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Indigenous youth take on the future with CAREERS

Jayton and Jake Day Chief are two of the closest brothers you'll ever meet. From friends to sports and hobbies, they share it all; so, when Jake jumped on an opportunity to explore the skilled trades, his younger brother was quick to follow.

"We like to motivate each other, give each other a little challenge," says Jayton.

And that was all it took! Jayton fast-tracked his courses at school to catch up with his brother, then reached out to CAREERS to apply for an experience that would change his life.

CAREERS: The Next Generation is a non-profit organization that works closely with schools and different Nations to connect Indigenous teens like the Day Chief brothers with employers in their region for paid internships. Through the CAREERS Indigenous Youth Internship Program, youth make money, earn high school credits, and gain valuable experience. With help from Blood Tribe Employment & Skills Training (BTEST), CAREERS found

plumbing and sheet metal internships for the Day Chief brothers at KB Mechanical in Lethbridge.

"I like the trades and I really just want to get some experience under my belt," explains Jake. "I want to try everything out so I can to see what I like."

The internship has had a huge impact on the brothers. While they are still unsure which skilled trade they'll end up in, both plan to pursue a journeypersons certificate. According to Jake, the opportunity came at the perfect time.

"With this, I get experience before going into post secondary. I can get a feel for what I like instead of going in blind."

Most of the employers who work with CAREERS, benefit as well.

"I've really enjoyed having them here. It's nice to see their enthusiasm in wanting to come to work and wanting to learn new things," remarked Ron Vandermeer, Commercial Project Coordinator, KB Mechanical.

In fact, 91% of CAREERS' employers agree it aligns with business objectives and say they'll hire students again.

"Syncrude supports the Indigenous Youth Career Pathways program because it is helping us build our future workforce with people who have the

skills we need and want to contribute to our success. By every measure, it continues to be an excellent investment," noted Jerry McPherson, Vice President, Projects & Regional Synergies, Syncrude, operated by Suncor.

"When you provide meaningful employment for Indigenous youth, you are increasing their confidence and skills, which lays the foundation for success and ripples through their communities," added Rebecca Kragnes, Indigenous Business Relations, Bird Construction.

Jayton Day Chief says the experience has put him light years ahead of his peers and would recommend it to any Alberta teen.

"If you want something, why not try it out. It's such a great program and I want more kids to get into it."

Whether you're a young person like Jayton or Jake, a parent helping a child navigate their future, or an employer looking to grow your workforce from the ground up, CAREERS: The Next Generation is an excellent resource to get you started. And right now, qualified employers can get up to \$7,500 to help cover the costs. Go to CAREERSnextgen.ca.



Foreground: Jayton Day Chief, Sheet Metal Intern. Background: Jake Day Chief Plumbing Intern.



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Alberta Native News

Treaty 6 leaders declare drug poisoning crisis a state of emergency

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



Following a motion at its annual general meeting, the Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 Nations declared the drug poisoning crisis an official state emergency on July 10, calling for assistance from all levels of government.

Treaty Six includes nations located in north-central Alberta and Saskatchewan.

“Families, friends, and loved ones are being lost to this devastating crisis,” said Treaty Six Grand Chief Leonard Standingontheroad.

“If harm reduction isn’t available, our People will die. The Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 Nations is asking the federal government to intervene and offer more effective, flexible and long-lasting support.”

Harm reduction refers to policies that acknowledge people are going to use drugs and seek to provide them with a way to use them as safely as possible. This includes supervised consumption sites, opioid agonist therapy, needle exchange programs and other interventions.

The confederation notes that under Treaty No. 6’s medicine chest clause, the federal government has a responsibility to continuously provide health care.

Federal Addictions and Mental Health Minister Carolyn Bennett, who was in Edmonton on July 10 to announce funding for sexually-transmitted and blood-borne infections support, said the government will “respond positively” to the grand chief’s request.

Bennett promised to pursue a “bottom-up approach” to the crisis, working alongside Treaty 6 leadership.

“The misunderstanding of harm reduction is deadly,” she said. “We need people to be able to

stay alive long enough to get help and with the poisoned drug supply, people using once are dying, people using alone and in their homes are dying. We actually need the kind of education and community support to ... use every tool in our toolbox.”

In a statement to *Global News*, Alberta Addictions and Mental Health Minister Dan Williams said “the provincial government is partnering directly with First Nations in the spirit of reconciliation by establishing addictions recovery facilities with the Enoch Cree Nation, Tsuut’ina Nation, Siksika Nation and Kainai Nation.”

He called on the feds to “step up and provide more support to (First) Nations facing addiction.”

Williams added that there are seven supervised consumption sites in Alberta.

“As of today, there are seven drug consumption sites operating in Calgary, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Edmonton (three sites) and Grande Prairie. Later this year, a new site is set to open in Edmonton,” he told *Global*.

However, the sites in Red Deer, Lethbridge and one of the sites in Edmonton are more bare-bones overdose prevention facilities, not full-fledged supervised consumption sites, as is the Edmonton site.

Earlier in the day, Bennett met with Edmonton Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, who served with her in cabinet when he was a Liberal MP from 2015 to 2019.

On Twitter, Sohi expressed support for Treaty Six Nations.

“We grieve with them for every community member lost,” he wrote.

“In Edmonton, we are also losing loved ones every day. These deaths are preventable, and both the federal and provincial governments have an obligation to work together to save lives.”

On July 7, *APTN News* reported that life expectancy for First Nations men and women have each decreased by seven years from 2015 to 2021, in part due to the drug poisoning crisis.

As of 2021, First Nation male life expectancy is 60 years, compared to 79 years for non-First Nation men, while First Nation female life expectancy is 66, compared to 84 for non-First Nation women.

