

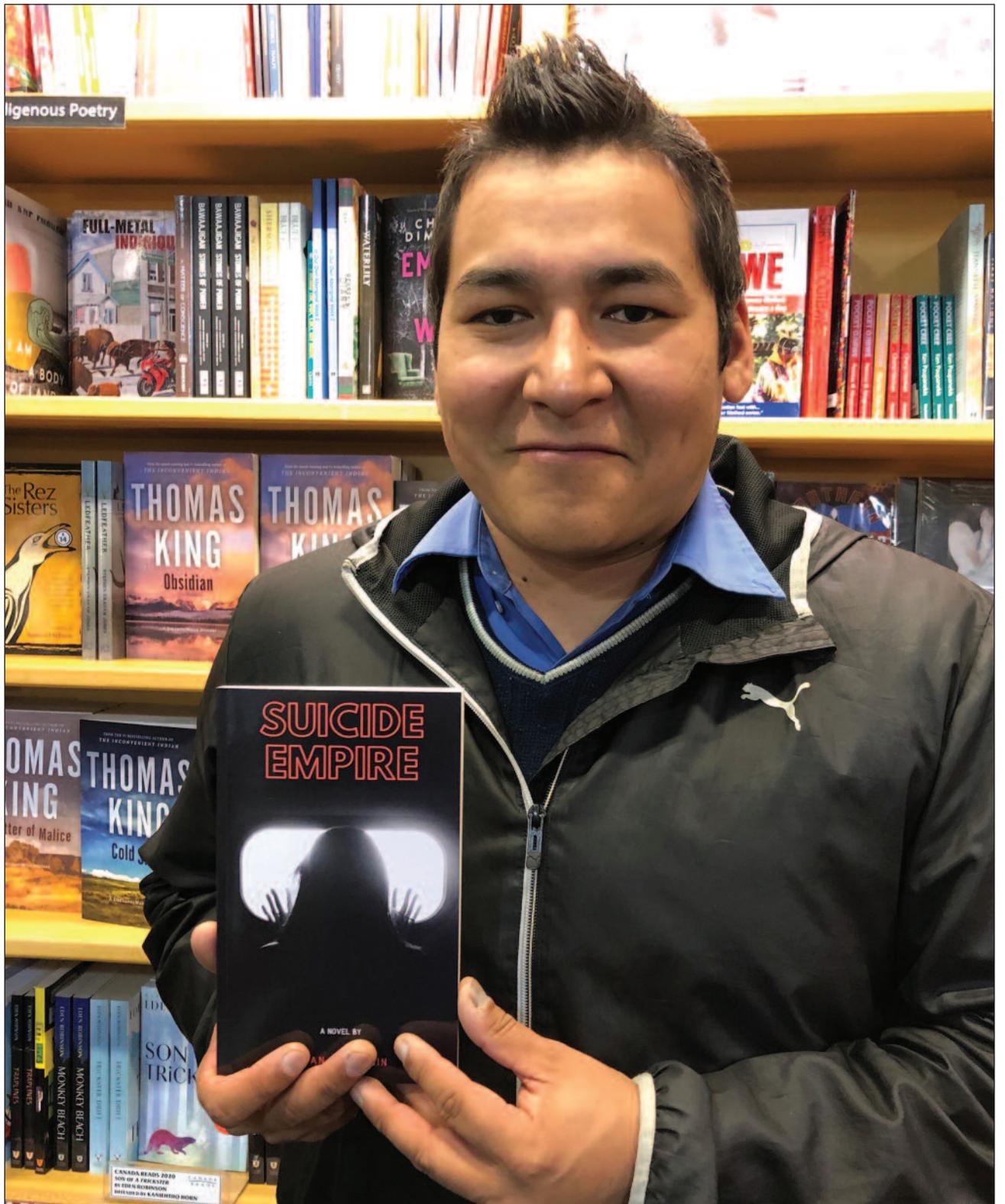
Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Sci-fi with a mental health theme

Comedian, satirist and now an author, Ryan Moccasin has written a novel that explores technology's harmful impact on society and how a future government uses technology to treat it.

(Photo by Betty Ann Adam)



**Betty Ann Adam
Of Eagle Feather News**

As a stand-up comedian, Ryan Moccasin loves to make people laugh, but his new novel explores what makes people sad.

"I wanted to write about mental health. I see Indigenous communities and the mental health crisis that we have been facing for some time. I wanted to go there and explore that with a science fiction novel," Moccasin said in a recent interview.

Suicide Empire is about a dystopian future where governments have turned to advanced technology to solve a mental health crisis that is plaguing the nation

and about the struggle for people to take back their humanity.

"It highlights the harmful effects of technology on society. Human connection is more important than technology in the end," he said.

Moccasin, a member of Saulteaux First Nation who lives in Saskatoon, is best known for his wry view of the world in stand-up routines at venues around the city and as "propaganda minister" at TheFeather.ca, an Indigenous satirical website he created with buddies Shawn Cuthand and Danny Knight.

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INSIDE



THERAPY, CREATIVITY

Bill Stevenson has found a way to deal with the deep depression that he felt after the death of a close relative. - Page 6



RETIRING

Gilles Dorval has made a huge difference in the lives of many people during his time with the City of Saskatoon. - Page 9



A SON'S LOVE

Kerry Benjoe has had a lot to deal with in recent years and she's making it through tough times thanks to her son. - Page 10



RECOVERING

April Gamble survived a horrific car crash and now she's sharing her story in hopes of saving lives. - Page 18



TRANSFORMATION

Jenn Sutherland was determined to change her lifestyle and her hard work has paid off in a big way. - Page 21

Health & Wellness Edition
Coming In March - Women's Issue

CPMA #40027204



Ryan Moccasin honed his humour on the stage and now he shares it in a book and on the satirical website www.thefeather.ca

(Photo supplied)

Moccasin credits sobriety for interest in mental health issues

• Continued from Page One

politics and current affairs are the focus of the trio's humour, Moccasin has a personal interest in mental health: he got sober two years ago.

He was surprised by how important counseling therapy was in his journey. Like many people, he used to scoff at the image of a person lying on a couch, while a man with a beard and a notebook sat by silently.

"People have this stigma about going to a therapist or a shrink, they call it. They're nervous and don't know how to approach it.

"It's so far from that. It's basically like talking to a friend. Your thoughts are like a ball of yarn, all tangled up, and the therapist is there to help you knit it into a nice sweater, organize your thoughts.

"Going through it, I realized this is actually helpful talking to somebody, an addictions counselor. We need more of these resources for people who need help, especially the Indigenous communities," he said.

In therapy, Moccasin learned about depression and anxiety – common problems for people with addictions.

He became a fan of funny and informative podcasts, especially *The Hilarious World of Depression*, which made him laugh while showing him he wasn't alone.

He also read, and was inspired by, the somewhat daunting classic book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Victor Frankl, a survivor of the Nazi death camps who dove deep into the effects of human suffering and how people can overcome it.

"It's been around for 50 years but it's on my recommended reading list for sure," Moccasin said.

He thought about writing non-fiction, but with storytelling being such an important part of Indigenous culture, he decided to talk about the issue in a novel.

He loves science fiction and was inspired by *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, *Flowers For Algernon* and the George Orwell dystopia, 1984.

Suicide Nation, which includes five pages of Canadian mental resources, was self-published. It went on sale on Amazon on Jan. 7 and quickly became one of the top three sellers in the Native American section and top 900 in the science fiction category.

It is available at McNally Robinson in Saskatoon, where a book launch will be held March 6.

Anyone experiencing crisis can call the Canada Suicide Prevention Service at 1-833-456-4566.

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Homelessness focus of annual Regina vigil

**By Carmen Pauls Orthner
For Eagle Feather News**

Stabbings. Beatings. Starvation. Freezing.

Harley Stonechild Kaye has lost far too many friends to the brutal ways that death comes to those living on the streets – and were it not for a fellow homeless man he calls his “brother”, he might have been one of them.

“When he’d see me lying in the alley... (he said) ‘I’ll keep you warm,’” Stonechild Kaye said of Wilfred McCallum, the friend who taught him how to survive on the streets.

The two men – one standing, the other in a wheelchair – were among the crowd gathered downtown at Regina’s City Plaza on a chilly February 4, night, attending the city’s fourth annual memorial service for those who have died as a result of being homeless in Saskatchewan’s capital.

The service was a large, multi-racial event, with a circle of glowing candles lifted high in the air, tears and hot chocolate, a canvas signed with statements of grief and solidarity, a drum song and an elder’s prayer. There were also calls to action, promises of change, and stories from those who spoke from their personal experience of homelessness.

Cody Francis, an Indigenous man who works with Regina’s Street Culture



Wilfred McCallum (grey hoodie) and Harley Stonechild Kaye were involved in the homeless memorial holding up candles to commemorate those who died living on the streets.

Project, said it warmed his heart to see that several hundred people had come to acknowledge and mourn those who have died.

“Being homeless, you get in the habit of telling yourself, ‘Nobody cares,’” Francis said.

Mayor Michael Fougere called on every level of government – provincial, federal, and municipal – to end the tragedy

of homelessness, and the pain and even hopelessness that those living on the streets deal with every day.

“We should be here to help them,” Fougere said.

The City and the Regina Police Service are taking steps, as are organizations such as the Street Culture Project and Phoenix Residential Society, which co-sponsored the memorial service. They are

helping the city’s homeless population every day.

Stonechild Kaye, McCallum, and speaker Dean Bear are just a few of those who now have safe, secure housing through Phoenix’s HOMES program.

“They’re very important to us,” Bear said of Phoenix. “Now (that) I have a home, I am more secure, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically.”

Even with those successes, homelessness remains a serious problem in Regina.

“This isn’t a typical funeral ... but we’re here to say that we won’t forget, and that we commit to doing better,” said Blair Roberts of the John Howard Society.

It grieves him that many of those being remembered at this event did not have that same support in life.

“It makes me sad that much of homelessness can be directly tied to the trauma of colonialism, residential schools, and systemic injustice toward our Indigenous neighbours,” he said.

“When 80 per cent of those living in homelessness are Indigenous, we have to acknowledge that the problem is with the system, and not with the people caught up in it.”

Roberts believes that an end to homelessness is possible.

“Our city is only as good as it treats its citizens on the margins,” he said. “Today we remember, and tomorrow we get to work.”

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Grateful for some 'me' time

Happy New Year everyone! (Indian time)

January was a long month with a mixture of cold and warm weather. As we witness the weather change, we also see so many sicknesses go around.

I kicked off my New Year's Eve with a nasty head cold cooped up in my kokum's basement trying to break my high fever. It was only two days after that I started to feel better. Thinking I was done with being sick this year, it came back with a vengeance a month later. To learn my lesson from the first time, I took the time to stay home from work and rest.

My life has always been on the go since I started my new job teaching journalism at the University of Regina back in the fall while I continue my duties with Eagle Feather News.

I've always put others and work before my own health and wellness. I was always worried about finishing tasks with both of my jobs and I never had the time to sit, relax and take some "me" time. It was nice and it felt good.

