

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Youngsters catch the spirit of exercise

Olympian Beckie Scott (right) and a student participating in Spirit North ski days.

(Photos courtesy of Spirit North)



By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Winters in Saskatchewan can be particularly long and cold, with many finding little reason, or motivation, to brave the outdoors for extended periods of time.

A study from Stats Canada showed that only nine per cent of a sample of children aged seven to 14 met the Canadian physical activity guideline of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity a day. Spirit North is working to change that.

Spirit North is an Alberta-based charity that provides cross-country skiing programs and other sports and activities to Indigenous youth. A grant from Indigenous Services Canada is allowing Spirit North to expand its program to communities in Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 2019.

“It’s really exciting to be expanding to different provinces and reach more and more kids every year,” said Laura Filipow, program director at Spirit North.

In Saskatchewan, Spirit North will start in three communities later this winter: Mistawasis First Nation, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, and Sally Ross School at Hall Lake.

Spirit North was founded in 2009 as a way to introduce Indigenous youth to cross country skiing. It is now overseen by Olympic gold medalist Beckie Scott, the first Canadian, and North American woman, to win an Olympic medal in cross country skiing. The program isn’t just about introducing kids to skiing, but developing healthy physical and mental practices in northern communities.

“The health and wellness benefits of a program like this – getting kids out and active on skis, is something that’s almost immeasurable. The feedback we get from teachers and participants on health benefits is something that can’t be understated,” said Filipow.

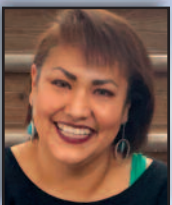
“Many of the remote communities we work with don’t otherwise have access to outdoor programming.”

According to Spirit North, schools recorded a 98 per cent attendance on Spirit North ski days, 99 per cent of students enjoyed the ski days, and 90 per cent wanted to exercise more after ski days. Participants also found a positive impact on mental health, with 90 per cent of students discovering that exercise helped them “feel better inside.”

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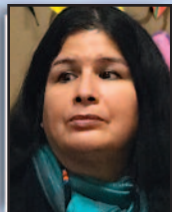
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Northern students enthusiastic about opportunities to combat cabin fever

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“We’ve had so much positive feedback from teachers who have seen some of their kids, who might be more hyperactive, now able to sit and focus,” said Filipow.

“The kids are just stoked to have the physical activity. So many of them get cabin fever in the winter and in some cases, parents are taking part in the program. They’re finding it a good way to get connected with their kids in a different way.”

Lannie Houle is one of the program instructors who works with eight different Indigenous communities, teaching the kids to ski, but also sharing her story about how physical activity has opened opportunities in her life.

“It’s about setting goals, yet having fun at the

same time,” said Houle. “The kids are excited about it, and always wanting to get better. And the teachers tell us how much it helps with focusing in class.”

“The kids learn that being healthy and exercising can also be a lot of fun,” she said.

In addition to the three communities in Saskatchewan, Spirit North currently offers programs to seven communities in British Columbia, 44 in Alberta, and four in Manitoba. The outdoor, land-based programming also includes snow shoeing, cross country running in the fall, hiking in the spring, and canoeing and fishing in some communities.

Filipow said Spirit North visits each community to build the program that’s right for them. Each community is encouraged to provide input from all its members on what they need. Spirit North then sends professionals, and even sometimes former Olympians, to get the kids out and enjoying the outdoors.

“We want to make sure we build the program in ways that are sustainable for the communities,” said Filipow.

“There’s so much more we can do in Saskatchewan. There’re so many communities that are remote and have amazing kids that want to get outside. So, I think we’ll expand as much as possible in as many communities that’ll have us.”



Students from Northern Albertan communities participated in Spirit North ski days and got some fresh air and exercise in the process.

(Photos courtesy of Spirit North)



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For more information or applications, contact SUNTEP Regina



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Funding to help La Loche heal announced

Federal and provincial leaders have announced funding for the La Loche community.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Premier Scott Moe, along with other MPs announced at the newly re-opened La Loche high school on Jan. 23 that there will be funding to support cultural and language-based programs, on-the-land activities, and mental health services for students.

The funding follows through on recommendations from the community, and supports the Holistic Healing Plan that Dene High School developed after the tragic shootings of 2016.

It also builds on work that the Government of Canada is already doing in La Loche, including funding mental health services, and supporting high-risk youth and their families.

“That dark day in 2016 will never be forgotten, but it isn’t what defines La Loche. People here have shown strength, resilience, and determination to move forward,” said Trudeau in a media release.

“This funding is about supporting the community on its journey of healing, empowering young people, and building a better future for everyone who calls La Loche home.”

The funding announcement was followed by the La Loche Dene High School grand reopening and memorial ceremony held on Jan. 18.

Premier Moe also announced that the Government of Saskatchewan will partner with La Loche-based Methy Construction and Maintenance on a \$3 million project to develop new staff housing in the community. These 12 units will be available to health and educational professionals to live and work in La Loche.



Photo courtesy of Chadwick Favel)

“Our government recognizes the need for more teachers and health staff in La Loche and these additional housing units will enable more professionals in those fields to help people in the community,” Moe said.

“This investment supports the construction of 12 new housing units to ensure La Loche can recruit and keep important staff in their community for years to come.”

Methy Construction will be developing the housing unit which is estimated to be a \$3 million-dollar

project to house staff as a key priority to support the delivery of essential programs and services.

“The village appreciates the provincial commitment toward the 12-unit staff housing project in the community’s effort in recruiting and retaining health professionals and teaching staff,” La Loche Mayor Robert St. Pierre said.

“The construction of 12 units will ensure employment of our local labour force and demonstrates the province’s continued support and partnerships in addressing our housing needs.”

