

NORTH

NORTHERN FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY NEWS | JANUARY 2023



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NORTHERN REGION
First Nations Health Authority

STORIES FROM THE LAND

“THE NORTHERN RESPONSE” FILM PREMIÈRE TURNS PG INTO HOLLYWOOD NORTH FOR ONE SPECIAL NIGHT

WHAT A NIGHT TO REMEMBER! With the aurora borealis lights dancing outside the Prince George Playhouse, guests arrived on the blue carpet primed for the show.

The première of “The Northern Response” attracted stars from the movie, healthcare celebs (yes, Bonnie Henry showed up; no, she wasn’t wearing Fluvogs), family, friends and FNHA staff.

Prior to the screening guests sipped sparkling juices from elegant flutes, and grinned widely as photographer Giles Palmer captured the moment. Waiters circulated offering hors d’oeuvres, under the glow of tiny white bulbs twinkling on birch trees.

With a flick of the foyer lights, the crowd made their way into the theatre. Darlene McIntosh, Lheidli T’enneh Elder, welcomed everyone: “Hadi!” and opened with a prayer.

John (a.k.a. Johnnie Armani) Moody, the film’s co-producer, hosted.

A hush fell over the audience as the house lights went down and the film began.

“The Northern Response” chronicles the COVID-19 pandemic in northern BC and how people were affected. From the pandemic’s beginning in China through the early days of lockdown, and onto the arrival of the vaccine, community leaders, family members, partners and FNHA staff shared their memories. The film combines light moments about bartering toilet paper and hosting fishing derbies, with the sad realities of grief and loss.



Lheidli T’enneh Elder, Darlene McIntosh, welcomed guests.
See more photos of the gala on page 7.

Danny Cox, director of photography, captured stunning vistas of the North, while director, Rio Mitchell coaxed stories—both funny and heartbreaking—from people she interviewed. Chris Hsiung, the film’s talented editor, joined Rio onstage after the screening to answer audience questions.

“What came first, the chicken or the egg?” gave everyone a good chuckle.

The panel provided insight into how the film was made and shared their own feelings about the experience.

Julie Morrison and Jessica Mikolayczyk, whose energy and passion gave birth to the project, welcomed our guests and staff.

Swag bags were handed out to everyone as they re-entered the foyer, and the after party carried on till the wee hours (not really, but isn’t that what’s supposed to happen?)

To view the film online, google: YouTube FNHA “The Northern Response” or [click here](#).

Download a digital copy of NORTH:
<https://fnha.bmeurl.co/EF5EA74>

SHARING STRENGTHS

TSAY KEH DENE CHILDREN NARROWLY ESCAPE THEIR BURNING HOME

THREE CHILDREN AND A DOG ESCAPED A FIRE THAT BLAZED THROUGH THEIR HOME in Tsay Keh Dene thanks to quick thinking by teenage Serenity Pierre, and her brother Skyler's ability to squeeze through a door blocked by packed snow.

Community members got there as fast as possible but were unable to save the building. Several responders were evacuated to Prince George suffering from smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide poisoning. There was no fire-fighting equipment available and the only prepared responder was trained in the 1980s.

Still groggy with sleep, 17-year-old Skyler went back into the house to fetch Princess, their German shepherd, while his sister took care of the newborn baby, Vienna. He soon realized his

mistake when flames prevented him from coming back out the front door but thankfully he was able to open the side door just enough to get them out. The door was packed with snow from the outside.

"I just thought about saving her. I didn't think. There was quite a bit of smoke and flames," said Skyler. "Don't run back in is my advice, it burned pretty quickly. Luckily I am slender."

The family are all healthy and staying with grandma while they find a new home.

The experience has shaken them and highlighted the vulnerability of a community that can only be reached by a logging road or air. With no cellular service,

communications are possible by landline and VHF radio or the most popular, Facebook Messenger. Princess is so traumatized that she isn't even running away any more, instead refusing to even leave the yard.

Trained responders and the appropriate equipment would probably have saved the house from major damage. Instead the family lost everything, including Skyler's prized Lego collection as well as all their clothes.

It's obvious to all that two teenagers and a bucket of water won't get the job done. But it could have been a lot worse without their quick thinking.

The fire did, however, highlight the increasing coordination between multiple agencies in responding to emergencies in communities. The First Nations Emergency Management Partnership table has a "no door is the wrong door" policy. That meant when it reached out to its health partners it quickly got support from the First Nations Emergency Services Society, which is working to upgrade its equipment and training.



Skyler and Serenity Pierre in front of what is left of their home. Responders were not equipped to save it.

HAVE WE GOT A JOB FOR YOU!



You work with communities to bring to life their land based healing projects

- ✓ **POSITION:** Project Manager, Land Based Healing
- ✓ **LOCATION:** Prince George BC
- Directs and manages land based healing projects from start to finish, working with communities and partners

ARE YOU THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO LOVES TO WORK ON A PROJECT FROM START TO FINISH? And weave together all the threads to help create something useful? In this role you will spread the word to communities about funding for projects that focus on the healing properties of the land. Then you'll support them to plan their initiatives and provide resources to help them achieve their goals. Sometimes that will mean coaching or mentoring, and it will always involve cheering people on over hurdles. Mixed in with the people contact and being part of important cultural initiatives is the administrative side of project management: planning, monitoring and documentation, including post-project evaluations and reports. Does this sound like a mix you'd like to work on? If so, check out our [Regional Land-Based Healing Project Manager job](#) today!

