

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Healthy lifestyle a good fit for paramedic

Shawna Arcand decided that to be better at her career and pretty much everything, she had to take better care of herself. A healthy diet, exercise and self care has contributed to her wellness.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)



**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

As a paramedic, Shawna Arcand is accustomed to taking care of others. But one day after a shift she realized that as an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) worker that she needed to be healthy to help promote a healthy lifestyle for the community.

Born and raised in Saskatoon and a single mother to three boys, Arcand, 27, had always been up and down in her weight. At the time, the Big River First Nation member was not in the best of health. And she wasn't feeling good about herself.

Determined to make change, although she works

a lot, she made the time to go to the gym four to five times a week. She began to eat healthier foods and ensured she incorporated protein in her diet.

With exercise and eating well, she lost 60 pounds in a matter of 10 months. It's a lifestyle change that not only helped her lose weight but she started to feel better about herself.

"I'm just a happier person in general. I was able to be active with my kids," said Arcand. "Sometimes it's hard to eat properly but, I don't deprive myself, it's more in moderation. It's something that I started when I got into this career."

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Women's Edition

Coming In April - Arts & Entertainment Issue

CPMA #40027204



Exercise and a healthier diet made it possible for Shawna Arcand to lose 60 pounds in less than a year. The before and after photos speak for themselves.

Paramedic found a way to take better care of herself

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Arcand received her education in 2012 from Saskatchewan Polytechnic and currently works in St. Walburg with Marshall's Ambulance Care as a primary care paramedic. She said the job is unpredictable and she likes the adrenaline of it.

"When it comes down to it, (I'm) helping people," Arcand said. "When we're doing transfers to the city, I'm in the back of the ambulance with the person. You have to talk to them and I'm a people person so that's what I like about it."

Arcand used to work up north from Beauval to La Loche in this field where she recalled most EMS workers were Indigenous. But coming down south, the Indigenous representation of EMS workers starts to dwindle, she said.

Arcand also works in a Saskatoon detox centre and said there were times she heard comments about her being In-

digenous but she brushed it off. Instead, she focused on working with the people she was helping.

Arcand said as a paramedic it's usually hard dealing with the family rather than the patient by addressing their concerns. But her biggest challenge she faces is being a parent and balancing her career as she sacrifices certain milestones in her children's lives.

"I've missed Christmas concerts and certain activities. I have to rely on my family to take on certain roles that I should be doing," she said.

Arcand said her family is her support system by tending to her children when she's gone for work. Being a paramedic is a passion that she loves but will possibly looking to change her career if she's accepted to study nursing. She said for those who want to pursue a career in EMS and achieve a healthy lifestyle, you have to exercise and feed your body good food and if you're passionate about help-

ing people then a career in EMS could be for you.

"If you want to do it, just do it. But always remember to take care of yourself. At the end of the day, your family is

going to be there for you, not your job," said Arcand.

"Don't be critical on yourself. If you have a bad day or a bad week, don't stop from picking yourself up."

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Representing Canada at Olympic Games a dream come true for hockey player from Cote First Nation

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

A dream came true for a young Indigenous female hockey player who always wanted to represent her country and Indigenous people competing in the Olympics.

Brigette Lacquette brought home a silver medal playing with the Canada's National Women's Hockey Team in this year's Olympics held in PyeongChang, South Korea. It is something that she will never forget.

"The entire experience was pretty amazing. The opening and closing ceremonies was awesome," said Lacquette who played defence.

"When I first walked out there in the opening ceremonies, I remember (thinking) 'wow, I'm here and I made it.' It was pretty special."

She said there was so much to take in being a part of the Olympics. It was an exciting milestone that many athletes dream of accomplishing.

"It was a dream come true to represent my country on a world stage," Lacquette said. "I remember my first game, I had the chills. The crowd was great there. It was awesome."

Lacquette, 25, a member of the Cote First Nation who grew up in Mallard, Manitoba has been playing the sport for over 20 years. Growing up, she started to play with her older cousins and even called herself a tomboy. She also enjoyed playing multiple sports but hockey was a sport that stuck with her.

"It doesn't matter where you come from, you can always achieve your dreams."

– Brigette Lacquette

"I was able to be myself out on the ice," she said. "Hockey gave me confidence. I had to grow through a lot of obstacles."

Lacquette was bullied when she was younger due to a skin condition, eczema, but she channeled her energy and developed confidence through the sport she loved.

She had no specific role model in hockey but she always admired the ladies on the National Women's team. She was inspired when NHL hockey player Jordin Tootoo represented Canada in the World Junior Ice Hockey Championships back in 2003.

Since then, she chased that dream to compete and represent her people on an international level.

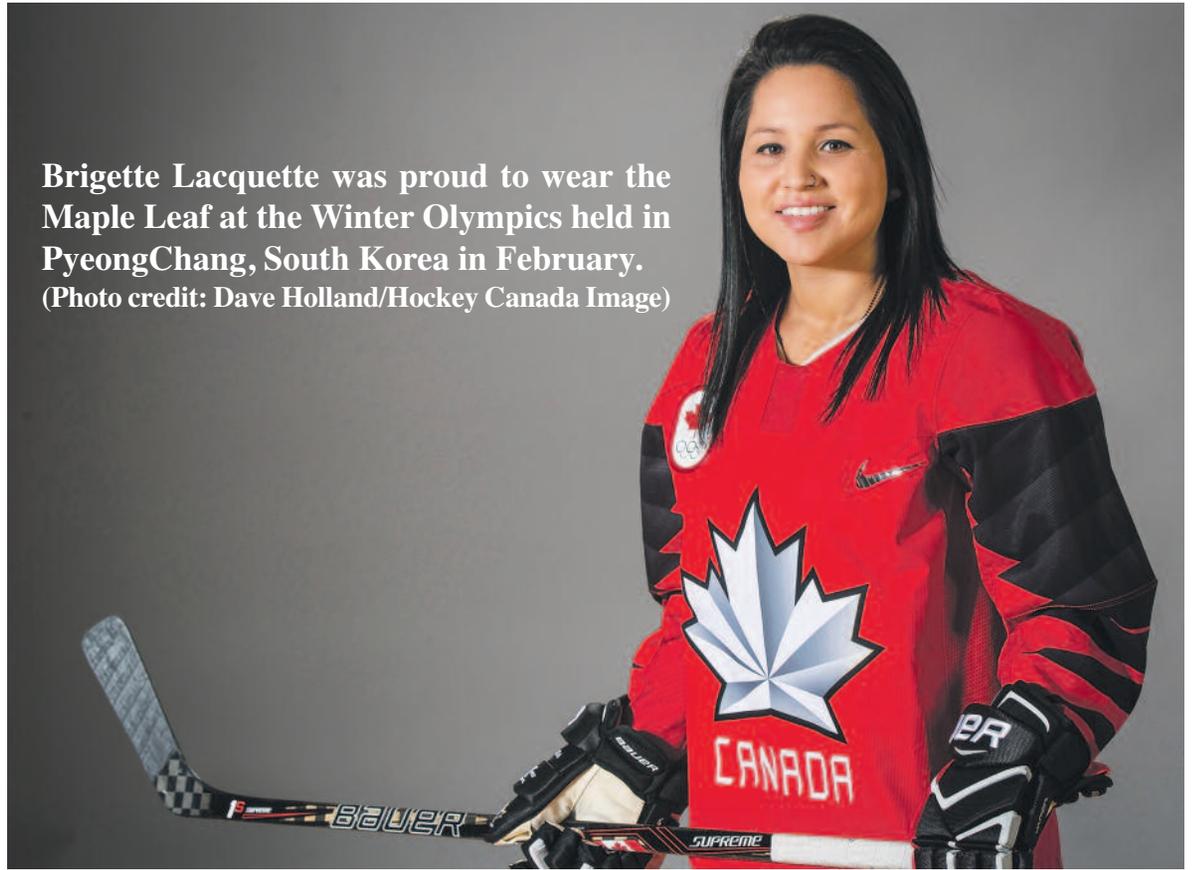
But it wasn't easy for Lacquette. She had to train herself everyday to ensure she was physically fit and she had to practice hockey on a daily basis. After she was picked to play for Team Canada, she had to move to Calgary this past year to train as a team where they practiced every day on the ice to prepare for the Olympics. In doing so, she wanted to make her mark as an Indigenous female hockey player

"I want to be that role model for the all those Indigenous kids across Canada. Playing at the Olympic stage I just wanted to show them that they can do it too. Anything is possible if you just believe in yourself."

