



# ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS





# Athabasca U student helps take research to the North

An Athabasca University (AU) undergraduate's research project is already beginning to help transform healthcare providers' awareness of Indigenous women's health issues.

Shelley Wiart, currently in her fourth year of a Bachelor of Arts program in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, got grant funding this year to help her co-create five digital stories and present them in a public forum in Yellowknife in August—but she mostly credits the research participants for the results.

"I was just the person who helped them. It's all them; it's not me," she said. "They picked the photos, they picked out the music, and they wrote out their script and I edited it. It was truly a collaborative process."

Dr. Janelle Baker, an AU researcher who supervised the project, said she was impressed with the high-quality research and with how Wiart, a member of the North Slave Métis Alliance in Yellowknife, facilitated the work.

"She uses Indigenous research methodologies, which makes for very successful and impressive research," Baker said. "She really understands how to work in collaboration with community members to co-produce knowledge."

Wiart's project comprises the research and creation of five digital stories featuring Indigenous women—two from the Onion Lake area near Lloydminster, AB, where she currently lives, and three from Yellowknife, NWT, where her family is from.

The women speak about their own experiences with healthcare, and in many cases, with their families' healthcare, which have been significantly influenced by the effects of intergenerational trauma and the legacy of Canada's residential school system, and also by cultural insensitivities among healthcare providers in the present day.

"We did their stories all separately, but if you start to look at it, there are a lot of themes that connect each of the stories," Wiart said.

The ultimate goal of this project is to share these stories to increase healthcare providers' understanding of these issues, which has begun to happen. Wiart hosted a public discussion about the stories on Aug.



Shelley Wiart is pictured with her digital story co-creators and supporters. L-R: Gail Cyr, Wiart's father Bill Enge, Beatrice Harper, Maxine Desjarlais, Wiart, Dorothy Weyallon, Tanya Roach, and Dr. Janelle Baker. (Photo: Athabasca U)

15 in Yellowknife. More recently she has shared these digital stories with medical residents at the University of Calgary, spoke about the stories on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and the government of the Northwest Territories has asked her to share these stories as part of its cultural competency training.

But still, that work of spreading the message is in the early stages.

"I'm happy with the way we're disseminating the results, reaching out to researchers and getting it on APTN," she said. "But I feel like we could do a better job just talking to Indigenous communities, sharing it with them, and giving them some help with advocacy and using their own stories to transform the healthcare system."

The five stories can be seen on the website of Women Warriors, an organization Wiart cofounded to empower women to be more physically active and eat well, and to create an environment of support so participants can learn to manage those barriers.

Further to completing a successful research project, Wiart said simply being up in Yellowknife doing the research, along with Baker, had an impact on many of the participants as well as others in the community.

"In Yellowknife they don't have a university, so it was really important that they could see me doing my post-secondary education in multiple locations, and being supported like this," she said. "I think it was also impactful for my digital storytelling participants."

Wiart said she doesn't think she would have been able to do this type of research from a traditional place-based university, whereas AU's flexibility made it possible for her.

Wiart's work bringing research to the North will continue in 2020, with the support of Baker and of several granting organizations including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

The two will work to host a Women in Research conference in Yellowknife, with the goal of bringing in additional perspectives from a variety of women researchers as well as Indigenous elders representing several Indigenous cultures.

The two-day workshop for students—including many Indigenous students—will focus on health, environment, and participatory action research methods. Topics will include the importance of post-secondary education, increasing space for Indigenous women in research, and creating a support network to mentor and propel more women to get into research in the Northwest Territories.

"It thrills me to support and inspire young people in the North to become involved in reciprocal community-based research," Baker said.

For her part, Wiart credits Baker's support with being able to accomplish as much as she has.

"I feel extremely well supported," she said. "I like that AU gave me the flexibility to connect with and work with a researcher I felt really comfortable with."

**Merry Christmas & Happy New Year**

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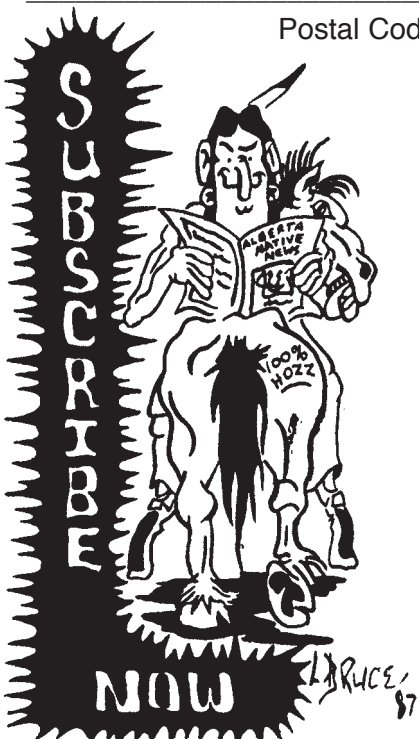
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# Chiefs reject proposed Land Sale Framework

Chiefs of the Tall Cree First Nation, Little Red River Cree Nation, Beaver First Nation, and Dene Tha First Nation met recently to discuss a proposed land framework in Peace Country. A letter dated November 12, 2019 was sent from County Reeve Josh Knelson to Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon proposing a number of land use objectives. Among the several proposed objectives is the sale of 350,000 acres of land.

The Chiefs, representing their Nations, reject this proposal, and remind the Provincial Government that any activities that may impact First Nations are subject to their right to be meaningfully consulted and accommodated as well as to free, prior and informed consent.

Chief Conroy Sewepagaham, Chief of Little Red River Cree Nation and Grand Chief of the North Peace Tribal Council, states: "I remind Premier Kenney, and all Albertans, that as Dene, Beaver, and Cree peoples, we have occupied our Territories since time immemorial, and continue to do so today. We did not cede title to the lands when we entered Treaty No. 8 but agreed to share our Territory in peace and friendship. Alberta should understand this by now, and realize it has no authority to take up and sell our land in our Territories without our free, prior informed consent."

"We are spiritual peoples; our churches, our cathedrals, our places of worship are braided in these forests that surround us. If I was to start tearing down each and every church in the Mackenzie County, it would be considered heresy, and this blasphemous action wouldn't sit well with the religious groups."

Dating back to 2010, a Provincial 3 phase land transfer plan has sold off more than 120,000 acres of lands within the northern Peace Country without the consent of the First Nations in the area. In spite of continued opposition from First Nations, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney has expressed his intent to go

forward with phase 3 of the plan, thus setting the stage for a potential conflict. This latest land proposal by Mackenzie County to the Province has only served to compound the serious concern among the First Nations over the matter of land and water.

