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# OHSOTO'KINO

## New music program OHSOTO'KINO amplifies voices of Indigenous Peoples, supported by TD

OHSOTO'KINO, which means “to recognize the voice of” in Blackfoot, aims to embody that concept by creating more opportunities for Indigenous artists while continuing to amplify their stories and contributions to music in Canada.

With support from TD, National Music Centre's OHSOTO'KINO program is playing a significant role in our collective journey towards truth and reconciliation. The program focuses on three key elements: recording bursaries, artist development, and the Speak Up! exhibition at Studio Bell.

For more details on OHSOTO'KINO, please visit:

[STUDIOBELL.CA/OHSOTOKINO](https://STUDIOBELL.CA/OHSOTOKINO)



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# Women Building Futures: Helping Indigenous women transform their lives

By Women Building Futures

Women Building Futures is a registered non-profit based in Edmonton, Alberta. We offer programs and support services to help unemployed and underemployed women explore and connect to careers that pay above a living wage. Careers that not only support their own security but often that of their children. Our graduates work in careers that provide them with higher earnings and a rewarding, fulfilling future that positively impacts their families and communities.

We acknowledge our organization is located on Treaty 6 Territory and we have programs delivered across Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 in Alberta. In our commitment to truth and reconciliation, we have prioritized Indigenous supports for our prospective students and graduates.

WBF is committed to helping Indigenous women achieve economic security. In 2020, 24% of WBF grads were Indigenous. Of those students, 97% graduated from their programs, and went on to earn an average of 2.5X more income.

We spoke with Jaynine McCrae, our Manager of Community and Indigenous Relations, about her role and what Women Building Futures is doing to support more Indigenous women into our programs.

## What past experiences prepared you for your current role?

I am an Inuk with a background in Territorial Government and 10 years of experience in the Mining and Construction industries. My belief is

that women can be independent, role models and trailblazers.

When I look back on my own history, I recall being one of few women in the various mining camps that I was working at, and one of few Indigenous people. I firmly believe Indigenous women and youth should be encouraged to enter these worksites.

## Can you share a brief overview of what the Community Indigenous Relations team does?

Our team offers tailored supports and coaching for Indigenous women to explore new career paths and succeed in our programs. We understand the additional barriers they face to training and employment. The work our team does to engage with and support Indigenous communities and women across the province is very rewarding.

## What supports can Women Building Futures offer to Indigenous women?

The support services we offer really set us apart from other organizations. We recognize many of our students face barriers to training. Many of our prospective students come from vulnerable populations, are unemployed or underemployed and are single parents.

We offer affordable and safe housing, income support during training, tuition funding, access to affordable childcare, coaching, training, employment support, and free readiness



Through its many initiatives, Women Building Futures is committed to helping Indigenous women achieve economic security.

workshops to help women get the training they need to get a job that enables them to provide for themselves and their families. Our Tools for Success workshop is rooted in traditional Indigenous teachings and incorporates the medicine wheel to prepare the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of beginning a new journey.

Our range of supports is extensive, and we assess each case on an individual basis. The best way to get started is to contact our Community Indigenous Relations department.

Are you an Indigenous woman looking for support in your employment search?

Connect with our Indigenous & Community Relations team today by sending an email to: [indigenous@womenbuildingfutures.com](mailto:indigenous@womenbuildingfutures.com)

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## Caring about one another

By Xavier Kataquapit

I can't believe I am writing a column to warn everyone once again that Covid 19 is around us all and that many of us are getting sick. It seems like this virus does not want to leave us and that is causing a lot of people pain and tragedy.

Part of the problem is that governments have decided that life should return to normal so schools are open and it is business as usual with no wearing of masks and very little concern about dealing with the COVID variants. There are vaccines available that deal with the BA4 and 5 variants that have come up over the past months but just recently it has been announced that there is another new variant threatening us.

The only good news is that for the most part the people that get sick with this virus at this point are the elderly and those with health issues. Vaccines do protect these people to a point but still they can get very sick, end up in the hospital or even die. So, younger people tend to survive this COVID virus much better than the elderly.

It remains that as a civilized society that we have a responsibility to care for each other and that means more so for the elderly, fragile and those with health issues. We need to remember to take care of the most vulnerable in our society but to a great degree that is not happening.

Right now these COVID variants are running wild and a lot of people are getting sick. Many are putting off being sick as having a cold or flu or even allergies but don't be fooled. There is a very high degree of chance that they have COVID. We are in a pandemic and the new variants are extremely contagious and infecting so many people so be aware that people with colds most likely actually have COVID. If you are elderly, have health issues and if you have not had up to date vaccines then be aware of your surroundings. Stay away from anyone with symptoms of COVID or any kind of flu or cold. Try to limit any visiting indoors with people and wear a mask when you are out and about.

Get the latest fifth shot of the vaccine that deals in a better way with the BA4 and 5 variants, get the annual flu shot and be alert and aware

of your surroundings.

Now that we are experiencing colder days much of our gathering is indoors and that will be creating a big problem in terms of COVID spreading through our population. It is disheartening to have to keep fighting this pandemic and rampaging virus and we all want things to get back to normal however the reality is that COVID is still here with us and a big threat to the most vulnerable people in our society. So, if you have any symptoms of COVID and even if they are mild please do your best to stay away from seniors and those

who have health issues so they have the opportunity to stay healthy and stay alive to enjoy more years with their loved ones, family and friends. It is the civilized thing to do.

I have lost family and friends to COVID-19, and I have experienced it first-hand so that makes me very conscious of the danger that still lives with us. The world seems a little dark right now with the war in the Ukraine and a looming recession, but I believe we will somehow do the right thing as human beings and figure things out on a global scale

without causing more havoc and threats to world populations. This is not a time for doom and gloom, but we have to be realistic and realize that our path of intolerance, uncaring, right wing and mean spirited thinking can only make things much worse. It is time for kindness, understanding, openness and taking care of each other.

We have more power than we know as long as we are aware of what is happening around us, on the planet and we step up to keep our democracy alive and well. While we are at it we need to remember to think about our seniors and the most vulnerable in our society while this COVID virus continues to spread. There are things we can do to make sure people get through this current wave of COVID. We simply need to care more about one another.

For more columns by Xavier Kataquapit  
visit [underthenorthernsky.com](http://underthenorthernsky.com)

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# Tanya Ward-Schur shares insights on finding balance

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Tanya Ward-Schur describes herself as a helper in the Red Deer community. She was educated at Royal Roads University and was recognized by the City of Red Deer for her community work.

Ward-Schur identifies as Blackfoot, Metis with relatives from northern Alberta and Browning, Montana, USA. She is a prominent advocate from the Red Deer area who worked for the Red Deer Native Friendship Society and is currently at the Urban Aboriginal Voice Society in Red Deer. She recently helped organize North America’s first Wellbriety Conference in Red Deer, Alberta.

She’s also a recovering addict. “I didn’t grow up culturally,” she explained. “I struggled all through my life trying to recognize myself as a person and human.”

Ward-Schur says we hear about epigenetics, but as Indigenous people, we talk about “blood memory. We carry the blood memory of our ancestors in our DNA,” she explained.

According to Ward-Schur, as Indigenous people, we are constantly accessing that memory from the past into the future. Drawing from the Indigenous four directions, she said, “I realize to be a balanced person, we need to work on being emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically balanced.”

“Our spirit exists long before it comes into this world,” so we need to do the work to achieve balance, “and engage in the struggle of getting well.”