So, it's important to take that time for yourself when you're not feeling well and it's OK to step back and say, 'my body needs to rest.' When people say, "get some rest," take that advice and actually rest. I returned back to work with a clearer mind, no sniffles or constantly sanitizing my hands and I felt even more recharged.

Speaking of wellness, my daughter Sharlize, who has Autism Spectrum Disorder, is now involved in a horse therapy program that has been helping her tremendously in identifying her emotions, learning patience and empathy, and how to self-regulate during meltdown crisis moments.

Once a week, she comes in for a few hours to feed and care for a designated horse. Sharlize grew up around horses and I always knew she had an incredible gift for being around these powerful animals.

Her anxiety level decreases a lot when she is around horses. It's like their spirits intertwine. Watching my daughter around horses is such a beautiful feeling because I know she's in her happy place, which makes me happy. There's something about horses where they radiate peace and tranquility.

Which leads me to my next area. Pet therapy. I've always found this par-



Jeanelle's daughter Sharlize is enjoying a new kind of therapy which has been beneficial to her. This is called horse therapy. (Photo submitted)

ticular service compelling. There is such a high appreciation for animals that are trained to work with those who need the service whether it be to cope with health problems, mental illness, physical or neurological disability or even just needing an animal to pet.

This issue includes a story of

Takoza Equine Assisted Traditional Alternative Therapy, which is based south out of Katepwa Lake along the Qu'Appelle Valley. It was introduced a number of years ago to treat clients who suffer with mental issues, PTSD, trauma and anger issues.

Horse therapy programs are becoming so popular on the prairies that there are waitlists. But if you want to see positive results, it's worth waiting for.

As mentioned earlier, I started teaching at the University of Regina School of Journalism holding the Asper Visiting Chair of Journalism. I teach Indigenous Peoples & the Press and the lab for Advanced Print.

I am loving my position as a professor because I can teach what I know.



Comment

Jeanelle Mandes

The Indigenous Peoples & the Press course takes a look into the Indigenous representations in the media and learning on how to report in Indigenous communities and how to properly cover Indigenous stories.

In my Advanced Print lab class, I have three students who will be contributing to Eagle Feather News monthly for the rest of the semester. This part of their assignments is to cover Indigenous stories through a non-Indigenous lens.

I believe this gives them a basic understanding of following protocols when covering an Indigenous story. So, welcome my three students; Suliman, Ade and Kaitlynn. You will be reading their stories until April.

As Health and Wellness is the theme for this month's issue, it's a good time to acknowledge that it's also Aboriginal Storytelling Month. We are all storytellers in our own way. Picking up a good book is therapeutic and yet refreshing.

If you don't feel like reading, you can check out Indigenous storytelling events. The old people say winter is usually the time when stories are shared.

When I head back to my reserve for a weekend, I turn my cellphone off and have an actual listen and visit with my kokum-mom and uncle-dad (haha – Indigenous peoples and their family ties always seem to confuse many.)

I love listening to their stories of when they were young or the stories they share that were passed on to them from my late grandparents and great-grandparents. I treasure those moments.

So, with that, enjoy this issue which is jam packed with unique and heart-warming stories of our Indigenous peoples.

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Embracing the automated life ... sorta

There are early tech adopters, there are late adopters and there is me, a stubborn luddite with only the apps on my phone that my phone came with.

It takes a lot to convince me that technology makes things simpler rather than more complicated. And generally, that “a lot” has to be life becoming completely unbearable before I change things up.

Case in point: I broke my iPhone a year ago. The headphone jack snapped off in the iPhone so the phone only worked on speakerphone. I still took calls until I got it replaced, which meant I had to yell into my speaker in all sorts of public locations. Yes, people loved me everywhere.

For the first time last week, I ordered groceries online at Walmart.ca. I chose it because it is free. And Walmart is now charging a loonie for carts – and I am tired of rummaging through my car for a loonie.

I never have them because I use them for parking downtown because I don’t have the parking app and I never will have it because I have enough apps. And the real question is: what is Mayor Charlie Clark doing with our data? (That hippie is probably gonna abuse our data to start sending us more reminders to recycle!)

So, more times than not, when I’m at Walmart, I don’t have a cart. Twice I have balanced a weeks’ worth of groceries in a basket which is an excellent workout though it takes hours to get the dents out of your hands.

As I placed my online order at Walmart, I

walked through my house clicking on things that I needed: coffee, laundry detergent, etc. Then I glanced out the window and saw my dog running around my yard – sans collar – like a rez dog. (He



had outgrown his other collar as he has a thick neck. Like mother like puppy, I guess)

So now every time I look at him, I think “rez dog. You’re such a rez dog.” I added collar to the list.

The online ordering process was pretty simple. You add your list, then they ask you a couple questions like, “Do you want bags or will you bring your own?” I primly clicked “will bring my own.” Because online me is so much more organized that IRL me.

The last step is picking a time for your pick-up and you’re done. I picked an early morning Sunday and then spent the rest of the weekend bragging that I had an important appointment on Sunday morning.

I showed up, parked in those special close to the store spots and called the number on the sign in front of me.

“This is so easy,” I thought to myself. Then

they asked for my order number (forgot) and if I had brought bags (forgot).

A young millennial showed up a few minutes later. He had a phone strapped to each of his wrists making him look like a bearded cyborg.

As we loaded my order into the vehicle, I apologized for forgetting the bags. “I’ll remember next time,” I assured him.

“That’s fair,” he said. I find it ironic that this is the millennial go-to phrase when literally nothing has been fair to them. They have to deal with higher tuition costs, higher housing costs and lower salaries – AND climate change. But still, their favourite saying is, “that’s fair.” I guess it’s better than, “that’s rad.”

After the Walmart order went well, I was inspired to order KFC online. And then after a terrible night of stomach discomfort, I ordered a fresh food delivery service. This service prides itself on getting people to vary their cooking repertoire.

The meals I remember growing up were: wieners and kraft dinner, wieners and beans and wieners with wieners. (I feel like this article is going to show up on strange search engines because of that sentence.)

Now I’m cooking stuffed chicken (badly), pan-seared steak (badly) and chicken and pear Waldorf salad (badly).

Never before have I cooked such a diverse array of foods (badly).

So far everything has showed up more or less as intended. I’m not sure if using technology more has simplified my life but it has made it more interesting.

Arts Board Deadlines

The Saskatchewan Arts Board announces the following deadlines for applications to programs that support the work of Saskatchewan artists, organizations, schools and communities wanting to engage in arts activities:

Micro-Grant
March 1, April 1, May 1

Independent Artists
March 15

Artists in Communities*
Artists in Schools*
– Micro-Development
March 10

Permanent Collection Submissions
April 1

Indigenous Peoples Art and Artists
April 15

Artists in Communities*
Artists in Schools*
– Projects
– Residencies
May 1

Prince Edward Arts Scholarship
May 1

For applications, visit: saskartsboard.ca

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Therapy and creativity helped depression, PTSD

By Suliman Adam
For Eagle Feather News

Bill Stevenson's outlook and approach to mental wellness all changed in 2015 after he lost his nephew to suicide.

"His mom had passed away previously, a couple of years prior," recalled Stevenson, 43, who has a background in Human Justice and works as a cultural coordinator and mentor for youth and helps them spend their time in a positive way.

"That weighed on him, it hurt him and haunted him, and he never got over it," Stevenson continued about his nephew. "In the end, he went to look for her.

"That broke me, it hurt me, and I felt myself falling into a depression," he said. "I didn't know if I could move past that."

Stevenson describes his life at the time as going toward a perpetual stupor, but things slowly started to get better as he reached out for help. He promised himself to focus on his health and made a list of the things he could do to eliminate negative habits from his everyday life.

"I'm a creative guy, and during that time, my creativity went to the wayside, so I would engage in creativity, effectively, and work my projects to completion," he said.

Making that list and breaking the cycle would turn his life around.

"Then, I could see that things would get better and they did," he said.

Stevenson also connects his past experiences to the knowledge of social injustices.

"I began to understand that the system was broken and if I wanted to do healing, I would have to work with that, work with the system to make sure others could come to that conclusion in a safe manner," he said.

According to the website of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Canada's largest mental-health teaching hospital and one of the world's leading research centres, "The economic burden of mental illness is estimated at a loss of \$51 billion per year (including) health care costs, lost productivity and reductions in health-related quality of life."

"It's a very large statistic, how much is lost in productivity with employment, people off on leave and people in hospitals," said David Nelson, a retired psychiatric nurse and senior program consultant for the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Saskatchewan Division. Nelson added: "It's a drag on the economy."

Nelson said services and programs offered through CMHA in Saskatchewan include an array of training and educational programs to deal with workplace wellness and suicide-prevention services.

"I think it's really paying off," he said. "People are much more open now. Not totally, there's still a problem, but more are open, talking about some of the issues they have, and not hiding it away, and also going earlier for support," Nelson said.

It can still be difficult for people to reach out for help, according to Cody Hutchinson, a veteran who was diagnosed 14 years ago with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"I think some people would be afraid to learn that," he said of his diagnosis. "But, I was actually relieved, because after six weeks of not knowing what was going on, I was happy to know what the problem was."

Hutchinson, 49, connects his symptoms back to his childhood experiences. His road to healing was supported by group sessions and physical activity.

"It might be something as simple as an outing with the family, or getting out of bed, and some people can't do that," he said.

When a support group he belonged to shut down, he and his peers hosted their own unofficial meetings. "We were the ones that experienced it and we can talk about it."

He emphasized the importance of seeking help.

