

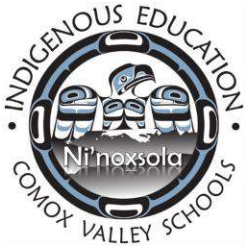


NI'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program

Revised July 2025

Evelyn Voyageur Edna Leash Bryce Mercredi Leilaina Jules
With gratitude to founding members Mary Everson & Bruce Carlos



AEKAKE LA KWA BEBAGUNS - TAKING GOOD CARE OF VISITORS (ayka kee la kwa bee baa gwuns)

Ni'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

The word Ni'noxsola was given to our program to use by Evelyn Voyageur and Mary Everson, both Kwak'wala speakers and members of the Ni'noxsola Elders Advisory.

The Ni'noxsola term is used when we are speaking of the 'Ni'noxsola, Elders in Residence Program' and cannot be used for individual titles.

It is a Kwak'wala word and destined for cultural elders of that heritage designated by band members. Please ask your invited guest how they wish to be greeted and introduced.

Ensure that there is parking available close the entrance and that your guest is greeted at the door. Enquire if they have transportation or mobility issues that need to be addressed.

Our team enjoys classic local organic foods whenever possible- they are careful of what they eat, where it comes from, and if it contains palm oils or msg.

Evelyn: No spicy foods, white bread, processed meats or sugary foods (muffins, cookies)
Prefers honey in her tea or coffee. Thrifty's gift cards. Be aware of stairs and walking distance

Edna: No spicy foods, likes meat or fish sandwiches (not wraps), likes herbal tea with a little honey
Allergic to licorice (in many herbal tea blends). QF or Thrifty's gift cards. Be aware of stairs and walking distance

Ramona: NO MSG Thrifty's gift cards

Sheila: Does not like baked fish but smoked and canned ok. Prefers black coffee or herbal teas. PC gift cards

JoAnn: Will try anything, likes her coffee with cream. PC gift cards

Janet: No spicy foods, not a fan of salads. Likes herbal teas with sugar and milk, water. QF gift cards

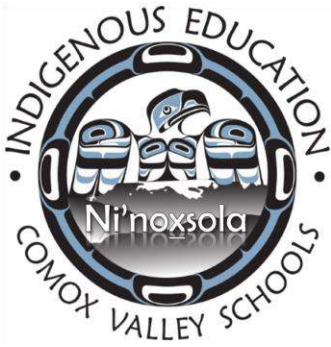
Bryce: Will try anything. QF gift cards

Annie: No spicy foods, not a fan of salads, likes meat or fish sandwiches (not wraps) Likes coffee with cream and sugar, water. PC gift cards. No stairs- uses a cane and walker for distances

Comfort Kits: At the In Ed office, we have 2 bags containing 4 seat cushions, 4 blankets, 2 cone covers for parking, gloves, umbrellas and warmers for the comfort of your guests. These can be loaned out upon request.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns,

Gwen Monnet gwen.monnet@sd71.bc.ca
Indigenous Cultural & Community Coordinator
Cell 250 207 3762



