



ACTIVE SPIRIT ACTIVE HISTORY

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A culture of sports, activity and well-being among BC First Nations.



FIRST NATIONS HEALTH COUNCIL

Active Spirit, Active History

A culture of sports, activity and well-being among BC First Nations.

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FOREWORD

The First Nations Health Council created this book to collect the stories from First Nations people who have triumphed, mentored, or lead in traditional and non-traditional sports, recreation, fitness, or physical activity. The stories are heartwarming and honest, and are told with pride and triumph. Being physically active brings success over so many challenges and each story is valuable for it reflects our nature to be strong, endure, and to respect others, ourselves and the land.

Traditionally, for subsistence, cultural practice, honor, or enjoyment, First Nations people are physically active. Each First Nation community participates in physical activity and the benefits for health and wellness are abundant and we have captured a diverse number of examples in this book. These stories are about people whose actions have made a positive difference in health and well being, and have also impacted their community and family in a variety of ways.

There are so many untold stories from our communities and this book captured only a few. There was a call out to BC First Nation band offices, organizations, conferences, and at gatherings for people to submit stories for over a two year time period. We would like to thank all the writers and photographers for sharing their work. The willingness to share and send in stories has helped to create legacies that generations after can view as positive role models.

In our communities traditional stories are normally shared orally and unfortunately I was only able to travel to few communities. The interviews that took place were spirit lifting for there was so much to share around positive experiences about hard work, and rewards of being active. The people in the interviews spoke about traditional teachings, residential school, and the challenges faced and the triumphs witnessed to organize programs or to pass on teachings.

All the contributors agree that sports, recreation and physical activity are useful tools to promote relationship building, unity and pride, and this is evident in their stories. The main message is that it takes a community to support healthy lifestyles for youth and it must include many ways to be physically active.

All my Relations,
DR. ROSALIN HANNA

INTRODUCTION

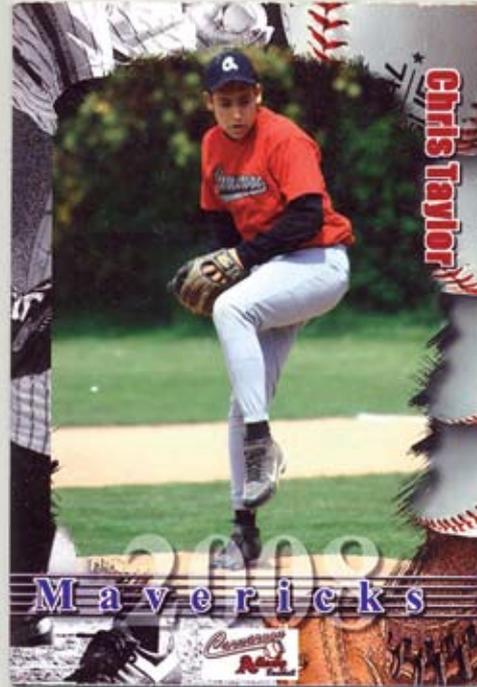
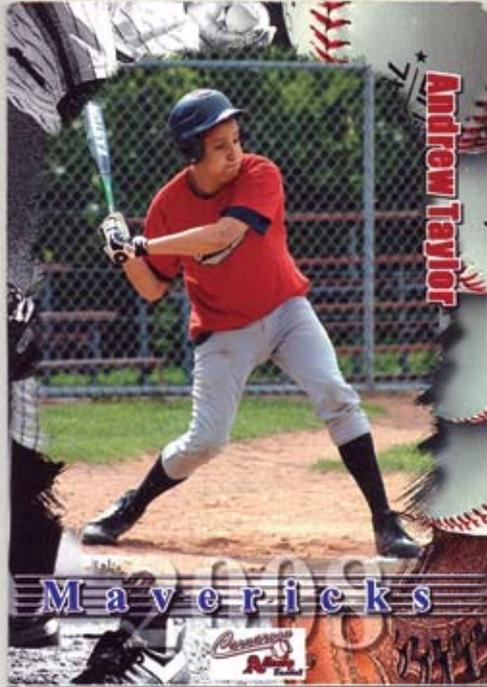
Physical Activity has the ability to empower, motivate and inspire and plays an important role in supporting the development of healthy, confident and resilient First Nations children, families and communities.

BC First Nations enjoy a long and rich history in sports, recreation and physical activity. Our Elders remind us about our teachings and values which help us understand the importance of being strong in mind, spirit and body. Discipline, hard-work, and inner strength continue to be highly valued personal characteristics in our communities and our Nations.

Physical Activity is an act of Nation-building. The fierce rivalries that arise between Nations in Basketball, Lahal, Soccer, Lacrosse, Canoe Pulling and in many other competitive activities are a source of Nation Pride. We show up, we wear our colours and we either soar with victory or are crushed by defeat. Nations continue to build upon their reputations of excellence, these Nations are feared and admired, and their children are supported to continue the tradition.

This book also shares important lessons about support systems. Whether it is the fever pitch of the summer soccer tournament circuit or a grandfather taking his grandson out onto the land, physical activity is about positive interpersonal relationships based on commitment and trust. Behind many of these stories you will find the real heroes of our communities: the husbands and wives, children, cousins, aunts and uncles, cooks and community volunteers. It is often said that it takes a community to raise a child, in our communities where sport is lifeblood it could be said that it takes a community to support an athlete.

Whether it is competitive sport or berry-picking all activity is good activity, and every move that we make is a good one. We move our bodies because our ancestors did, because it is in us to move, and because it feels good. We hope that you enjoy this collection of stories. This book plays homage to our shared legacy; it is not the beginning and certainly not the end. It's a glimpse of who we are, and intended to provide inspiration, for who we want to be.



The most important thing about staying healthy is to be consistent in your diet and take your daily vitamins and to make sure you get enough rest.

Chris & Andrew Taylor

Beecher Bay First Nation

Submitted by Addie Taylor

My journey has been a roller-coaster ever since my 17 year old twins were born with food allergies and asthma. I have been a single mom since Chris and Andrew were three and a half years old. During their early years they had eczema and had to take vitamins every day. My late mother helped me deal with all of their health problems. I was so protective of them, I had them in private kindergarten.

By time they were in Grade 1, I had all their allergies figured out by getting them tested and they could go to public school. Chris and Andrew were allergic to eggs, seafood, nuts, oats, beef, chicken, dairy products, dust, grass, dogs and cats. It was a big challenge keeping Chris and Andrew healthy. We ate a lot of turkey for the first ten years of their lives. We've also had a few scares at the hospital with their asthma being in the red zone.

All of Chris and Andrew's health problems have never stop them from playing sports. They are great athletes who have played sports since they were 8 years old. August is the only month of the year they do not play sports. Chris made the Provincials at 9 years old for Little League Baseball and the following year they both made the Provincials. When the boys were 10 years old, they went to the Coast Salish games and Beecher Bay came first in Basketball even though the boys team only had one girl and the other teams had eight or more players.

Beecher Bay also came in second place in soccer. This was the first time that Beecher Bay came in first and second place in the Coast Salish Games. Chris and Andrew played basketball for the North American Indigenous Games in 2008 and had time of their lives. Last year they made the baseball team for the Victoria All Star Team and came in second place for Vancouver Island. This is their last year for hockey, they play for the Victoria Minor Hockey Association "Ice Hawks." The first chapter of my sons' lives is coming to an end; they are graduating this year. They have brought me so much joy and happiness in watching them play sports. The most important thing about staying healthy is to be consistent in your diet and take your daily vitamins and to make sure you get enough rest.



Barbara Ann Skaling

Moricetown Band

I was living in Vancouver as a single mother of four. I was very lonely and lost. I was going to school, facing financial hardships and struggling with addiction. As they got older, my children became my focus because I realized they are my life, so I returned to work as a Practical Nurse to provide for them. I turned my life around focused on physical fitness and worked two jobs.

While I was in Vancouver I played for competitive and recreational baseball teams (slow pitch), which helped me get my self-worth on track. While I was working at Vancouver General Hospital, my co worker asked me if I ever canoe paddled. At first, I just chuckled and thought "Huh?", and then I thought "Why not?"

Little did I know; it was not as easy as I thought it would be! I joined a recreation team for the first year and was disappointed when I didn't win my first racing event. Then I joined a competitive team called "Dragon Ladies." Through hard work and determination, I succeeded in the time trials (competing against other-teammates) racing in single canoes. I worked hard at weight lifting for endurance, running for leg strength, following a strict diet and abiding by the no alcohol and smoking rules.

My training week consisted of weight lifting 3 to 4 times, swimming once, land training (running) twice, and being in the boat 3 times. I didn't let anything stop me; I persevered and overcame many challenges including having no financial support and working full-time.

My greatest achievement was making it to the First World Championship in China. In order to consider this, you had to train and compete with high-caliber teams like the "Canada A team," which was the False Creek Women, and pay for all of your own training, travel, equipment and clothing. I had no money. but I was determined. I continued to train and made the team!

The day I was chosen, I called my family back and told them about my accomplishment. Community members raised enough funds for me to be able to go to China! We raced in China and in Hong Kong against teams from all over the globe and placed 5th in the world in 1995! I considered myself the first Aboriginal Woman from the small community of Moricetown, BC to succeed in such a sport!

The best part about the Bootcamp
was that Tami modified the
workouts based on the different
fitness levels of the group.

Denise James

Penelakut First Nation

I am in an administrative job because I had a fall from my roof about three years ago. Prior to that I was doing interior finishing and forming and framing. That's how I got started in fitness because I had to go to rehab to get my knee back into place. That started to get costly so they decided to do surgery, but then I didn't have physio.

Then Tami August came along with Tami's Bootcamp. I thought to myself that I didn't want to do it because I didn't know what to expect. I was a bit scared to go, and the first few times that I did go, I almost quit because my knee was so sore. As I progressed, my knee got a bit stronger every time I continued to go.

We did a lot running, cardio and crunches. Tami helped each of us with our diets, which must have been a challenge for her because it was such a diverse group of people and she gave us individual advice based on what our eating habits were. The age range of our group was 16 to 60 years old.

The best part about the Bootcamp was that Tami modified the workouts based on the different fitness levels of the group. There were some people that were really fit, and others that had never really done any fitness activities. She also tailored our individual workouts based on what we were trying to achieve. There were two of us that had bad knees, so she would slowly add exercises that strengthened those areas. Then she would expect more from us, which was good because sometimes we forget to expect more from ourselves.

Before the bootcamp, I had no movement. I could barely walk. Now, I can move, I can even jog, which has been so nice. It also helped me boost my confidence. Now I know I can do things, where before I wouldn't do things because of the pain. Now I expect more from myself and I know my limitations.

The longest I've run so far was 7 kms and I did that in 59 minutes. I want to keep going on the pace I am now. I want to just keep adding kilometres to my run. My next goal is 10 kms and I hope to achieve that in 1 hour and 20 minutes.



Scotty & Maggie Sedgemore and Leah Hubbard

Port Hardy, BC

Submitted by Colleen Martin

My name is Colleen Martin and I was the leader of the 13-week Honour Your Health Challenge in Port Hardy in 2009. I have a love for fitness and healthy living and knew that I could inspire our community to get active and work on goals for better health.

Scotty and Maggie Sedgemore, and Leah Hubbard participated in the Challenge at Port Hardy Secondary School. Scotty and Maggie are Elders in our community. Maggie is a youth counsellor at the school, as well as a wife, mother, grandmother great grandmother and retired nurse; Leah is a teacher at Eke Me-Xi, a young adult program in the Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation community. Scotty is Maggie's husband and is a retired millwright, father, grandfather and great grandfather. The ladies both traditional dance, and Scotty swims weekly with his 5 year old granddaughter, who Maggie and Scotty are currently raising.

Maggie is a true Elder; she is always there for anyone. She feeds our students healthy lunches and snacks daily. She shares her stories of health and how we can make a difference. Her door is open for everyone in our community and she is loved by all.

Both Scotty and Maggie had health issues before they started; they were overweight and could not walk more than one km. Scotty, now 70 years old, had a heart attack at the age of 65, had bilateral knee replacements, and had a right hip replaced. Leah was also overweight and had other health issues.

During the first week of the Challenge, they were all out of breath and had all kinds of aches and pains. There were a total of 20 participants in our group, ranging in age from 17 to 71. We met on a weekly basis for a run or walk, and I gave them a challenge for each week, such as drink 8 glasses of water a day, follow the Food Guide, and try 3 different exercises this week. Everyone really wanted to make a change in their lifestyle and knew that they had to be more active and set eating goals.

After the challenge, they all completed the 10 km Sun Run, lost weight, and their health concerns were all but gone. All of the participants are a huge inspiration on our community; they share their stories of healthy-living with the youth and their families.



We were being taught to be respectful, to be disciplined and develop perseverance.

Dale Campbell

Tahltan First Nation

I was born in Prince Rupert, BC. I am of Tahltan ancestry from Telegraph Creek BC. My Indian name is Talth-ta-ma.

I have been doing Karate since 1980. I was inspired by my brother Terrence Campbell, who had just started learning it. I joined because it sounded like a lot of fun, and a good way to get in shape. At the time, I didn't do a lot of sports and wasn't playing any sports in high school either. To my surprise, I really liked Karate even though it wasn't easy. I'll always remember how stiff I was the morning after my first class; every muscle in my body ached. I soon discovered there was a lot more to Karate than just the physical aspect of it. We were being taught to be respectful, to be disciplined and develop perseverance. There was also a real feeling of camaraderie between the athletes.

When I had earned my green belt, I started competing in the BC Winter Games and the Provincials. We worked hard and trained for months before going to the competitions. My hard work paid off because I always brought medals home. My attitude going into every competition was that I was always going to do my best and see what would happen. The competitions were the most exhilarating experiences; I discovered I loved it!

In 1986 I was asked to participate in the National Native Role Model program that was spearheaded from Kahnawake Quebec. For 6 years I travelled throughout Canada doing workshops on Karate and carving, since I've also been a North Coast carver and artist since 1972. I travelled to some very remote places to teach First Nations children and I've been to many Youth Conferences as well. Most of my workshops were done in their schools; I would share some of my personal experiences in life, and I hoped it would inspire them in some way.

I now have my 3rd degree black belt in Karate. My husband Wade and I run the Prince Rupert Karate club as a non-profit organization. Our head Sensei David Akutagawa lives in Japan and comes to teach us twice a year. All of our instructors teach on a volunteer basis. We teach children aged 8 years and up, as well as an adult class.



Jackie Ross

Lytton First Nation

I was born in Lytton, BC, and I am very proud of my First Nations ancestry. My grandfather was Chief of the Lytton Band for many years. He helped me develop an understanding of the Aboriginal way of life. After taking nurse's training in Prince George—which is where I met my husband—and Dawson Creek, I worked for a time in Surrey. I then moved to Prince George to marry my husband, now of 37 years, and raise our two children.

My husband, Thom, became involved in Special Olympics in 1988. His passion for the organization, which provides sport training and competition for individuals with intellectual disabilities, was infectious and almost immediately I found myself equally involved. Our children also became volunteers so it was a family affair—something we could all do together.

The Special Olympics' emphasis on participation was a refreshing change from the mainstream emphasis on winning. I tell my athletes if they go into a competition and give 100% and finish last, I am still as proud of them as if they finished first. When you see the courage and determination on the faces of these dedicated athletes during an event, you understand!

To me, Special Olympics is not just a sporting organization—it is a way of life. The athletes are taught sport skills along with sportsmanship, nutrition, mental skills, and social skills and it is an avenue to compete, travel, and establish and maintain lifelong friendships with their peers. We teach them that through hard work, dedication, and perseverance there are no limits. They will all experience the joy of training and competition.

I've been involved with Special Olympics for over 20 years and have many great memories. I remember at one track meet held in Prince George, there was a Special Olympics athlete from William's Lake who had very limited skills and the longest race he could run was 50m. There was no one he could compete against in that race so the coaches ran the race with him. The smile on his face as he crossed the finish line in first place is etched in my heart forever. The crowd of Special Olympics athletes, generic athletes, and spectators went wild. What a great example of winning through sport!

Why am I in Special Olympics? I guess you could spell it out in two words—love and respect. Love of the athletes, love of competition, love of the thrill of seeing athletes excel, and love of the organization that does so much for those with intellectual disabilities. Respect must be earned. It is never a given and I feel I have the respect of the athletes in my care and I strive to maintain that quality in my daily life. Special Olympics has changed me because it has changed the way I perceive others. It has given me the tools to look on life with a new focus. As long as I am having fun doing what I am doing and as long as the athletes continue to respond as they have, I will be here.

