



ABORIGINAL COALITION
TO END HOMELESSNESS

April 2025

LAND-BASED HEALING

Annual Report

About: Report for the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society's (ACEH) Land-Based Healing program— A culturally supportive pathway to healing and recovery for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples served by the ACEH across the Coast Salish, Nuu-Chah-Nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw Tribal Regions.

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Prepared for:
The First Nations Health Authority
and all Nations who lovingly
hosted and shared their territory



The Aboriginal Coalition works closely with Elders, Knowledge Holders, and leadership from across the Coast Salish, Nuu-Chah-Nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw Tribal Regions to provide Land-Based connection, learning, and healing to the Indigenous Street Family who are First Nations, Inuit, and Métis from across, and beyond, Vancouver Island.

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SEASONAL LAND BASED HEALING CAMPS

PACHEEDAHT FIRST NATION July 15 - 19, 2024

WHAT WAS THE PROJECT INITIATIVE?

Following the Seasonal Land-Based Healing model, the summer camp was dedicated to women/Family Members from across the Aboriginal Coalition's Culturally Supportive Housing sites, including its Speqəŋéutxw House. The focus was providing an opportunity for the women to be surrounded by Matriarchs as they shared about traditional foods, art, and healing practices. Pacheedaht First Nation welcomed us with open arms and offered an abundance of lessons about the local plants and medicines, taking us to different locations to share the history of the land. Family Members were able to harvest berries, later used in the meals, and cedar, processed and used for cultural crafts. Pacheedaht's Chief was part of welcoming the ACEH to the territory and allowed special access to Botanical Beach, where whales, seals and local wildlife came to share their medicine. We were also kindly welcomed to the Nation's Culture Night, where traditional songs and dances were taught and shared. Evenings were spent together around the fire sharing personal stories, learning how to weave cedar and bead earrings. The camp ended on a special note by sharing a Family Member's birthday all together.



WHO DID IT SERVE?

8 Family Members from Speqəŋéutxw House and 1 Family Member from Kwum Kwum Lelum attended the summer Land-Based Healing Camp, along with 4 Elders and facilitators from Pacheedaht First Nation. This included Chief Arliss Jones and Elder Siemtino (LaVatta Frank) who holds close ties to the Pacheedaht Nation and the Speqəŋéutxw Family Members.



WHAT IMPACT DID THE PROJECT HAVE?

An immediate impact of this Land-Based Healing camp, was the development of friendship and sisterhood between the Family Members. While tensions can be high in an urban environment, the group was able to relate to each other in a more grounded and light hearted way. There were bonds strengthened, relationships mended, and overall a deep sense of family forms, as evidenced by the reflections of those present. Connecting in this setting: Through culture, in the shared state of healing and learning, opened new paths forward and provided a renewed peace to the house when the group returned.



WHAT OTHER SUPPORT DID YOU RECEIVE?

Pacheedaht leadership provided many offerings to this camp, including organizing “Culture Night” while we were in town. This provided Family Members the opportunity to learn about the Nation’s traditional dances and songs. Support from individual donations and fundraising efforts also made it possible to provide the Indigenous Alcohol Harm Reduction Program (IAHRRP) and Cannabis Substitution Program. This harm reduction support is required for the safety of those attending to be on the land.



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FAMILY MEMBER REFLECTIONS

*“What a sight to see
All the beauty that surrounds me
Its been quite a long time
Since I’ve seen so many stars
Such a beautiful sight
On a gorgeous night
Having this time with my family
Brings my heart full of glee
This is another memory I can take home
with me
Being here brought my smile back
Thanks so much”*

*“Thank you so much for the day, it’s
meaningful to me and I mean that. It feels
good to be in family again”*

*“I believe that the animals and trees are
our ancestors visiting and guiding us. It
feels good to see them so much”*

*“We’re really feeling the land-based
healing and it’s so powerful. All the
connection and conversations we’ve been
able to have... I feel like I’m coming home
with new friends.”*



SNUNEYMUXW FIRST NATION

August 12 - 16, 2024

WHAT WAS THE PROJECT INITIATIVE?

