

SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

# K'weseltkten

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SECWÉPEMC CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES



Elders Iris Jules, left, and Diane Sandy don their regalia for the Winter Gathering Traditional Powwow in February. See more pictures inside.



## WHOM WE SERVE

Indigenous families and children living in the seven SecwépeMC communities and Kamloops area. This includes: • Cstélen • Neskonlith • Pellt'iq't • Simpcw • Sk'atsin • St'uxwtews • Tk'emlúps te SecwépeMC

# Secwépemc Child and Family Services Agency

MAIN OFFICE LOCATION  
153 Kootenay Way  
Kamloops

SCFSA acknowledges, with deep respect and gratitude, that our work takes place on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Secwépemc speaking Peoples. We recognize the past, present, and future generations of the Secwépemc Peoples who help us as stewards of this land, as well as honour and celebrate this place. We honour our connection to this land and the teaching and healing that it offers.



## QWEQWENTSÍN (GRATITUDE PRAYER)

*Tqeltkúkwpí7,  
Creator,*

*Kukwstéc-kuc re pyin te sit'qt  
Thank you for today*

*Kukwstéc-kuc ren k'wséltkten-kuc  
Thank you for my family/relatives*

*Kukwstéc-kuc te xwexwéyt te stem  
Thank you for giving us everything we need*

*Kukwstsétsemc  
Thank you*

CLBC CULTURAL / COMMUNITY INCLUSION PROGRAM

# FISHING & FRIENDS



## CLBC and SCFSA take kids for fun day at Walloper Lake

We are still “reeling” with the success of our first official program event with CLBC’s Cultural and Community Inclusion Program, which happened on June 7, a beautiful, hot, sun-filled day. Cultural Inclusion Worker Cheyanne has been deep in program development and was excited to have pulled off this day with help from her co-workers on the Cultural Inclusion Team, especially Cultural Program Coordinator Jules Phillip. Here’s Cheyanne to tell us more:

‘We took three kids out to Walloper Lake Provincial Park for the day, where we not only cast for fish, but also “cast” for connections with one another! We spent the day fishing on the dock, sharing in the excitement of all the fish jumping and nibbling on our live bait — thanks, Jules, for being in charge of worm duty! We provided all the essentials for a day out on the land and water — sunscreen, lounge chairs, snacks, lunch, and beverages.



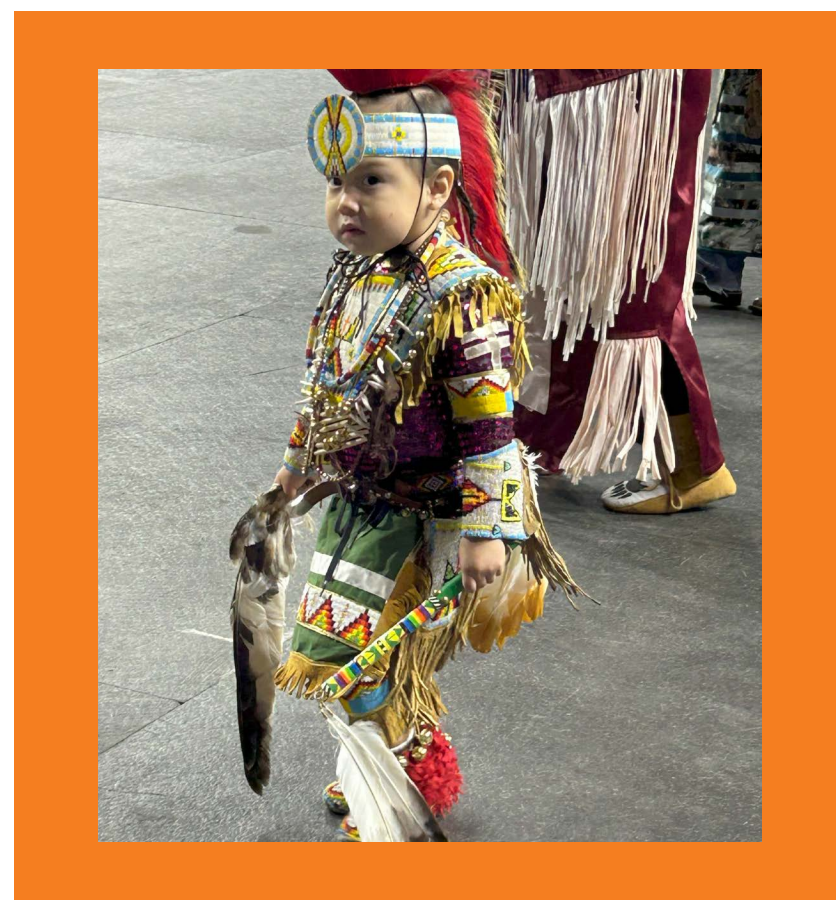
‘One of the major highlights was when a few of the kids caught some small trout! We are very proud of how this day turned out, everyone had a good time, memories were made, and we are excited to keep hosting these events for our amazing individuals in the CLBC Cultural and Community Inclusion program!’

# ALL STAFF MEETING

A beautiful summer day provided the perfect backdrop for a day full of fun, games and wellness, as well as tributes to staff who have reached milestone years and completed major projects.



# WINTER GATHERING



## SCFSA AWARDED \$7.3M GRANT FOR HOUSING INITIATIVES

**S**ecwépemc Child and Family Services Agency (SCFSA) is excited to announce it has been awarded a \$7.3 million grant that will create the first of its kind housing initiatives grounded in Secwépemc culture.

