

Aboriginal Education Newsletter

Vol 1 - Issue 1 - Sep 2020

District Principal's Report

Hadi,

First, I would like to welcome everyone back to another school year. I hope that you all managed to get some rest and enjoy your time away from school. Having said that, I do realize that we are still dealing with the pandemic that continues to impact our lives in many different ways. Please see the section **Helpful Resources and Links** for more information on Covid and School start-up where we have provided articles related to this. We are happy to have our students back in school and look forward to seeing them back in classrooms this fall. We would like to thank parents for taking our calls and enjoyed the conversations that we were able to have with many of you. We would like to continue to offer our support and can be contacted at the following e-mails:

Katie Nesbitt - knesbitt@sd91.bc.ca

Leona Prince - lprince@sd91.bc.ca

Sincerely,

Leona Prince

Did you know?

Residential schools operated in Canada for more than 160 years, with upwards of 150,000 children passing through their doors. The last school closed in Saskatchewan in 1996. First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were removed, often against their will, from their families and communities and put into schools, where they were forced to abandon their traditions, cultural practices and languages.

Every Child Matters September 30th

The annual Orange Shirt Day on September 30th opens the door to global conversation on all aspects of Residential Schools. It is an opportunity to create meaningful discussion about the effects of Residential Schools and the legacy they have left behind. A discussion all Canadians can tune into and create bridges with each other for reconciliation. A day for survivors to be reaffirmed that they matter, and so do those that have been affected. Every Child Matters, even if they are an adult, from now on. **For more information see Helpful Resources and Links Section.**



Helpful Resources and Links

COVID-19

- [SD91 Restart Plan](#)
- [Cultural Safety Mindedness During a Pandemic](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples and COVID-19](#)
- [Indigenous people and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [International Self-Care Day](#)

EVERY CHILD MATTERS

- [Orange Shirt Day Org](#) - Teacher Resources
- [Orange Shirt Day - Every Child Matters Campaign](#) - Information
- [What is Orange Shirt Day](#) - Activities and Videos
- [Phyllis Webstad Orange Day Shirt Presentation](#) - Video
- [History of Residential Schools](#)

Student Role Model

This year we have started a new process for recognizing Aboriginal Student Role Models. Each month 1 student from each of our high schools in SD91 will be chosen by the staff. They will be acknowledged in our monthly newsletters and then at the end of year we will hold a celebration in each school.

**Who will be our
role models for
September?**



Aboriginal Education Newsletter

Vol 1 - Issue 2 - Oct 2020

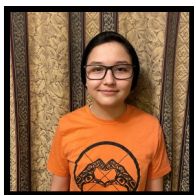
Student Role Models for September



Kirby — Gr. 8

Nak'azdli
Whut'en

"Kirby is courteous, always polite and on time."



Niki — Gr. 10

Status First Nations

"Designed Orange Shirt Day t-shirts. Very outgoing."



Ayianna — Gr. 12

Lake Babine Nation

"She has been working extra hard to get her graduation credits."



Mya — Gr. 11

Osoyoos

"She has her work ethic speak for her and leads by example"



Tye — Gr. 12
Metis

"He exemplifies a healthy lifestyle.. Is a strong student with excellent attendance."

District Principal's Report

Hadi,

September was a fast-paced and interesting month. Now that we are settling into the new school year I would like to thank everyone for being responsible citizens and keeping our system safe, healthy and supportive. As we venture into another month I would also like to thank everyone who participated in our School District Orange Shirt Day Events. I look forward to seeing photos and hearing stories about how each of you acknowledged this day.

Sincerely,

Leona Prince

Did you know?

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007, by a majority of 144 states in favour, 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States). The government of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper adopted it in 2010 with the proviso that it was a statement of aspirations, but not legally binding.

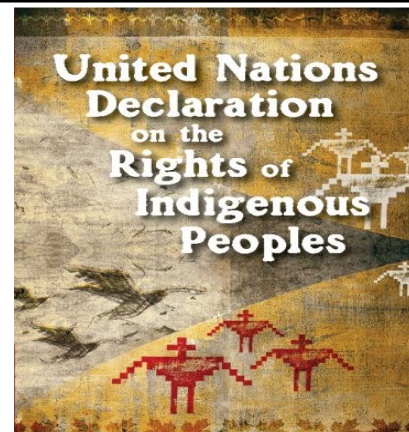
Helpful Resources and Links

UNDRIP Professional Resources

- [Bill 41—2019: Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#)
- [UNDRIP UN Site](#)
- [UNESCO UNDRIP Site](#)
- [Canada's Endorsement of the Declaration](#)

UNDRIP Classroom Resources

- [UNDRIP Teacher's Guide](#)
- [Speaking About Indigenous Rights I the Classroom](#)
- [Lesson Plan UNDRIP](#)
- [KAIROS Resources](#)
- [#NEXT150 Challenge Understanding UNDRIP](#)
- [Video: AFN Implementing UNDRIP](#)

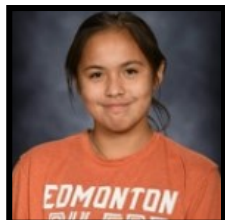


BC UNDRIP Legislation: Bill 41

The provincial government passed the [legislation](#) in November 2019 to implement the UN Declaration, which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission confirms as the framework for reconciliation.



Student Role Models for October



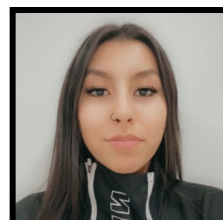
Leah — Gr. 8

Lake Babine Nation
"Good attendance and a conscientious learner."



Nevaeh — Gr. 9

Saik'uz First Nation
"She works hard on her studies and is learning a new language, Japanese."



Mya — Gr. 11

Osoyoos
"She let's her work ethic speak for her and leads by example."

Did you know?

Indigenous Veterans Day is on November 8th Each Year

"Over 12,000 Indigenous people are estimated to have volunteered in all three wars, including 7,000 First Nations members, and approximately 300 died during these conflicts.

First Nations, Inuit and Metis people were not eligible for conscription because they were not citizens of Canada (they were also unable to vote), but many volunteered despite the challenges they faced, including traveling long distances from remote communities to enlist, learning a new language (English), and coping with racism against them. Indigenous people were not allowed to join the Canadian Air Force until 1942 and the Canadian Navy until 1943. Both men and women enlisted, serving as soldiers, nurses and in other roles. Many served with distinction, winning medals for bravery in action.

After the war, enlisted Indigenous people returned home to continued discrimination, including in some cases denial of benefits, loss of Indian Status, and expropriation of their land by the government for non-Indigenous veterans. It took until 2003 for the Government of Canada to provide veterans' benefits to First Nations soldiers who had been denied them in the past, and Metis veterans have never received them. "



District Principal's Report

Hadi,

This coming month we look forward to honouring those who fought bravely for our country and our freedom. We hope that you find the information in here helpful and informative. Who in your family are you remembering on this day? This is my grandfather Robert Prince Sr. He fought courageously in WW2.

Sincerely,

Leona Prince



National Aboriginal Veterans Day

November 8, 2020



Nadleh Whut'en First Nation Veterans

<http://www.nadleh.ca/our-people/veterans/>



Helpful Resources and Links

National Aboriginal Veterans Day, November 8

- [National Aboriginal Veterans Day, November 8, Facebook Page](#)
- [Right to Play– Honouring Indigenous Veterans This National Aboriginal Veterans Day](#)
- [Indigenous Veterans – Veterans Affairs Canada](#)
- [The Memory Project: Remembering Indigenous Veterans](#)
- [Aboriginal Veterans Tribute List](#)
- [The Canadian Encyclopedia: Indigenous People and the World Wars](#)
- [Aboriginal War Heroes – More Than a Few Good Men \(Bob Joseph\)](#)
- [Remembering & Honouring Indigenous War Heroes: World War 1 & 2](#)
- [Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones](#)
- [List of Nak'azdli Veterans](#)

PDF

- [Native Soldiers Foreign Battlefields](#)
- [Indigenous War Heroes – Wausauksing War Hero and Native Veteran's Educational Awareness and Commemoration Project](#)

Dick Patrick: An Indigenous veteran's fight for inclusion

<https://humanrights.ca/story/dick-patrick-an-indigenous-veterans-fight-for-inclusion>

Dick Patrick was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the Second World War, but back home in British Columbia he was refused restaurant service because he was Indigenous. He became a local legend for repeatedly demanding to be served and then getting arrested, in a year-long act of civil disobedience that saw him thrown in jail 11 times.

Dominic "Dick" Patrick was born in 1920 in Saik'uz First Nation (also known as Stoney Creek), a Dakelh (Carrier) community located near the geographical centre of British Columbia. He enlisted in the Canadian army in early 1942 and fought in Europe until the end of the war. Patrick died in 1980 and is remembered by his family and community as a brave soldier and a local champion who stood up for Indigenous rights.

