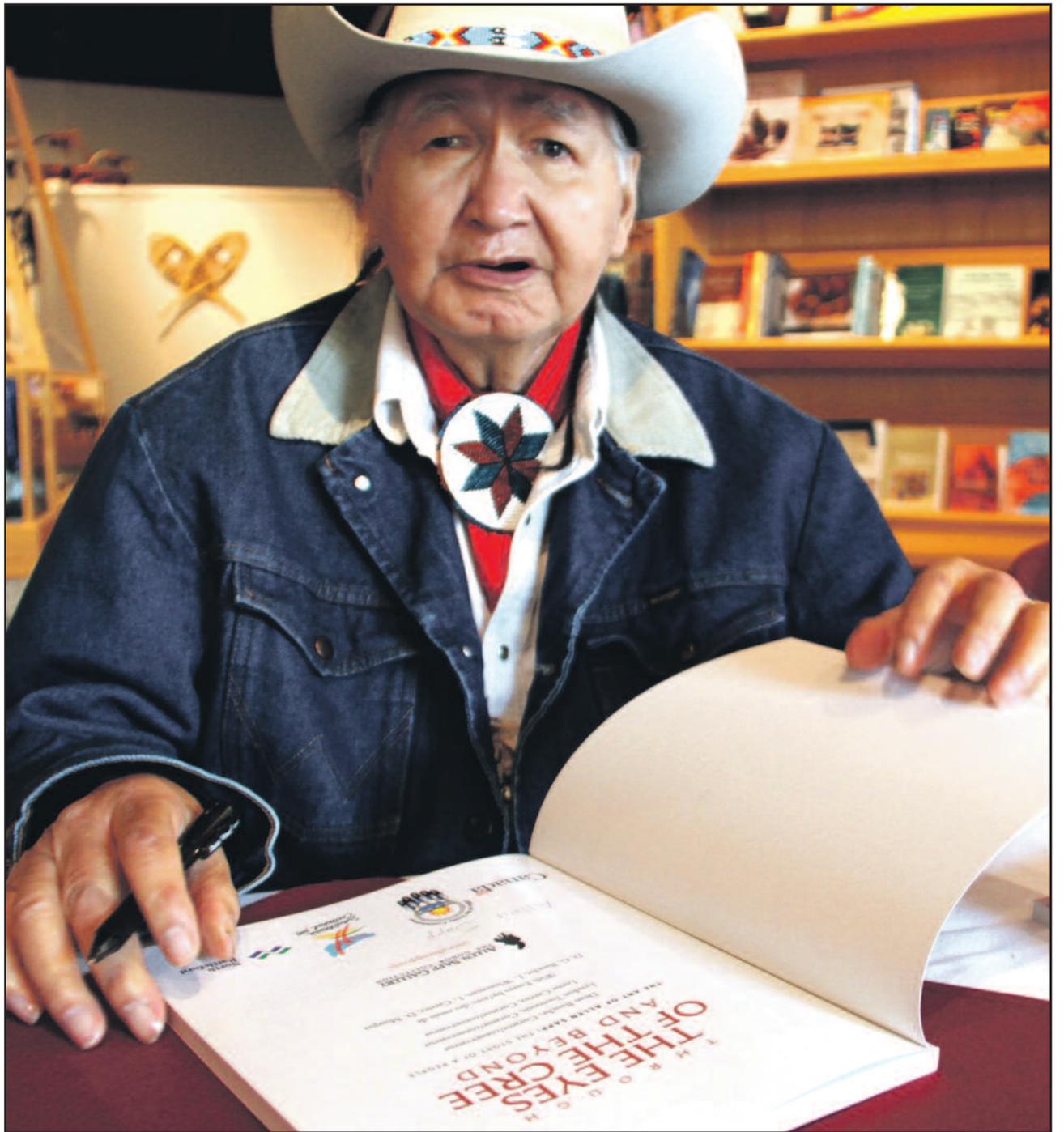


# Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

## Allen Sapp was a Cree master

The legendary Allen Sapp passed away at home Dec. 29 at the age of 87. The Cree painter's work can be found in galleries and private collections around the world. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)



### Sapp drew from memories to paint a colourful history

By Fraser Needham  
For Eagle Feather News

Allen Sapp grew up in very humble circumstances on the Red Pheasant First Nation, just south of North Battleford.

It was the Great Depression and being one of seven children, he struggled just to get by. Four of his siblings would not survive past childhood.

Nevertheless, it was these images of life and hard times on the small prairie reserve, as seen through a young boy's eyes that would inspire the painter years later.

Allen Sapp, one of Saskatchewan's most renowned artists, passed away peacefully in his sleep

on December 29. He was 87.

Sapp moved to North Battleford in 1963 and began selling his paintings door-to-door just to make ends meet.

However, it was when he met local doctor Allan Gonor in 1966 that things really began to change.

Gonor was so impressed with Sapp's work that he offered to buy anything he painted and encouraged him to focus on autobiographical themes.

The doctor also provided money for art supplies.

Gonor also introduced Sapp to Saskatoon artist Wynona Mulcaster who helped mentor the painter.

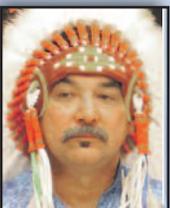
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**BORN TO ACT**  
Seven-year-old Isaiah Tootosis has hit the world stage, continuing a family tradition. - Page 4



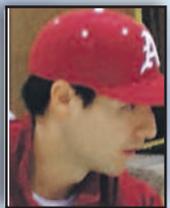
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Milo Cameron recently received a \$2,500 scholarship that honours the memory of Lacy Morin-Desjarlais. - Page 14



**HE WAS A HIT**  
Kids in La Ronge were thrilled when Christian Kowalchuk gave them some baseball tips. - Page 14

The Year in Review Edition

Coming In February - Health and Wellness Issue

# Sask arts community mourns loss of trailblazing Indigenous painter

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By 1970, he was hosting his first art exhibit at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, which attracted 12,000 viewers.

This was soon followed by other exhibits in London and Los Angeles making him one of the first Indigenous artists to achieve international acclaim.

Over the years, Sapp has been recognized countless times for his artistic achievements.

He was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1975, received the Saskatchewan Award of Merit in 1985, was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1987, received an honorary doctorate from the University of Regina in 1988, a Lifetime Award for Excellence in Arts from the Saskatchewan Arts Board in 1996 and the Governor General's Literary Award in 2003 for providing illustrations for the children's book *The Song Within*



*My Heart.*

In 1989, the Allen Sapp Gallery opened in North Battleford with the help of 80 paintings donated by the Gonor family.

Leah Garven is the curator of the Allen Sapp Gallery.

She says she believes part of the reason why Sapp's works have such wide appeal is they are accessible.

Focusing on Indigenous people going about their day-to-day lives within a small community is something many people can relate to, Garven says.

"Through his paintings, he depicts some very tender, special and personal moments for himself, his family and his people," she says. "And, this is something I think a lot of people associate with."

Garven adds that one of the amazing things about Sapp is that he had no formal training, did not rough sketch his work and painted strictly from memory.

"Some people call it a photographic memory in that he could hold that image in his mind and paint it.

"What comes through on that is that

he was never formally trained but he could paint in perspective and have things that maybe a naked eye would assume."

