

Eagle Feather NEWS

FREE

Lt.-Gov. Mirasty made big news in '19

Russell B. Mirasty celebrated his swearing in as Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Governor with his wife Donna. Eagle Feather News has named Lt.-Gov. Russ Mirasty the News Maker of 2019.

(Photo supplied)



**By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News**

Russell B. Mirasty, an Indigenous role model from northern Saskatchewan was named the first Indigenous Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan in July. The historic appointment and subsequent media coverage have led to Eagle Feather News deeming Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty the 2019 News Maker of the Year.

The 36-year veteran of the RCMP was born and raised in Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) and said

it's an incredible honour for this recognition.

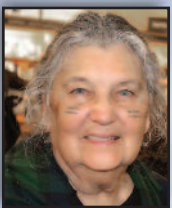
"I was really taken back but I do appreciate it that's for sure," he said.

Mirasty, a fluent Woodland Cree speaker, was raised predominantly by his grandparents who only spoke Cree. He grew up close to the land in terms of living a traditional lifestyle of fishing, hunting and trapping. To this day, Mirasty is very much grounded in terms of who he is, where he comes from and particularly to the land.

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Newsmaker of the Year Edition

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Mirasty swearing-in ceremony was historic

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“That’s really important to me to be out on the land not necessarily participating in those activities but enjoying nature and what it has to offer so that is still my strong connection,” he said.

He started school in LLRIB in the early years and then transferred to Prince Albert to attend residential school for four years. He returned to LLRIB in grade 6 up until graduation.

Through encouragement of his high school teachers, he attended university in Saskatoon for a year. Midway through that year, he decided that he needed to work and do something else. He had several options but narrowed his decisions towards a career path with the RCMP in 1976.

“Based on my experience back home and what I saw people doing, I decided the RCMP was a very good option for me,” Mirasty said. “There was a way of getting back to work at the community level and that’s why I chose it in the process of elimination.”

After he completed his training with the RCMP, he stayed in Saskatchewan and worked in detachments in Indian Head, Pelican Narrows, Rosthern and Loon Lake. After that, he left the province to work in Gander, Newfoundland, Prince George in British Columbia, Thompson, MB, Alberta and then back to Saskatchewan.

Eventually, he became a Commissioned Officer which is the management levels of the RCMP. He moved out of the province to Prince Edward Island and came back to Saskatchewan. He was stationed to Ottawa where the national headquarters for the RCMP is located. Again, Mirasty returned to the prairies to finish his career as the Commanding Officer which meant he was in charge of the RCMP for the Province of Saskatchewan.

He retired after 36 years of service for the RCMP.

He was approached two months after his retirement to work with the Ministry of Education and worked in different areas of the provincial government and within his own community of LLRIB by



Russell B. Mirasty, a member of the Lac la Ronge Indian Band signs in as Saskatchewan's 23rd Lieutenant Governor as Chief Justice of Saskatchewan Robert Richards on the left and Premier Scott Moe look on. (Photo supplied)

assisting with community safety planning.

In July of this year, Mirasty was sworn in as Saskatchewan’s 23rd Lieutenant Governor following the passing of Saskatchewan’s former LG, Thomas Mollooy who died on July 2nd, 2019.

His role as the LG of Saskatchewan keeps his days busy. His staff put his schedule under three categories that prepare him for visits or events; celebratory, constitutional and ceremonial.

Throughout his life, he often reflects on those who made an everlasting impact on him. He reverts back to the upbringing by his grandparents.

“I often mention my grandparents particularly at events I go to because of their values and what I learned from them in terms of how I conduct myself,” he said. “The work ethic was certainly there. My mother was a hard worker as well and I learned from that in terms of working hard.”

There was a teacher in high school that was tremendously supportive and gave Mirasty good advice. In the area of

the RCMP, he worked with many key people who helped him get to the level he is at now.

Throughout his career, Mirasty’s wife Donna was by his side.

“All the experience he has traveling across the country. And always by his side is his wife Donna and their children and grandchildren,” said LLRIB Chief Tammy Cook-Searson. “They’re both excellent role models.”

Coming from the same community, Cook-Searson knew Mirasty her whole life. She acknowledged all the work he did within the community and also volunteered his time to cut ski trails. She described him as an avid athlete in running and skiing. He loves the outdoors and being out at the lake.

“I think it’s really amazing of the work that he has done. He has a really excellent track record of all the years of service that he put in with the RCMP,” said Cook-Searson.

She added that she’s happy to hear Mirasty speak his Cree language when

he conducts his greetings in his current role as the LG. “I find it really powerful when he says it all in Cree and translates it that he’s here as the Queen’s Representative,” she said.

Cook-Searson congratulated Mirasty on being the Eagle Feather News Newsmaker of the Year

“It’s amazing and it’s a real honour to be chosen as the newsmaker of the year...I’m really proud of [him],” she added. Chief Cook Searson was our Newsmaker the year of the fires.

Mirasty encourages Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan to work hard and stay true to yourself and eventually good things happen.

“I never really aspired to high levels except to work hard and eventually I was recognized for that,” he said.

The official installation ceremony for Saskatchewan’s first LG Mirasty took place at the Legislative Building in Regina on September 12, 2019 where hundreds of people attended to witness a historic event.

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Re-released Halfbreed contains missing chapters that were killed by publisher

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

It was standing room only at McNally Robinson Saskatoon as Maria Campbell relaunched her classic, *Halfbreed* – this time with missing pages previously removed by her publisher at the last minute without telling her.

The pages, recently discovered in some Ontario archives, detail Campbell's rape at the hands of the RCMP as a teenager, in her family home.

"I wanted people to know it happened and still happens," said Campbell, who has already received about 30 contacts from women her age and older, and some much younger, that have gone through the same thing.

"It's scary – what's going to happen to your family if you start talking? You still don't have protection."

She shared that the RCMP knew about those missing pages and would follow her. One night while travelling on her book tour she entered her hotel room to find two RCMP officers waiting for her, who said they were "just letting you know we're here if you need us."

