

THE HAIDA GWAII YOUTH ASSEMBLY

SPECIAL ISSUE

May 2015



L-R: Konrad Russ, Teresa Russ, Jhett Collinson and Jaylene Sheford.

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HAIDA LAAS

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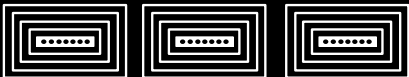


Photo: Team Media

Breaking the barriers

Welcome to all the youth who are participating in the 4th Annual Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly. This has truly become a highlight of the year for us at the Council of the Haida Nation and we are excited to spend the next three days together in an environment of fun, competition, sharing and mutual respect.

This year's HGYA continues to grow and adjust to the feedback that has been provided by all of the youth who have participated in the last few years. We are pleased to announce the creation of the six new teams this year: Team White Raven, Team Gwaii Haanas, Team OMVC, Team Art & Culture, Team Child and Family and Team Oceans. These teams were added based on your wishes to learn more about subjects that matter to you, and that's what the HGYA is all about, creating an environment where you can learn more about the things that interest you, and it also provides an environment where we can hear from all of you about how the youth feel about all these important issues.

On a personal note, we made quite the splash last year with the 'Happy' video, which currently has over 4670 views, most of which were viewed within the first week of its release. Team Media has gained quite the reputation and we are super excited about what will be created this year. It's also very important to us at CHN that we break down barriers between young people and elected leaders, which was reflected in our

embarrassing cameos in the 'Happy' video. To continue with this goal of breaking down the barriers between youth and elected leadership, we are also happy to announce that the CHN representatives will be directly participating in the teams this year to assist the team leaders. It's important to us that we get to meet more of you and hear your thoughts on matters that are important to you.

On behalf of the CHN, we wish you all the best in this year's 2015 Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly, may the best team win but more importantly, enjoy yourself, be you and give 110% throughout these next three days, you won't be disappointed.



Photo: Team Media

Stan's got a plan

Popular host and impresario Stan Wesley is returning again to this year's Youth Assembly. Mr Wesley is flying into Haida Gwaii to keep the three-day assembly moving, inspire participants, and up the creative quotient!



Photo: Haida Labs

Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly 2014 elected council. L-R: Paige Atwell, Elija Washington, Stefanie Stephens, Caylene Bell, Chelsea Gladstone, Shyanna Sawyer, Kwiiias Parnell, Chavonne Guthrie, Donovan Hunter, Shania Williams, Chasedy Young, Ava Williams and Brandon Gosnell.

Electing the Council

On day one of the assembly, youth vote to elect a Youth Council. Elected members include a president and vice-president. Ten regional representatives are also elected: four from the North, four from the South, one from Vancouver, and one from Prince Rupert. The Youth Council mirrors the composition of the Council of the Haida Nation.

Elected youth representatives must fulfill their duties and work with the current elected CHN leadership during the Youth Assembly, represent a selected team, facilitate the Youth House of Assembly, and represent youth of Haida Gwaii.

Our History

When the first Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly was held in 1993, its success depended largely on the leadership of Skilay *Ernie Collison*, who took on an important role in organizing the event; the legacy of his leadership still resonates in the lives of those who knew him.

Twenty years later, inspired by his vision, the House of Assembly resolved to make the intensive three-day program an annual event. By hosting the second and third Youth Assemblies in 2013 and 2014, the Haida nation awakened a whole generation of leaders like Skilay.

The Youth Assembly celebrates the Haida love of competition. In 2014 teams fought hard to beat one another in various challenges.

For the first challenge, teams were issued a list of tasks to perform and photograph around the host community of Hlgaagilda. Many of the tasks listed included *Xaayda Kil*, and required some translation.

The second challenge was to film one-minute videos about climate change. While filming, many participants learned a lot about the risks and nature of climate change, and uploaded their videos to the Internet.

The third challenge had teams develop plans for a sustainable and profitable business that would respect the environment of Haida

Gwaii. Finally, youth created and presented resolutions to the Youth House of Assembly.

The 2014 winners

CHN representatives judged the performances of the competitors, then declared last year's winner: Team Fisheries. The champions took home \$1,000 and earned a trip to circumnavigate Haida Gwaii.

The resolution that Team Fisheries put to the Youth House of Assembly aimed to train peer councillors in each community through Haida Child and Family Services. These mentors would learn how to listen and communicate well, would receive confidentiality training, and know how to access external support services within the Haida Gwaii community. Such a program would hope to reduce substance abuse and fill a gap in peer-support services.

"The team showed strong leadership skills," explained judge and CHN representative *Xuux Percy Crosby*. "We were really impressed by the way that the team worked together."