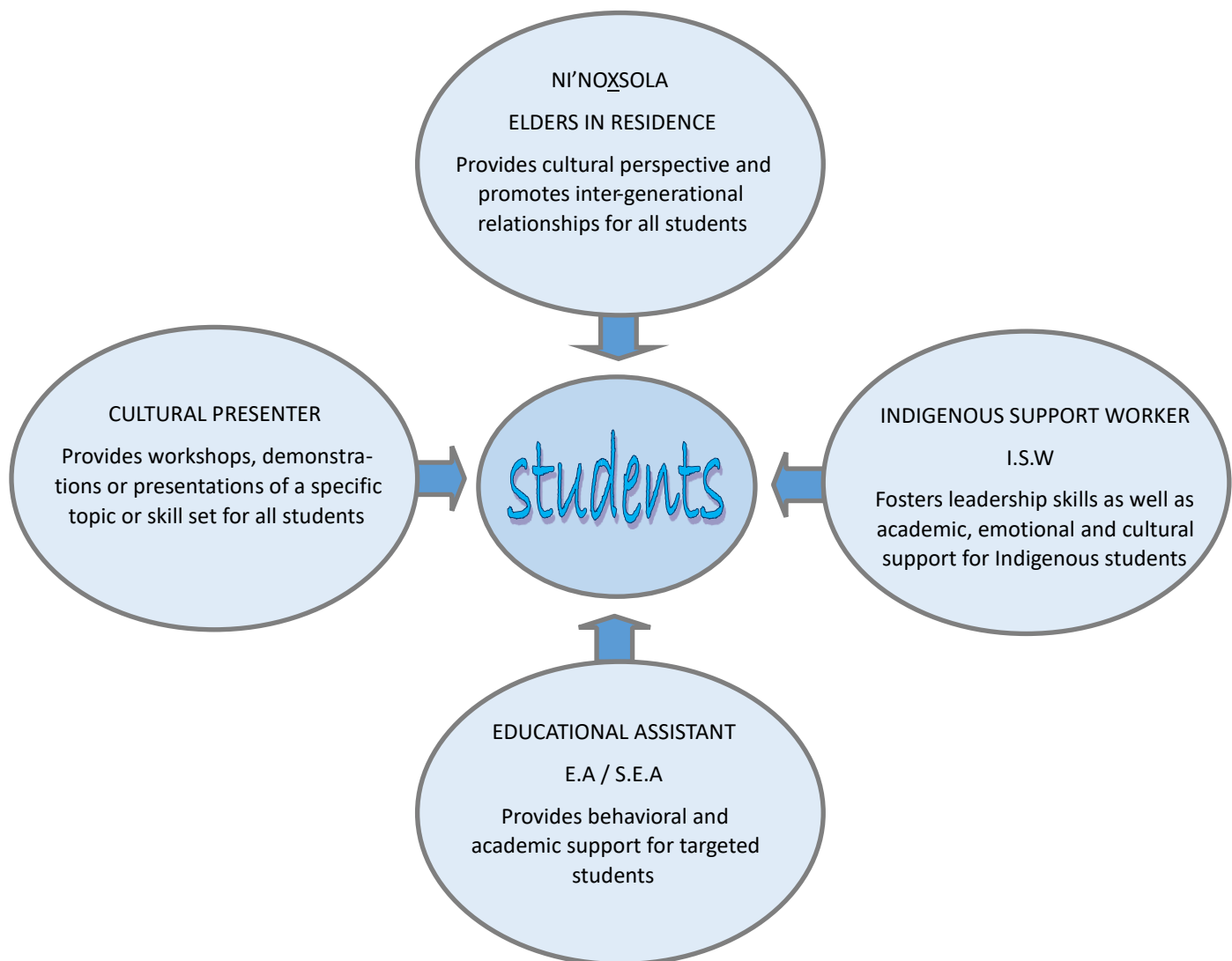
ROLES OF SUPPORT STAFF

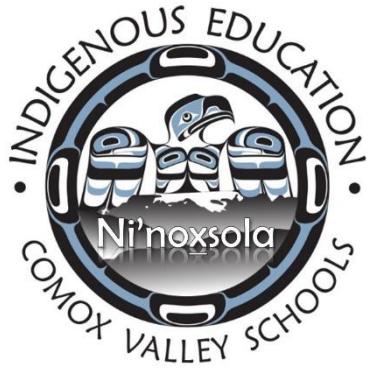
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Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

The following visual was created with the purpose of clarifying the roles of different support staff within the school.

This is a highly simplified tool and does not in any way mean to deflect from the many responsibilities that each role carries.





WHO IS AN ELDER?

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Elders in Residence Program

Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

Who is an Elder?

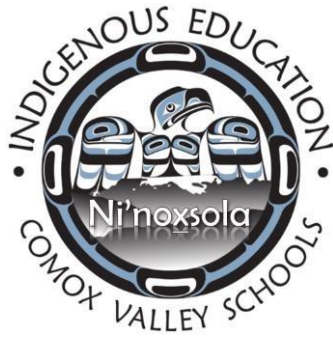
Our Ni'noxsola Advisory considers an Elder to be someone who is wise in the ways of their culture and are recognized in the Indigenous community for their culture, wisdom, stability and understanding, regardless of age.