Julie Jacques

Takla Lake First Nation

Submitted by Bonnydale Pierre

I have always been a busy, hardworking person. At 70 years old, I still like to get out and do things, especially traditional activities that I feel were designed to keep us active. I live in the shadow of the animals who guide me in trapping and hunting activities that keep me fit and able-bodied. It's when a person stops doing these things that they start to act old! I pass my teachings onto my daughters, grandchildren, and several of the youth here in my village by taking them out camping. I get out around Takla Lake, Hogum Landing, and in the Germanesen-Manson Creek region in northern BC.

Winter doesn't stop me from doing what I enjoy. I set rabbit snares in over a foot of snow and check them quite often before a hungry lynx or coyote steals from my snares. I also go ice fishing for lingcod in January. My grandson Daniel helps me cut the hole in the ice. In the winter months I also trap, which requires a lot of energy to walk with snowshoes and carry packs that get heavy if I trap anything.

In the spring months before the snow and ice are gone I hunt for beavers and sometimes will set snares for them.

In the summer and fall there is so much to do. I still hike to the mountains to set groundhog snares. Last year I hiked to the top of the mountain I had climbed with my great granddaughter Sariah when she was only two!

The tanning of moose hides takes a lot of physical work to complete and I enjoy the challenges this brings. I taught my granddaughters Morgan and Ashley to do hides.

I also set nets for fish in the lake. It is not unusual to see me over my knees in mountain valley creek netting salmon in late summer to fall. This is a lot of work and the creek water is quite cold but in the end it is a lot of fun and well worth the effort come dinner time.

One time I visited relatives in a neighbouring community and participated in their Cultural Day activities. It took me 22 seconds to gut a salmon.

I gather berries in the summer and medicines throughout the year that require a lot of walking. I have a favourite spot for growing potatoes and onions on my trap line that is away from the house; however, I admit the bears tend to dig up my seed potatoes before they have a chance to grow! That doesn't stop me from planting though.

I still traditional dance too at ceremonies. I also walk daily. Whenever I visit my daughters in the city I always make the time to go for long walks. I enjoy doing these activities so much that I don't feel like it is exercise at all. I have a family history of heart disease and feel that keeping active has helped me to have a healthy heart at my age.

**At 70 years old, I still like to
get out and do things, especially
traditional activities that I feel
were designed to keep us active.**



Lorraine Mundy

Ucluelet First Nation

One day my son said to me, "Mom, we should run the Edge-to-Edge Marathon."

"A marathon? Are you kidding? Do you know how much training is involved? Do you know how out of shape I am?" I asked.

My son, Jack, is not shy about telling me things. I was gradually getting the middle-age spread. Jack challenged me in February 2007 to run a marathon. I remember telling him I have always wanted to run a marathon, but was never motivated enough to do it (proof that I wanted to run a marathon lay in pages of my journal from February 2001).

So, I accepted the challenge and began training with my son and jogged 3 kms a day. I went to the Running Room for tips and advice, to my doctor about beginning a rigorous exercise regime, and I read information on the Internet about training for a marathon.

Running gives me more energy because I sleep soundly for seven hours instead of the five or six I was getting before training. I also lost 30 lbs. Running is therapeutic. It is great for stress release and helps me let go of day-to-day issues because I realize everything will work out.

I jogged the Edge-to-Edge Half-Marathon, the Royal Victoria Half-Marathon and the full Seattle Marathon (26.2 miles!) in 2007. I also fundraised for the BC Cancer Foundation's Tour of Courage, which was in September 2007. I raised more than \$2,700 for the BC Cancer Foundation and cycled 60 kms in the Vancouver area. Lance Armstrong, cancer survivor and seven time Tour de France winner, was in attendance for the event. It was an awesome experience.

I'm currently enlisted in Team Diabetes and hope to raise my target of \$6,100 for the Team so I can run in the Honolulu, HI Marathon. I will be cycling from Ucluelet to Port Alberni on September 20, 2010 and from Port Alberni to Nanaimo on September 21, 2010 to raise awareness of Diabetes, as the disease affects First Nations people three to four times more than the general population.

The benefits of exercise are tremendous. The difficult part is making the change. But once you begin eating right and exercising, your mind becomes clearer and focused. Thank you to my son for inspiring and motivating me!



Suzanne Johnson

Penticton Indian Band

As a baby I was born with a congenital heart defect that required surgical repair, but in the early 70's the surgery was not available in Canada. The solution was not to let me exert myself or get too worked up. I was told what I couldn't do and when I chose to believe this it had a significant power over my life.

I was 27 years old when I realized I needed to get into shape. After a couple of years I was doing pretty good and decided to join a karate class. Karate is a perfect mind-body balancing activity that allows for great physical training, along with some meditative elements that require deep concentration. It was after one of those great physical trainings that my congenital heart defect decided it could compensate no longer.

I ended up needing surgery to repair the defect. The miracle of this is actually beyond words. I became the 33rd case in Canada to have that particular procedure done. After a month in the hospital and three surgeries in total, I began my next training program. It started with six very slow, five minute walks each day down the long halls of the hospital and progressed to three still pretty slow 10 minute walks each day by the time I returned home. Gradually, I increased my walking time and speed, so that I was able to complete the Vancouver Sun Run 10K in 2001 in 97 minutes. At the next years Sun Run I did a walk/run in 78 minutes and I have been participating in that race every year since.

I have had the great opportunity to share my passion for health and fitness with my community by volunteering as walk leader to encourage and support others to get out, try something new and take on their own challenges towards better health and fitness. I also had the great opportunity to join a good friend in achieving one her life goals and together we completed our first half-marathon a year ago.

I was starting from scratch after the heart surgery and I could really tell the impact of missing a day or two in the schedule. Now that I am at a greater fitness level, I am so pleased that missing a day to two, or a week, hasn't totally thrown my efforts out the door and I am motivated to continue to do more each time. I haven't ruled out doing a marathon, and if I don't, I am going to be satisfied knowing that every day I do something that is good for me physically.



Chuck Holmes Sr.

Upper Similkameen Indian Band

Submitted by Charlotte Mitchell

Chuck was physically-disabled due to many years of working at a mine site in the mountains. He was put on disability and was no longer able to work. He couldn't walk without the aid of a cane, and his back was bowed so he couldn't stand up straight. He also had balance issues and nearly lost his driving privileges due to his "physical conditions." He also had trouble navigating stairs and if he fell down, he couldn't get up without help. He's had this condition for about 10 years and had become a bit of a hermit; spending his time on the Internet or watching TV.

Three years ago we invited him to join our kids' summer program as the group's male chaperone. He enjoyed the outings and learned so much that first summer that he asked if it was possible to come along on all future field trips. We were more than happy to have him. He has come a long way.

Last year we canvased our community for new participants for the Honour Your Health Challenge. We had our community's Sun Run team speak about their experiences; the response was great! We started out with 22 participants and ended up with 15; one of them was Chuck. He was 50 years old at the time.

He started out walking with our group and he trained really hard. He walked every day, because he was determined to do well at the Sun Run event. Sometime later in our training sessions, he decided he wanted to run for part of the event. He really surprised me! I wasn't sure if he could run, but he worked hard and was able to do the walk-run sessions.

He did so well with his training that he was able to stop using his cane by the end of the 13 week training. Not only that, but he completed the Sun Run! Chuck still has some balance issues, but it is not as debilitating as it was before he started training. Since the Challenge, he is able to get around much better.

He is an inspiration to many of us who are "couch potatoes." Chuck helps us get motivated to keep up with "active" living. He trains every week; he walks a lot and is looking forward to participating in the 2010 Sun Run.

Support from my family,
practicing my spirituality,
and dancing keeps
me mentally strong.

Lucy Barney

T'it'q'et (Lillooet) First Nation

I participate in Traditional Women Dancing all across British Columbia, Washington, Idaho and New Mexico. It boosts my physical fitness and helps positively affect my mind and spirit. My story incorporates the mind, body and spirit. Each of these is represented when we braid our hair. The braid has three strands: one representing the mind, the spirit and the body. Each side has significance. When we braid our left side, we pray for our ancestors, and when we braid our right side, we pray for our future.

My beaded regalia weighs 65 lbs. Each session dance lasts approximately 30 minutes (dancing two to three times). Grand Entry can sometimes take an hour, while Intertribal dances can include one to 10 dances. There are five sessions in a weekend. Whether we are dancing in our own category, grand entry or intertribal, the dances can last up to 360 minutes, which ensures plenty of physical activity.

Inspired by the beauty of one woman's stately traditional dance, I approached her and asked if she would share the dance steps. Grateful to her when she agreed and taught me the steps, I offered her tobacco and a small gift as a token of my heart-felt appreciation for her time and wisdom. As First Nation people, we learn by seeing and doing and I continue to learn by paying close attention to my surroundings.

Making regalia is a family affair and everyone who wants to learn and help are encouraged to come and make regalia with us. I have seen the most beautiful regalia all throughout North America, and it is because of them that I am inspired to continually improve my own regalia. The two fully-beaded regalia that I have now were made by my partner, my son, my sister, and myself.

While we are making outfits and before we put them on to dance, we smudge each piece to ensure that we will use our regalia for their specific purposes. Our "old people" tell us some people carry bad medicine, such as, jealousy, hate and anger. Where I come from, we are taught to put on a piece of red material in case someone is practicing bad medicine. The red material provides protection so the bad medicine will bounce away from us.

Support from my family, practicing my spirituality, and dancing keeps me mentally strong.



Georgia Adel Jules

Skeetchestn Indian Band

Submitted by Donna Jules

Georgia started in Taekwondo when she was about 4 years old. She stayed with it until she got to high school and ended up going to the World Championship in Florida. She fundraised herself; she did a lot of fundraising. She also got a lot of help from family members and the Tribal Council. Once she reached high school, school activities started to take over.

Georgia was into basketball and helped organize a girl's team because there was no team for them at the time at Chase Secondary. She also played Volleyball until Grade 11. Georgia got back into Taekwondo after that, and eventually took up curling. She played on a men's team, and she was also on the seniors' team because they needed someone younger. She was at the curling rink four days a week after school but she really enjoyed it.

Georgia then got on a women's team and went to a huge Metis tournament in Winnipeg with the team, but also took a youth team that she helped fundraise to get them there. She also got involved in Bonspiel and went all over BC with that. She bowled with a Jules team in Chase when she could. She tries to run at least 3 miles a day. She doesn't do anything halfway.

Three years ago, she got into the Armed Forces. She is preparing for Infantry training soon and is excited about going to Afghanistan. Georgia is also fluent in Secwepemc from being in an Immersion program since she was very young. She can talk to Elders and carry on conversation, she connects with them well.

When she was really little, I told her she had to be involved in something to keep herself busy. When she was 10 or 11 years old she began to realize why it was important to stay active because she saw her friends start getting involved with partying. She saw how they stayed out all night, but she was in bed by 8 pm because she always had somewhere to be first thing in the morning.

She is a very responsible person, and she is extremely focused. Seeing her as a young woman today and seeing her try so hard has been the biggest thing for me. I am so proud of her. I enjoy seeing her have the pride in everything she does. I know that she is on the right path and that is something I will always cherish.



Dave Robinson

Timiskaming First Nation

Submitted by Carrie Robinson

When I was younger, I used to hear Dave's pucks slamming against our garage door at the same time every morning and I would know that I could sleep in for another half hour. The beats would remind me of his heart because they were so reliable. His heart beats with fortitude whether he's playing hockey, boxing, running marathons, coaching or interacting with his community and family.

I used to pretend that my brother's slap shots were powerful enough to have called the sun to visit me. I'd climb the cold morning stairs on my tipped toes to peek through the back door and always find the morning sun touching me. Together the sun and I would watch Dave's pucks hit each corner of the hockey net over and over again until breakfast.

I'm older now and my brother's heart is still strongly intact. He is still my hero; I don't admit it out loud anymore, but I'm sure you can see it in my eyes. Dave has been playing hockey since he was 6 years old. He played hockey right up to the junior level. Dave also boxed competitively to win provincial championships.

Now, in his twenties, he lives to box, Crossfit train, coach and run marathons. With every 42 kms completed, and every boxing match won, he calls the sun up again and it shines on him in my eyes.

When he boxes, he shifts back and forth in his boxing shoes as the crowd cheers him on. He is focused and determined as he follows the path to the ring. I watch him with pride because he makes sure to bow in four directions to channel his strength before the fight. During the match, he never gets tired, he never gets scared, and he focuses on winning. At the end of every fight he gives thanks to everyone and I see that his heart loves like his body fights: tirelessly.

Every Sunday he piles my family into his truck and drives us to a mountain trail for a morning run. When I can't run for myself, I try to run for Dave. It means something to him that he doesn't express in words. I hear it in his steps and in his breath as he doubles back to check on everyone. Even now, he still has the power to make the sun rise every Sunday morning.



David Louie

Canoe Creek First Nation

Submitted by Darlene Louie

My husband David comes from Canoe Creek and was raised traditionally by his grandparents. From an early age, his grandfather taught him everything there was to know about hunting and fishing so he could hunt and fish for his family.

David was taught how to ride horses at an early age. He liked to go hunting or fishing on horseback. He was also taught to hunt on foot and could walk for miles. The whole countryside was his backyard. He knew where the best places were to hunt, and he knew how to track the deer and moose.

In the spring, he heads to Tsepeten to fish for trout. He loves trout fishing so he will get around 100 fish to bring home for the community. A long time ago, these trout would have been dried on racks but today most people put them in the freezer.

Summertime is for salmon fishing and David will go to the Fraser River to dip net for salmon. Unfortunately, salmon is not his favourite so he will bring home about a dozen fish and say that's all he needs.

David and I have been married 35 years and together we have raised 16 children. We are blessed with 10 boys and six girls. David passed everything he was taught about hunting and fishing on to his sons. He taught all the boys about fire-arm safety, hunting, looking for deer or moose sign, making sure they knew to only take what they needed, the importance of sharing with the elders, and how to dry meat.

All of David's boys were raised to be physically fit and walk for miles to hunt. These days, he doesn't have many horses, so the boys all walk hunt. They were taught to be up and out of the house by 5 a.m. and be on the mountains or river country by the time the sun comes up.

His sons are all grown but they return every chance they get just to hunt with their dad. Every summer he heads to the mountains to hunt with them. Every fall they camp out for the weekend to hunt somewhere.

David has been blessed with two die-hard hunters who love to spend time with him. Our sons Willis Louie and John Duncan are proud of their dad and want the world to know what he has done for them.

I love singing.

My mother taught both my sister and I.

We keep that as our cherished memory of our mom.

Wetsuweten Heartbeat Drummers

Moricetown Band

Submitted by Helen Nikal

Our drum group, the Wetsuweten Heartbeat Drummers started back in 1987 with young children. We taught them how to drum and sing and we had the parents make them blankets. We were teaching the kids about which clan they each belonged to. The drum group started out with five women and one man back then.

We have been performing together for over 20 years and some of my favourite memories are getting together with other nations in New Aiyansh, Prince Rupert and Terrace. When the kids are in school so we don't have much time with them to practice. The drummers keep busy by going to various functions in the community, such as feasts, gatherings, conferences and Culture Week.

When the kids are out of school, we usually practice on Tuesdays. We've got a different building ready for when they are done school, so we will probably start practicing twice a week. During the summer, it gets harder to get everyone together because some of the kids are in baseball or other sports. We have kids as young as Grades 3 and 4 that travel with the drummers to the out of town events. One of our language teachers came with us, so we had 7 people in our group, which was quite a few people travelling and performing together.

When the Torch Relay came through our community, we had the older dancers participating in our performance, and all the high Chiefs had their blankets and participated well.

I love singing. My mother taught both my sister and I. We keep that as our cherished memory of our mom. I'd like for the dancers in our group to get together and start doing more travelling and go to places that our kids have never seen before. We get invited to places such as Vancouver, and Prince George, so it would be nice to show the young kids some of those things. My sister and I also do a lot of traditional medicine. She works with the medicine and I talk about our blankets and our culture.

It is important to teach the young kids about our culture and our songs and dances because a lot of our young people don't speak our language in the schools. We are trying to teach it in our own language through the drumming and singing.