On October 23, 1945, Patrick found himself at Buckingham Palace, face to face with King George VI, who awarded him the Military Medal for gallant and distinguished conduct.



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Student Role Models for September



Madison — Gr. 12

Nadleh Whut'en

"Participates with Nadleh Whut'en singles/drummers/dancers. Strong Leadership skills, role model for younger students"



Chaylean — Gr. 8

Saik'uz First Nation

"Is a kind, respectful, strong young lady, very curious to learn about her culture. Is open minded and not afraid to stand up for what is correct."



Tina — Gr. 11

Lake Babine Nation

"Consistently attends class, is always respectful and has a good work ethic. Cooks for the class and is helpful to other students."

District Principals Message

Hadi,

I would like to wish all of you a happy and safe holiday. The upcoming Winter is the time in our seasonal rounds, traditionally, that we would gather and share stories. I want each of you to think of your favourite storytellers. Mine were my Great Auntie Catherine and my Grandfather John. My Auntie was my Carrier Language Teacher at Sowchea Elementary. She would tell the best stories! My Grandfather told me stories from his own Irish culture. For the longest time I believed in Leprechauns and Fairies. The first book I bought myself was from a garage sale at the age of 12 and I fell in love with Author V.C. Andrews. What are your most cherished story memories? My favourite book as an educator is Taan's Moons by Alison Gear. This book is the perfect recipe for engaging Indigenous people into your classroom. Mesiy and stay safe.

Leona Prince

Helpful Resources and Links

Links to Order First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Books and Resources:

- [Strong Nations](#)
- [Good Minds](#)

BC and Local Authors and Story Tellers:

Monique Grey-Smith

- [Find Monique online](#)
- [Watch and Listen to her books](#)
- [Watch her TedXLangleyEd](#)

Eden Robinson

- [Find at penguinrandomhouse.ca](#)
- [UBC Alumni Page](#)

Cecilia John

- [Watch "Fall in Saik'uz" Reading](#)
- [Find Books and Information at strongnations.com](#)

Canadian Authors and Story Tellers:

Richard Van Camp

- [Three Feathers](#)
- [Three Questions with Richard](#)

Story Feature: Monkey Beach by Eden Robinson

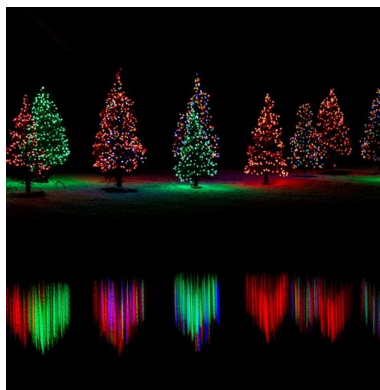
Five hundred miles north of Vancouver is Kitamaat, an Indian reservation in the homeland of the Haisla people. Growing up a tough, wild tomboy, swimming, fighting, and fishing in a remote village where the land slips into the green ocean on the edge of the world, Lisamarie has always been different. Haunting, funny, and vividly poignant, *Monkey Beach* gives full scope to Robinson's startling ability to make bedfellows of comedy and the dark underside of life. Informed as much by its lush living wilderness as by the humanity of its colorful characters, *Monkey Beach* is a profoundly moving story

about childhood and the pain of growing older—a multilayered tale of family grief and redemption. [Click here for movie trailer.](#)



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Did you know?

“Throughout history, Aboriginal societies in North America have relied on the oral transmission of stories, histories, lessons and other knowledge to maintain a historical record and sustain their cultures and identities. According to scholars Renée Hulan and Renate Eigenbrod, oral traditions are “the means by which knowledge is reproduced, preserved and conveyed from generation to generation. Oral traditions form the foundation of Aboriginal societies, connecting speaker and listener in communal experience and uniting past and present in memory.”

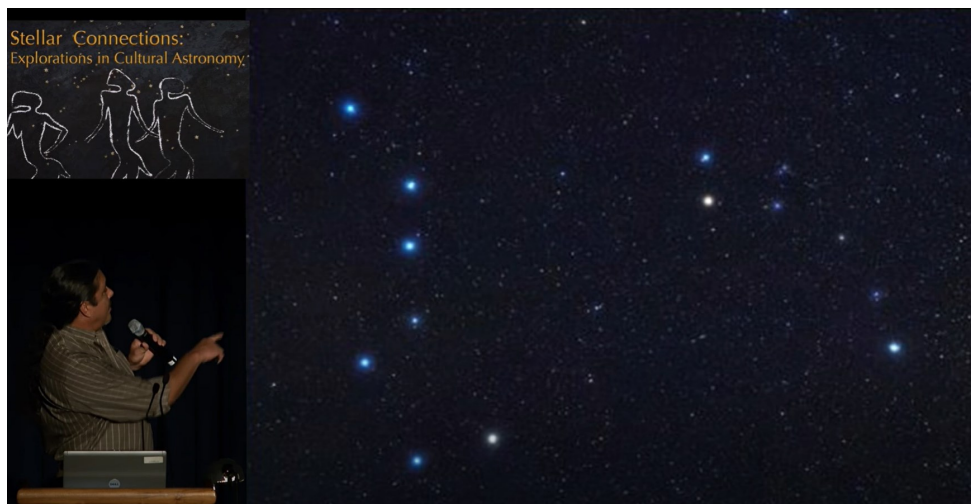
My favourite quote on the Oral Tradition comes from Stephen J. Augustine who captures it so well:

“The Elders would serve as mnemonic pegs to each other. They will be speaking individually uninterrupted in a circle one after another. When each Elder spoke they were conscious that other Elders would serve as ‘peer reviewer’ [and so] they did not delve into subject matter that would be questionable. They did joke with each other and they told stories, some true and some a bit exaggerated but in the end the result was a collective memory. This is the part which is exciting because when each Elder arrived they brought with them a piece of the knowledge puzzle. They had to reach back to the teachings of their parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents. These teachings were shared in the circle and these constituted a reconnaissance of collective memory and knowledge. In the end the Elders left with a knowledge that was built by the collectivity.” See more on the Oral Tradition at : [Oral Traditions \(ubc.ca\)](http://OralTraditions.ubc.ca)

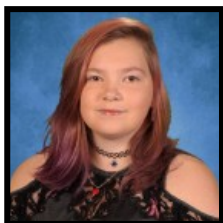
Stellar Connections: Explorations in Cultural Astronomy

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/nVny6LnTOLg>

Stories are often used in the humanities in education. Use this resource to explore the science from an Indigenous perspective using story. Cultural astronomy, also referred to as archaeoastronomy or ethnoastronomy, explores the distinctive ways that astronomy is culturally embedded in the practices and traditions of various peoples.



Student Role Models for December



Rae-Anne — Gr. 11

Binche Whut'en

"Always kind and considerate to all classmates and teachers. Always on task. Works very hard towards her goals and has no problem asking for help."



Dylan — Gr. 9

Lake Babine Nation

"Excellent all around student with Honour Roll with Distinction. Is extremely conscientious and works hard in class. He is kind, polite, and brings others together in quiet, positive way. Exemplifies a health lifestyle and actively participates in school events and activities"



Avalon — Gr. 7/8

"Faithfully attends school.. Works hard to include everyone and quick to help staff and students in need of a helping hand. Has found a love for woodworking and creates many pieces inspired by classmates."



Logan — Gr. 9

Stellat'en First Nation

"Consistently achieves honour roll status. Is kind and respectful to others. Logan represents FLESS on student voice and is an amazing role model."

Helpful Resources and Links

Historical Art

- [Pictographs and Petroglyphs of BC](#)
- [Hunter-Gatherers Harvested and Heated Microbial Biogenic Iron Oxides to Produce Rock Art Pigment](#)
- [Indigenous Tourism BC](#)

Art and Material Culture

- [Halfords Hides for ordering materials and supplies](#)
- [NIAC - Northern Indigenous Arts Council](#)
- [Indigenous Arts & Culture: Article with links](#)

YouTube Tutorials

- [Brick Stitch Beading Tutorial, Beginner DIY Beaded Jewelry](#)
- [Beading for beginners. 2 needle flat stitch technique](#)
- [Let's make Moccasins!](#)
- [Moose Hair Tufting Chloe Blue-bird Mustooch](#)

District Principals Message

Hadi,

I would like to welcome everyone back from our holiday break. I hope you got some much needed rest. During the Winter months we have traditionally worked on Art and Material culture items. My beading table is all set up and ready to go! What art and material projects are part of your seasonal round during this time of year?

Art has evolved over the years and has been a source of historical information. Throughout these territories there are examples of pictographs, like the ones in the photo below from Babine Lake. We have put together a list of resources on both historical and contemporary art. We have also included instructional videos on cultural material items that may be of interest to you.

Leona Prince



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Did you know?