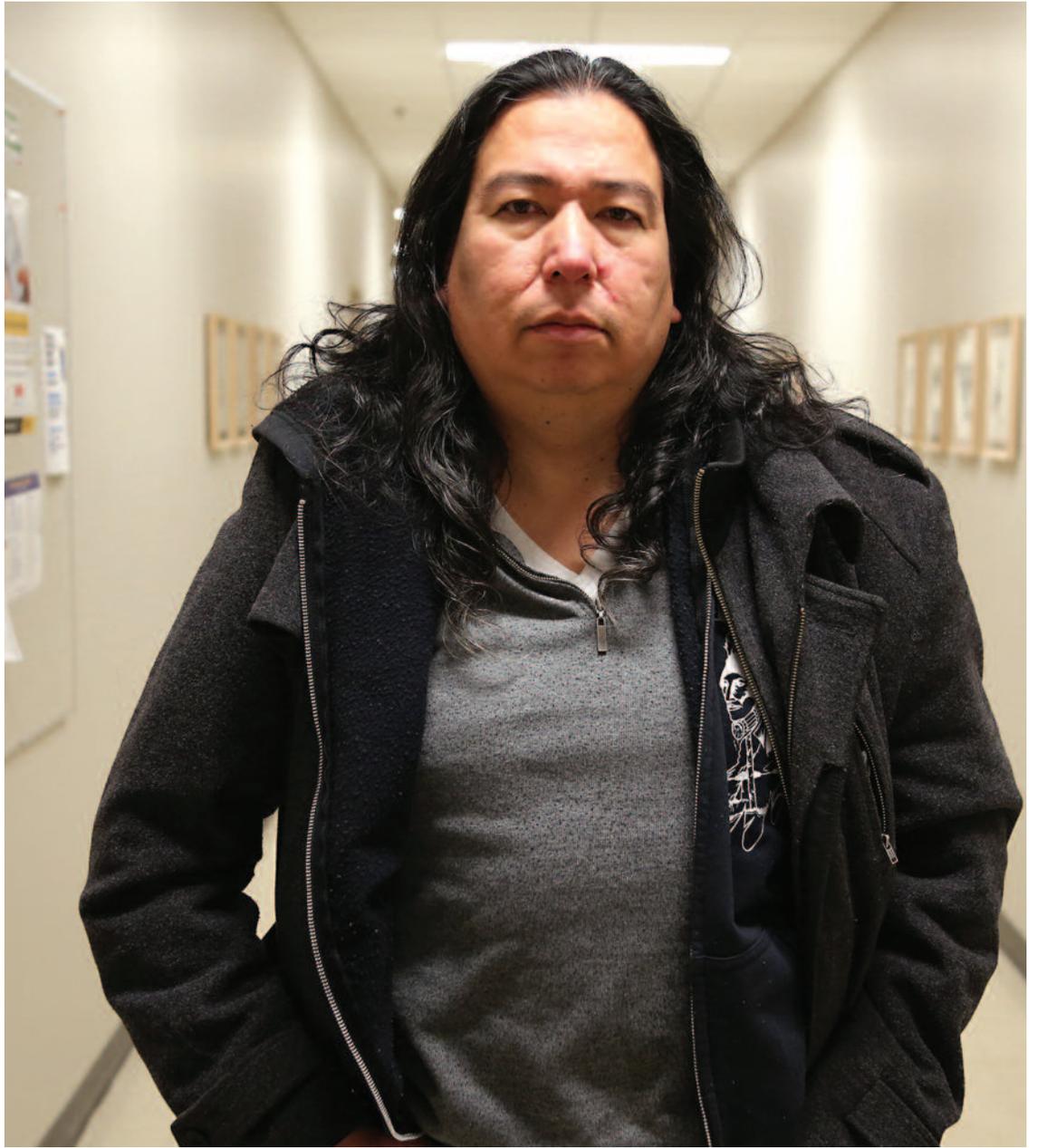
"The worst part is, people can't see a physical sign to mental health," Hutchinson said. "If you break your leg, or something, they can see you in a cast, and they understand it will take six to eight weeks in a cast, maybe a bit of rehab, and after rehab you're pretty close to being back to normal.

"But, with a mental health problem, it's something they can't see and there's a huge stigma about it."

Hutchinson believes there is a generational aspect involved.

"A lot of older people, they're the generation that says, 'We don't talk about that kind of stuff. We don't want to hear about it.' I know for myself, I have come a long way, but will I ever be 100 per cent like the way I was before? Probably not, but I'm OK with that."

Anyone experiencing crisis can call the Canada Suicide Prevention Service at 1-833-456-4566.



Bill Stevenson, 43, cultural coordinator and mentor for the youth, after attending an event at First Nations University.



2020 National Housing and Infrastructure Forum and Tradeshow

First Nations Control: Transformative Change in Housing and Infrastructure

March 10-12, 2020

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The forum will feature plenary sessions and interactive workshops on the long-term approach for First Nations Housing and related Infrastructure for First Nations and for First Nations members who live in urban, rural, and northern areas. The forum will also focus on operations and maintenance (O&M) with an emphasis on adopting an Asset Management Planning (AMP) approach.

Please watch for updates at www.afn.ca or email any questions to AFNHousingforum2020@afn.ca or call toll-free: **1-866-869-6789**.

Payepot students with disabilities now able to ride the bus to school

**By Julia Peterson
For Eagle Feather News**

The wheels on the bus are going 'round and 'round for students with disabilities at Chief Payepot School, now that their new mobility van has arrived. The van has been bringing three disabled students to and from school since the end of December.

Principal Nicole Crowe, whose 16-year-old niece Alashia uses the van, says its arrival was an emotional experience.

"When I found out, I did shed some

and I didn't want the same thing to happen to this little boy."

Charlene Fourhorns, Ben's grandmother, says the mobility van has made a positive difference in her family's daily routine.

"It's made transportation for Ben to school a whole lot easier," she said.

"Before, we were having our own little struggles to get him there. And now, just having that opportunity for him to have his own bus really made a difference, and we see it in him. He's really ex-



16-year-old Alashia rides the mobility van to Chief Payepot School. The van was funded by Jordan's Principle and delivered by Move Mobility at the end of December. (Photo submitted)

tears, because it was such a barrier that we've crossed," she said. "I wish we would have looked into this sooner for my niece."

The van was funded by Jordan's Principle, an organization that makes sure all First Nations children living in Canada can access the products, services and supports they need. Crowe began the process of applying for the van over the summer after she learned that one of her new students, Ben, uses a wheelchair.

"Over the summer, I found out that we have a little boy that was starting kindergarten that's in a wheelchair," she said.

"And it scared me, because I thought of my niece – who had trouble getting to school since kindergarten –

cited to go to school, he waits for his bus, and when he gets home, he's happy."

Fourhorns is particularly pleased that Ben will now be able to go on field trips, since he missed out on opportunities in the fall.

"We were a little disappointed because, during the Agribition week, Ben wasn't able to go simply because we didn't have a way to take him," she said. "So, he had to stay home."

For Fourhorns, the most important feature of the mobility van is that it allows Ben to be more included in school life.

"The one thing I've learned with Ben is that I don't want him to be treated different, and him not having a bus kind of put him there," she said. "But now, because they have their own bus, they're like all the other kids."



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Indigenous Women's Digital Health Stories: A form of advocacy and reconciliation in healthcare

ByEFN Staff

Indigenous women's health stories are complex and accessing culturally appropriate healthcare is challenging.

Shelley Wiart, co-founded Women Warriors, an Indigenous focused, holistic health program that helps Indigenous women share their health stories.

The program also provides free fitness classes and nutrition education.

"The participants shared their personal stories of negative experiences with healthcare providers in our round circle discussions and one-on-one with me," Wiart said.

"Also, they expressed the desire to share positive stories of their community and culture because of the negative media and stereotypes of Indigenous peoples in Canada."

She said healthcare professionals often don't understand how intergenerational trauma and the legacy of residential school can impact Indigenous women's health or the challenges they can face accessing quality health care.

Wiart created five digital stories about Indigenous women—two from the Onion Lake area near Lloydminster, Alberta, where she currently lives, and three from Yellowknife, NWT, where her family is from.

In the online videos of health stories, Indigenous women share their experience but also their traditional knowledge and healing practices and service needs.

The videos also educate non-Indigenous people about traditional healing practices among different Indigenous groups, bridging the gap between western medicine and Indigenous medicine.

"Indigenous women need more spaces to tell their own stories in their own voices," Wiart said, adding the women had complete control over their stories, from writing to selecting photos and music in the videos.

The project goal is to share stories to increase healthcare providers' understanding of Indigenous women's health and foster reconciliation in healthcare. Wiart

shared the videos at public event in August in Yellowknife.

She has also shared them with medical residents at the University of Calgary, has spoken



(Above) Dr. Paul Naude and Shelley Wiart presenting at Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nation Simon and Alma Community Hall on Tuesday, Jan 28. (Photo by Shelley Wiart) (Left) The gathering in Yellowknife at the Indigenous women's health stories community event. It is all the digital storyteller presenters and a community elder. From left to right: Maxine Desjarlais, Back row: Beatrice Harper, Shelley Wiart. Front row: Gail Cyr, Dorothy Weyallon, Sheryl Liske and Tanya Roach. (Photo by James O'Connor Limited)

about the stories on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and was invited to present at the government of the Northwest Territories cultural competency training.

More recently, she was invited to present alongside Dr. Paul Naude, a family physician to Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nations.

"I was excited because I felt like I could do a better job just talking to Indigenous communities, sharing the videos with them, and giving them some help with advocacy and using their own stories to transform the healthcare system," Wiart said.

The five digital stories can be viewed on the Women Warriors website www.womenwarriors.club.

Shelley Wiart is Métis and a member of the North Slave Métis Alliance, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. She is currently enrolled full-time at Athabasca University in her fourth year of a four-year B.A. degree – Concentration: Sociology, Minor: Women & Gender Studies. She is the co-founder of an Indigenous focused holistic health program, Women Warriors aimed at improving Indigenous women's health outcomes.

Contract employment opportunity

Cultural Advisor/Elder Services Saskatoon Provincial Correctional Centre

The Saskatoon Provincial Correctional Centre is looking for a motivated, energetic and flexible individual who can facilitate Cultural/Spiritual Programming to offenders within the Centre. Resumes will be accepted until February 21, 2020.

Advisors/Elders will attend to the cultural and spiritual needs of the offenders within the centre.

Cultural Advisors/Elders selected will have a working knowledge and/or expertise in the delivery of the following areas: teaching in the area of traditional ceremonies including, but not limited to the sweat lodge and pipe ceremonies, understanding the cultural practices of First Nation and Métis people, provide individual counseling and sharing circles to offenders. You will act as a resource to the Cultural/Community Co-ordinator and Correctional centre staff to increase understanding and sensitivity of the First Nation culture, traditions, spirituality, practices and beliefs.

Cultural Advisors/Elders are contracted to provide services to a maximum of 40 hours per week at a rate of \$33.00 per hour. Service Agreements can be picked up at the Saskatoon Provincial Correctional Centre.

Advisors/Elders must obtain a Criminal Record Check (Vulnerable Sector) prior to being awarded this contract and obey all rules and regulations of the Correctional Centre while employed at the centre.

Send resumes to:

Diane Houk, Deputy Director Programs
Saskatoon Provincial Correctional Centre
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Saskatchewan

Bison return to Wanuskewin

By John Lagimodiere
Of Eagle Feather News

There are six pregnant bison yearlings just hanging out at Wanuskewin right now.

Dr. Ernie Walker, the founder and heart of Wanuskewin calls the development a 'miracle.' These remarkable animals are going to be the foundation of the Wanuskewin herd that will hopefully launch the Park into UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

These bison are of excellent lineage. According to Dr. Walker, when the last of the bison were on the plains in 1872, a man found six orphaned calves from one of the last herds. He took them and raised them and grew quite a large herd on the Flathead Reservation in the United States. The American government decided to reduce the size of the reservation and the gentleman eventually sold the small herd to another couple men on the same Reservation. They grew the herd to about 800 animals but because of loss of land, the herd had to be sold.

"We are building a conservation herd unlike any other one that I can think of," said Dr. Walker at an event to welcome the bison.

"It will always be a small herd, but the foundations for the next five years are clearly there. You have to understand how precious these bison are. This isn't just Wanuskewin bringing some bison and dumping them off of a stock trailer. These animals are going to be pampered. They are precious. They are sacred."

