

Respect Works Here

Community Champion

Amanda Shatzko, an accomplished artist and leader, grew up in Vernon.

As the granddaughter of immigrants from Russia and Ireland, her mix of heritage first created Amanda's appreciation for multiculturalism which grew as she made friends globally through her participation in arts and competitive sports.

"Being exposed to different cultures and being open and respectful of different people's ideas and creativity, opened my eyes to multiculturalism," she says. "I was always encouraged to seek new possibilities, to be curious and have the courage to learn and listen to others and understand their point of view."

After graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Emily Carr University, she traveled the world presenting and selling art. When she returned to Canada, she was invited to share her perspectives on youth, culture and creativity at conferences.

Soon after she was named a Cultural Ambassador for BC, Amanda attended a United Nations conference on cultural diplomacy as a Canadian delegate, and was selected as a Young Global Cultural Leader. She is now past vice-president and advisor of the United Nations Association in Canada and is keen to promote the UNESCO Canadian Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities.

Amanda is naturally sensitive to the world around her. She knows the responsibility of those who sit at the table to share the microphone with people from diverse ethnicities, backgrounds, and gender identities so they too can have a voice.

Although young, Amanda's collective experiences have helped her realize her ability to affect change for others. "I understand I have white privilege that my friends coming from other ethnicities might not have. So, I'm able to get in the door probably easier than they can, and so I see an opportunity to open the door for others after me." She not only recognizes this opportunity, but she is also doing something about it.

Amanda's interest in serving on local non-profit boards arose when she "saw many arts and cultural groups working in silos." She got involved first with the Arts Council of the North Okanagan where she is now President, and later as vice-chair of the Master Cultural Plan advisory committee. This exposed her to the governance role of the Regional District of North Okanagan and inspired her to run for Area C Director which she won in the October 2018 general local election.

Amanda refers to a sign in her office: *Success is fulfilling your potential.* She applies it to herself and to a responsibility she accepts for helping others.

“I see an opportunity to open the door for others after me.”

~ Amanda Shatzko

"Giving other people opportunities to fulfill their potential when sometimes they might have roadblocks in their way, and so, if we're able, give a helping hand to others."

Her studio is bright and clean with her paintings on the walls, her Ph.D. study material from UBC-Okanagan on her desk, and a microphone on her side shelf, perhaps symbolizing the amplification of her voice when speaking for those who do not yet have access.

Amanda recognizes that her position, and the responsibility and opportunity she has because of it, to make a difference. She aspires to uphold the ideals of Canada's international reputation for being a nation of freedom, kindness, and multiculturalism. Something she is doing every day, on a local, regional, and national scale.

