

# FROM THE HEART TO THE STAGE



**From the Heart members partner with Sláva Doval's Dance Fusion, seen here at the Capitol Theatre preparing for a performance.**

**From the Heart Kootenays has been bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth together with Knowledge Keepers, artists and community members to learn and create since 2019.**

**Article by Chloe Tesoriere of Castlegar, age 17.**

**H**ave you ever tried to create something and perform it for the first time in a week? If the answer is no, you absolutely must. It's almost like watching the behind the scenes cuts of a movie, but the timings sped up, the voices jumbled and the movement all splotchy and erratic. Any careful observer could notice the trust, effort and authenticity it takes from each person to come together in such a vulnerable, connective way. And that exact phenomenon of community and connection is what Ms. Mann created with this project.

In September, From the Heart began its fall mission, 'From the Heart to the Roots.' A mission with the goal to reconnect with the earth, the land, the plants and one another. And exploring these ideas through movement, creative expression and connective collaboration with one another. The collective visited clear-cut sites, participated in plant teachings, and created a collaborative performance with Alyssa Amarshi and Orin T. McRey of Her Tribal Roots. Orin and Alyssa hosted inclusive student-led movement workshops with several local secondary schools. These workshops focused on shedding personal expectations and giving the youth space for healing through voice, movement and expression.

*"The healing and joy these creative expressions were creating was spreading with great strength through the community."*

With the final goal being the aforementioned collaborative production at the Capitol Theatre, to bring the youth and community together in movement and healing. We worked closely together for many hours, and with Sláva Doval (Dance Fusion) and her incredibly inspired dancers preparing choreography and making connections. Within a matter of three short days we had a performance prepared.

The idea of placing yourself so vulnerably on stage, with so little practice is terrifying, but the strength and

understanding of all my new peers and community members made it easy. And I saw this occurring with so many others on stage and even in the audience. When we are standing together authentically, we find new strength and new limits. The effects and understanding of experiences are so dependent on the way we connect with them, and there is a huge significance in presence and perspective. With the efforts of everyone collaborating, I had the opportunity to really understand this.

And for those who haven't heard of it, the From the Heart (FTH) program is a youth-led collective working towards truth and reconciliation with First Nations cultures and disadvantaged youth. The FTH program has been working over the last few years to bring cultural awareness, collaborations and identities to our surrounding small communities. This ever-growing collective began in a small room in Mount Sentinel, with teacher Ms. Mann and a courageous student creating a safe space for young voices and expression alike.

Students of all different backgrounds and identities began stepping forward with ideas for change and for the collective. Ms. Mann has led youth through many teachings about themselves and the land, and gave space for curiosity and growth in both. As From the Hearts' presence grew in our school, it also began to grow in the community. Of course this is not without adversity, and expected pushback. But determination throughout the community has always prevailed. If anything these challenges have proved how vital these kinds of community engagements are, and have brought new inspirations to From the Heart.

With each new round, From the Heart began putting on large scale productions, ranging from plays to documentaries, all youth led projects supported by like minded individuals and the community. The effects and passion of these projects rippled through our area and many nearby neigh-

borhoods rapidly. The healing and joy these creative expressions were creating was spreading with great strength throughout the community. And it's this healing and joy that kept FTH so active through the pandemic, and through the cultural injustices and systemic problems being highlighted in our world. From the Heart has put large efforts in maintaining a space for expression, and voice in a time so devoid of these kinds of spaces. And for that I, and so many others I'm sure, are grateful.

*"When we come together as a community to hold the weight of our struggles, they get lighter."*

I was very lucky to have the experience of getting to collaborate with From the Heart in the last installment of this mission, and to have learned that what matters is not the population of your community or the strength of the individuals on their own, it's the trust and understanding you have with one another. Purpose brings people together. And when we come together as a community to hold the weight of our struggles, they get lighter. The From the Heart program is a purpose that I really hope continues to bring youth together for many years to come. There's really no better way to come together, than as ourselves.

*My name is Chloe Tesoriere, I was born in Nelson, BC, and have lived in the area since. Im 17 years old, and regularly embarking on new adventures in activism, creative expression, and getting outdoors. I hope to continue to push myself in these areas through this new year.*



# HIGH SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Students from *Literary Studies 11*, *Stanley Humphries Secondary School, Castlegar*, share holiday traditions



Students showcasing their dance skills to YMCA.

## SHSS's Annual Winter Formal Dance

Written and photographed by Anastasia Salekin, Grade 11

"Winter formal was a success!" - SHSS student

Stanley Humphries Winter formal was an unanticipated hit. The dance set new expectations for upcoming school events. It is officially taking students out of 2022 with a bang and is taking us into 2023 with new ideas and inspirations for the upcoming year and the following semester.