The return of the bison was made possible by a generous donation from the Brownlee Foundation. Since 2013, Wayne Brownlee has been involved with Wanuskewin as co-chair of the Thundering Ahead campaign, as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, and as a donor. His urge to "think bigger" prompted Wanuskewin's visionary plans for expansion.

"I have had the good fortune of traveling many places around the world and seeing historic sites. I was always disappointed we didn't have ones here. Growing up, I learned about history from the 1700s forward. But when I got introduced to Ernie and Wanuskewin and I learned what was here, I



Dr. Ernie Walker, founder and the heart of Wanuskewin regaled the audience with the lineage of the herd of bison that will be at home at Wanuskewin Heritage Park.
(Photo by John Lagimodiere)

In 1907, those Plains bison from the last wild herds were bought by the Government of Canada and were shipped to Elk Island National Park near Edmonton. A total of 71 plains bison from Elk Island were transferred to Grasslands National Park in 2005.

In late November 2019, Parks Canada selected six healthy bison (female yearlings) for transfer from Grasslands National Park to Wanuskewin. And in December 2019, those historic animals were transported more than 400 kilometres, from Grasslands to Wanuskewin, and in front of elders, Wanuskewin staff and with a bison song being sung, they were released. The bison finally came home to Wanuskewin.

"The miracle here is this. There was an opportunity to get some other animals from the United States. When a very special bull bison from Yellowstone National Park joins the herd soon, the genetics of the herd can be traced straight back to the ones that roamed the plains.

realized we are just missing so much history here that we can bring to life," said Brownlee of his family's reason behind the donation.

"We need to build more understanding and for people to get along in this province. This is a legacy for a long time."

Thundering Ahead was publicly launched in 2017 to raise funds for Wanuskewin's capital expansion, grassland restoration, UNESCO World Heritage designation and return of the bison. This national capital fundraising campaign has brought together donors and supporters from across North America to see this extraordinary renewal to fruition.

The Brownlee Family Foundation has donated \$5 million to Wanuskewin's Thundering Ahead campaign to initiate the return of the bison to this national historic site. The Bison Facilities at Wanuskewin will be named for the Brownlee Family.



Gilles Dorval retiring after three decades with City of Saskatoon

By Andréa Ledding
For Eagle Feather News

Gilles Dorval is retiring from his position with the City of Saskatoon after over 30 years of hard work advocating for better relationships with Indigenous peoples in various communities.

"Gilles has been working as co-chair with me for Reconciliation Saskatoon since 2016, and he's a real champion in the community of Saskatoon, advocating and pushing for change," said Rhett Sangster of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC).

"Gilles has relationships with everyone in the community, and I just have a lot of respect for him."

Sangster notes that Dorval's intentions are good and everyone trusts him, "because he's in for the right reasons, so Indigenous peoples benefit the same ways anyone else benefits."

Reconciliation Saskatoon was one of many communities to celebrate Dorval in January as he wraps up his time with the City, honouring him with a lunchtime meal, star blanket and honour song.

"We recognize all the hard work he's done and good relationships he's created, and recognize that we couldn't have done it without him," said Sangster.

"Everyone wrote in a book good wishes for him, it's an opportunity for the community to recognize him and tell him how much we valued him. We'll miss him and look forward to his success in his next stage of life."

Dorval looks forward to the next stages too, but enjoyed looking back at his career.

"I really tried to represent change within our systems and organizations and communities to increase the quality of life for Indigenous citizens in Saskatoon and surrounding region," said Dorval, adding that everyone worked together to find out what the issues were, and to create real and lasting changes.

The 2012 Truth and Reconciliation event was a highlight.

"That really provided an opportunity for our community to come together and work towards that positive change ... acknowledging the truth of our shared history. We want to share this land, so we need to understand our shared history and what impact that had on the fabric of our lives."

He feels that this has brought about uplifting change and optimism from partners, the Indigenous community, and investors.

"We've had these opportunity to work together to enhance the training and economic and working opportunities – lots of Indigenous languages and employment opportunities, as well as Indigenous businesses," said Dorval, adding there has been support for addressing racism and discrimination, and many wonderful organizations such as the OTC, Gabriel Dumont Institute and Saskatchewan Indigenous Institute of Technologies.

"We have mutual areas of common interest where we can pool our resources to see things come to a reality."

Other highlights include raising Indigenous flags at city hall and other locations, introducing smudging policies, and working on the naming policy which led to the designation of Chief Mistawasis Bridge.

"Wichitowin Conference is going into its sixth year now and we continually have more and more delegates from all across Canada," added Dorval, noting other developments such as the Pathway to Reconciliation Program which develops Reconciliation ambassadors internally.

"Reconciliation Saskatoon has grown to 98 organizations (which) have joined us on our journey to reconciliation.

"It's been a really rewarding fulfilling career and it's all because of people in the community, I learn so much from different individuals, especially the old people that share their stories in the journey," said Dorval.

"I get paid by government but I work for the people. At times I've been caught in the middle but when we pull together and don't get polarized and can have brave conversations: that's how we see real progress."

Student amputee copes with depression

**By Adeoluwa Atayero
For Eagle Feather News**

Kerry Benjoe decided in 2018 that she was going to have her leg amputated.

The Indigenous journalist and graduate student at the University of Regina's School of Journalism, had suffered a foot injury about five years ago.

She believes knowing the options gave her the strength to make the decision alone. As she expected, the news was received with some tearful reactions from her family members.

"My mother is a very strong woman and I have only seen her cry twice, the day I told her about my deci-

ing to cover my leg that I had to come to terms with the idea that I wasn't me anymore.

"I did not leave my house for about a month. The reality that I had to give up my career as a journalist started to really hit me and I slid into a depression."

Benjoe credits making it past that dark mental state to three major things: writing, going out for wings with her friends and her son, Chance Deneyou, a first-year student at the University of Regina.

"Chance was the main person who made sure I was taking all my medication, eating and ensuring that I had someone with me when I needed it the most," she said.

For Deneyou, being his mom's rock was a privilege.

"I saw it as a way to give back to her for all the years she has taken care of me," Deneyou said. "I love my mom."

Benjoe had a support system, but some Indigenous students do not have the same help.

Shadi Beshai, associate professor

of psychology at the University of Regina, says that despite Saskatchewan's high number of Indigenous people, services are lacking.

"I was dismayed to find out that Indigenous people here don't have a lot of mental health options specific to their needs and cultural orientation," he said.

Beshai plans to provide Indigenous students at the U of R with a mindfulness-based intervention that he'll adapt to the needs of Indigenous people.

His team includes Brenda Green, associate professor of Indigenous Health Studies at First Nations University of Canada.

Beshai will use a \$165,000 grant from the Canada Institutes of Health Research on the three-year project.

The team will begin recruitment next year as well as create a guideline for the mindfulness treatment as it concerns Indigenous people. After it has been tested on a small group of students, Beshai hopes the project will start a conversation about using mindfulness as a cross-cultural tool for mental health.

Kerry Benjoe and son, Chancellor Deneyou, having a moment in the hallway of the U of R, where they are both enrolled as students.



Benjoe describes herself as "an independent, single mom who work(s) in a field that helped me tell the stories of Indigenous people."

Sharing stories through her writing was a passion Benjoe thought she might have to give up.

"I dealt with the pain secretly for a long time, but after a while, I could not deal with it anymore," Benjoe said about the ordeal. She made up her mind after learning all the treatment options from her doctor.

"I made the decision to go through the surgery by myself," she said. "For me, the possibility of amputation was always at the back of my mind. I did not have to, but I realized, if I don't do it now, I would have to do it at some point."

sion and the day of the surgery," Benjoe said.

"It made me feel in a way that I was the cause of her pain."

Along with the physical pain she was experiencing, Benjoe took on this emotional burden, too.

"I knew I had to be strong for everyone, so I did my best to always have a smile on and stay brave," Benjoe said.

She recognizes now, that by not dealing with her mental status upfront, she started a downward spiral that hit bottom in May.

"I had these little milestones in the hospital, like being able to walk, that gave me strength," she said.

"It was when spring came that I had to decide whether or not I was go-

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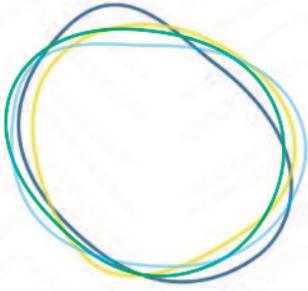
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These are just a few of the 1300 SUNTEP Alumni GDI has across the province.
(Photo by Peter Beszterda)

Gabriel Dumont Institute

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Gabriel Dumont Institute has turned 40.

“It’s pretty impressive to think about the impact we’ve had on Saskatchewan and the number of people we’ve trained,” said GDI executive director Geordy McCaffrey.

To celebrate the anniversary, GDI hosted a two-day Métis culture conference in Saskatoon, including a dinner where they inducted new members to the Order of Gabriel Dumont.

“It’s really overwhelming, seeing alumni and all the people from the community who have supported GDI and recognized the importance of having a Métis controlled institution.”

McCaffrey has been affiliated with GDI for 27 years – first as a SUNTEP student, eventually working his way up to executive director – and has witnessed its growth from a small institution to providing diverse, Métis-centred educational services across the province.

“We really try to create a culture where people feel welcome and believed in, so they can succeed,” said McCaffrey.

“Coming to GDI was a life changing moment for me. I didn’t have much confidence, and didn’t see myself as a teacher or professional. But stepping into that SUNTEP classroom, I saw my culture and that I belonged. Through that process I built up my confidence, and I know we’ve done that for many people.”

In its 40 years, GDI has provided over 1,300 students with Bachelor of Education degrees, established services in 11 communities and created partnerships with the universities in Saskatoon and Regina, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and regional colleges. They are the largest employer of Métis people in the province.

“I was around when it started. To see 40 years of this, not only education for our young people, but the people who came back to go to school, that’s something that never

Mission S

To promote the renewal and development of Métis research, materials development, those materials and the design, Métis-specific educational programs



Order of Gabriel Dumont Gold Medal recipient Clement Chartier
(Photo submitted by Métis National Council)



Order of Gabriel Dumont Silver Medal Recipient Norma Welsh
(Photo by Peter Beszterda)



Order of Gabriel Dumont Medal recipients Clement Chartier and Katrina Barkwell who accepted the award from Glenn Lafleur who posed for an historic photo at the gala.

A huge thank you to all of the sponsors of the Gabriel Dumont Institute’s 40th Anniversary Conference and Gala!



MÉTIS NATION



ite celebrates 40 years

could've happened without GDI," said Nora Cummings, Métis elder and founder of the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association.

"I'm so proud to see that our Métis people have an institution to educate Métis people," she said. "That's why I feel GDI is an important part of our nation. In fact, I think it may be the most important part of our Métis Nation."

New inductees to the Order of Gabriel Dumont, the Métis Nation's highest honour, included gold medal recipients, fiddler John Arcand, President of the Métis National Council Clement Chartier QC, and historian Lawrence Barkwell who received the award posthumously which was accepted by his daughter, Katrina Barkwell.

Silver awards were presented to Norma Welsh of Regina and Glenn Lafleur of Beauval.

