



Georges P. Vanier Secondary School

4830 Headquarters Road, Courtenay, BC V9J 1P2



Dear Students, Families and Faculty

Hello, Gilakas'la, Yo, Wachaiy, Tansi, Angai, and Kwey-kwey!

Welcome to Georges P. Vanier's 2021/2022 school year! We are happy to introduce ourselves to you as the Indigenous Support Workers (ISW's) at GP Vanier this year. We would like to say that it is a great privilege to live and work on the traditional unseated territories of K'omoks First Nation. Returning this year is Kris Prince, Kath Larson and Kolby Koschack who began at Vanier in February 2020. New to our team this year is Savannah Seigler.

Kris is of Ojibway, Cree and Irish on her fathers side and Welsh, Irish and English ancestry on her mothers side. She is a status member of Peguis First Nation in Winnipeg. Kris has lived in the Comox Valley on and off since 1991, since then, she lived in England for 10 years and in Nanaimo where she graduated from Vancouver Island University (VIU) with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in First Nations studies and minoring in Creative Writing studies. Kris has been working as a ISW for SD71 since 2015. Prior, she was a Aboriginal Education Assistant for SD68. Kris recently graduated from Vancouver School of Healing Arts (VSHOA) as a Expressive Arts Therapist/practitioner. She is excited to continue supporting past students and getting to know new students at Vanier.

Kath's Ancestry is Cree and Russian on her fathers' side and Cree, Metis, French and Irish on her mothers side. She has been a guest on K'omoks Lands for the past five years working within SD71. Kath is a mother of six children and Kokum of three young grandchildren. She has a diploma in Indigenous Studies from Camosun College. She has a degree in fashion Merchandising. She loves gardening, traditional medicines, all forms of arts and crafts. She looks forward to making connections with students and faculty, sharing life experiences, knowledge, values, beliefs and ways of being

Kolby is German from his fathers side and French, English, Scottish, Cree and Ojibwe from his mother. He was born and raised in Miracle Beach. Up until he was 18 years old, he felt full exploring the natural world and playing competitive ice hockey. In this time he learned that he would only be great at what he is passionate about. He wanted to continue building from the positive experiences, and also help others avoid and power through aspects that troubled him. After he obtained a Diploma in Exercise and Wellness, he completed a Bachelors Degree in Sport and Fitness Leadership. The summer after he graduated, he resigned from his job as a personal trainer, and made the big step into the universe. His early struggles taught him that when he pushed himself and became uncomfortable, he grew the most. He has lived in four countries and travelled to eleven; embracing culture and gaining experiences in the exercise and wellness industry. What he is most proud of, are the friendships that have been built along the way. He is a Certified Strength and



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Conditioning Specialist from the National Strength and Conditioning Association and a Kinesiologist from the BC Association of Kinesiologists. He is grateful for the experiences he has had on K'ómoks lands. As a guest he has always felt welcomed. He is grateful to have the opportunity to share space with students at Vanier.

Savannah Seigler is the newest addition to our Indigenous Education staff here at Vanier. Her traditional name is Małidzas, which means "stomach full of oolichan oil." Her mother is Melanie (Umełakw) from; Ligwilda'xw (Cape Mudge) Muska'makw Dzawada'enuxw (Kingcome Inlet), and Lyackson (Coast Salish), her father is George Seigler from; Germany and England. Born and raised here in the Comox Valley, Savannah has always appreciated the easy access to outdoor adventures, particularly up Mt. Washington. She has been an active member of the Kumugwe dancers for 12 years and seeks out any opportunities to immerse herself in her culture. Savannah has also recently reignited her passion for Northwest Coast art, transitioning from painting to digital media. She recently completed her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Vancouver Island University, where she majored in Criminology. Most recently, Savannah has had experience working in respite care, and as the local BladeRunners program Manager. Savannah has also been a member of the Courtenay Volunteer Fire Department for 7.5 years, with 5.5 years of responding to emergency incidents. She is so grateful to have grown up on the land of the K'ómoks people, and to have created such strong bonds with the community over the years. Savannah likes to take advantage of any opportunity to get involved with community events, to give back to the community that has given her so much.

Also returning to us, is Vanier's Elder in residence Evelyn Voyager, the Wise One. There will be an update to when Evelyn's visits will occur. Please see Evelyn's biography on the next page.

Also returning to our team is SD71s Indigenous Secondary Curriculum Support Teacher Lelaina Jules. Lelaina's ancestry is Hesquiaht, Ahousaht, Danish and Estonian. She splits her time between all our high schools, alternative schools and middle schools. Lelaina is very happy to support teachers with weaving Indigenous content into the curriculum.

Vanier's Indigenous department focuses on cultural activities, academic, personal support and leadership for our Vanier Indigenous students. We are excited to continue to work out of the beautiful room 133a complete with a full kitchen, office and large communal space for our students to study, socialize, partake in activities and enjoy their lunch and snacks.

The Indigenous students will be offered a range of opportunities that they can participate in. There will be tutoring as required, student lunches, cultural activities, field trips, and presentations from Indigenous role models, artists, guest speakers and Leadership.

The schools' vision for the Indigenous students is to have a balance between academic performance, Indigenous culture and identity and to foster the value of lifelong learning. The goals of the Enhancement Agreement are to "Increase a sense of belonging", "Improve academic achievement," "Increase cultural awareness" and to "Enhance leadership skills."

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child you can reach us at 250 334.2428 extension 40126 (Kath), 40127 (Savannah), 40125 (Kris/Kolby) or by email to Kristen.Kirkpatrick@sd71.bc.ca, Kathy.Larson@sd71.bc.ca and Kolby.Koschack@sd71.bc.ca and Savannah.Seigler@sd71.bc.ca Room 133a is currently open from 9am to 3.15pm.

Kind Regards,

Kris, Kolby, Savannah and Kath



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BIOGRAPHY – DR. EVELYN VOYAGEUR

ELDERS IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Aboriginal Education Comox Valley School

Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw – Kingcome Inlet



Despite going to St. Michael's Residential School at age ten, Dr. Evelyn Voyageur is a fluent speaker of Kwakwala and an active matriarch in the Kwakwaka'wakw culture and traditions. She has dedicated her life to improving the health of Indigenous peoples through her more than five decades in the nursing profession.



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As a registered nurse with a PhD in psychology, Dr. Voyageur has worked extensively in community- and hospital-based health care in across Alberta and British Columbia. She has worked with the Indian Residential School Society, where her work focused on supporting former students healing from the trauma of residential schools. She is also an educator who has taught and developed nursing curriculum at the University of Victoria and North Island College.

Dr. Voyageur has received many awards for her contributions to Aboriginal nursing, including a 2018 Indspire Award for Health. This award acknowledged her promotion of Indigenous health in a number of capacities, most recently as BC representative for the Aboriginal Nurses Association and member of the board of St. Joseph's General Hospital in BC. Dr. Voyageur was also recognized in 2017 in two ways by the College of Registered Nurses of BC when she received the Life Time Achievement award and was one of 150 nurses across Canada chosen for excellence in nursing. Also of note, she was one of the first recipients of the Award of Excellence in Nursing from Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Branch.

Dr. Voyageur has been active in the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association (formerly Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada) since 1980, serving as the BC representative, vice president, and president (2010 to 2012). She also founded the Native and Inuit Nurses Association of BC (NINA) in the early 1980s to help educate those who work with First Nations communities.