SPARC'D INNOVATION & CONNECTION





RESPONDING

& ADAPTING TO CHANGE

I-SPARC WOULD LIKE TO
RECOGNIZE THE MEMBERS OF ITS
FIRST BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR
THEIR FOUNDATIONAL WORK AND
COMMITMENT TO THE CONTINUED
SUCCESS OF THE ORGANIZATION:

- Corinne McKay President
- Alan Edkins
 Vice President
- Cheryl Charlie Secretary/Treasurer
- Dr. Curtis Smecher Director
- Wally Samuel Director
- Annette Morgan
 Director
- Milly Price Director
- Travis Kruger
 Director

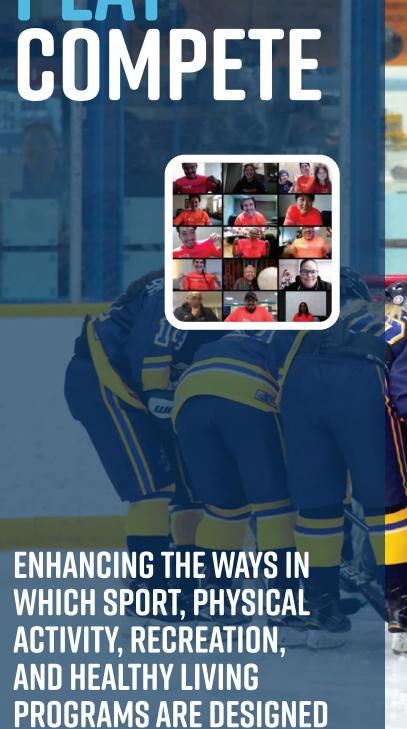
I-SPARC is also deeply grateful to the BCAAFC for serving as its host agency for 11 years and to its three Partner Agencies for their ongoing support with the implementation of the Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Strategy.

ON MARCH II, 2020, THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) DECLARED COVID-19 TO BE A GLOBAL PANDEMIC. THE TIMING OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT PRECIPITATED IMMEDIATE ACTION FROM I-SPARC'S LEADERSHIP TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Drawing on the guidance of the WHO, as well as the federal and provincial governments, the decision was made to suspend all program activities indefinitely and cancel upcoming events. With the fiscal 2020/21 year starting just a few weeks later, it was clear to the I-SPARC team that this was going to be a year like no other, one that would require an enormous amount of adaptability and resourcefulness.

These are not new concepts for I-SPARC. Since 2009, the organization has been dedicated to making participation in sport, physical activity, and recreation a priority for Indigenous youth and their families. As a direct result of the programs delivered under the Aboriginal Sport, Recreation & Physical Activity Strategy, the first broadbased strategy of its kind in Canada, access and participation in sport, physical activity and recreation has increased every year since I-SPARC was formed. To continue to remain responsive, the Strategy had to stay focused on the needs of those it served. In 2019, after a lengthy consultation with community sport, physical activity, recreation, and healthy living leaders; organizations and individuals from a variety of sectors and communities across BC; and I-SPARC's Partner Agencies, a new Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Strategy was created. This unified, youth-centred and cohesive plan is locally driven, yet provincially focused.

The year 2020 marked an important milestone for I-SPARC. After a multi-year organizational design process in conjunction with I-SPARC's three Partner Agencies, a new governance framework, including a constitution and bylaws, was created. In May 2020, I-SPARC incorporated under the leadership of the inaugural Board of Directors appointed for a nine-month term. The Board, representative of First Nations, Métis, and Aboriginal Friendship Centres, was tasked with implementing the new framework, establishing operational policies and procedures, and building the organization's capacity as it transitioned out of its host-agency relationship with BCAAFC. Through the expertise and balanced perspectives of the Directors, these objectives were met successfully. In February 2021, I-SPARC's membership elected a new Board of Directors.



AND DELIVERED WITHIN

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES.



THE 4-PILLAR PLAN

The Strategy is organized and supported by Four Pillars that help create responsive and enduring programs to have a positive impact on the health and well-being of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities across BC.

HEALTHY LIVING Self-Empowerment

SPORT Strengthening Pathways

4

ENGAGEMENT Inspiring Participation

4

SUSTAINABILITY Building Capacity

A HOLISTIC VISION OF WELLNESS

The Strategy is based on a holistic approach to health and wellness, a common thread across our diverse cultures, and acknowledges the interconnectedness of the physical, mental (intellectual and emotional), cultural, and spiritual facets of life.

