



Indigenous Education Report March/April 2025

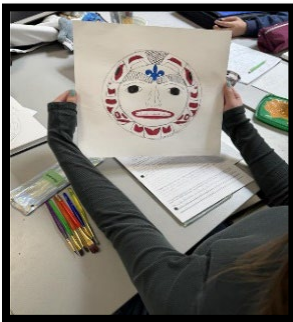
This Report highlights events and projects funded through the 1.31 Enhancement Proposals, Elders Knowledge Holder Program and the work of the ISW's.

Gratitude

Thank you to all Elders, Knowledge Holders, ISWs, teachers, and community partners who continue to guide and inspire the learners. Your efforts are helping to nurture identity, culture, and pride.

Artist Alexander Erickson Inspires Caledonia Art Students.

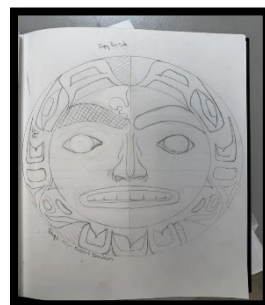
In February, Caledonia Secondary had the honour of welcoming artist **Alexander Erickson**. Over several class sessions, Alexander shared his personal journey with art and how it connects to his identity and culture.



He introduced students to the fundamental forms of Northwest Coast design, guiding them through creating crest head designs and analyzing works by master artists. His teaching, grounded in cultural tradition and personal experience, left an impression on the students.

"This was such a great gift to leave the students with." Collette Stewart

Learning Northwest Coast Design



IN THIS REPORT:

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Land-Based and Cultural Learning at Caledonia Secondary

Sustainable Harvesting Workshop

Led by Knowledge Holder **Tegan Anaka**, students learned about ethical and sustainable trapping from an Indigenous perspective.

“Some Indigenous students found their voice for the first time during this workshop. Tegan shared so much knowledge. —truly excellent.” **Stephanie Louie** Indigenous Support Worker.



Drum Making with Gerald Brown

Students explored the cultural significance of traditional drum making, supported by Indigenous Support Worker **Desiree Quock**.

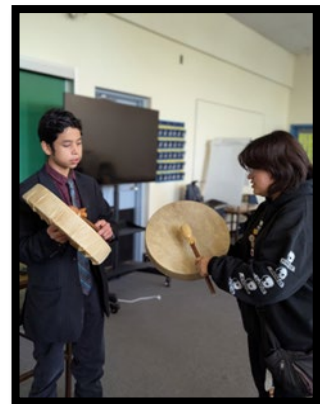


Skeena Grade 9's Join the Caledonia Drum Group



Supported by ISWs **Martha Watts**, **Stephanie Louie**, **Sheila Morgan**, and **Desiree Quock**, this new initiative supports a smoother transition to high school for Grade 9 students.

“Seeing one of the youth drum for the first time—seeing their joy and comfort afterward—was incredibly heartwarming.” **Martha Woods**



Caledonia's Indigenous Education Activities: Empowering Learners Through Cultural Connections

Cultural Week with Dr. Kevin Lewis and Family: Reconciliation in Action



From March 31 to April 3, the Kermode Friendship Society's Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health team hosted a meaningful Cultural Week, guided by Dr. Kevin Lewis and his family. Learners from Caledonia, Parkside, and Skeena had the opportunity to participate in this enriching experience. Students engaged in traditional practices including the Sweat Lodge Ceremony, Pipe Ceremony, and hide tanning. These hands-on experiences offered powerful teachings and deepened cultural understanding. The Indigenous Education team at Caledonia extends heartfelt thanks to Keith Axelson, Tracy MacMillan and the Indigenous Education Council for their generous support and commitment to reconciliation through meaningful cultural connections.



