



Kw'umut Lelum
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Children. Culture. Community.



2017/2018 Annual Report

Governance

Children. Culture. Community.

Purpose

It is the purpose of Kw'umut Lelum Child and Family Services' Board of Directors to strive for excellence in the governance of the agency, with deep respect for our Snuw'uyulh and the sacredness of our Nations. There is a commitment to the values of accountability, transparency, fairness, timeliness, and integrity.

Objectives

- > Seek, obtain and manage funding in order to meet the needs of children and families.
- > Recognize the diversity of our member nations and adhere to the culturally appropriate approaches pertinent to each of the respective communities
- > Strive to ensure that the children of our communities are safe and protected
- > Strive to ensure that all our children are returned to the care of their Nation

Principles

- > The mandate for our work comes from our Member Nations
- > Our children's best interest will be the most important consideration in all our decisions
- > Family and community are essential to our children
- > We will strive to maintain the best practice in keeping with our respect for our Member Nations in the care of our children
- > Striving for the safety and well being of our children though the provision of services using least intrusive measures
- > Comply with all applicable legislation, but recognize these are the minimum standards of diligence



Member Nations



Halalt First Nation

Chief James (Bert) Thomas
7973 Chemainus Road
Chemainus, BC
Phone: (250) 246-4736



Lake Cowichan First Nation

Chief Georgina Livingstone
313B Deer Road, PO Box 159
Lake Cowichan, BC
Phone: (250) 749-3301



Lyackson First Nation

Chief Rick Thomas
7973A Chemainus Road
Chemainus, BC
Phone: (250) 246-5019



Málexel Nation (Malahat)

Chief Caroline Harry
110 Thunder Rd,
Mill Bay, BC
Phone: (250) 743-3231



Penelakut Tribe

Chief Joan (Ozzy) Brown
PO Box 360
Chemainus, BC
Phone (250) 246-2321



Qualicum First Nation

Chief Michael Recalma
5850 River Road
Qualicum Beach, BC
Phone: (250) 757-9337



Snaw-Naw-As First Nation (Nanoose)

Chief Gordon Edwards
209 Mallard Way
Lantzville, BC
Phone: (250) 390-3661



Snuneymuxw First Nation

Chief Mike Wyse
668 Centre St
Nanaimo, B.C.
Phone: (250) 740-2300



Stz' uminus First Nation (Chemainus)

Chief John Elliott
12611A Trans Canada Highway,
Ladysmith, BC
(250) 245-7155

Message from the President

'Uy skweyul Siem. My name is Qwul'sih'yah'maht (Robina Thomas) and I am a member of Lyackson First Nation, but also have Snuneymuxw roots through my late mother Doris Josephson (nee Prest) and my late grandmother Lavina Prest (nee Wyse) and Sto:lo roots through my late grandfather Charles Prest.

It is an honour to represent the Board of Directors for Kw'umut Lelum Child and Family Services. Over the years we have grown and each year we have an opportunity to stop and reflect on the past year. This year, we are back into our newly restored and renovated building. If you have not had an opportunity, I encourage you to stop by and visit us, it is beautiful. I am reminded of the day the building opened. On that day, Chief Doug White Jr. challenged us to provide services to the Indigenous children in the best way humanly possible. He said, in the years to come, we need to be able to look at every child that was in the care of Kw'umut Lelum straight in the eyes and let them know that we did absolutely everything possible for them so that they could retain their Hwulmuhw ways of knowing and being and have a successful fulfilled life.

Our programs continue to expand to ensure we reach into our communities and offer the services that will support all families to be able to keep their children safely at home. Since we were given jurisdiction to provide the full scope of child protective services very few children ever leave their communities. We continue to offer programs in our mini Long House. We offer culture camp, Hope and Health Soccer Camp, Tribal Journeys, and this past year, we even contracted with Luke Marston to build our own canoe.

In the coming year, we are striving to offer services to children from our nine-member Nations wherever they reside. We believe this is our right, and all of our children deserve the best care they can possible receive. Children only have one childhood and we are committed to supporting them the best we can.

