

# Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

## Saskatoon grad is top of the class

First place photo contest winner Brittanni-Anne Roberts recently graduated from the U of S with a degree in nursing. (Photo by Breanna Doucette-Garr)



**By Jeanelle Mandes  
Of Eagle Feather News**

It's that time of the year again when Eagle Feather News holds its annual graduation photo contest.

We've had numerous entries and we thank everyone who submitted this year.

Our first-place winner is Brittanni-Anne Roberts who is from the Sturgeon Lake First Nation but has resided in Saskatoon for most of her life.

Roberts recently graduated from the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) with her Bachelor of Science

in Nursing degree. She started upgrading her courses to get into the U of S shortly after her son Noah was born. She raised him while focusing on her studies and while her partner Dillon Littlewolf worked full-time.

"This was hard because I felt like I missed out on a lot of milestones and I often felt guilty for putting a lot of my energy into school," she said.

"I am glad I had an awesome support system to remind me that I am looking out for my son's future and to pick me back up when I felt like quitting."

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*Graduation Edition*

Coming In August - Justice Issue

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# Benjoe bursary encourages business students

By Jeanelle Mandes  
Of Eagle Feather News

A young man from the Whitebear First Nation has been awarded a high school bursary to pursue a career in business and entrepreneurship.

Jerico Lonechild, who recently graduated from Regina's Scott Collegiate, did not expect to win this award.

"I was pretty surprised and excited because more blessings are coming my way," he said.

Lonechild was accepted into the First Nation University of Canada (FNUniv) and will be starting classes in the fall. He was recently awarded the Thomas and Dana Benjoe Business and Entrepreneurship Award – a first of its kind at Scott Collegiate.

"As a commitment that Dana and I made, we said we would do a business and entrepreneurship scholarship," said Benjoe, who is the President and CEO of FHQ Developments.

"It's going to be an annual thing, so we would be supporting a \$1,000 bursary for Indigenous students attending Scott Collegiate."

Benjoe and his wife are both alumni of Scott Collegiate so they felt it was fitting to dedicate this award to their old high school, located in Regina's North Central. They specifically wanted to recognize Indigenous students who have a passion for a career in business or entrepreneurship.

"I think of my high school experience and you don't hear a lot about scholarships or bursaries specifically targeted to business and entrepreneurship," said Benjoe.

"It's exciting to get a student on their direct path to becoming future business students or going into a program related to entrepreneurship."

The high school teachers provided recommendations to the Benjoes of certain students at Scott Collegiate who have the most drive or passion for careers in business and entrepreneurship. Their decision led to Lonechild who became interested in this field after taking an entrepreneurship class in high school. The idea of running his own business in the trades became clear



Thomas and Dana Benjoe awarded their very first bursary to Jerico Lonechild to recognize Indigenous students from their old high school, Scott Collegiate. (Photo submitted)

to him that this is the path he wishes to pursue.

"I was open minded and I really wanted to get into business because it (seems) like a good opportunity," said Lonechild.

He is saving his bursary winnings for when he becomes a post-secondary student. Lonechild said bursaries like the Thomas and Dana Benjoe Business and Entrepreneurship award is important for high school students to give them something to look forward to.

"It pushes (us) to succeed," he said. "Once they want to succeed, then they will do it themselves."

Benjoe and his wife are not only hopeful that this bursary will spark more interest for high school In-

igenous students to pursue a career in business and entrepreneurship but they hope that others may see this as an opportunity to create similar bursaries to give back to their communities.

"Hopefully, (this bursary) will encourage other people and leaders in the community to think about doing their own scholarships and bursaries for students," he said.

"It doesn't take much to do that. When we think about the high number of (Indigenous) high school graduates that we're going to start to see, it's nice for us to be able to provide some of that financial support. It is going to be critical to their success."



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# Princess Shop helps graduates feel special

By **Andréa Ledding**  
For **Eagle Feather News**

Not everyone can shell out for designer dresses at grad. And that is where the Princess Shop comes in.

Graduate Jessica Sewap applied and was accepted to the program which provides grad dresses to those who might otherwise go without. She says the women at the Princess Shop program not only made her feel comfortable, but she was nominated for a scholarship and got to wear a second dress to the Glass Slipper Gala Event where she spoke to sponsors and supporters about her experience.

“The ladies there are really helpful, they make you feel at home, they make you feel comfortable. They want to make sure you’re set and happy with what you’ve got before you’re done your appointment,” explained Sewap, who enjoyed the entire experience after her application was accepted.

“I never knew about the Princess Shop until I was in school, and last year my friend was graduating and went with the Princess Shop and that’s when I first heard about them.”

Her instructor suggested she fill out an application, as she wasn’t in a position to afford a dress while single parenting and going to school.

“I was really scared when I found out I was graduating (and had to find a dress). When I found out about the Princess Shop, all my worries left me,” said Sewap, who had started to look for dresses on her own and realized she just couldn’t afford them.

“When I heard about the Princess Shop, I was really excited.”



Jessica Sewap chose a beautiful purple gown for her graduation in May of 2018.

Sewap graduated from SaskPolyTech Grade 12 program in May of this year, and is waiting to start Culinary Arts in September, so she was thrilled to find out she has also been recommended for a scholarship through the Princess Shop program and is awaiting further details. Not only does the program enhance the graduation experience, it provides support and guidance afterwards.

The dresses are afterwards returned to the shop for future use, and sponsors can not only donate dresses and funds for new dresses, but mentorship, scholarships, shoes, accessories, and general support. Costs include purchases, alterations, dry-cleaning of returned dresses, accessories, hair, make-up and photography, and the many other services offered, so support and sponsorship is welcomed, and female mentors are also invited to join the “Fairy Godmother” mentorship support program.

