

WEAAD Edition

# E-Connector

The BC Association of Community Response Networks (BC CRN) Newsletter

## **#WEAAD2020: A Bright (Purple) Light in Times of COVID**

By: Sherry Baker, Executive Director, BC CRN



Sisters Lisa and Cindy of the Squamish Nation in North Vancouver put together care kits for elders in the community to recognize WEAAD 2020. The Squamish Nation is part of the North Shore CRN. (Photo: Squamish Nation Elders Centre)

June 15, 2020 will go down in BC CRN history as a watershed year for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) in BC. I am so proud of our mentors, administration team, coordinators, and the army of community volunteers who figured out how to safely mark this day during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To our readers: Did you see purple lights on any of your community's buildings? Did you see our beautiful WEAAD flag flying outside one of your community's building or as a background in one of your Zoom meetings? Did you wear purple? Did you get involved in delivering meals and gifts to

isolated adults? Did you see the ads and articles in your community newspapers? Did you follow us on social media to see the latest WEAAD activities as they were happening?

If you said "yes" to any of the above, thank you for helping the province shine a light on the issue of adult abuse that day. During this state of emergency, we know that physical distancing, although a critical measure to keep all of us safe, also presents a heightened risk to those who are already experiencing abuse of some kind. If you received any BC CRN information, I ask you to share it far and wide.

To our mentors, community response networks (CRNs), and volunteers: Thanks to you, almost every city, town, and village in BC did something to recognize this important day. Many of you included BC CRN educational materials in meal, grocery, and supply deliveries to some of our most isolated adults and vulnerable populations. This quiet method of sharing information helped spread the word on adult abuse, and hopefully, got lasting information to those who may be abused. You've also got important education into the hands of those who are not experiencing abuse, and who now may be able to avoid abuse and spot the signs of abuse in someone they might know. You all deserve huge thanks and a big virtual hug for everything you have done!

Thanks to ongoing funding from the BC Government, BC CRN was also able to provide grants to CRNs to support local events and activities. We also must acknowledge our partner organizations



The BC Legislature in Victoria glowed purple on June 15. (Photo: C. Taylor)



Revelstoke Credit Union staff received training from the Revelstoke CRN on how to spot the signs of financial abuse. They dressed in their purple best to mark WEAAD 2020. (Photo: Revelstoke Credit Union)



The Cranbrook CRN's drive-thru WEAAD event. (Photo: D. Newberry)

who also support many of the local CRNs and who continue to collaborate on specific initiatives and projects to the benefit of our most vulnerable populations. Some of these organizations act as CRNs, working to shine a light on abuse, neglect, and self-neglect as part of a larger portfolio of services supporting communities. For this, I continue to be grateful.

Whatever the approach, whatever the activity, WEAAD 2020 has presented a brand-new model for celebrating the day and raising awareness on the topic of adult abuse, neglect, and self-neglect prevention province-wide. And true to form, the local CRNs and community-at-large designed and held their events independently, reinforcing an important lesson that the best solutions and interventions to community issues come from the community itself. As more and more people become aware of abuse, neglect, and self-neglect, an even stronger platform for prevention will emerge.



Houston's "Angels in the Community" and volunteers of CRNs in Houston and Smithers thanked healthcare workers with WEAAD2020 gift packs. (Photo: B. Lacombe)

This year's WEAAD demonstrated that when we come from a place of love, respect, kindness, and generosity, we can creatively work together to celebrate the community and make a difference...even during a pandemic. Thank you all.

#### **CRNs at Work**

Communities from all across the province marked #WEAAD2020 in new ways to spread the word on adult abuse, neglect and self-neglect, engage with our most vulnerable of populations, and perhaps most importantly, connect. Have a look: smiles, goodwill, and positive energy abound.



#### **Chinese CRN**

The CRN led by Coordinator **Daisy Au** delivered celebration and entertainment to seniors at home with video messages, music, and care packages.

