



Dream Speaker

Surrounded by Cedar Child & Family Services

Winter 2020 /2021 Edition



Social Work Appreciation Week BC

March 14 – 20, 2021 marked Social Work Week in the Province of British Columbia. While the contributions of social workers are critical throughout the year, this is a time for us to stop and honour the hard and complex, yet incredibly fulfilling work of all social workers. Our children, youth, young adults, families and community members benefit from the heart, compassion and dedication social workers bring with them to their work.

“Social Work” is heart work; it’s helping work, and it’s certainly not a concept that is new to Indigenous communities. Before there were fields devoted to social work, this was the work of our aunts, our sisters, our mothers and grandmothers. Wrapping our love and support around all community members is who we are as Indigenous people.

As an agency we raise our hands to each of our amazing social workers during Social Work Week 2021! Each day they show up and persevere on behalf of our beautiful children and youth.

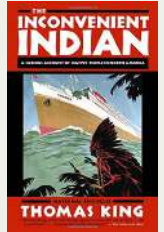


To celebrate this year, our Cultural Programming team surprised staff with a socially distanced ceremony outside to honor and hold up each member of our team. This year has been incredibly challenging for many people and has tested all of us, personally and professionally. Staff were blanketed, songs were shared and everyone’s spirit was lifted.

CULTURAL CONTINUITY

FROM MEAGAN SAULNIER & SARAH LEGGEAT

- ◇ In January, Sarah started a virtual book club with caregivers. The purpose of the book club was to provide a unique opportunity for the caregivers to come together to learn and discuss books by Indigenous authors. The book that was chosen to discuss was “The Inconvenient Indian” by Thomas King. Sarah and the caregivers discussed two chapters bi-weekly on Tuesday nights. Participants established guidelines to ensure that everyone felt safe and respected in discussions.



- ◇ The beauty of living in Victoria, BC is the diversity of Urban Indigenous people. The Cultural Continuity team had the opportunity to work with a local artist who has the skills and teachings to make ribbon skirts. This artist has made ribbon skirts for two of our Nehiyaw youth, and is now making a ribbon skirt for one of our young girls. We are grateful to be able to connect these kids to their culture despite them living far from their ancestral territory.

- ◇ In honor of the **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** in Canada, the Cultural Program and Cultural Continuity teams collaborated to create red dress pin beading packages to give to all of our youth and young adults accessing the Youth Agreements and Agreements with Young Adults program. The beading packages were included in the Traditional Food baskets and included a tutorial for beading and information on the history of MMIWG in Canada. Our hope is to bring more awareness to MMIWG in Canada and teach our youth a new skill that can be used for creativity and healing.



- ◇ One youth at SCCFS has always wanted to learn how to do traditional fancy shawl dancing and we were recently able to connect with a local fancy shawl dancer who has agreed to mentor this youth. They will be practicing in the evenings from March to June and we are so excited to see how this youth progresses!

- ◇ Cultural Continuity Worker, Meagan was recently featured in a beautiful article published by IndigiNews, an Indigenous run digital news publisher. The article entitled “**Medicine gardens help Indigenous kids in care stay culturally connected**” by Anna McKenzie, covered the work Meagan has been doing throughout the pandemic to keep our children and youth connected to the land. The medicine gardens that have been created include plants from the children’s traditional territories along with those of the land they are on and have been accompanied by teaching of their medicinal properties. To read the article and learn more about the amazing work being done check out: <https://indiginews.com/vancouver-island/medicine-gardens-help-indigenous-kids-in-care-stay-culturally-connected>



STAFFING CORNER

Welcome to the Team!

Sarah Adams: Sarah is a mother of two teenage boys (and auntie) and a Mi'kmaq clinical counsellor who has practiced for twenty-two years, including thirteen years in Lkwungen territory. Sarah works from a client centered, social justice, Indigenous psychological perspective. She is very happy to be starting her position here at Surrounded by Cedar and looks forward to learning from other staff and getting to know everyone.

Amanda Robertson: Amanda is mixed European and middle Eastern, with Indigenous ancestry from the U.S. She comes to us after just finishing her BSW through the University of Victoria and brings with her a plethora of experience working with youth and young people in different capacities. She worked as a youth worker for the Victoria Native Friendship Center, as a support worker for a young Indigenous person with different abilities, and as a student support at Camosun College. Amanda is also known for her very kind heart and passion for the work!

