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FREE

Truth exposed, can healing begin?

A Truth and Reconciliation Commemoration event was held in Saskatoon in early June to coincide with the release of the Commission's preliminary report. See coverage of this historic event on pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19, 22, 23, 27 and 28.

Valerie Harper and her brother Lloyd Isbister comforted their mom, Elder Helen Isbister after she was honoured at the Saskatoon Truth and Reconciliation Commemoration event. Helen was taken from her mother's arms at age five from the Mistawasis First Nation and wound up attending Birtle Indian Residential School for 12 years. Resilient, Helen had 13 children and at age 65 she graduated with a double degree in Social Work and Indian Studies. **(Photo by John Lagimodiere)**

Commission presents gov't with 94 recommendations

By Tiffany Head
For Eagle Feather News

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has concluded that Canada committed "cultural genocide" against Indigenous peoples and used Indian residential schools as its main weapon to accomplish that goal.

In a report that is the result of six years of exhaustive work during which the TRC visited 300 communities and heard from 6,750 survivors, commissioners have exposed Canada's harsh policies governing First Nations people and have given 94 recommendations that it says the federal government should implement to help with reconciliation.

The TRC report alleges the Government of Canada aimed to destroy political and social institutions by seizing land, persecuting spiritual leaders, banning languages, outlawing cultural practices, restricting movement and disrupting families so cultural values can't be passed on to successive generations.

The report also found at least 3,200 children who attended the schools died. The commission that has spent six years examining one of the darkest chapters in Canada's history is winding up its work with a key question left unanswered – exactly how many Aboriginal children died in residential schools?

Justice Murray Sinclair, who heads the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, says the federal government stopped recording the deaths around 1920 after the chief medical officer at Indian Affairs suggested children were dying at an alarming rate.

Sinclair firmly believes that political action needs to be taken to break away from the historical injustices and find a path towards reconciliation.

"Reconciliation requires deliberate, thoughtful and sustained action," said Sinclair.

Sinclair said it is necessary that the federal government adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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A DIVISION OF ABORIGINAL CONSULTING SERVICES

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HELPING KIDS
Cecile Smith is determined to see youngsters thrive in their educational pursuits.
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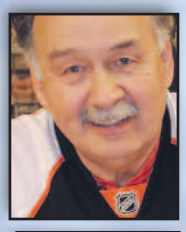

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Whitecap Chief Darcy Bear's old school is honouring him for his successful career as a leader in the community. - Page 18

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Leah Dorion's work is loved by youngsters and she's donated some of her art to the Allen Sapp Gallery. - Page 13

NOT A VICTIM
Football player J.R. LaRose could have been a victim but he says he chose not to be one.
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Welcome to our
National Aboriginal Day Edition
Coming In July - Graduations Issue

CPMA #40027204

Words are not enough: Murray Sinclair

• Continued from Page One

"Central to directing the path of reconciliation will be the Canadian government's adoption of the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – a declaration that received near unanimity at the UN in 2007," said Sinclair. "Shamefully, Canada was the only country that raised objections last fall to a UN document reaffirming the declaration"

Sinclair stated many of the commission's 94 recommendations that were unveiled are based on the principles of the declaration. With the rejection of the declaration from the Harper government Sinclair does not believe that this government is truly sincere in its 2008 apology nor taking action in steps toward reconciliation.

Further evidence of the government's lack of interest came when Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt was one of only a few people at the TRC report release who did not rise for a standing ovation when Commission Chair Justice Sinclair called for a National inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

Also, Prime Minster Harper didn't even make a short walk three blocks over for the release of the report. He also refers to the United Nations Declaration as an "aspirational document."

Commission Chair Murray Sinclair says a 2008 apology was not sincere.

The Harper government's attitude has Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde concerned.

"Action on reconciliation will honour the former students of residential schools and their families and give meaning to the 2008 apology for the Indian residential schools," said Bellegarde.

"The work of the TRC gives Canadians an opportunity to understand their role in our shared history and our shared future, and provides governments an opportunity to work with us as partners in reconciliation. First Nations are committed to action and change.

"It is time to restore our original relationship of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and sharing. It is time for reconciliation. The apology for the Indian residential schools was a shining moment for this country. But that apology compels action; otherwise it will be empty and meaningless.

"Together, we can and must take action to create a brighter future for us all," Bellegarde said.

Now that the survivor's stories have been captured and honoured, reconciliation is the path laid out for the future in the 94 recommendations. According to Justice Sinclair, true reconciliation will take generations and the hope is that this report will not sit on a shelf and gather dust just like the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People from 1996. But it may not happen under Canada's current political leaders.

"We believe the current government is not willing to make good on its claim that it wishes to join with Aboriginal people in Canada in 'a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together' as promised nine years ago," said Sinclair. "Words are not enough."

Commissioners shared their own stories

By Tiffany Head
For Eagle Feather News

At the closing event of the Truth and Reconciliation conference, Dr. Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild, two of the commissioners that worked with Justice Murray Sinclair, spoke about their perspectives on the stories that were shared by the residential school survivors. They also provided their views on the recommendations.

Chief Wilton Littlechild talked about his own experience in residential school and the importance of sports. He says that sports were his personal savior. It was his way out and his way into university. Many other survivors spoke about sports, he noted.

"This was the story we heard from many survivors. Sports provided an outlet to forget about abuse, if only for a second. More than once we heard survivors say that they wouldn't be here if it wasn't for hockey," said Littlechild.

Littlechild says there were some tragic stories (but) the one thing that resonated with every story he heard was hope. He talked about how the government had tried to destroy families and turn family members against each other with their policies. The families overcame all that with strength and resiliency.

"As we seek reconciliation, it is these stories of hope that I turn to, our spirit cannot be broken, and this was one of the recurring messages that stood out for me during the public hearings," Littlechild said.

Littlechild says while there are no easy answers, no magic wand to speed up the reconciliation process, he said that for him there are four solutions that were always out there but were never utilized or capitalized fully. Two of the solutions he describes are like an eagle.

"On one wing we have the treaty and on the other wing we have the declaration and in order for the reconciliation to fly, it will take both" he said.

Dr. Marie Wilson spoke about how the curriculum has to change in schools so that Canada will be informed about Canada's true history.

"We will need to make thoughtful changes to curricula coast to coast to coast so that we will equip and engage students with a broader less Eurocentric vision of our country," said Wilson.

Wilson suggests we need to "call upon the provincial, federal, and territorial governments in consultation and collaboration with survivors, aboriginal peoples and educators to create curricula on residential schools where it does not yet exist, and on treaties and on aboriginal peoples historical and contemporary contributions to Canada."

Wilson said several times that this is just the beginning of the continuation. She said they would uphold their collective healing process because to do otherwise would allow for continued cultural violence, discrimination, and tragedy.

"We will create the change needed so urgently because of the strength, the proven strength of Aboriginal peoples. A strength and extraordinary resilience that we have continued to witness during the long and difficult times.

"I also have to say the equally uplifting times that have brought us here today," said Wilson during her speech.

Phil Fontaine, former chief of assembly of First Nations, was asked to speak as a residential school survivor. He thanked the commissioners for their hard work and for the report they released. He said that Canada will now start transforming into a better world and in his opinion Canada has come of age today.

"This is a historic moment for all survivors, for all of Canada. The significance of this day is not about what has been, but equally, what is to come," said Fontaine.

He believes that Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people will have a future that is going to be healthier and positive and they will be able to pursue their dreams.

Fontaine says the money the survivors received would eventually run out, but the important work of the TRC commission will live on.

Commissioners Marie Wilson and Wilton Littlechild were given the opportunity to share their perspectives on what they heard during the process.

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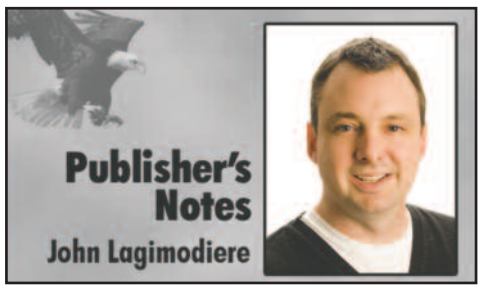
Champions will lead reconciliation, Harper won't



It was with great ceremony and expectation that Justice Murray Sinclair took to the dais to release the interim report and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Here was the moment that was going to validate the 150 years of pain, suffering and death experienced by 150,000 First Nation residential school victims.

The report lists abuse after abuse and chronicles the stories of many survivors, stories that bring even the toughest to tears. The Commissioners even go so far as to justifiably label the Government of Canada's residential school policies as 'cultural genocide'. The truth is now out there and it is very difficult to hear.

And then came 94 recommendations to help move our country forward on a path of reconciliation. It is in these recommendations where the community finds hope. Some very intelligent ideas and direction are offered, all with a sense of urgency.

The sad part now is that the report, though well received by a majority of Canadians, will be ignored by the Harper government. Their actions speak louder than words.

The day of the release virtually every leader had a comment. Prime Minister Harper? You could hear crickets.

When Commissioner Sinclair called for a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women, he received a standing ovation. Minister Valcourt was nailed to his seat looking at the ground.

How about adopting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People? It is an "aspirational document" according to our prime minister and they have refused to adopt it.

Invest in child welfare and on reserve education? Meh. Here is how we do it the Harper way, take it or leave it.

So until there is a change in the federal government (VOTE IN OCTOBER!), it falls to institutions and individuals to act. The good thing is there are many good people and organizations advocating and acting for change.

In response to the recommendation to protect the rights to Aboriginal languages including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses, the University of Saskatchewan is offering certificate programs in Cree. That is a great sign of reconciliation.

Just last month the City of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Public School Board and Nutana High School named a park after Whitecap Dakota Chief Darcy Bear. That is an act of reconciliation.

Cecile Smith is determined to see that children will not suffer the humiliation and brutality that she experienced. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Change is also being made by people in the community who attended the residential schools or felt their impact and are not letting that experience define them. People like CFL great and One Arrow member J.R. LaRose who encourages people to take control of their futures. Or Helen Isbister who earned two degrees after age 60. They are examples of two people who are showing the way.

At the TRC Commemoration event in Saskatoon there was a powerful moment when a thousand balloons were released after seven drumbeats. The significance wasn't lost on our friend Cecile Smith.

You see, Cecile spent many years in residential school and her vivid memories of her time came back to her at the release.

"I just cried when we let those balloons go," she said to me after the event. She remembered at school being so scared and lonely and not wanting to cry.

"If you cried, they beat you. So picture a bunch of kids under their blankets and you can hear them whimpering."

It is those memories that spur her on today. Cecile spends countless hours working with the students at St. Mary's School in Saskatoon and she encourages and nurtures each and every one of them.

"I do it so that not one of those children ever has to experience what we did when we were kids," she said.

The Commissioners have heard from the people and they have shown us a way to go forward as Canadians. Much of the big picture work has been to done at the government level and for that we will have to be patient.

But it is not only the government that has to act; we all have a personal responsibility to do something.

The sum of many small acts of reconciliation can bring big change. It is time to find the allies and support them and do your part as well.

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Taking our children

Who knows best what is good for children? Is it 'Father knows best'? Is it perhaps the bond between mother and child?

Is it the family? Or is it the government worker or the higher-up bureaucrat or the politician? Put another way, what is the proper role, if any, of the state in deciding the fate of children?

What are the boundaries, if any, that insulate the family from state interference in their relationship with their children?

This issue sleeps behind the work of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Indian Residential Schools (IRS) which released a summary of its final report early in June.

