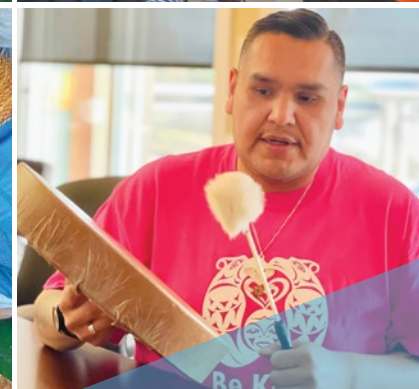




Kw'umut Lelum

Children. Culture. Community.



Governance

Children. Culture. Community.

Purpose

It is the purpose of Kw'umut Lelum's Board of Directors to govern the agency, driven by our Member Nation's need and aspirations and rooted in our sacred Snuw'uyulh. We hold an unwavering commitment to the values of honouring Indigenous natural laws and ways of being, inclusiveness, independence and innovation. Above everything, we work as one heart, one mind to ensure that every child has a childhood.

Objectives

- > Operate under a Member Nation-driven governance and village of care model focused on prevention and rooted in our Snuw'uyulh.
- > In partnership with our Member nations, ensure that our children prosper in their childhood; work as one heart, one mind to keep our children safe and living within their family and kinship system.
- > Maximize available funding to meet the desired outcomes and aspirations of the Member Nations.
- > Continue to innovate, expand programming into prevention service and secure additional funding sources through independence.

Principles

- > Our Member Nations guide, drive, and direct the way we take care of our children, families and communities
- > Family, community and culture are essential to our children's health and well-being, and our children are essential to the health and well-being of our communities.
- > Our children's well-being is the most important consideration in our decisions; a child's job is to eat, sleep, play.
- > Safety and well-being of our children is maintained using the most collaborative, culturally appropriate, family-inclusive decision-making.
- > Maintaining best practices congruent with each respective Member Nation.
- > We honour natural Indigenous laws
- > One heart, one mind, rooted in snuw'uyulh

Member Nations



Halalt First Nation

Chief James (Bert) Thomas
7973 Chemainus Road
Chemainus, BC V0R 1K5
Phone: (250) 246-4736



Lyackson First Nation

Chief Rick Thomas
7973A Chemainus Road
Chemainus, BC V0R 1K5
Phone: (250) 246-5019



Málexeł Nation (Malahat)

Chief George Harry Jr.
110 Thunder Rd,
Mill Bay, BC V0R 2P0
Phone: (250) 743-3231



Penelakut Tribe

Chief Joan Brown
PO Box 360
Chemainus, BC V0R 1K0
Phone (250) 246-2321



Ts'uubaa'asatx (Lake Cowichan)

Chief Georgina Livingstone
313B Deer Road, PO Box 159
Lake Cowichan, BC V0R 1K0
Phone: (250) 749-3301



Qualicum First Nation

Chief Michael Recalma
5850 River Road
Qualicum Beach, BC V9K 1Z5
Phone: (250) 757-9337



Snaw-Naw-As First Nation (Nanoose)

Chief Gordon Edwards
209 Mallard Way
Lantzville, BC V0R 2H0
Phone: (250) 390-3661



Snuneymuxw First Nation

Chief Mike Wyse
668 Centre St
Nanaimo, BC V9R 4Z4
Phone: (250) 740-2300



Stz' uminus First Nation (Chemainus)

Chief Roxanne Harris
12611A Trans Canada Highway,
Ladysmith, BC V9G 1M5
(250) 245-7155

Message from the President



'Ahh siiem nu siiye'yu
'eethu Qwul'sih'yah'maht
tun'i tsun 'utl Leey'qsun,
'i' Snuy'ney'muxw, 'i' Sto:lo

Good day respected people. My name is Qwul'sih'yah'maht (Robina Thomas) and I am a member of Lyackson First Nation. I 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 be a member of the Kw'umut Lelum Board of Directors. Every year I begin by expressing how exciting it is to pause and reflect on the previous year, but last year might be the most unusual. We were in the COVID-19 pandemic for the entire year. KL staff needed to function as a team, but mostly they were working alone and often remotely. The Board watched the staff tackle this challenge and not only continue to offer exceptional support, but flourish. KL remained undeniably committed to offering the best level of service possible to all of our nine Member Nations' children and families, while at the same time ensuring we kept everyone's health and safety front and center.

