

# BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Annual General Report 2020-2021





# Thank You

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres represents 25 Friendship Centres across the Province of BC.

We acknowledge and honour the communities who inform our work and allow us to work, play and reside on their territories. We are grateful to work together to support Indigenous people as they realize their vision of health, wellness and prosperity.

The BCAAFC resides on the lands of the Lkwungen-speaking (Songhees and Esquimalt) and the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich) peoples, the traditional keepers of the land who remain here as the original and rightful stewards.

Thank you to the knowledge keepers, staff, council members, volunteers and participants who make the work of BC Friendship Centres possible.



**Youth** at the Dze L K'ant Friendship Society War Canoe ParticipACTION event, rowing in sync in the beautiful Nyibegh War Canoe. "Nyibegh" means stability in Wet'suwet'en. The centre works with community in the canoes.



**Elders** at Mission Friendship Centre Society share invaluable cultural knowledge. The connections between Elders and youth at the centre support the health and wellness of the community.



**Volunteers** at Conayt Friendship Centre on Indigenous Peoples Day. The centre works to strengthen friendship and cooperation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members.





**Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association** Red Path Addictions Program is a treatment model that examines the effects of trauma, colonialism, and cultural losses as precursors to addiction and domestic violence. The program runs for 11 weeks (two sessions per week) and ends with a graduation sweat and feast. The need for Indigenous-led programs such as this is evident, with 70 people on the waitlist for the program.



**Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society** Youth Coordinator hosted virtual workshops to facilitate social connection among youth during COVID-19. The youth coordinator also actively participates on a community committee to advocate for youth and raise awareness for issues affecting Indigenous youth in regards to safe and secure housing. Their participation on this committee has directly resulted in youth securing housing.

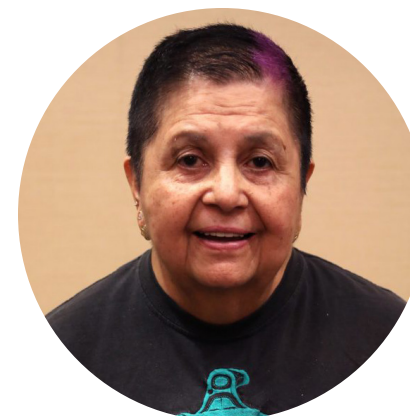
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**Cariboo Friendship Society** creates a monthly calendar of activities for the Elders Circle of Care Program with input and feedback from the Elders. Elders participated in 331 COVID-safe activities and events hosted by the Friendship Centre from April 2020 to March 2021. Over the summer, small group trips included the X'atsull Heritage Site, berry picking at Chimney Lake, Quesnel Forks Ghost Town and Farewell Canyon, Scout Island, and corn picking at Soda Creek! Elders enjoyed individually packed picnics for every adventure.



## Message from Dr. Sharon McIvor, President

Thank you to the BCAAFC Board of Directors and the Elders, youth, staff, volunteers, community members and partners who contribute to the collective work of BC Friendship Centres. Together, we are creating change by organizing against systems of oppression, calling for action where there has been injustice, and living in alignment with our values to uplift one another and whole communities.

Friendship Centres are a place for celebration, transformation, action, and support. I am grateful to be a part of the Friendship Centre Movement and to work alongside the great leaders within it.

The events of this past year have magnified existing inequities and deep pain. Friendship Centre communities have been a space for our people to share resources, heal, support one another, and connect to their cultures and traditions.

Thank you to the Elders, who share their wisdom, energy, and strength with us. The physical isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic has not been easy, and we are all looking forward to when it is safe to gather together again.

I raise my hands to all the Indigenous youth who are listening, using their voices, and taking care of one another—you are our future and you are a light.

I look forward to what we will accomplish in the coming year.

In friendship,

Dr. Sharon McIvor





## Message from Leslie Varley, Executive Director

What a year it has been. I raise my hands in high respect and appreciation for the work of BC Friendship Centres, our communities, and our partners.

The leadership demonstrated in Friendship Centres has been critical in supporting the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people, especially during a time where inequities have been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Centres were quick to adapt their service delivery to continue supporting existing clients, as well as an influx of new clients, through outreach, online platforms, and modified in-person programming. Staff balanced the growing demand for critical supports, such as food, hygiene products, and shelter, with the health and safety of themselves, their families, and their coworkers. Collectively, we helped ensure individuals, families, Elders, and youth had access to basic needs and connection to community.

Across Canada, we saw protests over land use, police violence, Treaty rights, racism in health care, and the overall violation of human rights of Indigenous peoples. Friendship Centres continued to be a safe and welcoming space for our people.

We have engaged ministers, departments, and institutions to advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples, including the equitable allocation of funds and resources that reflect a “by Indigenous people, for Indigenous people” approach to service delivery.

We partnered with Safespace Networks to develop a solution-focused response to the anti-Indigenous racism pervasive in health care, providing an Indigenous-led, online learning platform to empower Indigenous patients to report harm, access information on care providers, and help identify priority areas for change in the health system.

Across the province, over 1,000 Indigenous youth have completed the 3C Challenge, equipped with the knowledge and skills to run their own small business. This past

year alone, the Doulas for Aboriginal Families Grant Program supported 423 Indigenous families in accessing doula services to support their birth journey, support that was especially critical during the isolation that many families experienced as a result of COVID-19. The Employment, Life Skills & Training program served 1,581 Indigenous clients on their pathways to obtaining employment, increasing their skillset, and supporting their vision of wellness, with more clients coming through the doors daily.

BC Friendship Centres have demonstrated their ability to support and celebrate communities in times of success and offer refuge in times of crises. Many have served as evacuation support centres during intense wildfire seasons and have provided shelter services and critical resources during extreme weather. This past year, business continuity planning was a priority among centres, serving as a critical piece of emergency preparedness planning to build capacity in centres responding to future crises. We know that urgent action must be taken in response to the climate emergency to protect the land, people, wildlife, and our ways of living.

Addressing Indigenous gender-based violence is another priority in our work ahead. We are committed to building the capacity of Indigenous women and working with women and girls to better address gender-based violence in communities across BC. Anti-violence intervention and support services for Indigenous women and girls needs to be Indigenous led and culturally safe. We look forward to implementing this work with our partners to improve the safety, protection, and health of Indigenous women and girls.

The good work happening in BC Friendship Centre communities is fueled by the collective action of staff, members, volunteers and partners. There is still much work to do and I know that we can achieve great things together. I am honoured to be on this journey with all of you.

In friendship,

Leslie Varley



# BC Friendship Centres



BC Friendship Centres

- Cariboo Friendship Society (Williams Lake)
- Conayt Friendship Society (Merritt)
- Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society (Smithers)
- Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Society
- Fort St. John Friendship Society
- Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (Surrey)
- Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert
- Hiiye'yu Lelum (House of Friendship) Society (Duncan)
- Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society
- Kermode Friendship Society (Terrace)
- Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society (Kelowna)
- Lillooet Friendship Centre Society
- Mission Friendship Centre Society
- Nawican Friendship Centre (Dawson Creek)
- North Okanagan Friendship Centre Society (Vernon)
- Ooknakane Friendship Centre (Penticton)
- Port Alberni Friendship Center
- Prince George Native Friendship Centre Society
- Quesnel Tillicum Society
- Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre Society (Port Hardy)
- Tansi Friendship Centre Society (Chetwynd)
- Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Society (Nanaimo)
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre
- Wachiay Friendship Centre Society (Courtenay)

# About the Movement

The Friendship Centre Movement is made up of over 100 Friendship Centres from coast to coast to coast.

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) represents the 25 Friendship Centres in BC.

Friendship Centres are not-for-profit, Indigenous-led, social service organizations that work to promote, develop and deliver accessible programs and services that support Indigenous peoples living in urban areas and away from home to achieve their vision of health, wellness and prosperity.

Reports indicate that 78% of the Indigenous peoples in BC live off-reserve or in urban areas, however, it is estimated that the true number is closer to 85%.

The BC Friendship Centre Movement has been supporting the health, wellness and prosperity of urban Indigenous people and communities for over 60 years.

Collectively, BC Friendship Centres employ over 1,200 people and have over 600 community partnerships.

# A Bit of History

**1954**  
The Coqualeetza Fellowship Club was formed to provide support to Indigenous students moving to Vancouver.

**1963**  
The Coqualeetza Fellowship Club changed its title to the Vancouver Indian Centre Society, recognized as a place for all Indigenous peoples transitioning into Vancouver's urban setting.

**1972**  
A group of Indigenous service delivery organizations located throughout BC formed a provincial body, the Pacific Association of Communications in Indian Friendship Centres (PACIFIC). PACIFIC was later renamed the BC Association of Indian Friendship Centres, and is known today as the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

**2022**  
The BCAAFC's 50th Year Anniversary!



# Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council

The Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council (PAYC) helps lead the Friendship Centre Movement. Council members serve as role models, mentors, and change makers in their communities. Youth ages 18 to 24 are nominated for the council by their local Friendship Centre. PAYC members attend monthly meetings, participate in workshops and community engagement sessions with the BCAAFC, help Indigenous youth to share their voice and be heard, and assist with planning the annual Gathering Our Voices: Indigenous Youth Leadership Training event.

