



Kw'umut Lelum

Children. Culture. Community.



2022/2023
ANNUAL REPORT

Kw'umut Lelum is an Indigenous agency rooted in Coast Salish snuw'uy'ulh that provides culturally-driven family support, caregiving services and community programs and services to First Nations on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Our organization operates as nutsalum shqwaluwun (people working together with one heart and one mind) guided by the teachings of our ancestors to promote emotional and physical health, parenting skills, cultural strength, and personal growth.

While respecting Coast Salish practices and traditions, Kw'umut Lelum offers services and programs that keep our children safe, strengthen and preserve our families, connect to our culture, and enhance our community's wellbeing.

Our agency provides services to anyone with a cultural connection to our Member Nations, either living in community or in the urban areas of Duncan or Nanaimo.





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The only thing the world
needs is for every child
to grow up in happiness.

*My Spirit Soars, Chief Dan George & Helmut Hirschall (1986),
Surrey, BC. Hancock House Publishers. P.30*

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Governance

Children. Culture. Community.

Purpose

It is the purpose of Kw'umut Lelum's Board of Directors to govern the agency, driven by our Member Nations' needs and aspirations and rooted in our sacred Snuw'uyulh. We hold an unwavering commitment to the values of honouring Indigenous natural laws and ways of being, inclusiveness, independence and innovation. Above everything, we work as one heart, one mind to ensure that every child has a childhood.

Objectives

- > Operate under a Member Nation-driven governance and village of care model focused on prevention and rooted in our Snuw'uyulh.
- > In partnership with our Member Nations, ensure that our children prosper in their childhood; work as one heart, one mind to keep our children safe and living within their family and kinship system.
- > Maximize available funding to meet the desired outcomes and aspirations of the Member Nations.
- > Continue to innovate, expand programming into prevention service and secure additional funding sources through independence.

Principles

- > Our Member Nations guide, drive, and direct the way we take care of our children, families and communities
- > Family, community and culture are essential to our children's health and well-being, and our children are essential to the health and well-being of our communities.
- > Our children's well-being is the most important consideration in our decisions; a child's job is to eat, sleep, play.
- > Safety and well-being of our children is maintained using the most collaborative, culturally appropriate, family-inclusive decision-making.
- > Maintaining best practices congruent with each respective Member Nation.
- > We honour natural Indigenous laws
- > One heart, one mind, rooted in snuw'uy'ulh

Member Nations



Halalt First Nation

7973 Chemainus Road
Chemainus, BC V0R 1K5
Phone: (250) 246-4736



Lyackson First Nation

7973A Chemainus Road
Chemainus, BC V0R 1K5
Phone: (250) 246-5019



Málexeł Nation (Malahat)

110 Thunder Rd,
Mill Bay, BC V0R 2P0
Phone: (250) 743-3231



Penelakut Tribe

PO Box 360
Chemainus, BC V0R 1K0
Phone (250) 246-2321



Ts'uubaa'asatx (Lake Cowichan)

313B Deer Road, PO Box 159
Lake Cowichan, BC V0R 1K0
Phone: (250) 749-3301



Qualicum First Nation

5850 River Road
Qualicum Beach, BC V9K 1Z5
Phone: (250) 757-9337



Snaw-Naw-As First Nation (Nanoose)

209 Mallard Way
Lantzville, BC V0R 2H0
Phone: (250) 390-3661



Snuneymuxw First Nation

668 Centre St
Nanaimo, BC V9R 4Z4
Phone: (250) 740-2300



Stz' uminus First Nation (Chemainus)

12611B Trans Canada Hwy,
Ladysmith, BC V9G 1M5
(250) 245-7155

Message from the President



'Ahh siem nu siiye'yu 'eethu
Qwul'sih'yah'maht
tun'i tsun 'utl Leey'qsun,
'i' Snuy'ney'muxw, 'i' Sto:lo

'Uy skweyul Siem. My name is Qwul'sih'yah'maht (Robina Thomas) and I am a member of Lyackson First Nation. I also have Snuneymuxw roots through my late mother Doris Josephson (nee Prest) and my late grandmother Lavina Prest (nee Wyse) and Sto:lo roots through my late grandfather Charles Prest.