The Board wants to acknowledge the outstanding leadership demonstrated by all KL employees and thank them for their exceptional management of COVID-19 and the myriad of changes this brought to each and every one. The Elders remind us to always work together and support each other - Ts'its'uwatul' tseep. We know this teaching is what allowed KL to successfully manage the COVID-19 pandemic and not let it interfere with the safety and wellbeing of the nine Member Nations' children and families. The Board would like to raise our hands, with the deepest of respect, and honour those who contribute to our success. Huy tseep q'u:

- > To the Elders, the wise ones, the knowledge keepers – for your wisdom, guidance, direction and teachings and reminding us that what we do today is for those yet to come.
- > To the nine Member Nations for your unwavering support of Kw'umut Lelum and for entrusting us with your children and families.
- > To all of the caretakers for supporting the sacred ones, our children.
- > To all the board members, past and present, for their passion and commitment to the children in care – your guidance, direction and leadership is invaluable.
- > And lastly, to all of the employees for your unwavering passion and commitment 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

Message from the Executive Director



My name is Sqwulutsutun,
and I am from the Wyse family of
Snuneymuxw First Nation. My English
name is William Yoachim.

With the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have all made significant changes to how we live our lives. We began 2020 from a place of fear, but this was quickly replaced with the resilience and cooperation that our people have always shown in the face of adversity. Kw'umut Lelum adapted programs and services that would allow us to keep our families and staff safe while continuing to offer essential supports to our communities. During the lockdown, we were able to do much of our work from home and I raise my hands to the dedicated employees who continued to go out into community wherever they were needed, despite the personal risk.

Our use of technology like Zoom, and our increased use of social media to connect our families and communities to our programs opened up our reach to those who were isolated and in need of support. But it also showed us a new way of looking at services and programming that can encompass even more of our people, no matter where they live.

And even as our social bubbles got smaller, Kw'umut Lelum continued to expand – our new office in Duncan opened to better serve our southern member Nations and those living in the Duncan area, and we took over many open case files from MCFD. And I am proud to say that all of the Duncan MCFD children and youth who were living in foster care have since been placed with family, or within their home communities, thanks to the tireless efforts of our CPP team, who identified family members, and our delegated staff who worked in collaboration to ensure these smun'eem would be able to go home.

I know that our work could not be done without the ongoing efforts of so many. I raise my hands to our Board of Directors for their strong leadership and vision.

We stand supported by the wisdom and teachings of our ancestors and give gratitude to our Elders and knowledge-keepers who show us how to live and work in a good way.

We honour the families, the communities and the children – our xe'xe' smun'eem – by walking together with them on their journey.

And I give thanks to our staff and caregivers whose work is guided by true care for the wellbeing of our families.

Huy tseep q'u Siem
Sqwulutsutun – William Yoachim

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



James (Bert) Thomas
Halalt First Nation



Steve Henry
Malahat First Nation



Donna Kennedy
Qualicum First Nation



Roxanne Harris
Stz'uminus First Nation



Joan Brown
Penelakut First Nation



Living Our Mission

Programs and Services

When child safety interventions are required to keep children safe Kw'umut Lelum social workers will always work with the Nation and parents to keep children in their community and living with extended family. Kw'umut Lelum cultural workers support this planning through family finding and keeping kids connected to family, culture and community.

Child Safety and Collaborative Planning

Over the past year Kw'umut Lelum aligned its service delivery model to child safety south and north offices to increase access and quality of services to the nine Nations as well nation members living in urban Duncan and Nanaimo. Across the child safety teams there is a strong emphasis on collaboration and inter-agency teamwork with Kw'umut Lelum's support programs. When child safety social workers are responding to child safety reports and working with families they can quickly put together wrap-around supports and services (Cultural, Wellness, CYC, Family Support, Early Years outreach, etc.) to assist parents and support families.