Lacquette said she plans to continue focusing on hockey and herself with hopes of competing again on a national level. She hopes her story will inspire others to chase their dreams and to work hard at what you love to do.

"It doesn't matter where you come from, you can always achieve your dreams," said Lacquette.

Brigette Lacquette was proud to wear the Maple Leaf at the Winter Olympics held in PyeongChang, South Korea in February. (Photo credit: Dave Holland/Hockey Canada Image)





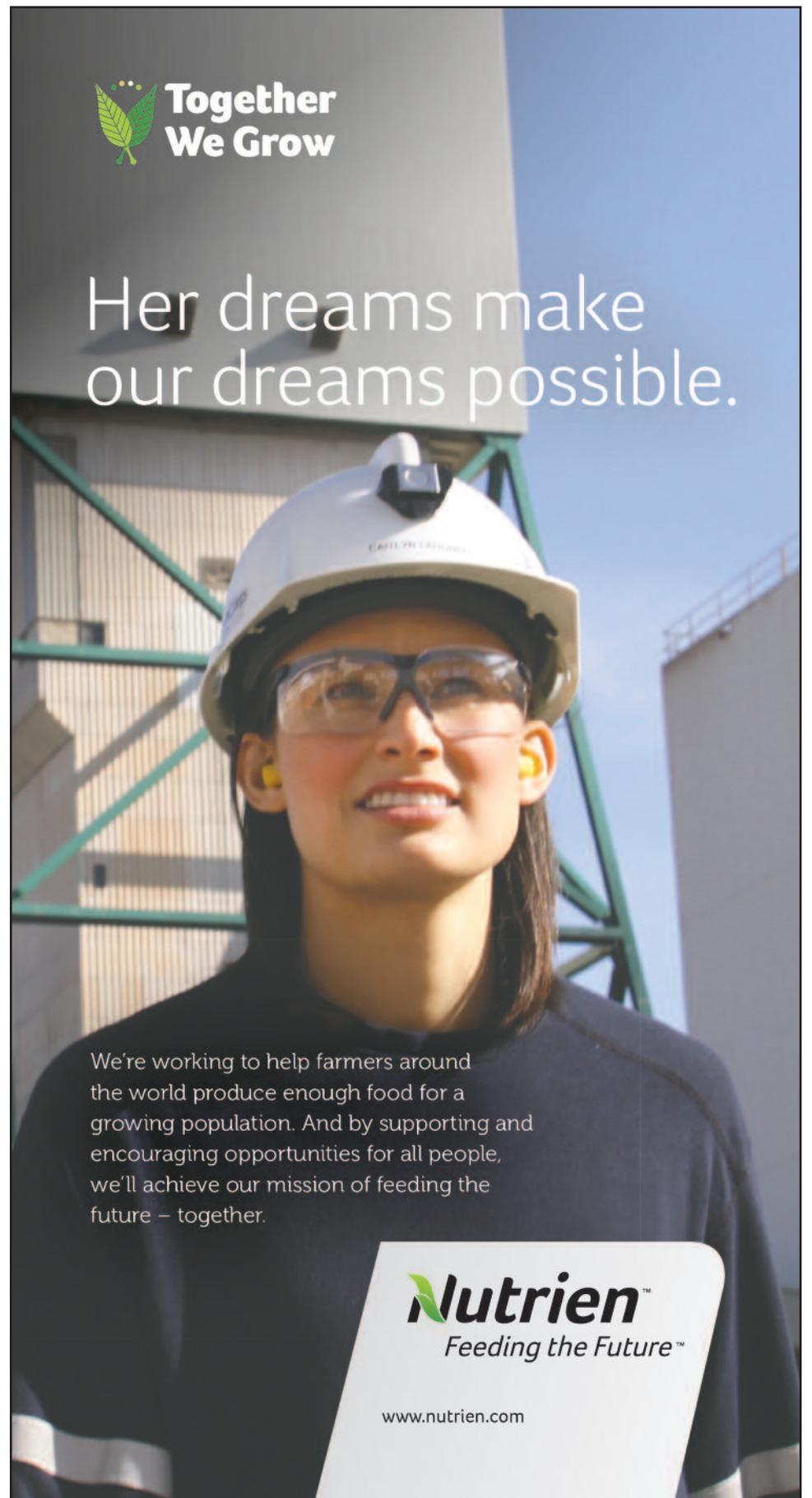
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Man, we couldn't have done it without the women in our lives

Sat down to start pulling another women's edition together last week and it hit me that all of a sudden 20 years have gone by. In March of 1998, we published the first edition of Eagle Feather News and we had no idea what we were doing, but we just started doing it.

When I accepted the first cheque that covered a two-year subscription, I was figuring how we were going to have to rebate that person their money once we crashed after six or eight months. There was no way we were going to make it two years. Then after two years we prayed to make it to five. Then it was ten. And in the blink of an eye another decade blew by like nothing.

Fitting, though, that our anniversary issue is always on the same month as our women's issue because we would not have made it ten days as a business and a newspaper if it wasn't for the women involved in making it happen. So please allow me to take this space to pay homage to the women of Eagle Feather News. Deepest apologies if I miss anyone.

First and foremost, I would be nothing without my life and business partner Deirdra Ness. Her finance degree and business background are the perfect supplement and complement and knowledge base to add onto my amazing three-year BA in Sociology. Her ability to see things in business I can't and her confidence in pointing out issues and making hard decisions has allowed us to go and grow through tough times and suffer and thrive through mistakes. She makes me what I am in all aspects of my life and that helps lift up the paper. Great mom too. I am so lucky.

Speaking of moms. My mom Dexter and my mother-in-law Marie both lent us money in the early days when we had none to pay our employees. Deepest gratitude.

Over 20 years we have had dozens of different women write for us or work in the office or from home or just help us out in the community. They have all played a part and over time included folks like Elizabeth Mooney, Christa Nicholat, Donna Boyer, Wanda Bear, Karen Trotchie and Faith Obey. Office superstar Jaqueline Gabriel always had our back as well. Later on, we had Peggy Robillard and

Julie Wriston on the team. Darla Read started writing for us in the early days and still is a key player in her role as our awesome web editor.

The best part of our paper has always been the writers. Much credit has to be given to our friend Shannon



This photo was taken after ACS and Eagle Feather News won the ABEX Award for Aboriginal Business from the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. One of the many highlights of the 20 years of the business and publishing Eagle Feather News for myself and partner Deirdra Ness.



Avison. Shannon is the department head of the Indian Communication Arts program at the First Nations University of Canada and she has brought me down to Regina to teach her students in the summer institute since the year 2000. It is from those sessions that we have found dozens of new and emerging writers, too many to name really, with various voices, different angles to stories and ties to the community.

Our old friend Sandra Ahenakew came from INCA. She worked in our office. She wrote stories and she also had the very popular column Sandy Says. We love her.

Shannon also helped us find Jeanelle Mandes who I taught over ten years ago in a summer institute. Then she freelanced for us. Then she was our intern. Then she earned her masters in journalism. And now Jeanelle is our news editor. Thank you, Shannon!

One of my co-teachers at the Institute turned out to be CBC journalist Merelda Fiddler. Merelda wrote a bit for us, but she also convinced her bosses at CBC to take a flyer on us and in 2006 we were able to create a ten-part summer replacement radio show for national radio! As IF!

An introduction by an old friend to his mother-in-law Bernelda Wheeler opened up our door to a Pandora's box of fantastic women writers. Bernelda was a CBC radio star in the 1970s. A trendsetter, if you would. And she graced our pages for many years with her fine pragmatic and thoughtful writing.

