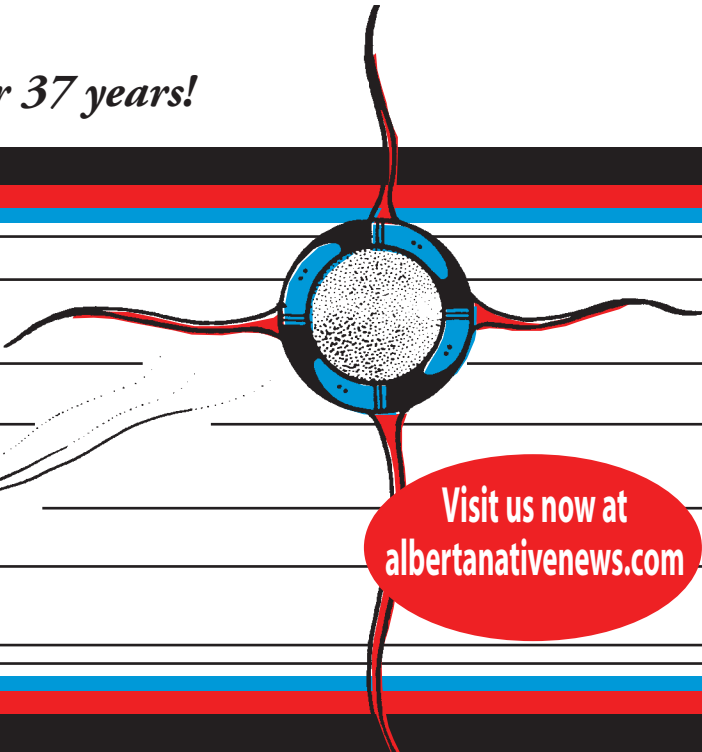




ALBERTA NATIVE NEWS



Summer Fitness Challenge returns to Alberta

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

There are some exciting activities taking place this summer that promote health, fitness and wellness. With the recent announcement that the Province is in Stage 2 of reopening, the Alberta Indigenous Games are set to take place in August.

The Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta (ISCA) is also back with the Summer Fitness Challenge, a completely free fitness program open to any Indigenous person in Alberta from June 14 to August 21.

A pre-made work-out program is given to each participant, which includes three days of strength training and two days of cardio. Then each day the participants work out, they can take a picture or video of themselves and post it on social media in order for a chance to win prizes.

“It’s really fun because you see people from all over the province posting their pictures, their videos, everyone’s supporting each other,” said Jake Hendy, Executive Director of the ISCA.

The Fitness Challenge currently has 95 different communities from in and outside of Alberta participating.

38 First Nations in Alberta are being represented in the challenge, including Alexander First Nation, Athabasca Chipewyan, Beaver Lake Cree Nation, Ermineskin Cree Nation, Kehewin Cree Nation, Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Siksika Nation, Whitefish Lake First Nation and many, many more.

It’s like the old adage Hendy said in an interview with Global News, “You give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. You teach him how to fish, you give him a lifetime.”

The Summer Fitness Challenge is participation-based, meaning everyone goes at their own pace. In fact, the program has a ton of different programs suited towards specific demographics.

“Everyone goes where they’re at — they modify, modify, modify. If you haven’t worked out in thirty to forty years, it’s okay you can do this. We have a disabilities division, specifically for those with

disabilities. We have a new and expecting mothers division for those who have had a baby this year or are going to.”

“It’s all about participation, it’s all about fun, it’s all about being in the physical part of your body that will help with all your other parts,” said Hendy.


Last fall the ISCA taught 10 Indigenous communities how to create their own fitness programs “from Pikani — Kainai down South — up to Little Red River Cree Nation up North and everywhere in between,” said Hendy.

The ISCA is also coordinating a family fitness challenge, which works the same way as the Summer Fitness Challenge. However the family fitness challenge is based on the medicine wheel teachings. Hendy said, “Everyday they look forward to doing something as a family.”

“That’s a big thing we talk about. With the pandemic and the shutdowns, you can’t control a lot of things... But we can control our physical health and if we have our physical health it helps our mental health, which helps out emotional and spiritual health. It helps be better parents, grandparents overall.”

The ISCA is also going to be hosting a virtual walk/jog/run on Indigenous People’s day, June 21. “Everyone’s going to be wearing orange in commemoration [and] just bringing awareness to the residential school kids that survived and those that didn’t,” said Hendy.



The ISCA is also very pleased to announce that the very popular Alberta Indigenous Games will be taking place this summer. Hendy said that that they are currently accepting applications from prospective coordinators, security members, or



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summer students for the AIG happening August 12 to 19th in Edmonton, Alberta — they are also in need of volunteers.


The games celebrate and promote Indigenous athleticism for youth of all ages from all across Alberta — including numerous team and individual sports.

As for other projects the ISCA is undertaking, they will be hosting a hiking challenge, a golf challenge, a bean-bag/cornhole virtual tournament, and a virtual Indigenous games in the fall.

Fitness Challenge Ambassador and Edmonton Oilers defence man, Ethan Bear, said of the ISCA’s programs, “We realize is it important to take care of the people around us, but it is also important to take care of yourself and your personal well-being.”



“With this in mind, ISCA and myself know that getting and staying physically active at home is more important than ever to support the medicine wheel teachings of having well-balanced physical, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional health of ourselves.”

For more information on the ISCA and their projects, check them out on Facebook and Instagram.



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First Nations, Métis and Inuit people*



Canada and Day School Students reach settlement

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On June 9, 2021 the Federal Government of Canada announced that a settlement has been reached for the class-action lawsuit regarding compensation for “Indian Day School” students who had been left out of the Residential School Compensation process.

The lawsuit was filed against the Canadian Government by hundreds of Indigenous students called “Day Scholars.” These students attended Residential Schools but were able to return home at night.

According to the Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett, the surviving day scholars will receive compensation of \$10,000 each.

The Government will also be investing \$50 million dollars into a Day Scholars Revitalization Fund in order to address additional harms.

Minister Bennett said that, “while many Canadians are aware of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, few are aware that not all survivors of residential schools could receive compensation under that agreement. The day scholars, those who attended a residential school during the day, but returned home at night could seek compensation for physical and sexual abuse suffered on the school premises but unlike residents, they were not eligible to receive compensation for the experience.”

The Day Scholars were left out of the 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which compensated those who attended Residential Schools full-time, and thus the lawsuit was filed.

However, it is important to note that the settlement still needs to be approved in court — which will happen on September 7. In the meantime, day scholars have the opportunity to provide feedback in court.

The settlement comes just days after a mass

grave of First Nation children was discovered near a former Indian Residential School in Kamloops, BC.

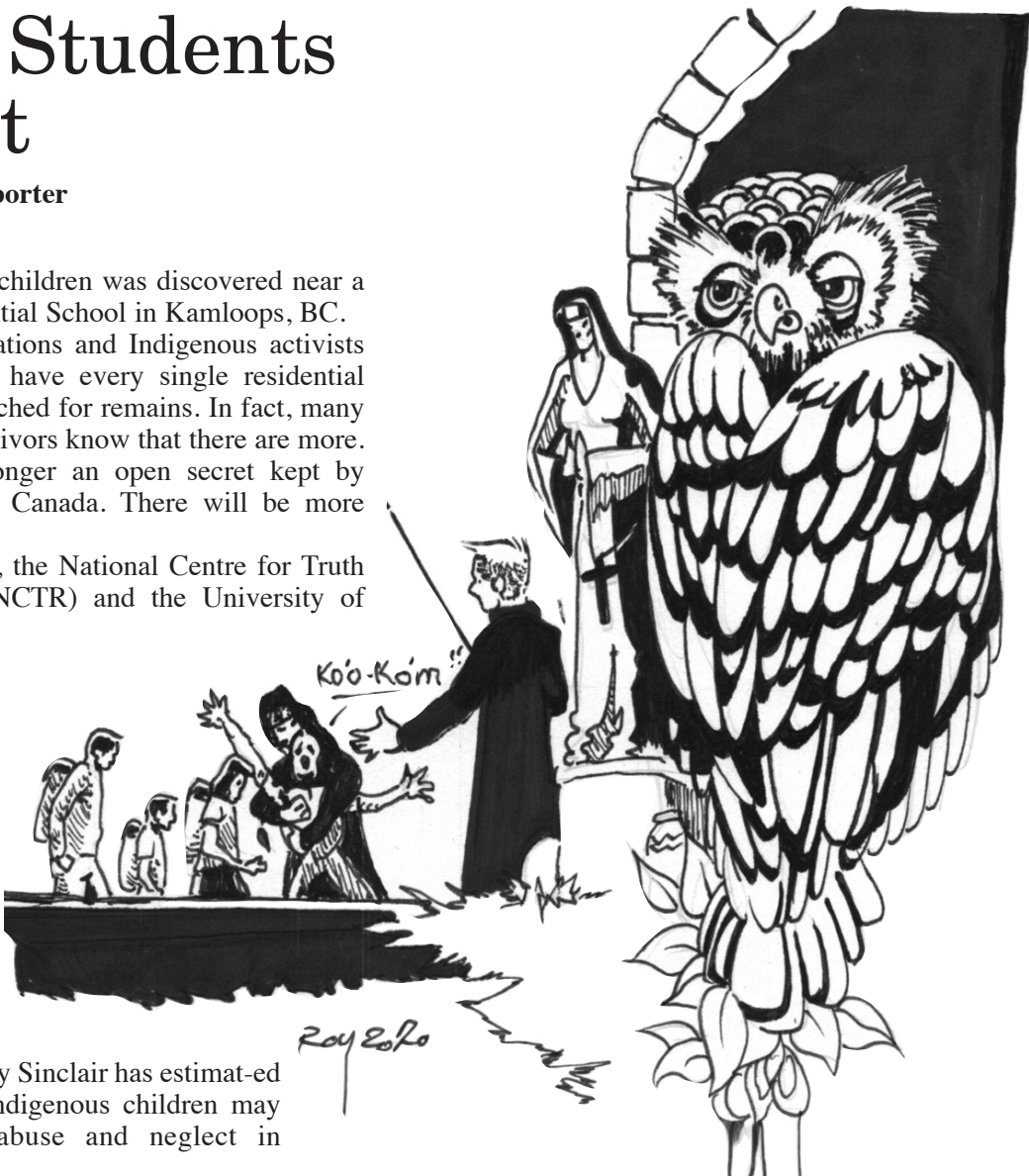
Since then, First Nations and Indigenous activists have been calling to have every single residential school in Canada searched for remains. In fact, many residential school survivors know that there are more.

This issue is no longer an open secret kept by Indigenous people in Canada. There will be more graves found.

In a joint statement, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) and the University of British Columbia’s Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre said, “The NCTR has so far documented 4,117 deaths of First Nations, Inuit and Metis children in residential schools across Canada.”

“Former Truth and Reconciliation Com-missioner Murray Sinclair has estimat-ed that 6,000 or more Indigenous children may have died due to abuse and neglect in residential schools.”

Wilton Littlechild, a Cree Lawyer and Commis-sioner with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said, “During the hearings that we held as a the truth and reconciliation commission, many times we were told the day school students suffered the same abuses as the residential school students. But when the settlement was made they felt excluded and left out and asked why, ‘why are we not being treated the



same way because we suffered the same abuses.”

“I think for that purpose alone, it’s a good decision,” said Littlechild. “It’s about those who will now have a chance to begin some healing. They’ve been waiting and waiting for some kind of decision to come and we have it today.”

Littlechild attended 3 Residential schools over the course of 14 years.



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What is Alberta’s philosophy on reconciliation?

By the Sovereign Nations of Treaty 8

As the original Cree and Dene Peoples, we affirm our connection to our lands, waters, air, animals, environment, and resources since time immemorial. Our Inherent rights and jurisdiction were given to us by the Creator and our ancestors through sacred affirmations and ceremony. Our natural laws are based on our people’s relationship with our unceded lands, waters, plants, animals, ceremonies, spirituality, customs, languages, and traditions.

Despite many attempts to assimilate us, extinguish our identities and way of life, our nationhood is stronger than ever.

On June 1, 2021, Jason Kenney spoke in admiration about “his founding fore-father,” John A Macdonald. It is this founder who created the plan to “kill the Indian,” the architect of Residential Schools who imposed the Indian Act upon First Nations. Everything imaginable was done to annihilate our peoples who entered an International Treaty with the Queen so her settlers could share our lands. The veering leadership under John A MacDonald stems from the Doctrine of Discovery, emanated from a series of Papal Bulls, used to impose a ‘legal’ and ‘moral’ justification for colonial dispossession of our lands and our Sovereign Nations in what is now called Canada. This presumed racial superiority was used to exploit and subjugate our peoples and is contrary to the Sovereign Relationship between our Treaty 8 Nations and the Queen. The ‘cancel culture’ Kenney speaks of in regards to ‘Canadian history’ may in actuality be the cause of his own eventual demise.

John A MacDonald championed this work and if you hear anyone fondly refer to their founding forefathers who enacted such horrific policies, they are speaking from a perspective of being on a ship coming towards our own ancestors.

Jason Kenney perpetuates a narrative that is laced in racism, domination, denial and manipulation of the true history, a colonial system that has

implemented such horrific actions into policy that still exists today. Let us not forget the 60’s Scoop and how they continued this legacy, and how this policy is still practiced today through their Children’s Services Ministry.

On May 31, 2021, UCP representative Rick Wilson announced Alberta’s intentions to fund research and to find “the burials of hundreds of Indigenous Children who did not make their way home.” This is a disgraceful, opportunistic, blanket statement from a government disinterested in reconciliation. There was no meaningful dialogue with the Sovereign Nations of Treaty No. 8 to discuss any of this work despite the fact that there were 11 Residential Schools with-in Treaty No. 8 [AB].

UCP representative Adriana LaGrange issued a similar statement on Twitter and writes that she “can’t begin to imagine the horrific feeling of losing a child.”


These children were not lost, they were stolen. These 215 Indigenous children were murdered, buried, and forgotten; their parents were never told – victims of white settler colonialism. The insincere and hypocritical statement was from a minister who rewrote and stands by a provincial curriculum drafted in the name of ethno-eurocentrism. The same minister who has supported the erasure of information about the residential school system in Alberta’s draft K-12 curriculum.

“We all know that the extermination policies of the federal government, such as the residential schools, stems from the Indian Act; if we are to right the wrongs that this is the place to start,” stated Grand Chief of Education Billy Joe Laboucan speaking to Alberta Education’s Curriculum.

Chris Champion, who was appointed by Jason Kenney and instrumental in developing the new curriculum, is the editor of *The Dorchester Review* – a self-proclaimed “authoritative and contrarian”

Continued on page 24





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Indspire announces 2021 Award recipients and a new format

(Ohsweken, ON) - Indspire has announced the recipients of the 2021 *Indspire Awards* and introduced Jennifer Podemski as the new executive producer, heralding a new format for the broadcast of this year's show. Twelve outstanding Indigenous achievers from a diverse list of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities will be honoured during a special broadcast on Tuesday, June 22 at 8 p.m. (8:30 p.m. NT) on APTN, APTN lumi, CBC TV, CBC Gem, CBC Radio One and CBC Listen.

