

December 2024

# Indigenous Education Online Newsletter



From the Indigenous Education Online  
Support Team:

Sandra Rutherford, Indigenous Support Teacher  
[sandra.rutherford@sd71.bc.ca](mailto:sandra.rutherford@sd71.bc.ca)

Alana Alix, Indigenous Support Worker  
[alana.alix@sd71.bc.ca](mailto:alana.alix@sd71.bc.ca)

Annette Blecic, Indigenous Support Worker  
[annette.blecic@sd71.bc.ca](mailto:annette.blecic@sd71.bc.ca)

Giselaine Ballantyne, administrative assistant  
[giselaine.ballantyne@sd71.bc.ca](mailto:giselaine.ballantyne@sd71.bc.ca)

Website:

<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/indigenous-education/online-learning/>

## Winter Wishes

The days have gotten shorter, and the cooler weather has arrived. We wish you continued success in your learning and would like to remind you that we are here to support in any way we can. We hope you enjoy the December newsletter offerings. Your feedback or ideas on what to include in future mailouts is welcome. Our community of learners come from across British Columbia, and we hope to foster a sense of community and connection with the information and contents included in this newsletter.

## Newsletter Contents:

- Honouring Murray Sinclair
- Winter Solstice Story
- Seven Sacred Teachings
- Winter crafts
- Student Activities and Colouring Sheets
- List of supports
- Winter Photo/Art Showcase Information
- Chat & Chew updated information and quick link



# Honouring the Legacy of Murray Sinclair: A Champion for Truth and Reconciliation



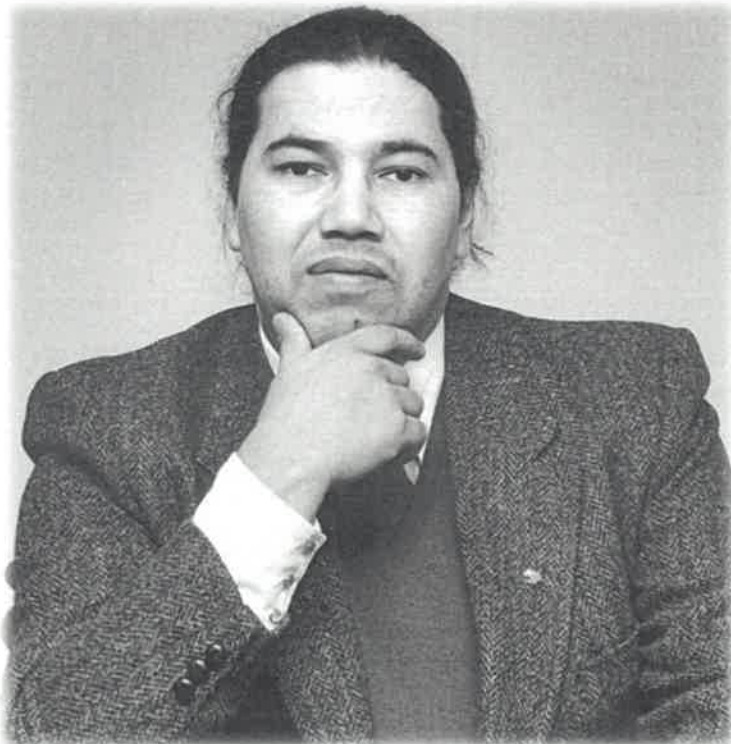
Senator Sinclair's contributions to Canada are profound, with his leadership of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission marking a pivotal moment in the country's history. As chair, he helped open a path toward healing, reconciliation and understanding. His legacy extends beyond this role to include his involvement in critical inquiries, such as the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the Phoenix Sinclair Inquest, and the review of policing in Thunder Bay, Ontario.