## Annual Highlights

Over the summer and fall, PAYC members participated in various projects and community engagement opportunities, including the Not Just Naloxone Train the Trainer program hosted by the First Nations Health Authority. This training focused on community-based discussions around decolonizing substance use, Indigenous harm reduction practices, trauma and resiliency informed practice, and anti-stigma work, in addition to the administration of Naloxone medication and the skills to facilitate Naloxone training.

A few PAYC members also participated in community engagement sessions hosted by the BCAAFC Policy Department, contributing their voice to BCAAFC's *Urban Indigenous Wellness Framework*, which helped to identify priorities, gaps, and promising practices related to health and wellness in BC Friendship Centres.

## Thank You to Outgoing Council Members

Elijah Mack and Samantha Jack aged off the council this year. Elijah served on PAYC for four years, during which one of his favourite memories was, *“being a co-host partner for Gathering Our Voices. Seeing the pride and the joy of youth across Canada flourish at one event. It is something I will forever treasure!”*

Samantha served on PAYC for two years, she expressed that she looks forward to watching PAYC grow and thrive in the future and that she will always be around to support youth in the Friendship Centre Movement. We at the BCAAFC are deeply grateful to Elijah and Samantha for their valuable contributions over the years and we know they will continue to accomplish great things in the next chapters of their journeys.

## What's Ahead

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic inevitably affected the ability to attend in-person meetings and community gatherings this past year. PAYC is looking forward to assisting with the planning and implementation of in-person activities as health and safety recommendations around COVID-19 change, including the Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective Youth Forum set to take place in Victoria in 2021.

Recruitment for PAYC is a priority. The prospective in-person gatherings in 2022 will serve as an opportunity for council members to connect with Indigenous youth across the province and build a strong foundation for PAYC.



The PAYC and Elders Council at a strategic planning meeting in 2019.

## BC Election 2020

### PAYC members posed public questions to the BC political parties:

**Elijah Mack:** *“If elected, will your party ensure Indigenous youth have access to culturally-appropriate trauma and addictions services?”*

**Diana Charlie-Iraheta:** *“If elected, will your party help urban Indigenous women and girls fleeing violence, and prevent the sexual exploitation and human trafficking of children and youth?”*



# Elders Council

The BCAAFC Elders Council is comprised of Elders from each region of the province, nominated by their local Friendship Centre. The Elders Council advises the BCAAFC Board of Directors, and the connections between Elders and youth play an integral role in shaping the goals and priorities of the Friendship Centre Movement.

The presence and power of Elders' wisdom and teachings is felt throughout Friendship Centre communities. The Elders Council members shared words of support to help alleviate community concerns around COVID-19 vaccination.



Elders Council with Honourable Melanie Mark in 2019 at our last in-person meeting before COVID-19.

## I'm choosing to get the COVID-19 vaccine because...

Basil 'Buzz' Morissette, Cree Elder, Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society: *"I value my health and I want to do what I can to protect the health of my loved ones and community."*

Marge White, Huu-ay-aht Elder, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Society: *"I believe it will prevent me from getting the virus. I am an urban Indigenous Elder over the age of 80, my health has always been important to me... I am anxious to be able to sit with family and to get back to our Potlatches where we can once again attend to our cultures and traditions."*

Wally Samuel, Ahousaht Elder, Port Alberni Friendship Center: *"I have family, friends, and community I want to be safe. I trust science, I've had many other vaccines."*

## What's Ahead

The Elders Council is looking forward to the opportunity for in-person gatherings to continue to share knowledge and connect with youth and community.

# Elders Connected

The Elders Connected initiative was developed to help address the prolonged isolation many Elders experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During check-ins with Elders it was evident that physical distancing measures were resulting in social isolation that was impacting their wellbeing.

Elders Connected provides tablets, Internet, and technical support to Elders who may not otherwise have access to online programming as a safe alternative during the pandemic. The BCAAFC hosts online engagement and learning opportunities that Elders may join through Zoom, which is pre-installed on their tablets. Online Zoom activities include bingo, musical performances, and sharing circles.

Elders are the keepers of culture, traditions, and sacred knowledge in community. Supporting the social participation and inclusion of Elders is a priority within the Friendship Centre Movement.

## Thank You

The Elders Connected initiative is part of BC Friendship Centres response to community needs during COVID. Thank you to the funders, partners, staff, volunteers, and community members who have helped us stay connected with Elders throughout COVID safety restrictions.





# Responding to the COVID Pandemic

## Provincial COVID Response Funding

Friendship Centres used Provincial COVID Response funding to respond to the emerging needs of urban Indigenous communities throughout COVID-19.

Provincial COVID Response funds are administered to meet the following objectives:

- To support the adjustment of programs and services so that they may continue running during COVID-19 with the implementation of physical distancing and health and safety measures.
- To allow centres to continue providing community support in response to new challenges that arise as a result of COVID-19.
- To enable centres to continue their mission to support urban Indigenous peoples in a safe way.

The BCAAFC advocated passionately to secure this funding from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) as a one-time grant to be distributed amongst the 25 centres. Thanks to the flexibility of the grant, funding supported priority

areas as identified by Friendship Centres. Each centre submitted an application outlining how they planned to use the funds. The applications reflected the depth of local knowledge within each centre, the relationships between the Friendship Centre and the communities they serve, and the innovation and experience of staff to allocate funding to benefit as many people as possible.

## Indigenous Community Support Funds

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) secured funding for Friendship Centres through the Federal Government's Indigenous Community Support (ICS) funds. Similarly to the Provincial COVID Response funds, ICS funds help Friendship Centres implement the best possible health and safety practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while continuing to serve their clients and communities.

The funding was released in three rounds during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Round one of funding was distributed as quickly as possible in Spring

2020, allowing centres to respond to the public health crisis and to the immediate needs of their communities. The first round included a portion of unrestricted funds from the Mastercard Foundation, giving Friendship Centres the flexibility required to respond to community needs effectively, without the constraints of eligibility and reporting requirements. The second round of funding was a larger monetary amount, accompanied by guidelines intended to help centres plan for long-term COVID response initiatives.

COVID-related expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Direct financial and material support for community members
- Measures to address food insecurity
- Supports for children and youth
- Mental health and emergency health response services
- Minor capital infrastructure costs that are necessary to prepare, prevent or respond to COVID-19

Round three was distributed in January of 2021 with the goal of sustaining general COVID-19 supports, with a portion of funds intended specifically for food security initiatives.

## Major Accomplishments

Friendship Centres have a long history providing tremendous value to the

## Indigenous Community Support Funds

**BC Friendship Centres** requested funding to help support vaccination rollout initiatives, including:

- Provide cultural supports
- Tracking and verification of follow up vaccine doses
- Provide transportation to and from vaccination sites
- Operation of Friendship Centre vaccination sites (equipment, staff support, rentals, food)
- Strategic communications
- Capacity and administration



# Responding to the COVID Pandemic

communities they serve. Each centre has demonstrated time and time again their commitment to helping as many people as possible with the resources available to them. The COVID pandemic resulted in a considerable increase in financial recognition for all that Friendship Centres do, and each centre was well positioned to leverage COVID response funding to continue providing longstanding critical programs and services, and expand on them in the context of COVID. Since the onset of the COVID pandemic, Friendship Centres have worked to:

- Increase the number of meal distribution days per week.
- Deliver meals to individuals unable to travel to the Friendship Centre (such as Elders and shut ins).
- Offer supervision for children while parents and caregivers picked up groceries and supplies.
- Collaborate with local businesses and communities to connect individuals and families in need with food resources available.
- Purchase slow cookers for families and deliver weekly recipes and ingredients so that families may prepare healthy meals together.
- Offer grocery and prescription pick-up and delivery

services, in addition to grocery gift cards.

- Construct vegetable gardens and greenhouses, planting fruit trees and berries to provide fresh produce.
- Implement extra safety precautions in overnight shelter facilities to protect the health of clients and staff.
- Distribute hygiene kits to homeless, creating handwashing stations.
- Implement safety precautions to continue providing access to storage space, washrooms, and showers.
- Set up clients in isolation with tablets and Zoom to stay connected to each other and Friendship Centre counsellors.
- Prepare and distribute an outline of all support organizations within the community, with the document updated weekly to provide clarity for clients.
- Help clients access housing subsidies and other financial resources available to them.
- Purchase Chromebooks for youth who need access to school work.
- Host Facebook live classes for programs.

## COVID-19 Funding Addressed Six Main Themes



### Food Security

Nawican provides takeaway meals and food hampers to community.



