



Fall 2025 NEWSLETTER



IN THIS ISSUE

See updates from our Teams. We've also included scholarship opportunities and some fun crossword and word search puzzles.



Mission

We are all somebody's seventh generation. We are committed to work with our communities to create the necessary change to ensure children currently in care have the advocates they deserve and seven generations from now, the need for a child welfare system will no longer exist as our families will be whole and healthy.



Vision

Work collectively to exercise nte?kəpmx and syilx inherent rights as we empower children, young people and families.

tekm míns | tá k'wúl'əm - Our Call to Action

We are at a critical moment in time. A great deal of change is taking place within the current political climate in which we exist. Bold steps are required to actualize the changes necessary for the communities we represent. For the first time since colonization, our action will fundamentally alter the foundation upon which outside governments have imposed political interests of assimilation through the systemic removal of our children.

For generations, our children have been the ones on the front line of federally and provincially legislated cultural genocidal regimes. Our families and communities were fractured but never broken. To achieve healing, justice and hope for each child ever removed from their parents, families and communities, it is up to us to provide a new reality for generations to come.

Through the wisdom of our ancestors, we have been taught the ways to care for one another. We must work toward a future markedly different from the current state wherein there are more Indigenous children in care now than at the height of the residential school era. While the current system is derived of legislation and policy, not of the Indigenous origin at a community level or otherwise, we undertake the process of decolonization to bring traditional knowledge, guidance and practices of the nte?kəpmx and syilx people forward in collaboration and guidance of our communities.

It is our responsibility to create the necessary change to ensure children currently in care have the advocates they deserve; and seven generations from now, the need for a child welfare system will no longer exist as our families will be whole and healthy. nte?kəpmx and syilx ancestors have anticipated this change and passed on their wisdom as we respond to this call to action. This very legacy is now ours to nurture and protect as we build a new platform where today's children, young people, families and communities will remain together and rekindle their cultural ways of being.

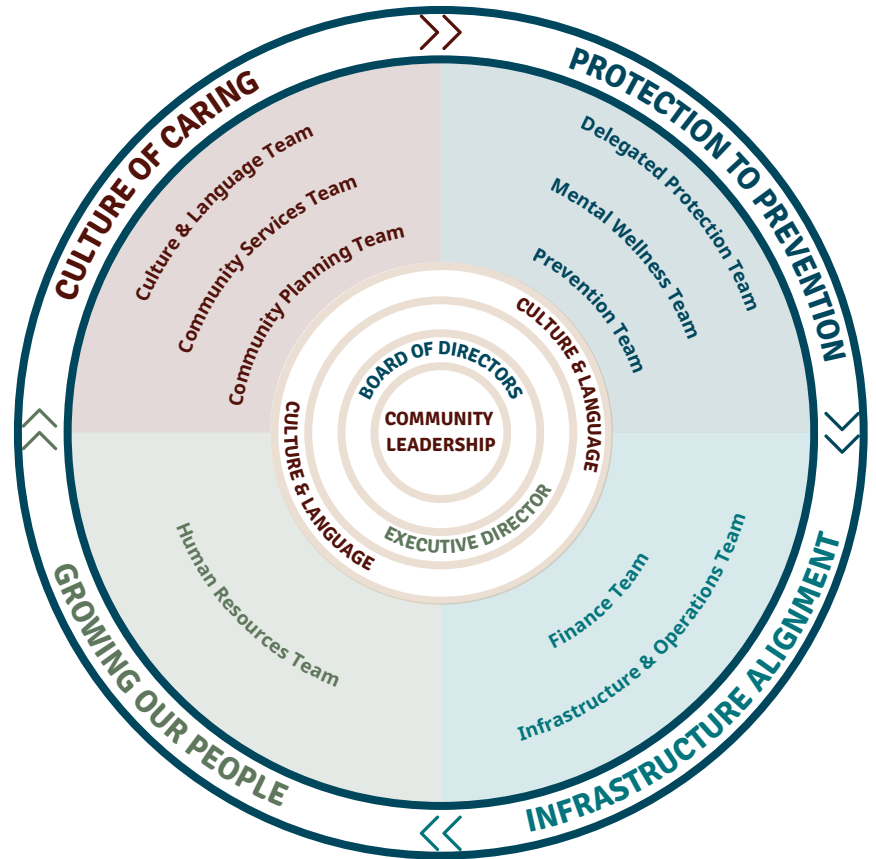
TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 CALL TO ACTION - MISSION & VISION**
- 3 SCFSS STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**
- 4 CULTURE OF CARING**
 - 4 Winter Harvesting Language Resource
 - 5 Christmas Cross Word
 - 6 Christmas Word Search
 - 7-10 National Day of Truth & Reconciliation Community Gathering
 - 11 Honouring Indigenous Veterans
 - 12 Jurisdiction Journeys
- 13 PROTECTION TO PREVENTION**
 - 13-14 Men's Group Updates
 - 15 Women's Group Updates
 - 16 Youth Team Updates
 - 17 Delegated Team Updates
- 18 GROWING OUR PEOPLE**
 - 18 Employment Opportunities
 - 19 Staff Halloween Fun
 - 20 Local Opportunities
- 21 INFRASTRUCTURE ALIGNMENT**
 - 21 Hand Foot & Mouth Disease
 - 22 Funding Opportunities
 - 23 Newsletter Sign-Up
 - 24 Contact Us

