



Islanders celebrated a very Haida Gwaii holiday with music, events, and a shop-local passport

Communities across the islands sparked holiday cheer and brightened the year's darkest days in so many ways this past December. In fact, we at Gwaii Trust Society have made a dedicated grant stream just for Community and Holiday Events. These grants and others support many seasonal activities, events, food deliveries, and creative work.

So settle in, fill the wood stove, and learn about a few of the special, made-in-Haida Gwaii ways islanders enjoyed the holiday season supported by Gwaii Trust Society funding.

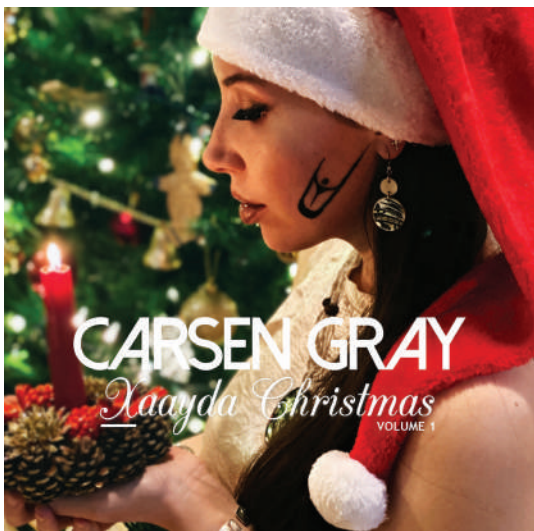
Carsen Gray's Christmas EP

The beautiful result belies the challenges of recording music during these last two years. The project's original plan called for travel to and from a studio in Vancouver, something that became impossible after the emergency declaration of March 2020. Gray persevered.

From her home in Skidegate, she gathered a team of local collaborators including creative professionals on Haida Gwaii. These included service providers from surrounding communities, including Jay Bellis (hair and makeup artist), William Gravelle (Haida language translation), Robert Gray (pianist), Patrick Shannon of InnoNative (photographer) and Joseph LaPlante of Blessed Street Studios (mixing and mastering). Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (SHIP) was another of Gray's partners for this project.

Upon the EP's release, Gray told CBC that she seeks to become a fluent Xaayda kil speaker. "I want to be able to pass that on to my children," she said. This music will no doubt bring that dream closer, and it also supports knowledge of the Haida language in local communities.

Xaayda Christmas: Vol. 1 includes "Little Drummer Boy," "Silent Night," "First Noël," and "Amazing Grace." The Gwaii Trust Society grant also supported the production of the music video



for the 2021 single "Little One" performed by Gray and her father, Robert Gray.

Will there be a second volume of *Xaayda Christmas*? "Yes, a volume 2 is currently in the works," says Gray. Its expected release is December 2022.

Xaayda Christmas: Vol. 1 and "Little One" are available on digital platforms including Apple Music and Spotify.

Local shopping with the All-Island Holiday Passport

A Community Innovation Grant of \$7,080.03 has funded the first-ever Love Haida Gwaii All-Island Holiday Passport, which encourages shopping locally during the holidays to stimulate the economy across the islands.



The project took inspiration from a successful December 2020 pilot in Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte* called the Holiday Receipt Campaign. Residents who shopped at local businesses were entered into a draw for gift cards to local businesses.

This year, all of Haida Gwaii was involved. How did it work? From December 1st to 31st, residents picked up a free Holiday Passport at their local grocery store or Causeway. Then, they collected stickers for each purchase made at participating businesses. At the end of the month, you returned your passport for the chance to win one of more than 40 gift certificates for Haida Gwaii retailers. Stickers are counted as entries into community draws.

This Holiday passport program was managed by Misty Isles Economic Development Society (MIEDS). The participating communities were *Gaw Tlagée Old Massett*, *Masset*, *Gamadiis/'Wáan Kún Port Clements*, *Til.aal Tlell*, *HiGaagilda Skidegate*, *Daajing Giids Queen Charlotte*, and *Kil K'un Sandspit*.

Contact chantal@gohaidagwaii.ca for more information about the All-Island Holiday Passport, and visit [@lovehaidagwaii](https://www.facebook.com/lovehaidagwaii) on Facebook or Instagram to find a list of participating businesses.

Holiday events across Haida Gwaii

Gwaii Trust Society also supports winter holiday events in all Haida Gwaii communities through the Community and Holiday Events grant stream. Here are a few of the events islanders participated in this past December.



Old Massett's turkey hampers: All households in *Gaw Tlagée Old Massett* and *Tlaga Gáwtlaas New Town* had their holiday feasts taken care of through this project led by Old Massett Village Council and funded by a \$16,000 grant. Volunteers in the village delivered food packages including a turkey, carrots, celery, potatoes, onions, and oranges.

Please contact the Old Massett Village Council at 250-626-3337 for more information.

Skidegate's holiday meals: Turkey dinners also came to households in *HiGaagilda Skidegate*. The Skidegate Band Council received a grant of \$16,000 to deliver gift cards that allowed community members to purchase a turkey.

Please contact cao@skidegate.ca for more information.

Festivities in Graham Island Central: Residents participated in several holiday celebrations funded by a \$16,000 grant. *Gamadiis/'Wáan Kún Port Clements* hosted a take-out Christmas meal for seniors, a Christmas lights display on Rainbow Wharf, and a children's Christmas event including a bonfire, games, prizes, and refreshments. Kids in *Til.aal Tlell* enjoyed gifts while their families received Christmas hampers. The Tlell River bridge was decked with festive lighting. A program offering Port/Tlell Bucks for residents was also delivered to encourage local shopping.

To find out more about holiday events in Graham Island Central, contact cao@portclements.ca.

Southern Graham Island cheer: The \$16,000 grant for the south island has funded many important community events like the KNOWvember town hall meeting in Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte* and the opening of the village's new Fire Hall. It also supported the Spirit Square Tree Lighting, holiday food hampers, and many events at the Community Club, including a luncheon for seniors, and a Christmas Coffee House with music and refreshments.

Please contact cao@queencharlotte.ca for more information.

We at Gwaii Trust Society look forward to a New Year full of community support for many more incredible and inspiring island projects.

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