

# ANNUAL REPORT

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**DZE L K'ANT  
FRIENDSHIP  
CENTRE**

**2021-2022**





**ANDREW TOM**  
PRESIDENT

**STANLEY NAMOX**  
VICE PRESIDENT

**SUSIE HOOPER**  
SECRETARY/TREASURER

**KRISTAL GRENKIE**  
DIRECTOR

**GUY BROWN**  
DIRECTOR

**JILLIAN DENNIS**  
YOUTH DIRECTOR

*The Dze L K'ant Friendship  
Centre is proud of its  
organizational structure,  
and that for over 40 years,  
this governance model has  
made our Centre  
accountable and  
transparent to its  
membership and  
provincial and federal  
partners.*

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we continue navigating our friends and families through this pandemic, we reflect on the true strength instilled in each of us, passed down to us from all of our unique cultures, traditions and protocols.

The resiliency of our people from far and near and from all walks of life are embedded in our collective approach to delivering quality programs and services out of our four offices within our growing Friendship Centre. Our dedicated teams in Houston, Smithers and Dease Lake all strive for excellence, and I applaud their creativity as they've both maintained and established circles of support in their respective communities.

I am humbled by the amount of lives we've enhanced, even through some of the most challenging circumstances. I value and appreciate the tireless efforts of our management team, staff and volunteers, your commitment to empowering people as an Indigenous lead organization is lifting spirits, saving lives and creating that sparkle in our client's eyes because afterall, we all have the potential to inspire, to lead and to motivate positive change.

I thank my fellow directors, who share in my vision for a safer, stronger, healthier tomorrow for all. Be safe, take care and always remember that who you are makes a huge difference to those who look up to you.

Snay Kahl Ya,  
Thank you very much,

Andrew Tom  
Board President



**ANDREW TOM**  
President

# 2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

**We cannot possibly provide information on all the many culturally safe supports that the Friendship Centre provided over the past year. Therefore, this report is designed to provide highlights between April 2021-March 2022. Key highlights include:**



- Our **MMIWG Mural project** is now complete and providing healing and education/awareness within our community.
- We raised the **Brother Pole** which was gifted from the Residential School Survivors Society to honour missing and murdered men and boys and two spirited
- We received funding for a **new Friendship Centre building** in Houston.
- Establishment of the **Friendship Fund**, supported by a number of local businesses and individuals, this fund will provide community education on reconciliation and healing from residential school trauma.
- We hosted **Orange Shirt Week** this September providing as a significant amount of community outreach and education and awareness regarding residential schools
- **Virtual Indigenous Peoples Day** was hosted on June 21, 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions which were still in place.
- **Dze L K'ant Housing Project for Families and Elders** selected by BC Housing to move forward. Construction is planned for spring 2023.
- **46th Annual General Meeting.** The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre hosted its AAGM via Zoom on September 28, 2021. The total of Membership is 44, and 25 participating via Zoom.



# SMITHERS SUCCESS STORIES

As an organization we have navigated the changing public health measured during 2021-2022 to ensure we were able to continue to safely provide a wide range of supports and services. This report provides just some of our stories of collaboration, hard work and dedication of our staff to serve our community during difficult times.



## SMITHERS PROGRAMS

- MENTAL HEALTH & OUTREACH.
- ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELLING.
- HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM.
- HOMELESS OUTREACH PROGRAM
- LEARNING HUB
- HIV AIDS AWARENESS.
- LEGAL ADVOCACY.
- FAMILY GATHERINGS.
- MMIWG FAMILY SUPPORT.
- CAPC (COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN FOR CHILDREN)
- HEALTHY CARE PREGNANCY PROGRAM
- CULTURE IS ALIVE (YOUTH PROGRAM)
- 5X5 EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
- HOLISTIC HEALTH PROGRAM

# AT THE HEART: MMIWG MURAL PROJECT COMPLETED

On Thursday September 2, 2021, the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre hosted an outdoor event at the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre on Main street Smithers to acknowledge the completion of our At the Heart Project MMIWG Mural project.

