

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

George Gordon toddler tore up the track

Kristine Cyr was the hit of the 2016 Aboriginal Track and Field Championships held March 4 and 5 at the Field House in Saskatoon. Around 300 athletes from across Saskatchewan participated in the 8th annual meet.

(Photo by Willow Lagimodiere)



By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Kristine Cyr was a huge hit at the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Track and Field Championships.

The super fast sprinter tore up the competition in the inaugural toddler dash as she took gold. And at only age 4, there are high hopes for the George Gordon First Nation sprinter and judging by the success of the championships, also for the future of Aboriginal track in Saskatchewan.

Now, the entire future does not rest on her tiny shoulders, but Derek Rope, meet coordinator of the Championships says the future is certainly bright for the

track and field sports.

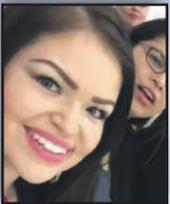
“For sure the highlight this year was the little toddler’s race. Always awesome when people come out and support athletes. Especially young people,” said Rope who helped start the Championships eight years ago.

“And we can see the hard work is catching on. This year participation grew in the open category. That’s for athletes competing beyond high school. That is a testament to some of the work they are doing in communities and with the growth of the sport in the communities. Lots more people coming out in the Summer Games and for NAIG trials.”

• Continued on Page 27



INSIDE



PRETTY GIRLS

Five young singers are getting noticed these days for more than their good looks.

- Page 8



YOUTH ADDRESS

Cheyenne Fineday presented the voice of youth at the recent FSIN assembly held on Whitecap.

- Page 10



PAYING TRIBUTE

Colleagues and friends are mourning the loss of Jo-Ann Episkew who passed away recently.

- Page 14



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Helen Oro’s fledgling fashion design company has landed a \$6,500 shot in the arm from PotashCorp.

- Page 17



JACKPOT FOR EMPLOYEES

SIGA has been recognized as a great casino organization to work for.

- Page 18

Women’s Edition

Coming In April - Arts & Entertainment Issue

Mothers' Centre launches Web funding drive

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – A Saskatoon community health organization has launched a major Internet funding drive.

The Saskatoon Mothers' Centre offers a number of services to assist women in building self-confidence, improving their skills and helping them provide a better life for themselves and their families.

It operates out of Station 20 West.

Due to a funding cut by the Saskatoon Health Region late last year, the organization has been struggling to make ends meet in recent months.

In order to remedy the situation, the centre launched the Mothers Helping Mothers crowd funding campaign on March 1. The goal is to reach \$25,000 by May 31.

Funds raised in the campaign will go towards the sewing circle, drop in centre, cultural programs, parenting circles and the breastfeeding peer support program.

Marjorie Beaucage is on the board of directors of the Saskatoon Mothers' Centre.

Contacted on March 1, she says the crowd funding campaign has already raised about \$8,000.

Beaucage says about 80 per cent of the centre's clients are Indigenous with the other 20 per cent consisting of recent immigrants to Saskatchewan.



Natasha modeling her newly made grad dress.

She says being a new mother on a tight budget can be a daunting task and the organization tries to offer various supports to let these women know they are not alone.

"They need time out, moms with kids and especially those who are at home with their kids most of the time," Beaucage says.

"There's breastfeeding support for new moms, parenting support, moms and tots, food support in terms of cooking food together and learning how to cook food healthy, the sewing circles and the social enterprise where they can make a little bit of extra money. All these things that help support women in the core area to not be alone in raising their kids."

Beaucage adds, aside from the crowd funding campaign, the centre also has a number of other activities going on to help

raise money.

"We are also launching a raffle for star blankets, bags, purses, scarves – things that are made at the mothers' centre," she says. "There is also a \$2 paper flower that you can buy at local businesses to help support the mothers' centre as well. So, we are hoping to raise another \$10,000 just with the raffle and the flowers."

The Saskatoon Mothers' Centre is one of two such organizations in Canada.

The other is located in Vancouver and both are part of a worldwide network of 750 mothers' centres.

In order to learn more about the crowd funding campaign or to donate, go to the campaign link at <https://www.gofundme.com/saskatoon-mothers>.



Madeline teaching her granddaughter.



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Five woman group more than Pretty Indian Girls

**By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather News**

After a group of women singers uploaded a video onto social media, they did not expect to wake up to news that their video went viral with thousands of hits and shares.

Five Indigenous women, who call themselves the Pretty Indian Girls (P.I.G.S) singing group, never thought their voices would gather so much attention. It all started two months ago when Judy Starr, Trisha Goodwill, Raeleena Dawson, Candace Gadwa and Desirae Desnomie were travelling home one night from YoungBear round dance (Mandaree, North Dakota) where they started video recording themselves singing backup to a round dance song called Home Sweet Home.

“I posted that video about nine in the evening ... the next morning my daughter woke me up and she said ‘mom your video went viral’ I was like wow!” says Goodwill.

The group’s length of singing experiences ranges from early childhood up until recently being discovered. A few of the singers admitted to being shy at first but the other ladies encouraged each other to embrace their voices.

“I’ve always been a part of the round dance and powwow (circle) for about 15 years and I’ve always had the urge to sing but not the courage,” adds Goodwill.

That’s what makes this group unique is their ability to encourage each other to sing even when one is shy or hasn’t come out of their shell yet.

“When I met Candace, she said sing

as hard as you can, don’t try to look good just sing from the heart. Don’t care how you look because some of us (look) crazy when we really sing hard,” says Starr who also writes the group’s songs including Friendzone.

“Singing in your culture and your language is like a prayer, so it’s like your praying and you feel that inside. Close your eyes if you have to, get lost in the moment. You’re given a voice for a reason.”

The P.I.G.S singers have been receiving positive responses and feedback to the newly formed group which has inspired the younger generation of girls to act on their urges to get up and sing.

“We get lots of comments from young girls saying we are their idols or that we sound so beautiful,” says Desnomie.

“I know these young girls are watching us and coming there to sing. Even an old lady said she wanted to sing beside us. When old and young people taking notice, it’s a real honor,” she adds.

Every weekend, the group travels near and far to round dances and they continue to receive positive responses and feedback including invites to sing at upcoming events and even receiving requests to record a C.D.

“We’re talking as a group and seeing what it is that we want to do. Judy is the one who comes up with the songs so we have to learn everything, so we’re going with the flow right now,” says Dawson.

Gadwa says the singers prefers a night of round dancing over any other social activities during the winter months because it is something they all enjoy



The Pretty Indian Girls singing group has become a bit of an internet sensation with videos of their round dance singing going viral. The ladies have been only singing together for a short time but you can see how much fun they are having together in the videos.
(Photo supplied)

and bond together as friends.

“We would rather go to a round dance rather than spending all night at a bar. That’s the main thing for us,” says Gadwa.

The backup singers’ dream is seeing

Indigenous people happy being drug and alcohol free and learning the old ways at these kinds of ceremonies.

The group’s latest videos can be found on their Facebook page called The Pretty Indian Girls.

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MINING OPERATOR
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We've grown up in our 18 years

In March 1998 we released the first ever Eagle Feather News. So if you do some quick math you will realize we just became legal in Alberta by turning 18 years old. Who would have thought that we could have pulled that off?

We started out with nothing. Literally nothing. No idea what journalism was and no idea what the publishing industry meant or how cutthroat it was. Nor did we notice the number of tried and failed Aboriginal publications on the landscape, and if we did we might have thought twice about trying.

We also had no business plan or any thought as to where we were going to take this little endeavour. Many of the so-called "stories" in the first edition were actually term papers from our efforts to pass Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

Maybe our ignorance is why we succeeded.

But we pressed on regardless. Our staff over the years has been a treasure trove of characters. A myriad of writers, sales people, photographers, receptionists and hangers-on have contributed mightily to our survival and growth. There are too many to mention after 18 years. We hope you know who you are and we send you eternal gratitude for all that you have done for us.

It has been interesting to reflect back on the changes or lack of change that we have seen in the community. Our first cover story was on the Clem Chartier election as President of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan.

Facing governance issues and a bit of a sketchy election at that time, the MN-S has never really recovered or flourished since.

Recently we have found out that the MN-S is about \$725,000 in debt (I have \$1.1 million in debt in the pool and it could get there yet as more is expected). The MN-S has been closed since November and is now being operated by a third party. The good news is an MNLA is called for the last weekend in July and an election for Sept. 3. Maybe change can happen.

The SaskParty also came into being a few months before we started the paper.

After years of NDP rule, the SaskParty has been governing for the past nine years. Neither the SaskParty nor the NDP can claim to be the best

friend of the First Nation and Métis voters in Saskatchewan.

Lots of inertia under the NDP and the SaskParty is lukewarm on Aboriginal issues at best.

Quick, can you name the Minister in charge of Aboriginal affairs? Ha! We knew it. (It is Jim Reiter ... surprise!)

So, basically Aboriginal issues have been and are still a low political priority in Saskatchewan, but it doesn't mean you shouldn't vote on April 4. We remind you to get all of your election coverage on our website.

On a positive, the graduation rates of Aboriginal people have grown as has our numbers attending postsecondary education. And last year at this time we hit the mark for the

most Aboriginal people working in Saskatchewan ever. For this I give credit to the economy and some begrudging credit to politicians.

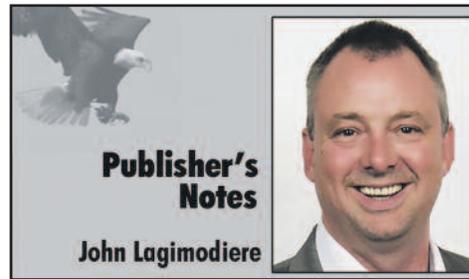
Idle No More came and sort of went. We know the mood and the placards are out there but the anger has subsided publically and went to vent on Facebook ... until, of course, Prime Minister Trudeau okays a pipeline. Then look out shopping malls and downtown streets as the round dances and rallies will be a coming!

Where we still need to make progress, though, is on the social conditions and residential school fall out that have marginalized our women. Missing and murdered women were certainly an issue when we began. It's just that the scope of the tragedy wasn't understood and the police and politicians didn't seem to care.

Now there are advocates, police policies, marches, monuments and entire communities taking this cause to heart and embracing families and protecting women. And finally the federal government is in the process to launch a national inquiry.

We still have way more work to do though because one missing or murdered woman is too much. But the progress we have made is heartening considering where we came from.

For our part we promise to continue to cover the issue and support the champions and to keep our March issue dedicated to women, and we hope to continue doing so for many more years.



