

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Students find Stepping Stones for future careers

Perhaps thinking about a career in firefighting, one student tries on a firefighter suit at the Stepping Stones career fair. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)



Annual career fair attracts hundreds of eager students

By Judy Bird
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA – High school students from Regina and Southern Saskatchewan traded in their classroom studies for a day to explore potential career choices for their future at the annual Stepping Stones Career Fair on May 7.

Hundreds of students flooded through the doors at Evraz Place in Regina, eager to learn about the industries, trades and businesses taking part.

A variety of career options were presented, with booths ranging from construction, heavy equipment, pipe fitting and mining to policing, fire fighting, the armed forces, health care, banking, gaming, beauty and esthetics, media, and more. Students interested in continuing their education had the opportunity to learn more about programs and supports offered from institutions including the University of Regina, the First Nations University of Canada, SIAST and SIIT.

Several booths featured hands-on experience, such as building scaffolding, competing in hammering nails, gearing up to work in the mine, putting on the RCMP

Red Serge or sitting behind the wheel of a police vehicle. The Regina Firefighters display allowed every kid to have their dream come true, somewhat, as they hopped in the fire truck and strapped on the gear.

Students still had some work to do at the career fair. Organizers learned from past career fairs that just presenting information wasn't enough; they needed a way to engage the students. One way to do that was to offer prizes. This year, prizes available included laptops, headphones and gift certificates.

"We created a crossword puzzle," said Mark Gettle, Stepping Stones board member and a member of the organizing committee. "Students have to get a letter from each booth that they visit. They have to ask a pertinent question about the career that they're involved with, and then the people at the booth give them a letter."

"If they complete the crossword puzzle, it's about 30 letters, then they can put their name in to win a laptop."

Stepping Stones Career Fair has been around for about 16 years, and is targeted to high school Aboriginal youth, but is open to all high school students.

• See Photos on Pages 6 & 7



INSIDE



MENTORING

Students participating in a mentorship program got an inside look at the workings of government. - Page 10



HEADLINER

George Leach, a former NAIG athlete, will be featured in the NAIG opening ceremonies in July. - Page 14



NAIG ATHLETES

Saskatchewan is expected to field a strong team at NAIG. Heather O'Watch will compete in archery. - Page 15 - 17



POTASH PROPONENT

Chief Reg Bellerose sees a potash mine as means of strengthening Muskowekwan for decades. - Page 16



WHITE BEAR WOMAN

She may be small in stature but Lily Daniels has the biggest heart in the province. - Page 25

Welcome to our
Sports & Youth Edition

Coming In June - National Aboriginal Day Issue

CPMA #40027204

Children's Advocate's report contains praise, criticism

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA—Saskatchewan's Advocate for Children and Youth tabled his 2013 report in the provincial Legislative Assembly earlier this month.

New this year was reporting on information contained in notifications of deaths and critical injuries from 2013, rather than reporting on files that had closed in the previous years.

"It is clear from the advocacy and investigations that we undertake every year that we are reaching many children too late," said Bob Pringle.

"By the time their families come to the attention of the Ministry of Social Services or First Nations Agencies, they are facing many challenges that are difficult to overcome. We need to focus on prevention and early intervention, before families get so overwhelmed and vulnerable."

Factors that place children at risk include poverty-related conditions, mental illness, addictions, family violence, and disabilities.

The 2013 report includes a summary into the deaths of two young children, ages seven months and 16 months. Both children were born to mothers struggling with addictions, family violence and mental illness, who needed intensive

services. The investigation found that the child welfare system failed to keep these children safe.

Recommendations from this investigation include one for the Ministry of Health to provide evidence-based models of care for pregnant, substance-

women and their children.

In the Annual Report, Pringle commends the Government for their Child and Family Agenda and its goals: children get a good start in life; youth are prepared for their futures; families are strong; and communities are supportive.



Pringle's report suggests Social Services and other agencies are not reaching troubled children or families soon enough.

misusing women province-wide. There are some services like this already available, and the report profiles Raising Hope, a partnership that provides housing, outreach services and a high level of support for high risk pregnant

However, he remains concerned that this Agenda, which was established in December 2010, is not well known outside of Government, or even in some parts of Government, and that it does not go far enough.



BOB PRINGLE

"We need to address the risk factors that make children vulnerable; otherwise, not much is going to change," reiterated Pringle, pointing to developing poverty reduction and early childhood development strategies.

In the 2014-15 budget, the Government announced funding for independent legal representation for children and youth involved in child protection hearings.

"I was very pleased to see funding for the Counsel for Children in the last budget," he said.

"We are optimistic that this will be a forum to focus attention on children's rights, and the importance of giving children and youth a voice in matters that affect their lives."

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Stanley Mission student first Youth Speak winner

Congratulations to Theron Sewap, the winner of our inaugural Youth Speak contest! Theron is a Grade 9 student at the Rhoda Hardlotte Memorial Keethanow High School in Stanley Mission. According to his teacher, Eric Gardiner, Theron has done a great job this year, his attendance is 100 per cent and his grade average is in the 90s. Theron also works part time after school and on weekends at the local Co-op store. He is an excellent student and role model for his younger siblings and peers!

Theron interviewed his Nokum and wrote a report for Eagle Feather News and our readers.

Enjoy.

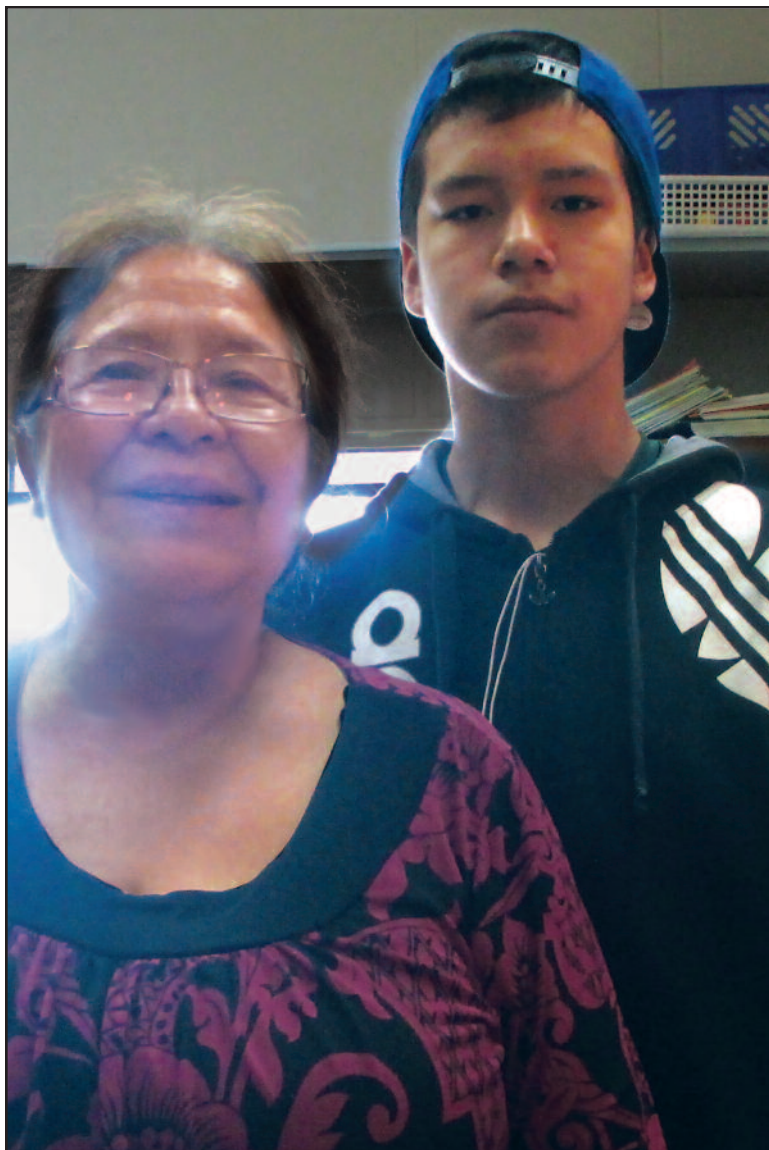
We will be holding this contest every month, so if you are a young Aboriginal aspiring writer, photographer or videographer who wants to earn some money, make sure you submit an entry!

Eagle Feather News is looking for submissions from anyone under 25. It could be an opinion piece, a story with a photo, a photo essay, or a video that's a minute or less.

Interview your kohkum and take her photo! Shoot a photo essay on an event or an issue facing your community. Tape a Rick Mercer rant on what bugs you and send it in! Every month we'll pick the best to be published in the paper as well as on the website ... and the winner also gets \$100! All submissions will have the opportunity to be published on our website.

Send your submissions to contact@eaglefeathernews.com by the last day of the month, and then be sure to pick up our paper and check out the website to see who wins!

Full details are on our website www.eaglefeathernews.com.



Theron Sewap is extremely proud of his kohkom, Nancy McLeod.

Kohkum grew up in a different time

STANLEY MISSION – My kohkom, Nancy McLeod is 64 years old. Her hometown is in Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan. She was born at her trapline, Sandy Narrows – nine miles South of Pelican Narrows.

When she was growing up, she had no TV or any electronics. Her and her siblings used to play outside and help out her dad when he killed a moose. In the summer they swam a lot and helped her dad lift the fishnets.

She started school when she was eight and her parents didn't let them go to the residential school. She had to wait for an opening at the day school.

Nancy helped her dad trap animals. She lived at the trapline in the winter and fish camp in the summer. Her dad had a sled dog team and they checked the fishnets with them.

She has five children (all are grown-up) and she grew up with 13 siblings. Her first language was Cree, which was spoken all the time. She married to my mosom on August 16, 1968. She met him on her own while going to school.

Elder Interview – My Perspective

I know my life and my kohkom's life are way different from each other. Especially when we were growing up. She grew up with her family in her "own world"; I grew up in a socialized town. It sounds like hers was better, being young and out at the trapline, having a lot to do like hunting, trapping, fishing, etc. I grew up in a whole different view of things.

She was born in 'the bush,' and I was born in the hospital. There are so many differences between me and her. Also our job payments. I get paid \$300 bi-weekly (15 hours a week) and she used to get \$90 bi-weekly and she worked 15 hours a day! That's a big difference right there by itself.

We were born in different times though. Things like that changed a lot during the time in between her birth and my birth obviously. That's "My Perspective" about my Elder Interview.

– Theron Sewap, Grade 9, Rhoda Hardlotte Memorial Keethanow High School, Stanley Mission



STORY NO. 01



When Paul took over his dad's sales territory, he had big, muddy shoes to fill.

We became a publicly traded company 25 years ago, but our customers still think we're a family business.

As a longtime potash salesman, Bill Whitworth was never afraid to walk the fields with his customers. And he followed one simple rule: "Always do what you say you're going to do." This worked pretty well for him over the years. Bill sowed dozens of successful customer relationships, not to mention lifelong friendships. He even inspired his son, Paul, to become a salesman at PotashCorp. Today, thanks to his father's nourishing example, Paul is growing his own relationships. To see the video of Bill's story, visit PotashCorp.com/25

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Our young people are on the right road

I remember being young. Best and worst time of your life, if I remember correctly. Your options are unlimited and you are likely in the best shape of your life ... but challenges and dangers lurk around every corner. One false step or bad decision and things can go south on you fast.

That is why it is so important to support young people in making great choices out there and nowadays it is getting easier to show our young people the right road.

Why? Because so many young people are already on that road and it is easy to point to role models.

Kendal Netmaker, the guru behind Neechie Gear, has become so famous for his philanthropic and entrepreneurial ways that he now has his own personal cheer team that follows him around!

Whenever he speaks at a conference (this guy is an international draw and has won contests in the USA and has also spoken at global entrepreneur conferences as far away as Russia!) he is escorted in by his cheer team.

Whenever he has a sale at his store, boom, the cheer team shows up! Don't believe us? Just look at this photo.

But really, we kid. Kendal, deserving though he is of a cheer team, does not have one following him around, but the St. Frances Cheerleading team did show up at his Neechie Gear store at the Centre Mall to do a cheer to thank him for his donation of shirts and support of the cheer team.

