



Melanie celebrates her Grand Office Opening May 29th with former MP Libby Davies.



Melanie and Grand Chief Stewart Phillip speak at the Kinder Morgan hearings.



A student holds a sign in support of Queen Alexandra during a public VSB meeting at Tupper Secondary.



Melanie at the Vancouver Chinatown Festival Aug. 13th.



Melanie at the Women's Memorial March on Feb. 14th



MLA Jodie Wickens, Official Opposition Leader John Horgan, and Melanie at the Vancouver Pride Parade Aug. 1st.

A MESSAGE FROM MELANIE

On Feb. 2, 2016 I was elected in a by-election as your representative for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant (VMP) in BC's Legislative Assembly. My swearing-in ceremony received nearly 1.5 million views as the Lax Kxeen drummers and dancers led our procession into the legislature for the first time.

My colleague and I made history, with MLA Jodie Wickens elected as BC's youngest MLA, and myself the first First Nations woman to hold office in Victoria. I am Nisga'a, Gitksan, Cree and Ojibway, and the mother of two school-aged daughters.

I have now opened up my community office, hired a team and began to roll up my sleeves on the important work that needs to be done in VMP. After knocking on thousands of doors in the by-election, I know that many of you are doing more with less, and are calling on me to be a strong voice for this amazing community. Prior to becoming your MLA, I was the Associate Deputy Representative, with Mary Ellen Turpel Lafond, BC's Representative for Children and Youth (RCY). The RCY is an independent office of the legislature with a mandate to advocate, monitor and investigate the child welfare system.

"With eight years of experience at the RCY, I know how children, youth and families' rights are being severely neglected by the province."

I began my term as the Deputy Housing Spokesperson for the New Democrat Official Opposition, working alongside MLA David Eby to advocate for affordable, rental, supportive housing and to call for legislation to protect renters from being renocticed. In the summer, I was promoted to Spokesperson for Children, Youth and Family Development by John Horgan, Leader of the Official Opposition.

Vancouver-Mount Pleasant is a diverse community characterized by its dynamic arts scene, charming small businesses, thriving schools, historic neighbourhoods, flourishing community gardens, and rich cultural heritage. It's also home to some of our most vulnerable citizens impacted by violence, poverty and social injustice.

Vancouver-Mount Pleasant residents make an impact on their community every day, and I am so excited to walk hand-in-hand with you to make VMP the best it can be – a community where people are thriving not surviving.

I hope you enjoy my Fall newsletter, and I look forward to seeing you at our open house, November 21st!



2000: Cherry Kingsley and Melanie working together on the Sacred Lives Project.

A LONG-STANDING ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

I am honoured to have the responsibility to shine a light on the issues facing our most vulnerable young people impacted by the child serving system. With decades of experience in child and youth advocacy, I am well suited to serve as the Spokesperson for Children, Youth, and Family Development, and your MLA. If you are not familiar with this ministry of Children and Family Development, they are responsible for the following 6 service delivery areas:

- Children and youth mental health
- Children and youth special needs
- Early childhood development
- Child protection and family support
- Youth justice
- Guardianship

I have 20 years of experience in community engagement, program development and Aboriginal relations. I have been a native courtworker and a youth worker at Covenant House Vancouver. I am the co-founder of the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre and former president for the Urban Native Youth Association. I lead a national project with Save the Children Canada to address the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth.

Before entering into public office, I was a child and youth advocate with BC's RCY and served as the Associate Deputy responsible for Advocacy, Aboriginal and Community relations and Youth Engagement across the province. I am a graduate from Douglas College and Simon Fraser University.

This issue is one that hits close to home as my immediate family and I were impacted by the child welfare system. I was a youth in care and lived with my extended family through the Child in the Home of a Relative program.

I know the legislation, standards and policies of this ministry. I am most passionate about upholding rights and the principles of administrative fairness (justice). After years of seeing rights denied for families across this province I signed up to fight the status quo and be an advocate for change.

Three out of my four grandparents attended residential school (St. Michael's, Brandon and Elk Lake). My grandfather escaped being caught by Indian agents when he was nine years old. I embrace the Truth and Reconciliation's 94 calls to action in my work. I am honoured to be your advocate in the BC Legislature.

Ha'awa,

Melanie Mark



2013: Melanie with Mary Ellen Turpel Lafond, BC's Representative for Children and Youth.

MY FIRST 250 DAYS IN OFFICE

October 23, 2016 marks my 250th day as an MLA. These 250 days have been filled with action in the legislature, community outreach, and a broad range of advocacy work on issues affecting my constituents.

