

## **2004 Ethics in Action Awards**

### **Individual Impact Category**

**Shirley Lang, Dakota West Consulting**  
**Kaug Auk Shee (Festival of the Raven) Cree Nation**

When The Beads of Hope Foundation was asked to make a third party nomination for the 2004 Ethics in Action Award, Shirley Lang came immediately to mind. She has proven to be a most deserving nominee who has shown a high level of social responsibility in her humanitarian justice work for Aboriginal human rights. Having met Shirley at the AGM of Spirit of the People Society and attended the \*Gladue - Justice Requires Humanity Symposium which she coordinated, we highly recommend Shirley Lang for the Ethics in Action Award.

The Aboriginal Justice model for First Nations offenders has profound implications for healing which impacts the Aboriginal community and mainstream approaches to Canadian societal justice issues. Her impressive contribution to improving the communities in which she participates benefits the Indigenous World and Canadian society at large.

Born to Cree parents, Lang was raised with an inherent respect for Native ways and the power of Earth's abundance. A single mother to Brittony Brooke, Shirley lives a healthy and balanced lifestyle in order to be a positive role model for her daughter and community at large.

Shirley's spirit name is Kaug Auk Shee - Festival of the Raven. Shirley, from the Cree Nation, is highly regarded by members of the Aboriginal community, judiciary, and justice system as a cultural bridge builder and positive role model. She is guided by her deep spirituality, and relies on the wisdom and direction of her respected Elders and Mentors. Shirley coordinates and develops programs that are established to formulate, initiate, and promote mechanisms, which constructively involve the Aboriginal community in the justice process. She assists Aboriginal offenders, the community and justice/legal system personnel, to work together in order to create healing linkages that empower the offender to break the destructive cycle of criminal activity and incarceration that profoundly affects our communities.

As the owner of Dakota West Consulting, Shirley writes the additional reports (that accompany Pre-Sentence reports) based on the Supreme Court of Canada decision R. v. Gladue - she calls them "Cultural Background Impact Reports". The first report that she wrote in 1996, was for The Honourable Justice Dohm, who stated in his Reasons for Judgment that, "He could not remember the last time he received such a full and fair report and that the author should be 'congratulated'. He went on to say that 'if Pre-sentence reports were like the one she had written, more often, it would make the very difficult job of sentencing much



easier'." For 6 years, Shirley was the only Aboriginal non-justice system personnel individual writing these reports.

The Gladue reports are specific to a new Criminal Code of Canada section that came into effect in 1996, Section 718(2)(e). This section allows the sentencing Judge to receive all of the pertinent background information necessary to properly create an appropriate healing sentence for the Aboriginal offender. Aboriginal offenders are the highest represented offenders in the Canadian prison and justice system, due to many systemic and historic factors. This section of the Criminal Code provides an opportunity for Aboriginal peoples to be treated more fairly and in a healing way as our Charter of Freedom and Human Rights and the UN Human Rights states.

Shirley coordinated and partially financed the *"Justice Requires Humanity, Gladue: A Message for the Millennium"* symposium, a 2 day legal conference (held September 27 & 28, 2001) that focused on information sharing and relationship building, with participants from all levels of the justice system and the Aboriginal community. She shares her heritage and cultural knowledge with new Correctional Officers in training for the Justice Institute of British Columbia in Vancouver. Shirley speaks often in First Nations Communities, Colleges, and Universities about the Supreme Court of Canada Gladue decision and Section 718 (2)(e) of the Criminal Code of Canada.

As a community development worker for Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services, Shirley facilitated opportunities for voices of those affected by the justice system and the foster care system, to be heard.

On behalf of the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Shirley has been the Native Liaison for Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre for 3 years and has developed the Spirit of Justice Program to assist Federal parolees with their Correctional Conditional Release Act Section 84 applications. In October of 2002, Shirley began a position as the Support Worker for the Aboriginal Housing Transition Project assisting community members to access safe and affordable housing. She was successful in accessing community donations to fully furnish and support the 8-unit 2 bedroom (per unit) apartment building, Iy, Ilen Hautw, recently purchased by the Victoria Native Friendship Centre.

In collaboration with local community members, Shirley founded and chairs the Urban Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council with the mission to work in partnerships with Aboriginal Communities and organizations in prevention and intervention for Aboriginal Persons who are in contact with the criminal justice system, with the aim of decreasing the over-representation within the prisons.

In January 2004, Shirley created, developed and is the justice coordinator of Ska'ls - Beliefs in Justice, Victoria Aboriginal Transformative Justice Program which creates alternatives to



the standard justice system, focusing on restorative justice practices, for both Aboriginal youth and adult offenders living within the urban setting.

Shirley arrived in British Columbia in 1995 from Toronto where, for 20 years she volunteered her time, energy and expertise to organizations such as *The Starlight Foundation*, *The Children's Aid Society*, *The Cabbagetown Community Arts Centre* and *Native Child And Family Services of Toronto*. She coordinated media activities for the opening of *Gizhaadsaawgamik Daycare* at First Nations School, where she was president, vice president and treasurer — this was Toronto's first all-Aboriginal childcare centre. Shirley was a film and video specialist on the board of directors for Harbourfront's *Earth Spirit Festival*, advising the Aboriginal committee for *Canadian Music Week* and consultant to *MuchMusic's Aboriginal Youth Speak-out* (broadcast on May 29/94).