On top of that, Kendal also donates over \$5,000 yearly to KidSport. How are fellow entrepreneurs supposed to keep up with that guy?

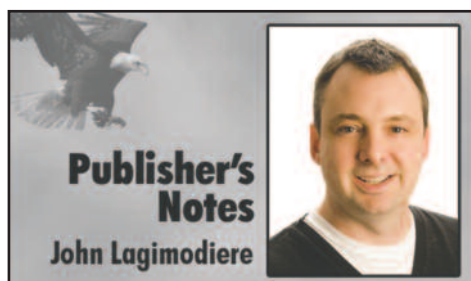
And it's not just Kendal out there making waves. Young Devon Fiddler is carving a niche in business. Heather Abbey of shopindigenous.com has broken through.

Go look at the University of Saskatchewan and the leadership roles Max Fineday and Jack Saddleback have

assumed.

Actually, go to any SIIT, FNU, or GDI campus and you will see current leaders and movers and shakers that are just coming into their potential. Also check out our pal, motivational speaker Mike Scott, who has 5,000 friends on Facebook and another 25,000 followers. How refreshing to have such focused and powerful young people in the community. And how refreshing to have so many young people look up to and aspire to be like these young leaders.

It is said that when young people prosper, you can look back in their life and find one key person who gave them



So, three cheers for all of those leaders out there, young and old, who are helping along this next generation of leaders who are helping us take our proper place in Canada. Hip hip hooray! Hip hip hooray! Hip hip hooray!

And a fond farewell

We have to offer a big tip of the hat to former Assembly of First Nations Chief Shawn Atleo. Never in the history of Canada has such an esteemed and credible leader been subjected to such lateral violence and media spin and worst, the incessant squawking of Pamela Palmater.

The amount of vitriol and lateral violence can be summed up in the press-release we received from Idle No More about Atleo's resignation.

And we quote "Today, after four years of servility and weak leadership ... most recently, he has served as the fig leaf for the government's Orwellian First Nations Education Act."

Servility and weak leadership and a fig leaf. Hmmm. We always thought that idle No More was based on peaceful protest and education ... not attack, slam and slur politics, especially towards a man who has committed his life to his family, his people and First Nation education.

When did this change happen? Did they smudge before they wrote that hateful piece of media release? Did they think that maybe his children would read that?

If you want the right perspective on this whole mess, read Wab Kinew's piece in the Huffington Post.

He gets it. A pragmatic insight that shows Wab is truly a national leader in Canada and is balanced and respectful.

Let's bring more of that back into our politics nationally and at the First Nation and Métis Local level please.

Much needed. We don't need any more enemies.

Welcome

We want to offer a big welcome to Jeanelle Mandes who has joined Eagle Feather News for her internship out of the University of Regina School of Journalism.

Jeanelle will be with us until after the summer and will be our source for all things NAIG!

We also want to welcome Conrad Naytowhow as one of our freelance writers.

Known as thatconradguy, Conrad travels all over the North to community events and he has agreed to be one of our correspondents. Welcome aboard both of you!



Kendal Netmaker's cheer team in front of the Neechie Gear store.

(By Trina Kingfisher)

advice or was there for that youth in a good way and allowed them to make right decisions and prosper.

You would have resigned too if you had to be under attack, a vicious attack at that, every day for trying to do your job.

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Box 924 Saskatoon, SK S7K 3M4
306-978-8118, 1-866-323-NEWS (6397)

PUBLISHER/EDITOR: John Lagimodiere, John@eaglefeathernews.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Warren Goulding, warrengoulding@yahoo.ca

ADVERTISING & SALES: Peggy Robillard, peggy.robillard@yahoo.com

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Growing your own food makes healthy sense

There was a time when almost every house on the reserve had a garden. Some were huge, others small. Some reserves had community gardens where a bunch of families pooled their labour, resources and time.

They grew potatoes, carrots, turnips, and squash which last all winter long in root cellars. Onions were braided and hung in a dark closet. Tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, peas, beets and corn were canned or pickled. Berries and other bush and tree fruits were canned, dried or processed into jams. Our late grandmother put up hundreds of jars of garden produce and berries each year, along with many jars of canned and dried meat and pemmican. They had no freezers back then so it took a lot more work to preserve food than it does today.

Our old people enjoyed fresh fruit and veggies all summer long and they made sure they had nutritional food set aside for the winter. Just as important, they did not have to spend their hard-earned money on foods they could grow and pick on their own.

Today we know there are high levels of poverty among our people and that groceries are expensive. But you seldom see gardens on reserves anymore, or in backyards in the cities. Many old people I have talked to over the years express sadness, and sometimes frustration, that many of our people no longer work with the earth to provide for themselves.

There is also concern about our people eating too much fast food, which we now know are significant causes of diabetes, obesity and other health problems associated with poor nutrition.

Growing our own food is cheap! Studies have been done about how much growing our own gardens can save us in grocery bills. These are called cost analysis studies, they compare the cost of growing vegetables against the cost of buying them in the grocery store, and have shown that the average cost saving ratio is 1 to 25. In other words, for each \$1 you invest (seeds, fertilizer, water) you reap \$25 worth of garden groceries. Spend \$50 and you reap \$1,250 worth.

A \$4 package of lettuce seeds will provide a month's

worth of salad for your family. \$15 worth of baby tomato plants will produce 60 lbs of tomatoes (25 cents per lb. home-grown vs an average of \$2.00 lb. from the grocery store). That's a lot of savings.



Things are looking up and our grandparents would be pleased to know that more people are recognizing the value of growing our own foods. Last year in Saskatoon there were 25 community gardens supported by the CHEP community garden network. Some reserves like Beardy's and Okemasis are bringing back community gardens and Harvey Knight has taken the lead at Muskoday on a large organic garden.

You do not need a large space to garden. Many veggies, herbs, and fruits can be grown in small places, and in planters or buckets. Some people in apartments have container gardens on their decks and patios, or on window ledges. Plant a few mint seeds and you will have mint tea all winter long to enjoy and help fight sore throats or colic.

Our attempts at gardening have had varying results. Tyrone built us a beautiful garden, all fenced in to keep horses and dogs out, and with the help of our buddy, Marjorie, we made a few raised beds. We were set! However, last year we had more tomatoes that we could deal with and our corn failed. Our potato plants produced pitiful yields (about 3 small potatoes each) but we got tons of carrots.

Like anything else, it's a learning process, and after consulting with buddies and YouTube I am ready to take on the challenge again.

There are many benefits of growing our own food. You can grow whatever you want, if you like pickles you can grow lots of cukes and beets. It relieves stress; it is soothing and relaxing to work with the soil. You get exercise and it takes your mind off work or your problems.

Get the kids involved for some positive family time and it teaches them responsibility and pride in producing their own food. You can avoid all the nasty chemicals that commercial growers use like pesticides and toxic fertilizers and it saves money.

Growing our own food is a step towards regaining Indigenous knowledge, like how to turn herbs into medicines like our old people did.

Food is a gift from the Creator and taking back control over our food production and harvesting is a big part of what is now known as the Indigenous food sovereignty movement.



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Understanding the Daniels case

On Thursday, April 17 the federal court of appeal gave its decision in the Daniels case. Contrary to what is widely reported and claimed, the case is not about Métis rights. It has nothing to do with the Indian Act or Indian status, nor with benefits for Indians defined by the Act.

The decision did not provide a definition of Métis or restrict the meaning of the term. Daniels is not about federal 'responsibility' for Métis. It is about the authority of the federal Parliament to make laws on the subject matter of 'Métis', who are included in the meaning of 'Indian' in section 91(24) of the Constitution Act 1867.

This is not a change in the law. The court's role is simply to declare what is the meaning of the law of the Constitution so that



Comment
Paul Chartrand

s.91(24) has always included the Métis. There have been many instances of federal law that targeted Métis people, including a provision in the Indian Act of 1884 that prohibited Métis or Indian people from meeting in public to express disagreement with government authorities.

This 1884 provision shows that federal authority to make laws about Métis and Indian people includes authority to make laws about persons as well as about communities that have Treaty or Aboriginal rights and shows why it is wrong to confuse the idea of a 'Métis Nation' with the idea of federal law-making authority. The Daniels case does not define the Métis people in s.35 of the Constitution Act 1982.

The Daniels case is named after the late renowned Métis political leader Harry Daniels from Regina Beach, Saskatchewan who initiated it in the 1990s when he was President of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, the successor to the historic Native Council of Canada, one of the major national Aboriginal organizations of the modern era.

Harry fought ferociously and endearingly at the same time with four prime ministers of Canada in a battle to clarify a basic constitutional muddle that the majority of Canadians would not tolerate for themselves. Daniels opens the door for federal legislation in areas that touch specifically on Métis interests, whether for the protection of hunting or fishing rights or for the establishment of distinct institutions for the preservation of the culture of the people.

But the existence of any rights is a matter for determination on a case-by-case basis and is not at issue in Daniels.

One intended result of Daniels is to clarify whether the federal and not the provincial governments can enact 'Métis laws'. The case was necessary because federal governments often refused to accept the role of law-maker. Politically the case helps the potential for Métis representatives to advance negotiations with federal and provincial governments.

The question of federal and provincial 'jurisdiction' or authority to make laws is exceedingly complex and Daniels should not be seen as a threat to existing regimes such as the Alberta Settlements or to Saskatchewan's Métis

Act. Neither should it be believed that the provinces can no longer make laws that affect the Métis people or their interests. To delve more deeply into these consti-

tutional mysteries would be to peek into the deep mysteries of legal magic that is constitutional law.

The Daniels case should not be expected to produce quick and happy results. There is still the need to identify the Métis people who are constitutional 'Indians', an immense challenge since the emergence of claimants to Métis identity from parts of Canada where historically there has never been a need for a Métis policy or law.

It must be pointed out that the federal court of appeal excluded Indians who are not included in the Indian Act definition, the 'non-status Indians' from its declaration on the meaning of s.91 (24). This is for 'technical' reasons and still leaves it open for the tens of thousands of Indians outside the federal reserve system to press their legal claims in court.

I am dumbfounded by editorial comments such as that of the Winnipeg Free Press which states, "It rejected, however, the notion non-status Indians are in fact Indians under the Constitution" The court expressly recognized the opposite, which is why it held that a declaration on NSI would serve no purpose!

All in all, the analysis in Daniels suggests it has a good chance of not being overturned by the Supreme Court of Canada if the federal government seeks leave to appeal.

But for the need to hold one's nose at a basic mistake by the judges in misunderstanding the difference between Charter rights and Aboriginal rights, and the insistence to use the despicable and insulting term 'half-breed' the decision is one that deserves applause.

Harry must be smiling.



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Stepping Stones

An RCMP officer showed an interested student how to put on a police belt. (Page 6 Photo by Jeanelle Mandes) Below, Wavell Starr, a professional First Nations wrestler and SaskPower employee throws an arm bar on Nick Blacksioux. Nick is one tough kid. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes) A group of girls pose in front of the First Nations University of Canada booth. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes) Lyle Acoose of PotashCorp (top right) helps a student don a breathing apparatus that miners have available in case of an emergency underground. (Photo by Judy Bird)



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OneStory project discovers strong, successful people

By Darla Read

For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Some Saskatoon students have been learning outside the walls of the classroom in a new project that has inspired pride in Indigenous culture.

Students from Mount Royal Collegiate interviewed Métis and First Nations leaders with OneStory.com, a tool for crowd-sourcing video interviews to help tell the story of organizations, causes, communities, families, and to create engaging material to share through social media. The intention of the project was to gather inspiring stories from all realms of occupation, wisdom, and talent.

Many leaders participated in the project, such as FSIN Chief Simon Bird, Elder Louise McKinney, filmmakers Tasha Hubbard and Marcel Petit, Neechie Gear's Kendal Netmaker, Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas, journalist Betty Ann Adam, and many others.

Each person was asked: What is it that makes you strong and proud as an Indigenous person? and what are your strengths, teachings, and expertise you wish to share with First Nations and Métis youth?