Allen Sapp is survived by his daughter Faye Delorme, brother Simon, sister Stella and other extended family.



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(Photo L-R) Creeson Agecutay, William Simon, Jasmine Machiskinic, Winona Pratt, Chanelle Lacerte, Jack Penashue, Austin Thomson, Kelsey Starblanket, Renee Pitawanakwat, Shana Pasapa, Adrianna Simon, Valyncia Sparvier. Recipients not in photo: Candy Fox, Laryn Oakes, Isabel Gagne.

## Calendar features Aboriginal success

By Jamin Mike and Morgan Esperance  
For Eagle Feather News

REGINA – Each year the Regina Aboriginal Professionals Association (RAPA) celebrates youth success by featuring various youth and professionals in the 2016 A Proud Generation calendar and also distributing \$500 bursaries to each recipient.

Last month, 14 youth from across Saskatchewan were chosen to receive the magnificent award at the First Nations University of Canada. Candidates are dedicated to leadership in academics, career, arts, sports, culture and community.

Winona Pratt, from the Cote First Nation, is one of the many recipients and is also the 2015 Miss First Nations University of Canada.



Nicole Akan presented Valyncia Sparvier with her award for being in the Proud Generation Calendar.

“I had my doubts about getting into this calendar because it’s such a huge honour,” she said.

Pratt is enlightened that she has role models to look up to and strives to become a role-model herself.

“I just hope to be more of an influ-

ence for the younger generations, more of an inspirer and have people look up to me.”

Pratt is 21 years old and studies criminal justice at the University of Regina.

Over \$60,000 has been invested and distributed to over 100 youth in the past 11 years by RAPA since the awards were first introduced in 2004 and each year’s profit is reinvested into making these awards happen year after year.

Adrianna Simon of the Carry the Kettle First Nation is also featured in the calendar.

“The calendar, to me, is basically letting you know all that First Nations can do in a positive way,” said Adrianna, a student at the U of R.

Brad Bellegarde, the communication lead for RAPA discussed the board’s pleasure in seeing the youth come forward to be recognized and wanting to become leaders of their communities.

“I’m pleased to say that this year we actually had a record number of applications. We had over 40 applications and it’s (still) growing,” said Bellegarde.

He and the RAPA board put numerous hours in preparation to make this calendar and event possible. Bellegarde acknowledged that if there were 40 months in a year then all 40 applicants could have been chosen.

“It’s a humbling experience. Every applicant is a success story, regardless if they were chosen or not,” says Bellegarde.

He encourages people to buy a copy of the calendar for \$20. All the funds raised through Proud Generation, gets funded right back into the communities. RAPA is community-based and is a non-profit organization. Each step toward this award was put in mind with the celebration of Aboriginal youth success.

Calendars can be purchased from [rapanetwork@gmail.com](mailto:rapanetwork@gmail.com)



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# Yes, 2015 was (mostly) a wonderful year

Sometimes you get it right. I have been making premonitions in my January column for years. Last year was like usual, you win some and you lose some.

The biggest win last year I predicted that in order to get the Cons Gang out of Parliament, Aboriginal people had to get out and vote en masse. And thanks to lots of encouragement from grassroots groups like Indigenous Vote 2015 and Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde, who voted for the first time in a federal election himself, the country did exactly that and booted Prime Minister Harper and his mean-spirited ways to the curb.

Sadly, I was right in predicting the demise of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan as we know it. The doors are shut and local presidents are screaming for a Métis Nation Legislative Assembly, but one seems far off at best. Maybe it's time for a revolution in 2016.

My biggest fails last year were in predicting the Nashville Predators to win the Stanley Cup and the Saskatchewan Roughriders to win the Grey Cup. Snort!

Before my predictions for 2016, I just want to run a list of wonderful things we witnessed in 2015...

- The election of Prime Minister Trudeau and the cabinet swearing in ceremony.

- The announcement of a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women.

- The emergence of Isaiah Tootoosis who got a big break by acting in the *The Revenant* as Leonardo DeCaprio's son. The humble 7-year-old is all over the media and is so wonderful and poised, I know his great grandfather the late Gordon Tootoosis would be so proud.

- The shout out Leonardo DeCaprio gave to First Nations people when he accepted his Golden Globe Award for *The Revenant*. That speech of his was on every Neechie in the world's Facebook and had every American wondering what a First Nation is.

- Seeing local sporting legend

Eugene Arcand speak on the national stage on behalf of residential school survivors. His

emotional speech at the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was powerful. If you ever get the chance to hear him speak about his experience in the residential schools and the TRC, take it.

- Seeing all of those familiar faces on TV when the *Amazing Race* came to Wanuskeewin and watching Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas trying to hold his laughter in as one of the contestants almost retched on the hill at the finish line.

- Teacher Belinda Daniels earning a few awards this year including a potential Nobel Prize for teaching. She is one of 50 finalists in the WORLD!

- Jack Saddleback elected president of the University of Saskatchewan Students Union.

- Seeing Jason Chamakese play his flute again at the SICC Language Conference.

- The growth of Aboriginal business and the emergence of a whole new generation of entrepreneurs led by young achievers like Kendall Netmaker, Devon Fiddler and Heather Abbey.

- Zoe Roy and Christian Kowalchuck winning National Aboriginal Achievement Awards.

And I could go on. That was a great year. Imagine how great 2016 can be without Stephen Harper leading the charge.

And now looking forward in my crystal ball to what will come in 2016.

Politically, the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan runs out of gas. The government appoints a person to manage the organization, get it in order and set up an election. Most of the old Area

Directors run again, so someone starts a new organization. The government wisely recognizes them as the legitimate representative and we move forward.

The FSIN stays the same though not without someone getting mad about expenses and Chief Cameron does a fine job in response and starts to whittle away the FSIN's debt.

Provincially the SaskParty gets back in, though they do lose a few seats. The Liberals sneak one, the NDP gain two and the Conservative party gets one. Let the games begin!

In Saskatoon and Regina, both

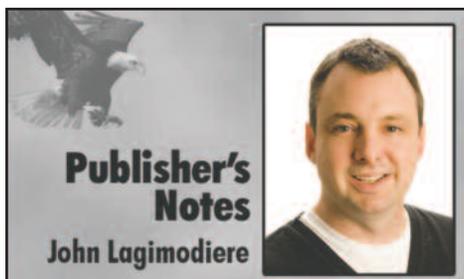
Mayor Atchison and Mayor Forgere both get re-elected because there are so many candidates the vote splits.

Those small houses that Idle No More have touted take off and villages of tiny little houses start popping up on reserves all across Canada. Tired of living alone, everyone starts making additions to their homes.

In sports, the Washington Capitals win the Stanley Cup. The Hamilton Tiger Cats win the Grey Cup (Riders go 9-9 and lose out in first round of playoffs).

And the World Indigenous Business Forum in Saskatoon in August is the most successful ever and the International Indigenous music festival that happens at the same time becomes a many year success story.

Best quote of 2015. "Because it's 2015." All the best in 2016.



Isaiah Tootoosis with Leonardo DeCaprio, the star of the Golden Globe Award winning *The Revenant*. Tootoosis is just seven years old and seems to be following a family tradition as an actor.

