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Get to know Mount Royal University

Mount Royal University’s premier event for prospective students, Open House, is set to take place on Saturday, Oct. 21 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For anyone considering pursuing post-secondary education, this event is a great opportunity to start making connections while learning more about MRU’s programs, admission requirements, student services and campus life.

“Open House is a way for students to get all the information they need in one day and it provides them with the opportunity to connect with some of the professors, staff and alumni in the programs they’re interested in,” national admissions and recruitment specialist Jake Wong says.

An interactive, informative and cost-free event, Open House provides prospective students an invaluable experience that can solidify their choices for post-secondary education.

“Anybody is welcome to attend Open House. All you have to do is register and from there you’re welcome to bring any friends, family and supporters to learn about the university with

you,” Wong says.

Here’s what to expect at MRU Open House:

Program booths and Live Panel sessions

Open House is the best opportunity to explore all of the programs that Mount Royal offers. Guests can stop by a program booth to chat with faculty or attend a Live Panel session where a mix of faculty, alumni and students will be discussing programs more in-depth.

Open House is also a time to learn about career possibilities, course options and what makes each program unique. This includes work-integrated learning opportunities and options for honours programs, co-operative education, internships, field work, research and more — all the things that add depth to programs and experience to students’ resumé.

Guided tours

There’s no better way to get a feel for a university than by setting foot on campus and seeing firsthand where you’ll be spending a

significant part of your academic journey. Mount Royal Open House offers a range of different tour options to explore every corner. These include general campus tours, Residence tours and program-specific tours that give an inside look into the unique labs, classrooms and spaces.

Student Services and Support booths

There will be a range of booths showcasing the student services and supports that are available for students throughout their educational journey, from application all the way through to graduation. Representatives will be available to answer questions about admission requirements, the application process, student services, career services and more. Open House offers a unique opportunity for guests to find all the answers in one convenient place.

Attending Open House can be a game changer for anyone in the pursuit of higher education. It’s more than just an event; it’s a gateway to discovering a welcoming community, exploring academic options and taking the first step towards a brighter future.

Learn more and register today at mru.ca/OpenHouse

Aysanabee *cont. from p 2*

process for his grandfather. When asked what his grandfather’s reaction was to hearing his stories interpreted through the songs, Aysanabee replied that “He was proud. But three months before he passed away in May, he decided he was ready to forgive and move on with his life. For him to find some sort of closure through this process is the greatest thing I could have ever hoped for, that’s the most precious takeaway from this album for me.”

When asked about advice for aspiring Indigenous songwriters, Aysanabee suggests: “Music conferences, social media, finding a team

who believes in you and is willing to work from the ground up, but overall, don’t give up and believe in yourself because no one can do that for you.”

Aysanabee’s new single “Alone” is now out. October is going to be another busy month as he has a new EP being released on October 20, and will head on the road with Dan Mangan. As for the future of his music career, Aysanabee aspires “to continue growing and evolving and experimenting. Musicians are their own worst enemy, and you can spend an eternity writing a song, so just finish it and move on. You’re going to write a thousand bad songs, but if you write one great one, it’s all worth it.”



Aysanabee at the 2023 Edmonton Folk Fest. Photo by Paula Kirman.

Mount Royal University Open House

Explore our programs, connect with faculty, tour campus and more.

Saturday, Oct. 21
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

mru.ca/OpenHouse



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Kitchi-Meegwetch Wab Kinew

By Xavier Kataquapit

I am feeling a little better about the state of democracy these days thanks to the election of Wab Kinew as Canada’s first Anishinabe Premier. He was elected recently with a majority government in Manitoba. So, congratulations to Wab and his New Democratic Party team and as well thanks to all those members of the voting public who chose to make their decision based on values that have to do with social democratic ideals of sharing, openness, tolerance and caring for everyone, the environment and the future of our planet. The fact that he has promised to save and enhance the public health care system is a bonus.

The main reason I am so happy about this win for the NDP is because this was not an easy victory. Let’s face it we are living in a time when our mainstream media and much of the social media are run by huge international corporations backed by the very wealthy who push more right wing ideals and parties. Just think about it. How many mainstream television media broadcast, print, radio or social platforms are owned and operated by Indigenous peoples, minorities, the poor, single moms and in general the disenfranchised? Of course the answer is none as they are all owned and controlled by very wealthy corporate interests that push a right wing agenda most of the time. That is why I am so happy with Wab’s big win and the fact that he represents Indigenous people and all others who are minorities is just wonderful.

This election reminds me of a quote attributed to the American President Abraham Lincoln, “You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time but you can not fool all the people all the time.” Even with all of the mainstream media for the most part lined up against the NDP and all of the money backing more middle democratic parties like the Liberals and the right wing parties, people still managed to have a deeper look at how democracy would best be served in Manitoba and they decided Wab was a good choice.

As they say, money talks, and all over the world right wing parties almost always get the support of the very wealthy, the big corporations and lobbyists. It is not easy for those on the left or in the middle, who are more socially democratic, to get elected. Part of the reason is that mainstream media, which is corporate owned, is also funded to a great degree by wealthy interests who prefer a right wing style of government that will reward the very wealthy, ignore as much as they can about climate change due to global warming, are generally anti-union and not very



Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew

supportive of Indigenous peoples, minorities and those who are disenfranchised. Could it be that even if the cards are stacked up against the general voting public we are seeing through all the propaganda strewn with misinformation and hate and we are now choosing more kind, open, tolerant and sharing governments dedicated to the common person rather than the wealthy dominating few.

Most Indigenous people don’t really understand to a great degree how politics works and who represents Canadians. Thirty years ago when I was first starting out as a young man, my understanding of what the different parties meant in terms of representation was almost nil as was the case with most of the Indigenous people I was surrounded by. Along the way we began to figure out just what politics was all about and many of us became very wary of any politician with their speeches promising all kinds of things. We also grew to understand that when we stood up as Indigenous peoples for our rights, for our treaties, to protect rivers and lakes and protest negative environmental initiatives we did not get a lot of support from all governments and parties.

I know first hand that Indigenous people all across Canada are standing with more confidence, more pride and more hope with the election in Manitoba of Wab Kinew. This is an historic moment and one that I hope will be replicated more and more as we all realize it is up to all of us to vote for the good path in leadership for a fair, safe and positive future. Kitchi-Meegwetch (Thanks very much) Wab Kinew.

