

REPRESENTING OFF-RESERVE STATUS & NON-STATUS INDIANS, MÉTIS AND INUIT OF SOUTHERN LABRADOR



THE INDIGENOUS VOICE

VOLUME 2 Issue 2 **2018**

A Dance of Reconciliation

*A New Generation of
Cultural Sharing*

The Winding Road to Success

*An Indigenous
student's story
of resilience and
determination*





Project de revitalization des archives

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VOLUME 2, Issue 2

contents

on the cover



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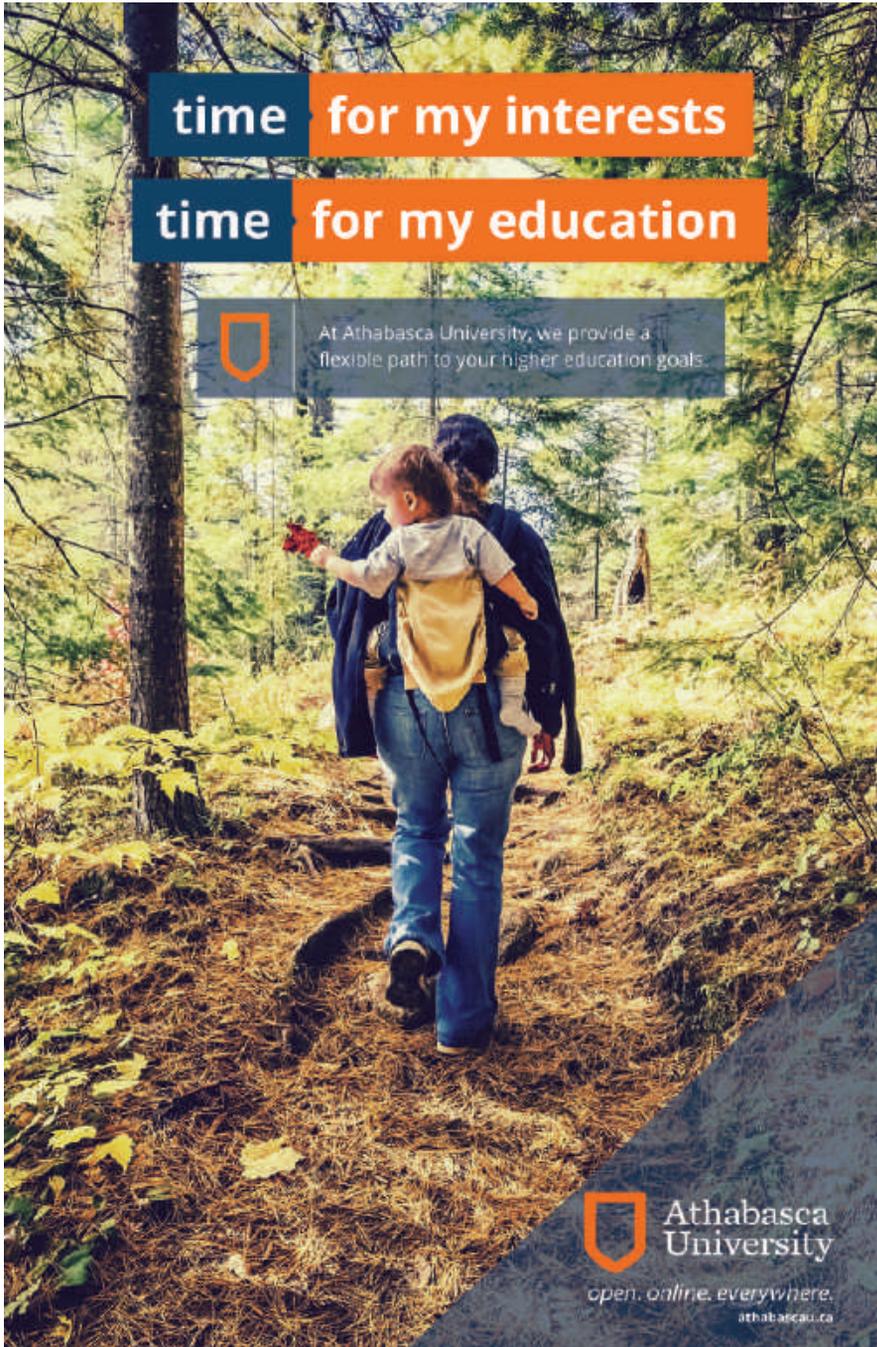
Marah (Miigwans) Smith-Chabot

Features

- 05 **WELCOME MESSAGE**
National Chief Robert Bertrand
- 11 **THE WINDING ROAD TO SUCCESS**
An Indigenous student's story of resilience and determination
- 14 **A DANCE OF RECONCILIATION:**
A New Generation of Cultural Sharing.
- 18 **THE TORCH; BE YOURS TO HOLD IT HIGH:**
Remembering Our Indigenous Veterans

Special Reports

- 06 **CANADA'S RESPONSE to the Descheneaux Decision**
What Happens Next?
- 08 **THE NEW FACE OF BUSINESS:**
The Social Enterprise
- 17 **MELISSA GILPIN** – Aboriginal Youth Achievement Award Recipient
- 20 **REMEMBERING CHIEF DWIGHT ALLISTER JOHN DOREY**
- 21 **"ALL OF OUR RELATIONS"** -
Student support centers assisting post-secondary Aboriginal students.
- 25 **THE REBUILDING OF OUR NATIONS**
- 32 **AT YOUR SERVICE**
The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples ASETS program



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The **Indigenous Voice** is the official publication of the Congress Of Aboriginal Peoples. As one of only five national Aboriginal representative organizations recognized by the Government of Canada, CAP advocates for the rights and interests of Métis people, non-status/status Indians living-off reserve and the Inuit of Southern Labrador. CAP represents the interests of its provincial and territorial affiliate organizations.

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Published June 2018





to our latest edition of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' magazine – *The Indigenous Voice*.

We are so very pleased to present this magazine to the general public and in particular to the Métis, Non-Status / Status Indians and Inuit peoples living off-reserve whom we represent.

This edition focuses on education and its importance to our people. Inside you will find articles around the successes of Indigenous youth in their pursuit of higher education. You will also hear about the exceptional work being undertaken by Colleges and Universities to create a culturally relevant and respectful environment for Indigenous students to learn.

The Congress has always been a strong advocate for education and since the inception of our employment and training program we have supported over four thousand (4,000) students in achieving educational success. Though we have made substantial gains; Indigenous students continue to require additional support and still remain below the national average in terms of secondary and post-secondary graduation rates.

The education of Indigenous youth is the responsibility of all Canadians and we know investing in them will benefit considerably to Canada's overall economy. Our success is Canada's success!

We are eager to share this informative publication with you and hope you enjoy the many articles about the work we do. It is also our hope this magazine will give you a greater awareness of our people and help you on your personal journey of reconciliation.

