



Sasamans Society

2018/19 AGM Report

Lori Bull, 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 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'waka 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 Aboriginal 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 Chair 2018/19



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 hard work, our commitment has always remained with the best interest and well-being of our families and communities while keeping our children at the centre of all we do.

It is very exciting that we are continuing to grow with the addition of two new programs that rolled out in the spring of 2019; these are *Aboriginal Outreach Housing Navigator* and the *Aboriginal Caregiver Support Worker* programs. With our new and existing programming and with the delivery of these essential services for Indigenous children & families we are always mindful of the Nations we work for. We are thankful for all the support Sasamans Society has received over the years and continues to receive. As we move forward, we are honored to serve and give back to community; we work hard to be transparent while never losing focus of everyone that supports us in the work we do. Thank you to everyone who believes in our work and our vision *to strengthen our children and families in a community-driven and culturally appropriate manner.*

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 children, families and communities and it is with your support that we are able to carry on the important work we do at Sasamans.

I would also like to recognize our Elders as they have a great impact on our work and our organization. They are very supportive to us in so many ways; we look to them for their leadership and guidance as they share their knowledge and wisdom with such humbleness and grace. They teach us the ways of our people and our culture, they remind us of who we are and where we come from. It is important to connect the dots between our youth and Elders; it is this connection that makes a successful organization.

I would like to acknowledge all of our staff at Sasamans, we are family and our success comes from the good working relationships we have with each other. Our staff work hard and go over and above what is required of them, they have passion and they work well as a team ensuring everything runs smoothly.

Last but not least, I would like to thank our new Executive Director for her leadership and for sliding into this role, the transition has been great! It is important to acknowledge the person who leads and continues this good work moving forward. When you have a good leader the staff have no problem following.

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

Message from the Executive Director



It is my great pleasure to welcome everyone to our 2018/19 Annual General Meeting, it has been an exciting year and it seems that time has flown by since our last AGM. I would like to acknowledge that our meeting is taking place on the traditional territory of the Laichwiltach people.

As Sasamans Society moves forward in our work, I am pleased to say that we are strong in our numbers as our team continues to grow, we are 15 strong and I am very proud to have such an amazing team that is dedicated to the vision of Sasamans Society. 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 including 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, New Relationship Trust and the Federation of BC Youth in Care Network, we also have partnerships with various First Nations including: Da'naxda'xw/Awaetlala; Mamalilikulla; Dzawada'enuxw; We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum; Gwa'sala-Naxwada'xw Nations; K'omoks; Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis Tribe; Quatsino and Tlatlasikwala.

I would like to acknowledge our Board of Directors as they have supported me 100% through this past year of transition for the Society and for me in my role as Executive Director. This past year has truly been a year of growth and learning and full of many challenges but also many successes. We cannot be a strong organization without strong leadership and I am grateful and humbled for this continued opportunity of growth and development as we move into another year.

I am honoured to be of service to Sasamans Society, our Indigenous nations, our community and the children & families we work for. I am extremely grateful for the support of our Sasamans staff not just for me but for our children and families. I am truly humbled by all of you who come to work every day bringing your knowledge and expertise but most of all putting your heart and spirit into the hard work that you do, this organization would not be what it is today without you. I thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement during this past year and most of all for your patience during my time of learning and growth in this role; each and every one of you have contributed so much to the success of Sasamans Society and I will continue to learn and grow from all of you. Thank you!!!

I want to acknowledge the Sasamans Harmony Circle of Elders who dedicate their time and energy not just to their own healing journey but also give of themselves to support our youth and families. They have worked tirelessly and engaged in many healing and training sessions over the last 5 years. They are truly an amazing group of Elders with beautiful spirits and strong voices; they are an inspiration to continue doing the work we do with our Indigenous children & families.

