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CARRIER SEKANI
FAMILY SERVICES

Sept / Oct 2022

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Spirit Bear Pays a Visit to Youth Services

Youth treated to a special
screening of the new Spirit Bear
film

Growing Sustainability

Teaching youth about the
importance of local produce

A Moment of Reflection

Staff reflect on National Day for
Truth and Reconciliation



Tachick Lake
Photo by: Kayla Brownscombe

CONTENTS

News

- 2 **Update from our CFO**
How our finance department is moving beyond the pandemic
- 3 **Sense of Belonging**
CSFS Vancouver hosts events for urban members to feel welcome
- 6 **Spirit Bear Pays a Visit**
Youth are treated to a special screening of the new Spirit Bear film
- 6 **'For Love' Comes to Netflix**
Catch our documentary on Netflix Canada
- 7 **Congrats Carol Reimer**
Long-serving CFO announces her retirement for 2022
- 11 **Breaking Barriers in Health Care**
Leading the way in offering innovative cancer screenings
- 13 **2022 Annual General Assembly**
CSFS celebrates its 32nd year in operation

Features

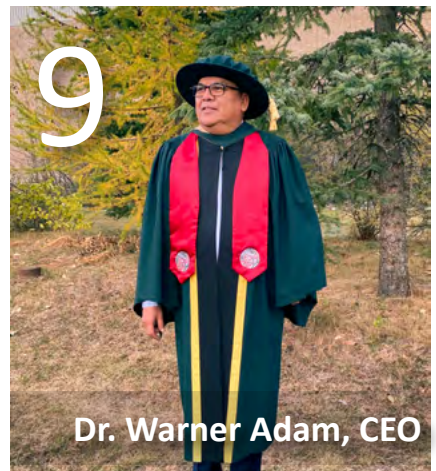
- 10 **Culture Corner**
Akhadineenle – growing sustainability for our youth
- 12 **Photo Submissions**
Photos from your communities



A Moment of Reflection



Middle Years Highlight



Dr. Warner Adam, CEO

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A Message from our CFO

Cheryl
Wallace

As a new staff member at Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), I am very impressed with the amazing work being done and the dedication of the staff. I am looking forward to the ongoing growth that continues to provide success to the organization. The growth has put stress on all areas of the organization including the finance department. Early in 2022, the finance team went through a re-organization and added some much-needed additional staff members to support the growth and continue to pay the over-350 staff and hundreds of invoices a week. The finance team has worked hard to use our digital accounting system to make processes as efficient as possible and share our data as widely and as quickly as possible with managers. The finance department continues to focus on prudent fiscal management and clear and transparent accountability of the funds entrusted to us as we move through these stages of growth. I am fortunate to continue to have Carol Reimer supporting me in my growth at CSFS while she transitions to retirement by the end of 2022.

This year again we engaged KPMG to complete our audit and have been

given the opinion that our financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Society as of March 31, 2022. We had a clean audit with no adjustments required from our internal management statements.

Financial results for the year ending March 31, 2022 show an increase in assets of 4,412,000 largely due to some major renovations and building purchases. The year ahead sees a new Healing Centre being built and a new Foundry in Burns Lake. Liabilities were up 7,126,000 which is related mainly to the increase in deferred revenue, which is mostly due to COVID slowing our ability to complete projects we have been funded for. Revenue is fairly static over last year but will be growing in the coming years with the new initiatives.

We are getting back on track with providing our programs and services along with starting the new ones that were delayed due to COVID. The pandemic delayed our process of hiring new employees, along with travel and programs that deliver direct face-to-face services. As a result, our expenses have reduced over the last

couple years. The CSFS HR team has been coming up with new recruitment and retention initiatives to attract and retain staff to ensure we can maintain our current programs and deliver new programs as we receive new funding. Staffing costs (wages and benefits) are 60 to 80% of our expense which in turn means we are heavily reliant on staff to deliver our critical programs to the communities we work with.

I look forward to supporting the continued growth of CSFS in delivering important services to the Nations we serve and community members.

Bringing a Sense of Belonging to Urban Members

Our Vancouver Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) team recently hosted a number of community engagement sessions to bring CSFS members together and introduce them to our services and staff.

In July, they hosted a meet-and-greet event for members from the 11 Nations that CSFS serves. For members living in urban settings, there is the potential to feel disconnected from their community, family, clan, and territory. This event was planned to foster connection and bring people together. It also served as an opportunity to introduce the members to the Vancouver office, and familiarize them with the services that we offer.

