

GOOZIH DUST'LUS



CARRIER SEKANI
FAMILY SERVICES

Mar / Apr 2021



BC Reconciliation Award

CSFS recognized with an inaugural award for its dedication towards reconciliation

Run-in with COVID

Harry Good tells his harrowing tale of catching COVID-19

Treatment Centre Hindered

How a recent decision has hindered the planning around a new treatment centre in Saik'uz territory



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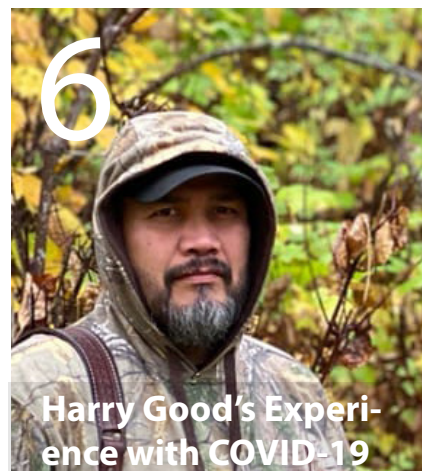
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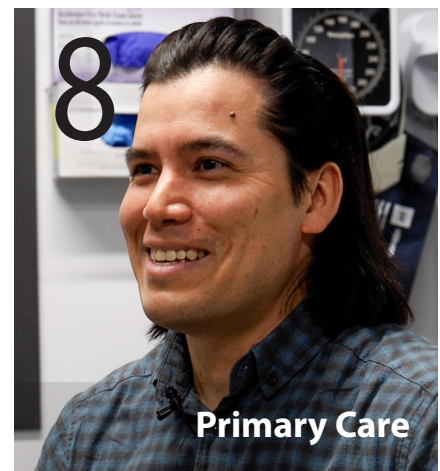
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A Message from our President Chief Corrina Leween



Hadih, everyone!

I hope everyone is staying safe during this time.

As you may know, Carrier Sekani Family Services has been honoured as one of nine recipients of the inaugural British Columbia Reconciliation Award. The other recipients include Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Dawn Drummond, Doris Paul, Corey Payette, Dr. David Suzuki, Corporal Christopher Voller, as well as the Marine Plan Partnership for the North Pacific Coast, and the *xax̱qanaʔitkiniʔ* (Many Ways of Doing the Same Thing) Research Team. CSFS is truly honoured to be in the same company as these prestigious figures and organizations, and extend our gratitude for their hard work towards reconciliation.

The BC Reconciliation Award was created through partnership between BC Achievement and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of BC. This award recognizes individuals and organizations who demonstrate leadership, integrity, respect, and commitment towards reconciliation with First Nations people.

CSFS was specifically recognized for the renowned Nowh Guna' "Our Way" Foot in Both Worlds Cultural training program. This two-day course, led

by Elders and knowledge holders, is focused on teaching individuals and organizations about cultural agility. Participants learn about the history between First Nations people and colonizers, and how we can move forward together towards a positive future. Nowh Guna' also teaches participants about the Carrier traditions and way of life.

The Nowh Guna' program has been so successful because of these four special women: Marlaena Mann, Dianna Mould, Barby Skaling, and Sarah Hein. These women created the program, and continue to facilitate it to this day. CSFS wholeheartedly recognizes their leadership and commitment towards reconciliation.

We also need to acknowledge that

this award doesn't belong to just CSFS – it belongs to all of you as well. It recognizes the great work we are all doing to elevate First Nations people as a whole. It is a collective effort in remembering the past, but looking ahead to brighter futures. Without all of you, this award wouldn't have been possible.

This doesn't mean that our work in reconciliation is over – far from it. Our work has only begun. However, this award indicates that we're on the right path, and the future has never been brighter.

Mussi cho,

Chief Corrina Leween
Cheslatta First Nation
President of the CSFS Board of Directors



Left to right: Marlaena Mann, Dianna Mould, Sarah Hein, and Barby Skaling

CSFS Hosts Snotty Nose Rez Kids Workshop for Youth

The CSFS Youth Services Team recently hosted a virtual event for youth featuring renowned Hip Hop musicians, the Snotty Nose Rez Kids (SNRK). SNRK is a Canadian Hip-Hop duo of Haisla descent from Kitimaat, BC, and composed of rappers Quinton “Yung Trybez” Nyce and Darren “Young D” Metz.