Read their blog post. (*Photo: MOSAIC*)

#### **Vancouver Mount Pleasant CRN**

Coordinated by **Claudine Matlo** through Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House, a 16-member team of youth, seniors, and staff volunteers delivered care packages and flowers to 100 seniors. (*Photo: Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House*)





#### **North Shore CRN**

Lucie Neliba of the Squamish Nation Elders' Centre worked with the community to recruit interns Scarlett (left) and Elijah (right) who helped with creating care packages that were delivered to Squamish Nation elders. (Photo: <u>Squamish Nation Elders Centre</u>)





#### **Tri-Cities CRN**

The CRN covers neighbourhoods in Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, and Port Coquitlam. For WEAAD 2020, municipal buildings in all three cities glowed purple. (*Photo: K. Kuhn*)

## **Beaver Valley CRN**

CRN volunteers, led by coordinator **Jayme Fowler**, strategically set up information tables on Highway 3B in Montrose to distribute with educational materials to people passing. (*Photo: H. Von Ilberg*)



#### **Sparwood CRN**





#### **Vancouver Renfrew Collingwood CRN**

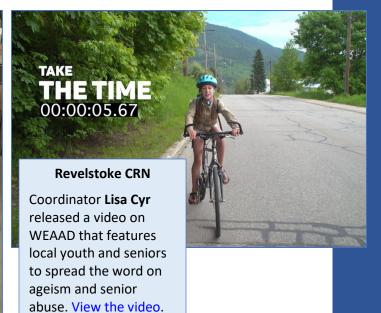
Coordinator **Suzanne Liddle** and her team of volunteers at <u>Collingwood Neighbourhood House</u> delivered 150 gift bags and plants along with the week's meals to seniors in their community. MP Don Davies helped with the deliveries: he took 40 gift bags and plants to Three Links Manor and ten to the Spectrum Society. (*Photo: S. Liddle*)

#### **Kitimat CRN**

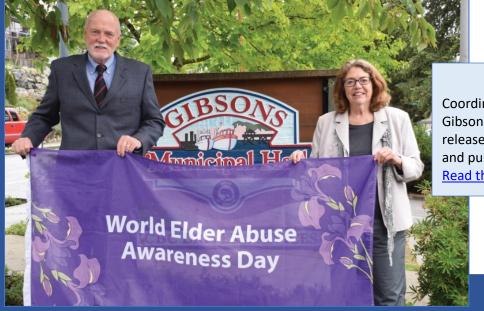
CRN coordinator

Jordana Velho and
volunteers handed out
irises outside the local
grocery store during
senior's shopping time.
(Photo: <u>Tamitik Status</u>





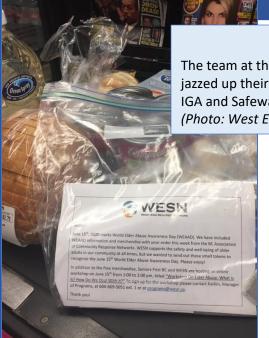
(Photo: Revelstoke CRN)



#### **Sunshine Coast CRN**

Coordinator **Vicki Dobbyn** (pictured with Gibson Mayor Bill Beamish) and her team released an adult abuse and neglect handbook and published an article in the local paper.

<u>Read the article</u>. (Photo: Coast Reporter)



#### **Vancouver West End CRN**

The team at the <u>West End Seniors' Network</u>, the CRN's host agency, jazzed up their grocery shopping and delivery service table this week at IGA and Safeway and included WEAAD swag bags with grocery orders. (*Photo: West End Seniors' Network*)

JUNE

# Vancouver Downtown East Side CRN WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS Vancouver Downtown East Side CRN While buildings shone purple at night, flags and

While buildings shone purple at night, flags and signage helped spread the word on WEAAD during day. (Photo:
Raycam Cooperative
Centre)



#### **Kamloops CRN**

Coordinator **Maureen Doll** set up shop at Mount Paul Food Centre handing out resources and swag to people dropping in for a delicious meal. (*Photo: Kamloops CRN*)

The IRIS Social



#### **Castlegar CRN**

Coordinator **Sandi McCreight** and volunteers of the <u>Kootenay</u> <u>IRIS</u> program delivered a special lunch to 165 seniors as part of their meal delivery program. (*Photo: Kooetnay IRIS*)

#### Vancouver

**Joanna Li**, Regional Mentor for Vancouver, worked with our friends at BC Place, Canada Place, Vancouver City Hall, and Science World to light up the rainy skies in purple. (*Photos: J. Li*)

#### **Cranbrook CRN**

A blustery day could not keep the CRN team in Cranbrook away! Led by Coordinator **Sandy Zeznik**, the team set up a drive-thru event where residents could pick up a free face mask and cake.

