

# eaglefeathernews

Newspapers will not transmit the Coronavirus

CPMA #40027204



## Heroes Wear Scrubs

Nurses Justina Kilfoyl (l) and Joanne Natomagan (r) are bearing the emotional burden of the pandemic on a daily basis.

*By Nathan Raine  
for Eagle Feather News*

Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan have been hit particularly hard during the pandemic, and the burden of staying afloat rests largely on the shoulders of their health care professionals.

Eagle Feather News spoke with two of the many health care workers fighting against COVID-19, to hear how the pandemic has effected their lives, mental health, and community.

“You wake up thinking about COVID, you go to bed thinking about COVID. It’s exhausting,” said Joanne Natomagan.

Natomagan is a Public Health Nurse and native of the Northern Village of Pinehouse. She worked as a Registered Nurse at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon until last September, when she returned to

her hometown to take a position as a Public Health nurse.

In early January 2021, Pinehouse declared a state of emergency, after COVID-19 cases rocketed from two cases to 101 in just a couple weeks. The town has a population of only 1,052.

“It was very quiet here, until about a month ago. More than anything, it’s just been really mentally exhausting,” Natomagan said.

“Some days you’re doing okay, and other days your morale is just low. You have to take it one day at a time.”

Natomagan said initially, she was scared of contracting the virus, fearing she’d bring it home to her three-year-old daughter. She said everyone in the town has had to make a major adjustment – a close-knit community is now expected to be isolated.

*continued page 2*



Marg Friesen - MN-S Minister of Health

## Breaking Barriers

“Our citizens and their families are in urgent need of financial support to help ease the burden of accessing medical care outside of their communities.”

- page 10



## Horse Therapy a Success

“A lot of the things that the horses can teach us can overlap and help others, which was our thinking at the time, which is how the program got started,”

- page 15



## Reconciliation Ally - Denise Blomquist Learning together

Discovering through the exercise how much Indigenous people lost and were controlled was shocking, but it was the teaching about residential schools that really hit home.

- page 23

February issues 2021

## Health & Wellness

NEXT ISSUE:  
Womens Month

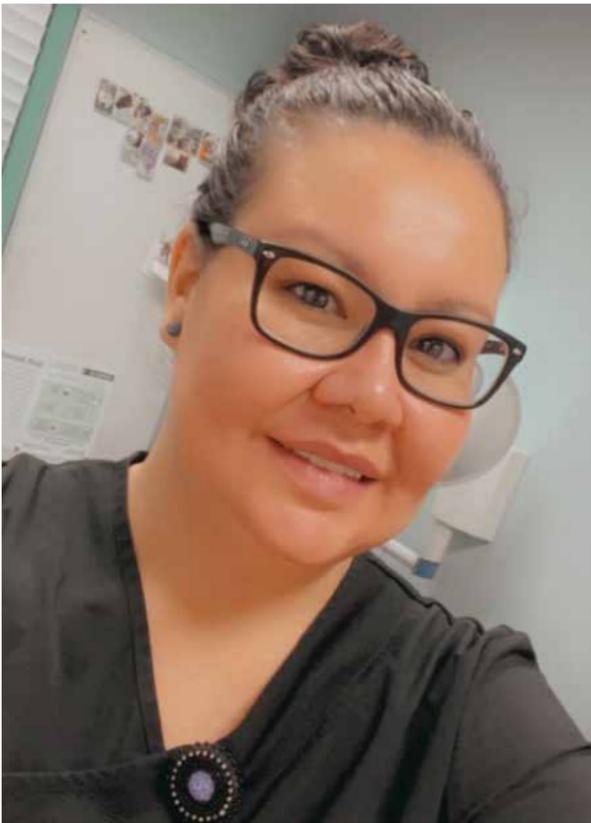
# COVID 19 a tough slog for northern health care workers

*continued from page 1 ...*

"It's hard, not being able to go out and visit, to see the people you grew up with. It's difficult, mentally. But it's still nice to be somewhere familiar, where you can see familiar faces when you drive by."

Natomagan said after the COVID-19 cases spiked, the community came together more, not less. People are encouraging each other any way they can online or over the phone, she said.

"People here make sure everyone feels like



**Justina Kilfoyl, Licenced Practical Nurse from La Loche. (Photo supplied)**

they're not in this alone."

"It's that (sense of community) and the people that I work with that have kept me sane."

There's a similar sense of community in La Loche, where Justina Kilfoyl works as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Kilfoyl has been working in her hometown since graduating six years ago, and said the past year has been the most exhausting in her career.

"It's been very, at times, frustrating. It's been tiring, for both myself and our health care team. We

were swamped at the beginning of it. And we're still short-staffed all the time," she said.

La Loche has seen multiple outbreaks in the community and their long term care home, including one of the first outbreaks in northern Saskatchewan, last April. In December, La Loche and the neighbouring Clearwater River Dene Nation had 116 active cases.

Kilfoyl said it was frustrating having roads closed and feeling like an already-isolated community had less access to the essentials.

"It felt like we were being confined to our community," she said.

"Once people started realizing numbers were going down, and started socializing again, we'd see another outbreak. The numbers keep escalating. So it's been hard to contain."

Being in an isolated community, Kilfoyl said they aren't adequately equipped to handle large outbreaks. They often have to send patients down south to get health care, or forgo important funeral customs.

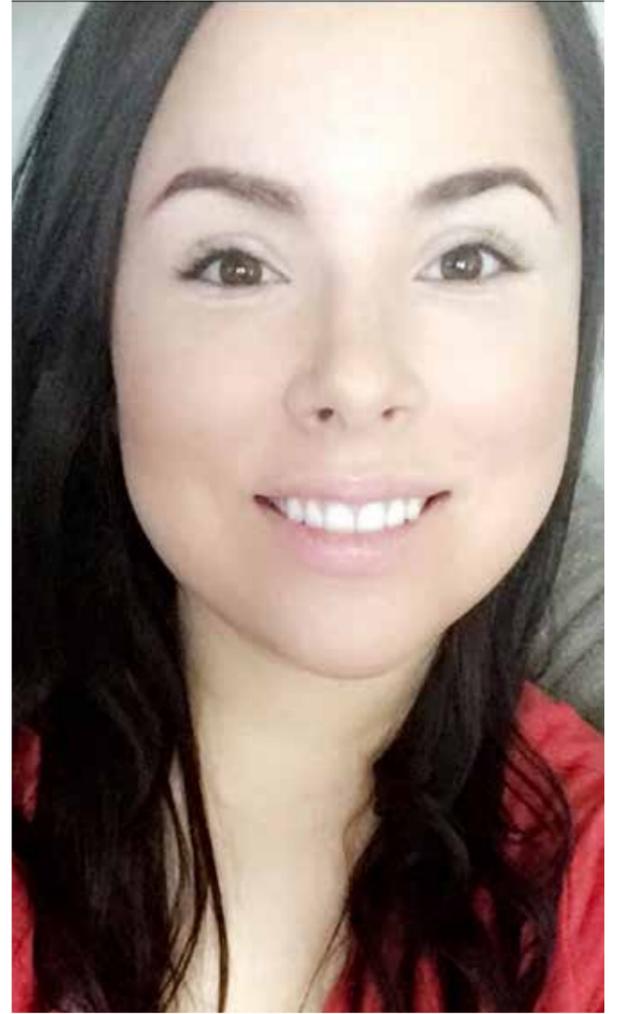
"That was really tough, not having (funerals). Not just on (the health care workers) but the whole community. We respect our elders, and we have important services to honour them."

Despite the hardships, Kilfoyl said the town's spirit has remained strong and positive, something she'd like to see more of when people hear about La Loche.

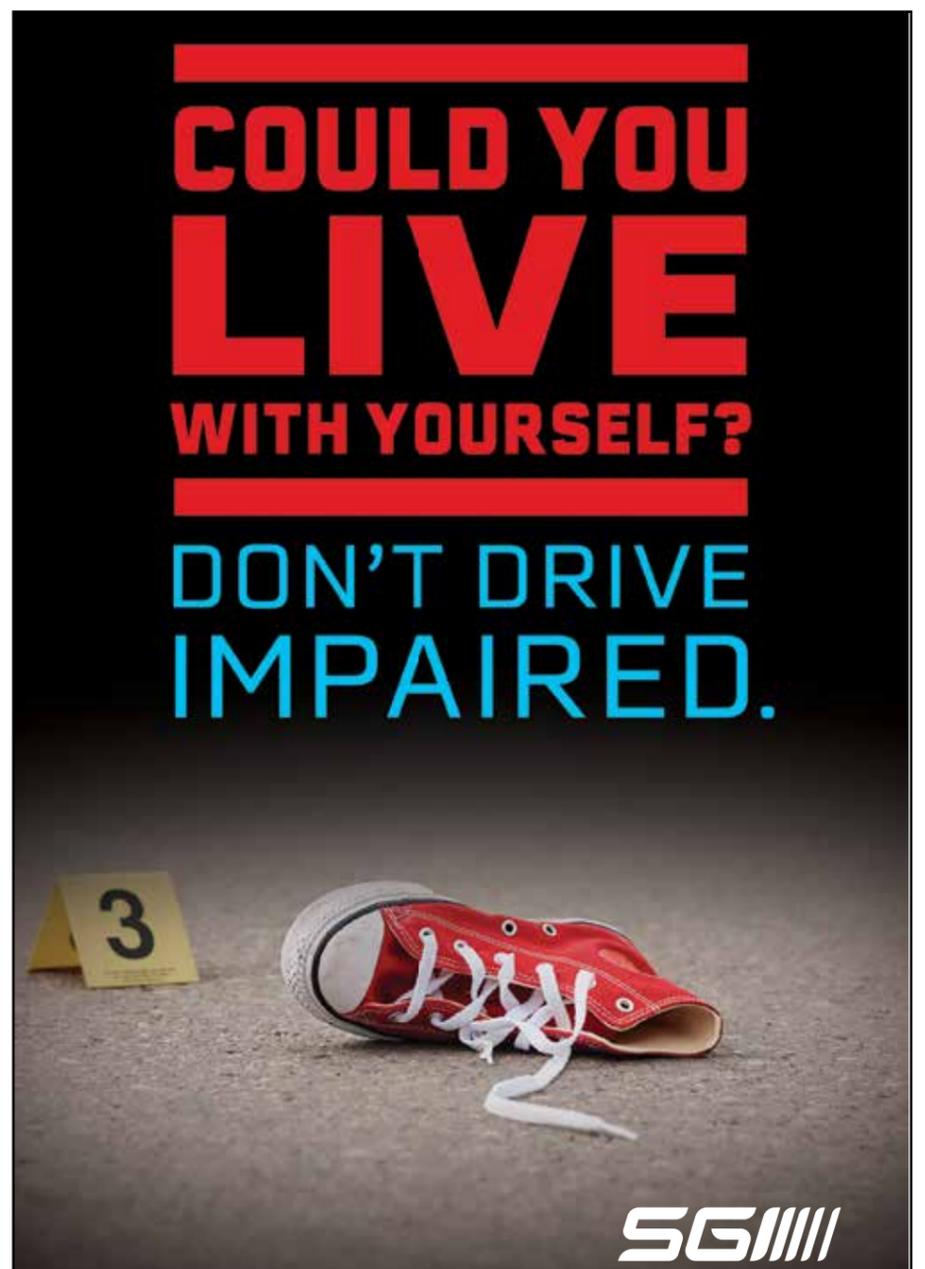
"When you look up La Loche, you think of a bad place. But this community is so resilient, and determined, and giving. I wish that was reflected more in the news."

As for herself, despite being exhausted day-to-day, Kilfoyl said she maintains her mental health from lessons from her elders.

"I've always been told by elders that you need to take care of yourself. I try to take 10 or 15 minutes for myself and get out every emotion that I need to get out. If I need to cry, I cry. But I try to take care of myself as much as I can so I'm able to take care of others."



**Joanne Natomagan, Public Health Nurse from Pinehouse. (Photo supplied)**



DAKOTA DUNES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

Your Partner in Positive Community Change

Sign up for our e-newsletter at:  
[www.dakotadunescdc.com](http://www.dakotadunescdc.com)

Follow us on social media or call:

(306) 956-1799



SG IIII

# Research Chair brings Indigenous view to nursing education

**By Julia Peterson  
for Eagle Feather News**

Holly Graham, a member of Thunderchild First Nation, is bringing Indigenous ways of knowing to the University of Saskatchewan nursing curriculum.