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

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Beyond Orange Shirt Day

By Lesley Machon, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

I am writing today from my seat on Treaty 7 territory: the traditional lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy: Kainai, Piikani and Siksika, the Stoney Nakoda First Nation, the Tsuut’ina Nation, and the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. Like much of the land we now call Canada, the legacy of colonization has carved deep wounds into the banks of the Elbow River and left jagged scars along the face of the Rockies.

I live on Turtle Island as a settler and a high school teacher, and my job includes thinking about what it truly means to Indigenize education. Provincial mandates and Teaching Quality Standards (TQS) can be starting places, but true reconciliation reaches far beyond bureaucratic boundaries. Infusing classrooms with Indigenous voices requires deep listening, a willingness to integrate profound shifts in perspective, and a sincere commitment to honour the wisdom of Indigenous elders, speakers, writers, scholars, poets, and artists. Even when they are challenging. Especially when they are challenging.

Revitalizing Classrooms

Indigenous perspectives are not simply pages from texts— though brilliant books have been published by Native authors, and I intend to highlight a few of them. Indigenous Knowledge (IK) has its roots down deep in the earth, in ways that are perhaps difficult for the colonial mind to grasp; like the mycelial network beneath the forest floor which transmits vital information, nurtures communities and ecosystems, and is inherently reciprocal in nature. This is of course, what our land acknowledgements are gesturing towards, however inadequate or perfunctory they may seem at times. They are attempts to acknowledge treaty-breach, broken promises, and the truth that IK is land-based healing, it is somatic ecology, it is ancient and earthy and lived more than studied or theorized about. By giving students access to this rich knowledge base into our curriculums, we breathe life into our classrooms.

This is important for so many reasons, not the least of which are the pressing issues that face Indigenous communities today, as outlined in the essay compilation *Indigenous Writes: a Guide to First Nations, Metis, & Inuit Issues in Canada* by Chelsea Vowel. From identity politics to the doctrines of colonialism to state violence, including the legacy of residential schools, the sixties and millennial scoops, Inuit relocation, poor quality drinking water on reserves, and the many injustices of the Indian Act, and other assimilation policies outlined in the Royal

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The issues facing Indigenous communities, from social inequalities to environmental concerns, deserve and demand our collective attention. To address these challenges effectively, we must equip students with the tools to navigate these complexities with sensitivity and a sense of shared responsibility.

Incorporating Indigenous content year-round is a way to engage with our past and future simultaneously. We address the past by making reparations for abuse and inhumane assimilation policies, and sifting through the traumatic implications of colonization. We address the future by finding new ways forward. Not just for Indigenous folx, but for each human body occupying space in the greater ecology of Treaty 7, and all of Turtle Island.

Sustaining Ecological Harmony

Indigenous voices, often silenced and marginalized, hold the keys to sustainable and harmonious living. Traditional ecological knowledge is often passed down through oral traditions, storytelling, and intergenerational teachings. From ancient wisdom to innovative solutions for contemporary challenges, Indigenous conservation efforts include a range of resource management practices. Some of these practices address health and food security such as seed-saving, sustainable hunting and harvesting, medicinal plant knowledge, and protection of waterways. Other environmental considerations include controlled burns for forest fires, and habitat restoration through riparian planting and caring for wetlands.

These practices reflect a deep understanding of local ecosystems and a commitment to maintaining a sustainable relationship with the land. For those of us in Treaty 7 who like biking through Fish Creek park on sunny afternoons in the summer, who are comforted by the buzz of pollinators at work, and who don’t want to choke on wildfire smoke...learning how to live in right relationship with the land, matters.

It’s also important to note, ecological knowledge is not static; it evolves and adapts to changing circumstances while maintaining respect for the land and its resources. Ancient practices continue to be relevant in contemporary environmental stewardship and conservation efforts. Traditional ecological knowledge offers valuable insights into sustainable resource



The 2023 Every Child Matters logo was designed by Charliss Santos, a grade 10 student at St. Augustine School in Ponoka.

management and conservation, which can inform modern approaches to land management and care.

As the world grapples with environmental crises, Indigenous perspectives on stewardship and sustainable living offer us a way forward. Incorporating Indigenous content in our classrooms year-round, allows us to nurture an ecological consciousness that is essential for addressing the pressing issues of our time.

Orange Shirt Day and Beyond

Let us take pause and be present with the truths which are brought to the forefront on Orange Shirt Day. Let the reality of intergenerational trauma seep in, unsettle us, and effect change. And let us move forward into the weeks and months that follow, with decolonization, indigenization, and reconciliation as guideposts.

Orange shirt day can become part of a much larger fabric. We have the opportunity to create a new tapestry together; a quilt that takes us beyond the orange square at the center. We can build a future that honours the teachings, insights, and voices of Indigenous people. In fact, students today, and the ones that follow them tomorrow— human and otherwise—are counting on it.

Tuning our ears to Vocables

The word *vocables* (Naósska) refers to non-lexical syllables used in singing to convey emotion and rhythm. They have specific meanings and purposes within songs. Vocables are an integral part of Indigenous music and oral

Continued on page 11



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New therapeutic foster care program looking for caregivers for youth

The Edmonton-based Family Centre is thrilled to announce their newest program, *ohpikihakan*. *ohpikihakan* was developed to meet the holistic needs (mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional) of youth ages 13 - 17 in the care of Children's Services. This program is part of a province-wide initiative called "Therapeutic Foster Care." It is embedded with culturally responsive services and Indigenous worldviews.

"*ohpikihakan* is an incredibly unique and exciting opportunity to make a substantial difference in the lives of our youth. I truly believe that we can offer a nurturing and healing environment for our youth, as caregivers, when we are equipped with the knowledge, culture and therapeutic support to be able to do so; *ohpikihakan* encompasses all of this," says Laurie Escott, a therapeutic supervisor with *ohpikihakan*.

Chantelle Painter, a caregiver recruiter for *ohpikihakan*, continues, "The very first call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to reduce the number of children in government care. This program seeks to do just that through reunification. We are living our commitment to using our privilege to advance the process of Canadian reconciliation."

