

Through Our Eyes[®]

Youth Stories & Photos from the Nuu-chah-nulth Territory

Wickaninnish Community School & Ucluelet Secondary School
Opitsaht, Ty-Histanis & Esowista Community Youth



Photo by Brenda Thomas

Through Our Eyes®

Through Our Eyes® place-based photovoice project, focuses on the voices and images of the young people who live in the Tla-o-qui-aht Territory. The project encourages youth to use photography and writing as a means to express and empower themselves by sharing “what is important to them and/or their community”.

From April to July 2022 Christine Germano, assisted by Ivy Cargill-Martin, mentored youth to write stories and compose images using professional photography equipment. The intent was to utilize the media in a positive way and to give the community an opportunity to celebrate the students’ creative achievements so they may continue to seek similar artistic opportunities throughout their lives.

The final photos and stories by the youth were exhibited at the Shore Pier, during the Carving on the Edge Festival, September 8th to 13th 2022. In November 2022 the exhibit was shown at the Wickaninnish Community School.

Thank You

The stunning results of this project are due to the amazing collaboration and support from the Wickaninnish Community School, Ucluelet Secondary School, and the communities of Opitsaht, Ty-Histanis and Esowista. A huge Thanks goes to: Aaron Redican, Miranda McIver, Dani Stone, Rebecca Tuck, Grace George, Deb Masso, Kourtney Yeske, Monique Copeland, Drew Ryan, Sheena Charleson and the wonderful staff at both schools.

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Wickaninnish Community School
Aaron Redican's Class
Photo by Violet Penny



Skateboarding

Skateboarding is important to me. It is the thing that makes me happy. It is fun and it can be for anyone. You can have so much fun because you can ride on ramps and there are so much good skateboarders in Tofino. They do cool tricks, and it is so cool but sometimes it can be raining or snowing. And sometimes you cannot go skateboarding and it can be boring, the only things you can do is go on your phone. But you can go outside, and you can still have fun. I love it cause I can have lots of fun. I have more fun when I skateboard, I can have so much fun. I've got tired fast, and my first trick was an Ollie. But it is the hardest trick in all of history, and I learned it when I was 9. It is hard to learn it makes me feel good a lot.

Ali Swan



Quinn Hughes Hockey Stick

When I was younger, I used to play ice hockey but, I don't play too much anymore. I watch it with my dad though. Once me and my dad went to a Canucks game in Vancouver. Before I went to the game I went to their practice at Rogers Arena. My dad said he wanted a picture of me, so I put my back against the boards. I was wearing my Canucks jersey that has "Hughes" written at the back. He is my favourite hockey player. Quinn saw my jersey and went to the bench to get me a hockey stick. The stick says his name on it. That stick is very important to me, it reminds me of that one time I went to the hockey game and watch the Canucks beat the L.A kings. That stick makes me play better. :)

Avery Desilets



Trees

Trees are strong because they can generate oxygen for the Earth. Trees are almost like wolfs they come in huge packs, and if one dies another comes back on top of the dead one and that is called a nurse tree. Trees are cool because they are good to sit beside to get away from reality. You can also hear the thoughts running through your head. Sometimes when I climb a tree it makes me feel like I am powerful because I am on top of the world.

Kingston Bruno



Grampa Glenn

My grandpa Glenn was an amazing person that I still hold dear to my heart, but he sadly passed away September 22nd, 2020. Before my mom was born, he spent a year on a remote island in the middle of a lake in Ontario. He stayed inside of a cabin on the small island. There he spent his time fishing, but at some point, an old angry bear with rotting teeth was breaking into the other cabins and trying to eat their garbage. But it couldn't eat because most of its teeth were gone. It was suffering and starving, and my grandpa could see that, so he brought his gun out and shot the bear to put it out of its misery. My grandpa made necklaces out of the teeth and claws for his future children and grandchildren. From this day on, me, my mom, my uncle and my cousins still wear our necklaces. I know that he is still watching over me now and I'm proud to be his granddaughter.

Lily Mackenzie



Biodiversity

When I think about biodiversity, I think about all the animals that depend on us. I really think about the biodiversity of Tofino. Tofino's biodiversity did thrive but now climate change is changing the biodiversity of Tofino because the heat is rising, and animals are dying. Also, the biodiversity is playing a key role in keeping climate change under control. I love to go out in the water and run around in the woods but now I am scared because if we don't get this under control in 20 years Tofino is going to have less biodiversity. I don't want there to be no more trees because when I climb up the tree my vision changes and I feel like a squirrel climbing around in a tree jumping from branch to branch. I have no fear of falling it's like I'm on the ground. I always make a jump and never miss a jump. Most important I always have fun. These are the reasons I love biodiversity.

Kai Grigg



My Cats

My cat is my favored pet. Her name is clover. When I am sad, she always cheers me up. 6 months ago, she had four kittens. We kept two Sider and Crimson. Clover will not scratch or bite. Clover is black with yellow eyes her chubby cheeks make her even more cute. Her favorite toy is a taco she takes it to the middle of the stairs and starts calling her kittens and they never come. Her meows are the cutest thing in the world. I love her so much. I found her at a gas station. When I looked into her eyes, I knew she loved me. I don't know her birthday, but it is in October. Close to Halloween. I am so happy she came into my life.

Violet Penny



Baseball

I play baseball outside with Devon, Darien, and Cedrick. I got two home runs 5 or 7 days ago. We play at his blue house. We use a tennis racket for first base. The tennis racket is red and blue. We use a stick for third base. We have a black mat for home plate. The blue house is Devens's house which is very far down the hill. Darien hits the baseball very far. Sometimes I'm the batter, but we switch teams a lot. I like playing baseball because it's fun and we do it when we get bored. I am hoping that one day I'll be able to hit it farther.

John Little



My Dog

My Dog is the best dog ever, but he got taken. My dog is as strong as a knight in shining armor. I trained him to roll, spin and sit down. I played fetch and ran with him. I named my dog Sparky. He used to be my best friend, and I slept with him. Me and Sparky used to play basketball and he got the ball from me, and I took the ball back and he got mad. Then I gave the ball back to him, and he got happy. It was his Birthday when he got taken that day. I was sad.