The child safety teams responded to almost 200 child safety reports last year and many of the calls involved neglect and likelihood of physical harm (due to neglect). Domestic violence and substance misuse (drugs/alcohol) was a complicating factor in reports 25% of the time.

Kw'umut Lelum child safety teams take a cultural and preventative approach to build on family strengths and increase safety to keep children in the home. In situations where children cannot safely remain in the home Kw'umut Lelum child safety workers always prefer kinship agreements - where a child or youth is placed with a family member - over court driven processes. In 2020-2021 the number of children in kinship care increased by 19% and 34 at-risk children were prevented from coming into foster care

through the child safety team’s use of kinship care (also known as “out-of-care”) agreements. There were only 5 removals over the past year and in each case there was no least disruptive measure available (i.e. unable to locate parent, parent deceased/no legal guardian). In every instance this was temporary as Kw’umut Lelum did find extended family to provide kinship care and therefore was able to withdraw from court driven proceedings.

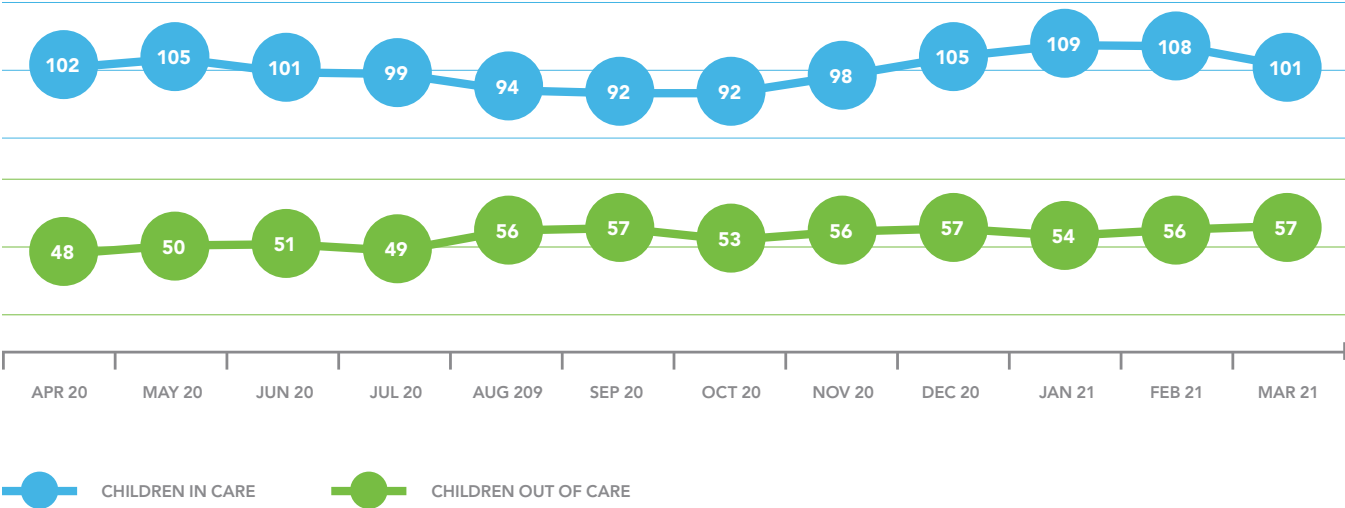
Guardianship Services

In early 2021 the file transfer from Duncan MCFD to Kw’umut Lelum South Office was completed and 13 children-in-care (CIC) were received which bumped the CIC count up to 105. Family finding was immediately undertaken by the Duncan team and the children have since moved out of foster care and into extended family kinship care. Through strong permanency planning Kw’umut Lelum has been able to reduce the number of children in care by 10% over the past year.

With the development of the Se’ye’yu team there are now two dedicated child service kinship workers attached to the Guardianship Team. The child service kinship workers see children living in kinship homes regularly and work with kinship care providers and others to ensure that kinship children have the services and supports they need. This can include getting assessments and educational supports, youth care and cultural workers to work directly with the children and youth, wellness supports, daycare, etc.