Empowering Youth: Boundaries and Knowing Your Rights Workshop



On April 3, 2025, Indigenous support staff partnered with Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health to host Sue Brown, Director of Advocacy at Justice for Girls, for an impactful workshop focused on setting boundaries and understanding one's rights. Caledonia brought a group of girls to attend the session, which proved to be both empowering and transformative. Since participating, staff have observed a noticeable shift—these students are beginning to open up and show a readiness to begin healing from past traumas. The workshop also highlighted the importance of knowing that healing looks different for everyone. Students came away with a deeper understanding that support is available in many forms, and that healing is not a linear journey.

Justice for Girls Workshop Series: Understanding Genocidal Practices in Canada

On April 2, 2025, Indigenous support staff, in collaboration with Caledonia's Law 12, Genocide Studies 11/12, and BC First Peoples 11/12 classes, welcomed Sue Brown, Director of Advocacy at Justice for Girls. This event marked the beginning of a three-part workshop series focused on exploring genocidal practices within Canada and pathways toward resolution and justice. The first session concentrated on the Indian Act, policing, and human rights. Students engaged in critical conversations about the historical and ongoing impacts of colonial systems, while also learning about the legal frameworks that continue to shape Indigenous experiences today. This powerful learning opportunity is part of a broader effort to educate and empower youth, while promoting truth, awareness, and reconciliation in our school community.



Sacred Fire Ceremony: Honouring, Healing, and Letting Go

On April 16, Caledonia's Indigenous Education team led a Sacred Fire Ceremony, creating a safe and meaningful space for learners to reflect and release. Students were invited to write letters to loved ones who are no longer in their lives, or to express feelings about situations they felt ready to move on from. These letters were then offered to the fire as part of the healing process. The day began with a traditional meal prepared by ISW **Sheila Morgan**, featuring fish, rice, and seaweed. This was followed by letter writing, and the ceremonial burning of the letters.



March and April have been rich with cultural learning and emotional growth. As we look ahead to more events in the coming months, we would like to

extend our sincere thanks to administrator Keith Axelson for his continued support. His commitment has helped us uphold the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #63-iii: *"Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect."*



Reconciliation

Natalie, Mason and Casey Russell walk through the Vatican Museum. The siblings travelled to Italy with the Caledonia Travel Club.

Note: Of the 40 students who went to Italy, 18 were indigenous. Mason has already registered for the Portugal / Spain trip for 2027.

Ruby Chan

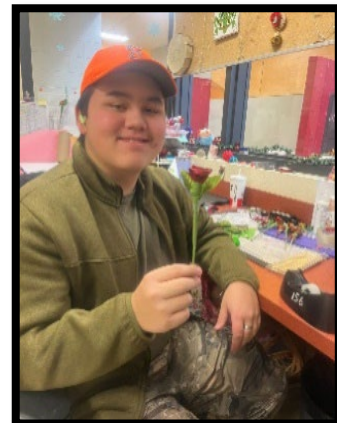
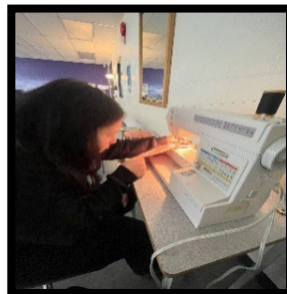
Nechako Elementary: Fried Bread & Young Entrepreneur Day

ISW **Kelsy Carlow** supports students in hands-on learning and cultural sharing through food preparation and entrepreneurial skills.



Skeena Middle School: Sewing & Cedar Roses

ISW's **Martha Watts** and **Brandi Davis** taught students how to sew scrunchies and craft cedar roses—an engaging way to build skills and cultural connection.



Cassie Hall Drum Group Sessions

Supported by **Kendra LeBlond**, ISWs **Krystal Conway**, and **Drieanne Porter**.

“An incredible opportunity that students eagerly look forward to.

*Even students with behavioral challenges are thriving in these sessions.” **Kendra LeBlond***



Kitwanga Elementary Tour to the Hazelton's/Upper Skeena Recreation Centre/Library/Historic Sternwheeler

On behalf of everyone at Kitwanga Elementary School, I just wanted to extend a heartfelt thank you! The students had an incredible time touring the recreation center, seeing the Michelle Stoney murals, and experiencing skating—many for the very first time. In fact, it was the first time skating for thirty of the students, and they did an amazing job! They fell, got back up, and kept trying with huge smiles on their faces.