Win or lose, CHN's Fisheries Program had planned to take the team to *K'iiis Gwaay Langara Island*. When team members realized they'd won a circumnavigation of Haida Gwaii, they passed this reward on to the second place winner, Team Health.

The #hgaya goals

To increase youth awareness of, and participation in, issues relevant to Haida Gwaii;

- to provide an opportunity to explore careers in natural resources, arts, government, media, economic development, and administration, with professionals and elected leaders;
- to gain hands-on experience in problem solving and decision making;
- to give youth the opportunity to voice their understanding of, and concerns about, the issues facing Haida Gwaii;
- to allow elected leadership an opportunity to hear from youth;
- to increase communication between governing bodies and the youth of Haida Gwaii;
- to inspire, prepare and encourage youth to step up as leaders;
- to provide youth a glimpse of future career possibilities available on Haida Gwaii, and
- to inspire youth to contribute to Haida Gwaii through education, employment and leadership.



Our Teams

Team Fisheries: The Defending Champions!

Yaahl Iiwaans Brad Setso, Haida Fisheries Program Manager

Fishing is not only fun – it has been the foundation of our livelihoods for thousands of years. Today, we must manage and protect fisheries to ensure our descendants will be able to enjoy the taste of fresh seafood. Team Fisheries will grapple with the political challenges that arise during the course of this crucial work, including sports fishing, the quota system for salmon allocations, razor clams, communal license issues, and responding to DFO fisheries policies.

Team Communications

Tawla Jaad Kelsey Pelton and Writer, Graham Richard

The Haida nation’s story spans 14,000 years, celebrates wonderful characters both famous and infamous, records massive geological changes, and tells us who we are. Because of the rigorous and consistent efforts of our ancestors, we are honoured to receive and protect these powerful memories. What we say and do every day adds to this ancestral legacy. The Haida nation continually makes its mark in the arts, in sports, and stands firm in the political sphere.

The Communications Team is a coalition of storytellers. Today, this team delivers the compelling story of Haida Gwaii with conviction and clarity. It shapes stories and delivers them to the places in which they need to be told, cherished, and remembered.

Team Finance

Taaw’ga Halaa Leeyga May Russ, Secretariat of the Haida Nation Administrator

Prior to colonization, coastal people governed themselves as sovereign nations through well-established potlatch systems that managed wealth. Today the stability and longevity of our self-reliance still depends on how we manage our wealth. Team Finance is in charge of ensuring all CHN’s incomes and expenses are in good order, and all the other teams depend on its accuracy and effectiveness.





Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly 2014 Winners. Back L-R: Evan Garrett, Daylon Bell, Brad Setso, Elijah Washington, Raven Ryland, Giinawn Gibbard and Cole Sankey. Front row L-R: Jenna Shelford, Rebbecca Holte, Chelsea Gladstone, Carol Ridley and Robert Russ.

Team Forestry

Stewardship Director, Garth Greskiw

Team Forestry explores Haida Gwaii’s forests to deepen knowledge of the land and investigate archeological discoveries. The Nation uses this knowledge to protect and restore the health and vitality of the forests we have lived among since the arrival of the first tree at Xaagyah Llnagaay *Bolkus*

Island thousands of years ago. By caring for our forests we ensure that our children can continue to breathe clean air, and enjoy good health and a vibrant environment.

Team Media

Nang K’uulas Patrick ‘Evil’ Shannon

Haida Gwaii is one of the most exciting places in the world right now, and has so

many young talented minds invested in creating stronger communities. Despite the geographic remoteness of the Islands, our youth have grown very tech- and media-savvy, increasing the capacity of Haida Gwaii’s communications and creativity.

Last year, nine youth worked hard to share the Youth Assembly with the world by collecting photos, videos, and conducting interviews. Team members are in charge of documenting the participants and group challenges and sharing their experiences live on social media. Team Media also creates a final video for all to enjoy.

“Team Media is a bit eccentric and we love what we do,” explains team leader Nang K’uulas. “While everyone else is competing hard, we are nerding-out hard on technical and narrative details that no one else even thinks about, resulting in fun and engaging videos that people love to watch again and again for years! Just look at our ‘Happy’ video from 2014.”



Photo: Team Media

Michelle McLeod (left) and Taylor Lantin (right) having a great day.



New teams!

Team Art and Culture

Guud San Glans Robert Davidson, Master Artist and Jeweller

Haida design speaks not only about us as individuals, but embodies the legacy of everything that surrounds us. It tells the stories that make us who we are. Today Haida Gwaii continues to inspire a strong community of artists whose work is known throughout the world. Now a generation of young artists is bringing new vitality to that legacy. Team Art and Culture promotes and strengthens their vision.

