



Secwépemc
Child & Family Services Agency

2023/24

ANNUAL REPORT



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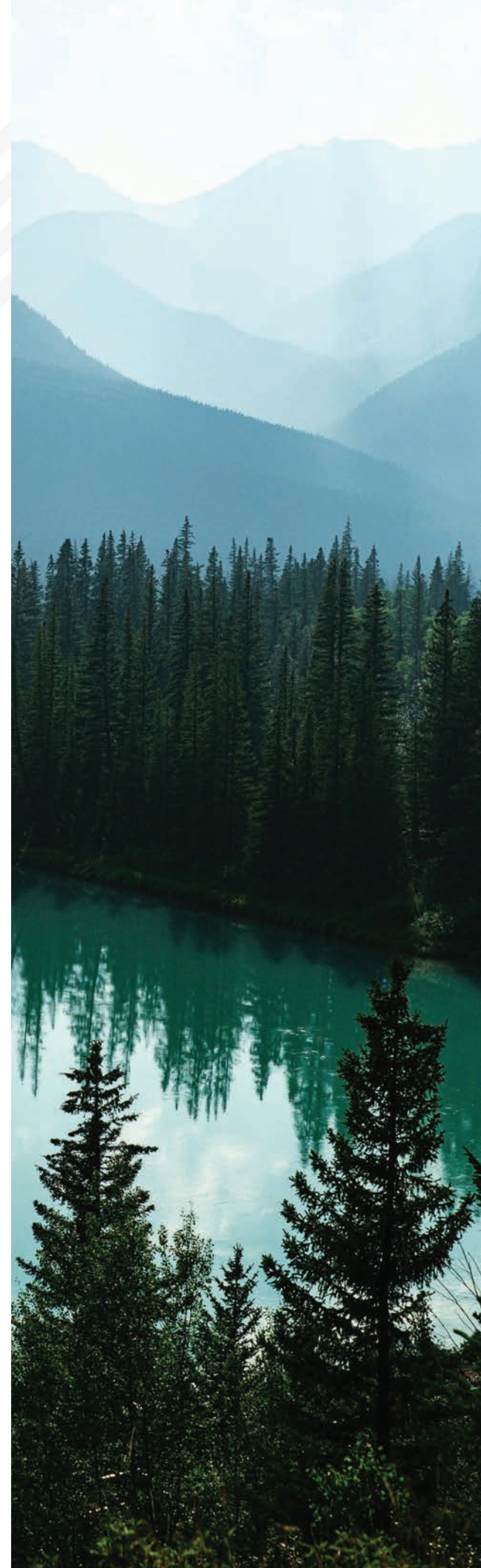


Our Mission Statement

Secwépemc Child and Family Services collaborates and advocates for the well-being and cultural continuity and connection of children to their families and communities by honouring the legacy of our Secwépemc ancestors and our Secwépemc Nation.

Our Vision Statement

Secwépemc Child and Family Services works in collaboration with Secwépemc communities to deliver family services that strengthen the family unit and uphold Secwépemc laws and are guided by Secwépemc values.





Our Guiding Values

Respect: We believe that respect is earned and is demonstrated by having an open mind, listening generously and being calm and supportive in our interactions with one another and the Secwépemc people we serve. Respect is honouring our relationships through acceptance, genuineness, and authenticity. It is Yecweminte, “for everything in life.”

Courage: We are courageous in allowing ourselves and others to be vulnerable in order to grow and pursue positive change. We act courageously as advocates on behalf of Secwépemc children and families to assist them in overcoming obstacles and promoting their well-being and the well-being of future generations.

Honesty: We are passionate and speak from the heart, being true to our spirit and accepting who we are. We are transparent and accountable and will engage in difficult conversations to advance our purpose and values in a consistent fashion.

Love: We act out of love for the people we serve by conducting ourselves in a caring and empathetic manner. We show love through our teachings and spiritual practices, and through generosity and kindness recognizing we are all emotional beings.

Humility: We believe in practicing humility, knowing that Secwépemc traditional values have taught us that everyone is equal and to be valued. We recognize and give credit for the good work of others, apologize when we err and keep the legacy of our children at the forefront of our work.

Wisdom: We gain wisdom from our Secwépemc stories; to stay grounded in our culture and acknowledge that everyone has a gift to share. We understand and accept our strengths and weaknesses, know what we have to share and always pursue what is in the best interest of our people.

Truth: Our truth is based on the Creator’s teachings; it is grounded in our Secwépemc laws. We are truthful with ourselves serve by following our laws and supporting our truth with factual information and real events.

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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)

Member Nations



Cstélen (Adams Lake)

Kúkpi7 Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief
PO Box 588, Hillcrest Road
Chase, BC V0E 1M0
Phone: 250.679.8841



SIMPCW FIRST NATION
People of the North Thompson River

Simpcw

Kúkpi7 George Lampreau
PO Box 220
Barriere, BC V0E 1E0
Phone: 250.672-9995



Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc

Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir
#200-330 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, BC V2H 1H1
Phone: 250.828.9700



Pellt'iq't (Whisping Pines/Clinton)

Kúkpi7 Edward LeBourdais
615 Whisping Pines Drive
Kamloops, BC V2B 8S4
Phone: 250.579.5772



St'uxwtews (Bonaparte)

Kúkpi7 Frank Antoine
2689A Sage Hill Rd, Hwy 97 N
Cache Creek, BC V0K 1H0
Phone: 250.457.9624



Skeetchestn

Kúkpi7 Darrel Draney
330 Main Drive
Savona, BC V0K 2J0
Phone: 250.373.2493



Sk'atsin (Neskonlith)

Kúkpi7 Irvin Wai
PO Box 318
Chase, BC V0E 1M0
Phone: 250.679.3295





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 honor our connection to this land and the teaching and healing that it offers.

Executive Summary

March 2023 – April 2024

The past year has seen many great successes for SCFSA as it continues to offer a diverse range of programs in service to our 7 Secwépemc communities and Indigenous families living in Kamloops.

The Agency pushed beyond its traditional boundaries of service delivery with the signing of a landmark agreement in the fall and the securing of a grant in the spring. The former will help those with intellectual disabilities who have aged out of the system and the latter will make it easier for the Agency to help those facing housing insecurities.

In September a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between SCFSA and Community Living BC (CLBC), a provincial Crown agency that funds services for adults with intellectual disabilities. The agreement was celebrated in a ceremony that involved SCFSA dignitaries, CLBC leadership and the Minister Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. The ceremony, which took place in our Kootenay Way office, was witnessed by Band Chiefs and council and community members, Elders, youths, families, SCFSA and CLBC staff.

In March the Agency was 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. Indigenous-led and the first of their kind, these projects will provide much needed accommodation and support programs and services to members of the seven communities served by SCFSA.

We raise our hands and give praise to Integrated Support Team Leader Erin Chillihitzia and our new Director of Research and Policy Development Caroline Thompson for their efforts in spearheading these groundbreaking agreements that will be an enormous benefit to the seven communities and urban populations whom we serve.

As the Agency continues to grow, and turnover creates an influx of new faces, more efforts are being made to help reconnect staff and to emphasize wellness. Recent staff meetings with wellness offerings and chances to ask questions of staff and management have been appreciated and well-received.

After an extensive search, Secwépemc Child and Family Services welcomes new Executive Director Mohinder Bajwa to help guide the Agency as it strives to meet the unique needs and challenges of the communities and families it serves.





We continue to provide services that respect and support the inherent authority of our Indigenous nations and families to provide care and protection for their children based on culture, tradition, values, beliefs, and customs.

We are honoured to have a relationship of reciprocity with our seven Secwépemc bands and are aware that our greatest success lies in that relationship and the guidance of the communities we serve.

As we reflect on this past year, we have been honoured to continue to walk with our member communities on this journey, providing compassionate services that support the strength and resilience within our communities for generations to come.



