



Sasmans Society

2014/15 AGM Report

Aboriginal Family Practitioner, Port Hardy

Caseload:

This position served eleven families, of whom 49 children are attached.

NOTE: This service ended March 31st, 2015. We now have an **Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator** located in Port Hardy out of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Child & Family Services, Health Centre.

Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator, Comox Valley

Caseload:

The Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator (AOFN) was enrolled in two classes, a Family Law course and a Cultural Competency course. In addition, the AOFN was away for a week and had a practicum student on both Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the last quarter.

The AOFN position was serving 16 families with a total of 34 children. As of March 31, 2015 the position was serving 18 families with a total of 36 children and closed 8 of the previously opened files with a total of 13 children.

SUCSESSES:

1. The AOFN and Legal Aid have created a good working relationship where each agency refers to the other upon meeting with new clients that meet the criteria. Legal Aid referred 6 new families to the AOFN.
2. Three Return Plans (return for next quarter) have been created this quarter with the help of the AOFN. This is for a total of 8 children.
3. The AOFN helped connect one mother to Alberta social services to find out information about her child in permanent care and to help her set up potential visits with her child.

On-going Challenges:

1. Lack of affordable, subsidized housing for urban Aboriginal families with children in temporary care

2. Lack of Aboriginal foster homes in the Comox Valley (both urban and on the Comox Reserve)
3. Lack of services/supports for children with Autism and young parents with Autism raising their own children

Aboriginal Youth Navigator, Campbell River

During the fourth quarter reporting period, the Aboriginal Youth Navigator was away for nine days which will reflect on the service hours provided. The Aboriginal Youth Navigator attended three day workshops during this reporting period; Fostering Resiliency, Correctional Services of Canada Aboriginal Justice Forum, and Building Bridges. Also, successful completion of Indigenous Cultural Competency was fulfilled during this reporting period.

CASELOAD:

Aboriginal Youth Navigator was serving 12 clients. As of March 31st, 2015 the position was serving a total of 13 clients.

SUCCESSSES:

1. The youth navigator was able to support a young lady into Barnett House as she transitioned out of Ministry Care.
2. The youth navigator was successful in arranging for two young men to have visits with their other siblings in care.
3. The youth navigator was able to bring three male clients to a workshop pertaining to the history of colonization. The young men left this workshop with a new understanding of their history and a list of strengths each one poses. It was a very positive and uplifting day.

ON-GOING CHALLENGES:

1. Lack of affordable housing options for youth that are leaving Ministry care.
2. Access to nutritional meals

Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator – Campbell River

Campbell River AOFN is mentored a 4th year Social Work practicum student from Vancouver Island University during the last quarter of 2015. The practicum student

completed 350 practicum hours with the AOFN learning and developing the skills necessary to practice in the field of Social Work upon graduation. The student is now filling in for our Courtenay Family Navigator while Jennifer is on maternity leave.

Caseload:

The Campbell River (CR) AOFN has a total of 23 families with 45 children. During the final fiscal reporting period CR AOFN closed 7 files with 11 children and completed intakes with 10 families and 16 children.

SUCSESSES:

1. One mother with 2 children previously under a TCO with a premature CCO application pending had the CCO application suspended. MCFD returned the children during this last quarter under a Supervision Order to the mother who has made significant positive changes to her lifestyle
2. We supported a mom with her move from Merritt to Campbell River that included a file transfer for her son who was residing in a foster home in Merritt; he was moved to a family option under a restricted foster placement.
3. We closed 4 files this last quarter where children are with their parents and supervision orders have lapsed and there have been no further child protection concerns with these 4 families.

ON-GOING CHALLENGES:

1. Long wait lists for families needing treatment and services
2. Shortage of detox beds in Campbell River.
3. Lack of affordable housing
4. When parents lose children they also lose housing due to reduction of finances.
5. With the new child protection laws surrounding domestic violence there is a need for more programs and support for families who are being impacted by domestic violence.
6. Legal services do not extend to working parents.
7. Too many Aboriginal children in care with no Aboriginal resources available, including out of care family options.
8. Lack of maternal resources for young moms and new moms.

