

SURREY  
TEACHERS'  
ASSOCIATION

# The Advocate

INDIGENOUS • OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2019



On June 20, 2019, the STA's Indigenous Education Committee put on a **celebration for National Indigenous Peoples Day**. Harley Chappell of Semiahmoo First Nation was the MC for the event, and a number of groups shared their cultures, issues, and concerns to a very receptive audience. Groups and individuals that shared that evening were: The Sasquatch Dancers (Sts'ailes FN), The KGN Dancers (Nisga'a FN), Hummingbirds Rising (Rhiannon Bennett & Andrea Hilder), Butterflies in Spirit (danced for the MMIWG), Mavis Dumont (Cree and SD#36 Enhancement Worker), and Bruno Philip (Guitarist/Singer).







# Aboriginal Recognition and Acknowledgment

By Annie Ohana, Teacher, LA Matheson Secondary

I would like to begin by recognizing and acknowledging whose Unceded traditional territory we stand on today. A cornerstone of social justice is the recognition of one's humanity, personhood, culture, and heritage. In fact, one's very existence.

Unfortunately, for hundreds upon hundreds of years, governments and authorities of power have not only denied Indigenous existence through policies of terra nullius but continued forward on paths of genocide and forced assimilation.

It is heartening, however, that as time moves forward, so do attitudes. Therefore, I want to recognize that we are all settlers and visitors to this land and that we stand on the Unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, their existence on these lands since time immemorial.

We are in fact on the traditional territories of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Semiahmoo and QayQay Nations.

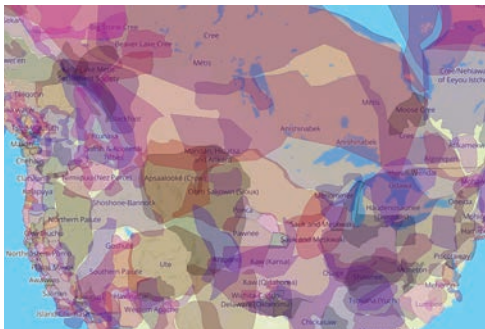
As we struggle with the realities of a self inflicted climate emergency, we must recognize the role Indigenous stewardship has played in protecting our environment from time immemorial, that settler greed and dependence on resource extraction has led us away from stewardship to destruction, and that it is in fact the front line efforts of our First Nations that are fighting while also teaching us to return to more sustainable ways.

I want to end this recognition on this note. Instead of an "us vs. them" mentality where some may feel that this is an "add-on" or perhaps even an act of tokenism, in fact, it is the opposite. We are in fact not only all visitors to this land but also treaty people. Think for a moment of your heritage and background. We all exist within top-down man-made borders.

For many of us, we have had to escape persecution, and oppression. Whether it be the 1947 Partition of India, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the Northern Ireland Troubles, Ferguson Missouri, or any number

of depressed socio-economic realities, we all, in our backgrounds, have faced the notion of being subhuman and therefore, not recognized. What this means is that we truly are in this together, and by recognizing Aboriginal territory and existence from time immemorial we do in fact recognize our own humanity, and our own heritage. It strengthens the fabric of who we are as humans and provides us with a stronger base from which to fight for Truth, Social Justice and when the time is right (as decided by the Indigenous Nations) reconciliation.

And so, we recognize the lands on which we do our work today, work that is very much in line with the purpose of this recognition, that we fight alongside Indigenous Nations, breaking the chains of colonization and bringing back to the center Indigenous ways of being and knowing and bringing justice through Truth as members of one common family—the human one.



## [Native-Land.ca](http://Native-Land.ca)

This interactive map shows the territories, languages, and treaties of different places around the world and can also be very useful when planning your territory acknowledgement.

**Can YOU pass the  
British Columbia  
Treaty Process  
Awareness Test?**

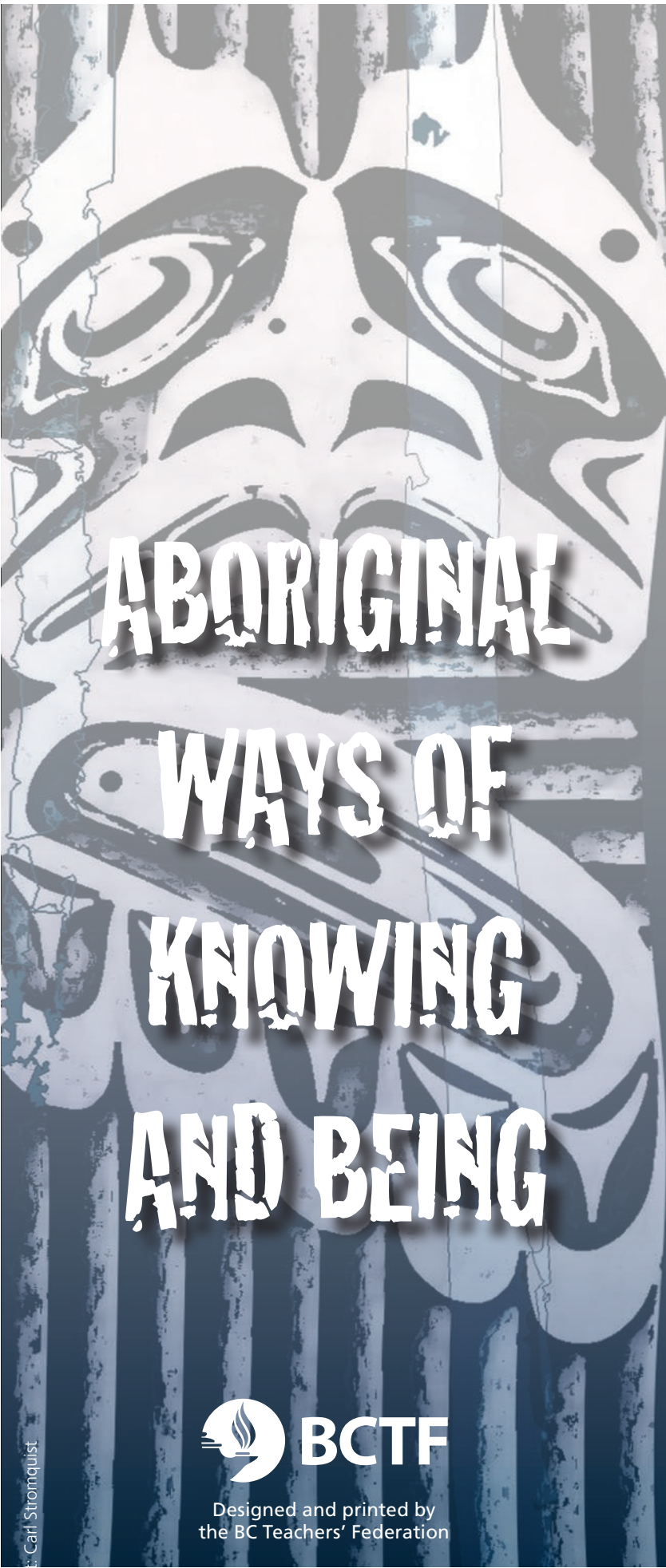


[www.bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx?id=5686&libID=5758#9](http://www.bctf.ca/AboriginalEducation.aspx?id=5686&libID=5758#9)



## FREE APP - IPAC!

Rick Joe (Chilliwack Teacher from Lil'wat Nation, BCTF Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee) has shared with us a very useful free app from the Indigenous People's Atlas of Canada. It provides a lot of useful information to help you plan a land acknowledgement. You can find it in the App Store: search for "IPAC".