The website, [theprincessshop.ca](http://theprincessshop.ca), has details and application information.

Since its inception in November 2007, it has impacted over 1,000 young women and continues to grow. In 2018, 74 per cent of the recipients self-identified as Indigenous, and about a third of the total number self-identified as being parents. The program impacts the whole family.

“My son is 12 and my daughter is 10. My daughter saw me walking across the stage for graduation and when I was coming off the stage, she came running up to me and said, ‘Mommy I’m so proud of you, I want to be just like you.’ It made me cry, I said you’re going to do it my baby — just stay in school.”

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# Inspiring stories from grads

Another year of graduations is upon us. It's always a momentous time for graduates of all ages.

I'm always proud of our Indigenous graduates here in the province. Especially when I see mothers who earn that diploma, certificate or degree.

As a single mother who was once a university student, I know and understand the struggles of obtaining a post-secondary education and caring for a child. It was hard on the pockets and there were times when I had no food in my fridge.

Luckily, I had supportive family and friends who would provide my daughter and I with care packages to get through the days. I even had to swallow my pride to walk through the doors of the food bank.

But I became thankful and appreciative for services such as that. Take advantage of opportunities like that. Never allow hunger to be the reason why you had to quit school. When you persevere through the hard times, your children will see the sacrifices you've made to make their futures brighter.

I was reading the biographies of our annual grad photo contest and I was proud of all of their achievements. A few entries stood out to me.

Cree Crain from the Muskoday First Nation graduated with a Mental Health and Wellness Diploma at SIIT. She shared her story with us, which I admired. She became a mother at the age of 15 and it was also the day she experienced being homeless. Luckily, her sister was there to help her raise her daughter.

Crain endured trauma in her life where she had turned to drugs and alcohol to numb her pain. A few years later, she sought help through Egadz in Saskatoon and was able to see an elder who had helped her to sober up through ceremony.

Crain shared a strong piece of advice for others who have faced trauma and living a hard life and want to do better.

"Always remember that nobody's perfect and you will succeed," she

wrote. "I was always told I would never make it this far from where I was before but with hope, prayer and sobriety, I walked across that stage this year, June 5 2019 with my head held high."

Laney Amanda Poitras Kay from the Kawacatoose First Nation, graduated from Raymore high school recently. Her inspiration to push through school was her beautiful baby boy, Hasen, and had set the goal of completing her Grade 12 diploma so she could continue into post secondary to obtain a career so she could raise her one-year old son comfortably. She was also a

single parent. They went through many hardships including not always having a home or having the most expensive things that other kids had. When she was about 10-years-old, she recalled helping her mother carry almost ten bags of food from the local food bank down 20 blocks. Linklater's mom sat down and cried and said, "Enough of this struggling! Mommy is going back to school!"

From then, Linklater remembered her mother going back to school and years later, she finished and obtained her degree to become a teacher.



**Bridget Linklater and her children Meya and Travis Jr. on her graduation day from ITEP. She followed the footsteps of her mother to become a teacher.**

(Photo submitted)

young single young mother.

Bridget Linklater, from Pelican Narrows in northern Saskatchewan, shared a heartfelt story that resonated with me.

She was raised by her mother as a

"I was so proud of her and still very proud of her today," she wrote. "She always stresses the importance of education."

Linklater had her children at a young age and decided to follow her



**Comment**

Jeanelle Mandes

mother's footsteps and went back to school. She recently completed her Grade 12 and has been accepted to ITEP (Indian Teacher Education Program) in the fall.

"I want to be a positive inspiration for my children and hope that they too will follow their dreams and take on what the world has to offer them," she wrote.

I always find it very interesting to read about Indigenous mothers who graduated high school or post-secondary studies. So, I decided to briefly research on this topic.

A document called "Women who are Lone Parents – Saskatchewan" prepared for the Saskatchewan Status of Women Office in August 2016 showed that lone parents are more common among Indigenous women. In 2011, 26 per cent of First Nations women and 16.7 per cent of Métis women in Saskatchewan were lone parents.

This compares with 6.4 per cent of non-Aboriginal women. In Section 4 of this document, lone-parent women have lower levels of completed education than other Saskatchewan women. In 2011, 45.1 per cent of lone-parent women had a post-secondary education – either a diploma or certificate (35.4 per cent) or a university degree (9.7 per cent). This compares with 50.4 per cent of all women. The presented data does not indicate how many of those lone women are Indigenous.

Although this data is a bit outdated, it would be interesting to know what the numbers are today especially when the graduation rate has increased in Saskatchewan for Indigenous students.

With that, I would like to extend my congratulation greetings to all of Saskatchewan's Indigenous graduates of 2019!

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# This grad needed a kick in the butt

It's the season for celebrating grads – but really for celebrating moms and dads and kokums and mushums and aunts and uncles for 12 or more years of dragging reluctant little people out of bed who are pleading: “I want to stay hooooommmmmeee.”

Then, in my case, my parents would say something like: “Do you want to be stupid and do nothing with your life?” “Uhhh...maybe, what does it pay?”

Of course, as it turns out, you can be stupid and be president of the United States so I'm not sure how you get kids up these days.

My mom was also a fan of pounding on bedroom doors yelling “get up, get up!” I'm sure that there are tornadoes that made less of a ruckus.

The sound was so ugly that I actually developed a lifelong habit of waking up before the mom-alarm (alarming-mom?) to avoid that sound. Well-played mom, well played.

My high school graduation was a huge moment in my life. I remember having stress nightmares for months beforehand, because that is how my mind processes happy events.

My parents did their best to prepare me for graduation, offering up loads of advice which I promptly forgot. Something about “do the right thing?” No, wait that was a Spike Lee movie.