Hunting, trapping, fishing and medicinal rights constitutionally guaranteed by Treaty No. 8 are of particular concern for First Nations. These are recognized by trapping lines that have been their way of life, long before Treaty No. 8 was signed, are included within Treaty No. 8, recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, and by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

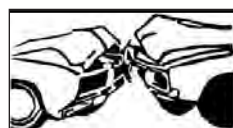
"The destruction of vast tracts of boreal forest, loss of wildlife habitat, and the ensuing runoff pollution of our waterways have a direct negative impact on our way of life, and who we are as peoples," states Chief Trevor Mercredi of Beaver First Nation.

"Beaver First Nation peoples have been negatively impacted by the land sales from phase 1 and 2 of Alberta's land transfer plan. Premier Kenney must reject this Proposal including both phase 3 of the existing plan, and the latest proposal from Mackenzie County.

"Our way of life is not for sale and Beaver First Nation will protect Lands. Every Albertan should reject the Sale of any "Crown" Lands as they lose access to these Lands as well."

Chief James Ahnassay, Chief of the Dene Tha First Nation states that "Dene Tha expressed grave concerns over the original land transfer plan. We were not adequately consulted, nor were we accommodated. No provisions were made for us to be able to provide our free, prior, and informed consent. It remains this way today – nothing has changed in the way the province behaves when it comes to First Nations and our lands and resources. I would expect the current provincial government to respect Dene

*Continued on page 6*



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# Land-based learning camp opens pathway to university for northern students

by Jordan Mae Cook, University of Alberta

(Folio.ca) - When 17-year-old Kristopher Colin heard about the opportunity to earn university credits while participating in a fish camp near his home community of Fort McPherson, he knew he couldn't pass it up.

"[Land-based learning] is important for us, culturally. It gives us a base for our cultural identity," he said. "It helps us find and strengthen that."

Members of the University of Alberta's Faculty of Native Studies worked closely with Fort McPherson community leadership, Chief Julius School and local elders to develop a camp that met the community's needs. The 10-day *Ganahghootr'onatan* land camp on the Peel River hosted Colin and three other students from the school in the Northwest Territories.

The students were taught an introductory course - on Gwich'in governance, focusing on food sovereignty, decolonization and Gwich'in leadership, and issues around climate change - that earned them dual credits at the high school and university level.

"The focus is creating a pathway opportunity for students from that particular region in the North to hopefully go to university," said Elaine Alexie, northern community engagement officer with the Faculty of Native Studies, who led the camp with professor Adam Gaudry.

Along with their academic work, students participated in the life of the camp, including setting it up, learning about the use of traditional medicines, setting, checking and cleaning fish nets, hauling water, and cleaning and drying fish.

"It was one of those things where in addition to all of the school work, there was the camp work, too. It was nice to switch between the intellectual learning and the physical learning, though it was physically demanding," said Gaudry.

Getting out of the classroom and onto the land can

reveal students' abilities, said Gladys Alexie, an instructor at Chief Julius School who taught a course on legends and cultural teachings at the camp.

"It's beneficial to the ones that struggle in the classroom but are eager participants on the land. They may struggle with school work, but then you go one-on-one and do oral work and they're excellent students," she said.

But for many participants, the physical aspect had the steepest learning curve.

"The first few days were very miserable and hard," said Colin. "We had to set up camp and work and while we were doing work, the mosquitoes were so frustrating. Plus, around that time of the summer it's 24-hour sunlight, so it's hard to sleep for some people."

However, Colin said, once students got used to the challenges, it was precisely those challenges that made the experience worth it.

"It's really hard to be out there, you need to be prepared. But it makes you physically and mentally stronger," Colin said.

"Going through 10 days of being challenged every day increases your resilience so much."

Gladys Alexie also saw that impact on the students.

"Land-based learning helps the students as they go on in life; they're able to say, 'I'm capable of doing this, I know I can, I know everyone in the community is behind me and they encourage me,'" she said.

The project first began in 2016, when the university hosted the Building Reconciliation Forum.



Teetl'it Gwich'in Elder Bernice Francis (centre) shows students Kristopher Colin (left) and Maleanah Alexie how to clean and dry fish at the Ganahghootr'onatan land camp. The camp on the Peel River near Fort McPherson, N.W.T., challenges students to live on the land for 10 days while earning both high-school and university credits. (Photo: Shayla Snowshoe)

First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders from all over Canada travelled to Edmonton to discuss post-secondary institutions' responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.

Leaders from Fort McPherson met with officials from the Faculty of Native Studies to find ways for the two groups to collaborate.


"The initial idea came from the community," said Elaine Alexie. "We asked what the community would like to see, and they said a community camp. And that's where it all started."

The group secured funding from the Kule Institute for Advanced Study and the provost's office, and in early summer 2019 built the physical structures of the land camp.

"This camp is not a university camp, it's not a Faculty of Native Studies camp, we just helped facilitate it," Alexie said.

"This is a community camp that is going to be used whenever the school wants to. If they want to do other land-based learning throughout the year, it's going to be there."

*This article was originally published by Folio.ca, newspaper of the University of Alberta.*




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# NIC celebrates Aboriginal scholars

North Island College (NIC) is marking a successful first term of a newly expanded program to provide support to Indigenous learners at all four college campuses.

The Aboriginal Scholars program is a culturally relevant, holistic program that began as a pilot project at the Comox Valley campus. Based on the concept of the medicine wheel, the Aboriginal Scholars program aims to help students find balance in all aspects of their lives.

The program was expanded to all campuses this fall, thanks to a \$50,000 donation from RBC and the RBC Foundation. The expanded program saw a huge response from students.

“It was incredible to see the number of students wanting to be part of the program,” said Sarah Lawrence, NIC Aboriginal education advisor and program coordinator. “It’s been an inspiring first term and we’re hoping to continue that into the winter semester.”

Students work with an Aboriginal educational advisor to create an achievement plan, based on their individual needs. The goals can be academic, spiritual, emotional and physical.

The students work with their advisor throughout the term to keep on track and also access services and supports that will help them achieve their goals.

“It’s about helping students gain the skills they need

to be success-ful,” said Lawrence.

NIC Business Administration student Chris Scarlatti is one of the students taking part in the Aboriginal Scholars program this year.

“NIC’s Aboriginal Scholar program has provided me connections to a wide variety of supports and services that I would not have known existed,” said Scarlatti. “Sarah has pushed me to take on new challenges, both on campus and off. Having made these new connections, I am now a student leader and honing my business skills on the Education Council, Planning and Standards Committee and Curriculum Committee. Without NIC’s Aboriginal Scholar program, none of this would have been possible.”

