

# June 2026 NEWSLETTER



## IN THIS ISSUE

See updates from the Scw'exmx Child and Family Teams! See photos from the Lower Nicola MMIW2SG+ walk, the Youth Resiliency Conference, and the LNIB Culture Day! And learn about traditional medicine making!

Find out what our amazing Teams have been getting up to and what employment opportunities we have open!



## Mission

We are all somebody's seventh generation. We are committed to work with our communities to create the necessary change to ensure children currently in care have the advocates they deserve and seven generations from now, the need for a child welfare system will no longer exist as our families will be whole and healthy.



## Vision

Work collectively to exercise nte?k'epmx and syil'x inherent rights as we empower children, young people and families.

## tekm mins | tá k'wúl'əm - Our Call to Action

We are at a critical moment in time. A great deal of change is taking place within the current political climate in which we exist. Bold steps are required to actualize the changes necessary for the communities we represent. For the first time since colonization, our action will fundamentally alter the foundation upon which outside governments have imposed political interests of assimilation through the systemic removal of our children.

For generations, our children have been the ones on the front line of federally and provincially legislated cultural genocidal regimes. Our families and communities were fractured but never broken. To achieve healing, justice and hope for each child ever removed from their parents, families and communities, it is up to us to provide a new reality for generations to come.

Through the wisdom of our ancestors, we have been taught the ways to care for one another. We must work toward a future markedly different from the current state wherein there are more Indigenous children in care now than at the height of the residential school era. While the current system is derived from legislation and policy, not of the Indigenous origin at a community level or otherwise, we undertake the process of decolonization to bring traditional knowledge, guidance and practices of the nte?k'epmx and syil'x people forward in collaboration and guidance of our communities.

It is our responsibility to create the necessary change to ensure children currently in care have the advocates they deserve; and seven generations from now, the need for a child welfare system will no longer exist as our families will be whole and healthy. nte?k'epmx and syil'x ancestors have anticipated this change and passed on their wisdom as we respond to this call to action. This very legacy is now ours to nurture and protect as we build a new platform where today's children, young people, families and communities will remain together and rekindle their cultural ways of being.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 2 CALL TO ACTION - MISSION & VISION

### 3 SCFSS STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 4 CULTURE OF CARING

- 4 June Harvesting - Language Resources
- 5-6 Making Medicine with Barbara Huston
- 7-8 Culture Team Updates
- 9-10 LNIB Culture Day
- 11 Community Prevention Updates
- 12 MMIW2SG+ Walk Photos

### 13 PROTECTION TO PREVENTION

- 13-15 Men's Group Updates
- 16 Delegated Services Update
- 17 NV Youth Gathering Info

