



# Sasamans Society

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## *2021/22 AGM Report*

Lori Bull, Executive Director



## Our History

Our name was derived from community engagement discussions in 2009/10 with leaders and frontline workers. Our logo was created by the late Mulidzas *Curtis Wilson*, of the Wei Wai Kum Nation. The services Sasamans provides came from our community engagement sessions along with the Voices of Our Elders I & II. These were facilitated over a period of two years.

## Vision Statement

Sasamans Society's **Vision** is *Strengthening “our children” and families in a community-driven and culturally appropriate manner*. In the Kwak'wala language, Sasamans means "our children"; the society's name reflects our intention to listen, acknowledge and honour the voices of the communities that we serve. Sasamans Society is supported and guided by our Board of Directors (BOD), comprised of community representatives from our partnering First Nation Bands and Indigenous Urban agencies.

## Our Mission

For the well-being of our children & families, we are committed to providing support, and work collectively based on a holistic model from a community-driven process.

In pursuit of our Vision, 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 wisdom of our Elders;
- Learn from one another;
- Dedicate ourselves to achieving our short and long-term goals.

## Beliefs and Values

- Every child needs someone to believe in them;
- Children and families have the right to be heard;
- All families do the best with what they have;
- Every child and their families have gifts and strengths;
- Every child deserves to be loved;
- Parents must start taking responsibility;
- Families must start taking responsibility;
- Children and their families need someone to trust.
- Children are our reason for living;
- Children are sacred;
- Children need a safe loving environment;
- Children have to be safe;
- Children belong with their family;
- Children have the right to be children;
- Children have the right to be respected;
- We are here to hold a sacred space for our children and families.

## Message from the Executive Director

Lori Bull, B.S.W., M.S.W., R.S.W.

Executive Director

It is my great pleasure to welcome everyone to our 2021-22 Annual General Meeting. I would like to respectfully acknowledge that we are hosting our meeting on the unceded traditional territory of the Laichwiltach people.

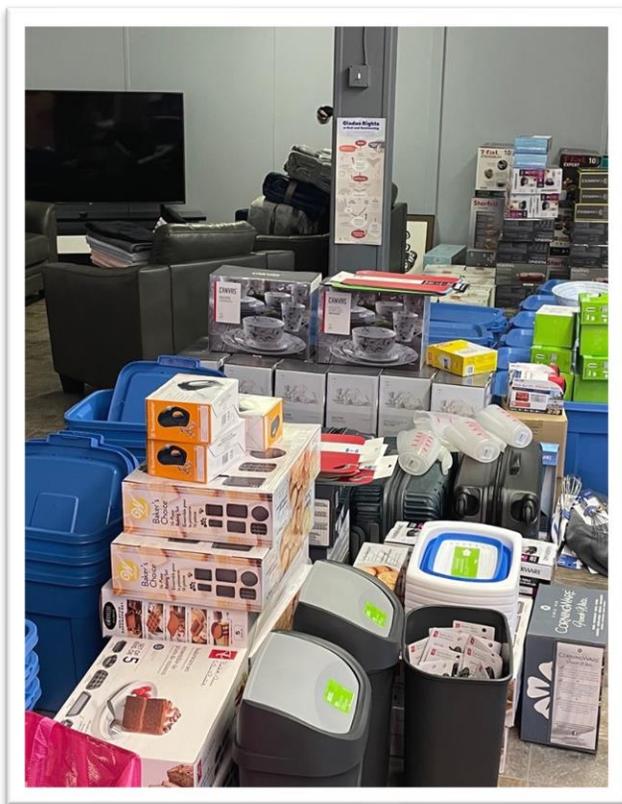
As we moved into the new fiscal year, April 2021 we were still in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were all coming through year one of navigating our way through this challenging global health crisis. Our focus was staying healthy while maintaining connection to the community and delivering services without interruption. Many of our staff worked from home but they were on a rotation to make sure there was always office coverage. Our goal was to make sure our services were still being delivered and our children, youth, families and Elders did not go without the support they needed from our programs/staff. There was always someone in the office to answer the phones and guide our callers to the proper supports. I am very proud to have a committed team of people dedicated to our work and the community. We were also participating in the BC vaccination roll out, thank you to KDC Health for holding vaccination clinics for our community. We were obligated to get vaccinated because of the nature of our work also we wanted to continue to do our work in community without disruption. Vaccines were a requirement for us to do our jobs and without the vaccination we would not be able to access many of our partner agencies and health/social services agencies that we collaborate with. As the summer months approached, we were able to move a little more freely as things began opening up again, staff were happy to have fresh air to move around in with their clients.

I can't write this report without acknowledging how devastating it was to learn of the remains of 215 children that were found buried at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. For many, this news was the confirmation to what many of us already knew... many of our children never made it home. Throughout the year families, communities and nations came together to remember, honour and mourn every single child that never made it home, we will always remember.

We had a couple of transitions during the year, unfortunately we have been without our *Housing Navigator Program* all year, this was due to a vacancy in the position since May 2021 it has been difficult to find a suitable candidate for this program, the position remains unfilled. With the lack of affordable housing in this community, homelessness continues to rise in this community and continues to be a concerning issue for our staff who must support clients who are living displaced and rough. In October of 2021, Sasamans Society programming moved out of the Wachiay Friendship Centre in Courtenay and moved to 2435 Mansfield Dr., at this location our Sasamans staff are in close proximity to the MCFD office (next door). We also had the misfortune of losing our Sasamans van in December which was often used by our youth and elders programs in Campbell River. One of our staff was t-boned by another driver who ran a red light, this was an unfortunate accident, our staff member was off work for several months due to the impact this

accident had on her, we are happy to say she is back at work again. The van was totaled, and we did receive a full insurance return from ICBC but we still haven't replaced the van due to the special requirements and upgrades we want in a new vehicle. Unfortunately, we just haven't found the time or the \$ to replace the vehicle but we are working on it.

**BIG NEWS...** In January of 2022 we responded to a Request for Proposals for a *Justice Support Worker*, the funding came through the *Strathcona Regional District* with a timeline of one year. We were excited to learn that Sasamans Society was the successful applicant for this program to be delivered in Campbell River. The purpose of the *Justice Support Worker* program is to support people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in navigating the justice system while also supporting folks in accessing treatment and recovery services, housing services and health care services. This program is a much-needed program in our community and is the first program that Sasamans delivers that is not Indigenous specific. The timeline to deliver this program (contract ends January 31, 2023) is tight so we immediately moved one of our staff into this program and it was up and running by the end of February. Sasamans Society is currently working on new funding opportunities to keep this program running beyond January 31, 2023.



Finally, we needed to spend a little extra money before year end in one of our programs and we had to do it quickly. We did a big shopping excursion and purchased various items (from Canadian Tire, Walmart, Superstore, Dollar Store and London Drugs) that would be placed in a “Starter Kit” for youth. These kits were distributed to various youth in Campbell River and also Courtenay and each kit was designed for new home start up and included mostly kitchen items, bath towels, blanket and cleaning supplies and also included a \$200.00 gift card for Superstore. Some youth who were leaving care also received a suitcase. Our Youth Navigator report for Campbell River shares some of the responses from the youth who received a starter kit.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of Sasamans Society, our staff, and our programs! We do this work because we believe in what we do but we can't do it without YOU! 'Gilakas'la!

