



G

RROWING TOGETHER

NEWS & RESOURCES FOR THE BC FIRST NATIONS HEAD START ON-RESERVE PROGRAM

BC FIRST NATIONS HEAD START

In this issue

- Encouraging Parent Participation 2
- Things We Like About Justin 3
- Vocabulary Key Rings 3
- Site Profile: Snc'c'amala?tn 4
- A Blessing Ceremony 7
- About the RAC 8
- New Regional Reps 10
- Calendar 12

Visiting the Salmon Run



ONE FINE FRIDAY MORNING IN SEPTEMBER, OUR 3-YEAR-OLD CLASS made a special trip to the creek to see the kikinee run. Along with a few dads, we piled into the van and drove off to the best site to see the fish. We walked down to the creek, where two men from the fisheries department talked to us about what the kikinee were doing—how the male and the female fish were different colours and how the eggs are laid and

then fertilized. We got to see a large group of fish and tried to see the different colours. That was hard when there were so many fish all crowded together, so we also looked along the edge of the bank for egg deposits. We didn't get to see any eggs after all.

Afterwards, we decided to take some of the dead fish and look inside their mouths at their teeth.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





We did some hands-on learning that day that we will never forget!

CONTINUED FROM COVER

We painted the sides of the fish and made fish prints on paper we brought with us. The fish prints showed us more clearly how many scales the fish had and how the scales overlapped each other.

In our program, we had been looking at the life cycle of different kinds of animals—so our trip to the creek was an extension of that. A lot of the children had never been that close to a live fish in the river. I myself had never seen the fish run before and this was a wonderful opportunity to experience something new together with the children. Being able to touch a fish, look closely into its mouth, and paint and take prints from it made this an experience to cement the learning that we were doing—one we won't forget for a long time. Also, because fish are a very important cultural aspect of our lives, it tied in culture, language (around the fish and the fish life cycle), and parent involvement in the program as part of the Head Start philosophy.

We did some hands-on learning that day that we will never forget!

Vanessa Antoine
Snc'c'amala?tn Head Start (Vernon)



Encouraging parent participation

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, PARENTS MAY BE UNSURE HOW THEY CAN HELP OUT. Maybe they can't come in and read books or help with field trips. You may need to show them that there are lots of different ways to participate. The list below was created as a parent handout for the U.S. Head Start program.

Ways You Can Help At Head Start

- Participate in home visits
- Read or tell a story to a child
- Serve food
- Do yard maintenance
- Get materials ready to use for a project
- Play a game
- Play a musical instrument
- Give another parent a ride
- Babysit for other parents so they can volunteer
- Save or collect recyclable materials
- Sew smocks, dress-up or doll clothes
- Help create, write or draw for a newsletter
- Help during toothbrushing time
- Help in the office
- Supervise during outside play
- Clean up after eating
- Bring a pet to share
- Sing a song
- Take photos
- Help plan and supervise a field trip
- Create and arrange a bulletin board
- Repair books or toys
- Work on a garden project
- Help plan a fundraising activity
- Invite the Head Start for a field trip to your work

Head Start components

1 **Culture & Language**

2 **Education**

3 **Health Promotion**

4 **Nutrition**

5 **Parent & Family Involvement**

6 **Social Support**

Create your own parent handout or poster. Think of all the ways parents can support their children and your program, and list them all! Put up your “dream” projects... Someone out there might be the perfect match, and you wouldn’t have known if you didn’t ask. Many parents may feel more comfortable with seeing “take photos” or “repair books” than with an open invitation to participate.

Things We Like About Justin

THIS IDEA COMES FROM THE DISCOVERY CHILDREN’S CENTRE IN WINNIPEG.

Each of the staff wrote down one special thing they liked about each of the children in their program. Using that info, supervisor Terry Bussey made up a little poster for each child, which is displayed in the hallway. “Both kids and parents loved reading these and the display continues to attract a lot of attention!”