# ABORIGINAL WAYS OF KNOWING AND BEING



Designed and printed by  
the BC Teachers' Federation

**Learning is connected to land,  
culture, and spirit.**

**We—the two-legged,  
four-legged, finned and  
feathered, plants and rocks  
—are all related.**

**We must always practice  
reciprocity through acts of  
giving and receiving.**

**Learning honours our  
Ancestors, Elders, Knowledge  
Keepers and Descendents.**

**It respects and embraces  
ceremony, protocol, and  
teachings that are connected to  
the sacred medicines including  
tobacco, cedar, sage, and  
sweetgrass.**

**Important teachings emerge  
through stories.**

**Learning involves developing  
relationships, respecting  
distinct cultures, and honouring  
the perspective of others in our  
communities.**

**The deepest learning takes  
place through lived experience.  
It requires exploring our  
identities, learning from our  
mistakes, and having gratitude  
for our gifts.**

**Learning is a journey that takes  
courage, patience and humility.**

**It is about striving to become a  
better human being and living  
with balance in body, mind,  
heart and spirit.**





## Bad Rock” Stó:lō Nation Tour

By Angela Marcakis, STA Communications/Campaigns, Local Rep to the BCTF and Teacher, Creekside Elementary

The STA Executive Committee is committed to “indigenizing” our union. To facilitate our learning, we partook in a “Bad Rock” place names tour of traditional Stó:lō territory (lower Fraser Canyon). The Stó:lō are known as “the People of the River”. Our tour guide was the incredibly knowledgeable historian Sonny McHalsie, who shared many, many stories and place names of the Hal’qeméylem. The way Sonny shared his stories was unlike any way I had learned through our education system, as the books and pages were the land itself - he was teaching us a whole new way of reading.

“I found that everything Sonny was telling us was hitting deep for me, and everything we were seeing, each place, was really profound. Sonny was amazing - he could talk on any point in detail.” **Dana Neidig, Health and Safety Officer**

Sonny told us of the Sxwōxwiyám and Sqwelqwel, “Legends and true stories”; the three main dialects of the Halkomelem language, and many legends that all connect to their culture, history and people today. What struck many of us was that many of the place names are not related to people, but to actions, which increases one’s connection to the land. For example, the word q’eyts’i (Katzie) describes the action of stepping down on moss and that feeling of the spring back. Sonny honoured us by sharing the remains of a sqémél (pithouse) that was last used by his own ancestors in the 1880’s. Toward the end of the tour, we ended up in the midst of the majestic mountains and raging river around Yale, BC. It was so beautiful and serene. We even spotted a bear! Now, we were looking at this land through a different lens.

“When you think of countries with rich, long histories you automatically think of Europe. In Canada, we are often awestruck by the beauty of the land but we tend to see it as a blank canvas and the history of it is just an afterthought. Through our tour with Sonny we were able to unpack this colonial line of thinking by learning about the complex and ancient societies that

existed prior to the arrival of the Xwelitem (hungry ones - European colonizers).” **Amrit Sanghe, TTOC and Early Career Rep**

**One of the First Peoples Principles of Learning states: “Learning is holistic, reflexive, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).”**

Sense of place is vital to our sense of identity. The Stó:lō call their special connection to their environment their Shxwelí, or “spirit, life force”. The acknowledgement of our relationship to the land we are on is an ancient Indigenous practice, and a small, but essential step toward reconciliation. As settlers, it is especially important to recognize that we are on the lands where Indigenous people have been living, and gathering for ceremonies. It forces us to remember what happened in the past, and think about what we can do for reconciliation. A lot of people are still unaware of the original inhabitants of the land they live and work on, and its actual history. Not only that, but a majority of the people I know have lost that connection to the land that is so crucial to Indigenous ways of living. Sonny shared the sacred place where girls would go with an elder for “puberty training”, where they would realize their gift. This place, despite the fact that the logging company had been told it was sacred, was recently clear cut. It is careless actions like these that keep us far away from any notion of reconciliation.

**“We are no longer able to participate with nature with our whole being – we cannot hear its subtle voices or speak the language of nature. Herein lies the disregard modern people feel for nature – when something no longer exists in your perceptual memory it also no longer matters.” (Cajete, 2000, p. 22).**



## NEW RESOURCE!

BC First Nations Land, Title, and Government, available for free online!  
[www.fnesc.ca/governance](http://www.fnesc.ca/governance)



# Reconciliation Has To Start With Us

By Lisa Lacki, Teacher, Panorama Ridge Secondary

In Cree there are words to acknowledge the space between things. I am currently typing on my computer, however in Cree I can acknowledge more than just the computer but note the space: the computer on which I type. This is currently the call for us as teachers. We are called to put in some of the work between the policies and procedures.

Reconciliation has to start with us, with real people. There is real hurt and loss that people have experienced, it is not merely a part of our history. Hurt people hurt people, and in order to change that we have to start by working at the human level. We may not know personally someone who has gone through the residential school system, or even perhaps an Indigenous person. However, we do live, work, and play on Indigenous territory. So, we can start there.

When we start the school week, a meeting, and perhaps even our classes we acknowledge the territory which we are on. Yet, do we know anything else? An acknowledgment is meant to be personalized, not a trite reading off a script that we have to do at each meeting. We can make a personal connection to the land and what it means to us to have a safe place to live and learn or learn how to say

“welcome” in one of the local dialects. This is a simple way to seek change and personalize the call to action, to move between the space between policies and procedures.

For many of us the fear of doing something wrong has limited us to do anything at all. However, I was reminded recently that nothing ever changed from a place of comfort. I was also encouraged by one of our Indigenous helping teachers Heidi Wood, who stated that we are asked to teach about the culture and its impact in our society, we are not called to teach the culture. How freeing is that?