Jordan Francis



My Dog Stella

My dogs name Stella. When my dog was younger my dad took care of her. My Dad was younger when he first got stella. My dog Stella has a cut or scratch near her tail, and it made me sad but stella did not care much, she is silly most of the time and she is always happy. She has deep brown eyes, and she has black and white fur. Stella fears my cat, Ike. Stella sits in her chair to leave my cat alone, but my cat is a boy, but he like to tease her. Ike hides too, I do not know why but ok to me it looks like a war to me, when they get jealous, and when they try to get the most attention and my cat won the war. He hides a bit but back to my dog, she is a beautiful dog to me, I love her so much and she is a tiny dog but not super Tiny, but I really miss her so much since she ran away. It made me sad she has not come back yet. Stella was my best dog in the world. I hope she comes back soon I am hoping today or soon I hope my dog is not dead or anything bad has happen to her. I think she will be ok or still to be alive. I miss my dog.

Lillian Yallup



Warriors

Something important to my community is my dad's work. What my dad does is he takes First Nations youth out into the wilderness away from electronics to reconnect with nature and his work is called the Warriors. My dad's name is Ricardo, and he started the Warriors because he saw that people were getting addicted to electronics and not knowing all the amazing things that nature has to offer. He also started Warriors so kids could embrace all of nature. Why I think this is cool is because other people and I get to learn all about nature and how to survive. My dad's work is important to me because I get to get away from all civilization and it's very calming for me to sit down in the forest and recharge my battery and take a break from all devices. Plus, I get to go to cool places that I have never even seen or heard of. One of the coolest places I have been to is called Ookmin or Canary Bay. Why I like this place is because it's a little bay with good rock jumping and has a big river that you can take a boat up. The warriors also spent lots of their summer building a cabin there. And those are the reasons that my dad's work is important to me and my community.

Rhys Manmohan



My Dogs

I love my dogs because they're soft, goofy, and very protective. They are scary when I run from them, most of the time they will tackle me. When they were baby's, they used to run around all the time. They will hit their heads together sometimes if they fight. One of their names is Spike but I changed it to Bunny, and that other dogs name is Sasha, but I changed it to Sushi. Sushi is so fast, Bunny is so strong. They are both boxer dogs and they are brown and black. Their eyes are hazel. They are five years old and they are smart, loving, and smelly sometimes. I had a dog before them, his name was Harley. He was three when I was three. He was also big. He got scratched on his ears by a cougar once and he was super brave and strong. My dogs are feisty beasts.

Mason Mallette



Basketball

I love basketball. used to play the same sport as me. I look forward to getting better at basketball in the future. I think of basketball, I think of all the talented players. Kobe Bryant was my favorite player. He inspired me to play basketball when I was seven years old. I love that I can always learn new moves. I love playing one-on-one with my friends and family. I go to basketball on Tuesdays and Thursdays When annoying kids, including me, broke it by jumping on the stand and cracking the back board. Also, my grandpa used to play basketball. It means a lot that my grandpa for one and a half hours. I used to have a basketball hoop in my neighborhood.

Manoa Henderson



My Dog Griffin

I loved him so much. He was always there for me, and I always gave him extra treats. One of the best memories I had with Griffin is in the winter. My dad put a white puffy jacket on Griffin. He and I ran outside and started tunneling in the snow. No one could find him because he had buried his paws, face, and back legs in the snow. If someone went near him without knowing he was there, he would run away and jump somewhere else in the snow. Sometimes you could see the glimmer of the moon lite in his eye. I loved him so much and he was so happy.

Leviticus Duncan



Secret Beach

When I am angry at my family, sad, or pondering life as we know it, I love to visit secret beach. It has lovely scenery, and perfect smooth flat rocks for skipping. This reminds me of when I got my personal record of 7 skips in a row. My dad was teaching me how to skip rocks, I was trying so hard but couldn't get one rock to skip, and in a fit of rage I threw a rock as hard as I could at the water, resulting in 7 skips. I have no idea how that happened, but I was so excited I felt like I was going to explode. The way to get to secret beach is to go down the Tonquin trail it's just past 3rd beach you'll see a small opening in the bushes to your right, if you go into the opening you will have to go down a narrow and short passageway it may take a bit of climbing but you will end up at the beach, I recommend going at low tide like any other beach. Secret beach also has Big huge boulders for climbing, I have been climbing rocks for 8 years... I am 11 years old and turning 12 this year, you can do the math. I also love listening to the waves as I am thinking. I find waves are the most calming sound I could listen to. And yes, reader by the time you finish reading this, Secret Beach will be called, "not so Secret Beach." Because you'll probably want to visit this beach and I don't blame you, because secret beach is our beach now.



The Beach

It's calming to be at the beach. The beach is amazing only when my friends are there with me. Tonquin beach is a good beach to go with your family and friends. The walk to Tonquin beach is nice and the rocks on the beach are fun to jump on, build with or sit and relax on. There is a tidepool in the summer that fish die in and that scares me a lot. Tidepools are made from waves at hightide. Sand fleas hurt so much when they bite your legs. But I still love the beach a lot, it's a good place to go and calm down and get away from stress. I recommend you all get away to the beach sometime.

Jackson Hubert



Spike

Spike is the most important to me because he was my first cat, and the one I loved the most. One day me and Spike were looking out the bathroom window and we saw a mouse playing around in the grass. Later, I went outside with Spike, and after 20 minutes they were chasing each other around. I tried to intervene and save the mouse. I had the broom in between them, and they were staring at each other. So I put Spike inside. Then the mouse went into the firewood by the house, and an hour later it came back out in the grass. I went out with some cheese, and I fed him and after a couple of minutes I started to pet the mouse. When I came in the house my mom was scared that I was going to get rabies, so she made me wash my hands really well. None of knew Spike was going to die. My mom took him to the vet in Port. But when she picked me up from school, I thought he was going to be in the car. That's when my mom said he died. I loved spike so much I love him to the moon and back even if he's gone.

Isabella Faire



Eagles

I found an eagle's nest and it was pretty cool. It was amazing because the eagle was there in his nest. I am not sure if it was a boy or a girl. I like eagles because they fly and I wish I could ride one. I would fly high in the sky and fly to different countries. I think I might look around and maybe visit Japan. And most of all I like how eagle eyes look and their yellow beaks. I have been trying to draw a realistic eagle from photos. I think eagles are special, I think they are tough, strong and never give up.

