

## FPCC RELEASES GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH ON THE STATE OF REPATRIATION IN B.C.



The First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) recently published two new reports that look at the history and current state of repatriation efforts in B.C.

The reports demonstrate that significant, long-term investment is required to bring home thousands of Ancestors and Belongings.

*"We are so grateful to the community experts who so generously shared their knowledge and experience with us," says Tracey Herbert, CEO of FPCC. "These reports create an opportunity to work together so we can make sure there are investments in British Columbia's collective heritage."*

*From Stealing to Healing: Repatriation and B.C. First Nations* shares critical research that identifies over 2,500 Ancestors and 100,000 Belongings from B.C. currently held in 229 colonial

institutions worldwide. It includes case studies of recent repatriation efforts by 16 Nations and a timeline of repatriation in the province over the last 100 years.

*Repatriation Cost Analysis: A Framework and Model*, is a companion report that offers a useful tool for Nations to assess where they are at in their

repatriation journeys. It includes information on how to estimate the costs of First Nations-led repatriation from the initial planning stages to long-term caretaking after Ancestors and Belongings are repatriated. The costing model has flexibility to account for diversity across B.C. First Nations communities.

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Pts'aanm Midiik returns home, reception ceremony, Lax Klan Community Hall. (Source: Gitxaata Nation)

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This research shows that successful repatriation requires sustained investment, planning, research, infrastructure and collaboration.

The reports also address barriers to support the return of Ancestors and Belongings to their rightful place in communities.

*The funding has helped a little, but, really, there's barely any funding for repatriation," says Lindsey Willie, General Manager of the Nunwakola Cultural Society. "We have to use these smaller grants like the FPCC Braided Knowledge Grant to piecemeal the work. The work is urgent as well, because we have Elders that*

*are aging. Those Elders currently help us connect the dots between the knowledge that's in those museums and now.*

Read the full news release and view the reports, executive summaries and fact sheets at [fpcc.ca/repatriation](http://fpcc.ca/repatriation).



Lindsey Willie takes a photograph of cultural belongings at the Museum of Vancouver.

# CULTURAL PRACTICES BRING LANGUAGE TO LIFE FOR FPCC REGIONAL COACH

Teaching a hide-tanning workshop using Secwepemctsin is an “incredibly powerful” experience, says Corey-Lee Philbrick of Williams Lake First Nation.

*“You see a kid tanning a hide, speaking the words you taught them, and they are so happy,” says Corey-Lee. “You watch them singing and picking up the drum, praying for themselves and for their family, and it changes everyone in the room. For those of us facilitating, we often have tears at the end of the day, just seeing the impact.”*

Corey-Lee started her Secwepemctsin language journey with FPCC’s Mentor-Apprentice Program (MAP) in 2021 after taking a Secwepemctsin language course at Simon Fraser University.

She is now one of FPCC’s regional MAP Coaches, supporting new MAP teams by sharing her knowledge and experiences.



Corey-Lee with Mentor-Apprentice Program participant Ts'etkwu Dunstan at a recent training event.

Incorporating cultural traditions into her language learning became the key to success for Corey-Lee. She went on to learn hide-tanning and its many words for animals and their parts, as well as the variety of special tools required.

*“You can’t learn hide-tanning without learning the language,” Corey-Lee says. “There are over 100 words just for the different types of tools that are used.”*

As a Coach, Corey-Lee assists others engaged in the program on their own learning journey. When asked what she thinks about the immersion program, she says:

*“Not learning the language is a trauma we have from the residential schools. Our language mentors and apprentices are breaking that chain. My biggest fear was that I was going to sound funny. You do sound funny at first,” Corey-Lee laughs, “because it is different. But after a while, English will sound funny. It will flip on you.”*

To read the full story, please visit [fpcc.ca/stories](https://fpcc.ca/stories).

Funding for MAP is supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage.



Our Mentor-Apprentice Language Program Handbook is a practical tool for individuals who want to use the Mentor-Apprentice Program as a language learning method. Check out the handbook and other language learning resources at [fpcc.ca/resource](https://fpcc.ca/resource).