Our relationship with Bernelda led to other amazing women joining us as writers. They include Andrea Ledding, Dr. Winona Wheeler, Leah Dorion, Dee Badger, Jessica Iron, Maria Campbell, Dawn Dumont, Alyson Bear, Angela Hill, Chelsea Laskowski and former provincial poet laureate Louise Halfé. How's that for a roster?

So, thanks to these wonderful women, we have been able to bring you hundreds of stories on our website or in our paper over the past 20 years.

Thanks ladies.

And thank you for continuing to read.

Eagle Feather NEWS

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Jonas Clarke is fighting for his life as he continues to battle brain cancer. His family is fundraising to offset the costs of travelling and staying with him at the hospital. Photo credit by Laura Uvery.

‘Tough little boy’ showing his mom what courage is all about

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Laura Uvery’s son Jonas Clarke, is currently at the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon battling stage four brain cancer and suffering from everyday seizures.

“At the age of three, Jonas was diagnosed with autism and is also non-verbal. When he turned eight-years-old, he was diagnosed with glioblastoma,” said Uvery. “He had surgery on February 19, 2015 and they did a biopsy which was sent to four different places. While he was being tested, his tumour was growing.”

Uvery said her son was having about 35 seizures a day but it has reduced to 14. She described him as not himself lately and that he lost mobility on his left side.

“As a mother, I feel helpless because I can’t help my son like what a mother should be able to do. I can’t even lift up my son because he’s so heavy,” she said. “I wish there was more that I can do for him, I wish I can cure him.”

Three years ago, the doctors gave Jonas six months to live but he was beating the odds for awhile until the tumour started growing and spreading into other sections of his brain. It came to a decision that Uvery never thought she’d ever have to make.

“The hardest part is signing that Do No Resuscitate (DNR) form. No mother should have to sign a DNR form,” she said.

“It’s in case he has a seizure and goes into cardiac arrest ... (when) your heart rate goes really high and having a seizure; you can go into cardiac arrest or your body can shut down.”

In the meantime, Uvery is focusing on cherishing every moment with Jonas and performing little dances to make him laugh. She said Jonas still manages to laugh even when he’s in pain. His comfort is going on his cell-phone to listen to music and playing with his mega blocks.

Uvery is not working right now and continues to remain by her son’s side. Relatives have hosted an auction fundraiser for Jonas in Ahtahkakoop First Nation to help with some costs for the family. But more financial assistance is needed as Uvery is not sure of the length of her son’s stay.

She said the money raised will help her family travel back and forth from Prince Albert to Saskatoon, pay for meals and parking and also to buy Jonas food as he has certain food preferences due to his autism diagnosis.

“He’s a very tough little boy,” Uvery said. “He has shown me what real courage is, how to be tough and how to be brave.”

The family has set up a You Caring fundraising page under Team Jonas.



WICIHITOWIN Speakers' Series Event Brigette Lacquette

APRIL 19, 2018
1:30pm to 3:30pm
Location Prairieland Hall C

Brigette will share her perspective as the first First Nations player to be named to Canada’s National and Olympic Women’s hockey teams, and how her experiences relate to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action on Sport (calls #87-91). Her mother is from Cote First Nation and her father from O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation - she credits them for much of her success. This 25 year-old Olympic silver medalist is blazing a trail for others to follow.

Registration will open March 15, 2018 @ picatic.com/BrigetteLacquette





Mary Culbertson is the new Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan

Another first for Culbertson

By NC Raine
Of Eagle Feather News

Mary Culbertson, the newly appointed Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan, is responsible for a couple significant firsts.

Not only is she the first woman to serve as Treaty Commissioner, she's also the first woman from her hometown Keeseekoose First Nation to receive a law degree. This sort of forward-thinking has been engrained in her from an early age.

"I've wanted to be a lawyer since I was four years old," says Culbertson. "I would watch (law shows) with my grandparents – it was always about injustices and being the underdog. I remember thinking I wanted to help people."

Her path to Treaty Commissioner, though, has taken a myriad of different directions. Culbertson has served for over 20 years in the various levels of government and Indigenous organizations, including Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Corrections Services Canada, and the FSIN, as well as her Sunchild law firm. She says her diverse work history has been beneficial in her newest career undertaking.

"It's been helpful in understanding how bureaucracies work, especially in the federal and provincial government," she says. "It's increased my confidence knowing that, yes, as a First Nations woman, I can sit at this table and I can understand everything you're saying."

As Treaty Commissioner for the next three years, Culbertson is tasked with bringing federal and provincial governments together with First Nations to help

honour treaty promises. Some of her main priorities include public education and increasing treaty literacy.

"(One goal) is increasing the speaker's bureau so it is representative of all treaties across the province, all genders, and all languages. Linguistic and gender equity needs to be First Nations more," she says.

"There's also so much work to be done in reconciliation in our rural areas. It can't be just First Nations and Indigenous communities always at the table with no one else. We need to increase our rural participation – we need to double down efforts on public education and meaningful reconciliation."

Part of Culbertson's strategy is to engage younger generations in treaty awareness and understanding to cultivate a more responsible culture and dispel some longstanding myths.

"It's a huge myth that (Indigenous people) don't pay tax or get free education. The general public don't know the disparity on and off reserves," said Culbertson. "We need to have allies. Younger generations are knowing it at a younger age that they have a responsibility to be a good treaty partner and treat their fellow human being with respect."

Culbertson says she plans to return to her First Nation to practice law following her tenure as Treaty Commissioner and hopes to find other young women taking positions of influence.

"I think it's very important to see women in different ranks in government," she says. "Right now, I'm still the only woman from my First Nation who is a lawyer. I'm hoping I'm not the only one for very long."

CONGRATULATIONS

During Indigenous Achievement Week—February 5 to 9—44 Indigenous students received awards for their academic, leadership and community outreach accomplishments. Congratulations to everyone and thank you for all that you do!



INDIGENOUS
ACHIEVEMENT
WEEK

UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Sasakamoose to lead Research Centre

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

JoLee Sasakamoose has been appointed the new director at the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (IPHRC).

"I am honoured and accept this opportunity to lead a nationally recognized research centre that harmonizes Indigenous knowledges to restore Indigenous health capacity," said Sasakamoose in a media release.

"Our strength will be in our partnerships and engaging Indigenous Peoples in developing the way forward. We are at a time of tremendous change and we have the opportunity to shape the provincial health landscape within Saskatchewan and beyond."

The previous IPHRC director was the late Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew who passed away Feb. 18, 2016. Sasakamoose said it's rather intimidating to fill her shoes leading the research centre.

"Just seeing how much demand is on IPHRC in general and on the role of the director," said Sasakamoose. "It's just shocking what she must have done while she was alive that probably many of us didn't realize. I had no idea the amount IPHRC is in demand in the community."

Sasakamoose is an Anishinabe (Ojibwe) from the Three Fires Confederacy in Michigan and Ontario, with membership in M'Chigeeng First Nation and an active citizen of Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation. She started working with Indigenous groups in defining healthy communities for more than a decade.

The Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School hosts IPHRC. Executive Director Kathleen McNutt said Sasakamoose was the ideal candidate to lead the Centre after recognizing her service as an IPHRC research affiliate under the leadership of Episkenew.

"Sasakamoose is regarded for her work with Indigenous communities and provides a much-needed and appreciated Indigenous perspective to the work that is being done in the school," said McNutt.

Sasakamoose is an associate professor of Educational Psychology and Indigenous Counselling in the University of Regina's Faculty of Education and a methodologist with the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient Oriented Research. Previously, she served as the founding director of the Health Advocacy and Research Training program.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science from Michigan State University (MSU), a Master of Science in Human Development, Counselling and Family Studies from the University of Rhode Island, and a PhD in Higher Adult and Life-long Education from MSU. She joined the U of R in 2011.

Her research explored the intergenerational effects of historical trauma with Indigenous Peoples and the use of traditional healing methods in the promotion of health and wellbeing. In partnership with the First Nations communities of Saskatchewan, she co-authored the Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Theory, a theoretical framework to improve wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples.

Sasakamoose will be under a three-year contract and hopes to accomplish a lot under her role including getting a fully staffed centre, establishing long-term sustainable funding and would like to see the centre become a trailblazer for Indigenous methodologies.



