



Weaving Strength: The Story of 2024/25

THÉLÁ:YLEXW AWTXW
FOUNDATION

Our Vision

Who we are.



Our vision is Stó:lō families thriving in healthy and united communities where Stó:lō womxn stand in their power as weavers that connect us together

Thélá:ylexw Awtxw Foundation, the House of Life Givers, is a Stó:lō womxn's non-profit dedicated to amplifying the voices and leadership of Stó:lō womxn. Guided by the Life Givers before us, we carry their work forward by gathering, sharing teachings, and taking our rightful place at the heart of our community and nation.

Our Mission

We are committed to rematriation in action where Stó:lō ways of being are entrenched in everyday living and no one is left behind.

Nurturing connections and culture.



Contributed by Lolly Andrew, TAF Auntie

I have such gratitude for our Thélá:ylexw Awtxw group of women which we started a few years back. We had high hopes of connecting with the women in our Stó:lō communities and it's been great doing this work. We have been able to do this work because we knew we wanted to uphold, encourage and inspire all the things that our girls and women are doing inside and outside of their communities. It has grown over the years and it has been well received and we like that. It is great to meet with our board members and to see what things we can do in the next year.

When we met for our planning session, there was laughter, crying and sharing of stories openly and honestly. We all like the two eyed seeing approach, where we take the gifts/teachings from our own people and supplement it with the Western knowledge. Some themes that came up are leadership, Child and family services, restorative justice and the wisdom with our own traditions and culture.

We know today that some of these systems are changing and that's a good thing because they have never worked for us. There is a shift happening in the world, it involves looking at life through a spiritual lens and leading with love and compassion. We are transforming the old oppressive ways and we need all of our women to continue to help with this change.

We know that connections is the key to wellness and we will continue to look at how we bring our women together in a variety of ways. We want to formalize what we have today and branch out to the regions in our area. We are doing podcasts to showcase our matriarchs and this is a great endeavor to show some of women with their gifts and talents. Some of our board members have met with ministers and we are telling them who we are and what we are doing for our women.

I love the author Richard Wagamese (he wrote Indian Horse), I read his poems and stories, they inspire me. He said these words, "Stay Brown." This to me means to love who you are, that is how the Creator made you, so be proud to be First Nations.

Our board has taken the time to look at our needs from a spiritual, mental, emotional and physical perspective. When we use this approach, it helps us to be more balanced in our lives. Our culture and traditions are key to good health and wellness and we keep all these things in mind as we plan out our year.

Love and prayers to all of our communities.



This de-colonized organizational chart shows how we support our members under the guidance of our Matriarchs. There is no hierarchy—each of us contributes our gifts equally. The use of 'Auntie' reflects both respect and our responsibility to care, while 'nieces' represent those learning and supporting the work. This chart represents our commitment to organize differently, with care and equality at the center.

Collaborating with partners and exploring opportunities.

Meet & Greet

- Minister of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation, Christine Boyle & team
- Minister of Children & Family Development, Jodie Wickens
- Minister of Health, Indigenous Health, team members
- Office of Gender Equity, ADM Asha Bhat
- UFV, Peace & Reconciliation team
- Chilliwack Chamber of Commerce
- Semá:th Matriarchs Tea

Presentations & Partnerships

- UFV, Peace & Reconciliation x 2
- Fraser Health Authority, Lunch & Learn
- Seabird Island Women's event
- United Nations Declaration Act, Annual Reporting presentation
- NRT, annual reporting presentation
- BCAAFC, annual reporting presentation
- Research Partnership - Dr Brittany Bingham, WHRI BC Women's (menopause study)

Conference & Gatherings attended by TAF

- Observer at the Fraser Salish - First Nations Health Council Caucus - January 2025
- Invited guest to the BCAFN Women's Dialogue - Healing in Action
- National Forum on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act
- Indigenous Women & Diversity Groups - UNDA