Graham, who holds a PhD and is an Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing, was recently awarded a \$1.05 million Indigenous Research Chair in Nursing, which she calls Wahkohtowin (we are all related).

The research chair is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF), and the Canadian Nurses Foundation.

"With the guidance of an Indigenous Advisory Committee, the program will bring together both Indigenous and Western research paradigms, incorporating First Nation and Métis ways of knowing into the curriculum," Graham said.

"It's a real honour to work with knowledge keepers, to bring their knowledge into the curriculum and into academia in an authentic way where it will be respected and utilized to improve the health for all people - Indigenous and non-Indigenous."

This Indigenous Research Chair will support and mentor Indigenous and non-Indigenous undergraduate and graduate student nurses in research that will advance reconciliation in nursing practice, education, and administration.

Graham also hopes to increase recruitment and retention of Indigenous nursing students.

"Indigenous nurses play a critical role in reducing healthcare disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous patients," she said. "They understand

the context and they understand the health disparities because many of them have lived them. There's that understanding of the culture and the spiritual life, and the importance of language and ceremony.

"Like, when a relative is hospitalized, they may have cultural items under their pillow, and it often gets thrown away because the nurse does not understand the value or cultural meaning of these items."

Graham has worked as an RN in northern communities, as well as other healthcare environments, and is also a registered doctoral psychologist. Her research focuses on Indigenous health, mental health and wellness.

Graham has a simple answer for what drew her to a career in nursing for the past 35 years.

"It was my mother's dream," she said. "My mother, Celia Wapass-Clennell, was a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for 23 years. She was in a residential school, and when she finished Grade 11, they just decided that she would go into nursing - but they put her in the CNA program instead of the RN program. It was always her dream that one of her daughters would become an RN, and I was the oldest."

"Nursing has been a really good career choice for me and has positively influenced my personal path toward health and wellness - and the best part of it all, is I get to share it with my family, relatives, students, and my patients."

She is approaching wahkohtowin with three overarching goals in mind.

"First, do no harm," she said. "Second, create the space and opportunity for personal, community, and collective healing, and last, transform relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people."

Graham is working to infuse Indigenous world



**In April, Dr. Holly Graham was awarded a \$1.05M Indigenous Research Chair in Nursing - one of only six awarded in Canada. (Submitted by Dr. Holly Graham)**

views into classrooms, such as the Seven Sacred Teachings and the Medicine Wheel. She describes reconciliation as a process which includes, "stretching current epistemologies, making room for Indigenous ways of knowing and being within curriculum."

Graham said she has been looking forward to the work she will be able to do in this position.

"It's such an opportunity to have been awarded this Chair," she said. "There were only six Chairs awarded in Canada, and I really consider it a privilege to have this opportunity to influence nursing education and practice in Saskatchewan."



Jacelyn Lerat-Nighttraveller, Cowessess First Nation Indigenous Internship Program 2017-2019

## Grow your career. Grow our world.

From grower to grocery store, we are all an essential service, which means we continue to have job opportunities.

Diversity and inclusive growth within our workforce, our supply chain, local communities and society at large is an important part of Nutrien's sustainability strategy. The diversity of our people is our competitive advantage.

We offer an attractive total compensation package that includes performance-based incentives, health and wellness and retirement savings programs.

For more information about Nutrien careers and the Indigenous Internship Program, visit:

[www.nutrien.com/careers](http://www.nutrien.com/careers)

### Grow with Us. Indigenous Internship Program.

Our Indigenous Internship Program provides valuable work experience, personal and professional development and community engagement opportunities.

We build bridges with industry by developing supplier partnerships and creating opportunities for you to engage with the community.

**Indigenous internship opportunities posted on our website now.**



Indigenous Internship Program participants

## Keeping communities healthy during the pandemic.

**Nutrien is working hard to address needs in the midst of COVID. Together, we are making a difference for people and families in our community. Our world never stops growing, and at Nutrien, we never stop either.**

*"What we are going through right now transcends any one business or any one person. We are all in this together. Let's take care of each other, and let's keep talking about what we can do to help."*

Chuck Magro, Nutrien President & CEO

### You belong.

Indigenous people are welcome and valued at Nutrien. There is opportunity for you here.

**Nutrien**<sup>™</sup>  
Feeding the Future<sup>™</sup>

# Everyone has responsibilities

If we are anything, we are resilient. Hoo boy this last year has been a test. Quarantine. Sickness. And lots of our family members suffering from mental and physical health issues because of it. Especially our seniors.

Had a friend relate to me his experience holding his dad's hand in hospital for 21 hours as he waited for COVID to take him. At the same time, he saw a person he swore was his sister, get pushed by the door on a gurney. He was right. The nurses eventually confirmed it was his sibling and he got the staff to let her know he was there with their father.

His family had been through the COVID cycle. He escaped. There is a sister that barely had symptoms, a sister who had to be hospitalized and a mother who was quite sick, but recovered. And a father that they lost. And this family took the Covid rules and restrictions very seriously and still have no definite knowledge of how the family was exposed to the virus. And they cannot have a wake and funeral to come together and grieve.

And it turns out wakes and funerals have been the source of many of the outbreaks in our communities. The last two months have been challenging to say the least. Some communities have lost so many Elders and veterans. Sports heroes have been lost. Sons. Daughters. It has been hard.

Awareness and supports for our families have never been more important. The help and leadership of our Indigenous governments have been welcome. Individual First Nations are investing the federal government monies that have flowed at an unprecedented level into their communities. Chief Bobby Cameron and the executive at

the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations have all been role models regarding social distancing and the wearing of masks.

The FSIN leaders are also championing vaccines. You can see the joy on social media when our Elders have received their vaccines. We need

decision from 2013 and the Daniels Decision from 2016. The Daniels decision welcomed the Métis into Section 91.24 of the Constitution under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. It made us Indians, but importantly clarified the federal responsibility to Métis people.

The Reconciliation Framework the current executive negotiated with the government lays out the process. It is federal dollars powering these programs. And the First Nations ones as well. Not provincial. That is why it is happening. I guess, sometimes it takes a pandemic to get things really rolling.

And at the front end of all this are our health care workers. The constant threat of exposure and the massive pressure on the system are making some reconsider their career choices. Both nurses in our cover story, Joanne Natomagan from Pinehouse and Justina Kilfoyl of La Loche say they have never been this exhausted in their careers. And they are not unique.

Ask any doctor, care aide, food services staff or maintenance and cleaning person how they are doing. No rest for them. But they continue to show up for shifts and take on the emotional burdens of their patients and the patients' families. Then, at home, they cry.

We must hold those workers up and do the best we can to support them. The FSIN and First Nation leaders, the MN-S and Local Presidents are giving us the supports. Our job is to do everything we can to control this pandemic and our future and ease the burden on our health care system and those so very important caregivers. Wear a mask. Stay home. Wash your hands. Get vaccinated when you can. Keep praying and hug the ones you can, as much as you can.



## Publisher's Notes

John Lagimodiere

to keep them safe. To help promote the vaccines, the Federation has launched an awareness campaign on vaccines. The ads are in First Nation languages found in Saskatchewan. It's a smart supporting strategy in this fast-moving pandemic response.

The Métis Nation-Saskatchewan is also seeing resources and programs flow like never before. Métis citizens are now able to access Métis specific medical travel and support programs, benefits once unthinkable in the Métis community.

Thankfully, our leaders and some awesome lawyers have fought court cases over the years and these new Métis health programs can be traced back to the Manitoba Métis land claim de-



Box 924 Saskatoon, SK S7K 3M4  
306-978-8118, 1-866-323-NEWS (6397)

### Eagle Feather News

is published monthly by ACS Aboriginal Consulting Services

No part of this publication may be reproduced either in part or in whole without the express written permission of the publisher.

Publications Mail Agreement No: 40027204 | OSSN #1492-7497  
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: EFN Circ., P.O. Box 924 Saskatoon SK S7K 3M4

#### Subscriptions:

The annual Canadian subscription rate is \$25/year, \$26.25 with GST. Bulk subscriptions are also available, call us for details. Subscription requests can be mailed or emailed to our office. Forms are available on our website.

#### Disclaimer:

Eagle Feather News hereby limits its liability resulting from any misprints, errors, and/or inaccuracies whatsoever in advertisements or editorial content to the refund of the specific advertisement payment and/or running of a corrected advertisement or editorial correction notice. Contributing authors agree to indemnify and protect the publishers from claims of action regarding plagiarism.

[www.eaglefeathernews.com](http://www.eaglefeathernews.com)

PUBLISHER / EDITOR: John Lagimodiere, [john@eaglefeathernews.com](mailto:john@eaglefeathernews.com)

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Betty Ann Adam, [bettyannadam@eaglefeathernews.com](mailto:bettyannadam@eaglefeathernews.com)

SOCIAL / DIGITAL MEDIA : Errol Sutherland, [errol@eaglefeathernews.com](mailto:errol@eaglefeathernews.com)

GENERAL INQUIRIES: [contact@eaglefeathernews.com](mailto:contact@eaglefeathernews.com)

This issue was printed on:  
**February 11, 2021**  
Next issue to be printed on:  
**March 11, 2021**

eaglefeathernews

Watch for DAILY news on our website

[www.eaglefeathernews.com](http://www.eaglefeathernews.com)

#### CHECK OUT OUR LATEST TOP STORES



Louise Bernice Halfe named Canada's Parliamentary Poet Laureate

Louise Bernice Halfe has been named Canada's next Parliamentary Poet Laureate. The appointment tops a distinguished career that many writers could only dream of.



La Ronge RCMP reviewing allegation of police brutality

National and local Indigenous organizations are accusing the La Ronge RCMP of systemic racism.



Federated Co-op launches Indigenous gas bar brand

A familiar Canadian company is developing a new initiative aimed at creating opportunities and building capacity for Indigenous communities.

# Self-care is Revitalization of Traditional Knowledge

Self-care is the revitalization of traditional knowledge, systems, culture, laws and language.

Attempts at surviving in a colonial society leaves no room to appropriately and respectfully revive our own systems while we are too busy caught in another system.

We are too busy fighting to survive, fighting for basic rights and justice for our peoples, the land and environment. We are trapped in colonial education systems from day one. These colonial institutions keep us focused on something that is not ours and trying to fit into spaces that do not take the time to respect or apply and make space for Indigenous knowledge and laws.

Education systems continue to fail our Indigenous students due to the lack of positive representation in the classrooms of the truth about our country. I know things are starting to get better in classrooms, but it is nowhere near where it needs to be and there is not much taught about how Canada and Canadian society in general benefits from Indigenous peoples and Indigenous land.

The education system continues to perpetuate that Indigenous knowledge systems are inferior, as they are not applied even when it comes to Indigenous law in the current colonial justice system. The only perspective that continues to be accepted in colonial spaces is colonial knowledge and perspectives, which amounts to systemic oppression.

This systemic oppression can be overt but it is also subconsciously deeply embedded in our society and institutions. When I think of how this system works, it reminds me of a fishing net and we're all caught in some world that was never our own. This colonial world is imposed and forced on us with no consent

given. It comes from every angle and it is exhausting.

Systemic oppression is much like this pandemic: it finds its way into all areas of our lives, imposing barriers which directly transmit to stress, anxiety, depression, hopelessness and suicide.

True self-care is being able to determine ourselves and have the time and space to focus on what our spir-



## Comment

Alyson Bear

its longs for. Mine longs to be with the land and being able to experience ceremony without interruption from the stresses of colonial time and laws. Colonial laws once outlawed our ceremonies through the Indian Act and other impositions of colonial policy and laws that continue to infringe on our rights.

There should be a remedy owed to us and not only in the monetary form, but in the form of time that was taken away from our people. More time to revitalize and pass on our own ways while not having to be grinded out by these institutions in a colonial world, to just barely be making it.

Running ourselves into the ground by becoming too busy and using negative coping mechanisms for

all the trauma colonialism has inflicted, juggling multiple jobs, being a broke student, trying to parent our children and running ourselves to burnout. This is the reality of trying to keep up in a fast-paced world not built for you.

