

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



Sq'ewqel  
SEABIRD ISLAND



# S'ólh Téméxw, Tselhxwelmxw yóyes sq'eq'ó

*Our Communities, Our Families Working Together*

*Sq'éwqel (Seabird Island) is proud of our formative collective history. Honouring Mother Earth, Grandfather Sky and the generations of united communities working together to form one Family, Seabird Island.*

*Honouring our history and connectedness will lead our community into the Future. Community, Administration, Chief and Council are all walking together and working together as a Seabird Island Family.*











# MISSION STATEMENT

## **Sq'éwqel (Seabird Island Band) Council Mission Statement**

*Sq'éwqel (Seabird Island Band) exists to promote a Healthier, self-sufficient, self-governing, unified and educated community. We believe that a Healthy community is one that has achieved physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and cultural balance.*

*We work towards building a community where communal pride and respect are based on family values and respect for other people's values, views and ideas. We want to co-exist with other communities and governments while exerting our right to be a self-governing nation.*

*Sq'éwqel (Seabird Island Band) promotes full employment, the development of our local economy and improved housing conditions. We want our community to be a safe and prosperous place for our people. We aim at achieving a good standard of living for all our Band Members.*

*Sq'éwqel (Seabird Island Band) will accomplish this mission with the energy of our Youth, the wisdom of our Elders, the strength of our families, the vision, determination of our political leaders, the guidance of our spiritual and cultural leaders and the contributions of our staff members.*

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# Welcome to the 2023–2024 Annual Report

This report covers the period from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. Within these pages, you will find a comprehensive collection of updates and achievements from our seven Divisions, as well as numerous departments and programs.

The dedicated staff at Sq'ewqel (Seabird Island) work tirelessly to support and uplift the community. Through their efforts, we continue to strengthen our programs, foster growth, and uphold our commitment to serving the needs of our members.

We invite you to explore this report to learn more about the remarkable work accomplished over the past year and the impact it has had on our community.







**JIM HARRIS**  
CHIEF

- Chair - Council Executive Committee
- Co-Chair - Cheque Signer

**ALEXIS GRACE**  
COUNCILLOR

- Chair - Justice
- Co-Chair - Council Executive Committee
- 3rd-Chair - Inter-Governmental Affairs/Ab Rights & Title
- 3rd-Chair - Cheque Signer

**ASHLEY BOBB**  
COUNCILLOR

- Chair - Health & Social Development
- Co-Chair - Early Childhood
- Co-Chair - Infrastructure /Lands Committee
- 3rd-Chair - Child & Family Jurisdiction

**CHAUNDINE FISHER**  
COUNCILLOR

- Chair - Education - K-12, Post Secondary, College
- Co-Chair - Child & Family Jurisdiction
- 3rd-Chair - Early Childhood

**MARCIA PETERS**  
COUNCILLOR

- Chair - Infrastructure /Lands Committee
- Chair - Cheque Signer
- Co-Chair - Justice
- 3rd-Chair - Administration Department / Audit Committee
- 3rd-Chair - Development Corporation Board (Sq'ewqel)

**PAUL ANDREW**  
COUNCILLOR

- Chair - Child & Family Jurisdiction
- Chair - Development Corporation Board (Sq'ewqel)
- Co-Chair - Child & Family Jurisdiction
- 3rd-Chair - Council Executive Committee

**RODNEY PETERS**  
COUNCILLOR

- Chair - Early Childhood
- Co-Chair - Inter-Governmental Affairs/Ab Rights & Titles
- 3rd-Chair - Education - K-12, Post Secondary, College
- 3rd-Chair - Justice

**SALLY HOPE**  
COUNCILLOR

- Chair - Inter-Governmental Affairs/Ab Rights & Title
- Co-Chair - Administration Department / Audit Committee
- Co-Chair - Education - K-12, Post Secondary, College
- Co-Chair - Development Corporation Board (Sq'ewqel)

**WILLOW WALKER**  
COUNCILLOR

- Chair - Administration Department / Audit Committee
- 3rd-Chair - Health & Social Development
- 3rd-Chair - Infrastructure /Lands Committee



# CHIEF & COUNCIL



Photographs:  
Remembrance Day  
November 2024





## **CHIEF,** *James (Jim) Harris*

This past year marked the beginning of a new term for the council. We welcomed four new council members, and so far, everything has been progressing well. The new council members quickly adapted and have integrated seamlessly into their roles, with everyone staying very busy.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the council members who served with us during the previous term. It was a pleasure working with you, and I truly appreciate your contributions.

At the start of this term, I enrolled in the AFOA (Aboriginal Financial Officers Association) Indigenous Leadership Program. The course spanned several months, and I am pleased to report that I successfully completed it, earning my AFOA Indigenous Leadership Certificate.

In addition, I have attended several important meetings, including those with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Fraser Salish Region and the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC). Most UBCIC meetings are held at Musqueam, but the last one I attended took place in Williams Lake.

We are also involved in the C2C (Community to Community) meetings, which bring together representatives from the District of Kent, Village of Harrison Hot Springs, Cheam First Nation, Sq'ewlets First Nation, Sts'ailes First Nation, Seabird Island, Popkum Village, the Fraser Valley Regional District, MP Brad Vis, and MLA Kelly Patton. These meetings are hosted and chaired on a rotating basis by the participating communities.

I have also engaged with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to discuss safety concerns related to Highway #7, particularly the entrances and exits for Seabird.

This past year, we received the devastating news that almost all the windows of our elementary school were broken. This incident deeply affected many of our Community Members emotionally.

Although we started a bit late, we did manage to have a Council orientation session.

Along with Chaundine and Alexis, I attended the B.C. Cabinet Ministers and First Nations meeting in Vancouver. I was also invited to participate in CAPSTONE interviews with AESS graduate students.

This year, we had a basket repatriation event at the elementary school. A family returned some cedar baskets, originally made by a Seabird member many years ago. They explained that their families had received the baskets in trade, although they did not know who the original basket maker was. They wanted to return them to our community, which was a meaningful gesture.

It's wonderful to see that we have several new homes being built around the community. Additionally, work on the new Cultural Center is underway, and new Youth Centre portables have been put in place.







**COUNCILLOR,**  
Rodney Peters

### **Intergovernmental Affairs**

Monthly meetings are held with the Director, staff, and Council portfolio holders. In November 2023, I attended their Strategic Planning session at the Harrison Hot Springs Hotel. Key projects discussed included the Key West Landslide, Log Sourcing, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) matters, the Sunrise Expansion Project with Enbridge, Stó:lō Place Names Tour, the Proposed Boat Launch, the White Sturgeon Research Project, and Hicks Creek Restoration.

Regarding the Lower Fraser Fishing Alliance (LFFA), I now serve as the Alternate Delegate, with Sally Hope as the Primary Delegate and Co-Chair of the Executive Committee. The LFFA continues to host forums, including Tier 1 forums with First Nations/Bands above the Port Mann Bridge and Tier 2 forums with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to prepare for the 2024 Fishing Plan. For instance, the 2024 Eulachon Fishing season opened from March 19 to April 6, 2024, with a possible extension into May, depending on the total Eulachon harvest in the Fraser River.

The Fraser Salmon Management Council hosted three forums: Forum 1 in Burnaby, Forum 2 in Nanaimo, and Forum 3 in Kamloops. These forums brought together Tier 1 First Nations/Bands and Tier 2 DFO representatives to discuss and plan for fishing activities. Currently, the Integrated Fishing Management Plan 2024 presents First Nations/Bands with two options or the opportunity to draft their own fishing plans for Chinook, Sockeye, and Chum. Since 2022, Sockeye fishing has supported dry-rack fishing in the canyon. However, due to the low Sockeye returns, there was no Sockeye or dry-rack fishing during the summer of 2023.

The S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance, hosted by Stó:lō Nation, welcomed Seabird as an official member alongside 16 other First Nations/Bands. We have held monthly board meetings and engaged with stakeholders. A strategic planning session was also conducted to identify projects and potential partnerships.

## Education

The Director, staff, and Council portfolio holders meet monthly to discuss various educational matters. In August 2023, I attended the Think-In for all school staff. We also reviewed the annual planning cycle, the post-secondary student program, and the education budget. The Education Committee's terms of reference have been reviewed and updated. The Seabird Parent Advisory Council has been active, holding monthly meetings since September 2023. Additionally, the Seabird College Board and staff meet monthly to track five-year funding, quarterly budgets, and course updates. The College underwent an external review by Dr. Lindeman, who presented an overview, summary, and a Q&A session.

## Justice

The Executive Director, staff, and Council portfolio holders hold regular and emergency meetings as needed. We have reviewed the Banishment List, which includes non-Indigenous individuals, Seabird members, and members of other First Nations. I also attended a virtual meeting with representatives from Canada, British Columbia, the RCMP, and Indigenous or Tribal departments. We continue to review and discuss information presented by the Agassiz RCMP regarding incidents that occur on Seabird Island.

## Closing Remarks

In closing, I want to thank and acknowledge all Community Members for coming forward with your concerns, questions, and input at meetings and events.

Respectfully submitted.

Rod Peters, Council





## **COUNCILLOR SIYOLWELH,** Marcia (Marcie) Peters

### Reflection on 2023: Progress and Achievements in Finance, Administration, and Infrastructure

As I reflect on the past year's accomplishments and challenges, I am proud to share the progress and growth achieved by the Finance and Administration Department and the Infrastructure Department.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the community for its support throughout 2023. Your engagement, feedback, and active participation have been instrumental in shaping our decisions and initiatives. Whether through attending meetings, providing input, or volunteering your time, your dedication to our shared goals has significantly contributed to the vitality and effectiveness of our council. I am deeply grateful for your continued trust and collaboration as we work together to serve and enhance our community.

### Highlights

#### **Finance and Administration**

The Finance Department team consists of:

- Accounts Payable & Receivable
- Finance Analysts / Comptrollers
- Payroll
- Purchasing
- Proposal Writer

Our finance team has achieved remarkable milestones while navigating challenges with precision and dedication. Their commitment to financial stewardship and strategic foresight has been instrumental in driving the Seabird Island Band's success. Throughout the year, the finance team successfully implemented initiatives to optimize operational efficiency, enhance risk management practices, and streamline financial processes. Their expertise and meticulous attention to detail have ensured the accuracy and integrity of our financial reporting, enabling informed decision-making at every level.

The Administration team consists of:

- Records Management Department
- Information Technology Department
- Human Resources Department



The Administration Department has spearheaded numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction. From streamlining administrative processes to implementing innovative solutions for remote work environments, their forward-thinking approach has fostered a culture of productivity and collaboration.

### Community Infrastructure

The Infrastructure Department team consists of:

- Custodial Department
- Lands Department
- Housing Department
- Public Works Department
- Fire and Emergency Management
- Health and Safety

The Lands Department has made significant contributions toward sustainable land management, environmental stewardship, and community well-being through the projects they have undertaken this year. Key highlights include the addition of the Animal Wellness and Lead Project Manager team members, the Cemetery Mapping Project, the Community and Family History Projects, the Wills and Estates Project, survey work, the Land Use Plan Update, and ongoing Land Advisory Committee meetings.

As stewards of infrastructure development, the Public Works and Housing Departments have played a pivotal role in improving the quality of life, fostering economic growth, and ensuring the safety and well-being of residents and businesses. Throughout the past year, they have remained steadfast in their commitment to delivering sustainable, resilient, and innovative infrastructure solutions.

Significant projects completed, initiatives undertaken, and milestones achieved include:

- Fire Hall expansion/renovation
- Construction of 34 new rental housing units
- Six individual members completed building their own homes
- Energy retrofit planning for 10 vacant units
- Design completion for Chief Hali Road and Pipehom Road
- Completion of water reservoir cleaning
- Planning for the new Child & Youth Center
- Commencement of cemetery upgrades
- Updated maintenance and asset management planning for all community buildings
- Initiation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) for Seabird
- Commencement of work on the new Seabird Cultural and Community Center

Of special note, the Infrastructure and Housing Departments successfully secured \$8,026,760 in funding for the various initiatives listed above.

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our dedicated staff. Please refer to your annual report for updates from each department, outlining their successes.





## **COUNCILLOR SIYOLWELH,** *Sally Hope*

The 2023-2024 year has been a period of learning for me, and through this experience, I have witnessed how our community serves as a source of inspiration. I hold deep respect for the unique gifts that each of you bring and continue to share with one another. It was with great honor and gratitude that I was elected by our community.

My primary portfolios include Intergovernmental Affairs and the Sq'ewqel Development Corporation. Additionally, I serve as an alternate for Administration and Education.

### **Intergovernmental Affairs**

This portfolio encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, but the technical staff have been exceptional in ensuring that portfolio holders are brought up to speed. The department's increased capacity has been instrumental in advancing various initiatives. The team provides monthly updates on each file during meetings with the portfolios, ensuring all matters are addressed with the appropriate support. Notable tables where the Intergovernmental Affairs team and portfolio holders collaborate include the S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance, the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA), and other fisheries-related discussions.

As the Delegate for the LFFA and Co-Chair of its Executive Committee, I actively participate in monthly meetings. I also contribute to several working groups within the LFFA, such as the Salmon Technical Working Group, the Non-Salmon Technical Working Group, and the Agreement and Economic Working Group. Additionally, I serve as a representative for the Fraser Salmon Management Council and take part in In-Season Planning meetings for fisheries.

### **Sq'ewqel Development Corporation**

The Sq'ewqel Development Corporation, located at the Pioneer Building in Agassiz, has undergone significant improvements, and the offices look fantastic! The staff work diligently to ensure the success of the corporation and have provided great support to the incoming council. As Chair of the SqDC Board, I am proud to say that the board members are knowledgeable and committed to the best interests of Seabird Island and the SqDC.

## Administration and Finance

While I am not the lead portfolio holder for Administration, I am an active member of the Audit Committee. We meet regularly with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Finance team, who are highly skilled and responsive to any questions or requests for clarification. Their professionalism, knowledge, and experience are invaluable, and it is a pleasure to work with such a friendly and dedicated team.

## Reflection on the Year

Our community has faced numerous challenges, some directly and others indirectly related to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these difficulties, I am deeply thankful to work alongside a dedicated council. Each council member brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and a strong desire to learn, which fosters open, honest, and respectful dialogue.

Above all, it is the community that continues to inspire me. Despite the many hardships that our families have faced, the community consistently uplifts one another, practices kindness, shows empathy, and remains resilient. We have confronted significant obstacles, such as those related to climate change, by standing together and addressing them head-on.

I look forward to the opportunities and growth that the new year will bring, confident that our community will continue to thrive and prosper.





## **COUNCILLOR SIYOLWELH,** *Willow Walker*

Law ey swayel, Willow Walker tel sqwix. I would like to take a moment to reflect on my first year as a member of Chief and Council. I deeply appreciate how well we all work together, and I am especially grateful for the support I've received from everyone in the office during this new role. It has meant a lot to me.

Throughout this year, we have attended many meetings covering a wide range of topics. In the beginning, I approached these meetings with the intention to listen and learn, absorbing as much information as possible. Now, I find myself asking questions, learning to use my voice, and figuring out how best to help our community thrive in all aspects.

Being a part of the Infrastructure, Capital/Public Works, Lands, and Housing portfolios has been an exciting experience. We have numerous projects underway, including the nearly completed accessible housing units that will soon be ready for new tenants. Watching our community grow has been truly exciting, and seeing the progress on the site where our new Cultural Building will be is wonderful. Once completed, it will be a great addition to our community. The Fire Hall also underwent some much-needed renovations, which were a significant improvement.

