

Sasamans Society



Annual Report

2012 / 2013

Our children and our families are the cornerstone of our Nations' futures.

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PREFACE

An Overview of Sasamans

Sasamans Society is providing 12 First Nations and 4 urban Aboriginal organizations on North Vancouver Island and the BC coast with the support they need to develop their respective cultural and traditional approaches to caring for their children, families and communities. Sasamans is committed to honouring a community-driven process to assist communities in creating their vision of a child and family wellness plan.

Sasamans Society's vision is to strengthen our children and families in a community-driven and culturally appropriate manner. In the Kwak'waka language, Sasamans means *our children*; the society's name reflects our intention to honour and listen to our children's voices and the voices of the communities we serve.



Member Nations

- Da'naxda'xw Awaetlala First Nation
- Dzawada'enuxw First Nation
- Kwakiutl First Nation
- Kwikwasut'inuxw/Haxwa'mis Tribe
- Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw First Nation
- Quatsino First Nation
- We Wai Kai First Nation
- Wei Wai Kum First Nation
- K'omoks Band
- Tlatlasikwala First Nation
- Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band
- Whe-la-la-U Area Council

Urban Aboriginal Organizations

- Laichwiltach Family Life Society
- Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre
- Wachiyay Friendship Centre
- Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry

Our History

The funding for Sasamans comes from the Ministry of Children and Family Development through a program called Indigenous Approaches. “Indigenous Approaches” is grounded in the acknowledgement that Indigenous communities hold an inherent jurisdiction to care for and protect their children and families within the context of their traditional laws and customs - and it is their communities who now need to lead the design and delivery of services to their children and families.

In its initial stages, the Kwakwaka’wakw peoples and other Aboriginal people in the traditional territories participated in Indigenous Approaches through the North Island Wellness Society (NIWS). Formed in 2009, NIWS focused on furthering community engagement to directly influence and engage in policy setting, governance, and management authority over services that currently remain within MCFD. NIWS experienced growth in membership, support and direction. In June 2010, society management changed along with a strategic plan that moved the organization to a new name, Sasamans (“our children”) Society, and a more developed identity and direction. Sasamans Society is governed by a board of directors appointed by member Nations and participating urban Aboriginal organizations.

With the development of Sasamans Society, we seek to move beyond the current MCFD system to one that is truly aligned with the culture and values of our people. Ours is a process of developing and implementing, within the context of our culture, our traditional laws and way of life. This effort is set within the context of moving progressively forward from the long history of government authority and control over the care and support of our children. The work of changing from a government-designed system to a system grounded in the cultural and traditional laws of our Nations will take time, effort, commitment and a positive working relationship with MCFD.

Our Mission

In pursuit of our vision to strengthen our children and families in a community-driven and culturally appropriate manner, the Sasamans Society will respectfully:

- Appreciate and nurture the strengths and capacities of our people.
- Communicate and engage, openly and on an ongoing basis.
- Honour our traditions, customs, and beliefs.
- Involve the voices of our children and the wisdom of our Elders.
- Commit to learning from one another.
- Dedicate ourselves to achieving our short- and long-term goals.

Our Values

- ❖ We strive to openly demonstrate Trust, Honesty, Respect, Integrity, Values and Empathy in achieving our goals.
- ❖ We believe in practicing compassion, transparency, honesty and accountability.
- ❖ We will respect and practice equality for all.
- ❖ We believe that we are all one and we strive to be inclusive at all levels as we walk and talk with honour.
- ❖ We embrace and nurture the strengths and abilities of our people.



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The funding agreement between Sasamans Society and the Ministry of Children and Family Development for the fiscal year 2012/13 has the following Service Description.

Outcome:

The design, development and management of community culturally-based child and family wellness services.

