

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Graduation pictures of academic success

Photo contest winner: Skylar and Keegan Ratt, with their grandmother, Mildred Ratt. She calls them her “friendly giants.” “They’re so loving and caring, respectful,” she said. The boys wear ribbon shirts in honour of their late grandfather, Horace Ratt. (Photo by Trudy May Laliberte)



By K.D. Sawatzky
For Eagle Feather News

Perseverance, family support and remembrance are captured in this year’s Eagle Feather News Graduation Photo Contest winner.

In this year’s top pick, Skylar and Keegan Ratt, 17-year-old twin brothers from Pelican Narrows, proudly hold their high-school graduation diplomas

from Wesmor Community High School in Prince Albert. The photo is two shots of the boys on their graduation day at the end of June.

“I’m really proud because it was our moshum’s dream for us to graduate,” said Skylar Ratt, who will be attending Saskatchewan Polytechnic in the fall to study Interactive Design and Technology.

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INSIDE



LOOKING AHEAD

This year’s graduates are thinking about the history of Canada and what the future holds for them. - Page 3



TIME FOR NAIG

Mike Tanton is preparing to lead his young athletes to the North American Indigenous Games in Toronto. - Page 4



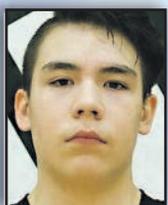
FUTURE MP?

Modeste MacKenzie made a recent trip to Ottawa and hinted he might want to make a return visit some day. - Page 9



PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Eric Clarke didn’t miss a day of school in the last three years, a remarkable achievement for this student. - Page 14



BASKETBALL RULES

Jacob Paul fell in love with basketball in Grade 7 and now he’s off to NAIG to compete for Team Sask. - Page 15

Graduation Edition

Coming In August- Justice & Back to Batoche Issue



SIMFC 33rd Annual Aboriginal Graduation Gala



Congratulations to all of the Graduates of 2017! The 33rd Annual SIMFC Aboriginal Graduation Gala was held on June 1st, 2017 at TCU Place in Saskatoon.

The event brings together all Indigenous grade 12 graduates for a celebration and night of recognition. This event allows the community to show support to the graduates and youth in the community.

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Young grads ponder Canada 150, contemplate their future plans

By K.D. Sawatzky
For Eagle Feather News

The question of whether to celebrate Canada 150 or not has been a hot topic all spring, but what did high school graduates think about it?

EFN caught up with some Regina students who were fresh from celebrating their own accomplishments and looking ahead to a promising future.



Micah Stonechild graduated from Balfour Collegiate this June. She'll be studying Indigenous social work at FNUniv in the fall. She celebrated Canada 150 because of her French heritage. (Photo courtesy of Micah Stonechild)

Micah Stonechild, a graduate from Balfour Collegiate in Regina, is the second person to complete high school in her family. She said her teachers were key to her finishing school.

"There were days when really I just thought I would want to quit, because things were getting frustrating," she said. "(My) teachers told me there's going to be the hard times in life and it's going to affect me in school and stuff but I shouldn't let it really bother me. I should get past it."

Even though she recognizes traumatic events like residential schools and the '60s scoop, Stonechild celebrated Canada 150 because her father is French.

"I still choose to celebrate it because

it's part of both sides of my family," she said. "This is where my family started, this is how Canada came to be. I know it wasn't founded on the greatest of terms but I still celebrate it because Canada has brought me a lot of opportunities."

Tim Pinay, a graduate from Thom Collegiate, received the resiliency award at his grad for his decision to keep coming to school despite losing both his father, the late Elder Mike Pinay from Peepeekisis First Nation, and his grandfather over the past year. Encouragement from his family was key to his graduating.

"(They said) keep going, never stop doing what you're doing," he said.

Pinay said he wouldn't be celebrating Canada 150 because the government just doesn't follow through on its promises, especially when it comes to hunting rights, which aren't honoured the same way provincially.

"(My dad) said it doesn't matter who you vote for, they always take our problems and put them to the bottom of the list every single time so we never get looked at," he said.

Courtney Kirkness, also a graduate from Thom and a friend of Pinay, said Canada 150 makes her angry because, at least for Regina's celebrations, not enough attention was being paid to the country's colonial past.

"All I've heard is, 'Oh, during the day down at the ledge there's going to be some powwow dancing,' and that's it. What's that supposed to do with showing anything about our past?" she said.

All three students' critical awareness of Canada 150 celebrations is something they attribute to Native Studies, which was a favourite class for each one of them. Both Stonechild and Kirkness said their teachers made it a comfortable space to be and to talk about stereotypes.

"It was kind of a big eye-opening for me," Kirkness said.

She said that non-Indigenous students in the class came with stereotypes about Indigenous students and left without them, something she thinks needs to happen in society if Canada can start to celebrate.

"Until some people can sort of just push (racism and stereotypes) aside then I don't think we can keep going much farther," she said.

Besides learning the history, the students also enjoyed connecting with their culture this year. Stonechild helped make Balfour's star blanket and her own beaded moccasins. Pinay and Kirkness played in Thom's drum groups, which performed around the city.

Both Stonechild and Kirkness will begin social work studies at the University of Regina and First Nations University of Canada this fall. Pinay plans on relaxing for now and seeing where his path takes him.



Friends Courtney Kirkness and Tim Pinay graduated from Thom Collegiate in June. They played in Thom's drum groups and enjoyed Native Studies class, where they learned to break stereotypes. (Photo by K.D. Sawatzky)



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Good news, sad news, surprising news

Random thoughts from a person who has checked out for summer already and can't put 800 common sense words together on one particular topic.

The good news

Wow, did we get a lot of submissions for our graduation photo contest. You met the lucky winners on the cover of this issue. Keegan and Skyler Ratt and their grandma Mildred Ratt received the most votes from our esteemed panel. Hard working young fellas honouring their ancestors is something to celebrate. Great photo, too. And the beautiful shots of Suraya Yuzicappi and Sidney Shacter were strong competition as well.

What was most impressive were the emails from the families nominating their graduates.

The pride in their student's accomplishments was universal across the province and was awesome to see. Check out our website for a photo gallery of all the submissions as well as a gallery from pro photographer Moe Morin who went to grads ranging from Reindeer Lake School all the way south to Ocean Man.

Congratulations to all of the graduates and thanks to all the people who sent in photos for consideration.

Surprising news

The resignation of Commissioner Marilyn Poitras from the National Inquiry on Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls does not bode well for the future of the Commission.

An abundance of red tape, bureaucracy and other machinations are driving people from the Inquiry with five key staffers walking out the door in the past few months. With the esteemed Poitras resigning, it leaves the Commission without a

representative from the Métis community and from Saskatchewan.

