

Éy St'élmexw St'elt'ílém
Good Medicine Songs



Halq'eméylem/English
Song & Story Book

Teacher's Handbook
CD & Student Guide

Language education through

Music - Stories - Live Video - Audio Glossary

We created four bilingual songs in Halq'eméylem and English that incorporate drumming and eco-rock musical elements:

- Xá:lpeyelhp – Cedar Trees;
- Lhílhehqeý – From Where the Waters Spring;
- Shxwelí – Life Spirit; and
- Tem Xa Xa Sth'óqwi – Sacred Salmon Time.

The companion stories to these songs are from the distant past (sxwōxwiyám), and from true family stories (sqwélqwel). As we move through “S'ólh tém:éxw” or Stó:lō territory, we see place names that help record the stories in the landscape. The place names, and stories that go with them, teach about our laws of relationship, values and responsibilities to live in harmony with each other, the land, the river and all our relatives in the natural world. Now that we share this beautiful part of Tém:éxw the Tá:l (Mother Earth), the stories and songs can cultivate a shared responsibility to care for this part of the world.



Ey st'élmexw St'elt'ilém • Good Medicine Songs Halq'eméylem/English Song & Story Project

Presented by Skwah First Nation and the Artist Response Team

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Additional vocals: Lexws T'it'elemót - Cheyenne Gardner

Additional guitar/audio tech: Ted Tosoff

Guidance and blessing: Dr. Síyamiyateliyót - Elizabeth Phillips

Storytellers: Eddie Gardner, Elizabeth Phillips, Jonny Williams

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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Éy St'elmexw St'elt'ílém - Good Medicine Songs

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Each song section includes the story,
the lyrics and two related illustrations

How and why this project came to be - Page 2

Guidelines for learning songs & stories - Page 3

THE SONGS

XÁ:LPEYELPH - CEDAR TREES

Pages 4 - 7

LHÍLHEQEY - FROM WHERE THE WATERS SPRING

Pages 8 - 11

SHXWELÍ - LIFE SPIRIT

Pages 12 - 15

TEM XA XA STH'ÓQWÍ - SACRED SALMON TIME

Pages 16 - 19

Dedications to Dr. Síyamiyateliyót & Dr. Stelómethet - Page 20

Additional language resources and CD - Page 21

HOW AND WHY THIS PROJECT CAME TO BE

In the fall of 2018, the Project Team came together under a partnership between Skwah First Nation and the Artist Response Team (ART) to create school curriculum merging the importance of environmental awareness with Stó:lō language, songs and stories. The team consisted of Dr. Síyamiatelíyót (Elizabeth Phillips), the last remaining fluent speaker of Halq'eméylem who is the project spiritual leader and guide, Xótwes (Jonny Williams) who teaches Halq'eméylem in schools with guidance and support from his grandmother, Siyamiateliyot, T'it'elem Spáth (Eddie Gardner), a strong wild salmon advocate, who promotes Stó:lō history and culture, Holly Arntzen and Kevin Wright who are songwriters/singers/producers who create eco-rock songs and produce Voices of Nature school programs and concerts, and Valerie O'Connell who is the Community Plan Navigator with Skwah First Nation. The late Dr. Stelómethet (Ethel Gardner) participated in the creation of songs and stories. She dedicated her life and career to the revitalization of Halq'eméylem and promotion of quality education. Cheyenne Gardner (Lexws T'it'elemot), Ethel's niece, was added to the team to help sing the songs in January.

We created bilingual songs in Halq'eméylem and English for children of all backgrounds to sing together. This fosters positive relationships amongst their families and creatively advances cross cultural understanding, respect and reconciliation. This project showcases the power of song and storytelling in bringing the Halq'eméylem language and culture alive. The traditional Stó:lō stories and teachings are directly connected to ecological issues that are being taught in schools today.

With only one fluent speaker left, we are making good use of the technology of audio recording and filming songs and stories with Siyamiateliyot's voice, fluency and authentic knowledge of our language. We now have the ability to share these songs and stories widely, for the benefit of this generation and future generations.

Four new songs were written and recorded, and stories gathered, in summer 2019. Brenda Point, Vice Principal of Aboriginal Education at School District #33 (Chilliwack) coordinated the involvement of McCammon Elementary and provided other valuable supports. Chilliwack Landing PreSchool involved its Kindergarten students. In the fall of 2019, the foundations were laid for the school program. In January 2020, the students, with the support of their teachers, started learning the songs. The culmination was to showcase the songs at a Language Showcase concert at the Chilliwack Cultural Centre. On March 12, 2020, the team gathered at noon with the 270 students, three Stó:lō Singers, four Wilds Band musicians, three videographers, audio engineer and did a dress rehearsal. Then at 4 pm that day, the principal notified us that the concert scheduled for that evening had to be cancelled; the government announced that day that gatherings could not be more than 250 people due to COVID-19 restrictions. Fortunately, the videographers filmed the dress rehearsal and we were able to produce the song videos.

We offer these songs, audio glossary, handbooks, student guides and videos for the benefit of all children who live, grow and learn in Stó:lō territory and everywhere.

GUIDELINES FOR LEARNING SONGS AND STORIES

Hand out the **Student Guides** to the class that provide the **Song Lyrics**, along with the companion **Stories and Illustrations**.

Select the first **Song** you will learn and sing.

Read the **Story** aloud. Have students read along. The story includes teachings from the Stó:lō world view that have been passed down through many generations. Focus on the meaning of the Halq'eméylem words. Discuss how much is in common between Stó:lō world view and contemporary environmental concerns. Discuss the significance and connections to current ecological issues.