Statement
Development of Métis culture through
collection and distribution of
development and delivery of
ams and services.

The celebration was steeped in Métis culture, and included workshops on embroidery, jigging, beadwork, sash finger-weaving, ribbon skirts, genealogy, square dancing, song writing, fiddling, memoir writing, and flora. Métis musicians John Arcand, Donny Parenteau, Jess Lee, Lucas Welsh, Tahnis Cunningham, Angela Rancourt and Julianna Parenteau delivered a powerful showcase at the gala.

Karon Shmon, GDI Director of Métis Culture and Heritage, reflected on SUNTEP and the impact of there being a Métis-represented teaching force in the province.

"There is a twofold purpose in that: to have Métis children and families see that this is something they can aspire to, and for everyone to see that a capable Métis person can take on a leadership role while bringing Métis content to the classroom," she said.

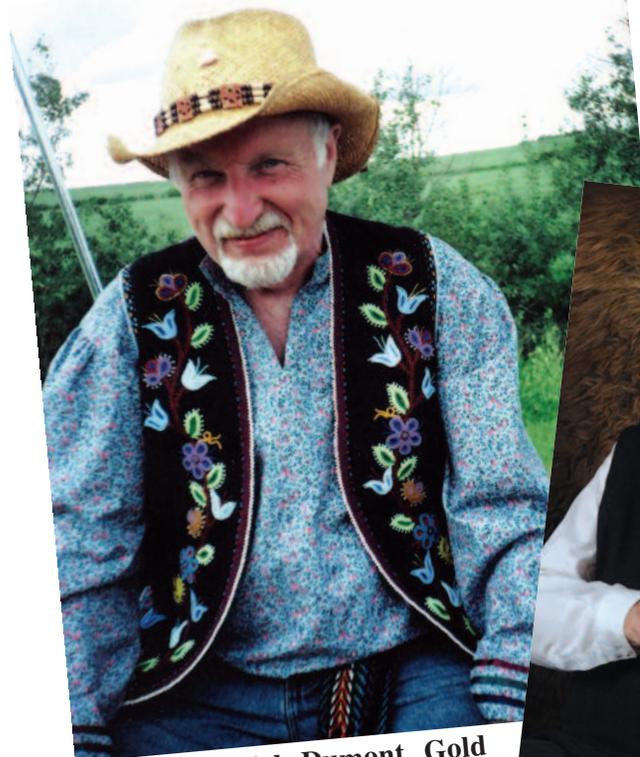
"It's really a celebration of how much GDI has grown in 40 years. Our people called for a way to be educated in a culturally affirming way, where our culture and heritage would be preserved," she said. "Now, all our programs are infused with Métis culture so people can reclaim their cultural grounding."



These current GDI students all received the Order of Dumont Bronze Award. (Photo by Peter Beszterda)



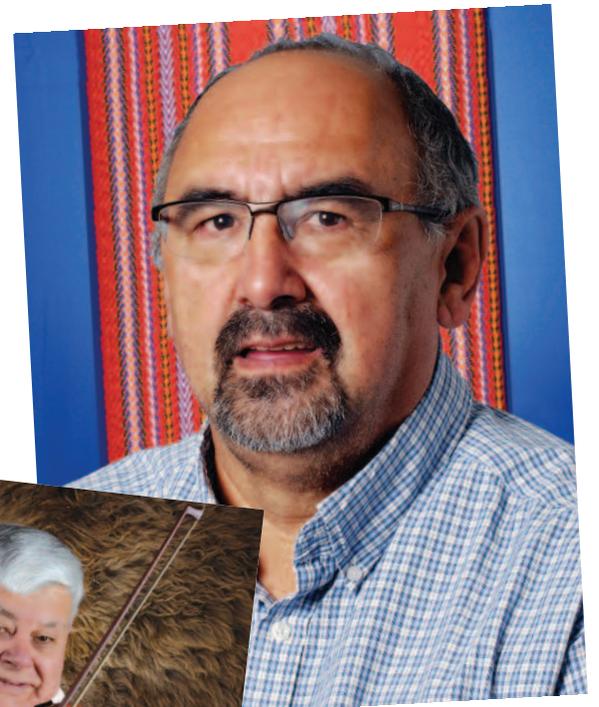
ment Chartier, John Arcand, Norma Welsh, and the honour on behalf of her father Lawrence (Photo by Juli Labrecque)



Order of Gabriel Dumont Gold Medal recipient Lawrence Barkwell (Photo courtesy GDI Collection)



Order of Gabriel Dumont Gold Medal recipient John Arcand (Photo submitted by John Arcand)



Order of Gabriel Dumont Silver Medal Recipient Glenn Lafleur (Photo submitted by Glenn Lafleur)



Schofield finds life after trauma, addictions

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

At 15 years old, motivational speaker Niall Schofield lost his brother to a drunk driver.

Since that day, Schofield has battled through many highs and lows, but that memory of his brother has remained at the forefront of everything he does.

"I've learned, through these traumas I've faced, that you have to confront your fears. It's important to have fear because fear can drive or propel you forward from something you couldn't do normally," said Schofield.

It was a sense of duty that initially started his venture into motivational speaking. At 17 he began sharing the experience and pain of losing his brother at speaking engagements.

But Schofield, who is also a Sixties Scoop survivor and was sexually assaulted at a young age, began seeking comfort for his traumas through substance.

Now, in addition to motivational speaking, Schofield is an author, the Diversity and Inclusion Program Coordinator at DyMark Industries, clothing-line owner, and driving force behind Western Canada's premiere BMX park.

"The BMX track all goes back to my brother," said Schofield. "It was a big part of our youth, so it was something I was inspired to do for him."

To build the track, located in Warman, Schofield enlisted former Olympian rider Trent Jones to help design a track, and received over a million dollars of financial support from local businesses and industry, including a significant contribution from DyMark.

The track was completed a year ago and is growing fast. The number of riders quickly surged from 23 to 54 and is projected to attract more than a hundred in the coming year.

Through the project, Schofield caught the attention of DyMark, a com-



Niall Schofield representing DyMark Industries at an employers event.

"I went through an addiction with multiple drugs and alcohol. I had a 23-year addiction, and went down a really deep hole," said Schofield.

Four years ago, Schofield said he had a 'spiritual awakening'. He got sober and began speaking again. And it was around that time, during the Northern Saskatchewan suicide crisis, that he committed to another huge change: he dropped everything from his life in Vancouver and drove to Saskatchewan.

"I felt a really powerful calling. I wanted to see if I could make a difference, impact people through my experience with addictions and suicide prevention," said Schofield.

When Schofield speaks, he is unreserved, drawing on his own struggles and life. He speaks on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD, a condition of which he suffers), suicide prevention, fear, love, and chasing your dreams.

"I tell people that trauma is not having a voice. It comes from burying your hurt, not having a platform or voice to move forward," he said.

pany that specializes in the design, manufacture, finishing and erection of structural steel, miscellaneous metals and custom fabrication projects.

"They created a new position for me. It's a dream job. And it can only happen from a company that has great leadership and a greater vision in moving together towards reconciliation."

The position, which was created in response to the TRC Calls to Action, has increased Indigenous employment and supports initiatives that benefit Indigenous communities.

Schofield's newest venture, his own clothing line, is inspired by his family. He named it Douglas Bird to honour the parents from whom he was taken - Douglas Whitehawk and Alice Bird.

"Douglas Bird clothing represents overcoming your fears, dealing with your demons, overcoming trauma, and moving forward," said Schofield.

I've seen that everybody faces trauma. So, my focus is to give Indigenous people hope and face whatever they're going through on the inside."



Niall Schofield (centre) and models wearing his clothing-line, Douglas Bird.

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Harris Sutherland, in the middle holding a gavel, was surrounded by friends and family when he was sworn in as the first First Nations Chair of the North Battleford Chamber of Commerce.

Gold Eagle Casino operations manager new chair of Battlefords Chamber

By Lisa Pitzel
For Eagle Feather News

Harris Sutherland, the operations manager of Gold Eagle Casino in North Battleford, is the incoming chair of the Battlefords Chamber of Commerce.

Sutherland, who originates from the Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation (BOCN) is the first First Nations chair in the 114-year history of the chamber. He was honoured with a star blanket which was presented to him at the induction, by Chief Roy Petit of Beardy's Okemasis Cree Nation. Some of Sutherland's family were in attendance.

"We are so proud of my nephew, Harris. He will be very good as the chair because he already has done so much in his life," said his aunt Francene Okemaysim.

Sutherland has served on council at BOCN, has worked with Indigenous Child and Family Services and has volunteered with many organizations, she said.

Sutherland believes that partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people will help boost the economy in the area. With the connections he has made since moving to North Battleford in 2010, he feels he can help continue the work the chamber has already done to engage with Indigenous people.

"The partnerships we build will open doors and minds and will also correct some misconceptions people might have about First Nations," he said.

"The Battlefords Chamber of Commerce is a leader in the work it does with Indigenous people," he said.

Sutherland is a member of the Battlefords Education and Special Events Committee, the Community Reputation Committee and the Battlefords Business Excellence Community. He is a volunteer with the Battlefords District Food and Resource Centre, Meals on Wheels, the Battlefords Boys and Girls Club, the Battlefords Business Excellence Community and the chamber's golf tournament fundraiser.

Linda Machniak, executive director of the Chamber, feels the impact Harris makes with the community in his role as chair, will be very positive.

In 2006 the Chamber received an award for its Indigenous initiatives and is acknowledged as a leading chamber in the province, Machniak said.

"We are implementing initiatives based on the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Call to Action #92, which includes ensuring that Aboriginal people have equitable access to jobs and training in the corporate sector.

"We also want to provide education to all our members about the history of Indigenous people in our area," she said.

The Chamber will provide a series of training programs to promote Indigenous awareness. The sessions will take place on Feb. 26 and Oct. 8.

"Level 1 will discuss the history of treaties and residential schools and their impacts. We have a lot of members interested already," stated Machniak.

Sutherland feels encouraged by the commitment in the community towards reconciliation and inclusion. He wants to educate the public about the many Indigenous business owners in the province.

"One of my goals is to have a business directory available that showcases Indigenous businesses. We can build more partnerships and people will be aware of the many businesses owned by First Nations and Metis people," he said.

Building bridges and partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is of utmost importance to him.

"My ultimate goal, as chair, is to build a sense of community. That is the legacy I would like to leave," he said.

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A horse therapy program in the Qu'Appelle Valley helps those who struggle with mental illnesses, trauma and behavioural issues in a six-week program.

Photos submitted)

Indigenous horse therapy program aids students' confidence, behaviour

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Horses are helping students from Chief Payepot School to cope with emotional issues.

"(My students) had different issues, from behavioural to suicide and all kinds of things. We figured this would be a good program for them," said learning resource teacher, Gaylene Brady.

"When we first took them out, they were hesitant. By the time the six weeks was up, they were actually on the horses and riding them. Especially the ones with the behavioural (issues). They learned to control their emotions instead of having outbursts because the horses are very receptive to that so the horses would act out. That

"... we do understand the horses and the healing powers of the horses."

was a big thing for a lot of them."