With a poor communications strategy, the community has been left in the dark about anything the Inquiry has done and the confidence in the process and their ability to hit any timelines has run out. It has become apparent that this Inquiry needs a total reboot. They did it for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and that turned out all right. Do it sooner rather than later.

Deserving award

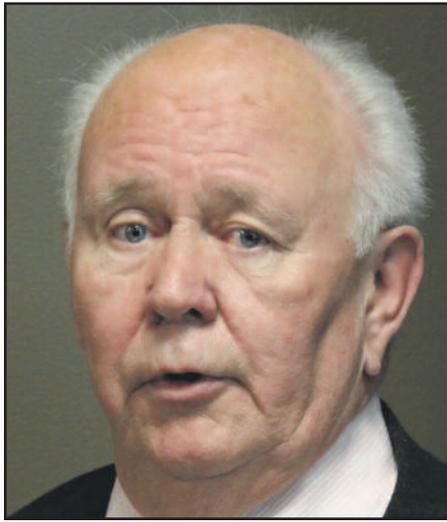
Roland Crowe's work as a political leader and champion of the Treaty Land Entitlement settlement has changed the face of Saskatchewan for the better for First Nations and Saskatchewan citizens alike. His outstanding body of work will now see him invested into the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, the province's highest honour.



ROLAND CROWE

This former FSIN Chief accomplished much in his day and now offers sage advice as a Senator. His two biggest accomplishments were the historic 1992 Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement, resulting in the addition of 1.6 million acres to First Nations land base and a foundational agreement on gaming

with the province resulting in the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority and 1,800 jobs, over 1,100 of which are First Nations people. Job well done!



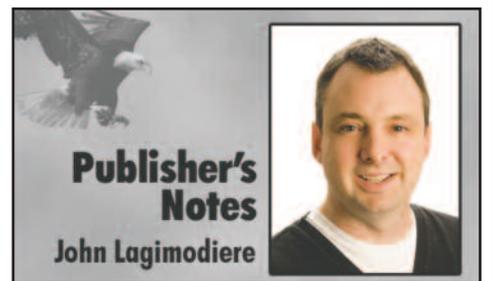
BOB MCLEOD

Sad news

The Métis community lost a heck of a leader in Bob McLeod who passed in June. Bob was the former President of CUMFI Métis Local #165. In his time there he laid strong governance foundations and partnerships that have led to the success that CUMFI is today. He was also the Area Director for Western Region 2A where again, he worked tirelessly to improve the governance of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and to strengthen the MN-S affiliates.

The Clarence Campeau Development Fund benefitted greatly from his guidance where he was board chair for several years. It is safe to say that many of the improvements in service and quality of life for Métis entrepreneurs in Saskatchewan and Métis citizens in Saskatoon can be attributed to Bob McLeod. Fittingly, several years ago CUMFI named one of their buildings after Bob so that his name and legacy will live on. Thanks for the hard work Bob.

• • •



Publisher's Notes
John Lagimodiere

Congrats Team Canada Creenation. Go TeamSask. And Go Summer Games Athletes

The Indigenous sports world is hopping this month. Athletes and cultural performers are returning from Edmonton at the completion of the World Indigenous Nations Games. From all reports, the Games were a life changing experience for everyone who attended.

The event is more about competing and celebrating culture than winning (but believe me, everyone is trying to win). That's cool. Check out the Shelley Mike photo gallery on our website for some great visuals.



MIKE TANTON

And a big good luck and safe trip to TeamSask as they head out to NAIG for the Games that run July 16-23.

Chef de Mission Mike Tanton tells us they have a great squad this year and should push for the top ranking again. These athletes are going to be competing in world class venues in Canada's biggest city. How lucky.

And hey Regina, those First Nation Summer Games in early August are going to bring your city alive. Enjoy the competitions! Go Team!

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Green-eyed monster

For the past year, whenever I've seen a woman in a bikini, my first thought has been, "show-off" with a silent hope that her thong gives her a yeast infection. Although I am generally a Judgemental Judy, I realize that this is an unusual amount of negativity even for me.

Years ago, I dated this guy who was obsessed with Jennifer Lopez. I thought it was cute until one night we were chatting on the couch. His responses were a bit confusing and disjointed. Then I realized that he was actually talking to Jennifer who was TV at the time. Stuff like, "Hey, I just want to brush away that hair in your eyes," and "gosh, you look so beautiful in red."

As I was wearing black at the time, I couldn't pretend it wasn't happening. However, I was much nicer back then (read: dumb as a tree trunk) and so I laughed it off. His Jennifer obsession continued unchecked and my fake laughter grew as unhinged as a toddler in a toy store. Our relationship ended a few months later when he broke up with me. He said it was because we were incompatible but I know it's because I was not a Latino superstar.

After the relationship ended, I became obsessed with Jennifer Lopez – not in a loving way but in a jealous way. Every time she was in a new movie or released a new album, it was like being stabbed in the gut. Which sucked because this was in 2000s and her career was taking off big time. She was literally everywhere – on billboards, in movies,

at Lloyds of London insuring her butt for a billion dollars.

One night I sat down and thought about this jealousy of mine. It had continued far after my feel-



ings for my ex had ended. I realized that it was actually about something else. I was envious of Jennifer because I wanted what she had.

Not the adoration of my lunkhead ex-boyfriend, but the spotlight. I wanted to be on stage, I wanted to perform, I wanted to insure my butt (the most SGI would offer was \$15.)

Once I realized what was driving my behaviour, I took action. I enrolled in acting lessons, I went to auditions, I started performing stand up comedy. Within a short time of taking action, all of those crappy feelings faded away. Because once I realized that I wasn't jealous – which is fear of someone taking something away from you – I was envious, which is wanting something that someone else has, then all I had to do was follow those feelings.

Now, I am not famous or rich or ridiculously fit like Jennifer Lopez – in case you need reminding. Following these feelings – which were so strong that they kept me up at night whispering JLO's name like a misguided Arya Stark on Game of Thrones – does not mean that you will "make it."

But it will lead to other things. Sometimes it might lead to being an extra in one scene in the movie Skulls which paid \$45 and a pizza pop, other times it might lead to a co-hosting gig on an APTN television show. You won't know until you try.

Which is why I think envy is not a bad thing. When you feel it curling inside of you like a poisonous snake, think about what you're really pissed about.

Like my surliness over women in bikinis has nothing to do with the woman showing off her business, it's because I haven't lost my pregnancy weight and it bugs me.

So, I've started working out, training for a 5 km race and watching what I eat. So far, my miniscule weight loss could only be measured by a scale invented by NASA but it's a step in the right direction.