SCFSS STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

CULTURE OF CARING

- Communicate with one voice
- Integrate language and traditional teachings into programs and services
- Grow caregiver networks in alignment with traditional and community values
- Incorporate learning from Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- Return rights and responsibilities to our people through the development and implementation of Governance and Laws



PROTECTION TO PREVENTION

- Bring and keep our children home
- Align programs and services with our vision
- Shift our focus from fear to love
- Build community engagement and capacity
- Build trusting relationships

GROWING OUR PEOPLE

- Engage community expertise to support our vision
- Retain those committed to our vision
- Adopt, embrace, and implement cultural practice frameworks
- Acknowledge Post-traumatic Growth (PTG)
- Build professional capacity













INFRASTRUCTURE ALIGNMENT

- Realign budgets to shift from protection to prevention
- Improve Information Technology support in current and post COVID-19 environment
- Structure change management to achieve our collaborative vision
- Improve prompt management reporting
- Integrate programs and services to build community capacity



Winter Harvesting

This season, we gather the following items. Reach out to your knowledge keepers to learn about sustainable harvesting practices, how to pronounce these phrases, and the safe uses of these natural gifts. The phrases in red represent the **nle?kémxcin**, while those in turquoise are in **nsyilxcən**. Additionally, we have provided a QR code for you to listen to the accompanying audio file.

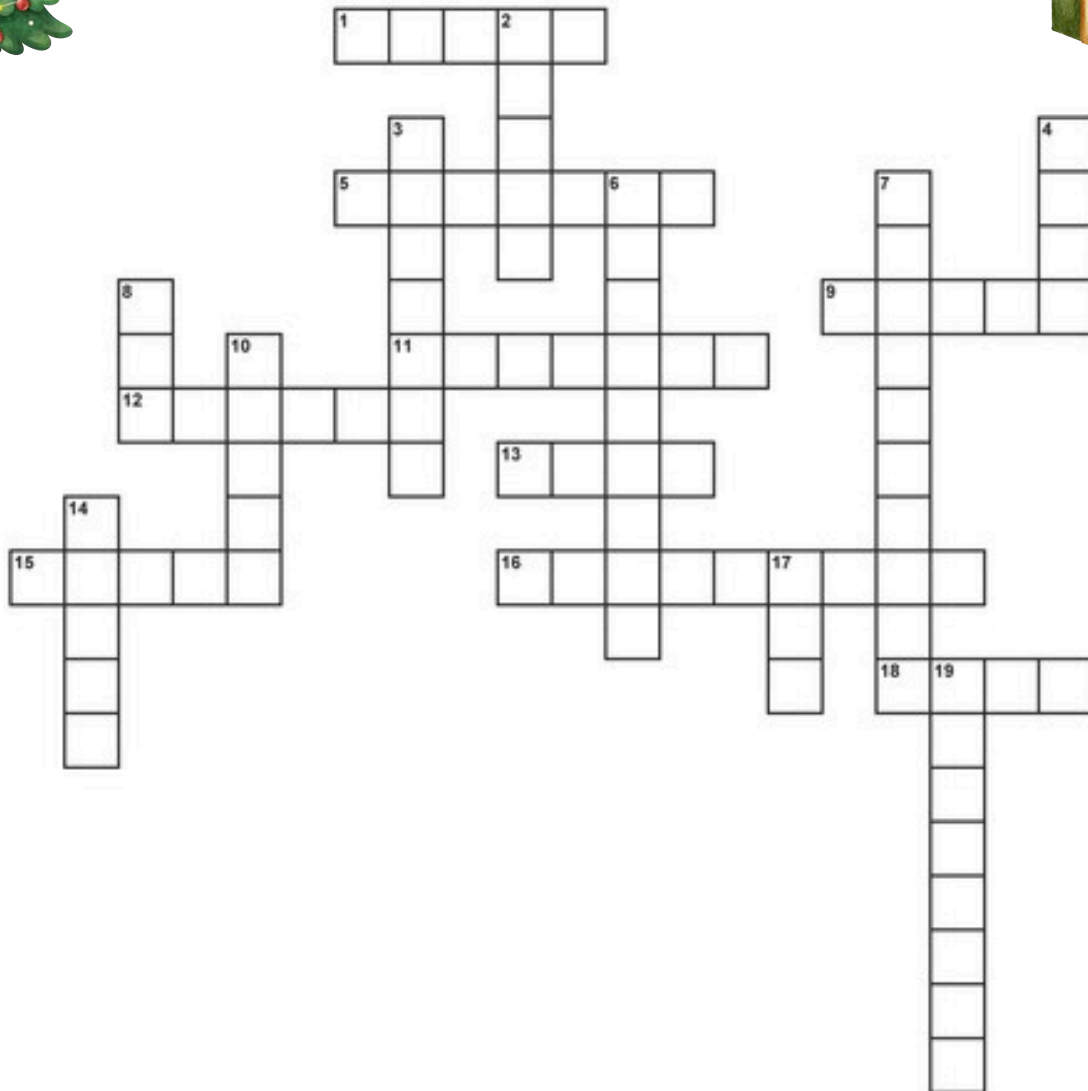
| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| Rainbow Trout | cu?xétus | xʷəxʷmín'a? |
|  |  |  |
| Rabbit | sqʷoqʷyəc | spəplina? |
|  |  |  |
| Winter | s?ístk | ?ístk |
|  |  |  |
| Gather or Cut Firewood / wood firewood | síqsiḅ | slip' |