Donnie Ketlo

Nadleh Whut'en First Nation

Submitted by Anne Ketlo

Donnie is a member of Nadleh Whut'en First Nation. Over the years he has displayed leadership qualities that our communities had been lacking for many years.

Donnie is the youngest in a family of eight and missed our older brothers' glory days when they all excelled in softball and hockey. They were always bringing home trophies to the delight of our mother who was our biggest supporter. Donnie was always in the dugouts or on the hockey benches cheering his brothers on because he was too young to play. As he grew up, his brothers all went on to marriages and children. For many years Nadleh did not have a softball team or hockey team, but that didn't stop Donnie's persistent love of sports.

Donnie played for many softball and hockey teams from surrounding communities and enjoyed teaching the younger boys in our community how to play softball. Our community's softball team took a beating in our first softball tournament but it had been at least 15 years since Nadleh had participated in any sports events. In the past 3 years our community has gone from being one of the worst teams around to being major contenders. Now with Donnie's help, our teams bring home lots of trophies.

Donnie had also taken a young man under his wing by the name of Kylan Bird (Birdy). Birdy was being raised in a harsh environment but Donnie was always there for support and guidance. Birdy graduated from high school and completed a welding course from the College of New Caledonia; Donnie is also a welder.

Donnie is a great pitcher and has played for some great teams and travelled a lot, but Birdy was always there to cheer Donnie on. Lately, Birdy has been pitching for a few teams but is still Donnie's backup pitcher or back catcher for our Nadleh Hornets.

Donnie has quit drinking because he doesn't want his children to grow up in that kind of environment. He doesn't believe in preaching about alcoholism, but he is an avid supporter of 'Choices International.' He says the program has given him a different outlook on life and that it was the last greatest gift that our mother had given him.

Donnie has been sober for 5 years and is a very dedicated family man. Birdy is now playing Jr. B Hockey in Invermere and he and Donnie have a great relationship.

Francis Johnson Sr.

Canoe Creek Indian Band

Submitted by Darlene Louie

In September 2004, the Rosie Seymour Elementary School started a program to teach students and community members the Traditional dances of our ancestors. We asked Francis Johnson Sr., a well-known Men's Fancy Dancer of the Esketemc Nations, to come to the school every Monday to teach the group how to drum and dance.

Francis expressed the importance of being physically fit and doing a warm up before the dance lessons started. The group was taught all the different warm up stretches and had to run 10 laps around the Gym before the dance lessons would start. Francis explained how they should do these stretches before they danced at any Pow Wow, and he said it would keep them fit and protect against injury.

Francis spent a lot of time teaching the group about the traditions and protocols of the Pow Wow trail, with a lot of emphasis on respect for the circle, drum groups and the dancers, especially the older dancers. He taught the group how to design, cut out and sew their regalia too. Some of the mothers in the group had never sewed before so it was awesome to see the work they did. He is truly an all-around type of guy!

Francis worked with our community for two years teaching the group all the different dances. We started out with 10 students out of 23, then we opened it up to the Community. The word spread quickly that by the end of December we had 43 people dancing! This was the most awesome, amazing thing I had the honour to participate in!

One condition Francis had when he first started the dance lessons was that we celebrate the children by honouring them with a Pow Wow so that they could have their Coming Out. In March 2005, RSES had its 1st Annual Pow Wow and 43 dancers had their Coming Out Ceremonies. This has now become theme of our annual RSES Traditional Pow Wow: Honouring Our Children.

This had never been seen or done on the Pow Wow trail before, so history was made in Canoe Creek that weekend. This year will be the RSES 6th Annual Pow Wow and Francis Johnson still helps us as the Whip Man every year. He was also our inspiration to build our Arbour.

Francis Johnson is an awesome person and I feel honoured to call him my friend. He is in his late 50s or early 60s and is still a Champion Fancy Dancer on the Pow Wow trail. I love watching him compete against the younger dancing. He still wins on a regular basis. We need more people like him in this world!



One thing is for sure:
sport is the vital lifeblood and
pulse for this remote community.

Hartley Bay Community

Gitga'at Nation

Submitted by Dr. Nancy Cochrane

Hartley Bay is a small First Nations village on an island along BC's coast with a population of only 170 people. Basketball keeps the community united, passionate and involved throughout the year. A gym with two indoor nets, which protects them from the inclement weather, is enough to keep the community thriving and alive with excitement. The community also has an outdoor basketball court that is well-used when it's not raining. For most, it is the only source of sport, recreation and physical activity. For others, it represents the essence of hope and survival, as they have something essential that keeps them going.

Basketball is the main sport and recreation for many coastal First Nations. The All Native Basketball Tournament has endured in these native communities for five decades. The adult teams consist of seniors, intermediates and masters for both genders. Juniors have their own tournament. All the teams play at the annual tournament in Prince Rupert. The 50 year anniversary of this tournament was held in 2009, with much anticipated celebration in the community. Hartley Bay had representatives in all four adult age categories this year, with about 55 to 60 players and a volunteer coach and trainer participating last year.

The tournament involves more than one third of this small island community, as well as a large gathering of enthusiastic and dedicated family spectators who travel to cheer their teams on. When the tournament is on, this community empties out and moves to the event with whatever financial means they have. Everyone sees this annual event as a time to reunite with friends and family. The fact that it is all-native makes a big difference to its success, according to the Community Health Representative who has lived in Hartley Bay all of his life. He believes that the residents feel more comfortable and willing to become involved when it is their own First Nations and Aboriginal people who are coming together in the spirit of the game. It is not about the competition, but about the inclusive involvement that works.

Basketball is the only sport for which they travel outside of the community. There is a small tournament in Kitimat for the youth sometimes, but only those who have the funds to travel can attend these tournaments. "It keeps our youth off the street" said one resident, and "it keeps them going", said another. Other sports are also played in the community, to a lesser extent than basketball and community members are also active in traditional ways such as food gathering.

One thing is for sure: sport is the vital lifeblood and pulse for this remote community.



Jenna, Mallory and Carlyn Andres

Katzie First Nation

Submitted by Deanna Andres

In 2005, my daughter Jenna was in Grade 4 and decided she wanted to try lacrosse. I think this may have been partly influenced by my husband, Trevor, who has played box and field lacrosse for most of his life. At that time we didn't have a girls' association in Langley, so we decided we would drive 30 km for her to have the opportunity to play for the New Westminster Salmonbellies.

For five seasons, she has played as a box lacrosse goalie for the 'Bellies. Last year, she tried out for TeamBC, because it was the first year the Ontario Lacrosse Festival included a national tournament for girls, and only in her Bantam age group. After three rounds of tryouts, she was chosen as the starting goalie for TeamBC.

In August of 2009, she and 19 other girls between the ages of 13 and 14 travelled to Oshawa to compete against teams from New Brunswick, Alberta, and of course, Ontario. Jenna's team did so well, they made it to the finals against Ontario. Unfortunately, their efforts were not rewarded with a gold medal and they came back to BC with a silver medal instead. Jenna was chosen as the National All Star Goalie.

In 2007, she tried a season of Field lacrosse and found that she enjoyed it as well. Since then, our family has been an integral part in creating a successful Girls Field Lacrosse association in Langley. Her father Trevor is the current League President, as well as the Head Coach, while I fulfill the Manager duties. Jenna has also encouraged her two sisters, Mallory and Carlyn to give field lacrosse a try. They are currently in their 2nd season and I'm proud to say their teams are very successful.

Jenna is a Junior Umpire and officiates for the Under 12 division. She also volunteers her time to coach a FUNdamental league every week, where they mentor and teach young girls between the ages of 5 and 11 the foundations of the game. Due to their positive attitudes towards lacrosse and their willingness to "give back to the game", we have now decided to bring Girls Box Lacrosse to Langley and look forward to the upcoming season when all three girls will be playing again and helping to build a new girls league in Langley.

Lacrosse isn't just a game for our family; it's our way of life!

Jimmy Lulua

Xeni Gwet'in First Nation

Submitted by Shari Hughson

Jimmy worked for two years as the Youth Worker for the Xeni Gwet'in First Nation in Nemiah Valley, BC. Jimmy is 25 years old and is already a great role model and leader in the community. Jimmy is all about physical activities! He loves anything related to sports, recreation and the outdoors, which he has passed on to the children and youth of Nemiah Valley. Jimmy was also raised traditionally, so he understands and appreciates the importance of living in a traditional and cultural way.

The Xeni Gwet'in First Nation are known as 'horse people'. Horses are an integral part of traditional life and were a key aspect in the survival of the Xeni Gwet'in people. The road to the valley was built in the 1970s and as more vehicles arrived in the community, the horses' role was reduced. Many children and youth lost interest in horses and outdoor activities. Jimmy has helped turn that all around by using horses, camping, swimming, hiking, and exploring traditional lands an exciting and fun activity again.

In his role as youth worker Jimmy coordinated gymkhanas, camping trips, horseback-riding trips, barrel racing clinics, and horsemanship training. He always included other traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, rafting, camping, gathering plants, and living off the land.

Jimmy also organized a traditional Wagon and Horse Ride from our community to the 2009 Williams Lake Stampede. This used to be a traditional and cultural trip but hadn't been done in over 30 years. Jimmy and his wife June, organized the event and had 3 wagons with over 30 riders travel to Williams Lake in one week.

He has always supported, acknowledged and showed respect when a y

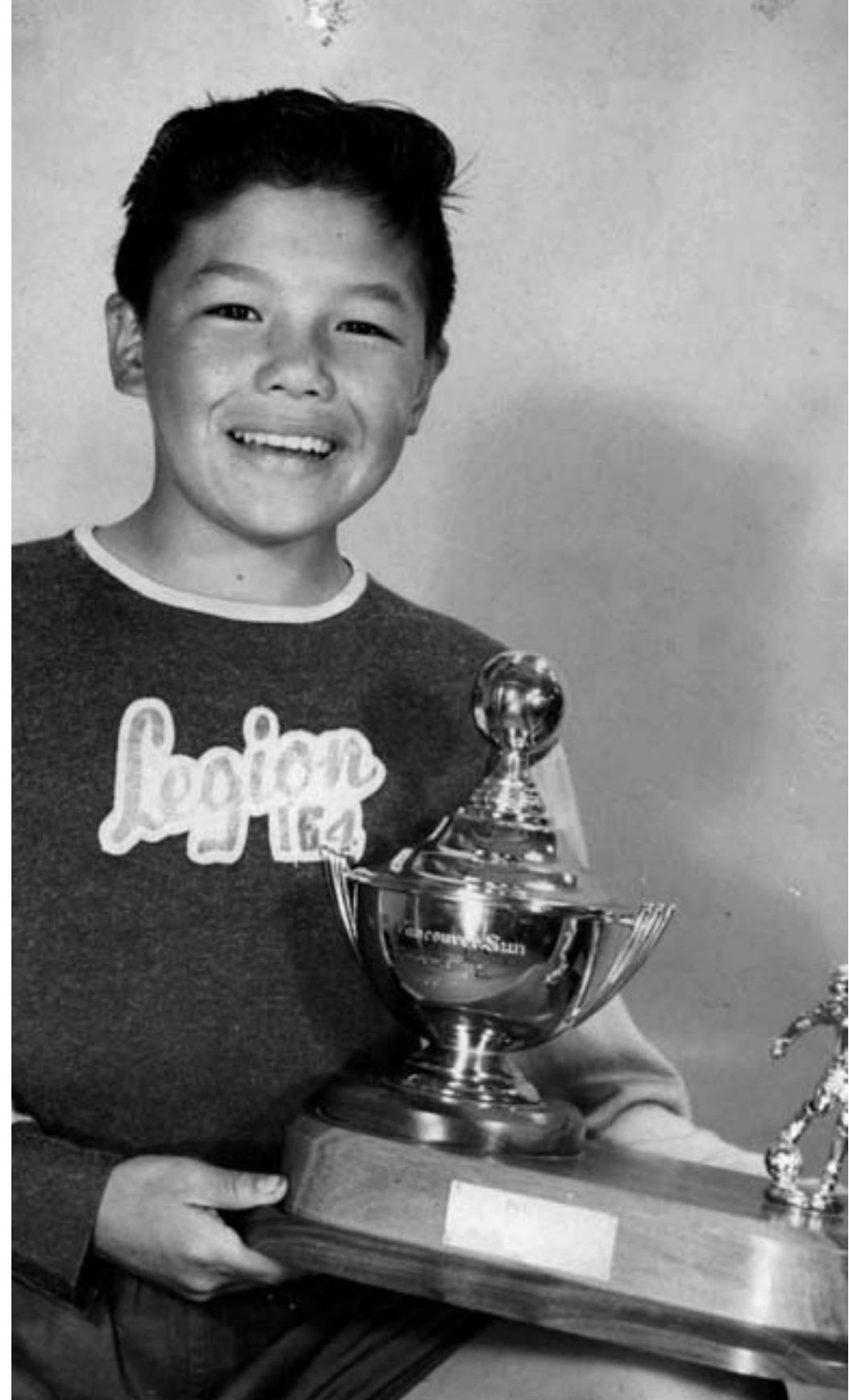
Jimmy's other physical activities include downhill skiing, ball hockey, volleyball, running, swimming and Mantracker. His traditional activities include: wild potato gathering, medicine gathering, sweat-lodge, hunting, fishing, berry-picking, camping, horseshoeing.

Jimmy is most passionate about Mountain Racing. Mountain racing is an exciting horse race that covers a quarter-mile course on treacherous mountain terrain; through steep hills, rivers and on winding narrow trails. Jimmy has raced locally 12 times; not including the Williams Lake Stampede. He has won first place 5 times, second place 3 times and has won 3 overall championships!

Jimmy is a great role model in our community. He has always supported, acknowledged and showed respect when a youth had a special talent or was doing well. Jimmy is a great role model for health, wellness and physical activity!



outh had a special talent or was doing well.



Larry Louie

Sliammon First Nation

Submitted by Grace Adams

Larry excelled and gained immediate recognition for his soccer talent. He started playing in Powell River and won the Golden Boy MVP award at 13 years old during the provincial playoffs. As a teenager, Larry moved to North Vancouver and won gold during the BC Summer Games in Halifax in 1969.

Larry played for Vancouver Spartans, before they were the Whitecaps, in the Western Canada League, which consisted of Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Seattle and Vancouver. Larry was 19 years old when the team was searching for local talent. He was the 19th player to be cut from the 18 roster limit but remained with the team as an auxiliary player.

Larry played all-native tournaments in BC with the Sliammon Braves and also played in the Vancouver Island First Division with Powell River Villa Soccer Club. Any soccer player in his age group who played against Larry would immediately remember him for his talent and skill on the field. Larry continued to play competitively until his retirement in 1998.

Larry always admired the Sliammon Braves players. Soccer was a passion in the community beginning in the 1940's. The majority of men were loggers and they would jump off the crummy, in front of the Sliammon church. The guys would put on their boots, choose sides and play until dark. This happened every day until the game on Sunday.

As he grew up, Larry became a role model for the Sliammon youth. He was young, healthy and extremely talented. Larry was a natural team leader, who brought out the best in those around him. Larry's success in soccer led to success in many other areas of life as well.

Larry's hard work, dedication and enthusiasm for the sport was infectious for his teammates. Working hard became fun; team spirit became a way of life. Success on the soccer field bred confidence and self esteem. Teammates learned to embrace challenge. If you wanted to make the starting line up you needed to train, commit to practices, get along with the team and earn your spot, as many young men wanted to play with such a talented team as the Sliammon Braves.

His wife Rose Louie (Mia) became an instrumental fundraiser in order for the Sliammon Braves to travel. Many years of fundraising took place and Mia was able to organize so many various activities year in and out. Volunteers became essential for the team to participate.

In many ways, the life lessons learned from soccer became values applied to other parts of life. Leadership, team spirit, dedication, commitment, attitude are all attributes that apply to community work. Larry, perhaps not intentionally, but unmistakably, contributed to positive development in his home community.



Laurie Mercer

Nisga'a Village of New Aiyansh

Submitted by Paul Mercer

Laurie Mercer is Nisga'a from New Aiyansh, BC. She is an advocate for youth, elders and community members in respect to culture, fitness, finance, community service and music.

Laurie is from the Ganada (Frog) Clan from the house of Ksim Ksaan. She is a key person in all cultural aspects for her section of the family. She is a mother of four children; two are in college, one is in a work experience program, and her youngest will be graduating from high school this year. When Laurie was younger, she was a teen mother and experienced the difficulty of raising a family on a limited income.