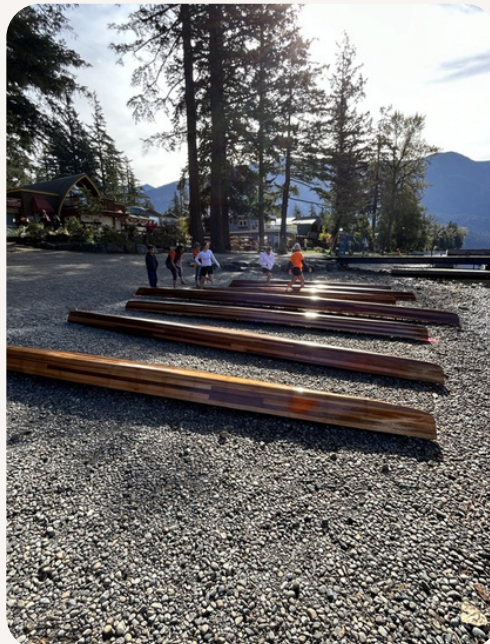
Celebrating empowerment through cedar canoe making.

This day has been set aside as a day of National Truth & Reconciliation, and for many years known as Orange Shirt Day. We knew that this day would mean far more to us if we were exercising our sovereign rights and reclaiming our own practice for our own benefit and celebration.

So we chose this day to celebrate our 12 participants in our first ever Cedar Strip Canoe making program. We launched the first ever canoe project, and we hope to offer it again and again. We used funding provided to us by BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centre under the Path Forward project; which helps groups like our address Gender Based Violence. We know that one way to address that is to empower our young women; and instill in them that they can do anything!

Under the guidance and teaching of master canoe builder Keith Point, he opened his canoe building shed and walked along these new builders every step of the way. With deep reflection and gratitude, we know Keith gave more of himself to this project than we could have compensated him for, but we all know sometimes when the meaning of the work gives back as much as you give, it is so worth it.

The day of our launch at Cultus Lake, the sun came out, and the canoes were launched, it was such a visual representation of what took these ladies weeks and many hours. It was a beautiful celebration as the families of all the participants also came out – it was pure joy!



The September Annual Gathering – Matriarchs

It was important for us to acknowledge the family of the late Grand Chief Dr. Rose Charlie, one of the original Indian Homemakers Association members who paved the way for women's organizations like ours. As women balancing many responsibilities, we recognize that while Rose was charting a path for us, she was also away from her own children. We don't acknowledge that often enough, so we chose to hold this Matriarchs Gathering in Sts'ailes, where Rose is from, and invited her children and grandchildren to give thanks for their Matriarch and all she did to lead the way.

We are working with care and commitment to carry forward the work started in the early 1970s, which included Auntie Ginny (Virginia Peters) and Auntie Pat (Nancy Patricia Charlie) as staff. Auntie Pat often says, "I watched what those ladies were doing—they were my idols. I learned so much from them."

Thank you again to the family of Grand Chief Dr. Rose Charlie.
Her legacy truly lives on.



Walking in solidarity for MMIW 2025.

Contributed by Joanne Jefferson

I was fortunate to participate in the MMIW walk on May 5th and witnessed when women connect we find solutions that fit for ourselves for instance how to keep safe – the elders sharing their stories of what's a respectful relationship – we need to connect to a young family that is in trouble with mental health. When this occurs we give purpose and trouble shoot problems in a traditional Stó:lō way. Over the centuries our women have been stripped from their roles due to colonization.

However, women are slowly gaining their entitled parts in our governance. The strength of our ancestors is returning with the voice of the MMIW and it flows through this new generation. Women are voicing their mistreatment and demanding change. We are witnessing pockets of unity and with unity we collaborate with allies Collaboration pushes for space to heal and connect as our old people once did. Having safe spaces to share with one another keeps the traditions alive and opportunities to tackle MMIW from all aspects. Organically solutions come and are implemented from the youngest to the oldest.