Reprinted from *Interaction*, Spring 2004

Vocabulary key rings

THE TLA-O-QUI-AHT HEAD START PROGRAM IN TOFINO came up with a creative way to reinforce language vocabulary learning. They put together key ring sets, with small vocabulary cards attached (numbers, body parts, and other words). The key rings go home with the children so that families can practice at home with their children.

Vocabulary key rings can be very simple to make using recycled key rings and home-made laminated vocabulary cards with a large hole punched in them so they will fit onto the key ring.



4

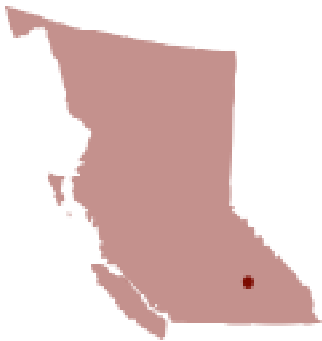


S I T E P R O F I L E

Snc'c'amala?tn



Snc'c'amala?tn Head Start serves the Okanagan Indian Band Reserve #1, near Vernon, in the sunny Okanagan Valley.



Location: on the Okanagan Indian Band Reserve # 1 (population about 1,000), half an hour from Vernon

Model: Daycare enhancement

Programs offered: 3-year-old preschool (9 a.m. - noon) + enhancement of other programs on site

Staff: (4) Full-time coordinator, full-time 3 - 5 Room Supervisor,

full-time 3 - 5 Room Assistant, and full-time Cultural Worker and Van Driver

First funded: 1999; additional funding from INAC, First Nations and Inuit Provincial Child Care Subsidy, Provincial Childcare Operating Program, First Nations Schools Association

Administered by: Okanagan Indian Band Health Department



Our children are as varied and individual as the staff and parents who work with them.



OUR CENTRE IS RIGHT NEAR THE HEAD OF OKANAGAN LAKE, half an hour from Vernon, B.C. Being in the Okanagan Valley means that we have beautiful, sunny weather from April to October. Our winters can be cold, but they generally don't last very long.

Originally the band had an existing preschool program before they applied to the First Nations Daycare Committee for funds. In 1994, once the funds were in place, a new building was created that now houses our four programs. The building has four different classrooms, some office space, and a staff room. It is beautiful!

Our infant and toddler, 3-year-old and kindergarten programs were all created after the building was finished, in September 1997. Head Start funding came through in November of 1999, and we were able to involve more children in the programs.

A pow-wow arbour and a playground are within a few minutes' walk from our

centre, and we are lucky to be able to use them any time. Our Health Department is just five minutes down the road, so we have easy access to the staff there. We have a few people that are very knowledgeable about natural resources in the community, who help out with berry picking, nature walks, seeing the pictographs, or watching the fish run. Our community is not very spread out, so it is not more than a 15-minute drive to either end of the reserve and to any of our local resources.

Snc'c'amala?tn is open to children from three months to six years old. We have about 60 children who access the centre daily in four different programs (infant and toddler, 3-year-olds, 4-year-old preschool, on-site kindergarten). Our children are as varied and individual as the staff and parents who work with them. The highest percentages of children are First Nations, but we also have children from many other backgrounds.

The main program funded by Head Start dollars is our 3-year-old program. It starts with a short circle time to welcome all the children, followed by a snack time, free play time (indoors and outdoors), then another short circle time with songs and stories, then lunch time. After lunch, the children brush





their teeth and some of them go home. The children who stay have a similar routine in the afternoon.

Our site has been very successful at getting a lot of children registered in the different programs; most of the classes are usually full. We have also been able to get funding for a speech and language therapist, who comes in once a week, and we have a full-time Okanagan language teacher and a full-time Cultural worker. Having the culture and language teachers enabled us to really incorporate the Okanagan language and traditions into the daily routines for our children.

