

SONGHEES ACADEMIC YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Food Sovereignty 2018 Report
SAYL to CALI 2018



Urban Tulek
Richmond, California

Title explained

*“SAYL to Cali” is a play on words with the Songhees Academic Youth Leadership - SAYL - sail
Many youth call California Cali - Hence, “SAYL to Cali”*

SAYL acknowledges the following for their support & expertise:

Chief Ron Sam, Songhees Nation
Francine L’Hirondelle, Songhees Nation, Director of Education
Cheryl Bryce, Songhees Nation, Director of Local Services
Maeve Lydon, University of Victoria, Community Engagement Coordinator
John Taylor, University of Victoria, Biology Professor
Morgan Black, University of Victoria, Marine Biologist
D’arcy 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

Sponsorship

Songhees Academic Youth Leadership have many people to thank for making this trip possible.

Songhees Nation: Chief Ron Sam, Francine L’Hirondelle, Cheryl Bryce, and Chris McElroy for taking the time to work with our youth and encouraging them to do well in school.

Horner Foundation: Tracy Cullen for assisting our youth with connections for our SAYL to Cali trip - Food Sovereignty.

New Relationship Trust: Lana Plante for providing funds towards our SAYL to Cali trip and for New Relationship Trust ongoing support of all SAYL activities.

University of Victoria: Maeve Lydon, John Taylor, Morgan Black, D’arcy Matthews for all their expertise and support for our Living Science Lab and our SAYL to Cali trip.

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Summary

SAYL & Food Sovereignty

Songhees Academic Youth Leadership (SAYL) became involved with food sovereignty and Traditional Food Systems after the 30 000 litre diesel spill in our territory. May 2016, a Vancouver Pile Driver Barge broke loose and ran into the grounds behind Songhees and Esquimalt Nations in Plumper Bay.

Both Songhees Chief Ron Sam and Esquimalt Chief late Andy Thomas wanted clear answers regarding the clean-up efforts of the diesel spill from either the Vancouver Pile Driver Barge or QM International Environmental and Industrial Services company. However, it took time and constant communication between the Nations and organizations to gain information regarding the clean-up effort. Since then, our Lkwungen people have not been able to fish, harvest clams or swim in Plumper Bay. Our Lkwungen Chiefs called for better regulations and assistance with monitoring water and soil contamination.

Our greatest concern in 2016 was the health and wellness of our water systems. Our youth group wanted to become involved with the clean-up and monitoring efforts of our traditional food systems. So we invited the Capital Regional District and the University of Victoria to meet with our youth to see what we could do as a volunteer youth group. The Songhees Academic Youth Leadership - Living Science Lab was spawned from these initial meetings.

Introduction

SAYL to Cali

Songhees Academic Youth Leadership (SAYL) was fortunate to secure funding to meet other youth doing work around food sovereignty in California, Spring 2018.

We spent the first day touring Los Angeles, California: Venice Beach, Santa Monica Pier, and Universal Studios. This was an exciting time for many of our youth, as many of them have never been to California.

Next, we flew to San Francisco, California to meet Jessica Heavy Runner from Salesforce 1.

We spent the afternoon with Jessica before we headed to meet Adam Boisvert at Rich City Rides. Rich City Rides is community initiative that runs the local cycling program.

On our final day, we travelled to three urban farms along Richmond's urban garden belt.

Our objective for this trip was to meet other youth who were doing work similar to our own around food sovereignty.

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, leadership and health and wellness. SAYL meets every two weeks to plan and deliver various educational and fun activities for our community. Every three months, SAYL members vote for two new youth leaders. These youth leaders are responsible for speaking on behalf of SAYL and representing SAYL at public events and functions.

Some projects SAYL has delivered include: Chopped Songhees - Traditional Foods Cooking Challenge, Songhees Got Talent, Creative Intelligence art and craft classes, community engagement, Living Science Lab, and Jr SAYL mentorship program. SAYL works hard to give back to our communities through volunteerism and community engagement. SAYL has quietly been behind the scenes, bringing hot drinks and snacks to Victoria's homeless, cooking for Songhees Community Potlucks, and assisting Songhees Nation at various community functions.