To do nothing is a privilege and one that enforces a bias against Indigenous peoples. Again, we need to find the space between and humanize the history. For me this has recently been about finding contemporary examples of Indigenous cultures and communities. I want my students to see beyond the textbook and the stereotypes and see a culture that is thriving and well.

To do this too, I suggest you listen to and share the music of Sisterz by J.B. The First Lady or check out [www.beatnation.org](http://www.beatnation.org) and discover a variety of Indigenous musicians, writers, and artists. You can attend an event for and



hosted by Indigenous peoples. You can learn something about the various groups around you because you want to, not because you have to. Allow yourself to be inspired. Allow yourself to see beyond what you first thought or knew. Allow yourself to be changed. Personalize your learning, so that you can then share from an authentic space, a space that exists between policy and procedure.

## New Standards for Educators from BC Teachers' Council

By Angela Marcakis, STA Communications/Campaigns, Local Rep to the BCTF and Teacher, Creekside Elementary

At the end of June, the BC Teachers' Council announced their revised professional standards, which is a set of ethics and principles that govern our practice as educators (including both teachers and administrators). A new standard was added to honour Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action (specifically call #57) and UNDRIP.

**9. Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute towards truth, reconciliation and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.**

Educators critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to facilitate change. Educators value and respect the languages, heritages, cultures, and ways of knowing and being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Educators understand the power of focusing on connectedness and relationships to oneself, family, community and the natural world. Educators integrate First Nations, Inuit and Métis worldviews and perspectives into learning environments.

So here's my call to all of us: That we commit ourselves to doing our part in the advancement of reconciliation and creating systemic change in BC public education. That we continue to advocate for additional support, resources, and in-service (including anti-racism training) so that we can implement this standard in authentic and meaningful ways. That we continue to learn more about the intergenerational impact of residential schools and the Sixties Scoop. That we continue to address overt racism in our schools and the systemic barriers that our Indigenous students face, including the racism of low expectations. This is our obligation to our profession, to our students, and to our community.

As members of the BCTF, we signed on to implement the recommendation of the TRC and we need to keep that promise. Residential schools were the ones to destroy our Indigenous languages and cultures, and therefore schools should be the ones to help revitalize it. It is no secret that our Indigenous students are some of the ones who struggle the most in our current education system, with 25.8% not graduating compared to only 8.5% of non-Aboriginal students. Learners need to see who they are reflected in their education system. If not here, then where? If you go to Greece, you will learn about Greek language and the culture will continue to thrive in Greece. If authentic Indigenous education is not taught here, then where?

# The Lens of a New Teacher

By Sukhpreet Gill, Teacher, Earl Marriott Secondary

On May 24-25, 2019, I had the opportunity to attend the BCTF's Social Justice and Aboriginal Education Conference. Over these two days, I met some fascinating people, listened to inspiring presentations, participated in thought provoking discussions and attended workshops. Participating in this conference has helped put into perspective how I can incorporate Indigenous Education in my classroom. My goal has always been to provide my students with an authentic representation of Indigenous experience. My greatest realization is that while I might have access to all the resources I will ever need, incorporating them in an authentic way is my true challenge.


As a new teacher, the one question I often ask is, How do I incorporate Indigenous perspective and teachings in my classroom in the most meaningful way? It is important that my students understand what they are learning and connect these teachings to their own lives beyond the classroom. The goal is not just to read a story and answer questions to promote reading comprehension. There is a larger purpose: we don't just study a poem, we study

the politics of colonialism. We don't just read a novel, we try to understand reconciliation in Canada. I still remember when reached out to my Department Head looking for resources I could use to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspective in my classroom. The words she said to me were: "We are not looking at creating a unit. Instead we are looking to include experiences, knowledge, and teachings throughout our practice." I took that idea and ran with it. I am now on my way to incorporating the experiences, knowledge, and teachings throughout my practice. I continue to work towards ensuring that my students are using what they gain and applying it to their experiences beyond the classroom.

One of my biggest fears as a new teacher is: Am I doing this respectfully? I want to make sure that I am incorporating Indigenous Education in the most meaningful way possible. Even though there are many resources that I have access to, I find it can be hard to figure out what is important. Growing up, the rich resources we have now were not a part of my education. My classroom experience

as a student did not have the Indigenous knowledge, practices, and teachings that we now aim to incorporate in our classrooms today. Now, I find that I often struggle to find the authentic resources and experiences that I am looking for. It is not that they are not there, I just don't know how to filter the resources. What's best? What's important? Am I doing this respectfully? I am thankful for all the resources we have, but, I find that I can often get lost in trying to find what I am looking for to create my authentic experiences for my students.

I am only beginning to find the answers to all of my questions. I think that, like most Canadians, I will always be searching for answers. What I have found, is a starting point. Through BCTF Conferences, lots and lots of reading, and consulting with my fellow educators, I have found ways that allow me to begin creating authentic experiences for my students. I am talking to others, listening to others, wondering aloud, and taking risks. I am committed to following the path of Indigenous Education in my practice in the most meaningful, authentic, way that I can.



**GUIDING YOUTH HOME**

**FRAFCA'S ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GALA**

Many youth struggle with the transition into adulthood on their own, currently there are very few options for them to receive the help they need. Providing a supportive home, space and services can be life changing. Together we can make this goal a reality!

Buy your tickets at Eventbrite at "Guiding Youth Home", or write a cheque to:  
Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association

Aria Banquet Hall Convention Centre ~ 12350 Patullo Pl, Surrey BC  
Friday ~ November 22nd, 2019  
Doors Open ~ 6:30 pm, Opening Ceremony ~ 7:30 pm

**Tickets**  
Single \$65  
Table of 8 \$480

Contact Kyla Bains for more info at: (604)-996-9602, [kyla.bains@frafca.org](mailto:kyla.bains@frafca.org)

