

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools'  
Journey in Education  
for Reconciliation

*Artwork by: Sofia Roma Soria, Morinville Community High School*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4 **Chapter One: Education for Reconciliation**
- 5 Education for Reconciliation Calls to Action
- 6 Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools: Our Commitment to Education for Reconciliation
  
- 8 **Chapter Two: Our Elders**
- 9 Meet Edna and Ella Arcand
  
- 10 **Chapter Three: Thoughtful Beginnings**
- 11 Connecting Faith and Culture
- 12 Co-creating a Locally-developed Treaty 6 Blanket Exercise
- 14 Giving Us “Calls of Action on Education”
- 15 Realizing Our Goals in Year One
- 16 Living a District Pipe Ceremony
  
- 17 **Chapter Four: Learning through Literature and Story**
- 18 Sharing Stories, Sharing our Elders’ Wisdom
- 20 Edna’s Story as a Residential School Survivor
- 24 Ella’s Story: Running Away from Hobbema Residential School
  
- 29 **Chapter Five: Working Together on Student-focused Strategies for Education for Reconciliation**
  
- 34 **Chapter Six: Furthering Truth and Reconciliation through Knowledge Mobilization in Schools**
- 35 Embracing Year Four of Our Journey in Education for Reconciliation
- 37 Advisory Committee: Co-developing a Concept-based Unit
- 38 Literacy, Literature, and Truth and Reconciliation
- 40 Indigenous Spirituality and Catholicity Connections to Further Truth and Reconciliation
- 48 Inculturated Mass and National Indigenous Peoples Day
- 50 Course Development



# Education For Reconciliation



## EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION CALLS TO ACTION

Following the March 27, 2014 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report, the Alberta government stated, "In the spirit of reconciliation, the Government of Alberta commits that all Alberta students will learn about the history and legacy of residential schools, along with the history of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples of Canada " (Retrieved July 8, 2018 at <https://education.alberta.ca/first-nations-m%C3%A9tis-and-inuit-education/education-for-reconciliation/everyone/overview/>).

*Education for Reconciliation is mandated to achieve the following objectives as outlined in the TRC Report:*

- 62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:**
  - i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
  - ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
  - iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
  - iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.
  
- 63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:**
  - i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
  - ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
  - iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
  - iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.
  
- 64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.**
  
- 65. We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.**

## GREATER ST. ALBERT CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: OUR COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools is enacting Education for Reconciliation Call to Action 63, which is focused on building staff and student capacity to explore foundational concepts which are central to our emerging curriculum and developing and using developed classroom resources to understand previously omitted First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities' histories and perspectives, and stories to inform our current work with students, parents, and our local communities and partners.

We are focused on this work through two committees: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Leadership Committee. The Leadership Committee is focused on developing community and inter-agency partnerships to advocate for Indigenous Education and sharing with parents what our Board is doing to enact Education for Reconciliation.

The Advisory Committee is focused on engaging in teacher education about Indigenous Education and developing and exploring classroom resources in Indigenous Education. Both committees contribute to developing resources including a K-12 Indigenous Literature Kit and to update resources for parents and teachers on our district website.

On both committees, our elders, Edna Arcand and Ella Arcand, provide us with advice, guidance, and teachings as we meet monthly with committee members. In this picture book, we have sought to capture in words, pictures, and student art, the lessons learned from Edna and Ella. This is the first edition of what we hope will be an ongoing journey strengthening relationships, partnerships, and actions that bring us to new understandings of what it means to enact Truth and Reconciliation within our district.





*December 14, 2018*

*First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee Members, Dianne Hutton and Rob Kelly, read Indigenous literature to take literacy strategies back to the classroom.*

# Our Elders





## MEET EDNA AND ELLA ARCAND



Edna and Ella Arcand were born on Alexander First Nation, a Plains Cree community located about 29 minutes Northwest of St. Albert. Following the signing of Treaty 6 by Chief Kitaskum, Edna's and Ella's Great, Great, Great Grandfather, led the communities in the Assiniboine area to migrate to Alexander Kipohtakaw (surrounded by trees). Edna and Ella Arcand's family were, therefore, the original peoples in this area. Many of the Arcand extended family continue to reside in this area.

During Edna's and Ella's careers, they touched the minds and hearts of many people, including Barb Brochu, who was the Principal of Alexander Kipohtakaw Education Centre. Through their relationship, Edna and Ella have blessed us with their wisdom and teachings throughout our journey on the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory and Leadership Committees.

Edna and Ella Arcand are sisters who grew up in the Cree community of Alexander First Nation Kipohtakaw. As they grew up, both Edna and Ella attended residential school in Hobbema. They were separated from their siblings who did not all attend residential schools. Therefore, their growing up years were greatly influenced by their experiences in residential school. They had to rely on each other and extended family to get through what was, at times, very difficult.

Later in life, Edna pursued her passion for education and eventually became the Director of Education of Alexander First Nation Education Authority. Ella became a leader in Health Education, and she worked with Indigenous Health initiatives such as becoming President of First Nations Health Managers' Association.



# Thoughtful Beginnings 2016-2017



## CONNECTING FAITH AND CULTURE

Our Elders are dedicated to walking with us to enact truth and reconciliation through our work on the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory and Leadership Committees.

In the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2012)* report, the Canadian government defined “reconciliation” as learning what it means to establish and maintain mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. To that end, there must be awareness of the past, acknowledgment of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.

The TRC presented 94 Calls to Action that outline concrete steps that can be taken to begin the process of reconciliation, and as a district, we focused on Education for Reconciliation, Calls to Action 62-65.

As educators, we sought the guidance of our local elders in understanding Education for Reconciliation. Ella and Edna Arcand urged us “to do something” and “not just to talk about it.” Given their extensive backgrounds in education and health care in the Cree community of Alexander First Nation Kipohtakaw, they had many excellent suggestions as to how to begin this journey.



## CO-CREATING A LOCALLY DEVELOPED, TREATY 6 BLANKET EXERCISE

In the fall of 2016, we decided to write a local version of the Blanket Exercise that includes the history of Treaty 6 from our elders' perspectives. The purpose of the Blanket Exercise was to provide participants with an interactive learning experience. By re-enacting Canadian history from an Indigenous perspective, we have come to better understand that the omitted Indigenous histories are at the root of tensions and power imbalances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This powerful learning experience influenced how we chose to begin our journey as a district. All school communities and District Office staff participated in the Blanket Exercise and students across the district led sessions for parents.



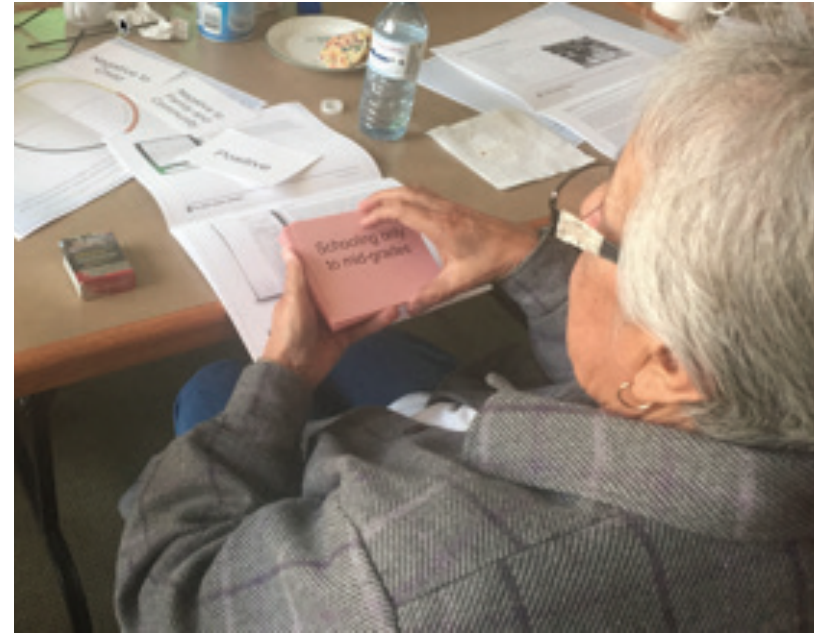
*October 12, 2016*

*Blanket Exercise for all Staff and our Partners at St. Albert Parish (basement) as led by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Committee members.*



*October 12, 2016*

*Billie Jo Grant created kits to be used by schools to carry forward with their own blanket exercises. The kits continue to be used in GSACRD schools.*



*August 23, 2018*

*We met with Cheryl Devin, our Walking Together Consultant, who worked with our elders to co-create a residential schooling session that integrated a provincial and local view of our history in residential schooling.*

In our first meeting, Cheryl sought to understand what committee members hoped to achieve in terms of professional learning. The two goals this committee set were to **build relationships with partners** and to **understand key facts with our local history of Treaty 6** to connect with our elders and each other as a starting place for this journey with staff.

The committee also advocated for having other staff as leaders to support them. Cheryl created a “Residential Schooling” session that was designed to introduce basic historical foundational concepts about Canadian residential schools and what impact the schooling system had in creating intergenerational tensions felt in our schooling system today. This session was done as a “train-the-trainer” model: two volunteer leads from each school took part in this session and then provided the same session to their own staff in the fall of 2017.

## GIVING US "CALLS OF ACTION ON EDUCATION"

Carryl Bennett-Brown and Ryan Plamondon, Alberta Teachers' Association Liaison Committee members, share in our Education for Reconciliation journey by giving us a framed poster of the "Calls to Action on Education." This poster has been hung in a prominent location at District Office.