JoLee Sasakamoose is stepping into the big shoes of the late Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew.

Gala Evening May 25th, 2018
TCU Place, Saskatoon

Call for nominations now open.
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Oochoo found her purpose after turning her back on gang lifestyle

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Living a life that involved gangs, violence, and alcohol then transforming to helping her people by becoming a strong community voice is a healing journey that Shawna Oochoo continues to work hard at.

She also identifies herself as Pimohsē Mahkwa Ihkwē, which is a Saulteaux-Cree name for Walking Bear Woman.

Oochoo is the executive director of White Pony Lodge which she founded two years ago in Regina's North Central community, a neighbourhood she grew up in and currently resides in.

***“Understand
there is
hope and
never give up.”***

- Shawna Oochoo

White Pony Lodge is a non-profit community-based organization led and driven by community members to address the violence and some of the systemic issues from a grassroots approach. Their primary program is doing the weekly patrols in the North Central neighbourhood to build relationships and rapport but also report safety concerns and issues to the City in order to create a safer community for all.

White Pony Lodge volunteers walk the sidewalks and back alleys to pick up any drug paraphernalia, garbage lying around, weapons, and even used condoms. She is familiar with the people in her community and they are aware of the work she does.

Over the years, Oochoo has organized various grassroots events around the city and currently sits on different boards as a voice in the community. She's also the coordinator of the Gang Exit Program which was introduced a few months ago.

Last year, Oochoo and co-founder Beatrice Wallace-Littlechief of White Pony Lodge were recognized as recipients of a YWCA Regina's Women of Distinction Award for their service and dedication to the community. Oochoo was also one of the winners of CBC Saskatchewan Future 40 last year under the category of Community, Social Activism and Volunteerism.

But all of Oochoo's accomplishments transpired from a life she previously led.

When she was 11-years-old, Oochoo began to develop an interest in gangs. It was a bad life spiral of alcohol, drugs and violence.

“I started to idolize the young people who were out on the streets,” she said. “The progression of that lifestyle went from idolizing those individuals and looking up to them to becoming more involved in criminal activities at a higher level.”

Oochoo ended up getting involved in a relationship with a man who was more deeply involved in the gang lifestyle and who climbed the ranks a lot quicker. It was her life for a number of years. It took a lot for Oochoo to say this life was enough for her. It all came down to her young daughter at the time knowing she wasn't always there for her.

“I wasn't really involved in her life. I wasn't a stable parent and I didn't have any parenting skills,” she said.

“That was a huge wake-up call for me because our relationship was so broken down. I knew my daughter needed me so I had to do whatever it took to make those changes to be that parent that she needed.”

She exited out of that lifestyle when she was in her mid-twenties to start her healing journey. But it wasn't easy for Oochoo at first.

“It took a lot of falling down and hitting the rock bottom multiple times,” she said. “There was a number of things that occurred like the number of charges that I've compiled (and) my addictions.”

Oochoo found her spirituality with ceremonies. An important step in order to start working with people.

“Once I started working on building my connection to the Creator, building my connection to culture, building my connection to ceremony, getting sober, clean and healthy then I could help others,” she said.

Oochoo said one of the greatest achievements she reflects on proudly is being able to rebuild the relationships with her own family. From her transitions, she built new relationships and connections with people in her community and spearheaded an organization that aims to create a safer and connected community. She continues to prove that change is possible despite the life she led.

“For the young people or anybody trying to find their way, just understand there is hope and never give up. Always continue to search for your purpose and follow your passions no matter where you are at in your lives,” said Oochoo.



Shawna Oochoo's life has taken a dramatic turn for the better as the executive director of the White Pony Lodge in Regina.



PARTNERSHIP AND RECONCILIATION AWARDS

The inaugural Partnership & Reconciliation Awards recognize partnerships between municipal or regional development entities and First Nations, who are taking positive steps towards reconciliation and economic development in Saskatchewan.

PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Eligible nominees are communities comprised of one or more First Nation reserves and one or more municipalities that are working collaboratively on economic development strategies between their communities.

RECONCILIATION AWARD

Eligible nominees are communities comprised of one or more First Nation reserves and one or more municipalities or that are working collaboratively on reconciliation efforts between their communities.

NOMINATION DEADLINE: March 30, 2018

Awards Presentation: : May 2 at the 2018 Creating Intersections for Growth Conference luncheon

Blackstock fighting the good fight for justice

I'd like to tell you about Dr. Cindy Blackstock.

She's a hero of mine who will never get the due and recognition that she deserves, mostly because the Government of Canada is not likely to give you an Order of Canada after you sue it multiple times – and win.

I'm sure they will someday, after the embarrassment has worn off from losing to a First Nations person and a woman, no less.

Blackstock, a member of the Gitskan First Nation, is the executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada which filed a human rights complaint against the government for discriminatory funding. We all suspect that Canada funds First Nations people at a lower rate than other Canadians, but she found a way to force this information out into the open.

Blackstock filed her claim of discrimination with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on February 23, 2007. Almost ten years later, after many legal and political shenanigans on the part of Canada which are set out on the Caring Society's website (you can actually read the transcript of Blackstock's cross-examination by INAC's lawyer – you will be cheering by the end), that body ruled that Canada has racially discriminated against 165,000 First Nations children.

So, you know when people say, "Oh, Canada isn't racist, that's all in your head," you can tell them that their own Human Rights tribunal says differently. Hell yes they are discriminating against First Nations people and have been for decades. First Nations kids are underfunded in education, health, water, child welfare and other areas.

The end result is that more Indigenous kids end up

in care because of poverty and neglect – and this the really gross part, there are indications that the agencies that watch over First Nations children have a greater incentive to take them away than to provide preventative services.



That's because agencies get their costs reimbursed when they put children in foster care but do not receive much funding for intervention and support services. I've heard this before but it's such a hard thing to believe that it never fully sinks into my big head.

The results of this selective underfunding are that Indigenous children make up about seven per cent of all Canadian kids under the age of 15, but they account for more than half the number of children in foster care. In some provinces, like Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Indigenous kids make up almost 90 per cent of the kids in care.

While the case was making its way through the Human Rights Tribunal, Canada spied on Blackstock's personal and public social media accounts. Why? Was she giving valuable intel to the Russians? Was she selling guns to terrorists? Was she hiring sex workers to pee on Obama's hotel bed?

Nope, she was just standing up for Indigenous peoples and in Canada that makes you a suspected enemy of the state. Also, during this time, when Blackstock would show up to a meeting with INAC to support a First Nation or a child welfare agency, INAC officials would either walk out of the room or demand that Blackstock leave. Dang, Canada, bitter much?

After Blackstock's herculean battle against Canada, you'd think that she'd get some downtime. But in fact, winning against Canada was only the first step. Since the ruling in 2016, the federal court has issued five (five!) non-compliance orders against Canada because Canada is like a stubborn teenager who refuses to do their chores and has to be prodded through the entire process.

We are seeing some forward motion. The Human Rights ruling and the five non-compliance orders seem to be having the desired effect. This week the federal budget was released with \$5 billion in new spending for First Nation, Métis and Inuit people, with funding for First Nations child welfare rising to about \$1.1 billion a year over the next five years.

Those numbers sound like a lot but the shortfall is so great that it will take a long time to see a difference. As well, the federal government has been known to play a shell game of five card monty with money. It will be on all of us to ensure that this money reaches the intended source – First Nations children.

As for Blackstock, she'll continue to fight. Just this week she was quoted as saying: "I don't want to spend my entire life litigating against Canada. But if that's what's required to get these kids a proper childhood across all services, then that's what's required."

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Super mom facing challenges with strength and love

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Parenting a child with a severe disability has given this mother incredible strength to provide the support and care her son needs.

Allyssa, who asked that her last name not be used, is the voice, hands and legs to her six-year-old son, Ben. Allyssa, who lives in Prince Albert spends all of her time caring for her son.

"I learned to do what's best for him. I was absolutely riddled with anxiety going into an emergency room or to a doctor's appointment," said Allyssa.

"I was judged and stigmatized as a young single (Indigenous) mother who doesn't know what she's talking about or what she's doing."

