

GOOZIH PIST'LUS



Sept/Oct 2023

Unveiling the New Highway 16 Billboards

Cycling to Beat Cancer

CSFS staff members Barby Skaling and Ben Berland take on cycling challenges to raise funds for cancer research and honour those who have lost the fight or are currently battling cancer

September 30
National Day for Truth &
Reconciliation



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A Message from the Executive Director of Health Services

Travis
Holyk

I am thrilled to share with you some exciting developments in our ongoing commitment to enhancing healthcare services for the communities. As the Executive Director of Health, I am excited to provide you with updates on two significant initiatives that will undoubtedly contribute to the well-being of the Nations we proudly serve.

We are delighted to announce the new Sobering Centre in Prince George, a transformative addition to our healthcare infrastructure. The Sobering Centre will offer a safe, compassionate, and nonjudgmental environment for individuals who are in a vulnerable state due to acute intoxication and at risk for harm, injury, and illness. Any person aged 18 or older who is under the influence of alcohol may access the Sobering Centre.

The Sobering Centre will provide service which is trauma informed and culturally safe, building relationships in order to provide, refer and transition to medical care as needed. Our staff can also connect clients to other health and social services.

The Sobering Centre will have ten beds that will be available 24 hours a day,

seven days a week, as a safe place for people under significant influence of substances to rest and be monitored. The Sobering Centre will play a crucial role in preventing the potential health risks associated with substance use, and we believe it will become an essential resource in our community. A person without care who is suffering from acute intoxication in public may suffer from a number of harms including head and bodily injuries, poisonings, exposure to the elements, victimization and unnecessary incarceration.

Staff are in place and the centre will be opening soon. Watch for the grand opening in the near future.

I also wanted to provide a small update on our Prince George Primary Care Clinic: Yu Be-Yah. Our clinic remains dedicated to offering culturally sensitive and comprehensive healthcare services that honour the unique needs of our clients and the Nations we serve. Tracey Day has also done a fantastic job of putting together an Addiction Team that are leaders in addictions services in Northern BC.

Currently, we are in the midst of bolstering our services and staff to

ensure that we can serve clients in the best way possible with an integrated approach, while managing wait times and respectful and quality service delivery. If you are in need of primary care services, please contact our clinic for more information.

As we continue to increase and improve our services, I am filled with hope and anticipation for the positive impact they will undoubtedly have on our community. The Sobering Centre and Yu Be-Yah Clinic are both testaments of our unwavering commitment to your health and well-being. Both locations and the health, social and addiction services provided, are part of a larger vision of care in preparation for the opening of the Carrier Sekani Family Services Healing Centre at Tachick Lake.

Thank you for your continued trust in our services. Together, we can overcome challenges, embrace healing, and foster a sense of unity that will carry us forward.

Mussi cho,

Travis Holyk

Unveiling the Highway 16 Billboards

Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS), in partnership with the Highway of Tears Governing Body, is excited to unveil four new billboards along Highway 16's notorious 'Highway of Tears'. This partnership aims to address Recommendation 9 of the 2006 Highway of Tears Recommendation Report, which includes creating a number of billboards to bring further awareness to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (2006:21).

Located between Prince George and Smithers, the billboards feature images and messaging of hope and strength to highlight the value of people in the north and that we are all, as communities, stronger together. As you travel on this stretch of Highway 16 we hope that these billboards will create a moment for pause to remember, honour and to reflect on what we all can do to make Highway 16 and the surrounding communities safer.

"We hope these billboards act as a visual reminder to travelers to be part of keeping Highway 16 safe for everyone," says Mary Teegee, CSFS Executive Director of Child and Family Services. "It is time to move forward with Hope and Strength and to honour our loved ones by making Highway 16 safe again."

The billboards are part of a larger series that will eventually include commemorative pillars at each end of the 'Highway of Tears', rest-stop signage and more to honour and remember missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in addition to providing more education and awareness of safety along Highway 16.

