest community in the north, has more than one project funded each cycle).

**The increase in the 2017/18 year for number of applications received and the total funding requested was due to it being the first year that two granting cycles were offered in the same budgetary fiscal year.



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