

Using Technology to Teach

Barriers to Learning

USAY's Language Event

NEW ★ TRIBE

MAGAZINE



**RECLAIMING
OUR
INDIGENOUS
LANGUAGES**

**A look into
language
loss and the
revitalization
initiatives that
are gaining
momentum**

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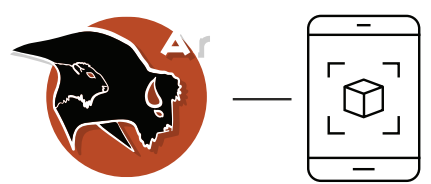
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About The Cover



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NEW ★ TRIBE

New Tribe Special Edition 12 Reclaiming Indigenous Language

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Disclaimer
The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the writers and not necessarily those of USAY (the publisher). The publisher accepts no liability or responsibility for plagiarism in the works in this magazine, all writing is presumed to be the original work of the writers.

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Special Thanks
USAY would like to thank everyone who helped make this project possible and the members of our Youth Creative Team for their hard work and dedication to New Tribe Magazine.

Alternate Nouns Disclaimer
USAY recognizes that this document contains a number of different nouns when referring to the original inhabitants of Canada. While our preferred noun at USAY is Indigenous, USAY recognizes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis as Indigenous People, we also honour and respect the writing and preferences of our contributors therefore have not made adjustments to their choices. We endeavour to not offend any individuals or groups with this decision.

NTM is a publication distributed free throughout the city of Calgary and beyond. NTM's mission is to promote a positive outlook on Indigenous people living in an urban setting by promoting information sharing within the Indigenous and youth communities.



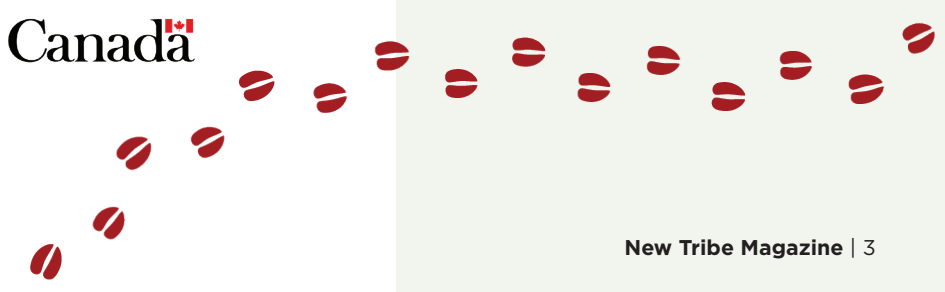
About USAY
The Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY) is a not-for-profit charitable organization located in the heart of Calgary. By nurturing self-empowerment and fostering healthy collaboration and communication USAY strives to enrich the lives of all urban Indigenous youth to ensure healthy future generations. USAY provides free services and programs to Calgary's Indigenous youth.

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Blessing

Blessings for Indigenous Languages

Always keep the language strong in your heart,
kinship to keep the family close,
practice speaking your Indigenous languages,
seek the ancient knowledge,
and keep the connection to our ancestors,
open your mind to the old ways of knowing,
we will carry our teachings through our traditional ways
and speak them proudly and uphold all the blessings in the way
our relations would share, it's expression - language is what
connects people, the traditional languages can be shared from
Elders to the little ones, it is the specific essence of the people.
to stay connected with our families, our tribal connections,
to the land, and all the universal concepts of the old ways
we reach out and thank the ones who went before us,
our Indigenous languages are special, and vital too
to connection to all things in the Great Circle of Life,
practice speaking your Indigenous language.

In gratitude
Love, light and laughter

Shared by Elder Shirley Hill (Anatsipi'kssaakii)





NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

While it is heart wrenching to share the facts about language loss due to colonization, it is exhilarating to discover that there are countless groups and individuals working on Indigenous language revitalization initiatives, many of them are featured in the pages of this Special Edition. The reclaiming of Indigenous language is taking many forms and reaching audiences across many stages including through technology.

We began the journey of this magazine by asking people about their own history and feelings surrounding their Indigenous language, we gathered their stories and encapsulated them into our theme statement: *In this Special Edition of New Tribe Magazine we aim to share information about Indigenous language, including the tragic history behind the loss of language due to colonization.* We will share how, through

years of perseverance, languages that were once close to extinction have been retained and how through revitalization initiatives and the continued desire to make our ancestors proud, feelings of sadness and shame that once surrounded the use of Indigenous language are being transformed into feelings of strength and honour.

From winter counts to chatbots, Instagram account recommendations to interactive learning tools, we hope this issue of New Tribe Magazine really speaks to you.

Stacey Carefoot
Executive Editor
New Tribe Magazine
Pronouns She/Her



GREETING FROM USAY

Welcome to the latest edition of New Tribe Magazine where we delve into the heart of Indigenous languages, exploring efforts to protect, restore and revitalize them in the face of destructive colonial practices.

The pages of New Tribe Magazine will unfold stories that chronicle the perseverance of our communities, showcasing how languages, once on the brink of extinction, have been retained through the unwavering commitment of Indigenous peoples. It is a testament to the enduring spirit of our communities and Elders, and the profound connections we maintain with our cultural knowledge.