Secwépemc Child & Family Services Board of Directors 2023/2024



TK'wenem7i'ple7 Marshall Gonzales
President, Skeetchestn



TK'wenem7i'ple7 Aubin McTaggart
Treasurer, Skeetchestn



Carmen Hance
Vice-President, Simpcw

TK'wenem7i'ple7 Alison Green
Director, Simpcw

Jolene Anderson
Director, Cstélen (Adams Lake)

Kukpi7 Lynn Kenoras – Duck Chief
Director, Cstélen (Adams Lake)

Tk'wenem7i'ple7 Shirley Anderson
Secretary, Neskonlith (Sk'atsin)

Carol August
Director, Neskonlith (Sk'atsin)



TK'wenem7i'ple7 Mathew Lewis
Director, Pelltiq't (Whispering Pines/Clinton)

Leah Briault
Director, Pelltiq't (Whispering Pines/Clinton)

TK'wenem7i'ple7 Morning-Star Peters
Director, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc



TK'wenem7i'ple7 Dave Manuel
Director, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc

Terry Porter
Director, Treasurer, St'uxwtews (Bonaparte)

Vacant
Director, St'uxwtews (Bonaparte)

Past Directors

Orla LeBourdais
Director, Pelltiq't (Whispering Pines/Clinton)

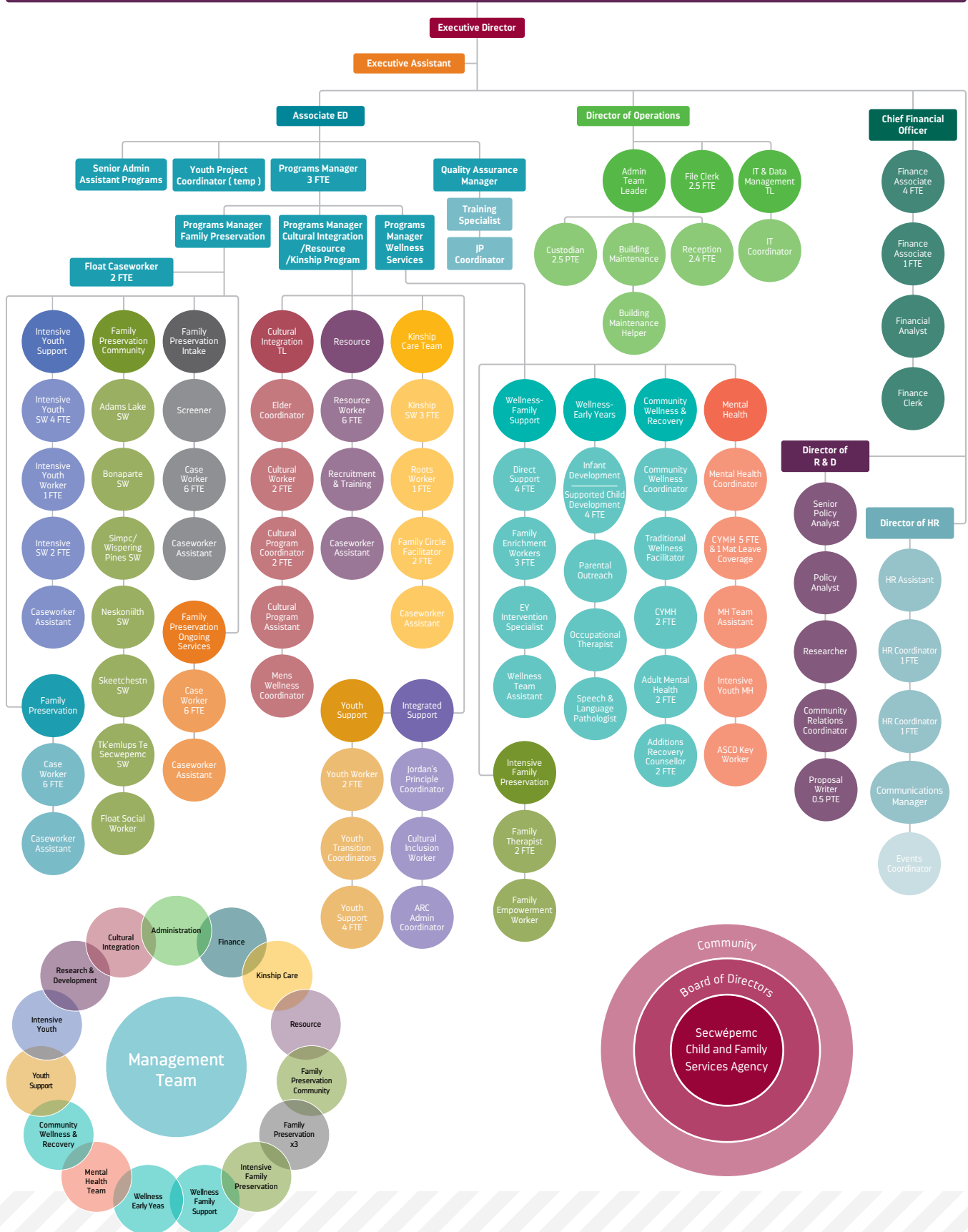
TK'wenem7i'ple7 Brandy Chelsea
Secretary, Cstélen (Adams Lake)



Angie Thorne
Director, Treasurer, St'uxwtews (Bonaparte)

Fiscal Year 2023/24 Organizational Chart

TK'EMLÚPS TE SECWÉPEMC, SIMPCW, SKEETCHSTN, NESKONLITH, ADAMS LAKE, BONAPARTE, WHISPERING PINES/CLINTON



Dr. Cindy Blackstock Award



Alexis Wiltse is this year's recipient of the Dr. Cindy Blackstock Award, a Distinguished Service Award that was created in 2018. Sadly, Alexis died in a motorcycle accident on May 6, 2023.

Alexis had been with SCFSA for 8 years, and worked extensively with Indigenous communities, allies, children, and families, most recently as a Family Preservation Caseworker for Adams Lake Indian Band. She was just settling into her new role as Family Preservation Team Leader of Ongoing Services when she passed.

Here's some of what Jen Kimble had to say about her friend and colleague Alexis at the all-staff meeting where the award winner was announced:

This was one of the hardest things I have ever had to write. I couldn't decide where to start. Do I start with talking about the time she chased her team down on the racetrack dressed like Bowzer? Do I talk about her temper tantrums when she didn't win the prizes at work? Or about her splitting her pants on the dance floor at the Christmas party? Do I talk about how she made everyone she came into contact with feel special and heard? Or do I talk about how when you effed around, you found out?

I decided to start at the beginning with her very first interview with the Agency, because right from the start Alexis showed her desire to be the best as well as that spazzy side that would pop out when she didn't get something right. Alexis arrived at her interview, sat down and was ready to destroy the questions. Michelle McMaster looked at her and asked her if she knew what agency she was interviewing for. Alexis did her head nod and said: "Yes, Secwépemc Child and Family Services," which is when Michelle replied, "I just wanted to check that you knew where you were as your resume is addressed to a different agency." Alexis got that look on her face, stared at them and snapped her pencil in half.

For a reason she could never figure out after snapping the pencil, they gave Alexis a job. Right from the start, she was always the first one to arrive with her hair pulled back in her tight bun, her red lipstick, and flat black pointy shoes shuffling around cleaning the kitchen and making coffee for everyone, a task she took on right until her last day with us.

When Alexis did Protection work and a family got her as their caseworker, they hit the jackpot. In the three years of being her team leader I never received a single complaint about her. The only complaint I ever received was when I re-assigned a family to another social worker. You could count on the fact that if you worked with a family after Alexis, you were going to be told you weren't as good as her. She literally had families refuse to open the door for other social workers until they could talk to Alexis. This was because you could trust Alexis with your life.

Another example of this was the day we were invited to a welcoming ceremony in one of the communities that was extremely special to Alexis. We were all standing in a circle talking about what we were excited about for the future relationship between the community and the Agency. One of the kyé7es/grandmas that was in attendance meant the world to Alexis. This grandma sat in her chair and when it was her turn, she said: "Well, I don't really know what any of this means I'm just excited I got my Alexis back. I don't know about the other social workers, but I have been asking for a year to get my Alexis back and I'm glad ya all finally listened." To watch this relationship in front of you was to watch what true community work should look like.

It's like this grandma described it — Alexis wasn't a social worker, she was a friend, she was like family. When Alexis was training new staff, she would take them to see this grandma

as a test. After the visit, Alexis would call me and tell me if the new worker got a jar of jam or not. If they got the jam, you were golden in Alexis's books, if not, well, you were gonna have to work a little harder for her to like you.

Right in that first interview at the Agency where she snapped the pencil in half, Alexis told the panel she was going to be a team leader one day. Everything Alexis did was to work towards this goal. The day had come when everyone, including herself, knew she was ready. She did her typical note-taking and prep work, but something was different in her last interview. She had found a calmness in her power, a belief in herself that not even she could convince herself didn't exist. She went into her interview, didn't second-guess herself, and stuck to her intuition. When she was done, she came speed-walking to my office, shut the door, waved her hands and said: "I don't know if I got it, but I effing killed it, dude." Her favourite part of that day was when one of our bosses cried telling her she had gotten the job. It meant the world to her that there were so many people at the Agency rooting for her that day and that they believed in her.

I wish she could have had more time to experience reaching her goal, but I am so thankful I got to walk alongside her for her first few weeks in her new role. It was amazing to watch her in the last months of her life. She had her hair down with her crazy

curls, she wore pink to work, and was vibrating at a level that many of us hope to reach one day. One of the greatest losses is that her team didn't get to have the time to learn from one of the greats and to feel what it was like to know you had Alexis fighting for you. I want everyone to know, especially her family, that Alexis was not just a good social worker, she was an exceptional one. She was kind, honest, hard-working, authentic, tenacious, and her favourite thing about herself? She was hilarious. She was the social worker who spent her weekends cooking meatballs for families when they were grieving, the one who sat with you for hours to come up with a plan for your children, and never gave up on you or on fighting for you.

She was the co-worker you could depend on for a laugh, for comfort, for words of wisdom and that she was going to do her job right. And for some of us lucky ones, she was a best friend who never let us down and showed us unconditional love and kindness. She truly is one of the great loves of my life.

The Dr. Cindy Blackstock Service Award is given to an employee in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the children and families who are served by Secwépemc Child and Family Services and in appreciation for their commitment/dedication towards realizing Dr. Blackstock's vision for all First Nations children.



