

Final Report 2021

MÉTIS SETTLEMENTS LIFE SKILLS JOURNEY (MSLSJ) PROGRAM

*Building youth resilience & community capacity through
youth programs & training with Métis Settlements*



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INTRODUCTION

In 2010, Dr. Fay Fletcher was part of a group from the University of Alberta and Maskwacis First Nations responding to an Alberta Health Services call for proposals for programs for drug and alcohol prevention to treatment. With funding also provided to Metis Settlements, we established a partnership to deliver and evaluate life skills awareness training, with the intent of addressing substance abuse, violence, and bullying.

Mentored by the community, we know that the best way to provide programs, conduct research, and maximize community benefit, is to be community-based and have as much participation by the community as possible.

This report summarizes activities from April-December 2021 and the impacts of 11 years of the Metis Settlement Life Skills Journey Project. The final report is followed by Settlement specific summaries for 2021 that can be pulled out by Settlement Administration for future fund development opportunities.

“It's had a positive impact on the kids for sure. I know many kids who are like, "Oh, I can't wait to come back next year." They enjoy the camp when they're here.” – Program Assistant 2019



PRIORITIES

The University of Alberta and participating Métis Settlements have been working together since 2009 to develop and deliver youth life skills programming through the Métis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) program. Guided by the principles of community-based participatory research, the goals of MSLSJ are:



01. Develop Respectful Relationships between the University and Communities

- That acknowledges that both have expertise, ownership, and responsibility.
- To include Settlement members in the project design, delivery and evaluation;



02. Contribute to the Capacity of Individuals and Organizations for Long Term Impact

- To increase life skills awareness in a culturally appropriate manner, building internal strengths and community support through life skills training, life skills programs, and workshops for Métis youth to address substance abuse, violence, and bullying;



03. Use Individual Strengths in the Most Effective Way Possible to Achieve Shared Goals

- Ongoing Life skills programs led and directed by the Community.

OUR SHARED JOURNEY 2010-2021

In 2010 Our first step was to meet with community members to ask whether life skills awareness training was something they felt was a priority and whether the community was prepared to make the commitment required for a research partnership. We were introduced to members of Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement (BLMS), our first Métis Settlement partner.

In 2011 the BLMS advisory committee provided guidance on program design (age groups and content) and implementation (summer camp). Over the next two years, resources for summer camps and facilitator training were created in preparation for running summer camps. This included life skills content, program logo and identity, and plans for evaluation, always with a focus on individual and community strengths and assets and seeking out community-based strategies for community wellness.

In 2013, the MSLSJ program received a 3-year grant dedicated specifically to Métis Settlement life skills awareness training, with the intent of addressing substance abuse, violence, and bullying.

Project goals:

- positively affect resilience among Métis Settlement children and youth, aged 7-14, and
- develop youth leadership so that older youth (18-30) can deliver the program under the guidance of adult mentors.

Six facilitators were trained and 57 children from BLMS and Kikino participated in the first annual MSLSJ camps.

In 2014, 7 facilitators were trained and 65 children from BLMS and Kikino participated.



OUR SHARED JOURNEY 2010-2021

In 2015, 14 facilitators were trained and 136 children from BLMS, Fishing Lake, and Elizabeth participated.

In 2016, 17 facilitators were trained and 147 children from BLMS, Fishing Lake, and Elizabeth participated. Funding was extended to 2019 in order to partner with more Settlements and focus on strategies for program sustainability.

In 2017, 23 facilitators were trained and 180 children from BLMS, Elizabeth, East Prairie, and Gift Lake participated.

In 2018, 27 facilitators were trained, 6 community members were hired and trained as program assistants and 185 children from BLMS, Elizabeth, East Prairie, Gift Lake, and Peavine participated.

In 2019, 30 facilitators were trained, 7 community members were hired and trained as program assistants and 183 children from BLMS, Elizabeth, East Prairie, Gift Lake, and Peavine participated. Funding was extended to December 2021. The Youth Life Skills Coordinator position was initiated by Allison Cardinal (Buffalo Lake), who stepped into that role for the East Settlements in October 2019.

