



## Dear friends,

“**Luut’aa**” is the Nisga’a name for the month of December. It means ‘staying in.’ The sun stays and rises in the same spot for several days. It also means that the people traditionally ‘stay in’, sitting by the fire.

Sitting by a fire inspires reflection, whether it is sitting by a fireplace, a summer campfire, or in a candlelit room. For Indigenous Peoples, fire is also a purifier. Smudging, or washing in the smoke from burning sage, cedar or sweetgrass, cleanses body, mind, and spirit. It opens the way for clarity in whatever needs to be expressed, good or bad.

The fire that heats the grandfather rocks for the sweat lodge is also sacred. It creates a pathway for the spirits to connect participants to the Creator and to nature, and to restore balance in their lives.

As we sit together beside our fires, let’s remember those who gather around the fires of the smudge bowl and the sweat lodge. As they courageously reflect on the darkest seasons of their life, may they discover a new light of hope.

**The Coming Home Society** partners with **Urban Native Youth Association**, **Warriors Against Violence Society**, and **YOU** to offer these healing ceremonies and programs. Thank you!



*Candle on a nest of cedar boughs*

## Warriors Against Violence—changing our children's future



*Warriors Against Violence provides child-minding so that both parents can attend co-ed Healing Circles together*

In a unique program, Warriors Against Violence brings men and women who are dealing with family violence into safe and supportive Healing Circles, both separately and together. Everyone gets to share their feelings without judgement, and hear how violence is experienced by both the abuser and the abused. They receive cultural teachings about anger management and their culture's traditional values. They learn how to create healthy family relationships in which every member is honored and respected.

**Your donations will support struggling families with emergency help for food, clothing, and medicine at Christmas and throughout the year.**

### Warriors Against Violence is -

- Low barrier—free; no referral needed; no wait time to join.
- No restrictive attendance requirements—participants come as often as needed for as long as needed; can return any time, even years later.
- Safe. Confidential. Non-judgemental.
- Open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.
- Child-minding is available. Older children may want to join Healing Circles.
- Open to all spiritual practices.

## Healing the Spirit

Spirituality is the core of Indigenous identity— it gives meaning to all aspects of life. Healing Circle participants at **Warriors Against Violence** and **Urban Native Youth Association** say -

- Ceremony and prayer is what is missing for them in other counseling settings.
- They feel accepted in their Aboriginal culture that does not attach blame or shame. No 'system' is judging them.
- Elders and Knowledge Keepers help them understand why it is so hard to stop passing on what was done to them as children to their own partners and children.
- They leave feeling lighter and more open because they held the eagle feather and talked and unburdened themselves as long as they needed to, without being interrupted.



## UNYA— grief and loss support for youth & staff

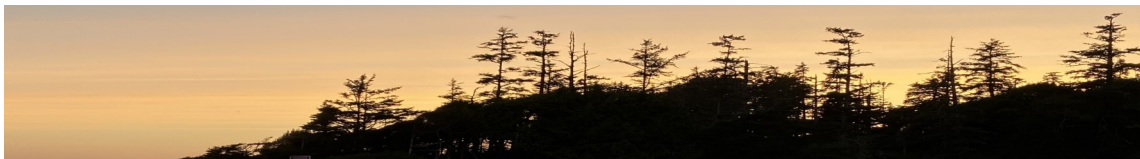
Urban Native Youth Association, located at Commercial & Hastings Street, runs 18 programs to support urban Indigenous youth. Youth often attend more than one of these programs and come daily to the main UNYA site.

Recently there has been a growing number of deaths amongst Vancouver's Indigenous youth. Overdose, suicide, and other causes have left a huge hole at UNYA.

UNYA has offered counseling and support for youth, a workshop on grief and loss, and a cultural 'letting go' ceremony held by the water.

UNYA also held a session especially for the staff. The Executive Director could not believe how many staff came to thank her. They did not realize how much grief and loss they themselves were carrying, as their focus was always on supporting the youth.

**Your donations will help UNYA provide more resources and encourage more youth to come in and deal with their feelings of grief and loss. They will also help UNYA support and equip the staff so they can be there for the youth.**



## Looking to the future....

The Coming Home Society is proud to partner with Urban Native Youth Association and Warriors Against Violence Society. We are grateful to be able to share news of their good work with you.

Together we can learn more about the people who are living with the effects of Canada's Residential School system. We can support the organizations that empower them and connect them to their culture. In the words of one residential school survivor -

“It took me a long time to wake up and realize there are a lot of wonderful teachings available to us, we just have to open our hearts and minds. Despite the negativity I have lived through, I am confident that, with the help of our Elders and their teachings, we can finally begin to repair the sacred family circles that have been all but destroyed by taking away the children and forcing them into the residential school system.”

*-Jimi Delorme, “The Lucky Ones –A Survivor’s Story”*

### HOW TO DONATE

*(All donations will receive a charitable tax receipt)*

- Make a cheque payable to the Coming Home Society.  
Mail it to 303 East Cordova Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1L4
- Google Canada Helps and donate to the Coming Home Society

For more information please contact [ladams99@shaw.ca](mailto:ladams99@shaw.ca)  
or call Linda Adams at 604-290-4117