Natalia Martin



Surfing

Tofino has some of the worst surf in the world. It's not the best but it is cool that we have surf. The water is very cold. My dad has lived in Tofino his whole life. He grew up on South Chesterman's beach. He is also a professional surfer. My dad's name is Raph Bruhwiler. He held the Olympic torch and I thought that was cool. My dad taught me how to surf, I also thought that was cool because he loves to surf. It is his favorite thing to do. I like surfing with my dad. The first time I went surfing I was really scared but when I started surfing more I lost my fear of big waves. I don't surf a ton with my dad but when I do I have lots of fun. I like to surf at North Chesterman's and Landos lefts at Cox Bay. My dad likes to surf at Cox Bay. My brother and sister love to surf with my dad, so does my mom. I like to surf in Tofino with my family because they can help me and tell me what I'm doing right and wrong That is why I like to surf in Tofino.

Dusty Bruhwiler

Photo by Christine Germano



First Time Fishing

In the morning me and my uncle Aaron and my little brother Sheldon walked down to the dock to go fishing. Me and Sheldon started fighting over who had to carry the fishing rod. When we got down to the dock my uncle Aaron leaned down to grab a tubeworm for bait to catch some fish. He asked who wanted to go first. A few moments later I said “me.” He said “ok.” I was holding the rod for a few minutes when I felt a pull from the rod. I asked for help and Sheldon came to help pull the rod. The fish we pulled out was actually big. Sheldon was amazed by the fish we caught. After that we caught a few more fish and we went home. When we put the fish in a bowl of salt water Sheldon was freaking out, well he was happy. I was quite glad as well.

Taylor Frank



My Grandparents Dan and Barb

My grandparents are so important to me because I go over to their house every day after school. One day when I was like four my grandpa made a sand bridge over the rocks because every time, I went over to their house I wasn't wearing shoes, so he made a sand bridge. My grandpa is named Dan his job was a pilot in the military. He started at about 19 years old and retired at 46 years old. My grandma is named Barb, she never had a job, but she was a full time, mom and you've got to give her credit for that. But now she works for Tla-o-qui-aht first nation. My grandparents live right behind our house, and I love it. They are awesome because, I mean, they made my dad. My dad has two siblings Daniel, and Andrew I can't really see my uncle Andrew because he passed away my dad always says he would have loved to see us, but life is life. I just love my grandparents.

Tamuuk Masso



Wickaninnish Community School
Miranda McIver's Class

Photo by Dia Arthur



Friends

My friends are one of the most important things to me and my everyday life. Whenever I am with my friends, we end up making so many memories. Whenever I am feeling down or upset my friends always got my back and are there for me when I need them. I love being around my friends because they always treat me with kindness and love. All my friends are so, so fun to hang out with. They are all so wonderful and so important to me. And so, I dedicate this to all of my very great friends.

Selah Braun



The Ocean

The ocean is a free and safe place to be. Floating there in the salty ocean, swinging back and forth in the waves, hearing the shore birds sing in the wind, the ocean is my favourite place to be. If I sit there on the beach long enough, I can see all the memories of my family in the clear water. On the beach my dog running through the water the ocean holds all the memories. If I listen, I hear the sea creatures at the bottom swimming all around, the ocean waves hitting the shore, splashing on the rocks. I feel the sea mist hit my face, the sparkle on the ocean from the sun warms the water. I stand and listen to all the things around in the ocean and on the beach. The ocean is my favourite place to be.

Gemma Austin



The Victory Song

Hi guys, today I am going to talk about culture. My fav culture song is the victory song. I am pretty sure the victory song is like to thank everyone for coming for the Potluck. And I have been singing cultural songs since I was like two, so I've been singing for like 11 years. And thank u to my late Papa Bj for getting me into culture and my Dad. I probably would not be too much into culture without em. And I'd like to thank my Papa Randy for having culture every Sunday and Wednesday. And now we have culture every Wednesday at school during lunch with Daniel and a bit after to teach people two of our songs. But the Potlatch that is coming up is going to be kind of hard for me because it's going to be the first one without him. It's going to be hard to because at the end of every Potlatch we sing the victory song together.

Tony Curley



Basketball

I love basketball for many different reasons these are just a few. The sport takes lots of hard work and great skill. You don't just need one you need a variety of skills. Some like dribbling, shooting, athleticism and defence. The sport is very entertaining to watch, because there is big shots going down and huge dunks. There are many leagues that you can see it like WNBA, NBA, G league, college and many more. It is very fun just playing around with your friends doing fun games, pushing each other making ourselves better. I love basketball for the dribbling, shooting, watching and playing with friends. That is why I love basketball.

Cole Steven



Hockey

Hockey is an insanely fun sport to play and enjoy, it's fun to play with lots of friends and it clears your mind when you play, I feel like and loosens it. It is a long drive to play but honestly, it's worth it to play 1-2 hours of hockey with about 4 hours of driving to Port Alberni and back and sometimes farther for games. You also learn some skills and improve your hand-eye coordination and with all the skating and shooting builds your muscles and makes you more fit. My favourite NHL team is the Vancouver Canucks and my favourite player on the Canucks is Quinn Hughes.

Jasper Windle



Noah Grigg

Hockey, soccer and nerf guns make two-thirds of Noah Grigg my brother. Hockey is a game changer for Noah we play mini sticks in the living room all the time. We watch the Toronto Maple Leaf's play on TV. Whenever we go to Revelstoke, we always play hockey on the ice rink. We even play hockey on the street if there was not hockey Noah would be so bored. Soccer plays a role in keeping Noah alive. We often go to the soccer field and play soccer. We play soccer in our living room with a mini ball and net. We even watch soccer on TV, it always cheers him up . When Noah got a nerf gun for Christmas it was all downhill from there. When he gets angry at his sisters he shoots them with his nerf gun. Noah and I share nerf guns, plus he loves it so much. Noah is one of the kindest guys I know. He is one of my biggest fans when it comes to sports. Even though we have so much fun together, we also get into fights, which can end in a scream battle which he likes because he always wins. As he is my only brother I take care of him, help him, and teach him important stuff. My brother loves me, and I love my brother.