Contributed by Antonia Victor

In such a short time, we were able to pull together partners to carry out this important day to walk in solidarity. The turn out was successful (over 100) and many were very uplifted to stand together on this 6 km walk. Many songs were shared and we were able to share a lunch with people of all walks of life. Youth had shared that they had never really understood the cause until coming. That they had left feeling more educated and determined to stand with our people. This is why we do this work. The awareness needs to be broadly supported.

Stó:lō Womxn's Song



Contributed by Gwen Desnomie

Being part of recording the Stó:lō Women's Song was an incredibly meaningful experience. It honoured the voices, teachings, and strength of our women while contributing to the preservation of our Stó:lō identity. What made it even more special was sharing the moment with my closest friends. I hold deep respect and love for Carrielynn Victor for creating such a beautiful song that carries our stories and strength forward. Sitting together, feeling the unity, connection, and power within the song, was deeply moving. I am truly grateful and humbled to have been included in such an important moment for our community.



Watch, Listen & Sing

We video recorded the song, and it is now available on our YouTube, Spotify and Apple Music. We have encouraged our members to learn the song by providing some pop up 'sing alongs' - and there is also a new dance accompanying the song. Auntie Pat, our lead Matriarch has requested that we all learn it and that this song be sung at all gatherings. It is a song to be used at any time by the womxn.



Rattle making.

Contributed by Shanna Anderson

I had the honour of having my first event with Thélá:ylexw Awtxw be a rattle-making workshop. We sent an invite and had twelve members participate. The day was beautiful, and the energy even more so. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to be able to engage with members in a casual setting. It helped to create bonds and establish relationships with our members.

The workshop was hosted by Brandon Jimmie, who kindly led participants through a hands-on guided workshop. Participants had the opportunity to make two rattles. Making two rattles was important. This is because the womxn were able to follow the teaching of giving the first one of something you make away, and they still had one for themselves. It was widely told to me that the participants greatly appreciated having the opportunity to make two rattles. Brandon was also nice enough to allow me to participate and make rattles as well.

The point of having members make a rattle was so they could have something to bring to sing-alongs. I later hosted a sing-along and had two of the womxn who participated in the rattle-making workshop attend and bring their rattle. It was neat to see the rattles “in action”.



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“The highlight was learning in a hands-on environment.”

“I felt a sense of accomplishment, making and finishing two rattles.”

“Very welcoming and relaxing environment!”

On the land, hiking.

Contributed by Carrielynn Victor, Xemontalot

The hiking series has been a response to the combined requests from Stó:lō women for more togetherness on the land, and the desire to learn more about the ethnogeographic history and values of the landscape we live in. Each hike was thoughtfully planned to bring the women to a different region of S'olh Temexw, our land, so the diversity of landscapes could be experienced, but also bring a range of fitness levels to the trails. Opportunities along the trails to learn about the rich storied landscapes were shared, along with knowledge of the plants as food, medicine and materials as they were encountered.

Proper gear for hiking safety was researched, purchased and provided along with a briefing before each departure for educational purposes. The participants were of all ages and fitness levels, bringing together the curiosity of young ladies with the wisdom of their elder generations allowing for a natural knowledge transfer to occur.

The continued effort to bring together women of Stó:lō families on the land will include the existing successful initiatives, along with new locations and experiences.

Contributed by Carli Brkich, Sts'éstanelwet

As part of the On the Land Series, I had the opportunity to join Stó:lō Women on local hikes that opened space for me as a new hiker. Together, we explored trails in our own backyards, sharing laughter, stories, and learning along the way. These walks not only deepened my connection to the land, but also fostered meaningful bonds with the women around me and a stronger sense of connection to myself.

Thank you for the funding and
the story BC Parks Foundation.

[TINYURL.COM/Y4464UUV](https://tinyurl.com/y4464uuv)



Celebrating the power of self-love and care.

Contributed by Joanne Hugh, Xwiyailemot

On Saturday March 15, 2025 approximately 100 Stó:lō Women gathered together at the Fraser River Lodge in Agassiz, BC to take some time to follow the teachings of our past. To take care of self because we cannot pour from an empty cup. As Stó:lō women we have many ancient stories also known as Shxwoxwiyam that teach us “how to be”. As an important step to de-colonize and Nation build we have adopted this concept into our main pillars.

