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Community Champion awards go to Wildsight managers

Canadian Cancer Society recognizes their work with Pesticide Free Coalition

Wildsight members can be proud of two program managers, Heather Leschied and Rachel Darvill. They received Regional Community Champion awards from the Canadian Cancer Society.

The awards recognize the work they've been doing with the **Pesticide Free Columbia Valley Coalition** since 2007.

"Prevention is a key strategy priority of the Canadian Cancer Society B.C.-Yukon Division," said Patti Moore, Community Action Coordinator for the society's Kootenay region, who nominated the pair. "Within this increasing area of action is reducing the cosmetic use of pesticides."

Leschied, who lives in Invermere, and Darvill, who lives in Golden, made the trip to Cranbrook to accept their awards on April 25.

"It was a really neat experience for Rachel and I to learn more about the CCS," Leschied said.

Words of praise

Patti Moore nominated both Leschied and Darvill with words of praise.

Leschied, she said, demonstrates all the values—caring, courage, integrity and progressiveness—of the Canadian Cancer Society. Darvill, she said, has worked tirelessly to raise community awareness by developing materials like lawn signs, stickers and brochures. Each woman has contributed to many aspects of the pesticide-free campaign: partnership building, public outreach and everything in between.

"I have been motivated and inspired by Heather and Rachel's dedication to this campaign. They are true community champions."

"It's an honour to receive this award from the Canadian Cancer Society," Darvill said. "The partnership that Wildsight and the Canadian Cancer Society has formed has been invaluable in moving our pesticide reduction work forward."

Leschied agreed: "It's exciting to see a coalition built around the links between human health and the environment. We are thrilled that our friends who work so hard for the Canadian Cancer Society in this region recognize these links, and that we have the chance to work with them. We are very grateful."

Marion Stotts, the chair of the Pesticide Free Columbia Valley Committee and an Advocacy Leader for the Columbia Valley CCS Unit, won an award on the same day. She received a Volunteer Achievement Award. Stotts is now a director of the Wildsight Invermere branch.

"Marion has been very involved as a volunteer with the coalition and the Canadian Cancer Society," Leschied said. "Now she's starting to get more involved with Wildsight—we are doubly fortunate!"

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