



PHOTO: Stefanie Recollet

*This is the perfect opportunity to pursue my language revitalization project. I hope to take the tools gained back to my community to apply in my road to leadership and encourage other women to become the leaders that we need.*

# Justine Manuel

*First Nations*

*Spaxmn, Okanagan, British Columbia*

I am suknaqinx (Okanagan) and have lived in Spaxmn the majority of my life. I now reside in Tk'emlups, British Columbia. The Okanagan peoples are known as the "beautiful ones." We keep close with our identity by reiterating our nation song "a'li kwu swiwinumtax, a'li kwu suknaqinx, a'li axa tmxwulaxw", meaning, "We are beautiful, because we come from the land, because our land is beautiful." I am a mother of a son, stk'masq't, who is the joy of my life. I am currently a full time student at Thompson Rivers University pursuing my Bachelor of Arts degree.

Spaxmn, or Upper Nicola Band, is a small community within the BC Southern Interior. It is a proud, inclusive Syilx community, which promotes Suxwtxtem, teaches our Captikwl and is committed to building foundations through En'owkin'wixw. Our vision is to be a strong, flourishing community in harmony with our Tmixw. I am passionate about learning and preserving language and culture, and continuing to be rooted to the land. I want to contribute to its future generations, to leave a legacy and a strong foundation for the ones yet to come.

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Indigenous Women in Community Leadership