Cultural Care Plan Circle meetings are scheduled every six months for each child-in-care and the circle includes child’s social worker, Nation representative, care providers/extended family, cultural worker and other members of the child’s care team. Cultural Permanency workers are attached to each child in care and work with the team to find temporary and permanent homes with relatives in each of the Nations.

CHILD SERVICES CASELOAD

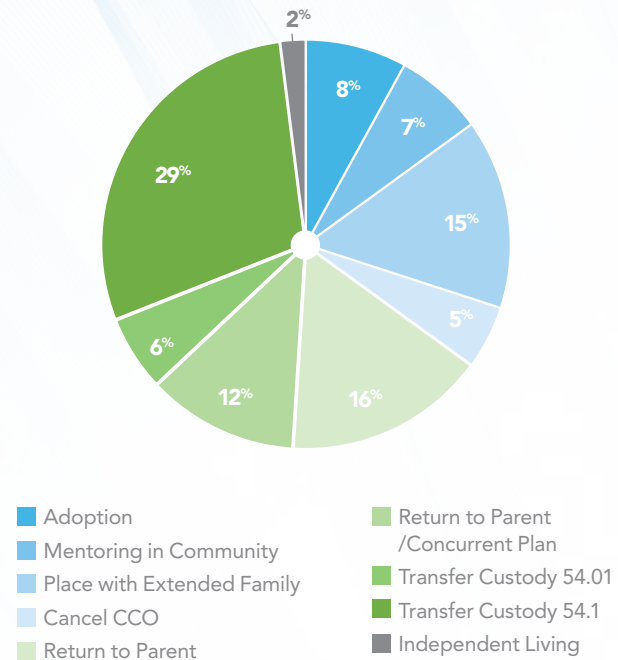


Programs and Services – continued

Permanency

In the last year, Kw’umut Lelum was able to return 26 children to their parents, transferred another 13 out of foster care through permanent legal custody of a family member (54.01), cancelled three continuing custody orders resulting in 7 children moving out of permanent foster care to be reunited and live with their parent. Adoption planning for another 10 children is underway and these adoptions will be completed over the next year. An additional 6 youth reached the age of majority and Kw’umut Lelum continued to provide housing and supports through an agreement with young adult (AYA), as well as ongoing support for their independence through our Step Up program.

PERMANENCY PLANS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE – MARCH 2019



Le’lumilh (Resources) and Se’ye’yu (Kinship) Program

Over the past year there has been significant emphasis in the Le’lumilh program towards increased recruitment of extended family “kinship” homes and less reliance on non-relative foster homes. With the development of the Se’ye’yu team there are now two dedicated kinship workers attached to the Le’lumilh Team. Kw’umut Lelum kinship workers assist in the recruitment and approval of extended family kinship homes as well as providing ongoing support to kinship care providers caring for their relative children. Kw’umut Lelum is leading the way in regards to its support of extended family who have taken permanent custody of their relative children.

A key priority is reducing the number of non-relative foster homes and increasing the number of emergency, temporary and permanent kinship homes in each of our nine member Nations. The Le’lumilh team is working with the Nations to support recruitment of all types of kinship homes.

Wellness and Prevention

Helping families to be strong and healthy and connected to their culture is a crucial component to preventing children and youth from coming into care. Kw’umut Lelum provides programs and services for all ages that promote emotional and physical health, parenting skills, cultural strength, and personal growth.

Kw’umut Lelum operates as a nutsamaat shqwaluwun (people working together with one heart and one mind) guided by the teachings of our ancestors. While respecting Coast Salish practices and traditions, Kw’umut Lelum offers services and programs that keep our children safe, strengthen and preserve our families, connect to our culture, and enhance our community wellbeing.

Our wellness and prevention teams (including our 4 Seasons of Culture, 4 Seasons Early Years, Step Up, Wellness and Child and Youth Care workers) had to innovate to continue providing services and supports to our families during the pandemic, when many of our Nations closed their communities to all but essential and emergency services. With the implementation of online groups and virtual programming, we were able to provide more than 550 program sessions that ranged from parenting support groups, to recreational fitness, and drumming groups.

