



Susan strives for a multifaceted approach to healthcare



When she's not enjoying time with her family and grandchildren, Susan Giesbrecht loves to curl and cross-country ski.

Knowledge of traditional Indigenous healing and modern healthcare practices comes together in Susan Giesbrecht, who brings her passion for promoting mental health and community partnerships to Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council.

“My interest is both historical and cultural,” says Susan, a member of the Bigstone Cree Nation. “My Kokum delivered more than 1,000 babies in the Lesser Slave Lake area and set numerous broken bones and helped locals with healing.

“Her approach was two-spirited, with natural, traditional Native remedies and some modern practices. It became known to me that I was to be trained as a healer, but I chose education instead. Healthcare from two perspectives continues to interest me.”

Education continues to be a priority in her life as Susan pursues her master's degree in psychology at the University of Athabasca to learn more about mental health. “I have a passion for learning and helping others in whatever capacity I can, even in my retirement.”

A life-changing tragedy also taught her the importance of emotional healing.

“My husband was an RCMP officer who was killed in the line of duty many years ago. For years I suffered in silence with depression. This taught me that mental health practitioners need to reach out to people who have been through difficult life experiences, and not wait for them to come forward.”

Her goals on Council include discussing ideas for addressing addiction-treatment in the area as well as finding ways to attract more doctors, nurses and healthcare practitioners to her community. To this end, she's forging better connections and a developing a stronger partnership with town and municipal councils.

Susan believes in the importance of individual responsibility in maintaining one's health and like other Council members, also advocates for groups such as seniors and people who live with disability.

When she's off the clock, family means the world to Susan, who loves to hang out with her grown children and grandkids. She keeps fit and energetic year-round as she hikes, walks, curls, golfs and enjoys both cross-country and downhill skiing.

For more information on the Lesser Slave Lake Health Advisory Council, visit ahs.ca/advisorycouncils, or email lesserslavelake@ahs.ca.