

SIWAL SI'WES

INDIGENOUS DEPARTMENT, SD75

Éy St'elmexw Sqwelqwel

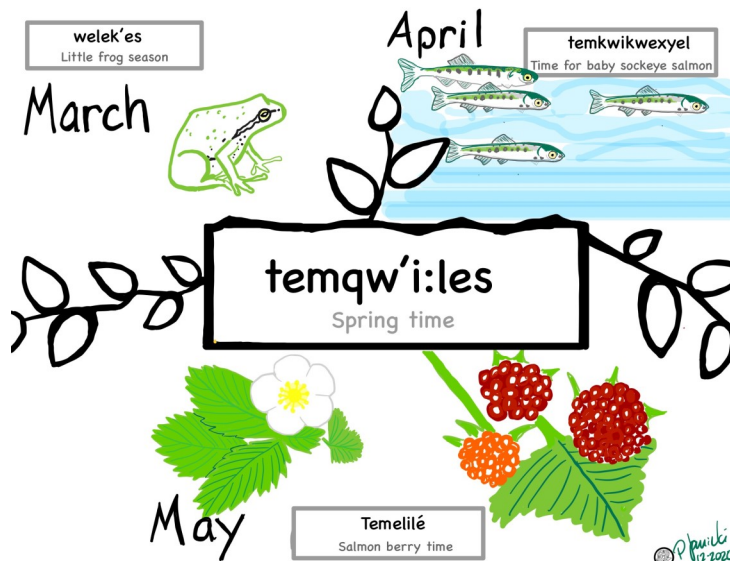
Good Medicine Stories, Edition #2



We acknowledge that, as a learning partners of Mission Public School District, we humbly work and learn on the Traditional, Ancestral, Unceded, and Shared lands of the Stó:lō people, of Qwó:ltl'el, Leq'á:mel, Matheqwi, Sq'éwlets, peoples of this land since time immemorial.



Our forefathers' teachings



Moving with the Seasons

Welek'es (March 23 - April 20) is little frog season because the welek' - little frog begins to croak about this time. The same month is also called Qweloxythi:lem - making music, because the birds start singing then.

Temkwikwexel (April 21 - May 19) is time for baby sockeye salmon, by some people, kwikwexel is baby sockeye salmon. Some call the month Lhem't'oles, which means spring showers in the eyes.

Tem'elile (May 20 - June 17) is salmonberry time. These are the first berries out and signal the beginning of six or seven months of berry picking time. When the weather warms up people will be out foraging for Th'exthex, stinging nettles, then shoots Sthathqi, followed by sth'im, berries and soon salmon will be running.

Temqoqo (June 18 - July 17) is high water time, when the rivers are high with melted snow water. Another name, less common, is Tem't'amxw or gooseberry time.

Inside this issue

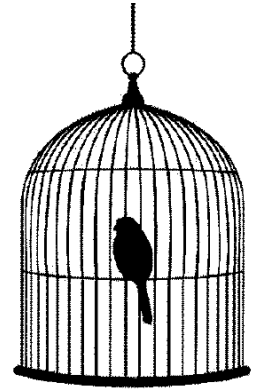
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Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism



What are the structural, cultural, pedagogical and psychological wires in your school that are getting in the way of opportunity for Indigenous students?

-Shane Safir, The Listening Leader



Scholar Marilyn Frye uses the metaphor of a birdcage to describe the interlocking forces of oppression.

"If you stand close to a birdcage and press your face against the wires, your perception of the bars will disappear and you will have an almost unobstructed view of the bird. If you turn your head to examine one wire of the cage closely, you will not be able to see the other wires. If your understanding of the cage is based on this myopic view, you may not understand why the bird doesn't just go around the single wire and fly away. You might even assume that the bird liked or chose its place in the cage. But if you stepped back and took a wider view, you would begin to see that the wires come together in an interlocking pattern—a pattern that works to hold the bird firmly in place. It now becomes clear that a network of systematically related barriers surrounds the bird. Taken individually, none of these barriers would be that difficult for the bird to get around, but because they interlock with each other, they thoroughly restrict the bird. While some birds may escape from the cage, most will not. And certainly those that do escape will have to navigate many barriers that birds outside the cage do not."

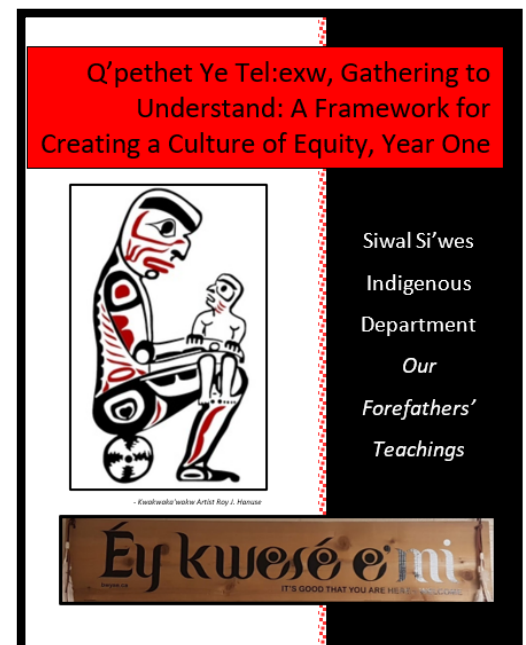
-Robyn DiAngelo, White Fragility

How do current practices support, connect to and/or hinder the commitments represented by the eagle, the sunrise, the paddles raised and the canoe?

Is/does this practice...

- culturally relevant to Indigenous students of SD75 and Indigenous communities?
- reflect Indigenous ways of seeing, understanding and knowing the world?
- consider the effects of racism, oppression, marginalization, poverty and colonization of Indigenous communities?
- promote meaningful Indigenous participation and benefit?

To access the digital document of *Q'pethet Ye Tel:exw, Gathering to Understand: A Framework for Creating a Culture of Equity*, please contact Vivian Searwar, District Principal, Siwal Si'wes.



Upcoming Events: Showing Solidarity

LIFT WOMEN UP! **#Choose to Challenge**

What will you do to show your commitment to working toward lifting women up?

"A challenged world is an alert world. Individually, we're all responsible for our own thoughts and actions - all day, every day.

We can all choose to challenge and call out gender bias and inequality. We can all choose to seek out and celebrate women's achievements. Collectively, we can all help create an inclusive world.

From challenge comes change, so let's all choose to challenge."

"They demonstrated their knowledge, confidence, pride and self-esteem as they learned and maintained their sense of dignity as they corrected one another, laughed together, and created the grounding for the written words that were being recorded."
-an excerpt from ***Courage to Speak***



Courage to Speak: Honouring Ancestors Voices tells the stories of the 10 first graduates of the Halq'eméylem Language Teachers training program with a focus on three women: Qw'etosiya Nancy Phillips, of Sts'ailes; Siyamiya Amelia Douglas, of Sts'ailes; and Xwiyálemot Matilda Gutierrez, of Chawathil.

For more information, click [HERE](#).

CELEBRATING MATRIARCHS

International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8 and offers everyone an opportunity to consider women leaders everywhere around the planet (Government of Canada info [here](#)). On Canada's website "International Women Day's [T]eacher toolkit" they offer an array of questions to consider in the classroom, (link [here](#)). One of many questions for the Grade 7-9 level is "What can Canadians do to defend human rights for women and girls living around the world?". This is a wonderful question! It offers an entry point into the conversation around women and girls and human rights.



"What can Canadians do to defend human rights for *First Nations* women and girls *living in Canada*?" and the answer lies with Dr. Cindy Blackstock.

On January 26, 2016, Canada lost at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) ([Blackstock, 2016](#)). But sadly, Canada refuses to act on what was hard won in those court rooms.

Dr. Blackstock is an amazing woman to focus on for International Women's Day. She is an iconic First Nations Matriarch/Leader and currently a Professor at McGill University in the School of Social Work.

A member of the Gitksan First Nation, she encourages all Canadians to support her calls to Justice for First Nations children and "Bring a Bear". She has lead and co-created the website "First Nations Child & Family Caring Society".

Resources:

The Ottawa Teachers for Social Justice and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society have created a beautiful Learning Guide, [here](#), has colouring pages, lessons, and information.