Despite intimidation tactics she was still vocal about the missing pages, so three years ago she was contacted by two women from Vancouver who asked if they could search for them. Campbell had been advised by her publisher to burn her own copies, which was bad advice: they were described to her by author W.O. Mitchell as "old age pension" because of the

value of original manuscripts.

Campbell didn't believe any copies existed, but when the researchers found one with red exes through the missing pages, it was very exciting. Her book has never gone out of print, but the publisher contacted her suggesting they reissue a new edition with the found pages.

She was also able to add notes to the front and back of the book, including a heartfelt thanks to her family and community – which she read aloud to the audience at McNally, after an hour of conversation with Marilyn Poitras.

Campbell said she doesn't consider herself a writer but wrote because she had to, describing writing as a tool.

"I never started out to write a book," said Campbell, explaining it began as a journal or letter to herself. She says art, theatre and story are ways to create change and understanding and make a difference.

The title of her famous book came about because "Halfbreed" was her nickname among the men she worked with in the Alberta Métis Association, and one of them told her jokingly she should call her book that. She did – and nearly 50 years later, it's still in print, a classic that is read and taught around the world.

She most of all hopes *Halfbreed* creates understanding and awareness about the Métis people, and that people delve further into Michif language, history and culture.



Maria Campbell, after signing and selling out all the copies of her newly reissued classic *Halfbreed* at McNally Robinson.
(Photo by Andrea Ledding)

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Newsmakers everywhere in 2019

Without a doubt 2019 was one of the toughest years for the Eagle Feather News staff to come up with a News Maker of the Year.

Excellence in the arts, political and community leadership, being different and being awesome and just everyday people who do extraordinary things were all on the plate for voting this year.

It was close, but as you have likely seen by now, the Honourable Russ Mirasty who became Saskatchewan's first Indigenous lieutenant-governor edged out the rest of the competition.

What an amazing choice for the Queen's representative in this province. Lt.-Gov. Merasty had a distinguished career in the RCMP and is a member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band. The fluent Cree speaker wore moccasins to his swearing in and also when he read the Speech from the Throne. His presence in the community will only raise the profile and understanding of Indigenous people and he will also inspire a whole generation of young Indigenous people who can see themselves in an important leadership and political role. Awesome. Good and big news all around.

Following the lieutenant-governor, in no particular order, are an outstanding group of people that had to be in the conversation for news makers.

Documentary creator and educator Tasha Hubbard won multiple awards for her film "nipawistamasowin: We will stand up". The story of Colten Boushie and his family's path through a terrible justice system and their commitment and voice to making change, the documentary is a must see for all Canadians.

The inside access Hubbard and her crew had to the process and the family brings you right back to the events in the farm yard and the excruciating trial and not guilty finding on

that frigid winter evening. You shiver watching it. Powerful. Insightful. Brilliant.

Politically, Cowessess Chief Cadmus Delorme appeared on many ballots. His community excelled in multiple successful opportunities under his leadership. Green energy projects, urban reserve development and the opening of a house on-reserve to bring young girls back to their community were a few of the achievements men-



Monica Goulet and her nephew Jim Searson were two of our news makers of 2019. Jim donated a kidney to Monica and saved her life. They shared their journey through the process on social media, raising the awareness and importance of organ donation in Saskatchewan. (Photo supplied)

tioned. Chief Delorme rose to prominence as a student leader at the First Nations University of Canada and he hasn't looked back since his first election.

The most shared and read story on our website in 2019 was on Two-spirited jingle dress dancer Alex Cameron Jr. Alex Jr. danced in a memorial dance special at BOCN's Revitalizing the Circle: Saskatchewan's Two Spirit

Powwow – a first of its kind held on First Nations lands in Canada. He wanted to express his identity by dancing girl's jingle dance for the Bobby Mike Memorial Dance Special.

And the seven-year-old won! The picture and story went viral and was shared across the country. What was heartwarming was all of the positive comments and support for the dancer and the family. People loved his story.

People also love resilience. We



They also appreciate stories of giving. And really, Jim Searson gave the most important thing in 2019. He gave the gift of life. Jim donated one of his kidneys to his aunty, Monica Goulet.

Monica was in dire straights. She been on the kidney transplant list since 2015. Five potential donors hadn't worked out and she was taken off the list twice due to health concerns. She underwent hemodialysis for four hours three times a week at St. Paul's hospital. Her kidney was functioning at less than five per cent.

Monica and Jim are also very high-profile people. Monica, a community builder for decades, is the former Aboriginal relations consultant for the Saskatoon Police and Searson, who is married to Lac La Ronge Indian Band Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, is a community coordinator for Red Cross and a Canadian Rangers Patrol Group commander.

Close to a year ago, he said he woke up one morning and decided to donate his kidney to his auntie because it felt like it was what he was supposed to do.

The surgery happened in March. Both are still recovering in their own ways.

These things aren't easy. Importantly, both of these leaders used this donation to raise awareness of organ donation need in this province, and their advocacy elevated the issue into many conversations. Social media was alive with their story of giving and healing. It was entirely uplifting.

Congratulations to all of our news makers this year. Thank you for allowing us to share your stories.

We look forward to highlighting many more in the years to come. Merry Christmas.

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I'm the boss, not my oil-change-craving car

I am a good driver. My mom was a school bus driver and taught all of her kids to drive using a teaching technique that can only be described as angry screaming. It's really effective.

My mom taught me how to drive and so you might assume that my dad taught me how to look after cars. And he did. His advice was to lease cars and then get a new one before something broke.

Leasing cars, however, is anathema to my thrifty personality. To me it makes more sense to buy used, except when you buy used – you're supposed to look after the car. This is the part that always gets me. Because I am not mechanically inclined.

I've tried to fix things. When my car wouldn't start one time, I googled my vehicle make and model and I watched YouTube videos about how to fix it. Then I went outside and tried to employ the techniques I had seen.

Within 20 minutes, I had gotten the keys stuck in the ignition, broke the hood so that it no longer closed and lost a pair of scissors in the motor. Never did find those scissors.

I had to get an oil change recently because my car said I had to. It had been saying this for a couple weeks but I ignored it because my car does not call the shots, I do.