"While these billboards serve as a reminder of our loved ones who went missing – we must do more to



Members of CSFS staff and the Highway of Tears Governing Body at the unveiling event

stop these violent acts committed against our people and people from all backgrounds," says CSFS Board President and Cheslatta Carrier Nation Chief Corrina Leween. "We must collectively take part in ensuring a commitment to building a safer space for all of humanity. Please ensure that your MLA and MP's help us achieve safe places and spaces for all."

Julie Daum, Executive Director of Justice, says that the day of the unveiling was full of hope. "I am filled with gratitude and hope for those family and community members who keep showing us all what strength is, their unwavering hope that no other family or mother or community will have

to face what they have faced. The family members' joy at the billboard unveiling was wonderful to see, fueling us along in our commitment to implementing the recommendations and calls to justice."

The billboards are booked to stand along Highway 16 until at least 2025. However, this is just the beginning of our action.



Potlatch for Our Children

CSFS Youth Services hosted a teaching potlatch for youth to learn the Bah'lats system

The youth are the generations of tomorrow – their actions, decisions and development play a crucial role in shaping the world for years to come.

This summer, the CSFS Youth Services team hosted the Bah'lats Niwh Hiskak Habibeh 'Potlatch for Our Children' in Prince George. The teaching Potlatch celebrated and honoured our youth, and taught them the traditional governance system of the Carrier and Sekani people. The Bah'lats system is important for building and maintaining cultural values, and providing opportunities for people and clans to come together to promote a sense of unity and belonging.

The youth Bah'lats was well attended by youth, their families, and support people, each of whom were seated into various clans – Bear, Frog, Caribou and Beaver. The event began with an opening prayer from Barby Skaling, and a territory welcome from Darlene McIntosh a highly respected Elder of Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. Afterwards, a rattle cry was observed to open up the potlatch hall, and to help clear the mind and bring peace to the event.

Following the rattle cry, youth danced in with their clans and clan blankets. Each youth received a \$5 bill to give to the drummers as they danced in. The blankets used by each clan were made by youth. Gloria Berg, senior cultural advisor supervised the making and adornment of the blankets. "It was so much fun watching how motivated

the young ones were in making their blankets. The Walk Tall group and Beading group all helped in making them beautiful. You could see the pride on their faces as they danced in," explains Gloria.

Each Potlatch protocol was explained before the day to prepare youth for what to expect – most importantly teaching them the ways Carrier and Sekani people carry business in Potlatch. The business of this Potlatch was to honour youth for how they live the Carrier values: compassion, balance, caring, wisdom, responsibility, sharing, honesty and respect. Each youth received a certificate and gifts for the values they were being recognized for. Elders and hereditary chiefs were also honoured for sharing their wisdom and teachings with the youth. Elders were gifted hand-made

items such as beaded lanyards, hand-sewn tote bags, and huckleberry jam.

Nayilhne' – a wholesome collection of goods was distributed to the youth and their families including jarred salmon from Lake Babine Nation, and locally grown vegetables, in addition to the youths' favourites snacks. To close our Bah'lats we had a group drumming of the goodbye song, and closing remarks from an Elder and a youth in each clan.

Knowledge holders Barby Skaling, Gloria Gerow, Helen Michelle, and Ronnie Alec provided cultural guidance and support throughout the planning process and during the event. Mussi cho to everyone who made the event a success, and to everyone who attended.



Kahe dee'zeelhe – Our Journey

Updates from our Jurisdiction department

Digitization Project – Preserving History, Language & Culture

Passing knowledge and teachings from generation to generation has and continues to be a vital practice for Carrier and Sekani people. In the present-day, many communities are at risk of losing the cultural knowledge passed down by their ancestors due to colonization and the legacy of residential schools. Elders often share concerns over children not knowing how to speak their language or not knowing cultural practices, notably children in care and those living away from community.

The question many communities are asking is what can be done to not only preserve knowledge, but make it accessible for generations to come?

Since the summer of 2022, the Jurisdiction team has been working on a digitization project, gathering historic materials shared by community members, Elders and Knowledge Holders involved with CSFS over the years. Boxes of film tapes, photographs and audio recordings have piled up in the office, keeping the team busy scanning photographs and uploading audio and video files to a digital database.