November 15, 2017

*Carryl Bennett-Brown and Ryan Plamondon give Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools a 'Calls to Action' framed poster.*

## REALIZING OUR GOALS IN YEAR ONE

By June 2017, each of our 16 schools and District Office successfully participated in our locally developed blanket exercise. In addition, each school lead provided their school community with the Residential Schooling session that had been shared on September 26, 2017. The feedback from schools was extremely positive with 100% “agreeing” or “strongly agreeing” that the session was “important” for professional learning.

During that same time period (May-June 2017), we were excited to learn that our grant application was approved. This grant enabled us to work with committee members and our elders to develop a K-12 Indigenous Literature Kit. The work to create this resource extended into summer and is continuing to develop as we learn and grow with our students. During this time, a sub-committee worked on reading and identifying titles for the kit. One of our committee members, Billie Jo Grant, shared her Project Heart activity that was later published in a local newspaper.



**March 2, 2017**

*Billie Jo Grant shares her Project Heart literature and activities at Vincent J. Maloney Junior High School.*

Our Indigenous Literature Kit began as a collaborative project to enact our mission – to create a professional learning resource that would support educators to grow in their collective understanding of Truth and Reconciliation. One of the first steps was to share the stories of residential school survivors through elders and through multimodal texts (print, visual, digital, drama, art).

Edna and Ella requested that we “put literature in the libraries and in the hands of our students” and “share the work of Indigenous role models.”

To that end, we approached the Executive Director of the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium (ERLC), Thérèse deChamplain-Good and our local St. Albert-Sturgeon Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSL) community and applied for grant funds to develop this kit. We are now using this kit (literature and activities) in K-12 classrooms and in our School Council and Board meetings.

## LIVING A DISTRICT PIPE CEREMONY



June 21, 2017 (Left-Right) David Keohane, Superintendent; Gary Gagnon, Escapio; Barb Brochu, Associate Superintendent of Student Services.



June 21, 2017 (Left-Right) Ella Arcand, Elder; and Serena Shaw, Board Chair, celebrate at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Edna and Ella Arcand organized a District Pipe Ceremony led by Ella and Dan Arcand at "The Grotto." Administration and several students from local schools came and celebrated through prayer, food, and sharing in story. This marked the beginning of living our Calls to Action through Education for Reconciliation.





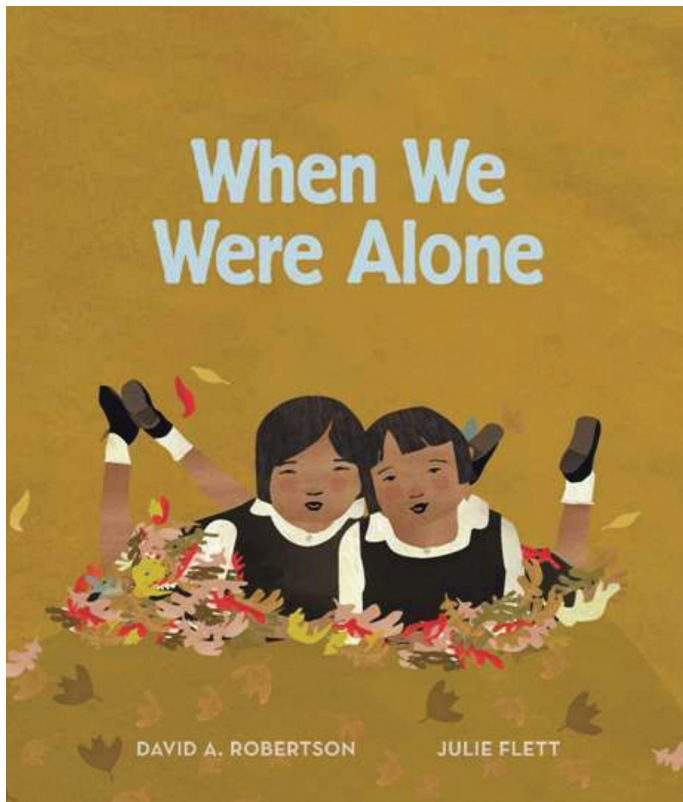
# Learning through Literature and Story

2017-2018



## SHARING STORIES, SHARING OUR ELDERS' WISDOM

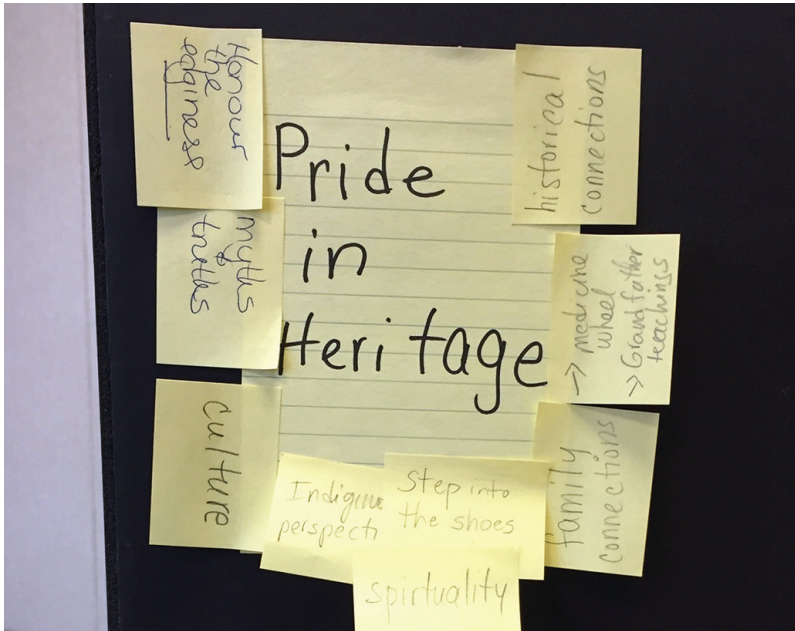
Edna and Ella have shared many personal stories with our committee and we have learned alongside them. As we have lived our journey, we realized that our meeting notes of our experiences were more like research “field notes” because they contained the words and thoughts of our elders, but few people beyond committee members would think to read them, even though they were and continue to be accessible online. For that reason, we decided to ask them how we might share what we learn from our work with them with the broader community. They returned to the picture book that they had received as a gift at the end of the first year and considered the format of a picture book to be a possible medium. To share our journey, we created this visual story in the format that you have in your hands.



*June 12, 2017*

*We celebrated our last meeting by having every committee member sign and write their thoughts in the picture book, "When We Were Alone" (Above).*

## SEPTEMBER 2017



On September 26, 2017, two leads from every school attended a session about residential schooling in Alberta. The activities involved teachers in a dynamic discussion about how residential schooling was a critical part of our history that has essentially not been taught to students.

They discussed how to bring such a session to staff and worked through activities that they felt would have the greatest impact.

For year two (2017-2018), our committee asked for more classroom activities to share with their staff. To that end, we structured a regular one-hour session with our Literacy Consultant who provided activities and used grant funds to purchase books for the schools. Our Religious Education Consultant provided prayers and other information and activities that connects our Catholic faith with Indigenous spirituality to share with students.

During our meeting on September 29, 2017, our committee experienced a Socratic discussion using *As Long as the River Flows* by Larry Loyie. Our focus question was: How can we be agents of change in Truth and Reconciliation? To enrich this reading and discussion, our Religious Education Consultant had our group contemplate how the words and images used to represent God are diverse, but also connected. He provided a way for students to experience these connections through mass at Sacred Heart Church in Edmonton.

To conclude our September meeting, Edna shared a story about her experiences in residential school and as a residential school survivor.



September 29, 2017

Our committee provided input that was transformed into a 'wordle' to highlight the goals for our work in the 2017-2018 school year.

## EDNA'S STORY AS A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVOR

Prologue: Edna's experiences at Hobbema Residential School are shared as a spoken free form poem using her spoken words from September 29, 2017.

### WE BROKE GROUND

I am a residential school survivor.  
I attended Hobbema Residential School for three years.  
We left because our school ended at grade 6  
We had to go to Hobbema for grades 7-12.  
I only stayed for three years because our Chief  
Had negotiated for children of the First Nations School to go to Camilla.  
Unfortunately, I didn't last long there.

#### **We broke ground.**

We were the first to go there.  
I didn't fit in at all. I had a lot of disputes with the white students.  
There was a lot of prejudice and I felt it.  
I lasted six months, until grade 11, and then I left.  
I never graduated.  
Maybe if I had stayed in Hobbema, I would have graduated.

#### **But that is history now.**

We prayed and prayed, and we weren't allowed to speak our  
language or to smudge  
It's because the Catholic nuns and priests were in charge of our  
program.  
But I haven't turned away from my Catholic faith,  
  
Because my mom and dad and grandparents were strong Catholics.  
So I believe that my First Nations traditions and Catholic faith  
are all the same.

#### **We are all praying to the same creator.**

We don't believe that it is our way; we pray to the same creator.  
Like I said, I saw a lot of abuse by the sisters; we got a lot of licks.