### 18 GROWING OUR PEOPLE

- 18 Employment Opportunities
- 19 Tech Corner

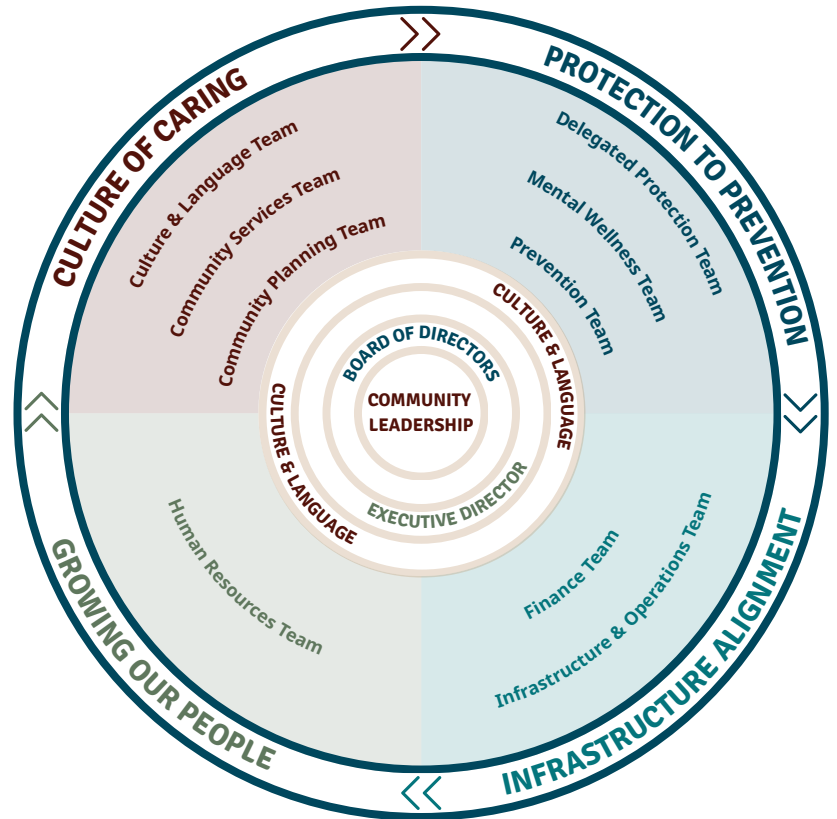
### 20 INFRASTRUCTURE ALIGNMENT

- 20 Colouring Page!
- 21 Newsletter Sign Up
- 22 Contact Us!

# SCFSS STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## CULTURE OF CARING

- Communicate with one voice
- Integrate language and traditional teachings into programs and services
- Grow caregiver networks in alignment with traditional and community values
- Incorporate learning from Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- Return rights and responsibilities to our people through the development and implementation of Governance and Laws



## PROTECTION TO PREVENTION

- Bring and keep our children home
- Align programs and services with our vision
- Shift our focus from fear to love
- Build community engagement and capacity
- Build trusting relationships

## GROWING OUR PEOPLE

- Engage community expertise to support our vision
- Retain those committed to our vision
- Adopt, embrace, and implement cultural practice frameworks
- Acknowledge Post-traumatic Growth (PTG)
- Build professional capacity

## INFRASTRUCTURE ALIGNMENT










- Realign budgets to shift from protection to prevention
- Improve Information Technology support in current and post COVID-19 environment
- Structure change management to achieve our collaborative vision
- Improve prompt management reporting
- Integrate programs and services to build community capacity



# June Harvesting

June is here, bringing with it the warmth and brightness of early summer. This month is known as ksmukáXəntn, or the Time of the Sunflower—a season when the earth stretches awake, blossoms open, and the land begins to glow with life. As the sun lingers longer in the sky, it’s a time to gather, explore, and enjoy the gifts of the land.

Learn sustainable harvesting practices and pronunciations from knowledge keepers. Phrases in red are in **nłeʔkepmxcín**, while turquoise ones are in **nsyilxcən**. A QR code is provided for an audio file.

		
Bitterroot	łk'wəpn	s'píłəm
		
Arrow-Leaved Balsam Root	sóx'w'm	smúk'waʔxn
		
Big Sagebrush	kéwk'wu	q'wíq'wímnitp

# THE MEDICINES MADE WITH BARB

## PITCH PERScription

“My mother taught me and I didn’t know I was being taught,” Barbara Huston shared. “She would tell me to go do this or go get that and we’ll fix an ailment.”

Medicines were just part of everyday life, something you gathered and used when it was needed.

Over time, that understanding deepened as she reconnected with her culture and began learning more intentionally. One of the medicines she works with today is pitch.

“Harvesting, to then make medicines is a happy place for me,” she said. “I like to be sure to put happy, joyful energy into making the medicines. My teachers said what we put in is what we get out of medicine, which is why I’m certain to only make it when I’m grounded.”

Pitch is gathered from trees, often when it is fresh and soft. It is collected with intention, then heated and strained to clean it. From there, it can be mixed into salves using ingredients like cottonwood oil, bear grease, or waxes, with each combination changing how it feels and how it works.

It has long been used for cuts and wounds, helping to protect the skin and support healing. Barbara shared how it has been used in her family for generations, including a story of her mother treating a deep cut with pitch to help hold the skin together. She also described using raw pitch on her own injury, where it healed with very minimal scarring.

Pitch is known for its antibacterial properties. When combined with other medicines, like cottonwood, it can also support pain management and reduce inflammation.

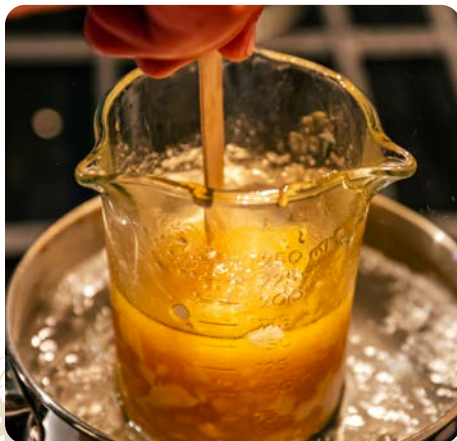
Working with pitch also comes with responsibility. Medicines are gathered with intention, used with respect, and anything leftover is returned to the land.