Stacy Sutherland
Muskeg Lake Cree Nation
Treaty 6, Saskatchewan

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Eagle Feather story made a difference

We're already in our second month of 2019 and this winter feels like an endless year.

During these long winter days, it's great to take a break to talk about health and wellness – which ties into this month's Eagle Feather News' theme.

When I think of Indigenous health, Jordan's Principle comes to mind – a principle used in Canada to ensure Indigenous children have equitable access to all government funded services no matter where they are living.

This initiative has been helping Indigenous families for years. In last year's February issue of Eagle Feather News, I wrote a story of a family that voiced their financial need to offset the costs of a medical trip.

Trudi Mercardi's son, Darnell, was in dire need of a facial reconstructive surgery as he was born with a condition that caused his brain to stick out of place. They found a doctor who could perform the surgery but the only barrier was finances.

Mercredi was unable to secure financial assistance from her home community of James Smith Cree Nation.

This is a dream come true for Darnell and his mother. And, it was all thanks to funding from Jordan's Principle.

But she didn't give up hope.

Following the release of this story, she received a phone call that her son's medical trip will be fully covered under the Jordan's Principle.

A couple weeks later, I spoke with people from Jordan's Principle in regards to advertising. The story I wrote on Darnell and his mother, came up in

conversation.

I was told this story was read by Cindy Blackstock, the national advocate for Indigenous Child Welfare. Apparently, she sent the story link to people at a higher level and it was around the time that Mercredi was informed Darnell's medical trip would be fully covered.

I was truly honoured.

The fact that Cindy Blackstock

read my story was an honour on its own but what's even more incredible is the action she took to help a family in need.

I've been in touch with Mercredi recently. She informed me that Darnell finally went on his medical trip last month in Toronto.

Darnell had face corrective surgery which consisted of taking parts of his skull and



Comment

Jeanelle Mandes

placing in front of his eye. They also removed the plate that was on his right side by his forehead. After 10 hours, the surgery was a success.

"Surgery was a dream come true for Darnell," said Mercredi. "He wanted his right side to look exactly like his left side. He is one very happy little man. Surgery was a success."

Darnell has two other surgeries to replace the top of his head with bone, correcting the inside of his mouth and aligning his teeth. But it's a procedure that will have to wait until next year to allow Darnell time to heal.

This is a dream come true for Darnell and his mother. And, it was all

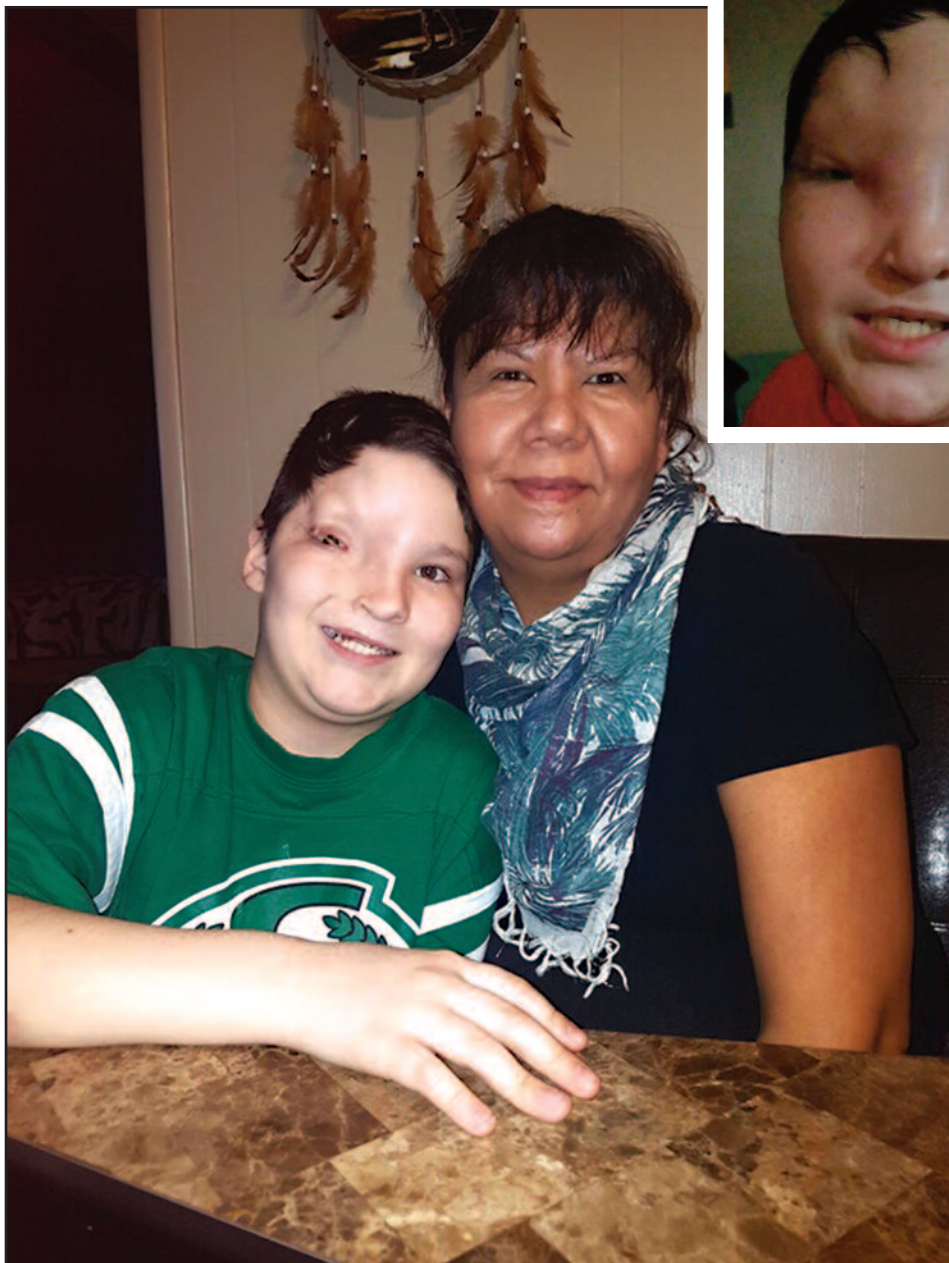
thanks to funding from Jordan's Principle.

