





# Town of Devon launches art database

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Mitch Wincentaylo is the Indigenous Engagement and Culture and Inclusion Coordinator for the Town of Devon. Over the past three years, he has been fostering and developing great relationships with the nearby First Nation Communities.

Most recently, he developed a new Indigenous art database and it's the first of its kind in the municipality in rural Alberta. The data base promotes Indigenous artists who are from Treaty 6 and surrounding First Nation communities. It should be up and running later this month.

"I was working with our communication department and updating our website," remarked Wincentaylo. "I thought why we don't start showcasing local Indigenous artisans, craftsmen, craftswomen, and crafty people from not only our community but around Treaty 6.

"If they want to purchase something locally made and support Indigenous businesses – they just go to the website and look through the directory. They can source out different products and services."

"Treaty is the foundation of the work that I have been doing in the community and what that really means for all of us as settler Canadians on Treaty 6 land. It's important to know the true intent of that relationship, working together, coming together; that

Nation to Nation relationship is so important and it's something that hasn't been taught in mainstream society for so long," said Wincentaylo.

He explained from his perspective, it means working together, developing that friendship, that neighbourly connection between settler Canadians and the First Peoples of Canada – it's about working together for friendship.

"What we have been trying to do for the Town of Devon is build those relationships and connections with Treaty 6 First Nations and [members of] Metis Nation Region 4 but more specifically the Nations whose traditional territories our community resides within, which is Enoch Cree Nation and the Four Nations of Maskwacis – Montana, Samson, Ermineskin and Louis Bull," said Wincentaylo.

"We are still learning about the history, learning new things from treaty from knowledge carriers and elders as well as the archival departments."

Some of the big highlights have been communities coming together and learning from each other, he said. "Listening to the First Peoples, their stories, and developing a better understanding of what it means to be an ally."

In the Town of Devon, we run lots of awareness gatherings and events. One such event is Treaty 6 Day,



which is now officially recognized by the Town of Devon on August 23 – as an annual gathering.

"Treaty 6 Day is intended for our community to come together and learn about Treaty and the true history of the land and peoples of Treaty 6."

"In recent years, we have done awareness on MMIWG and Residential Schools. We bring Indigenous voices to our community for locals to listen to and understand and in the process learn what they can do as a Treaty person, Settler Canadian and as an ally – working towards ending racism, hate and prejudices," said Wincentaylo.

"Along with that, we run many activities such as Cree language programs, Ribbon Skirt Workshops and Cree Culture workshops." He explained that the

Continued on page 3

# Concerns about the Emergencies Act

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On Wednesday Feb 22, Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief RoseAnne Archibald held a press conference as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau ended the government's use of the Emergencies Act.

The National chief expressed her concern over the Act during the press conference, believing the federal and provincial governments would use the act against First Nation activists should a protest arise.

"I am really concerned, though, about the long-term future of protests and civil actions First Nations might take and when is the situation going to be deemed an emergency?" said Archibald. "And will the government, now that it's utilized this act for non-Indigenous people, quickly act when our people are involved in civil actions or actions or protests in the future? It's something that's on my mind and I'm very concerned about."

Prime Minister Trudeau invoked the Emergencies Act on February 14 in order to disperse the "Freedom Convoy" protests and "occupations" across Canada that disrupted the country's supply chains and daily infrastructure for several weeks.

The Act grants police the power to designate areas as "no-go zones" that prohibit public assembly and the ability to freeze protesters' bank accounts and seize assets. During her press conference, Archibald recalled the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory rail-way protests in 2020 and speculated over what the government could do should a similar situation happen.

Continued on page 5

## Indigenous Community Actions Against COVID-19

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- Craig

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# Reporter Chevi Rabbit advocates for mental health and positivity

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Chevi Rabbit has made a name for herself as a mental health advocate over the years, but during the pandemic she decided to take her advocacy national by getting involved with the cross-country mental health campaign Soar Above Stigma.

“It’s a harsh world out there...telling us we don’t deserve love and respect unless we’re something we’re not,” Rabbit says in a TV ad for Soar Above Stigma, which aired on CTV in mid-January.

Her journey to mental health advocacy has been a difficult road.

Rabbit, who is Cree and a transgender woman, was the victim of a verbal and physical assault in 2012, when she was in her fourth year of Native Studies at the University of Alberta.

At the time of the attack, Rabbit identified as a gay man, which was never an issue for her until she went to university.

It began with a group of men catcalling her, but when they realized she was at the time male they began hurling homophobic epithets at her while a nearby crowd did nothing to stop it.

Once one of the men picked her up to throw her, a group of men intervened to stop the physical assault.

I had to drop out of university because I lived in fear,” said Rabbit, who is a regular contributor to *Alberta Native News*.

She began drinking heavily in 2013 to cope with her trauma from the assault, and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety.

Rabbit, who was on her way home with groceries when she was assaulted, couldn’t go to a grocery store out of fear she would be assaulted.

“That fear running through my head nonstop put me into a self-induced cage, where I literally couldn’t leave my house sometimes,” she said.

Rabbit’s journey also involved coming to terms with her Indigenous heritage, due to anti-indigenous stereotypes and tropes transmitted through the media in her teenage years.

“I was 17 and impressionable, and all I could hear was how scary Indigenous people are — they’re all in gangs,” she said.

“There was a brief moment where I was really scared of being Indigenous, which is kind of what pushed me to go to the University of Alberta. I knew growing up that the perceptions and stereotypes in the media were wrong.”

Her “very proud Cree family” from Maskwacis served as her “backbone” throughout the years, supporting her gender transition, which began around 2015.

“After I got assaulted, there was that fear and trauma, but also on the flipside there was a great educational journey I went through with my gender identity,” Rabbit said.