The *ohpikihakan* team wanted to begin the work in a 'good way' by listening to the wisdom of Treaty 6 elders. Before working with clients, the program began in a pipe ceremony. The team presented protocol; a grandmother print and tobacco, to seek wisdom from the elders and the ancestors. Elder Dr. Leona Makokis prayed for the program and later provided us with a name for the program: "*ohpikihakan*." This Cree word translates into *a child that is being raised*. This name was a gift, highlighting the relationship and

connection to a child's culture and family. The grandmother print hangs in their office for continued guidance from the ancestors.

ohpikihakan is founded on the belief that youth need to experience belonging, healing, connection, and reunification. They believe this occurs with regular contact with family members, culture, and community. They specialize in family engagement and therapeutic support to respond to these needs. Caregivers are ambassadors, allies, and advocates for youth wellness and healing.

Their program emphasizes practices like trauma-informed care, cultural connection, wraparound support, and youth reunification. Since youth live in the caregiver's home, caregivers have minimal separation between their professional role and personal life. That is why their team actively supports each caregiver with tailored training, individualized support, and peer engagement.

ohpikihakan caregivers must take training, have a licensed home, and get an approved home study. This may sound daunting, but they will support caregivers at every step of the process.

Some of their caregivers want to "right the wrongs" they have experienced in their own life. Others see it as their responsibility as part of their reconciliation journey. Above all, every one of them has indicated they feel 'called' to this role.

"One of the greatest gifts I get from seeking caregivers are the stories that are exchanged. Every person drawn to this program is giving a piece of themselves and the opportunity for their stories to enable the success of the youth they will guide," Chantelle Painter shares.

"I can't quite explain the energetic pull I feel toward this program and the caregivers I have met



"*ohpikihakan* is an incredibly unique and exciting opportunity to make a substantial difference in the lives of our youth."

- Laurie Escott, Therapeutic Supervisor



so far. Being able to use my experience with relational child and youth care work while incorporating an Indigenous worldview in this brand new program has opened a floodgate of passion, excitement, learning and gratitude. I am beyond excited to be a part of this journey of shaping therapeutic caregiving," says Kaitlyn Shinness, a therapeutic supervisor with *ohpikihakan*.

"The Family Centre would love to hear from you if you are reading this and feel you could be a therapeutic caregiver within our program."

Learn more about the program at familycentre.org/youth-resources/therapeutic-foster-care.

Orange Shirt Day Walk/Run promotes reconciliation

By Terry Lusty, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The weather was somewhat cooler for this year's Orange Shirt Day Walk & Run along nature's green carpet of grassy acres in Edmonton's beautiful river valley on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River.

However, hearts were warm and spirits high on that September 30th day as close to 650 participants contributed to raising over 14,000 dollars, explained the event's organizer, Anita Cardinal. The proceeds of those entry fees, she added, "go directly to the Orange Shirt Society and grass roots organizations such as the Edmonton Aboriginal Seniors Centre and the Indigenous Sports Council of Alberta, as well as the Give Back to the Streets project."

The day's activities started at 12 noon with registrations, followed by an Elder's solemn opening prayer, plus a sizeable one-hour round dance that witnessed the coming together of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who joined together, hand-in-hand, in reconciliation. Truly a sight to behold!

As expressed by Cardinal, the occasion was a prime example of "people working together" in the spirit of reconciliation, healing, and unification.

The round dance was assisted by live, on-site Indigenous drummers and singers for the first time, she explained. The round dance concluded with an 'apple dance' - a giveaway of fruit to the dance participants to demonstrate two particular messages - the long-held tradition of sharing and giving, in addition to remembering the fact that fruit, apples included, were something of a rarity at the residential schools.

The City's Roots for Trees team was on hand gifting visitors with a variety of 2,500 native trees, shrubs and wildflowers to honour the victims, families, friends and intergenerational survivors of residential schools. They exemplified "growth, healing and giving back to the land" as well as "the restoration of friendly relations with all people on Mother Earth and among humans," Cardinal stated.

To help recognize the significance of this day, a City bus wrapped in an Indigenous art wrap designed in partnership with iHuman Youth Society was on display. The bus, which features submissions from young artists nestled within a sweetgrass braid, remains in service year-round.

Continued on page 10

OHPIKÎHAKAN

"a child that is being raised"

ohpikihakan is a program designed to meet the holistic needs such as spirituality, family, community, and cultural connection of youth ages 13 - 17 in the care of Children's Services. This program is part of a province-wide initiative called "Therapeutic Foster Care".

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Access to church records is critical to investigating children’s burial locations

By Kinnukana, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Acimowin Opaspiw Society (AOS) Investigation Methodologies National Symposium took place on September 26-28, 2023, at the River Cree Resort in Edmonton, Alberta. At the symposium, participants were provided with a presentation entitled: *Access to Restricted Church Records*, by Leah Redcrow, the Investigation Director of the Blue Quills Missing Children and Unmarked Burials Inquiry and Chief Executive Officer of AOS.

Additionally, presenting alongside her was Father Andrew Schoenberger, Director of the Saint Paul Cathedral in St. Paul, Alberta. The AOS has a Reconciliation Partnership with the St. Paul Diocese with a common goal to share restricted records of the church in order to locate children’s burial locations.

Redcrow stated in her presentation that Church (a clergy of a religious body, such as the Roman Catholic Church for example) records are an important source of information for life events such as births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials. In Canada, there is no central repository for church registers. Many of the records are in the custody of individual churches, genealogical societies, religious archives and provincial and territorial archives and libraries.

Furthermore, Redcrow emphasized that access to restricted church records is critical to Indigenous organizations leading investigations into the unmarked graves of First Nation children at residential school sites across Canada. Reason being, that most sites had unregistered cemeteries associated with them and the locations of many burial sites of residential school children have been lost.

It is estimated that there are approximately 1,900 unaccounted individuals, mostly children, who were recorded as having been registered to an Indian Residential School.

Redcrow said that the records are key in helping investigators locate children’s burial locations, as every residential school had a “home parish” where the life events of students were recorded. Even after a child passed away, the register book would follow their life and record the date of death and may even have the cause of death. In Redcrow’s presentation, she informed participants that the home parish never changes and the register always remains with the one church, or home parish. Each home parish also has its own assigned Diocese under the pastoral care of a bishop responsible for keeping records, which in the AOS’ case is Father Andrew Schoenberger.

