

From the Desk of Shirley Bolan, Kitsumkalum Social Development

November 5-7, 2021 Kitsumkalum AGM

Working through the COVID pandemic has being very stressful and mind boggling. This is the first year I have had so many people yelling and swearing ; felt like it was at me; but I tried not to take it personally and remind myself I am only a worker delivering a Program to the Community.

Social Assistance/Income Assistance on Kitsumkalum is dropping so far this year. Last year it was almost double the amount of clients. One thing about COVID shutting down our reserve it shut the transients out and only had regular Kitsumkalum members & community members on s.a.

I have gone from at least 46 clients to 26. 1 client went onto higher education and moved out of town for University; 1 moved off reserve and all the rest have found jobs. I have some clients who don't want to work for Minimum wage but as things open up they will have no alternative but to go to work. I don't know how else to explain even at Minimum wage and a full time job they will earn more than \$560.00 a month and won't have to listen to me harping at them for their forms to be turned in or trying to send them to Tom Harwood to join a training program; or to the A&D counsellor or a counsellor in Terrace.

Special Needs budget is still small but has gotten us through the year.

Assisted Living – In Home Care has grown as we find homemakers for clients. There are a few who need the help but as holding off first because of COVID and now the variants. When at maximum I have 14 clients. 2 need a homemaker; 1 his homemaker will be back after his injury is healed.

Made a contribution to Health Department for the Elder's Monthly Lunch program; not sure when that program will start up again.

Assisted with the Variance submission for the Social Development Programs.

Family Violence – used to refer community members to counselling; my other 3 programs I have used to purchase equipment needed for gainful employment; work gear no one else had a budget for; winter coat allowance for on reserve children (only because our budgets are set for on reserve members). Once our new Principal starts at Na'Aksa I will journal voucher money to help with the lunch program or the cultural aspect of the school.

Ha!Ha! I must be getting old now people who phone in and swear at me are in shock because this old lady tries hard not to cuss them out too when I am raising my voice back at them. One person who drugs and drinks had the gall to swear at me – I wasn't even in his town whooping it up with him so I hung up on him.

I have been talking with NIFCS. If I know your story I will tell it to NIFCS. I let them know that Kitsumkalum is against removal. We want our children to stay home with their parents and for counselling for the whole family. For example if a parent is carrying unresolved grief and starts lashing out at everyone for no apparent reason; it causes more chaos because the rest of the family doesn't know what the parent is going through but yet they are being affected by it. If counselling was done the parent would be able to stop themselves from lashing out at their spouse or children and work more on whatever it was that triggered the outburst.

COVID has caused more Trauma for community members – has stopped the support system we had for families when a death occurs; no feasting or celebrating. I can only liken it to the Residential School System – stripped us of everything and broke families up. It will feel good when we can come out of this COVID life style and be free again.

Well back to NIFCS. They would like to attend events in the community and mingle with the community and get to know us. Brittany McDougall & Emily Bryant will be situated in the log house; I believe there was electrical issues that slowed the move down. Sharon Bryant is the Cultural Worker at NIFCS and will be coming to the Communities. NIFCS hired a new Family Preservation worker; and we have Doug Kroeker who work in Resources for NIFCS – works with Foster Parents. Tricia Thorn is the Team Leader or Anthony Adams in the Terrace Office; and Michelle is a social worker. To tell you the truth due to COVID I feel our line of communication has been broken but we have started reaching out and talking to one another again; not only when there is a family visit but to see how things can be made better.

It is not only the COVID we have to deal with we have had a rough year; we were hit with Ransomware and this wiped out our programs for 2 months or so. Good thing I am a hoarder; I had Indian Affairs old cards – that is what I used to requisition the cheques with. But since then our computers keep having issues. Plus my S.A. Program and Computer are so old even the Technicians couldn't resolve my printing problems. If I have to requisition S.A. using the hand written forms I will let you know at the meeting.

Well I will sign off, I am starting to babble again.