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# My Kiwi baby makes his first big trip

Three weeks in New Zealand with a seven months old baby – what could go wrong?

Well, from a quick search on the Internet – everything. For one thing, they don't carry our brand of baby formula, they have a giant hole in the ozone and their cable is satellite. Even one of those is enough to scare the mom-jeans off of me.

I don't come from a long line of travellers. From what my mom tells me, from birth to ten years old we never left the homestead except for school or to go look at the beaver dam behind our house – and we still managed to break every limb and a few fingers.

Travelling seemed like a good idea seven months ago. I was pregnant and swore up and down that I would not change post-partum. I would still be the same daring, reckless adventurer that I've always been. Except, of course, that I have never been any of those things.

My idea of risk-taking is using a different entrance to Midtown mall.

As the trip approached, I dealt with my growing anxiety by packing. I packed for every possible baby-related contingency for a week straight. Then I watched as my partner pared down my hard work to two suitcases and two carry-ons. He says I "got out of control." I still say that we could have used our changing table – what if New Zealand has no flat surfaces?

We flew into Auckland on a 13-hour flight. Until the hour before we left, I thought it was an

eight-hour flight. It wasn't until my partner bragged to the cab driver "we'll be flying for almost 14 hours" that I realized. He says that he told me how long it was but I don't remember that. (I suspect treachery.)

Our seats came with a baby bassinet. I can't



think of an easier way to travel with an infant, other than getting seats on a different plane from your baby. FYI: they don't allow that – I asked.

We were lucky that most flights were on time. Babies do not like flight delays. And neither do mommies as it is my job to constantly gage the amount of food and diapers needed for each stretch of the journey. I was reading the Martian on this trip and certainly identified with the protagonist's complex sustenance calculations after he was trapped on Mars. (At least he got to recycle his feces for food.)

Baby's dad was less nervous, believing that if we ever ran out of baby food, we could use ice cream to fill in the "nutritional holes." I'd like to fill in his nutritional holes.

We were using the stroller to schlep the baby around until we got to Wellington. We climbed a staircase as long as four pregnancies stacked on top of one another while carrying the stroller, the car seat, the baby and a deep resentment for Wellington city planners.

After that day – also known as the day of a thousand leg cramps – we switched to a baby carrier – it's awkward and makes me sweat like I'm eating soup in a sauna but the baby loves it.

After the first leg of our journey, the baby came down with a stomach bug. He threw up a few times, the most dramatic occurrence at three a.m., in bed, on his parents. Until that moment I didn't realize how much being a parent is like being a roadie for a heavy metal band.

New Zealand baby food is pretty nuts. Pumpkin and lamb? Beef rice and kumala? Blueberries, kiwis and guava? Isn't guava ... bat crap? I'm sure its got a lot of protein but how is that even legal? Everywhere I look I see cherub faced fatties so I know kiwi babies are eating this stuff. The baby likes everything but I put my foot down at lamb. It seems cannibalistic for a baby to be eating another baby.

We're halfway through the trip and the baby is thriving as he destroys hotel rooms across the country. He enjoys seeing new faces and sights every day which makes me think that maybe this wasn't the worst idea ever.

And there are even moments when I'm not a hyper-vigilant mom, usually after a glass of wine.

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# TRC's final report issues 94 calls for action

By Fraser Needham  
For Eagle Feather News

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has released its final report and now it is a matter of waiting to see how its recommendations are acted upon.

In a historic ceremony in Ottawa on December 15, the commission released a weighty six volume report which includes 94 "calls to action" to rebuild the fractured relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples caused by the numerous abuses the former suffered in Christian run Indian residential schools.

The report is the result of six years of work the TRC spent traveling the country, hearing the stories of residential school survivors and researching relevant school and government records.

It makes broad recommendations on how Canada can improve its relationship with Indigenous people in such areas as child welfare, education, language, culture, health and justice.

Standing beside two empty chairs to represent the many students who did not survive the residential school system, TRC Chair Justice Murray Sinclair said it is education that damaged the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and education will need to play a fundamental role in healing this relationship.

He added an inaccurate history of Indigenous people began in the residential school system and has been continued on in the public one.

"These dual myths of Indigenous inferiority and European superiority has caused all of us to think and talk about one and other in very negative ways. Our

calls for action calls for the very important role public education in the future will need to play to fix that."

Justice Sinclair also stressed the need to "bring all Indigenous people within the circle of reconciliation."

This includes all the people left out of the residential schools settlement agreement including Métis people, the Indigenous people of Newfoundland and Labrador and those who attended day schools.

The newly elected Liberal government has already committed to acting upon all 94 recommendations in the TRC report.

At the event, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau talked

about the guilt he feels for having had the opportunity to attend many good schools while the same opportunity was never given to those who attended residential schools.

At the same time, he told of a history teacher who once remarked to his class that they need not read a chapter on

Indigenous people because it was not important.

"We will ensure that never again students will be told that this is not an integral part of our country, of what makes us Canadians," Trudeau said. "This is a promise that we make right here."

As part of his speech, the Prime Minister also committed to working with Indigenous groups to design a national engagement strategy for developing and implementing a national reconciliation framework.

This will include a formal response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

For his part, Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde said the organization will do everything in its power to ensure the report's recommendations are acted upon and not forgotten.

"They will not gather dust or be forgotten on shelves like so many other reports have," he said.

Eugene Arcand of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation is a member of the residential school survivors committee and was one of the featured speakers at the TRC

final report release.

"I wore these feathers today to those who maintained the traditions and ceremonies while we were away. The 94 recommendations are calls to action.

"This process, we were supposed to be advisors to these three powerful and strong people. It gave us (the committee) a chance to become children again, we shared tears and laughs and dug out the demons.

"The fact that we are not alone means that we don't have to do this alone. For Canada, you've been awakened," said Arcand who was the TRC Survivor Committee Chair. He urged all Canadians to act on the report as quickly as possible.

"These are not recommendations, these are calls to action," Arcand reminded the audience.

"First Nations want to live healthy and productive lives and want the opportunity to overcome all the barriers preventing them from building better lives," Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Bobby Cameron said in a released statement.

"The TRC final report outlines the building blocks for healthier First Nations families and nations and ultimately leads to a stronger, healthier Canada."

"If the recommendations were fulfilled this would mean so much for the health and wellness of our people and of our nations," FSIN Vice-Chief Kimberly Jonathan added in the same statement.

The Liberal government has already acted upon one of the calls to action in the TRC report by announcing a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.



Prime Minister Trudeau is embraced by Eugene Arcand at the release of the TRC final report.

(Photo by Lorna Arcand)



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- January 27th is **Family Literacy Day**. Check out our website to find out more.



# Forums bring First Nations and municipalities together to talk land

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

A new series of forums began recently discussing economic development and wealth creation through Indigenous land developments. The forums are the result of a new partnership between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the federal and provincial governments, the University of Saskatchewan, the City's of Regina and Saskatoon, along with the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority.

Land development opportunity is vast with over half a billion dollars in settlement funds for Saskatchewan First Nations since 1992.



FSIN Vice Chief Bob Merasty says the forums are providing an excellent opportunity for discussing future economic development.

"Our forum committee has assembled the top experts and leaders in First Nation land and resource development with the overall objective to creating opportunities for our communities to develop their lands through partnership," FSIN Vice Chief Bob Merasty said.