In its 1996 final report Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) recommended the establishment of a public inquiry to, "investigate and document "the origins and effects of residential school policies and practices…" to "conduct public hearings across the country with sufficient funding to enable the testimony of affected persons to be heard…" (The full text of the RCAP and TRC recommendations are published at eaglefeathernews.com)

The TRC was established as part of the Indian Residential School Agreement of 2007 by the parties which included the federal government and the Assembly of First Nations. Its mandate reflects pretty much the recommendations of the RCAP on the IRS issue so that the TRC stands as one of the rare instances where the RCAP approach has been substantially adopted.

An investigation of "the origins and effects of government policies" respecting the IRS should tell us a lot about the question raised in this commentary. The TRC has released a summary only of the full report which will be published later. Will the TRC report lead to shifts in government policy about the state's role in taking children away from their families today and in the future?

The TRC pinned its approach to the IRS issue on the idea of 'cultural genocide' which has a contested relationship with the status of the international crime of genocide. The IRS policy of forcibly taking children from Indigenous families to pursue the goal of assimilating Indigenous people into the state's imposed culture and system has its parallels in other former British colonies like the USA and Australia.

In the latter, the issue was the subject of a report entitled 'Stolen Generations". The Australian High Court dodged the question of genocide.

The TRC has quite properly brought home to the minds of many Canadians the horrors of the policy of taking children from their families through the testimony of survivors. In the many comments so far published the one that stands out for me is that of Marilyn Simon-Ingram. A woman in her 80s she related her personal experience and said "Kill the Indian in the child worked the opposite. It killed the child in the Indian."

That comment brought back my memory of hearing an inmate serving a life sentence in a federal penitentiary during RCAP hearings. A tall, big man he recounted in tears his life in many foster homes where he suffered horrible abuse.

Later, I visited a women's prison and heard from the inmates that the state was taking their children away to put in foster homes. At the federal pen we had noted that most of the inmates present had been through foster homes.

The policies of governments today lead to indefensible rates of state apprehension of Aboriginal people. Criminals and innocent people are taken into state custody in numbers that shock the conscience of sensible people. Jails for children are called Youth Centres.

State agents with the backing of social workers and judges take children from their families and put them into the homes of strangers or in hotels as done in Manitoba and soothe the public conscience with the expression 'children in care', a term of political propaganda as effective as the 'justice system' for the criminal law system.

Let us hope for the sake of the children, which the survivors of the IRS were when they were taken by the state, that the work of the TRC will lead to national introspection about the reconciliation of the respective roles of the state and the family in caring for children.

That is a reconciliation that is long overdue. And that is the truth.

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There can be no reconciliation without justice

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission hosted its final gathering in Ottawa and the commissioners presented their final report to the survivor's of Residential Schools, the Canadian public and the federal government.

And that, my friends and relatives, is probably, pretty much the last we will hear of it and them, as I am certain, if past commissions are an example, this one will also end up in a shelf in some closet.

Nor should we hold our breath waiting for its recommendations to be a priority for the Canadian public, for this government or whoever gets elected in the near future.

I know I sound cynical but I am not really. I am just being realistic. It is going to take more than a Supreme Court Judge using "the words" cultural genocide to make me look outside of our own circles for change because that is the only place it is going to happen and is happening across this country as I write.

I just got home from Sagkeeng First Nations in Manitoba, where I attended a Rites of Passage ceremony at Turtle Lodge for 20 young people between the ages of 12 and 14 who took part in and completed a four-day fast.

I felt very blessed to be a part of the circle gathered there to celebrate and honor these young people, who, in their short lives, have suffered and sacrificed to live a semblance of the good life, miyo pimachihowin, that many of us take for granted.

While at Sagkeeng, I also attended a Water Ceremony that was conducted by grandmothers who came from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Arizona, Texas and California.

They carried not only their ceremonial bundles but also a jar of water from their territories.

The ceremony led by the grandmothers of Turtle Lodge was moving and very powerful.

The combination of teachings, stories, laughter, good food and ceremonies celebrating young people, honoring community leadership and a working together of all the people to heal the lake which is listed as endangered, was not only healing, it was also inspirational.

Turtle Lodge came from a vision that David Courchene Jr. had while fasting many years prior, to the actual building of it.

"A grandmother Turtle came to me while I fasted," David recalls. "She told me I was to build a lodge in her honor so we could bring the children home. Home meaning from wherever they have been placed by Social Services or left by us. She told me that we had to take responsibility for our children if we were to survive as a people.

"She also told me that this was a movement and had to be grounded in Spirit, that it was not an organization.

"Everyone, she said, must be welcomed into the lodge but it was our duty to establish inclusive leadership. I didn't begin the work of establishing the Lodge until many years later as I was not sure how or where to begin, but not doing anything really bothered me.

"That Grandmother Turtle was always with me reminding me of the work I had to do. Finally after several years I went to an elder and told him about the vision. He told me I had to begin the work immediately and that it was an honor to be chosen. He also told me it would be hard work, often painful.

"He was right; it has not been easy but it has been healing and fulfilling. The actual building of the lodge began in 2002 with a group of people who did ceremony together. Money came by holding fundraisers, and from private donations. Lots of people and especially young people donated their time and labor. I could not have done it without them."

The lodge is a lovely building. It is set back in a small clearing surrounded by poplar trees and willow bushes. The design is in the shape of a Turtle and can comfortably house up to 100 people.

"It is not quite finished," one of the grandmothers tells me as she shows me around and introduces me to the young people who are preparing the meals and cleaning up under the supervision of older women.

"We are building a big kitchen next. We need more space because the kitchen is also a teaching place where we share stories and knowledge about food and where we teach our young people to cook."

The Lodge and the lodge grounds are immaculate and throughout the day young people are busy cleaning, picking up, as well as making sure everyone is comfortable.

The dozens of children run around or play quietly both in the lodge and outside.

"They can do just about anything they want," the grandmother explains, "but they have to be respectful and considerate of others."

Everything, ceremonies, cooking, storytelling, drumming and singing is a teaching opportunity and although it is done in the language of the Anishnabe, there are translators who translate everything including the songs so no one has to wonder what is happening or feel left out.

All four days were peaceful, laid back and stress free. No big rules or regulations. No lateral violence. It was a "kind and gentle" four days.

As a child, David was very close to his grandmothers and mother. They were his first teachers, they influenced his life and this is reflected in the structure and ceremonies of Turtle Lodge.

"It was a Grandmother Turtle who came to me, not a Grandfather," he says. "This is her lodge and the grandmothers who come here represent her, this is also the old way of our people. Women and children were central to the nation. If they were okay then everything was okay."

Thank you, David, for your powerful vision. Thank you Justice Murray Sinclair, Wilton Littlechild and Marie Wilson for your work, commitment and kindness to our people.

And to the federal government and the people of Canada, know that there can never be reconciliation if there is no justice.

Bentwood Box holds symbols of reconciliation

By Tiffany Head
For Eagle Feather News

It was a very emotional week for residential school survivors as they leave with forgiveness in their hearts, knowing they have contributed to the change that is to come.

They leave knowing that future generations will know their stories and that the dark chapter in Canada's history has finally come to light and that they can now move forward with peace in their hearts.

The last gifts have been placed inside the Bentwood Box. The Bentwood Box was commissioned by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

It was created by Coast Salish artist Luke Marston as a tribute to all Indian residential school survivors.

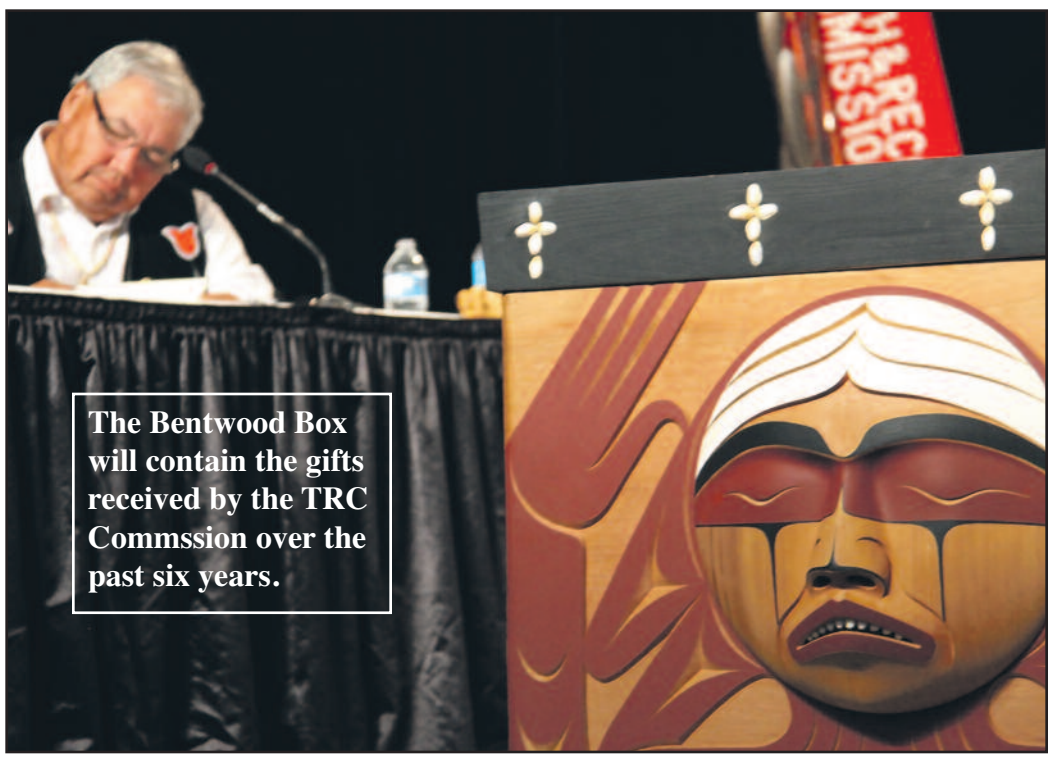
The box was used to gather gifts as the TRC travelled through the communities over the past six years.

The box reflects the strength and resilience of residential school survivors and their descendants, and honours those survivors who are no longer living.

Survivors placed their gifts in the box as a memory of their personal journey, more than 1,300 items presented to the TRC in the past six years.

Each gift had a special story, as each commissioner and an honorary witness placed their gift inside the box, during the closing ceremony.

Justice Murray Sinclair placed the original copy of The Survivors Speak, one of the volumes of the report. Sinclair and the other two commissioners had signed the book.



The Bentwood Box will contain the gifts received by the TRC Commssion over the past six years.

It is a reminder of the stories they heard from the survivors.

Chief Wilton Littlechild placed a basket of ashes that were made by the burning of the tissues they collected that had the tears of the survivors on them when they told their stories.

He also placed a hockey puck in the box for the memory of sports that let the survivors forget for a moment the abuse they received.

Dr. Marie Wilson placed a Tsimshian rattle in the box. When the rattle was presented to her by the Tsimshian people, she shared that as the rattle was being given to her every woman in the room had stood up, so before she placed that rattle into the box, she encouraged all the women in the room to stand up.

Eloge Butera, one of the three youngest honorary witnesses, placed a decorated gift bag that was given to him when he was inducted to the TRC six years ago.

Butera expressed that when he heard the stories from the survivors that he was able to understand their pain as he was a survivor of the genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda.

He made a promise to the survivors to carry forward their painful stories of enduring what was an attempt at cultural genocide, to preserve and spread their truth.

The bentwood box objects will be archived at the National Research Centre at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg and TRC's new office.

Residential school survivors await action

By Tiffany Head
For Eagle Feather News

The bulk of the work for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is over and before long it will all end.

The question on everyone's mind is, will the government act on the recommendations? People hope for the best, but some survivors are sceptical.

Gary Edwards, a cultural support provider at All Nations Hope Network, helps with the process of getting survivors stories heard in the courts. He himself had settled in court and he said the government's hope back then was that he would take the money and it would shut him up. He said he took the money and gave it to one of his nephews that deserved it and needed it more than he did.