“Creating new medicines with different plants and trying to help the people who need it is my heart work,” she said. “These teachings started as a child... those memories come back with certain smells and visuals while on the land.”

It is through this kind of work that knowledge of medicines like pitch continues to be shared and kept alive.



# MAKING PITCH SALVE WITH BARBARA HUSTON PHOTOS





# CULTURE TEAM UPDATES - FEEL THE BEAT

## Weaving Connections - May 5 & 19, 2026

“Creating connections in our community is a good thing. Having those positive relationships with the people we serve is a really uplifting feeling.”

Feel the Beat brought community members together at the Lower Nicola Indian Band Hall for an evening of culture, learning, and connection.

More than 20 participants attended, ranging from little ones as young as two years old to Elders. The evening began with a shared meal prepared by local caterer Penny Toodlican before participants gathered to learn how to weave medicine baskets using yarn.

With support from the Lower Nicola Band Cultural Centre and Carole Basil, participants worked side by side, helping one another and building connections throughout the room. Many began their baskets during the first session, preparing to return and complete them as necklaces at the following workshop.

Elders were an important part of the evening, each starting their own basket and taking part in one on one moments of support and learning. The knowledge shared during the session had first been taught to the team, then passed on to the community.

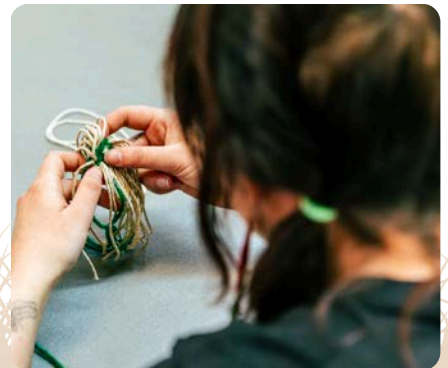
“It’s always a good feeling to keep the knowledge going.”

Participants also shared ideas for future sessions, including beading, moccasin making, leatherwork, and food preservation, helping shape what comes next for Feel the Beat.

Through shared meals, hands on learning, and time spent together, the evening created a welcoming space to connect, create, and carry knowledge forward.



*Elijah Kennedy,  
Cultural Program Coordinator*





# CULTURE TEAM UPDATES - GATHER AND GROW

## Learning Through Cedar - May 14, 2026

Gather and Grow brought SCFSS staff together at the Nicola office for a hands on session focused on cedar and its many uses.

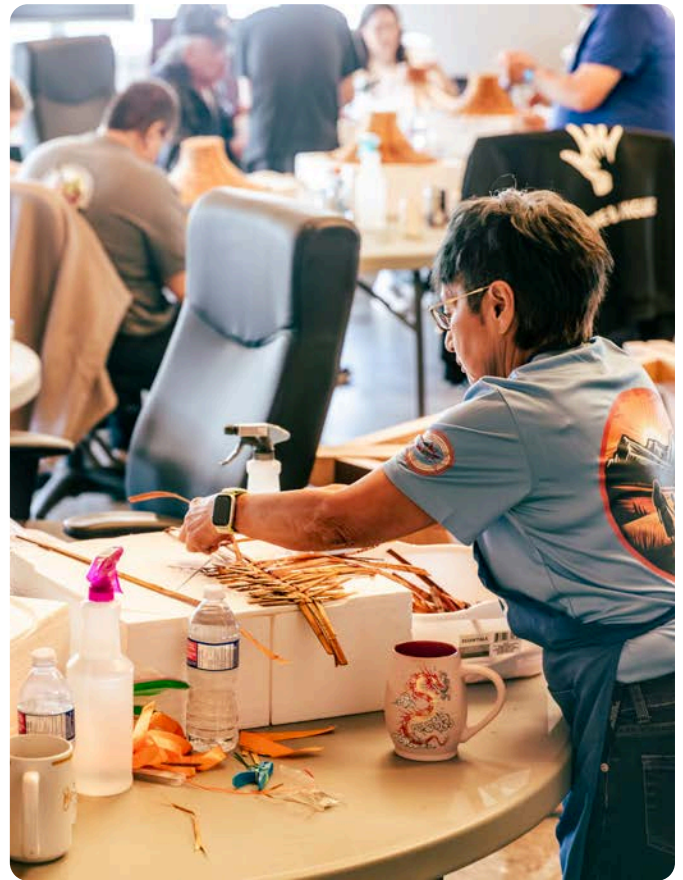
Eight staff members came together to learn about harvesting cedar and the full process involved, from gathering materials to creating woven baskets, hats, and roses. The teachings highlighted the time, patience, and discipline required when working with cedar, along with the importance of respecting the medicine and the process.

