

2022/2023

Annual Report




First Nations Child &
Family Caring Society


Please note that this annual report reflects activities from September 2022 to August 2023.


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Contents

3 Dedication

5 Honouring

6 Key Accomplishments

8 About Us

8 The Caring Society Board of Directors

8 The Caring Society Staff

9 Spirit Bear and Friends!

9 Spirit Bear Podcast

10 Spirit Bear at the Movies

10 Spirit Bear's Pawblishing Services

12 Reconciliation Ambearristers Initiative

13 Child- and Youth-Led Campaigns

13 I Am a Witness: Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

16 Jordan's Principle

17 Shannen's Dream

17 Reconciling History

18 Touchstones of Hope

19 Resources and Public Engagement

19 First Peoples Child & Family Review

19 Website Overhaul

19 Shaking the Movers

20 Indigenous Kids Rights Path

21 Events

21 Have a Heart Day

22 Elderbeary Day

22 Bear Witness Day

23 Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams

23 School is a Time for Dreams

24 Orange Shirt Day

26 Awards and Scholarships

26 Jordan's Principle Scholarship

26 Neebin's Music Fund

26 Shannen's Dream Scholarship

27 Spirit Bear Award

28 First Nations Children's Action Research Education Services

28 About Us

28 Education and Engagement Events

29 Research

29 Resource Development

31 Future Directions

32 Want to Make a Difference for First Nations Children?



Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of Joan Glode and Landon Pearson.

Joan was a fierce advocate for First Nations children. We are especially inspired by her long-standing advocacy for Jordan's Principle and ensuring that First Nations children have opportunities to grow up at home. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and the Mi'kmaq community of Acadia First Nation.

Landon was a champion for the rights of children everywhere. She was a kind mentor to all who stood with children and a stalwart believer that children have a right to be heard and have a voice in change. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family.

Honouring

Alanis Obomsawin

Amanda Strong and Spotted Fawn Productions

Ampersand Inc.

Anderson Family, Norway House Cree Nation

Atkinson Foundation

Anne Levesque, University of Ottawa

Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G)

Assembly of First Nations

Barbara McIsaac, McIsaac Law

Beechwood Cemetery

Ben & Jerry's

Canada Helps

Canadian Council for the Arts

Canadian Paediatric Society

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

Carrier Sekani Child and Family Services

Carters Professional Corporations

Catherine Donnelly Foundation

City of Ottawa

Claudette Commanda

Collie Historical Research

Collure Family

Dakota Ojibway Child & Family Services

David Hodges, inPath

David Stern, Lewis Birnberg Hanet, LLP

David Taylor, Conway Baxter LLP

David Wilson, Conway Baxter LLP

Donate a Car

Family of Neebin Armstrong

Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN)

HANSAméd Limited

Institute of Fiscal Studies & Democracy (IFSD)

J.W. McConnell Foundation

Kevin Droz, Conway Baxter LLP

Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency

Koostachin Family, Attawapiskat First Nation

Larissa States

Leah Gryfe Designs

Lillian Meighen and Don Wright Foundation

Lisa Howell, University of Ottawa

MacIntyre Communications

Marquis Book Printing

McGill University

McIntyre Media

Mélanie Vincent

National Film Board

National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)

Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, University of Ottawa

The Olive Tree Foundation (Mohamed and Opheera Nasir Endowment Fund)

Ontario Children's Advancement Coalition

OPIN Digital Inc.

Ouseley Hanvey Clipsham Deep LLP

Pokoloko

Project of Heart

Rise Consulting

Sandy Tunwell, Accountrain Inc.

Sarah Clarke, Clarke Child and Family Law

Secretariat for Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), Australia

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Teresa Libesman

TopHat

The Bryce Family

The Printing House

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), Australia

University of Toronto Press

University of Alberta, Faculty of Education

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education

Victoria Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), Australia

Wahkotowin Law and Governance Lodge

Winnipeg Film Group

Youth in Care Canada

Key Accomplishments

Reconciliation in Action



In honour of Orange Shirt Day and the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Caring Society partnered with Assembly of Seven Generations, Project of Heart, and Beechwood Cemetery to host an event on September 30 in Ottawa that was attended by over **1,000** people.



We hosted our annual Have a Heart Day event which was celebrated with **900** local students and over **60** schools, workplaces and organizations held events nationwide.



#BearWitnessDay and **#JordansPrinciple** were trending on Twitter on Bear Witness Day as individuals, groups, communities, schools and workplaces honoured Jordan River Anderson and learned about Jordan's Principle.



To support community participation in Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams, we distributed more than **200** packets of wildflower seeds across Canada! These were used to plant Heart Gardens in honour of residential school survivors.



In honour of residential school survivors and support the legacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, over **880** hearts were planted in heart gardens hosted by schools, organizations, community centres, and workplaces.

Spirit Bear and Friends



The Caring Society launched the first season of the Spirit Bear Podcast and the second season – the “Ask an Expert” series is underway. Listeners can now listen to **8** episodes on their favourite listening app!



Spirit Bear's second film, Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams hit the big screens in April 2023 with rave reviews from kids across Canada. Spirit Bear's third film, Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams, is soon to be released and work is underway on Spirit Bear's fourth film.



Over **2,000** copies of Spirit Bear's 2023 calendar, *Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation*, were distributed to individuals, child and family service agencies, school boards and educators across Canada.



Spirit Bear's four children's books continue to be made available for free online in English, French and some First Nations languages and close to **3,000** books were distributed to children, youth, families, supports, Elders and community members. We sold over **3,500** copies of Spirit Bear's books with all proceeds supporting child- and youth-led reconciliation initiatives.



15 Reconciliation *Ambearristers* found new homes in schools and community centers across Canada, with some going as far as elementary schools in Sweden! Each hosted bear accompanies the group as they learn about and promote the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.

Big Win for the Kids



The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has issued 27 non-compliance and procedural orders since the 2016 landmark ruling, four of which were issued this past year.



The Tribunal found that the class action final settlement agreement (FSA) on compensation does not fully satisfy the Tribunal's orders. The AFN and Canada returned to the negotiating table with the new addition of the Caring Society to revise the FSA. In July 2023, the Tribunal issued a letter-decision finding that the revised FSA on compensation satisfies its compensation orders.



Over **3.55 million** services and products were provided to First Nations children since July 2016 because of Jordan's Principle and the May 2017 noncompliance order.

Making New Friends



Through our awards and scholarships, we were able to recognize **16** fantastic schools and individuals who are taking action towards reconciliation and working to ensure equity for First Nations children.



We completed over **120** virtual and in-person in **9** provinces and **4** countries!



The Caring Society has **60,000** social media friends on X (formerly called Twitter), Facebook and Instagram!



We participated in over **130** media engagements, appearing in both Canadian and international media.

We published four newsletters featuring over **35** articles. We distributed newsletters to over **250** First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies, Caring Society members, and educators.

About Us

Building on the interest of First Nations child and family services leaders to create a national networking organization, the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (the Caring Society) was developed at the Squamish First Nation in 1998 at a national meeting of First Nations child and family service agencies. Meeting delegates agreed that a national non-profit organization was required to provide research, policy, professional development, and networking to support First Nations child and family service agencies in caring for First Nations children, youth, and families. An interim board was elected, and the plan was approved at a second national meeting at Kingsclear First Nation in 1999.