## **2021/2022 Sasamans Society Programs and Services:**

- Indigenous Outreach Family Navigator (Campbell River, Courtenay, Port Hardy)
- Indigenous Youth Navigator (Campbell River, Courtenay, Port Hardy)
- Cultural Connections (Campbell River)
- Indigenous Parenting Support Worker (Campbell River, Courtenay)
- Designated Band Representative – Mamalilikulla First Nation
- Indigenous Elders Outreach Navigator/Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders
- Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator
- Justice Support Worker **\*NEW\***

### **Indigenous Outreach Family Navigator**

The purpose of the *Indigenous Outreach Family Navigator* (IOFN) program is to enhance service provision, provide advocacy, decrease children in care through preventative support services, and improve accountability through a family-centered approach that focuses on meeting the needs of Indigenous children and families.

The IOFN provides support and guidance to Indigenous families who are at risk of becoming involved with the *Ministry of Children and Family Development* (MCFD) or a *Delegated Aboriginal Agency* (DAA) as well as providing assistance to families whose children or grandchildren are in the care of MCFD or a DAA. The IOFN acts as a *navigator* for families to assist them in understanding the child welfare system as well as accessing various resources and support services (i.e. legal services, counselling services, parenting support services, drug and alcohol treatment services and supports etc.).

### **Indigenous Youth Navigator**

The purpose of the *Indigenous Youth Navigator* (IYN) program is to enhance service provision, provide advocacy, and to ensure that youth in care are made aware of the services available to them while in care and when they age out of care. Additionally, this program aims to decrease the numbers of Indigenous youth in care through preventative support services and improve accountability through a youth centred approach that focuses on meeting the needs of the youth. This program works with Indigenous youth aged 13 – 26 years.

The IYN assists Indigenous youth in understanding and accessing various youth support services and resources that may be available to them as well as participating in planning processes with youth and their social workers on Youth Agreements while also providing support and guidance to youth who are:

- In government care;
- On probation;
- Transitioning out of government care or;
- Aging out of government care.

## **Cultural Connections Program**

The purpose of the *Cultural Connections* program is to create Cultural Plans for children in care and to assist MCFD social workers in developing and implementing appropriate re-unification plans and identifying children for whom a return to family or community may be appropriate. Sasamans Society has one FT Cultural Connections Worker (CCW); this position is based out of Campbell River and works in partnership with various First Nations (provincially and nationwide), MCFD and community agencies including Laichwiltach Family Life Society. This program has at times required the CCW to travel to communities such as but not limited to Kyuquot, Ahousaht and Cortes Island.

## **Indigenous Parenting Support Worker**

The *Indigenous Parenting Support Worker* (APSW) program was initiated in January of 2018. The purpose of the APSW is to provide essential and preventative support services to families identified as being in need of interventions and whose children are in government care or at high risk of removal. The APSW works very closely with our *Indigenous Outreach Family Navigators*. While these positions work closely together, they hold very different roles. The APSW provides intensive support through visits to the family's home while working collaboratively with the family to develop goals and reducing risks identified by MCFD. The worker walks alongside parents in their efforts to accomplish the goals set out by MCFD, they provide encouragement, parenting knowledge and resources with the objective of building strong and healthy families.

## **Designated Band Representative - Mamalilikulla First Nation (MFN)**

Sasamans Society and Mamalilikulla First Nation has been working in partnership since the fall of 2019 to provide *Designated Band Representative* (DBR) services for MFN children in care; The purpose of the DBR Program is to work with MFN families living on and off reserve to ensure their children in care remain connected to family, community and culture through planning, advocacy and mediation support. The goal to achieve successful outcomes through a collaborative approach between MFN and provincial child welfare agencies is paramount, while strengthening MFN's capacity building in exercising their inherent rights to be involved in all matters involving their children in care.

## **Indigenous Elders Navigator**

The *Indigenous Elders Navigator* (IEN) works with elders from both on and off reserve; the IEN assists elders in navigating the health care system and supporting them when attending medical appointments, assisting in finding housing, tax preparation and budgeting and supporting elders in whatever capacity they require. The Elders Navigator also meets with elders in Courtenay once a week. In pre-Covid times the IEN has spent a lot of time with the elders including attending Elders conferences that takes place in various communities each year.

The Elders Navigator program has been a valuable asset to many agencies, committees, schools and long-term care facilities in the community as they access the Elders support, love and

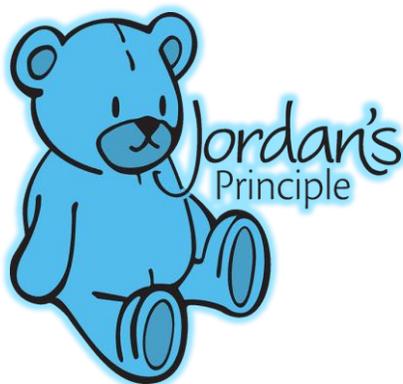
guidance. In previous years we had some amazing opportunities to bring Sasamans Society staff and Elders together to learn and grow from our knowledge keepers.

### **Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders**

The *Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders* (AHCE) was established in 2013/14 to provide support and guidance to Sasamans Society staff, local First Nations organizations, youth, families at risk, and other agencies including MCFD, John Howard Society, Foundry and Campbell River Family Services. The AHCE plays an active role in the community as they assist in facilitating workshops, giving opening and closing prayers and welcoming guests to the territory when attending meetings and workshops. The AHCE has participated in various training sessions and healing workshops throughout the years organized by Sasamans Society Elders Navigator, this training has provided them with the skills and confidence to work in community.

### **Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator**

This program was launched in Campbell River in February 2021, *Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator* objective is to provide knowledgeable and culturally safe support to First Nations



children/youth, parents and guardians in accessing the full range of federal and provincial health, education and social programs and services that will meet their needs. Jordan's Principle is a child-centred/child-first principle and applies equally to all First Nations children living on reserve or living off reserve and addresses the needs of First Nations children by ensuring there are no gaps in government services for them. This program may address but is not limited to gaps in mental health, special education, dental, physical therapy, speech therapy, medical equipment and physiotherapy.

### **Justice Support Worker \*NEW\***

The intention of this newly created position is to help bridge the ever-widening gap between the justice system, the healthcare system and social services by having a trained professional regularly attend court in-person and be available as a resource to assist Judges, Crown Counsel, Defence lawyers, Probation Officers and Restorative Justice to make more informed decisions when it comes to the availability of recovery services, detox treatment, counselling opportunities and housing programs. The Justice Support Worker is independent of government and must be available to respond to enquiries from the Judge or other court users in near real time (within minutes of receiving requests).

The Justice Support Worker will also assist accused individuals or convicted offenders who are experiencing homeless or at risk of homelessness access various services that aim to address the causes of criminality and homelessness. In particular, the Justice Support Worker will identify opportunities and provide information/resources when it comes to addictions and mental health

treatment options. Information provided by the Justice Support Worker may assist court users to determine the contents of joint submissions, to divert minor offences to alternative measures which include drug/alcohol/mental health treatment or assist in the drafting bail conditions which are designed to prevent a return to homelessness and criminality. We are excited to bring this program to Sasamans Society and the community of Campbell River.

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## STAFF PROGRAM REPORTS

### Campbell River Indigenous Outreach Family Navigator

#### 2021-2022 Program Update

Melony Larre

Some of the highlights in the IOFN program in Campbell River for 2021/2022 involved creating more resilient connections in the community to access resources around housing, healthcare, and addiction services for clients. The IOFN also assisted several women in developing safety plans as they attempted to leave family violence in their homes.