Wise Ones have knowledge of traditional and cultural teachings and live based on the traditional life values that they grew up with. An Elder is respectful of all peoples and is a positive role model to Indigenous people. It is for these reasons that the title of Elder, Noxsola, Knowledge Keeper, Wise One (or however it is culturally appropriate for your Elder to be addressed) cannot be chosen; it is earned through a shared respect throughout the Indigenous community.

It is the vision of the Ni'noxsola program to create awareness and understanding of the meaning of cultural integrity. To share with the community the real meaning of what it means to be an Indigenous person, what are the core beliefs and to understand that essentially it is the land and environment that dictates the culture and traditions of Indigenous groups across Canada.

"The concept of an Elder in the Indigenous community is sometimes a difficult one for non-Indigenous people to understand. The difference is in the language: in English, it is a title; a noun. In Indigenous languages, it is a verb that describes the role."

Elders Protocol and Guidelines- University of Alberta



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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Elders in Residence Program

Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

A Knowledge Keeper would work in consultation with CVS Principal of Indigenous Education towards:

Goals:

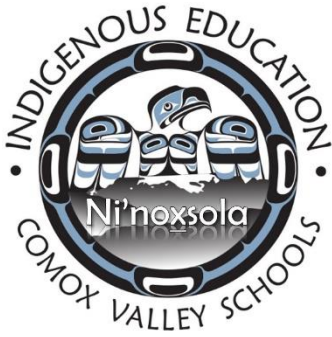
- Assisting host school in providing opportunities within the school system throughout the grades for all students and staff to recognize and appreciate our local First Nations people including sharing of the Origin Story of our local people (to be provided)
- Assisting host school in providing information regarding the diversity of Indigenous peoples across British Columbia and Canada
- Maintaining a presence in the host school to encourage a greater understanding of cultural values including: prioritizing the background and connection to ancestors, people, nature and society, the societal rules of community, the validating of life and the sharing of Indigenous world views.
- Assisting the host school in providing opportunities within the school system throughout the grades for all students and staff to recognize and appreciate the Elder's personal cultural background and the sharing of traditional knowledge and experience.
- To facilitate communication/relations with local Knowledge Keepers for staff and students.
- Cooperation with the host school to plan and implement strategies to encourage Indigenous enhancement activities for our First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.

Objectives:

- To prioritize relationships between staff, students, and Wise Ones with the goal of building bonds and a deeper respect for Indigenous peoples and culture.
- Accessibility to provide insight and guidance to staff and students at the host school in implementing cultural content designed to enhance our Indigenous programs.

Liaise with:

- Comox Valley Schools Ni'noxsola Advisory
- Ni'noxsola Coordinator gwen.monnet@sd71.bc.ca



ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

NI'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

Core Function:

The Elder in Residence will provide guidance and support to students and employees of their host school through the sharing of their traditional knowledge and experience.

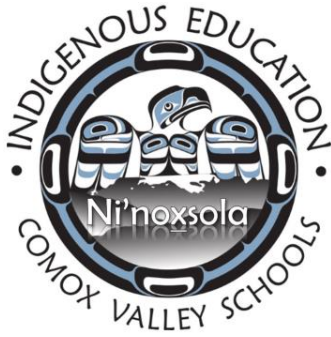
Authority:

The Elder in Residence is responsible to the District Principal of CVS Indigenous Education.

Details of Function:

The Elder in Residence will:

- Work in cooperation with staff to increase students' knowledge and understanding of cultural teachings.
- Welcome attendees to gatherings on behalf of our program as the Resident Elder when appropriate.
- Participate in the instruction of school programs, collaboratively and with the support of the host school staff and teachers.
- Assist in the planning and implementation of Indigenous content for teachers and support staff where possible.
- Assist in fostering and maintaining positive, supportive relationships between Indigenous students and school staff.
- Attend meetings as required and where appropriate.
- Provide verbal or written reports to the District Principal of Indigenous Education at monthly meetings.
- The Elder in Residence will not replace teachers, instruct or supervise students without assistance.



PROGRAM PROTOCOL

Ni'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

Fostering a positive classroom experience for our Ni'noxsla team, students and staff.