Brady took students to Takoza Tipi Camp located in the Qu'Appelle Valley south of Katepwa Lake, where they participated in Takoza Equine Assisted Traditional Alternative Therapy.

The program addresses mental, emotional, and behavioral issues affecting youth in Saskatchewan.

Knowledge Keeper Timothy Haywahe from the Carry The Kettle First Nation has been operating the program for 20 years.

Brady knew her students would benefit after seeing how Haywahe worked so diligently with her students.

"For the students who were shy or closed in, Tim taught them how to use their voices and to bring it out," she said.

"He would empower them and taught them how to work with the horses. He has a knack on knowing what each student needs without me telling

him what they need."

Haywahe created his own horse therapy after he and his family saw other equine services working with Indigenous communities were lacking something vital in their programs.

"They weren't addressing our core areas of development in the holistic understanding of the medicine wheel," he said. "We're not therapists, by any means, but we do understand the horses and the healing powers of the horses. So, we intertwined those together."

Haywahe runs the program with four trained and certified equine facilitators including himself. The cost of equine programs across the province ranges anywhere from \$350 to \$500.

As a way of giving back, Haywahe charges \$140 per person for six weeks. The program runs for three to four hours a day with a lunch included. Haywahe said they didn't want to charge a lot because the traditional knowledge used in the program was handed down to them and it's their way of sharing that with those they serve.

"I like that he (uses) a traditional aspect. He's not speaking down on the students, everybody is equal. It doesn't matter if you are a student, teacher or a volunteer. At the program, everybody has a voice and that's what I love about it," said Brady.

"I plan on taking ten more students in the spring."

The Takoza Equine Assisted Traditional Alternative Therapy program can be found on the Takoza Tipi Camp website.

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Leanne Lewis took advantage of a new program to earn her nursing degree.

Student overcomes fear to become nurse

By Lisa Pitzel
For Eagle Feather News

Leanne Lewis laughs as she recounts her fears of pursuing her dream of becoming a nurse, that is, until she heard about a new program offered by the College of Nursing and Onion Lake Cree Nation.

“I have always wanted to become a nurse. My fear and lack of self-confidence stopped me from moving forward. I doubted myself. My fear was being the only First Nation student and not being able to rely on anyone,” said Lewis.

Then an opportunity came where Onion Lake Cree Nation and the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing collaborated and gave members of Onion Lake the opportunity to do their pre-professional year at home.

“I was living in Armstrong B.C. when I received a call from my mom who reminded me that this was the chance I was waiting for.”

Lewis knew that obtaining her degree was going to be challenging but never dreamed how difficult it would be to be separated from her family.

“My husband Gary and my four kids were getting ready to move to Saskatoon and then we had a discussion and we had to make the tough decision for me to move alone. I did not want to leave, it was so hard on all of us, but we always said it would pay off in the long run,” she said.

Some of the challenges were particularly difficult for Lewis but she persevered.

“I made the drive home most weekends, and my family would sometimes come to Saskatoon to spend time with me. During midterms or when assignments were due, I wouldn’t see my family for weeks at a time.

“I worked when I came home, I tried to be there for my family but there was a lot of guilt for missing things like Christmas concerts and birthdays,” Lewis states.

There were many times Lewis wanted to give up because of the guilt she experienced from being away from her family.

“I tried to quit in my third year. My husband and children would not allow me to quit and I made them proud by graduating. My next challenge is the National Council Licensure Examination. I will write that in March,” she said.

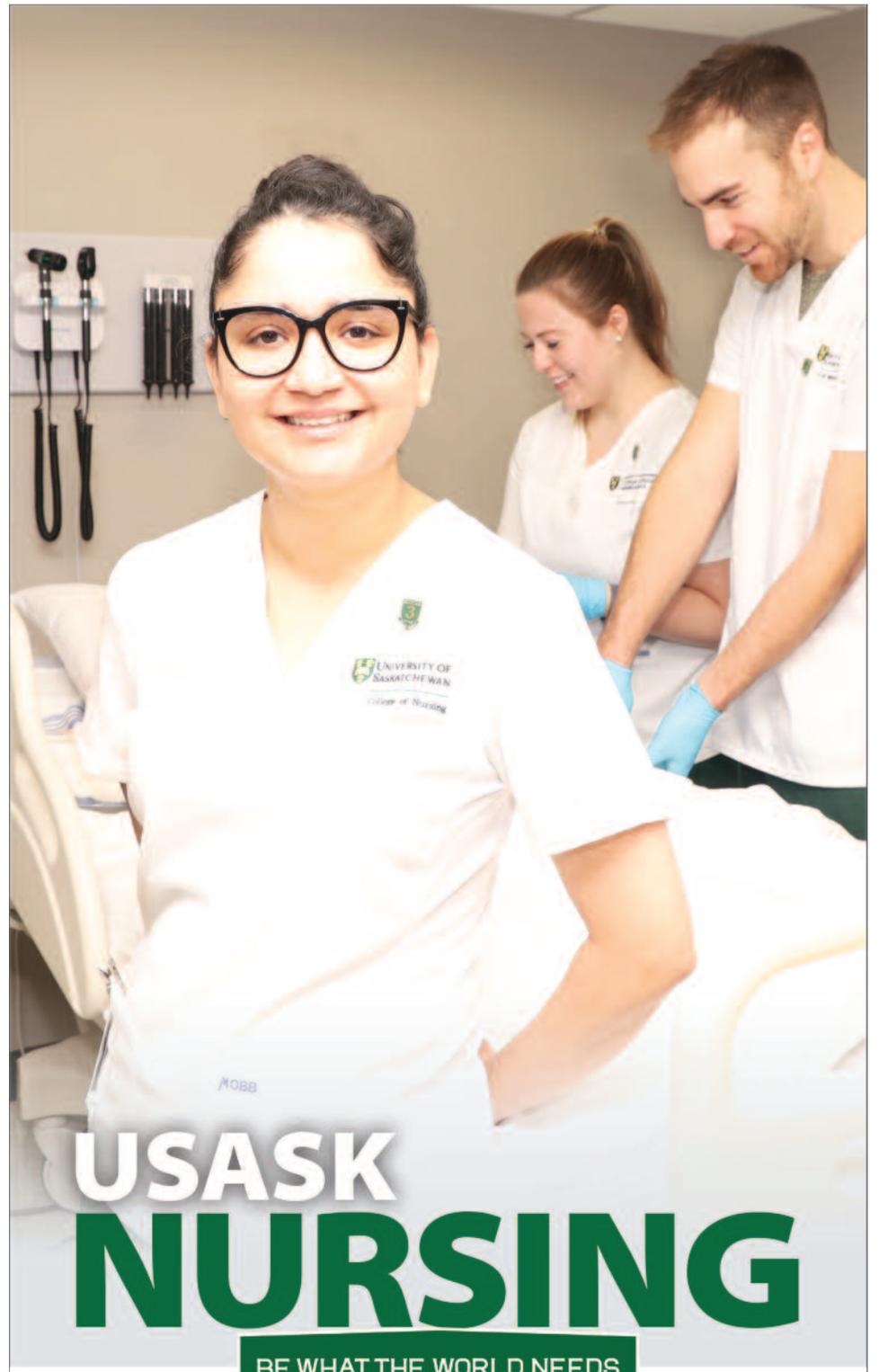
Lewis completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program in June 2019 and was one of the first students to enter the program as part of the MOU with Onion Lake Cree Nation.

“The college’s program, Learn Where You Live, fit perfectly with the mandate of our reserve. They have a strategic plan that includes us as First Nations people gaining leadership roles once we have the education,” Lewis said.

“This mandate helped me to get the job I have now as a home care nurse.”

When asked how the program helped her Lewis said, “The program made me realize who I was and how proud I am of being a First Nations Cree Woman from Onion Lake.

“I also encourage all young people considering nursing as a career to push themselves and they will be amazed at how resilient and strong they are.”



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Gamble sharing lesson learned the hard way

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

Beading and doing puzzles are two of the activities that keep April Gamble's mind busy as she recovers in Saskatoon's City Hospital after she survived a car accident.

On Nov. 17, 2019, Gamble was driving home to Saskatoon from work in Prince Albert. She grabbed some take-out at a drive-thru restaurant and embarked on her ride home. She was five kilometres past the town of Hague when she remembered the burger.

As she started to eat it, she kept a close eye on the vehicle in front of her. It took a split second for her to look down and then back up to realize the vehicle in front of her was no longer there but instead, she saw a semi-truck on the right shoulder.

It was a split second that changed her life.

"I can remember waking up and thinking 'stay calm and breathe'. And that's what I did, I stayed calm," said Gamble, who comes from the Beardy's and Ojibway Cree Nation.

Gamble had smashed right into the semi, totaling her SUV. She tried to pry the door open but it was jammed. She was finally pulled out of the vehicle by emergency responders.

"Once they've given me pain medication, the (paramedics) said, 'We can either take you to Rosthern (hospital) or to Saskatoon.' I told them, 'I don't want to die in Rosthern, just take me to Saskatoon. All my kids are at home'," she said.

"I remember being in the trauma room and seeing lights and faces of my family talking over me. (My partner) Eddie was there and whispered in my ear 'you scared me'."

Gamble was in excruciating pain. She sustained a broken wrist, a shattered ankle, a dislocated knee, a fractured sternum and painful bruising from the seat-belt.

Now Gamble is learning how to walk again.

"My daughter is expecting in March and all I kept thinking 'my baby is having a baby' and I was so scared that I wouldn't have been there for her," she said. "My partner and I's bond is stronger. He's been with me almost every day."

Gamble has three children aged 23, 17 and 12. Her daughter Dayzha has taken on the role of her mother to look after the household and her little brother. It was a pivotal moment in her life that she realized she had to grow up fast.

"It was hard. I was so used to seeing my mom every morning and when she got home from work," she said.

"It was quiet during Christmas without her. I will never think of Christmas the same. (Before the accident) I wanted a pair of shoes for Christmas and when Christmas came around, the only gift I wanted was my mom to be home."

That wish will soon come true as Gamble is set to return home within a month where she will forever cherish each day with her family.

"There's an appreciation for life," she said. "The fear of what could have been really leveled us and we know now that life is precious."