The Caring Society works to ensure the safety and well-being of First Nations youth and their families through education initiatives, public policy campaigns and providing quality resources to support communities. Using a reconciliation framework that addresses contemporary hardships for First Nations families in ways that uplift all Canadians, the Caring Society champions culturally based equity for First Nations children and their families so that they can grow up safely at home, be healthy, achieve their dreams, celebrate their languages and culture and be proud of who they are. The Caring Society proudly works with our partners in Canada and around the world to promote the rights of Indigenous children.

The Caring Society Board of Directors

Raymond Shingoose, President

Kenn Richard, Vice-President

Judy Levi, Treasurer of the Board

Elsie Flette Board Member, Manitoba Representative

Arlene Johnson Board Member, Atlantic Representative

Koren Lightning-Earle Board Member, Alberta Representative

Jessica Saunders, Manitoba Representative

Mary Teegee, British Columbia Representative

The Caring Society Staff

Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director

Melisa Brittain, Policy and Research Coordinator

Harmony Eshkawkogan, Administrative Assistant

Jennifer King, Director of Programs and Operations

Brittany Mathews, Director of Reconciliation and Policy

Sunny Mathews, Reconciliation Dog

Robin McLeod, Summer Law Student

Tammy Morgan, Finance Officer and Human Resources Coordinator

Jessica Raby, Education and Public Engagement Coordinator

Molly Rasmussen, Reconciliation and Research Coordinator

Daxton Rhead, Administrative Support

Azia Seitcher, Administrative Support

The Caring Society also acknowledges the contributions of **Sarah Fredericks** and **Madelaine McCracken** for her dedication and service to the Caring Society and First Nations children, youth, and families.

Spirit Bear and Friends!

fncaringsociety.com/SpiritBear

This past year, Spirit Bear has been especially busy in the huckleberry patch and working with his colleagues and friends to come up with reconciliation education resources.

A member of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Spirit Bear represents the 165,000 First Nations children impacted by the First Nations child welfare case as well as the thousands of other children who have committed to learning about the case and have taken action in support of reconciliation and equity. Gifted to the Caring Society by Carrier Sekani Family Services in 2008, Spirit Bear has since been a witness to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal case to serve as a reminder that the case is centered around children. Since then, Spirit Bear has been awarded an honorary “Barrister” degree from Osgoode Law School and was

officially admitted to the “Bear” by the Indigenous Bar Association in 2017.

Spirit Bear continues to create educational resources

for children of all ages. From his films and books to his podcast and Spirit Bear Plan, Spirit Bear’s resources are available for free on the Caring Society’s website, and on his personal social media where thousands of his friends can follow along on his learning journey.

Spirit Bear Podcast

fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear-podcast

The Caring Society is thrilled to have launched the Spirit Bear Podcast in July 2022 as the latest tool to reach more audiences and honour the diverse ways people learn. In the year since its launch, the podcast has had listeners tuning in from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, the Netherlands, and Myanmar!

The Caring Society is grateful to the students of Dr. Veldon Coburn’s “Indigenous Politics in Canada” course at the University of Ottawa who produced the first season. The students interviewed various scholars, politicians, and activists who work on advancing justice for First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples.

Currently underway, the second season – the “Ask an Expert” series – features interviews between Cindy Blackstock and various experts in the field of child wellbeing on a variety of topics. So far, we have been fortunate to have been joined by:

- Sarah Clarke, of Clarke Child & Family Law, who discussed compensation for those First Nations children and families who experienced discrimination in child welfare and Jordan’s Principle and how Canada can stop the discrimination and prevent its recurrence.
- Dr. Barbara Fallon, Dr. Ashley Vandermorris, and Genevieve Sansone of the Fraser Mustard Institute for Human Development Policy Bench, who educated listeners about parenting capacity assessments, birth alerts, and substance use interventions and their impacts on First Nations children and families.
- Dr. Helaina Gaspard of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Democracy, who joined for two episodes discussing some exciting opportunities that lie ahead for First Nations and agencies in the long-term reform of First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan’s Principle.
- Gary Mavis, former Executive Director of the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents, and core member of Teddy’s Homes, who sat down to discuss what it *really* means to provide trauma-informed, culturally relevant care to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth.

Stay tuned for more as Season 2 wraps up and get ready to launch Season 3 this Fall!



Spirit Bear at the Movies

fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/films

The Caring Society and Spotted Fawn Productions, an Indigenous-led and community-oriented film studio led by Michif artist Amanda Strong, has been hard at work. Throughout the nearly five-year partnership, Spotted Fawn Productions and the Caring Society have brought the adventures of Spirit Bear to life with a great deal of care and



Movie poster for Spirit Bear's third film Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams.

artistry. Released in 2020, Spirit Bear's first film *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* has recently been made available free of charge on the Caring Society's website; the film was also accessible to watch with French subtitles.

Spirit Bear's second film, *Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams* hit the big screen on April 12, 2023 and received rave reviews from kids across the country. Viewers followed along with Spirit Bear as he learned about traditional knowledge and residential schools from Uncle Huckleberry and his friend Lak'insxw before heading to Algonquin territory, where children taught Spirit Bear about Shannen's Dream of "safe and comfy schools" for every First Nations student. Spirit Bear's third film, *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams*, is soon to be released and work is underway on Spirit Bear's fourth film!

Thank you to the filmmakers at Spotted Fawn Productions for their beautiful rendering of Spirit Bear's latest adventures!

Spirit Bear's Pawblishing Services

Spirit Bear, the Caring Society and friends pawblished some amazing reconciliation books and resources this past year! These resources address a gap in reconciliation education. There are few Canadian books for younger children linking reconciliation with social justice in the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Calls to Action.

Spirit Bear's Books

fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/books-learning-guides

Always in high demand, the Caring Society has sold over 3,500 copies of Spirit Bear's books this year. Books are sold by both local and national retailers, and directly from our distributor, University of Toronto Press. Since Spirit Bear's books have been so well-received, we have been able to distribute close to 3,000 books to children, youth, families, supporters, Elders, and community members.

Spirit Bear has published eight picture books since 2017:

- *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* (1st edition 2017, 2nd edition 2020)
- *Spirit Bear et les enfants passent à l'histoire* (1st edition 2018, 2nd edition 2021)
- *Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams* (2018)
- *Spirit Bear : pêcher le savoir attraper des rêves* (2019)
- *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams* (2019)
- *Spirit Bear : Rendre hommage aux souvenirs, semer des rêves* (2019)
- *Spirit Bear: Echoes of the Past* (2020)
- *Spirit Bear : échos du passé* (2021)

Spirit Bear's books are all available to read for free on the Caring Society website, in English, French and in multiple First Nations

languages. The books are accompanied by learning guides to support families, educators, and communities in using Spirit Bear's books to teach equity, fairness, reconciliation, and ways to end discrimination against First Nations kids. The first three learning guides are available on our website and have been used to support learning alongside Spirit Bear books. This year, we have also worked to make Spirit Bear's books available in eBook format so that they can be made accessible on eReader platforms such as Kindle and Kobo.

Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation: 2023 Calendar

fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/calendar

2023 marked the release of the fifth iteration of the Spirit Bear Calendar: Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation. Alongside a whole year of reconciliation-based activities, events, and Spirit Bear resources, the calendar included imagery of Spirit Bear embracing festive activities throughout the year – from planting a Heart Garden to enjoying his favourite snacks, huckleberries and cookies! Most importantly, each month highlighted a different way individuals, families and communities can make meaningful differences toward reconciliation.

This year, we distributed 2,000 English calendars and 150 French calendars to individuals, child and family service agencies, school boards, and educators across Canada who recognize the importance of taking

action toward reconciliation. The Caring Society was also able to donate calendars to groups or individuals who would otherwise not have the means to purchase them. Included with every calendar purchase was a set of stickers, available in both English and French. The stickers were selected to represent holiday celebrations, annual campaigns, and if you look closely, you can even find the Caring Society's Reconciliation

Dog, Sunny! The beloved stickers are a recent addition to the Spirit Bear calendars and have been cherished by many, especially children.

The calendars were accompanied by a free activity book that supporters could fill out by following along Spirit Bear's adventures. Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation Activity Book 2023 offered drawing and writing activities for kids to



learn about their place in reconciliation in both fun and meaningful ways. The activity book is available to download and print from our website and is accessible in both French and English. Huge thank you to Leah Gryfe for designing the calendar and Mélanie Vincent for translating the calendar!

Reconciliation Ambearristers Initiative

fncaringsociety.com/Reconciliation-Ambearristers

The Reconciliation Ambearrister program is one of the Caring Society's most treasured initiatives that works to support groups in making a difference for First Nations children through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. Ambearristers are a child-friendly way of encouraging groups to foster and build relationships with local First Nations, Métis and Inuit Elders and Knowledge Keepers toward a shared vision of reconciliation. In 2023, nearly 15 Reconciliation Ambearristers found new homes in schools and community centers across Canada; some even went as far as elementary schools in Sweden!

Schools and community groups have created their own social media accounts through X (formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram

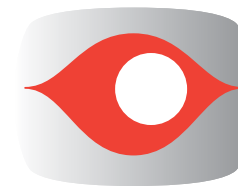


to share their Reconciliation Ambearrister's journey; some groups have even made photobooks and shared videos to show their bear's story with us. As new Ambearristers join the community, they are added to the gallery on our website. We receive annual updates from schools and community groups whose Ambearrister has been part of the community for longer. This year, updates have included photos of Ambearristers participating in Orange Shirt Day events and even a feature film of the "creation story" of a school's Ambearrister! We look forward to welcoming many more Reconciliation Ambearristers to join the growing community of people (and bears) working toward reconciliation.

Child- and Youth-Led Campaigns

The Caring Society believes that all children, including First Nations children, have a right to grow up safely with their families, go to good schools, and be healthy and proud of who they are. These rights are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Canadian government has ratified the UNCRC and committed to implementing the UNDRIP. With this in mind, the Caring Society works to ensure the realization of the rights of First Nations children and youth and their families.

As a child and youth-focused organization, the Caring Society believes in the powerful role of young people in bringing about positive change. To that end, each of our yearly campaigns invite young people from across the country to use their voices and participate in social justice movements in support of First Nations children and young people. Here is a snapshot of some of the latest accomplishments and activities to come out of our child and youth-led campaigns this year.



I Am a Witness: Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

fnwitness.ca

In January 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (the Tribunal or CHRT) ruled in a landmark human rights case that the Canadian government is racially discriminating against 165,000 First Nations children by providing flawed and inequitable child welfare services to First Nations children and their families and failing to implement Jordan's Principle to ensure equitable access to services.

Since this decision (2016 CHRT 2), the Tribunal has issued 27 non-compliance and procedural orders, four of which were issued this past year. Since September 2022, the following developments have taken place:

- 2022 CHRT 26: In September 2022, the Tribunal grants the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) interested party status.
- Class Action Final Settlement Agreement Letter-Decision: In October 2022, the

Tribunal issued a letter-decision, with full reasons to follow, finding that the class action final settlement agreement (FSA) on compensation does not fully satisfy the Tribunal's compensation orders. A letter-decision is similar to an oral ruling from the bench, with reasons to follow.

- **Judicial Reviews:** In November 2022, Canada and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) filed judicial reviews (like an appeal) of the Tribunal's letter-decision on the class action FSA.
- **2022 CHRT 41:** In December 2022, the Tribunal issued its full reasons for its letter-decision finding that the class action FSA did not fully satisfy its compensation orders.
- **Revised Final Settlement Agreement on Compensation:** In April 2023, the AFN

and the Caring Society announced a revised FSA on compensation signed by the AFN, the Caring Society, Canada and other class action parties. The revised FSA is valued at over \$23 billion for the approximately 300,000 First Nations children, youth and families who experienced discrimination due to Canada's flawed approaches to the First Nations Child & Family Services (FNCFS) Program and Jordan's Principle.

- **Revised Final Settlement Agreement Letter-Decision:** In July 2023, the Tribunal issued a letter-decision, with full reasons to follow, finding that the revised FSA on compensation satisfies its compensation orders.

Public education remains a key part of the Caring Society's work on the human rights complaint. The Caring Society maintains an ongoing and detailed timeline chronicling the case and information sheets to accompany each Tribunal order.

that the class action FSA fully satisfied the Tribunal's compensation orders or, in the alternative, for the Tribunal to amend its compensation orders to conform to the class action FSA.

The Tribunal found that the FSA substantially satisfies, but does not *fully* satisfy, the Tribunal's orders given that some victims who were entitled to compensation by the Tribunal orders are either disentitled or would receive reduced compensation under the class action FSA. The Tribunal found it cannot support eliminating or reducing compensation given "there is no legal basis" to justify doing so (2022 CHRT 41, para. 512). Indeed, the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) "does not grant fleeting rights: once entitlements are recognized under the CHRA, they cannot be removed (para. 504). In other words, once there is a finding of discrimination and the Tribunal issues a compensation order to vindicate rights, the entitlements may not be set aside. It was also significant that the Tribunal compensation orders were upheld by the Federal Court in September 2021 (2021 FC 969).

The Tribunal also denied the request to amend its compensation orders to reflect the terms of the class action FSA. The FSA deviates from the existing orders by reducing compensation for some victims in order to accommodate the fixed amount of \$20 billion under the class action FSA and the larger number of victims included under the class actions, which covers time



Class Action Final Settlement Agreement on Compensation

In its October 2022 letter-decision and in 2022 CHRT 41, which provided its full reasonings following the letter-decision, the Tribunal found that the class action FSA signed by the AFN, Canada and other class action parties does not fully satisfy its compensation orders. The Tribunal issued this order in response to the request by the AFN and Canada for the Tribunal to declare

periods and groups that were not covered in the CHRT proceedings. The Tribunal ruled that it “can clarify its existing compensation orders but cannot completely change them in a way that removes entitlements to victims/ survivors” (para. 6). The fact that the class action FSA requires disentiing some victims and reducing compensation for others “suggests the magnitude of the harms may be greater than ... the \$20 billion amount of compensation” committed to by Canada (para. 481).

Canada and the AFN applied separately for judicial review of the Tribunal’s Letter-Decision on the FSA in November 2022.