“We are given forms throughout life to live,” she added. “That’s always been my struggle because I was born into a family with addictions.”

Doing the work means “letting go of what we need to let go of, that hurt and pain which led us to addiction, it could be substance, overeating,

too much shopping, or whatever it may be that led to an unbalanced life.”

Doing the work on ourselves “is an attempt to try and reconcile all the pain of the generations that have come before us,” said Ward-Schur.

“So, the ones that come after us don’t have to go through the suffering we had to endure.”

The goal is to create healthy Indigenous families that can thrive. “It’s more than just breaking the cycle,” she said.

“We are starting a new cycle...I am starting to meet little kids growing up in intact families, with parents that have not suffered substance abuse issues.”

For her, it’s a positive signal that Indigenous people are healing. Ward-Schur said healthy Indigenous families want to focus on “what lays ahead for their kids.” Tanya’s blood memory carries a time when her female ancestors migrated from the eastern areas of Canada.

She said “[I was] born from a family that was also suffering from intergenerational trauma and having grandmas, grandmothers, and ancient years back – we came from the east by the fur trade, trade, and traffic.”

Ward-Schur explained, “My ancestors were in the back of canoes, heading down rivers, and coming west. Those women helped European fur traders and the first settlers to live on the land and survive on the land. But in that move, in that becoming, it left a lot of confusion about who we were as human beings.”

Ward-Schur said her relatives profoundly impacted her life as a youth but living in a small community and town with no other Native people was challenging and a struggle.

She explained, “We knew we were Native, but



Ashley Callingbull and Tanya Ward-Schur

no one talked about it.” It wasn’t until later in her life that she began to reintegrate into the Indigenous experience.

“It wasn’t until my grandmother was in her transition that anyone even told me what it meant to be a Native person. Since then, it’s been a long journey of trying to understand myself,” said Ward-Schur.

She is now a proud Native Woman; she carries her drums, sings Indigenous songs, and understands the Indigenous experience.

“The drum is my life; it came to me, protected me, kept me safe. In this world, I carry drums and songs from many places.”

Ward-Schur concluded her interview by discussing the Medicine Wheel and living the balanced life of the four directions.

Her journey finding balance has been a struggle, she explained. “I was given the Indigenous name, Morning Star Eagle Singer.”

She said it took her a long time to grow into her Indigenous name and own her gift of song.

“My language is the drum, and my language is

*Continued on page 8*



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# Métis Nation of Alberta begins historic ratification vote

Voting began this month for citizens of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) on a Métis Constitution, the next step towards self-government, self-determination, and reconciliation. Approximately 50,000 MNA citizens (16 and over) are eligible to vote throughout November, making this the largest ratification vote for an Indigenous nation in Canadian history.

On November 1 hundreds of MNA citizens gathered in the BMO Centre in Calgary to celebrate their culture and commence voting. MNA President Audrey Poitras was there to cast her ballot and deliver remarks.

By ratifying the Otipemisiwak Métis Government Constitution, the MNA will take the final steps towards recognition as an equal order of government within Canada, and the Métis will have increased authority to negotiate their rights and claims. The Otipemisiwak Métis Government Constitution will bring the new Métis government closer to its citizens and communities, and ensure they are better represented in the decisions made. District councils will be given stable funding and clear authority, and the needs and ambitions of citizens will determine the priorities of their Métis government.

While 25 self-government agreements or modern treaties have been implemented across Canada involving 43 Indigenous communities, none are currently finalized in Alberta. In June 2019, the MNA and Canada signed a Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government

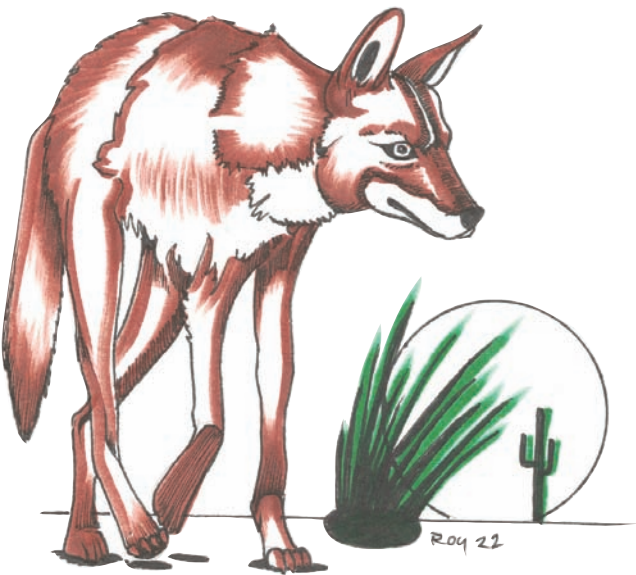
Agreement (MGRSA), which formally recognizes that the Métis Nation within Alberta holds the inherent right to self-government recognized by section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982. The MGRSA also sets out a process for the recognition of an MNA Constitution—based on the Métis Nation’s inherent right to self-government—in federal legislation.

“Ratifying the Otipemisiwak Métis Government constitution will open doors with both Canada and Alberta, including: a new fiscal relationship with Canada to finally provide Métis-designed supports to our citizens in health, housing, language, education, training, economic development, and justice,” states the MNA in a press release.

“It will also improve the services MNA provides to Métis in Alberta including mental health, supporting those with disabilities, delivering culturally appropriate child and family services, and caring for our elders when they can no longer take care of themselves.”

MNA citizens can vote in-person, online, or by mail. Voting concludes on November 30th, 2022. Visit [MNAconstitution.com](http://MNAconstitution.com) for information.

“The Métis in Alberta have always been at the forefront of advancing our collective rights,” stated MNA President Audrey Poitras. “I’ve heard stories all my life about Louis Riel’s vision and the dreams of generations of Alberta Métis. Today, as citizens begin to cast their ballots, we are one step closer to finally realizing those dreams and safeguarding the rights of our



children for generations to come. This vote is about affirming that we are the Otipemisiwak, the people who govern themselves. Our ancestors are watching; our time is now.”

“The 94th Métis Nation of Alberta Annual Assembly resolved that the final draft of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government Constitution was approved and will be voted on by MNA citizens,” added MNA Chief Electoral Officer Del Graff. “As part of the ratification vote process, the Constitution Commission hosted information sessions across the province and every MNA citizen on the Voters List was mailed: a voter information card, a copy of the Notice of Vote, a mail-in ballot package, and instructions for how to review the Constitution online. I hope all eligible Métis Citizens make their views known by participating in this historic ratification vote.”

# Crisis for unhoused people more critical than officials suggest

An organization that has been active in education and advocacy related to housing for over 35 years says the messages being heard by many Edmontonians seriously understate the dangerous reality of homelessness in Edmonton.

“There are too many media reports suggesting there is significant progress being made to address the life-threatening situation of thousands of our neighbours, but the hard facts tell a very different story,” charges Edmonton Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (ECOHH) chair Nadine Chalifoux.

ECOHH points to the daily-updated information provided at the Homeward Trust website for a reality check. The “By Name List”

(BNL) it maintains is a real-time registry of people experiencing homelessness, based on information provided by human services organizations. For months, it has identified about 2700 people each day being in this situation. Some who work with people struggling with housing suggest this figure is low. A one-day count of people who are homeless was carried out in late September but results of that have not yet been released. ([www.homewardtrust.ca](http://www.homewardtrust.ca))

At the same website there is a daily record of the emergency shelters in Edmonton, which have a combined total capacity of 786 people.