Glenda Abbott was interviewed by the students. Abbott ran from northern Saskatchewan to Panama in an honour run for water.

"If there is one thing I can pass on, from that journey or that experience, it would be learn who you are first so that



Students Darianne Moccasin, Tynesha McTaggart and Arianne Lewis interviewed Star Phoenix reporter Betty Ann Adam (second from left) as part of the One Story project.

you are able to share that with the world. I learned that I was a Nehiyaw, as a Cree woman I shared that with many different nations, from here to South America," she said.

Teacher Belinda Daniels started the campaign with her Cree class.

She says the idea behind it was "that as Indigenous people, we are contemporary and come from all walks of life, but still hold our beliefs, traditions, and practices true to our heart."

Daniels says her students were excited and intrigued by the project, and

they gained a lot from it.

"My favourite part would be hearing from strong, proud and successful First Nations people," one student said.

Another said it was great "learning how to public speak with confidence, making eye contact, and knowing what to say."

The students were clearly moved by many of the responses as well, noting that sometimes people became quite emotional. One student pointed to a woman who cried during her interview.

"She said that when she was younger,

she was not proud or raised not to be proud of whom she was supposed to be."

Perhaps most importantly, the students learned not just technical skills of recording, conducting, and editing interviews, but they learned a lot about themselves.

"There are a lot of good and successful people that are First Nations and Métis," said one student.

"I am proud of my identity, my background, my culture," said another.

The more than 40 videos can be viewed at OneStory.com.

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Comic characters reach Aboriginal kids

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Aboriginal kids reading comic books finally have a character they can relate to.

Earlier this month, around 200 children from Saskatoon's Westmount, Pleasant Hill, St. Mary's, and Caswell Hill schools packed into the city's main library theatre to hear from comic book author Jeff Lemire, who spoke to them via Skype from Toronto.

Lemire is the comic book creator for Justice League United, a six-issue mini-series that features main character, Equinox, whose super powers allow her to control the weather: the ice and wind in the winter, vegetation growth in the spring, and heat and fire in the summer. Lemire is still working on her fall super power.

The female pre-teen character was inspired by Shannen Koostachin from Attawapiskat, the young girl who created the movement, Shannen's Dream, that advocates for equitable education funding for First Nations children. Koostachin died nearly four years ago in a car accident but her movement continues.

As part of his research for the comic, Lemire twice visited the James Bay area, getting to know the people, and he says Equinox was created from that experience.

"I wanted to create a new Canadian super hero," and it's hard to capture the whole country in one comic, he explained to the kids.

Lemire felt the best place to start was with the country's First Peoples.

"I felt like one area that I really love and that never really gets represented in comics or movies is First Nations."

Six students from Westmount prepared questions to ask Lemire, and they ranged from why was the name Equinox chosen (partly because Lemire was born on the spring Equinox), does Equinox have any sidekicks (yes, and she starts meeting them in the first story), and how did he decide what Equinox would look like (Lemire wanted a modernized version of a Cree girl in regalia. She is also wearing the colours blue and white, which were Koostachin's favourite



Bernadeth Roma, Kielyn Scott, Madyson Longman and Mohamed Yousef from Westmount School with their copies of Justice League.
(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

colours).

The students' teacher, Megan Weisbrod, says it means a lot to the kids to have a comic book character they can relate to.

"We watched a video on Shannen, and they were asking lots of questions," she says of the kids' enthusiasm and excitement. "We had to narrow it down and limit to just six!"

Bernadeth Roma, a Grade 6 student at Westmount, says having a Cree girl featured in a comic book is both "inspirational and awesome."

Lemire felt it was important to have a female character, as there are predominantly male comic book heroes.

"More and more, girls read comics," says Lemire, noting that people from all parts of the world can access comics, so the characters should better represent those who are reading them.

Each of the students who attended the comic's launch received a free copy. Equinox will be introduced to the comic book world through a six-issue mini-series, which will then continue.



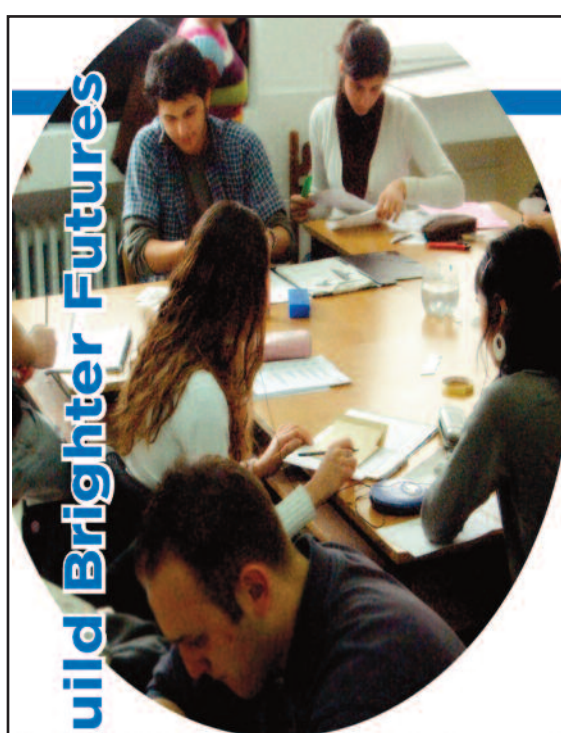
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Mentorship program an eye-opener

By Jeanelle Mandes
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA – Many high school students from northern communities traveled to Regina in May for the fifth annual Youth Mentorship Program. This year, there were 29 students in the program from Air Ronge, Buffalo Narrows, Canoe Narrows, Cumberland House, Fond Du Lac and Pinehouse Lake.



Mathias Kusch from Buffalo Narrows participated in the Youth Mentorship Program including the Mock Parliament in Regina.

This gave students an opportunity to see what options are available to them after completing high school.

The Provincial Capital Commission hosts this program every year with the financial assistance from the Ministry of Education and the Government House Foundation.

“The Youth Mentorship Program shows students the opportunities available to them right here in the province,” said Kevin Doherty, Minister of Education.

“I hope the young people who attend see that Saskatchewan, in addition to providing exciting job and educational opportunities, offers a vibrant quality of life.”

The program consisted of various events for the kids such as taking tours of the University of Regina, the First Nations University of Canada, Government House and the Legislative Building.

Gwen Jacobson, Director of Operations for the Provincial Capital Commission, said the youth prepared for a Mock Parliament by coming up with a new bill to experience how the government works.

“It’s an opportunity to learn about governance, learn about the history of the province, and an opportunity to learn about careers in the public service,” said Jacobson.

The students debated a bill in the chamber over the use of cell phones in the



MLA Buckley Belanger explains to the northern students on how to debate on bills introduced in the Legislative Assembly.

classroom. They discussed how to argue both sides of proposing a bill in the Legislative Assembly with MLA Doyle Vermette and MLA Buckley Belanger.

The northern kids were introduced in the Legislative Assembly and had the chance to watch Question Period to see the real action.

Grade 10 student Mathias Kusch of Buffalo Narrows would like to gain good experiences from this program.

Kusch said his school coordinated some of the students to participate in the Youth Mentorship Program this year. He was hesitant at first to attend thinking he was going to be sitting in board room

meetings all day but each day was something new and exciting to him and all the other students.

He said aside from swimming at the University of Regina, he enjoyed the Mock Parliament the most.

“It was pretty cool not ever seeing something like that done before and being able to do it for the first time. I don’t know how those guys can sit there for so long,” said Kusch.

When the Youth Mentorship program ended on May 7, the students returned to their northern communities with new bonded friendships, gained knowledge and hope for their future.

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I wanted to go to a place that not only understood me, but also knew where I had come from and where I wanted to go. Knowing that FNUniv is rooted in a deep understanding of who we are as Indigenous people is driving the success of my education, and the success of my community for the future.

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Mmmm ... grab a slice of post secondary pie

What do you want to be when you finish school? Graduation is a time to truly reflect on who you are, what you've become and how you feel about the world around you.

High school offers us a chance to begin this process and some of us actually get lucky and figure it out before we graduate.

Not all of us really know who we are or we are afraid, for whatever reason, to be ourselves in front of others.

As you go forward into your future, you need to be comfortable with who you are to find your place in the world.

Eventually we all learn that those who truly care about us will allow us to be ourselves without judgment. They will in fact, encourage it.

The youth are about to begin real life! Know that there will be obstacles; there will be days when you wonder why you were so excited to leave high school. Remember if you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

As the great Dr. Seuss once said, "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know

what you know. You are the guy who'll decide where to go."

As you leave high school, don't fret over leaving behind the life you have had, don't waste precious time wishing you could do it over differently because you can't.

Face the future with the understanding that you will be more aware of your actions and make the most of every choice you make.

The future offers a blank canvas for you to paint your own future. Embrace the past, be grateful for it, learn from it and move on.

Go and grab your slice of the post secondary pie.

Do what you love and you'll never

have to work a day in your life. You have the gift of time. Use it to do what you love.

Believe anything is possible and then work like hell to make it happen. An old Cree proverb says, "Realize that we as human beings have been put on this earth for only a short time and that we must use this time to gain wisdom, knowledge, respect and the understanding for all human beings since we are all relatives."

So be kind to each other and help

each other because it's the right thing to do.

University isn't for everyone.



Sandee Sez
Sandra Ahenakew

Congratulations to all the graduates. Grab your sunglasses because your future is bright.

There is a severe shortage of skilled trades' people in Saskatchewan.

If you ever dreamed of being a carpenter, millwright, plumber, iron worker or electrician go for it you can make some good money. Consider taking a course at a SIAST campus.

Maybe you want to be a chef? There are wonderful culinary schools all over the world. Imagine travelling to Paris or Moose Jaw the world is your prairie oyster.

Cooking not your cup of tea? Maybe you love to mess around with computers – you could be the next Steve Jobs (inventor of the Apple computer).

Whatever you choose, do your best and enjoy.

Congratulations to all the graduates. Grab your sunglasses because your future is bright. Next month I'll introduce you to an awesome young man, Creeson Agecutay.

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
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June is
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North Central "Healing Our Community" Smudge Walk
June 2 | 10am - 2pm | Albert Scott High School, 3350 7th Ave. Regina, SK

RAPA & Farm Credit Canada proudly present the 4th Annual Aboriginal Talent Showcase
June 19 | 11:30am - 1:30pm | Cornwall Centre, 2102 11 Ave. Regina, SK

RAPA & North American Indigenous Games proudly present the 2nd Annual 1-Day Archery & Lacrosse Youth Camp
June 28 | 10am - 4pm | First Nations University of Canada - 1 First Nation Way, Regina, SK

National Aboriginal History Month "Photo-A-Day" Challenge
Two prize packs to be won!

From June 1 - June 30, take a description from each day and just take a photo of something you think fits that NAHM weekly theme! Use the hashtag on social media sites **#NAHM2014PhotoADay**

Celebrating the stories and triumphs of Canada's Aboriginal Peoples

Proud Partners

Role models important for turning boys into men

Friends of ours are foster parents. They make their living at it and it's a commitment they've made with themselves and with the kids who come under their care.

They've been doing this for years and in that time they've positively influenced a lot of young boys. Since we've been friends we've gotten to meet a handful of these kids and it's always been a pleasure. They're shy at first, restrained, scared maybe, but they bloom eventually and become themselves.

Being a former foster kid myself, I can identify with them. I remember precisely how it feels to move into someone else's home and try to find a comfortable place for yourself and how much work it takes to get your feet under you so you can move.

It's never an easy thing. You travel with the knowledge that you don't belong. That's never an easy or a comfortable weight to bear at any age but harder when you're a kid.

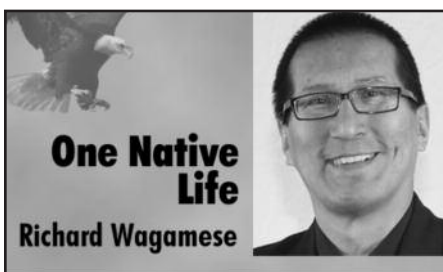
My friends are getting older. They're both in their sixties now and they can clearly see a time coming when they won't be able to do this work anymore. Everyone outgrows child rearing and it's no different with foster parents. They

want to rest. They want to enjoy each other. Sometimes their energy lags and sometimes, so does their patience. But there isn't a day when their care flags or their understanding of what makes boys tick surrenders to their tiredness.