Magwitch,
Chief Robert Bertrand

Bienvenue

à notre dernière édition du magazine du Congrès des peuples autochtones - *The Indigenous Voice*.

Nous sommes très heureux de présenter ce magazine au grand public et en particulier aux Métis, aux Indiens non-inscrits et aux Indiens inscrits vivant hors réserve que nous représentons.

Cette édition se concentre sur l'éducation et son importance pour notre peuple. À l'intérieur, vous trouverez des articles sur les réussites des jeunes autochtones dans leur poursuite de l'enseignement supérieur. Vous entendrez également parler du travail exceptionnel entrepris par les collèges et les universités pour créer un environnement d'apprentissage culturellement pertinent et respectueux

pour les étudiants autochtones.

Le Congrès a toujours été un ardent défenseur de l'éducation et, depuis la création de notre programme d'emploi et de formation, nous avons aidé plus de quatre mille (4 000) étudiants à réussir leurs études. Bien que nous ayons fait des gains substantiels; les étudiants autochtones continuent d'avoir besoin d'un appui supplémentaire et en matière des taux d'obtention d'un diplôme d'études secondaires et post-secondaires demeurent toujours inférieurs la moyenne nationale.

L'éducation des jeunes autochtones est la responsabilité de tous les Canadiens et nous savons que l'investissement dans ces programmes bénéficiera considérablement l'économie canadienne dans son ensemble. Notre succès est le succès du Canada!

Nous sommes impatients de partager cette publication informative avec vous et nous espérons que vous apprécierez les nombreux articles sur le travail que nous faisons. Nous espérons également que ce magazine vous donnera une meilleure conscience de notre peuple et vous aidera dans votre cheminement personnel de réconciliation.

Magwitch,
Chief Robert Bertrand

Canada's Response

to the *Descheneaux Decision*

The Descheneaux Case

Stéphane Descheneaux, a member of the Abenaki community of Odanak, claimed Canada discriminated against descendants of Indian women, launching the court case *Descheneaux c. Canada*. Descheneaux's Indian status originated from his Indian grandmother, who lost her status when she married a non-Indian man. Had she been a man, his Indian status would not have been revoked and would have been passed on to his wife, their children and grandchildren.

In August 2015, the Superior Court of Québec ruled that the registration provisions of the *Indian Act* unjustifiably violate section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The provisions constitute a disparity in treatment in eligibility to Indian registration between women and men, and their respective descendants.

The court suspended the implementation of its decision to allow Parliament to make the necessary legislative amendments to address inequities in Indian registration, including those beyond the scope of the *Descheneaux* case. In response, the Government of Canada introduced *Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Indian Act in response to the Superior Court of Québec decision in Descheneaux c. Canada* in October 2016.

In November 2016, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' (CAP) National Chief Robert Bertrand gave testimony on *Bill S-3* to both the Standing

Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN) and the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples (SSCAP).

For Indigenous Peoples, *Bill S-3* fell short of fully addressing sex-based discrimination in the *Indian Act*. In May 2017, the SSCAP amended *Bill S-3* to include a clause referred to as "6(1)(a) all the way". The amendment was intended to promote equality under the law for Indian women and men and their descendants born prior to April 17, 1985, under paragraph 6(1)(a) of the *Indian Act*. The Government of Canada did not support this amendment and felt more consultation was necessary.

The bill also mandated the design and implementation of a "collaborative process with First Nations and other interested parties on issues relating to Indian registration and Band membership." In October 2017, the Government of Canada began engaging with Indigenous stakeholders on the co-design of the collaborative process, which is slated to begin in April 2018.

On Dec. 12, 2017, *Bill S-3* received royal assent.

In March 2018, CAP, in partnership with its eleven Provincial and Territorial Organizations (PTOs), hosted community forums to share information with its constituents and to discuss how the collaborative process will take shape, what subject matter will be discussed, and what activities will be undertaken.

During the CAP PTO Forums, a broad range of issues relating to Indian registration, band membership and citizenship were discussed. Participants expressed hope that through the consultation process, issues of identity, Indian status, First Nation citizenship and band membership would be addressed by the collaborative process. Some issues of interest from CAP constituents include:

- categories in Indian registration provisions;
- issues relating to adoption;
- 1951 cut-off date for eligibility for registration;
- second-generation cut-off;
- issues relating to enfranchisement, including band enfranchisement;
- unstated and unknown paternity;
- voluntary de-registration; and
- First Nations jurisdiction to determine membership or citizenship.

CAP recognizes that the collaborative process is only an initial step to addressing the detrimental effects of the *Indian Act* legislation on generations of Indigenous peoples and communities. We continue to work diligently for all our constituents, especially for those who continue to be excluded from government services and programs. 

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The New Face of Business:

The Social Enterprise

By Robert Russell

The last decade has seen an explosion of social enterprise startups, both in Canada and internationally. This new age of business is a product of mostly young entrepreneurs who see themselves as innovators and visionaries. They are dissatisfied with the status quo and believe things can be done better. They see that business need not be a contradiction to social service, but that the two can complement each other. Entrepreneurs are no longer satisfied with bottom-line mentality, instead seeing themselves as advocates and public servants.

This new economic age isn't just for young entrepreneurs and new businesses. Many established business

leaders are recognizing how their businesses impact communities and the environment. This is now evident in many of the relationships being created with the Indigenous community.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) hosted its 4th annual Creative Leaders Symposium in March 2018. This year's theme was "Social Innovation for Social Impact". The event highlighted many outstanding Indigenous social enterprises and innovators working within the Indigenous community. Presenters spoke of the numerous efforts being made by business organizations to have a positive, lasting impact on the Indigenous community.

Caitlyn Baikie of Students on Ice

and Ajmal Sataar of Inspire Nunavut both spoke of how their organizations

“...innovative and engaging programming to create opportunities for young people in business and leadership.”

are using innovative and engaging programming to create opportunities for young people in business and leadership.

Participants at opening of Creative Leaders 2018



Caitlin Baikie of Students on Ice, Inspire North, and Ajmal Sataar of Inspire North and former Olympian Waneek Horn-Miller



Jim Devoe, CEO of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples



Diane Roussin of The Winnipeg Boldness Project spoke of building upon community wisdom in addition to mainstream experts stressing the importance of “thinking outside the circle, rather than outside the box”.

Roussin was one of many presenters to discuss social enterprise not as a new phenomenon, but as an extension of Indigenous cultural and historical practice. There is much to learn from the Indigenous community and its tradition of communal living.

Brenda Zurba, vice-president of sales, marketing and development with Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corporation (TWCC), spoke of the need for services to assist Indigenous social entrepreneurs in their

undertakings. She spoke specifically of the need for programs to support capacity-building, skills development, funding, capital and market access.