The *Indspire Awards* represent the highest honour the Indigenous community bestows upon its own people. The Awards recognize Indigenous professionals and youth who demonstrate outstanding career achievement on a national level in a variety of fields, including: the arts; business and commerce; culture, heritage and spirituality; education; health; law and justice; public service; sports; and lifetime achievement. Three Youth Award winners are also being honoured for their accomplishments, serving as role models to other First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth in their communities and across Canada.

The new format, which focuses heavily on the story of each recipient, pushes the boundaries of what is possible for celebratory events during unconventional times.

Indspire is delighted to announce the recipients of the 2021 *Indspire Awards*:

Youth Recipient – Lesley Hampton, Youth Recipient – Mitchell MacDougall, Youth Recipient – Justin Langan, Business & Commerce – Rosa Walker, Culture, Heritage & Spirituality – Emily Angulalik, Public Service – Nahanni Fontaine, Sports – Dallas Soonias, Law & Justice – Val Napoleon, Education – Lorne Gladu, Arts – Drew Hayden Taylor, Health – Catherine Cook, and Lifetime Achievement – Qapik Attagutsiak.

For full bios on each of the recipients are available at indspire.ca.

“Here at Indspire, we’ve consistently remained focused on our mission to recognize and celebrate Indigenous excellence throughout the challenging year we’ve collectively experienced,” said Indspire president and CEO Mike DeGagné. “It is both a pleasure and a privilege to invite viewers from all over Canada to help us celebrate the outstanding achievements of these 12 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis leaders.”

In the past, the Awards have been presented during an in-person gala ceremony, but the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a change of approach. This year’s show will appear in an innovative virtual format under the creative direction of new executive producer Jennifer Podemski, who accepted the challenge of producing the show during a lockdown, taking on the role held for many years by former Indspire president and CEO Roberta Jamieson.

Podemski is a highly acclaimed director, producer and actor, whose work has garnered international recognition and received numerous accolades. In addition to her prior role as co-executive producer of the *Indspire Awards* (for which she garnered multiple Canadian Screen Award nominations), she is also the creator and producer of the paranormal documentary series *The Other Side* (APTN) and co-creator and producer of *Future History* (APTN).

“When I think about all of the obstacles my team had to face this year, I am in awe of what was accomplished,” says Podemski.

“This year, through the production of the *Indspire Awards* we have proven that with hard work, perseverance and collaboration, we as Indigenous people can rise above adversity and achieve our goals

when we work together and support one another,” she added.

Once again, each recipient will be presented with a beautiful gold pin featuring a Canadian diamond unearthed from the Diavik mine in the Northwest Territories and supplied by Rio Tinto.

Indspire gratefully acknowledges the support of the following sponsors and partners:

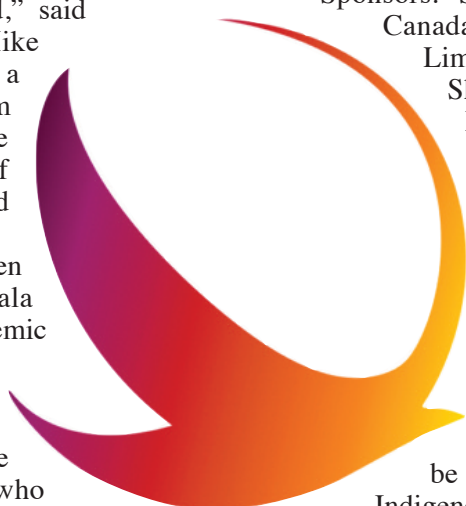
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The awards ceremony will be broadcast during National Indigenous History Month on APTN and CBC on June 22 at 8:00 pm (8:30 pm NT).

If you’re watching with friends and family (in accordance with local public health regulations), you can register your watch party to win a two business-class flights anywhere in the world from Air Canada: www.indspire.ca/watch-party

About Indspire

Indspire is an Indigenous national charity that invests in the education of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people for the long-term benefit of these individuals, their families and communities, and Canada. With the support of its funding partners, Indspire provides financial awards, delivers programs and shares resources so that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students will achieve their highest potential. In 2019-2020, Indspire provided more than \$17.8 million through 5,553 bursaries and scholarships to First Nations, Inuit and Métis students across Canada.



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Vaccination rates are rising and Alberta nears its Stage 3 criteria

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The vaccination rate for Indigenous people across Canada is going incredibly well. As of June 8, 540,581 vaccine doses have been administered in individuals aged 12 and older in 687 First Nations, Inuit and territorial communities.

80 percent of individuals aged 18 and older in First Nations, Inuit and territorial communities have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Over 72 percent of individuals aged 12 and older in First Nations, Inuit and territorial communities have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Of this group, 41% have received their second dose.

In the Alberta general population, the vaccine rollout has also been very successful; it is currently hovering at 67% with at least one shot. The next milestone will be to reach a 70 percent vaccination rate and further restrictions will be removed.

As an incentive Alberta Premier Jason Kenney announced the “Open for Summer” lottery, a vaccination lottery in the province created to encourage more people to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

Three \$1-million prizes will be available to people 18 and over who received at least one vaccination within 7 days of the province reaching a 70 percent vaccination rate.

In a video filmed at an empty Edmonton Expo Centre, one of Alberta’s larger flow-through vaccination clinics, Premier Kenney said, “No one is here. We’re not getting enough demand right now.”

“Many places around the world have launched similar lotteries like this because we need to just nudge those who haven’t gotten around to getting their vaccines yet,” said Kenney.

For example, Manitoba is holding two lottery draws of \$100,000 prizes and \$25,000 youth scholarships.

“We’ve had to spend billions of dollars in our health care system and through supporting people through the past 16 tough months. If we could just keep pushing up those numbers of people who are vaccinated, that will easily pay for itself in future savings.”

“Please do your part because now your vaccine shot is also your shot at a million dollars. And you can help to keep yourself, your friends safe, and help us all get back to normal,” concluded the Premier.

The first lottery will be drawn on the first day of Alberta’s stage 3 re-opening plan.

Despite the current vaccination rates, COVID cases are still present on Alberta. However, as of June 13, Alberta recorded a case count of 3180 - its lowest since October 2020. There were 165 new infections and sadly, 1 new death. There were 272 people in hospital and 75 in intensive care. The positivity rate of tests was 2.8%.

There are still COVID infections on-reserve in First Nations across Alberta.

Enoch has had a total of 188 on-reserve cases and as of May 25 there were 4 active cases on-reserve. 2 Nation members have died from the disease.

Blood Tribe, as of June 11, has only 2 active cases on-reserve. However their total amount of on-reserve cases is 618. 10 Blood Tribe members have passed away from COVID.

In Samson Cree Nation there has been a total of 47 active cases as of June 10. The Nation has had a total of 2132 cases and 17 deaths.



In Fort McKay, things are looking up as 72 percent of First Nation members eligible for vaccinations have received at least one dose. The First Nation also has 0 COVID cases.

On First Nations reserves, as of June 10 Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) is aware of:

- 30,701 confirmed positive COVID-19
- 851 active cases - 1,384 hospitalizations
- 29,501 recovered cases - 349 deaths

Case numbers per region:
- British Columbia: 3,121 - Alberta: 8,645
- Saskatchewan: 7,357 - Manitoba: 8,375
- Ontario: 2,440 - Quebec: 741 - Atlantic: 22

The First Nations Health Managers Association (FNHMA) Weekly Virtual Town Hall podcast features speakers from different organizations who provide credible and reliable information about COVID-19 from an Indigenous perspective, including resources, and updates about what their organizations are doing to combat the pandemic.

The podcast is broadcast on Wednesdays at 11 pm MDT at ihtoday.com and it can also be viewed on Alberta Native News Facebook page as well as other sites. It is screened on APTN on Saturdays at 5 pm MDT. Missed an episode? Visit ihtoday.com to get caught up.

Clifford Cardinal appointed as Cultural Advisor

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Earlier this month, St. Paul Education announced the appointment of Clifford Cardinal as Cultural Advisor for the entire division.

Cardinal taught at the St. Paul Regional High school since the fall of 2004 as the Cree Language Instructor and Liaison worker.

The new position entails providing advice on culturally relevant practices, protocols, ceremony, and

land-based learning, assisting in screening culturally relevant materials, assisting with planning Division events (feasts, round dances, Orange Shirt Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day, etc.), and visiting classes to share knowledge and understanding.

Cardinal shares that he is looking forward to these new duties, adding, “If you have respect for all living beings, you will grow in acceptance.”

While Cardinal will officially commence his duties on August 30, 2021 he will continue his work at the St. Paul Regional High School on a part-time basis.

St. Paul Division Board Chair Heather Starosielski said, “We are excited about having Mr. Cardinal on board as the Division moves forward on its journey of Truth and Reconciliation, with the aim of supporting our First Nations students and families, and building intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect. In the fall, the Division will also be hiring Community Outreach Workers who will provide support for individual students and families.”

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MPs pass NDP motion to stop fed's court action

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Earlier this month, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh put forward a motion calling on the federal government to stop taking Indigenous children and survivors to court.

On June 7, 2021 the motion passed with 271 for and 0 against. Parliamentarians from all parties came together and demanded that the Liberal Government cease all court battles regarding the recent rulings from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT).

While the Prime Minister and his cabinet ministers refused to vote on the motion, the support is clearly huge.

The federal government is currently attempting to appeal a CHRT ruling that would have Canada pay \$40,000 each to approximately 50,000 First Nations children who were separated from their families and forced into the child-welfare system — as well as to each of their parents or grandparents.

The Trudeau Government is also fighting another tribunal decision that would see the applicability of Jordan's Principle widen.

"This is just the start. This by no means is a finish," said Singh in reference to the overwhelming support of the motion. "This is just the start, but it is a powerful start and we want to keep on walking this path."

"If the Liberal Government continues to fight these kids in court despite the will of parliament, that is more than a betrayal, that is a complete abdication of listening to the voices of Canada, to listening to justice."

Singh's motion was made just days after the discovery of a mass-grave of 215 First Nation children at a former residential school in Kamloops, BC. And while the motion is legally non-binding, meaning that Trudeau can continue to fight the CHRT's rulings, continuing the legal battles would be against the wishes of parliament.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that the reason for the foster care compensation battle was because they didn't think it was fair.

"Should someone who went to a day school for a few months, or a year be compensated to the exact same amount as someone who was in a traumatic situation over many, many years, where they were taken from their families and had a very, very different experience?" he asked.

"Right now, the human rights tribunal says everyone should get exactly the same amount. We don't know that that's entirely fair."

Perry Bellegarde, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, wants the federal government to stop inflicting "further pain against children and do the right thing."

Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, believes that the motion is a good way to move forward, but thought it was "too bad" that Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller and Crown-Indigenous relations Minister Carolyn Bennett abstained from voting on the motion.

"They should be championing this motion," Blackstock said in a Twitter post.

Chief Robert Joseph, hereditary chief of the Gwawaenuk First Nation on B.C.'s Central Coast and a knowledge keeper for the B.C. Assembly of First Nations said, "It has been a sad, sad day in the Indigenous community."

"Laws, and policies must change; the way we think of each other needs to change and we need to talk to each other in different ways," said Joseph. "Our resolve will deepen as a result of all these incremental steps we take, including this (motion)."



Federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh

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Athabasca U honours Metis Elder, Educator Terry Lusty

Terry Lusty, a prominent Métis elder and advocate, always regretted that he was unable to complete graduate-level university courses and earn a PhD after a serious collision in the 1980s sidelined his educational goals.

Yet despite the setback, he has spent most of his life as an educator and has accomplished as much if not more than many people with a doctoral degree. In that context, he said receiving an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Athabasca University is an incredible honour—and one that means more to him than a traditional degree would.

“It speaks louder to me, and it really is humbling because I know, too, that not many of our people are awarded these kinds of things,” he said. “I’m very flattered, humbled, and honoured to receive this Doctor of Laws.”

Lusty is well-known as an elder, activist, historian, author, journalist, poet, artist, and survivor of Canada’s residential school system. He has accomplished an impressive amount in his lifetime, including authoring several books and countless news

articles about Métis culture and history, founding and contributing to newspapers covering Indigenous issues, contributing to Alberta Learning’s curriculum with respect to Indigenous issues, founding and contributing to Indigenous movements and organizations, ongoing involvement in mentoring Indigenous youth through several Friendship Centres in Alberta, and sharing his residential-school story as part of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings.

He said his efforts to learn about Métis and Indigenous heritage and culture were inspired in no small part by the fact he was denied access to these things in his own formal education as a child.

Lusty was born in Manitoba, and entered the residential school system when he was just three years old because his mother was unable to care for him. In that time he was not taught about his language and culture - instead the lessons focused almost entirely on language arts, mathematics, and religion, putting students at a big disadvantage.

After Grade 6, he had to leave residential school to attend Grade 7 in the public school system. He and other Indigenous students endured not just the foster-care system, which was rife with abuse, but school was not a safe place for them either.

“It was brutal. We were taunted, we were teased, we were ridiculed, we were isolated, we were discriminated against, you name it,” he said. “And it’s not a healthy way to grow up.”

But in Lusty’s last year, which was Grade 8, he had to write an essay. His teacher observed that his writing level was a few grade levels ahead, which provided some much-needed encouragement.

After he left school, he saw that many of his peers ended up on the streets, doing drugs, drinking, with no training and no proper education—and a lot of them became “nobodies.”

“I didn’t want to be that way,” he said.

The years immediately after leaving school were a dark time for Lusty, as he jumped from job to job and didn’t really see



On June 11, Metis Elder, Educator and well known photo journalist Terry Lusty received an honorary Doctorate of Laws Degree from Athabasca University in recognition for his outstanding contribution to Metis Education.

much of a future for himself.

When he turned 18, though, he began travelling across Canada and the United States, which he said opened his eyes to a lot of things like the realities of life and the kinds of problems people face. In that time he taught himself as much as he could about Indigenous heritage, culture, and the issues facing contemporary Indigenous North Americans.

He ended up in Calgary in his early 20s, got involved with the Native Friendship Centre there, and helped found the Calgary Métis Society, which became a local branch of the Métis Association of Alberta.

“Because I had dived into researching my history and culture so much, I did a lot of guest talks in university classes, and also as a mentor for city police recruits on native history, culture, and protocols,” Lusty said.

His research, along with his growing collection of Métis artifacts and crafts, led him to develop a small museum-style exhibit for the City of Calgary’s Centennial celebrations in 1975. It was received so well that he decided to take the exhibit on the road - in a converted school bus he called the Adrian M. Hope Métis Museumobile - to bring awareness and education about Métis history and culture to Indigenous communities all across Alberta.

“It was terrific. The people just loved it. I couldn’t believe the response I got from them,” he said. “And from non-Natives as well, who didn’t know a lot about Métis culture and history. It was important for them.”

Two professors from the University of Calgary eventually approached Lusty to ask if he had ever considered university. At the time he had two young children, but with their encouragement and the support of student loans and grants, he was able to earn a Bachelor of Education.