“Being here to witness today, I am honoured to participate and to watch and learn and to take this good medicine back to New Relationship Trust to say that projects like these are needed across of BC First Nations.”

Lisa Paull, Director of Programs, NRT



Denise Douglas of Cheam First Nation did a wonderful opening of our event as she is from the nearby village of Cheam who's traditional lands we were on for this session.

I was honoured to be asked to be a Co-host MC with Roxanne Dool of Squiala/Shxwowhamel. We started out the day with some fun energizing sharing of our vision and focus of the day for self care and self love. I also got to share our power point which explained how we are now a non profit society and going towards charitable status. Also shared some highlights from our last annual report to show the journey we are on as Sto:lo women. I in particular highlighted the session where we got to learn more about the wonderful legacy of Dr. Rose Charlie and the Indian Homemakers Association of BC.

Pat Charlie Selyaal was in attendance as our Matriarch Elder she did a great job also introducing herself and sharing the teachings of self care and encouraged the Sto:lo women to enjoy this day just for themselves as they so deserve it. We also had one of our funders present on this day called All Nations Trust who were interviewing some of the Stó:lō women and taking photos and video footage so we made sure everyone was aware of that also. We thanked All Nations Trust for believing in our initiative.

Full video here:

[TINYURL.COM/YEYSVPP2](https://tinyurl.com/yeysvpp2)

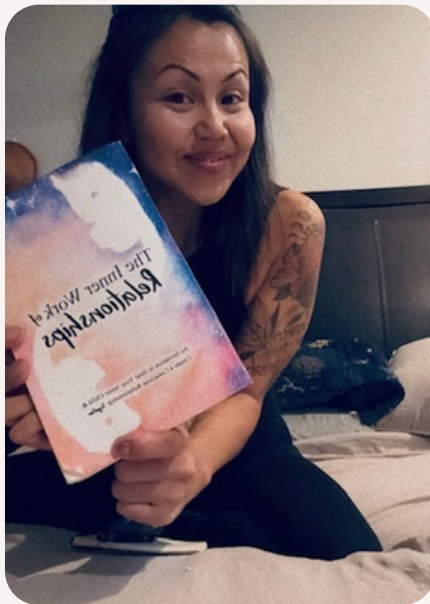
I've never felt so seen and supported in taking care of myself.

Auntie Patricia Charlie

Workshops throughout the day included medicine making, yoga, Halqemeylem language and a powerful healing circle. Many women said they need more things like this because it makes them get out of the house to focus on themselves. Quite often women in the home are the caretakers, cooks, drivers, child minders etc. and burnout is prevalent. Many women asked for things like massage, manicures, pedicures etc. as well as more opportunity to learn about spiritual self care. Evaluation forms were handed out and we ensured we captured everyone's feedback.

Board members present at this event were myself and Lolly Andrew. Staff in attendance was Melody Andrews. Volunteers were Carli Bkrich and Jody Minnabarriet.

I look forward to the event next year and hope to strike a committee comprised of some of our members to ensure they are included in how the self care self love event can go.



Auntie healing.

Contributed by Antonia Victor

Women's Book Club: December 2024 – February 2025

"The Inner Work in Relationships"

There was a total of eight Stó:lō women who participated in the book club. Each of these women were in different phases of their lives in terms of healing in their own personal relationships. Many shared the strength gained having other women to read and talk through their learnings. The sessions consisted of prayer, elders, food, and sharing which added such a significant dynamic to each session.

Sobriety Women's Group

Twelve women came together in various stages of their sobriety to share a meal, somatic workshop and meditation workshop. This was hugely impactful for the young women who struggle to find healthy supports and fun in sobriety. I was so grateful so many came to share and connect with themselves and others. This has been identified as a need and we will be continuing in the fall.