# REVIVING A SLEEPING ART FORM BRINGS ARTIST CLOSER TO HER ANCESTORS

Individual Arts Grant recipient Silixwiye Joy Hall weaves the past into the present by combining art, language and culture with her beautiful story blankets.

FPCC's Arts Program supports B.C. First Nations individuals, communities and organizations in the creation, development, production and promotion of all forms of creative expressions. For more information, please visit [fpcc.ca/arts](http://fpcc.ca/arts).

A weaving artist from Stó:lō Nation territory, currently living on Sq'ewqeyl (Skowkale) First Nation, Joy feels a powerful connection to her ancestors when weaving.

*"When I weave, I feel like I'm sitting with them," Joy explains. "They say the weavings are already created in the spirit world and the ancestors weave them through the weavers' hands so that the weavings can come alive."*

Joy's interest in the art of traditional weaving sparked in 2021 when she took a series of workshops with Coast Salish weaver Frieda George.

One of Joy's main reasons for learning to weave is to help revitalize an art form that

"went to sleep" for nearly 100 years and was nearly lost completely following European contact.

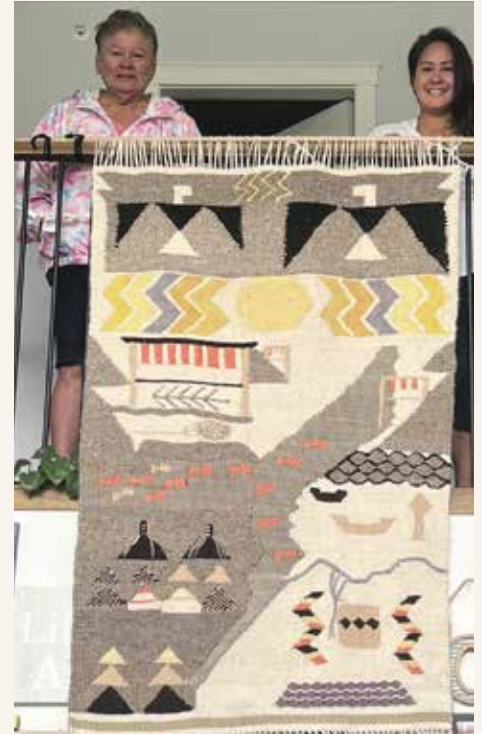
So far, Joy has created five transformation story blankets to help educate the wider public about Stó:lō culture and to promote Salish weaving.

She recently began work as a Halq'eméylem Language and Heritage Preservationist for her community and hopes her weaving will help people to "remember the ancestors."

*"Our ancestors' shxweli (spirit) still live among us today in our resources and stones and continue to teach us the lessons and remind us of our responsibility. We must remember to continue the work of our ancestors in language revitalization with a good heart and a good mind," she says.*

To read the full story, please visit [fpcc.ca/stories](http://fpcc.ca/stories).

FPCC's Individual Artists Program is supported by the Government of British Columbia through partnerships with the BC Arts Council and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.



The weaving Joy created with her mentor Frieda George depicts the Stó:lō transformation story of Lhílheqey and her dog sqwemá:y.



Joy incorporates Halq'eméylem into a weaving project.

# PUTTING THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER: REPATRIATING NAMING PROTOCOLS



Lindsey Willie viewing a bentwood storage box with cedar rope at the Canadian Museum of History.

The path to decolonization can sometimes lead in unexpected directions. Just ask Lindsey Willie, the General Manager of the Nunwakola Cultural Society, a non-profit organization that serves the Dzawada'enuxw community in Gwa'yi (Kingcome Inlet).

With funding from FPCC's Braided Knowledge Grant and the Repatriation Pilot Project, Nunwakola staff and researchers visited various museums and archives.

There, they digitized documents, photos, audio recordings

and videos relevant to Dzawada'enuxw culture.