By the time he had entered university, he had already published three short books. In 1979, while finishing university, he was also finishing a book he co-authored, *The Métis of Canada: An Annotated Bibliography*. Six more publications then followed.

During his first teaching job in Wabasca-Desmarais, he noted an “extreme absence” of Indigenous culture and history in the curriculum, and after one year he

Continued on page 17

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Heather Sweet
MLA Edmonton-Manning

Constituency Office
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Karen Erickson: Portrait of an artist

By Dale Ladouceur, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Karen Erickson is a Metis, Cree artist, currently living in Prince George. In art, she has only known painting and does it with a deft eye, whether it be on canvas, feathers, earrings or anything else she is guided to paint. Karen turned professional, right out of high school, attending craft shows with her twin sister, (artist Carla Joseph), when she got out of high school.

Expressing her thoughts and dreams onto canvas has been her sole life's work and that work reflects years of discipline, as well as empathy and compassion for nature and the humans that inhabit her world.

"My twin sister and I have been painting since elementary school," Karen begins, and all throughout "my adult life, it's what I've done."

Erickson's mom and dad are from Meadow Lake and Green Lake, Saskatchewan. They moved to BC so Karen's dad could work and they've been in Prince George ever since.

"I am basically just a self-taught artist. My inspiration is nature and animals and people; I love people. I like to draw pictures that make me [forge] a connection," she explains. "My painting is heartfelt, [and I use painting to] tell stories through my art."

Describing her process, Erickson explains how she gets her creative ideas.

"Sometimes I go to bed at night and, I swear, I dream some of this stuff up," she laughs. "I think about it all [evening] and then I end up dreaming about it, it's so weird."

Using a stream of consciousness approach, Erickson's inspiration takes over as she begins to paint. "Yeah, once I put my paintbrush (on the canvas) I just keep going until I know I'm done. I sold my first work straight out of high school and haven't stopped. My twin sister Carla Joseph is a (well known) Metis artist in this area and so when we started doing art shows together, our work started getting more attention."

Karen describes the feeling of someone buying her work for the first time. "Selling my work made me feel more validated. I kind of always knew what people like, even from the very beginning with my art style. There's a lot of coastal art in BC and so there was an [intentional] effort to move away from that."

While talking with Karen for this profile, it became more apparent that she does not seek the limelight. Her main focus is creating art that speaks to people and gives them a sense of peace. So, it was all the more surprising that she described the actual spark to her creative process.

"It starts with a dream and the next day I think about it more and more until I am (ready), then I feel like I've got to get this done before I forget about it," she laughs. "Sometimes I will even write it down on a piece of paper, just with little notes and then I will start drawing it up."

"Sometimes when I start creating the backgrounds, I just start using my hands and then [inspiration appears]; 'oh look, there's a little shape there' and then I know where to start. It's kind of like, it's different. It all starts with the backgrounds and the colours that I use. I just start throwing paint on the canvas but [I usually use] my hands to start painting. I just see a silhouette of something with the different colours. Even with just a whisp of my hand, I [may] see something."

"Surviving as professional, full time artists, my sister and I get commissions monthly. You have to treat it like a job. I do work full time for Metis Nation

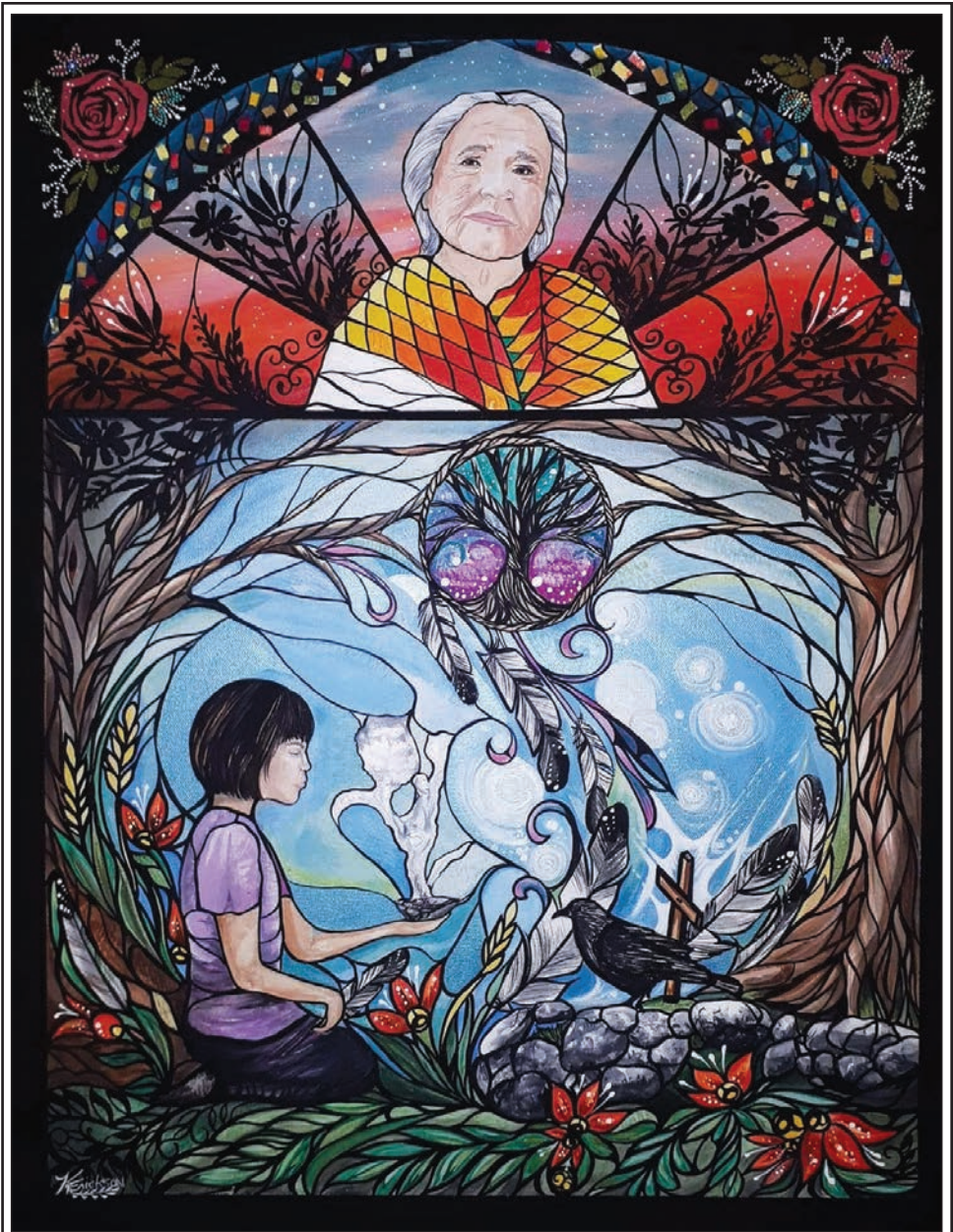
BC but I get as much painting done as I can (when I'm not working). I get so booked with requests for paintings. But I love it, especially during covid, there's been nothing else to do but paint and make people happy."

In closing, I asked Erickson what she feel is the artist's purpose. Her answer was understated and unassuming. "For me it's just to show stories through my art. To make people feel at peace with some of my images. I've sent my art across Canada so hopefully it is doing that to many. I love to paint, I can go anywhere with a canvas."

The beautiful image that appears on the cover of the June *Alberta Native News* is entitled "Every Child Matters." Karen added the coastal art reflected in the moon to show that residential school trauma happened to many other Indige-nous tribes.

"I think it is one of the most important things [I've done]. I always want to paint things that show the injustices that happen to Indigenous people. And it's so hard too because when people see my work, they think it's beautiful but at the same time, so sad. I try to make it uplifting as well because I'm trying to show that they've moved on to a better place. That could be anywhere because everyone has their (own beliefs) and it's up to the person to believe where they are going."

Karen continued, "I've always loved doing silhouettes but when I started to create this piece, I was just thinking about what would happen if someone passed (while attending) residential school.



Remembrance © by Karen Erickson

I just pictured siblings, when they finally got to see each other again, actually get to touch each other again and just basically that they would end up somewhere better."


About her painting "Remembrance," Karen says, "I love that one, it depicts the elder at the top who was from a residential school and remembers how she was a young girl and her friend actually passed on due to the residential school. She never forgot what happened to her friend and that's what (provided the inspiration). And I had to put the cross in there because it's catholic but it is just so different. I was apprehensive about (including) the cross because people are so mad at the catholic church."

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NSD Trustee Rubi Shirley wins a PSBAA Award



Rubi Shirley

Northland School Division is celebrating a special achievement. Dr. Rubi Shirley, Ward 9 Trustee (Fort Chipewyan), won a Public School Boards Association of Alberta (PSBAA) award for promoting and advancing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada within Alberta. Dr. Shirley, who earned a Doctor of Education degree from the University of Seattle, completed a thesis exploring the phenomenon of low high school

graduation rates of First Nation students in Canada and the perceptions of First Nation Chiefs. “On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we congratulate Dr. Rubi Shirley on earning this prestigious award,” said Robin Guild, Board Chair. “The effort Dr. Shirley put into this thesis is evident and will spark meaningful conversations on how to improve the high school completion rates for First Nations students.” “Your thesis is a perfect example for promoting and advancing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,” said Dr. Nancy Spencer-Poitras. “On behalf of Administration, we congratulate you on earning this award. Your passion for our students and improving their success in school is inspiring.”

While completing her thesis, Dr. Rubi Shirley interviewed 10 First Nation Chiefs in two provinces. She completed one on one semi-structured interviews to gather her data. The data showed there were three themes which led to four recommendations. One of the themes expressed the value of education. This thesis revealed that First Nation people have always valued education but from the First Nation worldview. The study was significant because, for the first time, it records the voices of chiefs discussing low high school graduation rates for First Nation students. Recommendations were made that direct the Chiefs to be involved in the educational process and provide guidance for current education systems in Canada, all of which could increase high school graduation rate.

Lubicon Lake Chief recants support for Alberta curriculum


By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The chief of Lubicon Lake Cree Nation has walked back his previous support for the Alberta government’s K-6 curriculum that has been rejected roundly by school boards and Indigenous organizations alike. “I supported the draft but on a deeper dive into the curriculum by our team, it was found wanting,” Chief Billy-Joe Laboucan, who is also the Grand Chief of education for Treaty 8, said in a brief email to *Alberta Native News*. As part of the March 29 release of the K-6 draft, Education Minister Adriana LaGrange invited Laboucan to speak at a news conference, where he said the document represents a “really good start,” but this was based on just a page and a half he had seen of the draft.

“We realize that we have a shared history, and that we need to keep focusing on that especially with some of the atrocities that have happened with Indigenous people in this country,” Laboucan said at the time. He recently told the CBC that upon reading the full draft document, his perspective changed. “I felt betrayed, because, I mean, they sought my advice, and I said yes. And I was a bit misconstrued,” he said in an April interview. “It made me look like the token Indian.” Now Laboucan says that not only is the draft a regression from the previous NDP government’s draft curriculum the UCP kiboshed as promised, but is a step back from the curriculum currently in use. Under the UCP draft, students won’t learn about treaties until Grade 4 and residential schools until Grade 5. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended that these be taught at all grade levels.

“What message does it send to Indigenous students when they are forced to memorize dates in European history for years before learning about Indigenous history in their classroom,” NDP education critic Sarah Hoffman said when the draft was released, calling the document “unacceptable in its current form.” In April, the Sovereign Nations of Treaty Eight wrote a letter to Premier Jason Kenney calling for the draft to be significantly revised, which Laboucan signed, citing the “deeply offensive” and “glaring absence” of First Nations people from the writing process. After being criticized for hiring an all-male, mostly white panel to draft the curriculum, the ministry last year asked five Indigenous elders to review the draft. One of them was Betty Letendre, a Metis residential school survivor who teaches students in Edmonton about Indigenous history and culture, who says the government provided the elders panel with hundreds of pages of documents, giving them just days to provide feedback. “You thought you were going to get... tokenized people to agree and to be the ‘yes’ people to this curriculum, and that’s just like a slap in the face. Because we are not tokens,” she told the CBC. Wilton Littlechild, a former Truth and Reconciliation commissioner, provided a quote to the government in support of the draft, praising the UCP government for being the first to include mandatory



Continued on page 20



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We spoke with our Indigenous Community Relations lead, Arlene Twin, about the importance of Indigenous Peoples Day and the work of the Indigenous Community Relations team at Women Building Futures.

What does Indigenous Peoples Day mean to you?

Indigenous Peoples Day to me, means that Canada recognizes the contributions of Indigenous people in the development of the country we know as our home. It means that I can practice my cultural traditions without fear of conviction. I can be proud of my background, language, ceremonies, and my ancestry.

Why is it important that we celebrate?

Although there is a history of the treatment of Indigenous people in Canada, we have persevered, prospered, and continue to share our culture and connection with the land. It is important to reflect on the past to change the future. Celebrating helps us remember and witness the beauty, love, and connection we have with one another. Our purpose in life is to take care of each other and ensure the best possible future for the next generations. Celebrations bring people together and create healthy environments to move forward.

It is important that Women Building Futures celebrates this day to honour the Indigenous women in our programs, the Indigenous communities we work with, our own Indigenous staff, and most importantly to respect the first peoples of the land called Canada. Indigenous people in Canada hold rights and entitlements that helped create the economy and that ripples down to the women coming into our programs, graduating, and finding success in their careers.

How does Women Building Futures engage with and support Indigenous women?

Prior to the pandemic, WBF would engage with Indigenous women by visiting communities, providing workshops, setting up booths at pow wows, and honouring the communities and individuals we work with at our Round Dance celebration. More recently, WBF has engaged with communities by participating and supporting ceremonies, going to sweats, learning to follow proper protocol in the communities we visit and learning how we can better support the women.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, WBF has created reoccurring online workshops to help develop skills, provide life-coaching and math supports to help remove barriers. We have Indigenous ambassadors and alumni that we work with even after they have graduated to be quest speakers and to be role models. Most recently, I have been asked to provide an empowering, motivational speaking session with one of our Journeywoman Start classes that focused on perseverance, life stories and using barriers and challenges to your advantage.

My favourite part of my role is having the opportunity to share my lived experiences, culture, knowledge, and provide a learning path for others to create a more inclusive environment for Indigenous people. When I get to connect with the people wanting to make a difference in women's lives and be a cheerleader to the women in our programs, it is the most rewarding feeling and gives me a sense of purpose.

If you're interested in learning more about WBF programs and services, visit womenbuildingfutures.com

A large, vibrant background image showing people in traditional Indigenous regalia, including a prominent rainbow-striped skirt, dancing. Overlaid on this image is the following text:

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Edmonton Elks new CFL team name is a step forward

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



The regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations in Alberta and the chief of the Enoch Cree First Nation agree that renaming Edmonton’s CFL team is a step in the right direction towards reconciliation.