"We must protect the forests for our children, grandchildren and children yet to be born. We must protect the forests for those who can't speak for themselves such as the birds, animals, fish and trees."

- Qwatsinas (Hereditary Chief Edward Moody), Nuxalk Nation



How the Grinch Stole Christmas



Across

- [1] Which direction did the Grinch live from Who-Ville?
- [5] Who wrote How the Grinch Stole Christmas?
- [9] What did the Grinch hate?
- [11] How did the Grinch get into the Who's house?
- [12] Who carved the roast?
- [13] What would the Who's do after the feast?
- [15] What did the Who's sit down to do?
- [16] What is the name of the mountain the Grinch lives on?
- [18] What happened to the Grinch's heart on Christmas morning?

Down

- [2] How many times did the Grinch puzzle?
- [3] What kind of trick did the Grinch do?
- [4] What did the Grinch live in?
- [6] Who did the Grinch think he looked like?
- [7] What did the Who's eat at their feast?
- [8] What was the last thing the Grinch stole from Cindy-Lou's home?
- [10] What did the Grinch say wasn't working on the Christmas tree?
- [14] What was the sound the Who's made on Christmas morning?
- [17] What is the name of the Grinch's dog?
- [19] What did the Grinch dress Max like?





The Twelve Days of Christmas

L R K E G D I R T R A P P E R
 N A T M F S R N T L L T S S A
 E M Y E R A L P C G S I D G E
 L A D I E S T A F E E E R N A
 R L C S N A W S A E L S I I C
 G S A G C G S N M S E G B R C
 N M R E H H S D A E E A G N I
 I E O D H R R S L N A S N E G
 K K L P E A R T R E E G I D N
 L S E R N N R E W N O N L L I
 I D E R S R N G A D R D L O P
 M I C S G M A I D S G S A G A
 S E V O D S E L T R U T C I E
 G Y N D L I K I V R D G S N L
 E R G N I M M I W S P E D D L

Milking
 Swimming
 Partridge
 Turtles Doves
 Geese

Pear Tree
 Laying
 Ladies
 Swans
 Maids

French Hens
 Golden Rings
 Calling Birds
 Leaping
 Carol



NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH & RECONCILIATION - COMMUNITY GATHERING

On National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Lower Nicola Indian Band (LNIB) hosted a community walk to the Shulus Arbour in honor of the children who never returned home, Survivors of residential schools, and their families. Walking together in unity were children and families from Lower Nicola Band School and Nicola Canford School, along with Elders, Survivors, community leaders, and members. The walk began at Johnny's Gas Station and continued to the Arbor, where participants gathered for ceremony and shared a meal.

This was a sacred and deeply meaningful day—an opportunity to witness, listen, grieve, and uplift together. It was an honor to stand alongside the community, children, schools, families, Elders, and Survivors, sharing in reflection and healing.

At the Arbour, the children sat in a circle and witnessed powerful speakers, dancers, and drummers. Principals and Residential School Survivors shared important words for the children, families, and community. One of the most moving moments came from Arnie Narcisse, who sang a song he had written and spoke with heartfelt meaning for the children.

Arnie is also the author of a memoir about his experiences titled *Hard to Be a Good Indian*—a powerful book that I read after hearing him speak. It would be wonderful to see more poetry, art, and writing from local artists that honor these experiences.