“I went on a big learning curve on how to speak up for myself, I had advocacy skills, I began learning [and] I started being mentored by some of the top advocates... It gave me access to a whole new world.”



Reporter/Advocate Chevi Rabbit.  
(Photo Supplied).

She was approached by Soar Above Stigma to participate in their ad campaign.

“This would be a good opportunity to talk about something I’ve wanted to get off my chest for quite some time,” Rabbit recalls thinking.

When the pandemic hit, Rabbit’s mental health issues resurfaced and she started drinking again.

After a younger relative of hers she had been quite close with died, Rabbit knew she had to take action.

“I realized there’s a lot of people within Indigenous communities who are suffering [and] are too afraid to talk about it, and they think mental health issues make them less adequate,” she said.

“I wanted to tell people to know they’re not alone in their suffering, and that you can get through anything. Despite your mental health issues, like PTSD or anxiety, you can still persevere through that, you can still accomplish that, you can still work, you’re still of value, and life is worth living.”

## Database *cont. from p 2*

goal is to get community members involved and learn firsthand from Cree people from across Treaty 6 territory.



These are all long-term reconciliation efforts, he added. Many of the outstanding issues will not be fixed within one term or in a few years but rather

“these are long term commitments to reconciliation that our leadership and administration commits too,” he said.

“It’s not a check the box exercise, it’s not a short-term political campaign, and we’re not doing it just to say we’re doing it. We are committed to reconciliation and working towards better relationships with Indigenous communities in Treaty 6.”

“As Treaty People, as Devon residents, we acknowledge that this is a long term and lifelong commitment,” he concluded, “and in the words of Treaty, as long as the sunshines, grass grows and rivers flow.”

For more information and to add your name as an Indigenous artist, call 780-987-8320 or email [mwincenaylo@devon.ca](mailto:mwincenaylo@devon.ca). Visit [www.devon.ca](http://www.devon.ca).



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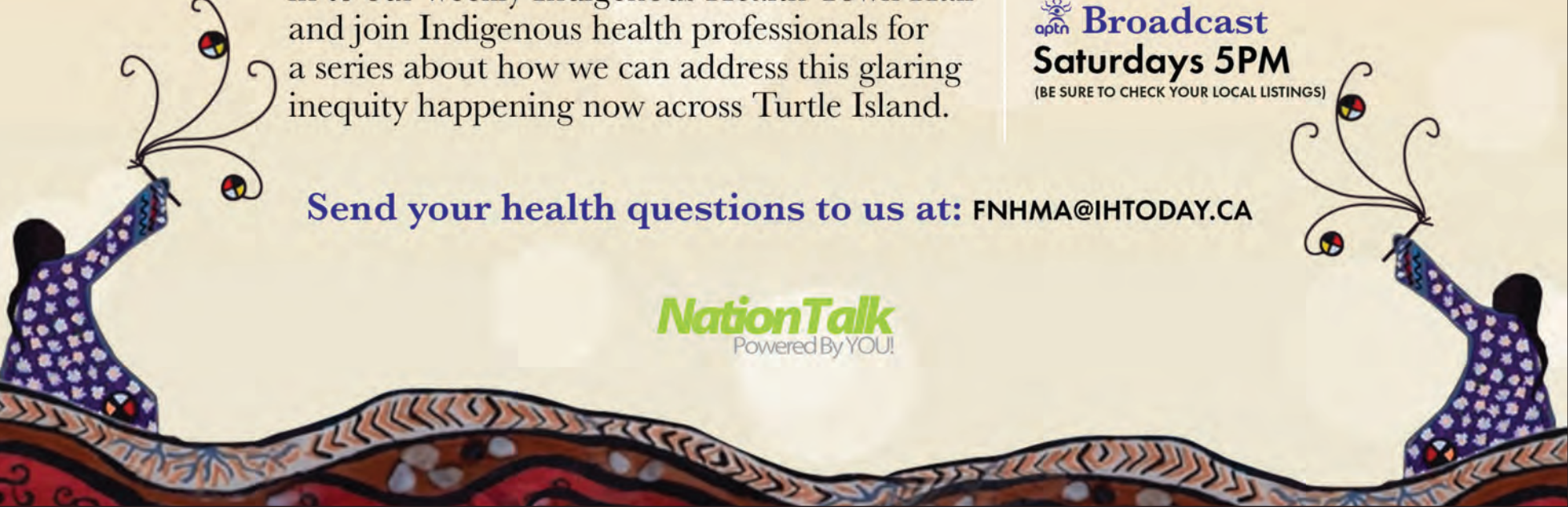
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# Education as a vehicle for empowerment and sovereignty

A member of the Bigstone Cree Nation, Janine Nanimahoo was born and raised in Wabasca. An alumni of the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP), Janine was impressed by the Northern Lakes College commitment to accommodating parents. As a woman raised with her culture’s traditional dedication to family, Janine appreciated NLC’s parent-positive atmosphere.

“We had a newborn in our class,” Janine reminisces, “and everybody was fine with that. If I was a new mother and I had hundreds of students in the class with me, no way would I be able to bring my baby,” says Janine, comparing the NLC experience to that at larger universities. It was these nuances that created a welcoming environment.

The main reason Janine chose NLC was its proximity to home; a key, Janine believes, in empowering many Indigenous and rural students. “Being able to study close to home gives students that sense of family and security. We need to be able to travel home from school that same day to care for those who depend on us. Many of our people don’t want to leave the reserve, but education is part of moving a person forward. It helps you further yourself, and then you bring that education back to your people.”