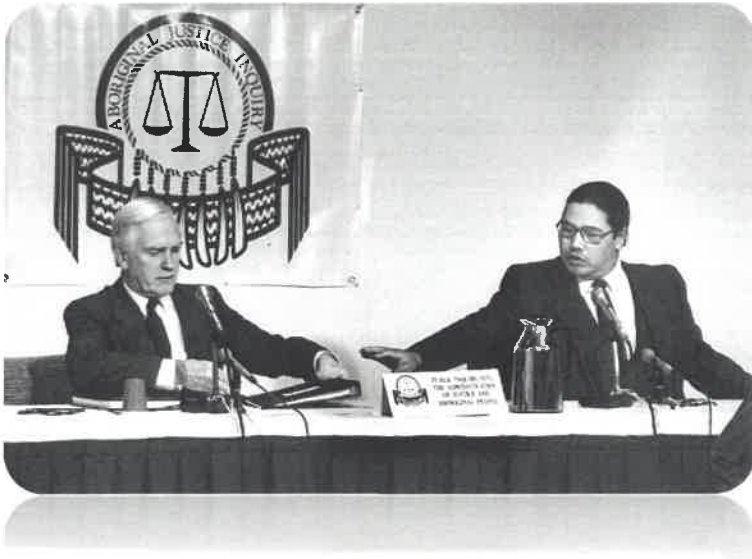
Known for his sense of wit, empathy and ability to listen, Murray was a person the country turned to in times of need. With profound conviction, he served all Canadians, often at significant personal cost, driven by a vision for a country founded on respect, human rights, fairness, equity, and justice. His leadership of the Commission broke new ground in Canada, shattering silence on residential schools and amplifying Survivor accounts of the devastating impacts these institutions had on generations of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families. He, together with the other Commissioners, gifted the country with 94 Calls to Action and 10 Principles of Reconciliation – roadmaps for reconciliation that have inspired countless individuals, institutions and communities to reflect, change and move forward together.

**Ry Moran, Associate University Librarian, Reconciliation**

[Honouring the Legacy of Murray Sinclair -  
University of Victoria](#) [www.uvic.ca](http://www.uvic.ca)



Judge Murray Sinclair on Sept. 2, 1989. When Sinclair was appointed to the provincial court of Manitoba, he made history as the first Indigenous judge in Manitoba. He was appointed as associate chief judge of the provincial court in 1988.



Commissioner Murray Sinclair (right) with commissioner Alvin Hamilton for the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, pictured in November 1989.

(Dave Johnson / Free Press files)

Murray Sinclair was sworn in as a judge on Manitoba's Court of Queen's Bench in 2001.

(Phil Hossack / Free Press files)



Justice Murray Sinclair was appointed chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2009. He's pictured here at The Forks in 2010 on the national day of healing for residential school survivors.

(Wayne Glowacki / Free Press files)







During the COVID-19 pandemic, former Senator Murray Sinclair used his voice to encourage other Indigenous people to get vaccinated.

(Mikaela Mackenzie / Free Press files)

Murray Sinclair attends the future site of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in November 2022.

(Ruth Bonneville / Free Press files)



Murray Sinclair speaks during a Public Safety Summit at the RBC Convention Centre in April 2024. A few weeks later, he was inducted into the Order of Manitoba.

(Mike Deal / Free Press files)



[A life in pictures: Hon. Murray Sinclair – Winnipeg Free Press](https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/story/news/local/2024/04/24/murray-sinclair-order-of-manitoba-1017242001/)

[www.winnipegfreepress.com](http://www.winnipegfreepress.com)

---

## Winter Solstice by Annette Bleic

The summer solstice reflects the longest day of the year, whereas the winter reflects the shortest day of the year. We are coming upon the winter solstice where the days will start getting longer. I am excited when I know the days are getting longer. Winter wreaks havoc on my well-being as I am more of a summer person. I look forward to the longer days.

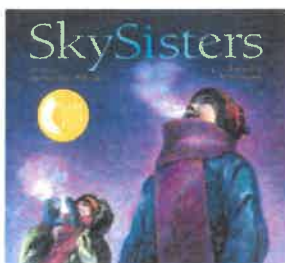
In Indigenous culture, when winter solstice was celebrated, it marked a time where all the chores were done and a time to hunker down for the long cold winter season. It was a time for storytelling and gathering with friends and family. Enjoying the fruits of your labour. December 21 is the Winter Solstice. I hope you take time to enjoy some time with friends and family.