Kai Grigg



My Favourite Place

Hi, my name is Matej, and today I'm going to talk about my favourite place and that is the forest at my house. Why? Well, because someone special made it, it was my Mom and Dad who build that area and it's nice because in a summer morning every day me and my dog will sit in the chair and relax. We would also think about what we should do. I would also wait outside for my friends to come. We would also eat on the chair whether if it's breakfast, lunch or even dinner. I would give my dog a treat while I eat toast. But it is a nice area in summertime. I listen to the birds chirping, and I also look at the gorgeous blue sky, and smell the fresh summer air. If my dog and I are too warm in the chair, I would go and grab ice cream for myself and grab my dogs water bowl and a treat and that would cool ourselves down a lot. I would also look at the clouds and the trees cause their tempting to look at. That's why the chair is my favourite place.

Matej Gluhovic



The Forest

I am going to tell you about the forest around me. In Tofino we are mostly surrounded by a big rainforest. The forest is beautiful with tons of interesting things such as lots of different species of animals, many different types of plants and lots more. One of the most important parts of all forests are the trees. They look so magnificent because of their size and for me, the branches. The trees help keep the air fresh and clean and that is very very important. The animals in the forest here are amazing, we have black bears, orcas, wolves, eagles, ravens and so much more. The animals all help the forest in different ways like when a bear finishes a salmon the remains are left for other little animals, and it also helps plants grow. There are so many plants in the rainforest around us. Each plant looks different from one another. Some plants can grow berries, Fruits and vegetables. Plants also feed animals who eat plants or herbivores. Those are some reasons why the forest is so important.

Rhys Manmohan



Tofino

Forest, trees, beaches, ocean, water, people and view. These are just a few things that make Tofino important to me. Tofino truly would not be the same without the tall broad trees, the kind generous people and the navy blue waters that surround us. Personally, when I think about Tofino, I think about the several tall broad dark cedar trees that are scattered around our community's rain forest. They stand high and proud and they are one of the many things that represent our town. Tofino will always be one of the most important things to me. It is a place that has helped me to learn and grow. Along with so many memories that I will hold close for many years to come.

Dia Arthur



Swimming

I love swimming so much! Most of the time it is very cold. Once it was 8 degrees! But that is all part of the experience of swimming in the ocean. I love swimming but I love doing it even more with my neighbours. They make it so fun. Like sometimes after Serena, Gemma and I are done swimming, we get cookies! It is like a reward. Swimming in freezing water is also incredibly good for the body. We do not do it often because it is so cold. Most of the time I can only go up to my shoulders and we only go in with bathing suits no wetsuits so we can only stay in for so long. But overall, it is so fun. It is one of the many things in Tofino that are important to me. I love swimming.

Mila Besson



The Ocean

The ocean is big. Really big. In Tofino we have ocean all around us. The ocean is full of beautiful wildlife including whales and fish. The ocean is one of my favourite places to go because there are big waves. Sometimes I surf and sometimes I just sit and watch the waves. The ocean is so big and beautiful and sometimes we take it for granted. The ocean will not always be big and beautiful if we don't help take care of it. My favourite ocean animal is salmon because I eat them a lot and because they are very fascinating. The ocean is very special to me because it is a sort of place where you can go to escape all the action. That is why I love the ocean.

Salvador Virtue



My Grandpa Tree

My Grandpa Tree is a very nice person. My Grandpa Tree is my Dad's Dad, and he has lots of grandchildren. He likes to walk all around where he knows. He also picks up cans for money and to take care of nature. I wonder if he gets lots of money for those cans.

Devon Ryan



Ty-histanis Park

The park at Ty-histanis is very fun. I would ask my friends to play outside. They would play out with me. If there are a lot of people at the park, we play manhunt. If there are not enough people, we just play tag or something. If people don't wanna play tag then we'll go home.

Devon Ryan



Long Beach

My favourite place is Long Beach, the only reason is because I can go there when I need space. It's also just up the hill from the court so it's always nice to go for a walk after playing basketball. I could be listening to the sound of the waves and normally it's just a nice place to walk, it's just an open place kind of for anyone. Well, it is a very open place probably because its long.

Going there with family or friends is pretty nice too and just talking about stuff or just sitting there. During the summer, especially when it's hot, it's really cool to go swimming there, or even just to sit there during summer is nice. Going for jogs there is really nice, and jogging with your feet in the water just feels nice when you rolled your ankle it feels really nice. It is a good place to surf sometimes when there are nice waves though. But Long Beach is a very pretty place. It's also just home basically.

Brielle Tom



Opitsaht

I live in Opitsaht which is across the water from Tofino. We must take a boat across the water to go to school and to go to town for shopping. I like Opitsaht because there is a lot of culture in our community and some family. One of my favourite things to do in Opitsaht is walking up the hill to the water plant. If you keep going you will get to the lake where there is a dock. And if you keep walking you will find small buildings. If you keep walking, there is a trail to Lonecone where there's a flat spot to take cool picture. One thing is we have cows that wander all over our village and to the beach where they eat the seaweed. One of the best things is second beach which you can only get to at low tide. One time when my mom, sister and Gilbert were walking there we saw big footprints that looked like Sasquatch was there. What makes Opitsaht is an Island surrounded by water.

Moses Thomas



Skiing

I love the way snow flows under my skis and the way powder blows in my face when I plow through it. Hi, my name is Nash, and I am writing about the beautiful sport, skiing. During 2021 I went up to Mt. Washington every weekend to go skiing with my family. Me, my dad, and my brother all ski. I chose skiing over snowboarding because you can go up hill and you don't have to take off and put on bindings at the top and bottom of hills. My favourite type of skiing is downhill in the powder. I would love to try helicopter skiing which is when the helicopter drops you at the top of any skiable mountain and you ski all the way down while hitting cliffs in never touched before powder. If you ever want to go skiing on the Island I recommend going to Mt. Washington, it has restaurants, a campground, and many parking lots at different chair lifts. Thanks for reading my writing, I hope I see you up at the mountain someday.

Nash Crosbie



Mount Washington

If you are into skiing, then Mount Washington is the place to go. I love Mount Washington for three simple reasons. One its impressive, two there lots of runs, and three all my friends go there. Let us start with number one, it is awesome. Mount Washington gets lots of snow/powder it is the ultimate skier's dream. If you like powder, then this is your place. Moving on to the second idea, lots of runs. Mount Washington has almost 110 runs! That is a lot of skiing terrain. Idea number three, lots of my friends go there. Most of my friends ski so I run into one to two them a day. Sometimes I ski with them, sometimes I don't, either way I have fun. Mount Washington is like my third home, and I love skiing there, so I think you will too.