“It’s a small gesture, but within the bigger picture reconciliation is a never-ending road. It might be cliché, but you take it one day at a time,” says Enoch Cree Chief Billy Morin.

On June 1, the team unveiled its new Edmonton Elks branding, 10 months after the team agreed to change its name from the Eskimos — a racial slur against Inuit peoples.

“It should have happened a long time ago, but hindsight’s always easy,” says Morin, who gave credit to the franchise for making the right call after a decade of debate.

AFN Regional Chief Marlene Poitras says this small goodwill gesture pales in comparison to the horrific discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous children on the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C., but is nonetheless part of a broader cultural shift towards taking Indigenous peoples’ concerns seriously.

She agrees it should’ve happened sooner, but is likewise pleased that the name is changed, which she pointed out was relatively easy, since the team didn’t have to change the acronym on their logos. “It’s way overdue. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released a report about 10 years ago and now things are finally starting to happen,” Poitras said. “It’s about time.”

Morin says he didn’t play a significant role in

having the name changed beyond “general conversations” with the franchise’s former CEO, crediting Inuit organizations for their advocacy. “They were engaging with Inuit communities and I thank them for keeping the dialogue open and working with communities to reach an ultimate solution,” he said.

The new name reflects the diversity of the team’s fanbase, says Morin, who reflected back to when the Grey Cup was in Edmonton and he was invited to say a land acknowledgement before the singing of *O Canada*. “A lot of small things, ultimately when you reflect back, they add up and can lead to bigger things collectively,” he said, calling the name change a “milestone”.

“I’m glad reconciliation played a role in that and I do wish them well going forward. I’m actually a big Elks fan. I’ve got to get used to saying that name myself... My dad used to take me to games.”

Poitras says the name change could only broaden the team’s following in the region. “They’ll continue to maintain their fans and continue to get some new ones because of their reconciliation efforts,” she said.

“There’s so much work we need to do to eliminate systemic racism and if more organizations or people took small steps, it would certainly be a lot more meaningful for Indigenous people everywhere.”

Elks CEO Chris Presson acknowledged that the change “was probably a few years overdue, to be honest.”

“But I’m glad that we’re where we are now,” Presson said. “No doubt we made the right decision.”

As recently as February 2020, the team said they would keep the Eskimos name after the results of a year-long consultation process were inconclusive, but reversed its position several months later due to a backlash from sponsors, such as insurance provider Belairdirect.

“Man, it’s been a whirlwind,” Presson told TSN. “We wanted to make sure we got it right, we wanted to make sure we did the proper research and we wanted to make sure we created something that was special, and we have.”

“When you look at the history of the Edmonton Football Team and the CFL itself, there’s a lot there to see. To know you are a part of that and you had a chance to make an impact like this, it’s pretty special.”

Elks was one of seven finalists for the new name, all of which started with the letter ‘E’ - Evergreens, Evergolds, Eclipse, Elkhounds, Eagles and Elements.

The original option was to call the team the ‘Elk’, but upon consultation with linguists at the University of Alberta and the Oxford Dictionary, they determined ‘Elks’ would be more appropriate.

The new name “reflects the speed, strength and resilience of the Green and Gold and Northern Alberta,” reads a statement from the organization.

After the 2020 season was cancelled due to COVID, the CFL plans to be back in action this year for a 14-game season starting Aug. 5.

PM calls for Papal apology

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says the Roman Catholic Church needs to “step up” and accept responsibility for Canada’s residential school system.

Trudeau says he personally asked Pope Francis in 2017 to consider apologizing for the system that took 150,000 children from their parents homes and sent them to live at church-run and government-sponsored schools, where abuse was rife.

“We’re still seeing resistance from the Church, possibly from the Church in Canada,” he said.

This comes after the Tk’emlups te Secwepemc First Nation announced that they had located the remains of 215 children who died at a Kamloops residential school, which has led to calls to the government and church to investigate the sites of other schools.

The prime minister called on Canadian Catholics to speak with their cardinals and bishops and demand the church take responsibility for its role in the horrors of residential schools.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops president Archbishop Richard Gagnon called the discovery of the remains “shocking” in a news release, which did not mention the church’s role.

“As we see ever more clearly the pain and suffering of the past, the Bishops of Canada pledge to continue walking side by side with Indigenous Peoples in the present, seeking greater healing and reconciliation for the future,” he wrote.

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By Mulidzas-Curtis Wilson (1980 - 2019)

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Happy National Indigenous Peoples Day!

June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day. This is a time for all Canadians to recognize and celebrate the unique heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

The Canadian Constitution recognizes these three groups as Indigenous peoples. Although these groups share many similarities, they each have their own distinct heritage, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

In cooperation with Indigenous organizations, the Government of Canada chose June 21, the summer solstice, for National Indigenous Peoples Day. For generations, many Indigenous peoples and communities have celebrated their culture and heritage on or near this day due to the significance of the summer solstice as the longest day of the year.

National Aboriginal Day was announced in 1996 by then Governor General of Canada, Roméo LeBlanc, through the Proclamation Declaring June 21 of each year as National Aboriginal Day. This was the result of consultations and statements of support for such a day made by various Indigenous groups: In 1982, the National Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations) called for the creation of National Aboriginal Solidarity Day. In 1995, the Sacred Assembly, a national conference of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people chaired by Elijah Harper, called for a national holiday to celebrate the contributions of Indigenous Peoples. Also in 1995, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommended the designation of a National First Peoples Day.

On June 21, 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issued a statement announcing the intention to rename this day National Indigenous Peoples Day. He said, “Every year, we join together on this day to recognize the fundamental contributions that First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation have made to the identity

and culture of all Canadians. The history, art, traditions, and cultures of Indigenous Peoples have shaped our past and continue to shape who we are today.

“No relationship is more important to Canada than the relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Our government is working together with Indigenous Peoples to build a nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, government-to-government relationship based on respect, partnership, and recognition of rights.

“We are determined to make a real difference in the lives of Indigenous Peoples – by closing socio economic gaps, supporting greater self-determination, and establishing opportunities to work together on shared priorities. We are also reviewing all federal laws and policies that concern Indigenous Peoples and making progress on the Calls to Action outlined in the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

“On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish everyone a happy National Indigenous Peoples Day. I invite all Canadians to take part in the activities in their community and to learn about the history, cultures and traditions of Indigenous Peoples.”

National Indigenous Peoples celebrations are taking place across Canada and throughout Alberta. Because of the COVID pandemic most celebrations are being held virtually but with the easing of health restrictions, some outdoor events will be held. Check your community listings so you know what is taking place in your area. Some notable celebrations in the Edmonton and Calgary area are listed here.

The Calgary Public Library is hosting free, virtual programs throughout June to celebrate National



Indigenous History Month. Everyone can learn about the history, culture, and traditions of Indigenous peoples from Treaty 7, where Calgary is located. Join CPL online for story times, a film screening, live interviews, a fry bread cooking demonstration, the unveiling of the third round of Placemaking installations, book discussions and more. Visit calgarylibrary.ca for full details.

On June 19, 2021, at 6 pm join the Edmonton’s Indigenous Peoples Festival Online! This year, you are invited to a virtual experience where First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and cultures will be celebrated through music, arts, education and entertainment. Hosted by Rellik, music and cultural performers and special guests will include Curtis Young, Brianna Lizotte, Creeasian, Kaeley Jade, Tammy Lamouche, Shawn Bernard AKA Feenix, Demaris Moon Walker and Ethan Bear. Visit eipfestival.ca.

Aboriginal Awareness Week Calgary will be held virtually from June 21 to 26. The theme of the event is “Keeping the Circle Strong” through traditional knowledge keepers and honouring modern day warriors to reflect the pride of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Circles. Family Day will be celebrated on June 26, 2021 from noon to 6 pm with star studded performances by 2021 Juno Award Winner Crystal Shawanda, Logan Staats, CTV’s “The Launch” Winner 2019, and Grammy Award Nominated Host Drum: Northern Cree as well as local Indigenous artists live performances by Wyatt C. Louis and Lindsay Crowshoe.

Join Edmonton’s Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society for their June 21 NIPD celebration from 9 am to 1 pm! This virtual event will feature Indigenous storytelling, interactive dancing, and more! You can register for free to be a part of the Zoom event, or watch live on the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society Facebook page. Register for free at Eventbrite.ca.

Edmonton paints over the Grandin Mural

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

After rigorous outrage from the Edmonton public, the City Council has finally removed an LRT mural honouring the Bishop Vital-Justin Grandin, a Residential School supporter and prominent Edmonton historical figure.

The entire mural was painted bright orange on June 7.

In recent years, Orange has become the colour of the National Day of Reconciliation — also known as Orange Shirt Day. And in light of the discovery of the remains of 215 First Nations children in an unmarked grave found in Kamloops, BC, the colour has come to represent much more.

The original mural has been the source of contention for a long-time, mainly because of the blatant depiction of the Residential School system.

A Catholic Nun is literally carrying away a First Nations baby; the family is

Continued on page 22

Graduation is a time of celebration. It is a time for students to have pride in their accomplishments as they prepare to enter the next phase of their lives. It is also a time thank:

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Their teachers
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MRU bestows honours at outdoor convocation

(Calgary) - National Indigenous poet Louise Bernice Halfe (Sky Dancer), energy sector leader Hal Kvisle, former police chief Christine Silverberg, and Blackfoot elder Clarence Wolfleg Senior (Elder Miiksika'am) received Honorary Doctors of Laws from Mount Royal University this month for their outstanding achievements and community service.

To the best of its knowledge Mount Royal is the only post-secondary institution in Alberta that held live, drive-in style spring convocation ceremonies outdoors following similar ceremonies in Fall 2020. Upwards of 640 graduating students (out of a record 1,937 MRU grads this spring), their family and friends attended the eight drive-in ceremonies from June 7 to 10. Students and their guests remained in their vehicles as the ceremony took place on an outdoor stage with screens, and audio tuned in to 88.5 FM. Each ceremony was live-streamed for students and families unable to attend in person.

"This graduating class finished their studies during an uncertain time, speaking to their persistence and ability to adapt. These are foundational skills that will serve them well in the future," MRU President and Vice-Chancellor Tim Rahilly, PhD said. "We just couldn't imagine not recognizing their accomplishments, so this drive-in format gives us a safe way to celebrate."

Graduates tapped their horns in applause, accompanied by the family members and friends who supported them throughout their journey.

"Class of the spring of 2021, you are truly remarkable. Not only did you fill the requirements of your chosen discipline, but you did it during a pandemic. You are persistent and you are resilient. And today we celebrate that," said Rahilly.

Chancellor Dawn Farrell recognized the tragic discovery of the 215 children whose remains were recently found at the site of a former residential school. "Our hearts break for them, their families and communities, residential school survivors and all Indigenous Peoples. The truth for these children and for others must be sought and acknowledged."

Honorary degrees date back to the middle ages and

are the highest symbol of recognition Mount Royal can give to an individual. Each recipient addressed graduates and guests during separate ceremonies.

Hal Kvisle, a leader in the oil and gas, utilities and power generation industries, received an Honorary Doctor of Laws on Monday, June 7. From 2012 to 2015, Kvisle was president and chief executive officer of Talisman Energy. He currently serves as board chair of ARC Resources and Finning International and a board member of Cenovus Energy. Passionate about education, Kvisle joined the Mount Royal College board of governors in 2001 as vice-chair and served as board chair from 2002 until 2007. He was awarded an honorary Bachelor of Arts from Mount Royal University in 2009.

Clarence Wolfleg Senior (Elder Miiksika'am), a Spiritual Elder Advisor, received an Honorary Doctor of Laws on Tuesday, June 8. A residential school survivor, Elder Miiksika'am has given back to the community in many capacities, serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, being an integral part of the justice system, providing leadership on the Siksika Nation Council and currently acting as a Spiritual Elder Advisor to many organizations. His traditional name "Miiksika'am" translates to "Red Crane" in Blackfoot.

"I don't call Mount Royal 'that place,' like residential school. I call this place my home," Miiksika'am told graduates. "I call everybody that's here my family. Graduates, you have had many challenges, many sacrifices that you have made to reach this beautiful day for you."



MRU President Tim Rahilly, Elder Miiksika'am, and Chancellor Dawn Farrell.

Louise Bernice Halfe (Sky Dancer), award-winning poet and residential school survivor, received an Honorary Doctor of Laws on Wednesday, June 9. Halfe has shared a powerful testimony to the ongoing Indigenous experience of colonialism, along with the strong resilience of Indigenous storytellers. *Burning in this Midnight Dream* details Halfe's response to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation process and how the experiences of residential school children haunt those who survive and affect multiple generations. Halfe is now serving a two-year appointment as the National Parliamentary Poet Laureate for Canada.

Christine Silverberg, who was appointed chief of police of the Calgary Police Service in 1995, becoming the first female chief in a major Canadian city, received an Honorary Doctor of Laws on June 9. Silverberg now represents diverse clients at SilverbergLegal. She is recognized for her accomplishments in multi-racial, multicultural and Aboriginal communities and as an advocate for women's rights. Among many awards, Silverberg was named Police Chief of the Year and is among the YWCA's 150 most impactful women in Canada and Canada's 100 most powerful women.

ON BEHALF OF THE ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE OF CALGARY'S BOARD, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



June is a time for Canadians to share and learn from Indigenous stories, traditions and culture in new ways that keep us together and connected.

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary recognizes the importance and sacred nature of cultural ceremonies and celebrations year round. For over a year, with COVID-19, we recognize that it has been very difficult for our Elders and most vulnerable community members.

We wish to extend our gratitude to all the essential workers, community outreach teams, and funders who collectively have mobilized to selflessly support the most vulnerable.

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Ethan Bear speaks out against racism

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Late last month, the Edmonton Oilers completed their run in the 2021 NHL playoffs with a defeat to the Winnipeg Jets.

However, despite the hockey team’s loss, the most newsworthy thing about the entire affair was the barrage of racism against Indigenous player, Ethan Bear, that immediately after the series ended.

In their final game against the Jets — and thus the season — a number of Bear’s on-ice errors resulted in goals against the Oilers. The Oilers lost the game in triple overtime.

One day after the game, Bear’s girlfriend, Lenasia Ned, announced that the Indigenous defence man had been receiving a barrage of racist messages and comments from disgruntled Oilers fans who blamed the entirety of the loss on Bear.

Ned’s announcement spurred an entire news day worth of content and sparked outrage among First Nations and Canadians alike. Many social media posts were made in defense of Ethan Bear and many Indigenous organizations released statements.

The Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations Grand Chief, Vernon Watchmaker said, “Our First Nations people are avid fans of hockey and the Edmonton Oilers, and we are most proud of the athletic achievements of our people. Ethan has been a gracious ambassador to our youth, and he is very much a part of our communities.”

“We all have a responsibility to speak out against racism in any circumstance and to ask those involved to stop.”

The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) also released a statement regarding the racist comments. “The blatantly racist comments being posted on social media this week are disgusting and these individuals must take the responsibility for the harm they are causing the sport and the First Nations community,” said FSIN Vice Chief Heather Bear.