WHAT IS I-SPARC?

The Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council (I-SPARC) is a provincial organization established with the purpose of improving the health outcomes of Indigenous peoples by supporting and encouraging physically active individuals, families, and communities. The programs and services delivered by I-SPARC are designed to build capacity and increase access to sport, recreation, and physical activity in First Nations communities, Métis Chartered Communities, Aboriginal Friendship Centres, schools, and other delivery agencies throughout the province.

HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAMS

- Regional Leader Training Sessions (RTS)
- · Indigenous RunWalk (IRW)
- Honour Your Health Challenge (HYHC)
- FitNation
- · HealthBeat
- · Community Project Grants
- · Warriors of Wellness (WOW)
- School Physical Activity and Physical Literacy (SPA-PL) Project

HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAMS HAVE BECOME THE CORNERSTONE
OF COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH PROMOTION AND ARE DESIGNED
TO TRAIN AND SUPPORT PASSIONATE VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY
CHAMPIONS IN DELIVERING THEIR OWN PROGRAMS.

In 2020/21, I-SPARC managed to maintain the forward momentum of this program area and even expanded the range of existing initiatives. After new safety protocols were established and I-SPARC's Return to Activity Guidelines were circulated, a total of 179 programs were delivered.

REGIONAL LEADER TRAINING SESSIONS

Each fall I-SPARC delivers a series of five regionally based Healthy Living Leader Training Sessions. However, in 2020, this was not possible due to COVID-19. As a result, the organization took the training online, hosting 4 virtual Healthy Living Leader Training sessions and training 89 IRW and 169 HYHC leaders for a total of 258 trained leaders.

IRW

The Indigenous RunWalk (IRW) program, now in its fifteenth year, trains community leaders to deliver an 8- or 13-week program to help participants prepare for a 5K or 10K running or walking event. After 89 IRW leaders were trained online, 59 leaders went on to deliver programs to over 2,000 participants. Adjustments included virtual race participation, staggered groups, and socially distanced race-day events, in addition to Sharing Circles that were hosted on Zoom.

In June 2020, I-SPARC team members assisted in the coordination and promotion of a virtual Tears to Hope Relay, which originated from an IRW program. Over 200 people participated in the relay to increase awareness and honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The relay was so successful that the non-profit Tears to Hope Society plans to maintain the virtual element of this annual event after restrictions have eased.

HYHC

The Honour Your Health Challenge (HYHC) program empowers leaders to design their own Healthy Living program. This year, Healthy Living Leaders demonstrated creativity and perseverance in finding solutions to keep their communities healthy and active. 97 programs were delivered in 2020/21, ranging from food box dropoffs to online physical activity challenges to the development of community gardens. The popularity of this program grew even in the midst of the pandemic, which speaks to the ongoing demand for community-led initiatives.

FITNATION

In April 2020, the I-SPARC team got creative about providing new physical activity options for participants. I-SPARC offered community leader-led workout videos and a professionally produced "FitNation Home Workout Series." As restrictions changed, FitNation leaders adapted their program delivery by taking programs outside, recording workouts for participants at home, and using online platforms to host program events. There were over 600 participants in FitNation programs this year. Additionally, I-SPARC launched "FitNation Fridays," offering live workouts for all FitNation leaders. In December 2020, 10 FitNation 1.0 leaders were trained as well as 6 FitNation 2.0 leaders. For the Spring 2021 FitNation online session, 13 1.0 leaders were trained.

HEALTHBEAT

HealthBeat is a complementary program that offers screenings for Healthy Living program participants to learn about their physical health, with a focus on the risks of heart disease and diabetes, and to experience the positive medicinal benefits of regular physical activity. Normally, participants are tested before and after their participation in the IRW, HYHC, and FitNation programs, allowing them to track the results of their increased activity. However the 2020 post-screenings and 2021 screenings were cancelled to keep communities safe. With the assistance of community experts, I-SPARC staff redesigned the HealthBeat resources to include more cultural activities and created three new handouts on sleep, nutrition, and mental wellness. To further enhance the training component of HealthBeat for both staff and community, an online module is currently being designed for community health practitioners.