"Our goal with this outdoor event was to provide an opportunity for the families who helped design this mural in collaboration with our mural artists, to come together with the community to acknowledge the completion of this project, to honour local MMIWG and raise awareness," says Elmira Sanati Nia, Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre's Holistic Health Worker.

The mural, which is located at the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre, is a vibrant and meaningful addition to the downtown. The Mural commemorates the lives and legacies of local MMIWG from Smithers, Witset and the surrounding communities along the Highway of Tears. The project activities were funded by a grant the Dze L k'ant Friendship Centre received from the Department of Women and Gender Equity.

The event was well attended and provided an opportunity for family members who participated to share their experience of the project, their ongoing struggles for justice and their hopes for future generations.



# ONLINE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY CELEBRATIONS

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**National Indigenous Peoples Day  
2021 was once again hosted online.**

**Our online event included  
welcoming remarks from elders  
and our board of directors,  
acknowledgement of residential  
school trauma being felt in the  
community, competitions, music,  
local performers and storytime for  
children.**

**We wish to acknowledge our  
Indigenous Peoples Day  
Committee and staff who worked  
hard to make the day special for  
our community despite the  
pandemic.**





# BROTHER POLE RAISING

In 2021 the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre was gifted an 11-foot Brother Pole in the honor of missing and murdered Indigenous men and boys.

This gift was received from Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS North West Region). The Dze L K'ant Friendship centre worked with Witsuwit'en Hereditary Chiefs to accept this gift, bring this pole to our community.

Nisga'a and Tsimshian carver Mike Dangeli carved two poles, the Grandmother, and the Brother, with the help of his two sons Nick Dangeli & Michael Daniel, to honor MMIWG and has received the blessing of the Kitsumkalum chiefs on whose territory they were carved. The beautiful Grandmother pole was raised in September 2020 along highway 16 at Kitsumkalum. The Brother Pole was raised at the Cultural Centre on November 17th.

"THIS BROTHER POLE, WILL BE  
AN IMPORTANT MEMORIAL.  
THE POLE  
STANDS AS A PLACE OF  
HEALING FOR FAMILIES AND A  
REMINDER OF THE NATIONAL  
ISSUE OF MISSING AND  
MURDERED  
INDIGENOUS MEN, WOMEN,  
GIRLS AND OUR CHILDREN." ~  
ANDREW TOM, PRESIDENT OF  
THE DZE L K'ANT FRIENDSHIP  
CENTRE.

The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre would like to take the opportunity to thank the IRSSS along with the following businesses for their gracious and thoughtful partnership in the Brother Pole project:

- Bulkley Valley Engineering Services Ltd.
- Vandergaag Construction Ltd.
- High-tech Drilling Ltd.





# FRIENDSHIP FUND ESTABLISHED



On July 1st 2021, the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre announced the Commitment of Friendship Fund Project. This idea came about when Blaine Estby, owner of Smithers Brewing Co, contacted Executive Director of Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society, Annette Morgan, to discuss the impacts of the thousands of children whose unmarked graves have been found at former residential schools across Canada.

The local business, Smithers Brewing Co wanted to talk to the Friendship Centre about supporting community healing. The business offered to provide 100% of their profit on July 1st. This generous donation has allowed the Friendship Centre to create the Commitment of Friendship Fund, a new community based awareness and healing project that has now been donated to by a wide range of local businesses.

***We wish to thank each and every businesses and community members who  
have generously donated!***

# URBAN INDIGENOUS HOUSING STUDY



This housing study creates a deeper understanding of the critical need for more affordable housing investment and highlights the importance of Indigenous led approaches to Indigenous housing and supports.