Time is of the essence when we think about how critical this moment is when it comes to what we are going to leave the future generations and the time we have left with our elders as they are growing older. Colonial laws and institutions need to make space for Indigenous laws, and ways of life to be able to thrive and survive together. Safe spaces are essential to our survival, to be who we are born to be. Self-determination is our inherent right. This is the self-care we so desperately need.

Our world is evolving, and our laws and society need to evolve with it. Evolution comes in the form of a circle and going back to our traditional ways so the ones coming up have a better chance at surviving. This work depends on our ability to work together.

Revitalizing Indigenous law takes more time than the trivial time we are left with after trying to survive in a foreign system. To relearn one's language, culture, songs, stories, and teachings of traditional ways of living is not a hobby for the weekend, it is a way of life. Especially before too many of our old ones pass onto the spirit world, it is vital to the survival of the future and the health of all people.

With domestic violence and mental health on the rise since this pandemic, it is important to find solutions and have services and spaces available for everyone. Our traditional teachings are grounded in lessons, self-discipline and the ability to better control our emotions with an understanding of all living beings around us.

**FSIN**

Dene higu'idene dene  
t'anidhen t'a si dene  
zedoghelniha chu nekue chu  
t'ok'e naidher si basi. Dene  
higuihorel?i h zedi ni  
nanidhen ?a si t'oke Canada  
dene narade si kodani dhen  
?a zediri dene sughua ghen  
chu dada dziredhi ch'a ha  
hoghedı ho?a ?a.

[fsin.ca](http://fsin.ca)

**Elwood Harvey Co-operative Leadership Award**

**Make a difference**

**\$2,500 Award**  
Open to:  
Grade 11 students

**Affinity**  
Credit Union

**Apply today!**  
[affinitycu.ca/awards](http://affinitycu.ca/awards)  
Deadline to apply: **April 15, 2021**

## Growing, preparing and sharing food part of school's grant-winning program

*By Andréa Ledding  
for Eagle Feather News*

Staff and students at St. Mary's Wellness and Education Centre in Saskatoon were delighted to win a \$10,000 grant from Mosaic for their grassroots initiative to increase nutrition and reconciliation.

"We try to put an Indigenous lens on much of the learning we do in the classroom, striving to make a connection to the land and Indigenous Knowledge," said Greg Bubnick, a grade 8 teacher at St. Mary's. Classes have sewed ribbon shirts and skirts, cut up deer and geese for cooking and prepared hides.

The school was able to buy indoor garden towers that are great for growing lettuce year round.

"We have a couple kids a week build a salad and bring it home. We used to feed each other, make soups and salads and sandwiches once a week, but COVID shut that down, so we get them to build a salad and bring it home and feed their family with it," Bubnick said.

The school also plants an outdoor vegetable garden from May to September.

"This year we're also adding a medicine garden with native species. It's a teaching garden and the kids are helping to pull that together, and another big part of the project is a food forest."

They'll use some of the grant money to buy fruit trees and plants for the school yard, and the entire community will be welcome to harvest the Saskatoon berries, haskap, chokecherries and blueberries.

The Mosaic money is also going towards field trips to swales, ponds, habitats and natural settings.

"The bus is a big deal because most classrooms can't afford to get around everywhere," Bubnick said.

He says the kids really enjoy processing meat, planting seeds, and digging in the dirt, but they also embrace the curriculum aspects where they display, through computers or technology such as PowerPoint, films and essays, what they're learning about through gardening.

The goal is to fulfill curriculum requirements and outcomes while incorporating Indigenous teachings and active learning.

"(We) try to make it benefit the community as much as we can," Bubnick added. "We ask, how can we better the school, the neighbourhood, help our friends and family and the community? When the kids know they're cooking supper for their family they kick it up a notch."

Another outcome is kids are always asking for the next experience out on the land and looking forward to the next trip, he said.

"Attendance always goes up, land-based experience elevates attendance in the classroom," he said.

Since 2006, schools from across the province have submitted projects to compete for \$100,000 in prizes, provided by Mosaic.

Recipient schools chosen by the Saskatchewan School Board Association in 2020 were part of the Good Spirit, Greater Saskatoon Catholic, Horizon, North East, Prairie South, Regina Catholic, Saskatchewan Rivers, Saskatoon Public and South East Cornerstone school divisions and Muskoday First Nation.

Earl Greyeyes, Public Affairs Indigenous Engagement Coordinator for Mosaic, says they are happy to support the programs.

"It's nice to see all the different initiatives that have come forward - breakfast programs, lunch programs, kitchen renovations, it's all around providing a really good environment for the youth of Saskatchewan," said Greyeyes, adding that St. Mary's unique ideas have been exciting to see.

"It's a wonderful and interesting program and I'm just happy to be a part of it."



**Destyn Thomas from St. Mary's proudly displays his fresh catch - a fat perch ice-fished from Blackstrap. (Photo supplied)**

## Do your part to slow the spread of COVID-19

- ✓ Stay home if you're sick.
- ✓ Wear a mask when appropriate.
- ✓ Wash your hands often.
- ✓ Keep your distance from others.
- ✓ Stay up to date on the latest public health measures by visiting [www.saskatchewan.ca/covid19-measures](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/covid19-measures)

Thank you for keeping your family, friends and community safe!



[Saskatchewan.ca/COVID19](http://Saskatchewan.ca/COVID19)

**Saskatchewan** 

## Making evacuation spaces safe for Elders, gender-diverse, women, goal of research

By *Nathan Raine*  
for *Eagle Feather News*

Individuals evacuated from their communities due to a disaster face a multitude of anxieties, and as such, a new research initiative is working to ensure their gender and cultural needs are met during these times of distress.

The First Nation and Métis Health Research Network (FMHRN), based at the University of Saskatchewan, has received a \$650,000 grant from the 2020 TD Ready Challenge which awarded 15 organizations to address impacts and inequities resulting from COVID-19.

The research will help emergency response planners better meet the needs of Elders, women, children, and gender-diverse individuals, particularly at evacuation sites and during COVID-19 restrictions.

“We know there’s a gap in understanding the lived experience from people who have been through these evacuations in the past,” said Dr. Caroline Tait, a medical anthropologist and co-lead of the project.

“We’re interested in how we can make the evacuation experience a positive experience. People are dealing with a lot of worry and trauma of being evacuated, so how do we make a safe space? And (we want) Indigenous people looking after Indigenous people who are evacuated.”

Tait said that as evacuation sometimes leads to family members being sep-



**USask Indigenous researchers Dr. Heather Foulds, Sheri McKinstry, Caroline Tait, Simon Lambert and Jaris Swidrovich outside their research offices at Station 20 West. (Photo by NC Raine)**

arated, they want to ensure children and youth are kept with their parents.

They will also look at safety in a variety of contexts. Physical safety can be an issue when evacuees find themselves in new, unfamiliar surroundings, and cultural safety is increased when responders are familiar with the language and providing appropriate foods. Gender safety is particularly an issue for gender-diverse individuals and women and girls who may be exposed to sexual harm.

Notions about individuals from northern communities may also be affected by COVID-19, said Tait.

“We know there will be a stigma now associated with Indigenous people coming from the north. The questions will be, are communities like Prince Albert and Saskatoon open and want to have the evacuees coming into the community?” she said. “Public opinion often goes against Indigenous people.”

Co-lead of the research project, Dr. Simon Lambert, said the pandemic emphasizes the multiple risks and hazards evacuees are exposed to.

“Social distancing will double the amount of buses you need, double the amount of space taken up. It will run the risk of putting people more at risk from COVID than perhaps if you left them in a community in the first place,” said Lambert.

“Our response is going to be culturally framed. We’re going to recognize the cultural processes of elders, we’re going to care for people the way they should be cared for. What our funding has allowed us to do is look at the complexities of these communities. It’s not one-size-fits-all.”

In order to train first responders and emergency managers in gender and cultural safety, research network will work with community partners in the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) and Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) to help develop services and training to institutions such as the Canadian Red Cross and Saskatchewan Emergency Planners Association.

“I think the outcome would be when the community has to evacuate from whatever emergency or disaster, that they are confident that all their community members will be cared for in a safe and respectful manner,” said Lambert.

More U = Less CO<sub>2</sub>

**Cameco**  
Energizing a clean-air world

[cameco.com](http://cameco.com)

Last year, Cameco's uranium fueled enough nuclear energy to **prevent 421 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.**

*If we want clean air, we need clean energy production.*

*At Cameco, we're making it possible.*

## Senator, lawyers continue fight against coerced sterilization

By *Sophia Lagimodiere*  
for *Eagle Feather News*

Yvonne Boyer was a former nurse, a lawyer and the Canada Research chair in Aboriginal health and wellness at Brandon University in 2015 when she received a call that would shake public consciousness and lead her to becoming a leading voice in the fight for Indigenous women's reproductive rights.

Journalist Betty Ann Adam wanted Boyer's comments about the coerced sterilization at a Saskatoon hospital, of Brenda Pelletier, an Indigenous woman, and another Indigenous woman, Tracy Bannab, who escaped sterilization when a doctor intervened on her behalf.

When it was published in November 2015, the story caught the attention of other Indigenous women, who'd been coerced into agreeing to have tubal ligations. The first courageous women, Pelletier and Bannab, paved the way because, "then came another woman, and another woman, and another woman," said Boyer.



**Senator Boyer at her acreage in Merrickville, Ontario. (Photo by Jason Simmons)**

"Those names are very, very important, because they were the first warrior women that came forward and they paid dearly... They were the brunt of a monstrosity and white backlash against Indigenous women."

The Saskatoon Health Region (SHR) had quickly changed its policy on tubal ligations, requiring women to discuss the matter with their doctors during pregnancy, prior to going into labour.

But when the coerced sterilizations became a national news story, the SHR reached out to Boyer, asking her to conduct an external review of

their tubal ligation policies and practices. She gives recognition to them for taking action.

"They could have waited for the lawsuits to come. They didn't have to do this... I really believe that they had good intent in trying to get to the bottom of it," she said.

Boyer agreed to do it on the conditions that she have a partner work with her on their own terms and that the results be published. She chose Métis Dr. Judy Bartlett and Elder Mary Lee, who worked with her when women started to anonymously come forward and tell them their stories in a Saskatoon hotel.

The women would talk about their experience, "which was so traumatic it's hard to even put words to it," Boyer said.

"The trauma was not just the act of cutting the fallopian tubes. The trauma came from an ancestral cut. An ancestral cut of ties because of the inability to give birth. That was taken away."

In 2017, they published the External Review report detailing the, "intimidation, harassment, psychological pressure and coercion," experienced by survivors from SHR facilities.

Survivors of the trauma turned to the courts.



**Alisa Lombard, partner at Semaganis Worme Lombard law firm. (Photo from their website)**

Lawyer Alisa Lombard said she wasn't really aware of the issue until she was contacted by a woman who shared her coerced sterilization story.

"I was just really troubled, and was hoping that she was the only one. Unfortunately, she wasn't."

As more women came forward with their stories, Lombard and Helen Semaganis of Semaganis Worme law firm filed a class-action suit at the Court of Queen's Bench in Saskatchewan. Soon after, in 2019, they filed another in Manitoba. Currently, they have over 100 clients across the country.

The class-actions are claiming the cost of future care: monies would allow survivors to access what they need to heal, Lombard said.

She believes the short-term outcome is a measure of punishment, informing women of their bodily autonomy and integrity rights and holding the individuals and institutions responsible to account.

Suggestions of providing more midwives and access to doulas to First Na-

tion's communities are great, but are missing the point, she said.

"We have the right to go to the hospital, deliver a baby with an epidural and not walk out sterile against our will," she said.

Boyer was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 2018, where she devoted her first speech to Indigenous women's health, including the need to address coerced sterilization.

She says something like in vitro fertilization (IVF) should be available to survivors who still want to have children.

She remembers checking into a hotel, and the female desk clerk recognizing her as the "Senator of Sterilization."

"Tears welled up in her eyes and she started to cry and she said, 'They did it to me. I was 21 and I had four kids. And they sterilized me against my will. And now I'm 35 and my kids have grown and I want more. And I can't. And I can't afford IVF,'" Boyer recalled.

"This is happening everywhere. This is not just located in Saskatchewan in the Saskatoon Health Region. It's located where there is a high population of Indigenous people. And I know that," she said.