That’s a gap of 19 years for men and 18 years for women.



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Alberta First Nations criticize federal UNDRIP legislation

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) calls on governments to “consult and cooperate in good faith” with Indigenous communities “to obtain their free, prior and informed consent” for any law that impacts them.

Yet First Nations in Alberta say that the federal government’s law to implement UNDRIP was done without adequately consulting them.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government endorsed UNDRIP in 2016 and passed legislation in 2021 to bring its laws into compliance with the declaration within two years.

Tsuut’ina Nation Minor Chief Regena Crowchild told the *Edmonton Journal* that while the government adopting UNDRIP was the right move, its ambition to treat First Nations the same as municipalities betrays a lack of understanding what First Nations are calling for.

“They talk to organizations, and we have some of our chiefs there, but there was no direct consultation with us to address the unfinished business of our treaties, and they’re moving away from the treaties,” Crowchild said.

Tsuut’ina is one of 16 First Nations in Alberta and Saskatchewan that have signed an open letter protesting the feds’ approach to implementing UNDRIP. The others are: Onion Lake Cree Nation, O’Chiese First Nation, Kehewin Cree Nation, Saddle Lake First Nation, James Smith Cree Nation, Beaver Lake Cree Nation, Beaver First Nation, Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, Cold Lake First Nation, Alexander First Nation, Frog Lake First Nation, Louis Bull Tribe, Montana First Nation, Ermineskin Cree Nation, Ochapowace Nation

The nations held a peaceful rally at the Alberta Legislature in Edmonton on July 1.

The government unveiled its five-year plan to implement UNDRIP on June 21, which marks both National Indigenous Peoples Day and Summer Solstice. Federal Justice Minister David Lametti acknowledged the plans were imperfect, but that the government intends to conduct more consultation.

“There’s more work to be done, more consultation to be done,” he said in Ottawa.

The open letter characterizes the government’s timing of its announcement as “deceptive — while our people are celebrating our culture, language and existence.”

Onion Lake Cree Nation Chief Henry Lewis told the *Journal* that the feds’ plan is a “reboot of the failed 1969 White Paper.”

The White Paper, brought forward by then-justice minister Jean Chretien sought to abolish the Indian Act without a replacement.

The current plan, which includes 181 measures, seeks to gradually move away from the Indian Act.

Tsuut’ina Chief Roy Whitney told the *Journal* that Treaty rights must be respected throughout the entire process.

“Abolishing the Indian Act without returning to the path of treaty continues to violate our right to free prior and informed consent. Repeal of the act puts our land at risk and moves us into a municipal structure of land governance — in violation of our treaty,” Whitney said.

The national Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), which represents Indigenous people who live off reserve and includes the Indigenous Congress of Alberta Association, said the

Continued on page 6

The intersection of First Nation Treaties and Metis Self-Government

By Rob Houle, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On National Indigenous Peoples Day (NIPD) the Federal Government introduced Bill C-53 or *Recognition of Certain Métis Governments in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan and Métis Self-Government Act* in the House of Commons. This piece of federal legislation is intended to enshrine recent self-government agreements enacted by various Metis organizations.

The Act utilizes a general application of the inherent right to self-government that exists within the Supreme Court of Canada’s definition of s.35, a right which was born from the outfall of the 1995 Quebec separatist referendum. During that tumultuous time, First Nations in Quebec took opposition to the province’s unilateral claim to their lands and resources. This opposition was strengthened by Quebec’s long-standing contestment of the *Constitution Act of 1982*, and its claim that they had never entered into Confederation, one of the tools that other provinces have relied upon to undermine Aboriginal title.

With the introduction of Bill C-53, we seem to be poised for another Constitutional conflict in Indian country. Over a number of years, in an attempt to gain further legitimacy and partnership with the Federal government, Metis organizations have been completing self-government processes. These processes involve management of membership outside of Federal determinations of metisness, as well as the ability to enter into claims processes like the problematic Specific Claims Policy imposed upon First Nations.

For First Nations leaders, the Act is seen as

Continued on page 7

Elder Gilman Cardinal shares his path to Eldership

By Kinnukana, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The road to Indigenous eldership takes time as it is sacred work. Elder Gilman Cardinal began his path to becoming an Elder at an early age and his life experiences have contributed to the wonderful work that he does now. As an Elder, he shares and educates others about his culture and history in order to create positive change.

Elder Gilman Cardinal grew up in his home community of Calling Lake, Alberta. He was raised by his Métis mother and Bigstone Cree father and his grandparents. He was brought up in the era of residential schools. He recalls at nine years old when a plane landed to pick up First Nations children. Most kids in the community were taken from Calling Lake and sent to residential school. Gilman asked his grandfather why this was happening, and his grandfather told him it was the law. Families were ordered to bring children to the dock to go on the plane or they could be jailed. Fortunately, Gilman’s mother chose not to register as a First Nations member when she married his dad. All First Nations mothers had to register their children at birth in the hospital and the names were sent to the Indian registry in Ottawa. The list was also used to identify children for residential schools. Gilman’s mother was able to protect her children so that they could stay at home. Elder Gilman Cardinal said, “Women were fire keepers and kept family together, they kept culture and language together and protected our teachings.”

After seeing the children leave, Gilman made a vow to himself that he would work the rest of his life to help make change, but it was not easy for him either. When he went to school in the community the students were told not to talk Cree, or they would get punished. Gilman learned about his culture by helping Elders with ceremonies. The Elders in the community had to hide their teachings and ceremonies so it was not something he talked about with others. Gilman also experienced racism and discrimination at age nine when he went on a trip to Athabasca with his grandfather. While there, Gilman saw writing on the doors of businesses that said, ‘No Dogs or Indians Allowed.’ This made Gilman upset and to this day he still struggles going to Athabasca.