In 2020, 2 program assistants (Peavine and Elizabeth) and a West Settlements Youth Life Skills Coordinator (Gift Lake) were hired. COVID-19 halted all Life Skills programs in March. The team pivoted and provided online Life Skills and digital storytelling training, programming, and activity kits. Digital storytelling workshops launched in the Fall of 2020. From April to March 2021: 209 unique youth attended programs; with 530 total attendance, 284 Activity kits distributed, 43 online programs. Personal protective equipment was distributed to all 8 Settlements on 5 occasions in 2020/21.

In 2021, programs remained online until June when public health restrictions were lifted. YLSCs in BLMS, GLMS, Peavine, and EMS hired 12 Life Skills facilitators, with most being previous facilitators, to deliver Summer camp. From April to August 2021, 124 unique youth attended programs, with 878 total attendance, 55 activity kits distributed, and 16 online activities. Youth attended Culture camps in BLMS, GLMS, and EMS. Peavine hosted a Youth Summer conference that included East Prairie and Kikino youth participants.

APRIL-DECEMBER 2021 SUMMARY:

In this last year of the project, we shifted from collaborative delivery of summer programming to Settlement-led year-round youth Life Skills programming. This was made more challenging with changing COVID-19 public health guidelines for youth and group activities in the Spring and Summer. With the Alberta “Open for Summer” launch, Settlement staff had less than one month to coordinate and deliver a Life Skills summer camp program. We typically started in February with hiring, training, and planning summer camp programs and materials. This is a testament to the growing leadership and skills of Settlement life skills staff. The following overview captures the community-engaged activities over this reporting period that supported the transition to community-led programming and project wrap-up.

TRANSITION TO COMMUNITY LED PROGRAMMING

Key Indicator	Activity	Data / Outcome
Life Skills On-Line Training	April-June bi-weekly sessions: COVID management; hiring; risk management, social media, digital storytelling, program plan development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 hrs of Settlement led training • 16 hrs of UofA team led training
Financial Management	Settlement Coordinators worked with the UofA team to develop the program budget and reconcile monthly expenses to support budget forecasts and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 hours of training • 100 hrs of one on one support
Cultural Integration	Community leadership and members identified the need for Metis cultural skills and knowledge as a priority for youth life skills training. Metis knowledge keepers were invited to facilitate cultural lessons from their community. LS integrated into annual Culture camps in 3 Settlements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons: Cree language, fiddling, traditional medicine, moccasin making, ribbon shirt/skirt making, fishing, moose hide and meat curing, and outdoor survival skills

APR-DEC 2021 SUMMARY: CON'T

TRANSITION TO COMMUNITY LED PROGRAMMING

Key Indicator	Activity / Project	Data / Outcome
Stakeholder Engagement and Sustainability	On-going discussions with Settlement Administrators to map out logistics for summer program and possible next steps after project end date. Depending on available financial resources, elements of the Life Skills program will continue on in some communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peavine created a new youth program position for Fall • GLMS and EMS have intentions to run Life skills camp Summer 2022.
Settlement Led Summer Camps July-August	BLMS: 4 week youth life skills program for ages 6-14, followed by a week long culture camp hosted at the Buffalo Lake traditional land use area. The culture camp was led by several	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by 4 trained BLMS facilitators • Culture camp led by community leaders and Elders.
	EMS: 6 week youth life skills program for ages 7 -14. A weekend culture camp hosted in Elizabeth and transitioned well into the last week of 11-14 summer camp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by experienced Program Assistant and 3 trained Elizabeth facilitators
	Peavine: 4 week youth life skills program for ages 7-15. Summer camp was followed by Peavine Summer Work Program and the Peavine Youth Conference, both of which were supported by the Peavine MSLSJ team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by the Peavine Life Skills Journey Facilitator/School Liaison and 3 trained Peavine Facilitators;
	GLMS: 7 week program for ages 9-14 that integrated Life skills modules with 7 Sacred teachings and culminated in a week long Culture camp led by Elders and knowledge keepers. Sash ceremony for participants who completed all 7 teachings at the end of Culture camp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by 2 experienced LS Program Assistants • Community led program where LS integrated into Miyo Pimatsowin