This initiative has also been very beneficial to my family.

My daughter, Sharlize, is autistic, dependent and has complex needs. She used to fall through the cracks of this system but I wear two hats at the table; an advocate and her mother. I used my voice to fight for her rights for a fair education and access to services and supports that she needs. A lot of those services requires money. But thanks to the Jordan's Principle initiative, my daughter is able to excel in her development.

From Darnell's success story to mine, advocating the need for equitable access to supports and services is needed across Canada for Indigenous peoples – no matter if you're living on or off reserve. To achieve wellness, taking good care of your physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health is essential.

Take care and keep warm!



Darnell and his mom Trudi know well the benefits of Jordan's Principle, support and funding for crucial medical care and family support.

(Photos supplied)

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Love those flirty attendants at Native gas stations

The other day, I went to one of those gas stations with the pay before you pump requirement.

There is nothing so cruel in chilling weather as gas stations that make you run inside to pay before you pump gas (or pay at the cold ass machine that takes minutes to process your payment because it's minus 30 outside and nothing works in minus 30, not even fingers.)

But like the good little sheep that I am, I pay. I follow the prompts and steps to pay for my gas. And my reward is that painful wait at the end when that every last excruciating penny slips out like molasses on a cold day.

By the time I'm finished, I feel like screaming, "fascists!" into the cold wind. But instead I jump back into my car and curse myself for never having gloves.

This is why it's always best to stick to Native gas stations. They're almost all full service and have even more benefits.

Like when you go inside the gas station, there's a selection of crafts, like beaded earrings. All the young girls these days are moving towards the beaded medallion earrings. But I'm old school, I like the long dangly earrings best.

I have to be careful – the longer earrings, the more single you are. I always take the time to read the bulletin boards advertising the latest steak nights, round-dances and hockey tournaments, reminding me that there are other things to do with my evenings than watch Netflix.

But despite my full tank of gas, I will continue to watch Netflix until the polar vortex has vortexed the hell out of here.

Then there's hot coffee available, you just have to elbow the gas jockeys out of the way for a cup. Most



stations also have the option of hot chocolate so sweet that it drills a hole in your stomach.

... as I was walking past a couple jockeys, I overheard one of them say, "She looks like she just has one kid."

I find the Native gas station cashiers provide the best service. Out of kindness, they overlook my ten-year-old Status Card pic. (I cannot replace it as the picture is literally the best picture ever taken of me. That picture will be used in my obituary.)

One of the highlights of the native gas station experience is any interaction with the gas jockeys. They're always quick to the pump in their parkas and they don't judge my cheap-ass ways.

"Fill it up."

"Regular?"

"What do I look like - a millionaire? Of course, regular."

Sometimes they can be a bit flirty. Many moons ago, as I was walking past a couple jockeys, I overheard one of them say, "She looks like she just has one kid." Which I guess is opposed to how someone is expected to look when they have a lot of kids.

Although at the time, I did not have any kids at all. So, I wasn't sure what to do with that comment.

Another time, the gas jockeys were bored when I pulled up. So one asked to check my oil, another asked to check my windshield wiper fluid, another to check my transmission – which I didn't even know existed.

Where else can you get cheeky service like that?

The tax free gas is nice but as many non-First Nations people have pointed out to me, Costco sometimes has even cheaper gas. But I look like Frankenstein in my Costco pic, so I'll stick to Native gas stations.

Call for applications

Indigenous Technical Advisory Group

For more information, visit:
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The City of Saskatoon is looking for First Nations and Métis people with specialized knowledge to join a new Indigenous Technical Advisory Group.

Members of the group will participate in the design of City of Saskatoon projects and initiatives to help ensure that the unique interests and perspectives of Indigenous people are heard.

Questions? E-mail ppiTAG@saskatoon.ca or contact Betty Nippi-Albright from City of Saskatoon at 306-975-8379.

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Not easy being open about domestic violence

By Kerry Benjoe
For Eagle Feather News

Nothing worth having, comes easy.

It's something I remind myself of often, especially now.

Although I've never been one to shy away from a challenge, as a kokum, I thought my uphill battles were behind me. Little did I know I would face my toughest one yet.

On Halloween night, while children and adults enjoyed the evening's festivities, I laid in a hospital bed wishing I could be anyone else in the world.

Had it not been for an unfortunate turn of events I would have been out with friends dressed in my costume of choice.

Instead, my daughter and my mother kept me company as I awaited to be wheeled into the operating room.

Earlier in the day, after consultations with several doctors, I consented to a below-the-knee amputation.

It was not an easy decision, but there was really no other choice.

I had been living with a mid-foot break for more than four years. According to the surgeons, even under the best of circumstances, it was not an easy fix. It was either cut the leg off now or face years of surgical procedures and possibly amputation at a later date.

My broken foot had already caused me years of constant pain and sleepless nights.

I was simply exhausted.

By choosing the surgery I was agreeing to give up so many things, but I felt the trade off would be worth it.

I was far from logical and composed the day I made the decision.

The moment the doctors mentioned amputation, I



Journalist Kerry Benjoe is recovering and thriving following a below the knee amputation.

burst into tears, because I loved my legs. They were a perfect pair. I dressed them up often in pretty tights and the most fantastic footwear. I had considered my legs to be my best feature, so it was not easy to break up the matching set.