Cultural Integration

Team Leader / Lyle Thomas

The Cultural integration team is here to share the knowledge we have been taught, to share the culture and beliefs we have learned, but most importantly, we have been taught to listen. Because everyone has teachings and we are hoping to awaken their knowledge, and no matter where you are from, everyone should have the opportunity to know, see and experience where your grassroots are truly from.

Our Elders have adjusted to the point they are accessible most times without hassle. Elders can now sit one-on-one, offering knowledge, laughter, and the best is that they are there to listen.

One development we are excited for is having our Elders present at our Agency's newest building on the North Shore. Our Elders share, laugh, but mostly they offer the needed support of listening to the youth. The reward of offering support to our youth — the next generation — is that they may just find answers to questions they may not be asking.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

Spring Break Camp

For two weeks of Spring Break a number of youths attended and many have grown. As well as doing activities at the organization we also brought the youth out to do activities throughout the city and area.

Pro-D Days

Youth had the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities, including flint-knapping, copper etching, and medicine-making.

Summer Camp

This year's Summer Camp ended up being day camps in various locations due to the smoke from wildfires.

Our camps and events we have for our youth is to bring them together, share, laugh, and they have similar stories



and understanding of who they are and where they are from. These youth are tied together through their own connections and as a team we are doing what we can to make sure they are comfortable in sharing, comfortable in who they are, and most important, comfortable in where they belong and feel connected.

Elders Gathering in Edmonton October 2023

This year the Elders Gathering was hosted by the various Treaty 6 groups in Edmonton.

To bring our *Ste' ex7ém* to an event where we represented our Agency and our nation, and to see a conference of this size and witness the teachings and the knowledge of many elders across Canada, was a great thrill.

The trip from Kamloops to Edmonton and back was filled with sharing, listening to stories, knowledge, meals and laughter.

The respect everyone at the conference shared, showed and passed on brings the understanding of who we are as people, as many nations and as one.

"They tried to beat our hands, our touch, but yet, it is our hands, our touch which has survived. This is how we greet each other, and with the same hands, the same touch we held our babies, our families and it is this touch these hands I show kindness as I place my hand on your shoulder to say hello or for comfort,"
Elder at Elders Gathering 2023.

ELKSTWÉCW PROGRAM

This year we were fortunate to hire two Cultural Program Coordinators to facilitate and connect with our 7 communities as well as our urban population — the youth and families that reside in Kamloops.

Our Elkstwécw program visits one of our 7 communities every Tuesday and Thursday throughout the month. The goal of this program is to help create a positive and welcoming space for community members to try new projects. These workshops have been extremely rewarding as we have witnessed people make a drum for the first time, or try sewing for the first time, or becoming interested in learning about our cultural ways. The workshops are creating new passions and interests to pursue. These workshops have also allowed the coordinators to connect with a variety of people by listening and sharing stories — the ones people forgot, but only until they poke their finger and then a memory comes forth.

The smell of leather, which may remind them of their grandmother sewing, the sound of punching holes in leather reminding them of a time with their cousins, notching more holes in a belt which doesn't fit.

This program has grown and has more people interested in attending, wanting to learn, but also to share what they may have learned along the way of their own journey.

Community BBQs

Every summer the Cultural Integration Team connects with our communities to have annual BBQs in each of our communities. This is an engaging way for us to connect and gather over food. As Secwépemc, as well as many other Indigenous people, food is a way we like to share laughs and build relationships. The BBQs are also a great way to help other staff connect with our communities and gather in a positive way.

What's working well?

The Cultural Integration Team and Elders are an amazing group with knowledge, stories and laughter. Everyone has something to contribute to our team — if it's a group of people, staff, youth or a community — we come together and make sure we can help any way we can during any type of circumstance or emergency.

The range of knowledge everyone has, from an office setting as management, or counsel, to working in a museum or care-aid, to having degrees and certificates, to learning through oral teachings, is wide and vast. This knowledge is amazing to sit and listen to as everyone contributes in some way through their own teachings, own surroundings and understanding.

What are we worried about?

Not so much a worry but our team is getting older, and the belief and understanding of what we are trying to share and acknowledge of who we are is slowly disappearing. We have a new generation to pass on this knowledge to, a new generation who we think aren't listening, a new generation who are going to be the next leaders. They are going to be ones with degrees and certificates and oral teachings. Because, as the generation before us and the workers today we were once asked, "Aren't you listening?"

As we start to grow as an Agency our team shares and educates about the people, territory, and the area we live in. But as the Agency grows, so do the teachings, and how do we bridge the gap within the Agency of the people from the 7 communities and our urban population? To be able to keep our values true to who we are as people through our language, song, land-based teachings of culture and legends?

What needs to happen?

One day a month where staff or a team goes out for teachings on land.

The use of language in small conversational or acknowledgments or answering the phone. This is something we as an Agency can work on together, for this is new and there are fears about mispronouncing Secwépemctsin words.

Stet'ex7ém Advisory Council

Our Stet'ex7ém act in an advisory capacity to provide guidance and encourage all Agency staff towards a more meaningful and culturally knowledgeable approach to our work with the children, families, and communities we serve in the Secwépemc Territory.

They focus on creating a positive, safe, and respectful environment that is grounded in cultural values, protocols, traditional ceremonies, and genealogies. They work hard to promote and provide advice to SCFSA staff in the area of their personal knowledge, strength and experience.

Our Elders Council:

Ronnie Jules (Adams Lake/Cstálen)

Iris Jules (Nlaka'pamux & Adams Lake/Cstálen)

Louisa Celesta (Simpchw/North Thompson/Chu Chua)

Eddie Celesta (Simpchw/North Thompson/Chu Chua)

Rock Denault (Neskonlith/Sk'atsin)

Janet Deneault (Skeetchestn/Skitsesten)

Della Fellhauer (Whispering Pines/Clinton/Pellt'iq't)

Diane Sandy (Bonaparte/St'uxwtews)

Colleen Seymour (T'kemlups te Secwépemc)

Evelyn Gottfriedson (T'kemlups te Secwépemc)





Family Preservation

Jen Kimble / Family preservation programs manager

As the Family Preservation Program Manager, the areas that I support and oversee are our four Family Preservation Teams and Signs of Safety Integration. The four Family Preservation teams include Community Family Preservation Team, Intensive Youth Support Team, and Intake Family Preservation, and the Ongoing Services Team. We continue to inform practice, process, and implement change in a way that I hope has and will lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency within our service delivery system. The following reflects the efforts, accomplishments, and functions of the teams that I have the privilege of working alongside of.

URBAN FAMILY PRESERVATION TEAMS: Ongoing Services Team and Intake Services Team

The Intake Team accepts new reports on Indigenous families who live within Kamloops that do not have an ongoing file. If it is determined at the end of the intake worker's assessment that Ongoing Services is required, the intake worker will open the file(s) and transfer to the Ongoing Services team.

The Intake Team is comprised of a Team Leader, Intake Screener, 6 Intake Workers and a Case Assistant. In May 2023, Britnie Marrelli, a 10-year employee of the Agency, became the Team Leader. The team recently lost its Screener, Darian Oakes, who moved onto another opportunity in her hometown of Prince George, and we welcomed Stephanie Fortin into the role of Screener. The Intake Team can be described as cohesive, productive and collaborative. Each member brings their own experience, ambition and special skill set to the table which helps drive the Intake Team's overall performance. Throughout the year the Intake Team has been able to assist and support the other Family Prevention teams when extra support was needed. The Intake Team is dedicated to the SOS practice and engaged in multiple trainings, such as Signs of Safety Boot Camp and safety planning training, to help enhance their knowledge of SOS practice.



Over the past year the Intake Team has shown resilience and adaptability and worked hard on building creative, family-led plans for the families they serve.

Ongoing Services Family Preservation consists of 8 caseworkers, 2 Transition Planning Coordinators and a case assistant. The team services Indigenous children and families in the urban Kamloops area. The caseworkers work with parents to address ongoing protection concerns, have guardianship responsibility to children in care, and support youth aged 16-27 on agreements to reach their goals for independence. The team uses Signs of Safety practice, which is a strength and solution-focused model that keeps the planning family-centred and upholds the child's voice. The mandate of Ongoing Services Family Preservation is to work with families and communities to reunify children and to concurrently plan for children to have their needs of relational, cultural, physical, and legal permanency met.

HIGHLIGHTS

Since March 2023, the Ongoing Services Family Preservation Team has kept growing and expanding. Ongoing Services is one of the largest teams within SCFSA. The staff are committed to strengthening and upholding children and families and are very passionate about working with children to see the best outcomes for them. Ongoing Services has been able to create permanency plans for children that have placed them with extended family and out of care, which is a huge success.

A particular highlight from the year was when we were able to work with our Kinship team to send a group of siblings to the Lower Similkameen Band for a visit and a book was created for them with pictures from the visit as a keepsake. The children met up with various family members and got to take a tour of their home community. We also have been able to create multiple permanency plans that puts children with their family instead of being in stranger care.

What's working well?

Ongoing Services Family Preservation has been continuing to expand its Signs of Safety skillset. One area has been the use and implementation of timelines, which is a document that clearly lays out the steps the staff do to work with parents to see the file closed and/or the children back in the family home. The goal is to have a timeline on every FS file so we can create vision for our work and create better outcomes quicker for our children and families.

