



495 Fitzgerald Avenue Courtenay BC V9N 2R1
250.871.0343 info@yanacomoxvalley.com
Charitable Registration # 11930 5449 RR0001

yanacomoxvalley.com

Community Relations Report – Annual General Meeting October 1, 2015

The position of Community Relations continues to be exciting and fulfilling. Working with our excellent Executive Director, Marcie Dumais, is a pleasure and a privilege. Our dedicated board directors, Lesley Hunter, Judy Cryer, and Darlene Nelson, round out our office team and not only keep operations running smoothly but bring warmth and humour to our work place. Our Board of Directors have been a valuable resource and are a vital in supporting community relations and I have appreciated their accessibility and commitment in supporting my work. My gratitude goes out to our many volunteers and supporters who have helped make this year a success.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

This year our opportunities for outreach focused on program awareness which was one of the goals outlined in our strategic plan. We were able to present to a variety of groups and organizations that ranged from young families to seniors to healthcare providers and local Rotarians. Hugh Mackinnon and Marcie Dumais were key in delivering this important part of community relations.

We continue to use Facebook as an effective way to reach our supporters and to direct traffic to our website. We have made an effort to keep updating our website and this is an area of priority in the coming year.

We have had some excellent press coverage this year, most notably around the Simon's Cycles YANA Ride and the YANA Dinner & Auction. Shaw television did a video piece about Christmas Crackers and volunteering. Our third-party fundraisers also generated their own press at times and the new editor at the Record, Terry Farrell, has created something called 'Community Pages' as a place specifically for cheque presentations which is a good opportunity for the businesses who fundraise on our behalf and very useful in terms of acknowledging their contributions.

BRANDING

Our new logo is fully integrated into our operations. We continued to promote our new website by directing online traffic from Facebook. Downloadable versions of our logo are now available on our fundraising page of our website and for the most part the community has adopted the new versions. We have seen very few examples of our old logo being used this past year.

Various items were developed using our new branding: we printed mini-mini mandates that were included inside the YANA Christmas Crackers with a reach of 5000, a new sandwich board was made for the office, new nametags for the Board and staff, new letterhead and we were able to add our logo to some of our client photos to be used in places like Canada Helps page. Thank you to Marcie Dumais for following through on all of these initiatives.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

We welcomed many new volunteers this year and welcomed back even more. We continued to have an excellent response from volunteers when emails were sent through our volunteer data base and had success in recruiting new volunteers through social media, the YANA website, and through Volunteer Comox Valley. We have been able to identify and define some volunteer roles which will assist in assessing our future volunteer needs. We began to look at volunteer process and will continue to consider policy around volunteers with some assistance from the excellent resources we have received from Volunteer Comox Valley (VCV). I was able to attend a few of the monthly networking meetings of the volunteer coordinators in the Comox Valley facilitated by VCV and found them useful and interesting. Our volunteers continue to be properly recognized by our organization and we are grateful to our board and some key supporters who are part of the team that makes that happen.

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Darlene Nelson and I continue to work in tandem in this area, with my focus being on the people involved in third-party fundraisers. YANA has always maintained effective process around thanking our supporters. This year my goal was to enhance some of that contact with more formal acknowledgement in some areas and less formal follow up throughout the year. This has given me the opportunity to express our gratitude as deeply as it is felt.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Increased use of Facebook has improved community awareness and engagement this year. I have tried to keep posts interesting, humorous, and fun. It has been an effective way to promote fundraising, engage volunteers, and spread awareness. We were able to increase our likes by 21% from 1,521 on June 1, 2014 to 1,834 on May 31, 2015 (our fiscal year).

Through Facebook analytics we can see what our friends on social media appreciate. Our posts of personal stories, gratitude, client stories, and service outreach are quite significantly the ones that get the most engagement. I see this as a really important way to share YANA with our

community. Posts regarding third-party fundraising and YANA events ask something of the community and all the rest of the posts represent our give, the give that says “look what you have helped create.”

COMMUNITY-LED FUNDRAISING

Community-led fundraising also called third-party fundraising is a substantial and important part of the Community Relations position. My goal this year was to better understand this committed group of supporters who fundraise on our behalf and to continue with our processes that support them in their efforts. I was able to attend a large number of the 2014-2015 fundraisers, make personal contact with the organizers, see the amazing variety of what they do, and meet their community of supporters. Through me, Marcie or the Board participating in these events, we were able to attend almost every third-party fundraiser this past year.

We supported these fundraisers by adding them to our events calendars on Facebook and our website. Posting on Facebook helped to bring awareness to their events and of the benefit to YANA. In some cases, I was able to write a news post for our website or use something directly from the newspaper or that the organizer had generated. Every third-party fundraiser uses some type of YANA signage and has YANA information available. These events not only generate approximately 22% of YANA’s revenue but serve as an excellent outreach opportunity in terms of awareness, services, and volunteering.

There were approximately sixty, third-party fundraisers last year. In the first five months of this year we have seen almost the same number already. This is very exciting!

CLOSING

In closing, this year I felt like I was part of a cohesive, committed, and caring team of people that includes our board directors, our volunteers, third-party fundraisers, donors, and supporters. I look forward to the next year with this great community.

Ocean Varney | YANA Community Relations