

## Wenasgwəlla?aw (Generations House) opens with a Ribbon Cutting



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic only a small crowd was invited for the ribbon cutting ceremony at 2:00 PM on May 13th to officially open the Generations House. All ceremony photos by Larry Workman

By Jennifer Scott—QIN Communications Assistant

It was a typical, glorious spring, coastal day – the sun was hidden behind the high clouds as not to outshine the new Wenasgwəlla?aw (Generations House) on the day it would officially be introduced to the community and it’s soon to be new occupants. The Generations House, 14 years in the making from the day it was imagined during the 2007 Annual General Council, proposed by Dawneen DeLaCruz, seconded by Mandy Hudson--Howard and voted on by the membership. It was recognized during those discussions that we were facing the eminent effects of global warming and the real possibility of a tsunami, threatening our most vulnerable segments of our population – the children and the elders. Moving programs that served them would be prioritized for relocation to higher ground; therefore, the process was set in motion.

The ceremony for the Ribbon Cutting was uncharacteristically brief with a much smaller crowd due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19

pandemic. However, not even a worldwide pandemic could eclipse the joy and pride that was present in the crowd as our Elder, Tekie Rosander opened the event with a prayer, blessing the building and all the children and elders who would soon occupy this new space. As is the tradition when we celebrate a significant event, our cultural singers offer a song as a prayer or honoring, as such, Doug James and his group, the Songbirds offered a song called “Ancestral Journey.”

Interim Community Services Director, Julie Burnett who served as the MC next introduced Quinault Indian Nation President, Guy Capoeaman to address the crowd and share his perspective on what the Generations House means to our Nation. Guy reminded us that this day and this building is not about him as the President of the Quinault Nation, or not about any elected official, but it is about the kids. He asked, “How many lives will this place change?” His message was about the future of our children and the opportunities this new space will provide for them, as



QIN President Guy Capoeaman steadies the ribbon as Miss Quinault Denise Curleybear cuts it to officially open Wenasgwəlla?aw.

well as acknowledging the workers who constructed it. He said it was “real work and hard work” and provided a means for our members to have good paying jobs in the process.

Guy continued his comments to remind us that this building started at the grass-roots level, followed by General Council action, then to the Business Committee to find the money to make it happen.

As the sponsor of the 2007 General Council proposal, Dawneen DeLaCruz recalled the night she presented it; she said, “It took everything inside me to hold off my cry.” She recalls thinking, “workers (QIN employees) were safe on higher ground (in reference to the Tribal Administrative Complex), but it broke my heart to



The elder's dining hall.

watch our children practice the evacuation route exercise to escape a tsunami.” Dawneen acknowledged Kelsey Moldenke and Charles Warsinske for their work in the planning for the project.

Current Chief Taholah Day’s Miss Quinault, Denise

Curleybear, assisted by President Capoeaman, then cut the ribbon, officially and ceremoniously opening Wenasgwəlla?aw, followed by a brief tour of the building and a light meal “to go” for guests and the witnesses of the event.



Karen Walker, Senior Project Manager, lead a small group on a tour of the building following the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

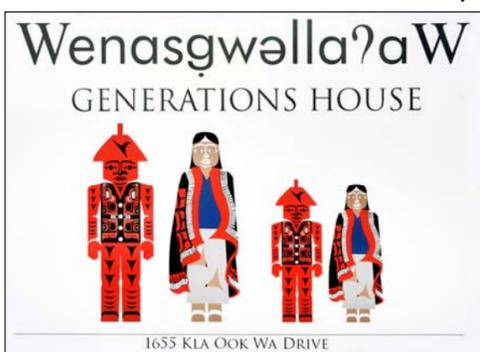
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The Principle speakers at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony were Left to right: Julie Burnett - MC and Interim Community Service Director, Elder Tekie Rosander delivered the Invocation, QIN President Guy Capoeaman, Councilwoman Dawneen DeLaCruz - who proposed a General Council mandate to move the youth and elders out of the Tsunami zone and Miss Quinault Denise Curleybear.



Left: The new sign on the driveway to the building.

Right: Some of the Songbirds Canoe Family sang an Ancestral Journey song.