People always say that it's important to follow your dreams in order to honour your soul or whatever.

But I feel it's important to follow your dreams just to stop yourself from being an insufferable asshole.

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Traditional knowledge vital part of education

By Nathan Raine
For Eagle Feather News

In Indigenous culture, Elders fulfill an important role of linking the past to the present and the future.

Often thought of as the heart of Indigenous history and heritage, Elders are the gatekeepers of wisdom, traditions, and knowledge, and are an essential to any healthy community.

Graduates of any sort, ready to take on the next big chapter of their lives, stand to learn a great deal from their Elders. Eagle Feather News spoke with both an Elder and a recent graduate to hear their individual perspectives on education, culture, and hopes for the future.

"I think the younger generations definitely should pursue education," said Abel Charles, Elder at Grandmother's Bay First Nation.

"But we can't forget our spirituality, which is an important part of any human being. We've forgotten the aspect of spirituality."

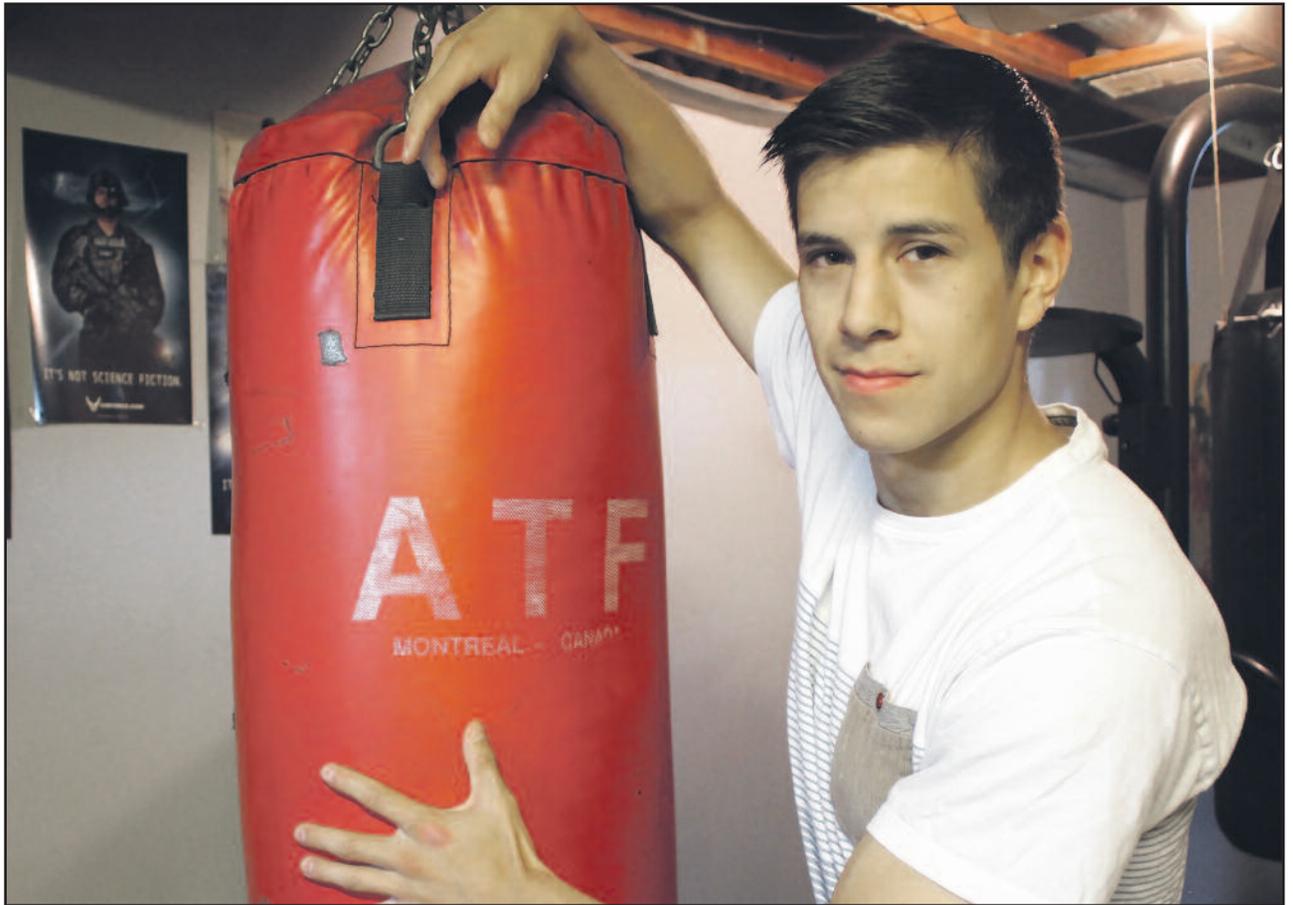
Charles, who has been a resident of Grandmother's Bay since his late teens, grew up mostly along the trap lines, learning first hand the importance of heritage and traditions. His community has evolved from log cabins with outhouses, to buildings and homes with plumbing, he says. But the constant, says Charles, should be a connection to one's past.

"Younger generations are less connected to their cultures," he says. "I think families have become disconnected. We're not eating together, or sitting in the living room together. We're too busy with technology."

Charles believes, from a young age, children should be imparted the traditions of their culture. And it's up to the parents, he says.

"I don't think you can teach that in the classroom. It must come from the land. The language comes from the land, and it has to start very early."

It's certain that at least some young people are listening. Preston Lachance, 21, is a recent graduate from Oskaya High School in Saskatoon, where he served as his class valedictorian. For Lachance, the significance Elders play hasn't been lost on him and his peers.



Nathan Lachance was the valedictorian at Oskayak High School in Saskatoon. He credits his participation in boxing as a motivating factor in his academic success.

"Elders are where our knowledge comes from. They're our role models, and who we go to for guidance," he says.

"They've played a big role in my life in terms of mindset. How I take things into consideration, how I react to things, or how I look after those around me."

Lachance, who plans to attend the University of Saskatchewan in the fall to study Physical Therapy, says his heritage will remain an important component in his education.

"Heritage is absolutely important for my future," he says. "I believe that traditional knowledge is something (we) have to continue to pursue and attain."

When asked what advice they have for young people on the importance of education, both Elder (Charles) and Graduate (Lachance) expressed a very similar sentiment, although in very contrasting manners.

"Go and seek education and employment outside your community. Young people should take risks, and they should challenge themselves. Even if you fall flat on your face, taking risks will make you stronger," said Charles.