Fred Sasakamoose wonders if the government really understands how the children attending residential school were treated.

"My trial was specifically being one of the survivors of residential school. I now have an opportunity via All Nations Hope through their regional health support program to provide cultural support as people go into their truth and reconciliation hearings, and that's what I've done there for a couple of years," said Edwards.

As a baby, Edwards was taken away from his parents. He was taken by a gun boat when he was only one year old and went to Ile-A-La-Crosse where he was kept for 18 months before being taken to Duck Lake. He stayed there until he was close to seven, and after he was then taken to Lebret where he stayed for a couple of months before being sent to a foster home.

Edwards was one of the lucky ones as he went into a loving home that allowed him to see his parents. He had heard horrific stories happening in Lebret, like medical experiments, and counts himself lucky that he did not have to stay there as it was just closing down. He was a part of the last generation of Residential School kids as they started closing down and turning them into Industrial Schools and Day Schools.

Living in a foster care home in Regina did not fully take him away from people that wanted to hurt him for being a First Nation person. He had numerous bullies as the only "brown skinned Indian" in a white school. It sent him to the hospital many times.

He says that three-quarters of Canada does not know what is going on and with the recommendations, they are only recommendations and the government could lie again and not do anything about the situation

"Recommendations are one thing; they don't have to be accepted. The Government of Canada can still throw them out and act like nothing happened.

"They'll have all that evidence up in flames, like they never existed.

"They'll have no record of any findings, no legal record of anything. It would be an effective way of getting rid of seven generations of suffering and no court in the world would have to look at it. That's what they can still decide," said Edwards.

Fred Sasakamoose was taken away from home at the age of six. His parents were told by the Indian agent that they were unfit parents because they lived in "poverty". He and his sister and brother were taken away by a priest in a truck to attend St. Michael's residential school in Duck Lake. They watched their parents cry as they were being taken away.

His 10 years of residential school were traumatic. He experienced emotional, physical and sexual abuse. The only happiness he experienced was when he skated. He is a great advocate for education for young people as he never got the chance to be educated properly.

"I think education is very important of our young people. But if you were to talk about 1940 when I went in there it was a slim, it was none, we didn't have proper educators, to compete in life. I think it was policy by the government not to educate the Indian people but to do away with their lives and culture," said Sasakamoose.

He chose to be an athlete and he excelled in the game and he made it to the NHL.

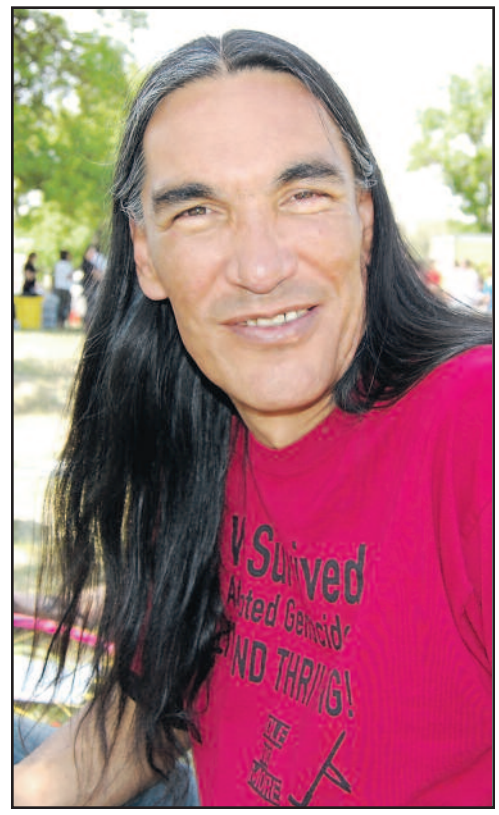
The feelings that Sasakamoose had after watching the broadcast of the TRC and listening to survivors tell their story was a very painful and sad experience for him, as their stories brought back memories of his own time at residential school. He does not know if people truly understand their grief.

"It's not human, it never was, the way we were treated. It is true what I heard, it bought a lot of tears, I wonder if really the government or the people understand in the world itself how we were treated," said Sasakamoose.

He does not know if the government will do anything about it, but hopes that they will.

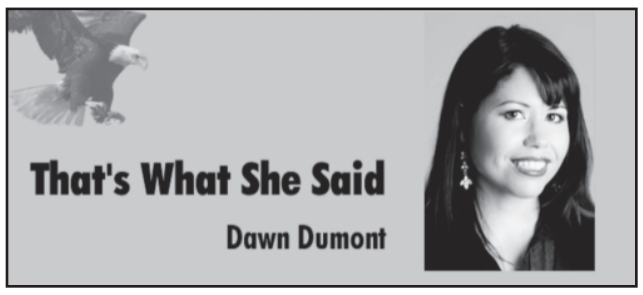
"Recommendations they are fine, but are they going to be there for us, is there room for us, our children?

"We are many now, we're not small anymore, but do we count in number as same as anybody else? I hope it is," said Sasakamoose.



Gary Edwards has concerns about what the federal government will do with the report.

In-sensitive



John Lagimodiere asked me if I was going to be a softer person after I became a mom. I said: "Nope, I'll be as cynical as ever."

After the birth of my child, reveling in the pain of my perceived enemies (people who butt in front of me at Starbucks and ISIS) will still be my favourite pastime.

I consider myself a tough-ass. Exhibit A: I've gone years without crying, specifically 2006 to 2008 (coincidentally, I was single that entire time.)

Being a non-crier, I find emotional displays curious and laughable. I had a guy refuse to go on a second date with me because I laughed at him when he cried at the movie. (I still laugh when I think of his big, crybaby tears.)

I swore to myself that motherhood would not make me soft. I would not go "gentle" into that dark night; I'd rage against the dying of my cold heartedness.

At least that's what I thought would happen.

During one of my prenatal appointments, my doctor had mentioned the "baby blues." In her soft Russian accent, she explained that after delivery, hormones make you weepy like you're watching Anna Karena on repeat.

This I dismissed. As someone who considers PMS to be an old wives tale – if I yell at someone during a certain time of the month – it's because they deserve it, not because I'm a slave to my hormones. And if they deserve it around the same time every month … well, that's just a coincidence.

The first bout of baby blues appeared as we were on our way home from the hospital. I was folding the baby's clothes. I'd brought about six outfits, for some reason I'd been anticipating a post-birth baby fashion show. (Instead my baby prefers to be naked.)

I came across a jumper with a rabbit tail. It was the first piece of clothing that I'd bought for him when I found out I was pregnant, and burst into tears. Because I realized that I was now a mother to a little person who for some reason already liked me a lot. But what if I let him down?

I tried to hide my tears because I knew that if the nurses saw me crying then we'd have to go through the depression questions.

Because post-partum depression is a terrible illness and also because Brooke Shields had it, as a pregnant lady or a new mom you get asked a lot of questions like, "Have you lost interest in life? Do you take pleasure in activities? Does anything excite you?" Etc.

I don't mind the questions but it's difficult to explain to my doctor that at my age the only thing that excites me are new episodes of Orange is the New Black, a nap or discovering that a frenemy got fat.

But I wanted to go home, so I avoided the nurses' gaze as I secret-bawled down the hallway.

The crying continued through the first week. Here is a list of things that I cried over:

1. Because his head is so perfectly round, like how my head was perfectly round when I was born.
2. Because he got diaper rash.
3. Because I went to Walmart without him and missed his round little head and red little butt.

My sister, and a mom of two, explained that the tears were coming because I now saw the bigger picture, the way that life extends so far into the future. Or in other words, that I am committed for life.

Before my baby, my longest-term commitment was with a cellphone company (and I reneged on that and have to answer my cellphone as one of my sisters.)

By this point, my boyfriend had resigned himself to coming home and finding me full of snot as I tearfully explained that the baby had sort of smiled at me and that reminded me that he would grow up.

And that I don't want that, because he's my newborn! But I do want him to grow up because he's so fragile and WHY WON'T HIS DIAPER RASH GO AWAY!

Around this point, my boyfriend told me to get out of the house. As I stared at normal people, with their sunglasses, crop tops, and beards, I wondered what was it like to be oblivious? What was it like when your biggest worry is a pimple, a couple of extra pounds or a suspicious pelvic rash? What was it like not to understand how scary life really is when you're responsible for someone who can't even tell you what hurts?

As my hormones change, the baby blues are waning and I certainly won't miss them.

But maybe I'll miss feeling things so deeply, like a weepy wimp watching The Notebook.

Batoche
National Historic Site

Have your say !

Parks Canada invites you to comment on the recently prepared Draft Management Plan for Batoche National Historic Site.

Your voice matters!

Come for some tea and bannock and share your vision, ideas and comments at any of the following public meetings:

Batoche National Historic Site
Sunday, June 21, 2015
1pm to 4pm

Gabriel Dumont Institute
#1308B 1st Avenue East
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
Monday, June 22, 2015
7pm to 9pm

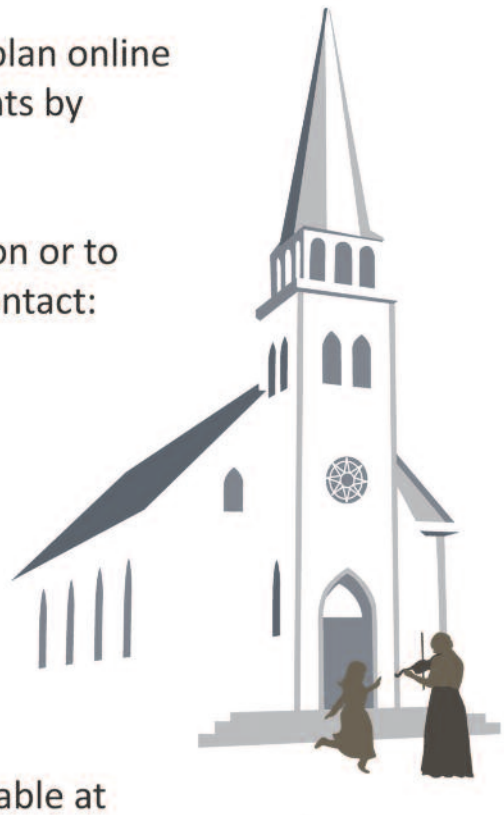
Gabriel Dumont Institute
#2 - 604 22nd Street West
Tuesday, June 23, 2015
7pm to 9pm

Refreshments will be served

You can also see the plan online and send us comments by e-mail or phone.

For further information or to provide comments contact:

Irene LeGatt
306-975-5814
or
Adriana Bacheschi
306-423-6227
or
batoche.info@pc.gc.



The draft plan is available at
www.pc.gc.ca\batoche-Site Management

Parks Canada Parcs Canada
Canada

Sask. foster care system needs repair: Pringle

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

Saskatchewan's Advocate for Children and Youth says the province's foster care system is broken and in need of serious fixing.

Bob Pringle made the comments on May 20 following the release of his report examining the tragedy of an Aboriginal toddler who died while in foster care in 2010.

The child is referred to only as Mark in the report but the details fit the case of Evander Lee Daniels of Sturgeon Lake First Nation who was just under two-years-old when he drowned in the bathtub of a foster home five years ago.

Pringle says the Ministry of Social Services failed the young boy's family in a number of ways including not providing the necessary supports to both his biological and foster family and placing him in an overcrowded home where he was at risk.

He says it was only a matter of time before something bad happened.

"When you place five children, and actually the ministry tried to place a sixth child there, that's a train wreck waiting to happen. There is no other way to describe it. That is irresponsible."

