

Health and Wellness Week September 26-30, 2022

Hosted by Vuntut Gwitchin
Government Health and
Social Services

This year's theme is to create a sustainable community that provides a safe and supportive environment in which to live, play, ceremony, and dance.

**Naganainlyaa K'itanahee –
Follow your dreams.**



To exercise our right to self-determination, and to take responsibility for our general wellbeing, we invite all citizens to an interactive week of programming, healing through music, art therapy, interactive play, cultural and spiritual reawaking ceremony.

September 30th, is Truth and Reconciliation Day!
Celebrate with us through ceremony, fun filled activities and dance.

Weeks Schedule of Activities

September 27, 2022 - Opening Ceremony Dinner and Music

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation has prioritized the health and well-being of their youth and community members, this week is focused on that mandate which was directed by the General Assembly of the people.

Due to colonialism and the intergenerational trauma, many members of our community had to endure a lot, resulting in drug and alcohol addictions, which leads to violence and various dysfunctions. This week will be contributed to reconciliation, and to celebrate Vuntut Gwitchin knowledge and Culture, while holding space for wellness and healing that is rooted in the spiritual teachings of our ancestors.

Our community must begin healing to create a clear vision for our youth that isn't clouded in adverse environments. Our youth must be prioritized to keep our cultural ways and practices thriving as they will be our future leaders, we must nurture and feed their spirits with healthy approaches to resolving trauma, so that they too can become resilient and adaptive to our ever-changing environments.

The focus of this week is to work with all members of our community, youth and their peer group, elders and their families, leaders, and future leaders, with a goal to build a stronger and more sustainable community for future generations.

We will guide our community towards, self-identification, self-care, and self-determination. As stated in the Governance Excellence Project report, this is not always going to be easy! There will be challenges, but our citizens have the talent, and many diverse skills and we can grow, "healthy" together.

We will work with the community to prevent and resolve problems that affect the community wellness, safety, and quality of life. We will all follow; Ans'at gwinah'ii – vision that our heart sees. Dinjii naih dathak eenjit t'igwii'in, (we are doing this for our people). naganainlyaa K'itanahee – follow your dreams.

September 26th

9 am to 11 am **Facilitators session** – planning morning with open discussion on expectations, potential outcomes, and community engagement

11 am. to 1:00 pm. Brunch at the Darius Elias Community Hall

1:00 to 1:30 p.m. Opening comments/prayers/introduction of facilitators

2:00 to 4:30 p.m. Breakout sessions begins

Crafting – healing hearts, or create an orange shirt pin with Alice Vittrekwa, Sarah Jerome and Glenna Tetlich; crafting through grief and loss

Harm Reduction through cultural and spiritual teachings; Sarah Jerome and Alice Vittrekwa

Youth Intervention and Suicide Prevention Awareness; Louise Creyke

Youth engagement with Knute Johnsgaard

5-6 pm **Dinner**

7 pm to 9 pm Interactive social time at the hall: continue with sewing projects, games with Teresa Frost. Coffee and Tea will be on for those that want to drop by after work.

Staff will be on hand to engage with citizens and seek input on wellness plans and visioning for the department and the community.

September 27th

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Workshop for men’s wellness; let’s talk about it! A vision for a better future – Mountain Camp – facilitated by: Damon Bell, Knute Johnsgaard.

A workshop for women’s wellness; Matriarch’s role in healing our nation – Mountain Camp – facilitated by Glenna Tetlich, Louise Creyke, Alice Vittrekwa and Sarah Jerome.