Building community one conversation at a time.

Contributed by Nivana Point

Since 2022, I've supported our social media presence—first on TikTok and, more recently, on Facebook and Instagram—curating a digital space where Stó:lō Womxn can see our lives, culture, and people reflected. This year has brought exciting highlights in building community and envisioning our shared future.

On TikTok, our most engaging content has been language and land-based, especially the Halq'eméylem and On the Land series. A personal goal of mine has been to weave Halq'eméylem into our posts—sharing terms, phrases, and teachings on medicines, seasons, and introductions. Our audience continues to grow, reaching 783 followers this year after surpassing our 500 milestone.

A key goal in our social media has been incorporating Halq'eméylem. I research and share terms, phrases, and teachings on traditional medicines, seasonal words, and introductions through TikTok.

On Facebook and Instagram, Wellness Wednesdays, Thankful Thursdays, and similar posts spark conversations about language, wellness, and positivity. Researching medicines and self-care terms in Halq'eméylem aligns with our goals but has been personally rewarding. Another highlight was the Stó:lō Womxn Grad Giveaway, which celebrated over 20 graduates of all ages and gifted one graduate to recognize their achievements.



Meet Me at the Mic

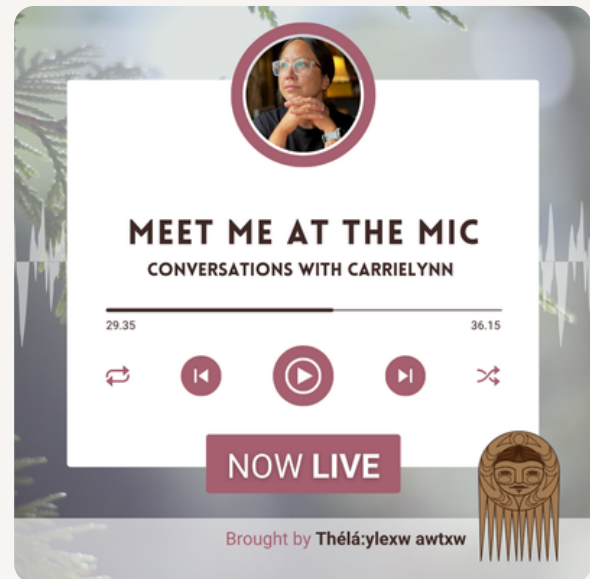
Contributed by Leslie Bonshor

Meet Me at the Mic is a podcast created by and for Stó:lō women. Hosted by Carrielynn Victor, it brings together our matriarchs and aunties to share their stories, wisdom, and lived experiences.

For our members, it is a space of inspiration and empowerment—reminding us that we are not alone, and that strength comes from listening to and uplifting each other. For our allies, it is an invitation to learn directly from Stó:lō women about who we are, what we carry, and the vision we hold for our communities.

Each conversation is both a teaching and a legacy, helping to build understanding, connection, and pride. Meet Me at the Mic is more than a podcast—it's a gathering place for story, voice, and the power of Indigenous women.

We are so honored to have Carrielynn hosting our podcasts and helping us to bring these empowering stories to our members and partners.



Contributed by Carrielynn Victor - Xemontalot

The Stó:lō communities are historically matriarchal, in the last 200 years there has been a great deal of intrusion and attempted assimilation that steered family and communal leadership towards the patriarchy. Among the efforts to make space for women to take back their voice, is the Meet Me at the Mic podcast. Women in various forms of leadership from Stó:lō families are being invited to take a seat and share their strengths, teachings and values for the listening audience. The podcast is done in the conversational style, mimicking the age old visit over tea practice, an ancient and modern Stó:lō tradition.

Halq'emeylem language, prayers, songs, and cultural understandings are shared over the course of an hour, enhancing the conversation and grounding the podcast in Stó:lō ways of knowing and being.

The Meet Me at Mic Podcast was launched in the Spring to an onslaught of support. As the sessions continue, there will be further exploration on topics such as, health and wellbeing, weaving and design practices, birthing practices and more.