They've got three boys in their home now. All of them are under 16 but just barely. It means that they're an emotional and a physical handful. They're growing into their bodies and becoming men and along with that comes a host of changes and a hundred different ways of coping with them. They fight like brothers. They tease and jibe. They react to the emotional surges that happen of their own accord and they question almost everything. It's called growing up.

It's actually kind of funny to watch. I find it funny because I remember so well how completely out of orbit I felt at that age. My body was different, my voice was different and then there were all those feelings.

Throw in the idea of girls and things in my head were a madhouse. I had big



One Native Life
Richard Wagamese

feet and a round head until I was 14. I had a severe brush-cut and goofy glasses and I couldn't talk to people. My life was one big ache for acceptance.

The world held mysteries that were always hinted at but never explained. When you need to rely on speculation because you're too timid or afraid to ask questions of things or people, the resources you're left to are always your own. I imagined a lot of wrong things. I surmised dreadfully. I calculated out of fear and confusion. There wasn't a man around me that I felt connected to in any big way to ask about the things that were going on inside me.

That was the big thing. I was a displaced boy trying to understand the process of becoming a young man and role models were at a premium for me. The men I most admired were other kid's fathers but I could never talk to them. Wandering through my stiff adolescent world I never had the benefit of a guide. It's tough territory.

So when I'm around those guys I try to remember all that. I try to remember

the fact that I could never for a moment forget that I was a foster kid. I try to remember how it felt to have to shop for a feeling of permanence and stability and how indecipherable grown ups were. Particularly the men. I remember how hard it was to learn how to be masculine through mimicry and how a lot of the behaviours I saw didn't fit with how I felt inside.

So I joke with them. I tease lightly. I play the clown and get them to laugh. I use their lingo and their references and I try to talk about the things they're interested in. I try to show them that grownups aren't all boring, dull, uninventive and non-spontaneous. I try to show them that some of us can still be kids too – because I really needed that when I was them. I didn't need a cop back then. I needed an ally, a confidante and a buddy. I try to give them that.

See, kids trust what reflects them. If they can see themselves in you they hear you, they pay attention to you, they're not afraid of you. When you're not infallible it allows them the dignity of the occasional oops themselves. As grownups we need to remember that because in the end, we're all role models and we're all foster parents.

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George Leach to headline NAIG opening ceremonies

By Judy Bird

For Eagle Feather News

REGINA – The Regina 2014 North American Indigenous Games has added some star power to the Opening Ceremonies. Award-winning musician George Leach will be the headlining act for the event on Sunday, July 20 at Mosaic Stadium in Regina.

“It’s a big honour,” said Leach of being asked to be the headlining act. “Hopefully what I do brings some good energy, some strong energy to support the Games. I’m here to do what I can to support it.”

Leach won a Juno Award in March 2014 for Aboriginal Album of the Year, and three awards at the Aboriginal People’s Choice Music Awards in 2013.

While he is best known for his music, he is no stranger to the North American Indigenous Games either.

“Back in the day,” as he put it, he participated as an athlete in fastball. “It was so long ago,” he joked.

Leach knows the value of the games, and what it meant for him personally to compete.



Interim CEO Ron Crowe and George Leach share a laugh during the media scrum after announcing Leach as the headlining act at the Opening Ceremonies.

“It was a very important motivational aspect for me because I was very athletic, and to have a goal set by your own community, when you have an opportunity to take part, to travel, to meet other athletes and just to be part of a big event, I think it’s all around positive.”

Along with entertaining, he hopes to give to the youth participating a bit of

advice.

“Be yourself, and strive to be the best of who you are. Nobody can be you better than you,” said Leach.

Interim CEO Ron Crowe said Leach was a clear choice to headline the Opening Ceremonies.

“The fact that he’s won a Juno, he’s an Aboriginal entertainer, and a past

participant in the Indigenous Games speaks well to the kind of development and leadership that the North American Indigenous Games can give individuals. I think he’s just a natural fit,” said Crowe.

Tickets to the Opening Ceremonies will cost \$10 each, a nominal fee for what the event will offer, said Crowe.

“We’re expecting to fill Mosaic Stadium for the opening ceremonies, and we’re looking forward to a huge show, and a great show.”

Tickets for the 2014 Regina NAIG Opening Ceremonies will be on sale starting April 30 at 10 a.m. and can be purchased online through Ticketmaster, or in Regina at the Brandt Centre.

The event takes place at Mosaic Stadium, however, tickets are not available for purchase at the stadium.

With less than three months to go, the Regina 2014 NAIG is also still in need of volunteers for a variety of roles, including the Opening Ceremonies.

For information and to sign up, visit www.regina2014naig.com



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Saskatchewan athletes preparing for NAIG

2014 NAIG ATHLETE PROFILES – TEAM SASKATCHEWAN

By Creeson Agecoutay

With the 2014 North American Indigenous Games in Regina less than three months away, Indigenous youth from across North America are training hard to compete in the sports that they love. If there is one thing to say about these athletes, it is that they are very hard working young leaders of tomorrow. Not only are they involved in sports and their education, many of them are working part-time jobs. Here are just a handful of athletes that I had the privilege to talk to. Enjoy!

WACEY STRONGEAGLE

AGE: 17

RESERVE: PASQUA FIRST NATION
SPORT: BASEBALL

Growing up with his grandparents and parents on the Pasqua First Nation, 17-year-old Wacey Strongeagle has been playing baseball since he was young. "All my cousins and uncles played baseball and I just followed through." Self-taught, Wacey says he wants to continue to push himself further in the sport as his team recently played at the 2013 First Nation Summer Games on the Muskoday First Nation. He will now be a leading pitcher, representing Team Saskatchewan for baseball in this year's 2014 NAIG in Regina. Training all winter at the Chief Paskwa Education Centre gymnasium with his cousin Rylee Cyr, Wacey says he wants to take home gold for his team. "Felt proud about myself and happy to make my parents proud and my grandparents proud. It's a pretty big thing to make (Team Saskatchewan)." Wacey says he will graduate next year from Bert Fox Community High School with hopes of becoming an RCMP officer in the near future. He believes there should be more First Nation RCMP officers. His message to the youth is: "Just live a positive lifestyle. Stay off drugs and alcohol and go to school. Keep on training in sports and just keep pushing yourself."



Sixteen-year-old Rylee Cyr of Pasqua First Nations says he has been playing baseball since the age of seven.

RYLEE CYR

AGE: 16

RESERVE: PASQUA FIRST NATION
SPORT: BASEBALL

First playing baseball for his grandfather at the age of seven, Rylee Cyr says he enjoys the family sport every summer. "Since I can remember, I have been throwing the ball all my life. I started off in T-ball, when I was a little squirt." The sport has taken him across Saskatchewan, including a tournament in British Columbia, as he has played for numerous teams in Saskatchewan, like the Pasqua Athletics, the Neudorf Red Sox and Ochapowace Thunder. "It's a team sport. You have to have your big shots and team players, that's why I like baseball so much." When asked what NAIG means to him, he says, "It's an opportunity for the Aboriginal athletes to showcase what they got in the sports that they love so much. I will try and do my best for Team Saskatchewan and show off what I got and make my team proud." His message to other youth is, "Always be positive. Be a role model to younger kids. Try to stay clean from drugs and alcohol and be a good role model for your younger family members as well."



Wacey Strongeagle is a 17-year-old baseball player from Pasqua First Nation.

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Saskatchewan the team to beat at NAIG

**HEATHER
O'WATCH**

AGE: 19

**RESERVE:
OKANESE FIRST
NATION**

SPORT: ARCHERY

Heather O'Watch is a hard working university student and she says she wouldn't have it any other way. Finishing her Grade 12 last year, she is now attending university classes at the First Nations University of Canada in Regina, majoring in journalism. On top of her studies, she also works two jobs and is part of the First Nations University Student Association, as well as practicing in archery for this year's 2014 NAIG in Regina. "It's a lot of juggling. I always have to make sure I have organization making sure my phone is scheduled. My alarm is constantly going off." When asked what NAIG means to her, she says, "It's like the Olympics for aboriginal people. It's that big and I don't think Regina knows yet how big that is but to me it's a big deal." Growing up in a single mother family, Heather says she gets much of her inspiration from her mother, "I have two sisters and a younger brother. To be able to see my mom raise four children on her own in Regina, work day and night and even to this day, she is still working. To see her keep going, it keeps me motivated. She is a really a good supporter in my life."



Heather O'Watch is a university student who will have her eye on the target as a competitor in archery.

MANDY LAROSE-KOOCHICUM

AGE: 15 RESERVE: Peepeekisis First Nation

SPORT: VOLLEYBALL

Mandy Larose-Koochicum truly believes that her volleyball team, the Yorkton Parkland Pounders is like family. "We're going to accomplish something and hopefully we get the best out of it. We talk a lot and we communicate. We have to stick together and no matter what, we help each other out if one falls down." The 15 year-old athlete from the Peepeekisis First Nation is not only involved in sports and her education; she is also working part-time at the local rink in Balcarres. She thanks her teachers for their continued support on her future path to success. "It's kind of hard and stressful but my teachers help me out and help me get my homework done. They pick me back up and they help me on my work so I can play volleyball in the evenings." Mandy says her father and mother are also a huge part of her life and support her every step of the way. When she finishes high school, Mandy plans on attending university in California, studying in nursing, dentistry or both. Her message to the youth is, "Don't give up when times get hard. Keep pushing yourself, even if you fall down and you will have that support right behind you."

• Continued on Page 17



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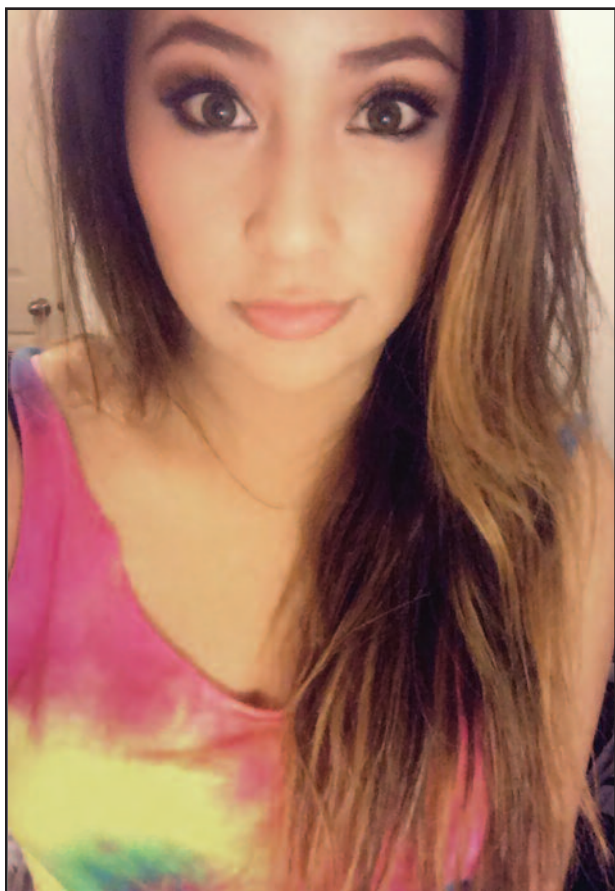


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HALEY SUNSHINE

AGE: 16

RESERVE: FISHING LAKE FIRST NATION

SPORT: BADMINTON

Haley Sunshine says she is proud to be able to represent Team Saskatchewan in this year's 2014 NAIG and welcomes the opportunities that follow with the sport. Haley says she has been playing badminton for eight years and has her eyes set on gold. "I've been playing the sport since Grade 3, I love the sport and (NAIG) gives me a chance to be noticed and to show everyone what skills I have." The Lloydminster Comprehensive High School student also plays volleyball and basketball and works a part time job. She says you can't accomplish anything in life without hard work. Her message to the youth who are thinking about getting involved in sports is, "it's probably one thing you will not regret in life." Once Haley finishes her education in high school, she plans on moving to Vancouver to become a makeup artist for theatre and art performance. She says she gets most of her inspiration in life from her family. "My brothers and father because I grew up mainly around boys. My mom is also a big help in my life."