My parents also helped out by spending cash which I do remember. My grad gown was a pricey little number in turquoise which nicely

set off the rash of stress chest pimples that I got two days before grad – another way that my body likes to celebrate the important times in my life.

My mom, who believes that makeup is for drag queens and that brushing your hair is vain, reluctantly shelled out some cash for hair and makeup at a local beauty salon.

Unfortunately for me, the stylist special-



ized in taking normal hair and spraying it into an unmoveable helmet. I could have fallen off a motorcycle at 80 miles an hour and been just fine with that hairdo.

Also, I'm not sure makeup is supposed to be applied in multiple layers like an ice cream cake. It took me three days to wash it off my face.

Grad parties aren't really the style anymore as people realize that drinking plus teenagers is a dumb idea. But back then, we still had them. We were escorted out to one of my classmate's barns where we drank under the watchful eyes of moms and dads who couldn't resist the urge to make terrible jokes like, “What did the grape do

when he got stepped on? He let out a little wine.”

Or, “how's that first beer tasting? Now you know why golfing is so much fun.”

I don't know about first beer, per se. But I was enjoying attending my first party that didn't take place in my cousin's basement, with people – who weren't my cousins.

I don't recall the grad ceremony itself (except being bitter about not being valedictorian), but I do remember that the gym was full of people who had attended to watch, including my parents and siblings.

The ceremony marked the transition from one state to another and connected my classmates and me to those pictures of graduation classes that hung on the walls of the corridors that we walked each day.

Without the graduation ceremony, I don't think I would have been able to grasp the end of my school years or what was ahead of me. I knew leaving high school and moving out was important – I had the nightmares and the stress pimples to prove it – but I needed that ceremony to show me that I wasn't in it alone.

We need more of these ceremonies in our lives to mark these occasions and I am glad that our families and nations are bringing them back.

They are a reminder that we have the strength to get ourselves out of bed in the morning and that if we don't, then someone will give us a much-needed kick in the butt.



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# Aden Bowman students made respectful statement

By Kaitlynn Nordal  
For Eagle Feather News

Three friends sparked some controversy right before their high school graduation when one of them approached administration about wearing more than just a suit and tie to the ceremony.

Aden Bowman Collegiate student Nolan Nighthtraveller got the idea to wear the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls symbol on his face during the ceremony after seeing on social media that First Nations peoples getting their rights taken away for wearing traditional regalia or feathers to graduations.

He decided to wear the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls symbol on his face – along with traditional regalia – out of solidarity for those who have gone missing but also out of worry that the same thing could happen to his sisters.

“The way I thought of expressing myself is bringing awareness to a topic that isn’t discussed more in Saskatoon and in my school particularly. I thought it would be a good idea to express myself and my traditions and beliefs by putting on face paint for my graduation and it would be a good silent showing of a message I care about,” he said.

Out of respect, Nighthtraveller approached the vice-principal of his school, Marnie Ross, to ask permission to do this. Following protocol, Ross approached principal Paul Humbert and the superintendent of the school about Nighthtraveller’s plans.

“It was interesting for us because this is new territory. We have never had a request such as this one so it really made us think deep down is this the right form to make a statement like this and what’s the best thing for Nolan and the students involved in the whole school in terms of the graduation ceremony,” said Humbert.

Nighthtraveller asked around if anyone else would do this with him.

Two of his friends, Brendon Buffalo and Teddy Shingoose, agreed if they were given permission.

In the week between asking and the ceremony, their plan was met with hesitation in three separate meetings with staff,



Although it was first met with hesitation (L-R) Teddy Shingoose, Brendon Buffalo and Nolan Nighthtraveller wore traditional regalia and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls symbol on their faces to their high school graduation from Aden Bowman Collegiate as a way to bring light to the situation (Photo courtesy of N. Nighthtraveller)

Nighthtraveller and his grandmother. They were worried about it taking away from the other graduates or people not understanding the message the boys were trying to convey.

“At one point they said we wouldn’t be able to graduate if we put the face paint on and walked across the stage,” said Shingoose, who wanted to participate as his aunt is currently missing.

Buffalo also felt it was an important cause to bring awareness to.

“In high school you don’t get to express yourself fully as an Indigenous person or bring light or do anything surrounding politics, so I just tried my best to bring awareness to that crisis,” he said.

After consideration the students were given permission to wear the symbol and traditional regalia.

“Any time there is change in what we are doing we want to make sure we are making good decisions and go through the process,” said Humbert.

“When you go through the process you end up making the best decision. We feel we did that by working with the family.”

Nighthtraveller is happy they said yes and felt there was a moment of mutual respect as he shook Humbert’s hand when getting his diploma on June 27.

“I did it because I felt like some-

thing needed to be done even though it’s something as small as painting your face it puts the meaning of it in someone else’s mind. I don’t have to yell it at them they just have to look,” said Nighthtraveller.

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Emily McKay Hikwa (white dress, third from right) and other Marion Graham graduates at the 2019 SIMFC Graduation in Saskatoon.

## Inuit student among 200 grads honoured at SIMFC ceremony in Saskatoon

By NC Raine  
For Eagle Feather News

Every year, First Nation, Métis and Inuit graduates from Saskatoon and surrounding area have the opportunity to share their culture and academic successes at the annual Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre (SIMFC) graduation.

Now in its 35th year, the event that once started in a school gym with a handful of Indigenous students, is now a major event at TCU Place, with over 200 graduates attending this year's ceremony.

"A lot of students won't get the chance to have a banquet marking this major milestone in their life, so I think it's really important," said SIMFC graduation co-ordinator Terry Gossen.

"To see within their own Indigenous communities how many people are graduating – getting together as a big group with a lot of representation from their community – it's empowering," said Gossen.

The graduation included several cultural traditions, said Gossen, including a ceremonial smudge, and the students themselves performing dance and music.

