

Songhees Academic Youth Leadership

Living Science Lab

with the support of Songhees
Nation, the University of Victoria



Songhees Academic Youth Leadership

Songhees Academic Youth Leadership (SAYL) formed in the fall of 2012. SAYL is made up of Songhees Youth between the ages 14-30. SAYL promotes education and career development, health and wellness, leadership through mentorship our Junior SAYL youth. SAYL works hard to give back to our communities through volunteerism and community engagement.

SAYL meets every two weeks to plan and deliver various educational and fun activities. Some of our projects include Chopped Songhees - Traditional Foods Cooking Challenge, Songhees Got Talent show, Creative Intelligence art and craft classes, and community engagement. We believe it is important to support our youths strengths, visions and individualities to allow our youth to flourish to the best of their abilities.

Songhees Nation

Songhees Nation has fully supported SAYL in many endeavours. With the leadership of Chief Ron Sam and Council Members, SAYL has achieved many milestones within our community. With the support of Songhees Nation, 50 Songhees youth have filtered through SAYL since its inception in 2012.

Chief Ron Sam has attended many of our functions. He has been a great role-model and leader for our youth.

Other Songhees Nation staff who have supported SAYL are Chris McElroy, Michelle Sam, Loretta Jones, Catherine Davies, Karen Tunkara, Don Albany and the Songhees Event Staff. These members have been extremely supportive of SAYL programs for Songhees youth.



The Living Lab Project is a unique opportunity for youth to explore and learn about their environment.

With the goal to develop materials that can be used in the classroom, in the future youth will be proud that they were a part of the process.

~ Francine L'Hirondelle

Songhees Education

Songhees Education staff have supported and assisted SAYL on many occasions. Francine L'Hirondelle is our SAYL supervisor who oversees many of our operations. She has managed to successfully keep SAYL going. Songhees Education assist with programs from preschool to post-secondary. Verna Barker, Butch Dick and Lyle Henry have all assisted with any of our SAYL events. We all work together to propel our youth into the future with their heads held high.

Cheryl Bryce

SAYL has worked closely with Cheryl Bryce since its inception in 2012. Cheryl is our SAYL advisor, she has selflessly shared her stories and teachings with our SAYL members.

She has taken our youth group on field trips on our territories. Our Colonial Reality Tour left our students with more questions and ideas about their history. The Colonial Reality Tour opened their eyes and instilled a sense of identity. It was amazing to hear our youth engage with Cheryl about plant technology, traditional food systems and traditional medicine. She also shared stories she heard from her grandmother about *The Legend of Camossung*, *The Star Sisters* and other stories. We went on four separate plant walks at Beacon Hill Park, Chatham and Discovery Islands, and other places. We have mapped our traditional food systems and done invasive species removal to maintain our traditional food systems.

We have done traditional pit cooks with Cheryl at Camosun College and Songhees Nation. For many of our youth, this was the first time they got to be involved in the process of learning how our ancestors prepared and cooked our food.

Cheryl has been a great source of knowledge and information and was always willing to sharing this with our youth. Much of our activities and events have to do with health and wellness, so protecting our traditional food systems was very important to us. So, having our youth work with Cheryl these past few years has been awesome.



Living Science Lab

SAYL met with Erich Nasser-Ringer and Natalie Bandringa from the Capital Regional District to talk about the health of our water systems. It was from this meeting that our youth wanted to do something about the oil spill in our territory.

Not long after that, we met with Maeve Lydon from the University of Victoria and we decided it would be beneficial for all to work together to teach our youth how to manage and protect our traditional food systems.

Francine L'Hirondelle, Cheryl Bryce, Butch Dick, Maeve Lydon, John Taylor, Morgan Black, Louise Page, Darcy Matthews and Spencer Pickles all came together with our Songhees youth to introduce them to practical, hands on science education we decided to call the Living Science Lab.

We met every Tuesday to work with both academic experts and traditional foods experts to map our resources and learn about the science behind our Living Lab.

This Living Science Lab brought us back to T'l'iches (Discover & Chatham Islands). Where we studied intertidal species with Louise, shell middens with Darcy, marine biology with Morgan and plant technology and history with Cheryl.

The hands-on, practical learning allowed our youth to fully enjoy and have fun in our classes.

Indigenous food systems are important for our future generations. I am very grateful to have SAYL take part in ~ Cheryl Bryce

SAYL would like to acknowledge the following for their support and expertise:

Chief Ron Sam, Songhees Nation

Francine L'Hirondelle, Songhees Nation, Director of Education

Cheryl Bryce, Songhees Nation, Director of Local Services

Butch Dick, Songhees Nation, Student Liaison

Maeve Lydon, University of Victoria, Community Engagement Coordinator

John Taylor, University of Victoria, Biology Professor

Morgan Black, University of Victoria, Marine Biologist

Darcy Matthews, University of Victoria, Environmental Studies

Louise Page, University of Victoria, Biologist

Spencer Pickles, University of Victoria

Erich Nasser-Ringer, Capital Regional District

Natalie Bandringa, Capital Regional District



SAYL Members involved with the Living Science Lab:

Jesse Rice

Phoenix Clark

Rylan Pelkey

Frankie Taylor

Julia George

Eugene Sam

Gerri-Jean Sam

Terrence George

Rayn Cook-Thomas

Jordan Dick

Allen Dick

Roy Louie



Songhees Youth: Rayn Cook-Thomas, Terrence George, Phoenix Clark, Rylan Pelkey & Eugene Sam with Cheryl Bryce.

Other youth:

Shantal Cook

Mary Lagis



We want our youth to be able to stand on their own two feet.

~ Skip Dick



University of Victoria

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