Revised Final Settlement Agreement on Compensation

To address the Tribunal’s order on the class action FSA, the AFN and Canada returned to the negotiating table with the new addition of the Caring Society to revise the FSA. In April 2023, the Caring Society and the AFN announced a revised FSA on compensation valued at over \$23 billion for the approximately 300,000 First Nations children, youth and families who experienced discrimination due to Canada’s flawed approaches to the FNCFS Program and Jordan’s Principle. The revised FSA addresses key issues raised by the Tribunal in its 2022 CHRT 41 order, including ensuring that children and families entitled to compensation through the Tribunal orders but were left out of the class action FSA

would receive compensation through the revised FSA.

In July 2023, the Tribunal issued a letter-decision finding that the revised FSA fully satisfies the Tribunal’s compensation orders. The revised FSA was then submitted to the Federal Court for final approval and hearings are proceeding in October 2023.

Long-Term Reform

The Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) on Long-Term Reform of the FNCFS Program and Jordan’s Principle signed by the Parties to the Tribunal complaint in December 2021 set out a one-year timeline to reach a final agreement to meet the Tribunal’s orders, end Canada’s discriminatory conduct and ensure the discrimination is not repeated. Our last annual report detailed progress made to August 31, 2022, particularly 2022 CHRT 8, which ordered Canada to fund at actual cost post-majority care to youth aging out of care and young adults who were formerly in care up to and including age 25 and assess the resources required to extend Jordan’s Principle supports to young adults past the age of majority.

In December 2022, the Assembly of First Nations passed a resolution calling on Canada to extend the timelines for reaching a Final Settlement Agreement (FSA). The resolution further directed that the First Nations-in-Assembly must approve the FSA on long-term reform. Canada’s mandate to negotiate an FSA expired at the end of 2022

and as of this annual report, the government has not confirmed a new mandate to continue negotiations. Discussions about long-term reform between the parties have continued, however negotiations have effectively been on pause since the end of 2022.

In March 2023, the Tribunal requested Parties provide a report on Canada’s implementation of certain orders. The Caring Society wrote to the Tribunal requesting the opportunity to respond to the May 10 update provided by Canada and provided brief responses to the Panel’s questions about long-term reform implementation. In this letter, the Caring Society acknowledged that the Tribunal’s orders and the collective work of First Nations and their allies (especially children) have resulted in positive change for First Nations children, youth, and families. However, the Caring Society expressed that substantive matters must still be addressed by Canada to end the discrimination and prevent its recurrence. These substantive matters include ensuring that evidence-informed solutions inform the long-term reform of the First Nations Child & Family Service Program and significant concerns with Canada’s implementation of Jordan’s Principle, including determination and reimbursement delays.



Jordan's Principle

jordansprinciple.ca

Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle, and as of 2016, a legal rule that ensures First Nations children can access the supports they need, when they need them. Jordan River Anderson was a young boy from Norway House Cree Nation who was born with multiple complex medical needs who spent most of his life in the hospital while the federal and provincial governments fought over who would pay for his at-home care. Jordan ended up passing away at the age of five, never having spent a day in a family home.

In 2007, Jordan's family gifted his name for a child-first principle to ensure that what happened to Jordan would not happen to other kids like him. In its landmark ruling on the matter (2016 CHRT 2), the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found Canada's implementation of Jordan's Principle to be discriminatory and ordered Canada to take immediate measures to implement the full and proper scope of Jordan's Principle. Since then, the Tribunal has issued more than

27 procedural and non-compliance orders against Canada.

Following the Tribunal's orders finding that the class action FSA on compensation did not satisfy its compensation orders, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Canada returned to the negotiating table with the new addition of the Caring Society to revise the FSA. In April 2023, the AFN and the Caring Society announced a revised FSA valued at over \$23 billion for the approximately 300,000 First Nations children, youth and families who experienced discrimination due to Canada's flawed approaches to the First Nations Child & Family Services (FNCFS) Program and Jordan's Principle. In July 2023, the Tribunal issued a letter-decision, with full reasons to follow, finding that the revised FSA on compensation satisfies its compensation orders.

In early 2022, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) implemented the "Back to Basics Approach for Improving Outcomes under Jordan's Principle." In keeping with the Tribunal orders, Back-to-Basics approach outlines that ISC's approach to implementing Jordan's Principle must be non-discriminatory, centre the needs and best interests of the child, consider distinct community circumstances, ensure substantive equality and culturally relevant service provision, be simple to access, be timely, and minimize the administrative burden on families.

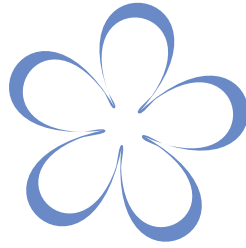
The Back-to-Basics approach stems from October 2021, when the Caring Society, the Assembly of First Nations, and Canada (the Parties to the human rights complaint) entered into negotiations to try and reach an agreement to end the Canadian Government's discrimination against First Nations children. During these negotiations, the Parties agreed that a "back-to-basics" approach to Jordan's Principle was required to get ISC closer to compliance with the Tribunal orders and to ensure that things were changing at the level of children and families. The Parties signed an Agreement-in-Principle on Long-term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program and Jordan's Principle in December 2021 which set out a one-year timeline to reach a final agreement to meet the Tribunal's orders. Discussions about long-term reform between the parties have continued, however negotiations have effectively been on pause since the end of 2022 (for more details on long-term reform, please refer to the I am a Witness section).

With ISC having yet to establish a formal complaints process for Jordan's Principle, the Caring Society continues to operate as ad-hoc compliance mechanism on behalf of families (children and youth), Service Coordinators, and communities. A transparent and accessible complaints mechanism through which families and Service Coordinators can submit difficulties they are having with Jordan's Principle is a priority for the Caring

Society. In the interim, the Caring Society continues to flag compliance issues and relay concerns received from families and Service Coordinators to ensure ISC implements Jordan's Principle according to the Tribunal orders.

Public education remains a key part of our work on Jordan's Principle. In light of new compliance and procedural orders by the Tribunal, the Caring Society released an updated version of our Jordan's Principle Information Sheet in May 2023. Furthermore, the Caring Society released an updated poster explaining how to make a Jordan's Principle request aligned with the Back-to-Basics approach. To ensure that families and service coordinators are aware of their rights under the Back-to-Basics approach, the Caring Society also developed an information sheet explaining the principles to the approach and what is required (and what is *not* required) of those making requests.

As in previous years, the Caring Society continues to prioritize public education and connection with Service Coordinators, First Nations organizations, academic researchers, and healthcare professionals and service providers. The Caring Society also provided several presentations at community gatherings and conferences and produced various parliamentary and legislative submissions.



Shannen's Dream

shannensdream.ca

Shannen Koostachin, a youth education advocate from Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario, had a dream: safe and comfy schools and culturally based education for First Nations children and youth. Shannen and her peers in Attawapiskat First Nation fought for a new school after a diesel spill contaminated their school, making the students and teachers sick. Shannen sadly passed away in 2010 at the age of 15 and never saw the new school, which was finally built in 2014. With the support of her loving family, friends and community, Shannen's Dream was named in her honour and is a campaign to make sure all First Nations children across Canada have "safe and comfy" schools and receive a good quality education that makes them proud of who they are.