I am honoured to be the President on the Kw'umut Lelum Board of Directors. Nothing gives me more joy than to knowing we have a stellar organization that prioritizes the well-being of Indigenous children, youth, and families. Annual reports allow us an opportunity to reflect on the good work undertaken by the Kw'umut Lelum staff the past year.

Kw'umut Lelum continues to grow to meet the diverse needs of Indigenous children, youth and families. Besides the many programs and services that KL regularly provides, a few highlights from last year include:

- > Providing services and support to Nuu-chah-nulth children and families that resided in our traditional territories.
- > We began planning for a youth treatment center so we can provide culturally appropriate services for our youth that need extra support to achieve their wellness goals.
- > We continued to prioritize and plan to undertake a process to create our own legislation based on Indigenous legal orders and practices.
- > We continue to offer and prioritize prevention, wellness, and traditional programs.

Large organizations must have outstanding leadership and team members to meet the ongoing and changing demands. We want to hold our hands up with the deepest of respect to every staff member for being committed to the KL Team – huy tseep q'u Siem – it is because of you that Kw'umut Lelum is the amazing organization that it is. The KL staff demonstrate what is possible when we work together - ts'its'uwatul' tseep - for the collective goal of supporting all our children and families wherever they reside.

KL is also indebted to:

- > the Elders, the wise ones, the knowledge keepers – for your wisdom, guidance, direction and teachings.
- > the nine Member Nations for entrusting KL with your children and families.
- > all of the caretakers for loving and caring for the sacred ones -- our children.
- > the board members, past and present -- for their passion and commitment to the well-being of our children.

Huy tseep q'u Siem
Qwul'sih'yah'maht – Robina Thomas

Message from the Executive Director



My name is Sqwulutsutun,
and I am from the Wyse family
of Snuneymuxw First Nation.
My English name is William Yoachim.

We began in spring of 2022 to emerge from the pandemic with a new hope that we would once again gather together with our friends and relations.

At Kw'umut Lelum, we have responded to the needs of our communities by opening a drop-in space on Penelakut for youth and young families, launched a Housing team to help our people who are struggling to find adequate and affordable living spaces, and continued to expand our teams our teams to provide culturally-based supports when and where they are most needed.

With health restrictions lifted, we were able to offer more in-person programming this year, including our first Indigenous Women's Gathering that brought more than 100 women to Nanaimo, our second annual Fishing Derby in Stz'uminus, and wellness retreats for families, children and youth and expecting parents.

We continued to walk alongside our families to lift them up on their healing journeys, and to ensure that our children grow up in love and safety surrounded by their culture and community.

We welcomed new families into our home as well – opening the door to our Nuuchahnulth relatives living away from home in Nanaimo and Duncan.

As always, our work would not be possible without the strength and commitment of a huge number of people working together – nutsamaat shqaluwun – across our Nations.

I raise my hands to our Board of Directors who lead us forward in a good way.

I humbly give thanks to the Elders and knowledge-keepers who show us how to live and work with purpose according to our teachings, and who pass along their gifts so selflessly.

I am grateful to our staff, and to our caregivers, families and le'lumilh whose compassion and dedication guides them as they support and care for our smun'eem.

