

Pacific Rim Hospice Society

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June 18, 2007

To: David Fraser, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Community Development Committee, Discretionary Funds

From: Kim Hoag, Executive Director, Pacific Rim Hospice Society

Re: Final report Grief Support Program

Dear Sir,

Thank you once again for \$1800 from the Community Development Committee, Discretionary Funds.

Grief Support Group, Fall 2006

Background and Meetings

- ❖ Ucluelet First Nations elected chief invited hospice to present at an Elder's lunch. Several people attending expressed an interest in attending a grief support group.
- ❖ Organizational meetings for the Grief Support Group at Ucluelet East Clinic Boardroom were attended by Ucluelet First Nations staff and staff, volunteers and grief counsellor from the Pacific Rim Hospice Society.

Outreach

- ❖ Westerly News, Ha-Shilth-Sa
- ❖ Flyers given to counselors, in clinic and band office
- ❖ Hospice table at Health Fair with flyers and information about the group

The group ran 7 sessions October 3rd through November 21st 6:30-9pm. October 31st session was cancelled due to a loss in the community. The group was facilitated by hospice volunteers and grief counsellor with the support of Executive Director Kim Hoag and Community Health Representative. Six people participated, three of whom live in Itattsoo.

Each session opened with a prayer and a talking circle using an eagle feather, review of group guidelines, had a break with chumas tea, juice and coffee, and closed with a talking circle. Each participant received a binder in which to put weekly handouts. Sessions incorporated sharing, art therapy, relaxation and guided imagery, journaling, music, education and poetry and covered many topics such as grieving as a group, sharing stories about the life and death of the loved one, self care, anger, guilt, fear, unfinished business, hope, spirituality and more.

All the participant evaluations were positive, asserting the program and facilitators were very good to excellent. All would recommend the program to others. On a scale of 1-10 all felt their ability to cope with grief had grown to a 8, 9 or 10.

Goals attained:

1. Accessible, culturally sensitive and appropriate grief support program to promote healing, community health and reduce barriers to employment-prayer at beginning by Elder or Lavern, talking stick or feather
2. Promote cross-cultural understanding of end of life traditions and beliefs
3. End of life and care for the caregiver education
4. Facilitator and participant capacity building and community self reliance
5. Promote equality, trust and asset-sharing between the communities

The anticipated outcomes of greater participation by residents when group is situated in isolated reserve community and increased value of a primarily First Nations group with aboriginal material and images were not met. We, tentatively, have concluded that Mixed culture grief support groups with an alternating location accessibility to several communities are more successful. Transportation needs to be provided and/or subsidized and elements of First Nations culture like the talking feather, opening prayer and sharing of food add to the richness of the group experience.

Funding was generously provided by the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the St. John's award via BC Hospice Palliative Care Association supported transportation, chumas, art and other supplies, individual binders for participants and the three volunteer facilitators, honorarium for grief counsellor, administrative costs and program design and the Celebrate a Life tree.

Pacific Rim Hospice Society extends our gratitude to you for assistance with this important program. We continue to offer grief support groups with the new knowledge that the greatest healing and peer support comes when participants are from several different communities.

Sincerely,

Kim Hoag, Executive Director