

MUSIC

Rising Star, Jesse Labelle

By Jackie Browne

I got to sit down with a talented young man by the name of Jesse Labelle. We discussed his journey meeting Emily Osment, and touring with her, and of course Sodapop Tour. He's been on one heck of a journey, and just recently had his first album come out, "the album was written over about a 10 year time period," says Labelle. "A couple of the songs on there are like 8 or 9 years old."

With an album comes touring, earlier in January Jesse Labelle toured with Hannah Montana star Emily Osment, and said they had a great time. After touring in January Emily Osment's people asked what Jesse was up to, and invited him to join the list for the Sodapop Tour performers, which Jesse couldn't resist. "She's an awesome girl, she's totally cool." Labelle explains while talking about Emily.

Being on tour means being away from your family and friends, and while many of us find it very hard to do, this young man has his ways. "Facebook, blackberry, having text messaging, it works wonders when you're out on the road."

Recently Jesse Labelle had his first real touring experience travelling along side a band called Faber Drive. "It was the best experience I've ever had." Labelle explained, "it was my first tour, we started in Nova Scotia and finished in Vancouver." Jesse had a chance to shoot a video for his second single: "Easier" in Toronto on one of the days off from tour. "That was great!" Labelle goes on, "we did the video on one of the days off on the Faber Drive tour, it was the only day for a period of about three and a half months that I was actually in Toronto able to shoot a video."

The boys from Faber Drive managed to join Labelle in the video, you can look for them in the video on Jesse's YouTube channel.

Everyone should go check him out:
<http://www.jesselabelle.com/>

Community Peace Garden Thrives at VIU

By Amanda Davis

Vancouver Island University has given students of its Nanaimo campus a great gift: the space and support to grow food. Sprouted from ideas of the campus club, Solutions: a Sustainability Network, VIU's Community Peace Garden has been over two years in the works. It now occupies an area outside the modern glass walled library building. In contrast, the garden's sun-etched wooden sign organically leads the way to newly planted vegetable crops where once there was just basic shrubbery and a vacant corner. VIU Community Peace Garden Club member Stephen Levesque says the University librarians are particularly pleased to have an apple tree blossoming outside their doors. Further down a "food forest" or orchard with a variety of fruit and nut trees has been planted.

The garden is designed to look like a peace symbol, a beautiful idea which is further enhanced by its setting overlooking Nanaimo and the mountains and ocean beyond.

The garden is universally accessible, which means all members of the campus and larger community will be able to utilize it. For example, pathways are wide enough to accommodate wheel chairs and a number of raised garden beds are waist high.

VIU psychology student Kristy Tymos, 24, says she plans to garden at home as well as at school. Five years ago Tymos fell asleep while driving and crashed her car. She suffered a spinal cord injury and is now in a wheel chair. Tymos consulted on the final designs for the

Peace Garden. She says it will provide something fun and useful for students to do in between classes, and will be an ideal place to meet new people.

Last month the club held a fund raiser for the garden showcasing local foods. VIU's Culinary Arts students prepared a decadent and colourful buffet which included produce from Nanoose Edibles, Compassion Farms, Providence Farms, farmer Darren Horwood, oysters on the half shell from Evening Cove, an assortment of cheese from Qualicum Cheeseworks, a delicate pork shoulder from Nesvog Meat & Sausage Co., and four types of bread from Bodhi's Artisan Bakery. Local salmon and halibut was also served, along with fresh pasta dishes with a choice of sauce and toppings including spot prawns.

Levesque says the meaning of the peace symbol speaks for itself, and its y-shaped arms further encompass what the garden is all about - community. The club looks to the university's various departments for support and collaboration, like the branched out arms of the peace symbol. Carpentry students did the concrete forming and wood framing, Horticulture Therapy students designed the garden alongside other experts, Culinary Arts students cooked for the fundraiser and will one day use the garden's produce, and Visual Arts students may make ceramic plaques to adorn it. Levesque says the garden will hopefully become an outdoor classroom, as well as gathering and growing place.

"It's an honour to be involved in this project," he says. "The VIU facilities have been so supportive."

Photo above: VIU student Kristy Tymos addresses attendees of "Let's Get Local", VIU's Community Peace Garden fundraising dinner.