Marches to commemorate missing and murdered Indigenous women have, unfortunately, become commonplace. The positive is that Canadians have never been more aware of the issues and progress is starting to take place.

(Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

Eagle Feather NEWS

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Publications Mail Agreement No.: 40027204

OSSN #1492-7497

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: EFN Circ., P.O. Box 924 Saskatoon SK S7K 3M4

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Subscriptions: Annual Canadian subscription rate is \$25 per year, \$26.25 with GST. Bulk subscriptions are also available, call our office for details. Subscription requests can be mailed or emailed to our office. Forms are available on our website.

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This issue printed on: March 10, 2016 Next issue to be printed on: April 13, 2016

This one is for the ladies

**By Dawn Dumont
For Eagle Feather News**

As First Nations people, we have a lot of female role models to people worship. Let me add one more name to your list: Senator Lillian Dyck.

Dyck is a Chinese and First Nations Senator from Saskatoon. She is a scientist and former university administrator and a self-declared feminist – a word which I never get tired of hearing proclaimed loud and clear. The Senator is a tireless advocate for the rights and safety of Indigenous communities and in particular, for women.

Dyck recently sponsored a bill in the Canadian Senate called: An Act to amend the Criminal Code – Sentencing for Violent Offenses against Aboriginal Women. The goal of the bill is to address the high rates of violence against Aboriginal females. We know that Aboriginal females are murdered at rates higher than the non-Aboriginal females.

According to the 2015 RCMP Report: Aboriginal females are four times more likely to be murdered than non-Aboriginal females; Statistics Canada puts the number even higher at six times. The rate of sexual assault of Aboriginal females is also three times higher than non-Aboriginal females.

The Senator's bill would make judges take into consideration that the victim is an Aboriginal female. That fact will be an

“aggravating factor” and the person should receive a higher sentence. There are already similar aggravating factors that judges must consider when sentencing someone set out in Section 718 of the Criminal Code. Judges follow this section when deciding what type or length of sentence to give someone in case you were wondering if they just pulled sentences out of their butt (which is what I thought.)

Other aggravating factors are, if you commit a crime against your partner, someone who was in your care, or if it was motivated by hate against a particular race, sexual orientation or language speaker. I'm sure no one is surprised that language is one of the factors as it's rather difficult to restrain oneself from assaulting airline attendants who interrupt your movie to give you announcements in French.

There are other groups that receive additional protection: police officers, transit worker and cab drivers. The reasoning behind these protections is that these groups put themselves into vulnerable positions on a daily basis – it's true. Transit workers are always disturbingly close to being urinated on.

However, it was pointed out by Senator Dyck that the Aboriginal women

are in just as a precarious position in this society; the average homicide rate for Aboriginal women is 4.8 per 100,000, higher than for cab drivers at 3.2.

To learn more about the Bill, you can read over the entirety of the Senator's speech at the Parliament of Canada website at parl.gc.ca. (Just google – “Bill S.215 Senator Dyck.” I wish I could say it was more difficult than that but it really isn't.)

Part of the senator's reasons for sponsoring the bill is Canada's indifference to the numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women in this country. Such indifference may inspire perpetrators to target Indigenous women believing that there will be a lack of interest in investigation, prosecution and that even if convicted, they will get a lower sentence.

There is certainly ample evidence that crimes committed against First Nations women are not taken as seriously. I'm sure every one of us knows of at least one case. Dyck, in her submissions to Senate, talked about the recent Cindy Gladue verdict out of Alberta.

The prosecution was unable to get a conviction in Gladue's death despite committing an indignity against her body

for the sake of evidence. Dyck also referred to the Helen Betty Osborne case in which there wasn't a conviction in her murder until 16 years after her body was found.

With the bill, Dyck believes that the justice system will be able to address such indifference.

While the bill is a great step forward and will draw attention to the justice system's indifference to Aboriginal women, it does have weaknesses. For instance, section 718 already refers to crimes of hate against a particular race. Shouldn't this already address Aboriginal female victims?

Senator Dyck argues that hate is difficult to prove and her Bill takes away that burden – the only thing that has to be proved is that the victim was an Aboriginal female.

Another concern is that the Bill only deals with sentencing. There are many places on the way to sentencing for the justice system to break down. From investigation, to charging, to prosecution – there are various steps along the way where someone can drop the ball – and not be held accountable.

Still the senator's bill, if it passes into law, will send an important message about the vulnerability of Aboriginal women and their value to their families, friends and Canada.



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Wanuskewin to seek UNESCO World Heritage Designation

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Imagine the Saskatoon region in 50 years. The big sprawling city will encompass Warman and Martensville with a million people.

And imagine, right smack in the middle of that big city, Wanuskewin Heritage Park in all its glory.

By then a UNESCO World Heritage site and home to a herd of bison ... a park so unique it is as well-known internationally as Central Park in New York.

The Wanuskewin Heritage Park Board and their partners have announced an ambitious plan to fulfill their founding vision to become a global centre of excellence in the education, preservation and interpretation of Northern Plains Indigenous culture and heritage.

Part of that vision for renewal is to apply to become Saskatchewan's first United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage designated site.

"As a result of a great deal of work and collaboration, Wanuskewin has re-

newed its original vision," said Wanuskewin Board Chair, Candace Wasacase-Lafferty.

"Our journey is just beginning, but we are excited to embark in the process of applying to UNESCO for recognition as a World Heritage Site. Our announcement today is an early first step, and we look forward to one day welcoming the world to Wanuskewin."

Wanuskewin plans to renovate and expand the facility to attract international exhibitions, conferences and special events; to expand the art gallery and showcase Plains Indigenous art in Canada; to dedicate additional green space and grassland reclamation; and increase Saskatoon's reputation as a global tourism destination.

The renewal project is multi-faceted and involves preserving the ecology and biodiversity of the site, expanding the land base to meet UNESCO's criteria and returning a small herd of Plains bison to their native prairie habitat.

"The bison are what drew Indigenous peoples to Wanuskewin for thou-



Wanuskewin Board Chair Candace Wasacase-Lafferty explained the reasons why Wanuskewin is seeking World Heritage Site designation from UNESCO.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

sands of years," Tribal Chief Felix Thomas from the Saskatoon Tribal Council said.

"By understanding their story of near extinction, we are able to better understand the stories of Canada's indigenous peoples. Bringing back the bison will be symbolic of the recognition of Indigenous cultures in Canada."

The plan for renewal and expansion of the Park is well supported by the First Nation leadership of Saskatchewan, the Province of Saskatchewan, PotashCorp and the City of Saskatoon.

"We are launching a bold plan for Wanuskewin to reach its full potential and take its place among Canada's premier cultural destinations," said Wayne Brownlee, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of PotashCorp.

"Wanuskewin has extraordinary cultural value that is relevant to all Canadians, and PotashCorp is committed to helping Wanuskewin build an internationally-recognized centre that will be sustainable in the long-term. This place is like Mesopotamia.

"History did not start 300 years ago. It started long ago and we need to celebrate and teach it. If we all pull together and share in this vision, imagine the lasting legacy in Saskatchewan," says Brownlee.

"Wanuskewin Heritage Park links our past to the present and the future of our region", says Saskatoon Mayor Donald Atchison.

"Today Saskatoon is planning for the future and that includes aligning the city's cultural strategy with innovative approaches like the Wanuskewin Heritage Park UNESCO project to promote and enhance our cultural heritage."

The historical significance of Wanuskewin and the 6,000 years of use and occupation has been used as a teaching tool to a couple generations of school students and Chief Thomas hopes those teachings continue and deepen.

"This place is a part of our history and we need to teach our young people that. History didn't start in 1492. This will give them a sense of pride," he added.



Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas and Wayne Brownlee, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of PotashCorp are both strong supporters of Wanuskewin pursuing the UNESCO designation.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

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RHEANA WORME**

Darlene Brander elected chair of Saskatoon board of police commissioners

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Darlene Brander is only the second woman and civilian to be voted chair of the board of police commissioners for the Saskatoon Police Service.

For the first time since 2003, someone other than Mayor Don Atchison will serve as chair. The current board is made up of city councillors Darren Hill and Charlie Clark, Mayor Atchison and two members of the public-at-large, Brander and Carolanne Inglis-McQuay. Usually the Mayor is chair of the board.

Councillor Darren Hill nominated Brander for the Chair at the January meeting and she was voted in.

“I was surprised but honoured,” said Brander of the nomination. “Carolanne and I had been getting more involved as civilians and we have hosted public consultations. Mayor Atchison ran great meetings and I learned a lot from watching him. He has offered me his guidance as well.”

Brander is the Chief Human Resources Officer with Athabasca Catering and is from the Red Earth Cree First Nation. She believes that her work experience will be valuable in her role as Chair.

“There are a lot of transferable skills in HR. We look at policies and procedure and always make sure we act in the best interest of the organization,” said Brander who has a long track record of community service including chairing boards and committees.

“I like to approach issues in a collegial and col-

laborative way.”

Being on the Board of Police Commissioners is a volunteer role that not only has zero pay it also takes lots of your time.

“I try to schedule meetings and such at lunch or after work. There are lots of hours but I try to use my time very strategically,” she added. “Thankfully my company is very accommodating.”

The last civilian appointment to be chair was Leanne Bellegarde who had to deal with the starlight tour controversies of the early 2000s. Though Brander isn’t becoming chair in such a trying time, there are a couple of issues that she sees as priorities.

“Missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is certainly an important issue and we also have to develop policy around carding and street checks,” said Brander of the policing tactic that has raised the ire of some community members.

“But there will always be pressing issues in policing and we will be making a strategic plan to guide us into the future.”

Accepting the chair position was not a decision that she took lightly, either.

“At the end of the day I have been a citizen of Saskatoon for a long time, I’ve talked to a lot of people and I know the issues,” said Darlene.

“I am humbled and honoured with my responsibilities and I take them very seriously and will do my best at it.”



Darlene Brander is only the second civilian to sit as Chair of the Board of Police Commissioners for the Saskatoon Police Service. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Comedian

Rick Mercer

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Wise teen looks into promising future

Christopher Sanford Beck may only be a teenager, but he has a lot of wisdom.

The unschooled 15-year-old, who homesteads with his parents and two younger siblings off-grid north of the Battlefords, wrote one of the winning "Imagine a Canada" pieces in the competition put on by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR).

He and the other winners recently travelled to Ottawa where they read their pieces in front of Gov. Gen. David Johnston.

Beck says a lot of his inspiration came from growing up in one of Saskatoon's inner city neighbourhoods, Riversdale, before moving to their homestead. He also attended St. Mary's School.