Many First Nations schools receive less funding per student than provincial and territorial schools. Many also do not provide a safe and appropriate learning environment. Shannen worked tirelessly to try to convince the federal government to give First Nations children a proper education. Shannen

remains an important role model for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and young people who continue to carry her dream for safe and comfy schools for all First Nations children in Canada.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls on Canada to provide culturally based education for First Nations children and calls on individual Canadians to learn more about Indigenous peoples in Canada as a starting place for meaningful reconciliation. In this spirit, the Caring Society continues to provide updated education resources for learners and teachers of all ages to take part in activities that foster reconciliation and culturally based equity for Indigenous children and youth.

In celebration of Shannen's Dream, the Caring Society hosts the annual event; School is a Time for Dreams. This event invites people from all over the country to support equitable education for First Nations and all young people in Canada.

Reconciling History

fncaringsociety.com/reconciling-history

The Reconciling History initiative invites people to learn from the past in the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Calls to Action by learning about Canada's treatment of Indigenous children and families in ways that link lessons of history to contemporary injustices. By learning about the complete and accurate story of

the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, we can all have a better understanding of how we can contribute to reconciliation in meaningful ways.

The Caring Society was honoured to partner once more with the Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G) and Beechwood Cemetery to host our second Orange Shirt Day on September 30. As part of the day's activities, a commemorative plaque of residential school whistleblower, Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce was unveiled in front of the James Hope & Sons building at 61 Sparks Street, Ottawa. James Hope & Sons is the published house that first published Dr. Bryce's report on the conditions of residential schools. In acknowledgement of the long-standing relationship the Algonquin people have with this land, the plaque was also translated into Algonquin. Special thank you to Joan Tenasco from Kitigan Zibi for sharing her knowledge in translating the plaque. The Caring Society was honoured to unveil the plaque alongside members of the Bryce family, Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Marie Wilson, Assembly of Seven Generations and members of the public. Special thank you to the City of Ottawa for supporting this important truth-telling work!



Touchstones of Hope

[fncaringsociety.com/
touchstones-hope](https://fncaringsociety.com/touchstones-hope)

Touchstones of Hope continues to be an important resource for institutions, groups, and individuals wanting to take part in meaningful reconciliation. The Caring Society offers sessions on Touchstones of Hope on request. In the past, we have delivered sessions to youth and community-serving organizations, social workers and hospitals.

This past year, the Caring Society was honoured to be asked to provide submissions to the Inquiry into the Treatment, Experiences and Outcomes of Innu in the Child Protection System in Newfoundland and Labrador on the Touchstones of Hope following our 2022 two-day facilitated session for Commissions

and staff. The Inquiry was established by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Innu Nation, and the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry include the Touchstones principles.

With the passing of Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nation Métis and Inuit children, youth and families*, the Touchstones of Hope is being taken up by Indigenous communities and agencies in the development of culturally specific visions of child wellbeing to inform the development of Nation – and community-specific legislation.

Resources and Public Engagement



First Peoples Child & Family Review

fpcfr.ca

The First Peoples Child & Family Review is proud to have published Issue vol. 17, no. 1 in December 2022 and Issue vol. 18, no. 1 in February 2023!

FPCFR vol. 17, no. 1 offers interconnected articles that disrupt Westernized approaches in social work and counselling practices to provide systemic solutions that integrate cultural wellness and lived experiences from Métis and First Nations, as well as non-Indigenous expressions.

FPCFR vol. 18, no. 1 is a special issue made in partnership with the NSW/ACT Aboriginal Legal Service, Jumbunna and Law, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) Australia. The articles in this issue focus critically on the important role of Aboriginal voices in child protection decision-making.

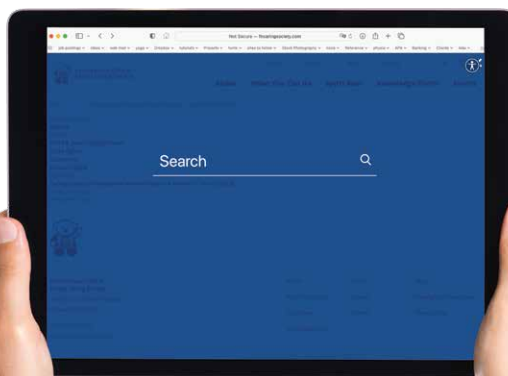
The First Peoples Child & Family Review (FPCFR) is an open-access, interdisciplinary, and peer-reviewed journal honouring the

voices and perspectives of First Peoples and supporters. The FPCFR's mission is to promote research, critical analysis, stories, standpoints, and educational resources that advance innovation within child, family, and community-based matters for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, as well as Indigenous peoples abroad. We are proud to be a leader in the movement for open access and accessible knowledge sharing.

Website Overhaul

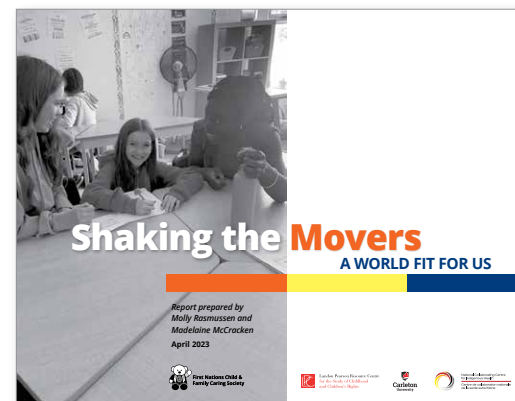
In September 2022, the Caring Society was thrilled to launch our newly designed and updated website after months of hard work. With the last website update being completed in 2018, the Caring Society decided it was time to overhaul the website with a new design, navigation structure and search functions to make it more user-friendly!

We are proud to say that our campaign timelines, I am a Witness, Jordan's Principle



and Shannen's Dream are now searchable. Website users can search by keyword and filter by year. Similarly, there are now filter capabilities to accompany the search function on the Caring Society's publication database.

Shaking the Movers



On February 10, 2023, the Caring Society facilitated our very first Shaking the Movers workshop!

Shaking the Movers is an annual youth-led workshop designed by the Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights at Carleton University. The workshops give young people the chance to participate in matters that affect them and consider elements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in

the context of their lived experiences. Their words are then shared with key Canadian decision-makers to *shake up the movers* who have the power to implement positive change.

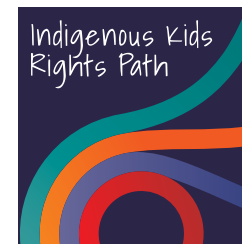
The Caring Society is grateful for the participation of Jodie O'Halloran and Tarah Zulpo's Grade 5/6 classes at St. Anne School! Thank you for allowing us to spend

the morning with the students as they discussed what needs to happen to create a world fit for young people today. We look forward to hosting STM again in 2024.

Learn more about Shaking the Movers at carleton.ca/landonpearsoncentre/shaking-the-movers. You will also find the 2023 *Shaking the Movers Report* at fncaringsociety.com/publications/caring-society-shaking-movers-report-world-fit-us-2023.



Caring Society staff presenting at the Shaking the Movers workshop.



Indigenous Kids Rights Path

indigenoukidsrightspath.ca

Launched in 2015, the Indigenous Kids Rights Path is an online portal that aims to support kids and youth in learning about their rights and offers resources and contacts in the event that they feel their rights are not being respected. The Indigenous Kids Rights Path also supports anyone wanting to learn more about the rights of Indigenous peoples and children's rights.