'Gilakas'la,
Lori Bull, M.S.W., R.S.W.
Executive Director

Aboriginal Outreach Family/Youth Navigators

Funded by Aboriginal Service Innovation Funding (MCFD)/Prevention and Family Support Funding (MCFD)/Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (INAC)

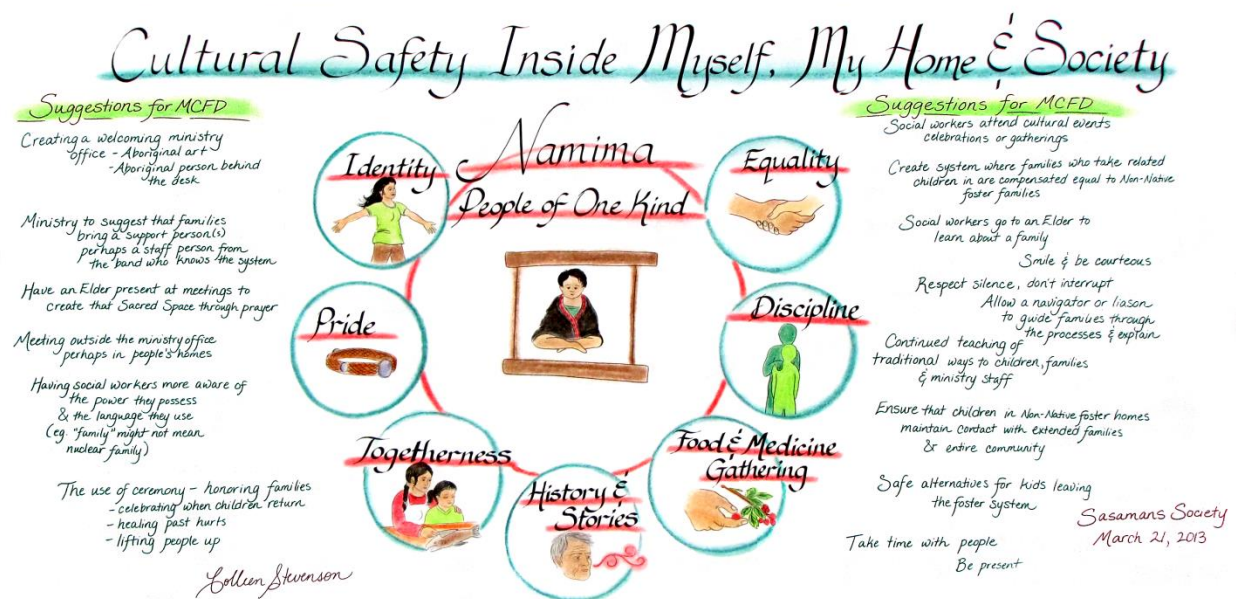
Sasamans Society currently has two FT Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigators (AOFN). One is based out of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Child & Family Services office in Port Hardy and one is based out of our main office in Campbell River.

We have three FT Aboriginal Youth Navigator (AYN) positions. One AYN based out of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Elders Centre in Port Hardy and two AYN's are based out of our main office in Campbell River.

In Courtenay our AOFN and AYN programs are combined into one position, and provide services to Aboriginal families and youth in the Courtenay area.

The purpose of the **Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator** and **Aboriginal Youth Navigator** 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 needs 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. The purpose of our work is to enhance and promote culturally safe services to our children and families who are involved with child welfare services. We are grateful for our ongoing collaborative working relationships in the communities we serve.



Cultural Connections Program

Funded by Campbell River *Ministry of Children and Family Development*

The purpose of the **Cultural Connections** program is to create Cultural Plans for children in care and 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. Sasamans Society has one FT Cultural Connections Worker (CCW), this position is based out of Campbell River and services our catchment area which includes Gold River/Tahsis, Sayward and Quadra/Cortez Island. Our Cultural Connections worker continues to work in partnership with MCFD.

Our Cultural Connections program continues to see success in children being placed within community or extended family placements. This success is due to the outreach work the CCW conducts within local and remote communities to find family and community members to step forward as caregivers for children & youth in care. Additionally, the CCW has worked on many plans that will see children and youth moving out of the foster care system and moving into permanent placement.

