

# GOOZIH DUST'LUS



CARRIER SEKANI  
FAMILY SERVICES

July / Aug 2021

## Tachick Lake Fish Camp

CSFS hosted a fish camp for youth and employees to learn how to process fish

## New Treatment Centre

A vital new treatment centre for addictions and mental health gets the go-ahead

## Nk'esi Youth Group

A new 2SLGTBQIA+ group where youth can come and be themselves





Fish waiting to be proceed at the Tachick Lake Fish Camp  
Photo by: Leasa Kells



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## A Message from our CEO

Warner  
Adam

Hadih everyone!

Although the BC wildfire season is cooling off, we must remain vigilant. While we are out enjoying the outdoors with our families and friends, it is critical to be responsible, as well as report any wildfire activity that you see. We have already seen what devastation these fires are capable of with what happened to the south. I send my deepest condolences to those who have suffered losses.

I want to sincerely commend the CSFS employees who helped accommodate the evacuees from the Yekooche First Nation, who were ordered to evacuate to Prince George earlier this summer due to a nearby wildfire. Our employees handed out prepared meals, and organized outdoor activities. They even helped twins from Yekooche celebrate their birthday by delivering a cake – or rather, two cakes!

Thankfully, the evacuation order was soon lifted, and Yekooche community members have since returned home.

As if the wildfires weren't enough, the COVID-19 pandemic persists. First of all, I would like to thank all of those who

continue taking personal responsibility in protecting our communities from COVID-19 by following provincial health orders and getting vaccinated.

For those who have not gotten vaccinated yet, I strongly urge you to do so. With the Delta Variant of COVID-19 gaining more traction in our region and around the globe, it is looking for those who are unvaccinated. The statistics are clear – the virus is affecting those who are unvaccinated at a more significant rate than those who have received both doses of the vaccine. In order for this pandemic to end, our best bet is for as many of us to get vaccinated as possible.

If you have any questions about the vaccine, it is important to talk to your health provider or doctor. All of the CSFS health professionals are eager to discuss your concerns with you. To register for your vaccine, go to [www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca](http://www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca).

I want to assure all who access CSFS services that any employee who enters your community will have been vaccinated. I believe that these measures are prudent and needed. First Nations are considered a vulnerable

population. Many of our communities are very small and a virus outbreak could cause irreparable harm. Most importantly, we have many elders who are vulnerable, and we need to ensure that we act responsibly to protect their health.

Mussi cho again to you all for the hard work you have been doing to support each other and our communities. Indigenous people have always been resilient, and this past year has demonstrated that. The light is almost here, and we will be able to all come together soon.



Two cakes for the Yekooche twins  
celebrating their 8th birthday



# Conifex CEO Donates \$10,000 to CSFS Youth Services

Carrier Sekani Family Services would like to sincerely thank Conifex for their generous donation of \$10,000 to our Youth Services program. Conifex CEO Ken Shields visited the Sk'ai Zeh Yah youth centre for a tour and cheque presentation in August.

"This donation further reflects our commitment to the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Principles released in Conifex's annual Sustainability Report," said Ken Shields, Conifex Chairman and CEO.

"This donation will support cultural resurgence and youth empowerment initiatives within the Youth Services Program," said Kayla Brownscombe, Youth Services Manager for CSFS. "We are grateful for the support of Conifex,

and acknowledge their commitment to community engagement and reconciliatory action."

CSFS Youth Services is focused on investing in today's youth by providing recreational, educational, and cultural programming. Sk'ai Zeh Yah is a drop-in centre available for any youth aged 16-29 years who needs assistance navigating life's challenges, a hot meal, or a safe place to hang out. It is a non-judgmental environment, and everyone is welcome.

For more information on the Youth Services program or the Sk'ai Zeh Yah youth centre, you can call (250) 564-5643, or visit our website at [www.csfs.org/services/youth-services](http://www.csfs.org/services/youth-services).