The focus of the fall Land-Based Healing camp was to bring Kwum Kwum Lelum (House of Courage) Family Members out on the land to learn and build skills traditional to the Coast Salish peoples of Snuneymuxw First Nation. This camp was opened by a local and highly respected Elder, Geraldine Manson, who welcomed us to the territory at the Nanaimo Art Gallery. On this day Family Members had an opportunity to share about their families and ancestry, while guided through an art activity to represent “home”. In the days to follow, Troy Elliott led activities including as fishing on the Nanaimo River, smoking fish, drum making, and story telling. Patrick Aleck joined us on the final evening, to hold a talking and drum circle. Here Family Members were able to share their feelings around recent losses and use their drums to learn the Equality Song. We were also able to enjoy a Cultural Movie Night “drive-in style” by setting up the projector outside under the stars. It was truly a camp full of offerings and focused on connections.



WHO DID IT SERVE?

10 Family Members from Kwum Kwum Lelum attended alongside community members including Elder Geraldine Manson, Troy Elliott, and Patrick Aleck who shared their gifts with the group. The Aboriginal Coalition also brought gifts of medicine and a handshake for Bailey Macabre, who graciously welcomed us to the Nanaimo Art Gallery where she works as the Indigenous Curator.



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WHAT IMPACT DID THE PROJECT HAVE?

This camp was deeply impactful on the spiritual and physical health of all Family Members. After collectively experiencing much grief and loss over the past year, we were able to process much of this together and find new light through laughter and memories. Notably, 9 out of 10 of the Family Members attending this camp chose to abstain from using their ‘Drug of Choice’, resulting in some major life reflections. A talking circle allowed space for everyone to share their experiences after 4 days of sobriety, which most of them had not experienced in 10-20 years. While the Aboriginal Coalition provides low barrier access to culture and is committed to leaving no one behind, it was remarkable to see the group uplift each other in remaining sober and present while away.



FAMILY MEMBER REFLECTIONS

“I haven’t spent this much time around a group of sober people, it must have been 4 years, it feels so good to be in touch with myself.”

“I think I’m ready to stop smoking now.”

“Look I made bracelets; it was my first time! Being here has allowed me to explore my creativity.”

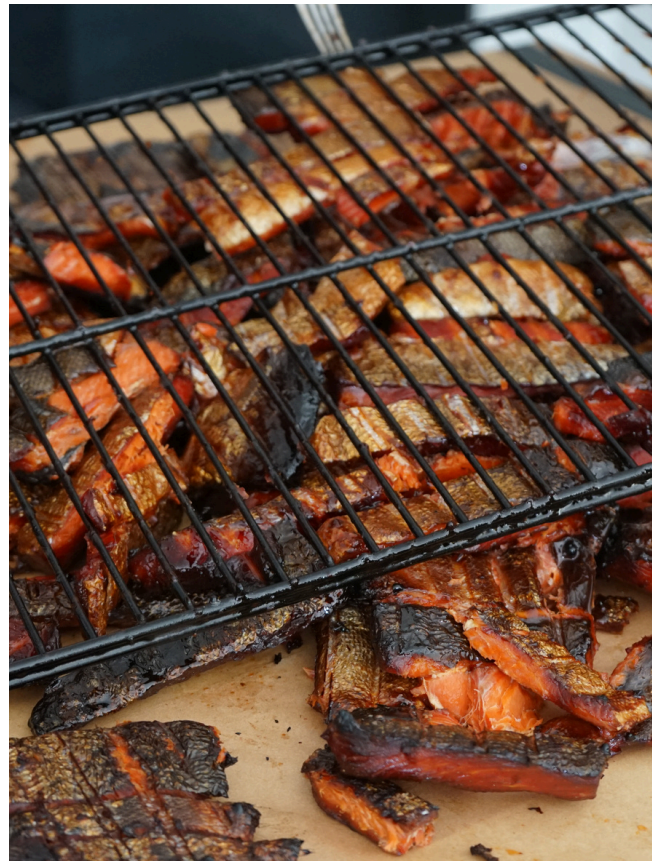
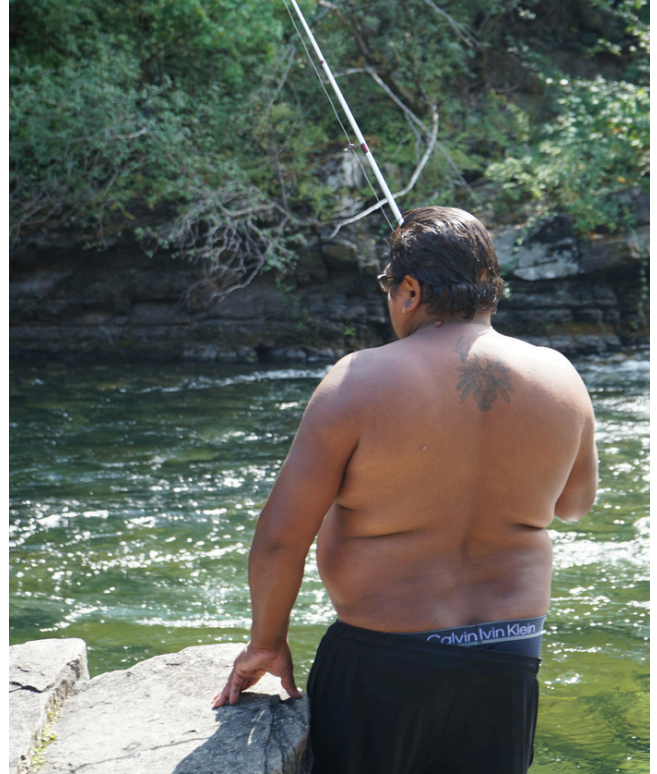
“I like to cut down while I’m here. I feel safe to get the rest I need while still being with everyone.”