Explore the **Illustrations**. Discuss the images and symbols in relation to the Story.

Watch the **Concert Video** (see link below) of your chosen song.
Read aloud **How and why this project came to be**.

Read the **Lyrics** aloud. Don't worry if you are unsure of the pronunciation of the Halq'eméylem words; we'll get to that next. Refer to Illustrations to explain content of lyrics.

On the **CD** (found on the inside back cover of this Handbook), play the **Audio Glossary**. Listen to Síyamiatelíyót (Dr. Elizabeth Phillips) pronounce the Halq'eméylem word, and then have everyone echo together. Listen to Eddie Gardner speak the same word, then echo.

On the CD, play the **Song**. Have students listen and read along in the **Lyrics**.

Have everyone stand up, play the song again and have everyone sing along.

Play the video, sing along, do the actions. Have students add their own actions.

**Repetition is the mother of learning.
Enjoy singing the songs often and have fun!**

These resources are available for FREE!

Visit www.ArtistResponseTeam.com/GoodMedicineSongs

- Download MP3s for the Audio Glossaries and Songs
- Watch live Concert Videos
- Download PDF files for the Teacher's Handbook and Student Guide

XÁ:LPEYELPH - CEDAR TREES

The late Bertha Peters from Sq'ewqel (Seabird Island) shared this story of the distant past (sxwōxwiyám) about a man whose name was Xpá:y. He was a very generous man (xwe'éywelh swíyeqe) who was always giving and always helping people. They say that when he passed away, he was transformed into the cedar tree (Xpá:yelhp).

The Stó:lō believe that the “Shxwelí,” the “Life-Spirit” of Xpá:y, the man who was transformed into the cedar tree (Xpá:yelhp) is in all the cedar trees (Xá:lpeyelph). Because he was such a generous man, that’s why we get all the different things from Xá:lpeyelph, the cedar trees. We say to the cedar trees “Thank you for everything” (Ts’ithóle te mekw’stám). We thank them for good medicine (éy st’élmexw). The cedar has been used for making canoes (Sléxwelh), longhouses (S’í:ltexw), cradles (P’ó:th’es), and so many other things.

Cedar bark and wood are also used for making clothes (s’ith'em), hats (yó:seqw), baskets (sá:letel), mats (slhqw'á:y) and rope (stélwél). Cedar boughs (Xpá:ytses) are used in many ceremonies as medicine for cleansing or clearing a path.

It is a practice of Stó:lō people to visit with the cedar trees (Xá:lpeyelph) to pay respect to the Shxwelí of Xpá:y by making offerings such as tobacco or salmon. They say, “Shxwówelches” to cedar trees which means “We raise our hands” in gratitude and respect.

The Stó:lō people consider Xá:lpeyelph (cedar trees) as their relatives. This is an important distinction that needs to be considered when making use of cedar trees for different purposes. We must ensure they are used sustainably, respecting the teachings of generosity, and must be protected so they can continue to benefit people across generations to come.





XÁ:LPEYELPH - CEDAR TREES

O sí:yá:m Xá:lpeyelhp
 O sí:yá:m Xá:lpeyelhp
 Ts'ithole te mekw'stám
 O Xá:lpeyelhp
 O Xá:lpeyelhp

Thank you cedar trees
 Thank you cedar trees
 Thank you for everything
 Oh cedar trees
 Oh cedar trees

Ey st'élmexw kw'as hóy
 Ey st'élmexw kw'as hóy
 Good medecine thank you
 Good medecine thank you

Chant

Sléxwelh kw'as hóy
 Sléxwelh kw'as hóy
 Canoe thank you
 Canoe thank you

Chant

S'í:ltexw kw'as hóy
 S'í:ltexw kw'as hóy
 Longhouse thank you
 Longhouse thank you

Chant

P'ó:th'es kw'as hóy
 P'ó:th'es kw'as hó
 Cradle thank you
 Cradle thank you

Chant

Shxwóxwelches
 Shxwóxwelches
 We raise our hands
 Shxwóxwelches
 Shxwóxwelches
 We raise our hands
 We raise our hands

Shxwóxwelches
 Shxwóxwelches
 We raise our hands
 Shxwóxwelches
 Shxwóxwelches
 We raise our hands
 We raise our hands