Laurie decided to register for a Business Administration program to provide a better life for her children. With her family's love and support, she graduated with her diploma. Through years of hard work, Laurie now has an extensive background in finance and has been the Financial Controller for New Aiyansh Village Government for over a decade.

Laurie is a volunteer Fitness leader for New Aiyansh and Gitwinksihlkw. She provides participants with an hour of cardio strength training three times each week. She plans to become a registered fitness leader in the near future and enjoys when her classes are well attended. Laurie also plays in the Terrace ladies basketball league with her youngest daughter.

Laurie works with the New Aiyansh Youth Council as a mentor and liaison between youth council and Village Government Administration and Government. She volunteers her time for youth events and offers financial planning and fitness advice to all those interested. She is an outdoors enthusiast and participates in canoe journeys along the North Coast of BC (Gathering Strength), running in the Sun Run, and cycling in the Tour de Nass bike race from Greenville to New Aiyansh.

Laurie still prepares fish for canning, smoking and drying for her family and has developed a network for trading with others for other traditional foods that are not readily available in our territory. She picks berries, makes jam, and bakes for her family and community events. She is currently learning how to weave and also learning stories from her family about the Nisga'a territory she plans on telling during canoe journeys, camp outs, hiking with family, youth and elders.

Laurie Mercer is a role model in every possible way and I am pleased to share her story to acknowledge all the work she does and her desire to be a good community builder.

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Leslie Adams

Sliammon First Nation

Submitted by Grace Adams

Leslie comes from the community of Sliammon where soccer is played every day. He excelled at the sport from an early age. Leslie played soccer in his teens but also boxed. At the age of 18, he played soccer for Powell River in the Vancouver Sun tournament for Powell River and the team won. He was named Golden Boy. He was a talented powerhouse goal scorer, full of sheer will and tenacity.

One of Leslie's mentors was Charlie Wilson who would drive him to rep soccer practice in Powell River and wait for him to finish training. This was in the 1950s when having a car wasn't common.

Leslie was offered the opportunity to play soccer in England but declined because of family commitments. He was as dedicated to his family and community as he was to soccer. Leslie has an incredible work ethic and thrives on competition. At 27 years old, Leslie was elected Chief for eight years and after that, served his community as a councillor for over 30 years. He also remained employed by MacMillian Bloedel for 37 years and earned his captain's ticket.

Leslie believes achievements come from hard work and to excel in the non-native world, it takes twice the work. Leslie and his wife Janie raised 5 children and believed their children would all go to University, which they have accomplished.

Today Leslie remains active by walking until his soccer injuries catch up to him. He recently purchased a treadmill that he uses every day. Leslie's grandchildren play soccer and he loves travelling to tournaments and games to watch them play. He talks to his grandchildren about hard work and being disciplined.

Leslie retired nine years ago and is a busy gardener and carpenter. He helped build his daughter's house and replaced his own roof and chimney this summer. Leslie does not believe in paying someone to do work that you can do yourself. He also volunteers for church fundraisers. Leslie is currently teaching his grandchildren the importance of firearm safety, how to use a rifle and to hunt for deer. When it comes to his adult children, Leslie doesn't hesitate to sit them down if he thinks they need guidance.

The passion Leslie brought to his family and friends is what made him excel as an athlete, a leader and hard worker. Leslie is a great role model and exemplifies his motto: work hard, play hard.



Ramona Johnson

K'ómoks First Nation

Ramona's contribution to healthier living in our community and her wholehearted and inclusive approach to her interactions with all levels of the Comox Valley community make her a positive role model for an active lifestyle and healthier eating.

With her enthusiasm and good will, Ramona has led or played a key role in a number of initiatives that have contributed to the healthy lifestyle of our community. Ramona's main goal has been to lead others by example.

In 2008, Ramona and other Comox Band members organized a "Biggest Loser" competition for the Comox people to encourage physical activity. Ramona also organized Belly Dancing and Kickboxing classes that community members could participate in to make healthier living easier and more fun.

In 2008 and 2009, Ramona also played a significant role in "Aboriginal Act Now-- Honouring Our Health" which was a province-wide initiative. The program includes a 13-week training period leading up to participation in the 10K Vancouver Sun Run. In 2008 we had 20 members from our community participate in the event. In 2009 our community participated again and had 17 community members prepare and 14 cross the finish line.

As part of Ramona's job as coordinator for the 2009 Sun Run, she started weekly walks and exercise classes to prepare community members for the event. She also coordinated fundraising in both 2008 and 2009 with t-shirt sales and raffles at community meetings, and scheduled volunteers.

Ramona has also been actively involved in ensuring that the community workout group continues to have a trainer. The workout group's classes have also increased from once a week to twice weekly.

On a personal level, Ramona has faced and overcome an important challenge through exercising and community group walks. To date, Ramona has lost 40 lbs. She is a true inspiration to others in our community to exercise and lead healthier lifestyles, which has helped her achieve her goal of leading by example.

In her work, Ramona is the Manager of the I-Hos Gallery, which is owned and operated by the Comox Band. The gallery is one of the busiest First Nations-owned galleries in B.C. Being environmentally-friendly is another one of the efforts Ramona has put into place at the gallery by making changes such as recycling, implementing energy efficiency policies, and supporting the BC Hydro Walk. Ramona believes that every little bit counts and proves that she is dedicated to teaching by doing.

Spirit of Burns Lake

Burns Lake, BC

Submitted by Shannon Alec

In 2006 the Spirit of Burns Lake was created by Rosalie Lacerte (McDonald) and Shannon Alec who were determined to play hockey at any cost. The previous year, they struggled for funding. They had wanted the innocence of playing hockey for fun put back into the game, but, no matter how hard they tried, they couldn't feel the youthful feeling they had before. Then Shannon thought they should play for free and Rose said it was a great idea. From that day on, the ladies raised money by collecting bottles, doing bingos, bake sales and anything it took to make money for ice time.

Later on they learned how to apply for funding from other sources and word got out. Before they knew it, they were funding all women in Burns Lake with free hockey, including gear and ice time. The Spirit of Burns Lake has received funding from the NHL Players Association and also won a National award through the Kaiser Foundation.

Three of the ladies from the Spirit of Burns Lake have shared their personal stories:

Rena Alec

When Rosalie and my sister Shannon got me to join hockey, my time of life was dark, lonely and confusing. Hockey helped me forget about my problems. My only thought on the ice was to not fall and save the puck, because I'm one of the goalies!

Being there with the kids is great. It's good to give back to them, and it's something I would have wanted when I was young. We've been able to go on trip, like the awards in Montreal. Going with my sister was awesome. It's a phenomenal feeling helping the girls and boys in Burns Lake.

Cherill Greening

When I first joined hockey it was because Shannon would not stop telling me how much fun it was also that she needed another goalie. I also enjoyed hanging out with the kids, playing softball, and making a community garden. I love listening to all the youth laugh and I like hearing the parent's say they wish they had this opportunity when they were young. In my role as auxiliary officer in our community, I do my best to promote free hockey to the youth.

Shannon Alec

Being a part of this amazing team has helped me to grow into a woman of courage, strength and wisdom. Everyone has helped me see the good parts of life and taught me to embrace the sad parts and utilize those parts as an opportunity to share my story with others. It has allowed others to see how someone can triumph and learn to trust her own instincts. It has also helped to gain the trust of the other players on the Spirit of Burns Lake. Building this team is an honour I will never forget.





Ed Jensen

Tk'emlúps Indian Band

Submitted by Colleen Mosterd-McLean

My brother Ed Jensen is one of the few traditional hunter/gatherers in our community. Not only does he hunt, fish and gather berries and medicine for himself and others, but he also teaches these skills to anyone who wants to learn.

He has done these things since he was, as the elders would say, "knee-high to a grasshopper." Our grandfather started taking him out into the bush when he was very young, much younger than our mother felt comfortable with. When he first started going out with grandfather, mom woke early in the morning to make fresh bannock for the hunt, boil the coffee on the stove and make sure Ed was dressed in warm clothes for the hunt. She waited all day for them to return and if it started to get dark, she paced until they were back safe. They always came home with something and every time it was a celebration as we gathered outside to see what they got.

After grandfather passed, it was the uncles who began to mentor Ed. They taught him how to survive in the mountains. Through their teachings, he became a very skilled hunter. Today, Ed continues to hunt and fish for us girls and he also hunts for the elders and single mothers. He is well-known and respected as a skilled hunter and fisherman. He is passing his knowledge on to my children as his uncles did for them. My children share his great love for the mountains.

To be a good hunter gatherer it is necessary to be in good physical condition by eating healthy and getting plenty of exercise. Ed abstains from drugs and alcohol in order to keep his soul, spirit and body pure and to be respectful towards the animals he hunts and fishes. He always gives thanks for all the gifts of the earth he receives.

My brother scales the mountains like a goat. He has spent three days chasing a trophy buck and many nights in sub-zero windy, gusting weather, ice fishing. It is in doing these activities that he connects spiritually and he will tell you that it is this that feeds his soul, body and mind.

He is a genuine role model and has recently helped form a men's society to encourage men in the community to live healthier lifestyles and participate in community service.



I am very proud of all that I have accomplished and look forward to all that awaits me in the future.

Ceejay Turner

Gitanmaax First Nation

My name is Ceejay Turner and I am a proud member of the Gitksan nation. I am 16 years old and in Grade 11. I have already experienced a wide variety of events in my life. I started playing basketball in elementary school but became more serious about it once I got to high school. My love for the sport gave me the opportunity to represent BC in the 2008 North American Indigenous Games. I have also won All-Star for zones in high school tournaments and am now coaching my school's Grade 8 boys. Last year I coached Grade 4 and 5 boys for two months in the Steve Nash basketball camp.

In the fall of 2008, I won a \$750 bursary from the Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth and the year before I won a computer from the Samuel A. Monroe Society for good grades.

Last spring I was nominated by members of my community to be an Olympic Torchbearer. I was then selected by the 2010 Olympic committee to represent Gitanmaax and ran in the evening of January 30. I have no words to describe the feelings and emotions that I felt while running with the torch. Hearing the roar of the crowd, and then seeing all the people as I arrived to get the torch blessed was amazing. It was an experience of a lifetime and a memory that I will treasure forever.

Every year during the winter semester, my school hires one student to work for the school as a Carpenter's Apprentice. I was hired for that position and will be working for the district, and will receive two Grade 11 credits and two Grade 12 credits. I will also receive my first year carpentry apprenticeship certificate and will continue to pursue a career in the trade after I graduate. My dad had me working with him on building projects and roofing at an early age and because I enjoyed it so much, I decided that I wanted to make a career of it.

When I am not playing basketball, soccer, working, or in school, I enjoy riding my dirt bike on trails where I live. Drawing my own art designs is also a fulfilling accomplishment and a good way to relax.

I am very proud of all that I have accomplished and look forward to all that awaits me in the future.

Streetfront Running Program

Vancouver, BC

Submitted by Trevor Stokes

Streetfront was founded in 1977 by two outdoor enthusiasts and educators who reinvented the idea of school, focusing 60% of time on core academic work and 40% on active pursuits. They hoped struggling students could gain confidence and self-esteem through fitness, and that it would transfer into other aspects of their lives. The program would serve marginalized kids who were unsuccessful in a traditional high school. Their removal from high school would be the result of high truancy, socio/emotional issues, addiction or abuse cases and extreme poverty. Thirty-three years later, the fundamentals haven't changed one bit, maybe intensified.

A normal day at Streetfront has always started with an intensive physical education class. The goal is to get the kids' hearts and lungs pumping and welcome the day with vigour and intensity. An academic class will follow and three days a week we finish the morning with our mandatory long-distance running program.

Streetfront has always had a core running component. Students would run a 5 km route, three times a week. For more advanced students, a 10 km route was also established. Staff always participate on these runs, one at the front, one in the middle and one at the back as a sweep. Over the years, thousands of kilometres have been travelled by Streetfront students, some in work boots, some in skateboard shoes; we've even had kids run the route in flip flops and on crutches. We started thinking about entering running races, and we had to decide if we wanted an easily-achievable goal or did we want to raise our expectations and do something that no other high school program was doing? We opted for the latter and decided on Marathons.

Our first marathon was in 2002 in Seattle, Washington. Since then we've had 42 full marathons finished and 8 half marathons finished, all from students who most PE teachers would have never thought capable of such an incredible feat. Many of our accomplished runners have been First Nations! They have used the marathons as a catalyst for true and positive change in their lives. Most have found that as they dedicate themselves to a life of structure, discipline and commitment, the rest of their life starts to have more meaning and the daily hurdles and stresses are much easier to clear.

A number of our students have graduated high school and are either attending college/university or preparing to do so. Thousands of dollars have been awarded to our marathoners in academic and physical scholarships. Our marathoners have won many Most Outstanding Grade 12 athletes and one of our students won the City of Vancouver Youth Award (highest honour given out by the City of Vancouver to youth).

The accomplishments are fantastic but the kids themselves are the true prizes. The mental toughness needed to run marathons is incredible. The pain one has to go through to cross that line is immense but these kids don't give up. They estimate it takes 42,000 strides to finish a marathon. Each one of these kids could have stopped running 42,000 times, but they all found it more important to fight and struggle to achieve their goal than to give up.

To me that's what makes a champion. Someone who knows what they are up against but are not intimidated. They set their course and are not satisfied till the ribbon is broke and their objective completed. Then they can rest.





Levi Turner

Gitanmaax First Nation

My name is Levi Turner and I am 13 years old. I am a member of the Gitanmaax Nation and have been Indian Dancing with The All Clans Dancers since I was 6 years old. After 7 years, I continue to dance and am the only original person still dancing with the group.

We have done a lot of travelling and performed in several communities throughout BC . Our dance group has also performed for many different functions in the community where I live. Since I started, I have worn a lot of costumes. I always have to be refitted for new ones because I outgrow most of them quickly. Even though I am young and I still continue to perform, I also help to teach the younger children how to dance properly and respect our traditions.

For me, I enjoy Indian dancing because it makes me feel happy. It is also important to me because dancing also brings me closer to my culture. Every song we sing tells a story. The beating of the drum and the people dancing bring that story to life. There are many different dances and they all remind us of what happened to the Gitksan people in the past and how important it is to keep our culture alive today.

Our language, our culture, our traditions, and our belief system are dying along with our elders, even though they are trying so hard to keep it alive. I am proud to be able to share the stories that I know with everyone. Even though I have danced and drummed the beat to the same songs over and over again, in practice and in front of audiences, I still get excited and nervous. To perform in front of an audience, and to watch them sing and dance with us makes me glad because it shows me that the Gitksan history will continue to live.

I love to Indian dance and knowing that I am helping to keep our culture and history alive by telling our story through dance and song makes me proud.



Chelsea Charlie

Chehalis Indian Band

I love to play soccer. My soccer schedule is year round and it consists of off-season training, team practices, monthly training camps, league competitions, tournament competitions and indoor training. Most recently, I was honoured by being named an Olympic Torch Bearer.

In order to excel in the sport, I have chosen to be drug and alcohol free. To ensure I am in top physical shape I try to push myself in a rigorous individual training program. I attend practices for whatever team I am playing with and I push myself on the field to improve my speed, ball skills and shots.

I attended ASRA's Talent ID Camps and was selected to play with Team BC at the 2006 NAIG Games in Denver Colorado. The Midget Girls Soccer team won the gold medal.

In 2006, I attended several NIFA training camps and was selected to play on the Under 19 NIFA Women's Team. We played nine games in Europe in 2007. I was selected team captain and also played with the Open Women's Team for two of the games.

In 2007, I attended another series of ASRA's Talent ID Camps and was selected to play on the Juvenile Girls Soccer Team for the 2008 NAIG Games in Cowichan, BC. Our team won the gold medal. I was selected from 400 BC athletes to be a Flag Bearer for the opening ceremonies for the Games. It was a great honour and memorable experience.

I proudly display the two gold medals I won at the NAIG Games and cherish the wonderful memories and friendships. I appreciate the experience of playing internationally in Europe and Cuba with the NIFA organization.

It was a tremendous experience to be recognized by my community for being a positive role model. They held a special ceremony attended by community, staff and family highlighted my athletic achievements. I received many wonderful and encouraging words to continue to pursue my dreams. It was an especially memorable event.

One of the biggest things I learned was that if you make an effort and put in the hard work, it pays off in the end. There are opportunities for aboriginal youth and everyone should take advantage to gain valuable experience and be able to represent BC and their home communities.