PROJECT WRAP UP ACTIVITIES

01

Story Map: Building Resiliency with Métis Youth

MSLSJ stories from the 11 year journey, key learnings, and hopes and dreams for the future. Storymap can be used by Settlements to generate new partnerships to fund future youth Life Skills programs.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b02e0a4516ea406c856da72421e53351>

02

Data Transfer to Settlements

As part of the collaborative agreement with participating Settlements, all research data, reports, and program materials collected over the last 11 years were transferred back to Settlements in December.

03

Impact Numbers for Q1 (April to August 2021)

134

Total Unique
Participants

888

Total
Attendance

195

Activity Kits
Distributed

12

Hired & Trained
Facilitators

16

Online
Activities

746

Facebook
Likes



COMMUNITY IMPACTS

During project wrap-up discussions, Settlement Administrators, staff, and parents shared with the team the positive impacts the MSLSJ project made in their community over the past 11 years. Three key impacts emerged:



01. Mentorship

Fostering mentorship skills has always been a key focus of the MSLSJ program. Both facilitator training and summer camps were intentionally organized to nurture mentorship skills, both between community-based facilitators, program assistants, and youth. We witnessed facilitators build strong mentorship skills while delivering youth life skills programming and become role models for youth in their communities.



"I got a warm fuzzy from someone saying I was their role model. When we did role models I had a lot of girls always come sit by me and tell me life stories about them. They felt comfortable to talk to me about their family stuff. I enjoyed that, I feel like they had someone to come talk to" - Facilitator 2019

"Having this time to be able to work and learning all these things, my role in the community has changed. People actually see me as a mentor now." - Program Assistant 2019

"I have a little girl in my team who wants to be a camp leader, a facilitator. She's only 10 but still she's, "I wanna be you guys." - Facilitator 2018



COMMUNITY IMPACTS



02. Confidence

Over the course of the MSLSJ project, we witnessed an increase in confidence in community-based program assistants and facilitators. They reported being afraid to do something new at the beginning but after some time in the program, they demonstrate confidence in program development, budgeting, and organizational networking. This confidence has greatly impacted the youth participants reported increased in communicating their thoughts and feelings with the facilitators.



*"I think I enjoyed watching them open up. They were really shy at first, and then they're so confident when they left. Just seeing them make friends and participate and not being shy anymore just warms my heart."
- Facilitator 2017*

"This was a learning experience for me too. It's nice to know what it means and keep it so you know for the future that there is help there, and there is your self-esteem, your confidence boost, what's wrong from right. I just think it's good. Some kids don't get that education." - Facilitator 2017



COMMUNITY IMPACT



03. Youth Programming

Community members and Administration have stressed the need for youth programming in Settlements so youth have a place to connect with role models and learn cultural skills to become a strong Metis adult. MSLSJ was identified by Settlements as a valuable youth program in the community that has demonstrated to improved relationships, increase in respect, and boundary setting in youth.

"The kids love the program; we always have a good turnout; it is an excellent program"- Alvina Desjarlais 2018

"I think like the kids that went to camp treat the older people with more respect now because they used to not listen or just not care what the adults had to say or anyone older than them. I feel like they have a better understanding of respect and boundaries and things like that."
- Facilitator 2017

"I enjoyed the whole camp experience, basically just getting to know the kids, honestly. And learning, I guess learning a little bit about myself too, what works, and my own biases and stuff like that. Getting to know how I interact with kids, and I guess it was a little bit of an eye opener for me." - Facilitator 2014

What module was most impactful to the campers?
"Bullying for sure. Especially for the little kids because it is becoming such an issue in school. It was nice to give them these tools that they could use in the future." - Program Assistant 2019

Over the last 11 years on our journey with Alberta Metis Settlements, we are honoured to have been invited into their communities to work with leadership, community members, and young people who are committed to creating a strong and resilient community. These numbers are the reflection of collaborations rooted in trust and mutual understanding between the University MSLSJ team and Metis Settlement Administrations and communities.

