

Opportunity to do something great

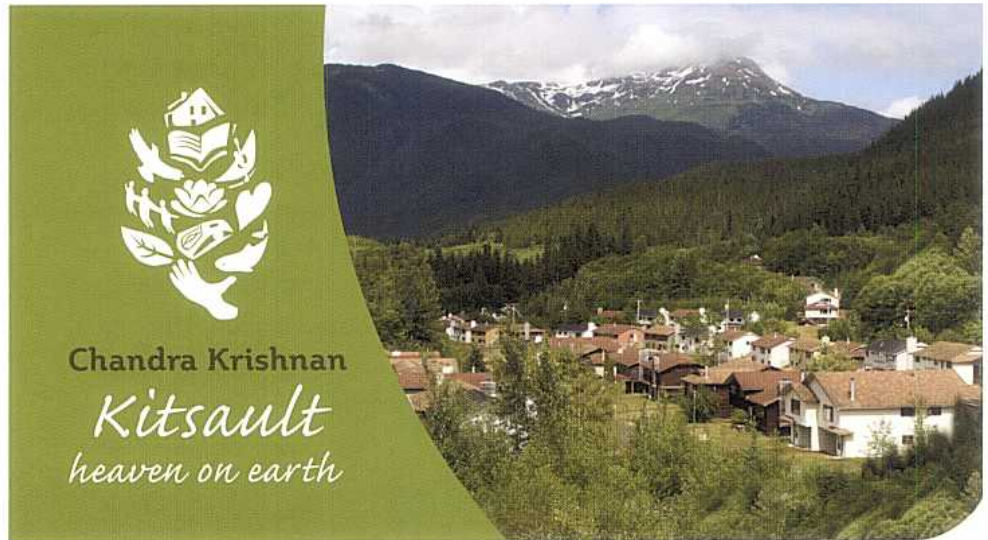
Philanthropist aims to transform Kitsault into retreat for top thinkers

Lena Sin, *The Province**

Published: Sunday, September 09, 2007

The Virginia multi-millionaire who bought a remote B.C. town two years ago has finally figured out how to banish the ghosts and bring it back to life.

Krishnan Suthanthiran says he'll transform tiny Kitsault, which sits in the province's far northwest, into a global centre for the world's most talented artists and scientists.



Up to 400 of the world's brightest minds will get to spend a year in the town — with free room and board — to develop their skills and ideas.

It is, in essence, Suthanthiran's vision for a global problem-solving centre.

"They will focus on developing their work skills. But we also want to build their character," he says.

"When they spend a

year here, we want them to be ambassadors of the world. We want them to go and look at the world beyond themselves and look at how to contribute to the world rather than simply taking and not giving back."

Plans for the project, expected to be launched in 2009, are similar to Alberta's Banff Centre, renowned for inspiring artists and fostering leadership.

Still, so outlandish is the proposal that skeptics might be tempted to call it downright flaky.

"It's such a pure, big picture that you almost don't dare to think that big," says Mark Doherty, a design consultant working on the Kitsault project.

"But to come from a very humble origin, he's a man who's had to make things happen for himself. I think to go from a lower-caste grocer's son in southern India to a multi-millionaire in the States now — he sees that things are possible."

The plan will move Kitsault a long way from its origins as a stunning mining town at the end of a long inlet about 140 kilometres north of Prince Rupert.

The town was built in the late 1970s complete with a shopping mall, library, post office and

**The Province*

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Published by CanWest Interactive, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.

pub. When molybdenum prices plunged in 1982, the mine shut down and its residents vacated.

A sign posted on the edge of town asked the last person leaving Kitsault to “please turn out the lights.”

In 2005, the sleeping beauty was put up for sale. Suthanthiran snapped it up for just under \$7 million, sight unseen.

It seemed an unlikely venture at the time for the engineer-trained entrepreneur who had quietly built his fortune in the biomedical business and shunned media attention.

