

annual report

2020/2021



Please note that this annual report reflects activities from September 2020 to August 2021.

Copyright © 2021. All Rights Reserved.

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada
Suite 401, 309 Cooper Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5

 @CaringSociety

 @CaringSociety

 @SpiritBearandFriends

 @SpiritBear

 fncaringsociety

 fncaringsociety.com

 info@fncaringsociety.com

Design by LeahGryfeDesigns.com

Contents

- 3 Dedication**
- 3 Honouring**
- 4 Key Accomplishments**
- 6 About Us**
 - 6 The Caring Society Board of Directors
 - 6 The Caring Society Staff
- 7 Spirit Bear and Friends!**
 - 7 Spirit Bear (*Bearrister*)
 - 7 Spirit Bear Animations
 - 8 Spirit Bear and Children Make History Screenings
 - 10 Lesson Plans
 - 10 Spirit Bear's *Pawblishing* Services
 - 10 Celebrating Language Diversity
 - 11 Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation: 2021 Calendar
 - 12 Reconciliation *Ambearristers* Program
- 13 Child- and Youth-Led Campaigns**
 - 13 I Am a Witness: Canadian Human Rights Tribunal
 - 14 Canada's Judicial Reviews
 - 15 Jordan's Principle
 - 15 Jordan's Principle and Children With Disabilities and Special Needs: A Resource Guide and Analysis of Canada's Implementation
 - 16 Shannen's Dream
- 17 The Caring Society at Work: Services, Events and Projects**
 - 17 Caring Society Services
 - 17 First Peoples Child & Family Review
 - 17 Reconciling History
 - 18 Touchstones of Hope
 - 18 #Hibernating4Health and Spirit Bear's COVID-19 Resources Pages
 - 19 Indigenous Kids Rights Path
 - 19 Caring Society Events
 - 19 Have a Heart Day
 - 20 Elderbeary Day
 - 21 Bear Witness Day

- 21 Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams
- 22 School is a Time for Dreams
- 22 Caring Society Projects**
 - 22 Accountability in Our Lifetime
 - 23 Bill C-92 Information Sheets
 - 23 The Spirit Bear Virtual School for Teachers
- 24 Caring Society Awards and Scholarships**
 - 24 Jordan's Principle Scholarship
 - 24 Spirit Bear Award
- 25 First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service**
 - 25 About FNCARES**
 - 25 FNCARES Events**
 - 25 Alberta Virtual Film Premiere and Interview With Cindy Blackstock
 - 26 Film Screening and Learning Guide Launch
 - 27 Bill C-92: The Good, the Bad & the Unknowns – Part II
 - 27 FNCARES Research**
 - 27 "Just because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall": Reconciliation education in the elementary classroom project update
 - 28 Media**
 - 28 "A Call to Self-Reflection and Action" – Interview with Julie Mann-Johnson for *The Advocate*
 - 29 FNCARES Resource Development**
 - 29 Film Distribution
- 30 Future Directions**
- 31 Want to Make a Difference for First Nations Children?**

Dedication

Dedicated to the Survivors of the residential school system and their families who bravely spoke their truths in the course of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the stories of those children who did not survive. As First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities affirm these truths in the course of finding these unmarked graves, it is important to recognize that the work of reconciliation remains unfinished. Survivors gifted Canada a roadmap to reconciliation in the form of the 94 Calls to Action so that future generations of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children have equitable opportunities to grow up safely at home and be proud of who they are.

Honouring

Alanis Obomsawin
Amanda Strong and Spotted
Fawn Productions
Ampersand Inc.
Amnesty International
Anderson Family, Norway
House Cree Nation
Andrew Koostachin, Jenny
Nakogee and Family
Anne Levesque, University of
Ottawa
Assembly of Seven Generations
(A7G)
Assembly of First Nations
Barbara McIsaac, McIsaac Law
Bartmart Audio Inc.
Beechwood Cemetery
Bertha Chief and Kevin Chief
BlackSun Inc.
Book Manager
BookNet
Canada Canadian Council for
the Arts
Canadian Federation of Nurses
Unions
Canadian National (CN) Railway
Company
Canadian Union of Public
Employees
Carrier Sekani Child and Family
Services
Chamandy Foundation
Cheekbone Beauty
Child Welfare League of Canada
City of Ottawa
David Hodges, inPath
David Stern
David Taylor, Conway Baxter LLP
David Wilson, Conway Baxter LLP
Dorothy Patrick
Folklore Contracting
Hadley Friedland
Indigenous Bar Association
Institute of Fiscal Studies &
Democracy
J.W. McConnell Foundation
Laurentian University
Larissa States
Leah Gryfe Designs
LeMay Media and Consulting
Lillian Meighen and Don Wright
Foundation
Lisa Howell, University of
Ottawa
Manitoba First Nations and CFS
Committee
Many Hands One Dream
Coalition
Marquis Book Printing
Mawita'mk Society
McGill University
McIntyre Media
Mélanie Vincent
Mosaic Insitute
Naiomi Metallic
National Collaborating Centre
on Aboriginal Health
National Film Board
National Indian Child Welfare
Association (NICWA)
NIB Trust Fund
Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, University
of Ottawa
Nordstrom
Ontario Children's Advancement
Coalition
OPIN Digital Inc.
Ouseley Hanvey Clipsham Deep
LLP
Pam Palmater
Plus 1
Project of Heart
Sandy Tunwell, Accountrain Inc.
Sarah Clarke, Clarke Child and
Family Law
Shelby Thomas
Sign Language Interpreting
Associates of Ottawa
Sisters of Service
Secretariat for Aboriginal and
Islander Child Care (SNAICC),
Australia
Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council
Sotos LLP
Terri Libesman
The Body Shop
The Bryce Family
The Edith and Bernard Ennis
Foundation
The Printing House
The Queensland Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Child
Protection Peak (QATSICPP),
Australia
University of Toronto Press
UNICEF Canada
UNIFOR
United Food and Commercial
Workers Union (UFCW)
University of Alberta, Faculty of
Education
University of Ottawa, Faculty of
Education
Wabanaki Council on Disability
Web Kitchen
Winnipeg Film Group
Youth in Care Canada

Key Accomplishments

We published **two issues of the *First Peoples Child & Family Review***, including a special edition by Children and Youth in honour of Shannen Koostachin and Shannen's Dream for safe and comfy schools.



Public Education

We are **appeared in the news over 250 times**, both in the Canadian media and overseas!

We completed **over 85 public education events** attended by thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds.

Through our awards and scholarships, we were able to recognize a number of fantastic groups and individuals who are taking action to ensure equity for First Nations children.

We published **4 newsletters** featuring over **40 articles**. We distributed newsletters to over **250** First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies, Caring Society members, and educators.

We gained over **3,600 new followers** on the @CaringSociety Twitter account, and **2,000 new page likes** on Facebook. Our online friends now include more than **32,000 followers!**



Making New Friends

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has issued **20 procedural and noncompliance orders** since the 2016 landmark ruling, 5 of which were issued in 2020-2021.

In November 2020, the Tribunal confirmed that **First Nations children living off-reserve who are recognized by their Nations, are eligible for Jordan's Principle** (2020 CHRT 36).

Big Win for the Kids



In August 2021, the Tribunal ordered **Canada to fund buildings and additional capital assets that support the delivery of First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle services** (August 26, 2021 Letter-decision).

Over **1.15 million services and products were provided to First Nations children since July 2016** as a result of Jordan's Principle and the May 2017 non-compliance order.



Over 1,300 hearts were planted by individuals, communities and schools in **6 different provinces** in celebration of Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams.

Reconciliation in Action



#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.

Have a Heart Day was celebrated in COVID-safe ways by clubs, groups, schools, and communities across Canada. The Caring Society created the Snow Bear Learning Activity to support celebrations!

Over 15 groups, schools and communities worldwide were joined by a Reconciliation



Ambearrister. Each hosted bear learns about reconciliation and supports the legacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Over 1,100 of Spirit Bear's books and over 1,000 copies of Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation, 2021 Calendar were donated to schools, organizations, and hospitals!



Spirit Bear and friends made their big-screen debut with the release of their **first stop-motion animation**, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*.

Spirit Bear and Friends

Spirit Bear *paw*blished his **fourth illustrated children's book**, *Spirit Bear: Echoes of the Past* in French and Algonquin!

