

New program for Learning Piping and Drumming in Surrey Cedar Hills Caledonian Pipe Band



After hearing a piper or pipe band belting out a familiar tune on the bagpipes, many people have no doubt asked the question; "how could I learn how to play the bagpipes too?" or maybe even said "I want to be a drummer!" If the answer to either of these questions has been yes, then now you can with the help of the Cedar Hills Caledonian Pipe Band in Surrey, British Columbia.

Over the past 5 years the Cedar Hills Caledonian Pipe Band (www.chcpb.ca) has had many requests to take on beginner adult students that wanted to learn to play the bagpipes or drums. Seeing that there was a need, the decision was made to develop a pilot program to fill this void. Following the successful models of the Robert Malcolm Memorial Pipe Band and Piping Hot Summer Drummer programs, we developed our Learning Piping and Drumming program. The mission of the program is to develop pipers and drummers with little to no experience with music to the point where they can learn the instrument and join the Cedar Hills Caledonian Pipe Band Society as a playing member in as little time as a year.

Newlands' son joined the RMM program in September 2013 and had his first group lesson on the chanter with Jack Lee, something his son knew was a big deal but not sure just why yet. Seeing a much different approach to teaching than what Newlands had done as a private adult tutor, the idea came to him on how to develop an adult program in Surrey and use a similar approach to teaching new players.

The next few months were spent developing the pilot program and we recruited pipe and drum instructors from the Grade 2 ranks in the local piping community and under the guidance of the chief instructors' pipe major, Garth Newlands and drum sergeant Robert Millar the six month pilot program was developed.



In January 2014, we accepted our first six adult students into the pilot program with five being pipers and one a drummer. The program turned out to be such a great success that the executive decided to develop the pilot program into a full program over the summer months of 2014 and offer it each year from September till June.

September 2014 saw the beginning of our second season, we took on ten pipers in the program with five returning students from the first season; three of the new students turned out to be kids who are 12 years old, a development not initially planned for. Changes were quickly made to have the kids get as much out of the program as the adults were.

The second full season finished in mid-June and the Learning Piping, Drumming and Highland Dance program will take a break until September 2015. The second season has been another great success.

The first pilot season had two instructors, our second season had three instructors and as the program continues to expand we will be bringing in even more. We look after them too and pay our instructors well for the hourly classes and for the full day workshops that we hold.

Program registration for the piping and drumming program is \$400 for a full season (this also includes \$10 for a society registration fee). This also turns out to be a far more economical solution than private lessons, plus has the added bonus which allows for the encouragement of peers to keep moving forward in their learning in a group setting. Anyone who would like to learn to play the pipes or drums is welcome.



The program includes many aspects of playing both pipes and drums and you can expect to learn about musicianship including working on standard pipe band tunes, the fundamentals and music theory, instrument maintenance and getting beginners up playing on the bagpipes and drums sooner rather than later. We are also expanding our Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/chcpb to include more videos using

GoPro cameras to help assist with the learning process so students can work at home with one of the instructors playing along with them. We have a couple of more ideas that we are working on to make this even better part of our offering.



The Learning group also benefits from the Cedar Hills Caledonian Pipe Band Education and workshop program by way of membership in the CHCPB Society. This year, the education and workshop program received a generous grant from the BC Lotteries Community Gaming Grants and from Surrey Arts and Cultural Grants programs. This has allowed us to not only offer full bursaries to society

members to attend Piping Hot Summer Drummer but to expand our Saturday full day workshops that are held about every six weeks. Complete details about our programs can be found at www.chcpb.ca/learning.htm or by emailing learning@chcpb.ca

The Cedar Hills Caledonian Pipe Band was founded in February 2002 and calls the Whalley Legion Branch 229 home for our base of operations. On April 3, 2006 we received official Society status from the Province of British Columbia and became the Cedar Hills Caledonian Pipe Band Society® S-50486. With the formation of the Society the three programs of Piping, Drumming and Highland Dance were formalized.

The Cedar Hills Caledonian Pipe Band can be found performing at many parades and attending many other functions throughout the year, including Surrey Canada Day, Surrey Fusion Fest, Whalley Legion Burns Dinner and Remembrance Day to name but a few throughout the Lower Mainland, and when called upon for other functions.

If you are interested learning to play the bagpipes or drums, in joining the pipe band or in opportunities as an instructor, please feel free to contact us.

You may also contact the Pipe Major of the Cedar Hills Caledonian Pipe Band at

Garth Newlands, Pipe Major,
Email: pipe.major@chcpb.ca
website: www.chcpb.ca
facebook: www.facebook.com/chcpb