Oh cedar trees
 Oh cedar trees

O Xá:lpeyelhp
 O Xá:lpeyelhp
 O Xá:lpeyelhp

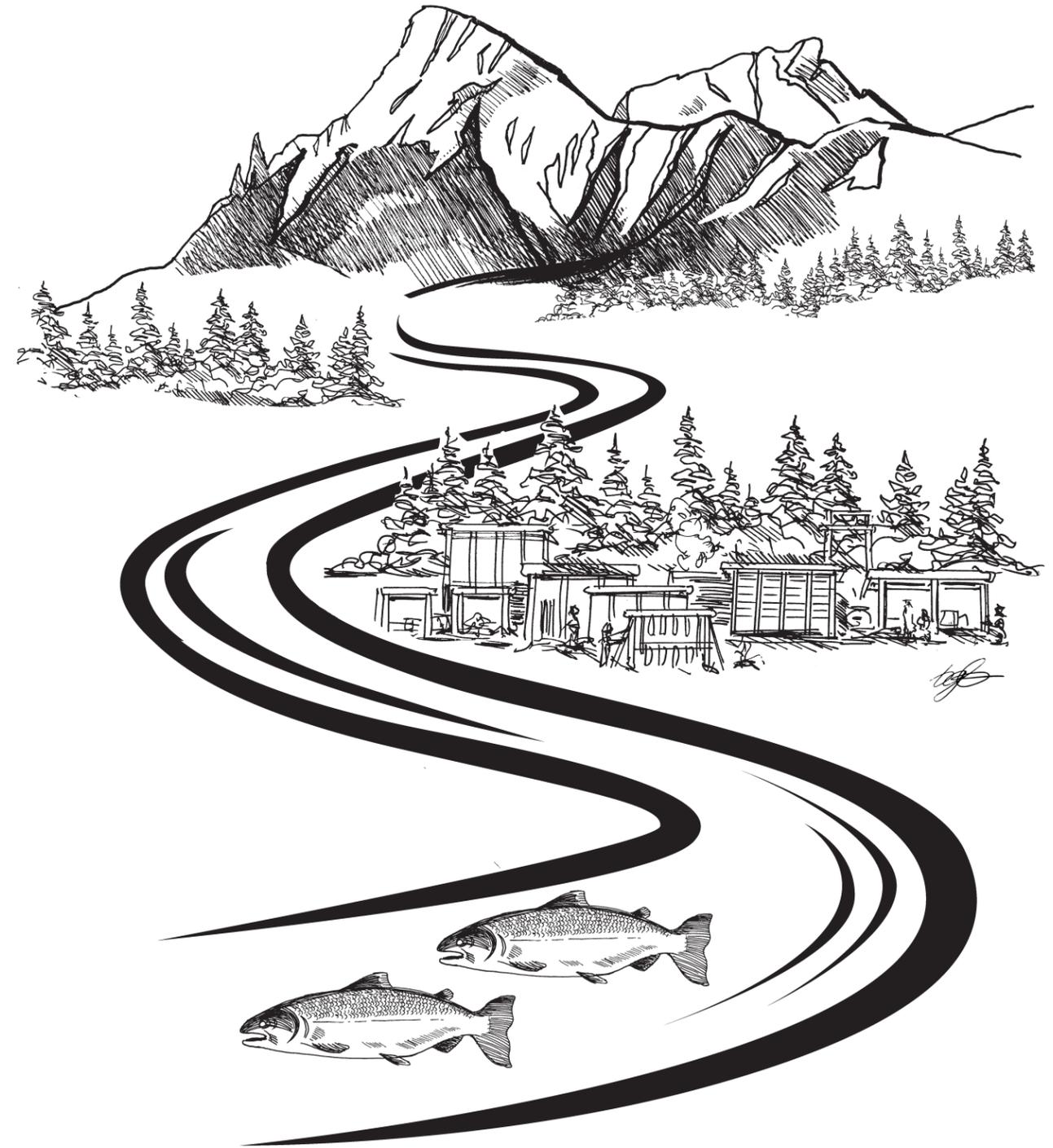
LHÍLHEQEY - FROM WHERE THE WATERS SPRING

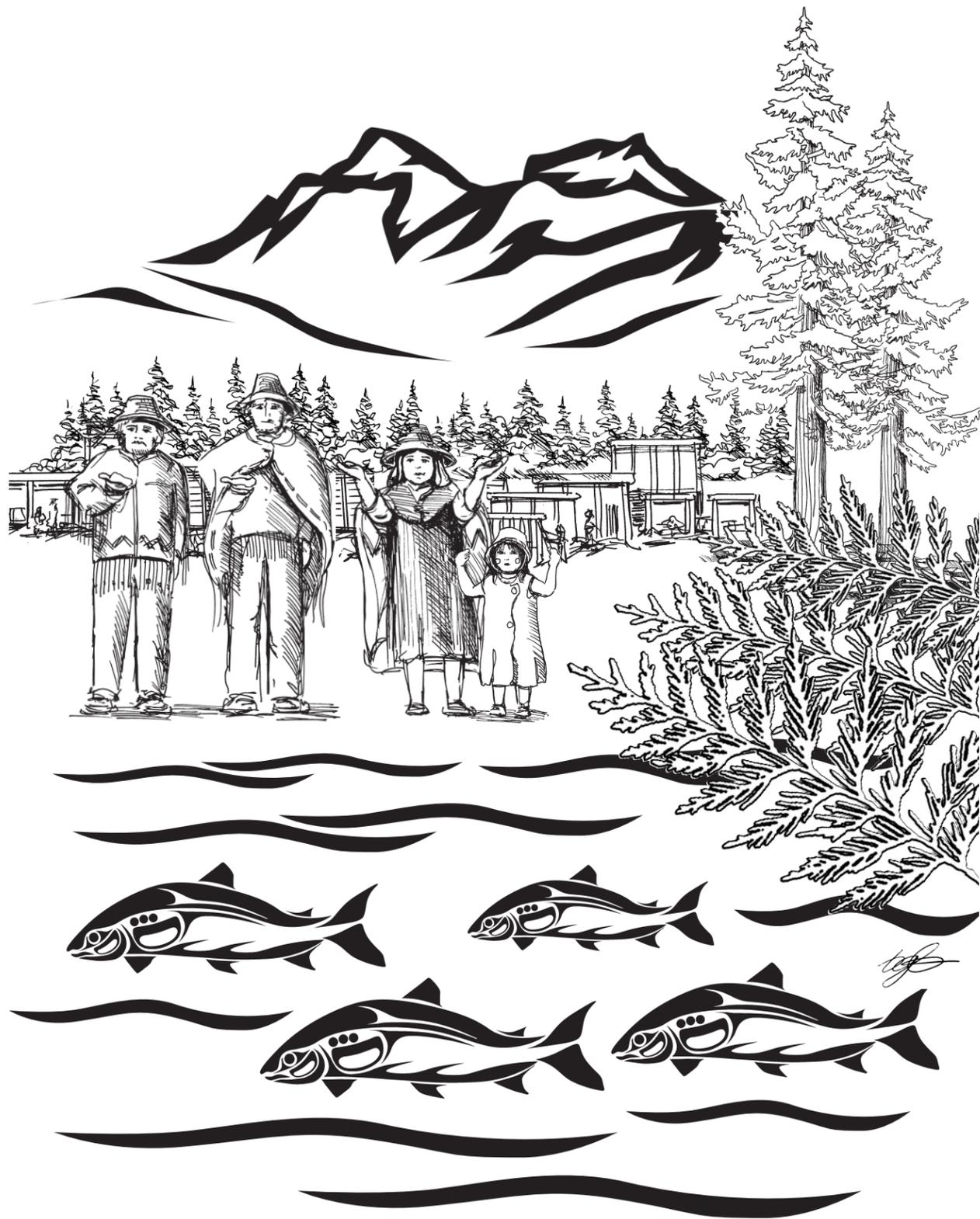
Lhílheqey (Mt Cheam) is a lady (slhá:lí) and Kwelshánexw (Mount Baker) is a man (swíyeqe). Kwelshánexw came over to look for a wife (stó:les). He found that Mount Cheam (Lhílheqey) is a nice-looking girl (iyómex q'á:mi) so he took her over to his country. There they had three sons: Mount Hood, Mount Shasta and Mount Shuksan. After the sons grew up, she had three daughters, and said, "I had better go home to my people on the Stó:lō". (the Fraser River). So she came back and said, "I will stand guard for the Stó:lō, so that no harm comes to my people and no harm comes to the salmon that comes to feed them".