Overall Project Impact 2009–2021



Total Unique Participants (2013–2019)

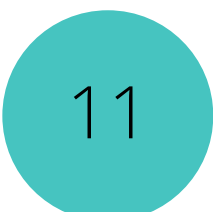


Total Unique Participants (2020–2021)

*some youth may have participated prior to 2020



Total Facilitators Hired & Trained



Total Program Assistants & Youth Life Skills Coordinators



Total Activity Kits Distributed



Total Online Activities



Total Facebook Likes (All LSJ Pages)

Total unique participants are divided by 2013–2019 and 2020–2021 years due to transition to after-school program format and community-led programming and evaluation in 2020. Settlement staff discontinued the use of unique identifiers from 2013–2019.



FINAL REFLECTIONS

We started our journey with the shared goal of building youth strength and resilience through life skills lessons identified and prioritized by the community. Since 2013, over 700 youth have participated in Life Skills programming. Reflecting on what transformation looks like for us as Community Based Researchers, the 7 Sacred Grandfather teachings proved to be the most fitting way to share our transformation journey. These Indigenous teachings were integrated by Gift Lake Metis Settlement into the Life Skills summer program and are guiding principles for living a good life. With their permission, we share our transformation through these teachings.

7 Sacred Teachings	Our Transformation
Love: Loving yourself and others	This is heart work. We entered into this as a research project but the work is relational and although activities come to an end, our relationships will continue on.
Respect: Honor all people and things	Respect for the self governance and uniqueness of each Settlement in developing the Life Skills program.
Bravery: Facing problems with integrity	Courage to challenge the University systems to be more culturally responsive to Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.
Honesty: Speaking Truth to yourself and others.	Knowing how to step out of the way because communities know what is needed and how to meet that need.
Humility: To know yourself	Knowing our contribution plays a very small part of the Settlements' larger vision and mission.
Truth: To know who you are	Knowing our presence is much appreciated but not a driving factor for change.
Wisdom: Cherish knowledge	Métis Settlement youth and communities are resilient and have strong youth leaders ready to lead.

BUFFALO LAKE METIS SETTLEMENT YOUTH LIFE SKILLS JOURNEY PROGRAM

Our Journey Together....

Over a decade ago, Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement (BLMS) and researchers from the University of Alberta formed a partnership to create a community-grounded youth life skills program. Our journey together since then has been guided by the shared goal of building youth resilience and leadership capacity through community-driven programming for youth aged 7-14.

From 2011-2013, the BLMS Advisory committee met with University staff to identify and develop learning modules in response to youth needs and priorities. Participating in summer day camps, youth learned life skills, self-esteem, communication, neighbourliness, kinship, role models, grief and loss, and hopes and dreams. Since 2013, over 200 BLMS youth have attended the BLMS Life Skills Journey summer camps, with many returning each year. Youth surveys completed before and after camp documented positive change in several areas relating to individual strength.

The BLMS Life Skills Journey camps have nurtured relationships between youth, elders, artists, community leaders, and families, many of whom have attended as guest speakers and/or participants.

From 2013-2015, there was a 15% change from disagree/neutral to agree in the survey response "I think that I can do things as well as other young people my age" for youth aged 7-10 (Hibbert et al., 2018).

BLMS 11-14-year-olds: 10 % increase from disagree to neutral in response to the statement "I am able to plan ahead, such as completing my chores before going on a bike ride".