ANTI-RACIST EARTH EDUCATION

Tune into CBC: [Unreserved](#)

Water: How Indigenous People are Turning the Tide

Depending where you live, clean water is something many of us take for granted. But that's not the reality for many Indigenous communities. And while the federal government has committed to lifting all long-term drinking water advisories on reserves in the next two years, the work is slow, and costs billions of dollars. It's a cause that continues to inspire artists, activists and entrepreneurs across the country, who are speaking out, and raising awareness.

Autumn Peltier is a 14 year old water activist who advocates for clean drinking water in First Nations communities and across Mother Earth. She comes from Wikwemikong First Nation/Manitoulin Island and is from Ojibway/Odawa heritage. Autumn has travelled far and wide to carry the message of the importance of clean water and the Sacredness of Water. She has spoken at the United Nations World Water Day on March 22, 2018, been honoured by the Assembly of First Nations as a water protector, and recently travelled to Stockholm, Sweden, for World Water Week in August 2018, invited by the United Nations as a Keynote speaker. Autumn has also been honoured by the Ontario Lieutenant Governor with the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers for her exceptional advocacy and being an exceptional conservationist. Autumn was also recognized and honoured as an Ontario Junior Citizen for her advocacy work and won a WE Day award for Youth in Action. Autumn continues her work for access to clean water for the Indigenous Community and Indigenous People across the world.



*"Water gives life. We respect the
water like it's a human being."
"In my teachings, in my way, water has
a spirit. And water is alive."*

-Autumn Pelletier

Resources from the Siwal Si'wes Library for Anti Racist Earth Education

Here are some featured resources available in Siwal Si'wes Library to share with classes as we think about **Earth Day** and **Water Day** this year:

Available in every school and at Siwal Si'wes Library!



"For millennia, a vast lake existed between Sumas and Vedder mountains in the unceded territory of the Stó:lō people, in what is now known as the Fraser Valley. Teeming with ecological abundance, Semá:th Xó:tsa (Sumas Lake) was central to cultural, spiritual, and physical wellbeing of the Séma:th people (Sumas First Nation) and surrounding Indigenous communities. Between 1919 and 1924, settlers in the region lobbied government to drain the lake, thereby enhancing the agricultural capacity of the region with devastating consequences for Stó:lō people." ([The Reach Gallery](#)).

This book is just one story of the changes to the land and water experienced by Indigenous people since settlers came to our territory.

Links:

[Read along with video](#)

[Semá:th Xó:tsa: Halq'eméylem Pronunciation Guide](#)

"It is important to acknowledge what happened to our land, and the changes experienced by the Sumas people over the past 100 years. This book is just one story of the changes to the land and water experienced by Indigenous people since settlers came to our territory. These changes continue to impact our people today."

-Thetáx, Chris Silver; Sumas First Nation

More Resources (continued)

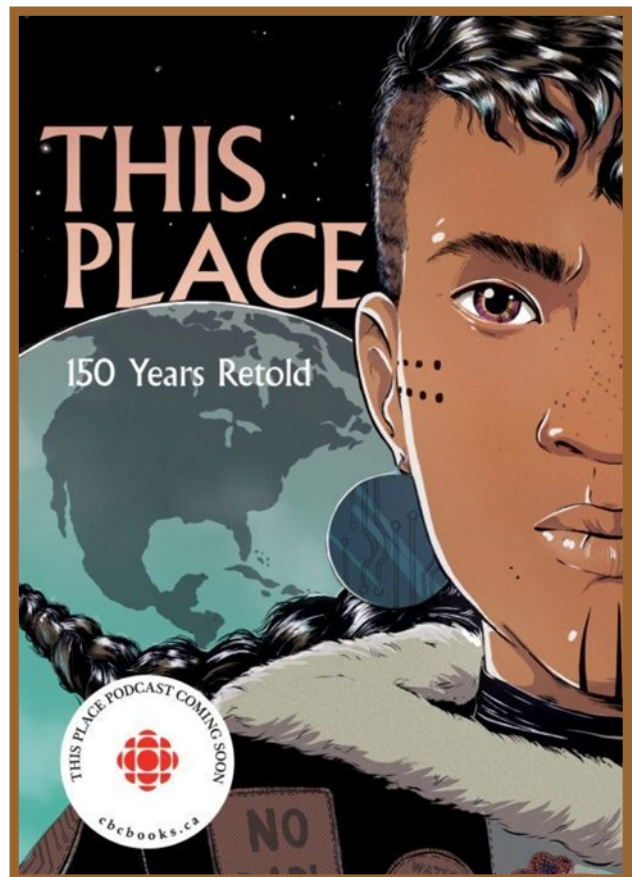
Recommended for Gr. 9-12.

Click [here](#) for the Book Trailer!

"Explore the past 150 years through the eyes of Indigenous creators in this groundbreaking graphic novel anthology. Beautifully illustrated, these stories are an emotional and enlightening journey through Indigenous wonderworks, psychic battles, and time travel. See how Indigenous peoples have survived a post-apocalyptic world since Contact." ([Portage and Main Press](#))

"This Place is the graphic novel I've waited my whole life for, and the graphic novel Canada has needed for 150 years. The stories contained within its pages are both beautifully rendered and vitally necessary. They represent a history not only largely untold and unknown, but one obscured, hidden from sight, so that other stories may occupy a privileged place in the defining a national story. Their importance is exquisitely captured on these pages, told by some the leading artists working today. This is an essential book, for comic fans, teachers and anyone who wants to learn the stories of this place we now share."

—Jesse Wente, broadcaster and film critic



More Resources (continued)

*Water is the first medicine.
It affects and connects us all . . .*

When a black snake threatens to destroy the Earth
And poison her people's water, one young water protector
Takes a stand to defend Earth's most sacred resource.

Winner of the 2021 Caldecott Medal

Click here for [Activity Kit](#).

Click here for [Read Aloud by Carole Lindstrom](#).



We Are Water Protectors issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption. Complete these *We Are Water Protectors* activities and learn about ways to make an impact in your community and further protect the Earth and our waters in everyday life.

Click [HERE](#) for another great resource on the sacredness of water!

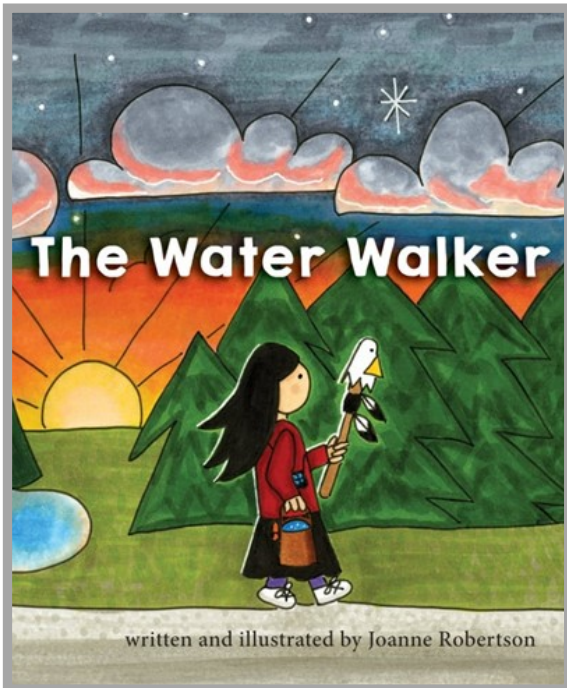
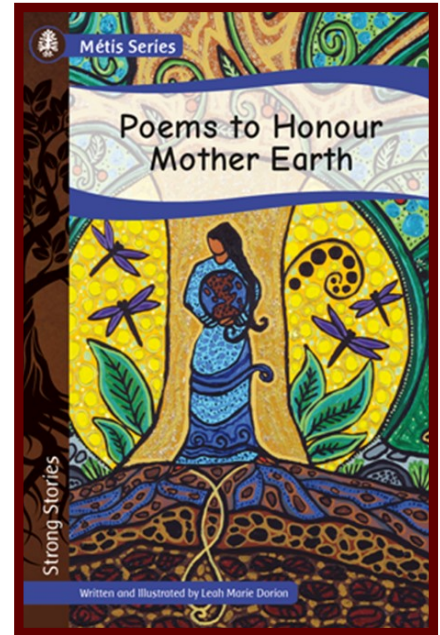
More Resources (continued)

What is one way that you show respect to Mother Earth?

"Leah Marie Dorion's poetry reflects her deep connection to Mother Earth, which she has had since she was a child. Each poem gently recognizes all that is around us and the importance of being respectful." (Source: Strong Nations)

See **Water Poem** and **Creative Writing Activity** at the end of the book.