"There was a big focus on education about traditional teachings and traditions, as well as regular ceremonies, and elders at the school. These things all helped to lead me where I am now," he says, adding that reconciliation should be important to everyone.

"Canada's future involves each and every one of us and if we want a good future we need reconciliation."

Beck's father, Shawn Sanford Beck, says his son has been practicing reconciliation for years, starting with his time at St. Mary's, as well as hanging out at CHEP with his mom, Janice, and at KAIROS justice and church events with Shawn (who is an Anglican priest).

"Truth and reconciliation has been very important in our family for a long time; it is integral to the type of life we lead, trying to work toward social, ecological, racial, and gender justice."

"Personally, this feeling has been ingrained in me for a long time and I think that really comes from my school, my parents, and growing up where I did," says Christopher. "Also, as a white person I feel awful about the part Europeans played in the past, included the residential schools. So, as I've mentioned before, we can't change the past, but we can effect the future!"

Shawn says he and Janice are "pretty proud of the way those values have become incarnate in Christopher. He's a great guy!"

We couldn't agree more. Read part of Christopher's story below, and visit eaglefeathernews.com to read the entire story.

Treaty Six Territory

June 21, 2036

Looking back on the past 20 years, I am ever-surprised at how far Canada has come. When I was a boy, growing up in a farming community in rural Saskatchewan, what I am doing now would have never happened.

I am taking my two daughters to the local First Nations reserve – for the third day in a row – to attend the culture festival. Quickly becoming an annual tradition for everyone in the area, the culture festival is a week-long event celebrating indigenous history and tradition in Canada. As a countrywide event, each reserve customizes it to reflect its own history and traditions.

This has emerged as an extremely effective way to encourage us white folks – and other newcomers to Canada – to learn and grow not only in our own cultures and traditions, but to share in the rich traditions of Canada's First Peoples. The fact that it builds and strengthens intercultural communities is a side benefit. Yesterday there was a powwow, the day before that we partook in a feast and smudge, and today we are gathered for a re-commitment ceremony of the treaty promises that were made so long ago.

Events such as these are not new to me. Growing up in the Saskatoon inner city and attending an elementary school where my siblings and I were the only white students, I was exposed to many Cree traditions and cultural values as a youngster. For that I am forever grateful.

It is now my profound joy that these rich teachings can be shared not only with my own children, but with all of the families who live around us. To see the grown-up children from what had been the most racist families in the area bringing their little ones to an event like this warms my heart in a way words can not adequately describe.

That now – instead of something that a select few white people would attend for solidarity's sake – everyone in the community can gather together to smudge, feast, and dance.

I think that this is an almost magical shift from where things were at 20 years ago. When I look even further back



Christopher Sanford Beck was one of the winners of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation "Imagine a Canada" writing contest. (Photo NCTR)

into the past my awe only multiplies. For someone 50 years ago to imagine a future where farmers and people from the reserve could hold hands together and share in the beauty Canada has to offer would have been unheard of.

There would, of course, have been people dreaming of a time like that, working for it, striving for it. But to imagine that an on-reserve culture festival would have become a mainstream tradition may have surpassed even their hopeful imaginations.

When I delve back even further into the past, into things that were already a subject of near legend during my childhood – despite their only recent eradication – I am blown away. To think that one 150, even 100 years ago, children were being forcibly removed from their families and traditions; thrust into an unfamiliar and hostile environment; stripped of their traditional clothing, teachings, and language; and abused, 'educated', and assimilated is unthinkable.

Nowadays the residential schools and their legacy sound like a dystopian novel. This is Canada's history.

GEORGE GORDON FIRST NATION ELECTION INFORMATION

Advance Poll:
 March 21, 2016
 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM
 Saskatoon Ramada Hotel, Pioneer Room

March 23, 2016
 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM
 Regina Urban Office, 2704 - 10th Ave

Election:
 March 31, 2016
 9:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.
 George Gordon Education Centre

For further information contact:
Howard McMaster, Electoral Officer

Toll free: 1-844-652-1858
 Saskatoon only: 306-652-1858
 Fax: 306-652-1955
 E-mail: howardmcmaster@sasktel.net

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Senator wants courts to consider vulnerability of Indigenous women

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

Lillian Dyck wants to ensure the high vulnerability of Indigenous women and girls to violence is specifically recognized by Canada's Criminal Code.

The Saskatoon senator has put forward Bill S-215, which seeks to amend the criminal code so that the court system will be required to take into account Indigenous female identity during sentencing in convictions of murder, assault and sexual assault.

The goal of the legislation is to send a strong signal to Canadian society as a whole that violent crimes committed against Indigenous women and girls are considered as serious as those committed against non-Indigenous females.

It is also hoped the legislation will serve as a deterrent to any potential perpetrators who believe violent crimes against Indigenous females will be prosecuted less severely.

"If a person is found guilty, then the judge has to take the female Aboriginal person's identity into account to ensure that the sentence is appropriate and that it's not minimized," Senator Dyck says.

"Or, it may even be a little bit longer because Aboriginal females are more vulnerable to being victims of assault or murder."

Dyck says the idea for the legislation came to her some months ago when she started noticing bills being passed that recognize the vulnerabilities to violence under the criminal code of specific professions or groups but no such legislation existed for Indigenous women.

"I noticed last summer when I was looking through the bills we had passed there was one on protecting public transit operators, like taxi drivers. When I reviewed it, I realized the situation was very comparable (to violence against Indigenous women). So I thought, if we can amend the criminal code to protect taxi drivers and police dogs, then why can't we do the same thing for Aboriginal women?"

Dyck adds perhaps the strongest part of the bill is that it should serve as a heavy deterrent to potential perpetrators of violence.

"It's more than just the sentencing. It also sends a very strong signal, if it's followed up with appropriate public education, to the public that this has to stop and it's what they call in sentencing the denouncement.

"So that, if the seed is planted in people's minds that this has to stop, they're not going to get away with it and they might even get a heavier sentence, that will in effect deter people from targeting Aboriginal women and girls."

Bill S-215 passed second reading in the Senate at the end of January.

In order to become legislation, it will have pass a third reading in the upper chamber before passing another three readings in the House of Commons.

A 2014 RCMP report estimates Indigenous women and girls are three times more likely to go missing and four times more likely to be murdered as their non-Indigenous counterparts.

In addition, Indigenous women are three times more likely to be sexually assaulted.

Earlier in the year, the federal Liberal government launched a process to start a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women.



SEN. LILLIAN DYCK

FSIN holds first assembly under new chief

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

WHITECAP DAKOTA FIRST NATION – Newly elected Chief Bobby Cameron says after a difficult few years, the future looks bright for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

The FSIN had to lay off most of its staff in early 2014 due to millions of dollars in cuts from the Harper government.

However, Cameron, who was elected chief last October, says things appear to be turning a corner with a new Liberal government in Ottawa.

The new head of the FSIN is also fresh off his first legislative assembly as leader, which took place February 16-18 on Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

"It's been a long time coming, especially with the change with the federal government," he says. "We now have a Liberal majority who have all these very good commitments with respect and

recognition of our inherent and treaty rights, on really emphasizing on building on a nation-to-nation government basis.

"Now we just wrapped up our two-and-a-half-day assembly, which was really inherent and treaty rights focused. Many good discussions and directions coming from our chiefs, councillors, Senate, elders on what it is when it comes to a treaty-based budget. And, really, emphasize and advocate that treaty relationship must be with the Crown."

At the assembly, elected officials voted on and approved a five-year budget worth about \$2.5 million per year.

The FSIN is still running a deficit but Cameron says he doesn't see this as a long-term problem.

Moreover, he says the main thing is governments need to live up to their treaty obligations in terms of providing adequate funding to First Nations people in such areas as education, housing and health care.

"The federal government is in deficit, the provincial government is in deficit and so are we. So that says that obviously there's not enough funding for housing, education, health and all those other related items and the fastest growing demographic, our First Nations people. Something's going to give. The funding really has to reflect our growing demands. It has to reflect our growing population."

There was also significant discussion at the assembly on the recent Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling on how the federal government meets its obligations in terms of on-reserve child welfare services.

In its groundbreaking ruling, the CHRT finds the federal government discriminates against First Nations children living on-reserve by providing a lower level of financial support as compared to what children living off-reserve receive from provincial governments.

The CHRT has yet to put forward what specific actions Ottawa should take to remedy this discrimination.

Sebastian Grammond, the senior counsel for the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, spoke to the FSIN assembly about the ruling via Skype.

He says whatever recommendations the CHRT decides on, it is important that they meet the test of substantive equality.

In other words, the recommendations must take into account the unique historical challenges Indigenous people living in Canada face.

"For 20 to 30 years, we have been developing in Canada another conception of equality called substantive equality," Grammond says. "What does this



Female Youth Representative Cheyenne Fineday addresses the assembly. (Photos by Fraser Needham)

mean? It means that equality does not just require equal treatment. It means also that governmental measures must take into account the special needs, the special circumstances of certain particular groups."

On the floor of the assembly, close to \$3,000 was also raised as part of an effort to send 10-year-old Marcus Haywayhe and his family to Disneyland.

The Carry the Kettle First Nation boy suffers from terminal brain cancer.

The FSIN office has raised another \$3,000 for the trip through a 50/50 draw.

It is estimated the trip to Disneyland will cost about \$15,000.

The FSIN assembly also formally honoured elder Fred Paskemin of Sweetgrass First Nation for his years of service.

The next assembly is slated to take place in May and will likely be held in North Battleford.



Elder Fred Paskemin (center) is honoured for his years of service. (Photos by Fraser Needham)

Artists focus on empowering Indigenous people

**By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather News**

REGINA – The Indigenous Artists Symposium and Storytellers Festival was held in Regina to help coordinate and build partnerships.

The event was a collaboration between Sâkêwêwak and the First Nations University of Canada Plains Red Gallery. The event ran from Feb. 24 to 27 throughout the city.

Audrey Dreaver organized this year's

event and the theme was based on activism and education through the arts which looked specifically at artists who are working to empower Indigenous people.

"The event was fantastic, I couldn't have asked for a better selection of artists who came across Canada to present their work, to talk about their initiatives and to network with other artists," she says.

"The organization's goals were to bring everyone together to talk and look critically at how art is an important element of voice in Indigenous communities."

Dreaver says the turnout of Saskatchewan artists was disappointing but the conversations of the events were powerful. It gave the artists the opportunity to talk about what they actually do because with every piece of art carries significant stories which people don't see as she explains.

"Artists are undervalued and they are often not given a fair compensation for the work they are doing. People don't think of the time or energy that goes into the art."