Amelia Washington reminded us of a profound truth:

“***All the children are protected now. No Indigenous child will ever have to go to those schools again. And no child is forgotten.***”

The day closed with a shared meal and a sense of unity, reflection, and hope for a better future.



Paula Moyes, Traditional Counsellor



NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH & RECONCILIATION - LNIB WALK



Paula Moyes, Traditional Counsellor

NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH & RECONCILIATION - COMMUNITY GATHERING



On September 30, SCFSS hosted a Truth & Reconciliation Community Gathering to honor the children who never returned home, the Survivors of residential schools, and their families and communities. This day was dedicated to reflection, education, and healing, bringing people together in a spirit of unity and respect.

The event featured traditional dancing ceremonies, interactive workshops, and cultural games that fostered connection and joy. A warm community meal brought everyone together, with delicious chili prepared by SCFSS staff and fresh bannock lovingly made by community members, it was a heartfelt collaboration around the table. Guests were encouraged to wear orange in support of the message that Every Child Matters, and the sight of a sea of orange was truly beautiful.

“My 4-year-old son came home Monday excited to tell me that his friend at daycare said it was Orange Shirt Day the next day and asked if he had an orange shirt to wear. I got out his shirt and told him about Phyllis and Residential School. His tender heart was crushed and he asked if he could give Phyllis his shirt. As a non-Indigenous community member, staff member, and mother, when I reflect on Truth and Reconciliation, I feel my most important duty is to teach my son the true history of Indigenous people and show him how to do better than those who came before us.”
— Kelly Hanson

Highlights of the Day:

- Buck Sheena served as MC, keeping the energy high and the crowd engaged.
- Morning began with traditional Bear Dancers, followed by the powerful performance of qwámqwəmt he słéykt (We Dance Beautifully) in the afternoon. Not only were both dances were incredible, but birds soared overhead and deer grazed quietly in the back field, affirming the importance of gathering and celebrating culture.

- Activities included knobby ball, medicine pouch making, brushing off/smudging (with deep thanks to Dan Jager and the IRSSS for their good medicine and mental health support), plus fun for kids like a bouncy castle, cotton candy, popcorn, and face painting.

Community Contributions: A heartfelt thank you goes out to the incredible bannock makers (Penny Toodlican, Charlotte McRae, Laverne Spahan, Lucy Henry, Dion Aljam, and Vinnie Wilson) whose skill and care brought warmth and tradition to the meal. Their bannock was not only delicious but a meaningful contribution to the spirit of the day. Gratitude also goes to SCFSS staff who prepared the chili and to all team members who made this event possible. Many hands make light work, and that was certainly true during this unforgettable gathering. The drumming and singing echoed across the Valley, carrying with it the good energy of the day.

Door Prizes & Attendance: To top it all off, over 35 door prizes were handed out, including three grand prizes: a TV, a youth electric scooter, and a wagon/sled.

We welcomed 237 attendees—a testament to the strength and unity of our community.

Community Feedback:

“It was great to see so many people out there. You guys did a good job putting this on.” — Doreen Sterling, LNIB Elder/IRSSS

We remember. We reflect. We rise together.



Lucynda Russell-Rabbit, Community Services Team Leader





NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH & RECONCILIATION - COMMUNITY GATHERING





HONOURING OUR INDIGENOUS VETERANS

For our fall newsletter, we want to pay tribute to the Nicola Valley Indigenous veterans and the sacrifices they made for our communities and future generations. Their dedication to duty and resilience in the face of adversity stand as powerful testaments to their strength and commitment.

Let us remember and celebrate the vital role Indigenous veterans have played in Canada's military history, while continuing to support and uplift their legacy. Some of our staff joined the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Nicola Valley First Nations Veterans Memorial site in Shulus to honour these heroes.



Photo credits: Harmony Williams & Merritt Herald/Ty Lim



JURISDICTION JOURNEYS



Welcome to our newsletter section focused on supporting our communities on their unique jurisdiction journeys with news of legislative changes regarding Indigenous Child and Family Services, along with information and showcases of Indigenous Legal Traditions and work on upholding Inherent Jurisdiction. "Jurisdiction is not something that you sign, it is something that you do. You don't have to wait to sign something to exercise jurisdiction in some of the most important ways for children" - Cindy Blackstock
This month's focus is:

Loving Justice Conference

In September, several SCFSS staff and board members traveled to Saskatoon to participate in the 2nd annual Loving Justice: Wicwīkamātowin Conference. This is a national gathering focused on advancing Indigenous child and family jurisdiction. This event provided an invaluable platform for First Nations and Indigenous organizations to share experiences, celebrate achievements, and explore strategies that uphold self-determination and cultural integrity.