9. Lack of Aboriginal resources for Aboriginal children.
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Cultural Connections Worker, (CCW) Campbell River

Training & Workshops:

- Successfully completed PHSA Indigenous Cultural Competency Post Training: Mental Health component in May 2014.
- Participated in the 'Fostering Resiliency with Indigenous Children and Families' workshop facilitated by Monique Gray Smith in January 2015.
- Attended the 'Building Bridges Through Understanding the Village' workshop co-facilitated by Kathi Camilleri and Meredith Martin in March 2015.

Caseload:

Sixteen referrals came in from MCFD plus the on-going files that were from previous worker.

Forty-three (43) genograms and X0 cultural packages were completed.

SUCSESSES:

1. Families have been responding well to the program and have become increasingly engaged. They are grateful to receive cultural support and more information about their extended families. They have indicated that they appreciate what the service has to offer for their children.
2. The children and youth are interested in learning more about their culture and discussing what they most want to learn about their heritage. For example, an aged out youth has self-referred to the program in order to aid the Cultural Connections Worker to complete family information on their siblings' files. The children and youth are most likely to connect to traditional art and foods and enjoy seeing their family trees.
3. Foster parents are engaging well with the CCW to work on bringing culture into their homes and to start working with the children to discover more about their communities.
4. Alternative placement plans have been inclusive of family input in order to maintain cultural and family identities.

5. Collaboration with other agencies has improved since the previous report from 2013-2014.

ON-GOING CHALLENGES:

1. There is a lack of willing or healthy family members to take in children in MCFD care from their families. Reasons range from: lack of space in their homes, unable to care for high needs children (Ex. FASD, developmental delays), financial difficulties, addictions, prior MCFD involvement or parents have been cut off or have isolated themselves from their families.
2. Many family members reside in isolated communities and are unable to provide cultural support face-to-face or establish strong bonds with the children. This difficulty is increased for Elders in families as they can also have mobility or transportation issues. Providing ample time for caregivers and MCFD to be informed about cultural/community events has also proven problematic thus far.
3. All of the referrals for the CCW program in the 2014-2015 fiscal year came solely from the Family Services Team at the Campbell River MCFD office. Continued efforts need to be made in order to inform other MCFD teams and other social work agencies about the program and their ability to makes referrals.
4. There have been changes within the collaborative planning team and MCFD which will take time to adjust to.

Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders

The elders program was established in 2013/14 to be a support group and/or provide guidance to the Sasamans Society staff, other First Nations organizations, youth, families at risk, and other agencies including the Ministry of Children and Family Development. This support would include cultural appropriateness, protocols in the traditional territories, guidance and their wisdom.

The group represents Elders from the Wei Wai Kum First Nation, Wei Wai Kai Nation and Komoks First Nations, Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band, Quatsino First Nation, Da'naxda'xw/Awaetlala First Nation, Tseil-Waututh Nation, Kyuquot Native Tribe, Urban Aboriginals agencies and Metis Peoples living in the territory. This group is a great resource for its First Nations knowledge and history. The long term goal is to provide

continuous mentorship for new Elders as they join the group; our core group is 20. Recruitment is also a priority for this group.

The Elders have completed more training and healing sessions with funds from New Horizons which ended Feb 2015. They expressed a need for more healing, specifically in the areas of self-care, conflict resolution, communication and public speaking in order to be more effective in providing the supports that is requested of them. Our Society was successful in accessing funds for more training for this group from First Nations Health Authority in the amount of \$15,000 and New Relationship Trust \$2000. They have launched their sessions as of Sept 16 & 17th, they met as a group on Sept 1st to discuss the sessions they wanted. As a commitment to our Elders we will continue to apply for funds from other sources to support their training and healing.