Haley Sunshine, 16, of Fishing Lake First Nation will be competing in badminton.

ative kids with their athletic abilities. Not many First Nations youth get recognized and know what they are capable of doing. I would just like to help out and make great athletes." The Grade 9 student from Wadena says he has been playing badminton for six years and loves badminton for its strategy. He says he is thankful to have his parents for support as they inspire him to be a better athlete. "They were both very athletic. When I see their trophies and medals, it just pushes me to play in sports." His message to other youth is to get involved in every sport and enjoy it as much as you can. The life lesson he has learned from sports is, "Do not get ahead of yourself and the harder you try, the more you succeed." Darian will also be one of many athletes representing Team Saskatchewan and he says he is training extra hard and hopes to make his family proud. "(NAIG) is a huge thing for me. It's a chance for top athletes from across

Darian Sunshine wants to one day coach his own team and help his people. "I want to help young native kids with their athletic abilities. Not many First Nations youth get recognized and know what they are capable of doing. I would just like to help out and make great athletes." The Grade 9 student from Wadena says he has been playing badminton for six years and loves badminton for its strategy. He says he is thankful to have his parents for support as they inspire him to be a better athlete. "They were both very athletic. When I see their trophies and medals, it just pushes me to play in sports." His message to other youth is to get involved in every sport and enjoy it as much as you can. The life lesson he has learned from sports is, "Do not get ahead of yourself and the harder you try, the more you succeed." Darian will also be one of many athletes representing Team Saskatchewan and he says he is training extra hard and hopes to make his family proud. "(NAIG) is a huge thing for me. It's a chance for top athletes from across the country to compete at their sport. I am going to do a lot more training for (NAIG)."

DARIAN SUNSHINE

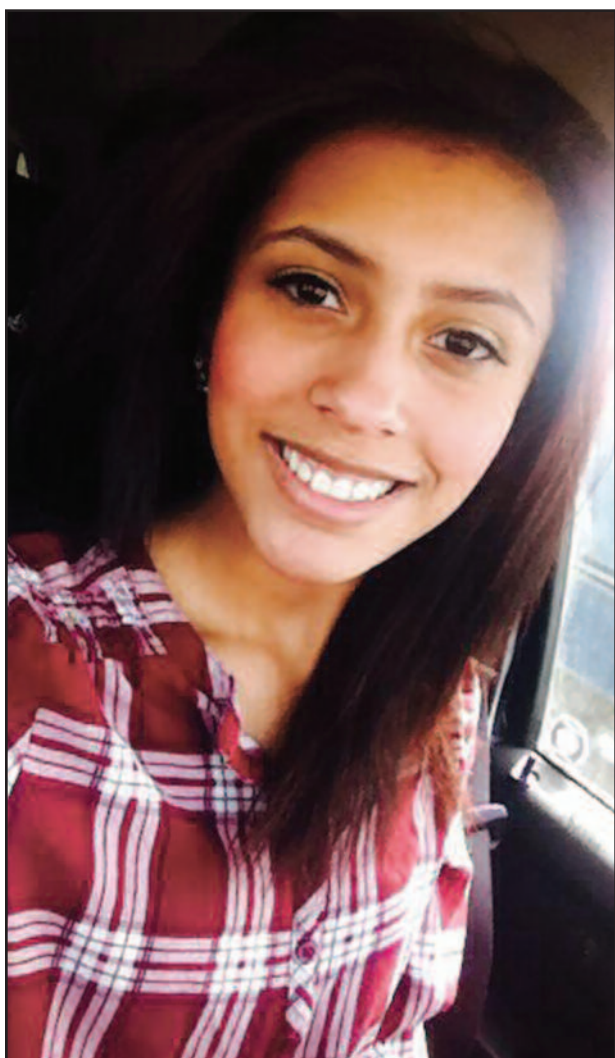
AGE: 14

RESERVE: FISHING LAKE FIRST NATION

SPORT: BADMINTON



Darian Sunshine of Fishing Lake First Nation loves the strategy in his sport of badminton.



Mandy Larose-Koochicum is a 15-year-old volleyball player from Peepeekisis First Nation.

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Clean-up projects a tidy fit for northern partners

By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News

A community-owned development corporation and its business partner have been awarded a major mine clean-up in northern Saskatchewan.

The Lorado project, located near Uranium City, is the second project to be awarded to the partnership between Pinehouse Business Development North (PBN) and Nuna Logistics, an Inuit-owned Aboriginal company that boasts a workforce in excess of 600 people working on various northern remote projects. Nuna also has a history of employing more than 55 per cent northern staff in its operations – something that appealed to both PBN and the Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC), who hired the joint venture.

“We wanted to make sure ... they put an emphasis on the environment, using a local workforce and local equipment,” explains Mark Calette, SRC’s Senior Advisor of Community and Aboriginal Engagement, Environmental Remediation, “because that’s what we were hearing was important from community meetings.”

Julie Wriston, CEO of PBN, says the joint venture with Nuna has had a significant impact on PBN in terms of building capacity as well as diversifying from PBN’s heavy reliance on Cameco and Areva. She says the partnership has moved PBN into environmental services and waste management.

“The community is extremely proud to have Lorado, and it will open doors to other clean-up projects.”

Nuna and PBN first came together in 2010. In 2011, they were jointly awarded the Key Lake west wall stabilization project, which was huge for PBN, says Wriston.



The Lorado mine site is in the process of being remediated in a massive project including Pinehouse Business North, Nuna Logistics and The Saskatchewan Research Council.

“PBN got a lot of training through that,” noting eight heavy equipment operators were trained, three of which were hired permanently for the project.

That project finished a year ahead of schedule – “unheard of,” says Wriston – and from there, the two companies discussed whether they should dissolve their joint venture or purchase the equipment and continue to

find work. They chose the latter and successfully bid on the Lorado project.

Wriston says Nuna has the right perspective on how to build from the ground up, how to work with communities, and says they are very patient, transparent, and open in communicating.

• Continued on Page 19

Working Together to Improve the Northern Landscape



How do we improve the landscape at abandoned mine sites?

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Community values important for SRC

• Continued from Page 18

"I don't know that every large corporation has the appetite to work with a community-owned corporation, but they certainly do," says Wriston. "So we want to utilize them as much as possible."

Work is set to begin on the Lorado mill site this June, but both companies were already using the ice roads to move equipment to the site and have also been in touch with local contractors.

Calette says SRC has been working on its procurement process since 2007, ensuring the companies they hire for mine clean-ups closely align with the values of the communities most affected by the remediation – and he's confident Nuna and PBN meet those criteria.

"(Communities) want these sites remediated properly... so that the land can be allowed to heal itself and may be be usable again," says Calette.

Wriston says she was really encouraged by how SRC approached the procurement process.

"Not only did they employ a community-owned corporation, but they also looked at how that corporation affects the communities that own them.

"I would like to see more of that within the industry."



Heavy equipment is used for heavy jobs at northern sites. They are often brought in over ice roads.

Wriston says the partnership between Nuna and PBN will continue. Each year, they review profit-sharing, capacity investment, and re-investment into the joint venture. She says they are currently looking for more projects, and they will remain partners for a minimum of five years. "The intent after five years is we can shift into taking more and more on our own."



Pinehouse Business North is an Aboriginal owned and operated company specializing in construction and labour services for the mining industry. The company was started in 2007 by the people of Pinehouse to create wealth, employment and infrastructure for the community.



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NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM AROUND THE PROVINCE

First Nations making mining industry inroads

ATCO Structures & Logistics (ATCO) has been awarded a contract to operate a 1,470 person camp for K+S Potash Canada GP in southern



Saskatchewan. **The George Gordon First Nation** is a partner in the project as the **K+S Potash Canada Legacy Project** is located on the traditional lands of the First Nation.

ATCO will provide catering, house-

keeping, janitorial and maintenance services for the facility that houses workers constructing the K+S Potash Canada Legacy Project. The volume-based, multi-million dollar contract begins in April 2014.

ATCO's catering service will provide a six week rotating menu that will feature dining specials such as a full smorgasbord and summer barbecues. ATCO will also have responsibility for all cleaning and minor maintenance work, as well as operating a lounge and commissary that will provide convenience items for the workers.

"We are very pleased to have the opportunity to expand our operations in Saskatchewan and to continue to work with the George Gordon First Nation," said **George Lidgett**, President, ATCO Structures & Logistics.

"Working together we will ensure top quality service for the camp residents." ATCO has partnered with the George Gordon First Nation on other large projects in Saskatchewan. Building on the success of this cooperation, the Legacy Project partnership demonstrates ATCO's commitment to growing capacity in local First Nations

"The K+S Legacy Project is a significant economic opportunity for the George Gordon First Nation," said **Chief Shawn Longman** of the George Gordon First Nation.

"Our joint-venture partnership with ATCO works towards our goal of establishing an active and healthy business community that sustains local jobs, particularly in the hospitality industry."

Muskowekan gives green light for potash mine

MUSKOWEKWAN FIRST NATION, SASKATCHEWAN – The eligible voters of the Muskowekwan First Nation have voted overwhelmingly in favour on the six ballot ques-

tions which would allow for the construction and operation of a solution based potash mine on the First Nation's lands that are reserve and pre-reserve.

The majority supported the Council's vision to build a self-sufficient Treaty based economy for our future and future generations, said **Chief Reginald**

Bellerose.

"The proposed development of a potash mine on First Nation Lands is precedent setting as no other First Nation in Canada has ever undertaken such an endeavour. The Council believes the development of a Proposed Potash Mine represents a game changer for the members."

The percentage of those in favour on the six ballots ranged from 79 per cent to 77 per cent.

Muskowekwan First Nation and Muskowekwan Resources Limited, the economic development arm that is wholly owned by the First Nation, entered into a

Joint Venture Agreement with **Encanto Potash Corp** to develop a potash mine. "The benefits from the mine will include equity, em-

ployment and business opportunities, and members will see economic benefits from income, wages and opportunities," said Chief Bellerose.



Making a difference



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Muskowekwan First Nation — Building a Treaty Based Economy

By Dr. B Kayseas and Dr. P.W. Moroz
For Eagle Feather News

Canadian on-reserve First Nations are now more than ever seeking to fully participate in the Canadian economic system. While there are a growing number of good stories that showcase how communities have successfully embraced an enterprising spirit, many barriers still exist.

A 2013 report by the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board clearly stated the issues: “First Nations have been effectively legislated out of the mainstream economy through the imposition of laws, regulations and “Indian policies” that were developed and imposed upon First Nations without their consultation or consent.”



Chief Reg Bellerose thinks a potash mine project in his territory can reawaken the Saulteaux spirit and identity.

The outcome of these long standing policies are plain to see.

“The people of contemporary First Nations communities are disproportionately ranked among the poorest in the nation,” argues Daniel Wilson, author of *The Income Gap Between Aboriginal Canadians and the Rest of Canada*.

However, more and more First Nations are seeking to address the existing inequities within their communities by engaging in economic development. Across Saskatchewan, First Nations economic development projects have yielded a rich diversity of commercial enterprises. These ventures range from trucking, golf courses, hotels, gas stations, drilling services, commercial real estate, construction and retail to name just a few.

The current leadership of Muskowekwan is attempting to impact their economic prospects in a way not yet achieved by any other First Nation in Canada. The world has stood up and taken notice.

Recently, a story concerning the

Muskowekwan First Nation appeared in the Wall Street Journal, the largest financial newspaper in the United States, in terms of its circulation. It is focused primarily on economic and business issues and often prints stories on some of the world’s most successful companies including Google, WalMart, and Verizon.

So why the interest from one of the world’s most prestigious newspapers in a rather sparsely populated First Nation located in central Saskatchewan? The answer is First Potash Ventures, the legal name of the joint venture between the Muskowekwan First Nation, Muskowekwan Resources Ltd. and Encanto Potash Corp.