It all started when Ben had infantile spasms (IS) which is an infancy epilepsy that caused his body to jerk in motions and is accompanied by development delays. Physical seizures were only seen when he was eight-months-old but the doctors always told Allyssa not to worry about it. When Ben reached a year old, it was then that doctors pushed for more testing.

Ben has a condition called Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, a form of severe epilepsy that begins in childhood. Symptoms of this condition usually result in the child having multiple types of seizures and their intellectual disability is impaired.

Ben is susceptible to infections and



Six-year-old Ben has faced numerous health issues throughout his life.

every type of seizure there is which makes it very hard to treat. The diagnosis was made when doctors noticed a slow spike wave pattern in an electroencephalography (EEG). Ben also has electrical status epilepticus in sleep (ESES).

When Ben sleeps, it looks as if he is in a continuous seizure. This caused his development to be restricted placing him on a level of a nine-month-old infant. Due to the epilepsy, Ben has low muscle tone and is unable to walk, talk and struggles

with swallowing, so he is tube-fed.

This past summer, Allyssa nearly lost Ben after he contracted a Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infection that made him so sick, he ended up in septic shock.

"His body started failing him ... both of his lungs had collapsed. It was scary," she said.

"All the people who helped him in Prince Albert (hospital) didn't think he would pull through. But he did."

It's a lot for Allyssa to take on but she found help by seeing a psychologist and having a strong support system. She has learned to cherish every single day with him and she always makes sure to love and spoil him as much as possible.

Allyssa focuses on the little things that she calls inch-stones rather than mile-stones, like when Ben laughs at certain scenes in movies. She sees how precious Ben's life is and continues to be his advocate by holding onto him with strength and love while wearing her supermom cape.

"I don't want to lose him until we're both really old and have lived really long lives. Unfortunately, I don't know how realistic that is for his conditions," said Allyssa.

"It's taking me a lot of years ... to hold my head up strong and to know that I am Ben's mom and I'm doing the best I can for him."

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Standingready overcame obstacles as she set sights on poli sci degree

**By NC Raine
Of Eagle Feather News**

Excuses seem to have no place in Kelly Standingready's composition.

As a recent graduate in Political Science from the University of Saskatchewan, Standingready faced daily obstacles to accomplish something that most people take for granted. Standingready is visually impaired; legally blind in her right eye and has limited vision in her left.

As a baby, Standingready was born with cataracts in both eyes. Surgeries to remove the cataracts when she was two-months-old and again when she was a year-old caused additional problems. Though she has gone through life visually impaired, she has never backed down from life's many challenges.

"I think that people who have a disability often use that as motivation to get a good education," said Standingready. "I was told no one will look after you but yourself. So, I've always pushed myself."

The pursuit of a degree presented a fair set of challenges for Standingready. When reading, her eyes move rapidly and lose focus, causing letters on the page to jump around. It's frustrating, she says. What may take the average person a short time to read could take her hours.

"Sometimes, I would call home to my mom or dad and cry because I was so tired. I want to

sleep, but the work had to be done. And I did it. A lot of tears and sweat went into this degree," she says.

Disability services at the University of Saskatchewan allowed Standingready to have a note-taker, and permitted additional time during exams.

"Those disability services at the University really helped. I'm grateful that they're there for people with disabilities who want to pursue an education."

Motivation to pursue a degree came not only from a desire to better her life but those around her. Standingready hopes to pursue a law degree in the future, with the intent to be of service to those in her home community of White Bear First Nation.

"I want to go back to my community and help them retain the land we have," she says. "The recent cases with Tina Fontaine, and (the Colten Boushie) trial show a lot of injustices toward First Nation people. I've always felt strongly for fighting for our rights and land."

As Standingready hopes to return to campus next fall for the next chapter of her educational career, she says she'll continue to tackle her challenges free of excuses.

"I would tell anyone with a disability, you can do anything as long as you put your mind to it. I want it so bad, so I just made up my mind to do it."



Kelly Standingready during her convocation with University of Saskatchewan Chancellor Roy Romanow.

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SIGA's Patricia Cook committed to growing and challenging herself

By Angela Hill
For Eagle Feather News

Patricia Cook really enjoys going to work.

"I've had great opportunity, I think it's a great organization and I really enjoy what I do, so that keeps me coming back that's for sure."

On any given day, the vice president of corporate affairs for the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA), could be working with her team to create a community event, prepare an executive report or go out to a community to see where financial support is really needed.

Cook recently met with Saskatoon's mayor to invite him to a charity pancake breakfast set for August. She also talks with excitement about SIGA's second year of sponsorship for a summer basketball tournament in Saskatoon that will see more youth from the North attend.

"So that's something that I think is a high priority for us is making sure our children are included in different types of activities coming through the province."

Work hard, stay focused on goals, get good supports in place, Cook said about what she would tell youth. There are many good role models out there right now, she said mentioning basketball player Michael Linklater and Olympic hockey player Brigette Lacquette.

"We have lots of young people who are doing great things out in our community."

While SIGA has an employee volunteer program that has Cook and her team serving lunches at the Friendship Inn, she also donates her time outside of work. Cook sits on several boards including the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation.

Cook said early in her career she received a good piece of advice from a friend and professor about the importance of setting boundaries.

"She said, 'don't let work consume you, don't become a workaholic,'" Cook said.

"Because family is critically important to me, I think that helps keep me balanced."

Cook and her husband recently celebrated their 38th wedding anniversary, with their two adult children, five grandchildren and one great grandchild.

"I recognize how important family is and so I try and make sure I balance my work life with exercising and sleeping well and trying to eat well."

Another thing that Cook said she thinks is incredibly important is to keep growing and challenging yourself. Two years ago, at age 56, Cook went back to school on Fridays and Saturdays to work towards receiving her MBA.

"It was a bit of a challenge going back to school, but it was so fun to be part of a great cohort. It really



Pat Cook is the vice-president of corporate affairs for the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority.

(Photo courtesy of SIGA)

gave me a different perspective of community economic development," she said.

Cook is currently working on her final paper with the plan to graduate in April.

Being a woman in business presented some challenges in her career over time, but Cook said she was lucky to have good supports. Cook says among her role models was her mother, someone she truly admired, and the president and CEO of SIGA, Zane Hansen.

Now that she is established, Cook said she looks to support young women coming into business.

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Medicine Woman in training launches new business

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

It is a dream that began six years ago, to create a retreat in a northern community. It was inspired by a young woman's parents' trapline and it will soon become a reality.

After winning first place in the Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge (AYIC) contest, Michela Carriere is excited to launch her business, Aski Holistac Adventures, this summer in northern Saskatchewan.

"It was the highlight of my life winning the competition," said Carriere. "I finally got to tell my story and idea to a whole crowd of people. People are responding to it and it felt like validation to all the hard work I'm doing."

Six years ago, Carriere went through a cycle of mental problems including depression and anxiety, so she decided to return home to her parents' trapline which is situated 60km from Cumberland House.

She began to heal herself through traditional medicines, hunting, trapping, canoeing and being surrounded by Mother Nature. Her parents own a hunting lodge called Big Eddy lodge – a place where she grew up and became familiar with the hunting/tourism business in her role as an adventure guide.

Carriere identifies herself as a medicine woman in training as she learned a process called holistic healing and nature therapy upon her return. That is when the idea was born to create the Aski Holistac Adventures business based on the land to connect people with nature through holistic eco-therapy retreats.

She plans to open her six-day retreat in June. Peo-

ple will learn how to heal using traditional medicines, enjoy camping outdoors, canoeing, hiking, and biking.

"It's been a passion of mine to show people the way that I grew up," she said. "The main part of the business is taking people out on the land and teaching them how to reconnect with nature and Cree culture as well."

Carriere started taking business classes last year and began her business plan, marketing and branding that led up to the competition a few weeks ago. She already registered her business and created social media pages and will be receiving First Aid training. With part of her \$6,000 winnings, she bought a tipi to use when her retreats start in a few months time.

"Now my business is going to take off," she said. "I already have customers lined up this summer to do the retreats."

The cost for the six-day retreat is \$1,775 per person during seasonal months. She plans to target an international market of worldwide travellers and hopes to have a fully funded retreat for people in need but cannot access the funds.