One graduate in particular was a standout – Emily McKay Hikwa, a high-school graduate from Marion Graham Collegiate in Saskatoon, as the only Inuit student at this year's celebration.

McKay Hikwa said she was initially hesitant, knowing she'd likely be the

only Inuit person at the SIMFC graduation. But she was encouraged to go, she said, by her mother who was also the only Inuit person at the SIMFC graduation 35 years ago.

"It really meant a lot to me to be there. It meant a lot to my friends and my family as well, it's just a big stepping stone for all of us," McKay Hikwa told Eagle Feather News.

"I was scared at first, being the only Inuit person. But my mom told me that 35 years ago, she was also the only Inuit person."

McKay Hikwa and her family took the opportunity to embrace and share their culture, handing out Nunavut flags to others at the graduation, as well as sharing some her grandfather's carvings and Inuit jackets. McKay Hikwa also did a solo dance at the graduation, and her mother shared a speech about Inuit people.

Being an Inuit person in Saskatoon, McKay Hikwa said she is no stranger to feeling a little different. But different is good, she says.

"Growing up, I've always been surrounded by Cree and Métis people and culture. With my Inuit culture, we fit in with some of the traditions, but I've always felt like we've been classified as a different type of Indigenous," she said.

"So, it was really important to me to share my culture at the graduation. I've always loved my culture."



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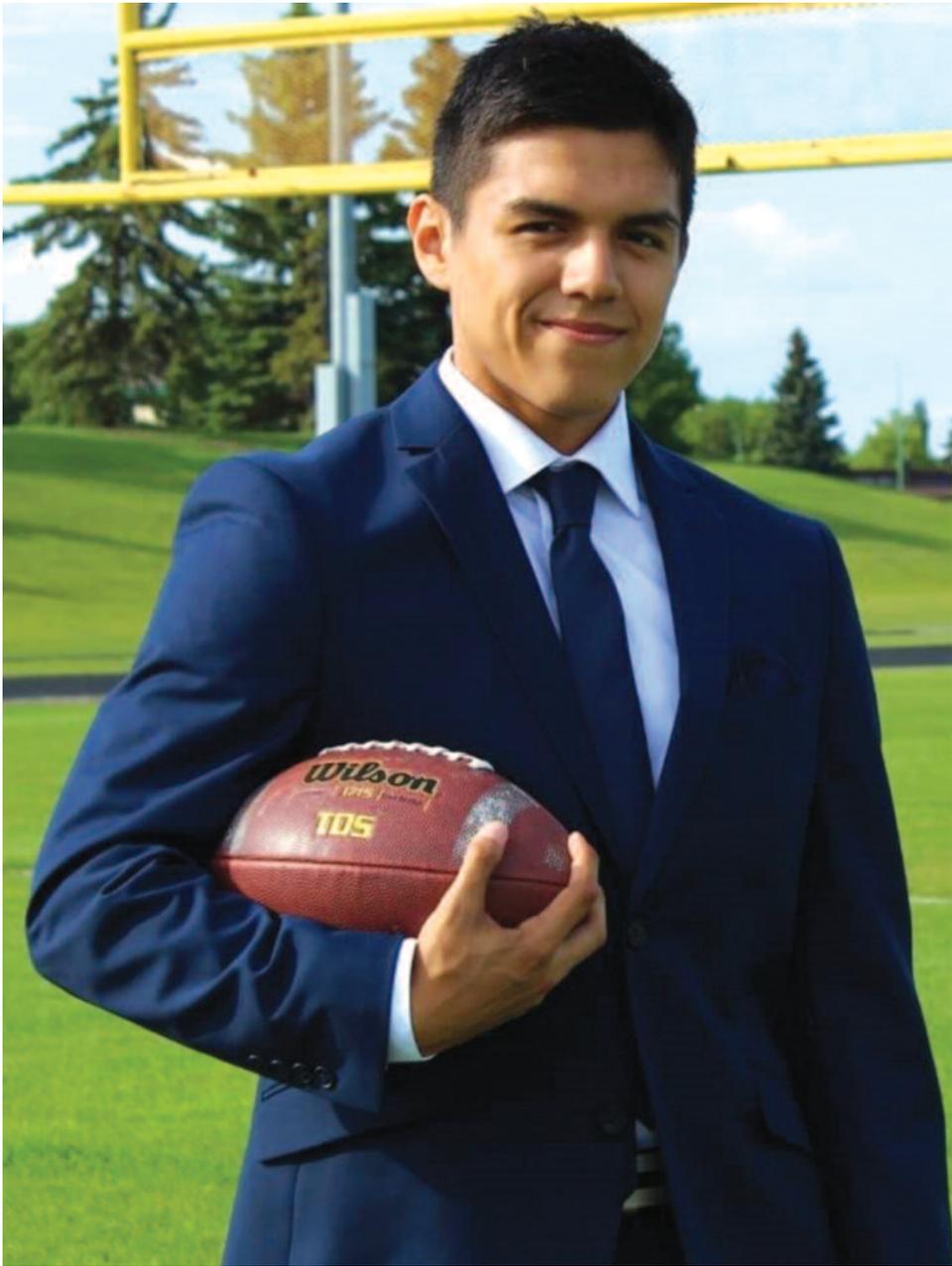


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Third place photo contest winner Rory Iron from the Canoe Lake Cree First Nation also graduated from Ecole St. Mary High School in Prince Albert. (Photo submitted)

# Iron coped with social pressures to succeed in class and on the field

## • Continued from Page One

My schooling has been a long, tough journey and I'm glad it's finally over and I can now focus on my family and maybe even pick up some new hobbies!"

Roberts became interested in a career in nursing as she recalls seeing few Indigenous nurses as she was growing up. It was something she wanted to be a part of, a change.