First Potash Ventures seeks to develop the first ever potash mine on a reserve. Once operational, with a development cost of \$3 billion, the mine will produce an estimated 2.8 million tonnes of potash a year, for 50-plus years. It is estimated that the benefits that the Muskowekwan First Nation (MFN) will realize are:

- Creation of approximately 1,000 jobs during construction and 340 full-time jobs during operation.
- Over the lifetime of the mine, approximately \$3 billion in fees and taxes that will go directly to the MFN.
- Ongoing shared environmental monitoring of the mine site, ensuring safety of the MFN, its lands and water.
- Preferential service contracts and the creation of spinoff business to take up these contracts.

The Muskowekwan First Nation’s joint venture with Encanto Potash has a number of unique elements to it. The first involves the recognition of Treaty #4 as the foundation for the “re-building” of the Nation. Within the natural resource extraction sector, land ownership and the rights to the resource are key factors for mining development.

Having these rights is a key factor in fully participating in partnerships with industry.

“We are focused on Treaty implementation ... we do have underlying title ... our forefathers who occupied the land passed us the inherent rights title,” explains Chief Bellerose.

“Our forefathers who signed Treaty #4 passed the Treaty.”

The Muskowekwan First Nation’s pursuit of development on their lands is their choice and is an expression of their rights to the land.

This leads to the second element that contributes to its unique nature. Not having to negotiate or forward legal claims over issues of Aboriginal title is not a typical position for most First Nations to be in. Most First Nations must attempt to access benefits from mining developments in Canada through legislative measures such as the duty to consult or legal mechanisms such as impact and benefit agreements.

In many other cases, First Nations and Aboriginal peoples have been ignored in

the past and have had to involve the courts in injunctive processes to stop development, or force companies to negotiate, often leaving bitter feelings amongst both parties. The outright ownership of the resource offers an opportunity for Muskowekwan First Nation to be involved in decision-making rather than a negotiated role as in the case of a signatory to an impact and benefit agreement. Muskowekwan First Nation has negotiated a joint venture that provides the partners with seats on the decision-making Management Committee.

“At many mining developments and mining projects around the world the indigenous people are kept outside of the fence with big wire, razor blades ... to keep them out,” Bellrose noted.

“And then the operators in the room make decisions on their land, on their lives, on their future. We’re there! I’m not going to stand outside while someone else determines my future in a room that’s locked.”



This patch of land may be the future home of a \$3 billion potash mine that would provide benefits to the citizens of Muskowekwan for decades.

Finally, there is also a strong cultural element to this project that involves the incorporation of Muskowekwan First Nation culture and Indigenous knowledge. The Muskowekwan project is subject to an environmental regulatory framework that goes beyond the legislated requirements of most environmental impact agreements.

The environmental regulatory framework “will ensure the potential environmental and socio-economic effects of the development are well understood and managed,” according to First Potash Ventures, a project description and technical proposal written in 2012.

As such the development has moved through a number of stages that has involved the hiring of, “highly-skilled professional engineering and environmental consulting companies.”

The work to date has involved a range of environmental, socio-economic and traditional land use studies. As owners,

the Muskowekwan First Nation has had the ability to incorporate their own cultural and traditional beliefs into the complex and often closed processes involved in mining development.

“So in our model, we move Elders to where they’re an expert just like an engineer.”

The Elders have been involved from the early days with advice and guidance as well as ceremony at early test sites. This element of the Muskowekwan First Nation “model” is an example of how First Nations as owners can infuse First Nation traditional values into projects that are often viewed as being detrimental to the environment.

While much progress has been made, there are still many hurdles to overcome and a monumental task set out before them. A number of significant milestones must be met on the way to realizing this opportunity.

The community has already voted in favor of the project through a number of land designation votes. However, invest-

ment of approximately \$3 billion for the construction of the mine is needed.

Only time will tell as to whether or not the Muskowekwan model can overcome the significant challenges to this project, a project with the potential to, “reawaken the Saulteaux spirit and identity” says Chief Bellrose.

Dreaming big has always been the way of all entrepreneurs. Muskowekwan First Nation’s dream of independence, prosperity and wellbeing will no doubt be emulated. As First Nations communities in Saskatchewan continue to enter into the local, provincial and global economies, the values and traditions that constitute some of their greatest strengths will without doubt bring forth new models and partnerships.

The entrepreneurial spirit, new ventures and projects will not only benefit First Nations peoples, but all treaty peoples across the province through shared growth and prosperity.

Aboriginal businesses will meet their match at ABM event

SASKATOON – The Most Powerful Aboriginal-Driven Business Development Event in Canada is Coming to Saskatoon in June

On the heels of another successful run in British Columbia, the Aboriginal Business Match or ABM is now coming to Saskatchewan for the first time. From June 16 to 19, 2014 a powerful group of Saskatchewan's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal corporate decision makers is expected in Treaty Six Territory to create opportunities for business.

ABM Saskatchewan follows the highly successful business development model pioneered in B.C., where the event has taken place each year, beginning in 2012. This year, ABM BC welcomed over 300 delegates representing B.C. First Nations, Métis communities and the private sector who connected in Sylix/Okanagan Territory in Penticton.

"This was my third year attending ABM," said Scott Roberts, Vice-President of the newly launched Aboriginal Travel Services. "In my opinion, this was the best ABM yet. We decided to launch Aboriginal Travel Services at this event because we knew ABM delivers an influential audience ready to do business."

"As expected we made more valuable connections in three days than we would in a year without this forum."

ABM delegates use online technolo-

gy to set up as many as 31 pre-qualified appointments that are 20 minutes in length. At the event, these appointments keep the conversation focused and efficient and help determine next steps if a business match has been made. ABM levels the playing field by offering a three-day intensive experience that eliminates geographic barriers, condenses time requirements, reduces costs and facilitates opportunities.

"We host the event in B.C. annually and are pleased that ABM is now also accessible to Saskatchewan First Nations," said Chief Jonathan Kruger of the Penticton Indian Band.

"ABM is useful no matter what stage of development a First Nation may be at as it connects a corporate network in tune with the vast opportunities and unique characteristics of Aboriginal economic development. People at ABM know why they are there."

"Our motto is Prepare To Be Connected," said L. Maynard Harry, Principal Partner with Raven Events and Communications, the Aboriginal event management company that owns the ABM trademark.

"We offer sophisticated business matching software allowing ABM delegates to create online profiles. Delegates prepare by reviewing each other's profile and choosing who they would like to meet with one-on-one."



At the ABM business people can talk about partnerships and enjoy some fellowship.

"This happens weeks before the event and when delegates arrive on the tradeshow floor, they have their personalized appointment schedule in hand. As a result a minimum of \$30 million in new business deals were initiated at ABM 2013. We are still adding up numbers for this year but anticipate they will be higher."

"Saskatchewan has a hot economy right now," said Edmund Bellegarde, President and Chairman of the Board, FHQ Developments Ltd. "A lot of opportunities

present themselves for Aboriginal communities. We are looking to align with businesses that understand the importance of environmental stewardship alongside economic development. ABM connects us with dedicated professionals that are serious about discussing mutually beneficial projects. We are looking forward to exploring possibilities for growth at ABM in Saskatoon this summer."

For more information visit aboriginalbusinessmatch.com

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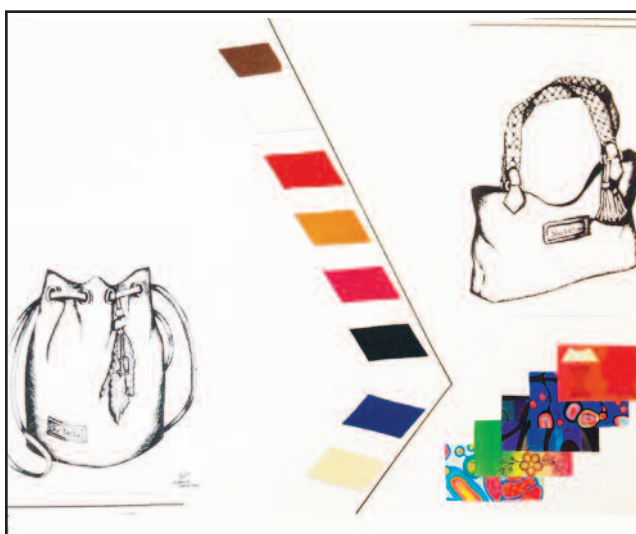
Waterhen entrepreneur wins cash to kickstart new business venture

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – Devon Fiddler has moved her entrepreneurial dream that much closer to reality. The young fashion designer just found out that she is one of eight youth from across Canada that have been chosen for the Michaëlle Jean Foundation Young Arts Entrepreneur program funding.

“I’m feeling very lucky,” said Fiddler on her recent successes following her second place finish at the Saskatoon Tribal Council’s Mino-Bimaadiziwin business plan competition in February. But it’s not all luck for this energetic young woman.

“This comes from hard work, dedication and adaptability. This concept has changed so much I just roll with it and make changes as needed.”



SheNative will be marketing a line of handbags and accessories.

Fiddler is a social entrepreneur from the Waterhen Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan. She is building SheNative, a brand of handbags and accessories dedicated to empowering Indigenous women in Canada through the design, production and fabrication of the SheNative Goods.

tion of the SheNative Goods.

In addition to receiving start-up capital of \$7,500, Fiddler will be mentored in business plan development, marketing and other business skills, and receive ongoing mentoring in arts techniques from seasoned professionals. The Canadian Youth Business Foundation, which helped to design the program, will also be assisting her with additional tools and resources.

“I’m looking forward to getting the money first, because it will help kick start everything,” said Fiddler. “I’ve already put money into branding, professional fees, business registration, and now it’s time to finish the design based on the brand. So I’ll be looking for local artisans and designers to collaborate with right away. I’m hoping to send a call out soon.”

On top of her work ethic, Fiddler is dedicated to her education and has a BA in Aboriginal Public Administration through the University of Saskatchewan, her technical Aboriginal Economic Developers Certificate through the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO), and completed a program through the COADY International Institute of the St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Fiddler is one of 21 entrepreneurs chosen globally to participate in a new international program, the Start-up Generation Global Fellowship program.

The aim of Young Arts Entrepreneur is to provide participants with the tools, experience and connections in the financial world they need to “graduate” to other ongoing opportunities to build their businesses.

“We are delighted by the caliber and diversity of our young arts entrepreneurs whose innovative spirit and determination have the potential to inspire underserved youth all over the country. Their business projects span such a rich variety of artistic disciplines, providing our recipients with a unique opportunity to make a mark in Canada’s creative industries, which bring billions of dollars to our country every year”, said the Rt. Hon.



Devon Fiddler is the driving force behind SheNative.

Michaëlle Jean and Monsieur Jean-Daniel Lafond, Co-Founders and Co-Chairs of the Michaëlle Jean Foundation.

“This opportunity will have a huge impact on my business. It’s more than just the money, it’s the connection to the Michaëlle Jean Foundation that is exciting, and the other art entrepreneurs across Canada,” added Fiddler.

“It will help me get the word out on what I’m doing. I still have so much work ahead of me still, but this will help pay for the expenses of working with the Academy of Fashion Design, materials and a brand new Industrial Sewing Machine!”

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Making music a passion for versatile youth from Fond du Lac

FOND DU LAC – Tristan Randhile of Fond Du Lac Dene Nation is an emerging 16-year-old artist from the Great White North. He loves hockey and one of his favorite influences are the Foo Fighters. He is currently enrolled in Grade 10 at the St Mary's High School in Prince Albert.

Tristan's parents are Freda and Tony Randhile and he has three sisters and two brothers. Tristan first sang when he was eight or nine years old performing in his own community at the Fond Du Lac Winter Festival.

Some past stages he has graced are The Northern Spirits Showcase and The Voices Of The North Showcase 2014 in Prince Albert and more recently Tristan took first place at the first Annual Thundersky Talent show in March competing against 30 other contestants. In April, Tristan opened for the fabulous Derek Miller at The E.A. Rawlinson Center in Prince Albert.