Winners of the AYIC business competition were announced last month at a gala held in Saskatoon. The second-place winner went to Linklater House business and Eagle Feather Box Co. came in third.

"Congratulations to the 2018 AYIC winners!" said Enactus University of Saskatchewan President Dani Nichols in a media release. "Thank you for the Enactus board and AYIC committee for their outstanding volunteer work."

The AYIC provides Saskatchewan Aboriginal



Michela Carriere has put her success at AYIC into action.

Youth ages 16-35 the tools necessary to make their entrepreneurial interests a reality. Over the past 12 years, AYIC has helped launch numerous Aboriginal businesses including Bannock Express, Neeched up Games, Helen Oro Design Inc, Neechie Gear, Sweet Moon Photography and SheNative.

Strong women behind awakening in our communities

With so much hurt, pain and anguish in the atmosphere right now from the recent verdicts I want to focus on something hopeful and encouraging happening in our community.

This month's theme is women and as I have said before, women are the backbone to our families and communities. Women rise above to lead the future. They show our young girls how to be strong and independent and our young boys that it is okay to have emotions and feelings.

Progress is happening in the community and being led by our very own hardworking Indigenous women.

There is a woman I am grateful and proud to call my friend who has been working hard on a program I would like to highlight.

Rheana Worme is a Nehiyaw Iskwew (Cree Woman) from Kawacatoose First Nation. She is a law student at the University of Saskatchewan and volunteers with Level Justice as the Indigenous Youth Outreach Program (IYOP) Leader.

She has been working very hard not just as a law student but working with Grade 6-7s at St. Francis Cree bilingual elementary school in Saskatoon. Rheana coordinated a six-week course meeting every Monday after-

noon with the Grade 6 and Grade 7 students to mentor and create a positive introduction to the justice system while learning about legal education. This six-week course leads up to a mock trial.

I had the opportunity to volunteer and attend a few sessions. One session I attended was held at St. Francis school where Donald Worme came and spoke to the group. To sit and listen to Donald Worme speak about his own journey and all the obstacles he had to overcome as an Indigenous person to become the contributing trailblazing Indigenous lawyer he is today was an honour and inspiration to witness.

The other session I attended was a Building Better Allies training session Rheana coordinated at the University of Saskatchewan. This was a training session for IYOP volunteers and fellow students at the University of Saskatchewan who are interested in working with Indigenous communities and youth.

The third was the final session at the College of Law where the students

did a mock trial with the Honourable Justice Gerald Morin. Justice Gerald Morin has now been taking part in this program for the past five years and he is also a Saskatchewan Provincial Court judge who conducts court sessions in Cree in northern Saskatchewan.

Every time I was able to attend it was beyond rewarding to be around the youth, our future, our hope and the reason why we work so hard and do what we do. Each of these sessions gave me that much more reason to keep pushing forward down the path that I am on.

It is through these mentorships with Indigenous youth, it is through being honest, real and allowing them to see our own people who have overcome adversity and they can relate to that and feel it in themselves and their own lives.

Our women carry, give life and take care of the children and this needs to be recognized and our women deserve to be treated as such. There was something my own grandmother told me recently when I was feeling de-

feated after the recent verdicts came out: "You believe in yourself my girl, and as long as you believe in yourself no one can take that away."

That is the same with knowledge and education. Once you earn it no one can take it away. Becoming educated is an important tool in today's world and even our old ones have always told us we need to "walk in both worlds" to build a better future for all of our children.

That is why it is important to create non-indigenous allies, because there are people who care, and want to make a difference, a better world for all.

There are many strong women in my life that inspire me and I am grateful and blessed to have, my mother, aunties, grandmothers, teachers, coaches and friends. I think as women it is our duty to empower one another instead of competing with one another.

It is these strong women challenging not only their own families, but the men in their lives and society to see the truth and to start to build a bridge of healing, trust, and truth. I see right now as the beginning of an awakening and I see a lot of hope and people coming together to empower one another and end these injustices that are still happening in our communities.



Comment
Alyson Bear

Designer Christine Marie never afraid to try new things and people are paying attention

By Angela Hill
For Eagle Feather News

In a home office with big windows and lots of space to cut cloth, Christine Marie pins material.

Designing and making products for Awasis Boutique started after she shared online some of the clothes she made for her son. People wanted what she had made, but Marie was just doing what she liked.

"I had fun going out and getting some more Indigenous-based prints. It's funny because when my son was born five years ago there was barely anything," she said.

Christine Marie is the owner of Awasis Boutique. (Photo courtesy Awasis Boutique)



The baby onesie is Awasis Boutique's most popular item. (Photo courtesy Awasis Boutique)

Marie said she did some digging to see if there was an Indigenous baby line out there and found there really wasn't anything. She decided to fill that void.

Designing isn't so far from her career as a teacher, where she majored in home economics and minored in native studies.

"I'm still teaching people ... but I'm not in the classroom," she said about the bibs and onesies with Cree writing on them.

The ongoing interest in her products allowed Marie to launch a website earlier this month, and while its new, she is already getting feedback.

"Mostly people are loving the way I present

the photos online. I love to hear that it's eye-catching," Marie said.

While her focus is Indigenous-inspired baby products, she aims to have things that incorporate modern designs, she said.

"That way if somebody is coming on my site, their first instinct isn't that this is just for one culture group, it's 'oh cool, there's actually a variety of prints here that would work for anybody.'"

Her son Levi, 5, doesn't take too much interest in his mom's sewing, but Marie says she can't keep her youngest Liam, 2, away. He wanders into the sewing room and wants to help, she said and laughed.

Marie said she thinks it's a good time for Indigenous women in business because there is an interest in what she can bring to the table.

"People are paying attention, it's like a breath of fresh air, something inspiring, something positive," Marie said.

"It's really encouraging."

Seeing what others are doing in business is inspiring to her. Marie and Kendal Netmaker, founder and CEO of Neechie Gear, have known each other for years and spoke at an event together in 2012. When she decided she wanted to launch a business, she reached out to him with a few questions.

Netmaker said he receives requests for guidance often and wants to see people doing not just talking about ideas.

"I like to work with winners, you have to show me that you are actually doing it, so Christine is actually doing it," he said.

Printed bib and the most popular item, a baby onesie. (Photo courtesy Awasis Boutique)



"I like to see people who take action and maintain it and if she does that then I'll do my best to continue helping her."

Marie said some of the best advice she has received is to always work hard.

"Don't be afraid to keep learning," she said.

"Whether or not the idea flops, because sometimes that happens, don't just get discouraged, just try something else."



Two founders at the 2018 AWBEN conference in Saskatoon: Nicole Roberston (left) of Muskwa Media & Jenn Harper of Cheekbone Beauty. (Photo by N. Robertson)

Women entrepreneurs inspired

By Ntawnis Piapot
For Eagle Feather News

The Aboriginal Women's Business Entrepreneurship Network (AWBEN) conference came to the prairies for the very first time.

Dozens of women from across Canada came to Saskatoon recently to celebrate Indigenous female entrepreneurship, attend workshops, take in keynote speakers and network.

"We're bringing these national and international speakers to Saskatchewan where they can meet with our local entrepreneurs. They can meet with our local students. Ideas can be shared. Friendships and partnerships can be made - and we can all grow our entrepreneurial network," said Heather Abbey, coordinator of the event.

Jenn Harper is one of the vendors that sold their goods during the conference. Harper was born in Thunder Bay and her family is originally from Whitefish Bay in Northwestern Ontario.

She is the owner of Cheekbone Beauty, a social enterprise makeup company that gives portions of her sales to organizations like Shannon's Dream and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. Harper says she was once in a battle with alcoholism and depression - a battle she says she's proud to have overcome. She says her company was born out of her healing journey.

"There were days when I would get up, and a little lipstick would help me get through that day, realizing I had to fight and get on to the next day.

"For many of us, the core work has to be done. Who we are on the inside that matters the most but there are times when we need a little lipstick to get through," said Harper.

She says she loves owning a business that educates the public, gives back to her community, and celebrates that "Indigenous cheekbone beauty."