"We believe these forums provide an excellent opportunity to educate, network and create those opportunities to develop lands and generate economic development."

The Prosperity through Partnerships Conference: Communities Coming Together is a three-part conference series that brings land development experts in all areas of reserve, Treaty Land Entitlement, Specific Claims and urban reserve development together to

educate, discuss and strike partnerships to develop those lands.

Sakimay First Nation Chief Lynn Acoose was on hand at the first conference in Saskatoon to present about her First Nation's opportunities. They have over 6,000 acres to develop from a specific claim over an illegal surrender and they also have land from their flood claim to develop.

"We have turned most of it into reserve and we are focusing on developing those lands right now. We have had urban land in Yorkton since about 1997," said Chief Acoose.

"It was the choice of the people and leadership of the day. Forty-five per cent of our people live in Regina and we have two satellite reserves near Yorkton. So we bought where our people were."

Sakimay has a beautiful piece of land just west of Regina bordered by Westera which is zoned commercial/residential development and to the east is the Global Transportation Hub. They also own land in the south and southeast sides of the city. This presents lots of development opportunities to the band.

"We want to build social capital as well as wealth. We want jobs and we want to go into sectors that will provide a living for our people," said Chief Acoose.

"Ultimately we want to create our own revenue base so we can achieve self determination and not be dependent on anybody. That's why we focus on economic development."

The forums present workshops and discussions centred on issues such as reserve creation and land management on-reserve, reconciling land claims, collaborating with municipalities, urban planning, legislative reforms, land acquisition strategies, developing on specific claim lands, communicating effectively with First Nation governments and communities and developing effective partnerships with government and the private sector.

"It is a new era of opportunity for First Nations and all communities. The new economy is going to need the full participation of First Nations if we are to be successful, and we are committed to facilitating and assisting our communities and our partners to develop new wealth and economic development opportunities through claims lands," Vice Chief Merasty said.

The Prosperity through Partnerships Conference part one was held Dec. 15 and 16 at the Travelodge Hotel in Saskatoon.

Conference number two will be in Regina on January 13 and 14 and then an urban reserve focused conference happens in Saskatoon on March 16 and 17.

Registration and other information can be found at [www.fsin.com](http://www.fsin.com).



Brad Michael, Sr. Policy Analyst, Lands and Resources Secretariat, FSIN presented Four Horse Development CEO Pat Fiacco and Sakimay First Nation Chief Lynn Acoose with a gift. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)



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11:00 am	Opening prayer Coffee, tea and visiting time Fun, games and prizes
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12:30 pm	Sharing thoughts on 2016

All Aboriginal persons ages 55 and older are invited;  
please be our guest!  
RSVP to the Friendship Centre nearest you!

Transportation assistance is available: Reserve early





# World Indigenous Business Forum coming to Saskatoon in August

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

**SASKATOON** – The World Indigenous Business Forum slated for Saskatoon in the third week of August will have a strong youth component to it. One would think a forum of this sort would not be the best or most interesting event for young people, but the organizers and a couple of lucky youth from Saskatoon say otherwise.

Hailey Lavallee is a 19-year-old social work student at FNUC, but in October she was lucky enough to attend the WIBF event in Hawaii. What she saw there has inspired her to attend and contribute as a volunteer when Saskatoon hosts the event this summer.

“My intent was to go to Hawaii and learn about business and other Indigenous people and, of course, to see Hawaii,” said Lavallee who earned her way on the trip by being an Atoske alumni.

“I learned we have the same struggles across the world but I also learned what it takes to be an entrepreneur.”

In Hawaii, Hailey was asked to perform at the announcement of the Saskatoon event. Her jigging was a big hit and showcased the culture of our territory.

Rosa Walker is the President and

CEO of the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute who is co-hosting the forum with the Saskatchewan First Nations Economic Development Network. She says the input of youth is invaluable to the Forum and a great investment.

“It is very important to have youth there and to have them engage with business leaders from around the world. In Hawaii we had Indigenous business people from every continent,” said Walker.

“And the youth were engaged. They worked the registration and organized the reception and got to meet every single speaker. In Saskatoon, through our youth group Eagle, we intend to raise enough funds to have 100 youth from across Canada come and get involved.”

Joshua Scott, another Atoske alumni, also attended in Hawaii and is looking forward to August.

“I wanted to see how indigenous business works around the world. From what I saw, it made me impressed with how successful Indigenous business is here in Saskatchewan. I think of SIGA and Whitecap Dakota First Nation and how they help the entire community,” said Joshua, an archaeology student at the U of S.

According to Milton Tootoosis,



**Milton Tootoosis, at the podium in Hawaii, invited WIBF delegates to come to Saskatoon in August and experience our hospitality and culture.**

Chair of the WIBF 2016 Committee, the delegates really benefit from having a strong youth delegation.

“We know that Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing demographic in Canada. As business people, we have a responsibility to transfer our knowledge and contacts to the millennial generation. Delegates also get to meet potential future employees and do some recruiting,” said Tootoosis.

Most inspiring to Hailey and Joshua was one side of business that people don't often think about. “What really stuck with me were these two young boys, maybe 11 years old. They had a business that was designed to give back to their community,” said Hailey. “It was really inspiring

to see. I am excited to help welcome everyone to our territory and show them our ways and perform for them and meet people from across the world.”

Joshua was also impressed with corporate social responsibility.

“I heard a lot of business models, and philanthropy based models to provide for community,” said Joshua. “I was awed by the Maori presenters who opened and closed their presentation with a Hakka dance. It was cool to see. I am very looking forward to volunteering in August.”

2016 World Indigenous Business Forum is expected to attract about 1,000 delegates and will be held at TCU Place from August 23-26.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### IN NORTH AMERICA:

**Barb Hambleton**

*Vice-President, ILDII*

barbhambleton@ildii.ca

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# Company helps Aboriginal entrepreneurs to get started

By Fraser Needham  
For Eagle Feather News

**SASKATOON** – Getting a new business off the ground can pose multiple challenges and that’s where Ideas Inc comes in.



**Justin Scott of Scott Repair shown here at the Ideas Inc offices in Saskatoon.**

The Saskatoon-based company provides various support services to entrepreneurs.

Their Empower Program specifically targets Aboriginal entrepreneurs by providing space, mentorship and coaching.

Entrepreneurs who are in the Empower Program have access to retail space at the Ideas Inc offices located in the Farmers Market Square at no cost.

The Empower studio can be used as a place to interact directly with customers and showcase product.

As part of this space, Empower members also have access to the Ideas Inc boardroom, a professional mailing address, printing, scanning and wireless Internet. They can even use a communal bicycle when needed.

As part of the program, entrepreneurs can also rely on seven experienced business mentors that are part of Ideas Inc.

The mentors provide both perspective and advice on how to avoid some of the pitfalls that stand in the way of making a new business successful.

Ideas Inc staff is continuously on hand to provide constant coaching in such areas as financials, marketing communications, business strategy and operational efficiency.

BHP Billiton is a major sponsor of the Empower Program.

Ryan Richichi is the business development director at Ideas Inc. and says aside from providing free office space and all the advantages that come with it, the Empower Program provides a whole network of contacts and support to Aboriginal entrepreneurs who may be new to Saskatoon.