There is no stopping this young man as he continues to hone his skills as an entertainer. He hopes to start his own band in the future but for now he would like to focus on his education. He is a mature and talented individual with a passion in music.

Tristan is one of the many many talented aboriginals in our province so keep an eye out and an ear open because Tristan Randhile is definitely coming to a stage near you!



Tristan Randhile is an up and coming performer from Fond Du Lac. (Story and Photo thatconradguy)



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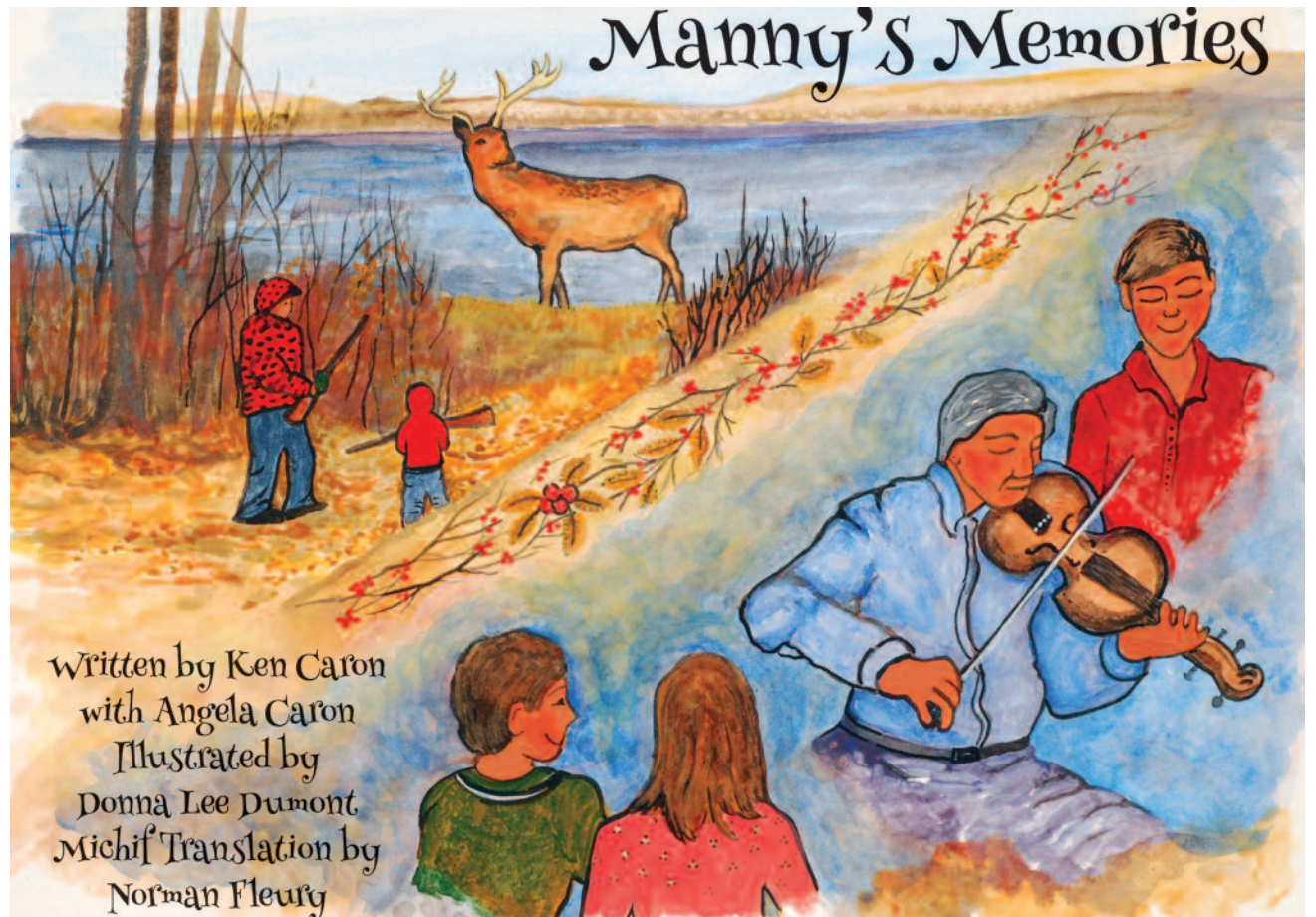
Gabriel Dumont children's book a family affair

Manny's Memories, by author Ken Caron with his daughter Angela Caron, introduces us to the Métis community of Round Prairie, Saskatchewan through the eyes of a young boy growing up in the 1940s. The Gabriel Dumont Institute recently released the publication Manny's Memories, a children's book for primary-aged readers.

accompanying Michif translation and narration returns to the language which Manny so often heard as a boy.

"I was proud to make this book with Angela," said Ken. He also reflected that the highlight of the entire process was seeing the story as a book for the first time.

Daughter Angela is an educator in Saskatoon and she cherished the opportunity to work with her dad.



Written by Ken Caron
with Angela Caron
Illustrated by
Donna Lee Dumont
Michif Translation by
Norman Fleury

Manny shares his boyhood memories of the once vibrant community not too far from Saskatoon's city limits. Though rural life at the time called for hard work, self-sufficiency, and generosity, there was always time to have fun and to enjoy being a young Métis boy.

Artist Donna Lee Dumont's visual expression of Manny's Memories helps us see the world as Ken, called "Manny" in his youth, remembers it. Norman Fleury's

"It was something I have wanted to do for a long time to honour my Round Prairie relatives and in particular my dad. I enjoyed recording the stories knowing that they would be shared with a wider audience," said Angela.

"Seeing my dad's happiness and pride when he saw the finished product was something I will remember for a long time."



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Lilly Daniels with one of her young dancers at the First Nations University Pow Wow.

Wapimaskwa Iskewew — White Bear Woman

By Carol Daniels
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA — She is not quite five feet tall. She is almost 80 years old. And, although most refer to her as Lilly Daniels, she introduces herself as White Bear Woman.

"I got that name because I am little," Daniels says. "The Elder who gave it to me said I need a big animal name to protect me. Wapimaskwa Iskewew."

Something big, indeed. A conversation with Daniels and anyone can figure out that 'something big' is her personality.

Within a second, a mischievous smile accompanies one of Daniels' many stories. Gently clasping her elbow and muttering, "Damn arthritis," she continues with a giggle.

"My eyes aren't as good as they used to be either. The other night while I was trying to sleep, my elbow hurt so much. I sat up in bed and grabbed the Absorbine Jr., dabbed some on and went back to sleep."

She covers her mouth with a small, delicate hand trying to hold back the sound as the giggle erupts into a belly laugh, "when I woke up, next morning, there were red dots all over my arm. I had grabbed the bingo dabber instead."

Little stinker.

Daniels is the type of person we should all aspire to become; gentle, kind, generous and loving. It is also the reason she is a respected Elder in southern Saskatchewan. She is originally from Kawacatoose First Nation but now lives in Regina. Daniels has an incredible story to tell and I am proud to say, she is my Mom. That happened the day I married her son, Lyle.

Her smile has emerged through tears. Her strength increased over the years.

"I never wanted my children to be brought up the way I was." She is referring to dark times.

Daniels did not grow up with a mother. She was only seven years old when her Mom died. It was that same year the Indian Agent came and forced Daniels to leave her family.

She ended up at the Gordon's Residential School where she was not taught to read and write. Instead, it was hatred, intolerance

and violence.

"Maybe that's where the saying The School Of Hard Knocks comes from."

It is her attempt to lighten the mood but it physically sickens me as Daniels tells of how she ended up in a coma at the age of 10. A supervisor had beaten Lilly so badly that it caused internal injuries.

The day after the beating, Daniels was still throwing up blood. Realizing she wasn't faking, they finally took her to hospital where the youngster spent the next eleven months in a coma.

Perhaps it was then she started to dream.

"That White Bear has been guiding me for a long time. I was young when I met Alan Daniels. We got married and had six children. But, Alan died young too. I suffered so much."

Lilly stops speaking for a moment, to find the happy memories instead of revisiting the sad.

"It was during that time that dancers would come to me in my dreams."

Daniels spoke with an Elder about her dreams of pow wow dancers. It changed her life.

"I started a group to teach our young people how to dance. The Rainbow Youth Dancers. We started in 1978 and since then more than 600 young people have learned to dance pow wow."

It is a group that still exists today, with a regular pow wow dance practice happening each weekend at a north-central community centre in Regina.

"It is the dancing that has made me stronger and makes me realize that it is important to never give up. Now, I have great grandchildren who dance and that makes me happy."

And with that story, it is most likely Daniels will hand you something. Chances are, you will come away holding a small rock that she's gifted to you.

"It is to keep you grounded and to always remember what is important. That is what keeps our culture alive and strong."

Wapimaskwa Iskewew. She is the cherished and living example of why we celebrate Mother's Day every year — love, laughter and teachings.

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~ Louis Riel



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Love is in the air

In spring, a young person's thoughts turn to love. I blame all the crop tops and shirtless running dudes.

Now I'm not talking about the love that you have for friends, family or Game of Thrones characters, but that other kind of love, the kind that is described in a million different Taylor Swift songs.

Here's musical genius Lauryn Hill's take on it:

Your love is like the ocean, and I am like the sand

Responding to your power, a safe place for you to stand.



By the time I was in my early twenties, I had never been in love and was sceptical that it even existed. In university, I asked my roommates about love during one of our hallway meetings.

The meetings were informal, occurring just before bedtime in the hallway outside our bedrooms. We'd discuss guys, school and who was eating all the Nutella (me).

One of my roommates was Jill who treated me with no small amount of contempt because I was from Saskatchewan. I was okay with this, though, because when she was dropping jokes about curling and mullets, I would stare intently at the hairs that grew on her chin.

My other roommate was Caitlin, a third year medical student who was the physical embodiment of summer, but not a lame Saskatchewan summer, a long, hot California summer. (Caitlin is probably the closest I've ever come to wanting to jump the Hetero-ship for Good Ship gay.)

At the time both girls were in relationships and so they assured me that love did exist, that it was game-changing and most importantly, that it was coming for me.

I didn't believe them. I continued to meander my way through student life: pretending to study, hanging out with friends and going to the mall to look at clothes I couldn't afford.

Then I met Jeff. It was not love at first sight. I thought his head was too large for his body and his hips were womanly. (I should have paid more attention to the fact that he had no interests outside of partying and that he was obsessed with Jennifer Lopez, like tattoo her-initials-on-his-neck-obsessed.)

I remember being impressed that he was a good dancer because at that stage in my life, I wouldn't date a man who couldn't dance – no matter how great they were in every other way. Let me pause for a second to backhand myself.

Alright, back. I fell hard for Jeff. I

talked about him all the time to my friends; I'm sure they were delighted to hear the minutiae of our relationship right down to the fact that Jeff only wore ankle socks because he hated it when socks rolled down. However, my friends were all in love at the time, so we took turns boring the shit out of each other.

Love felt exciting and calming at

the same time. It felt like you could do anything in the world but you didn't need to do a single damn thing because being with your love was the only thing you wanted or needed.

Watching TV together for half an hour was more fun than jumping on a trampoline for ten hours (that is my frame of reference – go get your own).

Then it all fell apart. Before we got to that – I did have a premonition of what breaking up would be like. My boyfriend and I were crossing the street one day.

We got separated and I stood on one side of the street while vehicles passed between us and I remember realizing that separation could happen, that being a single entity was an illusion that could be broken at any time.

Our break-up was slow and took place over months. It was probably less painful that way but it also meant that I didn't know why I was unhappy. I thought it was normal to stare listlessly at the wall and binge-eat comfort foods. I also developed an unhealthy level of hatred for Jennifer Lopez.

This is the other side of love that Ms. Hill describes:

But when the undercurrents come, and pull you out to sea

I'm left with shells and slippery rocks where you used to be.

Replace "slippery rocks" with empty jars of peanut butter and that described my state bang-on.

The first break up is the worst because you don't yet know that you can and will survive. So it's scary. But you do make it and you even start watching Jennifer Lopez movies again. (Then you stop because they are generally crap.)