Kai Grigg



Ucluelet Secondary School
Monique Copeland's Class
Supported by Sheena Charleson, Indigenous Support Worker
Photo by Sienna David

Guitar

When I was first asked the question “what are you passionate about?” my mind immediately darted to the guitar. Whenever I’m asked a question revolving around ᐱuušuuqᐱ (passion), my answer will always be guitar; ᐱuušuuqᐱ (passion) and favoritism, favoritism and coping mechanisms, just anything positive. I can’t stress how cliché it sounds, but there’s something about it that boosts my mood incredibly, pure quintessence. I was asked to work on a plan of action whenever I felt that my sadness became overwhelming, and from that day on it has always been my kučak (instrument). I play it whenever the negativity hits and it has become my favourite addiction. I don’t need to think about it anymore: I’m sad? Guitar. Depressed? Guitar. Rough day? Guitar, guitar, guitar. Always guitar. It helps my days feel complete.

It’s not like you must be necessarily ᓃacik ‘good’ either. My biggest idols have been the ones to take simple melodies and twist it into something vastly creative. An easy example is Kurt Cobain, he admitted himself that he wasn’t the best in the world when it came down to being a guitarist, but still had the ability to make beautiful nuutnuuk (songs) out of easy riffs. The best songs written by him could be 4 easy open chords, played in such a way that allowed the nuuk (song) to let itself into your head. Simple, but full of creativity. Even though anyone who tried could pick up a guitar and play it, only he could radiate the kind of energy that his songs had. That’s what gives me so much ᐱaaᐱuupa (inspiration), it’s all originality, creativity, there isn’t any wrong with guitar. Even music theory is only a guide to what you can do, there’s no rules to guitar and I love that.

I’ve been playing since I was super little, I think around 8 was when my ᐱuwiiqsu (father) came up with my first guitar, an acoustic. For my 12th birthday he noticed I started showing a bigger fancy for music and took me to pick out my first electric guitar— an Epiphone Les Paul, a guitar model that’s known to be great for punk beginners. Around a year after that when I learned the basics, he took me to buy a used Godin Standard SD model which is the one I’ve been playing lately. I can’t get enough of it.

My ᐱuwiiqsu (dad) was the one to introduce me to the guitar. He’s been playing for roughly 30 years and is incredible. The reason I’ve been labeled self-taught instead of paying for lessons is because he is the one to teach me already. He’s my own teacher—dad teacher. He shows me new things, but only once to ensure that I’m listening. If I forget or wasn’t listening then I have to figure it out myself, otherwise he’ll sigh and say, “I taught you this just yesterday”. He’s been the one to inspire all my musical taste and interest to be what it is today. He’s introduced me to bands, taught me about their album history, and more. Everything around this interest of mine has rooted in him.

Kailea Sked

My Grandad Rodrick Stanley Palm

My name is Hanna Grimm I am 12 years old and I have lived in Tofino BC my whole life. I have chosen to write about my grandad Rodrick Stanley Palm, he was born in Trail BC on April 19 1942. At the young age of 11 his beloved mother Frieda had passed away. After, he tried to run away from home many of times and also after being in trouble with the law at such a young age, he remembered his passion of diving from the young age of 8 years old, to become a diver and old ship wreck locater, at 19 after walking the break water in Victoria on his lunch breaks he was curious of what was beneath the surface of the ocean. He then went and bought all the equipment he had needed to teach him self how to dive. His first diving experience was not pleasant and he had barley survived “the pain in his ears was awful”. The silent world by Jaques Cousteau was his catalyst to understand the under world. That made him get the idea to search for treasure and make millions from the “under world”. Unfortunately, his research had shown there was no treasure ships on our west coast except for the (pacific) which sank in 600 ft. of water but it was all gold dust so it would be spread all over the ocean floor also his research made him aware of about 200 other vessels that were lost in the “grave yard of the pacific” which is off the west coast of our Vancouver island. In ca 1966 soon after meeting my grandma Sharon they were living in Sooke BC when he got an amazing opportunity to search for the wreck of the (Tonquin) in Tofino BC. He then accepted the job and went to Tofino to search for the wreck of the (Tonquin) he then went back to Sooke after seeing how beautiful Tofino was and told my grandma Sharon to pack up her stuff and there moving to Tofino. Soon after moving to Tofino they found an old ship to live and start a family on, it was the old north Vancouver ferry (#1). then they had found an island for sale, at the time it was known a leach island it is now known today as strawberry island. And so they decided to purchase the island, they moved the boat on to the side of the island and made a few work shops and even an out house at the time. And for his diving career he had found so many artefacts that him and my grandma decided to make a museum that was located where big daddy’s fish fry now is to day if you go around Tofino you will find some of the anchors/artefacts that he has found. We just celebrated Grandad’s 80th and after raising 7 kids and having many adventures he still lives happily in the boat on the island to this day.

Hanna Grimm



Basketball

Basketball has always been something special to me, something that clears my mind something that makes me feel happy when I'm doing it. Being on the court knowing I'm about to play makes me našaak (happy). I remember so much things of my past that's about Basketball. Ex. My first shot in a big hoop, I was 4 years old and lived up in Tofino with my ʔatʔanank (family), during that time my ʔumʔi (mom) was also still into ball and would take me to the court near the town park in Tofino. We went up, I grabbed the ball from my ʔumʔi (mom) and tried with all my strength to try shoot it up into the hoop, thinking I was going to miss I didn't and got it in. All the excitement and joy I got after that day. I remembered that day so vividly like it was just yesterday. After that day though I wanted to try more and more as I got older. During elementary school I would sign up for ball practices and try my best to get better. During grade seven was just a bit after covid started so the school wasn't really doing programs, during that year I would play ball every now and then, but not as constantly as I used to. The way I felt while playing ball, makes me ʔuuʔaqʔ (joyful) I felt while being on the court, I never realized of how much joy and ʔuušsuuqʔ (excitement) I felt. Not until now, after I stopped playing so constantly I would never feel the same, like Basketball was part of me, like it was something that I had to do. To this day I still love it, I love hearing the net make that swoosh noise or whatever every time I'd make a hoop. I loved going to ball practice, I loved and enjoyed all those ball drills, running drills, and when we'd work on our footwork. The most things I've learned was with one of my coaches, his name was Mr. Reynolds he helped with the most skill I have today, and I will always be wišat ʔimaqsti (grateful).