Except that the day that I was ready – every oil change place I went to had long lines. I guess oil changes, like menstrual periods, sync up. And every damned car in Saskatoon was on its period that day.

I drove up to one place and an incredibly hand-

some young man greeted me (the Great Canadian Oil Change tends to hire only young men who look like Abercrombie and Fitch models. And I, for one, hope they never stop this discriminatory practise!).



He assured me that it was only a "45-minute wait." I know three quarters of an hour doesn't seem like a long time when you're 22 and have perfect hair and skin – but it's a long time when you're

a working person and have hair that is as frazzled as Trump Whitehouse staffers.

So, I didn't get my oil changed but I thought I would top up the oil and so I stopped at a Native gas station. One of the attendants, an older guy, checked the oil then he came to my window with an incredulous look on his face. "You have zero oil."

"Get out of here."

"There is nothing – look!" He shows me the dipstick. (Why do men show us dipsticks – we really don't want to look at them. Also, what am I supposed to be looking at? The dipstick is black, oil is black – I'm supposed to be looking for something slightly blacker? Why can't oil be red or white? Or make the dipstick yellow? This is why more women need to design cars. I want a pink dipstick.)

Then the attendant called another attendant over and showed him. Together they marvelled at my stupidity.

They poured in two things of oil and then I asked – ever the cheapskate – "Okay so if I get an oil change now? Do I lose all that oil?"

Again, the older attendant gives me incredulous look: "Why don't you get an oil change?"

Sheepishly I replied, "Well, there were a lot of people and lineups and I hate people and so ..."

The older guy just shook his head and the younger guy told me about how he is learning to do oil changes which sort of has nothing to do with how bad I am at cars but I guess is a move.

The important thing is, the car is still running and now it knows that it is not the boss of me.

Why do men show us dipsticks – we really don't want to look at them.

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Luff Actually continues hilarious Christmas tradition

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

During one of the busiest times of the year, often accompanied by social and financial pressures, Curtis Peeteetuce, and the cast and crew, behind Luff Actually want to remind you to take time to laugh.

“I would love to remind audiences, especially around this time of year, that humour is good medicine,” said Peeteetuce, the writer and director of Luff Actually.

“When there is 400 people in a theatre, all belly-laughing, I think there is a wonderful energy, a community spirit, tied to that.”

Luff Actually is about a trio known as the Kohkoms, who are preparing for a private Christmas party, but the band office on the reserve crashes the festivities.

“I wanted to keep (the three ladies) on-reserve and see what kind of shenanigans they can come up with. The idea of a party came up, and the greatest drama you can have for a party are people showing up who you do not want to be there,” said Peeteetuce.

The Christmas play is part of the popular Gordon Tootosis Nikaniwin Theatre (GTNT) Rez Christmas Series, created in 2001 by Peeteetuce and four other actors, originally as a way to adapt Charles Dicken’s A Christmas Carol to a First Nations community. The series now consists of ten plays, one of which is performed annually during the Christmas season.

Peeteetuce said that Luff Actually is one of the most popular in the series, both for its humour and its heartfelt themes.

“(The play) explores the notions of love, because at Christmas time, I think we get rushed in our notions



Actors Wanita Singing Bird, Aaron Marie Nepoose, and Cory Dallas Standing perform a scene from Luff Actually.

(Photo by NC Raine)

of love,” he said.

“Sometimes those notions can be misguided, and so in this story there’s a very special message about what love means, not only from a Christmas perspec-

tive, but from a Cree cultural perspective.”

There is certainly proof of the impact these plays can have. Aaron Marie Nepoose, one of the actors in this year’s performance, was motivated to become an actor after watching a previous performance of a Rez Christmas story.

“The Kohkoms were in Vegas and it was a really funny story that showed so much joy and hope in our communities,” said Nepoose. “It inspired me to become an actor. As soon as I could, I joined the GTNT Circle of Voices program and I can’t believe I get to play one of the Kohkoms this year.”

Providing audiences with that joy and hope can be particularly important to Indigenous audiences, said Peeteetuce.

“In the Indigenous community, Christmas can be especially hard. I think it’s a hard time for everyone in general, but in the Indigenous community, there are other hardships in terms of lateral violence, drugs and alcohol in the community.

“So, humour is what we see carrying us through in this hard time.”

In addition to their theatrical run in Saskatoon, the cast and crew are taking the play to several First Nations around the province which include the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, and Beardy’s and Okemasis Cree Nation in an effort to uplift as many people as they can.

“It’s a Christmas show that doesn’t inundate you or throw Christmas in your face. It’s a story of humour and it’s very heartwarming.”

Luff Actually plays December 10-15, 2019 at the Broadway Theatre in Saskatoon.

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Keara Tinker (L) takes a photograph of Aubrey Tinker. The Pinehouse Photography Club provides a supportive space for youth to learn new skills and open up about their mental health.

(Photo by Dre Erwin)

Pinehouse youth viewing life through a healthy lens

**Julia Peterson
For Eagle Feather News**

The Pinehouse Photography Club, a therapeutic photography club based in Pinehouse in northern Saskatchewan, is expanding its horizons as it enters its third year.

The club continues to teach skills and offer mental health support to local youth, and is now getting young photographers involved in national initiatives and cultural events.

Club president and founder Dre Erwin says the club helps start a conversation.

“Our main objective is to use therapeutic photography to help youth open up about mental health problems,” he said.

“A lot of the youth that come to us, you wouldn’t think they’re depressed or have any thoughts of suicide – these are kids that haven’t said anything, even to their parents or their friends. And they start using the camera and learning photography and taking pictures, and they start opening up about their thoughts.”

The club also works closely with health professionals and social workers to ensure that vulnerable youth are able to access appropriate supports.

“There isn’t a youth centre in town, so what (the club) does is give the kids a safe place to go to where they can have positive influences on each other,” Erwin said.

Every month, the club has over 100 youths aged 10 to 17 come to take photos of nature and talk about what’s on their minds.

“The club helps me not think about depression – it helps me a lot,” said 12-year-old club member Jaredan Smith.

