



News Release

Reconciliation Blanket Gifted to the Sunshine Coast Regional District

Sechelt, BC – July 23, 2020 – On July 20, 2020 a wool blanket by shíshálh professional weaver and artist Jessica Silvey was gifted to the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) in commitment to the journey we are weaving together, towards reconciliation.

The design of the blanket begins with four inches of twined weaving on each end of the blanket, as a base, with the main body being woven with a Cherokee basket weave pattern called 'Unbroken Friendship'.

"I have chosen this design, as to me it represents the journey that we all need to take together towards reconciliation," says Jessica Silvey. "It will not be an easy journey, as there is deep-rooted distrust, fear, and generational trauma in our community and hesitation on the settlers' side, [as] both sides are truly entering into the unknown."

"Unbroken Friendship" is prominently showcased in the lobby of the SCRD's administration building in a display case designed and constructed by shíshálh artist and wood worker Shain Jackson.

"'Unbroken Friendship' is a symbol of hope and healing for our entire Sunshine Coast Community," says Lori Pratt, SCRD Board Chair. "We are deeply honoured to receive Ms. Silvey's weaving and grateful to the syiyaya Reconciliation Movement for this critical work. There are many more steps on our journey, and as we recognize the pain and transgressions of the past, we look to the path ahead and how we can move forward, together."

In total, four master weavers were commissioned by the syiyaya Reconciliation Movement to design and create reconciliation blankets and sashes as part of a project titled "Weaving Tears into Dreams of Reconciliation" that honours the shíshálh art form of weaving.

The syiyaya Reconciliation Movement is a grassroots movement for all peoples within the shíshálh homelands, inspired by and dedicated to the Survivors of Indian Residential Schools, including Day Scholars.

The "Weaving Tears into Dreams of Reconciliation" Project was designed to celebrate the cultural vitality of shíshálh culture through the art form of wool weaving, provide an opportunity for members of the public to participate in the weaving of three friendship blankets and two ceremonial sashes as they learned from four shíshálh Master Weavers, and to raise awareness and cultivate dialogue about the importance of reconciliation in the shíshálh homelands.

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Left: Jessica Silvey
Right: Shain Jackson