12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Catered Lunch at Mountain Camp

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Men's group session – continue

Women's group session - continue

1:00 p.m. to 3:30

Interactive Play with Damen Bell and Knute Johnsjgaard (Chief Zzeh Gittlit School)

Harm Reduction and Drug Use Prevention: Alex Hodgins: Blood Ties Four Directions, will be facilitating a session on drug use and prevention, and harm reduction

6:00 p.m. Catered light dinner at the hall

7:00 p.m. Community Meeting; Life Promotion and Suicide Prevention in Old Crow – Blood Ties Four Direction

8:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. Community interactive evening with musicians and events coordinator – learning to heal through music and dance, lessons on Guitar, Polka and Jiving lessons

September 28th

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. commence the days sessions:

Crafting – healing hearts, or create an orange shirt pin, crafting through grief and loss

Harm Reduction through cultural and spiritual teachings; Sarah Jerome and Alice Vittrekwa

Youth Intervention and Suicide Prevention Awareness; Louise Creyke

Interactive play through basketball; Damen Bell and Knute Johnsgaard

Harm Reduction and Drug Use Prevention: Alex Hodgins: Blood Ties Four Directions, will be facilitating a session on drug use and prevention, and harm reduction

Art Therapy with Jeneen Njootli

12:00pm catered lunch

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Breakout sessions continues:

5:00pm – Community Dinner at Darius Elias Community Center

6-8pm Harm Reduction through interactive games – focus on anti-bullying campaign and team play, with VGG Events Coordinator Teresa Frost and Recreation Staff.

September 29

9 a.m. to 12:00

Continue with interactive group sessions:

Crafting – healing hearts with Gwitchin elders; crafting through grief and loss

Harm Reduction through spiritual teachings; Sarah Jerome and Alice Vittrekwa

Art Therapy and Harm Reductions; Cheryl McGuire

Youth Intervention and Suicide Prevention Awareness; Louise Creyke, and Alice Vittrekwa

Interactive play through basketball; Damen Bell and Knute Johnsgaard

12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Catered lunch

1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Afternoon wrap up session with group leaders and Interested community members with emphasis on: **Ans’at gwinah’ii** – vision that our heart sees.

Welcome and introduction of the Tlicho Drummers: leading community in Prayer, and drumming to close the afternoon session

5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – light dinner – Tlicho Drummers opening prayer song, Sarah Jerome opening with a prayer

7:00 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Evening will be dedicated to healing through music

Daniel Rogers, Tye Kisoun, Harold and Marvin Frost; Interactive music lessons with youth, bring your guitars and fiddle and join in an evening of gospel singing, fiddling, ending with dance lessons.

Tlicho Drumming; Healing through the beat of the drum, song, dance, and prayer songs

September 30 – Reconciliation Day

Honoring our youth, “**EVERY CHILD MATTERS**”. The Indigenous Peoples of Canada through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made 94 recommendations and calls to action to improve the lives of every child intergenerationally affected by residential schools.

Today we will honor our ancestor who never made it home from residential schools, we will honor those that survived, and those that have been intergenerationally impacted.

OUR HEALING JOURNEY – The future is ours to create.

12:00 p.m. Lunch

Start the day in Ceremony/Prayer to honor all those affected by residential schools – special invited guests’ speakers; focusing on the survivors and those that directly impacted making space for them to share their stories, and how they overcame adversities, and continue to work on their healing journey.

Tlicho Drummers leading us in prayer songs.

Elder Prayer in Gwitchin

Highlight the Chootla School Project, and how this has directly affected VGG and what we need from the community around the cultural protocols, and what this week meant in correlation to this project. It takes a community to raise a child, adversely, it takes a community to heal an adult directly impacted by intergenerational trauma inflicted by Residential Schools.

Truth and Reconciliation Day; the call to Action

1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Make Placards, and signs at the hall – prepare for the walk, “expression through words”.

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. **Community Walk** – Remembering and honoring the survivors and those that never made it home. Start at the Darius Elias Hall, walk to around the downtown, up to Coop, and around the back trail and back to the hall.

3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Snacks

4:00 to 5:00 p.m. Interactive Games

Community Dinner – Speeches - Honoring our ancestor – Recognizing the participants from the weeklong session

Gift exchange for participants and youth

Evening – Dance and Fun Filled Activities and Games – Tlicho Drummers, Fiddle Music and Dancing

Facilitators for the week:

Pauline Frost is a citizen of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nations, and in a few short months she was raised under the watchful eye of the matriarch of her family, Joanne Njootli and carries the teaching of the Gwitchin People, she can honestly say that she has her foot planted in both worlds.