As he has done in the past, the children's advocate says the system needs more accountability and one way to achieve this would be licensing foster care homes in this province as is the case in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.

"If licensing foster homes brings a higher level of accountability and some liabilities to the Province, you know what, if our policies are so good embed them in legislation and let's see how good they are," he says.

Chris Martell says he does not believe his family received proper support both before and after his son died.

In the case of Evander Lee Daniels, his foster family had been previously licensed in Alberta to look after two children but in Saskatchewan they were looking after six children, including five in foster care.

The report, No Time For Mark: The Gap Between Policy And Practice, makes a number of other recommendations including the ministry ensure staff are properly trained to supervise foster home investigations, a review be completed to determine reasons why there has been a rapid decline in foster homes and a plan put in place to address this decline and a letter of apology be issued to Daniels' parents.

Minister of Social Services Donna Harpauer says the Province has made significant improvement in the foster care system since the young boy died which includes hiring 93 additional frontline staff in the past five years.

She also says the Province is acting or has already acted upon several of the report's other recommendations.

However, Harpauer says one thing the government is not currently considering is licensing foster care homes in Saskatchewan.

"The evidence isn't there in these provinces that do license. The evidence is not there for the improved outcomes for the children, there is no evidence," she says.

Evander Lee Daniels' biological father Chris Martell was also on hand to weigh in on the children's advocate report and the Province's reaction to it.

Martell says he does not believe his family received proper supports from the government both before and after his son died.

He says he is still looking for closure and hopes changes are made so no one else has to experience the pain his family has gone through over the past five years.

"I just don't want another tragedy like this to ever happen again to anybody."

Daniels' foster mother, Eunice Wudrich, was initially charged with criminal negligence causing death in 2010.

However, a judge acquitted her of those charges in 2013.

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Le gouvernement du Canada vous offre de nouveaux moyens pour vous aider et pour aider votre famille à économiser de l'impôt. Des moyens comme ceux-ci :

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- **Le compte d'épargne libre d'impôt:** À compter de 2015, vous pourrez gagner un revenu de placement plus élevé que jamais à l'abri de l'impôt. Conservez une plus grande part de vos économies ou consacrez-les aux choses qui vous importent le plus.

PLAN D'ACTION ÉCONOMIQUE DU CANADA

POUR PLUS DE RENSEIGNEMENTS, CONSULTEZ LE SITE PLANDACTION.GC.CA.
Sous réserve de l'approbation du Parlement.

Canada

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The Government of Canada has new ways to help you and your family save on taxes. There are measures available to help like:

- **The Family Tax Cut:** Couples with children under age 18 can now split their income between the higher-income spouse and the lower-income spouse for tax purposes.
- **Tax-Free Savings Account:** Starting in 2015, you can earn more tax-free investment income than ever before. Keep more of your savings or spend it on the things that matter.

CANADA'S ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

LEARN MORE AT ACTIONPLAN.GC.CA
Subject to parliamentary approval.

Canada

Elder Noel Starblanket, Janine Windolph, Jhaik WindyHair who was interviewed in the film, Trudy Steward and Annie Charles gathered after the showing for a group photo. **(Photo by Tiffany Head)**

Documentary seeks to unravel mystery of Regina Indian Industrial School children

By Tiffany Head
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA – The Regina Indian Industrial School seems to have faded from memory or is unheard of.

So, Janine Windolph and Trudy Stewart embarked on a journey to collect stories. They found that the greatest mystery was trying to find the names of the children buried in an unmarked gravesite and in what are now unmarked graves as the crosses eroded with time.

"I was first approached in January 2014 by a member of the United Church and one of the descendants of the students, who wanted to do a documentary on the Regina Indian Industrial School," said Stewart.

From their stories and research came the documentary RIIS From Amnesia, which had its world premiere on May 22 at the Artesian theatre.

Regina Indian Industrial School opened in 1891 to teach the First Nations children basic writing, reading and arithmetic skills. The boys were taught farming skills and the girls in domestic duties. The school closed in 1910.

The gravesite held children who went to RIIS but the number of children buried there is unknown.

"That remains unclear because there's 38 shafts, but by then they sometimes stacked them and they found six graves outside of the cemetery.

"So that would be 44 grave shafts all together but there could be more children buried there than that," said Stewart.

They hope that there will be more action taken after people gain knowledge of the children who never made it back to their families. The gravesite remains unprotected by the Province and there is fear of what will happen to the gravesite.

"There have been lots of community members that have come forward, wanting to help take care of it, but it still needs to be protected because that area is going to be developed," said Stewart.

Nancy Lafontaine went to the premiere not knowing what to expect, as she had not known about RIIS. She says she would bring awareness by telling her story about the film and asking what they knew about RIIS.

"I would ask people if they knew or if they realize that RIIS was there. They say there are a lot of people that don't know and to bring that awareness would be good," said Lafontaine.

The people who created the documentary formed a committee and are now seeking charitable status. They aim to have the gravesite protected from development and make people aware of the sad history that was almost forgotten.

"Even though the film is done, it somehow just begun," said Windolph on taking more action to leave a legacy for the descendants of RIIS and the children that are buried at the gravesite.

They plan to show the film in various communities and they will also put it up online for anyone to see.

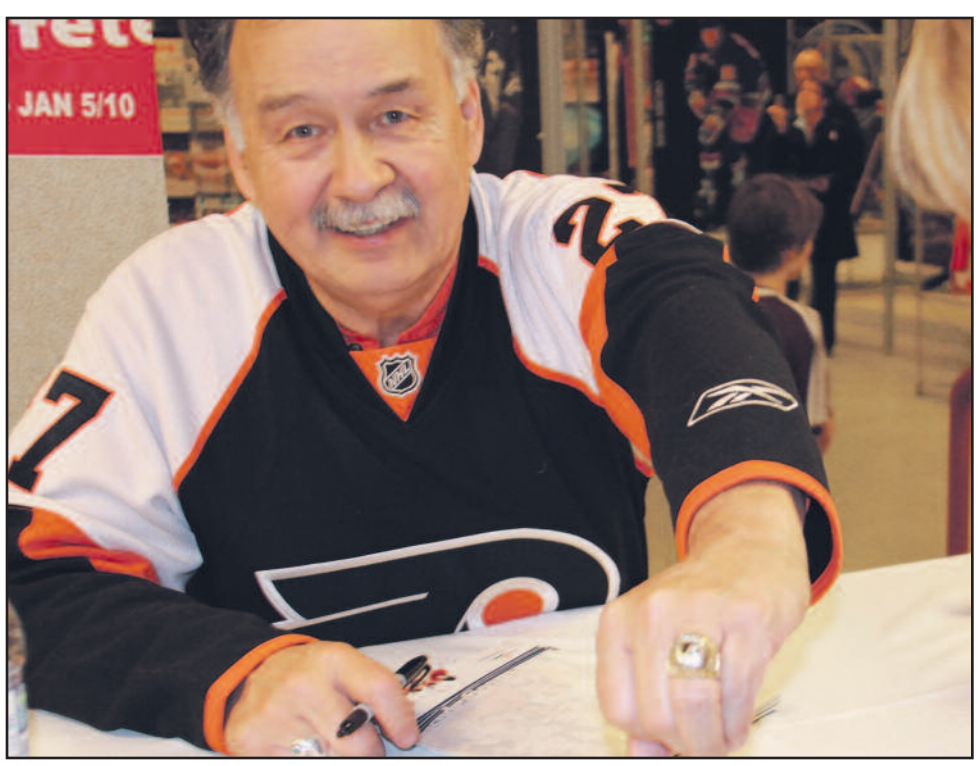
Our Annual National Aboriginal Day Quiz!

By Tiffany Head
For Eagle Feather New

1. Who were the first people to create life jackets?
a) The British
b) The Inuit
c) The Mohawk
d) Lifeguards

2. Some natural ways to protect yourself from mosquitoes is to rub onion all over yourself or apply bear fat to your skin. True or false?

3. Who invented Hockey?
a) Russians
b) Inuit
c) Iceland
d) Mohawk



4. How many numbered treaties areas are in Saskatchewan?
a) 7
b) 5
c) 6
d) 4

5. What does the word Saskatchewan (an adaptation of a Cree word) mean?
a) Land of living skies
b) Swiftly flowing river
c) Blessed land
d) Big River

6. Who is the president of First Nations University of Canada?
a) Neil Young
b) Mark Dockstator
c) Nelson Bird
d) Dashing Dirk

7. How many times has National Aboriginal History Month been celebrated?
a) 11times
b) Once
c) 19 times
d) 5 times

8. How large was Canada's Aboriginal population in the 2011 census?
a) 1,172,790
b) 1,400,685
c) 836, 165
d) 207,544

9. When were First Nation people given the right to vote in federal elections?
a) 1929
b) 1950
c) 1960
d) 1963

10. Who does the Word 'Aboriginal refer to?
a) Inuit
b) Métis
c) First Nations
d) All of the Above

11. Which Canadian celebrity claimed First Nation heritage saying, "I'm enough per cent in Canada I can get free gas?"
a) Neve Campbell
b) Jim Carey
c) Justin Beiber
d) Mike Meyers

SASKATOON TRIBAL COUNCIL

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Celebrating Our Success

2015 NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

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athabascabasin.ca

So, just how smart are you?

12. What is the name of the 1795 treaty that allows free passage of First Nations between the U.S. and Canadian border?
a) The Jay Treaty
b) The Blue Jay Treaty
c) The Jay Z Treaty
d) The Jay Peace Treaty

13. Her concern for North America's Native nations figures strongly in the songs of this folksinger-songwriter.
a) Shania Twain
b) Alanis Morissette
c) Buffy St. Marie
d) Ali Fontaine

14. She received a Gemini award for best actress in 1997.
a) Candy Renae Fox
b) Tina Keeper
c) Misty Upham
d) Irene Bedard

15. What is the nickname of Ojibwe hockey great Reggie Leach?
a) Steve
b) Chief
c) The Riverton Rifle
d) Sniper

16. Under the Indian Act it was illegal to …
a) To use Band funds to hire a lawyer to file a land claim
b) For "Whites" to hire a lawyer on behalf of Indians to file a land claim
c) Have a reserve close to town
d) All of the above

17. One of these measures is not included in the "Peasant Farming" policy…:
a) Limit Indians to farming 40 acre plots
b) Prohibit Indians from using labour saving technology
c) Restrict Indians from helping each other
d) Hanging pheasants on the porch

18. Status Indian is:
a) A person defined as an Indian under the Indian Act
b) An aboriginal person of high rank
c) Whoever wears moccasins?
d) None of the above

19). A Band is defined in the Indian Act as:
a) A music act like, down with Webster
b) A body of Indians
c) Something you wear on your head
d) Dnab spelled backwards

20. The real name of the Bell of Batoche liberated by Billy Jo De La Ronde is?
a) Marie Antoinette
b). The Frog Lake Bell
c). The Belle of the Ball
d). Tina

THE ANSWERS

1. B 2. T 3. D 4. C 5. B 6. B 7. D 8. B
9. C 10. D 11. C 12. A 13. C 14. B
15. C 16. D 17. D 18. A 19. B 20. B

SHARING SUCCESS

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SIGA continues to support First Nation art and culture through sponsorship of many community programs, camps and events.

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SIGA is building stronger communities by ***Sharing Success.*** We are proud of our value Wîtaskêwin that speaks to sharing our land and resources.

WÎTASKÊWIN
Living together on the land is the fundamental value conveyed by the word Wîtaskêwin. SIGA's vision "Sharing Success" talks to the concept of sharing our land or, in today's terms, sharing resources. This value directs us to give back to the communities where we live and work.

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ks-potashcanada.com

National Aboriginal Day

K+S Potash Canada is a proud supporter of the First Nations University of Canada, Annual Spring Celebration Pow-Wow.