"Being able to be a positive role model for the kids in our community, showing them different ways to deal with different things, and showing them that there are people that they could be related to (or not related to) that they can go to and talk to if they need anybody to talk to. Not even just in this camp, if they ever see us around. " - Allison Cardinal, 2017

“One of the little girls said, when we were doing role models, you’re my role model and I said how come? She said, because you like taking care of kids” - BLMS Facilitator, 2019

***“I learned that I can be a leader”
- Allison Cardinal, 2021***

As the number of camp participants grew, so did the number of trained community-based facilitators. In 2014, over 25 BLMS young adults attended a 4-week intensive training program that fostered team building, mentorship, and leadership skills. In 2018, two experienced facilitators stepped into leadership roles as Program Assistants, responsible for overseeing and leading summer camps and training. In collaboration with a program assistant from Fishing Lake Metis Settlement, Allison Cardinal and Kyle Durocher developed and delivered facilitator training to over 12 facilitators in Elizabeth Metis Settlement.

Inter-settlement collaboration was fostered by Allison Cardinal, who organized a field trip for BLMS campers to attend an event hosted by the Elizabeth Life Skills Journey team. While many examples demonstrate Allison’s growth and leadership, in 2019 she proposed the creation of the Youth Life Skills Coordinator position as there was a need for year-round after-school programming. Since 2020, Allison has excelled in this new role, leading an after-school program that hosted both in-person and online activities.



This Summer and Impacts ...

BLMS was able to host its 8th year of the Life Skills Journey camps. Allison Cardinal and a team of facilitators delivered several weeks of fun-packed activities for youth aged 6-14. Activities included jigging and cooking classes, multi-week day camps, and participation at the culture camp. During the spring and summer of 2021, Allison and the life skills team collaborated with several Settlement agencies, including the Honouring Life Program, Family Resource Network, and the Metis Community Adult Learning (MCAL) program to offer ongoing youth programming, both virtually and in person.

BLMS Life Skills Journey

Impact Numbers April - August 2021

302

Total
Attendance

42

Total Unique
Participants

30

Activity Kits
Distributed

309

Facebook
Followers

9

Online
Activities

BLMS youth look forward to camp, with many aspiring to be junior facilitators. This was apparent for Allison as she recalled a camper asking her every day if he could come to the next camp or if he could come next year. For Allison “summer camp is where the heart is”. With her continuity and leadership in delivering youth programming, many BLMS youth recognize her as a community leader and she is glad that they can come to her anytime.



Final Thoughts

For more than a decade, BLMS's capacity to develop and deliver culturally responsive youth programs has grown. In reflecting on her journey, Allison believes that Metis youth in BLMS need ongoing programming that fosters their leadership skills through mentorship and peer support. We look forward to seeing what BLMS and its emerging leaders will create for youth in the coming years. Thank you for our journey together! Check out the Metis Settlement Life Skills Story Map for a snapshot of the project's journey:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b02e0a4516ea406c856da72421e53351>

“Life is a journey and we all need help to get through it” - BLMS Facilitator 2019



PEAVINE METIS SETTLEMENT YOUTH LIFE SKILLS JOURNEY PROGRAM

43% increase in Peavine campers who "agree" to the statement "I try to do the best job at whatever I do"

29% increase to the statement "I make choices based on what I think is right and not what others tell me"



Our Journey Together...

In 2018, Peavine Metis Settlement and the Metis Settlement Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) research team from the University of Alberta forged a partnership to foster community-led youth programming. With the shared goal of building youth resilience, self-esteem, and leadership. Peavine MSLSJ team has hosted 3 years of summer camps and offered after-school programming in the Fall of 2020.

Over 100 Peavine youth have attended MSLSJ programs delivered by trained Peavine facilitators. The summer camps featured activities that focused on building self-esteem, community, respectful relationships, and refusal skills to name a few. Also featured in Peavine MSLSJ were outdoor education, digital storytelling, community farm visits and guest speakers. Youth surveys completed before and after camp in 2018 and 2019 documented positive change in several areas relating to individual strength.