It is obvious that teens missed out on important activities and events that shape one's youth. This dance showed that we are capable of bringing back that spark of school spirit and excitement.

Not only was this a way for the school to connect, but we also raised money for two great causes. The senior boys and girls rugby teams raised money for their upcoming tournaments, and the Student Council raised money for the upcoming "Coldest Night of the Year" event in February 2023.

I am so proud of the Student Council for this event. I'm looking forward to more fun in 2023!



## SHSS's Annual Christmas Breakfast by Alyssa Jenner by Alyssa Jenner, Grade 11

Breakfast here at SHSS is a highlight of our Christmas traditions. It brings the school together and is a fun activity for the teachers and staff to fill our tummies. The Christmas breakfast has been running here at SHSS for nine years. Without our staff, this breakfast wouldn't be possible. The staff works the day before to prepare the food, to be ready to be cooked the morning of.

Not only do the teachers prepare fantastic food for us, but they also decorate our activity room. Doing this makes it feel like you aren't even at school. The food gets served in the cafeteria, and then we transfer to the activity room with most of our school.

Music is on, lights are shining, hot chocolate is served, and most of all, we all have bright smiles

on our faces. It also lands on our annual 'Pajama Day' tradition to make things feel even more fun. Therefore, it makes us students feel like our school is home. As well, blocks are shortened. We do this to spend quality time together rather than rushing to our classes.

Not only do our staff and students participate in this, but we also invite people from our school board office. Doing this gives them a better look at how great our school spirit is and brings them closer to all of us. This breakfast gets funded by PAC, which we are very grateful and fortunate to have. In conclusion, our SHSS school breakfast is something that I will remember for a very long time and many would agree. Thank you to our exceptionally loving and caring staff at SHSS!



Students preparing the annual Christmas breakfast.

## Spirit Week at SHSS by Adam Menzies, Grade 11

Spirit Week at SHSS is usually an eventful week. Our Student Council comes up with a different theme for every day of the last week of school before winter break with an assembly on the last day with games and prizes.

Monday, the first day of Spirit Week this year, is 'Anything but a Backpack Day'. I'm excited to see what kinds of things are used as backpacks this year.

Day two of Spirit Week is 'Dress as a Colour Day' which has never been done at SHSS since I've been here. Students get to pick a colour and dress up in only that colour. They can match with friends or do it solo. Tuesday also consists of judging the door decorating competition. SH students decorate class doors the week before Spirit Week.

Wednesday is the traditional 'Tacky Holiday Sweater Day' where kids will wear ugly Christ-

mas sweaters. Students can post a picture in their ugly Christmas sweaters onto their Instagram stories and tag SHSS for a shout-out.

Thursday the last day of spirit week is 'Pajama Day' where students can just wear pajamas and there is breakfast served before school for students who want it. Typically at SHSS, we would have an assembly on the last day but not this year. The assembly consists of team games. One game is where each group has two big skis and there are four people as a team. You have to work together to race the other groups lifting one ski at a time and making it across the gym floor.

Along with the skiing competition, SHSS also has a pie-eating competition in which students have their hands tied behind their backs and race to see who can eat the pie the fastest. These annual events always make students feel at home and gets everyone involved and excited for the holidays.

## Jamaican Holidays by Mariah Thompson, Grade 11

On Christmas Eve, there is an annual event called Grand Market in towns and communities. Grand Market runs from Christmas Eve to Christmas morning. Shoppers buy last-minute gifts and meet up with friends and family.

On Christmas Day, we don't usually give or receive gifts, nor do we have a Christmas tree. The most we did for decorations was get new sheets and curtains and put up pepper lights. Christmas dinner is usually when everyone gathers to celebrate with family and friends.

On Christmas morning, we have our national dish ackee and saltish with dumplings and boiled bananas. When it's time for dinner,

we have baked chicken, fried chicken, pork, oxtail, fried fish, and curry mutton with rice and peas. For a drink, we have our traditional sorrel wine and for dessert, our traditional Christmas fruit pudding cake also known as fruit cake. We either make it ourselves or buy it from local bakers.

Similar to Canada, Jamaica also has a Boxing Day. However, Jamaicans celebrate it in a different way. On Boxing Day, there is an annual event that is called the Junkanoo. It's a street parade in every town and street across the country. Men and women march while wearing costumes of various African origins. Whether it be clothing or jewelry, everyone would be wearing something significant. Typically, they dance to the beat of traditional

drums and instruments, and performers engage with audiences, particularly kids.