Along with the successes, the Cultural Connections Program has faced some challenges that are systemically related, this includes the impact of intergenerational trauma associated with the Residential School System and The Sixties Scoop on our Indigenous communities and families. With many families disconnected from family, culture and community there is little knowledge of cultural roots, tracing lineage among this disconnection to community and culture remains difficult.

Aboriginal Outreach Elders Navigator/Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders

Funded by *First Nations Health Authority*

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 Aboriginal Outreach Elders Navigator (AOEN) works with 30+ Elders from both on and off reserve; they come from a variety of First Nations Bands, urban agencies, Metis and Inuit communities.

The Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders (AHCE) group participates in training sessions and workshops throughout the year; there has been excellent attendance at all the workshops put on by the AOEN. The AHCE continues to have an active and supportive role in the community:

- By helping facilitate workshops, opening and closing events with prayers and welcoming the attendants to the territory when attending these meetings and workshops;
- FNHA and VIHA have utilized the AHCE from Campbell River, Courtenay and Quadra Island to share their wisdom in regards to Cultural Sensitivity in conjunction with the Maternity and Emergency departments at the North Vancouver Island Hospital with the goal to better equip hospital staff when treating Indigenous peoples;

- Comox Valley School District 71 Advisory Committee has added two of the AHCE to their committee to create a higher level of awareness of intergenerational trauma from residential school in public schools;
- BC Provincial Emergency services committee made up primarily of doctors and nurses has two of the AHCE on their committee accessing their wealth of knowledge to create a better standard of care in hospital emergency departments;
- Elders attend Foundry 3 days per week as support for youth accessing services. This has proven to be a great avenue for youth and families to access support in a culturally appropriate manner;
- KDC health continues to access Elders from the AHCE assisting with the families they work with and is sincerely grateful for the support and wisdom they have provided to their programs thus far.

Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders



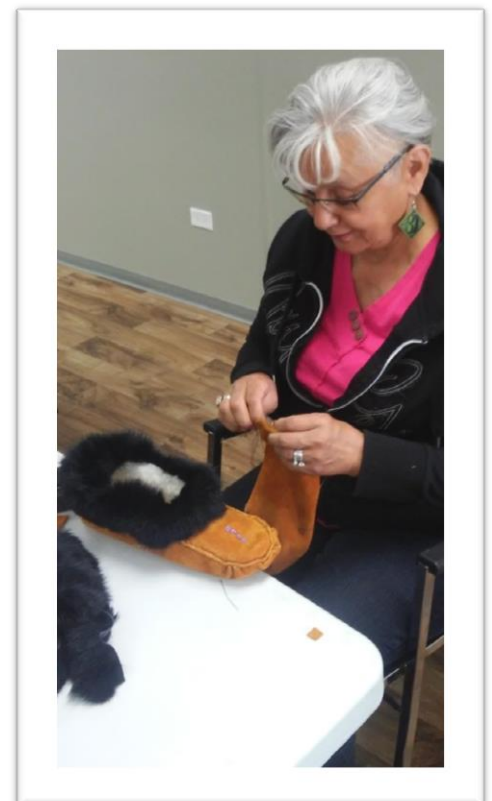
AHCE Elder ladies with Pauline Janyst (seated) at Pauline's retirement Party at the Eagles Hall ~ September 21st, 2018

Top Right: (L-R) Mary S. (Island Health) with Elders Verna F., Barb W. and Verna W.