Spirit Bear: Echoes of the Past selected as a **Top Recommended Read for the 2021 TD Summer Reading Club**.

Spirit Bear's first book, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*, was released as an audiovisual book in the Carrier language.

Spirit Bear gained over **2,400 new Twitter followers** and **1,000 new Instagram followers!**



Spirit Bear *paw*blished a **learning guide** to accompany his third book, *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams*, and lesson plans to accompany his movie, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*.

We sold over **4,600 of Spirit Bear's books** (twice as many as last year!) and over **3,500 copies of the 2021 calendar**. All proceeds support child- and youth-led reconciliation initiatives.

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 Indigenous 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, Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services Inc., Saskatchewan
Kenn Richard	Vice-President, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, Ontario
Judy Levi	Treasurer of the Board, New Brunswick Representative
Elsie Flette	Board Member, Manitoba Representative
Marilyn Birch	Board Member Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island, PEI
Koren Lightning-Earle	Board Member, Kasohkewew Child Wellness Society, Alberta
Landon Pearson	Board Member, Carleton University, Ontario
Theresa Stevens	Board Member, Anishinaabe Abinoojii Family Services, Ontario
Mary Teegee	Board Member, Carrier Sekani Family Services, British Columbia

The Caring Society Staff

Cindy Blackstock	Executive Director
Hannah Crawford	Policy and Public Education Associate
Sarah Fredericks	Executive and Administrative Assistant
Jennifer King	Reconciliation and Policy Coordinator
Brittany Mathews	Reconciliation and Research Coordinator
Madelaine McCracken	Education and Public Engagement Coordinator
Robin McLeod	Reconciliation and Communications Associate

The Caring Society also acknowledges the contributions of **Andrea Auger, Tammy Morgan, Emily Williams** and **Melisa Brittain** (FNCARES), for their 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 *pawsitively* thrilled to work with his colleagues and friends to come up with reconciliation education resources and fun ways for children and families to take part in reconciliation!

Spirit Bear (Bearrister)

fncaringsociety.com/about-spirit-bear

Just like that, another *pawsitively* eventful year has passed for Spirit Bear and his friends. Spirit Bear reached friends far and wide this year through his Twitter page. He gained over 2,400 followers, had his Twitter profile visited 60,000 times and reached 3.3 million engagements on his tweets! This year, Spirit Bear attended all the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (the Tribunal) and Federal Court hearings and witnessed five Tribunal orders! He was *beary* excited to make his big-screen debut alongside friends in his first stop-motion animation, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*. Spirit Bear was thrilled to attend many screenings across Canada, both online and in the fur when public health protocols allowed. His fourth book, *Spirit Bear: Echoes of the Past*, was selected as a Top Recommended Read for the 2021 TD Summer Reading Club and made available as a free e-book for the summer months through the Toronto Public Library.



The Caring Society team celebrates St. Patrick's Day.



Spirit Bear was gifted to the Caring Society by Carrier Sekani Family Services in 2007. Since the very beginning, he has been a witness to the Tribunal case, representing 165,000 First Nations children and their families affected by the case and the thousands of other children who stand with them for fairness.

Spirit Bear Animations

fncaringsociety.com/films

Pass the popcorn! After more than three years of hard work by award-winning Michif artist Amanda Strong and the incredible team at Spotted Fawn Productions, Spirit Bear and friends made their big-screen debut with the release of their first stop-motion animation, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*, at the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) on September 27, 2020.

Based on the first book in the Spirit Bear series, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* is 26 minutes long and tells the true story of the landmark human rights case for First Nations children at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and how Spirit Bear and friends stood with First

Movie poster for Spirit Bear and Children Make History.



Above Left: Cindy Blackstock and Amanda Strong are joined by Spirit Bear and friend on the set of Spirit Bear's movie! Above right: Sunny takes part in the VIFF premiere of Spirit Bear and Children Make History.

Nations children to help make Jordan's Principle a reality. Attended virtually by people across Canada, the VIFF premiere included a panel with Amanda Strong, Alanis Obomsawin, and Cindy Blackstock, moderated by Jesse Wentle.

Spirit Bear and Children Make History is the first in a series of three animations based on Spirit Bear's adventures. Stay tuned for the second film in late 2021 and film three in 2022! Follow the Caring Society on social media for updates.

Spirit Bear and Children Make History Screenings

The Caring Society partnered with a number of organizations and communities to host screenings of *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*!

Ottawa Orange Shirt Day Premiere

Following the premiere at VIFF, the Caring Society hosted a screening of the film at a drive-in movie theatre in Ottawa,

Left: Cindy Blackstock and Theland Kicknosway join Spirit Bear at the Orange Shirt Day premiere; Below: Spirit Bear and his Caring Society colleagues preparing for the Orange Shirt Day premiere.



Spirit Bear is joined by youth from Assembly of Seven Generations at the Orange Shirt Day premiere of his movie!

Ontario, for Orange Shirt Day on September 30, 2020. Ogimaakwewak Singers opened the event, and Elder Barbara Dumont Hill offered prayers and spoke to the significance of Orange Shirt Day. Cindy Blackstock and Theland Kicknosway, the voice of Spirit Bear, introduced the film. More than 60 vehicles attended!



A Love We Know
SPIRIT BEAR THEME SONG
By Children and Youth from Saik'uz First Nation, Takla First Nation, Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation and Lake Babine Nation
Produced by: David Hodges, inPath

GROUP VOCALS - "SPIRIT BEAR" - "SUS ZUL"
I want to help you see the truth
And show you my reality
How hard it's been to be a youth
All alone with plans to dream
I want the world to treat me fair
I deserve a chance to see
A place to be with equal rights
And have my family close to me (Sus Zul)
Then you came and heard my voice
You made us loud and now they can't avoid
We have a heart, we have a dream
Now sing with me

CHORUS
Sus Zul
We sing with Spirit Bear, we sing with Spirit Bear
Sus Zul
We sing with Spirit Bear, we sing with Spirit Bear
Sus Zul
We want to see, a world that is fair
Where we could dream, where we could share
A love we know is there and sing with Spirit Bear (Sus Zul)
I gotta be brave and to never trust fear
I want to feel safe and I want you all here
We came to celebrate in the name of Spirit Bear
We want you all to listen and the mission is to care
All the children want to share and
we really need a change
Cause history has shown
that we've not treated the same
Believe there is a place
where the teachings will remain
Find the spirit in your heart when you're
speaking on his name (Sus Zul)
It's sad what we've been through
Enraged by injustice
It's time that we show you
How strong our love is
I have determination
fight for more fairness
Stand as a nation
And join us in caring (Sus Zul)

BACKGROUND GROUP VOCALS
Just because you're small, it doesn't mean
you can't stand tall stand tall, stand tall
You gotta learn to listen, everybody
do you hear the call! the call!
We're here to rise together
as we're singing with Sus Zul Sus Zul

GROUP VOCALS - "SPIRIT BEAR" - "SUS ZUL"
CHORUS
Sus Zul
We sing with Spirit Bear, we sing with Spirit Bear
Sus Zul
We want to see, a world that is fair
Where we could dream, where we could share
A love we know is there and sing with Spirit Bear
Sus Zul

The lyrics for A Love We Know.

Prince George Studio Premiere

Up next was a release party celebrating children and youth in Spirit Bear's home territory. On October 3, 2020, a virtual screening beginning with an in-studio discussion between Cindy Blackstock and Mary Teegee, Executive Director of Carrier Sekani Family Services and voice of Mary the Bear, was held in Prince George, British Columbia. The Prince George screening was held to honour the contributions of children and young people from Saik'uz First Nation, Takla First Nation, Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation and Lake Babine Nation, who worked with David Hodges at inPath to create a theme song for the Spirit Bear films, called *A Love We Know*. You can watch the music video at [youtube.com/watch?v=QXOgmWhGXvY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXOgmWhGXvY).

National Virtual Screening for Learners and Educators

The Caring Society and our partner organization, FNCARES, organized a virtual screening for children and youth nationwide.