In Finance, HR, Admin, and the Audit Committee, things have been progressing well. I continue to learn and am eager to gain a deeper understanding of our Financial Administrative Law (FAL) and how it operates. I have a growing appreciation for our Finance Department and the hard work they do, especially given that we are a large and continuously growing organization.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all Community Members to get involved in and learn more about Child and Family Jurisdiction. This work will not be easy, but together we can create a plan to keep our children safe and our families united.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside our Community Members as we strive to make Seabird Island a safe, healthy, and proud community. I know in my heart that if we keep working together, we will continue to move forward in a good way.

All my relations,  
Willow Walker

**COUNCILLOR,**  
*Alexis Grace*



- Chair - Justice
- Co-Chair - Council Executive Committee
- 3rd-Chair - Inter-Governmental Affairs/Ab Rights & Title
- 3rd-Chair - Cheque Signer

**COUNCILLOR,**  
*Chaundine Fisher*



- Chair - Education - K-12, Post Secondary, College
- Co-Chair - Child & Family Jurisdiction
- 3rd-Chair - Early Childhood





**COUNCILLOR,**  
*Paul Andrew*

- Chair - Child & Family Jurisdiction
- Chair - Development Corporation Board (Sq'ewqel)
- Co-Chair - Child & Family Jurisdiction
- 3rd-Chair - Council Executive Committee



**COUNCILLOR,**  
*Ashley Bobb*

- Chair - Health & Social Development
- Co-Chair - Early Childhood
- Co-Chair - Infrastructure /Lands Committee
- 3rd-Chair - Child & Family Jurisdiction



**Photographs:  
Family Day  
February 2024**





## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

*Jason Campbell*

### **Strategic Advisor,**

*Chuck (Daryl) McNeil*

### **Human Resources**

### **Culture & Community Services**

*Events*

*Communications*

*Youth Program*

*Elders Program*

*Culture*

*Recreation*



## CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES



Seabird Island offers various cultural and language programs to promote knowledge of indigenous culture and languages. These programs provide halq'eméylem language classes to children and staff, incorporate cultural teachings into community events and daily activities, and aim to revitalize cultural practices.

A range of services are offered to support Elders and families in need. Elders programs assist with transportation, meals delivery, home maintenance and more. Income assistance and food bank services are available through the Social Development program. Employment assistance provides skills training and job search support.

The Seabird Island Communications and Marketing team plays a vital role in engaging Community Members. Under leadership direction. Our objectives are to keep the community connected, enhance program access and participation, and showcase all the great work happening at Seabird. We provide these services cost-effectively in-house, which benefits programs and opens funding opportunities. Savings often extend to Community Members as well.

The Seabird Island Events Program plans and hosts over 100 vibrant gatherings each year for Band Members and the local community. Our events aim to engage, connect, and celebrate the unique Seabird culture. The Seabird Island Band proudly sponsors Community Members' participation in sports, recreation and leisure activities. We provide financial assistance for registration fees, equipment costs, travel expenses and more.



# Meet the Team

## COMMUNICATIONS



**Zorana Edwards**  
Communications Assistant



**Kristy Johnson**  
Communications Assistant



**Ciara Bugsby**  
Communications Assistant



**Cassandra Manley**  
Communications Manager



**Sandra Bobb, IO**  
Communications Supervisor



**Jasmine Louis-Paul**  
Communications Assistant



**Quentin Charlie**  
Communications Assistant

Part of the Culture and Community Services Department, the Communications Program is dedicated to providing timely, accurate reporting to Sq'ewqel members and stakeholders. We are responsible for gathering, organizing, and sharing information with the community through both digital and traditional media channels. Our goal is to raise awareness, maintain a positive public image, and ensure that the Sq'ewqel brand is consistently and professionally represented.

Each team member brings their own unique skill set, including illustration, design, photography, writing, editing, publishing, printing, and finishing. Together, we promote the many programs and services offered at Sq'ewqel, highlighting events, workshops, clinics, and more for the benefit of the community.

In the 2023-2024 year, we transitioned from producing the monthly Yoo Hoo Newsletter to the new Sq'ewqel Sqwélqwel Pípe (Seabird Island Newspaper). Our newspaper emphasizes articles over advertisements and welcomes community submissions that align with our mission to promote positivity. We encourage Community Members to share their accomplishments so we can celebrate them with our friends, families, and neighbors.

We also introduced Schákwel tl' Sq'ewqel, a bi-monthly event schedule that provides a simple list of upcoming events hosted by various departments, keeping the community informed about current happenings.

Our Communications team has undergone extensive training, including six months of weekly Team Writers Workshops led by Cassandra and Sandra, as well as other professional development opportunities. Our priority is to hire locally whenever possible and train Community Members in communication skills. As part of this initiative, we have welcomed new team members from the Employment Center on a one-year, learning-on-the-job contract, with the hope of providing full-time opportunities and expanding our team in the future.

In addition to publishing, we also design promotional slides for five TV displays around Sq'ewqel—in the main lobby, doctors' lobby, schools, college, and the gas bar. We manage and post content to over 18 social media pages, with the Sq'ewqel page serving as our primary platform for daily updates. All notices and publications are also available on the Sq'ewqel website.

We appreciate your continued support of the Communications Program and all Sq'ewqel programs and services. By staying engaged with our communications and marketing materials and participating in events, workshops, and clinics, you help us strengthen our community. We look forward to seeing you at future events!

# FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Photographs:  
Career Fair  
March 2024







## **ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE DIRECTOR**

*Nigel Selvadurai*

### **PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

*Accounts Receivable*

*Accounts Payable*

*Payroll*

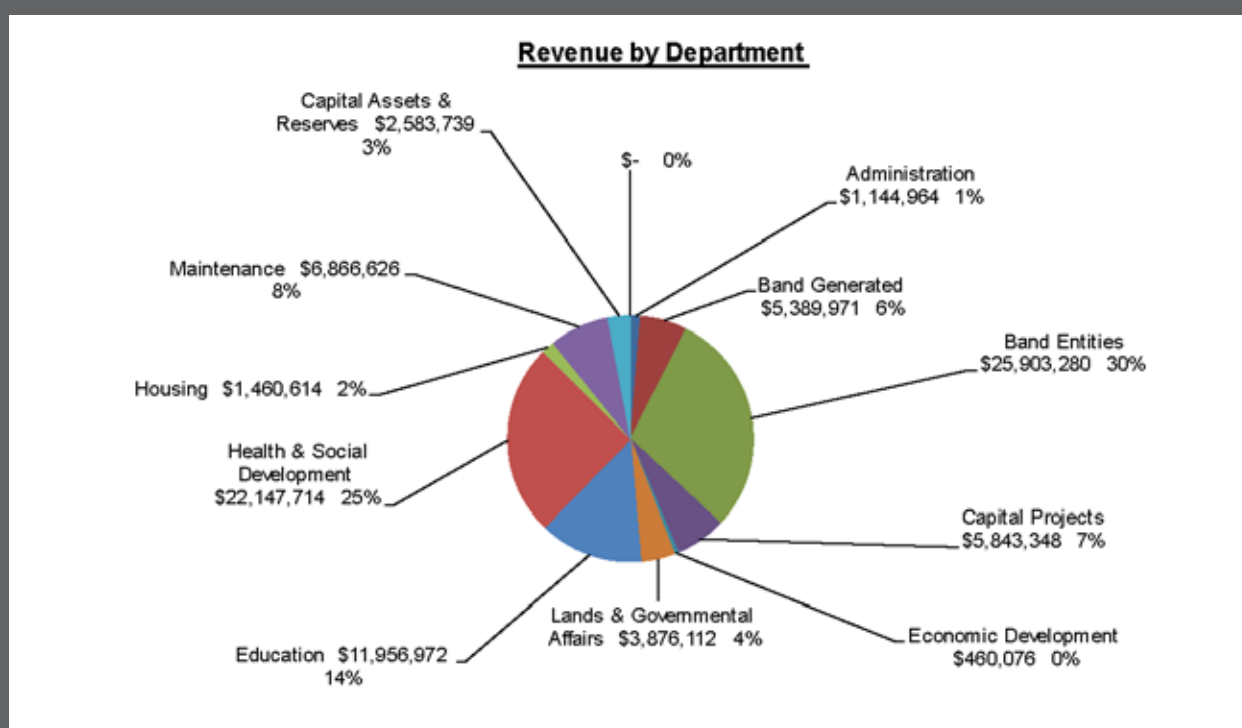
*Records*

*Information Technology*



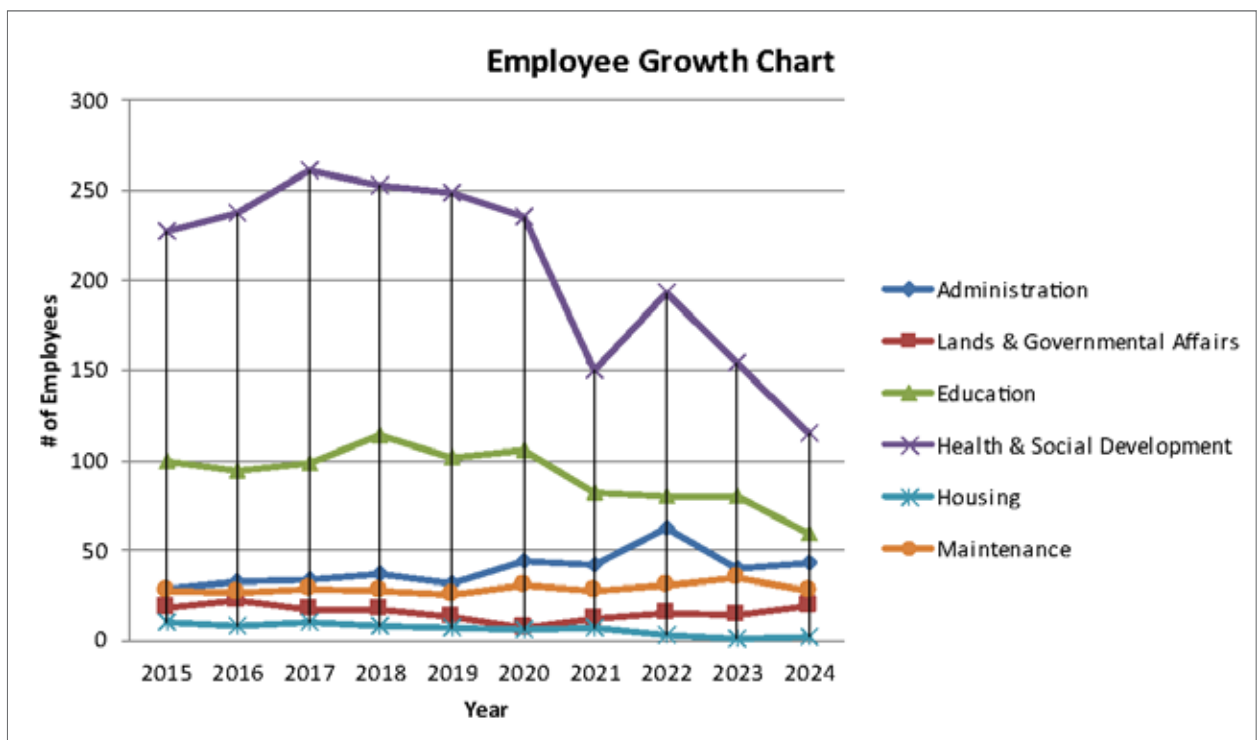
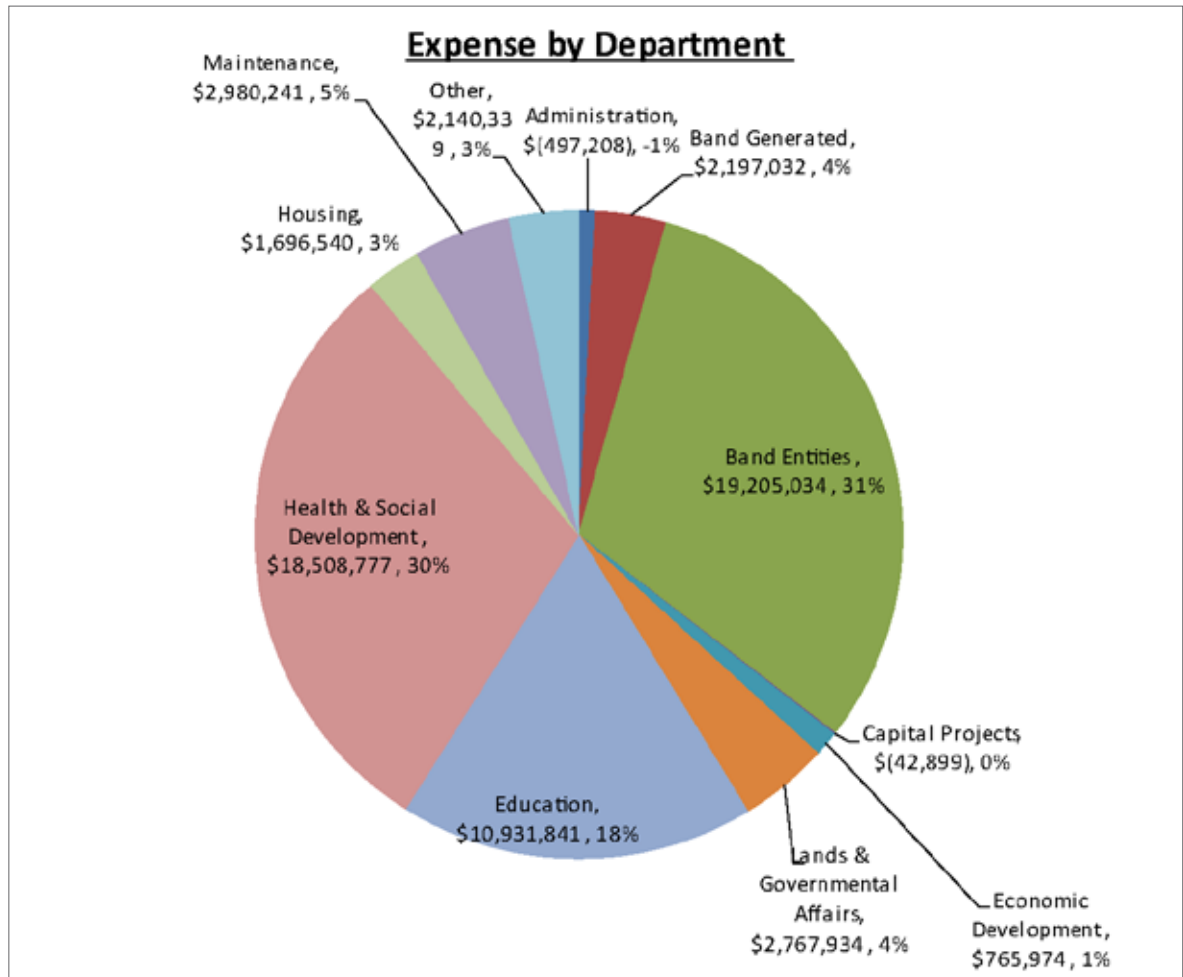
## Financial Highlights

Revenues and the accumulated surplus have continued to grow for Seabird Island for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. This growth has strengthened Seabird Island's financial position and the band's Net Financial Assets. The Health and Education departments remain the two largest sources of revenue as they continue to expand and provide additional services to both the Seabird Island community and neighboring regional First Nation communities. As our financial position improves, Seabird Island is able to offer an increasingly diverse range of programs to its Members. Seabird Island is also continuing to build more homes on reserve, moving forward with the construction of a new cultural centre, and planning to expand the Band Office.