Stephen Huddart, president and CEO of the McConnell Foundation spoke of the need for a new arrangement in society oriented toward justice, sustainability, openness and inclusiveness.

Business and community agencies from across the country demonstrated that success can be measured both in profit and the positive community impact.

Manitobah Mukluks and Cheekbone Beauty both spoke of their pledge to invest by supporting local delivery agencies and artisans.

Vancouver Native Housing Society (VNHS) CEO David Eddy discussed partnering with local artists and how VNHS’s model of housing is transforming the lives of Indigenous people in Vancouver. It’s a feedback model with each sector supporting the other. A model he feels can be replicated in many parts of the country.

Social innovators and enterprises are impacting every sector of the economy. Whether it’s the drone technology utilized by Stan Kapashesit of Moose Cree First Nation, or the climate change activism of Sheila Watt-Cloutier, this new age of business is creating hope for many Indigenous communities. The future seems bright. 

National Chief Robert Bertrand and Présidente Grande Chef Danielle Bédard



Indigenous Group - Twin Flames



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The Winding Road to Success

By Sarah Mitchell

Resilience is often born in the wake of shared hardship. For many Indigenous Peoples in Canada, it is a particularly strong attribute that developed out of necessity in the face of extraordinary trauma, racism and circumstance.

Most notably, the legacy of colonialism and residential schools has had an enduring effect on Indigenous Peoples, spanning generations and geography. The effects, among others, can now be measured in barriers to education, employment, as well as access to traditional practices and knowledge.

However, with the right support systems in place, combined with resilience and determination, these barriers can be overcome.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' (CAP) and the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy (ASETS) program work to effectively remove barriers for its constituents by providing funding for skills training and employment. One client of CAP's ASETS program is a single mother named Abbygail Noah.

Abbygail was born and raised in Baker Lake, Nunavut – a small hamlet located in the vast Kivalliq Region in Canada's arctic. The child of a residential school survivor, she grew up on the land, hunting caribou and fishing with her community. With limited education and employment options in Baker Lake, combined with housing shortages and the high cost of



Student Abbygail Noah and Senior Manager of Projects Sarah Mitchell

living, she decided to move to Ottawa at the age of 22. Her journey in Ottawa began at Nunavut Sivuniksavut (NS), an academic affiliate of Algonquin College in Ottawa. NS welcomes Inuit students from all over Canada, offering certificate programs in Inuit studies.

However, isolation and loneliness, elements that plague many youth moving away from the north, took hold of Abbygail, resulting in issues with gambling and alcohol spanning the next 10 years. Through counselling offered by the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health and Algonquin College, Abbygail successfully

developed new and healthy coping mechanisms which enabled her to make positive changes and eventually returned to school at Willis College.

After seven months of studying, Abbygail successfully graduated from Willis College's Indigenous Certified Community Service Worker (ICCSW) Diploma program and is in-line for a job placement. Her perseverance in the face of so many challenges is a measurable success after a long journey. She is one of eight graduates who successfully completed the ICCSW program at Willis College this past year with funding from CAP ASETS.

Following her placement, Abbygail plans on making a meaningful contribution to the community by serving some of our region's most vulnerable populations. A full circle on a winding road to an incredible accomplishment.

Students like Abbygail thrive at institutions like Willis College, who go above and beyond to provide the necessary supports for some of their most at-risk students. Willis College advocates on behalf of their students in relation to housing support, food security and financial assistance; and navigating the child-welfare system, where warranted. Support through these services can mean the difference between completing the program and dropping out. This kind of support is an integral component for successful student retention.

Canada's long and complicated history has created a challenging world for many Indigenous Peoples. CAP ASETS, along with its partners, work hard to remove barriers to ensure student success. Abbygail is a shining example of what is possible when all of the right supports come together. Her resilience and tenacity are what carried

“resilience and tenacity are what carried her through”

her through. Familial support, financial assistance, access to relevant services – all play a vital role in providing the comprehensive elements needed for long-term success. Together, we can create a brighter future for CAP ASETS constituents.

For those interested in acquiring skills training in the coming year or would like to know more, please contact Sarah at s.mitchell@abopeoples.org.

I look forward to hearing from you and helping to make your dreams become our next success story! 📧




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A Dance of Reconciliation:

A New Generation of Cultural Sharing.
Mariah (Miigwans) Smith-Chabot

By Clarissa Pangowish

Mariah (Miigwans) Smith-Chabot is one of the successful graduates of the Indigenous Community Service Worker (ICSW) diploma program. Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' (CAP) Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) sponsored the ICSW program at Willis College.

In addition to her placement at Hadley Junior High School and Philemon Wright High School, Smith-Chabot works on a variety of inspiring projects. She works as a casual relief worker at Tewegan Housing, a transitional home for Indigenous women aged 16 to 29, helping residents develop personally and professionally.

She's also is the Performance Manager for Aboriginal Experiences Tourism, located on Ottawa's Victoria Island, where she's been performing for the past 5 years.

Smith-Chabot credits her late great-uncle, spiritual and environmental leader William Commanda, as her inspiration to become a cultural ambassador for Aboriginal Experiences. "He fought a lot for our people when he was Chief of my community," Chabot says of Commanda's time leading Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation near Maniwaki, Que. "After overcoming cancer a few times, he focused on unity and bringing all people from across the world together. Smith-

Chabot remembers the annual spiritual gatherings Commanda hosted at his home in Kitigan Zibi every August.

“ sharing
unique culture and
spirituality brings
everyone together.”

"People would come together to meet and exchange the beautiful cultures from across the globe," she says. "They talked about sustainability and accountability of Mother Earth and what we need to do to help her. My mother would go because she looked



Photo Credit: Benjamin

over the grounds for everyone's safety, taking us along with her to see what it was all about. Every year, my sister and I would be invited to dance for the people, along with the Lac-Simon drum group Screaming Eagles." Smith-Chabot initially thought it strange that her great-uncle was sharing the ways of Anishinabe people with outsiders, but learned through her healing journey that sharing unique culture and spirituality brings

everyone together.

When she's not juggling her three jobs, Smith-Chabot hosts dance and craft workshops in her community. She currently dances the modern fancy shawl, hoop dance and traditional jingle, styles which all came into her life at different times. Her craft workshops include making dreamcatchers, mini-headaddresses, snowshoe ornaments and small beaded earrings.



In addition to these initiatives, Smith-Chabot participated in the I Love to Dance program put on by the Odawa Native Friendship Center in partnership with the City of Ottawa. During the ten-week program, she taught Ottawa youth how to respect themselves and each other. She also shared the values and stories behind the Indigenous dances, including how to take proper care of regalia (which Mariah believes is most important step). To conclude the program, the Shenkman Arts Center hosted a recital for all participants on Apr. 4, 2018. The recital included Cody Coyote's notable song "Hit the Town", a Stomp Dance, a Haudenosaunee call-and-response song, hoop dancing, fancy shawl and men's traditional. Smith-Chabot says I Love to Dance program was a great experience and looks forward to participating again. She is grateful space was made to share and represent Indigenous peoples.