Since the External Review, Boyer has traveled across the country to speak about the issue. She receives calls from all over Canada and listens to survivors' stories. Currently, she has a motion in the Senate calling for the Standing Committee on Human Rights, of which she is a member, to study coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women. If it goes ahead, she hopes to have the report made public.

Like Boyer, Lombard thinks much still needs to change systemically.

"At the end of the day, you're in this extremely vulnerable state, in a place where you ought to be the safest in that state, and it's totally the opposite experience for many women, for our clients. We're not saying it's the same experience for everybody and no one is saying all doctors do this, but that's not the point. Some do. And those are the ones that were concerned with," said Lombard.

"Hearing these stories is very troubling, and it certainly makes you wonder how safe you are and how safe your children are - I have two girls - in this institution of health that is supposed to provide equal access and accessibility. And there isn't. There just isn't."

# Connect to Your Highways





Reach out to the Highway  
Customer Service Centre  
at **1-844-SK-HIWAY** or  
[saskatchewan.ca/skhiway](https://saskatchewan.ca/skhiway)

Remember — don't drive distracted.

[saskatchewan.ca/highways](https://saskatchewan.ca/highways)



# U of S appoints anti-racism scholar as advisor to President

By Fraser Needham  
for Eagle Feather News

After facing accusations of institutional racism, the University of Saskatchewan has appointed Verna St. Denis to a new position as special advisor on anti-racism and anti-oppression to President Peter Stoicheff.

"Seeing how I can support change at that senior level is what I will be doing," St. Denis said.

"I am going to be providing, developing anti-racist, anti-oppressive education for senior leadership at the U of S. The president and his executive council, we'll start there. And I know there's discussion of providing that kind of education further down the hierarchy, that institutional hierarchy."

A member of Beardy's and Okemasis Cree Nation, St. Denis is a professor of Educational Foundations at the U of S.

She will also take over as chair of the university's committee on anti-racism and anti-oppression.

The appointment follows an exodus of at least nine Indigenous academics in the previous five years amid a climate of, "racism, a hostile work environment and the slow pace of reforms," according to an August 2020 letter to Stoicheff from the University's Faculty Association.

In September, more than 200 people, including former students and current and past faculty, signed an open letter to Stoicheff demanding immediate reforms.

The letter singled out the College of Education, saying it had become an unwelcoming place for Indigenous academics and one that fosters racial hostility.

It called for the immediate resignation of the senior administration of the college and for the university to speed up the pace of reforms.

St. Denis said tackling racism within institutions like universities is a massive and slow moving task but is crucial for society make fundamental change.

"That is definitely the goal of anti-racism: to look historically and currently at the evolution of race thinking within European traditions. And examine over time how race, as a way of categorizing human beings, has been used as a tool for evaluating, making judgments and all of that has consequences. That's the kind of education we need to engage in more broadly across the university," she said.

Places of higher learning play a critical role in reshaping society on more equitable grounds, she said.

"Thousands of students go through the university and all of them are heading into some profession or practice involving other human beings. So, I think it's the responsibility of the university to be and practice anti-racism."

Jacqueline Ottmann, Vice-President of Indigenous Engagement at the U of S, said movements like Black Lives Matter are causing institutions to re-evaluate how they tackle racism and inequity.

"(The appointment) is one of the responses to the climate in general," Ottman said. "With the awareness of racism, oppression, discrimination and inequities that are happening and have happened globally."

Indigenous Studies professor Priscilla Settee said the university has done well in certain parts of Indigenousization, but it lacks a coordinated effort across all departments.

"If there's no commitment as a broader body of academics, things could get waylaid and events like (academics leaving) could happen. It also speaks to the level of advancement that we've made that this persists or exists in parts of the university – you know we're all related, we're all connected – then that indicates there's a problem. There's a need for a concerted effort at the top."

The director of the Aboriginal Education Research Centre, Alex Wilson, said St. Denis' advisory role to the president is a step in the right direction.

"You can't go back and get back all those people who have left, which is the sad part," Wilson said. "But maybe in the future new people will come, I don't know."



Verna St. Denis has been appointed to advise University of Saskatchewan President Peter Stoicheff on anti-racism matters. (Photo University of Saskatchewan)

**HEALTH OF THE NATION**  
MIIYOOMAASHCHHOWIN  
DAAN NUTR NAASYOON

**The Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) Government Ministry of Health oversees health programs and services for Métis citizens and communities.**

**OUR PRIORITIES INCLUDE:**

- COVID-19 response
- Travel assistance for medical appointments
- Métis-specific health and wellness strategy
- Support for mental wellness and addictions

**DETAILS ON OUR HEALTH PROGRAMS:**

[www.metisnationsk.com/Health](http://www.metisnationsk.com/Health)

**COVID SUPPORTS AND APPLICATIONS:**

[www.metisnationsk.com/COVID](http://www.metisnationsk.com/COVID)

**1-833-343-8285** OR [covid19@mns.work](mailto:covid19@mns.work)

**MENTAL WELLNESS AND ADDICTIONS SUPPORT:**

**1-855-671-5638**

8AM-4PM, MONDAY TO FRIDAY

**1-877-767-7572**

24 HR CRISIS LINE

[metisnationsk.com](http://metisnationsk.com)

[@MNSASK](https://www.facebook.com/MNSASK) [@METISNATIONSASK](https://twitter.com/METISNATIONSASK) [#METISNATIONSASK](https://www.linkedin.com/company/METISNATIONSASK)



# MLTC and MN-S work together amid pandemic

By Nathan Raine  
for Eagle Feather News

A partnership between the Metis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S) and the Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) has yielded a wide range of supports in health services for Indigenous people in the North, the impacts of which may be immeasurable.

“Working together, we’ve made a difference. Not to be overly dramatic, but I truly believe we’ve saved lives,” said Richard Quintal, CEO of the MN-S.

Early in the pandemic, the two governing bodies established a joint response in the North Incident Command Centre (NICC). Through the partnership, the two organizations have been able to secure \$7.3 million in emergency support funding for northern Saskatchewan - \$2.3 million during the first wave in the spring, and \$5 million during the second wave in the fall.

In July, to create food security for vulnerable communities, the organizations announced they would distribute enough food for every household in the northwest for two months.

“That was also to help suppress travel around going to grocery stores, trying to keep people home. In a lot of cases it made quite the difference,” Quintal said.



**The Meadow Lake Tribal Council and Métis Nation-Saskatchewan provided necessary staples for many families in the north. (Photo supplied)**

Similar widespread support is possible if needed in the future, but in the last several months the support has been more directly focused where needed, he said.

For example, families or individuals who contracted COVID-19 and were unable to isolate at home were provided with isolation units, said Quintal. The MN-S and MLTC had mobile trailers brought to some communities and set up “isolation camps” and safe

hotels in areas hit hard by the virus.

They also provided medical supplies and PPE and paid for securing community perimeters.

The success of the response isn’t without its continued challenges. Supply distribution and check points were a challenge, Quintal said.

Housing shortages continue to be an issue compounded by the pandemic, which has led to discussions about the possibility of constructing tiny homes, he said.

“The first wave was really scary. The entire world didn’t know what to expect (but) things have evolved. The supply chains are up and active, there’s no longer shortages of things like toilet paper and sanitizer. But we still have to adapt as things change. The success in all this has been the communication piece.”

Closing in on a year of the pandemic being a critical issue in Saskatchewan, Gordon Iron, CEO of MLTC said the biggest concern going forward is the mental health of northern citizens.

“It’s my biggest concern. Having these restrictions that are required and necessary to stop the spread of COVID-19, it really is difficult for individuals forced to stay home or in their bubble... mental health is a serious issue that we’re addressing.”

Iron said they recently received funding from the federal government to purchase four trailers, each of which will have two compartments to accommodate mental health therapists. These trailers will then be brought to communities around the north.

The newest challenge is the vaccination rollout, both in education and its application, which has been decidedly more delayed than expected.

“There is a bit of a concern (with the vaccine rollout). It’s panic mode. The province has been rolling it out the way they see it. I think they could’ve collaborated more with the nations,” said Iron.

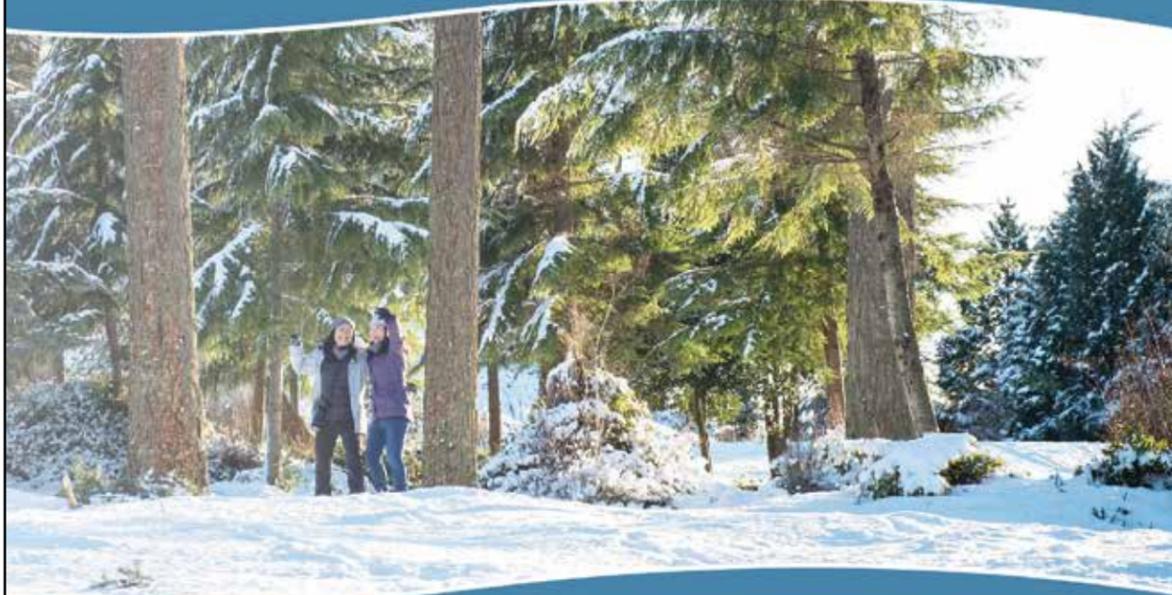
Iron noted the reluctance some Indigenous people feel about using vaccines goes back to the 1930s, when the government did Tuberculosis testing on reserves in the Qu’Appelle.

“So there’s a fear there. We have to work to bring this forward, to educate our people that this is how we’re going to get through this. We have to make sure everyone believes in it.”



**Volunteers from Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Region III helped load and unload trucks of provisions for distribution to families across the north west. (Photo supplied)**

## Stay a step ahead of your health



Keeping active is important for your health and wellness. Regular exercise, like a daily walk, can reduce your risk of certain cancers.

Visit [saskcancer.ca/prevention-article](https://saskcancer.ca/prevention-article) for more information about preventing cancer.

# Amputation doesn't have to mean losing control of life

By Kerry Benjoe  
for Eagle Feather News

Life as an amputee is complicated. Twenty-eight months ago, I consented to the surgery and prepared myself for the journey. Learning to walk again was not easy. There were many times I was overwhelmed with fear, pain, and complete frustration.

However, losing my leg helped me in several different ways. I took control of not only my health, but my life. Although I was presented with an option for a partial foot amputation, doing so required several more painful surgeries and lengthy recoveries.

If there had been a suitable alternative that would have allowed me to keep my leg, I would have taken it.

I realize amputation of lower limbs is common among Indigenous people due to high rates of Type 2 Diabetes. I know people who have lost toes, feet, and legs because of the disease. Diabetics must be extra vigilant because a small injury can quickly become serious.

In the 1980s, my dad underwent emergency surgery where doctors removed his leg below the knee because gangrene had set in. After months in the hospital, he came home and eventually received a prosthetic. He stayed active for the remainder of his life.

In my case, my limb loss was due to trauma, so I still had a measure of control. Before I made my decision, I weighed the pros and cons and decided what was right for me. I knew there were things I would have to give up and some things I wouldn't be able to do anymore, but there was still so much I could do.



**Kerry Benjoe says that the loss of her leg helped her take control of her health and her life. (Photo supplied)**

Being a single mom, I needed to be at my best and the only way to do that was to get rid of the damaged foot that was slowly killing me. Although I never doubted I would walk again, it still took a commitment on my part to make it happen.