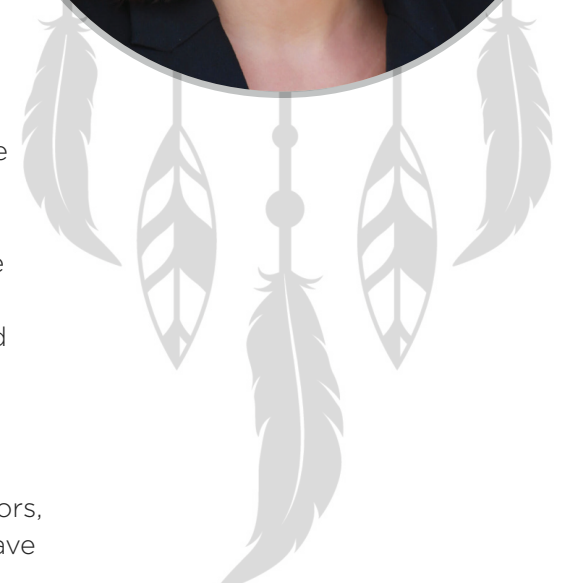
Through revitalization initiatives, we witness a transformative journey. This edition aims to celebrate this transformation, highlighting the power of cultural resurgence and the vital role language plays in shaping our identities.

As we navigate the stories within these pages, may we find inspiration, understanding and a sense of pride in the beauty of our languages. Together, let us embrace the richness of our culture and amplify the voices of those who have dedicated themselves to language revitalization.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the contributors, writers, and artists who have poured their passion into this Special Edition. Your dedication ensures that the legacy of our languages continues to thrive.

USAY invites you to become part of our 'New Tribe' and join us on this journey as we discover Indigenous language revitalization together.


LeeAnne Ireland
Executive Director, USAY
Pronouns She/Her



THE HISTORY OF TURTLE ISLAND'S INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND LOSS



By Julius Hirsch

Language is synonymous with identity, sovereignty and culture. This notion holds significance, especially among oral-based societies. Since time immemorial, Indigenous people inhabiting Turtle Island (North America) have developed sophisticated dialects that adequately describe all aspects of life and the observable universe. Prior to European contact, Indigenous peoples strictly relied on oral traditions, as they were the pinnacle of ceremonies, songs and creation stories. Oral traditions set the standard of living for future generations, giving young people direction and societal standards. The loss of language subsequently damages culture, identity and the sovereignty of any society.

The introduction of European settlers into Northern America depleted over half of all spoken Indigenous languages.

European Colonization

According to the Indigenous Foundation, prior to the arrival of Europeans, it was estimated that

300 languages were spoken among nearly 11 million Indigenous people on Turtle Island. The advent of Christopher Columbus in the late 15th century marked the beginning of the demise of millions of Indigenous inhabitants. When the Europeans migrated to Turtle Island, they brought with them a variety of diseases. These illnesses surfaced quickly, aggressively expanding throughout the continent. Diseases such as measles, chickenpox, influenza and pneumonia are estimated to have killed 95 per cent (over 10 million) of all Indigenous people in Northern America. Numerous communities were destroyed in this mass annihilation, leaving certain nations with only indirect descendants. The result of these illnesses has caused the eradication of approximately 150 Indigenous languages, they are lost forever. Furthermore, the spread of infectious diseases paved the way for future colonization efforts, largely weakening pre-colonial military powers in some regions.

Following the migration of the French, British and Spanish into Northern America, surviving Indigenous nations were seen as a hurdle for colonial expansion. Economic opportunities such as gold mining, logging, hunting and commercial agriculture propelled settlers to continuously migrate inland, increasing contention with Indigenous peoples. Dubious treaties were negotiated as early as the 1700s, which settlers immediately violated following their ratification.

Colonial settlers felt obligated to Christianize and civilize Indigenous people, ultimately assimilating them into Euro-American society. These objectives were executed by way of armed conflicts, illicit whisky trading and intentional biological warfare. Following these assimilation efforts, Indigenous peoples were coerced to live on reservations where all nation members were denied freedom of movement, discouraging them from practising a hunting and gathering lifestyle.

Loss of Language

By the 19th century, colonial governments on Turtle Island aimed for the complete eradication of Indigenous identity, sovereignty and culture. Religiously operated educational institutions emerged across the western hemisphere, aiming to assimilate Indigenous youth into settler communities. Stemming from the 1800s, kids as young as seven were forcefully removed from their homes and placed in reform-style institutions. Children were brutally penalized for speaking their language and often faced loss of life and physical, emotional and sexual abuse from educational staff. Furthermore, children were vigorously indoctrinated into Catholicism, having their hair cut and receiving biblical names. The forceful

"According to the Indigenous Foundation, prior to the arrival of Europeans, it was estimated that 300 languages were spoken among nearly 11 million Indigenous people on Turtle Island."

apprehension of children permanently damaged native languages, greatly reducing the number of Indigenous language speakers. A majority of those who survived residential schools ceased to speak their language, hindering future generations from naturally inheriting it. Despite the tremendous loss of life and continuous colonization efforts, Indigenous people have displayed their resiliency, over 150 languages survive in the 21st century.

According to official Canadian census records, Indigenous languages are primarily categorized into twelve groups. These groups include the Inuit, Algonquin, Athabaskan, Siouan, Salish, Tsimshian, Wakashan, Iroquoian, Michif, Tlingit, Kutenai and Haida language groups. Furthermore, between the United States and Canada, over 630,000 Indigenous people (260,000 in Canada and 370,000 in the U.S.) can speak their language well enough to hold a conversation.

