



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Indigenous children and youth celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day through art



Emiley, 10

1<sup>st</sup> Place, Ages 5 to 10



Isabelle, 14

1<sup>st</sup> Place, Ages 11 to 14



Presley, 16

2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Ages 15 to 24

In honour of National Indigenous Peoples Day, Xyólheméylh held its third annual writing and/or art contest, asking children and youth what being Indigenous means to them. Indigenous children and youth to express what being Indigenous means to them in writing and/or art. The entries were judged by a panel consisting of Xyólheméylh's Board of Directors and Elders Advisory Committee, in three categories – ages 5 to 10; ages 11 to 14 and ages 15 to 24.

The children and youth expressed their connection to the land, nature, animals, and their families. They also expressed their hopes and dreams as well as their sadness with discrimination and racism.

“Many artists have painted or drawn pictures of wolves howling at a full moon. In my artwork, I have used the dream catcher as my moon because I want the dream catcher to catch and protect all my

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hopes and dreams of being a person who is known to protect friends, freedom, family, loyalty, and teamwork,” said Emiley, 10, of her artwork.

Kyan, who won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Ages 15 to 24 category wrote: “Stereotypes often take over how First Nations are seen, and when someone looks at you and automatically thinks that what you are isn’t something to be proud of it makes you feel bad no matter how proud you are.”

“Thank you to all the children and youth who submitted their heartfelt art. It is truly inspiring to see the talent, creativity and the pride expressed in being Indigenous,” said Dr. Wenona Hall, President of Xyólheméyhlh’s Board of Directors.

### **About Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society**

Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society (FVACFSS) is a fully delegated Aboriginal child welfare agency providing culturally appropriate and holistic services through prevention, community development and child welfare programs to Aboriginal (Status, Non-Status, On Reserve, Off Reserve, Stó:lō and other First Nation, Inuit, and Métis) children, youth and their families residing throughout the Fraser Valley.

Our programs and services are created and executed with a special attention on strengthening culture and identity. We focus on keeping families together, reintegrating children back with their families, and discovering and strengthening cultural connections. We work to ensure children are connected to their family, and community while striving to ensure their inherent rights to heritage and identity are upheld in all we do.

LÉTSE MÓT TÉ SQWÁLEWEL – “With a good mind, a good heart, and good feelings”

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