



Dream Speaker

Surrounded by Cedar Child & Family Services

Summer 2020 Edition 2019



Words from our Executive Director—Jennifer Chuckry

On May 11, 2020, SCCFS re-opened its doors to visitors and saw our staff return to working in office on a rotating schedule. Initially, staff returning to work in-office were identified as essential service providers. Since that time, we have been able to have almost all of our staff return to working in office however, we continue to maintain a rotating schedule so that we can ensure proper physical distancing. I recognize all of the challenges that Covid-19 has presented in our personal and professional lives. Many are struggling with feelings of overwhelm and isolation and this is impacting our spiritual and mental well-being. As a communal people, our greatest strength has always been in our ability to gather and to fill our spiritual buckets back up. Please know that you are not alone and that you are loved. If you need to connect in anyway, please reach out to any of our staff members and we are happy to support you. Our communities have been through hard times before, and we are still here, strong, resilient and working hard to build each other up.

Throughout the summer months we took some time as an agency to learn more about the Indigenous territories upon which we are located and upon which our children and youth come from. We hosted Bradley Dick and Alex Nelson who shared time and space with us virtually, along with some teachings from their homelands.

We raise our hands to both of you for your generosity of time and knowledge.

We continue to work through the process of receiving our adoption delegation. Our working group is meeting on a bi-weekly basis to ensure this work is firmly rooted in our ways of knowing and being. As an agency, we have also established an internal working group that is focused on the Calls to Justice that were identified through the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry. At this time, we are specifically focused on the Calls to Justice for Social Workers and Those Implicated in Child Welfare.

We are now moving into the end of the year and winter will be upon us soon. Those first snowfalls, the winter moon, the silence of the frogs – each of those signals cultural processes that will begin in our communities. What cultural protocols happen in your communities over the winter months?



CULTURAL CONTINUITY

MEAGAN SAULNIER & SARAH LEGGEAT

Update from Sarah Leggeat:

The Cultural Continuity program has changed a lot over the past months as we continue to adhere to the health and safety guidelines around COVID-19. Normally, at this time of the year, I would be travelling all over Canada to remote communities with kids and caregivers to attend summer camps and cultural events hosted by Nations. This year we have had to get creative with the ways in which we can continue to support our kids and caregivers, connecting them with culture, while staying safe and healthy.

One way we have done this is by offering virtual drum sessions with kids and caregivers. We have also met with a few youth at the beach to have mini, socially distant drum sessions. We have also dropped off cultural resources such as books or materials for crafts to kids as requested, and we have provided caregiver support and cultural advice over the phone.

We continue to work together to find new ways in which we can support everyone and bring culture into the lives of our children and youth.

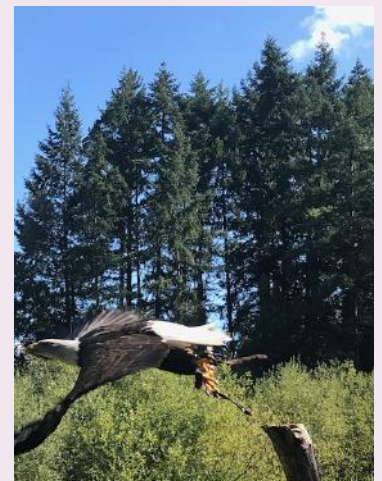
We hope everyone is staying safe and healthy!



Playing in Nature



Whale Watching



Learning about Raptors



Back to School Swim



Crabbing at the Pier



Medicine Garden

STAFFING CORNER

Guardianship Social Worker | Brian Garvin

We are excited to welcome Brian Garvin to the Guardianship team to fill a one year maternity leave. Brian comes to us with a BSW from the University of Victoria, as well as a number of years of child protection experience with MCFD. Brian is passionate about working with Indigenous children, families and communities, and is hopeful to learn many great new skills during his time with us.

Practicum Student | Mary McDonald Rogers

Mary is a Child and Youth Care practicum student who will be working alongside us until April 2021. Mary is of Scottish and French ancestry and has been a settler on the land of the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ since 2018 when she relocated for school from Ontario. Mary looks forward to learning alongside the many roles within Surrounded by Cedar to improve her future practice working with children, youth, and families.