One of the first things I did was learn as much as I could about being an amputee. I also followed the doctors orders when it came to medication, appointments, limb care and physiotherapy. I joined online amputee support groups to connect with others and ask questions.

Most importantly, I kept active by forcing myself to do all the things I did before the operation. Once I received my leg, the work did not stop. Limb care is part of daily living.

I continue to pay close attention to my equipment – silicone liners, suspension sleeves, 2-ply to 6-ply socks and my prosthesis. All of these help to secure and protect my fragile limb and keep me mobile.

I have developed a good relationship with my prosthetist at the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre.

I also do not to ignore any discomfort and know when I require an adjustment, which is important.

Two years ago, everything seemed so overwhelming, but it has become second nature to me now.

I am still adapting to life as an amputee, as is my body. I fell only a couple times because I forgot I didn't have a leg. Most recently the phantom pains have subsided.

Don't get me wrong. At times I still feel pain from walking, such as tired muscles, but I can still walk, drive, work and do basically everything I did before. The pros definitely outweigh the cons.

I know my situation is a bit different, but I want others who are dealing with an amputation, to know life can still be everything you want it to be because you can still define your own future.

## BECOME A NURSE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Earn your Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree at the University of Saskatchewan.  
Deadline to Apply: March 31st

USASK

NURSING



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN  
**College of Nursing**  
NURSING.USASK.CA

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS



# Words from our Elders: Wanda Gladys *Wanda Gladys Prettyshield - Wa Asinya Wiya "Woman*

These memories of Wanda Prettyshield are excerpts from the book *Meskanawiyiniwak Volume II*. The elders were recorded, photographed and published by Ted Whitecalf and a team, including Marilyn Poitras, Jacqueline Gabriel and the late Pamela Whitecalf, Sweetgrass Records. Check back monthly for words from our elders.

We lived at the school when we went to high school. There was no high school at the boarding school, just up to grade seven. We got bused into Brandon...

(My brother Duncan) went through a lot, he was actually tortured and sexually abused [at the school]... I didn't know nothing about it while I was there.

Here's four of us, look. Isn't that an awful picture? Look at



**Wanda Prettyshiled, "Woman Who Heals" was one of few First Nations Registered Nurses in her day. She accomplished that by juggling family responsibilities and burning the midnight oil. She passed away in July of 2020. (Photo by Ted Whitecalf)**

that, we all look sour, not even smiling or nothing, pathetic looking... there was a lot of emotional and physical abuse, because we got strapped when people ran away, because they would try to find out who knew what, and we were hauled out of bed all hours of the morning and lined up in the hallways.

... We used to get strapped up to here, we used to have big red arms right all the way up. I think that's why I've got eczema, or why I had it in school. I don't know where this rash came from. A lot of horrible stuff went on there, but some good stuff too, so you could balance it. It was home, so you had to make it home...

My parents would send a small little box of parcels of chocolate bars and a few apples and popcorn and things in there, and then we'd share that. When we



## GET VACCINATED

*Protect your community! Protect your loves ones!*

*Vaccines create immunity without causing illness or resulting complications. We need to continue keeping each other safe!*



# Prettyshield, Carry the Kettle First Nation Who Heals” - September 27, 1939-July 13, 2020

were done sharing it, whatever was left we had to take back into the office, to the matron’s office. So, we’d do that every Friday and we’d try to eat as much as we could before they’d spoil, you know, things would go bad in there, so we’d eat the things that had to be eaten first. I’d look after all of that for little visits.

...Duncan used to run away a lot, so I would worry sick about him all the time... of course he’d get picked up, he’d have to go to the farmers’ places and then they’d phone the school. They’d feed him and keep him in the house until the supervisor got there, then they’d take him back.

...We tried to run away one time, too, but we didn’t try to run away from the school, we were trying to get out to go to a hockey game, and they took the boys, and they left the girls. So, we crossed the river that night, there was three of us or four of us, I can’t remember. First time I ever ran away from the school at night, and there were huge blocks of ice that were cut that time, and there were holes in the ice. And we were cutting across that. Crazy. But anyway, when we got into town, into Brandon, because we cut across the river, we were running across the tracks and I tripped and my friend caught me from behind and stood me up, and when I stood up my socks were all wet. It was almost melting time, so we went to the show, anyway.

This is funny, because we are sitting all in a row like this. [I] went in the bathroom and wrung my jeans out, put them back on, and we’re sitting in there. And by now they’re kind of drying, they must have been thin or something, and guess who was sitting right in front of us? Our laundry matron was sitting in front with the maintenance guy – yeah, hanky-panky. And we were sitting right behind them, so we got a ride back to the school, and she tried to let us in by disconnecting the alarm for us. But she was more or less on our

side. She was a short little woman. She used to teach music lessons to the girls there. But we were lucky to get back. Never did do that again, I tell you.

...The last year I was in Brandon, that summer, the matron came and asked me, “Wanda, what do you want to work at, what kind of a job do you want this year?” And I said, “Nurse’s aide,” and I got the job [as] nurse’s aide....

I tried to finish my grade twelve by correspondence, but I never did finish it. I tried and it didn’t work, because I was working in Wolseley. That was my first job...

So, the matron, the director of nursing in Wolseley, she said to me one day, “Well, Wanda, you can do better. Why don’t you take the LPN training?” I said, “Well, help me,” because at that time you never got any direction from anybody. There was no counseling, there was nothing, nobody to help you. [So] she mentioned it to me, and I said, “Help me get in and I’ll do it.” So, she applied for me to the LPN program in Saskatoon. I went in, I think it was 1960.

...  
I went back (to school again) part-time and took my RN in three years...  
When I went back to take my training, I had four kids. So, I was studying in the evening, put my kids to bed about eight thirty, around there. Start about nine o’clock and sit up until about two o’clock doing bookwork. He’d do the cooking most of the time. Hung in there. Had some rough times too, rough times, I almost quit, kept on going. I got my RN in ’84.

W  
(Ed. Note: This Elder’s Story is an excerpt of a longer piece that will be available on the Eagle Feather News website as of February 19, 2021)

## talk tobacco

Indigenous Quit Smoking and Vaping Support

# Quitlines like **Talk Tobacco** can **more than double** your chance of quitting successfully

**Learn to cope**  
with cravings and withdrawal symptoms

**Available in**  
**16 Indigenous languages**

**Culturally inclusive and aware**  
Serving First Nation, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous populations

**Free and confidential service**

CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP AGAINST CANCER

PARTENARIAT CANADIEN CONTRE LE CANCER

Ontario Health  
Cancer Care Ontario

1-833-998-8255 **talktobacco.ca**

Production of this ad has been made possible through collaboration and financial support from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer Corporation and Health Canada.

# Humour and spirituality foundational for police officer author

By Nathan Raine  
for Eagle Feather News

If you ask John Langan how he's been so resilient, he'll probably laugh. Not at the question, though. Laughter is his answer.

"I guess that's how I've dealt with it all. One of the things I found while writing (my book), my editor would tell me 'these aren't funny stories'. But I would just laugh," Langan said in an interview.

Langan, of Keeseekoose First Nation, is a Saskatoon Police Constable and first-time author, and is no stranger to adversity. Growing up in more than a dozen towns and cities in southern Saskatchewan, he found himself surrounded by death, drugs, and violence from an early age.

His approach to adversity has allowed him to rise above despair.

"The bad times, they changed me for the good. Going through physical pain, even. I laugh about it later. That's how I heal, is laughing."

This spring Langan will self-publish *Resiliency: My Nose Above Water*.

His 200-page book is part memoir and part documentation of Cree and Saulteaux culture, ceremonies, and protocols. Much of the book will focus on the healing qualities connected with spirituality, he said.

"My family has always been spiritual. I found out through writing this book that I come from a long line of spiritual people – ceremonies, medicine, lots of stuff. In my book I go through my spiritual progress and how I came through it."

The youngest of five brothers, Langan relied on family to guide him through early challenges. His father, Henry Langan Jr committed suicide when Langan was only four. His step-father, Rodney Severight, whom Langan refers to as 'Dad', used substances to cope with the effects of his time in residential school. Severight died in 2013.

In high school, with his eldest brothers starting to get involved with gangs, Langan found himself surrounded by drugs and crime in his school and family life. After a run-in with the law, in which a group of friends tried to pin a break and enter on him, Langan decided to make some changes.

He joined the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, became president of his school's Students Against Drunk Driving chapter, and after graduating from high school, joined the Canadian Army Reserve.

"Joining the Air Cadets saved my life. I surrounded myself with positive-minded people and structure. I think that's what I needed, to have structure and a strong authority figure."

After graduating from the University of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Arts in 2013, he worked at the Saskatoon Open Door Society. At a night-lodge ceremony a few years later, Langan felt a spiritual calling to become a police

officer.

In 2017, he went to the Saskatoon Police College and joined the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS).

Now 32 and serving his fourth year as a police officer, Langan knows he's found his calling.

"When I'm out (talking to other Indigenous people), I try to get last names so I know where they're from, or what language they're from. I'll say a (Cree or Saulteaux phrase) and right away it breaks the ice," he said.

"Whenever I'm working, I'm always praying for them. Even my partner knows, whenever we're (on a call), I'm always praying."

The motivation to put his journey into a book came from his wife of three years, Bianca Ermine, who he said provides him with constant support and encouragement.

"At first, I told my wife that this book will let our children and future generations know where they came from," he said.

"But as I started to write it, I could see it will help so many people (and educators. This book will change the way people are policed."

Langan said he hopes to get this book into the hands of as many police officers across the country as possible, to shine a light on the experience of young Indigenous people, and help build a foundational knowledge of the culture from which they come.

He's already off to a promising start, as Russ Mirasty, the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan has read the book.

"I remember my Kokum telling me, 'We learned so much about white people. Now it's time for them to start learning about us'. That's what I'm doing."

"Our culture is so beautiful. You see how powerful our people were back in the day, and it's starting to come back now. It's going to be a beautiful thing."



John Langan and his wife Bianca Ermine, who he says constantly supported and encouraged him as he wrote his book. (Photo supplied)

**MBC Radio**  
**BINGO!**

**SUPER BINGO**  
Feb 19 at 5:30 pm

**\$15,000 in cash to be won, including two \$5,000 blackout games**

2 page 6-up cards for \$15

Next SUPER BINGO is March 19  
Lottery Licence #: MB20-0001

Visit our website and click on **RADIO BINGO** for more information:  
[www.mbcradio.com](http://www.mbcradio.com)

SERIES 02 LA TAYR LA LAANG PI LI RISPAY  
**LAND LANGUAGE & RESPECT**

**March 6, 10:00-2:00 PM**

REGISTER AT [LANDLANGUAGEANDRESPECT.EVENTBRITE.CA](http://LANDLANGUAGEANDRESPECT.EVENTBRITE.CA)

PRESENTERS INCLUDE

 Calvin Racette / MODERATOR	 Elder Norman Fleury / LANGUAGE KEEPER	 Annette Ozirny-Hobart / MÉTIS HARVESTER & TRAPPER	 Carrie Armstrong / MÉTIS EDUCATOR
-----------------------------------	--	--	--

AND MORE

THANK YOU TO

Indigenous Services Canada  
 Services aux Autochtones Canada

Métis Nation Saskatchewan

# Horses help women at healing lodge

By Creeden Martell  
for Eagle Feather News

Dale Mosquito has been around horses for as long as he can remember. His father was a horseman, as was his grandfather.

The animals were part of his life long before the Four Seasons Horse Teaching program at the federal Okimaw Ohci healing lodge was established at Nekaneet First Nation in the early 2000s.

The program, for which Mosquito is an instructor, teaches women serving federal sentences about horses and how to care for them while helping the women heal too.

"A lot of the things that the horses can teach us can overlap and help others, which was our thinking at the time, which is how the program got started," Mosquito recalled of the program's origins. "What we like to view it as is part of a healing plan."

The women learn how to approach horses, equip them with saddles and the basics of equine hygiene and anatomy. It starts with a talking circle where the women are introduced to each other.

The programs take place several times per year and last about a month. The morning portion of the course is spent in the classroom and the afternoons are



**Children greet Rocky, a legendary thoroughbred that is known all across Indian country. Now Rocky helps connect with female inmates at a healing lodge. (Photo supplied)**

outside with the horses.