The project was awarded funding through the First Peoples' Culture Council (FPCC)'s Language Technology Program grant, a program designed to support Indigenous communities in converting audio, video and language resources to digital files. The digitization project is trailblazing a new approach to securing Carrier and Sekani cultural knowledge, language and memories for the purpose of cultural preservation and revitalization.

From the ribbon cutting for the Prince George main office to children learning to fish with Elders at Donald's Landing,



A scanned photo from the digitization project.

the historic materials tell the story of CSFS and the families at the heart of our work. Beyond serving as artifacts of our past, these materials are now playing a key role in our future.

Transcriptions of historic videos are pulling stories, teachings and values out of the past and into the present; voices across generations are now influencing the development of new child welfare legislation. The experiences from those who came before are being documented and woven in to the development of the very law that will govern child and family matters for member Nations.

Beyond the Jurisdiction department, having such rich cultural information accessible to staff creates opportunities for CSFS teams to not only deepen their understanding of Carrier-specific traditions, but further apply these teachings to the creation

of culturally informed services and programs.

This digitization work also has incredible potential for language revitalization. As materials are collected and digitized, phrases and words are archived in a way that makes them easily transferable to new resources such as digital dictionaries, educational tools and more.

To date, 4,578 photographs, 397 videos and 79 audio tapes have been digitized. This work could not be done without the contributions of materials from community members. The team is excited to continue the work over the winter with the goal of bringing the stories back to communities in the spring.

Dakelh Word Search

Nadleh-Stella Whut'enne Dialect

Find and circle the words below.

M	T	F	G	A	T	S	'	I	Y	A	N	S
T	S	A	S	D	L	I	O	O	H	E	U	R
S	N	T	A	T	A	I	H	B	S	S	R	U
D	A	H	W	Y	N	C	D	T	K	A	S	N
M	Z	A	Y	S	A	E	A	R	S	K	W	D
U	E	G	L	A	L	S	B	H	E	S	H	U
A	B	R	O	O	N	G	'	H	T	A	U	S
T	A	B	K	R	O	O	Y	A	S	B	D	N
S	Y	M	I	G	J	D	O	G	T	A	Z	E
'	U	B	O	O	S	U	E	S	R	H	I	K
O	U	N	S	U	L	H	T	U	S	O	H	E
O	R	A	N	D	F	I	T	H	E	R	T	'

- Aloo (Mother)
- Ats'iyan (Grandfather)
- Uskeh (Children)
- Ghundan (Son-in-law)
- Aba (Father)
- Soona (Brother)
- Atai (Uncle)
- Yas'at (Daughter-in-law)
- Ats'oo (Grandmother)
- Sulhtus (Sister)
- Abezan (Aunt)
- Dusneke (My people)



Healing Fire event in Prince George

Program Highlight:

Sexual Violence Survivor Support Program

Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence in their Healing Journey

The Sexual Violence Survivor Support Program (SVSSP) is a new program at Carrier Sekani Family Services, developed to support the healing journey of adult survivors of sexual violence. Sexual violence is an experience that far too many people face and has significantly impacted and continues to impact many of the communities we serve. Through the program, our goal is to support healing from sexual violence, foster a culture of consent by promoting healthy relationships and healthy relationship skills, increase the capacity of communities to be active bystanders, and to interrupt rape culture to generate positive actions by others.

This past year, we attended and supported at-risk populations through community outreach at

the IRSS healing circle, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit awareness walk, Indigenous Peoples Day events, Take Back the Night walk and the Healing Fires in Prince George to support survivors of sexual violence. Leah Healey, the Sexual Violence Survivor Support Worker, also had the opportunity to join the North District Sexual Assault Investigation Review Committee (NDSAIRC) to provide external partner oversight of RCMP sexual assault investigations. This is a great initiative that allows Leah to work collaboratively with the RCMP through a victim/survivor-centered response to sexual assault crimes, and helps to improve the quality of investigations and enhancing community confidence in sexual assault investigations. The NDSAIRC is a positive step towards learning

best practice and a trauma-informed approach to supporting survivors of sexual assault. The Sexual Violence Survivor Support Program also supported Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April through the CSFS social media platforms, where sexual assault and program information was distributed.

