

# 2013 Storytellers' Foundation



2013 Annual Report

## **A message from Storytellers' Chair: Dr. Peter Newbery**

Census data describes a somber picture for life in our communities. In the Upper Skeena the majority of household incomes are far below the poverty line; suicide is epidemic; housing is in a state of disrepair; children are 50% more likely to suffer from chronic disease.. and the list continues. What the statistical data fails to show is the wealth that exists within our communities. This wealth might not come in the form of cash but it is genuine wealth. It comes in the form of long lasting relationships, wild salmon, resilient people, and rivers and land that provide us with food, wellbeing and a sense of connection beyond only ourselves.

Those of us involved with Storytellers' Foundation know that we live with both sides of this picture. We choose to focus on our assets. Our activities build the skills, knowledge and confidence of people to live healthy and rewarding lives, including a sustainable livelihood. We challenge assumptions about poverty including the idea that people choose to live with poverty and that a rural lifestyle can not sustain us. As we work alongside people to reduce poverty, we challenge the root causes of poverty. This involves working beyond our communities with governments and non-government groups to change systems so that northern, rural and aboriginal ways of being are not only accepted but embraced.

This takes a lot of energy and positive people - if you embrace the way of life in our community then we invite you to join us in building happy, healthy lives for all people who call this place home.





## Our approach

Storytellers' Foundation challenges assumptions about poverty, literacy and citizenship by directly engaging people in issues and opportunities that

affect their lives. We're organized around three focus areas:

**Practical Intervention:** Popular education, experiential education, literacy and food security

activities provide opportunities for people living in poverty to build capacity, hope and happiness.

**Local Infrastructure:** Community development approaches engage diverse citizens to co-create change for the good of the community.

**Strategic Intervention:** Our practice and approach of validating the place-based, sustenance economy of the Upper Skeena is a culturally relevant solution to relieving poverty.

*This page summarizes some of our activities. There is so much more - please ask us for more information.*

## Practical Intervention



**Youth Works** employed 15 youth this year. Youth Works continues to sell food + coordinate the Farmers Market Coupon program.

**Community Kitchen** hosted 26 people weekly for a meal and literacy activities. The Kitchen continues to be busy and active.

**Community Development Service Learning** engaged 10 youth in citizenship development projects while gaining school credit.

**Check Your Latitude** mentored 3 teens to lead change in their community. The video on our website tells their story. [upperskeena.ca]

**Backyard Gardeners** built knowledge, skills and confidence around local food production. 11 people met weekly this season.

## Local Infrastructure



**Women's Collective:** We partnered with Hagwilget Village, Office of Wet'suwet'en and Gitsegukla Health Station to operate 2 Collectives where women built relationships and developed food economy skills.

**Indigenous Women's Safety:** We partnered with the Indigenous women's group to facilitate decolonizing conversations about increasing safety for women.

**Knowledge Exchange:** Gitxsan knowledge holders have been sharing traditional systems for care with western service providers.

**Housing Forum:** We've started organizing with 30 organizations to create plans for a coordinated approach to affordable housing in the Upper Skeena.

## Strategic Intervention



**Publications:** Our publications are available at Storytellers' and will eventually be on our website.

**2014 GPI Calendar** shares our results and findings in exploring Genuine Progress in the Upper Skeena.

**Women's Collective Primer** is a short handbook on how to develop Collectives as one way to shift helping relationships away from disempowering (service-client) to enabling where the "client" takes control.

**Gender Based Analysis** highlights what we've learned about life for women in the Upper Skeena.

**Upper Skeena Housing Report** pulls together affordable housing research and our local, coordinated housing projects together in one document.



*This word cloud gives a snapshot of our mission and purpose*



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