And then she took the three daughters up there. Amy Cooper mentioned the dog (sqwemá:y) followed her, and she tried to send the dog back to Kwelshánexw, but the dog stayed with her. The dog was transformed into the dog mountain (Sqwemá:y smá:lt) that is visible just behind Lhílheqey who was transformed into what is now known as Mt Cheam. Lhílheqey in English means "From Where the Waters Spring."

The song Lhílheqey acknowledges the Stó:lō belief that "Shxwelí - Life Spirit" of Lhílheqey is still awake, watching over and caring for the river (xólhmet ye Stó:lō), caring for the salmon (xólhmet ye Sth'óqwí) and caring for the people (xólhmet ye mestíyexw). Lhílheqey reminds us that we too must be "always awake – "shxwexwí wiyóthe" - to care for the salmon (Sth'óqwí) the river (Stó:lō), and the people (mestíyexw). This is a way of life for the Stó:lō, and cultivates a strong connection to the land, the water, the salmon and the ancestors (syewá:lelh). If we properly care for the salmon and the river and the people now, (tlóqá:ys) then future generations will benefit. This story shows why the Stó:lō refers to Lhílheqey as the Mother Mountain (Smá:lt the Tá:l).

Amy Cooper, February 8, 1962





LHÍLHEQEY - FROM WHERE THE WATERS SPRING

Lhílheqey shxwexwí wiyóthe
 Lhílheqey always awake
 Lhílheqey shxwexwí wiyóthe
 Lhílheqey always awake

Lhílheqey xólhmet ye stó:lō
 Lhílheqey xólhmet ye sth'óqwi
 Lhílheqey xólhmet mestíyexw

Caring for the river
 Caring for the salmon
 Caring for the people

Lhílheqey... Lhílheqey

From where the waters spring
 Way up high on the mountain

Way up high on the mountain
 Woaahhhh... Woaahhhh... Woaahhhh

Lhílheqey shxwexwí wiyóthe
 Lhílheqey always awake
 Lhílheqey shxwexwí wiyóthe
 Lhílheqey always awake

Lhílheqey xólhmet ye stó:lō
 Lhílheqey xólhmet ye sth'óqwi
 Lhílheqey xólhmet mestíyexw

Caring for the river
 Caring for the salmon
 Caring for the people

Lhílheqey... Lhílheqey

From where the waters spring
 Way up high on the mountain
 Way up high on the mountain