## Did you know?

The Burns Lake Primary Care Clinic is now located at the College of New Caledonia campus.

Our two Medical Office Assistants, Patti Rojek and Sarah Brand, assist our physician team of Dr. Cody Kaskamin, Dr. Bryan Skrenes, Dr. James Liu, and Dr. Jaya Bastedo. While some of our regular doctors are away, we are pleased to welcome Dr. Jessica Tamura-Wells and Dr. Danette Dawkin to temporarily support our team until late fall.

Visit the Burns Lake Clinic at 545 Highway 16W in the CNC Building.



CSFS's Mary Teegee with Conifex CEO Ken Shields





Tachick Lake, Saik'uz First Nation  
Future site of the CSFS's new healing facility



# Vital New Treatment Centre gets the Go-Ahead

Planning underway for construction and operation of a new treatment and healing centre at the former Tachick Lake Resort

**C**arrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) is thrilled to announce that after ongoing discussions with the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and the Province of BC, a new Indigenous healing centre will be built at Tachick Lake, located within the traditional territory of Saik'uz First Nation.

This news comes after the ALC had once denied CSFS's request back in February 2021 to use the land for non-agricultural farm use, which stymied planning for the new facility. However, with the recent decision, plans are back on track, and the focus can shift towards creating a vital service tailor-made for the local Indigenous peoples.

CSFS was confident that the decision would eventually be approved, since the former Tachick Lake Resort had been operating as non-agricultural land since the 1960's.

Chief Corrina Leween, CSFS President of the Board of Directors and Chief of the Cheslatta Carrier Nation, says that this decision will help CSFS in focusing on the opioid crisis in BC.

"We are very happy with the ALC decision to allow 'non-farm use' of the property for operations of the Carrier Sekani Family Services Addiction Recovery Program in the new facility, and will continue to serve future generations. The ALC decision allows Carrier Sekani Family Services to move forward in realizing our long-term goals that include healing and treatment that will help address the ongoing opioid and mental health crises that are disproportionately affecting Indigenous people."

CSFS has been keen on this spot for a new healing facility for some time now. Thorough studies were commissioned by CSFS to determine the best possible location for a

healing facility of this type. Due to the size of the site, the healing centre is currently planned to have 60 beds. The close proximity to water, much like CSFS's Ormond Lake treatment centre, is also crucial in providing the land-based healing model.

CSFS is investing in state-of-the-art and culturally-based care models in order to fulfill mental health and addictions services that have been lacking in our region for decades. With the Tachick Lake healing centre, we are one step closer in providing those services to Indigenous peoples of Northern BC.

Planning for the construction and operations of the new healing centre is proceeding. Stay tuned for more updates in the near future!



# Our New Director of Jurisdiction

**C**arrier Sekani Family Services warmly introduces Stephanie Konefall, our new Director of Jurisdiction.



**Stephanie Konefall**

Stephanie is an Indigenous child welfare practice expert, child protection legal specialist, policy analyst and practitioner in the field of Indigenous Child Welfare.

Her responsibilities include the coordination of the Carrier Sekani Child and Family Well-being Law being drafted under the Federal Child Welfare Act. She is the coordinating lead for community involvement in the development of the Act, and is the lead on the Technical Drafting Committee.

She is responsible for overseeing the drafting of the Act, review and final assent by the Whu Neeh Nee Council. Stephanie leads partnerships with the Crown and the Province for Jurisdiction and is a pivotal senior manager responsible for service delivery under the Jurisdiction Framework. Stephanie and her team will work with the member Nations

and all departments under CSFS to ensure protocols regarding the inherent authority of each Nation to care for their own is respected.

Besides her role at CSFS, Stephanie is a mom to two adult children living in Vancouver, and she manages a farm and loves every minute of it! She cares for goats, lamb, chickens, ducks, rabbits, horses, and the farm's namesake – a rooster called "Sully"!