“It’s hard. I often feel sad and angry. But photography makes me not as depressed as I used to be, because it makes me see the beauty in life.”

Sixteen-year-old Louis Iron also credits the club for improving his mental well-being.

“I’ve been through so much depression and sadness to the point that it became brutal,” Iron said.

“And then I just thought that maybe photography would do the job and kill all that, and it turns out it’s actually been doing a pretty good job. The club is really helpful. It shows you there’s still hope.”

Earlier this year, Kids Help Phone purchased 12 photos from Pinehouse youth as part of their Finding Hope Action Plan, aimed at preventing suicide and supporting Indigenous youth.

“Now our youth are realizing they’re not just (taking photographs) for themselves; they’re actually helping youth all across the country,” said Erwin.

“And I know a lot of them are going to look back at this and know that they’ve actually helped someone – and there’s no greater satisfaction than helping someone else.”

This year, Erwin has focused on involving the club in more cultural events, so the Métis and First Nations members will be more connected with their communities.

“We had a booth at the elders gathering that just passed, and we had kids with PPC jerseys and name badges on walking around with cameras for the whole week, and they all felt really important,” Erwin said.

“It was really awesome to see these kids feeling like they’re doing something for their community. We’ve definitely seen how effective that was for their mental health.”



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Elders share beautiful Christmas memories

By Judith Iron
For Eagle Feather News

An elder from the Canoe Lake First Nation remembered how Christmases were back in the older days.

Eugene W. Iron recalled that Christmas was always a nice time. He explained how people used to visit and be happy to see each other.

"I remember traveling far to see friends and family at Christmas. We went by sleigh and horses. It was beautiful. Those horses were decorated. We had colored ribbons on the horse tails and lots of jingle bells on the reigns. It sounded so nice. I still remember that sound," he said.

"It took us days to get places back then and it was cold, but that didn't matter. All that mattered was that we visited. It was so nice for all of our relatives to get together."

Iron remembers every year on Christmas Eve, his kohkom and mushom would take him to midnight mass where they would go to sing and pray. But nowadays, everything isn't the same as he once remembered.

"Everything changed over the years. It used to be about being a good person all year and celebrating the birth of Jesus. Now it seems all that matters are presents," said Iron, an 86-year-old elder.

Iron is the grandson of the very first Chief of Canoe Lake, John Iron. He was sentimental when he was asked what Christmas was like as a child.

"I remember being small and watching my mom (cook) while Christmas music played. She really loved that song Silent Night. When it came on, she would turn it up real loud and sing along. That's why, for me, Christmas is happy and sad," he said.

"I still think of my mom and I miss her when I hear that song today. All of us elders have lost a lot of friends and family over the years, but we think of them when Christmas time comes. Today, I am glad when I get to see my kids and their kids at Christmas. It makes me happy. I'm glad they think of me."

Iron has many beautiful memories of his Christmases as a child. His childhood Christmases were peaceful, carefree, loving, and abundant. Iron and his family may not have necessarily been wealthy when he was a child, but they were rich in tradition and family.

The great granddaughter of signatory Chief John Iron, 80-year-old Alice Bouvier said that most memories of Christmas from her childhood are of her and her family traveling back and forth between home and the Beauval residential school.

At Christmas break, Bouvier's parents often arrived to pick her up at the school in a wagon pulled by two horses. Bouvier looked forward to going home because Christmas was a happy time to be with family.

Bouvier said gifts were not usually given. It was an unspoken gift of its own that the presence of friends and family was all they ever needed.

"I remember one Christmas when I was about six years old and the school gave me two gifts. I got a dark-skinned doll and big red bus. I was so proud," Bouvier said with great laughter.

Things have changed so much,' says Bouvier, 'back then people knew what was important."



Eugene W. Iron and Alice Bouvier remember Christmas when it revolved around getting together with family.


(Photos submitted by Judith Iron)

 **Season's Greetings**
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SG IIII

Sask. youth ponder the meaning of reconciliation

Youth in Service – Moving Saskatchewan Towards Reconciliation Youth Conferences were recently hosted by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner.

At the end of the two conferences, 36 youth were selected to continue working and travelling with the OTC in the following capacities: Youth Advisory Council; OTC's Youth Speaker's Bureau; Youth with Youth Cadre.

During the conferences, the youth heard from residential school survivors, motivational speakers and participated in empowerment sessions and group and individual activities. One activity included asking the youth "What does Reconciliation mean to you?" and "Do you think young people today should get involved in Reconciliation? Why or Why not?"

Here are some of their responses.

Akinwande Akingbehin, 19, Saskatoon

What does Reconciliation mean to you?

Reconciliation is the action of recognizing the critical role Indigenous people have held in the creation of Canada. It is coming to terms with the impacts of colonization, the attempts at assimilation and cultural genocide. Living in Africa, in a village heavily influenced by Britain's colonization, and the dehumanization of my people allows me to have a unique perspective on Canada's history. Reconciliation to me, (is) a form of forgiveness and appreciation. It is asking, what can we do to repair our damage? It is humbling yourself to the fact that you are living on Treaty 6 territory and homeland of the Metis, the Cree, Assiniboine, Dakota and Ojibwe.

Do you think young people today should get involved in Reconciliation? Why or Why not?

It is important to have the youth get involved in the reconciliation plan. With our fresh perspective of the world, we can come up with effective plans, if given resources. It is said, a child's mind is more accepting than an adult. It takes just a hand of friendship among peers of different race and ethnicity to change the world. We are the future. If we want the world to be truly safe and inclusive, we must start young, so that they may grow up with the qualities of a leader.

Layla Meesto, 17, North Battleford

What does Reconciliation mean to you?

Reconciliation, to me, means and/or represents my dad and what he has been through. He is a residential school and 60's scoop survivor. I often think about how the major events in his life affected his choices and my life as well. He blamed his father for what happened to him as he thought his dad sent him away to residential school but that was not what really happened. My dad does not talk about what he went through in the school and I would like to talk with him about it but I don't want to trigger bad memories for him. While I was growing up, he was not the father I wanted – all he wanted to do was forget and all he would do is drink. My memories of him drinking when I was young was, he would say things that made me cry. He would talk about wanting to kill himself. What he went through still affects both of us. Now I won't see him unless he isn't drinking. The hurt and pain caused by my dad being taken from his family still affects us today. My dad dropped out of school in Grade 4

Do you think young people today should get involved in Reconciliation? Why or Why not?