I am going to share a link to a story called the Sky Sisters written by Jan Bourdeau Waboose. The book is about two sisters who set out to watch the dancing spirits in the sky (Northern Lights). It is a lovely story for children of all ages.

I would love to hear some stories on how your family spends the Winter Solstice.

Thank you,

**Annette Bleic, Indigenous Support Worker, Navigate/ Nides**



**Sky Sisters- Written by Jan Bourdeau Waboose Illustrated by Brian Deines**

Listen to the Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dP-S6rwgunk&t=9s>

Summary (from <https://goodminds.com/collections/children-series>): SkySisters is a children's picture book by Ojibwe writer and storyteller Jan Bourdeau Waboose. In this contemporary story set in the winter season, two sisters go outdoors to play in the magical world of snow and moonlight to wait for the arrival of the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis).

---

# Seven Sacred Teachings

## How I incorporate teachings in my life

By Annette Bleic



According to an oral traditional story, the Seven Teachings were given to the Anishinaabe people early in their history.

Many Indigenous communities have adopted the seven guiding principles, in one form or another and adapted the teachings to suit their community values. There is much diversity among Indigenous people, however, the Seven Teachings remind us that we are all one, that we are all connected. The Seven

Teachings have been passed down from generation to generation. These gifts were passed to us from the Seven Grandfathers. They are the gifts that have been gifted to us in peace and harmony with ourselves and Mother Earth. It is said that when you live by the Seven Teachings you will be in harmony with yourself creating a good, happy life. Although the seven teachings are an Indigenous gift, the teachings themselves are for every living being to create harmony in themselves and environments. I am going to share how I incorporate the Seven Teachings in my life.

<b>The Seven Teachings include:</b>	Humility (the gift of the wolf)
Love (the gift of the eagle)	Courage (the gift of the bear)
Truth (the gift of the turtle)	Respect (the gift of the buffalo)
Honesty (the gift of the Sabé)	Wisdom (the gift of the beaver)

Sources:

Samatte, Sandra. **Seven Teachings Words**. Native Reflections, 2014.

The Seven Teachings <https://www.southernnetwork.org/site/seven-teachings>

---

**Eagle** represents **love**, because it is strong enough to carry all the teachings and fly close enough to the creator. Like love, the eagle can reach far and wide. I incorporate love into my life by caring for my family and friends and taking time for myself. Empathy and compassion are parts of what love entails. I have tremendous empathy and compassion for people and animals. I like to help earthly beings when I can. This is how I show love.



**Sabé**, also known as Bigfoot or Sasquatch, represents **honesty** as he is closest to the creator. I was once told by an Elder that Bigfoot lives between two worlds, the physical and spiritual, which is why sightings are rare. Honesty can take many forms such as, do not lie, steal, gossip, or cheat. Being honest is a virtuous quality to have. I incorporate this into my life every day. Sometimes it is by gently steering a friend or family member back on to the right path or walking back into a store if I forget to pay for something. I advocate for myself if I know I am not being treated justly, or for anybody that I see who is not able to advocate for themselves.

**Wolf** represents **humility** because it lives selflessly for its pack. To be shunned by the wolf pack is the most humiliating thing that could happen to a wolf. Like the wolf, I too live my life selflessly for my pack kids, husband, and family. To have humility means to be selfless and humble. It is important to not be arrogant or think that it is important to have better than others or be boastful. Humility is to be content with what you have or do not have.



**Bear** represents **courage**, because the bear has the courage and strength to face their fears while protecting their young, hence the term 'Momma Bear'. Courage means being able to do something even while afraid, to face your fears. For example, telling the truth even when it terrifies you to do so.

**Buffalo** represents **respect**. To honor all of creation is to have respect for yourself and for others. Buffalo respects others' needs and gives himself to the cycle of life. In Indigenous culture we are taught to respect our Elders as they are our knowledge

---

keepers. Respect also for the earth is foremost as she is our mother and sustains us, all living things are connected. I do my part by recycling and teaching my children these core values.