“My Nephew is a strong man and a positive role model to so many of our people, but it hurts our community and our First Nations youth who read and see these comments online. No one deserves this disgusting backlash, and we are calling on the Oilers, the NHL and everyone to stand up to these racist people and do something about it.”

“Staying silent when racism is so public like this is unacceptable,” said Vice Chief Bear.

Shortly after, the Oilers’ General Manager and President of Hockey Operations, Ken Holland, said that the comments towards Bear are “totally unacceptable. It’s disgusting. Ethan is an unbelievable

young man. He’s a tremendous role model for all young athletes, especially in the Indigenous community.”

The NHL as an organization also supported the Indigenous Hockey Star, “Ethan Bear represents both our game and his Indigenous heritage with dignity and pride. He, and all people from Indigenous backgrounds, deserve to feel empowered and respected on and off the ice. We stand with Ethan and his family in denouncing hate.”

Bear released a video statement in response to the situation. “We just came off a hard fought series. We didn’t get the result we wanted, but the guys left it all on the line,” said Bear. “As you know, I’ve been subject to racist behaviour on social media. I know this doesn’t represent all Oilers fans or hockey fans and I greatly appreciate your love and support during this time.”

“I’m here to stand up to this behaviour. To these comments. I’m proud of where I come from. I’m proud to be from Ochapowace First Nation.”

“And I’m not just doing this for myself, I’m doing this for all people of colour, I’m doing this for the next generation. To help make change. To love one another. To support one another. To be kind to each other. There is no place for racism in our communities, in sports or in our workplace,” said Bear.

He concluded his statement by saying, “I call on all of us to help make change and to end racism.




On May 28, in a heartwarming display of solidarity, hundreds of fans showed up at Rogers Place – Home of the Edmonton Oilers - to demonstrate their unwavering support for Ethan Bear and against racism. Photos by Terry Lusty

We all deserve to be treated fairly, and in the end I think we’ll get there.”

On May 28, in a heartwarming display of solidarity, hundreds of fans showed up at Rogers Place – Home of the Edmonton Oilers - to demonstrate their unwavering support for Ethan Bear and against racism. The defenceman was both moved and very appreciative of the fan support.

In recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day we celebrate the cultures, heritage and incredible contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

In addition, I would like to congratulate the graduating class of 2021!



Jeremy Nixon, MLA
Calgary-Klein

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Best wishes for a Happy National Indigenous Peoples Day!




MLA Adriana LaGrange
Red Deer-North

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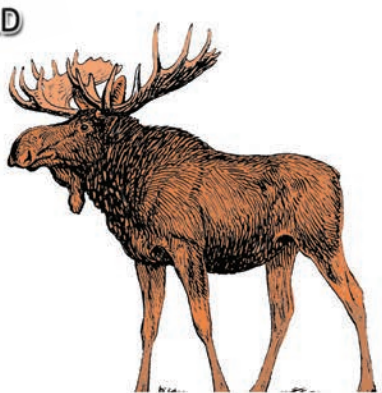
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Justice Cheryl Arcand-Kootenay appointed to Queens Bench

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On May 26, 2021 the Department of Justice Canada announced that the Honourable Cheryl Arcand-Kootenay, a nehiyaw iskwew (Cree woman) from Kipohtakaw (Alexander) First Nation in Treaty 6 Territory, is going to be appointed to the Justice of the Court of Queen’s Bench of Alberta.

She is replacing Justice R. Graesser (Edmonton), who elected to become a supernumerary judge effective August 3, 2020.

The Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, made the announcement in a press release, saying “I wish Justice Arcand-Kootenay every success as she takes on her new role. I am confident she will serve the people of Alberta well as a member of the Court of Queen’s Bench.”

Prior to her appointment, Arcand-Kootenay was a judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta in St. Paul. She graduated from the University of Alberta in 1988 with a Bachelor of Arts in political science and then a Bachelor of Law degree in 1992. Arcand-Kootenay is currently completing her Masters of Law in Dispute Resolution at Osgoode Hall Law School.

Before her role in the Provincial Court of Alberta, Madam Justice Arcand-Kootenay practiced primarily in the areas of child welfare and Aboriginal law.

At the Superior Court level, more than 450 judges have been appointed since November 2015. Of these judges, more than half are women, and appointments reflect an increased representation of visible minorities, Indigenous, LGBTQ2+, and those who self-identify as having a disability.



Justice Cheryl Arcand-Kootenay

Tax Exemption Card will discontinue this fall

Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Alberta Indian Tax Exemption (AITE) card is going to be discontinued this fall but a Calgary company, Wiz-Tec will be ready to help make the transition as smooth as possible for First Nations across Alberta.

In order to reduce unnecessary duplication and respond to concerns from First Nation communities, Federal Indian Status cards are going to be used instead. It is important to note that expired cards and Temporary Confirmation of Registration documents will be accepted as well.

The change will be effective on October 4, 2021. After which, the original AITE cards should be destroyed as they will no longer be accepted by exempt-state retailers as evidence of exemption after the date.

The AITE cards allow for on-reserve First Nations to purchase fuel, tobacco, and accommodations at a lower cost.

Carla Rodriguez, Marketing Manager at Wiz-Tec Computing Technologies, told *Alberta Native News*, “This is quite similar to the change that the Government of Ontario did back in 2019/2020 when they went from using the Ontario Gas Card as proof of tax exemption eligibility to using the Status Card instead.”

“Wiz-Tec is the dedicated provider of the electronic tax exemption service in Ontario so our team did an overnight changeover on the night of December 31st to all our systems in the area to disrupt service as little as possible for these retailers.”

“We’re planning on doing a similar overnight changeover for our Albertan retailers so we’d like for everyone to be well informed about the changeover,” concluded Rodriguez.

Wiz-Tec is the largest provider of the electronic submission service for tax exemptions in Alberta. Founded in 1991 in Calgary, Wiz-Tec has been providing point of sale and payment solutions for independent and corporate retailers for over 30 years now. They currently serve over 300 First Nation sites across Canada and various other retailers with fueling, car wash, and tax exemption rebate POS requirements.



Dehcho Divisional Education Council

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Student Residence House Parents

The Council is hiring house parents on contract, for a twelve bed, coeducational students' residence located in Fort Simpson.

The home serves the needs of male and female students attending school in Fort Simpson. The facility will be operated according to the Operational Guidelines established by the Council. Written applications will be evaluated according to the Operational Guidelines that may be obtained from the Dehcho Divisional Education Council office.

Responsibilities:

- provide a culturally-based family environment, where students will receive nurturing as well as personal, academic, social support
- work closely with parents and officials of the Council
- provide experiences that develop living cultural and recreational skills

Qualifications:

- experience working with adolescents in a cross-cultural setting
- training **OR** experience in the area of counseling and personal growth.
- ability to assist high school students with their studies

Written proposals, that include personal resumés and references, **must be received at the Council office by 5:00pm, June 20, 2021.** If interested in applying, please contact the Council office for a copy of the application form and requirement to be submitted as well as a copy of the Terms of Reference.

Dehcho Divisional Education Council
P.O. Box 376, Fort Simpson, NT X0E 0N0
Phone: (867) 695-7300 Fax: (867) 695-7359
Email: pbrulot@ddec.ca and fin@ddec.ca

The Canadian Genocide

The news that the graves of 215 children had been discovered near the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia came as shock to me, my family and to every First Nation person across the country. As shocking as it was, it was also knowledge we had known about our entire lives.

I am a child of residential school survivors and the trauma my parents faced as a result of this inhumane period of history has affected me and generations of my people. Both my parents attended residential school with my father Marius and his siblings going to St Anne's Residential School in Fort Albany and my mother Susan flying off to a residential school in Fort George, Quebec on the other side of James Bay.

My siblings and I grew up hearing so many strange stories about these schools but we could never really understand or appreciate these experiences because no one ever told us the full story. Our parents acknowledged that they attended these schools but they never fully explained what happened to them.

The clouded recollections of many residential school survivors were filled with memories that children died regularly at these places, were punished, tortured and abused. I've heard many personal stories of children who just never came home, children that disappeared and families that learned of their child dying months after the fact. There are also many stories of children who ran away. Some of them did escape back to their families and some just

simply disappeared.

I imagine my mom Susan faced with leaving her family as a small child and not understanding why she was getting on a float plane and taking off into the unknown. My dad Marius as a little boy would have had no idea why he was plucked from his home in Attawapiskat and sent to another part of the coast. In reality their experience was part of a grand plan to genocide. The United Nations describes genocide as a crime committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, in whole or in part.

There is no guessing as to what took place. Consider the frank words of Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932 who in 1916 said, 'I want to get rid of the Indian problem ... Our objective is to continue until there is not an Indian that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question and no Indian department.' Scott is also famously quoted in 1910 as referring to the policies of the government at the time as leading up to 'the final solution of our Indian problem.' This is a haunting statement that is reminiscent of the Nazi government who used the same language 30 years later during the holocaust.

When you read the history of Canada from an Indigenous perspective, the policies, the laws and the words of the people who dealt with Native people are clear. They wanted us gone and they wanted us out of the way for development of this land.

Imagine the shock and terror all of these children

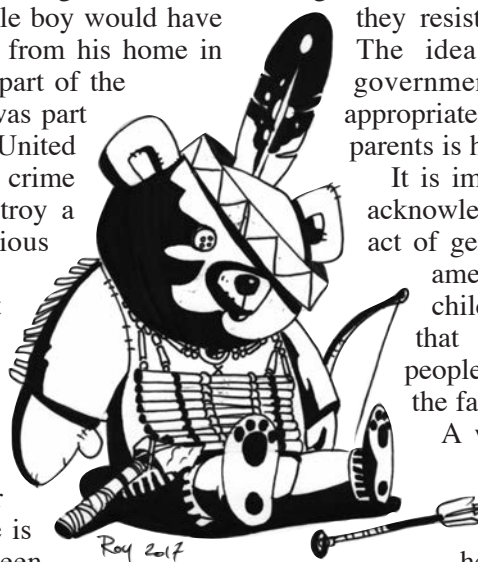
felt as their parents could not protect them from being kidnapped from their home communities and families. It was law, enforced by law enforcement and parents and guardians would be arrested and punished if they resisted this capture of their children. The idea or notion that the Canadian government could even think it was appropriate to steal away children from their parents is horrifying. It is genocidal.

It is important that the government fully acknowledge this history for what it was, an act of genocide. There is no way to make amends for the lives that were lost, the children who died, the broken people that survived and the generations of people like me who have had to live with the fallout.

A way forward from this is to first acknowledge and accept this terrible part of our shared history.

Then we can move on towards a healing path that can ease the lives of the remaining survivors and help the people of my generation to cope with this tragedy. This recent discovery is the tip of the iceberg and sites at all residential schools across the country must be investigated. A good start at making things right would be to make sure my people all across the country have clean water, descent housing and there should be more investment in health care and education. We have no choice if we want to honour the lives of 215 children and countless others who lie in unmarked graves across Canada.

For more columns by Xavier Kataquapit visit www.underthenorthernsky.com.



Educator Terry Lusty

cont. from p 8

developed a program, to cover those topics for the students in grades 7, 8, and 9.

“Years later, a group of former students thanked me for bringing them their culture. And that felt so good, so heartwarming, to get that feedback from them - that

they still remembered it and still appreciated it.”

He returned to university to pursue a Master of Education, but his studies were cut short when he was involved in a serious collision in northern Alberta, and he was never able to complete it. He spent two more years teaching in Fort Chipewyan before focusing on his advocacy work, journalism, photography, and art - work that he continues to this day.

“This has been a beautiful ride for me, all these decades of work. Kids, young people out there, and people pursuing their education or even those who aren’t, I’d really encourage them to get it,” he said. “It’s such a blessing to have an educational background, and you gain so much from it.”

To learn more about Athabasca University, please visit athabascau.ca.



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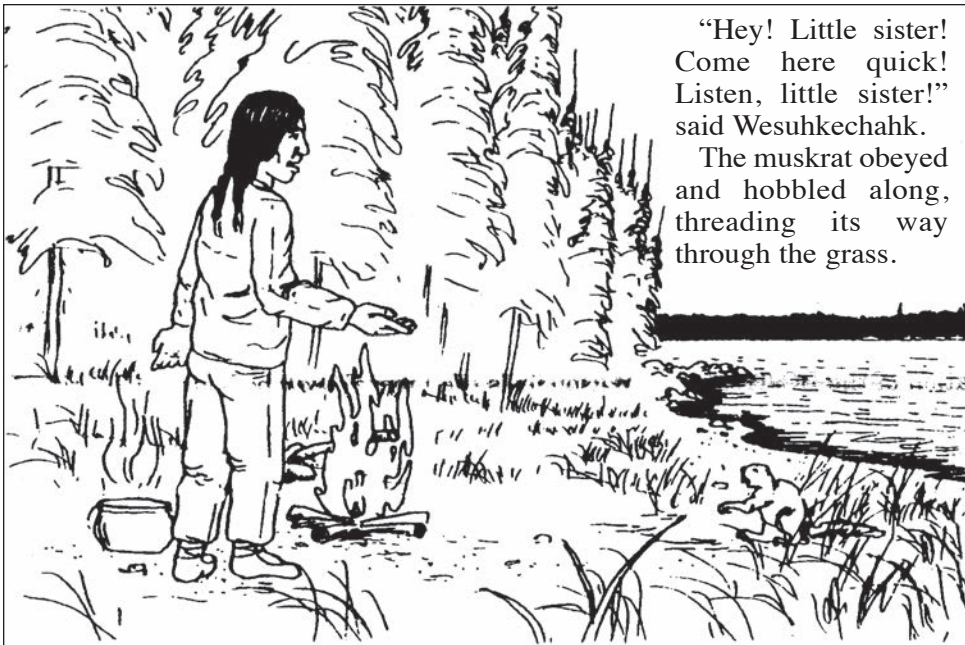
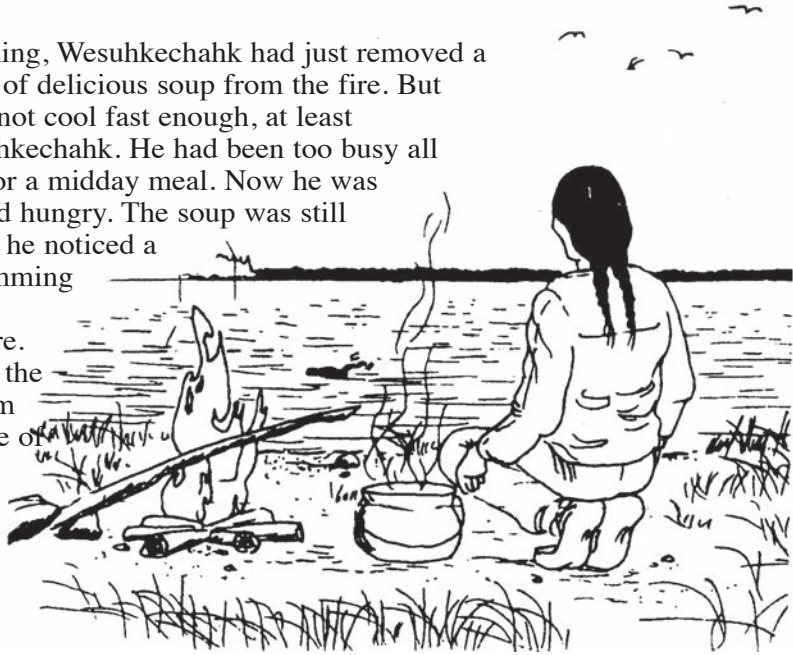
How the muskrat got its tail is provided by the Lac La Ronge Band, Curriculum Resource Unit who are dedicated to providing quality educational resources to all the people of the First Nations.