(Photo: D. Newberry)



#### **Prince Rupert CRN**

It was a meeting of minds for CRN leaders (over brunch!) to strategize on how to address abuse and neglect in the Prince Rupert community. From left to right: Gurvinder Randhawa, Ladan Zaharia, CRN Coordinator Louisa Sanchez and Regional Mentor Belinda Lacombe (Photo: B. Lacombe)



To all who spread the word on adult abuse prevention, thank you!

# Volunteer of the Month: Diana Day, Vancouver Indigenous CRN (#VICRN)

It's been a busy month for **Diana Day**. With World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), National Indigenous History Month, and National Indigenous People's Day all falling in June, and all taking place in times of a pandemic and high anti-racism sentiment, it's been non-stop for her. Hearing her talk, Diana speaks with passion, intention, and care. There's a quiet and steady cadence to her speech that lands calm and compassionate, and lends very well to her role as lead matriarch of the <u>Pacific Association of First Nations Women</u> (PAFNW) based in Vancouver. She made time in her packed schedule to speak to us a little bit about this year's WEAAD event, her hopes for First Nations communities, and why she does what she does with so much heart and commitment.

We are very pleased and honoured to be profiling Diana Day as our volunteer of the month.



(Photo: D. Day)

### **An Extensive Career Advocating for Indigenous Peoples**

Diana hails from the Oneida Nation and is a member of the Wolf Clan. Originally from Ontario, Diana went back and forth between BC and her home province until 1983, when she moved to BC permanently. "I visited my sister, who was living in Portland at the time, and we took a train to Vancouver," says Diana. "Seeing Vancouver for the first time, I thought it would be a beautiful place to live. When my sister moved to Vancouver, I followed."

Diana holds an honours degree in psychology and has also worked at local, regional, provincial, and national organizations in a variety of roles, including in program development and management. For over a decade, she was Vancouver Coastal Health's aboriginal community development and engagement leader, which allowed her the opportunity to engage with Aboriginal communities across the region. One of her key projects was helping to <u>indigenize VCH's ReAct Adult Protection Program</u>, which educates and trains frontline care workers in their obligations to recognize, report, and respond to abuse cases. The program is still running today. Diana has also provided personal and professional development training for Indigenous people across Canada and the United States.

#### Early Days Fighting Racism and Discrimination in the School System

Diana is a proud mother of two, a son and a daughter, both who are now grown and in post-secondary studies. A hands-on parent, Diana was involved as a member of the district's PAC, eventually becoming co-vice chair. She saw her children experience ongoing discrimination in the public school system, so much so that she decided to run for school board election in 2014, 2017, and again in 2018. All three times, she ran with the local Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE), who was looking for indigenous candidates.

"The racism started as early as elementary school," recalls Diana. "I complained about it, and in my naivety, decided to run for the school board when the opportunity came up. For me, children, especially Indigenous children, deserve culturally safe spaces where they are comfortable, free from racism, and can be themselves. It's a crime that our kids are subjected to racism. It's pushing Indigenous kids out of school with the only option being alternate schools, which were not and are not producing the results we need to ensure student success."

She would not be successful in securing a position on the school board, due largely to the racism she experienced throughout her campaign from within the system. (<u>View media coverage for more on this part of Diana's story</u>.) Despite the setbacks, her advocacy work on behalf of her own children and Indigenous children would serve her well several years later in her role as lead matriarch of the PAFNW.

#### **Creating Culturally Safe Spaces for Indigenous Families**

During our interview, Diana spoke passionately and at length about PAFNW where she has been lead

matriarch for the last three years. She was also president of the organization in its earlier years.