From November 16 to 27, *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* was made available online to young learners across Canada. Educators who registered for the screening were granted two-week access to the film along with lesson plans to support meaningful engagement with the story. They were also invited to attend one of two livestream webinars with Cindy Blackstock, Spirit Bear, and special guests, Theland Kicknosway, the voice of Spirit Bear, Danielle Fontaine, a retired teacher who attended the Tribunal hearings with her students, and Raiyah Patel, a young person who has supported the Caring Society and participated in its campaigns for many years. Over 700 educators across Canada registered to participate in this event!

Video of the webinar for schools: [youtube.com/watch?v=Qklyet01mWo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qklyet01mWo)

In addition to the above activities, the Caring Society supports screenings organized by other groups and communities. In 2020-2021 this included screenings with Montreal Children's Hospital, UFCW, Canadian Human Rights Commission, Mikinakoos Children's Fund, and our partner organization, FNCARES.

For information how to rent the film or to purchase a DVD or digital copy of *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*, please contact the Winnipeg Film Group at winnipegfilmgroup.com.



Virtual film launch presenters, from left to right: Emily Williams, Cindy Blackstock, Danielle Fontaine, Raiyah Patel, Theland Kicknosway.

Lesson Plans

As part of the *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* national virtual screening for learners and educators, the Caring Society alongside FNCARES developed a series of free lesson plans to support learners' engagement with the film. Best suited for Grades 2 to 6, the lessons conclude with a flexible culminating task where students share their learning with their community and take action towards reconciliation. The lesson plans are available free of charge on our website at fncaringsociety.com/films.

Spirit Bear's Pawblishing Services

fncaringsociety.com/books-and-learning-guides

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.

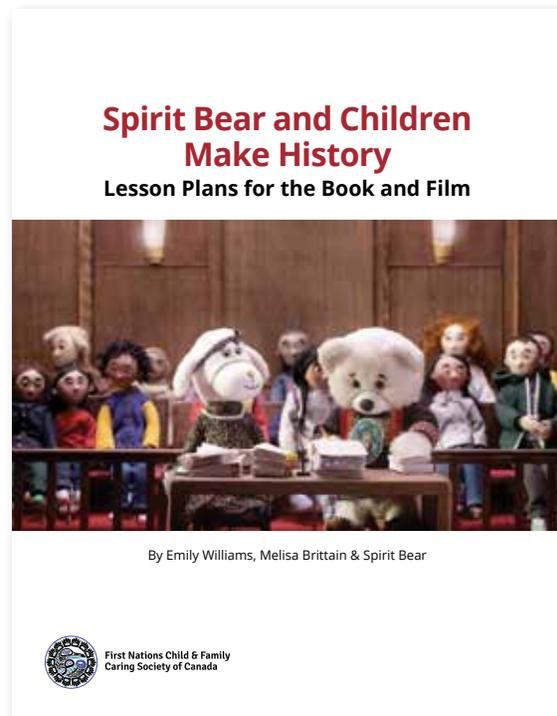
Celebrating Language Diversity

The Caring Society is thrilled to have sold over 4,600 books in 2020-2021 and donated 1,100 books! It was a busy year at the Caring Society as we worked with language speakers and others across the country to pawblish Spirit Bear's learning resources in more languages and formats.

Spirit Bear has published four picture books since 2017:

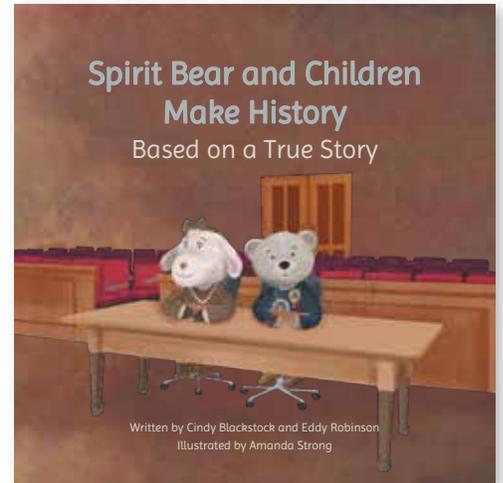
- *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* (1st edition 2017, 2nd edition 2020)
- *Spirit Bear: Fishing for Knowledge, Catching Dreams* (2018)
- *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams* (2019)
- *Spirit Bear: Echoes of the Past* (2020)

The French translation of book four, *Spirit Bear: échos du passé*, was released in summer 2021. With this, all four of Spirit Bear's books are now available in French. Publishing books and resources in Indigenous languages is a priority for the Caring Society as well. We are proud to say that *Spirit Bear: Echoes of the Past* is also now available in Algonquin as an e-book. Translated by Bertha Chief and Kevin Chief from the Timiskaming First Nation, the Algonquin translation was made possible by the NIB Trust Fund and is available on the Caring Society website as a free learning resource. In addition, we were thrilled to release our first Indigenous language audiovisual book this year: *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* in the Carrier language, read by Dorothy Patrick! The video is available on the Caring Society's YouTube channel.

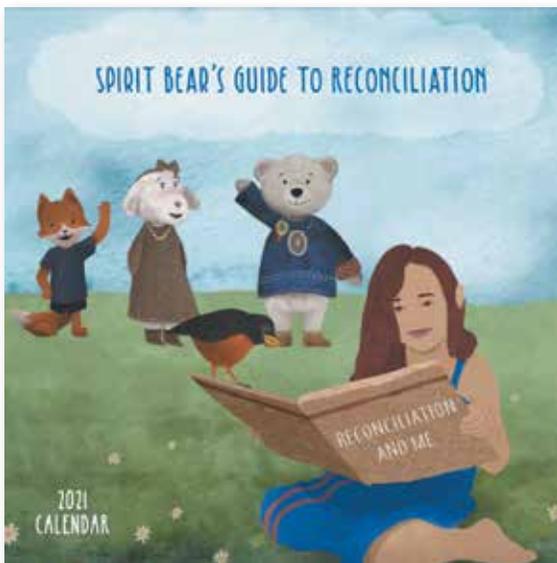


Other 2020-2021 highlights include:

- Spirit Bear published a second edition of *Spirit Bear and Children Make History*, with new illustrations that follow the look of books two to four.
- *Spirit Bear: Echoes of the Past* was selected as a Top Recommended Read for the 2021 TD Summer Reading Club and made available as a free e-book for the summer months through the Toronto Public Library.
- We published a free learning guide to accompany *Spirit Bear: Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams*. The guide supports families, educators, and communities in using the book to teach about equity, reconciliation, and how kids can make a difference.



Cover of the 2nd edition of *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* with all new illustrations.



Spirit Bear's books in English and French can be purchased through your local bookstore as well as through larger retailers (subject to availability). Bulk or educational orders should be directed to the University of Toronto Press or Ampersand, Inc.

Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation: 2021 Calendar

fncaringsociety.com/SpiritBear/calendar

Spirit Bear was *beary* keen to have his calendar widely available, so he *paw*blished his fourth calendar, *Spirit Bear's 2021 Guide to Reconciliation*, in June 2020. Featuring snapshots from Spirit Bear's first animation, the 2021 calendar featured a whole year of reconciliation-based activities and events for individuals and groups to participate in. 3500 calendars were sold online and 1000 were donated to groups, schools and other partners throughout Canada. All proceeds from the calendars support child- and youth-led reconciliation initiatives.

Special thanks to the Lillian Meighen and Don Wright Foundation for their continued support for the calendar.

Above top: Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation, 2021 Calendar; Above: Spirit Bear getting ready to ship his 2021 calendar to individuals and groups across Canada!



Reconciliation Ambearristers Program

fncaringsociety.com/Reconciliation-Ambearristers

The Reconciliation Ambearristers Program invites groups to work with one of the Caring Society's Reconciliation Ambearristers to guide the group through a year of free ways to make a difference for First Nations children and promote the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. Hosting groups "teach" the bear Indigenous languages and stories and include the bear in cultural activities so it becomes a well-known Reconciliation Ambearrister in the community! This year, over 15 schools, groups and communities worldwide were joined by a Reconciliation Ambearrister.



Spirit Bear joins Reconciliation Ambearrister at the Children First Forum hosted by Okanagan Nation Alliance.

Child- and Youth-Led Campaigns

The Caring Society believes 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 Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Canadian government has ratified the UNCRC and has expressed support for UNDRIP. As such, the Caring Society actively works to ensure the realization of these rights for First Nations children, youth and their families.