Huy tseep q'u Siem
Sqwulutsutun – William Yoachim

Board of Directors



Dr Robina Thomas *President*
Lyackson First Nation



Mike Wyse *Vice-President*
Snuneymuwx First Nation



Aaron Hamilton *Secretary*
Lake Cowichan First Nation



Brent Edwards *Treasurer*
Snaw-Naw-As First Nation



Jodi August
Halalt First Nation



Steve Henry
Malahat First Nation



Donna Kennedy
Qualicum First Nation



John Elliot
Stz'uminus First Nation



Joan Brown
Penelakut First Nation



Living Our Mission

Programs and Services

When child safety interventions are required to keep children safe Kw'umut Lelum social workers will always work with the Nation and parents to keep children in their community and living with extended family. Kw'umut Lelum cultural workers support this planning through family finding and keeping our smun'eem connected to family, culture and community.

Child Safety and Collaborative Planning

Kw'umut Lelum child safety teams take a cultural and preventative approach to build on family strengths and increase safety to keep children in the home. In situations where children cannot safely remain in the home Kw'umut Lelum child safety workers always prefer kinship agreements - where a child or youth is placed with a family member - over court driven processes.

The child safety workers have responded to more than 260 calls in the past year – an increase of 11% over the previous year. However, more than a third of these calls are now requests for support rather than protection concerns – from people reaching out for help. This allows us to offer services and supports to families and to get in front of an issue before it becomes a safety concern.

OVER THE PAST YEAR

- > We have kept all children from within our 9 Nations in the Nation doing wrap around prevention based work.
- > 27 at-risk children were prevented from coming into foster care through the child safety team's use of kinship care
- > 40 children returned home to their families
- > There were only 6 removals and in each case there was no least disruptive measure available
- > 3 families whose children were in care for more than 2 years were able to have them return home

Guardianship

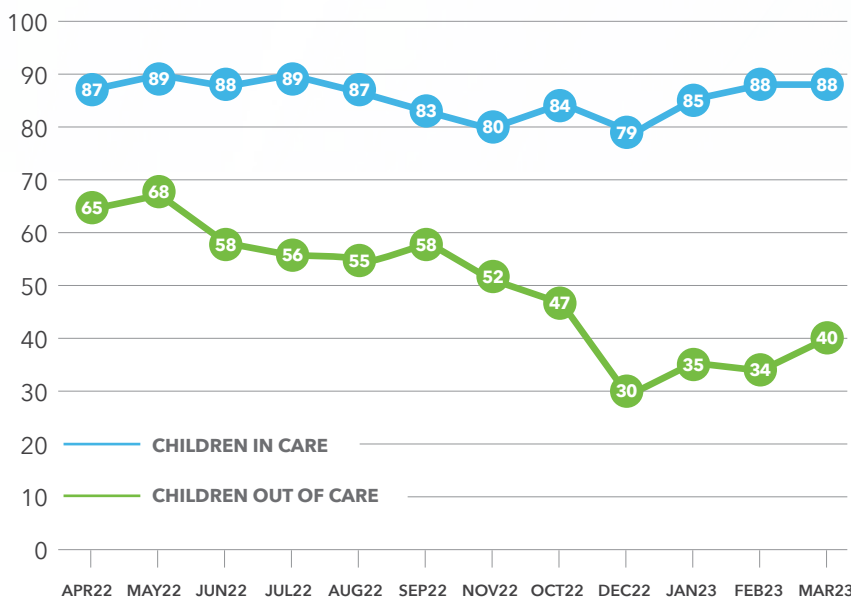
We are proud of our families and communities who put in the work to make sure that our xe' xe' smun'eem remain with their parents or extended family.

For those who do come into temporary or continuing care, our Guardianship workers are responsible for their care, custody, and guardianship. They ensure that each child or youth has a plan of care that supports their cultural and family connection, their education, health and emotional and behavioral development, and finding a permanent home out of care.

PERMANENCY SUCCESSES FOR GUARDIANSHIP IN 2022 INCLUDE

- > 18 children left care over the past year with 7 returning to the care of their parents, 7 more to live permanently with their extended families, and 4 moving to care placement with relatives instead of foster care.
- > One youth in care attended treatment in June and maintained sobriety; he has been sharing his successes with other youth in care. Another has come a long way and recently gave birth to a beautiful baby girl – she is raising her under an Independent Living Agreement and is doing exceptionally well.