In creating more program awareness, there is hope that more survivors will come forward to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions of sexual violence, and to reduce the number of people impacted by sexual violence. We all need to work together to improve safety, and working collaboratively to end violence of all forms.

The Sexual Violence Survivor Support Program offers a safe, supportive

environment for individuals 19+ to disclose recent or historic sexual violence experiences. We offer confidential emotional support and information to help with the decision-making process and the next steps to take.

Some of the ways we can support survivors of sexual violence include:

- Court accompaniment
- Liaison between community agencies and law enforcement
- Referrals

- Advocacy
- Emotional support
- Education
- Safety planning

Individuals can self-refer to the program or have a community member or agency support the referral process. For more information, including the referral form, please visit www.csfs.org/services/sexual-violence-survivor-support-program.



At Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park for Indigenous Peoples Day

Raising Awareness to Prevent Overdoses

International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) is observed on August 31 each year, and is an opportunity to shine a light on the opioid crisis in Canada and all over the world. Not only that, it is a day to reduce stigma, remember those who have died from overdose, support loved ones, and advocate for effective overdose prevention and response measures.

“International Overdose Awareness day isn’t just one day to get together to spread awareness and to remember loved ones who we have lost to overdose. Most of us are thinking about the drug crisis non-stop, and we have to face the devastating effects it has on families and communities across Canada,” says Krista Soles, CSFS Youth Intensive Worker.

The overdose crisis is a complex and multilayered issue whose symptoms appear within social and structural factors, such as housing and work conditions, poverty, and criminalization which all further deepen the impacts of the overdose crisis. A total of 7,328 toxicity deaths occurred in 2022 (January-December), which averages to about 20 deaths a year with a majority of deaths occurred in British Columbia, due to the misuse and abuse of opioids (Statistics Canada).

A crucial aspect of International Overdose Awareness Day is promoting

support for individuals with substance use disorders. It emphasizes the importance of accessible and evidence-based treatment options. The stigma associated with addiction is a major barrier that often prevents individuals from seeking help and accessing treatment, continuing the cycle of overdose risk. By sharing stories and information, this encourages open conversations and empathy for those affected.

“I work with empathetic leadership and coworkers, we all have good relationships with our clients, and see what they have to go through each day. A lot of people find it difficult to be kind to people dealing with uncontrollable desire to use substances, systemic racism, homelessness and severe mental health disorders. Most people are quick to judge by the behaviours of the addiction. However, at CSFS/Sk’ai Zeh Yah we recognize the struggle and we emphasize the importance of having agency, empowerment, and personal growth, in overcoming addictions,” explains Krista.

In an effort to safeguard lives and to spread

awareness about substance abuse and harm reduction, CSFS Youth Services Workers Talia Nahulak and Maryann Foster facilitate a program called ‘Not Just Naloxone.’ It is a two-day workshop that focuses on the overdose crisis in BC which continues to disproportionately impact Indigenous people. The workshop facilitates community-based discussions about decolonizing substance use, Indigenous harm reduction practices, Naloxone training (nasal & injection), and more.

To those who have lost loved ones, those who shouldn’t use alone, those who use in silence, and those who are trying to break cycles and make changes – we see you and love you. By raising awareness, reducing stigma, and advocating for change, we can work together to prevent overdoses, support those affected, and ultimately save lives.



CULTURE CORNER



Living Life with Respect

By: Rita George, Wet'suwet'en First Nation

Respect is a key value we strive towards at CSFS. Living and building respect is a process that requires understanding and empathy. Treating everyone respectfully is not always easy but it is crucial in creating a successful and safe environment for all. Hear from Wet'suwet'en First Nation Elder Rita George discuss the importance of living your life with respect.