Nyce and Metz provided an inspiring and informative keynote, and then responded to the youths’ questions with kindness and humour. The duo shared their journey of how their connection to their culture and with each other led them to start the band, which incorporates Indigenous values and experiences into pop music and culture. When the duo first started performing as the Snotty Nose Rez Kids, both musicians were dealing with deep, personal struggles.

Nyce explained the band’s music comes directly from their experiences growing up: “We wanted to make music for our area, for people to relate to out here.”

The pair hopes that by injecting themselves into popular culture, they can help create a new narrative for Indigenous people in Canada.

CSFS Youth Services has continued to provide service delivery throughout the pandemic. This event was hosted as an opportunity to acknowledge the youth who have continued participating in our services during this time.

Beginning in March 2020, the Walk Tall program and other youth services provided activities and one-to-one support via Zoom. Although most youth expressed a preference for in-person programs, they demonstrated an ongoing commitment to participating in the Walk Tall program and other

services offered by the Youth Services team. In September 2020, programs returned to in-person, but with a revised delivery method in order to strictly follow COVID-19 safety protocols. Youth Services staff recognized that the youth had been diligent in following the COVID-19 protocols, and, like everyone, were experiencing some pandemic fatigue.

Spring break offered a perfect opportunity to provide a positive and inspiring experience for youth who had remained committed to their programs and wellness goals over the past year. This event had participants from the Walk Tall program, Elder Youth Mentorship, and one-to-one services. The youth were encouraged to participate via Zoom from home, and those who did not have the resources to attend from home were able to participate from the Youth Services office in their cohorts while following COVID-19 safety protocols. The event opened

with a prayer from Barby Skaling, “Yahalli” of the Luksilyu clan (small frog) from the House of Many Eyes, and a welcome to the territory from Darlene Macintosh of the Lheidli T’enneh.

As the workshop continued, Nyce and Metz talked about why they use their music to explore what it was like growing up on the Kitimaat (“People of the Snow”) First Nations reserve in B.C., and why they feel like it is their purpose to empower Indigenous kids across the country to feel proud of who they are and where they’re from.

The youth who participated expressed appreciation for the storytelling, and the “A Capella” style rap that Metz (“Young D”) performed during the workshop. SNRK was grateful for the opportunity to present, and expressed interest in an in-person event in Prince George once it is safe to do so.



CSFS Youth Services staff posing with SNRK t-shirts



Saik'uz Territory
Photo by: Benna Rathburn

Tachick Lake Treatment Centre Hits a Snag

CSFS asks the province of BC to help new treatment centre for addictions and mental health in Saik'uz territory become a reality

Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) has been planning on building a new treatment centre for addictions and mental health for some time now. However, that planning has suffered a drawback after a decision made by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to reject CSFS's application to re-purpose the old Tachick Lake Resort.

The proposed location of the new treatment centre is located on Tachick Lake, which is within Saik'uz First Nation territory. The site, which is currently Tachick Lake Resort, was identified as an optimal location after years of due diligence and feasibility studies commissioned by CSFS.

The treatment centre aims to blend medically-based service models with traditional Carrier and Sekani healing and land-based wellness practices. As the opioid crisis in British Columbia continues to impact more people, the need for such a centre has never been greater – especially for Indigenous people.

"The services to be offered in this facility will work to begin to address some of the alarming rates of harm being endured by Indigenous people in our home communities. The data is clear – Indigenous people are being affected by the opioid crisis at a higher rate, with recent statistics

showing that First Nations are dying from overdose at a rate of more than 5 times higher than other BC residents," says Carrier Sekani Family Services Board President and Chief of the Cheslatta Carrier Nation, Corrina Leween. "Carrier Sekani Family Services has waited more than 25 years for the full support needed to develop a quality treatment and healing facility - no further delay should be endured."

The Tachick Lake Resort is the perfect location for such a facility, including the size, a setting on water that is necessary for the land-based healing model, within Carrier Sekani territory, and situated close to major urban centres (Vanderhoof and Prince George) that will aid in attracting and retaining professional medical staff. The close proximity of these communities is key, as it alleviates the challenge of transitioning back to one's community if they are from the region.

A lack of these types of supports available in the northern interior has added a sense of urgency to the planning of this project, and any delay impairs the health and wellness of Indigenous people of our region.

The ALC's decision to deny CSFS's application to construct new buildings on the proposed location is based

on preserving the agricultural land on which the current Tachick Lake Resort stands. This decision is confusing, at the least, as the land is currently being used for a commercial resort, and not for farming. However, an exemption is possible, and CSFS is currently exploring those options.