Events

fncaringsociety.com/events

The Caring Society annual events support campaigns like Jordan's Principle, I am a Witness and Shannen's Dream. The events also honour residential school survivors and their families, as well as the legacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The Caring Society provides information and resources to make it easier for people to participate in these events in their communities, schools, workplaces and at home.



Have a Heart Day

fncaringsociety.com/have-a-heart

The Caring Society was thrilled to see so many children and young people standing up to help ensure First Nations children have the opportunity to grow up safely at home and get a good education.

Nationally, we saw participation in the form of community events, letter-writing campaigns, and social media contributions from over 60 different schools and community organizations across British Columbia,



Top left: Children and young people participating in the Ottawa Have a Heart Day event; Top right: Spirit Bear and the mailbox full of letters from children and young people; Bottom: Volunteers and the Caring Society team at Have a Heart Day.

Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick. You can see what initiatives took place in your community by checking out the hashtags **#HaveaHeartDay** and **#JourneeAyezUnCoeur** or via our interactive map at fncaringsociety.com/have-a-heart-day-map.

The Caring Society was excited to safely return to an in-person Have a Heart Day gathering with children and young people across Ottawa-Gatineau after two years of coming together virtually. The construction at Parliament Hill was no barrier to participation. Over 900 children and young people from 20 different schools and community organizations came out and used their voices for change at a special indoor event. A huge thank you goes out to the team at the Meridian Theatres @ CentrepoinTE for helping to put on this successful event.

The students wrote hundreds of letters to the Prime Minister, which were packed into a giant mailbox made by students from Elgin Street Public School and delivered to the Prime Minister's Office. After the event, students said that they felt confident and proud after sharing their views and getting involved in the matters that affect them.



Elderbeary Day

fncaringsociety.com/elderbeary-day

March 20 marked the Caring Society's fifth annual Elderbeary Day! Elderbeary Day

invites people of all ages to honour and celebrate the contributions of our Elders, who do so much to help teach and raise our children and youth. Participants can choose to thank their Elders in whichever way they prefer, whether that be through acts of service, spending quality time together, or expressing gratitude through letters or drawings. We were so thrilled to see so many classes, organizations, and individuals across the country sharing how they chose to honour and appreciate the contributions of their Elders by using the hashtags **#ElderbearyDay** and **#JournéeOursonAîné** on social media platforms.



Bear Witness Day

fncaringsociety.com/bear-witness-day

On May 10, people from across Canada honoured Bear Witness Day and used their voices to raise awareness of Jordan River Anderson and equity for First Nations kids like him. The Caring Society especially acknowledges the Juniper Elementary School students who shared why Bear Witness Day is important to them with CBC Kids!

Children and young people participating in the Bear Witness Day event held at the Senate.



Across the country, caring individuals and organizations hosted events with their teddy bears and stuffed animal friends to honour Jordan River Anderson and his family by writing letters to decision-makers calling for them to fully implement Jordan's Principle. We were so happy to see such great engagement again this year, with **#JordansPrinciple** and **#BearWitnessDay** trending across Twitter throughout the day!

Some children and young people in Ottawa also spent Bear Witness Day at a Teddy Bear Tea Party at the Senate of Canada, where they were able to speak directly with Senators about equity for First Nations children, young people, families, and communities. The youth asked the Senators to respond to the boil water advisories still prevalent in many First Nations communities, to create a plan for climate change led by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, to provide accessible mental health services on reserve for children, youth, and families, and to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 66, which calls on the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations working on reconciliation.

The Caring Society extends our sincere thanks to the offices of Senators Audette, Francis, and Klyne for their help in hosting such an important event, and to all who came out to use their voices for action.



Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams

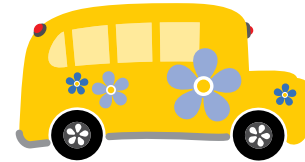
fncaringsociety.com/honouring-memories-planting-dreams

Celebrated each May and June, Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams invites people across Canada to learn about the residential school system and its legacy, to honour Survivors and their families, and to make a commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. Each year, individuals and groups are encouraged to plant heart gardens as physical representations of their commitment to reconciliation. The first heart garden was planted on June 3, 2015, at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's closing ceremonies. After the main event, communities across the country were in bloom, as groups and individuals planted more than 6,000 hearts throughout 80 gardens. The act of planting a garden is similar to reconciliation, in that both require ongoing attention and care to prosper.

The beauty of this event is that each garden will look different from one another. Some groups choose to affix paper hearts on sticks and write down their commitments to reconciliation directly on them. Others choose to plant wildflowers and grass seeds

Children's art made for School is a Time for Dreams.

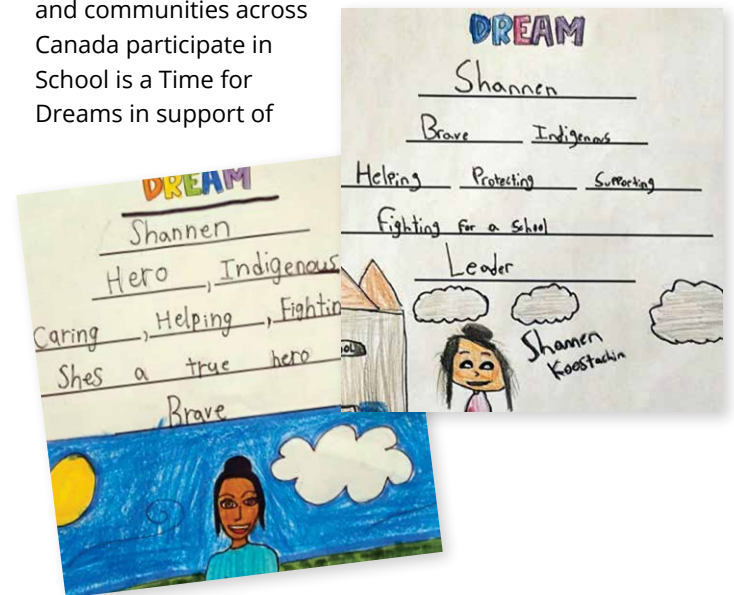
native to their region, contributing to the ongoing health of their local ecosystem! This year, 880 hearts were planted in heart gardens with participation in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario. Many people also shared photos of their gardens with us on social media using the hashtags **#HeartGarden** and **#HonouringMemoriesPlantingDreams**.



School is a Time for Dreams

fncaringsociety.com/school-time-dreams

Throughout March and April, children, youth, organizations, schools, and communities across Canada participate in School is a Time for Dreams in support of



equitable education for First Nations young people in Canada. It's also a time to honour Shannen Koostachin and her dream for all First Nations kids to go to safe and comfy schools.

On social media, the Caring Society saw many messages from students about what they want to be when they grow up and many also wrote letters to their elected officials to demand equitable access to quality education for First Nations kids. Year after year, it remains clear that children and youth continue to see Shannen as a hero.

Individuals, organizations, and communities across Canada were also invited to watch Spirit Bear's new film *Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams*, which shares parts of Shannen's story.

Orange Shirt Day

fncaringsociety.com/orange-shirt-day

On the second annual Orange Shirt Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Caring Society was fortunate to partner once more with Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G) and Beechwood Cemetery to host another day of learning, truth-telling, and taking action toward reconciliation on September 30.