*"We go to these places, and we get pieces of information and it's like we're collecting parts of ourselves," says Lindsey.*

One of the things that was uncovered along the way in research on Dzawada'enuxw culture was information on how the Dzawada'enuxw People used to hand down names – a complex and important part of the Dzawada'enuxw culture and Kwakwaka'waka language.

*"The Dzawada'enuxw follow as closely as possible our intricate system of naming protocols, but because of the breakdown in knowledge transfer that came as result of the Potlatch ban, residential schools and oppression by the government and church, some of the details of our system have been forgotten," Lindsey says.*

Another piece of the project is to create a short story with illustrations that can be used as a community resource for future generations. This illustrated story will narrate the life cycle of a person, showing how their names would be received throughout their lifetime.

To read the full story, please visit [fpcc.ca/stories](http://fpcc.ca/stories).

FPCC's Braided Knowledge Grant is made possible with funding from the Indigenous Knowledge Holders Fund of RSF Social Finance.

## Heritage Toolkit



The Heritage Toolkit provides information and resources for Indigenous communities, nations and organizations interested in learning about Indigenous Cultural Heritage and the types of work involved in protecting, revitalizing and celebrating it. Visit [fpcc.ca/toolkits](http://fpcc.ca/toolkits).

# FPCC COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

χ<sup>w</sup>emaḱ<sup>w</sup>u, λaʔamin, Klahoose, Qualicum and Liḡ<sup>w</sup>iḱdax<sup>w</sup> canoes waiting to be welcomed ashore to the former χ<sup>w</sup>emaḱ<sup>w</sup>u village site of ʔop on a local canoe journey.



FPCC Arts Program associate Cindy Charleyboy at the 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM).



Tsaahtis Wenstob plays with Nuu-chah-nulth language blocks at the Tla-o-qui-aht Language Keepers Society Language nest in Ucluelet, B.C.



Stellat'en First Nation Language Program Resource Coordinator, Dennis Patrick, at the 2025 AGM.

(Left to right) Patricia and Tanya Louie, Iskut First Nation, learn how to use a Digikit at an FPCC-led training session.





(Left to right) King Charles III's Coronation Medal recipients FPCC CEO Tracey Herbert, FPCC Executive Director Karen Aird and Haítzaqv Revitalization Initiatives Director Ğiwilm̓ ğa Frances Brown.



Minnie Kenoras demonstrating how to harvest birch bark, Living with the Land Foundation, Secwépemc Nation. Supported by the Braided Knowledge Grant.



FPCC Communications staff Emmy McMillan and Bobbi Charlton with Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Spencer Chandra Herbert (centre) at the 2025 First Nations Leaders' Gathering.



Arts Strengthening Grant recipient Pamela Johnson, Wuikinuxv Nation, alongside Mentor Walter George, Nakwaxda'xw Nation.



Elder Elsie Paul and Legislator Brandon Louie cut the ribbon on Tla'amin's new Cultural Centre, June 21, 2025.

**Sign up for FPCC news!**

**Join our email list to receive email updates on upcoming learning series, grant and resource launches, special projects, contests and more. Visit [fpcc.ca/signup](https://fpcc.ca/signup).**



# HANDS-ON COMMUNITY LEARNING CONNECTS ESK'ETEMC YOUTH TO THEIR CULTURE



Esk'etemc community members model regalia items made with funding from FPCC's Cultural Practices Grant. (Left to right) Rhoda Edwards, Jayonna Char, Taya Soloman, Carolyn Belleau, Valarie Johnson and Frank Robbins.

A recent FPCC Cultural Practices Grant (CPG) project in Esk'etemc, Alkali Lake, B.C., provided both youth and adults with valuable opportunities to engage and connect with their cultural heritage.

The community-based project supported Esk'etemc community members in learning how to make birch bark baskets and jingle dresses, ribbon shirts and skirts, as well as belts, used in dance, ceremonies and cultural practices.

During every lesson, community Knowledge Keepers advised the students on the proper protocol for the work.

