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# Celebrating Dads



TOP LEFT: JOHN NOLE AND ANDY NOLE SEWING HALLOWE'EN BAGS (ISKUT)

TOP RIGHT: PROUD NEW DADDY, CECIL CARLICK WITH HIS BABY GIRL (ISKUT)

BOTTOM LEFT: CHINI HERB JONES IN THE KITCHEN! (SKIDEGATE)

BOTTOM RIGHT: MALVIN AND BRITTANY WESLEY (SKIDEGATE)

We asked you to share about the special dads, uncles and Elders in your lives... and you did!

*father's Day is Sunday June 17...*

Take the time to celebrate the men in your Head Start community!



## Chini Herb & Skidegate Dads

Our “Chini” Herb Jones is a loving and caring person, which comes naturally after raising seven children of his own. He now has eighteen grandchildren and one great grandchild. He loves children—which is his reason for having so many! Herb is one of four children raised by his grandparents (“Chini” and “Nuni” in Haida) on Haida Gwaii.

Chini Herb has been teaching Haida language at Skidegate Head Start since 1998. He also drives the children to and from school on a daily basis, accompanied by his beautiful songs. He is famous in our center and the community for his Wednesday pancake breakfast. You can find Herb in the kitchen making healthy snacks for our toddlers and their families every day. The children love having Chini Herb around, greeting him with hugs whenever they see him. Herb is always taking part in training, fundraising and staff meetings. He is an inspiration to us all!

Herb’s passion for dads and male Elders came from the old people. That was their custom then, when he was growing up. Herb learned the traditional ways from his grandparents. They instilled the values and beliefs of caring for and being responsible for your family.

Father’s Night was a one-night-a-month program where fathers could bring their children to play at Head Start. Chini Herb was available for support and encouragement. The facilitator for the dad’s group was a father of three girls himself and the husband of our pregnancy outreach worker. He would talk with dads to see what they were interested in and what they would like to know more about. Their interests were mending nets, hunting and fishing.

Steven Pedersen is an Early Childhood Educator who works at the daycare. Steven is also a father of a three-year-old boy. A year ago Steven attended Head Start three days a week and really enjoyed it. His son loved the social aspect of Head Start and gained new friends. Steven helped with the Father’s night, making bird houses with five and six families.

We have a few dads who attend the Parent n’ tot program during the day. They do feel a little outnumbered with all the ladies in the room, and tend to bond with Chini Herb immediately. Dads are also a part of our three-year-old preschool and take part in field trips and helping out.

When N’Quatqua Preschool Head Start visited our center and met Herb, they extended an invitation to him to speak to the Elders and fathers when we visited their community on a Head Start exchange. Chini Herb shared

Chini Herb’s favourite saying to pass on to fathers is: **“It takes two to make a child, it takes two to rear the child and two to instruct the child!”**



L: WIRT THEVARGE & HIS BROTHER ALLEN THEVARGE WITH NEPHEWS KIO & CEDAR KAGE-THEVARGE (N'QUATQUA)

R: UNCLE AL VISITING FOR THE MORNING TO CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION OF OUR MEDICINE BAGS, WITH CULTURAL ADVISOR MARGARET PETERS (N'QUATQUA)



Thanks to all who shared about the special men in their lives... Winner of the draw is Heiltsuk Head Start (who submitted the cover story). They will receive a beautiful Folkmanis eagle and eaglet puppet kit for their dads to play with, and a copy of the board book, "I Love You, Daddy." Other sites who submitted will receive a set of Eaglecrest books for dads, uncles and Elders to read aloud with the children.

We welcome more stories, recognitions, and photos about the special men at your Head Starts to publish in future issues! Send your submissions to the editor (see back of newsletter for contact info).

his thoughts with the N'Quatqua Elders about how important it is for children to have both parents present and involved in the child's upbringing and how beneficial Elders are in children's programs. Connections are made and carried on throughout the community.

Chini Herb's favourite saying to pass on to fathers is: "It takes two to make a child, it takes two to rear the child and two to instruct the child!"