In total, we heard from 202 people who shared a range of lived experiences and perspectives on housing and homelessness through our survey and group circles. Our study revealed the following eight key themes: Lack of affordable and available housing, displacement, discrimination and racism, poor rental conditions, homelessness, colonial trauma, and the need for culturally safe Indigenous-led housing and supports.

Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society Executive Director, Annette Morgan states: "I want to acknowledge the work and efforts that have gone into producing this study. Specifically, the housing team at Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre and well as our project partners. I also want to thank all of the community members who took the time to share their housing stories and knowledge with us and this speaks to the strength and resilience of the urban Indigenous people in this area."

The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre also wishes to acknowledge that this knowledge building project was funded through the Homeless Community Action Grant program in partnership with Plan54 Consulting and the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC).

# FIRST ANNUAL ORANGE SHIRT WEEK



In 2021, during the last week of September, the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre offered a week of learning opportunities about residential schools and their impact. The Centre provided a range of activities, including a smudging tent on Main street outside of the Friendship Centre provide in-person teachings on smudging, resources and information about the history and impact of residential schools. Other key activities included canoe paddling for local businesses and organizations on Tyhee Lake and Lake Kathlyn with Alcohol and Drug Counsellor Mel Bazil.

A highlight of the week was the opportunity for our Friendship Centre to connect with two local elementary schools. At the Friendship Centre Sonia Palmer, a trauma informed mental health outreach worker is a survivor and has been engaging with students for many years to increase knowledge and understanding of the impacts of residential schools.



# DZE L K'ANT HOUSING PROJECT SELECTED BY BC HOUSING



BC Housing announced in 2021 that the Dze L K'ant Friendship Housing project for families and elders in Smithers was selected. This will be the community's first-urban based Indigenous-led housing development, located at 1621 Main St, will provide 30 affordable homes for families and Elders living off-reserve. The three-storey building will be designed to reflect the diversity of local Indigenous cultures, reaffirming our commitment to providing unique, culturally supported housing to our community.

Groundbreaking for the building is expected in spring 2023, with the new homes welcoming residents by the end of 2024. The location of the proposed building is ideal due to its proximity to Smithers' downtown core and amenities including schools, transit, medical services and more.

The project is a testament to what can be achieved through the power of partnerships. The Dze L K'ant Housing Society is working with the provincial government, through BC Housing, the federal government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, as well as the Town of Smithers, who have provided a municipally owned site on which the project will be located. The operating agreement will be managed by the Aboriginal Housing Management Association.

# MENTAL HEALTH & OUTREACH

## RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL IMPACTS: EDUCATION & HEALING

This year during the last week of September, the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre offered an entire week of learning opportunities about residential schools and their impact leading up to September 30th. A highlight of the week was the opportunity for our Friendship Centre's Mental Health Outreach worker to connect with two local elementary schools to increase knowledge and understanding of the impacts of residential schools. Our program created 215 orange fabric squares which were distributed to Muheim Elementary as well as students and teachers from the French School, Ecole La Grande-Ourse. Our mental health worker arranged visits with the schools and welcomed students to visit her at the Friendship Centre. During these visits she provided the squares and talked to the student, explaining that they were free to write or draw whatever they wished as long as the messages came from the heart. Each student who participated was also entered into the Friendship Centre's prize draw for a face mask or a reusable lunch bag.

## HEALING CIRCLES

Our Mental Health Outreach worker continued the healing circles due to their popularity. This gives our worker a chance to check on people's wellness individually and make them feel connected. Sometimes this is just a friendly conversation and other times we are able to provide information about resources and support such as covid-19 relief support via the friendship centre programs as well as other programs providing support e.g. housing support.