Since the partnership began, 11 Peavine young adults completed comprehensive training to facilitate summer camps that included standard first aid certification and

hands-on learning to build leadership and mentoring skills. Training took place in Gift Lake Metis Settlement where Peavine facilitators joined fellow East Prairie and Gift Lake facilitators to learn MSLSJ content and develop their own summer camp schedules. Every summer Peavine MSLSJ saw returning facilitators who continue to build on their experience of leading previous summer camps and mentoring new facilitators. Lyndon Anderson, a returning facilitator, stepped into a leadership role as the Peavine Life Skills Journey Facilitator/School Liaison in the spring of 2020. While navigating the global pandemic, Lyndon developed and delivered after-school youth life skills programs both in-person and online.

"One of my main goals is to become that mentor and help with all the other youth and community, [Life Skills] brought me out of my shell, and kind of made me who I am right now" - Lyndon Anderson 2021

This Summer and Impacts ...

In spring 2021, Lyndon Anderson led youth outdoor survival skills workshops which included shelter building, fire building, and animal tracking. He hired 3 returning facilitators to prepare for and facilitate the long-awaited summer camp. The Peavine MSLSJ team delivered learning through play activities in both July and August.

Upon completion of the MSLSJ camps, two facilitators used their skills, stepping into the role of supervisors of the Peavine Summer Work Program. The Summer Work Program wrapped up with the Peavine Guns and Gang Prevention Youth Conference. This conference was collaboratively organized with several Peavine organizations, including the Family Resource Network, Honouring Life program, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and Peavine Life Skills Journey program, among many others. The day included Tipi Teachings, 7 Sacred Teachings, Metis jiggers, motivational speakers, and ended with a round dance.

*"Being good role models for the kids and being able to teach them new things. I guess that was positive effect I feel I had on them" -
Facilitator 2019*

There was this young girl who came to camp the first day and we knew she had lots of stuff and struggles going on in her life. At first she did not pay attention or want to do the planned activities. The facilitation team made sure we supported her and over a few weeks we noticed she was coming out of her shell. She started hanging out with the kids, she would start to raise her hand when we'd be asking questions. Eventually, she would come to camp ready to participate, really listening and paying attention. We worked with the parents and they also noticed the change in their daughter at the end of camp.

-Story shared by Facilitation team 2021



PVMS Life Skills Journey

Impact Numbers April - August 2021

201

Total
Attendance

47

Total Unique
Participants

3

Survival Skill
Workshops

135

Facebook
Followers



"I think [Life Skills Programming] would have an impact on drugs and alcohol in our community. Like drunk driving, working together as a community, (...) stress and anxiety and grief and loss"
- Facilitator 2019

Final Thoughts

Peavine MSLSJ has grown significantly in 4 short years, enhancing community capacity to lead youth life skills programming. It is with great excitement that we celebrate Lyndon Anderson's continued work with Peavine in the Fall as the School Liaison, Youth & Recreation Coordinator, and Social Media Manager. In his new position, Lyndon will facilitate culturally grounded youth programming to help Peavine youth grow into strong Metis adults. The Metis Settlements Life Skills Journey project is honoured and grateful for our journey together over the past few years and we look forward to seeing what will come next! Check out the Metis Settlement Life Skills Story Map for a snapshot of the project's journey: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b02e0a4516ea406c856da72421e53351>

"We take them on a quick journey through life skills, that's what we teach them!" - Facilitator 2019



GIFT LAKE METIS SETTLEMENT YOUTH LIFE SKILLS JOURNEY PROGRAM

Our Journey Together....

5 years ago Gift Lake Metis Settlement (GLMS) and the Metis Settlement Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) Research Team from the University of Alberta forged a partnership to develop and grow community-led and culturally grounded youth life skills programming. Tammy Anderson immediately championed the program by hosting facilitator training and inviting both East Prairie and Peavine MSLSJ facilitators to participate three years in a row.

GLMS' first summer camp in 2017 was a huge success, with 6 strong GLMS facilitators leading one of the largest summer camps MSLSJ has ever hosted. Over 150 youth participate in 4 years of summer camp and after-school programming in March 2020.