**Sully the Rooster**

## Feedback Page

Did you know that Carrier Sekani Family Services has a feedback page? If you have some suggestions on how we can improve our services, or want to see something new, please go to [www.csfs.org/contact-us/feedback](http://www.csfs.org/contact-us/feedback).





# Equine Assisted Learning

**E**arlier this summer, some of the Youth Services staff took part in an Equine Assisted Learning program at Ultra Equine with the intention of not only learning themselves, but to get acquainted with the program so they can eventually have youth participate.

What exactly is Equine Assisted Learning (EAL)? Erin Weyman, CSFS Youth Life Skills Worker says that it is a unique program where the horses teach us about ourselves!

“Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) is an interactive skill development program with horses. More specifically, it is where the horse is the teacher. It

is an effective approach to human development that encourages individual and team growth.”

Erin says that the EAL program will be a valuable addition to their existing youth programs.

“In youth programs, participants engage in objectively driven exercises, where they find themselves learning valuable life skills in a safe and fun environment. A lot of work has gone into developing our curriculum and has had proven results. There was intensive research done on how horses interact in nature and how human learn best. EAL has also been

proven to be effective, powerful, and empowering for all participants.”

EAL programs can also be adapted to many other diverse and specific needs. The program has been beneficial for individuals who struggle with connection, relationships, behaviour, confidence, and identity. EAL has also been shown to help with addiction and mental health, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD.

Stay tuned for more news on Equine Assisted Learning, as Youth Services look to offer the program to youth.



**Youth Services Staff Wyonna Batoche, Sara Heembrock, Marly Whitmer, and Chelsa Dennis at Ultra Equine**



**Sara Heembrock leading 'Scout'**



**Marly Whitmer giving Scout a good brushing**



Pictured: Annette Williams



# TACHICK LAKE FISH CAMP

**T**he creator blessed us with wonderful weather, great friends and colleagues, and plenty of fish!

Carrier Sekani Family Services recently hosted a fish camp at Tachick Lake, located on the traditional territory of the Saik'uz First Nation and future home of the new CSFS healing and treatment centre, and invited youth and CSFS employees to partake.

We invited youth who participate in CSFS programs such as Walk Tall, to learn the traditions of canning salmon – a food staple that has sustained Carrier people for generations. The CSFS staff were grateful for sharing the opportunity to learn culture and traditions around food gathering and preparation.

Over the course of a week, dozens of people took part in harvesting, processing, canning and smoking approximately a thousand fish, which came from Lake Babine. Normally, the remnants of the fish would be discarded back into the water of which

they came from. However, since the camp took place at Tachick Lake, we instead burned the remnants.

Wyonna Batoche, Youth Care Worker, says she couldn't be more excited to share this experience with the younger generation.

"I haven't done anything like this since I was way younger at other culture camps. It just makes me feel so happy and I feel like I'm at home ... It was so cool seeing our youth doing all of the processing. It brought back so many memories from when I was younger, and just seeing them



CSFS Youth Services employees Erin Weyman and Wyonna Batoche



sitting in a circle canning and putting everything into the jars, it was so cool. It just makes me so happy and so proud.”

Wyonna continues to say that the whole processing of the fish is a reward in itself for her.

“It’s so calming, and it’s so rewarding in the end. Preparing all this fish, it’s not just for you. It’s for everybody. This fish is for all of our youth in care, all of our communities, family members that are in need of food, and that makes me feel so good and amazing. I just love it.”

Barby Skaling, Cultural Support Coordinator, says that CSFS has been doing fish camps for over ten years.

“I’m very proud to be part of this. Carrier Sekani has been doing this for as long as I can remember... over ten years. We’ve been bringing the children in care to different communities; Lake Babine, Donald’s Landing, and now Saik’uz. A lot of it is handing down the teachings to our young ones. Even young moms who grew up in urban centres.”