Shirley sat on the committee for *Aboriginal Community Police Relations*, which acted as a liaison between the Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit and the former Metropolitan Toronto Police Chief, Bill McCormick. She was a council member for *Aboriginal Community Council* on behalf of Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto. She was also Secretary on the Board of Directors for *Pedahbun Lodge*, Toronto's only Aboriginal substance-abuse treatment centre.

During her years in Toronto, Shirley was an award-winning hair stylist, salon owner and accomplished business executive, and single mother, Shirley Lang's field of influence circled a wide network of celebrities, media hosts, entertainment moguls and personalities. She has contributed to the success of recording artists, radio hosts, television stars and prominent actors, at home and abroad. With an uncanny ability for bringing out the best in people — and achieving success in a world measured by commercial strategies and advertising budgets — Lang's business was built on personal recommendations and one-on-one referrals.

Recognized for her commitment to high standards of excellence and dedicated artistic vision, Lang acquired the respect and support of the likes of Moses Znaimer, Alan Thicke and recording artists Liona Boyd, Marianne Faithful, Lisa Dalbello, Colin James, and Cory Hart. Lang formed her own talent agency, Brooke International Talent Inc., (named after her newborn daughter) in 1989 and within six years, had developed a much-in-demand roster of accomplished actors, comedians and personalities, including Robert Ito (*Star Trek*, *Quincy*, *X-Files*).

Lang has been the focus of major editorial coverage with features from YTV, CBC radio and television and Citytv (*Fashion Television*, *City Line*). At the hub of a high-profile circle of stars and celebrities, Lang continually attracted the attention of young, emerging talent and was ideally positioned to help them further their goals, which she now applies to working with Aboriginal people who are in conflict with the law.

Shirley applies her personal philosophies to the challenges of everyday circumstances and the human condition. As a living role model, her real work lies in her innate, dynamic ability to empower people. She is poised to help identify and apply their untapped gifts and skills, while sparking their imagination, broadening their realm of possibilities, increasing their choices, opening doors and facilitating their advancement.

Since 2002, Shirley has been developing and operating her own Catering company, Kitchens of Distinction Culinary Arts Ltd. Exploring different cultural cuisines has always been her passion and a positive way to express her artistic side. She has been taught to create beautiful flavourful healthy dishes by experts from many different ethnic backgrounds. This journey has not only been nourishing for her soul but has also been and continues to be a way to bring people together on an equal level, in order to share her philosophies of feasting with the goal of dispelling racism and creating mutual respect, in a silent nourishing way: Creating Harmony.



VICTORIA NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

June 21, 2004

Ethic In Action Selection Committee  
C/O 620-220 Cambie St  
Vancouver B.C.  
V6B 2M9

Dear Sir or Madam:

I'm writing this letter in support of Shirley Lang as the nominee for the Individual Impact award category. Shirley has for the past 4 years worked for the Victoria Native Friendship Centre involved for the most part in the justice system. As the Native Liaison with the Centre she was instrumental in the development of the Spirit of Justice program. Her dedicated hard work with the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre is well recognized and respected in the Aboriginal community. Since then she has engaged herself in the areas of housing advocacy, fairness to the foster care system and most recently helped develop the Urban Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council. At present, Shirley is the coordinator of Ska'ls- Beliefs in Justice, Victoria Aboriginal Transformative Justice program.

Her work with the Gladue reports have been recognized by the judicial and justice system in taking the lead in the development of culturally sensitive pre-sentencing reporting "Cultural Background Impact Reports" for Aboriginal offender. Aboriginal offenders represent the highest numbers in the Canadian prison system. These reports allow aboriginal offenders to be treated more fairly in this system as stated in our Charter of Freedom and Human Rights and the United Nations Human Rights Charter.

As you can see her work in the humanities makes her a perfect candidate for this award and I whole heartedly support her in this category. She has shown strong leadership and initiative in this area and continues her fight for the Human Rights for Aboriginal offenders. Thank you for the opportunity to support Shirley for this award. Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Bruce Parisian  
Executive Director

**LARRY GILBERT**  
**Barrister & Solicitor**

479 Sturdee Street  
Victoria, British Columbia V9A 6R2

Telephone: (250) 478-8881  
Facsimile: (250) 478-8801

Ethics in Action Selection Committee  
c/o 620 - 220 Cambie Street  
Vancouver, BC  
V6B 2M9

May 17, 2004

Dear Committee Members:

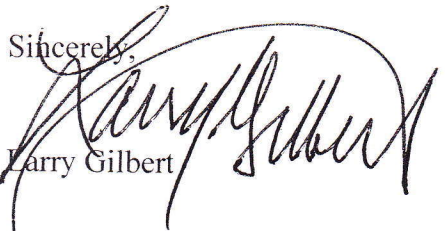
**RE: SHIRLEY LANG AS A NOMINEE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL IMPACT CATEGORY**

Please accept this letter as a letter of support for Shirley Lang, a nominee for the Individual Impact Category.