**Beaver** represents the gift of **wisdom**. Wisdom is not to be confused with knowledge. Wisdom is gained through life experiences. For example, you can tell a child not to touch a hot stove. Some will continuously try until they figure out the stove will burn them, and then they will never touch the hot stove again. They have gained the wisdom to know that the stove is hot. For myself, wisdom is knowing that if I litter the earth, it hurts me and everyone around me. Our earth is our home and needs to be respected.

**Turtle** represents **truth** because he carries it on his back. It is the guiding principle we carry in our hearts. Truth keeps us grounded and aligned with our true selves. Truth means to know, understand and follow the seven teachings. How I incorporate truth into my life is by following my conscience. If I am involved in situations where it requires transparency, I follow that. If I see someone in peril, I will help. I tell my children every day to follow their truth. I do believe this is the most important out of the seven teachings.

*If you would like, please feel free to share with me how you and your family incorporate the seven teachings into your lives.*

Thank you,

Annette Blecic (Indigenous Support Worker)



## Support Information

**Food support:** If your family is in need or you know of another NIDES family that is facing food insecurity, please reach out to our Indigenous Support team or another NIDES staff member. We will help to connect you with support.

### Mental Health supports:

**KUU-US Crisis Line Society** provides crisis services for Indigenous people across BC. Phone (adults and Elders): 250-723-4050 Phone (Youth): 250-723-2040 Phone (toll-free): 1-800-588-8717 Website: [www.kuu-uscrisisline.com](http://www.kuu-uscrisisline.com).

**Hope for Wellness Help Line** offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention by phone or online chat. Phone (toll-free): 1-855-242-3310 Website: [hopeforwellness.ca](http://hopeforwellness.ca).

**Métis Crisis Line** is a service of Métis Nation British Columbia. Phone: 1-833-MétisBC (1-833-638-4722)

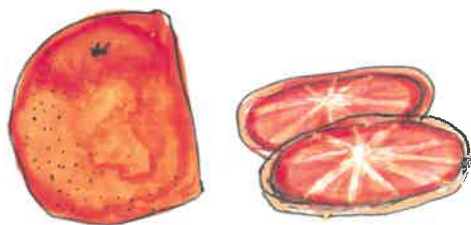
**VictimLink BC** Immediate 24 hours, 7 days a week, crisis support or victims of family or sexual violence. This service also provides information and referrals for all victims of crime. Phone: 1-800-563-0808 Email: [VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca](mailto:VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca)

**Foundry virtual access** provincewide virtual services for youth under 24 and their caregivers. All services are free and confidential, and may be accessed through the Foundry BC app or chat. Phone: (1 833 308-6379) or video calls. <https://foundrybc.ca/virtual/>

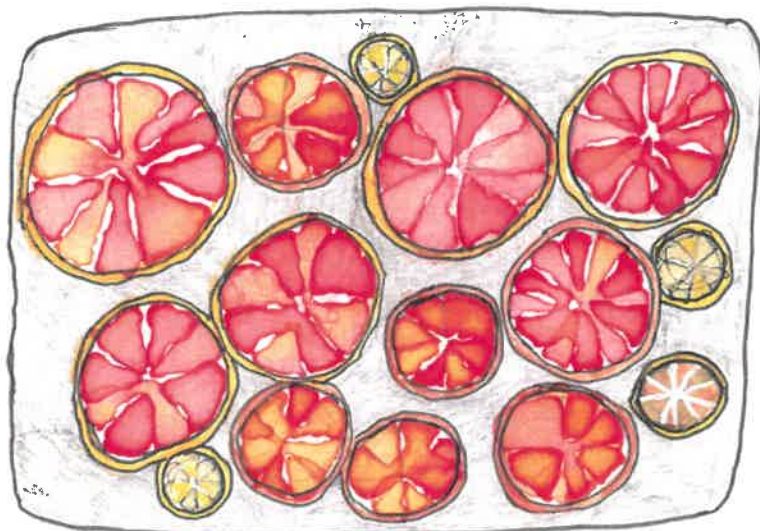
**Kids Help Phone** Get 24/7, immediate counselling, support, information and referrals. Phone: 1 800 668-6868 or Text: TALK to 686868 Texting support for adults available by texting TALK to 741741