"Through some of the teachings in the classroom, we look at things in a historical perspective too," Mosquito added. "Because when we look back, we can see what causes why a person would want to stray away from leading, I guess, a good life."

Horses are animals so they won't judge people, Mosquito said, but they're responsive to a person's body language and overall demeanour. The horses help the participants relax and kind of let their own identities shine through, he said.

The program addresses aspects of life such as the physical, social, mental, emotional and the spiritual.

"When we do ceremony, that gives us a connection to the land and gives us an identity, who we are as people," Mosquito said.

Mosquito doesn't work alone in the program. He has a team with him, which includes an elder from the community and a facilitator to take care of the paperwork for the social rehabilitation program, as it is classified by Corrections Services Canada.

Mosquito's daughter, Shaya Stanley, has also helped with the program in some years, as she has been around since the start, when she was 14.

Some of the horses are kept on the land at the lodge and some are brought from off-site.

The program has evolved over the years but the one constant has been Rocky, Mosquito's old horse that is known across Indian Country. Rocky is a thoroughbred and is the tallest horse in the program.

"That's his number one, that's his old reliable," Stanley said, adding that Rocky will celebrate his 28th birthday in May.

Stanley said Rocky is the horse Mosquito took to horse dance ceremonies as part of the program, before COVID-19 slowed things down and limited escorted temporary absences for the women at the lodge.

"When we were able to do that, it was a nice break from being in the institution," she said.

"It was a nice little getaway and that kind of lifted everybody's spirits to come out and be away from there, even for a day."

The Indigenous Apprenticeship Initiative is accepting proposals until  
**MAY 28, 2021.**



The Indigenous Apprenticeship Initiative (IAI) program creates awareness for apprenticeship training and promotes the trades as a top career. The IAI is now accepting proposals for innovative projects, including apprenticeship courses, mentoring projects, career exploration and more.

For more information:

**306-787-2439**

**[saskapprenticeship.ca/indigenous-apprenticeship](https://saskapprenticeship.ca/indigenous-apprenticeship)**



Saskatchewan  
Apprenticeship and  
Trade Certification  
Commission

# Crain's life behind the wheel earns entrepreneurial award

By **Brendan Mayer**  
for *Eagle Feather News*

Alfred Crain took over his father's medical taxi business at Muskoday First Nation 25 years ago and later started A.C. First Nations Driving Academy.

Now his knack for business and aptitude for working with people has been recognized with the Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation (SIEF) 2020 Entrepreneurial Spirit Award.

"It wasn't expected," Crain said. "It's something that further enhances the relationship I have with the business community. It's an honour and is a positive feather in my cap."

"He always looks after everybody," said Crain's sister-in-law Priscilla Crain, who is one of the main drivers for Muskoday Medical Taxi. "He's an excellent boss and brother-in-law."

Alfred was nominated by Muskoday First Nation council and Chief Herman Crain.

"I must be on the right track if I'm being recognized by my community's leadership," Alfred said.

His father, Jim Crain, operated the medical taxi business for 22 years and hoped it would stay in the family.

"He was quite happy that we could keep it going," Alfred said. "My parents showed us a strong work ethic. There is a level of integrity that I want to carry on on behalf of my parents."

"Alfred has made it work," Priscilla said. "He is very helpful to the drivers and the community in many areas. He's very friendly with everybody that he meets. He takes care of us and the business."

"You have to have the right combination of patience and understanding," Alfred said. "I'm a people person. Communication is important in this line of

work. Being sick isn't fun for anybody. We realize that if we can keep it light, that helps with stress. You have to be sensitive and can't be rushing them."

The company has three medical taxis, and one of the vehicles is wheelchair accessible.

"We don't have a doctor in the community, and a lot of people don't have access to transportation due to their income," Alfred said. "That's why there is a need to provide medical transportation to residents. It's a valuable service."

When the pandemic hit, he thought they might be so busy they'd have to bring in extra vehicles and drivers, but the opposite happened.

"The medical taxi almost came to a stand still," he said. "It was surprising to us... We were fortunate to have money to cover any payroll issues and any financing issues for our vehicles."

He started training drivers in 2005 and has taught more than 3,000 students.

"I keep myself busy with the driving school," he said. "I love this job. We're here to help. I've been to every part of Saskatchewan (and) every community is different."

Crain doesn't take the responsibility of preparing drivers for the road lightly.

"I hope and pray that I never have to hear about one of my students being involved in a collision because of distracted driving or impaired driving. We hammer that point home a lot. That's an immediate challenge that we have to deal with," he said.

Crain is also the president of the Saskatchewan Driver Education Association. He is serving his third term.

"I think this education is really working," he said. "Doors open faster once you have a driver's license. It will improve your everyday life."



**Alfred Crain was presented with the Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation Entrepreneurial Spirit Award at the Saskatoon Inn and Conference Centre. (Photo submitted)**



## Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation COVID-19 ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR INDIGENOUS BUSINESSES

SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN EQUITY FOUNDATION INC.

through assistance provided by the Government of Canada and the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA), is providing Indigenous business owners impacted by Covid-19 with access to Additional Assistance funding. The Additional Assistance Emergency Loan Program (ELP) is a component of the Indigenous Business Stabilization Program.

The Additional Assistance Emergency Loan Program (ELP) is designed as an emergency measure to support small business owners in meeting their immediate operating cash flow needs. These funds are for the purpose of surviving the pandemic crisis and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous businesses.

**Additional Assistance is \$20,000 comprised of a 50% loan and a 50% non-repayable contribution.**

If you are an Indigenous-owned business

impacted by the COVID-19 crisis,  
contact the SIEF office for more information  
and visit our website for the ELP application.

SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN EQUITY FOUNDATION

PHONE: 306-955-4550 EMAIL: [info@sief.sk.ca](mailto:info@sief.sk.ca)

WEBSITE: [www.sief.sk.ca](http://www.sief.sk.ca)



# Pandemic creates welcome jobs in the north

By Judith Iron  
for Eagle Feather News

Staffing security check points in the north has turned out to be a new source of employment for some young people, who often have few job opportunities in remote communities.

Raven Security owner Duane Iron employs and manages gate staff from Cole Bay, Jans Bay and Canoe Lake. The majority of its employees are young adults from the three communities and often need to travel to get to the job.

Iron feels that providing young people employment helps them learn to be self-sufficient, keeps them productive and builds their self-confidence. They are expected to enforce the health guidelines without conflict. As a result of their employment and being in the public eye, they are now more involved in their communities. Iron hopes to encourage a strong sense of purpose and belonging.

“Working here allows me to socialize more with people.. which used to be tough,” said Neil Morin of Cole Bay.

Marie Maurice, an employee from Canoe Lake, hopes that everyone continues to do their part to lessen the spread of the virus.

“I like knowing that I make a difference in flattening the curve. I try to give out information and have pleasant interactions because some gates are hard to deal with. People enjoy passing by our gate knowing they will be greeted and treated with respect by our staff,” she said.

Tyson Kyplain of Cole Bay is happy to have secured employment with Raven Security.

“I thank Duane for giving me a chance by hiring me. Not often do we young people get a chance to work. I look forward to my shifts all the time and meeting the different travelers,” Kyplain said.

Iron says his company has been successful mainly because of the staff.

“I am proud to have these young people as employees. Their work ethic amazes me. They arrive early, they are organized, and they are very responsible,” he said.

As gate staff, they have to speak with many people about COVID-19. They are expected to collect information from the public about their travel plans for contact tracing and do it with respect and professionalism.

Even with the recent cold warnings, the employees agree what they most enjoy is being outdoors and speaking with travelers. Safety tips, information, and smiles are given freely every day by the staff of Raven Security on the corner of the 903 and 965.

*“I am proud to have these young people as employees. Their work ethic amazes me. They arrive early, they are organized, and they are very responsible,”*

The check stop at the junction of highway 903 and 965 has been in operation sporadically since the spring of 2020. It is sponsored by the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and implements the regulations and recommendations of the Saskatchewan Health Authority.



Duane Iron, owner Raven Security. (Photo provided By Duane Iron)



“Yunadhe dġ’eth”

“Ahkami pimohtē”

“Ĉdehde iyokpiya icupi”

## Take the Next Step!

**Academic Programs**

**Student Services  
and Cultural Supports**

**Career Centres**



For more information on SIIT programs or to apply online, visit [www.siit.ca](http://www.siit.ca)

## Miserable Mike, me and the bears

One time I was backpacking in the Arctic Circle, northeast of Fort Good Hope, NWT, doing an archaeology survey. I was young and strong. I was placed with a grouchy mountain man nobody wanted to work with. He was strong like a bull and hated people in general. I was given compass bearings each morning with a destination and he would take off, leaving me to my own devices. He insisted we never camp near each other. There was a time I found him waiting for me by a fast-flowing river. He just jumped in and swam across. I wasn't going to let any white man degrade me and so I pushed myself. I fought my fear and made two trips while being carried on the current.

After I crossed Mike was gone. He had his ways of testing me. One time I saw him some distance away up a spruce tree howling like a wolf. I figured he wanted to scare me and so I pretended I was scared. He no doubt found this quite amusing. He was for the most part blunt and condescending. I later found out there were others who simply quit because they couldn't tolerate him. Mike seemed to enjoy breaking people, preferring to be alone.

I had had my fill of racism since childhood and my response was to stand up to anyone, including Mike, if only in silence. Finally, we had the occasional grudging interaction. He wasn't much of a listener but appeared to appreciate someone who would listen. He told me once he

hated cities. Among other reasons, he was convinced disease wafted up from manhole covers. I don't know why he left Saskatoon and chose to live as a virtual hermit in the wilderness of the North West Territories and I never asked. Our



### Breaking Trail

John Cuthand

boss only told me he had some understandable reasons but that's all he would say.

We were fishing by a place called Axe Lake. We were both sick of freeze-dried food and had improvised a fishing pole out of spruce. Our safety pin wasn't up to the job. He told me to look into the bush and hidden among the shadows was a black bear watching us intently. We kept fishing and then it came out huffing and slapping the ground. It was a beautiful bear. I then realized we were occupying its fishing ground and we were definitely not welcome. I later found out

in bear language his slapping the ground meant back off.

Mike, to my surprise and that of the bear, flipped out, pounding the ground with our fishing pole while screaming obscenities. Bear eventually backed off and shot up a tree. I don't know which was freakier Mike or the bear. I stayed up all night keeping fire while he slept soundly. Night was just twilight. In the morning a chopper picked us up. The pilot wanted to get away fast. He was scared of bears. As if a bear would hang around a roaring chopper.

Any way we eventually camped with the others in our team. I was glad to meet normal people. Mike, however, reveled in putting me down in front of the others. Again, I kept silent but others spoke up on my behalf. A bear and cub got into our grub tent while we were swimming. They spilled flour everywhere and we could see their tracks in the mess. Then I alone spent the night keeping fire and chasing them away. They were very sneaky but the cub's big ears gave them away. Once a bear gets into your grub there's no getting rid of it. You either move camp or shoot the bear. Bears are always hungry. Once fed, they hang around like certain relatives I know. Between Mike and bears it was too much. I quit. As the float plane lifted off, I could see him going toe to toe with the bears screaming at them and pounding the ground. It was all too weird but most memorable.

AMNSIS recognizes and includes all members of the family, the kinship, supporting inherent Indigenous rights of the individual.



**AMNSIS**  
Association of Métis, Non and  
Status Indians Saskatchewan

**... is back.**

Advocating for over 125,000 urban, rural and northern Indigenous people.  
An alternative to distinctions-based organizations, AMNSIS respects freedom of association.

### Virtual Town Hall Meetings

**Saturday February 13: 2-4 pm**  
Senator Sanderson presents *Inherent Rights, National Powers of Treaty Making*,  
Dr. Major presents *Non-Status*

**Wednesday February 17: 7-9pm**  
Senator Sanderson presents *Crown Indigenous Relations*, Dr. Major presents *Daniels Case*

**Sunday February 21: 2-4 pm**  
Allan Morin presents *History of AMNSIS/CAP*

**Thursday February 25: 7-9 pm**  
AMNSIS President Charlene Lavallee  
presents *Occupying the Field*



"AMNSIS"

For more information on  
Town Hall Meetings,  
call 1-888-262 7808  
or email [info@amnsis.ca](mailto:info@amnsis.ca)

Visit [www.amnsis.ca](http://www.amnsis.ca)

# Northern youth to join anti-bullying research

By Julia Peterson  
for Eagle Feather News

Northern youth are being invited to flip the script and deliver “report cards” on how their communities are doing addressing youth violence and bullying.