Gilman’s mother prepared him to one day leave the community of Calling Lake and she told him to get a government job. When Gilman was old enough, he moved to Slave Lake and kept

his promise to his mother. He got a job with the government and put together a Job Core program that focused on supporting people to get off of social assistance. Gilman and his staff worked with families in the community and expanded the work to include opportunities for apprenticeship, trades training, and career counselling. Gilman wanted to become part of the solution instead of being part of the problem.

Gilman worked for twenty years in Slave Lake before continuing his government career in Edmonton, Alberta for another twenty years. When he moved, he was gifted the key to the Town of Slave Lake for all his excellent work and he also won a Premier’s Award of Excellence for his successful Job Core program.

Gilman says he was and still is a workaholic, but he had to slow down at fifty years of age when he had a heart attack. His healing took him to an Elder in Maskwacis where he stayed all summer and went through a right of passage and many different healing ceremonies. The Maskwacis Elder knew his full history and all the things he accomplished. After the last ceremony, the Elder gave him protocol in the form of tobacco and asked Gilman to accept it. Gilman asked him what it was for, and the Elder said I want you to start following the path of Eldership. Gilman was blown away. He thought of it in the past, but it is such a respectful position and humbling place that he thought he did not qualify for it. The Elder explained to him that all of Gilman’s life had been focused on teaching his language, culture and empowering young people in education, training, employment, and homelessness that he absolutely earned the right to be an Elder. Elder Gilman Cardinal accepted it and also earned a spirit name which he said is sacred and he only uses it for special occasions.

Elder Gilman Cardinal said the role into



Elder Gilman Cardinal with his grandchildren Luc and Alex. (Photo supplied).

Eldership took on many challenges when he first started. Being an Elder in an urban setting is different than in the community. He spends lots of time teaching the outside world about his culture and history. He said, “If you want to make an impact and have success with Indigenous communities and lessen the high rates of unemployment and incarceration, you have to work with us at our level. This is what I have been teaching – come to our community, sit with us, we will smudge you and cleanse the place where you are going to work and then bring your agenda forward. If you do not do it that way you can leave the door you came in and walk out the same way.”

Elder Gilman Cardinal has fifteen grandchildren, ten biological and five from extended family members. He loves to pass his knowledge to them. He also works part-time at Telus World of Science and loves being able to enhance their programming. He does work for individual companies, government ministries and organizations that reach out to him to provide ceremonies and training. Recently, he received one of the first ever Okimaw Awards that recognized his contributions as a Courageous Warrior and Okimaw (leader). When others ask him if the world for Indigenous people is changing and how can they help, he replies with ‘Come and walk with us, beside us, get to know us. We are moving forward.’

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EPS Papaschase mural is a step forward

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A mural at Edmonton Police Service (EPS) headquarters honouring the history of Papaschase First Nation is an important symbolic gesture, but there must be concrete action to rebuild trust between the police and Indigenous communities, says Papaschase Chief Calvin Bruneau.

The mural, painted by Metis artist Jordan Ernst, was unveiled on June 21 — National Indigenous Peoples Day — at a ceremony attended by Bruneau, an Elder and EPS leadership, which included drumming and singing.

The spray painted portrait depicts a woodpecker, which is what Papaschase means in Cree.

Bruneau told *Alberta Native News* that the EPS first reached out to him about displaying a mural portraying Papaschase’s history “to acknowledge us, honour our history and our band.”

The event was initially scheduled for June 2, but band leadership thought it would be more appropriate for it to occur on National Indigenous Peoples Day, which coincides with Summer Solstice.

An EPS member who was corresponding with Bruneau recommended Ernst, who painted

another mural for the service last year.

“I took pictures with it yesterday, and it’s a beautiful mural. This guy is talented,” Bruneau said.

Assistant Insp. Paul Looker said in a promotional video that the mural is “another step forward to remind our members of the strong relationships that we have with the First Nations and the work we do with them.”

The EPS doesn’t necessarily have the strongest relationship with Indigenous Edmontonians, as exemplified by the case of Pacey Dumas, an Indigenous teenager who required the removal of a large part of his skull after he was kicked in the head by an EPS officer while lying on the ground in December 2020.

Bruneau said incidents like these demonstrate why there’s so much distrust between Indigenous people and the EPS, but the EPS acknowledging



Chief Calvin Bruneau and Papaschase delegates at the unveiling of the new EPS art installation in honour of the Papaschase First Nation. EPS photo.

that their headquarters is on Indigenous land is an important first step towards repairing their relationship.

“[Police] need to understand who our people are. There needs to be [a greater] level of respect on their part, because of the stereotypes already out there. I think that influences some of these officers and how they deal with our people,” Bruneau said.

He said the superintendents he spoke with after the ceremony expressed interest in recruiting more young Indigenous officers, potentially setting up a tipi outside headquarters, and sending officers to a sweat lodge to get a better understanding of Indigenous cultural practices.

Only through understanding Indigenous history and culture can police “make better decisions when it comes to dealing with” Indigenous people, Bruneau added.

“It was a good first step in acknowledging the Papaschase First Nation here in Edmonton. That’s showing respect, and an acknowledgement of who we are and our ancestors’ place in history here,” he said.

“Now let’s try and think of ways to move forward and improve relations with our people here in Edmonton.”

UNDRIP *cont. from p 4*

Liberals’ plan is “devoid” of their input.

“The exclusion of CAP and its recommendations are just another way to attempt to further colonize and assimilate our communities, who represent all Aboriginal distinctions, including off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Métis, and southern Inuit Indigenous peoples,” the congress said in a statement.