There have been countless positive programs that athletes have been able to experience. For myself I was able to travel, improve my soccer skills, represent my community, meet new people and make lasting friendships along the way.

Barb LeBeau

Gitsegukla Indian Band

Since January 2007, as a First Nations Support Worker within the First Nations Program of North Okanagan-Shuswap #83, I have had the pleasure of implementing the Honour Your Health Challenge (HYHC) to students of Aboriginal ancestry in the Salmon Arm school district. This program is funded by the Aboriginal Health Branch within the BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport.

It was so successful, that I shared it with other co-workers, and last year, seven of us attended the HYHC training conference in Vancouver to become health co-ordinators. The HYHC approach gives co-ordinators a network of support and knowledge from provincial health facilities, as well as connects co-ordinators from across BC to create a sustainable program.

With the full support of our First Nations Program, we implemented traditional and non-traditional activities throughout the health challenge in our schools. Some traditional activities included: self-assessments using the medicine wheel, kayaking, snow shoeing and Inuit games. We supplemented the "Dream Dancers" program which promotes traditional dancing in the school district. Non traditional activities included tobacco awareness/education, hip hop dance lessons, Sun Run training, skating, swimming, bowling and Action Schools BC. Each session finished off with role modelling healthy eating habits where students learned to prepare and taste various fruits and vegetables.

The HYHC initiative has brought positive attention to the First Nations Program in our school district and community and we are proud forerunners of this cutting edge health program. Through HYHC, we have increased contact with our aboriginal families as parents become involved in the program with their children, offered our youth opportunities to mentor younger students and improve their leadership skills, and given elementary students positive role models as they see us making healthy living choices. Our First Nations support workers are seen as leaders in health promotion and are approached by school staff for support in promoting additional health programs related to health and wellness.

The HYHC gives a wonderful sense of pride, belonging, and hope for aboriginal people as we lead the province in role modelling healthy lifestyles. It offers a way forward in our healing as it builds on our strengths. There is no program like it. It gives a renewed sense of energy, enthusiasm and autonomy for our future.

Through its respect for and inclusion of cultural practices, we have reconnected and regained pride in our traditions. The HYHC initiative offers knowledge and support which combines innovative worldly ideas with cultural ways that are firmly embedded in a traditional framework. This framework allows us, as Aboriginal people, to move forward while still retaining or regaining our sense of identity. It is like a ripple on a pond, where one person can start the ripple which is shared and maintained by many. It is easy to maintain because it has such a strong base and is so much fun to deliver!





Christina Gosselin

Huu-ay-aht First Nation

I was inspired to join biathlon through a fellow cadet because he is involved in several activities and achieves many medals and awards. The objective of biathlon is to cross-country ski and shoot at a target proficiently. It is important to pace yourself during competition because you ski four laps and shoot three times at five different targets. You are trying to shoot five targets in about a minute and a half.

My most recent competition was at Mount Washington. I participated in the youth girls category and placed second in my division. I am very proud of my accomplishment.

I love biathlon. It is something I really feel connected to. I have a lot of support from my peers and people at school. All my teachers know about my achievements and they are all very proud of me. My parents were proud of me as well. It feels good to know I have people supporting me.

Biathlon helps improve my endurance and strength as well as my skiing and precision shooting skills. I have been training in precision shooting since navy league when I was 12 years old.

My Coxswain at cadets has been a mentor to me. Mike is always encouraging me, and telling me to keep up. He makes sure I don't push myself too hard, because I am very motivated, and when I push myself too hard my asthma acts up. My coaches are officers and they come up to the competitions and support us, as well as guide us through training.

My biathlon training and competing is funded through the Navy League Branch of Canada, but this will run out next year because I will be too old. . Even though I will age out in Cadets, my wish is to continue competing as a civilian, in the hopes of going to Nationals in two years.

I love exercising. I love that I don't have to worry about anything else when I am exercising. I focus on my breathing and the rest of the world fades out. It's very meditative.

We have an intense cardio work-out on Thursday nights. I enjoy the workout so much, I have to make sure I am aware of how much I exert myself because of my asthma. This doesn't stop me from reaching my goals and being athletic. I am always pushing everyone else to push harder!

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Chester Moore

Nisga'a Village of Gingolx

Submitted by Corinne McKay

Chester Moore is a hereditary chief from the Nisga'a community of Gingolx. He holds the name Sim'oogit Hay'maas. He was 28 years old when he was elected Chief Councillor and started working on projects for his community. He has worked in the fishing and logging industries and was instrumental in starting a logging operation that funded a meeting hall, community hall, church and clinic. He has worked as Cultural Director; teaching children cultural dancing and singing. He travelled to different communities teaching cultural dancing and drum-making.

In 2004, he was elected by the Nisga'a Nation as Chairperson of the Council of Elders and was also a member of the Executive of Nisga'a Lisims Government. His contribution to the Nisga'a nation was his cultural education, as he wasn't sent off to Residential School. His father, William Moore was a great story teller, and Chester felt privileged to grow up traditionally. The late Frank Calder called him a "Nisga'a walking encyclopedia", another person called him a "Nisga'a living treasure."

He has been actively composing songs, choreographing dance groups and drum drills, and teaching carving as well as cultural practices since the early 1970s. He choreographed traditional songs, and spiritual songs translated to Nisga'a.

In 1991, he lead the Gitwinksihlkw Four Crest Dancers in the raising of a totem pole. In 1994 they travelled to the Common Wealth Games. His most recognized song is the Nisga'a 'Common Bowl' song, signifying the sharing nature of the people; as well as 'Ayuuks Ye'e' a tribute to the laws of our ancestors.

He assisted in the creation of the Vancouver Nisga'a Dancers and the Laxgalts'ap Cultural Dancers. His knowledge and skills were sought by Terrace and Prince Rupert Nisga'a, also to provide guidance to other cultural groups. He estimated that he has made over 700 drums and hundreds of cradles. He was recognized for teaching children to carve a totem pole and to host a feast to commemorate the raising of the pole in Gingolx.

Chester Moore has never sought recognition for his leadership work in the Nisga'a communities he's served. He has lived a humble life, while seeking to help others wherever possible. His cultural leadership is a positive testament to the work that he has undertaken. His service to the communities and to people is invaluable. His traditional upbringing has served both his community and his nation in the valuable cultural lessons he has left as his legacy.



Dewayne Robinson

Gitanmaax First Nation

My name Gitxsan Hereditary name is Aldux Ye'e. I am Dewayne Robinson from the Gitxsan Nation. I presently reside on Vancouver Island and have done so for 10 years. Prior to the Island, I lived in my hometown of Hazelton, BC. I have seven sisters and five brothers. My mother is Yuga Si'ip, Joy Turner and my father is Ge'en, Skana, Delbert Turner, both Chiefs in their respective Houses of Gitanmaax, one of the Gitxsan nations.

I've enjoyed many accomplishments in my life. I was picked as a Young Achiever of Canada in 1982 and got to travel to Ottawa to witness the Constitution being returned to Canada by Queen Elizabeth. I've played soccer almost all my life and won many All Star trophies as a youth and an adult. In 1990, I played on the Pacific Coast Falcons in the Vancouver West Coast Premier League. The next year, I played on the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) team for our province and we ended up winning gold.

In 1994, I played soccer in the BC Summer Games and our team won silver. Three years later I coached the BC First Nations Youth Under 13 soccer team and was so proud of the team when we won a gold medal.

I later joined the RCMP and served seven years as an Officer, stationed in Bella Bella and Smithers, followed by nine months as a Tribal Police Officer in Kitwanga. I also worked for four years as a By-Law Officer for the City of Vancouver.

From 2000 to 2008 I coached youth soccer for the Cowichan Valley Soccer Association. During that time, I was honoured when I was chosen to be a wing Chief in my House in 2002. Four years later, I coached the NAIG Midget Boys soccer team when we went to Denver, Colorado where we ended up winning a gold medal. When the 2009 NAIG was in Cowichan, our Midget Boys team won a silver medal.

Later on, I worked for four years as an Outreach Worker for the Homeless with the Native Friendship Centre in Duncan. I also obtained my Drug & Alcohol Counselling Certificate and worked at a Treatment Centre for six months. Most recently I have been working for Vancouver Island Health Authority; first in Security and now as a Tobacco Enforcement Officer/Tobacco Reduction Coordinator in Courtenay BC.

I thank the Creator for all I've been able to accomplish in my life.

The sweat lodge is a great activity that can benefit people mentally, spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

Gitanmaax Community

Gitanmaax First Nation

Submitted by Sheridan Martin

In our community in Hazelton, BC, a group of us have gotten together to perform sweat lodge ceremonies. The ceremony begins with starting a fire, and within that fire, a number of rocks are placed (one to upward of 45). The fire burns for two hours. We gather the water for splashing the rocks inside the sweat lodge. We gather other people to participate in the ceremony and we bring fruit for an offering afterward and also to replenish our bodies. We bring the hot rocks into the sweat lodge at different intervals; we sing and pray in the lodge.

The sweat lodge is a great activity that can benefit people mentally, spiritually, physically, and emotionally. It's a good workout: gathering the rocks for heating; carrying large containers or water to the lodge area; carrying the rocks into the lodge at different intervals; and eating healthy foods afterwards.

Also, the making of a sweat lodge includes a lot of physical activity. From gathering rocks to going to the forest and cutting down more than 25 trees, and then gathering and bringing them back to the lodge site to build the lodge.

Many people make these ceremonies happen including myself, Gary Patsey, and Larry Patsey. We all take turns running a sweat lodge ceremony. We get asked to do sweat lodge ceremonies in Kitwanga, or we go to Glen Vowell Reserve to participate in a sweat lodge. We have lots of participation from people other than ourselves, including our families. They all come into the sweat lodge or help build the fire or made the healthy food for feasting afterwards.

We hope to teach the youth about sweat lodge ceremonies, as well as other ceremonies such as Sundance. We are trying to raise awareness in our communities about the wealth of our cultural knowledge. We want to keep the momentum of healing ceremonies going among the reservations. We are focusing on continually generating awareness of empowering ceremonies. We hope that everyone who participates will achieve balance of their physical, mental, emotional, spiritually well-being. We also hope to bring self-healing to the communities, especially among the youth. In the future, we hope to create a healing group.

These sweat lodge ceremonies have helped me feel great about myself and see everything in a positive light.



Gerry Oldman

Seton Lake Indian Band

My name is Saa Hiil Thut or Gerry Oldman, a member of the St'atl'imx Nation from Shalalth, BC. In 2008, I trained for the Barcelona Marathon for four months before the event. I arrived in Barcelona from Vancouver on March 6. I felt great and decided that I was ready for the Marathon on Sunday. My goal was to finish the run in four and half hours.

A horn sounded to start the race and runners from all around the world were off! I heard many different languages that day. There were 9,105 runners in the Marathon. After 10 kms I was feeling great and maintained the pace that I was on and thought I could achieve my time goal. By the 21 km mark (half-way) I still felt strong and was maintaining my pace.

By the time I got to 30 km I started to feel my energy weaken considerably and started to worry about finishing. I passed a man on crutches doing the marathon and could hear the crowd cheering bravo for him and I was inspired to pick up my pace.

With 5 kms to go I was feeling pretty beat and low on energy. I encountered four children who were about 5 years old. When they saw me with my Team Diabetes Canada shirt they lined up to give me the high five and were hollering "Bravo Canada." I was touched to tears and reenergized. Their young energy helped to carry me to the finish line. I cannot describe how good it felt to cross that finish line and receive my finisher medal. Surprisingly I felt strong after I finished the race and recovered faster than I have in the other marathons that I have run.

My time at this marathon was 5 hours 23 minutes and 1 second. I felt such a feeling of accomplishment at this Long Run as I was so afraid that I would not be able to run and once I decided that I would run I was afraid that I would not be able to finish.

I would like to thank everyone that mentored me; it was these teachings that helped me to be successful in running and work. I also want to thank the ones that inspire me today to be healthy and strong in mind, body and spirit. There are so many people to thank that I do not want to mention names as I will leave someone out.

All My Relations –
Saa Hiil Thut / Gerry Oldman

Hoop Troupe

Vernon, BC

Submitted by Sandra Lynn Lynxleg

Hoop Troupe Olympic Dream Recipe:

ARRANGE for a local, two-time world champion Hoop Dancer to instruct (Dallas Arcand)

GATHER students across the district from all grades to participate 2 hours a day, twice a week after school

ADD a place to dance without worrying about potential transportation issues: If you offer it they will come!

COMBINE with parents and a dedicated, local Hoop Dance instructor Sandra Millar

TOSS IN an inspired Canadian Poet's poem by Wendy Morton

SET ON FIRE by adding an Olympic Torch Lighting Ceremony

SERVE to families, friends, and community members

It's a great Canadian recipe that any hearty appetite for student achievement can delight in and savour for years to come!

The Aboriginal Education Department of School District 22 (Vernon) was provided an opportunity to share their recipe for achievement with the world on January 26th, 2010 at the Olympic Torch Lighting Ceremony held at Polson Park in Vernon, BC.

The Hoop Troupe was comprised of 25 dancers from eight schools ranging from kindergarten through Grade 11; they represented three secondary schools and five elementary schools. They represented both Aboriginal nations and non-Aboriginal nations from across Canada and Europe.

They practiced 46 hours from October-January. Over 300 individually-handmade hoops were created from pvc pipe, couplers, and electrical tape. The dancers studied hard, did hoop dance homework, and made time to play, become friends, and understand the requirements to belong to a hoop troupe.

School District 22 currently has seven hoop dance troupes with over 125 students participating. Our appetite for hoop dancing was inspired by two-time world champion Dallas Arcand in 2008-2009. His presentation led to an immediate organization of schools across the district arranging for hoop dance lessons. As a district, we are fortunate to have a local, dedicated Hoop Dance instructor Sandra Millar to ensure schools and students have access to hoop dance every week. Every spring we recognize student achievement by celebrating with family, friends, and community by hosting a Drum and Dance Celebration.

As a result of their district-wide impact, our hoop dance students are asked to dance at assemblies and community gatherings throughout the year. It's phenomenal to witness the look of excitement in a child's eyes when she or he receives an invitation to dance. As the District Principal of Aboriginal Education, I appreciate the opportunity to encourage Aboriginal achievement in venues that cultivate culture combined with academics and athleticism and bring Aboriginal pedagogy into the 21st century and beyond.





Haisla Community

Haisla First Nation

Submitted by Lucille Harms

Up until the early 1980's the Haisla community used to have canoe racing every May long weekend between the different clans which included both men's and women's teams. Sadly, last year the community experienced the loss of five band members over a one month period and the race was cancelled because of the overwhelming feeling of grief and loss which touched every community member.

The community's canoe team was made of of people young and old; the oldest paddler being in her mid 60's and the youngest was 12. The team was fortunate to have two men who naturally took on the role of steersman and instructors. This made the team feel safe just simply by their presence because of their experience as boatmen. Their calm, gentle guidance reassured the group and their humour was a wonderful bonus.

The canoe team still wanted to race and by coincidence an avid Dragon Boat Racer was seeking out Kitamaats. She wanted to know if anyone would be interested in entering their Annual Dragon Boat Race.

The lady from the Dragon Boat Team came to the community to help with fine tuning the teams paddling technique as it differed a bit from Haisla canoe paddling. She came to the team's practices because of her passion for teaching the art of dragon boat racing. She also arranged for the team to have a chance to paddle on her team's dragon boat a few weeks before the official race.

The team called themselves "Sahnis", which was a Haisla legendary water grizzly who looked just like the land grizzly but lived only in the water and could be seen at the mouth of the big rivers in the area especially when a storm was coming. The team proudly wore their bandanas bearing their name 'Haisla Nation'.

The team raced five times that day. They came in 1st in the 'C' Division! Wahooooo!!!!!! The chanting of "Haisla, Haisla, Haisla!" as the paddlers struck their paddles on the benches of the dragon boat echoed through out the air. The splashing of water drenched every team member. The looks of pride on each of the members' faces, especially the youth, was most precious! The laughter and chatter was overwhelming. Nothing beat the pride and feeling of victory in every team member's heart as they each walked up the marine dock and then up the stairs to the platform where they received their award.



