

SMOKE FREE SPACES ARE A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Nothing says we have left winter behind like the onset of sunshine, warm weather and clean fresh air! We can't wait to head outside and breathe deeply; experiencing the freshness of the summer season.

We love to congregate and recreate in our favorite public spaces such as parks, play grounds, athletic fields, beaches and cycling or walking trails. These common places are important spaces for families to visit, play and explore.

British Columbia is known for its natural beauty and our communities strive to offer healthy and safe family friendly environments. Children especially thrive as they experience the great outdoors with their families and friends.

Have you ever been out at one of your favorite parks enjoying an afternoon picnic or participating in a game of catch with your children when slowly you begin to notice the smell of cigarette smoke? For many of us, cigarette smoke, also known as second-hand smoke, interferes with our enjoyment of outdoor public spaces.

Most smokers and non-smokers agree, smoking and children do not mix – and it makes sense to protect children from being exposed to tobacco smoke. It is encouraging to see the many opportunities our local governments have engaged in to enhance the health of their communities. Local governments have regularly partnered with businesses and community groups to assist in establishing smoke-free outdoor spaces. More than ever before, families are celebrating and enjoying time in smoke-free spaces.

There are a number of other good reasons to enhance smoke-free outdoor spaces. Smoke-free spaces also help reduce litter related to tobacco waste and reduce the risk of human caused fires thereby protecting our environment. Establishing smoke free spaces assists community efforts to “go green” and be environmentally friendly while eliminating concerns about discarded cigarette butts that may be ingested by children, pets and wildlife.

So this summer, let's gather our families and get outside and enjoy our smoke- free beaches, parks and trails.

For more information on smoke-free outdoor spaces visit Clean Air Coalition – British Columbia (<http://www.cleanaircoalitionbc.com/issues/smoke-free-outdoor-public-places>).

If you know of someone who is considering stopping smoking, support is available at Quitnow.ca.

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