#### **We worked hard.**

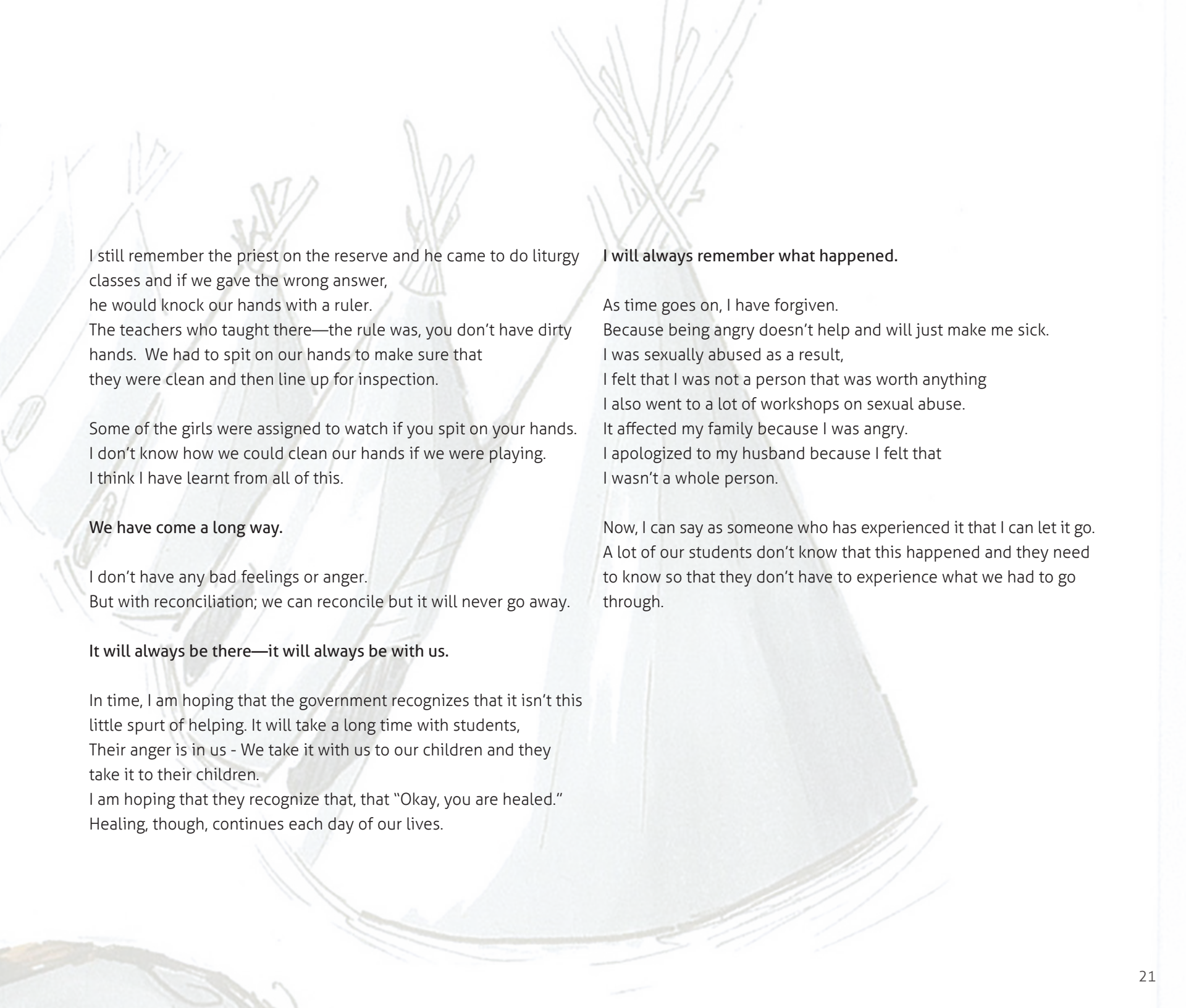
We got up at 6 or 7 and we did house work.  
We went to school and came back and did chores.  
I don't feel sorry for that part because I believe that, as I am older,  
I learned a lot there (how to cook, how to sew) and that stayed  
with me.

But, there were residential schools that our elders attended—  
Blue Quills and some down south because there were a lot of  
residential schools, so I can't say what their experiences were.

#### **I can only speak to my own experience.**

But my brother, who was Métis, he went to the one in St. Albert,  
And he attended there and he was never taught how to read and write.  
All he did was farming, learning how to milk the cows, all the  
chores on the farm.

But, I guess for him, because he, he felt that he  
was abused, it was hard for him.  
Residential school is a hard memory for him.  
He said that he saw himself as part-heathen, part-tortured.



I still remember the priest on the reserve and he came to do liturgy classes and if we gave the wrong answer, he would knock our hands with a ruler. The teachers who taught there—the rule was, you don't have dirty hands. We had to spit on our hands to make sure that they were clean and then line up for inspection.

Some of the girls were assigned to watch if you spit on your hands. I don't know how we could clean our hands if we were playing. I think I have learnt from all of this.

**We have come a long way.**

I don't have any bad feelings or anger. But with reconciliation; we can reconcile but it will never go away.

**It will always be there—it will always be with us.**

In time, I am hoping that the government recognizes that it isn't this little spurt of helping. It will take a long time with students, Their anger is in us - We take it with us to our children and they take it to their children. I am hoping that they recognize that, that "Okay, you are healed." Healing, though, continues each day of our lives.

**I will always remember what happened.**

As time goes on, I have forgiven. Because being angry doesn't help and will just make me sick. I was sexually abused as a result, I felt that I was not a person that was worth anything. I also went to a lot of workshops on sexual abuse. It affected my family because I was angry. I apologized to my husband because I felt that I wasn't a whole person.

Now, I can say as someone who has experienced it that I can let it go. A lot of our students don't know that this happened and they need to know so that they don't have to experience what we had to go through.



*October 3, 2017*

*Kaylee Taylor shared her art that was inspired by Edna's story.*

**Kaylee shared:**

The wolf howling reminded Kaylee of Edna being alone with no one to turn to for help, when she was at residential school. When the wolf is alone, it cries out because it is longing for something. When Edna was alone, she cried to herself like the wolf does. The wolf also represents Edna herself as having the courage to stand out to share her story, similar to that of a wolf howling at night and telling it's story.

The Dreamcatcher was added because it's a big part of aboriginal culture, but it was added here in Edna's story to represent hope for Edna to have a better dream than the actual reality that she was experiencing.

Don Hinks, Principal of Morinville Community High School, a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee member, brought Edna's story to his students, and one of his students, Kaylee Taylor, created the following art and shared her words about the roots of its inspiration.



*A lone wolf howls at the same moon in hopes that he will be heard.*

In addition to the sharing by the Advisory Committee, our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Leadership Committee comprised leaders from Alexander First Nation, the City of St. Albert, our Board of Trustees, and our senior administrative team. Together, they worked with our elders to share in activities to bring back to parents and to learn from them and their stories as well as students' responses to their stories.



**September 15, 2018**

*Members of our Board of Trustees attended the St. Albert Healing Garden ceremony with staff and students from our district.*



## DECEMBER 2017

As our committee continued to study different texts and explore residential school survivor stories, Ella shared one story with us that was the inspiration of two students' art pieces following this story.

### ELLA'S STORY: RUNNING AWAY FROM HOBHEMA RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

**Prologue:** Ella responded by sharing this story after hearing Edna's poem during our October First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee meeting.

I attended an old shanty of a building at Hobbema Residential School. When Edna arrived, several years later, there was a new building. I recall this time as especially "spiritual" because my grandfather, while Chief, embraced the Catholic Church. It was a time of change and tension, though, because while we wanted to please our grandfather, we also didn't like being at this school. I think what was hard for us was that no one spoke Cree; they only spoke French. So, one day Edna and I were in the church and we "swore on the bible" that we would run away. So, we had to do it (laughs). At the residential school, we got a little bit of money to buy treats, and Edna and I saved ours for our big trip.

Finally, we had enough and on the day of our "trip," Mrs. Lynch fried some bannock to take with us. She put it in a brown bag so that the grease wouldn't get all over, and off we went. It was a hard day for Edna because she had had her wisdom teeth extracted the day before, so her mouth was sore. Plus, it was cold out; I think it was October. We hopped onto the Greyhound bus, which took us to the bus depot in Edmonton. We had hoped to figure out a way to get to Wetaskiwin, but we didn't have enough money. Once we got to Edmonton from Hobbema, we followed the bus route (#124) on foot and made it to the Charles Camsell Hospital. Fr. Mercredi was the priest at the Camsell. He called Fr. Letour in Hobbema. Letour phoned the Indian Agent who went to get uncle Fred at Hobbema. Uncle Fred disciplined us - he "kicked our bums" - and took us back to the residential school.

When we got back, the boys in the dorm began to sing "The Saints Go Marching In." We had to go by the boys' dorm on our way to repent for our sins and every time we walked by, we would hear that song. For supper that night, we were only allowed to eat vegetables even though everyone else ate (I think there was a celebration going on that night, but not for us). The nuns told us that we hadn't eaten for a long time, so it would be best for us to have just a light meal and only eat veggies.

When we saw our Gramps the next day, he was hunched over with his rosary, and he asked, "Why would you do that?"

The thing was that Gramps was okay about residential school because he was twisting and turning to make things work with Father Lacombe; he knew that there was something to be had on both sides of the fence and he wanted us to survive in a healthy way. At residential school, he saw that we learned important skills—the girls learned how to sew, how to make bread, and how to can berries from the Aunties who had gone to residential school in St. Albert. He had witnessed this with our Aunties, and the only reason we went to Hobbema was that the St. Albert Residential School had closed down when it was time for us to go.

And then we stayed in residential school from 1957 until the early 60s, so we were together there for a few years. This was our experience, so there was good and bad. You can see why it is important to learn the stories because we can't speak for others' experiences in residential schools.



## MAY 2018

May 23, 2018- Two students from Morinville Community High School created art pieces inspired by reading Edna's and Ella's stories about their experiences as residential school survivors.



### Sofia shared:

My main inspiration for this piece is everything Edna and Ella were forced to go through. All their hardships. So I can't really underline any certain parts of the stories, since their courage and toughness was carried throughout. Realizing that every accomplishment and obstacle that is overcome by an individual changes them as a person gave me this idea. To be so full of forgiveness even after surviving something like that means they grew because of those obstacles. So I thought of how I could draw out two sides of a person. Showing hopefully better days versus the darker ones, including how different culture-wise it must have been for them too.