RETURN TO ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

In June 2020, following the release of viaSport's Return to Sport Guidelines (based on recommendations from the Provincial Health Officer), a working group was created to develop I-SPARC's Return to Activity Guidelines. The guidelines were completed in August 2020 and shared through I-SPARC's regional networks along with a survey designed to gauge level of readiness to return to activity among Indigenous communities.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS













COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS

Each year, I-SPARC provides community grants ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 for Healthy Living leaders to support their IRW, HYHC or FitNation programs. This year, the grant application included a section for the applying organization to outline their safety plans. During 2020/21, I-SPARC administered 169 Healthy Living grants, totalling \$156,500. In addition, the top three schools from the November 2020 WOW Challenge each received Healthy Living grant prizes.

WOW

A new addition to the Healthy Living initiatives, the Warriors of Wellness (WOW) program offers an online school-to-school challenge that tracks students' Healthy Living habits, while empowering them to make healthier choices. This program tracks six key health indicators for each student: physical activity, nutrition, screen time, sleep, hydration, and mental wellness. The fiscal year 2019/20 was the first full year of WOW programming and many teachers reported that the WOW program had already been adopted into regular curriculum. Since it was early days in the pandemic, the April 2020 Warriors of Wellness Challenge was cancelled. However, the I-SPARC team soon began to promote a November 2020 WOW challenge to schools within the First Nations School Association (FNSA) and schools on-reserve. Twelve FNSA schools participated in the challenge, with a total of 158 students joining in.

SCHOOL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PHYSICAL LITERACY (SPA-PL) PROJECT

The School Physical Activity and Physical Literacy (SPA-PL) project supports Kindergarten – Grade 7 educators in BC to build capacity, knowledge, and confidence in delivering physical activity and physical literacy opportunities in schools. As part of this project, I-SPARC (in partnership with respective communities) has developed multiple resources and training opportunities for FNSA schools and public schools that have high Indigenous student populations.

Professional development opportunities and resources includes virtual workshops, webinars, PLAYBuilder, downloadable resources, eLearning courses, Linking Indigenous Cultural Sports and Activities with Physical Literacy card sets, and Métis Jigging instructional videos and accompanying handouts.

CULTURAL FITNESS

I-SPARC delivered two distinct virtual interactive series, "Pow-wow Impact" and "Jig-Fit" in collaboration with a professional Métis dance instructor. The sessions focused on celebrating culture and physical activity while learning some of the basic moves of pow-wow dancing and jigging. Offered over a number of weeks, the classes averaged approximately 50 distinct logins from individuals, families, and youth groups from across the province.



INDIGENOUS LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

In partnership with the Sport for Life Society, the Aboriginal Sport Circle developed the Indigenous Long-Term Participant Development Pathway (ILTPD) in recognition of the fact that mainstream pathways for sport development do not necessarily align with Indigenous needs or experiences.

In 2020/21, I-SPARC coordinated and promoted the Sport for Life e-learning module: "Stepping Stones to Indigenous Sport and Physical Activity Participation." This year, 50 participants completed the e-module which provides an introduction to the ILTPD and a certificate upon completion.

PHYSICAL LITERACY 101: AN INDIGENOUS LENS

Now more than ever, physical literacy is being recognized as an important component of sport, recreation, health, and education. Physical activity for children is more engaging and fun when they are physically literate. Ideally, for children to be active for life, they develop their physical literacy at a young age.

In 2020/21, I-SPARC and Sport for Life collaborated to develop the workshop "Physical Literacy 101: Indigenous Lens." The workshop provided attendees with the concept of the Holistic Model, the ILTPD, and the connection to physical literacy. Examples were shared on how to better meet the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of participants in support of healthy lifestyles and positive outcomes. Four virtual workshops were delivered with a total of 71 participants.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES: ACTIVE FOR LIFE WORKSHOP

In partnership with the Aboriginal Sport Circle and Sport for Life, I-SPARC created the Indigenous Communities: Active for Life resource and accompanying full-day workshop to inspire community leaders to deliver sustainable programs that promote the holistic development of their participants. Upon completion of the workshop, participants received:

- Tools, resources, and action plans
- An understanding of the importance of physical literacy
- Ideas to support individual needs

Given the high demand for the workshop and the limitations for in-person delivery during the pandemic, I-SPARC collaborated with Sport for Life through 2020-21 to develop an online workshop delivery format for implementation in 2021/22.





