

# Kwanlin Dän Ch'a

"Kwanlin people of Whitehorse, how are you?"



Erin Paul, a kindergarten teacher at Elijah Smith School, recently wrote to KDFN about children from Dusk'a. She said staff at the Dusk'a Family Learning Centre do an "extraordinary job" of preparing the children for kindergarten.

"It is evident that they have learned how to behave appropriately in a classroom and treat others with respect and dignity. It is very exciting to have students coming into kindergarten whom have already been exposed to their ABC's, numeracy and colours. I am impressed with the children's ability to draw pictures with detail, purpose and colour.... All of the students that I have this year from the [Dusk'a] program have shown a love for reading and learning." Brand new playground equipment at Dusk'a is adding to the preschoolers' positive experience.

## Message from Chief and Council

In the first six months in our term as Chief and Council we have been very busy. We have been building our understanding about pressing issues and initiating new efforts to provide benefits to our First Nation and its citizens.

A focus of our work will be the implementation of our self-government and land claim agreements. These agreements include many opportunities for our First Nation and potential benefits for our citizens. We want to make sure we're taking advantage of these opportunities and benefits for our current and future citizens.

As part of this, we are looking at how we can make our lands work for us. A new Letter of Understanding (LOU) between KDFN and the Government of Yukon is an example of how we will be using our Settlement Land to move our First Nation towards greater self-sufficiency (*see story on page 3*).

Economic development is also a significant focus for us. Chief and Council also want to create a fair and transparent government so our citizens know what we're doing and can have input into our decisions.

We encourage everyone to come out to the General Assembly to learn more and provide direction for our work.



## General Assembly 2011

Kwanlin Dün First Nation's annual General Assembly will be **October 28-30 at Nàkwät'à Kù** (Potlatch House).

All citizens are encouraged to attend! The GA is an opportunity to provide direction to your First Nation and to learn more about the plans and activities of different departments.

## Elders' Walking Group

Every Tuesday and Thursday Elders (over 55) get a ride and free pass to the Canada Games Centre where they walk together from 11-12. It is a good time to visit with friends and get healthy. Everyone is back in time for Meals on Wheels.

This year there will also be monthly draw prizes and prizes for greatest distances walked.

Even if you are an Elder that uses a walker, please come out and join us for fun and friends. Call Denise at the Health Centre at 668-7289.





## Play on!

Kwanlin Dün First Nation hosted the 24th Annual Hand Games Championship last month at Helen's Fish camp. People from around the territory came to play, celebrate and have fun together, rain and shine.

The last time KDFN hosted the games was in 1993. This year, prizes for the winners included money and traditional gifts made by Elders and community members.

It was a busy weekend with twenty-two adult teams and five youth teams competing. Congratulations to the winners!

### Adult Winners

1st place - Kaskanovas

2nd place - Ross River Rockers

3rd place - Selkirk Gamblers

### Youth

1st place - Young Bloods

2nd place - The Warriors

3rd place - Six Stick Stealers

And thank you to everyone who played, drummed, cheered, judged, made prizes and volunteered!

*If you are interested in buying t-shirts, hoodies, cups or bags from the 24th Annual Hand Games Tournament, please contact Darlene Smith at 668-7850.*

## CHOICES!

### YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Over 75 youth attended the successful CHOICES! conference at the end of July. In all, participants attended a total of 720 hours of sessions!

There was awesome entertainment on Saturday night. On Sunday, 15 youth made five 2-minute movies about topics they learned about the previous day. A strong message in their films was the importance of sharing information with others. We have also had several phone calls and emails from both participants and their parents saying what a great time the youth had.

A big THANK YOU to all of our volunteers, presenters and support staff for making the conference a huge success!

# Putting our lands to work

In early September, KDFN and the Government of Yukon announced they would be working collaboratively on the development of land within the City of Whitehorse.

Chief Rick O'Brien and Premier Pasloski signed a "Letter of Understanding" (LOU) that outlines how both governments will work together to share expertise, resources and ideas. Initially, the two governments will focus on initiating new residential developments that can help meet the public demand for housing.

"KDFN has substantial Settlement Land holdings in the Whitehorse area," Chief Rick O'Brien said. "Exploring residential opportunities on these lands will increase the amount of residential land and housing available to the public while providing economic benefits to the Kwanlin Dün First Nation for generations to come."

## Plan Marsh Lake

A Marsh Lake Local Area Plan is being developed with community input between June 2011 and the summer of 2012.