Abbey says that there is a feeling at the AWBEN conference that you don't get at any other entrepreneurship conference in Canada.

"It's this feeling of overwhelming support. Everyone is here to help everyone else succeed. There's no negativity. We start the day off in a good way with a smudge and a prayer. There are women from all walks of life, all backgrounds, all different sectors - coming to join forces for entrepreneurship, to push and promote each other forward," said Abbey.

#AWBEN2018 ended with a pitch competition where six women either won \$500 in start-up money or iPads. NWAC says they hope to build a fund to help Indigenous women begin their own businesses in the future.

Project Venture making a huge difference in La Loche, naturally

By Chelsea Laskowski
For Eagle Feather News

There's something about the memory of seeing a young girl joyfully rolling around in the grass after a hike last summer, that makes La Loche's Mandy Herman emotional.



Korey Laprise (left) and Mandy Herman (right) run Project Venture out of the La Loche Dene Building High School. (Photo by Chelsea Laskowski)

Herman takes kids out hiking, snowshoeing and camping all the time through her work as manager of Clearwater Project Venture, a youth wellness and crime prevention project in La Loche.

It's moments like that, seeing a girl be "her own self" completely in her element after a hike, that are touching for Herman. She said the program does play a role in transforming the Grade 6, 7, and 8 kids she works with.

"You see a difference in the students once they're outside in nature rather than they're in school, they're like two different people," Herman said.

Herman returned to La Loche two years ago after getting her business administration certificate, finding work in the Alberta oilfields, and finding a passion for baking while taking an apprenticeship program in Calgary. Upon her return home, the federal government announced it was reinstating \$2.2 million in funding for Project Venture, which had been cancelled by the previous government, as part of its response to the La Loche mass shooting. Herman saw the job as a chance to give back to her community.

Now she, along with four youth workers and several dozen high school mentors, spend time both in the



The Project Venture crew on a hike in the summer of 2017. (Photo submitted by Mandy Herman)

classroom and out in nature with kids. The focus is on reaching out to a core group of about 25 students who could use positive activity in their lives.

"For me, it would be the students that have very minimal supports in their lives and someone to look up to, to kind of lead them towards a positive life," Herman explained.

So far, they've seen success, particularly with a group of three boys who had previously been troublemakers.

"These kids went from swearing at other kids, teasing other kids, to swearing at teachers and now one of them, like the leader of that pack is now leading sessions," Herman said. "If they're leading other kids to do negative things there's already a leader in them so to turn it into a positive, that's what we did."

Youth worker Korey Laprise is a former Project Venture student who, in her final year of high school,

worked on the advisory committee to help bring the program back. She said she used to be a shy student who only got involved in volunteering at the end of high school. In her new role, she is trying to draw kids out of their shells.

"They just want encouragement," she said. "They are leaders. I believe each and every one of the kids in the program, they're leaders. Just they just need to allow themselves to be those leaders."

She helps them by holding them accountable to their responsibilities, but also by helping them believe in themselves.

"You'll be surprised what these kids can come up with. They are dreamers. They dream big so the sky's the limit. They can reach wherever they want. They could be anything they want to be."

Project Venture just marked its one-year anniversary after starting up again in Feb. 2017.



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Dedication, passion springboard to success

By **Andréa Ledding**
For **Eagle Feather News**

Kia Jimmy from Thunderchild First Nation began dancing when she was six years old at the Sitter School of Dance in Saskatoon. Classes included tap, hip hop, jazz. But her favourite was ballet.

"I like ballet because you're able to move in a way that you can't with any other style. With tap you move your feet and make sounds but with ballet you're playing roles with characters," noted Jimmy, who is now 18 and a post-grad at the School of Alberta.

She began by auditioning for their summer intensive in 2015 after doing a summer intensive with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet in 2014, and was accepted into the professional division of the Alberta Ballet, where she completed her high school.

"Right now I pretty much dance eight hours a day, five days a week," she explained. "I've been doing the post-grad program for one year but dancing with Alberta Ballet for 2.5 years."

Her family relocated to Alberta so that she could pursue her dreams, and she says her parental support from parents Wilfred and Lori Jimmy has been key.

"Their support was very important. I probably couldn't have been doing what I'm doing without them. I was 16 and we packed up and moved to Calgary in one month. I was very excited but sort of nervous because I'd never moved anywhere. Saskatoon Sitter School of Dance was my whole life."

She says her dedication and passion is what has led to her success.

"People who don't dance think are you crazy because it's so many hours. You don't have time to do anything but dancing because you train so much, you have to be really dedicated."

She is the only Indigenous dancer in her class right now and says there aren't a lot of Indigenous ballet dancers. But there are still many teachers she looks up to for inspiration.

After her post-grad year at the Alberta Ballet, she begins to audition for other companies, not only in Canada but in Europe and the U.S. Her goal is to be a professional dancer in a company. Her mom would like her to dance Juliet in Romeo and Juliet, but Giselle in Swan Lake is a role that Jimmy also really admires.

"Right now I'm auditioning for summer schools. It's pretty nerve-wracking if it's your first time but you have to make sure you're confident and it will happen for you. First you do a class together and you have numbers on you, and then they eliminate people and the last four are the ones they keep.

"Some of them you get a letter two weeks later saying whether you got in or not. It just sort of depends on the school," explains Jimmy, who really enjoys competitive dancing and has many wins to show for it.

"I just try and keep calm knowing I'm doing the best I can and I can't really do anything else. Sometimes it's not even how you're dancing because they're just looking for height or look."

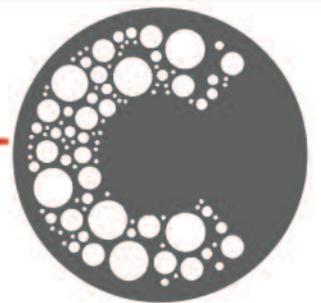
Kia Jimmy dedicates eight hours a day pursuing her passion for ballet at the Alberta Ballet.



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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

For ten months, pairs of artists work together in an informal, peer-learning style, with experienced artists mentoring evolving artists. Traditional art forms are welcome. Mentors are seasoned professionals who provide personalized support, advice, encouragement, and feedback on a regular basis. Mentees gain professional development, technical skills, and increased confidence. All participants experience enhanced community and artists at many career stages can benefit from mentorship. Apply today!

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NDP

Intense practice for Durocher sisters prior to spelling bee

**By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News**

The Durocher sisters from Canoe Lake were the big story out of the recent First Nations Provincial Spelling Bee.

Four of them competed, three of them placed in the top three in their categories, and two of them are going to Toronto as first-place winners to compete in the Spelling Bee of Canada in May.

“This is Sierra’s third competition, the first year she didn’t place, the second year she placed third and this year she was determined to win,” commented coach Jessica Iron of the youngest Durocher sister to win first place. “And she did. I’m so proud of her. A lot of hard work on her part!”

Their mother, Charmaine Durocher, said a lot of practice went into the family results, and that was the advice she had to pass on as a key to success.

“Practice, practice, practice!” she laughed.

While younger sister Sierra was first place winner in the Juniors category, older sisters Ashlyn and Avrin Durocher ultimately competed against each other in the Intermediate category for top placement, after a large contingent of the competition was knocked out by the word “unanimous”. Ultimately Ashlyn won first place with the word “squall” – which was misheard by the



First place finalists Betsy Windigo, and sisters Sierra Durocher, and Ashlyn Durocher pose with their trophies while proud parents take photos.

(Photo by Andrea Ledding)

audience to a lot of laughter, but she spelled the word correctly nonetheless – and Avrin took third place behind Aiden Tanner.

Ashlyn and Sierra will both go on to compete in Toronto along with Juniors

first place winner Betsy Windigo of Muskowekwan First Nation.

Despite a major snowstorm that blanketed most parts of Saskatchewan, many youth from across the province made the trip into Saskatoon and gath-

ered at St. Kateri Tekakwitha School to compete. This is the third year that the First Nations Provincial Spelling Bee has been held, and last year McKenna Fineblanket made history by becoming the first ever First Nations youth to place at the Spelling Bee of Canada National Championships when she won third in the Primary Age Category.