There were also wonderful opportunities to learn, grow, and network with organizations like Nawalakw, KDC Health, FNHA, and hockey hero – Jordin Tootoo, at a variety of special events. The IOFN also organized and hosted a fun craft day/meet and greet with Sasamans Society staff and MCFD staff. This was done in December with a holiday theme. One of our Elders came and demonstrated how to create beautiful holiday centrepieces, while other folks decorated wreaths and tried their hand at beading.



This year the IOFN was delighted to witness a shift in how MCFD has offered tangible support. A family that was being supported in the program was experiencing health concerns from the unhealthy living conditions of their housing unit. MCFD was gracious in offering temporary housing for several months and took on the costs of repairs, cleaning, fumigation, food and all new furniture and belongings. This resulted in the family staying together and the children not going into foster care.

**Port Hardy Indigenous Outreach Family Navigator/Indigenous Youth Navigator  
2021-2022 Program Update  
Jane Watts-Ellens**

It's nice to see families attend and participate in cultural ceremonies, as it's been a very long time. Families have been struggling with their sense of connection, belonging, community and saying their final "goodbyes" to loved ones lost to natural causes, Covid, or addictions. Families still face challenges with getting connected to counselling services for trauma and Alcohol/Drug substance use.

Some programs have started up in the last few months, since Covid started, Culture Night, Lunch programs, workshops @ Sacred Wolf. The other Nations are also looking to offer more to their community members, keeping in mind there have been spurts of Covid cases and following the Covid protocol. There hasn't been any decrease in substance use, many overdoses have occurred in the past year, we have lost so many of our young people and many who left children behind. There aren't enough resources to address the urgency and need to detox, access supportive housing, and attend treatment. There are many long wait lists for all of those needs and more. The Alcohol and drug consumption, compounded with MCFD involvement, has impacted this community in the North Island significantly. Many families are still feeling the impacts of no cultural events, celebrations, feasts, and memorial services for the past 2.5 years, and with so many deaths, no proper send off has been achieved, until very recent.

Our communities in the North Island (Gwa'sala Nakwada'xw, Fort Rupert, Quatsino, Kingcome, Guilford Island, River's Inlet, Zeballos, and Alert Bay) have been impacted by a disconnect from Sasamans Society due to pandemic isolation requirements over the past 2.5 years (March 2020). The impacts are many, resulting in more domestic violence, isolation, and loneliness all of which are examples of the disconnect. Our communities have lost many big political figures and Matriarchs and beloved Elders in this past year. The families from the communities mentioned, are not able to fully grieve and say final goodbyes/farewells to their loved ones who left us during the Covid19 Pandemic. Our Indigenous communities are re-living the trauma and affects of attending Residential schools, with the Day School Applications, which were to be completed and submitted by July 2022. The families who applied, had to tell their story again, and delve deeper into the old hurts and wounds. This has impact and fall out as they move through day-to-day activities. We need resources and more counselling to assist this process, as they are our knowledge keepers and are like "GOLD" to us. We are hopeful more resources will be available in the coming year or so, to address: Impacts/fallout of residential school, addictions, poverty, lack of affordable housing and ceremonial needs.

**Campbell River Indigenous Youth Navigator  
2021-2022 Program Update  
Taylor Shuttleworth & Monica Glendale**

It's evident that the support and guidance Sasamans Indigenous Youth Navigator(s) given to indigenous youth involved with the Ministry, youth transition planning, youth on probation, youth agreements, aging out and/or in government care is a highly valued and a sought-out service. Throughout this year, there has been several successes to note regarding the work that the Indigenous Youth Navigator(s) have been involved in:

**Community Dinners**

The Indigenous Youth Navigators, Sasamans Elders, Foundry, YLSBC and the Federation of BC Youth in Care Network come together to host 3 community holiday dinners for local Indigenous youth and young adults. The event now feeds up to 150 youth and young adults a delicious homemade meal. These dinners are a great opportunity to establish healthy connections between peers, elders, support workers and other agencies while also feeding the amazing young people in community.

**Starter Kits**

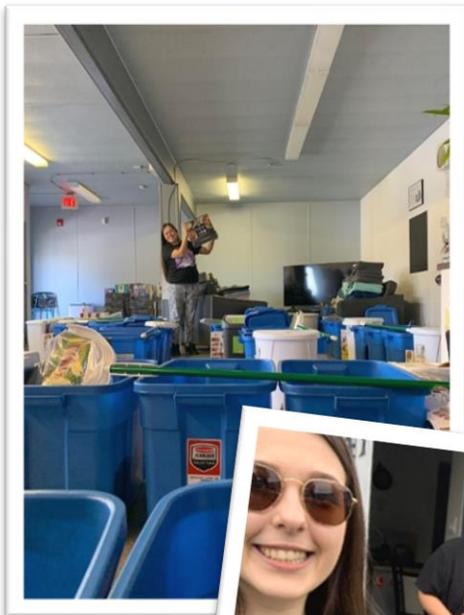
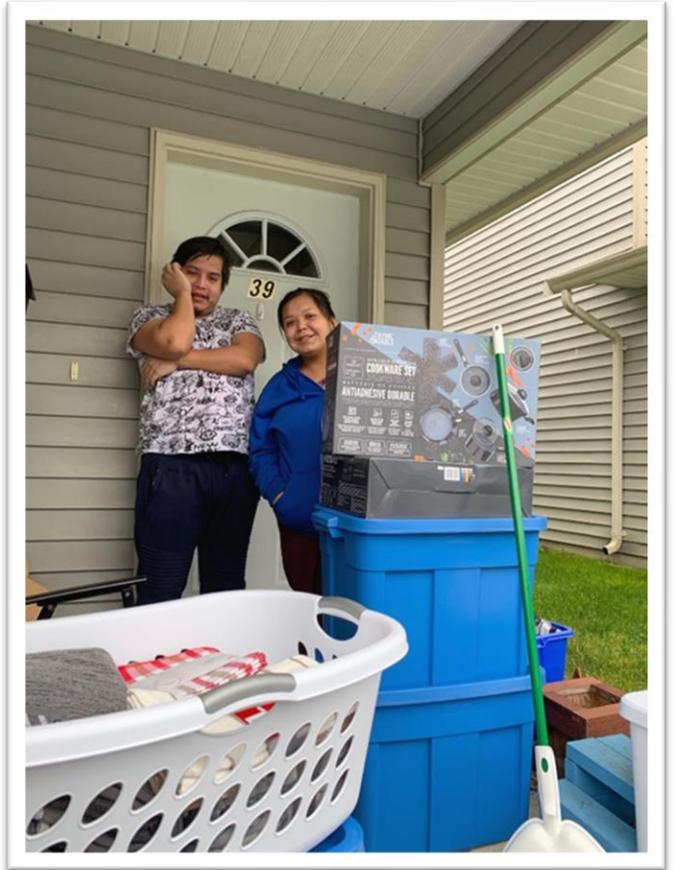
One of the highlights from this quarter include this ability for Sasamans Society to purchase, pack and deliver a "Home Starter Kit" to the youth and young adults connected to the IYN program. These kits were created for youth who were or had aged out of government care. The kits came with housing essentials such as cookware, plates, towels, blankets, garbage cans, cleaning supplies, and much more. With their starter kit they were also given a \$200 Superstore gift card to be able to purchase groceries to use their new home supplies. Each starter kit cost a minimum of \$1000.00.