Rock carvings and paintings are found throughout the inhabited world. In British Columbia alone, over 500 examples of this type of archaeological site have been recorded, more than in any other province in Canada.

The rock carvings, or petroglyphs, were made by the aboriginal people of the region by pecking and abrading selected rock surfaces with stone tools. The paintings, or pictographs, were applied to rock with brushes, sticks or fingers. Pigments were usually made from powdered minerals (ochres); haematite and limonite.

A binder of animal fat or fish eggs may have been added to make them adhere to the rock surface. The bonding ability and composition of the pigment is such that it easily outlasts the commercial paints of today. Over 90 per cent of all rock paintings are red. The paintings, or **pictographs**, were applied to rock with brushes, sticks or fingers. Pigments were usually made from powdered minerals (ochres); haematite and limonite. Over 90 per cent of all rock paintings are red.

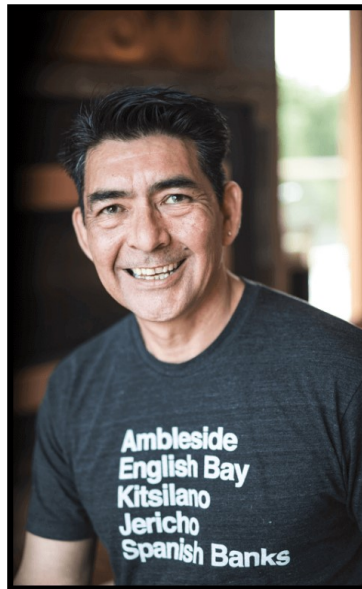
More information on this can be found at: <http://britishcolumbia.com/things-to-do-and-see/attractions/petroglyphs/>

Story Feature: Klatl-Bhi

Klatle-Bhi (pronounced "Cloth-Bay") was born in North Vancouver, British Columbia in 1966. He began his life as an artist studying the works of his ancestors featured in museums and galleries. Klatle-Bhi spent many hours with artists Beau Dick, Wayne Alfred, Wade Baker and Rick Harry, absorbing their understanding and knowledge of native culture.

In his carving, which he has evolved over 25 years, Klatle-Bhi is committed to the spiritual and cultural expression of his ancestors. Many of his carvings express his own personal and spiritual journey through life. Klatle-Bhi has developed a style of carving which is unique and distinctive. It is his goal to achieve the highest level of craftsmanship and artistry that this cultural medium will allow. He believes that his journey as an artist has just begun.

Klatle-Bhi comes from a very traditionally rooted family where his Squamish and Kwakwaka'wakw cultures are a large part of everyday life. Aside from his artwork, Klatle-bhi aspires to maintain the languages, dances and songs of his ancestors. Klatle-Bhi believes both art and culture meet on a journey into the history of his people. Klatle-Bhi has taken on several apprentices to share the knowledge and experiences passed down to him with the next generation of up and coming artists. Klatl-Bhi's father Charlie Sam Sr. is from Nak'azdli Whut'en.



Links for more information:

- [Klatl-Bhi Website](#)
- [Petro Canada 2010 Winter Olympic Totem Pole](#)
- [2010 Legacy Pole Video](#)
- [Making of an Eclipse Mask Video](#)
- [Strong Nations Vest](#)



Student Role Models for January



Latisha— Gr. 11

Lake Babine Nation

"She is a strong role-model for younger students by virtue of her positive lifestyle, near perfect attendance, and continued success in school, particularly in her writing ability."



Keleley— Gr. 12

Binche Whut'en

"She is always kind to all classmates and teachers. She is always on task and works hard towards her goals. She has no problem asking for help and is very focused on graduation."



Annika— Gr. 12

Metis

"Consistently high grades. Interest in learning about science, excellent work ethic, participation in class discussion, happy, gentle nature."



Kaitlyn— Gr. 12

Saddle Lake

"She leads a healthy lifestyle and achieves honour roll with distinction and maintained excellent attendance while working 2 part time jobs through the pandemic. She is kind and respectful. We can always count on her to greet us with a smile."

Resilience in the Warrior's Cry

Hear the aches of resilience in the warrior's cry
Stood last sunset for generations dreams, hold fast
In your spirit, carry the drum to know where ancestors lie.

Descendants from war-torn battle born; peace still try
Every breath comes hope for the future, do not forget the past
Hear the ache of resilience in the warrior's cry.

Teaching engraved in our hearts, so your spirit may fly
Memories of a life once lived, persevere to last
In your spirit, carry the drum to know where ancestors lie.

Though laws and decrees are the battle now; society holds a blind eye
It's the same war centuries cast
Hear the ache of resilience in the warrior's cry.

Once waded in the water, walk with heads held high
Embers soon ignite the flick of a flame, grasp
In your spirit, carry the drum to know where ancestors lie.

The future promises tears will dry
Prayers will soon prove steadfast
Hear the ache of resilience in the warrior's cry
In your spirit, carry the drum to know where ancestors lie.

Written by Hope Abraham, Grade 11
Lake Babine Nation, Student Role Model



Helpful Resources and Links

- [Library and Archives Canada—Louis Riel](#)
- [The Canadian Encyclopedia - Louis Riel](#)
- [Library and Archives Canada—About the Métis Nation](#)
- [Canadian Geographic - Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada – Métis](#)
- [Métis Nation British Columbia](#)
- [Resources, Culture and Program—Louis Riel Institute](#)
- [Metis Nation British Columbia—Education Resources](#)
- [Rupert's Land Institute Metis Center of Excellence](#)

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Did you know?

Manitoba celebrates Louis Riel Day on the third Monday in February?

Louis Riel Day is a name that was suggested by Manitoba school students, in honour of Louis Riel, the political leader of the Métis people of the Canadian Prairies and regarded as the Father of Manitoba.

He led two resistant movements against the government of Canada seeking to defend Métis and was executed after being convicted for high treason in November 1885.

In 2008, Louis Riel's sash was given to the Manitoba's people and was on display at the St. Boniface Museum in Winnipeg. Read this [story](#) to learn how it got there! Learn more about the meaning of the sash at the [Louis Riel Institute](#).

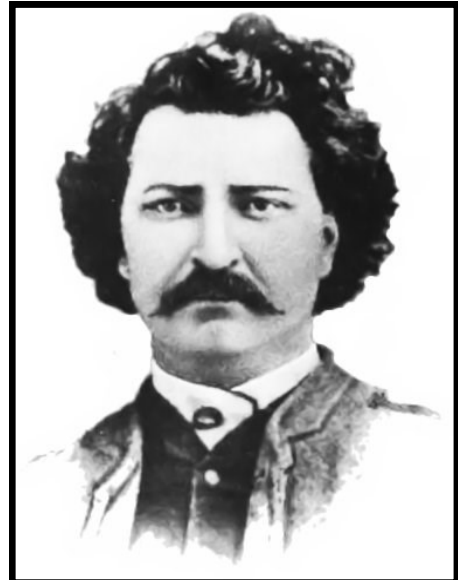


District Principals Message

Hadi,

This month we honour the Metis people of our country and the Metis families in our communities. The Metis have a long, proud history in Canada that is built upon a unique and beautiful culture. How much do each of us know about the Metis people of Canada? I have been on a journey for the past 3 years to learn more about our cousins. Every journey in Indigenous education in this country can begin with simple questions. I asked the president of the Metis Nation of BC to define who they are and from there have been building on my own personal knowledge so that I may better serve my community. It will take small steps by each of us to move forward collectively.

Leona Prince



SD91 is Now Hiring!

SD 91 has Aboriginal Worker/Homeschool Coordinator and Language and Culture Teacher positions available in Burns Lake, Granisle and Vanderhoof!

If you are interested in joining our team for casual or regular positions please check out our external [job postings here](#) and apply. Please contact cupejobs@sd91.bc.ca if you have any questions

Student Role Models for January



Susan— Gr. 9

Lake Babine Nation

"Susan thrives academically and always put forth her best efforts. She cares about those around and is an amazing role model to her peers. She puts forth her greatest efforts for her hockey team."



Tyra — Gr. 11

Nak'azdli Whuten

"Tyra is an honour roll student, a leading member of student voice and a leader among her peers. She is self motivated, takes on extra leadership roles, participates in school sports, and works hard in all of her classes."

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Did you know?

The Inuit have always enjoyed a variety of games and sports. Skills developed by these games were often those necessary for everyday survival in the harsh environment. Thus, the games concern physical strength, agility, and endurance. Many Inuit games are traditional and require no equipment. Some traditional games may have been learned in Asia before the Inuit migrated across the Bering Strait (c. 2000 B.C.), while others were undoubtedly learned after migration, through contact with southern Aboriginal peoples who had migrated at an earlier time from Asia into the Western hemisphere. [© 2009. CHIN-Canadian Heritage Information](#)

District Principals Message

Hadi,

I would like to thank you all for the wonderful feedback that we are receiving about our newsletter. Please feel free to use the information in your classrooms. The Indigenous people of Canada are made up of Metis, Inuit and First Nations peoples and in our district we have families from all three of these groups. The Inuit are a very distinct group with a rich and unique culture. This month we will be focusing on Inuit culture and featuring the Arctic games. Please feel free to send us any newsletter topic suggestions for future editions of the monthly publication.