Meaningful reconciliation engages young people in learning about our collective past and thinking creatively about the future. Children and young people have a clear sense between right and wrong, engaging them in reconciliation, and social justice nurtures compassion and moral courage and bolsters self-confidence.

The Caring Society believes that each of us can take peaceful and respectful actions to help make a better Canada for Indigenous children and their families. We provide opportunities for educators and young people to participate in activities and events where they can feel empowered to make a difference.

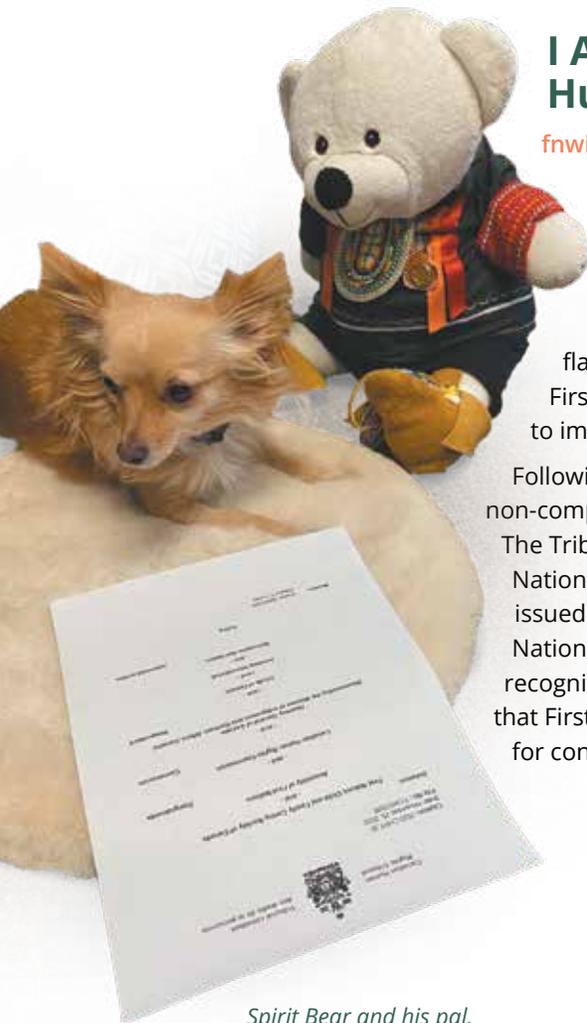
I Am a Witness: Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

fnwitness.ca

In January 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (the Tribunal) 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.

Following this landmark ruling (2016 CHRT 2), the Tribunal has issued twenty non-compliance and procedural orders, five of which were issued this past year. The Tribunal issued an order in November 2020 confirming eligibility of First Nations children for Jordan's Principle (2020 CHRT 36) following previously issued orders on the matter (2020 CHRT 20). This order ensures that First Nations children living off-reserve without *Indian Act* status but who are recognized by their Nations can access Jordan's Principle. The Tribunal ordered that First Nations children meeting **any one** of the following criteria are eligible for consideration under Jordan's Principle:

1. The child is registered or eligible to be registered under the *Indian Act*, as amended from time to time;
2. The child has one parent/guardian who is registered or eligible to be registered under the *Indian Act*;
3. The child is recognized by their Nation for the purposes of Jordan's Principle; or
4. The child is ordinarily resident on reserve.



Spirit Bear and his pal, Sunny, read the Tribunal order confirming First Nations eligibility for Jordan's Principle.

The Tribunal also issued two orders relating to its September 2019 ruling that the Canadian government must compensate certain First Nations children and their parents or grandparents who were affected by Canada's discriminatory treatment in child welfare services or who experienced service were denied or delayed receipt of services due to Canada's discriminatory implementation of Jordan's Principle (2019 CHRT 39). In February 2021, the Tribunal issued a ruling on outstanding issues relating to the compensation process (2021 CHRT 6). Also, in February 2021, the Tribunal issued an order approving the *Framework for the Payment of Compensation under 2019 CHRT 39* as submitted by the parties (2021 CHRT 7).

In March 2021, the Tribunal issued an order that the Tribunal's current remedial orders include First Nations communities not served by a First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Agency (2021 CHRT 12). Finally, in August 2021, the Tribunal issued a Letter-Decision confirming that funding of buildings and additional capital assets that support the delivery of FNCFS and Jordan's Principle programs and prevention services must be provided to FNCFS agencies, including small agencies

and First Nations. This ruling also confirmed that the Tribunal orders have primacy over the *Financial Administration Act* (August 26, 2021 Letter-decision).

Canada's Judicial Reviews

The Caring Society was disappointed that the Canadian government submitted a judicial review of the Tribunal's orders on Jordan's Principle eligibility (2020 CHRT 20 and 2020 CHRT 36) to the Federal Court on December 22, 2020. The Canadian government had previously submitted a judicial review of the Tribunal's orders providing human rights compensation to eligible First Nations children and their parents or grandparents (2019 CHRT 39). In both judicial reviews, Canada

wanted the orders quashed. Importantly, the Tribunal orders remain in place while the judicial review is underway and the Canadian government must adhere to the Tribunal's orders pending a decision from the Federal Court.

The Federal Court appointed Justice Paul Favel and hearings were held on June 14–18, 2021. Regarding the Jordan's Principle eligibility order, Canada argued that the Tribunal erred in finding Canada's inclusion of the *Indian Act* as criteria for Jordan's Principle eligibility to be

discriminatory. Regarding the compensation order, Canada acknowledged the finding of systemic discrimination and did not deny the harms to children, but argued that harms to each child in this systemic case needed to be proven individually. The Caring Society and other parties, including the Assembly of First Nation, Chiefs of Ontario, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International and Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, then gave their arguments in support of upholding the Tribunal orders and rejecting Canada's judicial reviews.



Above top: David Taylor and Spirit Bear take part in the Federal Court hearings; Above: Sarah Clarke and Spirit Bear take part in the Federal Court hearings.



Jordan's Principle

jordansprinciple.ca

Jordan's Principle is a legal rule named in memory of Jordan River Anderson from Norway House Cree Nation. It ensures First Nations children can access services in ways that reflect their distinct cultural needs, takes full account of the historical disadvantage linked to colonization, and does so without service denials, delays or disruptions because they are First Nations.

In January 2016, as part of its landmark ruling, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (the Tribunal) ordered the Canadian government to properly implement Jordan's Principle. Since this landmark ruling, the Tribunal has issued further procedural and non-compliance orders. This past year, the Tribunal issued two orders relating to Jordan's Principle, including confirming eligibility of First Nations children receiving supports through Jordan's Principle (2020 CHRT 36). The Tribunal also ordered Canada to fund capital assets that support the delivery of Jordan's Principle services and confirmed that the *Financial Administration Act* should not be interpreted in a way that hinders the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal orders (August 26, 2021 Letter-decision). Read more about these rulings in the I am a Witness section.

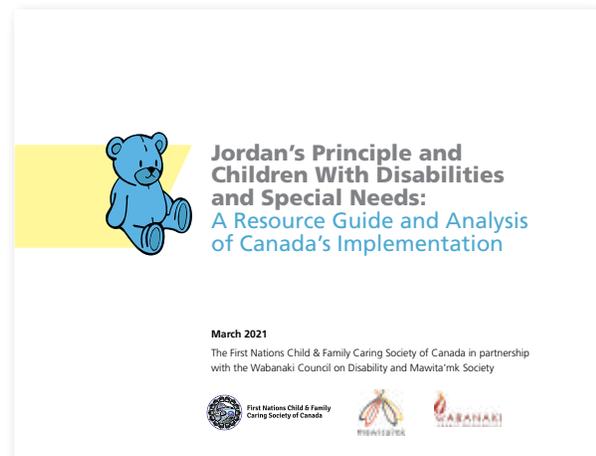
Jordan's Principle and Children With Disabilities and Special Needs: A Resource Guide and Analysis of Canada's Implementation

The Caring Society welcomes opportunities to work with others to develop resources and increase public understanding of Jordan's Principle and the CHRT orders. The Caring Society was honoured to work with the Wabanaki Council on Disability and Mawita'mk Society in 2020-2021 to write and publish a resource guide on Jordan's Principle and children with disabilities and special needs. Written for families, community members, service providers, and policy makers, the guide is divided into four parts:

- history of Jordan's Principle and commonly asked questions;
- how to get help through Jordan's Principle;
- findings on Jordan's Principle and children with disabilities and special needs; and
- gaps and challenges to accessing supports and services.

