

# 2011

## Ages 7-11 Youth Workshop



Rachel Roberts/Communications Coordinator

Sasamans Society

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## **Introduction**

The following is an overview of the Youth Workshop for children aged 7-11 (grades 1 through 6) held on February 18, 2011 at the Quinsam Hall in Campbell River.

The event was hosted by Sasamans Society. The purpose of this event was to gather information and gain the youth's input and ideas to help build or enhance programs for children and families in their communities.

It was open to youth band members from Wei Wai Kum First Nations (Campbell River Indian Band), We Wai Kai First Nation (Cape Mudge Band), K'omoks Band. The event was also open to and youth affiliated with Laichwiltach Family Life Society and Wachiay Friendship Centre.

The day was planned with fun, educational and engaging activities to promote healthy active lifestyles in our communities.

## Event Planning

The Ages 7-11 Youth Workshop was planned in 5-6 weeks. During those weeks relationships were established with youth workers and program co-ordinators within the community. On-reserve community newsletters and local Campbell River newspapers were used to collect information and contacts. The community directory was utilized to identify contacts from various community programs. The main contacts were the youth workers of the participating communities and program co-ordinators from community health offices (KDC Health).

To prepare for the event, Rachel Roberts, Community Based Collaborator (CBC) for Wei Wai Kum, held a pizza meeting for the target market (ages 7-11) with help from the youth workers. The meeting was held at the Health Office downtown location Campbell River. Kids in attendance from each group were:

### **Cape Mudge**

Boys: 0

Girls: 3

### **Campbell River**

Boys: 5

Girls: 1

The purpose of this meeting was to get the youth's input on the activities and food they would like for the gathering. The time and location was decided based on the best way to accommodate this age groups' schedule. The decision was made to host the event on the school districts Pro-D day for that month, February 18, 2011.

During the meeting the youth were split into groups of 2-3. Each category had several activities to choose from and room to add their own ideas or suggestions. The following categories of activities to be chosen from and added to were as follows:

- Health
- Fitness
- Fun
- Educational
- Traditional
- Crafts

Rachel labelled envelopes per category with pieces of paper with the activities inside. The groups then took the papers with the activities and put them in order from favourite to least favourite; including their suggestions. All the information was gathered and the first 2 choices from each group became a sample agenda. They also discussed meal options and all agreed on the menu of pizza and subway.

With the theme, Healthy Lifestyles, in mind and a basic understanding of how the day would look possible facilitators were contacted for interest or suggestions. The agenda was based on the availability of the facilitators.

A poster was made and advertising was used in the newsletters of Campbell River Indian Band (CRIB), Cape Mudge (CM), Kòmoks, Waichay, and Laichwiltach Family Life Society (LTLS). The school district was informed along with the community Youth workers. Registration forms were sent out in newsletter and distributed to youth workers. The week before the conference there was not very many registration forms so Michelle Billy, CBC for We Wai Kai, and Rachel Roberts went door to door and hand delivered invitations to the eligible participants. During the planning process there was continual follow up with facilitators and youth workers for support, feedback, and suggestions.

## The Day of the Event

The day was planned with fun, healthy and educational activities. As the children arrived they had Plinko, a parachute and a huge game of connect four for entertainment as the rest of the kids were registering. The following table is the number of youth from each community:

Community	Number of Youth
Quinsam / Cape Mudge	6
Campbell River	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>

Once all the participants arrived and were registered the day began with “Youth 4 Diversity” (Y4D).

Y4D is a group of high school students who educate their peers on the importance of respect, anti-racism and discrimination. They had engaging activities that taught the importance of leadership, diversity, anti-bullying and friendship.

Once the Y4D presentation was finished the participants were split into groups by grades. The groups rotated through booths in half an hour intervals.

The booths were as follows:

- Blind Walk Obstacle Course –creating trust and team building.
- Traditional Booth –carving demo while the youth coloured traditional pictures
- Healthy Cooking Class – cooking healthy meals and handed out healthy recipes
- Community Wish lists – drawing/writing on paper what they wish their community looked like

- Dance Booth – freeze bop

It was interesting to see that one of the most popular of the booths was the healthy cooking class.

The agenda for the day was from 8:30am – 4:00pm, with an hour lunch. A 6ft subway, pizza and platters of fruits and vegetables were served for lunch.

### **Feedback from the Youth**

The most valuable methods of receiving information/feedback from the youth during the workshop were the Wishing Room booth and the door prize questionnaire.

### **Community Wish List**

For the Wishing room a lot of time was spent in the set up of the room with the intention to inspire and nurture creativity. Role model posters were placed on the walls as well as poster board with words like; joy, dream, peace, friends. The tables were covered with blank paper, markers, and rocks with painted words such as love, laugh, kisses, and “Make a wish”. There was a spinning wheel with colours and each colour represented a wish for “my family” “myself” “my friends” and “my community”. Music played in the background.

To get the kids actively involved the facilitators asked questions such as: If they could wish for anything in their communities what would it be? What do they like doing? What would you like to do? If you could build anything in your communities what would it be?

The youth described their wishes through pictures and words. There was a lot of feedback on spending time with family, recycling, and that they value sports and recreation, special emphasis was on a pool, ice rink (hockey) and improvements to the park. Through discussion they expressed that they would like the sportsplex facilities located in willow point, in a location downtown. There was also evidence that the youth find money important.

An Elder who was present in the wishing room commented that she felt that the kids in our community are very fortunate. She did a similar wishing room with low income children and they wished for things like a cupboard full of cereal. Another child wished for a dinner table and when she told them they could wish for anything they replied a table and four chairs.

### **Door Prize Questionnaire**

In order for the youth to be entered to win door prizes, they had to write down three things that they liked about their community and one wish for their community.

The feedback indicated that the youth have a deep appreciation for the hall, soccer field, park, youth groups and KDC. The most recorded in the wish category was that they would like

community soccer matches/games, others mentioned were a skate park, bowling nights and more youth group time.

## Lessons Learnt

The youth aged 7-11 event was the first youth gathering that the Sasamans CBCs coordinated. Therefore, it was important for the planning committee to record and learn from the event.

The following is a list of lessons learnt:

- From the traditional booth the colouring contest should have a place for names and a short questionnaire to gather more information from the youths perspective
- De-briefed with kids at the end to ask them what they liked about their conference, communities, etc. To once again gather more information before door prizes
- Been prepared for the weather (it snowed 6 inches) to have a backup plan and it also impacted the turnout/activities (outdoor hockey tournament had to be cancelled)
- Shorter day as it was too long for the kids who were very played out by the end of the day
- Had more afternoon activities. There was a miscommunication with bounce-a-rama and that portion of the afternoon had to be cancelled last minute.
- Learnt that it is important to be flexible while organizing gatherings. Some Youth didn't want to speak up so the option of silently giving their opinion was available.
- When given an incentive like pizza or a prize they were more open and susceptible to conversation.
- When given the chance to voice their opinions there was excitement. With more time and careful planning I would have been able to take the opportunity to spend more time gathering information.
- Timing was crucial; the lack of planning time, communication and timely responses was impeccable and crucial. So there wasn't a whole lot of time to wait and it felt slightly rushed as far as spending time with the kids' inputs.
- The workshops self esteem, racism, suicide, dreams, etc.
- "I learnt a lot about what the kids had to say. We thought we had enough staff and volunteers but we could have used more organizers so there could be more time spent sitting in on the workshops to take notes", Rachel.

## Future Plans

It was felt that it would be extremely beneficial to host a focus group with some of youth from the gatherings and reward their attendance with an outing or activity. The topics would revolve around the feedback received from the gathering.