The program will run again through the winter term at NIC campuses in Campbell River, Comox Valley, Port Alberni and Port Hardy. Students can apply for one term or the entire year. At the end of each term,



**Business student Chris Scarlatti is taking part in the Aboriginal Scholars program at North Island College. (NIC Photo)**

successful students will earn a \$250 scholarship. “Success is defined very broadly, since the goals are specific to each student,” said Lawrence. “It’s really about helping students succeed now and setting them up for success in the future, both academically and throughout their lives.”

Interested students can contact Sarah at [sarah.lawrence@nic.bc.ca](mailto:sarah.lawrence@nic.bc.ca).

For more information on NIC’s Aboriginal Education programs and courses, visit [nic.bc.ca/aboriginal-education](http://nic.bc.ca/aboriginal-education).

## Land Sale Framework rejected *cont. from p 4*

Tha’ rights in this matter.”

Dene Tha’ Chief Ahnassay says he reads about other perspectives of the boreal forest and knows that “continued degradation of the boreal forests is not good for our children, it holds a bleak future for

them.” The Narwhal reports that “The green ribbon that makes up 75 per cent of Canada’s forests (and about a quarter of the country’s total landmass) is vital habitat for many of Canada’s iconic and endangered species. Threatened boreal caribou depend on large unbroken swaths of it to protect the animals and their calves from predators, while endangered wolverines and whooping cranes make their homes there as well.” And this is just the tip of the iceberg as many species of birds migrate here to nest; it’s home to many local wildlife; and west of the Town of High Level is all endangered Wood Bison Protection Area.

Chief Rupert Meneen, Chief of Tall Cree First Nation also expressed his concerns with the land objectives proposed by the County. He said, “As First Nations, we have never relinquished our inherent rights and title to our lands. Treaty No. 8 is a peace and friendship Treaty to share the land to the depth of a plow, and contrary to the false narrative pushed by government and industry, it is not a land cession.

“Our rights are guaranteed within the law, and are also historically recognized by Alberta, who cannot now arbitrarily remove them. We will wait to see if Premier Kenney and his Cabinet will recognize and adhere to this, or not. As First Nations, we are prepared to move forward in unity either way.”

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# Poundmaker's Centre to expand

Poundmaker’s Lodge Treatment Centre is getting a boost in funding to add space to treat 900 more people over three years as part of the Alberta government’s expansion of addiction care.

The province is providing \$1.4 million per year to create 28 new residential addiction treatment beds and fund seven existing beds at the Iskwew Healing Lodge, equaling 900 recovery-oriented treatment spaces over the next three years.

“We are keeping our promise to improve access to mental health and addiction treatment and recovery services for all Albertans.” Stated Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Jason Luan.

“We are proud to partner with Poundmaker’s Lodge to make sure more Indigenous people in Alberta have the supports they need to get on the path to long-term recovery.”

Poundmaker’s Lodge Treatment Centres is a residential addiction treatment centre that blends Indigenous healing methodologies with western practices in alignment with best and wise practice standards. The centre employs Elders, addiction physicians, nurses, pharmacists, therapists, psychologists and other allied health professionals.

Brad Cardinal, Executive Director of Poundmaker’s Lodge Treatment Centres said that the expansion will save lives.

“This increased funding will first and foremost allow us to save lives,” he said.

“It means increasing treatment beds, detoxification beds, shorter wait times, rapid response, increased health outcomes with a culturally based comprehensive approach to treating addictions. This government needs to be acknowledged for its commitment to UNDRIP, TRC recommendations, MMIWG recommendations and its concerted effort to

addressing the opioid crisis.”

Poundmaker’s Lodge has a 46-year history of providing services to individuals from all cultures and back-grounds and serves an average of 550 clients annually.

“Over and over, I heard on my engagement tours from across the province, First Nations and Metis leaders have spoken on the need for additional treatment spaces for their people,” stated Minister of Indigenous Relations Rick Wilson. “Today, this announcement marks an important marker in our platform as well addressing Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. I am pleased to see this commitment from our government today.”

The funding is earmarked for twenty-eight new treatment beds for a men’s program, seven existing beds in a women’s program and five medically upgraded detox beds.

This initiative is part of the \$140-million commitment to recovery-oriented addiction and mental health care made by the government in its election platform.

The good news for Poundmaker’s came after the Nechi Institute, an internationally recognized Indigenous healing centre that offers counselling and therapy services on the same site, was evicted to make room for the additional beds.

A letter from Alberta Infrastructure says its lease with the Nechi Institute will be terminated effective March 31 because the expanded program delivery by Poundmaker's Lodge Treatment Centres will require the whole building.

"The expansion of services will require the entirety of the Poundmaker Nechi Centre, including the space currently utilized by Nechi," the letter says. "In recognition of this requirement, [Alberta]



Brad Cardinal with Associate Minister Luan.

Infrastructure assessed the potential for replacement space but nothing currently exists."

Nechi Institute has provided training therapeutic and training services for 45 years to "help our people and communities in alleviating various addictions in various stages," said CEO Marilyn Buffalo. She wants Premier Jason Kenney to revoke the "unilateral tactic" of the eviction.

Press secretary for Minister Wilson, Ted Bauer, told CBC that the training services provided by Nechi Institute are valued but the space it occupies is "urgently needed for the delivery of addiction treatment to Indigenous people."

He added that the government is willing to work with the Nechi Institute to find a new, suitable location if approached.

Buffalo believes that the proximity to Poundmaker's is crucial.

"I feel that it is imperative that we maintain our presence and service at this location, as it is synonymous with healing facilities that work with us in concerted efforts to combat addictions plaguing our people," Buffalo said.

# Beaver First Nation opens water plant

On December 10, Chief Trevor Mercredi and Beaver First Nation officially opened a new water treatment facility and six new housing units.

The water project, in which the Government of Canada invested \$14.2 million, included construction of the water treatment plant, raw water intake, treated water reservoir and distribution main to the Beaver First Nation Boyer River core area.

The six new housing units were designed to accommodate large families in response to the First Nation’s increasing population. They include multi-unit accommodations and a new unit to address the needs of a disabled youth. The Government of Canada provided \$1.8 million in support.

“Congratulations to Chief Mercredi and Beaver First Nation on the opening of their new water treatment plant and six new housing units,” stated federal Minister of Indigenous Services Marc Miller. “The infrastructure gap between Indigenous communities and the rest of Canada is very real, and our government remains committed to working in partnership with First Nations to support the

building up of communities so that residents are guaranteed access to clean water and safe, suitable housing.”

Beaver First Nation is located in Treaty 8 Territory near the town of High Level, Alberta. The community has a population of approximately 450 people on reserve.