Mesiy,

Leona Prince



Helpful Resources and Links

- [Inuit Games Circuit— Grade 5 lesson plan](#)
- [Inuit Games—virtualmuseum.ca](#)
- [Arctic Survival Skills : Traditional Inuit Games Lesson plans](#)
- [#Next150 Challenge—Inuit Games](#)
- [Inuit Games—indigenouspeoplesofcanada.ca](#)
- [Arctic Survival Skills: Traditional Inuit Games—beyondpenguins.ehe.osu.edu](#)
- [Inuit Ball Games](#)



Nunavik-born, Shina Novalinga, showcases Inuit culture on TikTok



Just under year ago, Shina Novalinga posted her first video of her throat singing with her mother on TikTok. Now, over 1.6 million people worldwide watch the 22-year-old's videos about Inuit culture. Novalinga, who started throat singing around the age of seven after moving to Montreal, said her account took off after her mother, Caroline, had the idea to post a video of them singing together. At first, she was a bit shy to post the videos, she said, but in the end, it was worth it. "It always brings us joy and we have a stronger connection every time we throat sing," she said. "Our goal is to definitely have more representation," she said about herself and other Indigenous people on

social media. “Having more people around the world understand our culture and finally having a voice.” Having Indigenous people seen in the mainstream like this helps youth appreciate their identities and not be ashamed of their culture, said Novalinga. She said she hopes to sing with other Inuit throat singers she has connected with over social media too. To see the full article click [here](#).

Climate Change Threatening Polar Bears: There is an increase in Grizzly-Polar Bear Hybrids

The change in climate it is impacting Polar Bear populations and there are more occurrences of the breeding between Polar Bears and Grizzly Bears. There seem to be more instances of a 3/4 Grizzly and 1/4 Polar Bear hybrids. As Arctic ice melts and decreases the living space of Polar Bears we will see more instances of the hybrids with the possible disappearance of Polar Bears with their DNA being overwhelmed by Grizzly DNA. Changes in the climate is also having significant impacts on Inuit food harvesting practices. The interconnectedness between the Inuit and their land base is being threatened.



The Inuit knife known as an ulu was traditionally a woman's cutting tool. This example was made in the early twentieth century in the area of Port Harrison, Quebec. It has a crescent-shaped metal blade and an ivory handle decorated with fish and lines. A smaller ulu with a five-centimetre blade was used for slitting animal sinew to make thread and cord, and to cut patterns. Larger ulus were used to scrape animal hides, fillet fish, or slice meat.

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Student Role Models for April



Roberta— Gr. 10
Kitasoo/xais

"was most impressed with Roberta as her studies with me focused on showing her community, sharing her culture, and documenting her learning through the creation of a short film. Roberta is an example of how all learners can recognize their skills and passions."



Tyson— Gr. 12
tla-o-qui-aht First Nation

"Tyson is a dedicated member of the Moose Hide Campaign team. He has completed grad requirements early and participated in the CNC Forest Worker Entry Program. He is always quick with a kind and caring word. I am immensely proud of the person he has become."



Nyah— Gr. 8
Burns Lake Band

"Nyah is academically outstanding. She is always cheerful and kind. She encourages other students and works very well with all classmates. She is thoughtful, attentive and reflective to all learning activities. Nyah models a healthy lifestyle in and outside of school."

Did you know?

Kwah is the usual English form of the name of the famous Dakelh leader Kw'eh. He was born around 1755 and died in 1840. Chief Kw'eh was the chief of what is now Nak'azdli in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In his time, few people lived at Nak'azdli (Fort Saint James), which attracted people due to the location of the North West Company (later Hudson's Bay Company) fort there, which was not established until 1806. The main village was located at Tsaochoche ("Sowchea").

Chief Kw'eh is also known for the incident in which, in 1828, he spared the life of his prisoner, the fur trader James Douglas, who later became the first governor of the united Colony of British Columbia. He was also known for his acquisition of an iron dagger prior to the arrival of the first Europeans in the area, presumably one traded in from the coast. He is the ancestor of a large percentage of the Dakelh people in the Stuart Lake area.

Chief Kweh's Dagger



District Principals Message

Hadi,

This month we are focusing on local Dakelh history, language and culture. Although there are tonnes of historical information on our local cultures we also want to be mindful that our cultures are dynamic, modern and thriving. We are better neighbours if we know just a little more about each other. We would like to extend an invitation to our readers to contribute to this newsletter. What is happening in your classrooms or communities that we should all be aware of? Send your write-ups and photos to knesbitt@sd91.bc.ca and we may include your pieces in upcoming issues. Thank you for all of your positive feedback on past issues. We enjoy this process and will continue to bring you more issues and volumes of this dustlus (paper) in the future.

Mesiy,

Leona Prince

Helpful Resources and Links

- [Dakelh \(carrier\) - The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)
- [Dakelh -WikiZer](#)
- [Carrier Language Resources](#)
- [Chief Kwah](#)
- [Article Chief Kw'eh](#)
- [Dakelh Language Links](#)
- [Rose Prince News Article](#)
- [Southern Dakelh Nation Alliance](#)
- [Lejac Residential School Info](#)



Art Contest Opportunity!



FORED BC Society
For Education about our Environment
& Natural Resources

Traditional Knowledge & Medicine Artwork contest for Indigenous youth grades K-12 with \$100 cash prizes!

To celebrate the rich cultural and heritage traditions of Indigenous people of BC, FORED is sponsoring our longstanding annual artwork contest with cash prizes for Indigenous youth.

Could you or your teaching colleagues please help us circulate this contest information to any and all Indigenous youth through email, social media, and website?

Theme: *Traditional Knowledge & Medicine*

Prize: Three \$100 prizes. Group work is eligible with a shared prize.

Deadline: May 7, 2021

This contest is a wonderful opportunity to find a mentor in the Elder community to pass down this important knowledge to Indigenous youth.



- Open to all youths ages 5-18 with First Nations, Inuit, Metis, or any self-declared ancestry.
- Participants must note their name, band affiliation or ancestry, home mailing address, phone & email address, grade, teacher and school name.
- A brief description of how the artwork relates to traditional knowledge and medicine is required.
- Artwork can be any size or artistic medium.
- All entries must be submitted electronically (.jpg, .pdf, .png) to education@foredbc.org. Minimum 2MB.

Click here for **Contest Details**

WE HAVE A NEW WEB SITE!

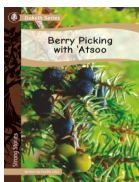
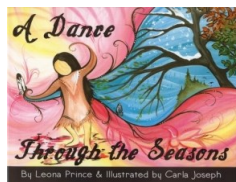
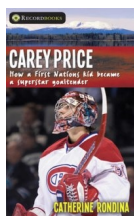
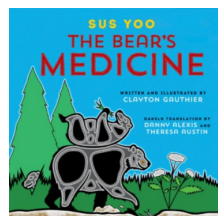
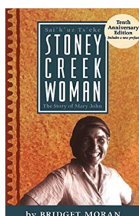
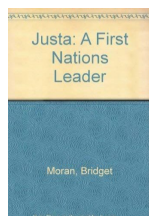
www.sd91indigenouseducation.com

Our new page is the home to not only more information about our department but a place to explore resources we have collected for both students, parents and teachers. Have a look!

We've created a parent page with helpful links, updates on our programming, and a school calendar to help keep you informed. On our home page you will find 2 buttons, the 'Elementary Go' and 'Secondary Go'. Here you will find resources for students. The 'Educators' page offers resources available for everyone and Pro-D opportunities for employees.



Dakelh books that might interest you...



Aboriginal Education Newsletter

Vol 1 - Issue 9 - May 2021

Student Role Models for April



Daylan— Gr. 11

Burns Lake Band

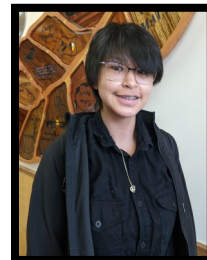
"Demonstrated a high level of improvement... he is a very dedicated student with excellent work ethic in all of his classes. He is extremely polite, helpful and inclusive. He is responsible and very deserving of the student role model recognition."



Claudia— Gr. 10

Yekooche

"Claudia came to FLESS as a grade 10 student and has worked extra hard to move herself into her graduating cohort. She has completed several courses through independent learning so she can graduate with her peer cohort."



Julissa— Gr. 9

Tl'azt'en

"Julissa has excellent attendance. She gets on the Honour Roll list all the time. She's respectful to her peers and teachers."

Did you know?