FNHA JOB OPENINGS IN THE NORTH (click for more info)

[Aboriginal Head Start Advisor](#)

[Advisor, Crisis & Emergency Response](#)

[Clinical Counsellor, Mental Health & Wellness](#)

[Community Engagement Coordinators:](#)

- [Northern Region](#)
- [Prince George](#)
- [Terrace](#)

[Community Relations Representative](#)

[Crisis Response Community Coordinator \(2\)](#)

[Environmental Health Officer \(2\)](#)

[Indigenous Educator, Harm Reduction](#)

[Program Coordinator, Traditional Wellness](#)

[Project Manager Land Based Healing](#)

[Regional Addictions Specialist](#)

[Regional Planner](#)

[Senior Administrative Coordinator](#)

[Specialist, Health Informatics Support](#)

[Traditional Wellness Coordinator](#)

[Wellness Systems Quality Care Coordinator](#)

[eHealth Trainer](#)

NURSING

[Community Health Nurse, Health Centres \(casual\)](#)

[Community Health Nurse, Nursing Station:](#)

- [Gitga'at](#)
- [Kitkatla](#)
- [Lax Kwalaams](#)
- [Tsay Keh Dene](#)

[Community Health Nurse, Resource Team](#)

[Nurse Advisor, Harm Reduction & Substance Use \(Tobacco and Cannabis\)](#)

[Nurse in Charge, Telegraph Creek](#)

[Nurse in Charge, Remote, Tsay Keh Dene](#)

[Remote Certified Community Health Nurse, Nursing Stations \(casual\)](#)

**Check out all our jobs at
fnha.ca/careers**

BONFIRE CHAT

WITH JULIE MORRISON, VICE PRESIDENT REGIONAL OPERATIONS



OUR TEAM BROUGHT THE HEAT TO THE PRE-CHRISTMAS COLD SNAP IN PRINCE GEORGE, dropping everything to protect those in precarious housing from polar conditions.

As temperatures dropped to -40°C the team provided everything from warm coats to a fire extinguisher for those huddling close to makeshift fires.

bags, sleeping bags and snow pants. And one person asked our team to tell their grandmother they were safe.

Sixty-one emergency bags consisting of hand warmer packs, socks, toques, underwear, long sleeved shirts, water, and snacks went out.

I am terribly proud of our team and its dedication to service.

“WE NEED TO ACCELERATE OUR PLANS TO PROVIDE MORE TO SUPPORT OUR URBAN AND AWAY FROM HOME POPULATION...”

The majority of those we met both in the downtown core and at Moccasin Flats were from surrounding First Nations communities.

The team, led by Regina Carlson and Brandon Prince, procured many of the essential necessities for this vulnerable population including sharps containers to help substance users stay safe. Other items in demand included toilet paper, garbage

We also learned we need to accelerate our plans to provide more to support our urban and away from home population, as well as convince our partners in government to do the same for all who need it.

Email SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca
to sign up for our eZine

FYI

FIRST NATIONS DRINKING WATER COMPENSATION

If you lived on a First Nation that had a long-term drinking water advisory for more than a year, you may be eligible for compensation. This is an \$8-billion settlement that includes compensation and commitments to fund construction, operation and maintenance needed to provide regular access to safe drinking water. Find out more at: <https://firstnationsdrinkingwater.ca/>



FUNDING

First Nations Harm Reduction Grant up to \$50,000

This year's grant application for harm reduction programs, services and initiatives is here. To be eligible, the event or initiative must be held before March 31, 2024. Applications can be submitted via email to hrgrants@fnha.ca no later than Feb. 17, 2023. Support is available to fill this out. More info: <https://www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/2023-first-nations-harm-reduction-grants-are-now-open>

Community Wellness Awards up to \$8000

The Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee, Northern Health and the First Nations Health Authority are offering Wellness Awards up to \$8,000 to support projects aimed at improving the health and well-being of Indigenous communities (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis). Send in your proposal by Feb. 20, 2023. Need more info or an application form? Contact Indigenous.Health@northernhealth.ca.

On the cover

Two women who guided us calmly and clearly through the COVID pandemic were honoured for their work. Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, and Dr. Shannon McDonald, recently retired Chief Medical Officer, FNHA.

Photo by Giles Palmer



Have a great picture for our cover or a story idea? Send to SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca

Dr. Shannon McDonald retires from the FNHA

On Jan. 6, 2023, the FNHA hosted a farewell gathering to celebrate the retirement of Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Shannon McDonald. During her speech, she shared these words of farewell for her FNHA family.

"Over the last seven-and-a-half years at the FNHA, I have met many wonderful people on this road – Elders for whom I have the deepest respect, colleagues who have become friends, First Nations community leaders and members who presented me with continual challenges to do better. I have witnessed and shared joy and despair, fear and laughter. I have had the opportunity to witness powerful cultural experiences shared in song, dance, and art. I have heard the languages spoken with pride. I have had amazing moments when people have experienced new ideas, new knowledge, and new understanding of how we as people can live, work and play together, and seen the beginnings of reconciliation in action."

Heartfelt thanks from all of us, Dr. Shannon!

THROUGH NORTHERN EYES

SEEN AT THE NORTHERN RESPONSE PREMIÈRE



HAVE A GREAT SNAPSHOT?
Send your photo to SubscribeNorth@fnha.ca

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO

FNHA Virtual Doctor of the Day
1-855-344-3800

First Nations Health Benefits
1-855-550-5454

**National Indian Residential
School Survivors Society**
1-800-721-0066

Kids Help Phone
1-800-668-6868
Text "connect" to: 686868

KUU-US Crisis Response
1-800-588-8717

Mental Health
(no area code needed)
310-6789

Health Link BC
811

BC Suicide Line
1-800-784-2433
<https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/get-help/>

Northern BC Crisis Line
1-888-562-1214

**Northern BC YOUTH
Crisis Line**
1-888-564-8336
Text: 250-564-8336