“We are working in partnership with First Nations communities, like Beaver First Nation, to build healthy, safe housing and water facilities that improve access to clean water

*Wishing everyone a safe and festive holiday season*

**MLA David Hanson**



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# Celebrate Christmas at Bearclaw Gallery

(ANNews) - The beautiful image on the cover of this month's *Alberta Native News* is titled *Renewal* by contemporary artist Nancy Desjarlais. The bold imagery against the soft pastel colours creates a peaceful ambience for an aging Mother Earth to contemplate the renewal of her creations.

It is one of the new works by Desjarlais that is part of a special 2019 Annual Christmas Exhibition featured at Bearclaw Gallery in Edmonton until December 30, 2019.

The exhibit and sale also features new works by artists Joseph Sanchez, Jane Ash Poitras, Ronnie Simon, Jason Carter, David Williams and Aguenus.

"You will also find a wonderful selection of works by Jessica Desmoulin, Linus Woods, Jim Logan, Maxine Noel, Ernest Cobiness, Nathalie Bertin and many more," noted Bearclaw Gallery owner Jackie Bugera. "We also carry a large selection of gifts in all price ranges."

"And all works can be taken at the time of purchase," she added.

Artist Nancy Desjarlais is of Cree and Metis ancestry. She spent her early years on the Fort McMurray First Nation Reserve #468. This close connection with nature established a touchstone that could be retrieved in her journey through life.

Like many First Nations children, she was removed from her home. She was put into a convent first, then foster homes. Consequently, she lost her language and cultural ties.

Later, as she reconnected with her family roots, she was inspired to learn her culture through art and crafts.

"I was happiest when I was creating, whether it was sewing moccasins for my babies or painting a picture of a sunset."

Nancy obtained her BFA from the University of Alberta in 1994. Familiarity with modern art materials evolved into a series of textural paintings in which she incorporated and moulded sand and paint. Petroglyphic and myth-inspired forms emerged alongside contemplative, meditative symbols. Her images of the sky



Artists Aguenus and Ronnie Simon are part of the Bearclaw Christmas Exhibition.

and stars reveal a cosmic-earth connection rich in spiritual energy. As well, her relationship with the earth runs deep in her work.

Nancy has won awards in the Peace Hills annual Native Arts Competition. She has taught art to children and adults. She has shown her work in B.C., the Northwest Territories and Alberta.

"Finding peace with my past, practicing daily gratitude, loving the earth, communicating a personal vision and travelling with a light heart are my main objectives right now, and art is my vehicle," remarked Desjarlais.

Aguenus (Angela Hall), is a member of the Métis Nation and of Cree and Stoney ancestry, living in Stony Plain, Alberta.

Angela spent many years as a successful teacher, but when she discovered her gifts of art and poetry, she changed her focus. Inspired by the empowerment she experienced through creating her art, Angela was able to face and heal the wounds she carried from her experiences growing up in foster care. In order to help and inspire others to heal, she began graduate studies in Art Therapy.

Today, Angela paints for the joy it brings her and others. She strives to make her paintings multi-dimensional through bright colours and mixed media, simulating her experiences and feelings in the images she creates.

Jason Carter, a member of the Little River Cree Nation, is one of Canada's most exciting and accomplished contemporary Indigenous visual artists, celebrated for both his paintings and his carvings. His work has been acquired into dozens of prestigious private collections; as well, he has had several exciting public shows, including the Royal Alberta Museum, Art Gallery of Alberta, The Art Gallery of Calgary and the Indian and Northern Affairs

Public Art Display in Ottawa.

Jason has been awarded numerous high-profile commissions and in 2012, he created a 100ft x 7ft permanent installation for the Edmonton International Airport. He has also worked with The Wood Buffalo Regional Municipality and The City of Calgary on giant installations of public art.

Jason created permanent murals for the Amiskwaskahagan (Beaver Hills Park) in Edmonton and was one of three artists who were part of the LRT/SOUTH Extension beautification project. He illustrated "Who is Boo" a delightful children's book series. He also completed an 18-painting series for the Art Gallery of Alberta as part of the T-REX Program called 'Urban Animals' which has been touring Alberta for several years, and he published a children's book of the same name, 'Urban Animals.' He as well, opened the 'World of Boo' in the BMO World of Creativity Children's Gallery at the Art Gallery of Alberta through July 2015.

Jason's masterful use of colour, bold lines and majestic scenery combine to create a powerful sense of humility and serenity. His animals are simply drawn but their personalities shine through – often whimsically. His large canvases are magnificent, and his small canvases are sweet and inspirational.

The Bearclaw Gallery, located at 10403 124 Street in Edmonton is well-known and highly regarded as a fine Canadian First Nations art dealer and gallery. Over the last three decades, the Bearclaw Gallery has established solid relationships with First Nations artists from across Canada and has proudly promoted Canadian First Nations and Inuit art and artists to buyers both at home and internationally.

To view the works that are currently exhibited, visit [bearclawgallery.com](http://bearclawgallery.com).



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# Leaders welcome the throne speech

Indigenous leaders are applauding the contents of the latest Federal Throne Speech, delivered by Governor General, Julie Payette.

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde says the December 5 speech that opened the 43rd Parliament is an opportunity to maintain momentum and progress for First Nations.

“This is the first Throne Speech to include a section on Reconciliation,” stated AFN National Chief Bellegarde, “and it commits to a path forward that we pushed for – from a commitment to honouring the spirit and intent of the Treaties, action on the climate crisis, legislation on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and ongoing progress on a better quality of infrastructure and a better quality of life for our people. The key to maintaining progress is working together based on the Treaty relationship of partnership, mutual recognition, mutual respect and

sharing. I look forward to working with the government on an ambitious agenda that will make a stronger country for all of us.”

The leaders of the Metis National Council (MNC) and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami agree.

“Much like his choice of cabinet appointments, this throne speech shows that Prime Minister Trudeau is committed to unity and bringing people in this country together,” said MNC Vice-President and National Spokesperson David Chartrand. “I know the Métis Nation shares that commitment and we look forward to doing our part to continue creating a prosperous and unified Canada for all Citizens.”

The MNC is particularly pleased to see the Federal Government is committed to taking action to co-develop and introduce legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of

*Continued on page 11*



## APTN is now streaming

(Winnipeg) – In celebration of its 20th anniversary, APTN recently launched APTN lumi, an Indigenous-focused streaming service. The streaming service offers new and original programming, returning favourites and compelling documentaries.

Launched in September 2019, APTN brings the Indigenous stories and programming it's known for and delivers it to an OTT platform. APTN lumi gives viewers unprecedented access to an extensive, and ever-expanding, catalogue of programs in English, French and a variety of Indigenous languages.

