

Green Party's Elizabeth May endorses national food security program

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Overlooking Saanich farmland from the summit of Mount Douglas, the next generation of local farmers spoke about the importance of food security and healthy food.

Students from the global studies class at Claremont have been learning to farm through Growing-Young-Farmers, a program launched by organic farming advocate Dave Friend and aimed at teaching school-aged kids how to produce their own food. They met with Federal Green Party leader Elizabeth May on the mountain Wednesday, in an effort to make food security a priority for all levels of government.

Grade 10 student Sierra Kemp underlined the importance of her class's work with Friend, who uses the name "Mr. Organic."

"We're on the Island and if we were cut off, we would be out (of food) in 72 hours," Kemp said.

The program covers all aspects of farming, from soil, seeds and preparing the land, to irrigation and crop rotation.

May told the students she plans to push for a national food security policy, as well as water protection, during the next election campaign.



Global studies teacher Mark Neufeld, with federal Green Party leader Elizabeth May, farmer & educator Dave Friend and student Sierra Kemp on the summit of Mount Douglas. Claremont is 1 of 4 schools participating in the Growing-Young-Farmers project.

TJ Watt

"For too long we've assumed the only economic sector of this country that will continue to work hard for all of us, while losing money doing it, are farmers," May said.

Through his volunteer efforts, Friend has connected local farms with students from Claremont, Stelly's secondary, Kelset elementary and Parkland secondary.

"We do need more health-friendly, organic food in the community and to get away from the dependence on (outside sources)," Friend said. "How do we do that? There's many reasons we can and should support local farmers."

Coming up

Claremont's Global Studies 11/12 class will host CC350, a fundraiser to purchase solar panels at the school. On May 6, 2011, students will circle the school's track 350 times by bicycle, accepting donations for each tour. The digit 350 is a reference to 350 parts-per-million, or the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to avoid runaway climate change.