1. The Knowledge Keeper should be greeted by the Indigenous Support Worker at the school office. It is important that on the first visit that the School Principal put aside at least a half hour to sit and converse with the Knowledge Keeper, the ISW and Ni'noxsla Coordinator. Colonial time should not be considered during this initial visit and ideally the two leaders will not feel rushed. Tea would most certainly be welcome.
2. We will provide your school with information packages and links to video biographies. We have found that staff meetings are a great place to introduce and educate school staff. Most often teachers will contact the Elder directly and set days are put in place and made known to staff of your Elder in Residences' availability. It should be noted that the ISW will support but is not responsible for the Knowledge Keeper.
Please decide on clear goals and objectives prior to inviting the Elder into the classroom and discuss with them how her/his visit fits into the plans of the day.
3. Administrators and office staff will be informed of the name of the Elder and the time and purpose of the visit well in advance. The first week in the school should be viewed as an introduction to all staff and workings of the school.
4. The Wise One's role is not one of a support worker and as such is not responsible for classroom discipline or studies. The Elder should never be the sole adult in the classroom.
5. Should an Elder need to cancel their visit for any reason, they should contact school staff at the respective school as soon as possible. Classroom Teachers should keep in mind that the Elders may not have information regarding school closures due to weather or other special circumstances. Please try to contact your Knowledge Keeper if you have a planned visit.

6. Have a student designated to thank the Elder once the day is complete, and if required, help them carry their materials out.

7. Comox Valley Schools Indigenous Education will provide our Ni'noxola team with a vest and an official identification card with lanyard. We will check in with them on a regular basis and provide support for time sheets and keep them informed on special events.

Our Ni'noxola team will be celebrated with a Role Model Poster (professional photo and biography). We will provide video biographies, story-telling opportunities, and a website page

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

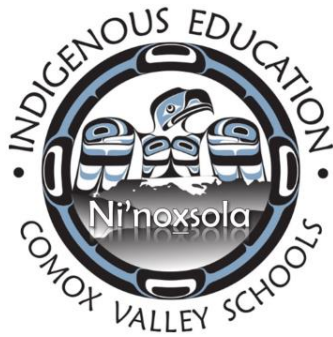
The District Principal of In Ed and Ni'noxola coordinator will be available to answer any questions or concerns of all parties.

8. Ways you can support your Elder:

Invite your Knowledge Keepers to teas, luncheons to celebrate their contributions.

Invite your Elders to special events happening within the school; assemblies, concerts...

Take the time to listen; you will be glad you did.



K'OMOKS HISTORY

NI'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program

Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

Information source [Cultures - K'ómoks First Nation](#)

K'ómoks First Nation History

K'ómoks First Nation's history begins with the arrival of their ancestors to this territory at the end of the last Ice Age. Descent from these First Ancestors tie the K'ómoks and Pentlatch tribes to their respective territories. For thousands of years, KFN ancestors occupied the extent of their territories, and harvested and managed the rich natural resources therein. These lands and waters supported thousands of people who developed a rich and sophisticated culture. The disease and warfare that accompanied contact with Europeans in the late 18th century decimated KFN ancestors, just before an onslaught of settlers came to their territories. From this time, KFN has struggled against colonial policies that tried to alienate KFN people from their territories, resources, and culture. Despite all of this, KFN's ancestors persevered, and current generations of KFN people continue to assert their rights and title to the whole of their territory.

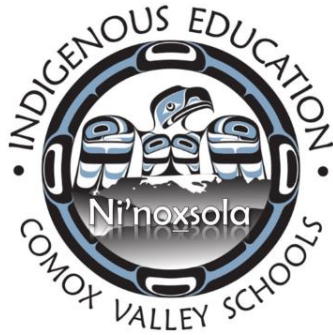
HISTORY

K'ómoks First Nation, like many First Nations, is composed of culturally related, but distinct groups or tribes, that, through various historical processes have come to be organized together as a single modern First Nation. The organization now known as K'ómoks was first recognized by Canada as a distinct Indian Band in 1876, with the formalization of the Comox Indian Band.

The K'ómoks History was prepared by Jesse Morin, PhD, Archaeologist, Ethnohistorian, Heritage Consultant, Adjunct Professor at the SFU Department of Archaeology, and Adjunct Professor at the UBC Institute for Oceans and Fisheries.

Please refer to the link below for a detailed summary of the K'ómoks History.