KDFN lands make up almost 50% of the Marsh Lake area. Under KDFN's Self-Government Agreement, it says we can do "local area planning" in this area, along with the Yukon government (planning together with Yukon government will help ensure that existing and future land uses on Settlement and Non-Settlement Land are compatible).

A land use plan will guide future land use decisions about what type of land uses and activities will be allowed—or not allowed. It will also be used to create land use regulations.

The Marsh Lake Local Area Planning Steering Committee was set up by Government of Yukon and Kwanlin Dün to guide the planning process and develop a draft plan through a public process. The Steering Committee includes three Kwanlin Dün First Nation representatives and three Marsh Lake residents.

This summer there was a community BBQ, a survey, many kitchen table meetings, and a field trip.

We will be setting up a "graffiti wall" and comment box on October 17th in the coffee room outside of Chief and Council chambers. This is a place people can post their ideas about what they'd like to see for the future of the Marsh Lake area.

KDFN has about 30 square kilometers of Settlement Land within the city. By leasing some of these lands for new homes, KDFN would get paid annual lease fees. It would also be able to collect a portion of the income tax paid by people living on our Settlement Lands. These revenues would help KDFN provide important programs and services for our people.

When we were negotiating our claims, we selected lands for different values and purposes. Some lands were specifically selected for their economic development potential. These valuable lands were seen as a way we could become self-sufficient in the long-term and provide important social and economic benefits for our citizens.



On November 4th, there will be a "Focus Tea" for KDFN citizens with ties to the Marsh Lake area. It will be from 1-4 pm at Nàkwät'à Kù.

And on November 5th, there will be a visioning session at the Marsh Lake Community Centre (1-4 pm).

*To learn more about the visioning workshop and the planning process, contact Dave (633-7814 or [dsembsmoen@kwanlindun.com](mailto:dsembsmoen@kwanlindun.com)) or Les (668-7859 or [lwilson@kwanlindun.com](mailto:lwilson@kwanlindun.com)) at KDFN. Or check out the **Plan Marsh Lake** website: [www.planmarshlake.ca](http://www.planmarshlake.ca).*

## Ec Dev Youth Intern

This summer, Tayler Eryn Julia Vallevand Vance worked as a Youth Trainee Intern for KDFN Economic Development.

In the past Tayler had worked with Kwanlin Dün Youth Summer Camps. This summer she wanted to gain new skills and experience in an office environment.

And she did! As an intern with Economic Development, Tayler gained

the skills to assist with department's day-to-day operations, i.e. answering phones, gathering research information for proposed projects, assisting in developing

presentations for Chief and Council, coordinating materials for project teams.

During the summer, Tayler also assisted the department's Director in researching and preparation of on-going strategic economic development planning.

She attended all department meeting and became highly knowledgeable in KDFN Economic Development issues. Additionally, Tayler had the opportunity to gain interview skills as she sat on a hiring committee for KDFN.

Tayler who has returned for another year of high school, said she enjoyed her experience in working with her First Nations people. And we look forward to watching how her new skills and experience helps her with future employment!



# Message from Ray Sydney

## Councillor for Kwanlin Dün First Nation

In the past couple of years scientists have discovered tools and artifacts from our ancestors that have been dated to be over 10,000 years old. It was until the 1800's that First Nations in the Yukon lived and thrived as a hunter-gatherer culture.

As Mother Earth provided for our people, she was also harsh, and there were tough times for our people too. Yet, we controlled our own destiny, and were responsible for ourselves.

Yukon First Nations had one of history's longest surviving civilizations. Compared to the ancient Egyptians whose culture lasted 3,000 years, or the ancient Mayans at 2,000 years, or ancient Rome at a little over 1,000 years, our cultures lasted over 10,000 years. When First Contact occurred in the 1800's, the outsiders brought disease that killed what many believe to be half of our population.

Since the First Contact, things have not gone well for our people. Today, very few of our people speak our traditional languages, and many do not know our history or traditional ways. Government programs that were designed to help people, like social assistance, have instead made some people dependent on them.

Here in the Yukon we are seeing the potential for First Nations to become leaders in the region once again. Kwanlin Dün First Nation is the largest landowner in Whitehorse, and land has become scarce. Impressively, many of our government programs like health have evolved to a state where we can now get involved with helping others. As such, Kwanlin Dün First Nation is in a position to make our entire community in Whitehorse stronger.

It appears our time has come to become a stronger and more independent nation. Implementing our land claims gives our people opportunities that we never had before.

I look forward to working with our elders, our youth and our families to achieve our vision of becoming a self-sufficient nation.