As I cried, cradling my damaged limb, it was then I realized it was time to let it go.

The doctors who delivered the news sensed my anxiety and did their best to reassure me I was making the right choice.

My biggest fear, at the time, was facing the unknown.

Prior to everything, I knew who I was, what I was and where I was going.

I was an independent, single mom who worked in a field that helped me tell the stories of Indigenous people. I had a lot of responsibility and people depended on me.

Ironically, the surgery itself was the easiest part of my journey.

Having to depend on others has been a hard pill to swallow, but I am learning to ask for help when I need it.

On Jan. 8, I was able to stand using a prosthetic.

To stand and take my first step was the most liberat-

ing feeling in the world, because up until that point, walking and running were things I could only experience in my dreams.

I named my leg Hardy, after Hollywood actor Tom Hardy, because I don't want to think of my prosthetic as an object.

It may not be the same as my old leg and it may be ugly, but it has given me back so much already that I can't resent it.

What I do not like are the circumstances, which caused my original injury, but I do not regret what I have learned from it.

Physically, I am adapting to life as an amputee and adapting is the key.

What I wasn't prepared for was how the loss would impact my sense of femininity.

It is a hurdle I am still working on.

With physiotherapy, I am learning to walk again and soon I will do so without any walking aide.

As with anything the response by others to my amputation has been mixed.

While strangers awkwardly stare at me, my children and my friends reassure me that I am still the same person.

My life is not over and my story is not finished.

When people ask what happened to my foot, I say, "domestic violence."

It's not easy to be open about such a sensitive subject but it's a conversation we all need to have especially in this province.

Domestic violence is not my shame to carry and even if I wanted to, I can't cover the damage it has done with a pretty little story.

Unfortunately, I wear domestic violence where the world can see it.

Be yourself
and soar with us
Your individuality is an asset

Be distinct. Be original. Be yourself.

Celebrate Louis Riel Day on February 19.

fcc.ca/Careers



Safe injection sites saving lives

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

Safe injection sites, also known as supervised consumption sites, provide a safe environment for drug users and aim to prevent infectious disease while connecting clients with education and services.

Safe injection site success stories in Canada are not in short supply. A facility in Vancouver, Insite, saw a 35 per cent decrease in fatal overdoses in the surrounding area, a 30 per cent increase in people getting into detox, and a 96 per cent decline in new HIV infections.

The total number of deaths due to overdose at the Insite facility, since opening in 2003, is zero.

Alberta offers seven safe injection sites approved by Health Canada. British Columbia has nine, Ontario has 13, Quebec has four, and Saskatchewan has zero. Saskatchewan does, however, have several needle exchange programs.

Despite their proven effectiveness, Saskatchewan still has its skeptics, including Health Minister Jim Reiter, who, in 2018, questioned their application in smaller communities.

"I'm not sure that there's been any examples across the country of safe injection sites in a small town of just a few hundred people."

Health Canada has recently changed its application process for safe injection sites to allow for third party funding and to remove provincial government approval as a requirement for safe injection sites.

"I think its vital to Saskatoon to have a safe injection site so we can connect clients to case managers and workers, to allow them to be monitored while they're using. Because they're going to be using regardless," said Colin Naytowhow.

Naytowhow is the founder and executive director of Okihtcitawak Patrol Group, a harm reduction group that patrols core areas of Saskatoon. Naytowhow estimates that he and his team pick up around 200 discarded needles



Colin Naytowhow and other members of the Okihtcitawak Patrol Group in Saskatoon.

and sharps per week. During patrols, Naytowhow said he has caught small children playing with spoons that still had drug residue on them.

Saskatchewan has some of the highest HIV rates in the country, with rates more than 10 times the national average in some regions in the province. Nearly 80 per cent of those with HIV in Saskatchewan are Indigenous.

"The stigma towards having a safe injection site is that it's promoting drugs. But I think its vital for the reduction of disease, overdoses, and infection," he said.

"There needs to be a level of understanding of why that person is using in the first place. A safe injection site could offer programs for trauma related use, which is why a lot of people become addicted."

Becca Beattie, a Saskatoon woman, started a petition in December for a safe consumption and treatment facility in the city, as well as wrote a public letter to Health Minister Jim Reiter, arguing for support. Beattie started the petition after an incident in which a man tried to shoot up at a table in a Subway restaurant where Beattie was sitting with her four-

year-old son.

"We've connected with a lot of people who want to come forward and talk about obstacle and barriers that they face in this system, and how the system has displaced them," she said.

"They're not just safe injection sites – they're multifaceted – educating the community on safe practices and making sure they get tested. When you connect with vulnerable communities, they help to create the best treatment plan for them."

Beattie said she eventually received a written response from Minister Reiter, who said the Ministry would first have to investigate drug user patterns.

"Absolutely not (satisfied with Reiter's response). It's the same dismissive feeling," said Beattie, who said she lost her mom, a 60s Scoop survivor, to opioid use.

"I think its fundamentally because we have a very conservative government. In his letter back to me, he referenced that our needle exchanges have a 91 per cent success rate. People are going back repeatedly. Largely these exchanges have no funding from the Ministry of Health. If he cites something that

he doesn't fund to be 91 per cent successful, why isn't he funding it?"

In an email response to an interview request, Minister of Rural and Remote Health Greg Ottenbreit said, more consultation is needed.

"For any supervised consumption site, Health Canada requires extensive community consultation. The type, range, and scope of services offered depends on drug use patterns, the client needs, existing local services, and resources available to establish a facility. The benefits and risks associated with supervised consumption sites would vary accordingly."

To date, Beattie has collected over 3,000 signatures. She hopes the petition will be used as evidence for third parties who seek funding for safe injection facilities from the Ministry of Health. She plans on continuing to petition the public, and government, for support.