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I learned how to live with respect as a child growing up in Broman Lake with all of my siblings. We all grew up learning how to respect everything. Our Elders taught us the value of respect, to respect each other, and to work hard.

We lived in a huge log house, and my grandfather, Bill Nye, would come and visit. We respected him so much. When we went to bed, we could hear him talking. He would talk about how

to respect things, how to respect our parents, and how to respect what they teach us about in the territory. We need to respect everything, even the animals. My brothers were taught to respect the animals when hunting, and not to shoot any animals that have young ones.

Respect is really important in the Bah'lats. We were taught how to respect everyone in the feast hall, and how to conduct ourselves respectfully, and to not make mistakes. We pay special respect to any visitors in our feast hall, including non-Indigenous people. They have a special spot where we seat them, because they are honoured guests and we have to treat them with respect.

I recall when I witnessed a moment of disrespect in the Bah'lats hall. We took that person outside of the hall, and let them know what they said was not right, and that we have to respect everyone. They need to know what's

right and what's wrong. It was a learning moment for that individual.

Today, I still practice respect, and I am teaching how to live with respect to the younger generations. I'm teaching my daughter, Corinne, how to respect the land, the animals, and the territory. We go out picking berries and she listens to my lessons.

Some of the younger generations don't want to learn our ways, but we have to talk to them respectfully to tell them about where they come from, to make sure they that know their history, where their grandparents are from, and which clan they are from. Only then can we connect with the younger generations and to teach them about respect. This will teach them how to respect their history, and their ancestors. We also have to direct the youth how to use the Bah'lats system, and to continue that system.

Cycling for the Fight Against Cancer

Two members of CSFS staff, Barby Skaling and Ben Berland, have recently participated in respective cycling challenges that each have philanthropic goals of fundraising for cancer research.

Barby Skaling – Tour De Cure
Barby Skaling, CSFS Cultural Program

Coordinator, is of Witsuwit'en and Gitxsan ancestry. She recently took part in her first ever ride with the Wheelin' Warriors team to take on the Tour de Cure.

Tour de Cycle is a fundraising cycling event that took place in Fraser Valley from August 26-27, 2023, and is in

support of research at the BC Cancer Foundation.

Reflecting on her motivation, Barby remarks, "The reason I joined the Tour de Cure is to create more awareness for my Nation – my close friends and family facing cancer. First Nations people have been hit hard

by cancer as well. Cancer is a silent killer, and I am here to encourage and bring this message to the forefront in hope to create change, to help with research, and to fund caring support programs. Through this ride, I hope that I can help others understand and have more awareness about cancer and that I can encourage people to know that they are not alone."

On August 26 – in honour of her Nation, those we have lost to cancer including Barby's best friend Sarah Hein, everyone currently facing cancer – and with great encouragement and commitment, Barby completed the 100km bicycle ride.

"I am proud to have taken part in this ride with my team and all the other riders. We are all in this together for those facing cancer. I raise my hands to all the riders who make this possible. Thank you to all who donated generously towards my ride. You helped me achieve my fundraising goal and all your support kept me motivated in this challenge – much blessings to each with love!"

Each rider was asked to carry a note with names to bring on the ride as a visual reminder when the going gets tough or feeling too exhausted to continue. Barby included names on her note that were her motivation for why she was doing the ride, and it helped her cross the finish line.



Barby Skaling with the Wheelin' Warriors



Barby's motivation note for who she was riding for

Ben Berland – Great Cycling Challenge

2023 marks the sixth year that Ben Berland, CSFS Capital Projects & Assets Manager, participated in the Great Cycling Challenge. This particular challenge consists of two goals: a mileage and a fundraising goal. This year, Ben rode 1007 kilometres, and raised \$2709, with proceeds supporting kids fighting cancer.

Ben remembers a few key moments in his life that motivate him to give back this way. "I lost my grandmother to cancer when I was a teenager. She went to Lejac, and she was quite young when she died. I'm now the same age she was when she passed away, and so her legacy was a major motivation in taking the challenge," says Ben. "I also had a friend in Vanderhoof whose child battled cancer at a very young age, and that was devastating to witness."