### 3 Young People Provide Feedback on Receiving a Starter Kit

*“My family and I want to thank everyone who have put these really amazing starter packs together, for the funding put into them so that we are able to have what we need when we have our own space, and also for the gift card to get Groceries and stuff that we need. My family also want to thank Taylor for delivering our package to us, unfortunately we weren't able to see Monica, we are super grateful Gila'kasla” ~ Youth*

*“Moving out on my own has been a scary experience but having this makes me less worried. You are a life saver.” ~ Youth*

*“All of this is for me?! This will replace a lot of my older stuff!” ~ Youth*

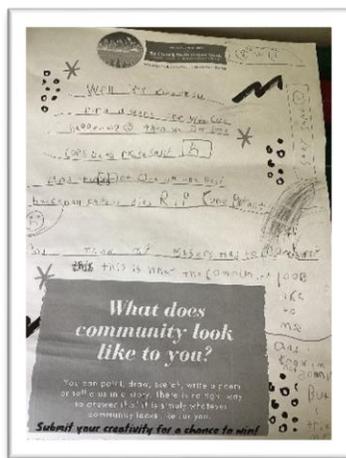


## BC Child and Youth in Care Week

The 2021 BC Child and Youth in Care Week was incredible. This Indigenous youth navigator hosted meetings every 2 weeks starting in April of 2021. We had various agencies come together to plan one of our best weeks yet. Some of the agencies included Sasamans Society, MCFD, JHS, Foundry, FPSS, Community Volunteers, Campbell River Museum, The UPS Store, Stonehouse Teas, KDC Health, Lees Chicken, Spinners, Frontier College, Wei Wai Kum House of Treasures, Campbell River Mirror. We created 2 types of bags that reached to over 170 youth and young adults ranging from 1.5 yrs old all the way to 30 yrs. MCFD funded our entire event and we had

incredible donations from the community for prizes and to put into our gift bags. We used our reusable Sasamans bags for older kiddos and each one contained Fed Swag, FPSS Swag, books, a hands-on craft, a free ticket into our local museum, a coloring

B	I	N	G	O
6am Fitness Activity	10,000 steps in a day	Take a picture of your food	30 minute walk	Breakfast
Take a picture of your food	Walk an animal (birds not included)	Lunch time fitness activity	Do 4 fitness activities in 1 week	Do 10 pushups
30 Minute bike ride (indoors or outdoors)	Go for a walk in the rain	FREE SQUARE	Hike a new trail	Drink 1L of water today
Do 10 situps (can modify in chair)	Take a selfie during activity	Cook with beans	Pay it forward (do something nice)	15 minutes of Yoga (use youtube)
30 min fitness with family/friends	Buy Nothing day (no spending money)	15 Minute strength workout	Cook a new recipe	Evening fitness activity



book/ or word search, crayons/pencil crayons/ or felts, a bag with the supplies to make their own caramel apples and an activity booklet that had the FED events, and daily activities for them to do. Starting with a fitness bingo, photo scavenger hunt, how to make caramel apples and then a large sheet of paper to create “What does community look like for you.”

## Community Connection

The Indigenous Youth Navigator(s) pride themselves on their ability to maintain a close relationship with a variety of agencies, primarily on Vancouver Island although some are located across Canada. Examples of the agencies this IYN works closely with includes: MCFD, Foundry and John Howard Society, NVIATS, Laitchwiltach, SD72, NIC, WEmatter, Canadian Roots, Outward Bound, Nanaimo Child Development Center, local doctors/nurses, psychiatrists, CLBC, Youth probation officer, Communitas supportive care, CRADCKL, RAVEN program, counsellors, CYMH, Rose harbour, Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks and band offices specific to clients. (These services can change depending on the needs of current youth/young adults).

## Core Principles

The core principles behind these successes involve ensuring their voices are heard, increasing elder involvement in youth planning, receiving services that are culturally appropriate and sensitive, developing and maintaining community relationships, assisting youth to access supports, participating in transition planning and last but certainly not least the ability to provide youth with advocacy support and information, liaise between community, families and external professionals.

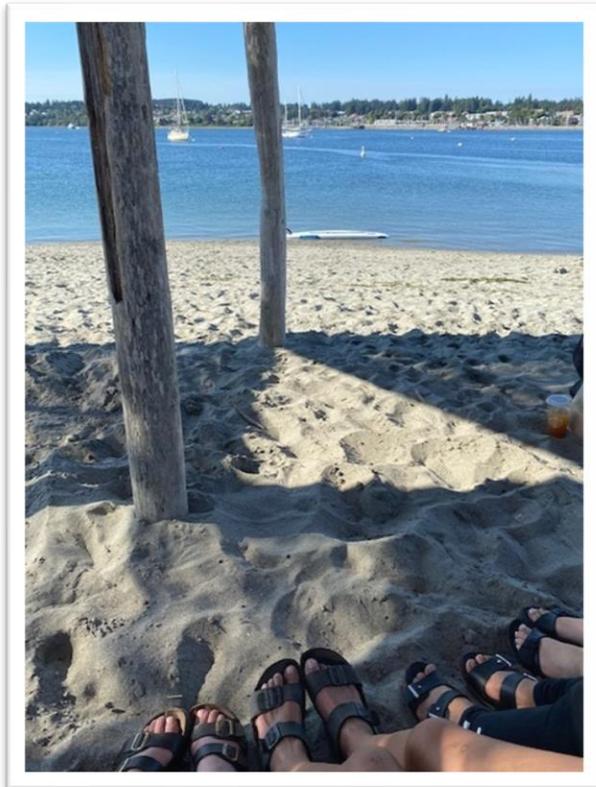
Moving forward we hope to see more culturally appropriate services provided to Indigenous youth and young adults.

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## **Courtenay/Comox Indigenous Family & Youth Navigator 2021-2022 Program Update**

**Kia Everson**

This past year has been especially challenging for Indigenous youth and families in Courtenay and Comox. Not only have they had to adapt to COVID life and the grief and losses it has brought to so many of our communities but also mass financial stress due to the rise in prices for housing, rentals, insurance, groceries, and petrol. Added to their daily life challenges, these incredible individuals are confronted with colonial institutions such as the criminal justice system and the Ministry of Children and Family Development which directly compounds any existing trauma. Throughout these challenges I've seen growth and resilience by families connecting with one another; fulfilling their integral roles as aunties, uncles, sons, daughters, moms and dads and grandparents. Being strong enough to advocate for themselves and their families and proving that home truly is where the family is, resulting in kiddos having better understandings of who they are and where they belong. Within my client caseload there are children in the process of being adopted into family, parents gaining custody of their kiddos, and families having regular access, visitation and communication with their children and grandchildren. As much as we celebrate the successes, there are also parents who have had restricted access due to substance use, domestic



violence issues and custody battles, however these situations are few and there are options for treatment, counselling, and family law advocates. Same is true for the youth as some have struggled with substances, precarious housing, mental health challenges, sexual and physical assault. Resources have been brought forward that have proven helpful; rental subsidy/housing worker, Foundry for mental, physical, sexual health, treatment options and FNHA coverage and victim services. I have been witness to youth stepping into their power as young adults entering the world and proving to themselves that they can succeed. Finding/keeping housing, connecting youth with post secondary information and options, prioritizing their physical, mental and sexual health by getting connected with organizations such as the Foundry, securing employment they also enjoy and walking alongside them in their goals for stability and success. There have been a

few instances of cultural groundedness (such as is depicted within the image attached) wherein myself and the youth have gone for walks at the river or the beach to reconnect with time-honoured traditions of healing through singing, drumming, talking, laughing to ground ourselves back to the land and back to who we are.