“Every culture has a gift for the world.”



WHAT OTHER SUPPORT DID YOU RECEIVE?

The ACEH received support from the Nanaimo Art Gallery, who opened their doors on a day it is usually closed to allow a private tour of the exhibition. This allowed Family Members to interact with the exhibition without the challenges that come along with being in a busy, populated setting. The gallery had an Inuit exhibition on at the time and the Indigenous Curator, Bailey Macabre, arranged two separate art activities with the group. We also received support from the Aboriginal Coalition's IAHRRP program to provide harm reduction for Family Members to safely attend and mitigate health risks from withdrawal.



**COWICHAN TRIBES,
XWULQW'SELU (KOKSILAH)
November 25-29, 2024**

WHAT WAS THE PROJECT INITIATIVE?

The winter Land-Based Camp centred around learning to respectfully process animals, from skinning, to scraping hides, and using processed hides to create drums. With hunting and as outlined in the Decolonized Harm Reduction model, this camp focused on these longstanding practices. Family Members learned how to honour and process a bear; harvest the fat and create bear grease; butcher an elk; scrape the hides to prepare it for buckskin; make elk sausage; make bone broth and traditional bone marrow; carve traditional hide processing tools out of the bone; how to jar meat; and make drums. The Family Members also participated in several traditional healing ceremonies including a Lakota Sweat Lodge and Sound Healing Ceremony led by Hwiemtun (Fred Roland) from Cowichan Tribes.



WHO DID IT SERVE?

8 Family Members supported through the Aboriginal Coalition's Culturally Aligned Integrated Support Program (CAIS) attended this camp. Staff additionally brought Family Members unable to stay overnight for the days, resulting in 2-5 additional Family Members each day. Elders in the community were also supported through the camp, as all the food and crafts made, were gifted to Elders on the Koksilah Reserve.



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WHAT IMPACT DID THE PROJECT HAVE?

Family Members expressed deep appreciation for the strong sense of community formed through these four days, and together were able to give back to Koksilah Elders. This camp nurtured a sense of team work because of the many tasks accomplished and lessons learned together. Mornings were spent sharing reflections and setting intentions, while the evenings were spent around the table laughing about memories made in the busy days. Another meaningful take away is that many Family Members abstained from substance use to participate in the Sweat Lodge, following the protocol to be 4 days leading up to the ceremony. The nurse was able to get prescriptions to subside the cravings for the Family Members that needed this support.