"We've seen such great success stories with other safe injection sites across Canada, done by third parties, who offer a multitude of services," said Beattie. "People are going to be doing drugs. I'd rather them be educated and safe."



SheriBenson
Member of Parliament **Saskatoon West**

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MACSI has been helping people get their lives on track for half a century

By Angela Hill
For Eagle Feather News

Giant trees are painted on the back wall at the Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan (MACSI) treatment centre in Saskatoon.

On the leaves are pieces of art with the names of clients who have passed through the doors over the past 50 years.

"They leave a little part of them to expand the tree," said Cecile McKay, MACSI regional director of Saskatoon centre. "They leave something with MACSI because they got so much from us, they say they want to leave something for us."

Throughout 2019, MACSI is celebrating its 50th anniversary with events and open houses throughout the province.

A lot has changed over the past five decades. When MACSI started it was only alcohol addiction they were addressing, said executive director Raymond

Laliberte, but now they work with people who have addictions to drugs like crack, opioids, and crystal meth.

"Using alcohol plus all those other new addictions and that's the challenges the clients have been telling us, and those are areas of growth for us."

For Larissa Moosomin it was after losing her children to child and family services and being introduced to crystal meth that she realized she needed help.

"I lost myself and lost who I was as a person and the MACSI program has helped me rediscover myself, who I am, and where I want to go," said Moosomin.

"If it wasn't for the program, I would probably still be in my addiction."

She started the program about five years ago, and appreciates that she still has contact when she needs it. MACSI runs a 28-day residential program, a drop-in program, and a day-to-day program as well as arranging for after care, said McKay.

Moosomin restarted daily programming with the birth of her baby girl late last year.

"Staying sober for my baby is one of the biggest battles. I've been battling every single day."

To qualify for services from MACSI all that is required is a Saskatchewan health card and the desire to change an addictive lifestyle, Laliberte said.

"MACSI is proud to have delivered services to all off-reserve Indigenous peoples for 50 years, Métis and First Nations, since we began," he said.

He added that one of the hardest things for people to do is deal with the stigma of beginning to heal. Amil Bird knew he wanted to get help, but the people he was using drugs with would call him a quitter.

"I needed to be a quitter from drugs and alcohol, and that life I was leading," Bird said. "I was living in a church, sleeping on chairs, living off welfare and I just wanted more out of life than what I had."



Cecile McKay during a media event at the MACSI treatment centre in Saskatoon

He detoxed and got into the MACSI 28-day program in 2017. He still attends the daily program when he needs it. Bird said the people who work at MACSI have helped him see a better life.

"People who are willing to do this who actually enjoy life. You can see the smile, you can see the happiness in people's eyes and how they express themselves through everyday living," Bird said.

"I am a lot better. I'm a lot more human. I'm a lot more alive, and happy."

Bird said he is working on getting his life to a place where he can support his daughter.

"I just want to thank all the workers, who have worked here or continue to work here, they are basically the reason why all this is happening and working out," he said.

When Moosomin hears that MACSI programs have been around for 50 years, she is happy.

"That's amazing, it makes me so thankful for the people who first funded this program because without this program a lot of us, you know, our group gets big in the day program," she said.

MACSI is holding an open house in Regina on Feb. 28, in Prince Albert on Mar. 14 and one in Saskatoon on Apr. 22.



Amil Bird says treatment at MACSI has helped him to see a better life.



Larissa Moosomin first went to treatment at MACSI five years ago, she still uses day programming when she needs support

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Rugby a fantastic connection to health and culture

By Joel Pedersen
For Eagle Feather News

Have you ever heard of the New Zealand All-Blacks Rugby? Or seen the traditional Indigenous Maori Haka war dance?

Truly inspiring and impressive that the country is connected by the sport and the Indigenous culture. Rugby is similar to football and soccer with differences such as: the ball must move backwards to go forward and you can kick the ball forward on the move but cannot knock it or throw it forward.

Not an expensive game to play, fast paced two halves, seven players aside to the 15 players aside game.

This past month I had the opportunity to meet with youth from the communities of Sandy Bay and Pelican Narrows First Nations for a two-day learn to play rugby camp. The program is Rookie Rugby, based from the game of 7's. It is intended to teach youth the skills of rugby, without the direct tackle contact, with the use of Velcro belt flags.

The sport of 7's will be in the next North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) 2020 in Halifax, and in the Saskatchewan Summer Games 2020 in Lloydminster. Canada has a national team for both women and men, and the sport is in the Olympics.

Currently there is one Indigenous player, Phil Mack from Toquaht First Nation, Vancouver Island who plays for the National Team.

Saskatchewan Rugby and Northern Sport Culture and Recreation have partnered to build Indigenous Rugby. I am grateful in being a part of this opportunity to assist in these early stages of the sport development with Indigenous communities in the North.

I'm looking forward to players and coaches to have more representation in provincial and national games for our communities, hopefully international.

Last year, we were in Green Lake for our first Rookie Rugby session. It was a small turnout but a great day and everyone was tired by the end including me. We appreciated the assistance from my friend Rufus and some of his players from the She-Devils Rugby Club out of Meadow Lake.

On this past trip north, coaches from the Black Bear Rugby Club from Prince Albert teamed up with me. We had great numbers of boys and girls in Sandy Bay, and in Pelican Narrows we signed in over 70 youth!

We are encouraged by the number of youth who participated, and more impressed by how quickly the kids picked up the skills and the game. Rugby is for



Students from Sandy Bay and Pelican Narrows participated in a 2 day rugby camp hosted by Joel Pedersen and Fitness 2J2. Rugby 7's is going to be included at NAIG 2020 and the camps are drumming up interest in the sport.

every body type and size and athletic ability.