Deliverables:

1. *Community Engagement: Complete community engagement process (6 remaining).*
2. *Community Engagement: Host 2nd Elders gathering to develop proposal for traditional service delivery model to keep children from entering the care of the Director, CFSCA.*
3. *Community Engagement: Develop working agreements with First Nations Band and Urban Aboriginal agencies.*
4. *Service Delivery Development: Develop a proposal for an Aboriginal Restorative Justice Program.*
5. *Service Delivery Development: Develop proposal for an Indigenous Approach outreach training program.*

Outcome. <i>The design, development and management of community culturally-based child and family wellness services.</i>	
Status	Comments
Significant movement toward this Outcome in the past fiscal year.	In the past year (2012/13 fiscal year) Sasamans made a major shift in its focus, with the goal of meeting its long term objective of offering services that fulfill unmet needs in our communities. We successfully completed our consultation phase in our development and have now moved our resources into targeted service delivery. Our planning and community support has allowed us to shift our funding to provide six staffed positions during fiscal 2013/14. We are hiring and implementing the following positions/programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Three Aboriginal Outreach Navigator positions❖ A Restorative Youth Justice Worker❖ A Community Development Worker❖ A Child and Family Counsellor position for Gwasala-Naxwada'xw In addition, the Family ROOTs program that has traditionally rested elsewhere has been transferred to Sasamans and has become part of our service team.

Deliverable #1. Community Engagement: Complete community engagement process (6 remaining).		
Status	Key Dates	Comments
Substantially completed (5 of 6 completed, 1 of 6 in progress)		All six of the communities have been fully engaged in the community engagement process. We have completed the process in Wei Wai Kai; K'omoks; Kwakiutl; Gwasala-Naxwada'xw; and Sacred Wolf. There were some delays in completing Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis Tribe, although that will be completed this fiscal year. There was a crisis with the key worker in the community that impacted completing this work. Each community has a booklet which describes the process and outcomes. They are all on our website.
Deliverable #2. Community Engagement: Host 2nd Elders gathering to develop proposal for traditional service delivery model to keep children from entering the care of the Director, CFSCA.		
Status	Key Dates	Comments
Completed.	Gathering held November 28 and 29, 2012.	Successful inclusion of Elders in program design. Has led to an ongoing commitment for Elder involvement in Sasamans programming.
Deliverable #3. Community Engagement: Develop working agreements with First Nations Bands and Urban Aboriginal agencies.		
Status	Key Dates	Comments
Completed (initial stage) Ongoing work required.	April 2012 – March 31, 2013 (Initial meeting with First Nations and Agencies). March 15, 2013 (MOU signed between Sasamans and Laichwiltach).	Agreement at August meeting that MOU or Cooperation Agreements will be signed when Sasamans direct services are offered in a community. In the meantime, there are Letters of Support and/or Band Council Resolutions supporting Sasamans from all participating parties. A collective working agreement between Sasamans and Laichwiltach Family Life Society was signed in March.
Deliverable #4. Service Delivery Development: Develop a proposal for an Aboriginal Restorative Justice Program.		
Status	Key Dates	Comments
Completed.		A program description and job description have been completed. The coordinator was deployed into this position and has begun the work as of April 1 st , 2013.

Deliverable #5.

Service Delivery Development: Develop proposal for an Indigenous Approach outreach training program.

Status	Key Dates	Comments
Completed.		A program description has been completed. A Community Development Worker job description has been developed and will work out of the Campbell River office, and will be open to communities wishing to utilize this service. The position was posted and recruitment is complete as of end of April, 2013. Individual will commence work on June 3 rd , 2013.

Extra Deliverable –

Pilot Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator position added in November 2012 as per board direction and community support.

Status	Key Dates	Comments
Continued to June 30 th , 2013		Collaborative meetings with LFLS took place and referral forms were created. Clients referred from LFLS, it was determined it would be best to only come from them until the pilot was complete and determine other referral sources in 2013/14 fiscal. Shared pilot plans with MCFS team leaders; response was positive. Both navigators participated in training at the Justice Institute for: conflict resolution, mediation skills, anger management and family justice. Many lessons learned on what we will do and won't do, outcomes to be shared in first quarter report for 2013/14.