"PAFNW is all about helping women and their families succeed," she says. "We're 100% led and managed by Indigenous women. We offer several services, including counselling, ceremony, Cree and Ojibwe language classes, (The Vancouver Lower Mainland has a large Cree and Ojibwe speaking population.) intergenerational programs to connect youth with elders, drum circles, and training. We're about creating a safe place to practice culture, to heal, and to support others. All of this is challenging to find in the Vancouver Lower Mainland."

PAFNW also includes Indigenous men in some of their programs. "We need to find that balance to ensure our men are receiving important cultural teachings and healing along with the women," adds Diana.

During the pandemic, the organization focused its fundraising on preventing homelessness for Indigenous women and



PAFNW volunteers Misty and daughter Angelina make masks in response to COVID-19. (Photo: <u>PAFNW Facebook</u>)

families. "We wanted to ensure our women are housed, so they are safe," says Diana. "We are thankful for our funders, and we were able to provide groceries and cleaning supplies to 100 Indigenous families per month at risk of homelessness. We are also thankful to Save-on-Meats in Vancouver, who donated 1,000 paper masks for us to include with our deliveries."

Currently, PAFNW is also making fabric face masks as part of this fundraising campaign. "We received a donation of 24 bolts of fabric from Dinkydoo Fabrics and Notions in Maple Ridge, and we're thankful for them. We have a small team of volunteers sewing masks, and are always welcome more people who might be interested in joining us in this venture!" she adds.

#### The Vancouver Indigenous CRN

PAFNW hosts the Vancouver Indigenous CRN, or VICRN, and has been for the last three years with Diana as coordinator. (The CRN itself has been in place for several years. Changing coordinators have moved the CRN to different agencies.)

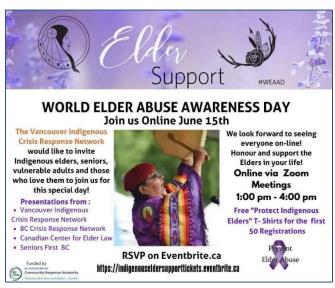
"The CRN is another way for us to support our elders, especially those who are vulnerable," says Diana. "We also have a program called *Moving Forward* as part of the VICRN. It's about developing a training strategy and plan for our people to help them deal with different workplace situations and issues that they may come across, such as racism, discrimination, and lateral violence. We're also looking to teaching the history of the healer, and other important leadership qualities and skills that our people need to succeed in their roles."

"Diana has been vital in bringing the Indigenous voice and perspective to CRN work, which I think is crucial for us," says **Joanna Li**, Regional Mentor – Vancouver. "In her role as coordinator for this unique CRN, she acts as a bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures, helping ensure that whatever educational offerings BC CRN has on the topic of abuse and neglect are culturally sensitive and culturally relevant to the Indigenous members of our community."

#### VICRN Presentation a Highlight of WEAAD 2020

PAFNW hosted an afternoon of virtual presentations from non-profit organizations, including the <u>Indian Residential School Survivors Society</u>, the <u>Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society</u>, the <u>Aboriginal Life in Vancouver Enhancement Society</u>, <u>Seniors First BC</u>, and the <u>Canadian Centre for Elder Law</u>, to mark WEAAD 2020. Diana opened the event with a prayer and closed the afternoon as well.

The session by the VICRN was co-presented by Diana and Joanna. Their presentation introduced the CRN to the community, explained what CRNs do, summarized the signs of possible abuse, and provided information on what to do to help, including who around them can help.



VICRN marked WEAAD with a virtual event. (Photo: PAFNW Facebook)

The VICRN's Moving Forward program was also highlighted.

"Our collaboration was a reminder and powerful lesson to me on the value of working together, co-creating, and co-learning," explains Joanna. "We touched on the topic of ageism, and what other CRNs are doing for Indigenous communities. I was thrilled that Diana was able to work with me to fine-tune the presentation, and then present it with me. Had she not stepped in, that presentation would have been from an outsider, and the content would not have landed as well as it did. Diana also skillfully

told the story of the VICRN and how it came to be. Her world view and experiences resonated with the collective history of the Indigenous community."