FAMILY MEMBER REFLECTIONS

"My body became so alive, in my soul, I don't want to leave. I just want to keep doing this."

"I haven't done this in a long time, sitting around the table, laughing and connecting with everyone. Can we make plans to do this at home?"

"I learned so much this week, more than I ever thought I would. More than I thought I would get to experience."

"This is what life is all about. I wish my life was like this all the time."

"This is the longest I've gone without drinking or smoking."



WHAT OTHER SUPPORT DID YOU RECEIVE?

We received tremendous support from the community to pull off this busy camp. Local hunters provided the animals for processing, while other cultural facilitators were called on to lead the long list of work and programming completed. We also were called on by the local conservationist team to gather a bear that had been hit by a car, to honour the bear's life with ceremony and to process the parts that could be salvaged. This synchronicity added much learning and value for everyone involved in the camp by interacting with such a sacred and culturally significant animal. Financial support from fundraising efforts also allowed us to provide the Cannabis Substitution program.



TSESHAHT & HUPAČASATH FIRST NATIONS February 10 - 14, 2025

WHAT WAS THE PROJECT INITIATIVE?

Following the Seasonal Land-Based Healing model, this winter camp was offered to the Women of Speqəŋéutxw House, as a women's healing camp. The main focus of this camp was on healing modalities, to assist in some inter-personal relationships within the group, while offering activities that highlight shared interests amongst the Family Members. We worked with several Elders and Healers from the Tseshaht and Hupačasath First Nations to offer a sound healing ceremony, a guided healing circle with oracle cards, and a group love song for the land. Activities such as a visit to the petroglyphs at Kleecoot (Sproat Lake), necklace making with traditional trade beads, blanket design and Valentines cedar weaving were also shared throughout the days at the lodge. We also welcomed Willard Gallic to share first hand experiences with Sasquatch, showing the Family Members real casts of Sasquatch feet and hands, as well as leading a Sasquatch drawing activity done in traditional design. We were also welcomed back into Marilyn Watts' home to learn about the Salmon in the Somass River and learn how to make half-smoked fish, one of her specialties!



WHO DID IT SERVE?

8 Family Members from Speqəŋéutxw House, along with Elders and facilitators from Tseshaht and Hupačasath First Nations; Jan Green, Moy Sutherland, Willard Gallic, Marilyn Watts, Rudy Watts, Linda Thomas and Linda Pelech. We also brought 2 Speqəŋéutxw House staff to create an opportunity to build stronger bonds with the Family Members.



WHAT IMPACT DID THE PROJECT HAVE?

There were multiple activities and moments that had a large impact on the group and individual Family Members that attended the camp. One on one time with the healers and facilitators allowed for individual healing. For example, one Family Member that was deeply struggling with vertigo and shortness of breath received sound healing work that relieved her symptoms and left her feeling grounded and present for days afterwards. The guided healing circle with oracle cards left a great impact, sharing cards like generosity with the Family Members that they put into action immediately, gifting each other the jewelry and art projects to one another.



WHAT OTHER SUPPORT DID YOU RECEIVE?

Support from individual donations and fundraising efforts also made it possible to provide the Indigenous Alcohol Harm Reduction Program (IAHRRP) and Cannabis Substitution Program. This harm reduction support is required for the safety of those attending to be on the land.



FAMILY MEMBER REFLECTIONS

“I feel like I traveled to a different dimension in an amazing way. Never felt like that before”

“I like that we’re all here together, but on our own journey”

“I just had the best sleep and rest. My body feels calm. I didn’t realize how much I needed that.”

“It’s good medicine sitting around the table and eating this food. I haven’t eaten this well in a long time.”