Like most sports it builds positive traits like co-operation and mutual respect. The guiding core values: Integrity; Respect; Solidarity; Passion; and Discipline are similar to Indigenous: Tapewin which speaks of integrity, honour and discipline; Respectful Relationships, Miskasowin which speaks of sense of pride in ourselves and our Indigenous heritage; Responsibility; Education; Culture; and Trust.

There are many more principles and values we have in our stories and teachings. This is another way we can have synchronicity through sport for our

youth. Looking forward to coming to a community close to you, with functional fitness and sport. Developing community healthy and positive lifestyle programming, engagement and sustainment. Be active to the best of your ability, set goals and we can assist you in getting there.

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Family made difficult journey manageable

I want to acknowledge my family and friends who have stayed by my side through all the dark and hard times.

I want to acknowledge all my grandparents in the spirit world who were loving, caring and held our family together and took care of all of us the best that they could.

No, they were not perfect, nobody is. I can't even imagine the things they experienced in those Residential schools, like actually living it and being them in that time, the sacrifices they have made for us and worked so hard to overcome.

This should be enough to burn a fire in our souls and hearts to want to make them proud and end these cycles because they did the best they could.

I want to acknowledge our ancestors who fought so hard in the face of colonization so we could be here. Our people were so connected to land we are all living on, the one that will have final say and serve justice.

I want to acknowledge my living family who have always been there for me and done their best. My entire family has showed me the importance of working hard and did their best to incorporate tradition in our lives which has kept me strong and on this path I am on.

I want to acknowledge that my writing is rooted in my personal lived experi-

ence and everything I have been through and the books and research I have done in school, and all the paths I have crossed.

This is my perspective and if you do not agree with me 100 per cent that is totally fine. I mean no harm to anyone.

I also believe in the good things coming but flowers do not bloom, the sun does not shine and there are no rainbows without any storms.

Seasons are natural and so are different stages of our life. The problem is too many people are fighting change instead of adapting. We used to live in fluid communities where we could pick up and leave and only carried what we need.

Now we live in these concrete jungles where the energy becomes trapped by this fast-paced life filled with pollutions, toxins, drugs and alcohol.

There was this 10-year challenge going around recently on social media. All I could think about was 10 years ago, February 26, 2009 I went face first through that windshield and it changed my life forever.

I went through some dark times. I have been beat down physically, mentally,

emotionally, spiritually what feels like my whole life and I know many can relate to this. Always asking why, why this keeps happening to me? What did I do? Why?

Literally, when I look back there is a lot of pain and these scars I carry are not a reminder that I am not worthy. It is a reminder that I am a warrior that I come from a blood line of warriors.

This bloodline is why I am alive why I persevered and made it through and why I am still going right now. I had over 100 stitches in my face and head alone, lost one eye, I was literally scalped but I was brought back to life.

My femur was broken in half, I had to quit all the sports I played and they were my therapy growing up, my outlet. For the longest time I thought I was better off dead, but I don't think that anymore.

I spun out of control but I learned from a young age, education will set you free. Probably from watching my mom work super hard while we grew up. She set the example in university and was very young when she taught high school students, grinding, writing papers raising my brothers and I.

A lot of my dad's time was occupied helping our community become what it is today and I could not be more proud of both of them.

Our family was definitely not perfect, and no family is. That is another thing, the social standards of the illusion of that perfect family. Single parents are normal, two dads, two moms, grandmas, aunties, uncles, papas, extended family helping out is normal.

We need to revitalize those kinship laws. We need our family trees, because our families have been dismantled and disrupted due to colonization and residential schools, the 60's scoop and now the child welfare system.

We need to remember who we are to end cycles for the younger generations and those still to come.

I found myself in ceremony, in researching the truth of who I was through school work and when I became a mother and looked into my children's eyes.

I found myself when I became sober and I am now becoming who I am truly meant to be. I stopped trying to prove myself and just spoke and walked my truth and owned who I am and all of my scars.

I am finally figuring out my worth and once you know your worth and own your worth, no one can mess with that.



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Jordan's Principle the way of the future

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

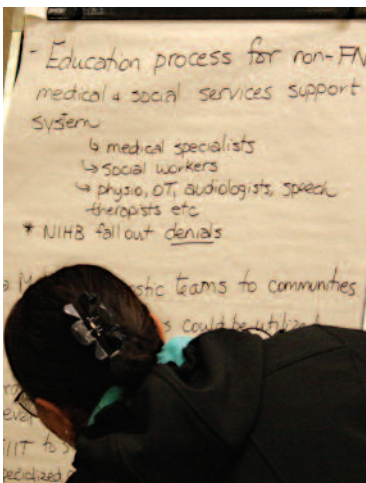
In order to better prepare the future for younger generations, a two-day forum on Jordan's Principle was held in Saskatoon in January.

The forum gathered input from hundreds of its attendees to help create the regional submission to the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations' (FSIN) regional approach beyond April 1, 2019.

Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle named in memory of Jordan River Anderson, a child with complicated medical issues who died in the hospital at five years of age while the federal and provincial government argued over who is responsible to pay for his at-home care.

The principle ensures that First Nations children can access public services when needed, and will be culturally appropriate. The government of first contact is responsible for service, and resolves payment disputes later.

"The family and community of Jordan River Anderson have shown resilience and courage in moving forward the principle of ensuring our children receive the programs and services they are rightfully entitled to as other Canadians in this country," said FSIN Second Vice-Chief David Pratt in a release.



In 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found the federal government is racially discriminating against 165,000 First Nations children and their families for failure to provide equal services, including the proper implementation of Jordan's Principle.

The principle was adopted by the House of Commons in 2007.

The First Nations Child and Family Care Society is now seeking an interim order forcing Ottawa to cover

non-status First Nations children living off-reserve, under Jordan's Principle, who require urgent health care.