Indigenous women filmmakers, Trudy Stewart and Janine Windolph from Mispon: a Celebration of Indigenous Filmmaking, presented at the storytelling festival to talk about their work

as filmmakers.

"It was great to partner with Sâkêwêwak again for another event at the Storytellers Festival. We hosted a screening of Amanda Strong's work and the animated short, Mia' done by Amanda and Bracken Hanuse Corlett. It was great to host such amazing talent," says Stewart.

"I really enjoyed the symposium and (the) speakers who shared great information, their work and experiences. Christi Belcourt's keynote was a highlight. I'm grateful Sâkêwêwak brought First Nations and Métis artists together to share our work, research and methodology."

The symposium and storytelling festival had a variety of artists from Peter Morin who attempted to make the world's largest gluten-free bannock at the FNUUniv, Indigenous music by Murray Porter and Elaine Bomberry, Amanda Strong who conducted a digital storytelling workshop at the Dunlop Art Gallery and also Christi Belcourt who gave the keynote address.

Dreaver was satisfied with the overall participation of artists and listeners.

"It was one of the best conferences that I've ever coordinated. It was equally strong."



Elaine Bomberry and Murray Porter gave a presentation during the luncheon at the Indigenous Arts Symposium and Storytellers Festival in Regina.

(Photo by Adam Martin, Sâkêwêwak Executive Director)

Cameco

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Classic pianist wows the kids in La Ronge

By Linda Mikolayenio
For Eagle Feather News

LA RONGE – Internationally acclaimed pianist Jan Lisiecki performed in La Ronge on March 3, and the audience there was luckier than the one in New York.

When Lisiecki recently played at Carnegie Hall, he didn't speak to the audience, notes Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra (SSO) Executive Director Mark Turner. In La Ronge, however, the 20-year-old classical musician introduced his pieces with an explanation or an anecdote.

"He's very charming when he talks," says Turner.

Thanks to a partnership between the SSO and Cameco, Lisiecki charmed and inspired students at the Lac La Ronge Indian Band's Senator Myles Venne School (SMVS), and an over-capacity crowd at a free evening concert for the public.

Former La Ronge resident Tristen Durocher made a special trip in from Prince Albert just to take in the concert which was held at Churchill Community High School. Durocher, who is also 20 years old, and an accomplished fiddle player, appreciated Lisiecki's commentary.

"I enjoyed his interaction with the audience," said Durocher. "We're not very educated as far as classical music goes, because that's just not our genre. He really made it more accessible to us."

Cameco's Director of Corporate Relations Jonathan Huntington was pleased with the number of families that attended the concert.



Students at Senator Myles Venne School crowd around classical piano superstar Jan Lisiecki to get his autograph. (Photos by Linda Mikolayenko)

Still, he says he finds meeting with students energizing, and his time answering questions and playing at SMVS was a highlight.

"They were really curious," he observed.

"Piano, for me, is my way of expressing myself," he told the students, encouraging them to focus on their strengths and work hard.

"The cool thing in life is that you can figure out a way to make money at whatever you like to do – you should know that," he said.

His message struck a chord with Grade 9 student Faith Bird, one of many who sought Lisiecki's autograph and posed for photos with him.

"I thought it was inspiring," she said.



Along with answering questions, Lisiecki played a number of pieces on the piano for the students.

"We're thrilled to see so many young people here," said Huntington. "Jan is a tremendous role model."

It was Lisiecki's idea to come to Northern Saskatchewan prior to a performance with the SSO in Saskatoon, despite already having a very demanding touring schedule. Although he makes his home in Calgary, just days before arriving in La Ronge he had completed nine performances in nine European cities over 10 days.

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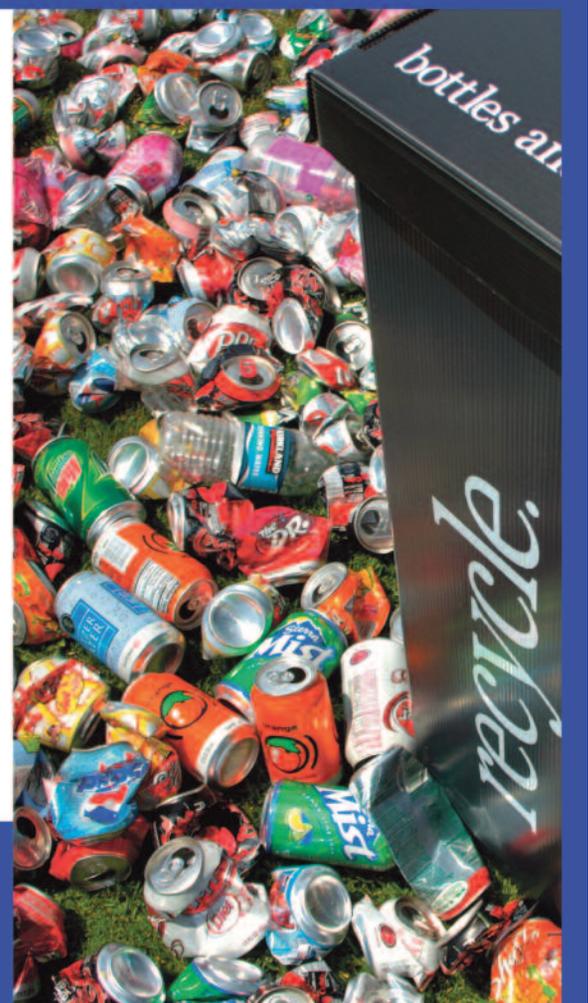
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GTNT's Circle of Voices continues to produce relevant social commentary

By EFN Staff

SASKATOON – Community activist Marcel Petit's latest work is the play Reclaim, the story of a retired police officer who attends a healing circle in an effort to let go of the past and move forward in a healthy way.

"The play is an honest portrayal of what I saw on the streets," explains Petit. "It's the relationship between the police and the people I grew up with."

Reclaim is a multi-media, one act play which will be performed by the Gordon Tootoosis Nīkānīwin Theatre (GTNT) Circle of Voices (COV) participants.

The COV program assists young artists in building self-confidence and cultural awareness while developing performing arts skills and working with industry professionals.

Petit drafted the play and then collaborated with the COV participants for feedback and input before writing the final version.

"Working with the COV participants was amazing," says Petit. "They are so resilient. They faced the challenges that were put in front of them and came out the other side."

Reclaim is consistent with GTNT's delivery of thematic and relevant presentations for diverse audiences. As Saskatchewan's only professional Indigenous theatre company, GTNT produces culturally based Indigenous theatre that educates and promotes racial harmony.

"This is a tough show," admits GTNT Artistic Associate and COV Co-ordinator Jennifer Bishop. "It's full of so much truth and emotion. This year's COV is



Marcel Petit with Circle of Voices participants: Sonny Wahobin, Patience Wapikwanisis Wahobin, Benjamin Clarke, Allana Dorion, JoHanna Angus, Stephanie Bellegarde. Front: Kyle Angus, Marcus Merasty, Aaron Marie Nepoose and Velma Eashappie. (Photo supplied)

giving it their all in bringing Reclaim to life. I think the work of Marcel Petit and our COV goes hand in hand to create this journey together, I'm proud of everyone that's involved."

The audience can expect an in-depth look at the inner workings of healing circles and the drama that can materialize when people come face to face over a conflict.

While Petit admits the process of writing the play was difficult at the beginning, he acknowledges, "It was an amazing journey for me. It helped me heal, forgive and let go of some of my past that was still hanging on."

The Gordon Tootoosis Nīkānīwin Theatre is presenting Reclaim at Studio 914 in Saskatoon from March 11 to 18.



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Presents

2015/2016 Circle of Voices

Reclaim

By Marcel Petit

March 11 - 18

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March 11 - 18

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gtnt.ca

Jo-Ann Episkenew inspired many people

By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather News

Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew lived an extraordinary life. There are not enough words to describe the kind of woman she was. Her passing on Feb. 18 is a massive loss for the community.

She was a courageous woman who was driven by success, and this resulted in numerous awards and recognitions to acknowledge her accomplishments.

She worked extremely hard to land on top of that mountain of victory.

I've come to learn about Jo-Ann's life story since I first met her a year and a half ago. But, I knew about her reputation before that.

I was introduced to Jo-Ann through my friend Cassandra Wajuntah, who is the Associate Director of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (IPHRC), where Jo-Ann was the Director. They hired me as one of the Research Assistants specializing in Communications, for a student position that was only supposed to be a summer position, but Jo-Ann continued to extend my contract.

Being a part of the IPHRC team is like being a member of a family. Jo-Ann instilled that effect upon her employees but yet maintained that professional rapport.

I was inspired with how she worked her way up from being a single mother of four, struggling through university, to landing the position as IPHRC's director, being the author of *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy and Healing* and being an English professor at First Nations University of Canada.

She was a member of the Regina Riel Métis Council, a board member of the Aboriginal Health Research Network Board of Directors, the Lung Association of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina Press, member of the Advisory Group on Poverty Reduction and one of the founding members of the Indigenous Literary Studies Association.

Her community involvement let everyone see the amazing person she truly was.

Jo-Ann was passionate about the work she did and the projects she led, and it showed through the amazing research projects that came out of IPHRC.

Even the American Ambassador to Canada, Bruce Heyman and his wife Vicki, heard about all the excellent work Jo-Ann and the IPHRC team were doing, and they made a special visit to IPHRC to meet Jo-Ann and her team.

Jo-Ann gathered researchers and community partners to run a project called Acting Out – But in a Good Way in which IPHRC staff travel to reserve schools to run theatre game workshops and teach different art forms to foster wellness and suicide prevention among Indigenous youth.

All her efforts were rewarded with many honours, including the prestigious 2016 Inspire Award. She was also chosen as one of six female educators in Saskatchewan for Women's History Month and she was recognized with the YWCA Women of Distinction Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015.

Jo-Ann will be remembered for her mentorship roles in numerous lives she had a profound impact on. An article I wrote about IPHRC's intergenerational mentorship was featured in the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) December's issue. I interviewed seven people in total about the intergenerational mentorship and the ripple effect Jo-Ann started.

Jo-Ann will be sadly missed by her husband Clayton, their blended family of 13 children and over 30 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, IPHRC staff, research affiliates and community partners, colleagues from First Nations University, as well as many others who knew and loved her.

I will cherish the lessons she passed onto me, savour the memories that I have with her and certainly follow the example that she left behind, which is to push yourself beyond your limits to pursue the life you want for yourself, your family and your community.