Below: Edwina and Ollie H. with Gina H. Elders in Residence at Foundry

Bottom Right: Kathryn D. making moccasins

Bottom Left: (L-R) Violet D. Gloria N. and Rita P. at International Women's Day Tea 2019





Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders



Top Left: Elders Charlotte J. with her sister Diane M. showing their support for Jody Wilson-Raybould

Top Right: Edwina and Ollie H. showing their support for Pink Shirt Day

Bottom Left: Edna L. at the 2018 Elders Gathering

Bottom Right: Verna F., Edna L., Verna W. and Violet D. at the 2018 Elders Gathering

Art Therapy

Expressive Art for Indigenous Youth

Sponsored by
New Relationship Trust

In 2018/19 Sasamans Society received \$2000.00 from ***New Relationship Trust BC First Nations Youth Grant Initiative 2018/19***. Our Campbell River Aboriginal Youth Navigators organized two 3-week art therapy workshops for young adults ages 16-24. The students met for 2 hours once a week. Carihi Secondary school graciously offered their art room for the workshops. These workshops focused on increasing knowledge of culture, connecting with an Elder through mentorship,

showing respect for the people of this area and the area around us, promoting a sense of importance, healing, leadership, mentorship and cultural values.



Campbell River Aboriginal Youth Navigators Monica White (L) and Taylor Gee (R) with Art Therapy student instructor Leanne Longeway (M)

Increase Knowledge of Culture

Culture was one of the main focuses of these groups. Being open and connecting to each young person was key to building the type of workshop we wanted. Although respect was already inherent, there were times that reminders were important. At each session the chosen Elder would conduct a prayer in an opening & closing ceremony. Our Elder was very knowledgeable about local Indigenous community and families. There were many conversations with multiple youth about connections within families while discovering how they are related to one another.

Elder Mentorship

Our Elder was chosen from the Aboriginal Harmony Circle of Elders. The elder's navigator worked with the youth navigators to decide who would be the best fit. The Elder that was chosen is a great

advocate for education. They were very comfortable being able to check in with the youth throughout the sessions.

Respect for Elders

The youth learned respect for their Elders by listening without interruption while the Elder spoke. The youth were able to share with one another various techniques of respect without any direction from one of the leaders. This was demonstrated by standing or taking your hat off during prayer. Another way they showed respect was making sure they gave enough time for the Elder to speak. The youth would love having different conversations with the Elder, who was very inclusive while sharing affirmations.

Promote a sense of importance

Each of the art pieces were held for a certain amount of time. Each piece was handled with care and love. The teacher did an amazing job giving praises to each young person and being able to pick out each of their strengths. Although names don't seem to have the biggest impact, all leaders were able to say each young person's name with confidence and make them feel important. At the end of the workshop, gifts were exchanged. We made sure to give the youth something they could continue with art as well as something fun they can go to.

Support youth on their healing journey

Our goal was to find a therapeutic form of healing in a way that was appealing to Indigenous youth and young adults in our community. Using art as a form of expression individuals were able to be themselves, release stress and gain self-control in a healthy environment. This process encouraged the participants to feel confident about stepping outside of their comfort zone. The group also introduced a safe and enjoyable space to de-stress while also connecting individuals to healthy supports and like-minded peers.

Leadership, mentorship and cultural values.

Leadership was demonstrated by the participants creating and sharing their artistic pieces that inspired other members of the group. Participants also demonstrated leadership by their commitment to attend and ensure that all materials were cleaned up. The participants were provided mentorship through one of four supports that were available. The mentorship was dependent on what the youth needed at that time. Some examples of mentorship included: artistic skills, family troubles, emotional needs, personal experiences etc. Cultural values were demonstrated in a variety of ways. Youth were encouraged to share their knowledge of culture, share stories with the elder, listen to the elder's teachings and participate in the opening and closing prayer.

Feedback from the Youth

"Art Therapy was great, I felt a connection to the Elder."

"I always look forward to coming to Art Therapy."

"I'm so glad I came. It was special to share my story with the Elder."

Aboriginal Parenting Support Worker

Funded by MCFD Prevention and Family Support

The Aboriginal 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 children who are at high risk of removal. The APSW provides intensive services through visits to the family's home and works collaboratively with the family to develop goals and activities to assist in reducing risks identified by MCFD. The worker walks alongside the parents in their efforts to accomplish the goals set out by MCFD, providing parenting knowledge, encouragement, and navigation to resources and support to build strong and healthy families.