**1-800-SUICIDE** offers support for those experiencing feelings of distress including thoughts of suicide. This phone line is available in over 140 languages. Phone: 1-800-784-2433

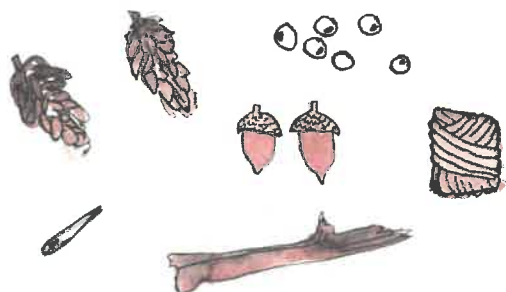
# Citrus Garlands



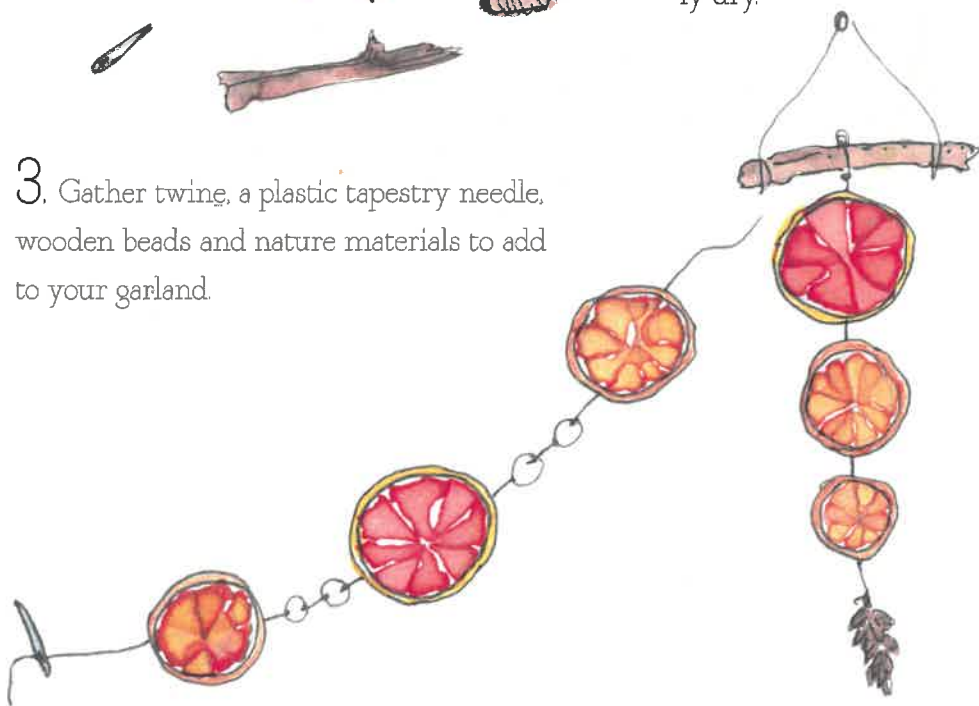
1. Slice your oranges, grapefruits, limes and other citrus into even slices around 1/4" thick.



2. Dry them in a dehydrator at 135°F or in an oven at its lowest temperature. This could take up to 24 hours depending on the thickness of your fruit. They should be completely dry.



3. Gather twine, a plastic tapestry needle, wooden beads and nature materials to add to your garland.



4. String your dried citrus and other bits to make garland and hanging swags with sticks. Pinecones and acorns make lovely finials! Tie knots to keep things spaced apart.



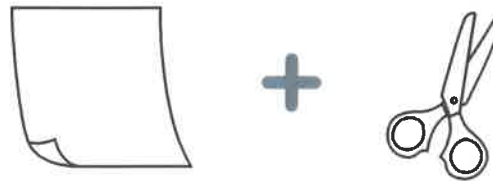
5. After you are finished with your decorations you can use the dried citrus slices in tea!— no waste here!