*Sofia Roma Soria*



### Morgan shared:

My inspiration came from the lines "We prayed and prayed, and we weren't allowed to speak our language or to smudge it's because the Catholic nuns and priests who were in charge of our program." This brought to mind a church-like building that the residential school students would have attended. My choice of colour (none) came from the cold feeling I imagine many students must have felt during their time at the residential schools and churches. My drawing centers on a version of what I imagine the students must have seen and felt on a daily basis.

*Morgan Brophy*



*Brooks Arcand-Paul, Ella's grandson, shares his story about becoming a lawyer with students at Morinville Community High School, Brooks is an MCHS Alumni.*

Tara Ricioppo, teacher at Morinville Community High School (MCHS) invited alumni, Brooks Arcand-Paul with the Alexander First Nation to share his story of growing up on the reserve, attending MCHS, and his passion in becoming a lawyer.

Brooks specializes in Indigenous law and shares his interest in the justice system with his auntie, Cheryl Arcand-Kootenay, who recently was appointed the first Alexander First Nation and female Treaty 6 member to ever become a judge. His visit to the school included spending time addressing grade nine students. Brooks was honoured to be asked to come and "give back to the community that helped raise him."

During our last committee meeting, Don Hinks shared a framed picture with our each of our elders and committee members also shared words of gratitude and flowers with them.



*May 23, 2018*

*Don Hinks, Principal of Morinville Community High School, gives Edna a framed picture of artwork created by MCHS student Sofia Roma Soria.*



**National Indigenous Peoples Day  
June 21, 2018**



JUNE 2018



Edna and Ella suggested that we have students across the district take part in an activity to learn more about the values celebrated in Cree culture in Alexander by engaging in an activity about the Seven Grandfathers, the teachings that Edna and Ella tried to live their lives by.

They explained that “learning about giving the gift of celebrating the value that another person brings into their lives” is central to learning about their families’ traditions and teachings. We prepared with their assistance an activity that was sent out to every teacher in our district and then we went to schools to see firsthand how students engaged in and learned about our elders.



As students learned about each teaching, they reflected on who in their own lives has helped them to connect with one of the teachings presented. They then designed a rock with the teaching on it and tied it in a pink ribbon (symbolizing the kookums giving the teachings to them as children).





In addition to celebrating our Cree elders' traditions across the district, we were also thankful to have Ella Arcand come to a Board meeting to share a rock and a teaching for each of First Nations and Métis students who won or received honourable mention for the Honouring the Spirit Awards of 2018.

**June 11, 2018**

*Ella Arcand (top) is offering the award winners a smudging, a teaching, and a rock to carry forward the teaching offered to the recipient.*

*Board Chair Shaw (bottom) offers each award winner a certificate to commemorate their achievements as student leaders.*



Working Together on  
Student-focused Strategies for  
Education for Reconciliation  
2018-2019



Our district has developed a Student-Focused version of our Three-Year Education Plan 2018-2021, which articulates the district strategies for school improvement from a student stance (written in green below). In the month of September, our committee work is advancing our key strategies to ensure that Alberta Education System Supports First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Students' Success (Outcome Two).

**Students will use the Gallup Student Poll Survey results to set goals to increase hope, engagement, entrepreneurial aspirations, and career and financial literacy.**

Our Building Communities of Hope project in St. Albert Catholic High School and École Secondaire Sainte Marguerite d'Youville is a school-university partnership to work with students to make visible sources of hope in their lives within and beyond school. Their experiences in developing visual and digital representations of "hope spaces" will be shared with others in our district community.

**Students will experience how Indigenous culture and spirituality connects with our Catholic faith.**

To connect our Catholic faith to Indigenous culture and faith, our Religious Education Consultant is introducing School Chaplains to prayer table artifacts that celebrate our Indigenous communities' identities, spirituality, and cultural connections. In the September Chaplain meeting, each School Chaplain was given a Métis sash and inuksuk. Some basic facts about each artifact were shared and discussed (e.g., the interwoven threads of the Métis sash represent the cultural sharing between French and Indigenous communities; and the inuksuk symbolizes that "someone has been here" and "this is the way"). Such connections will be visible on prayer tables and used to teach to students through religious education programming and school-wide liturgies and events. Elders and parents of Indigenous students from Alexander First Nation First Nation, St. Albert, Morinville, and Legal communities will be invited to share their histories and stories, and teachings about such artifacts.

**Students will learn how to take an active role in Truth and Reconciliation through activities shared with them through teacher professional development led within our district.**

On September 26th, our ATA Walking Together Consultant led staff through a session to take back to their schools or to lead at district-wide PD on November 9th about Indigenous Alberta and Indigenous Ways of Knowing.



Sessions like this are important to begin to prepare our staff to meet the Teaching Quality Standard (2018) that will come into effect September 1, 2019: *A teacher develops and applies foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit for benefit of all students. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as: "supporting learning experiences of all students by using resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit" communities and individuals.* We were very proud of our nine teacher leaders who have presented what they learned in our committee work about Indigenous Ways of Knowing to approximately 160 teachers from K-12 within our district. Our response to the session was excellent with all participants reporting that the sessions were "valuable" or "very valuable" for advancing their understanding of Truth and Reconciliation and how to share with students.

**Students will learn with resources (e.g., Indigenous Literature Kit) and strategies suggested by the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee leads.**

During our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee meetings, leaders within the committee share their stories as lived in their schools and classrooms and show how they are using Indigenous literature and sacramentals in their work with K-12 students and in their school communities with parents. At Albert Lacombe Catholic School, they created an outdoor-indoor classroom space with a teepee as a location for reading and gathering.



*At Albert Lacombe Catholic School, students can read or gather in the outdoor-indoor teepee.*



*Religious Education Consultant shares the connections between the tradition of using incense in the Catholic church with the tradition of smudging using medicines in local communities' ceremonies.*

**Students will learn from parents about resources and strategies about Truth and Reconciliation through First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Leadership Committee.**

Our Leadership Committee gathers stories from schools and posts them on our webpages in the form of a blog that is updated regularly for parents to see what is happening in schools with students to engage in Education for Reconciliation.

*Truth & Reconciliation  
Honouring Memories...Planting Hope*



*Neil M. Ross Catholic School, Living Wall Display*

Neil M. Ross Catholic School has a passionate group of educators who were inspired to create a noticeable reminder of the road of healing we are walking together with the Indigenous community that resulted in the development of a living wall that is visible to all. At the center of the wall is the schools' Project Heart (as seen on the tiles at the center of the plants) while the growth of the plants is symbolic of their growing knowledge of the hurts of the past and how they are all a part of the healing process.

The wall has been titled: Truth and Reconciliation; Honouring Memories ... Planting Hope. If you are ever in Neil M. Ross School, drop by the SOAR center to reflect and honour their living wall.

**First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Advisory Committee**

**Elders:** Edna and Ella Arcand (Alexander First Nation); Gary Gagnon, Escapio (Edmonton Catholic)

**External Partners:**

Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, Spiritual Director (Star of the North), John Waterhouse, Executive Director (Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium), Thérèse deChamplain-Good (Past ERLC Representative), Terry Godwaldt, Director (Centre for Global Education and Advanced Placement and College Board Programming), Phyllis Kelly, Diversity Equity and Human Rights Chair (ATA Local)

**School members:**

Kerrie Fedunyk (AL), Leah Kres (AL), Dolores Andressen (BK), Kathy Trudel (BK), Cathy Traynor (BK), Natalie Jurick (EFJ), Colette Klemmer (EFJ), Gisèle Boddez (EMP), Élodie Maunder (EMP), Carryl Bennett-Brown (ESSMY), Cammy Feehan (ESSMY), Sheila Glebe (ESSMY), Laurie Peterson (ESSMY), Annette Holterman (JJN), Scott Raypold (JJN), Bruce Brown (NMR), Cherie Brown (NMR), Sandy Klick (NMR), Brytani McLeod (NMR), Damon Clayton (RSF), Jen Heschuk (RSF), Mike Wurtz (SACHS), Hayley Zabolotniuk (SACHS), Debbie Dyer (SACHS), Angela Gauthier (SGHS), Charlotte Kirchner (VJM), Leah Albrecht (VJM), Françoise Gamache (VG), Rebecca Grams (GHP), Dianne Hutton (GHP), Cara Mazur (GHP), Shelly Walline (END), Angelle Peacock (END), Don Hinks (MCHS), Cathy Whittal-Williams (MCHS), Jason Paik (Legal), Greg Lamer (SAA)

*continued...*



## **First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Advisory Committee** *(continued)*

### **District members:**

Rhonda Nixon, Committee Chair, (Assistant Superintendent, Learning Services), Barb Brochu (Associate Superintendent, Student Services), Yvonne Stang (Literacy and ELL Consultant), Colin Loiselle, (Religious Education Consultant), Raymonde Roulston (District Principal), Laurie McCurdy (Inclusive Education Consultant and Counselling Lead)

### **First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Leadership Committee**

**Elders:** Edna and Ella Arcand (Alexander First Nation); Gary Gagnon, Escapio (Edmonton Catholic)

### **External Partners and Community Members:**

Verna Arcand, Assistant Director of Education (Alexander First Nation) Gwen Crouse, (Métis Association) Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, Spiritual Director, (Star of the North) Lisa Kruickshank, Associate Director Education, (Rupertsland Institute) Billie-Jo Grant, K-12 Métis Curriculum & Resource Developer, (Rupertsland Institute) Tanya Sharp, Parent

### **Trustees:**

Joan Crockett, Trustee (GSACRD), René Tremblay, Trustee (GSACRD), Serena Shaw, Trustee (GSACRD), Noreen Radford, Trustee (GSACRD)

### **District members:**

David Keohane, Committee Chair (Superintendent), Rhonda Nixon (Assistant Superintendent, Learning Services), Yvonne Stang (Literacy and ELL Consultant), Colin Loiselle, (Religious Education Consultant), Carol Bruineman (Communications Manager), Rudy Zacharias (Community Engagement and Communications Manager)

**Thank you to all partners and participants for walking with us on this journey of Education for Reconciliation in our school district and on our two committees.**



GSACRD schools hosted celebrations to honour Orange Shirt Day by wearing their orange shirts. Whether you walked the halls of the schools or were out and about in our communities, staff and students from the district displayed their support for raising awareness and understanding of the significance of this day.