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**Cultural Connections Program**  
**2021-2022 Program Update**  
**Rachel Cain**

The Cultural Connections Worker (CCW) ensures that Indigenous children and youth in care have the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to their family members, community and traditional culture. The CCW assists MCFD social workers to identify potential extended family placements as well as to provide relevant resources to support children, youth and their caregivers uphold their cultural identities. One key piece of the role is the development of *Cultural Safety Agreements* for children and youth to ensure that their cultural needs are being met while they are in foster care or placed with a caregiver outside of their Indigenous cultural community. The CCW collaborates with other community professionals, family members, and communities to further these goals and to create a circle of support around these children and youth.

Between 2021 and 2022, the CCW continued to offer a flexible service to clients as COVID-19 still had a significant impact on the availability of community programming and services. Many communities slowly re-introduced their former programs and have also adjusted their service delivery to accommodate the changing needs their members face. Rising cases of COVID-19 throughout the fiscal year meant we needed to come up with creative ways to support our clients and continue the work we do. Unlike the year prior, agencies and communities were more experienced in working through the challenges that arose from closures and outbreaks. Working closely with professionals and Indigenous communities has led to an increase in family and community placements in comparison to other years.

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**Indigenous Parenting Support Worker**  
**2021/22 Program Update**  
**Marisa Anthony – Campbell River**

The purpose of the Indigenous Parenting Support program is to assist parents in building strong and healthy families. The IPSW provides essential, intensive, preventative support services to families identified as needing interventions and whose children are in government care or at high risk of removal. The IPSW visits the family's home while working collaboratively with the family to develop goals. The worker walks alongside parents in their efforts to accomplish these goals, providing encouragement, parenting knowledge and resources.

In 2021-2022, the CR IPSW returned to supporting families in home and in the community, with virtual support for some clients working their way through *Circle of Security Parenting*. In

collaboration with the Indigenous Outreach team at Child and Youth Mental Health, the CR IPSW began hosting a weekly *Caregiver/Knowledge Keeper* group. The group provides an opportunity for Caregivers and Cultural Knowledge Keepers to come together and discuss different topics related to parenting Indigenous children. Topics have included a discussion on traditional foods and nutrition from an Indigenous dietician, screen time and gaming addiction, a discussion with an Indigenous occupational therapist about emotional regulation, and various Knowledge Keepers have shared their wisdom on ceremony and healing practices.

This year the CR IPSW was also part of the *Campbell River Early Years Council* team organizing an *Indigenous Awareness* training program for Early Childhood Educators. The course officially launched in February 2022, with 18 ECE participants working their way through Monique Grey Smith's *Ripple Effects of Resilience* course, as well as supplemental materials compiled by the team. The participants met monthly with a facilitator to discuss the course materials and how to create childcare settings that are culturally safe and inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

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### **Indigenous Parenting Support Worker 2021/22 Program Update Cecilia Plecas – Courtenay**

The new IPSW started on January 5<sup>th</sup> of 2022. Most of the first few months were focused on relationship building. As well, time was spent going through client files, reviewing files and closing any files that were not active. It took the IPSW some time to set up an effective filing system to keep all client files organized. Another aspect of the program was doing outreach and raising awareness in the community, this included joining the *Comox Valley Early Years Council* (CVEYC), *Child and Youth Matters Comox Valley* (CYFMCV), *Comox Valley Social Planning Society* (CVSPS), and the *Ad Hoc Emergency Resources Organization* (AHERO). Most of the first few weeks were dedicated in developing a better understanding of the objectives of these various councils.

The IPSW connected with the local MCFD office and received new referrals for the program. The IPSW also completed the *Circle of Security Parenting* (CoS) program facilitator training and many of the new referrals participated in CoS program. The IPSW connected with the local school district and met the *Student and Family Program Worker*, Gwen Monnet from the *Indigenous Education* department. Another success for the IPSW participating in the *2022 National Forum*, in March, through *Brazelton Touchpoints Center*. In February of 2022 the IPSW completed the *Family Support Worker* training through *Indigenous Perspectives Society*. In addition, the IPSW participated in the *San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety* training program. During this time the IPSW completed two Family Case Planning Conferences with two different clients. It was a successful start to the year and a meaningful start to the new role as IPSW for me, I am looking forward to the future.

## **Designated Band Representative for the Mamalilikulla First Nation 2021-2022 Program Update**

**Tasleem Mall**

In its third year operating within the Sasamans Society agency, the Designated Band Representative role continues to achieve successes in working toward upholding Mamalilikulla First Nation's Agreement with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and Indigenous Child and Family Services across British Columbia and other provinces across Canada. In this role, the Designated Band Representative has also been strengthening Mamalilikulla First Nation's relationships with other First Nations to form alliances that strengthen the family unit, such as working together to identify a child's ancestral connections and to find family members who are related and who may be able to support the child in learning about their culture, traditions, and potentially provide a loving and stable home where the child may thrive, whilst their parents address concerns related to the safety of their children and family unit. In this past year, we have placed three of our children in family homes, after working with MCFD for over 2 years. We have also gathered support teams to wrap around our parents who are struggling and have prevented 5 children from being removed and able to remain with their parents.

Some external and systemic factors that continue to exacerbate child protection concerns are lack of adequate affordable housing, timely acceptance into treatment facilities for addiction that are culturally safe, and access to culturally rooted programs that can support parents to grieve, engage in healing related to intergenerational trauma, and to access supports to cope with socio-economic challenges such as accumulated debt, lack of references for housing and employment. These external factors exacerbate substance misuse as well as domestic violence, which are the primary concerns that lead to removal of children, and into foster care placements. Whilst these challenges are beyond the scope and ability of the Nation and Sasamans Society to resolve, and rather a larger provincial and national conversation, Mamalilikulla First Nation with the support of Sasamans Society staff and program expertise, helps to build a support system around the parents, that aims to help parents and families navigate these complex systems, by providing in-person support, advocacy, resources, and information.

There remain broad inconsistencies amongst child protection agencies and MCFD across the province related to communication with Mamalilikulla when files are transferred to new social workers, when files are transferred from one MCFD department to another and sometimes between MCFD offices, which impact relationship and trust building for both the parents and caregivers and the Mamalilikulla First Nation. Mandatory transfer meetings is a proposed amendment/addition to help strengthen the Agreement document. The Designated Band Representative also experiences challenges in providing cultural connection and learning opportunities for Mamalilikulla children residing across Canada and in the city but is hopeful that in working with Sasamans Elders support worker, Cultural Connections worker, with First Nations and Mamalilikulla membership, we can learn more from Elders and community members how best to create resources for our children in other communities and provinces.

In hopes for the future, the Designated Band Representative continues to take part in any learning opportunity to strengthen understanding of current federal legislation and key developments around Indigenous Inherent Rights to jurisdiction over children and family matters. There are many First Nations who are entering into agreements to develop their children and family services in their Nations and serve as beautiful examples of a future where Indigenous children may remain closely connected to their identity, sense of belonging and grow with their community into healthy and proud Indigenous People. With the support of Sasamans Society, Mamalilikulla Designated Band Representative is supported to attend webinars, meetings, conferences, and participate in Nation wide surveys that culminate to support the Mamalilikulla Chief, Council and membership to one-day develop their own child and family services.

As Designated Band Representative, I feel blessed and honoured to hold this position for the Mamalilikulla First Nation at Sasamans Society and hope to continue strengthening our relationships with all community partners, allies, and Nations to support Mamalilikulla children and families.