April 29—May 5 is the National Week of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and May 5 being RED Dress Day. RED Dress project started as a art instillation by Jamie Black, a Metis artist based out of Winnipeg. In North America, Native women, girls and those who identify as women experience violence at far greater rates than those who are non-Indigenous. "I felt like we all know someone who has experienced violence in her life, women who feel powerless and who don't have a voice," says Black. "I had to do something to address that." The dresses "call in the energy of the women who are lost," Black says. "People notice there is a presence in the absence." She uses red dresses because "red is very sacred and powerful. It relates to our lifeblood and that connection between all of us." <https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/story/redress-project>



From our Students

Hello, my name is Kylee Prince and I'm from Fort St James I'm a 16 year old first nations woman and I go to school at Fort St James Secondary, I'm in grade 11 and for one of my assignments for Socials, I was writing an essay on the topic of Missing Murderous Indigenous Women, then one of my teachers suggested that I share this picture of me and my friend Moniqa Julian (right side) we did a photoshoot to spread awareness on MMIW. I hope you like this picture.

Crisis Line Information

For immediate emotional assistance, call 1-844-413-6649. This is a national, toll-free 24/7 crisis call line providing support for anyone who requires emotional assistance related to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. You can also access long-term health support services such as mental health counselling and community-based cultural services through Indigenous Services Canada.

District Principals Message

Hadi,

This month has a theme of adversity and diversity. This month we help create awareness about MMIWG. Having our entire school district, directly or indirectly, on the Highway of Tears makes this extremely important and relevant to our system. It is not lost on me that being an Indigenous female puts me and my daughters at an increased risk. Historically, the public school system has been a fierce advocate for social justice. What stories will we tell, what truths will be bring to light and how are we putting an end to this in our country? I also want to promote our May 17th Share the Love Day! On this day we Honour Diversity in a meaningful way!!

Mesiy.

Leona Prince

facebook

Follow us on Facebook!

[@SD91AbEd](https://www.facebook.com/SD91AbEd)





May 17th is Share the Love day!!

For more information on this SD91 district day please visit the following website for more resources, information and links:

<https://sites.google.com/view/sd91sogiday2021/home>

Send your love and support to all off those that experience homophobia, transphobia and biphobia.



Helpful Resources and Links

- [‘A Place for the Taken: The REDress Project Gives a Voice to Missing Indigenous Women](#)
- [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada—The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)
- [‘Stolen: The Search for Jermain’ Highlights Plight of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women’ Brenna Ehrlich– Rolling Stone](#)
- [Highway of Tears—The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)
- www.highwayoftears.org
- [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)
- [The REDress Project—Facebook](#)

Books about MMIWG



TedxTalks and YouTube

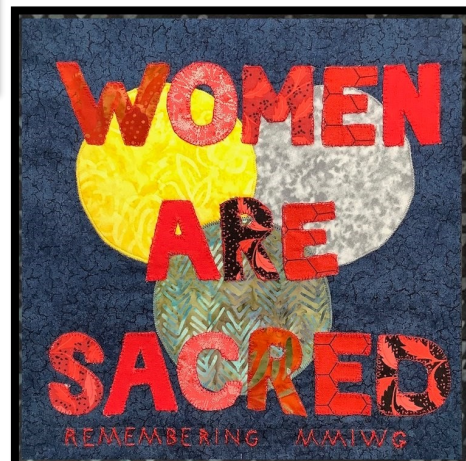
- [We are more than murdered and missing. Tamara Bernard](#)
- [The REDdress Project at the National Museum of the American Indian \(YouTube\)](#)
- [TedX Youth—Running for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women | Rosalie Fish](#)

WE HAVE A NEW WEB SITE!

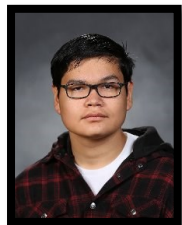
sd91indigenouseducation.com

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Student Role Models for May



Coen— Gr. 12

Stellat'en First Nation

"Coen is an excellent role model to younger students. Although extremely shy, Coen participates in speaking activities in French and is part of the year book class. Coen will be attending CNC in the fall."



Kristen— Gr. 8

T'lazten First Nation

"Kristen has read over 50 books on the bus this year. She actively participates on school sports teams, has a positive attitude in her classes and completes assignments on time."



Hailey— Gr. 12

Wet'suwet'en First Nation

"Hailey is kind, caring, compassionate and inclusive. She shows pride in her culture and will be delivering the welcome speech in carrier at grad. She sits on the youth council for FOUNDRY where she is active in promoting pride and acceptance to the LGBTQ+ community."



Marissa— Gr. 10

Lake Babine Nation

"She is an upstanding human being. She is creative, a passionate writer, and empathetic to others. She is always looking for ways to help. She is active in activities in and out of the school. She is talented singer and is a leader of the LDSS drum group."



Jamal— Gr. 12

T'lazten First Nation

"a driven student with great determination. Jamal spends many extra hours on his studies and works intently to complete his assignments. He is a kind student who helps wherever he can and always tries his best."



Luke— Gr. 11

Nak'azdli First Nation

"a very focused student and had an excellent work ethic. He chose to take extra courses to strengthen and enhance his skills. He also he is participating in an additional Mining course experience while attending regular classes at Fort St James Secondary."

Did you know?

June is National Indigenous History Month in Canada. It is a month to recognize the strength of present-day Indigenous communities as well as learn, appreciate and acknowledge the contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people have made in shaping Canada.

To help celebrate National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous People Day, which is June 21, visit [Celebration National Indigenous History Month Canada.ca](https://celebrationnationalindigenoushistorymonthcanada.ca)

Through this link you can read, watch, listen and try various activities for all ages and view virtual activities for Indigenous Peoples Day.



Project of Heart projectofheart.ca

"Project of Heart" is an inquiry based, hands-on, collaborative, inter-generational, artistic journey of seeking truth about the history of Aboriginal people in Canada." The purpose is to recognize and examine the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools in Canada, acknowledge the loss of former students, their families and communities and to commemorate their lives. It is also a call to action to change our present and future history collectively.

Resources are available for your journey of learning such as films, maps and visual aide, timelines, teacher guides and lesson plans, ect.



Orange Shirt Day Design Competition!

This is a call out to all students to design our 2021/2022 Orange Shirt Day T-Shirts.

submit your designs by Friday June 25 to

knesbitt@sd91.bc.ca

Include your age, name, school, and explanation of your shirt

Winner will receive five (5) T-Shirts with their design and a \$100 Gift Certificate





District Principals Message

Hadi,

This month has been a very difficult one in light of the recent discovery in Tk'emlups at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. I would like to express my gratitude to those who are showing their support and sympathy, especially those who have been directly impacted by this devastating news.

June is Indigenous History Month and what a better time to learn about our collective history in this country. I would like to remind everyone that even though we may be inclined to highlight some of our more challenging history that we also make space to highlight Indigenous success, as well.

Again, I would like to remind all of you to be gentle with yourselves. This has been a long year and I wish you a well-earned, restful summer!

Mesi,

Leona Prince

Helpful Resources and Links

Web Page

sd91indigenouseducation.com

Video

- [Heritage Minutes– Indigenous History](#)
- [Parks Canada– National Indigenous History Month YouTube Channel](#)
- [Parks Canada–The Metis of Fort St James Nations Historic Site](#)

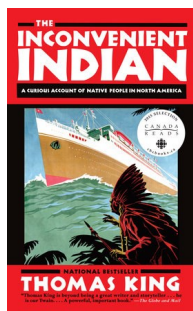
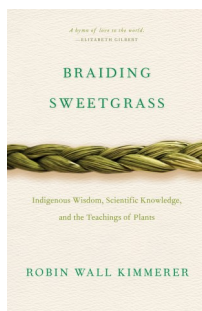
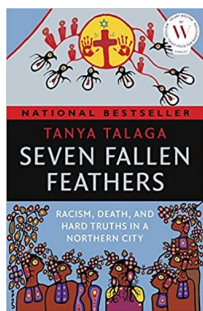
Listen

- [Indigenous Perspectives: Stories from Indigenous Public Servants](#)

Print Outs and Games

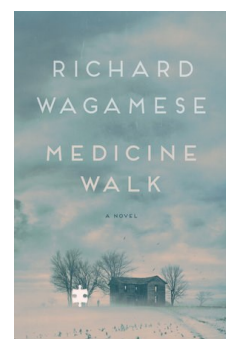
- [Cruncher colour and folding game](#)
- [National Aboriginal Day Colouring Pages](#)

Books that Teach us About Indigenous Experiences



News from Around the District

Teacher Gretchen Vogelslang's English 12 class at FSJSS recently completed a study of Richard Wagamese's Medicine Walk and prompted learners to create their own, personal, medicine walk nar-natives. We have included 4 student exemplars as an attachment in the email in addition to this newsletter. These stunning narratives are from multiple perspectives and serve as a neat illustration of the impact of the novel on learners.