Team Gwaii Haanas

Gwaii Haanas Superintendent, Ernie Gladstone and Archipelago Management Board Member, Cindy Boyko

In the summer of 2014, sub-marine archaeological exploration upheld Haida oral history when scientists confirmed they had discovered a 13,800-year-old village site in Gwaii Haanas. Today adventurers continue to explore the land our ancestors called home, when the mountains were dominated by enormous glaciers and provided for grizzly bears, caribou, bison, musk ox, and canines. Team Gwaii Haanas makes decisions about how to manage Gwaii Haanas to ensure its forests and seas will be healthy for the next 13,800 years.

Team Haida Child

Stlaakuum Jaadass Karen Wainwright Jutkungits Lyndale George Kwii Gaay Iiwaans Sharon Matthews, Financial Operations Manager, Jennifer Russ, Delegated Generalist Social Worker, Shelley Gladstone

The Haida nation is embarking on a journey of self-governance that will empower us to administer our own child-welfare system. By strengthening our families and investing in our children we can ensure a good future

for Haida Gwaii. Team Haida Child and Family creates safe, healthy environments for our children and families and develops holistic programs and services that model our traditional Haida way of life.



Photo: Team Media

Human pyramid, Team HaiCo nails it!

Team Mapping

Team leaders to be announced.

For millennia we have depended on our knowledge of the land and sea to define us and provide for our livelihood. Understanding the land and sea and sharing that knowledge with others is the foundation of our strength as a nation. Through the process of mapping that knowledge we gain new insight and a deeper understanding of our place on Haida Gwaii. As we explore and learn, secrets of Haida Gwaii are revealed to us. Team Mapping goes out doors, exploring mountains, valleys, forests, and marshes to record these secrets. Sign up today and protect tomorrow!

Team Oceans

Marine Communications and Technical Support Officer, Molly Clarkson

The ocean is the home of our first ancestors. Our kinship with the ocean is sacred, and by protecting the waters that surround Haida

Gwaii, we show our heritage respect. Team Oceans explores the sea and its inhabitants to understand how our ancestors treated them. When we deepen our knowledge, we can make certain we treat our changing ocean gently.

Team OMVC

Team leaders to be announced.

The Old Massett Village Council is responsible for the governance of the community of Old Massett. It is also the largest employer in Gaaw. The OMVC consists of eight elected councillors and nine departments: education, health, economic development, administration, capital works, social development, finance, Chief Matthews School, and housing.

Team White Raven Law

Lalaxaaygans Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, Principal Lawyer, White Raven Law, and General Counsel to the Haida nation

A great deal of the Haida nation's work requires legal counsel, and recognition of Haida Title is one of the nation's central goals. As a law firm established and run by First Nations people, White Raven Law is the Haida nation's legal representative. The firm specializes in aboriginal rights and title, natural resources and environmental law, and cultural heritage law. On March 6th, the Haida nation and White Raven Law celebrated winning an injunction against the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The injunction protects herring stocks in Haida Gwaii from fishing in 2015. By blending traditional knowledge with modern technologies, Team White Raven Law stands up for Haida Gwaii in the legal arena.

The Challenges

During the assembly, a number of time-restricted Team Challenges are announced. To ensure fairness, Team Skilay keeps these challenges top secret until they are presented to everyone at the assembly. As the youth perform their challenges, Team Skilay judges the teams based on punctuality, time management, participation, use of resources, creativity, and team spirit.

The winning team receives \$1000. CHN announces other secret prizes throughout the four days of the event. Finally, Team Skilay members each select a youth who exhibits strong character, like Skilay, to join and be recognized in an honorary team.



Photo: Team Media



Photo: Team Media

Megan Yeltatzie-Setso (left) and Chase Samuels (right).

Team leaders Brad Setso and Kevin Brown competing in a challenge.



Photo: Team Media

kil tlaats 'gaa *Peter Lantin*, President of the Haida Nation; *Donavan Hunter*, Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly 2014 President; *Stefanie Stephens*, Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly 2014 Vice-President and Ginn wadluu un uula isdaa ayaagang *Trevor Russ*, Vice-president of the Haida Nation.



Skilay created the first Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly in 1993 and was a strong speaker. Skilay dedicated many years working to advance the rights and title of the nation.

Team Skilay

Team Skilay members are selected in honour of Skilay *Ernie Collison*, who helped to initiate the first Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly in 1993 and provided guidance to the nation over many years.

The team has ten members, including Jaasdalaas *Harmony Williams*; Guudee Gud Dlaaya *Vince Collison*; Sgaalanglaay

Gaamdamaay *Vern Williams*; Patricia Moore; Gwyaawhlans *Roy Collison*; and Seraphine Pryce.

Its members act as the Youth Assembly's "sergeants at arms". Members assist youth who may need a hand, ensure that spectators don't interfere with the participants' creative process, and make certain that the assembly runs smoothly.