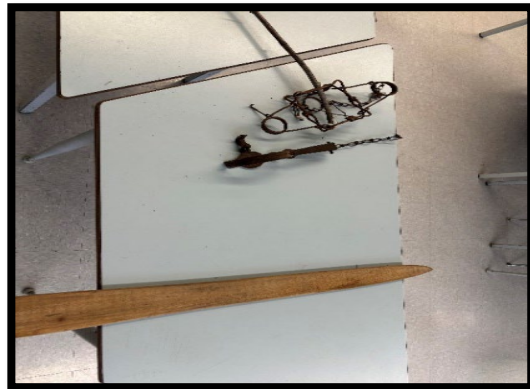
They were also really intrigued by the Hands of History signs; we learned about the local history and culture. Many of them have driven past these signs countless times but have never stopped to read or learn more about them. They sparked curiosity and great conversations.

We are so grateful for your support and for offering the students such a wonderful and memorable opportunity. **Kassia Nameth**



Hazelton Secondary School – Knowledge Holder Jordan Muldoe

Jordan Muldoe led sessions in traditional land-based practices such as **trapping and hunting**, sharing cultural knowledge and community teachings.



Ms. Carol Bob's Grade 8 class

Integrated drum making into the math curriculum, supported by Knowledge Holder **Dr. Jane Smith**.



Hazelton Secondary School Back to the Land Program

"Back to the Land" Program – March Highlights

I would like to take a moment to highlight the incredible work carried out this month through our team's "Back to the Land" program.

A special thank you to **Steph Muldoe, Ryan Samson, Zach Rychlo, Brianna Wright, Jordan Muldoe, Patience Muldoe**, and the **Inter-Tribal Education Committee** for their invaluable guidance and support in delivering this month's programming.

"We are proud of the meaningful learning taking place and the confidence, resilience, and cultural connection being nurtured through this program." **Taylor Murell**



Throughout the latest trips, learners engaged in hands-on, land-based learning and demonstrated growing proficiency in a wide range of cultural and survival skills, including:

- Cedar gathering
- Trapping
- GPS navigation
- Territory boundary knowledge
- Land use permission protocols
- Survival techniques
- Fire building (individual and collaborative)
- Map reading
- Terrain analysis
- Snowshoeing
- Environmental stewardship
- Plant identification
- Risk assessment
- Cultural awareness
- Cultural and outdoor trip planning
- Emergency preparedness
- Shelter construction (individual and group)
- Cooking and team cooking skills
- Circle talks focused on gratitude, reflection, and mutual support



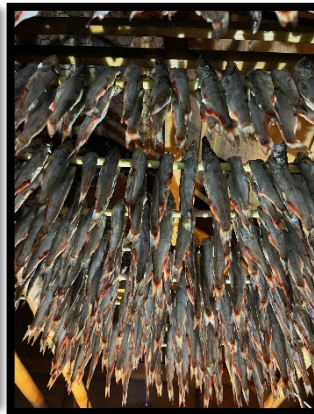
Thornhill Primary Grade 3 – K5T Field Trip

The Grade 3 students of Thornhill Primary, along with their teachers and IESW **Liz Dowse**, had the incredible opportunity to participate in hands-on learning with members of Kitselas Five Tier (K5T).

At Thornhill Primary, all students learn about the Ts'msyen Seasonal Rounds. March is **Ha'lilaxsixwah** — the time of the eulachon. In class, students explore harvesting and preservation practices through stories, texts, and videos. Their field trip to **Kulspai** brought these lessons to life.

During the visit, students had the chance to work directly with the fish. They were shown how to string eulachon by sliding one fish's head through the gill of another and then opening the gill of the second to "lock" them together. They were fascinated by the smokehouse filled with hanging fish and learned how it is heated. Students also explored the air-drying area and discovered the cultural significance of positioning the fish heads upriver — a sign of respect for the eulachon's journey.