# INDIGENOUS HOUSING SUPPORT FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR AT RISK

*The Indigenous Housing Support Program operates in both Smithers and Houston and provides fulltime workers for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness toward greater housing stability.*

Supports provided via this program in 2021-2022 included:

- Food supports (food hampers, frozen pre-made meals, snacks, access to traditional foods)
- Emergency motel rooms for short-term shelter and those needing to isolate
- Damage deposit and rent in arrears to reduce homelessness
- Traditional medicine (cleansing kits, devils club bracelets, smudge kits)
- Hygiene kits (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo & conditioner)
- Winter clothing (winter boots, jackets)
- Showers/laundry access cards

**TENTS, SLEEPING BAGS, FOOD SUPPORTS, BACKPACKS, AND MORE PROVIDED DAILY THROUGH THE DZE L K'ANT FRIENDSHIP CENTRE'S INDIGENOUS HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMS IN SMITHERS AND HOUSTON.**

IWe were able to ensure we had sleeping bags, sleeping mats and tents on hand and provide them to clients to ensure they have some shelter.

During the winter months we have distributed winter jackets and boots to all registered clients in need of warm clothing. This was made possible with our Reaching Home funding and discounts provided by local businesses. In the coldest months we have distributed up to 20 jackets during the month at each location.

On an ongoing basis we provide wool blend socks, gloves and toques, for those who need them. The clients who have received winter gear were very happy that we are able to provide them with warm clothing for the winter. In addition, throughout the year we regularly ensure we have waterproof backpacks ready with essentials, hygiene kits, water bottle, socks and non-perishable snacks for those who are living



**Our staff provided  
12,099 points of  
contact and over  
800 basic needs  
supports to  
homeless or at risk.**



# ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS & TRAINING COORDINATOR

**The Essential Life Skills Coordinator is here to support increased Indigenous workforce participation and skills and training in order to obtain transferable skills that respond to the labour needs.**

The program provides resources on labour market and community resources as well as computers, fax machine and phone accessibility to support resume writing and job searches. Clients who successfully employment are also then able to access proper work and equipment required to do the job safely.

Key resources provided in 2021-2022 fiscal year to respond to unique challenges of the pandemic include , food security, hygiene kits, safety kits, cleaning kits, PPE equipment for personal and work, day planners, backpacks, clipboards, pens, pencils, hi-vis gear, steel toe boots, shoes, socks, underwear, safety glasses, work gloves, laundry soap and obtaining your driver license.

During 2020-2021, due to restrictions and adherence to covid safety plans the program focused on finding opportunities for clients to take training online or safe training opportunities.



# LEGAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre's legal advocacy program is delivered in partnership with the Law Foundation of BC. This past year we continued to support clients during difficult times in their lives due the pandemic and economic hardship. The lack of affordable housing has led to a number of clients seeking support for tenancy issues and increase in support in this area this past year.



Being available to meet in person, respecting physical distancing measures, and via phone has been valuable to ensure client needs are met. We were pleased to be able to begin offering workshops again this year.

This program supported many families to navigate hardships and access services including federal and provincial government.

As our community continues to adjust and cope, we remain available to help vulnerable people in need, as well as ever-evolving in our approach, to ensure best practices for the community we serve.



***SUPPORTING CLIENTS TO NAVIGATE SYSTEMS AND REDUCING HOUSING INSECURITY IN A CULTURALLY RESPECTFUL AND TRAUMA INFORMED MANNER HAS BEEN A PRIORITY IN 2021-2022***

# CULTURE IS ALIVE PROGRAM



## PROGRAM SUPPORTS PROVIDED:

- Connections with the high school key teachers and Indigenous support workers via School District 54
- Laptops were provided through partnership with BC Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council. We hosted a youth dinner gifted the laptops and equipment to the youth
- Bi-monthly meals - time to share food together. Our worker was a trained chef and he treated our youth to nutritionally balanced means and shared his passion for food with the group. These sessions had restricted numbers and some sessions were conducted via zoom with contactless pick up of meal.
- BC Food hampers (BC Centre for Youth partnership allowed us to provide 23 kits with healthy foods
- Driving Lessons- 18 youth participated in these lessons.
- Food skills for families workshops - in partnership with BC Centre of Disease Control we conducted these workshops via zoom with a total of 12 participants.
- Hygiene kit distribution - by partnering with Covid-19 relief funding we were able to provide 26 hygiene kits which our worker ensured were accessed by our youth many of whom struggle with high cost of items such as body wash, lotion, dental care, deodorant, feminine hygiene products etc.
- 18 Mental wellness kits were created specifically for youth. These includes a range of vitamins, cultural components, essential oils, weighted blankets and resources about anxiety and self care.