“Walk down the streets of the urban core or in parkland and you will see where hundreds of the

people without shelter are living, in temporary camping situations, dangerously lacking health or security services. Many others are hidden-crashing with anyone who will take them in, sometimes at risk to their safety and with no certainty of having a place the next hour,” observes Chalifoux. “This is not the life we should be allowing for our neighbours.”

Recent media coverage has highlighted provincial funding to temporarily address shelter needs during the winter months. This includes Hope Mission opening 260 additional beds at its downtown facility and another 150 in a warehouse to be provided on the south side, as well as 40 additional beds with Mustard Seed. “With a need for about 2000 more places, we are getting 450,” Chalifoux notes.

It has not been confirmed that all the additional places for the winter months will be open 24/7 nor is there information about issues such as physical spacing to address health concerns

Continued on page 12



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# Chef Shane Chartrand brings Cree Spirituality to the culinary world

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Shane Chartrand, one of Canada’s top Cree chefs, is a Star Chef from Enoch Cree Nation, who has appeared on hit TV shows like *Chopped Canada* and *Iron Chef Canada*.

He is currently bringing concepts from his Cree spirituality to the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity as their newest Sous Chef.

In an exclusive interview with *Alberta Native News*, Chartrand explained that he aims to showcase Indigenous Cuisine wrapped in spirituality and healthy living.

"I am bringing our people along on the journey to Banff," said Chartrand.

"What I am trying to do is show the truth about the spirituality behind Indigenous food."

The culinary Cree genius has amassed extensive skills that rival the best in his field of interest – much to the delight of foodies throughout Turtle Island.

"I also have the luxury of being a trained and certified chef," said Chartrand.

He has conducted culinary research on several Indigenous groups – learning about their relationships with food, how they prepare food, the customs, storytelling, politics, and most importantly, the religious aspects of indigenous food.

"I've met with [people from] Metis communities, Inuit, Cree, Blood Tribe, Metis Settlements, and several others; I have engulfed all these ideas, storytelling, history, and Indigenous concepts and brought them to Banff."

Chartrand said he learned about food by questioning: "What changes a person's mind about food? What are healthy food choices? What food makes a person think clearer, and what makes you think about the Creator."

He has been on a healing journey of self-discovery. As a Sixties Scoop Survivor, Chartrand was impacted by the policies of cultural genocide, and as an adult, he rediscovered his Cree roots. He discovered Creator.

"It started with religion," he explained but it was hard for him to figure out what religion meant to him.

"I am a sixties scoop survivor, which means I never knew where I was from. As an adult, I knew I was Indigenous, but from where? I didn't know back then," said Chartrand.

After finding his roots in Indigenous Spirituality, he began a long process of understanding Indigenous Religion, concepts, thoughts, and Cree medicine. Then he began the journey of marrying it all to his passion for food.

Chartrand provides an example of what his family does after they kill an animal, "We drink a little bit of its blood, to remember that it sacrificed itself to feed other people."

He offers another example of food, death, and Cree spirituality: "After someone passes away, we leave food out for them."

Chartrand explained, "You don't have to be a hunter or fisherman to understand Indigenous food... You just have to wrap it around that cleanse of spirituality."

The acclaimed chef ends the interview by saying, "I just want people to understand that clear minds and Indigenous food is the medicine between religion and what comes on the plate."

That's been a hard path for him to perfect. "Given my past life, past addiction, and party life – [I've been] trying to cleanse myself and make sure that I know if I follow the right rules and eat properly, and have a clear mind, I can live a great life."

According to the Star Chef site, Chartrand got his professional start when he was 14, washing dishes at a "dive" and working his way onto the line by 17 when he decided to move to Edmonton. After graduating from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, he ran franchise

restaurants but didn't find it particularly soul-satisfying.

His profile is extensive, and the celebrity chef has made his mark from the Northwest Territories to New York City as an Executive Chef in many cities. He received a prestigious Award of Excellence at NAIT and an Honourary Degree from NAIT. In addition, he has appeared on several TV Food Network Shows, as well as a documentary.

In recent years, he’s also done motivational talks where he’s been received very favorably. Most recently, he spoke at 2020 Hate to Hope: Indigenous Rights with award-winning film director Georgina Lightning.

Chef Chartrand has an award-winning book called, *Tawâw: Progressive Indigenous Cuisine*.

Through these many initiatives he is bringing



Chef Shane Chartrand

awareness about the importance of Indigenous foods and shining a spotlight on the cultural significance of the foods we eat.

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# Indigenous veterans still struggle for proper recognition

By Ry Clarke, LJI Reporter

When it comes to remembrance it is important to take the time and recognition for all veterans that have served in Canada's military.

Indigenous people have been a part of Canada's military efforts since the War of 1812, and numbering in the thousands during WWI and II, and the Korean War.

But when it came time to return home, many Indigenous people encountered battles they were not prepared for. Losing their right to live on the reserve, being absent for the allowable four years, and not being compensated for their service, it has taken many years for proper recognition. National Indigenous Veterans Day on Nov. 8 was only recognized in 1994.

But for many Indigenous veterans the fight is still tough when it comes to receiving aid and recognition.

"The history between the British Empire, Canada, and the Indigenous people hasn't really been even close to favouring Indigenous people," said Chuck Isaacs, veteran and president of the Aboriginal Veterans Society of Alberta.

"It is about time that the Canadian Government engaged Indigenous veterans and provided them with funding to organize themselves to be able to reach out into their own communities. There are reserves where Afghan war vets haven't left their parent's basement for years because they have problems and there is no support in their communities."

Speaking to the trouble veterans have, Isaacs notes that as the technology changes, many reserves are without the means to access those changes.

"There's organizations that claim to service the northern area in very rural areas," said Isaacs. "But that's not the reality of it. Everything is online, so you have people that are in their 80s and 90s being told to 'go online' and follow a link. And while they are doing that the paperwork that is required is a four-page document. By doing that they are making a lot of programs inaccessible for the old and rural living veterans."

Isaacs spoke about his own experience with PTSD, noting there is a certain degree that every veteran carries with them.

"Whether they know it or not they have a part of PTSD," said Isaacs. "When I came back, I did ok for a number of years. But then I would have a lack of sleep, for a decade I only slept for two hours a day. It breaks down your brain, basically turns it into lactic acid and causes a whole range of problems with pain inside your body. I have gone through some treatments and learned to adjust my lifestyle so that I can live a life that is reasonably joyful. But there are still times where little things come up. The hyper vigilance of PTSD causes you to laser focus on each of these things as they happen. If that happens too much, it gets hard to focus and complete any task."

As an Indigenous veteran Isaacs hopes to see



more unity going forward towards reconciliation, both for the history and the honour of those that fought for Canada.

"I think it would be about time that they celebrated the fact that the Indigenous soldiers stood shoulder-to-shoulder through the history of this continent," said Isaacs. "Indigenous soldiers deserve a lot of the recognition for that, but at the very least they deserve to be front and center at any Remembrance Day ceremony."

Ry Clarke is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter with Lethbridge Herald.

## Tanya Ward-Schur *cont. from p 5*

the songs; those things are only for prayer. I use my voice in a good way, my songs in a good way, and speaking in a good way," added Ward-Schur.