Andrew Amos

Photo by Talon Morgan-Banke

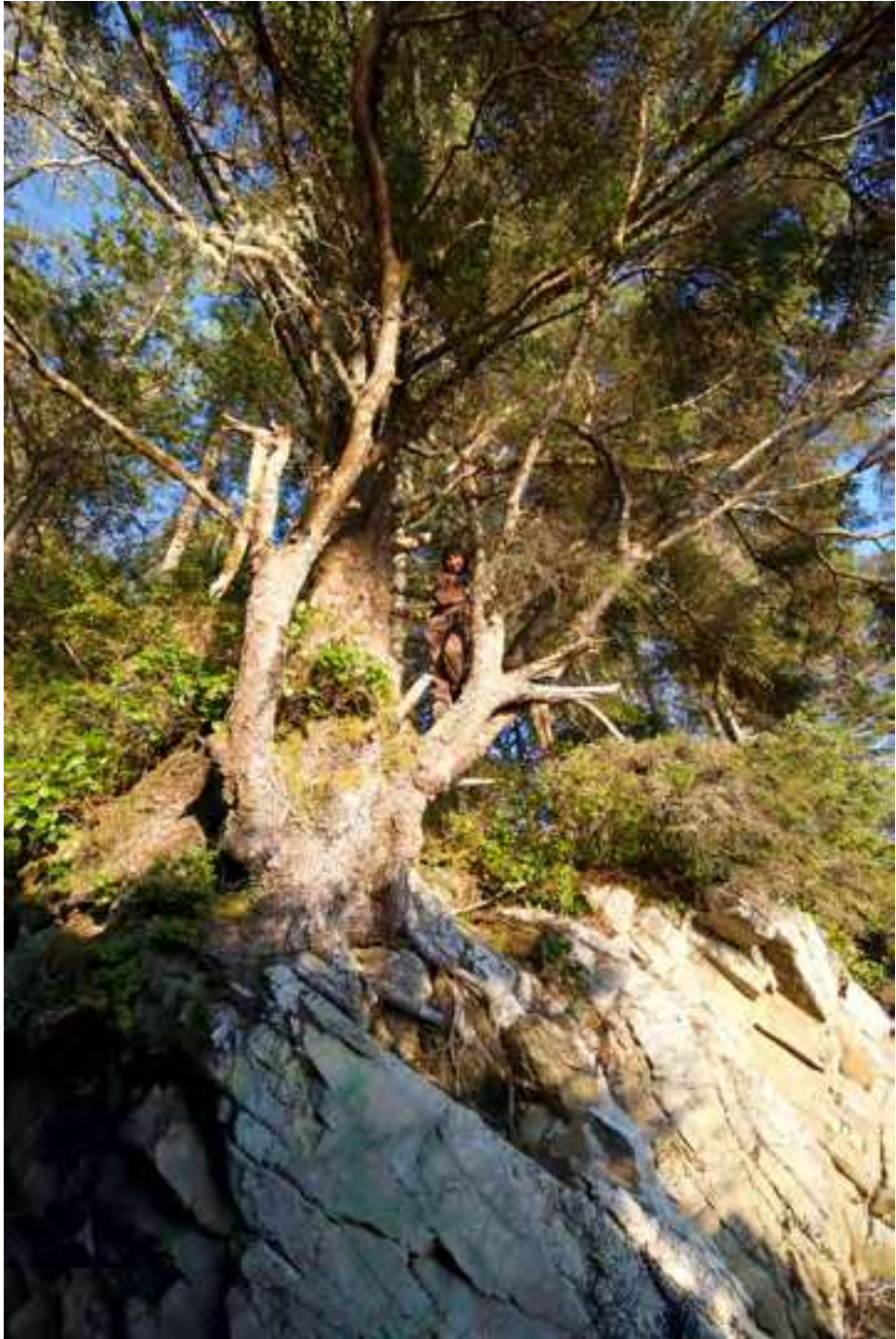




huyaaqumł, 25,2022

I love to hug ĥumiis (cedar) because it gives me haʔakʷiicił (strength). I love to tiitiičma (pray) on the trees because it gives me strength. I can watch my naniiqsu (grandma) weave and weave cedar ciyapuxs (hats), cedar niišaana (shawls), she can also make maałiicum (headbands), wʷaanuś (skirts) and a whole regalia. Cedar can also put a roof over our heads. Cedar can also make a precious gift for someone. My grandma is an expert at weaving. Her name is witchita (Thundering on woman) (Beverly Fred). I have made one weaving bowl and 17 headbands. My favorite tree is łiłsmapt (red cedar). My grandma's stories are amazing, she comes up to načiqs (Tofino) to teach weaving classes. My grandma is from čišaaʔaṭ (Tseshaht). łiłsmapt (red cedar) has a very nice smell, and you can do so much with cedar. Trees can grow anywhere. Trees can live up to 100 000 years. I went cedar hunting with one of my grandmas, it takes a long time to work with one tree to get a strip. I'm from muwačaṭ/mačłaaṭ (Gold River). There is a lake that had so many trees sinking and they chopped all the trees down to build a lake instead, so they let the water in from the rivers around it and the lake filled in minutes. The trees went to good use. They built houses, used it to make regalia, schools, smoke houses, and fires. In a huge haul they made so much with it after all the lake turned into this beautiful lake. I camped there a few times where there are cougars and wolfs howling at night. I went canoeing and it was so beautiful, nice and clean.

čaamatuk (Christina Howard)



ñačaaŕyak (Books)

Some people say ñačaaŕyak (books) are underrated and I agree because, when you read a ñačaaŕyak (book), you are transported to a whole new ʔunaaqḥ siitsiitaʔiq nismà (world). You can be flying over the ʕučičšt (ocean) on a gigantic eagle, searching the depths of the (ocean) for lost treasure, or a ñačaaŕyak (book) is just a way to escape from the real ʔunaaqḥ siitsiitaʔiq nismà (world). There is horror, romance, fantasy, sci-fi, history, so many different scenarios and genre to choose from. A ñačaaŕyak (book) can also be a combination of many feelings beginning with sadness ending in našaak (happiness) or vice versa. Again, a ñačaaŕyak (book) can have the reputation of a certain mood yet affect every individual reader in a different way giving it diversity. The diversity of a ñačaaŕyak (book) can be shared to all the ʔunaaqḥ siitsiitaʔiq nismà (world) published in many languages. A ñačaaŕyak (book) is a friend, therapist, a ḥuuhtikšiiḥʔapḥsi (teacher), and an escape to block out the chaos of life. ñačaaŕyak (Books) are a mighty tool. ñačaaŕyak (Books) are created for beliefs, religion, hinʔaḥsap (warnings), laws also rules but ñačaaŕyak (books) can still be silly like fairy tales, poems, songs, all with wisdom inside. ñačaaŕyak (Books) are something you can relate to, and for the author of the ñačaaŕyak (book) to share their story or imagination to others. ñačaaŕyak (Books) can be small and plain yet amazingly huge and powerful, it all starts with the first sentence.