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### **Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator 2021-2022 Program Update**

Sasamans Society successfully launched our Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator program in February of 2021 and after completing one week of an intensive onboarding session we walked into the 2021-2022 year trained and ready to get some work done. Some of this work included making some important connections in community including, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Parents Legal Centre, Foster Parents Society, Child and Youth Support Needs, Child and Youth Mental Health, Children's Health Foundation, Vancouver Island Kids First, Bear Essentials Program, and others to inform them of changes in the program, eligibility and legislation. The Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator worked closely with the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) in the creation of the "Hub" an online website and resource guide with multiple access points for families, organizations, and coordinators. The Service Coordinator also established a collaborative team of Vancouver Island Service Coordinators and hosts monthly meetings to ensure we are addressing gaps that are specific to the needs of coastal nations and the urban Indigenous population.

Throughout the year the Jordan's Principle program has continued to grow and the knowledge of available services is being shared widely in the communities we serve. Also, Indigenous Services Canada adjusted previous paperwork requirements resulting in quicker and easier release of funding. Entering the programs 2<sup>nd</sup> year, advocacy from service coordinators in collaboration with BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Caring Society, First Nations Health Authority, and other stakeholders has resulted in eliminating of bureaucratic 'red tape' resulting in easier application processes, this is good news!

There have been growing pains and challenges along the way some of these include:

- Obtaining consent and other necessary information from MCFD (as guardian of a child) in a timely manner, which unfortunately leads to delays of much needed services and supports for children.
- Turn around time on adjudication from the new BC Jordan’s Principle Focal Point office was considerably long with files awaiting response, some files waiting on a response for over 4 months. This is much longer than the agreement under the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.
- There are also delays in accessing funding quickly when other governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Family Development push funding requests back and forth, recreating the barriers that this program is built to handle.
- Families in the communities that we serve are often not clear of the process through Pacific Blue Cross and First Nations Health Authority that have to be navigated and accessed prior to submission to Jordan’s Principle. It is important to note that even if Jordan’s Principle adjudication was happening in a timely fashion, the process to get to qualifying can take months to years through the other programs first. The absence of a concise framework for group requests has created lengthy application processes of that nature.

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**Justice Support Worker  
2021-2022 Program Update  
Melony Larre**

The end of the 2021/2022 year saw the inception of the Justice support Worker Program with Sasamans Society. This program was designed to be an intersecting role in Campbell River for people experiencing homelessness, involved in the criminal justice system, and struggling with substance misuse. This program is unique to our organization as it is the first to serve both Indigenous and Non- Indigenous clients. The program was just getting off the ground towards the



end of the 2021-2022 fiscal year for Sasamans Society and the focus has been on training and relationship building with the homeless community and organizations who are also working with this demographic.

Additionally, the Justice Support Worker continued the tradition of supporting the “Coldest Night of the Year” fundraiser for the Campbell River & North Island Transition Society with our organizations team, the Sas-Squad. Collectively, we raised \$1090.00 for our communities homeless, hurting and hungry citizens.

# Harmony Circle of Elders

The Elders program has continued to evolve in order to work with the ever-changing COVID-19 protocols and still support our at risk community of Elders. A main highlight from this year was being able to finally get together after so long being in isolation. All the Elders got their vaccinations were able to get out for lunch and eventually meet together following social distancing and mask protocols.

Our main focus was to get the Elders connected again. We had to be creative as the restrictions seemed to change over night at times. This made making any plans too far in advance nearly impossible. The AOEN had to be very flexible when it came to organizing workshops with this in mind. To be safe most outings were organized for outdoor spaces to lessen the chance of it having to be cancelled. The following photos are a little glimpse into our year. There were many happy faces as the group was able to get back together more and more.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN WHO LUNCH 😊 There isn't much we could do together at this point post COVID but we could go for lunch so that's what we did!**





**LOVE!**  
**LAUGH!**  
**LUNCH!**



**SO HAPPY  
TO SEE  
EACH  
OTHER  
AGAIN!**

**Non stop  
catching up  
laughter and  
smiles 😊**



## HOLLY HILL FARM DAY

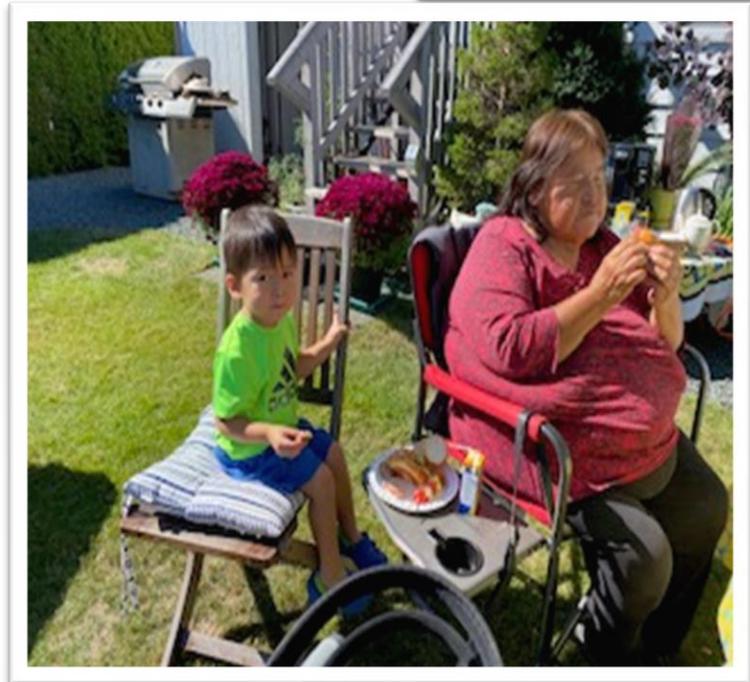
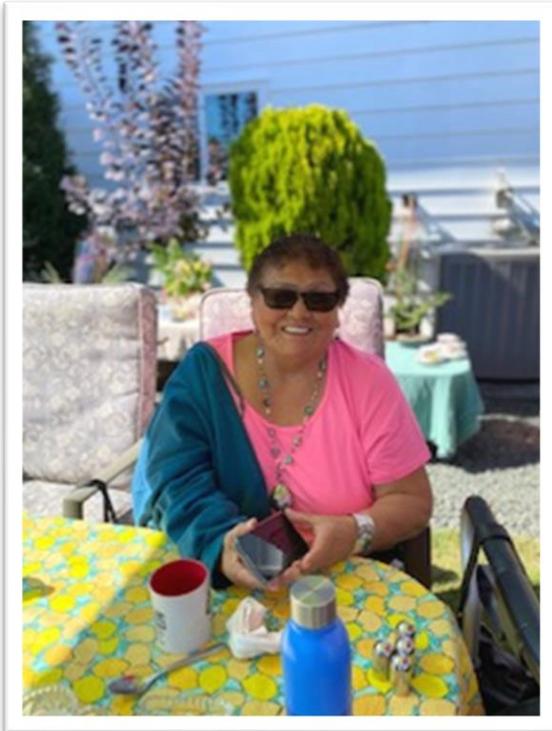
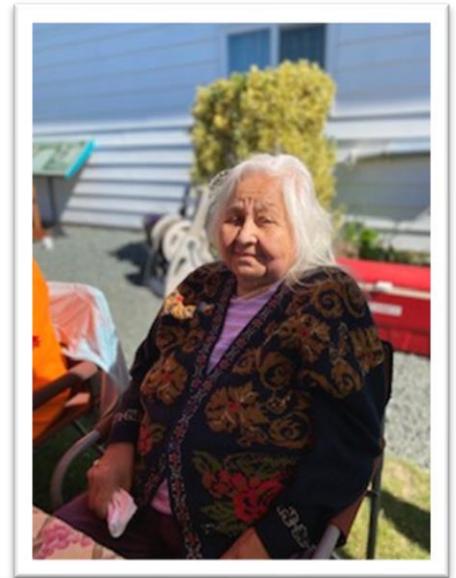
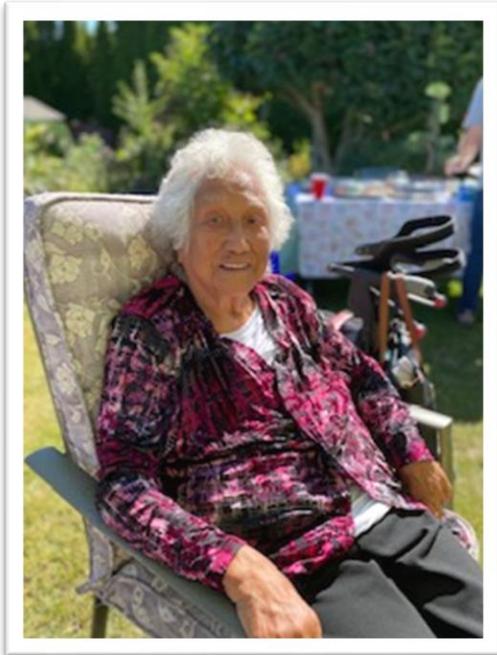