Jo-Ann Episkenew was honoured with an Inspire Award shortly before she passed.
(Photo by Eagleclaw Thom)



Hundreds of people attended the University of Saskatchewan College of Education's feast and round dance in February. It is the annual wrap-up event for the U of S's Aboriginal Achievement Week. As well as the traditional dance and music, students in the Indian Teacher Education Program honoured a number of people for their commitment and dedication to Indigenous education including U of S Chancellor Blaine Favel and Education professor Verna St. Denis. This is the seventh year for the feast and round dance. (Photo above) Education professor Verna St. Denis (center) is honoured for her commitment and dedication to Indigenous education.

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The staff at the Indigenous Peoples Health Research Centre were all inspired by the leadership of Jo-Ann Episkenew.
(Photo by Mike Dubois)



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Indspire Award floors Métis youth recipient

**By Zoey Roy
For Eagle Feather News**

It is said that the Indspire Award is the “most prestigious” award that an Indigenous person can receive for their achievements.

So, naturally, I was floored and humbled last August when I got the call I was the Métis youth recipient. The show took place in February at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver. The theatre was packed and the schedule was tighter. Each of the award recipients went through a dress rehearsal so we were prepared for the fast pace of the two-hour show.

The recipients are all amazing people who are at the top of their careers. Chief Robert Joseph received the Lifetime Achievement Award. He has a revolution of love that we all need to carry on. Even though he was badly beaten in residential school, he blamed himself and carried pain that led him to alcohol abuse and a self-destructive lifestyle until one day he had enough. He knew that he needed to search within the smallest sources of hope and he has made a tremendous difference in many people’s lives by spearheading reconciliation in Canada.

Joseph Boyden received the Arts award and it was such a proud moment watching him celebrate his achievement through his inner child – you could see him smiling from within as he stood next to business recipient Clint Davis on the rising platform and their very large trophies tightly gripped.

Now, for the Saskatchewan recipients and we’ll start with Jo-Ann Episkew.

“She was everyone’s boss and never acted like it even once,” said one of her employees who reminisced on the lessons she learned from Jo-Ann. She single handedly raised over \$1 million for Indigenous arts in Education for Saskatchewan. She was the Director of the Indigenous Peoples’ Health Research Centre and led a team that she deeply believed in. She changed the way her students see themselves as learners, as scholars and as people.

Jo-Ann passed away on Feb. 17. She leaves a legacy that is left to the hands of the hundreds of people she inspired and guided to do great things.

Last year, Jo-Ann received the Lifetime Achievement Award for the Women of Distinction Awards in Regina and in her acceptance speech, she said: “I thank all of you for recognizing me and the little bit I try to do to make my children proud and my grandchildren proud. And hopefully when I leave this world, it will be a better place than when I started.”

This is something we are going to have to ask ourselves. But, what is certain is that our world is better because she was here.

Christian Kowalchuk was awarded the First Nations Youth Award. He is a coach for the Arkansas Razorbacks baseball team. He was raised by his father in

Saskatoon and started playing baseball when he was 10 years old. He is a left-handed pitcher who learned early on that this was the game for him.

He graduated from University with an Economics Degree and a Masters Degree in Physical Education

Christian graduated from Holy Cross High School and gained a scholarship at Seward County Community College where he played for the Saints. He was awarded Conference Freshman of the Year and Conference All-Star of the Year. Not a bad start for a First Nations boy from Saskatchewan – just imagine the possibilities.

Zondra Roy (me!) was awarded the Metis Youth Award. I am a third-year student in SUNTEP, a Teaching Musician for the National Arts Centre’s Music Alive Program, a co-founder of Write Out Loud: Building Community through Spoken Word and an active member in Saskatoon.

Most people call me Zoey and I have lived on both sides of the system and I believe the best way to rebel against it is to succeed. I always acknowledge my adversities and reached out to community members to help overcome them.

With the trust and patience of many organizations, teachers and youth workers, I finally began finding my calling as a messenger. I am a spoken word poet and love using my gifts to help others find their voice.

Elder Mae Louise Campbell and Chief Jim Ochiese received the Culture, Spirituality and Heritage Award. Pat Mandy received the award for Health. Mark Stevenson received the award for Law and Justice. Michael Kanentakeron Mitchell received the award for Politics. Leonard George received the award for Public Service.

Carey Price received the Sports award. His mom, Lynda Price, came in his honour as he is healing from injuries. He is the goaltender for the Montreal Canadiens. He dedicated his Vezina award to Indigenous youth saying, “be proud of your heritage and don’t be discouraged from the improbable”.

Laura Arngna’naaq received the Inuit youth award. She is from Baker Lake, NU and moved south to study Business and found that Chartered Accountants aligned with her aspirations.

“The 2016 Indspire Awards recipients personify the successes Indigenous people have achieved and the significant impact we have made in all areas of life in Canada,” said Roberta L. Jamieson, President and CEO of Indspire and Executive Producer of the Indspire Awards.

“We also salute the future, through our three youth recipients, each of whom serves as a role model, inspiring young Indigenous people across the country.”

The 2016 Indspire Awards was an amazing celebration – if you see yourself in any of these people, hold on to that.

If you want the award too, then make it happen – they did.



Laura Arngna’naaq, Christian Kowalchuk and Zoey Roy were the Inuit, First Nation and Métis Indspire Youth Award recipients. (Photo by Indspire)

SHARING SUCCESS

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GameSense

Indigenous models living their dreams on fashion runways

By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather News

Two young Indigenous women are walking their dreams on a fashion runway on the other side of the world.

Shasta Mike and Elicia Munro-Sutherland, both 22 years old from Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation, were picked along with a couple other Canadian models to be a part of the Global Indigenous Fashion Runway in the Virgin Australia's Melbourne Fashion Festival's Cultural Program with the show starting on March 8.

The models left last week to live their dream to be a part of an Indigenous fashion show. Mike has chased the dream since she was a little girl and would look for opportunities to gain modeling experience.

"I did a few hair photo shoots for my sister, Loressa Mike, when I was a teenager and in September 2015 I met

Incubator, and Helen Oro, one of the founders, took me under her wing. Then I was signed with Infinity Management in November 2015," she says.

Helen Oro is showcasing her newest collection Modern Traditions at the show. She has been busy building her brand for two years through fashion shows and showcasing her collections throughout Canada and the U.S. and now overseas.

"Don't be afraid to take that leap towards following your dreams. Don't let negative people or opinions stop you from pursuing modelling and being successful. In reality, the only person keeping you from your dreams is yourself and how you overcome obstacles."

Munro-Sutherland's advice to all the younger girls and women who want to pursue a career in fashion modeling is to follow your dreams and to never give up.

"There are so many directions you can go with modeling and the opportunities are endless. Dream big, work hard, and stay humble," she says.

Since she was a little girl, her parents would take her to auditions in Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Saskatoon.

"I would be asked to sign with agencies but my parents could never afford it so now that I am older and I can do that for myself and that's what I am doing pursuing a lifelong dream," she says.

Munro-Sutherland, also a mother to two little girls, hopes to return to school in the fall to take Social Work. In her spare time, she is a photographer for her own company called EliciaMunro Photography.

Both of the models say training for the fashion show is hard work that includes walking, posture, facial expressions and learning professionalism in the fashion industry but also a part of the amazing experience.

"We already have blisters on our feet from training. It's hard and it hurts but it's definitely worth it," Munro-Sutherland says.

Mike is hoping to take home unforgettable memories from a momentous experience and establish bonds with the other participants.

"I'm hoping to make friendships and connections with the models, designers and organizers of the Global Indigenous Runway. I already learned so much from the runway training, so I'm excited that I get this experience.



Models Shasta Mike on left and on right Elicia Munro-Sutherland were fortunate to be picked to go to Australia with designer Helen Oro for the Global Indigenous Fashion Runway. (Photos supplied)

the ladies of Her 4 Direction Fashion

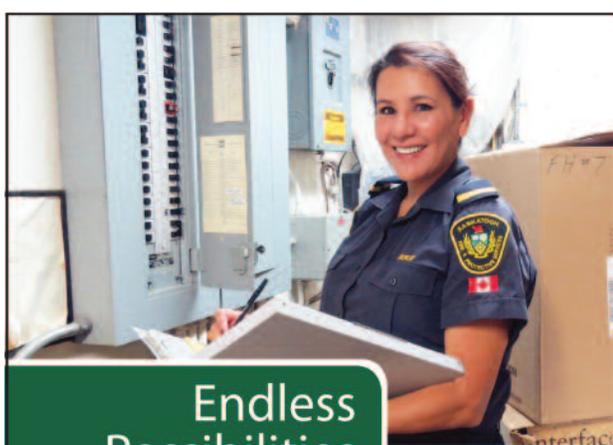
inspire the people watching her chase her dream.

"I plan to mentor and empower the youth from Beardy's and Okemasis to follow their dreams of becoming a part of the fashion industry," she says.



Mike, mother to a two-year-old little girl named Kamiya, doesn't look up to any celebrity super models in particular but she's inspired by the local models from Saskatchewan including Nikita Kahpeaysewat.

She hopes she, too, can



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Youth entrepreneurs pitch business ideas

By Fraser Needham
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Young Indigenous entrepreneurs were busy pitching their business plans in Saskatoon on Feb. 27.

It was all part of the Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge put on by PotashCorp and Enactus University of Saskatchewan.

A total of six entrepreneurs outlined their business ideas to a panel of judges that included local Aboriginal entrepreneurs, sponsors and U of S faculty.

PotashCorp awards a total of \$10,000 in start-up capital to the top three finishers with \$6,500 going to first place, \$3,000 to second and \$500 to third.

Helen Oro of Helen Oro Designs took the top prize at this year's Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge.

"My advice for other entrepreneurs would be to build great relationships and to maintain them, finding like-minded entrepreneurs like you and collaborating," said Oro of what she has done to become successful.

"Collaborations are huge when you're just starting out. So much growth comes to you and others when you work together rather than seeing others as competition."

Helen Oro Designs is an Indigenous fashion design start-up company, which currently features traditional beaded sunglasses and branded T-shirts among its products.

The company seeks to create awareness of Indigenous culture in a respectful way and a portion of its profits are given back to the local community through charitable donations.

Janelle Pewapsonias of Neeched Up Games took second place.

Neeched Up Games seeks to share Indigenous cul-



Helen Oro (center) of Helen Oro Designs took first place at the 2016 Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge and received a big cheque from Peter Siarkos, the president of Enactus University of Saskatchewan and Lisa Mooney of PotashCorp.

ture and education through a combination of Aboriginal themed card and board games that incorporate humour.