Thornhill Primary extends heartfelt thanks to K5T for sharing their knowledge and creating such a meaningful experience. Most importantly, the students had an amazing time!



We are pleased to announce that Jenine Klein has been hired for the temporary Indigenous Language and Culture Teacher position.



Jeninehl way, Nisga'a n̓iy. Gingolx wil w̓itgwiy, ganhl Gisk'aast n̓iy.

My name is Jenine Klein. I am Nisga'a from Gingolx (Kincolith), and I belong to the Killer Whale clan.

A warm welcome to Jenine, she brings a wealth of knowledge and a strong commitment to Indigenous education. We look forward to the contributions she will make in supporting language revitalization and cultural learning within the primary and elementary schools.

Jenine began her journey with Coast Mountains School District in 2011 as an Educational Assistant. While working at Thornhill Primary, she supported the late Phyllis Bolton, the Language Coach at the time. Jenine fondly shared ***“I treasured my time with Phyllis, watching her eyes light up when students remembered words in Sm'alg̓ax . That year sparked my interest in language revitalization”.***

Inspired by Phyllis's passion and the students' enthusiasm for learning Sm'alg̓ax, she went on to enroll in the First Peoples' Cultural Council's Mentor-Apprenticeship Program, studying Nisga'a with Sim'oogit Naaws (Ron Nyce). After three years of dedicated learning, she completed the program in 2023.

Today, Jenine serves as the Culture and Language Teacher for the district. She is proud to continue the work of preserving and teaching Sm'alg̓ax and looks forward to working alongside students and staff to keep the language thriving in our schools and communities.

Culture and Language Lessons

My name is Jenine Klein, and Luu-aamhl goodiy (I'm happy) be teaching Culture and Language again at CMSD 82. I learned to speak with Sim'oogit Naaws Sm'algyax the Ts'msyen. Our focus will be introducing the basics in Primary and Elementary students.

Sm'algyax

Sm = important algyax = talk:speak

There are three dialects in Northwest BC.

Ts'msyen Nisga'a Gitsenimx

Language Topics

- numbers
- Animals
- greetings
- colours
- Seasons
- weather

I have attached the link for First Voices Sm'algyax below
<https://www.firstvoices.com/smalgyax>

Any questions about scheduling or programing please email me
jenineklein@cmsd.bc.ca

Elder/Knowledge Holder Role Model Program
*Reviewed and Approved by the Inter-Tribal Education Committee
 & Indigenous Education Department*

School	Project	Knowledge Keeper/Elder
Caledonia Secondary	• Firekeeper Training • Sweat lodge	• Sam Martin
Cassie Hall Elementary	• Drum and Dance (monthly) • Cedar Basket Weaving	• Vivian Carlick, • Chris Peal • Roxanne Woods • Jenine Klein • Julie Bradford
Hazelton Secondary	• Land Knowledge Plants and Medicine	• Ross McRae
New Hazelton Elementary	• Land based learning about frogs, learn about the Frog clan, crests, cultural history, and stories.	• Kitty Mowatt
Kildala Elementary	• On the Land Plant Identification	• Dustin Gaucher
Thornhill Primary	• Oral Storytelling	• Shalane Pauls

1.31 Indigenous Targeted Funded Projects – March/April 2025 <i>Reviewed and Approved by the Inter-Tribal Education Committee & Indigenous Education Department</i>	
Caledonia Secondary School:	
•	Ceremony Week with Kermode Friendship Centre
Hazelton Secondary School:	
•	Field Trip to Nisga'a Territory
•	Making of Crests for School
•	Indigenous Art Class
•	Sparkle Project/Personal Hygiene
•	Outdoor Education/Land Knowledge Plants and Medicine
•	Cottonwood Balm Salve Project
New Hazelton Elementary School:	
•	Traditional Harvest and Canning Practices
Cassie Hall:	
•	Herring Eggs for Seasonal Rounds teachings
Kitimat City High:	
•	Nation2Nation Women's Gathering