Several copies available at Siwal Si'wes Library!

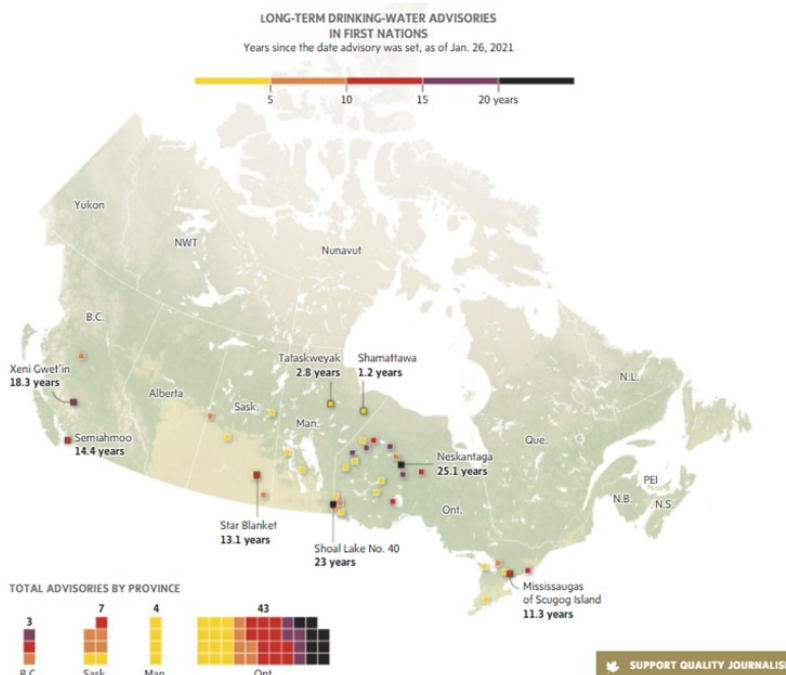
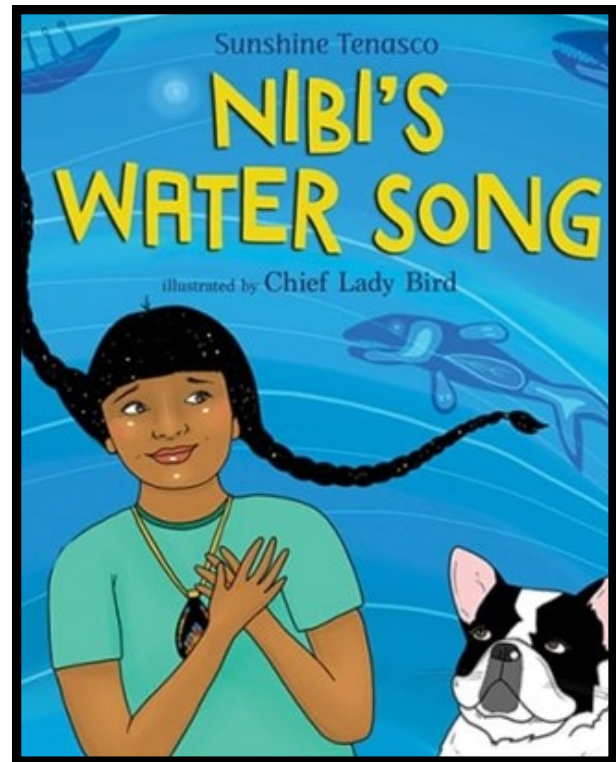


The story of a determined Ojibwe grandmother (Nokomis) Josephine Mandamin and her great love for Nibi (water). Nokomis walks to raise awareness of our need to protect Nibi for future generations, and for all life on the planet. She, along with other women, men and youth, have walked around all the Great Lakes from the four salt waters, or oceans, to Lake Superior. The walks are full of challenges, and by her example Josephine challenges us all to take up our responsibility to protect our water, the giver of life, and to protect our planet for all generations. (From *Second Story Press*)

Click [here to access a lesson plan](#) for using "The Water Walker" with students.

More Resources (continued)

Nibi is the Anishinaabemowin word for water. In Nibi's Water Song, an Indigenous girl is on the search for clean water to drink. Though she is faced with repeated obstacles, Nibi's joyful and determined energy becomes a catalyst for change and action as her community, and then in widening circles the country and government, rally around her to make clean drinking water available for all. In a story perfectly levelled for young readers, there is a strong underlying message that even when a problem seems too large to face, every bit that everyone does helps. And inaction in the face of a wrong is not an option. (Source: Strong Nations)



WHITE BEAR • LITTLE SASKATCHEWAN • SANDY LAKE
MUSKRAT DAM LAKE • NORTHWEST ANGLE NO. 33
GULL BAY (KIASHKE ZAAGING ANISHINAABEK)
SHOAL LAKE NO. 40 • TATASKWEYAK • NIBINAMIK
NESKANTAGA • ANISHINABE OF WAUZHUSHK ONIGUM
MINISTIKWAN LAKE • PEEPEEKISIS • WET'SUWET'EN
SEMAHMOO • MOHAWKS OF THE BAY OF QUINTE
WABASEEMOONG • MISHKEGOGAMANG
SACHIGO LAKE • WASHAGAMIS BAY • EABAMETOONG
ONEIDA OF THE THAMES • BEARSKIN LAKE
OJIBWAY NATION OF SAUGEEN • XENI GWET'IN
PETER BALLANTYNE • NORTH SPIRIT LAKE
SHAMATTAWA • MISSISSAUGAS OF SCUGOG ISLAND
DEER LAKE • CHIPPEWAS OF NAWASH • SAPOTAWEYAK
WAHTA • ANISHINAABEG OF NAONGASHIING
CHIPPEWAS OF GEORGINA ISLAND • LITTLE PINE
WAWAKAPEWIN • STAR BLANKET • MARTEN FALLS

INDIGENOUS CRISIS
NO CLEAN WATER:
39 FIRST NATIONS REMAIN
UNDER LONG-TERM ADVISORIES

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

The trans flag was brought into the world by Monica Helms, a long-time transgender activist and herself a transgender woman, earning her the moniker of the 'transgender Betsy Ross'" ([Lafuente, 2019, para. 4](#)).

Cat Lafuente interviewed Monica Helms for "The List" online News in an article titled "The Truth About the Trans Flag" and I wish to centre their amazing voices and stand out of the way. The hyperlink to the article is in the citations. Here are two paragraphs explaining the colours and symbolism.

... , [T]he colo[u]rs on the trans flag are significant as well, according to Monica Helms. "The stripes at the top and bottom are light blue, the traditional color for baby boys," she explained in an article in Point 5CC. "The stripes next to them are pink, the traditional color for baby girls. The stripe in the middle is white, for those who are intersex, transitioning or consider themselves having a neutral or undefined gender."

Additionally, the flag's design is strategic, in that the flag is the same upside-down as it is right-side up. "The pattern is such that no matter which way you fly it, it is always correct, signifying us finding correctness in our lives," she continued. That's some super poignant symbolism. ([Lafuente, 2019, para. 10 & 11](#)).



Resource List:

Zine "Two-Spirit: Conversations with Young Two-Spirit, Trans and Queer Indigenous People in Toronto" by Marie Laing, link [here](#)

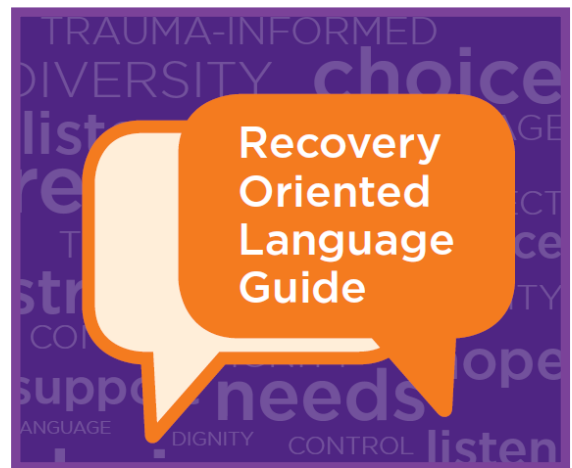
Book "Urban Indigenous Youth Reframing Two-Spirit" by Marie Laing, link [here](#)

News article "The Truth About The Trans Flag", link [here](#)

"She [Grandmother] coined the term Sts'iyóye smestíyexw slhá:li. When she handed the piece of paper to me with this title on it, she included the English translation, 'Twin-Spirited Woman,' and explained that I could interpret it as 'two-spirited woman,' or 'twin-soul woman,'..." ([Wesley, 2014, p. 343](#)).