Medicine Walk

Nature has its own way of teaching lessons that need to be taught without you ever knowing. I was recently gifted a lesson of understanding and empathy. What I found most interesting about this lesson is that it made me really think about my experience for almost week, before I was able to understand the lesson that had been presented to me. In a way this event was a medicine walk of my own.

One day after school I hooked up my dogs and began mushing up the lake as I often do. It was a beautiful evening the sky to the east was the colour of a tulip in full bloom, the sky to the west a soft yellow like the flicker of a candle. As my team and I travelled along the ice all functioning as one we travelled across the deep blue ice as the wind howled violently in our faces. As the sun began to set the candlelight began to fade killing the beauty of the tulip sky and night fell upon us. Then the moon came out and a dim light shone across the lake as if to provide a blanket on the cold of night. In the distance I could hear a wolf howl; the sound of it almost spiritual.

I have never been a **very** spiritual person. But I have always had a fascination with animals so I turned on my head lamp and began to scan the shoreline, thinking I may be able to see the wolf I had previously **heard**. I watched as the trees, rocks, and chunks of ice whizzed by, almost as if the hollow moonlight had given them the ability to move. And then all of a sudden, a wolf quietly walked out on a rock, looked at me, turned back to the forest, and was engulfed by the shadows of the trees. We continued on for another few minutes and then I stopped the team walked up to my lead looked at his foot and there was a small cut. The cut was very small and harmless and causing him no discomfort. So, I applied some cream to his cut and a bootie on his foot to ensure that the cut will not become harmful and cause damage to his foot. Then I pet my lead dog got back on the sled and headed home. Not thinking anything of the wolf and how he had let himself become visible.

Almost a week later I was mushing by the same spot and I remembered seeing the wolf and I remembered hearing from a local indigenous artist and storyteller. I remembered him telling our class that wolves are wise and often deliver knowledge. At the time I brushed this off just as I had brushed off seeing the wolf. However, I began to vividly remember that night. I had no reason to stop the team, I had no reason to look at my dog's feet, none of the dogs showed signs of discomfort. But none the less I felt as if I should stop and check the dog's feet. Then I began to wonder if maybe in some spiritual way that wolf had told me to stop, or maybe it had just been a coincidence. Whether the wolf played a role in the care for my dog or not I gained a great deal of respect and understanding for people that do believe in spirits guiding them along their journey of life.

I will never know what to believe. Was the wolf meant to help me or had it just been a coincidence. What I do know is that I will never think of a person's beliefs as unreasonable again. I will never forget the feeling of understanding and empathy. And how it had been taught to me in such a subtle humble way.

Sean Houghton

Dagan Boschman

My Personal Medicine Walk & Synthesis of Personal Novel with Medicine Walk

Hoping for a long, relaxing sleep, I had my alarm set planning to get an early morning start. I gathered a few cans of food, some fire starter, a change of clothes, and a sharp axe into a pack that I loaded on my back. I set out into the forty-acre woodlot behind my house with the sky clear. There were only two wispy clouds that played juvenile games on the horizon, flaunting their innocence. The shadows, long and stark, and the taste of morning dew was still in the air. The early summer mud had retreated to the shadows of the tallest spruce, where the crows called good morning to each other.

I didn't go very far out – maybe a mile through a winding deer trail riddled with ribbon so I can find my way out. My plan was to return in a day or two, anyway. I encountered tracks left from deer and moose which crossed the path occasionally. I walked until I couldn't hear passing logging trucks and the faint memories of landmarks became less reliable.

The rumble in my stomach was echoing in my eardrums by the time I cleared some brush a few metres off trail to set up camp. I had been fighting the hunger off all morning; I needed to make the rations last for at least two nights and I feared that if I had eaten at my house, I would not have left. I found some large stones that I made into a ring so fire couldn't escape and gathered some sticks and started chopping some small trees down for warmth. I started off with some slim ones to get into a rhythm, remembering how various people fell trees getting firewood with my family which made me chuckle, as I was no lumberjack.

Regardless, I continued to fall them away from me, but towards camp. Thud after thud and eventually it crashed down. It wasn't large enough to where I couldn't drag it back to the clearing where I chopped and split. I had been starving myself because I know that I get lazy after I eat, but the grumble in my stomach was craving attention, so I thought I should start to satisfy it. I worked on making a small fire that would burn out after about an hour.

When the wood was getting charred, the shadows were becoming short, but remained dark. The adolescent clouds of morning were maturing, however, gaining a slight grey colour. I rested a can of beans on the rocks, letting them heat up while I went to find something to make sufficient cutlery.

A few times when I was younger, I had encountered a meandering, crystal clear creek which I felt was nearby to where I was setting up, and I was determined to find it again after eating. I brought the empty can with me to drink from. I had been searching for quite a while when I finally found it. It turned out to be further than I had remembered, but it was well worth the wait. I was parched. I emptied the can twice and filled it a third time to take back with me when I spotted a small engraving in the stone beside the flow. Seeing the stone pulled forward a memory from the back of my mind from summers past.

“Y’know how to tell?” Tyler asked. He had a smirk on his face from the vague question, preparing his rhetorical response. His face missing its tan from winter’s depression, but his hair was still the unkempt, sandy blonde contained by the baseball cap I had come to recognize him by. His clothes were new, yet stained with dirt and grass, and his name-brand hiking shoes were untied, laces tucked under the tongue. His question caught me by surprise, but based on his grin, I responded accordingly.

“Tell what?”

“Tell if you’re good to drink the water,” he smiled, glad that I was playing along.

“Cause it’s moving,” I said with only some confidence. “Right?” I added.

“Right. But do ya’ know why it’s safe when it’s moving?”

“The water doesn’t have time to spoil.” There was less confidence in my voice. Tyler put down his pack and reached out a new, shiny bottle.

“The water gets all mixed around. No bacteria can survive. Same reason why the washing machine mixes the clothes to get them clean.” He filled up the bottle and started drinking. He was only two or three years older than me; I could never remember which, but I felt lucky he included me on those trips. “You brought that knife?”

I fumbled around in my pockets looking for the pocketknife I got for my birthday from my mom earlier that year. It had a stainless-steel blade and a durable resin handle with a wooden print on it. There were simple steel mechanisms that allowed the blade to flip out from the hollow grip almost effortlessly. I kept the knife in a bandana that I had cut apart to fashion into a pouch. I cleaned it and sharpened it after every venture Tyler would take me on, meaning it was still in very good shape for a cheap knife. I found it and handed it to him.

Tyler took the knife and flipped it open and closed while he eyed the edge of the creek. Eventually he found what he was looking for and walked over to a piece of stone that moss loosely blanketed, which he scratched away. He hunched over the rock with my knife in a position so I couldn’t see what he was doing. He motioned me over and gave me back my knife, which I quickly wiped off and returned to the pouch to be sharpened later.

“I thought that we should have a trademark,” he told me. “Something that we leave behind, so everyone’ll know we were here, y’know?” He had engraved six vertical lines roughly the same height, with a single horizontal line proceeding them. He told me I would understand when I was older, but the vague picture still made little sense.

§

After I found my way back to the fire, it had burned down to coals and the smoke floated into the quick dark that encroached on the camp. I built up the coals and put some smaller pieces of wood on top. When the darkness had been pushed back and the smoke rose higher, I lay out some of the previously discarded long grass and weeds I had cleared away and set out a

makeshift bedroll. I used the pack as a pillow and a coat for blanket and as the fire got dimmer and the dark crept back, my eyelids shut, and I fell asleep.

The morning came slow; I was used to a proper mattress, so the grass did little to comfort me and when the fire burnt out, I began to shiver. I got little sleep, and what I did get was lame. Tyler would have been disgusted in me, probably saying something like I had gone weak, and I didn't know how to prepare anymore.

The sun rose, and so did the birds. They sang their songs and gave me a welcome wakening. I ate the second can of beans I had brought, counting my blessings that the now sinister clouds hadn't broke on me the night before. My body had ached from the days work and poor sleep, but I set out to build a shelter because I wasn't going to get lucky twice.

Again, I found slim trees that I could haul without cutting into small chunks. I found a bit of rhythm during the second falling. The consistent cracks of the axe against the trunks lulled me into the dance of it. The swings were involuntary, and the power went effortlessly from my feet to my arms into breaking the log. The smooth breeze through the brush and long grass gave a tune to the beat and the grunts of every swing added lyrics. I was so entranced that the third tree fell towards me, landing on my leg. I wasn't badly hurt, and because the denim jeans made good protection, and I hadn't been cut, either. After the close call, I decided to pack the logs I had to camp, where I would begin construction.

I cut notches into one end of each log after cutting them into about five-foot lengths. I leaned six side by side on a cluster of trees at most eight inches apart, so the notches locked into the low knots and dug them down a bit to wedge them securely in place. A seventh went across the middle for extra support, which I secured with some weeds I used to tie them together. I took some brush, grass, and broken branches and lay them across the gaps to create a roof. A small gust of wind flanked me from the west as I turned to get more of the dry mixture and reset my progress. Instead of rebuilding immediately, I went to find a patch of mud that hadn't evaporated yet.