Our agency could not run without the dedication and commitment of many, or as the saying goes, 'It takes a community to raise a child.' I will take this time to raise my hands and acknowledge everyone who has contributed to the success of Kw'umut lelum. Huy tseep q'u:

- > To the Elders, the wise ones, the knowledge keepers – for your guidance, direction and teachings.
- > To the nine member nations for the support you have given Kw'umut Lelum, because your devoted support has allowed our organization to flourish.
- > To all of the caretakers who support the children.
- > To all the board members, past and present, for their passion and commitment to the children in care – your guidance, direction and leadership has been invaluable.
- > And lastly, to all of the staff for your dedication to children, youth and families – you make this organization what it is – Strong Roots, Strong Families.

Huy tseep q'u Siem
Qwul'sih'yah'maht – Robina Thomas



Board of Directors



Dr Robina Thomas *President*
Lyackson First Nation



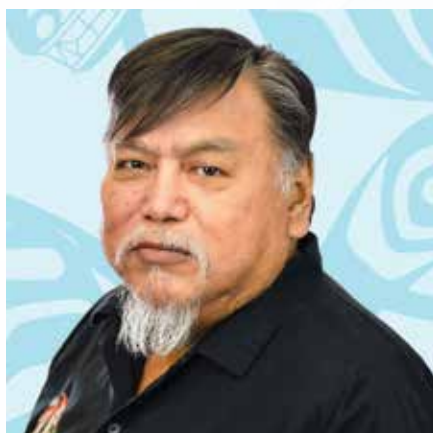
Mike Wyse *Vice-President*
Snuneymuwx First Nation



Aaron Hamilton *Secretary*
Lake Cowichan First Nation



Brent Edwards *Treasurer*
Snaw-Naw-As First Nation



Dan Norris
Halalt First Nation



Vince Harry
Malahat First Nation



Donna Kennedy
Qualicum First Nation



John Elliott
Stz'uminus First Nation



Joan Brown
Penelakut First Nation

Message from the Executive Director

Hello, my name is Sqwulutsutun, I come from the Wyse family of Snuneymuxw First Nation. My English name is William Yoachim. As the Executive Director of Kw'umut Lelum, I am honoured to have worked for children and families in our nine member Nations since 2008.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their support and confidence as their Executive Director. Their strong leadership and guidance has shaped Kw'umut Lelum and its services to match the expectations of the Nations we serve. We raise our hands to our Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, and leaders for their wisdom that keeps us rooted in Snuw'e'yulh; and to the caregivers and extended families for opening their hearts and homes; and to our partners, friends and supporters who have made outstanding contributions to the well-being of our children and youth.

Since 1996 when nine member Nations came together with one vision to create Kw'umut Lelum Child and Family Services, it has undergone many changes and seen many successes. In 2014, Kw'umut Lelum achieved full delegation status to provide Child Protection, Guardianship and Voluntary Services. As a federally-recognized First Nations agency, we are proud to demonstrate our inherent right to govern and manage the child welfare needs of our communities and to provide for the health and well-being of vulnerable children and youth.

The past year has been a busy and productive year for Kw'umut Lelum. It has been a year of accomplishments, challenges, progressive development and cultural growth. We have made strides in prevention, returning children to the care of family and securing out-of-care placements. We have supported youth in care to continue developing themselves in higher education. We have provided opportunities for our children and youth to connect with their identity as Aboriginal People.

One of the most significant accomplishments this year is the work on a Permanency Project to improve rates of permanency planning for our children and youth in care. We focused on strengthening culturally-based practices to reduce the number of children in care and reconnect them with their family and extended family to bring them home.

As we move forward, it is important to remember the founders who initiated the dialogue for the development of a Coast Salish child welfare agency over 20 years ago. We acknowledge the former staff and honoured board members for their contributions to the development of Kw'umut Lelum. We also thank the Elders and community members who volunteer and support our children and families.

I raise my hands and give special recognition to our dedicated employees who care so passionately about our children, and make it possible for families to become stronger. I believe the vision and passion of our founders – to restore our connections with our children and to build on our traditional teachings to foster healing and growth – are becoming a reality. I would like to encourage everyone to continue to work together for the common purpose of creating a better life for our children and our Nations' future.

Huy ch' qa
Sqwulutsutun – William Yoachim





Living Our Mission

Programs and Services

Kw'umut Lelum, rooted in Snuw'uy'ulh, is directly mandated by member nations to safeguard the inherent right of our children to be protected from neglect and abuse, to thrive in a safe and healthy environment and strengthen cultural identities and family unity.

We operate as a nutsamaat shqaluwun (people working together with one mind) guided by the teachings of our ancestors.

While respecting Coast Salish practices and traditions, Kw'umut Lelum offers services and programs that provide support and training to our nine member Nations.

