



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

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## **First Nations Celebrate Winter Wellness at 168 Events Across BC**

*Events will take place in all corners of the province, from Sooke to Creston, and Good Hope Lake to Lax Kw'alaams.*

First Nations communities and partners will be celebrating the best of the winter months with 168 Winter Wellness events taking place in January and February 2018. The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) is investing \$320,000 in community wellness events, organized by and for First Nations in BC. This investment is supported by almost \$125,000 in in-kind and financial contributions from community-based and regional partners. Events will take place in all corners of the province, from Sooke to Creston, and Good Hope Lake to Lax Kw'alaams.

"From a cultural viewpoint, winter is a time of reflection and ceremony, and this is reflected in many of the Winter Wellness Grant initiatives," said FNHA Chief Executive Officer Joe Gallagher. "As a health and wellness partner, FNHA recognizes that the work of improving health outcomes belongs to each of us, our families and our Nations. Wellness can mean many different things to many different people, and we're happy to support communities and their members to determine what will work for them."

The 2017-2018 theme is "Togetherness". Winter is the time of year where coming together is important for us as individuals and as a community to strengthen bonds, family ties, and support each other. Events will include a gathering aspect so participants are encouraged to celebrate wellness by bringing individuals, families and communities together. Starting the year in a good way is an important part of sustaining wellness throughout 2018.

"Community wellness is always a priority on Haida Gwaii, however over the winter months it can become more important than ever to raise each other's spirits. As a recipient of the First Nations Health Authority's Winter Wellness Grant, the Skidegate Band Council in collaboration with the Council of the Haida Nation, Old Massett Village Council, and local health services, is coordinating the Haida Women's Masks of Power event," said Rayne Tarasiuk, Event Coordinator, Skidegate Band Council. "Haida women from across Haida Gwaii will be invited to participate in traditional mask-making, with the intention of not only coming together to nurture each other's spirits and well-being through art, but also to build relationships with local wellness service providers. Haawa/Haw'aa to FNHA for making this possible!"

Other events include canning lessons and a gathering in Kyuquot; Saa-ust Shqalawin Winter Feast in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver; traditional hunting and harvesting in Shxw'owhamel; youth wellness camp gathering in Osoyoos; winter fun day at Kanaka Bar; self-care gathering and dinner in Kitasoo; winter relay races and a celebration feast in Lhoosk'uz Dene; and drum making and drum jamming session at the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society in Smithers, to name a few. A full list and interactive map of this year's events can be found on the FNHA website through the link below.

“Together as a CommUNITY we strive for good health and wellness through positive choices in our day to day lives, including physical, emotional, mental and cultural connections – join our 30 for 30 Challenge!” said Glenda Louis, Sherry Louis, and Sharmaine Gregoire from the Okanagan Indian Band.

Events intend to support the four FNHA wellness streams of Nurturing Spirit, Respecting Tobacco, Being Active, and Healthy Eating. The 2018 Winter Wellness grant initiative is the fourth consecutive year of supporting First Nations wellness in BC during the winter months. FNHA has invested \$950,000 over the past four years in community-driven winter wellness events and initiatives.

“These gatherings promote health and wellbeing, as everyone brings their expertise to assist with a community event, promoting togetherness,” said Leona Wells, Family Support Worker with Lax Kw’alaams.

Find out more and an interactive map listing all the events on the FNHA website here:

[www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/2018-fnha-winter-wellness-events](http://www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/2018-fnha-winter-wellness-events)

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