After the presentation, staff sat together and created cedar roses, taking time to learn from one another and share in the experience. Everyone was encouraged to give away their first rose, reinforcing values of sharing, care, and connection.

There was a strong sense of people coming together throughout the session, with staff supporting each other and staying engaged in the learning.

“It is so good to see everyone come together to learn new skills.” – Casey Holmes, Resident Elder

Through Gather and Grow, staff continue to deepen their understanding, strengthen connections, and carry forward the teachings in a meaningful way.



*Elijah Kennedy,  
Cultural Program Coordinator*

# COMMUNITY PREVENTION TEAM UPDATES - LNIB CULTURE DAY



## Culture for the Kids - May 22, 2026

Culture Day at Lower Nicola Band School brought together students from grades 1 through 7 for a day of hands on learning, storytelling, and shared experiences.

In the gym, students spent time painting drums and pressed hide medallions. Using the provided pictograph printouts as a reference, there was a mix of traditional and contemporary designs. Students carried their drums around the room, asking classmates and teachers to sign them as a way to remember the day.

In the classrooms, Elders shared traditional stories in their language while students sat and listened. In another room, a group of students lay on the floor with their hands over their eyes, listening closely as a story was told in a different way.

The plant medicines and food room drew a lot of attention. Students gathered around to learn about traditional foods like Indian celery and Indian ice cream. There was a strong interest in tasting and touching the plants. Some students were brave enough to try soapberries on their own and were very surprised by the bitterness.

Lunch brought everyone together in the cafeteria, where salmon, fish head soup, bannock, rice, beef stew, and Indian pudding were served. While many students chose familiar foods, the fish head soup was definitely enjoyed by the Elders.

After lunch, students moved through a salmon preparation demonstration where each step of the process was shared, from brining to the way the fish is cut for smoking. Students stayed engaged, watching closely and asking questions, with some wanting to get a closer look and even touch the fish.

Near the end of the day, the Elders joined in the activities, gathering together to paint their own medallions.

Days like this create opportunities for knowledge to be shared in ways that are visible, hands on, and meaningful. It supports ongoing learning while helping ensure that cultural teachings continue to be passed on to the next generation.



*Mindy Garcia,  
Community Prevention Worker*

# LNIB CULTURE DAY PHOTOS



# COMMUNITY PREVENTION MONTHLY UPDATES - COLDWATER

## Healing Hearts - May 05, 2026

The Coldwater Women's Group gathered for an evening of reflection, connection, and ceremony in recognition of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirit people.

MMIW2SG+ gatherings create space to honour those who have been lost and to recognize the ongoing impacts on families and communities. Wearing red and coming together in this way offers an opportunity to hold space, reflect, and show support.

Thirteen community members attended, beginning the evening with a shared meal and check in before moving into reflection. The gathering focused on honouring those impacted, while also creating space for personal sharing and connection.

During the evening, participants took part in a letter burning ceremony, offering a way to release grief, worries, or anything they were carrying. This was followed by a brushing off and smudge to support cleansing and renewal. The evening closed with the Women's Warrior Song, creating a strong and meaningful ending to the gathering.

Since starting in October 2024, more than 45 sessions have been held with over 60 women participating. The Coldwater Women's Group continues to offer opportunities for connection, support, and shared learning.



*Harmony Williams,*  
*Community Prevention Worker*



Through sharing circles and cultural workshops, Women's Group creates space for women to come together, build relationships, and improve feelings of connection. Past sessions have included ribbon skirt making, traditional spa workshops, smudge spray making, and community outings like art nights and movie nights.

Ongoing support from participants, Elders, facilitators, and community members continues to strengthen the program, helping to create spaces where women can connect, heal, and grow together.



# MMIW2SG+ WALK PHOTOS - MAY 05, 2026

CULTURE OF CARING



# MEN'S GROUP MONTHLY UPDATES

## Honouring Life Givers - May 9, 2026

In collaboration with Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly (CNA), the Men's Group hosted a Mother's Day Dinner that brought 64 community members together to honour mothers and life-giver figures. Families from Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Upper Nicola, Nooaitch, and the urban community gathered for an evening rooted in remembrance, gratitude, and connection.

The evening opened by holding space for the mothers and life-giver figures who are no longer with us. Families then shared a meal together, with partners and sons serving dinner to the mother figures in their lives as a gesture of care, respect, and appreciation.