Our participation reflects SCFSS's commitment to learning, collaboration, and supporting Nations in reclaiming jurisdiction over child and family well-being.

SCFSS Resident elder MJ Coutlee shared how she learned of other organizations that make language and culture a living part of every staff member's and caregiver's home. Every First Nations child has the right to learn, retain, and maintain their heritage—and what we say and do every day impacts that success. The conference reinforced her belief in the importance of SCFSS's Language and Culture program and our prevention work as vital to supporting children's learning and healing in the best way.

Stephanie Tourand, the Acting Community Manager, shared some of her key learnings from the event. Some of the amazing things shared were from nations that are about to implement their own law. North Caribou Lake First Nation shared about how a consultant had lead community engagement to develop the law; however, the draft law that was brought forward did not reflect community voices and values. The nation instead brought someone else in and rebuilt their laws from the ground up to ensure they were community and culturally informed. We also got to hear from a delegated agency that worked with several of their member communities to develop a declaration, and are in the process to develop their law together. One lawyer even shared on how some nations are developing an "external" written law, while also having nations' law keepers work on the laws that shouldn't be written. Hearing the way traditional teachings are being woven into law is so beautiful and inspiring.

Lastly, our Operations Team Leader Juanita Quewezance shared the following: "Attending Loving Justice was beyond amazing! Each of us walked away with something unique. While there, we listened to powerful words about how our youth are still affected. As an organization, we must do more for our youth—raise them up so nothing like that happens to them. We need to be united as a whole, because the work we do today shapes the future of our communities. We are here to be the voice for our children, youth, families, and communities. We are all somebody's seventh generation. Let's continue to lead with heart, with vision, and with the strength of those who came before us—and those yet to come."





MEN'S GROUP UPDATES: SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2025

September Engagement Highlights

The Men's Group wrapped up its September engagement dinners with Upper Nicola on September 11 and the Urban community on September 18.

- Upper Nicola Dinner (Glimpse Lake): 17 relations joined us, and William Oppenheim won the dipnet prize as part of SCFSS engagement. Men completed a survey to enter the draw.
- Urban Dinner (NVIT): 18 relations attended, and Gene Moses took home the dipnet prize.

We extend our warmest thanks to Buzz Manuel for opening the Glimpse Lake facilities and to Terry McRae for setting up space at NVIT. Gratitude also goes to Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly (CNA) for donating door prizes and providing manpower support through Glendon Charters.

In total, the Men's Group engagement dinners brought together 96 relations from the five surrounding bands and urban communities, with support from NHSS, SCHSS, Conayt, CNA, NVIT, delegates from the five bands, and local caterers. The Men's Group is honored to do this work alongside the men in the valley—we are better together.

September Activities

- September 13: We collaborated with Lower Nicola Men's Group Delegate Joe Shuter to host a fun prevention event at Sniperz Paintball in Chilliwack. The event was filled to capacity with 26 relations, including the largest turnout of youth so far. There were bruises and laughs—but no tears!
- September 22: The Men's Group went out on the land to collect chert, a local rock used for knapping tools, at Hat Creek in the Cache Creek area. Glendon Charters (CNA, Eskenstwex Assistant) taught the men how to remove the outer layer of the rock and start forming usable tools. It was a great day of learning, sharing stories, and laughter.



Jason Ermineskin, Men's Group Coordinator



MEN'S GROUP UPDATES: NOVEMBER 2025

In November, the Men's Group came together for a pizza night, followed by the Merritt Centennial game against the Revelstoke Grizzlies. We were joined by SCFSS Traditional Counselor Daniel Jager, Lower Nicola's Cultural Coordinator Joe Shuter, CNA's Sqáyx nłé?kémx Coordinator Jonah Daniels, and Upper Nicola's Cultural Coordinator Buzz Manuel—four of many SCFSS Men's Group supporters who joined us at the event.

Some of the men brought their children along. As part of the Family Wellness team, I fully encourage this. It's important for children to become familiar with the men in our community. I share with them that we, as men in the Men's Group, are protectors of the women, the children, and the land—values passed down to me by a Nlaka'pamux & Syilx mentor.

CNA generously provided gas and Subway gift cards, which we raffled off before the game. Thank you, CNA! Your collaborative efforts have brought our organizations closer together. Seeing the benefits of these programs and watching our relations come together and leave in a good way makes the work we do feel truly appreciated. We welcomed 7 relations from Coldwater, 10 relations from Lower Nicola, 2 relations from Upper Nicola, and 7 relations from other bands. Participants ranged in age from 7 to 60 years old.

Why Join the Men's Group?