# How To Make a Paper Snowflake

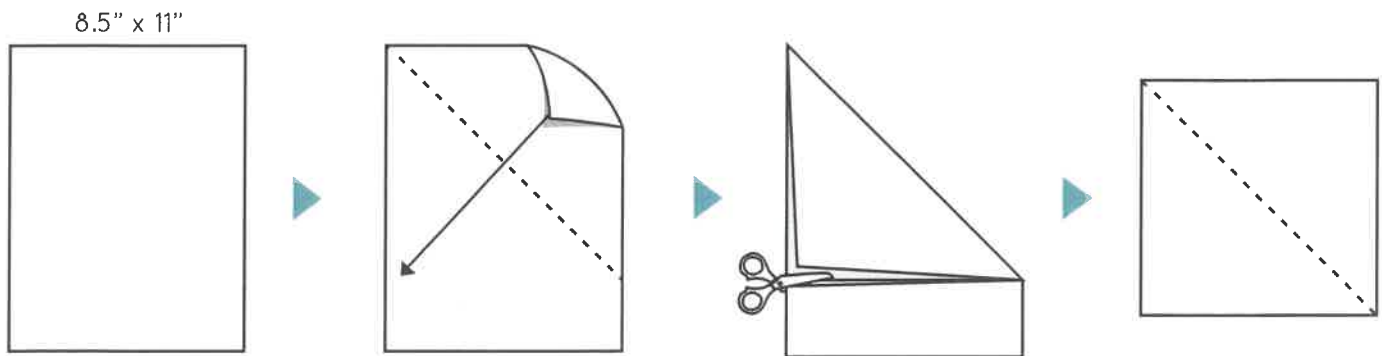
Winter is coming! Follow these simple directions to get started creating your own snowflakes. Use this template to create the snowflakes shown in the following pages.