In addition to this, Redcrow explained that the Church has numerous restricted records in different formats. The clergy has a comprehensive sacramental register that has its parishioners’ names, births, baptisms, deaths, etc. In the past, clergy also used historical codices to record what was happening each day and to document history. However, the documents between the Church and the Residential Schools may be different depending on the locations and whether or not they were under the same supervision. Moreover, many of these documents are narrative-like, while some are like daily logs or even journal entries. The stylistic choice of the codices really depends on the pastors

who authored their own reports. Other key documents include Human Resource Records because they show if there were any conflicts with the staff of the schools. Many of these documents were written either in English, French or the language of the community.

In her presentation, Redcrow stated that the sacramental registry must be read in conjunction with the historical codices in order to understand what was going on in the community at the time.

Leah said, “You must look at all these multiple records in order to build the stories and create a proper understanding of what happened to each child.”

Father Andrew also said during the presentation, that “these records don’t get destroyed under any circumstances and the Church has been keeping them for many years. The only way records are destroyed is if there is a fire where they are being held.”

Unlike the AOS, many Indigenous groups are struggling to access these documents for their investigations. There is no clearly defined process for accessing these records. The Church also says it has legal obligations that it must follow in order to protect parishioners, as per access to information and privacy legislation in Canada. Also, due to the heavy volume of inquiries the Church is receiving and the lack of resources they have, they are unable to conduct searches for everyone.

Father Andrew stated that “the Canadian Bishops have committed to Reconciliation with Indigenous People. The role of the church is to listen to the stories of Survivors and Indigenous communities and to be able to pray with them, for them, and assist where we can, to make amends for the errors of the past.”



Leah Redcrow, CEO, Acimowin Opaspiw Society and Father Andrew Schoenberger, Director of the Saint Paul Cathedral. St. Paul, Alberta. Photo by Kinnukana.

He also recommends that Indigenous communities form collaborative approaches with the Church and work with each Diocese to determine what process could best work for each investigative group.

It has been over a year since Pope Francis’ Papal visit to Canada and his apology to Residential School Survivors. On July 25, 2023, the one-year anniversary of the apology, the Confederacy of Treaty No. 6 Nations released a statement from the Grand Chief and Chiefs of Treaty No. 6 Territory. In the statement, Leonard Standingontheroad, Grand Chief and Chief of Montana First Nation, stated, “It’s been a year since the visit with very little progress to show for it.” Alexander First Nation Chief George Arcand Jr said, “the apology was a meaningful first step from Pope Francis, but it wasn’t supposed to end there.”

Indigenous leaders want to see more action by the Church, and this is a necessary area that should be focused on immediately to assist the investigations and support the healing of Survivors. The Church should develop a process for easier access to these records and provide resources for each site in order to properly share restricted Church records. This is critical for moving forward on Reconciliation with Indigenous people.

A photograph of a laptop screen displaying the CAM LLP Injury Lawyers website. The website features a navigation bar with links like 'HOME', 'ABOUT US', 'SERVICES', 'CONTACT', and 'BLOG'. The main content area includes a 'Free Consultation' banner, a 'Welcome to CAM LLP Injury Lawyers' message, and a list of services. A hand is visible typing on the laptop keyboard.

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Spills and leaks are not acceptable!

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Indigenous climate advocates are harshly criticizing an Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) report into Imperial Oil's Kearl mine leaking 5.4 million tonnes of contaminated water, which concluded that the oil company followed all required regulations, even after it failed to notify members of the downstream First Nations.

While it was initially reported that the AER concealed the leakage from Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Mikisew Cree Nation for almost a year until contaminated water surfaced in February 2023, the regulator knew about the leakage for years prior, according to reporting from The Canadian Press.

Groundwater reports Imperial submitted to the AER in 2020 and 2021 acknowledge that tailings were seeping from the ponds intended to contain them.

In May 2022, the First Nations were first informed that discoloured water had surfaced from the pond, but Indigenous leaders were then kept out of the loop until February, when the AER issued an environmental protection order against Imperial after 5.4 million tonnes of toxic water escaped from the pond.

Mandy Olsgard, an environmental toxicologist who worked with nearby First Nations, said the regulator would have known about the seepage since 2019. "They knew there was seepage to groundwater," said Olsgard, adding that the AER and Imperial decided to "just manage it internally," rather than notify the public.

The seepage continues, with hydrocarbon levels in test wells exceeding provincial guidelines, CP reported.

"There is no indication of adverse impacts to wildlife or fish populations in nearby river systems or risks to drinking water for local communities," Imperial spokesperson Lisa Schmidt told CP.

An AER report said Imperial followed all existing rules in reporting the leak, but acknowledged the rules have major

shortcomings.

Mikisew Chief Billy-Joe Tuccaro, who has called for a stop-work order at the Kearl site, said he has no reason to trust Imperial or the AER.

"They say they have contained the seepage. They have not. The fact that they did not tell us about the seepage for nine months is the tip of the iceberg," he told CP.

A statement from Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, which has called on the federal government to intervene, expressed similar doubts about the AER's integrity.

"We do not believe that the Kearl leak was an isolated incident, and we do not believe the regulator would inform the public if another incident occurred," the band told CP.

Indigenous Climate Action (ICA) issued a blistering Sept. 27 news release decrying a lack of accountability from the AER.

"They don't live there, they don't drink the water. Oil and gas groups have spent millions, *if not billions*, aiming to weaken policies so they can continue to get away with destroying our planet. Their only interests are their bottom lines—our community and our rights mean nothing to them," said ICA executive director and Athabasca Chipewyan member Eriel Tchekwie Deranger, adding that the AER's conclusions "are unfortunately not surprising."

"It only affirms that spills, leaks and overflows are considered acceptable and normal within the Canadian colonial system," Deranger said. "Standard '*business as usual*' holds no consequences for industry. It's the land, waterways and the people that are expected to

shoulder the consequences for them."

The release noted that the AER report came days before the annual Day for Truth and Reconciliation across Canada.