Around the tables, families reflected on the teachings and values passed down from mothers and grandmothers. Stories touched on honesty, forgiveness, kindness, prayer, respect, love, and the importance of preserving family memories. One relation shared the reminder to take more pictures and record conversations with loved ones because "you never know when people will pass over," and those everyday moments can become stories to carry forward.



Other powerful and important teachings were shared as well:

*"Always tell the truth. Do your best. Pray every night. Forgive. Respect yourself and others."*

*"She taught me to be kind to myself and others. I still do to this day to my family and friends."*

*"treat people how you want to be treated."*

The reflections also spoke to the quiet and lasting ways mothers care for their families. One relation described their mother's love as "the strongest thing to experience," sharing that her calm voice, love, and joy helped them learn forgiveness for themselves and others. Another spoke about being looked after through unseen love, remembering how their mother prayed for them, checked in through others, and helped them realize they were loved and cared for.



# MEN'S GROUP MONTHLY UPDATES - CONTINUED



The night closed in a beautiful way, with women receiving bouquets from flowers donated by CNA. Drummers also joined the gathering to sing the Women's Warrior Song, offering a powerful ending to an evening of honouring and celebration.

This spirit of care and connection continues through the Men's Group's upcoming work. Planning is underway for a Men's Health and Recovery Retreat from July 10th - 12th at CNA's Surrey Sussex Lake, focused on strengthening men's identities and life skills related to addiction and healthy recovery. The group is also collaborating with Nooaitch to support a four-week Boys Group program that will help First Nations boys build identity and strengthen cultural skillsets.

With support from CNA, K'en T'em, Upper Nicola, Lower Nicola, Interior Health, Conayt Friendship Society, ASK Wellness, and other partners, the program continues to grow through community collaboration. The Men's Group remains grateful to all the men, women, children, families, and partners who support this work through planning, participation, and care.



 *James Isaac Jr.,  
Men's Group Coordinator*

 *Jason Ermineskin,  
Men's Group Coordinator*



Drug and Alcohol Free Event

# Men's Group

## Health & Recovery Retreat



**JULY 10TH-12TH 2026**

**TIME: JULY 10<sup>TH</sup> 12-9PM, JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> 8-9PM, JULY 12<sup>TH</sup> 8-5PM**

***n?iyecin e ?iswet - 8050 Surrey Sussex Lake Rd***



**For any questions email: [Jason.Ermineskin@scwexmx.com](mailto:Jason.Ermineskin@scwexmx.com) or help with registering, contact our front desk by calling (250) 378-2771**

Men's group warmly invites Indigenous Men transitioning out of treatment or walking the red road to recovery to join us for a 3-Day Health and Recovery Retreat. This Retreat will be focused on healing, life skills, cultural connection, and building a strong foundation for what comes next.

Men can expect to work on their emotional and mental connection, life skills reintegration, cultural teachings, and peer connections.

This Retreat aims to honour Indigenous ways of knowing while supporting recovery, responsibility, and balance in everyday life.

We have space for 30 participants, so please register to secure your spot!

**Participants are encouraged to bring hand drums.**



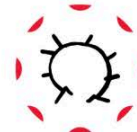
Upper Nicola



LOWER NICOLA INDIAN BAND



GOLDWATER INDIAN BAND





# DELEGATED SERVICES MONTHLY UPDATE

## Youth Resiliency Conference - May 21, 2026

Youth from MSS, Logan Lake, and Ashcroft came together for the Youth Resiliency Conference, a day focused on connection, support, and future opportunities.

The conference gave youth a chance to learn about programs, services, and organizations available to support them in and around community. It also introduced pathways they may want to explore or aspire to, including opportunities such as the CNA Land Guardians program.

By bringing together youth from different schools and communities, the day created space for students to ask questions, build awareness, and see the range of supports available to them. It was a strong turnout and a positive opportunity for youth to connect with people, programs, and possibilities that can help support their growth and resiliency.



Jessica Peterson,  
Community Navigator



**Scw'exmx**  
Child & Family

In partnership with:



**Citxw  
Nlaka'pamux  
Assembly**



# NICOLA VALLEY YOUTH GATHERING

## “STRONGER IN EVERY DIRECTION”

<p><b>JULY 1<sup>ST</sup> - 4<sup>TH</sup> 2026 9:30AM- 5:00PM</b></p>	<p><b>LUNCH, SNACKS, AND DRINKS PROVIDED!</b></p>
<p><b>FOR YOUTH AGED 13-18</b></p>	<p><b>DOOR PRIZES TO BE WON!</b></p>

We warmly invite the youth of the Nicola Valley to our 4th annual Youth Gathering!