"Once I got into nursing, I kind of fell in love with the children during my clinical," she said.

Roberts says one of the challenges she faced during her studies at the U of S was the lack of services for students who are parents.

"I think having more options for on-campus child care services because it's hard finding people who are available (especially) for clinicals because they (run) from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.," she said.

"It would be nice to have that so I could have studied on campus or if I have a clinical that runs late then someone could help with that."

Roberts plans to work in maternal and child health and also to work at the new Children's Hospital in Saskatoon. Her long-term goals are to become a Nurse Practitioner and she hopes to one day open an Indigenous health centre that focuses on maternal and child health.

Coming in second place in the Eagle Feather contest is Justine Scarrow from Prince Albert who recently graduated from Ecole St. Mary High School. Scarrow will be studying at the Gabriel Dumont College to take arts and sciences hoping to major in psychology.

She said living a busy lifestyle, working a part-time job and balancing her studies in high school was a bit challenging for her. But she managed to work through it in order to graduate from Grade 12.

"It was difficult with schedule balancing (with) the more difficult classes," she said.

Scarrow shares with other high school students that it's important to remember that if something doesn't challenge you, it's not going to change you.

"Nothing comes easy in life but sometimes hard work is what really changes you and helps you grow as a person," she said.

Scarrow gives her appreciation and gratitude to her Native Studies teacher Mrs. Longjohn-Constant for being an inspiring educator and role model.

In third place, is Rory Iron from Canoe Lake Cree First Nation. Iron recently graduated from Ecole St. Mary High School in Prince Albert. He will be joining the Regina Thunder football team in the fall.

**"Keep going with what you love to do whether it be football or visual arts or anything else that interests you."**

– Rory Iron

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# Métis program gains official status

By Kaitlynn Nordal  
For Eagle Feather News

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has dubbed the Métis language Michif, an endangered language, but the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division and Central Urban Métis Federation Incorporated (CUMFI) have partnered together to try and combat this.

CUMFI and the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division partnered together around 2005 and discussed how to incorporate Métis culture, language and history at St. Michael as there was declining numbers and they were looking at options to revitalize the school.

In fall 2015 the Métis Education Program was implemented. When that contract ran out April of 2016, the two signed a new educational alliance agreement and language became a priority.

“When they established that goal of a Métis education program the talk was always about language revitalization and retention,” said Cort Dogniez, Métis Education Program Leader for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

It had always been a priority of CUMFI to have this sort of program in schools.

“It is very important to have Métis history and culture taught in the schools

and it was a priority of ours. We had an opportunity for some funding we started with hiring a Métis culture and history knowledge keeper,” said Shirley Isbister, President of CUMFI.

On June 24, the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Trustees approved development and establishment of a core Métis language program at the school. Up until that point there was Métis Mondays at St. Michael and the actual Métis Education Program went from Kindergarten to Grade 3.

Up until then it has been an informal program but with this new approval it can become an official program.

“Now that we have approval for this core Métis language program, we can be much more deliberate about it,” said Dogniez.

“We’ll have staff support and we’ll have opportunity to build those resources to work in partnership with other organizations like Gabriel Dumont Institute and Saskatchewan Urban Native Teachers Education Program. We’ll look for partners and community members that can support us as we try to work at revitalization and retention of the Métis language”

The program had previously worked with students in kindergarten to Grade 3 for 100 minutes a week to establish core Michif language. Under this



**Cort Dogniez, Metis Education Program Leader for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and CUMFI President Shirley Isbister are excited about the Métis language program at St. Michael’s School in Saskatoon. Here they are together at the 2018 Métis Days awards banquet where Dogniez was honoured for his leadership in education.**

(Photo by Claire Letendre)

new program students from Grade 4 to 8 will now have a support teacher for Métis education starting in September.

Dogniez and Isbister hope this leads to the school becoming formally bilingual. Isbister estimates that could take five to six years as they must ensure they have the properly licensed teachers for the classes.

“The challenge that everybody has is that because there are so few resources, and Métis speakers, there is the chal-

lenge of getting Michif into the school,” said Dogniez.

“So, to get to having a Métis bilingual school its really daunting. We needed a first step and so that's why we decided we would focus on a core Métis language program with the idea of building until we got to that point where we could have a metis bilingual school.”

Since the announcement in June they have already had people reaching out to help where they can.

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# Indigenous grad rates improving but still room for improvement

By NC Raine  
For Eagle Feather News

High school graduation rates continue to be on the rise in Saskatchewan.

According to the Ministry of Education, 2,446 Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit high school students graduated last year, an increase of 58 per cent from 2009, when Saskatchewan saw 1,550 graduates.



DR. MARIE BATTISTE

But the figures for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit high school students continue to be significantly lower than their non-Indigenous counterparts. The graduation rate for Indigenous students is 44.5 per cent graduating within three years of starting Grade 10 versus 86.5 per cent for non-Indigenous students.

The Deputy Minister of Education says he's pleased with the progress over the last ten years, and while more needs to be done, the province is trending in the right direction.

"We should feel good about all the progress that is made," said Marie Battiste, Professor of Educational Foundations at the University of Saskatchewan.

"But there are still disparities in terms of the amount of resources that are given in certain places and there are also disparities in terms of what is offered as a curriculum in those particular places," she said.

A number of improvements in de-

veloping a relevant education in First Nation communities, as well as improving the provincial curriculum, may have contributed to the climbing rates, said Battiste. She also cites an increased effort to educate Saskatchewan students from an early age on treaty education.

"Since the (Truth and Reconciliation Commission), there's been much more interest to address reconciliation issues and examine what the experience has been for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in their education systems, as well as through those residential school and intergenerational effects," said Battiste.