### Mental Health Supports

Dze L K'ant provides outdoor movement classes.



### Supports for Elders

Fort Nelson FC distributed tablets to Elders for video communication.



### Anti-Violence Initiatives

Victoria FC provides supports for woman healing from violence.



### Equipment & Infrastructure

Prince George FC installed plexiglass for added protection.



### Additional Staffing

Oonakane hired a coordinator to oversee COVID safety procedures.



# Responding to the COVID Pandemic

- Deliver infant care kits to pregnant individuals (food boxes, diapers, formula).
- Deliver wellness kits containing games, arts, and cultural crafts for all ages.
- Maintain client contact and provide counselling services via phone, teleconference, social media, etc.
- Provide harm reduction supplies.

## Growth and Improvement

The emergency funding administered in response to COVID came from several different funding streams with various expense eligibilities and reporting requirements. The time and energy constraints experienced by staff have been heightened during the COVID-19 response, and creating a more streamlined approach would help to alleviate the additional pressure of numerous reporting requirements.

## What's Ahead

Friendship Centres experienced a rapid increase in requests for services as a result of the COVID pandemic. The crises called for urgent action from provincial and federal governments. Emergency funding was

rolled out to social service organizations providing the critical services now needed by a greater portion of the population. The COVID response funding received by Friendship Centres helped support additional staff and modify service delivery; however, the reality is that the COVID response funding provided a snapshot of a more appropriate funding amount reflective of the scale and scope of services provided by Friendship Centres.

This funding has a set end date, but it has magnified the need for adequate multi-year funding that guarantees financial security for Friendship Centres and empowers them to continue addressing the needs of their communities.

## Thank You

Provincial COVID Response funding was provided by the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. The Indigenous Community Support Funds (ICSF) were provided by the Indigenous Services Canada, and administered by the National Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.



**Lillooet Friendship Centre Society** Chillaxin Youth Centre provides culturally appropriate, accessible programs and services with the goal of empowering urban Indigenous youth. Activities support social relations, connections to culture, health and wellbeing, and education and employment training. The Chillaxin Youth Centre also provides a space for Elders and youth to connect, with Elders facilitating sharing circles, smudging, and drumming. The relationships formed between Elders and youth are invaluable.





# Responding to the COVID Pandemic



**Mission Friendship Society** provided food hampers, wellness kits, computers, clothing, and gift cards to individuals, Elders, and families in need. Youth helped build hampers at the Friendship Centre to uplift one another and take care of their community.



**Hiiye'yu Lelum Society** connected with over 275 youth from their community this past year! The Friendship Centre offered in-person activities with COVID safety plans in place and delivered at-home wellness packages to youth and their families.



**Tansi Friendship Centre Society** worked to support the health and wellness of families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic by facilitating activities such as baking, outdoor hikes, scavenger hunts, book clubs, gardening, and youth-focused educational games.



**Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre** offered online communication and programming, alongside resources such as youth at-home craft kits, food hampers, and school supplies to support students with the transition to online learning.



# Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples

## Organizational Capacity

Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP) Organizational Capacity (OC) funding is intended to serve as a consistent financial base for the delivery of programs and services that support the urban Indigenous community. The OC funds help Friendship Centres staff key positions, such as the Executive Director, and to cover day-to-day operating costs, such as rent, utilities, and office supplies.

The BCAAFC releases annual funds to Friendship Centres in four stages throughout the fiscal: contract signing, first quarter reporting, second quarter reporting, and third quarter reporting. The funding that each FC receives is the sum of the base funding amount (\$120,000) plus an additional amount calculated with a points-based model that takes into account the size and capacity of the centre, including programs offered, clients reached, and other funding received, among other considerations.

## Increasing Our Capacity

This year, the BCAAFC employed two new contract administrators to work on the Member Services Team. The contract administrators coordinate the distribution of all core-like funding to Friendship Centres. They also serve as the go-to support people for centres seeking guidance on reporting requirements and funding expenditures. Growing the BCAAFC Member Services Team has increased and enhanced the capacity building initiatives offered to Friendship Centres, and has allowed us to dedicate a full-time position to data management and analysis.

## Communication and Collaboration

The BCAAFC has participated on bi-weekly Provincial Territory Association (PTA) Technicians Committee calls to maintain active connection and collaboration with the NAFC and PTAs across the country. One result of our ongoing engagement with the PTA Committee is the formation of a National Data Strategy working group where we explore visions and pathways towards a data strategy that will encompass the Friendship Centre Movement nationwide.



**Quesnel Tillicum Society** provided one-to-one support by phone throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, building trust with clients during a challenging time. Many clients expressed their gratitude for the Friendship Centre's ongoing services during COVID-19, especially because many other community services were at capacity or had barriers to entry.

## Urban Pogramming for Indigenous Peoples in BC Friendship Centres



**252,382**  
People Served



**525**  
Programs



**1,515,258**  
Points of Service

Numbers are based on 2020-21 fiscal reporting completed by 22 of the 25 Friendship Centres.



# Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples

## Growth and Improvements

The BCAAFC is advocating for an increase in funding commitments from UPIP. The long-term efficacy of UPIP funding would be improved if it was guaranteed over a longer time period than the current 5-year contracts. While the structure of UPIP funding has changed, the funding amount has not increased in decades. Funding should be increased to match inflation at minimum, and should acknowledge the continued growth of Friendship Centres' reach and client base.

## Programs and Services

UIP Programs and Services (P&S) funding supports the delivery of culturally-relevant and safe programs and services to urban Indigenous communities. P&S supports projects under six funding categories:

- Women
- Vulnerable Populations
- Youth
- Transition Services
- Outreach
- Community Wellness

## Major Accomplishments

This past year, Friendship Centres quickly and successfully transitioned many of their services and programs to online platforms, and restructured their in-person groups to meet the health and safety recommendations that came with the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic. Many centres also expanded their programs and services to address heightened needs in their communities, such as food security and isolation.

Friendship Centres' response to urgent needs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated their experience stretching a limited amount of funding exceptionally far. The reach and impact each centre has in their community in relation to the funding they receive is remarkable.

## Growth and Improvements

An increase in fund allocations per project and multi-year funding would benefit centres and their clients. Currently, P&S funding limits the portion that Friendship Centres can utilize for administration to 7% of their total funding. Feedback from centres, as well as the

BCAAFC Provincial Office, is that the 7% undervalues administration and is inadequate for optimal program delivery and the wellbeing of staff.

## What's Ahead

Negotiations with UPIP administrators are underway to secure funding through 2022 and beyond. Our hope is that the funding agreement will reflect the value that Friendship Centres provide and the number of people that they serve.

The BCAAFC will continue work to streamline reporting requirements and maximize the efficiency and efficacy of data collected. We are also focused on continual improvement in relation to the support and guidance the BCAAFC Member Services Team can provide to Friendship Centre staff on a consistent basis.

## Thank You

UIP funding is provided by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC).



## Wachiay Friendship Centre Society

Introduction to Commercial Screenprinting course helps artists, makers, and entrepreneurs build capacity and self-sufficiency that bolsters local economies and supports healthy communities.



## ***“By Indigenous People, For Indigenous People”***



### **Elder, Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society:**

*"I enjoy coming to the Elders program, this has been the most successful Elders' program I have attended with the Friendship Centre. I do my best to attend the program as often as I can, the cultural workshops have been a success. As I'm getting older it's important to me to keep busy and keep moving my body. When I'm not working, I'm at the Friendship Centre. We always get to do different activities. We have completed a lot of different projects, more than in the past. Some of my favorites are the Moccasin making, sewing, and berry picking."*

## **BC Friendship Centres Programs and Services**



### **Staff, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Center Society:**

*"One of the shelter residents who has been homeless for 20 years moved into the VAFCS temporary COVID-19 shelter with showers and laundry and changed their life. Through contact with our Outreach Team, they started to receive social assistance. Within a short time they were set up with safe secure housing, and are now housed independently. It was amazing to see the transformation that happened when they realized they were ready for this transition."*



# Provincial Capacity

The purpose of Provincial Capacity (ProCap) funding is to contribute to the base funding necessary to keep Friendship Centres operating. Centres may use ProCap funds to upgrade information technology systems, upskill employees, complete small capitol renovations, staff a key position at the centre, or support cultural activities to strengthen and improve the delivery of programs and services.

## Major Accomplishments

Friendship Centres are creative, collaborative and smart in how they leverage core funding to maximize the value to their centre so they can best support the communities they serve. Friendship Centres’ skills in prioritization positioned them to adapt quickly and continue operating safely, in alignment with COVID safety recommendations from federal government.

## Growth and Improvement

BC Friendship Centres saw a significant increase in requests for services at the onset of COVID-19 and have worked hard to maintain their growing client base. In order for centres to sustainably fulfill the need

for the culturally-safe services they provide, core-like funding needs to account for the scale and scope of Friendship Centre service delivery. It is challenging for centres to plan effectively due to the uncertainty of funding commitments each year, which impacts the sustainability and growth of programs.

