



The Power

of community



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The BCPVPA believes that student success is supported not only by school and district leaders, teachers, and peers. There is something else that is of great importance, both inside and outside of the classroom: their community.

For more than two decades, the BCPVPA's Partnership Awards have celebrated the people and organizations that dedicate their time and expertise to supporting BC students and schools. Any of our sixty Chapters can nominate a partner that has contributed to the school community. Over the years, recipients have included a company with a 'floating classroom' that teaches students about the sea, musicians dedicated to volunteering with students with special needs, a retired teacher who regularly travels to volunteer at a school, and a senior whose crafted birdhouse project engaged a whole community.

Denisiqi Services Society: Keeping Indigenous Culture Alive

Denisiqi Services Society aims to provide a safe, caring, and loving environment for children, supporting their development within their own homes wherever possible. Their services support students across schools including Alexis Creek, Columneetza, Tatla Lake, Naghtanequed (Xeni Gwet'in), and Anahim Lake. As part of their Mental Health program, they offer counselling and other mental health supports where they work directly with children. Helen Wight, Principal of Alexis Creek School, notes that, "Their clinicians are caring and professional. Our students have built many positive relationships with Denisiqi's clinicians and look forward to their sessions." They work with students who are struggling with addiction, social, or family challenges, and Principal Bonnie Sauder from Anahim Lake stresses that, "They have a remarkable ability to connect with students who are difficult to reach by others."

Kimberley Ikebuchi, Principal of Tatla Lake Elementary and Junior Secondary School, says, "At our school, they have played a pivotal role in enhancing Indigenous cultural learning by teaching students about the medicine wheel, leading smudging ceremonies, and conducting drum-making workshops." Kimberley adds that "Their work contributes directly to the academic success and personal growth of students by cultivating a sense of pride and belonging in their cultural heritage, while also equipping them with essential life skills."



Left to Right: Board Director Charity Peal (SD92); 2024 Award recipient Linda Bingham, Outreach Manager of Denisiqi Services Society; Yvonne Davis, Vice-Principal (SD27); and BCPVPA President, Dr. Shannon Behan (SD47)



School District 87 Award recipient, Ryan Wank



School District 47 Award recipients
Melanie Jordan and Sue Cecconi,
Friends of qathet



Board Director Sid Jawanda (SD57)
and School District 57 Award recipient
Selen Alpay

At the November 2024 Partnership Awards, we recognized five recipients doing important work across BC: the Denisiqi Services Society in School District 27; Friends of qathet in School District 47; the Laichwiltach Family Life Society in School District 72; Selen Alpay in School District 57; and Ryan Wank in School District 87.

The Denisiqi Services Society in School District No. 27 plays a very important role in the Cariboo-Chilcotin School District. It is a community-based organization that focuses on delivering culturally appropriate child and family programs to First Nations communities, including the ʔEsdilagh, Xeni Gwet'in, Tsideldel, Yunesit'in, Tl'esqox, and Ulkatchot'en communities. Their offerings are vast, including a Mental Health program for Aboriginal children and youth, the development of Tsilhqot'in curriculum and programming, and guardianship services in specific cases.

Friends of qathet in School District 47 quietly and carefully supports students in the community, addressing student needs in many different ways that include paying for extracurricular activities, food, clothes, bus passes, swim lessons, and summer program fees. Friends of qathet also provides

"Our hope is that from our program, others will create programs they feel passionate about to help others in need."

*Sue Cecconi and Melanie Jordan
Friends of qathet*

resources and support for families in need, aiming to help students have a stable home environment that is conducive to learning.

Laichwiltach Family Life Society in School District 72 received the 2024 award because of their support for First Nations' families and students in areas that include students' social and emotional wellbeing, culture, counselling, and addiction and recovery support. Counsellors from this organization regularly provide support to students at different schools. The main goal of the organization is to support children's goals and development.

BC school communities value the work of different organizations, but they equally value specific individuals who support them. Selen Alpay lives

***"This award celebrates
the efforts made in
supporting Indigenous
families and communities
in School District 72."***

*Audrey Wilson
Laichwiltach Family Life Society*

in Prince George in School District 57, and has donated to his community for many years, impacting thousands of students and their families. His donations are often to support students in pursuing sports, and he has provided education bursaries for students competing in the 2022 BC Summer Games, and bought hockey and basketball equipment for school students. He has also donated to the School District 57 Indigenous Education Department.

Ryan Wank lives in the small community of Dease Lake in School District 87, and runs the grocery store Dease Lake Super A Foods. He received the award due to his support for schools through donations of large amounts of groceries to support school lunch programs and other events. He has also prepared meals for students, and his grocery store offers students the opportunity to get work experience under his mentorship, with caring accommodation for students with special needs.

Every community needs supportive leaders and organizations to thrive. If your Chapter has an individual, organization, or business that you would like to recognize for their support of your students and community, nominate them for a 2025 BCPVPA Partnership Awards. Nominations will open in August.

Visit: bit.ly/BCP_Partnership



Left to Right: Board Director Bryn Williams (SD43); 2024 Award recipient Audrey Wilson, Executive Director of Laichwiltach Family Life Society; and BCPVPA President, Dr. Shannon Behan (SD47)