On New Year's Eve, we have an annual event at Waterfronts in Kingston. People come from near and far. It's where we go to watch fireworks when the clock strikes 12. People also go to church that night for praise and worship thanking God for another year. They always make a comment saying, "Mi want New Years' come ketch mi inna church" which translates to, "I want the new year to come when I am in church".

On New Years' or the day after is when we go out to enjoy ourselves. Either at a party or a family get-together. Jamaican culture is colourful and fun. It is something everyone should see or be a part of to truly experience the beauty of our events. Now living in Canada, we are sure to enjoy some other traditions.



# COMMUNITY CATS: INVERMERE'S PET NETWORK

Article written by Landon Dales, age 17

There are currently 16 cats in the house and seven in foster care at the Invermere Companion Animal Network. As I walk in four volunteers are hard at work feeding cats, cleaning bowls and litter boxes, and talking on the phone to potential adopters. I'm greeted with a warm welcome from the volunteers and the cats. I meet Chevy, an orange cat that just had \$1000 raised for him by the community to receive vital tests at the vet. Along with this, there are kittens coming up to lick my hand and some older cats purring, looking out the window while lying on their cat trees.

Started in 2007 by Lana Banham, this cat shelter is unlike any other. Volunteers Katherine and Darla want people to know that ICAN is a cage-free, kill-free shelter. The cats roam free throughout the house that used to be lived in by Lana but soon was taken over by the cats. ICAN works closely with other local rescues such as GALS and Meant 2b Loved. ICAN is held up by their 54 volunteers and 16 fosters, they greatly appreciate all the work they do to keep it up and running.

I discovered ICAN back in 2018 when I first moved to Invermere. We adopted our first cat Stitch, originally Clover, in June of 2019. Fast forward to last May we adopted Lexie, previously Ash. They were both only a couple of months old when they joined our families and the adoption process was an amazing experience with these dedicated volunteers.

Don, a more recent volunteer shared a very heartwarming story about his experience at ICAN. "My 16-year-old cat ended up having kidney disease, I came to ICAN for some support and ended up volunteering." Tears began welling in his eyes, as we anticipated the next part. "I had so much support and ended up meeting a cat that reminded me of my Tuffy. Frodo came home with me, he filled a hole in my heart." All the volunteers shared with me stories of the cats they've adopted from here and all the love they received from their



Lexie and Stitch: Landon's adopted cats. Photos submitted.



new furry family members.

Like any nonprofit organization, ICAN suffered during the pandemic. They relied on can and bottle donations from locals as well as generous cash donations. Many local businesses support ICAN like Bosleys, the pet store donating food and Lambert Kipp, the pharmacy donating needles. They rely on donations of material and time, always looking for new volunteers to care for these cats.

ICAN doesn't just care for cats, they've also rescued many dogs, reptiles, and rats but a lack of space makes that a less common occurrence. They hope to one day expand to be able to rescue and rehabilitate all kinds of animals, but a lack of money and support stop this dream. With an overabundance of cats, they have waived adoption expenses on seniors in hopes that they will be adopted by Christmas.

If you want to learn more about ICAN and all the incredible work they do, or are thinking of fostering or adopting, visit their website [icanbc.com](http://icanbc.com) or Facebook @ICANBC. Any donation or visit to their establishment is greatly appreciated.

*I live in Invermere BC, and I love volunteering in my community! My New Year's resolution is to spend more time in nature.*

## Naturalist's Niche Hazel Raine of Wynndel, Age 15



The moon has many aspects, wears many hats: it is the tide-puller, light in the darkness, shapeshifter, cyclical orbiter. It is more than just a cold, lonely rock drifting in the expanse of the universe. I'm inspired and drawn to this satellite planet – its natural artistry is simply breathtaking. Crescent, gibbous, balsamic, waxing, waning: I can't help but be captivated by all these phases of the moon. We all go through our own internal and external cycles, and the moon teaches us that where there is darkness, there is also light. It's okay to transform, to accept your own metamorphosis, to wax and wane and come out whole again.

*I'm Hazel, a fifteen-year old living in Wynndel, BC. I set intentions to manifest for the new year, and this year I'm focussing on getting my voice out there, being okay with being seen and heard, and standing in my truth.*

# JEREMY DUTCHER INTERVIEW

Concert review written by Ava Campbell-Wall, age 15



"We sat stunned to the core."

