



## BRIDGES PROGRAM UPDATE

Happy New Year to everyone!

Bridges enjoyed a wonderful year in 2016. We are especially excited with our new program area. Renovations to our new space were completed early in December and we immediately hosted an open house and invited everyone in Clay Tree. It was a lovely relaxed afternoon. The next day was the official ribbon-cutting with some members of our Board and the group from VIU 'Team Seed' who helped raise a portion of the renovation funds. We have settled in nicely and everyone is delighted and proud of our new 'home'. We are planning some finishing touches which include a patio garden area and look forward to starting this project in the Spring. We would like to thank everyone for their generous donations to help this project come together.





# LETTER FROM THE ED



Welcome 2017 and a very Happy New Year to all the families, caregivers, friends and members of Clay Tree Society.

Usually we use the beginning of the year to reflect on the past and to energise ourselves for the future, I am sure that you will agree that 2016 was a year of high activity and achievement for our Society. In brief some of the highlights were Art From The Heart, The Gala, Protesting at Parliament, Kayak Day, Butchart Gardens, Flea Market, Craft Sale, VIEX competing, all the volunteering and community service and inclusion by Clay Tree staff and participants, getting people out to work and also obtaining our three year CARF accreditation. All our progress is with the help of the staff, participants and yourselves, all the volunteer efforts with the grounds and fundraising are a communal effort from us all and I am so lucky to be a part of that. We culminated our year in the biggest Christmas Party ever, which I am sure you followed on facebook, Susan was "livestreaming" our party and my family in the UK and France were able to watch, it just felt amazing to be so connected to everyone.



So moving on to 2017 we have so much already planned, as you know we did the survey at the end of 2016 by telephone, and we certainly achieved more of a response, mainly good comments but a few concerns that are going to be addressed at our first ever working "retreat" that is taking place during the weekend of 13- 16 January. Ten staff have volunteered and will be working towards the future of Clay Tree that will encompass more meaningful goals, better use of precious funds and program fees, better communication, this will be an intense weekend and (hopefully) some fun at the end, and then we will come back to Clay Tree ready to share the information with all the other staff. If this is a productive weekend then I am hopeful it will be an annual event and just get bigger with more input.

Also during 2017 there will be 2 separate info sessions for caregivers to bring everyone up to date on the future of our Society, one in an afternoon and one evening for people who work so we will be letting you know the dates for those. The AGM this year is taking place on May 25th at Cedar Community Centre, the AGM and long service "rewards" will be during the AGM, which will start early at 4.30p.m. followed by a wonderful buffet/dance for everyone. This will be complimentary for our participants and only \$15 for any family members or friends wanting to attend.

As you all know 2017 is our Diamond Jubilee year, yes 60 years since the inception of this wonderful Society, each Thursday as we see Mrs Cathy Armstrong, along with Marty and Elaine, we take a moment to be grateful for the effort and hard work of all the families and friends that have gone before us, all that lead us to where we are today. That only leaves me with one thing left to say.....

Here is to the next 60 years!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenys".



# ARBUTUS CHRISTMAS PARTY



The day started off with each participant being greeted with jingle bells, frosty the snowman and Santa's Elves at the door. As participants entered the program, they received hot chocolate from Mandy to enjoy before participating in the festivities. Tim hosted karaoke, while Cassie and Doug facilitated building two gingerbread houses. Eggy set up a bean bag toss for guests to try and Pat organized an area for folks to socialize and enjoy one another's company.

At 11 o'clock, a special guest arrived! Santa came with gifts for everyone! After each and every participant received their gift and a little visit, they were invited into the main building to be seated for the formal Christmas lunch. A hearty thank you to Linda, Kevin, Crystal, Brenda and all the kitchen crew for the hard work and scrumptious meal! After lunch, our guests returned to the Arbutus program to find more special guests' - Dan Dube and his band came to play Christmas music and carols for all to sing and enjoy! What a wonderful way to end such a beautiful festive day.





# ESTEVAN CHRISTMAS PARTY



We had a fabulous Christmas celebration just before the holiday closure. The fresh snow on the ground added to the holiday ambiance. Christmas music was playing outside as the participants arrived and Staff greeted everyone with a smile and a cup of hot cocoa.

Anticipation filled the room when we all glimpsed at Santa Clause making his way down the driveway, accompanied by 2 - familiar elves, a piper, drummer and local legion members.

Santa Clause took his time with each participant by calling each person up one by one and gave them their gifts as well as a little visit. After the morning festivities a lovely holiday lunch was provided. Everyone had fun at the photo booth which was supplied by Kelly & Derrick Moore. Participants enjoyed listening to Peter Cunningham on the keyboard and a variety of Christmas Carols were sang.

It was a day filled with lots of love, old friends and new friends!