**\*\* THIS IS A 19+ EVENT, WE APOLOGIZE FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE**

# From Overwhelmed to Exhilarated

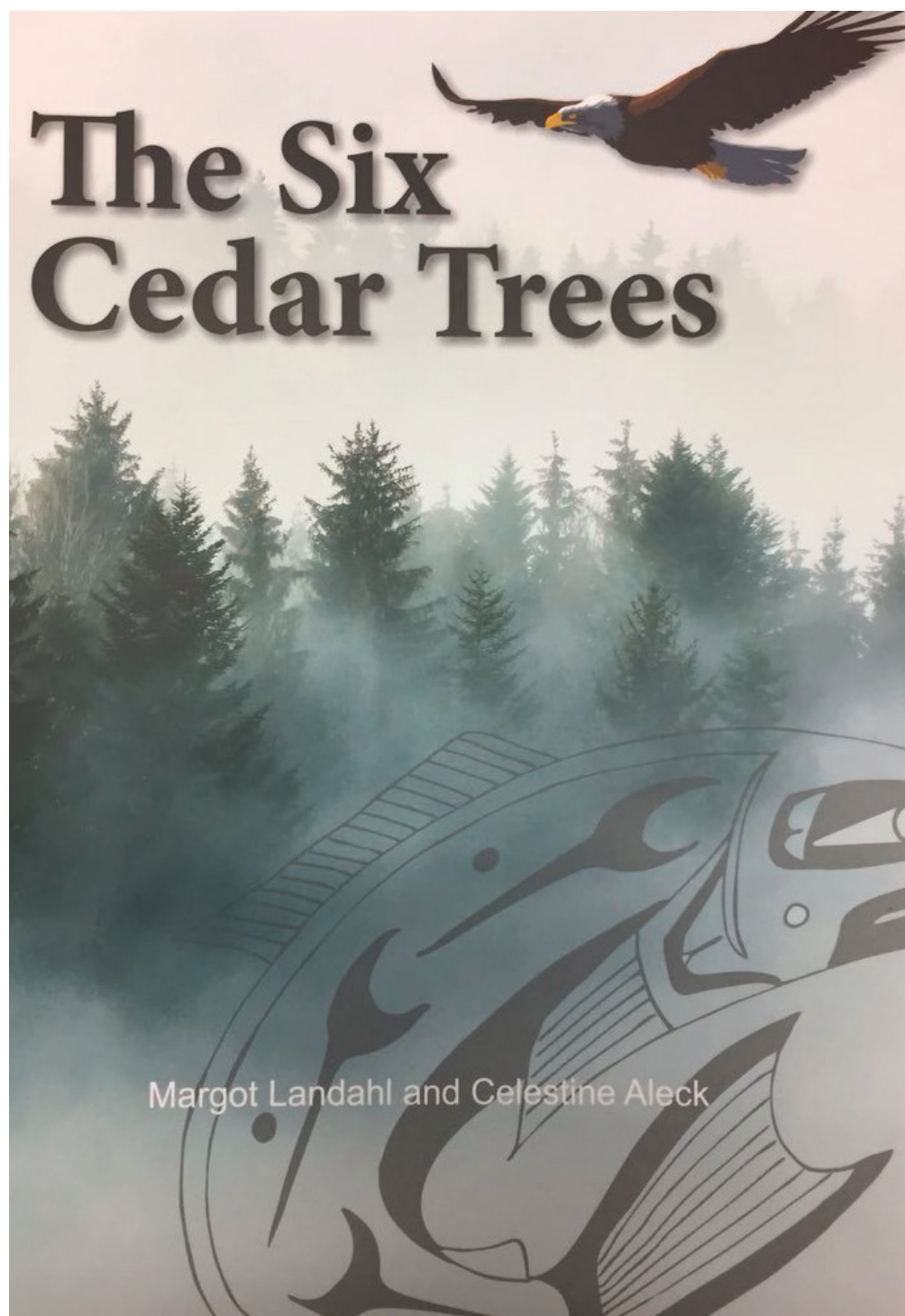
By Angel McMahon,  
Teacher, Port Kells Elementary

Indigenous learning means so many things to so many people. While I've been a teacher for eighteen years and consider myself fairly knowledgeable in many areas, indigenous learning was not one of them. The revised curriculum, specifically the focus on infusing all subjects with indigenous learning opportunities, was both exhilarating and completely overwhelming to me, despite all those years of experience. I had so many questions, "Where do I start?", "What resources do I use?", "Where are the resources?", "Are my resources authentic?", "What if I do it wrong?" The worst part was I didn't want to admit to anyone how lost I was.

So, I struggled on my own, googling resources and links to more and more resources. The amount of reading I felt I had to do to become knowledgeable in this area and be able to teach the content in a respectful and accurate manner, was enormous. My stress over doing this "right" was driving me crazy. So, I did what many teachers do when faced with an enormous amount of work, I went on Facebook. Luckily, a friend of mine had posted a comment on a Facebook group called Kindergarten Connections. I was pretty new to teaching kindergarten after many years as an intermediate teacher, so I thought it would be great to see what more experienced kindergarten teachers were doing in their classrooms.

It was in this group that I found my needle in a haystack. I found one tangible resource that I could implement in my classroom, immediately and easily. Someone had taken another teacher's year plan that had been posted earlier and revised it to focus on the core concepts that are covered in a book entitled *The Six Cedar Trees* by Margot Landahl. It was a beautifully laid out year plan that provided me with a visual structure from which to start on my journey towards implementing indigenous learning in my classroom.

I ordered the book right away. We read it as a class and discussed the story and the illustrations. We then wrote and drew our own stories, experimented with creating art in the same style as the illustrations and the students loved it. I had also read posts from other teachers on how they linked this book to outdoor learning, indigenous connections



to nature and offered activities in all subject areas that had been a success in their class. I experimented with these, as well. All it took was one resource, shared by a fellow teacher, to lessen the immensity of the pressure I had put on myself regarding including indigenous learning in my teaching practice. I am forever thankful to have found this group.

Since then I've asked more questions both on the Facebook group and to teachers who are knowledgeable in this area. I continue to include opportunities for indigenous connections in my classroom but I'm doing it at my pace and in a way that works for me. I am no longer overwhelmed or scared of doing it the wrong way because I'm trying my best and

I'm making progress. Isn't that what we ask of our students?

Indigenous learning is a very important part of the revised curriculum and needs to be honoured as such, but don't let the importance overwhelm you. As Lao Tzu said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." If you feel overwhelmed, like I did, take one step. It could be as simple as reading an indigenous story to your class and discussing it. Then take another step. You'll get there but it will take time. Now I feel exhilarated from the knowledge I'm gaining to inform my teaching of indigenous learning and make me a better teacher and it all started with one step.



# “Teachers are the caregivers. You have the gift.”

By Gavin Slade-Kerr, STA Secretary-Treasurer and Teacher, Fraser Wood Elementary

With these words, **Chief Harley Chappell** of the Semiahmoo First Nation welcomed teachers to the Aboriginal Site for the STA conference on May 3, 2019. The conference began with teachers being brought into Earl Marriott Secondary School by **singers and drummers from the Musqueam First Nation**. Entering the school two by two, teachers walked to the gym, following a multi-generational family dressed in the Musqueam traditional regalia, with toddlers jumping and paddling alongside of the adults. “Teaching is important”, conference attendees were told by the family. “You have an opportunity to guide our children as they emerge from generations of trauma.”