Battiste also cites increased numbers of Indigenous teachers, creating more role models in communities. For example, economic professor Eric Howe recently estimated that the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) social benefit for Saskatchewan ranges from \$13.6 billion to \$40 billion.

But Battiste says much more work can be done to achieve higher educational outcomes.

"When education is run solely through English, as a colonial language, when communities still use their Indigenous languages, it's saying that those aren't 'valued', and you have to assimilate. Much in the same way residential school systems was a whole process of assimilation."

Understanding Indigenous learners and building more relevance in their education, as well as continuing to educate both teachers and students on treaty rights are a couple of the pathways to continued progress, said Battiste.

"In doing so, we help students understand our social locations in regards to race, class, and gender," said Battiste.

"Those are the kinds of things that all teachers, and thus, all students, and then hopefully all of society will hopefully be able to generate a better of understanding of race relations, gender relations, and all other relations we have."

## CCDF helps Far North Crane & Rigging soar to new heights

By Naomi Zurevinski

Kevin Grunow has been in the crane business for 30 years, working his way through the industry and even owning his own crane business, Titan Crane, for 10 years. After calling it quits with Titan Crane, Grunow thought his days of owning a business were over, until he saw an exciting opportunity to start something new.

Grunow's son, Chad, had been working for a crane company when the pair decided that they wanted to purchase their own crane and begin a business together. Combining their experience, they started Far North Crane & Rigging in May 2018.

"My son and I are co-owners, but Far North is actually a father, son, and mother operation, so it's a family affair!" said Grunow, who holds his journeyman hydraulic crane operator certification. "When I had Titan Crane, Chad started with us when he was just five years old. When he was in high school, he'd come down and work on Saturdays too, so he grew up with it and has a huge crane background."

When Grunow was first starting Titan Crane, he worked with the Clarence Campeau Development Fund, for financial and business support. This time around, Grunow knew he wanted to work with the CCDF again, based on his positive experience the first time.

"The CCDF is excellent. Their financial support for the purchase of the two cranes, business support, advertising, the training part — their support is there in every aspect of the business," he said.

The CCDF was initially established in 1997 by the Government of Saskatchewan and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan and works to assist economic development activities of Métis people in the province. Grunow and Chad accessed the CCDF's Business Plan and Business Development programs, which are just two of the programs they offer for business development. In 2018 alone, the CCDF invested \$7.6 million in repayable and non-repayable



Photo credit: Naomi Zurevinski

contributions.

For Grunow, their support goes far beyond financial.

"I like that they get involved; they don't just stay in the office. They've been out here, and have seen the jobs we've done, and they're interested in what we're doing."

One of the CCDF's main goals is to increase Métis entrepreneurship, and for Grunow, this is one of the best parts of owning a business.

"There's absolutely nothing like having your own business. Chad's been working all his life, and now that we've started Far North together, he can see it's a whole different avenue. You put it all together, and you can look back and see what you've accomplished."

For Grunow, the choice to work with the CCDF was a natural one, and he urges anyone who has the same opportunity to go for it.

"We wouldn't have what we have today if it wasn't for the CCDF. It's a tremendous opportunity for anyone who wants to get started in business, and their support is phenomenal."

For information on Far North Crane & Rigging, visit [www.farnorthcrane.com](http://www.farnorthcrane.com). For information on the CCDF, visit [www.clarencecampeau.com](http://www.clarencecampeau.com).

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Terence Alexson, a Grade 12 graduate, delivering his address at the year-end celebration.

## Great Plains College proud of adult students' accomplishments

By Jeanelle Mandes  
Of Eagle Feather News

Great Plains College is celebrating another year of student success.

The College in Maple Creek was proud to celebrate its Maple Creek Program Centre students at a year-end celebration. The annual event is planned by staff in celebration of the many personal and academic accomplishments of the Adult Basic Education students who've chosen to come back to school, despite the challenges they may be facing.

This year's event celebrated 15 students who completed Adult 10, GED and Grade 12 programs, along with many others who took big steps in their academic journey.

In addition to many academic successes, students also had a chance to focus on personal and career development and 18 students completed courses in Driver's Training, WHMIS, First Aid, H2S Alive, Mental Health First Aid, Serve it Right, Naloxone administration, Ground Disturbance, Speechcraft and Microsoft Office basics.

"One of the most rewarding parts of our Adult Basic Education program is watching how much our students grow throughout the year, both as students and as people," said Kim Wellings, program coordinator at Great Plains College.

"I'm incredibly proud of the obstacles they've overcome throughout their journeys at the college, and we are thrilled to see so many achievements celebrated this year."

A special address was also delivered to students from a fellow classmate and 2019 Grade 12 graduate, Terence Alexson.

Alexson first began as a Pre-12 student in 2015 and encountered many bumps along the path to his Grade 12 diploma, including the challenge of raising five children, battling addictions and leaving (and returning) to school twice.

"My whole life was filled with people who told me all the things I wasn't, and all the bad that I would be," Alexson said.

"Eventually I realized I was living up to all the words I was told my whole life and I knew it was time to make a change. So I did. The negatives are always in the back of my mind and I made mistakes along the way, but my spirit pushed me not to fail. Take it step by step, keep your chin up and it can be done."

His story was one of hope, perseverance and encouragement for everyone in the room, no matter what journey they are on.

"I'm proud to be from Great Plains College. The academic and emotional support from teachers and staff is like none other and I will never forget it," he added.

"I'm not done on my learning journey; I'll never be done. I am proud."

Alexson completed his Grade 12 this spring and has been accepted into the Architectural Technologies program at Saskatchewan Polytechnic beginning this fall.

