

ABORIGINAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



AHMA ENERGY CHAMPION

SANDY WHITE

Kekuli Centre Property Manager
North Okanagan Friendship Centre

PROFILE

Sandy White has been the Property Manager at Kekuli for 1.5 years. After working in various industries over the past 35 years, Sandy feels that housing is where she belongs.

Sandy was motivated to invest in energy efficiency upgrades after learning about Kekuli Centre's high water consumption levels from the City of Vernon.

CONTACT KEKULI

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HOUSING SOCIETY

Kekuli, North Okanagan Friendship Centre is an Indigenous non-profit housing provider and AHMA member in the City of Vernon, affiliated with the B.C. Association of Friendship Centres. Friendship Centres provide support to the urban Indigenous community.

Kekuli's mission is to provide culturally appropriate health/social programs and services for the North Okanagan Indigenous community. Kekuli Centre housing provides safe and clean accommodation for Indigenous youth experiencing or at risk of being homeless because of a physical, social or mental condition or disability.

ENERGY JOURNEY

Sandy's energy journey started when she attended the Housing Central Conference in 2019. Sandy met the staff at [It's On Electric Company](#), who told her about BC Hydro and FortisBC's [Energy Conservation Assistance Program \(ECAP\)](#).

ECAP provides FREE help to income-qualified households in B.C. to improve their homes' comfort and efficiency.

Sandy signed up Kekuli Centre for ECAP. Through the program, she was able to secure new replacement fridges for 14 units at no cost. Kekuli residents received carbon monoxide detectors, LED bulbs, aerators for the taps, low-flow showerheads, fridge magnets with some tips on saving energy, a fridge thermometer, and night lights for each unit.

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AHMA

AHMA is an umbrella organization composed of 41 Members that are each Indigenous Housing and Service providers. Our members represent over 5000 Indigenous families living in urban, rural, and northern regions of British Columbia.

Created for Indigenous Peoples by Indigenous Peoples, we are the first Indigenous Housing Authority in Canada and only the second globally. We are direct partners with the Provincial government, and our mission is to advance the housing rights of all Indigenous Peoples living in B.C.

CONTACT AHMA

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MONITORING ENERGY USE

Sandy continues to monitor cost savings from the ECAP upgrades. She is reviewing power bills and energy consumption for each unit and plans to compare the previous year's bills to this year. She will then work to understand any discrepancies between the units, such as how a mom and child in a 2-bedroom suite can be using less power than a single person in a 1-bedroom suite.

ENERGY ADVICE

AHMA connected Sandy with the free Home Energy Management Training webinars offered through the Fraser Basin Council's [First Nations Home EnergySave program](#). Sandy signed up for all 12 of them and said:

"I have really enjoyed this training, and I would recommend it to anyone interested in energy efficiency and conservation. I have learned a lot through these sessions, and I am trying to implement things to help."

Sandy runs an orientation workshop for new tenants on how to use their thermostats. She also designed and ordered decals to put on the wall beside each thermostat to teach tenants how to appropriately adjust their thermostats.

This work has not been without its challenges. Sandy's tenants do not pay for their own utilities, so they aren't as invested in good energy saving practices. Sandy is working to engage residents through a contest to see who can consume less electricity than their average bill. She has also created a Facebook group to keep tenants engaged and to communicate energy-saving tips.