Child Safety and Collaborative Planning

Collaborative Planning can include both Family Group Conferencing or Traditional Decision Making Process for children and/or youth who have come to the attention of Child Protection.

The process is inclusive of the child's immediate family, extended family and members of the child's community to help keep our children safe at home.

The parties come together to develop a plan for the child(ren). The process promotes cooperative planning and decision-making and assists in building a family's support network.

- > In 2017, KL was able to prevent 40 kids from coming into care, and reunited 19 children with their families. We were able to secure 21 out of care placements for at risk children last year alone as well – meaning our children are able to stay in their home communities, with the least amount of disruption to their lives as possible.

Guardianship Services

> Children in Care caseload has declined slightly overall, but remained fairly consistent over the reporting period. Our number of children in out of care placements (placed with family members) has tripled in the last quarter. This means that more children are being prevented from coming into care by finding safe homes with family.

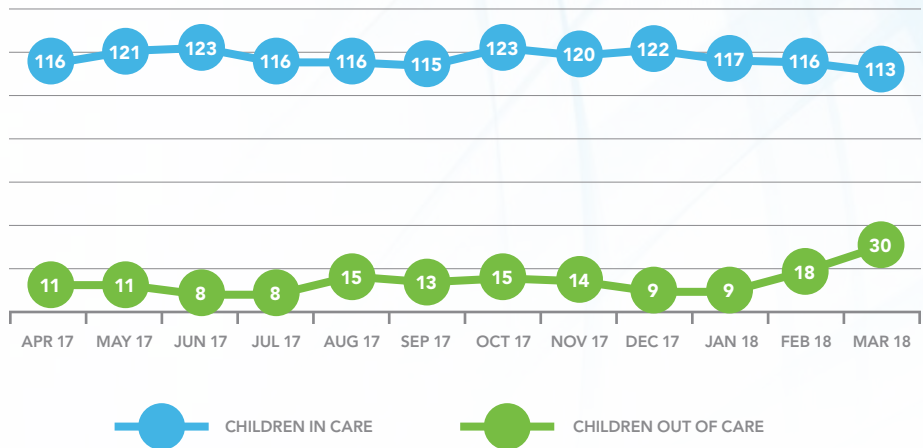
> All of our children in care receive referrals to our Cultural Permanency Program, and 98% of them have a documented plan for after care. Our plans focus on keeping them with family through reunification with parents, transfers of custody or placements with extended family, or being placed within their aboriginal community.

> Children in Care have access to an education counsellor who helps create education plans to keep kids in school and help them graduate or even pursue post-secondary education.

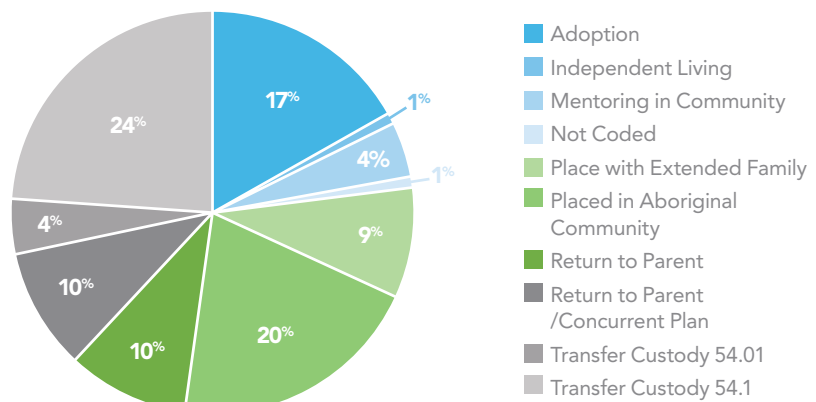
Guardianship of our children and youth involves their physical care and decision-making responsibility concerning such areas as residential care placement, education, health and emotional and behavioral development.

Working closely with caregivers and their support system, our social workers and cultural workers develop a cultural plan for our children and youth that is central to their care and informs ALL decision making.

CHILD SERVICES CASELOAD



PERMANENCY PLANS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE



Programs and Services – continued

4 Seasons Early Years

4 Season Early Years (4SEY) is an innovative program bringing together key partners with the communities they serve to focus on enhancing early childhood development, school readiness and overall family health and wellness for First Nations preschool children (birth to six years old) on reserve. 4SEY provides proven early intervention strategies so that First Nations children develop a positive sense of themselves, a desire for learning, and successes to build upon and carry them into adulthood. Weekly Parenting and Play groups are held in Snaw-Naw-As, Stz'uminus, Penelakut, Snuneymuxw and Halalt.