# Growing Businesses & Jobs

On August 17th, Chief and Council hosted a community consultation meeting on economic development for KDFN and how to increase our “Own Source Revenue” (money we create from development and other initiatives).

This meeting was an opportunity for citizens to learn about where the Chief and Council are strategically headed in implementing the First Nation’s Self Government and Final Agreements in order to create more economic development. The new Chief and Council are focused on creating a fair and transparent government for their citizens.

As part of this strategy, Economic Development has been working closely with the Lands department to implement our land claims agreements. These efforts are creating jobs for KDFN citizens and new businesses. It is also leading to new directions for KDFN corporations.

For example, Canyon City Construction (which used to be called 42135 Yukon Inc.) is one of our businesses that is changing. After several years of strategically focusing on government contracts through Yukon Asset Construction Agreements (YACAs), Canyon City is now planning to focus more on developing residential housing in Whitehorse. If successful, they will be able to grow the company and create jobs for construction industry workers. The company’s target is to hire qualified Kwanlin Dün citizen first.

KDFN field crews, led by Steve Kocsis, have been busy preparing residential lots for Canyon City Construction. Steve’s crew has also worked on clearing KDFN’s quarry at McLean Lake.

This quarry may provide opportunities for employment in heavy equipment operating and gravel trucking. As KDFN has one of the last quarries in Whitehorse, and there is a lot of construction happening in the city, demand for the materials is high.



## 2011 a record year!

This year, the run of fish returning to spawn in Michie Creek was one of the largest ever recorded!

An August survey of the creek’s spawning site counted 297 spawners and 143 redds. Last year we counted just 2 spawners and 11 redds.

This year’s run also had a higher proportion of female fish than usual. This might be because the US changed their gillnet mesh size which allowed the larger fish, especially the females, to avoid being caught.

Over the last 10 years, KDFN crews have been making sure salmon have access to the prime spawning area at the outlet of Michie Lake. This summer, we broke up one beaver dam and a log jam just prior to the arrival of the salmon.

## Do you want help getting your Driver’s Licence?

The House of Learning can provide you information and support to get you started on the Graduated Driver’s Program.

Stop in at the House of Learning to pick up the Yukon Driver’s Basic Handbook to get started.

For more information contact Belinda Harrow at 633-8422 ext.7897 or [bharrow@kwanlindun.com](mailto:bharrow@kwanlindun.com)



# A place to call our own



George Scurvey (left) and Hank Henry (right) worked on landscaping at the Cultural Centre this summer.

And over the many years, there have been a number of shifts in our leadership and in the membership of the steering committee for the centre.

But one thing that has never changed is Kwanlin Dün First Nation's commitment to creating a space by the river for our community. And what a space we have created!

Planning for the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre first started 12 years ago. Since that time, there have been many discussions, consultations, ideas and designs developed for the Centre. Many of the design changes were aimed at ensuring we had a space reflective of our culture.

A number of years ago, there was also a delay in funding from other governments. At the time, it postponed construction of the centre and caused the cancellation of hiring and training initiatives.

The nearly finished Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre will be 40,000 square feet in size. It will include archives, two exhibit spaces, two traditionally inspired long houses, an artists' studio, a gift shop, two classrooms, an elders' lounge and a round, sacred gathering space. In the process of building this \$21 million building, we have provided many carpentry, finishing and landscaping jobs for Kwanlin Dün citizens.

Unlike so many large projects, our centre has been completed ahead of schedule and under-budget! This,

and the professionalism and hard work of our citizens, has attracted the attention of other building projects and contractors who are now looking to KDFN as a resource.

The Cultural Centre staff and Steering Committee are working with other departments and the Elders Council to provide exciting programming and cultural opportunities at the Centre. These programs will be geared toward re-establishing bonds to our traditions and cultures. We hope to engage youth by fusing traditional and contemporary art forms to create a memorable, engaging and positive experience for our community and other visitors.

*KDCC is looking for Kwanlin Dün citizens to sit on the Permanent Art Collection Committee as well as the Opening Ceremonies Committee. If you are interested contact Rae at 633-7881 or [rae.m@kwanlindun.com](mailto:rae.m@kwanlindun.com).*

*For information on the centre, visit [www.kwanlindunculturalcentre.com](http://www.kwanlindunculturalcentre.com)*

## Building a Path to Wellness

In September, KDFN held a men's land-based healing camp at Jackson Lake.

The three-week program included a knife-making workshop (see photo) and a range of other activities. Land-based, cultural and ceremonial activities are a central focus of healing programs at Jackson Lake. The day after the men finished their knives, they went on a hunting trip.