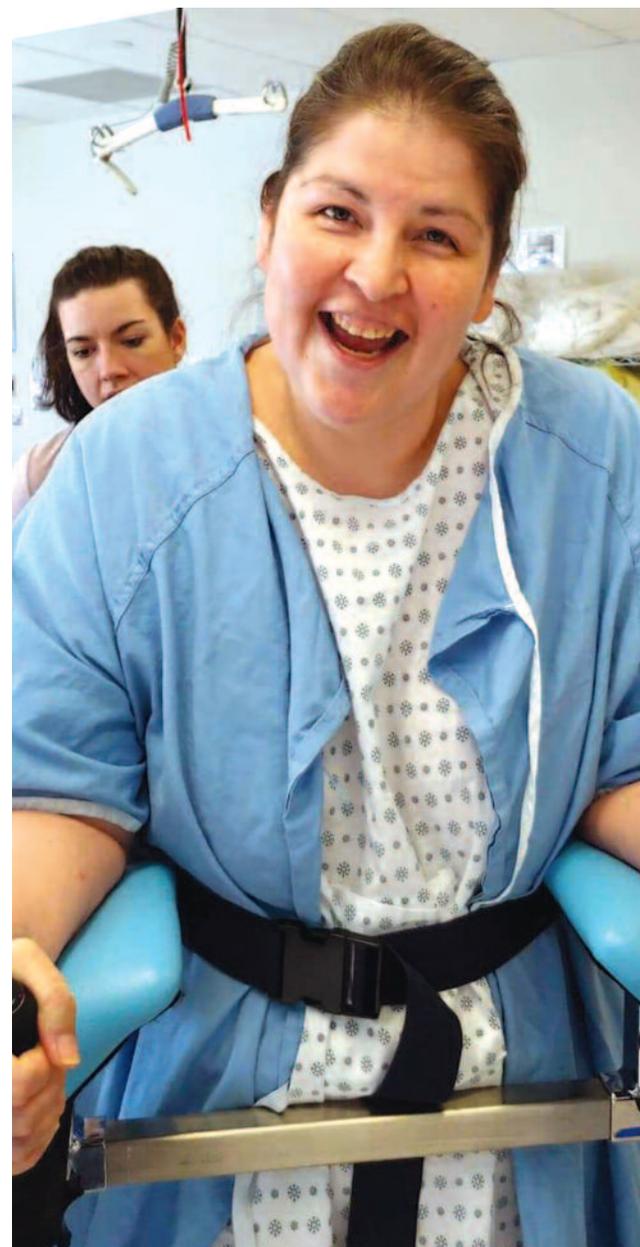
A new law that targets distracted driving in Saskatchewan took effect on Feb. 1. Fines start at \$580.

Gamble said the new law is fair. She hopes others can learn from her ordeal and obey the new law.

"Pull over. Don't try do things while you're driving. It's seconds that your life can be changed forever and my life has forever been changed, all because I wanted to eat and drive," she said.

"I should not have been eating. I should have taken that extra 10 minutes to sit in the restaurant and all of this wouldn't have happened."

Distracted driving includes texting, smoking and



April Gamble's days since November have been spent in a hospital where she is recovering from a car accident that could have claimed her life.

(Photo submitted)

eating to name a few. In 2018, driver distraction or inattention was a factor in more than 6,000 collisions, resulting in 774 injuries and 22 deaths, according to SGI.

Janet Carriere named Prince Albert's Citizen of the Year

By Judith Iron
For Eagle Feather News

"I do what the Creator guides me to do, but my true goal is to create equality for marginalized people," said Janet Carriere, recipient of the 2019 Prince Albert Citizen of the Year award.

The award came as a complete shock to Carriere, executive director of the Prince Albert Indian and Métis Friendship Centre (PAIMFC).

"I was scared and thought something must be wrong. I was called into the office for a media release, but when I got there, I was told I won the Citizen of the Year award. My brain couldn't process it. All I kept thinking was what is going on?" she said.

"She had no idea," said Carriere's co-worker, Georgette Arcand, who had secretly nominated her for the prestigious award.

The award banquet, sponsored by the Kinsmen Club and the Prince Albert Daily Herald was held Jan. 25. Carriere happily found herself making a grand entry to the sounds of a powwow drum rather than the usual tradition of bag-

pipes.

"It was such a proud moment in my life," said the Métis woman originally from Crutwell. Having a well-known Métis musician providing the music added to her joy in the moment.

"Even Ray Villebrun attended the celebration and performed my favorite song Drums," she said.

In the nomination, Arcand focused on Carriere's wealth of experience and knowledge, but also her willingness to go above and beyond in helping everyone who walks through the doors of the PAIMFC. Her primary focus is health and wellness, especially for those who live with poverty, addictions, homeless-

ness and high-risk lifestyles.

She does that through a variety of holistic programs, such as Bringing Back Our Warriors, for men, which addresses violence, anger management, and domestic abuse, traditional counselling and learning activities such as the Kairos blanket exercise about Indigenous experience in Canada.

The centre also hosts support circles, a weekly addictions day program and works with families of missing and murdered Indigenous people.

A drumming class addresses cultural awareness and wellness.

"When we run the programs, we watch to see what works better for the

people; this way we can learn what needs to change. It's always a learning experience," Carriere said.

The Centre also provides some basic needs that many people take for granted, such as a fresh cup of coffee, a hot meal, the use of a telephone or even the use of the centre's address to receive mail. The staff at the centre collectively agree that everyone needs a place to go to where they feel they belong and are welcomed without prejudice.

Carriere strives to become her community's catalyst for equality. With the Creator's guidance Carriere is the executive director at the PAIMFC who just happens to be an advisor for the Commemorative Day for Missing and Murdered Women with the Women's Commission - who sits on the Prince Albert Board of Police Commissioners - who is a member of the Prince Albert Indigenous Coalition - who is on the Community Advisory Board for Homelessness - the list goes on.

Not all heroes wear capes, but when you meet one, you just know.



Janet Carriere, on the right, got a hug from her pal Sheryl Kimbley after Carriere was named the Prince Albert Citizen of the Year.

(Photo supplied)

saskatchewan aboriginal storytelling month

DRUMMING & STORIES

All ages recommended, under 6 with an adult

Carol Rose GoldenEagle shares her stories through storytelling, writing, singing and drumming.

**Frances Morrison
Central Library**

Saturday / Feb 22 / 2–3 pm

RABBIT & BEAR PAWS PUPPET SHOW

All ages recommended, under 6 with an adult

Join Chad Soloman, a member of Henvey Inlet, Ojibway First Nation for a puppet show that shares Indigenous wisdom.

Alice Turner Branch

Monday / Feb 3 / 11–12:30 pm

**Station 20 West /
1120 20th St W**

Monday / Feb 3 / 2–2:30 pm

EMBODIED STORYTELLING

Adults recommended

Local theatre artist Curtis Peeteetuce looks at what connects us all in contemporary storytelling.

**Frances Morrison
Central Library**

Friday / Feb 21 / 2–3 pm

LOCAL BUSINESS SUCCESSES

Adults recommended

A group of local business owners share their personal stories of struggle and success.

Kendal Netmaker

Neechie Gear

**Frances Morrison
Central Library**

Wednesday / Feb 5 / 7–8:30 pm

Christine Marie

Awasis Boutique

Carlyle King Branch

Wednesday / Feb 19 / 2–3 pm

**Frances Morrison
Central Library**

Thursday / Feb 6 / 6–7 pm

Devon Fiddler

SheNative

**Frances Morrison
Central Library**

Saturday / Feb 22 / 2–3 pm

PLAYING WITH THE PAST: HISTORY THROUGH GAMES

Adults recommended

Assistant Professor Benjamin discusses how board games have shaped social ideas around morality, racial stereotypes and regionalism.

**Frances Morrison
Central Library**

Friday / Feb 28 / 2–3 pm

SASKATOON: NAMES, MYTHS & LEGENDS

Adults recommended

Randy Morin shares stories of the supernatural and creation stories from a Cree perspective.

Alice Turner Branch

Tuesday / Feb 11 / 2–3 pm

Mayfair Branch

Thursday / Feb 27 / 2–3 pm

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Op-ed by Senator Yvonne Boyer

Canada has long been considered one of the safest places in the world to live. Today, many dispute this claim, particularly Indigenous women who are the first affected and still topping the list of those most dispossessed by colonialism.

When a political power forces its way of life and imposes its institutions onto a people, as the British and the Canadian state has onto Métis, First Nations and Inuit Peoples, the women are the first to pay the price, a terrible price that compounds over time.

Since the release of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the recent inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Canadians are becoming aware and are beginning to acknowledge its history's long period of colonial darkness.

However, acknowledging colonialism alone does not end colonial attitudes and the residue of its racial societal imprint. Colonial racism persists in Canada. Reconciliation will be difficult, and healing will be measured in long-units of time, generations in fact.

Our Children Deserve Opportunity

By Regan Ratt-Misponas

Our community is all too familiar with the Foster Care System. We've experienced our children being taken away, and we've also had many amazing families who have offered their homes to children from all over the province.

There was one boy who grew up in Pinehouse that would pop into my head from time to time. He came from a community that was further north and he had the reputation of being a 'handful,' but I came to understand that this was his way of showing the strength he had built up at a young age.

The Pinehouse Photography Club uses photography as a form of therapy for the youth. Led by the founder, Dre Erwin, this club has been in operation since 2017 and has been proven to help youth involved with their well-being and to channel their emotions in a healthy and creative way. The feedback this unique club receives is that photography is therapeutic which has helped the youth with depression, anxiety, thoughts of suicide and even addictions. The Pinehouse Photography Club will submit a photo gallery where it will be displayed once a month on our website. One photo from each gallery will be featured in every issue for the year of 2020.

Another colonial dispossession that has come to public awareness is the forced and/or coerced sterilization of Métis, First Nations and Inuit women. The residential school system and the Sixties Scoop robbed Indigenous communities of their children.

Forced and coerced sterilization robs Métis, First Nations and Inuit women of their capacity to give birth. Birthing, for Indigenous peoples, is viewed not only as a sacred contribution to the family and community, but as a strengthening of the relationships to the land, nature and cultural relationships, and as a way to teach and transfer knowledge to the youth involved in serving at the ceremony of sacred birthings.

Today, forced sterilization is another chapter in the colonizers cruel chronicle of dispossessing Indigenous life. The depth of the visceral trauma of losing this ability is staggering.

In Ottawa, on Jan. 28 and 29, the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health assembled stakeholders (community, professional, government, Métis, First Nations and Inuit leaders) to see how the practice of sterilization could be stopped. The outcome was hopeful.

The conference participants, including the pledge by the Saskatoon Health Authority who were instrumental in bringing this issue to light in the first

place, committed to a joint declaration with an aim to:

- stopping sterilization and ensuring a safe and secure place where informed choice and consent is guaranteed;
- empowering Indigenous women's right to self-determining their health choices;
- acknowledging the that involuntary sterilization is happening;
- preventing this practice from happening again and ensuring the protection of the sexual health and reproductive rights of Indigenous women.

We also discussed putting in place a foundation that would administer programs that help the healing process and help rebuild their community life, including funding for treatment of affected individuals and their families and a gathering of survivors as a next step.

Gaining awareness of the forced and/or coerced sterilization of Indigenous women is a reminder of how racism remains all too present in determining social relations in Canada.

Be it at a clinic, in the school yard, at the hockey rink, at the hospital, on the bus, wherever Canadians cross paths, more efforts are needed to rehabilitate and build relationships and to find paths of reconciliation.

I never knew what became of him until we met again at a convenience store in downtown Saskatoon. He had been living with family and was doing OK but he never had the same opportunity to attend post-secondary that I had. During our conversation he asked me, "How do you do it?"