This year there is a great group of parents who have come in to perform with us (puppet shows based on legends, native

dances), show us handmade puppets, go on nature walks, teach us about fish during the kikinee run, and do drumming with the children.

One of our challenges has been getting parents involved in the centre and trying to start a Parent Advisory Council. So many of our parents work full-time; it's hard for them to find time to come and join us at the centre. Another challenge has been finding qualified substitutes to cover for our staff when they are away.

Head Start is a very valuable program. It is the first chance for some of the children to socialize with others. It is incredibly important for the children to have the chance to meet their peers and learn to socialize in a positive manner with them. Parents are encouraged to join us at any time, so they can see how their child is doing and what activities they are participating in.

All the staff love working with the children every day, learning from them, as they learn from us.

Vanessa Antoine
Head Start Coordinator, Snc'c'amala?tn Early Childhood Education Centre (Vernon)

nutrition TIP

Healthy Snack Ideas

Blueberry Yummies

Freeze blueberries. Children can pop them in their mouths frozen.

You can also offer frozen veggies at snack time. Many children enjoy the fun of eating crunchy frozen peas!

Banana-sicles

Freeze very ripe banana halves.

Dip in yogurt and sprinkle with crushed nuts or wheat germ.

Finger Salad

Spread tuna salad or peanut butter on a lettuce leaf. Roll it up and enjoy!

Fruit Dippers

Mix 1 cup of ricotta cheese, 3 tablespoons orange juice concentrate, and a dash of cinnamon.

Serve as a dip for cut-up fruits, like apple, strawberries, etc.



C U L T U R E

A Blessing Ceremony

Parents want their children to be in a good place, a safe place, a protected place.

Native traditional lifestyle was built around the idea that life was sacred and much of what was learned was done and carried out in a ceremonial way.

You might have a ceremony at some special time each year to bless your program. Spring might be a good time, because it is the time of new birth, or at the start of the new school year in September.

Ask the Elders to come and bless your program in a traditional way. Invite other religious leaders to come and bless your program at the same time. This will do two things. It will show unity and assure people that your program respects all religions in the community.

At the same time, invite Chief and Council, parents and other important people to come and witness the ceremony. You could call it "Beginning in a Good Way Ceremony".

The community can witness the day care staff promise the Creator that they will



do things in a good way during the coming year.

This is a simple ceremony where all of you say together, "Great Spirit, we will all try and do our best for the community and for each other during this new year."

This can be a good time to have your "Open House" and allow the children to take people around to show off your program.

Another option is a "Lighting the Way" ceremony. This is an evening ceremony where a traditional dinner is prepared to celebrate all the new things the children are learning, and to acknowledge the responsibility of the staff to teach the children and of the children to learn from their teachers.

At the end of the dinner, the lights are put out and the Chief lights a single candle. Then staff members come forward with unlit candles. The Chief lights all of their candles and blows his out. All of the children come forward with their parents to have their candles lit. Speak about the importance of the children, of education, of caring. Then, turn on the lights, and serve dessert!

Reprinted from *Show Us the Way: Daycare Curriculum Manual* (Council for Yukon Indians).

The manual is available for loan from Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (1-877-262-0022) and from the B.C. Aboriginal Child Care Society (604-913-9128).





All about the Head Start RAC

In 1998, when the Head Start program initiative got started in Canada, each province was required to organize a committee with community and government representatives to guide decision-making.

THE B.C. ON-RESERVE HEAD START PROGRAM CREATED A “REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE”—RAC FOR SHORT, which at first was mostly government representatives. The committee structure evolved as it became evident that community representation was very important to ensure that regional Head Start program decisions reflect needs and priorities for Head Start projects at the community level.

We now have five members on the Regional Advisory Committee who are elected to represent geographical zones: South Mainland East, South Mainland West, Vancouver Island, North West, and North East. These regional members are responsible for representing their entire geographical area (not just their own Head Start programs) when they sit down at the RAC table and contribute to decision-making about program priorities.