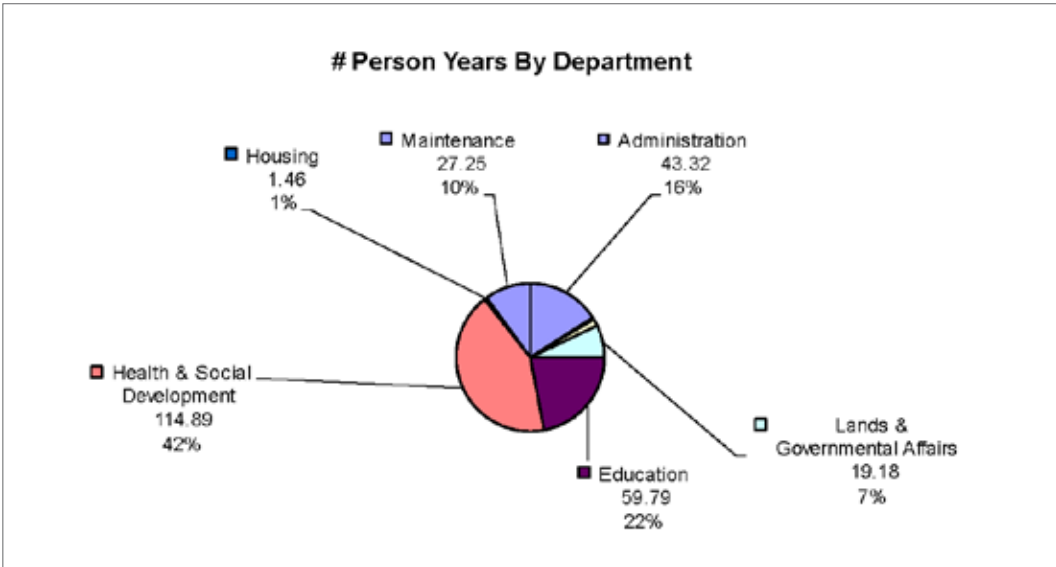
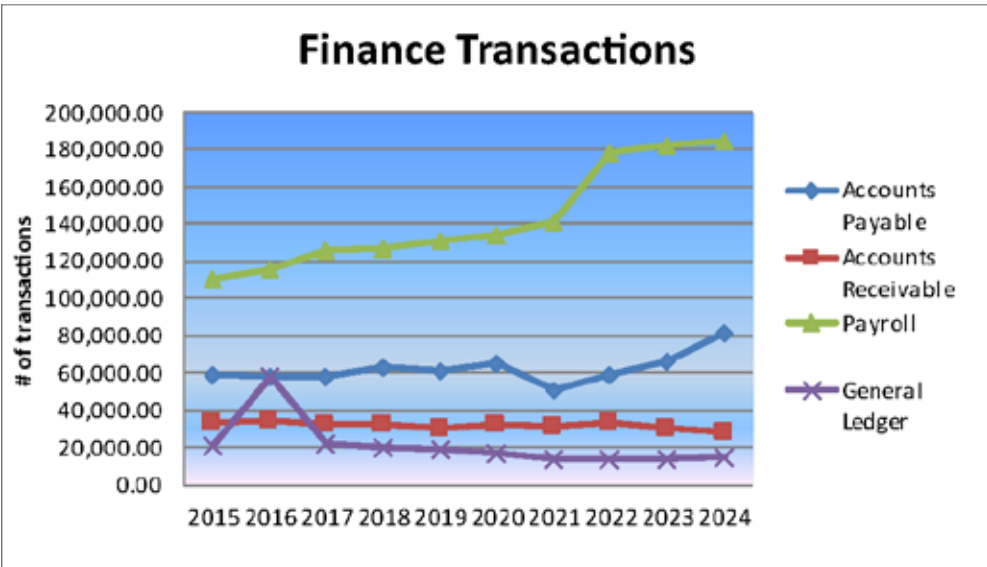
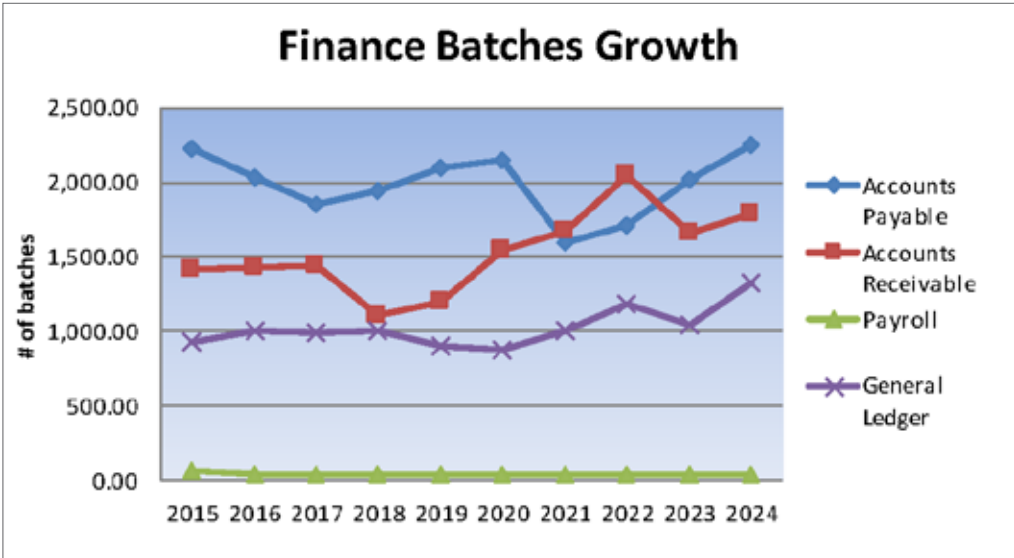




# EXPENSES



# FINANCE TRANSACTIONS



# Records

This past fiscal year (2023-2024), we are proud to report the following “GO GREEN” recycled paper statistics:

31,000 lbs (15.5 tons) of paper recycled equates to:

- 264 trees saved from harvest
- 47.43 cubic yards of landfill space saved
- 63,193 kilowatt-hours of energy saved
- 9,099 fewer pounds of air pollution
- 107,772 gallons of water saved
- 5,890 gallons of oil saved through the process

The year began with 44 shredding consoles placed throughout all Seabird facilities. As awareness increased, so did the demand for additional consoles. Today, we are proud to report that the volume has increased to 50 containers.

In today’s era, people are starting to consider going paperless, but there’s still a long way to go before we fully reduce our dependence on paper. There has been a noticeable decrease in the volume of mail services over the past few years, which continues to decline as our digitized environment grows. We strive to maintain professional services for our customers and the community.

Information is power, and it is essential to keep our recorded information well-preserved for future reference and use. We have all learned valuable lessons from these efforts, and our hope is to continue safeguarding and remaining hopeful in the face of challenges. Our records will speak for us in the future.

## Accomplishments

- Seabird Island received Financial Management Systems (FMS) Certification from the First Nation Financial Management Board (FNFMB), which represents a higher level of financial management accreditation than the Financial Administration Law (FAL).
- Seabird Island continues to operate under a 10-Year Grant Funding agreement, providing greater flexibility in how core funding is utilized and allowing for long-term planning for the community’s future until March 31, 2029.

- We had another successful audit this year, conducted by our auditors, MNP LLP.
- We continue to develop and expand our purchasing and procurement team to better meet the long-term needs of our community, including emergency management logistics, storage (for food security), and asset management (with future plans for dedicated storage facilities for Seabird Island Band).
- Significant IT infrastructure upgrades were completed to support Seabird Island’s ongoing growth, including the installation of fibre lines to all on- and off-reserve infrastructure.
- Server and switch upgrades were completed to meet current demands, as the number of employees has increased over the past few years and is expected to continue growing.
- We continue to digitize our paper record management system, transitioning to an electronic document management system. This initiative has saved a considerable number of trees and brought significant environmental benefits.
- Progress was made toward permitting and infrastructure upgrades for the Rogers/Shaw internet upgrade on Seabird Island.
- Our physical permanent records were relocated to a secure space, with improvements made to climate control, drainage, and security.
- Records Management continues to promote the “Go Green” approach, recycling over 31,000 lbs of paper.
- Development of various policies and training initiatives.
- Completion of Seabird Island Band’s Property Taxation Annual Law approval and notice preparation.



# Information Technology

The IT department has been extremely busy this year, maintaining and upgrading various IT systems, including servers, switches, networks (such as the community internet), websites, desktops, laptops, printers, cell phones, and other small devices. We provide a wide range of support and services to meet diverse IT needs.

This year, the IT department has focused on maintaining and upgrading server and switch hardware. These significant upgrades will provide Seabird Island Band (SIB) with the long-term capacity to sustain the continued growth of our organization.

We continue to make progress on our major internet/fibre connectivity project with Rogers/Shaw following the approval of our Letter of Intent for an internet service upgrade on Seabird Island. Currently, permitting, hardware, and infrastructure upgrades are underway as we approach the final stages of this project, with the goal of offering upgraded internet services by spring/summer 2024. This will include higher-speed internet, cable television, and phone services for everyone.

The IT department has also assisted with Stqō:ya Construction by providing network connectivity, software, and support for their daily operational needs.

Other major completed and ongoing projects at Seabird Island IT include:

- The installation of new building security systems to enhance the safety of all our facilities.
- Adobe Sign implementation, digitizing paperwork to help save trees and preserve our environment.
- Commercial building network upgrades to connect Nations Creations, Sq'ewqel Development Corp., Stqō:ya Construction, and our warehouses to our network and firewall security.
- The addition of geo-fencing to protect against malware and phishing scams from abroad.
- Standardization of staff IT equipment and cell phones.

Future IT projects for the coming year include continued improvements to our websites, further infrastructure upgrades across buildings, standardizing hardware and software, enhancing services to staff, and planning for additional facilities on Seabird Island, such as new homes and the Cultural Centre.

IT is ever-changing and evolving. With the continuous growth of Seabird, we are always seeking new and better solutions to enhance community internet connectivity and the overall communication experience.

As we continue to grow and evolve, SIB IT remains committed to upgrading and adapting to the changing needs of both the community and the organization.



# Summary

- Seabird Island continues to grow at a rapid pace as an organization. We have made ongoing changes to better meet the needs of all departments and to more effectively serve the community. As we continue to grow and move forward, it is vital that the Finance, IT, Records Management, Reception, and Purchasing/Procurement departments work efficiently and collaboratively to meet the organization's expanding needs.
- Over the past year, the Finance and Administration department staff have worked diligently to refine and improve all internal processes, as well as enhance inter-departmental coordination and communication. As Seabird Island continues to grow, the Finance and Administration team has streamlined numerous processes and procedures to manage the increasing volume of transactions and organizational growth. Key improvements include Adobe Sign integration, remote working options, hot-desk arrangements, additional backup for critical staffing positions, and the integration of Microsoft Teams across all systems, including phones and video conferencing in meeting rooms. These advancements have enabled us to maintain a consistent level of service to the community, other departments within Seabird Island, off-reserve buildings, and the regional communities we serve.
- With the Financial Management Systems (FMS) Certification from the First Nations Financial Management Board (FNFMB), our focus now shifts to attaining the First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA) Borrowing Partner Certification. Additionally, we are concentrating on long-term strategic financial and investment plans to ensure Seabird Island's financial position continues to grow for the benefit of both current and future generations.
- Expanding and updating our IT infrastructure is crucial, as reliance on internet services will only increase in this digital age. Ensuring future generations have access to digital tools, both on and off reserve, is essential. Once the Rogers/Shaw internet infrastructure upgrade is completed for the entire community, Seabird Island will fully benefit from high-quality internet and cable services.
- As the organization grows, the Records Management department plays an increasingly important role in managing and archiving vital information, adhering to federally regulated retention schedules. We continue our "Go Green" initiative to minimize the environmental impact on our land. It is imperative that we protect all permanent documents and artifacts that represent Seabird Island's rich history. The development and expansion of our highly trained and dedicated staff will ensure the preservation of our records and artifacts for future generations.
- We would like to thank everyone for their support, patience, and understanding. We are truly passionate about what we do and deeply value the working relationships across all levels of staff, striving together to achieve Seabird Island's strategic goals and lay the foundation for future generations to prosper.
- We look forward to serving you in the upcoming year and will continue to provide the best possible service to the Seabird Island community, its band members, and our regional First Nation communities in the most efficient and effective way.



# INTER-GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



Photographs:  
Community Salmon  
August 2024





## **INTER-GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DIRECTOR**

*Janice Parsey*

### **PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

*Membership*

*Policy*

*Fish, Wildlife & Natural Resources*

*Referrals*

*Aboriginal, Rights & Title*





The Inter-Government Affairs (IGA) department ensures that Seabird Island First Nation has a voice in both federal and provincial bureaucratic arenas. By engaging with external stakeholders, agencies, and proponents, the department advocates for the Aboriginal Rights and Titles of Seabird Island members in alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

For the 2023-24 year, the IGA department has been highly active. Key achievements include the development of an organizational chart, a five-year strategic plan, and progress on both annual and long-term work plans. We have advanced major negotiations with organizations such as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) regarding Lot 259 and the Bluff Slide Recovery.

Significant projects initiated this year include the Geohazard Study and various habitat restoration efforts. The department has also provided updated communications to the membership and facilitated ongoing discussions regarding the review of the Membership Code.

Our policy division has been making progress by reviewing both internal and external policies and providing input on provincial and federal legislative and policy changes. We have also begun implementing the Referrals Process Framework and established strong communication networks with the S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance (STSA) and the People of the River Referrals Office (PRRO). These partnerships have allowed us to collaborate on major referrals and participate in several working groups.

Additionally, the department has expanded its team by hiring an Executive Assistant, Junior Biologist, Policy Writer, and Project Manager.

# Aboriginal Rights & Title

Aboriginal Rights and Title affirm our inherent right to our Traditional Territories and our responsibility to protect and manage the resources within our lands and waters. This forms the foundation of all the work carried out by the Inter-Government Affairs department.

## 2023-24 Year Highlights:

1. Advanced MoTI Negotiations – Reached an agreement on the Past Use Agreement for Highway (Lot 259) and are currently reviewing a Future Rent Payment Rental Agreement.
2. Highway Information Signs – Secured an agreement with MoTI to place new highway signs, scheduled for installation in Spring/Summer 2024.
3. Bluff Slide Cleanup – Continued discussions regarding the cleanup of the bluff slide, including advancing talks for the south side of the highway cleanup, an agreement for the berm upgrade, and engineering plans for reopening the upper slough to the river.
4. Stó:lō Geohazard Risk Assessment Project – Initiated a two-year Geohazard Study as the lead applicant alongside eight other Nations. The project, to be completed by July 2025, aims to identify and mitigate potential landslide risks.
5. Enbridge Sunrise Expansion Project – Engaged in discussions about the Enbridge Sunrise Expansion Project, focusing on both on-reserve and off-reserve impacts. While the project is progressing, we are staying informed on all off-reserve activities, primarily through the Integrated Cultural Assessment implemented by STSA. A potential route could pass through Seabird Island, though discussions are ongoing, and no commitments have been made.
6. Specific Claims Review – Initiated a review of Seabird Island's Specific Claims, working towards re-opening previous claims and exploring new claims, such as erosion, which can now be included in Specific Claims.



A referral is a formal notice submitted by government agencies or private corporations to a First Nation, serving as an official request to initiate consultation regarding a proposed project that seeks to utilize lands and/or resources within the First Nation's territory. This process is crucial for ensuring that the rights, interests, and concerns of the First Nation are adequately addressed and respected.

Referrals can encompass a wide range of projects, including but not limited to infrastructure development, resource extraction, and environmental assessments. Upon receiving a referral, the First Nation conducts a thorough review to assess the potential impacts of the proposed project on the community, its traditional territories, and the surrounding environment.