Canadian Mental Health Association's MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

PLEASE JOIN US during the week of May 3-9, 2021 to take part in our Mental Health Awareness Campaigns, and in solidarity, we can show our commitment, care and concern for those who live with mental health challenges.



Click [HERE](#) for a detailed look of the above document.

Reference Guide - Safer Language

Combating stigma related to mental illness, suicide, and substance use starts with how we use language – something that continuously evolves. That's why we must all be aware of any outdated language being used in the media and around us every day. Everyone can be a champion against stigma when advocating the use of accurate and respectful language. So, as you communicate with others, be mindful of the impact of your language.¹

Stigmatizing	Respectful
It drives me crazy .	It bothers/annoys/frustrates me.
This is nuts .	This is interesting/strange/peculiar/funny .
This individual suffers from depression.	They live with/are experiencing depression.
Mentally ill or insane person	Person living with a mental health problem or illness
Committed suicide, successful suicide	Died by suicide
Failed or unsuccessful suicide attempt	Attempted suicide
Substance abuse	Substance use or substance use disorder
Everyone who is a junkie...	Everyone who uses substances...
They used to be an addict .	They are in recovery .

LANGUAGE MATTERS

1 Note: This brochure is a living document and is subject to regular updates.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Alicia Elliott connects the dots between mental health challenges and colonialism.

"In an urgent and visceral work that asks essential questions about the treatment of Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island while drawing on intimate details of her own life and experience with intergenerational trauma, Alicia Elliott offers indispensable insight into the ongoing legacy of colonialism. She engages with such wide-ranging topics as race, parenthood, love, mental illness, poverty, sexual assault, gentrification, writing and representation, and in the process makes connections both large and small between the past and present, the personal and the political."

—From Goodreads

Content Warning ([see this article](#)): Elliot's book is deeply personal and has the following Content Warnings: racism, sexual violence, domestic violence, mental illness, and suicide.



"How can we possibly expect survivor's descendants to be much better off? To "get over" a genocide that has marked their very genes, and their children's genes and their children's genes?"

—Alicia Elliott

Pause & Reflect: Cultural Connections



Photo Credit:
Glenda Scrimshaw,
Band Outreach Teacher

"What is clear is that the stories that will make a difference are not the easy ones. If they don't challenge us, confound us, make us uncomfortable or uncertain or humble, then I'm not sure what they offer us on the long run, because to my mind it's the difficult stories that offer hope of something better."

-Daniel Heath Justice, Why Indigenous Literatures Matter

Teachings from Siyá:ye: Cheryl Gabriel



We did not know who we were. We were all beginning to find ourselves when we became part of the Aboriginal program in the schools. I keep finding myself, and we continue to find our child self, from our grandparents and great grandparents and aunts and uncles that were strong in our life.

Brandon, our son asked me about work ethic. When we were kids, we worked with our mums and dads – work was not separate, it was a family duty for us to be working with our mum and dad. My parents were fisher people and in late 50's and early 60's we did not have a boat because of assimilation, and the Gradual Civilization Act and the Indian Act, which changed our focus from tradition to a

commercialized way of life. In 1996 when I was working in the Aboriginal program in the schools, we wrote to fisheries asking for permission to bring students on river for a fishing day, chum salmon in October. We had three boats, my mum had own boat, my brother had a boat, and this is when we started 'unlearning' about each other.

This was about survival, our people were engineers, in how can we catch the fish. They made fish weirs and fish traps. I became more aware of how beautiful our people were with the seasons. I grew up western minded, but at the same time our dad and grandparents were showing us who we were and the way we were. But we thought that that was taught by the outside world, not our inside world, not our own world.

Lekeyten and I made nets of stinging nettle and cedar bark – they are so strong! It works in the water then it dries, and it never lost its strength. Our people made the nets in the wintertime in the longhouses, to get the nets ready for the summer fishing. That to me is not the business side, but the survival side. Salmon is part of our blood and bones. It was like the witnessing of the cedar bark [referring to a cedar pull ceremony]. We were doing that with our grandparents without even thinking that it was a seasonal thing. I had to learn this in anthropology class with Steven and Gwen Point and Luanne Yellowly at UFV, where everything had a reason. There were certain people knew when the sap was running in the tree and when to harvest it; when to harvest berries, and to me, what I notice is that we are coming alive again, the history of what we did is opening every pore in us at the time that we are sharing with students and staff, the beauty in trying to live and survive is understanding the seasons and what to prepare for. It is interesting what our ancestors used to study, they would go out on the land to do their thesis and masters research. They would bring the information back and share it with the people.

Teachings from Siyá:ye: Cheryl Gabriel (continued)

Prior to contact, Kwantlen was 10,000 strong, and we know that we have been here longer than 25,000 years because a cedar baby cradle was found and carbon-dated to 25,000 years. A young Kwantlen man found that cradle and this was the third cradle found. Each year when they draw water at Ruskin Dam, something reveals itself, and so this is a time for us to learn. There is so much more that needs to be learned. At Ruskin Dam, when they draw the water you can still see the old cedar stumps standing in the water. Our village used to be there, and Brandon's murals are on the dam, they tell the story, of the mountain goat and the frog. The frog has great symbolism, when the frog sleeps that is when the winter dance starts and was the time when the Elders would tell their stories. It was a learning chapter in their lives to be passed on to time immemorial.

An artifact reveals itself when it is time. The first cradle was dated at 12,980 years, the next one at 15,000 and the last one was 25,900 years. This land is the heart of the Kwantlen people, where it was safe, where it was plentiful, where we stayed. Then, it was needed later for power and electricity. I can imagine how sad it must have been to be given land from the Crown that is barely livable.

Lekeyten taught me a beautiful lesson today: "We can't leave out anybody". When we bring a story forward, we are bringing forward the histories of what happened to our people, and we can't exclude Elders, because it also helps them connect. It was the Acts that pushed them out, and our people are working through these Acts. Sometimes, in their sleep as well, we have revelations during sleep. I want to honour Lekeyten for teaching me this lesson today. We need to be patient, like the cradle, the cradle was patient. Finding the cradle might have broken a cycle for us, as Kwantlen people because babies are our future.

"An artifact reveals itself when it is time."



Teachings from Siyá:ye: Lekeyten



Thank you to Cheryl for sharing her experiences and how she grew up. She is a third and fourth generation fisherperson, and they grew up on the land and worked the land. I remember Cheryl as a young person who followed traditions of her grandmother's teachings of working on the land and her dad's teachings of fishing on the river, of milking cows and finding the time to rest. They worked hard, worked their fingers to the bone and lived with nothing, but they survived. Her family in Kwantlen is so significant and when I came to Kwantlen, there were only four families who were true survivors of the Indian Residential Schools, of The Indian Act, of

chicken pox, measles, influenza, and bad water, all that destroyed the Kwantlen families. This is what I have witnessed here on my mother's territory.

When a mother had a child, she had two choices: the man that she married could register their child where he was from and they could live with him on his territory, but they also had the option of registering the child in her territory. We, as children, we had no choice, we just knew that our mums registered us somewhere. And with the Canadian government, one had to have the child registered somewhere, and with the Census, could only be counted once. The Indian Act came alive and we watched it come alive, and it created prejudice against our own people because the Indian Agents, they had a paper with your name on it and they checked it off, then you were registered with Indian Affairs in Vancouver and your name appeared in Kwantlen registry. So people knew your name and who your family was, but the names were in Halq'eméylem and Hunqimimum and the Indian Agents gave you a name because they did not know how to spell the languages. Sometimes, these men that were registering our people, had not idea that they were registering the same person in another nation knowing that they had no proof of who these people were; and so sometimes people ended up on your registry and they were not from there. This caused tiffs among families saying that they belonged in Kwantlen, when they didn't as they may have just travelled through that area for a short time, but according to the Indian Act that's where you belonged. When they did Census, they had a different way because they could read the names of the settlers, but for First Nations peoples, they could only go by what others said about him and it was often a guess and registered as such.