Canadian Icon Terry Fox also had a big impact on Ben earlier in life. He remembers his voyage across Canada, and the will and determination that would have taken. "September 1st was the day that he had to stop his run across Canada, and I still take pause every September 1st to think about his cause. It can be emotional for me."

Ben's love for children led him to giving back and supporting the fight against kids cancer. He has been coaching kids sports since before he had children of his own, and continues to do so. "Combining something I love in cycling and my desire to give back to children was a no-brainer."

Since 2018, when Ben first took the Great Cycling Challenge, Ben has ridden 6210 kilometres, and has raised \$14,895.

"I have always enjoyed riding my bike, and will continue till the day I leave this earth."



Ben Berland with his daughter celebrating his completed goals with sparkling apple juice

Photo Submissions

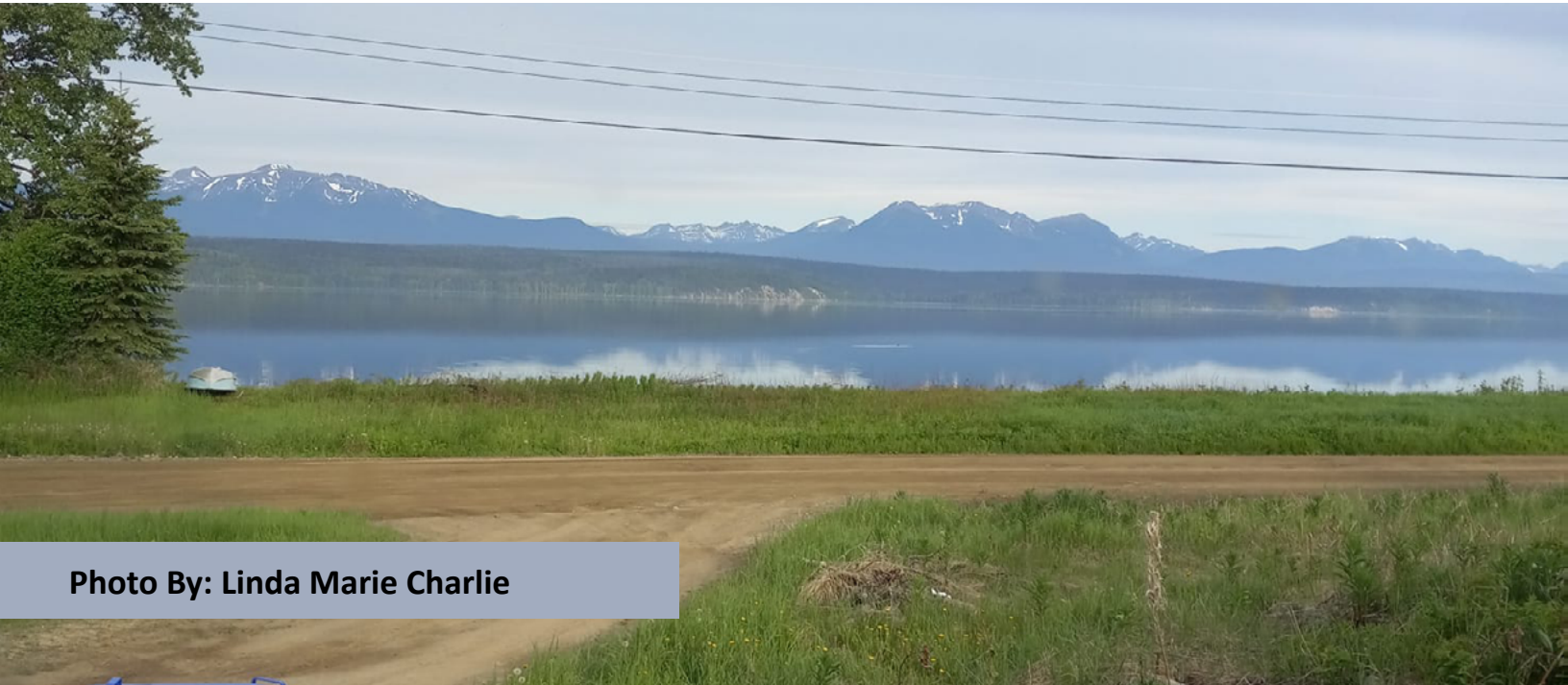


Photo By: Linda Marie Charlie



Photo By: Cam Moore

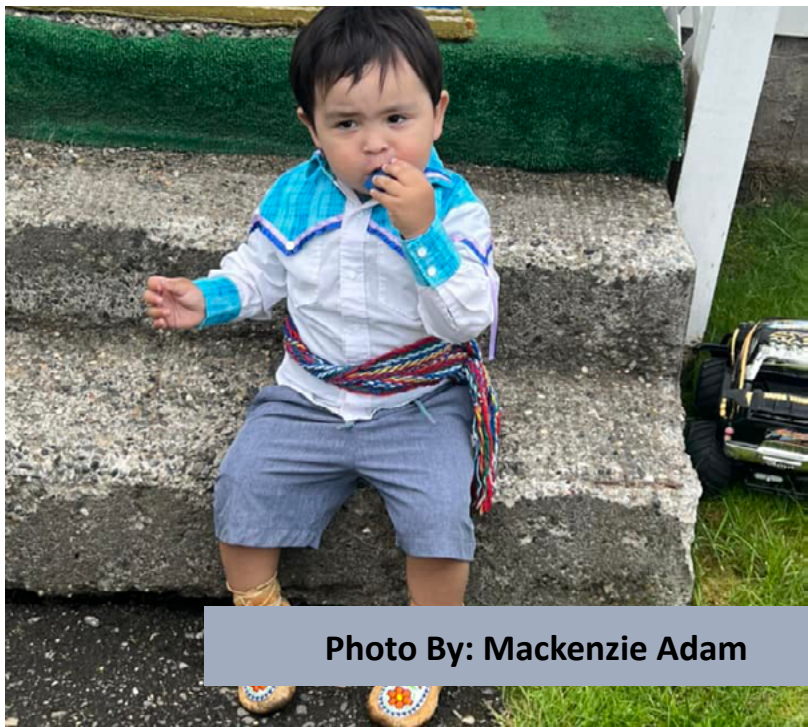


Photo By: Mackenzie Adam

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.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30th 2023 is 'National Day for Truth and Reconciliation', commonly known as 'Orange Shirt Day'. At Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) we acknowledge the historical injustices of the past, the strength of those who are sharing their stories, and the forward-looking work in advocating for justice. This day serves as an opportunity to educate, remember and to re-evaluate personal and collective commitments of the ongoing work towards reconciliation.