The first two sections offer history and information relevant to anyone wanting to learn more about or make a request through Jordan's Principle. The third and fourth sections present the findings of a literature review and conversations with Jordan's Principle Service Coordinators and others at the community level about how Jordan's Principle can assist families of children with disabilities and special needs, as well as gaps and challenges to accessing support that needs to be addressed by Canada.

The guide is available on the Caring Society website at fncaringsociety.com/publications/jordans-principle-resource-guide. Hard copies are also available through the Mawita'mk Society by contacting info@mawitamk.org.



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.

The Caring Society at Work: Services, Events and Projects

Caring Society Services

First Peoples Child & Family Review

fpcfr.com

Founded in 2003, the *First Peoples Child & Family Review* (FPCFR) is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, and multi-format journal honouring the voices and perspectives of First peoples and non-Indigenous allies and supporters. The FPCFR's mission is to promote research, critical analysis, stories, standpoints, and educational resources which 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.

Issue 15(2) was published in December 2020 and features articles on various that demonstrate the collective resilience of Indigenous communities, the resurgent vitality of Indigenous worldviews and lifeways, and the capacity of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to collaborate in pursuit of justice, equity and the holistic wellbeing of Indigenous families and communities.

The FPCFR was also thrilled to publish a Special Edition by Children and Youth in August 2020 in honour of Shannen Koostachin and Shannen's Dream for safe and comfy schools. In this issue, kids and youth learn from Shannen's experience and action, explore the unfair ways First Nations kids are still treated by Canada, and articulate the change that is needed to ensure all First Nations kids and youth have the opportunity to pursue their dreams. The young authors in this issue remind us that children and youth understand colonial injustice and deserve opportunities to meaningfully participate in the learning and action required to end it.



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 has been busy working with the Reconciling History Committee to create more learning opportunities for the Reconciling History initiative. This past year, the Caring Society added more resources on historical figures involved in residential schools. A new information sheet on Nicholas Flood Davin, considered one of the architects of the residential school system, joins other resources on figures like Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce and Duncan Campbell Scott.



Touchstones of Hope

fncaringsociety.com/touchstones-hope

Sixteen years have passed since Touchstones of Hope was created by Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders in child welfare at an international gathering on the territory of the Six Nations of the Grand River (in Niagara Falls, Canada). Since then, Touchstones of Hope has evolved from a vision for a way forward to a sustained movement to embed Indigenous ways of caring for children and families into child wellbeing systems, policies, and practices.

Touchstones of Hope is a process and set of principles for guiding ethical reconciliation and collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in a variety of contexts. Years later, we continue to hear from leaders, child welfare workers, policy makers, educators, and others that the process and principles of Touchstones of Hope are both useful and relevant—especially now, as more people in Canada are seeking to engage in reconciliation processes that are ethical, meaningful, and grounded in both truth and action. In addition to child welfare, Touchstones of Hope has been used workplace environments, child and youth engagement, research, education, and more.

In 2020, the Caring Society, assisted by FNCARES, joined with the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) to organize and host a seven-part, bi-monthly dialogue series for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples from Canada and the United States to learn about the Touchstones of Hope and topics related to each of the five principles: self-determination, holistic approach, culture and language, structural interventions, and non-discrimination.

The first session, an Introduction to the Touchstones of Hope, was held in November 2020 and the final session in the series is scheduled for November 2021. The series features speakers from both Canada and the United States working in a variety of contexts and sharing teachings and lessons from diverse backgrounds, Nations, and geographies. Along with Caring Society and NICWA staff, speakers included Elders, youth organizers, Indigenous legal experts, Indigenous leaders in culturally relevant health care and approaches to healing, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working in child welfare, and experts in the area of fiscal studies.

Read more, watch videos of past sessions, and sign up for future sessions at nicwa.org/touchstones-of-hope-dialogues.

#Hibernating4Health and Spirit Bear's COVID-19 Resources Pages

fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bears-COVID-19-resources

In early March 2020, Spirit Bear and the Caring Society launched the #Hibernating4Health social media campaign to support kids and families in staying healthy, supporting each other, and learning during COVID-19. In the early weeks of the campaign, Spirit Bear shared valuable health recommendations, encouraging folks to stay home, wash their paws, and stay a moose length away from friends. Spirit Bear then shared learning activities for kids to engage in at home, including many of the Caring

Society's child-friendly resources. Spirit Bear's COVID-19 resource pages on the Caring Society's website keep child- and youth-friendly resources in one place, along with resource pages for professionals working with families and youth, families and educators, and Indigenous communities. These pages are updated continuously, so they continue to direct people of all ages to reliable resources and information.

As families and communities continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, the Caring Society strives to provide high-quality learning resources for kids at home on health and wellness, social justice, and reconciliation. Explore the resource pages and follow Spirit Bear on Twitter for the latest **#Hibernating4Health** resources, activities, and more.



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. The Caring Society continues to add relevant resources and contact information to the portal; something has proven to be even more useful in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Caring Society 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

Have a Heart Day is an annual child- and youth-led reconciliation event to help make sure First Nations children have a fair chance to grow up safely with their families, get a good education, be healthy, and feel proud of who they are. Celebrated since 2012, Have a Heart Day is usually an event where children and young people gather in their communities, schools and on Parliament Hill to read letters and sing songs in support of First Nations young people. However, with most places across Canada following strict health protocols due to the COVID-19 pandemic,



A special Have a Heart Day Snow Bear made by Spirit Bear's friend, Theo!



Spirit Bear making his very special chocolate chip cookies for his Have a Heart Day celebration!

things were different this year – different, but just as fun, meaningful and oh-so creative! WOW!

To support individuals and families who could not gather in groups due to public health protocols, the Caring Society created the Snow Bear Learning Activity! This activity invites learners of all ages to learn about Have a Heart Day, get outside, and show their support in COVID-safe ways. After learning about why we celebrate Have a Heart Day, the activity invites learners to create snow bears with signs or messages in support of equity for First Nations children.

Boys and Girls Clubs across the country celebrated Have a Heart Day by making snow bears and drawing pictures of Spirit Bear. As well, 600 children from four schools in the Pembina Trails School Division in Winnipeg, Manitoba, spent weeks leading up to Have a Heart Day learning about equity issues like Jordan’s Principle and access to clean water. Children at the Inuuqatigiit Centre in Ottawa, ON, made cards with the qulliq, asking leaders to “Keep your heart warm.” Families baked cookies (Spirit Bear’s favourite food), post-secondary students celebrated Have a Heart Day as part of their

learning, unions, agencies, church groups, and organizations encouraged their members to participate, and people across Canada wrote letters to the government in support of the Spirit Bear Plan. Have a Heart Day was even celebrated internationally by supporters in Tasmania! These are only a few examples of the many uplifting Have a Heart Day celebrations sent to the Caring Society by email or shared to social media using the hashtags **#HaveaHeartDay** and **#JourneeAyezUnCoeur**.

Elderbeary Day

fncaringsociety.com/elderbeary-day

On March 20, the Caring Society celebrated the third annual Elderbeary Day! Elderbeary Day invites individuals to honour and celebrate the contributions of Elders who do so much to teach and raise our youth. The day is celebrated by thanking your Elders for all that they do for you and your community by writing them letters, drawing them pictures, in any way you believe best represents how much you care!

This year’s Elderbeary Day was once again celebrated differently due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Caring Society urged participants to celebrate Elders virtually or contactless to respect physical and social distancing measures put in place by public health authorities. People celebrated their Elders in many ways, including doing outdoor chores, delivering groceries, and sending mail and virtual messages to Elders. They celebrated Elderbeary Day on social media using the hashtags **#ElderbearyDay** and **#JournéeOursonAîné**.





Bear Witness Day

fncaringsociety.com/BearWitness

Every year on May 10, children, families, organizations, schools and communities celebrate Bear Witness Day by showing their support for Jordan's Principle. Named in loving memory of Jordan River Anderson, Jordan's Principle is a legal rule to ensure that First Nations children get the services they need, when they need them. May 10 is also Spirit Bear's *bearthday*!