All bands are notified when there is an upcoming vacancy on the RAC. Band or community members nominate RAC candidates, who must have community support backed up by a Band Council Resolution. The RAC then reviews the nominations and selects new members. RAC members serve for two year terms.

In addition to the five regional representatives, other RAC members include an Elder representative, a Canada Prenatal and

Nutrition Program (CPNP) representative, a child care specialist, the BCFNHS program manager, program consultant, and program assistant, the off-reserve Head Start program manager, and the HRDC program manager.

The Regional Advisory Committee meets several times a year in person and several times by conference call, depending on needs. In addition to the full RAC meetings and follow-up, committee members might participate on sub-committees to deal with specific initiatives (such as organizing a training conference or developing policies, tools, or resources).

The main purpose of the RAC is to ensure that decisions being made are community-relevant. Some of the areas the RAC deals with include administrative requirements, policies, procedures and mandates, training, funding distribution (i.e., “How should Head Start spend the surplus this fiscal year?”), and the proposal selection process.

In the past, regional representatives on the Head Start RAC found it difficult to keep up on-going communication and get input from the Head Start programs in their geographical areas. Their work and participation was voluntary, above and beyond the demands of their own programs. They barely had time to phone one another, let alone organize conference calls or gatherings.

The main purpose of the RAC is to ensure that decisions being made are community-relevant.

This year the regional office has decided to pilot a new approach, providing funding assistance to each of the regional representatives so they can host monthly conference calls and have a gathering once in the fiscal year in their geographical area.

The primary goal of this pilot project is to increase communication amongst Head Start programs and between the regional office and communities so that all Head Start programs are updated on regional activities and also so that community issues, challenges and successes can be brought to the RAC table. Sometimes programs feel alone as they struggle with their challenges. The more opportunities to get together and share challenges, ideas, and successes, the further ahead every community will be, and our programs will be even better.

We are all unique, with diverse situations, ways of seeing things and dealing with challenges, ideas about programming, strengths and weaknesses. We are all in a journey of growth as we work together for our children.

We need to keep talking and working together to make sure our on-reserve Head Start programs are community-driven and work with our community needs and resources. We are all very busy—our work is challenging, and we have personal lives which need our attention. It takes extra time to give feedback, share ideas, ask questions. But we will build better programs for all the children if we take the time to communicate with each other.

When you have questions, ideas or concerns, please share them through your regional rep. As the year unfolds, let the regional office staff know how this pilot project is working, and whether having the additional resources for the regional reps for conference calls and regional gatherings is helpful.

You'll find bios and contact info for the regional reps on the following pages.

Thank you!

Kelly

Kelly Terbasket
ECD Project Coordinator
Community Health Associates of B.C.



Coming together is a *beginning*.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.

—HENRY FORD

To work in the world lovingly means that we are defining *what we are for*, rather than reacting to what we are against.

—CHRISTINA BALDWIN



10



CANDACE



JOAN

B C F N H S R A C

your

We introduced Joan Gignac (Vancouver Island) and Candace Robotham (South Mainland West) in the Fall 2004 issue of Growing Together. Joan and Candace stay on as reps for their regions. Romona, Roma, and Tami will continue the good work of Nancy Anderson and Lorraine Naziel.



Romona Baxter

South Mainland East Region

My name is Romona Baxter, and I am from the Skuppah Band, located just outside of Lytton. I have a husband, Brian, and two daughters, Jasmine age 11 and Jade age 9. I received my Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Victoria in 1996 and have been working as the Executive Director for the Nzen'man' Child and Family Development Centre Society since August 1996.

I became involved with Head Start in 1999. The new influx of funding allowed us to expand our services and offer outreach/home visiting programs for families choosing to stay home with their infants and preschool-aged children. Currently, our organization has a 43-licensed-space child care facility, offering care for children ages three months to 12 years, a Family Place Centre, and Prenatal, Infant Development, and Preschool Outreach/Home Visiting programs.