"Terence has persevered through all the trials and tribulations of school and life, and it has been an honor getting to know him over the past four years as he worked his way through the Adult 10 program to the full completion of his Grade 12 diploma. We wish him the absolute best as he takes the next step in his journey and we look forward to seeing all the successes that are yet to come," said Wellings.



## PROTECT THE WORKERS WHO PROTECT US

When people are willing to put their lives on the line to protect us, it seems only right that we do everything we can to protect them.

But here in Saskatchewan, recent government changes mean the brave emergency service workers who fight and manage wildfires and environmental disasters, like flooding, are losing the existing benefits and job security they count on.

That's a lot to lose for 600 workers and their families.



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# No reason to celebrate Canada Day, eh!

For the month of July ... Oh Canada ... where do I start?

Oh Canada, our home on Native Land! Honestly, I choose to opt out on the "celebration." I have strong feelings about the genocide that has taken place and continues to take place there to even be a Canada.

I have come to a place in my life where I know and understand that this land and country that is free, rich, vibrant, full of diversity has caused serious harms to my people and it continues to point the fingers at us as if we dug this hole ourselves.

The facts are that intentional colonial policies and laws were set in place that caused this harm and created intergenerational trauma that has been rolling out in our communities and families.

If you celebrate Canada Day, that is fine. I mean most people do it but please at least, understand that the economy is built on infrastructure that is not only killing Indigenous peoples but Indigenous land.

"Violence on the land, violence on our bodies."

This is home for everyone, too, so end of the day it is not only Indigenous peoples who are feeling the effects of capitalism.

If it was not for the "rich" resources

this beautiful country offers, there would be no economy. The thing about that is the revenue derived from draining, ripping apart the land, deforesting Mother Earth and driving animals to extinction has built this country into what it is, and that revenue has not been shared with the first peoples of this land either.

Indigenous peoples continue to be overincarcerated and overrepresented in these systems/institutions but underrepresented in the professions and jobs that keeps our people locked up, so who's benefiting?

Not Indigenous peoples. I call myself Dakota before I'll call myself Canadian. These borders were never here since time immemorial; this is Turtle Island.

I have the right to not have to take part in social events that celebrate the ongoing depletion of Indigenous peoples and land. Most non-Indigenous people go and enjoy their cabins by our most beautiful lakes across Canada, meanwhile many First Nations are living with boil water advisories and that's a fact.

Everyone knows or should know that the MMIWG 2SLGBTQQIA inquiry released on June 3, 2019. This is a 1,200-

page final report with 231 "calls for justice."

The report includes recommendations to government, the police and the larger Canadian society to help address the rampant levels of violence directed at Indigenous women, girls and people. We also need to be educated around

the truth of our country to be able to come together and help support each other. We need to create safe spaces for one another to be able to grow.

Holding onto old comfort zones is not where growth happens. That is why I am saying to people who want to be an ally to be informed and to not always depend on the few Indigenous students to do all the work to educate and "indigenize" colonial institutions and non-Indigenous students.

I see it all too much many places want to take their part in reconciliation but they allow the few Indigenous students or workers to take on the brunt of the work while they juggle their job their workload/school-load and everything else that is going on in their lives that might be

dysfunctional due to these exact findings.

So, I suggest when doing research for assignments that you choose topics like this so you can study, reference, and learn it. I know from experience that focusing your work around issues that are about the genocide of your people is not easy work.

When you write reports on the forced sterilization of Indigenous women like my friend did and to see how that is still happening to this day is an emotional and triggering process.

These human rights violations need to come to light and be addressed to move forward. You are only harming more people the more you deny the facts.

The truth will always keep showing up is the thing people seem to forget about are the natural laws.

In the age of technology if you want to comment on Indigenous matters please do your research. We should be on the same side for all the children of tomorrow. Let's evolve our minds, families, communities, policies and laws.

We are beautiful diverse Nations from across Turtle Island. The future is now. We are the 7th generation the old ones talked about. We owe it to everyone who came before us, we owe it to ourselves, our children and our children's children.

Pidamaya.



## 2019 GRADUATES, WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!

On May 31, we hosted our Graduation Powwow to honour the hundreds of Indigenous students graduating from USask and local high schools.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in honouring these graduates.



Photo: Arts and Science graduate Lillanohna Naytowhowcon (middle) celebrates at the USask Graduation Powwow.

# Summer Culture Camps offer fun, exercise and learning

By NC Raine  
For Eagle Feather News

The school year may be over, but there are plenty of ways this summer to continue to exercise your mind as well as your body. Here are a handful of culture camps around Saskatchewan that provide the opportunity to learn new skills, engage with culture, and just spend some quality time outdoors.

## Kaniyasihk Culture Camps

With camps offered year-round, Kaniyasihk is one of Saskatchewan's premiere Cree-based learning centres. All of their staff are fluent in Cree and will provide an immersive Cree experience where one can learn language on the land. Campers may learn how to fillet fish, cut and preserve meat, as well as learn basic first aid, wilderness first aid and paddling.

The camp has been around for 16 years and was started as a way to get kids reacquainted with land, as well as encourage healthy lifestyles.

"We have a lot of diabetes on the rise in our communities, and obesity rates are high, so we're trying to get people moving a little bit, and also give them life skills and connect with elders," said Kevin Lewis, founder of Kaniyasihk.

This year, following their water-based camp, Kaniyasihk is offering a drama-themed camp, where they will bring in Métis actors to teach the youth drama and acting techniques. The idea is to develop young actors and encourage Cree, said Lewis.

"I want to create a couple of YouTubers. It would be cool if a few of them created a little following on YouTube and showed that Cree or other Indigenous languages are cool."

<https://kaniyasihkculturecamps.com>

## Yellow Quill First Nation Culture Camp

Yellow Quill First Nation allows people of all ages to reacquaint themselves with Saulteaux heritage and traditions. The camp, which will take place August 19 – 22 in Corman Park (on Yellow Quill land), features contests, bannock making, lessons in tipis, pipe ceremonies and a sweat for the men.