About The Writer



Julius Hirsch is a third-year undergraduate student majoring in history at the University of Calgary. He is a member of the Northern Piikani Nation. His father, Jason Hirsch, is Hispanic and German from Danville, California. His mother, Heather Crowshoe, is Northern Piikani from Brocket, Alberta. Born and raised in Calgary, Hirsch served in the Canadian Armed Forces as an infantry reservist for seven years following high school and has spent a large part of his life on his grandfather's land on the reserve, around Elders and community members. He is motivated to preserve Indigenous heritage and oral traditions. He was a youth member of the Neepomakeeks (chickadee) society and was raised learning creation/Napi stories from the matriarchs in his family. His upbringing and exposure to oral stories inspired Hirsch to pursue work in the history field where he is currently employed at Fort Calgary as the programs facilitator where he strives to educate visitors about post-colonial Blackfoot and 19th to early 20th century southern Albertan history. In his spare time, he volunteers with the Mustard Seed and the Drop-in and Rehab Centres in Calgary and keeps active by training in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and going on runs.

Dr. Kevin Lewis is helping to RECLAIM INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES from Saskatchewan to Neverland and beyond.

By Sissy Thiessen Kootenayoo

It is no secret that sending over 150,000 Indigenous children to Residential Schools over the span of 100 plus years led to mass loss of traditional languages.

Through our Elders we have learned that there were hundreds of Indigenous languages spoken across Canada before contact. As of March 2023, Statistics Canada reports less than 80 being spoken today.

Dr. Kevin Lewis, a Cree Language Keeper, instructor, researcher and University of Saskatchewan director of culture, recently shared what is being done to counter this loss, including within his home of Ministikwan Lake Cree Nation, SK. "We are changing that narrative, it [language loss] was a motivator at one time. But that's not true anymore."

In 2023, a survey was sent home through the school system and 99.9% of the responses indicated that families were in support of traditional language and cultural teachings, this support led to the development of a Nêhiyawêwin (Cree) immersion program for preschool and grade one students, which led to record-breaking scores on provincial achievement tests in English, reading comprehension, writing and mathematics for those same students once they entered grade two.



Photo Credit: Chelsea Laskowski

The secret?

"All we did was teach the kids both English and Cree."

Dr. Lewis shares that the continued success for the survival and resurgence of Indigenous languages included the creation of land-based learning schools and programs, such as his land-based culture and Cree camp Kanâiyâsihk as well as integrating the use of technology.

"I am totally both with technology and tradition because it's moving so fast, what's AI going to mean for this," he says.

Dr. Lewis shared that COVID brought the technological tool of Zoom as a replacement for standard classroom or land-based language teaching. He shares that there's almost a gravitational pull that increased the demand for programming and language classes.

"All we did was teach the kids both English and Cree."

"There are families out there who went through the 60s scoop, residential school etc. and when they hear language is being taught, they gravitate toward it, because they never had the opportunity and they take full advantage," says Lewis.

Lewis points to the Apple App, Picture This, that allows youth, adults, Elders and Medicine People to work together to map photos

Alyssa Wapanatâhk, who plays Tiger Lily in Disney's *Peter Pan & Wendy* is a member of the Bigstone Cree Nation. She was coached on set by Dr. Lewis.



and locations of medicines in his community. "It's really awesome to see kids and adults asking Elders the traditional names and uses of the medicines through this project," says Lewis.

Dr. Lewis also shares that big moves and big things are coming for Indigenous language speakers

as far-reaching as Hollywood. Lewis served as a consultant during the production of Disney's new live action movie *Peter Pan & Wendy* including assisting the actress who plays warrior princess Tiger Lilly with incorporating Cree language into the script.

EMBRACING INDIGENOUS CULTURE

*My Personal
Journey*

By Genna Hunt

My name is Genna Hunt and I live in Treaty 7. Growing up, I faced challenges due to a learning disability and a lack of connection to my Indigenous language. Today, as I reflect upon my journey, I realize how difficult it is to learn my language now. Had I been given the opportunity to embrace it during my childhood, it would have likely been much easier.

As a child, I was unaware of the diverse languages and communication methods among different Indigenous tribes. Instead, my education primarily focused on French Canadian roots, neglecting the original languages and cultures of the Indigenous people who are the true roots of this land. It is disheartening to realize that there are limited resources or connections to Indigenous languages within the school system.

Although some schools have introduced Indigenous culture programs, I found that these efforts often

lacked authenticity, failing to establish genuine connections to the culture, Elders and opportunities for reconnection. I also believe that these programs should be introduced at a young age to foster a real understanding and appreciation of our Indigenous heritage.

I understand that mandating Indigenous language education may not be feasible, however I firmly believe that every child should have access to learning their Indigenous language according to the Treaty they are on and the Nations in their region.

The incorporation of Indigenous language and culture into our daily lives can be an easy way to reconnect. Translating or renaming streets, signage, and other public information would create a more inclusive environment. By incorporating

Indigenous perspectives in education, we can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of our heritage, ultimately breaking down these barriers and promoting unity.

As Indigenous individuals, it is essential that we raise our voices and advocate for the incorporation of Indigenous language and culture in education, whether it means engaging with politicians, seeking support, or exercising our right to vote, our collective voices can drive meaningful change in our communities. By raising awareness and fighting for the preservation and appreciation of our Indigenous heritage, we can create a more inclusive society that embraces and honours our Indigenous culture and languages.



“As Indigenous individuals, it is essential that we raise our voices and advocate for the incorporation of Indigenous language and culture in education...”

