Sasamans Society



Annual Report—2012/2013



Vision Statement:

Strengthening "Our Children" and families, in a community driven and culturally appropriate manner.



Our Mission:

In pursuit of our Vision, 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

Learn from one another

Dedicate ourselves to achieving our short and long-term goals

About Sasamans Society

Who We Are

The Sasamans Society is a non-profit Aboriginal organization established in Campbell River in 2010. Our 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 a board of directors (BOD), comprised of 16 community representatives from our partnering communities and organizations.

Sasamans is funded through the Ministry of Children & Family Development, under the Indigenous Approach, to co-develop creative traditional service delivery models that meet the needs of our communities. The work undertaken by Sasamans is designed to identify the gaps in service and complement the work being completed by Aboriginal urban agencies and/or First Nations bands. Additional funding is sought through grant opportunities.

We measure our accomplishments by the success we achieve in balancing our limited resources with the needs of the communities we serve. We do this by identifying high priority COMMON needs across our various communities.

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Board of Directors

Chair:

Richard Dawson Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre

Vice Chair:

Nick Chowdhury Da'naxda'xw First Nation

Treasurer:

Marian Atkinson Wei Wai Kum First Nation

Secretary:

Lisa Anwar Laichwiltach Family Life Society

Member at Large:

Tom Nelson **Quatsino First Nation Ross Hunt Kwakiutl Indian Band** Sandy Johnson Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis Tribe Pearl Hunt Whe-la-la-U Area Council Gwa'sala 'Nakwaxda'xw Nations Paddy Walkus Keith Wilson We Wai Kai First Nation Barb Mitchell **K'omoks First Nation** Jill Beech **Wachiay Friendship Centre** Gloria Nicolson Dzawad'enuxw First nation John Powell Mamalilukulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band

Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry

Tlatasikwala First Nation

Liz Cadwallader

Executive Director

Pauline Weaver

Tiffany Charlie

Pauline Janyst

Program Staff

Courtenay

Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigators for:

Campbell River Lori Speck

Port Hardy Margaret McDougall

Administrative Assistant: Genesis Hunt

Book-keeper: Kim Puglas

Child and Family Counsellor: Constance Eagle

Community Development Coordinator: Cheryl Kwaksistala

Cultural Connections Worker: Rachel Cain
Youth Restorative Justice Worker: Jackie Sinclair

Year at a glance

Message from the Executive Director

As I think back over the past year, I am feeling a sense of great pleasure to be a part of implementing programs and services within our communities. It is especially rewarding as the programs have been developed as a direct result of community input and consultation.

I think it is important to provide a brief overview of the steps that have been undertaken and how they have brought us to where we are today.

In 2011, Sasamans Society hosted two youth gatherings, one in Port Hardy and one in Campbell River, for the purpose of collecting information from our youth. We also hosted a workshop in Campbell River for younger children ages seven through eleven. The ideas and information collected at the youth gatherings were the foundation for what would later be used as themes in our community engagement.

In March and November of 2012, one of the most rewarding experiences took place when we brought 37 Elders together. The first gathering focused discussions on four issues: traditional family law; traditional parenting; what our families and children in care need; and what needs to be in place to prevent children from going into care. The second gathering focused on "how to develop a traditional approach to keeping children out of government care".

Through these gatherings, the Ministry recognized the inherent wisdom of our Elders and offered to fund additional meetings between the Ministry staff and a smaller group of Elders in both Port Hardy and Campbell River. The ensuing conversation was around developing a formalized role in which the Elders provide planning and development recommendations to the Ministry for the purpose of improving Aboriginal services.

One of Sasamans Society's main objectives is to weave the Elders in to all of the work we do. We have a strong representation of Elders who are very enthusiastic about participating, and I am very inspired by their dedication and wisdom.

To that end, I'd like to express my deepest gratitude for the trust that the communities have placed with Sasamans Society. As a result of community members willingness to speak from the heart and share their beliefs and values we will increase the health and well-being of our children and communities. I thank you for your continued support.