It's all about being of service in an excellent way to Indigenous communities. "It is through the

beauty and beautiful voices that we make medicine and good medicine for one another."

"I heard that music goes where words cannot go – and it has been very true in my own life," said Ward-Schur.

On October 22, 2022, she inspired guests when she spoke and sang a beautiful song at the third

annual Walk a Mile in a Ribbon Skirt at West Edmonton Mall. The event was initiated by Edmonton's Hate to Hope Initiative after the Rabbit family of Montana Cree Nation faced discrimination in an Edmonton restaurant. It was hosted by Ashley Callingbull, an advocate and long-time supporter of Hate to Hope Initiatives.

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Remembering the bravery and courage of all the Indigenous men & women who served and continue to serve. Thank you!

**MLA Adriana LaGrange**  
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*On this day of remembrance, we commemorate our fallen heroes who gave their lives for our country and our future.*



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# The tragedy of war is generational

By Xavier Kataquapit, Under the Northern Sky

November 11, Remembrance Day is very meaningful to myself and my partner Mike. My family lost my great-grandfather John Chookomolin during the First World War or what is referred to as the Great War. This is a very sad and tragic story as the Canadian military in 1917 sent a recruiter up the James Bay coast to look for young Indigenous men to join the conflict in Europe. This recruiter more or less kidnapped 24 young men who could not even speak English from Attawapiskat and convinced them to join him. They made a long and gruelling trip south by canoe and then were transported to southern Ontario for training. These men had no idea about the outside world and had never seen trains, ships, automobiles or anything of the modern world in 1917. I can't imagine how frightened and amazed they were at their voyage into such a foreign world.

They were then shipped overseas in cramped quarters on huge ocean ships. My great grandfather contracted the Spanish Flu and soon after disembarking in England passed away. My family never knew until the 1980s what had happened to my great-grandfather as he just disappeared and was never heard of again. This greatly affected my entire family for generations. John had left a wife and three-month-old baby girl in the northern wilderness of James Bay. Soon after he disappeared his wife Maggie died leaving their child an orphan. That lone orphan was my grandmother Louise Paulmartin who became the matriarch of a large Cree family in the north.

One of the other 23 young men from Attawapiskat was my grandfather on my father's side, James Kataquapit. He managed to return home at the end of the conflict but was greatly affected by what he had endured. In all of my research on the First World War I can't find any good reason why this conflict happened except for stupidity, greed and the egos of world leaders of the time.

My partner Mike also was impacted by this war as his grandmother's cousins who returned from

the hell of the trenches suffered gas attacks that left them with lung damage and one of the young boys lost a leg due to his injuries. These boys were sacrificed for no good reason to be maimed and killed as fodder for a pointless conflict. Our shared family history has always given us great cause to remember the millions of victims of this horrible war and also to not forget that the very wealthy leaders, monarchs and industrialists of the time were responsible for this tragedy.

The Second World War was even more horrendous and took the lives of many millions of young soldiers and innocent civilians. Although the war was promoted as fighting fascists, the truth is that leading up to war, the major wealthy decision makers of the world at the time financed and supported right wing fascist governments with Hitler in Germany, Franco in Spain and Mussolini in Italy to name a few. The idea behind this was to make sure that socialists, labour unions, communists and academics were silenced and crushed as the wealthy networked billionaire class of the time had no intention of letting the world believe that wealth should be shared.

After the first great war there were movements in an enlightened period where academics, labour unions and socialist minded leaders believed the world should be more fair in distribution and sharing of wealth. They wanted publicly funded education, health care, social programs and more done for the disenfranchised and poor. The history is finally being known and understood that the wealthy rulers of the world including western and European countries, industrialists and monarchies were all dedicated to getting rid of the new idea of sharing of the wealth. Supporting far right authoritarian movements that led to the Second World War was a way to stop the ideas of socialism from spreading.

Mikes' father James McGrath was wounded in some of the worst fighting of World War Two in the Battle of the Scheldt near Antwerp in Belgium. On the same day James was wounded his 18-year-old brother Patrick was killed in action. James ended up with shell shock as did



**James Kataquapit,**  
World War I veteran  
(circa 1950).



**James McGrath,**  
World War II veteran,  
(circa 1950)



**Patrick McGrath,**  
World War II veteran,  
(circa 1944)



**John Chookomolin,**  
World War I veteran,  
(circa 1917)

— All photos were supplied by family —

many young men who returned from the war and his life was a disaster. The trauma that these young boys endured meant that they never mentally returned from the war. They coped with these memories with alcohol. Drinking was encouraged during the fighting to make these soldiers forget about the horrors of war and people don't realize that amphetamines and methamphetamines were widely given to soldiers on both sides to keep them awake for hours and to encourage them to run head on into dangerous situations and gunfire.

So on November 11, Mike and I have a heavy burden to bear with the knowledge we have gained about these two wars. We are dedicated in making sure people know the truth behind these wars and we urge everyone to think twice about supporting any current and future conflicts that the wealthy start and use our poor young men and women as fodder. Lest We Forget.

## Status card holders face racism

(x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil Waututh)/ Vancouver, B.C. – Indian status card holders face stigma and discrimination on a daily basis when presenting them at stores or to officials, according to a landmark study commissioned by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

The full report is titled “They Sigh or Give You the Look: Discrimination and Status Card Usage” and was prepared using a comprehensive methodology to inform recommendations for government, businesses, and the media.

The decision to commission the study stemmed from the unlawful arrest and detention of Maxwell Johnson when he and his granddaughter presented their federal status cards to open a bank account.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, UBCIC President, stated, “Status cards have long been the prime catalyst for the public expression of ongoing racism and stereotyping of Indigenous peoples. The media and schools have failed to educate people on the history of status cards and why First Nations peoples have them. These results will help us to begin educating Canada so that no grandfather and no granddaughter need ever suffer violence when lawfully going about their business.”

The findings show discrimination is a near-universal experience amongst status First Nations individuals who have used their status card.

This experience is traumatic, particularly for those experiencing other compounding and overlapping forms of oppression, and shapes people's behaviour for a lifetime.

The report also underlines the ways that traditional and social media portray status card usage as a platform for anti-Indigenous racism.


“I will never forget being handcuffed and seeing my grand-daughter standing on the street, crying and handcuffed,” stated Maxwell Johnson. “She was 12 years old, and we were just trying to open a bank account for her. We both have to live with this trauma and the fears caused by it including what could happen the next time we show our Indian status cards. UBCIC's report is an important step forward to revealing the discrimination Indigenous peoples experience every day. I want to see governments and businesses step up to learn, educate, and eliminate this kind of discrimination.”

“The burden of educating people on status cards is unjustly on First Nations people when the government has been negligent in providing the

### They Sigh or Give You the Look

Discrimination and Status Card Usage

2022



proper and relevant resources to educate public service workers and the public about the legality and legitimacy of status cards as government-issued identification,” stated Chief Marilyn Slett, Heiltsuk Nation. “The end result is unacceptable and traumatizing incidents like those of Mr. Johnson and Tori-Anne who merely wanted to do some banking.”

“Using a literature review, media analysis, online survey, and behavioural fieldwork, the study uncovered a near-universal experience of discrimination amongst status First Nations who have used a status card,” said Harmony Johnson, the report's author, “Although this is an issue we all know about, there were no existing studies available. That excuse no longer exists.”