# FAMILY GATHERINGS PROGRAM

The Aboriginal/ Metis Family Gathering project is a community based project that will support families to work with others to address the social determinants of Health.



## **DURING 2021-2022 KEY ACTIVITIES INVOLVED:**

- **SUPPORTING FAMILIES**
- **IMPROVE HIGHER LEVELS OF HAPPINESS, GOOD HEALTH AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL BEING.**
- **CREATE AND OFFER ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT FOR EMOTIONAL WELLNESS AND DEVELOPMENT.**
- **PROMOTE IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE AND OVER ALL RESILIENCY.**
- **PROMOTE TRADITIONAL GAMES.**

### **Foods, arts and crafts, cultural supports, and learning together**

By providing tasty food that is healthy and geared towards the group in general, we are promoting an improved quality of life and overall resiliency. All meals are well rounded with all four food groups that provide correct amounts of protein, Iron, vitamins and minerals that the body needs to function properly throughout the day. Dietary restrictions and food allergies are asked about to make sure everyone is happy and taken care of during a meal.

As we also provide arts or craft projects, we try to gear these activities to a comfortable skill level that all participants can feel happy enough to participate in.

# LEARNING HUB ESTABLISHED AND SUCCESSFUL HEALTH CARE ASSISTANT PROGRAM OFFERED

**The newly established Learning Hub which is located at the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre hall is designed to achieve the following objectives:**

1. To provide Indigenous community members with access to college-level post-secondary education and skills training
2. To support Indigenous community needs and priorities for education and skills training throughout the Northwest region including responding to economic opportunities and industry needs for a local skilled labour force.
3. To provide recognized public post-secondary credentials and/or course credits that are transferable to post-secondary institutions and programs.
4. To work with local businesses, organizations and individuals to identify current needs for post-secondary education and training.
5. To form partnerships with at least one post-secondary organization which can offer the appropriate certificates and diplomas.
6. To promote community capacity building.

**The greatest success story for the newly established Learning Hub this year was the graduation of six Indigenous students from the Native Education College Health Care Assistant Program.**

**A partnership with Native Education College, Vancouver, formed the basis for delivery of the 10-month Health Care Assistant Program, beginning in May, 2021. Students from Smithers, Houston, Witset, Sik-e-dakh and Gitseguk'la studied theory via an online learning platform, then gained practical personal care skills in preparation for practicum placements. Students adapted well to the online delivery model, but confirmed that they enjoyed the hands-on labs and contact with their peers far more**



# ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELLING PROGRAM & HARM REDUCTION SERVICES



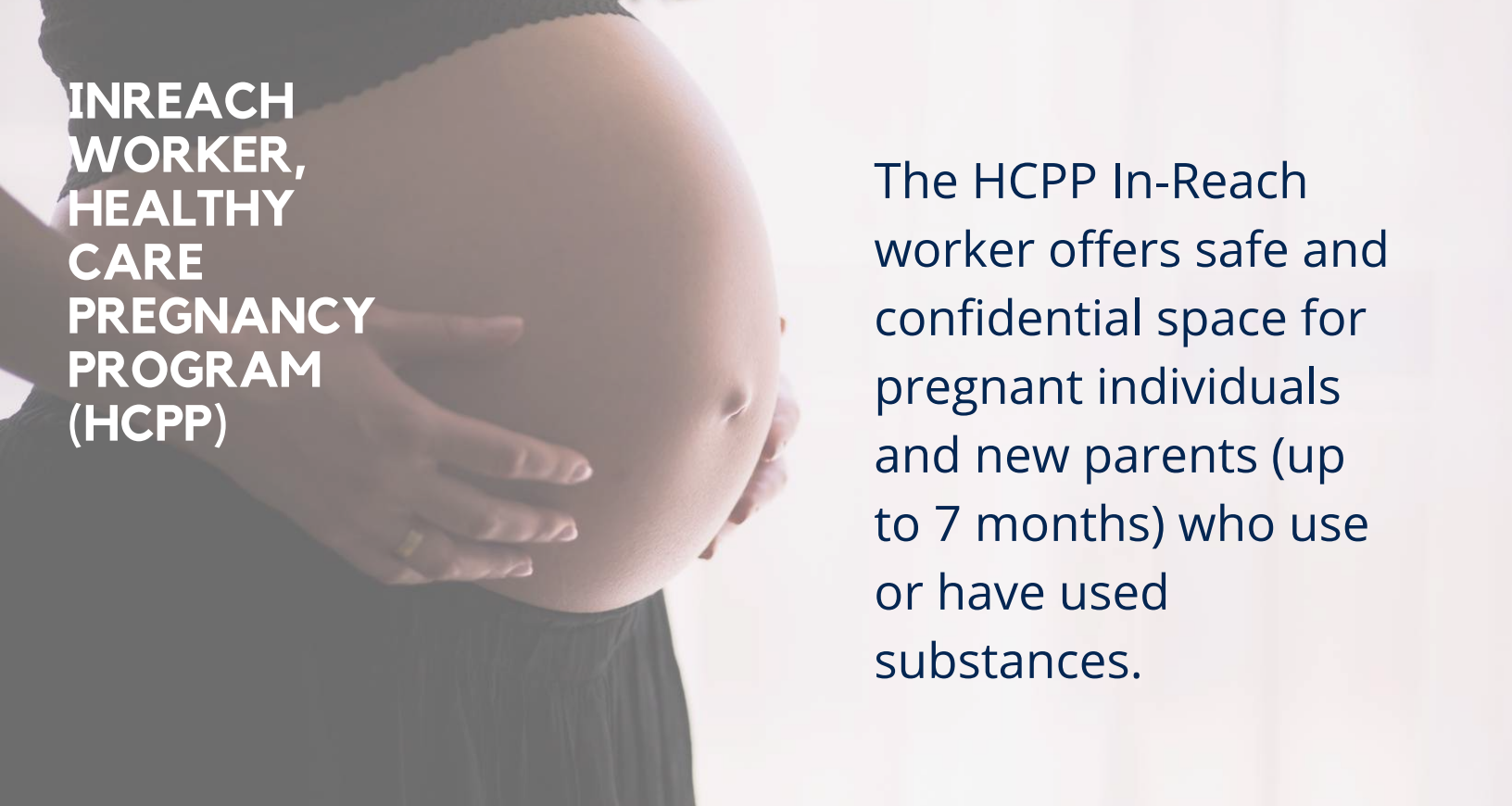
THE ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELOR PROVIDES ONE-ON-ONE, GROUP, AND FAMILY SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE OR HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE, INCLUDING EDUCATIONAL, ACTIVITY-BASED, AND COUNSELING SERVICES. ASSISTANCE IS GEARED TOWARDS RESPECTING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND PROVIDING TIMELY, APPROPRIATE, AND EFFECTIVE SUPPORTS TO ADDRESS THESE. WHERE NECESSARY, THE ALCOHOL AND DRUG COUNSELOR ALSO DEVELOPS TREATMENT PLANS AND UNDERTAKES REFERRALS.

The Alcohol & Drug Facilitator Mel Bazil has now been in the role for five years as a longtime employee he has built trusted relationships with the clients and community offering greater chances at personal recovery, as well as long-term social recovery.