How the muskrat got its tail

Collected and illustrated by: James Ratt
Told by: Percy McKenzie

It was evening, Wesuhkechahk had just removed a cauldron full of delicious soup from the fire. But the soup did not cool fast enough, at least not for Wesuhkechahk. He had been too busy all day to stop for a midday meal. Now he was dead tired and hungry. The soup was still too hot when he noticed a muskrat swimming a few metres from the shore.

Sometimes the muskrat swam on the surface of the lake, sometimes diving and disappearing further away.



“Hey! Little sister! Come here quick! Listen, little sister!” said Wesuhkechahk. The muskrat obeyed and hobbled along, threading its way through the grass.

“What is it, big brother?” she asked.
“Will you do me a favour? My soup is too hot and I am dying of hunger. Will you plunge it into the cold water of the lake for me?”
“Gladly!” she answered.



Wesuhkechahk emptied the soup into a moose hide vessel which he tied with a cord. The muskrat plunged under the water bearing the precious burden. However, just at the moment when the vessel was going to disappear under the water, the cord gave way and the animal’s tail received a shower of boiling soup. The vessel disappeared and the soup mixed with the waters of the lake.



In an angry rage, Wesuhkechahk stormed and fumed. Wuchusk, the muskrat, came out of the water with a scalded tail! Wesuhkechahk saw that all the hair was gone from its tip. He made a vow that no hair would ever grow or cover the tail of a muskrat from one generation to the next. To this day, Wuchusk has a naked tail!

Happy National Indigenous Peoples Day!



On National Indigenous Peoples Day, and everyday, we celebrate and honour First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples achievements, contributions and culture.



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Indigenous crafters elevate central farmers market

By Terry Lusty

Celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day in Edmonton on June 19 at the Edmonton Downtown Farmers Market with live entertainment, free door prizes, raffles and local Indigenous artists.

The talented group of artists known as 'I am Collective' will definitely be in attendance. Located in the upper level of the Farmers Market (the old Army and Navy Store) at 97 Street and 103 Avenue in central Edmonton, it is gradually developing into a primary destination for people looking to purchase Indigenous arts and crafts.

Like other Edmonton Farmers Markets and Flea Markets, the business is open on Saturdays (8:30 am to 3 pm) and Sundays (10:30 am to 3 pm).

The I am Collective rents space from the privately-owned market and each weekend it accommodates Indigenous proprietors with anywhere from two to fifteen sales booths. Of course, and especially given the economic downturn over the past year due to the Covid pandemic, the onsite market is a blessing for Indigenous crafters.

On the whole, the collective has about 60 members and continues to grow. While certain crafters set up just once or twice a month, others are there every weekend like clockwork.

In addition to their own products, some crafters also sell items for friends or relatives. Many of the business are a family affair wherein everyone contributes.

For example, Jamie Lynn Stewart, a Cree from Alexander First Nation, is assisted by her hubby and older son. She produces a number of household items such as oven mitts, place mats, towels, etc, in addition to face masks, shirts, shawls, sashes, mossbags and more. Her booth also sells those ever-popular Native-designed face masks. However, she's quite proud of her oven mitts which, she explains, "have worldwide interest in such countries as the U.K., Germany,

Japan, Australia and beyond."

Much of her work incorporates Native patterns and images which adds to their popularity and gives their owners a sense of identity, "something to connect with," she says.

Then there's Darlene Cardinal who produces some excellent and exacting beadcraft jewelry such as earrings (one of her best-selling items), necklaces, hair ties and so forth. She also produces orange shirts (to honour Residential School children) and red dresses (to honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women).

Known as "Lightning Fingers," Cardinal can accommodate special custom orders for certain beaded products, such as beaded face masks. As an independent crafter her sales are her "sole source of revenue." That, combined with her terrific beadwork and renowned artistry, is all the more reason to purchase her treasured work.

Now into his third year as an exhibitor is Tom Baril. The 22-year-old Metis who used to market a lot of his "moccasin photography," has expanded his subject matter, which now includes trees, buildings and other configurations, landscapes, suns and moons, and more. Because his dad was into photography, it wasn't unusual that Tom had an early introduction to the profession and he's good at what he does.

"I started when I was eleven," he says. Now at 22, he really has evolved as is evident if you view his eye-catching imagery.

Be that as it may, Tom hopes to eventually follow his passion for cycling and wants to pursue a career as a bike technician.

Tina Brett is a well-known knitter and finger weaver whom many seek out for such items as Metis sashes and shawls as well as toques, mittens, leggings, and so on. She also produces those famous finger-woven sashes that the Metis were so well known for.



Darlene Cardinal is one of the talented crafters showcasing her beadwork as part of the "I am Collective" featured at the Edmonton Downtown Farmers Market.

One additional feature at her booth is the work of her daughter, Bobbi, who is making her own mark in the area of flat art. Among the pieces she recently had on display was an image of Metis war hero, Tommy Prince from Manitoba who was one of the country's most decorated soldiers. For anyone desiring a custom-made knitted or woven product, don't hesitate to seek out Tina's booth at the market.

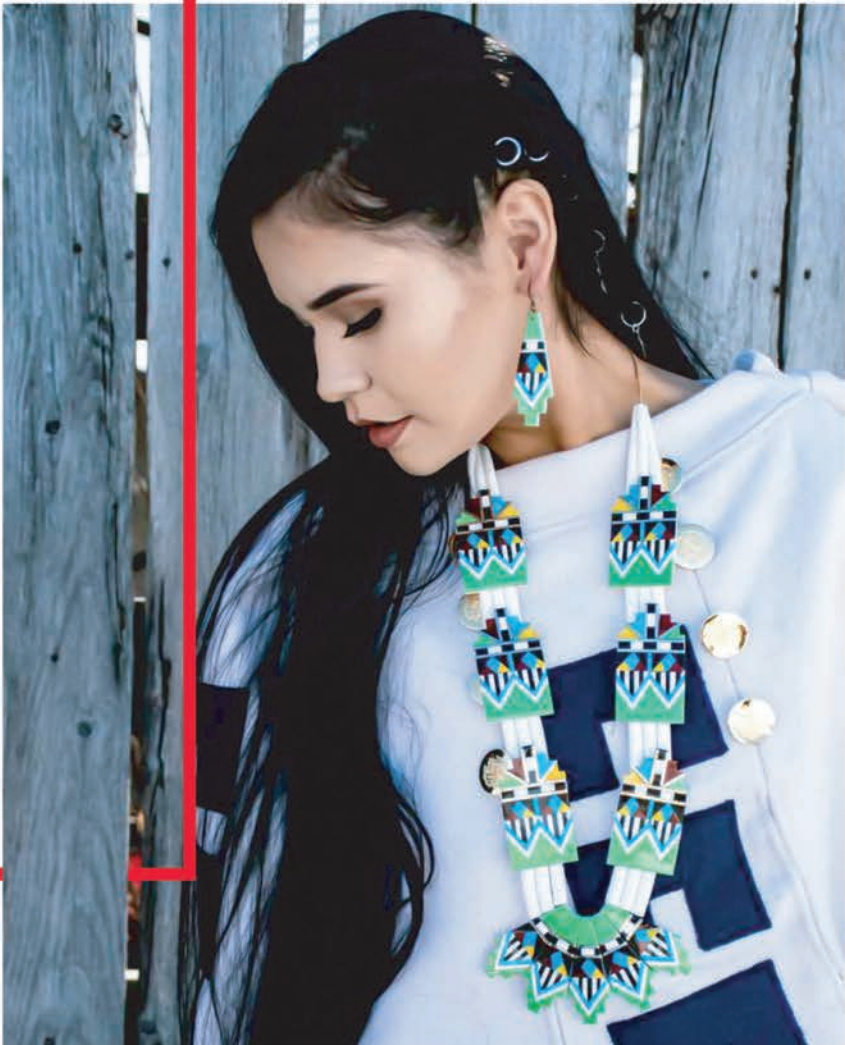
Sabrina Amanda Williams and hubby, Teddy, operate S.A.W. Sacred Beading, which also provides custom work to suit your fancy, particularly in the realm of earrings, lanyards and barrettes. Sabrina also produces certain health and hygiene products like soaps, oils, and hand sanitizers.

Covid has really put a spotlight on these types of health products, which really are a mainstay at her

Continued on page 21

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New book – The Rainbow – teaches a timeless Cree lesson

By Glenn Miller

Long before Indigenous people developed a writing system, they relied on spoken language to pass on their shared knowledge. Elders were the keepers of information. Over time, they transferred those memories through stories to the generations that followed. This system helped preserve their identity over centuries.

The stories served as historical reference points, connecting contemporary thought with ancient wisdom. This transfer of knowledge continues to be a bond between the speaker, the listener and their ancestors.

The Rainbow teaches a timeless lesson that was passed down orally through the Cree communities. It explains how Great Spirit created balance within our world’s ecosystem. The story relates a critical message that needs to be heard worldwide. Indeed, we have a global responsibility to protect the natural equilibrium of our home we call Earth.

James (Smokey) Tomkins from Alberta, was the most recent keeper of *The Rainbow*, a story passed to him by Maglorie Cardinal sixty years earlier. Historically, the story was passed through generations using oral tradition practices. Smokey chose to transfer the story to new keeper Canadian author Jean Miso. He met her during her travels in the West. Jean was interviewing Indigenous war heroes for another book.

Smokey’s grandmother was of Cree descent and the widow of the great Chief Poundmaker. For 22 years, Smokey served in the Canadian military and was an outstanding advocate for veterans.

This beautiful hard-cover, full-colour book, is suitable for Cree language learners and will make a

beautiful gift for anyone with an interest in Cree language and culture. Money collected annually from each sale of *The Rainbow* is donated to the preservation of Indigenous languages.

Dolores Greyeyes Sand provided the translation and is the daughter of the late Dr. Freda Ahenakew of Atahkakhop First Nation. Dolores is a Cree language teacher.

The book features original rich pastel artwork created by Darrell Doxtator, who is also Veteran, and member of the Tuscarora Nation (Haudenosaunee Confederacy) in south-ern Ontario. This new bilingual Cree/English book has not had a chance to be properly launched and shared due to Covid.

During Jean’s travel across Canada while interviewing in various Indigenous communities, she learned how traditional languages are becoming extinct. Elders are worried the next generation will not be able to recognize or speak their traditional language. The gift of *The Rainbow* story presented an opportunity for Jean to honour the Indigenous people and help them preserve their language. In her passion of honouring Indigenous people Jean has also produced a YouTube video to accompany her book *The Rainbow*. It was produced in Cree to help learners immerse themselves in the Cree spoken and written language. Dolores Greyeyes Sand provided the voice narration for this video.

I am honoured to have had the opportunity on several occasions to speak with Smokey and share stories from one veteran to another. I asked him what his message he would want to pass on to students today.



Metis Elder Cecile Blanke is presented a book by Last Post Fund member Glenn Miller at the ceremony for the installation of new veteran markers in Swift current.

“Education! I didn’t know where I would end up without education.” said Smokey. It motivated him to learn more and more over his life and present more opportunities to provide for his family. “Without education even the army doesn’t want you.”

It is fitting that Smokey in a small way, helped to honour a fellow Metis veteran by providing a lasting military marker.

Now each time I look at a rainbow, I appreciate its appearance and reflect in a new light on the story *The Rainbow*. The vibrant colours remind me of how bright and magical Smokey’s smile was. Now I say a quiet prayer to Smokey “ninanâskomon! I am thankful!” for him sharing a part of his culture with me.

For more information visit creeliteracy.org, *The Rainbow: A Plains Cree Story (y-dialect)*. The book can be ordered at jeanmiso.ca.

Chief recants support

cont. from p 10

treaty and residential school education.


But Littlechild told the CBC that he hadn’t read the full draft.

Treaty Six Grand Chief Vernon Watchmaker says schools on reserves don’t have to use the provincial curriculum and may resort to developing their own.

But students, whether Indigenous or settler, in provincial schools don’t have that ability, underscoring the importance of providing an in-depth exploration of Indigenous history and culture.

“A history of Alberta that does not begin with the rich and deep histories of the Treaty First Nations and does not accurately portray how we have survived and thrived to this day, is a faulty and incomplete one,” Watchmaker told CTV News after the draft was unveiled.

All of the province’s largest school boards have rejected piloting the draft curriculum, including the Calgary Board of Education, the Calgary Catholic School District, the Edmonton Public School Board, Edmonton Catholic Schools, Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools, where LaGrange once served as a trustee, and Red Deer Public School Board, as well as public and separate school boards in Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Grande Prairie.



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Best wishes to everyone for a Happy National Indigenous Peoples Day!
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Real action is needed for missing First Nations children

(Ottawa, ON) – Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde released the below statement to mark the first day of Indigenous Peoples History month and in advance of the June 2 anniversary of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action.

“In the days since the discovery of the remains of children from Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation and those who attended Kamloops Indian Residential School, there has been an outpour of support to our people and communities. Flags are half mast, children’s shoes line the steps at Parliament and at monuments across the country and an orange wave is washing over social media. All eyes are on First Nations as we attempt to digest the most recent evidence of the genocide against our people, our children.

We have the attention of our non-Indigenous brothers and sisters, many of whom seek direction on how to show support. It’s incumbent on us right now to work together to seize the opportunity to harness this awareness and this energy. Everyone has a role. Every single government and person in Canada can help drive change, to honour our shared history and commit to doing better as a country.

The Government of Canada must respond to First Nations seeking assistance in finding our lost children and support our mourning First Nations communities. We deeply appreciate the support of so many concerned Canadians. I demand that all governments commit to supporting First Nations seeking thorough investigations into former residential school sites and to take any, and all action available to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

The resources and efforts currently being put toward a judicial review of the 2016 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision should be invested in fulfilling the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls to Justice of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous women and Girls.

Moments of silence are respectful and heartfelt, but we need to see real action. I demand the federal government stop fighting our children in court and implement the orders from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Provincial and territorial governments must stop apprehending our children and work with First Nations to fully implement the *Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*.

We need to see real action to end the systemic racism that persists in every single system in the country. And we need to see Parliament implement international human rights standards in Canada by passing C-15, the proposed legislation on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The discovery at Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation confirms what First Nations have believed for decades took place at residential schools.

Indigenous crafters *cont. from p 19*

booth. Like Darlene, Sabrina is on-site pretty well every weekend.

These are but a few of the many Native crafters who are established artisans, but still constitute only several of the dozens who make up the I am Collective.