Woaahhhh... .Woaahhhh... Woaahhhh

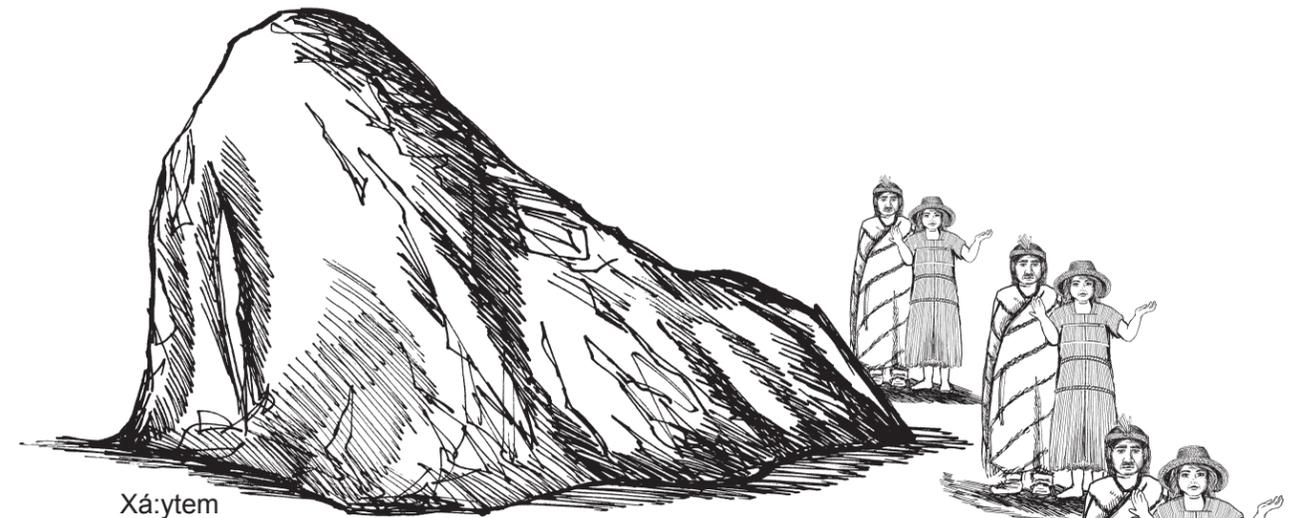
Lhílheqey
 Lhílheqey
 Lhílheqey
 Lhílheqey

SHXWELÍ - LIFE SPIRIT

Shxweli is a word in Halq'eméylem that carries great significance to the spiritual connections Stó:lō (People of the River) have with Great Mystery or Creator. Some Stó:lō refer to Creator as Chíchelh Siyá:m. Our elder Síyamiyateliyót (Elizabeth Phillips) refers to "Creator" as "The Xá Xá Shxweli – Sacred Life Spirit." During "Sxwōxwiyám," the distant past when the world was chaotic, XeXá:ls came into this world to make things right. XeXá:ls traveled through this territory and made many transformations to teach people to learn to live in a good way. Those who were generous and doing good were transformed into what we now call our natural resources, like cedar, salmon and mountains. Those who were not living the right way were transformed into stone as lessons for future generations. For example, there were three Siyá:ms who were given the knowledge and skills to write in Halq'eméylem and were instructed to share this with the people. Since they kept this to themselves, XeXá:ls transformed the three Siyá:ms into the stone "Xá:ytem." For the Stó:lō, the shxweli of the three Siyá:ms are still in the Xá:ytem stone now situated just outside of Mission, BC.

Our Elders were asked the meaning of Shxweli and they explained that Shxweli is in us, in our parents, our great, great grandparents, going back seven generations. The Halq'eméylem word "tómiyeqw" means seven generations back and seven generations forward. The current generation is at the centre and are taught to honour what they inherited in their lineages that goes back seven generations, and to be good ancestors to the next seven generations as we are connected to them through our Shxweli. Our elders further explained that "Shxweli" is also in the river (stó:lō), the salmon (sth'óqwí), the mountains (smámelet), the ocean (kw'ótl'kwa), in the sacred roots (xa xa kwémléxw) of trees and plants, and in everyone and everything. What is unique about the Stó:lō is that the "Shxweli" of their ancestors is in the landscape of their homeland.

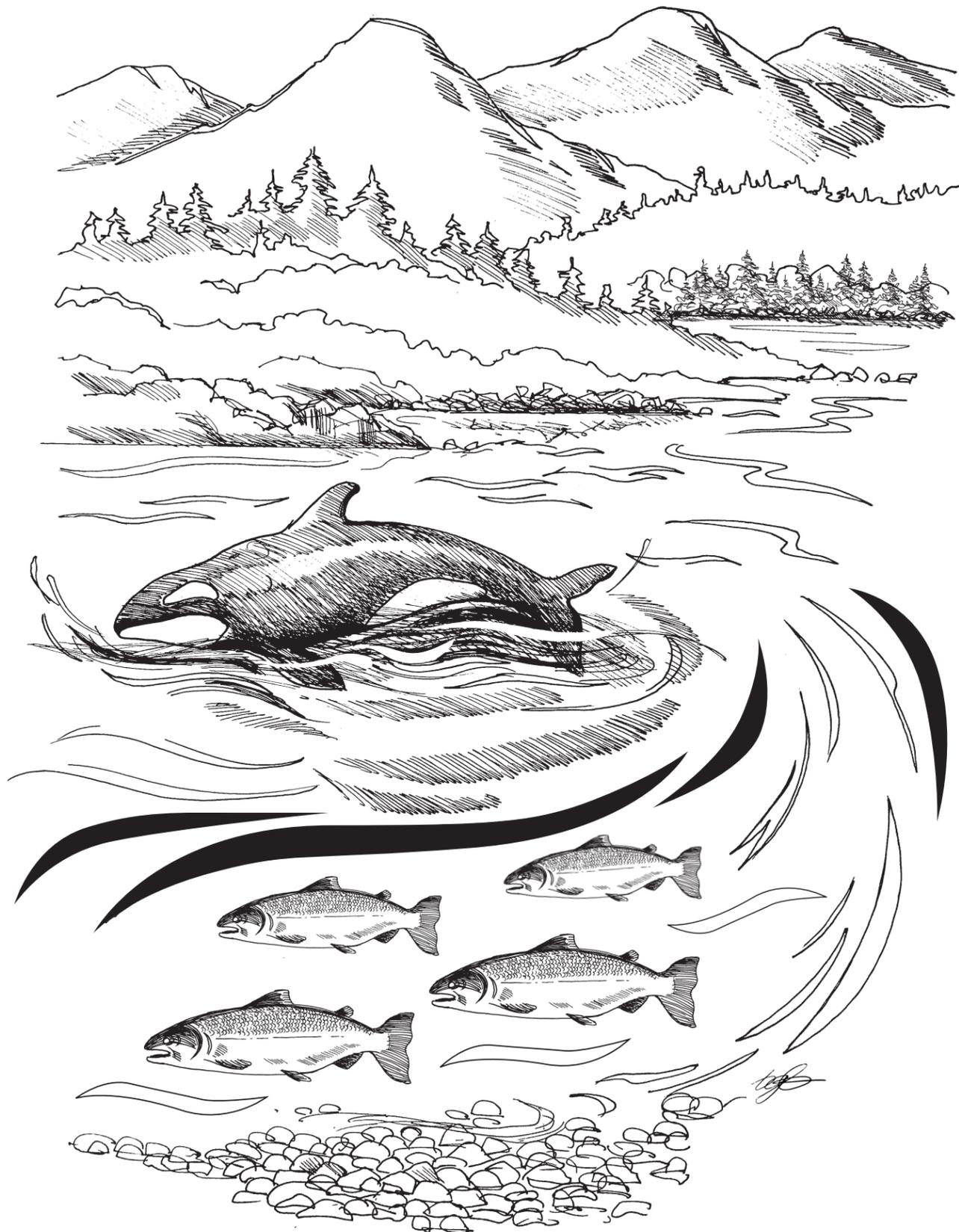
The song **Shxweli** expresses gratitude and reverence for the Great Sacred Life Spirit – the Siyá:m Xá Xá Shxweli, and the sacred connection we have with everyone and everything. With this understanding, we sing the song **Shxweli** with one mind, one heart – Let'sé mót, Let'sé Th'ále. Enjoy!