Jyah Quocksister

Victoria, BC

My name is Jyah Quocksister. My traditional name is Tsooksies. I am from Campbell River, BC, from the Kwaksistala family. I am 14 years old. My dad is Fabian Quocksister, Loxsumgamai Dee-Kla-Nala Kwaksistala, and was born an Inherent Hereditary Chief of the Laichwiltach Nation here in Campbell River. He is Laichkwiltach and Lekwungen. His family name, "Kwaksistala" means "Smoke around the world." His given name, "Dee-Kla-Nala" means "Honoured one who looks at the Thunder Bird." On my mother's side I am Adowa, Padawami, Mohawk and Ojibway.

In November 2009 I went hunting with my dad, my uncle Rocky Quocksister, and my cousin Tyler Love, and my cousin Negyae Quocksister for an Elk.

Before we began hunting we got dressed in our ghillie suits. A ghillie suit is a full body camouflage suit. We made the suits by hand. We added yarn to look like grass. We worked on them for three days. My dad cut out the pattern for the suit and I sewed it together. A professional ghillie suit is \$150, and mine cost \$40.

Before we got out on the hunt, my dad smudged the guns and tools as well as us with sweetgrass. My Uncle Rocky actually got the Elk. We spotted 10 Elk lying down about 100 yards away from us in a slash. When they saw us they got up and started walking. We had a tag for a cow, so that's what we were looking for. My uncle lined up his cross hairs in the scope of his gun and fired. He got the big cow at the back. After a long day of dealing with the Elk, we went home and saw my family.

My father is my mentor when it comes to hunting. He has shown me how to tie knots, how to gut a deer, an elk, and a bear. I feel confident that I could skin any animal that had fur. He has shown me how to sneak around in the bush when hunting. He has shown me the need to smudge before hunting, and he usually puts grass in the mouth of the animal we kill because this is their last food offering from their lands. It is for their spirit. He has taught me respect for the forest. He offers prayers of thanks to the animal, the land, spirits of the land, and the Creator— "Ha-las-due-seela" for the food for our friends and family.

Richard Peter

Cowichan Tribes

I became disabled when I was 4 years old after I sustained a spinal cord injury in a motor vehicle accident and was confined to a wheelchair. I grew up in Duncan but after I graduated I moved to Vancouver to start a career in wheelchair basketball. I have been a member of the Canadian Men's National Wheelchair basketball team since 1994. I am currently the only First Nations athlete on the team.

When I was younger, a Wheelchair Basketball demonstration team came to my school for Disability Awareness Week. It was the first time I had ever seen any type of sports for the disabled. Since then, I participated at a recreational and provincial competitive level in many different wheelchair sports including tennis, racquetball, ball hockey, sledge hockey, athletics and of course basketball.

A few challenges that I had growing up were for financial reasons and location issues. Wheelchair sports were mainly located in the Vancouver area and Victoria at that time. I had to find transportation and travel money, if I wanted to participate in the sports every week and around BC.

With a lot of support from my parents, family, and the Cowichan Tribes, I was able to participate and travel for sports. I also had to find funding for a sports wheelchair to participate. Sports wheelchairs cost between \$2000 - \$7500, so I had to find a lot of help in this area on many occasions. I am very thankful for all of the support that I have received over the years.

I won the Tom Longboat Award for National Aboriginal Athlete of the Year for Canada in 2000 and 2004. I have also been a TeamBC member since 1992 and have won Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals. I was also the recipient of numerous All Star, Most Sportsmanlike, and MVP awards. I've been to the World Championships a few times and have won the Bronze medal three times, as well as the Gold Medal in 2006. I have also had the opportunity to participate in the Paralympic Games and won 2 Gold medals, and a Silver medal. In 2008, I was named Male Athlete of the Year by Wheelchair Basketball Canada.

I go to schools and community events to share my stories and to show my medals. I enjoy talking to people about the Paralympics, participation in sports, and about living a healthy lifestyle.

I think my involvement in the Paralympic games has had a positive impact on my family and my community. People see me as a positive role model for our youth, they admire my athletic talent and my achievements. They can see that even though I came from a tough situation I was able to be successful.

The fact is there is no “secret to my success;” just hard work, determination and some help from family, friends and a few key organizations.



I entered the Provincial Lawn Bowling Championship in my first year and won a silver medal. Since then I have won the gold medal every year.



Randy Fred

Tseshah First Nation

I have been visually impaired all my life. I have retinitis pigmentosa and night blindness. I had lost all my peripheral vision by my late teens. I lost the remainder of my vision around 1998. I used to do a lot of walking but when I lost all my sight I was too afraid to walk anywhere by myself as I was almost run over by cars and had many accidents walking into metal signposts and telephone poles. My visually impaired friend, Shirley Cole, invited me to try lawn bowling and I immediately loved the sport because it was a physical activity that got me out of my house.

A typical lawn bowling 'green' is about 36 metres long. A strand of twine is run down the middle of the green for visually impaired bowlers. Bowlers stand on a small rectangular mat. These two items are important for visually impaired lawn bowlers to gain perspective of where they need to throw the ball. A marker at the other end of the green lets the players know the distance at which the jack sits.

Visually impaired lawn bowling is a team sport. Each player has a sighted coach or director that assists in lining up a shot. I have been fortunate in having Stan Dalzell as my coach. It was critical for Stan and me to learn to work together as a team.

To learn how to throw the ball properly, I copied Elaine Smithson's style. She is a member of the Nanaimo Club, was a world champion and is totally blind. Copying her, I crouch down and aim at the tips of my fingers and it works very well. The technique requires a certain amount of strength in my legs and good balance is essential. I do Tai Chi exercises to help with this.

People must be prepared to laugh a lot when lawn bowling. I wish I had started the sport at a younger age because it is so much fun. Lawn bowling suffers from the stigma of being an 'old fogey's' sport but in other countries people of all ages play it.

I entered the Provincial Lawn Bowling Championship in my first year and won a silver medal. Since then I have won the gold medal every year. I won one silver medal and four gold medals in the National Championship. I plan on winning the world championship if funding can be secured.



Wegadesk Gorup-Paul

Snaw-Naw-As First Nation

I don't believe competitive diving from heights was practiced by our people. In fact, it is a relatively new sport in Canada. However, there are parts of the sport of diving that cross over into our culture. Many Canadian First Nations, such as the Mik Maq, are well known to tolerate heights. First Nations on the West Coast also used to under-water dive to harvest scallops.

I trained at the Saanich Commonwealth Centre in Victoria BC. It is the only facility on Vancouver Island that has a 10 metre diving platform. I started in a Fun Dive Program where I continued diving competitively until 2007.

Diving was my focus for moving forward. My coaches knew how to push me while knowing when to pull back and let me do it myself. Diving also offered me a group of friends that I got to know well and shared the same challenges such as learning a new dive.

I won many medals for Canada and placed either top 3 or 10 in the world at the International events. But I also came close by fractions of a point to making it to bigger competitions. Overall, the biggest results were that I did my best and did well for my family, nation and country.

My mom was a single parent with me and my brother and sister, but could always find a way to get my travel money to a competition and gave me the freedom to keep going; as long as I was going in a good direction!

I know now I can do anything I set my mind to. I also know your head and body need to be looked after to do more than just carry you around. Your body, if looked after, can give you new energy and strength to make you want to do even more. I learned how competition can become cruel and that in the end it should be about the well being of the youth.

I also learned how to accept not winning and being able to put it behind me and move on. In a competition you have 12 dives to do and if you don't do one well you need to not think about it and make the next dive count. I learned to not get caught in the adult world of winning but to make the journey count.

I celebrate my success and my failures since without both I would not know any boundaries. I dedicate this story to my father who never gave up even in times of hardship or prosperity.



Bruce Alfred

Namgis First Nation

Bruce is from the Namgis Nation of Alert Bay, BC. He has been a carver for 35 years and specializes in bentwood boxes. Bruce is the only carver in the area that does that type of work. Most bentwood box makers live in Prince Rupert, Vancouver, and Victoria.

Bruce enjoys staying active with his three grandchildren. He takes them for long walks and teaches them the fundamentals of soccer and basketball. They also enjoy going for bike rides and other outdoor activities with their grandpa. Bruce tries to encourage his grandkids to be physical rather than focus their time on electronics and today's technology. He also teaches them about the importance of healthy eating habits, such as eating a lot of fruit.

Every summer, Bruce takes his grandchildren to Chilliwack because he has a friend that lives there. He calls it bootcamp because his friend has a lot of rules, but he supports her because he sees such a huge difference in the children when they come back after three days.

Bruce believes that everything starts at home. He is very strict with his grandchildren, but also fair. When he tells them it is time to go for a walk, none of them complain because they know they don't have a choice, but they also love it too.

When Bruce isn't carving, he can be found with his grandchildren, taking them on their next great adventure. While they are together, Bruce teaches the children about drugs and keeps a sharp eye on them when they are playing to ensure no one is bullying each other. His grandchildren tell him they are lucky to have him but he feels he is the lucky one, to have them in his life.

Bruce encourages his grandchildren to dream big and work on achieving their dreams. He believes everyone can achieve greatness but people have to work toward it. He tells his grandchildren that they can do whatever they want and to not let anyone steer them in the wrong direction.

Bruce enjoys spending time at the community recreation centre. He plays basketball and other games with the kids. He likes to see their self-esteem grow through structure and activity. He hopes he and his grandchildren are setting a good example in the community and he encourages other people to be active and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Red Fox Active Adventures
are a series of stations in a
carnival setting, that promote
fitness and healthy choices.

Red Fox Program

Vancouver, BC

The Red Fox program combines active play, food security and leadership training to improve the levels of fitness, health, capacity and social responsibility of Aboriginal and low income families in the Lower Mainland. The program has several different initiatives.

Two years ago, the program held five Active Adventure Passport Days in various parks around Vancouver. These park days were designed to promote increased activity levels and healthy choices among families. Each park day featured a portable climbing wall, Red Fox Action Adventures, and participation from community recreation, and health and safety organizations.

Red Fox Active Adventures are a series of stations in a carnival setting, that promote fitness and healthy choices. These Active Adventures are delivered to schools, community centres and parks to promote the participation of Aboriginal and inner city families. Each station includes an activity designed to promote hand/eye coordination, balance, stamina, and artistic and cultural expression. Vancouver Native Health provides food security and health-promotion stations. Sessions are led by trained community members from the Red Fox Leadership Training program.

The Red Fox Leadership Training program is designed to build capacity and mentorship in Aboriginal and inner city youth and parents that foster increased learning, confidence and healthy lifestyles. Workshops focus on recreation and health-promotion skills and work experience leading the Active Adventures.

The Red Fox Running program is another Active Communities Vancouver project that reaches out to Aboriginal and inner city children and families to help increase activity levels, social responsibility and food security. The program is a partnership between the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Native Health Society.

Roger Adolph

Xaxli'p First Nation

My English name is Roger Adolph. I'm St'at'imc from the Xaxli'p First Nation, which is also known as the Fountain Indian Band, in the Lillooet area. My traditional name means "My face comes from the Earth."

I got involved in sports through the residential school, mainly through the Kamloops Indian Residential School. They had some good sports activities going. I played basketball, soccer, and boxing. It was a tough grind. It took me three years to crack the boxing club back then, but just through sheer hard work and determination, I finally made it.

I started competing while I was at the Kamloops school. Boxing helped me cope with the residential school. We had a coach there that was from the Army. His name was Gordon Dancer. He came out the school to coach boxing and started a club with one of the Fathers, who became the club manager.

I was 112 pounds then; classed as a Flyweight. I kept training, running and working out. I kept going to the gym all the time. I got beat up so bad in my first fight that my coach told me I should quit. I knew I could show everybody they were wrong, so I went back to training until I met a great coach. He showed me the finer art of boxing: how to move; how to stand properly; how to punch properly; and how to defend myself. My boxing improved and I was able to beat the guy that got me so bad that first time.

After I graduated, I wasn't sure what I was going to do, and my coach recommended that I go to school in Vancouver to learn a trade and continue to train. I took a bookkeeping course and got my diploma. I continued to box and enter tournaments and championship fights. In 1963 I won the Canadian Bannerweight Title.

After that I went to England to fight. I was homesick at first, and it took me awhile to adjust to living there. I didn't end up doing as well there as I wanted to. I started getting cuts all the time. Eventually I came back home. I was ashamed because my community threw a big potlatch for me when I left and that was when I thought I'd come home as a world champion. I was dwelling in self pity when word got out that I was home and they wanted to throw another potlatch for me.

At the potlatch, as I listened to an old Chief speak, I realized they were happy to have me home. They weren't worried about how well I had done. They told me it was my job to train the young ones with everything I had learned. The weight lifted off my shoulders, and I lost that self pity.



After that I started coaching again and used the techniques that my great coaches had taught me. My boxing club is open to anybody and it works good that way. It's open to young men and women and the focus is on having fun and working hard.



Tom Watts

Tseshah First Nation

Submitted by Annie Watts

Tom Watts is a member of the Tseshah, a tribe belonging to the Nu-chah-nulth Nation on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Tom grew up and still lives in Port Alberni, British Columbia. While Tom was married to Dolly Morgan they had three children.

Through his accomplishments he has inspired his children to aspire to greatness. His daughter Cynthia has obtained her degree in Business Management, his son Wallace has been a flight captain for United Airlines for almost 30 years, and his other daughter Annie has her degree in Computer Science and is an award-winning author. Tom hopes that his accomplishments would inspire other young athletes.

Tom, a longshoreman for four decades, said the road to fame was paved with lots of hard work. It was early to bed and early to rise if you wanted to win. Things didn't happen overnight, it took a lot of training. When Tom wasn't working or looking after familial responsibilities, he was practicing sports. Teamwork and confidence in yourself is necessary to win ball games. Don't drink alcohol and never smoke if you want to become a really good athlete. Eat good food everyday to stay strong and health. Include vegetables, fruits, berries, brown rice, chicken, seafood and water in your diet.

Tom won over 400 awards for his athletic excellence, sportsmanship and leadership qualities in basketball, softball, soccer and track & field. Two outstanding awards were the Tom Longboat Award for Canada won by the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada in 1962 where his ability in the field of sports was recognized on a national scale, and the award for winning the Canadian championships while playing for the Alberni Athletic Senior A's in 1965.

Tom was inducted into the ADSS and the Morgan William Classic Hall of Fame which celebrated his athletic accomplishments over 50 years. He is recognized as one of the top athletes to ever come out of the Alberni Valley.

When Tom stopped playing sport, he got interested in country dancing, and started to travel the world to attend workshops. Up to this day, he continues to attend country dances held in dance halls on Vancouver Island and in the Vancouver area. Tom also loves to watch basketball tournaments held in Port Alberni.

Recently, Tom was asked to represent the Nu-chah-nulth people at a fundraising dinner to help rebuild an athletic hall. The last one had burned down and was a great loss to the community.

Right from the start,
I never thought about doing
anything else as a career.
All I wanted to do was play hockey.

KC Timmons

We Wai Kai Nation

I'm from Victoria, BC. I just turned 30. I started playing hockey when I was 4 years old. I was pretty young when I first started playing, but I always enjoyed it. It was always fun. I stuck with hockey and ended up playing junior hockey in the states for the Tri-City Americans in the Western Hockey League.

I got drafted at 18 years old by the Colorado Avalanche, which was definitely a highlight for me. Eventually I ended up playing in Europe for the Manchester Phoenix, and later on I played for the Coventry Blaze. Playing in Europe was probably the most fun I've ever had. There was lots of free travel, and a free place to stay. Playing in North America is great, but over in Europe its much more laid-back. It was a good experience to just focus on playing hockey and having fun.

Right from the start, I never thought about doing anything else as a career. All I wanted to do was play hockey. It was never really a decision to play hockey professionally, I just knew it was what I wanted to do.

It's been a tough life though. I left home at 16 years old to play, and it wasn't the hockey that was a big challenge. You're expected to make such huge decisions and act like an adults when realistically it's probably not what you should be doing, but that's just the way it works.

When I was 17 years old, it was my second year of playing junior hockey and I was already worried about where I would go in the NHL Draft, then I was already worrying about if I was going to sign an NHL contract. It's a lot of stuff to deal with when you've barely had any life experience.

I actually quit hockey for two years and moved to Australia to get away from it, and before I knew it, I was playing in their version of a professional league. Wherever I go, hockey just seems to find me.

I'm living in New York City right now, and I play in the East Professional Hockey League for the New York Aviators so I'm quite happy doing what I'm doing. I'm looking forward to playing hockey again for the team next year.