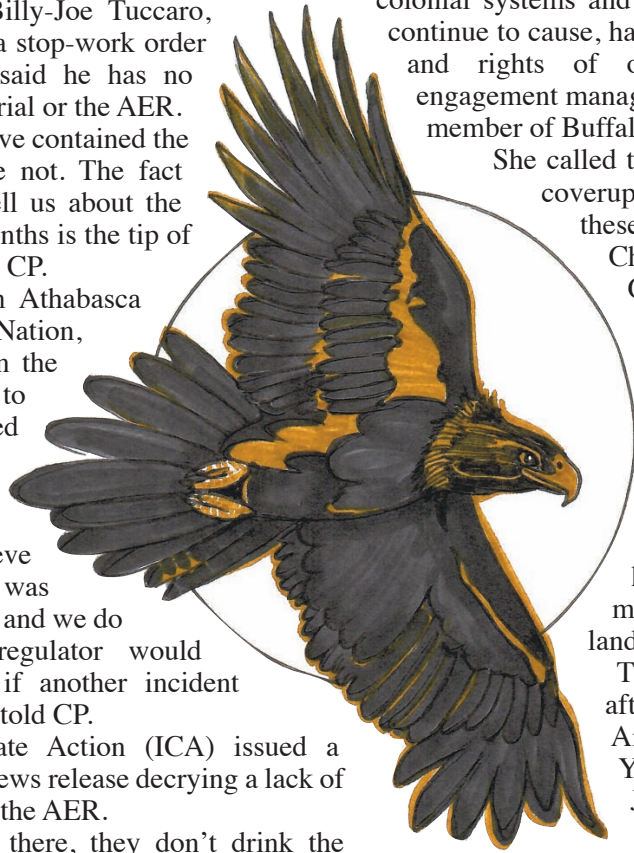
"We can't truly work toward reconciliation until the whole truth is told about the oppressive colonial systems and practices that caused, and continue to cause, harm to our lands, waterways and rights of our peoples," said ICA engagement manager Jamie Bourque-Blyan, a member of Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement.

She called the Kearl spill, and ensuing coverup, just "one example of these harms," with Athabasca Chipewyan and Mikisew Cree nations "left in the dark about the tailings breach and increase in toxic chemicals in the waterways and environment often used to practice inherent Indigenous and treaty rights, including those of harvesting foods and medicine, and practicing land-based ceremonies."

The report also came a week after the UN Climate Ambition Summit in New York, where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised to "build a cleaner and more prosperous future for all."

Despite his rhetoric, Trudeau continues "to miss the mark when it comes to upholding human rights, including Indigenous rights," said ICA digital media coordinator Katie Wilson, a member of Peguis First Nation.

"Not once did Trudeau mention Indigenous rights in his address last week and this report from the AER further demonstrates the sincere lack of interest by colonial governments in upholding Truth and Reconciliation, as long as it impacts industry wealth," Wilson added.



Teen loses bid to prosecute EPS officer who kicked him in the head

By Jeremy Appel, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A second effort to prosecute an Edmonton police officer who kicked an Indigenous teenager in the head while the youth was flat on his stomach has been rejected by the Crown on the eve of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The family of Pacey Dumas attempted to launch a private prosecution on Sept. 11 against Edmonton Police Service (EPS) Const. Ben Todd after Crown prosecutors in April rejected the provincial police watchdog's recommendation of criminal charges against Todd, arguing there wasn't a reasonable likelihood of conviction.

On Sept. 29, chief prosecutor Sarah Langley sent a letter to the Alberta Court of Justice staying a charge of aggravated assault against Todd launched by Dumas's lawyer, Heather Steinke-Attia.

The case was scheduled for an Oct. 13 hearing, which was subsequently cancelled.

Steinke-Attia told the *Edmonton Journal* that nobody has explained the reasoning behind the Alberta Crown Prosecution Service's original decision not to press charges.

"It's one blow after another, to prevent them from getting the justice they deserve," she told reporter Jonny Wakefield.

"Where's the respect to at least say, 'Your life means something, and this is sufficiently concerning that we're going to put the evidence in a courtroom in front of an impartial judge to make

a decision?' At the very least, that is what is needed in this case."

Dumas, who is from Little Red River Cree Nation in northern Alberta, was left unconscious and had to have a large piece of his skull removed after Todd kicked him in the head in the early morning of Dec. 9, 2020.

The officer, who carried a carbine rifle, was sent to Dumas's home after receiving a tip that Dumas was brandishing a knife, according to a report from the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT), which investigates allegations of police misconduct. Todd was accompanied by a canine unit and an officer with an ARWEN projectile launcher.

Dumas, who was 18 at the time and weighed about 90 pounds, complied when Todd ordered him to leave the house and crawl towards officers on his belly. Dumas was accompanied by his brother Blair, who died by suicide 15 months later.

Officers said they believed Dumas was reaching for a knife, although an EPS investigation later confirmed he was unarmed.

A neighbour, who was unknown to Dumas and witnessed the incident, said Todd kicked Dumas in the head like a "soccer ball," which the ASIRT report noted rendered Dumas unconscious.

ASIRT said Todd's action reflects a "shocking lack of judgment," adding there are "reasonable grounds" to believe he committed assault.

The only explanation the Crown has provided was to note that prosecutors have a higher standard of evidence than the police watchdog.

Citing "an independent expert on the use of force," who was never identified, an ACPS spokesperson said Todd's use of force could be justified under Criminal Code section 25, which permits police use of force if an officer "acted on reasonable and probable grounds and used only as much force as was necessary in the circumstances."

ACPS spokesperson Michelle Davio told the *Journal* that the Crown reached its decision not to proceed with the private prosecution after reading an affidavit from Dumas.

She emphasized that the Crown found the incident "disturbing" and that declining to prosecute Todd is "not an endorsement of the officer's actions or their tragic consequences."

Steinke-Attia said she's exploring other possible avenues for pursuing criminal charges. Dumas, additionally, has a \$560,000 lawsuit filed against Todd, EPS Chief Dale McFee and six other officers.

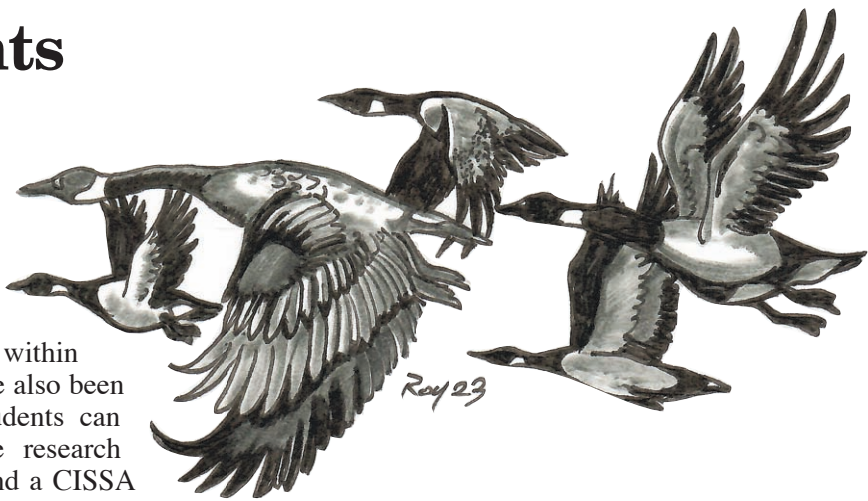
"What is it to the Crown to let this matter go to trial?" Steinke-Attia said. "Give the police officers the opportunity to explain what happened. Explain the decision-making. Increase public trust in policing. Actually have a system of accountability and transparency."