Viewers can sign up for a three-day free trial and will have access to a small selection of shows even after the trial ends. For only \$4.99/month, viewers can access the complete APTN catalogue by becoming a member. This fee helps support APTN's mission to share Indigenous Peoples' journeys, celebrate Indigenous cultures, inspire Indigenous children and honour the wisdom of Indigenous Elders.

Visit [aptn.ca](http://aptn.ca) to view the entire lineup of shows that are available on APTN lumi.

In addition to its media platform, APTN recently published the first ever National Indigenous Music Impact Study (NIMIS). This landmark Canadian study looked at the contributions made by the Indigenous music community and the impacts that this community has on the Canadian economy and on the social fabric of this country. The study also looked at the Indigenous music community's challenges and successes. This study provides the most recent, best available data on any segment of the music industry in Canada.

APTN and its partners engaged with those involved in the Indigenous music community to conduct the study. This included anyone (Indigenous or non-Indigenous) who creates, promotes and supports Indigenous music in Canada. In total, 620 industry insiders completed the online survey and 70 interviews were held to gain unique insight into the industry.

“APTN has always been a leading supporter of the Indigenous music industry in Canada,” stated APTN CEO Jean La Rose. “We set out to gain a better understanding of this group of professionals and what we found is that this industry has a significant impact on the economic and social fabric of Canada. However, the industry also faces challenges, which creates

many opportunities for growth. We see this study as a starting point for in depth and informed discussions that will help the industry reach its full potential.”

Some of the key findings of NIMIS show that Indigenous music contributed a total of almost \$78 million to Canada's economy (GDP) and supports more than 3,000 full-time positions across the country. While the Indigenous music community is thriving, the Indigenous music industry, comprised of Indigenous-owned, Indigenous-directed music companies and supporting organizations, is still in its infancy and is poised for development.

“Thank you, miigwetch, tansi, nakurmiik, merci to all of the Indigenous musicians and members of the Indigenous music community who took the time to share their perspectives and wisdom with us,” added La Rose. “This report reflects your collective voice.”

To learn more about the Indigenous music industry and its impact on Canada, visit APTN's NIMIS website for the full results of the study. Topics range from artist profiles to economic impact, outputs, funding barriers and recognized opportunities.

And wandering hunters heard the hymn:  
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# Backyard Wilderness comes to IMAX in Edmonton

(Edmonton) – *Backyard Wilderness* - an inspirational story about observing the surprises nature delivers every day, right in your own backyard, is now screening in IMAX at TELUS WORLD OF SCIENCE in Edmonton.

Spanning a seasonal year around a suburban home, the film displays a stunning array of unique wildlife imagery and behavior – all captured by cameras mounted inside dens and nests and moving along forest floors and pond bottoms to reveal the animal inhabitants in rare and breathtaking detail.

Audiences follow Katie, a young girl, and her family who are absorbed by an array of electronic devices and, at first, oblivious to the natural world just outside their home. Gradually, Katie discovers the intricate secrets that nature has hidden so close to her front door, and audiences experience the joy she finds in her interactions with this newly uncovered world.

The film is a reminder that Wi-Fi is not the only connection that matters and that sometimes you can uncover extraordinary things in ordinary places – you just need to step outside.

“*Backyard Wilderness* is a fascinating film for people of all-ages to experience together,” said Alan Nursall, President and CEO of TELUS World of Science - Edmonton.

“It really captures magical moments in nature we rarely get to see in our day-to-day lives and puts them on the IMAX screen for an intense experience.”

Through breathtaking camerawork, *Backyard Wilderness* shows audiences an intimate portrait of the world around us, to inspire the next generation of scientists and explorers to look closely and observe the natural world around them to better understand and appreciate how it works

An Arise Media / Archipelago Films production in collaboration with HHMI Tangled Bank Studios, *Backyard Wilderness* arms explorers of all ages with the tools and inspiration to discover the wonders of nature at their fingertips. An extensive multiplatform

educational outreach program to accompany the film, created by HHMI Tangled Bank Studios, will encourage and empower children and families to get outside and observe the changing world around them.

Created by Emmy Award-winning and Oscar® nominated filmmakers Andrew Young and Susan Todd, *Backyard Wilderness* will surprise and entertain viewers with the unexpected delights of nature that are in our own neighborhoods and communities.

“We’re thrilled to have made this movie,” said Andrew and Susan. “We live in a world where we are consumed with technology and the notion of instant gratification. Our desire for this film is to incite parents and children alike to slow down and embrace the small marvels of nature. No matter where you live, we all have access to unique and amazing outdoor environments that we can explore together at any age.”

“The Giant Screen is the perfect medium to engage families of all ages and showcase the beauty of *Backyard Wilderness* – especially with Andrew Young’s outstanding cinematography and a compelling story of the transformation and discovery,” said Executive Producer and SK Films CEO, Jonathan Barker. “Our hope is for the audiences to become immersed in the splendor that the movie captures in this large format film.”

“*Backyard Wilderness*, through breathtaking camerawork shows us an intimate portrait of the



Backyard Wilderness, in IMAX at Telus World of Science - Edmonton.

world around us,” said evolutionary biologist, Vice President for Science Education and Executive Director of HHMI Tangled Bank Studios Dr. Sean B. Carroll. “The goal of this film, coupled with our educational outreach effort, is to inspire the next generation of scientists and explorers to look closely and observe the natural world around them to better understand how it works.”

Filmmakers Andy Young and Susan Todd are hoping that their film will encourage children and adults to get outdoors and increase the amount of contact they have with nature - for entertainment as well as for health reasons.

They said, “Our lives are now almost 90% indoors and we spend hours in front of computers and on our cell phones. There has been a huge increase in obesity, depression, diagnoses of ADHD, and there is clinical evidence that increased exposure to nature actually reduces these problems and helps people heal. We hope this film will help remind everyone to put down their screens and get outside to appreciate the nature around them.”

For screening times, visit [twose.ca](http://twose.ca)

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# Final stories by Richard Wagamese

Richard Wagamese’s quiet yet powerful voice returns from the beyond in a new release entitled *One Drum*, that has been published posthumously by Douglas & McIntyre. It returns with the peaceful comfort of an old friend and a cup of tea.

Beautifully written and deeply introspective, *One Drum* is a manuscript that the bestselling author, journalist and storyteller had been working on until shortly before his tragic death in 2017. T

The new release, a volume of stories and ceremonies is a fitting tribute to Wagamese’s spiritual and literary legacy.

*One Drum* welcomes readers to unite in ceremony to heal themselves and bring harmony to their lives and communities.