K+S Potash Canada extends best wishes to all First Nations & Métis People on National Aboriginal Day. Our company recognizes the significant contributions of all Aboriginal people to the province of Saskatchewan and to Canada. We join you in celebrating Aboriginal heritage and tradition – a proud legacy to build upon and inspire Aboriginal youth, who will play an important role in our future.

We salute the many Aboriginal individuals and businesses working with us to build the Legacy Project – a solution potash mine near Bethune, SK. This is the first greenfield (completely new) potash mine built in Saskatchewan in 40 years.

National Aboriginal Day provides a means of educating and sharing the unique heritage of Canada's first inhabitants and serves to strengthen the ties of co-operation among all Canadians.

Eric Cline
Vice President,
Land and Sustainable Development
K+S Potash Canada GP

Terry Bird
Lead Advisor, First Nation & Métis Initiatives
Land and Sustainable Development
K+S Potash Canada GP

Bobby Badger received the Culture award from SIGA Vice President Lionel Tootoosis.

Julia Eyolfson received the Education award from Richard Ahenakew of the Northern Lights Casino.

Hailey Lavallee received the Community Service award from Kelly Cameron from SaskEnergy.

Boxer Nolan McKay received the Male Sport award from Jerry Shoemaker of SaskSport.

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Saskatoon Public Schools
Inspiring Learning

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 17th ANNUAL

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

The 17th Annual SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards celebrated the achievements of 130 young people from urban, rural, and First Nation reserves across the province.

Organizer Colleen Cameron, who has just been honoured with an appointment to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, noted that each year there are more and more young people being nominated in every category, and even new categories being created.

"The overall goal is one of trying to build leaders for tomorrow by being a leader now in these categories," said Cameron, adding that the nominees with the most complete packages who best fit the goals of the Wicihitowin foundation are the ones who generally receive the award.

"It's not an easy task for the selection committee, but the chosen recipient is the one fitting all the criteria. All the youth are deserving, to be honest."

She also observes that the one-of-a-kind event increases in calibre each year as coaches, teachers, and activity leaders recognize and nominate youth, while sponsors are eager to be a part of something so inspiring which celebrates and enhances the youth, and brings about present and future community development whether it's on reserves or in urban centres. Success not only brings more success, but inspires others to follow the path.

"I'd like to thank all the youth who've come over the past 17 years, respect and honour to them, and all our sponsors – it's really important because we need corporate support to put it on," she said, adding that the youth nominators are also crucial.

"As one teacher stated, his student was one of the highest caliber he has ever met in 20 years of teaching."

The Spirit Award went to Robyn Sugar of Piapot First Nation.

"The video of past recipients inspired me to keep on going with life and how it's okay to fail as long as you keep on moving towards your goal," Robyn said afterwards, noting part of the joy is sharing the evening and the honour with family members.

"I made my mother and grandmother proud."

She lives a drug-and-alcohol-free lifestyle, and plans to become a nurse after high school. Her relationship with her grandmother is especially cherished as she learns about residential school, growing up with just one parent, and is inspired to continue to learn and speak her Cree language. Robyn tries not to think about her illness or health issues but has been seeing doctors since she was 10 years old, with complications which include high blood pressure, a heart condition, and a possible kidney transplant.

"I want to become a nurse so bad because I want to give back and help others, especially children," Robyn added. "When they showed previous winners it inspired me to never give up and just keep going – if you hit a bump in the road you don't just give up."

So it's humbling to realize she is inspiring others too.

"It feels good."

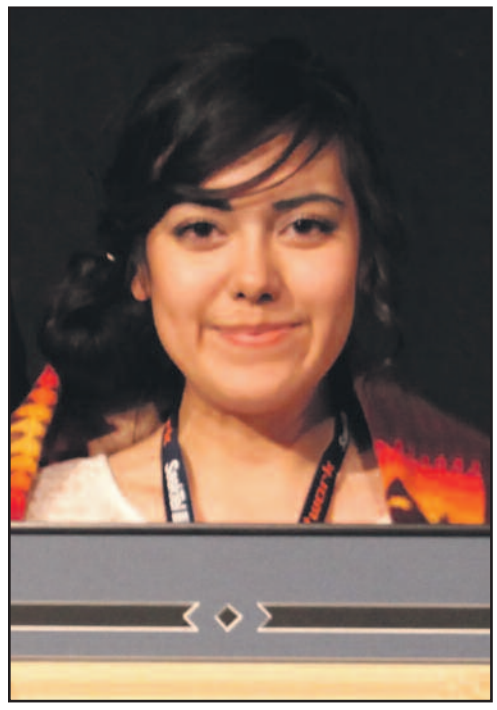
Which is why Colleen Cameron says

Kieran Meetoos received the Science and Technology award from Sean Ying President of Huawei.

Lauryn Prokop received the Female Sport award from Audrey Young of SaskSport.

Khoniss Wuttunee received the Fine/Performing Arts award from Merv Brass of MBC Radio.

The Oskayak High School ELA 20 Group received the Group award from Eric Cline Vice President at K+S Potash Canada.



Adrianna Simon received the Leadership award from Terry Porter of SaskBuilding and Trades.

L ABORIGINAL YOUTH AWARDS WINNERS

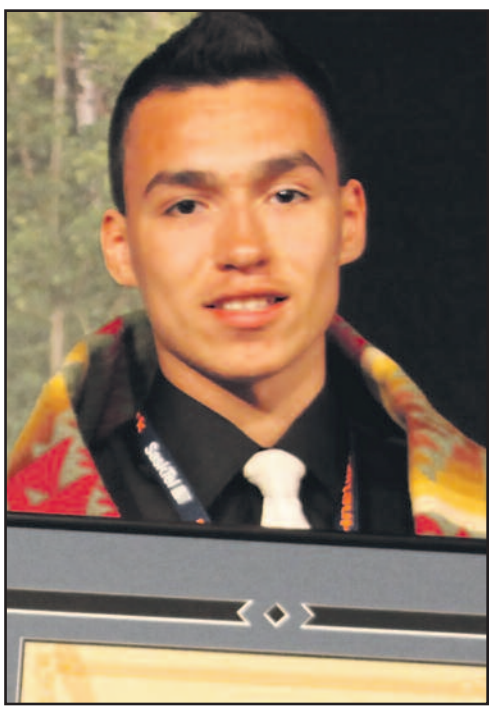
everyone supports the vision.

"The motivation for success is for the youth to be happy and peaceful and have good lives and that's why we're doing this. We're one big family and we want everyone to all do well, and be happy."

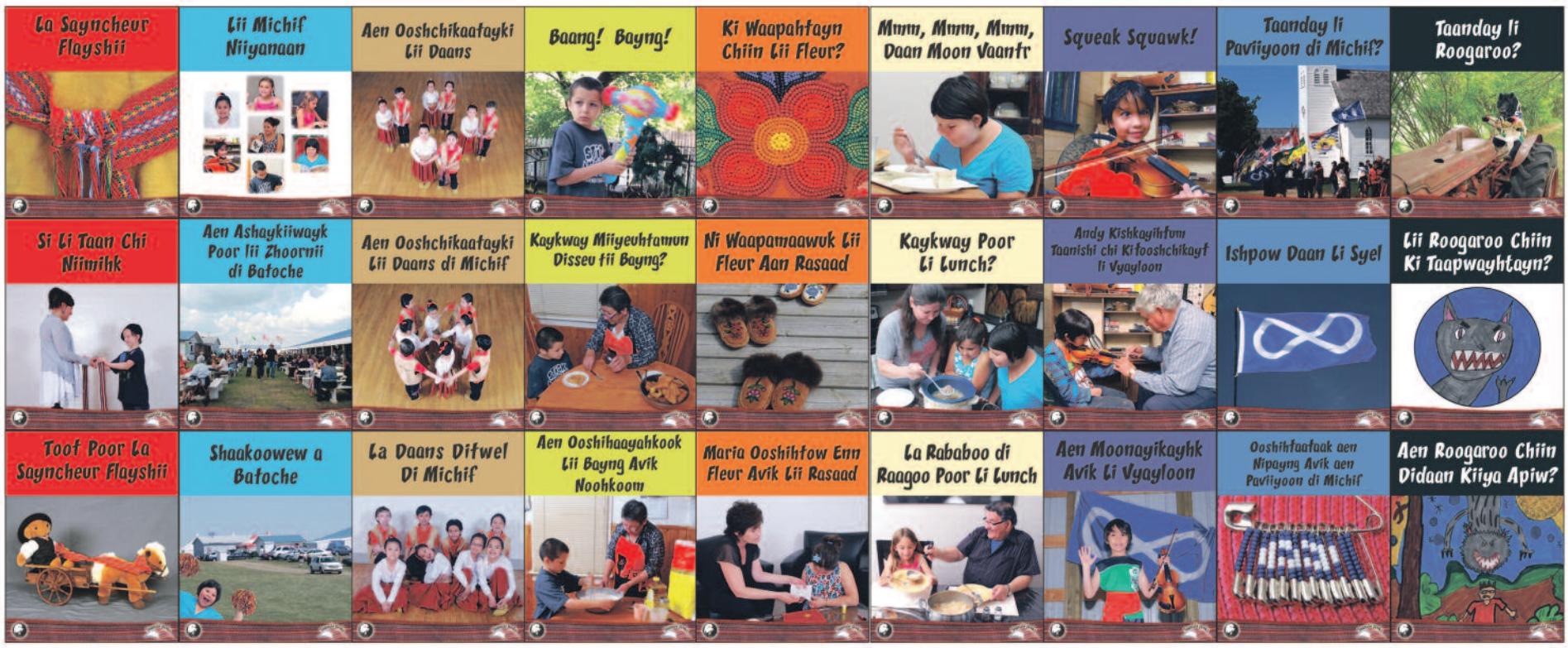
Robyn Sugar received the Spirit award from MLA Gordon Wyant.

Gabriel Dumontier received the Science and Technology award from SaskPolytechnic President Dr Larry Rosia.

Darian Lonechild received the Female Outstanding Achievement award from SaskTel President Ron Styles.



William Desjarlais received the Male Outstanding Achievement award from SaskTel President Ron Styles.



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Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation Golf Tournament Raises $70,000 for Students!

The Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation Golf Tournament held at Moon Lake Golf and Country Club on May 29th, 2015 was a great success, raising $35,000 which will be matched with funding from the Provincial Government under the Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship to a total of $70,000. On May 29th, the scholarship adjudication committee provided 284 student scholarships to Métis students studying in a variety of programs throughout Saskatchewan. We are hoping that our October 2015 scholarship meeting will move our yearly total to over 500 scholarships awarded in 2015. Thank you to all of the sponsors and staff who helped make this event a success. *Maarsii*!

A Very Special Thank You To All Of Our Incredible Sponsors!

AREVA, Affinity Credit Union, ISLAND, The McCaffrey Family, NORTHLANDS COLLEGE, SASKMETIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, O'Reilly Insurance Ltd. EST. 2007, The Edmondson Family, GDC, dream building better communities, We could not do this without you!, BUSINESS FURNISHINGS, Jack Hillson, ENBRIDGE, eagle feather news, RBC Wealth Management Dominion Securities, CAMPONI HOUSING CORP., Saskatoon Inn, Globe PRINTERS, Cameco

Please join us
for special events at
Batoche National Historic Site
on National Aboriginal Day, June 21, and
on Canada Day, July 1. 1–4 pm both days.

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GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE of Native Studies and Applied Research
Parks Canada Parcs Canada

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PROUD PAST
BRIGHT FUTURE!

Congratulations to all
Gabriel Dumont Institute
Graduates of 2015!