# Rights tribunal won't endorse final agreement for Indigenous child welfare

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On Oct. 25, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) announced it can't support the Final Settlement Agreement (FSA) for Indigenous children who have unjustly been put through the child care system.

The ruling determined the FSA fell short in two key respects — not all victims or survivors were covered by the agreement, and a list of all the categories of victims and survivors was removed from the agreement.

On June 30, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Government of Canada signed a \$20-billion agreement to compensate victims of “discriminatory underfunding” of First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program, according to an AFN statement.

The endorsement of the Human Rights Tribunal and Federal Court were conditions for the agreement.

The tribunal highlighted four groups of children who were overlooked by the agreement:

1. First Nations children removed and placed in non-Indigenous Services Canada placements.
2. Estates of deceased caregiving parents and grandparents are not entitled to compensation.
3. Certain caregiving parents and grandparents will receive less compensation.
4. Some Jordan's Principle survivors may receive less compensation.

Jordan's Principle refers to the requirement that the federal government fund services on reserve to ensure Indigenous people have the same access to services as everybody else, whether they live on reserve or not.

The tribunal found that while the agreement “substantially satisfied” its orders, it didn't do so

fully.

The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), which is composed of the BC Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, is calling on the federal government to ensure First Nations are “consulted and cooperated with in order to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent,” as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“We must collectively ensure that impacted children are not left out of any settlement and that no child is left behind. Substantial inclusion of victims/survivors of the child welfare system is not full inclusion – we must proceed on the principle that every child matters,” reads an FNLC statement, which calls on the feds “to come back to the table.”

In its own statement, the AFN said its lawyers will “consider whether there is a path towards amending or adapting the FSA in a manner that is satisfactory of the CHRT's orders or seek an alternative legal recourse.”

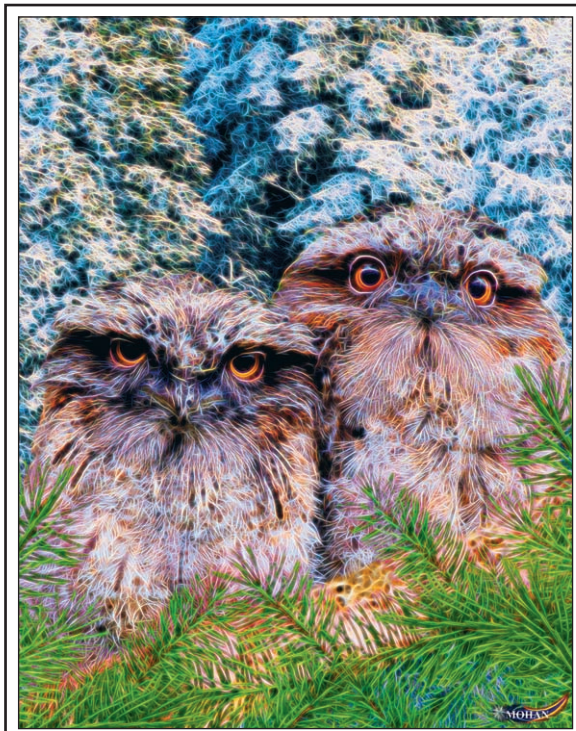
“The AFN will keep fighting to ensure First Nations children and families receive compensation and is cognizant of impacts of the delays on the First Nations victims of Canada's discrimination who now must wait longer for compensation for the discrimination they experienced,” the statement reads.

The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society welcomed the CHRT's ruling, noting in a statement that “Canada's dramatic under-funding of child and family services contributed to thousands of unnecessary family separations between 2006 and 2022.”

While the Federal Court upheld the CHRT's order last year, which required the federal government to provide at least \$40,000 in compensation to each survivor, the feds decided instead to go the route of a class action settlement, which the government said would provide more compensation to victims.

But, as the CHRT ruled, this excluded certain categories of victims.

“We call on Canada to adopt the Tribunal's



'Two Small Owls' © by Tim Mohan, Prints available at [wakinagallery.com](http://wakinagallery.com)

ruling and take up its clear suggestions to fix the FSA to ensure all victims get the human rights compensation and supports they are legally entitled to as soon as possible,” the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society said.

Society executive director Cindy Blackstock said on Twitter that while the FSA would “benefit many, [it] would also take away the 40K from a troubling number of child/adult victims or reduce amounts.”

The CHRT ruling “affirms the rights of all victims to get their 40K as a minimum amount and... encourages Canada to fix the FSA so no-one gets left behind,” Blackstock added.

According to Blackstock, the CHRT “sets out a pathway to ensure all victims get compensated that is easy.” All the feds need to do is amend the FSA to ensure all categories of survivors are included.

However, Manitoba chief Cornell McLean blames Blackstock and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society for causing an unnecessary delay to compensating survivors.

“When we speak about every child matters, in Cindy Blackstock's eyes, no child matters,” McLean, the former acting grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, said at an Oct. 26 news conference.

Lawyer and Toronto Metropolitan University professor Pam Palmater came to Blackstock's defence in an interview on APTN's *Nation to Nation* program, saying the tribunal's ruling is “exactly what we were hoping for.”

“I can only assume [McLean] and others haven't actually read the settlement agreement. Because I can't imagine any chief in this country

*Continued on page 11*



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# Singer-songwriter Donita Large addresses grief and trauma of Residential Schools

A healing image of orange sunsets mixes with heavy grief on Indigenous blues singer, songwriter Donita Large’s soaring new single “Reconciliation Sky.” Inspired by the horrific 2021 news headlines that 215 unmarked graves had been uncovered at the Kamloops Residential School in British Columbia, Donita does what she describes as “the emotional labour of reconciliation work as an Indigenous person” through her music with this new song, which is available now.

Donita’s own father is a survivor of a residential school (as well as several other Cree & Metis family members), and so she needed a way to process the feelings that flooded her when the Kamloops story made the headlines. Friends and colleagues contacted her immediately when the story broke because, by that point, Donita had already been long been involved in teaching about the traumas wrought by the schools and assisting survivors with their interviews for Independent Assessment Process (IAP) claims for the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

Because she already knew much of what was just now being covered in the news, the emergence of the truth on the world stage came as somewhat of a relief. “I was fine, even a bit relieved,” Donita said. “I knew of the unmarked graves, and I was just happy for their relatives that these children were found.”

And yet she was aware that many people

around her were not okay, and that many Canadians were shocked and were finally paying attention. “They were paying attention to residential school stories as survivor TRUTH,” she said, “and not just dismissing it as stories of legend and folklore.” It was a complicated feeling – finally having the truth recognized, but also dealing with the frustration and deep disrespect of not having been believed.

It had been a Spring of orange sunsets, and Donita stood in her home, looking out the window and trying to regulate her body and her thoughts in the evening glow. The words “Can you honour the bones of our children?” echoed in her heart and she wrote the pieces that came.

Then, in August, thanks to the Edmonton Arts Council, Donita travelled to Toronto for a songwriting mentorship with Chris Birkett, known for his work producing several of Buffy Sainte-Marie’s albums as well as for being an accomplished songwriter, singer, and musician. While there, Donita decided she was ready to write a song that honoured her father’s story of going to residential school and the unmarked graves still being recovered at residential school sites.

During the song mentorship, Chris and Donita worked together to complete the lyrics and, with Chris’s multi-instrumentation, he built the layers of sound that were needed to create the foundation for Donita’s voice to belt out



Singer/songwriter Donita Large

“Reconciliation Sky, what will your eyes let you see?”. Donita arrived home to Edmonton and was fired up with excitement about the songs they had written and realized that this is the time that “Reconciliation Sky” should be heard. She decided that she wanted to release it during Reconciliation Week on the day that schools commemorate Orange Shirt Day, and the day before what is now called National Day of Truth & Reconciliation.