As the former MLA, and Minister of Health and Social Services, Housing and Environment for the Government of Yukon, Pauline is well to equipped to lead us in interactive sessions throughout the week.

Pauline spent 10 years working for Vuntut Gwitchin on the self-government and treaty negotiations, she also has a background in health, negotiations, and conflict resolution, policy development, governance, and human resource management.

She will graciously moderate and emcee the week of activities and ceremonies.

Teresa Frost has for the past 30 years coordinated, and mastermind the many successful events hosted in Old Crow, including suicide prevention week, Caribou Days, Gwitchin Gathering activities, July 1st Celebration, Easter, and Christmas celebrations. She will be on hand to coordinate the evening events – including evening activities, gospel singing, games, dance, and feast

Health and Social Services Staff will be on hand to co-host the events for the week: Natasha Frost, Paige Tlzya, Candace Blake, Renita Kakfwi and Kathy Nukon

Darrel Charlie will be cooking and catering the event for the week

MSU Councilors (Laurant, Chantal and Kyla Amett) will be on hand for counseling supports

Blood Ties – Will be on hand to support sessions on drug awareness, and suicide prevention

Andy Nieman – spiritual reawakening and healing through interactive conversations and group sessions

Alice Vittrekwa and Sarah Jerome - traditional Gwitchin teachings and holding space for ceremony

Damen Bell – is a proud Haida and Tlingit First Nation man, and former professional athlete that offers world class training grounded in trauma, informed/culturally aware care. With over 10 years of coaching, facilitation, and speaking experiences, Damen will be able to offer knowledge to youth and community members. The relationship will be long lasting to ensure community capacity is developed and Damen's services is no longer required.

Damen will work with work with Vuntut Gwitchin to development an impactful week, through his basketball clinics, facilitated workshops with youth, men's talking circles, that will cultivate and foster healthy relationships in the community.

Jeneen Njootli – A granddaughter of Joanne Njootli, and the daughter to Stanley Njootli Sr. Jeneen is a proud member of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and is a professor at the University of British Columbia. She has a Master's Degree in Art through UBC, and a Undergrade degree from Emilie Carr. With a focus on music, multi-medium art form, traditional crafting, she could engage with youth at all levels, using different modalities of art form.

Jeneen is known on the national stage, and has had her pieces shown in New York, Colorado, Banff School of Art, and on many international stages. She is well versed in working with children applying art therapy to healing.

Jeneen is on her own healing journey using all the resources made available to her to support her sobriety, can share her experiences with others.

Louise Creyke– A Gwitchin Elder that has worked with and taught young children for the last four decades in rural and urban settings, she is social worker, and works with youth in the education stream that have been caught in a conflicting trauma. She is amazing in integrating interactive play into her programing.

Louise opened her home to raise many children who have been caught in the system as her own, these include children from many walks of life with many challenges. She humbly opened her home and her heart to give them a safe and supportive home to thrive in.

She is a known for her advocacy work with you and will lead group session on healing through crafting and beading, youth engagement sessions.

Glenna Tetlich is a Vuntut Gwitchin Elder, with a degree in sciences, and back ground in health management, life skills coaching, mediation, and healing touch practitioner. She has dedicated her career to working with inner-city/urban youth through the education systems. Being raised in Old Crow, and staying closely connected, she is well versed and familiar with the challenges of our community and will assist with the facilitation of sessions while creating holistic space to address addiction awareness, intergenerational trauma inflicted by residential schools, and will focus group sessions on healing through spiritual growth and self-awareness, with a goal of creating individual self-care plan.

Alice Vittrekwa – is a well-known Tetlit Gwichin Elder with many years of counselling experience and is a true knowledge keeper of our Gwitchin language, culture and teachings. As a life skills coach, Alice is one of the founding members of the Glondee Healing Camp and has led many land-based healing initiatives in the Mackenzie Delta Region. She is a gifted elder, connected and rooted in our cultural teachings and practices, and has worked with diverse groups throughout the last 40 years.