Tyler had taught me to mix the mud, grass, and sticks into flat, round bricks, about a foot in diameter, which would be a durable building substitute for in the wilderness. So, after I found some wet mud, I made some bricks by mixing mud and grass together and lay them over the logs. Before they dried entirely, I lay more dry grass over holes and patched them over with more of the mud. Tyler would normally use any extra for welding the logs in place, but I had already wedged them in enough.

I was running low on firewood and the clouds had long stopped their games and were about to fall. I didn't want to sit in the cold, so I decided to chop the rest of the wood I had gathered that morning into firewood. I lit a new fire and I put a can of chicken soup on the large rock I had been using to cook. While I let it warm up, I gathered a large pile of brush underneath the shelter and contained it with the bed spread I had used the night prior and sat down. My arms had been aching, and a bruise had formed on my lower thigh. I tried to think of something else I should do as it was still too early for sleep.

§

There were still small banks of snow around the trunks, and where it was bare, the mud would suck your foot in and cling on to try and escape the loneliness of the wilderness. The air was warm, but I wore a coat because the winds were picking up. Geese flapped their wings in formation overhead and honked their return, like they were in heavy traffic, even though the sky was clear otherwise. The wildflowers were blossoming, and the forty acres was waking up from the long winter.

“Over here!” I had been poking a stick in the thick mud, tired of searching, when Tyler called me. “I found it!”

I dropped the stick and ran to where he was calling from. He was at the top of the ridge, looking down into the valley. Several trees had fallen from the big storm a few days ago, and I used one to climb over a ditch.

“Where?” I asked after I caught my breath.

Tyler just pointed across the valley. There was a cluster of branches that held a soaking card box in its grasp. The box looked tightly sealed, but it was hard to tell. Tyler turned to me, grinning.

“Race ya’,” he said.

I got to the box with him on my heels. It was in a plastic bag, so the water did not damage the contents, but the bag was damp on the inside. I handed it to him after removing it from the bag which I put in my pocket. He carefully opened the box, and his grin grew wider.

“It’s still here.” He pulled out a yellowed, folded piece of paper and dropped the box.

I picked it up and asked, “Did the water get through?” I could tell it had not based on how he held it, but he responded anyway.

“Nope. I can still see the trail to the X”

For his birthday, his mom made a treasure hunt leading through the woods. We had already explored and found two of the others that lead to an eventual promised reward. It was getting late, but he promised we were almost finished, and I asked him how he knew.

“Gut feeling,” he plainly said.

Another map down, and still no treasure. Eventually, we came to the fifth map, but the dark was troubling to read through. We found that it led back to Tyler’s house, so we obliged.

“Last one, then,” Tyler decided.

“How do you figure?” It was too dark to see much detail in his face, but I knew he had his grin on that he wore when he was about to tell me something obvious. He loved giving me, as he called it, “life advice”, which usually consisted of things he made up or saw on television. Rarely did it offer more practicality than it does at the time, but I still treasured them.

“When you’re looking for somethin’, it’s always back where you first wanted it. The treasure will be where I got the first map.” At the time, I hadn’t questioned it, but later I had wondered why we hadn’t gone back to his house earlier for the treasure, if it was so reliable.

The rest of the walk home was filled with some light conversation. We did our best to avoid holes and mud traps on our way back. Owls questioned, and branches snapped, but I didn’t feel scared. I had grown up in this forest, and I knew what was behind those trees and shadows. I was free.

Tyler’s mom was waiting for us when we got there with a rectangle wrapped in coloured paper. He tore the paper and found a glossy survival guide with instructions for how to make anything you’d need in the wilderness. The next week, he taught me how to build a shelter in hardly a few hours.

§

I had been staring into the fire for a what felt like a few seconds, but the puddles forming around me were already half an inch deep, so clearly, I hadn’t. The roof had done a good job keeping the rain out, I had found a few holes, but could patch them easily. The sizzling from the rain on the flames had begun to dominate the popping of the lumber, so I threw on a few more blocks and the fire was busy again. Despite the erratic noise of the downfall, I could still find patterns in the drips. The branches beside my head gathered drops of rain and took turns letting the sum of the water fall into the puddle forming below. I had recited songs and stories to myself from which the words left me as quickly as they came. I dozed off a few times but would wake up, frightened from a branch break or an animal sound. The forest had changed, and so had I.

The rain gave me an excuse to rest, but I felt incredibly unproductive trapped under a blanket of mud and fiber. I decided to take a walk while it was still light enough to see and pulled the blocks of wood apart, letting the fire die. My mind wasn’t calming, but the rain slowed anyway. I tried to stay close to camp, but eventually went further and further yet. I was not paying attention to the surroundings, only my own thoughts. I had nothing to prove, being out there, yet I still felt I had to. I had to find water. I had to build camp. I had to make a fire and I had to cook my own food. I had to move on.

I got back to camp when the rain had slowed to a trickle. I tried to clear my busy mind, but the noise persisted. I started the fire again, and the sounds of drops falling on wet ground finally started to pierce the static in my ears. I felt reassured, knowing that it was coming to an end, and somehow, I fell into a heavy slumber.

§

Laying under the stars wasn’t something we did very often, but it offered a great opportunity for Tyler and me to just talk. We heard about a meteor shower that night, so we grabbed our packs and trudged our way up to the peak of the ridge. I had been looking forward to the night as I always did, but Tyler seemed off. We talked like normal, but he had no sly comments or quick jokes. And his regular grin had disappeared from his tanned face.

We set up our sleeping bags and a tent he borrowed from my uncle, and gazed at the specks in the magnificent, black space above. A sliver of the moon threw enough light so I could see Tyler's silhouette and the ground beside me. We pointed out constellations and made a game out of who could find the most. We laughed as we began manifesting our own images and stories for how they came to be. As the game was coming to an end, the sky started falling.

A hush fell over the ridge, only broken by our infrequent awes. Eventually, it slowed, and Tyler decided it was time to talk again.

"I need to tell you something." I rolled over to look at him, but he continued to stare up. "This is our last trip out here." There was only regret in his voice.

"What do you mean?" I asked. There was concern in my voice that I tried to hide, but the words just came out a little shaky.

"I mean my mom is moving, and I'm leaving with her. We aren't coming back." There was a defensive aggression in his tone as he continued to stare straight up. "At least not for a while," he finally added, slightly calmer.

I was lost for words. I looked forward to those trips and seeing Tyler. He told me he didn't have a choice and that he was sorry, but I was still mad at him. He couldn't even face me to tell me, he just looked up at the messy sky. I was expecting him to start laughing, and tell me it was a bad joke, but it never came.

The silence lifted from the forest around us, but we remained quiet. Neither of us could find comfort in the soil we had slept weeks of our lives on. Finally, he broke the silence.

"Just 'cause I'm gone, though, doesn't mean you can stop coming out here. I don't wan'na hear that you went soft. You have to be the man out here. You hear me?" Tears welled in my eyes and I didn't respond. I thought about what he told me, and I thought about what we had done. I looked at him one last time that night, and the glimmer of a single tear streak was visible on his cheek. It was coming to an end. It wasn't fair.

His snores echoed in the valley, which used to sound comforting to me, but now just drilled into my head like a jackhammer. I looked up at the tainted night sky one last time, catching the final shooting star that I wished on, but my wish never came true.

§

I woke up to a sunny dawn. I was still exhausted from the effort of sleeping, but my stomach painfully barked at me, so I opened the final can of food and ate it cold. I walked to the creek and rinsed my dry mouth. I decided I was not getting any more sleep, so I packed my things into my bag and covered the few embers left in mud to suffocate them. I left my shelter up, satisfied with my handiwork. I walked to the edge of the trail and turned towards the exit. The wind whispered in my ear in a language I couldn't understand anymore, so I kept walking.

When I got to the exit of the woodlot, I didn't look back. The sun was hot, and the now grey clouds had parted and retreated to opposite ends of the horizon. The path sucked my feet in,

hoping I would stay, but I moved forward. Birds picked at the grass and argued over the best way to find worms. With my house in view, I felt excited, even relieved. For the first time in years, treason had not occupied the back of my mind.

I am not sure what let me move on, or even it was my intention when I planned the trip, but after I left the forest, I wasn't angry at Tyler anymore. I still occasionally thought about him and the good times we had, but they were no longer tainted. I didn't feel like I was letting him down or confused why he left. I felt free once again.

English 12 medicine walk. A journey of self-discovery and realization.