What about you? Are you in the market for a special gift for someone - maybe as a birthday, graduation, anniversary, wedding or Christmas gift? Or perhaps there's something you'd like for yourself? After all, it's okay to treat oneself every now and then.

Well, look no further. Amble on down to the 97th Street Farmers Market. Most of the Native crafts are on the second level.

If you wish to own a one-of-a-kind product or craft piece, and if you ever wanted to show true support for Indigenous products and artisans, then find your way to this market some weekend. That's where you'll find a variety of genuine, handcrafted items, many of which are unique and one-of-a-kind.

Finally, your purchase(s) will definitely assist the economic well-being of these talented Indigenous craft makers.

With increased awareness, it’s my hope there will be increased understanding for the searing reality of intergenerational impacts of the “Indian” Residential School system.

I encourage every single person in Canada to stand with First Nations as we press forward for action to ensure our children are returned to their people to finally receive the respect and dignity not provided to them in life.

I encourage any concerned Canadian to write their Member of Parliament to press for the full implementation of all the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We must



continue to reveal the truth, no matter how painful, in order to move toward reconciliation.”

The AFN is the national organization representing First Nations people in Canada. Follow AFN on Twitter @AFN_Updates.

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Two Alberta men raising awareness for MMIWG

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Two Alberta men are walking to Ottawa to raise awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

“We are fighting for every lost child in this world,” one of the men, Adam McDonald, told Global News.

McDonald and Stanley Gilbert Jean were welcomed by a gathering outside the legislature when they arrived in Edmonton on June 7.

The discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous children at the site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School demonstrates the continuing need to have Indigenous voices heard, McDonald said.

“Our First Nations issues and Métis issues and Inuit issues have not been heard,” he said.

“It’s all going to resurface, and we’re never going to stop fighting for the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.”

McDonald, who began walking to raise awareness for MMIWG five years ago, says he’s walked along every major highway in the country. “Once I start something, I’m never going to give up,” he said.

It’s Jean’s first time doing the walk, which he said in addition to raising awareness about a major issue is helpful on his path to sobriety.

Bear Clan Patrol Edmonton Beaver Hills House organized the June 7 greeting event. Leader Judith Gale told Global the cause is particularly close to her heart because her sister was murdered 40 years ago

and it wasn’t taken seriously by police.

“Forty years ago, they never looked for her and still, 40 years later, they aren’t doing anything,” she said. “She laid in the morgue for three months with a tag on her toe as a Jane Doe. It’s a cause that’s dear to my heart and I do it for my sister.”

Gale, a Sixties Scoop survivor, said Indigenous children taken away from their parents for being Indigenous also hits close to home. She was taken from her family and sent to live with a white family on the other side of the country.

Gestures like McDonald’s and Jean’s go a long way to maintaining Indigenous traditions, Gale added.

“In our community, our men are so important,” she said. “They play an essential role and their role is to be warriors, to be our protectors. (To) go walking across Turtle Island in commemoration of (the) missing and murdered is fantastic. I wish more warriors would step up.”

The two men don’t have a set date for their arrival in Ottawa, because they want to stop and meet with supporters along the way.

Marion Buller, the chief commissioner of the inquiry into MMIWG, said in 2019 that the crux of the issue is a “persistent and deliberate pattern of systemic racial and gendered human and Indigenous-rights violations and abuses, perpetuated historically and maintained today by the Canadian state, designed



Adam McDonald and Stan Gilbert

to displace Indigenous people from their lands, social structures and governments, and to eradicate their existence as nations, communities, families and individuals.”

After the report, which contains 200 recommendations for different levels of government, came out, Buller told a crowd in Ottawa that “this is genocide.”

Stephanie Harpe, who also helped organize the welcoming event at the legislature, says there’s been no concrete progress on the inquiry’s recommendations after two years.

“We know that people on the ground and grassroots organizations and advocates and the people, we have to do the work ourselves. We’re realizing that every day,” Harpe said.

There are a growing number of settlers who are sympathetic to the cause and want to help in whatever capacity they can, she added.

“It’s important that the people with decision-making power know that the people care about change,” said Harpe.

Grandin Mural *cont. from p 13*

nowhere to be seen.

“I’m very sad that it took this tragedy on this scale to move all of us to this action,” said Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson.

“People, particularly survivors and intergenerational survivors of residential schooling, have no choice but to be in its presence and behold it

and people have reported for some time that is triggering and re-traumatizing for them.”

The LRT station was also named after the Residential School Bishop, and the city council’s decision will also remove any namesakes for Grandin that appear on Municipal sites. The Grandin Catholic Elementary School in Edmonton also bears his name and it has been reported that the Catholic School Board is currently reviewing the name. There are also


calls for Bishop Grandin High School in Calgary to undergo a name change.

His name is already being removed from the LRT signage in Edmonton.

The city will be putting together a working group made up Indigenous and Francophone leaders in order to figure out what the next steps for the mural are. There will also be another working group dedicated to the re-naming process.



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Honouring National Indigenous Peoples Day

On behalf of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, I am proud to recognize National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, 2021. This special day is an opportunity for all residents to recognize the histories, cultures, and perspectives of Indigenous People, places and communities that have existed for millennia and continue to thrive in our region. Today, we honour the lasting and ongoing contributions of Indigenous Peoples to Canada and Wood Buffalo through a shared and collective history.

Today, more than ever, it is vitally important that all of us recognize the strength and resiliency of Indigenous Peoples in maintaining their languages and cultures in the face of ongoing colonial impacts, systemic racism, and enduring hardships. The recent, tragic discovery of the unmarked graves of 215 children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School is a painful reminder of the terrible legacy of Indian residential schools and their devastating and ongoing impacts.

On this National Indigenous Peoples Day, and all other days, we stand with Indigenous Peoples in this region and across the country with a commitment to keep doing more, to learn, to listen, and to work in partnership as we move forward on the path of reconciliation.

Thank you
Mayor Don Scott

Provincial control of resources cannot exclude Treaty partners

By Chief and Council of the Fort McKay First Nation

On May 31, Premier Kenney commemorated the 91st anniversary of four provincial natural resources transfer agreements and a constitutional amendment that solidified “the principle of provincial equality and control over natural resources.”

He noted that, until then, Alberta “had been denied full control over [its] natural resources, a right given to all other provinces upon Confederation.” Assuming this control and asserting it against federal intrusion in the 1970s “propelled our province into its role as the engine of prosperity for our country,” said Kenney.

Alberta’s First Nations are not celebrating. Our treaties were made with the Crown—and we do not care if the Crown dresses as Canada or Alberta so long as the sacred promises in the treaties are upheld. Are First Nations better off under Alberta’s control of resources, or has Canada been a more honourable partner? Here is the scorecard.

Canada has abused First Nations peoples’ trust for over a century. At times in our shared history, we could not vote; we could not leave our reserves without the permission of the Indian agent.

Our children were shipped to residential schools as late as 1996, beginning a cycle of cultural dispossession and intergenerational trauma with which we still struggle.

It has been illegal to hire a lawyer to represent our interests, and illegal for lawyers to work on our behalf. It was not until 1982, when Canada passed its own Constitution Act, that Indigenous peoples’ rights were formally “recognized and affirmed.”

Alberta has generated \$220 billion in natural resource revenues of which roughly \$17 billion is saved in the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. Norway, by contrast, has saved \$1.6 trillion from smaller offshore reservoirs.

The Alberta Energy Regulator has estimated it will cost \$260 billion to clean up the oilsands, which are in Fort McKay’s backyard. Government has so far collected just \$1.6 billion.

Alberta announced just last month it is reviewing

the Mines Financial Security Program, which collects fees to fund reclamation. First Nations have not been asked to participate. The reclamation deficit exceeds \$258 billion.

The chiefs and headmen of First Nations overlapping present-day borders of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories signed Treaty No. 8 with the federal Crown in right of Queen Victoria in 1899, six years before Alberta and Saskatchewan became Canada’s eighth and ninth provinces.

Treaty 8 established a partnership with the Crown to establish peace and good will between First Nations and the growing number of European settlers, and to assure First Nations of “what allowances they are to count upon and receive from Her Majesty’s bounty and benevolence.”

In exchange, the treaty grants perpetual hunting, fishing and trapping rights, “Indian reserves,” and an annual payment to members of \$5 plus “as much ammunition and twine for making nets annually as will amount in value to one dollar.” That latter trifling promise has been kept; many others, more substantial, have not.

Alberta’s Natural Resources Transfer Act allowed the province to assume control and regulate all public lands and natural resources, including oil and gas, forests, minerals, and fish and wildlife. But it cannot do so without its treaty partners. No one asked

First Nations, whose territories were reassigned in 1930, what we thought. That is a broken promise.

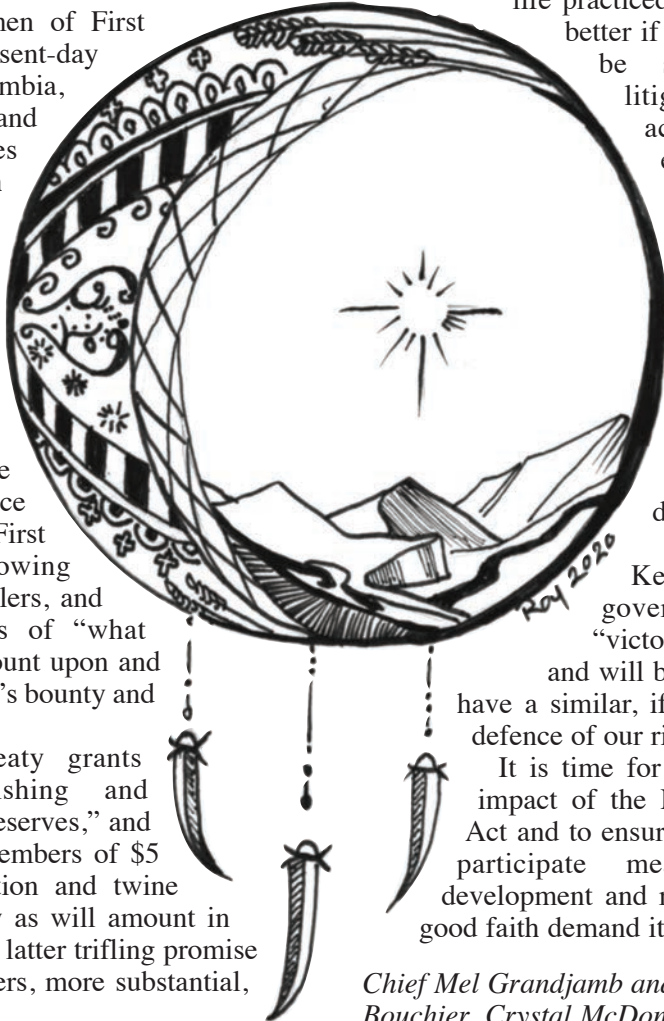
Alberta cannot by itself take up lands that will infringe on treaty rights; it takes two to make land use decisions. Unfortunately, First Nations are often forced to litigate to protect our rights, which stalls development projects, slows economic development, and reduces industrial certainty.

Some rights remain to be better defined and protected, including rights to preserve and share with our children our cultures, languages, and ways of life practiced for millennia. It would be better if these rights did not have to be secured through costly litigation and were, instead, acknowledged without engaging the courts.

And our rights should include participation with Alberta in joint decisions about resource development in our traditional territories, sharing in resource development revenues, and working with Alberta to ensure the landscape is restored when development is complete.

In his statement, Premier Kenney invited the federal government to remember that “victories have been won before and will be won again.” First Nations have a similar, if not better, track record in defence of our rights.

It is time for the premier to discuss the impact of the Natural Resources Transfer Act and to ensure that First Nations peoples participate meaningfully in resource development and reclamation. Our treaty and good faith demand it.



Chief Mel Grandjamb and councillors David Bouchier, Crystal McDonald, Raymond Powder and Melinda Stewart are the elected representatives of the Fort McKay First Nation.

This article originally appeared in Fort McMurray Today on June 11, 2021.

As we celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day, let us take time to reflect on the important contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Metis People to our society and reaffirm our commitment to walk the path to justice, equality and reconciliation together.


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Every Child Matters



Honouring departed veterans by installing military markers

By Glenn Miller

Research done over the winter months by volunteer members of the Last Post Fund on unmarked Veterans graves has led to orders being placed for headstones that will be placed throughout the summer months and into the fall. The installation of an estimated 140 military markers in Alberta on previously unmarked Veterans graves is anticipated over the course of the next months.

“Our volunteers are looking forward to hosting a number of commemorative ceremonies in communities across Alberta as markers are installed during this summer and fall, as Covid conditions allow,” says Hans Brink, Alberta Branch President of the Last Post Fund.

The mission of the Last Post Fund is to ensure that no Veteran is denied a dignified funeral and burial, as well as a military gravestone, due to insufficient funds at time of death. In addition to delivering the Funeral and Burial Program on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada, the Last Post Fund supports other initiatives aimed at commemorating Canadian Veterans.

These include the Unmarked Grave Program, through which the Last Post Fund provides military markers for eligible Veterans who have been deceased for over five years and lie in unmarked graves. Since the inception of this Program in 1996, the graves of 6,946 Veterans have been properly marked across the country. Last year alone, thanks to researchers 605 markers were installed under the Unmarked Grave Program.

In keeping with the spirit of the ongoing Reconciliation process, The Last Post Fund (LPF) is proud to help commemorate and honour Indigenous Veterans through the Indigenous Veterans Initiative (IVI), launched in March 2019. The Indigenous Veterans Initiative (IVI) offers two services. The placement of a military marker for Veterans that have been buried more than 5 years and with no existing permanent marker in place. The inscription of the Indigenous Veteran’s traditional name on existing tombstone previously placed by the Last Post Fund or by Veterans Affairs Canada.

Both services require research and community

support from members of Indigenous communities throughout Canada. The LPF provides a list of Indigenous Veterans as a starting point for the research.

The program is gaining traction through awareness and has made several achievements since being launched in March 2019: A summary to date would include:

- 175 cases submitted to date
- 74 headstones approved and ordered/installed to date
- Over 2,500 Indigenous Veterans names researched
- 23 Indigenous community researchers established across Canada
- Requests for traditional names in 6 distinct Indigenous languages received (Algonquin, Blackfoot, Cree, Interior Salishan, Inuktitut, Saulteaux)
- Special collaboration with Cree artist Jason Carter for the creation of seven symbols for headstone inscriptions, to be used in perpetuity

At a recent ceremony in Swift Current, Saskatchewan in partnership with the local legion recognition was given to the installation of a number of new markers in a field of honour. Local Metis Elder Cecile Blanke was invited to attend. She presented Last Post Fund volunteer Glenn Miller her book *Metis Veterans Monument and Lac Pelletier History Logbook*. The first 4 pages contain pictures and short biographies of sixteen Metis veterans from the area. Miller has begun researching where these veterans are buried across Canada and if they have a permanent marker. Initial findings have indicated WW2 veteran Elise Fayant who served in the Canadian Army Womens Corps. After the war she married Metis veteran John Rouzault. Both are buried together in Calgary. He has a foot marker, but her headstone has been removed over the years likely due to damage and



Shown here is the new military marker installed in September 2020 at Athabasca cemetery by The Last Post fund under the Indigenous Veterans Initiative for Private Edward Loutit. The Metis symbol is now available as an option for new military markers. (Photo by Glenn Miller)

remains unmarked. An application has been submitted by Miller to the Last Post Fund for her to have an upright military marker with the Metis symbol engraved. Another WW2 veteran Lloyd Trottier died in Whitefish Montana in 2004. Miller is working with the American veteran post to determine where he was buried.