TOTAL CASELOADS 2022/23

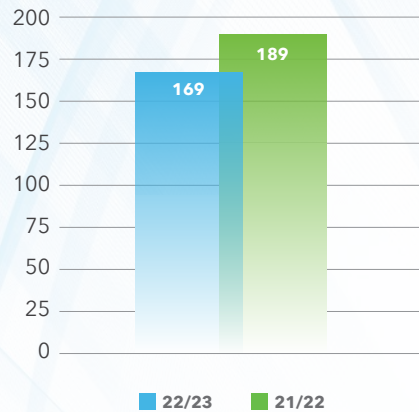


	22/23	21/22
PREVENTED FROM COMING INTO CARE	27	32
RETURNED TO FAMILY	29	29
ADOPTION	0	1
PERMANENT TRANSFER OF CUSTODY (54.1, 54.01)	16	6
REACHED AGE OF MAJORITY	7	7

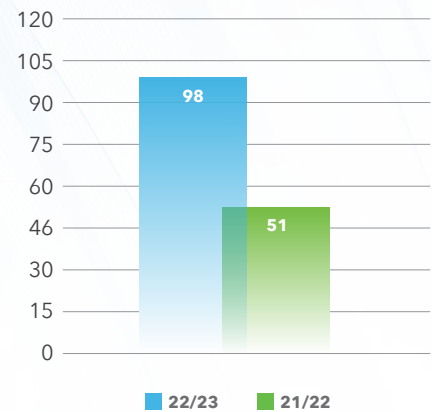
Programs and Services – continued

The number of calls we receive have increased over the previous year by 11%. However, more than a third (37%) of these calls are now requests for support - allowing us to get in front of an issue before it becomes a child safety concern.

NEW PROTECTION REPORTS

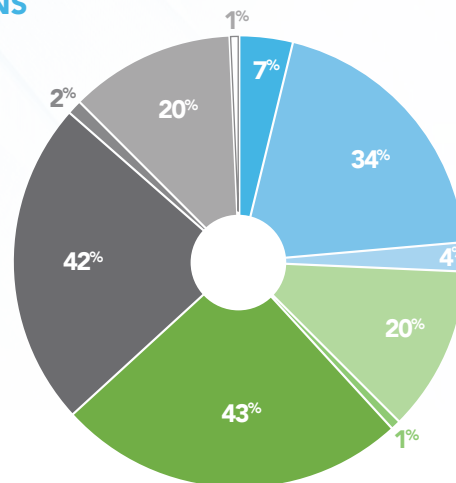


REQUEST FOR SUPPORT



CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

- Parent Not Protecting
- Physical Harm/Likelihood
- Sexual Abuse/Exploitation
- Neglect with Physical Harm
- Deprived of health care
- Parent Unable/Unwilling
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Emotional Harm
- Emotional Harm/Domestic Violence
- High-Risk Pregnancy



The most common concerns reported were "Parent Unable/Unwilling", concerns related to substance use, likelihood of physical harm, and exposure to domestic violence

Early Years

Our Early Years Team uses Coast Salish teachings and a strength-based approach to support and guide parents with children ages 0 to 6 through parenting challenges.

- > We hosted Pre and Post-Natal Retreats, and the Honouring our Children Gathering shared important teachings on parenting, connected families to community supports and resources, as well as to each other

Le'lumilh and Se'ye'yu

Our agency continues to focus our efforts towards supporting extended families to be able to step up and look after children whose parents cannot currently care for them. This has always been the way of our people.

- > In total – 9 Kinship Care Providers have committed to permanently caring for children in their care (under a 54.01 order – permanent transfer of custody) resulting in 13 children acquiring permanency within their family network in their home communities.
- > Penelakut kinship providers were honoured with ceremony and food to provide recognition and accessible gathering for our most remote community. The event was a huge success and widely appreciated by the nation and our Penelakut Kinship families.