In the time Mel has taken this role, he has expanded its reach by including Harm Reduction Principles and putting together a project that addresses the Opioid Overdose Crisis. This program also aims to reduce barriers to access caused by the pandemic lockdowns by finding a way to keep vulnerable people connected to services and supports.

The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society also operates The Backpack Program, a Harm Reduction Supply and Naloxone Distribution and Training project. It is considered an Episodic Overdose Prevention Service. This is the local response to the Opioid Overdose crisis which continues to impact our communities. The program has been featured in a recent film project and is designed to encourage more northern communities to respond to the Opioid Overdose Crisis with the Harm Reduction Principles in more agencies and homes in the north.





## INREACH WORKER, HEALTHY CARE PREGNANCY PROGRAM (HCPP)

The HCPP In-Reach worker offers safe and confidential space for pregnant individuals and new parents (up to 7 months) who use or have used substances.

**In-Reach Worker program** provides emotional support, referrals to counselling services, referrals to life skills programs and parenting programs. supporting clients by attending appointments with them and drive them to appointments. Assisting clients to navigate the healthcare system and advocacy are all part of this important program.

Connecting clients with doula services, birthing classes, and breastfeeding workshops. Furthermore, the In-Reach Worker collaborates with the pregnancy outreach offices in Hazelton, Smithers, and Houston to support her clients.

**Promoting health education.** This program works with doctors and nurses at the Smithers hospital, Hazelton hospital, the Public Health Unit and OAT clinic in the community to better support pregnant individuals and new parents who are using substances. This program also collaborates closely with the Dzelkant Friendship Center's skilled nutritionist to provide nutritional information, breastfeeding workshops, and cooking sessions.

The In-Reach worker is able to build a trusting relationship with her clients by meeting with each one of them weekly. This includes going for coffee and treats, addressessing their concerns, and she providing supplies to low-income parents, such as diapers, formula, pre-nata vitamins or clothing.

# MMIWG FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Missing & Murdered Indigenous Woman and Girls Program provides family counselling to individuals and family members who are requiring one-on-one, small group sessions.



Activities have included individual and family support, awareness raising, and online information sharing and connections.

IMMIWG program has supported the following families of MMIWG in activities:

- Totem pole raising project
- Grandmothers Project
- Ribbon Skirt Project
- Drum making workshops
- MMIWG Mural Project



# HOUSTON SUCCESS STORIES

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## HOW WE'VE SUPPORTED OUR COMMUNITY IN HOUSTON

The Houston Friendship Centre serves many young families and their children from early years through to young adults. The pandemic required significant shifts to ensure families were supported during an extremely difficult time. Below are stories from our dedicated team in Houston, who went above and beyond during the pandemic.



## HOUSTON PROGRAMS

- ABORIGINAL FAMILY DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR >>
- AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (ASP)
- CONNECTIONS PROJECT
- EARLY YEARS CENTRE
- MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLOR
- HOUSTON PREGNANCY OUTREACH PROGRAM (POP)

## HOUSTON FC, 2021-2022



The Dze L K'anet Friendship Centre in Houston provides cultural, social, and recreational supports in the community of Houston. The programming in Houston has a family and youth focus, for children aged 0-6, as well as a number of youth programs.

This past year the focus has been on family health and holistic wellness. Our team has provided one-on-one counselling, housing supports, tadpoles programming and a range of exciting programs for children and youth in the community. We are proud of the work we do in Houston and look forward to another great year to come!





# HOUSTON XMAS HAMPER PROGRAM

In lieu of our Annual Christmas Community luncheon The Houston Office provided Holiday Hampers for Indigenous off-reserve community members in addition to those seeking additional supports throughout the holiday season.

With the help from generous support from local community businesses we were able to provide over 30 AECD families with Christmas hampers filled with a Christmas dinner, and non-perishable food items, self-care items, small age appropriate gifts, winter gear, and gift vouchers. In addition to Christmas dinner helper hampers that were distributed through the Covid relief fund. We also provided over a dozen senior gifts.