Featuring on-the-land teachings from local elders and teams!

This youth gathering will focus on building connections, celebrating culture, and sharing valuable lessons from the land!

- Day 1 - nłq'atməł?x (Upper Nicola)
- Day 2 - nčéłetkʷu (Coldwater)
- Day 3 - nwéyc (Nooaitch) and sxéxńx (Shackan)
- Day 4 - sulús (LNIB) - Family Feast and Fun Day!



Scan the QR code to register!  
Free swag bags and sweaters for participation!

**Have Questions? Please reach out to:**

ShayLee.Jack@scwexmx.com or Cory.Ermineskin@scwexmx.com or call (250) 378-2771

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Scw'exmx Child and Family Services Society (SCFSS) is family-centered and guided by n̓eʔk̓épmx and syil̓x traditional knowledge and principles. SCFSS utilizes prevention and protection strategies with the collective goal to keep children with their families and communities. SCFSS recognizes historical challenges and is guided by traditional strength and wisdom to build family and community capacity in a monumental shift from protection to prevention.

As an Indigenous organization serving the n̓eʔk̓épmx and syil̓x communities, SCFSS prioritizes the hiring of n̓eʔk̓épmx and syil̓x community members. Following community member priority and pursuant to Section 41 of the BC Human Rights Code, preference may be given to qualified applicants of Indigenous ancestry.

### Current Postings

- Youth Outreach Worker

Check our website regularly,  
we will post there first!

**APPLY NOW**

See our full postings and apply on our website at [www.scwexmx.com](http://www.scwexmx.com)





## TECH CORNER - SUMMER SECURE TRAVEL

Summer adventures create lasting memories, let's make sure your digital ones stay safe too.

Use these simple tips to protect your information and devices while you travel this season.



### STAY CONNECTED SAFELY

- ✓ Avoid using public Wi-Fi for sensitive tasks like banking or email
- ✓ Use Secure websites (look for (https://)).
- ✓ Turn off auto-connect to unknown networks.

### PROTECT YOUR DEVICES



- Use a strong passcode or biometric lock. ✓
- Keep your devices updated before you go. ✓
- Enable tracking or remote wipe in case your device is lost or stolen. ✓



### BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

- ✓ Avoid public USB charging stations, use your own charger and outlet.
- ✓ Keep devices with you in busy areas.
- ✓ Limit sharing travel details on social media.



At Scw'exmx Child & Family Services Society, protecting our families and communities extends to keeping data safe in the digital world too. Our IT Department is committed to sharing practical knowledge that helps our staff, families, and community members navigate the online world with confidence.

Tech Corner is one of the ways we're bringing that knowledge to you, because looking after our relations means looking after all aspects of their wellbeing, today and always.

# COLOUR WITH YOUR KIDS!



# SCW'EXMX CHILD & FAMILY NEWSLETTER SIGN UP!



Would you like to receive newsletters and updates from Scw'exmx Child & Family? Scan or click the QR code below to sign up for our newsletter today!



SCAN  
ME



[www.scwexmx.com](http://www.scwexmx.com) • [facebook.com/scwexmxchildandfamily](https://facebook.com/scwexmxchildandfamily) • [Instagram.com/scwexmxchildandfamily](https://Instagram.com/scwexmxchildandfamily)

# Scw'exmx Child & Family

Child Wellness Concern After Hours? Please Call:

**1-800-663-9122**

## Children's Help Line for Children and Youth

Do you need help?

If you don't feel safe or you have a concern, you can call this number 24-hours a day for free from any phone.

**310-1234**

Scw'exmx Child & Family Services Society

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Downtown Address: 1988 Quilchena Ave., Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Culture & Language Address: 2099 Nicola Avenue, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Mailing Address: 1750 Lindley Creek Rd, Merritt, BC V1K 0A3

Prevention Hub Address: 2475 Merritt Ave, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Quilchena Address: Unit #2 - 3512 Highway 5A, Quilchena, BC V0E 2R0

Telephone: 250-378-2771

[www.scwexmx.com](http://www.scwexmx.com)

Facebook Page: [facebook.com/scwexmxchildandfamily](https://facebook.com/scwexmxchildandfamily)



Healthy Children



Healthy Communities



Healthy Families