HAND TALK

By Terry Hachey-Collins

Since time immemorial Indigenous people have used the art of hand talking to communicate. Whether it was because they did not share the same oral languages as other nations or because they had to remain silent during a hunt, hand talking was an integral part of our Indigenous ancestors' lives.

Hand talk has four essential components: hand location, movement, shape and orientation and is sometimes known as Plains Indian Sign Language (PISL). The building blocks are approximately 4,000 basic words that when strung together form a vocabulary.

Like oral languages and dialects, hand talk can be unique to families and like other Indigenous languages hand talk was nearly decimated by colonization.

For more information check out the book *Hand Talk: Sign Language Among American Indian Nations*.

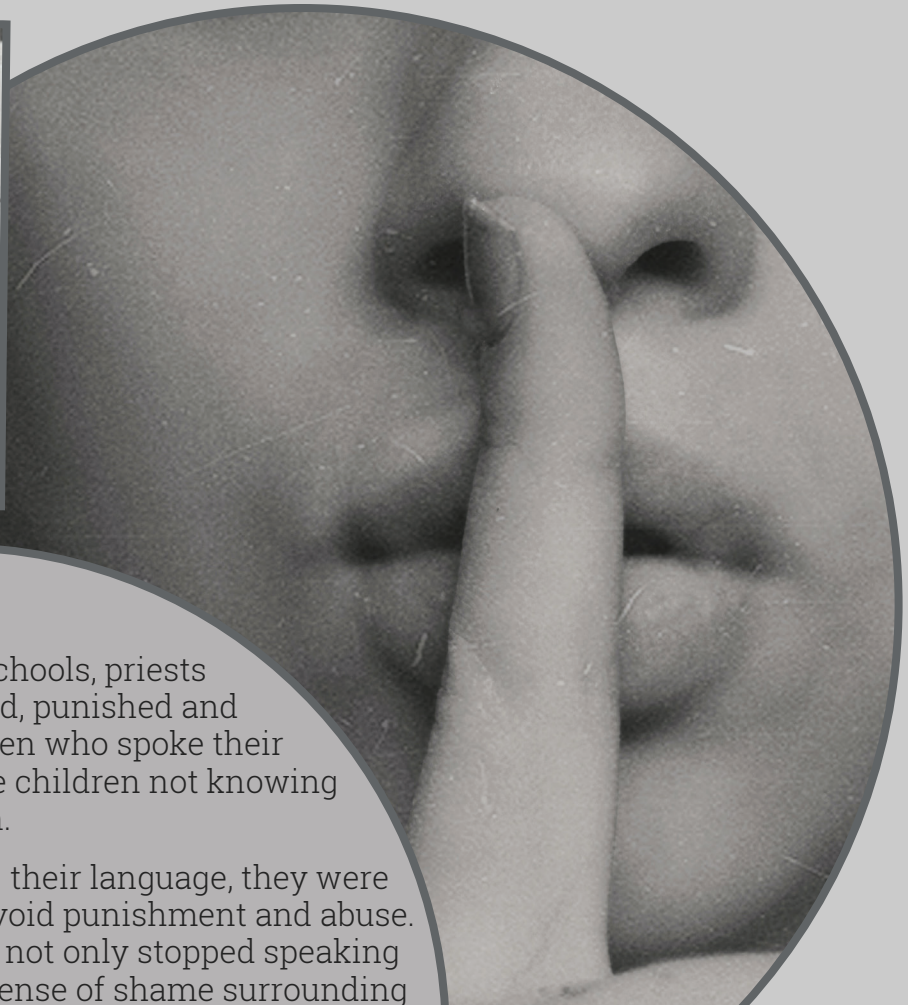


Check out a video exploring Indigenous hand talking

LOSS OF LANGUAGE

ANOTHER DEPLORABLE RESULT OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

By Lazaya Villeneuve



Within residential schools, priests and nuns often shamed, punished and abused Indigenous children who spoke their language, despite some of the children not knowing English.

Many children stopped speaking their language, they were taught it was bad and wanted to avoid punishment and abuse. As a result of this, many children not only stopped speaking their language but also gained a sense of shame surrounding their language and culture, because they were taught in these institutions that their ways of living and being were incorrect and subpar.

Isolation also contributed to the loss of Indigenous language. Many children could not see their families or hear their language for years on end, they often returned home ashamed of who they were and chose not to continue speaking their language because of this shame. Others had lost fluency of their language due to years of being forced to only speak English.



POETRY

it takes a baby 9 months growing
inside us, then another 9 months
earthside before they start cooing
and babbling in our sounds.

and babies are the never ending
rapid absorbers of information

so if it takes you a year or two before
you feel the sacred connection of
how our language comes from the land
feel no shame

revert back to your inner infant
and listen. just listen.

then mumble and let your tongue
slip and slide over the syllables
as you forget, for a bit, the
twists and turns of the colonized
slowly. surely.

the sounds become a word.
then another. and another.

a small sentence.

a whole sentence.

a conversation.

humour. jokes. teasing.

and yeah, maybe it is 5, 10 years later

but we aren't as smart as a newborn baby...

By Alycia Two Bears

About The Cover

The cover of this Special Edition features Tsisga Crowchild a Dene youth from Tsuu T'ina Nation. standing in front of a winter count, the winter count symbols were created by local artist Kristy North Peigan. (Learn more about winter counts on page 21)

Tsisga likes to camp and dance at pow wows, play hockey, play outside with his dogs, watch Henry Danger on TV and when he grows up he wants to be a cop.

