

April 2024 Issue

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M'AKOLA

HOUSING SOCIETY

Tenant Newsletter

Welcome to Spring everyone! With longer brighter warmer days on the horizon it's time to SPRING out of hibernation mode and embrace what this time of year has to offer. In this article we provide regional updates, updated rent review information, tips on how to stay fire safe with warmer weather on the way, Earth Day appreciation, self-care check-in, a tasty berry filled desert and an adorable colouring contest!

Regional Office Updates

As we enter into Spring we want to remind all tenants of some important landscaping and common area information. For any questions don't hesitate to reach out to your local office.

Landscaping & Common Areas

Landscaping: Landscaping is maintained by landscapers in each M'akola complex. We ask all tenants not to remove any existing plants or alter the existing landscaping as stated in your tenancy agreement.

Plants: If you have a green thumb you can show it off by upkeeping plants and flowers in designated planters. We ask tenants to avoid large planters (over five gallons) and hanging plants/planters from their home as it may damage it.

Outside Common Areas: It is everyone's responsibility to keep common areas pleasant and clean. Please do not store items or dispose of garbage in common areas so everyone can enjoy them. If you have any concerns with common areas please reach out to your regional office.

Air Conditioning Units

As warmer weather approaches we want to remind all tenants that window mounted air conditioning units are not permitted as they are a health and safety concern.

Air conditioning units that do not extend past the window sill and have transitioning devices that are made for every type of window are allowed.

Pest Concerns

Often pest sightings increase during Spring. We ask tenants to avoid using home remedies as it rarely eliminates the problem, but causes pests to scatter and hide. Instead, please call M'akola's repairs line immediately if you have any pest concerns in your unit or at your complex:

1-877-384-1423 Ext 2

M'akola Contacts

You can call or email the Housing Services Team at:
1-877-590-0204

- For Applications press 1
- applications@makola.bc.ca
- For Repairs press 2
- For Rent Review press 3
- rentreview@makola.bc.ca
- For Rent Collections press 4
- rentcollections@makola.bc.ca

For all other housing inquiries, questions, or concerns, please email: INFO@makola.bc.ca

Victoria Regional Office
250-384-1423

Cowichan Regional Office
250-746-1785

Nanaimo Regional Office
250-756-4217

Port Alberni Regional Office
250-723-9855

Comox Valley Regional Office
250-923.4145

Prince Rupert Regional Office
250-627-7501

Terrace Regional Office
250-638-8339

Please note M'akola offices will be closed the following dates:

Victoria Day	May 20th
National Indigenous Peoples Day	June 21st
Canada Day	July 1st

Rent Review: New Income Assistance Rent Rates

New Income Assistance Rent Rates

Effective April 1, 2024 and onward BC Housing is updating rent rates for households in rent-geared-to-income (subsidized) units, who receive Income or Disability Assistance from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

These updated rent rates are due to the new shelter portion rates set by the Ministry. Please note these new rent rates are set slightly below the Ministry's Maximum Shelter portion to allow for other shelter costs that might not be included with rent, like phone services.

If your income source is Income Assistance you will receive a new Shelter Form with the new rent rate. We ask that you take a copy of this form to your Employment and Assistance or Disability Worker at your local Ministry office.

Please note, these new rates will not require all households in Income Assistance to conduct a new rent review. Rents will be updated following the regular annual rent review process or if a rent review is requested.

Request for Rent Review

If your income is **negatively impacted for three months or more** you may be eligible to request a rent review to decrease your rent.

You may be eligible for a Request for Rent Review:

If you have a change in income source: If you have lost employment or changed employers and are now earning less income you can request a new rent review.

If you have a change in household composition: If the members of your household have changed (Ex. an income earning adult has moved out) you may be able to have your rent amount updated.

Please note: All regular rent review documents are required to assess if you are eligible for a Request for Rent Review

If you have any questions regarding this information, please reach out to Rent Review at 1-877-384-1423 Ext 3. or email rentreview@makola.bc.ca

Emergency Preparedness—Wildfire

In the event of an emergency it is always best to be prepared! This issues Emergency Preparedness section covers preparing for a wildfire.

Emergency Alerts








In the event of a life-threatening emergency, such as a wildfire, an emergency alert will be issued to impacted areas in B.C. Some alerts may be sent to small warning areas, while others may affect more than one region or be issued province-wide.

You don't need to do anything to receive an emergency alert. They will automatically be sent to active cell phone numbers. Read the alert immediately after receiving it to determine if you're in the impacted area, if so you will need to evacuate the area.

For emergency information updates go to emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca and/or follow [@EmergencyInfoBC](https://twitter.com/EmergencyInfoBC) on X (Twitter).