Rachel West, Skidegate Head Start

## A very special uncle

Allen Thevarge is a very special Uncle to four boys: Saqa7, Kio, Cedar, and baby Raven Kage-Thevarge. Uncle Al, as the children call him, is dedicated to spending time with his neph-

ews. He often provides childcare for his brother's family, and brings the children to the N'Quatqua Head Start Preschool. Al is a great supporter of the Head Start Preschool Program and all the other programs offered at the N'Quatqua Child & Family Development Centre. He has played a major role in encouraging men to visit our Centre and participate in family events. Since Al moved home from Vancouver three years ago, he

has been an active community member and a great role model. It has been beautiful to observe the positive changes that Al has decided to make in his life. He is living healthier and engaging in educational workshops and conferences when the opportunities arise. It has been exciting and inspiring to hear Al share his stories and voice with the children. We have been drumming a lot this spring, as we are embarking on year two of the Hand Drum Making Project. It was great to have Al with us at the river when we blessed the deer hide for this year. Thank you for sharing your time with all of us at the Children's Centre—you make a difference!

Michelle Klau, N'Quatqua Child & Family Development

## Iskut Dads

The focus of our program is looking at the family as a whole unit rather than the child as a single unit. We plan activities around family interests. We found that when we plan special projects such as tree skirt making, stockings, scrapbooking, and sewing Halloween treat bags, this attracts the families. As our Parent and Tots program increased in participation, we started to see more fathers becoming involved. Our community is a high matriarchal community, so having fathers involved is progress! We had two fathers participate in the

BELOW: BABY RAVEN & CEDAR KAGE THEVARGE WITH UNCLE AL





“You Make the Difference” Parenting program last year and we had a group of fathers come out to participate in our Halloween treat bag project.

Carol Quock, Iskut Head Start

## Sto:lo Dads

Here are some pics of our dad involvement! We provide ‘Family Nights’ on a monthly basis.



One photo shows our dads practising their cultural traditions and sharing traditional songs with their children and other families. Arnie Leon comes and visits his daughters at the preschool; this is daughter Leilani.

Arnie is an educator so he knows how important early education development is for his daughters.

Mary Stewart, Sto:lo First Nation Head Start



## fathers Are Wonderful People

Fathers are wonderful people  
Too little understood.  
And we do not sing their praises  
As often as we should...

For, somehow, Father seems to be  
The man who pays the bills,  
While Mother binds up little hurts  
And nurses all our ills...

And Father struggles daily  
To live up to his “image”  
As protector and provider  
And “hero of the scrimmage”...

And perhaps that is the reason  
We sometimes get the notion,  
That fathers are not subject  
To the thing we call emotion,

But if you look inside Dad’s heart,  
Where no one else can see,  
You’ll find he’s sentimental,  
And as “soft” as he can be...

But he’s so busy every day  
In the grueling race of life,  
He leaves the sentimental stuff  
To his partner and his wife...

But Fathers are just wonderful  
In a million different ways,  
And they merit loving compliments  
And accolades of praise,

For the only reason Dad aspires  
to fortune and success  
Is to make the family proud of him  
And to bring them happiness...

And like our Heavenly Father,  
He’s a guardian and a guide,  
Someone that we can count on  
To be always on our side.

ANONYMOUS

Dedicated to Mel Brown, Chris Vickers Sr. & Jr., Doug Brown Sr. & Jr., Slim, Baba, Papa Chuck, and my late papa’s Daniel Humchitt & George Vickers.  
Love you always: Mel & Shelle, Bella, Elle & Blue



Adapted from “Planning for Success: Red Cliff Band—An Innovative Fatherhood Initiative” by Carolina Alvarez, *Head Start Bulletin* (U.S.), June 2004.

No matter what issues the fathers have, they are always loving fathers.

## Red Cliff Band **Fatherhood Initiative**

The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa is a reserve located on 11,000 acres of Lake Superior Shoreline at the northernmost tip of Wisconsin.

Red Cliff tribal historian and spiritual leader Rob Goslin coordinated a fatherhood demonstration program for the Red Cliff Early Head Start program to find ways to encourage more father participation.

“When we started this project, father involvement in Early Head Start was minimal to non-existent. The program did not even include fathers in the initial enrollment process. Fathers have felt excluded since the beginning; it seemed like the staff were only interested in working with the mother.”

The first step Rob took to address this problem was to include a father assessment in the enrollment packet. The assessment enabled staff to identify fathers’ strengths and needs. Mothers were happy that fathers were invited to be involved.