Receptionist Assistant | Chelsea Young

Chelsea is returning to the administrative team from a 15 month maternity/parental leave. We are happy to welcome her back to the office!

Guardianship Social Worker | Jenna Bailey

Guardianship social worker Jenna Bailey will be leaving for a one year maternity/parental leave starting in October. We wish Jenna and family the best as they continue to grow their beautiful family!



Some of the women of Surrounded by Cedar drumming and sharing songs while socially distanced.

L—R: Sarah L, Robin, Jennifer, Alysha, Shelley, Chelsea, Katie, Nicole, Sarah U.

CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

SARAH UNDERDOWN & BRANDI LANCASTER

Cultural Programs has made the adaptations needed to ensure our children and families continue to have cultural connections through the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift to the distant, virtual world has been an adjustment for us all but we are so grateful to our families for their patience and understanding in this learning process.

In July, we took youth out whale watching with Eagle Wing Tours which are considered good friends of the local Lekwungen and Esquimalt Nations. Though we did not see Orcas, we were privileged to witness many humpbacks break the surface.

Nest to Wings ceremonies for our youth ageing out of care was done at their homes in a socially distant manner with a small group of staff honouring these wonderful young adults. There were messages shared, gifts given and a song was also shared. The youth felt that a personalized ceremony was very special and were happy we could honour them this way.

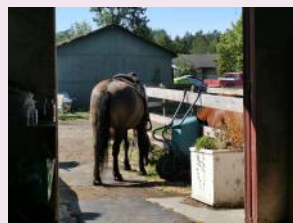
In August, summer camps happened all month long. Cultural programs gave families the option of two dates to choose from to ensure social distancing and safety. Summer camps consisted of horse back riding, a visit to a healing farm, whale watching, seeing the raptors in Quw'utsun territories, crabbing in Sidney, wool teaching with WSÁNEĆ Elder May Sam, and a fishing charter. The children and youth all enjoyed their time learning and experiencing what we could offer.

In September, we returned to regularly scheduled programs such as Building our Bundles where TSARTLIP Elder Murray Sampson came to Goldstream with us to teach our caregivers and children about the traditional use of the lands as part of our *Salmon as Medicine* programming. We also hosted more Nest to Wings ceremonies for youth that were unable to participate in the summer. Pro-D Days commenced quickly again and we took a trip to Quw'utsun for the 'Hand of Man' museum where the youth and staff got to witness a bunch of cool things throughout the entire exhibit.

Cultural Programs continues to ensure our children's safety within all realms of planning and will continue to do so as we navigate these unprecedented times. Wey!



Fishing charter visitor



Horseback riding



Wool teaching



Crabbing at the Pier



Cultural Support Worker
Brandi Lancaster



Painting



Cedar Weaving



Cultural Programs Coordinator
Sarah Underdown

Staff Training



In September, Surrounded by Cedar Staff participated in “*Understanding and Healing from Lateral Violence*”, a virtual training seminar facilitated by Indigenous Perspectives Society. Through the use of virtual group exercises and individual reflection, we explored the definition of lateral violence, contributing factors and received helpful frameworks and tools to strengthen our strategies at SCCFS.

Some things we learned...

- Other terms for lateral violence: Workplace bullying, horizontal hostilities/violence, internalized colonialism, relational aggression
- Aboriginal lateral violence: a learned behavior as a result of colonialism and patriarchal methods of governing and developing society.
- Behavioral Signs of lateral violence: name calling, sarcasm, snide comments, gossiping, excluding people, complaining to peers and not the individual, failing to respect privacy, breaking confidence of others.
- Why does it happen: when individuals who have endured oppression suppress their feelings they can manifest into feelings of jealousy, bitterness and resentment.

For more information on this course please visit: <https://ipsociety.ca/training/community-and-family-support-training/understanding-and-healing-lateral-violence/>

Thank you to Rachelle Dallaire and the team at IPS for hosting this important workshop.



In September SCCFS staff also participated in Arete Training’s “Respectful Relationships: Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace”. This workshop’s objective is to help boost morale and productivity by providing the tools needed to create a safe and respectful workplace. We would like to thank the team at Arete Training for keeping it interactive and fun while on a virtual platform.