Outside of Nzen'man', I enjoy the simplicity of spending time with my family and being home. I also volunteer as a member of the school PAC and School Planning Council. My newest passion is karate!

R A C 2 0 0 5 - 2 0 0 6

| | |
|---|--|
| South Mainland West <i>Candace Robotham</i> <i>(Seabird Island)</i> | CPNP/Nutritionist <i>Jan Stephens (Sechelt)</i> |
| South Mainland East <i>Romona Baxter</i> <i>(Lytton)</i> | Elder <i>Herb Jones (Skidegate)</i> |
| Vancouver Island <i>Joan Gignac</i> <i>(Ladysmith)</i> | Child Care Specialist <i>Margo Greenwood</i> |
| North West <i>Roma Walker</i> <i>(Lower Post)</i> | AHS Program Consultant <i>Mary Knox</i> |
| North East <i>Tami Smith</i> <i>(100 Mile House)</i> | BCFNHS Program Manager <i>Christine Burgess</i> |
| | BCFNHS Program Assistant <i>Jane Barnes</i> |
| | ECD Project Coordinator Community Health Associates of B.C. <i>Kelly Terbasket</i> |



P R O F I L E

new regional reps



Roma Walker

North West Region

I am Kaska/Tahltan, born in Watson Lake, YT, and raised in Lower Post, B.C. My first summer job was in the Watson Lake daycare when I was 15 years old, and this, along with babysitting, instilled in my heart the love I have for children.

I am married to Charles and we have two children: eight-year-old Blayde and three-year-old Charlayne.

I've been actively involved and committed in the Head Start program since I moved back home in 1996. I completed a Family Childcare Home certificate course in 1997, along with five other community members, and was instrumental in getting the existing daycare into operating a new facility today.

In June 2005, I celebrated with community members, leaders and government officials the grand opening of our newly constructed "T's Udane Kq"—"Children's House" childcare centre.

My vision is to one day have my people more involved in education, child care, and certified in Early Childhood Education.



Tami Smith

North East Region

I first became involved in the Head Start program when I started working for the Canim Lake Band as the Early Childhood Educator; this was back in December 1999. At that time, I did not know anything about the program and since then I have learned a lot. I am very honored and proud to say that I work in a Head Start program on reserve.

My passions in life are spending time with my family: my mom, dad, little brother, beautiful niece and grandmother in Kamloops. Without their support and encouragement I would not be working here today. Thanks dad, I owe you. I also love traveling, watching hockey, soccer, and basketball, and spending time with my boyfriend and five teenage stepsons. I love playing and visiting with the children. No matter how I feel, I know they can put a smile on my face and make me believe that life is truly worth it all.

The thing I love to do outside of work, besides being with family and friends, is walking and cuddling my dearest friend, my dog Dakota.

regional rep
contact info**Vancouver Island**

Joan Gignac
Chemainus First Nation
Tel: (250) 245-0994
Fax: (250) 245-1379
E-mail: jgignac@cfnation.com

South Mainland East

Romona Baxter
Nzen'man' Child and Family
Development Society
Tel: (250) 455-2661
Fax: (250) 455-2644
E-mail:
romona_baxter@hotmail.com

South Mainland West

Candace Robotham
Seabird Island Band
Tel: (604) 796-2177
Fax: (604) 796-3729
E-mail:
candacerobotham@seabirdisland.ca

North East

Tami Smith
Canim Lake First Nation
Tel: (250) 397-2175
Fax: (250) 397-2173
E-mail:
nowayout312@yahoo.com

North West

Roma Walker
Daylu Dena Council
Tel: (250) 779-3161
Fax: (250) 779-3371
E-mail:
dayludena@linesat.com





Growing Together is a quarterly publication of the BC First Nations Head Start On-Reserve program.