“I just love being out here with you girls. I’m really feeling the connections and growing as a family”

“This is the second thing I’ve made on this trip! Can’t wait to wear my necklace when I get home”

“My spirit has been helped to be strengthened”



YOUTH CAMP DAY EVENTS

While working with local Elders and Knowledge Keepers from the Cowichan Tribes, the ACEH had planned a Youth LBHC to take place over March 25-28. Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances and interpersonal relationship conflicts, we had to cancel the camp. As a result, we decided to continue some of the day programs to honour the healing that the land provides and make sure that this programming was still accessible to the Youth.

MEDICINE MAKING WORKSHOP MARCH 20TH WITH DELLA SYLVESTER RICE

The youth attended a medicine making workshop with Della Sylvester Rice at the Esquimalt Pavilion to learn about Native Medicine practices from home grown medicine harvested at our ACEH Culturally Supportive Housing sites, as well as medicine harvested from the land. Della guided the youth in a medicinal salve making workshop, where all involved were able to go home with a jar of the homemade salve. Tea blends to help support immune health, lung health and overall health were also made, as well as sleeping pillows filled with lavender, KEXMIN and lemon balm.



DRUM MAKING WORKSHOP MARCH 26TH WITH HWIEMTUN

The youth were welcomed by Hwiemtun at the Sacred Cedar Centre on Koksilah Reserve to partake in a drum making workshop, where the traditional teachings of drum making were passed along. Initially this was meant to be a day out on the water, learning to paddle a canoe, but the weather took a turn. This was many of the Youth's first time making a drum and the lesson of gifting your first drum was shared. We were able to host both the Youth living at our Culturally Supportive Housing, as well as the Youth from our outreach cohort.



Seasonal Land-Based Healing Model

Integrating Healing Daily, Urban & Away from Home



The Seasonal Land-Based Healing model, featured in the Aboriginal Coalition’s Decolonized Harm Reduction Framework, is informed its Elders and Knowledge Keepers advisory; representing the 3 Tribal Groups on the Island and Métis Nation BC. Western medical supports identified by the Indigenous Street Family are provided alongside seasonal practice and ceremony, to provide pathways to healing and recovery.

Integrating Healing Daily, Urban & Away from Home

Through the 5-year process of developing Land-Based Healing, Family Members have consistently emphasized importance of regular access to cultural events, to support the continuation of their healing journeys once returning from Land-Based Healing camps. In response to this feedback, the Land-Based Healing team organizes cultural events as often as possible, and in accordance with seasonal teachings. These cultural events are offered to all of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples supported by the Aboriginal Coalition across the housing continuum. This includes the Indigenous Street Family, Family Members at Kwum Kwum Lelum (House of Courage), Speqəŋéútxw (House of Flowers), Xexe Pahlatsis Lelum (Sacred Cradle House), Youth, the Culturally Aligned Integrated Support Program (CAIS), and part of the YEK,ÁUTW (Place of Hope) Justice program.

These events offer consistent opportunities for Family Members to step out of the urban environment to (re)ground themselves on the land and in community. Family Members are able to learn and showcase artistic skills including painting, carving, and designing as well as skill building around animal processing, medicine making, and traditional knowledge. Facilitators and Elders are primarily from the local Coast Salish Nations. In alignment with the Decolonized Harm Reduction Framework, all garden programming, harvests, forages, and preparations are used/distributed for winter ceremony. This include berries preserved, medicine grown, tools made, and animals processed.

DRUM MAKING WORKSHOP

Date: April 18 **Family Members:** 4

Cohort: Speqəŋéútxw

Facilitator: Hwiemtun

Territory: Koksilah Reserve (Cowichan)

DRUM PAINTING WORKSHOP

Date: May 2 **Family Members:** 5

Cohort: Speqəŋéútxw

Facilitator: Hwiemtun

Territory: Koksilah Reserve (Cowichan)



SALISH SEA CENTRE & CRAB TRAPPING

Date: May 23 **Family Members:** 7

Facilitator: Charlene George

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum & Speqəŋéutxw

Territory: ƳSÁNEĆ & Ləkʷəŋən



FISHING AT SPECTACLE LAKE

Date: May 30 **Family Members:** 8

Facilitator: Xavier Jack

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum & CAIS

Territory: ƳSÁNEĆ, Malahat & Quw'ustun



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SALMONBERRY HARVESTING AT GOLDSTREAM