Orange Shirt Day traces its origins to the personal experiences of Phyllis (Jack) Webstad, a residential school survivor from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation in British Columbia. In 1973, when Phyllis was just six years old, her new orange shirt, a gift from her grandmother,

was taken away on her first day at the St. Joseph Mission Residential School. This traumatic experience has come to symbolize the broader cultural suppression and abuse endured by Indigenous children.

This year we encourage you to go beyond Orange shirts by developing meaningful relationships with communities, and respecting Indigenous rights and culture. Here are some ways to get involved:

- Educate yourself on the history of colonialism, residential schools and the ongoing issues facing Indigenous Peoples.
- Acknowledge the territory you are in and learn a greeting in the local language.
- Celebrate, uplift and support local Indigenous artists and small business owners.

- Wear an Orange shirt helps to spread messages of hope and acceptance of all people and that every child matters!

By wearing an orange shirt, learning about the past, and actively supporting Indigenous communities, we can contribute to a more just and equitable future where Indigenous cultures are celebrated, and the wounds of the past are addressed. CSFS staff and leadership are all working collectively to identify pathways to achieve our strategic objectives that focus on the healing and empowerment of Indigenous families.

Stay tuned to our social media channels for updates on events happening in your community.





CARRIER SEKANI
FAMILY SERVICES