COMMUNITY SPORT DEVELOPMENT

Each of I-SPARC's six Regional Coordinators works with their respective Regional Committees and directly with communities to respond to the needs and priorities of the region. All regional sport development activities are focused on increasing youth participation and building leadership capacity.

When restrictions eased this year, several in-person community sport development camps were delivered with a total of 800 participants. In addition, a variety of courses were offered online, allowing for 303 coaches to be certified.

Overall, I-SPARC delivered 28 youth sport development camps and coaching courses for over 1,100 participants.

REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

To maintain connections with communities across I-SPARC's six regions, each Regional Coordinator launched monthly regional newsletters to share information including virtual program opportunities and COVID-19 updates.

This year, the annual Regional Engagement Meetings (REMs) were held virtually via Zoom. The Northwest and Northeast regions delivered a combined session and a total of 133 participants attended the five REM series held in November through December 2020.

The REMs covered discussions about the COVID-19 pandemic, safe return to activity for participants in their communities, the delivery of mental wellness presentation "Support Strategies During Uncertain Times", and an overview of the new I-SPARC governance framework.

RFORMANC



CHAMPIONSHIPS AND ATHLET DEVELOPMENT CAMPS

As delivering in-person Provincial Championships an Athlete Development Camps was not possible this year, I-SPARC took the opportunity to deliver a series of sport psychology webinars in partnership with PacificSport Okanagan and PacificSport Vancouver Island. Themes included performing under pressure and dealing with burnout. A total of 10 webinars were delivered and 314 participants attended the virtual events. A majority of the recorded sessions are now available on I-SPARC's YouTube channel.

TEAM BC

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of the Regina 2020 National Aboriginal Hockey Championships (NAHC) and the Halifax 2020 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG). Thousands of athletes and coaches were affected across Turtle Island. In response, the Halifax NAIG Host Society delivered a weeklong series of "NAIG at Home" virtual events and activities from July 10-18, 2020, and promoted the series on various social media platforms with the hashtag #NAIGatHOME. Highlights of the week included virtual competitions, activities and panel discussions, a virtual market, prizes, bingo and more.





communities by reducing barriers and increasing access to sport, recreation, and physical activity programs.



During the winter season, I-SPARC launched its annual **Equipment Grant Program**, accepting applications from First Nations communities, Métis Chartered Communities, **Aboriginal Friendship Centres,** Indigenous schools, and other non-profit organizations that deliver Indigenous recreation programs. The program supports the purchase of equipment to be used to promote healthy active lifestyles for Indigenous

This year, barriers to participation were further exacerbated by the pressures and restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In recognition of the heightened need for access to equipment, I-SPARC was pleased to be able to accommodate an increase to the maximum grant amount. **Grant applications ranged from** \$500 up to \$3,000.

The response to the grant application call-out was the highest ever received to date, with a total of 167 applications. 118 communities or organizations across the six regions of the province were awarded grants for a total of \$278,687.

THE PREMIER'S AWARDS The Premier's Awards for Indigenous Youth Excellence in Sport recognizes athletes who have achieved excellence in performance sport and are regarded for

in Sport recognizes athletes who have achieved excellence in performance sport and are regarded for their leadership qualities both on and off the field of play. In 2020/21, 30 recipients (17 males, 13 females) were selected from across all six regions and were recognized virtually in early February 2021. Of the 30 recipients, 10 athletes (5 males, 5 females) were selected for the Provincial Awards and were honoured virtually in October 2021.



THE BC SPORTS HALL OF FAME

As public recognition is an important part of the Strategy, I-SPARC is continuing to work with the BC Sports Hall of Fame to increase the profile and awareness of Indigenous athletes and role models to share their stories. In recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day, several one-minute promotional videos showcasing achievements of Indigenous athletes played in the gallery throughout the month of June 2020.