Emergency Evacuation

If an Evacuation Alert is in place, be ready to leave on short notice. Take these steps

-  Move patio furniture, cushions, door mats and any other flammable outside items indoors
-  If possible take down flammable curtains and window covers
-  Ensure your house number is visible. This will help firefighters locate your home quickly
-  If an Evacuation Order is in place it means you are at risk and must leave **immediately**.
-  Grab your Emergency Kit and Emergency Plan before you leave!
-  On your way out close all doors and windows. Turn on both interior and exterior lights so your home is visible to firefighters in the event there is heavy smoke
-  If you have natural gas in your unit it shut it off before you leave!

Emergency Kit Should be Ready!

In previous issues we shared how to make an emergency kit. The BC Government has a comprehensive list online: www2.gov.bc.ca > [Public safety and emergency services](#) > [Emergency Management](#) > [Public preparedness and recovery](#)

Have your kit ready as you may need to use the supplies while you shelter in place at your home. If your home is unsafe to stay in you will need to take your kit with you and your family as you find safety.

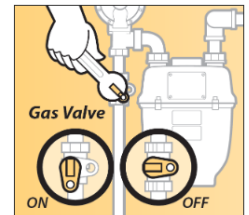
Have an Emergency Plan

In the event of a wildfire you might need to be away from your home for several days. You can find great information on preparing an emergency plan at PreparedBC.ca/EmergencyPlans

Ensure your family knows what to do in this scenario by preparing ahead of time. Note who you will contact. Have access to radio to listen to emergency broadcasts. You can keep a copy of your Emergency Plan in your Emergency Kit.

Ensure Your Renter's Insurance is Up-To-Date

Check your renter's insurance annually (at a minimum) to make sure all your possessions and family are covered in the event of a natural disaster. For any questions about renter's insurance you can reach out to your local M'akola office or refer to the information in the October 2023 Newsletter.



Earth Day

Earth Day will take place on April 22, 2024, this year marks the 54th anniversary since the conception of Earth Day.

For more ways to celebrate Earth Day check out earthday.org

The theme for Earth Day 2024 is "Planet vs. Plastics." The focus is on the escalating crisis of plastic pollution and advocating for a 60% reduction in plastic production by 2040.

This years theme is redefining our relationship with plastics.

In 2024, Earth Day brings a critical challenge to the forefront with its theme, "Planet vs. Plastics." This urgent call to action highlights the accelerating crisis of plastic pollution suffocating our planet. With over eight million tons of plastic dumped into the oceans annually, we need to do our part and help reduce the use of plastic products and have better practices on how we recycle them.



How can we help?

- 1) Use reusable shopping bags – Once you form the habit of taking your reusable bags into the grocery store or shopping mall you will be helping the planet and saving money.
- 2) Carry Reusable eating utensils/straws with you. Reusable utensils in your lunch bag, desk/office or vehicle can help reduce disposable plastic use.
- 3) Join a Clean Up in your area – There's no better way to contribute to a cleaner and healthier community than by volunteering to tackle out-of-control waste in our community, parks and beaches.
- 4) Use social media to spread awareness about Earth Day 2024's theme and encourage others to take action. Share resources, stories, and ideas on how to reduce plastic usage and protect our planet.
- 5) Conserving water by adopting simple habits like turning off the tap while brushing your teeth can save up to eight gallons of water a day



Self-Care CHECK-IN

CHECK THE BOXES OF THE ACTIVITIES
YOU DO TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

- EAT THREE MAIN MEALS
- GO ON A 24-HOUR SOCIAL MEDIA DETOX
- FIND A QUIET SPOT TO MEDITATE
- LIGHT AN AROMATIC CANDLE
- DO A GRATITUDE LIST
- PRACTICE DEEP BREATHING
- LISTEN TO GOOD MUSIC
- EXERCISE
- CATCH UP WITH A FRIEND
- VISIT A FAMILY MEMBER
- SPEND TIME OUTDOORS
- HAVE A MINI PAMPER SESH
- CUDDLE A PET
- TRY SOMETHING NEW
- READ A BOOK

Self Care

Treat yourself!

Feeling stressed and overwhelmed? You might be in need of some self-care! Here is a list to help with a self-care check in. These activities are quick to do, for any age, and no matter your background or budget. Remember that it's important to take care of yourself first so that everything else can fall into place.

Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

It is more than the absence of a mental illness—it's essential to your overall health and quality of life.

Self-care can play a role in maintaining your mental health and help support your treatment and recovery if you have a mental illness.



Recipe

No-Bake Strawberry Pie: With its whipped, creamy filling and buttery graham cracker crust, this no-bake strawberry pie is like a sweeter sibling to an icebox cake

Ingredients:

For the Crust:

- 9 graham crackers, broken into pieces
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- Pinch of Kosher salt
- 1/2 Cup unsalted butter

For the Filling:

- 10 ounces fresh strawberries, finely chopped, plus 4 strawberries, halved, for garnish



- 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar

- 2 1/4 cups heavy whipping cream, divided

- 12 oz. cream cheese, softened

- 3/4 cup powdered sugar

- 1/4 teaspoon lemon zest (grated lemon rind)

Instructions:

Step 1: Make pie crust:

Place the graham crackers, sugar, and a pinch of kosher salt in a food processor or blender and pulse until the mixture has the texture of fine crumbs. Add the butter and pulse again until the mixture is evenly moistened. Spray a 9-inch deep dish pie plate with cooking spray. Transfer the crumbs to the plate and spread evenly over the bottom and up the sides of the pan. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

Step 2: Macerate strawberries:

Stir together strawberries and granulated sugar in a medium bowl. Set aside so the berries can soften.