Following the welcome, **Professor Bruce Granville Miller** from the University of British Columbia provided the keynote address. Professor Miller led the conference through contact between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of British Columbia. “First Nations were decimated by this contact, but have recently got more organized and are getting more and more rights recognized. There is a slow regaining of cultural confidence.” The professor, born in the United States, lived in First Nations communities for a number of years. He had suggestions for teachers on how to teach about the Indigenous peoples of British Columbia in their classrooms. “There must be emphasis on indigenous community and individual strengths rather than pathology.

Use appropriate terminology. Recognize the traumatic history. Recognize the disruption of families. Finally, recognize indigenous contributions and perseverance.” **Nadine McSpadden**, a teacher in Surrey from the Aboriginal helping department, also addressed the conference. “Make sure you don’t focus on the negative in your classrooms. Some of the Aboriginal workers and elders you invite into your classroom may be retraumatized by bringing up this history. That needs to be honoured. Talk about our strengths. We were self sufficient!” **Phyllis Minsky**, a teacher at Queen Elizabeth Secondary School, appreciated the need to balance the positive and negative aspects in teaching about First Nations. “It’s important to have the history of abuse and exploitation,” she explained, “But the culture should be celebrated.”

After the keynote was over, the gym was taken over by a gigantic map of First Nations peoples of Canada brought by **Jacqueline King**, a BCTF facilitator on aboriginal teaching. Teachers got an opportunity to remove their shoes and walk on the sturdy, detailed map while Jacqueline pointed out some key features. She noted the Cree area where she was from, and the large areas of unceded territory, including the entire province of British Columbia!

The conference was organized by the Indigenous Committee of the STA. **Carolyn**

**Sousa**, another Aboriginal helping teacher, has been involved from the beginning. When she arrived in Surrey she found no aboriginal professional development at the annual conference. She decided that someone had to do something about it. It took sweat and tears but has grown into the successful event with its own site that it is today.

**Tanya Hubert**, an Educational Assistant in Surrey attending the conference, grew up beside the Semiahmoo Reserve. “I knew a lot of kids from Semiahmoo. It feels important to learn about First Nations culture. We didn’t really think about the fact that we grew up on their land. It’s good to learn about their history. It feels like we have the same goals.”

Teachers had a number of workshops to choose from at the conference. The author **Tomson Highway** presented in the school library. There was drum-making, beading, and weaving.

**Harley Chappell** talked about the history of the Semiahmoo, while **Harlan Pruden** discussed the importance of Two-Spirit people in indigenous cultures. Others talked about how to teach Math from a First Nations perspective and others how to include First Nations elements throughout your curriculum.

The day was split in two by a lunch that included bannock and salmon. Sharing their experiences over a meal, **teachers** reconnected with their **friends and colleagues** as their resolve to teach First Nations issues grew and strengthened. Come join us next year as we continue to develop Truth and Reconciliation.



## Indigenous Education Committee

Chair: Carolyn Sousa

Committee Members: Yvette Dabbs, Gavin Hainsworth, Allison Hotti, Helen Kelsey, Jacquie King, Tammy Mackie, Angela Marcakis, Phyllis Minsky, Brandon Misura, Annie Ohana

The Indigenous Education Committee recommends programs and initiatives to recruit, retain, and support Indigenous teachers. This committee also examines the conditions for Indigenous learners within our school district and recommends strategies that better support Indigenous learners in classrooms throughout the district. The Indigenous Education Committee meets regularly, sometimes twice monthly, to organize its three annual district-wide events: 1) our professional development days events, which take place in November and May each year, where teachers come together to share in a pro-d day of Indigenous everything, from teachings, speakers, dancers, drummers, hands-on, experiential art, and traditional food; and 2) our National Indigenous Day Celebration each June. All three of these events are free to Surrey teachers.

# Aboriginal Education Workshops

The following BCTF workshops are about 3 hours in length and free for you to book for your staff.



## Aboriginal Lens

The BCTF has developed an Aboriginal Lens, a tool for understanding and applying Indigenous Perspectives in schools and classrooms. In this workshop, the seven “Rs” of the lens will be explored as well as keys themes based on Indigenous worldview. Colonization has imposed perspectives that the lens helps us challenge.



## BC Blanket Exercise: Exploring Historical Relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples

This experiential workshop will help participants understand how colonization of the land we now know as British Columbia and Canada has impacted the people who lived here long before settlers arrived. Through this exercise participants will explore the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, how this relationship has been damaged over the years, and how we can work toward reconciliation.



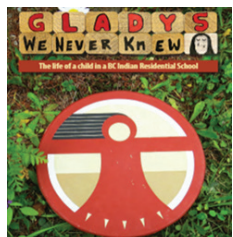
## Deconstructing Myths

In this workshop participants are submerged into the depths of the mistruths that have made up the belief systems of mainstream Canada for far too long. Participants will be challenged to dig deeper through research, which must include historical documentation and oral testimony as opposed to acceptance of archaic misinformation and hidden fabricated narratives. In a commitment to the continuation of the work that teachers started with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, BCTF invites all teachers to join in the effort to seek truth through the deconstruction of myths in curriculum.



## Gladys We Never Knew Cross Curricular Lesson Modules for Secondary Schools

Gladys Chapman, a student at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, died of tuberculosis at the age of 12. The spirit of Gladys is at the heart of this workshop that provides a cross-curricular module of lessons for teachers who want more ideas to help meet the ministry mandate of infusing Aboriginal content and perspectives at the secondary level. Like the intermediate module, participants will have the opportunity to engage with the activities and speak with the module developers. The goal of the session is to provide teachers with the resources, background, and support that will prepare them to take their students to a deeper level of truth and reconciliation education. This is a developing e-book resource.



## Gladys: The Life of a Child in a BC Residential School The short life and tragic death of a BC residential school student

Somebody's sister ... somebody's auntie ... somebody's daughter ... Designed for the intermediate grades, this teacher and student-friendly, ten-lesson module was written with the New BC Curriculum in mind. While learning about the true-life story of Gladys, a local Aboriginal girl from the Nlaka'pamux Nation in Spuzzum, BC, students are taken on a local, land and place-based journey of inquiry and ethical judgement. Students are encouraged to connect personally to Gladys as they work together to examine and evaluate a wide range of primary and secondary resources. The goal of this session is to provide teachers with the resources, background and support that will prepare them to take their students to a deeper level of truth and reconciliation education.



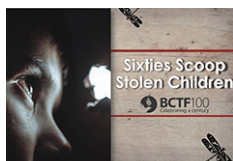
## Infusing Aboriginal Content (K-9)

While teachers express interest in incorporating more Aboriginal content in their classrooms, they are sometimes unsure of where to start and how to find authentic materials. This workshop is designed to create awareness around integrating Aboriginal perspectives and quality Aboriginal resources in the classroom through hands on activities.