Smith-Chabot credits the ICSW program for helping her combine traditional Indigenous and Western knowledge. She also has a diploma in police foundations from Algonquin College and is completing her Bachelor's degree in human rights at Carleton University. She says her main focus is to give back to her community by continuing to teach traditions. She wants to become the first Indigenous liaison for students in the Quebec education system, as there currently isn't one.

Smith-Chabot believes that educational institutes should have a safe place for everyone. "My message to Indigenous youth is to be proud of who you are and where you come from," she says. "We all share many individual gifts, with many stories to tell, both good and bad. We are already succeeding by still being here today and to continue to share what was taken from us. We need to acknowledge our ancestors, no matter where they come from, because that is also who we are, and without them, we would not be here." 



Creative Leaders 2019

Creative Leaders is an annual event intended to provide a platform for discourse between Indigenous groups and the business community regarding employment in mainstream industry, entrepreneurship, and economic development.

We host the event to discover new and existing best practices for the engagement of our community within mainstream industries, highlight areas of success, and examine challenges faced by both our groups.

*If you would like to make suggestions for Creative Leaders 2019 please email us at **creativeleaders@abo-peoples.org**.*

All comments and suggestions are welcome.



Melissa Gilpin

Aboriginal Youth Achievement Award Recipient

By Rufus Jacobs

In 2017, Canada celebrated its 150th birthday, Montreal its 375th. But tucked away in subarctic Quebec lies a Cree village that is celebrating its 350th birthday in 2018. This village is known today as Waskaganish. In the past it was called Rupert House, Fort Rupert and Fort Charles. This unique location is the birthplace of the Hudson's Bay Company's fur trade and is the oldest Cree village in this area.

From this village comes a treasure: Melissa Gilpin, an outstanding 26-year-old woman with an incredible story of resilience, determination, strength and courage. She has experienced extraordinary losses, challenges and successes. She encourages others to strive for greatness and live their lives to their fullest potential, regardless of setbacks or obstacles.

The last few years have been especially difficult for Gilpin. She suffered several losses: the loss of her beautiful son, Jace, due to stillbirth; the loss of her hair, the loss of her health and her dreams. Due to her immense grief she became extremely sick and was hospitalized in a life-and-death situation.

Despite her setbacks, her parents encouraged her to see the future regardless of her circumstances. Hope began to build up inside of her. She began to see something beyond where

she was. She saw a dream, a goal, even though it looked impossible. She began to fight back, growing stronger day by day. She read books such as Jeannette Walls' *The Glass Castle*, *Brain on Fire* by Susannah Cahalan, Elizabeth Smart's *My Story* and *All the Way* by Jordin Tootoo. These books were about real people who overcame extreme obstacles and emerged as winners.

Gilpin has devoted herself to continuous and selfless voluntary service, both at home and abroad, teaching her the virtues of gratefulness and altruism. In December, she and her friend hope to run a marathon for the Healthy Horizons Foundation (HHF). She is raising money for HHF, giving youth in Northern communities an opportunity to live healthy and active lives. 100 per cent of money raised directly supports healthy initiatives geared towards youth programs that promote nutrition, education and active living.

In March 2017, Canada Post announced the recipients of its 2016 Canada Post Aboriginal Education Incentive Awards. Gilpin was one of 24 recipients who wrote an essay outlining the obstacles and challenges she overcame in pursuit of a higher education.

Gilpin lives a healthy, balanced and positive lifestyle through her commitment to physical activity and



healthy eating. She continues to practice her traditional culture while maintaining her Cree mother-tongue and hunting and fishing on the land with her dad. Despite all odds and traumatic experiences, she chooses to fight. She is determined and fearless to pursue her educational and personal dreams.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples' National Youth Council is pleased to announce Melissa Gilpin as the recipient of the 2017 Aboriginal Youth Achievement Award, which recognizes achievement and establishes role models. Melissa received a cash reward and a personalized plaque acknowledging her hard work, dedication and positive influence on Indigenous youth across Canada. 

The Torch; Be Yours To Hold It High:

REMEMBERING OUR INDIGENOUS VETERANS

By Brad Darch

2018 marks a significant moment in history for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

November 8 will be the 25th observance of the Aboriginal Veterans Day, the first such observance having taken place in 1994. November 11th will bring to a close the first 100 years since nations around the world chose to lay down their weapons and work towards peace in 1918.

Sadly, any lessons learned were cast aside when a new global horror brought about the attempted extermination of an entire race of people during the Second World War. Since then, Canada has been called upon, playing a vital role in quelling attacks on democracy across the world through the assistance of military personnel and peacekeeping initiatives. Through all of this, despite being subjected to continued colonial and racist policies by the Government of Canada, Indigenous Peoples - from all backgrounds, genders and walks of life - equally served with honour and distinction.

Although Indigenous persons were officially discouraged from actively enlisting during the initial months of the First World War, the federal government's position on this quickly changed once they received word of the rising rates of casualties. In August 1917, the Military Service Act implemented mandatory call-up for military service for all male citizens aged 20 to 45.

Large numbers of Indigenous Peoples enlisted immediately. More than 4,000 Indigenous people ultimately served in what was called the Great War. Though the

machinery of warfare made survival seem impossible, they excelled in ways human beings had probably never imagined.

One such person was Henry Louis Norwest, a Métis from Fort Saskatchewan, Alta., who transferred his marksmanship skills into the role of a sniper. During his service with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, Norwest accumulated a recorded total of 115 kills.

Norwest earned the Military Medal following his efforts at the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 1917. He later destroyed several enemy machine gun posts during the Battle of Amiens in August 1918. The following week, members of Norwest's battalion were shocked when they received word that their comrade had himself been the victim of an enemy sniper. He died just three months before the end of the war. It was reported that his fellow soldiers wrote the following words on his grave marker: "It must have been a damned good sniper that got Norwest." Back at home in Canada, a wife and three children would receive the terrible news soon after.

Upon returning home from the front, Indigenous soldiers encountered the same racial persecution of governmental colonialism that they had faced before the war. However, Indigenous Peoples did not hesitate when the rising spectre of fascism ultimately led to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Canadian battalions would be expected to enter into far greater theatres of war than they had dealt with during the previous war. A significant number of the Allies' battles against the Axis were won and lost in Italy. It

FORCES
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was there that Huron Eldon Brant, a Mohawk from the Bay of Quinte Band in Deseronto, Ontario, led a courageous attack on an enemy squad of thirty soldiers in the battle for Grammichele, Sicily on July 14th, 1943.