She told *CTV News* that the Crown's repeated refusal to proceed with charges is also unfair to the officers involved.

"They should be given an opportunity to address their actions, their training, and justify what they did if they can," Steinke-Attia said.

Helping STEAM students at University of Calgary

By Deena Goodrunning, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter



Many have said that education is the new buffalo for Indigenous peoples. But, attending educational institutions such as universities can be a lonely and stressful experience for many Indigenous students. That’s why it’s important for support to be in place for Indigenous students attending educational institutions.

At the University of Calgary there exists a student organization that is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics). This organization is the Calgary Indigenous STEAM Students’ Association (CISSA), founded and spearheaded in 2020 by an Indigenous mechanical engineering student named Jasmine McDermott.

The current president of CISSA is Métis student Alexandria McRorie. In an interview on September 21, McRorie shared some insights and information about CISSA with *ANNews*.

“Our main mission of CISSA is to promote Indigenous engagement in STEAM, facilitate learning opportunities that strengthen our campus community and provide opportunities for professional development for Indigenous and non-Indigenous STEAM students here,” McRorie stated.

McRorie explained that CISSA helps inform students of employment opportunities in industries related to their degrees. And if students are interested in continuing their education, CISSA helps connect them to graduate opportunities at the University of Calgary and at other universities as well.

One way that CISSA helps provide and inform club members of opportunities is through a biweekly newsletter. CISSA often receives emails from various external organizations that are interested in showcasing their available opportunities to student members. Some of these opportunities have included internships with companies such as BioCanRx, Enbridge and Suncor as well as volunteer opportunities with various non-profit organizations. CISSA compiles and highlights these various opportunities in their newsletter which they then send out to members on a biweekly basis.

CISSA has also hosted cultural and social

events to help students network, make connections and learn about ways they can get involved within the community. There have also been research nights where students can learn about some of the research taking place on campus and a CISSA mentorship program where senior and junior students are paired together based on mutual goals and interests.

Additionally, every year during the winter semester CISSA hosts an industry week where they have different graduate programs and industry leaders come in and talk to students about the opportunities available to them.

McRorie explained that within the past year a completely new team of executives have taken helm of CISSA. It’s been a big transition year for CISSA, but she and the new team of executives hope to make McDermott proud with what they have planned for CISSA for the upcoming year.

During the interview, McRorie also spoke about how she thinks that being in university is a big accomplishment, and that a student doesn’t need to be in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) to be successful.

“STEAM is a more inclusive acronym because arts usually gets left out. You don’t need to be in a STEM program to be successful. That’s not the point at all,” said McRorie. “The fact that somebody’s in university is such a big accomplishment. So, we’re trying to recognize that and provide opportunities on all fronts rather than just focusing on that STEM aspect, because I feel like that’s happening a lot nowadays.”

When asked for advice she has for Indigenous students entering university (especially since Indigenous peoples face many barriers in pursuing higher education), McRorie spoke about her own university experience. She was the first person in her family to attend university and for her it was a daunting experience going into university, especially since she didn’t know what was out there and what was available.

So, she said that her biggest advice would be for students to put themselves out there and get involved with the campus community and make connections with other people, because university

is a lot easier to go through when you have a support system.

McRorie also mentioned that no matter what university students attend, there are usually specific supports for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students. She mentioned the Writing Symbols Lodge as a support for Indigenous students attending the University of Calgary. She further iterated on her advice for students to put themselves out there at least just a little bit so that they can make connections and create mentorship opportunities.

“And don’t be afraid to ask questions,” McRorie added. “I know it’s scary, but asking questions is how you get answers. And then by doing so, you can create those relationships that persist throughout university and also after. Try to be involved in any way.”

She pointed out that just being on campus and sitting in areas like the Writing Symbols Lodge can lead to connections and friendships that can help with getting through that first year of university, since the first year of university is always a bit hard.

During the interview McRorie mentioned that CISSA is open to everyone. Non-university people can also join the club, as long as they don’t make up more than one-third of the club’s members.

“We’re open to everyone. We do focus around the First Nations, Inuit, Métis populations just with how our club is structured, but anyone can join. We have a fair amount of non-Indigenous students who are really just trying to learn more about Indigenous culture and just trying to be involved and see what opportunities we have.”

For those interested in learning more about CISSA, more information about them can be found at their official website address: <https://www.cissa-uofc.com/>.

A third book written by Northland Students is now available on Amazon

A third book written by Northland School Division students is now available on Amazon! The published book was made possible with funding from Cenovus Energy. The book titled *Weaving Hearts Together* can be best described as a labour of love and connection.

Similar to *Finding Fire Within* by *Reconnecting with the Land*, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and community members opened their hearts to the students by sharing stories. After listening to the Elders, Knowledge Keepers and community members, students wrote and illustrated pictures to bring the stories to life. This connected people, deepened cultural roots, and helped to weave their hearts together.

“The Board would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of students, staff, Elders, and community members involved with this project,” said Cathy Wanyandie, Board Chair. “Publishing these stories is an excellent way for students to learn and celebrate their language, culture, and identity from local Elders and community members. The Board would also

like to thank Cenovus for continuing to support Northland School Division.”

“This project is an example of how Northland School Division is achieving excellence in learning and weaving Indigenous knowledge, language, and culture in the curriculum,” said Shelley Willier Superintendent of Schools/CEO. “Being able to see Northland students and staff interacting with Elders, Knowledge Keepers and community members is exciting and very beneficial to the student learning experience. I also want to thank Cenovus for supporting this project.”

Lost in the Fog is one story featured in the book. Nathan Cardinal, a student from Mistassiniy School, wrote about a hunting trip his grandfather shared. While it was a beautiful fall morning, the fog created challenges for travelling in a canoe across the lake: “They ventured ahead as there was nothing to stop them from going to the bush to hunt and get what they needed from the land. This would provide for the family at home and others in the

community as this was a practice back then; to give what you had to others that needed the help not asking or wanting anything in return” (Nathan Cardinal, 2023).