U of S Students Union president Jack Saddleback says the powwow helps to break down barriers.
(Photos by Fraser Needham)

U of S powwow honours Aboriginal grads

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Thousands of people gathered in the University of Saskatchewan Bowl on May 27 for the annual graduation powwow.

The event is held to honour both university and high school Aboriginal graduates.

Festivities throughout the day feature traditional drumming and powwow dancing competitions.

Other activities include Métis storytelling, First Nations and Métis hand games and First Nations storytelling.

Master of ceremonies duties were performed by Donny Speidel and Howie Thomson.

Jack Saddleback is the third successive Aboriginal president of the U of S Students' Union and he says the annual powwow has become one of the university's integral events.

"The significance of the University of Saskatchewan's powwow is huge. It's vital in regards to showcasing to Aboriginal people, more specifically Aboriginal students, that they can see themselves in postsecondary education," explains Saddleback.

"And we want to break down those barriers that may be internal, or external, so they can succeed in these types of institutions."

Saddleback adds the graduation powwow allows the U of S to showcase its diversity.

"Having a powwow here within the University of Saskatchewan graduation is huge," he says. "Having that celebration of Aboriginal culture, it just showcases that we are a diverse university and we love to be able to showcase the whole student and not just the scholarly part of the student but their cultural background, their community background, and to celebrate them and show them they matter in our community."

The newly elected USSU president also has a few words of serious advice for the new grads.

"I realize that a lot of these folks are going to go out into the workforce and I just playfully Googled a few things and number one being clean up your social media. Number two being make your online presence job oriented and number three being don't just look for a job, look for a meaningful career because at the end of the day you're the person who's investing in your future.

"And when you invest in something meaningful to you, it's not going to feel like a job, it's going to feel like a career."

A total of 363 Aboriginal students have applied to graduate from the U of S this spring and 120 participated in the powwow.

Close to 2,000 other students from across the province attended the powwow including 304 Grade 12 graduates who were honoured.

A total of $25,000 in prize money was awarded to competing dancers and drummers.

U of S spring convocation ceremonies took place in the first week of June.

The graduation powwow was attended by almost 2,000 students.

Nutana park honours former student Chief Darcy Bear

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – At no time ever did Darcy Bear think that one day the park at Nutana High School where he used to go to football practice would be named in his honour.

"The only thing I thought of in high school was getting out of here," joked Whitecap Dakota Chief Darcy Bear.

But due to his outstanding leadership and the success of his community, his old school and the City of Saskatoon have named a park area adjacent to the collegiate in his name.

Chief Bear graduated from Nutana Collegiate in 1986 and has since become one of province's most highly regarded First Nations leaders. The ceremony to officially recognize the park as Chief Darcy Bear Park was held as part of the collegiate's annual Friends of Nutana Celebration and Luncheon.

"As a member of the alumni I have always valued my time at Nutana Collegiate and am truly grateful for this honour," said Bear.

"I share this honour with all members – both past and present – from our community, our dedicated staff, and all our partners who together have built the successes that we all enjoy today. It is very humbling to be here."

Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison joined Chief Bear for the naming ceremony and espoused the benefits of the partnerships that Whitecap and the city have shared for over 130 years.

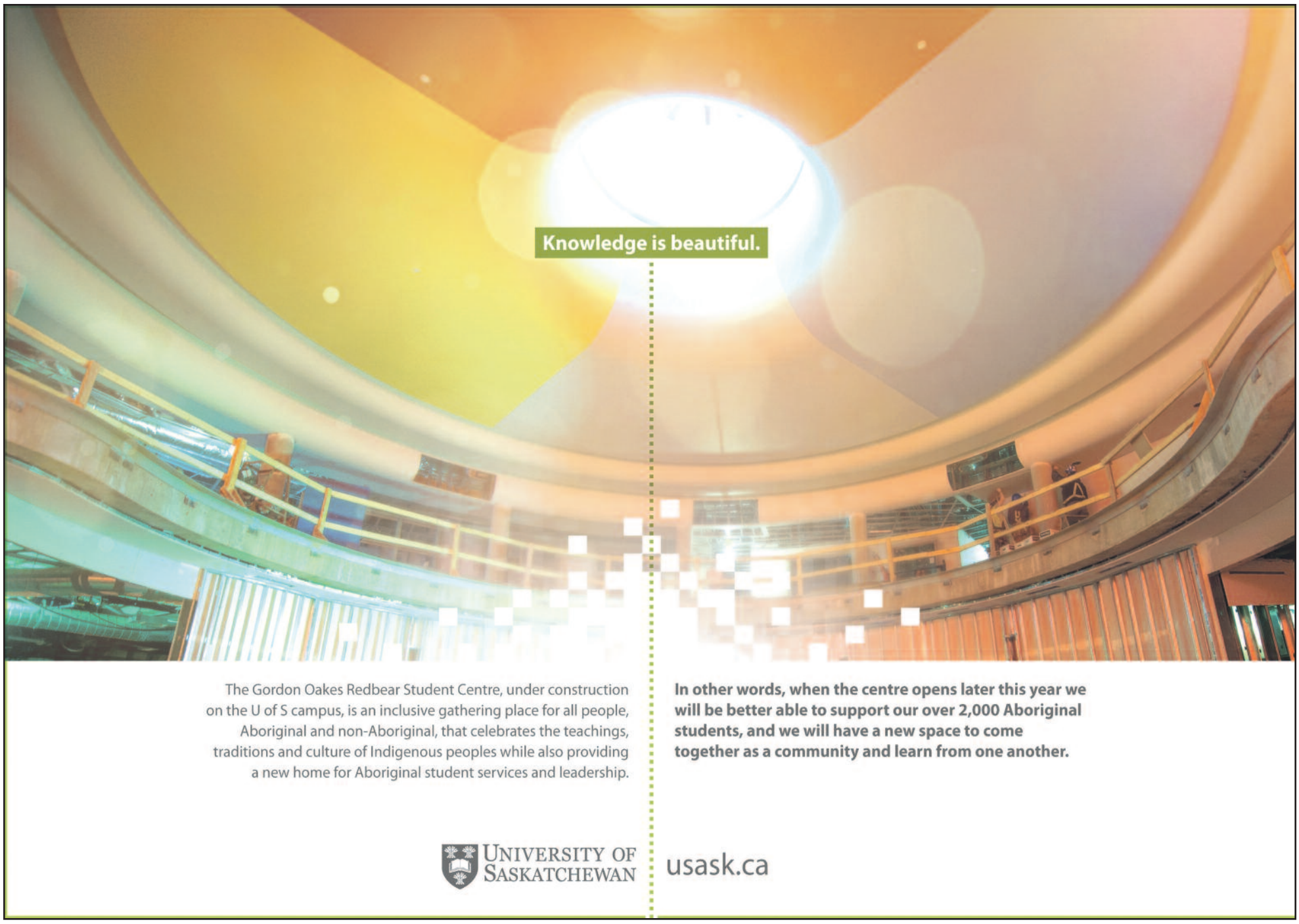
Chief Bear has been a leader in the extensive economic development within the Whitecap community and a driving force for improved quality of life for residents of the First Nation located south of Saskatoon. He is currently serving his seventh consecutive term as chief and eighth overall term on council after first being elected in 1991 at the age of 23.

Chief Darcy Bear attended Nutana High School in the 1980s and has been Chief of Whitecap Dakota First Nation for seven consecutive terms.
(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Ray Morrison, chair of the Saskatoon Public Schools' Board of Education, says it's fitting that a park which serves the Nutana community and the collegiate be named in honour of Chief Bear, one of the many outstanding leaders who have graduated from Nutana Collegiate during its more than 100-year history.

"Saskatoon Public Schools and the Whitecap Dakota First Nation have a long history of working together to create opportunities for students. Under the leadership of Chief Bear that relationship has grown and strengthened into a partnership that truly provides benefits to all members of our division's learning community," Morrison said.

The celebration and park naming was a partnership effort between Nutana Collegiate, Whitecap Dakota First Nation, Saskatoon Public Schools, the City of Saskatoon and the Nutana Community Association.



Principles of Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada believes that in order for Canada to flourish in the 21st century, reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canada must be based on the following principles:

1. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.

2. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.

3. Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.

4. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.

5. Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

6. All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.

7. The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.

8. Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.

9. Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.

10. Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.

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PFP Participant Funding Program
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Notice of Public Hearing and Participant Funding

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) will hold a public hearing on September 30, 2015, in Ottawa, Ontario, to consider the Saskatchewan Research Council's (SRC) detailed remediation option plans prior to releasing a hold point that would allow SRC to carry out remedial activities as part of phase 2 of the Gunnar remediation project.

The Commission granted the SRC a 10-year licence following a public hearing in November 2014.

Through its Participant Funding Program (PFP), the CNSC is offering funding to assist members of the public, Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders in reviewing SRC's detailed remediation option plans and submitting comments to the Commission. Participant funding up to **$20,000** is being offered for the provision of new, distinctive and valuable information, through informed and topic-specific written interventions.

The deadline to submit a participant funding application is **June 19, 2015.**

For information on how to participate, visit the *Participate in a public Commission hearing* and *Participant Funding Program* sections of the CNSC website at nuclearsafety.gc.ca. Hearing location and dates may be subject to change. Check our website for the latest details.

For information on the Participant Funding Program:
Participant Funding Program Administrator
Tel.: 613-996-9063 or 1-800-668-5284
Email: pfp@cnsc-ccsn.gc.ca

For information on the hearing process:
Louise Levert, Secretariat
Tel.: 613-947-6382 or 1-800-668-5284
Email: interventions@cnsc-ccsn.gc.ca

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Canada

Cree protocol for ceremony

Part four of a four part series by Louise Halfe

There are ceremonies dedicated to each full moon as well as the first Moon Time period.

Moon tipiskâwi-pîsm – translates loosely as the "night moon," or more accurately the "tumbling over or turning over of the night sun."

It is also referred to as nôhkom âtayôhkan which means "Grandmother-Legend Keeper," the sacred holder of knowledge and legends of Cree pimâtisiwin. pimâtisiwin at a deeper level means the "blowing life of the wind" which is life, and is sometimes referred to as culture.

The word psyche in Latin means "one's spirt and wind". The Old Ones teach that our ceremonies, our culture is our psychology.

The moon time is a time of reflection, power and consideration. It is the wakening of women's fiery spirit, during the last week of her cycle she is waiting, wishing, meditating and dreaming. It is a time of learning, memory, moderation and deliberate action. In nêhiyawêwin this is referred to as pîsimâspinêwin, or "the moon's behavior/psyche has taken over."

The menses is about transformation, regeneration and death. During a ceremony, the protocol asks that people be mindful of dress, sitting position and moon management. This is not because the Elders are being disrespectful or dismissive, they are merely asking that the ceremony be respected.

Participants are in fact humbling- ê-tapahtêyimocik ," themselves in the sacredness of ceremony." Contemporary Elders did not invent these wishes, these practices have been here long before their Elders were born and are inherent in our language.

Dress, miskotâkay – more literally means "to switch into another skin to cover up one's private parts."

For ceremonial purposes the word that is used is mamahtâwisîho which means "in honoring of one's sacred entity, one dresses."

Those who conduct a ceremony may be in opposition to women wearing pants, but the ospwâkan, "the Pipe" cannot turn people away. The circle will be broken if it is so. Everyone therefore must grapple with and be accountable for what they perceive to be humble and, respectful.

The person who is responsible for the Pipe and whose belief system is entrenched in the dress protocol is free to establish that boundary for themselves, the ceremony they conduct, and if necessary for others.

How they handle this is entirely their journey. They know for themselves, what it is to dress appropriately, sit upon the earth, and be in ceremony with humility and respect.