“A lot of the people that we see come from outside the city, say from a reserve, you just don’t have the connections in the city,” Richichi says. “So that’s where we can really help with our network and just the process of

actually starting the business if you haven’t been living in Saskatoon you don’t have those same connections.”

Richichi also says that since the overall learning curve of starting any new business can be extremely steep, Ideas Inc believes the three pillars of space, mentorship and coaching the Empower Program provides can make this learning curve as painless as possible.

“You have a lot of curves with starting any new business,” he says. “It’s a learning process. You’ve got to feel out the market and how your product’s accepted and there’s just those hurdles of learning every aspect of the business from bookkeeping, to the operations, to the financials.”

There are currently five Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the Empower Program.

Rachel Eyahpaise is the owner and operator of GROW.FN, which is an online platform that acts as a nationwide service directory for First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

Brian Dreaver runs Wild Buffalo, a philanthropic business with a community focus of educating youth on both the discipline and benefits of martial arts.

The business is based on his mixed martial arts apparel brand “Iron Buffalo.”

Sarah Gaudry owns Gee Gee’s Boutique where she acts as your personal shopper traveling the continent for the ultimate selection in vintage clothing to fit a modern lifestyle.

Justin Scott is the proprietor of Scott Repair, which fixes smart phones, tablets and laptop computers.

Jean McKenzie’s business is Sewing Gene, which offers handmade clothing and other accessories.

Ideas Inc plans to add five new members to the Empower Program in 2016 and another five in 2017.

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## Gordon Oakes Centre a welcoming place for Aboriginal students

By John Lagimodiere  
Of Eagle Feather News

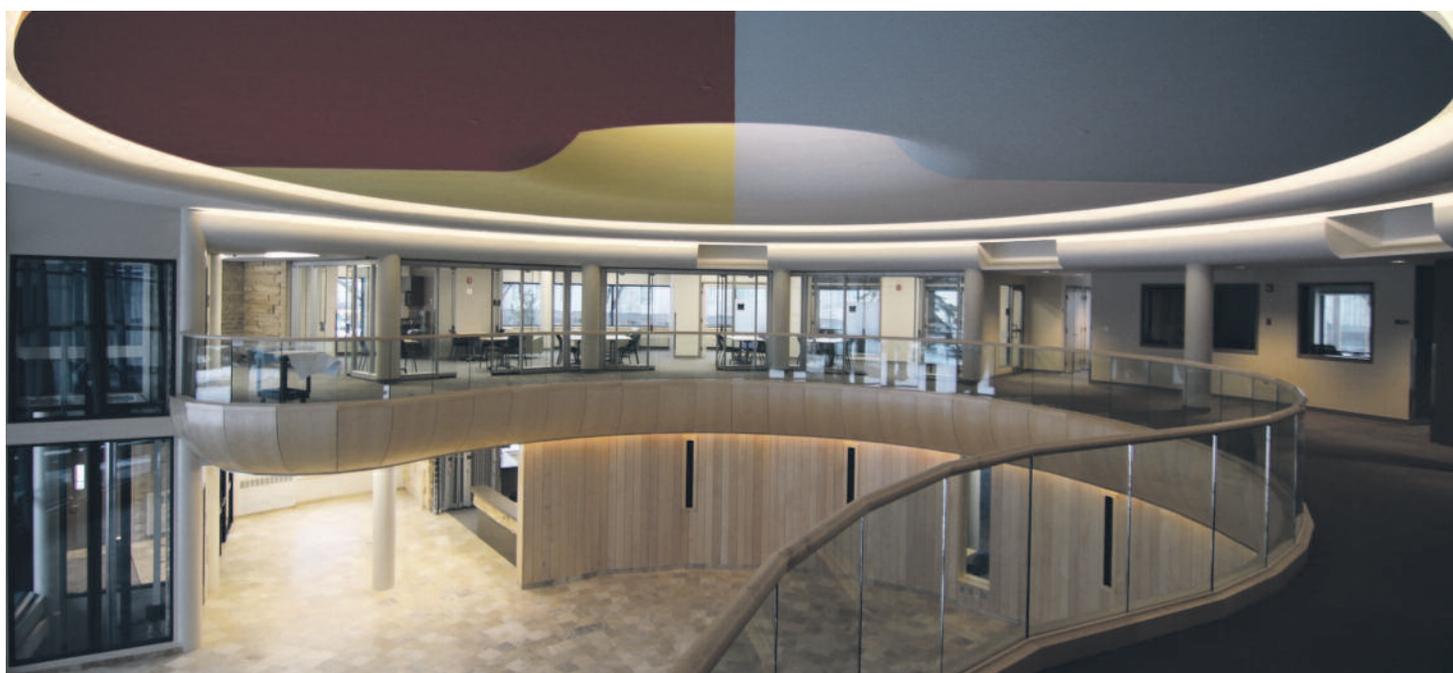
SASKATOON – The Gordon Oakes Redbear Centre on the University of Saskatchewan has opened its doors and welcomed students in the new year.

The building is an architectural beauty. Created by renowned Métis and Blackfoot architect Douglas Cardinal, the stone and wood building will be a safe and welcoming place for students and ceremony on campus.

“Yes Aboriginal students face many unique challenges but they are also leaders. Here we can bring together a community of people,” said Graeme Joseph Team Leader, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Success at the University.

The building is named after the late Gordon Oakes Redbear who was the Chief of the Nekaneet First Nation from 1958-1962 and 1970-1992. Oakes was a strong believer in education and honouring one’s culture and traditions.

No detail was overlooked in developing the \$17 million building. The ceiling is decorated as a medicine wheel, using the colours of the Oakes family—yellow, red, blue and white. The feature skylight of the building at the centre of the medicine wheel was inspired by the patterns on a star blanket.



**Graeme Joseph, Team Leader, First Nation, Metis and Inuit Student Success at the University of Saskatchewan showed off the wonderful design and finish of the Gordon Oakes Redbear Centre.** (Photos by John Lagimodiere)

The building is also built over a tunnel that connects the Health Sciences Building to the Arts Tower and the rest of campus allowing students safe and warm passage around campus

Coming in at 1,884 square metres, the Centre will host the Aboriginal Students Centre as well as the Indigenous Students Council and the Indigenous Graduate Students Association. There is also a computer and docking lab, meeting rooms and gender neutral bathrooms. Lots of them.

Joseph sees the building as more than just stones.

“This will be a place of intercultural education, communication and dialogue where we get people together to talk about the issues,” added Joseph. “And it is also a safe place where students can come and utilize services. But it is mostly about building a community.”

The Gordon Oakes Redbear Centre opened for business on Jan. 4 and with an official grand opening in the first week of February.

The Elders said that for ceremony to be right, they still had to be connected to the earth. So, ground was saved from the excavation and a large pillar in the basement contains all that dirt, connecting the centre ceremonial part of the building to the ground. Some of the decorative wood used in the building is from the elm trees cut down to accommodate the construction and a ventilation system is hidden in the ceiling that expels smoke in the four directions.

Tyndall stone adorns the building with two rows of inlaid tile encircling the building representing the wampum belt and one of the first treaties negotiated in what would later become Canada.

