

SUMMER/FALL 2025 EDITION

K'weseltkten

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SECWÉPEMC CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY



Energy Mover and MC Madelaine McCallum gets her jingle on at the Agency's inaugural Le7 es Elkst Conference, held in May. Read and see more about it 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*

TEAMS UPDATE

CULTURAL CAMP



“We encouraged our young adults, who typically might be reserved in unfamiliar settings, to step outside their comfort zones and engage with one another. With laughter and camaraderie, we embraced the moment, breaking down barriers and connecting with everyone.”

Cheyenne Bigcharles and Eric Nickel were tasked with creating a camping trip for our CLBC young adults with the focus on building relationships and providing them with a safe and fun environment free of judgment.

The Cultural Camp had many opportunities to explore. The waterfalls were everyone's highlight of the week, which provided a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with nature. Spending an hour at the falls allowed the young adults to be fully present and appreciate their surroundings. We sang traditional songs and offered a prayer of gratitude, taking a moment to absorb the powerful beauty of the waterfalls. This experience, free from the distractions of our phones, was precisely why we organized the Cultural Camp.

Afterward, we enjoyed swimming in the lake, which not only helped everyone cool off but also fostered a sense of joy. Both staff and young adults recognized that even simple activities like swimming in nature offers everyone a chance to stop and enjoy the moment.

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IN COMMUNITY

CAMP



At far right, Elder Barb Larson is smudged at the Empower Her retreat for women at Sun Peaks that focused on empowering women, resources for women and putting strength back into our women. Near right, some happy faces during the Skitsesten Spring Seasonal Feast. The Band has fall and spring seasonal feasts every year. Above middle, youth boys trip to Klahoose Wilderness Resort. Skeetchestn sent 9 youth to experience a different Indigenous culture. They fished, swam in the ocean and got to experience coastal life. Above, youth girls trip to Siwash Lake Wilderness Resort & Ranch. They focused on confidence building, horse back riding and being on the land.



SKITSESTEN Uses SCFSA Funding to Access Healthy Food

Thanks to the generous funding support from SCFSA, the Family Wellness Department from Skeetchestn has been able to make incredible strides in supporting our community's well-being. This year, we've expanded our reach and provided more families with the tools, resources, and experiences they need to thrive.

One of the biggest successes has been increasing our access to Farmers Market Nutrition Coupons. These coupons, which act as cash at any BC Farmers Market, have helped families across the province buy fresh dairy, meats, fruits, and vegetables — ensuring greater access to healthy, nourishing food.

In addition to the coupons, we've also been able to provide direct food security sup-

port, including meat packages, fresh fruit and veggie bundles, and other nutritional staples that help ease the burden of rising grocery costs.

Our investment in youth has also grown. With Agency funding, we are sending youth to two transformative youth retreats, focused on building strength, confidence, and cultural connection. These retreats will give young people the chance to spend time on the land, connect with peers, and engage in meaningful activities that ground them in identity and wellness. All these initiatives are rooted in our mission to promote wellness and support families in meaningful, sustainable ways. We are deeply thankful for the support that makes this work possible, and we look forward to continuing to grow together.

The team enjoyed a week filled with delicious meals, a highlight of the camping experience. This time together emphasized the significance of being grateful and surrounding yourself with community, allowing staff to share stories and connect with our young adults on a deeper level. The young adults also had the opportunity to share their life experiences, fostering a greater understanding of everyone.

The campfire served as a tool for open dialogue among participants, enabling them to express their personal experiences in life surrounded by a supportive community. By establishing norms of transparent communication and a judgment-free atmosphere, we encouraged our young adults, who typically might be reserved in unfamiliar settings, to step outside their comfort zones and engage with one another. With laughter and camaraderie, we embraced the moment, breaking down barriers and connecting with everyone on equal footing.

The initial task of setting up Cultural Camp presented a challenge that was met with teamwork and collaboration. We are grateful for Tiffany Gray, Kenneth Joseph and Aeon Staff who accompanied us and gave us so much support to make this camp a success. The Cultural and Community Inclusion Team couldn't have made the trip a success without our team.

Kudos to all who made this a great success!

LE7 ES ELKST

CONFERENCE



MC, Energy Mover, Keynote Speaker Madelaine McCallum

For the first time, SCFSA hosted The Le7 es Elkst (Good Work) Conference between May 20-22, 2025 at the Kamloops Coast Hotel. This conference served over 125 community members, social workers, Elders, staff, and presenters from around the Province. Le7 es Elkst, translates to “Good Work” and refers to the conferences overarching theme of jurisdiction; Le7 es Elkst Conference was an opportunity for our communities to come together to uphold, explore, and learn about the good work being done in child & family services, as well as share, plan, and discuss what the future must hold. This three-day conference was full of powerful presentations, moving keynote speakers, cultural activities and language, art, connection, and traditional games.

Photos courtesy photographer Shelanne Justice



Le7 Es Elkst: The Second Gathering coming in December!

CONFERENCE

LE7 ES ELKST



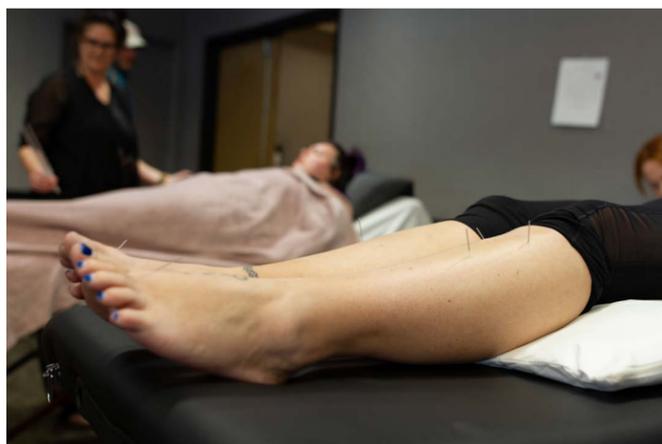
*Bryant Doreadea,
aka Higher Knowl-
edge, telling truths,
spitting rhymes*



ALL STAFF MEETING / SPRING



It was a full day of fun, wellness and a celebration of our amazing staff when we gathered together this past spring at the Delta Hotels Kamloops. Wellness offerings included acupuncture, reiki, tuning forks, reflexology, and meditation. We also had fun with trivia, crafting and a Secwépemctsin icebreaker. See you in November!



We'll see you at the Paramount Nov. 13!!