In the military's recommendation for the Military Medal for Brant, it was stated that he, "totally disregarded his own personal safety in the face of very heavy enemy fire and made possible the killing, or capturing of the entire enemy force." He was killed a year later during a fierce attack near Rimini in northern Italy. By the war's end, more than two hundred Indigenous soldiers had also given their very lives.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples have continued to contribute to Canada's mission to ensure peace throughout the world. In 2001, tribute was paid to these efforts with the unveiling of the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument in

Ottawa. Located in Confederation Park, the creation of the monument was made possible by the dedication of the National Aboriginal Veterans Association, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, senator Nick Taylor, and the donations of Canadians nationwide.

While it will never be possible to find the right words to describe the selfless actions of our Indigenous veterans and our lasting gratitude towards them, the final words included in the monument's inscription may be apt:

"We who would follow in their path are humbled by the magnitude of their sacrifice and inspired by the depths of their resolve. We owe them a debt of gratitude we cannot soon hope to repay." 

Chief Dwight Allister John Dorey 1947-2018



The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of our former National Chief, Dwight Allister John Dorey, MA, who passed away on May 24, 2018. He was a proud Mi'kmaq man from Nova Scotia.

Dwight had long and successful history in Indigenous Politics and served with the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples as Senior Policy Advisor, National Chief and Vice-Chief. He also served as a band councillor for Millbrook First Nation.

Born in the rural part of the province, Dwight like many young Indigenous men of his time was a high school dropout who after entering Indigenous politics, found the

importance of higher education. In his late 20s, he passed the GED test and shortly thereafter went on to graduate from Carleton University with a Master's Degree in Canadian Studies. He first became involved in Indigenous politics as an active member of the Ontario Métis and Non-Status Indian Association in 1975 while living and working in Toronto.

In 1977, he returned to Nova Scotia where he was elected as Vice-President of the present day Native Council of Nova Scotia. Dwight continued to be an activist and a leader for many years, having been elected as a Band Councillor for Millbrook First Nation shortly after receiving his Status in 1986.

Dwight was a fierce advocate for Indigenous Peoples in Canada. He served as co-chair of the Native Council of Canada's Constitutional Committee in the early 1990s during Canada Constitutional meetings of First Ministers, and was an active participant in the negotiations of the Charlottetown Accord. He was also a pioneering force behind the successful *Daniels Decision*, a landmark legal challenge for the rights and recognition for Metis and non-status Indians living off-reserve. He received numerous awards over the course of his career and was named a recipient of the Aboriginal Order of Canada.

Dwight never stopped working for his people. In an article of the Indigenous Voice he was quoted as saying "Life is precious and yet fragile. Many of my close friends and colleagues have passed on; I miss them. So, day-by-day, I try to carry their torch forward for a better future for all Indigenous Peoples."

The Congress and all Indigenous Canadians are so very thankful for all Dwight gave to us. In his memory let us try and live by his words and carry the torch forward for other Indigenous peoples as he did for us. We will miss him profoundly.

“All Of Our Relations” -

Regardless of Aboriginal ancestry, student support centres are ready to assist post-secondary Aboriginal students

By Matthew Gallina

We've all felt like the “deer in the headlights” before. The eyes enlarge, trying to assess the situation. The feet are firmly planted, as if weights are attached to the ankles. The jaw drops, as the brain rapidly processes hundreds of thoughts ranging from, “Is this really happening?” to, “What have I done?” It's the same sensation that many Indigenous students experience as they take their first steps onto university and college campuses across Canada. While it can be an experience of wonder and amazement, it can also be one of anxiety, terror or helplessness.

Exiting a small community of hundreds and relocating to the urban populace of a large city can indeed be overwhelming. Before Indigenous students can undertake the long hours necessary to achieve their post-secondary goals, they may require the assistance, guidance and serenity offered by student support centres to help navigate the chaos of campus life.

According to the Canada 2011 Census of Population, 38% of the overall Aboriginal population have completed post-secondary education, a number that has steadily increased. A 2018 Statistics Canada publication reported that the percentage of First Nations with a college diploma increased from 17% in 2006 to 21% in 2016. The same study concluded that,

in the same time frame, the number of Métis with a college diploma increased from 20% to 25%, while Inuit graduates went from 17% to almost 19%.

Post-secondary education is directly linked to employment across Canada: the employment rate among First Nations with a college diploma living off-reserve is 75%, significantly higher than the national average of 60.2%.

In order to transition from enrollment to graduation and ultimately employment, Indigenous students from all communities can benefit from the nurturing and empowering environment provided by student support centres.

Noella Wells is the director of the Iniiikokaan Centre at Bow Valley College in Calgary, Alta. The Centre is a department of Learner Success Services and refers Indigenous students to available services. She and her staff work tirelessly to provide programs and services aimed at enhancing Indigenous learners' success in their academic programs. The Centre offers all students the opportunity to reconnect with culture and provides spiritual guidance through smudging and weekly appointments with numerous Elders.

Wells and her staff recognize the importance of guidance and support for Indigenous students living away

from their home communities. “We are providing encouragement for students to never give up and we support their educational journey,” Wells says. “We have walked the path of our Indigenous students.”

“ We are providing encouragement for students to never give up and we support their educational journey ”

The Iniiikokaan Centre also provides resources for educational sponsorship, with current Indigenous scholarship and bursary information. “We are aware of the financial challenges inherent when Indigenous students apply for funding,” Wells says. Wells takes the initiative to find funding for Indigenous students in need of financial support. She says she is glad to have come in contact with the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) program at the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP).

Nancy Sinclair, one of Wells' students, was having difficulty finding sponsorship until she heard about the



Mamawechetotan means "let's all work together and help one another," a fitting description of the Centre's purpose and objectives.



Angie Cote has been the Centre Coordinator at the Mamawechetotan Centre at University College of the North since August 2016



Indigenous Students and Staff wearing Pink Shirts showing their commitment to an Anti-Bullying event at Bow Valley College.

The animal symbols displayed by staff and students represent The 7 Sacred Teachings. "These pics are some of my favorites because we support and motivate our students to get involved and represent our Indigenous teachings."- Noella Wells, Director of the Iniiikokaan Centre.

ASETS Program. “There was no other educational financial sponsorship available, as we advocated on her behalf to other funding sources,” Wells says.

The ASETS program bridges the financial gap for Indigenous students unable to access sponsorship from other organizations. Sinclair is a client of the ASETS program and is grateful for Wells’ dedication in assisting her through her educational journey.

“Thank you Congress for believing in me, and also, to Noella for your support in getting the application started,” Sinclair says in regards to CAP’s support for Indigenous students. “You are a blessing to me. Thank you from the heart.”

Wells will continue working with CAP and other funding agencies in order to provide the best possible educational assistance for Indigenous students at Bow Valley College. She says that “Bow Valley College, Iniikokaan Centre, is a collaborating partner with the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, ASETS program.”