And bring her skills home, Janine did. Upon graduating in 2008, Janine was hired by the Bigstone Education Authority to teach grade five at the local school. After five years in the classroom, Janine and her family moved to Edmonton. In 2016, she graduated with a Master in Education specializing in Indigenous Peoples Education from the University of Alberta. Despite this achievement, Janine knew her educational journey wasn’t over.

“My heart is in protecting our treaties,” Janine explains. “For so long, our people have been told what to do under the Canadian government, but now more and more of us are getting educated. Now it’s like, ‘No, we chose how we live, how our ancestors lived. We have our own laws and, as Cree people, we have our own lives.’ That’s where I want to go. I want to protect our sovereignty.”

With this spirit of determination, Janine applied for both a doctoral program and law school. She was accepted into both, and ultimately chose the U of A Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge program, with the goal of building a career within the legal system and, eventually, entering into politics.

A model of inspiration, Janine urges others to continue working towards their full potential. She explains, “Education helps you grow as a person.



NLC alum Janine Nanimahoo.  
Photo credit: Steinhauer Photography

It instills pride. It instills that ‘Hey, I can do this,’ belief, and NLC supports that attitude. And we can do this! Our people should be running, operating, and doing everything within our Nation. NLC supports us in that effort – or at least it gives people a little push towards a fuller life.”

Janine currently lives in west Edmonton, 15 minutes away from where she teaches elementary school in Enoch Cree Nation.

Northern Lakes College continues to offer a variety of partnership degrees, including the Community-Based Bachelor of Education with the Werklund School of Education, UCalgary.

## Emergencies Act *cont. from p 2*

“First Nations have valid concerns in this country around lands and water, particularly land rights, and if they’re defending their land rights where does the government draw the line? I think that hopefully we can get into situations where we’re in positive negotiations around the actions,” said Archibald.

While the government notified Archibald prior to the enactment, she said that it was a short conversation with Minister Marc Miller.

“There are going to be more discussions in terms of long-term impact of the Emergencies Measures Act on

First Nations in the future,” she said.

The AFN conveyed their concerns in letters to the Prime Minister and other politicians, added Archibald.

Meanwhile Andrew Crosby, a Ph.D. candidate and researcher at Carleton University, told APTN that he does not “think the Act is going to deter Indigenous communities from defending their land.”

“But if it gives more powers to police and to security institutions to repress and suppress Indigenous-led movements to defend their land, then that could be a real concern.”

Crosby discussed the initial response to the protest, saying that police failed to react properly because they

are conservative-leaning in nature. “We really see this coming to the fore in these freedom convoy protests,” he said.

Far-right groups tend to “always attract” both active and former military personnel Crosby iterated.

Archibald said she was not surprised at the police response “because it’s their own system.”

“When non-Native politicians look at their own citizens, their own non-Indigenous citizens in a state of protest against their very own laws and regulations and policies those governments are enacting, they have to respond to that because that’s their electorate,” she said.

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# Global Television news anchor Daintre Christensen is a trailblazer

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Every weekday morning, Daintre Christensen shows young Indigenous people in Alberta that you can achieve your dreams through hard work and being at the right place at the right time – as well as a little bit of luck.

She is an essential member of the Global Television Family and a role model for Indigenous youth – especially young Indigenous girls and women.

Global Edmonton launched as ITV on Sept. 1, 1974. Many of Canada’s most extraordinary television personalities have been a part of the network’s 48-year legacy, such as Lorraine Mansbridge, Lesley MacDonald, and Lynda Steele.

Many First Nation, Metis, and Inuit communities have grown up watching the network and the friendly faces that keep us informed and updated on current events and local, regional, national, and international news.

For the last 13 years, Indigenous communities have been inspired by Daintre Christensen, who continues to trailblaze as a proud First Nation woman on

television as the Traffic Anchor and Morning News co-host at Global Edmonton.

Christensen is a member of Ontario’s Nipissing First Nation, an Ojibwe and Algonquin community whose ancestors have lived on and around Lake Nipissing for more than 9,000 years.

“I have worked hard, but I have lived my life with a little bit of luck,” said Christensen.

After a high school work experience program, she decided to become a journalist. She got her start with some luck, she explained, “when I was standing in front of the Tribal Council members who were there to help determine who got funding for the year – because unfortunately, there were more applicants for education than there was for funding.”

After being approved for funding by her tribal council, she promised that she would give back to the community and complete her studies.

She wound up excelling at school with a high-grade point average, and because her grades were high, she was able to utilize scholarships and bursaries –

proving that if you work hard enough, you will be rewarded.

“I wanted to make sure that my First Nation family back home was proud,” said Christensen.

“I managed to get a job at a local radio station; they were looking for somebody that was pretty green. Unfortunately, I didn’t have much experience when I applied, but they ended up picking me out of quite a few applicants.”

Christensen explained that she was very proud to get the job at the radio station. However, the pride she felt in her achievement was overshadowed by a hateful remark by a former co-worker.

He told Christensen that it bugged him when an Indigenous person would get a job over him even though he had more experience. His comments left a lasting mark on Christensen, made her feel ashamed of her background and heritage as a First Nation person.

“I didn’t say anything at the time, and I wish I had because perhaps that could have changed this person’s perspective,” she noted. “I carried that experience with me for quite a while.”

Over the years, Christensen says she has overcome that experience and others like it, and is very proud of her Indigenous identity.

Nowadays, she is an advocate, she works for Global Edmonton and has become a critical member of the Global

Television family.

When Global Edmonton hired her, they decided that they would bring in helicopters to do traffic reporting. “I was so afraid of heights, but I did the work,” she said. “I still get nervous every time,” she confided.

One day Global Television needed her to fill in for the Morning News. “I did a great job, and they liked the recording,” she said and that is how she moved into her current role.