Reconciliation is supposed to be about healing. I want to be the first in my family to graduate high school. I want a better life for myself. I know what I want to do and what I don't want to do. I believe that young people today should get involved in reconciliation because it is better to look back at what happened and make sure it doesn't happen again. We are healing and we are getting stronger. Our stories are important and need to be heard.

Mya Ruelling, 17, La Loche

What does Reconciliation mean to you?

To me, reconciliation is overwhelming. The sheer cliff face of adversity that has been laid upon First Nation communities through various forms of intergenerational controls and disadvantages, as well as the traumatic events that have set us back further and further from the point of reconciliation, have caused irreparable damage to our communities.

Loss of culture is daily experience for me, I walk the halls of my school that is named "Dene High", but in practice provides White European educational experience. Even as birth rates rise in my community, the likelihood that these children will be raised not knowing our language increases. Parents tell their children that the only way to succeed, and in some cases survive, is to apply themselves to the society that was dropped on top of us, not the society we lived previously. In the past we had locally and culturally developed religion that was based in appreciation for and reverence to nature, yet in our current lives in reserve communities you can see the ground littered with garbage of modern day society. Make no mistake about my aims, I do not seek the wrack and ruin of Canada or those of European descent, this is not a tale of revenge, but rather one of reclamation. To reconcile fully we must be given the chance



Youth from across the province gathered for two conferences hosted by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner to discuss reconciliation.

to stand on our own feet and be the captains of our own destiny.

Do you think young people today should get involved in Reconciliation? Why or Why not?

From my perspective when it comes to the involvement of youth in the act of reconciliation, I see success as only being attainable with the inclusion of youth. Too many times we have been let down by the generation before us being unsupported and in turn failing to support the next. If we intend to end the cycle of generational depression, we must start with the youth.

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Congratulations to the successful grant recipients for April 2019 & September 2019 Intakes! Thank you for all you do to make our communities better places to live.

First Nations & Tribal Councils

Kinistin Saulteaux Nation	Mistawasis First Nation
Muskeg Lake Cree Nation	Muskoday First Nation
One Arrow First Nation	Whitecap Dakota First Nation
Yellow Quill First Nation	Saskatoon Tribal Council
Day Star First Nation	George Gordon First Nation
Muskowekwan First Nation	Kawacatoose First Nation
Fishing Lake First Nation	Touchwood Agency Tribal Council

Saskatoon & Area Community Groups - Highlights *

Children's Wish Foundation	Big Brothers Big Sisters, Saskatoon & Area
Bishop Klein Community School	City Park School Play Space Committee
C.L.A.S.S.I.C	Denny Carr's Secret Santa Foundation
CHEP Good Food Inc.	Clavet Community Arena Association
Clavet Composite School	Community Living Association Saskatoon
Core Neighborhood Youth CoOp	Conquest Volunteer Fire Department
Family Service Saskatoon	Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwin Theatre
Great Plains College	Hague Senior Citizens Housing Corp
OUT Saskatoon	Kenaston School Community Council
Read Saskatoon	Sask First Nations Veterans Association.
Saskatoon Council On Aging	Saskatoon Folk Fest Incorporated
Saskatoon Friendship Inn	Saskatoon Indian & Metis Friendship Centre
Saskatoon Open Door Society	Saskatoon Industry Education Council
Saskatoon Search & Rescue Inc.	Saskatoon Public Schools - Confed Park
Saskatoon Sports Tourism	Saskatoon Public Schools - Howard Coad
Saskatoon Track and Field Club	Saskatoon Public Schools - King George

The next grant application due date is **January 30, 2020**.

NEW! The Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation's 2018-2019 Annual Report is now available on our website.

*For a complete list, visit: www.dakotadunescdc.com
Or call us at 306-956-1799

JNE Welding lands ABEX Award

**Julia Peterson
For Eagle Feather News**

Saskatoon-based company JNE Welding took home the top prize at this year's ABEX Business Awards. Along with winning the 'Business of the Year' award, they also won the 'Priority Focus for Indigenous Engagement' award.

These awards are exceptionally competitive – of over 40,000 eligible companies in Saskatchewan, only about 65 are nominated every year after – and for JNE CEO Adam Logue, the night's successes were a welcome surprise.

"We really had no idea," he said. "We knew we were nominated for the Priority Focus on Indigenous Engagement award but had no idea that we were even considered for (Business of the Year), let alone that we would receive it at the end of the night. So, the whole team here is just very excited by the great honour."

Logue believes that what sets JNE apart are the relationships the company has built over the years.

"We're constantly striving to create win-win relationships with our clients, our suppliers and our employees," he said. "I believe that's what you need to do to be successful nowadays."

JNE Welding was founded in 1980 by Jim Nowakowski. Over the nearly four decades since, it has grown from a small operation with a handful of employees to a legacy business that builds custom steel fabrications throughout Western Canada. In 2015, English River First Nation and Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation became equity partners in the company with a 30 per cent ownership interest each.

Steve McLellan, CEO of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, says that JNE Welding's trajectory has been positive for all concerned.

"It's a great symbol of the future of Saskatchewan, where a legacy company is now owned by a group of First Nations, and they are taking the profits from that to invest in other businesses and their communities," he said.

"But it's also a sign of the times, where the interests of the First Nations communities are coming together with businesses that are changing hands. It's just a great Saskatchewan story. Everything about it is good – the symbolism is good, it's a great business decision for all [involved], and JNE is continuing to grow."

McLellan hopes that JNE's story will serve as an ex-

ample to other businesses in the province.

"I would encourage all businesses – whether they're a brand-new company or a legacy company – to follow the lead of JNE and look what they can do to expand their Indigenous engagement," he said.