In *One Drum*, Wagamese wrote, “I am not a shaman. Nor am I an elder, a pipe carrier, or a celebrated traditionalist. I am merely one who has trudged the same path many of this human family has - the path of the seeker, called forward by a yearning I have not always understood.”

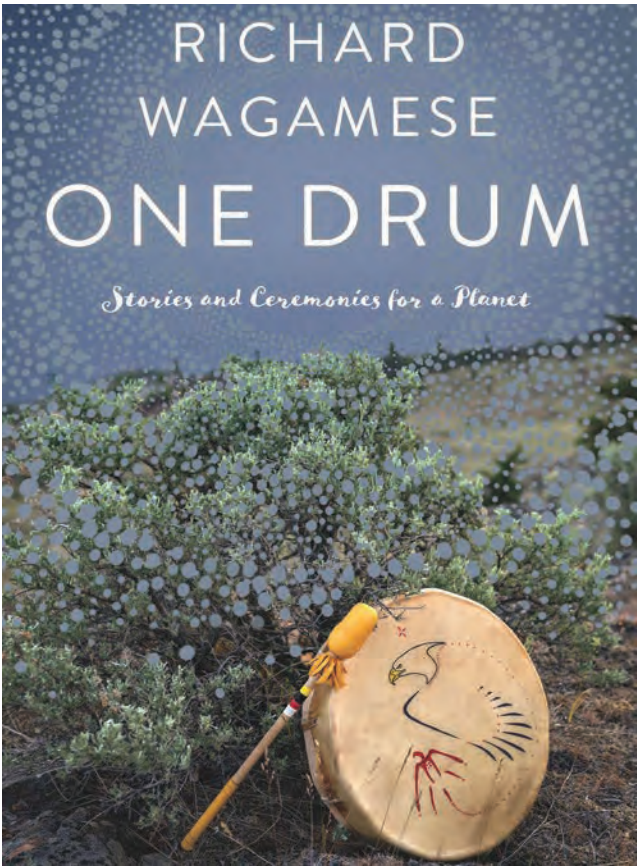
*One Drum* draws from the foundational teachings of Ojibway tradition, the Grandfather Teachings. Focusing specifically on the lessons of humility, respect and courage, the volume contains simple ceremonies that anyone anywhere can do, alone or in a group, to foster harmony and connection. Wagamese

believed that there is a shaman in each of us, and we are all teachers and in the world of the spirit there is no right way or wrong way.

Writing of neglect, abuse and loss of identity, Wagamese recalled living on the street, going to jail, drinking too much, feeling rootless and afraid, and then the feeling of hope he gained from connecting with the spiritual ways of his people. He expressed the belief that ceremony has the power to unify and to heal for people of all backgrounds.

“When that happens,” he wrote, “we truly become one song and one drum beating together in a common purpose - and we are on the path to being healed.”

Richard Wagamese (1955–2017), an Ojibway from the Wabaseemoong First Nation in northwestern Ontario, was recognized as one of Canada's foremost First Nations authors and storytellers. His debut novel, *Keeper 'n Me*, came out in 1994 and won the Alberta Writers Guild's Best Novel Award. In 1991, he became the first Indigenous writer to win a National Newspaper Award for column writing. In total, he authored fifteen books including *Indian Horse* (2012), the 2013 People's Choice winner in CBC's Canada Reads competition, and his final book, a collection of Ojibway meditations, *Embers* (2016), received the Bill Duthie Booksellers' Choice Award.



## Throne speech *cont. from p 9*

Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in the first year of the new mandate. UNDRIP recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples to legal equality, self-determination, the preservation of their languages and control of their traditional lands, among other rights.

“It’s no secret, in his last mandate we saw great things out of Justin Trudeau when it comes to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and in particular, the Métis,” said Vice-President Chartrand. “I look forward to working closely with this government and all members of Parliament, including the opposition, as they continue to work towards a better relationship with Canada’s negotiating partner in Confederation.”

Another highlight of the speech for the MNC, is a commitment to work with Indigenous communities to close the infrastructure gap by 2030 and to take new steps to ensure the government is living up to the spirit and intent of treaties.

“This is a battle we wage daily in the province my people founded,” added Vice-President Chartrand. “While we have a premier who has the audacity to not acknowledge our rightful place at the table, I am delighted to see a Prime Minister who understands the history of the Métis and our rights.”

“We are encouraged by commitments to close the infrastructure gap by 2030, co-develop legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples within the coming year, and co-

develop legislation to ensure that Indigenous peoples receive culturally relevant health care and mental health services at a level consistent with that all Canadians can expect to receive,” stated ITK president Natan Obed.

“ITK looks forward to working with Ministers of the Crown to build on the progress made during the last mandate. Investments in infrastructure and housing remain a high priority in Inuit Nunangat. Inuit leadership takes the co-development of legislation seriously and we are committed to working in the spirit of true partnership with government to realize our joint ambitions.”

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# Calgary Public Library celebrates Indigenous authors and artists

(Calgary, AB) – The Calgary Public Library is proud to share several events and special announcements as part of its continued commitment to celebrate Calgary’s Indigenous communities. The Library hosted an Indigenous Languages Day at Central Library (800 3 Street SE) on Saturday December 14, with free programming from 10 am to 2 pm. This day marked the official opening of the Indigenous Languages Resource Centre and included the Treaty 7 Book Launch, featuring 12 children’s books written in Treaty 7 languages.

“Over the past year, the Library has committed to learning more about Indigenous language and working with the community to understand how we can support them to celebrate and share their language,” says Heather Robertson, Director, Service Design, Calgary Public Library. “A need that was apparent right away, was the complete lack of children’s materials in local Indigenous languages.

“We are thrilled to see this many new titles enter the Library system that will be shared across Alberta.”

The Treaty 7 Book Launch features a new collection of children’s books by 12 Indigenous authors who represent every nation within Treaty 7. Through the Indigenous Writers Workshop, participants worked with author Richard Van Camp to create children’s books in their traditional languages. These books will be added to the Library’s permanent collection and enhance programming at the Library to promote Indigenous language and storytelling. The full list of authors and titles is available at [calgarylibrary.ca](http://calgarylibrary.ca).

The day also included the official opening of Indigenous Languages Resource Centre. The centre is a place to meet with Elders, view traditional items, and learn Treaty 7 languages. Features include original Indigenous art and a special ceiling light display that mimics the night sky and constellations long tied to oral practices and storytelling.

In addition to the authors and illustrators being celebrated on December 14, the Library hosted an artist talk on Thursday, December 12 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm highlighting the five Indigenous artists that have contributed Indigenous Placemaking art at three locations this year.