Date: June 12 **Family Members:** 7
Facilitator: Marylin Olsen-Page
Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum & Speqəŋéútxw
Territory: ƱSÁNEĆ, Malahat & Ləkʷəŋən



SALMONBERRY AND CEDAR BARK HARVESTING AT PKOLS

Date: June 13 **Family Members:** 16
Facilitator: Charlene George
Cohort: Indigenous Street Family, CAIS & BC First Nation Justice Council Members
Territory: ƱSÁNEĆ & Ləkʷəŋən



DRUM MAKING WORKSHOP

Date: June 26 **Family Members:** 12
Facilitator: Wade Charlie
Cohort: Indigenous Street Family
Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

Date: June 21 **Family Members:** 13
Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum & Speqəŋéutxw
CAIS & Justice
Territory: W̱SÁNEĆ & Ləkʷəŋən



CELEBRATION OF LIFE

A Celebration of Life was held to honour nine Family Members from Kwum Kwum Lelum who have left us, offering a day for community to come together to share memories, reflections and well wishes for our loved ones moving on to their next journey. Community partners from UVIC, Cool Aid Society, SOLID, PEERS and many others were able to attend and pay their respects. A traditional lunch was provided for the community, followed by a slideshow presentation filled with memories of the Family Members that have passed. Drummers and singers from the 3 Tribal Regions joined to ensure there was representation for all those we were celebrating.

Date: June 28 **Family Members:** 38+
Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum & Speqəŋéutxw,
Indigenous Street Family, Community Partners
Territory: Ləkʷəŋən

RATTLE MAKING WORKSHOP

Date: June 27 **Family Members:** 6
Facilitator: Wade Charlie
Cohort: Speqəŋéutxw
Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



SWEAT LODGE

Date: July 3 **Family Members:** 2
Facilitator: Hwiemtun
Cohort: Justice
Territory: Koksilah Reserve (Cowichan)



YOUTH CANOE

Date: July 4 **Family Members:** 7
Facilitator: Hwiemtun
Cohort: Youth
Territory: Cowichan



KEXMIN HARVEST

Date: July 24 **Family Members:** 3
Facilitator: Marilyn Olsen-Page
Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum
Territory: MEE-qan (Beacon Hill Park)



POST CAMP HEALING CIRCLE AT THETIS LAKE

Date: July 26 **Family Members:** 7
Cohort: Speqəŋéutxw
Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



POST CAMP HEALING CIRCLE AT HOC

Date: August 22 **Family Members:** 5
Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum
Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



BLACKBERRY PICKING AT ELK LAKE

Date: August 23 **Family Members:** 1
Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum
Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



BLACKBERRY PICKING AT ISLAND VIEW BEACH

Date: August 27 **Family Members:** 7
Facilitator: Lillian Underwood
Cohort: Speqəŋéutxw & CAIS
Territory: Tsawout Reserve & Ləkʷəŋən



MALAHAT SKY WALK

Date: September 5 **Family Members:** 10
Facilitator: Davis Henderson
Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum & Speqəŋéutxw
Territory: Malahat & Ləkʷəŋən



FISH SMOKING WORKSHOP

This was our second year in a row working with Anette Dyck to learn how to smoke Sockeye, working on the Songhees Reservation where many of the Family Members grew up. The LBH team's goal is to continue growing these relationships year after year, bringing funding straight to the Community members and Nations that we're working with.

Date: September 9 **Family Members:** 7

Facilitator: Anette Dyck

Cohort: Speqəŋéutxw

Territory: Songhees Reserve



NEIGHBOURHOOD CRAB BOIL

As part of its commitment to being a good neighbour, the Aboriginal Coalition actively seeks to build relationships and a sense of belonging with neighbours of our Culturally Supportive Houses. On this occasion, a crab boil was hosted to provide an opportunity for Vic West neighbours to spend time on the land with Family Members living at Kwum Kwum Lelum. 3 neighbours joined us at the Tsawout Spit to enjoy some food, stories and laughter together.