**Wishing you &  
your family  
a joyful, healthy,  
& prosperous  
year ahead!**



**Jennifer Campeau, MLA 306-974-4125  
Saskatoon - Fairview**

# Dirk Dashing on the year ahead

John L.: The year 2015 marked a turning point for many in First Nations country. Here to dazzle and astound us with his predictions for 2016 is the columnist voted to “Most Likely To”, Eagle Feather News’ own, the astonishing Dirk “Yikes” Dashing.

(Dear readers: There are several things wrong with that sentence, but that’s what it says on the card he makes me read in these conversations)

**Dirk: Thank you John. For your average Johnny One River, 2016 promises to be a year of renewal, rejuvenation and, well, promise.**

John L.: Good point, Dirk. It appears things are looking better for Aboriginal people in 2016. We have the report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, movement on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women file, and of course the defeat of Stephen Harper’s Conservatives with the election of Justin Trudeau.

**Dirk: And, at the top of everyone’s minds, that I have read, is the burning question: What will Stephen Harper’s battle hair do now, now that the offers from Chate-laine, GQ and MAD magazines has been withdrawn? I worry for that signature**

**hairstyle, John, I really do.**

John L.: So let’s begin with the report on the residential schools. What can First Nation people expect?

**Dirk: Haven’t a clue, John. All I know is 2016 will be a fantastic year for the Dirkster. And John, isn’t that what really matters? What does 2016 hold in store for the audacious and mildly interesting Dirk Dashing?**

John L.: Oh god, here we go. Alright, Dirk, what’s coming up for you?

**Dirk: Excellent question, John. You see it all began when I was born...**

(Four hours pass while Eagle Feather News owner is regaled with Dirk’s captivating and deeply personal tale of daring, tragedy, comedy and profound insight. John is gently snoring, a trace of spit oozing down his chin as he slumps in his Millennium Falcon executive chair with matching Star Wars blankie)

**Dirk: ...which brings us to the tail end of 2014, when I almost became an ex-Dirk. Yes, John, I was damn near a goner.**

John L.:

**Dirk: John?**

John L.: But I don’t want to go to school today, daddy. Wait! What? Oh! Thank you for your valuable contribution this month, Dirk.

Ladies and gentlemen, this has been Dirk Dashing, the most dangerous columnist for Eagle Feather News!

**Dirk: I’m not done.**

John L.: Really? That’s a pity. I mean, please continue Dirk. This is spellbinding stuff.

**Dirk: I know, right? So yeah, 2014. Damn near didn’t get out of it alive. Since then I devoted myself to being an even more dazzling inspiration for my family and loved ones.**

John L.: Family and loved ones? Aren’t your family and loved ones the same thing, Dirk?

**Dirk: Sure, in a very real and technical sense, I suppose this is true. In fact, what I’ve noticed over the years is that I became highly tolerant of – what are the word people been using? Yes, parents and siblings.**

John L.: So you became tolerant of your family?

**Dirk: Yeah, why not? They seemed**

**mostly harmless. And you know what, John? Somehow tiny beings seemingly sprouted around me, too. Out of nowhere, John! Although always underfoot, I found myself becoming rather fond of them as time marched on. Odd how that happens, right? I believe they’re called, “children.”**

John L.: You’re an odd man, Dirk. But once again we got off track.

**Dirk: Right. So, some pretty amazing things transpired in 2015 that are now starting to bear fruit. And by “bear” I mean the verb, not the noun, John. As in, “Dirk was forced to bear the stunning and ever present admiration of the crowd even as his sock rolled half-way off inside his shoe.” That bear, John, not the animal.**

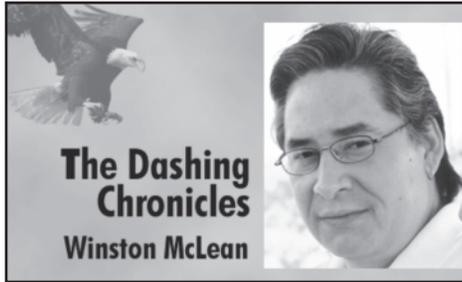
John L.: Thanks for the clarification.

**Dirk: Now to the point: some pretty cool things are about to unfold for the Dirkster in 2016, so stay tuned.**

John L.: I got this strange and yet all too familiar feeling this has been pointless, and I am a little worried that I am getting used to these conversations. Thanks again, Dirk. Best of luck to you in 2016.

**Dirk: Thanks John. You were pleased to have me here.**

*Dirk says, “What do they use to ship Styrofoam?”*



## CELEBRATE WITH US

The Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre on the University of Saskatchewan’s Saskatoon campus is open.

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Darrel Burnouf, Manager Business Development & Northern Affairs at Cameco Corporation and Glen Lafleur, Gabriel Dumont Institute vice Chair signed the scholarship agreement at a ceremony in Saskatoon. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

## Scholarship presentations, special performance delighted audience at Gordon Tootosis Nikaniwin Theatre

Amiskusees: Semaganis-Worme and GTNT have awarded their first round of scholarships and at the same time sent Curtis Peeteetuce's *Nicimos: the final Rez X-mas* into the Stratosphere!

December 18, 2015 was a great night for GTNT and Amiskusees. Milo Cameron was awarded the Lacy Morin-Desjarlais Memorial award valued at \$2,500. Jennifer Dawn Bishop was awarded the Theatre Arts award valued at \$1,500 and finally Aren Okeymaysim was awarded the Arts Perseverance Bursary valued at \$500. The awards were delivered by Tara Worme of the Amiskusees: Semaganis Worme Family Foundation.

This award is to honour the life of late Lacy Morin-Desjarlais, a Circle of Voices alumni who passed away in a tragic car accident in February 2015. Following the scholarship presentations the audience was treated to the staged reading of *Nicimos*, the last play that Lacy acted in.

There was a sold-out audience, and the reaction was priceless with each scene receiving applause that was underscored with uproarious laughter.



Tara Worme and Rheana Worme presented the Lacy Morin-Desjarlais Memorial Scholarship to Milo Cameron in December. (Photo Daniel Knight)

## Gabriel Dumont Institute and Cameco renew scholarship agreement for another five years

**SASKATOON** – The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and Cameco Corporation have entered into a renewed agreement to continue to offer scholarships to Métis post-secondary students in Saskatchewan.

Cameco has committed to an annual donation of \$10,000 for five years for a total of \$50,000. GDI will contribute an additional \$3,000 each year to the program.

The scholarships will be aimed towards Métis students from northern Saskatchewan who are studying in areas related to trades, business administration, commerce, computer science and other fields of study related to employment opportunities with Cameco.

“At Cameco, our success is built on strong partnerships with the communities

near our operations. This scholarship initiative is another example of ways we can work with others to increase workforce opportunities for people in northern Saskatchewan,” said Sean Willy, Director of Corporate Responsibility at Cameco on the renewal.

GDI and Cameco began their partnership in 2010, and together have awarded over \$33,000 in scholarship funds.

“With the rise of tuition and living costs, the need for scholarships is at an all time high,” said GDI Vice-Chair, Glenn Lafleur about the partnership.

“It’s partnerships like this one with Cameco that can help ease that burden and in turn recognizes leadership and academic achievement of our Métis students.”