Xá:ytem

Shxweli





SHXWELÍ - LIFE SPIRIT

CHORUS

Shxweli... shxweli
 Shxweli... life spirit
 Shxweli... shxweli
 Shxweli... life spirit

Slilikwee... slilikwee
 Harmony... harmony

Toteló:mot... toteló:mot
 Understanding... understanding

Lets'emót... lets'eth'ále
 Lets'emót... lets'eth'ále
 One mind... one heart
 One mind... one heart

Shxweli... ts'ithómetset
 Life spirit... we thank you

CHORUS

Stó:lō shxweli... river life spirit
 Sth'óqwi shxweli
 Salmon life spirit
 Shxweli... shxweli

Kw'ótl'kwa shxweli
 Ocean life spirit
 Qwélés shxweli
 Whale life spirit
 Shxweli... shxweli

Smámelet shxweli
 Mountain life spirit
 Xa xa kwémléxw shxweli
 Sacred root life spirit

Shxweli... shxweli

CHORUS

Shxweli... ts'ithómetset
 Life spirit... we thank you
 Shxweli... ts'ithómetset
 Life spirit... we thank you

Shxweli... shxweli
 Shxweli... shxweli

TEM XA XA STH'ÓQWÍ - SACRED SALMON TIME

In the Stó:lō territory of the upriver Halq'eméylem-speaking people, there are teachings that have been passed down from generation to generation regarding the salmon runs. Through the winter months, all the families would pass down life lessons and teachings of the land. At the end of winter, when the snow melts and the warmer weather arrives, the people are to watch for the xaxt'ó:les (*Easter lily*). Once it blooms, p'ápe'q'em (*to bloom*) then it is known as "tem swíwe" (*eulachon time*), when the fishermen would go to the stó:lō (*river*) and wait for the swíwe (*eulachon*). The people then would have a feast and started to preserve the swíwe (*eulachon*), also known as the candle fish.

The Stó:lō (*people of the river*) would use the dried swíwe (*eulachon*) as torches for when it was dark through the long winter nights. The Stó:lō would also bury them to extract oil, then use the oil for cooking. Tem swíwe (*eulachon time*) is short so the Stó:lō would try to get enough for the year, because once the first xeléqt te shxwexwós (*eyes of the thunder are opening or thunderstorm*) comes, it is known that the swíwe (*eulachon*) are gone out of the stó:lō (*river*). At that time, the Stó:lō would finish with the preservation of the swíwe (*eulachon*). Shortly after this, the Stó:lō would notice that the pípxwem (*cotton*) from the chewó:lhp (*cottonwood*) are starting to fall. When they see the pípxwem (*cotton*) falling, it looks like it's snowing and they know that the tl'elxxel (*spring salmon*) are in the stó:lō (*river*).

During this time, it is known as "Tem tl'elxxel" (*spring salmon time*). Another feast is held with the whole community to honor the first salmon, and all the Stó:lō would eat together, bringing the bones back to the river, and plan the fishing trips. After the feast all the families work together to "hílexw stexw" (*get the nets ready*) because it will be a long trip up to the canyon to prepare for "Tem sth'eqí" (*sockeye time*). Once the nets are ready and the Stó:lō made it up the canyon, they would build their dry racks to hang the sth'eqí (*sockeye*) to wind dry them. This would preserve the sth'eqí (*sockeye*) for the winter. In Halq'eméylem, wind dried salmon translates to *shíts'es*.

