



Sasamans Society

2016/17 AGM Report

Pauline Janyst, Executive Director

Our History

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

Vision

Sasamans Society's *Vision* is “To strengthen 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 is supported and guided by the Board of Directors (BOD), comprised of community representatives from our partnering First Nation Bands and Aboriginal Urban agencies.

Mission Statement

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

Beliefs and Values

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Every child needs someone to believe in them.▪ Children have to be safe.▪ Children are sacred.▪ Our children are our reason for living.▪ Children need a safe loving environment.▪ Respect for our children▪ We believe every child & their families have gifts and strengths.▪ Every child deserves to be loved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Children belong with their family.▪ Children and families have the right to be heard.▪ Parents must start taking responsibility.▪ Families must start taking responsibility.▪ All families do the best with what they have.▪ Children & Families need someone to trust.▪ Children have the right to children.▪ We are here to hold a sacred space for our children & families.
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Message from Chair

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I would like to recognize our partnering organizations, member nations and surrounding communities. We have a collective vision that honours and values the health and well-being of our families and communities and it is with your support we are able to carry on the important work we do at Sasamans.

Throughout this past year Sasamans Society has worked diligently to increase programing and services for our communities, youth, families and Elders. As we continue our work, our commitment has always remained with the best interest and well-being of our communities while keeping our children at the centre of all we do.

Sasamans works with an amazing group of Elders; over the years they have committed to enhancing their own health and wellness as they embarked on their own healing path. We recognize their strength and courage in sharing their stories, as well, their knowledge and wisdom and finally their cultural teachings they have shared over the years, we are truly honoured to have such an amazing group of Elders supporting Sasamans in the work we do. It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the ongoing commitment and hard work of all Sasamans employees who continue to dedicate their services, skills and professionalism in the work they do within our communities, specifically with our children & youth, families and Elders and the various nations and bands that we collaborate with.

And finally on behalf of our Board of Directors I would like to acknowledge the leadership and dedication of Pauline Janyst, Executive Director for Sasamans Society for over 7 years. Pauline has worked hard over the years to build significant relationships with our community and government partners; she has built a strong platform that sustains the work of Sasamans. Thank you Pauline for your leadership, guidance and support in the important work we do.

Gilakas'la,
'Walas'gwa yum gee
Richard Dawson, Board Chair

Message from the Executive Director

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to our AGM and to acknowledge the amazing traditional lands of the Laichwiltach people. It has been a privilege and an honour to be of service to the communities we served.

As you all know this is REALLY my final AGM with Sasamans. I want to thank each and every person and organization I worked with. The society created collaborative working relationships with many organizations such as John Howard Society, Laichwiltach Family Life, G&N Health Centre and some of the First Nations Bands.

I want to especially acknowledge the Elders who are involved in the healing and training sessions we have been offering for four (4) years. They are truly amazing women with strong voices, and they are an inspiration to me as I journey back to Victoria where my husband and I reside.

I'd like to thank our amazing, knowledgeable compassionate staff; they make my job easy☺ I'd also like to thank the board of directors for their kind understanding and support.

In closing, I would like to wish the society continued success as they approach their future with the new leadership.

Gilakas'la
Pauline Janyst

Aboriginal Service Innovations – MCFD funding

Aboriginal Outreach Family/Youth Navigators

The purpose of the **Aboriginal Outreach Family/Youth Navigators** program is to enhance service provision, provide advocacy, decrease children in care, and improve accountability through a family-centered approach that focuses on meeting the need of both clients and families.

The Navigators provide support and guidance to Aboriginal families and youth who may be at risk of becoming involved with MCFD as well as providing assistance to families whose children or grandchildren are in the care of MCFD.

This past year our ASI team collectively was involved in partnership with MCFD, LFLS and John Howard Society:

- ✓ 50 children not entering care as a result of intervention
- ✓ 61 children returning to care of a family member
- ✓ 22 out of care placements secured
- ✓ 27 Reunification: visits to family, newly connected to culture
- ✓ 276 Collaborative family planning meetings
- ✓ 6 completed youth agreements, care plans
- ✓ 6 attended cultural training events
- ✓ 20 participated in cultural events
- ✓ 41 MCFD referrals received
- ✓ 3 DAA referrals received
- ✓ 78 other or self-referred

Cultural Connections Program – local MCFD region funding

The purpose of the **Cultural Connections** program is to create Cultural Plans for children in care and to assist the Ministry worker to develop and implement appropriate re-unification plans and identify children for whom a return to family or community may be appropriate. This position is based out of Campbell River and services our catchment area which includes Gold River/Tahsis, Sayward and Quadra/Cortez Island.