"Don't get caught up in the bullsh*t," says Lachance. "Focus on your dreams. One thing you can't get back is time. And one thing that stays the same is change. So keep changing for the better."

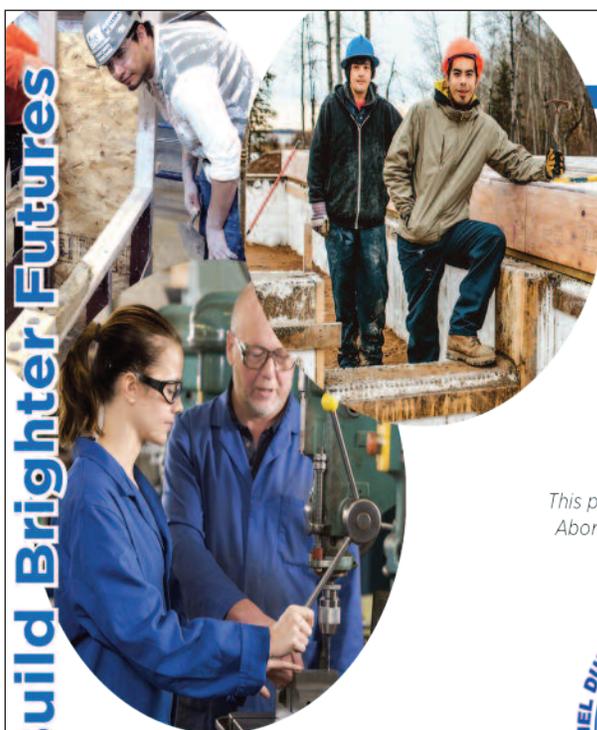


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Graduation ceremonies and the question ‘why?’

**By Gail MacKay
For Eagle Feather News**

What’s the value of a graduation ceremony?

One answer is that it follows a tradition of family and community getting together to recognize a person’s transition to a new stage of life, a new way of relating in the world. It’s a ceremony to witness the end of something and the beginning of something else. It’s a way to acknowledge a person’s persistence in working to reach their goal.

This year I attended graduation ceremonies both as a graduate and a teacher. Seeing the gathering from both sides made me think about the question, “Why?”

Recently a friend said to me, “If you know why you are doing something it helps you get through the tough times. Answer the question ‘Why?’ and you’ll find your way through.”

I thought about people who have inspired me to persist and finish my degree. They are people who know why they are doing the work they have taken on.

The first example is a man who managed to study Cree history and culture at a university before there was a Native Studies Department or Program there. He graduated then moved 3,000 kilometers to a university that had a Master’s program

in Native Studies even though he had to wait a year until they accepted the next group of students. He was creative and persistent and focused on his purpose.

The second example is made up of a number of champions of Indigenous language learning and teaching. They aren’t discouraged by the many ways that Indigenous languages are overwhelmed by English or the many ways that the problem of language shift seems so much bigger than one person can solve. Some have raised awareness that Michif is a language, and they work to teach in community, elementary schools, and university classes.

Others saw that there was no local training for Indigenous language teachers so they developed an Indigenous Language Teacher’s Certificate Program in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S).

Some language champions recognized that language revitalization is a project that is bigger than just classroom teaching and so they have brought a Master’s Program in Indigenous Language Revitalization (MILR) to the U of S and are working to make it a permanent program.

Some language champions work full time as teachers while studying full time as students in the master’s program. Some champions have innovated new ways of

teaching with language immersion camps, language immersion houses, and language immersion cafés.

These champions aren’t discouraged by what is not, instead they work to make their vision come into being. They know why they are working so hard.

The third example is the many university students I have known in these past few years of working in the College of Education at the U of S. They have persisted through tough times that would have made many other people quit.

Tough times are balancing school, community, and family commitments when coping with the loss of a beloved relative to accident or suicide; or the physical demands of giving birth at the start of the school term and bringing the baby along to field placement in an elementary classroom, or needing to come up with creative ways to make do with less, and make more with little money.

Tough times are coping with children’s accidents, injuries, illness, diagnosis, exceptional needs, and their schedules that don’t coincide with university class times or bus schedules.

Tough times are refusing to surrender to pain; physical, emotional, or psychological, and working step by step to complete a project, a course, a program.

How many times I’ve heard someone say, “I know they would want me to finish.”

This past week at the graduation powwow I met a former student who reminded me of this. She is grieving five recent deaths in her family. We stopped and talked and she took a break from the interviews she was doing to complete a course assignment. She opened her calendar and showed me the memorials from the funerals. How powerfully real I felt her determination and will to carry on.

The graduation ceremony celebrates a transformation from student to graduate. It honours the graduates’ persistence. It also honours why we are persistent.

At the heart of persistence is hope and responsibility to the continued health of language, knowledge and culture. What gives us hope and fills us with a sense of responsibility are our family and community, our ancestors now deceased, and future generations waiting to be born.

For that reason, graduation ceremonies honour graduates’ reasons why they persist.

Gail MacKay is a PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies and is an Assistant Professor at the University of Saskatchewan College of Education.



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Memorable guided tour of Wanuskewin Heritage park for visiting Quebec students

By Julie Ann Wriston
For Eagle Feather News

“Our roots are deep”.

This was the powerful message that a group of interchange students from Montreal heard from Chris Standing during a tour of Wanuskewin Heritage Park in late June.

Four girls and four boys from various parts of Montreal and Quebec visited Saskatchewan on the first leg of an interchange program with the Children’s International Summer Village (CISV). The group of 16 delegates joined team leaders and parents in an interactive journey through one of the most exciting archeological finds in North America.

Over ten days, they will be sharing their time and lives with eight families from Saskatchewan learning about daily life and working on developing communication skills to overcome language challenges. Then they all go back to Quebec and are immersed in French culture. The purpose of the Montreal interchange is to build open mindedness, tolerance and reduce discriminatory behavior in individuals.

It was important to this year’s interchange to include exposure and learning about the importance of the Indigenous culture in Saskatchewan. Wanuskewin was an obvious choice, offering not only a strong cultural component, but also the history that served as particularly poignant heading into Canada’s 150th celebration.

Chris Standing provided a guided tour of the Opimihaw Valley giving the kids a glimpse of what life



The Montreal delegation paused for a group shot atop the beautiful Opimihaw Valley. (Photo by Julie Ann Wriston)

was like on the prairie long ago. He offered teachings about the archaeological story of Wanuskewin and introduced participants to the medicines of First Nations people. The kids loved the breathtaking views from the top of the valley and found the stories about how the area was used very interesting. Interchange student Pacific Vallee said that “it was fun to walk and see how the bison was used here a long time ago.”