Training the body gives you strength to take risks and the ability to persevere.

Rosalin Hanna

Lytton First Nation

I am a member of the Lytton First Nation. My native name is Maaj and I have been told that it mean first light of day or one who brings light by revealing herself. I love this name for me because it also translates to strength, for revealing oneself makes a woman very vulnerable and open. Strength is something that I depend on when in relationships with people for they can judge, disappoint, or even leave you behind. Without a strong spirit I could not have become a coach, athlete, therapist or a First Nations woman with her doctorate in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, specializing in Exercise Science.

A strong mind and body also gives me the ability to take risks, and the emotional awareness from being involved in sports gives me the discipline that I need to control, have boundaries, or access my emotions. With an active lifestyle I have the confidence that I am healthy, and the tools to keep my days in balance.

Working as a coach fulfilled me more than I could ever imagine. I felt alive, energized, and I felt powerful. I practised what I preached and could not wait to be on the field with the athletes. The other coaches and the athletes became my family. My vision I wrote at this time was "I empower athletes to be champions" and I did whatever it took to make sure they had someone like I did when I struggled growing up. I spent every Sunday writing out our programs and I looked forward to leading the workouts in the weight room and perform speed drills on the field. This was one of the best times of my life.

Life does reward hard work, but it may not look like what you have planned. Your body always rewards you with health and wellness when you train hard. Your career rewards may not be consistent nor predictable but always something in the right direction if you are a dedicated coach. I found that the emotional and intellectual development comes when you make the commitment by listening to your dreams and taking care of your body, and from here you can make good decisions.

What I have learned is that anyone can succeed if they are physically active and they take time to connect their head, heart, body, and spirit in the process. Training the body gives you strength to take risks and the ability to persevere.

Chief Clement Seymour

Seabird Island Indian Band

My name is Clement Seymour. My name comes from the Stakaya Clan. I am the seventh generation since that name came out. It comes from my mother's side of the family.

Every year we hold a Seabird Island Festival. It started over 40 years ago as a way to bring our people together for soccer tournaments, canoe races, and other activities. It started out pretty small but over the years it really started growing. When the weather is good, we can get anywhere from five to seven thousand people coming into our community.

People come from the States for the canoe races. We also have people coming from up north, Vancouver Island, and a lot of people from up and down the Fraser Valley. Teams also come from Mount Currie to play soccer and ball hockey. Last year we had probably about 110 different teams in soccer and ball hockey.

I remember when the Festival first started years ago, I played in the first soccer tournaments here on Seabird, it was good. The Festival isn't all about sports; it also has a cultural side to it. We have a number of different things we take care of, such as a salmon barbecue. Our artists also come and sell their products. There is a lot of community pride out there, we've been holding the dry event for the last 20 years.

We have a little over 250 staff members here on Seabird so we have lots of resources working to help make the event a success. We also have lots of participation from the younger ones. We have young teams, some as young as 6 and 7 years old. They play on the smaller fields.

The festival is a good tool for educating and understanding. It's a positive experience that helps bring the community together. It was the same when the Olympic Torch came through our community. In taking care of the Torch, it reminds you of yourself and who you are and where you come from. It gives you a very good idea on what you're here to look after, and that is yourself.

Many of my teachings come from our Elders. Even if they don't say much, they all have something to share. I like to go and sit down to talk with them. I've been doing that for most of my life. Their message to me was always to start with the younger ones, and that's what our Festival is all about.



The festival is a good tool for educating and understanding. It's a positive experience that helps bring the community together.



Barbara Chapman

Seabird Island Indian Band

My name is Barbara Chapman. I have worked with kids and raised them all of my life. My mom was blind and had 20 children. I was the eldest of the works so I did all the housekeeping and babysitting and it just carried on as I got older. Nowadays I'm involved with the youth. I belong to the RCMP meetings we have here concerning our youth. Normally I would just sit at home and youth would come along to see me. I'm always helping them raise money for different events and goals.

Every year I help with the fundraising for the Seabird Island Festival. My sister does a lot of sewing: native art and other things. I work along with her, and we make cedar bark hats and different styles of vests. She's a teacher at school and she has lots of sewing machines. The money we make is for the youth. We go down the island for cedar bark. The trees are beautiful down there. We get strips 80 feet long.

I've been doing the fundraising for the youth for quite some time now. I was involved with the soccer teams years ago and used to travel all over with them. We would put on dances to raise money for them. Four of my brothers were in soccer, so I had to go along with them.

Last fall we had an event for youth and elders that we went up to Chehalis for. It turned out to be really good. We learned how to work together with the youth. We had about 20 of them participate. There were just about the same amount of Elders, and we stayed up there for a week. It was really interesting to just be with those teenagers. I think they learned a lot from being around the elders for a week. The last thing we made while we were there was drums.

Our youth have good minds if they are around the right people. They know how to carry themselves and be respectable. They're learning to be mannerly and not to swear. They really work hard at it nowadays compared to before. There are so many young children coming up.

The main thing is that it's important to keep busy and keep your mind busy. I'm 73 years old and I'm just starting to feel my age. But I'm still always on the go. Every evening I spend my time sewing, and I don't sew anything for myself. It's all for fundraising for our youth.



Brian Jones

Seabird Island Indian Band

I'm the Economic Development Manager at Seabird Island First Nation. I'm a Sechelt Band member and have lived in Sto:Lo territory all my life.

We are going into our 41st year of the Seabird Island Festival. I've been with the Band for 10 years and have been very active in the Festival since I started. I look forward to our annual event and always coordinate youth soccer. Its a lot of hard work, but its also a lot of fun. I've seen some kids that have come through the Under 7 bracket and are now playing Men's soccer. Its always nice to see those youth moving through all the age brackets.

Over the years, I've heard that the communities that attend our event look forward to it every year. They enjoy the scenery, and the prizes and trophies we have for the young ones. Every year, I look forward to the Sundays where we hand out the hardware. The smiles the young kids have when they come up to receive their awards keep me coming back every year. To see the joy and the fun these kids have; it keeps me going. It's what I admire in the Festival the most. Whether it's sunny or raining, they just enjoy their time here.

I think the main thing about our Festival is that it is 100% First Nations. I don't think you'd see as many teams if the youth had to play mainstream. Their confidence is really built up here. The teams here practice on a daily basis and they look forward to playing in the elite soccer leagues that are in the municipalities around us.

Soccer here in the Fraser Valley is huge. It is one of the biggest drivers that I see in most communities. I think you see the evidence in the North American Indigenous Games. Our Sto:Lo teams are right up there with any other team in North America. Community pride is really what dictates that.

All the skills kids learn in organized sport help them with all the different life skills they need: the discipline of working together, the camaraderie, the goal setting and planning. They don't realize they are learning it all at the time, but as they get older, they start to see how much it helped them and will continue to help them. Organized sports is really what is going to help many of our youth through a lot of their life issues.



Diana Kay

Seabird Island Indian Band

My name is Diana Kay. I'm a teacher at Seabird and I work with the special skills program. It's designed as an alternate program for young boys, and I have one young lady in there as well.

I am involved with our Seabird Island Festival in a couple capacities. At times in the past, I've worked as a soccer coach for the kids. Most other times, I work as administrative help and assist with the coordination of the event. In the past, I've worked with the teen boys, usually youth Under 14. I did that for about three years.

As a coach, I try to work with their best qualities first and build a foundation from there. I'm not hard-nosed. I'm very gently, but I encourage them a lot. I started coaching after I became too old to play anymore. In 2000, I had a very horrible knee injury from soccer and the doctor said I could either continue to play and be in a wheelchair at 60 years old, or hang my boots up.

I began coaching as a way to stay connected to the sport and also because I love the energy and competitiveness of the game. I love the values that come from soccer and team sport. The one thing that is not my favourite about coaching is knowing what the young men are capable of and their physical abilities, but sometimes they would rather do things they're not ready for yet instead of building on what they can already do.

Having a team is all about family, that's the way I teach in school too. When I see these boys in school for so many hours a day, sometimes that's longer than I get to spend with my own son. I tell the boys, "This is a family and we need to treat each other as such. It's a foundation of respect and being able to hold one another up and being there for one another as well."

The most rewarding part of being a coach is the ability to overcome loss: loss to injury, loss of a player, or loss of a game. I enjoy watching them grow from there; watching them grow from boys to men. It also means watching them be accountable, and responsible. Personal growth is all that matters. As long as we're willing to put the time and effort into them, we get it back; sometimes ten-fold.



Jason Campbell

Seabird Island Indian Band

My name is Jason Campbell. I volunteer and coach a bit of boxing in the area, but for employment I work for Corrections Canada. I'm an Aboriginal Correctional Program Officer for Mountain Institution.

One of the biggest challenges you face as a coach is that a lot of people associate sport with alcohol and drugs. They see their family members go play sports on the weekend as an excuse to go drink after the game. That is something that you try and fight as a coach. You have to let them know that they're there for the game, and for themselves, rather than the drinking afterward.

For some of the kids, it's the only break they have from that chaos at home. It provides them with structure, guidance, and friendship; all in a healthy way. They're safe. For some of our youth, that's the situation they yearn for. It is their only outlet to get away.

What I'm trying to do is expand the sport base to Aboriginal youth in general, not just Seabird Island. I play junior football, and I now coach junior football in the local area; rugby and fastball too. I try to encourage and attract more youth to those sports because not everyone is built like a soccer player. I try to bring diversity of sport and let them know there are other options if they don't want to play soccer.

This is my fifth year coaching a specific team. This year, more so than other years, I've wanted to bring some of our culture into my coaching. With the Aboriginal players, I let them know my ancestry and also what's available for them. I don't want to preach to the kids, but sometimes they don't have a lot of connection to their family or the culture. Eventually I'd like bring in some people to cleanse the field prior to the season, and do a song on opening day.

I think sports help our youth gain a little confidence that they could not acquire anywhere else. Through sport, you find that everyone has a place. This gives them strength. Sometimes they're not going to be the best players out on the field, but they have to give themselves a chance to go and try new things. If you do this, you are going to be rewarded with new skills.



Karen McNeil

Seabird Island Indian Band

My name is Karen McNeil. I am originally from the Chehalis Indian Band but I married into the Seabird Island Band. My involvement with the Seabird Island Festival is mainly with youth soccer. I manage most of the youth brackets. All the teams are co-ed. We have rules to ensure there are two girls from each team on the field at all times. If a team doesn't have two girls to play, they have to play one player short. Teams get competitive and want to play with all boys, so the rules help ensure fairness.

My responsibilities in managing the team include fundraising, uniforms, phone calling, and emailing all the teams. Sometimes I feel like I get burnt out and ask myself, "Why am I doing this?" Then I give my head a shake because I did it for my kids. My husband and I took three girls' Under 21 teams to the North American Indigenous Games and we brought back the gold medals. That was rewarding.

NAIG is every two years, and we did it for six years mainly to be involved with our children. Then they became of age, and we started doing all the youth. Now I can see us doing it all over again because we have 10 grandchildren and our oldest are 13 years old.

I also talk to our grandchildren about the importance of staying focused on your goals and not getting sidetracked by partying or boys. We have one granddaughter, Brandy McNeil, that plays in the top division of the Chilliwack League. She plays on the Metro Under 15 team even though she is only 13. She's the youngest player on the team. It's very competitive, and aggressive.

I think soccer helps keep the kids out of trouble. It's a good prevention tool. They look forward to it. I get kids asking me "When is practice?" We wait till the good weather comes and then we practice twice a week. It is a lot of hard work; juggling everything. We have 5 grandchildren playing soccer now. I love the way the kids come up to me. They're happy to see me and they ask me a bunch of questions. I just love helping kids.

The Seabird Island Festival is a great example of an alcohol and drug free event. Chehalis Indian Band and Cultus were inspired by the Festival and started doing it too.

My main goal was to lose
weight for my heart's
sake, as well as to gain
confidence about myself.

Joan James

Penelakut First Nation

My name is Joan James from the Penelakut Tribe on Kuper Island. Last year I started Tami's Boot Camp, a fitness group here in Penelakut. The main reason I decided to become active was the desire to live a healthier lifestyle because I was concerned about my health after my dad had his heart attacks. My main goal was to lose weight for my heart's sake, as well as to gain confidence about myself.

To get myself in shape, I started walking and using the tread mill on my own. I also joined the fitness group, which eventually led to running on a regular basis. Tami August owns New Image Fitness and she was a great leader for the Boot Camp program.

Initially one of my biggest challenges was making time to exercise regularly. Slowly as the months progressed, it became more of a lifestyle. I discovered that as I became more and more physically active, I had more energy to do all my day-to-day activities.

Since I started my lifestyle change, I have lost at least 50 lbs., and 9 inches off my waist. The results were gradual, but noticeable. I have been eating healthy and have also quit smoking. My biggest accomplishment was when I ran my first half-marathon.

Through the fitness group, led by Tami, we started testing ourselves by running 7 kms for fun, which seemed terribly long at the time! As a result, a few of the people in the program trained for the Royal Victoria Half-Marathon. Completing that half-marathon has been my biggest accomplishment so far.

Tami's Boot Camp has benefited many people in our community. I think it has also inspired other people in our community to get physically active. For myself, I know I will be participating in many more races in the upcoming year.

I celebrate all of my accomplishments in fitness daily by enjoying my life.



Stanley Peters

Sliammon Indian Band

Submitted by Gloria Galligos

Stanley Peters was born on September 16, 1937 and passed away on October 20, 1981. He was born and raised in Sliammon by his parents Benny and Emily Peters, along with two brothers and two sisters, all of whom are deceased.

Stanley was married a young age to Nellie Marguerite Harry, who also passed away at a young age. They raised seven children; six girls and one boy. Stanley started working as a logger and a fisherman when he was very young to provide for his family.

Stanley was known as hard worker and a very strong athlete. He was very dedicated to his family and he had a love for soccer. He also loved living a traditional lifestyle that included fishing, hunting, and berry picking. He loved smoked fish and grew his own garden. He helped with the chickens and with jarring foods.

Stanley always had his children involved with helping him in the garden, cleaning fish nets, picking the chicken eggs, making rugs out of old clothes, and dusting his trophies. Stanley participated in many soccer tournaments. He played for the Sliammon Braves. During that time, they were always undefeated. He was known as the most valuable player for the team. They travelled to Courtenay by Seine Boat and played against non-Native teams but always came out victorious. The Sliammon Braves also travelled to Victoria for the annual Easter Weekend Native Tournament. They even went to Richmond to compete in Division 1 Tournaments and always did very well.

Stanley also participated as a referee for soccer in Campbell River, where he received his first referee uniform. He proudly loved to coach his daughters in soccer and never missed a tournament. After he passed, Stanley's memory was honoured when he was recognized in the Easter Weekend tournament in Victoria for his soccer talent.

Today he is gone but not forgotten. He was an inspiration to his fellow teammates, friends in Sliammon, and his children. There are still a lot of very fond memories left untold. Many friends still cherish his memory and share their stories of moments in his life. They talk about how hardworking he was, and they tell stories of his days as a logger and a fisherman. Stanley sadly passed away in the ocean while fishing in October 1981.

Elders of Sliammon

Sliammon Indian Band

The Sliammon people have a wonderful history of sports and culture for more than 70 years. There are so many activities with communities that can be defined as physical activity beyond sports. The stories shared here include endurance activities like gathering food, and the holistic teachings that surrounded these activities. Many of the activities here that were used for survival also prevented disease such as diabetes. Sports also provided a place for communities to gather and network.

Elsie Paul remembers being young and living with her grandparents. She said at that time, you had no choice but to get out and be active; you never grumbled or complained. You just got up at daylight breaking every day. You got up and got busy because there was always something to do; there were no modern conveniences. Everything was done by hand and required hard work. She remembers how much everything was appreciated because people worked hard for everything they had. Everyone shared in the community and there was a strong sense of unity.

Maggie Wilson said that they got up early every morning and remembers her grandpa getting the boat ready. They would pack their lunches and everyone would pile in the boat. Their grandfather would let them off in a little bay and their grandmother would dig roots. Not a day or minute was wasted because there was always more work to be done. She remembers her grandpa towing logs to cut up and store the wood for winter. She also remembers how her grandmother would weave cedar baskets and would walk and knock on doors to sell fish and baskets. Then they would walk all the way home and buy needed supplies. Maggie remembers constantly picking blackberries to make jam and apples to store. Maggie's grandmother was always worried about everybody in the community having enough to eat.