In its landmark 2016 ruling, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (the Tribunal) ordered the Canadian government to fully implement Jordan's Principle by May 10, 2016. However, First Nations children and their families continue to face discrimination in accessing government services due to the Canadian government's failure to comply with the Tribunal's orders. In May 2017, the Tribunal issued a third non-compliance order finding Canada's approach to Jordan's Principle to be unlawful and discriminatory (2017 CHRT 14). In total, the Tribunal has issued twenty non-compliance and procedural orders, five of which were issued throughout 2020-2021.

This year, the Caring Society hosted a free online screening of the stop-motion animated film *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* about the landmark case on Jordan's Principle and First Nations child welfare at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. The film was introduced by special guests, Hon. Landon Pearson, Trudy Lavallee, and Dr. Cindy Blackstock spoke about Jordan's legacy and the work that still needs to be done to ensure all First Nations children have access to equitable and culturally relevant services. Over 200 people attended this event, and many more showed their support for Jordan's Principle by sharing photos online with their teddy bears. Due to the outpouring of support, **#BearWitnessDay** and **#JordansPrinciple** once again trended on Twitter!

The Caring Society also partnered with Mikinakoos Children's Fund, based out of Sioux Lookout, Ontario, to facilitate film screenings in elementary schools throughout the First Nations communities they serve and their broader region of northwestern Ontario. As a result, hundreds of children across several northwestern Ontario school boards watched the film.

Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams

honouringmemoriesplantingdreams.ca

Celebrated in May and June, Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams invites people of all ages to plant heart gardens in memory of children lost to the residential school system, to honour residential school survivors and their families, and support the legacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Heart gardens can include decorated paper hearts, real flowers, and, where appropriate, Indigenous plants and medicines.

While Honouring Memories, Planting Dreams events were disrupted this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, over 1300 hearts were planted by individuals, communities, schools and groups in six different provinces. People shared their heart gardens and showed support by posting photos on social media using the hashtags **#TRCHeartGarden** and **#CVRJardinDeCoeurs**.





School is a Time for Dreams

fncaringsociety.com/school-time-dreams

The Caring Society created School is a Time for Dreams in 2018 to honour Shannen Koostachin, the community of Attawapiskat and Shannen's Dream for safe and comfy schools. As many First Nations young people still do not have safe and comfy schools and quality, culturally relevant education, School is a Time for Dreams invites people from all over the country to support equitable education for First Nations and all young people in the country.

This year, the Caring Society encouraged people to celebrate by sharing their dreams for First Nations young people and their own dreams by hosting a Shannen's Dream party in accordance with public health guidelines and writing to elected officials. Supporters shared their celebrations on social media using the hashtags **#ShannensDream** and **#RêvedeShannen**.

Caring Society Projects

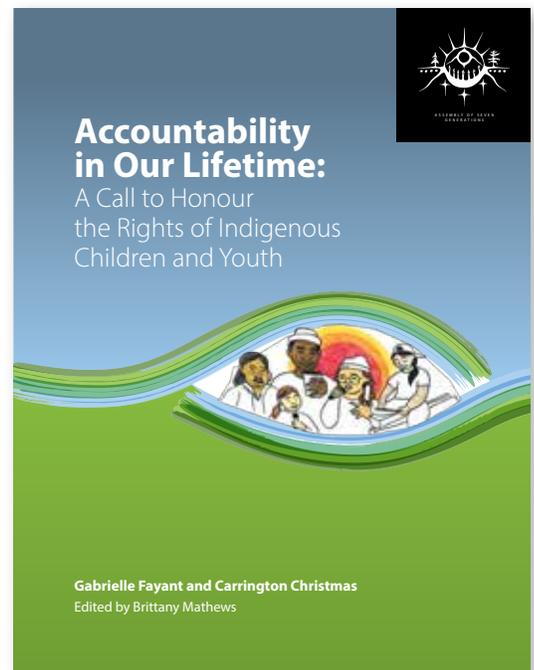
Accountability in Our Lifetime

The Caring Society was honoured to have supported Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G) in the creation of a new report detailing the findings from an initial December 2020 gathering of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth discussing an Indigenous youth accountability mechanism. While the report, entitled *Accountability in our Lifetime: A Call to Honour the Rights of Indigenous Children and Youth*, addresses Senator Moodie's tabled Bill S210 to establish a National Children's Commissioner, it is written more broadly to also address youth accountability mechanisms.

Accountability is used to describe this mechanism rather than "rights promoter," which is listed as one of the mandates of the Child Commissioner. The youth at the gathering made it clear that Canada is long overdue in honouring inherent Indigenous rights. Canada has a long history of violating the rights of Indigenous children and youth, and failing to redress these harms despite generations of reports and recommendations that Indigenous peoples have provided to Canada. The report emphasizes the importance of including young people in accountability measure initiatives. It contains six determinants of accountability defined by young people in very practical ways:

1. responsibility,
2. safety,
3. respect,
4. reciprocity,
5. relationality, and
6. integrity.

The report is available on the Assembly of Seven Generations website at a7g.ca/reports and fncaringsociety.com/publications/accountability-our-lifetime-call-honour-rights-indigenous-children-and-youth.





Bill C-92 Information Sheets

The Caring Society is committed to providing quality resources to support First Nations leaders in making the best decisions for their communities. Canada's ongoing non-compliance with elements of the Tribunal orders raises concerns about whether the federal government will ensure adequate and equitable funding for Indigenous child welfare under Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Métis and Inuit children, youth and families*. Canada has refused to expand the terms of the current First Nations Child Services Program to include First Nations with agreements under Bill C-92, signalling that the government may not honour the Tribunal orders in funding agreements for agencies operating under First Nations jurisdiction.

In July 2021, the Caring Society published a three-part series of information sheets called *Looking for Clarity in Canada's Funding Positions on C-92*. Part I presents the Caring Society's position. Without proper funding, the Caring Society fears that

Bill C-92 will fail to address inequities and will exacerbate existing issues in First Nations child welfare. Part II outlines Canada's First Nations child welfare funding history and various funding models used by Canada. Part III outlines questions and concerns regarding Canada's funding approach for Bill C-92.

This three-part series and other information sheets can be found at fncaringsociety.com/information-sheets.

The Spirit Bear Virtual School for Teachers

The Caring Society is thrilled to be collaborating with researchers at the University of Ottawa and FNCARE to develop *The Spirit Bear Virtual School for Teachers*, as part of the SSHRC-funded "Just because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall" research project. In August, we collaboratively hosted *Spirit Bear's Virtual Teacher Professional Learning Retreat*. This retreat had over 200 participants attend where they heard from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit educators, researchers, Cindy Blackstock and Spirit Bear! At the retreat, draft resources were shared with participants to use in their schools and communities.

In 2022, *The Spirit Bear Virtual School for Teachers* will be launched as an interactive online resource hub for teachers and education professionals. Inspired by feedback from teachers who have taught the Caring Society's campaigns in their classrooms, the school will offer learning guides on the Caring Society's campaigns, including I am a Witness, Jordan's Principle, and Shannen's Dream, and learning content on colonial injustices that impact First Nations children. It also aims to connect teachers and offer webinars on how to teach the Caring Society's reconciliation-based campaigns and forthcoming curriculum.

On January 21, 2021, educators and researchers Lisa Howell, Madelaine McCracken and special guests hosted a webinar introducing the new *I am a Witness Learning Guide* to educators. The first of the School's series of learning guides, I am a Witness contains lesson plans, resources, and ideas for teaching students about the I am a Witness campaign and Have a Heart Day in February. Over 90 teachers attended the webinar! Teachers were encouraged to try out the guide with their students and invited to participate in focus groups to gather feedback on the guide.

To access the guide or learn more, email info@fncaringsociety.com. You can view the webinar at bit.ly/SBSchoolWebinar.

Caring Society Awards and 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/jordan-principle-scholarship

Named in loving memory of Jordan River Anderson and in partnership with Jordan's family, the Caring Society is proud to present the third annual Jordan's Principle Scholarship for First Nations students to **Jessie McGregor, Diane Simon, Felicia Erickson** and **Grant Bruno**. These four recipients were presented with the scholarship to honour their commitment to Indigenous children's health and community service. 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.