CSFS is also requesting financial aid from the provincial and federal government for the project. Thankfully, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) has agreed to fund the project with \$5.7 million, however the total costs are estimated at \$16 million. Talks will continue with government and other funders to ensure the project is sufficiently supported.

CSFS emphasizes that the organization has a positive relationship with federal and provincial government leadership. Dedicated financial and political support is critical for this essential Healing Centre to proceed. CSFS looks forward to working in collaboration to achieve long-term goals of addressing the ongoing opioid and mental health crises that are disproportionately affecting our communities, and improving Indigenous health in British Columbia.



Harry Good's Experience with COVID-19, and How His Ancestors Saved Him

"They didn't think I was going to pull through"

“ It started off with a cough and a sore chest, that's all it was. By the third day, it felt like my lungs were on fire. Every breath hurt to take. [Eventually], I was on all fours because I couldn't breathe properly. I was lying on the floor. I couldn't do anything. I was throwing up non-stop.”

This is how Harry Good, a man from Gitanmaax, Gitxsan Nation, described his symptoms from

COVID-19. His health would continue to decline until he was admitted to the Prince George hospital. He couldn't catch his breath, and his memory started to fade as well.

“I remember the first three hours at the hospital, but I don't remember too much after that. It's kind of spotty.”

Eventually, Good had to be admitted

to the ICU, and doctors were beginning to think this might be the end for him.

“When I got admitted into the ICU they gave me 72 hours to see what my body was going to do. Because my oxygen levels were so low, all my organs were swelling up. They really didn't think I was going to pull through it because everything was so bad. My lungs were full, my oxy-

gen was so low, they just didn't think I was going to pull through."

It would be during these 72 hours that Good would experience something so extraordinary that one of the only possible explanations could be that Good's ancestors saved him from COVID-19.

The following is an explanation from Good on his dream-like experience:

I remember I was lying on the ground and I couldn't move because my lungs were hurting, and they were even hurting in my dream. And I couldn't move, and I saw this grizzly coming after me, trying to grab me, trying to pull me away. And when I looked up, I saw two wolves. I saw one wolf on one side and I saw another wolf on the other side. One was a grey wolf, which I believe was my Grandmother on my Dad's side, because her tribe was a wolf, her clan. And on the right side was a white wolf and that was my Mom's Aunties, and her name was the one I received, which is Maas Gibuu, meaning white wolf. And I received that name from her and I believe that was her fighting on the other side. And they both fought off this grizzly for three days. They fought for three days, and the doctors only gave me three days to see what my body was going to do.

After the wolves and the grizzly were done fighting, and the wolves chased away the grizzly, there was this little skinnier lady, and she had no eyes on her which seemed weird. Instead of eyes she had this dark crevice with this tar-like substance coming out and she was trying to coax me into going with her. Instead of trying to use physical force, she was calling me to go along with her. The wolves ended up scaring her away too.

Right after that, I was flying over what I could describe as hell itself. There was smoke, fire, couldn't really see the fire, what it looked like was when lava flows into a body of water, like the ocean. You can still see some of the red, and see the steam and smoke coming off the water. That's what it looked like without the water. I can still hear today the screams and yells, and see hands coming out through the smoke trying to grab whatever it was that was flying me, getting me out of there. I couldn't see what was flying me, I just remember having the feeling that I was flying over top of it. Then I ended up flying over the earth, flying through mountains and valleys and then I was in a whole different universe. I don't know how to explain it. It was almost like I was a little star, floating around, I felt comfortable, I felt at ease. Right after that I woke up in the ICU.

Though Good isn't certain on how to perceive this dream or vision he had, one thing is certain - his ancestors helped him fend off the virus, which manifested in his dream in the fight between the wolves and the grizzly bear.

Good now knows the terrible toll that COVID-19 can have on one's health, even after recovering from the initial onset of the virus, as Good continues to experience the 'long-haul' effects, such as brain fog, and is urging everyone to take it seriously.

"I keep trying to tell everybody that this needs to be addressed as soon as they start feeling symptoms. Don't go anywhere, don't go see anybody. Take every little cough, cold, or flu symptom seriously at this time. You never know how your body is going to react to the virus. Some people fight it off as just a cold or a flu, and some people are able to fight it off at home. Some of us need help from the hospital and get hospitalized and get oxygen. Some of us get put onto life support, and some of us don't make it. It needs to be taken seriously. You need to have more education on it, for your own safety, for everybody else's safety, for your family's safety, and for the elders."