The APSW works very closely with our Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigators. While these positions work closely together they hold very different roles. Parents appreciate one on one time with the APSW as the support can be tailored to meet the family's specific needs in a way that parenting groups cannot. Families have a say in what they want out of the program, the APSW has found this works well for the participants to maintain continuity within the program as it helps to build relationships with families in a good way and from a place of empowering parents.

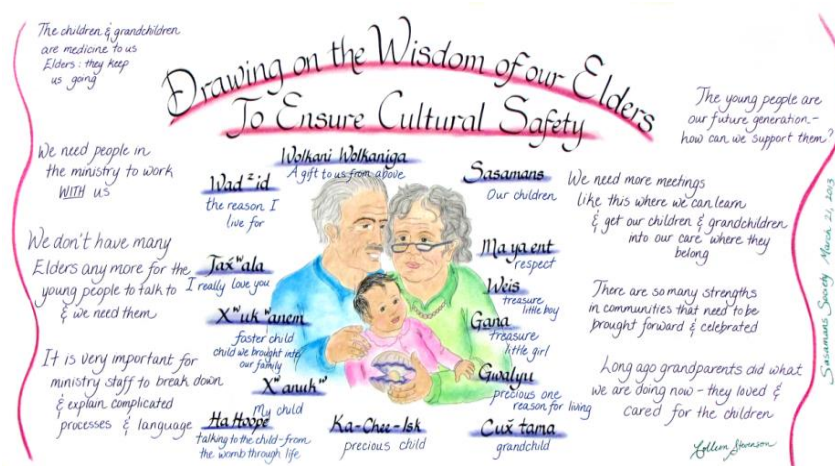
Sasamans currently has two FT APSW's, one is based out of Campbell River and the other is based out of the Wachiay Friendship Centre in Courtenay.

Funding

Sasamans Society programs are primarily funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) through the *Aboriginal Service Innovation* (ASI) funding stream; our local Campbell River MCFD office provides ongoing funding for our Cultural Connections program; we receive funding from MCFD Prevention and Family Support and look forward to continued support from this program; we also received funding from Da'naxda'xw First Nation through the *Community Well-Being Jurisdiction Initiatives* (CWJI) administered by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). Finally, Sasamans Society receives funding from First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) for our Elders program.

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.



Services Catchment Regions

Sasamans Society 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* and an *Aboriginal Parenting Support Worker* both workers operate out of the Wachaiy Friendship Center.
- **Port Hardy** has an *Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator* that operates out of the Gwa'sala –'Nakwaxda'xw Health Centre and the *Aboriginal Youth Navigator* is based out of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Elders Centre.
- **Campbell River** has one *Receptionist*; an *Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator*; two *Aboriginal Youth Navigators*; an *Aboriginal Parenting Support Worker*; a *Cultural Connections Worker*; an *Aboriginal Outreach Elders Navigator* and finally, our *Executive Assistant/Bookkeeper* that operates out of our head office. Two new programs for 2019/20 are based out of our head office, these include: *Aboriginal Housing Navigator* and *Aboriginal Caregiver Support Worker*.

Sasamans Society Team

Jane Watts-Ellens	Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator	Port Hardy
Thomas Wamiss Jr.	Aboriginal Youth Navigator	Port Hardy
Melony Larre	Aboriginal Outreach Family Navigator	Campbell River
Taylor Gee	Aboriginal Youth Navigator	Campbell River
Monica White	Aboriginal Youth Navigator	Campbell River
Rachel Cain	Cultural Connections worker	Campbell River
Marisa Anthony	Aboriginal Parenting Support Worker	Campbell River
Corrina Mahoney	Aboriginal Youth & Family Navigator	Courtenay
Shana Reeder	Aboriginal Parenting Support Worker	Courtenay
Nicole Kitts	Aboriginal Elders Outreach Navigator	Campbell River/Courtenay
Tasleem Mall	Aboriginal Caregiver Support Worker	Campbell River
Alynne Neault	Aboriginal Housing Navigator	Campbell River
Crystal Assu	Executive Assistant/Bookkeeper	Campbell River
Skye Bourget	Reception	Campbell River
Lori Bull	Executive Director	Campbell River

Sasamans Society Board of Directors

Richard Dawson	Chair	Vacant	Director
Nick Chowdhury	Vice-Chair	Barb Mitchell	Director
Marian Atkinson	Treasurer	Rita Pimlott	Director
Vera Peacey	Secretary	Willie Moon	Director
Keith Wilson	Director	Patricia Hall	Director

What's NEW for Sasamans Society in 2019/20 & moving forward?