To bring visibility within their school communities, many schools accessed the resources provided by the Orange Shirt organization including the video that shares "Phyllis' Story." In addition, some schools:

- hosted assemblies to gather as a school community,
- created school displays,
- included teaching lessons with Indigenous literature,
- offered orange ribbons to wear on wrists and,
- acknowledged the importance of this initiative with a special prayer.

# Furthering Truth and Reconciliation through Knowledge Mobilization in Schools

2019-2020



## EMBRACING YEAR FOUR OF OUR JOURNEY IN EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION

We are proud of our work on our Advisory Committee which focused on teaching for Truth and Reconciliation and on our Leadership Committee which shared with our partners to further Truth and Reconciliation. We found that these committees worked well to achieve our goals as a school division in Truth and Reconciliation. One area that we aimed to improve was related to “hope” for all students, especially our Indigenous students. We made many gains in 2019-2020 amidst a mid-year budget announcement and pandemic, and we detail this part of our journey in this chapter and provide a glimpse into those successes through examples, stories, and pictures.

### **Alberta’s Professional Practice Standards and Furthering Truth and Reconciliation**

In September 2019, the Ministry of Education and community partners worked together to develop Alberta’s three professional practice standards for the teaching profession. Each of the three standards align with and build on each other:

- The Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) describes the professional expectations for teachers who work directly with students.
- The Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) outlines the professional expectations that principals and school jurisdiction leaders must demonstrate to create the conditions under which teachers can do their best work.
- The Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS) defines the professional expectations that superintendents must demonstrate to create the conditions under which school leaders and teachers can do their best work.

The standards are Ministerial Orders, making all teaching professionals accountable for their applicable standard to the Minister of Education.

Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives, identities, histories, and ways of knowing is of primary importance to developing a collective understanding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action for educators.

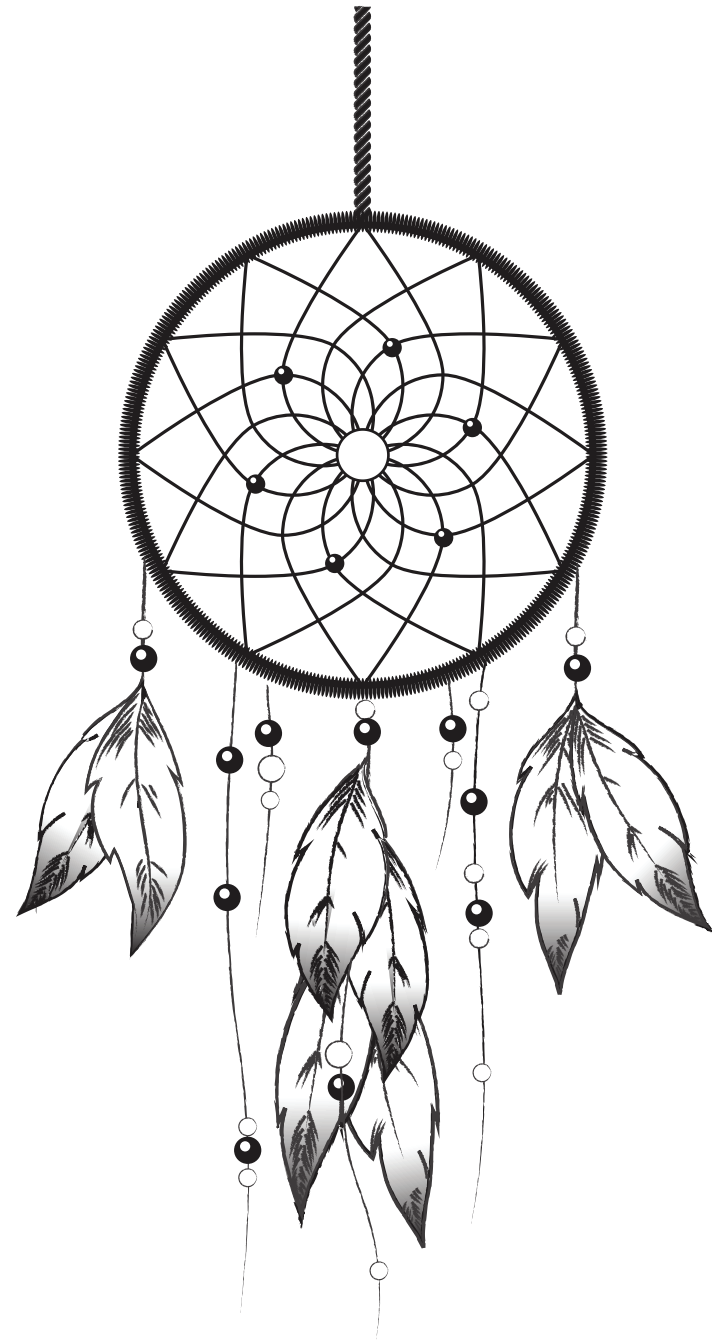


## Alberta's Professional Practice Standards and Knowledge Mobilization

As we reviewed results of our feedback from administrators and teachers about how we were doing to prepare staff for enacting the new practice standards, we found that we have successfully ensured that there was a “core group” within every school that accessed the work with our partners and our elders, Edna and Ella Arcand, through our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory and Leadership Committee meetings. The question that persisted was how best to expand this core group to involve all staff in this learning process.

We worked together with our administrators and teacher leaders to co-develop a pedagogical vision that was focused on teaching for conceptual understanding, which was foundational to new curriculum development pedagogy emerging at this time. We recognized that if we were preparing teachers to teach concepts such as “diversity”, “identity”, and “reconciliation” that teachers would be prepared to connect such concepts through newly developed K-4 programs of study. When the emerging curriculum was temporarily delayed by the government to initiate further community feedback, our division leveraged this delay by going deeper and creating a sharing component within our Advisory committee meetings to learn firsthand how every school shared what they were learning beyond the committee members. This sharing component also emerged into a blog that was posted following these monthly sharing opportunities.

In 2019-2020, such sharing was evidence that there had been an expansion of what has been developed within the Advisory Committee meetings (i.e., how to use literature to share Indigenous perspectives, knowledges, histories, and how to make connections between Indigenous spirituality and Catholicity) with all staff in schools.



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE: CO-DEVELOPING A CONCEPT-BASED UNIT

During the fourth year of our work in Truth and Reconciliation, our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee linked Indigenous Education with the Division's pedagogical framework.

Greater St. Albert Catholic School's Pedagogical Vision focuses on enacting the six practice progressions to create deeply engaged learners in a Christ-centered learning community. Teaching for conceptual understanding is at the center of our framework and designed to move students beyond traditional methods of learning by grasping big ideas and concepts in a transferrable way.

In keeping with this goal, we planned a concept-based unit to guide our work with the Advisory Committee. First, we identified concepts in the draft curriculum and the key understandings to form the generalizations in the unit of study. We organized the concepts according to knowledge, concepts, and themes studied in literature. We supported participants to engage in the strategies and skills that the participants needed to explore the same content in their classrooms. We also decided that the unit would be experienced through the conceptual lens of story as it, along with oral tradition, is considered to be a source of knowledge and an integral part of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Ways of Knowing.



## LITERACY, LITERATURE, AND TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Just as we had begun our journey with co-creating a literature kit with the involvement of partners and our elders, we have continued to expand the titles and lessons in this kit every year of our journey.

In 2019-2020, at each meeting, members of the committee experienced a literacy strategy to analyze an Indigenous text and developed their knowledge of the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, and experiences of Indigenous peoples.

Each lesson was framed with guiding questions, that in combination with mini-inquiries and collaborative discussion, led participants to the essential understanding: *Analyzing stories with diverse perspectives and experiences renews relationships and advances reconciliation.* The literature and lessons presented to the Advisory Committee were then shared with schools and implemented in individual classrooms.

## The Division Three-Year Education Plan Strategies

(2019-2022) Students will explore K-12 literature and strategies connecting to foundational concepts of the emerging curriculum in Indigenous Education through the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee.

(2019-2022) Students will participate in learning through coursework, school activities, and division-supported events that further Truth and Reconciliation and understanding of foundational concepts in emerging curriculum.

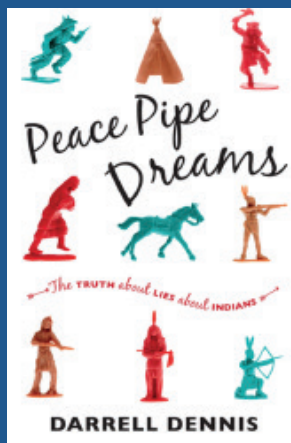
(2019-2022) A Division-wide First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Leadership Committee will provide guidance on how to engage our parents in Truth and Reconciliation using school-based resources and strategies, including elder-recommended and/or community partner opportunities.