Date: September 13 **Family Members:** 11

Facilitator: Marilyn Olsen-Page and Aaron Sam

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum & Speqəŋéutxw

Territory: Tsawout Reserve



JAM MAKING WORKSHOP

With the increased participation in the Land-Based Healing programming, we were able to harvest more berries than last year, resulting in over 100 jars of jam for community!

Date: September 17 **Family Members:** 10

Facilitator: Lillian Underwood

Cohort: Speqəŋéutxw & CAIS

Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



SALMON JARRING WORKSHOP

Date: September 24 **Family Members:** 9

Facilitator: Aunty Glo (Gloria Roze)

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum & Speqəŋéutxw

Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



REGALIA FASHION SHOW

Date: October 4 **Family Members:** 8

Facilitator: Aunty Glo (Gloria Roze)

Cohort: Speqəŋéutxw

Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



SPEARFISHING

Date: October 17 **Family Members:** 8

Facilitator: Hwiemtun

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum, Speqəŋéutxw & CAIS

Territory: Koksilah Reserve



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MEDICINE MAKING WORKSHOP

Date: October 24 **Family Members:** 8

Facilitator: Della Sylvester-Rice

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum, Speqəŋéútxw & CAIS

Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



TEA MAKING WORKSHOP

Date: November 14 **Family Members:** 6

Facilitator: Della Sylvester-Rice

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum & Speqəŋéútxw

Territory: Quamichan Reserve



RIBBON SKIRT MAKING WORKSHOP SERIES

This series of 4 workshops, led by Crystal Brune from Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, provided an opportunity for learning across all of the Aboriginal Coalition's programs. Teachings were shared around the origins of Ribbon Skirts, protocol, and tradition to offer deeper meaning behind the regalia being created. These skirts were worn by Family Members in the sweat lodges later taking place on November 27th and January 15th.

Date: November 19, December 3, December 10, December 19

Family Members: 8-12 per session (41 total)

Facilitator: Crystal Brune

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum, Speqəŋéutxw & Xexe Pahlatsis Lelum

Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



WREATH HARVESTING

Date: December 4 **Family Members:** 4

Facilitator: Marilyn Olsen-Page

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum, Speqəŋéutxw

Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP

Date: December 6 **Family Members:** 9

Facilitator: Lillian Underwood

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum, Speqəŋéutxw & CAIS

Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



DEER PROCESSING

This is the second year we have worked with local hunter, Sandy Morris Jr. and his wife, Charity Morris, for deer processing at Kwum Kwum Lelum and Speqəŋéútxw . This was a large community event, where the neighbours were invited to join the learning for the day. There were 2 neighbours that attended the workshop, as well as 2 staff members from Vic West Community Association. We were able to start working on the hide tanning process, by using the bone tools made at the fall camp to start scraping the deer hide.

Date: December 13 **Family Members:** 10

Facilitator: Sandy & Charity Morris

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum, Speqəŋéútxw

Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



HIDE TANNING WORKSHOP SERIES

From December to February, the Aboriginal Coalition has partnered with local business Fern + Roe and our Elder in Residence, Lillian Underwood, to host a series of hide tanning workshops. We are working with the hides from the 4 animals processed this year to make soft buckskin from the deer and raw hide from the elk. This process takes us through the fleshing, scraping, graining, stretching, smoking and softening of the hides. All finished materials will be used in medicine bag making workshops and “Parfleche” container making workshops from the raw hide.

Date: December 17, January 7, January 14, January 24, January 31, February 18, February 25

Family Members: 10

Facilitator: Lillian Underwood and Fern + Roe

Cohort: Kwum Kwum Lelum, Speqəŋéutxw

Territory: Ləkʷəŋən



HOUSE GARDENS

A regular part of integrating healing into daily life for the Aboriginal Coalition, is through its plant and native medicine gardens. All ACEH Culturally Supportive Housing sites now have abundant gardens as part of the outdoor space, as a way to provide daily connection to land and plant relatives. Programming includes tending, nurturing, harvesting, processing, and gifting - taking the forms of food, medicine bundles, salves, and teas. The garden programming stretches across Kwum Kwum Lelum, Speqəŋéutxw and our new Youth House that opened this year. With the increased production from the gardens, the ACEH has been able to supply all the medicine for the workshops this year and provide food baskets to neighbours in the community. We've also been able to make a community garden outside Kwum Kwum Lelum with a variety of native berry species for the whole community to benefit from.