CAP vice president Kim Beaudin told the *Brandon Sun* that the plan ignores the needs of Indigenous people who aren’t affiliated with their band leadership.

“There are thousands of people who don’t have a voice — they don’t have a voice with their band, or they’ve actually been ignored by their First Nation band,” said Beaudin. “We’ve been fighting tooth and nail to make sure nobody is forgotten about — it doesn’t matter if you’re on- or off-reserve.”

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chief Roseanne Archibald, however, said that while some Indigenous groups may not be fully onboard with the plan, most support it.

Terry Teegee, the AFN’s British Columbia regional chief, said in a June 21 media release that the federal plan is a crucial step towards undoing 200 years of colonization, but it must be done properly at every step.

“We will hold the government accountable to ensure the work on this plan does not take a similar pace. It is essential that we establish clear accountability mechanisms and take tangible steps to ensure the implementation [of] this plan into meaningful change for First Nations,” Teegee said.



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Indigenous youth continue facing discrimination

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Indigenous youth say they still face systemic barriers in their academic and professional careers, although there have been improvements, according to a new survey from accounting firm Deloitte.

The survey, conducted as the second part of the company’s Indigenous Youth Leaders on Reconciliation series, focused on education, the workplace and the transition between the two.

It involved speaking with more than 20 young Indigenous people who participated in last year’s Indigenous Youth Advocacy Week, which was hosted by the reconciliation advocacy group Canadian Roots Exchange.

Four participants were selected for follow-up interviews. The information from the surveys was supplemented by data from Statistics Canada and industry reconciliation specialists, including those at Deloitte.

Indigenous enrollment in post-secondary institutions increased by 85 per cent from 2011 to 2021, but Indigenous post-secondary students are less likely to complete their degree than the non-Indigenous population, according to the statistics compiled in the report. While 11 per cent of Indigenous students went on to graduate in 2021, 35 per cent of non-Indigenous did.

Many students surveyed said they felt they didn’t belong at colleges and universities. One study participant noted that support for Indigenous students in post-secondary education “diminishes over time.”

“Why do we have to prove ourselves to get respect from others?” asked another participant.

Indigenous youth are 65 per cent less likely to find employment in the professional and financial services sector than their non-Indigenous counterparts, the study notes.

When Indigenous youth do enter the workplace, the study found they’re likely to face various forms of discrimination, including microaggressions, having their ideas ignored, not being assigned to favourable projects and being subject to stereotypes.

Dean Janvier, a Deloitte Indigenous director overseeing the Prairies and B.C., told *Alberta Native News* that youth are far too often left out of

discussions regarding reconciliation.

“It would be very difficult to measure reconciliation, because reconciliation is a process, so it’s going to be ongoing for some time to come,” Janvier cautioned. But the report’s purpose was to gather Indigenous youth leaders’ perceptions of progress so that it can be “amplified” for government and corporate leaders to hear.

Participants agreed that many companies’ policies, programming and funding for Indigenous employees are a good first step, but they’re asking decision-makers “to go deeper now” and make these programs more accessible, Janvier added.

“They asked us leaders to go back and do our homework, and review those policies, those programs, those funding mechanisms and see what ways we can make them more friendly.

more welcoming or culturally appropriate, more acceptable [and] to decolonize them,” he said.

This also applies to Deloitte, which launched corporate Canada’s first Reconciliation Action Plan in 2020.

“We still have some of our own homework to do and improvements to make in these areas. But we’re committed to working with our employees and to make those adjustments as we go forward to create better outcomes,” Janvier said.

The report concludes with nine recommendations, including increasing services and financial support for Indigenous students of



all ages, offering paid Indigenous-focused job placements for those entering the workforce, and for employers to establish “targeted and meaningful professional development opportunities” for Indigenous employees.



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WHAT IS THE CLASS ACTION ABOUT?

The Indian Boarding Home Program was an educational program in which the Government of Canada placed children from First Nations communities and Inuit villages in other communities (usually non-Indigenous) to stay with private families for the purpose of attending school. The class action alleges that Canada’s actions in creating, operating, and maintaining the Indian Boarding Home Program were wrong. These actions created an environment where children were abused, harassed, and suffered other harms. The prolonged absence from family and community also caused loss of culture, language, and community bonding.

WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT?

The classes are defined as follows:

- Primary Class:** Individuals who were placed in private homes, during the period of September 1, 1951 and June 30, 1992, for the purpose of attending school, not including placements for post-secondary education. Individuals placed after June 30, 1992, are also included if Canada was responsible for their placement.
- Family Class:** Members of the individual’s family who lost the guidance, care, or companionship they could expect from the individual.

To be eligible for compensation, Class Members must have been alive on July 24, 2016.

WHAT BENEFITS DOES THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT PROVIDE?

The proposed settlement must be approved by the Federal Court before compensation will be available to class members. If approved, every Primary Class Member will be eligible for a Category 1 payment of \$10,000: a single payment to anyone who was in the Indian Boarding Homes Program.

You may also apply for Category 2 compensation ranging from \$10,000 to \$200,000 based on the harms that you suffered, such as physical or sexual abuse. You may hire your own lawyer to help prepare your application for Category 2 compensation. In that case, Canada will pay the lawyer an amount equal to 5% (plus tax) of the Category 2 payment you receive.

A foundation will be created to support commemoration, healing, and preserving languages and culture. Canada will pay \$50 million to be administered by the Foundation.

Family Class Members will not receive direct compensation. Their claims will be recognized and addressed by the indirect compensation available through the Foundation’s reconciliation projects. More information on compensation can be found in the settlement agreement which is available at www.boardinghomesclassaction.com / www.foyersfamiliauxfederaux.com.

WHAT ARE YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS?