Before getting her big break on Global Television, Christensen spent time working odd jobs in Edmonton. She moved from Ontario and started working at Tim Horton’s for several months and delivering pizzas to pay the bills while pursuing her dream job.

“You can’t be afraid to take those smaller jobs that aren’t necessarily what you had in mind,” remarked Christensen.

She said Indigenous youth who move away from home to pursue education or work need to be smart about saving money. But they also need to make sure that they keep focused on their goals and ambitions.

It would be best if you persevered through the barriers and struggles. But, as Christensen puts it, “Your dreams will eventually actualize; in the long run, it will happen.”

She wants to remind Indigenous youth to stay connected to their family, extended family, and First Nation Communities.

“I live 2000 miles away from my family and my home community... yet, I stay connected,” she said.

Towards the end of the interview, Christensen opened up about her very personal struggles with a neurological disorder. She was hesitant to share, but she feels that sharing this part of her story could help others.

“I was afraid to open up about it because there is a stigma attached to it,” she said.

“I was diagnosed with ADHD, and during the last ten years, I currently live with ADHD and manage it. However, it was something that for a long time I struggled with.”

Years ago, she suspected she might have ADHD because she was having such a difficult time reading textbooks. “I would read it over and over again,” she said.

“I felt like I just couldn’t absorb it. I couldn’t understand why I was struggling in school. They tested me; they told me, you’re wonderful, you’re intelligent, and everything is good, and we’re not sure why you’re having these difficulties.”

But ten years ago, after a conversation with her husband about it, Christensen got tested properly, was diagnosed with ADHD and received proper medical care.

She said through medication and lifestyle changes, she has successfully managed her ADHD, which is classified as a neurological disorder.

Christensen’s story is one of breaking barriers, being a trailblazer, and paving the way for the next generation of First Nation women on television. She is a shining example of what is possible and she continues to be a role model for Indigenous Canadian women.



Daintre Christensen

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# Siksika Nation collecting personal accounts of racism in health care

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

After receiving an “overwhelming number” of reports from band members who have experienced racism and discrimination in the health care system, Siksika Nation is collecting information on members’ experiences.

Chief and council authorized B.C.-based JFK Law Corporation to conduct information-gathering interviews with band members at its Feb. 15 meeting, which is being done as a precursor to potential legal action.

The interviewers will look for those who have experienced discrimination or negative treatment based on their race, ethnicity, or status as a Siksika Nation member while receiving health care services, as well as those who have witnessed said treatment.

“We know there are some amazing people working within the Alberta Healthcare System and we applaud you for all your hard work and dedication, especially in recent times. Unfortunately, our People are often on the receiving end of shoddy service and discrimination,” said Siksika Chief Ouray Crowfoot in a news release.

“We are asking for those who have been discriminated against to come forward and confidentially share your story. We realize these stories may be hard to recount but know that if there is going to be any real positive change, then we have to be the change.”

At a March 4 news conference at the tribal administration building, Crowfoot said a “steady flow of complaints” about anti-Indigenous racism in health care has picked up pace since the beginning of the pandemic.

The chief referenced the case of Joyce Echaquan, an Atikamekw woman in Montreal who livestreamed her mistreatment by healthcare workers before her death in September 2020.

“Her story is not an isolated incident,” Crowfoot said. “Far too long we’ve been subject to racist and discriminatory behaviour while receiving health care. For too long we’ve been insulted when we were at our most vulnerable.”

Closer to home, Lillian Vanasse, an Ojibway woman living in Hanna, Alta., died with flu-like symptoms while she was in the hospital in December

2020. Her husband Corey Ashley said he’s still seeking answers as to how exactly she died.

Samuel Crowfoot, a Siksika councillor who chairs Siksika Health Services, said many band members neglect their health care needs because of racist treatment, specifically referencing the nearby Strathmore and Vulcan hospitals.

“The complaint process in general in Alberta for any type of medical or racist event is extremely hard to follow and is governed not in the most efficient way,” he said. “Thereby, I think it reduces the amount of complaints that come in.”

Coun. Crowfoot said there’s often a presumption from health care workers that Indigenous people’s ailments are the result of substance abuse, which results in victim blaming.

“Some of our nation members who are in pain, or who are suffering from legitimate ailments, are looked at with a certain level of skepticism,” he said.

Siksika Health Services CEO Tyler White said he’s “disappointed that we’ve had to take these types of measures in order to get the attention of our government both federal and provincial.”

White said he’d like to see the federal and Alberta governments take their own action on this file, citing a report the Government of B.C. released in 2020, as well as the creation of Saskatchewan’s First Nations Health Ombudsperson’s office this year.