Family Support Workers

The FSW team provided a range of services over the 2020/2021 fiscal year. The highest demands for support have been in the area of community services supports and parenting with housing, D & A and parental mental health. The team worked hard over the past fiscal year to navigate community lockdowns and for some time were forced to move from in-person visits to almost exclusively virtual visits facilitated via Zoom or Facetime. The FSW team has been facilitating all of the agency supervised access and spends many indirect hours focused on consults, application processes, transportation and resource support work so that they are able to meet the referral goals that have been identified.

4 Seasons Cultural Program

4 Seasons Cultural Program supports children and youth across our 9 communities to connect with their culture through weekly cultural programming. Children, adults and families can participate in Coast Salish weaving, moccasin making, drum circle, cooking, language, as well as other arts and learning with Knowledge Keepers.

- > Block hands-on programming was held virtually over the past year. Multiple moccasin, weaving and other textile programs were held and guided by knowledge keepers within the 9 Nations, as well as opportunities for learning traditional medicines, cedar weaving, and traditional food preparation.
- > Weekly online drum circles with hosted drummers from different Nations kept families engaged throughout the pandemic. This program continues to be open to all Nations.
- > Cultural Day Camps brought children and youth together over 3 days to partake in Territory history, canoeing, lacrosse and cedar teachings in their home territories.



Programs and Services – continued

Wellness Team

Helping families to be strong and healthy is a crucial component to preventing children and youth from coming into care. Kw'umut Lelum's Wellness team works within our communities to offer a range of opportunities such as individual counselling, group recreation activities and family education events. During the Covid-19 pandemic the Wellness team remained operational offering virtual programming as well as in-person when able and necessary.

- > Weekly recreational programming, including fitness challenges for families was held via Zoom and moved in person when permitted
- > Virtual youth group hosting 57 youth in 2 communities virtually over the pandemic. This group had a mental health and addiction prevention focus while blending with a cultural component
- > A series of 10 video workshops on managing challenging child behaviours was made available to all of our families via our YouTube channel, and had more than 250 views.
- > A virtual workshop for parents and caregivers focussed on developing tools necessary to support children and youth with FASD, sensory or attachment issues.

4 Seasons Early Years

4 Seasons Early Years (4SEY) enhances early childhood development and overall family health and wellness for First Nations preschool children (birth to six years old) on reserve. Weekly Parenting and Play groups have been held virtually across our nine member Nations over the course of this past fiscal year. This shift has allowed for greater participation as we have had member Nation families attending from not only across the Province but also across the border due to accessibility. The majority of the programs offered through 4 Seasons Early Years have been accompanied by carefully curated kits to support learning and enhance engagement. Over the past year the team was able to deliver 29 unique programs that were a mixture of block sessions and one-offs. A number of these programs were run multiple times due to their popularity including:

- > The Hum'na tul Book Club was developed to provide early literacy intervention and to give parents/caregivers foundational knowledge on how to support early literacy through reading and by extension (literacy focused) activities.
- > Budding Babies was developed to help parents/caregivers with infants and toddlers under the age of 2 gain knowledge of early childhood development through hands on experience with their babies.
- > Cultural Connections and I am Healthy placed emphasis on good nutrition and healthy meal planning.



Transitioning out of Care: Step Up

The Step Up program helps our youth in or from care to develop independence across 5 domains of Personal Effectiveness, Education, Housing, Culture and Community, and Employment. Step Up is a youth-driven program that is supported by a Youth Advisory Council. These youth, with the support of our Step Up Transition team, have created an assessment process designed to look at the unique strengths and needs of those referred to the program and to work collaboratively to develop comprehensive plans to support youth to gain skills and knowledge and identify supports for their transition to adulthood. The team is comprised of three Step Up Transition workers, an Educational Coordinator/Clinician and a Step Up Work Placement Navigator. Over the past fiscal year, the team spent on average 175 hours each month providing direct service to the youth on their caseloads.