GLMS integrated cultural teachings such as Cree language, fiddling, and culture camp into LS programs. Youth surveys completed before and after camp in 2017 and 2018 documented positive change in several areas relating to individual strength.

Positive responses to the survey question "I live in a very caring community" increased 16% between 2017 and 2018

27 % increase in the Gift Lake 7-10 yr response to the statement: "I respect the beliefs and values of people who are different than me"



"I'm so happy my kid gets to participate in this. I'm so proud of Gift Lake for doing this for the kids now. The kids are happier and they're excited to go to camp, and they say they're having fun. I feel like it's impacted both the parents and the kids." - Gift Lake Parent 2018

"The new experience that I got was being a leader; something I'm striving for, that leadership role. I wanted to step out of my shell and try to become a leader. "

*- Elisha Lamouche
2018*

*"We helped them come out of their shells more, they got very comfortable with us" - Facilitator
2019*

Over 5 years, Gift Lake MSLSJ program has trained and employed over 20 community-based facilitators. Each facilitator completed over 100 hours of hands-on life skills and leadership training as well as standard first aid certification.

In 2018, Elisha Lamouche and Delauren Anderson stepped into leadership roles as program assistants and co-led facilitator training with the University team to new and returning facilitators coming from the tri-settlements. They managed and coordinated all the summer camps across 3 Settlements. In collaboration with Mathew Cunningham, East Prairie program assistant, they formed a community-based leadership team and delivered 4 weeks of intensive facilitator training.

In 2020, Ruth Calaheson was hired on as the Youth Life Skills Coordinator to deliver year round after school life skills programming. Due to COVID-19, Ruth transitioned to online activities that include online cooking classes and created Life skills activity kits for families to use.



This Summer and Impacts ...

In collaboration with the Family Resource Network, Tammy Anderson and Corinne Anderson Noskey developed a culturally responsive youth program that connected Metis knowledge and ways of being with relevant life skills modules. They hired returning LSJ facilitator, C.J. Anderson, along with a new team member Elisha Cunningham to deliver the 7 week Miyo Pimatsowin Youth Summer program that combined the 7 Sacred teachings and life skills program. This innovative youth program culminated with a week-long Culture camp led by Elders and knowledge keepers and concluded with a Sash ceremony for participants who completed all 7 teachings. Check out our Miyo Pimatsowin story at:

Storymap:<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3a7e2ce124784ca18be3ef8d3c7858c7>

GLMS Life Skills Journey

Impact Numbers April - August 2021

108

Total
Attendance

24

Total Unique
Participants

140

Activity Kits
Distributed

42

Facebook
Followers

7

Online
Activities

"I think the kids that went to camp treat the older people with more respect now because they used to not listen or just not care what the adults had to say or anyone older than them. I feel like they have a better understanding of respect and boundaries and things like that." - Facilitator 2017



Final Thoughts

Gift Lake MSLSJ was built by community champions who saw the need for sustained community-led youth life skills programming. Our partnership nurtured community capacity to develop and deliver programming that fosters youth resilience, self-esteem, and leadership. C.J Anderson, Miyo Pitmasowin facilitator, believes that there is a need for more youth programs that focus on Metis heritage, Cree Language, and cultural teachings. Other facilitators also contend that community-led youth life skills programs help to prepare kids for their journey in life. We are so grateful to have shared this journey with GLMS and we look forward to seeing how youth programming in Gift Lake grows in the future. Check out our Story Map for a snapshot of the project's journey:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b02e0a4516ea406c856da72421e53351>

"When I think about the kids, it's setting them up for the journey of their lives and having them be prepared for certain things that might come up, [the] unexpected, or they just [have] the skills to adapt to whatever might come their way" - Program Assistant 2018



ELIZABETH METIS SETTLEMENT YOUTH LIFE SKILLS JOURNEY PROGRAM

Between 2015 and 2018, reports of bullying incidents decreased 29% in Elizabeth Settlement.

Elizabeth 7-10 yr: "I can ask people in my community for help at any time" ↑ 21.