## CONNECTIONS

On Thursday, December 8, all participants attending the Connections Program came together to celebrate the Christmas Season. As turkey seems to be the staple at so many functions this time of year, a selection of pizzas was the choice for this event. Valerie made the butterscotch marshmallow squares and a punch that were served by her son, James. After the dinner, participants retired to the Common room and enjoyed dancing to Mariah Carey's Christmas songs.



## LIFE SKILLS



We are all excited about the future of Life Skills at Clay Tree. This year all programs will have two months each on a rotating schedule. Topics include Pre-Employment Life Skills, Semi Independent Life Skills, Food Production and Preparation, Manners Class, Dress for Success, Personal care, Table setting, Social Skills and City Bus Training.

During the formal Christmas Dinner in December, participants and staff were pleased with the high level of manners and social greetings displayed by all. Looking forward to a productive 2017 with new ideas and great accomplishments.

Linda, Life Skills Instructor



The Concepts Program host a Drama group every Tuesday afternoon. This has been a great success with an average of 23 participants joining in. Who doesn't love to dress up and do some improvisation?

We have many plans for the New Year and you can follow us on Facebook and by reading our newsletters. We call the group Wishing Well as we finish every session with throwing a wish into the imaginary well. The Arbutus program has kindly donated a large wooden trunk for our costumes, anyone wishing to donate costumes or props please call Elaine 250 753 5322 ext 5.







We are very pleased to announce that Yves Moskaluke has just finished his second seasonal position at Costco. He has thoroughly enjoyed his time at Costco, and is hopeful that there are further employment opportunities for him with such a great employer.

Many of our candidates have had work experience opportunities, and we are eagerly seeking employment and work experience opportunities for the remaining candidates on our initial intake. Once these job seekers have obtained employment, we will begin our second intake of employment candidates, and enroll them in the Pre-Employment Skills program with Linda. Upon completion of this program, job seekers are well prepared for many areas of employment such as interview skills, transit training, time management, budgeting, grooming and dress just to name a few. If you or someone you know is interested in having one of our skilled candidates fill a position in a local business, please contact our Employment Specialist, Rachel Pearsall, at 250-753-5322 extension 0.





## H.O.P.E. COUNCIL

In spring 2016 a participant council was formed it and was named HOPE which stands for "Help Our People Excel". A representative from each program was voted onto the committee by their peers. The monthly meetings have been a huge success with an enthusiastic bunch of people coming up with new ideas and many of which have already being implemented. Glenys was invited to our December meeting which was held in the board room of Country Grocer where we all enjoyed a Christmas lunch together.

It has been inspiring to see how the council members are comfortable in expressing their hopes and dreams for Clay Tree.

Our council members are: David Palmer, Megan Orcut, Dan Gligor, Eliza Green, Cody Robertson and Joanna Steel.  
We wish to thank all of the above for their great and continuing efforts on our HOPE council.





# THANK YOU!



“Many hands make light work”  
Thank you to everyone that continues to support our Society – We truly are grateful!

## CELEBRATING 60 YEARS!!!

Our Diamond Jubilee Gala Event is March 4th, 2017 at the Coast Bastion downtown Nanaimo. Tickets are \$125.00 each and can be purchased at Clay Tree Society.

The word "GALA" is written in a large, black, serif font. A blue tree branch with leaves is positioned to the right of the letter 'A'. Below the text is a solid black horizontal bar.

Please consider attending as we have a very special evening planned with a four course European style Dinner, Dancing, an awesome Silent Auction and much more!!



We appreciate all the Country Grocer Receipts that come in on a weekly basis.

We appreciate all of the bottles/cans that have been donated in our recent bottle drive to obtain industrial dishwashers.



# IMPORTANT DATES



## Closures:

Thursday	January 19, 2017	Staff training day
Friday	February 10, 2017	Staff training day
Monday	February 13, 2017	BC Family Day – STAT
Friday	April 14, 2017	Good Friday – STAT
Monday	April 17, 2017	Easter Monday – STAT
Monday	May 22, 2017	Victoria Day - STAT
Friday	June 30th, 2017	Canada Day - STAT
Monday	August 7th, 2017	BC Day STAT
Friday	August 8 – August 11th, 2017	SUMMER CLOSURE
Monday	September 4, 2017	Labour Day - STAT
Monday	October 10, 2017	Thanksgiving - STAT
Friday	November 11, 2017	Remembrance Day – STAT
	December 22, 2017 – January 1, 2018	Christmas Closure

## Events:

Gala March 4, 2017

AGM May 25, 2017

**CHRISTMAS CLOSURE - LAST DAY FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Thursday December 21, 2017

Clay Tree to re-open January 2, 2018

### CONTACT US:

838 Old Victoria Rd, Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 6A1  
250-753-5322  
claytree@shaw.ca

Please send us your email address,  
and we make certain you get a  
copy of the latest Newsletter!  
or you can view it online at:  
<http://www.claytree.org/media>