## Thank You

ProCap funding is provided by the BC Ministry of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation.



**Ooknakane Friendship Centre** implemented COVID-19 safety measures to protect staff and clients.



**Dze L K’ant Friendship Centre** is expanding services to meet the needs of their community. The Friendship Centre was approved funding for a new Indigenous housing support program in early 2020. Pictured is the Homeless Count Survey Team from 2021, who listened to housing challenges in the community.

## Provincial Capacity



**25**  
Friendship Centres



**102**  
Service Facilities



**600+**  
Partnerships



**1,200+**  
Employees



# First Citizens Fund, Friendship Centre Program

The First Citizens Fund Friendship Centre Program (FCF-FCP) provides financial assistance to Friendship Centres for the delivery of social, recreational and cultural programming to Indigenous people living in urban areas.

Specifically, FCF-FCP funds help support the program-related administration costs, and other costs associated with program development, implementation and delivery.

FCF-FCP is distributed to centres under a single fiscal agreement covering April 1-March 31 with funds distributed twice throughout the fiscal.

## What's Ahead

Friendship Centres are anticipating a renewal of funds for the 2022 year. Currently, this funding is held to one fiscal year. Friendship Centres and their clients would benefit from a more substantial funding amount allocated over a longer period of time. The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the need to provide job security, competitive wages, and safety to staff.

## Thank You

The FCF-FCP is funded by the BC Ministry of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation.



**Kermod Friendship Society** Client Ambassador Outreach Team provided ongoing services on the streets and in emergency shelters. Including essential resources, emotional supports, and service referrals.



**North Okanagan Friendship Centre Society** works with community partners to raise awareness for the meaning behind Orange Shirt Day, and to honour the experiences of survivors and their families and support their healing journeys.



**Tillicum Lelum Centre Society** How'nuq Youth Program provides a wide range of educational and social opportunities to support youth in their success.



## ***“By Indigenous People, For Indigenous People”***



### **Staff, Fort St. John Friendship Society:**

*“As a result of the pandemic, all of our roles and responsibilities changed several times as we amended and continued to expand services throughout spring and into summer. Building, vehicles, equipment, and outdoor childcare space deficiencies were addressed to increase safety and access according to new protocols. Technology was updated, training completed, program-specific safety protocols were developed, PPE and sanitization equipment were acquired, vacancies were filled and additional staff were hired to prepare for September programs and services, including Keeginaw Preschool, Keeginaw Kids, Miyo.sin Teens and individualized one-on-one school supports.”*

## **BC Friendship Centres Programs and Services**



### **Staff, Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert:**

*“Youth attended WILP Sweat Retreat, and various outdoor land based cultural activities, including cedar bark harvest with the Elders, smudges, sweats, fishing and traditional food harvest and preparation. This has really helped with youth engagement and leadership in the community, and is a part of their mental health check-ins during COVID-19. The youth have weekly mental health check-ins for homework support, tutoring, cultural healing practices and circles, camera club, story sharing circles, and as well recreational activities such as skating, swimming, soccer and, soon, baseball outdoors.”*



**Port Alberni Friendship Center's new kitchen will help expand their food distribution programs in the community.**

**The Friendship Centre made great progress on their kitchen repairs. Their work will continue into the 2022 fiscal, but it is nearly complete.**



# Infrastructure Funding

Infrastructure funding supported Friendship Centres in need of urgent minor capital renovations and energy efficiency upgrades in order to ensure a safe and accessible space to provide programs and services to urban Indigenous peoples.

Projects were approved on a case-by-case basis by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

Approved projects included:

- HVAC upgrades
- Roof repairs
- Flooring replacement and repair
- Air conditioning installation
- Furnace replacement
- Hot water tank replacement
- Electrical wiring updated
- Window and insulation upgrades
- Kitchen repairs

## Major Accomplishments

Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA) completed installation of a centralized air conditioning system, roof replacement, furnace and duct cleaning, and gutter repairs. Remaining

funds will be used to rebuild fencing around the back of their youth facility.

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Society completed a roof repair project and their remaining funds contributed to the replacement of their HVAC system.

Wachiay Friendship Centre made significant progress on their window and insulation upgrades, with the remaining work to be completed following construction delays.

## Growth and Improvement

The applications for this funding were submitted nearly two years prior to the projects being approved and the funds disbursed. As a result, many Friendship Centres who applied for the funding with urgent repairs were forced to move forward with the proposed repairs prior to receiving the funding. Then, when the funding arrived, they couldn't use it as planned because they had already completed the repairs with other funding. ISC was strict on how the funding was used despite the two year duration on project approval and funding

delay. This posed a huge challenge for the BCAAFC and Friendship Centres, as much time was spent negotiating with ISC for approval to modify the funding expenditures.

## What's Ahead

We anticipate receiving another round of Infrastructure funding in the near future. This funding will be administered directly to Friendship Centres by the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), rather than the BCAAFC. The BCAAFC will collaborate with the NAFC to keep track of Friendship Centre proposals and to share information about the funding opportunity.

## Thank You

This funding was provided by Indigenous Services Canada and administered to the BCAAFC by NAFC.



# Data Strategy Development

The BCAAFC Research and Data Analyst position was created to evaluate, support and increase the data capacity of our provincial office and member centres. The analyst will establish best practices and a reliable foundation for collecting data that can be used to represent BC Friendship Centres in an accurate and meaningful way.

At this time, data is increasingly recognized as an invaluable resource that can be used to identify, inform and solves issues. Data governance and ownership are important components of self-determination.

## Major Accomplishments

Major accomplishments from the beginning of this initiative include:

- The establishment of methods to transform incoming reporting into usable repositories. This resulted in efficient access to information to enhance research, roll up reports, press releases and funding proposals.
- The creation of administrative tools to assist all departments in the BCAAFC in their regular tasks.

Some of the tools automate workflows to save time, while others assist with tracking important administrative items such as contracts, payments and reporting.

- The establishment of a data working group that includes members from all PTAs, NAFC and representatives working on the Friendship Centre database pilot project.
- The development of the *Path To A Data Strategy* roadmap and timeline.

## *Path To A Data Strategy*

The *Path To A Data Strategy* roadmap outlines the steps required to establish foundations for improving data management. The roadmap begins with a discovery phase that explores our current data positioning, leading to the next phase which will be based on recommendations around best practices. The activities will result in the completion of a data governance framework that will help guide data decisions, solutions and maintenance of BC Friendship Centres data collection going forward.

Currently, we are in the discovery phase of the roadmap. The discovery phase is integral as it establishes the baseline conditions from which we will grow. This phase will result in a discovery report that will outline our current data landscape and recommend next steps to meet best practises.

## What's Ahead

The BCAAFC will continue to work with Friendship Centres and the NAFC to ensure we are moving forward in a collaborative way to find the best possible solutions to our shared needs.

Internally, the BCAAFC Research and Data Analyst will continue building on solutions to improve collaboration and workflow within the provincial office.

## Thank You

The BCAAFC Research and Data Analyst position is supported with funding from the Province of British Columbia and NAFC.

## *Pathway To A Data Strategy*



**Discovery:**  
Exploring current data positioning and establishing a baseline for improved data infrastructure.

**Recommendations:**  
Establishing best practices and implementing recommendations for improvements.



**Framework:**  
Creating a data governance framework to guide future decision making.



# Peer Support and Capacity Building

This past year, the BCAAFC focused on three main capacity building initiatives:

- Peer Resource, Review, Response, Restore Committee (PR4C)
- Board Governance Training
- Friendship Centre Training Plan

## Peer Resource, Review, Response, Restore Committee

The PR4C is a committee of volunteers from the Friendship Centre Movement who use their experience and expertise to provide guidance in areas such as board governance, human resources, and finance. The PR4C was created with the belief that peer support can help centres overcome challenges and uplift them on their pathway to further success.

A main goal of the PR4C has been to strengthen a proactive approach to peer support to help prevent centres from reaching a place of crisis before reaching out for support. The committee is looking forward to implementing a plan to deliver consistent proactive support and grow the capacity of the PR4C in the

coming year. The expansion of the BCAAFC Member Services Team will help take action towards these goals.

## Board Governance Training

In the 2019-20 fiscal year, the BCAAFC contracted a specialist from Real Board Solutions to develop board governance training materials. Our goal was to have the BCAAFC Member Services Team use these materials to deliver board training to Friendship Centres throughout the 2020 year. Unfortunately, we were only able to deliver one in-person training session before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Thankfully, Terry Clark of Real Board Solutions agreed to provide online trainings to the centres that requested it while travel and in-person gatherings were restricted by COVID. Simultaneously, we have been working to expand the vision for board governance training to reflect a model that is grounded in Indigenous expertise and knowledge.