As head of Best Medical International, which he founded in 1977, Suthanthiran developed medical technology to treat cancer, which claimed his father in India when Suthanthiran was a young man.

His philanthropy to date has also been very much dedicated to improving global health and education.

He has built a medical clinic and school in his hometown of Dindigul in southern India and plans for more around the world. He also funds about 100 scholarships every year in recognition of

the small loan he once received that saved him from working at his father’s grocery store.

“I’m on a mission to revolutionize health care and education,” says Suthanthiran.

The new Kitsault, he maintains, is in keeping with that goal.

Officially rechristened Chandra Krishnan Kitsault after his parents, Suthanthiran says the town will be a place that nurtures leaders.



Opportunity to do something great

Philanthropist aims to transform Kitsault into retreat for top thinkers

Lena Sin, *The Province**

Published: Sunday, September 09, 2007

“You have many individuals who are extraordinarily talented,” he says. “But they lack conviction to succeed. We want to bring outstanding individuals to Kitsault so when they leave, they’ll have excellent character to be strong leaders.”

The year that the artists and scientists spend in Kitsault will be about creating a bond among different cultures and creating a stimulating learning environment.

There will be opportunities, for example, to bring surgeons to Kitsault to talk about how to treat heart disease or better deliver aid to the Third World.

A project with no immediate returns can only be made possible by Suthanthiran’s own dime.

He has already invested \$10 million (including the purchase price) and expects another \$10 million will be spent in the next two years.

Many of the staff he has hired to renovate the town are members of the nearby Nisga’a Nation.

But Edmond Wright, secretary-treasurer of the Nisga’a Lsims native government, says he’s disappointed that Suthanthiran has not told him about his plans for Kitsault or responded to the band’s proposal for eco-tourism.

“We’ve had a couple of sit-down meetings, but they were very informal,” says Wright. “I think we need to have more meetings. We own land and territory all over this area.”

Suthanthiran says he expects to fund Kitsault’s operations for the first few years.

But he concedes the town will eventually have to generate its own income, which he hopes to generate through corporate retreats, weddings, eco-tourism and film production.

Following his purchase of Kitsault, Suthanthiran also bought the Vancouver-based film and TV production company ATV Productions.

The goal of that purchase is to create and showcase non-violent entertainment through an annual Mahatma Gandhi film and television festival at Kitsault, he says.

“This man has vision and what he does with Kitsault will work because it comes from the heart,” said Erika Schinzel, who has worked on tourism and marketing projects in northern B.C. for years and was recently brought in to join the Kitsault planning team.

Meanwhile, the 58-year-old Suthanthiran shows no signs of slowing down at his main business. He is in the midst of four acquisitions to boost operations at Best Medical while he leaves a small local team to focus on infrastructure improvements at Kitsault.

“I feel I have the opportunity, the ability and I have the finances to do something great,” he says. “We don’t take anything with us. We come into this world with nothing and we leave with nothing. But we do leave a mark.”

lsin@png.canwest.com

**The Province*

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Published by CanWest Interactive, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.



Krishnan Suthanthiran
President

Kitsault Resort Ltd.
501 - 207 West Hastings St.
Vancouver BC V6B1H7
Canada
phone 604 662 7444 ext 29
fax 604 662 7444
krish@kitsault.com
www.kitsault.com



Chandra Krishnan
Kitsault
heaven on earth

Inspired by the cone of a majestic British Columbia coniferous tree, which germinates from a seed into a giant, the identity for Chandra Krishnan Kitsault represents the spirit of limitless possibilities that serve as the very foundation of the community's revitalization. Within the cone are symbols reflecting the many elements embodied by Chandra Krishnan Kitsault: education, health, nature, the environment, and Aboriginal heritage.



Nature respect & explore



Culture create & discover



Wellness embrace health



Learning be inspired



Adventure play outdoors



Community interact



Chandra Krishnan
Kitsault
heaven on earth