Josephine Awasis of Pawata Designs was awarded third prize.

Pawata Designs is an apparel and beaded accessory line that focuses on Cree culture, healthy lifestyles and keeping Cree syllabics alive.

All designs and beadwork are hand made by-products from locally owned businesses.

Hannah Tootosis and Victor Carter were also given certificates as part of the Young Innovator Awards.

Dani Nichols is the project leader for the Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge.

She says there are a number of things they look for in terms of selecting the six finalists and those that win the top three prizes.

"We look for someone who has put a lot of time, dedication and passion into their business – ideas that are really plausible, that they are going to make happen," Nichols says.

"We are looking for people that are going to help the community and just basically projects that people are really passionate about, they have put a lot of time into them and that they give a great pitch."

Nichols adds often the only obstacle standing in the way of a great business idea becoming a reality is a lack of seed money.

"The start-up capital is very helpful for these young entrepreneurs," she says.

"Many of them are just starting out and they don't have any start-up capital, so PotashCorp's donation is going to help them get their feet off the ground completely. It's a really vital part of this competition; it helps them turn their ideas into reality."

Enactus University of Saskatchewan is a student run, not-for-profit organization that creates outreach programs to address social, economic and environmental issues within the community.

"This win is huge for me," added Helen Oro. "It's been a slow go putting whatever money I've made these past couple years back into product. With this money I will be able to launch my website and my newest T-shirt line which will be giving back some profits to different organizations."

"It's just so exciting to actually get everything I've planned for years to fully launch and get the ball going with all that I envisioned."



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It's a safe bet ... SIGA's a great place to work

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

The Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) has been honoured with the distinctive title of 2016 "Best Casinos to Work for" in North America by the Casino Journal.



ZANE HANSEN

SIGA (Corporate and Casinos) was fourth on a list of the top five casino organizations that competed from across North America, and it was the only Canadian casino organization that was recognized.

"SIGA is very proud of this accomplishment.

Since starting in the 1990s, we have grown SIGA into an employee compliment of about 1,900 people, making SIGA the largest First Nations employer in Canada –over 1,300 of our employees identify as First Nations," President and CEO Zane Hansen said.

"We continue to improve as an organization, and we are proud of our employees; they are contributing on a grand scale to the communities where they live, work and play."

Participation in this program required SIGA's employees to go through an assessment process. The process included surveying their employees, as well as taking an inventory of company benefits, policies and offerings. As part of the process, SIGA received a summarized analysis of the engagement and satisfaction of employees at SIGA.

This summarized analysis is rich with information that identifies what areas SIGA is doing well in and what areas there are opportunities for improvement.

SIGA is also an attractive place for women to pursue a career. At SIGA, 56 per cent of the workforce is female and 56 per cent of the managers are female.

"The stability of the career and the benefits are a big draw," said Shauna Bear, V.P. Human Resources.

"SIGA has competitive wages, an excellent group health benefit and pension plan, other incentives such as long service awards at five, 10, 15 and now 20 year and health and wellness programming. We also heard that our employees feel like they are a part of the team."

"We are very proud of our employees at our casinos and corporate office. SIGA is always exploring new ways to develop and enhance our workplace," added Bear.

"We actively look for and value feedback from our

employees. It helps us to improve the working environment, and we strive to provide the resources needed to encourage their professional success. We work hard at ensuring our workplace is the best so that we can attract and retain top talent to better serve our customers.



SHAUNA BEAR

"I want to thank the SIGA Board and Executive team for their direction and guidance, and to all of the management teams and employees at SIGA for their feedback to make SIGA an even better place to be."

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fcc.ca/Diversity

New digs for Neechie Gear

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Kendal Netmaker, his wife Rachel, their kids and family welcomed shoppers and friends to the new Neechie Gear location on a bustling Saturday afternoon in February.

The storefront on Circle Drive in Saskatoon is a big change from the action at Circle Centre Mall, but the move offers Netmaker more control of his life and business and the ability to better serve his clients.

And as much as the mall offered his store some traffic and exposure, the location did come with some drawbacks.



Kendal and Rachel Netmaker were busy in February celebrating the opening of the new location of Neechie Gear on Circle Drive in Saskatoon and the fact that they can now close on Sundays. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

“Last year we were only closed for three days the entire year. The mall set the hours. We had absolutely no storage and mall people can sometimes bring their bad moods into your store,” said Netmaker.

Now he has his own place, with windows and a huge store room in back for his bulk sales, a nice office with a signed Rider helmet proudly displayed. And parking for customer’s right out front.

“I am looking forward to having Sundays off, finally,” added Netmaker on one of the benefits of the new location.

The hard working entrepreneur has been touring Canada doing motivational speeches and telling about his story of his life, and his brand, and being responsible for a retail store that was open seven days a week. The Sundays off will likely be spent with his young family.

Mining career a great fit for Katelynn Kimbley

Ms. Katelynn Kimbley of Beauval, Saskatchewan took a Mill Operator Training course in McLean Lake. She has since secured full time employment at the mine and she has settled into career as a miner for Areva. We tracked her down for some insight to being a woman in mining.



KATELYNN KIMBLEY

• **What is your job? Describe what you do in a day.** My job is a Mill Operator. Currently I work in the JEB Water Treatment Plant, which involves a lot of sampling and monitoring. We treat process water and remove contaminants, dissolved minerals, and other materials that can’t be released into the environment.

• **What is most challenging about your career?** Learning new areas and being able to troubleshoot. Every area in the mill has a different purpose, therefore operated differently.

• **What is the most rewarding?** Every day you are learning something new, and at the end of your work week, you always feel like you accomplished a lot.

• **Is there room for advancement or different careers where you are?** Yes, with experience, I eventually would have the opportunity to advance if I wanted to. I also have the opportunity to change career paths with AREVA if I become interested in something else.

• **Was there a “welcome to mining” moment at the start of your career? Something interesting or awe inspiring?** I felt very welcomed when I started at McLean Lake. Everybody introduced themselves, made me feel at home, and was always willing to help or answer any questions I had.

• **What freedoms does this career allow you?** In 52 weeks I only work 23 weeks, that’s less than six months. This gives me a lot more time to spend with my family.

• **Any tips for young women pondering careers working in mining?** Don’t be intimidated that the majority of the employees are men. We all treat each other equally.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
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The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research invites applications for the position of **PROGRAM HEAD** at the **Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP)** in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Comp Code: 1604 200S Mar 31

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Qualifications: The ideal candidate will have a Master’s degree in Education or a related discipline, must have multiple years of related and successful experience teaching at the K-12 level, 3-5 years of supervisory experience, a good knowledge of Métis culture and history, an understanding of issues in cross-cultural education, and well developed oral and written communication skills. A knowledge of and demonstrated proficiency in the use of a variety of software programs is essential.

For more information on the position or the Institute, please visit <https://gdins.org/>

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Term: **June 2016 – ongoing (Start date negotiable)**

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Deadline for receipt of applications: **March 31, 2016**

Please quote competition code when submitting cover letter and resume to:

Mr. Jim Edmondson, Director of Human Resources
917 - 22nd Street West, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7M 0R9
Ph: (306) 657-2272 Fax: (306) 975-0903 Email: hr@gdins.org

Gabriel Dumont Institute has permission from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to hire affirmatively. (EX93-15)
Please state in your cover letter if you are of Métis ancestry.

Only applicants short listed will be contacted

Aboriginal Advocate Program earns an A+ in Regina public schools test

By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather News

A program with the Regina Public Schools has been helping to improve the lives of self-declared Aboriginal high school students.

The Aboriginal Advocate program is used to mentor students to help them succeed in their studies, establish connections and to provide support while building relationships with the students and their parents or caregivers.

Kenilee Pelletier, a Grade 11 Winston Knoll Collegiate student, has been a part of the program for two years and says it has benefitted her in many ways.

"It's helped me think about what I want to be, what kinds of fields I want to go into and to have someone guide me," says Pelletier.

The mentorship program has opened her mind to possible careers in law or journalism but she is undecided where to study at. She is thankful for her mentor, Peter Turner, one of the Aboriginal Advocate teachers, who makes sure she attends school, helps with her homework and informs her of future opportunities including getting a part-time job.

"Having the aboriginal advocate there, he's always there. He's someone to go to ... all he sees is the good and potential in you," she says.

The intention of the program is to support self-declared Aboriginal students achieve graduation. Seven other Regina Public Schools have Aboriginal Advocates mentoring the students who self-declare.

"We support students with their course work, assessments and with any circumstances or challenges in or out of school," says Aboriginal Advocate Peter Turner who is in his second year in the position.

"Being an aboriginal advocate in serving the purpose to assist students is a tremendous privilege."

Turner describes Pelletier as being quite active in the school community and displays a positive track record of attendance. She wants to pursue a post-secondary education after completing high school to follow the footsteps of her role models, one being her mother who is very thankful her daughter is benefiting from this program.

"I was happy when she got involved, it helped her to be more outgoing in her studies and beyond her classes," says mother Janice Pelletier. "(The Aboriginal Advocate teacher) communicates with us quite frequently."

Pelletier believes this is important for her family. She wants her daughter to be happy going to high school and says it's the best years of your life.

"She has good goals and I like that," she adds. "I never really had that growing up, I never had much encouragement growing up. I believe education is key."

According to Regina Public School Division document, the 2014-2015 Division planning for First Nations and Métis Achievement is based on 'attendance, basic skills and credit attainment, culturally sensitive and appropriate curriculum instruction and assessment and family or community involvement and support.'



Kenilee Pelletier has been a part of the Aboriginal advocate program at Winston Knoll Collegiate for two years and has benefitted in many ways.