Teachings from Siyá:ye: Lekeyten (continued)

All stories can be derived from this, with Census, a story of truth, of roots, your roots, and if one says they are from Kwantlen, then we need to see the proof. We don't want to hear that you belong here, but that there is proof of your grandmother's birth certificate saying that you are from here. Sometimes people were only at Kwantlen for a month and they were registered by the Indian Agent. Our people did the fish runs, they traded, and some people were going through the territory for logging and fishing, they moved with the seasons. And so, it was important for Grandfathers and Grandmothers to tell the story of the Grandchildren born under their names, by word of mouth, through the Matriarchs. That was the job of the Matriarchs, to keep track of the families, they were Matriarchs of the People, and that was membership, when they said it was true, it was true, they were our lines of historians, and they, the Grandmother and the Mothers and the Daughters, they still do that today. And the cradles that were found, we know that they belonged to someone on those waters and we know that it was the Kwantlen people that lived on that watershed. We all had our own watersheds, where we lived and travelled, we moved with weather, and it was about survival. Kwantlen's area was always so vast – when we had 10,000 members, we looked after six other nations as well. These are the stories of Kwantlen. I can only speak of things I know to be true.

My dad is from Sts'ailes, with my Grandfather and my Grandmother on my father's side were Skookumchuck, who migrated to Sts'ailes people and stayed there. When I talk about name changes – my father's name in Skookumchuck, his name is spelled differently and pronounced differently in the two areas. A lot of our history moved like the wind, with the rivers, with the mountains, with time. A lot of people in Siwal Si'wes are my relatives and if we all sat down and talked about our roots, we would all end up in the same place with the same Grandmothers, and this is why we are all related, we are family.

“If we all sat down and talked about our roots, we would all end up in the same place with the same Grandmothers, and this is why we are all related, we are family.”

Teachings from Siyá:ye: Lekeyten (continued)

When Cheryl and I grew up, with the stories of Grandfathers and Grandmothers, stories of a vast history of people, it contains a lot of different dialects, are like a sacred lifetime, where we move along the storyline of greatness and how you respect each other's bloodlines so deeply, this is rooted in our genetics, with the only barrier the languages of Halq'eméylem and Hunqiminum. And we were taught English before our own language and it was devastating all the years, I spent in the Indian Day School. I thought I was going to be in Grade 7 forever, because no one talked about anything past Grade 7, like there was no future for us. I thought that we went to Grade 7 and that was it, we got to Grade 7 then that we went logging. I never saw our people go to high school or university. In those days they called us Indians, you were either a dirty Indian or a good Indian, one or the other; and there are stories that I have in me that have not yet been told. We had names for everything; long before cities and towns, we had names for the mountains, every mountain peak had a name, that was our map. When our people traveled, they knew these names, Canada came along and put their own names and took our names away. I do not know where this story is going to go, but I do know it will go to a place where it has great significance on the younger people coming behind us. They need to know where it came from, who said it, who seen it, who heard it, who witnessed it, how it was witnessed, even though it was not written down. That's why the Matriarch has to have such a good memory, to carry history of family tree in memory and one of the greatest things is that we were gifted with, was our memory.

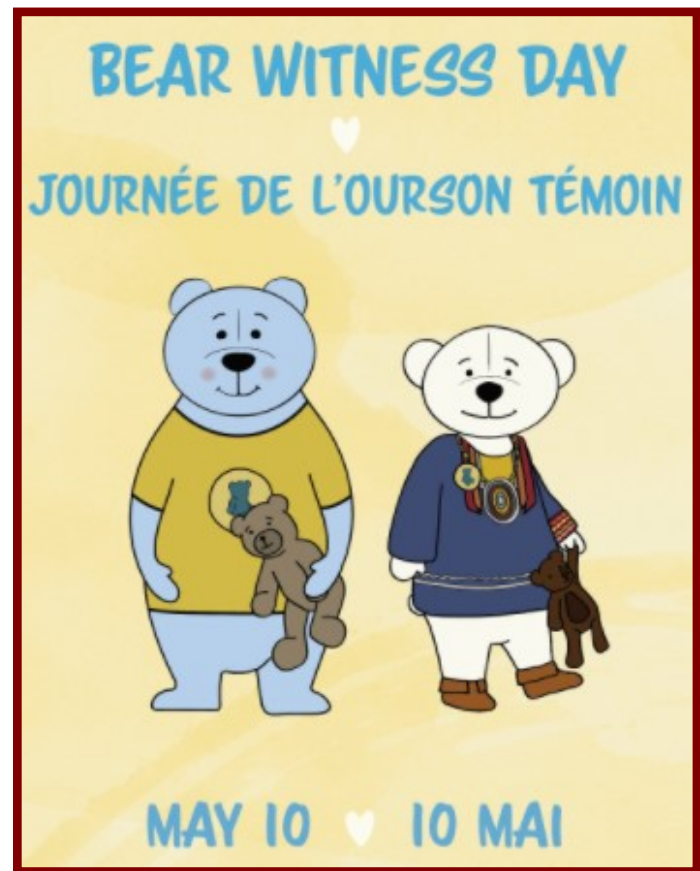
Cheryl and I have been together for 46 years and we have witnessed such changes in the land, the Fraser River, the ocean, the fort, the municipalities, the urbanization of our people, with the changing of the rules and laws, telling us when we can hunt what we could hunt, when we could fish and how we could fish, knowing that's all that we lived on, we had to feed our people. Nobody told us how to feed our people, we just knew that we had to feed every child. We have survived all this time on the earth because our Grandparents and Great Grandparents had an agenda for us on how to survive. We have to look at our Grandchildren and say, 'You need to trust me. I will take care of you now'. We need to look after the new generation because they will be the true survivors, they will look after us one day. I hope that at some point people will see it. We need to trust. With trust, the door is always open, and it swings both ways and to me that makes all the sense in the world. Open truth.

It was a great honour and privilege to hear Cheryl & Lekeyten's stories of truth, of resilience, and not only of survival, but of thriving and prospering amidst barriers intentionally placed in front of First Nations people by the Canadian government. I can only hope that these words have captured the true essence of the words and message they so eloquently shared with me. —Vivian Searwar



BEAR WITNESS DAY

Bear Witness Day, May 10, 2021 is Spirit Bear's birthday and an important date in the history of Jordan's Principle at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. The Tribunal's first non-compliance order called for Canada to fully implement Jordan's Principle by May 10, 2016. Unfortunately, it took several more years and many non-compliance orders (September 2016, May 2017, November 2017) against Canada before any real progress was made.



Jordan's Principle is a '**child first**' principle and legal rule named in memory of Jordan River Anderson. Jordan River Anderson was a young boy from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba who was born in 1999 with multiple disabilities. He lived over two years in a hospital because federal and provincial governments could not agree on who would pay for his at-home care. The reason for this is that federal and provincial/territorial governments cannot agree on which government should pay for services to First Nations children on reserves so they typically do not provide the service until they can sort out the payment issue. Unfortunately, Jordan died at the age of 5 before he could experience living in a loving home. Jordan's death ignited a movement to uphold human rights for all First Nations children through the creation of the child-first principle called "Jordan's Principle, which ensures First Nations children receive the services and supports they need when they need them.

Click [HERE](#) to find out more about how to access Jordan's Principle.