Eevie Mayes



Basketball

Basketball has basically been my number one sport since I was three, it's always been fun watching my nane?iqsu (aunties), nane?iqsu (uncles), ?om?i (mum) and nuwiiqsu (dad) play basketball games, even their basketball practices or drop ins. My whole life was basically revolved around basketball, and I don't really mind, I used to hate being referred to as "Tysons daughter" or "Jada's yukwiiqsu (little sibling)" but I've learned to not mind. My whole life was basically spent on the court, I put my whole tiičma (heart) into the game, at times I've hated basketball but the more I play the more I love it. The more I think about it ball brings my family and friends closer, basketball has helped me cope with many things. Whether its passing time, getting my head or thoughts straight or getting away from stressful situations and much more.

Like the beach, basketball or basketball court has many memories, if it come to sad, happy or stressful memories, they're all very important to me. Important to my family and friends, just a couple days ago me and my friends were playing basketball and we played till dark, playing and laughing away.

A couple of my friends didn't even like playing basketball, but they played anyway, and it was. Basketball is a sport that has helped myself and my yaqh̄yuyin (family) very much throughout the years, I think it could help others too! Even other sports can help people as much as basketball helped me.

Jaysen Touchie



māmiiqsu (My sister)

My sister's name is Bree. She was born in ʔukʷiiqsu (December). She just turned 19. I will usually longboard with my older sister. Whenever I longboard around with her, I feel našaak (happy). In a way it's like something to hupii (help) escape reality almost because I forget about the other things that are on my mind. Even if I'm not long boarding with her I can still use longboarding as an escape from reality. Me and her longboard or we would yaacuk (walk) down to the hitinqis (beach) even just walk around. We longboard down the hills and sometimes we would see muwač (deer), ɕixʷatin (eagles) and just other animals. In my opinion she's okay to be around. Lately, I've been heading down to her place just to go hang out with her. We chat, ʔumčaap (play) video games and I also play with her piišpiš (cat), Nala, instead. She doesn't live far from my house its like a 5 min walk through Itatsoo. I don't see her often because I'm tired after school so when I have the energy, I try to go see her whenever I can. Sometimes me and her gather up a group to hang out with us like our younger brothers and a few of our cousins and play a few games, like man-hunt and black-ops 2 and black-ops 3.

Kaila Louie



My Inspiration

ʔuḥuks ṇuwiiqsu (My father) taught me how to ʔumčaaḥ (play) basketball when I was at a very young age. I've learned a lot since I first ever touched a hupkumf (ball), I am very wisifat ḥimaqsti (grateful) for it. My skill level has improved drastically as well. A great ḥaaḥuupa (inspiration) for me was and still is Michael Jordan, as well as Kobe Bryant. The reason they are so inspirational is because of their mamuuk (work) ethic. There are times when Kobe was kicked out of the gym at 3:00 o'clock in the morning. Basketball has been my favorite sport since as long as I can remember.

I remember the first time I beat my dad in a game of one on one. It was so exhilarating even though he was going easy on me, it was still exciting. He has always tried helping me improve my skill level. I've been winning a lot more since the first time I beat him, but only without him going easy on me. It has been getting harder and harder, mostly because he's trying now.

I've been to multiple basketball tournaments, all of them are from school. The adrenalin that I felt from my first one was so intense, I could feel my stomach coming up my throat. I am going to a tryout for the U15 British Columbia basketball team on the 29th and 30th. I feel like I am putting a lot of pressure on myself. I feel like if I don't make the team, I will let myself down, but I am trying to not put too much pressure on myself.

Talon Morgan-Banke

Photo by Andrew Amos



Drawing

I've been drawing since I was a ʔaṅa (child). Drawing makes me našaak (happy) and it a distraction from my huge ʔatṅanak (family). I usually draw in my room or in the kitchen with my little ḥaḥačimsiqsu (brothers). And I like drawing mostly anime stuff but I'm currently huuḥtakšiiḥ (learning) how to do ʔusaqsti (anatomy/body parts).

Jordyn Louie



ṭatṭanak (family)

Why is ṭatṭanak (family) important to me? It is because they support you and vent to them when you're at your lowest. Also, they can teach you some stuff like how to cook or drive. Family keeps you connected and loved. You can share your feelings also spend some time with your family like going on walks, swimming or road trips. You can spend time as much as you can with your ṭatṭanak (family) because sooner or later you're going to move somewhere far or out of your community. You won't see them as much anymore when you are far from them. Also, most family doesn't last long you, may think they will live long when your little but they don't. In the future, they will pass and that's hard to see someone you were close to pass on, after they taught you so much stuff you get use. Our favourite road trip to go on is Port Alberni. It has some nice spots and views. The ʔaaphii (nature) is peaceful. There is one area I like because it is nice and high and has a nice view. Also, it has some good places to eat. Our favourite place to walk is yaaqsis (Long Beach). Swimming is nice there and it is nice to hear the waves and a little bit of wind. There are some nice views and it's good for runs and walks including in the early morning. It's a great place to think things through, take photos with friends and ṭatṭanak (family) and it has a nice sunset. At some point you can make your family proud. The things you couldn't do when you were little, that you can do now, would make them proud. Time goes by really fast. It is important to talk to your ṭatṭanak (family) when you're sad or someone you really trust like your wikʔaʕis (brother) or ʔuučmuup (sister). Always ʔiisaak (respect) your family. You may sometimes disrespect by accident but that's ok they will understand. I will always be thankful for my (family).