I would like to acknowledge the skilled and dedicated staff who share our vision and have joined the Sasamans Society team. I would also like to thank our Board of Directors for their guidance, commitment and wise counsel.

Gi'lakas'la, Kix'sisalas Pauline Janyst, Executive Director Sasamans Society

Message from the Board Chair

It is my pleasure to act as the Chair of the Board of Directors for Sasamans Society. I believe, through the cooperation and determination of all of our members, we have built a strong working team of which I am proud to be a part.

Throughout this past year we have moved forward meeting with all member regions in order to ensure that we are fair and adequately reflective of the needs of all of our communities. We are working to ensure our reporting system is transparent and accessible. We have built a strong agency that operates at the grassroots level and has political support.

Through the strong leadership of the Executive Director, Sasamans Society is a link that has pulled together a large number of Bands and urban Aboriginal organizations. This has resulted in increasing dialogue and is, in itself, a measure of success. Through partnership and collaboration, we will ensure increased well-being for our communities.

I am very pleased with the establishment of our Elders committees. It is long overdue that the voices of our Elders are acknowledged as their opinions about the needs of the communities are vital. I thank the Elders for these important contributions.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everyone for their continued support.

Gi'lakas'la,

'Walas'gwa yum gee Richard Dawson, Chair – Board of Directors Sasamans Society

Services

Aboriginal Youth Restorative Justice Program pilot in the new fiscal year 2013/14

The Aboriginal Youth Restorative Justice worker, based responsibilities include developing in Campbell River, works with First Nations and urban material, undertaking the planning and development of Aboriginal communities to support in the delivery of projects, supporting the Elders Councils and ensuring youth justice services. The Restorative Justice Worker is their voices are central to service delivery direction, and part of a collaborative team comprised of community- finding supplemental funds that will allow for based staff, volunteers and professionals working to sustainable work with a future focus on capacity reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal youth in building and service development within the partnering the justice system. A key component of this work will communities and organizations. be the involvement of an Elders Council. The Restorative Justice Worker will be a resource for youth who are involved with, or are likely to be involved with, The Child and Family Counsellor is working in Port Hardy the youth justice system including police, probation and with the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations Child and court. The Restorative Justice Worker is a key contact Family Services program. The counsellor will provide for community agencies, such as local First Nations direct trauma focused services delivered from an Bands, the John Howard Society of North Island, the Indigenous lens. Support will be culturally sensitive and RCMP Restorative Justice program, Laichwiltach Family outreach based. Life Society and MCFD staff who are working with environment which will be conducive to encouraging Aboriginal youth.

from communities for culturally relevant services and involvement of MCFD. traditional supports to help youth to feel connected to their culture and to strengthen identities.

Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator

The purpose of the Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator program is to enhance service provision, provide advocacy, reduce the number of children in care, and improve accountability through a familycentred approach that focuses on meeting the need of both clients and families. The Navigators, geographically placed in Courtenay, Campbell River and Port Hardy, will provide support including information and guidance to Aboriginal families involved with MCFD as well as those who are seeking preventative support. The Navigators will assist families to understand their rights, to access family support services, and to have a strong voice within the court process when needed. The Navigators will also assist service providers to build their understanding of the unique cultural practices, values and needs of families, thereby ensuring there is ongoing, respectful communication.

Community Development Coordinator

The Community Development Coordinator's communication

Child and Family Counsellor

This service aims to establish an families to voluntarily request support and assistance in This program development is centered around requests addressing challenges and reducing or preventing the

Cultural Connections Worker

The Cultural Connections program was previously called the ROOTS program. The focus of this program is to assist MCFD social worker's to develop and implement appropriate re-unification plans and identify children for whom a return to family or community may be appropriate. Elder involvement will be essential to assist in the development of culturally appropriate plans. This position is based out of Campbell River and services our catchment area which includes Gold River/Tahsis, Sayward, Quadra and Cortez Island.