The question for them is do they project this upon others? How will they welcome innocent seekers and share their knowledge?

There is also a misconception that one is a "Pipe Carrier." In reality ospwâkan, carries us. To be carried by ospwâkan is not only an honor, it is a significant responsibility.

To honor ospwâkan is, perhaps ironically, an earned kîspinacikêwin, "a and difficult burden." ospwâkan opens most ceremonies. It does so to clarify the expectations of the rituals before a ceremony begins.

All participants are the guests in this process, and follow protocol. It is not without flexibility. Women who avoid a dress can be offered a blanket and be encouraged to honor their feminine side or moon time.

I am deeply grateful to the language itself for these gifts of awareness, and to the Elders who guided this paper. This paper was written with respect and brought into ceremony.

I may have offended some in the publication of this material. It is my hope that releasing this information inherent in the language will open the door to further discussion and help those in need.

There is no end to the quest for knowledge. Reading and research is one thing, it is yet another to gather information through active participation in ceremony and direct communication with an Elder. One grows when one accepts and honors mistakes and pays attention to the corrections.

Our Elders are diminishing in numbers, time is running short. More than ever we are in need of their wisdom.

LOUISE HALFE

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WHERE: Little Pine First Nation

WHEN: July 26 to 30, 2015

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Gary Smith at 306-659-4034 or gary.smith@saskpolytech.ca or
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Hundreds attend Saskatoon event honouring Residential School survivors

SASKATOON – The Truth and Reconciliation Commission officially wound up its mandate on June 2 with the release of a report on its findings and recommendations.

This was followed by events across the county commemorating the TRC and its work.

These celebrations included a gathering in Saskatoon's Victoria Park where hundreds of people attended daylong festivities to honour survivors.

Even in the face of this difficult history, resilient survivors have often overcome their challenges to succeed in life. Shirley Isbister chose to honour one such hero at the event, her mother-in-law Helen Isbister.

"The release of the recommendations and the event today was about the survivors," said Isbister who gave a moving and memorable tribute to survivors and Helen before they presented Helen with flowers and a blanket.

"I thought about culture, resilience and strength and I decided to pay tribute to her. It is my way of acknowledging her contribution to our family and all of the survivors because they are what today is about."

Helen overcame the odds and had 13 children and earned two university degrees after she turned 60.

After an opening of O Canada in the Dakota Language by students from Whitecap School and the Métis National Anthem by Krystle Pederson and Confederation School students, the day was a mix of culture and presentations on residential schools.

Hundreds gathered to commemorate the TRC in Victoria Park in Saskatoon. At the end 1,000 balloons were released.
(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Deanna Ledoux and Elders Walter and Maria Linklater shared their residential school experiences and CFL football star J.R. LaRose spoke of the impact of the schools on his mother and his life.

Entertainment included the Northern Prairie Dancers, Phil and Dallas Boyer, Young Thunder Drum Group and Donny Parenteau. Survivors Ruth Cameron and Howard Walker were the emcees.

Many people spoke of reconciliation and help for survivors. Deanna Ledoux attended St. Michael's Indian Residential School in Duck Lake from the age of six to 14. She says now that the TRC has wrapped up, ongoing supports need to be provided to residential school survivors.

"It (TRC) didn't help the people who didn't have the skill set or the interpersonal skills, it didn't help them deal with the traumas or the emotional scars. So, once the money was gone, the pain's still there.

"So now, what Canada, or the government, needs to do is put forward programs, or money or funding, to help survivors, and also children and grandchildren of survivors, deal with the multitude of issues that are a result of the schools – the addictions, the violence…"

Walter Linklater attended residential school in Lebret in the mid-1950s.

• Continued on Page 23

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Young people celebrating their culture was a big part of the TRC commemoration. **(Photo byJohn Lagimodiere)**

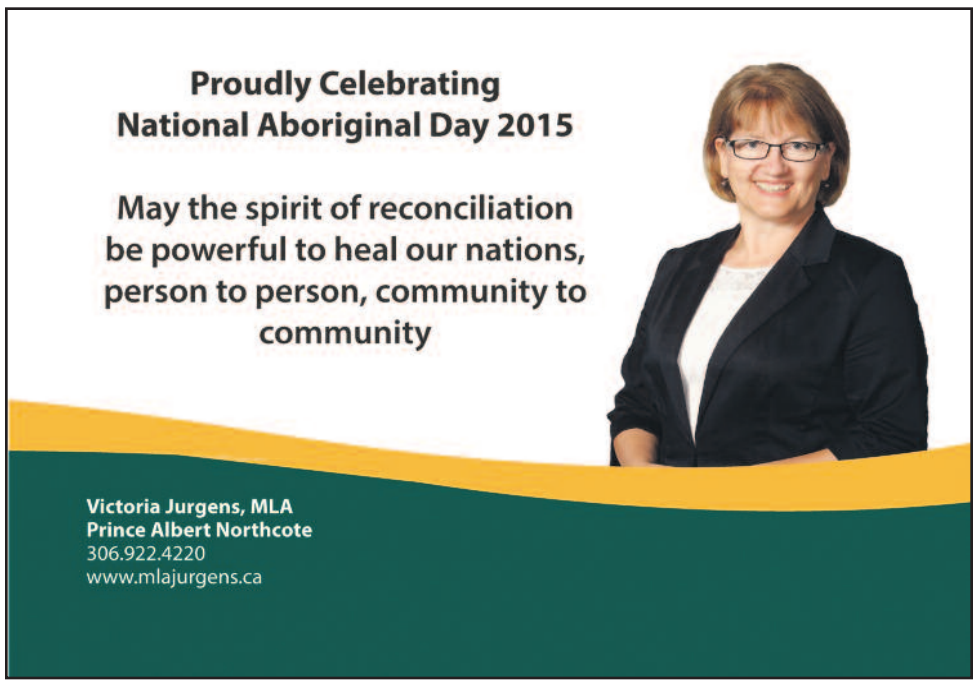
Report is a start: Walter Linklater

• Continued from page 22

He says he does not believe all of the TRC report's recommendations will be adopted but at least it is a start.

"You will always find in society a certain percentage of people that will never, ever, accept the First Nations people but I think what the commission has done is to make it more aware. What we need to do now is in the educational system, the justice system and all the systems that work with Native people, is to implement spiritual culture within their programming. That's what we need to do," said Linklater.

At precisely 2 p.m., the music stopped and Young Thunder struck the drum seven times. On the seventh beat 1,000 orange balloons were released and a massive rounddance broke out. The dance captured the hope in community as Elders, survivors, school students, educators and community leaders joined in a circle, all moving to the same beat, not one person above or below the other, just together.



Students at Payepot School have been given a special opportunity to learn more about their culture and their language through a Mini Language Festival.

Sask Culture grants enables Piapot students take part in Aboriginal language showcase

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

A group of First Nations students were recently given a firsthand opportunity to experience the diversity of Aboriginal languages.

The students attend the Payepot School on the Piapot First Nation, about 50 kilometres northeast of Regina.

They were part of the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council's Mini Language Festival Showcase which took place May 13-14.

The event was made possible through a grant provided by Sask Culture.

The Multicultural Initiatives Fund will provide up to $10,000 for eligible cross-cultural educational projects, multicultural events and First Nations and Métis awareness raising events.

Non-profit entities, First Nations bands and municipalities are few of the organizations eligible to apply for funding.

FHQTC comprises 11 separate First Nations in the Treaty Four area of the province.

Five different traditional languages are spoken within the tribal council including Cree, Dakota, Lakota, Saulteaux and Nakota.

Bill Cook, a Cree language instructor at Payepot School, was one of the organizers of Mini Language Festival.

He says they wanted to expose the students to the rich diversity of First Nations languages spoken in this part of the province.

"We wanted to showcase a song, so we picked something generic that everybody knows and that was 'O Canada,'" he says. "So we did the national anthem in the four languages Cree, Dakota, Saulteaux and Nakota. Unfortunately, we didn't have anyone there that could do Lakota."

Cook says the event also featured a reading in each of the traditional languages and this was followed by a powwow dance highlighting different styles of both traditional and modern.

The Fishing Lake First Nation School in east central Saskatchewan also recently made use of the Multicultural Initiatives Fund to host a four-day event to promote cultural understanding.

The Fishing Lake reserve, which is located about 18 kilometres southeast of Wadena, is also in the Treaty 4 area.

Along with the Muskowekwan First Nation and Wadena elementary schools, the Fishing Lake school hosted a cultural camp from June 8-11.

As part of the outdoor cultural camp, students took part in various activities including beading, dry meat making, quillwork, moss bag teaching, canoeing and a teepee raising.

"It's really important to have young people learn about their culture and language so it doesn't get lost," Fishing Lake First Nation School Principal Peter Pavelich says.

"Also, it bridges the gap between the communities to establish a better understanding of the culture."

For more information about grants, go to the Sask Culture website at http://www.saskculture.ca.

Youth learn equine therapy to achieve healthy lifestyles

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

For the past year a group of Aboriginal youth from Regina have been learning about equine therapy as a means of achieving healthy lifestyles.

The "Spirit Horse" program is led by local rancher Kamao Cappo on the Muscowpetung Saulteaux First Nation – about 71 kilometres northeast of the city.

The program is made possible through an Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Leadership Grant provided by Sask Culture.

The grant gives up to $30,000 to Indigenous programming that increases cultural awareness, activity, skill development and positive lifestyles at the individual, group and community level.

In Aboriginal culture, the horse is considered a powerful teaching tool.

As a prey animal, it is uniquely aware of its environment and this includes both the unconscious and subtle body language of humans.

Working directly with Cappo, the youth learn how to interact and care for horses.

This includes learning horsemanship skills and participating in various other activities the ranch has to offer.

As a result, they develop self-esteem, confidence, respect and control.

Margaret Poitras is with the All Nations Hope Network in Regina which administers the "Spirit Horse" program.

She says there is a lot that can be learned through equine therapy.

"One of the objectives and intended results was to get the young people to learn about themselves," she says. "And by caring for the horse, learning some skills, and taking part in activities at the ranch they are able to develop important parts of the self – a healthy self."

The families of the youth and elders also take part in the program.

Students were under the tutelage of rancher Kamao Cappo during the "Spirit Horse" program at Muskowpetung First Nation.

The Saskatoon Tribal Council also made use of an Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Leadership Grant to put on the Indigenous Language Celebration Festival at the end of May.

Partnering with Greater Saskatoon Catholic and Saskatoon Public Schools, STC put on a series of Aboriginal language showcases and workshops for students on May 22.

This is the third year the language festival has taken place.

For more information on Sask Culture grants, go to their website at http://www.saskculture.ca.

Project teaches Métis jigging and other forms of cultural dance

This past fall and winter a group of Indigenous people in Regina learned about arts and culture through the Métis Dance Project.

The project is a partnership between the Wiichihiwayshinawn Foundation Incorporated and New Dance Horizons with the goal of researching and developing Métis cultural dances and jigging.

Once a week, participants worked with dance professionals to hone their skills.

This was followed by some participants taking part in one week's worth of intensive training that culminated in a performance at the New Dance Horizons studio at the end of March.

The "House of Dance" performance featured two shows on March 28 and March 29.

As part of the performance, project participants worked directly with dance professionals Robin Poitras (New Dance Horizons' artistic and managing director), Edward Poitras and Yvonne Chartrand.

The dance project was made possible by a Métis Cultural Development Fund grant provided by Sask Culture.

As part of the fund, organizations are eligible to apply for up to $10,000 in grant money for projects that promote Métis culture, traditions and leadership in Saskatchewan.

"This fund was able to help us in a number of ways," Ashley Norton of the Wiichihiwayshinawn Foundation says.