*"Jordan could not talk, yet people around the world heard his message.
Jordan could not breathe on his own and yet he has given the breath of life
to other children.*

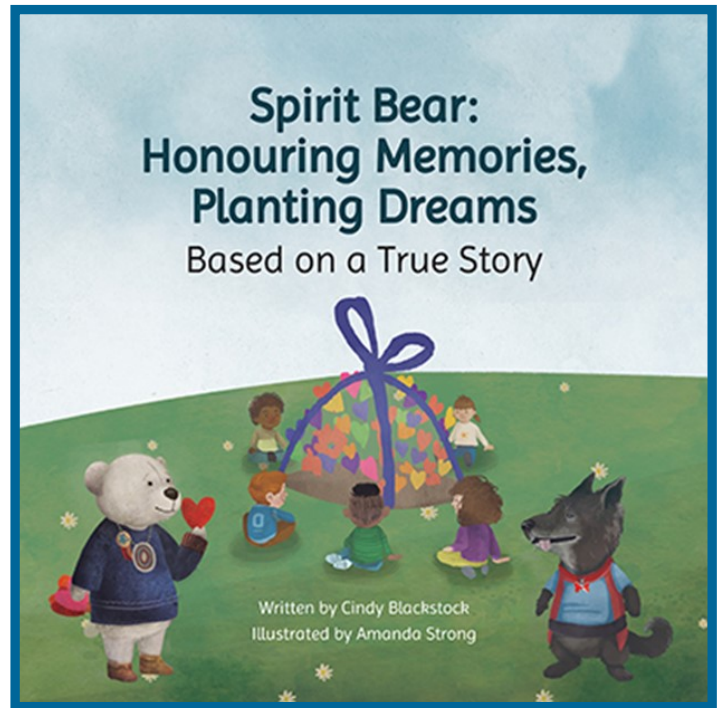
*Jordan could not walk but he has taken steps that governments are now just
learning to follow."*

- Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director First Nations Child & Family Caring Society

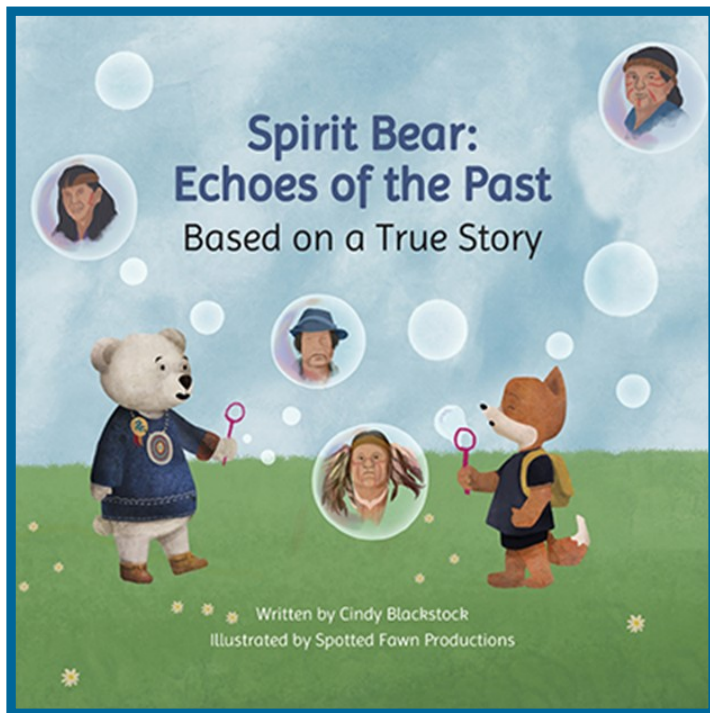
Resources from the Siwal Si'wes Library for Bear Witness Day

Spirit Bear is on his way home from a sacred ceremony when he meets Jake, a friendly dog, with a bag full of paper hearts attached to wood stakes. Jake tells Spirit Bear that school children and residential school survivors will plant the hearts when a big report on residential schools called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC for short) is shared. The TRC will have Calls to Action so we can all help end the unfairness and make sure this generation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children grow up healthy and proud!

Click here for the [Learning Guide](#).



For the past 13 years, Spirit Bear has been working hard to make sure First Nations children get the help they need when they need it so they can grow up safely with their families, get a good education, and be healthy and proud of who they are.



It's been a long journey, and Spirit Bear needs a vacation! He and his family set out for Songhees and Esquimalt territories (Victoria, British Columbia) for their holiday adventure. Along the way, they see a statue of John A. Macdonald - Canada's first Prime Minister - being removed from the steps of Victoria City Hall. Some people have signs that say, "Save the statue," and others have signs that say, "The statue must go!" Spirit Bear and his family learn why people disagree and how we can learn from the good and bad parts of history to make better decisions now and for future generations of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit kids.

NATIONAL FIDDLE DAY 2021

The third Saturday in May has been proclaimed as National Fiddling Day. This is an occasion to recognize the historical and contemporary importance of the fiddle and to make Canadian fiddle music known to a broader audience.

The Metis have played the fiddle for several hundred years. Since the days of the voyageurs, fiddling has been part of Canada's cultural fabric. People from many different cultures have come to Canada, shared their ways of playing the fiddle and offered their own interpretations of traditional fiddle music. Fiddles were costly to buy, so the Metis made their own fiddles using maple wood and birch bark.

Music and dance are a very important part of Metis culture. Usually played at Metis community events, festivals, and celebrations. The fiddle is an important part of the music. It is tuned a little differently than a regular fiddle which has a better sound for the fast moving Metis jig.

Along with the fiddle, other instruments usually include the spoons (Siwal Siwes has a classroom set), tin pans, and pounding out the beat with their heels.

A well know Metis fiddler is John Arcand. In 2003 he received the Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Association (CGFMA) Lifetime Achievement Award.

Watch John in action [HERE](#).



"All my uncles, my dad and my grandfather, everybody played the fiddle. When you don't have any TV or radio to speak of, you sort of entertain yourself by playing music."

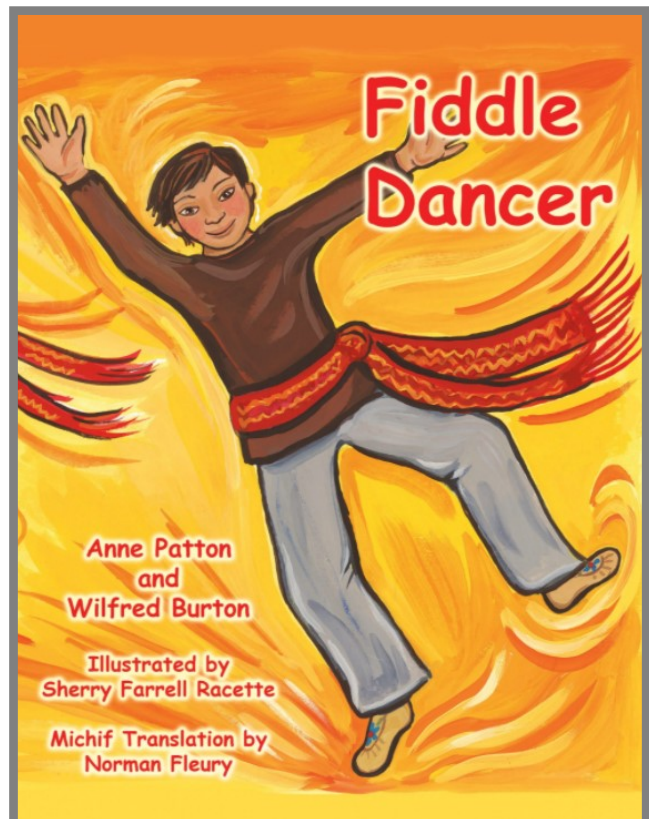
- John Arcand

Resources from the Siwal Si'wes Library for National Fiddle Day

Fiddle Dancer tells the tale of a young Métis boy, Nolin, and his growing awareness of his Métis heritage and identity while his "Moushoom," or grandfather, teaches him to dance. Authors Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton masterfully weave a childhood story rich in Métis culture and language. This delightful story captures the importance of Elders as role models, a child's apprehension at learning new things, and the special bond between grandparents and grandchildren. Sherry Farrell Racette provides many beautiful illustrations for the book.

*"I have found this quiet, gentle man to be a giant in the Canadian Fiddle world. He is highly respected as a collector of fiddle tunes in the Métis Tradition, with a strong desire to see this music performed and preserved for all generations. Because of his dedication and recognition for his work in fiddling, **John Arcand** is a cultural treasure for Saskatchewan, Canada and the world."*