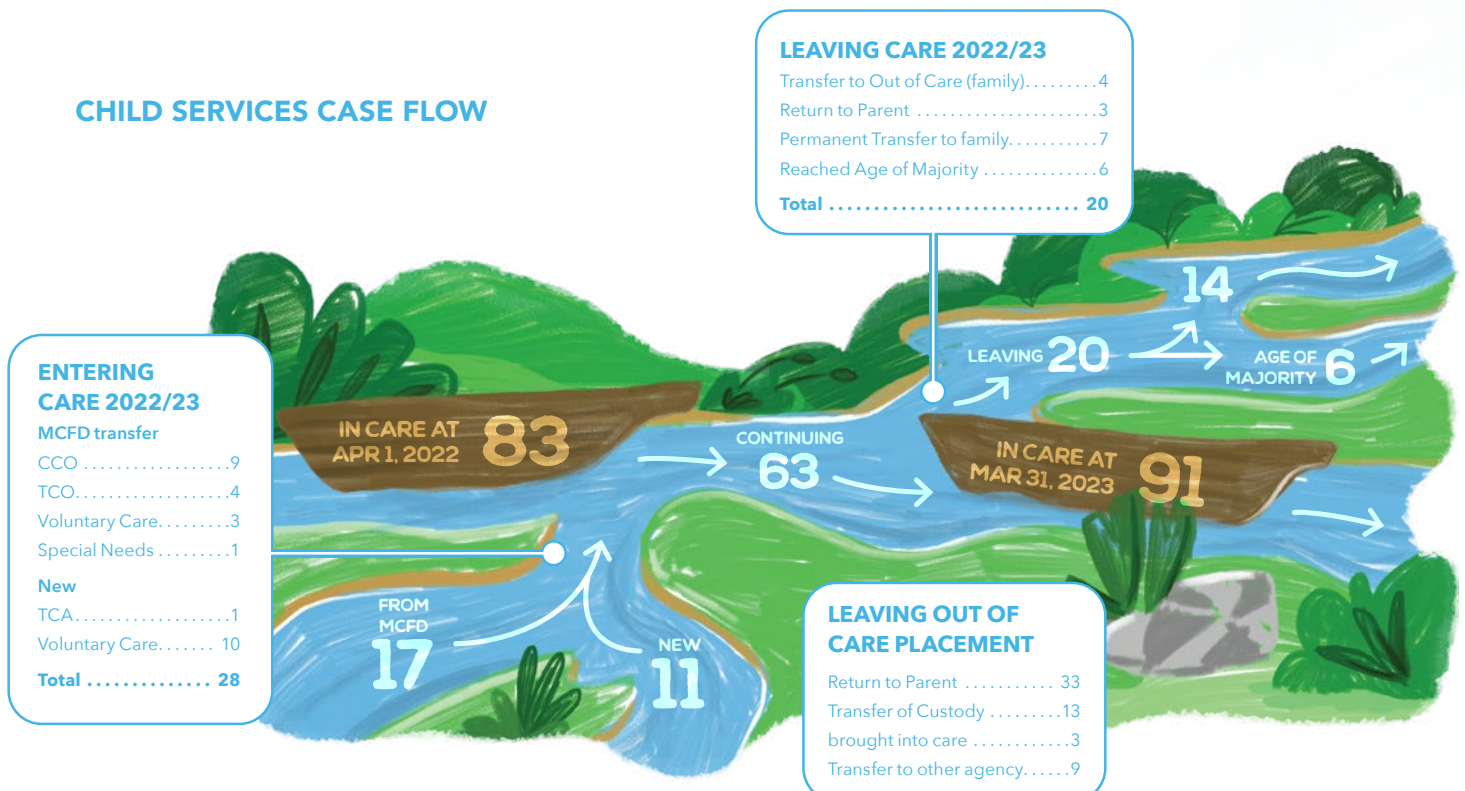
Step Up

This unique program for youth in care and young adults empowers them to be the masters of their own journey to independence.