Total Caseload: 37 referrals

This past year our Cultural Connections worker involved in partnership with MCFD in:

- ✓ 22 clients in 12 Family Finding referrals
- ✓ 25 clients in 18 ROOTS referrals
- ✓ 15 clients in 7 file update referrals

Successes:

- By visiting remote First Nations communities, the Cultural Connections Program has been able to develop good working relationships with community professionals and on-reserve families
- Continued collaboration with local agencies has led to more successful outcomes and permanent placements for children and youth in MCFD care.

Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders – FNHA funding

The elders committee was established in 2013/14 to be a support 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 Elders have completed a variety of training and healing sessions with funds from New Horizons, First Nations Health Authority and New Relationship Trust. Many of the Elders are being utilized by FNHA and VIHA cultural safety coordinator.

The Elders navigator takes Elders to a variety of medical appts, looking for housing, and support in whatever capacity they require. Navigator goes to Courtenay once a week for the Elders who have been with this program since the onset, and they sometimes refer new clients to her. The program is evolving as we move forward.

To date she is working with 30+ Elders from both on and off reserve and they come from a variety of First Nations Bands, urban agencies, Metis and Inuit communities.

Funding

Sasamans programs are primarily funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development through the Aboriginal Service Innovation stream and the local office for Cultural Connections. Sasamans currently receives funding from the New Relationship Trust and First Nations Health Authority.

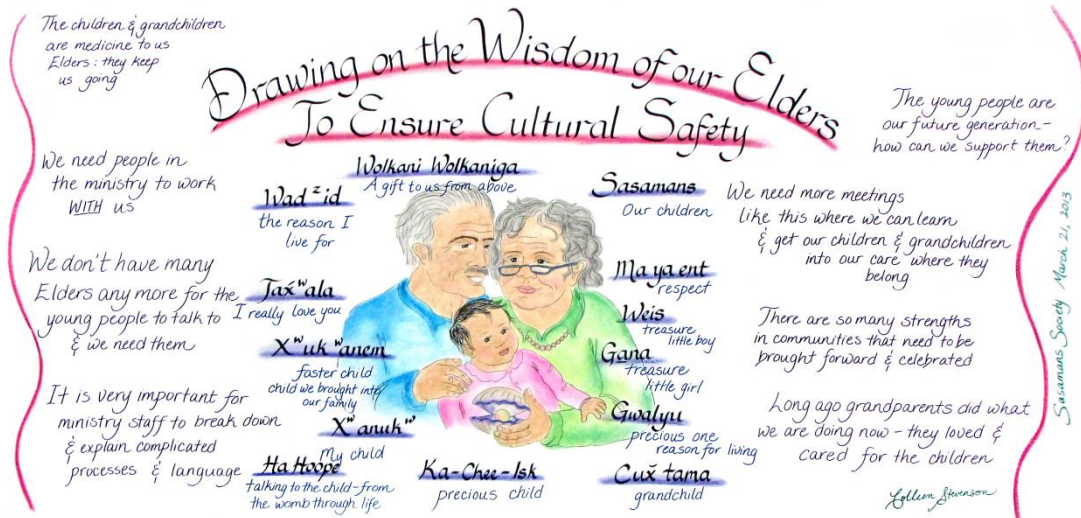
Services Catchment regions

Sasamans services Courtenay, Port Hardy and Campbell River for both on and off reserve people.

- Courtenay has a combined Youth Navigator and Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator that operates out of the Wachiay Friendship Center.
- Port Hardy has an Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator that operates out of the G&N Health Centre.
- Campbell River has an Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator, Youth Navigator, Cultural Connections worker and Elders Navigator that operates out of the head office.

Cultural Safety

Sasamans is committed to providing culturally sensitive services to the Aboriginal clients 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 Aboriginal people.