“We are in a time where people are still learning the truth, wrongs are still being righted, healing of intergenerational trauma is ongoing, and history is still unfolding as we honour the children who didn’t make it home,” Donita says.

“Reconciliation Sky” is available now.

## Rights tribunal *cont. from p 10*

would want some kids excluded,” Palmater said.

“I mean, that’s counter to the whole purpose of both the human rights tribunal case and the

class action.”

While the agreement is a good first step, provided it’s amended to include all survivors, more must be done to protect children who are currently in the child welfare system, she added.

“Nothing has changed. The discrimination continues – against First Nations kids, their family members, their communities – and the harm keeps happening,” Palmater said.



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# November is Family Violence Prevention Month

Each November, Alberta recognizes Family Violence Prevention Month as a time to identify family violence, raise awareness about it and support those affected by it.

“Families are the basic units of society and violence has deep and lasting negative impacts on family members and the larger community,” said Alberta Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services Jeremy Nixon and parliamentary secretary for Status of Women Tanya Fir in a joint statement.

“Awareness and understanding are key to bringing change. This month provides an opportunity to start conversations about healthy relationships, learn the early warning signs of abuse, and understand how we can support our friends, family and peers to put an end to family violence in Alberta.

“No Albertan is immune to the impacts of family violence. Supports are available to help Albertans learn where to turn if you or someone you know is at risk. Using the hashtag #WhereToTurn is one way to find information on social media. Anyone in need can get connected to supports closest to them 24-7 in more than 170 languages by contacting the Family Violence Info Line by text or phone at 310-1818 or online at [alberta.ca/SafetyChat](https://alberta.ca/SafetyChat).

“This month we encourage all Albertans to learn what they can do to support those at risk of or experiencing family violence, and we urge all Albertans to learn about the role they can have in helping to end family violence.”

On November 1, the Government of Alberta announced that it will be developing a “modern approach to reducing crime and protecting Albertans” with new grant funding available for organizations that provide restorative justice services. The eligible organizations include community-based coalitions, non-profits, Indigenous communities, and youth justice committees, and successful applicants will be supported with up to \$50,000 each for a total of \$720,000 through the Victims of Crime and Public Safety Fund.

Restorative justice—a term popularized since the 1990s—is a dialogue-based practice that attempts to repair the harm caused by crimes by involving both the victim and the perpetrator in

victim-offender mediation, conferencing, or peacemaking. The specific goals can be varied, but centre around the concept of reparation and repair over punishment and incarceration.

While it’s true that restorative justice can have a positive impact—especially in cases involving youths—and can benefit both individuals and communities, there are cautions around broadly applying the concept as a solution for cases of domestic violence, says a blog by the Alberta Council of Womens Shelters. There has been debate on the issue for some time, and many feminist scholars have argued that sending a survivor and their abusive partner to a mediation table to draw up an agreement is neither safe nor a just remedy. In fact, the very nature of domestic violence is the power imbalance that is created when one partner exerts a pattern of coercive control over the other. The dynamics of domestic violence are complex, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

According to ACWS, only 1 of 4 domestic violence incidents are reported to the police. In fact, most cases of domestic violence do not make it to the criminal justice system. Many cases go unreported, and most do not end up in the courts. Some communities continue to have strained relationships with police, based on years of systematic racism and prejudice, and in these communities even fewer cases may be reported. Any approach to justice will require consultation with communities who have been marginalized, including the use of an Indigenous lens and authentic engagement with racialized communities, newcomers, and the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

There has been little research on restorative programs that address intimate partner violence and skepticism about whether the informal methods of restorative justice can ever be truly survivor-centered. Restorative justice must not write over the experience of survivors. It is one potential part of what should be a much larger approach: misogyny and colonialism have led to the current crisis of gender-based violence and it requires solutions that tackle the problem from many angles.

ACWS has long recognized the need for a national action plan (NAP) on gender-based



violence based on international conventions and has supported efforts through its membership with Women’s Shelters Canada to advance this objective. A NAP would also build a shared understanding of the root causes of VAW as well as coordinated and effective efforts across the federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal levels—an approach that recognizes that international law requires states to address violence against women, to exercise due diligence to prevent acts of violence against women; to investigate such acts and prosecute and punish perpetrators—and to provide redress and relief to victims.

It is the recommendation of the ACWS that much caution be taken when considering applying restorative justice concepts to instances of domestic violence. In applications for funding that will involve domestic violence, a panel consisting of provincial VAW/GBV organizations, which includes representatives from the Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters, academics, and other experts should be engaged in the decision-making process.

Engagement with experts will ensure that survivors are kept at the centre of these conversations. In matters of justice and safety, good intentions may inadvertently do harm, putting the lives of women, gender minorities, seniors, and children at risk.

## Unhoused crisis *cont. from p 6*

during a time of spreading respiratory and other health issues, including shigella and Covid. No date for the additional spaces becoming available has been announced.

ECOHH points out that Homeward Trust’s


posted information offers further cause for concern when it reports in the current month 208 people newly identified as having become homeless, compared with 44 who have been housed in the same period.

“It is difficult not to be cynical that elected leaders are more con-cerned with reassuring messages than with effective action,” Chalifoux says.

Homelessness is the worst outcome for people who lack adequate housing. The City of Edmonton says nearly 50,000 people

are in core housing need-- currently living in housing that is too expensive, unsafe, unhealthy, inappropriate, or lacking in necessary supports such as physical accessibility modifications or personal support services. 6400 households are on wait lists for community housing and 4702 households are on the wait list for the Rental Assistance Benefit. “When adequate housing is not available, homelessness may well be the next experience for a person,” Chalifoux says.

As the years of significant homelessness have gone on and grown, over the past 25 years, ECOHH has tracked a growing number of people who die as a result each year. When records began to be gathered in 2005, 32 people were identified. In 2021, that number had grown to 222.



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# Teagan Littlechief to sing National Anthem at Grey Cup

The Canadian Football League (CFL) will welcome Teagan Littlechief for the singing of “O Canada” ahead of the 109th Grey Cup on Sunday, November 20. The recording artist from White Bear First Nations of Treaty 4, located north of Carlyle, Sask., is set to perform the national anthem in Cree, English and French.

“I’m so thrilled and grateful for the opportunity to showcase Indigenous language and culture at the Grey Cup in my home province,” said Littlechief. “As we continue to build a better country through reconciliation, inclusivity and representation, this is a step in the right direction and it’s a message to all Canadians that we are stronger when we stand together. And how better to send such an important message than through the gift and joy of music.”

Littlechief’s debut album *Rising Above* included the singles “Once An Eagle” and “Bring It On.” Her next release, 2013’s “Home Fire,” reached No. 1 on the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Charts, while 2014’s “I’ll Bring the Party”, soared to No. 1 on the National Aboriginal Music Countdown. The single also garnered her a nomination for Aboriginal Artist of the Year at the 2016 Saskatchewan Country Music Awards (SCMA).

This year has seen Littlechief reach new heights after claiming the SCMA for Indigenous Artist of the Year, and being voted Pure Country 92.7 Saskatchewan’s Next Big Thing. Despite her accolades in 2022, and her multiple performances of the national anthem for her beloved Roughriders, she remains in awe of the opportunity ahead.