Priority was given to families and clients that missed the deadline for the Salvation Army Food hampers. We received an overwhelming response of gratitude from those who received the hampers expressing that the initiative helped alleviate stress and helped provide a brighter Christmas for their families following such a difficult and trying year.



# CULTURAL WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN HOUSTON

The Houston Friendship Centre provides a number of programs for children and youth. We focus on ensuring activities that involve an abundance of teachings centered around the understanding and the importance and values of the gifts within nature and on our territories. This work fosters community and youth connection to land, cultural and all relations.

## **Moose Tanning Workshop February 2021.**

A highlight this year was a 2-day workshop with Benjamin Laurie at the A Rocha/ Buck creek nature Centre. The purpose of this workshop was to learn skills, and knowledge on how to process hide from skinning to final product as well as to support indigenous culture, language revitalization and cultural competency.

This workshop provided a unique community experience that helped build skills, awareness, and support for community members to share their experiences, and expertise. It helped reduce social isolation and promote community belonging. This project connected families to their indigenous culture and language, supported cultural connectedness and community wellness.

Over 300 children, (15 school classes joined 20-minute learning sessions throughout the day), multiple families and community members were able to have hands on learning experience working and gaining a body memory experience working with hides. We received strong feedback on the value of this experience from youth and their families.



# FUNDING RECIEVED TO BUILD A NEW FRIENDSHIP CENTRE IN HOUSTON



The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society is pleased to announce that our organization has been approved for funding via the Provincial Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to build a new Friendship Centre facility in the community of Houston, BC.

This funding will allow our organization to design a beautiful new space to meet the specific needs of community members we serve. While the project is still very much in early design phases, our vision is to build a new Friendship Centre facility that is a vibrant place of belonging and wellbeing for urban Indigenous people in Houston.

Our design will allow us to create welcoming spaces for our popular youth and early years programs, a community kitchen facility, safe outdoor play areas, confidential offices and a healing room for counselling and family services, as well as a multi-use space for hosting workshops and events. Most importantly the facility will be a vibrant



# ACKNOWLEDGING OUR KEY FUNDERS 2021-2022

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- NAFC
- BCAAFC
- Northern Health
- Law Foundation
- Ministry of Child and Family Development
- Department of women and gender equity
- Lu'ma Native Housing
- CMHC
- BC Aboriginal Childcare Society
- Emergency Community Support Fund
- United Way Northern BC
- New Horizons

*WE THANK ALL OF OUR FUNDERS WHO SUPPORTED US DURING 2021-2022.*



## ACKNOWLEDGING OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS DURING COVID

- Office of the Wet'suwet'en
- Witset First Nation
- Positive Living North
- Salvation Army
- Noir Restaurant
- Sullivan's Motor Products
- Rotary Club of Smithers
- Nature's Pantry
- Subway Smithers
- Smokescreen Printing
- Canfor
- Dungate Community Forest
- Co-op Fuels
- Chamber Of commerce.
- Houston Food Market
- Pawsome Adventures
- Buy- Low Foods
- The Houston Leisure facility.
- P.A.P.C Pharma save



# HEALING AND MOVING FORWARD

**The pandemic and the findings of unmarked graves at residential schools has increased isolation, trauma mental and physical health challenges, loss and economic hardship for many in our community.**

**We will continue to honour these challenges in our community by seeking funding and ensuring services are delivered as needed.**

**We are proud of by the many new initiative sand partnerships over the past year and we look forward to what the future holds as we continue to grow as an organization.**





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**Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre**  
**1188 Main street Smithers,**  
**Ph: 250-847-5211**  
**Email: [info@dzekant.com](mailto:info@dzekant.com)**  
**[www.dzekant.com](http://www.dzekant.com)**  
**[www.facebook.com/dzelant](https://www.facebook.com/dzelant)**