Board governance frameworks are colonial in nature as they are based off of the Society's Act. We believe that with the right guidance and attention, we can translate our board training resources into a format that better

reflects and recognizes traditional governance methodologies, and Indigenous values and ways of knowing.

## Friendship Centre Training Plan

The Friendship Centre Training Plan will offer bi-monthly human resource related training opportunities to Friendship Centre staff. The goal of the training is to build capacity in the BC Friendship Centre network by offering accessible educational opportunities through the online platforms available.

Training topics offered will focus on three main areas:

- General human resources
- Anti-bullying and harrassment
- Occupational health and safety

Training providers have been confirmed for: anti-bullying and harassment training, strategic succession planning, and performance management and coaching. BC Friendship Centre staff have the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations for topics they are most interested in using a short online form.

## What's Ahead

In the coming year, we hope to increase the number of PR4C members





# Peer Support and Capacity Building

and build a list of trusted consultants that we can call upon to provide specialized support as needed. The current board governance training resources will support centres while the next iteration of the training is developed to reflect an approach rooted in Indigenous knowledge and methodologies. Friendship Centre management will have the opportunity to enroll in the first course offered in the training series, Developing Human Potential: The Future of Human Resource Management, to be completed online through Royal Roads University on May 28.

The implementation of capacity building initiatives within BC Friendship Centres will help us to better serve clients and communities, increase collaboration with partners, and honour the wellbeing of staff.

## Thank You

The PR4C and capacity building initiatives are funded through a combination of Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples Organizational Capacity funding and Provincial Capacity funding.



**Marge White, PR4C Member** offers her experience and expertise to help Friendship Centres overcome obstacles and plan for future goals. Marge is a founding member of the Friendship Centre Movement and provides guidance on the PR4C and Elders Council.



**BCAAFC Member Services Team:** Dalious McCullough (Program Assistant), Vanessa Daniel (Contract Administrator), Kim Hayward (Member Services Manager), Terri Stachowicz (Contract Administrator), and Melissa Reinhardt (Research and Data Analyst).





# Student Supported Learning Program

The Student Supported Learning Program (SSLP) provides financial support for underrepresented youth who need access to equipment and resources to support their education.

The funding was delivered through the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) as part of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. The BCAAFC administered the funding to Friendship Centres to support urban Indigenous students in their communities with the transition to online learning during physical distancing measures due to COVID-19.

SSLP funds were distributed under three categories:

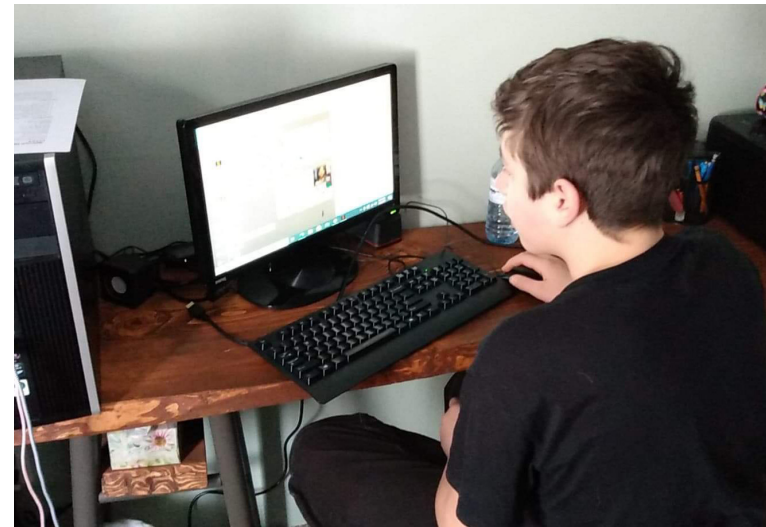
- Hardware, such as laptops, speakers, webcams, and microphones.
- Software and/or learning subscriptions, such as Zoom, Adventure Academy, and Microsoft Word.
- Mentoring, including tutors, Elders, and cultural teachers or knowledge keepers for meaningful learning supports.

## What's Ahead

The SSLP project completes in June of 2021. Informal feedback from Friendship Centres indicates that this funding positively contributed to students transition to online learning. At this time, it is not confirmed that the project will renew.

## Thank You

This funding was provided by Employment and Social Development Canada through the NAFC.





**Emergency COVID Relief Funds for Students**

**60** students recieved a one-time payment of \$900 from BCAAFC on behalf of Indigenous Services Canada.

These funds helped students who needed additional financial support in order to continue their studies successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding focused on three main areas:

- **Counselling, mental health, and wellness**
- **Technology needs to support students switching to online schooling**
- **Additional tuition and/or living allowance support for extenuating circumstances**

# Education

**Post-Secondary Student Support Program**

The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) provides eligible First Nation students with funding to access education opportunities at the post-secondary level, including university and college entrance preparation programs.

This funding is prioritized to cover the costs of tuition, fees, and books for as many applicants as possible. If there are remaining funds, then a living allowance may be provided to successful applicants based on financial need.

**Inuit Post-Secondary Strategy**

Beginning in September 2020, the Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy (IPSE) took full effect, meaning all Inuit students could now access financial assistance for their post-secondary education through their land claims agreement service provider.

The BCAAFC Education Department worked closely with Inuit Tapirit Kanatami to ensure a smooth transition for all Inuit students who were previously funded through PSSSP. The BCAAFC Education Department continued to distribute funding for Inuit students through the summer 2020 semester, then assisted them in getting connected with the

appropriate IPSE administrator for all future funding applications.

**Major Accomplishments**

The BCAAFC Education Coordinator worked to update the PSSSP application process, making it more clear, accessible, and transparent for students. This included creating a new application form that was easier to navigate, as well as updating the website content with clear and comprehensive information about the program.

**Growth and Improvement**

To be eligible for PSSP funding, First Nation students must be registered Status Indians who do not have band membership, and are thus ineligible to apply for band funding. The eligibility requirements set by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) are difficult to interpret, and cause a great deal of confusion for prospective applicants. Each students’ circumstances are unique, and it can be very challenging to determine eligibility when there are various factors at play. The BCAAFC Education Department is working with ISC to

facilitate these changes to better serve students in the future.

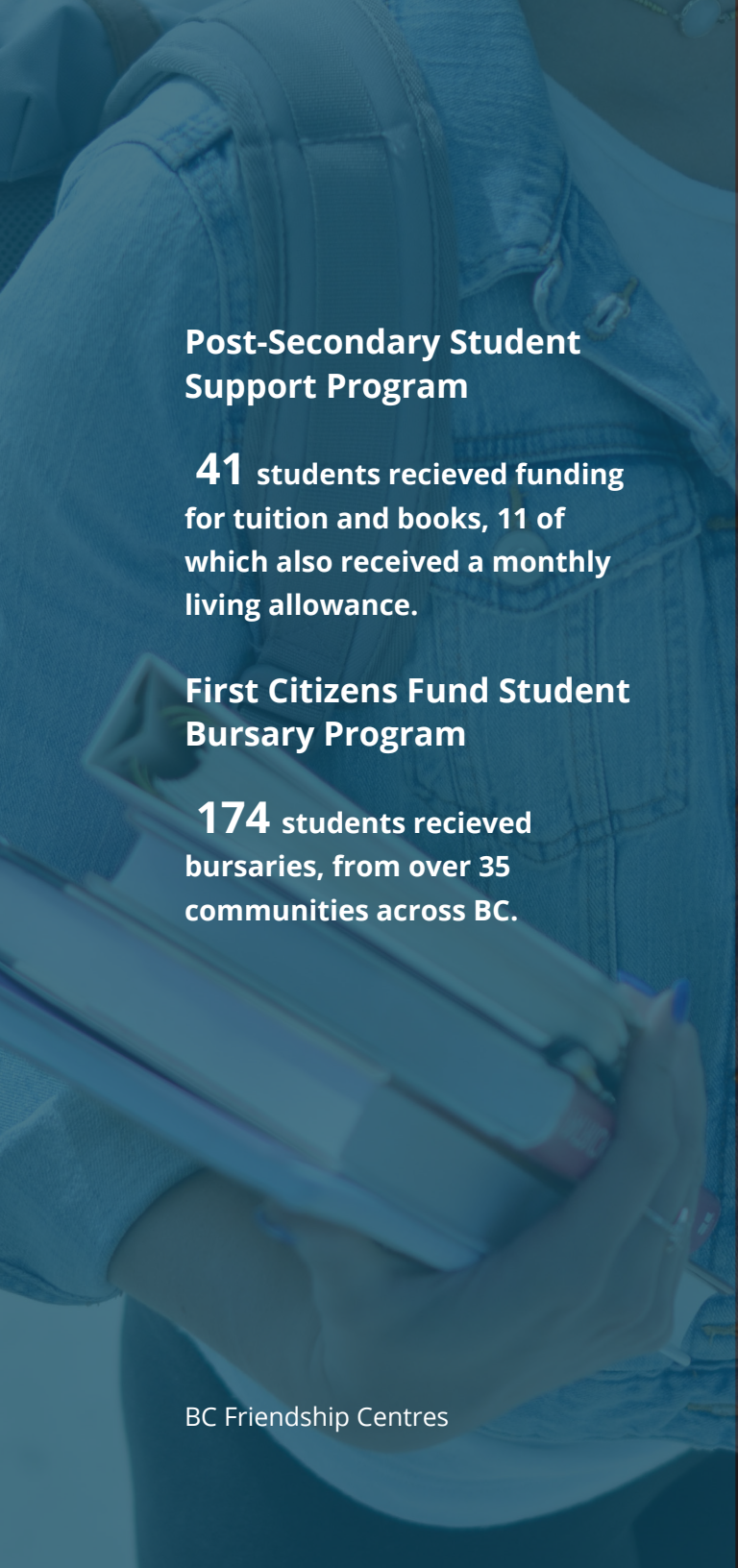
**What’s Ahead**

The 2020-21 fiscal year marked the end of a five-year contract with ISC, which was renewed for another five years. The funding amount per year will be confirmed on a year-by-year basis for the duration of the contract.