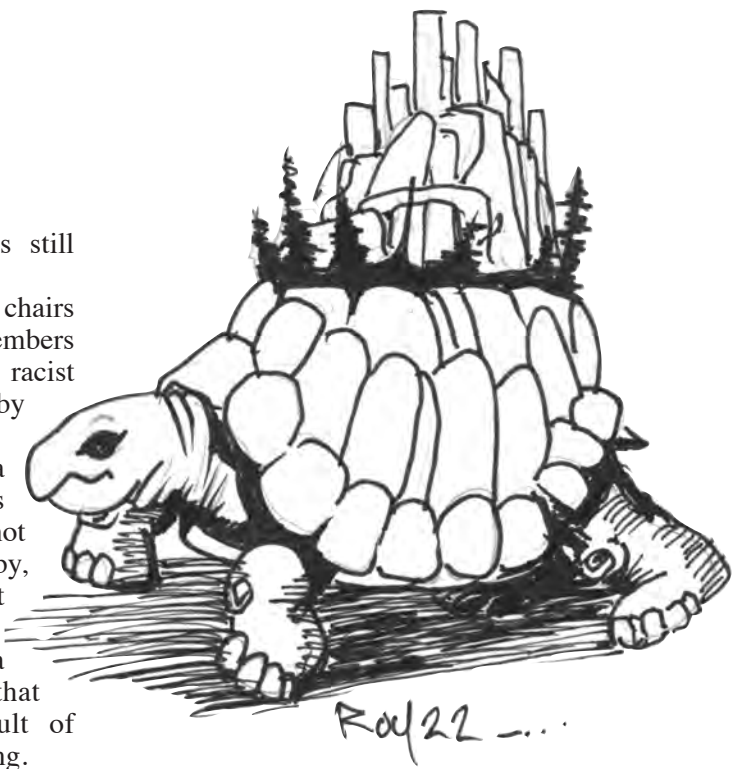
“Those are things we can build on,” White said. “This is really a signal to both governments that we expect some followup and responses and we will have a number of measures at our disposal to address those issues.”

A January 2022 study in the Canadian Medical Journal found First Nations people were more likely to have their ailments deemed less serious in emergency rooms than settlers.

“This may reflect systemic racism, stereotyping and potentially other factors that affected triage assessments,” the study concluded.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) spokesperson James Wood told Global News that efforts are underway to improve the province’s health care system.

“Racism and discrimination have no place within



Alberta Health Services,” Wood said.

“We know many Indigenous people do not seek care for an illness or injury because they do not feel safe or welcome within the health system, or that they believe their cultural traditions will not be respected or understood.

“By creating meaningful relationships and listening to Indigenous communities, we are confident that we can create partnerships that improve the health and wellness of Indigenous people together.”

He cited a Siksika flag raising ceremony at the Strathmore hospital in September as “symboliz[ing] our intention and commitment to work together for the benefit and healthcare of all people.”

Asked about complaints of anti-Indigenous racism at AHS facilities, Premier Jason Kenney said he discussed the issue recently with Chief Crowfoot.

“We recognize the reality that many Indigenous people have long-faced elements of racism (while) accessing health services,” Kenney said, citing a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Health and Siksika Nation from last year that aims to improve health services for band members.

“It is a priority for us to work with them to address those issues.”

## TikTok *cont. from p 4*

So, just be aware that there is another side to it. Some people online are not your friends.

When asked whether she’s been able to capitalize on TikTok, McKay said she hasn’t been able to make an income from TikTok viewers or followers. However, she has been able to get opportunities from corporate sponsorships, guest speaking, and workshops.

She noted that she doesn’t shame other Indigenous TikTok influencers who accept corporate sponsorship.

Rather she encourages other Indigenous influencers to find ways to capitalize on the popular social media

app. Over the course of the pandemic many Indigenous influencers received contracts from large corporate campaigns such as Canadian Tire and Royal Bank of Canada.

“We deserve a piece of that pie too, a big piece of that pie. Some people shame us for taking that money, but I am a mother and I have a family to feed,” said McKay.

“This is the first I am self-employed. I can legit feed my family and pay my bills.”

McKay ends the conversation by noting, that “people are watching us and if we are treating each other bad they think they can do that to us too.”

“Also, remember the youth are watching,” added McKay. “Remember, not everyone is online for your interest. Some are more concerned about view rather than making a difference.”

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# Fatal accidents: Damages for wrongful death of a loved one

By Bill Hendsbee, Q.C., CAM LLP

Losing a loved one is devastating. This article reviews potential legal remedies for wrongful death as the result of a car accident, but we know that no amount of money can replace your loved one.

We also recognize that the first step in dealing with your loss is to obtain emotional support from your family and friends, and to access necessary counselling support to cope with the grieving process.

Some resources that you may find helpful are available at [albertahealthservices.ca](http://albertahealthservices.ca) and additional resources are available through CAMH Edmonton. Your family doctor may also be able to connect you with local resources.

## Compensation in wrongful death claims

Other than CPP death benefits and Section B death benefits under Alberta's Standard auto insurance policy, the *Fatal Accidents Act* (FAA) of Alberta is the sole basis for wrongful death claims in this province. If you are the spouse, common-law spouse, child, step-child, sibling, parent, step-parent, or grandparent of someone killed by the negligence of another, you may be entitled to the compensation described in the *Fatal Accidents Act*.

The first thing to note is that FAA damages are not triggered automatically. They are part of a claim made against the at-fault party. They are also subject to establishing liability against the at-fault driver. In other words, if the deceased was fully liable or partly liable (contributorily negligent), the claim of any parties under the FAA is impacted. For example, if the deceased is found 50% at-fault for the fatal accident any damages payable under the FAA would be reduced by 50%.

## Compensation under the *Fatal Accidents Act*

The *Fatal Accidents Act* statutorily prescribed damages consist of:

Bereavement Damages for the loss of the guidance, care and companionship of the deceased. The amounts