- Do nothing** – If you agree with the proposed settlement, you do not have to take any action now.

- Show your support** – If you agree with the proposed settlement and would like the court to consider your support, you must write to either of the lawyers listed below. You must write no later than **August 25, 2023**.
- File an objection** – If you disagree with the proposed settlement and would like the court to consider your objection, you must write to one of the law firms listed below. You must send your objection no later than **August 25, 2023**.
- Participate in the hearing** – If you would like to talk to the court in person or by video, you must write to one of the law firms listed below. You must send your request no later than **August 25, 2023**.

- Watch the hearing** – If you would like to watch the hearing, you can attend in Federal Court, 701 W Georgia St., Vancouver, BC, or use the attendee link (public) <https://cas-satj.zoom.us/j/701WGeorgiaSt>. The hearing will be on September 12, 13, and 14, 2023, starting at 9:30 am PST (later in time zones further east).

WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CLASS ACTION?

If the Settlement Agreement is approved, you will be able to exclude yourself (“opt-out”) if you do not want to receive compensation under the settlement and wish to keep your right to bring your own lawsuit regarding your participation in the Boarding Homes Program. To exclude yourself, you must submit an Opt Out form before expiry of the Opt Out period. To submit an opt out, please visit www.boardinghomesclassaction.com / www.foyersfamiliauxfederaux.com to obtain an Opt Out form and submit the completed form to one of the law firms listed below. The Opt Out period will be set by the Court and will be at least sixty (60) days from the date on which the Court issues an order regarding approval of the settlement.

WHO ARE THE LAWYERS FOR THE CLASS?

Klein Lawyers LLP
1385 W 8th Avenue #400
Vancouver, BC V6H 3V9
1-604-874-7171
ibhclassaction@callkleinlawyers.com

Dionne Schulze
507 Place d’Armes, Suite 502
Montreal, QC H2Y 2W8
1-514-842-0748
percival@dionneschulze.ca

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

If you want more information about your rights and options, information about the settlement and details about the settlement approval process in the Indian Boarding Homes Class Action, and see the settlement agreement, please visit the following website at www.boardinghomesclassaction.com / www.foyersfamiliauxfederaux.com.

This notice has been authorized by the Federal Court of Canada

The intersection *cont. from p 4*

another affront to their negotiations regarding long-standing land disputes and past harms. In numerous press releases and statements, First Nations leaders like the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) were clear to state that their opposition of the legislation is not directed towards Metis individuals, but rather what has been coined as “Metis Colonization.” For many, they see these new agreements as another process to carve out lands and resources, as well as allow other governing organizations to add to an already detrimental consultation regime and process.

In Alberta, the issue becomes even murkier when one is aware of the background of prominent Treaty arrangements, like Treaty No. 8. It is a little known fact that when the Treaty was entered into in 1899 on the shores of Lesser Slave Lake, scores of what the government described as Metis people were admitted to the Treaty. It was approximately 40 years later that the government attempted to rectify this issue by establishing a commission and removing Metis individuals from Treaty rolls – an action that only added to the confusion and created real legal questions.

These legal questions will continue to make their way through the Court with members of the Wabun Tribal Council filing a judicial review of the Metis Nation of Ontario’s self-government agreement in March of this year – with the next hearing set for August 8 & 9, 2023. However, with Bill C-53 having received its first and second reading, it remains a possibility that the Federal Government passes this legislation before then. If that is the case, there is little doubt that First Nations will continue to push their opposition forward, with the ultimate decision resting with the Supreme Court of Canada.

In any event, the conflict and disagreements at present may also highlight a failure of governments past and present to properly negotiate with Indigenous peoples. It may also signal a failure of the Court to provide the clarifications necessary to ensure obligations outlined in agreements like the numbered Treaties are upheld by all parties. There are serious questions regarding which side of the Treaty people sit on, and who they owe obligations to. Questions which are fundamental to determining exactly what Canada is and whose land is it anyway.

Search for unmarked graves helps Survivors and others gain clarity

By Kinnukana, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



Between June 23-25, 2023, over a thousand registered Survivors, descendants, and community members from across Treaty 8 attended a gathering at the site of the former St. Bruno’s Indian Residential School (St. Bruno’s) to reflect on the *Final Summary of the Phase 1 Ground-Penetrating Radar Search at Jousard Mission, AB* report just released by the University of Alberta. The University of Alberta’s Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology was contacted by the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council (LSLIRC), Sucker Creek First Nation and Driftpile Cree Nation to undertake an advanced ground-penetrating-radar geophysical search for unmarked graves at St. Bruno’s in Jousard. Much of the technical data was obtained in the Summer of 2022 and has been undergoing rigorous analysis and interpretation since it was collected.

This is one site of many across Canada where communities continue to search for unmarked graves at former Indian residential schools. St. Bruno’s was operated by the Catholic Church from 1913 to 1969 and was located on the south shore of the Lesser Slave Lake. The objectives of the gathering were to share the findings in the report, allow time for participants to grieve and provide them with culture, wellness, and ceremonial supports. The report supports oral testimonies and records that have been collected from Survivors and other sources over the years on the horrific treatment Indigenous children endured at the residential school.

The event was opened by Sucker Creek First Nation Chief Roderick Willier, a Survivor of the school, and Driftpile Cree Nation Chief Dwayne Laboucan. The local Chiefs and the University of Alberta released the report which showed eighty-eight potential unmarked graves were found within 1.13 acres of land. The report uses the phrase “potential unmarked graves” and notes

that the results are not meant to be taken as definitive proof of eighty-eight grave sites. Fourteen of those graves are listed as ‘likely’ meaning that there are multiple indicators, such as the size and shape of a potential grave.