Spirit Bear Award

fncaringsociety.com/spirit-bear-award

Spirit Bear is *beary* proud to announce the winners of the 2021 Spirit Bear Award. 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. This year, the selection committee was inspired by the number of exceptional candidates. To honour and encourage the nominees' good work, Spirit Bear decided to award four groups of children and youth with the first-place prize and one group with a second-place prize. The winners are:

- **Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Jordan's Principle Storytelling Project in Manitoba**
These three youth worked together to plan and create a video for their community sharing stories, teachings, and language from Elders about the land.
- **Featherston Drive Public School R7A Class in Ottawa, Ontario**
This class has been tirelessly learning in the spirit of reconciliation and standing with First Nations kids, youth, and communities by speaking out, sharing their learning with their school, participating in reconciliation-based events, and asking for fairness from Prime Minister Trudeau.
- **Lilian Berg School's Grade 7/8 Class in Vermillion Bay, Ontario**
On top of educating their local community about residential schools and other important work, this class worked with community chiefs and Elders to apply for a Canadian Heritage grant to take better care of the McIntosh Residential School Memorial site.
- **ASIA North Poplar Indigenous Afterschool Program in Abbotsford, British Columbia**
This group of young people have shown leadership in their school by learning Sto:lo teachings and language, leading activities in their school, and participating in reconciliation-based events and learning opportunities throughout the year.
- **Thickwood Heights Public School in Fort McMurray, Alberta**
Thickwood Heights was awarded a second-place prize for its ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by learning from First Nations and Métis experiences and perspectives, building respectful relationships within the community, and participating in a wide variety of reconciliation-based learning activities and events.

A huge bear cheer for all these groups of young people!

First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service

fncaringsociety.com/fncares

About FNCARES

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. Located on Treaty 6 territory in Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton, Alberta), FNCARES focuses on translating research on structural disadvantage for First Nations children into practical, community-based solutions.

We organize and host numerous educational events throughout the year, including lectures, workshops, film screenings, panel discussions, book launches and other educational events that are free and open to the public. We also develop resources to educate about the structural drivers of disadvantage and promote further discussion and action concerning culturally based equity for First Nations children and youth.

Director: Cindy Blackstock, **Research Associate:** Melisa Brittain



FNCARES Events

Alberta Virtual Film Premiere and Interview With Cindy Blackstock

On the evening of November 18, 2020, we premiered *Spirit Bear and Children Make History* in an online event that reached over 200 households in Canada. After a screening of the film, Cindy Blackstock joined Melisa Brittain in the Kiwi Productions studio (Edmonton, Alberta)

for a live interview, where Cindy answered questions submitted from viewers across the country. Thank you to Kiwi Productions for making this a reality on very short notice, and to our partners at the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society for providing the film.



Above left: Image from Spirit Bear's animation, Spirit Bear and Children Make History; Left: Melisa Brittain interviewing Cindy Blackstock in Kiwi Productions Studio.

Film Screening and Learning Guide Launch

On November 24, 2020, FNCARES partnered with the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) for a webinar launch of our *Learning Guide for Professionals Working with Indigenous Children and Youth*. The learning guide was developed to accompany our film *(Dis)placed: Indigenous youth and the child welfare system* (kingcripproductions.com/displaced). Over 750 social work professionals and others attended from across Canada, and more than 300 have watched the webinar “on demand” since then.

The film features the voices of Indigenous youth as they reflect on their prior involvement with the child welfare system and their multiple strategies of resistance to assimilation. The learning guide is ideal for professional workshops or individual use, containing crucial background information on the historical and contemporary colonial contexts for the overwhelmingly high number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children in the child welfare system, and the importance of cultural continuity for their wellbeing.

Many thanks to the panelists: Cindy Blackstock (Caring Society), Bernadette lahtail (Creating Hope Society), Julie Mann-Johnson (University of Calgary) and Michelle Briegel (Mount Royal University).

Thanks also to Charity Lui and Heather Johnson (Alberta College of Social Workers), as well as

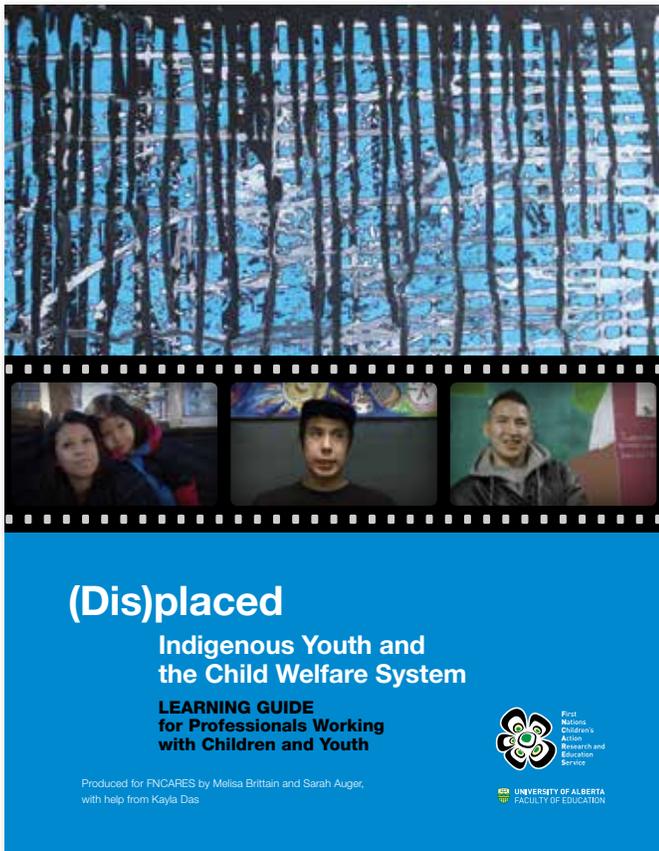
Alexandra Zannis (Canadian Association of Social Workers), for all their work planning and hosting this event, and to our collaborators: Creating Hope Society of Alberta, University of Calgary, Mount Royal University, Child Welfare League of Canada, and Child & Youth Care Association of Alberta.

As always, we send our greatest appreciation to the young people in the film – Tyler Blackface, Tia Ledesma and Donovan Waskahat – for sharing their truths, so that we can all continue to learn from them and make changes to help ensure the best possible outcomes for Indigenous children, youth, and families.

Anyone can register to watch the webinar (excluding the film) for free by following this link and registering at casw-acts.ca/en/webinar/displaced-learning-guide-film-screening-and-learning-guide-launch.

The *Learning Guide for Professionals Working with Indigenous Children and Youth* can be accessed from fncaringsociety.com/publications/displaced-indigenous-youth-and-child-welfare-system-learning-guide-professionals.

To preview and/or purchase the film, please contact Vtape at distribution@vtape.com.



(Dis)placed
Indigenous Youth and the Child Welfare System
LEARNING GUIDE
for Professionals Working with Children and Youth

Produced for FNCARES by Melisa Brittain and Sarah Auger, with help from Kayla Das

First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Bill C-92: The Good, the Bad & the Unknowns – Part II

On April 22, 2021, FNCARES partnered with Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge and the Faculties of Law and Native Studies at the University of Alberta on Part II of our series on *Bill C-92: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*. In this webinar, Cindy Blackstock, Hadley Friedland and Koren Lightning-Earle discussed emerging issues with Bill C-92 since it became law on January 1, 2020. Discussion topics included issues pertaining to



Clockwise from top right: Shelby Thomas, Hadley Friedland, Koren Lightning-Earle, Cindy Blackstock.

jurisdiction, national standards, and the government's ongoing non-compliance with elements of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's ruling on First Nations child welfare, as it relates to Bill C-92. Over 270 registered for the live webinar, and there have been over 400 views of the video on YouTube since.