Tyler Bob



The Beach

The beach has always been important to me. Especially because I lived in Opisaht when growing up which has the beach right in front of it. Now I live in Ty-His-Tanis where I can walk down to Esowista to go to the beach there. the beach is a good place to go to just clear your mind, listen to the waves crash, birds chirp and breath in the fresh air. It is also a good place to do some exercise or do other activities, you can walk, run, swim, surf, meditate, bike ride and play many different games. There are many sights to see while at the beach like great views, sunrises and sunsets plus many animals. There are orcas peeking through the water, muscles sticking to the rocks, eagles soaring through the sky, fish jumping out of the water, sea lions on rocks and abalone inside of shells. I also find it to be like an escape from reality, a place where you can go by yourself and not have anything bother you. The beach will always bring good memories for me. Times when I would spend the day there with my friends and family or with my class, having fires, swimming, looking for hermit crabs. I like to go to the beach for all these reasons, and that's why the beach has importance to me.

Chloe Moulton



Lyrics

the lyrics hypnotize me,
they bring me back to reality,
remind me that i'm home,
they remind me that life will move on,
they remind me if i lose i can get up again,
and the poetry of music is comforting.

Clove Crosina





Ty-Histanis & Esowista Community Youth

Photos by Mary Jane Amos



Photos by (top left and clockwise) Paton Black, Kate Little, Ali Swan, Lillian Yallup, Ali Swan, Mary Jane Amos



Photos by (top left and clockwise) Mary Jane Amos, Isha August, Paton Black, Paton Black, Vincent Titian



Photos by (top left and clockwise) Jordan Francis, Paton Black, Mary Jane Amos, Lillian Yallup, Vincent Titian



Opitsaht Community Youth
Supported by Elder Deb Masso

Photo by Kate Little



My Sister

My sister is seven months old. She has brown eyes and her hair sticks up in the front. Irelyn is really cute, and she crawls a lot when she is sitting. When I met her, she was cute and tiny and she still is.

Kailani Emily Rose

Photos by Kailani Antoine and Tracy Amos Frank



The Wolves of Opitsaht

There is a group of wolves that hang out near Opitsaht. There is a black wolf, grey wolf and a greyish brown wolf. One of the wolves caught and kill a young calf. Me and my friends went looking for the wolf on our island Opitsaht. And once my friend found it by one of our forts. Then the day after, we went to go look for the wolf, and we couldn't find it. So we tried the next day but we still couldn't find it. I was with Jayden, Brenda, Roberto, and Asher but we still couldn't find the wolves. Finally one day we found the greyish brown wolf behind the community near the cows. The one wolf hang out by the graveyard, and by our fort. The wolves have been around for a years. They are a part of our community.

Jarret Thomas



My Mom

My Mom's name is Melissa Tom. And she is very important to me. She is 38 years old. And she cooks really good food. I love her food, and she looks pretty. My mom has 5 children, and their names and ages are. I have an older sister, her name is Kiana, and she is 16. And I have an older brother his name is Roberto he is 11. And me, hi I am Brenda and I am 10 years old. And there i Alicia, she 6 years old, and Carlito he is 4 years old. My mom's full time job is being a mother. But she might be getting a job at the co-op. My mom buys us clothes and takes really great care of us.

Brenda Thomas

Photos by Roberto Thomas



Swimming

My favourite thing to do is swimming in Opitsaht. We swim at the boat dock at the end of the road. One time I jumped off the shed where everyone waits for the boat. The shed is really high and it gives you butterflies if you jump from the top. And we also get everyone to swim with us, well most of the kids. In the summertime it is the best thing to do and sometimes we swim in the winter too. For some people the water is freezing cold but not for me. We throw things in the water like bottles filled with sand to dive for them. We also swim to the island close by to explore. I am a very strong swimmer.

Roberto Thomas

Photo by Christine Germano



Swimming

My name is Christina and I live in Opitsaht. Opitsaht is a small village across the water from Tofino. My favourite thing to do is swimming. I like to dunk my head in the water, and jump off the docks and the boats. I am not a very good swimmer, so I still need a life jacket. One time I did a big splash by jumping off of Uncle Jean's big boat. My grandma Lydia likes to watch me make big splashes cause I make her laugh.

Christina Martin

Photo by Christine Germano



All the things I like...

In hupicath, I like going swimming (susaa) with my friends.
I like it when my mom tickles me. It makes me laugh.
I like playing with my friends.
I like going for walks on the beach in Opitsaht.
I like learning about math, it's my favourite thing at school.
I like the park at school.
I like feeding the cows and ducks that roam around Opitsaht.
I like hanging out with my grandparents, Noah and Melissa.
The ultimate best thing about Opitsaht is being so close to my friends.

Alicia Thomas



Photos (top left and clockwise) by Tamuuk Masso, Kate Little, Tamuuk Masso, Tamuuk Masso, Taylor Frank, Roberto Thomas, Taylor Frank



Raising a Totem Pole

For the first time in a while our community is raising a Totem Pole. The pole was carved at the Naa'Waya'Sum Coastal Indigenous Gardens by Joe Martin, Gordon Dick, Robin Rorick, Pat Amos and Robinson Cook. For Tla-o-qui-aht families the totem poles served as reminders of the teachings relatives were expected to uphold. It is nice to have a new totem pole risen and I am proud to see a new totem pole in our community.

Taylor Frank





Photos by Tracy Amos Frank



Carving on the Edge Festival 2022 ~ Edge Exhibit Opening at the Shore Pier featuring the Wickaninnish School Dance Group
Photos by Taylor Frank



Constant Arts Society

The Through Our Eyes® program was created in 2000 by Christine Germano and was first completed in Alert Bay. Since that time the program has been brought to fruition in 50+ communities internationally collaborating with many NGO's, schools and organizations.

The Through Our Eyes® program and the Constant Arts Society was founded in tribute to Christine's younger brother, Constant Germano, who died on August 30th, 1993, from a suicide attempt made five days earlier. His memory is the life force that guides the official mandate of the Constant Arts Society and its programs. May the legacy live on through the voices of today's youth.

Constant Arts Society Mandate and Objectives

- 1) To use the arts to build self-esteem and provide leadership opportunities amongst youth with potential;
- 2) To promote and provide healthy living opportunities for youth;
- 3) To support youth-driven programs that utilize the media in a positive way.



Christine Germano and Ivy Cargill Martin ~ Co-Creative Directors for Carving on the Edge Festival 2022, mułmunč?atuk (Taking Care of the Roots)
Photos by Shanielle Williams and Kate Little



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