## Project of Heart

Project of Heart is an inquiry-based, hands-on, collaborative, intergenerational, artistic journey for seeking truth about the history of Aboriginal people in Canada. This teaching resource examines the history and legacy of Indian residential schools, commemorates the lives of the thousands of Indigenous children who died as a result, and prepares students to engage in social justice activities that contribute to the developing truth and reconciliation movement.



## Sixties Scoop

This workshop invites educators to open their hearts and minds to understanding the colonial impact of Canada's history on Indigenous families and their children. Educators will be challenged to unlearn the history taught to them and relearn how to value the lives of Indigenous peoples. Educators will follow the lead of Indigenous educators who may be directly connected to the lived experience of the generations of 'stolen children'.

For more information, visit the BCTF Workshop Page at [www.bctf.ca/pd/workshops.aspx?id=233054](http://www.bctf.ca/pd/workshops.aspx?id=233054)



# First Peoples in Residence Week

By Brandon Misura, Teacher, North Surrey Secondary

'First Peoples in Residence' is a week-long integrated event that brings Indigenous cultures, voices and worldviews into the learning spaces of North Surrey Secondary. Beyond extending the opportunity to experience and celebrate art, music, dance and culture, this event serves as a source of meaningful engagement with Indigenous people and communities of British Columbia and Canada.

Amidst a climate of reconciliation, it is increasingly essential that non-Indigenous Canadians learn about Indigenous history and culture – because by doing so they demonstrate their recognition of the important role of Indigenous peoples in shaping this country historically, and to their contribution to protecting democracy. It is equally important to integrate knowledge

systems embedded in the cultural traditions and practices of Indigenous Canadians in a fashion that acknowledges and honors principles of self-determination, equity and collaboration.

Despite our current and ongoing efforts to decolonize our classrooms, we inevitably fall short due to the scarcity of Indigenous voices within our educational community. This event affords students the opportunity to gain valuable expertise and knowledge held by Indigenous people and communities, that which can only be generated through life experience. Moreover, through this engagement students may gain a greater appreciation for the tremendous diversity between and amongst Indigenous groups in Canada.

To date, this event has consistently been revered as a valuable and enriching experience both by students and staff. Through this effort to integrate and honor traditional and contemporary Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems, the 'First Peoples in Residence' has ultimately contributed to creating a more responsive educational organization for all students.

Going forward, it is my greatest hope that these fundamental components of 'First Peoples in Residence' are woven into a more cohesive and inclusive everyday curriculum. By incorporating Indigenous views, perspectives and knowledge of Indigenous people themselves education may evolve into a vehicle and mechanism of reconciliation.



## Orange Shirt Day

By Nicole Jarvis, Teacher, École Salish Secondary

École Salish Secondary teacher and Aboriginal advocate Lauren Compton organized a schoolwide activity and collaborative art piece leading up to our very first Salish Orange Shirt Day. Students and staff were encouraged to write reflections, connections, or messages of hope to Residential School Survivors on top of tracings of their own hands, as a symbolic representation that 'Every Child Matters.' The collective of orange hands made for a powerful visual display in the school's entrance as we entered the building. Students were able to enter our school and find their contribution to the art piece, and students and staff could also take an orange button made by Salish Art Teacher Sofia Trujillo. One of the best parts of the display was seeing students' writing in their language of choice. We encouraged students to write in their own first languages because the Residential Schools greatly harmed Canada's first peoples' ability to remain fluent in - and connected with - their Indigenous languages. Thank you Ms. Compton for bringing this all together! Chaque enfant compte!

For more **Orange Shirt Day activities**, check out the following resources curated by the BCTF

Gladys We Never Knew  
[www.bctf.ca/GladysWeNeverKnew](http://www.bctf.ca/GladysWeNeverKnew)

National Truth and Reconciliation has an interactive map with all the residential school locations  
[nctr.ca/map.php](http://nctr.ca/map.php)



# Teaching About Residential Schools

By Angela Marcakis, STA Communications/Campaigns, Local Rep to the BCTF and Teacher, Creekside Elementary



Growing up, I had no exposure to anyone of Indigenous heritage, which is ironic since Delta is so close to the Tsawwassen First Nations. My only frame of reference was the textbooks used in school which taught Aboriginal Education as if they were people of long ago, no longer existing, and in my world at that moment in time, it seemed to be true. This is how Aboriginal Education had typically been taught, as Francis (1992) shares how “the role of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is that as colonial subjects, they have often been stereotyped as remnants of a dusky and distant past”. I first learned of residential schools during my fifth year of university and was in complete shock that I had not learned about it sooner. I remember the day clearly, as the teacher had us watch the documentary *We Were Children* (2012), which features residential school survivors sharing their stories. I have learned that my (in)experience is not uncommon.

“It is precisely because education was the primary tool of oppression of Aboriginal people, and miseducation of all Canadians, that we have concluded that education holds the key to reconciliation”

(Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p.7).



My story highlights the importance of teaching about residential schools to today's students. This is what I wanted to use as the foundation to teach about the repercussions of colonization. “The ability to use language through storytelling, oratory, and song was highly regarded by all tribes as a primary tool for teaching and learning. This was because the spoken or sung word expressed the spirit and breath of life of the speaker, and thus was considered sacred.” (Cajete, 1994) I felt the students would benefit from learning about residential schools to develop some historical background knowledge and to deconstruct stereotypes. As there was no established set of literature circle books on a residential school theme geared to middle school, I had to create my own list. I put up a bulletin board with a map of all the residential schools that had been open in Canada, and connected a print out of the book covers to the location that they were set in for the students to visualize.