*"All participants were taught about the sacredness of the regalia," project lead, Valarie Johnson, says. "We discussed the importance of the energy that we bring and how important it is to be praying while we're creating. The work that we*

*do while we're creating our regalia has to be very intentional."*

Valarie expresses gratitude at being able to do this project, but feels much more work needs to be done, with not a lot of time to do it.

*"We need all hands on deck and we need teachers. We need*

*community leaders and youth and all age groups, adults, everyone to step up and learn as much as they can about our culture so that we can continue to sing, dance or weave a birchbark basket or make a regalia belt. All of these things are really important to continue to learn," Valarie says.*

FPCC's Cultural Practices Grant supports B.C. First Nations in planning, carrying out and documenting community-based cultural practices and events that affirm identities, foster a sense of belonging and celebrate the roles, relationships and responsibilities within a community.

To read the full story, please visit [fpcc.ca/stories](https://fpcc.ca/stories).

The Cultural Practices Grant is funded by the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation through a Canada-British Columbia bilateral agreement as part of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.



Sky Johnson models jingles made with materials from the project. Images on this page provided by Julie Elizabeth Photography, Williams Lake First Nation.

# DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS



Sarah Jeffrey is helping to revitalize the Skwxwú7mesh language both at work and at home.

Sarah plans to use what she learned at a recent digitization training workshop offered by FPCC as part of the Language Vitality Program. Her aspiration is to help create more language learning tools for the next generation of Skwxwú7mesh speakers, including her own family.

Sarah is Executive Director of Sníchim Foundation, a non-profit foundation based in Vancouver dedicated to revitalizing the language of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) People since 2015.

*"The digitization course opportunity came up, and I had heard that cassette tapes have a certain lifespan – you just can't digitize them anymore past a certain point," she says. "I'm hoping with this training that I can have the tools and the knowledge of how to digitize cassette tapes that contain really valuable recordings of our language."*

Sarah isn't just supporting language growth while at work, she is also nurturing it at home with her kids and husband.



Sarah with her two children. Photo credit: Simayatography.

*"My husband and I are both very proficient speakers," Sarah says. "So, at home, we primarily speak Skwxwú7mesh. My children's first words were Skwxwú7mesh. As a baby, my son would come with me to work, and there would be language programming going on, so he'd be taking part in the certificate programming, unofficially, as an infant. He was acquiring the language alongside all these adult learners that were learning it too."*

Language speakers develop fluency through the use of language in all spaces: work, home and in the classroom, both in person and with support from technology.

FPCC continues to support communities with program planning and technology developments to support language fluency.

To read the full story, please visit [fpcc.ca/stories](https://fpcc.ca/stories).

The Language Vitality Program is made possible with funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage as a result of the Government of Canada's Indigenous Languages Act, and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation through the Province of British Columbia.



FirstVoices.com is a suite of free, open-source technology tools for communities to document and share their languages. Communities in B.C. and worldwide use FirstVoices to create secure, interactive online language sites by uploading and sharing audio recordings, words, phrases, songs and stories.

Learn more at [fpcc.ca/firstvoices](https://fpcc.ca/firstvoices).

# MUSIC BRINGS FAMILY TOGETHER TO SHARE HUL'Q'UMI'NUM' LANGUAGE, STORIES AND CULTURE

Xualupathut Patrick Aleck's new double album, *Life is a Journey* was produced with support from the Creation and Sharing option of the FPCC Music Grant. Family has been a big part of Patrick's musical journey, with his grandmother, Marguerit James at the centre.

*"My grandmother is my teacher," Patrick says. "She has always guided me and nurtured my gift and continues to do so. In my culture, our Elders guide us and teach us the ways. She helped me write three of these songs in our language. The knowledge passed down to me is now in these songs that will be shared with my community and the world."*

Patrick's ties to his ancestral communities run deep with connections to the Hul'q'umi'num'-speaking peoples of Stz'uminus First Nation on his father's side and Penelakut Island on his mother's side.

Patrick currently lives on Snuneymuxw First Nation territory (Nanaimo), where he brings his music to many community gatherings and cultural events.

Members of Patrick's community, his family and friends were all involved in the making of *Life is a Journey*.