When you bring the cover to life using USAY's IndigiPRINTS app, you will see and hear Neil Crowchild, Steven Crowchild and Tsisga Crowchild, all members of a family from Tsuu T'ina Nation, as they represent one person growing older but regaining/reclaiming their Dene language.





Shay's Instagram & TikTok RECOMMENDATIONS



Who we follow and who follows us is always changing. Consider some of the suggestions below to freshen up your following list.



Wapahkesis

Keisha Erwin is the owner of this Instagram account. She is funny, beautiful and engages followers as they learn more about traditional ways. Cree language is important to her and can be heard throughout many of her videos.



Anatakiikowaan

This account showcases Native humor, the issues and rights of the Indigenous people and the importance of educating others on these issues.



SarahElizaJeffery

In this account you can find the content creator speaking Gitksan to her young one in videos.



Michifwithmonoksamson

This happy man is one of my favorite content creators. I've been following him for a while as I've been trying to learn a bit more about my own Métis language and history.



Strongwaterfallwoman

This account features a series of videos called "Cree word of the day".



Alanlukin

Alan as a single father who works with children, teaching the Blackfoot language in traditional ways. He also features Elders using Blackfoot sign language in a few of his videos.



Cree_syllabic_designs

This account focuses on the teaching of the Cree language and the issues and rights of all Indigenous peoples.



USAYCalgary

Follow our own account on Instagram to keep up to date with USAY News and Events between editions of New Tribe.

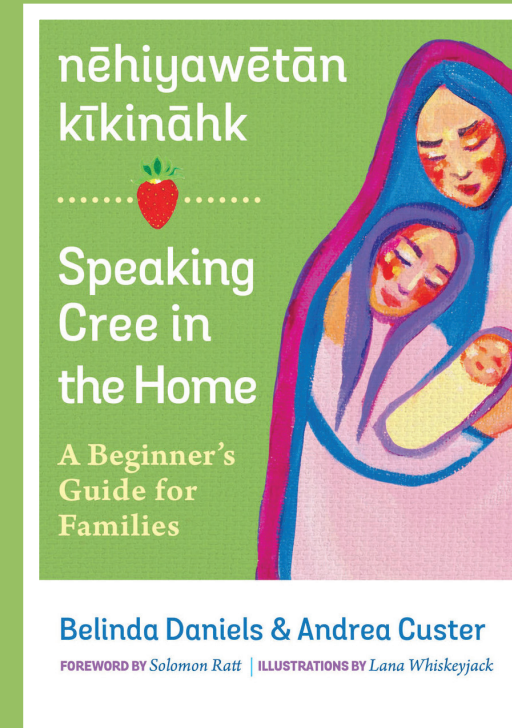
Book Review

nēhiyawētān kīkināhk/ Speaking Cree in the Home

By Belinda Daniels and Andrea Custer

nēhiyawak people speaking nēhiyawêwin shatters colonization

Reviewed by Alycia Two Bears



With the combined power of first language speaker, Andrea Custer and second language learner Belinda Daniels, you have a powerful guide to support your family's in home language learning path. This book provides a brief overview of when and how language was disrupted in the Cree community and how individuals, communities, grassroots organizations and Bands are striving to support language revitalization efforts.

This book reminds us that in the home, language needs to be tended to and practiced every day. Language is a gift from our spirit kin and a responsibility we have as parents to pass onto our children and grandchildren.

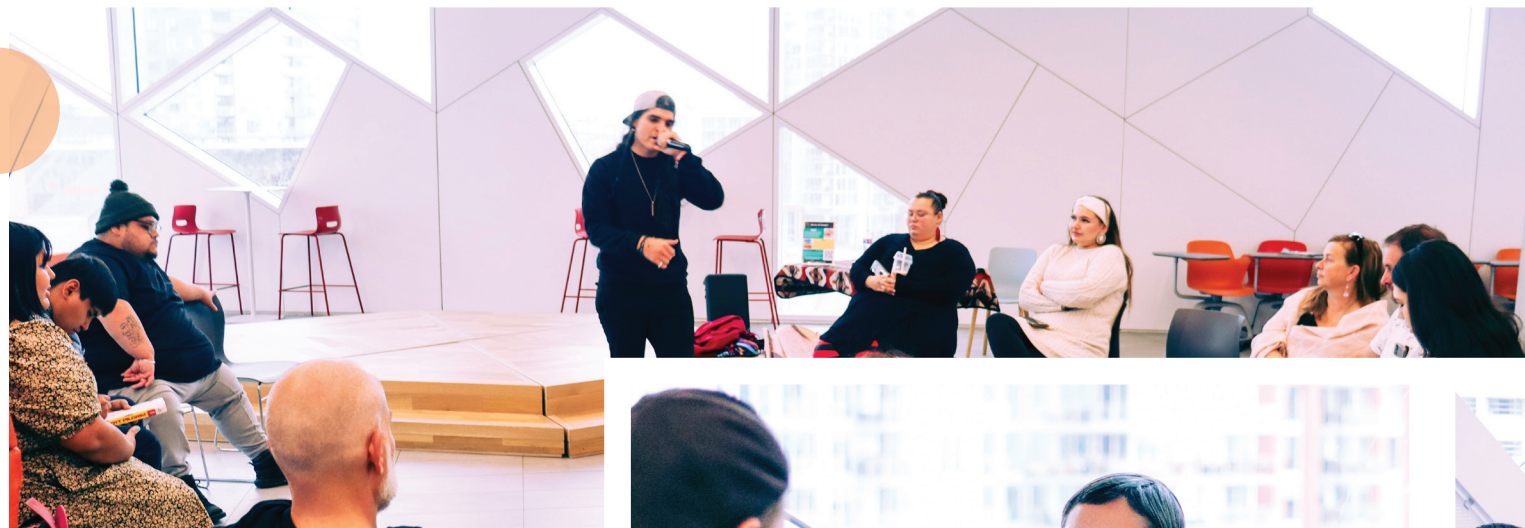
A vocabulary list with phrases commonly used around the household are at the back of the book. Learning a new language can be daunting. This guide is a reliable resource to support your family.