"Ageism is an issue in the mainstream that has trickled over to Indigenous communities," continues Diana. "Pre-colonialism, we did not have ageism: it wasn't a thing. I wanted to bring this perspective to the presentation, to talk about the family life cycle, the roles and responsibilities of individuals within

that life cycle, and how respect is shared and displayed by all. No one person is more important than the other. We need to continue supporting our elders, who are on different chapters of their journey. We have people doing well, and others who are struggling. We need to support everyone."

Word of the event made several rounds through social media, and 105 people registered for the virtual event. Final attendance for the afternoon was tallied at 60 people from across the province.

#### Why Diana is Our Volunteer of the Month

Say Joanna: "Diana is brilliant. She's one of the busiest people I know. As lead matriarch, this is a given! Everything she does come from the heart. She expresses herself powerfully and allows herself to be vulnerable, which allows others to do the same. I feel calm in her presence, and I feel she's given me permission to be moved by the people and the energy around me, and then lead from that place. While Diana is calm and sincerely authentic, at the



Agenda from the VICRN WEAAD 2020 event. (Photo: PAFNW Facebook)

same time, she's got everything under control. I'm looking forward to more collaboration and seeing how the VICRN moves forward under her leadership."

Learn more about the Pacific Association of First Nations Women (PAFNW) by visiting their <u>website</u> or <u>Facebook page</u>. To learn more about the Vancouver Indigenous CRN (VICRN), contact Coordinator <u>Diana Day</u> or Regional Mentor <u>Joanna Li</u>.

If there is an outstanding volunteer in your community you think we should profile, please email us at info@bccrns.ca or send us a direct message on Facebook or Twitter.

# **Provincial Learning Events on Summer Hiatus**

We're on summer break! The next event is scheduled for September 15: save the date!

Look for more details on our events for the rest of the year in upcoming *E-Connector* editions and on our <u>Facebook</u> and <u>Twitter</u> pages.

Provincial Learning Events are toll-free teleconferences and take place on the third Tuesday of the month from 10:30 am to 12 pm. Everyone is welcome.

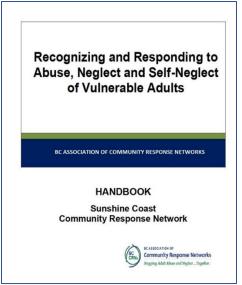
Email info@bccrns.ca to receive notifications of upcoming teleconferences and to receive dial-in info.

# **Our Top 8: Resources of the Month**

- 1. <u>First Nations ReAct</u>: This program was established by Vancouver Coastal Health as an extension of the Adult Protection Program. First Nations ReAct consists of education and practice support materials for educators, facilitators, Community Health and Human Service Workers, First Nations Community Members, Health Authority Staff, Community Response Network Members, and a wide range of adult learners to understand the complex dynamic of abuse, neglect, and self-neglect of vulnerable adults and older adult in First Nations communities.
- 2. <u>Is Social Isolation Elder Abuse?</u> (2020): From our friends at the Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (CNPEA), Elder Abuse Ontario, and CanAge with the generous support of HelpAge Canada and the United Way, this is a free recording of a live online debate with leaders and experts to discuss the issue of isolation and neglect of older Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic in light of the recent shocking report about long-term care homes. The live session took place on June 15 to mark #WEAAD2020.
- 3. The Place of Assisted Living in BC's Seniors Care System: Assessing the Promise, Reality and Challenges (2020): Published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) with support from the Hospital Employees' Union (HEU) and BC Health Coalition, this report shows that problems in seniors' care are not isolated to long-

term care, but are symptoms of a larger crisis in our fragmented system of home- and community-based health care.

4. Recognizing and Responding to Abuse, Neglect, and Self-Neglect of Vulnerable Adults Handbook (2020): Produced by the Sunshine Coast Community Response Network (CRN) under the leadership of current and past coordinators Vicki Dobbyn and Dianne Evans, this handbook is available in print only. To receive your copy, please email vickidobbyn@dccnet.com or contact April Struthers, Regional Mentor – Sunshine Coast at april.struthers@bccrns.ca.