(Left to right) Natalie, Patrick and Kellie.

One album includes five traditional songs featuring Patrick and his drum. In between songs, he talks about the meanings and stories behind the songs and gives descriptions of some words in Hul'q'umi'num'.

The companion album includes acoustic, blues and rock 'n' roll versions of the songs. Patrick's sisters are featured on the second album (pictured above).

*"It has been a very community-oriented project whereby a bunch of creatives just came together. It was definitely an encouragement*

*piece for my friends and friends of friends and my sisters. It was absolutely fun and some beautiful work has resulted from it," he says.*

You can stream *Life is a Journey* on Spotify.

To read the full story, please visit [fpcc.ca/stories](https://fpcc.ca/stories).

Funding for the FPCC's Music Program is supported by Creative BC and the Province of British Columbia.

Check out FPCC's Spotify Playlist!



Discover the incredible sounds of B.C. First Nations artists with this curated playlist, featuring tracks from talented musicians supported by FPCC. Visit [Spotify.com](https://Spotify.com) and search for the First Peoples' Cultural Council.

# FPCC ONLINE LEARNING SERIES SHARES INSPIRING STORIES

Our most recent Online Learning Series titled "Our Stories, Our Voices" included 10 webinars held over six weeks from October 20 – November 26, 2025.

The series showcased B.C. First Nations storytellers, visual artists, musicians, art advocates and language and cultural heritage champions.

The objective of this FPCC initiative is to create peer-learning opportunities in which those running successful projects could share what they are doing, what outcomes they are achieving and how they got there.

Each of the 10 webinars included a presentation or panel discussion for up to an hour, followed by a Q&A period.

Webinar presenters included leaders of successful B.C. First Nations arts, language and heritage projects.

*"I deeply appreciated the witnessing of lived experiences from the presenters. The series felt like a culturally safe space where the focus wasn't just on*



*technical skills, but on the emotional and spiritual journey of cultural reclamation. I loved the sessions on how art – specifically Haida formline, Sm'algayax storytelling and food sovereignty – acts as a mechanism for personal and collective healing."*  
– Participant feedback

FPCC's Online Learning Series features events that aim to inspire, inform and foster collaboration among those involved in language, arts and cultural heritage revitalization projects.

These events are free to attend and open to all who are involved in revitalization work.

Funding for the Online Learning Series was provided by the BC Arts Council and Creative BC.

Webinar recordings are available on our YouTube channel for public viewing at the end of each series: [youtube.com/@firstpeoplesculturalcouncil](https://youtube.com/@firstpeoplesculturalcouncil)



Jacob Beaton, Tsimshian, *Promoting Indigenous Cultural Heritage and Well-being through Food Sovereignty*



Sheri Marie Ptolemy, Samahquam First Nation, *How to Successfully Plan a Music Project: Everything You Need to Know!*



# HÍSW KĒ (THANK YOU) TO FPCC'S BOARD AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE



The Board and Advisory Committee are pictured here at the 2025 FPCC Annual General Meeting in Tk'emlups, B.C. The AGM brings together FPCC Board and Advisory Committee members, FPCC staff and program participants to review the year's achievements and plan for the future. We celebrate our honoured Board and Advisory Committee for their dedication and support.









**FIRST PEOPLES'  
CULTURAL FOUNDATION**

Interested in supporting First Nations Cultural Revitalization?

FPCC is supported by our key partner, the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, an Indigenous-led charity that funds many of our programs and initiatives. Every contribution goes toward programming to support B.C. First Nations language, arts and cultural heritage revitalization. To learn more, visit [fpcc.ca](http://fpcc.ca).

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The First Peoples' Cultural Council is grateful to have our home in the beautiful traditional unceded territory of the WSÁNEĆ Nation people, in the village of WJŌŁĒŁP. We have an additional satellite office at Tk'emlups, within the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people.

*We gratefully acknowledge the funders whose financial support has contributed to our success. Please visit our Funding Partners page on the website to see the full list: [fpcc.ca/funding](http://fpcc.ca/funding).*