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 the Songhees Academic Youth Leadership program 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 Chief Ron Sam, Francine L'Hirondelle, Cheryl Bryce, Chris McElroy, Verna Barker, 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.

SAYL has been very appreciative of all that Songhees Nation has done to support our youth. The hard work and dedication to our youth does not go unnoticed.



Background

Living Science Lab

One evening, our youth were having our regular bimonthly meetings when we were told of the devastating news about the diesel spill in Plumper Bay. We met with the Capital Regional District of Victoria and started to have conversations on what we could do to improve the health of our Traditional Food Systems. Collectively, we came up with the idea of having a Living Science Lab. A few months later, we invited the University of Victoria to sit at the table with us. From there, we developed our program called the Living Science Lab. In the fall of 2017, we applied for the Horner Foundation Grant and won a grant that will allow us to continue and grow our 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'liches (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.

SAYL to Cali

Objectives

1 *to train our youth with hands on scientific testing*

2 *to get our youth interested in jobs for environmental studies*

3 *to teach our youth the importance of our traditional food systems*

4 *to pass on the torch of stewardship*

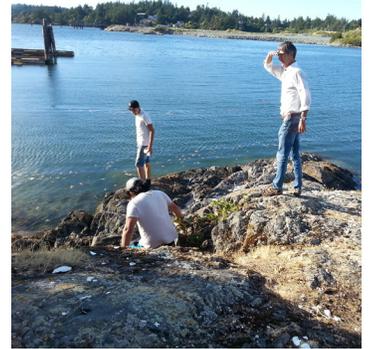
Achievements

In our first year, a handful of youth joined the University of Victoria's staff to collect water samples along our shores around our traditional territories. We took samples from Plumper Bay, T'liches and surrounding areas.

We do have some of our youth interested in future environmental studies. I believe it is important to expose our youth to many professions and trades. It is important to show our youth that the possibilities for their futures are endless.

Some of the youth who joined us want to be chefs. Walking with Cheryl Bryce on the Traditional Foods - Plant Walk, we had one student constantly questioning, "Can I eat this? What about this? Is this good to eat?" His questions were relentless and unending. It is through these youth that the work will continue.

Once the desire to maintain our Traditional Foods Systems have been established with our youth, it is our duty to teach them as much as we can to preserve our knowledge for all future generations.



Urban Tilth

Urban Tilth cultivates agriculture in west Contra Costa County to help our community build a more sustainable, healthy, and just food system. We hire and train residents to work with schools, community-based organizations, government agencies, businesses, and individuals to develop the capacity to produce 5% of our own food supply.

Founded in 2005 to help build a more sustainable, healthy, and just local food system, Urban Tilth has emerged as a local leader, a catalyst drawing together a variety of individual, discrete initiatives into a web of integrated, food- and community-focused efforts. In sum, we farm, feed, forage, teach, train, build community, employ, and give back. We help our community grow our own food; train and employ our own young people as “home grown experts”; teach our local residents about the relationships among food, health, poverty, and justice; and forge partnerships with local small farmers to increase demand for their produce.

We use our 7 school and community gardens and small urban farms to teach and employ community members to grow, distribute, cook, and consume thousands of pounds of local produce each year, to create a more equitable and just food system within a healthier and more self-sufficient community.

Visit Urban Tilth website at:

<https://www.urbantilth.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/urban.tilth/posts/>

Write-up taken from Urban Tilth Website



Adam Boisvert



Adam Boisvert is the Richmond High Urban Agriculture Institute Program Manager. He was our tour guide for our visit to Richmond's Greenway: North Richmond Farm, AdamCrest Farm and Greenway Gardens. Adam and his friends are in charge of a few community programs. One is Rich City Cycles, a community run bicycle program. Adam also works with the community and the youth in the Greenway urban community farm.

Luis Chavez



Luis Chavez is the Verde Partnership Garden Manager for the Richmond High Urban Agricultural Institute. Urban Tilth has many youth programs in place within the community as well as their local high schools.