“The Grey Cup is one of the country’s biggest

sporting events each year. Performing for football fans and feeding off their energy and excitement is always amazing, but I know this will be like nothing I’ve ever experienced before. I can’t wait!”

“Teagan wows Rider Nation with her rendition of “O Canada” on a regular basis and we are thrilled that the whole country will be able to experience her incredible talent,” said Saskatchewan Roughriders President and CEO, Craig Reynolds. “As we work together towards truth and reconciliation, hearing our national anthem in Cree on a stage as big as the 109th Grey Cup will be a truly special moment for all of us.”

Littlechief joins a musical lineup that features country all-stars Jordan Davis, Tyler Hubbard of Florida Georgia Line and Canadian Josh Ross, who will unite on-stage for a one-time-only performance in the Twisted Tea Grey Cup Halftime Show, as well as Canadian alternative pop band, Valley, who will open the festivities in the SiriusXM Kickoff Show.

The 109th Grey Cup from Mosaic Stadium in Saskatchewan will air live on Sunday, November 20 with kickoff slated for 5 p.m. local/6 p.m. ET. The sold-out championship contest will be broadcast across the



Singer Teagan Littlechief

nation on TSN and RDS – Canada’s home of the CFL.

The 2022 Grey Cup Festival opens on Tuesday, November 15 in Saskatoon before moving to Regina from Wednesday to Saturday. For more information surrounding the festival, including dates, venues, purchasing details and more, please visit GreyCupFestival.ca.



# Joe Spence wins lo-ball Memorial Pool Tournament

By Terry Lusty, LJI Reporter

Joe Spence, a Native sharpshooter from Calgary, was this year's winner of the Tim (Bradshaw) Kirkland lo-ball Memorial Pool Tournament at Top Shots Billiards in Millwoods, Edmonton on the November 5 & 6 weekend.

Another Indigenous contestant, Stephen Holem, who has been on a tear this year, placed a close third.

Prize money was \$5000, added purse with 64 entries. The weekend saw some very exciting matches!



Joe Spence, winner of the '22 Tim (Bradshaw) Kirkland lo-ball Memorial Pool Tournament.

## Public Notice - St. Mary River Irrigation District Chin Reservoir Expansion Project



### Proposed Terms of Reference for Environmental Impact Assessment

Chin Reservoir is an off-stream storage reservoir that is located roughly in the middle of St. Mary River Irrigation District (SMRID) irrigation network, approximately 30 kilometers (km) east of Lethbridge and 15 km south of Taber. The existing reservoir is located in Lethbridge County, the County of Warner, and the Municipal District of Taber, between NE-27-8-18-4 and SE-26-7-16-4. It is the largest off-stream reservoir within SMRID with a storage volume of 154,320 acre-foot (ac-ft). Chin Reservoir is located in a major glacial melt coulee known as Chin Coulee. The reservoir is impounded by two dams on its east and west ends: Chin 1 (West Dam), and Chin 2 (East Dam). The two dams were completed in 1955 and no major modifications have been completed since their construction.

The water impounded by the reservoir is vital to the economic activity in the Southern Alberta region and is relied upon as a source for drinking water, recreation, various industrial activities and for farm irrigation.

The Chin Reservoir Expansion Project (the Project) involves the construction of a new dam which will result in a larger reservoir. The new dam will be approximately 40 meters (m) in height and is expected to inundate (flood) approximately 650 hectares (ha) of privately held land within Chin Coulee. The new dam and eastern limit are within SW 23-7-15-W4 and NW-14-7-15-W4 in the MD of Taber and County of Lethbridge. There will be no change to existing SMRID water diversion licenses, the expanded Chin Reservoir volume can be filled within current diversion licenses.

The expansion of Chin Reservoir has the following goals:

- To enhance, and continue to support, the economic productivity of the Southern Alberta region;
- To build resiliency against future floods and droughts based on climate change predictions; and
- To upgrade critical infrastructure to modern design standards.

The Director responsible for Environmental Assessments has directed that an Environmental Impact Assessment Report be prepared for the Chin Reservoir Expansion Project. SMRID has prepared a proposed Terms of Reference for this Environmental Impact Assessment, and through this public notice, invites the public to review this document. **Your name and comments submitted will be accessible to the public.**

The proposed Terms of Reference and associated project information can be viewed at the following locations:

- St. Mary River Irrigation District  
<https://smrid.com/>
- Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, Register of Environmental Assessment  
<http://www.alberta.ca/environmental-impact-assessments-current-projects.aspx>

For further information on the Chin Reservoir Expansion Project or for copies of the proposed Terms of Reference and associated project information please contact:

Chin Reservoir Expansion Project  
Address: 525 – 40 St South, Lethbridge, AB, T1J 4M1  
Email: [chin.expansion@smrid.com](mailto:chin.expansion@smrid.com)  
Phone: 587.220.5652

Individuals wishing to provide written comments on the proposed Terms of Reference must submit them by January 3, 2023, to:

Director, Environmental Assessment, Regulatory Assurance  
Alberta Environment and Protected Areas  
E-mail: [environmental.assessment@gov.ab.ca](mailto:environmental.assessment@gov.ab.ca)

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If you have any question about the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information, or should you wish to have your personal information removed, please contact the Environmental Assessment Registrar at 780-427-5828, [environmental.assessment@gov.ab.ca](mailto:environmental.assessment@gov.ab.ca).



# Indigenous team to challenge Mt. Denali

By Terry Lusty, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

What originally began as nothing more than “just an idea”, has suddenly evolved into a major undertaking. Eight Indigenous individuals have banded together and under the leadership of veteran mountain climber, Leo Namen, they are embarking on a most challenging sojourn that will undoubtedly test their strength, fortitude, resiliency and commitment.

Their mountainous goal is Denali - the world’s third most prominent at 6190 m (20,310 ft), only superseded by Mount Everest in the Himalayas (8849 m) and Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina (6961 m). Situated in the American Cordillera of the Alaska Range, it was initially scaled in 1913.

Americans named it Mount McKinley after one of its presidents who died in 1901 by way of assassination. The name first came about by a gold prospector in 1896 and officially by the USA in 1917. It stuck for a long time; an attempt was made to have it revert to its Indigenous monicker, Deenaalee “(the high one)”, in 1975 but failed. The Deenaalee name came from the Koyukon tribe that lived in the region immediately north of the mountain. It did, however, become Denali, the English spelling, in 2015, thanks in large part to then-President Barack Obama.

According to the Indigenous Sports Council of Alberta, the original idea for the current initiative was that an Indigenous team would include one male and one female. However, after consideration of expressed interest, “we decided to reach out” a bit more. For a few of the team participants mountain climbing is not a foreign concept; some have prior experience. Team lead, Leo Namen has decades of past experience and, if successful in this planned climb, he will become the first Canadian survivor of a heart attack to summit Mt. Denali. That in itself, would be quite an accomplishment.

If successful, the Indigenous eight-member team will become the first Canadian Indigenous group to ever summit Denali. They’re all very excited and looking forward to the May 2023 arrival date. And they wait, not with trepidation, but with delightful anticipation of the start and conclusion of the project. It will certainly be a memorable experience that they will cherish the rest of their lives!