The CSFS Jurisdiction team also attended to present their work to CSFS Vancouver staff and urban community members, as well as engage with community members and listen to what is most important to them. In doing so, the work done by the Jurisdiction team is led by the community members to ensure that their needs are met.

As part of the engagement, the CSFS Jurisdiction team invited the community members and staff to participate in the creation of a quilt. Community members were welcome to create their own quilt square and to depict what is meaningful to them, such as culture, family, their clan, and more. Once all squares are complete, they will be united into a quilt so that all of the pieces come together as one, and will be displayed in the Vancouver office.

Stephanie Konefall, Director of Jurisdiction, says that "being able to connect with our Vancouver members and use the quilting activity to remind us all of the connections to each other, to clan and to territory regardless of residence, was incredible."

Stephanie says that being away from home can be hard, but the quilt will



Sandra Wilson, Practice Manager, Vancouver Office



CSFS Jurisdiction Team

serve as a symbol for the constant connection we have with where we are from: "the quilt represents being wrapped and acknowledged in the warmth, the love and the support of CSFS even when members are far away. The quilt represents that connection."

Emily Retza, Jurisdiction Summer Student, says that "it was really nice to participate in the good-bye song with everybody. It was my first time being a part of a community engagement, and I felt very welcomed by the community members."

"Something that stood out to me was the presence of all generations," says Momo Arakawa, Jurisdiction Research Assistant. "There was children, youth, and Elders. It was a nice introduction. There was a lot of connection. And the kids had such positive energy – they were enjoying the dancing, the crafting."

For CSFS staff, it was important to include cultural components at the event, and drummed and sang the All Clans song.

"We drum for healing and acknowledgment and respect and highlight our culture for who we are and it comes within," says Cindy Lowley-Patrick, Community Engagement Facilitator. "We all belong somewhere. Everyone is included in our clans – if you're not Carrier or Sekani, we still invite you to sit with our clans."

The Vancouver Family Preservation also hosted a back-to-school event in September, and handed out food hampers to help with the hectic times of back to school. The team received good feedback from members that attended.



A Moment for Reflection

September 30th marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day. At Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), we acknowledge the anguish of the past, the strength of those who are sharing their stories, and the forward-looking work in advocating for justice, truth, accountability, and reconciliation. Recognizing the past brings us to a state of reflection, calling for dialogue from Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations to re-evaluate personal and collective commitments towards reconciliation.

Orange Shirt Day was commemorated in order to honour residential school survivors, those who did not survive, and their descendants.

“For CSFS, working through the historical impacts of colonization and the residential school systems is not new. Today is a day to reassert First Nations’ control of justice, health, and wellness,” says CSFS CEO Warner Adam. Learning about oppression is a continuous journey, and we must do more to educate ourselves on the past.

Being a genuine ally and supporting Indigenous governance is crucial in ensuring that all efforts are made to continue to dismantle barriers that violate Indigenous communities. This means developing meaningful relationships with communities, and respecting the culture – and there isn’t just one way to do this. Here are some suggestions that might help you get started on your learning process:

- Educating yourself on the history of colonialism, residential

schools, and the ongoing issues facing Indigenous peoples;

- Acknowledging the territory you are in and learning a greeting in the local language;
- Celebrating, uplifting, and supporting local Indigenous tribes, artists and small business owners;
- Wearing an orange shirt helps to spread messages of hope and acceptance of all people and that every child matters.

Becoming a genuine ally does not happen overnight – it takes time, effort, and an understanding that Indigenous people have a basic right to human dignity, respect, and equal access to resources. CSFS staff and leadership are all working collectively to identify the best pathways to successfully achieve our goals that focus on the healing and empowerment of Indigenous families.

Many of the CSFS staff came together in support of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and reflected on what the day means to them.

Darren Coleman, CSFS Network Administrator, says: “I feel it’s a day where the entire CSFS family can reflect on why we are an amazing team and how the work we do has everlasting results to our families and communities.”

Marie Merasty, CSFS Human Resources Assistant, says: “What it means to me is a new beginning for Indigenous people. Those that were most affected by the Residential Schools can release memories that are kept locked up in their mind. Letting go and having people listen with open ears. A new beginning for the younger generation that have been affected and how our nations can now continue to heal and grow. Ekosi, mussi.”



CSFS Burns Lake Guardianship and Resources

Spirit Bear Pays a Visit to Youth Services

On October 11th 2022, our Niwh Hiskak Habibeh (For Our Children) Youth Services program was joined by two special guests, Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, and Mary Teegee, CSFS Executive Director of Child and Family Services, along with Spirit Bear, to celebrate the youth and host a special screening for an upcoming Spirit Bear film.