Ed



Adam works closely with (). Together, they created the

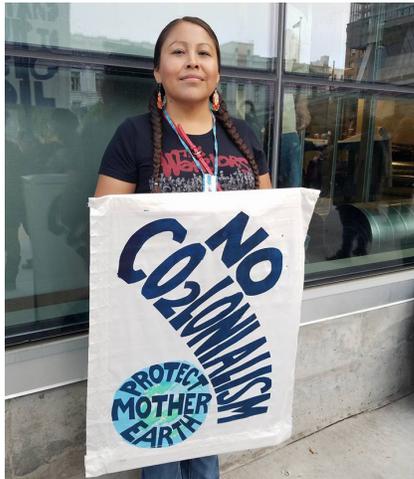
Jessica Heavy Runner



SAYL met with Jessica Heavy Runner at Salesforce1 in San Francisco, California.

Jessica, Jess, is a computer forensic specialist that works to debug, clean and handle secure information for businesses for Salesforce1 members.

Salesforce an international business organization that supports marketing, sales and managerial platforms for businesses. There are many ways in wih Salesforce1 works with businesses big and small.



Cynthia Sam

Our Songhees Academic Youth Leadership got connected with another group called Urban Tilth though the Horner Foundation. Urban Tilth was also doing Food Sovereignty in San Francisco California. Meeting with Urban Tilth was a great experience, we learned that it was founded in 2005 to help build a more healthy, sustainable food system for the community.

Urban Tilth showed SAYL their garden that was built on an old railroad track that was though the community. The garden is managed by the local community members, they showed us the drip irrigation system that is used to water the plants and save water from the heat of California. SAYL has learned that Urban Tilth has a 30 year lease on a land. Before they started gardening there, they had to clear the bushes that was growing there it took about a year to clear it. Once it was cleared they planted some traditional plants and added a little farm for chickens.

Cynthia Sam *continued*

Urban Tilth connected with seven schools and the community to teach the youth to grow, harvest and cook the plants that they grow, in hoping to have a more equitable and just food system for a healthier and self-sufficient community. Adam Boisvert is the one of the main contacts for Urban Tilth, he brought SAYL to one of the high school gardens to show us how to harvest, prepare and cook homemade stir fry. We also met Luis Chavez and Eddy Chaconbecerra who also help with Urban Tilth. Before we left San Francisco they gifted us with traditional blue corn and sage.

Talia George

Urban Tilth was a very great experience, each person having a friendly positive attitude. Providing information about how much time it takes in order to get started on planting things; taking out what was not native to the area and having to research what used to be there.

With all the hard work it is surprising, being only at the starting point in their journey with five years to their 30 years lease of the land. Testing their own soil as they had pollution companies that were nearby. To make sure that their soil was safe enough to plant seeds in their different gardens that stretch along an old railway area, being open to the public, allowing residence in the area free to grab what they want from the garden. The soil being embedded in an area that had an leaking water system to water the plants that resided in that specific area, to not waste any water as it gets really hot in the area, which can lead to water evaporating into the air. Explaining that they would like to expand to the nearby elementary school to provide them the opportunity to learn about the importance of food. Lastly, going to the garden that was by a high school to harvest some vegetables to cook stir fry. Getting the experience the hard work of actually trying to get the vegetable out of the soil, especially the onion as it was very slippery wiggling it back and forth then eventually getting it free. Then being taught how to make the stir fry outside with Adam, having the smell surround the area feeling more and more hungry as the time went on.

With how much patience you need to prepare the food making you think about how important/precious it is, the time it takes to grow, and how much people take food for granted. In conclusion, the Urban Tilth group was very informational about how long it takes to get a garden started and how much dedication one must have to garden as it is not something you can just start and leave it to let it do its own thing. It has to be maintained every day and cared for so that the plants can actually grow.

Phoenix Clark

SAYL started doing work with Cheryl Bryce around Food Sovereignty in the summer of 2016. Our environmental work was spawned from the oil spill in our back yard. Right away we became concerned with protecting our traditional food systems. We have done water and soil testing with the help of the University of Victoria.

