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Community Relations Report – Annual General Meeting October 4, 2018

This report is for the fiscal year covering June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018. My first day with YANA began May 30 2018 as the new YANA Community Relations Coordinator. I have based this report mainly from the monthly CRC reports and website information from the previous CRC for YANA - Ocean Varney, 'at the helm'.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Again this year, our presence in local media has been notable. Generally, our fundraisers have had great coverage in the Record newspaper, and in particular the Simon's Cycles YANA Ride. Many of our third-party fundraisers have also had their press releases make the paper. That can be a challenge with the space constraints of only one local paper. The Valley Vonka fundraising event sponsored in part by the Record gave us the chance to have feature stories in a series of articles called 'Circle of Giving.' The community pages also featured photos of many of our cheque presentations as well.

Local radio stations and publications continue to be generous in their promotion of YANA.

Board Director Hugh MacKinnon led the YANA Week in the Schools. Many schools within School District 71 plan events during a special week dedicated to YANA, raising awareness and funds. Some schools support YANA at other times of the year. We are so very fortunate to have this relationship with the school district and see all ages of the students participating.

Thanks to our staff, Board Directors and YANA Ambassadors, we were able a strong presence out in the community. YANA representatives were, among many other events, at The Local Heroes Awards, Chamber of Commerce Mixers, sports events and Rotary Club meetings.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

YANA is blessed to be in a position of having so many willing YANA volunteers at the ready. We use the computer volunteer database program SUMAC to email volunteer positions when needed. Alternatively, we do a group email call out to our YANA directors and/or ambassadors when it best suits someone who can be a good communicator for YANA.

YANA's capacity as an organization relies substantially on volunteers. From our office duties, fundraising efforts, community outreach, our volunteers are there!

Once again, YANA volunteers make remarkable commitments around our big fundraisers and have leadership roles in Big Love Benefit, Simon's Cycles YANA Ride, YANA Kids Clutter, and YANA Christmas Crackers. We are also able to provide volunteers if requested for our third party fundraisers, for instance The Town of Comox and Investor's Group Easter Eggstravaganza and The Potter's Place Chili Bowl Fundraiser.

YANA volunteers, of all ages, show their generosity, spirit, and big hearts throughout the year!

GRATITUDE

Darlene, Lesley, and Ocean coordinated the acknowledgment of our donors. They were able to continue to send personal thank you's to everyone. Including a little note of acknowledgment sets us apart from larger non-profits. It keeps the Comox Valley connected with the 'grass roots' heart of this organization. Having our donors see someone take the time to use personal handwriting is a wonderful thing!

When requested, we meet with third party fundraisers after events and do a cheque presentation and photo either at the YANA office or location of their choice. Each month we update our posts under 'Thank You's' on our website (under the News section, and sub-section Thank You's.)

Our Staff, Board Members and YANA Ambassadors are profoundly grateful for the love of this community and are fabulous at communicating that in person whenever possible.

SOCIAL MEDIA

This fiscal year our YANA Comox Valley Facebook page started with 2409 likes and reached 2688 by the end of May. An increase of 279 new likes, up 12%. Facebook continues to be our main use of social media and works well for us to share stories, promote events, direct traffic to our website, and express gratitude.

Impact posts and client stories are what our audience is most responsive to and it has been a great way to share those stories and have conversations around the scope of YANA's work in the community. For example, one post had reached an astonishing 8000+ people. It shared photos highlighting Maverick's difficult journey and the commitment to YANA fundraising from the Ardron family.

Our FB account also links to our Twitter account so we have a presence there as well. We also have an Instagram account and YouTube account that are not as active compared to FB. FB has fit our demographic well, but as the next generation comes through, we will most likely need to be more multi-faceted with social media in the future.

THIRD PARTY FUNDRAISING

These fundraisers are initiated and executed by the Comox Valley community. They have a large impact for YANA and are crucial in our fundraising needs. We support these diverse events by adding them to our event calendars on Facebook and our website. Sharing them

through social media posts and posting any available news stories to our website. We are able to provide YANA logos, signage, donations cans, and informational materials for these events. We also recruit YANA volunteers (or board members/ambassadors where needed to support it.)

Scroll through the 'Thank You's' section on the YANA website to understand the diverse range of community members, organizations and businesses that are leading these efforts. From little kid birthday parties, to larger more complicated events involving large amounts of businesses and volunteers working together, you will see that there. We are fortunate to have many recurring third party fundraisers from committed YANA Champions year after year. We also love seeing the various ideas and connections made with new fundraisers.

CLOSING

This has been another busy year for YANA and I know Ocean appreciated the positive working environment, collaborative team, and committed supporters that allowed YANA to accomplish so much. Thank you everyone and Ocean. I am so excited I get to continue her work!

Deanne McRae | YANA Community Relations