<https://komoks.ca/cultures/#history>



K'OMOKS ORIGIN STORIES

Ni'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

Information source <https://komoks.ca/cultures/#story>

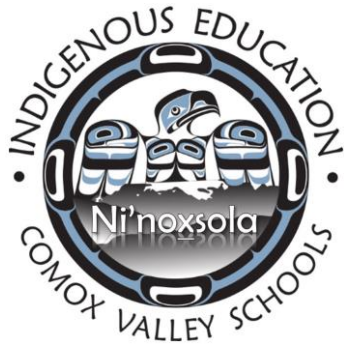
'KFN today consists of several formerly separate tribes, both culturally K'ómoks and Pentlatch. The Sathloot ('sath-loot), Sasitla (sa'seet-la), Ieeksen (eye-'ick-sun) and Xa'xe ('ha'hey) are all culturally K'ómoks and have their own unique origin stories. The Pentlatch had a similar culture but spoke a distinct language and also have their own unique origin story. These origin stories all tie the tribes' first ancestors to their respective tribal territories. We have included a selection of KFN origin stories below and will continue adding others as we are ready to share.'

A Sathloot Origin Story

"A long time ago, Cia'tlk'am ('shal-kum) descended from the sky. He wore the feather garment Qua'eqoe ('khwhy-khwhy) and settled in Nga'icam (Quinsam). He became the ancestor of the Catloltq (Sathloot). With him, his sister Te'sitla (teh-'seet-la) arrived. She was so big that she needed two boats to cross the sea. The brother and sister wandered through all countries and visited the Nanaimo, Ni'ciatl (Ni-Such), Tlahu's (Kahuse) and many other tribes who all became their younger brothers." {Boas 1895:86}

A Pentlatch Origin Story

"A long time ago, two men, Koi'min ('koh-yuh-min) and He'k'ten ('heck-oo-tin) descended from the sky. They became the ancestors of the PE'ntlatc (Pentlatch). Once the sea receded far from its shore and the women went out far and filled their baskets with fish. The bottom of the sea remained dry for a long time. But He'k'ten was afraid that the water would rise that much higher later on. Therefore, he made a long rope of cedar branches and toed four boats together. At last, the water really flowed back and began to flood the shore. So, he tied the rope to a big rock in the mouth of the PE'ntlatc River, fastened the other end to the boats and the two chief families floated about on the rafts. The other people begged He'k'ten, "Oh, allow us to tie our boats to your rope. We will give you our daughters as wives." But He'k'ten didn't allow it and pushed them away with poles. When the water receded again, they alone found their home again, while the others were scattered about the wide world. A whale remained stranded high up on the mountain near PE'ntlatc Lake. The water up there froze and it was unable to get away again. It can still be seen there today and that is why the glacier in the PE'ntlatc Valley is called K'one-is (Queneesh)."



BIOGRAPHY – DR. EVELYN VOYAGEUR

Nl'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Aboriginal Education Comox Valley Schools

Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw – Kingcome Inlet

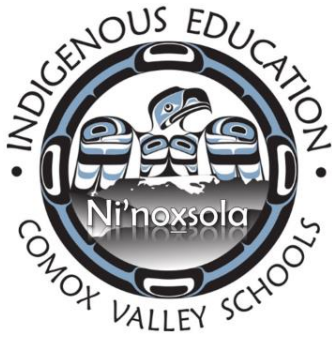


Despite going to St. Michael's Residential School at age ten, Dr. Evelyn Voyageur is a fluent speaker of Kwakwaka'wakw and an active matriarch in the Kwakwaka'wakw culture and traditions. She has dedicated her life to improving the health of Indigenous peoples through her more than five decades in the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

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 curricula 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.



BIOGRAPHY – EDNA LEASK

Ni'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

Tlingit, Tagish & Tutchone – Yukon



Hello, my name is Edna Leask. Comox has been my home for 25 years. I respect and honour that I live in the traditional territory of K'omoks First Nations.

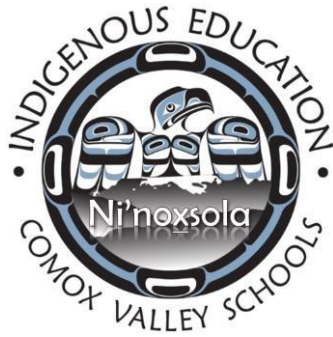
My ancestors are Tlingit, Tagish and Tutchone. I come from the Yukon. My father's people came from Lake Laberge and my mother's people are from Selkirk along the Yukon River.