Gathering knowledge and stories of the experiences of people in the Saskatoon region will help future generations, said Pratt.

"Whatever Jordan's Principle will look like beyond April 1, 2019 will have a positive impact for the benefit of those that are in need of the programs and services accessed will result in an improved quality of life for that individual, families, and communities," the release continued.

The Assembly of First Nations have called on Canada to continue to invest in and implement Jordan's Principle beyond March 31, 2019, when the authorities for the interim approach expire.

The forum in Saskatoon included an overview and survey of forum objectives, a best practice discussion with dignitaries from the region, and breakout sessions discussing the regional position on health, education, and social issues.

Facilitators led breakout sessions at the Jordan's Principle Forum in Saskatoon. Groups discussed health, education and social needs. The information gathered will lead the focus for the FSIN's regional approach after April 2019.

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Little Pine's Wholistic Learning Centre working well

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

Anita Johnstone, principal of Chief Little Pine School on Little Pine First Nation, is proud of what her school has been able to achieve.

"Our Wholistic Learning Centre and on-school grounds Powwow Arbor and Cultural Grounds are second to none," noted Johnstone.

"I am proud to say that we are one of the only schools that has its own Wholistic Learning Centre that houses our Special Education department, Life Skills Department, Elders room, Play Therapy Room and Sensory Room."

The Wholistic Learning Centre came about through applying for Jordan's Principle funding, which every First Nation is eligible for.

"We had students with special needs and behaviour, so lots of individual education program for children with needs," she explains, and it began with items such as weighted vests as opposed to medication.

"We were interested in finding more holistic and physical apparatuses that could slow them down so their brains could intake the education."

Thanks to Jordan's Principle funding, and a brand new band office which freed up three teacherages, the special ed teacher now has special facilities — a play therapy room, elders room and the basement sensory room has about 20 hands on calming activities.

"There's a box of balls that change colours — calming centres — hands-on things the kids can touch — a trampoline, treadmill, punching bag, tv and lounging area and brushing materials — so when they go back to the classroom they're so much calmer and ready to work," explained Johnstone, adding they are still waiting for more money from federally funded Jordan's Principle to continue to develop and expand the areas and include outdoor playground equipment.

"We want people to come and physically see it so that a lot can be incorporated into their own schools in various areas. The kids need it."

Since the centres have been incorporated, she has noted a vast change in her student body of over 200 kids. Disciplinary measures are minimal. Roughly 10 per cent of the student body benefit directly from the centres, but all the kids do so as a result.

"Since creating this space last school year, we have noticed that our student population with special needs and behaviours have improved. We have had several schools come through to view it, in the hopes that their school will be able to mimic it. I believe it is important to get this wonderful learning site made public."

The small scale powwow arbor right beside the school came about two years ago, when they got tired of having in-school powwows in the small gymnasium.

"We found the money and built our own beautiful powwow arbor and cultural learning huts, along with a smoke house and soon-to-be amphitheatre, sweat lodge and equine assisted learning coral."

Johnstone invites other interested schools and First Nations administrators and principals out to learn more and be inspired to provide the same style of cultural and special needs support for their student bodies.

"I hope that you are intrigued enough to come visit our small school with a big heart, and take away a breath-taking display of forward education," invites Johnstone



This is a student rolling on balls. This changes the thought process in their minds. These special objects and activities calm down the students for when they return to their classrooms.

(Photo supplied)



The teepee for students to sit in and read or to calm themselves. The bubble light to the left of it hums and the child can sit there and watch the bubbles while feeling the vibrations on their body. It is a calming mechanism.

(Photo supplied)

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Book project showcases work done on Indigenous Health

By Angela Hill
For Eagle Feather News

It was a book launch, but also a bit of a reunion for four editors who started together at the University of Saskatchewan and returned to celebrate five years of work on an Indigenous health resource.

More than 30 people gathered at the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre on campus for the event.

Editors Robert Henry, Amanda LaVallee, Nancy Van Styvendale and Robert Innes were joined by some of the book's contributors to present *Global Indigenous Health: Reconciling the Past, Engaging the Present, Animating the Future*.

The project started in 2013 to showcase the incredible work being done on Indigenous health by academics, as well as community researchers and knowledge keepers.

We wanted to "make sure what was coming forth is what they wanted to come forth," said LaVallee.

"Something like this hasn't been done here. This is one of the first collections globally focusing on Indigenous health," Henry said.

"We know there has been a real disconnect between Indigenous peoples and wellbeing and health."

Global Indigenous Health looks at more than health in a biomedical sense. The book looks at health holistically.

"This is where the title of the book came through where we were looking at the past, understanding the present to reimagine a future together," Henry said.

The book is divided into four parts, with the first piece focusing on ethics and historical understanding. The second looks at environmental and ecological health, including connection to land and food, said LaVallee.

In the third, the impacts of colonial violence and Indigenous kinship are discussed with a focus on the importance of women and children, and the impact of intergenerational trauma, she said. The final part looks towards the future of Indigenous knowledge and health activism.

At the launch, contributors Barbara Fornssler, Colleen Anne Dell, and Peter Butt spoke about their chapter in that final section. It focuses on mentorship and building relationships in health research.

One of the biggest challenges for



From left: Robert Innes, Amanda LaVallee, Robert Henry and Nancy Van Styvendale are the editors of the newly released Indigenous health collection launched last week.

non-Indigenous researchers engaging in Indigenous health work is stepping back and acting as a support, said Butt. The first part is being present and the second step is being an ally.

"One is much more imbedded in talking the hits, removing barriers and then getting out of the way," he said, adding non-Indigenous researchers need to be comfortable shifting back and forth between an active and passive role.