BCFNHS
Health Canada, FNIHB
Suite 540, Federal Building
757 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 3E6
Tel: (604) 666-0816
Fax: (604) 666-1690

Christine Burgess, Program Manager
Tel: (604) 666-6919

Kelly Terbasket
ECD Project Coordinator
Community Health Associates of B.C.
Tel: (250) 499-0223

Newsletter Coordination,
Design & Production: India Ink

Head Start Logo: Delmar Johnny

Special thanks to contributors:
Vanessa Antoine
Romona Baxter
Tami Smith
Roma Walker

We would love to hear from you!
Please send your photos, story ideas, draft articles, staff and site profiles, questions you would like answered, resource contacts, great curriculum ideas, and success stories you would like to share.

Send newsletter submissions to:
Sachiko Kiyooka
India Ink
2211 Sayward Street
Victoria BC V8R 3T4
E-mail: India_Ink@shaw.ca
Tel: (250) 598-0816

Upcoming Events

October 1, 2005
Northwest Regional Child Care Conference: Let Them Play! (Terrace).
Tel: (250) 638-1113
Toll-free: 1-888-638-1863
Fax: (250) 638-1873
E-mail: skeena@ccrr@telus.net

October 11 - December 4, 2005
"Meeting the Challenge: Effective Strategies for Challenging Behaviours in Early Childhood Environments" (on-line course). BC Council for Families, 8 weeks, 7 - 10 hours per week.
Contact: Julie Norton
Tel: (604) 660-0675
Toll-free: 1-800-663-5638
Web site: http://www.ccf-fcsge.ca/subsites/mtc/training_en.htm.

October 28 - 30, 2005
BC First Nations Head Start Conference and Training (Vancouver).
BCFNHS sponsors two delegates per Head Start site. Hands-on, interactive sessions with traditional and contemporary trainers.

Sessions include: Importance of the Classroom, Incorporating Culture and Language, Involving Parents and Community, Making Storybooks, Computers 101, Drum Making, Fostering Resiliency With Aboriginal Children, Self Care for the Caregiver, Outreach Certificate Workshop, Making Children's Portfolios, Elders Panel, Laughter and Play, Building a Community-Based ECD Vision, Asset Mapping, Unlock the Power of Coach-Approach Leadership and Management.

Registration packages available after September 5, 2005.

Tel: (250) 503-1123
Toll-free: 1-800-379-3300
Fax: (250) 403-1733
E-mail: chabc@shawcable.com

November 5 - 7, 2005
11th Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education (Vancouver).
Tel: (604) 925-6087
Toll-free: 1-877-422-3672
Fax: (604) 925-6097

November 11 - 13, 2005
BC Aboriginal Child Care Society 8th Annual Child Care Conference: Healthy Traditional Living (Vancouver).
Tel: (604) 913-9128
Fax: (604) 913-9129

November 28 - December 1, 2005
World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education 2005 (Hamilton, New Zealand).
Contact: Aroha Te Kanawa
Tel: 64 7 838 7649
E-mail: info@wipce2005.com
Web site: www.wipce2005.com

Changing Fathers, Evolving Practices Free training sessions
Awareness of the role of fathers, making room for fathers, development of practices, promoting parental involvement. Reflect on personal beliefs, research, history and practices regarding fathers.
September 28 & 29 - Nelson
October 13 & 14 - Dawson Creek
November 8 & 9 - Vancouver
December 8 & 9 - Powell River
Contact: BC Council for Families
Tel: (604) 660-0675
Toll-free: 1-800-663-5638

BCFNHS Fall 2005 Outreach Training "Reaching Out to Families" outreach training.
Delivered by Nzen'man' Child & Family Development and Sterling Consulting.
September 29 & 30 - Williams Lake
October 3 & 4 - Kelowna
October 28, 29 & 30 - Vancouver
To register, contact Jane Barnes.
Tel: (604) 666-0816

November 20, 2005 is National Child Day

