



Statement about the Death of a Youth in our Agency Care

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2020

A youth in care of our agency tragically passed away and we are heartbroken by the loss of this youth. We are saddened, and on behalf of our agency we send love, prayers and condolences to the family, caregivers and the community. We have called upon our Respected Elders to help us by sharing their traditional knowledge, and offering healing circles for the family and staff to get through this difficult time.

The agency has launched an internal review into the events and circumstances surrounding this tragedy and will be fully cooperating with all external investigations. We trust that findings from an investigative review will give the grieving family and agency staff answers, comfort, and understanding. The agency appreciates the need for a collective effort to advocate for culturally appropriate, trauma informed prevention resources and mental health services. We are committed to improving services to better prevent further tragedies like this from occurring.

We understand the heavy burden of achieving transformative change to keep children safe and families together. This work will involve collaborating with numerous Ministries, Policing and Justice and our First Nations organizations to make progress in the social determinants of health. Our agency is prepared and accountable to do our part. Bill C92 is an opportunity to transform programs and services for Indigenous children and families. We are excited about this new law, the opportunities it provides.

With increased collaboration and partnership, it is the collective hope that we can walk a path together in a good way, with good hearts and good minds with our communities and families. In the spirit in our collective commitment we will continue to support the family in their healing journey. Every child and every family matters.

Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society is a delegated agency and was founded by the Stó:lō Nation in 1992. The agency was established with the goal of providing better outcomes for Indigenous families, children and youth in the Fraser Valley, as well as prevention and a focus on enhancing Indigenous culture.

Contact Info:

Grand Chief Doug Kelly

President

Stó:lō Tribal Council

Doug.Kelly@stolotribalcouncil.ca

Phone: (604) 798-1436

Marion Mussell

President,

Xyólheméyhlh Board of Directors

Info@xyolhemeylh.bc.ca

Phone: 604-316-2454

Chief David Jimmie

President:

Stó:lō Nation Chiefs Council

David.Jimmie@stolonation.bc.ca

Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children & Family Services Society

Bld. 1, 7201 Vedder Road, Chilliwack, BC V2R 4G5 ☎ 604-858-0113 Fax: 604-392-3256

www.fvacfss.ca