During a gallery walk, participants made meaning of the word “story” by reading select case studies and recording their ideas associated with the concept. In groups, members worked together to draw relationships between ideas by sorting them according to how central they were and then drawing connecting lines between the ideas that shared something in common. In doing so, participants were able to articulate the defining attributes of “story” which refined their understanding of the concept and provided a lens to view and analyze a variety of text within the unit.



Participants applied the ACE strategy (answer, cite and explain) while reading *Peace Dancer* by Roy Henry Vickers and Robert Budd to garner evidence on the ways First Nations’ communities use stories to connect community to the land.



Teachers experienced a synthesizing strategy while reading *Peace Pipe Dreams* by Darrell Dennis to adjust their initial understandings about first contact, treaties, the fur trade, residential schools, and what it meant to be a status Indian. Participants accommodated new knowledge by combining the author’s ideas with their personal insights. This revision of thought helped participants revise their original understandings to consider the dangers of a single story and its effect on cultural identity and on our relationship with Indigenous peoples.

## INDIGENOUS SPIRITUALITY AND CATHOLICITY CONNECTIONS TO FURTHER TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

In our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee meetings, we intentionally connected our Catholic teachings and Gospel values to traditions and practices of our elder and of communities within and beyond Treaty 6. Prayers, artifacts, and teachings were shared through our elders and consultants, and school leads then took back such sharings to their schools.

That sharing within their schools resulted in evidence that is captured in a small way in this book. It was through such sharing that we saw expanded efforts within and across our jurisdiction to enact Education for Reconciliation.

We had focused on how best to grow knowledge and preparedness of school staff within each school to share what we were learning in our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee meetings. We were proud to see that many schools expanded such sharing through their staff meetings and by sending staff to our Division PD to further lead other colleagues in this new learning. Below are examples of how such sharing took hold in a few of our schools.

### The Division Three-Year Education Plan Strategies

(2019-2022) Students develop a common understanding as a division of connections between our Catholic Faith and the spiritual beliefs/practices of our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit brothers and sisters.

(2019-2022) Students will explore K-12 literature and strategies connecting to foundational concepts of the emerging curriculum in Indigenous Education through the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee.

(2019-2022) All students advance Truth and Reconciliation by acquiring and applying foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences.

(2019-2022) Our focus on Truth and Reconciliation furthers staff awareness of trust, respect, and understanding of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit efforts to honour cultural Strengths.

(2019-2022) Students will participate in learning through coursework, school activities, and division-supported events that further Truth and Reconciliation and understanding of foundational concepts in emerging curriculum.



## MORINVILLE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL



Grade 10 student, Autumn Auigbelle, performed a traditional dance that came from the Ojibwe people. The regalia has long sleeves with rolled up tobacco lids in the shape of cones, dangling from the dress. The sound of the jingle cones in combination with the style of dance was said to heal a gravely ill child who was the granddaughter of a highly respected Elder. For generations, many tribes across Turtle Island performed the dance to bring healing to all who watched or participated in it.





## BERTHA KENNEDY CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Peace Garden is an outdoor classroom used for circle and story time. The landscape is configured to form the appearance of a Medicine Wheel, a representation of the beliefs and values that shape the diverse worldview of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people. Four trees are planted, one variety for each direction: East, South, West, and North. Place cards with the colours yellow, red, blue, and white mark each tree and convey the stages of wellness, life, seasons, basic elements, and sacred medicines. The honeysuckle bushes complete the wheel leaving space in the Northwest corner for an archway with vines. Over the arch, a sign reading “Bertha Kennedy Peace Garden”, is written in English, Cree, and Michif. The space enhances learning and is a symbol of the staff and students’ commitment to reconciliation.

Students at Bertha Kennedy also animated faith and connected with Indigenous communities through projects including the North of 60 Project, Project Heart and the Northern Birthday Box Project. With the Northern Birthday Box Project, students were connected in a very direct way with families living in remote regions of Canada’s North where gifts and ingredients to make a “happy birthday” were very rare and expensive. Students collected and sent boxes containing food items and birthday supplies for young celebrants.



## I Introduce Myself

By Kylie Foisy

I never see BEAR  
Mukwa leaves me  
I introduce myself to my non protector, my non spirit,

Known doubt  
It pains me into a corner - it seeks me out  
And pulls me down to dirt - my eye:  
My eyes stuck in earth.

I hear Mukwa but my eyes are buried in darkness  
I smell Mukwa but my eyes...dirt  
I feel his nuzzle - soft, wet nose,  
But I remain inert

And I take another drink  
Mirror  
He takes another drink  
Mirror  
I am not myself

My spirit fettered until my bear my BEAR MY BEAR  
Can weave me back together  
With power  
My spirit bear power,  
Somewhere above.

## ST. ALBERT CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

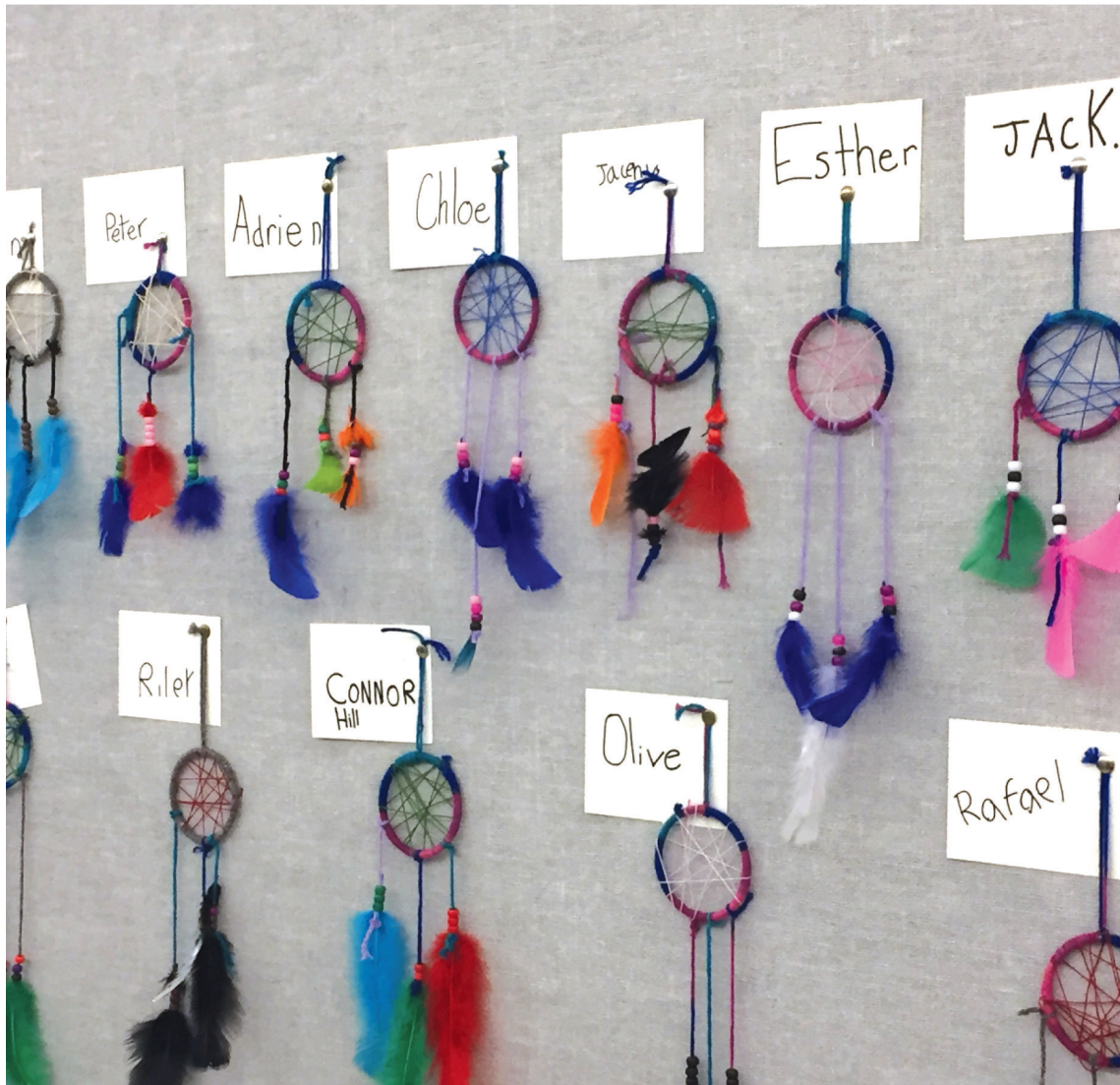
In an International Baccalaureate (IB) Theory of Knowledge class, grade 12 students explored art as a visual narrative and a tool for understanding Indigenous knowledge systems. Students began with an introduction to Norval Morrisseau, an Anishinaabe Canadian artist known for his narrative works. They analyzed selected pieces and reflected on the impact that the images, along with the artist's use of colour, line and other elements, had on the viewer. The images were then accompanied by ekphrastic poems written by Armand Ruffo. The connection between art and poetry developed students' appreciation for how art can inspire new art forms. Students chose a work of art from Morrisseau's collection that inspired creative writing to develop their own ekphrastic poem.