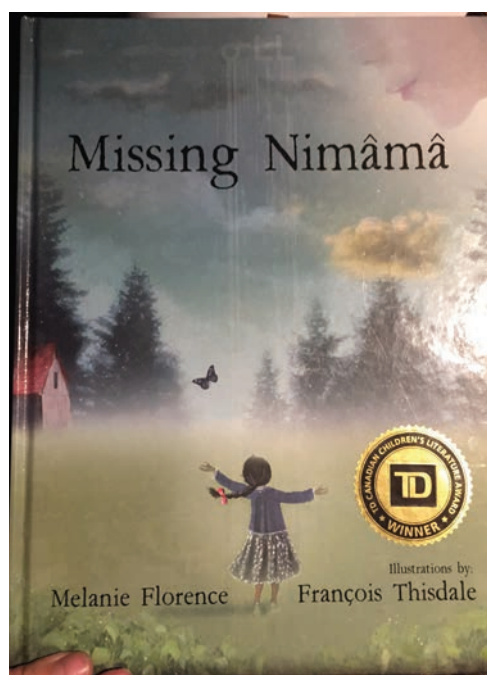
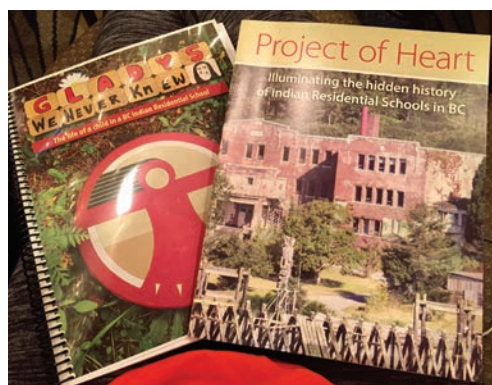
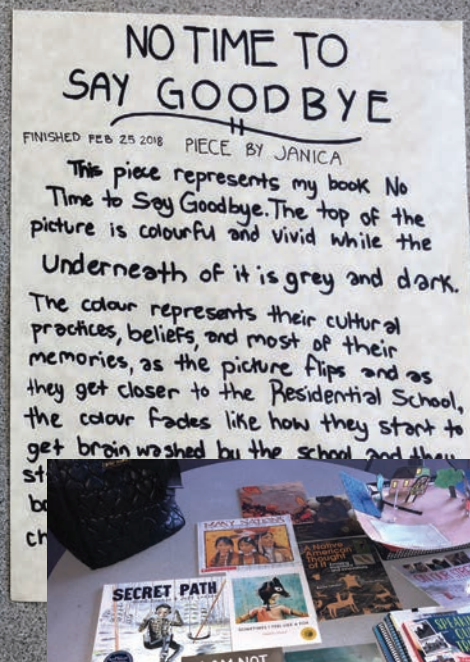
I introduced the six novels to my class and allowed my students to look through and read a few pages of each book. *Red Wolf* by Jennifer Dance is about a young Anishnaabek Nation boy who is forced to go to residential school and his connection with a wolf. This book would be for my students that are at a higher reading level. *My Name is Seepeetza* by Shirley Sterling is a diary of a young Nlakapamux First Nation girl who compares her life at Kamloops Indian Residential School with her life with her family on Joyaska Ranch. *Goodbye Buffalo Bay* by Larry Loyie is about a young Cree boy who is forced to leave the reserve to attend a residential school, and then after five

years, must readjust to life back on the reserve. *No Time to Say Goodbye: Children's Stories of Kuper Island Residential School* by Sylvia Olsen is a compilation of five Tsartlip First Nations children's stories of attending residential school. These three books would be for my students who are at an average reading level. *Fatty Legs* by Christy Jordan-Fenton is about an Inuit girl who goes to a residential school in Aklavik. *A Stranger at Home* by Christy Jordan-Fenton is the sequel to *Fatty Legs*, recounting what life is like for the Inuit girl when she finally returns home from residential school. Both of these books would be for my students who are at a lower reading level.

For the following four weeks, the students would read a set part of the novel, and write down questions, connections, reflections and predictions. I met with the groups and discussed that week's readings and their questions and connections. After our first meeting together with each group, I could sense the excitement in the class. They loved the literature circle format. They loved that I only facilitated and that it was run by them, their voices being the strongest. They really began to connect with the stories.

Once all the novels were finished, the students had a choice of creatively presenting in various mediums where the main goal was to convey the emotions felt from reading the novel. Below is an example of a student's project in which she chose to paint after reading *No Time To Say Goodbye*. I was so impressed with her multilayered representation and how the “reflection” shows the dark and dreary journey to





the residential schools. Using art to reflect and portray the emotions felt after reading these novels has proven to be really powerful.

I then read *Stolen Words* by Melanie Florence (2017), a picture book about a girl who helps her grandfather, a residential school survivor, relearn Cree. I thought this would be a nice way to begin tying in the residential school stories the students were familiar with, with modern Indigenous issues, such as loss of language and intergenerational trauma. This book ends on a positive note, so it was a nice way to ease back into the heavy subject. I also used resources such as *Speaking Our Truth* by Monique Gray Smith (2017) and *Project of Heart* by the BCTF (2017) to help guide us and fill in the gaps on information such as The Indian Act. The students found it particularly interesting when we discussed Duncan Campbell Scott and Peter Henderson Bryce. Campbell Scott was the mastermind behind mandatory enrollment in the residential schools with the goal "to kill the Indian in the child". Bryce was a doctor who had visited residential schools and written a report about the poor health conditions and published it, making it public knowledge.

The intergenerational trauma from residential schools is heavily connected to many of the current issues faced by Indigenous people today. The story *The Secret Path* by Gord Downie is a good way to connect the past to the present (2016), experiencing the story through both the physical copy of the book and the accompanying film. Some students really connected with Gord's lyrics, "The song

and images are trying to say that by removing all of Chanie's (or any residential school person's) identity, you would feel empty, or feel like a "stranger", not only to other people, but also to yourself." We defined reconciliation and discussed what Gord had done for reconciliation, and what we could do for ourselves. We watched Gord visit with the Wenjack family and his emotional honouring by the First Nations Assembly. We discussed the power of an apology and watched the statement of apology to former students of residential schools made by Stephen Harper in 2008. "When Steven Harper was saying sorry to all Aboriginal people, why didn't a former prime minister say this way before – more could have changed." Students were frustrated to hear that the Pope refuses to apologize on behalf of the church. We explored the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the 94 Calls to Action, and discovered which ones had been completed versus which had yet to be started. Many students were dismayed at how many Calls to Action had not been started yet.

“ I feel disappointed that our first prime minister called them savages and agreed to end their culture by sending them to residential schools. I hope that racial discrimination ends in every country and this never happens again. Everyone should be treated equally. ”  
- a grade 7 student





**Jacquie King**

STA Member at Large - Aboriginal

### What is your role in the STA?

I started out as the Aboriginal Member at Large, stemming from my involvement with the Aboriginal Education committee, who

advocated for the role to be created on the STA Executive. My primary focus within the role as a member at large on the executive table is trying to bring about change and opportunity. This led me to become a part of the convention committee to ensure that the Aboriginal site continues independently. It also led to becoming a member of the awards committee in order to advocate for scholarships for Indigenous students in the Surrey School District. I also work with stakeholders at the Aboriginal Education Council and advocate for Indigenous teachers and students in Surrey.

### Tell me a little bit about yourself. What was it in your background that helped you become a leader?

I was once asked what I would want out of my role as an Indigenous teacher. I responded naively, "to change the world." And in some way, 20 years later, I am.

### What accomplishment are you most proud of?

I think I am most proud of creating space for indigenous voices and advocating for change in our union that is more inclusive.