Farewell to Nathalia Gagnon: Nathalia was an integral part of the agency as one of our clinical counselors. Nathalia provided valuable support and care to our children and families during her time with Surrounded by Cedar. Nathalia will be very missed in the office, but we wish her all the best on her next venture!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Surrounded by Cedar would like to thank the U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay for their on-going contribution of cultural resources for our children and youth. We greatly appreciate their generosity and the amazing language resources we've been able to pass onto our kids!

To find resources or learn more about the Kwakwaka'wakw people check out their website:



U'mista Cultural Centre

<https://www.umista.ca/>

SCCFS Face Masks

Available for Purchase at reception!

\$10 each, cash or cheque accepted



CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

SARAH UNDERDOWN & BRANDI LANCASTER

As Covid-19 has created a shift in the delivery of cultural programming, the team has had to adjust to a virtual platform, however, this has allowed for wonderful collaboration with people they wouldn't usually get to work with. Over the last few months, the team has been able to virtually bring in many new faces to work with our children and youth.

In March, the team welcomed Avis O'Brien (Ligwilda'xw and Haida) and Erin Brillon (Haida and Cree) for virtual drum teachings and song sharing. They shared songs from Ligwilda'xw, Haida, and Cree territories. The songs they shared were open for people to learn since they were not attached to any particular ceremony.

Spring Break virtual, cultural workshops took place over two weeks from March 15th to March 26th. Vanessa Prescott (Métis), a knowledge keeper of traditional plant medicines, joined the Spring Break camp to share her knowledge about various medicinal plants and their traditional uses. Avis was able to join again for more song sharing this time with a new group of youth.



The team also worked alongside Tsartlip and Qwu'utsun knitter Elder May Sam in the creation of wool pouches with youth. She told stories of her younger years when she first started to weave with wool and the adventures that she had when she was younger. They also learned about Terry Wilson's journey and how he learned to make regalia out of various parts of Eagles, Owls, and Hawks. He talked about the historical uses, and the more modern interpretations of regalia making.



Xe'Xu T'uluts'thut Leadership took a pause over Spring break and will resume in April with the first session talking about the importance of *Cedar: The Tree of Life*. They will also discuss other interesting topics in the coming weeks and hopefully, will be welcoming some guests to their virtual circles.

Family Care Homes

There are many different ways you can provide support and care to the children and youth who need either long term or short term placements, emergency or relief or even potentially adoptive homes. Becoming a Foster parent or Caregiver is a way to extend our hearts and homes to other Indigenous children in the community. As a caregiver, you and the child or youth in your home will receive supports where you can provide a safe and loving placement for them child while they are away from their parents.



Interested in caregiving, or know someone who might be? If yes, please connect with one of our Resource Social Workers at becomeacaregiver@sccfs.com

Surrounded by Cedar stands with Cowichan Tribes

To show our support to Cowichan Tribes in the face of the racism they have been faced with during the pandemic, the agency purchased "I Stand With Cowichan Tribes" t-shirts for all of our staff.



To purchase a T-Shirt and show your support visit: <https://www.urbanvalleytees.com/i-stand-with-cowichan-tribes>

COVID-19 Mental Health Resources

News and updates around COVID-19 have been coming at us quickly and it can be hard to remain calm given all that is going on. It is important that we deal with our stress and anxiety and support one another through these challenging times. You know your body and it's signs of stress, if you are having trouble managing your mental health, contact your healthcare provider and encourage those you love to do the same.

If you need help, here are a few resources available:

- ⇒ HealthLink BC: Provides 24/7, confidential health information or advice. Call 8-1-1 or visit: www.healthlinkbc.ca
- ⇒ Wellness Together Canada provides an online portal for Canadians to access self-assessments self-directed e-mental health tools, peer support and live counselling by telephone, video and text. Visit www.wellnesstogether.ca or call 1-866-585-0445.
- ⇒ Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre: Provides confidential, non-judgmental, free emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including thoughts of suicide. Call toll-free 1 800 SUICIDE or visit: www.crisiscentre.bc.ca
- ⇒ The KUU-US Crisis Responsive Service: Provides 24/7 culturally-aware crisis support to Indigenous people in BC. Call 1-800-588-8717 or visit: www.kuu-uscrisisline.ca.
- ⇒ Mental Health Digital Hub: A provincial website that provides information, services, education and awareness about mental health and substance use for adults, youth and children www.gov.bc.ca/mentalhealth
- ⇒ Bounce Back: a free evidence-based program designed to help youth and adults experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate depression, low mood or stress, with or without anxiety. Bounce Back teaches effective skills to help people improve their mental health. Call toll-free 1 866 639-0522 or visit www.bounceback.ca

Traditional Foods Baskets for Children and Youth

Surrounded by Cedar's Traditional Foods Committee continues to meet on a weekly basis to plan and put together traditional foods baskets for our children and families. It has been a wonderful experience bringing in everyone's diverse cultural background to create baskets filled with unique Indigenous and Canadian items. Our team is currently working on our last round and are including some items that seem to be favorites!