The journey of my personal medicine walk takes place somewhere special to me, it's a place that brings me back to many memories and an overall tranquil state of mind. The forest is a place I have always been drawn to, as a child, and now as well. When I was younger, I always wandered throughout the forest surrounding my home and often turned to the nature-filled space when upset or deep in thought. My favorite time to walk through nature would be what I would consider to be called magic hour, or twilight, a time after the sun sets but the lights remain, this time brings about a calm state of mind to myself. This place has led me to make some thoughtful decisions and has helped me discover things about my own self along the way. Though out this medicine walk I will show my own discovery journey and how I had to overcome and make personal decisions, eventually leading to myself now.

Once when I was younger, about the age of 6 or 7 I wandered out with my sketchbook and pencil to a spot near my house I often visited within the forest, this spot was located on a ledge halfway down a riven. A constant stream of water would flow from rock apart of the mountain and down along the riven, following a set path. It was a recurring thing for me to sit there on that ledge and just draw the scenery around me. If it weren't for this amazing place, I had discovered I probably wouldn't have realized my love for art, drawing in particular. I first started drawing after I found this place, I was so in aw that I wanted to draw it, but each attempt I did at trying to recreate the scenery around me the more the picture didn't look the part, and eventually over time the place I always visited changed. This time though was quite different from other times, during that particular day I had been upset and needed time to myself. I sat there drawing, completely still, focused on the task ahead of me, then it happened, I spotted a red, fire-like flashed of fur before my eyes. A fox walked out from the cover of the bramble and wandered to the stream of water, dipping its head down to take a drink of water. I watched in amazement, keeping completely still trying not to make my presents known and draw attention to myself. The fox looked up in my direction and started walking up slowly to where I was sitting. I was terrified, the animal was larger in size than myself and I had no way of knowing what might happen next. The next thing I knew the fox was beside me, I stayed completely still, not making a sound, the fox looked directly at me then sat down not taking its eyes off me. We stayed there for quite a while before the fox got up and walked away. Right after that I immediately rushed home to my parents and told them what happened, I was so excited, but my parents had other thoughts, they told me not to go back to the forest for a while, and since we had a small dog, we had to keep them from

going out by themselves also for the time being. Although I tried to see that fox again, I never did, but I drew it in memory time and time again.

When I was younger, I was always there in that place, but now I never go, maybe because it's not irrelevant to my life now, maybe because it has changed so much, or maybe I changed so much. there is no longer a stream running through there and the place seems a lot smaller than it once was. As of now, I'm more interested in all the hiking trails that scatter throughout the area. I see many animals and I'm particularly interested in seeing foxes, I rarely see them but when I do see one, I like to think of it as a sign, like I'm coming to a crossroads, or I'm on the right path. I like to consider if I really do have a spirit guide it would be a fox. During my time in the forest hiking, I've come to realize animals respect your space as much as you respect their space. Although I am still very careful, because I would prefer not to be killed by a bear. This reminds me of the story 'Medicine Walk' and how I had connected to the main character greatly, my connection deepened especially after the part with the bear because I've had a similar experience to that, very similar. My similarity doesn't end there I've also experienced losses very similar, and I connect to the fact Franklin had always been drawn to the forest since he was a child. Something that has always weighed very deeply on my mind is death in general. Death is an uncomfortable topic for me, so as a whole, the book 'Medicine Walk' and this project, in general, made me uncomfortable, so much so that I was going to skip this project altogether, so I went on a walk to procrastinate, and remembered that time I saw a fox, this gave me the idea to do my medicine walk based off that, in that moment I realized I had to go back and do the project, because if I didn't that would go against my morals, and my need for experiences. In a way this whole project by itself is Kinda like a medicine walk.

My time in the forest and the animals I have met along the way have led me to discover my own morals, which is, what goes around comes around, and whatever you put out into the world comes back to you ten times as much. I think the forest helps fuel my creativity, and not only the forest, but life out of it as well, it is full of creativity. When I am out walking, I am always in my head, in all honesty sometimes I forget, and I get lost in it, always thinking, real or imaginary. Although I love my imagination, it has gotten me in trouble in the past, which had led me to be isolated from others. I think it's crazy how some people come to be ignorant to bullying while it happens in clear sight. So, I'm glad now that after entering high school I found a good group of friends that I can share my thoughts with and be myself around. I have always struggled with reading and writing, but I loved to do it, and once I found a good group of friends, they indulged me more and feed my creativity, and often when I create

my own written story's, comics, and animations, they are the first to see and hear about them. And one day I hope I can look back at this when I active my goal of eventually publishing my own novel and or comic, although I would never want to be an author professionally, I would like to share a part of my passion and hobby.

I believe that if it weren't for my experiences, I wouldn't be who I am today, and in an alternate reality I could be someone boring, someone, who doesn't know themselves, someone who takes the easy way out, and I don't think I like the sound of that. I'm glad for my struggles, which led me to my friends, I'm glad I never gave my creativity up and stayed true to myself and my morals. And I'm happy I had the chance to do this project and look at It in a learning way. I'm not sure if my medicine walk is over but that's okay, I hope one day I will look back at this and see myself in a different light and see my overall growth because I too want to be, "strong like grass", (medicine walk). This concludes my self-discovery medicine walk.

My Personal Medicine Walk

Anonymous

What time is it?

I checked for my pockets but couldn't seem to find my phone. That's odd, I don't really go anywhere without it. I paused in amble to look around at my surroundings.

The gray air crawled around me, thick and translucent yet cool and clear when the breeze brushed against my face. I squinted my eyes and tried to peek through the faint clouds around me. There were big tall trees all coated with rough bark. The lower torsos of their trunks were covered in soft green moss and the tops engulfed in blotches of scarlet red, apricot orange, and dandelion yellow. One big blow of mother nature and the fall leaves would be carried away by the wind. In the middle of the trees oozed sticky sap, most which had already solidified but the rest glistened in the dim light.

I took a deep breath in. A forest? Seems legit. I continued my walk amongst the foggy path. Occasionally I would look around to check my surroundings. Maybe something was lurking in the depths of the hazy fog but it was too thick to see through and so I hoped for the best and prayed that there was nothing out to get me.

What seemed like hours but only to be minutes passed by and I was still walking in this dumb forest. Well, I wouldn't call it dumb. Tall trees covered in beautiful fall colours, and fall does happen to be my favourite season. Not only that but a nice fog hugging the torsos of the natural wood. A gentle caress of the crisp, clean air as it dances around, shaking the leaves on the trees.

Who are you?

I stopped to look around for the umpteenth time. I was alone. Then the voice came again.

Who are you?

"Hello? Is anyone there?"

There's no one around you, Tino. It's just you and I. Now tell me, who are you?

What do you mean 'who am i?' That's a hard enough question as it is, you're going to have to expand a little more than that.

Who are you, Tino?

I began to walk again, gradually speeding up my pace. Leave me alone.

Who are you?

Is that all you say?

Not really.

Good.

Who are you?

I'm ignoring you now.

Who are you?

LALALALALALALALALA

"Avoidance is the best short-term strategy to escape conflict and the best long-term strategy to ensure suffering." - Brendon Burchard

I stopped my walk again. What do you want from me??

I just want you to tell me who you are.

And why is this necessary?

It just is.

Can't you just help me get out of here?

I can.

Great-

If you answer my question.

UGH.

Who are you, Tino?

I paused in my walk and sighed. I don't know. I don't know who I am. Can we not talk about this right now please?

Who are you?

I don't, KNOW, okay? I can barely remember what I had for dinner last night. And besides, I already gave you an answer.

...

Do you not know who you are, Tino, or have you forgotten?

I don't- what?

*Because I think you **do** know who you are, I just don't think you can remember.*

Why don't YOU tell me who I am then?

I can't.

You can't..?

No, I can't.

Why not? My feet slowly began to step forward and I started up my walk again.

*Because it's not my place to say. I need **you** to realize and remember who you are, Tino.*

...

This is hard.

I know.

Does it get easier?

Yes.

When?

With time, my dear, with time.

I'm scared.

I know.

You do?

Yes, and I'm here for you. Every step along the way.

You won't leave?

Why would I leave?

I don't know.

I would never leave you to fend by yourself, however, this is your own discovery. I can't tell you who you are, unfortunately you have to figure that out for yourself. It'll be hard, but I'm right here, okay?

Okay.

...

I'm sorry.

For?

I'm not too sure. Just seemed right to say.

You don't have to apologize for anything.

Then why do I feel like I do?

Guilt, love.

...

Are you okay?

No, but...

But what?

But, eventually I will be, right??

Yes, you will. Now, let's go home.

The dense foggy air around me began to clear up and I could see the rest of the forest. At the bottom of the tree trunks were blooming white daisies and blue forget-me-nots. The fluffy green moss running down the girth of the trees met with the sharp grass surrounding the roots. The wind around me picked up and I squinted my eyes. I blinked once, then again, then found myself staring up at my bedroom ceiling. I glanced around me only to see my messy room tinted violet from my LED lights. I sighed.

Back to square one.