This made me wonder where he might be if given the chance to attend a post-secondary institution. This young man had the determination, but lacked the same support or financial means.

The Province of British Columbia began efforts to offer tuition waivers to students who have aged out of the Foster Care System. Max Fineday, former USSU President, lobbied for a similar program in our province where the University of Saskatchewan, with support from the Government of Saskatchewan took on the initiative.

As grateful as I am for these opportunities that already exist, we must recognize the growing need to do more.

Saskatchewan maintains a high number of children in our Foster Care System. As children of the province, we all play a part in ensuring they have the same opportunities to be successful. This all starts with access to post-secondary education.

I'm hoping that an increased opportunity to post-secondary education will ensure that our children are in the best possible situation to succeed in the future.

And as the province continues to march towards growth, with a more significant Indigenous population growing by the day, Saskatchewan will depend on its children to look after its future.



Sutherland learns to love herself through healthy transformation

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

When Jenn Sutherland began committing herself to the gym, it was about seeking change to improve her well-being. But the transformation she went through, and continues to go through, certainly goes far beyond just the physical.

“Weight-loss wasn’t the goal. It was about feeling better about myself, being comfortable in my own skin,” said Sutherland.

“I started to commit to daily workouts – one hour a day. It came from a place of needing to love myself and treat myself better.”

A year and a half after committing to a better way of life, Sutherland has lost approximately 100 pounds, through, as she calls it, ‘good old-fashioned hard work.’

Originally from the Beardsy’s and Okemasis Cree Nation but now living in Saskatoon, Sutherland said she needed to change her life to something sustainable.

Sustainability, for Sutherland, means consistency. She now eats five small, high-protein meals a day, and frequents Ryde YXE Cycle Studio four to seven times a week – sometimes going twice a day.

be better at my job. She inspires me to be a better version of who I am,” said Robertson.

Sutherland said she has no intention of slowing down any time soon. And she’s the first to acknowledge that it’s not through beating yourself up, but through loving yourself, that one is able to achieve great things.

“Consistency is key, not perfection. We’re all human, we all have slip ups. It’s important not to be too hard on ourselves because that’s what causes setbacks,” said Sutherland. “If you love yourself, it all falls into place.”



Jenn Sutherland, before she embarked on her well-being transformation (left) and Jenn Sutherland in summer 2019.

“It’s such a supportive place, maybe my favourite place to be. It’s my home away from home,” laughs Sutherland.

She also exercises with a trainer, Marie Robertson, twice a week, who she credits providing her with constant encouragement and motivation.

But throughout this process, it’s not about what Sutherland has lost. It’s about what she’s gained.

“About a year ago, I was honestly in a depression. I had a lot of negative talk about myself, how I looked, where my life was going,” she said.

“But exercise has helped me so much. Now I’m more satisfied with the quality of life. I’m happier and healthier, and it’s actually having a big impact on my relationships with people. I’m a better friend and a better family member.”

Robertson, Sutherland’s trainer, has closely observed just how much her client has changed from the first time she walked into one of Robertson’s bootcamps.

“I could tell from the beginning; she was really committed. But since then she’s just blossomed,” said Robertson.

“In my experience with training women, yes, they get strong in the gym but that’s not the only place they get strong. They blossom into who they’ve always been. The best version of themselves. That’s what happened with Jenn.”

Robertson, who has shared Sutherland’s success story on social media, said in a short amount of time Sutherland has already become somewhat of a legend at the studio. She’s always working hard, smiling, and encouraging those around her. Even pushing herself and others to do more than Robertson herself prescribes, she said.

“It’s so inspiring for me and for everyone. It makes me want to work harder, and

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Peter Ballantyne conference offers message of hope

**By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News**

Spreading the belief that life is worth living was one of the principle messages delivered to the hundreds of young people who attended the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN) Youth Empowerment Conference.

With the suicide crisis in Northern Saskatchewan in mind, Weldon McCallum, PBCN Vice-Chief and councillor in Pelican Narrows, knew that addressing young people directly was paramount. From Jan. 18-24 in Saskatoon, almost a thousand young people attended the Youth Empowerment conference to talk and learn about suicide prevention.

“It’s a crisis we couldn’t ignore. We knew we had to do something,” said McCallum. “A lot of the issues we addressed were things that could lead to suicide, like poverty, social problems at home, and bullying. We wanted to address as many issues as we could.”

Recently, three young people in the northern community of Makwa Sahaigiehan First Nation died by suicide, including a 10-year-old girl. The conference, aimed at young people from ages 10 to 18, featured a number of speakers, therapists, emergency responders, and a registered nurse to show the support network available to youth.

“Helping our youth talk about it is the most important thing because the more we talk about it, the more we understand and can help prevent suicide,” said McCallum.

First Nations leadership has called for more supports and the FSIN has developed a suicide prevention strategy.

Simon Jobb, consultant, motivational speaker, and social worker at Pelican Narrows, says more work needs to be done in breaking the stigma around suicide.

“People don’t know how to talk about it, people are scared of it. When someone says they want to commit suicide, you don’t know what to say,” said Jobb.

“Society tells us that we need to live the perfect life: nice house, nice cars, nice shoes. What about the kids and parents who don’t have this? The ones that feel they aren’t worthy? People need to know they have support and can break down and cry.”

One of the youths who attended the event, Tamarus McKay, said she was encouraged to attend after going through some difficult times in her life. She said the conference gave her a new sense of hope.

“It gave me a sense of belonging, knowing that I wasn’t going through things alone and people can relate to what I’ve gone through. It felt hopeful,” she said.

McKay said she left the conference with a new perspective.



Tamarus McKay (centre) at the PBCN Youth Empowerment Conference with Amazing Race Canada winners Anthony Johnson (left) and James Makokis (right).

(Photo supplied by Tamarus McKay)

“There’s a lot of doors ready for you if you allow yourself to open them. I heard a quote from one of the speakers that said, ‘The past is a history, the future is a mystery, and today is a gift. That’s why they

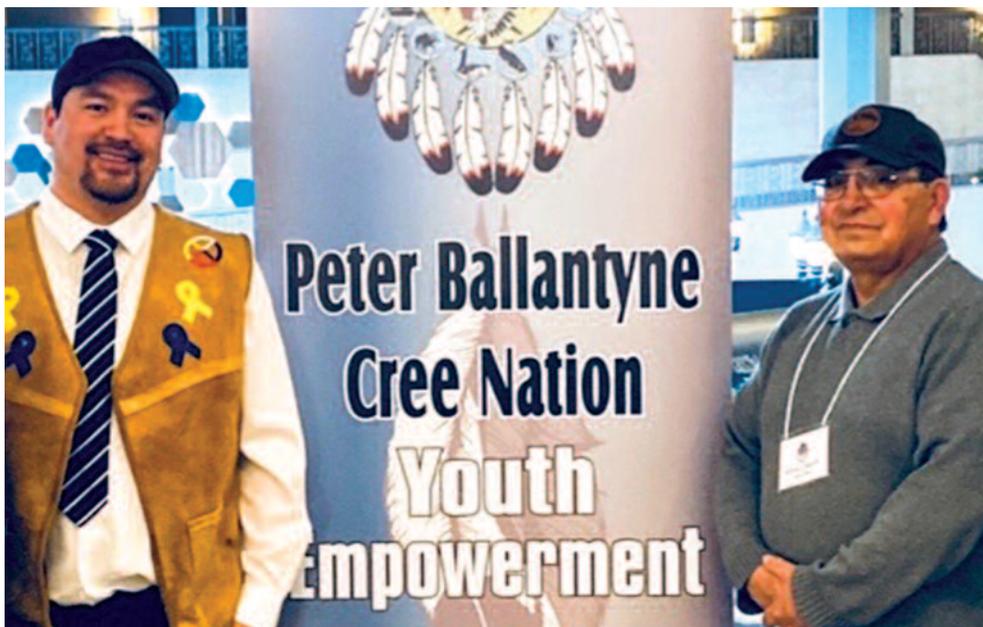
call it the present.’ I think a lot of the youth needed to hear that.”

Anyone experiencing crisis can call the Canada Suicide Prevention Service at 1-833-456-4566.



Simon Jobb, (left) and Weldon McCallum (right) at the PBCN Youth Empowerment Conference in Saskatoon

(Photo supplied by Weldon McCallum)



PBCN Vice Chief Weldon McCallum and Chief Peter A. Beatty.

(Photo supplied by Weldon McCallum)

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Healthy lifestyle begins with an intense Ryde

**By Kaitlynn Nordal
For Eagle Feather News**

Healthy living and community giving is the mission for the co-owners of Ryde YXE in Saskatoon.

“I grew up participating in all kinds of different sports and activities and I pursued them all the way to playing university basketball,” said Shaina Lynden of Ryde YXE.

the first while after high school,” said Mustoe.

When Lynden first had the idea to open Ryde YXE, she was 10 years into her law enforcement career and was looking for something else out of life, but stayed with her policing job.

A chance encounter with former NHL player and well-known children’s advocate, Sheldon Kennedy, at a spin



Shaina Lynden, owner of Ryde YXE, balances a business partnership with her career as a Saskatoon Police Officer. (Photo supplied)

The Saskatoon police officer and a member of the Yellow Quill First Nation is one of the co-owners of the gym. Ryde YXE specializes in stationary bicycle – also known as spin classes, an intense form of interactive workout that has grown in popularity in recent years.

“I obtained a kinesiology Bachelor of Science degree and tucked it in my back pocket for a little, while I pursued policing as a career and kind of full circle came back to it,” she said.

Physical activity was always of interest to the other co-owner, Bradie Mustoe, as well.

“I had grown up here dancing – ballet, jazz – so that’s what I had pursued for

class in Calgary, gave her the idea to open a gym.

“Sheldon was there because he needed and wanted to be there,” Lynden said. He said spin was his outlet to deal with daily life. That resonated with Lynden and she felt there could be an opportunity to support the community of Saskatoon.

Meanwhile, Mustoe was living in the United Kingdom, but was thinking about moving back, so Lynden approached her childhood friend with her business idea.

Mustoe was interested and the pair started looking into how to open Ryde YXE.



Spin classes have helped countless people regain their health and wellness. And at Ryde YXE, riders also help donate to charity.

They opened on Broadway Ave. in Saskatoon.

Ryde YXE became so popular that two years ago, they opened their second location in the City Park area.

To give back to the community, Lynden and Mustoe instituted Friday night ‘Ryde For Change’ classes.

The \$10 class fees all go to a charity, which changes from week to week.

“If it was just a regular class, you might not come in to get your workout in at 7:15 on a Friday night,” Lynden said.

“But, if we made it special and made it an opportunity to give back to the community in different ways, we thought it would be a great way to bring people

together.”

Charities can apply to be recipients at rydeyxe.ca.

Shawna Naduriak, a licensed practical nurse, has been going there since 2016.

Naduriak enjoyed the intense workout and now goes four or five days a week.

“You share in that experience with people and you are more inclined to stick with it,” said Lynden.

“So, I think you choose something that not only are you interested in, but are prepared to try something new to come with friends and to build a support group.”

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