I have attended outstanding cultural events, lively festivals, and important community meetings, talking to constituents about the priorities of our community. With one foot in the community and the other in the legislature, I'm working hard to be a strong advocate for change in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant.

While not an exhaustive summary, here are some highlights from my first 250 days in office.



Community members celebrate the opening of the Vancouver-Mount Pleasant community office.

Collaborated with the community

- Participated in Vancouver School Board budget consultations and launched the Save Our Schools Campaign alongside MLA Adrian Dix and community allies
- Participated in the Vancouver Board of Trade AGM
- Spoke Aug. 18th at First Nations' roundtable panel consultation on the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline, criticizing the government's consultation process
- Participated in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Coalition
- Met with community organizations like the Kettle Friendship Society, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, Carnegie Community Action Project, and PACE
- Met with various student associations from VCC, SFU and the Native Education College
- Rallied against Payday lending rates, alongside ACORN
- Participated in VMP's 1st mural festival

Opened our office

After some renovations, we celebrated the opening of our community office on May 29. Since opening our doors, the office at Commercial Dr. and 1st Ave. has been buzzing with activity. I've built an office team that includes 3 staff and 1 practicum student, all working to serve the constituents of VMP through sharing community resources, providing referrals, and supporting constituents with challenges in accessing provincial programs.



Sept. 27, 2016: Vancouver School Board Meeting at Tupper Secondary



Sept. 30, 2016: Melanie Mark with Eastside Culture Crawl Gala host Fred Lee and organizers Esther Rausenberg and Geoff Meggs

Melanie speaks on the weaknesses of Bill 28, the government's bill introducing a 15% tax on foreign home buyers.

Watch the video at www.MelanieMarkMLA.ca.



Served as a vocal advocate in the legislature

- Introduced legislation to protect renters from renovations
- Presented evidence of the negative impact Metro Vancouver's affordable housing crisis is having on growth in the tech sector
- Held the government to account on their lack of action on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and their clawback on bus passes for people with disabilities
- Raised concerns about government's lack of action on climate change and First Nations consultation in debate of Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Amendment Act, 2016
- Urged the Minister of Transportation to finally take action to build the Broadway line and develop public transit

Supported culture, diversity and the arts

- Delivered the keynote address at the Nisga'a Lisims Government Special Assembly in Gitlaxt'aamiks
- Marched in the Vancouver Pride Parade
- Attended the 40th Annual BC Elders' Gathering
- Participated in Mount Pleasant's first Mural Festival
- Took part in the Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade
- Attended the Chinese Benevolent Association's 110th anniversary
- Hosted an art contest for elementary school students about the importance of voting



Feb. 17, 2016: Melanie is sworn in as the first First Nations woman to serve in the BC legislature. Wearing her grandmother's blanket, she is greeted by the Lax Kxeen drummers & dancers.



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(closed 12:30-1:30pm)

Friday: 9:00am-12:00pm



MOUNT PLEASANT PRIDE

Heritage Hall celebrates a century!

Heritage Hall, located at Main and 15th, was once a post office. It was designated a heritage structure by the City of Vancouver in 1974, and is now a beautiful space for weddings, fundraisers, and special events.



Photo credit: Scott Elegant, Flickr

MEET OUR STAFF

Christina Rzepa has worked as an outreach worker and health researcher with populations experiencing homelessness, marginalization, mental health and addiction issues for many years in Vancouver's downtown eastside.

Sam Ponting has a passion for community building and has worked in communications, community education, and research. She also works as the Program Coordinator for the youth empowerment organization, Next Up BC.

Abby Leung can be found out in VMP attending community events and celebrating culture. Abby comes from Hong Kong and is fluent in Cantonese and Mandarin.

Jennifer Sather is a practicum student from Douglas College working towards completing her BA in Child and Youth Care.

OUR COMMUNITY OFFICE IS HERE TO HELP YOU

When you contact our community office, my staff and I will do everything we can to assist.



Information

We can supply information on provincial government services, and we can provide government documents and other web-based forms. We can refer you to various community services.



Recognition

Has someone made a unique contribution to our community? Do you know someone who is celebrating a milestone? We will send a congratulatory message and certificate.



Advocacy

We work to bring the voices of VMP to the legislature on the issues that affect our communities. We can help you navigate government agencies and help to ensure government processes are conducted fairly.



Get Connected

Our office offers free photocopying, faxing and printing for government and community needs.

Save the date! November 21 is our annual Open House.



**Volunteer with us!
Contact the office.**