Another success has been completing regular group supervision in team meetings, which promotes Signs of Safety learning amongst the team and supports clinical supervision. Through this process, staff are learning to slow their thinking down and critically analyze the information, which creates better decision-making. The staff have worked closely with communities from B.C. and across the country to create permanency plans for children with their extended family. We also have hopes to bring more children back to their home territories prior to their 19th birthdays so they can ground themselves in where they come from traditionally and establish that connection as adults. Recently, the team has piloted a specific guardianship position to enhance the service

delivery of children in care so their needs for planning are better met. 2023 has been a year of growth and expansion for Ongoing Services Family Preservation and we look forward to what the future holds.

Community Family Preservation Team

The Community Family Preservation Team is in its fourth year of operation and has contributed greatly to our strengthened practice and relationships within our 7 member nations. This team provides child-safety and family-enhancement services to our 7 communities primarily. The purpose of this team is to create service continuity within community. There is a Team Leader, Lisa Wortelboer, and 6 Family Preservation Workers who make up this team, and 5 have community assignments. There is a Family Preservation Float who is assigned to support staff shortages and prevent multiple workers within communities providing differing practice to children, family, and communities. There is also one Case Assistant on the team, to help with administration.

This team has been able to provide consistent service delivery with focus being on the Signs of Safety model. This allows the families and community to make decisions for their families and enhance strength and capacity within community. We partner with communities, and this has built strength in our relationships with our 7 nations. There is a heavy focus on prevention and how we can partner to ensure children, families, and youth do not require protective services to meet the safety needs of their children. This fiscal year, prevention dollars went directly to the communities, and this has allowed the Community Team to work alongside bands, so that the communities can provide their own prevention services to their children, youth, and families.

The Community Team strives to provide service that is consistent to each community's individual values for children, families and youth. They work in collaboration with the Band Representatives to ensure that they are upholding our agency's mission, values, and vision while adhering to the community's expectations of how child-welfare services should look to be successful in the lives of their community members. The team is committed to ongoing learning as it relates to community standards, values, beliefs, and expectations.

We are looking forward to a future where our processes are rooted entirely in the values of our communities and our partnership can flourish further in Indigenizing child-welfare practice.

The Community Team is an integral part of the Agency. The Family Preservation Workers are skilled, intelligent, committed, and passionate about building relationships within the 7 member nations. The team is committed to not only being there in times of crisis, but also in supporting families through good times as well. They are committed to attending community events and building long-term relationships within the communities and with families. Since inception of the team, you can see the trust being re-built between the children, youth, families and the Agency.

Some important successes to report that reflect the type of service our Agency wants to promote within our 7 communities:

- We are currently in the process of rescinding a continuing custody order for 2 children who have been in care for 5 years. Thanks to the Signs of Safety framework and the hard work of the parent, we were able to successfully return them to their parent and address the safety concerns.
- We continue to focus on priority placement. The majority of children who have had to be outside the parental home because of safety concerns have been placed with family or in community. This is because the family and community were able to create a successful plan, without resulting in a removal.
- There has been a heavy focus on permanency this fiscal year. Family and community have created successful plans for those children and youth so they could have legal permanency.
- Now that the communities have the prevention dollars to distribute themselves, we have seen a decline in families accessing support services from the Agency, as well as a decline in safety concerns.
- Most of the children and youth who remain in SCFSA care that belong to our 7 member nations reside with family or reside with community members.

Intensive Youth Support Team

The Youth Intensive Support Team is made up of a Team Leader, two fully delegated caseworkers, delegated youth transition coordinator, two youth support workers and a case assistant. The team was created with the

intention to give more intensive support to youth ages 12-20. The caseworkers are intended to have smaller caseload numbers with the goal to have no more than 10 files so that they can build meaningful relationships with the youth, care team, family, community and other professionals. The hope is that the caseworkers can be present in the youth's lives not just for the bad but to also celebrate the good. Our caseworkers typically see their youth once a week. As the population we support is primarily youth, we work on setting the youth up for independence in a good way. We often work alongside CLBC, Youth Probation, Interior Health, and specialized resource companies.

The team provides more intensive and individualized wrap around supports to each of the youth we serve while maintaining connection to family, culture, and self. This is to ensure we are providing effective supports to young people that experience risk factors such as: mental health, addictions, complex behaviours/ needs, risk of homelessness, and justice-system involvement.

What's working well?

Long time caregiver Rob Getz is now subcontracting with SCFSA to provide CLBC support hours for the youth who were previously connected to him, allowing for a continuity of care.

We moved into SCFSA's main office on Kootenay Way. This allows easier access to Agency vehicles, gift cards, our case assistant, and other members of SCFSA.

Support from other teams, while short-staffed, has been greatly appreciated. Thank you, Trent!

The Signs of Safety framework is being used in a more fulsome way — group supervision and SOS tools, like maps, Three Houses, and timelines, are being used to strengthen our practice.

Access to a specific Telus phone plan makes it easier for us to access cellphones for our youth. It's a lot of work for Kirby, which we really appreciate!

Practice has been strengthened around connecting youth to CLBC well before their 19th birthday so that better planning can occur, leading to better outcomes for youth leaving care.

We have a 14-year-old female youth transitioning from a staffed resource to a family care home, which has been a dream of hers for the past 4 years.

We have five youth graduating high school this year!

Two youth completed Treatment.

Relationships with our staffed resources have improved.

We had a youth move back to their home community.

What are we worried about?

Not being fully staffed has a significant impact on the team given the nature of our work.

We said goodbye to two senior caseworkers, Jillian Pelly, and Curtis Sleyphen. Both had extensive knowledge and relationships with the youth.

There continues to be a lack of low-barrier youth housing in Kamloops. Many of the youth we have transitioned out of care have lost their housing due to their substance misuse, mental health, or behaviours.

Lack of low-barrier counselling, detox and treatment centres for the youth we serve.

Capacity to serve youth who have significant support needs given the need to hold larger caseloads (due to being short staffed along with case transfers from other service-delivery areas).

We are seeing youth beginning to use drugs at much younger ages and we carry a lot of worry and fear for their safety and well-being given their high-risk lifestyles.

What needs to happen?

- Low-barrier housing for youth and young adults
- CLBC housing
- More accessible counselling for our higher risk youth
- More accessible youth-detox and treatment centres
- A youth support worker assigned to the Youth Intensive Support Team
- Safe space for youth to drop in and get a meal, harm-reduction supplies, and easily access their social workers
- Fully staffed team

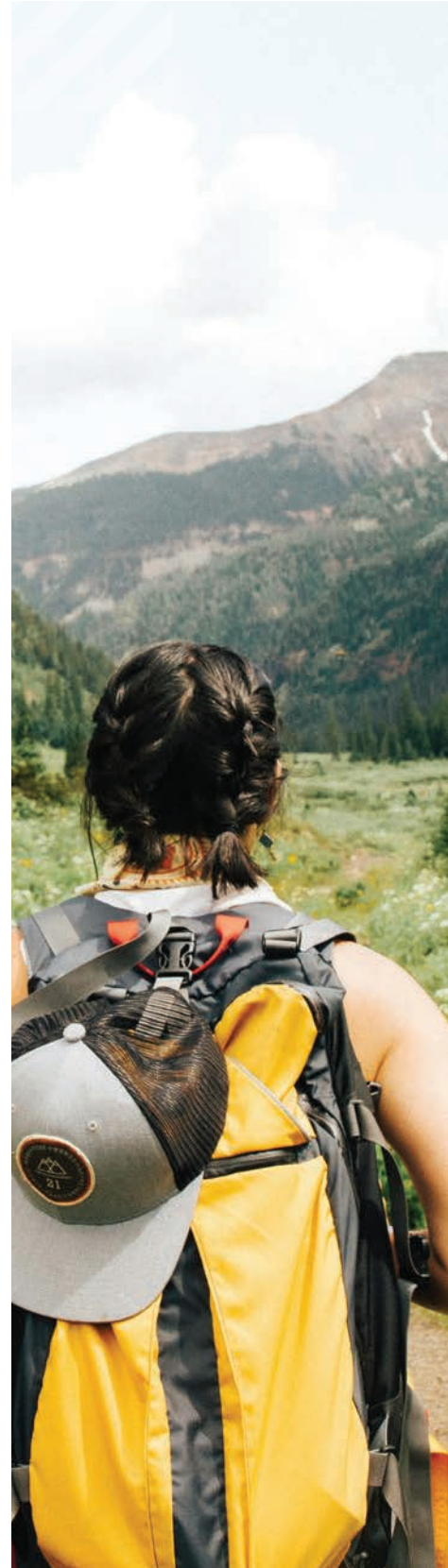


Mental Health Team

Barb Fedora / Wellness Program Manager for Mental Health Team

The Mental Health Team provides culturally attuned mental-health services, which are sensitive to the needs of children, youth, families, and communities. These voluntary services strive to meet individuals where they are at, and understands that context, community, and cultural backgrounds are avenues of healing. We follow a client-led, trauma-informed process where people are in the forefront of decision-making about their mental health needs, treatment, and therapeutic direction.