The CISV uses hands on learning to promote a growing understanding of diversity, conflict resolution, human rights and sustainable development with the hope that participants can then apply that learning to their every day lives to make a positive impact in the community they live in. The teachings of the tipi raising, lead by Mary Merasty were a perfect fit given the ethos of the CISV program.

The kids were taught about the circle of life and traditional roles of women and elders. Mary asked each kid to participate by placing a new pole in each of the stages of life: Infancy, Youth, Adult and Elder.

With each new pole, Mary carefully explained the

intended learning. She discussed things like respect, humility, self-love, gratefulness and sharing. Her passion for sharing this knowledge kept all the participants engaged and eager to participate.

“I love knowing that people have been coming to this place for thousands of years. I have had so many opportunities to share the history and knowledge of Wanuskewin with people from all over the world in the four years that I have been working here,” said Merasty.

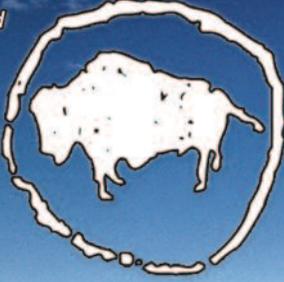
Montreal leader Johanne Berthiaume expressed how excellent she thought the tour was, not only for the kids, but also as an educator herself.

“I felt like I was able to get a better understanding of this culture that I can now take back and apply to how I teach my classes,” said Berthiaume.

The group ended the day by enjoying a variety of traditional foods like rabbit stew, bison burgers, and bannock at the incredible restaurant, one of Saskatoon’s unique treasures. The learning, extraordinary views, and infusion of traditional culture certainly gave the Montreal visitors something to remember.



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Entering the 'real world'

Continued from Page One

Ratt is interested in pursuing a job in media down the road. Keegan Ratt isn't sure about his future plans, but he knows his graduation will lead to something.

"It's the next part of life and I'm happy I had family to push me there, like my moshum and my kokum," said Ratt.

The brothers' grandmother, Mildred Ratt, who is pictured with them in the photo, said the boys were happy and sad that day. Their grandfather, Horace Ratt, who passed away three months ago, had constantly encouraged the boys to stay in school.

"They were thinking of their grandpa but I told them he was there in spirit," she said. "He was always always so proud of them and kept telling them to keep going and don't let anything stop them and after graduation just keep on going."

Both Ratt brothers won awards for perseverance and leadership from their school. Keegan Ratt said he was glad he had his family's support.

"They just told me to do my best and keep going, they kept encouraging me," he said.

Suraya Yuzicappi graduated from Bird Fox Community High School in Fort Qu'Appelle. When she walked out of her

school after the ceremony, there was a big surprise waiting for her: a car.

"It's pretty exciting," she said. "I didn't think it was for me at first cause I seen all the balloons and then all my family was standing right in front and they held out the keys for me and told me that that was mine."

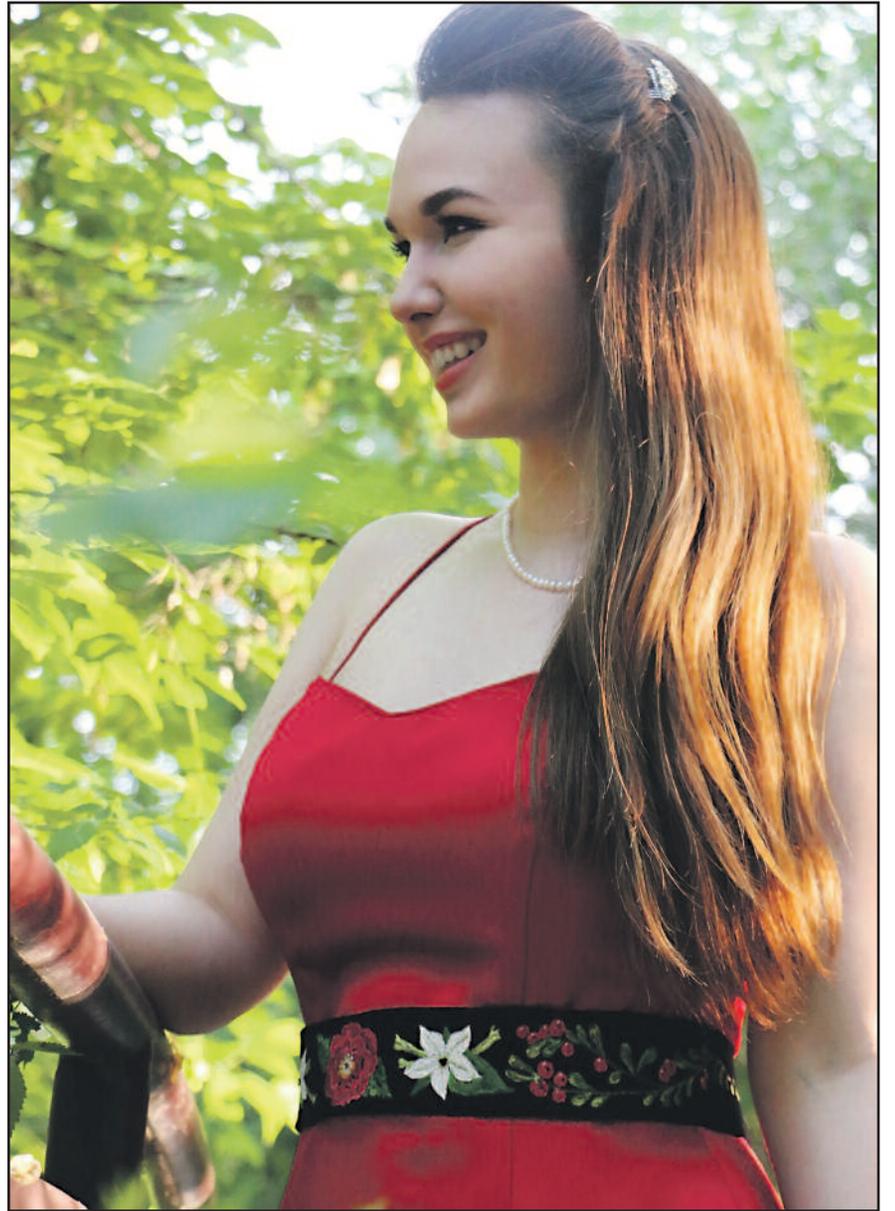
Yuzicappi will need the car. She was scouted to play varsity volleyball this coming fall for Briercrest College, which is about two hours from home. She'll study kinesiology there for two years and then head off to Minot State University to complete her Bachelor of Science Education.

Like the Ratt brothers, during high school, Yuzicappi's family encouraged her to do her best.