To formally kick off their Heart of the Summit climbing project, the ISCA held a formal press conference at the University of Alberta’s Climbing Centre on October 22. Organizers explained the concept development, fielded



Team photo: (Back row) - Leo Namen, Shawna Goodstriker, Kandace Halcrow, Tyler Halcrow, and Joseph Manyfingers. (Front row) - Elena Gould, Margaretta Potts, Rae-Anne Gill, and Melody Lepine.

questions, provided information, and followed with a silent auction of Native handicrafts, art pieces, autographed hockey pictures (including a gorgeous one of ‘the’Connor McDavid), luggage sets and more!

During the question period, some team members discussed challenges that the climb might present.

Melody Lepine, originally from Ft. Chipewyan, has previous climbing experience and stated that the “physical” element would definitely be there as will “safety” factors and one’s “mental capacity.”

To others, the “heights” will play a role. As well, they’ll have to “train hard” and stay focused. Another challenge is that they will “be away from family members” for some time.

A few additional considerations, quipped Namen, will be the “weather, potential avalanches, and oxygen levels” due to high altitudes. He noted that although the slope is “not real steep and there are some flat, open areas,” the winds can be quite brisk up high and in the open areas.

The sport council said that apart from the health and wellness angle, the project will assist in raising awareness and funding for the ISCA. Add to this, is the fact that it will “increase valuable partnerships and enhance the capacity for the

ISCA to further their important work with the Indigenous communities, families and individuals of Alberta and further enhance ISCA’s profile as a provincial organization.”

Finally, it will help to “increase opportunities for Indigenous people of Alberta to participate in mountain climbing.”

Kandace Halcrow explained she found herself drawn into the project because it’s challenging and “because I love the mountains.” Margaretta Potts stated that she saw an advertisement asking for participants, “so, I applied... I love the challenge.”

They all love the challenge!

On a parting note, Shawna Goodstriker from Kainai territory in southern Alberta said that there will also be other events, to assist with awareness and fundraising which is so very critical to help subsidize this project as well as ISCA itself in its day-to-day operations and expenses.

Giving the organization’s CEO, Jacob Hendy, the final word, he expressed his delight that, within this project “there is representation from all over Alberta... and from youth to grandparents.”

For additional information or to donate, contact the Indigenous Sports Council of Alberta at [iscamountdenali@gmail.com](mailto:iscamountdenali@gmail.com), or [heartofthesummit@hotmail.com](mailto:heartofthesummit@hotmail.com).



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# ‘Rainbow Jellyfish’ is a story of modern Métis beadwork

By Deena Goodrunning, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Krista Leddy is a Métis artist currently located in Treaty Six territory. Her artwork has been featured in the Royal Alberta Museum’s *Breathe* exhibit, in the *Canadian Geographic* and on the cover of the book *Stories of Métis Women: Tales My Kookum Told Me*. Leddy spoke with Alberta Native News about one of her beaded artwork pieces: *Rainbow Jellyfish*.

According to Leddy, the creation of *Rainbow Jellyfish* began in the earlier days of the COVID-19 pandemic. She was working from home, and making *Rainbow Jellyfish* was something she needed to do in order to heal and cope with what was currently going on around her in the world.

“I think sometimes some of the best art comes from those really visceral moments of feeling and need,” Leddy said. “And [*Rainbow Jellyfish*] was definitely one of those pieces. So [I was] just trying to make something shiny and happy and light amid a world of uncertainty and fear.”

Leddy explained that *Rainbow Jellyfish* was also created for an online challenge she had started called the: #BeadSoupChallenge. Bead soup is a container filled with a mixture of different beads. The beads in Leddy’s soup are mostly glass, but there’s also some beads made from stone, bone, shell, and the odd piece of plastic. *Rainbow Jellyfish* was created entirely from the glass beads selected from her tub of bead soup, though she used beads from elsewhere for the edging. She compared beading to painting a picture.

“Instead of paint, it’s laying down each bead because that’s your colour. And with beads you don’t get to change the colours. You don’t get to mix them. You have to find different ways to tell a colour story with what you have. I think I did a pretty good job of telling an interesting story with the colours I had that [were] in my tub of bead soup.”

Leddy said it took her 15-20 hours to finish

beading and edging *Rainbow Jellyfish*. She also spent additional untold hours dreaming, sketching and planning out the layout of *Rainbow Jellyfish*.

“I’d start beading a little bit and I’d get stuck, and then I’d sleep on it and then wake up and be like: *That’s what I need to do. I just saw it in my sleep, in my dream.* And whether it’s the ancestors kind of guiding me or my subconscious, it’s the experience and stories that were telling me what to do.”

Leddy said that *Rainbow Jellyfish* is also the result of years of experience in beading and creating art.

“That’s years and years of practice and hours and hours of work. And even though it seems whimsical, it’s not done lightly. I invested a lot of time in [*Rainbow Jellyfish*] and a lot of me, because it does carry a piece of my soul and my identity in there.”

When asked about what she thinks the story that *Rainbow Jellyfish* tells, Leddy said: “I made this as a moment of joy and beauty and whimsy, because I needed it. Because of what was going on in the world around me. The story that has evolved from that is: recognizing what art is. What Métis art is. Hopefully [*Rainbow Jellyfish*] inspires other Indigenous artists to take their experiences of the here and now and tell it through a lens that comes from the training and the stories and the way they were raised that comes from their ancestors.”

Leddy explained that she beaded *Rainbow Jellyfish* using traditional Métis methods. But, the image itself isn’t traditional.

“It’s very contemporary because we don’t have a lot of jellyfish on the prairies. You know, it’s not a regular Métis thing.”

Leddy said that to her, *Rainbow Jellyfish* is a modern telling of Métis experience.

“So this is a modern telling of Métis experience because I’ve seen jellyfish...and, so it becomes part of the new [Métis] experience. And so that’s an evolution of culture and art,” Leddy said.

Leddy explained that people create art about their experiences. Leddy said that she truly believes that if her ancestors had seen jellyfish they would have also beaded images of them. There’s nothing wrong with deciding to bead more traditional images but she thinks that there’s also nothing wrong with choosing to bead more contemporary images.

When people try to dictate that only certain images are allowed to be classified as Métis



Rainbow Jellyfish by Krista Leddy

art, Leddy disapproves, “because it’s taking images that sometimes aren’t really the ones that truly represent who we are. But, it’s the greater Eurocentric view of who we are supposed to be, [and what our art is supposed to look like.]”

Leddy said that she believes that if her ancestors had access to the materials she has, that their art and images used would look a little bit different. But, the stories and the underlying ideas and representations of wahkohtowin would remain the same.

“Cultures evolve. If they don’t, they die. We are always evolving to what’s around us. And so [*Rainbow Jellyfish*] is a representation of how cultures evolve. I still [bead traditional Métis imagery] because there’s important stories and whatnot in there. But, that’s not the only Métis art. Métis art is that and everything else that is made by Métis artists. And it doesn’t have to be beadwork either. It can be paint, it can be sculpture, it can be anything.”

In conclusion, Leddy said that she thinks everyone should give beading and the traditional arts a try.

“And you’re never going to be good at it the first time. All these things take practice and they take time,” Leddy pointed out.

“It’s okay not to like it either, so don’t think you’re any less Indigenous because you don’t resonate with doing the art. That’s not everybody’s cup of tea. But, I do suggest everyone just give it a try.”

Leddy can be found on Twitter and Instagram @beadedchickadee and on Facebook @Beaded Chickadee.



Beading by Krista Leddy

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