Angie Cote is the coordinator of the Mamawechetotan Centre at University College of the North (UCN), a position

she has held since August 2016. Located in The Pas, Man., the Centre provides a welcoming atmosphere for all UCN students, striving to “work together and help one another.” Cote and her staff host events for Indigenous students at UCN and foster a warm environment for all visitors through traditional craft making, drumming performances and pipe ceremonies.

Teachers, staff and students all play a role in the success of the Mamawechetotan Centre. Through funding provided by student council, the Centre has a lunch program where students can use the ingredients provided to create a satisfying meal. “All our cupboards are full!” Cote says proudly.

The Centre also has a “Career Closet” that creates a comforting shopping experience. Students can choose from donated items such as dress shirts, suits and sports jackets in order to obtain proper business attire necessary for job interviews. “However we can help them, we are helping them,” Cote says.

The staff at the Mamawechetotan Centre are focused on more than

providing support for Indigenous students: Cote believes that developing relationships are key. She often gives one-on-one counselling to students struggling with loneliness, addiction, depression and other hardships that post-secondary students face. “I know what it’s like coming from a smaller area to a larger community,” Cote says.

The Centre organizes an annual Pow-Wow for graduates, at which they hand out the Wawatay Award to a UCN staff member who made a lasting impact on the student’s lives. This award symbolizes Cote’s mission at the Mamawechetotan Centre. “My most rewarding experience is being a small part in their journeys,” she says.

For information on Indigenous Student Support Centers, please contact your college or university. If there is no Indigenous Student Center available, contact your student representatives or Program Coordinator, and ask for this service as part of your post-secondary educational journey. Remember that you have a voice; let it be heard. 



The Iniikokaan Centre at Bow Valley College organizes an annual Indigenous Showcase. This picture is from Canada Day 2017.



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The Rebuilding of our Nations

By Brad Darch

Since 1971, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) has committed itself to advocating for the rights and needs of off-reserve status, non-status Indians, Métis peoples, and Southern Inuit across this country.

“Our vision is that all Indigenous peoples in Canada will experience the highest quality of life, founded on the rebuilding of our Nations,” states National Chief Robert Bertrand. “All Indigenous citizens will rightfully be treated with respect, dignity, integrity, and equality.”

A crucial component of CAP’s advocacy has revolved around its efforts to enact true reconciliation with the Government of Canada.

For Chief Bertrand, the most important piece to reconciliation is the establishment and implementation of a

“A legal victory for CAP seventeen years in the making.”

working relationship with the Federal Government through its honouring the Supreme Court of Canada’s final decision on *Daniels v. Canada*; a legal victory for CAP seventeen years in the making.

This landmark ruling confirmed Canada’s jurisdiction and responsibility to Métis and Non-Status Indians. It

affirmed that the federal government has a fiduciary relationship with the Métis and Non-Status Indians, just as it does with status Indians, and has a duty to consult and negotiate with them on matters that affect them.

The legal victory earned through *Daniels* Decision rightfully belongs to CAP and is the key for our people to gain the rights, programs and services which should be available to each and every citizen of this country.

In 1972, the Secretary of State for the Government of Canada submitted a confidential memo to Cabinet showing that Canada was well aware the Métis and Non-Status Indians are “far more exposed to discrimination and other social disabilities” and “are the most

Chief Bertrand - UN Permanent Forum



Prime Minister's Meeting, left to right: Chief Robert Bertrand, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau



disadvantaged of all Canadian citizens...living in circumstances that are intolerable judged by the standards of Canadian society.”

In the years following, both federal and provincial governments in Canada denied having legislative authority over Métis and Non-Status Indians resulting in what the Supreme Court of Canada has characterized as a “jurisdictional wasteland with significant and obvious disadvantaging consequences.”

In the Supreme Court’s 2016 final decision on *Daniels*, Justice Michael Phelan acknowledged that these consequences “produced a large population of collaterally damaged people...” as a result of being “deprived of programs, services and intangible benefits recognized by all governments as needed.” Justice Phelan’s words closely echo those presented by the Secretary of State over forty years earlier.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has stated time and time again that “No relationship is more important to Canada than the one with Indigenous Peoples” and his government is working in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to review federal laws and policies to ensure they respect both Canada’s constitutional

obligations and international standards, including those set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Under the online information provided to the public on what the Government of Canada terms, *The CAP/Daniels Decision*, the government emphatically states, “We are studying the decision to determine next steps. We will be working in genuine partnership with Métis and non-Status Indians - based on recognition of rights, respect, and partnership - in order to meaningfully advance the work of reconciliation.”

According to the Federal Government’s website, this statement was last modified on April 14, 2016. The very day that the Supreme Court handed down its final decision.

As of today, Canada remains an inactive partner in engaging the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples on *Daniels*. CAP, and by extension the voices of Métis and non-status Indians, continues to experience exclusion from crucial discussions with the Canadian government that impact the rights and the lives of our constituents.

The Federal Government’s continued state of inaction on the *Daniels Decision* belies their commitment to

support and advance the rights of *all* Indigenous Peoples, specifically those of CAP’s constituency.

“Renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples”

Canada’s proclaimed, “Renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples” and vision to achieve “reconciliation” has seemingly extended itself on a distinctions-based approach to a select number of the five National Indigenous Organizations as recognized by the Government of Canada.

From Chief Bertrand’s perspective, this lends itself to creating a culture of exclusion, division, and inequality, perpetuating competition for social, political and economic interests amongst Indigenous groups, communities, and families.

In an effort to raise awareness amongst the international stage and further hold the Federal Government accountable in honouring the Supreme Court’s ruling on *Daniels v. Canada*, Chief Bertrand took his message to the United Nations this past April. Attending the UN Permanent Forum in New York City, he spoke to the

United Nations on the Government of Canada's fiduciary responsibility and obligations to our people via the *Daniels Decision* and UNDRIP.

Speaking to a full-capacity audience, Chief Bertrand stated that the *Daniels Decision* has the potential to transform the framework and relationship in which Canada deals with Métis and Non-Status Indians. Yet Canada remains an inactive partner in engaging CAP on *Daniels*.

"The Federal Government needs to abandon and move away from its paternalistic, litigious relationship with Indigenous Peoples, to one of complete reconciliation with all our people where it honours its constitutional and fiduciary responsibilities," stated Chief Bertrand.

Chief Bertrand advocated to the United Nations that Canada use the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as an international human rights instrument to implement measures to directly address the provisions of the *Daniels Decision*, and honour reconciliation and the rights of Métis and Non-Status Indians.

Following up on this intervention in May, Chief Bertrand appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Indigenous and

Northern Affairs to give CAP's perspective on *Bill C-262 - An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This Bill had been drafted and submitted by NDP MP Romeo Saganash.

Enshrining the principles set out in the UN Declaration in Canadian law is a momentous step towards genuine reconciliation and safeguarding the individual and collective human rights of all Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Since Canada's full endorsement of the UN Declaration in May 2016, our people have been questioning what this means, what impacts UNDRIP will have, and what the future now holds for them.