My Mom and Dad were the Elders who greatly influenced me in my life. As a way of sharing my story, I want to share some stories about my Mom and Daddy. I remember February 14 with fondness because I can almost taste my Mom's heart-shaped sugar cookies which she made especially for me.

At least that's what I thought. I have brothers who might disagree. The cookies had pink icing and red icing around the edges. My Mom always made important events very special. She stayed up all night, many nights sewing moccasins and mukluks so Christmas would be a day to remember. There wasn't much money in those days so that's how she made extra money. Christmas was a big event at our home and there was always many extra people eating Christmas dinner. Relatives and others who were welcomed into our home to share food.

Mom showed me how to hunt small game and gather food from the land. Our father was the big game hunter. All the kids went on a hunt at one time or another and we all had jobs to do. Although, I was the youngest, my father always made sure I was included, and I had a little job to do. We learned from our parents how to live on the land and eat from the land. Daddy was an avid outdoorsman, he knew how to live 'in the bush'. My parents had 'his' and 'her' dog teams. Another fond memory was my Daddy singing in his language and telling stories about the different places we hunted and camped. He always cached our tent poles so the poles would be there when we came back again. We had several different camp sites for food gathering. My parents were a team and raising their family was their main focus.

Courageous, bold, adventurous, dedicated, determined, patient, generous, responsible, honest, hard-working, kind-hearted, sharing, caring, loving are some of the words I think of when I think of my Mom and Daddy. I recall, years later, my Father still checking to make sure everyone was okay. By then, he was an old man. He always had time for his grandchildren and there are many grandchildren. My parents taught me and my brothers and sisters about our people; who all our relatives are and the importance of keeping family and community connections. They taught us to share and to care about people. I do my best to teach my children and grandchildren what I learned from my Mother and Father. I know what my parents taught me are the guiding principles for me and my family. I can say that what I learned from them has helped me to deal with many challenges that I have had to face as an aboriginal woman in Canada. I believe in the importance of preserving the legacy of aboriginal people and actively encouraging the understanding of First Nations/aboriginal values and culture in Canada.



BIOGRAPHY – JOANN RESTOULE

NI'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools



Dokis-Okekindawt First Nation, Anishinaabe
Sturgeon Falls, Ontario

I am a member of the Dokis -Okekindawt First Nation, of the Anishinaabe people. The Anishinaabe people are located throughout areas of the Great Lakes both in Canada and the United States. My family crests are the Eagle, "Migisi" and the Muskrat, "Wajask". As an Anishinaabe Kwe-woman, mother and grandmother I have looked for ways and means to celebrate my cultural heritage. Culture, spirituality, art, theatre, song and dance have played a large role in my life. Through these mediums I have found ways to explore, learn and teach the rich cultural history of the ancestors of this country.

As a young woman I had the opportunity to spend time with Knowledge Keepers and mentors from across North America and other parts of the world. I pursued a deeper understanding of the impact of Canada's policy of assimilation by obtaining a degree in Criminology and Corrections then working at the Canadian National level with the Assembly of First Nations and the National Native Women's Association. Through my work in Addictions, Corrections, Health, Education, Economic Development, Youth Programs and developing awareness and understanding of culture and spiritual practice, I was able to grasp the degree to which we, as Indigenous people had lost our sense of place and identity. How the traditional Indigenous ways of being and cultural practices could bring this strength and identity back into being.

The teachings and the values of Indigenous ways of being, taught me the value of a sense of place and belonging. Culture, spirituality, family and community are to me, the pillars of life. Opportunities to create these connections in a meaningful way are first and foremost in all aspects of my life and my work. I am the mother of 3 children and a grandmother, "Kokum". I make my home in the traditional territory of the K'omoks First Nation (Pentlatch, E'ik'wsən, and K'omoks (Sathlout & Sasitla), where I have lived for over 37 years.

I have worked within the School District since 1997 in Indigenous Education and as a Youth and Family Support Worker. I have also had the gift of working as Coordinator of the Oh Toh Kin Cultural Society, from 1989-1999.