Our approach is to combine Western therapeutic modalities with traditional healing practices. The Western therapeutic models we use respect the unique lives of our clients and may include trauma-informed/trauma-specific counselling, Narrative Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing treatment (EMDR), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Solution-Focused Therapy (SFT), Internal Family Systems (IFS), Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), alongside Art and Play Therapy approaches — all of which are dependent upon the person we are working with. Traditional healing practices include smudging, drumming, prayer, language circles, healing circles, beading, and other cultural crafts.





HIGHLIGHTS

- At the beginning of March, the Mental Health team moved to our new space on Tranquille. This new-to-us location makes mental-health services more accessible to youth and families who use public transportation. We also have more rooms dedicated to therapeutic use, so clinical work can be more suited to the client's need. We also now have access to a highly functional group workspace that is open to the Agency for hosting groups.
- Wilderness Wellness program: Over Spring Break, Tiffany and our practicum student Adrian Moyles ran an outdoor wilderness therapy group. This was a pilot program intended to support youth in wellness on the land. The program involved drawing out leadership skills and helping youth to find belonging while providing regulation skills and mental-health tools. The program centred around hiking, fishing, and life/outdoor skills. This program was so successful that further funding has been applied for to expand the program and delivery options.
- Mind Medicine program in partnership with the YMCA: Funded through the YMCA and designed to support youth 13-18 experiencing mild to moderate anxiety. This program is based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and teaches skills to address living with anxiety. We delivered this program in Fall 2023 and again in Spring 2024. We were able to support Secwépemc youth in attending and accessing this program, and as it is popular, we hope to expand the offerings to include up to age 30 in the future.
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Treatment (EMDR): A well-established treatment modality designed to support nervous system recovery from trauma. This year most of our clinicians have completed or are in process of completing this training. This is a modality that is flexible in incorporating traditional ways of wellness into the treatment process. We are looking forward to offering this as treatment options for children, youth, and families.
- The Mental Health Team opened up to support our first BSW practicum student, Adrian Moyles. He was helpful in supporting the Wilderness Wellness pilot program. As the year progresses, the team looks forward to supporting further learning for students.
- Professional registration: As the province considers regulating mental health and psychotherapy, SCFSA is well placed in front of any new legislation with almost all our team now being professionally registered. This meets the industry standard, increases valuable oversight in our work, while providing increased support for those receiving care from the team.
- We are very excited about some upcoming programming to be offered, including Mindful Monkeys (anxiety tools and mindfulness for 5-9 year olds), Mind Medicine (Fall 2024), Mindfulness Yoga (Fall 2024), Mental Health movie nights, Wilderness Wellness, Art Series, Grief and Loss, and Beading for Mental Health.

What's working well?

- Using group work to intentionally address the stigma of mental-health supports, as well as to support increased service delivery while case loads are full.
- Ongoing clinical skill enhancement team members have been engaging in include Suicide Risk Intervention Assessment, Critical Incident Debrief Training, EMDR, CBT, DBT, Leadership, Somatic Experiencing, Synergetic Play Therapy, and Conflict Resolution, among others.
- Our new building is much larger and provides the team an increase in therapeutic space. This allows us to pivot slightly away from an outreach-based model and increase the quality-of-service provision by increasing access to tools and modalities available.
- We are continuing to offer flexibility as much as possible through virtual sessions, phone sessions, and mobile sessions when indicated.
- Arrangements for external clinical supervision — this means that we have an increase in quality assurance, guidance, and cultural integration in the work being done.

What we are worried about?

- The ongoing impact of intergenerational trauma for individuals, families, and communities, and having this be pathologized through Western understandings of mental health.
- 100 per cent increase in annual referrals to date of report. With the changes to FNHA funding for

counselling, we are seeing a higher rate of referrals than we ever have before. This is an indication of the value of mental-health services, but also the unaddressed need.

- With the overwhelming increase in referrals, we are seeing our waitlist grow to unprecedented lengths, and triaging need is always an ethical dilemma.
- The lack of a Secwépemc-specific mental-health assessment. Currently we have no standard assessment or model giving a clear picture of mental health for Secwépemc people. A specific assessment which incorporates Secwépemc ways into the foundation of the assessment would be ideal in highlighting Secwépemc ways supported by Western models.
- Ability to meet the mental-health needs through service delivery within the seven Secwépemc communities. With the lack of an established and dedicated community team, we worry that needs of individuals in communities may be unaddressed. We also worry that the opportunity to engage in determining service provision regarding mental health is being missed, as well as the opportunity to collaborate in supporting program delivery within community.
- Determining time-limits of services versus meeting an ongoing and evolving need from clients.
- The goodness of fit for mental-health clinicians as a sole provider during crisis intervention is not ideal. The Mental Health Team is part of the response, but standard procedures indicate mental health should be part of a broader team, and that a crisis intervention response would be a better fit to support vulnerable people.
- Youth-engagement in services, especially regarding highly vulnerable youth and ensuring service delivery that is accessible to meet their needs.
- The ongoing competition with private sector for talented and dedicated staff. Over the last year, the mental-health teams have lost 4 clinicians to private practice. This is due to significant wage differences, and the increase in autonomy afforded in the private sector. As we see an increased societal investment in mental health, this struggle will likely continue to grow.



What needs to happen

- Continuing to staff the urban and community mental-health teams to minimize disruptions and maximize service delivery for clients.
- Working with Elders to understand how we can improve mental health practice in assuring alignment with cultural values for communities.
- Complete the establishment of the Crisis Intervention Debrief program.
- Mental Health policies and procedures require an update to reflect current work.
- An increase in developing partnerships to assist in meeting the needs of those on the waitlist.

Our new building is much larger and provides the team an increase in therapeutic space. This allows us to pivot slightly away from an outreach-based model and increase the quality-of-service provision by increasing access to tools and modalities available.



Early Years Team

Nicole Williams / Early Years Team Leader

Our Early Years services are specialized intervention and prevention services for Indigenous children 0-6 years of age and their families.

Aboriginal Supported Child Development and Family Enrichment work with 0-12 children mostly but up until the 19th birthday. We work directly with parents and caregivers to offer infant massage, parent coaching, Circle of Security, autism awareness, families and cultural parent groups. Participation is voluntary and family-centred, and parent-driven for all programs.

Aboriginal Infant Development (AIDP) provides support to Indigenous children from pregnancy to 3 years old and sometimes up to school age if the developments sit in 0-3 years category. Aboriginal Infant Development and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (AIDP/ASCD) build the ability for inclusion in childcare or social settings, supporting the right of all children of diverse abilities to participate actively up to the age of 18. We use multiple early child assessments to identify where the focus is needed not only for development but for health and make referrals to speech and language, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy services as well as Family Support and Direct Support.

HIGHLIGHTS

Recently sharing information about FASD with colleagues sparked immensely valuable learning from Elder Ronnie Jules about the specific date alcohol was introduced to local First Nations communities. Through personal story-sharing, he painted a vivid picture of how the colonial introduction of trauma and alcohol is impacting generations of First Nations families. This brought very specific Secwépemc cultural teachings and relevance to both the hardship and resilience of the families we support.

In addition, the SCFSA Pow Wow was a highlight this year — being able to invite and welcome all the children and families we support to a free and easily accessible cultural event.

This past year we have enjoyed creating more collaboration with our social-work colleagues. We have been able to get to know many of our



newer social workers, case consult, and discuss ways to co-create support plans/goals/next steps to best meet the needs of the children and families. We also enjoyed being included in some of the permanency planning meetings again. This process is important to get diverse input/expertise and direction of how to support children and families. This reduces working in silos or isolation and ensures the children are visible to many people/roles, creating shared responsibility/accountability and preventing children from “falling through the cracks.”

Playgroup has introduced swimming days once a month, and Pro-D days have had the opportunity to get the children out on the land. The families look forward to this playgroup and we love seeing the full interaction of the parents with their children with no electronic devices in the way of them bonding. We also have had a hygienist attend our playgroup from Qwemtsin Health Society to help with parents and their children with dental hygiene.

Therapists have been provided the opportunity to provide inter-professional wraparound therapy services for families. When it is best for the child, therapists can attend sessions as a team, allowing us to work together to support the child’s unique needs. For example, if a child is working on eating a larger variety of foods, SLP can support their ability to communicate during mealtimes, OT can support with feeding skills, and PT can support with postural control and adaptations.

Parents are being supported to find housing, daycare and assessments by psychologists for diagnosis, opening many doors financially to support in-home and in-educational settings.

A child was able to attend a specialist equipment clinic from Sunny Hill and was prescribed a power wheelchair. This will be a critical tool in allowing them to access their environments and mobilize in their community for the first time before entering adulthood soon.

A family has regularly engaged in speech, occupational, and physiotherapy sessions despite numerous barriers to accessing services. This family does whatever they can to support their children’s developmental needs. One child in the family is now speaking in full sentences and engaging in social programming and is now interacting with new foods. Another child in the family is beginning to use spoken words and a communication device and

is also engaging with new healthy foods. Both children trialled an adapted bike and were successful with this.

A child has made significant progress with their speech sound development after engaging in regular speech therapy sessions. Parents were highly engaged in-service and carried out homework and generalization tasks. The child reports that they have an easier time communicating with friends at school, and parents report positive changes in the child’s overall well-being and engagement at home and school.