The benefits of attending the Men's Group vary by age and experience:

- For boys and young men: They are surrounded by safe men and mentors who look out for one another and foster a gentle, healthy masculine nature.
- For middle-aged men: There is space for connection with like-minded men, sharing values, teachings, and laughter.
- For soon-to-be Elders and Elders: They bring a strong, calming presence and love to share their stories and humor.
- At SCFSS, we offer safe spaces for men and families to strengthen bonds within the community.

Looking Ahead

If you are seeking support or simply someone to listen, we would love for you to join our events. We are planning big opportunities in the new year for men to learn life skills and participate in workshops. We are always looking for mentors, if you feel you can offer a safe presence and share a teaching, please reach out to me. Together, we are creating something special to give back to our relations and children in care, with the help of our men.



Jason Ermineskin, Men's Group Coordinator



WOMEN'S GROUP UPDATES - OCTOBER

Women's Group Halloween Party

We had an amazing time at our Halloween party, filled with creativity, laughter, and a strong sense of community spirit. Everyone embraced the spooky season with pumpkin carving and painting, and the optional costume contest brought out some incredible looks!

A huge thank-you to everyone who joined us and made the evening such a festive success. Special appreciation goes to Darlene Valley from IRSSS for her support of the Women's Group.

We were thrilled to welcome 26 women and 9 children to the event. These gatherings are more than just fun—they reflect the Women's Group's commitment to creating safe, welcoming spaces where women can connect, share, and celebrate together. By fostering cultural wellness and community ties, we aim to strengthen relationships and empower women through meaningful experiences.

Thank you again to all who participated. Your presence and energy remind us why these events matter so much.



Ali Antoine, Family Wellness Navigator





YOUTH TEAM UPDATES - OCTOBER

YOUTH TRANSITION PROGRAM

October was an exciting and impactful month for youth engagement!

This month I joined my teammates for the “It Can Happen to Anyone” youth sexual exploitation awareness session in Coldwater, and took the lead in launching the **Youth in the Kitchen program** at Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) with Chef Kim.

Ten youth are learning kitchen safety, cooking traditional meals, and preparing at least 60 meals weekly for the community. As one participant said, *“It feels good to give back by preparing meals for others.”*

Additionally, I attended the NVIT Open House with a coworker to gather resources and strengthen connections that will support youth in their post-secondary journeys. For those interested in food security and community support, check out the Nicola Valley Food Bank.

Throughout the month, I continued meeting with several youth each week, assisting them with:

- Finding first-time homes
- Preparing for high school graduation
- Applying for post-secondary education
- Working on budgets
- Securing status cards and IDs

Finally, I’ve been attending language classes on Mondays through CNA, which has been a rewarding opportunity for personal and cultural growth.

Why These Activities Matter

Youth gain independence by engaging in new experiences such as conferences, open houses, and community programs. These opportunities allow them to practice leadership and self-advocacy in safe, supportive environments—key goals of our youth initiatives.



Candice Dolman,
Youth Transition Coordinator





DELEGATED SERVICES TEAM UPDATES

LNIB SALMON FESTIVAL - SEPTEMBER

On September 20 and 21, Delegated Services team members, along with other SCF teams, had the privilege of attending the Salmon Festival (he sqyéytn Festival) at the Lower Nicola Indian Band (LNIB) arbour. We set up a booth and connected with many wonderful individuals, sharing information about our organization and the important work we do.

The event was a valuable opportunity for our staff to strengthen relationships and get to know each other better. We also enjoyed celebrating First Nations stories, traditions, and culture through drumming and dancing.

It was a fantastic experience, and we are grateful for the chance to be part of such a meaningful community event.



Ewa Olguin, Social Worker

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Scw'exmx Child and Family Services Society (SCFSS) is family-centered and guided by nłe?kėpmx and syilx traditional knowledge and principles. SCFSS utilizes prevention and protection strategies with the collective goal to keep children with their families and communities. SCFSS recognizes historical challenges and is guided by traditional strength and wisdom to build family and community capacity in a monumental shift from protection to prevention.

As an Indigenous organization serving the nłe?kėpmx and syilx communities, SCFSS prioritizes the hiring of nłe?kėpmx and syilx community members. Following community member priority and pursuant to Section 41 of the BC Human Rights Code, preference may be given to qualified applicants of Indigenous ancestry.

Current Postings

- **Community Prevention Worker**

*Check our website regularly, we will post there first!

APPLY NOW

See our full postings and apply on our website at

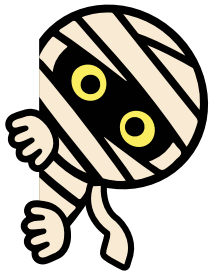
www.scwexmx.com

Submit your cover letter and resume to: jobs@scwexmx.com



SCW'EXMX CHILD & FAMILY STAFF HALLOWEEN FUN!

For our October Staff Meeting, our team member went all out with their halloween fun! Participating in a costume contest, and competing on spooky trivia!



LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

FREE TRAINING | REGISTRATION REQUIRED

MEN + NONBINARY | AGES 15 - 35

Empower Protect + Connect

POWER SKILLS BUILDING + SELF-DEFENCE

2026

WEDNESDAYS | WEEKLY
JAN 7 - MARCH 25
 12 SESSIONS | 6:00PM - 8:00PM
 FREE | MERRITT CIVIC CENTRE

The Empower, Protect + Connect program develops essential safety and empowerment skills, builds strengths and confidence, and provides a safe and supportive space where participants can build community.

- Learn practical self-defence techniques for physical safety
- Develop situational awareness in everyday and high-risk environments
- Strengthen assertiveness and boundary-setting skills
- Rebuild personal confidence through trauma-informed practices
- Access emotional support and empowerment strategies
- Connect with local community resources and services
- Foster physical and emotional resilience in a supportive group setting


FORMAT
 This 12-week program offers weekly two-hour sessions that include:

- Self-Defence Training (3 weeks): Taught by certified instructors, with a focus on real-life scenarios and practical safety techniques.
- Counselling & Empowerment Workshop (9 weeks): Facilitated by a Registered Clinical Counsellor and local organizations, offering trauma-informed support, strategies for personal growth, and community connection.

ELIGIBILITY
 For men and nonbinary people (aged 15-35 years) affected by or at risk of gender-based violence. (Note: The program for women and nonbinary people is from September 20 to December 17, 2025).

ACCESSIBILITY
 If you require any accessibility accommodations, please contact recruitment@merritt.ca.

COST
 Free to attend. Registration is required as participants are expected to attend most, if not all, sessions.

 **Merritt**
 FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN

► [MERRITT.CA/PROTECT](https://merritt.ca/protect)
 ► [MERRITT.CA/REGISTRATION](https://merritt.ca/registration)

* CIVIL FORTFEITURE GRANT | MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

JOIN
Homework Club
 AGES 6 - 12

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS
JANUARY 6
 - **MARCH 12**
 TWO SESSIONS
4:00 - 5:00PM
5:00 - 6:00PM
 \$10 DROP-IN | MERRITT CIVIC CENTRE

GET SUPPORT WITH YOUR HOMEWORK
 TUTORING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE
 ► [MERRITT.CA/HOMEWORK](https://merritt.ca/homework)


 FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN

WorkBC Skills Enhancement

DID YOU KNOW?

People in part-time, seasonal or casual work and those who are unemployed can access WorkBC Skills Training programs and the financial help needed while in training.

To learn more contact:
WorkBC Centre-Merritt
 tel: 250-378-9351
 email: info-merritt@workbc.ca
 facebook: [@workbcmerritt](https://www.facebook.com/workbcmerritt)

 Employment Services

FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAM

 Interior Community Services

If your family is struggling with:

- ✓ Building and maintaining healthy family relationships
- ✓ Parenting skills through all ages and stages of parenting
- ✓ Safety planning regarding family violence
- ✓ Family Stress Management
- ✓ Accessing community resources

The ICS Family Service Program can help! To find out more information and how to access this program, contact Angela Ross
 250-280-2561
a.ross@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca

A free outreach intervention service offered through ICS to families in Merritt

We believe that by supporting Merritt families, our community will strengthen

Together, we can enrich lives and strengthen our community

WINTER 2026
Gymnastics
 THURSDAYS

JANUARY 8
 TO
MARCH 12

2-3 YRS | 3:00 - 3:45PM
 4-5 YRS | 4:00 - 4:45PM
 6-8 YRS | 5:00 - 6:00PM
 9-13 YRS | 6:15 - 7:15PM

► [MERRITT.CA/REGISTRATION](https://merritt.ca/registration)
 ► [MERRITT.CA/GYMNASTICS](https://merritt.ca/gymnastics)


 FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN



ABOUT HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (HFMD)

What it is

HFMD is caused by enteroviruses. It mostly affects children under 10, but older children and adults can also get it. It happens mainly in summer and early fall.

Symptoms

Symptoms appear 3 to 6 days after infection and start suddenly. They may include:

- Fever (lasts 1–2 days)
- Sore throat
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Headache or loss of appetite
- Spots and blisters usually heal in 7–10 days
- Painful mouth blisters (inside mouth, tongue, gums) appear about 2 days after fever
- Red spots on hands, feet, and sometimes knees, elbows, or buttocks appear later and may turn into blisters

Not everyone gets all symptoms; some have no symptoms.

Complications

Most common: dehydration from painful swallowing. Make sure to drink enough fluids.
 Rare: meningitis (brain lining infection) or encephalitis (brain swelling).
 Temporary peeling skin or nail loss may happen weeks later, mostly in children.