In order to ensure a successful transition to adulthood, youth identify their strengths and needs and develop their own plan to achieve their goals for education, employment, personal and social health, culture and community and housing. These goals are supported by a dedicated Step Up worker, and kept on track using the Step Up app that also celebrates and rewards their achievements.

This year, many of our youth have been supported to get their driver's licenses, SIN cards and learn to budget, while our Work Experience Program assisted 25 youth by hosting job training sessions, resume building support, work parties to gain experience and skills.

CHILD SERVICES CASE FLOW



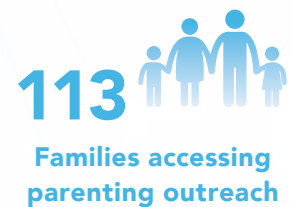
Programs and Services – continued

Culture

Cultural programming is based on the four seasons and is open to any of our children, youth or families.

THIS YEAR

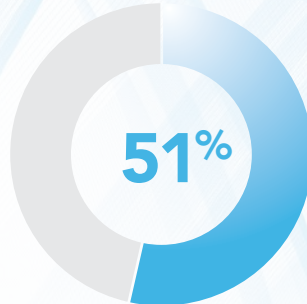
- > Respecting the Harvest brought 10 youth in care on a hunting trip where they harvested 10 deer
- > 21 boats participated in our second annual Ku'ki'yook fishing derby – each boat had a youth on board to pass on teachings and knowledge of traditional fishing areas
- > Family retreats allowed larger family units to connect with their culture for a weekend of teachings, craft, drumming, games and stories



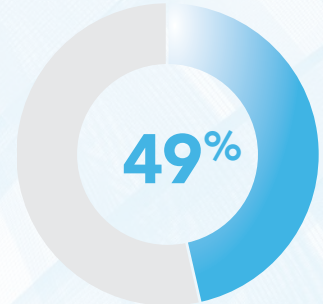
Wellness

Our Wellness team of counsellors and workers provide mental, physical and emotional health and wellness supports that are consistent with western treatment standards and Coast Salish snuw'uy'ulh.

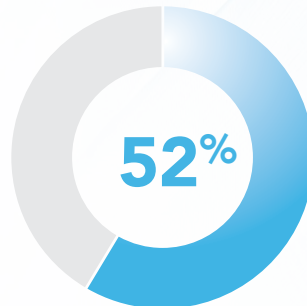
- > Griever's Journey offered grief and loss support to more than 60 participants and was held 4 times over the past year
- > The first KL Summer Camp for Community Children and Youth with diverse needs was held at Lake Cowichan Education Centre. This offered children and youth a summer camp and outdoor education experience
- > Recreation programs including our annual family kayaking allowed children to connect with their land while staying active and having fun



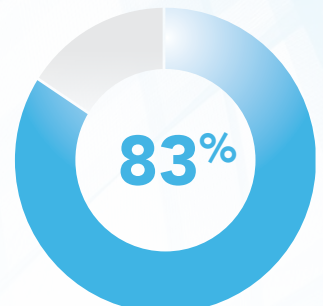
Percentage of homes on reserve



Percentage of homes off reserve



Percentage of homes of relatives



Percentage of Indigenous Caregivers



Highlights of 2022/2023

The past year has continued to see Kw'umut Lelum grow and change to meet the needs of our children, families and communities. We are celebrating our successes and acknowledge the work we still have ahead of us. Below are just some of the highlights of our year.

Penelakut Youth Building Celebrates Grand Opening

In May a large gathering of community members joined us to celebrate the grand opening of the Penelakut Youth Centre.