The exercise will be part of a \$400,000 research project in which 16 to 21-year-olds will tell their stories through photos and video, said Dr. Brigitte Krieg, a mental health therapist involved in the project that is led by Dr. Raven Sinclair of the University of Regina faculty of social work.

“Participants will learn to use digital storytelling to create individual and group stories related to the community and will share project information with stakeholders across the province. Recommendations for supports and resources will be implemented in each community,” Sinclair said.

“They will be teaching us what’s working for them, what’s not working and what needs to change in order to create opportunities within the schools and within their communities,” said Krieg. “What is it they need in order to be successful?”

Krieg says the plan is to credit the participants as authors in the study report, which is expected to be complete before the end of 2021.

The research team is recruiting participants now in Prince Albert, Pelican Narrows, Wollaston Lake, Stanley Mission and Fond Du Lac. For more information contact [krieg24b@uregina.ca](mailto:krieg24b@uregina.ca).

The Northern Prairie Spirit Youth Cultural Continuity Project will collaborate with the young people to better understand violence and bullying from their perspectives.

Researchers want to know how young people want their community leaders, resource providers and policy makers to address these issues.

Krieg says the federal government’s support for the project goes beyond funding.

During a November phone call, Public Safety Minister Bill Blair expressed interest in the project, she said.

“He has made a commitment to having the youth come and share some of their findings - going out to Ontario to share some of the findings they

have from the project,” she said, adding such trips will be arranged when it is safe to travel again.

“This commitment from Minister Blair means that more youth will have that opportunity to have their voices heard,” she said.

The project will help Indigenous youth in Saskatchewan to be heard, which they “absolutely” are not now, Krieg said.

Regardless of where they are, in urban areas or remote northern communities, youth are forgotten, she said. They are under-resourced and under-supported.

“We lack... understanding about the struggles that youth have in northern and remote areas.”

Access to support and services for anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts can be a challenge, she said.

“They will be teaching us what’s working for them, what’s not working and what needs to change in order to create opportunities within the schools and within their communities,” said Krieg. “What is it they need in order to be successful?”

The research team hopes to get started in the communities by May or June.

“It’s a chance to be part of something and to learn - not just from each other in your own communities, but then having that opportunity to connect with other youth from other communities who are experiencing some of the same things,” she said. “I think this will create a kind of camaraderie with our youth where they can lean on one another, support each other and then also learn from each other.”



Dr. Brigitte Krieg, a mental health therapist, University of Regina. (photo supplied)

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

To all persons who were Crown Wards in Ontario at any time from the period on or after January 1, 1966 until March 30, 2017 and suffered physical or sexual assault before or while a Crown Ward (“Class Members”)

**A proposed settlement has been reached with Ontario in this class action to provide compensation of up to \$3,600 to Class Members who are former Crown Wards who suffered physical or sexual assault before or while a Crown Ward.**

This lawsuit is not about seeking money from your abusers for the abuse you suffered. The lawsuit is about the government’s alleged duty to consider and, where appropriate, apply for specific benefits on behalf of Crown Wards who were victims of crime, or to seek damages in civil actions on behalf of Crown Wards. The lawsuit, and this settlement, do not impact your ability to sue someone who abused you.

If you opted out of the class action, the settlement will not impact you.

There will be a court hearing on **May 12, 2021** to decide whether the proposed settlement of the lawsuit should be approved. The hearing will take place virtually.

There is no money available now. If the court approves the settlement and you are part of the lawsuit, you can then make a claim.

To obtain further information, please visit <https://OntarioCrownWardClassAction.ca> or contact Epiq Global at 1-877-739-8936, or by email at [info@ontariocrownwardclassaction.ca](mailto:info@ontariocrownwardclassaction.ca).

The lawyers acting for the class are Koskie Minsky LLP. You may also contact Koskie Minsky LLP at 1-866-778-7985, or by email at [OCWclassaction@kmlaw.ca](mailto:OCWclassaction@kmlaw.ca).

If you approve of the settlement, and want it to proceed so you can claim money, you do not need to take any steps. If you want to object to the settlement, you must send an objection to Epiq Global by April 1, 2021

**FSIN**

Cîstahowin êkwânima  
nawasonikewin ka-osihitayin  
ta-manâcihisyin, kî-wîtokêmâkanak  
êkwa mâmawâyâwinihk. Cîstahowin  
êkwânima tipiyawê nawasonikewin  
êkwânima mîna mistahi Canadians  
tipêyimowak ewako oma takahki  
miyo-mâcihowin êkwa  
nîkânêyihâkwan nakinam kiki  
mitoni misi âhkosiwin.

[fsin.ca](http://fsin.ca)

# Métis Nation - Saskatchewan achieves health care benefits

By EFN staff  
of Eagle Feather News

A cancer diagnosis is the last thing you want to hear from your doctor. Lots of fear of the future. Treatments. Travel. Uncertainty. It can be the most trying of times for the strongest of families.

Soon though, there will be support for Métis patients and their families in the process.

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA) and the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) have agreed to work together to improve Métis people's experiences with cancer treatment.

The partners intend to improve outcomes for Métis people, from prevention through treatment, with a culturally responsive plan for the Cancer Agency to ensure health equity for overall health and well-being.

"We are formalizing a relationship that has been years in the making through our collaboration on cancer surveillance, cancer prevention activities and community consultations," said Cancer Agency President Dr. Jon Tonita.

The MN-S will help the agency identify, understand and address the barriers that contribute to health inequities for Métis people in this province, Tonita said.

MN-S Health Minister Marg Friesen has committed to working closely with the Cancer Agency, "to implement diverse and targeted cancer programs and services for the people we serve."

Registered Métis people in Saskatchewan also now have access to financial help to cover the cost of travel and accommodation for cardiac care, surgeries and other medical specialist appointments.

The travel and accommodation program is a pilot project to expand an existing application-based program for Métis cancer and kidney dialysis patients.

Some medical services are only available in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert, which can require significant travel, time, and expense for Métis citizens living across the province. With the economic challenges that came with the pandemic and the stress that traveling for medical treatment brings, MN-S



**Marg Friesen is the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Minister of Health. The pandemic has been keeping her very busy and they are still finding time to enter into partnerships to provide better medical services to Métis citizens. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)**

wants to provide its citizens with some comfort and assistance to help reduce their worries during an already stressful time.

"Our citizens and their families are in urgent need of financial support to help ease the burden of accessing medical care outside of their communities. Lack of public transportation and pandemic related fears have made essential travel more difficult," Friesen said. "Removing some of these barriers will help lessen the stress of travel when dealing with critical medical concerns."

Reimbursement will be provided for fuel, healthy food and accommodation expenses incurred during travel to and from required medical appointments outside of the patient's home community. The program is open to all registered citizens of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, those whose registrations are in process, and their immediate family members.

To sign up for the travel program or for more information go to [www.metisnationsk.com/health](http://www.metisnationsk.com/health)

The benefits arise from negotiations with the federal government to implement the 2016 Supreme Court of Canada Daniels decision, which found the Métis are included as Indians under the constitution, and that Métis fall under the federal government jurisdiction.

sk  
arts

## Deadlines

**Our programs 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**  
- Development  
March 10

**ARTISTS IN COMMUNITIES\*  
- Projects  
- Residencies**  
April 1

**PERMANENT COLLECTION SUBMISSIONS**  
April 1

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ART AND ARTISTS**  
April 15

**ARTISTS IN SCHOOLS\*  
- Projects  
- Residencies**  
May 1

**PRINCE EDWARD ARTS SCHOLARSHIP**  
May 1

(306) 787-4056 (Regina)  
(306) 964-1155 (Saskatoon)  
(800) 667-7526 (Toll-free)  
[grants@sk-arts.ca](mailto:grants@sk-arts.ca)  
[sk-arts.ca](http://sk-arts.ca)

\*Supported by funding from  
Sask Lotteries through the  
partnership between SK Arts  
and SaskCulture Inc.

FOR APPLICATIONS, VISIT: [SK-ARTS.CA](http://SK-ARTS.CA)

## Mindfulness Classes

with Jeanne Corrigan, Certified Teacher

Introduction to Mindfulness: Presence of Heart: Mondays Feb 22 - Mar 8, \$75

Mindfulness and Quiet Joy: Mondays Mar 15 - 29, \$75

Indigenous Presence: Tuesdays, Apr 6 - 27, \$100

**All classes are online 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm**



Jeanne has been practicing and teaching for over 25 years. She is Métis and one of her first teachers in loving presence was Cree Elder Jim Settee.

Please see [www.jeannecorrigan.com/mindfulness-classes.html](http://www.jeannecorrigan.com/mindfulness-classes.html) for details and registration

# Youth shelter opens in Saskatoon

By John Lagimodiere  
of Eagle Feather News

The number of homeless youth in Saskatoon is growing and the Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre provides support for them.

SIMFC has opened the doors of the Wicitizon Shelter as part of a new daytime drop-in place for youth with services and supports to meet their unique needs.

"When youth are living on the streets, they are surviving at night so they don't get the opportunity to sleep," said SIMFC Programs Manager Charleen Cote. "So, we are providing a safe place for them to come and sleep. The whole centre is a safe place for them. We provide food and culturally rich



From left, SIMFC Executive Director Robert Doucette, Programs Manager Charleen Cote with Youth Care Workers Glen Watcheston, Nicole Paske-min and Natasha Scott at the Wicitizon Shelter, a new drop-in service for youth at the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Center. (Photo by John Lagimodiere)

activities. We have all Indigenous staff. And we work with them to try and transition them to a place of safety and security."

The need for a place is real. The last point-in-time count on homelessness in Saskatoon in 2016 showed 200 homeless or under-housed youth. "There are way more than that now and a majority are Indigenous," added Cote.

The shelter's name, Wicitizon, is a Saukteaux word meaning "to help oneself." The shelter is made possible through funding from Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership. There is capacity for up to 12 youth at a time.

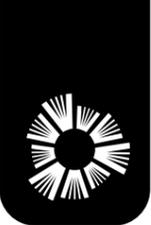
"Our place is culturally different than other programs. Kids are looking for that connection to their culture," said SIMFC Executive director Robert Doucette. "They can see that everyone they work with here is Indigenous. And they can see that success and role model behind that. I think of the youth like me that aged out at 18 from the system with nothing. This is an incredibly good program and I think a lot of kids will benefit from this."

The Centre works with private landlords and other partners to provide housing and emergency transition services and within its first three days had 14 regular users.

They expect more clients in the cold days of February.

"They can come and use our computers and phones to stay in contact with their family. We feed them. They feel safe here. They like we aren't pushing them into other services," Cote said. "They come to us on their terms. And we will meet them where they are at."

The Centre utilizes rigorous COVID-19 protocols to ensure that the youth, other clients, and Centre staff stay safe during the pandemic. Youth enter and exit through the gymnasium doors and have access to a cot, food, and activities. The drop-in centre is open daily 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.



## NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY

### HAVE YOUR SAY IN THE DESIGN!

Jan 25 – Feb 19, 2021

The new central library is an investment in our community's potential to grow and learn together. For this project to achieve its vision of being a welcoming, inclusive and barrier-free place for everyone who calls Saskatoon home, we need to hear from you.

Over the next 18 months, there will be several opportunities for Saskatoon residents to help shape the design of the new central library.

Here's how to get involved:

### JOIN A VIRTUAL CONVERSATION WITH THE PROJECT TEAM

Mon / Feb 15 / 6 – 7:30 pm

Wed / Feb 17 / 1 – 2:30 pm

### COMPLETE A KITCHEN TABLE KIT

Download a Kitchen Table Kit or pick up a paper copy at any Saskatoon Public Library. Kitchen Table Kits are for a small group of friends or family to get together to talk in a comfortable and informal setting. Your thoughts and ideas are then submitted to the project team.

### CONTRIBUTE TO SURVEYS, ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION ONLINE

Complete surveys and other interactive activities, and participate in the Q&A discussion.

