



West Vancouver Place for Sport fundraising campaign closes in on target: Council steps in to close the funding gap

Wednesday, January 19, 2022, West Vancouver, BC – After six years of fundraising, construction of the [West Vancouver Place for Sport](https://www.wvps.org) will finally proceed in 2022.

West Vancouver’s Armitage family has made the largest and most substantial donation to the project to date, bringing the total amount raised to \$4,812, 857.

West Vancouver Council then agreed to provide the funding required to complete the project, on top of the \$2,250,000 already committed in October 2019.

“It was becoming clear that the longer we spent fundraising, the more costs and budget estimates were rising,” says Mayor Mary-Ann Booth. “We really needed to find a way to move forward. Then, the incredibly generous donation of the Armitage family brought the funding to a level that allowed Council to step in and close the gap. I am so appreciative of this support, and that of the almost 400 donors who have believed in this exciting project over the last five years.”

Kevin Armitage is a West Vancouver resident, entrepreneur, sports enthusiast, volunteer, philanthropist, and the father of boys aged 12 to 19. All boys are active in various sports and have spent countless hours on the West Vancouver Secondary School sports field and track representing the school’s football, rugby, and track teams.

“Our family is very aware of the dilapidated condition of this sports facility,” says Kevin Armitage. “This past fall, our home football games had to be rescheduled to be played in North Vancouver as a result of the poor condition of this field. We are delighted that our family is able to help the community improve this facility.”

The West Vancouver Place for Sport is a partnership between West Vancouver Schools and the District of West Vancouver. Almost 70 years old, the North Shore’s only competitive running track is in urgent need of replacement and the poorly draining grass field is rarely usable. The demand for a safe, all-weather multi-sport and leisure facility for all ages has never been higher and it continues to grow. The new track and artificial turf field will be a community amenity promoting healthy active lifestyles for all ages.

In February 2021, West Vancouver Schools announced that the running track at West Vancouver Secondary School would be named in honour of one of Canada’s most celebrated athletes, Harry Jerome.

"I know that my late brother Harry Jerome would be absolutely thrilled to see the West Vancouver Place for Sport become a reality, as he trained and competed on this track while still in high school. In the years following his remarkable achievements he worked passionately to bring sporting opportunities to young Canadians in the hope that they too could enjoy the countless benefits of athletic competition," said Valerie Jerome.

"The response of the community to this exciting and much needed new sports facility has been inspiring," said Geoff Jopson, spokesperson for the West Vancouver Place for Sport fundraising committee. "We applaud the generosity of the hundreds of families, service clubs, parent groups, and local businesses whose commitment to this project has helped us to reach the finish line. We are very grateful for the extraordinary generosity of the Armitage family, and for the ongoing support shown by Mayor and Council."

The facility at West Vancouver Secondary School is used by students, organized sport groups, and the community at large.

West Vancouver School Board Chair Carolyn Broady remarked, "The power of sport can be transformative and with this donation from West Vancouver Schools' Armitage family it will help future athletes experience these tremendous opportunities. All of our students, staff, and families will be able to use this world class facility."

The District will schedule information meetings to update the neighbourhood on the project details. Work is underway to finalize plans, and construction will begin as soon as possible.

BACKGROUND

The 2011 District of West Vancouver Sport Field Master Plan recommends the need for an additional artificial field in the community. Combining a new track with an artificial turf infield would support the needs of school students, community track and field clubs, community field sports groups, and the greater community recreation needs.

In 2014–2015, the school district and the municipality consulted the community and stakeholders to develop a project scope for replacing the track and field at West Vancouver Secondary School, and study project impacts.

The campaign to raise funds for this project was launched in 2015 by a small group of private citizens, and started with a generous donation of \$250,000 from the West Vancouver Foundation. The fundraising campaign has been supported across the community, with contributions coming from families and individuals, almost every public and independent school, numerous community organizations, and sports clubs. Major donors to the project include the Park Royal Shopping Centre, the Onni Group, West Van Football Club (soccer), West Van Schools, West Van Field Hockey Club, North Shore News, and the Beedie Foundation.

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