This collaborative dialogue is essential in promoting transparency and fostering positive relationships between the First Nation and external stakeholders. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that any development within the territory aligns with the First Nation's values, priorities, and long-term vision for the land and resources.

#### 2023-24 Year Highlights:

1. The division will be hiring additional staff to increase capacity and support.
2. We will continue working towards the full implementation of the Referral Framework that the department has developed and designed.
3. The department has continued to receive, review, and respond to incoming referrals. This process is a collaborative effort, with referrals being received by our Referrals Coordinator and/or Clerk, who then forward them to the Inter-Government Affairs team for technical review and comments.

# Policy

The Policy Unit at Seabird Island is dedicated to developing policies aligned with the direction set by Chief and Council. Our team ensures that these policies reflect the wishes of Seabird members and the broader community. Policies serve as rules, actions, and guidelines that protect the assets of Seabird Island and its members. Additionally, our Policy Unit conducts external policy reviews at both provincial and national levels.

## 2023-24 Year Highlights

### Internal:

#### 1. Approved Policies

- Education Committee Terms of Reference
- Medication Management Policy
- Membership Committee Terms of Reference
- Stó:lō Geohazard Risk Assessment Steering Committee

#### 2. Policies in Development

- Sports, Arts, Leisure, and Recreation Sponsorship Policy
- Committee Establishment and Disbandment Policy
- Funeral and Cemetery Management Policy
- Emergency Management Committee Terms of Reference
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Parent's Committee Terms of Reference
- Membership Code

#### 3. Policies to Be Developed

- Post-Secondary Student Support Policy
- Election Code
- Sq'ep Committee Terms of Reference
- Ayelexw Recovery Home Policies and Procedures
- College Board Committee Terms of Reference
- Investment Policy

### External:

The enactment of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Act in British Columbia has prompted significant legislative changes. In response, the Policy Division has engaged with the government and other stakeholders to navigate these changes. The division has guided Chief and Council through amendments to several critical pieces of legislation, including:

1. Gaming Control Act
2. Cannabis Act
3. Emergency Management Legislation
4. Forest and Range Practices Act
5. Disaster and Climate Risk and Resilience Assessment Strategy and Action Plan
6. Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project
7. Child, Family and Community Service Act
8. Hazardous Waste Regulation
9. Clean Water and Wastewater Act
10. Anti-Racism Legislation

The division's active participation in key policy development forums, such as the BC First Nations Policy Working Group and the Indigenous Data Governance Circle, ensures that Seabird Island is represented in the province's legislative processes.

## Fish & Wildlife

The Fish & Wildlife Division addresses issues and opportunities related to the conservation, protection, and enhancement of animals and the natural environment within Seabird Island's traditional territory.

### 2023-24 Year Highlights:

1. **Pilot Program Launch:** Initiated a pilot program to survey salmon spawners returning to Maria Slough and monitor water quality in the slough. The Fish & Wildlife team is committed to improving these programs in 2024.
2. **Restoration Planning:** Collaborated with a consultant to plan and design the restoration of the Upper Slough. This project will involve excavating a channel and pond, aimed at enhancing both the quantity and quality of aquatic habitat.
3. **Community Engagement:** Hosted the first annual Ripple Report community event to showcase the results of the 2023 monitoring program and outline plans for Upper Slough restoration. The event was well-received, attracting over 60 attendees.
4. **Member Involvement Opportunities:** We are excited to announce new opportunities for Community Members to engage with Fish & Wildlife programs! Starting in 2024, quarterly updates will be available on the Fish & Wildlife webpage. Additionally, members will have the chance to join our team in the field. Interested individuals can sign up on the Fish & Wildlife webpage to be notified of upcoming field opportunities.





# Natural Resources & Forestry

The Natural Resources and Forestry Division focuses on regaining control, access, and rights to Seabird's traditional and natural resources. We advocate for the protection of our rights and title over all resources in our territory. This past year, the Natural Resources and Forestry Division has contributed to the stewardship of our natural resources, addressing environmental crises and broader challenges related to sustainable development and conservation.

## 2023-24 Year Highlights:

1. **Enriched Strategies:** Participation in meetings and conferences on environmental protection, climate change, and resource conservation has enhanced the division's strategies and knowledge base. These experiences have facilitated learning opportunities and empowered the division to effectively represent Seabird's interests.
2. **Policy Redesign Report:** The division prepared a detailed report to Indigenous Services Canada regarding the redesign of the Additions to Reserve Policy. This report aims to ensure that the practices align with the community's needs.
3. **Active Response to Environmental Incidents:** Following a landslide and oil spill near Seabird Island, the division took an active role in collaborating with regional and provincial regulators. We advocated for comprehensive cleanup efforts and the establishment of a long-term habitat monitoring plan.
4. **Sustainable Forestry Practices:** The division emphasized the necessity of sustainable harvesting practices in forestry cut blocks. Seabird's concerns were communicated directly to the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, and ongoing dialogue aims to ensure that forestry activities prioritize environmental sustainability and respect the ecological integrity of our lands.
5. **Upcoming Projects:** In 2024, the division plans to undertake projects related to heat mapping, evacuation route planning, and water scarcity assessments. These initiatives aim to enhance community resilience against environmental threats.

# Membership

Membership services at Seabird Island play a pivotal role in facilitating various administrative processes that are crucial to the well-being and recognition of our members within the community and beyond. The Membership Department can assist you with the following services:

- Minor/Adult Registration
- Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) applications
- Certificate of Indian Status (CIS) applications
- Recording events and amendments in the Indian Registration System (IRS), such as marriages, divorces, deaths, legal name changes, and band transfers

**Do you need to renew your status card?**  
**Does your child need to apply for registration under the Indian Act?**  
**Please contact Simone Jimme to schedule an appointment!**

*Membership services are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.*

*\*This is a decline of 7 from last year*

## Membership Code

Our membership team is diligently revising the Membership Code and is excited about this next step forward. We look forward to collaborating with the appointed Membership Committee members, who will support community engagement and assist in upcoming Membership Code events.

### ***Why is the Membership Code important?***

The Code is a set of rules that Seabird follows when adding and removing members from the Membership List.

***Why should SIB members attend the Membership Code meetings?*** Your opinion matters: any feedback we receive will help us create a revised Membership Code.

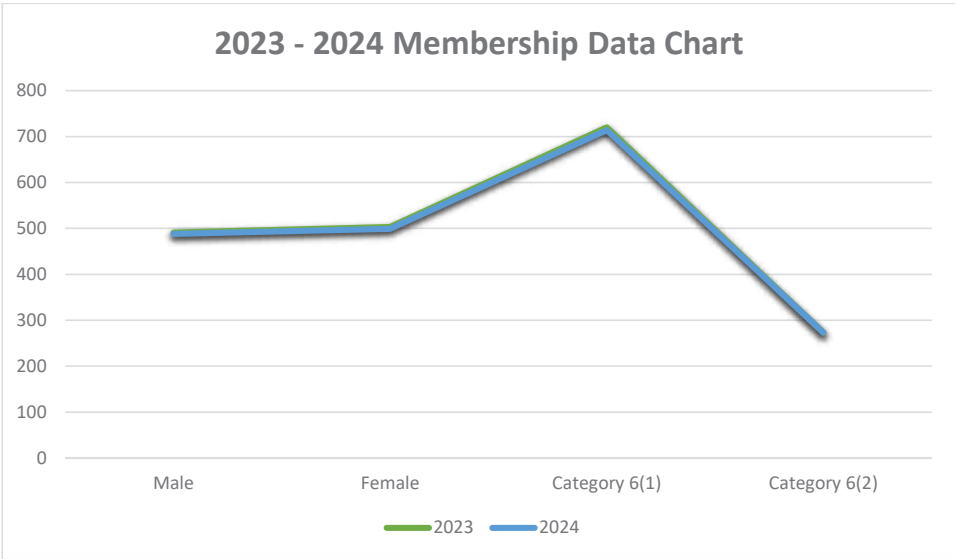
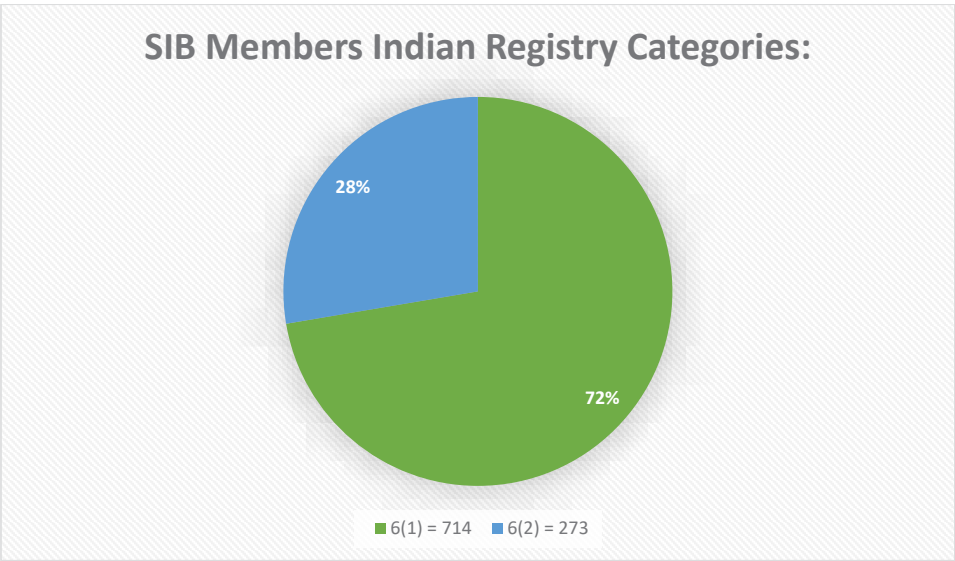
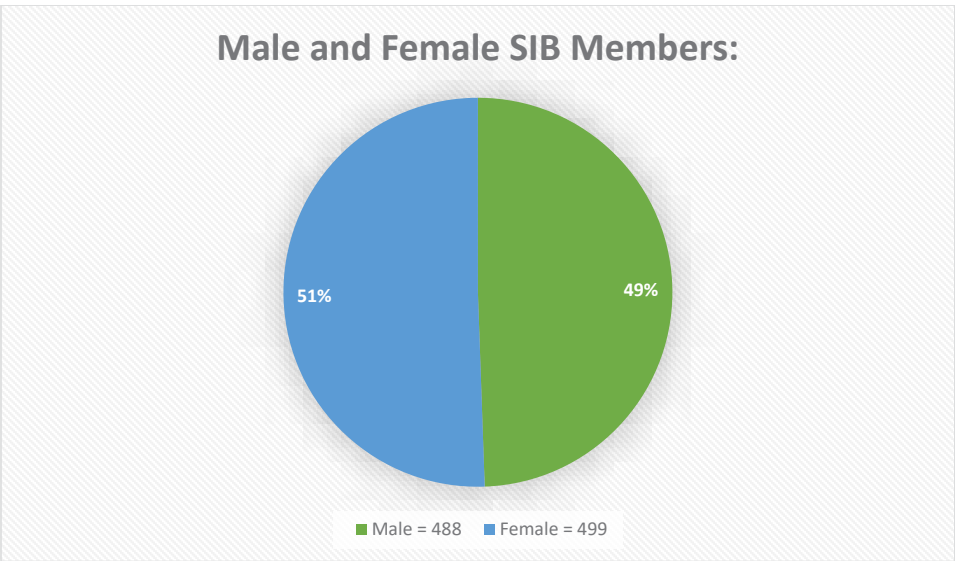
***Did you know?*** Seabird Island has roughly 738 eligible voters, which means we need approximately 443 votes in agreement to effectively change the Membership Code!

### ***What's new with the Membership Code revision?***

We held another round of Membership Code Community Meetings scheduled throughout January, February, and April. Unfortunately, with an average attendance of only ten SIB members, we decided to cancel any remaining meetings. Membership is currently working on a new Membership Code Communications Plan, hoping that this new approach will encourage more SIB members to engage in the Membership Code revision process. This plan includes family meetings, summer BBQs, and more. Please stay tuned for the next Membership Code event!



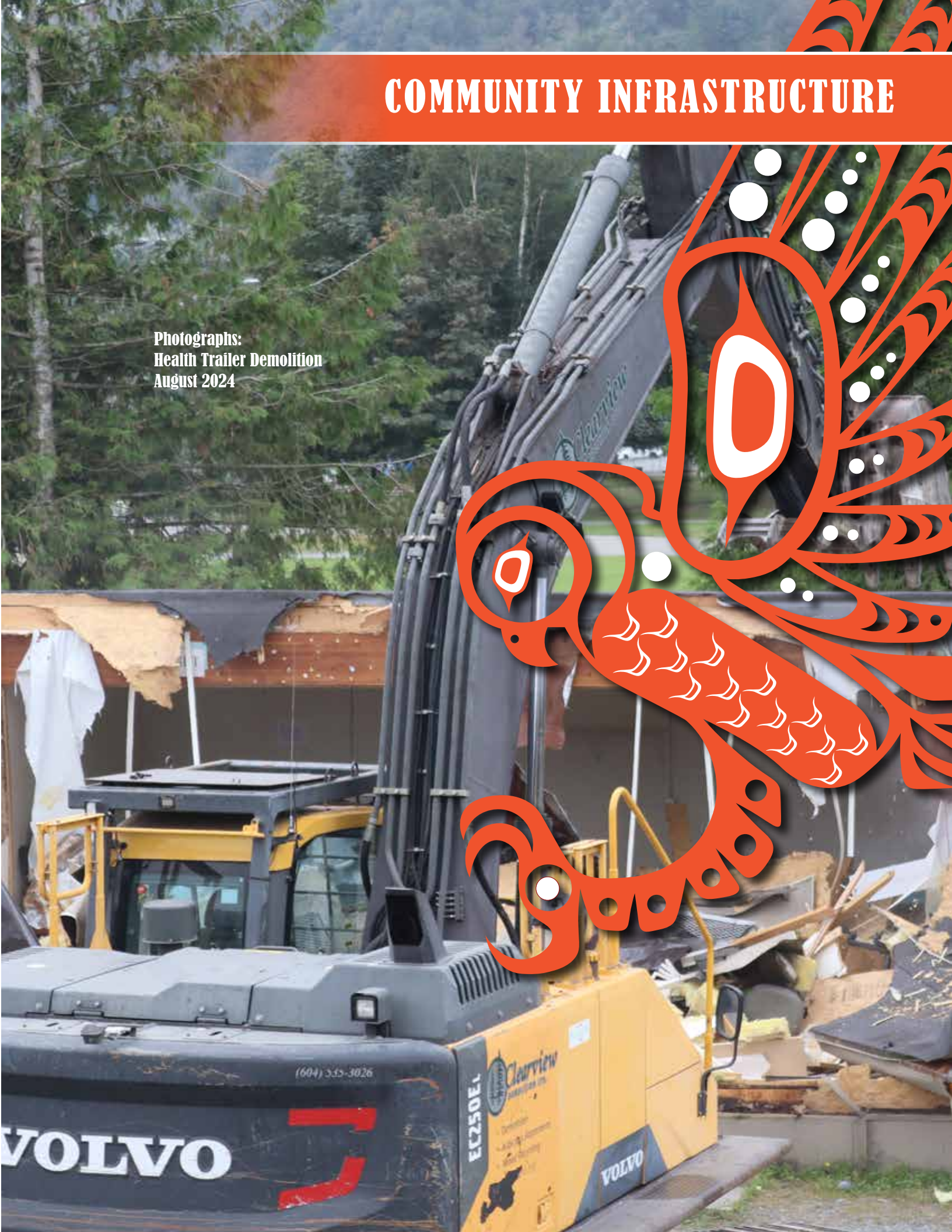
# Membership Graphs





# COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Photographs:  
Health Trailer Demolition  
August 2024





## COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTOR

*Khalid Safi*

### PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

*Lands*

*Fleet*

*Custodial*

*Drone*

*Housing*

*Public Works*



The Seabird Island Lands team has expanded its services to address the community's key needs. These initiatives include animal wellness programs, food security efforts, forestry and land stewardship, lease management for on-reserve tenures, and property taxation administration under the Fiscal Management Act.