The bunnies brought big smiles to all the Elders faces. It was so nice to see after so long in isolation



Holly Hill Farm was a blast!! The weather was hot but it was nice to do something fun outside as there were still COVID

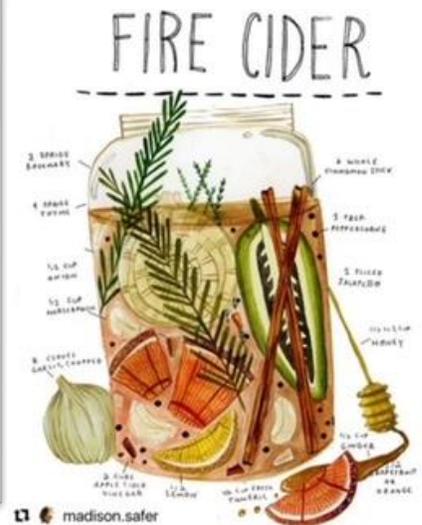
# TEA PARTY IS IN KATHRYNS GARDEN



# MAKING MEDICINE!!



Making  
medicine is  
good for the  
heart 😊



**HAVING A GREAT TIME MAKING CENTERPIECES!!  
THE WORKSHOP WAS FACILITATED BY ONE OF OUR ELDERS**



**So many  
talented  
Elders! They  
made  
beautiful  
centerpieces  
for the  
holidays.**



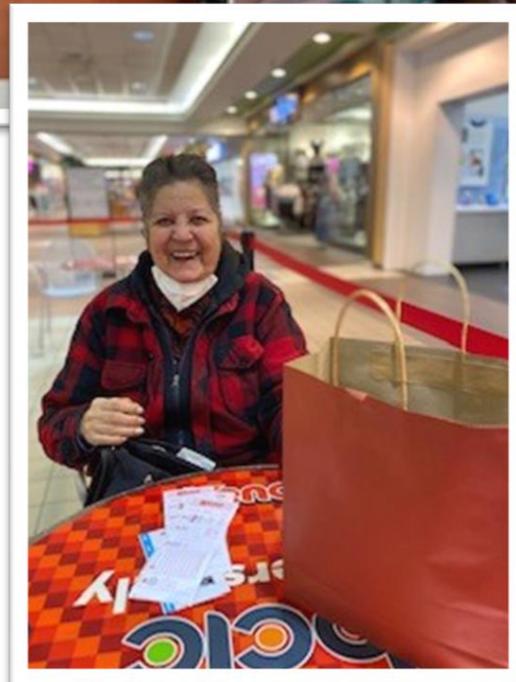
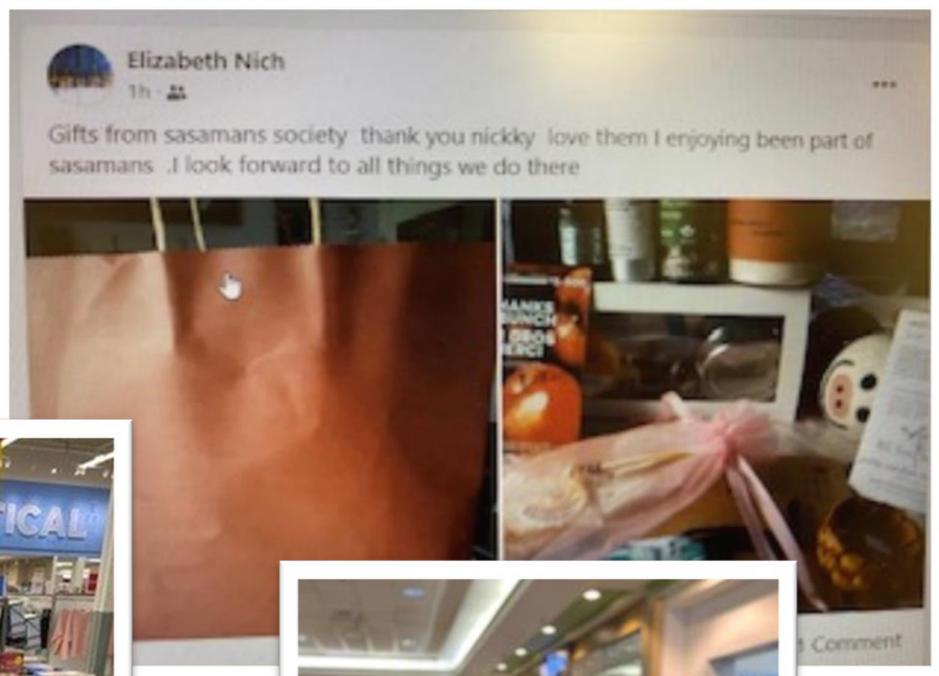


**POTTERY  
CLASS  
WAS A  
HIT**





**TIME TO SPOIL  
THE ELDERS  
AGAIN WITH A  
GIFT AND  
GROCERY  
STORE GIFT  
CARDS**





**And last but never forgotten...**

We lost one of our beautiful Elders this year to her battle with cancer. She will be sincerely missed by all.



*In loving memory of Carol Christine Bear  
November 8, 1947 to November 6 2021*

## PARTNERSHIPS

Our work at Sasamans is enhanced through our many partnerships; we have nurtured many collaborative working relationships in each of the communities we work in (Campbell River, Courtenay and Port Hardy). These partnerships include but are not limited to our community agency partners and Nations:

- Laichwiltach Family Life Society;
- John Howard Society;
- Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre;
- Gwa'sala-'Naxwada'xw Health Centre;
- KDC Health;
- Wachiay Friendship Centre;
- Ministry of Children and Family Development and;
- The Federation of BC Youth in Care Network;
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Legal Services Society
- Strathcona Regional District
- Da'naxda'xw/Awaetlala
- Mamalilikulla
- We Wai Kai
- Wei Wai Kum
- K'omoks
- Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis Tribe
- Quatsino
- Tlatlasikwala
- Dzawada'enuxw
- Gwa'sala-Naxwada'xw Nations

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## FUNDING

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) provides funding through 3 funding programs:

- Aboriginal Service Innovation (ASI) - MCFD Provincial Office
- Prevention and Family Support - MCFD Provincial Office
- Roots Program (Cultural Connections) - MCFD Campbell River Regional Office
- First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Elders Navigator Program
- Mamalilikulla First Nation for the Designated Band Representative
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator
- The Federation of BC Youth in Care Network – Campbell River Youth in Care Network
- Strathcona Regional District –Justice Support Worker, Campbell River

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## PROGRAM SERVICES CATCHMENT REGIONS

Sasamans Society services Courtenay, Port Hardy and Campbell River for both on and off reserve youth, families and Elders:

- **Courtenay** has a combined *Indigenous Outreach Family Navigator/Indigenous Youth Navigator* and an *Indigenous Parenting Support Worker* both workers currently operate at their new office space on the second floor at 2435 Mansfield Drive.
- **Port Hardy** has a combined *Indigenous Outreach Family Navigator/Indigenous Youth Navigator* that operates out of Rendezvous Place at 9250 Trustee Road.
- **Campbell River** has one *Receptionist*; an *Indigenous Outreach Family Navigator*; two *Indigenous Youth Navigators*; an *Indigenous Parenting Support Worker*; a *Cultural Connections Worker*; an *Indigenous Outreach Elders Navigator*; the *Designated Band Representative* for Mamalilikulla First Nation; the *Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator*; the *Bookkeeper and Executive Director* that operate out of our head office at 680 Head Start Crescent.