We have loved seeing and hearing about how our families have been enjoying spending time together making meals from the items in the baskets. It looks like some people are getting pretty good at making fry bread!

This project has also been a great opportunity to support and bring attention to some small Indigenous run businesses across Turtle Island.

We are very appreciative to all of the businesses that have made, ordered and supplied items while navigating through all of the challenges of COVID-19.

Stay tuned for Round 8 coming soon!



BC People First Society's President's Award Winner: Charlene Barney

A BIG congratulations to our long time Office Assistant, Charlene Barney, who won the 2020 President's Award for her self-advocacy and leadership work. Charlene was awarded for all of the work she has done in the community over the last year to advocate for the rights of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Some of her work has included: Participating in news articles and advocacy projects to increase disability payments, speaking out on issues in her community and participating on the BCPF Advocacy Committee. She was also recently appointed to her city's Accessibility Committee.

Thank you for everything you do for our agency and for the community Charlene!



Moosehide Campaign Day 2021

-submitted by Brian Garvin

Moosehide Campaign Day was celebrated this year with a virtual gathering which allowed participants to join in ceremonies, listen to addresses by keynote speakers, participate in workshops and fast together while apart due to Covid 19.

I have joined the Victoria gathering in past years by fasting and marching to the Legislature with my colleagues, and while I certainly missed the in-person gathering this year, I replaced it by watching the livestream from home together with my infant son. It was a beautiful experience for me to listen to the speakers sharing about the impacts of gender-based violence and hearing a Call to Action together with my son.

This year I also participated in a Moosehide Campaign workshop for my first time and was able to participate in reflective discussion with other participants and learn through story telling.

Overall, the experience was a very positive one – and even though I know everyone would have liked to gather in person for this, I really appreciated the great effort the organizers made to ensure that the gathering was still able to continue in a safe, distanced, and virtual capacity.

To learn about the Moose Hide Campaign check out their website:

<https://moosehidecampaign.ca/>



Lifeguard Digital Health App

The overdose crisis is an unprecedented public emergency effecting the lives of many across BC. Due to the stigma around addictions many people who use drugs use alone, increasing the risk of an overdose death. The Lifeguard digital health app was created to help prevent overdoses and save lives.



How does it work?

The app is activated by the user before they take their dose. After 50 seconds the app will sound an alarm, if the user doesn't hit a button to stop the alarm, indicating they are fine, the alarm will grow louder. After 75 seconds a text-to-voice call will go to 9-1-1 alerting emergency dispatchers of a potential overdose.

The app can be downloaded for free from the IOS App Store or Google Play.

For more information check out their website: <https://lifeguarddh.com/>

Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project Free confidential drug checking program in Victoria BC

Locations :

Substance 1802 Cook St., Monday—Friday 12pm—7pm

Lantern Services 820 Cormorant St., Tuesdays 11am—5pm

Honouring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

On Thursday February 11th, Surrounded by Cedar staff gathered outside to recognize the on-going epidemic of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls across Turtle Island. Staff wore a mix of red clothing and regalia, and while the wind blew and the temperatures plummeted below zero, songs were shared as a way of honoring our beautiful women and girls.

MMIWG is an issue running rampant through our communities; the Native Women's Association estimates that more than 4000 Indigenous women have been murdered or remain missing in Canada. This issue remains close to the heart of many at the agency and our MMIWG: Calls to Justice Working Group continues to meet bi-weekly to discuss ways to address each Call for Justice for Social Workers and those implicated in child welfare.



SCCFS Supports Pink Shirt Day 2021

On Wednesday, February 24th SCCFS staff wore pink to show their support for Pink Shirt Day, an anti-bullying initiative in BC.



[CKNW Kids' Fund](#)'s Pink Shirt Day aims to raise awareness of these issues, as well as raise funds to support programs that foster children's healthy self-esteem.