



**PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: THE HEALTH PERSPECTIVE
2020/21 – Mid Year Report (April 1 – September 30, 2020)
Community-Based Projects**

Note: The deadline for submitting this report is **October 30, 2020**.

SECTION 1 – CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Organization:	Liard Aboriginal Women’s Society (LAWS)		
Project Title:	Ts’edené á’nezen: Youth for Dignity in Relationships		
Project Number:	# 1819-HQ-000140		
Project Contact Name:	Ann Maje Raider		
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SECTION 2 – PROJECT ACTIVITIES

1. Provide a detailed summary of progress on project activities undertaken between April 1 and September 30 2020, as per the approved work plan (Appendix A of the Contribution Agreement). Include details of progress on the development and delivery of the intervention (e.g., number, length and duration of sessions, specific activities, etc.), intervention research, and broader project evaluation. Sufficient detail on each activity should be provided to support the associated budget costs, as per the submitted cashflow.

The Ts’edené á’nezen: Youth for Dignity in Relationships project - referred to in this Report at Youth for Dignity (YFD)- focuses on knowledge and skill development among youth in Grades 8 to 12 at Watson Lake Secondary School in order to increase understanding and prevention of gender-based violence and to mobilize youth as anti-violence leaders in their community.

Project activities undertaken between April 1 and September 30, 2020 were as follows:

Background/Context:
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Watson Lake Secondary School was ordered to close for the last two weeks in March 202 and remained closed for the rest of the 2019-20 school year. Students shifted to working from home on schoolwork. With that, the last two Youth for Dignity sessions that were planned for April 27-29 and May 4-6 did not run. Instead, the pandemic forced YFD project organizers to shift activities under the program in compliance to new physical distancing and related public health measures, and undertook the following project activities:

Social Media Campaign:



Funding for the April and May workshops was reallocated to support the coordination of an online campaign. Planning and coordination undertaken by YFD Program Facilitators took place during the month of April.

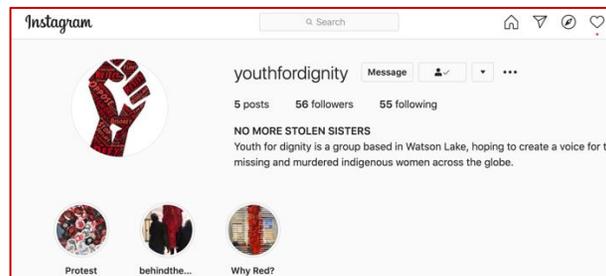
On May 5th, the youth participated in an online campaign through social media for the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Trans and Two-Spirit people. A YFD Instagram account was created: @youthfordignity and the students created and used the hashtag #MMIWG2STMAY5.

Campaign activities:

The YFD Instagram account was used to share pictures and a message about the significance of the May 5th Day of Awareness and featured a series of hashtags associated with the issue.

YFD Facilitators hosted online group chat sessions with students from the YFD program to discuss the significance of the May 5th Day of Awareness and to plan activities for the campaign. On the day of the campaign, YFD youth shared the post and images that was made on the Youth for Dignity Instagram account.

A screenshot of the YFD Instagram account @youthfordignity:



The following text was posted for the May 5th Day of Awareness campaign along with a series of images:

[youthfordignity](#)

May 5th is the National day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous women, girls, trans, and two-spirited people. .

.
There are currently over 1200 murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls, trans, and two spirit people in Canada and those are just the reported cases.

.
The final photo is of elder Mallay Caesar with an art piece the youth and elders made in the fall out of strips of red dresses to represent all the murdered and missing Indigenous relatives. There are 43 tobacco ties that were blessed with prayer to represent the 42 reported mmiwgt2s in the



Yukon plus an extra one to represent all those not accounted for. The youth, elders, and community members of Watson Lake were invited to write down the names of relatives that have gone missing or been murdered. [#mmiw](#) [#mmir](#) [#mmiwgt2s](#) [#mmiwt2smay5](#)

Photos that accompanied the May 5th Day of Awareness Instagram post:



Anti-Violence Vigil and Solidarity March

LAWS hosted an Anti-Violence Vigil and Solidarity March in June in response to the elevated levels of violence against women brought about by increased isolation during the height of the pandemic physical distancing requirements.

YFD Facilitators and organizers helped to spread the word to the YFD students about the planned physical distancing vigil and march. Facilitators reached out to ensure that as many of the YFD students as possible attended the event wearing their Ts'edené á'nezen: Youth for Dignity hoodies.

LAWS news release drawing focus to the issue of elevated violence against women during isolation:



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JUNE 11, 2020

For immediate release –

KASKA WOMEN DENOUNCE VIOLENCE

Recent events in our community have focused attention on the unconscionable level of violence against women and girls. Kaska women in our community do not feel safe. We as indigenous women are outraged by the extreme level of violence and the failures of the legal system to keep girls and women safe.