**Thank You**

This funding is made possible by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).





**Post-Secondary Student Support Program**

**41** students recieved funding for tuition and books, 11 of which also received a monthly living allowance.

**First Citizens Fund Student Bursary Program**

**174** students recieved bursaries, from over 35 communities across BC.

# Education

**First Citizens Fund Student Bursary Program**

The First Citizens Fund (FCF) Student Bursary Program provides financial awards ranging from \$700 to \$1,200 to eligible Indigenous students enrolled in post-secondary education.

First Nation students who do not have Status are eligible for this funding with a letter of support from their Indigenous community. The BCAAFC Education Department continually receives letters of appreciation from FCF recipients, which demonstrates the value of funding that is accessible to non-Status students.

**Major Accomplishments**

Through collaboration with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) we removed two of the eligibility requirements that were proving to be an unnecessary barrier to many students; namely that applicants must be full-time students and that they must be registered in a minimum two-year program. In our experience administering the funding, we found there are often applicants who are in professional certificate programs and trades programs that are less than two full years, as well as people who are required to split their time between work and school for financial and/or family reasons. It was evident that these two eligibility requirements were a barrier for

students who needed the financial support the most, and who were working hard to further their education while juggling other responsibilities.

We also shifted the evaluation process to a more equitable model, evaluating applications primarily based on financial need and access to financial resources in conjunction with merit, instead of evaluating on a first-come-first-serve basis.

This was a unique year because we had a temporary increase in the First Citizens Student Bursary Program budget due to carry-forward from previous years and because we were able to transfer surplus from the PAYC budget. Because of this increase, we were able to support almost every student that applied, close to three times as many people as we would normally be able to support with our typical yearly budget.

**Growth and Improvement**

Feedback indicates that awarding the FCF bursaries prior to the start of a school year/semester, instead of after, would help students with financial planning

for their school year. We are currently negotiating this change with MIRR.

Additionally, an increase in the funding available for bursaries would allow us to support more students. There is a high demand for financial support for Indigenous post-secondary students, especially for those that do not have Indian Status. We received a total of 189 applications for this fiscal year, and were able to provide funding to 174 students.

**Thank You**

The First Citizens Fund Student Bursary Program is provided through funding from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.



# BC Indigenous Youth 3C Challenge

The BC Indigenous Youth 3C Challenge provides training to Indigenous youth, ages 15-29, to start and run their own small business. Participants learn the basics in sales, marketing, financial literacy, and working as a team. Youth gain valuable, broadly applicable skills that support them in achieving their career, education and life goals.

## Major Accomplishments

The 3C Challenge successfully pivoted to an online delivery model at the onset of COVID-19, with minimal interruption to the program. Consequently, we were able to offer the program to youth who were isolated at home and remove the geographical barriers that existed when the program was delivered in-person by region. As a result, we saw an increase in the number of participants who successfully completed the program.

**226** Indigenous youth participants in the 2020-21 fiscal.

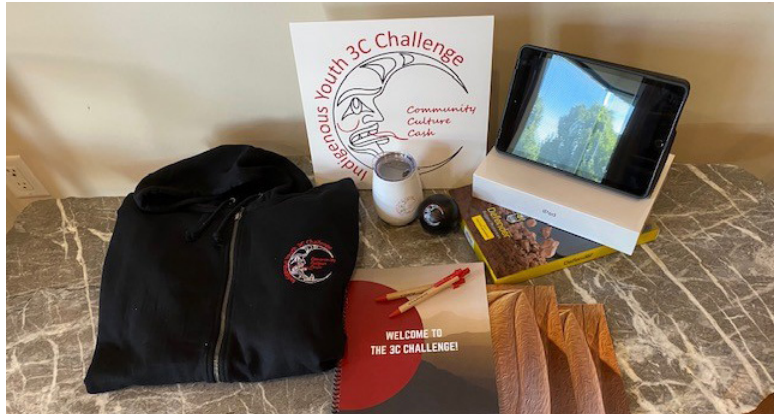
**24** Challenge cohorts were hosted online.

## What's Ahead

There will be 11 more 3C cohorts before the program is completed on August 31, 2021. Ideally, the program will serve as a model for expansion to deliver similar training experiences all across Canada.

## Thank You

The 3C Program is delivered in partnership with the University of Victoria Gustavson's School of Business and the National Consortium of Indigenous Economic Development, with funding from Service Canada.



The 3C Challenge participant welcome kits include an iPad, workbook, apparel, and other branded SWAG.

# The 3C Challenge - Indigenous Youth Owned Companies



**Blue Moon Bath**  
Bath salts



**Spirit Design Co.**  
Apparel



**Three Sisters Seed Co.**  
Seed kits



**Bangin' Bannock**  
Frybread mix



**The Historical Natives**  
Podcast



**Turtle Island Puzzles**  
Educational puzzles



# Employment, Life Skills, and Training

The Employment, Life Skills, and Training (ELST) program builds off the previous success of the Northern Corridor Initiative that delivered employment services in seven Northern Friendship Centres (Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Smithers).

The ELST program is delivered in 14 Friendship Centres, including the previous seven Northern Corridor Friendship Centres, and supports an additional stand-alone program, Introduction to Commercial Screenprinting, at Wachiay Friendship Centre.

An ELST Employment Coordinator in each of the centres delivers a mix of one-on-one client services, and/or multi-week cohort programming, depending on the needs of the community. Wachiay’s Introduction to Commercial Screenprinting is a multi-week program that helps artists develop the technical and entrepreneurial skills to launch their own business.

Through ELST funding, Friendship Centres provide a culturally safe environment that reduces barriers to

employment, life skills and training services for urban Indigenous people. In a single visit, clients may access multiple, in-house, wraparound supports such as addictions and mental wellness counseling, housing assistance, cultural programs, daycares, foodbanks, and more.

A common “domino effect” success story is that a client may come in for one service, but receive in-house referrals for multiple supports, which can lead to sustainable employment, stable housing, children being returned, and families reunited.

### Major Accomplishments

Despite the challenges of COVID restrictions in 2020, seven new ELST Coordinators were hired, eight new programs were developed, and all 15 programs successfully adapted their services to implement COVID safety plans.

Due to the increased demand for services provided by ELST, some programs currently have waitlists, and others are just beginning to reach their full potential as

# Program Highlights

	<b>3225</b> Points of Service		<b>1284</b> Clients
	<b>312</b> Received Gear and Equipment		<b>2056</b> Employment Supports Accessed
	<b>248</b> Cultural Supports Accessed		<b>1022</b> Trainings and Certifications
	<b>408</b> Referrals to In-House Programs		<b>67</b> Educational Upgrades Achieved
	<b>504</b> Life Skills Supports Accessed		<b>240</b> Positive Employment Outcomes



# Employment, Life Skills & Training

they adapt to changing community needs, with a new focus on computer literacy and access to technology, in response to the priorities identified by clients and employers.

## Growth and Improvements

We are excited to see what the ELST programs can accomplish in a broader way once restrictions lift and in-person services can grow.

The ELST program is currently funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. The funding contract ends on June 31, and the intention is to expand funding and programming opportunities.

Stability and employee retention is a huge factor in the success of these programs, as it takes time to gain experience, adjust programming, build community and employer networks, and gain client trust. Long-term funding for ELST programs would be an immense asset going forward.

## Thank You

BC Friendship Centre staff and ELST Coordinators work hard to deliver this programming with funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.



ELST- supported fire suppression training at Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Society (photo credit: Lycrecia Adin).