Cindy and Mary visited the Walk Tall Senior and Junior girl groups, and introduced the youth to Spirit Bear. We also enjoyed a delicious catered meal prepared with vegetables from our own building's Akhadineenle (garden) – more about the garden in this issue's Culture Corner. Cindy shared stories about Spirit Bear's clothing and accessories, which came from all over Turtle Island.

After dinner, everybody gathered in the Guno Lodge to watch a special screening of the new upcoming film, *Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams*, followed by Mary and Cindy sharing stories of their advocacy for Indigenous youth.

There were many smiles and laughs throughout this event, and we look



forward to more Spirit Bear projects in the future.

Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams is an upcoming Spirit Bear produced by the Caring Society and Spotted Fawn Productions, and features a theme song performed by Carrier and Sekani children. The film talks about honouring traditional knowledge, as

well as community-based Indigenous education, and introduces First Nations children to the impact of government policies on Indigenous people.

The film will be released in the near future, so stay tuned. In the meantime, you can catch the Spirit Bear music video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jwEfp2FuYA>.

'For Love' Now Available on Netflix Canada

It is our great pleasure to share that *For Love* is now streaming on Netflix Canada.

Thank you to Matt Smiley, Mary Teegee, Cindy Blackstock, Warner Adam, and everyone else involved in the creation of this critical film that depicts the resiliency of Indigenous people through the horrific impacts of colonization.

We hope you enjoy the film.



Congratulations to Carol Reimer

This year, Carol Reimer, our long-serving Chief Financial Officer, has announced her retirement.

Warner Adam, CEO

Carol's leadership, commitment and dedication to her role in managing the financial portfolio of CSFS for the past 22 years has been unsurpassable. Carol has played an instrumental role in the design, management and control of the many programs and services we provide to the communities we serve. We will certainly miss her presence but we know where she can be found – Happy retirement!!

Rayna Barter, CSFS Finance Manager

I am unsure if I have adequate words to describe the positive impact Carol has had on my life. She has been a strong advocate for lifelong learning, a cheerleader when I needed someone in my corner, a mentor that is about knowledge sharing and a role model in how she lives her life and balances her career.

Carol will be missed in the office. Thankfully, she is exiting in stages, so we can get used to seeing her less and less. Carol has helped to guide CSFS through extreme growth and change, however, her positive impact will live on for the life of CSFS.

On her time at CSFS, Carol says...

I certainly have enjoyed my time with Carrier Sekani Family Services. When I joined the organization, there was less than 50 employees and \$4 million a year, and I leave the organization with greater than 350 employees and greater than \$50 million a year in expenses. For my career, it's been good, because I've got to grow with the organization. I also got to learn about another culture that I was not apart of previously, and that has been a

wonderful learning experience. I've had some great mentors who has shown me to the world of First Nations and I really appreciate that. Overall, it's been a really positive experience.

I fondly remember going to culture camp. Mary Teegee invited me out to the girl's camp one year out at Lake Babine, at Donald's Landing. I got be the fitness instructor for the week. I connected with a lot of the kids in

care. I don't get out of the office a ton because I'm an accountant, so I really appreciated the times I would be invited out to participate in things like that.

From all of us at Carrier Sekani Family Services, congratulations on your retirement, Carol, and mussi cho for all you have done to build CSFS into what it is today.



Program Highlight: Middle Years

“ Seeing those little faces with the biggest smiles – you just can't beat that. You can have the quietest kid, but as soon as you get them around the horses they totally open up...” ”

The CSFS Middle Years program serves children from ages 6-12 years from the 11 member Nations. We provide holistic, hands-on, and culturally enriched programming to enhance children's growth in all developmental domains. We also provide guidance for families regarding parenting and sharing resources to aid in their parenthood journey. The program also aims to increase healthy relationships for the children with their peers and family.

The Middle Years programming starts in September to coincide with the start of school. Right now, we're in the preparation stage of getting into the schools as well as starting the new 12-week sessions in Prince George and the new equine groups in Vanderhoof.

Our Equine sessions is one of our most established programs that we host with our Middle Years clients. Our sessions in Fort Fraser are one-on-one, while the sessions in Vanderhoof and Prince George are group sessions in partnership with the schools.

Ashley Howe, Middle Years Manager, says that the Equine sessions have a knack for bringing the youth out of the shells.

“Seeing those little faces with the biggest smiles – you just can't beat that. You can have the quietest kid, but as soon as you get them around the horses they totally open up and they are happily having a conversation with you.”

