Respect Works Here

> “We’ve all got visions. We need to be quiet enough to see them.”
>
> - Jody Leon

Community Champion

Jody Leon’s Splatsin name given to her by the Elders in a recent naming ceremony is Sasa’7 which is affiliated with the Northern Lights. The name is well chosen as traditionally the Northern Lights and stars have been used by people to guide them and this is exactly what Jody does everyday through her work as a Legal Advocate with the Vernon Women’s Transition House Society.

“I help guide people through,” she says. “They are lost in a system and they may have an issue and are falling through the cracks. I become the voice for that person.”

Helping people has been a passion for Jody her whole life, and one that she learned at the knee of her mother, Rosalind Williams, often accompanying her when she went to work. Her mother and father were both strong role models for her. “A lot of the vision and passion that I have in my life come from the good role modeling that I had.”

“My mother has been a very big inspiration for my life, “ she continues. “When I think of a Community Champion, I think of my mom. She has been tirelessly preserving the cultures, traditions, history and language of our people, and continues to give so much everyday.”

“She is very visionary and that is what drove her. She taught me that we’ve all got visions. We need to be quiet enough to see them and move forward.”

Jody is from the Splats’in First Nation with Irish heritage on her mother’s side and the Lake Babine Nation on her father’s. She is grounded and connected to the land she grew up on and proud of her heritage and being able to give back to her community by being a strong advocate.

“I was already working for my band when as a young woman I heard of one of our members going to university and this really intrigued me,” she says. “I wanted to find out more and I thought I should try that.”

Determining that her interests lay in the systems that keep people in place she felt that pursuing both a Social Work and a Law degree would be where she could help the most.

“Our indigenous people are like the coyote, that trickster-transformer in the Creation Stories, and they always survive. Regardless of what has been thrown at us, be it racism or oppression, we continue to move forward and we draw on the strengths of our ancestors. We will continue to overcome those systems and move forward with strength.”

“I have done a multitude of things but before I accept any job, I have to make sure it pulls on the passion from inside of me. My passion is not about money, it’s about what I do,” she says emphatically. “ I want to look back on my life and ensure that I have left really good tracks on this earth. My Creator has given me my skills, and my job on earth is to use them.”

Jody stands at the base of “Quiliqua” mountain, the site of an historic battle of Splatsin people and is a sacred site with much meaning to her Splatsin people.