A great number of our people are skeptical that any significant changes would ensue as a result of UNDRIP and *Bill C-262*, as their voices have largely been ignored in terms of political recognition and engagement in policy development on substantive issues that affect them.

Certainly, the inherent rights expressed in the UN Declaration are not exclusive or limited to federally recognized "Status Indians" or Indigenous Peoples who live on-reserve, in Inuit Nunangat or the Red

River Settlement.

Canada's ongoing unilateral decision making on behalf of non-status Indians and the urban Indigenous Peoples must come to an end as it is a direct violation of their fundamental human rights and UNDRIP.

Our constituents are the most vulnerable and marginalized of all Canadian citizens, who have and continue to fall through the jurisdictional and legislative cracks.

In the Supreme Court's decision on *Daniels*, Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella stated:

"As the curtain opens wider and wider on the history of Canada's relationship with its Indigenous peoples, inequities are increasingly revealed and remedies urgently sought. Many revelations have resulted in good faith policy and legislative responses, but the list of disadvantages remains robust. This case represents another chapter in the pursuit of reconciliation and redress in that relationship."

"Brought together," stated National Chief Bertrand, "CAP's legal victory with *Daniels*, Canada's Constitution, and UNDRIP, will enable lasting and positive change for our people. I will continue to hold the Federal Government accountable by fighting for our peoples' rights and needs. 



Chief Bertrand and President of NunatuKavut Todd Russell



Chief Bertrand and Senator Dyck



Portage College



Joseph Sanchez – *The Prophets*

2018 represents a year of milestones for Portage College. In addition to marking 50 years since the college's inception as Alberta NewStart Inc., it is also the 40th anniversary of the Museum of Aboriginal Peoples' Art & Artifacts (MOAPAA), located on the Lac La Biche campus. To celebrate 40 years of showcasing Indigenous Canadian works of art, MOAPAA is unveiling a permanent exhibition for the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporation, better known as the Indian Group of Seven.

The Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporation was founded in 1973 by the Indigenous artists Jackson Beardy, Eddy Cobiness, Alex Janvier, Norval Morrisseau, Daphne Odjig, Carl Ray and Joseph Sanchez. Sanchez credits Odjig as the visionary behind the group, who strove to foster “a space where Indigenous artists could share ideas and collaboratively elevate the profile of their work and the public perception of Indigenous art.”

Sanchez also points to Expo 67 as a key event in the group's formation, with the “Indians of Canada Pavilion” representing a lack of autonomy for Indigenous Canadians. The group's first meeting occurred following an exhibition of works by Beardy, Janvier and Odjig at the Winnipeg Art Gallery titled Treaty Numbers 23, 287, 1171.

The moniker “The Indian Group of Seven” was coined by Wah-sa Gallery owner Gary Scherbain in the Winnipeg Free Press. A reference to the Group of Seven, the iconic company of Canadian landscape painters active in the 1920s and '30s, the new collective embraced the title.

The group's fight to be recognized as legitimate contemporary artists was manifold. As individuals, the members of the Indian Group of Seven faced the discrimination experienced by Indigenous Peoples across Canada. One story illustrating this occurred during Jackson Beardy's exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada. Despite the fact that his work was on display, a security guard denied Beardy and his family access to the building.

But the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporation were also fighting against the colonial ideas that marginalized Indigenous art and excluded Indigenous artists from the world of contemporary art in Canada.

“...as negative stereotypes and dismissive attitudes dominated the mainstream perception of indigenous peoples, our art was treated as anthropological museum pieces and romanticised through a colonial lens,” Sanchez says in one of the videos on display at MOAPAA. “As such, Indigenous artists faced an uphill struggle to gain recognition as serious contemporary artists, contributing relevant modern work to the fabric of Canadian arts and culture.”

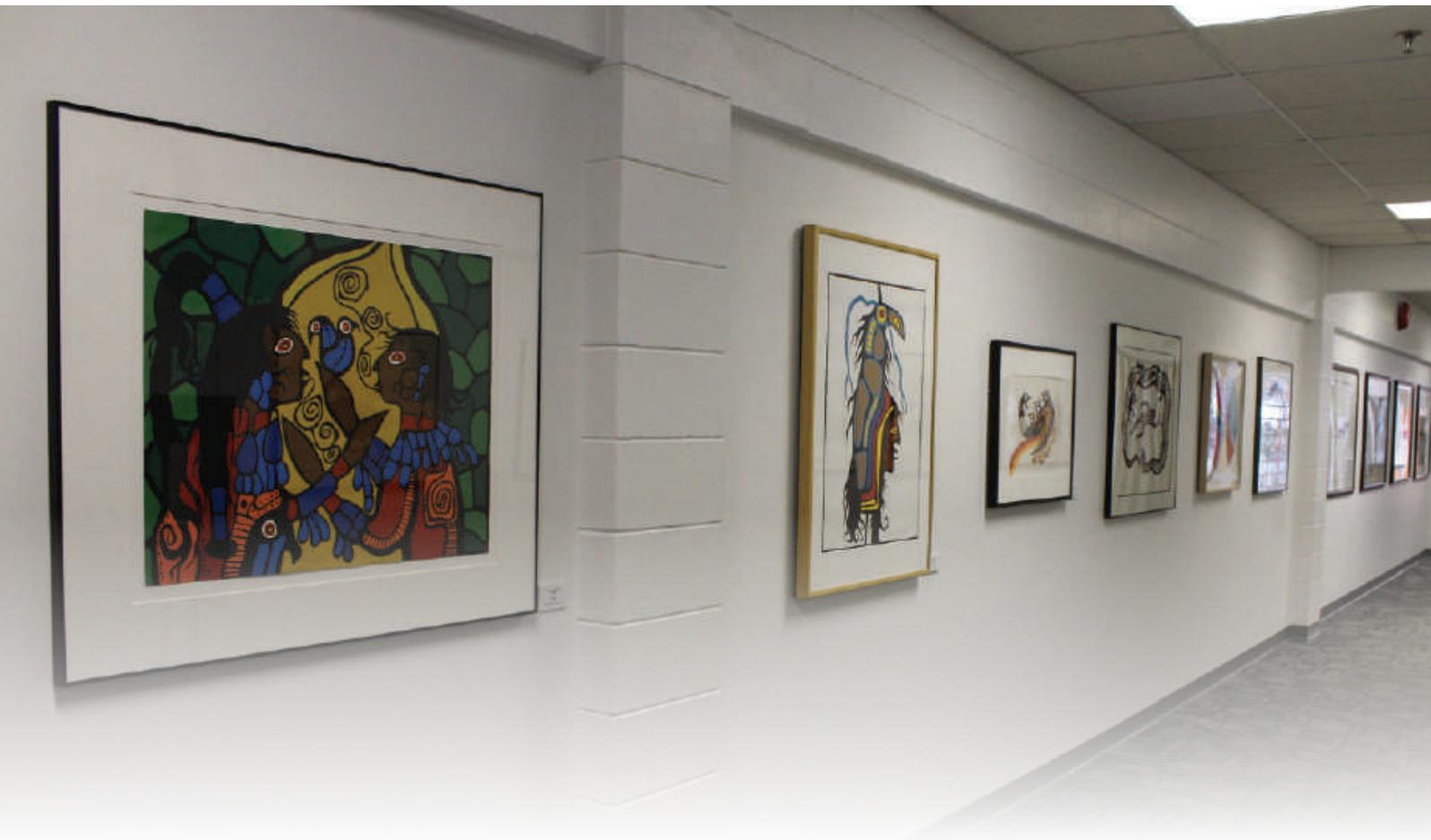
For the artists, the presence of Indigenous voices in Canadian art was a necessity, particularly in the midst of the trauma still being created by the residential school system and the 60s Scoop. For generations of Indigenous Canadians who had their cultural heritage systematically oppressed, contemporary Indigenous art was a pathway to healing.