Child and Youth Care

The Child and Youth Care (CYC) team carry an average of 20 children and youth on their respective caseloads and are a team of 4. On average, over the past fiscal year the CYC team logged approximately 200 hours each month of direct service hours. The CYC team work closely with our Guardianship team to ensure a strong collaborative process that promotes cohesive care planning for our children and youth in care. CYC goals show a high focus on developing independence for our youth which, depending on age, moving forward will be addressed within Step Up as this will tighten up the collaborative planning process between these two teams.

Youth Advisory Council

The KL Youth Advisory Council is comprised of 7 former youth in care who meet monthly with two of our Step Up Transition Workers. The identified values for the 2020/2021 fiscal year were:

1. Family
2. Caring
3. Continuous Improvement
4. Communication



A Maori Four Elements Workshop was delivered at the outset of the year to highlight the importance of coming together as a team and recognizing the unique combination of skills, abilities and traits that contribute to a team environment. A partnership was also formed with the Construction Foundation as they came to the table to discuss workshop opportunities with our youth. A Mentorship carving workshop was held with Dean Heron where youth were taught to carve and shape paddle pendants and braid necklaces. At the end of the fiscal year guest speakers were brought in from VIU Community Cousins to connect with the youth advisory council and share learning around their roles as mentors for Indigenous students who are studying at VIU. The 2020-2021 year has made way for lots of exciting partnership possibilities in support of our youth.



Highlights Of 2020/2021

Over the past year, Kw'umut Lelum has experienced extensive changes. Guided by the mandate of our Nations, and with significant engagement and input from the members of our communities, we expanded to include both Urban (off-reserve) services and prevention programs.

With new funding and focus, we expanded our staff team by nearly 20 people, opened a new office in Nanaimo, implemented a new wellness team and expanded our cultural and prevention services to include all of our member Nation families: not only children in care.

Connection to Education: Supporting Indigenous Students

Kw'umut Lelum, in collaboration with Nanaimo Ladysmith Schools Foundation (NLSF) and the Mastercard Foundation supported more than 800 Indigenous learners and their families across mid-Vancouver Island with the "Staying Connected to Education" initiative. Tablets and laptops, as well as additional supports including free Wi-Fi access were provided to students to support their online education, and keep them better connected to the services and social supports they need.

The collaborative effort saw local School Districts (Parksville/Qualicum, Nanaimo Ladysmith and Cowichan), Aboriginal Friendship Centres and First Nations governments identifying families in need in each of their catchment areas and overseeing the

distribution of the devices to ensure they got into the hands of students who need them most.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on Indigenous communities, where 1 in 4 people are living in poverty. With many services, including education, being provided in a virtual environment, it is challenging to ensure some of the most vulnerable have access to technological resources and supports to continue education and connection. While graduation rates are rising, only about 44% of First Nations people 18-24 living on reserve have completed high school. Connection to Education provides a lifeline to students and their families who are already struggling to cope with a transition to virtual learning.



Highlights Of 2020/2021

Work-Life Balance: KL Implements 4-day Work Week

As we begin to emerge from the pandemic crisis, we recognized a need to find creative solutions to creating work-life balance for our employees while ensuring our essential services could be maintained.

In July 2020, Kw'umut Lelum implemented an innovative approach in an effort to enhance employee wellness, boost productivity and creativity and reduce time commuting to and from work. All Kw'umut Lelum employees were offered the opportunity to participate in a 4-day work week, allowing them to work the same number of hours week, condensed into 4 days instead of 5.

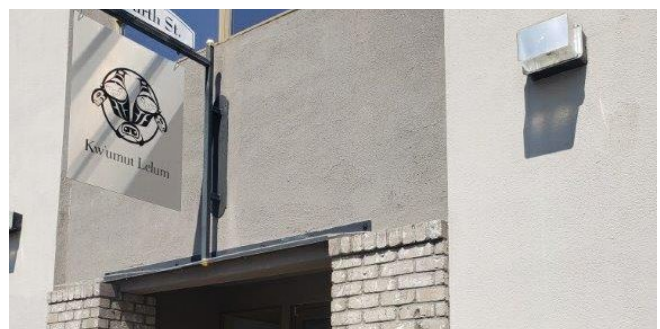
This new approach has been well received by staff, and initial evaluations have shown increases in employee satisfaction and retention, with no loss in productivity, service delivery or operational capacity.