## What you'll need:

- Paper
- Scissors

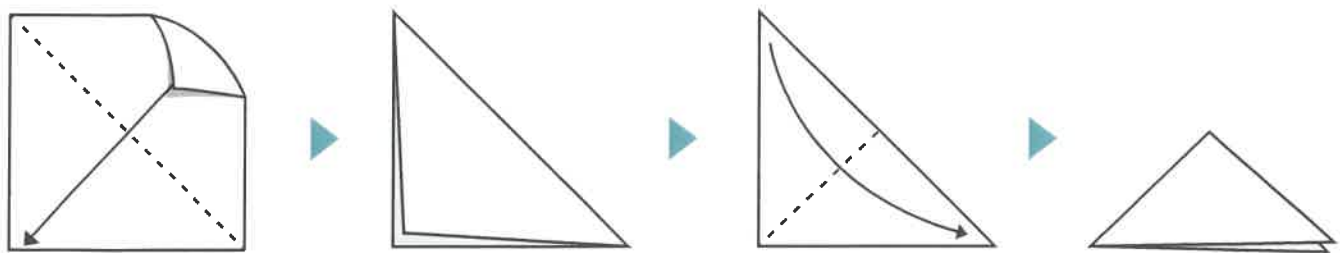


## Step One



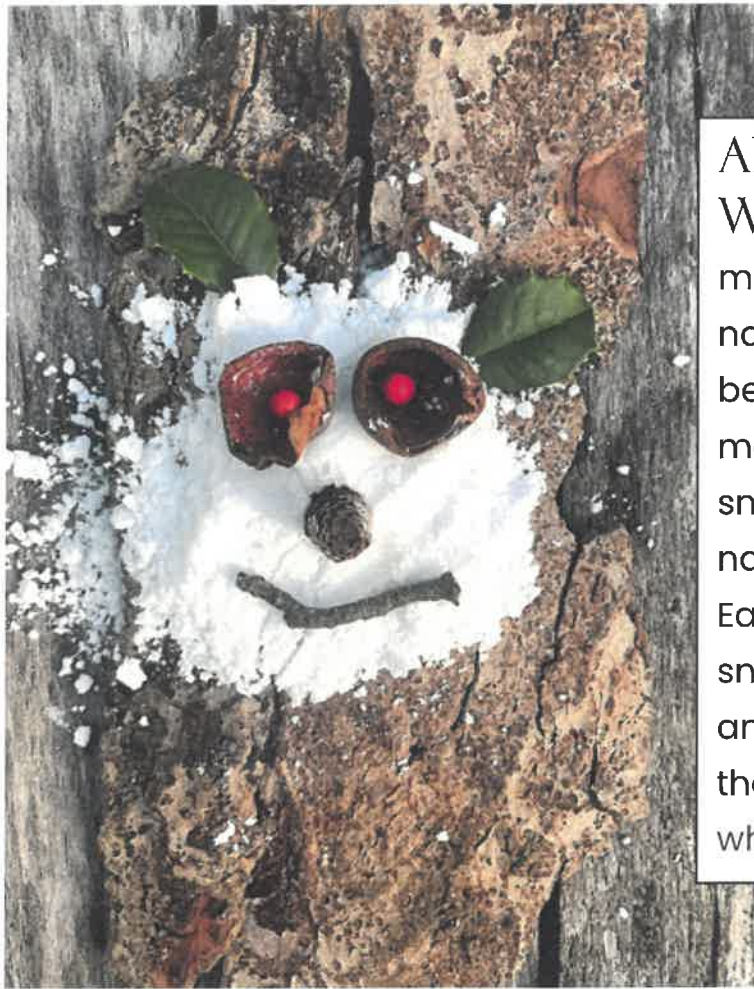
This first step is necessary only if you are using a piece of paper that measures 8.5\" x 11\" (also known as "printer paper"). Take the upper right corner of the paper and fold it down diagonally so it lines the left side of the paper. While folded, cut off the excess paper to create a perfect square.

## Step Two



Next, take the square and fold it again in half diagonally, **top-right** corner to **bottom-left** corner. Then take the **top-left** corner of that triangle and fold it down to the **bottom-right** corner of the triangle to make a smaller triangle.





AN EASY ACTIVITY FOR A WINTER DAY– make snow or mud faces on trees! Collect some natural materials: sticks, pinecones, berries, leaves etc, and find a tree to make a face on! Pack your mud or snow on first and then use your nature finds to embellish the face. Easy and fun! Wet snowball type snow will work best, and if there isn't any snow where you live live will do the job too! You can think about what the spirit of the tree might look

[www.wineberrywoodpress.com](http://www.wineberrywoodpress.com)

TOO COLD OUTDOORS? GET MOVING INDOORS!

## Burpee Card Game

Looking for more activities?  
Learning Resources? Try here!

Shuffle a deck of cards and give each student two cards. Students keep one card and give the other card face down to another student of their choice. The gifted card becomes a burpee card.

**Diamonds:** Lunges

**Hearts:** Push ups

**Clubs:** Jump squats

**Spades:** Mountain climbers

**Numbered cards:** 2–9 reps

**Face cards:** 10 reps

**Aces:** 11 reps

**Burpee card:** 5 burpees

At the start signal, students will do the number of reps for the exercise on their card, plus the burpees for any burpee cards gifted to them.

After finishing their card and any burpee cards received, the student runs to the card stack to get another card and back to their mat to finish another exercise. The goal of the game is to collect and do as many cards as possible until the deck runs out.




<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/indigenous-education/resources/identity/>








# WINTER PHOTO & ART SHOWCASE



Winter is here. Show us your wintery  
photo or art! What does winter look  
like where you live?



Email a photo to  
[sandra.rutherford@sd71.bc.ca](mailto:sandra.rutherford@sd71.bc.ca)  
We will feature it on our Indigenous  
Education Online Webpage  
<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/indigenous-education/online-learning/>





## Indigenous Online Learning Community

Please join us at our weekly online Chat and Chew. This is an informal time to connect with our team, ask questions, and get to know each other.

Chat & Chew will be held on Fridays from 1:00-1:30pm.

Scan the code or use the link to join us:

<https://bit.ly/inedonline>