Charlie Bob said his grandfather made Charlie a jigger and he used that to catch lots of red snapper. He would bring them home and his grandmother would smoke them. She would can any bluejacks he caught. Charlie says he was out fishing every day when daylight broke. He would also go to Texada Island to pick black caps, then his family would spend the whole summer canning. Charlie was 10 years old when he got his first deer. He didn't know how to clean it so he dragged the deer the whole way home. His grandmother cleaned the deer, and smoked and canned all of the meat. Charlie also remembers his granny used to make them peel apples and she would cut them like doughnuts. When the sun shone she would string them all over branches till they were dried, then she would put them in boxes to eat later.

Margaret Vivier said grandparents didn't like young people to be lazy. They always wanted the children to be moving and on-the-go. She remembers that there was always so much work that needed to be done: berry picking, clam digging, house cleaning, wood gathering. She said that it always seemed like work work work but nobody ever complained.

Les Adams remembers how important strength was to elders for young boys. The boys were always taught to go and bathe in the river at breaking daylight; even if it was in the middle of winter. He said they were frozen by the time they got home and all they had was wood heat, because there was no electric. He also remembers his grandma talking about competition and about how all the warriors would go to a spot on Harwood Island where there were steep sandy bluffs. All the men would try to run up. Chief Tom was the highest runner and could run up the steep bank without stopping. They said that if the runners were weak, the trees would start to come sliding down along with the men.

Young women were taught to take care of their bodies and their attitudes. They did not show themselves off or flaunt themselves; modesty was of the utmost importance. These young ladies were sheltered and kept close to the women of the community so they could be taught to eat properly, and to watch their mouths and how they used them, and how to talk to people.

Young boys weren't allowed to eat certain foods, like the bone marrow of a deer. This ensured that they would always have steady footing in sports or in hunting. Boys were always training, and would be sent out running. They had to get up early and do their river cleansing with a father, uncle or grandfather. They were very strict with young boys back when these Elders were young. No one was allowed to sit around or be lazy.

All of the Elders shared many wonderful stories. The main theme of these stories was that the more people stayed busy and active, and that this kept people well. The less they suffered from disease. All the physical activity helped bond the community together. Sliammon also competed in soccer and was one of the best teams of their time. The most important lesson of all was to take care of yourself.



I love teaching fitness classes because I love the people's energy. I love the fact that they are so willing to do whatever I put out there on the floor for them.

Tami August

Penelakut First Nation

I started out in the social work field and decided to go back to the gym as a method of stress release. The place I was training out of offered me a part-time job as a personal trainer. I took the courses and went into personal training. I absolutely loved it. I decided to become a full-time personal trainer. I worked for 2 and half years until my husband encouraged me to open my own business 8 years ago and I've been going strong ever since.

The idea for Tami's Bootcamp originated after I did a Walking program over on Kuper Island in about 2003. It was a huge success, however, I got really busy with my business and had to focus on work. Through word-of-mouth, I learned that people really enjoyed my program. I decided to contact the Penelakut Band once again and asked them if they were interested in doing a fitness program. From there, it's just really taken off. It has had a snowball effect that has been absolutely phenomenal.

I started back over there in October of 2008 with a group of 4 to 6. Classes consist of strength, endurance, cardio, and flexibility training. Now, I have a group of at least 22 people; all ages and all fitness abilities. I am so impressed with these people because they live on an island that is truly only 3.5 kms around for a running route. Once they accomplished their first 7 km run, they decided to take on a half-marathon. They did their entire training for their half-marathon on that small island.

When we first started, with that group, to walk around the interior of the gym, for some of them it was too difficult. They've gone from that level to running a half-marathon. It was a huge inspiration to others in the community.

I love teaching fitness classes because I love the people's energy. I love the fact that they are so willing to do whatever I put out there on the floor for them. Honestly, I love seeing how far they advance from the beginning of the program to the end.

I really hope that Penelakut build a small fitness area so they can offer the strength training. My goal is to train and mentor someone over there so they can do what I'm doing now on a continual basis.

Eliza Archie School

Canim Lake Band

Submitted by Barbara McLeod

Our school has 19 students this year. We are located in Canim Lake, which is half an hour west of 100 Mile House. I came to the school in January 2007 and before I came to Eliza Archie, I was involved in Action Schools in the public school system. I was very impressed with the program's whole process. They sent trainers into the schools, and they provided manuals and materials for the school to work with. They trained staff how to use the materials and they train the students how to do some of the playground activities. They also have a healthy eating program.

The first step when I came to Eliza Archie was ensure that the staff and community members were onboard, and they all were. This is a very health-oriented community, so it was easy to get everyone excited about the program. Action Schools came in and sent us kits galore! The kits have skipping ropes, balls, scarves, stress-releasers, you name it! The stress-releasers are designed for use while working in school. Everything is geared toward integrating healthy living into daily routines. They provide us with cds and dvds so that you can follow all of the dance and exercise patterns. It really is a constant resource. They train you how to use everything and then they provide follow up with refresher courses for staff members.

The people they send in are energetic and enthusiastic and really motivate you to use the program to its full potential. We pledged to do this every single day and we do! Every morning we gather as an entire school, all of our students and staff. We do 15 minutes of Action Schools. The students learn all of the brain gym activities and all of the activities on the dvds that features kids and are set to music. The students love the dvds because they are fun.

We have one teacher that leads the group to ensure that the students are learning all of the activities. Everyone in our school skips. They use the skipping ropes and they double-skip and triple-skip, they skip backward and forward. They also have Chinese skipping ropes. We track the students' progress and they get stickers on a progress chart every day. They just love it.

The students have so much fun doing all of their activities. They have activities for everything, from 5-minute chair aerobics breaks during their classroom schedule, to a Playground Circuit where the Actions Schools people came in and took our existing equipment and planned out stations that they documented and formalized. They are so amazing; they send so many

resources for us, from posters and charts, to samples of dried apples. The healthy eating component is also a huge part of the program that allows us to talk about fruits and vegetables and there are lots of hands-on activities that revolve around healthy eating habits.

We are so diligent about it because we can see the difference in all the kids. It has given us a focus on physical activity and helps the students get together and work co-operatively, it has strengthened the relationships between the kids. Everyone is so aware of physical activity. The kids have endless stamina. They are so conscious of who they are, and they focus better in class. They know that school is a lot of fun.

I hope they never lose Action Schools because it is an amazing program.

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Jimmy Thomas and Ida Mae Prince

Nakazdli Band

Submitted by Clara Jack

My name is Clara Jack. I am the Capacity Coordinator of the Nak'azdli Natural Resources Research and Development Centre in Fort St James BC. We had two youth come to our office to do a demonstration on processing moose hide from start to finish. Jimmy Thomas learned how to process moose hide when he was very young from his great-grandmother who he lived with until he was 16 years old. Ida Mae Prince learned how to process hide from her partner and she is still learning.

There are probably 70 people in our community that know how to do moose hide. We had the demonstration at our office so people could drop by and learn the process, and so Elders could come and lend their advice on techniques. It is important to get the youth interested in learning about it because it is an art that is being lost. Ida Mae and Jimmy are both willing to teach whoever wants to come along and learn.

In our first session we had about 4 people come. The biggest challenge was getting the youth interested in learning. It was winter and it was -30 degrees, so the turnout wasn't as good as we wanted. We're hoping this summer that more people will be interested.

The youngest generation that knows how to work on hides right now is probably about 30 years old. It is important for people to learn how to do the work because there's a lot of hunting and people just throw the hides away because they don't know how to process them.

There is also a market for hides in Vancouver so it could be a way to generate income for people. They could also turn the hides into crafts and make money that way. The youngest people that make moccasins now are probably 70 years old so it would be so good to see youth learn how to make them.

This summer, the Natural Resources department is going to hold another session outside so that people can stop by if they are interested in learning more about what it takes to process a moose hide. Scraping hides is pretty physical, it's not hard but it's a lot of steady work. We are working on engaging the youth to participate in moose-hides and the tanning process, to get them interested in the culture and get them doing something.



Kim Kufaas

Kwakiutl First Nation

Submitted by Robyn Kufaas

Our family took a trip to Cuba to support my sister Kim when she played for the Native Indian Football Association soccer team. They travelled all that way to play against the Cuban Under 20 national soccer team in two games. We went for two weeks and it was a very fun trip.

Kim has been playing soccer in the Port Hardy league ever since she was 5 years old. She decided to try out for the NIFA team because she wanted to further herself. In Port Hardy, the highest you can get is League, and that's only seasonal.

Our uncle Bill Wasden is one of the head coaches for the NIFA team so he told her to come try out. She made the women's team and had the opportunity to go to Cuba for her first tour. Kim was one of the younger players on the team.

There is a big difference to playing for NIFA, compared to the Port Hardy team, and the Port Hardy Secondary School team that Kim also plays for. She was able to learn a lot of different drills and work on her skills with higher level coaches.

We met everyone at the Vancouver Airport to catch our flight. At that time we barely knew any of the team members. It was neat to meet all the other aboriginal women from all over the province, and we found out that we were related to almost half the team.

While we were waiting for the plane, we went to eat. When it was time, we got on the plane and headed to Cuba. We arrived in Varadero just a little bit before the Cubans' dinner time. The team had dinner all together in the resort.

When it did come to the day to play against the Cubans, we got to take a tour bus to the field. Our tour guide's name was Maria, she was Cuban and knew a lot about Cuba. She said voodoo is one of the beliefs that Cubans have.

On the day we played, the Cubans won by three goals. One of our team members, Autumn, dislocated her arm, so she didn't play the second game at the Olympic training field. The second game at the Olympic field and Cuba beat our NIFA team. We had a good time though.

Sports have always
been an outlet for me;
it was the main thing that
kept me going in life.

Darren James

Cowichan Tribes

I live in Duncan, BC and I'm a high school teacher at Brentwood Bay in Saanich. At 5 years old, I started playing soccer. It's been a lifelong passion of mine, as I still play today. I have also enjoyed playing fastball, boxing, and Karate, among many sports I have played in my lifetime. It seemed like I could play any sport I wanted, so I just kept trying new ones.

I like being fit, and staying healthy. I also like the social aspect of being on a team and playing with my friends, as well as the discipline that comes with organized sport. Sports have always been an outlet for me; it was the main thing that kept me going in life.

I think my biggest accomplishment so far was when I had the opportunity to play for the University of Victoria Vikings. I was attending the University for my Bachelor of Education at the time. I then went on to earn my Masters in Coaching.

I have coached a lot of teams in the past. You name it, I've coached it. I enjoyed coaching fastball, football, volleyball, rugby, wrestling and track and field, to name just a few. I think it's extremely important for youth to stay active and play sports. It gives you a sense of belonging, respect, discipline, pride, and self-esteem. It helps you keep your body healthy and allows you to have a social life.

One of my favourite memories was winning the Canadian National Championship in soccer with the Malaspina College Mariners. I also did the Vancouver Marathon twice because I enjoyed the challenge. I used to box for a local boxing club as a middleweight. I got to go to Lillooet for the Buckskin Glove competition.

Some of the biggest challenges I have faced have centred around being First Nations and living in a white world. I found it very challenging. When I was younger, I really preferred playing with native teams because of the security it provided. Now that I'm older, and I understand more about what's going on in the world, I've adapted to playing with mainstream teams.

I'm going to continue to play soccer as long as I can. I'm 50 years old now and I've gone through a lot of injuries. Once I can't play anymore, I plan on coaching full-time.



Dessa Gottfriedson

Tk'emlúps Indian Band

My name is Dessa Gottfriedson. I'm 29 years old. I've been married for the past couple of years and have one son. I was born and raised in Kamloops. I enjoy playing a variety of different sports. Fastball is my favourite sport, and I have been playing it since I was 5 years old. I also played basketball for four years at Thompson Rivers University here in Kamloops.

I started playing competitive fastball when I was 13. Since then, I have played with men's, women's and coed teams. I've played a lot of games locally but had the opportunity to play all over BC, Alberta, and Washington.

I enjoy the challenge of playing with coed teams. I like the camaraderie of playing with a team, and I especially enjoy playing with my family. My mom and my brother were instrumental in teaching me how to play baseball. We even had a family team until recently. I love playing with my sisters, nieces and other family members. My parents are the coaches, so it really is a family game. We play other sports together too, but fastball is always the most fun.

I got recruited to play fastball at Western Washington University, but decided to go to TRU for basketball once I got recruited there. I didn't think I was ready to leave home and move to Bellingham and I really liked the coach at TRU so that made my decision easy. I enjoyed being a student athlete. Our coach was so great. If you wanted to play, you had to be a student first. The focus was on education. My two favourite highlights from that time were when our team won the provincial championship for our division, and when I graduated with my degree.

Right now, I've been doing research for my Masters degree. I'm looking to see if there is a positive connection between sports and school performance. Once I'm done my research, I will present my findings to my band's Chief and Council to hopefully have an after-school sports and recreation program set up on our reserve. I hope we'll eventually have a facility where kids will be able to have their own community gym. There's a gap in our community right now because we are encouraging sports and recreation but we don't have the facilities yet.

I'll be done my research in October, so my goal is to have something going by next year.

Alex Nelson

Tsawataineuk First Nation

I'm from the Musgamagw Tsawataineuk. We are four tribes in one. Kingcome Inlet is home of the Tsawataineuk. The three other tribes are the Gwawaenuk, the Kwicksuitaenuk and the Ah Kwah Ah Mish. In the old days, we used to roam around as a combined group. There were no stationary villages, but as time went on, we started to become stationary. That is how the four tribes came into existence, but we still consider ourselves to be one.

Sports have always been a part of my life. I like to think that even before I was born, I was trying to kick my way out of my mom's womb to come and play. Soccer has been a driving force for my a lot of my activities, aspirations and goals.

In 1938, our elders saw the wisdom in creating our soccer field in our isolated village of Kingcome Inlet. Soccer has had a really strong history in our lives; even in the generation before my dad and the generation before that played the game of soccer.

When I went into the residential school phase of my life, soccer was one of the positive aspects in the infamous dark history of the time. It was there for me, and I started playing formal soccer when I was there for a team named after our principal. We were from St Mike's and we were 10 years old to 12 years old. We started competing there in the village of Alert Bay.

In 1958 there was a big sports day, what we call June Sports, that came into existence. It was very soccer oriented but they also played baseball and they did a lot of races. Because the fishing industry was active and vibrant at the time, there were lots of other activities that involved competition like net-mending. June Sports itself is going into its 52nd year right now, so it's been a real powerful influence for me personally as far as the continued participation in sports.

Soccer continued to follow me and inspire me through high school and eventually university when I played for the University of Victoria Vikings soccer team and then after that I moved onto elite leagues where I played 1st division soccer for a long time. Later on I began working as a coach, and have been coaching successful teams with proud histories for the past 35 years.

The past 21 years, I was first an Executive Director, and then promoted to CEO of the Aboriginal Sports Association of BC. My job has taken me around the world and I've been fortunate to do some extensive travelling, especially in North America. I've had the opportunity to be involved in the creation of a national sport organization called the Aboriginal Sports Circle.

Before that, I became involved with the North American Indigenous Games. In 1992, there was a core group there that started to formalize those set of games to create its constitutional by-laws, and do what's required to pull off games of that magnitude. I became involved in shaping what that would look like and from an international point of view, that was pretty awesome.

I was also involved in spearheading the 1997 NAIG in Victoria, which was a major endeavour when you're pulling together 6,000 athletes, 3,000 cultural performers, and 2,000 volunteers, to deliver that for one full week. It made a pretty special mark on my personal life. Ten years later, I was still involved when we delivered NAIG in 2008 in Cowican.

One of my favourite memories, is standing up, in front of 20,000 people in the 1997 NAIG in Victoria before we declared the games open. To be there, to witness the tribal journeys, and all the cultural expressions of our nations coming together; it was just so wonderful.

The cultural performers came in and formed a circle, then the athletes came in and formed a circle in the centre. There was a total of 6,000 athletes from across the continent that marched into the University of Victoria stadium. There in the centre, our young people could see that they were surrounding by our culture, and their families, now they could go out there and perform for one full week with pride.

I was sitting up in that isolated box at UVIC, and I was watching this unfold. I saw the pride in people entering the stadium, and the pride of the people in the audience, and it was just so much pride and honour. That's one of my real memorable moments as far how the world of sport has treated me, and it goes beyond sport, it goes into our lives.