"(My grandma and my Mom) always told me to keep pushing my grades up as high as I can and my Grandma always said once I graduate, 'Go back to school next year, don't take a year off cause you never know,'" she said.

Yuzicappi said playing volleyball also helped her do well in school because she had to keep her grades up to play. She's looking forward to making new friends at Briercrest.

• Continued on Page 11



Third place: Sidney Shacter graduated from Evan Hardy Collegiate in Saskatoon. She'll study Computer Science and business at the University of Saskatchewan in the fall. (Photo courtesy of Susan Shacter)



Honourable mention. Delaney Aisaican and Trey Bear, both skilled hockey players, graduated from Kakisiwew school -Ochapowace First Nation.

(Photo by Sonya Dodginghorse)

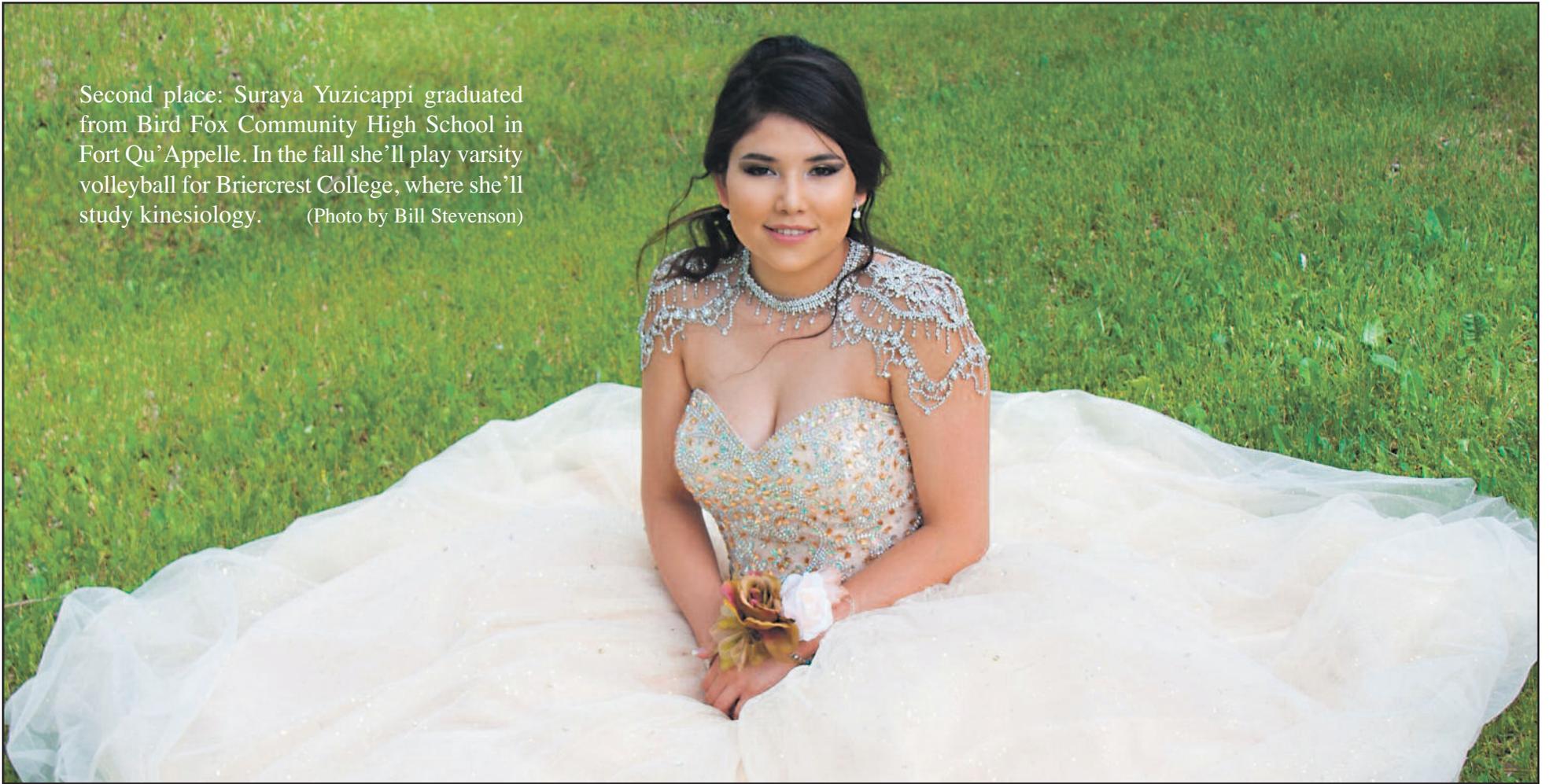
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Second place: Suraya Yuzicappi graduated from Bird Fox Community High School in Fort Qu'Appelle. In the fall she'll play varsity volleyball for Briercrest College, where she'll study kinesiology. (Photo by Bill Stevenson)



Continued from Page 10

Sidney Shacter graduated from Evan Hardy Collegiate in Saskatoon. Home-schooled for the first eight years of school and off and on throughout high school, Shacter took home multiple awards at graduation, including one for the highest grade average. She also won the Outstanding Female Achievement Award at the 2017 SaskTel Indigenous Youth Awards for mentoring younger female students in math and science.

"Graduation is an important milestone for me, as I think as young people we are taken more seriously once we are out of high school," said Shacter, who will study Computer Science and Business at the University of Saskatchewan in the fall.

"I am very excited to be moving on to university and to have more of an opportunity to be involved in the real world," she said.






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Modeste McKenzie visits Parliament ... he may be back

By K.D. Sawatzky
For Eagle Feather News

When Modeste McKenzie sat down with Canadian senators on Parliament Hill on June 7, he was quick with a joke.

McKenzie, whose presentation followed that of a young woman who sang in her Mi'kmaq language, said, "That is a hard act to follow but I am a dancer and I will gladly hop on this table and do a jig for you if you want."

McKenzie, 22, who is Dene Métis and lives in La Ronge, was one of 10 youth leaders picked from 100 nominees across the country to participate in an event called Indigenous Youth Leaders at the Senate in Ottawa.

"I did a fist pump in the air," McKenzie said. "It was pure excitement."

The Senate's Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples gathered together youth leaders who are working for change in their communities. The event not only marked the 150th year of Confederation, but contributed to the committee's study on how to improve relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

After a day of informal meetings with senators and a workshop with new Canadians and high school students, McKenzie and the other leaders took turns sharing their stories in front of the committee.

McKenzie spoke about the importance of his Métis culture, which he embraced after he moved from La Ronge to Rosthern so his mother could work at Batoche National Historic Site.