"We can push systems and allow for change to happen in them," said Dell. Dell spoke about seeking change in how a grant was given to meet the needs of the research and not the other way

around.

"I think it's an important chapter for non-Indigenous researchers. It's an important book for non-Indigenous researchers," Butt said.

A chapter about ethics and child welfare looks at the impact of the child welfare system through collective histories. It is co-authored by Caroline Tait and the collection editor Henry.

"We wanted to do something with the collection that went beyond biomedical and to show that wellness and wellbeing is a holistic piece," Henry said. "We can't understand Indigenous health in isolation."

Arts Board Deadlines

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

Micro-Grant
March 1, April 1, May 1

Independent Artists
March 15

**Artists in Communities*
Artists in Schools***
– Micro-Development
April 1

Indigenous/Métis Art and Artists
April 15

SaskFestivals*
– Development
– Established
April 15

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

Prince Edward Arts Scholarship
May 1

For applications, visit: saskartsboard.ca

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Belmore exhibition explores three decades

By **Andréa Ledding**
For Eagle Feather News

How do you sum up over three decades of artistic work?

Wanda Nanibush, Indigenous curator of the Art Gallery of Ontario calls this Rebecca Belmore retrospective at the Remai Modern, “Facing the Monumental,” an exhibition “that really grapples with the monumental issues of our time” using art as a response to the kind of human beings we want to be and where we want to go as a society.

The show opened Feb. 1 with an artists’ talk by Belmore and Nanibush and a performance by Eekwol and T-Rhyme, and included photography, sculpture, media installations, and one very special feature to Saskatoon: the outdoor Neil Stonechild ice sculpture, “Freeze” which is ice blocks with the letters of his name within, installed right outside the doors of the Remai for everyone to see until it melts.

“It’s the first time for it to be in Saskatoon,” said Nanibush.

“We called Neil’s mom and she was really happy that we were doing it. It was really important to get her permission. She sees it the way we see it, honouring Neil Stonechild and making sure we don’t forget his name.

“His death launched the investigation into the Saskatoon police and we can’t forget it was his death that made that happen.”

Bringing that particular exhibit “home” to Saskatoon – it has been in three other locations, twice in Ontario and once in the U.S. – meant being able to ask questions like “how much have things changed?” with the death of Colten Boushie, Indigenous interactions with the policing and justice system, and racism embedded in all these systems.

On Feb. 5, there was a fireside chat led by Lyndon Linklater at the Remai, discussing policing in Saskatoon along

with Police Chief Troy Cooper, Angela Daigneault, and Darlene Brander.

“I hope that people really open themselves up through the exhibition and think about our role in the perpetuation of a lot of injustice, and also our role as witnesses to this history, and our role as people who can really change things,” said Nanibush.

On Friday, March 1 at 7 p.m., two artists will respond to the work of Belmore, and every subsequent Friday in March there will be films screened which were selected by Belmore and Nanibush, including *Two Worlds Colliding*, Tasha Hubbard’s film about Stonechild.

“This was a work made in collaboration with my husband, Oswaldo Jiro,” explained Belmore of the Stonechild installation, *Freeze*.

“For us having it here outside the Remai is very significant because it feels like it’s coming home. This is where the work really belongs and where it should be seen.”

Belmore talked about the retrospective being in part about the land and ownership of the land, poverty, and how in cities it’s more difficult for people to have homes now. Another room has performance works about the buffalo, missing and murdered women, residential schools, resource extraction, and other topics.

Another room contains her piece about the Boxing Day massacre at Wounded Knee, a giant white quilt over a white quilted chair that has bloodstains at the top of it.

“It’s not an easy road to take, being an artist, it’s hard work, but there’s lots of ways to get your work out there, and you have to,” said Belmore, when asked for advice for other artists.

Belmore’s work provokes, informs, questions, examines, reflects, and creates space for dialogue and paradigm shifts. The show will run until May 5 with many activities planned on Tuesdays and Fridays at 7 p.m.



Rebecca Belmore and Wanda Nanibush at the opening of “Facing the Monumental” at the Remai Modern. (Photo by Andrea Ledding)

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- Lana knew there would be a cost when she called the ambulance for her brother – but there was a part of the bill that she didn’t think was fair.

*Names have been changed for confidentiality.

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3. **Talk to us.** We are independent and not on anyone’s side. We may be able to help solve the problem informally... or investigate if that is appropriate. Depending on what we find, we may make recommendations to solve the problem or make things better for the next person.

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- Until September 19, 2027 you can get a copy of your records for yourself or to share with anyone you choose.
- If you choose, you can preserve your records for history, education, and research at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR).

Which records are being kept?

- Your application form
- The voice recording of your testimony
- The printed record (transcript) of your testimony
- The decision on your claim

Can I get a copy of my own records?

Yes. To get a copy of your application form, the transcript of your testimony, and your decision, call IAP Information toll free at **1-877-635-2648**. Or email **IAPRecords_DocumentsSAPI@irsad-sapi.gc.ca**.

Information that identifies other people will be blocked out, to protect their privacy.

It can take several months to receive a copy of your records.

Preserving the history of residential schools

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) has been created to preserve the history of Canada's residential school system. It is hosted at the University of Manitoba. It is the permanent home for the records of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

The NCTR invites those who made a claim in the IAP or ADR to add their records to its collection. These records will be available forever, to researchers and others who want to learn about the history and impact of Canada's Indian residential schools.

Information that identifies other people will be blocked out, to respect everyone's privacy.

If you choose to preserve your records with the NCTR, send

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How would my records be used at the NCTR?

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- **National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR)**
toll free: 1-855-415-4534
email: NCTRrecords@umanitoba.ca
online: www.NCTR.ca

If you are feeling pain or distress because of your residential school experiences please call the free 24-hour **Residential Schools Crisis line: 1-866-925-4419**