



## A Season of Renewal.....

*As I've journeyed with hundreds of First Peoples over the last 28 years, I've realized that my understanding of Canada's history and the experience of Indigenous people on this land was not accurate. John Johnstone, Inner Hope's Cultural Mentor, shares an important perspective below. I encourage you to open your heart and mind to his wisdom and experience.*

*-Jenny Shantz, Executive Director*

When I think about springtime, and renewal, the first thing that comes to my mind is our "ruts". We get so entrenched in our ways, we do the same things over and over again. As the Church in Canada, we've tried to do the same things the same ways for 450 years, since colonization. I ask the churches: how many First Nations people do we have in our congregations? You can tell a lot about a tree by the fruit it produces, and right now that fruit is close to nothing. Something needs to change. We need to make room for new growth.

The Indigenous people up north, in the Gitxsan area, have been arguing with the government about cultural burns. They have a long history of doing these controlled burns. But this burning freaks people out—the government and the logging companies see it as a loss of profit. As the Indigenous people see it, the forest is overgrown; the upper canopy doesn't let through sunlight. There's no lower vegetation, no animals, no life anymore. But when they burn the old growth, new growth comes, animals come back. The relationships between two-legged and four-legged

and the land returns to rightness. This is sustainability over profit.

Who has authority over the land? The one who owns the land is the one who made it, the Creator. The first people He placed here are the ones who have authority to steward the land—the water, the plants, the fish, the birds, the creepy crawlies. The authority given by the Creator can't be taken away by man. When the newcomers came in 1492, they were welcomed and invited in to the land. This welcoming gave them authority to be on the land too. But shortly after, that authority was ruined—the newcomers valued profitability over sustainability. They brought disease that killed off a huge percentage of Indigenous people. More and more came, and they made laws, bylaws, and regulations. The host people were hardly ever invited to the table. Instead of God-given authority, they had man-made power to be here because of rules they created.

When Jesus came and died on a cross, it was to bring relationships back into rightness. The very existence of salvation comes from relationship: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When I hear that we are made in God's likeness, not just His image, I hear that we are meant to be LIKE him. How do we expect to see righteousness pour out from the Creator if our relationships are not in good standing? As a church, we need to focus on relationship building, and it has to be a two-way street.

I am Stó:lo\*, people of the river. As a First Nations person, I have authority to welcome people to this land; it's a



*John and his cousin led a drumstick making workshop for us in March*

spiritual deal. But that's a one-way street. How can we change what has been done for the past four centuries? How do the newcomers give up their power to right these relationships?

I work at the Mennonite Brethren denomination's missions agency, Multiply, as Ambassador to First Peoples in Western Canada. My former boss, a White guy, gave up power over First Nations ministry, and made me his partner. He relinquished power so that we could bring forth good fruit. I also know a farmer in the Fraser Valley who felt he needed to right relationships in his part of the world. He shared profits from the garlic and kale he grew on the land with the Kwantlan First Nation in Langley. In the White world, cash is king. Giving up money is another way of relinquishing power.

Relationship birthed salvation. If we want to see the Creator's love and righteousness poured out in our land, we need to renew our relationships. What is the old that we need to burn away to make room for new growth? What sacrifices do we need to make to bring rightness to our relationships?

*\* The Stó:lo are a group of First Nations peoples inhabiting the Fraser Valley and lower Fraser Canyon of British Columbia.*

## New Drivers



*Clockwise from top left: Christopher, Linda, Ryan, and Morenda with their new licenses!*

**Since then, 10 young people have passed their Ls, and 3 community members have passed their Ns! We're so proud of their hard work.**

This winter, we have focused on supporting our youth and young adults to get their driver's licenses. There can be many barriers to obtaining a license, from not having a car to practice in, to not being able to access driver training. Getting a license is a huge step towards independence; it opens doors to employment, education, family and cultural activities, and even healthcare.

Last November, an individual donated a used car and a number of supporters helped us get it road-worthy. It's been a huge blessing! It allows us to provide each young person with on-road driving experience with a mentor or staff member, giving them tools to stay safe on the road.

## Board Transition

*We're saying goodbye to two of our long-serving board members this spring. Rebecca Janke and Barb Schmidt have both reached the end of their maximum six years (two 3-year terms). We're so grateful for the wisdom and experience each of them brought to our board. We asked Barb to reflect on her time with us:*

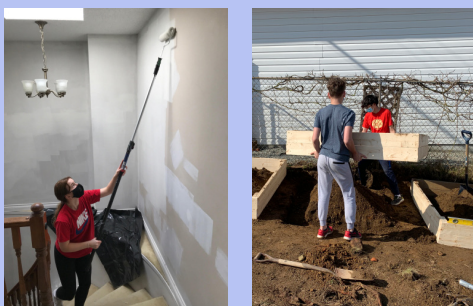
"I first heard about Inner Hope through one of the founding members. I am constantly amazed at the needs and the holes in our society. My heart goes out to those that don't have the same advantages that I did. I took for granted that I would have my family take care of me and teach me what I needed to know. My involvement with Inner Hope showed me that this is not the case for many.

My eyes have been opened and my heart touched through my role as a board member. I am so impressed with how Inner Hope has grown and has developed programs to meet the needs of the youth it serves. The dedication of the staff and the commitment to caring for our youth is amazing. I have been privileged to see the impact that Inner Hope has had and how lives have been changed. It has been a blessing and a privilege to serve with this organization."

## Surprise Renovations!

"The House" has provided space for living, gathering, playing, eating, and working for the past 13 years, and this spring it got an unexpected face lift! A group of students and teachers from John Knox Christian school volunteered their time to help us paint, landscape, and garden! They also donated funds for a shed, gardening materials, and a contractor. Other donors provided paint, new flooring, and new cabinets.

**We can't wait to host our community again and fill The House with life!**



*highlights of  
2020*

Check out the attached annual report summary to see our year in review!

Inner Hope Youth Ministries' mission is to walk alongside youth and families in East Vancouver nurturing hope, belonging and transformation through support, discipleship, life skills, and housing.

- support
- discipleship
- life skills
- housing

promoting positive community engagement and loving youth, young adults and families in practical ways  
guiding children, youth and young adults in a relationship with their Creator  
mentoring youth and young adults to develop the skills needed to build their futures  
offering a safe, stable and supportive home for youth, young adults and their children