- > New collaboration with “Bonds to Literacy” Program introduced using Indigenous resources/stories
- > Outreach (one-on-one service with families) ramping up with 6 referrals made in last quarter
- > We served more than 50 families and 75 children across our member nations in 2017
- > 2018 funding grant (\$5000) from Victoria Foundation is earmarked to expand programming



Hope and Health 2017

Wellness Supports

KL is committed to providing wrap-around collaborative wellness services including trauma/addictions counselling for families, children, youth, and collaborative supports for pre- and post-natal health. The last quarter saw the development of a new partnership with VIU’s Nursing program: practicum students to provide health outreach to families through 4SEY beginning in 2018.

- > In 2017, the team helped 43 children to connect with their culture for the first time (organizing visits to family or traditional territory for instance)
- > The program offered 40 cultural training events in which more than 120 people participated.
- > In 2017 CPP staff completed more than 100 care plans and genealogies (some of which were more than 20 pages long) to support family finding and cultural connections for children in care.

Cultural Permanency

The Cultural Permanency Program (CPP) facilitates the transition of Aboriginal children currently in care, or those at risk of coming into care, to placements with their relatives, community members or those with whom they have a cultural connection. Ensuring culturally-appropriate permanency for children in care, the program also helps connect children to their culture, and provides cultural training opportunities for children and families.



Kw'umut Lelum Office Post Fire

- > More than 70 active caregivers and extended family members (on and off-reserve) and 2 group homes provide culturally-responsive parenting to children who are unable to live at home with their parents.

Le'lumilh Services

Caring for our children is paramount to Kw'umut Lelum as a whole and to persons who open their heart and home. The Le'lumilh Program provides training and support to persons interesting in becoming caregivers to children or youth who are, for various reasons, unable to remain at home.

Programs and Services – continued

4 Seasons Cultural Program

The Four Seasons Cultural Program was born from an identified need for our youth in care to feel a sense of belonging and ownership of their inherent birth rights. 4S creates programming in a more sustainable, fluid way that is tied to each child’s plan of care, and immersed in all determinants of life.

- > Bi-weekly language classes, weekly drumming circles, and a new storytelling program – open to all families served by KL
- > Annual special programs include Tribal Journey, Hope and Health (more than 320 registrants in 2017 – 200 of those from our member nations), and Cultural Camp.
- > New this year is Slhexun’s tthu Xpey’ (Medicine of the Cedar) with internationally-renowned carver Luke Marston working with our children to carve an ocean-going canoe for Tribal Journey
- > KL organized a homecoming for Snuneymuxw children and youth to welcome them back to the care of their community.



Slhexun’s tthu Xpey’ (Medicine of the Cedar)

Transitions from Care

No child “ages out” of the Kw’umut Lelum family; we offer transitional supports to help keep them connected to their community, to find housing, employment and healthy interpersonal relationships. 2017 saw the planning and development of our new Step Up program, being implemented in 2018, to offer ongoing support to youth ages 19-24.

Highlights 2017 /2018

KL Moves home in January

After a fire in our Center Street offices required us to move all of our staff and services to Stz'uminus, Kwumut Lelum was finally able to move back into our newly expanded and beautifully restored building in January 2018.

Our family is grateful to Nanaimo Fire Services for keeping us safe, all of our colleagues at the Ministry of Child and Family Development who offered us emergency workspace, and to Stz'uminus Nation for their warm welcome and temporary office space. We will continue to have a satellite office at our Jones Road location (the old Stz'uminus School) that will house our Cultural and 4 Seasons Early Years teams.

Healing through art and discussion

In January, Kw'umut Lelum hosted "šxw?amət (home)", an audience interactive play on Reconciliation at the Snuneymuxw Recreation & Wellness Centre.

Created and performed by a mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous cast, šxw?amət (home) weaves together stories based on real life, challenging us to practice reconciliation. In Forum Theatre, the play shows through once and then begins again, with audience members able to intervene and come onto the stage in the second round, to take on the role of a character and try to offer solutions to the real-life problems presented on the stage.

Holiday Party in December

The KL Children's Holiday party welcomed 280 people (children, families, caregivers and staff) to the BC Forest Discovery Centre in Duncan on December 14th.