"Now we are able to do some National Aboriginal Day stuff, there's future performances coming out of this and I think it was really good to have this grant because there's not a lot of Métis anything in Regina, especially in southern Saskatchewan. So, having access to this grant we were able to so much more and showcase and highlight our culture and traditional dancing."

The Métis Dance Project follows up on last year's Buffalo Square Dance Project.

New Dance Horizons is currently in its 29th season.

For more information on Sask Culture grants go to their website at http://www.saskculture.ca. ***– Needham***

Leah Dorion donates art from children's books to Sapp Gallery

By Tiffany Head
For Eagle Feather News

Métis artist and educator Leah Dorion has donated more than 100 paintings to the Allen Sapp Gallery in North Battleford.

Leah Garven, the curator and manager of the Gallery, recently hosted a reception to show their appreciation for the generous donation. It was also the grand opening of the storytelling room where Dorion's art was unveiled.

"We had a really nice turnout and unexpected turnout of people who really love Leah's work and want to come meet her again," said Garven.

"She's a very strong speaker and people just really enjoy being around her. She exudes enthusiasm and a rich knowledge of her culture."

Leah Marie Dorion tells stories with her paintings which are focused on Métis core values and belief systems which includes the connection with the Creator and Mother Earth. Her paintings are layered with vibrant colours, energetic lines, form, and symbolism.

The paintings she donated are from her original illustrations from her three award-winning children's books: The Giving Tree, Relatives with Roots, and The Diamond Willow Walking Stick.

Dorion knows that the Allen Sapp Gallery has a very strong education program and felt it was a great place to leave her artwork for children to see the paintings and to learn from them.

"I just felt it was the perfect place to curate and look after all these illustrations from my children's books. They would be used and enjoyed and protected for future generations," said Dorion.

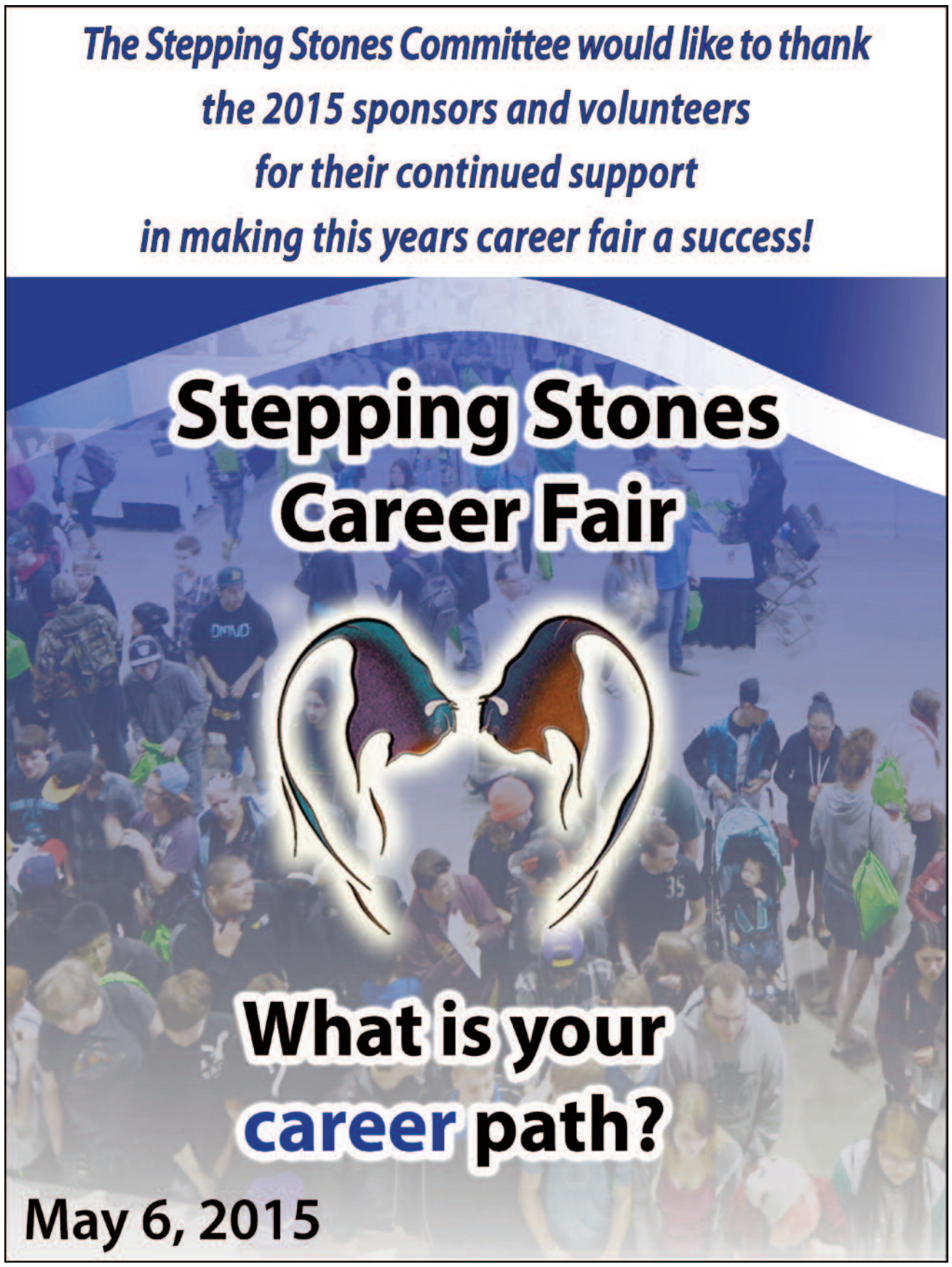
Along with her donations, Dorion also provided cultural and art education workshops to schoolchildren.

The gallery has numerous school tours throughout the year and they have hands-on activities where the children paint and have fun while learning about art. Having Leah Dorion's artwork in the programming room has brightened up the place.

"It's a great opportunity for the kids to see original works. It's made the learning room, the programming room a lively and inspiring place. Her art gives us a lot of examples to draw from to show the kids so they (the paintings) can become a really strong teaching tool," said Garven

The paintings are children based art forms and the illustrations tell really important stories, ones that Dorion wanted to share with the thousands of children that walk through the Allen Sapp Gallery every year.

Artist and educator Leah Dorion donated almost 100 paintings to the Allen Sapp Gallery in North Battleford. (Below) One of Dorion's beautiful works of art.



Now an MLA, Jennifer Campeau recalls pain of Residential School

Moe Morin is a freelance writer and photographer and the co-founder of Humans of Saskatoon. She photographs and interviews people and runs their stories on her highly popular Facebook page. She caught up to MLA Jennifer Campeau at the TRC Commemorations and interviewed her for Eagle Feather News. Jennifer went to Muskowekwan Indian Residential School for eight years. The same school attended by her mother and grandmother. Below are her unedited words.

The most profound memory that I have, and you hear a lot of student's talk about when we first went to the schools, and definitely not knowing what was going to happen and being that young. I was only seven. Seeing this four-door sedan pull up to the house, and my mom being very nervous and flitting around the house and she also had younger kids than us that weren't old enough to go yet. Getting us ready, and not taking a suitcase or a bag but making sure we were clean. Telling us that someone was coming over, trying to prepare us but not telling us where we were going, and having this man we didn't know come up to our door.

My two brothers and I were ready … we were all kinda just looking at one another but she still was not telling us where we were going only that we needed to go with this man. After being in the car for three hours, pulling up to this really long road that was probably a kilometre long from the main road to the school and seeing this big, red, brick structure and then going in.

The kids were still in school when we arrived, and the child care workers coming to talk to us, being assigned a number and basically getting us checked in but still really not knowing what was going on. Being separated from my brothers, (and there were other things during my eight years that had gone on), but being separated into different categories of age groups and not knowing where they were going and being inside this cold school.

Jennifer Campeau attended Muskowekwan Indian Residential School.

Photo credit: Moe Morin-Oksasikewiyin - Humans of Saskatoon

You're seven years old, and you don't know anything about folding clothes but you're getting yelled at … realizing that you aren't going to see your mother that night, and that you're not going home. I would sneak over to the boy's side to try and see my brothers and I would get into trouble. Obviously they had certain punishments and being that young and trying to understand but not being prepared for that, or being thrown into a room with 30 other girls ranging from six to 13 years is a huge age difference. The supervisors couldn't be there at every moment. We also have to look at being institutionalized, being conditioned to be institutionalized, and trying to come out of that trying to function in a normal school which was a huge cultural shock … attempting to adapt to normal life after having to be at mass every morning at 7 a.m. for years.

There have been a lot of things I've had to bury deep down inside in order for me to function and what people perceive as a functioning adult and parent. After the Truth and Reconciliation last week, there are some things that came back to me that I completely forgot and blocked out. I'm driving home, having these memories flood back, trying to explain this to my fiancé and he doesn't really understand; being afraid to delve into memories, and what those memories will do to me if I was to explore that to fully heal.

– Jennifer Campeau

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LaRose determined he wouldn't become a victim

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – J.R. LaRose is one of the most accomplished Aboriginal CFL players in the history of the game.

But what really formed the Grey Cup champion player is his deeply personal story about his mother, from One Arrow First Nation, who was a survivor of the Indian Residential Schools and his own reality as a survivor of childhood sexual abuse.

He shared his difficult tale with the people at the Saskatoon TRC Commemoration ceremony in Saskatoon and it is a story of tenacity, triumph and inspiration.

"I speak about my story because it is healing and it makes me feel better. And I also know I reach other people. It is so relatable of so many of the hardships that many First Nation people are faced with," said LaRose.

"I never wanted my situation to become my excuse that I couldn't do something in life. I knew I wanted better and I knew I didn't want to become a victim. For me it was finding something I was passionate about and that was football."

LaRose never knew his father and his mother struggled with addictions, finally becoming sober for the last two years of her life. Being the vulnerable child impacted LaRose and after the abuse he became a very angry young man who fought a lot. When he became a teenager he had an epiphany.

"I knew then that the things I was faced with as a young kid, I knew I was going to grow up and have a family one day and there was no way my kids would go through the same things that I faced as a child. It's all about making choices and I decided not to become a product of my environment."

Football was his way out and he could hit players at full speed helping to vent some of his inner anger. After a stellar junior career he broke into the CFL with the Edmonton Eskimos in 2005 but was released in 2008 after he shattered his leg.

At that moment he vowed to never fully rely on the CFL for a livelihood and he started motivational speaking. He eventually signed with the BC Lions where he won a Grey Cup in 2011. He remains unsigned this year and he anticipates he is going to retire.

His pro sports career has given him lots of perspective that he shares in his motivational speeches.

"Breaking my leg the second time in B.C. really put things into perspective. Am I actually going to be able to come back from this? One thing to say you can but to actually go through the process. I really struggled with it."

The game also introduced him to people across Canada and opened up doors for business opportunities.

"I travel across Canada doing these speeches and I am booked solid. I'm looking at getting into consulting for companies that want to work with First Nation communities and I plan on building relationships and partnerships," said LaRose.

After his speech, LaRose was besieged by autograph seekers and well wishers. Many thanked him for his honesty. He hopes the story he tells helps others.

"We talk about being survivors and it's about overcoming that victim mentality. What our people went through and what my mom went through is very traumatic. At the same time we have to be able to overcome that.

"After hearing the success stories and stuff like that, it helps overcome the negativity. Find something that you are passionate about and go full fledged and never take no for an answer."

CFL great J.R. LaRose happily signed autographs and allowed people to examine his Grey Cup ring after a motivational speech at the TRC Commemoration in Saskatoon. Lucky for him, that day the T-shirts were BC Lion Orange. **(Photo by John Lagimodiere)**