According to the report, ground penetrating radar is not able to confirm the presence or absence of human remains, but it does help to pinpoint locations where further analysis of study is needed. The University team found signs of unmarked graves outside the school cemetery area at two locations, one of them was near the priest’s residence and the other was close to the workshop on the school’s grounds.

This was painful news for the participants. There were various reactions at the event and lots of emotional tears. There was a blanket ceremony where generational Survivors were asked to come forward and they were wrapped in blankets. Two hundred and fifty blankets were used to comfort Survivors. Shane Pospisil, Executive Director, LSLIRC said, “It was my first blanket ceremony. It was very symbolic and very powerful. People were comforted and hugged. This process is important because it allows people to grieve and then begin the healing process. They can also celebrate their strength, resilience and attachment to their culture, traditions, and ceremony.”

Ground penetrating radar is only one step in the process of identifying unmarked graves. There will need to be alternate ways of confirming whether the graves are actually present. From the beginning of this project, an advisory committee made up of two Survivors from each of the outlying communities meet on a periodic basis to assist with identifying search areas, advising on the approaches to take, planning the gathering and guiding leadership on the necessary work.

The next phase of the project at St. Bruno’s will be to expand the ground penetrating radar to twenty acres and focus on other high potential

areas. A review of oral testimonies and other archival records will also be done. Shane said, “We are going to find more is my sense. We can clear the air on what the numbers are. It is not a matter of if there are unmarked graves, we all know that, but we are going to have to continue to work because it requires clarity. You cannot move forward in a process without knowing what happened and what the impact is. Understanding what happened at these sites is part of the healing process.”

The work on identifying potential graves is not something that can be rushed, and it will take time. It is extremely important to do this work in a respectful manner. The leadership and the communities are not planning to disturb the graves. Over time, they are hoping to be able to repatriate the land, take over the care of the gravesites and regain their power over an area where there was disempowerment that went on for far too long.

“The St. Bruno’s site we are standing on this afternoon is sacred and hallowed ground for our People, and lands that must not be disrespected as they have by some in the past...whether unintentionally or not,” remarked Chief Willier.

“Rather than repatriating the remains of our loved ones, our precious little ones, as some have suggested... many of us now strongly believe that the former residential school site itself is what needs to be repatriated. This, to further empower our People on the very site that was meant to disempower our children, our families, and our communities.”

“I am among those who believe this needs to happen,” he concluded, “so that we truly honour those who never made it home and allow them to respectfully, and with dignity, find true and lasting peace.”

CMA president commits to apology for medical harms

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has begun the process of apologizing to First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities for the harms done to them by the Canadian medical system in the past and present, its first Indigenous president says.

“Today, we formally recognize that the deep

trust that should exist between health providers and Indigenous patients, families and communities continues to be damaged by racism, inequitable access, and ongoing harm from people and institutions within our health systems,” reads a June 13 statement from CMA president Dr. Aliko Lafontaine.

Before a formal apology occurs, the CMA intends to conduct an “honest examination” of its history, which “will require many uncomfortable and painful conversations,” Lafontaine explained.

In order for the apology to be sincere, it must involve “building on aggregated moments towards an end goal of re-discovering each other

Continued on page 9



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MNA President Audrey Poitras discusses her decision to retire

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On June 10, longtime Metis Nation of Alberta (MNA) President Audrey Poitras announced she won't seek re-election in September's election, where nation members will elect their first self-governing Otipemisiwak Métis Government.

In February, the MNA signed an agreement with the federal government that recognizes it is a distinct nation on par with First Nations. This came in response to MNA members voting overwhelmingly in 2022 in support of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government Constitution, which put the nation on path to self-government.

In an exclusive interview with *Alberta Native News*, Poitras reflected on her 27-year-long career in Metis politics, detailing how she got involved, her major accomplishments and challenges, and advice for her successor.

Poitras, an accountant by trade, began her involvement with the MNA in 1990 as the nation's director of finance. She became so discouraged by infighting within the nation's board, which resulted in many missed funding opportunities, that she decided to quit her job after five years.

But as she was visiting the different Metis settlements to say goodbye to those she had worked with, many encouraged her to run for the presidency.

"I did not believe at that time that the nation would elect a woman president," Poitras recalled. "But I knew that the only place you would make a difference is if you went to the top to say, 'This is what needs to change,' so that's what I did."

As she travelled around the province, she set up a campaign office at her house, where volunteers made phone calls to nation members. After two weeks on the road, campaign headquarters phoned Poitras to let her know that they needed to order more brochures due to unexpected levels of support.

"That's how it started for me. People knew they needed change," Poitras said.

She cited the September 2022 opening of Metis Crossing in Smoky Lake — Canada's first Metis

cultural centre — as one of her proudest accomplishments.

Construction on the McMurray Metis Cultural Centre at Wood Buffalo's MacDonald Island Park is underway, but its scheduled December 2023 opening has been postponed.

Another important accomplishment for Poitras is in the realm of education, which has been a pressing community concern since she was first elected.

Under her leadership, the MNA was selected as one of the Indigenous communities to participate in the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training program in 2010, which became the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training program in 2018, with a renewed 10-year funding commitment.

The nation also established the Rupertsland Institute in 2010, which facilitates job training and helps design Metis-focused curricula for schools.

From 2008 to 2021, the Metis Education Foundation, which was founded prior to Poitras's presidency, provided \$30,387,744 in post-secondary scholarships.

"I'm very proud ... that we were able to move forward in some of the areas that I had heard our people talk about forever," Poitras said.

The leaders of each Metis government — the MNA, the Manitoba Metis Federation, Metis Nation-Saskatchewan, Metis Nation British Columbia and Metis Nation of Ontario — sit together on the Metis National Council, to collectively promote the interests of the Metis People.