Another large portion of our services is our in-school programming. Last year we were a new program, and so we were introducing our program to the schools and connecting with the kids. This year, we are more established and have groups and activities planned from September through June. Our activities focus on social and emotional learning activities, as well as recreational and cultural activities. We also love to get outside with the kids in whatever way we can. Last year we even went tree planting.

“Even when we go into the schools the kids are happy to see us and ask ‘what are we doing today?’” says Ashley.

Part of our summer programming includes the Yinka Dene camps. It's a three-week camp. CSFS staff, along with community members, go through a week of training to host the camps. Each community team comes up with their own programming for the three-week camps, which include topics such as literacy, math, and science. The camp that we hosted this past summer was a big hit.

If you're interested in the Middle Years program, referrals go directly to staff. Many referrals come from the schools, such as from the principals, for youth who may require additional supports. We also welcome self-referrals from parents or guardians throughout the year.

If you'd like to learn more about the Middle Years program, or for referrals, please contact Ashley Howe at ahowe@csfs.org or 778-916-5445.



Warner Adam Receives Honorary Degree

Please join CSFS in congratulating our CEO Warner Adam for his work and recognition as he receives an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from UNBC this Fall. The ceremony recognized his leadership, hard work, academic strength and ongoing advocacy for Indigenous people in our regions, province and across Canada.

“I am deeply grateful to be selected for this honorary degree and must acknowledge that I owe this privilege to all the Elders that guided me in setting the stage to re-build our Nations and communities. This work can be challenging but our collective efforts have created space for cultural understanding and shared

knowledge,” says Warner. “These ways, reinterpreting modern innovations while being informed by the wisdoms and learned practices of Elders, outline the best way in forging ahead with reconciliation and improving the lives of our people and all of society.”



CULTURE CORNER



Akhadineenle – Growing Sustainability

By: Gloria Berg, Cultural Advisor, & Kayla Brownscombe, Youth Services Manager

Access to nutritious food is necessary for child and youth health and wellness. Participating in growing a garden develops a sense of community and promotes food sovereignty. It also encourages sharing – a key principle of the Carrier Bah'lats governance system.

The NiwH Hiskak Habibeh (For Our Children) Youth Services team at 835 3rd ave. have been growing an Akhadineenle (A-kha-da-noon-lay), which is the Nadut'en Carrier dialect word for 'garden'. The garden received renovations to improve the raised beds, and growing capacity of the garden. We worked with youth to save perennial plants from the previous beds.



Gloria Berg, Cultural Advisor, and Kathleen Roswell, Youth Social Worker

The community garden has become one of the favourite activities for the youth to participate in. Youths helped to plant asparagus, potatoes, tomatoes, herbs, and much more. The youth enjoyed the workshop, which offered sage smudging and a picnic lunch. The youth learned how to identify plants, weeds and pests. You could see the genuine joy and connection that the youth experienced while working in the community garden.

The NiwH Hiskak Habibeh team worked with youth to maintain the garden throughout the summer; everyone helped with weeding and watering. Our goal for next year is to establish a perennial traditional medicines garden. Plans for the garden include facilitating food-skills workshops for youth utilizing the garden's harvest, including canning, drying, and preparing garden vegetable meals.

Food sovereignty is an important determinant of health for Indigenous peoples, and this garden allows our team and clients to learn about food sovereignty together, and what it means to share our food. We are proud to share our harvest with clients who access our food bank. We have enjoyed eating the vegetables, such as roasted beet salad at our Bah'lats, and we shared baked spaghetti squash with Cindy Blackstock during her recent visit.

By growing the foods ourselves, the youth are able to enjoy local organic produce, and support biodiversity.

We appreciate the financial support for this garden provided by ISPARC Food Systems. On October 4th, Julia Flinton, ISPARC Food Systems Program Manager, and consultant Lara Hill toured the Akhadineenle, and helped to gather the last of the harvest for this year. They discussed how we could work with organizations and Indigenous communities to develop and implement food sovereignty programs across BC. Food sovereignty is so much more than community gardens; it includes fish processing, hunting, gathering, and preserving.



Kayla Brownscombe, Youth Services Manager (photo by ISPARC)

Breaking Barriers in Health Care

By: Ally Dick, Project Assistant, Global Control of HPV Related Diseases at UNBC

Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) is leading the way as the first Indigenous health and wellness organization in Canada to offer innovative cancer screening options for women and people with a cervix.