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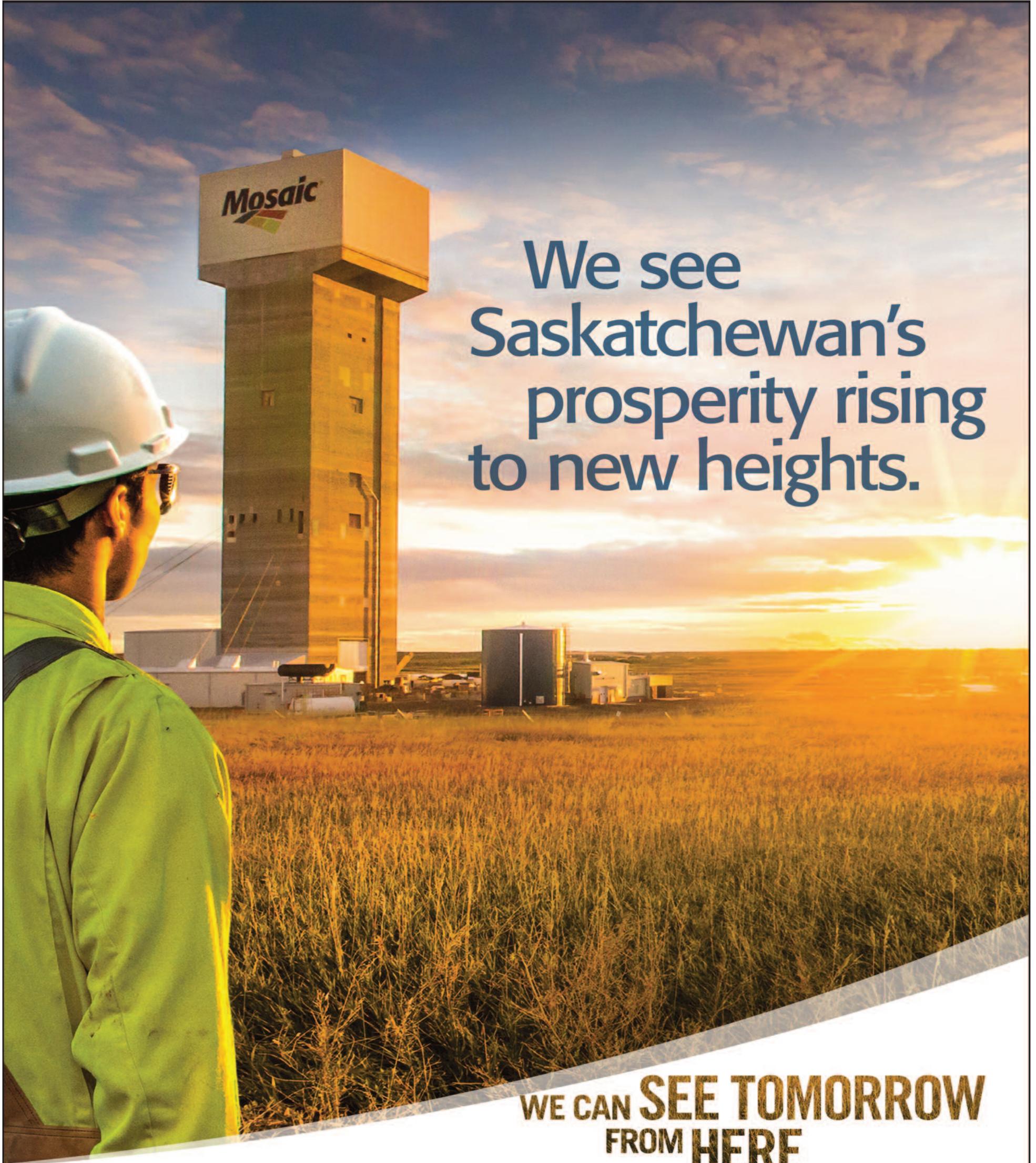
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FHQTC students blend traditional knowledge with modern science

By Tiffany Head
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA – Students from the Fort Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC) displayed how they incorporated science into traditional knowledge at their annual science fair in Regina.

There were 33 displays exhibited at the fair with students ranging from Grade 3 to Grade 9. Each exhibition had a way to incorporate the theme of science into traditional knowledge into their science project and many used the teachings of elders.

Matthew Ryder and Brad Runs, two Grade 9 students from Carry the Kettle searched for the right project that would incorporate traditional knowledge into their science project. Their project, called "Colliding air masses" symbolized a good spirit confronting an evil

spirit. "We did some research online and I couldn't find anything on the site, so we went to an elder," said Ryder.

Destiny Dubois and her partner did their science project on how stress affects your body. They wanted to help people learn the negative and positive ways of dealing with stress.

"We wanted to help people cope with it in healthy ways by using the tipi teachings," said Dubois.

They suggested not using drugs and alcohol, which would only make your stress come back 10 times stronger and that physical activity is the better way.

Grade 7 students from Payepot, Montana Blacksioux and Athena Sugar did their display on traditional medicines.

"The traditional medicines help heal the body and the soul, the smoke is



Winners of Aboriginal Content award, Evynn Cyr and Montana Bellegarde from Peepeekisis First Nation. (Photo by Tiffany Head)



Destiny Dubois and her partner Jobie Agecutay teaching others on how to deal with stress in a positive way using the tipi teachings. They are both in grade 8 and from Pasqua First Nation. (Photo by Tiffany Head)

carried up to the sky to carry the prayers up to the creator," said Blacksioux about the use of sage, tobacco and sweet grass.

They were taught these medicines as children and how they were used by elders.

"We got taught these four medicines and we were taught how they were used by elders," said Blacksioux.

The winners were given prizes of laptops, iPod, iPod shuffles and smart watches. The event was sponsored by PotashCorp.

Grade 6 students, Montana Belle-

garde and Evynn Cyr from Peepeekisis First Nations won the Aboriginal Content award, a special award for a project that best fit the theme. They focused on the bison.

The children had a fun and learning experience and they got to hear keynote speaker Adrian Duke tell them about the innovative waterslides he designed.

He is the co-founder of Skyturtle Technologies Ltd. and a descendant of the Muskowpetung First Nation and is a great role model for the students.

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THANK you

Lorna Butler, RN, PhD Leaves Position as Dean, College of Nursing

I leave the College of Nursing with great pride and appreciation for the faculty and staff of the college. Together we have made great strides in health education.

To all registered nurses of Saskatchewan, health region administrators, Northlands Regional College, leaders within Treaty 4, Treaty 6, Onion Lake Cree Nation, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, the Village of Île-à-la-Crosse, Town of La Ronge, the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, our alumni and to you—the public—my thanks for helping our college and our students attain both success and leadership in nursing education.

Dr. Butler came to Saskatchewan in 2007 and assumed the role of Dean in the College of Nursing. On March 1, she assumed her new role as Senior Strategist, Distributed and Technology Enhanced Learning and Discovery with the U of S.

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*All Registrations must be paid in FULL prior to event. Seats are limited and will be sold on a first come, first serve basis

The Thou Shalt Not Pass System

There's a documentary out called The Pass System which talks about a shady practice that Canada probably would have buried as deep as nuclear waste if they'd had a choice.

Simply put, the Canadian "pass system" required First Nations individuals to get permission to leave their reserve. Permission came in the form of passes or permits signed by the Indian Agent.

This was a person who oversaw a reserve like a southern plantation owner, minus the genteel accent. I try to imagine how the pass system worked: you wake up and want a cup of coffee. No coffee in the cupboard. So you go to the Agent's house and ask for a pass to go to buy some coffee. If he says yes, you patiently wait for him to write out your pass.

Or, in my scenario, you lose your patience and pull out of all of your hair and then his, in an episode of caffeine-withdrawal-induced rage.

The government knew the pass system looked, at the very least, sketchy as hell, so they tried to keep it a secret, later asking the officials who administered it to destroy their passbooks. (FYI: if you're ever asked to shred documents – don't. They always come in handy someday.)

But the government could not destroy the memories of the First Nations people who survived it. And thanks to academics poring over archives, risking eye strain and dust allergies, we also have a paper trail.

The pass system existed in western Canada for over 60 years. The system denied basic freedoms like the freedom to hunt, sell their goods or even, visit

their children in the residential schools. The agent handed out the passes at his leisure and any failure to get a pass could result in fines, having your food rations withheld, and even imprisonment.



I'm no expert on human psychology but giving someone unchecked power over a group of people leads to abuse or have you not heard of Kim Jong Un?

For instance, what was to stop the agents from skimming money off the profits of First Nations when they controlled access to commerce? My late grandfather William Dumont said he would sell his crops and livestock with the permission of the Indian Agent – however a portion of his funds was then withheld by the agent for "investment." My grandpa would often say, "My money has been invested so long, I must be a millionaire by now."

First Nations people resisted the system by going underground. People snuck off the reserve to sell their goods and labour to local farmers. But the threat of getting caught and turned into the RCMP was always hanging over their heads.

My late uncle Edward Cote was one those who

bucked the system. He was 13 years old when his mom and older sister were arrested for picking firewood without a permit. His older sister had a six-month-old baby when she was sentenced to jail for this offence. She was aware of what could happen to a baby left in the hands of government officials – without money or resources – how could she ensure that she would get her baby back? So she gave her baby to her little brother to hide in the bush.

With the baby on his back, my uncle set snares and hunted small animals. He took the skins and traded with a local farmer for goat's milk which he fed to the baby. He supplemented the baby's diet with gopher meat which sounds like a tween's idea of good baby food.

He survived with his nephew at an age when I threw a fit every time my mom asked me to babysit. (Although, one time my mom paid me for babysitting with a pony. Lesson: whining works.)

My uncle's story had a happy ending; baby and mom were reunited. And, my uncle went on to join the Canadian Navy and represented the same country that forced him to hide in the bush with an infant.

There are people who will probably say that these things should be left in the past – probably the same people who write me emails calling me a racist when I write about race issues – but we should never forget because remembering is how we honour those who survived.

Although you could do a bit more than just remember – like maybe cook dinner for an elder? I know where you can get a good deal on gopher meat.

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Métis dancer shares her love of Salsa dance with Saskatchewan

By **Andréa Ledding**
For Eagle Feather News

PRINCE ALBERT – Kimberly Parent first fell in love with Cuban music and dance in a Latin dance group while attending university.

When she moved home to Prince Albert, she happened upon a poster for a Salsa class and really caught the bug from an instructor who had trained in Cuba. She continued to dance while she worked and travelled abroad, taking lessons in Australia and Taiwan.

But when she came home to Saskatchewan, she couldn't find a place to cha-cha! So she founded Saskatoon Salsa, as much to have a place to dance as to share her love of dancing with others, and the rest is history.



Kimberly Parent opened up a successful dance school with the help of SMEDCO and the Clarence Campeau Development Fund. She focuses on the salsa dance and here her dancers perform at the Mayor's gala. (Photo by StarPhoenix Jeff Lyons)



KIMBERLY PARENT

"I saw a space for it here," noted Parent, and she continues to fill that space with great success. Now this Métis dancer is bringing Cuban dance to new generations, including 13 local youngsters who will be part of the International Children and Youth Salsa Congress in Puerto Rico. Eleven out of the 13 are First Nations or Métis, like Parent.

"I'm not teaching jiggling, I'm teaching salsa, so it's a funny place to be in, but there's so much support from the Aboriginal community," notes Parent of the interesting twist that she is teaching a traditional dance style, just not a locally traditional one.