# Cultural Safety Inside Myself, My Home & Society

## Suggestions for MCFD

- Creating a welcoming ministry office - Aboriginal art  
- Aboriginal person behind the desk
- Ministry to suggest that families bring a support person(s) perhaps a staff person from the band who knows the system
- Have an Elder present at meetings to create that Sacred Space through prayer
- Meeting outside the ministry office perhaps in people's homes
- Having social workers more aware of the power they possess & the language they use (eg 'family' might not mean nuclear family)
- The use of ceremony - honoring families  
- celebrating when children return  
- healing past hurts  
- lifting people up



## Suggestions for MCFD

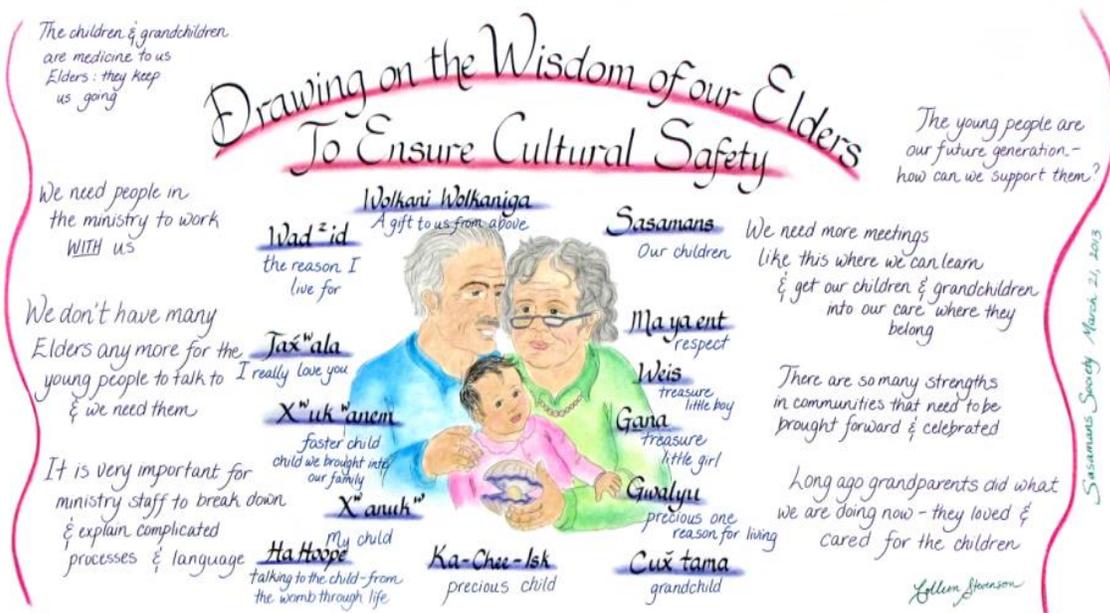
- Social workers attend cultural events celebrations or gatherings
- Create system where families who take related children in are compensated equal to Non-Native foster families
- Social workers go to an Elder to learn about a family  
Smile & be courteous
- Respect silence, don't interrupt  
Allow a navigator or liaison to guide families through the processes & explain
- Continued teaching of traditional ways to children, families & ministry staff
- Ensure that children in Non-Native foster homes maintain contact with extended families & entire community
- Safe alternatives for kids leaving the foster system
- Take time with people  
Be present

Lellen Stevenson

Sasamans Society  
March 21, 2013

## Cultural Safety

Sasamans is committed to providing culturally safe services to Indigenous children, youth and families in Campbell River, Port Hardy and Courtenay. We are aware that the urban communities are comprised of many different Nations; therefore, we respect and value the traditional teachings of all Indigenous people.

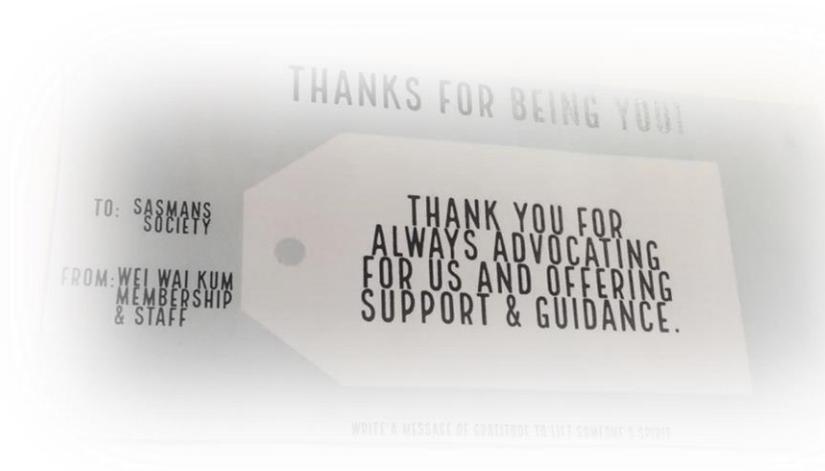


## 2021-2022 Sasamans Society Team

Jane Watts-Ellens	Indigenous Family & Youth Navigator	Port Hardy
Melony Larre	Indigenous Outreach Family Navigator	Campbell River
Taylor Shuttleworth	Indigenous Youth Navigator	Campbell River
Monica Glendale	Indigenous Youth Navigator	Campbell River
Rachel Cain	Cultural Connections worker	Campbell River
Marisa Anthony	Indigenous Parenting Support Worker	Campbell River
Kia Everson	Indigenous Family & Youth Navigator	Courtenay
Shana Reeder (resigned)	Indigenous Parenting Support Worker	Courtenay
Cecilia Plecas	Indigenous Parenting Support Worker	Courtenay
Nicole Kitts	Indigenous Elders Outreach Navigator	Campbell River
Tasleem Mall	Indigenous Caregiver Support Worker	Campbell River
Jerry Mundi	Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator	Campbell River
Fiona Hansed	Bookkeeper	Campbell River
Skye Bourget	Reception	Campbell River
Lori Bull	Executive Director	Campbell River

## 2021/22 Sasamans Society Board of Directors

Richard Dawson	Chair	Elizabeth Carter	Director
Nick Chowdhury	Vice-Chair	Katherine Frank	Director
Shelly Haunch	Treasurer	Rita Pimlott	Director
Vera Peacey	Secretary	Willie Moon	Director
Cindy Inrig	Director	Patricia Hall	Director
Bert Boucher	Director		



*Thank you for attending  
Sasamans Society AGM for 2021/22*