Step 3: Make pie filling, and refrigerate:

Beat 1 1/2 cups of the heavy cream until stiff peaks form (if you have an electric mixer it will speed up this step). In a different bowl add cream cheese, powdered sugar, and lemon zest. Blend with a stiff spatula and blend until smooth and creamy (the softer the cream cheese the easier this step will be).

Add the macerated strawberries and their juices and stir until combined. Add 1/2 cup of the whipped cream and stir until combined, 15 to 20. Gradually fold remaining whipped cream into cream cheese mixture using a rubber spatula. Dollop the mixture into the prepared crust and spread evenly. Cover and refrigerate until set, about 8 hours, or overnight.

Step 4: Make whipped cream topping:

Just before serving, you can place the remaining 1/2 cup heavy cream in a medium bowl. Beat with a hand mixer until stiff peaks form, about 1 to 2 minutes. You can save yourself the effort and use canned whipped cream too

Step 5: Decorate top of pie:

Use a teaspoon to make 8 dollops of whipped cream along the edge of the pie (one for every slice)! Place a strawberry half cut-side down on each dollop. Slice and serve.



Colouring Contest

Participate in this Spring inspired colouring contest by submitting your entries to info@makola.bc.ca by April 30th to be entered in a draw for a \$25.00 Amazon gift card.



Provincial Resources

The following resources may be great supports for your household for health and wellness.

Senior Services Society of BC

This agency works across the province with different health authorities/ SHINE partners. They have support services, financial assistance available, temporary housing programs, and other outreach services (referrals, advocate, connect with health authorities)

www.seniorsservicesociety.ca
604-520-6621

YMCA BC—Responsible Adult Course

20-Hour Responsible Adult Course, offered FREE for a limited time. This comprehensive course provides valuable training and certification for anyone who works or volunteers in child care facilities, schools, before- and after-school care, camps, and other settings where children are present

www.yv.ymca.ca/responsible-adult-course
or
information.request@bc.ymca.ca



British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society

BCANDS assists and supports their clients acting as a liaison/lead between various service agencies and their clients to address their needs and obtain or develop a variety of health and disability services. More information can be found on their website:

bcands.bc.ca

HealthLinkBC: 8-1-1

8-1-1 is a free-of-charge provincial health information and advice phone line. By calling 8-1-1 you can be connected to a registered nurse, a registered dietitian, a qualified exercise professional, or a pharmacist. Any one of these healthcare professionals will help you get the information you need to manage your health concerns, or those of your family

Call toll-free: 8-1-1

Judy Bourne Memorial Scholarship

It's that time of year again for M'akola's Judy Bourne Memorial Scholarship application process to begin. The application deadline is May 8th, 2024. For more information please visit: makoladevelopment.com/scholarshipsbursaries

Port Alberni Resources

The following resources are available in your area and may be able to support your family at this time!

Port Alberni Friendship Center

Address: 3555 4th Avenue – Unit A
Phone: 250-723-8281

The Port Alberni Friendship Center is an Indigenous Social service organization that provides Addictions & Mental Health Counseling, Sports & Recreation programs, youth & adult employment training programs, Family Law and Poverty Law Legal Advocacy Programs, Family Support, Early Childhood Development & Early Years, and much more. For more information check out their website:

pafriendshipcenter.com

Pacific Rim Children & Families

Address: 3500 Argyle Street

Located in the Family Hub at EJ Dunn Elementary School

Phone: 250-724-0278

Email: pacificrimchildren@sd70.bc.ca

Pacific Rim Children & Families helps families navigate early years services in the Alberni Valley and the West Coast. They are the early learning branch of School District 70 Pacific Rim and offer various onsite and outreach programming.

pacificrimchildren.ca

Salvation Army

Community Food Bank
250-723-6913

Call to book an appointment. The Food Bank is open for appointments Tuesday to Thursday, 11AM to 3PM

alberniavalleyssa.ca

The Port Alberni Association for Community Living

3008 2nd Ave.
250-724-7155

A source of support for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

They offer a wide range of services including person-centered planning, employment supports, residential programs, and community-based activities.

paacl.ca

Port Alberni Family Guidance Association

3039 4th Ave.
250-724-0125
info@pafga.ca

Provides free counselling services, supervised visits, Parents of Teens support group, and a Possibilities Youth Program for high-risk youth ages 15-26.

pafamilyguidance.com

Inside Out Care Corporation

4268 10th Ave.
778-421-5921

Provides a variety of programming and services for youth, children, and families including supervised family visits, respite, and day programs with a support worker and that provides a routine for those unable to attend traditional school.

insideoutcarecorporation.com