A note from Alycia:

There are a variety of ways to learn a language, the resources to support the ways in which people learn best are shared in abundance. Audio support through podcasts and songs are available online to encourage ears and brains to develop the connection of isolated sounds and speech patterns. This is particularly important to those who live away from their home community or have no first language speakers to sit and listen to, or practise with. Books from children's tales to academic driven textbooks, encourage writing and reading skills for everyone in the household.

Usay's LANGUAGE EVENT

USAY's Language Event held at Calgary's Central Library provided participants with an intimate setting to learn more about the importance of language and communication. After an opening prayer, shared by Elder Johnathon Red Gun, participants engaged in a 'Using Your Voice' workshop. Sarah Good Medicine (mcgoodmedicine) and Erick Gutierrez (Eazyg) led the group through the interactive session that had the audience opening their hearts, minds and mouths as they used their voices for reflection and a little beat boxing too.



Creative Team members, USAY friends and library patrons were brought out of their shells and their comfort zones with a little encouragement from @mcgoodmedicine and @Eazyg.

The library provided the perfect backdrop for USAY staff to update their profile photos and have a little fun in-front of the camera.

New Tribe would like to thank Calgary's Central Library for their continued support of our programs.

Experience the Language Event using the IndigiPRINTS APP



LANGUAGE EVENT

Part Two

The Language Event attendees were also able to lay down a symbol of their choice using paint to help tell their own story on the winter count hide. The winter count symbols were created by artist Kristy North Peigan. USAY staff were on-site throughout the day giving VR demos featuring Writing on Stone Provincial Park to workshop participants and library users.



WHAT IS WINTER COUNT?

Indigenous languages are steeped deep in oral tradition, but sometimes creative tools were used to help document complex histories. Today our annual cycle is based on months, but our Indigenous predecessors kept track of things from first snow fall to last snow fall and one impactful event was used to forever label that time in history. A new pictograph was painted on a hide to symbolize the event that summed up that year by the winter count keeper. The winter count hide was often handed down from father to son and updated for many years. The winter count kept communities united and connected to their past.

Use the IndigiPRINTS app to see a video of Ira Provost sharing a modern winter count story from the Galt Museum and Archives in Lethbridge featuring their exhibit Piikanikoan: Living under a Blackfoot Sky: A Modern Winter Count

Above, Shannay Mcgilvery, Kelsi Reimer and Sage Carrier contribute to the USAY Winter Count, individuals shared their stories on the hide. Next page, Jay Kequahtooway provides a VR demonstration to USAY board member Andrew Hunter.



Photo credit: Albert Woo



JOURNEYING THROUGH CULTURE

Highlights from a Transformative New Tribe Camp



As the autumn leaves rustled and the crisp October air enveloped us, the Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY) hosted the New Tribe Magazine camp, bringing together 35 Indigenous youth aged 15 to 30 for an immersive experience that transcended the ordinary. Nestled in the heart of nature, this camp was not just a getaway; it was a journey of rediscovery, cultural reconnection and empowerment that focused on the ways we become involved in our communities.

At the heart of our camp were two esteemed Elders, Jonathon Redgun and Duane Mistakenchief, who graced us with their wisdom and knowledge. Their teachings resonated with the importance of language, the historical losses and the profound art of revival. It was a privilege to witness the passing down of traditions and protocols, offering a deeper understanding of our cultural teachings, languages and knowledge.

Accompanying our Elders were knowledge keepers Pam and Hutch, who shared invaluable insights into the assembly and disassembly of a tipi. Beyond the practical skills, they gifted the youth with stories that intricately taught everyone to embrace or find their way back to their unique Indigenous roots, fostering a sense of connection and pride.

The vibrant energy of our camp was fueled by the active engagement of our youth in various activities, which was spurred by their volunteerism in the creation of the magazine itself. From

shelter building to fire building and obstacle courses, the camp provided a space for hands-on learning and collaboration.

The emphasis on teamwork not only strengthened the bonds among participants but also echoed the communal spirit embedded in our Indigenous cultures, and the ways we create spaces for reconciliation.

The storytelling sessions, particularly those centered around the Big Dipper, left a lasting impact on the youth. The Elders' words resonated as powerful and encouraging, instilling a newfound confidence in the history and stories of our people. Star teachings, tipi teachings and the sharing of new stories became threads that supported the cultural learnings, leaving an indelible mark on every participant.

As we reflect on the success of the New Tribe Camp, we extend the deepest gratitude to the Elders, knowledge keepers and dedicated staff who made this experience possible. The camp was more than just a temporary escape; it was a steppingstone toward cultural understanding, self-discovery and community building.





The feedback from the youth expressed a resounding appreciation for the camp's diverse offerings. Participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn new skills, engage in Indigenous cultural practices, and connect with like-minded individuals. The non-judgmental atmosphere fostered a sense of freedom, enabling each participant to embrace their identity without fear of judgment.