*Kylie Foisy's poem was inspired by the painting Sacred Medicine Bear 1974. The concept of power is central to the Ojibway belief system. Morrisseau underwent a vision quest and the spirit of a powerful Mukwa, or Bear, came to him. It became the artist's totemic spirit guide.*

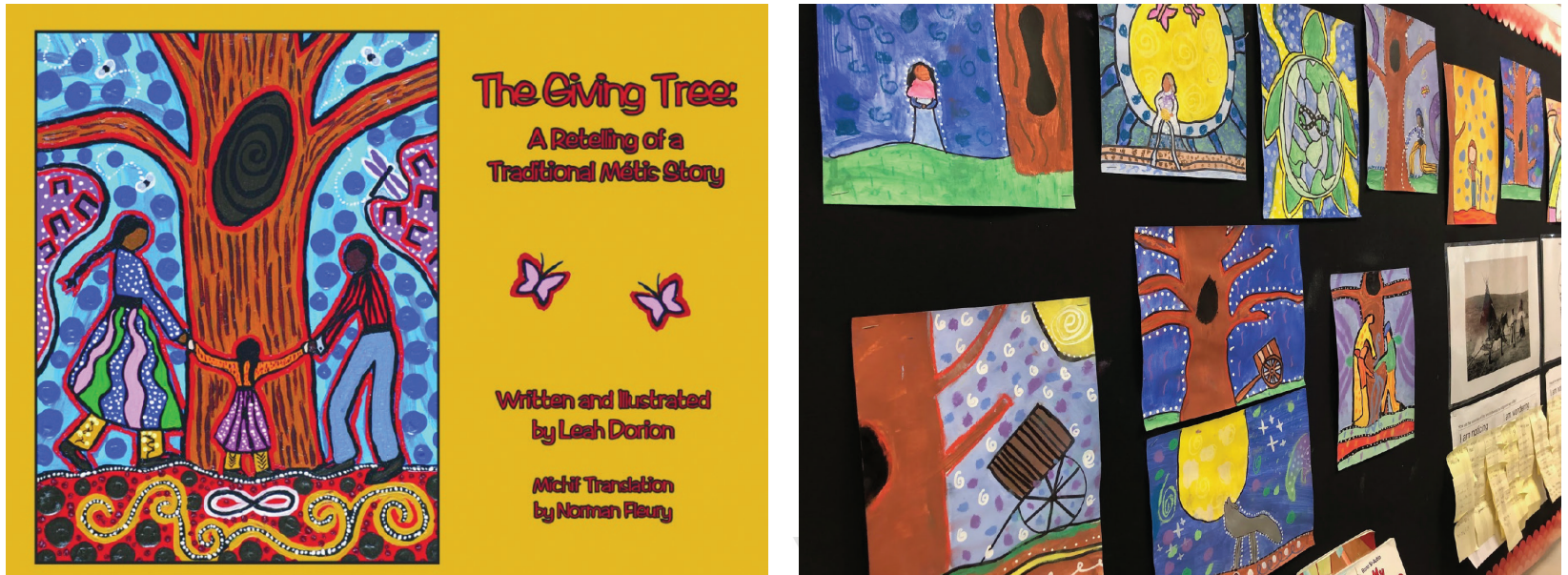
## ÉCOLE MARIE POBURAN CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

At École Marie Poburan Catholic Elementary, a number of activities and initiatives invited students to engage in foundational knowledge and concepts to further Truth and Reconciliation. By creating dreamcatchers, stained glass, tipi crafts, talking sticks, painted rocks (with Grandfather Teachings) and even bannock, students were drawn into very tangible experiences that explored Indigenous culture and spirituality.



## JJ NEARING CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Students at JJ Nearing Catholic Elementary were introduced to foundational concepts of the emerging curriculum in Indigenous Education through a number of initiatives. Grade four students explored the artwork and teachings of *The Giving Tree* by Leah Dorian, which is a retelling of a traditional Métis story.



## COCREATING STORIES OF HOPE

The idea of creating a book that documents stories of hope in our community grew from research and in response to Indigenous students' lower ratings of hope on the Gallup Student Poll. Research indicates that "hope is a predictor of success in overall well-being, a better predictor than academic achievement" (Lopez, 2014). The results of the Gallup Student Poll revealed that Indigenous students' ratings of hope were lower, specifically in their ability to set and meet goals. Further studies on youth development offered insights on the positive effects of engaging students in meaningful roles and leadership opportunities (Arnold & Ferrari, 2018) as well as profiling their work to reinforce that their identities matter, particularly those who are disenfranchised (Brokenleg, 2016). For this reason, members of Indigenous communities, beginning with students in our division, who asked to have their stories of hope documented (i.e., how they created hope in their lives) started our book. The questions posed to students during their interviews were partially focused on cultural background and included, but were not limited to: *Who influences you to learn about your culture? How do others' histories, stories and life experiences generate hope for others? And how are you a model and witness of hope?* Although this project is a work in progress, the interviews conducted thus far have illuminated the individuals' stories of coming to know their cultural backgrounds through the eyes of their Kokums and knowledge keepers in their communities. While other results were coming to light, we save expansion of these themes for our next chapter, when our research will be complete.





Morgan Brophy is a First Nations grade 11 student attending Morinville Community High School. When asked to define hope, she stated, "It is when you're looking forward to the future." Morgan's hope is for humanity, that we can come together and work to rebuild what was broken. She hopes that her culture will be acknowledged as a positive part of Canada's identity that is thriving and not merely surviving. Morgan's inspiration comes from the resilience of Indigenous peoples, including members of her family who attended residential schools and the grandchildren, like herself, that are impacted by the intergenerational trauma and disparity of those who survived. Morgan believes the first step to reconciliation is to bring awareness of the past and to celebrate the beauty of First Nations culture so that it has meaning, respect, and reverence. If not, she says, "we run the risk of history repeating itself." Morgan is not a repeater of the past, but rather looks for a new storyline; she is a new storyteller and an author of life.



Emma de Guerre is a grade 8 student at École Secondaire Sainte Marguerite d'Youville. This year, Emma and her father embarked on a journey in search of their cultural identity and traced their descent to First Nations Métis heritage. Genealogical research revealed that Emma's "great-great-great-great grandfather was Pierre St. Germain", an acclaimed Métis hero of the First Franklin Expedition. Aside from her family's history, Emma says school influences her to learn more about her culture. She grows in her understanding of Métis heritage through literature that reflects the perspectives of her ancestors. When asked what she likes best about her life, Emma felt privileged to say she has enjoyed every aspect of it, and in the same breath, acknowledged that Indigenous people throughout history have not been so fortunate. In the spirit of reconciliation, Emma believes it is important to honour the history of residential schools as part of the curriculum to promote trust and understanding which will pave the way for a hopeful future. With her positive and friendly disposition, Emma wishes to inspire hope in others.



## INCULTURATED MASS AND NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

In 2019, our division celebrated our first Inculturated Mass, in which representatives from every school and our division office participated in St. Albert Parish on June 19, 2019. Father Susai presided, and he supported us by inviting members of Treaty 6 First Nations drummers and dancers who brought together Indigenous traditions within a Catholic mass. This ceremony was a beautiful example of our vibrant partnership with Treaty 6, our Elders and knowledge keepers, and our Métis families, and Métis staff from Rupertsland Institute.

Edna Arcand asked that we continue this tradition yearly, and, in 2020, our plan to continue it was halted by the pandemic. We were encouraged by the Government of Canada to consider the following message:

*Due to the seriousness of the COVID-19 crisis, the Government of Canada invites Canadians to celebrate this year's National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day at home. Keep yourself, your family and your community safe by following instructions from health officials and other trusted, reliable sources. (Retrieved on July 13, 2020 from <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013248/1534872397533>).*

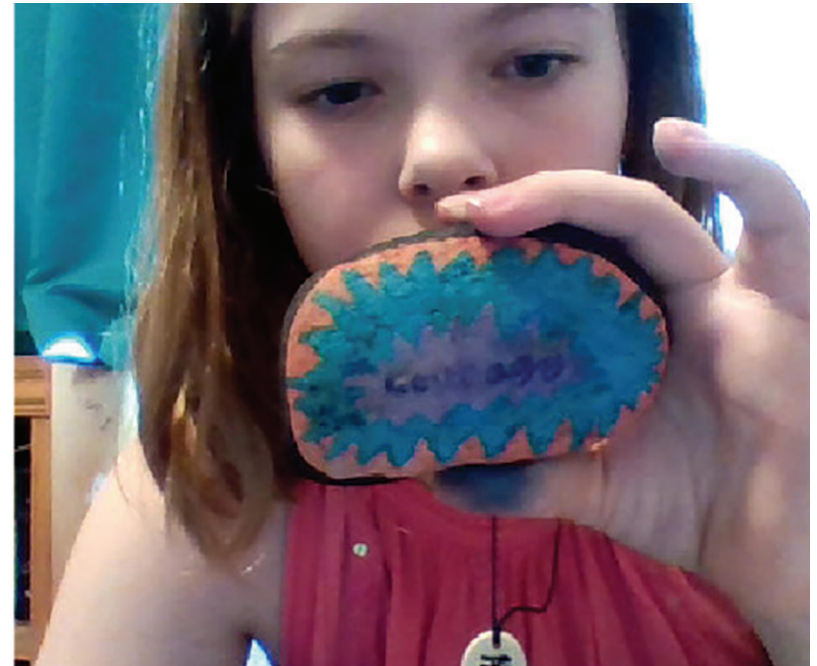
Given that we could not proceed with an inculturated mass in 2020; instead, we worked with our Advisory Committee to prepare planned activities that could be carried out the week of National Indigenous Peoples Day. All of our schools embraced these activities and were innovative about furthering Truth and Reconciliation in many ways. Some examples follow and are a small sampling of what we experienced in our division communities.