SCFSA has been awarded a \$7.3 million grant from the National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Inc. (NICHI). This grant will enable the creation of two housing projects, rapid response housing and transitional housing in urban Kamloops. These projects will provide much needed accommodation and support programs and services to members of the seven communities served by SCFSA.

This initiative reflects SCFSA's commitment to address the urgent and unmet housing needs of Indigenous children, youth, and families served by the Agency. The two housing projects will offer a culturally enriched environment promoting growth, wellness as well as a strong relationship to the land amongst its residents. SCFSA's commitment to prevention and resilience throughout its program and service delivery will ensure the Agency continues to meet the unique needs and challenges of the communities it serves.

**“This is a long time coming”, says Marshall Gonzales, Board President of SCFSA. “This funding will help our children, youth and families by putting them into a safe environment while in transition.”**

The rapid response and transitional housing locations will each be initiated by a land blessing ceremony that respects and honours the ancestral connections and the spiritual significance of the land, following Secwépemc protocol. These housing initiatives will provide up to 20 beds for Secwépemc children, youth, and families in transition. The rapid response housing option will accommodate individuals for up to 90 days, while the transitional housing option will support occupants for up to two years.

“The Creator placed us on this land to take care of our people, the Elders, babies, unborn and our displaced,” say Secwépemc Elders. Celebrating the launch of what will become the first of many First Nations-led culturally grounded housing initiatives in Kamloops, SCFSA will strive for a future that respects the unique cultures, identities, and traditions of the 17 Communities within Secwepemcúl’ecw and of those, the seven Communities served by the Agency.



PHOTO GALLERY

# WINTER GATHERING

# TRADITIONAL POWWOW



There was drumming, dancing, vendors and so much great energy at our Winter Gathering Traditional Powwow. The event was a great success and we can't wait to see what next year brings! Also, a shout-out to our partners at the City of Kamloops, who helped make this event happen at the Sandman Centre, a significantly larger venue than we have ever had host one of these events.

# KINSHIP CONNECTIONS



This past year has been a whirlwind with some proud achievements.

We participated in a lot of community events, including powwows at Tk'emlúps Sk'elep School, Bonaparte, Neskonlith, and Simpcw, as well as our very own Fifth Annual SCFSA Winter Gathering Traditional Powwow. We also helped out with Skeetchestn's Rattling Ramble, Bonaparte's Wellness Days and Adams Lake's Wellness Days.

We brought a Roots event to Whispering Pines community, teaching people about their roots and family finding and the importance of knowing who your family and ancestors are.

We have worked hard family-finding and bridging communication with bands and communities in Northern B.C. as well as Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Roots has worked with Elders who are Kinship caregivers, building their genograms, making paper copies for them, and hearing all the beautiful stories they shared. We have a new printer and are able to print out poster-sized genograms for meetings, and to give to families.

Roots worked with a social worker in bringing three kiddos back to their maternal community. The kids were able to reconnect with their great-aunt, whom

they had not seen in five years and spent the day with her. We brought a full printout of the family tree, and the kids were able to help fill in the blanks with Great Aunty's support. We went to their Reserve and the children were able to see the land of their ancestors. They played in the water where the Sylix people had camps and villages. They met a few more aunts and uncles at the Ashanola powwow arbour/campground.

Being able to see the land they came from and the stories we were able to share with them about their Nation had minds playing in the strength of who they were.

We were able to take the kids to their family graveyard to see where their ancestors lay and see the valley their grandfather grew up in.

The trip was incredibly impactful for all the family. Supporting home visits and cultural connection sparked a new fire within these children, and we will always be grateful for the opportunity to have made that happen.

There were many impactful moments with connections in the community and breakthroughs over the phone with connecting to a family who had not spoken to each other in many years. Another great year at establishing roots and connections.

Kinship Team and Kinship caregivers also participated in SCFSA annual Winter Gathering Traditional Pow

*“There were many impactful moments with connections in the community and breakthroughs over the phone with connecting to a family who had not spoken to each other in many years. Another great year at establishing roots and connections.”*



Wow, held at the Sandman Centre this year, and was enjoyed by all. At the end of 2023, the Kinship Team celebrated both in-care and out-of-care providers who reside in our seven communities with a Pendleton blanket, to show our appreciation of their support in caring for family. All our Kinship caregivers also received gifts of thanks and support, to help assist them with the day-to-day needs of the children and youth. The Kinship Team along with the Resource Team organized appreciation dinners and luncheons for all caregivers.

With the prices of groceries and meat being so high, we have helped with extra provisions of meat boxes for all our Kinship caregivers. We have also hosted two feather workshops — one on Neskonlith Reserve for our rural families there, as well as at Tk'emlúps for our urban families.

The 2023-24 vision for our Kinship Team was focused on connecting and building relationships with our Kinship families. We have witnessed a significant increase in participation in cultural events as well as the beginnings of more meaningful relationships built over tea.

We have been assisting families with Jordan's Principle and have purchased plane tickets to reunite a family and children with their ancestral community in Saskatchewan.

With our 10 Respected Elders, CLBC, and Jordan's Principle in our Agency now, we have been able to start the important work of wrapping our Kinship families around and encouraging longer-term support for lifelong well-being. Our Elders in Residence are a large support for our cultural assessments and needs for Enhanced Out-of-Care applications.

Amazing direction for Kinship this year with many great ideas and upcoming events.

We are looking forward to another great year!