Here is what some participants had to say about their camp experience:

As someone who is Blackfoot but does not know very much about herself in terms of culture, camp was a great opportunity for me to feel more comfortable in a space where I can grow and learn about my culture without any judgment.

I loved the fireside stories we had with Pam and Hutch and getting to see everyone have fun and talking to each other especially being outside the city it makes you feel like you are connected with nothing else to be focussed on.

I was able to learn a bunch of new things about Blackfoot language specifically and how the way we speak is in terms of what the purpose of our words are so we don't just say I'm sitting on a chair. This chair is somebody or it has life to it when you speak about it everything does in the language.

It would be beneficial for anyone who feels like they don't have a connection to who they are to come and do these things, and get a little sense of where we come from as people.

- Genna Hunt

I have been going through many changes in my life the past year, bad and good. When I heard about the Language Camp (through New Tribe Magazine), I decided that it would be a great opportunity to get away from the stressors of the city and connect more with my Blackfoot language and culture.

My favorite part of the camp was putting up the tipi as a group and getting to sleep there that night. Ever since I was young, I wanted to reconnect more with my culture and language, but I didn't know why until recent years when I learned about the hardships our nations have faced because of colonialism, trauma and systemic racism.

I was nervous at first to be gone all weekend, especially being away from my loved ones and my dogs but the USAY team and Elders helped me feel more comfortable and less nervous.

- Laura Royal

It was an unforgettable time filled with exciting and valuable life lessons. One aspect of the camp that I particularly enjoyed was the wide range of activities available. Whether it was hiking, setting up the tipi or being able to communicate and learn from Elders, there was always something to do. The diverse range of activities helped me discover new interests and develop skills, camp provided numerous opportunities for personal growth. A highlight of the camp experience was meeting people who also were learning about our culture. It opened my eyes to new perspectives and broadened my horizons.

I also want to mention the beautiful natural surroundings of the camp.

- Thunder Warrior (Ayn)



Watch a video featuring USAY's Indigenous Language Camp.

DR. ELDON YELLOWHORN (OTAHKOTSKINA)

On Preserving Indigenous Languages One Tech At A Time



New Tribe Staff Writer Sissy Thiessen Kootenayoo used the technology of a virtual meeting to interview Dr. Eldon Yellowhorn (Otahkotskina), a Blackfoot language keeper, professor, archaeologist and founding chair of Indigenous Studies at Simon Fraser University.

NTM: What has caused such a major loss of language for so many Nations in your territory and across our country?

EY: In a word. Electricity. Before our communities were hooked up to the electrical grid our languages did not have any competition. Homelife was the incubator of new speakers. When the grid brought electricity to our homes, people brought modern communications media such as radios and TVs into their living rooms. Now the soundscape of the home was dominated by TV, record players or radio and all the content was in English. Within one generation, electricity allowed English to supplant our homes as the incubators of languages.

NTM: Why do you think it's so important for people to learn the Indigenous language local to where they reside or descend from?

EY: I will use my language as an example. I am a native speaker of Blackfoot; our homeland was between the North Saskatchewan River and the Yellowstone River in the south, along the west were the Rocky Mountains and the eastern frontier was in Saskatchewan. We have always assumed that

Blackfoot should only exist on the small reserves in Montana and Alberta. However, there are millions of people who now live within the boundaries of our homeland. If even one per cent were to learn the language of the place, they would gain a new appreciation for the place they call home. They would help revitalize Blackfoot and make their own personal contribution to reconciliation.

NTM: In your experience, what special role does technology play in increasing the number of fluent speakers?

EY: Media consumption was unilingual (speaking only one language), so we never heard our languages on the airwaves. Popular culture only arrived in English. That gave us the impression that our languages were not designed for modern times. Blackfoot, like other Indigenous languages, who have struggled to be considered among modern languages. The internet has changed that limitation. It has made media consumption more democratic. Writing code to support software that brings a language application to the public makes it feasible for anyone to contribute. When young people can interact with Indigenous

languages through a computer or virtual reality format, that will help them recognize that Indigenous languages are modern languages.

Dr. Yellowhorn has taken on many projects to preserve the Blackfoot language, including narrating animated education videos that teach mathematics in Blackfoot, translating texts and most recently helping create a Blackfoot Revitalization Program and interactive ChatBot for students in his home community of Piikani Nation.



WHAT IS A CHATBOT?

A chatbot is a computer program that allows humans to interact with the digital world as if they were conversing, playing or mingling with a real person.

Scan this QR Code for access to the Chatbot!



The importance of reclaiming **TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE**

and the barriers that are stopping us.

New Tribe contributor Alycia Two Bears catches up with Andrea Custer, a renowned Cree language lecturer, program coordinator, author and more.

By Alycia Two Bears

Andrea Custer is an Asiniskawiskiw, a Rock Cree woman, from Pelican Narrows reserve. She is a first language Cree speaker, mother to five children, and an accomplished individual within Indigenous academia on many levels including language revitalization.

For the last decade Andrea has been a Cree language teacher, driven by the love of community and led by the spirit of language.

Andrea is generous and warm with her gifts and love of language reclamation. As she says, until the 1960s, it was the norm, growing up, everyone spoke it. Imagine all these toddlers just speaking Cree only, there

was nothing to reclaim or "revitalize".

Language reflects our belief systems, our traditions, our worldviews, our parenting, our values, everything. Cree language was present in her life as a child.

"Language is very connected to identity, wellness, strength and pride and all these amazing things. It really connects you to your ancestors, and later to everything our family had to do to hang onto our language for us".