Occupational therapy modifications provided for daily items have really supported a child’s ability to manage their daily tasks such as dressing, open containers and backpacks, and managing zippers.

Therapists’ and consultants’ ability to attend kindergarten transition meetings has been well received by school teams and families and has allowed for a smoother transition into kindergarten; the school is well informed of the child’s abilities and challenges prior to entry.

What’s working well?

- Our team continues to do amazing work with children, families, community, daycares, schools, health-care professionals, etc. We are making a positive difference in the lives of our children every day. This is the rewarding piece. The budget expanding over recent years has been significantly valuable in creating a profound difference in the access to basic needs as well as therapy supplies. Having a therapist on our team is incredible! This is creating a timely and low-barrier therapy services to our children.
- Staff retention on the Early Years Team.
- Increase in attendance for play group.
- Pro-D days were successful with all spots filled and children engaged and happy.
- Working more as a team to support our families.
- Keeping the child at the centre of the circle of support, using this to collaborate with other professionals and systems in a good way, and advocating to meet the child’s needs in the best possible way.
- Families are consistently engaged in speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy services.

Families remain open to regular visits from therapists to address their children's developmental needs.

- Communities are generally very welcoming of support. Communities have offered space for therapy services, making visits more accessible to families.
- Therapist ability to travel to rural and remote communities has allowed for families to have regular in-home visits, eliminating the barrier of transportation, and allowing clients to feel comfortable in their own homes.

What are we worried about?

- We need a streamlined filing system and file clerk that requires less time of the consultant so we can focus on our roles with the children and families.
- We need to simplify steps taken and reduce barriers within our own Agency to support children and families.
- Smaller caseloads would better support us in meeting the needs of children and families in a timely way. In addition, increased family enrichment workers/availability to meet the basic needs and transportation barriers of the families so consultants can focus more on child development.
- Increased (possibly contracted) direct support workers would increase the hours of goal-based supportive intervention our children are receiving.
- We need more support and access to programing to update our forms into fillable Signs of Safety orientated documents. Frontline staff would benefit from Signs

of Wellness training and professional support in implementing SOS from a wellness perspective.

- Some primary worries are expanding expectations/ increasing workload, ongoing staff turnover/transitions in many areas set things back or delay in moving forward.
- Jordan's Principle — how long these are taking, the number of pending requests, the changing requirements or items that will be funded.
- Share Vision and filing (this takes a significant amount of time from my families when we must do both).
- High caseload numbers and increasing demands with higher needs in families, complex children and families.
- Often families are finding it hard to find services within the community to use their autism funding (e.g., especially under 6, as the service provider must be on the RASP list)
- Support workers in daycares — we have a high number of children needing support and being removed from daycares but not enough support workers to meet this demand (currently have two empty positions). Keeping staff to work in daycares has been challenging for many years and the months to post and fill those positions leaves children unsupported and us trying to find innovative solutions.
- Differences with on-reserve versus off-reserve funding available to families. Unfortunately, families off-reserve and not eligible for Jordan's Principle have limited access to funding for therapy supplies or supports.



- Difficulties with acquiring therapy supplies from outside of Canada.
- Space restrictions for storage of specialized therapy equipment.

Community advancements

- Communities are continuing to ask for ASD workshops.
- We have been quite connected with Skeetchestn and they will reach out when there is a need in their community (whether a need we can help with or point in the right direction).
- Working alongside school staff in Simpcw to create a plan for a sensory room (started this process in 2023 with Simpcw and it sounds like the band is moving forward with building a therapeutic space).
- Worked alongside Skeetchestn staff, OT and SLP to create a sensory room that would support the needs of their students.
- Strong collaboration with other community agencies (e.g. collaboratively working together to support a child that was being removed from a childcare).
- SCFSA provided a DAYC2 training for both SCFSA staff and other Early Years community professionals regionally. We've starting going back into the band daycares to do ASQs again.
- Hoping this year's summer program is successful and engaging. We have geared it more towards culture and getting in touch with tradition and bonding with the land.
- Bike Camp! Next summer it would be amazing to host a bike camp at the Agency to support children learning to bike ride. We would need a handful of bikes (trikes, bikes with training wheels, adapted bikes and helmets) for those families that do not have this equipment to be able to participate.
- Therapists would like to engage more consistently in Wellness Team playgroup at the Agency and community locations. Therapists hope to input informal programming into playgroup to support communication, fine motor, feeding, and gross motor development.
- Continue to provide in home visits to outreach (rural) communities as often as possible.



Family Support Team

Joanne Korpan / Family Support Team Lead

The Family Support Team specializes in supporting Indigenous children and families by providing voluntary, comprehensive intervention and prevention services, transition planning, screening, and assessments with an attachment-based, culturally focused, and family-centered lens. We work directly with parents and caregivers to offer parent coaching, family support, and direct support for children in various settings.

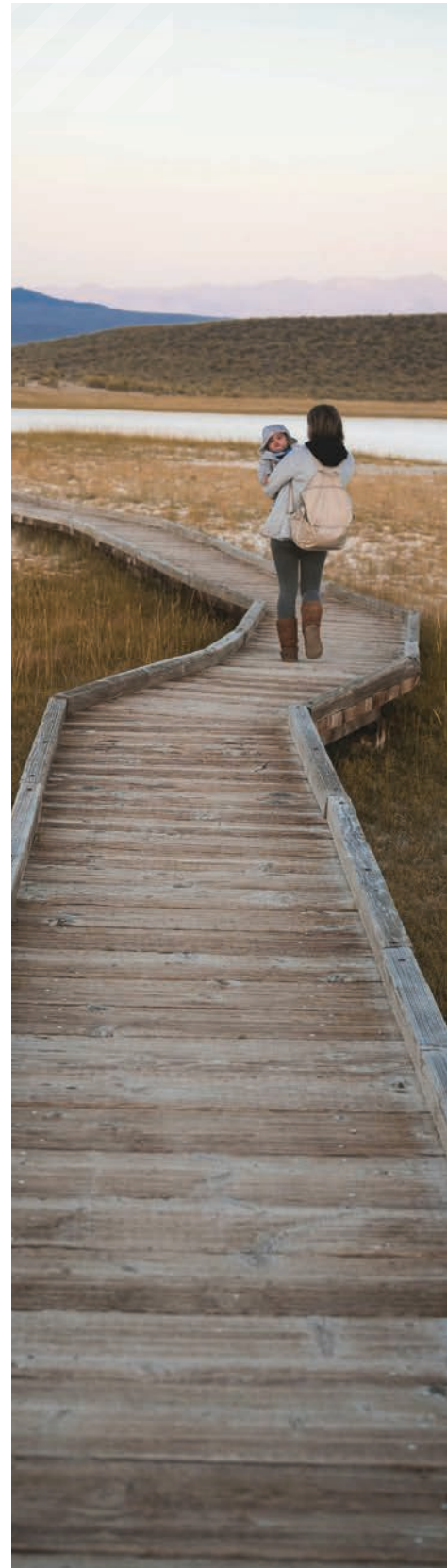
HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE YEAR

Men's Group; Summer Camp Program; Women's Social Group; Life Skills and Food Sovereignty (canning); Fill My Basket Parenting Program; Women's Warrior Group Whispering Pines/Clinton; Mother Goose; Family Connections Staycation 3-Days Spring Break; Pro-D Inservice Day Camps; Family Wellness Day; You Are the Difference Workshop; Nurturing Bonds for Mothers and Daughters; Elders in Residence Daily

WHAT'S WORKING WELL

Our team is committed to finding new ways to include culture and language in our programming. Our Direct Support Workers have implemented Mother Goose teachings using traditional songs. We fostered cultural connections across all our programs by actively integrating traditional teachings, Elders, and cultural aspects. Our parenting strategies are firmly rooted in culture, involving guidance from the Elders, language and drumming teachings, traditional foods and the values of Secwépemc.

- To counter a lack of inclusion for children on the spectrum within our communities, our team organized and implemented a 4-week summer program and Pro-D Inservice Days Camp for these children who were unable to register for mainstream programming without one-to-one support. This will be a recurring program offered in the future.
- Having a Direct Support Worker fills the gap for services for children aged 7-12 years old. This includes one-to-one support as well as group support.



- Including Elders in our parenting groups continues to receive positive feedback from participants and offered dynamic opportunities for parents to explore traditional ways of parenting and cultural teachings.
- The engagement in our newly developed Women's Social Group has exceeded expectations and has been well accepted in all communities served.
- The engagement of our newly developed Women's Warrior Social with Whispering Pines/Clinton consistently drew a strong attendance and have led to parents and community members feeling a deeper connection with their families and communities.
- Our contracted Occupational Therapist and Speech and Language Pathologist have both been working at full capacity.
- Our new Family Development Coordinator has been facilitating training in Nobody's Perfect Parenting, FASD 2-day Workshop, and Circle of Security Program.
- Our team offered a Food Sovereignty, Food Skills Canning Workshop, and an officer from the Rural RCMP volunteered for the day.
- Our Family Enrichment Workers have been working above capacity to connect families with essential resources and alleviate financial, transportation, housing and food security barriers as much as possible.
- Direct Support Workers often provide services in understaffed daycares and schools and are expected to provide support that is beyond their roles. Many children who require Direct Support need full-time one-to-one support, which we are not currently able to provide in most cases due to a shortage of staff.
- The cost of living and persistent shortage of affordable housing poses significant hurdles for our team. These challenges detract our focus from crucial aspects of our work, such as child development goals, parent coaching, and other interventions until these basic needs are met.