How it spreads

HFMD is most contagious in the first week. It spreads through:

- **Close contact** (kissing, sharing cups or utensils)
- **Droplets from coughing or sneezing**
- **Touching contaminated surfaces** or fluid from blisters
- **Contact with feces** (virus can stay in bowels for weeks)
- **Pregnant people can pass the virus to newborns**, usually mild but rarely severe.

Prevention

Good hand hygiene is key. You may stay contagious for weeks after blisters heal.

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds (especially after diaper changes or toilet)
- Teach kids to sneeze/cough into tissue or elbow and wash hands after
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and toys with bleach solution:
 - For surfaces: 15 mL (1 tbsp) bleach in 1 L (4 cups) water
 - For toys: 5 mL (1 tsp) bleach in 1 L (4 cups) water

Children can attend daycare if they feel well and hygiene is followed.

Treatment

No antibiotics (virus illness). To ease symptoms:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) for fever or pain (check dose)
 - Do NOT give aspirin to anyone under 18 (risk of Reye syndrome)
 - Ibuprofen not for children under 6 months without doctor advice
 - Leave blisters alone; do not pop them
 - Offer cold, bland liquids (milk after 9 months, water) and soft foods (bread, noodles, peanut butter sandwich)
 - Avoid fizzy, tart drinks and spicy or acidic foods
- Continue breastfeeding if possible.



 *Heather Fairley, Acting Operations Manager and OH&S Specialist*



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

During your twelfth grade year, you might be contemplating applying for scholarships to assist with your post-secondary plans. Please keep the following in mind:

#1 - Community Scholarships

Our generous community offers various scholarships to support our grade 12 students. Applications for these will be available later in the school year. The MSS administration will provide you with details regarding the scholarship application package.

#2 - Post-Secondary School Scholarships and Bursaries

Colleges and universities have their own scholarships and bursaries available for students who have submitted their admission applications. You will receive communications from each institution throughout the admission process.

#3 - External Scholarships

There are numerous websites where students can explore relevant scholarships and grants they might want to apply for. Be aware that:

** Applications for this year may not be open on all of these sites , so be sure to check back for updates. ***

Scholarships Made Simple | ScholarTree
<https://scholartree.ca/>



ScholarshipsCanada - Find Scholarships, Student Awards, Bursaries & Financial Aid
<https://www.scholarshipscanada.com/>



Beedie Luminaries | Scholarships for B.C. Students
<https://beedieluminaries.ca/>



Guidelines | WorkBC



<https://www.workbc.ca/find-loans-and-grants/students-and-adult-learners/strongerbc-future-skills-grant/guidelines>

Scholarship for Indigenous Youth | RBC Future Launch



<https://www.rbc.com/en/future-launch/resource-type/scholarships-awards/indigenous-scholarship/>

Indspire Funding



<https://indspirefunding.ca/>

Scholarships, Grants, Bursaries and Awards - Province of British Columbia



<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/scholarships>

BC Scholarship Society | Scholarships & Awards for BC students



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

Scholarship Partners Canada | Universities Canada



https://portal.scholarshippartners.ca/s_Login.jsp

2025 College Scholarships | Application Deadlines for Students



<https://studentscholarships.org/scholarships>

SCW'EXMX CHILD & FAMILY NEWSLETTER SIGN UP!



Would you like to receive newsletters and updates from Scw'exmx Child & Family? Scan or click the QR code below to sign up for our newsletter today!



www.scwexmx.com / facebook.com/scwexmxchildandfamily / Instagram.com/scwexmxchildandfamily

Scw'exmx Child & Family

Child Wellness Concern After Hours? Please Call:

1-800-663-9122

Children's Help Line for Children and Youth

Do you need help?

If you don't feel safe or you have a concern, you can call this number 24-hours a day for free from any phone.

310-1234

Scw'exmx Child & Family Services Society

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Downtown Address: 1988 Quilchena Ave., Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Culture & Language Address: 2099 Nicola Avenue, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Mailing Address: 1750 Lindley Creek Rd, Merritt, BC V1K 0A3

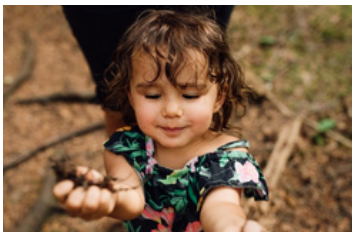
Prevention Hub Address: 2475 Merritt Ave, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Quilchena Address: Unit #2 - 3512 Highway 5A, Quilchena, BC V0E 2R0

Telephone: 250-378-2771

www.scwexmx.com

Facebook Page: facebook.com/scwexmxchildandfamily



Healthy Children



Healthy Communities



Healthy Families