

Tribal Journey 2007

This was the third year for ITHA's Aboriginal Suicide Critical Incident Response Team (ASCIRT) to participate with youth, Elders and other adults 23 extremely determined, seafaring people, who made sure their traditional canoe kept pace, overcame challenges and best of all, completed with sustained enthusiasm, this First Nations/Tribal healing journey. (Photo courtesy of Ben Charles)



ASCIRT members worked hard to co-ordinate this activity and their efforts were rewarded with a very successful trip that included daily lessons in teamwork and lifeskills.

We acknowledge the Snuneymuxw First Nation and the use of their canoe!

The crew came together to not only support each other in practical ways, such as hard work - but were also able to do some healing along the way.

It was an adventure! While in Lummi, the canoe tipped, but because of all the advance safety measures that were put in place, all were safe. We also had wonderful support from the escort boats and the Coast Guard from that territory. All of us were very grateful.

Throughout the journey, the ASCIRT members continued to support the crew in various ways, including morning and evening circles.

Culture was always a priority. Our protocol was excellent - we acknowledged Lummi Nation for their hard work and all the support boats/escort boats for doing such a great job in looking after all the canoes. We were not the only ones who went through difficult moments, and all of our canoe families felt supported.

Last year's tragic drowning death was on our minds. The family members of the late Jerry Jack traveled with us and it was an honour to have them, as they started their healing journey. At the protocol ceremony they lead us through songs and dance.

Once home, the ASCIRT staff continued to help the crew in their healing - we held an end-of-journey traditional ceremony. ASCIRT is not only involved with Suicide Prevention, but also we know it is important to recognize that as First Nations people we need to continue with our culture.

We are very pleased that once again we were able to use our culture to help our youth, Elders and ourselves to carry on with our healing journey, through participation in this annual tradition of travelling with Tribal Journey canoes. We are looking forward to doing it again in 2008.