In September of 2017, CBC released a documentary called Bee Nation based on the First Nations Provincial Spelling Bee, and the National IND-SPIRE Awards asked the organization to present at their National Indigenous Gathering in Montreal in late November of 2017.

First Nations Provincial Spelling Bee President Pauline Favel was also honoured for her work and given a national award for Community Service.

Support for the Spelling Bee comes from title sponsor Affinity Credit Union, along with support from SIIT, the Government of Saskatchewan, Husky Energy, the U of S, Peace Hills Trust, Ah-tahkakoop Cree Nation, Staples, and the Semaganis Worme Foundation.

All the competitors receive a certificate of participation, and the top three receive a trophy and cash prize, while first place winners proceed to the Nationals in Toronto with a parent accompanying them.

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THE BATTLEFORDS TREATY SIX TERRITORY

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- TEAM ROSTER PLAYER LINEUP MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE FOR 1ST GAME
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PRIZES BASED ON FULL ENTRY PER DIVISION

DIVISION	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
SR REZ REC	\$7,000	\$3,500	\$1,500
35+ LEGENDS	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$1,000
45+ LEGENDS	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$500
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It is volunteers like Derek Rope of the Aboriginal Track and Field group and Reila Bird, a board member with Saskatchewan Athletics that make the annual event a success. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

Competition heats up a little more every year for up for Aboriginal Track and Field Championships

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

Starter's pistols going off. Shot putters grunting. Coaches and parents yelling encouragement.

Saskatoon Fire Chief Morgan Hackl groaning after pulling his hamstring in a relay. These were the sights and sounds that greeted athletes and supporters alike at the 10th Annual 2018 Aboriginal Track and Field Championships (ATF) at Saskatoon's Field House.

Over the din, the voice of Derek Rope directs athletes to marshalling areas and calls winners forward to receive their medals. All in a day's work for track nut Rope who has been involved with ATF since the start.

A former track athlete at the University of Saskatchewan, Rope and his friends devoted to track have been pulling together partners like Saskatchewan Athletics, the University of Saskatchewan and SIGA to offer a world class track meet for Indigenous athletes in Saskatchewan.

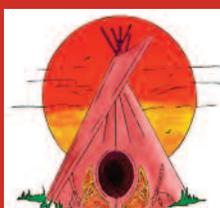
"This year is one of the best yet. Over 390 athletes (and) the level of competition always keeps getting better," said Rope.

• Continued on Page 19



Dezaray Wapass won gold in the 800 and 1500-meter races at the 2018 Aboriginal Track and Field Championships. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)





APRIL 20, 21, 22, 2018

JEMINI ARENAS - SASKATOON, SASK.

Gate Admission: \$10.00 Daily, (Including players/Coaches)

SENIOR CONTACT All Reserve	LEGENDS 35 + All Reserve	MASTERS 45 + Tribal Council or All Reserve
Entry Fee: \$1000.00 (12 Teams) 1st - \$5,000.00 + Trophy/Jackets/Banner 2nd - \$3,000.00 + Trophy 3rd - \$2,000.00 + Trophy	Entry Fee: \$1000.00 (16 Teams) 1st - \$5,000.00 + Trophy/Jackets/Banner 2nd - \$3,000.00 + Trophy 3rd - \$2,000.00 + Trophy	Entry Fee: \$1000.00 (12 Teams) 1st - \$5,000.00 + Trophy/Jackets/Banner 2nd - \$3,000.00 + Trophy 3rd - \$2,000.00 + Trophy
SHA Fee - \$300.00 Per Team	SHA Fee - \$300.00 Per Team	SHA Fee - \$300.00 Per Team
DEFENDING CHAMPIONS Red Pheasant First Nation	DEFENDING CHAMPIONS PBCN	DEFENDING CHAMPIONS Canoe Lake Cree Nation
RECREATION 1 All Reserve	RECREATION 2 All Reserve	LADIES All Reserve
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Prizes based on full entries in each DIVISION

Individual Awards for all divisions:
All Star Team: 1 Goalie, 2 Defenseman, 3 Forwards
Top Forward, Top Defenseman, Top Goalie, and MVP

Team Entry Deadline: APRIL 12, 2018 at 4 PM
Please make certified cheque/money order payable to:
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Re: 2018 FSIN Adult Hockey Championships
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For more information contact: Clay Debray (306) 240-8786




SHA SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT
All players/Coaches MUST BE registered with SHA
MUST PLAY FOR YOUR OWN FIRST NATION & PROVIDE A VALID TREATY CARD BEFORE 1ST GAME
All Fees must be made payable to Flying Dust First Nation. SHA will not accepting them
SHA Fees and Rosters must be send to Flying Dust First Nation by April, 13, 2018

MINIMUM AGE FOR PLAYERS IS 18 YEARS & OLDER VISORS ARE MANDATORY FOR ALL DIVISIONS
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL WILL NOT BE TOLERATED ON PREMISES
Committee not responsible for lost/stolen items or injury that occur during this event

Proceeds go towards Flying Dust Firsts Nation Youth/Recreation Program

2018 F.S.I.N. ADULT PROVINCIAL HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Athletes aiming high

• Continued from Page 18

“We have lots of athletes coming into the older categories which is great. It means they are participating later and sticking with sports. And it shows they are choosing healthy lifestyles.”

Dezaray Wapass is one of those athletes. She won the 800 and 1500-meter gold medals at this event. Some more hardware to add to her many gold and silver medals from the North American Indigenous Games.

The 18-year-old Grade 12 student from Big River First Nation credits track with making her a better person.

“Running makes me feel confident. It gives me a good feeling after I run. Like I can do anything,” said Wapass who aspires to be on the U of S Huskie Track and Field team next year.

A big draw was the annual Community Relay Challenge where local teams run the relay for pride and a huge trophy. Fifteen 4 x 100 teams raced the Challenge this year and team Amiskusees: Semaganis Worme Family Foundation, are the 2018 Champions, edging out last year’s winners the City of Saskatoon Fire Department (silver) and the U of S Education Student Society (bronze).

Rheana Worme spoke about being the relay winner and also her family foundation’s role in supporting the event.

“Our secret was having Amanda LePage on our team. She is amazing and fast. But our family has run our entire lives because of our mom. She is a long-distance runner since she was pregnant with me and she always encouraged us to be active and use our bodies in a positive way. And today was about being with community and having fun,” said Worme, currently a student at the University of Saskatchewan College of Law.

“And part of our family’s core values is to support Indigenous youth and women in our community. And to have this support from an Indigenous foundation at this meet sends the message that we really care about our communities



Team Amiskusees: Semaganis Worme Family Foundation comprised of Elias Worme, Rheana Worme, Donovan Worme and Amanda LePage won the community relay at the 2018 Aboriginal Track and Field Championships.

(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

and are willing to put our time and money into things that are important to us. This is our third year of supporting ATF and we look forward to more.”

Derek Rope knows the track meet only goes on because of the support of the community.

“The fire department, the University of Saskatchewan and their volunteers. Lots of the Colleges came out. Sponsors like SIGA, and the Amiskusees Semaganis Worme Foundation came out and it was great to see them come in and run alongside our athletes,” said Rope.

“BHP Billiton really stepped up also and allowed us to provide a world class experience for these young athletes.”

And it is athletes like Dezaray Wapass who benefit.

“I plan to run for the Huskies. Something I have wanted to do since I

was in Grade 6. I want to study kinesiology and nutrition but will do arts and science first,” said a confident Wapass.

“This meet is really good. It is great to see our people come and do this. Track is a very individual mental and physical sport. It is so inspiring to be with other

Indigenous people that do what I do. I’ve been coming to this meet ever since I was little, just like these kids.

“It really brought me up and I really improved over the years. I’m going to come again next year so hopefully I keep doing better.”



These two athletes took home gold and silver at the Aboriginal Track and Field Championships. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

10th Annual Saskatchewan Aboriginal Indoor Track & Field Championships

March 2 & 3, 2018 - Field House, Saskatoon, SK.

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Track & Field would like to congratulate all the athletes, Community Relay Challenge teams and the many people, communities and sponsors who made the 10th Annual Indoor Championships a great success!

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