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“Coming Home For the Children” short film premieres October in Sechelt, Vernon, and online

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Charlene SanJenko, Indigenous Storyteller, Founder, and Media Visionary of PowHERhouse and reGEN media along with her creative team announce the premiere of her inaugural short film next month.

Filmed in the scenic valley of the Splatsin Nation, the southernmost tribe of the Secwepemc Nation in the interior of British Columbia, Coming Home For the Children is a short documentary profiling a seven-term former First Nations Chief, Wayne Christian - whose Indian name, Wenecwtsin, means Big Voice That Speaks the Truth - and hosted by SanJenko as an adult-adoptee and foster care survivor.

The film's screening will open the Sechelt Arts Festival at the Raven's Cry Theatre on Friday, October 13th, premiere at the Vernon Towne Theatre on Tuesday evening, October 24th and virtually on Monday afternoon, October 30th after a home community screening in Splatsin.

Festival co-producers Diana Robertson and Ross Powell are “honoured and delighted to present the premiere showing of Charlene SanJenko's new film, ‘Coming Home For the Children’, during our inaugural First Festival Films evening showcasing eight incredibly talented Coast filmmakers.”

“We applaud Charlene and the teams at PowHERhouse and reGEN media for bringing this important story to life,” says Enderby & District Branch Manager, Andrew Van Dokkumburg. “We all have a role to play in helping to heal and better understand our Indigenous communities and through this partnership, we can ensure that the film is accessible to all with the hope that those who see it will be inspired to create even greater impact.”

The film travels back and forth between two parallels: the reclaiming of the meaning of “home” for both Charlene and Chief Wayne as they meet for the first time in the Splatsin Nation; and our responsibility - as adults and parents - to intergenerational healing for the children. This was modeled by parents, grandparents, and a young Chief back in 1980 with the Indian Child Caravan led by Chief Wayne himself in 1980 that marched across British Columbia in a fight for Indigenous peoples' rights over the jurisdiction of their children, at which time Charlene was 11 years old and unaware of Chief Wayne's advocacy for the very same rights she had lost as a child in foster care.

“As an Indigenous woman raised in a non-Indigenous environment, I walk in two worlds. I crave to experience each day in an expanded state of my existence, fully awake to my whole life as a spiritual being in a physical body and connecting at a deeper level with my own pain as well as the pain of my ancestors and the healing possible through all my relations.

At our very core, as humans, we can feel how far we are currently from our center. If we’re honest with ourselves and turn down the distractions, I think we can agree that we’re obviously off-kilter. And if we can tune into our heart, our soul, our breath, or whatever your word is, at our center, there is something that we’ve forgotten. I’m not going to say lost. I’m purposely saying that we’ve forgotten. We’ve gone off-track.” — Charlene SanJenko

Watch the trailer for *Coming Home For the Children* here.

According to Statistics Canada data (2021 census), Indigenous children accounted for 53.8 percent of all children in foster care. This has gone up slightly from the 2016 census, which found 52.2 percent of children in care under the age of 14 were Indigenous.

On June 21, 2019, Bill C-92 An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families became law. It is the first time the federal government has exercised its jurisdiction to legislate in the area of Indigenous child welfare. The purposes of the Bill is to recognize Indigenous People’s jurisdiction over child and family services, as part of an inherent and Aboriginal right to self-governance; to establish national standards in this area, in response to the TRC’s Call to Action #4; and to contribute to the implementation of UNDRIP. However, adequate funding to support this new policy is critical. *Source: yellowheadinstitute.org.*

“Thousands of children were removed from their families under Federal and Provincial genocidal laws and policies that robbed these children from their blood ties to their families - their ancestors & their land. ‘Coming Home’ is for each one of you to understand that you are not alone; your connections to your blood is not lost. You do belong with your family and community and Nation. Your journey of connection to yourself begins with all the ups and downs of life. You are the link to the seven Generations that walked before you and the seven Generations yet to come. You are the past, present and future.” — Wenecwtsin

Coming Home For the Children is part of an intentional media franchise, including a digital arts community engagement exhibition, a healing workshop series (in-person or online), limited podcast series, and a future book written jointly by Chief Wayne and Charlene SanJenko: “Our vision is to inspire other Indigenous Elders and Native Chiefs across Turtle Island and around the globe to share and document their stories and provide a sustainable way to do so. We will put a call out to other Indigenous adult-adoptees, especially those taken from Splatsin from 1960 to 1980, and invite them to consider their own Coming Home journey.” Further community screenings, guest appearances, and speaking opportunities will continue in 2024.

PowHERhouse was founded by Charlene Sanjenko in the fall of 2014, and celebrates its 10th Anniversary in changemaking this Fall. It is a 100% Indigenous owned social impact organization with two primary focuses: to support and amplify the leaders we need for a sustainable tomorrow, and to change the narrative for women and Indigenous people using the PowHERful voice of Impact Media. Both of these goals support the acceleration of the 2030 UN Agenda of Sustainability.

reGEN media, a sister organization, was formed in Fall 2021 to explore the field of regenerative media to shift our future narrative. reGEN is the first and only Indigenous-owned and female-led regenerative media studio. Over the next 10 years - and beyond - we will grow a completely different kind of media ecosystem to finance, produce, market and distribute transformative stories by historically underrecognized storytellers in a healthier way.

“What pulls me to regenerative media and this film so powerfully is that ultimately, I’m an optimist. Ultimately, I’m a visionary, and I know it’s in there for most people. I see it. With enough little clues, enough little hits, enough little reminders, enough little insights, I believe, as a society, we can get back on track. We can come home. Remembering precedes reconciliation.” — Charlene SanJenko

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More press clippings:

- “Our Nation Heals: soon to be launched pilot program will help Indigenous people return home” Global News, June 19, 2022 - watch [here](#)
- “Indigenous adoptees reconnected with roots through community program” Global News, September 30, 2022 - watch [here](#)

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For complete EPK, including photos and other media, visit:

regenimpactmedia.com/coming-home/EPK