BIOGRAPHY – Sheila Buchanan

NI'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

Métis – Lac la Biche

Sheila Buchanan was birthed by her grandmother in a log house in the small town of Lac la Biche in Northern Alberta. She was the second child of fourteen and was raised by her Grandparents who taught her traditional ways such as trapping, cooking and survival skills. She speaks the languages that were spoken in the Métis community of Lac la Biche which include Cree, Michif, English and a little French.

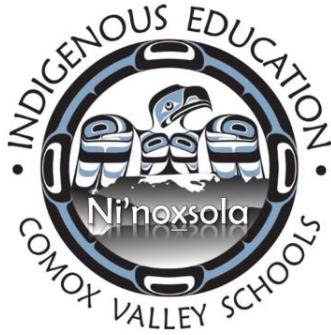


Métis Jigging was a regular part of Sheila's home life where the community would come together and dance. Every weekend neighbours would take turns hosting the family friendly dances in their homes. Lac la Biche may have been a poor community, but it was rich in simple pleasures and family values. Transportation was typically a horse and wagon, or a cutter in the winter months which is a type of sleigh.

Sheila was married at the age of eighteen and moved to Athabasca, also located in Northern Alberta. It was there that she raised her three children. She is now the proud Grandmother of twelve Grandchildren and twelve Great-Grandchildren.

Sheila is a firm believer in adult education. She decided to further her education in her late twenties by finishing her high school diploma, then obtained a college degree in law enforcement and corrections and completed her studies with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Alberta.

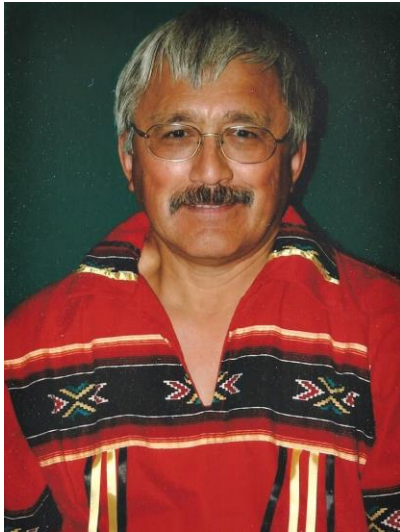
Sheila has worked as a a Peace Officer, Corrections Officer and retired as a Parole Officer.



BIOGRAPHY – BRYCE MERCREDI

Ni'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools



Métis – Fort Chipewyan

Bryce Mercredi was the first child of 8 born to Métis parents Peggy and Xavier Mercredi in Fort Smith, NWT. His parents were both born and raised in Fort Chipewyan where they, and later Bryce, attended residential day school. Bryce comes from many generations of Métis who worked for the fur trade, the Hudson Bay Company and as postmaster in Fort Chipewyan on the North shore of Lake Athabasca. Bryce's great-great grandfather travelled with Alexander Mackenzie to the Arctic Coast and to the West Coast of British Columbia.

The Mercredi family eventually moved to Yellowknife where the children were raised. Once acquiring a Mine Technician Diploma, Bryce worked in Northern BC, New Guinea, the Yukon and finally Port Hardy where his 3 children were born. The family moved to Comox in

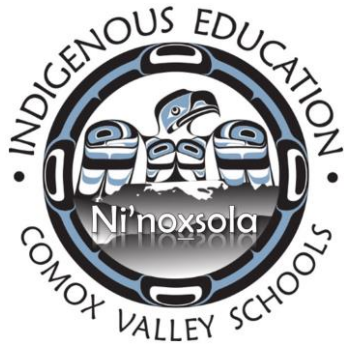
1985 where he and his wife still reside. Mooshum Bryce is the proud grandfather of 6.

Bryce has been involved in providing a voice for the Métis people for over 25 years including forming the Métis community North Island Métis where he served as director and vice president.

Since its formation in 2004, Bryce remained president of the local Métis association MIKI'SIW for 13 years where he now serves as an Elder on the Board. Through the years the MIKI'SIW has grown in numbers and has had an impact on our Indigenous community through their charitable work and creation of weekly family oriented cultural workshops. The MIKI'SIW has been an active participant in various cultural events in partnership with community organizations and has given identity to our local Métis residents.