"A child's identity is the root of all of its life. And once it knows where it comes from, it can blossom, it can grow into a strong person"

- Elder; Voices of Our Elders Gathering II

Liz Cadwallader

Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator

Liz Cadwallader is from the Kwakiutl & Ha'xwa'mis First Nations. She was born and raised in Fort Rupert and Port Hardy, where she also raised her own two wonderful children. Liz feels fortunate to have been brought up in a large family where culture and traditions were lived on a daily basis.



Liz's education and training includes Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Interviewing and Mediation, Speech and Language, and First Nations Language. After working many years in the banking industry, she pursued a career teaching language and culture at an elementary school level. This experience with families and children provided a desire to work in a field where she could share her belief of the importance of community and family connection. As Kwakwaka'wakw woman, Liz has a great respect and intimate understanding of the culture and needs of Aboriginal families. Liz is creative, dedicated, extremely well organized and a strong communicator. Liz is enrolled at the Justice Institute of BC to complete additional training and is excited to be a part of the Sasamans Society team and will be working in the Courtenay area as Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator.

Rachel Cain, B.A, B.S.W.

Cultural Connections Worker

Rachel Cain was raised in Campbell River, British Columbia and graduated from Carihi Secondary School in 2005. She is a first generation Canadian whose parents emigrated from England and Hong Kong. Following her graduation in 2013 from Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, Rachel has relocated to Campbell River.



Rachel graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Bachelor of Social Work. Her interests in social welfare and at-risk populations were sparked when her family adopted her two special needs sisters. Since then she has worked with a diverse range of issues from mental health to disabilities, which has only made her more invested in helping others in whatever way is possible.

Recently, Rachel has completed a practicum with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Band in Kamloops where she worked with Elders and Aboriginal offenders in their First Nations Court.

Rachel is excited to be back home in Campbell River and is eager to learn more about Aboriginal cultures on Vancouver Island. She welcomes both the opportunity and the challenge of working with the Sasamans Society.

"Children need to become wrapped in our noble history and our laws, and know their place in the universe. They won't be lost like a piece of wood drifting in the water"

- Chief Robert Joseph; Voices of Our Elders Gathering II

Staff Profiles

Constance Eagle, B.S.W.

Aboriginal Child & Family Counsellor

Constance is the Aboriginal Child and Family Counsellor for the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations. While born and raised in Ontario, Constance has had the privilege of working alongside many First Nations communities across Turtle Island. Constance hails from both



European and Indigenous ancestries. Her mother is a descendant of parents who were born of French and German Jew ancestry. Her father was the son of parents who came from the Dakelh and Secwepmc Nations. It is this ancestry that has largely influenced Constance in her life's work, professionally, politically and personally. Constance's practice is greatly influenced upon a decolonizing approach; one where healing practices, in prioritizing Indigenous knowledge, wisdom and worldviews can be bridged with western practices. For Constance, the community based counselling model that has been developed through the partnership of Sasamans Society and Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations is an amazing opportunity because it focuses on the fostering of relationships, on healing and belonging, and is capable of responding to the needs of each member of the community.

Constance lives on the traditional territory of the Kwakiutl First Nations with her partner and very much appreciates, enjoys and is grateful for the chance to live, work and play in such a coastal paradise. Constance graduated with a BSW from the University of Manitoba and is currently completing her MSW at the University of Victoria.

"Children were raised by everyone; children were safe from one end of community to the other end"

- Elder; Voices of Our Elders Gathering II

Genesis Hunt

Administrative Assistant/Reception

Genesis Hunt grew up in a community called the Whe-la-la-U, in Alert Bay, BC. He is of both Tlatlasikwala (Hope Island) and Kwakiutl (Fort Rupert) ancestry. Although he only has one biological brother, he considers himself lucky to have grown up with a number of cousins he considers brothers and sisters.



In his early years he spent much of his time launching the 'Power of Youth" program with the Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre as a member of the Youth Council. Later, with the support of his fellow Youth Council members and Program Coordinator, he became the Youth Recreation Worker; after a year of training and being mentored, he then went on to coordinate the entire youth program.

