

JONNY WAKEFIELD

Staff Writer

A First Nations community on Moberly Lake is reeling after a mother and her teenaged daughter were killed in an apparent murder-suicide in their home earlier this month.

Friends and family of Linda Watson, 47, and her 15-year-old daughter Krystina Haggard gathered for a vigil on the Saulteau First Nations reserve Sunday.

Police discovered the two in their home March 17 along with Tony Labrie in an alleged domestic homicide, Saulteau Chief Nathan Parenteau told the CBC.

The BC Coroners Service declined to identify the deceased, citing a policy review. RCMP also declined to comment further Monday.

Yvonne Tupper, Watson's second cousin, said the community is struggling to process the loss.

"It's very devastating," she said. "There's no words to describe the tragedy. It's totally unexpected."

Tupper said Watson was well-liked in the community and known as "our native Martha Stewart" for her craft and culinary streaks.

"She was really creative and good with decorating," Tupper said, adding Watson was enrolled in a chef course through the local college at the time of her death. "She was family oriented: she was really close with her nephews and nieces, her brothers and sisters."

Haggard was an "outstanding" student who had recently won a Skills Canada engineering competition, Parenteau told the CBC.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs drove from Penticton to attend a vigil in the community on Sunday.

He linked the killings to "systemic" violence against First Nations women and girls. According to federal statistics, 16 per cent of all women murdered in Canada between 1980 and 2012 were indigenous, despite making up just four

per cent of the female population.

"This horrific tragedy reverberated across the country," Phillip said. "Within seconds, minutes, hours, every First Nations community was aware of this horrific tragedy, and more importantly what it represents in terms of the ongoing issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls."



Linda Watson and daughter Krystina Haggard. SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Nearly 80 people attended a vigil held outside the home where police found Watson and Haggard after responding to a 911 call March 17.

Tupper said Labrie was a non-indigenous man from Quebec in the area looking for work.

A wake was scheduled for Monday evening, with a celebration of life to be held the following day. The community of 400 lies an hour-and-a-half drive west of Dawson Creek.

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