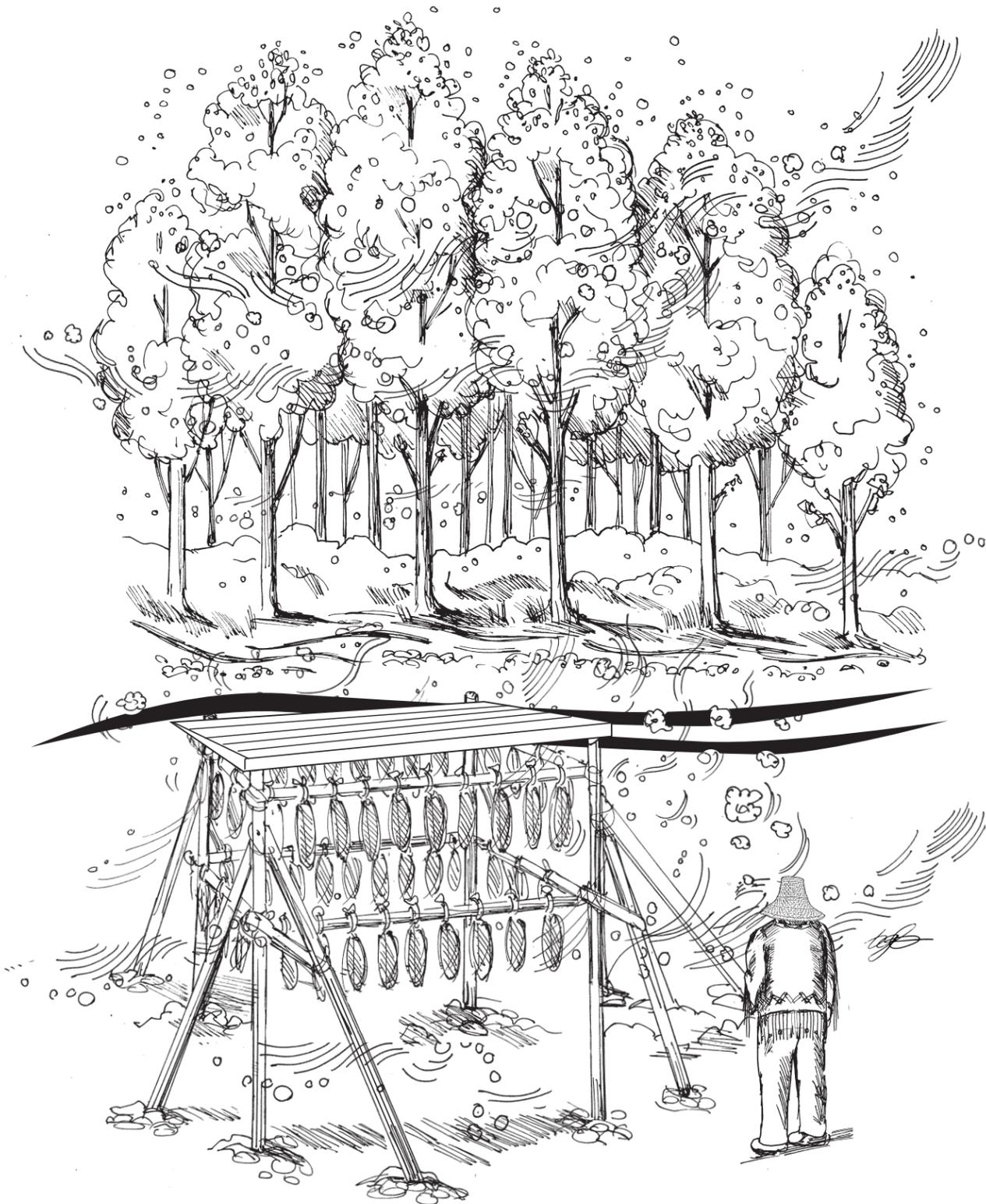
These are some of the teachings passed down from the ancestors and shared among the Stó:lō (*people of the river*). If we respect "the xa xa tém:éxw" (*sacred land*) and the stó:lō (*river*), Mother Earth (*Tém:éxw the Tá:l*) will continue to take care of her children.

These are the teachings that have been shared with me by my grandmother Síyamiatelíyót, (Elizabeth Phillips), Sísetl'a, (Vivian Williams), and my late grandfather Síyameltset, (Albert Phillips).

Story told by Xótxwes, Jonathan Williams.



TEM XA XA STH'ÓQWÍ - SACRED SALMON TIME



Oh oh oh oh... Oh oh oh oh
Oh oh oh oh... Oh oh oh oh
Oh oh oh oh... Oh oh oh oh

P'ap'eq'em... tem swíwe
P'ap'eq'em... tem swíwe
Easter lilies blooming... oolichan time

Xéleq't te shxwexwó:s... eyes of thunder opening
Xéleq't te shxwexwó:s... eyes of thunder opening
Xéleq't te shxwexwó:s... oh oh oh

Oh oh oh oh... oh oh oh oh
Oh oh oh oh... oh oh oh oh
Oh oh oh oh... oh oh oh oh

Pípexwem... tem tl'élxxel
Pípexwem... tem tl'élxxel
Cottonwood is snowing... Spring salmon time
Tem tl'élxxel... Spring salmon time

Oh oh oh... oh oh oh
Oh oh oh... oh oh oh
Oh oh oh... oh oh oh

Hílekw stexw... sthéqi emí
Hílekw stexw... sthéqi emí
Get your nets ready... sockeye are coming
Sthéqi emi... sockeye are coming