Watch the virtual gathering here:

[TINYURL.COM/YEYSVPP2](https://tinyurl.com/yeysvpp2)

Virtual Circle - call to action.

Contributed by Leslie Bonshor

We hosted a panel of our members, the Grandmothers, the Mothers, the Aunties to discuss the ongoing and relentless impacts of the toxic drug epidemic and the loss of lives from suicide and other acts of violence. This has resulted in us all feeling as if we are in this constant state of grief and mourning.

We know that the women carry the responsibility of caring for everyone, protecting their families and children, and so when this is happening all around us and impacting our children, families and partners we need to talk about it and call for action.

We offer these kinds of opportunities to discuss how we learn from one another, how we move through the crisis and help lift each other up. The virtual attendees shared in the comments throughout the session about how important it is for the women to call for changes. We have made this virtual townhall available on our YouTube channel and have shared it widely with service providers. Our intention is for those with the responsibility to provide programming and services to our communities, will watch and listen to the suggestions of our panelist. The women on the front line to this devastation; the one saving lives in their own capacity; resourced by love and commitment and fueled by our unwavering responsibility as life givers to love and care for all.

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Let's be honest and truthful (that's one way to intervene).
I talk about the things that need to be talked about.
We can't get around it, we need to go through it.

Patricia Charlie, Matriarch Lead

Honouring those who support our work.

Our hands are raised to you for seeing us! For answering our call for support to do this good work with our womxn.



FIRST PEOPLES'
CULTURAL COUNCIL



NEW RELATIONSHIP TRUST
Empowering First Nations in British Columbia



BC Association
Aboriginal Friendship
Centres

vancouver
foundation



Department of Justice Canada
Indigenous Partnership Fund

Profit & Loss by Class

January to December 2024

	Admin	BC Parks	BCAAF	IRPF - JUS	NRT- Social Inclusion	TISF23- Vancouver Foundation Grant	TOTAL
INCOME							
40000 Membership fees	1,663.77						1,663.77
42000 Grants	20,000.00	5,000.00	68,796.05	37,493.47	51,808.84	62,450.41	245,548.77
45000 Sponsorship	16,592.57		900.00				
48000 Other Income	3,000.00						3,000.00
Billable Expense Income							-
Total Income	41,256.34	5,000.00	69,696.05	37,493.47	51,808.84	62,450.41	267,705.11
GROSS PROFIT	41,256.34	5,000.00	69,696.05	37,493.47	51,808.84	62,450.41	267,705.11
EXPENSES							
16100 IT Support				1,040.00	520.00		1,560.00
61000 Bank charges	144.47						144.47
62000 Community Events & Workshops		5,000.00	4,217.07		4,591.30	6,000.00	19,808.37
62500 Event			4,769.20	11,192.46			15,961.66
62600 Marketing			3,157.41	2,030.25	2,086.00	2,521.26	9,794.92
64000 Professional fees & Services			3,537.05	15,951.54	39,021.54	38,696.63	97,206.76
64200 Accounting fees	5,089.60						5,089.60
Total 64000 Professional fees & Services	5,089.60	-	3,537.05	15,951.54	39,021.54	38,696.63	102,296.36
65000 Subcontractors			46,610.52		4,090.00	12,982.62	63,683.14
65500 Consultation			1,433.76	1,750.00	1,500.00	2,250.00	6,933.76
66000 Office expenses	615.56			1,256.67			1,872.23
Honoraria & Stipends			5,000.00	1,500.00			6,500.00
Merchandise			971.04				971.04
Rent or lease payments	12,534.09						12,534.09
Travel				2,718.55			2,718.55
Total Expenses	18,383.72	5,000.00	69,696.05	37,439.47	51,808.84	62,450.51	244,778.59
PROFIT	22,872.62						22,872.62
amortization	-964.81						
	21,907.81						



Thank You

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TikTok [@stolowomxn](https://www.tiktok.com/@stolowomxn)

