

MEDIA RELEASE

Reconciliation House Post Ceremony

On Friday, September 8th dozens of people gathered on the grounds of Cheakamus Centre to participate in a traditional blessing ceremony to celebrate the carving of a Reconciliation House Post, created by renowned Squamish Nation artist Xwalactun (Rick Harry).

The nearly 4-metre Reconciliation House Post features several Coast Salish forms. During the ceremony Xwalactun shared “To have reconciliation we need to work together to find balance, recognize what happened in the past and where we are going now. The two salmon symbolize that balance”.

“The eagle is there to remind us that we are being watched and all of us are connected to something greater than us. The eyes are in the spiritual form looking further than its’ normal vision to symbolize enlightenment and strength. In-between the eagle and the salmon is the Coast Salish eye reinforcing we are being watched and our responsibility to each other.” Xwalactun explained.

Cheakamus Centre, a 420-acre ecological reserve located in Paradise Valley, has a long-standing commitment to Indigenous education. Overnight cultural programs have taken place at the longhouse since the early 1980’s. As part of the ceremony the Harry, Billy, Gabriel, and Williams families were acknowledged for their significant contributions in sharing important cultural practices with thousands of students over the years.

Mayor Patricia Heintzman recognized the importance of programs offered by Cheakamus Centre and Xwalactun’s dedication to his practice that connects communities and influences students understanding of the natural world.

The Reconciliation Post will be permanently installed later in the year near the entrance to the Centre’s longhouse, alongside the Ch’iyákmesh (Cheakamus) River, a Skwxwú7mesh word meaning people of the fish weir”.

Funding for this project was gratefully provided by the Squamish Arts Council, the yellow cedar log was donated by the Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre, with additional support from Friends of Cheakamus members.

For more information about Friends of Cheakamus or other development initiatives, please contact Sarah Bainbridge, Senior Development Officer at sarah@cheakamuscentre.ca.