Oh oh oh... oh oh oh
Oh oh oh... oh oh oh
Oh oh oh... oh oh oh

Oh oh oh... oh oh oh
Oh oh oh... oh oh oh
Oh oh oh... oh oh oh



**SÍYAMIYATELÍYÓT
Dr. ELIZABETH PHILLIPS**

Dr. Elizabeth Phillips was born in the village of Cheam in 1939, and was raised by the Peters family, who were fluent Halq'eméylem speakers. Elizabeth learned how to speak English on her own and, at an early age, often translated for her relatives who only spoke Halq'eméylem. Síyamiyatelíyót was resilient and determined to always think in Halq'eméylem

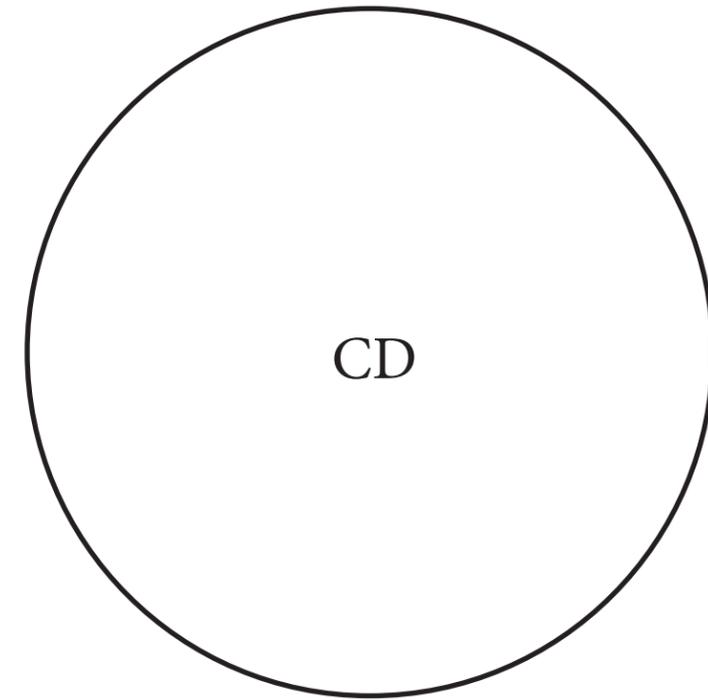
when she went to the Indian Residential School in Mission. She made it her lifelong purpose to keep the Halq'eméylem language alive. Síyamiyatelíyót and the late Xwiyólemot (Tillie Gutierrez), in collaboration with linguist Susan Russell, co-authored Talking in Halq'eméylem, Documenting Conversation in an Indigenous Language, published in 2017. She also worked with linguists Dr. Strang Burton and Brent Galloway in developing tools for learning Halq'eméylem. For her efforts to ensure that current and future generations can speak Halq'eméylem, the University of the Fraser Valley recognized Síyamiyatelíyót in 2018 with an honorary Doctor of Letters degree. Shxwóxwelches (We raise our hands) to Dr. Síyamiyatelíyót, a champion of the Halq'eméylem language!



**DEDICATION TO STELÓMETHET
Dr. ETHEL GARDNER**

The late Ethel Birdie Gardner was born in Squeah, British Columbia in 1948. Sadly, she was diagnosed with terminal bone cancer in December 2019 and passed away in January 2020. This was a terrible shock to her family, friends and Skwah community. Ethel achieved outstanding academic success, including a Bachelor of Education at UBC, a Master's of Education at University of British Columbia, a Master's Degree at Harvard Graduate School of Education, and, in June 2002, a PhD at Simon Fraser University with a doctoral theme on the Halq'eméylem language. Because of her spectacular education achievements, and her dedication to the revival of the Halq'eméylem language, Stó:lō Elders gave her the name Stelómethet, which means "Highly Educated Woman."

We dedicate this project to Stelómethet – Dr. Ethel Gardner. She committed her education, career and life to revitalization of the Halq'eméylem language. She was part of the team that conceived the idea, co-wrote the songs and stories and guided its development. The Good Medicine Songs project was her last endeavor to bring Halq'eméylem alive in the community. This is her legacy to her family, community and to the language and culture that she loved to the core of her being. We are truly inspired to carry on Ethel's work in engaging young and old to sing and tell stories in Halq'eméylem.



ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE RESOURCES

First Voices—Explore Languages: <https://www.firstvoices.com/explore/FV/sections/Data/search/halq'emeylem/10/1>

(You can look up words in Halq'eméylem and hear correct pronunciation)

Betty Peters, Indigenous Student Centre, Chilliwack Campus

University of the Fraser Valley for referrals to Halq'eméylem Teachers

EMAIL: Betty.Peters@ufv.ca TEL: 604-504-7441 ext. 2245

Brenda Point, Vice Principal, Aboriginal Education

School District #33 (Chilliwack) to access Aboriginal Support Workers

EMAIL: brenda_point@sd33.bc.ca TEL: 604-794-5553 ext. 2227

Willow Mussel, Coordinator of S'íwes ye Siwáleh Sq'ép

Teachings of our Ancestors Group

Email: Willow Mussell <kahtustudios@gmail.com> Tel: 604-793-5604



Daytime dress rehearsal of the language showcase in Chilliwack on March 12, 2020 with the Stó:lō Singers, the Wilds Band and the students from McCammon Elementary and Chilliwack Landing Pre-School. The evening concert would never be performed due to COVID-19 cancellations two hours prior to showtime.

You can watch the videos of the bi-lingual songs performed at www.artistresponseteam.com/goodmedicinesongs
Special thanks to The City of Chilliwack and Vancity Credit Union for supporting the concert!