Sarah Jerome – has a master’s degree in Education, is a former principle with experience in curriculum development and design and was the master planner and curriculum developer behind the Land Based healing model, “Breaking Trails. ”

Sarah is was also the first Language Commissioner in the NWT, and held that prestigious role for a number of years. Breaking Trails is used by the Gwichin Tribal Council, Tetlit Gwichin First Nation, Inuvik Indian Band, and the First Nations in the Delta Region to attract young men and women who are suffering from addictions by bringing them back to their roots, while healing on the land.

Sarah is also a Lay Minister in the Anglican Church, and is well versed in multi denominational teachings, including Gwitchin values and principles which she will apply during her co-facilitated sessions with Alice Vittrekwa.

Cheryl McGuire – Northern Focus Counselling, Cheryl is a member of the Trondek Hwechin First Nation, she has a master’s degree in clinical counselling, with emphasis on youth supports. She uses art therapy in her practice and will use this interactive time to introduce this method of connection, and healing through art.

Knute Johnsgaard – Knute is a former Olympian and is well known with the youth of Old Crow. He has been to Old Crow every year for the last five years working with the youth in the Old Crow Ski Program on a volunteer basis. He along with his colleague Pavalin Sudrich has kept the legacy of the ski program alive, in the footsteps of the legends like Father Mouchet, William Linkater, Shirlee, Glenna, Louise and Mary Frost, Martha Benjamin, Norma Kassi, and Agnes Charlie to name a few. His life has been dedicated to working with youth, creating a healthy space to grow and develop into healthy adults, while relying on sport as a therapy.

Knute is also master builder and timber framer and has built his career around his passion for sport and trapping, crafting, and sewing. He is an active trapper and utilizes his harvest to make his own clothing.

Knute will assist Ramen through the Sport Therapy Sessions, and will work directly with the youth of Old Crow by hiking and interactive time at the youth center and the school, and the Crow Mountain Camp.

Alex Hodgins The Community Harm Reduction Coordinator with Blood ties Yukon an is responsible for leading the delivery of harm reduction programs and services in rural Yukon communities. The Community Harm Reduction Coordinator works closely with the Harm Reduction Counsellor to set best practice standards in harm reduction across the Yukon and ensures that Blood Ties delivers culturally meaningful harm reduction services in rural Yukon and delivers overdose education services including Fentanyl testing in rural and outreach settings such as festivals. The Community Harm Reduction Coordinator works with Rural Partnership Coordinator and Community Engagement Coordinator in delivering Harm Reduction and Overdose Education programs to rural Indigenous communities.

Harold and Marvin Frost are renowned Vuntut Gwitchin musicians, both having learned the art of music from former fiddlers and guitar players like, Paul Ben Kassi, Bill Stephens, Grafton Njootli, Peter Benjamin and Charlie Peter.

Daniel Rogers and his son Tye Kisoun; Daniels well known for his fiddle tunes; he has played at many festivals in the Delta. Daniel has worked with his son and introduced him to music as a way of healing, and expression. Tye is excited to share with his community of Old Crow, Bertha Allen is his great grandmother, and Victor Kisoun is his grandfather. HE is closely connected to Old Crow, not only is a great up and coming musician, he is also a great dancer.

The Tlicho drummers have been drumming since they were teenagers. Two of the drummers are the product of high school drumming program in the late 90s. They have performed all over the country. They have drummed in Alberta, Yukon, Vancouver Olympic 2010 and many communities in NWT for the school programs. The drummers have promoted the drumming in every community for their tournaments. They are excellent in spiritual prayers songs, drum dance music and drumming for hand games. They are good ambassador for Tlicho Nation through their drumming. They are cultural strong, and all speak their Aboriginal language

George Mckenzie served two terms as Grand Chief of the Tlicho Government and was honoured to represent his nation in this political role, he is also a former classroom teacher and vice principal of Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School in Edzo, NWT and ran the culture and drumming program for 14 years.

Drummers are as follows:

George Mackenzie
Mark Mackenzie
Alex Black

Jonathan Black
Peter Adzin
Tony Tatchia