"(Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont) inspire me to this day, knowing that they're rooting for me, knowing that they fought for me, and I will continue to do so for the unborn," he said in his testimony.

Valerie Barnes-Bonnell, who nominated McKenzie for the Senate event, was his neighbour in La Ronge and was at many events where McKenzie jiggled.

"He just offers (his jiggling) and encourages people, like I've been up there trying to jig," she said. "He's infectious with it but he also has a very firm sense of his identity and culture and his spirituality goes with that, too."



In his testimony in front of Canadian senators in Ottawa, Modeste McKenzie talked about his Métis culture and the importance of equal access to education for students on reserve. McKenzie is a youth support worker for Lac La Ronge Indian Band and was chosen to participate in Indigenous Youth Leaders at the Senate. (Photo courtesy of Modeste McKenzie)

McKenzie was hired as a youth support worker by the Lac La Ronge Indian Band after a crisis in October 2016, when four young girls committed suicide. Barnes-Bonnell was communications officer for the Band at the time and saw how hard McKenzie worked to create positivity with special events like traditional hand games, a New Year's Eve dry dance and a family carnival night.

"Working with those kids, never in my life have I met such amazing, resilient, smart, kind, courageous youth," McKenzie said in his testimony.

McKenzie highlighted the funding gap between schools on and off-reserve. He also explained that the shutting down of the Northern Teachers Education Program in Saskatchewan was an example of government's misplaced priorities.

"I think (education is) Canada's greatest injustice right now. Systematically I think, education, especially on reserve, it's designed to fail the youth," McKenzie said in a phone interview.

"That system is designed to keep young Indigenous people from really reaching their true potential."

McKenzie also wasn't shy about his aspirations during the presentation.

"In 20 years where do I see myself sitting? Hopefully amongst you or in the other House," he said to the senators. "But right now my main focus is the youth: nurturing, listening, advocating anytime I can."

Senator Lillian Eva Dyck, chair for the committee on Aboriginal Peoples, said

McKenzie's dreams are on point.

"If you can imagine yourself being that, then go with it, dream that dream," she said.

"He would be very well suited to be a Senator because the Senate is all about dreaming a better Canada and representing minorities that are typically under-represented, like Aboriginal people."



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Partners wrote the book on appropriate Indigenous protocols

By **Andréa Ledding**
For Eagle Feather News

The City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner have worked together to publish a booklet entitled “ayisinowak: A Communications Guide” - ayisinowak meaning, “the people.” It is a book on basic protocols when working with Indigenous peoples.

“I don’t think there’s something like this in other parts of the country, it’s true,” noted Mayor Charlie Clark, who recently shared advance copies at a national mayor’s gathering to a lot of excitement and mayor envy.

“It’s thanks to the work of everybody here.”

Lee Thomas from Pelican Lake First Nation was a student intern who helped develop the publication, thanks to an internship developed between the Saskatoon Tribal Council and the City of Saskatoon. He credited the many organizations along with many workers at the City of Saskatoon in developing the final product, which is just under 50 pages.

The booklet provides background on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; a basic introduction on Indigenous peoples, urban reserves and holdings, and Treaty Land Entitlement holdings; and then moves into meetings and protocol, which includes etiquette,



Partners in the publication from the City of Saskatoon, the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner gathered for a group shot to commemorate the launch of “ayisinowak: A Communications Guide”. (Photo by Andrea Ledding)

cultural information, information on Elders and tobacco, as well as a few explanations about things like pipe ceremonies, smudging, sweat lodges, eagle feathers, and some cultural differences.

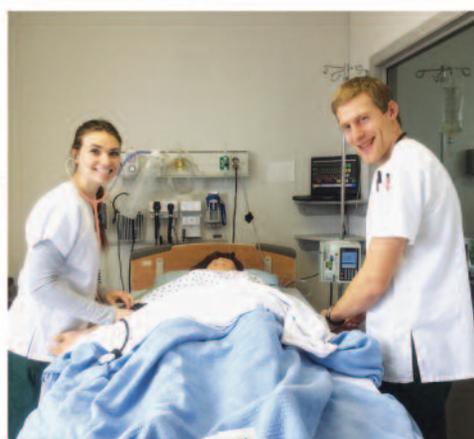
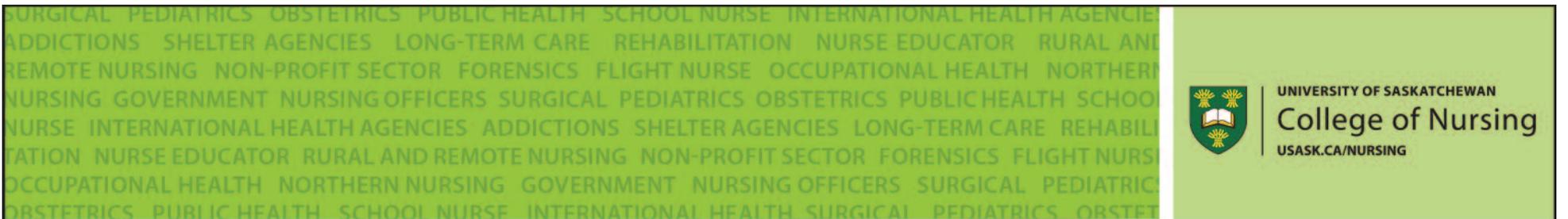
Because the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre was involved, they were very careful not to write down anything about protocols that shouldn’t be published, but enough of an outline that non-Indigenous people not familiar with any of the basics might feel comfortable enough to appropriately approach knowledge-keepers and find out more about what they need to know in a good way.

“The guide will be a valuable asset for organizations and City Administration as the community journeys in the spirit of Reconciliation,” writes Harry LaFond, Executive Director of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner in the Foreword to the booklet.

He describes the effort as a tool by which to make good choices towards our neighbours. LaFond was present at the launch along with Wanda Wilson, president of the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre. The staff and cultural advisors of the SICC assisted in the Guide, contributing to terminology, review of Indigenous concepts, and design support to ensure everything was valid and insightful.

Both LaFond and Wilson emphasized the leading role the City of Saskatoon has been taking in supporting and enhancing relationships with First Nations peoples in a wide range of areas, including the urban reserves – locations within city boundaries where Saskatchewan First Nations establish urban land bases from which to operate.

The publication was launched at the English River buildings in Grasswood.



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Eric Clarke was Mr. Perfect throughout high school career

Moe Morin is a freelance writer and photographer and the co-founder of Humans of Saskatoon. She photographs and interviews people and runs their stories on her highly popular Facebook page. This month she talked to Eric Clarke. Eric received an award this year for perfect attendance in grades 10, 11 and 12, a truly outstanding achievement. Below are his unedited words.