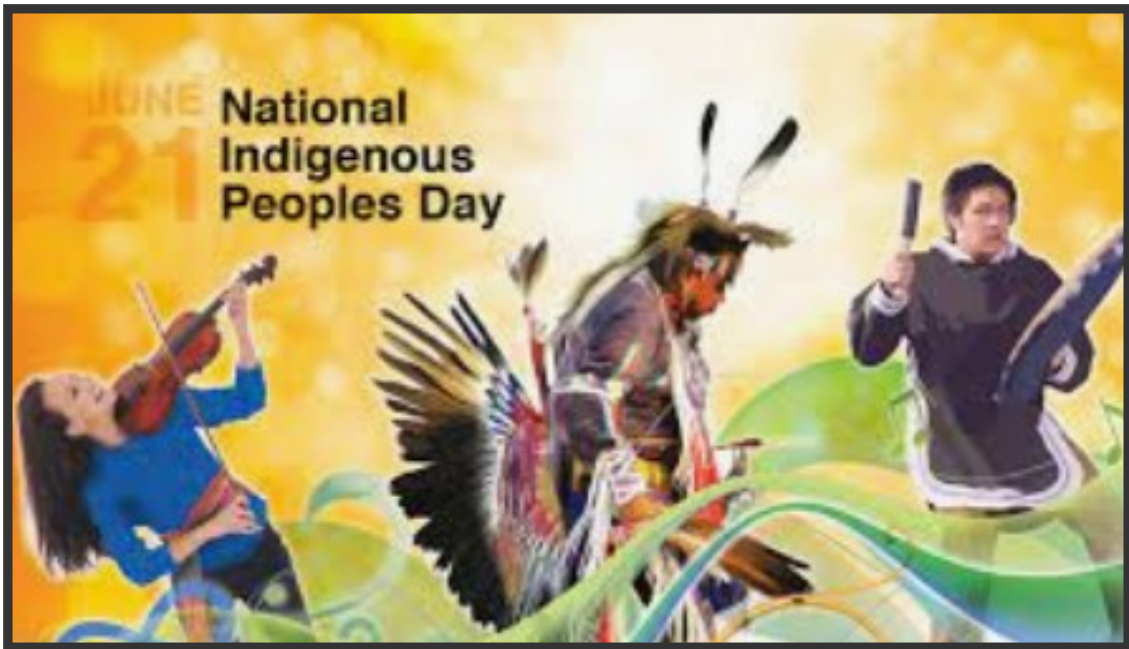
-Trent Bruner/ Accompanist



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY 2021

National Indigenous Peoples Day and History month is a time of celebration to recognize and honour the heritage, cultures and valuable contributions to society by First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. National Indigenous Peoples Day, is the same day as the summer solstice and was chosen for its important symbolism to many Indigenous peoples.

PLEASE JOIN US on Monday, June 21, 2021, National Indigenous Peoples Day, in solidarity, to celebrate working alongside Indigenous learners, parents, caregivers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous Community members.



Here are some suggestions on how to celebrate or commemorate this meaningful day.

- Check out local listings of National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations and plan to attend with family, friends, colleagues
- Spend the day learning about the Indigenous history of where you live or work
- Learn some greetings in the Indigenous language of where you live or work
- Seek out an Indigenous restaurant or food truck
- Seek out music by Indigenous musicians
- Visit an art gallery that features Indigenous art
- Read a book by an Indigenous author;
- Watch a movie by an Indigenous director
- Make a Pledge of Reconciliation and discuss with family, friends and colleagues
- Read and discuss the *10 Guiding Principles of Reconciliation* from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report with family and colleagues [HERE](#).

Halq'eméylem: Malila

Ey swayel Mekw' wat
Le hoy te temxeytl' xeta te Sqwiqw. Eweta The'it.

The goundhog predicted Spring was near but it was not true because we had cold winter weather in February.



Ey kwesé e'mi Temqwiles te So:lh Temexw. Welcome Spring, to our Land.
Ey swayel. Malila tel Skwix. I have worked for the Mission Public School District since 2014 in the Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Department as a Halq'eméylem Instructor and Indigenous Liaison Worker.

In 1982 I was hired at Coqualeetza Cultural Centre in Sardis and eventually began the long road of learning Halq'eméylem from the language teacher, Siyamiyeteliyot, Dr. Elizabeth Phillips. To this day Siyamiyeteliyot doesn't mind it when I phone her to ask, "How do you say....?" Because I am not fluent in Halq'emeylem, I will be learning forever.

-Malila, Halq'emeylem Instructor and Indigenous Liaison Worker

Halq'emeylem: Good Medicine Songs

École Christine Morrison Elementary will be participating in a music project developed by the Artist Response Team. Some of the material that will be included are from the Good Medicine Songs project. The local Stó:lō language, Halq'emeylem, is included in the songs.

The Good Medicine Songs project team involved Stó:lō Elders and singers Siyamiyateliyot, Eddie Gardner, Late Ethel Gardner and Jonny Shaw Williams, (grandson of Siyamiyateliyot), Wilds band members Holly Arntzen and Kevin Wright, coordinator Valerie O'Connell from Skwah First Nation and Cheyenne Gardner. Bon Graham graced the pages with her beautiful artwork.

This dynamic group created four bilingual songs in Halq'emeylem (traditional Stó:lō language of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia) and English, for children of all ancestries to sing together. This fosters positive relationships amongst their families and creatively advances cross cultural understanding, respect and reconciliation.



This project showcases the power of song and storytelling in bringing the Halq'emeylem language and culture alive, with the traditional Stó:lō stories and teachings being directly connected to ecological matters, specifically salmon stewardship.

Find out more about the project [HERE](#).

*"Losing it [the salmon] would be a terrible blow to First Nations people, who have a spiritual and cultural relationship to the salmon."
-Eddie Gardner, Wild Salmon Warrior*

Student Role Models

A Student Profile in Resiliency and Strength

Raven Searle, a Metis student at MSS, is the very definition of resiliency and strength. Raven's purpose in sharing her story is so that others may relate to her journey, and see that life does not just go on, but that one can thrive after being through hardship. Raven has overcome incredible obstacles to get to where she is today - a happy, hardworking, successful young woman who dreams of giving back to youth and society.

Born in Kamloops, Raven's parents were unable to care for her, and so she was placed in care where she remained until the age of two, when she was adopted. Her new family moved to 100 Mile House, where Raven would live for many years. Her adoptive parents divorced not long after her adoption, and she remained living with her (adoptive) mother, while seeing and maintaining a relationship with her (adoptive) father.

Raven grew up learning some of her Metis background and was always eager to learn more. In elementary school, she participated in the Indigenous Education program at her school and was able to connect culturally in meaningful ways. Working with her Indigenous Support Worker Charmaine, she began to learn how to prepare traditional foods, as well as learn about Indigenous visual art forms. It was during these years where she developed an immense interest in nature and connection to the land.

In Grade Seven, Raven moved to Langley after having some challenges with her adoptive mother, then lived with her adoptive father for about two years before moving to Mission. She moved into the home of her Great Auntie, who has remained her caregiver, and has been instrumental in Raven finally gaining a sense of belonging, safety and security.

At MSS, Raven has created and experienced a major shift in her schooling. Her attendance has improved, she feels motivated to do more work because of the support she gets from MSS staff, and she has confidence in her academic abilities. Last year, she was awarded a Siwal Si'wes Bursary and is hoping to win more, as well as scholarships, towards her future schooling. She credits the Indigenous Education team at MSS with giving her a space to belong and grow culturally. She continues to find great fulfillment in cultural teachings and land-based learning.

Raven spends as much time as possible outside. She feels that the "energy forces of Mother Nature are watching over" her, and finds being near running water very healing. Her favourite local adventure spots are Cascade Falls and Heritage Park, where she says she never gets bored, because there is always something new to discover. She finds that being out on the land brings her great peace of mind and comfort. She smudges to reduce stress, and has recently started growing her own sage, as well as herbs, that she prepares into her own medicine bundles. When she is not working hard at school, out exploring, or gardening, Raven loves to hone her art skills. She loves to draw and paint, make dream catchers, and do photography. She is taking place in our Table Journey art project, being led by local artist Peter Gong, and will be helping leave a legacy piece at MSS to be enjoyed for years to come.

Raven works many hours per week at Save-On foods in the deli department, where she prepares food "with love". Eventually, she plans to attend a post-secondary program to become a Community Service Worker, with her greatest desire to work directly with youth. Raven's wish is to provide for and give back to young people, particularly those at risk, in a way that they can feel safe and cared for, knowing firsthand what so many of them go through. She is also passionate about fostering children someday.

Raven has a bright future ahead, and things keep looking up for her. She knows that if she remains connected to culture and learning, through formal education, land-based learning and life's lessons, she will be able to face anything that comes her way - and meet successes at every turn.

-Submitted by Jennifer Sherif, MSS Indigenous Liaison Worker



More Student Role Models

Joselynn and Rachelle Burgess

(she, her, remaining fluid to them their)

The twins are both proud to identify as two-spirited.

Rachelle and Joselynn are Grade 6 students at Windebank Elementary. They are from Gitxsan First Nation. Gitxsan means *People of the River Mist*, referring to the Skeena River. The area is known as Lax Yip and includes the Hazelton area, the Babine, Bulkley, Kispiox and Skeena Rivers.

They both love math and all traditional First Nations arts. They love anything they can create with their hands.