Genesis has taken part in a number of training opportunities that include: Basic Web Design, Facilitation Skills, Respectful Relationships, Conflict Resolution, ASCIRT, and Train-The-Trainers (in addition to a number of other training courses/programs).

One of his proudest accomplishments was in 2006 when he participated in the "Canoe Journey, Life Journey" from Campbell River, BC to Muckleshoot, Seattle. The journey spanned four weeks--- where the small, young, and inexperienced crew faced various obstacles that would forge stronger and more resilient friendships; among these friendships, he was fortunate to meet two people he would come to consider to be two of his closest friends.

Genesis was honoured to have been recruited to join the North Island Wellness Society as a Facilitator. He then continued his work with the society as it evolved into Sasamans Society, where he has had the pleasure of working with some incredibly talented, inspiring, and hard-working people.

Cheryl Kwaksistala

Community Development Worker

Cheryl Kwaksistala was born and raised in North Vancouver, British Columbia. She relocated to Campbell River in 1998. She lives with her husband and three children who are part of the Wei Wai Kum First Nation.



Cheryl's educational background

includes studies in Criminology, counselling, and crisis intervention. She has a strong administrative and organizational capacity. Her work experience is widely varied and includes Corrections, Outreach work with Laichwiltach Family Life Society, and police based Victim Services. Her background has resulted in a wide range of multi-disciplinary skills, knowledge and experience.

Cheryl is thankful to be welcomed by the community and is enjoying being part of the Sasamans Society's team.

Margaret McDougall

Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator

Margaret McDougall is from the Kwakiutl & Namgis First Nations, but has roots that reach up and down the coast. She grew up in both Alert Bay & Fort Rupert; and was raised in culture with a humbled nature. She is a proud mother of 2 girls that give her the strength and inspiration to do more.



Margaret graduated high school in 2000. She completed a semester at Institute of Indigenous Government in First Nations Studies; completed a year of Early Childhood Care & Education at North Island College. Currently, she is in the process of finishing her Certificate in Aboriginal Child & Youth Care at University of Victoria.

She has worked in many aspects that include children, families, and community. Maggie worked for KDC

Health as Health Administrative Assistant; worked as Kwakwala Language Technichan,. Researcher for Health Canada, with FASD programs. She also worked for child/youth summer programs, and after school programs. She has enjoyed working in her First Nations community and looks forward to working more with our First Nations people. Her passion is to work with our people towards creating the best future for them. Maggie has a lot of experience in volunteering for her community in many different aspects, including cultural ceremonies, community gatherings, cooking, and working with children youth & their families.

Kimberly Puglas

Kimberly Puglas (Kim) is from the Wei Wai Kum First Nation. She is married, has one child and is expecting a second child early in 2014. Kim has been involved in Laichwiltach culture group since she was very young. Now she has her young son dancing as well. It is very important to her to keep her culture alive.



Kim's education and training include a Business Administration, with Accounting Option Degree from North Island College. Kim has worked for the Campbell River Band office, KDC Health Centre and the Treaty Society. Throughout all of Kim's work experiences she has demonstrated great communication skills, a positive attitude, and a pursuit of excellence.

Kim joined Sasamans Society in 2011 as the bookkeeper. She enjoys the opportunity to be part of a growing and dynamic team.

"The time has come upon us that we have the inherent right to have a voice"

- Pat Charlie; Voices of Our Elders Gathering II

Staff Profiles

Jackie Sinclair, B.A.

Aboriginal Youth Restorative Justice Worker

Jackie Sinclair is an Anishinabe Kwe (First Nations woman) from a community in the Lake of the Woods area in Ontario called Rainy River First Nations. Her Anishinabe name is Qui-Whed-Na-Shiig (pronounced: key-wed-nah-sheeg). Jackie has been living on



the west coast since 1984; and in Campbell River since 1994.