Key Highlights for the Year Include:

- Completion of the will-writing project
- Completion of the cemetery caretakers project
- Construction of the Shxwoxwelstexw ye Silelyólexw (Cemetery Infrastructure Project)
- Drafting of the Environmental Management Plan
- Drafting of the Land Use Plan
- Initiation of lease template development and restructuring
- Creation of the lease-holding entity

To protect Seabird Island Band (SIB) interests and ensure that leasehold agreements align with our laws, plans, and policies, templates are being developed for specific land-use zones. This will help ensure that environmental and natural resources are preserved for tómíyeq̓w (seven generations).

SIB, in partnership with Seabird College and the Stó:lō Research & Resource Management Centre, has created a Guardianship training program at Seabird College. This culturally based training, set to begin in the fall, will deepen understanding of the Xwelmexw people's responsibility to their territory.

Finally, the department has incorporated the halq'eméylem language into its name. This change reflects the goal of grounding our work in language and culture, ensuring that knowledge, culture, and language are passed on to future generations.



As my first full year in the Fleet Department, I am proud to report that we have achieved many positive goals. The year began with the successful integration of the 2023 Thomas school bus into full-time service, which allowed us to retire and sell the older 2012 Bluebird school bus. Throughout the year, the bus fleet has experienced minimal downtime and repairs, ensuring reliable service.

A safety operator course was conducted for the Public Works staff on the safe operation of the JCB backhoe. The course was well-received by both staff and the instructor, resulting in five Public Works staff members being certified in the safe operation of the machine. We are currently gathering quotes to conduct another training course for the smaller Bobcat Tool cat machine.

### **Recalls and Motor Vehicle Inspections**

All recalls and motor vehicle inspections are up to date. Any outstanding vehicle recalls are either completed or awaiting parts.

### **Vehicle Use Policy**

The Vehicle Use Policy was reviewed by the Fleet Department, and necessary updates were made. It is now being reviewed by policy writers for further refinement.

### **Water Testing Training**

One employee has been recertified in small water testing for 2024. Additionally, he attended the First Nation Water and Wastewater Conference in October, followed by a three-day water training course in Kamloops.

### **Vehicle Replacement Program**

We are currently developing a vehicle replacement program. This initiative involves implementing a mileage fee for each department based on vehicle usage. The funds collected will be used to cover repair costs and contribute to a vehicle reserve fund, which will be used to purchase new vehicles as older ones are retired.

Plans and Goals for the Upcoming Year:

1. Gather quotes to implement a new vehicle identification system for fleet vehicles.
2. Collaborate with Public Works to make the yard more user-friendly by dividing it into distinct Fleet and Public Works areas.
3. Explore grant opportunities to transition the fleet to electric vehicles as we replace older ones.
4. Replace the aging ride-on mower for Public Works.
5. Replace the aging plow truck for Public Works.



# Custodial

The Custodial Department is proud to provide services within the community. Our team consists of 13 members, of which 76% are from the Seabird Island Community. The Custodial Program is dedicated to creating a safe and healthy environment for Community Members, students, clients, employees, and visitors of Seabird Island.

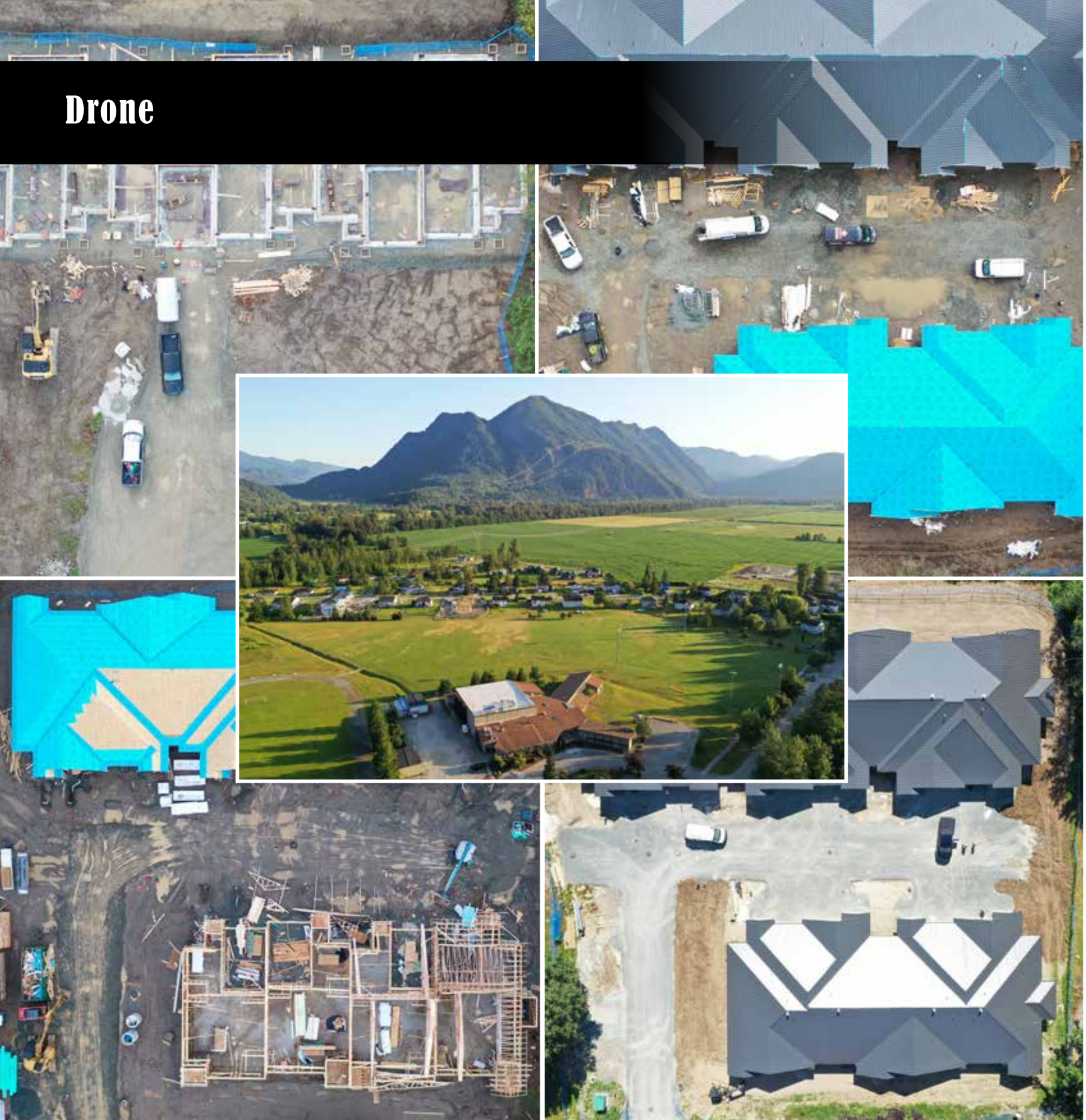
In addition to performing daily custodial tasks in each building, the custodial team collaborates with the Events Department to set up client-requested arrangements. With a keen eye for detail, the custodial staff arranges events efficiently and professionally, helping to achieve the goals and deliverables of various activities, including the Community Halloween and Christmas events, town halls, and more.

We're actively enhancing our capabilities by exploring consumable dispenser options with Cintas and Bunzl Cleaning Supplies. Starting with our smaller buildings, like the Mill Hall and Out of School Care facilities, we are committed to meeting our consumable needs effectively and comprehensively.





# Drone



Seabird Island's Remotely Piloted Aircraft System, "the Bird One," has excelled in a variety of drone operations this year. From the Seabird Island business park to AE Concrete and internal housing and infrastructure projects, the opportunities available are vast and exciting. We are proud to capture stunning aerial photography that showcases our community's growth and progress, ensuring that these accomplishments are shared with future generations.



# EDUCATION

Photographs:  
Seabird Island Community High School Grad  
June 2022







## **ACTING EDUCATION DIRECTOR**

*Barbra White*

### **PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

*Elementary School*

*High School*

*College*

*Employment Services*

- *Drivers Training*
- *Pre-employment Training*





### Message from the Director

After serving as school principal for the past eight years, I was thrilled to take on the role of Director of Education for the Seabird Island Band. This year, I have focused on connecting and strengthening the various programs within the department, which include our schools, Seabird College, post-secondary student supports, and employment services. As I grow into this new role and work towards a broader vision, there are exciting opportunities to realize long-held aspirations: connecting our employment, post-secondary, and college teams with high school students starting in Grade 8, ensuring every student knows their post-graduation goals, and helping them achieve those goals. Additionally, we aim to offer trades programs, allowing students to graduate with both a trade and a Dogwood diploma.



# *Congratulations to the Lal*



**Hayden Charlie**



**Jayme Preson**



**Evan Abbott**



**Shawnti Angus-Green**



**Jeremy Tait**



**Veronica Moreno**



**Semiya Birch-Douglas**



**Kyra Gillis**



**Maximus Edwards**

# *me'Iwesawtexw Graduates*



**Travina Charlie**



**Stewart Francis Jr.**



**Tina Lyle-George**



**Bert Peters**



**Blaine Wilson**



*(Seabird  
Island  
Community  
School)*





# **LALME' IWESAWTEXW - Seabird Island Community School (SICS)**



We are working towards developing our own curriculum, which is a key element of gaining jurisdiction over our education system. Teachers have been integrating research on traditional land use and cultural practices into lessons for our students. The interviews conducted by Keith Carlson with our Elders and knowledge keepers form part of the resource material we are using in this effort.

We hold monthly assemblies to celebrate positive student behavior and attendance. Addressing learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic remains a priority, and we continue to offer teacher-led tutoring and other supports to help students catch up where needed.

We are also expanding learning opportunities through experiential education. Students have been involved in carving a canoe for the cemetery project and have planted a small ecosystem on school grounds to learn through hands-on experience. Additionally, students participated in a salmon release program, fostering environmental stewardship.

We congratulate our 2024 graduates and look forward to increasing our focus on traditional ways and experiential learning in the years to come.





# Employment Services & Driver Training

## Employment Services

Over the past year, Employment Assistance Services supported 246 Seabird clients, with a total of 2,932 visits to the Centre. These visits included a range of services such as career decision-making, work readiness assessments, employment training, interview preparation, work experience placements, job searches, job starts, and retention support.

### Employment Services Summary:

- 114 clients secured employment
- 10 clients transitioned to training programs
- 110 clients were referred to employers
- 294 referrals were made to other services and programs



## Driver Training

The driver training program includes one-on-one driving lessons (slowly reintroduced due to COVID recovery), preparation for the learner's test, and support for obtaining a driver's license. Over the year, we conducted a total of 189 in-car road lessons, with 17 individuals successfully obtaining their licenses. Approximately two-thirds of these lessons were provided to Seabird Island Band Community Members.

### Driver Training Accomplishments:

- 9 clients obtained their Class 7L (Learner's License)
- 5 clients obtained their Class 7N (Novice License)
- 3 clients obtained their Class 5 (Full License)

# Pre-Employment Support Program

The Pre-employment Support Program assisted 280 unique clients over the past year, with 72 individuals moving into employment, further training, or exiting the income assistance program. Seabird Island Community Members secured jobs in a variety of sectors, including executive-level positions, construction contracting, the service and hospitality industry, community health, and municipal public works.

The annual career fair was a great success, attracting Community Members, local residents, and students from the community schools. The event saw over 300 visitors and featured 54 vendors, including educational institutions, industry employers, and cultural organizations.

## Pre-employment Support Program Summary of Statistics:

- 3,852 client visits with case managers
- 397 client action plans implemented
- 1,032 client support interventions completed
- 5,603 referrals to hands-on practical skills projects

## Communities Served by the Pre-employment Support Program:

- Chawathil First Nation
- Cheam First Nation
- Scowlitz First Nation
- Seabird Island Band
- Shxw'ow'hamel First Nation
- Skwah First Nation
- Spuzzum First Nation
- Squiala First Nation
- Union Bar Indian Band
- Yale First Nation

Acknowledgment of Our Funders: Employment services are primarily funded by Stó:lō Aboriginal Skills Employment Strategy (SASET) to provide Employment Assistance Services (EAS) at Seabird Island, and by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to support the Pre-employment Support Program (PESP) within the 10 listed communities.

We have secured five years of funding, extending our programming capacity until March 2028. This stability allows us to plan effectively and retain staff, both of which are essential for enrolling students and meeting their post-secondary training needs.

Over the past year, students have been engaged in programs such as ecological restoration, business administration, early childhood education, licensed practical nursing, and construction craft work. Adult Dogwood students have been working diligently to achieve their diplomas.

In the spring, we introduced new programs in community service work and Indigenous-focused therapy training. This fall, we will launch a health care assistant program and a cooking program. While some programs are offered through partner institutions, we are working hard to host as many as possible at Seabird.

We are excited to provide a diverse schedule of post-secondary programs for individuals to choose from, with tuition sponsored for First Nations students.

# HEALTH & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Photographs:  
Nutrition Walk/Run  
March 2023





## **HEALTH DIRECTOR**

*Arlene (Lolly) Andrew*

### **PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

#### **HEALTH SERVICES**

*Better at Home*

*Breast Cancer Support Group*

*Annual Celebration Of Life*

*Maternal Child Health (MCH)*

*Mobile Diabetes*

*Nutrition Walk / Run*

*Public Health Screening*

#### **PRIMARY CARE CLINICS**

*Seabird Island Dental Clinic*

*Seabird Island Pharmacy*

*Seabird Island Doctor Clinic and Medical Centre*

#### **FAMILIES & WELLNESS**

*Family Development*

*Family Homes*

*Counselling*

*Recovery Homes*

# HEALTH SERVICES

## Better at Home Annual Report

The past year has been a success, marked by significant improvements in key areas such as increased hours spent in communities, reduced equipment failures, and decreased property damage. The team has been more reliable than ever before, and this consistency has been crucial in maintaining the rotating schedule, allowing us to distribute hours effectively across the communities. Staff attendance has been our biggest achievement this year, and as long as we retain our team, we can expect continued success.

In 2023, we were fortunate to have an excellent and dependable team. At the beginning of the year, one of our team members transitioned to a different department, but we were able to quickly hire a new member. Our team currently consists of Gordon Peters from Seabird Island (our original team member who has been with Better at Home since its inception), Wilfred Florence from Chawathil (with us since 2022), and Cavan Louie from Seabird Island (with us since early 2023).

Thanks to this outstanding team, we have covered significant ground, remained active in numerous communities, provided a full range of services, and experienced far fewer equipment malfunctions compared to previous years.

The staff were offered First Aid training; however, Cavan and Wilfred already held current certifications. Gord attended the First Aid training independently.