- 5. A Guide to COVID-19: Caring for Yourselves and Your Loved Ones (2020): Published by the First Nations Health Authority, this guide provides information on the virus, how to stay safe and healthy, and information on medical and mental health supports and resources specifically for Indigenous people and their families.
- 6. Exploring the Updated Practical Guide to Elder Abuse and Neglect Law in Canada (2020): Hosted by CNPEA, this webinar presented by the Canadian Centre for Elder Law provides an overview of the changes to the Practical Guide to Elder Abuse and Neglect Law in Canada. The recording of the webinar is free, and the guide itself is available in English and French.
- 7. Confronting Ageism, Racism, and Abuse in Later Life During COVID-19 (2020): This blog post by the USC Center on Elder Mistreatment highlights a few of the abuser tactics, namely isolation, manipulation, and targeting vulnerabilities, and some of the systemic barriers, ageism, and racism, that are putting older adults at greater risk for harm during this time of national crisis. The post also contains further resources on elder abuse for information.
- 8. <u>Take Time for Seniors</u> (2020): Produced by the <u>Revelstoke CRN</u> as an intergenerational project and launched for #WEAAD2020, this video is intended to open the conversation on the topic of ageism and senior abuse. The video features Revelstoke youths Claire Brown and Aiden Hill, and several seniors in Revelstoke.

"Like" Facebook or "follow" us on Twitter to receive the latest resources on adult abuse and neglect.

# Our Top 14(!): Headlines of the Month

- 1. Response network works to keep seniors safe, Coast Reporter, June 20, 2020.\*
- 2. OLDER AND WISER: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day highlights an important year-round issue, North Shore News, June 18, 2020.\*
- 3. You can help prevent seniors from suffering abuse and neglect, Penticton Western News, June 16, 2020.\*
- 4. <u>Community Response Network says thanks to healthcare workers on World Elder Abuse Day,</u> Houston Today, June 16, 2020.\*
- 5. Raising awareness of elder abuse is key to prevention, BC Government News, June 15, 2020.
- 6. <u>New police program to help isolated Delta seniors find connection</u>, North Delta Reporter, June 15, 2020.
- 7. New Westminster to light up Anvil Centre in for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, New Westminster Record, June 15, 2020.\*
- 8. <u>Powell River group urges residents to observe elder abuse awareness day, Powell River Peak,</u> June 10, 2020.\*

- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day prompts insight from Kootenay Community Centre Society, MyCrestonNow, June 10, 2020.\*
- 10. <u>BC communities ready to offer help on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day</u>, Langley Advance Times, June 9, 2020.\* (Article also ran in the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows News and the Abbotsford News the same day.)
- 11. LETTER: Colouring for a cause, a win-win for our Elders, Hope Standard, June 6, 2020.\*
- 12. Senior abuse and the pandemic, The Squamish Chief, June 5, 2020.\*
- 13. Revelstoke elementary school students create art for seniors, Revelstoke Review, June 1, 2020.\*
- 14. Funding supports Powell River seniors, Powell River Peak, May 26, 2020.\*

"Like" Facebook or "follow" us on Twitter to receive the latest news on adult abuse and neglect.

\*Denotes local CRN story.

# **Campaigns & Professional Development Events**

Because of COVID-19, please check with organizers directly to learn the status of their events.

 John K. Friesen Conference: Supportive Communities for Healthy Aging – Simon Fraser University

September 17-18, 2020, Joseph & Rosalie Segal Centre, SFU's Vancouver Campus, 515 W. Hastings St., Vancouver, BC

This year's Friesen Conference is focused on the key role that Supportive Communities can play in promoting healthy aging at the global, national, regional, and local levels and for both individuals and populations aging in today's society. <u>View more details</u>. <u>Register now</u> to book your spot.

Seniors Living Expo and Job Fair, BC Care Providers Association November 21-22, 2020, Vancouver, BC

This event was rescheduled from Spring 2020 to the Fall. The expo targets seniors 60+, as well as their families and caregivers and is an opportunity network, and learn more about local opportunities for the senior demographic. View more.

*E Connector* is published 11 times a year (monthly except for a combined July/Aug. issue). <u>View the E-Connector archives.</u> Interested in contributing content? Contact us through the BC CRN web or privately message us on one of our social media channels.

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