Weaving Hearts Together is available for purchase on Amazon. Other published books written and illustrated by Northland School Division students are *Finding Fire Within* by *Reconnecting with the Land* and *Kayas Ayamikamik Acimowina: Old Stories of the Mission*. Both books are also available on Amazon.



O'Chiese Nation opens resort and casino in Red Deer

By Chevi Rabbit, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The flourishing city of Red Deer in Central Alberta is currently experiencing a remarkable period of growth and vitality. At the heart of this dynamic landscape lies the Red Deer Resort & Casino, a visionary project with its roots tracing back to the Late Chief Darren Whitford of O'Chiese First Nation, a sovereign community near Sunchild Cree Nation and Rocky Mountain House. This impressive venture, under the ownership of the O'Chiese Business and Investment Center, celebrated its grand opening on September 8, 2023.

The Red Deer Resort & Casino, formerly known as the Capri Hotel, has a long history of serving the Red Deer community. Recently acquired by the O'Chiese First Nation, the transition reflects a commitment to diversity and cultural heritage. The resort continues to provide outstanding service, featuring guestrooms, dining, entertainment options, a conference center, and the Jackpot Casino. Whether for business or leisure, the Red Deer Resort & Casino aims to offer a memorable experience, embracing both its history and future.

In an onsite interview with *ANNews*, O'Chiese Nations member, Adrian Strawberry, the Operations Manager of the resort, shared invaluable insights into how, alongside a dedicated team, they managed to turn a dream of their former O'Chiese chief into a thriving reality.

"It was a vision envisioned by the late Chief Darren Whitford over 15 years ago," Strawberry revealed. "He had some fantastic dreams, and though he is no longer with us, our past and current council continued with that dream, and this is where we're at right now. It's been an amazing 15-year journey."

This journey is not just about dreams; it's also about making good long-term financial investments and shrewd resource management. The initial funds for the resort were derived from natural resource deposits on their land, enabling them to make prudent and diligent investments.

"This is how it all began," Strawberry explained, underscoring the strategic foundation of their success.

For those nurturing their entrepreneurial dreams, Strawberry has some resounding advice: "Dream big, work diligently towards your aspirations, and never surrender." Strawberry emphasized the inevitability of obstacles on the path to success and the need for unwavering determination to overcome them.

A mini-mall within the casino offers a welcoming space for entrepreneurs. In an open invitation to the Indigenous entrepreneurship community and non-Indigenous entrepreneurship collaborators, Strawberry urged them to consider the resort as a haven for economic entrepreneurship. "Our hotel extends a warm welcome to Indigenous entrepreneurs seeking a place to invest in their ideas and visions," Strawberry said.

Adrian Strawberry embodies the essence of indigenous perseverance and a resolute commitment to advancing economic reconciliation. O'Chiese Nation's journey is a dedicated pursuit of ensuring success, not exclusively for Indigenous communities but for the broader collective. Strawberry's resounding message conveys this sentiment: "I'm truly at a loss for words when I consider how I feel. I mean, I'm incredibly proud of O'Chiese First Nation, exceptionally proud of the remarkable team that made all of this possible. My pride extends to my people, my community, and the entire team that worked tirelessly to bring our vision to life."

Reflecting on the earlier chapters of their life, Strawberry shares, "During my formative years, I carried a considerable burden of anger and resentment. Letting go of these emotions was an arduous journey. Fortunately, I had the guidance of numerous advisors and mentors who imparted invaluable wisdom: let go of negativity and steadfastly pursue your dreams through unwavering hard work. The most crucial lesson



Georges Yammine, CEO of O'Chiese Business and Investment Centre with Adrian Strawberry, Hotel Operations Manager.

they taught me was the significance of diligence, and to never allow detractors to divert me from my path. People will inevitably attempt to undermine your hard-earned achievements. However, it's essential to remember that when they criticize, it's not Adrian Strawberry the individual they are targeting; it's the role or the position I held at that specific time. Consequently, I've learned not to internalize such criticisms, instead, to release them and persevere."

Strawberry further emphasizes, "I suppose everyone encounters similar challenges in life. We all develop our unique coping mechanisms to navigate through adversity. The paramount objective is to surpass these obstacles, release any negativity, and unwaveringly continue to forge ahead. Regardless of the pursuit, success becomes attainable through this unwavering commitment."

This journey encapsulates a powerful example of economic reconciliation in Central Alberta. It signifies the O'Chiese First Nation's ownership of a casino and hotel, generating employment opportunities for the public and establishing a significant presence in Central Alberta. The experience it offers to residents is nothing short of revolutionary, setting the stage for the future of economic reconciliation.

Indigenous communities take the lead in such transformative projects, benefiting not only themselves but society at large. This marks a significant stride toward achieving economic reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

Orange Shirt Day *cont. from p 6*

One new element this year was a new design of the medals handed out to those completing the walk/run. Last year's medals were circular, whereas this year's took on the shape of a t-shirt in recognition of the orange shirt that was taken away from six-year-old Phyllis Webstad, when she first arrived at the school near Williams Lake, British Columbia, in 1973. The shirt had been purchased by her grandmother as a gift Phyllis could wear proudly upon entering the residential school. It was, however, confiscated and never returned.

A number of supportive dignitaries joined the day's festivities including: Edmonton Mayor Amarjeet Sohi and some of his council members, Members of Parliament Blake Desjarlais and Heather McPherson, MLAs Janis Irwin, Jodi Calahoo-Stonehouse, Brooks Arcand-Paul, and former Alberta Premier Rachel Notley.

One couldn't help but notice the addition of more vendors and Indigenous service organizations, like the Canadian Native Friendship Centre, among others.

In terms of major event sponsorships, the city's Indigenous Relations Office graciously funded the orange t-shirts and the wood-crafted medallions.

The community of Peace River in northwestern

Alberta joined forces this year with their own walk/run, and next year, a similar event will be held in Saskatoon. So, yes, the dream that Anita Cardinal had is ever-expanding and coming to fruition. All this, of course, points to a more powerful move forward with respect to the drive she loves to refer to as, "reconciliation!"