## Words from Kermode ELST Program Coordinator:

*I had a client that had the full wraparound service from Kermode. They were struggling with mental health, substance misuse, housing stability, employment, and food security.*

*From our outreach department they transitioned into housing, after their food security and mental health was supported, they then secured a place in supportive housing that allowed them to access substance misuse programs and services. They were then recruited as a candidate for our “Ambassador Program” to provide clients space for opportunities to connect with a worker, prepare clients for employment through supervised work experience, engage the homeless population of Terrace in doing productive activity three times per week, and preparing them for sustainable housing status. We introduce clients to life skills e.g. cooking, communication, time management, motivation, team work.*

*This client successfully graduated from the program and became an employee of Kermode Friendship Centre.*



# Leading Indigenous Service Sector Training

The Leading Indigenous Service Sector Training (LISST) program provides funding to increase the number of skilled Indigenous workers in the social services sector.

The LISST program is the result of many years advocating for increased financial support for training opportunities for Indigenous social service workers. The Indigenous social service sector is chronically underfunded despite the tremendous contributions it makes to the social and economic fabric of BC. Providing training to upskill workers will be fundamental to the growth and success of staff, clients, and communities, especially as complex social challenges continue to intensify.

## Major Accomplishments

The BCAAFC LISST Advisory Committee was formed in September 2020, consisting of an Indigenous Elder, youth, and Friendship Centre representatives, as well as representatives from the Provincial Government and BC Federation of Social Services. The LISST Advisory Committee guided the development of the grant process and eligibility.

The LISST Program Manager also participates on a working group of service sector organizations which administer similar funding agreements. The working group shared evaluation questions, which will be compiled from across social service sectors to advocate for continued funding to support staff training opportunities.

- 14** Indigenous staff completed training opportunities supported by LISST funding in the 2020-21 fiscal.
- 6** Communities benefited from the training in Indigenous non-profit organizations serving them.

## What's Ahead

The LISST program is still relatively new, with a soft launch taking place on November 2020. In April of 2021, a LISST Administrative Assistant was hired to support concentrated outreach to Indigenous social service organizations and increase applicants.

Funding will be administered through to March 31, 2022, and an evaluation of the program will help advocate for regular funding renewals to provide LISST funding on a long-term basis and continue to grow capacity in the Indigenous social services sector.

## Thank You

The LISST program is funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.



LISST promotional materials, including posters and brochures, helped inform prospective applicants about the program.



# Urban Indigenous Wellness Report

The BCAAFC released the *Urban Indigenous Wellness Report: A BC Friendship Centre Perspective* on November 23, corresponding with National Addictions Awareness Week— a week dedicated to national conversations on substance use.

The BCAAFC began work on the report in 2019 in response to the pressing mental health and substance use issues – notably the opioid crisis that BC has been facing since 2016 – that disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples living off-reserve and in urban areas.

## A Shared Vision for Wellness

The wellness framework was codeveloped with the 25 Friendship Centres and their networks, it is designed to:

- Provide direction on how governments, partners, and other stakeholders can work together to improve the health and wellness of Indigenous people residing in urban, rural, and off-reserve areas across BC.
- Identify ways to enhance service coordination among various systems and supports culturally-safe

delivery of services.

- Inform future programming decisions to ensure the best use of any available resources, building on the guidance of Friendship Centres.
- Present a shared vision for the future of urban Indigenous wellness programs and services and practical steps towards achieving that vision.

The need for individualized approaches to detox and treatment centres, as well as adequate aftercare and recovery supports, are identified as a high priority within the report.

Friendship Centres are critical to supporting the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples living in urban, rural, and off-reserve areas. Each Friendship Centre provides a safe space for Indigenous people to access information, resources, and receive quality and culturally-safe health and social services. This work provided an opportunity for the BCAAFC to deliver an urban Indigenous health strategy that is informed by the Friendship Centre Movement in BC.

## What's Ahead

The BCAAFC will continue to share the report through presentations and communication briefings to support ongoing discussions about the framework. The framework will outline opportunities to build on strengths and control of resources, in order to strengthen existing wellness programming.

## Thank You

This work was the shared contribution of BC Friendship Centre communities, funded by the Ministry of Health.



The Urban Indigenous Wellness Report is available for download on the BCAAFC website.

## Leslie Varley, Executive Director:

*“The Urban Indigenous Wellness Report is a community-based framework for achieving the actions required to improve health outcomes for urban Indigenous peoples.*

*We know there is a need for Indigenous-specific mental health services, especially for youth, and these programs need to be accessible and affordable. In order to improve the health outcomes for urban Indigenous peoples, systemic change must occur at multiple levels.*

*We encourage all partners and stakeholders to read the Urban Indigenous Wellness Report and implement the recommendations.”*



## Safespace Networks

Patients and providers can use the Safespace web app to share:

- Their personal healthcare experiences.
- Healthcare experiences they have witnessed.
- The experiences of family, friends, and community members that have been shared with them.



# Safespace Networks

The BCAAFC partnered with Safespace Networks to offer Indigenous people a safe alternative to reporting a health system concern. Safespace is an Indigenous-led initiative, founded by Dr. Alika Lafontaine and Dr. Kamea Lafontaine in 2019 with the vision of a social enterprise and learning platform for patient advocacy.

## Sharing an Experience With Safespace

Indigenous people can make a report using the Safespace web app online or participating in a virtual sharing circle facilitated by the Safespace Network team. Participants can share their personal healthcare experiences, healthcare experiences they have witnessed, or the experiences of family, friends, and community members that have been shared with them. All information collected through Safespace is anonymized for participants' protection. The data collected is owned by Indigenous people and can be used to identify priority areas for system change and provide information to patients that can help them make decisions about their care providers.

## The Need for an Indigenous-led Method of Reporting Racism in Health

Indigenous patients and providers have voiced longstanding concerns regarding anti-Indigenous racism in the Canadian healthcare system, as evidenced by Dr. Janet Smylie in the 2015 publication, *First peoples,*

*Second Class Treatment: the Role of Racism in the Health and Wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples*, and further affirmed in Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's 2020 report, *In Plain Sight*. It is clear the existing internal processes for monitoring and addressing racism within healthcare systems function primarily to defend health care institutions. If a complaint received through the healthcare system is addressed it often involves an individually-focused solution and does not result in true system change.

The need for independent, Indigenous-led mechanisms for reporting racism is clear in other service areas as well. The BC Human Rights Tribunal (BCHRT)'s 2020 report *Expanding our Vision: Cultural Equality & Indigenous Peoples Human Rights* details how Indigenous persons have been silenced and recognizes the absence of culturally appropriate and accessible services.

## What's Ahead

Safespace Networks is a patient-centred model and provides value to patients from the knowledge network they've contributed to. The next phase of the Safespace Networks project will share the anonymized data

collected in an interactive map format that will help Indigenous patients make decisions about healthcare providers. In this phase, patients and providers can expand on the experiences shared by others, building a sense of community and accountability. The patterns of care established will help identify priority areas for change within the healthcare system.

In addition to the online web app, Safespace Networks hosts virtual sharing circles and drop-in conference lines. Moving forward, there will be an increase in alternative methods for sharing to the network, including in-person sharing with trusted individuals at BC Friendship Centres.

## Thank You

We are deeply grateful for our partnership with Safespace Networks. Thank you to the Resilience BC Community Conveners Pilot Project for funding to support the advancement of this work.





# Doulas for Aboriginal Families

The Doulas for Aboriginal Families Grant Program (DAFGP) aims to address health inequities related to birth and increase healthy birth and post-partum outcomes by lowering barriers to accessing doula care for Indigenous families.

Doula care has been documented to lead to improved outcomes for birthers and their babies. For Indigenous families, this is especially important given the disparities that exist in healthcare services and outcomes for Indigenous people. Providing doula care is a way of promoting improved health for Indigenous people right from birth.

## Circles of Birth Keepers

The Circles of Birth Keepers project supports Indigenous culture in birth by strengthening Indigenous traditional and ceremonial practices and protocols related to birth and new life, which have been negatively impacted through the policies and processes of colonization.

This project will enable birth ceremonies by providing funding for cultural supplies and honorariums, connecting birthers with Indigenous doulas, and bringing Elders and Knowledge Keepers into the circle to care for Indigenous families.


## Major Accomplishments

- Circles of Birth Keepers programs running through: Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre, Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society and Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association.
- Co-hosted the Indigenous Birth Workers Forum
- Doubled the number of Indigenous doulas registered to the program by removing the requirement for certification through non-Indigenous oriented organizations, which created a barrier for many Indigenous birth workers.
- Full spectrum doula care is now recognized and supported by the grant.







2020-21 Program Statistics



**423**  
Indigenous  
Families



**282**  
Doulas Registered



**71**  
Communities  
Reached



# Doulas for Families

**What’s Ahead**

Going forward, the DAFGP Program Coordinator is looking to evaluate doula pay rates to support pay equity in the program. Additionally, an evaluation of population needs will support the case for an increase in the grant amount provided for each birth. There is evidence that increasing the grant amount to cover \$1,000 towards birth doula services and another \$1,000 towards postpartum doula services would have a significant, positive impact on families by providing additional support for the transition period that comes after birth.