Staff and volunteers guided over 1,000 participants through an entire day of learning about Canada's history in the spirit of truth and reconciliation through various activities, including:



Top: Participants listen to Indigenous young people from A7G leading Reconciling History tours at Beechwood Cemetery; Bottom: Dr. PH Bryce plaque unveiling; Right: Rocks painted by children and young people as part of activities at Beechwood Cemetery.



- The unveiling of a plaque honouring Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce, the former Chief Medical Officer of Health at the then-known Department of Indian Affairs who blew the whistle on the unsanitary conditions of residential schools. The plaque sits out front of 61 Sparks Street at the James Hope & Sons building, which was the publishing house that first published Dr. Bryce's 1922 report, *The Story of a National Crime*.
- Showings of an episode of CBC's *The Audience*, a radio play that initially aired in 1978, which detailed the story of Dr. Bryce

Below: The plaque telling the story of Dr. Bryce blowing the whistle on the conditions of residential schools installed at 61 Sparks Street, Ottawa.



and Duncan Campbell Scott, and their involvement in the residential school system. Ahead of its time for a 1978 piece of media, this radio play uses the term genocide to describe the schools, offering a truthful portrayal of Canada's treatment of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples.

- Youth-led Reconciling History walking tours at Beechwood Cemetery and Downtown Ottawa, with support from historians and educators from Defining Moments Canada. The tours highlighted the resting spots of key figures involved in the residential school system and other significant landmarks.
- Showings of Spirit Bear's film, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*, for learning for all ages; and
- Action tables, where participants could demonstrate their commitment to reconciliation by writing letters to elected officials and making art.

12th Annual Caring Society Gala

fncaringsociety.com/events/annual-caring-society-gala

The 12th Annual Caring Society Gala was organized and hosted by Dakota Ojibway Child & Family Services and Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency. The theme of the gala was Celebrating 23 Years of Standing with First

Cindy Blackstock and a very special Gala supporter!



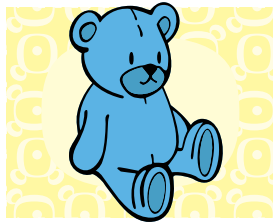
Nations Children & Families. The event took place at the RBC Convention Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and over 250 supporters attended. Supporters also watch Spirit Bear's second film, *Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams*.

Additionally, the Caring Society led an educational session with Dr. Helaina Gaspard with the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Democracy at the University of Ottawa. Dr. Gaspard shared updates on the 2022 data assessment on Jordan's Principle. The event was a highlight for the year, and the Caring Society extends our utmost gratitude to all the event organizers and supporters who attended. We cannot wait to attend the Caring Society Gala in 2023!

Awards and Scholarships

<https://fncaringsociety.com/awards-scholarships>

The Caring Society proudly acknowledges the work of individuals and groups, including children and youth, to support the best outcomes for Indigenous children and families. We work in partnership with families, communities, schools, and other individuals in recognizing the outstanding work of our awards and scholarships.



Jordan's Principle Scholarship

fncaringsociety.com/awards-scholarships/jordans-principle-scholarship

Named in loving memory of Jordan River Anderson and in partnership with Jordan's family, the Caring Society was proud to present the sixth annual Jordan's Principle Scholarship to Cheyanne Derosier, Jordan McVittie, Patti Lynn Sinclair, and Vernon Jebb. Two \$5,000 scholarships and two \$2,500 scholarships were awarded to assist First

Nations youth with post-secondary education costs this year. Additional scholarships for 2023 were made possible by donations in memory of Joan Glode, a fierce advocate for First Nations children, and HANSAmEd Limited.

This scholarship is awarded to First Nations students studying children's holistic health and wellbeing. May they always hold Jordan River Anderson in their hearts and minds, and remain champions for Jordan's Principle and equity for all Indigenous children.



Neebin's Music Fund

fncaringsociety.com/awards-scholarships/neebeins-music-fund

Neebin's family, the Caring Society and inPath have come together to honour Neebin Armstrong and his memory through Neebin's Music Fund. The annual fund offers Indigenous youth an opportunity to create music and share it with their communities along with the rest of the world. It is our hope that the music created through Neebin's Music Fund by passionate youth will continue

to inspire healing and wellness in many Indigenous communities. The successful recipient receives \$10,000 in support of a music project, a \$2,000 prize pack to Long & McQuade Music Store, internal support, connection and guidance from a Music Industry Expert and enrollment into the N'we Jinan Artworks Program.

Applications for 2023 closed on August 1 and the grand prize recipient was announced on September 1. Congratulations to Faith Desmoulin, the first grand prize recipient of Neebin's Music Fund and to the runners-up, Caleb Peters and Dylan Hope!



Shannen's Dream Scholarship

fncaringsociety.com/awards-scholarships/shannens-dream-scholarship

The Shannen's Dream Scholarship is named in loving memory of Shannen Koostachin from Attawapiskat First Nation who sparked a national movement for safe and comfy schools for First Nations students.

The second annual Shannen's Dream Scholarship was awarded to Jordan Bryant, Darian Lonechild, Amber Nakogee and Dawson Trimper. Congratulations!

As a "pay-it-forward" scholarship, recipients must make a fair and measurable contribution to the Shannen's Dream campaign or related First Nations initiative as a condition of receiving the award. The Shannen's Dream Scholarship is made possible by a generous donation from the Collure family from Richmond Hill, Ontario who approached the Caring Society with the idea, and Canadian EdTech company TopHat.



Spirit Bear Award

fncaringsociety.com/awards-scholarships/spirit-bear-award

Spirit Bear proudly presented the fifth annual Spirit Bear Award this year. The Spirit Bear Award recognizes groups of young people who demonstrate a commitment to reconciliation and the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. Three prizes of \$500 were given to children and youth and the prizes can be used toward their continued work toward

reconciliation or as the group of young people sees fit. Thank you to the Olive Tree Foundation (Mohamed and Opheera Nasir Endowment Fund) for generously donating \$500 towards the award!

Three groups were awarded the Spirit Bear Award in recognition of their hard work:

- Students at Sir Alexander Mackenzie (SAM) School
- Grizzly Bear
- K.I.D.S. Inc. At École Sir William Osler

Two additional groups were selected for an honourable mention:

- The Pas 4H Club – Helping Hands
- St. Michael Fitzroy Kindergarten Class

Congratulations to these young people and all who were nominated for the Spirit Bear Award. Spirit Bear appreciates everyone's continued dedication and commitment to reconciliation!



First Nations Children's Action Research Education Services

fncaringsociety.com/fncares

About Us

The First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service (FNCARES) is a partnership between the Caring Society and the University of Alberta's Faculty of Education. FNCARES works with community partners to organize and host numerous

public events each year for both adults and children and develops resources to educate about the structural drivers of disadvantage and encourage discussion and actions that promote culturally based equity and justice for First Nations children and youth.

Education and Engagement Events

Spirit Bear Virtual School Launch

fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/spirit-bear-virtual-school

On August 23, 2023, in collaboration with the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education, we launched the Spirit Bear Virtual School, a new online space for educators and all others across Canada wishing to access the Caring Society's resources for teaching social justice-based reconciliation in the classroom and beyond. Panelists Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Spirit Bear, Dr. Lisa Howell, and Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook discussed the research project that led to the creation of the website, the research findings, and the Spirit Bear Virtual School resources, including

Spirit Bear's Beary Caring Curriculum, the *Jordan's Principle Learning Guide*, and videos featuring early-years educators discussing their experiences of teaching with Spirit Bear in their classrooms.