In 1994, after graduating from Aboriginal Life Skills Institute, Jackie moved to Gold River to work with the Mowachaht people for six months. It was then she met Pauline (nee: McCrimmon) Janyst who hired Jackie to work on a woman's life skills program for Laichwiltach Family Life Society. Jackie worked with Laichwiltach Family Life Society for over 17 years in various positions including a Life Skills/employment readiness facilitator and Aboriginal Head Start Coordinator.

In 2007, Jackie made the decision to upgrade her education. She enrolled in the Justice Degree program with Royal Roads University. She joyfully received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Justice Studies, November of 2009.

In October of 2011, Pauline Janyst hired Jackie as the Initiatives Coordinator for Sasamans Society. In 2012, Jackie was hired as the Aboriginal Youth Restorative Justice Worker. She has been working with Elders and the Justice Committee on developing a youth restorative justice program with a traditional approach which will be available in early fall of 2013.

"You always have to do the best you can, and learn how to apologize and respect property, and other people in the house... When they do bad, it affects the family... It was your responsibility to mend it, to make things right, to maintain healing in family and community. I remember my father saying, "We all have to live together. By doing that we have to respect one another."

-Elder; Voices of Our Elders Gathering II

Lori Speck, B.S.W.

Aboriginal Family Outreach Navigator

Lori Speck is a member of the 'Namgis First Nation with ancestral ties to the Lawit'sis tribe through her father and grandfather as well as the Dzawada'enux and Kwikwasutinux tribes through her biological mother. Lori was born in Vancouver and spent her



formative years in both Vancouver & Alert Bay. She considers Alert Bay to be home no matter where she may be living.

Lori graduated from the University of Victoria in 2009 with a bachelor's degree in Social Work specializing in First Nations Child Welfare. She chose this field because of her own childhood experience in the child welfare system before being adopted at the age of four. Lori has a personal understanding of how child welfare policies have affected First Nations children, families and communities across Canada.

Lori's approach to service delivery centres on her antioppressive and strength-based practice standards. She is confident that most families have the capacity within their own community to provide a safe and loving environment for their children. She truly believes that a child's best chance to make it in this world is to grow up within their own community, to be surrounded by family, culture & language, where they have a strong connection and that sense of belonging.

Most recently Lori has worked for the 'Namgis First Nation as a delegated social worker at K'wak'walat'si Child & Family Services. Lori is pleased to be taking on a new challenge as Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator with Sasamans Society and looks forward to assisting families in the Campbell River region.

Elders Committees & Next Steps

Elders Committees

Two Elders Committees have been established and will be utilized to weave their wisdom, influence and participation into the service delivery of Sasamans Society's programs. It is clear that Elders envision an important role for themselves at the heart of future programs that will protect and strengthen families and communities. Therefore, Elders are being aligned with specific programs and are being provided with on-going training. One of the committees will work with the Aboriginal Youth Restorative Justice program. The second committee will provide support, information and guidance to MCFD regarding keeping children out of care and developing plans for returning those in care to their family or community.



Photo above:

Elders in attendance at the 'Voices of Our Elders'
Gathering hosted at Quinsam Hall in Campbell
River on March 21st & 22nd, 2012

Next Steps

We are working collaboratively with MCFD to enhance service delivery and to establish processes which would reduce or eliminate the need for our communities' children to go in to MCFD care. To that end, we are in early discussions to develop an Aboriginal Interim Foster home which will provide an opportunity for children and youth to be cared for in the community in emergency situations without being formally placed in to MCFD care. This allows us with the opportunity to help look for family to provide on-going care.

We are working with Laichwiltach Family Life Society and MCFD to develop collaborative working agreements. Once complete, this template will be utilized with other interested agencies and Bands.

There has been an expression of interest by the Dzawada'enuxw First Nation and Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis Tribe to develop a collaborative (tripartite) agreements with Sasamans Society and MCFD. Due to their isolated location, the intention would be to have Sasamans Society as MCFD's first point of contact. Sasamans will then contact the band and/or family.