My name is Eric Clarke, and I've just completed and graduated from Grade 12 from Southend Reindeer Lake.

I won an award for having perfect attendance all throughout high school (Grade 10, 11 and 12). I don't actually feel like a role model, and I don't really believe I had any role models however, whatever I've done, I just went with it, and I don't ever like following what other people do and love to do my own thing.

I don't have any advice but I know my parents told me to go to school, and I listened even when I didn't want to. My friends also encouraged me to attend class and school. Pretty much everyone around me encouraged me to attend class every day.

My plans are to attend college and get a job after I've completed my course.

I love working with my hands and I applied into Industrial Mechanics in La Ronge and was accepted. Right now I don't really see myself in any other place other than in La Ronge.

The award I received for having perfect attendance is the first award I'm actually proud of, it made me feel like I've finally achieved something after so long.

I'm the last one born in my family, and have one brother and two sisters, and my parents are Robert and Joyce Clarke.

So yes, you could say I am proud of myself just a little bit.

Eric Clarke has achieved a remarkable record of attendance, never missing a single day throughout his high school years.

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NAIG ATHLETE: JACOB PAUL

**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

Jacob Paul from Regina will be



Jacob Paul, 15, will be playing basketball with Team Saskatchewan's U16 at this year's NAIG.. (Photo credit: Adidas Top 40 Camp)

amongst thousands of athletes to compete in this year's North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) held in Toronto from July 16-23.

Paul will be playing basketball with the U16 age group for Team Saskatchewan. The 15-year-old athlete has been playing the sport for a few years now and is looking forward to the experience.

"In Grade 7 I got to fall in love with

basketball all over and really started to dedicate time to my dribbling, handles and shot," said the Grade 9 student who attends Luther High School.

"I am looking forward to the environment of a major city and also being recognized as an elite athlete."

Paul's favorite basketball player is professional athlete Damian Lillard who is the point guard for the Portland Trail Blazers of the NBA because of the pride and determination he demonstrates.

"I like him also because of the adversity he has shown while struggling of not being an all-star to become the leagues top point guard," he said. "(I like) his style of play, his dribble skills, his ability to manoeuvre and score under the basket. Plus, he has a smooth shot and I also admire that he is an artist/rapper."

When Paul graduates from high school, he hopes to pursue a post-secondary education to study either architecture or possibly medical school ideally with a basketball scholarship.

His advice to other youth who have a passion for sports is not to give up when it gets tough.

"I have faced many challenges in my sport such as sudden death games in club tournaments which I had lost but it gave me a drive to work harder and practice more at what I didn't excel in in the games," he said. "Keep at your sport and work on your flaws."

Paul is pumped to play basketball, travel and represent Saskatchewan at NAIG 2017.

NAIG ATHLETE: XAVIER PAUL

**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

Xavier Paul was born and raised in Regina but will be making Toronto his home for one week from July 16-23 to compete in this year's North American Indigenous Games (NAIG).

Paul will be competing in the sport of kayaking – a sport that he started training for throughout the winter.

Although he's new to the sport, Paul attended NAIG 2008 in Denver, Colorado to cheer on his brother. This will be his first time attending NAIG as a participating athlete – an experience he is looking forward to.

"I'm excited to see the city of Toronto where the Blue Jays and Raptors play," he said. "I hope my work hard all winter pays off to win medals," he said.

Paul's role model is NBA basketball player Tracy McGrady because he is cool at dunking. He hopes to become a NBA player after he completes high school.

"I want to show and tell everyone that you can do anything if you put your mind to. Plus, I love the game," he said.

Paul has been training for NAIG by practicing and running long distances around Wascana Lake a few times where he felt good prepping himself.

His words of advice to other youth who want that chance to compete in NAIG is train and never give up on your passion for the sport.

"Facing challenges is important because it makes you better at what you're trying to succeed at," he said. "If you want NAIG you will probably succeed if you practice a lot and do more training than others."

Paul is 11 years old, in Grade 6 where he attends Ecole St. Pius X elementary school.



Xavier Paul, 11, will be competing in his first NAIG in kayaking. (Photo credit: Colina Paul)

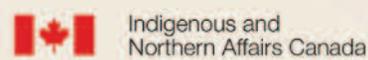
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CURTIS LITTLEWOLFE

Pipefitter

"I ENJOY THE FREEDOM of being a pipefitter. You're always travelling to a different job site, and in the process you get to visit such fascinating places."



When Curtis Littlewolfe travels, it's for both business and pleasure.

For 20 years, Littlewolfe has been employed as a pipefitter.

Through his work, he has travelled throughout Saskatchewan and has had the opportunity to work on basically every major potash plant in the province, from Estevan to Esterhazy to McArthur River to Points North Landing.

"I enjoy the freedom of being a pipefitter. You're always travelling to a different job site, and in the process you get to visit such fascinating places," Littlewolfe said. "It sucks being away from home, but you can find long-term employment in the industry if you're willing to travel."

Littlewolfe grew up on Coté First Nation. He attended the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, where he earned a business diploma and also received his journeyman certificate in pipefitting.

From the beginning, Littlewolfe has never had much trouble tracking down work. Over the years, he has taken a part in major projects such as the Regina Co-op Refinery expansion and the Boundary Dam Carbon Capture Project. Part of this can be attributed to Littlewolfe's decision to become a member of the United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters, Local 179 at the beginning of his career.

"Joining the union has definitely made it easier to look for work, and steady work is so important," he said. "The health and various other benefits are also amazing. When you step onto a job site, it feels good to know you have the union behind you and to know that your rights are protected and you're not going to be stepped on during the day."

"Union members always stick together and get along great. Of course, you can't just walk onto a job site and take it easy. You have that sense of accountability."

Thanks to his decision to join the union, Littlewolfe was able to combine practical work experience with sessions in the classroom. He said this was very beneficial, as pipefitting is a difficult profession to learn. Now that he's among the more experienced workers, he sometimes takes on the leadership role of a foreman.

"The foreman hands out work orders to the crew and sees the bigger picture," Littlewolfe said. "He can see how the entire puzzle is going to come together, and he gives everybody their piece of the puzzle. It's good to experience life as a foreman and see things from the other side. It gives you a greater perspective."

When Littlewolfe is not on the road travelling to a job site, you'll likely find him travelling with his two boys to a hockey rink in Regina. He's a proud hockey dad. You may also find Littlewolfe travelling to a jiu jitsu club. He has been practicing the martial art for 10 years.

"I wouldn't say I'm great at it, but it keeps me in shape," he said. "It's a healthy outlet and something I enjoy."



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