She said being the only female representative on the council for years led to some frustration at times.

"My feeling at that time was that all of those people sitting around the table believed that I did not belong there," Poitras said. "What was I doing there?"

Poitras, however, focused on doing her job and eventually formed strong friendships with many



of the male councillors. "We're all different in a lot of different ways, in the way we live within our province, the way we work within our province... But there's a lot of similarities that we can take forward at the national level and be stronger because there's five of us together," said Poitras.

She said she hopes her legacy is one of bringing tangible improvements to the lives of Metis People in Alberta that will continue into the future. But Poitras cautioned this legacy isn't hers alone.

"If you don't have the team of councillors around you to work with you, if you don't have the key knowledgeable, skilled staff that we have, there's a lot of things that would not be able to happen. And so I always believe that the legacy for me is that we move forward, not backwards," Poitras said.

Poitras pledged to provide support to her successor, whomever it ends up being, acknowledging that serving as MNA president can occasionally take a toll.

"Be who you are — an honest person with integrity," she said. "You must have good health and you must have a family that supports you, because I have missed many, many family events that I wanted to be at, but knew there were other things that needed to be done."

The Otipemisiwak election occurs from Sept. 13 to 19. The nomination period is underway, ending on July 30.

Those interested in seeking a nomination can do so at https://deloittecanada.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3V29oMn7S7SS01U.

CMA president *cont. from p 8*

and rebuilding trust between providers and Indigenous patients, families and communities," he wrote.

"The profession's history is Canada's history," Lafontaine added. "It includes the devastating impacts of Indian hospitals, forced medical experimentation on Indigenous Peoples, disparate infrastructure investment, as well as systemic racism, neglect and abuse."

The impact of these abuses continue today, Lafontaine emphasized.

In an interview with *Global News*, the CMA

president said the medical abuses faced by Indigenous patients has long been common knowledge, particularly in Indigenous communities themselves.

"There's a lot of stories out there that haven't made their way into the news that I think people within communities talk to each other about and really form a basis for a lot of the mistrust that people have when they go to the health-care system," Lafontaine explained.


Northern Medical Services executive director Veronica McKinney told Global that the CMA's gesture is an

important first step.

"I think it's through some of these processes that we will see some change in it," said McKinney. "It feels like it's slow in coming ... but I really am encouraged to see that there is some change and that we're seeing more Indigenous people in leadership that I believe are helping to incite that change. And that's a wonderful thing for everybody."

The apology should occur at some point next year, Global reported.

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"PROUDLY SERVING ALBERTA'S FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES FOR OVER A DECADE"

Actress offers encouraging words to Indigenous youth

By Kinnukana, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Indigenous people have been underrepresented and misrepresented in the film and television industry for years. Most recently, this has been changing and there have been more opportunities for Indigenous people to be involved. Olivia Kate Iatridis is a young, Indigenous actress who has been successfully working in the film and television industry for the past eight years, since she was thirteen years old.

Olivia is an Inuvialuk, a member of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Western Arctic. She was born and raised in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories but moved with her family to St Albert, Alberta when she was a teenager. Olivia grew up performing in front of others. Before she started acting, she was a competitive dancer and figure skater.

Olivia began her acting career in Alberta after she participated in a talent competition where she had to act in a number of showcases in front of talent agents. She performed a monologue, one-liner, commercial, modelled and danced for the judges. At the event, Olivia placed in the top ten among hundreds of children from all over the world and she won the Facebook Photo Contest. This inspired Olivia to pursue her passion of acting in film and television. With the support of her mother, she started by seeking an agent, participating in actor training and building her work experience. She did all of this during her free time after attending school, dancing and figure skating full-time.

Olivia started auditioning for roles and began acting in short, independent films, promotional videos, commercials and feature films being made in Alberta. In her pursuit of acting, she had to overcome several challenges that made it difficult for her to build her resume. It was hard to find roles available for her age. There were times where Olivia was able to book roles for older characters as she looked more mature than her age. Most times, she volunteered on films in exchange for movie credits and film clips that she could use in her demo reels. Olivia worked on film sets some days for up to fourteen hours at a time. If Olivia had to work during the school week, she would have to make up for any classes and assignments that she missed. This did not discourage Olivia from progressing and building a strong acting foundation.

In 2019, Olivia had her first co-starring lead

role in a feature film called *Abducted*. The film was written and directed by Métis Director, Daniel Foreman. It is about an inner-city teenage boy's life that is turned upside-down when his drug-running sister goes missing. Olivia played the role of the missing sister, Lakota Sampson. The film touches on important Indigenous topics such as Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW) and Girls, residential schools, and intergenerational trauma. Olivia was proud to play a part in bringing to light these important topics through this film. She was nominated for an award as Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role at the Red Nation International Film Festival in Los Angeles for her role as Lakota.

Once Olivia graduated from high school, she moved to Vancouver at the age of eighteen with the goal of pursuing acting professionally. She was so determined that she did not let Covid-19 stop her from making the transition. Once in Vancouver, Olivia continued to take acting training. She also obtained a new agent, Trisko Talent Management, to represent her for higher profile principal roles. Throughout Covid-19, and even now, she auditions regularly for roles through the submission of self-tapes. Olivia said, "One of my greatest memories working on a project is when I booked my first job in Vancouver. It was my first big job and when I showed up to set it was like a dream come true. They had huge, beautiful sets and cool costumes and it just reignited my spark for acting all over again."