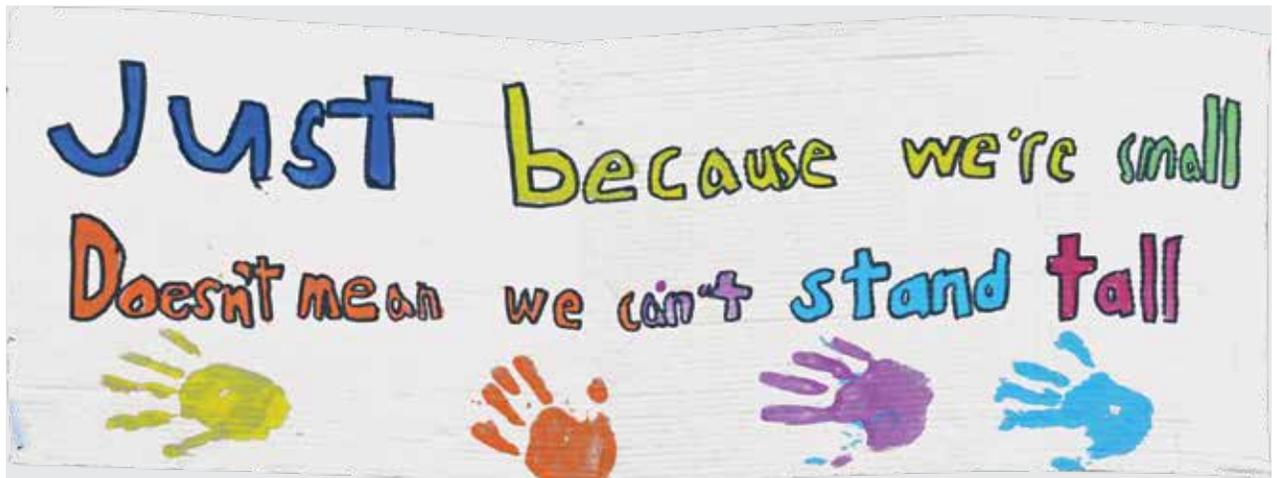
Thanks to the presenters, and to moderator Shelby Thomas, for an excellent panel discussion. And thank you to Aileen Reilly (Faculty of Law) and Jade Brown-Tootoosis (Faculty of Native Studies) for all their hard work to make this event a success.

Watch Bill C-92, The good, the bad and the unknowns – Part I at youtube.com/watch?v=I7tMq0ta0D0

Watch Bill C-92, The good, the bad and the unknowns – Part II at youtube.com/watch?v=NiVKyTB_c5U

For additional resources on the implementation of Bill C-92, check out Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge's website, where they regularly share excellent resources at ualberta.ca/wahkohtowin/research-areas.

FNCARES Research



"Just because we're small doesn't mean we can't stand tall":

Reconciliation education in the elementary classroom project update

This SSHRC-funded research project studies the impacts of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society's social justice-based reconciliation campaigns on elementary students and teachers.

Led by Dr. Cindy Blackstock (McGill University) and co-investigators Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and

Dr. Susan Bennett (University of Ottawa), this project will advance knowledge about implementing a social justice reconciliation approach within elementary school curriculum frameworks and standards and create knowledge and resources that school boards and educators can use to implement this education in elementary classrooms.

Phase I of the study found that, for the most part, teachers and students who engaged in the Caring Society campaigns had positive and transformative learning experiences. Researchers also found that teachers would benefit a great deal from the following resources: a centralized place for access to resources on the campaigns; learning guides specific to each campaign; opportunities to access other educators teaching the campaigns; and access to mentors who could help guide them as they learn to teach the material in their classrooms.

In response to these findings, the research team is developing an interactive online resource for teachers and educational professionals called *The Spirit Bear Virtual School for Teachers*. On this website, educators will find the *Spirit Bear Beary Caring Curriculum* and lesson plans for each campaign; they will meet fellow teachers who have experience in elementary and secondary education for reconciliation; and they will have access to webinars designed to help them teach the curriculum. Our research team is currently working on a draft of the curriculum and lesson plans, and we will launch *The Spirit Bear Virtual School for Teachers* in 2022. In the meantime, we are working with teachers to get feedback on the newly developed resources as they are drafted.

You can watch the *Spirit Bear Virtual School Webinar* to find out more about the research project and the development of *The Spirit Bear Virtual School for Teachers* at bit.ly/SBSchoolWebinar.

Media

“A Call to Self-Reflection and Action” – Interview with Julie Mann-Johnson for *The Advocate*

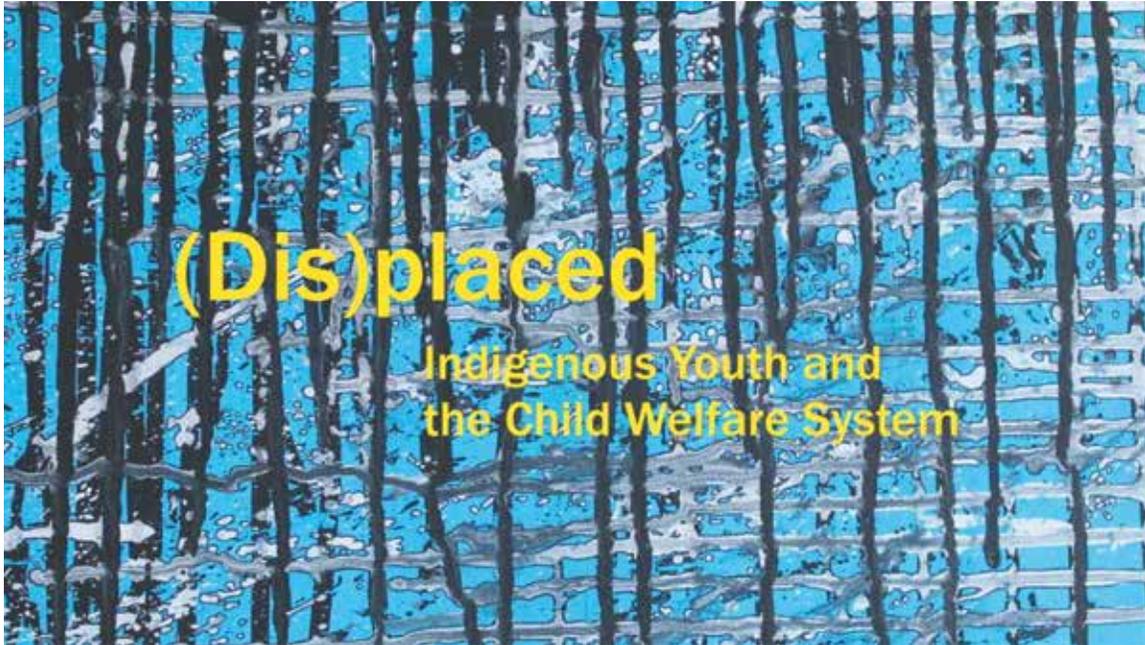
For the summer 2021 issue of the Alberta Association of Social Worker’s quarterly magazine, *The Advocate*, Julie Mann-Johnson (University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work) interviewed Melisa Brittain (FNCARES) about the film *(Dis)placed: Indigenous Youth and the Child Welfare System*, and the learning guide for professionals launched in fall 2020. The interview focuses on the collaborative filmmaking process, highlights the connections between residential schools and current child welfare practices, and discusses what agencies and social workers can do to disrupt this pattern of colonization, including reflecting on and challenging their own practices and working to meet the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action on child welfare.

The article, found on pages 40–42, can be accessed at issuu.com/acsw/docs/acsw_advocate_summer_2021.



FNCARES Resource Development

Film Distribution



Our film *(Dis)placed: Indigenous Youth and the Child Welfare System* (2017), a collaboration with Indigenous young people sharing their experiences with the child welfare system, continues to draw interest from across Canada. With the publication of the learning guide for professionals in 2020, distribution increased once again, with streaming licenses sold to provincial and territorial government departments, libraries and post-secondary institutions, and small organizations working with Indigenous children and families. Indigenous Services Canada has acquired the film for employee training purposes, creating a version with French subtitles and making the film accessible for all its employees through visual describe and closed captioning.

For more information on how to purchase your copy, please contact Vtape at vtape.org/video?vi=8693.

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 two 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.
- Publish two editions of the First Peoples Child & Family Review and continue updating the online database.
- 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/becomeamember or making an online donation at fncaringsociety.com/donate.





First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada

309 Cooper Street, Suite 401, Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5

📞 613-230-5885 ✉ info@fncaringsociety.com 🌐 fncaringsociety.com

🐦 @CaringSociety 📘 @CaringSociety 📷 @SpiritBearandFriends 🐦 @SpiritBear 📺 fncaringsociety