In addition to this, the ACEH has been asked to assist with local restoration projects, as part of this continued garden and stewardship program. This spring, the land based program will be partnering with the Vic West Community Association to help with a “Camas Re-Homing” project for Banfield Park, as well as Anneth Farm for a “Garry Oak Re-Wilding” project where Family Members will work on restoring a Garry Oak meadow to its former glory.



COMMUNITY MURAL DEVELOPMENT

Another highlight this year, was a Mural Project completed by Family Members for the nearby Vic West Community Centre. This project was a powerful journey of love, healing, and teamwork. This meaningful collaboration between the Vic West Community Association (VWCA) and the Family Members at Kwum Kwum Lelum brought community members together to create something truly special. The outdoor murals, *Emergence of Reconciliation*, and the indoor piece, *Cycle of Great Spirit and Mother Earth*, now stand as vibrant symbols of connection, resilience, and shared purpose. These works reflect the strength of community coming together to honour stories, foster healing, and celebrate cultural expression. This project would not have been possible without the incredible partnership with the VWCA and the many hands and hearts that contributed along the way. We are deeply grateful for the dedication of everyone involved, whose efforts have left a lasting impact on the community. The Mural Project was carried out in honour of Desmond Smith, whose memory inspires and guides this important work.



Project Breakdown:

- VWCA provided a donation of \$1600 to fund stipends for Family Members participating in the mural project, as well as provided all materials.
- FNHA funds were used towards the food, beverages and additional supplies for this community centered project.
- 15 workshops were held from May 31 - November 10, 2024 to complete the murals.
- The opening ceremony was held for the Community and artists on November 15th.



QUARTERLY CULTURAL TRAINING

COMPLETED TRAINING

QUARTER 1:

Cultural training was led by Aunty Glo, facilitating a talking circle with new staff and holding space for the recent loss of a Family Member. Discussions around cultural protocol around death as well as staff wellness during loss were shared in the circle.

QUARTER 2:

Cultural training was led by Della Sylvester Rice, a highly respected medicine woman from Cowichan Tribes. Della shared with new staff members about 16 different traditional medicine plants and participants were able to learn how to make salves and tea blends from the medicine grown in the gardens.

QUARTER 3:

Cultural training led by Lillian Underwood at W̱MÍYEFEN Nature Sanctuary on W̱SÁNEĆ territory. Lillian taught the group how to make jerky out of elk, salmon and halibut. The new staff also received a teaching on how to make beaded earrings with Dentalium shells.



QUARTERLY CULTURAL TRAINING

COMPLETED TRAINING

QUARTER 1:

MAY 16TH

15 STAFF ATTENDED

QUARTER 2:

SEPTEMBER 27TH

26 STAFF ATTENDED

QUARTER 3:

DECEMBER 20TH

21 STAFF ATTENDED

QUARTER 4:

MARCH 14TH

15 STAFF ATTENDED

For the final staff training of the year, we brought new staff together with the guidance of Charlene George, to offer a variety of different Cultural teachings and activities. The day was started off by an introduction circle and history of W̱MÍYEFEN, formerly known as Mary Lake Nature Sanctuary. Staff were brought on a medicine plant walk throughout the forest, worked with Devil's Club to make beads, used traditional Native art design to make bookmarks and finally made a medicinal bear fat/deer fat ointment with their choice of essential oil. Cultural lessons and teachings were shared with each offering and allowed an opportunity to learn more about the medicine and teachings our plant and animal relatives bring.



CONTACT INFORMATION



“Our way is to care for all our people, from the youngest to the oldest. We are all one. Some of our people living away from home are suffering, isolated, and homeless. We stand together to end homelessness.”

CONTACT

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