Over the past years, Olivia has won three Joey Awards, *Young Canadian Performers Awards*, for her acting. At the age of 15, Olivia won the Best Supporting Actress in A Short Film for her role in *Indra's Awakening*. The short film also won the Audience Choice Award for Best Dramatic Short at the Edmonton International Film Festival. At the age of seventeen, Olivia won the Best Actress in a Commercial Award for her role as a goth girl in a *Mattress Mattress* commercial. Most recently, in 2022, Olivia won the first ever Joey Award in a new category called Outstanding Indigenous Performer Award. In her acceptance



Actress Olivia Kate Iatridis in front of her trailer on the set of "Alaska Daily."


speech, Olivia dedicated the award to her Nanuk (grandmother) Sarah Nasogaluak and spoke about the lack of Indigenous representation in the film industry.

Olivia now has eleven acting credits to her name on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) which is the largest source of information for movie, TV and celebrity content. She is listed as part of the Top Cast alongside Hilary Swank in episode five of *Alaska Daily* which aired in 2022 on ABC and Disney+. Recently, Olivia also played a principal role as Sadie in a Hallmark Movie called *Sweeter Than Chocolate* which aired on the Hallmark Channel as part of *Loveuary 2023 Movies* and in celebration of Valentines Day.


When asked what advice Olivia would give to Indigenous youth interested in acting, she said, "If you are interested in acting, you can absolutely do it. These days, it is so much easier to get into the industry. If you want to be an actor though, you have to work hard for it. You have to truly believe that you can do it and work your butt off to get it. If this is your dream then the hard work is definitely worth it!"


You can follow Olivia at: Instagram – oliviakatei; Facebook – Olivia Kate Iatridis; and IMDb – www.imdb.me/oliviakateiatridis.

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Anthony Antoine's beautiful soapstone carvings are currently on sale at Wakina Gallery. See wakinagallery.com

Anthony Antoine’s art is featured at Wakina Gallery

By Deborah Shatz

Anthony Antoine is a gifted Dene sculptor who uses his hands to create beautiful art and his spirit to bring life to his carvings which often tell a wondrous story of nature and culture. His art is being featured this summer at Wakina Gallery’s boutique pop-up location at Suite 206, 8944 182 Street in Edmonton. For a peek at some of the offerings visit wakinagallery.com. To view the entire collection in person call Dan at 780-237-1556 or email wakinagallery@gmail.com to book an appointment.

“Carving is my life and it’s how I make a living,” explains the 58-year-old artist. “Although I have dabbled in such things as painting over the years, my greatest pleasure and the one that gives me the most satisfaction is sculpting and carving.”

Antoine was born in the Northwest Territories but has been firmly rooted in Edmonton for the past 22 years. His large creations appear in many corporate offices and private collections throughout the city (and surrounding area). While most of Anthony’s work is sold privately, some of his masterpieces have also been exhibited and sold in galleries in both northern and western Canada.

Anthony is renowned for his carvings of muskox, bison and of course bears - his large polar bears, his stunning bears on inukshuks, his fishing grizzly bears, his black bears with glorious striations and of course his whimsical dancing, drumming and marching bears of all sizes. Each bear seems to have its own personality.

He is masterful at creating wildlife and many stones speak to him in the voice of the animal that they will become but he also enjoys creating abstracts. “Each abstract is definitely one of a

kind – there is no duplication. The rock guides the carving,” he said.

“I like telling a story through the art that I am creating – sometimes that can be achieved with simplicity, other times it is the fine detail that brings out the meaning I am trying to portray.”

To look at Anthony, one would not think that he is a spiritual person but his spirit soars when he is describing the thought process behind his abstracts, describing transitions and transformations, such as lifecycles from youth to elders, tears for missing and murdered Indigenous people, and honouring lost children.

Antoine’s artistic prowess wasn’t inherited and his skills weren’t passed down to him from other artists in the family. Like both his father and mother, Anthony was a victim of the Indian Residential School System.

“I was part of the 60’s Scoop,” he explained. “I was taken away from my parents when I was just two years old and was a ward of the government until I was 16. When I was 18 and in Edmonton I learned that there was an Aboriginal liaison from the Northwest Territories in the city; the people at the Herb Jameson Centre suggested I contact him. I did and found out that he knew two of my uncles – my Uncle Rene was working with the NWT Government and my Uncle Jim was Chief at the time.”

A phone call and an airline ticket later and Anthony was back home.

“I arrived there in September of 1982 and met my dad; my mother had passed on when I was just 10 years old; I didn’t find out until I was 13. I met so many of my cousins and other relatives; I could hardly believe it, but it was good, real good.”

He stayed for nine years before moving on to

Yellowknife, where he met his wife, and together they moved to Edmonton.

Anthony’s artistic side was discovered by chance – he ran into some trouble with the law and found himself incarcerated. There wasn’t a great deal of opportunity for self-improvement in jail, but the opportunity that did come his way is one he took advantage of.

“They had a carving program going on at the facility when I got there,” he explained, and he knew some people who were participating.

“I told them that I wanted to try it and they encouraged me to give it a try. I had just got my income tax check back so I bought my first piece of rock and did just that.”

The rest is history.

“My first sculptures took me a full two weeks to complete,” he explained, “and I was told not to expect them to sell.”

Their predictions would not prevail, noted Antoine. “Within a week of the sculptures being put up for sale, I sold them both. I was very happy to make the \$1800 and said ‘wow this is what I’m going to do to keep myself out of jail.’”

And, with the exception of some minor scrapes, it’s been that way ever since.

Anthony loves carving with soapstone and he loves sharing his culture through his art. He tries to keep his art affordable and accessible to everyone.

“Costs have gone up in recent days but I still manage to keep my prices within most budgets,” he assured.

Anthony’s art is beautiful, affordable, unique and authentic – so when you need a great piece of art for yourself, or as a personal or corporate gift for a special occasion, visit wakinagallery.com or call 780-237-1556 for a viewing.

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