For more about the project and to get involved, please visit

[saskatooncentrallibrary.ca](https://saskatooncentrallibrary.ca)

## U of S recognizes student excellence, resilience, leadership and community

By Fraser Needham  
for Eagle Feather News

Morgan Longjohn took herself from homelessness and addictions to university.

Devin Kyle said goodbye to work in the service industry and now studies anthropology.

Both were recognized with resiliency awards as part of Indigenous Student Achievement Week at the University of Saskatchewan in early February.



**Morgan Longjohn has overcome homelessness and addiction and is now excelling at the University of Saskatchewan. (Photo supplied)**

Longjohn, 33, has three children and is pursuing a degree in political studies.

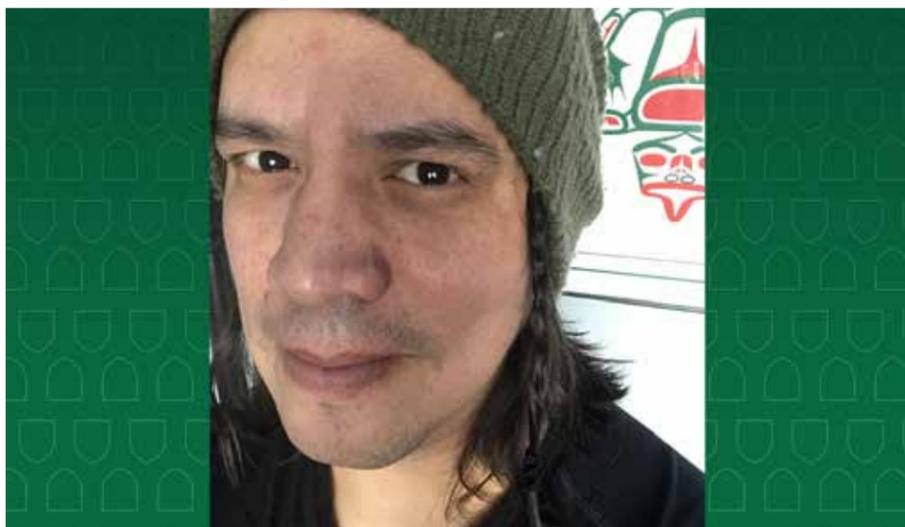
She had to conquer drug and alcohol addictions and homelessness before she could return to school, but since then she has never looked back.

“Well, how I did it is I just had to live a clean life, get organized and do what I had to do,” she said. “The opportunity came to apply at the U of S, I took it and doors just opened.”

She started small, by taking one course when she was 28 before eventually working her way up to fulltime studies and said she works hard to maintain a clean and healthy lifestyle each and every day.

Longjohn lives in Prince Albert, but maintains a strong connection to her home community of Sturgeon Lake First Nation.

Her minor is in Indigenous studies and she plans to do some form of com-



**Devin Kyle went back to school after almost three decades in the service industry. Now he is in Anthropology at the U of S. (Photo supplied)**

munity work after she graduates.

Kyle, 45, who studies anthropology, said there is never a perfect time to go back to school but entering his early 40's he realized it was now or never.

“I spent close to three decades in the service industry and the appeal was wearing off quite fast,” he said. “And then I was doing construction but I was just cuspung 40 around the time and it's kind of a young man's game – it was starting to hurt in places.”

Kyle's father is from Thunderchild First Nation, his mother from Mistawasis First Nation and he grew up in Prince Albert.

He said there have been times when he's questioned whether he has made the right decision by returning to school, but what keeps him going is his two

boys who are now five and eight.

Kyle is proud of his Indigenous heritage but says the university is not always the most welcoming place for a First Nations person and there is always room for improvement in terms of becoming a more supportive environment.

Indigenous Achievement awards were presented to 39 other students in 17 colleges.

Arts and Science: Community Awards Hannah Bird, Aurora Chartier; Academic Excellence Travis Black, Sydney Fremont, Kathleen Funk, Kate Gillis, Carson Mackonka; Research Kat Chief Calf, Alex Litster-Paramor; International Bishudwy Dewan; Resiliency Jennifer Falconer, Meztli Henriquez, Tara Nelson.

St. Thomas More College: Leadership Micaela Champagne; Community Kieran Young.

College of Dentistry: Academic Excellence Kaleb Tyler.

College of Education: Community Award Kennedy Halcro.

Indian Teacher Education Program: Academic Excellence Stephanie Carriere, TeeJay Sumners; Leadership Kal Ledoux, Chante Speidel.

Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program: Leadership Taryn Gunville; Academic Excellence Tate McDougall, Ashley Sorenson.

Edwards School of Business: Leadership Brayden Caron; Community Allyn Eger; Resiliency Lori Waterhen; Academic Excellence Tyler Wellman.

College of Engineering: Resiliency Dannielle Brewster.

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Academic Excellence Dylan Sjolie.

Johnson Shoyama School of Public Policy: Academic Excellence Lauren Wallingham.

School of Rehabilitation Science: Community Carina McKay-Saturnino.

College of Kinesiology: Community Zach Lomsnes.

College of Law: Leadership Jodi Hancheroff.

College of Medicine: Community Ryan LaBossiere.

College of Nursing: Research Taryn Phaneuf; Leadership Lisa Tourangeau.

College of Pharmacy and Nutrition: Academic Excellence Lauren Thompson.



Do you want to set yourself up for further career opportunities?

Join READ Saskatoon's free Workplace Writing Workshop Series!

**Cost: FREE!**  
[www.READsaskatoon.com](http://www.READsaskatoon.com)  
306.652.5448

**TOPICS INCLUDE:**

- Using forms in the workplace;
- Email etiquette;
- Summarizing information;
- Digital writing & editing tools;
- Writing for your purpose & audience;
- and more!

**TIME COMMITMENT:**  
1.5 hours of class time per week for six weeks, plus one to two hours of at home time for working on assignments.

**DATES:** March 11-April 22

**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** TBA

**REGISTER:** [www.READsaskatoon.com](http://www.READsaskatoon.com)

# Workplace Writing Workshop Series

**WHAT YOU GET:**  
Improved skills in written communication for the workplace, increased confidence, improved productivity, a certificate of completion, and a portfolio of the writing done throughout the workshop.



# Reconciliation Ally: Denise Blomquist and Reconciliation Nipawin



By Betty Ann Adam  
of Eagle Feather News

Denise Blomquist grew up on a farm and is married to Brian Blomquist, a member of Waterhen First Nation, but she didn't realize how much she didn't know about Canada's relationship with Indigenous people until she participated in the Kairos blanket exercise.

"I just knew I had to do something. That just totally changed my life," she said.

The participatory history lesson about the effects of colonization, had been offered to staff at Nipawin's Cumberland College in 2010.

"It was my very first introduction to Indigenous history in Canada," she said.

"I never learned it in high school (or) at SIAST, never took an Indigenous studies course so I never learned it all."

Discovering through the exercise how much Indigenous people lost and were controlled was shocking, but it was the teaching about residential schools that really hit home for her.

Blomquist's mother-in-law, Darlene Fiddler, had attended the residential school in Beauval and Brian remembered his mother taking him as a child to see the old school, but she had never talked about her experiences there.

"I literally was in tears because I could feel my mother-in-law's history. It was my first understanding of what she must have gone through."

Blomquist began asking Fiddler, when the family was together, about her experiences and found she was willing to share with them.

"We're all sort of learning together... That's been pretty heartbreaking to hear her stories," Blomquist said.

She joined Cumberland College's inclusion committee to help ensure the Indigenous and growing number of newcomers feel safe and welcome at the College. She also sought out information about the treaties and attends Office of the Treaty Commissioner workshops with her daughter.

The 2015 release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Ac-

tion raised awareness and in 2018, some women from the town started a reconciliation committee to bring people together to acknowledge Indigenous people and their shared history.

"Nipawin kind of struggles with some racism, with lack of education on Indigenous history, just like me. I would say the majority of people in town didn't get the proper education on it," she said.

Yet, leaders in Nipawin and nearby Cumberland House stepped forward to support Reconciliation Nipawin by assigning employees to represent their organizations, such as school divisions, the Credit Union, RCMP, Social Services, the Health Authority and the mayors of Nipawin and Cumberland House. Blomquist represents the College and Indigenous knowledge keeper Sharon Mayer and Bradley Ironstar from the Oasis community services centre guide the group and connect them with Indigenous communities.



**Reconciliation Nipawin's Orange Shirt Day committee joined the nationwide movement to acknowledge the children who attended Indian Residential Schools. The 2019 committee included (L to R) Lauren Gleeson, Dana Martin, Jillian Senecal, Raquel Chaboyer, Ronda Teichreb, Linda Barlow, Jan Boughen, Denise Blomquist, Heather Genik, Mayor Rennie Harper, Melissa Sisson, Elder Kathleen McLean, Brandie Trew and**

In 2018 the group held its first big event on Orange Shirt Day, with a traditional round dance that attracted about 300 people, including school groups.

They had another in 2019. Last year, because of the ban on gatherings, the College created a video featuring staff and students reflecting on reconciliation.

In 2019 people gathered in the Nipawin town square on June 21, National Indigenous Peoples Day, and raised a Reconciliation Nipawin flag, which flew until Canada Day.

Prior to the pandemic, the group had 35 people trained as blanket exercise facilitators and there was interest from the public, but that is temporarily shelved.

The group has created treaty and land acknowledgement signs that will be erected at the entrances to Nipawin and are planning for a future guided Indigenous history tour.

Reconciliation Nipawin is focused now on the region's Indigenous history, drawing from the work of archeologist David Mayer, who conducted a dig at the current dam site, which revealed thousands of years of occupation and use of the area.

"Nipawin was really a gathering place. (That didn't just start) with the formation of the town," Blomquist said.

## FACTS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES




**CAN A COVID-19 VACCINE MAKE ME SICK WITH COVID-19?**  
No, none of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine CANNOT make you sick with COVID-19.

**AFTER GETTING A COVID-19 VACCINE, WILL I TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 ON A VIRAL TEST?**  
No, neither of the recently authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines can cause you to test positive on viral tests. You can test positive to COVID-19 if you were previously carrying the virus.

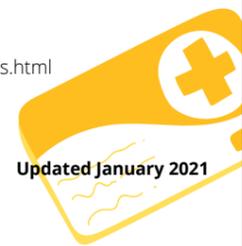
**IF I HAVE ALREADY HAD COVID-19 AND RECOVERED, DO I STILL NEED TO GET VACCINATED WITH A COVID-19 VACCINE?**  
Yes, due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible. Vaccine should be offered to you regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 infection.

**WILL A COVID-19 VACCINATION PROTECT ME FROM GETTING SICK WITH COVID-19?**  
Yes, COVID-19 vaccination works by teaching your immune system how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19, and this protects you from getting sick with COVID-19.

**IS VACCINATION MANDATORY?**  
No, but it is highly recommended that you get vaccinated.

**IS THE VACCINE SAFE?**  
Yes, the vaccine has passed its clinical trials and has received approval from Health Canada.

**Learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization-vaccines.html>



Source: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html)  
Updated January 2021

A FIRST NATIONS HEALTH MANAGERS ASSOCIATION  
**COVID-19 VIRTUAL TOWN HALL**  
Information Session & Q&A

**EVERY THURSDAY  
11 AM**

Watch live on  
**WWW.IHTODAY.CA**





First Nations Health Managers Association  
Association des gestionnaires de santé des Premières Nations



“It was important for me to register with the Métis Nation.

Paying respect to the hard work our ancestors did for recognition as a uniquely diverse culture.

I am proud to be a citizen. It is a rewarding journey.”

Daniel / Métis Nation–Saskatchewan Citizen and Entrepreneur

# ∞ Now is the Time. Become a Registered Métis Citizen.

The **Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) Government** works to preserve Métis culture and ensure Métis rights and interests are respected. We are furthering Métis language, culture, health, housing, education, business, and employment.

Our registry staff can guide you through your citizenship process by phone or a virtual consultation.

[metisnation.sk.com/citizenship](https://metisnation.sk.com/citizenship)



"Métis means a person, who self identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and is accepted by the Métis Nation." MÉTIS NATION–SASKATCHEWAN CONSTITUTIONAL DEFINITION OF MÉTIS