Liard Aboriginal Women's Society is hosting an Anti-Violence Vigil and Solidarity March. The Vigil will take place on Thursday June 18 at 2:00pm at the Wye Lake Cabin; everyone is welcome to attend.

Community members marching in solidarity to end violence will gather at Tag's on Tuesday, June 23 at 1:00pm; we will march to Watson Lake Foods and back to TAGS. Attendees are encouraged to observe public health protocols and maintain physical distancing requirements.

Violence against women has increased significantly since the pandemic necessitated sheltering in place. These restrictions, combined with reduced access to immediate services and supports for victims of violence, have had a big impact for victims. "The vigil and march are about solidarity for victims and letting them know that we, as a community are here for support," said Ann Maje Raider, Executive Director of Liard Aboriginal Women's Society.

The circuit court schedule in the territory causes delays in hearings and trials for violent offenders, often leading to them being released back into the community – even where there are previous outstanding charges against them. Offenders released on bail usually [contact victim](#) or act out violently against them, even when there is a restraining order or peace bond in place.

"Too many women and girls become less safe when they report violence, not safer. This must be changed," said Margaret Charlie, Kaska Advocate.

Contact

Ann Maje Raider
867-334-8265

Margaret Charlie
867 536 4576

YFD July 2020 Gathering & Check-in with Youth:

On July 20th, YFD Facilitators hosted a physical distance gathering at the gazebo in Wye Lake Park in Watson Lake for youth. YFD Facilitators Renee and Julie hosted the event where pizza was shared and they checked in with the students in attendance to find out how they were doing. The informal gathering provided an opportunity for continued contact and provided Facilitators Renee and Julie an opportunity to reconnect with the youth and check in with them during such an unprecedented time. At the event, students also completed research surveys.

YFD One-on-One Interviews and Survey Completion – August 2020:

In August, YFD students worked with Watson Lake Youth Counsellor Kate Odgers who conducted one-on-one interviews with the students and completed surveys with the youth as well. As Kate usually worked in the school, the interaction for the interviews and surveys provided an opportunity for students to connect and talk privately with Kate, an important opportunity for continued relationship-building and to support the mental and emotional health of the students. A total of 5 one-on-one interviews were completed with YFD students.



Planning for student recruitment session & Coordination with School Officials – September 2020:

The YFD team were hopeful to conduct a student recruitment session in the school during September, however this was postponed at the request of school administrators who required more time to allow students to adjust to the ‘new normal’ routines that the school had adopted in order to adhere to new Covid-related safety measures at the school.

In light of the new Covid-19 safety measures, September was a time of preparation, communication and planning between the YFD project team and the school administrators to define a plan for hosting a student recruitment and initial YFD session in October.

2. Describe any factors (experienced or anticipated) that may have/will positively or negatively influence your project activities and outcomes (e.g., partnerships; organizational or community changes; competing priorities in the community or sector; changes in the social, cultural or political context).

Factors experienced that positively/negatively influenced project activities and outcomes:

- Negative Impacts: Worldwide Covid-19 pandemic:
 - o Mandatory closure of Watson Lake Secondary School
 - o Lack of home access to computers and/or Internet impeded our ability to shift the program to an online format
 - o New restrictions on numbers of people permitted in classrooms/gathering places within the School (It’s likely YFD will need to be hosted in a space that’s larger than a classroom i.e. auditorium in order to include all the students that are interested, while adhering to new physical distancing rules.
 - o Restrictions placed upon YFD planning team at the discretion of the School and Department of Education (ex. Needing more time throughout September to settle students, forcing the program to delay recruitment activities with the students)
- Positive Impacts: Strong ongoing relationships between YFD team & students:
 - o Our team was fortunate to have strong enduring relationships with the YFD students which made it easy to contact & engage the students to participate in the social media campaign, summer ‘check-in’ and survey/interview gatherings. Typically, we reach the students via the school, but due to the pandemic, we were unable to relay information to the students through the school.
 - o LAWS is well-connected in Watson Lake and to public health supports and services. LAWS was able to mobilize a free counselling service that was promoted to Kaska members in the Watson Lake area. This service was helpful to support people through such an unprecedented and mentally/emotionally challenging time. This also allowed for the provision of continued outreach and support for adults and YFD students in the Kaska community, so that all activity and contact was NOT lost during the pandemic and imposed lock-down period.



3. Please note any upcoming events, workshops, meetings, etc. that may be of interest to PHAC and/or the broader stakeholder community.

- While not an event, meeting or workshop, the following article about LAWS' community work to reduce the instance of violence against women was published online and shared via social media channels: [Future Of Good - LAWS article](#)
- The following is a link to LAWS spring 2020 newsletter which outlines many of the initiatives that YFD students led during the 2019-20 school year, in addition to the Counselling service: [LAWS - Spring 2020 Newsletter](#)
- Link to news article regarding the planned solidarity march to raise awareness on the alarming rise in instances of violence against women during the pandemic lock-down: [CBC News - LAWS March](#)
- Link to the Youth for Dignity Instagram account page: <https://www.instagram.com/youthfordignity/>