Routine health screening is an important way to monitor your health and ensure you continue to live a life of wellness. For women and people with a cervix, routine check-ups currently include a Pap test every three years. However, there are many barriers to this type of screening. As of 2019, CSFS is acknowledging these barriers by offering community members a different option for cervical cancer screening using self-collected swabs, which are available at community health centres. This alternative option for screening is a low-barrier approach that is putting screening into the hands of community members, and is working to address higher rates of cervical cancer and pre-cancer in Indigenous Peoples compared to non-Indigenous.

This alternative way of screening has been well-received and responses to a survey from participants indicate this is a preferred method. Participants say the “process was easier, faster, and less embarrassing”, that it was “more easy, less painful and more private” and “was a quicker process than seeing a doctor in person and requires no appointment, so I can do it in my free time”.

CSFS has recently been invited to be one of the first organizations in the province to offer this screening as an ongoing health service, rather than a research pilot project. This is an exciting opportunity that reflects CSFS health services, infrastructure, and teams. Travis Holyk, CSFS Executive Director of Health Services, often says that “research is a pathway towards health innovation and improvement.” We are so excited to share that what began as

research is now being implemented as a health service.

To celebrate this change, we interviewed Charlotte Wenninger, CSFS Medical Office Administrator, to hear her thoughts on this exciting opportunity.

Why is this project and method for screening important?

This project is important because it will decrease cancer rates as it helps the women in our communities get access to screening. There are barriers with Pap tests, and with self-collection we are hoping that barriers are reduced.

How is this project different than other research projects CSFS has done?

I think it is unique because of the longevity. We have been offering this service for three years. This project has rolled out seamlessly because of monthly meetings and check-ins with the project team and CSFS health staff. This project has sustained itself with enthusiastic and passionate team members since the beginning. We are so excited that this project has paved the way for this type of screening to be offered as ongoing patient care.

What about this project was successful?

Offering women and people with a cervix an alternative screening method that does not include a pelvic exam. We are happy with the number of people we have screened. It was successful because of the resources and team available to support the project with updating supplies, having swabs available and offering training to newly hired CSFS staff. We were so fortunate to have Dr. Sheona Mitchell-Foster, a gynecologist, as available as just a phone call away.

What have you learned from this project as an organization and how you provide primary care?

What we have learned is to be open to something completely different. There was some initial hesitancy around implementing a project like this and how this work could be perceived. We learned the importance of talking to community members before anything like this is to be rolled out. It was essential to host meetings and round-table discussions with community members, create space for discussions and questions, and ask community members how to offer this screening in their community. There was an importance placed on ongoing conversations throughout the project and space for feedback. We are so pleased that it will continue as a health service offered by CSFS.

Congratulations to CSFS and all the hardworking health and wellness staff who have contributed to making this new and exciting opportunity a reality. If you would like to participate, or get more information on this type of screening, please feel free to speak with the doctor, nurse or medical office assistant at your local health centre. For more information you may call BC Cancer Cervix Screening at 1-877-702-6566.



Photo Submissions



Photo By: Joleen Charlie-Ordazt



Photo By: Will Mole



Photo By: Bonnydale Pierre

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.

The 2022 Annual General Assembly

Carrier Sekani Family Services hosted its 2022 virtual Annual General Assembly (AGA) on October 20th, 2022 in Prince George.

We were delighted to welcome our AGA featured keynote speakers, Professor Val Napoleon, University of Victoria – Law, who spoke on intergenerational governance today, and Professor Stephen Cornell, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology, University of Arizona, who spoke on rebuilding Native nations through jurisdiction, law, and responsibility.

We also hosted a panel discussion about Creating Our Own Laws, moderated by our own CEO, Warner Adam, and was joined by our panelists: Professor Val Napoleon; Mary Teegee, Executive Director of Child and Family Services; Marilyn Vickers, Saik'uz Elder; and Karen Ogen, Chief Executive Officer, First Nations LNG Alliance. We had a great discussion, and welcomed questions from our online audience.

We also provided our annual updates from CSFS program areas, Executive Directors, our CEO Warner Adam, and more.

Thank you to everyone who joined our live stream and provided your questions

and comments. If you missed our live stream, you can watch the recording on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/CarrierSekaniFamilyServices.



Piglets!

Stephanie Konefall, Director of Jurisdiction, welcomed two new piglets on her farm recently. However, there was one problem – what to name them?

To fix that problem, Stephanie opened

it up to CSFS staff to name them, and the winning names were submitted by Barby Skaling and Leo Parsons.

Please welcome to the world: Willow and Noots (which means 'cute nose' in the Wet'suwet'en dialect)!





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