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT



Photo: The new Burns Lake Primary Care Clinic entrance

PRIMARY CARE

Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) is proud to offer a wide variety of primary care services centered around a holistic care model for individuals and families. We have a group of dedicated physicians and nurse practitioners, nurses, and allied health professionals who provide the nations we serve with day-to-day care, as well as connecting patients

with specialists, if required. The CSFS Primary care model includes an inter-professional team working together to improve health outcomes.

It was this unique care model that attracted CSFS's newest physician, Dr. Cody Kaskamin. Dr. Kaskamin grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, and is of Cree descent. He is currently based

out of the CSFS Burns Lake clinic.

Relationships were also key to Dr. Kaskamin's decision to practice in a rural setting. Kaskamin is friends with CSFS's Dr. Todd Alec, who has been urging Kaskamin to come to Burns Lake once he finished his residency in 2019. He also met Dr. John Pawlovich during medical

school, who also played a key role in convincing Kaskamin of the attributes of living in Burns Lake. It is the CSFS model, and the inclusion of virtual care, that enables CSFS' physician group to be supported as a team when they practice.

The CSFS Primary Care Model also moves away from the typical fee for service practice providing additional time and opportunity to address multiple factors that contribute to a patient's health and wellbeing. "The biggest thing for myself that really appealed to me," says Kaskamin, "is that the care model is more relaxed in the sense that we can spend a fair amount of time that is necessary to address the issues that come up in family doctor visits. I feel like I'm able to provide good care to my patients because I can address their concerns and I'm not in a rush to get to see the next patient."

Coming from a Cree background, Kaskamin is familiar with the

importance of having a blended care model for CSFS patients.

"We are definitely open to connecting and sharing care with patients with traditional healers. We also acknowledge the legitimacy of traditional healing practices, and we like to partner with our patients to explore all avenues that they'd like to. We do like to try to work with our patients to understand where they're at and how best we can support them with traditional and more-conventional medicine."

CSFS Primary Care is happy to see the development of a new clinic space in Burns Lake, which is now located in the College of New Caledonia (CNC) campus. It's a central location that is easily accessible, and will allow our physicians to better serve our patients.

"We have two exam room spaces that are better set up to see patients for family care. We also have a larger area where we will be able

to see people for physiotherapy services. We also have primary care public health with our registered nurse in the community as well." The new space contributes to the concept of integrated care, allowing multiple providers to interact and work together in supporting health and social needs.

Dr. Kaskamin is thrilled to be working with CSFS patients and member nations, and is excited to meet all clients who access our services. As mentioned, the Burns Lake primary care clinic has now moved to the College of New Caledonia campus. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the clinic at 250-692-1444.

CSFS Burns Lake Clinic
545 Highway 16 West
Burns Lake, BC
V0J 1E0



Dr. Cody Kaskamin

Guest Writer:

Lahal - A Traditional Game

By: Francois Prince

Background

The game is a gambling game and was traditionally played by adults. Recently, children have been taught Lahal as it allows Elders to teach traditional songs and different drum-beats that are used during various styles of songs. The history of individual tribes and stories relating to the game can also be passed on. Children learn to work together as a team, and develop respect, trust, self-confidence, and pride. This also serves as a chance to learn how to carve their own Lahal sticks and bones.

Materials required

- Traditional drum
- At least 5 sticks per team. The sticks are carved. Each team needs to have the same number of sticks. One extra stick is used as the King Pin.
- 4 carved bones - usually deer, moose or elk bone - and about 2 inches long. There are 2 plain carved bones (female bones) and 2 bones that have a ring or protruding ring around the bone (male bones).

Preparation

- There are 2 teams with at least 3 members per team. Teams can have odd numbers of players. During fun games, people can come and leave as they wish. During competitions, team members must stay seated.
- Invite an Elder to come and teach the game and the Lahal songs.
- Teams sit directly across from one another with the sticks laid

out in front of team members

- Each team has one female bone and one male bone.
- The game begins with one team having the drum and the other guessing where the male bones are hidden.
- Game takes from one to four hours
- Can be played indoors or outdoors; traditionally played during cultural events

Rules of the game

- To start the game, each team designates someone to hold the bones and someone to guess what hand the bones with the rings (male bones) are in. The team that guesses where the male bones are wins the opportunity to have the bones first. They also win an extra stick (the King Pin). This may vary among



Lahal Game Materials

tribes. The King Pin may be used at the end of the game. If the team that won the King Pin is losing, then it is like having an extra stick.