# Better at Home

2023 - Jan-Dec

# of New Clients	45
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Paid Internal Staff	Service Requested	Services Accessed	# of Unique Clients	Service Hours
	Snow Shoveling			
1488	Yard Work	1488	224	4520
2	Home Organization	2	2	4
40	Gutters	36	40	155
	Pressure Washing			
8	Firewood chopping/stacking	8	5	35
	Other (Maintenance)			
Total		1539		

Community	Hours
Aitchelitz	148
Chawathil	252
Cheam	266
Kwaw-kwaw-aplit	46
Leq' a: mel	274
Matsqui	254
Peters	116
Scowlitz	269
Seabird	1009
Shxw' ow' hamel	129
Shxwha'y Village	16
Skowkale	404
Skwah	166
Soowahlie	363
Squiala	169
Sts'ailes	166
Sumas	230
Tzeachten	174
Yakweakwoose	30





## Breast Cancer Support Group



On March 16, 2024, the evening began with dinner in Abbotsford at The New Saigon Restaurant. This restaurant was chosen for its convenient location near the theater planned for the evening and its excellent reviews. Vietnamese cuisine was selected for its healthy options, featuring a variety of vegetables.

Following dinner, the group attended a live theater performance of *The Sound of Music* by Gallery 7 Theater Company at the Abbotsford Arts Center. The show was outstanding, with amazing voices, a beautiful stage setup, and excellent acting. *The Sound of Music* was chosen for its iconic female lead, who faces adversity with courage. Before purchasing the tickets, the group was consulted, and all members expressed excitement about seeing the live version of the beloved movie. The seats were excellent and conveniently located near the side entrance, where the usher provided helpful assistance.

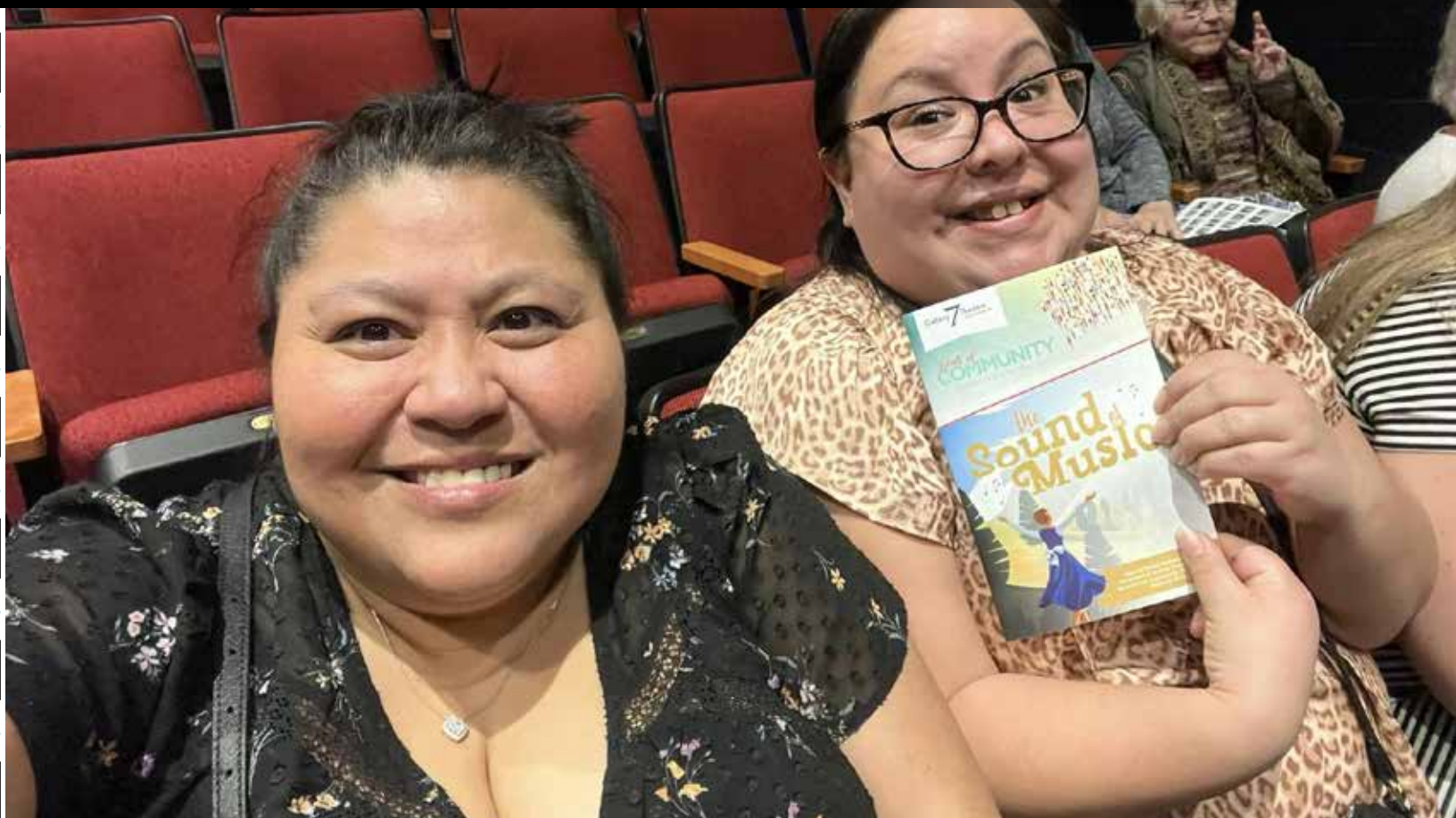
Transportation was arranged by Tash, with Jim Harris serving as the capable driver. The group gathered at the Seabird Band Office at 4:00 PM, except for Babette and Norma, who were picked up at their homes and met the bus at the Cottonwood Mall parking lot at 4:30 PM. The

group arrived at the restaurant shortly after 5:00 PM for their reservations. The food was delicious, and the restaurant lived up to its 4.9 rating. Although some members were initially hesitant about trying Vietnamese food, as they were more familiar with Chinese cuisine, they all enjoyed the meal and expressed a willingness to dine there again.

The activity was considered very successful. However, a mini activity or discussion between dinner and the show would have been beneficial, as it would have naturally facilitated conversation if everyone had been seated at one table. Unfortunately, the group was spread across four small tables.

One member noted that this activity typically occurs at the end of the year, meaning the group missed the 2023 activity. The suggestion was made to organize another event in 2024, including a small Christmas gift. It has been proposed to host an additional event this year, inviting artist Sequalinda McNeil-Bobb to lead an art project. This would be a more interactive activity, allowing participants to create a tangible memory for this year's group.

# Breast Cancer Support Group



## Participants (and support person):

Sue Harris (Rhoda Peters)  
Donna Andrew (Jennifer Andrew)  
Judy Douglas (Sid Douglas)  
Babette James (Norma George)  
Philomena Hulbert (Vi Pennier)  
Absent:  
Madeline Gabriel  
Frieda George

Substitutes:  
Lisa Mason  
Mindy Peters  
Bus Driver:  
Jim Harris





# Celebration of Life Remembrance

As the winter cold front swept over the communities under the health services umbrella of Seabird Island Health, the nurses gathered within each community to remember loved ones at a Candlelight Vigil. The atmosphere was filled with children's laughter, heartfelt greetings from family members reuniting after long periods, some meeting for the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic. In the background, the sounds of cultural drumming mixed with the aroma of dinner being prepared in the kitchen, creating a warm and welcoming environment. Attendees reacquainted themselves with one another, sharing hopes for more frequent family gatherings in a healthy, positive way.

A delicious dinner, prepared by our nutritionist, featured homemade meatballs, scalloped potatoes, freshly cut sweet carrots, and Caesar salad. This meal was enjoyed and appreciated in every community. As we continue to recover from the isolation caused by COVID-19, attendance numbers are beginning to increase, although many members shared, they still feel some anxiety about gathering in large groups. However, they also expressed how much they missed these moments and long for more. While this year's attendance was lower than pre-COVID numbers, the turnout was appreciated by all. Attendance by community was as follows: Squiala (24), Skwah (12), KKAP (16), Chawathil (10), Shxw'ōw'hámél (20), Seabird (15), and Cheam (17). In total, seven communities were visited, with a combined attendance of 114 people.





# Annual Celebration of Life Remembrance



As the evening progressed, the conversation shifted to the topic, “How do we cope with our grief?” For many, the winter holiday season will never be the same, as memories of loved ones who are no longer with us flood the heart. Tears were shed as those in attendance reflected on their losses. This is where the cultural healing drums played an important role. We opened with drumming and singing, followed by a shared meal, good laughter, and some heartfelt reconnections.

Nurse Shannon then introduced the question, “How do you cope with grief?” She emphasized that there is no wrong answer and that everyone deals with grief in their own way. Community Members shared their methods of coping, from going for a hike, being alone, sleeping, crying, talking to someone they trust, to behaviors like binge eating or substance use. Shannon encouraged the group to consider new ways of coping and to be open-minded about why others may turn to certain behaviors like substance use during grief. She guided a deeper discussion on healthy coping mechanisms, such as engaging in cultural activities, talking to an Elder, expressing feelings through crying, singing, running, or exercising. The conversation then moved to how we can help those who are grieving and using substances, acknowledging that many have been in that situation or know someone who has. Suggestions included reaching out to the person, offering alternative activities, and encouraging productive outlets like meditation, going to the gym, cooking, or arts and crafts.

# Annual Celebration of Life Remembrance



Once this brief but impactful conversation concluded, the drummers played an uplifting song to lighten the mood. This was followed by the lighting of the "Memory Candles." A member from each community lit a candle to symbolize the start of the remembrance. Nurse Shannon offered words of comfort, sharing insights on coping with grief and surviving loss. She read the names of loved ones as Community Members came forward to light their candles in remembrance. The flickering candlelight, accompanied by the drummers' prayer songs, cast glowing shadows across the room. Tears flowed, and cherished memories of lost loved ones filled the hearts of those present.

As the candle flames flickered and prayer songs were sung, poems were recited, allowing those gathered to release some of the sorrow they had held inside. The drummers then transitioned to a more upbeat, joyful song to lift spirits and shift the focus towards healing.

In keeping with tradition, Elders spoke, sharing cherished memories, prayers, and teachings. Their words offered solace, guidance, and unconditional love to all in attendance. The evening concluded on a note of appreciation, as members embraced the opportunity for healing in a healthy, traditional way. Gratitude was expressed towards Seabird, with hopes for more gatherings like this in the future, bringing the community together once again.



## Maternal Child Health (MCH)



At the heart of the Maternal Child Health (MCH) initiative is a steadfast commitment to nurturing comprehensive, culturally safe, and confidential maternal, child, and family wellness. Rooted in Indigenous values and a profound dedication to truth and reconciliation, the program strives to restore traditional birth practices to their rightful place within our communities.

Central to the MCH program is a rich tapestry of voluntary services, encompassing prenatal and postnatal education and support. Through culturally sensitive pre and postnatal classes and incentivized programs, expecting and new parents receive essential guidance, complemented



## Maternal Child Health (MCH)



by personalized birth and postpartum planning sessions. Nutritional support, tailored to the unique needs of pregnancy and early parenthood, is provided through individual, partner, or family-centric clinic or home visits, ensuring accessibility and comfort.

In the tender moments following birth, newborn assessments are conducted with meticulous care, laying the foundation for a healthy start to life. Breast-feeding support, grounded in cultural wisdom, seamlessly integrates traditional practices with modern knowledge.

Recognizing the importance of family planning, the program offers compassionate contraceptive guidance, empowering individuals to make

# Maternal Child Health (MCH)

informed choices aligned with their values. Concurrently, the management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and facilitation of PAP testing contribute to overall maternal health and well-being.

The safety of newborns extends beyond hospital walls, with car seat education ensuring secure transportation for our most precious cargo. Acknowledging that true wellness encompasses more than physical health, the program facilitates referrals to a wide range of health and wellness services, fostering holistic healing and growth.

Central to the program is a profound commitment to partnership, exemplified by close collaboration with Tem'elile Midwifery, which honors and integrates Indigenous birthing traditions into contemporary practices.

Each spring, the MCH program welcomes babies who have been part of our voluntary program or who belong to our affiliated communities, to participate in the annual Baby Welcoming Celebration. This uplifting ceremony recognizes the births and celebrates our connection to the land from which we come.

By weaving together these elements, the MCH program embarks on a sacred journey, grounded in the wisdom of our ancestors and fueled by a collective vision of health, healing, and reconciliation. Through each tender interaction and thoughtful intervention, the program honors the inherent dignity and resilience of Indigenous families, paving the way for future generations. Collaborating seamlessly with the "Kwiyo:s" or "Respected Aunties," the MCH team serves as a beacon of support for expecting and seasoned mothers alike, nurturing healthier beginnings for families within the Seabird Island community and beyond.

## **Community-Connected MCH Births This Year/Invited to Baby Welcoming Celebration: 35**

In Care with Tem'elile Midwifery: 9

Average Home/Office/Virtual/Telehealth Visits per Month: 22-75

Total MCH Births Cared for During This Period: 56 births

Disclaimer: We regret that, due to the sensitive and confidential nature of our work, we are unable to disclose specific individual community statistics to safeguard the privacy and security of our clients. Nonetheless, we are available to discuss any general inquiries or concerns you may have regarding maternal child health within your community.

## Other Community Statistics:

### Chawathil:

Community connected MCH births this year/invited to Baby Welcoming Celebration: 6

In care with Tem'elile Midwifery: 4

Average home/office/virtual/telehealth visits per month: 8-20

### Shxw'ow'hamel:

Community connected MCH births this year/invited to Baby Welcoming Celebration: 2

In care with Tem'elile Midwifery: 2

Average home/office/virtual/telehealth visits per month: 7-20

### Skwah:

Community connected MCH births this year/invited to Baby Welcoming Celebration: 10

In care with Tem'elile Midwifery: 3

Average home/office/virtual/telehealth visits per month: 3-18

### Sq'ewlets:

Community connected MCH births this year/invited to Baby Welcoming Celebration: 1

In care with Tem'elile Midwifery: 1

Average home/office/virtual/telehealth visits per month: 3-8

### Squiala:

Community connected MCH births this year/invited to Baby Welcoming Celebration: 0

In care with Tem'elile Midwifery: 0

Average home/office/virtual/telehealth visits per month: 2-7



# Mobile Diabetes Team

The Mobile Diabetes Team is actively traveling to various communities with the goal of increasing access to services for Community Members. The team provides workshops for healthcare providers and families, hosts dinner presentations, offers one-on-one education sessions, and conducts screenings for Community Members at risk of developing diabetes. Currently, we have only two staff members who travel three out of four weeks each month. Unfortunately, due to limited staffing, the team has struggled to meet the high demand for clinics across communities.

## Program Highlights and Changes:

- Vision Technician, Andrew Duerkson has moved on from his position. Since many First Nations communities now have access to local optometry services, the Mobile Diabetes Team has shifted its focus to include annual foot exams as part of their services, replacing eye exams.
- Pamela Kalia, LPN CDE successfully earned her Certified Diabetes Educator designation and has joined the team full-time.
- Dann Swann, Diabetes Educator, has reduced his travel with the team but continues to support local initiatives and provide assistance to team members as needed.
- Dr. Benjamin Schroeder, Endocrinologist, has taken over for Dr. Dawson as the team's endocrinologist.
- The Mobile Diabetes Team has upgraded its aging equipment. We now have four DCAs and two new Piccols, all of which have been tested by CEQUAL's lab for quality control.

The team is committed to enhancing services despite the challenges and looks forward to continuing its work in supporting communities.