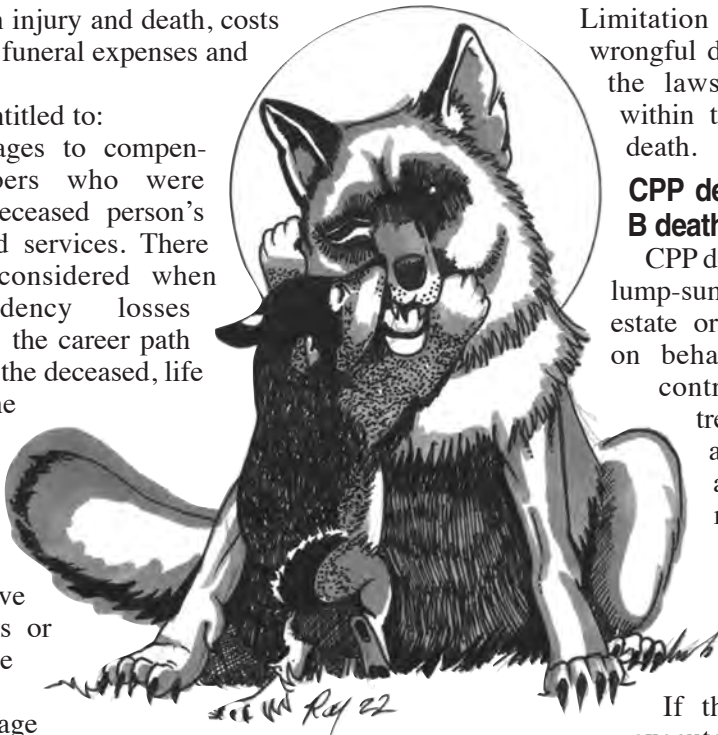
are mandated by legislation and vary depending on who the deceased is within the family.

Out of Pocket Expenses like the cost of care for the deceased between injury and death, costs of the family to visit, funeral expenses and grief counselling.

You may also be entitled to:

Dependency Damages to compensate family members who were dependent on the deceased person's income or household services. There are many factors considered when calculating dependency losses including things like: the career path and future earning of the deceased, life expectancy if the accident had not occurred, how close they were to retirement, portion of the deceased's income that would have been available to his or her dependents, the anticipated future earnings of a spouse, age of dependent children, as well as the nature and extent of household services performed for dependent family members.

Determining dependency losses also involves considering tax implications (if any) and various contingencies and other legal principles. Examples of typical contingencies include the likelihood of divorce of the parties and remarriage of the surviving partner, and the likelihood of unemployment or disability of the deceased. As a result, it is usually necessary to retain an economist to determine the amount of this loss. Medical experts will also probably be necessary to prove the health of the deceased, and their likely life expectancy.



## Other Issues Related to FAA Lawsuits

One thing to note is that only one lawsuit can be brought for the benefit of all those suffering damages as a result of a wrongful death. Usually the lawsuit is brought by the executor or administrator of the estate of the deceased, although, if there is no executor or administrator, or if the executor or administrator has not commenced a lawsuit within one year following the wrongful death, others who would benefit from the lawsuit can bring the action.

Limitation periods also apply to a wrongful death action, and in general the lawsuit must be commenced within two years of the wrongful death.

## CPP death benefits and Section B death benefits

CPP death benefits are a one-time, lump-sum payment to the deceased's estate or other eligible individuals on behalf of the deceased CPP contributor. This payment is treated as taxable and there are eligibility requirements and time limits that must be met.

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The deceased's next-of-kin,

The amount of the death benefit (at the time of writing) is \$2,500.

You may also be eligible for a survivor's pension or surviving child's benefit (if under 25).

Continued on page 9



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# Partnership to preserve over 1,500 hours of sacred history

By Jake Cardinal, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Last month, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) and the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) announced a brand new partnership dedicated to preserving survivor statements and other audiovisual content from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Audiovisual content includes sharing circles, Commissioner panels and Survivor public and private statements on their Residential School experiences and the legacies.

Stephanie Scott, Executive Director of the NCTR, said of the partnership, “We are grateful for the opportunity to access the expertise of the NFB, which stands out as one of the few cultural institutions in Canada who are up to this important task.”

“The NCTR holds more than five million records, and we are steadfast in our commitment to preserve these on behalf of Survivors, their families and nations. This partnership will allow for more secure long-term preservation of audiovisual content, while ensuring these recordings are made accessible for future generations.”

The NFB has said that they will ensure all recordings are migrated to international standard preservation formats, and all required preservation metadata will be collected and stored with the

recordings for easier cataloguing and research.

Furthermore, the team in charge of creating the files will consult with First Nation, Inuit and Métis Survivors, Elders and Knowledge Keepers to best understand the significance of the content.

The NFB will also create copies for future projects, in addition to lower-resolution copies that can be accessed on the NCTR website.

The NCTR’s standard protocols of public, redacted and restricted records will still apply as part of this process, as respecting the privacy of Survivors remains paramount.

In total, there are approximately 7,000 statements and more than 1,500 hours of content that will be preserved as part of this project.

Once the project is complete, the copies will be rendered for long-term preservation and stored with

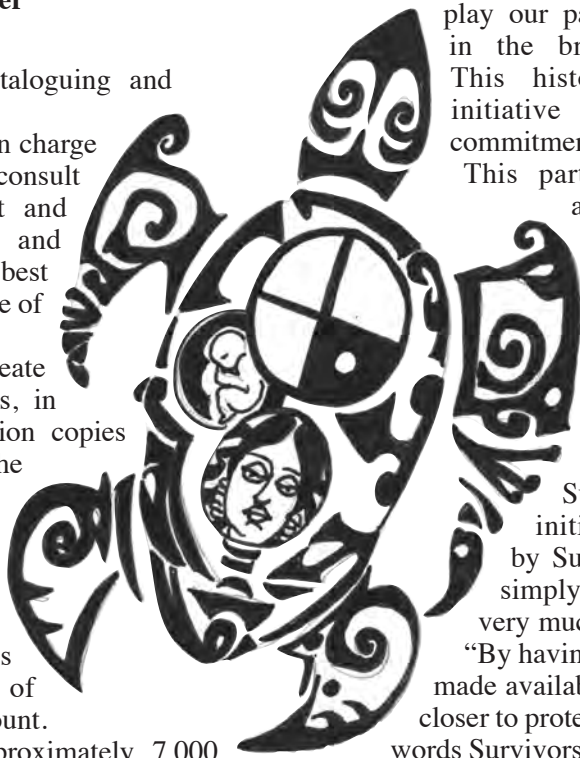
the NCTR, hosted by the University of Manitoba under the approval of Survivors.