The camp also focuses on providing informational programming, with several speakers who come out to talk about issues like prevention or identity.

"We want the kids to learn about their culture and ask questions. It's about the Saulteaux culture and language, so they're able to really learn their language. We are trying to teach them respect and honesty, and talk to them about things like bullying," said Rose Campo, camp programmer.

"A lot of the kids don't know where they come from, they have lost their identity and don't know their language. So, the camp gives them a chance to meet other relatives and talk with elders."

<http://yqfn.ca>

## Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op Summer Camp

The Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) is an inner-city program for youth in Saskatoon where they can earn academic credits as well as develop life skills. The CNYC Summer Camp, taking place August 23 – 25, is designed to give kids the opportunity to get out of the city and experience spending time in the outdoors. Participants



A group shot of participants at the Nehiyawak Summer Language Experience last year.

will be taken on hikes, canoe, play games, and learn essential camping skills.

"We want to take them somewhere where they've not had the opportunity to go," said CNYC executive director Marcel Petit.

Saskatchewan, typically selling out weeks before-hand. Teachers at the camp share their talents in singing, drum-making, beading, birch bark biting,



Youth at Kaniyasihk Culture Camp learn to skin and cut meat from a beaver. (Photo by Kevin Lewis)

"It's about getting them out of their own selves for little while and showing them more than street life and sirens."

Petit said because so many of the CNYC youth rarely have the opportunity to truly get away, he hopes they connect in a new way with the land.

"We want them to appreciate the land, and the North," he said. "Hopefully it will lead to a little openness for them in showing them what's out there, so they will be able to open their brains."

[www.cnya.ca](http://www.cnya.ca)

## Nehiyawak Summer Language Experience

Taking place July 21 – 27 at Sturgeon Lake First Nation, nehiyawak Cree language camp aims to produce authentic language engagement. The end result of the summer language experience is to confidently tell a story in Cree, as well as understand nehiyawak philosophies, practices and beliefs.

"I know that Indigenous languages come from the land and its environment, the sounds of the language come from the sounds of the earth and everything it inhabits," said Belinda Daniels, founder of nehiyawak camp.

"Children, students, and learners need to experience this verb action orientated rhythm of the language and its connection to land. It's a part of our identity."

The camp is one of the most popular in

basket weaving, and acting.

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[saskatchewan.ca/agriculture](http://saskatchewan.ca/agriculture)



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# Saskatoon Cadets fired up about careers as firefighters

By Kaitlynn Nordal  
For Eagle Feather News

Almost every kid dreams of becoming a firefighter, but for 20 high school students that dream became a reality.

As part of the Career Education Program through Bedford Road Collegiate, Mount Royal Collegiate, Tommy Douglas Collegiate, E.D. Feehan Catholic High School, and Bethlehem Catholic High School, students got to participate in this year's Firefighter Introduction Recruitment Experience (F.I.R.E.) Cadet Program.

After talking it over with the guidance counselors at their school, students went through a paper and interview application process. These were Grade 11 and 12 students and a few recent immigrants who went back to finish up their high school diploma.

The program ran for 13 weeks from April 8 to June 7, Monday to Friday from 2:30 to 4:30 in the afternoon.

Kenton Beatty, who had been a firefighter with the Saskatoon Fire Department for 13 years, was one of this year's instructors.

He wanted to be an instructor to see more of what the F.I.R.E Cadet Program was about but also to share his enjoyment of the profession with others.

"I was interested in it to see what it was all about but also to challenge myself. I wanted to see how the high school students would respond to the training, mostly because I think it is a great opportunity for them. I wish it would have been available to me when I was in high school. So, I think it was a rewarding experience," said Beatty.

Garrett Pewapisconias, a recent graduate of Bethlehem Catholic High School was one of this year's Cadets. Pewapisconias applied for the program after his teachers and counselors suggested it as he is a hands-on learner.

"I thought it was a great opportunity to get outside of the classroom and experience a career I was looking into," he said.

During the eight-week program, the cadets learned to operate fire hoses, fire trucks and specialized water rescue equipment. They also had technical ladder, extrication, firefighter self-rescue and water safety skills training. Participants received the CPR Level C certi-

fication. They also had to put together and then present a fire safety presentation to elementary schools.

Every Friday, they did community work such as working at the food bank, helping pick up needles and things of that sort. Pewapisconias enjoyed working and bonding with the fellow cadets but the repelling exercise was his favorite because of the rush that came with it.

The program has been going on for five years, but it was Beatty's first time teaching it and he was happy with how everyone did.

After an application and interview process and

look at how they did as a cadet once the program was done, Saskatoon hired four of the cadets for the summer. They will be working fire prevention, maintenance, and community relations. Pewapisconias is one of the four staying on from July 2 to August 23.

"I had a very good time during the semester, and I wanted to continue it. It was a good opportunity to make some money and get on with the fire department," he said.

Pewapisconias wants to go into firefighting as a career and is looking into more formal schooling.



During an intense 13week program high school students from various schools across Saskatoon participated in the annual Firefighter Introduction Recruitment Experience (F.I.R.E.) Cadet Program where they learned everything from CPR, how to operate the hoses, how to breach doors, and water safety. (Photo courtesy of the Saskatoon Fire Department)

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# 35th Annual Aboriginal Graduation Gala

hosted by the Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre

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**This year's gala was a new record with 207 students registered!**

Saskatoon came together to honour these students with 33 scholarships awarding \$25,000 to the recipients for their commitment in academia, community involvement, personal growth and sports.

Thank you to everyone involved for supporting our youth as they reach a major milestone in their journey!

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