Bryce has been a part of the Indigenous Education Council for over 20 years and shares his knowledge of Métis history and culture as a cultural presenter for Comox Valley Schools. He was presented with the Order of the Sash which is a distinct award provided by the Métis Nation of British Columbia to honor important work by an individual.

'Mooshum' has been honoured as an Elder with the Ministry of Health, Indigenous Health and Reconciliation, MNBC, MNBC Youth, and Comox Valley Primary Care Network. He is an active member of the Ni'noxsola, Elders in Residence program of which he is a founding member of the Advisory.



BIOGRAPHY – RAMONA JOHNSON

Nl'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Aboriginal Education Comox Valley School

Tsa Tsi Li Dzam'ga (Giving) and K'alam'alaga (Warrior Woman)
K'omoks First Nation



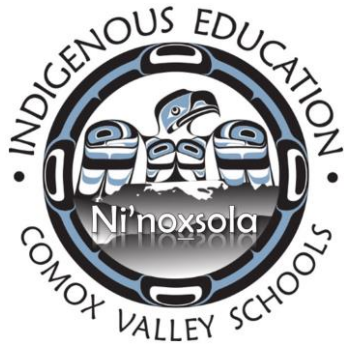
Ramona Johnson was born in Comox to Sonny and Ann Billie where she was raised in a family of ten children. She is a member of the K'omoks Band and has been adopted into the Kingcome Big House by Billy Robertson and the Late Gert Robertson. Ramona is married into the Guilford Island Big House through her husband, Charlie Johnson.

Many people in our community will recognize Ramona through her almost 30 years spent managing the I-Hos Gallery. During her time there she gained significant exposure for the gallery by collaborating a Canada wide memorial event for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Walking with Our Sisters showcased more than 1,200 pairs of hand beaded moccasin vamps along with cultural events and healing ceremonies for the families. This event pulled together the community by bringing to light a disturbing truth that had long been considered an indigenous problem.

Auntie Mona has always been drawn to work that interacts with the public, her first experiences were in banking and then in customer service as a hostess in the CN tower in Toronto. Upon her return to the Comox Valley in 1994, she completed a two year resort management course at North Island College. Afterwards, she worked as the in-house manager at a floating fishing resort in Ucluelet.

Ramona has maintained a presence in our community speaking at various Rotary groups, chamber of commerce meetings and North Island College's Elder College. She sits as an Elder with the Indigenous Education Council for SD71 and continues to support and promote Indigenous ways of being through sharing her knowledge and generous heart in our local schools.



BIOGRAPHY – JANET WILSON

Nl'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Aboriginal Education Comox Valley School



Ojibway (Anishanabe)-Enniskillen, Ontario

Janet was raised by Grandparents and Aunties in the village of Enniskillen, Ontario where she, her sister and brother had been put into the foster system at a young age. She did not have the opportunity to know her birth mother who was Sheeshagwaning First Nation from Manitoulin Island in Ontario. Her Mother had been enfranchised when she married Janet's father who was of Scottish and English descent.

Janet came to the Comox Valley in 1978 when she met and married a K'ómoks First Nation member and had 2 beautiful daughters.

Living and learning on the KFN reserve brought her a pride and sense of belonging that she had never known growing up in an urban setting with little contact with other Indigenous families. This feeling of community instilled in Janet a strong conviction that it is imperative to have a presence in urban schools so our children can see, connect and feel their own uniqueness as an Indigenous person.

Janet has been in the childcare field for 26 years, earning her Early Childcare Education certification at NIC. She has worked in several daycares in the Valley but found her home at the CV Aboriginal Head Start Preschool program where she stayed for 16 years; drumming and singing with our young ones.

Janet is an active member of our community and sits as an Elder on the Board with the Indigenous Women's Sharing Society, is a Wachiay Friendship member and an Elder with Laichwiltach Family Life Society. She is also involved with the Comox Valley Substance Use Strategy Collaborative.

Janet volunteers her time at the Lodge and the Junction participating in crafting circles, drumming and singing with and for, people who are coping with addictions. She also participates in many community gatherings such as MMIW Awareness Day, Comox Valley Spirit Walk and Orange Shirt Day.

Janet strives to live by the Ojibway Seven Sacred Teachings and is looking forward to bringing her teachings, knowledge and caring presence into our classrooms with a joyous heart.