**Thank You**

The Doulas for Aboriginal Families Grant Program is delivered in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and the BC Ministry of Health, with funding from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

**Words from a DAFGP family:**

*Having a doula completely changed the course of my pregnancy and postpartum life. As a result of having my doula I was able to switch from my GP, who was not providing me with proper care. Instead, I had midwives for my birth and was able to have a home water birth. She supported me a lot while I waited to give birth, I was 42 weeks, 4 days when I finally delivered. That was a very stressful and difficult time for me.*

*[Our doula] is a person that I will be forever grateful for. She hugged me while I cried during those very difficult first few weeks. She helped me find my footing in being a mother. She means a lot to me. There’s no way I’d be who I am today without her. I can still go to her with questions or share wins and challenges with her.*

*I’m so grateful to this program for giving me this opportunity. Thank you.*



# Child Care Programs

## Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP) and Aboriginal Supported Child Development (ASCD)

Together, Aboriginal Infant Development Programs (AIDP) and Aboriginal Supported Child Development Programs (ASCD) support Indigenous children and families and child care workers. The AIDP/ASCD Provincial Office Team supports program and service delivery, coordinates community training opportunities, and advocates for funding and improvements towards Indigenous-specific child care. The BCAAFC has held the contract for the AIDP/ASCD Provincial Office for 15 years, since February 2006.

### AIDP/ASCD Staff

- Diana Elliott, Provincial Advisor, AIDP
- Jackie Watts, Provincial Advisor, ASCD
- Jessica Mugford, Administration Assistant, AIDP/ASCD Provincial Office



The AIDP supports children up to age five. Support includes early identification of need and early intervention for children at risk of developmental challenges. The program connects children and their families with the resources they need for positive childhood development.

The ASCD program supports children up to age 12, in some cases up to age 19. The program promotes inclusive child care and early intervention and support for children with special needs.

### Major Accomplishments

This past year, the AIDP celebrated its 30th year anniversary. The program had its beginnings in the Cowichan Tribes. The phrase *'I tst 'o' hwun' 'l*, meaning “We Are Still Here” in the language of the Cowichan Tribes, serves as a fitting sentiment to the milestone. The team hopes to commemorate the accomplishments of the past 30 years at an in-person gathering in 2022.

# *‘I tst ‘o’ hwun’ ‘l* “We Are Still Here”

The AIDP/ASCD Provincial Office and Regional Advisors worked to support the transition to online service delivery and COVID-19 safe practices. There was a focus on professional development opportunities, with an increase in funds available due to COVID-19 restrictions that prevented travel for in-person meetings.

## 55 Child care workers completed Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) training offered by AIDP/ASCD.

In addition to ASQ Training, the AIDP/ASCD Provincial Office also provided home visiting training sessions to AIDP/ASCD professionals, and regular support through an increase in online communication and engagement opportunities.

The provincial office team continued participation on a number of committees, including two new committees, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Executive Committee for the University of British Columbia, and the Ministers Advisory Council for Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN MAC).





## Top Eight AIDP/ASCD Programs and Services:

This year, AIDP and ASCD combined the data collection from programs using Survey Monkey.

The top eight AIDP/ASCD programs and services provided were:

1. **Home Visting**
2. **Developmental Screening**
3. **Parent Programs/Workshops**
4. **Home Visiting to Children**
5. **Culture and Language**
6. **Child Care/Daycare Supports**
7. **Elder Involvement**
8. **Health Fairs**

# Child Care Programs

## Responding to COVID-19

In some cases, AIDP/ASCD services were identified as “non-essential” work, which put significant financial and emotional strain on workers and families. AIDP/ASCD workers strategized to maintain connection with families despite closures, shut downs, and physical distancing measures. The exclusion of AIDP/ASCD from essential service lists amplified the need to change public policy to recognize the value of culturally safe, Indigenous-specific child care and family services.

Food insecurity increased for families as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many families relied on meals provided by daycares, schools, or workshops to help feed their children. AIDP/ASCD programs responded by continuing to provide food boxes, in addition to gift cards from Superstore or Walmart. Any AIDP/ASCD staff who had access to community kitchens used in their regular programming continued to prepare meals and drop them off to families.

## Thank You

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides funding for AIDP/ASCD under two-year contracts. The AIDP/ASCD Team can be reached by phone at 250-388-5593, toll-free 1-866-338-4881. For more information on each program, and their full annual reports, please visit each website at [www.aidp.bc.ca](http://www.aidp.bc.ca) and [www.ascdp.bc.ca](http://www.ascdp.bc.ca).

# 147 BC Friendship Centre Family & Child Care Services



**XaXe STELITKEL Day Care**  
Victoria Native Friendship Centre



**Little Friends Day Care**  
Prince George Native Friendship Centre



**Skəmxist Preschool**  
Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society



**Kermode Daycare**  
Kermode Friendship Society



**ʔiilhmisk ʔaatñaʔis  
“Treasure Our Young Ones”**  
Port Alberni Friendship Center



**Awahsuk Preschool**  
Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association



# Board and Councils 2021

## Board of Directors

Dr. Sharon McIvor, President  
Elijah Mack, Vice President  
Calvin Albright, Secretary  
Fabian Alexis, Treasurer  
Diana Charlie, Youth Representative  
Carol Camille, Director  
Matthew Baran, Director  
Kerry Chelsea, Director  
Tami Omeasoo, Director  
Cerelina Willie, Director  
Patricia Wilson, NAFC BC Representative

## Thank You

We acknowledge with great appreciation the outgoing board members, Shyla Elgie, Debbie Williams, and Joanne Mills. We thank them for their time on the board and wish them the best in their future endeavours. Joanne Mills, Treasurer, was required to end her term on the board early after accepting a new role as Executive Director of Indigenous Relations at Community Living BC. We look forward to continuing our work together in a collaborative relationship.

## Elders Council

Marge White 'Na-cha-uks'  
Basil 'Buzz' Morissette  
Minnie Kenoras  
Laura Fortin  
Wally Samuel  
Stanley Namox

## Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council

Shyla Elgie  
Diana Charlie

## Thank You

We thank the outgoing PAYC members, Elijah Mack, Samantha Jack, and Mikayla Mayner, for their contributions on the council. Elijah Mack continues to serve as Vice President of the BCAAFC Board of Directors.



# Closing Remarks

The Friendship Centre Movement in BC has served Indigenous peoples living in urban communities and away from home for nearly 70 years. Each Friendship Centre is powered by multigenerational relationships, a deep understanding of the communities they are a part of, and a shared commitment to supporting the health, wellness and prosperity of Indigenous peoples.

Today, Friendship Centres provide wraparound programs and services in every area you could think of. This past year, during a global health crisis, the 25 Friendship Centres across the province delivered over 525 programs and provided supports to over 250,000 people. The critical work done in Friendship Centres is representative of Indigenous leadership and a shared belief in taking care of one another.

The BCAAFC will celebrate its 50th Year Anniversary in 2022. As we reflect on all that we have accomplished together, we look forward with strength and determination.

Thank you to the staff, youth, Elders, knowledge keepers, community members and partners who contribute to our vision of a society that is safe, equitable, and supportive of all.



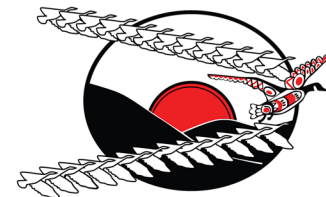
# With Appreciation

## Collectively, BC Friendship Centres Have Over 600 Community Partnerships

Thank you to our many funders and partners. Your financial contributions, collective knowledge and experience, and shared dedication to our cause helps us in the journey towards a vibrant society that supports the health, wellness and prosperity of Indigenous peoples.

## A National Network From Coast to Coast to Coast

We are proud members of the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC). Thank you to the NAFC Team for their guidance, advocacy, and support. We are so grateful for the support and shared success of our growing urban Indigenous family.



**BCAAFC** | BC Association of  
Aboriginal Friendship Centres



**National Association  
of Friendship Centres**

**Mel Basil, Alcohol and Drug Counsellor, Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre:**

*"It's not that it's effortless, it's more that I don't feel like I'm working, because I love what I'm doing."*

*Like I've mentioned to people with our big canoes that we operate in the lake. I'm the skipper in that canoe. When everyone walks away thanking me for the ride in the canoe, I have the opportunity to also thank them. I tell them, 'look at the size of this canoe, I can't move this by myself, you're taking me for a ride'.*

*It is an honour and a pleasure to serve my community in this way."*







**BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres**  
**551 Chatham Street, Victoria, BC V8T 1E1**  
**250-388-5522 | [frontdesk@bcaafc.com](mailto:frontdesk@bcaafc.com) | [www.bcaafc.com](http://www.bcaafc.com)**