SCCFS staff also participated in Emergency First-Aid + CPR/AED certification facilitated by Alert First-Aid. We are grateful to have the opportunity to take this training in a COVID-19 safe environment. Our staff had a great time and are feeling confident with their first-aid skills!



MMIWG: Calls to Justice Working Group

Kristy Potskin

Last year, the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry published a list of 231 recommendations to address the disproportionate violence experienced by Indigenous girls and women in Canada. 16 employees from Surrounded By Cedar formed a working group to go through each recommendation and come up with changes to recommend to our agency. The working group has been meeting bi-weekly (virtually) and exploring 1-2 recommendations each meeting. Not every recommendation is applicable to the work our agency is delegated to do, but we are working diligently to tease out which recommendations we can implement into our daily work with Indigenous women and girls. The working group has had many beautiful, emotional conversations about this very serious issue that has touched all our lives in some way. We have had many fulsome summary recommendations about how to improve our practice to protect our sacred women and two-spirited people. When the group completes its work, we will present the recommendations to the agency at large for further discussion.



Orange Shirt Day 2020

Orange Shirt Day is a time to honour Indigenous children who were sent away from their families to residential schools. This day helps to educate and bring awareness to the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada. On September 30th, Surrounded by Cedar staff wore Orange shirts to show our support of the movement.

“Every Child Matters”



Back to School Picnic 2020

Update from Ron Rice

The annual Aboriginal Back to School program looked very different this year. In addition to having to cancel the in-person celebrations in every community due to pandemic-related provincial health orders, we had to eliminate two events in the north due to a short-fall in fundraising this year.

Here in Victoria we provided supplies and gifts to 1332 students from pre-school to post secondary and a combined total of 2380 students province-wide.

The Picnic team was reduced to two truck drivers who delivered supplies to partners in each community over the course of the week. Our partners in Prince George held a drive through event. Port Alberni, Campbell River and Courtenay, which are smaller events, hand-delivered kits to families' homes. Tillicum Lelum and Duncan had weeklong pick-up schedules. Here in Victoria we had pick up locations at Hulitan Community and Family Services' new offices, and Surrounded by Cedar and VNFC distributed from their parking lots.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of BC, Van City, Rina M Bidin Foundation, Monk Office, RK Morrow Foundation, Out of the Blue Designs, and in-kind contributions from our friends at Monk Office.

I am sad to report Rebecca Campbell, my Mother and a member of the Picnic Team since the summer of 2009, passed away last December. I received numerous heartfelt messages of condolence from our partners province wide. The Picnics meant a great deal to my Mother and she loved every minute of the tour.



Managing COVID-19 Stress

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. Here are some helpful tips to help you remain calm and informed:

- ◆ **Know the facts:** Use reliable sources of information such as the BC Centre for Disease Control, HealthLink BC, Health Canada and The World Health Organization
- ◆ **Reach Out:** It's important to reach out when we are feeling isolated and lonely; use virtual platforms such as Facetime and Zoom to connect with friends and family safely.
- ◆ **Practice Self– Care:** By taking good care of yourself you'll be better prepared to take care of others; try exercising, meditation, reading, smudging or even just cuddling your pet.

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.welnesstogether.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

Feeding Our Spirits in the Workplace: Vancouver International Film Festival movie, *Inconvenient Indian*



In September, our staff were able to view the Vancouver International Film Festival's screening of *Inconvenient Indian*. This documentary, directed by Michelle Latimer, is a deep dive into Thomas King's book, *The Inconvenient Indian*.

"In this time of momentous change and essential re-examination, Latimer's *Inconvenient Indian* is a powerful visual poem anchored in the land and amplified by the voices of those who continue the tradition of Indigenous resistance. Artist activists, land protectors, hunters, and those leading cultural revitalization powerfully subvert the "inconvenience" of their existence, creating an essential new narrative and a possible path forward for us all".

We are grateful to have been given the opportunity to view this film as an agency. For more information on how you can view the film once released, please visit <https://mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/inconvenient-indian>.