- Each team chooses a team captain who will be responsible for their team and most decisions will go through the captain. The team captain is usually the person who formed the team and is one of the stronger Lahal players.
- The object of the game is to win all of the other team's sticks and the King Pin.
- For the purpose of this explanation, the team that wins the bones will be referred to as Team A, while the opposing team will be Team B:

1. Team A sings their Lahal song and tries to distract Team B, while 2 members of Team A are mixing up the bones behind their backs or under a sweater and hiding the bones in their hands. Team B members are continually watching so they can guess where the bones are.
2. Team B tries to guess what hand(s) Team A has hidden the male bones in.
3. If Team B guesses correctly, then they win a set of bones for every correct guess. If they guess incorrectly, then they must pass one of their sticks over to Team A. This continues until Team B wins both sets of bones.
4. If Team B guesses incorrectly, then they continue to lose their sticks until they have none left. Should they reach this point and continue to make incorrect guesses, Team A will lay one of their sticks on top of a stick they have won. These sticks are considered to be "dead sticks". This continues until either all of the sticks that have been won are "dead" or Team B begins to win some of their sticks back.
5. The only way Team B can win sticks back from Team A is to

correctly guess which hand(s) the bones are in. If Team B wins both sets of bones, then Team A becomes the guessers and the game continues.

6. The first team to win all of the other team's sticks and ensure that all the sticks are dead wins the game.
7. There is to be no cheating. If cheating occurs, then the team is disqualified.
8. There is no use of drugs or alcohol during the game.

Hand movements during the game

- The person guessing where the male bones are typically uses her/his pointing finger.
- When there are only 1 set of bones to guess for that person, they usually point either left or right.
- If there are 2 sets of bones to guess for, and the person guessing only wants to guess for 1 set of bones, then he or she can hold one of the guesses. They do this by holding up their hand to stop the guess from
- If the person guessing is trying to guess where both male bones are and they believe both male bones are in the outside hands of players on the opposite team, they will hold down their 3 inside fingers and spread apart their thumb and pinkie finger. This indicates they think the male bones are on the outside.
- If the person guessing thinks the male bones are in the inside hands of the two people holding them, then they would hold their hand straight and make a chopping kind of motion indicating they thought the male bones were down the middle.

either the player on the right or left. If the guess they want to hold is on their left, then they would hold up their left hand. They can then turn to the other player holding the bones and make their guess. This is one way to try to win 2 bones for those players who are confident that they know where the male bones are.



Lahal being played in Saik'uz

Photo Submissions

Photo By: Dakota Eileen



Saik'uz Creek



Photo By: Heather Nooski



Photo By: Desiree Dawn Heathcliff

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.

Sk'ai Zeh Yah Youth Centre Announces Extended Hours

The Sk'ai Zeh Yah Youth Centre is pleased to announce that they have extended their hours of service. This will allow the staff to better serve its clients while considering such things as housing curfews.

Kara Myers, Youth Centre Team Lead, says that clients have been asking for extended hours since they opened last year.

"We did some research on the other services offered in Prince George for our clientele, and we found that on some days, there is a lack of food. It's going to make a huge difference in regards to the ability to serve food, but it's also going to open up our hours so we have more time for intakes and work on other initiatives. It adds up to more service for our clients."

The housing facilities that the youth and young adults access usually have a curfew, and so it was crucial that the new hours at Sk'ai Zeh Yah did not interfere with that.

"We're making sure they will have a bed for the night instead of sending them out to the streets. It'll help in organizing housing. We close at 6:30

to allow our clients to make it back to their housing facilities in time."

Previously, Sk'ai Zeh Yah was not open during the weekends, but will now be open Saturdays and Sundays, and will be providing meals.

"We're going to be doing brunches on the weekend, so we're providing a

breakfast and lunch meal, and we're going to be doing dinners as well."

Sk'ai Zeh Yah will now be open for extended hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays until 6:30pm, though staff will be around until 7:00pm to clean the centre, and Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00am – 6:00pm.



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

Email your submission to our Digital Writer, Jordan Cryderman: jcryderman@csfs.org

Contact Us

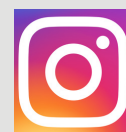
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FAMILY SERVICES

Creating wellness together.