### What are the barriers you see to Indigenous colleagues achieving more leadership roles?

We really need to support new indigenous teachers and let them know that there is a

need in the urban setting for role models for all our students but more importantly our indigenous students. We are the district with the largest and most diverse indigenous community in the lower mainland. The leadership roles are there we just don't have individuals to step in. The STA needs to advocate for the district to hire more indigenous teachers.

### There have been a lot of changes recently for Indigenous Education. For instance, the new curriculum infuses Indigenous education throughout all the subjects and grade levels. We also had a new standard of education added recently stating that we must teach Indigenous education. Do you think these steps are enough to achieve reconciliation in education? What other suggestions do you have?

Those are just words. We are beyond that now and are looking for action. It is too late now for empty promises and idleness. It is incumbent upon all members now to educate themselves. One thing that I always pass on to members when facilitating workshops for the BCTF is that it took a long time to get where we are and it will take time for us to move to a better place. Every journey starts with one step and no action is too small to change the course this country was on.

## Am I a Warrior or Am I a Healer?

By Lee-Ann Locker, Counsellor, Hillcrest Elementary

This question, shared by Saylesh Wesley, two-spirit, Indigenous author, activist and educator, went right to the centre of my being. At once, it made me consider my past, and my present.

This was only one of numerous personal connections that "ReconciliACTION", the Provincial Social Justice and Aboriginal Education Conference, gave me. In "Settler Conversations", I was invited to examine my role as a settler in this land of many Indigenous peoples. It also made me consider what it is to decolonize thinking and being, as well as social and educational systems. During "SOGI 123 Salish Weaving", I connected with educators from around British Columbia, who are working to integrate SOGI education into their classrooms, schools and districts. This was incredibly valuable and helped me get a wider perspective of the experiences of LGBT2Q+ students, families and teachers around the province.

My learning on this weekend was at once a call to heart and a call to personal and professional action, that I am still exploring and doing, four months later. I look forward to continuing this journey of "witnessing and walking forward together." I invite you to join me.

The next opportunity to learn will be at the STA's Indigenous Education Committee's Pro-D Event: **TO SHINE A LIGHT ON IT HAPPENING ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2019.** Our theme for this year is Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Too many members of the STA Indigenous Education Committee have connections to women who have gone missing and decided it was time "to shine a light" on this issue as well.

The keynote will be Charlene Bearhead, who currently serves as the Education Coordinator for the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women. She was also the first Education Lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba.

**FOR IMMEDIATE EMOTIONAL ASSISTANCE,** call 1-844-413-6649. This is a national, toll-free 24/7 crisis call line providing support for anyone who requires emotional assistance related to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. See the back cover for more details.







# Final Report from National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

By Glen Hansman, Past President of the BCTF

On June 3, 2019, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its [final report](#).

The report is framed around four key pathways that perpetuate gendered, colonial violence. The report is attentive to how the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people is intimately connected to historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada.

The report is properly focused on the social and economic marginalization of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people as another root cause of their disappearances and deaths. Much of the evidence before the commissioners spoke to the perceived dispensability of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people and how poverty frequently creates vulnerabilities that are exploited by those who would target them for harm.

The report also recognizes institutional apathy, a desire on the part of institutions and systems to protect the status quo, and an institutional lack of will to change as contributing to the targeting of Indigenous

women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Finally, the report is framed around the appalling lack of recognition and respect for the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

It is important for all governments to take concrete steps to address systemic and institutionally enshrined gender-based violence. And education must play a role.

For example, the report includes the following two calls for educators:

**11.1 We call upon all elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions and education authorities to educate and provide awareness to the public about missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and about the issues and root causes of violence they experience. All curriculum development and programming should be done in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Such education and awareness must include historical and current truths about the genocide against Indigenous Peoples through state laws, policies, and colonial practices. It should include, but not be limited to, teaching Indigenous history, law, and**

**practices from Indigenous perspectives and the use of *Their Voices Will Guide Us* with children and youth.**

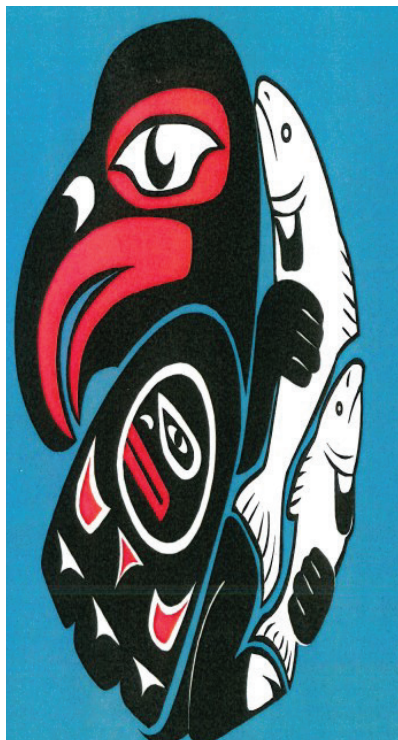
**11.2 We call upon all educational service providers to develop and implement awareness and education programs for Indigenous children and youth on the issue of grooming for exploitation and sexual exploitation.**

Thank you to BCTF staff member Gail Stromquist for her work on developing *Their Voices Will Guide Us*, which received a soft launch at our 2018 AGM. Locals are encouraged to share the teaching resource, which is online (<http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NIMMIWG-THEIR-VOICES-WILL-GUIDE-US.pdf>)

Many Indigenous women, communities, and families have been waiting for this report for many years. The report marks a significant moment in the decolonization and reconciliation work led by these same women, families, and communities.

The BCTF remains committed to working in collaboration, in consultation, and in solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

STA'S INDIGENOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE PRESENTS ITS 4TH ANNUAL  
**YUSÁYŁTHUT, "TO SHINE A LIGHT  
 ON IT" CONFERENCE**



## A DAY OF INDIGENOUS EVERYTHING

- Hot lunch included
- Many academic and experiential workshops
- Indigenous Dancers, Singers, Speakers, Giveaways, and much, much more!

Guest speaker

**CHARLENE  
BEARHEAD**

**FRIDAY,  
NOVEMBER 8TH, 2019  
8:30 AM - 2:30 PM**

Queen Elizabeth Secondary  
9457 King George Blvd., Surrey

### Registration

- Free to all STA members
- \$100 registration fee for all out-of-district teachers and admin
- \$25 registration fee for CUPE members and student teachers

Register at [toshinealighttonit2019.eventbrite.ca](https://toshinealighttonit2019.eventbrite.ca)

For further details, contact Carolyn Sousa  
at [sousa\\_c@surreyschools.ca](mailto:sousa_c@surreyschools.ca)

**This is a scent-free event**