 A promotional poster for the 18th Annual SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence 2016. The background is a light blue sky with a large, stylized silhouette of a bird in flight, possibly a raven or eagle, in shades of gold and brown. The text is arranged in a dynamic, overlapping manner. At the top, it says "CELEBRATING THE 18TH ANNUAL SASKTEL". Below that, in large, bold, blue letters, is "ABORIGINAL YOUTH AWARDS". To the right, in smaller blue letters, is "OF EXCELLENCE 2016".
 

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**TCU Place, Saskatoon**

All nominations must be in by April 22nd, 2016. No exceptions.

For more information and nominations, visit [www.sasktel.com/saya](http://www.sasktel.com/saya), contact [aboriginal.youthawards@sasktel.com](mailto:aboriginal.youthawards@sasktel.com) or call toll free 1.866.931.6205

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(Right) Charity Bradfield (left) goes over a scene as Janine Windolph provides direction on the last day of filming of *The Land of Rock and Gold*. (Left) Dimitri McLeod, with his make-up partially applied, waits for his turn to go before the cameras in the film, *The Land of Rock and Gold*.



# Mother and son featured in *The Land of Rock and Gold*

By Linda Mikolayenko  
For Eagle Feather News

**LA RONGE** – *The Land of Rock and Gold*, a new feature film being produced in Saskatchewan, is a true collaborative venture.

Janine Windolph and Daniel Redenbach are the co-producers, co-writers and co-directors. In addition to working with each other's strengths, Windolph and Redenbach have taken advantage of the resources in La Ronge, Windolph's hometown.

"We've been able to make the film possible because we've had a lot of community support and a lot of community donations," said Windolph, noting that the production has a micro budget, primarily funded by Telefilm Canada and Creative Saskatchewan.

Local businesses, organizations and individuals were generous in providing access to their venues for shooting. As well, some of the outdoor scenes were filmed at Lynx Creek, near Stanley Mission.

"In the city you have access to a sound studio, but you can't recreate the beauty that is on the land here," said Windolph, thankful that they had mild winter weather for those days.

The movie is about a mother and her journey into searching for her missing boyfriend, says Windolph. "Through it, she starts to look at her connection to her son and herself, and she goes on this learning journey that takes her full circle to finding herself and what it means to be a mother and what that looks like without her partner."

In the fall, the directors put out a "no experience necessary" casting call in La Ronge for the role of the mother (Rochelle), and her son, as well as several other roles. Charity Bradfield brought her son, Dimitri McLeod, to a workshop to audition for the role of the young boy.

"I know he's a little performer; he likes to perform at home," said Bradfield. "To get him to participate, I started to do some of the activities."

Bradfield, who normally works as a cashier/buyer at Robertson Trading Ltd., caught the attention of Windolph who wondered why she wasn't trying out for the role of the mother. The 32-year-old Bradfield explained that the casting call asked for someone between the ages of 20 and 29, but when Windolph told her that was not an issue, she agreed to read some lines.

"We were very lucky," said Windolph. "I just can't imagine anyone else being Rochelle."

Bradfield admits to being caught off guard when she got the part, but was excited for the opportunity to act in a movie, with her son, and alongside professional actors.

"The very first day that we filmed, I was so nervous," she said, "but after we did the first scene, I was comfortable. I'm surprised with myself. I really didn't think I would be capable of doing it."

Windolph acknowledges that Bradfield added a valuable dimension to the production.

"We had Charity have input on her own character, which gives it a nice blend of a collaborative energy. She transcended what I had originally seen the character as, which is a really good thing."

While Bradfield was grateful to be able to get time off work for her role, the directors tried to be respectful of seven-year-old McLeod's school schedule as much as possible, and even filmed a scene with his Grade 2 class at Pre-Cam Community School.

"All his classmates were super-excited," said Bradfield.

The film wrapped up shooting in La Ronge in December, and is now in the editing phase. The producers are hoping to hold a preliminary screening in La Ronge in April, which will give them time to make adjustments before sending it out on the festival circuit.

The plan is also to run a crowdfunding campaign to support post-production expenses.

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# Kowalchuk inspires northern youth

By Linda Mikolayenko  
For Eagle Feather News

**LA RONGE** – As a 2016 Indspire Award winner, Christian Kowalchuk takes his responsibility as a role model seriously, giving of his vacation time over the holidays to share his skills and a few thoughts with youth in La Ronge.

“This isn’t about me,” he told the students at the Lac La Ronge Indian Band’s Bell’s Point Elementary School on January 4, 2016, “this is about you guys.”

“School is the most important thing,” he emphasized.

A member of the Bigstone Cree Nation in Alberta, Kowalchuk grew up in Saskatoon. A full athletic scholarship allowed him to play college baseball in the United States. He not only excelled in the sport, but in his studies as well, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and a Masters of Physical Education from the University of Arkansas.

“Baseball is a team sport,” noted Kowalchuk. “It requires you to work together as a team, kind of like what you would do in a class project. When you work together as a group, you end up being successful based on each individual person doing their part. Be a team player. Don’t let your team down,” he advised the students.

Currently an assistant coach with the Arkansas Razorbacks, Kowalchuk also teamed up with Greg Brons, High Performance Director with Sask Baseball, and Corey Borthwick to present a three-hour baseball skills camp for 24 young players at the Jonas Roberts Memorial Community Centre.



**Christian Kowalchuk, Arkansas Razorbacks assistant coach and 2016 Indspire Award winner, shares his expertise at a baseball skills camp in La Ronge.**

Borthwick, the founder and president of La Ronge and Area Minor Baseball, had the pleasure of coaching Kowalchuk in his early teens, and was happy to have him come to La Ronge to share his professional expertise.

“The kids had lots of fun,” he said.

Ten-year-old Garrisen Clarke plays shortstop. What did he think of playing baseball in the winter?

“I think it’s cool!” he replied.

His mother, Loni McCuaig, was grateful her son had the opportunity to participate in the camp.

“It enhances their skills,” she said.

The camp focused on the fundamentals of throwing and receiving, hitting, pitching and fielding.

“Quality instruction is key. I learned some new drills and new ideas myself,” admits Borthwick, who has previously coached at the provincial level.

La Ronge and Area Minor Baseball has been active since 2006. Last year, over 200 players were involved in the recreational league which typically ends once school is out. The Pee Wee team,

however, played competitively during the summer and advanced to the provincial semi-finals, despite having their playing schedule disrupted because of the evacuation due to the forest fire situation.

Though Kowalchuk has run youth skills camps in Arkansas, this was his

first camp in Saskatchewan and the first time he has spoken to school classes here, and it is something he hopes to do again.

“If you find something you’re passionate about, whether it’s baseball, music, whatever it is, you’ve got to put in some hard work,” he told the students.

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# Resolution Run an inspiring experience

Joel Pedersen is a police officer, soldier and personal trainer who owns Fitness 2J2, a socially responsible community-based health and wellness company promoting healthy and positive lifestyles for Aboriginal people of all ages and abilities. Each month he writes a story or gives tips on health and training on our website. We figured you might want to have a hard copy of this one.

Welcome to 2016 to all Eagle Feather readers. Hope your 2015 was fulfilling, and you have selected some New Year resolutions that will involve a healthy and positive lifestyle.