"By doing that, they make their company stronger and more sustainable, and they also make Saskatchewan stronger."



(L-R) Former JNE CFO Brenda Nowakowski, founder and former JNE CEO Jim Nowakowski, current JNE CEO Adam Logue and award sponsor David Alpin Group CEO Jeff Alpin at the 2019 ABEX Business Awards.

Season's Greetings

Wishing you a safe Holiday Season
and all the best in the New Year!



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SIEF
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DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Saskatoon Public Schools is seeking a Director of Education to take office on or about August 1, 2020. As the largest school division in Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Public Schools has a well-earned reputation of excellence in the programs it offers to more than 26,000 students in 62 schools within an annual \$268-million budget.

As Chief Executive Officer, you will be a student-centered leader capable of inspiring staff and community members to exceptional performance. In order to meet the ever-changing needs of our diverse student population, you will be an excellent communicator and have demonstrated the ability to understand and optimize a complex system driven by provincial and local strategic priorities.

Application deadline: January 16, 2020

Qualified individuals are invited to submit an application accompanied by a statement of educational philosophy, detailed resume, and three professional references, to:

Director's Search Committee
c/o Superintendent of Human Resources, Jaime Valentine
valentinej@spsd.sk.ca

Questions may be directed to Mr. Valentine by email or calling 306.683.8315.



BHP

On behalf of our employees and contractors in
Saskatoon and at our Jansen Potash Project,
BHP wishes you a safe and happy
holiday season and the very best for 2019.



Tears of joy at Sixties Scoop family reunion

**By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News**

Searching for each other from opposite sides of the world, neither Erin Parenteau nor Kim Thomas-Jones ever thought the day would come when they would find each other.

“The first week she was here, I kept thinking to myself, ‘Am I dreaming?’ It was so hard to believe that, after all these years, she was actually here,” said Parenteau.

Thomas-Jones, born Kimberly Settee, was taken as a small child during the Sixties Scoop. She was adopted by two Welsh teachers, working in Saskatchewan at the time, who soon brought her home to Wales, U.K.

Her niece, Erin Parenteau, had long known she had an aunt out there, but for decades attempts to track her down had been unsuccessful. It wasn’t until Thomas-Jones was prompted by a doctor in Wales to do an ancestry DNA test that a connection materialized. Shortly after the test, a cousin of Parenteau, who had also done an Ancestry DNA test, connected with Thomas-Jones.

From there, everything fell into place.

“I knew within a few messages on Facebook that she was my aunt. She looks just like my late grandmother, and my late mother,” said Parenteau. “Immediately our family knew that we needed to bring her home.”

Parenteau and her extended family started having bake sales, garage sales, opened a GoFundMe account – anything they could to raise money to bring Thomas-Jones to Canada, who is Parenteau’s closest living relative. On Nov. 9, 2019, in the Saskatoon airport, accompanied by drums and signing, the long-lost aunt and niece finally met.

Two weeks later, both women still have trouble putting into words the profundity of that moment.

“I couldn’t hold back. When I saw her come through

the doors and saw that she looked just like me and my mother, my knees just buckled and I sobbed,” said Parenteau. “There was no awkwardness or worrying about first impressions. This is home to her.”

For Thomas-Jones, it wasn’t just returning to Canada for the first time in 50 years and meeting her family, it was coming to a place where she felt like she belonged.

“It’s been so emotional,” Thomas-Jones told Eagle Feather News. “Just seeing that I look like someone else, because I’ve never looked like someone else. It’s a feeling of ‘oh, at last!’ I feel so connected now, whereas before I felt so disconnected.”

Thomas-Jones and her family returned to Wales on Nov. 23 but Parenteau made sure her aunt was able to connect with her family, history, and culture during her two-week visit, including visiting Wanuskewin, Waske-siu, and her home community of the Montreal Lake Cree Nation.

“It feels like I’ve lost out on an awful lot,” said Thomas-Jones. “I’m still rejoicing at the moment – I’m in this dream world now. But as soon as I’ve gone back and absorbed everything mentally ... all this history that I didn’t know about. I’m 51 years of age and just learning about all of this. So, I do feel like I’ve been



Kim Thomas-Jones and Erin Parenteau in Saskatoon on Nov. 23, Thomas-Jones' last day in Canada before returning to Wales. (Left) Kim Thomas-Jones and Erin Parenteau meet for the first time in the Saskatoon airport. (Photos provided by Erin Parenteau)

robbed of that.”






Plans have already been made for Thomas-Jones to return to Saskatchewan this summer where she can continue to connect with the family that was long ago taken from her.

“She’s the closest person I have to me. I was alone – I had cousins – but there’s nothing like having an actual aunt. I don’t take her for granted,” said Parenteau. “It feels like we’re making up for lost time.”

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS,
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MIYO AYAWĪPINIKĪSIKANISIK**

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Believing in myself is my destiny

What I am aiming for in my life is having people around me who respect me.

Respecting yourself and other people will show your kids to respect themselves and other people and it will also show other people how to treat you.

I am going to speak directly to my life as a sober, single-mother, law student and everything else.

The hustle is real. The new year will be about reinforcing my boundaries and not tolerating disrespectful people.

Over the past few years, I found myself walking away from people who did not believe in me or support my goals and this has only benefitted my daughters and myself. This does not mean I am cutting off everyone who does not agree with me, I have friends and family members who have different views and beliefs but what is key is being able to communicate, have disagreements and come up with solutions in a respectful manner.

The problem with social media and technology today is the breakdown in communication and respect because of it.

No matter what you do, people will always talk and this has nothing to do with you but everything to do with where they are at with themselves. Peo-

ple subconsciously impose their own fears and insecurities onto others.

It is hard enough trying to do all this work alone. I would also rather not take on people's misrepresentations of who I am and how hard I work. Therefore, living life fearlessly by not allowing others to hold me back from taking opportunities because I believe in myself and choose to surround myself with people who also believe in me.

I have found for myself that taking opportunities that you are "not ready for" will open new doors that could lead to ending unhealthy cycles in your life. I am now wrapping up my last year of law school and I officially signed with a law firm.