Obviously being in love is worth the risk of the pain of a break up because if it does work out – you get someone in your life who makes you feel like you just ate chocolate; and if it doesn't, well, then you'll gain a deeper appreciation for good music.



Team Saskatchewan won gold for boys and girls at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in Kanahwake, Quebec. Here the girls pose with their cup.

Double gold at national hockey tourney

SASKATOON – Team Saskatchewan won gold in both the Female and Male National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in Kanahwake, Quebec in early May.

"The girls and boys both did really well," says Lynn Regnier, coach of the Female Team. "They battled hard. The boys had to really work to get to the finals against BC and were like the underdogs who came through. They bonded with each other, and then they won gold, too," she says.

"It was a tied game, 3-3 with five minutes left and then my teammates scored two breakaway goals," recalls Summer Roberts, goaltender for Team Saskatchewan Aboriginal Female. "We got silver two years in a row before this, so it was nice to finally win! Then we cheered on the boys who played right after us and they also won, so it was double gold!"

"It's an honour for our whole team," says Roberts. "You feel good to represent your province like this."

Roberts will be taking pre-Dentistry at Red Deer College in the fall while she continues to play hockey for the Red Deer Queens and looks forward to the next National Championships in Halifax next year.

Coach Regnier says the Saskatchewan Aboriginal hockey

program is really excellent.

"The talent in Saskatchewan has gotten a lot better. We've got a good bunch of kids who like to play the game, and they come from all over – Weyburn or Regina or Stanley Mission. It's kind of the best of the best for Aboriginal youth."

Regnier's daughter, Kelly, also played in the program and is now an assistant coach.

"We're both giving back," laughs Regnier.

Aboriginal players went through tryouts in March and had one month to come together as a team before heading to the Championships just outside of Montreal from April 27 to May 3.

Regnier notes that there is a tremendous amount of work that is done to support the team at this level of championship and acknowledges in particular, April Tipewan, FSIN Youth Sports coordinator and Mark Arcand, assistant coach and Vice Chief with Saskatoon Tribal Council, who worked hard to raise the funding that made this possible.

The NAHC is a minor hockey Championship for male and female players who are Bantam and Midget aged.

Past players at the Aboriginal Hockey Championships have included many male and female players that have gone on to play Junior Hockey and at University and Colleges across North America.

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What are YOU doing this summer?

SIGA provides \$50,000 for SIIT program

SASKATOON – Students at SIIT have another tool available to help them become successful. The school recently hosted the signing of a collaborative agreement between SIIT and the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA).

SIIT will receive a cheque for \$50,000 for their scholarship programming from SIGA, and this will be matched with funds from the Province of Saskatchewan's Innovation and Opportunities program. The total amount awarded through the Scholarship Program will be \$100,000 based on the availability of the provincial government's matching grant.

"The provincial government recognizes the value of post-secondary education and how it benefits our growing economy," said Advanced Education Minister Rob Norris.

"This new agreement will provide more scholarship opportunities for SIIT

students, making it easier for them to transition from learning to earning."

Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas and SIGA Board Chair was also on hand for the announcement.

"This partnership will support the common interests of all parties involved. Advanced education, training and employment opportunities for the First Nation people of Saskatchewan will directly benefit from this agreement," said Thomas.

President and CEO of SIIT, Riel Bellegarde added that "Today's announcement creates a much needed scholarship investment for SIIT students, and opens the door for employment and career opportunities for our students within SIGA."

SIIT will award scholarships in SIGA's name in 2013-2014, 10 Scholarships at \$5,000 each for entrance students (1st year students) and 10 Scholarship Awards at \$5,000 each for



Minister Rob Norris and Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief and SIGA Board Chair Felix Thomas look on as SIIT president Riel Bellegarde and SIGA CEO Zane Hansen sign an agreement that will see more SIIT students get scholarships. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

continuing students.

"We want to strengthen the lives of Saskatchewan and First Nations people through employment, economic growth and community relations. By establishing strategic alliances such as this, SIGA will be well positioned in fulfilling its mission as an organization," said Zane

Hansen President and CEO (SIGA)

SIGA's existing scholarship criteria will be utilized to determine scholarship award recipients, and SIGA along with representatives from SIIT will create a joint review committee that will review scholarship applications and award recipients.



Shannon Louttit and Joel Pedersen intend to train a group of youth to run from Saskatoon to Batoche to honour Métis veterans. (Photo by Andréa Ledding)

Honour runners anticipating second empowering experience

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

SASKATOON – The Road to Peace and Unity is a race worth running, and Shannon Louttit, longtime honour runner, is excited to help make it happen again.

In 2010, she trained and led 15 youth honour runners called 'The New Messengers' who ran a 100 km route between Saskatoon and Batoche in July.

They were a key part of the opening historic reconciliation ceremony of the 125th anniversary of the battle, delivering the message that is inscribed on the cemetery gates, and now in 2014 they have reunited to mentor more runners: 80, in total.

On July 18, each runner, whether a soldier or a 'New

Messenger', will run to honour a life and story.

When they reach their destination, those names will be remembered with a living memorial, the unveiling of the Métis Veterans Monument, and the hope that Batoche will be known as a place of peace and unity.

"Together these events will help signify a new era for our country — an era where we can celebrate each other and honour our diversity," notes Louttit on the website, adding that her philosophy of honour running that it is about relationship.

"Through the honouring of another we learn to honour ourselves."

Michelle Adamyk and Nichole Kyplain, two of the original honour runners, said that they learned in 2010

how much farther they could run than they thought they could.

It was an empowering experience as well as an honour to represent and honour the Métis veterans as they did the run to Batoche, and they are enthusiastic about sharing the experience with so many more.

The website www.honourrun.ca contains the details and registration form.

The first 80 youth to register will be selected for the free seven-week training with soldiers from the North Saskatchewan Regiment, Louttit and her running partner Joel Pedersen of Fitness 2J2.

No prior experience is necessary, and everyone of every background is welcomed to apply.

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Andrea Menard dazzles in history making performance with symphony

By Simon Mocassin
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA—The lights come up, the stage is lit. Woodwind, strings, brass and percussion sections emit melodic notes that hang over a packed audience.

A lone performer dressed as a cleaning person enters stage right. The music stops. The sanitary worker begins to clean and comes across a pair of shoes. She puts them on and smiles, then starts to dance with her broom. She comes across a microphone, gives a quick tap on the mic, she looks around to see if the coast is clear, and belts out “A-wop-bop-a-loo-bop-a-lop-bam-boom.”



After the performance Andrea Menard took time to share with her fans and to sign autographs. (Photo by Jeff Elliot)



Planning to burn debris this spring?

Did you know that over 200 wildfires – more than 50% of last year's total – occurred between April and June?

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The crowd roars with laughter. Andrea has the audience. Again on the mic, she warms up her voice and then sings the words, “I hope I don’t get caught.”

Just then, the curtain opens and the full Regina Symphony Orchestra (R.S.O.) comes into view. The guest conductor, Charles T. Cozens, looks at the singer and says, “And who are you?” “I am Andrea Menard,” is the reply.

The conductor then asks the audience if she can stay. Clapping erupts at the Conexus Arts Centre in Regina.

On May 3, 2014, Andrea Menard made history by being the first Métis person to headline with a full-scale orchestra. Along with Andrea was her team of composers and arrangers, Charles T. Cozens and Robert Walsh. The team met up in Hamilton to put the final touches on the show. Robert and Andrea have worked together before, writing songs and performing, and it shows when they duet on stage. In preparing for the show, “there is no room for error,” commented Robert. “We only had two rehearsals with the Orchestra.”

This night also saw the launch of Robert and Andrea’s new album called “Lift.”

The philosophy behind “Lift” came about because Andrea was feeling low one day, and couldn’t find a playlist to pick her up.

“Well let’s write it,” Robert said. “The album is an attempt to create a vibration, we want this album to be the one you put on when you’re feeling low and want to tap into your humanity, no

matter what your spiritual beliefs are. We want this album to resonate with people.”

Amongst such hits as White Cliffs Of Dover and I’ve Got The World On A String, Andrea also stayed true to her Métis roots during the performance. At centre stage, Andrea picked up her smudge bowl, smudging herself and her drum before facing east to sing “The Four Directions Song” to a mesmerized audience.

“She has a very powerful voice,” mentioned one symphony-goer. “I really liked the jigging as well, although she may have not been the best dressed for jigging.”

Andrea wore traditional flower beading on a black velvet dress. Backed up by the fiddle, Andrea brought the Red River Jig to life.

“She seemed like she was floating and bouncing on the stage,” said Sarah Abbott, a patron of the arts in Regina.

Throughout the show, Andrea shared stories of her life, and even included audience participation. One song called “I Fell For The Wrong Man Again,” had three audience members take the stage, each holding a sign with lyrics that the audience could sing along with when the song called for it.

A professional artist true to her art forms, Andrea’s show touched on aspects of theatre, music and dance, all backed by a recognized Regina musical establishment, the R.S.O. Her performance drew on the emotions. The audience was engaged throughout. And the show itself rang out with the appropriate title, “I am Andrea Menard.”



Participants in Joel Pedersen's fitness program from Cumberland House do some resistance training with their friends. Pedersen's courses are designed for young, old, small and big.

Fitness instructor taking message to Aboriginal communities

**By Darla Read
For Eagle Feather News**

SASKATOON – A Fond du Lac Dene Nation man hopes to use fitness to empower Aboriginal communities.

Joel Pedersen operates Fitness 2J2, a professional Aboriginal Fitness Instruction and Consulting company.

A socially responsible community-based health and wellness business, Fitness 2J2 provides instruction and programming to rural and urban Aboriginal communities across Saskatchewan.

However, Pedersen hopes the business goes beyond just providing instruction and programming: he hopes it will build future fitness leaders.

"So building sustainability within community so that the programming that is brought forward can be continued on," Pedersen says.

He also hopes there will be economic development spin-offs for the communities from the future fitness instructors that come out of it.

Pedersen was involved in sports from a young age, and later served as Infantry Sergeant Major with the Canadian Armed Forces and currently is a Police Sergeant with the Saskatoon Police Service.

Pedersen feels he can be a positive role model not just because of his accomplishments or careers but "it's being able to give positive feedback and provide an example of what a healthy lifestyle can be."

He hopes his programming can be used as a toolbox for communities to build on what they have.

He says his program, which is functional fitness, is inclusive, scalable exercise for all abilities, all ages, and all genders.

"Depending on what your goal is, it can be met."

He can do personal training or group fitness.

And, last year Pedersen worked with the St. Mary's after-school program at the Saskatoon school.

Three days a week, he did functional fitness with the youth, and then incorporated it into a running team.

"We wanted to try and provide a goal for the kids to reach besides just having a safe place to be and a social place for them to be, so we came up with the decision for them to participate in the Bridge City Boogie ...with the goal of the 5 km run."

At first, he says it was a little challenging, because many children couldn't make one loop around a 125m track without stopping.

"But by the time we were done the programming, everyone one of those kids completed the 5 km run," and he says the community, including parents and teachers, became interested and involved.

The after-school program is running again at St. Mary's, as well as a community drop-in fitness class at Pleasant Hill. Pedersen hopes to do another Bridge City Boogie run with the students again this year, and next month, he will be working with youth to prepare them to run from Saskatoon to Batoche in July.

Pedersen did a project in Southend/Reindeer Lake, where he went in for one week and worked with the school's physical education class. He used functional fitness for Grades 1 to 12 during the day, and in the evening, he put on a fitness class that brought in mostly adults. He says not only Aboriginal people attended, but also other community members who maybe didn't socialize with each other regularly, such as RCMP and health nurses.

While there, he also provided a

preparatory instruction for fitness instructors.

He also provided week-long training at the end of last summer in Cumberland House that was broken into groups based on age, from six-years-old all the way up to adults.

Looking forward, Pedersen hopes his business will become involved in as many northern communities as possible, and he would like to employ more Aboriginal fitness instructors who can work in their own communities or be employed right in Saskatoon.

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