The afternoon began with a drum and dance ceremony, followed by the cutting of the ribbon by Chief Brown and Executive Director, Bill Yoachim, and a tour of the building and amenities.

Staffed by a Penelakut youth worker, the Youth

Centre will act as a drop-in space for Penelakut youth to come play games, socialize and interact in a safe and welcoming environment. It will also house our Early Years Outreach programming for new and expecting parents on the island, providing an opportunity for families to gather together and learn valuable Coast Salish teachings as well as western parenting skills.



Honouring our Sisters, Sharing our Strength

Over 200 women from across Vancouver Island and the mainland gathered in May for the Honouring our Sisters Conference. Participants gathered together for opening prayers and protocol, followed by keynote speaker Ashley Callingbull, who shared her journey as an Indigenous woman growing up in the Enoch Cree Nation near Edmonton Alberta.

Registrants attended workshops on topics such as learning to set boundaries, promote self-care and self-empowerment, and understanding the role colonization has had in oppressing Indigenous women and taking away our spiritual, creative and social power.

Between workshops, women were free to check out the vendor tables where Indigenous businesses were selling everything from beautifully beaded earrings to hand-sewn clothing. There were also many local service providers with information booths on health and wellness services, childcare, housing and family supports.

New Housing Team Provides Help for Family Stability, Youth Independence

Here in BC, more than 20% of Indigenous households are “in core housing need”, meaning their homes are unsuitable, unaffordable or insufficient to meet the needs of their household. For the children and families we serve, access to safe, affordable and adequate housing is a huge barrier to their health and wellness.

This year, KL launched a new program that puts the issue of housing front and centre – and provides hands-on education and support for Indigenous families and youth. The Housing team helps community members to support their housing needs – whether that is assisting with BC Housing applications, organizing viewings, performing rental market searches or helping develop a family housing budget. We also run a Rent Smart program, open to anyone from our member Nations to learn more about the rental market, improve communication skills, understand their tenant rights and responsibilities, and learn to budget for a home.



Kw'umut Lelum Welcomes Nuu-chah-nulth Families

Here at Kw'umut Lelum, we believe that culture is medicine. It is at the heart of everything we do because we know it has the power to strengthen and heal our children, our families and our communities. It means we approach our work from a different perspective. We know the importance of keeping our smun'eem connected to their identity and to the vast family networks who love and care for them. Lifting each other up so that we can be stronger together.

In 2018, we expanded our mandate so that we could bring our services to any of our member Nation families, even if they were not living in community. And now, in 2023 we have strengthened our ties to our Nuu-chah-nulth relatives – 7 Nations so far – to be able to serve their families and children living away from home in Parksville, Nanaimo, Ladysmith and Duncan. This year saw our agency overseeing the transfer of families previously served by MCFD to our own services at KL.



Many KL staff have connections to Nuu-chah-nulth Nations and are well-versed in the unique culture, language and family ties. This connection will allow us to broaden our cultural approach to reflect the Nuu-chah-nulth experience and provide culturally-appropriate services to their children and families living away from home.

Respecting the Harvest Shares Valuable Teachings About Food and Identity

Respecting the Harvest was created to provide youth from our 9 Nations with traditional teachings on hunting and food sovereignty and their importance to Indigenous identity. The program also teaches practical firearm safety, learning to handle a fire arm and developing shooting skills.

10 youth were selected to be part of a special program: a guided hunt and tour of Treaty 8 territory based in Dawson Creek, BC. Where they managed to harvest 10 deer.

The youth observed the processing procedure of how to skin, cut and pack away the meat in a safe manner utilizing all parts of the deer. Meat was processed in a variety of cuts, wrapped and ready for distribution to local elders back in their home territories. In keeping with the teachings, every part of the animal was used: the hooves were processed for use in regalia, the skin was harvested for future drum-making in KL's cultural programs.

“ Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.”

Children. Culture. Community.



Kw'umut Lelum

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