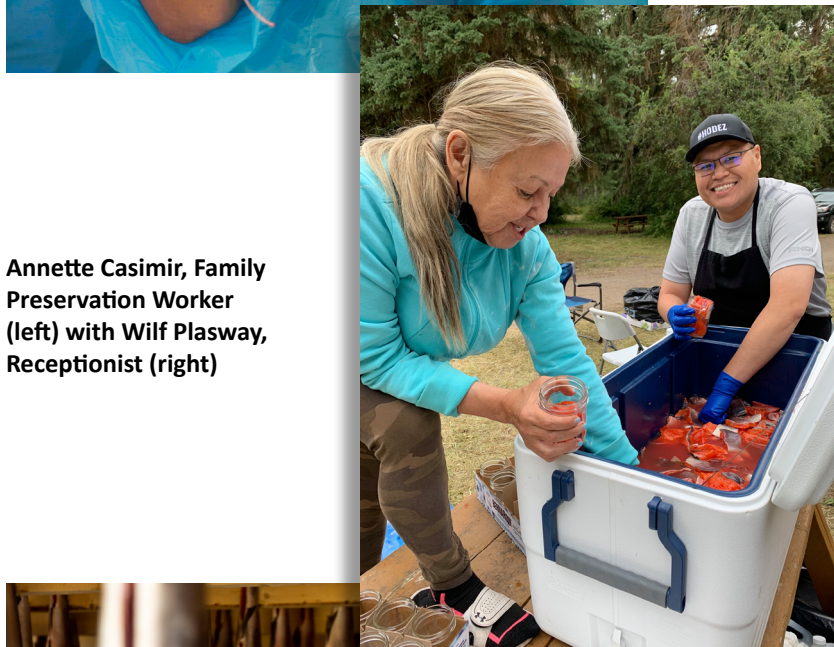
For many of the staff, it was their first time participating in a fish camp.

“As a new staff member with CSFS, it is a new experience for me to be invited into cultural learning as part of the work we do,” says Andrea Palmer, CSFS Director of Communications. “The Tachick Lake Fish Camp was such a great experience! I learned about Carrier Sekani cultural practices around food gathering and processing – and I also had a lot of fun alongside colleagues, volunteers, youth and children all working hard together with lots of laughs along the way.”

The fish will be shared with the community, given to people in need, and saved for future bah’lats.



**Barby Skaling,  
Cultural Support  
Coordinator**



**Annette Casimir, Family  
Preservation Worker  
(left) with Wilf Plasway,  
Receptionist (right)**



**Emily Retza, Family Empowerment Worker**



# A New Group for 2SLGTBQIA+ Youth

By: Sara Heembrock - CSFS Youth Advocate

"Nk'esiyy" (I love you) - No matter who you are, we love you.

Over the course of the past school year, it became apparent to us at Youth Services that some of the youth we serve are coming out to their families, peers and communities, and that sometimes they are not accepted by those most important to them. During service delivery, we recognized that such scenarios were occurring for some of the youth, and that there are few supports in place to educate, celebrate, and validate the experience of the 2SLGTBQIA+ youth.

The CSFS Youth Services team felt that there needed to be more supports for the 2SLGTBQIA+ youth that access our services, and so a youth pride group was created in order fill this service gap and to demonstrate to the youth that we see them for who they are. We named it Nk'esiyy, which means "I love you" in the Dakelh dialect.

We know that suicide rates for 2SLGTBQIA+ youth are three times higher than those of their non-identifying peers, which further highlights the significance of providing non-judgmental supports to youth who identify as part of the community.

Having a safe space for youth to express who they truly are mitigates risk and creates important protective factors for wellbeing and personal safety.

Since starting the group in July 2021, we have had eight youth join or inquire

group continues to progress, we are seeing the youth form friendships and connect over experiences that once were isolating while building self-worth and confidence in the process.