I dreamed of this. Honestly, do I feel ready? Not really.

But was I ready to have two kids back to back on my own? Was I ready to quit drinking? Not really, but I am doing it and I am about to be over six years sober. I never thought this would happen so fast. I was told countless times I could not do it as a single mom of two. I am

the definition of a "mombie" and I barely sleep.

Then add in trying to have a social life and have people drinking around me is not an easy task either. I know being sober, educated, and independent filters out a lot of people on its

own. I have also learned to be comfortable on my own.

I think society has created this false dependency that we need to be in a relationship. This dependency keeps us distracted from focusing on ourselves. This model of forced dependency aligns with what the government has imposed on us and our communities.

The goal was to assimilate us and "kill the Indian in the child." They tried to strip us of our identity. I am working on being more aware of my upbringing and our history to know who I am so I can walk proud and confident.

We are all important and our children are the ones who need to feel that the most. I am working through past traumas, learning to embrace the healthy

traits I have learned, so I can break the cycles of toxic traits that I learned that continue to cycle in our families and communities.

I am learning every day as I go. I have my breakdowns and I rise back up because at the end of the day my kids depend on me to show them the way.

Nine times out of ten they will follow my footsteps and I want to take them down a good path and open all the doors of opportunities that I can. There is no time to waste on questioning my worth because of other people's insecurities and fears.

I wish everyone a safe and healthy Christmas holidays. I hope you love yourself so that we can show our babies how to love themselves. This can take years but once you're at that place where you no longer subconsciously self-sabotage your life and are self-disciplined you can create the life you want. It is time to take back our power and that is what 2020 is dedicated to.

You are the creator of your destiny. Once you take back your power it doesn't matter if you are winning or losing because it is all lessons.

Sometimes we need to be humbled to remember we are only human and that we can continue to become better if we so choose it.



Comment

Alyson Bear



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE of Native Studies and Applied Research

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research invite applications for the following full time position:

Accounting Clerk

Competition Code: 1901 106S Jan 3

Responsibilities: Reporting to the Director of Finance, or designate, the Accounting Clerk will be responsible for maintaining records for accounting functions and assisting with audits; keeping up-to-date and accurate data of clients and students within the Great Plains Accounting System; ensuring quality client service; entering course purchase notices and purchase orders; entering amendments; paying authorized invoices; processing cheques; processing purchase orders; keeping accounts payable current; and other duties as assigned.

Qualifications: The successful candidate will have an Accounting/Business Certificate or Diploma; a combination of relevant experience and course completion will be considered; experience with the Great Plains Accounting System is an asset; the ability to multi-task, solve problems, meet deadlines, work independently and as a member of a team, and will possess strong organizational and computer skills. A good working knowledge of the Métis community is a significant asset. Attention to detail is a key requirement of this position.

Remuneration: A competitive salary and benefits package

Term: February 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021

Location: Saskatoon, SK

Deadline for receipt of applications: January 3, 2020

Please quote competition code when submitting resume and cover letter to:

Robbie Walliser
917 - 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Tel: (306) 657-2264
Fax: (306) 975-0903
hr@gdinstitute.org

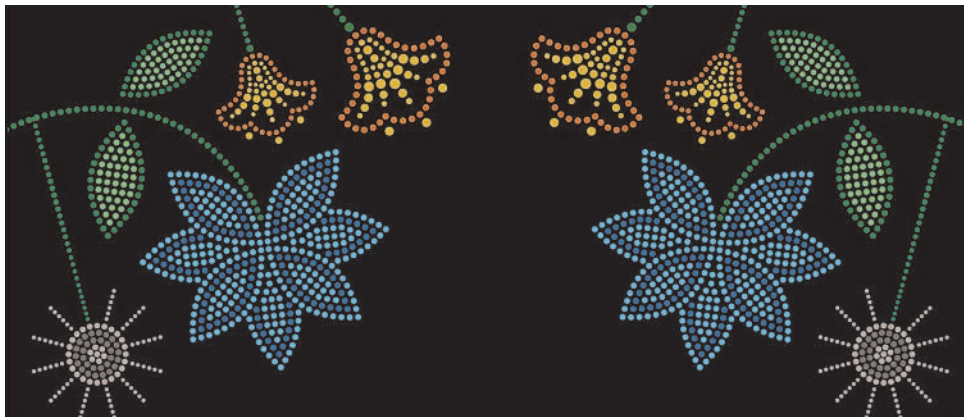
The Gabriel Dumont Institute has the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to hire affirmatively.
Please indicate in your cover letter if you are of Métis ancestry.
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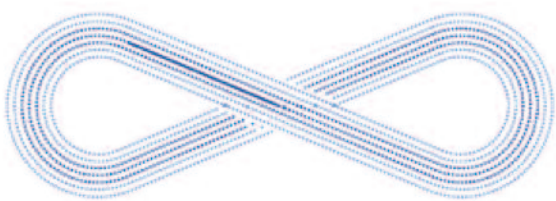
– Kris Foster, READ Saskatoon Board of Directors

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Blessings, love, and peace to you this Christmas.

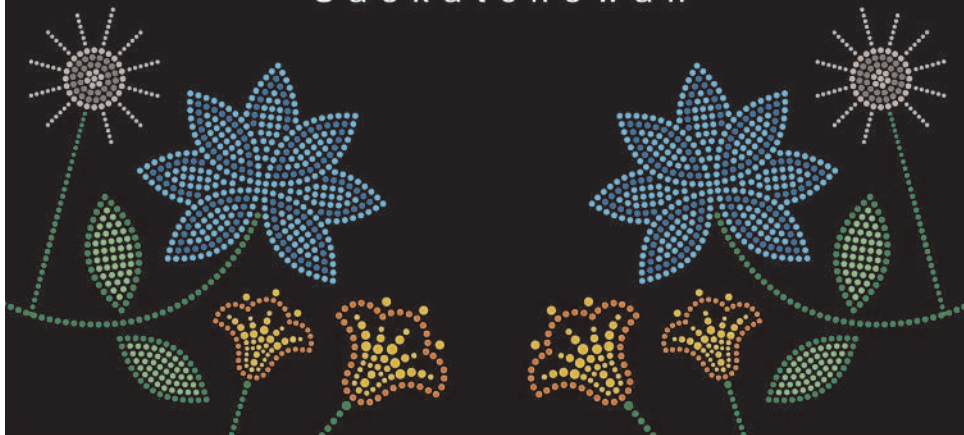
Jhwayeu Nowel
Merry Christmas
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From everyone at Métis Nation of Saskatchewan



Tansi, Hello! This is President Glen McCallum of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. I, along with my wife, Verna, our family – and everyone at MN-S would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy holiday season. Our best to you!