Rob emphasizes the importances of offering fathers the opportunity to participate in interesting activities that are father-friendly. “When organizing activities for fathers, we need to be creative.” Involving the Red Cliff fathers was done in a variety of ways. The project designed father-oriented activities that were sometimes only for fathers, others that included fathers and children, and some that involved the family.

One of the first steps Rob took was to invite interested fathers to visit the recreation centre and the gym weekly. Here, fathers developed relationships with one another. This was a critical step in building trust and willingness to

participate further.

These activities offered the opportunity for fathers to talk with other fathers without other family members present. This also provided time to reflect on the *Four Hills of Life*. For the Red Cliff people, this means the four stages of growth: infancy, teenage years, adult and elder years. Fathers discussed the stages and what each meant to them personally.

To engage their children, fathers participated in weekly pow-wows at the center, teaching drumming and dancing. These activities helped develop father-child bonds.

Rob says, “No matter what issues the fathers have, they are always loving fathers.” He offered them the chance to demonstrate this affection through an activity called *Sharing Their Children*. Fathers sat in a circle with their children and talked about their unique father-child relationships, how they had developed these bonds, and what they valued most about these ties.

The Red Cliff Father Involvement Initiative led to stronger families and father involvement. By offering activities that were culturally relevant and sensitive to individual and family needs, the project gained the trust of participating fathers. This project is a model for programs planning father-friendly and culturally appropriate activities for fathers, while sharing important information about early childhood and offering support to families.



# Positive Father Involvement

“Aboriginal fathers are probably the greatest untapped resource for improving the quality of life for Aboriginal children.”

—GRAND CHIEF ED JOHN

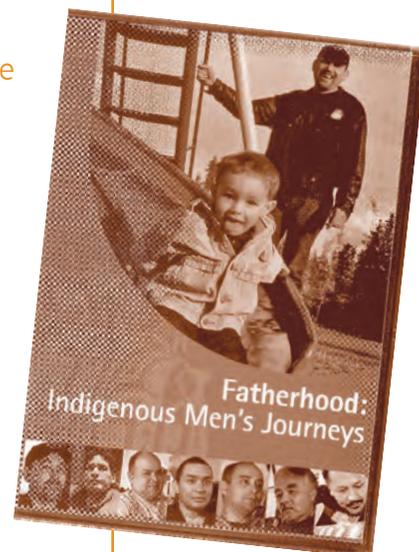
## Positive father involvement benefits everyone in the family.

**It is good for children.** Studies have shown that children benefit from a positive connection to their father. Children with positive father involvement are less likely to live in poverty and more likely to do better in school. They are more likely to have supportive relationships with both parents and they are less likely to have a stressed-out mother. All of those are good things for children.

**It is good for mothers.** Many things about family life have changed. More women with young children work outside the home. More families live far away from close relatives, and most mothers don't have the kind of female support network that was common 25 or 30 years ago. So, today, mothers need their partner's (or ex-partner's) support more than ever.

**It's good for fathers.** The rules about what men do and what women do have been changing for some time. That allows men to play a bigger part in one of the great human activities: looking after children and helping them grow. There's huge satisfaction that goes with parenting that doesn't come from anything else, not to mention a boost of self-esteem.

Excerpted from “Aboriginal Fathers: A Guide for Community Programs,” by Jessica Ball & Candace Roberge (2007).



*I never knew my father. So, I get to give that to my son, and in turn, that helps me.*

Earl, Prince George

*It makes me feel great... It makes me feel happy... it is enlightening to see her smile and to know that she is a part of me.”*

Dion, Haida Nation

*One thing I never felt before, from anybody else... how much they love me, how much they want me around. That's one thing that makes me happy...*

Jacob, Terrace

*I told my daughter recently that I didn't become a man until I had her. I said, “I was learning to be a man, thinking I was a man, until I saw you.”*

Richard, Stelat'en First Nation

*I enjoy being a dad all the time! Nothing makes me happier [than knowing] he is my kid!*

Aboriginal dad, Prince Rupert

In our next issue of *Growing Together*, we will profile *Fatherhood: Indigenous Men's Journeys*, and the excellent accompanying booklets, all focusing on Aboriginal fathers. BCFNHS Regional Office is purchasing copies of the resources for all sites and will distribute them in the fall.