What Needs to Happen?

- In moving forward, it will be necessary to have additional FDC, FEW and Direct Support working in community, schools and daycares. This will ensure that we can continue providing exceptional services with our rising caseloads.
- Our team and families served would greatly benefit from a new position to assist with programs and group facilitation, such as a Group Coordinator and/or an on-call driver to help clients get to and from programming. We would also like to explore options for assistance with child-minding during parenting groups.
- Our team needs consistent and comprehensive training in areas such as Signs of Safety for Wellness, child-development assessments, trauma-informed practice, emotional self-regulation, Duty to Report, Financial Literacy, FASD, Autism, ADHD, facilitation skills, learning disabilities, and parenting approaches to remain up to date with current Early Years/Family Support research and strategies.
- To increase community engagement, our team has been and will continue to offer programs, workshops and groups at the Agency to all the communities. Our team members are currently hoping to engage with all our communities in some capacity.

What are we Worried About?

- A significant challenge that we are still facing right now is having moved from urban area to the reserve. Housing, cost-of-living, food security and transportation are still barriers to our families.
- Our team is currently struggling to keep up with the demand of maintaining caseloads along with the extensive preparation and facilitation of groups.
- Our team's current shortage of staffing is challenging and difficult to keep up with the needs of our team attending community functions.

Resource

Tammy Newton / Resource Team Leader

To provide safe, consistent, time limited care to children who are unable to remain in their family home

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

Caregiver Event 2023 held at the Delta. Great turnout of more than 60 caregivers.

Dancers were honoured to offer cultural understanding and teaching about powwow dance.

Recruitment events held at main office have resulted in some potential caregivers to be studied.

Family Day recruitment event at TCC, 2 Blazers game recruitment events, one was Indigenous Night.

Resource jumped in to support Kinship while work was being done to secure more staff on the team.

Resource workers completed assessments and home studies on behalf of Kinship so workflow would continue.

One home study completed in May 2024.

In addition to the need for more placements and our experiences with higher risk and needs youth, we established a "Global Bed" with Rob's Place. This allows us emergency placements and has been used 3 times in its short 3-month contract. Typically, this has served as a stabilization or short-term transitioning. We have witnessed the value of having this and have extended it for another 3-month term.



What's Working Well

The Resource Team is at full complement. All Resource workers are fully trained and have reasonable caseloads.

We are working on cleaning up MIS files and ensuring file accuracy to support the transition of files to ICM from MIS. MIS to be phased out in 2025. Also working on ensuring all missed audit points are corrected and resolved.

Dedicated Resource file clerk implemented so RE files are being addressed, cleaned up and managed.

What are we worried about?

Many homes are overcapacity, few Kinship transfers, and a significant number of children brought into stranger care over the past months.

We also have an aging caregiver population and may see several retirements over the next year or so.

Too many children and youth are being displaced in Kamloops and at SCFSA. Often, there is no ability to return them home and are left with no family, no community, no connections.

What needs to happen?

More homes are required, not only at SCFSA but across the province. Too many children left in stranger care, even after CCO.

Children in care require a forever family wherever possible and waiting until CCO is granted prevents attachment, bonding and positive relationships. We have several children that have not been connected back to family and/or community. We have been taking on other children/youth from other jurisdictions, across the province. This also overtaxes our resources, with no ability to support a return to family/community for these displaced children and/or youth.



Kinship Team

Leanna Mackenzie / Kinship Team Leader

2023/24 has been a year of building connections and relationships for the Kinship Team. Since January 2024 our Kinship team, which includes Roots Worker Willow George, Case Assistant Miranda Payne, welcomed Kinship Worker Megan Griffith in January, Team Leader Leanna Mackenzie in February and Kinship Worker Megan Montgomery in April. We are committed to supporting the creation of lifelong connections, so children and youth in care will be proud of who they are, who their families are, and where they come from.

We know that children and youth are better off when they are cared for by their families. The Kinship Team is committed to supporting the maintenance of family, culture and community ties for children and youth during the experience of being out of their parental home. Our goal is to find family members with the necessary skills and to nurture lifelong commitment for the children and youth. We also strive to build capacity within families to successfully care for their children and to work collaboratively with service professionals and caregivers to create the best plan for the child.

In 2024, The Kinship Team's goal is to focus on building connections and relationships with our Kinship families and communities. In 2023, Roots Worker Willow worked with a Family Preservation social worker to bring children home to their community, introduce and reintroduce them to family members, and was blessed to witness these children walk on the land of their ancestors for the first time. We are always grateful for the opportunity to have made this happen and witness such a meaningful moment. This summer we are supporting 4 of our Kinship Families in taking their children to community to attend cultural events, to connect with their many family members, and for some, to stand on the land of their ancestors for the very first time.



The Kinship Team loves to take the opportunity to celebrate and support our Kinship families, both in care and out of care. At the end of 2023 we provided Pendelton blankets to our care providers who reside in our seven communities to show our appreciation of their support of caring for family. Additionally, to support the rising cost of groceries, the Kinship Team was able to provide meat boxes for Kinship families, which were well received. The Kinship Team along with the Resource and Cultural teams is again working together to organize the annual Caregiver Appreciation Dinner that will be held in October. This event is for both in-care and out-of-care caregivers, and we look forward to celebrating with all of those who can attend.

The Kinship Team held two feather workshops, one in Neskonlith for our rural families there, as well as Tk'emlips for our urban families. We look forward to more workshops in the future. In June the Kinship Team is very pleased to be joining Skeetchstn for a Genealogy Weekend for members, to support them with documenting genograms. The Kinship Team is proud to share that we completed our Agency's first Enhanced Out-of-Care Arrangement, which supported funding for youth to access services that will sustain them into adulthood. We are currently working with two other Kinship families to access support and services for their youth through the Enhanced Out-of-Care Arrangement. The Kinship Team has been working to build connections

with all our Kinship families and is excited with the increased participation in all the activities and events put on by SCFSA and are always looking for new suggestions. It is our hope that our Kinship families know they have a whole team that is available to support them and that they can call on us as needed. 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 long-term support for lifelong well-being.

The Kinship Team is excited for the coming year, and we look forward to sharing with you the great ideas and upcoming events as we move through 2024.

The Kinship Team is proud to share that we completed our Agency's first Enhanced Out-of-Care Arrangement, which supported funding for youth to access services that will sustain them into adulthood.



Human Resources and Communications

Chylane Diablo / Director of Human Resources

Human Resources and Communications Team is responsible for:

- Recruitment and retention
- Orientation, training, and development
- Occupational health and safety, wellness
- Employee communication and employee relations
- Performance management, succession planning, and compensation
- Records and information management
- HR policies and procedures
- Internal and external communication strategy



HIGHLIGHTS

- Progress continues with Agency wellness strategy
- Great media coverage of and attendance at MOU signing ceremony with CLBC
- Providing more training opportunities
- Consistent leadership meetings
- Progress made on improving our recruitment and retention strategy

What's working well

- Hired 2 HR Coordinator and an HR Assistant, creating a full HR team to better support the Agency.
- Created full Safety Orientation process with regularly scheduled monthly meetings for employees.
- More community engagement opportunities. Building relationships.

What are we worried about

- Staff recruitment and retention

What needs to happen

- Hire a new HR Director to spearhead agency-wide human resources initiatives.
- Implement a new leadership team onboarding strategy to better support those stepping into new leadership roles.
- Continue conducting exit interviews to assist in creating staff retention strategies
- Conduct "stay" interviews with senior staff to identify reasons why they remain with the agency.