Lovers of home made soups, they say

Mom's is the best, but Dad's comes very close. Rachelle's favorite foods are steak and soups. Joselynn loves those foods too but finds she eats lots of hot dogs at Dads, and a lot of lettuce at Moms.



They love anything to do with outdoors and spend as much time as they can outside. When staying inside they love the challenge of 1,000+ piece puzzles.

Both shine as wonderfully empathic and tender old souls.

The girls are extremely proud of their heritage and traditions and they demonstrate their kindness in everything they do.



-Submitted by Holly Gallant, Windebank Elementary Indigenous Liaison Worker

Good Medicine Work - Mask Art

This year has been very challenging due to COVID for the staff and students. We have had to get creative when it comes to our Cultural Presentations and artwork. This year we invited Lisa Shephard into our classrooms virtually to work with the students on "The Breath Project".

Lisa Shephard: A metis beading artist - (Co-creator: "Breath: A collection of traditionally crafted masks demonstrating resiliency through 21st century pandemic")

Nathali Bertin: A multidisciplinary Visual Artist (Co-creator: "Breath: A collection of traditionally crafted masks demonstrating resiliency through 21st century pandemic")



This project was based on the healing process of mask making. The act of creating the mask allowed students to unpack their feelings stemming from the pandemic. This enables them to work through blockages and get on with their lives. Lisa and Nathali felt that it was only natural that the healing could occur in education to help students and teachers work through their emotions and blockages through these unprecedented times.

The Breath Project touches on multiple curriculum such as Indigenous Studies, Wellness, Art, Social Studies, and History.

Students were able to upload their masks virtually to the Isolation Museum with an artist statement explaining the meaning of their mask.

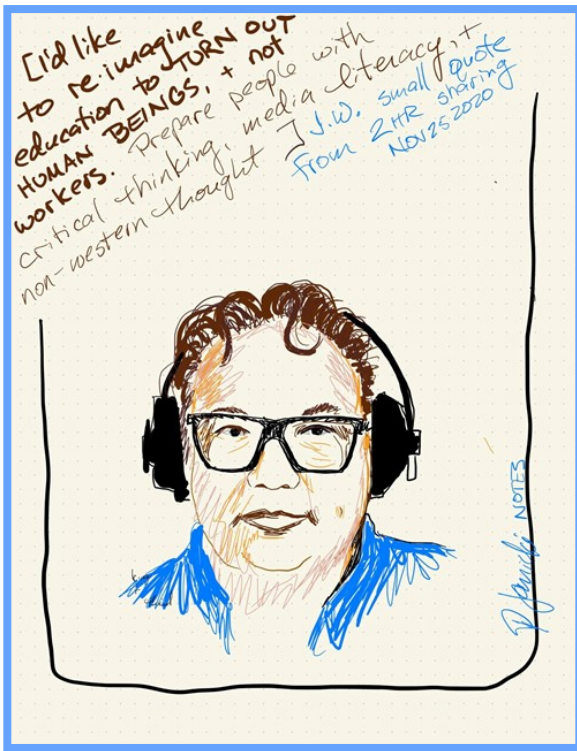
These are some of the mask's students created at Heritage Park Middle School in Shawn Martens Art classroom.

*Indigenous Liaison Workers:
Sukhi Pangli, Katie Cochrane
Student Success Coach: Katy Brooks*

Click below for more masks!
<https://isolationmuseum.com/mr-martens-class>



Learn & Leap In



Jesse Wenté, Ojibwe broadcaster, curator, producer, activist, and public speaker, recently spoke at a CBC Radio One Ideas and Vancouver Island University (VIU) Event on November 25, 2020. You can listen to the talk [here](#).

It was a chance, in part, to listen to an Indigenous parent and how they negotiate their obligations to generations. Also, Jesse discussed trauma and tragedy blended with Indigenous joy "[w]e've created healing and joy out of tragedy already, ..." (Wenté, 2020, para 20). The 53-minute talk left me feeling hopeful and joyous! As a Dakelh Teacher, parent, and Grandparent, I find it often challenging to deal with serial tragedies and of course Covid-19 era. Once I listened to Jesse Wenté I was reminded of all the Indigenous Joy and felt hopeful once again. I began to see it everywhere, especially in children's books.

Nicola Campbell's new children's book **Stand Tall Like a Cedar** (and yes you can find it in the Siwal Siwes' Library) has on each opened page, Indigenous Joy. Families are gathering berries and plants, they are hunting, fishing, and pulling canoe. Each of these seasonal events bring Indigenous Joy along with examples intergenerational learning. Being a Canoe Puller and dip-net fisherperson myself, and viewing this book gave me so much joy!

I hope you get to read the book and/or listen to Jesse's recorded talk!

-Peggy Janicki, Indigenous Mentor Teacher, SD75

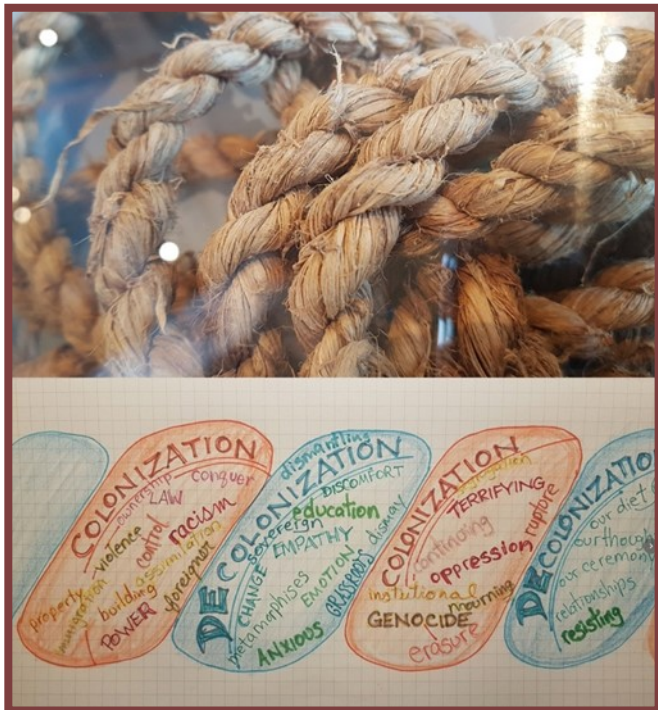
A Message from Kilaksten, Indigenous Mentor Teacher, SD75

I wish to continue our thinking about decolonization from the last (and first) newsletter, specifically, the important work of revealing Indigenous resistances. One idea of decolonizing is to disrupt or interrupt colonization and all the efforts to *cover up* our shared historical violence and Indigenous resistances. Therefore, to find examples of Stó:lō resistance in Stó:lō territory contributes to our decolonization and I wish to share a good one!

The example I wish to share; did you know Elder Dr. Rose Charlie (of Sts'ailes First Nation) was the founding person of the BC Indian Homemaker's Association which then became the Union of BC Indian Chiefs? (link [here](#)).

Dakelh Elder Mary John that speaks to the shared Indigenous resistance many women participated in (from the same link above):

"All this changed in 1976! We discovered in that year that we could no longer knit and crochet and quilt and leave Native politics to others.... Here was our chance to talk, and talk we did, about the poverty of our reserve, the lack of opportunity for our people, the racism that we had to deal with day after day, the stranglehold that the Department of Indian Affairs had over our lives".



These are examples of two powerful Indigenous Matriarchs resisting colonization here in BC. I knew of them because of my Mum and wanted to share their powerful resistance!

Contributor Acknowledgment & Siwal Si'wes Resource Staff



Connect with Indigenous Mentor Teacher, *Kilaksten* (Peggy Janicki), to collaborate!

Contact: Peggy Janicki
peggy.janicki@mpsd.ca

Check out our collection of authentically Indigenous resources at the Siwal Si'wes Library with Jennifer Lane, Siwal Si'wes Teacher-Librarian!

Contact: Jennifer Lane
jennifer.lane@mpsd.ca

Or work with your school-based Teacher-Librarian.



Contributor Acknowledgment & Siwal Si'wes Resource Staff (continued)



Judy Cathers, is an
**Indigenous Cultural &
Liaison Worker** who
currently works at Ecole
Christine Morrison
Elementary.

To book Judy for a cultural
presentation, please
contact your school site
liaison.

Vivian Searwar, District
Principal of Siwal Si'wes,
Indigenous Education,
SD75

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