As one of the youths explained when

asked what they would like to share with other youth who may be interested in joining the Nk'esiyy Group:

"I hope that they also have supports and that people accept them and that if they are in a bad time, that they know it will get better even though it can be really hard. It's good to connect to groups because people are like you there and you will learn that you are not alone. We support all people and sexualities in our group and we won't judge you. The group is for people to feel better about themselves and to learn more about who they are."

If you or someone you know would be

about our group. We've been able to connect youth with other community resources such as Positive Living North, Gender Outlines, and soon – the Queer Café. We've been able to honour youth are while simultaneously connecting the youth with a peer group in which they see themselves reflected – something that would not have been possible without the group. As our

interested in the Nk'esiyy Group, please reach out to Sara Heembrock by email at [sheembrock@csfs.org](mailto:sheembrock@csfs.org).





# International Youth Day

August 12 was International Youth Day – a day to celebrate the accomplishments of today’s youth, as well as recognize the challenges that they face. Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) would like to extend our warmest acknowledgments to today’s youth, and look to you for your leadership in helping to restore the health of the planet.

Each year, the United Nations decides on a theme for International Youth Day. For 2021, the theme was “Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health.” With the world’s population continuing to grow, professionals say that “simply producing a larger volume of healthier food more sustainably will not ensure human and planetary wellbeing.”

Indigenous peoples have always been leaders in land stewardship and using what the land has given to us. Indigenous youth will carry on the work of their elders, and lead us to a healthier future by addressing the challenges we are facing of our food systems by selecting natural and traditional foods of our people.



CSFS’s youth services has a number of exciting initiatives that help teach youth about the importance of natural and traditional foods, including outdoor

cooking and fish processing workshops. With the new skills and knowledge learned, youth will be able to make more informed decisions on what they eat.



## Save The Date

### October 26, 2021

More details coming soon!



# Photo Submissions

Photo By: Chazity Aslin



Photo By: Meagan Louis



Photo By: Corrine Dawson

## Want to show off your photos?

Send us your best photos, and we'll include a number of them right here in the next issue!  
Submit your photos to Jordan Cryderman at [jcryderman@csfs.org](mailto:jcryderman@csfs.org).



# Welcoming Two Doctors to CSFS!

*Introducing two doctors to our communities: Dr. Danette Dawkin and Dr. Lauren Taylor.*

## Dr. Danette Dawkin

Dr. Danette was born “long ago” (her words) in Saskatchewan and has moved more than 16 times since. She has lived and worked in Northern BC since 2009. She met her husband, James, 30 years ago while in the military and they have two grown children, Georgia and Nate.

She adores animals and has three rescue cats and one rescue dog (she claims she got him 25% off as he is missing one leg!). She loves art, music, reading, learning, hiking, running, fishing, nature, traveling, cooking and eating delicious food. She is looking forward to meeting, working and learning from our community members.

Dr. Danette will be working in Stella (temporarily for Dr. Montana), then in Burns Lake and surrounding area in September and October, and in Nadleh late fall. As well, she will be serving with other physicians on our Telehealth schedule.



## Dr. Lauren Taylor

Dr. Lauren was born in Manitoba and raised in BC. She is Cree- Metis with ties to the San Clara-Boggy Creek Metis community and also a member of Metis Nation BC.

She completed her medical training with UBC, followed by training in the Indigenous Family Medicine program through UBC and working closely with our physicians.

Besides working in our communities, she works as a family physician for the FNHA Doctor of the Day clinic and the Kelowna Urgent Care Center. She enjoys spending time in nature with her two dogs, hiking, biking, and swimming! Dr. Lauren will be visiting communities in the Burns Lake area and on our Telehealth schedule.

If you have any questions about our primary care providers, please contact Dr. Travis Holyk at (250) 562-3591.



## Have stories or news you would like to share with us?

Email your submission to our Digital Writer, Jordan Cryderman: [jcryderman@csfs.org](mailto:jcryderman@csfs.org)

## Contact Us

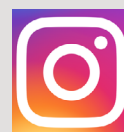
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Photo by: Nathan Paul Dennis