Exhilarating. Captivating. Heartfelt. If words could describe Indigenous performer Jeremy Dutcher's recent show in Nelson, these would be a few that hit the mark. I had been surprised with tickets a few days before, and as I settled into my seat in the Capitol Theatre, nothing could prepare me for the experience I was about to partake in. After land acknowledgments and a beautiful drum circle with local elders, we sat on the edges of our seats, already pulled deeply into the performance with Dutcher's band playing whimsical opening bars unlike anything I have ever heard.

Dutcher, who hails from the Tobique First Nation of New Brunswick, came on stage, and I immediately felt right at home - as I described to him after the show, his presence makes you feel as if you're sitting around a fireplace with friends and a warm mug of coffee. Comforting, familiar,

and yet threaded through with a sense of wonder at his artistry. He said a few words of welcome, talking to the audience as if we were his closest friends.

A performance with Dutcher doesn't feel like a performance. It feels like he's welcoming you into his music, threading modern instruments together with the vocals of his ancestors, preserving and sharing music that may otherwise have been lost. We sat stunned to the core as he began to sing, his pure tenor vocals and the drums, guitar, and trumpet of his band weaving together into something truly beautiful. I will neither confirm nor deny the suspicion of nearby audience members that I shed a few tears.

"The show is one long rollercoaster of music."

Dutcher's debut album, *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa*, which uses wax recordings of traditional Maliseet songs from the Canadian Museum of History, was awarded the 2018 Polaris Music Prize and the Juno Award for Indigenous Music Album of the Year in 2019. The album is sung entirely in Wolastoq, a language with fewer than 100 fluent speakers. He performs a number of these songs, interspersed with never-before heard creations and covers of familiar

Buffy Sainte-Marie tunes. Each song blends smoothly into the next, as if the show is one long rollercoaster of music.

The mood shifts from jovial to grieving, and we remain on the edge of our seats until it ends, spellbound. His music fills the space, ballooning out into the audience and into our hearts. Lingering in the theatre long after the performance has ended, the feeling of awe and warmth does not leave me. Dutcher comes out to speak to a small child who had given him a piece of art, thrilled at the gesture.

I got a chance to speak with him in an exclusive interview, and just like he had been onstage, I immediately felt at home with his easy demeanour and warm laugh. He told me he'd like to "thank Nelson... [the band and I] just got off stage, and felt an immense amount of love, and also a lightness and fun to this. People were shouting out, it was just an energy exchange. Honestly, through the pandemic, not being able to do shows... This is what I miss." He goes on to laugh, saying, "My houseplants, they don't sing back."

I felt these words really resonate with me as we continued to talk about growing up in the theatre, about sharing music together, about queerness and performing arts. "I'm gonna come back for sure," he said as we exchanged goodbyes. "Me and Buffy Sainte-Marie, we gotta hit the stage sometime." Nelson will be awaiting his return eagerly.





**Art by Valentine Paradine**

I am a 15 year old artist who lives in Nelson, B.C. and is interested in Indigenous studies, art, and skateboarding. On occasion, I'll set New Year's resolutions, but they'll always be stuff I'm already working on/towards.

**Decisions, Decisions...**

**by Wayland Dicks of Nelson, Age 14**

The City of Nelson is updating its highway welcome sign. Which one should be the new city motto?

- Come for the pot stay for the weed
- So snobby our panhandlers have e-transfer
- More restaurants per capita than New York
- More people without shoes inside restaurants than New York
- Like Disney we haven't been good since cars came out

Wayland's official New Year's resolution is to cut back on the Benadryl.

**STREET TALK**

KTN correspondent Ashleigh Germaine of Nelson, age 14, asked students at Trafalgar Middle School: What is your New Year's resolution for 2023?



"My 2023 New Year's resolution is to be more spontaneous and go on more adventures."

~Avery, 14



"My New Year's resolution is to work out 100% every day."

~Jaden, 14



"My New Year's resolution for 2023 is to get better at my school work."

~Preston, 13

Ashleigh's New Year's resolution is to be more adventerous and try new things.

**BLACK OUT POETRY**

The youth from a recent Blackout Poetry Workshop at Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson, BC share their creations. The red and yellow poem was created by Morgan P. The rest are anonymous.



Mysterious harmonies in spirit.



Everybody has bodies, plays in a creative way, and our society helps us.



Shapes loop in tones, trying something wondrous, but wreaking havoc.



Distant roots, first loss, yearning.

**KTN NEEDS YOU!**

We are looking for stories! Something happening in your community that we should know about? Contact Editor Melodie Rae at kootenayteennews@gmail.com. And we are always looking for teen journalists, photojournalists, and reviewers. Interested, but never done it before? Don't worry! We can teach you!

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