Elizabeth 11-14 yr: "I think we should all be fair to others" ↑ 16%.

Our Journey Together...

Over 7 years ago, Elizabeth Metis Settlement children and young adult leaders joined the Metis Settlements Life Skills Journey (MSLSJ) camp in Fishing Lake. After two summers of joint training and youth summer programming, Elizabeth transitioned to hosting their own camp and facilitator training. In 2017, the inaugural Elizabeth MSLSJ summer camp was at capacity, a trend that would follow each summer. As a champion of the MSLSJ program, Elizabeth hosted facilitator training 3 summers in a row, inviting Buffalo Lake facilitators each year. Since 2015, Elizabeth MSLSJ has hosted more than 175 children at camp. Youth surveys completed before and after camp documented positive change in several areas relating to individual strength.

More than 20 Elizabeth young leaders have completed intensive Life Skills Facilitator training that focused on developing leadership, mentorship, and team-building skills. Each summer Elizabeth hired the largest group of facilitators, averaging 8 facilitators with many returning to mentor new hires. In 2018, an Skye Desjarlais, stepped into a leadership role as the new program assistant overseeing training and camps. Returning facilitators continued to have a lasting impact on MSLSJ, encouraging campers to return.



"We're teaching the youth important stuff like to be an upstander and self-esteem" - Facilitator 2019

“I have a lot more confidence now; when I started I was so shy I was hardly talking but now I have more confidence. I feel it helped me open up my shell. It got me out of my comfort zone.” Program Assistant 2018

“Having the parents come up to me (...) telling me how their kids are really enjoying camp, and they're so excited to (...) come back the next day” - Kim Gadwa 2021

In the summer of 2020, one of Elizabeth’s most experienced MSLSJ facilitators transitioned into a leadership role as the new program assistant. Utilizing over 5 years of experience, Kim Gadwa led the creation of a new after-school program. While mentoring a returning facilitator, Kaylee Desjarlais, the two developed programs that focused on hopes and dreams, cooking skills, arts and crafts, while offering take-home activity kits.



“Being in this program for the past six years, (...) [it] brought me to who I am today. (..) a role model to the kids. When I first started the program I couldn't talk in front of people so it got me out there. It taught me (...) what I wanted to do (..) and working with kids is what I love to do” - Kim Gadwa 2021



This Summer and Impacts ...

With public health restrictions loosening, Elizabeth MSLSJ was eager to bring back the well-known summer camp. Kim and Kaylee, worked with two new facilitators and delivered several weeks of youth life skills summer day camps for ages 7-14. Activities included outdoor education, self-care, stress and anxiety, grief & loss, anger & conflict resolution, and role models to name a few. The MSLSJ team was fortunate to be invited to support the Elizabeth culture camp in August, where they organized youth activities and games.

EMS Life Skills Journey

Impact Numbers April - August 2021

277

Total
Attendance

41

Total Unique
Participants

25

Activity Kits
Distributed

116

Facebook
Followers

"A great number of kids came to camp, they really enjoyed it, and so did I!" - Facilitator 2019

"We have a kid in the 11 to 14 camp, he's 14, and he was there I think since the first [camp]. I see him working, helping the kids, especially yesterday taking care of the younger ones. And so it's made him already be, what's the word I'm looking for [Like a mentor?] yeah!"

- Kim Gadwa 2021



Final Thoughts

Community champions such as Alvin Desjarlais and strong young adult leaders grew the Elizabeth MSLSJ program where the summer camps were always at full capacity with children and youth eager to learn and connect with local community leaders. Kim Gawda believes that programs that support intergenerational learning and interactions will help youth grow into strong Metis adults. We look forward to seeing what Elizabeth and its emerging leaders will create for youth in the coming years. Thank you for our journey together! Check out the Metis Settlement Life Skills Story Map for a snapshot of the project's journey:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b02e0a4516ea406c856da72421e53351>

"These skills will help you turn into the person you want to be, it's your journey to be that person." - Facilitator 2018



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