“Through art, our group was able to reclaim much of what was lost while reflecting on how our experiences have shaped our culture today,” Sanchez says.

“The role of art is to create context in which members of society can understand and communicate their own experiences and how they relate to the experiences of others. To discuss Indigenous art as only a subject of history, and not as a major component of contemporary Canadian culture, is to invalidate the experiences of Indigenous people in modern society.”

The exhibit itself features dozens of original works from all seven of members of the Professional Native Indian Artists Incorporation, collected from a variety of sources and donors. Works like Alex Janvier’s watercolour painting *Mother’s Cry*, which addresses the trauma of residential schools, have previously been displayed in the National Gallery of Canada, while Norval Morrisseau’s print *David and Lisa Talk to the Birds* spent years in the family home of Portage College communications manager Jaime Davies.

The works on display at Portage College represent the work done by the Indian Group of Seven to bring Indigenous Canadian artists mainstream exposure and respect, and remains in lockstep with Portage College’s mission to bring educational and career opportunities to remote communities in northern Alberta.



At Your Service

How the ASETS Program at the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples is making an impact in Skills Training

By Matthew Gallina



BELOW: 5th Wheel Training Institute has training sites in three different sections of Ontario. CAP ASETS sponsored 7 Indigenous students participating in Heavy Equipment Operation, AZ, and DZ Truck Driving courses in 2018. For more information on program registration and requirements, please visit www.5thwheeltraining.com

ABOVE LEFT: After completing his training as a Hydraulic Excavator Operator at Rayway Operator Training, Michael Languedoc of Coquitlam, BC secured a job in his field. "This is really life changing for me!"

ABOVE RIGHT: Michael Languedoc on receiving his Excavator Operator certificate, "My experience dealing with ASETS was very helpful in that they were able to sponsor me for a 6 week 240-hour Excavator Operator Training Course, through which I excelled at during my time there. I graduated with the necessary skills and confidence to immediately seek an entry level Excavator Operator position. I was immediately hired by a very Large Union Company that has been in business for 70 years. I am very thankful for the guidance and support from ASETS staff!"



Whether you are an Indigenous student that is passionate about your dream job, or a Program Coordinator at a college looking for extra support for your students; the ASETS program is at your service! The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) program at the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) works to provide financial support (also known as interventions) for our constituents. The Congress' strategic vision for ASETS is to support the skills training and employment aspirations of our constituents that will help address Canada's labour market challenges.

In 2016-2017, CAP's ASETS program's *individual component* provided funding for roughly 150 people in a variety of labour market sectors.

To assist participants in reaching their goals, ASETS

provides skills training sponsorship. This important service, provides individuals accepted into skills training programs with funding for tuition, textbooks, and supplies. In addition, monthly living allowance support payments can be obtained for participants needing extra financial assistance to successfully complete their program. This support can be used for enrolment in certificate programs, diploma programs or towards the final year of an undergraduate degree program.

Last year, CAP ASETS provided over \$830,000 in financial support resulting in many of CAP's constituent members obtaining interviews, receiving employment offers and ultimately positions in their desired field. Currently, CAP ASETS continues supporting students faced with employment barriers and strives to maintain and create

connections with employers. Our ultimate goal - assist our participants in obtaining meaningful work.

If you are an individual looking for support with a skills training program, please contact Matthew Gallina at m.gallina@abo-peoples.org.

Projects and Partnerships - another vital component to the ASETS program

Working with colleges and our Provincial Territorial Organizations, we provide funding for skills training to our **projects** that address local labour market needs and skills demand. For, example, last year, CAP ASETS funded 10 projects totaling \$1.1 million.

Engaging with businesses to create **partnerships** that assist our constituents with training and employment barriers, CAP ASETS is presently looking to develop new partnerships and engage with businesses, non-profit organizations, governments, training institutions, and other employers. An example of partnership is our current dual partnership with the Correctional Service of Canada in the Correctional Officer Training Program and an agreement to jointly work on employment equity issues. Focusing on improving the life of our constituents, we are working hard to make the transition from school to employment a success.

If you are interested in developing a partnership with CAP, please contact Sarah Mitchell at s.mitchell@abo-peoples.org.

Is ASETS for Me?

If you are Indigenous and **cannot access funding support from other sources** ASETS may be for you. To qualify you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a person of Aboriginal Ancestry
- Live off-reserve
- Be unemployed or working less than 20 hours a week while completing your skills training program
- Not receiving funding support from another agency such as the Métis, Inuit or other First Nations ASETS agreement holders
- Prove that you are unable to apply for band or tribal council post-secondary or skills training funding support

If you've met the conditions above, you can find the complete application form online in English at:

http://www.abo-people.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/02/CAP_ASETS_Client_Application_2017_18_FINAL.pdf
or in French at http://www.abo-people.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CAP_ASETS_Client_Application_FR.pdf

Whether you are non-status, Métis, southern Inuit or urban status, the ASETS team at the Congress of Aboriginal People are here for you!

“The ASETS program has really changed life for me. With the program I was able to achieve so much. It gave me a chance to start my life. With the help of the ASETS program I was able to attend training to receive my AZ license and finally start a career that I love!”

- Richard Smith, Kanata, ON

“ASETS means positive change, a chance to start something new, and a chance to build on creating a better me. As a direct result of this program not only have I been able to reach my goals, but I have obtained numerous certificates that have helped me be better prepared to get into the career that I want.”

- Angel Lee Geraghty, Pembroke, ON

“The ASETS Program gave me the financial assistance that removed road blocks and allowed me to achieve my goal of owning my own business. I am now on the road to success thanks to the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and the ASETS Program!”

- Gerald Speers, Renfrew, ON





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