Sasamans Society continues to participate in the Indigenous Approach gatherings and the Executive Director serves as a board member of the First Nations Child & Family Wellness Council.

"We are responsible for our children"

- Elder; Voices of Our Elders Gathering II

"Grandparents would teach kids and when they got older, they'd remember the teachings"

- Elder; Voices of Our Elders Gathering II

Partners



Da'naxda'xw/Awaetlala First Nation - New Vancouver

Website: www.danaxdaxw.com | Phone: 250-974-2703



Dzawada'enuxw First Nation - Kingcome Inlet

Website: www.kingcome.com | Phone: 250-974-3013



Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations - Port Hardy

Website: www.gwanak.info | Phone: 250-949-8343



K'omoks First Nation - Comox

Website: www.comoxband.ca | Phone: 250-338-4545



Kwakiutl Indian Band - Port Hardy

Phone: 250-949-6012



Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis Tribe - Gilford Island

Website: www.khfn.ca | Phone: 250-949-3004



Laichwiltach Family Life Society - Campbell River Urban

Website: www.lfls.ca | Phone: 250-286-3430



Quatsino Band Office - Coal Harbour

Website: www.quatsinofn.com | Phone: 250-949-6245



Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre - Port Hardy Urban

Phone: 250-902-0552



Wachiay Friendship Centre Society - Courtenay Urban

Website: www.wachiay.org | Phone: 250-338-7793



We Wai Kai Nation - Cape Mudge Band

Website: www.weiwaikai.com | Phone: 250-285-3316



Wei Wai Kum First Nation - Campbell River Band

Website: www.crband.ca | Phone: 250-286-6949



Whe-la-la-U Area Council - Alert Bay

Phone: 250-974-5501

Phone: 250-334-9591



Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry - Courtenay Urban



Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band - Village Island

Phone: 250-287-2955



Tlatlasikwala First Nation - Hope Island

Website: www.tlatlasikwala.com | Phone: 250-949-1480



Communications Strategy

Accountability is one of the guiding principles at Sasamans Society. In keeping with this principle, we perform a number of key communication tasks throughout the year that maintain a high level of accountability to all of the Bands and urban Aboriginal agencies we serve.

We will maintain a communications strategy that complements our Strategic Plan. This strategy will be updated annually.

Communications Delivery

Sasamans Society employs a multi-faceted approach to communications to raise awareness and knowledge about our activities. Specifically, we:

- Publishes and distributes an annual Strategic Plan (we anticipate this will change to a three year plan)
- Prepares and publishes an Annual Report
- Publishes a monthly newsletter
- Maintains a web site (www.sasamans.ca) and uses technology to improve the overall effectiveness of Sasamans Society's communications
- Host an Annual General Meetings where all our partner bands and urban Aboriginal agencies are invited to attend
- Host quarterly Board of Directors meeting that include a board representative from each of our partner bands and urban Aboriginal agencies
- Host a monthly Executive Committee Meeting
- Participate in meetings with community agencies for the purpose of information sharing and collaboration
- Attend Kwakiutl District Council bi-annual Annual General Assembly meetings to provide a report as requested
- Attend Musgamagw Tsawataineuk Tribal Council Annual General Meeting to provide an Annual Report as requested

Photo's



Voices of Our Elders Gathering, 2012



Maya'xaka Youth Gathering, 2011



Voices of Our Elders Gathering, 2012



Voices of Our Elders Gathering II, 2012



Sasamans Grand Opening Ceremony, 2011



Maya'xaka Youth Gathering, 2011



Painting Our Way Youth Gathering, 2011



Elders MCFD Meeting, 2013



Elders MCFD Meeting, 2013



Sasamans Grand Opening Ceremony, 2011



Voices of Our Elders Gathering, 2012

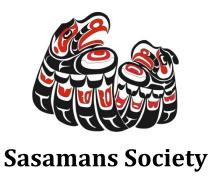


Sasamans Grand Opening Ceremony, 2011

Notes
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Colleen Stevenson creating a Graphic Recording Voices of Our Elders Gathering, 2012



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