## Statistics

Total Communities:42

Total Clinic Days: 53

Total Clients Seen: 446

Total with Diabetes: 222

Total Screens: 224

Total foot Exams:128

Total Screening Events: 4

Total Education/workshops for communities: 6

## Community List

Hitacu, Tyhistunis, Tsawwassen, Boston Bar, Boothroyd, Leq'a mel and YAY community centre for screening/education, Mount Currie: Adams Lake, Skway, Tit'q'et Nation, X-Wisten, Camin Lake, Tsawwassen, Seabird Open house, Scw'exmx, Upper Squamish, South Stl'atl'mx Health Society (N'Quatqua, Samahquan, Skatin and Xa'xtsa), Lower squamish, Scowlitz, cheam, Shxw'owhamel, Chawathil, Lower Nicola, Simpcw, Boston Bar, Osoyoos, Upper Nicola/ Lower Nicola, Enderby, Bonaparte, Skwah/ Squiala/KKA, Sumas, Katzie lucheon workshop; Sta'ailes, Boothryd, Bridge River, Lower Similkameen Band, Cheam and Xaxtsa (booked for March 25 but not complete yet)

# Nutrition Run/Walk



This year, we were fortunate to have a beautiful pre-spring day for our event. Jaime Peters had everything organized and ready to go. The event started at the Band office, with participants choosing between a 5 km or 10 km distance. While some participants had mobility issues, they still did their best and participated. Each participant received a toque with "Seabird Nutrition" printed on it, as we selected toques for their ease of sizing.

- KM markers were placed at each kilometer, from 1 km to 5 km.
- Four water stations were set up at the 1 km, 2.5 km, 3.5 km, and 5 km markers. Each station was staffed by someone to fill cups and hand out water (Jaime, Val, Bonnie, Tash, and Stephen). The water was provided by the Chilliwack Water Store.
- Stephen collected the water containers at the end of the event on his way back to the Band office.
- A snack/lunch was provided for all participants after the event in the Band gym, which included: veggies and dip, bananas, strawberries, yogurt, ham and cheese sub sandwiches

Successes: At the start of the event, only about 20 youth indicated they would reach the 5 km turnaround and complete the full 10 km. However, the beautiful day inspired many to walk or run further than expected. Approximately 80 participants made it to or past the 3.5 km water station!

## Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Place "Run/Walk Event in Progress" signs at all roads and intersections along the route to ensure safety and awareness on the day of the event.
2. Invite the local police to monitor traffic.
3. Add music at the water stations to create a more festive atmosphere.
4. Consider bringing back a start clock: In the past, the Running Room participated with their inflatable Start/Finish arch and a large digital clock, which allowed participants to track their time.

The event was a great success, and these enhancements can help make it even better next year!

# Public Health & Screening

## Immunizations/Communicable disease

Seabird Island is excelling in infant and childhood immunization rates when compared to Fraser Health! In addition to providing immunizations to clients of all ages, our Public Health Nurses offer various other services, including:

- TB testing
- Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) screening
- PAP/HPV testing
- Birth control support and provision
- Condom distribution
- School health services, which include immunizations, health education, and a weekly youth drop-in clinic

## Public Health Nursing Services Statistics for Seabird Island:

- Total number of infant/child clients immunized: 153
- Total number of children immunized at Seabird Island School: 45
- Total number of TB tests completed: 21
- Total number of PAP/STI tests and Depo injections given: 33
- Total COVID-19 vaccines administered by Seabird nurses: 31
- Total influenza vaccines administered by Seabird nurses: 101

Note: COVID-19 and influenza vaccines were also provided by the pharmacist at Seabird Pharmacy this year. The above statistics do not include the vaccines administered by the pharmacy.

In total, Seabird Island Public Health Nurses provided immunizations to 330 clients this year.





## PRIMARY CARE CLINICS



### Seabird Island Dental Clinic

Providing a range of basic dental care services, including cancer screenings and minimal sedation.

Seabird Island Dental Office Hours are  
Monday to Thursday: 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM and  
some Fridays are available from September to June.

With the transition from pandemic to endemic, we continue to prioritize patient safety by adhering to universal precautions and optimal infection control practices. Masks are still required in the dental office, and our operatories are equipped with air filtration units to reduce the spread of airborne contaminants. Additionally, our dental team is fully vaccinated and up to date with all required immunizations.

We are committed to ongoing professional development by attending courses that enhance our knowledge in both dentistry and the community we serve.

Our Cavity Prevention Program remains active, offering pick-up and drop-off services for elementary students for their six-month recall appointments. Parents must complete and return permission forms to the clinic. High school students are encouraged to walk over for their appointments.

We regularly participate in community events such as the Seabird Health Fair, attend Parents and Tots sessions, and recently gave a presentation at the Grade 6 career sessions.

We welcome all Community Members who haven't visited in a while to schedule an exam. We look forward to seeing you back at the clinic!

# Seabird Pharmacy

The Seabird Island Pharmacy team collaborates closely with Seabird doctors and nurses to provide high-quality care. Our staff members are highly knowledgeable and experienced in handling FNHA/NIHB medical benefits. Conveniently located across from the Doctor's Office, you may also meet our team members at various community events, such as the Seabird Open House. We are dedicated to delivering exceptional service and ensuring your healthcare needs are met.

## Services include:

- Prescribing and assessing for Minor Ailments
- Compounding medications
- Medication review
- Home delivery of medications
- Blister packs
- Pain and addiction management support
- Patient education programs
- Flu and Covid Clinics
- Administering of injectable vaccines and medications
- Home-visits for home-bound clients
- Home health and wound care products
- Compatibility counselling regarding herbal products, food, and lifestyle in conjunction with medication use
- Providing medical supplies or equipment
- Providing covered nutritional supplement and baby formula for those who need them.

We are here to support your health and well-being with comprehensive pharmacy services tailored to the community's needs.

Ramez (Ram) Istafanous B. Sc. Pharm

Seabird Pharmacy Manager.

Phone: 604-491-4477

Mobile: 604-491-4478

Email: [Seabirdpharmacy@shaw.ca](mailto:Seabirdpharmacy@shaw.ca)

## Doctor Clinic and Medical Centre



Dr. Fox and Dr. Beaulieu had 4 medical students and 1 Pharmacy fellow this fiscal year.

SI Medical Centre received new medical eye equipment from BC Doctor of Optometry.

Chauntelle Blair is our new Medical Office Assistant (MOA).

Dr. Fox continues to have clinics in Cheam and Skwah.

Dr. Beaulieu continues to have clinic in Sts'ailes.

Stephen Martin continues to have clinic in Chawathil.



# Doctor Clinic and Medical Centre



## Medical Clinics provided April 2023 - March 2024

Type of Services	Dates	# of patients
Amplifon Hearing Clinic	April 19 May 25 September 28 October 26 January 25 March 26	31
Acupuncture Clinic	July - October	64
Life Labs Mobile Clinic	April – March (Quarterly)	44
Gynecologist Visits w/Dr. Deacon	April – March (Once a month)	73

Description	Dr. Fox	Dr. Beaulieu	Stephan Martin	Total
Diabetic	63	88	34	185
High Blood Pressure (HBP)	46	67	32	145
Congestive Heart Failure	8	9	4	21
COPD	16	14	9	39
Fraity Elders	4	6	3	13
Pap Smear Exams	0	137	0	137
Prostate Exams	6	2	2	10

Description	Dr. Fox	Dr. Beaulieu	Stephan Martin	Amelia Doran	Dr. Deacon	Dr. Wu
Office Visits	2628	2828	1592	519	73	64
Telephone Consults	1945	1577	817	-	-	-
Home Visits	27	6	20	-	-	-
Methadone OAT						
Patients	425	-	-	-	-	-
No Shows	531	453	253	-	-	-

# FAMILIES AND WELLNESS



The Families and Wellness team proudly welcomed over a dozen new staff members across our four programs this year. It has been a dynamic year, marked by significant growth, heartfelt celebrations, loss and profound healing.

## **FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**

The Family Development Program had an exceptionally busy year, filled with impactful events and training opportunities designed to acknowledge, inform, educate, honor, support, and celebrate Seabird Community Members. Weekly Community Suppers at the Mill Hall have become a cherished tradition, drawing dozens of attendees. In October, for Truth and Reconciliation, the team hosted weekly soup luncheons, while November's National Addictions Awareness Week featured an awareness walk and a poignant blanketing ceremony to honor those in recovery and remember those lost to addiction.

The Family Development team demonstrated unwavering support, responding promptly to provide food, firewood, transportation, and emotional care to families during times of loss throughout the year. Additional highlights included Red Dress Day, Men's and Women's Groups, Babysitter and Naloxone training, and the Seabird Pride Festival for LGBTQIA2S+.



## FAMILY HOMES

In 2023, Seabird Island's Family Homes underwent significant refurbishments before welcoming four new families. Our dedicated team of two Life Skills Coaches has been instrumental in helping these families thrive through a range of cultural and recreational activities, as well as providing essential advocacy and support.

One of the biggest challenges our clients face is the scarcity of affordable housing, both on and off reserves. BC is known for its high cost of living, making it one of the least affordable regions in the country. As a result, our Life Skills Coaches are often tasked with performing near miracles to help families find suitable and affordable housing to transition to after completing our program.





## **COUNSELLING**

This past year, our dedicated counselling team has gone above and beyond, extending their work beyond the clinical setting and into the heart of the community. The four counsellors not only provided therapy but also responded to crises affecting homes and families. They were actively involved in packing hampers, distributing Christmas gifts, attending ceremonies, and supporting grieving families at funerals.

Their support was comprehensive, encompassing play therapy, forest therapy, group and family counselling, grief and loss support, LGBTQIA2S+ inclusion support, suicide intervention, Wellbriety, and substance-use counselling. Their commitment to the community has been truly exceptional.

## **RECOVERY HOMES**

Seabird's well-regarded Recovery Homes saw remarkable enhancements this past year. Both homes underwent substantial upgrades, including physical renovations, program rebranding, a thorough policy review, and extensive staffing changes with new leadership in place. The revamped Program Model focuses on supportive recovery, offering a holistic approach that addresses the whole person through access to counselors, traditional practices, education, career development, recreation, and community connections.

# Families and Wellness

## Staffing Updates:

- We welcomed two new Family Development Workers, a Life Skills Coach at the Family Homes, and an additional full-time counselor to complete our clinical team. We are currently recruiting for a Supervisor of the Family Development Program, as the previous supervisor has transitioned to the Program Manager of Families and Wellness role.

## Program Updates:

- **A:yxalh Family Homes** Operating at full capacity since October 2023.
- **A:yelexw Recovery Homes** Undergoing a strategic organizational overhaul and will resume client intake in May 2024. We are revising all policies and procedures, hiring new staff and a supervisor, and negotiating with funders for increased financial support. The aim is to enhance program effectiveness and efficiency, increase successful graduate rates, and stay within our operational budget.
- **Family Development:** Our two newest workers have hit the ground running, providing essential support to families. They are organizing Naloxone training sessions for staff, community members, and youth at SI School, and distributing Naloxone kits and safe-use supplies door-to-door to prevent overdose deaths due to toxic drug distribution. Family Development also hosted two events for National Addictions Awareness Week (NAAW), resumed the monthly shopping bus to Chilliwack, and organized weekly Men's and Women's support groups and outings, such as to the Corn Maze and Whitecaps Soccer games.
- **Counselling:** The team, now consisting of four staff members, offers diverse support to the Seabird community, including play therapy, youth counselling, drug and alcohol counselling, LGBTQIA2S+ counselling, support groups, and Forest Therapy sessions. They also provide family and individual counselling to address trauma, grief, loss, anxiety, and depression.

# Families and Wellness

## Events, Meetings, and Workshops:

### Meetings:

- Seabird Island Youth Strategic Planning
- Attendance and School Supports Meeting
- Child and Family Services Jurisdiction Meetings
- Cross-Departmental Working Group
- EVENTS Meeting
- Seabird Justice Meetings
- Seabird Collaborative Initiatives
- Community Well-Being Planning Committee
- Substance Use Planning Committee
- Housing Support Services Team Tenant Selection Committee

### Events:

- Traditional Ceremony Celebration for Jurisdiction over Sts'ailes Child & Family Services

### Workshops & Trainings:

- Indigenous Tools for Living
- Bill C-92 2-Day Working Sessions
- Allyship & Reconciliation Building (12-Month Program at UFV, University of Fraser Valley)
- Naloxone Training Workshop

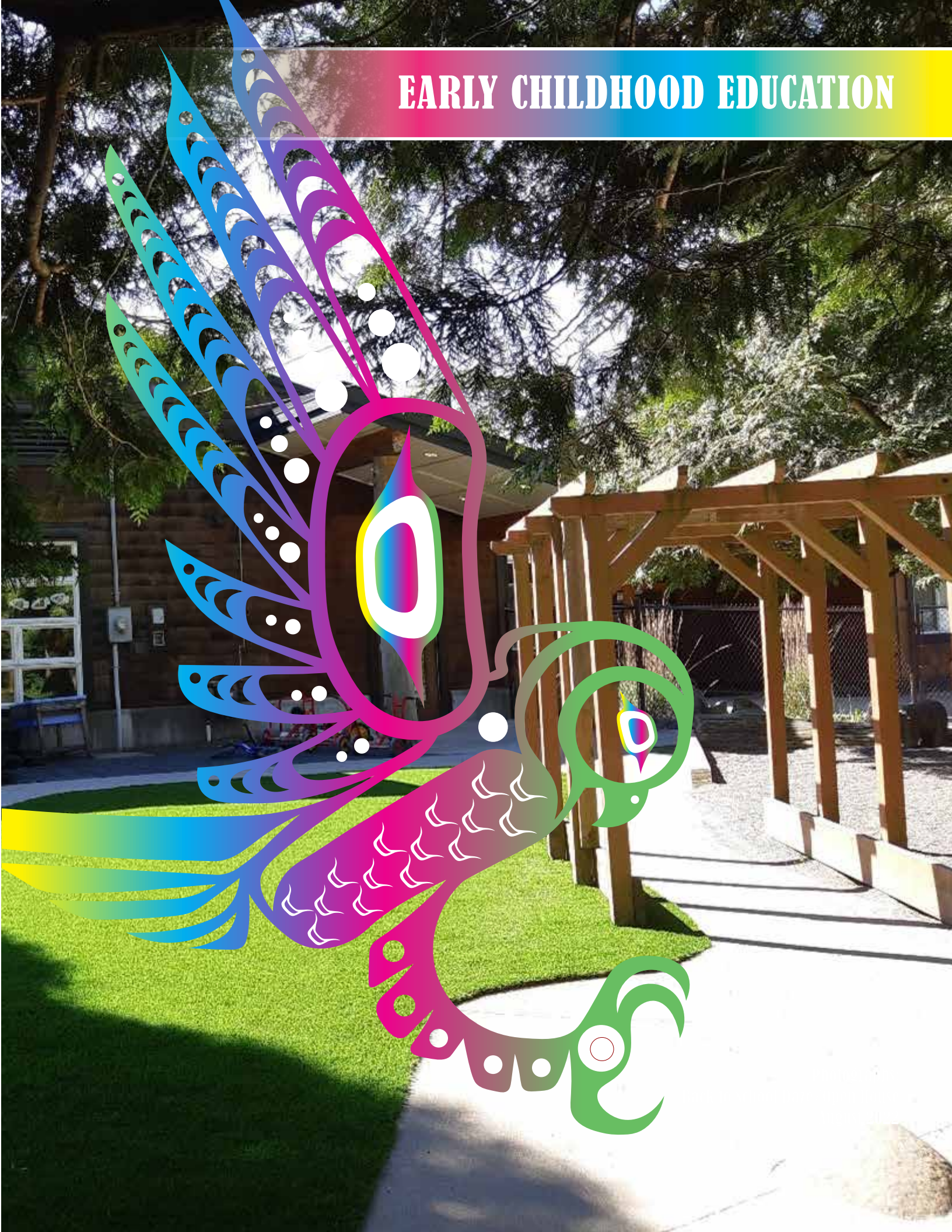




# Families and Wellness Program Statistics

	Karla Joseph Youth and Young Adults Counsellor				Derek Swanson Addictions Counsellor				Kim Verigin, Women and Family Counsellor			
	# of clients	# of sessions	# of No Shows / Late Cancel	Groups / Events	# of clients	# of sessions	# of No Shows / Late Cancel	Groups / Events	# of clients	# of sessions	# of No Shows / Late Cancel	Groups / Events
April	30	22	1	Youth Pride Bingo 12 participants								
May	32	29	1									
June	32	43	5	Community Pride Night ~ 67 participants								
July	32	27	3									
Aug	30	38	0	Youth Pride Bingo 7 participants	41	45	14	1 Group 5 Participants				
Sept	28	10	0		38	12	14	2 Groups 7 participants				
Oct	30	35	2		38	47	20	1 Group 6 participants				
Nov	34	31	10	Youth Pride Bingo 7 participants	43	22	14	2 Groups 13 participants				
Dec	30	15	3		47	21	10		3	9		1 Women's Group 9 participants 2 Forest Therapy 7 participants
Jan	43	36	6		45	20	8	3 Groups 3 participants 4 Wellbriety Group 4 participants	3	22	1	3 Women's Group 4 participants 1 Forest Therapy 6 participants Monday Meditation 10 participants
Feb	50	52	8		45	15	10	3 Groups 3 Participants 3 Wellbriety Group 4 participants	9	4	6	3 Wellbriety Group 4 participants 6, 6, 5 participants 1 Forest Therapy 4 participants Monday Meditation 13 participants
Mar	49	48	4		35	20	12	4 Wellbriety Group 4 participants	4	1	6	2 Women's Group 6.5 participants 2 Forest Therapy 7 participants Monday Meditation 5 participants
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>91</b>

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION







## **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DIRECTOR**

*Carlene Brown*

### **PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

*Aboriginal Infant Development*

*Supported Child Development / Aboriginal Supported Child Development*

*Aboriginal Headstart On-Reserve*

*Ey Qual Speech & Language*

*BEAR Bus*

*Daycare*

*3' Preschool*

*4's Preschool*

*Out of School Care*



# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



The 2023–2024 year has been a dynamic and exhilarating time for our Early Childhood Development (ECD) Department. We have embraced the opportunity to welcome families into our in-house programs, continuing to deliver exceptional quality and support. One of the highlights of this year has been overseeing the planning and construction of our new Head Start and Out of School Care building. This exciting project began this winter and is set to open in the coming weeks, marking a significant milestone for our department.