The men also spent much time exploring how they can live healthier, more connected and resilient lives.





## Who I am, Where I am from

This summer, KDFN hosted a youth camp at Jackson Lake. Nine participants, ranging from 14-19 years old, had a full five days as part of the “Who I am, Where I am from” camp.

The youth learned how to set net at Fish Lake and how to clean and prepare the fish they caught. They went canoeing on Jackson Lake and did arts and crafts. They learned about traditional medicines and tried a few martial arts moves too.

In addition to learning some Dene Games, the camp involved tons of fun games. KDFN staff also presented a workshop on healthy relationships and one called “Who I am, Where I am from”. And there was a prayer circle to understand their First Nation culture and history.

### Leadership

Two KDFN youth participated in a leadership workshop hosted by BYTE (Bringing Youth Towards Equality) and the Native Ambassador Post-Secondary Initiative from the University of Calgary while the camp was going on. These youth spent four days at the college, learning about leadership. When they finished, they received a certificate from the University of Calgary. The two joined the rest of the youth Jackson Lake on the last day of the camp to share the skills they gained over the week about developing a vision for the youth of Kwanlin Dün.

KDFN’s Youth Council would like more youth involvement to develop a strong vision and promote a healthy future for all Kwanlin Dun citizens.

## Interim agreement on Child Welfare

Since last October, when Chief and Council banned the Government of Yukon social workers from coming onto our lands to respond to child welfare issues, KDFN staff have been working hard on developing a more collaborative model of care.

From January to August, KDFN and the Yukon Government worked to negotiate a new relationship that would address Kwanlin Dün child welfare needs under the Yukon’s current Child & Family Services Act.

As a result of the negotiations Kwanlin Dün and the Yukon government agreed to establish a joint liaison committee to oversee the delivery of child welfare services to Kwanlin Dün children, families and residents on Kwanlin Dün lands.

The Liaison Committee’s work is to be guided by an Interim Measures Agreement (IMA). This important agreement will outline the principles, values, administrative structure and process for resolving

issues related to Yukon government social workers’ activities with Kwanlin Dün cases.

The proposed IMA is almost complete; a draft is being reviewed by legal counsel and the details will be finalized shortly. It is likely the document will be tabled at KDFN’s upcoming General Assembly.

*If you have any questions about the IMA or child welfare issues, please contact Jeanie Dendys at 633-7851 or [jdendys@kwanlindun.com](mailto:jdendys@kwanlindun.com).*



## Making health & safety part of their work

In the coming months, Kwanlin Dün First Nation will be implementing a new workplace safety program (one of the first First Nations in Canada to do so).

However, we would like to congratulate workers who have already shown dedication to making occupational health and safety part of their daily work. These employees have been wearing all of the proper safety equipment, filling out daily equipment and work site inspection forms, and thinking and working safely.



The photo on the left shows a crew from Economic Development: David Taylor, Steve Kocsis, Darrell Charlie, Brian MacIntosh, Brad Bill, Brian Smith (missing: Sean Dawson). This crew has been working on clearing various KDFN residential lots and the gravel pit by McLean Lake.

The photo above shows the Community Services crew, Charles Chief, Kevin Smith, and Gabriel Smarch Jr. They have been working on Lot 226.

*Excellent work everyone! Keep it up!*

## New weekly nurses clinic opens downtown

In August, a weekly nurses clinic started operating out of the Salvation Army administration building on Black Street.

The clinic is a partnership between Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Yukon Health & Social Services (H&SS) and the Salvation Army. A nurse from Kwanlin Dün and one from H&SS provide nursing services to the clients.

As Maureen Crill, a Home and Community Care nurse at KDFN's Health Centre said, "The new clinic is about taking health care to where the clients are instead of taking the clients to the health care!"

Previously, nurses from the Health Centre would frequently go downtown to take clients who had

no transportation, or who had other difficulties figuring out the medical system, to various medical appointments.


Now people can come to the Salvation Army on Wednesdays from 11-3 to get their immunizations, wound and foot care, pregnancy tests, education and support for harm reduction, testing for some sexually transmitted infections and other general care (the clinic does not dispense medications).

The new clinic is "client-driven" which means that the nurses who run the clinic are looking for suggestions and requests from people about the clinic and its services.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Kwanlin Dün First Nation**

[www.kwanlindun.com](http://www.kwanlindun.com)

 Find us on Facebook!

Phone: 867-633-7800

Fax: 876-668-5057

[reception@kwanlindun.com](mailto:reception@kwanlindun.com)

35 McIntyre Drive

Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada

Y1A 5A5