We all enjoyed riding "The Christmas Express" train, dancing, getting our hair & faces glittered at the Sparkle Station, making Christmas Snow Globe ornaments, decorating organic Gingerbread cookies and eating hot dogs and popcorn. And of course, children got to have their pictures taken with Santa.

Collaboration Increases our Reach

In connection with the Greater Nanaimo Early Years Partnership, KL participated in a series of four Healthy Start Fairs over the course of the year. These free drop in events for parents and caregivers of children 6 and under feature games, snacks, giveaways, activities and stories, along with opportunities for vision screening and immunizations. Our 4 Seasons Early Years team was on hand to offer information about our parenting and play groups, as well as to promote Coast Salish Literacy Kits developed by KL and available through the Vancouver Island Regional Library.

Foster Parent Appreciation Month

Kw'umut Lelum took the opportunity to honour our caregivers with an evening of celebration on October 18th. Despite the stormy weather, we had a wonderful turnout at the Cavallotti Lodge in Nanaimo. Along with dinner and entertainment, our Kw'umut Lelum Caregivers were honoured with a blanketing ceremony and a brushing off ceremony.

Highlights 2017 /2018 – continued

Hope and Health 2017 Draws Huge Attendance

The 6th annual Hope and Health event in Nanaimo welcomed nearly 400 children and 60 volunteers to Merle Logan Turf Field for a day of skills-building with VIU and Vancouver White Caps FC players and coaches. It was one of the largest events to date! More than just an event, Hope and Health is a movement to inspire hope, as well as improve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health and life conditions for Aboriginal children and youth.



Communities Gather for Medicine of the Cedar

On a scorching hot day at the end of August, Kw'umut Lelum brought together elders, community leaders, children and youth to launch an innovative new program.

Slhexun's tthu Xpey' (Medicine of the Cedar) is a youth leadership development project rooted in Coast Salish teachings and traditions and focused on the creation and journey of a cedar canoe for Kwumut Lelum's Tribal Journeys ahead.

Over the next year, KL youth, led by their elders, and with the expertise of renowned Coast Salish artist Luke Marston are learning to carve a traditional ocean-going canoe from a cedar log. The program will also incorporate key lessons about traditional values, self-care and self-identity.

Luke Marston is a carver whose works have been displayed in Thunderbird Park in Victoria; he also created a medicine box that travelled across Canada with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He will be helping the group to coax the canoe out of the cedar.

The canoe, once it is finished, will be used by KL's canoe family to travel the ocean as part of the annual Tribal Journey in 2018.



Tribal Journey 2017

Tribal Canoe Journeys is a celebrated annual event for the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast. These are a sequence of canoe journeys taken up by canoe families, nations, and groups from the coast of Alaska, British Columbia, and Washington state.

Kw'umut Lelum has been part of the journey since 2009, using a canoe carved by Noel Brown and KL youth from a cedar log that was donated by Kevin Frenchie in 2008.

This year, the KL Canoe family, made up of children and youth in care, as well as KL staff, elders and chaperones paddled from Dididaht around the coast of Vancouver Island to their final destination in Campbell River.

The Tribal Journey is more than a canoe trip. It is an opportunity for youth in care to connect with each other and with their culture. It is a welcome chance to build a stronger sense of self, to heal, to learn, and to have fun. For the 12 youth who participated this year, the journey was challenging, and affirmative.



Our Vision For the Future

- > Kw'umut Lelum is holding onto the dream for our children.
- > We will lift them up so they know how much we value and cherish them.
- > We will strive to ensure all our children have opportunities to know who they are, and are **PROUD** to be Xwulmuxw Mustimuxw!
- > We will continue our work with youth, rooted in the traditional teachings and following the Coast Salish Way.
- > We will be a rock of support for all our families in need and walk beside them on their journey.
- > We will persevere in creating a Cultural Permanency Planning team to bring our kids home for good.
- > And when we have done our work and reached our goals,
- > We can envision a world where there is no need for child welfare in our Nations.

“ All of us – whether from First Nations, business, industry or government – are being required to make critical decisions that will affect not only the generation of today, but also the children of our children. We will have to take the long view as we make resolutions, judgments and settlements in the days ahead... we must be led by the conviction that better understanding and partnerships will only come about if we realize that we are all in this together.” – Chief Viola Wyse

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Kw'umut Lelum
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

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