Government Film Commissioner and NFB Chairperson, Claude Joli-Coeur, said, “The NFB is humbled to be a partner with the NCTR to play our part in preserving the truth found in the brave testimonies of Survivors. This historical undertaking is another initiative to advance our institutional commitment to reconciliation.”

This partnership comes after the NFB announced a plan outlining a series of commitments to implement the recommendations of the TRC and to address Indigenous creators’ longstanding concerns about systemic inequities in the existing Canadian production landscape.

Garnet Angecone, NCTR Survivors Circle member, said of the initiative, “The Truths shared by Survivors and their families are not simply an Indigenous experience, but very much part of Canada’s story.”

“By having the digital recordings of the TRC made available and accessible, we are one step closer to protecting the spirit that lives within the words Survivors so bravely shared with the world.” The project is supported and funded by the Canada Foundation for Innovation’s Innovation Fund.



## Fatal accidents *cont. from p 8*

Section B death benefits are part of Alberta’s Standard Automobile Insurance Policy. The amount payable depends on the deceased’s age and status in the household at the time of death. These benefits are generally payable to the surviving head of the household, or the surviving spouse. The details are found in Subsection 2 – Death, Grief Counselling, Funeral and Total Disability in Section B – Accident Benefits – S.P.F. No. 4.

As you can see, it can get complicated fast. If you’ve just lost a loved one, eligibility requirements, contingency factors, and deadlines are the last thing on your mind, and rightly so.

### How CAM LLP can help

At CAM LLP, our lawyers have considerable experience helping people who have lost loved ones due to fatal car accidents. We help by supporting the grieving process and assessing potential legal remedies and eligibility for the benefits available.

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If you have questions about a wrongful death claim or need help, please contact [camllp.com](http://camllp.com) or a free consultation.

NB: This article is an abbreviated version of a longer blog post on the subject that you can find at [camllp.com](http://camllp.com).



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Preliminary findings announced  
at St. Bernard’s Residential School

By Rob Houle, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The following information and material here may trigger unpleasant feelings or thoughts relating to Residential Schools and the death of children. Please contact the 24 Hour Residential School Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419 if you require emotional support.

As the grief once again begins to settle in First Nations and Metis homes, they were given another collective shock with the recent announcement by the Kapawe’no First Nation. Following preliminary engagement with Elders and survivors of St. Bernard’s Indian Residential School in August of 2021, the Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology (IPIA) conducted initial examinations of grounds surrounding the former institution. Utilizing industry established processes involving ground penetrating radar (GPR) and overhead examinations, the IPIA and leadership from Treaty no. 8 unveiled their grim findings to the world.

This initial phase, of a three phase process, uncovered 169 potential graves at various locations throughout the one acre examination area. According to the summary findings released, the areas examined include a root cellar, church area, the former Nuns’ dormitory and community cemetery. While the majority of anomalies have been located in the cemetery grounds, troubling anomalies were located in areas that are not expected to hold burials. Locations such as root cellars and dormitory grounds do not usually hold burials, unless, as we continue to learn, those grounds are located near residential schools.

Throughout the press conference, Chief Sydney Halcrow, Grand Chief Arthur Noskey and Dr. Kisha Supernant verified the work undertaken, emphasized the tragic circumstances at the institution and committed to carrying the work forward. They jointly reiterated that the discovery of one grave is tragic, but a number of 169 is unfathomable. They also conveyed the number of supports available to survivors and the importance of community support as truth after truth is uncovered. Visibly shaken by the discovery and announcement, each took turns sharing their personal connection to the school and its negative impact on Treaty No. 8 as a whole.

Missing from the press release, speaking points and revelations was any recognition of the operators of the institution, their role in this tragedy and responsibility for the trauma caused. It has become a well known fact that these institutions were not operated by the

government, but rather religious groups. In the case of St. Bernard’s, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) classifies it as a Roman Catholic mission. This difficult truth is also reflected in the name of the nearby community, named after one Bishop Émile Grouard. So for this fact to not be mentioned, the role of the church emphasized or the only reference to any religious involvement was a thank you message to Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC), it may leave survivors and descendants with mixed feelings.

Furthering these mixed emotions, and adding to the trauma, is problematic rhetoric and reference to the “children being in the presence of God”. Initially shared by Grand Chief Noskey in June of 2021 following the confirmation of remains at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, these utterances send a chill down one’s spine. These statements are troubling for many reasons, but most notably is the fact that before 2007, the Pope and Catholic Church confined those who died unbaptised to the religious realm of limbo. This policy, which was in place during the residential school era, necessitated that unbaptized individuals be buried outside of cemetery grounds and without a proper burial rite.

As discovery after discovery continues, there should be a more fulsome conversation within our communities regarding the conflict of belief systems, and whether comments and references to God do more harm than good. As a survivor of intergenerational trauma directly connected to St. Bernard’s and its neighbouring institution St. Bruno’s, it gives the writer little solace to know that children, who were taken before their time and not afforded the chance to life are residing with “God”. It becomes even more difficult to comprehend these statements when those who placed these children in the ground, or worse, carried out their death, were those preaching the word of God.

These are the difficult truths and realities we are faced with each time there is an announcement regarding more graves and lost children. Difficult truths and realities that are necessary, but must be carried out with all those affected in mind, and with the ultimate goal of continuing to hold the Church and State accountable as equals in genocidal acts. Only then will we truly be sharing the truth, and ensuring all parties carry the burden of reconciliation, and not just Indigenous communities.