Missed the launch? You can watch it at bit.ly/SBVSLaunch.

First Nations and Class Actions: Reconciliation or Wreckonciliation?

fncaringsociety.com/fncares/fncares-film-video

There is currently a proliferation class action lawsuits affecting First Nations peoples, but most of us know very little about what they are, what they can accomplish, what their limitations are, and what rights class members and representative plaintiffs have (or do not have). To address this gap in understanding, FNCARES hosted a webinar on April 18, 2023, featuring Andrew Eckart from the Class Action Clinic at the University of Windsor and Dr. Cindy Blackstock of the Caring Society. The panelists took a close look at class action lawsuits and whether they are a useful tool for



Spirit Bear and Cindy at the Spirit Bear Virtual School Launch.

both compensating plaintiffs and addressing systemic problems to ensure that other people do not suffer the same harms.

Mind Control and Colonization – Part II

fncaringsociety.com/fncares/mind-control-colonization-escaping-undue-influence

On August 10, FNCARES and the Caring Society hosted a second webinar on Mind Control and Colonization. Dr. Steven Hassan, founder of Freedom of Mind Resource Center (freedomofmind.com), joined Dr. Cindy Blackstock and Brittany Mathews from the Caring Society to discuss how undue influence gets people to do unethical things and defend them, and how mind control and undue influence work in relation to First Nations, Indigenous Services Canada, and all Canadians.

Research

Just because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall: Reconciliation education in the elementary classroom

This research project studies the impacts of the Caring Society's social justice-based reconciliation campaigns on elementary teachers and students who have actively participated over the years to ensure equity for First Nations children. In response to research findings, the research team developed the Spirit Bear Virtual School, an online resource that supports educators across Canada in their learning about the

Caring Society's campaigns and initiatives for social justice. Drs. Lisa Howell and Nicholas Ng-A-Fook published some of the findings in their article in *Studies in Social Justice* (17:1, 2023) and on the EdCan Network (along with Barbara Giroux), and are busy disseminating findings at conferences over the next year.

To learn more about the research process and findings, read the articles noted above, visit fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear/spirit-bear-virtual-school.

Resource Development

Getting Started with Spirit Bear: Michelle McKay on Reconciliation in the Kindergarten Classroom and Stories from Practice: Spirit Bear and the Kindergarten Classroom

These videos, created specifically for the Spirit Bear Virtual School, feature Dr. Lisa Howell interviewing early year educators Dr. Michelle McKay and Klara Redford about



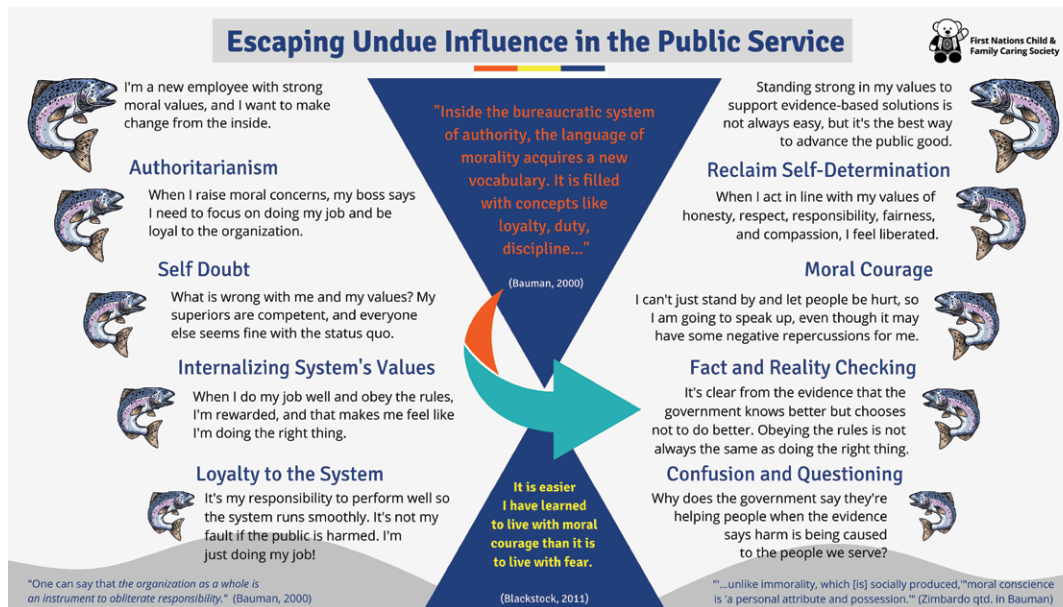
their use of Spirit Bear resources in the kindergarten classroom, and the amazing capacity young children have to understand issues of social justice, equity, and fairness. The insights shared in these videos will support teachers taking up the Caring Society's campaigns and resources in their classrooms and beyond.

Watch *Getting Started with Spirit Bear* and *Stories from Practice* and other related videos at bit.ly/SBVSResources.

Escaping Undue Influence in the Public Service – Infographic

This infographic provides ideas about how to resist colonial undue influence in the public service through fact and reality checking, and by acting in line with values that support evidence-based solutions to advance the public good.

Find the infographic and other related resources at fncaringsociety.com/fncares/mind-control-colonization-escaping-undue-influence.



Future Directions

Our vision of Canada is one where all First Nations children are loved, respected, and honoured. We know just what to do to make that vision a reality and it will require the education and active engagement of caring Canadians and organizations to make it happen. Over the next year we look forward to making the following visions a reality:

- Continue to work with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and the Canadian federal government on First Nations child welfare and the full implementation of Jordan's Principle.
- Write, illustrate, and publish Spirit Bear's fifth book with accompanying educational resources.
- Completion and distribution of Spirit Bear's stop motion animated films.
- Expand the Reconciliation *Ambearristers* program and promote reconciliation initiatives for the Caring Society's ever-growing bear family.
- Continue expanding the Reconciling History project to truthfully portray Canada's collective past in order to honour reconciliation.
- Support First Nations child and family service agencies, governments, and stakeholders' engagement in the Touchstones of Hope movement.

- Expand the Touchstones of Hope Reconciliation in Canada and Reconciliation + Children and Youth platforms to include more of the Caring Society's initiatives.
- Expand the tools we use to share information and resources, including through videos, webinars, and our forthcoming podcast.
- Develop more educational resources for Shannen's Dream, Jordan's Principle and the promotion of children's engagement in research and positive social change.
- Expand the available educator resources and make these resources more accessible.
- Host School is a Time for Dreams, Have a Heart Day, Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams, Elderbeary Day and Bear Witness Day for another year!

A warm thank you to our members, volunteers and the many thousands of caring people of all ages who have joined the effort to ensure culturally based equity for First Nations children, youth, and their families.



Want to Make a Difference for First Nations Children?

Go online to fncaringsociety.com to learn more and join the movement for culturally based equity for First Nations children, young people, and families. You will find seven ways you can make a difference for Indigenous children and youth, as well as information and resources to make it easier for you to participate in these campaigns in your community, school, workplace, or home! Think about supporting the Caring Society by becoming a member at fncaringsociety.com/what-you-can-do/become-member or making an online donation at fncaringsociety.com/donate.



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