

Tlecko, Tlecko for the Nomination – ʔuklaamah Gonocolit (English name Melissa Gus)

I am from the Watts, Sam and Gus houses of Tse-shaht.

- My parents Margaret E. Gus (Sam) and Late William Barry Gus
- My maternal Grand Parents were the late Agnes Sam (Watts) and Charlie Sam
- My paternal Grand Parents were the late Reginald Gus and Phyllis Gus (Baker)

I look forward to everything that comes after accepting my nomination and becoming a candidate in our upcoming election for a seat at the table of Tse-shaht First Nation Council. I'd wish everyone best of luck through the process.

I was born and raised in Tse-shaht Territory, but I have been away just over 10 years. I am now home full time and have been home for almost two years. I am a single mom of 4 children, and one grandchild. For the first 12 years of my professional life I have worked in Community Service and Social Services Administration finishing in Employment Training with Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. Over the last 9 Years I have worked within Youth Employment, Child/ Youth and Family Navigation in the Snuneymuxw Territory where I also called home during the years I lived away. Currently I am working from home full-time as the Indigenous Employment Outreach Coordinator with WorkBC Nanaimo.

My passion for Indigenous advocacy personally and professionally in community has been a part of my life's upbringing and guided me through my professional career choices over the years. I have some really great mentors that have guided me on this path, my grandparents, my father, and my aunt. I have watched each of them shape the lives of youth and young adults in different ways.

Majority of my growth and professional development has come from being an Urban Indigenous person living away from home. Experiencing firsthand what it's like to be without your community and thrive with systems that are not supportive. I had to learn quick and strong to become an advocate for myself and my children and those that I supported professionally.

The strength's I bring to our community members is 15 years of 'community and indigenous advocacy.' I am passionate about minimizing but preferably eliminating social service, community service, health service, employment service, access to safe housing, and economic growth barriers for at risk youth, infants, children, young adults families, elders, members with disabilities - our community as a whole.

Like many I have a strong cultural teachings that have played just a big role in my personal and profession position in life and have lived by those teachings passed on to me from some of our greatest teachers in song, dance, language (one day I dream to be a fluent speaker).

I am prepared to put forward the commitment, energy and effort necessary at re-building community confidence in our Nation. I speak from the heart, I work from the heart but I also respect a strong team with vision.

- Address and minimize community barriers for at risk families, children, youth, young adults and members with disabilities.
- Address and minimize community biases
- Encourage and support community voice
- My dream is a more robust Health and Wellness Centre for our community with bountiful access to Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Physical Health, and Healthy Communication for Families, Young Parents, children, and Youth.

Every move we make going forward shapes the resiliency of our members. Together lets set our members up with a solid foundation to grow from - I am ready to be accountable for the next generations.