Spirit of our Nations

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Eagle Heart shares Christmas spirit

By Jeanelle Mandes
Of Eagle Feather News

A non-profit organization in Regina helps families to create memories around the holidays.

Eagle Heart Centre located in North Central has created the Legacy Project where they encourage donations from the community to give to nominated families to create memorable memories around the holidays.

Delora Parisian, the executive director at Eagle Heart Centre, wanted to leave an impact on families by creating this project in the community. It was something that started small then gained more interest.

“We try to (distribute) the life experience gifts before Christmas. We put out nomination sheets. So, different programs within the Eagle Heart Centre nominate the neediest families that will benefit a life experience to make memories,” she said.

A few years ago, Parisian was thinking of retirement and she wanted to leave a legacy of some kind. She thought back on her childhood where she remembered the fond memories around Christmas time of eating together and spending time with her family in different life experiences. Parisian wanted to do something to give the families they serve life experiences of their own.

“Rather than gift toys, let’s see what happens by giving them life experiences,” she said. “So, that’s how the Project was born.”

Families are nominated by different departments within the Eagle Heart Centre based on who they feel deserves to be gifted with a life ex-

perience. Gifts from this project are presented in various ways such as a night at the movies, supper at a restaurant, haircuts and even a hotel room.

“Their budgets don’t allow for much of anything extra like that,” she said.

The Legacy Project started three years ago with only a handful of donors. The following year, over 20 donors donated to the project. This year, Parisian hopes to receive more donors to contribute to the Legacy Project. The life experiences are delivered on the week of Dec. 23 by volunteers including the Chief of Regina Police Service Evan Bray.

Various organizations within the community donate to this worthy cause as a way of giving back to families during the holiday season.

Doug Moran, the Chief Executive Officer of Gabriel Housing Corporation, said they donate to the Eagle Heart Legacy Project every year and it’s their way of giving back to families who deserve to have a life experience. They donate \$200-400 a year for this project and it’s something the folks at the Gabriel Housing Corporation look forward to.

“We do it to give them that extra boost because there’s certain times of the year with where they have trouble around Christmas time,” he said.

“We know that it’s a struggle around Christmas time, so we try to do our part.”

The Eagle Heart Centre, formerly known as Aboriginal Family Service Centre assisted with over 700 families this year.



Doug Moran, the Chief Executive Officer of Gabriel Housing Corporation donates to the Eagle Heart Centre every year with a cash donation. The Eagle Heart Centre executive director Delora Parisian appreciates donations from Gabriel Housing Corporation and others within the community who help families with life experiences. (Photo by Jeanelle Mandes)

May the holiday season fill your home with joy, and your life with laughter.

*Merry Christmas from the
Clarence Campeau Development Fund*

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Young women find their voices in search for utopia

By NC Raine
For Eagle Feather News

A 'utopia', as interpreted by the Young Indigenous Women's Utopia, is not an imagined state or place of perfection, but target destination free of the oppression and violence that restrict young Indigenous people.

"The 'utopia' represents the stories and visions for a world where young women and girls can be liberated, and living our best lives, whatever they may be," said Jennifer Altenberg, Saskatoon teacher and mentor in the Utopia.

"It's a destination that we're striving for," added Kari-Dawn Wuttunee, community scholar and Utopia mentor. "Along the way to this 'utopia', we need to dismantle the mechanisms that project violence on to us."

The Young Indigenous Women's Utopia, as described by Altenberg, is rather "undefinable" – a constantly evolving girls and women mentorship group, art collective, and research project – working to challenge gender-based and colonial violence in their communities.

"In the classroom, sometimes we're more restricted or censored as to

what we can dive into and explore, so girls' group was a way to get some educational tools to young girls in the community," said Altenberg.

Utopia started as a group of 17 girls, ages 12 to 13, engaging in a research project to explore gender-based violence and how it has impacted Indigenous girls in Treaty 6. Over time, the group got smaller, but in turn, broadened areas and mediums in which they've explored.

The young women of Utopia, now all around 16 years old, have written a self-titled book, published with Chokecherry Studios, produced a short film which won second-place at the International Cellphilm Festival in Montreal, and participated in several workshop series and conferences.

They were also recently the subject of the short film sohkeyimowin, directed by Kiyari McNab, which looks into how Utopia has transformed the lives of the young women in the group.

"It's had a really big effect on me because I didn't know anything about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, gender violence, about inequality for women, and the two-spir-



Members of the Indigenous Young Women's Utopia (Photo submitted by Jennifer Altenberg)

ited and gay community. The whole thing has been an eye-opener," said Gabby Daniels, one of the young women who have been part of Utopia since its inception.

"I was shy when we first started. But as I kept going to these workshops, I realized I did have a voice and can use my voice," said Daniels.

"I think (Utopia) has made me think there will be good in the future, that we'll all be equal.

"It's really made me think we can create good in the world if we just keep working towards it."

The young women in Utopia are

now transitioning from being the participant to being the mentors themselves. Currently, they're planning a workshop for 12- and 13-year olds, to start talking to a new generation about sexual and colonial violence.

"It's profound how these girls share their deeply impacted stories about their own personal journey, and how violence has been this perpetual thing as young people," said Altenberg.

"This is what Indigenous girls experience every day, and this is them speaking back to it."

FROM ALL OF US HERE AT K+S POTASH CANADA,
MIYO-MANITOWI-KÎSIKANISIK!
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



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Happy Holidays!

from your Saskatchewan NDP MLA Team



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