A new Lost Veterans Initiative aims to support volunteer researchers for unmarked Veterans graves. As society has allowed people to work and live further from where they were born, many veterans are buried in other locations across Canada and elsewhere.

With Father’s Day approaching the Last Post Fund is requesting that Canadians visiting the gravesite of a departed loved one take note of any veteran unmarked graves they know of. The very last honour we can bestow upon these heroes is to recognize and record their service.

If you know of a Veteran in an unmarked grave for more than 5 years, you can help us ensure they receive a permanent marker to recognize their service, sacrifice and commitment by calling 1-800-465-7113 or visiting The Last Post Fund website for more information.

Glenn Miller is a volunteer with The Last Post Fund.

For further details on the Indigenous Veterans Initiative (IVI) you can contact Maria Trujillo, Program Coordinator mtrujillo@lastpost.ca 1-800-465-7113; 222 (Mobile during pandemic: 438-880-7227).

Reconciliation *cont. from p 4*

journalist, in a tweet supports TRC recommendations as long as “the discoveries are not hijacked by fanatics in support of some deranged far-left claim of deliberate murder and genocide.” *The Dorchester Review* also replied to Sean Carleton, editor at Active History, that “the cause of death (in residential schools) was usually tuberculosis or some other disease.”

Happy National Indigenous Peoples Day

From MLA Martin Long
West Yellowhead

Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2021

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These statements show the ignorance and racist views staff and leadership at the Government of Alberta have of our Indigenous communities, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and our truths. Chris Champion has never been disavowed by the UCP.

Instead of actively confronting the problem and working with Treaty partners, the UCP government continues to employ people who would rather confront and demean the experiences of the victims of the residential school system. Jason Kenney issued a single statement on Twitter about the atrocities committed, while Matt Wolf, the Executive Director of Issues Management, managed to retweet a single news article – without making a statement himself.

Celebrating the unique cultures and outstanding contributions that First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have made to Canada.

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It is disgusting and hurtful to see these words come from the Premier, Ministers, and their staff when they do not call out others who make excuses for genocide. Their actions do not align with their statements.

Yet on May 31, the UCP government celebrated 91 years since the Dominion of Canada illegally transferred our Natural Resources to the province through the Natural Resources Transfer Act. Again, celebrating the exploitation of our way of life and subjugating our peoples. The citizens of the Treaty No. 8 Sovereign Nations question the UCP’s ethics and philosophy. Their actions including their recent Legislation, Bills, Regulations, and media statements are once again opportunistic and contradictory to their actions.

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Treaty 6 Nations dissolve protocol agreement with Alberta

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations are so disillusioned and upset with the Alberta government that they have dissolved their historic protocol agreement with the province.

Late last year, the Confederacy and the Alberta Government partnered in a protocol agreement meant to facilitate meetings between the two parties.

The agreement outlined a formal process for ministers and Chiefs and Councils to meet periodically throughout the year in order to discuss topics such as land, resources, health care, education, and so on. The agreement also committed to an annual meeting between the Premier of Alberta and the Chiefs of the Confederacy and was considered to be a “promise between governments about communication and collaboration with a focus on shared prosperity, now and for years to come.”

However, on June 2, the Confederacy announced that they have dissolved the agreement.

In a press release the Confederacy says that they have ended the relationship because the Government has been making unilateral decisions without consulting First Nations.

Grand Chief Vernon Watchmaker said, “The decision to dissolve the Agreement was made by the member First Nations at the Assembly meeting (in May). When we gave our notice, we left the door open to discussions when the Government was ready to work in a more effective and collaborative manner.”

Things appear to have escalated recently as the Grand Chief was “appalled” by the Premier’s comments in defense of the glorification of residential school architects whose names are currently attached to schools and other public places.

Last week the remains of 215 First Nation children were found in a mass grave at a former residential school in Kamloops, BC. With the discovery came a resurgent of calls to remove the names of

residential school architects from schools, train stations, and more.

For example, an LRT station in Edmonton is named after Bishop Vital-Justin Grandin, an early supporter of residential schools who lobbied for their funding. There are also schools named for Bishop Grandin in both Edmonton and Calgary.

Premier Kenney, in response to the name-change calls, said “I think Canada is worth celebrating. I think Canada is a great historical achievement. It is a country that people all around the world seek to join as new Canadians.”

He said Canada “is an imperfect country, but it is still a great country.”

“Just as John A. Macdonald was an imperfect man but was still a great leader.

“If we want to get into cancelling every figure in our history who took positions on issues at the time that we now judge harshly, and rightly in historical retrospective, but if that’s the new standard, then I think almost the entire founding leadership of our country gets cancelled,” said the Premier.

In response to the Premier’s comments, the Confederacy said,

“Just when we think we are experiencing acts of reconciliation, the Premier contradicts all the efforts toward an understanding and confirms that the Treaty Six Chiefs made the right decision to dissolve the Protocol Agreement that was made.”

Grand Chief Watchmaker continued the sentiment by saying the Premier is insensitive to Indigenous

people.
“Statements such as those grounded in the Doctrine of Discovery bring dishonour to the Crown and reveal an insensitivity that it is difficult to deal with,” said Grand Chief Watchmaker.

“The real Canadian story is that we entered into a Peace and Friendship Treaty with the Crown. Sir John A McDonald acted inhumanely toward First Nations, he aggressively implemented policies and legislation in order to assimilate our people at all costs and we continue to deal with the aftermath to this day.”

Richard Feehan, NDP Critic for Indigenous Relations, made the following statement in response to the dissolution of the Protocol Agreement between Treaty Six and Alberta:

“I am profoundly saddened and frustrated to see Premier Jason Kenney inflict so much damage on the relationship between First Nations and the Province of Alberta.”

“It’s clear from Grand Chief Watchmaker’s statement that the Kenney government has failed to work collaboratively with Treaty Six First Nations for some time,” continued Feehan.

“While Albertans are confronting the horror of a mass grave filled with the remains of hundreds of Indigenous children, the premier felt that was the moment for him to defend one of the central figures in the residential school system.”

“This follows a determined effort by the Kenney government to delay teaching the history of residential schools in their draft curriculum, in clear contravention of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”

“Through their words and actions, Jason Kenney and the UCP are unravelling years of work towards reconciliation,” concluded Feehan.



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Feds must collaborate with IRS survivors to investigate burial sites

By the NCTR and IRSHDC

The discovery of an unmarked mass burial site at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School highlights the urgent need for a concerted national response on behalf of all the children who were stolen from their families and who never returned home.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) and the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (IRSHDC) at the University of British Columbia are calling on the federal government to work in collaboration with residential school Survivors and Indigenous governments to establish a national framework for investigation and protection of burial sites, consistent with the rights, laws, jurisdiction and protocols of the affected Nations.

Lila Bruyere of the NCTR Survivor’s Circle, said, “Survivors have always been clear that the road to reconciliation must begin with the truth. Canada’s failure to properly investigate and protect the sites where our sisters and brothers were buried means that we still do not have the whole truth. Too many of these children have never been identified by name and have never been located. This has to change. We owe it to these children to do this important work and to do it in our culture through ceremony in a good way.”

The NCTR and TRC have so far documented 4,117 deaths of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children in residential schools across Canada. Former Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Murray Sinclair has estimated that 6000 or more Indigenous children may have died due to abuse and neglect in residential schools.

The NCTR and IRSHDC acknowledge the leadership of the Tk’emlups te Secwépemc in locating the mass grave where 215 children were buried on their traditional territory. The discovery has galvanized national attention to a history of disappearance and loss that is well known to First Nations, Inuit and Métis families and communities.

Angela White, Executive Director, Indian Residential School Survivors Society (IRSSS) and member of the IRSHDC Indigenous Advisory Committee said, “IRSSS has witnessed the testimony of thousands of former students, and the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School only proves that their spoken and documented truths have unveiled the atrocities under the guise of School. The way forward for true reconciliation is to put the ACTION behind the words.

“We cannot change the horrid past but we can begin by ensuring that we hold the Canadian Government and the Churches accountable by demanding the implementation of all the recommendations from the TRC, an inquiry into the treatment of Indigenous peoples in healthcare, and the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.”

The TRC’s Calls to Action, released six years ago this week, included calls for the federal government to work with Survivors and Indigenous peoples to develop and implement strategies and procedures to investigate, document, and protect potential burial sites (Calls to Action 71-76). The TRC also said that the development of such strategies must be led by the affected Indigenous Nations and that Indigenous protocols must be respected.

IRSHDC Director Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (Aki-Kwe) said, “Canada has not adequately responded to the Calls to Action. This has left the full truth of the residential schools concealed and Indigenous peoples vulnerable to waves of unspeakable trauma, as we have seen these past weeks. There must be a new determination and diligent action by Canada on the key priorities like the missing children and burial sites.

“The world is watching, and a bright light must be shone on those things that were swept aside six years ago. The Survivors, and all Indigenous peoples



deserve to know their voices were listened to when they told Canada there were children who never made it home, and someone did the right thing—they found them.”

The NCTR and IRSHDC emphasize that all potential residential school burial sites must be investigated and documented. Until such investigations can take place, these sites must be protected from erosion, destruction, manipulation or disturbance.

Hiding, damaging, interfering with or destroying the graves of residential school children must be recognized as a crime and prosecuted as such. In addition, national standards must be put in place concerning use of investigative technologies such as ground scanning radar to respect the privacy of affected families and ensure that any evidence of crimes is not compromised. A renewed commitment to ensure the affected Nations have all records related to missing and buried children and documentation where records are absent is urgently required.

Continued on page 27

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Protecting vulnerable Albertans from Hate Crimes

A new Alberta Security Infrastructure Program will help protect targets of hate-motivated crime with funding for security upgrades.

Starting this fall, religious and ethnic organizations and Indigenous groups that are at risk of being targeted by hate-inspired violence or vandalism will be able to apply for grants for security and technology improvements.

“As we tragically witnessed this week, religious and ethnic minorities in Canada remain at risk of being targeted with hate-motivated crime,” stated Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, referring to the horrific murder of a Muslim family in London Ontario. “These cowardly acts of bigotry have no place in our province. Alberta’s government stands shoulder to shoulder with these communities and is proud to deliver on our election commitment to help keep them safe.”

Funding for upgrades to facility infrastructure, including security and monitoring systems, will help protect both individuals and property from vandalism and other criminal acts. The program will be flexible and accessible enough to address a range

of protective measures, such as security planning, education and training.

“Complex problems such as hate crimes and racism place an incredible burden on vulnerable Albertans,” added Minister of Justice and Solicitor General Kaycee Madu. “The Alberta Security Infrastructure Program will empower these Albertans and their communities by providing additional layers of protection for those in need. Empowered communities are safe communities.”

The initial call for grant applications will take place this fall. A total of \$500,000 will be available, with applicants eligible for up to \$10,000 to assist with training and security assessments, as well as up to \$90,000 for security infrastructure. More information on program eligibility and the application process will become available in the coming months.

“The Alberta Security Infrastructure Program is vital to the safety and security of all Albertans,” concluded MLA for Calgary-Cross Mickey Amery. “Racism and hate-motivated crimes impact us all and this program demonstrates our government’s commitment to protecting all Albertans.”



The Alberta government has also announced the creation of a community liaison on hate crimes, an adviser based out of the ministry of justice. That person will consult with ethnic, religious and LGBTQ communities, as well as the Anti-Racism Advisory Council (ARAC), “about what more we can do to ensure that we are addressing issues of hate crime in a comprehensive manner,” noted Minister Madu.

“At the end of the day the question for us is how do we assure minority, cultural and Indigenous communities in this province that they are going to be safe.”

Feds must collaborate

cont. from p 26

Finally, all measures to investigate and protect burial sites must be consistent with the rights of Indigenous peoples in domestic and international law, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This includes respect for the decision-making authority of Indigenous governments and the right of Indigenous peoples to control their own lands and territories. The UN Declaration specifically calls on states to work with Indigenous peoples to develop appropriate mechanisms to protect and return human remains.

Stephanie Scott, the Executive Director of the

NCTR, said, “Six years after the release of the 94 Calls to Action we’re still a long way from having the full truth of what happened to all the children taken away to residential schools. I cannot overstate the importance, the seriousness, or the urgency of Canada’s obligation to the Survivors, to their communities, and to all the children who never returned home. Canada must work with Indigenous peoples to ensure that every burial site is found and every burial site is protected according to the rights, laws and protocols of the affected Nations.”

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is a place of learning and dialogue where the truths of Residential School Survivors, families and communities are honoured and kept safe for future generations. The NCTR was established to maintain

the archive of records shared with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and to continue ongoing work begun by the TRC, including establishing a National Student Memorial Register to remember and honour the children who never returned home from residential schools.

The Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (IRSHDC) at the University of British Columbia addresses the colonial legacy of residential schools and other policies imposed by the Canadian government on Indigenous Peoples, and ensures that this history is acknowledged, examined and understood. As a Survivor-centred, trauma-informed space, the Centre works in service to Indigenous communities and peoples of Canada.

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YOURHEALTH OURSTRENGTH

COVID-19 VACCINES | MYTH BUSTING

MYTH
The vaccines will alter my DNA.

FACT
The vaccines do not enter the nucleus of the cell, where your DNA is kept. It is impossible for the vaccine to change your DNA.

MYTH
The vaccines contain fetal tissue.

FACT
The vaccines were not developed using fetal tissue.

MYTH
Vaccines cause autism.

FACT
There is no scientific evidence that vaccines cause autism.

MYTH
The vaccines cause blood clots.

FACT
The AstraZeneca vaccine has a 1 in 250,000 chance of causing a blood clot – or, 0.000004 per cent.

MYTH
The vaccines can give you the virus.

FACT
The vaccines do not contain COVID-19. The vaccines produce a protein that helps your immune system recognize COVID-19 and fight it.

MYTH
The vaccines were rushed.

FACT
Companies were given more support and resources than ever before to develop these vaccines as quickly as possible. There were no safety shortcuts.

MYTH
The vaccines cause severe side effects.

FACT
For most people, the vaccines will cause mild side effects such as a sore arm, fatigue, headache and fever. Side effects are a sign that your immune system is doing what it is supposed to.

MYTH
If I've already had COVID-19, I don't need a vaccine.

FACT
There is no proof that a long-lasting natural immunity against COVID-19 exists. It is possible to be re-infected with COVID-19. Experts recommend vaccination for everyone aged 12+.

- Wash your hands • Wear a mask • Practice physical distancing
- Avoid gatherings • If you are sick, stay home

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