I am an Algonquin Indian originally from Ontario but I have lived and worked in Victoria for the past 14 years. I am a lawyer practising in the areas of family law, aboriginal law and administrative law including human rights. I have known Shirley Lang for 6 years now. She owns and operates Dakota West, a consulting firm in Victoria. Shirley Lang was the inspiration for Spirit of the People, an organization created to help Aboriginal offenders stay out of prison. Shirley Lang has also helped numerous lawyers throughout the Province in sentencing matters by preparing a "Gladue" submission. She has provided leadership and direction for many young Aboriginal students and she has donated countless hours of her own time to help community organizations dedicated to helping Aboriginal families and individuals. At one time, Shirley Lang worked for me as an office manager. Her talent and expertise in office management and time management were a blessing. She has taught me how to organize my office and how to better serve my clients. She is a kind and generous person who is always available to help someone who is less fortunate than herself. Throughout her career and as long as I have known Shirley, she has demonstrated the highest level of professionalism and compassion whether it is on a contract or in a volunteer capacity. Shirley's impact in our community is that we live in a richer and more vibrant community because Shirley Lang lives and works among us.

Please do not hesitate to call or write if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Larry Gilbert



**CORRECTIONS AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE DIVISION**

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November 6, 2000

Victoria Native Friendship Centre  
Shirley Lang  
220 Bay Street  
Victoria British Columbia  
V9A 3K5

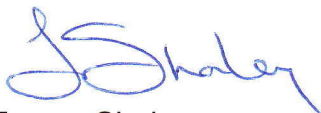
**RE: Adult Corrections Officer Program #00:08  
Glendale Lodge**

Dear Shirley,

Thank you for the wonderful time you spent with my class teaching them about Aboriginal Awareness. The students thoroughly enjoyed the presentation and the ceremony you shared with them. The information you shared was realistic and gave them a really good insight into aboriginal people. The students expressed their thanks to me to pass on to you. I look forward to seeing you again in our next Employment Readiness Program in Victoria.

Thanks again

Sincerely,



Teresa Shaley  
Co-ordinator & Instructor  
Corrections and Community Justice Division  
Justice Institute of BC  
tshaley@jibc.bc.ca

Training for safer  
communities  
through

Centre for Conflict  
Resolution

Corrections and  
Community Justice

Courts Academy

Emergency  
Management  
Division

Fire and Safety  
Division

Paramedic Academy

Police Academy

Social Services &  
Community Safety  
Division





# **Certificate Of Appreciation Ce Certificat De Mérit**

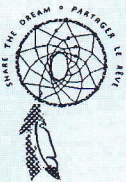
*is presented to/est présenté à*

***Shirley Lang***

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**in recognition of your active participation in the recruitment of Native role models. On behalf of the National Native Role Program, we thank you for your assistance in identifying individuals whose dreams can inspire Native youth to create and achieve positive life goals.**

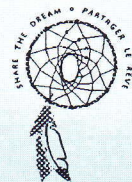
**en reconnaissance de votre participation active au recrutement de personnages modèles autochtones. Au nom du Programme national de personnages modèles autochtones, nous vous remercions d'avoir aidé à identifier des personnes dont les rêves peuvent encourager la jeunesse autochtone à viser et à atteindre des but élevés.**



***March 17, 1998***

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**DATE**



**National Native Role Model Program  
Programme National De Personnages Modèles Autochtones**





March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am pleased to offer this letter of support and reference for Shirley Lang.

As Director of Programs at the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC) through 2000 and 2001 I had the pleasure of working with Shirley in her capacity as the Native Liaison Coordinator for the Centre. I would like to confirm that Shirley delivered a wide variety of support and cultural awareness services and programs to a diverse group of First Nation inmates.

Shirley established direct links for the Centre with local Chiefs, Elders and spiritual leaders to enable quality programs and support for our aboriginal men. Our inmates and staff benefited from her constructive advocacy, compassion, knowledge and beliefs. Shirley dedicated many hours assisting the men to make positive connections and change by providing teachings and ceremonies.

The inmate population that Shirley worked with included those with mental disorders, substance abuse problems and serious criminal and violent behaviours. Shirley was able to support most of these individuals while respecting the complicated and critical security environment of a maximum security institution.

I can vouch for Shirley's honesty, tenacity and work ethic and I would be pleased to provide appropriate additional information as required for her future endeavors.

Sincerely,

  
Bill Young  
Director, Special Projects  
Strategic Planning & Corporate Programs Division  
Corrections Branch  
Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General

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E-Mail: [bill.young@gems6.gov.bc.ca](mailto:bill.young@gems6.gov.bc.ca)

*Protecting Communities, Reduce Reoffending*

**Ministry of  
Public Safety and  
Solicitor General**

**Corrections Branch**  
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