**Great media coverage
of and attendance at
MOU signing ceremony
with CLBC**



Research and Policy Development

Director of Research and Policy Development

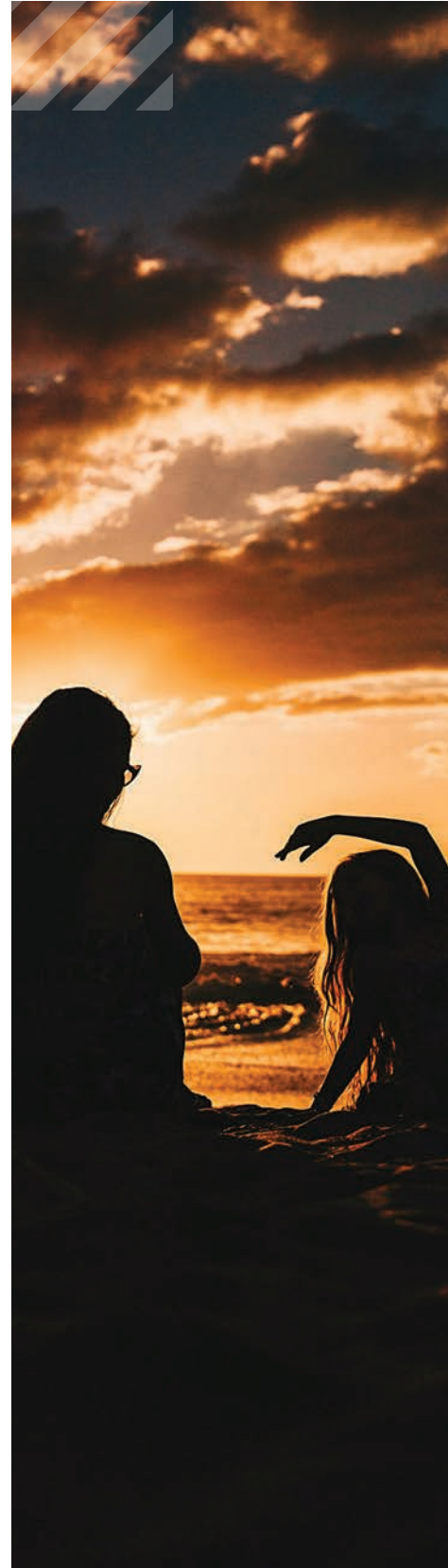
Period Covered: November 2023 - March 31, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Caroline Thompson, serving as the Director of Research and Policy Development, has been instrumental in advancing the strategic objectives of the organization from November 2023 to March 2024. Her leadership in navigating complex policy landscapes and fostering research initiatives is aimed at contributing to the Agency's mission of enhancing prevention efforts and advocating for equitable policy frameworks. Caroline's commitment to professional development is evident through her completion of FOIPPA, violence and de-escalation training as well as MCFD's accredited Delegation Training achieving C6 – Child Protection designation.

REPORTING

Under Caroline's guidance, a process for Quarterly Reports (QR) has been implemented with meticulous attention to detail, and continuous improvement based on feedback from the SCFSA Board, Band Reps, SCFSA Leadership and staff. Caroline has had a standing invitation to monthly Board meetings, highlighting and building the vision for a Research and Policy Development team. With a focus on prioritizing the addition of a Senior Policy Analyst and Settlement Resource Navigator to the Research and Policy Development team, Caroline continues to work towards refining the Agency's strategic focus in areas relating to research and policy development and specifically in emerging legislative and policy changes both federally and provincially such as with Bill C-92. Notably, engaging the Board, Band Reps, SCFSA Leadership and staff will remain an integral goal to enhance internal alignment and strategic clarity.



Research

Caroline's tenure saw significant advancements in research endeavours. She authored Briefing Notes on critical topics such as a Cost of Living Study, the long-term reform of First Nations Child and Family Services in collaboration with the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD), and most notably the NICHI living spaces (housing) projects, demonstrating a commitment to innovation and a desire to contribute to operational excellence. Engaging with external stakeholders like MCFD, the First Nations Caring Society, the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) as well as Thompson Rivers University, facilitating strategic partnerships is an important component of well-informed policy formulation and program development.

Policy Development (internal/external)

Caroline spearheaded establishing a Research and Policy Development Committee and a Financial Advisory Group to foster collaborative efforts within the organization. Her rigorous review of legislation and resolutions pertinent to the Agency's mandate underscored her commitment to ensuring policy alignment with organizational goals. Additionally, her contributions to the Final Settlement Agreement (FSA) process, including FSA-related information sessions in Community, collating feedback on long-term reforms affecting the Agency specifically, and First Nations Child and Family Services more broadly.

Innovation

Beyond core responsibilities, Caroline actively engaged with stakeholders through meetings and discussions, fostering robust relationships with Ministry representatives and community leaders. Her initiative in coordinating community engagement efforts and strategic outreach exemplifies a dedication to transparency, stakeholder involvement and building professional relationships in critical organizational matters and advocacy. Caroline was integral in securing a \$7.3M National Indigenous Collaborative Housing Inc. (NICHI) grant in early 2024 that will go toward the purchase of two urban housing locations in urban

Kamloops for up to 20 children, youth and families served by the Agency. These projects will fulfill the mandate of implementing a national Urban, Rural, Northern (URN) Indigenous Housing Strategy broadly, and locally, SCFSA teams who specialize in culture, kinship, family preservation, and youth support, for example, will rotate through the space, ensuring a continuous presence to support those accessing the spaces and who are in transition.

Future Outlook

Caroline Thompson's tenure as Director of Research and Policy Development has been marked by strategic leadership, meticulous attention to detail, and a steadfast commitment to advancing organizational objectives through successfully applying for, and being granted a \$7.3M grant for two housing projects in urban Kamloops, and an unwavering dedication to continue to access resources for current and future generations. Her contributions are intended to continue to position the Agency for sustained growth and impact in the First Nations Child and Family Services sector alongside her colleagues, the Communities served by the Agency as well as the Board of Directors. Looking ahead, Caroline remains dedicated to fostering innovation in policy development, enhancing research initiatives, and cultivating strategic partnerships that empower communities and advance equitable outcomes. Her continued leadership promises to drive meaningful change while the Research & Policy Development team grows, and to uphold the organization's commitment to excellence and Community advocacy. A future State vision for Caroline means that the Agency remains informed, nimble and prepared for change.

Financial Statements



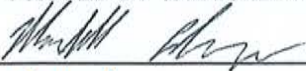
SECWEPEMC CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
Year ended March 31, 2024


	Invested in Capital Assets	Unrestricted Fund	Externally Restricted Fund	Internally Restricted For Trust Accounts	Total 2024	Total 2023
REVENUES:						
Indigenous Services Canada	\$ -	\$ 14,676,045	\$ 4,299,818	\$ -	\$ 18,975,863	\$ 23,042,454
Prior year reimbursement (recovery)	-	-	33,620	-	33,620	(138,414)
Ministry of Children and Family Development	-	-	18,797,246	-	18,797,246	15,257,237
Allowance - ISC	-	-	168,463	-	168,463	284,922
Allowance - MCFD	-	-	866,103	-	866,103	737,117
Interest	-	1,354,451	-	-	1,354,451	267,156
Wages and Administration Recoveries	-	421,214	-	-	421,214	238,219
Other	-	181,357	390,059	-	571,416	176,941
	<u>-</u>	<u>16,633,067</u>	<u>24,555,309</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>41,188,376</u>	<u>39,865,632</u>
EXPENSES:						
Administration	-	1,680	183,652	-	185,332	160,354
Amortization	566,493	-	-	-	566,493	417,465
Community prevention	-	-	-	-	-	5,122,663
Community relations	-	285,476	5,239	-	290,715	70,406
Computer support	-	36,938	14,506	-	51,444	78,987
Contractual services	-	57,626	42,692	-	100,318	140,133
Equipment and facility rental	-	181,598	217,503	-	399,101	317,678
Fees for service	-	-	37,682	-	37,682	54,128
Insurance	-	188,145	132,759	-	320,904	281,713
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	-	-	-	-	-	79,383
Meetings	-	170,907	34,229	-	205,136	158,137
Office and miscellaneous	-	284,567	82,889	-	367,456	212,941
Professional development	-	195,477	105,687	-	301,164	242,288
Program expenses	-	855,335	18,283,670	-	19,139,005	14,671,636
Repairs and maintenance	-	137,331	31,373	-	168,704	104,820
Telephone and internet	-	104,682	68,341	-	173,023	151,216
Travel	-	8,587	54,185	-	62,772	43,721
Vehicle	-	61,117	76,393	-	137,510	114,117
Wages and benefits	-	5,929,257	4,539,600	-	10,468,857	9,117,497
	<u>566,493</u>	<u>8,498,723</u>	<u>23,910,400</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,975,616</u>	<u>31,539,283</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ (566,493)	\$ 8,134,344	\$ 644,909	\$ -	\$ 8,212,760	\$ 8,326,349

SECWEPEMC CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
March 31, 2024

ASSETS	2024	2023
CURRENT ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 26,591,264	\$ 18,125,691
Accounts receivable	1,298,003	1,271,602
GST rebate receivable	3,272	148
Deposits	12,044	19,794
Prepaid expenses	<u>240,021</u>	<u>236,967</u>
	28,144,604	19,654,202
 RESTRICTED CASH (Note 4)	 25,163	 25,163
 TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 5)	 <u>11,755,498</u>	 <u>11,863,836</u>
	\$ 39,925,265	\$ 31,543,201
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable and accruals	\$ 1,458,717	\$ 1,381,084
Payroll remittances payable	162,350	70,198
Deferred revenue	<u>-</u>	<u>481</u>
	1,621,067	1,451,763
 COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES (Note 7)	 <u>1,621,067</u>	 <u>1,451,763</u>
 NET ASSETS		
Invested in capital assets	11,755,498	11,863,836
Internally restricted for trust accounts (Note 8)	25,163	25,163
Unrestricted	24,047,099	15,966,116
Externally restricted	<u>2,476,438</u>	<u>2,236,323</u>
	38,304,198	30,091,438
	\$ 39,925,265	\$ 31,543,201

APPROVED BY THE DIRECTORS:


 _____ Director


 _____ Director





Main Office: 153 Kootenay Way, Kamloops, BC V2H 0E6

 250.314.9669  @secwepemcfamilies  @SCFSAgency  secwepemcfamilies.org