CWJI Funding – in February of 2019 Sasamans Society received \$92,028 from Da'naxda'xw First Nation in response to the federal *Community Wellbeing and Jurisdiction Initiative* (CWJI) funding from Indigenous Services Canada (ICS) to conduct prevention and wellness activities/programs. Sasamans Society is grateful for the opportunity to continue providing support and services to urban Indigenous families including Da'naxda'xw families. We proposed to use this funding towards developing an urban *Aboriginal Housing Navigator* program to help urban Indigenous families seek out safe and affordable housing, this was a program we piloted over a year ago for a very short 3 months and found it an essential service, particularly for Indigenous families who had MCFD involvement.

We did not utilize any of this funding during the fiscal year 2018/2019 as it came quite late in the fiscal year. We received another payment from the CWJI funding initiative from Da'naxda'xw also in the amount of \$92,028 for the funding year 2019/20. With this funding we are able to introduce not just one but two new programs for our community.

In late spring of 2019 Sasamans Society launched the *Aboriginal Housing Navigator* (AOHN) program and is situated out of the Sasamans Society main office in Campbell River. The purpose of the Aboriginal AOHN program is to enhance service provision and assist Indigenous peoples (families, couples, individuals, youth and Elders) find suitable, safe and affordable housing. The AOHN will assist those in understanding their tenancy rights & responsibilities when seeking rental accommodations and throughout tenancy. Persons aided by this service may include but is not limited to Indigenous families and individuals involved with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) and/or the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD); single parents with children leaving violent relationships; youth aging out of government care and individuals who may be couch surfing, residing in shelters/hotels or on the street.

Additionally, we launched the *Aboriginal Caregiver Support Worker* (ACSW) program and is currently operating out of Campbell River. The ACSW provides essential support services to Indigenous caregivers (grandparents/aunties/uncles etc.) who are caring for Indigenous children that are placed in an MCFD out-of-care placement option or who are caring for Indigenous children under a family plan. The purpose of the ACSW program is to support Indigenous families and community to care for our own children in place of stranger foster care. The ACSW will connect caregivers to knowledgeable resources and provide ongoing services to assist caregivers navigate MCFD out-of-care placement options and placement requirements as well as family law, guardianship rights and information with the goal of keeping Indigenous children connected to their family, cultural community and traditional languages, while preserving the child's Indigenous identity.

Youth Centred Space – with the launch of two new programs at Sasamans Society we started to grow out of our main office in Campbell River, with 5 offices spaces and 7 programs with 8 staff

we needed to configure our office to fit everyone but we clearly needed new space for our new programming. We rented new space adjacent to our main office in Campbell River in the former Cape Mudge Head Start building, we spent some time cleaning & painting making it just the right space that would become our **Youth Centred Space** and is the new office space for our Youth Navigators. We are very excited to see the growth in our programming and our team.

We are truly grateful to the **Da'naxda'xw First Nation** for providing Sasamans Society with the CWJI Prevention funding so we are able to continue doing the work we are doing in our communities, thank you for giving us the opportunity to build on our programming for our children and families.

We would like to continue building on the needs identified by our communities and hope to see Sasamans Society grow even more as we move forward.

