

# A winding path to peace

Local labyrinth lover hopes to bring the tranquility of an ancient symbol to Surrey

by Leslie Dickson

**L**abyrinths have inspired human beings for thousands of years.

Through the ages, they have been used to cage mythic beasts, to guide ritual dance in celebration of pagan holidays, to help religious groups meditate and to delight children with games.

Yet, while common in ancient and medieval times, labyrinths fell out of vogue during the last few centuries.

Recently, the symbol has been revived by Christians and members of other spiritual movements for the opportunity it offers users to meditate and achieve a sense of peace.

Surrey labyrinth enthusiast Diana Ng plans to bring this intriguing pattern of paths to a local park later this year.

Ng discovered labyrinths while working on a master's degree in leadership several years ago and has since incorporated them into her corporate consulting work.

She is now trying to raise enough money for The Labyrinth Project – which will see a classical seven-circuit outdoor labyrinth built on a 100-square-metre area in Fleetwood Park at 80 Avenue and 160 Street.

While there are dozens of other indoor and outdoor labyrinths in B.C. – including a similar one at Camp Kwomais in Ocean Park – this labyrinth would be the first one located on public land in the Lower Mainland.

If completed, the Fleetwood Park design won't resemble the series of towering walls of hedge or stone many think of when they envision a labyrinth. Instead, a two-dimensional design of concrete, with granite cobblestones marking the path, is planned.

Like many modern-day labyrinth lovers, Ng makes the distinction between mazes and labyrinths: mazes have dead ends, labyrinths don't.

"Mazes are designed to confuse you and frustrate you. A labyrinth is designed to calm you," says Ng.

In a classical labyrinth, the walker is led on a single twisting path to the centre, then back out to the single entrance/exit.



DIANA NG

**Diana Ng has launched The Labyrinth Project, which would see a classical outdoor labyrinth built in Fleetwood Park. Unlike mazes, which are meant to confuse, labyrinths are designed to calm people, Ng says.**

"It's a meditation. Some people get an insight when they get to the centre; some just feel more relaxed."

Ted Urich, Surrey's parks designer, said the city has been in talks with Ng about the labyrinth for about a year now.

Urich said the city got on board with the labyrinth as it complements Fleetwood Park's planned formal gardens and gives locals an opportunity to unplug.

"It provides a restful oasis within the urban city and provides people with the chance to escape their busy lives and meditate any way they see fit," Urich said.

Ng has already raised \$1,000 toward the project, but needs to raise another \$14,000 – which the city will match – before the project can go ahead.

But she is optimistic The Labyrinth Project will inspire people to donate.

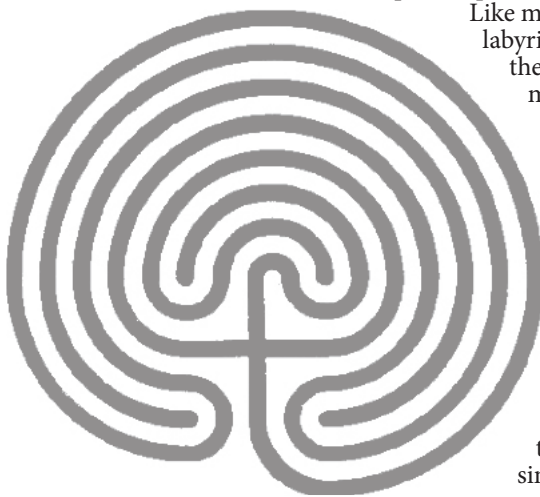
"I think there's a hunger out there... The West Coast is ready for a spiritual movement."

And while it is sponsored by the church she attends, South Fraser Unitarian, Ng says the labyrinth is open to people of all faiths and backgrounds.

If she is able to secure enough donations, Ng hopes the labyrinth will be installed by the end of this year and act as a bridge between Surrey's many cultures and religions.

*For more information about the labyrinth proposed for Fleetwood Park, call Diana Ng at 604-765-7493. Tax-deductible cheques can be made out to The Labyrinth Project and dropped off at Surrey City Hall, 14245 56 Ave.*

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**A stone labyrinth with a pattern like this one is planned for a Surrey park.**

NEWS

## WHALLEY RESIDENTS EVACUATED

Three homes were evacuated after firefighters responding to a report of a suspected house fire found a clandestine drug lab in a Whalley neighbourhood Thursday night. The lab was discovered near 104 Avenue and 125B Street about 10 p.m. inside a large brown and green house. One man was seen fleeing the scene after smoke began coming from the building. Haz-Mat crews were called in to safely dispose of the potentially explosive chemicals. One evacuee, who asked not to be named, said the house with the lab was about a year old, with occupants who kept to themselves. "It's one of those mega-houses," the resident said. "It looks right into our back yards." Anyone with information about the case is asked to contact the Surrey RCMP at 604-599-0502 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.