“It is exciting to see our Indigenous Placemaking continue at Central Library and extend to two new locations this year. The talent we see in our local communities is inspiring and the value of permanent and prominent Indigenous art in public spaces cannot be overstated,” says Jared Tailfeathers, project lead for Indigenous Placemaking at Calgary Public Library.

At the Central Library, an interactive augmented reality mural created by Jesse Gouchey, Tanisha Wesley, and Autumn Whiteway engages patrons in the Teen Centre on Level 3. On Level 2, metal pictographs of the Blackfoot language sculpted by Adrian Stimson adorn the wall and floor.

At Forest Lawn Library, a story robe, or winter count, by the late Rodney Big Bull, recounts the tragedy of the Baker Massacre.

At Signal Hill Library, Lauren Monroe’s skylight mural depicting Blackfoot stories is accompanied by traditional dance regalia handcrafted by Treffrey Deerfoot.

## Christmas at Moonstone Creation



There is a wide assortment of gorgeous hand crafted gifts at Moonstone Creation in Calgary. Drop by for a photo in the Christmas tipi too (1219 10 Ave SE).

All these programs were made possible by \$1 million in funding from the Government of Alberta and a \$1.6 million investment from Suncor Energy Foundation to protect, preserve, and promote Indigenous culture.

For more information on the authors, artists and event details, please visit [calgarylibrary.ca](http://calgarylibrary.ca). Central Library is located at 800 3 Street SE.

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Merry Christmas and a  
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The Sacred Rock

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt; told by Jean Roberts



Long ago, there lived a widow who had two small boys. She made two small bows with arrows and taught them how to use them.

One day, she told them to go out and shoot some birds to eat. “Later, I will make you stronger bows so that you can shoot bigger game,” she told them.

She put some ready cooked meat in a bag and told them to sit on a large rock when they got hungry and wanted to eat.

One day while the boys were eating their lunch on a large rock, they heard a voice saying, “I’d like to tell you boys a story.”

They looked all around but did not see anyone so they kept on eating.

“Shall I tell you some stories?” the voice asked again. It was coming from the rock they were sitting on.

“What kind of stories do you tell?” the boys asked then. The rock said he told stories of things that happened a long time ago. He said, “If you will give me your birds, I will tell you many stories.”

Continued on page 14

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SEASONS GREETINGS

FROM ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS





The Sacred Rock *cont. from p 13*



The two brothers laid their ducks and geese beside the rock and sat close to it as it told them strange stories and legends. It was almost sunset when the voice from the rock said, “You have to go home now, but come back tomorrow and I will tell you more stories.”

On their way home, the boys shot three birds each. When their mother asked why they didn’t have more, they said the ducks and geese were getting scarce. The same thing happened the next day and also the day after.

The mother knew that her children were not telling the truth. So, she went to the Chief and told him the problem.

The Chief said, “I will send two men tomorrow to follow your sons to see what they are doing with their catch.”

This was done and the two men watched the boys shoot ten birds each. The boys then laid them down beside the rock.

As the men watched, they were surprised to hear a voice coming from the rock saying, “Bring all the people from your village here tomorrow. Tell them to bring some food or a gift and I will tell them many stories.”

The Chief and all the people were astonished to hear what the braves had to tell. The Chief said, “We will do as the rock says.”

Everyone took gifts or some food and went to the talking rock.

When the people had all made their offerings, they sat down around the stone and the voice began to speak. It told wonderful stories of beautiful lands and



strange creatures. It told of animals that could talk to one another and of people yet to come to this land.

When it was almost sundown, the rock said, “I have told you many stories and it is up to you to keep them as long as the world lasts. Tell them to your children and grandchildren but make sure they always place tobacco or a little food before the story tellers.”

The rock never spoke again, but for many years the people visited the sacred stone. Today, some old people still remember those legends and stories. When you visit old people, you should always carry a gift. The old person will never refuse it.

Scholarship recipients announced

Students at Assiniboine Community College in Brandon, Manitoba and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in Calgary, Alberta are the 2019 recipients of the Jim Pattison Broadcast Group Prairie Equity Scholarships.

Desiree Brightnose is a second-year student in the Interactive Media Arts Program at Assiniboine. During her first year, Desiree developed a love for broadcasting that motivated her to volunteer for campus and community stations, work for local commercial radio stations and develop her own podcast.

A member of Manitoba’s Chemawawin Cree Nation, Desiree has also been an instructor at a camp for Indigenous youth media, as well as a Cultural Peer Mentor helping Indigenous students at Assiniboine

with information and support. This ties in with her desire to create a path for future Indigenous students in the broadcast industry.

“Our communities hold so much talent,” says Desiree, “even though a lack of acknowledgment and resources contribute to underrepresentation in the world of broadcast.”

The faculty at Assiniboine Community College think Desiree Brightnose has what it takes to succeed, noting her academic and personal strength, her great leadership skills and her willingness to provide support and assistance to her fellow students.

The second winner is Shelby Emro, a second year radio student in the RTBN program at SAIT in Calgary. Shelby got hooked on radio during a visit to SAIT, and has developed a passion for audio production, having already completed a Digi-tal Audio Certificate pro-gram.

Shelby has a long volunteer resume, including the National Music Centre, Beakerhead (an art, science and engineering education festival), and Otafest (Calgary’s premiere Japanese animation festival). Her favourite volunteering stint was facilitating a radio class at a conference this spring, helping grade nine girls explore career choices.




Scholarship recipient Desiree Brightnose

Her instructors say Shelby Emro is passionate about broadcasting, calling her dynamic, professional and mature, and adding that she is an all-star student who is at the very top of her class.

The Equity Scholarship was instituted in 2009 to address the shortage of broadcasters from four underrepresented groups; Aboriginal Peoples, Persons with Disabilities, Members of Visible Minorities, and Women. The Jim Pattison Broadcast Group believes that by supporting the career development of these groups in broadcasting on the Prairies, the industry will access an untapped pool of potentially talented employees, encourage diverse viewpoints and backgrounds, enhance relationships with local communities, and broaden the advertiser and audience base.

Desiree Brightnose and Shelby Emro have each received \$2000 to assist them in pursuing their education and career goals.

The scholarship initiative is supported by over 26 stations of the Jim Pattison Broadcast Group based in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.



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# Sharing culture with colouring books and calendars

(ANNews) - Colouring It Forward is a shining example of the fun that can come with sharing culture and learning to be inclusive. It looks like a series of colouring books and although that is exactly what it is – it is also so much more.

Colouring It Forward is the brainchild of its founder Diana Frost, an Algonquin Metis artist and entrepreneur. It is a social enterprise, including a not-for-profit organization called CIF Reconciliation Society and a business called Colouring It Forward Inc. The purpose of the social enterprise is to advance education on indigenous issues, art, language and culture through a grassroots approach.