Sasamans Society SHINES in Community 2018/2019

In the Spring of 2018 Sasamans Society was nominated for the **Campbell River Chamber of Commerce Business Awards** in two categories *Community Spirit* and *Not for Profit of the Year* Awards. We were truly honoured and humbled by this recognition and we are grateful for this amazing opportunity. While we didn't win, we did place with 5 others in the top 6 for *Not-For-Profit of the Year* Award and a BIG CONGRATULATIONS to **Habitat for Humanity** for winning in this category. We would also like to send out our CONGRATULATIONS to one of

our partners, the John Howard Society NI for winning the *2018 Community Spirit Award*! A much deserved honour for all the hard work you do in community!!



Sasamans Team Build Day with Habitat for Humanity NI December 10th, 2018

Sasamans Build Team & H4H Site team

Back Row (L-R): Monica, Ryan, Dave, Lori, Thomas, Hayley, Logan

Front Row (L-R): Taylor, Jane, Skye, Rachel, Marisa



Thank you Habitat for
Humanity for an awesome
day onsite. A truly
amazing experience!!
Sasamans Team

Shoebox Project

December 2018

In December 2018 Sasamans Team took part in donating boxes for the Shoebox Project!

The Shoebox Project for women collects shoeboxes filled with thoughtful items to remind women living in homelessness that they are a valued member of the community!

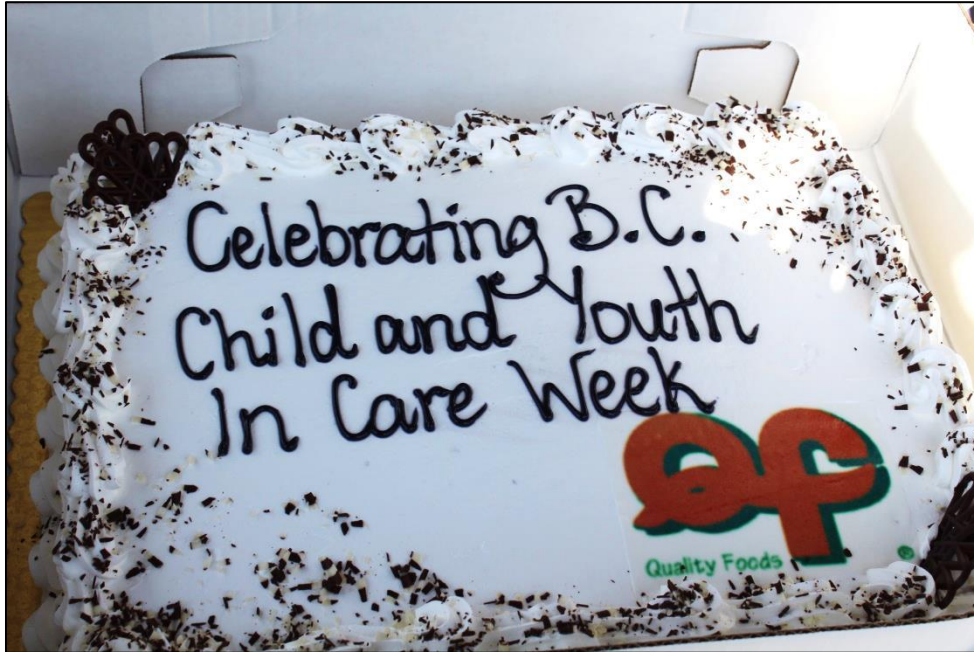
Each holiday season Sasamans Society makes an effort to give back and be involved with a community initiative that supports individuals/children in need.



International Womens Day Tea 2019

Lori Hirst (Rose Harbour) with Sasamans Team
L-R: Lori H., Lori B., Taylor, Rachel, Niki,
Monica, Marisa, Skye (in front)





Celebrating Children and Youth in Care Week 2018



Sasamans Aboriginal Youth Navigators were able to bring multiple youth to workshop put on by KDC. The workshop was focused on *Creating Empowering Changes*. This is a part of Samaya Entertainment's *Heal. Inspire. Empower Youth Tour*



Monica White ~ Sasamans Aboriginal Youth Navigator with Dani & Lizzy (L), Mike Scott (M), and Suzette Amaya (R) with youth.

*Thank you for
attending Sasamans
Society AGM for
2018/19*