Society Staff

Jane Watts - Ellens, Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator, Port Hardy
 Lori Bull – Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator, Campbell River
 Aaron Thompson, Youth & Family Navigator, Courtenay
 Ashley Visser, Youth Navigator, Campbell River
 Rachel Cain, Cultural Connections worker, Campbell River
 Nicole Kitts, Aboriginal Elders Outreach Navigator
 Crystal Assu, Bookkeeper
 Skye Bourget, Reception
 Pauline Janyst, Executive Director

Board of Directors

Richard Dawson, Chair
 Nick Chowdhury, Vice Chair
 Marian Atkinson, Treasurer
 Vera Peacey, Secretary
 Keith Wilson
 Sharlene Frank
 Rita Pimlott
 Gloria Nicolson
 Hazel Ettiagiak
 Patricia Hall

What's NEW for 2017/18 & moving forward?

First Nations Health Authority is funding our Elder in Residence in partnership with John Howard Society. Orientation and planning meetings with the Elders began Sept 2017 and plan to implement November 2017. We look to our Elders to provide direction on how we select and what their role will be with the Foundry team.

We have collaborated with Mamalilikula & Danadaxw First Nations on a Cultural Planning project from Sept to January 2018. The goal is to work collaboratively with MCFD and develop a cultural planning template and a protocol agreement.

We have collaborated with Tlowitsis Tribe, Mamalilikula & Danadaxw First Nations to enhance our Family Navigators positions to all full-time and hire a new Youth Navigator for Campbell River to offset the large caseload.

What are some of the things we have heard from the Community?

To Lori, thank you for all your support with everything. You're awesome girl! ~ card

Dear Lori, I want to thank you wholeheartedly for all your support, your strength, and your wisdom and guidance through this horrible time. You have truly made a difference in my life and my children's lives and we are forever grateful to you. ~ card, December 2016

Dear Lori Bull,

We just wanted to give you a big THANK YOU! Your support and knowledge have helped us more than you know... Congrats on doing such a wonderful job. ~ note, January 18, 2017

"Thanks for being there for me and my beautiful babies" text, April 19, 2017

Quote from Chief and Council Member: The parents are willing to work with you Jane/Sasamans and Chief & Council have better understanding of the way the Ministry (MCFD) works.

Felt comfortable right away working with Jane (Sasamans), trust was there right away. If Jane (Sasamans) didn't know something, she would find out or search to help my family fight for our rights. Keep doing what you're (Sasamans) doing, you go above and beyond doing good work.

Very happy the way things have been going since he started on council for the past year. Very pleased with the support Sasaman's has to offer, their experience helps give the Chief & Council strength. It lifts a lot off of chief and council, in the work Sasaman's does.

For me personally, it's great support, not only for meetings but generally as working with or against MCFD, is hard to do alone.

I'm thankful that I can go for anything and be able to speak up and for court same thing. I don't think I could have spoken up on my own without the support of Sasaman's and my family.

Helped with the return of some children and Council rep say's I am a good spokesperson for G&N members, and I help them understand what they are signing in regards to MCFD. And that I am a great support for court appearances for the G& N band members

Cultural Connections Quotes:

“I can't thank you guys enough for everything” – parent, text

“Thank you very much! [...] Your assistance was invaluable” – community agency, card Feb 2017

“Thanks for looking in all directions and for keeping me posted. I really appreciate the work that you do Rachel” – community professional, email Aug 2017

“I really appreciate your help in connecting with band reps and families, and these genograms will be a fantastic reference. Your thorough research and knowledge and your collaborative approach is greatly appreciated.” –community professional July 2017

I was recruited for Patient Voices through Sasamans Society Harmony Circle of Elders. It's important that health professionals hear the voices of patients so we can work together to achieve 'Excellence in Health'. Thanks to Sasamans Society, the Elders are working towards making connections with all groups who have similar aspirations. “*Elder*”

“ Ashley genuinely cares about her clients. Respects their rights and opinions, considers the cultural competent to her work, and takes what she does very seriously. She is eager to try new and collaborative ways to help our clients and to meet them where they are at...” Independent Living Worker – John Howard Society

“ Ashley is a strong, positive and reliable support for the youth with which we work...an excellent advocate who shines a light on youth's needs while also bridging out relationships with the youth so there needs can more likely be met...” Social Worker – MCFD Youth Services

I want to express gratitude on behalf of my family for the work that Aaron Thompson has done with us. He has been a fantastic resource for dealing with addiction. He has sat with us for hours, listening to us lament and vent our frustrations. He has found other resources that have been able to help us out as well. He has been a mentor, a guide and an ear to a very worried mom. I am thankful for Aaron and his program, it has helped us and continues to help us through a difficult time.