We were fortunate this month to visit Fond du Lac First Nation during the first week of January with my friends from TransWest Air to meet with the community leaders to assist in sustainment of functional fitness programming and the design of a fitness facility. We are also looking forward to be going back to Ile ala Cross and La Ronge and our first time out to Whitecap Dakota First Nation later this month for some programming.

At 2J2 we finished off the year with the annual Running Room's Resolution 5km run, a nighttime run on New Year's Eve in Saskatoon. We were able to help raise over \$1,300 for local charity. The run was a great finish to the weeks of work and preparation by the Run Club we started this past fall.

The Run Club is another program offered by 2J2 to the community in partnership with the Pleasant Hill Community Association, Packham Dental, and the City of Saskatoon MeTeWaTan program. The format is a no-cost, drop-in health and wellness program open to all levels of fitness and abilities. We provide strength and mobility training and gradual increase in time and distance of run's and walks.

Some of the club is ready for the next jump up to a 10km or a half marathon distance, and some of us are good with the 5km distance. Most important is that we have fun and learn about what we can physically and mentally accomplish, when we consistently stay with fitness program and build friendships and bonds.

Run Club is open to youth and adults, first timers and experienced runners. One of our members is 11-year-old Zander Struhar, a quiet, soft-spoken boy who is an inspiration and a great motivator for all of us.

Zander must use a walker as he has limited use of his legs which makes running a challenge. His strengths are many and one is his personality and determination to show that although he has physical challenges, it will not deter him from action.

On the last few weeks leading up to the Dec. 31 run, Zander was hospitalized with complications in his legs and back. This was a shock to all of us, we



did not know what our young athlete and friend was experiencing. On the morning of the run, St. Mary's teacher and run club member Tara Desroches called me and excitedly advised that Zander and his younger sister Charley would be at the run.

As we started the run with approximately 200 others, it was a huge difference from what we had been accustomed to. Our team was ready and started to spread out with the rest of the run. Glow sticks and headlamps on, we were motivated and excited by the route as we moved through the downtown sidewalks out onto the trail along the river and looping back a couple times to check on Zander and Tara, both in great spirits and determined to finish.

The last few blocks of the run, a few members of our team and I went out to finish the run with Zander. The young runner with his teacher by his side was still on the move, sweaty and tired. Most of the runners had left the finish area, and may not have even realized that Zander was still racing. Our Run Club did, and a few other runners who now realized the race was not over, cheered Zander and Tara, the last pair in.

The air was crisp, the night was lit up by street lights and cars near the finish line. With great pride Zander ran the last few meters over the finish line. I don't think there was a dry eye around. We all gave him a hug. I leaned over next to Zander and told him how proud I was of him.

He may have been the last one to finish the run, but for all of us Zander was the real winner of this run. Resilient

people are all around us. Make your resolution to never give up on a healthy and positive lifestyle.

Happy New Year!

- Joel Pedersen

## 2016 Saskatchewan Aboriginal Indoor Track & Field Championships

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# Youth program building special relationships

By Tiffany Head  
For Eagle Feather News

**REGINA**— Children sit in a circle on the gym floor, happily chattering amongst themselves, while they eagerly wait for the activities to start.

“When we first come in, we come together in a circle, have a snack and then share each other’s stories,” said Tanis Keepness, one of the high school mentors.

Growing Young Movers (GYM) is a program that was started three years ago at the Kitchener Community school gymnasium in Regina by three researchers, Dr. Sean Lessard, Dr. Lee Schaefer and doctoral student and program coordinator Brian Lewis.

In this program they have five youth mentors who all attended the school before heading off to high school, Royce Taniskishayinew, 15, Tanis Keepness, 17, Cole Keepness, 15, Rochelle Taniskishayinew, 17, and Jessica James, and also two junior mentors, Macy Stonechild and Katreena Landry who still attend Kitchener school.

Jessica James started as a mentor in the program the moment it started and Lewis good-humouredly calls her the veteran.

“I heard it from my mom and was asked if I wanted to join and I said ‘yes’ because I like working with kids. It’s something I want to do, and I can come here and work with kids so I agreed,” said James.

The other youth mentors gradually joined in a year later and are role models for the younger children.

Cole Keepness says they have learned a lot and it is working with the kids.

“We were asked to join and help out when they went on outings at first and it later became a regular thing. They ended up hiring us,” said Keepness.

Tanis Keepness agrees that it has been good for them as it is for the children.

“We want to set a good example for the younger kids and we have little brothers and sister, so we want to be good examples for them too,” said Tanis Keepness.

Lewis claims they are downplaying the role they play as they are very instrumental in the program.

“Not only do they help, but these little ones see them committing to something, see them always showing up,” said Lewis.

Lessard, Schaefer and Lewis knew they wanted to create a program in a place where there was a strong sense of community.

“All we really wanted is to be connected to a community, to work



Older students mentoring younger students has proven to be a big success at the Growing Young Movers Program.

(Photo by Tiffany Head)

alongside them,” said Lewis.

They plan to keep the program as long as they can and even when the funding runs out Lewis asserts that he will continue to keep going.

“It shows consistency, there are a lot of times where people come in for a short time and they’re gone. If we just came in for a short while, we couldn’t build these relationships,” said Lewis.

When asked what the most memorable thing that has happened to them in the program, Royce Taniskishayinew answers,

“Nice glasses and laughs as he explains of the compliment he received from a kid when he first started the program.

They all have developed these special memories and a big brother/sister, little brother/ sister relationships.

“This one little girl always asks me, how my day is going. I tell her and it just makes my day,” said Rochelle Taniskishayinew.

Cole Keepness smiles as he shares one of his stories on his relationship with one little boy.

“Sometimes he would be annoying to me, other times he we will be acting like we’re best friends, and be like hey bro,” Keepness said.

The children are able to talk to their mentors if there is something bothering them.

Lewis says it is all intergenerational and it causes a ripple effect.

“I learn from the little six-year-olds, they learn from me. It’s not about the older ones teaching the younger ones, were all teaching each other,” said Lewis.

The Growing Young Movers program meets every Wednesday after school from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Many of the activities occur in the gymnasium of Kitchener Community School though at times they are able to take field trips in the city.

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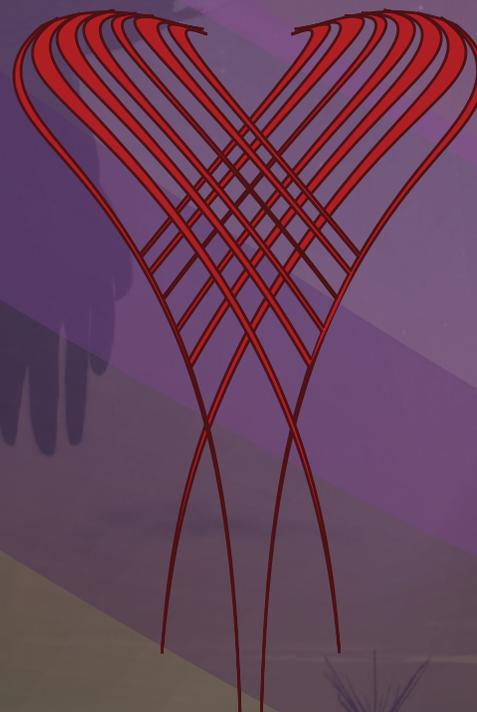
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