THE PREMIER'S AWARDS 2020 PROVINCIAL RECIPIENTS

- HILLARY BIRKETT -Figure Skating, Track & Field, Métis Nation BC
- COLTON CAMERON Hockey, Football, Basketball,
 Baseball, Soccer, Track & Field,
 Ultimate Frisbee,
 Métis Nation BC
- GRACE CURRIE -Softball, North Central Métis
- ELLASHANI GEORGE, Kakaso'las -War Canoe, Soccer, Kwikwasut'inuxw, Ławit'sis and Oneida
- CLINTON KABONI Field Lacrosse, Cross-Country,
 Nipissing First Name on
- AIDAN LENHART-BAKER -Lacrosse,
 Squamish Nation
- KENDRICK LOUNSBURY -Football, Namus First Nation
- OLIVIA LOUNSBURY Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer, Track
 & Field, Swimming, Badminton,
 Tabltan Nation
- · KIERAN MCKAY -Lacrosse, Michel Band
- TAYA SUTTILL Soccer, Basketball,
 Métis Nation BC

MIND-BODY CONNECTION

Mental wellness has always been an integral part of I-SPARC's work and the holistic approach that underpins its Provincial Strategy, but the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic demanded a greater focus. With limited in-person interactions, the importance of the mental health component of I-SPARC's program delivery became more apparent.

For Healthy Living programs, workbooks developed for leaders were enhanced to include additional resources and new information on mental wellness.

Additionally, I-SPARC staff worked with mental health professionals to develop a three-part mental wellness webinar series.

For performance and community sport programs, I-SPARC worked with other sport organizations to develop a series of sport psychology webinars designed with the Indigenous performance athlete in mind. Supporting coaches and athletes was top-of-mind for the I-SPARC team.





GOING DIGITAL

I-SPARC continues to engage with Indigenous peoples and communities across the province through the expansion of I-SPARC's social media pages and the use of existing technologies including Zoom. I-SPARC has pages on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok.

I-SPARC's YouTube channel offers a variety of training tools and resources, including FitNation exercises and home workouts, mental performance webinars, Indigenous RunWalk coaching tips and a cooking show, "Food is Medicine."

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE SHARED GOALS

The collaboration with these three Partner Agencies has been intrinsic to I-SPARC's success:

- First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)
- · Métis Nation BC (MNBC)
- BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC)



THE ENTIRE I SPARC TEAM IS PROUD OF THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS THIS YEAR, AND ARE INSPIRED BY THE RESILIENT RESPONSES OF COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE PROVINCE.

THERE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE MORE
CHALLENGES ON THE JOURNEY AHEAD, BUT BY
STAYING CONNECTED AND HONOURING THE
HOLISTIC APPROACH TO IMPROVING HEALTH
OUTCOMES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, WE CAN
BUILD HEALTHIER LIVES AND FUTURES FOR OUR
COMMUNITIES AND GENERATIONS TO COME.



We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport and the Ministry of Health.

Canadä

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.





Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council

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Move | Play | Compete

Board of Directors

Corinne McKay President
Alan Edkins Vice President
Cheryl Charlie Secretary/Treasurer

Dr. Curtis Smecher Director
Wally Samuel Director
Louise Ormerod Director

Elected Regional Committee Leads

Cheryl Charlie Fraser
Bruce Baptiste Interior
Ken Edzerza Northeast
DeWayne Robinson Northwest

Courtenay Gibson Vancouver Coastal Milly Price & Wally Samuel Vancouver Island

Senior Management & Staff

Rick Brant Chief Executive Officer
Alex Nelson Elder & Senior Advisor

Lara Mussell Savage Director, Sport

Robynne Edgar Director, Healthy Living
Tara Nault Special Advisor
Darren Lee Manager, Finance

Felicia Greekas Manager, Premier's Awards & Communications
Michelle Webster Manager, Sport Development & Community

Engagement

Alissa Assu Provincial Coordinator, Performance Sport
Kim Leming Provincial Coordinator, Sport for Life Programs
Jessie Toynbee Manager, Healthy Living Program Operations
Daniel Young-Mercer Provincial Coordinator, Physical Activity,

Training & Development

Susan Meier Provincial Coordinator, Indigenous RunWalk

Amanda de Faye Provincial Coordinator, HealthBeat

Patti Campbell Administrative Coordinator

Alex Dolen Project Coordinator, School Physical Activity

& Recreation Coordinator

Andrae Dennis Finance & Administrative Coordinator

Regional Coordinators

Alana Cook Fraser
Bernard "Buzz" Manuel Interior
Allie Auger Northeast
Toni Muldoe Northwest

Peter Natrall Vancouver Coastal
James Nyce Vancouver Island