Expanding our Services: Duncan Office Serves our Southern Nations

On August 4th, Kw'umut Lelum opened the doors of its newest location in Duncan. The site marks a new chapter in the organization's 25-year history of offering culturally-integrated services to Indigenous families in mid-Vancouver Island as we expand our services into the Urban population of Duncan.

The building, at 151 4th Street in Duncan, is a service hub for member Nation families living in Duncan, as well as those living in community in Malahat, Halalt, Penelakut, Ts'uubaa-asatx (Lake Cowichan) and Stz'uminus.

With three different child and family service organizations (including MCFD and Lalum'utul' Smun'eem - LS) operating in the Duncan area and servicing Indigenous people, there was some concern about confusion over which agency a family might call or be referred to. Cowichan families continue to be referred to LS, and those with cultural connections to KL Member Nations (Halalt, Lyackson, Malahat, Penelakut, Qualicum, Snaw-Naw-As, Snuneymuxw and Stz'uminus and Ts'uubaa-asatx) are served by Kw'umut Lelum. We are working together with these agencies collaboratively to ensure that everyone is able to access the services they need, from the organization who is in the best position to serve them.





Culture Camps

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, our 4 Seasons of Culture Team were still able to provide a scaled-down version of our Culture Camps held in Snaw-Naw-As, Stz'uminus, Penelakut and Saysutshun (in Snuneymuxw territory). Children and youth strengthened cultural identity through activities, oral teachings and field trips. Some of the activities included: ocean fishing using rod and reel, while listening to stories of traditional methods of fishing techniques; learning about the history of war canoe racing – then receiving a paddling demonstration and paddling in an oceangoing canoe; listening to the history of bone games (lahal) and learning the basics; weaving cedar headbands and bracelets; harvesting blackberries and receiving teachings on a variety of traditional foods as well as learning about the shift and introduction of new foods such as sugar and flour in today's diet; and receiving hands-on experience in making fried bread.



Indigenous Grad Ceremony

While the graduation rate for Indigenous students in BC has been rising, there is still a huge gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous success outcomes in education. Kw'umut Lelum is committed to helping our youth achieve the best possible future and we know that having a solid education is a huge part of that.

In July 2020, Kw'umut Lelum honoured 7 of our Indigenous graduates in a small but meaningful ceremony at Maffeo Sutton Park in Nanaimo. With pandemic restrictions in place, we were mindful of limiting the attendees, but the youth were encouraged to invite close family members to witness their achievement. A few select staff and invited guests provided words of praise and encouragement, as well as song and ceremony to recognize their accomplishments. The graduates and their families were treated to a catered dinner, had their photos professionally taken and were provided with gifts and a framed certificate to commemorate their incredible achievement.



Team Trouble Lifts Up Youth Through Sport

Youth Outreach Worker Eli Wyse was hired by Kw'umut Lelum to work with high risk Indigenous youth as an Outreach Worker. His job is to make connections with youth, provide mentorship and guidance, and help them to walk a good path.

Eli quickly realized that his love of boxing could be used to bring youth – particularly young men – together to help each other on their journey. He recruited four youth from our member Nations to become “Team Trouble”, training through heavy bags, circuits, sparring, focus pads, and drills twice a week at Force Boxing and Fitness in Nanaimo.

Eli’s outreach approach is to teach patience and discipline; controlling anger and aggression by providing a physical outlet through boxing and training. But it also helps the youth to learn how to support each other as a team working towards a goal of physical excellence, or even possibly a career in boxing. Eli gives these youth a space to experience the rewards of commitment and for them to set goals for their future.

“ Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practise reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.”

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
COMMISSION REPORT



Children. Culture. Community.



Kw'umut Lelum

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