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Position Summary: This role is an opportunity to influence the journey the Alberta Seniors and Community Housing Association (ASCHA) is setting out on to deepen our knowledge of Indigenous cultures and tenant/resident experiences. With the support and partnership of our team, the coordinator will use relationship-building, dialogue, and research to build understanding of how affordable housing providers can better meet the service needs and cultural needs of Indigenous tenants/residents.

ASCHA is an association representing more than 100 organizations who provide seniors housing and affordable housing to over 60,000 people in our province. For more information visit ascha.com.

Indigenous Liaison and Learning Coordinator will join a team of 11 employees and may be the only staff member self-identifying as Indigenous.

Minimum 3 years’ experience in a similar research and/or operational role, Excellent interpersonal skills,

particularly in listening, and in establishing and maintaining relationships. Experience and knowledge of housing related issues is considered a strong asset, Research skills including interpreting and summarizing written research, and understanding of how to use interviews and focus groups. Strong Microsoft Office skills and Working knowledge of an Indigenous language(s) is an asset.

Education: Lived experience as an Indigenous person. We encourage all First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples of Canada or Indigenous Peoples of North America, to self-identify in their applications. Bachelors degree or an equivalent combination of experience and education in Indigenous studies, cultural studies, or social sciences.

Work location: Remote and Edmonton. Primarily remote work with some travel across Alberta and occasional work/meetings in Edmonton. The position reports to the Policy Research and Advocacy Coordinator.



# Fashion Designer creates recovery home on Tsuut'ina First Nation

By Chevi Rabbit, Local journalism Initiative Reporter

Stephanie Crowchild is a member of Tsuut'ina First Nation. Her traditional Indigenous name is "Woman who walks over the red mountains" Tsa dik'azi K'a Nogha Siya Ts'ika.

Crowchild is a multi-talented Indigenous woman in southern Alberta. She is a designer and founder of Eagletail House Society. The young woman is utilizing her family's knowledge keepers for a new recovery home in her First Nation community that's all-inclusive, for women, men and gender diverse people.

With support from her father, Hal Eagletail, and Aunt Coreen Eagletail-Frazer, she was able to turn her struggles and challenges into a home for recovering addicts.

"It is always an honour to decolonize colonial spaces as a strong, resilient indigenous woman," said Crowchild. Through her journey and challenges, she was inspired and encouraged by her father and aunt to turn her late grandmother's house into a home for recovering addicts."

She said after her grandparents passed away, the home became vacant. Initially, the family requested family members to move into the house, but most of them already had their own homes. "So, I went forward with creating the society," said Crowchild. "I did it independently."

Crowchild and her father are the founders of Eagletail House Society, and they also registered Eagletail House Society as a charity.

She said they were able to create a recovery home within the jurisdiction of Tsuut'ina First Nation however, they are still awaiting approval to get a VCR from the chief in the council.

"We initially planned on partnering with Poundmaker's or Oxford house, but our Chief and Council didn't support that initial plan," said Crowchild. "It was a minor setback, and so we revised our entire structure to focus on healing and to open it

to everybody seeking recovery."

She explained that in November 2020, she and her father created the non-profit organization. At the time, the Crowchild family was working with Poundmaker's and Oxford house. She said clients from those programs utilized her father's sweat lodges and they also used her late grandmother's home.

"We had night lodge ceremonies and pipe ceremonies to help everybody. It wasn't just for women; it was for men, and it was for everybody and full inclusion!"

She said that recently they started adding singing to the services at the recovery house. She mentioned that there is a lot of support within the community. "People donate food and drinks and offer to volunteer their time around the home," said Crowchild.

She said one of the primary objectives of the house is to rehabilitate former addicts and people suffering from substance abuse issues and reconnect them with Indigenous culture and practices.

Through Eagletail House Society, her family can utilize their knowledge keepers. They can also help other community members and those seeking help by reconnecting with their culture meaningfully and spiritually.

If any First Nation community or First Nation family is looking to create their own recovery home within their home nation or utilize a vacant or abandoned house on the reserve, they can contact Crowchild for a consultation.

She mentioned there's also a woman who helped Crowchild throughout the process of developing Eagletail Society. She is Director of Siksika Family Services Corporation Deanna Many Shots, and she founded a similar recovery home called Henry Three Suns Child & Youth Society.

Outside of her role as a founder of Eagletail House Society, Crowchild is a highly sought after and



Stephanie Crowchild. Photo: @feather.photo featuring Stephanie Eagletail Designs.

talented fashion designer specializing in custom-made Pendleton jackets.

"My style and inspiration replicate my great grandmothers' who were the matriarchs of our family. Tsuut'ina woman proudly wore the beaver pelt hats "tall hats" and the Headdress," said Crowchild.

"I wear mine with honour and dignity, as I am a modern-day warriorette who has fought against the injustices and adversities we face as Indigenous women and peoples. I am reclaiming my identity through fashion, culture, sobriety, decolonization, and intergenerational healing. As a mother of four children and a wife, I am the matriarch of my family."

Crowchild is an example of a new wave of Indigenous social entrepreneurs who are utilizing their knowledge and instead of waiting for others to be the change, they are the change in their communities. She's proven that with an abandoned house, being born into a family with traditional knowledge keepers and a lot of perseverance, you too can be that voice that brings about changes in your community and helps others in need.

If you are an everyday First Nation person and eager to help your community in their recovery, contact Stephanie at Croweagletail.steph@gmail.com (587-439-4455 cell) and or Deanna Manyshots Dmany\_shots@hotmail.com (403-325-0045).



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