

May 17, 2023

## Greater Victoria School District hosts Indigenous Storytelling and Film Festival

**VICTORIA, BC** – Indigenous storytelling and film takes centre stage at the Greater Victoria School District’s all-staff professional development day on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

The second annual Indigenous Storytelling & Film Festival features 20 events at 11 locations, including Indigenous films, authors, storytellers, land-based learning, and other offerings that highlight Indigenous peoples’ stories, culture, and worldviews.

All events present opportunities for staff to learn more about Indigenous perspectives while developing a greater understanding of how to engage with the [Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action](#). Moderated discussions will happen before and after each event, led by Indigenous guest presenters alongside District staff for areas that spark learning.

“We were so inspired by the number of participants and the positive feedback that we received last year when we offered our first ever Indigenous Film Festival, that we knew we had to build on that success and expand the event to include a range of storytelling art forms,” said Director of Indigenous Education Dr. Shelly Niemi. “Over 1,250 employees have registered for the festival, which speaks to the ongoing commitment in our District to recognize the importance and value of Indigenous knowledge and how it must be woven into the fabric of the public education system. We are co-presenting some of this year’s events with community and we are sharing resources that will provide a wonderful range of experiences. We will also include senior Indigenous students who will act as ushers and supports at various venues.”

The festival’s feature film presentation will be *The Mind of a Child*, followed by a guest presentation by Dr. Lorna Wanosts’a7 Williams, Professor Emerita of Indigenous Education, Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Victoria and Canada Research Chair in Education and Linguistics, and the film’s director/producer Gary Marcuse.

Other featured festival guests include Métis Fiddler Tristen Durocher, Haida Storyteller Kung Jaadee, Educator Carolyn Roberts, Artist Tejas Collison, and authors Samantha Beynon and Peggy Janicki. Venues for the day include four school-based theatres, Camosun College’s Gibson Auditorium, land-based learning at PKOLS and SNIDŽEŁ (Tod Inlet, Gowlland-Tod Provincial Park), the Esquimalt Bighouse, the Pacific Opera’s Baumann Centre, and the Gorge Pavilion.

“The Indigenous Film and Storytelling Festival is a creative way to provide our staff with the opportunity to develop a deeper appreciation and awareness of Indigenous stories and will serve to enhance Indigenous knowledge and well-being in schools,” said District Superintendent Deb Whitten. “As a school district, we are committed to finding ways to better understand how to engage with the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. I have great appreciation for the collaborative partnerships and work that has gone into coordinating this day for our entire learning community.”

Planning for the festival's events was undertaken by the District Professional Development Planning Committee, which includes members of the Greater Victoria School District's Indigenous Education Department and Leadership Team, the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE 947).

## Learn More:

### SPECIAL GUESTS

Author Samantha Beynon: <https://www.strongnations.com/gs/show.php?gs=3&gsd=9116>

Métis Fiddler/Knowledge Keeper Tristen Durocher: <https://indspire.ca/laureate/tristen-durocher/>

Haida Storyteller Kung Jaadee (Roberta Kennedy): <https://www.pebblestarartists.com/kung-jaadee>

Author Peggy Janicki: <https://www.peggyjanicki.ca/>

PEPÁKĚN HÁUTW land-based learning: <https://pepakenhautw.com/learning-on-the-land/>

Director Gary Marcuse: <https://pulitzercenter.org/people/gary-marcuse>

Artist Carey Newman: <https://witnessblanket.ca/carey-newman>

Educator Carolyn Roberts: <https://www.carolynroberts.net/>

Dr. Lorna Wanosts'a7 Williams: <https://indspire.ca/laureate/dr-lorna-wanostsa7-williams/>

### FILMS

**Feature Film:** *The Mind of a Child*: [https://www.nfb.ca/film/mind\\_of\\_a\\_child/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/mind_of_a_child/)

*Beans*: <https://www.emafilms.com/en/film/beans/>

*First Daughter and the Black Snake*: <https://www.blacksnakefilm.com/>

*The Making of the Witness Blanket*: <https://humanrights.ca/story/picking-pieces-making-witness-blanket>

*Pour toi Flora* (series): <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/tele/pour-toi-flora/site>

*The Raising of the Oaklands School Pole*: <https://www.sookenewsmirror.com/community/collaborative-totem-project-unveiled-at-victorias-oaklands-elementary/>

*The Road Forward*: [https://www.nfb.ca/film/road\\_forward/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/road_forward/)

Lekwungen: Place to Smoke Herring: <https://vimeo.com/275788251>

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### For more information contact:

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