## ÉCOLE G.H. PRIMEAU CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

On Monday, June 22, 2020, the school principal described how students were invited online to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day. They met with their homeroom teacher via Google Meet, and all homerooms began with a four directional prayer, in which students were asked to face east, south, west, and north to celebrate creation and the beauty in all things as sacred gifts from Mother Earth. Students were then led in an activity to recognize the Seven Grandfathers' Teachings Activity reflecting the seven teachings defining Cree heritage and values. Students were asked to think of a person who taught them one of the seven teachings. Students were encouraged to design and paint a rock using the words and images.

Students were then encouraged to give a rock to the person that helped to teach them about this value.



## ÉCOLE FATHER JAN CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The school principal described activities that staff had prepared to work on with children in class and at home. One example was about the Medicine Wheel.

### Majorville Cairn and Medicine Wheel




**Learning about Sacred Places in Alberta**

Majorville Cairn and Medicine Wheel is about 5000 years old, situated near Vulcan Alberta. Some people believe that the site to be Native American sundial or possibly an ancient burial place. Lots of rocks are placed beyond the circle.

By a grade 4 student

Majorville Cairn et la Roue Médicinale sont un lieux sacrés avec des roches abondantes. Ce site est situé dans la région éloignée du comté de Vulcan. Ils estiment qu'il a environ 5000 ans. Des rayons rocheux rayonnent vers l'extérieur jusqu'au cairn central. Des offrandes peuvent être trouvées placées dans des arrangements de pierres environnantes. Par un élève en 4e

Here are various activities you may wish to do throughout the week.



**Le Sud (South)**  
L'été (Summer) <https://summersolsticefestivals.ca/>  
(workshops and live virtual activities)

**La Terre (Earth)** <https://www.eipfestival.ca/>  
(What is up in Edmonton?)

**L'herbe douce** (sweet grass) <https://youtu.be/zSjXh52dSI>  
(explanation about the symbolism of sweet grass)

**La santé physique** (Physical Health) <https://www.inuksite.com/>  
(games in French and in English)

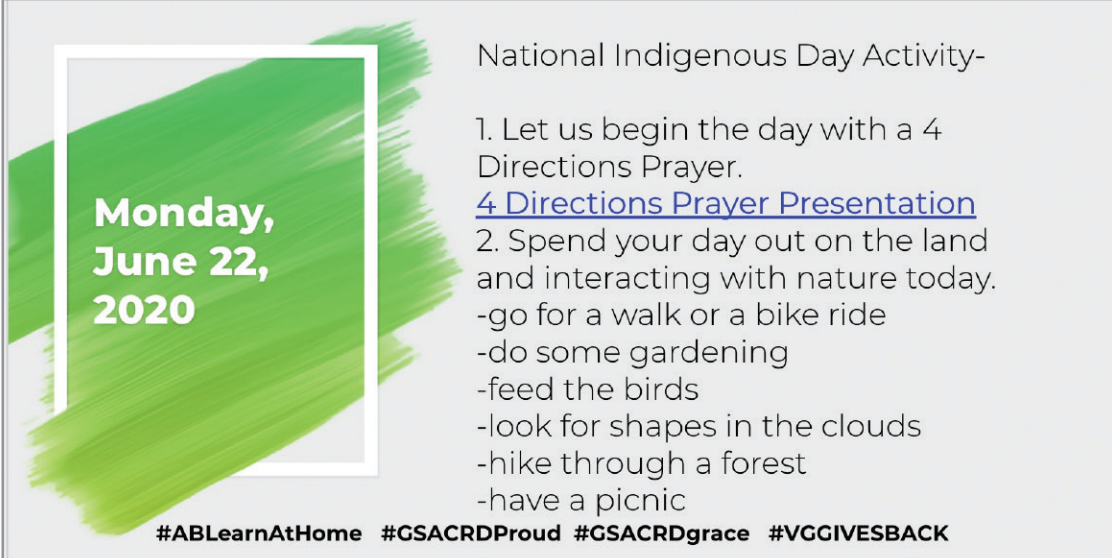
**L'adolescence et la jeunesse** (Adolescence and youth) <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1302795811383/1534949002037>  
(games, activities to do with kids)

## ÉCOLE MARIE POBURAN CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The school principal had David Bouchard present his new children's book in French (*On apprend du soleil — We Learn From the Sun*) to all of their students virtually, via Google Meets, as a major activity. He presented to the students during the week of June 15-19. David Bouchard's sharing of his background and the meaning of the story through his presentations of his book, in French, was thoroughly enjoyed by our students. Our Kindergarten Team also highlighted this with a special prayer, by sharing resources with the families and inviting them to make bannock as a family.

## VITAL GRANDIN CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The administrative team shared their school had devoted a day to National Indigenous Peoples Day 2020. All of the teachers in the school shared an outdoor activity that families were to do as well as engaging in the Four Directions Prayer with their children. In addition, each family was provided with a slideshow about National Indigenous Peoples Day that was a celebratory and information piece.



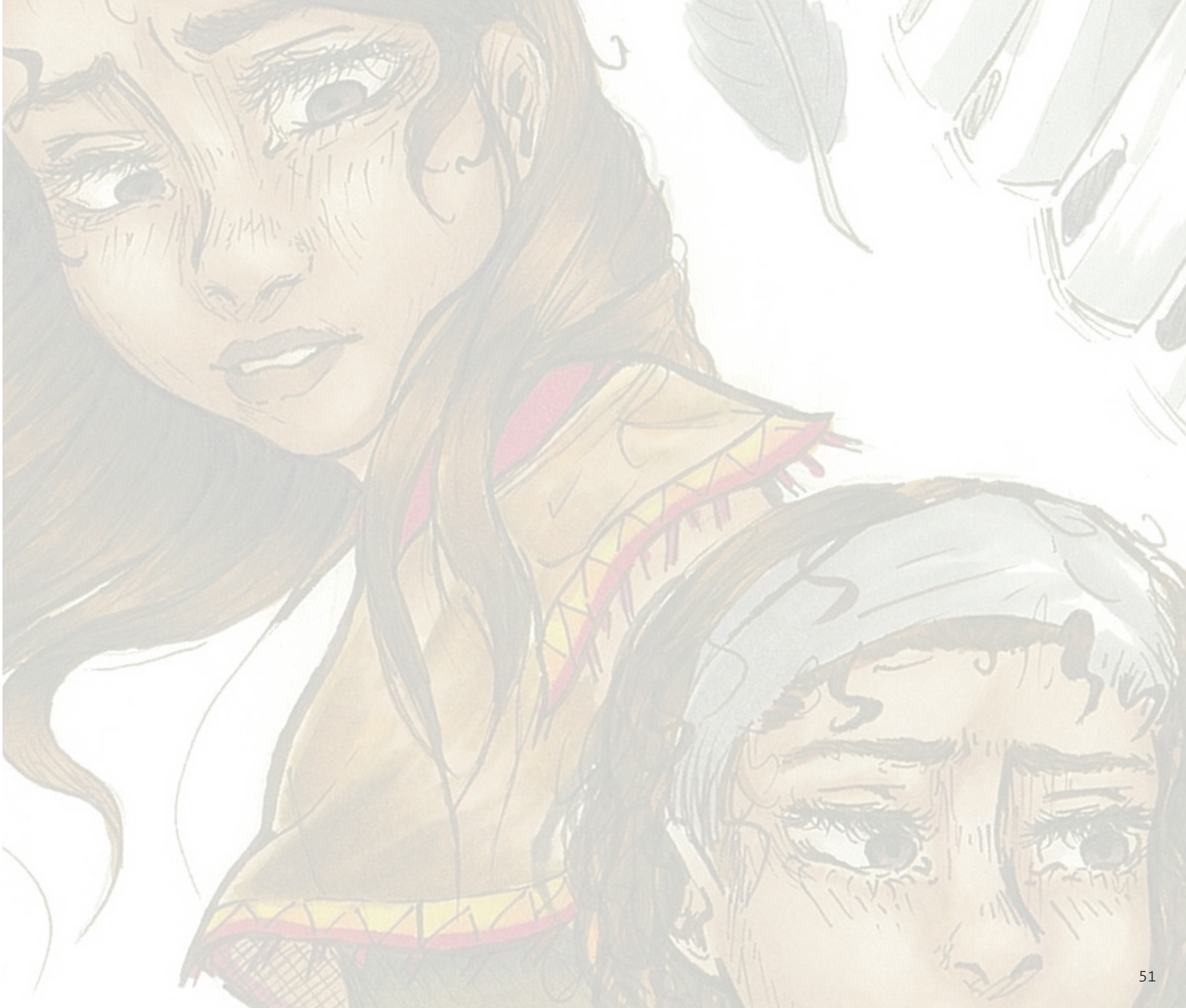
National Indigenous Day Activity-

1. Let us begin the day with a 4 Directions Prayer.  
[4 Directions Prayer Presentation](#)
2. Spend your day out on the land and interacting with nature today.
  - go for a walk or a bike ride
  - do some gardening
  - feed the birds
  - look for shapes in the clouds
  - hike through a forest
  - have a picnic

**#ABLearnAtHome #GSACRD Proud #GSACRDgrace #VGGIVESBACK**

## COURSE DEVELOPMENT

We recognized the need to write locally developed courses from K-12 to embed our Catholic worldview into the work being done in classrooms to further Education for Reconciliation. We have completed the K-6 and 7-9 courses, which were approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2020. We look forward to furthering our committee work to carry forward what has been a fruitful four-year journey furthering Education for Reconciliation in our school jurisdiction.





**For more information, contact us**

6 St. Vital Avenue St. Albert,  
Alberta, Canada T8N 1K2

**T:** 780.459.7711  
**F:** 780.458.3213

[gsacrd.ab.ca](http://gsacrd.ab.ca)

**Greater St. Albert  
Catholic Schools**