She has received a SMEDCO grant, along with support from the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, in running her school as an entrepreneur — she is not only a highly-trained instructor but owner and artistic director.

"Naturally we have a lot of Creative Kids Saskatoon grants for kids' tuition to come to the school, too."

As the only school in Canada representing at the Congress, the kids will train from September to June to prepare, as well as extensive fundraising (\$26,000 in total - \$2,000/per child).

"We're doing numerous fundraisers — steak nights, chocolates, merchandise bingos, bake sales, whatever we can," notes Parent, and there is always room for sponsorship if any should come their way.

The showcase itself is non-competitive, a four-day-long fiesta to showcase talents, do dance activities and inspire one another.

Parent brought some of her students to the congress two years ago, and was invited back again this year, proof of the company's slogan "Saskatoon's Premiere Salsa."

For over a decade, Saskatoon Salsa Dance Company has had over 200 students at any given time, and does not only instruction for all ages but also entertainment,

competitive dancing, travelling and training in Cuba and elsewhere. The Salsa Congress in Puerto Rico will be a highlight for the youth.

"It shows the kids where they can go. There are kids from New York City who dance every day, and of course Puerto Rico is where Salsa developed."

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Women are the backbone of our communities

Have you ever thought about making your community a better place? What are some things you would like to see in your community? What would you change? If you had an opportunity to sit down with community leaders what would you say?

We all have a responsibility to ensure that our communities are fair and just. Let's all do our part to build and maintain safe and healthy communities. Change can happen but it takes time and dedication.

I have been an armchair Chief, Mayor, Prime Minister and American President many times. I want clean water and a safe community for my children and grandchildren. I want a good school, daycare, health clinic and training opportunities for my community members. I want to live in a community where my neighbors care for one another; one where there no violence.



Sandee Sez
Sandra Ahenakew

This is not a dream, people! There was a time when our communities were a safe place for everyone. We can get there again but it takes all of us working together and recreating that safe place.

Many communities are doing research and asking community members for their thoughts and opinions on how to make their communities a better place. So, take the opportunity to participate in those discussions and when someone from your community asks you to provide input into community planning jump at the opportunity. Do it because you care and want to make your community better.

One of my biggest beefs is that everyone wants to get paid for everything they do these days. If they go to a meeting or an event, fill out a survey or go to a community meeting, people want to get paid.

Really people! Get a grip. Take pride in your community and do whatever you can to make it a better place and do it because you want to and don't expect to get paid every single time.

Gandhi once said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

The March issue of Eagle Feather News is dedicated to Women's Issues and March 8 is International Women's Day which is all about celebrating acts of courage by ordinary women who make extraordinary choices to make our communities better places.

Women are the backbone of our communities and the foundation of our families. Women have always been the life givers and caretakers – remember that people. Respect that. Let us remember those women who have gone missing or murdered.

In 2008, the United Nations launched a global campaign to end violence against women. In his report the United Nations General Secretary said, "There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities; violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, and never tolerable."

Hands are for helping, not hurting. What do you think we are teaching our children when they see the women they love getting beat up?

I'll tell you! We get generations of children who think it's a normal behaviour. These children will grow up and they will beat or get beaten. We have to put an end to this vicious cycle. Violence against women won't just disappear, but progress is possible. We all need to support the development of solutions and strategies at all levels of government to address this issue.

Through leadership, advocacy and determination we can work together and engage our communities to end violence against women and girls.

"The house does not rest on the ground, but upon a woman."

So take care of your women, love and nurture them. Together we can stop violence against women and girls. Check out International Women's Day events in your community and go show your support. If there are no events planned think about organizing one yourself.

If you get a chance to see a production of The Vagina Monologues - Go! In Regina the play is scheduled April 16, doors open at 6:30 and the show starts at 7 p.m. at the Exchange 2431 8th Avenue, tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the door.

This year marks the 18th anniversary for Eagle Feather News – wow! Congratulations to John Lagimodiere. Keep your letters and emails coming. You can write to me at Sandee Sez C/O Eagle Feather News P.O. Box 924 St Main Saskatoon SK S7K 3M4 or email sandra.ahenakew@gmail.com

Regina women celebrate International Women's Day

By Tiffany Head
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA – Women from different cultures came together at Regina's Mackenzie Art Gallery to mark International Women's Day.



They united to celebrate the resilience of women through dance and movement. The Métis jigging group from Seven Stones Community School in North Central Regina performed.

The Seven Stones Métis Jigging group from left Deborah Allery, Clara Mante, Cassie Bailey, Elizabeth Gabriel, Cindy Mormer, and Allison Kimberly. Photo by Tiffany Head

them confidence is just something I really believe in," said instructor Allison Kimberly.

"There is a lot of strength in the women who are a vital part in keeping the community healthy and strong, and developing opportunities that give

"Today represents the strong community of the Metis, with the strength of the women and children in particular".

Gala Evening May 27th, 2016
TCU Place, Saskatoon

All nominations must be in by April 22nd, 2016. No exceptions.

For more information and nominations, visit www.sasktel.com/saya, contact aboriginal.youthawards@sasktel.com or call toll free **1.866.931.6205**

Cultural activities a big part of life for young squash phenom

Summer Schofield is a wicked good squash player. The 12-year-old has been playing recreational squash since she was six years old and has been playing competitively in both adult and junior level tournaments for almost two years now. She is currently ranked #4 in Under 19 Girls in Saskatchewan and ranked #12 in Under 13 Girls in Canada. She volunteers at numerous places and is rooted in her culture and traditions. We were impressed with her credentials so we fired her an email to get some more info on this squash prodigy.

What is the best thing about pursuing squash as a sport and what was your favourite squash moment?

The best about playing squash is the mental part of the game. I have to think about where I am placing my shots, trying to make shots my opponent is not expecting, and be aware of where my opponent is at all times. My favorite squash moment was meeting and playing Nour El Sherbini, who is the #4 ranked women's player in the World. I had the opportunity to play and train with Nour at the Edmonton Women's Weekend Squash Event in February 2016!

What do you have to sacrifice in order to perform at an elite level? Pop? Chips? Fun?

In order to compete at an Elite Level, sometimes, I have to miss events taking place with friends and family, I don't always get to sleep in on weekends, I don't eat too much junk food and I train hard sometimes when I don't feel up to it. My goal is to be the number 1 Female Squash Player in Canada. My goal for this squash season is to get in the Under 13 Girl's Top 10 in Canada and be #2 in Under 19 Girl's in Saskatchewan. The season ends at the end of April 2016. I train at the YMCA in downtown Saskatoon and play with Bridge City

Squash.

In two weeks, I am heading to the Rocky Mountain Junior Open in Calgary, and then I train hard for a month leading up to the Canadian Junior Squash Nationals taking place from April 21-24 in Toronto.

Any tips for young women who want to be high level athletes?

My advice to young women who want to compete as high level athletes is to train hard (even when they are tired), eat healthy, get a good night's rest and be committed to whatever you are training for. Also, they should set short/long term goals, create a vision board of what their goals are, such as being in the Olympics. It will also help them to have role models.

Beside squash, what do you do in your spare time?

In my spare time, I hang out with my friends, participate in the City of Saskatoon Aboriginal Lifeguard Program, watch TV, volunteer, go cross country skiing, (only in the winter, lol) travel, and spend time with my family, my dog, Zoey, my cat, Chrystal, and my two betta fish (who don't have names...lol!).

You were jigging at Folkfest. What was that like and how else do you celebrate your culture?

Last year, I was the Youth Ambassador in Training at the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre for Folk Fest. I hope I am asked to do this again this year. I celebrate my culture by volunteering at Aboriginal events, going to powwows, helping with a Treaty 6 and Métis cultural assembly at my school, helping to lead a Talking Circle at my school about respect, attending Back to Batoche Days, learning to jig and powwow dance and going to culture camps. I am making a traditional offering to have a new jingle dress made for this year's powwow season.

Who are your role models?



Summer Schofield is one of the top ranked young squash players in Saskatchewan. Below she is seen with her role model Nour El Sherbini. (Photos Supplied)

My role model is Nour El Sherbini because she is an amazing squash player and I can learn from her. My role models are my parents because they love and support me as I work towards my goals. My grandpa (who I have always called "Bampa" since I was a little girl) because I have learned from him and he taught me how to be loving, kind and respectful. My great coaches, Bob and Natasha, are my role models because they have taught me so much about squash in these last two years and they always believe in me and know that I can achieve my goals!





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Michela Cook competed in the open category in several events and took home bronze in the high jump and the 200. (Photo by Willow Lagimodiere)



From left Leah Boyer-3rd, Taylor Ballantyne-1st and Hailey Albert-2nd were the medalists in the pee wee girls shot put event. (Photo by Willow Lagimodiere)



Nothing makes you smile at a track meet more than making it to the podium. Competitors of all ages and size attended the 8th Annual Saskatchewan Aboriginal Track and Field Championships at the Field House in Saskatoon. (Photo by Willow Lagimodiere)

Volunteers, sponsors key to success of Aboriginal Track and Field Championships

• Continued from Page One

Rope and the committee welcomed around 300 athletes this year. The event is a handful and is organized by a board of six people. It takes 40 officials and about 20 volunteers to make the weekend run smoothly.

“All of those people are volunteers,” added Rope. “They do this for the love of the sport. The officials are not paid, like basketball or hockey. We have a great partnership with the officials and SaskAthletics.”

Michela Cook came from Onion Lake for the weekend event. She earned bronze in High Jump and also in the 200. She was part of the growing group in the open category.

“I thought it would be a good competition for me. I am competitive and for the next event, I want first place. I thought it would be a good warm up for me,” said the 19-year-old athlete who attends Lakeland College.

“In track, you have to keep your head up and confidence up and you can do it.”

All different sizes and skills sets of athletes were welcomed for the weekend. Each participant received a cool T-shirt, competed against peers and spent a couple of interesting and fun days at the Field House in Saskatoon.

Rope, a volunteer himself, is grateful for the participation and for the support from the community.

“Our sponsors are the key to bringing this event around each year,” said Rope. “Amiskuses Semaganis Worme and SIGA are our title sponsors this year and we also had help from BrainSport, Eagle Feather News and the Saskatoon Travel Lodge.”

“We have to keep this meet going because I want to see Kristine Cyr run in 11 years. That little girl is fast.”

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Indoor Track & Field Championships

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Track and Field (SaskATF) would like to thank our sponsors for their continued support in building community and providing opportunity for our aspiring athletes. Your contribution helped make the 8th Annual Saskatchewan Aboriginal Indoor Track and Field Championships a wonderful success!

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