Our Songhees Academic Youth Leadership group wanted to meet another group doing soil and water testing of their traditional territories so we connected with Adam Boisvert from San Francisco California. Adam is one of the main contacts for the Urban Tilth. Adam brought us to visit their community gardens and taught us about the troubles they face with pollution and urban gardening. Despite many challenges, they have accomplished a lot in the five years they have been regenerating the soil, cleaning the contaminants and planting seasonal harvests. We learned how much the community garden brings the communities together.

The work that Urban Tilth does in schools is great for the kids and the future of the community. They teach the kids about the great food and medicine that is available in their own backyard and how to maintain food sustainability for the future. It was a nice experience being able to harvest food out of the garden, cook it, and eat it right there with the local people. The community gardens made use of an old unused railway track and made it into a place that is good for the environment, and brings the community together while teaching the kids about food sovereignty, which is hard to do in urban areas. There was a lot to be learned with how they maintained the gardens. The drip irrigation system was nice, and important for not wasting water in the hot California heat. They also built a shed that washes rain water into a giant vat. This is the water they use for their gardens. The Urban Tilth group is way ahead of us with regards to monitoring the health and wellness of their community gardens, but it was nice to see what can be accomplished for our own youth leaders in Victoria.

Charlotte Charlie

There are three things I like to keep in mind when working with our youth:

1. they know what they want and they know how to get to where they are going
It is important for me to take the step back and allow our youth to find their voice and inner strength.
2. I don't wait for funding to do the work we do - serving our community is more important to our youth
To promote leadership, I feel it is important to teach our youth to give back to our local communities. Once our funding runs out, we continue to do the work necessary to teach our youth values and respect for our communities.
3. it is important for me to allow our youth stand on their own two feet.
I believe it is important to give them the tools necessary to survive in today's world. It is important to educate our youth so that they may aspire to any profession they chose. to enter.

Our youth are the most intelligent and innovative thinkers I know. I love watching them rise and become the best versions of themselves. The work we as SAYL members do has to relate to academics and youth leadership.

When our youth meet, the direction and leadership comes from these youth. Most of what we do is planned and organized via consensus vote. They wanted to go to California, so I asked them, how will that relate to the work we do? What do we hope to accomplish on this trip? Is it feasible? This group is so amazing, they had all the answers. Each one of these members made this possible, with their visions and ambitions, we made it to Richmond, California to meet Adam Boisvert and the rest of the Urban Tilth members.

It was beyond amazing to meet like minds and see what is possible for our future leaders. Their group is a bit older than our youth, but that did not deter our youth from seeking answers to their questions. It was great to see the youth see what they have been working towards in action. Urban Tilth is five years into their deliverables. It has taken over five years to build and grow into this amazing urban farming venture.

Our youth are in it's infancy with the planning, but with the help of local organizations, Cheryl Bryce and Chris McElroy, I know our hopes and visions are attainable. Hopefully we will be able to invite Adam, Luis, and company to Victoria, BC when we get our Living Science Lab off the ground.

Chris McElroy

The recent Songhees Academic Youth Leadership trip to California was a positive experience for the youth to connect and learn the importance of food sovereignty.

The trip brought us to Richmond, California where we connected with the organization Urban Tilth which is a community organization that delivers programs surrounding gardening and food initiatives. We had a chance to tour and interact at three different gardens which included; AdamCrest Farm, Greenway Garden and North Richmond Farm.

It was great to have the youth be exposed to the programming that takes place at these locations. We had the opportunity to discuss the following topics; food policy, climate justice, school & community garden programs, traditional plants and farm education.

After we have toured the different sites, we gathered at the local school garden where the youth harvested fresh veggies which were then incorporated into meal we all shared together. Once the meal was finished we participated in sharing circle where all individuals expressed what food sovereignty meant to them. It was powerful to hear the youth express themselves and their new understanding of these issues that currently exist and how they can engage with being part of the solution moving forward.

I would like to take an opportunity to thank our funders; Horner Foundation and UVic, Urban Tilth and Songhees education for making this trip possible for the youth.



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. The 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.