As in the previous two years, the walk/run featured three different distances - 2.15 km, 5 km and 10 km. Participants could choose the distance they wished to run and the style of running or walking. It all hinged on whatever they felt comfortable with or dared to challenge. In return, they were rewarded with a certificate of completion, plus the short-sleeved, t-shirt-shaped wooden medal that symbolizes the orange shirt.

Everyone who attended the event at Edmonton's Kinsmen Park "wanted to be there and was there to learn," said Cardinal. It is an event aimed at "healing," and one that, hopefully,



Alberta NDP leader Rachel Notley was one of the participants at the 2023 Orange Shirt Day Walk/Run in Edmonton. Facebook photo.

will continue "indefinitely." It is all about supporting and amplifying communities.

People can still participate by contacting indigenoustrunners@outlook.com

Sept. 30th was declared a statutory holiday by the federal government as a direct response to the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action, No. 80, and is designed to "honour survivors, their families and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process."



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Orange Shirt *cont. from p 5*

traditions, preserving cultural knowledge, spirituality, and the connection to the land and community within Treaty 7 territory and beyond.

Below is a list of artists whose modern echoes incorporate ancestral roots, offering a diverse range of perspectives and styles, and making their work relevant for discussions surrounding Truth and Reconciliation.

Rappers and Musicians:

A Tribe Called Red – Known for blending traditional Indigenous music with contemporary electronic beats, their music often touches on themes of cultural pride and identity.

Snotty Nose Rez Kids – Hailing from the Haisla Nation, this duo’s music frequently addresses Indigenous rights and issues.

Drezus – A Plains Cree rapper from Canada, Drezus has created songs that deal with the effects of colonization and the resilience of Indigenous communities.

Supaman – A member of the Apsáalooke Nation, Supaman combines hip-hop with traditional Indigenous singing and dancing to share stories of his people’s culture and history.

Frank Waln – A Sicangu Lakota rapper, Waln’s music often addresses topics such as identity, history, and the effects of colonization on Indigenous communities.

Lido Pimienta – a talented Indigenous musician whose work explores themes of cultural preservation and empowerment.

Jeremy Dutcher – A Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) singer-songwriter and composer, Dutcher’s music combines classical and traditional Indigenous elements to tell stories of his people.

Samian – A French-Canadian rapper of Algonquin descent, Samian’s music deals with Indigenous rights, identity, and the importance of cultural preservation.

City Natives – This hip-hop group from the Mi’kmaq Nation often addresses issues faced by Indigenous youth, including cultural identity and social justice.

JB the First Lady – An Indigenous rapper and spoken word artist, JB’s music explores themes of empowerment, identity, and social justice.

Spoken Word Artists and Poets:

Gitz Crazyboy – A Cree poet and spoken word artist who explores themes of identity, culture, and resilience.

Tenille Campbell – A Métis writer and poet whose work often focuses on Indigenous identity, love, and healing.

Billy-Ray Belcourt – A Cree writer, poet, and academic whose poetry delves into queerness, Indigeneity, and decolonization.

Painters and Visual Artists:

Although my intention here is to highlight Indigenous voices, it is also possible of course, to speak without any sound at all. These talented

humans, spanning various creative mediums, contribute to the rich tapestry of Indigenous art and culture, making their work relevant for discussions surrounding Orange Shirt Day and Truth and Reconciliation.

Daphne Odjig – A pioneering artist whose work reflects Indigenous culture and social issues.

Christi Belcourt – A Métis visual artist who addresses environmental and Indigenous issues.

Kent Monkman – His paintings and performances challenge colonial narratives and explore Indigenous, queer, and Two-Spirit themes.

Fiction and Non-Fiction Authors:

Thomas King – His novels and essays, such as *The Inconvenient Indian*, offer insightful commentary on Indigenous history and contemporary issues with humor and wit. *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* is another powerful read, where King reflects on the power and significance of storytelling in Indigenous cultures.

Eden Robinson – Known for her novels like *Monkey Beach*, Robinson explores Indigenous identity and spirituality in a contemporary setting.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson – A writer, scholar, and musician, her work includes books like *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back*, which addresses Indigenous resurgence.

Richard Wagamese – His novel *Indian Horse* provides a poignant look at the impact of residential schools on Indigenous individuals.

Winona LaDuke – An Indigenous environmental activist and author, her book *All Our Relations* explores the connections between environmental and Indigenous issues.

Maria Campbell – Her memoir *Halfbreed* offers a personal account of her experiences as a Métis woman in Canada.

Chelsea Vowel – Author of *Indigenous Writes*, a collection of essays addressing Indigenous issues, colonialism, and reconciliation.

Robin Wall Kimmerer – her book *Braiding Sweetgrass* combines Indigenous Knowledge with ecological science and has received numerous awards.

Alicia Elliott – Her collection of essays titled *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground* won the 2020 RBC Taylor Prize for Non-Fiction.

Tanya Tagaq – her book *Split Tooth* is a unique blend of fiction and memoir, and won the Scotiabank Giller Prize in 2018.



Orange Shirt Day at Mistassiniy School.

Basil Johnston – an Ojibwa author, scholar, and rider, Johnston invites readers to delve into the richness of Indigenous thought and philosophy. In *Think Indian* he presents a collection of essays and reflections that explore various aspects of Indigenous culture, spirituality, and ways of thinking.

Our Story: Aboriginal Voices on Canada’s Past – this is a compelling anthology that offers a diverse range of voices and perspectives from Indigenous authors, historians, and storytellers. The book explores Canada’s history from an Indigenous viewpoint, through personal narratives, historical accounts, and contemporary reflections. This collection emphasizes the importance of reconciliation and understanding in the context of Canada’s shared history.

Young Adult Book Suggestions:

The Marrow Thieves by Cherie Dimaline – This dystopian novel explores a future in which people hunt Indigenous individuals for their bone marrow, which holds the key to dreaming.

Fire Song by Adam Garnet Jones – This novel tells the story of a young Two-Spirit Indigenous man dealing with grief and identity in a small town.

The Journey Forward: A Novella on Reconciliation by Richard Van Camp – This novella explores the journey of a young Indigenous woman in a healing circle.

My Name Is Seepeetza by Shirley Sterling – Based on the author’s own experiences, this novel follows a young girl’s life in a residential school.

These suggestions offer a diverse range of Indigenous perspectives, experiences, and stories, suitable for educators and teens exploring Indigenous culture and issues.

Lesley Machon is a Humanities Teacher in Calgary.

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