## Highlights of the year:

- **In-House Graduation Ceremonies:** Our 3's and 4's Preschool programs celebrated their graduates with memorable ceremonies. These events were marked by vibrant drumming performances, the presence of respected elders, thoughtful gifts, and a communal lunch, creating a special and meaningful experience for the children and their families.
- **No-Fee Childcare:** Thanks to a generous grant from the First Nations Health Authority and United Way, we proudly offered no-cost childcare for all participants in both our Summer Program and the 4's Preschool

# Early Childhood Education

Summer Program. This initiative has provided invaluable support to our families, ensuring access to quality early childhood education without financial burden.

- **ECD Story Time in the Park:** In partnership with Agassiz/Harrison Community Services, we hosted a delightful Story Time in the Park event. This gathering featured a delicious Bannock snack with jam and watermelon, alongside the engaging book “I Sang You Down From The Stars” by Tasha Spillett-Sumner. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for families to connect with each other and enjoy a culturally rich experience.
- **Annual Early Childhood Carnival:** Our Annual Early Childhood Carnival was a tremendous success, bringing joy and excitement to the community. Each child received a backpack, and families had a blast participating in carnival games, enjoying a bouncy castle, and indulging in snow cones, popcorn, cotton candy, and more. The event also included opportunities for families to register for upcoming programs.
- **ECD Pancake Breakfast with Santa:** This year marked the return of our beloved Santa Breakfast, the first since before COVID. The event was a resounding success, with each child receiving a gift and goodie bag. Families enjoyed a festive breakfast, had the chance to meet Santa, take photos with him, and engage in Make & Take Crafts. We were thrilled to provide gifts and special treats to over one-hundred-twenty-five (125) children from our case load during this heartwarming event.
- **ECD Case load:** During the 2022–2023 period, our case load included approximately three-hundred-twenty-five (325) children, covering our Summer Program and Head Start on Reserve. This robust case load reflects the ongoing demand for our services and our commitment to supporting a large number of families.

The Early Childhood Centre of Excellence continues to be the hub for fourteen (14) of our ECD programs, delivering specialized services to Seabird and the surrounding communities. Our department works closely with other Seabird departments to ensure that every child and family receives the highest level of care and support. Our collaborative approach and dedication to excellence drive our mission to foster a nurturing and enriching environment for early childhood development.

# Aboriginal Infant Development

The Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP) has successfully supported over thirty (30) Indigenous babies and toddlers, from birth to three (3) years of age, who required extra assistance or were at risk for physical, social, intellectual, emotional, and developmental delays. These essential services were offered both on and off-reserve, extending from Sts'ailes to Boothroyd. The program is voluntary and family-centered, prioritizing the unique needs and goals of each family.

AIDP also provided developmental screenings and assessments to any families interested in receiving additional support. This year has been particularly successful, with many positive relationships established between families and other professionals. Infant massage classes have become a popular component of the program, along with the parent drop-in gross motor movement group, "Someone So Small."





## Supported Child Development/Aboriginal Supported Child Development

The Seabird Supported Child Development Program is a family-centered initiative providing vital services to both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous children who require extra support due to intellectual, social, emotional, and communicative challenges. The program serves children from birth to nineteen (19) years old, with a particular focus on those aged three (3) to six (6).

Over the past year, we have extended our support to ten (10) different centers, spanning from Boothroyd to Sts'ailes, reaching over seventy (70) children and families, including forty-seven (47) new referrals in 2023. Our dedicated team, comprised of one supervisor, two (2) consultants, and five (5) – seven (7) support workers, travels to all surrounding communities within Circle 1 to deliver these essential services.

In addition to our direct support, our team actively participates in developmental fairs hosted by the Early Years Committee and events like Ready-Set-Learn, ensuring we connect with as many families as possible.



# Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve

The goal of the Head Start program is to support early childhood development for children from birth to six years old and their families. We offer a range of activities tailored to each community's unique needs and priorities, all provided free of charge. To ensure accessibility, transportation is available for those who need it.

This year, due to staffing, our Head Start program operated as a hybrid model, combining in-house sessions with home deliveries. Registered participants received weekly meal deliveries and activity packages, allowing families to engage with the program from the comfort of their homes.

At Seabird Island, our program runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. For the 2023 year, we have sixteen (16) families registered, with twenty-five (25) children ages newborn (0) – six (6) participating. We provide a healthy snack and lunch during each session, as well as a monthly family night where families can come together and connect.

Our program is rich in cultural integration, including drumming and singing in halq'eméylem. We strive to build strong relationships with families and children, incorporating traditional culture through fun and educational activities. These include field trips, crafts, traditional storytelling, and introductory weaving sessions with families.

We also collaborate with other service providers from Seabird Island and the First Nations Health Authority to offer a convenient space for parents and children to receive immunizations, information, and referrals for services such as dental care, speech and language support, Aboriginal Infant Development, and Supported Child Development.

Our staff members are committed to ongoing professional development to enhance their cultural, educational, and safety protocols. This ensures that we continue to provide the highest quality services to the Seabird Island Community.



# Ey Qwal Speech and Language



Ey Qwal Speech and Language is a referral-based program dedicated to supporting Indigenous children aged newborn (0) – six (6) who face challenges with language development. This past year, our program successfully provided services to seventy-two (72) children across daycare, preschool, and in-home settings throughout our catchment area, which spans from Boothroyd to Sts'ailes.

We work in close collaboration with the Supported Child Development and Infant Development programs to ensure that children receive comprehensive, wraparound services from our Early Childhood Department. Our team includes one registered speech pathologist and two speech and language assistants, all committed to delivering the highest quality care.

A significant milestone for our program this year was the acquisition of our own hearing screening equipment, enabling us to screen for potential hearing loss directly. If any concerns arise during these screenings, the child is promptly referred to an audiologist for further assessment. This streamlined process has allowed our families to access the necessary support more efficiently, ensuring timely interventions for their children.





## Bus for Aboriginal and Educational Resources

B.E.A.R. (Bringing Education and Resources) Bus is a mobile program that travels throughout our catchment area, from Boothroyd to Sts'ailes, providing families with children aged newborn (0) – six (6) with essential educational and cultural resources. Operating five days a week in different communities, the Bear Bus works closely with the Infant Development and Supported Child Development programs to offer comprehensive support.

The B.E.A.R. Bus integrates Stó:lō and Nlaka'pamux language and culture into daily activities, including circles, art, and story time. The program's primary focus is to reach families in isolated areas who may lack transportation to access early childhood programs, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to engage in enriching educational experiences.

# Daycare

Seabird Island Daycare is a fully licensed center dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for children. Our commitment to adhering to strict licensing regulations ensures that every aspect of our program meets the highest standards of care and safety. One of the key features of our daycare is our low adult-to-child ratios, which allow for personalized attention and meaningful interactions. Each child benefits from one-on-one time with our skilled and caring staff, ensuring that their individual needs are met, and their development is closely supported.

Our daycare is licensed to accommodate up to twelve (12) infants newborn (0) – eighteen (18) months, twelve (12) toddlers eighteen (18) months - three (3) years, and twenty-five (25) preschoolers aged three (3) – five (5) years, when fully staffed. This capacity allows us to create small, intimate group settings where children can thrive. We are particularly proud to offer no-cost childcare for all children in the three (3) – five (5) age group, as well as for infants and toddlers, thanks to funding provided by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). This support ensures that our services are accessible to families and that every child can benefit from high-quality early childhood education and care.

At Seabird Island Daycare, we believe in providing a holistic experience that goes beyond basic care. Each day, we offer a variety of enriching activities designed to support the overall development of our children. We start the day with a nutritious breakfast cereal, followed by two healthy snacks, one of which is a hot option, to keep the children energized and ready to learn. Our program includes a diverse range of activities, such as circle time, where children engage in group discussions and learning, and outdoor play, which encourages physical activity and exploration. We also organize





community walks and events, allowing children to connect with their surroundings and learn about the world around them.

Field trips are another exciting component of our program, with destinations that can take us as far as Vancouver. These trips provide children with unique learning opportunities and the chance to experience new environments and cultures. In addition to our regular activities, we celebrate special days with extra events and activities tailored to holidays and the summertime, making these times of the year particularly memorable for the children.

Cultural enrichment is a core aspect of our program. We have thoughtfully integrated Stó:lō and Nlaka'pamux language and culture into our daily routines, particularly during circle time. Through language lessons, singing, and drumming, we help children connect with their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and identity.

Our staff is a team of fully qualified professionals who are passionate about early childhood education. They regularly participate in professional development opportunities, ensuring they stay informed about the latest research, trends, and best practices in the field. This commitment to lifelong learning enables our staff to provide the best possible care and education to the children in our program.

We are also fortunate to have the full support of in-house services, including Ey Qwal Speech and Language, Aboriginal Supported Child Development, and our department administration. This collaboration allows us to offer a comprehensive range of services that address the diverse needs of our children and their families, ensuring that every child at Seabird Island Daycare receives the support they need to thrive.





# Preschool and Out Of School Care

## Preschool and Out Of School Care

First and foremost we acknowledge that we operate on the traditional and unceded territory of the Stó:lō people, also known as the "river people," today recognized as the Seabird Island Band. We honor their traditional language, halq'eméylem, as an integral part of our program.

### 3's Preschool Program

Seabird Island 3's Preschool is a welcoming and culturally diverse preschool, offering a nurturing environment where children can thrive. Our program runs five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM. We are deeply grateful to the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) for providing the funds that allow us to offer our program at no cost to all students who attend. At Seabird Island 3's Preschool, we emphasize the cultural beliefs and language of the First Nations, as we believe this foundation helps children build a strong and positive sense of self through their cultural heritage.

Our preschool provides a positive introduction to education, focusing on school readiness. We are committed to creating a safe, caring, and inviting environment where children can learn and grow. We believe that children learn best through play, which not only enhances their social and emotional development but also instills a sense of pride, confidence, and a lifelong desire to learn.

Understanding the importance of proper nutrition for our students, we provide a healthy and nutritious morning snack each day.

Seabird Island 3's Preschool operates in full accordance with all childcare licensing requirements and follows the philosophies, policies, and objectives established by Seabird Island Band Management. Our goal is to ensure that every child in our care receives the best possible start on their educational journey.



# Preschool and Out Of School Care

## 4's Preschool Program

The Seabird Island 4's Preschool operates five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, following the schedule of the Seabird Island K4's Elementary program. We are proud to offer a welcoming and culturally diverse environment where we teach the cultural beliefs and language of the First Nations. We believe that this foundation helps children build a strong and positive sense of identity and pride in their cultural heritage.

Our daily routine includes a morning circle led by a halq'eméylem teacher, who engages the children with songs, sounds, counting, colors, and more in the traditional language. Our preschool teacher has also completed a halq'eméylem course and incorporates the language throughout the day in the classroom. Our teachers are culturally sensitive and skilled in teaching cultural beliefs and traditions, ensuring that these are woven into the daily activities.

Seabird Island 4's Preschool provides a positive introduction to education, focusing on school readiness. We are committed to creating a safe, caring, and inviting environment where children can thrive. We believe in the power of play as the best way for children to learn, enhancing their social and emotional development while instilling a sense of pride, confidence, and a lifelong desire to learn.

Recognizing the importance of proper nutrition, we provide healthy and nutritious morning and afternoon snacks. Our teachers have even involved the children in snack preparation, making soup, fruit platters, spaghetti, and baking cakes, muffins, and more.

Seabird Island 4's Preschool operates in full compliance with all childcare licensing requirements and aligns with the philosophies, policies, and objectives established by Seabird Island Band Management. Our goal is to provide every child with a strong foundation for future educational success.





# Preschool and Out Of School Care

## Out Of School Care

Seabird Island Out of School Care program runs five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM. We are proud to offer a welcoming and culturally diverse environment where we teach the cultural beliefs and language of the First Nations. We believe that fostering a connection to culture helps children build a strong and positive sense of identity.

We are committed to creating a safe, caring, and inviting space where students can unwind and be their authentic selves. Our program provides them with opportunities to interact and develop healthy social and emotional skills. We offer a mix of planned arts and activities, as well as open-ended crafts that encourage creativity. Outdoor free play is a key part of our program, along with organized sports and games.

Understanding the importance of proper nutrition, we provide a healthy and nutritious after-school snack to keep our students energized.

Seabird Island Out of School Care operates in full compliance with all childcare licensing requirements and aligns with the philosophies, policies, and objectives established by Seabird Island Band Management. Our goal is to support the well-being and development of every child in our care.





**Yálh yuw kw'a's hò:y**

Thanking someone deeply,  
thanking the creator,  
praise something beautiful, finished

**shxw'éyelh**

be in good health

**kwétslóme**

see you

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**Design and Layout by**

**Zorana Edwards Shippentower - Communications Assistant (Publications)**

**Artwork / Illustrations by**

**Zorana Edwards Shippentower - Communications Assistant (Publications)  
Ciara Busby - Communications Assistant (Illustrator)**

**Interviews & Writing, Data Input,  
Formatting and Editing by  
Submissions by Departments**

**Sandra Bobb, Communications Supervisor / IO  
Directors, Managers and Supervisors**





**SEABIRD ISLAND BAND**  
Sq'ewqel

2895 Chowat Road, Agassiz BC, V0M 1A0

Ph: 1.604.796.2177

Toll-free: 1.800.788.0322

[www.seabirdisland.ca](http://www.seabirdisland.ca)