CIF Reconciliation Society works in collaboration with organizations such as Kamootaan Consulting and Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society to deliver art-based workshops and events that provide education on Indigenous ways of knowing and promote healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

But the company is best known for its beautiful colouring books and calendars.

“It began with an intent to share beautiful things, to create books that heal and teach, books that highlight Indigenous culture, pay respect to traditional values and honour the wisdom, words and teachings by the Elders,” explained Frost.

Colouring it Forward currently has four different beautifully designed colouring books available; two of them, *Discover Blackfoot Nation Art and Wisdom* and *Discover Northern Dene Nation Art and Wisdom*, have also been translated into French. The others include *Cree Nation Art and Wisdom Colouring Book* and *Onagottay Heart and Wisdom Ojibway (Anishinaabe) Colouring Book*.

“The books are enjoyed by children and adults,” added Frost. They are filled with stories about culture and information about the artists and Elders who have collaborated with the project.

“The books are intended to honour the artwork, the wisdom and the culture; I want to make products that people will think are beautiful, valuable and cherished,” remarked Frost.

Colouring it Forward’s extraordinary 16-month calendar is filled with knowledge and beauty and with the turn of every leaf comes an artistically unique piece of Indigenous art – in full colour and created by Chipewyan, Cree, Saulteaux, Nuu-chah-nulth, Mohawk, Algonquin, Blackfoot, Stoney, Mohawk, Inuvialuit and Métis artists.

“The calendar is beautiful inside and out,” said Frost, noting that “this is the culmination of the creative work and exceptional talent of the 14 different artists and Elder who created it. Not only does it showcase amazing artwork, it also includes important dates for Indigenous peoples, honours Indigenous heroes and provides educational pieces on some of the issues faced by Indigenous peoples as well as calls to action for reconciliation and much more.”

One of the most recent CIF projects is a beautiful Indigenous Art and Wisdom Journal.

Frost explained the impetus for the journal. She said that ever since she began making colouring books featuring Indigenous artwork and elders’ wisdom, she received requests that she make a journal and books with full-colour artwork. She finally decided to make a journal because she enjoys and benefits from journaling. “It helps me remember the good things that happen every day and to be grateful for them.”

“As with all my other books, I always work with an

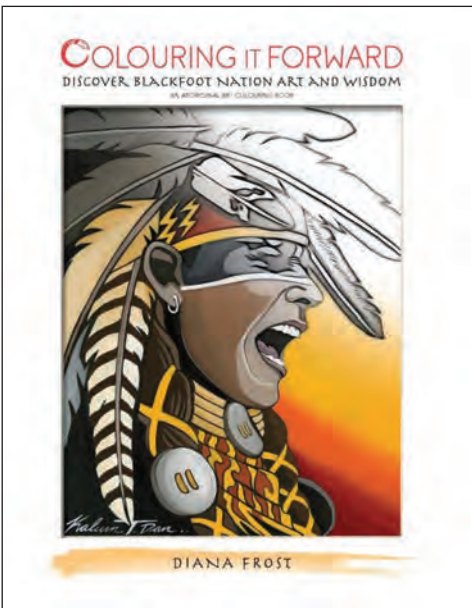
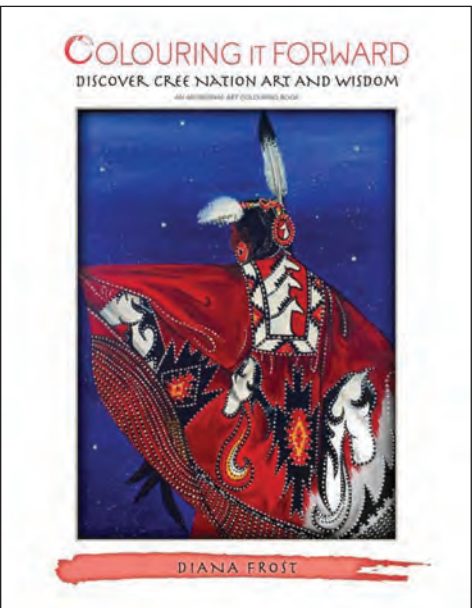
elder to guide my projects,” explained Frost. The elder who oversaw this project and wrote the passages inside the journal is John Sinclair. John is a Cree elder from Ermineskin and Good Fish Lake. He currently works in a penitentiary and with many other groups including schools, friendship centres and others. He spends his days sharing the teachings he learned from his teachers and trying to help people to learn and heal.

“I hope that the words he has placed in the journal will help to gently guide people in their meditations and progress along their chosen path,” she added. “John is a wonderful person, very patient and understanding, always loving and encouraging. I feel very honoured that he accepted to work with me on this journal.”

The artwork in this journal is by 11 different artists from different nations. It was important to Diana to showcase artwork from different artists as “beauty comes in different forms and styles. It is part of Colouring It Forward’s mandate to help to promote artists.”

Shelley Rose May a.k.a. Metis Mamma is one of the artists whose work is featured on the cover and inside the journal. “I felt that her work was particularly well suited to this journal,” noted Frost. “That is because Shelley is a beautiful person, inside and out. She has such a kind heart and is always helping others. The messages and figures in her artwork are always inspiring, positive, empowering and beautiful. Shelley is a Cree metis artist originally from Prince Albert.”

Ryan Jason Allen Willert is one of the two Blackfoot artists featured in the journal. “Ryan is one of the first artists that I met when I was first starting the Colouring It Forward project. It is thanks to him that the Blackfoot colouring book exists because he introduced me to the elder and other artists that are featured in that book: Camille Pablo Russell and Kalum Teke Dan. Ryan taught me a lot when I was first starting out and helped me to better understand certain aspects of the protocol which is so important when working with Indigenous people and




particularly elders.


“I’ve been impressed watching him develop as an artist, a teacher and businessman in the last few years. He is very serious about his artwork and about his culture and spirituality. He spends a lot of time teaching in schools, making murals and mentoring youth. He also has a very exuberant and playful side which is delightful. Ryan’s work in the journal shows a father teaching his son how to extract the marrow from a bone. It is a wonderful piece which shows his versatility and thoughtfulness.”

The Colouring it Forward project has allowed Frost to pay it forward. “Along with my appreciation and love for the artists’ work, the colouring book series has given me a chance to learn more about First Nations people, culture and wisdom,” concluded Diana. “I also have the opportunity to ‘colour it forward’ with these books by giving a percentage of the proceeds from the books to the artists, Elders and community projects to generate jobs, support small businesses and encourage higher education on reserves.”

To learn more about Diana Frost visit [colouringitforward.com](http://colouringitforward.com)



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