



watchful eyes to ensure the Shambhala population is well cared for.

"In all honesty, this is the highest concentration of quality people I've ever worked with in my entire life," Hunt shares. "I love being able to work with them, and co-create, and push the boundaries."

HARM REDUCTION

Pushing the boundaries is what Shambhala does best. Also promoting a safe and secure festival experience is Chloe Sage, Drug Checking Project Coordinator for ANKORS (AIDS Network Kootenay Outreach and Support Society), a Nelson-area nonprofit organization that provides free drug testing services to festivalgoers. Beneath a bouncy crop of brown and purple curls, Sage has a comforting smile and an inviting demeanor. She's sweet, assertive, and smart as hell. Sage sits at the helm of a diverse collection of experts, who range from chemists sent by Interior Health (British Columbia's regional health authority), to volunteers with backgrounds in harm reduction and safe sex education.

"A lot of us have experience in drug use, and there's a lot of knowledge in that too," Sage says candidly. "It's not that we're sitting on the other side of the table sharing all of those personal experiences, but when people come into the tent knowing that our volunteers have also been [in similar situations], they feel safer."

Attendees do not hesitate to take advantage of these services. At all hours, there is a winding line



Chloe Sage



of patrons pouring outside of the front flaps of the white ANKORS tent. Hung above the entrance are digital monitors to alert festival goers of harmful substances that have been detected that day — nasty concoctions like ketamine cut with 3-MEO-PCP, an analog of PCP that causes aggression and hallucinations, and cocaine cut with Levamisole, an industrial pig wormer that wreaks havoc on the human immune system, causing users to develop open sores on their bodies.

"Levamisole has a stimulating effect, so dealers will sometimes mix it in, but this is absolutely not what