Reclaiming language for community was not necessary until English became everywhere; on TV, on the radio, in books,

in school, then it became something to reclaim, including in her own home. Her fourth child is not a first language speaker and together they are navigating the relationship of mother-daughter and cultural translation. This is very different to how Andrea and her husband decided to raise their youngest son, as an immersive language learner.

"English is dominant. It's everywhere and it's invasive. It produced a barrier between me and my daughter who I started teaching at 3 years old. There is an English barrier that gets between us and speech production".

Major obstacles in language revitalization as always, include funding and priority. There is often a lack of funds to support language efforts. Even in times of reconciliation and apologies, there are rarely funds attached.

Then, there are surprising push backs from communities who want their children to be fluent English speakers, over their traditional languages. Parents who don't feel supported enough in the home to continue language efforts, are struggling with feelings of shame and disappointment.

And there is a lack of connection and inclusion of first language speakers with second language speakers, who really do need each other. There are nuances to both learning and teaching language that each

language speakers. Hearing first language speakers converse is poetic and a big push back to the Residential Schools that denied this gift with acts of harm and abuse. This includes Andrea, who attended residential school and who realizes the effects firsthand and intergenerationally through her parents and grandparents. It is our responsibility to listen, to speak, to share, to laugh, to be together in community in a really good way. Then continue it at home.

Andrea Custer is the co-author of *nehiyawetan kikinahk / Speaking Cree in the Home : A Beginner's Guide for Families.*

"It is our responsibility to listen, to speak, to share, to laugh, to be together in community in a really good way."

can see and both teachers are necessary for success.

At immersion language camps, people get to be on the land, in community, with first language speakers and second





CREE SYLLABICS

The history and mystery behind these unique symbols

By Terry Hachey-Collins

What are syllabics?

Syllabics (syl-lab-ics) breaks down into the root word 'symbol'. This type of written language can be found around the world as simplified lines and curves. A great example outside of Turtle Island are Hiragana characters from Japan.

How did Cree Syllabics Originate?

The Sacred Story Theory

Badger Call, sometimes called Calling Badger, is said to be the first Woods Cree to introduce what are now called Spirit Markers. According to an interview in the 1930s with the Elder and Chief of the Sweetgrass Nation, Badger Call was traveling with two singers. They came upon a light that collapsed them to the ground. A voice said Badger Call's name and then he became ill. When they returned, Badger Call was in a death-like state, but he did not seem to show any signs of having

passed on. His body was cared for and left unburied at his wife's request; she was convinced he was not actually dead. After four days his soul returned to his body from the spirit realm and with him, he brought much knowledge, including knowledge of Spirit Markers, which were written down on a birch-bark scroll.

The Colonial Rendition

James Evans, a missionary from the 1830s, is often credited as being the inventor. There is no oral history to back up this claim.

In fact, the only reason credit has been given to the Methodist missionary is because he had translated the bible and religious hymns into Cree.

How to learn Cree syllabics?

The popularity of writing in Cree has blossomed under the efforts of revitalizing the original languages of Turtle Island. There are often free language classes available in-person and virtually. Online Cree Language resources include creedictionary.com and kids.creedictionary.com.

Can you match the english word to the Cree Syllabic by drawing a line to the correct syllabic?

Maskwacis Plains Cree Syllabic MATCHING GAME

Answers: 1-B, 2-D, 3-A, 4-C, 5-E

THE TIE THAT BINDS

Mioohpokoiksi programming bringing families together to learn Blackfoot language

By Olivia Condon Storey



What started as a hub for online language resources has become a haven for Blackfoot speakers looking to deepen their connections to culture and family.

Mioohpokoiksi – Stories and Games for Our Children, offers online Blackfoot language resources for people of all ages through stories and games designed to inspire creativity and connection.

Bringing together knowledge keepers, Elders, educators, technical experts and partner organizations, Aikamotsiipohtoo’p, one of Mioohpokoiksi’s programs, featured a series of months-long family game nights to support family language learning and engagement.

Naato’saaki Annette Fox-BruisedHead, the driving force behind Mioohpokoiksi and all its programming, was inspired to create a space for Blackfoot language learning more than 25 years ago.

“Prior to becoming a formal teacher, I worked with my children

in their school, and I remember my daughter, who was in grade two at the time, had said how the Blackfoot immersion students were way smarter than her,” Annette recalls, laughing. “And my daughter was fairly intelligent and was able to read and write at that point.”

“But she was watching these younger kids come into kindergarten at the on-reserve school she was at and they were learning language so I wanted to support her and help her learn the language.”

Since then, Annette has been involved in many community organizations, all with a goal of deepening the understanding of and connection to Blackfoot culture for communities and families who have expressed interest.

In 2021, after the COVID-19 pandemic put a stop to much of Annette’s work, she connected with Dr. Heather Bliss, a trained linguist and lecturer at Simon Fraser University who was

involved in community Blackfoot language workshops through the University of Calgary.

With their complimentary talents, the two women worked together to introduce the first of the Aikamotsiipohtoo’p events in November 2022. Grants from the Department of Canadian Heritage enabled Annette and her dedicated team to continue hosting seven more family game night events until March 2023.

Annette said the reception was overwhelmingly positive, with many families asking when the next Aikamotsiipohtoo’p events would take place. The unique approach to making language learning more accessible has shown her how powerful opportunity can be.

“We use the stories and games as that unifying piece so that we’re learning language but it’s not rote memorization,” says Annette. “Our families have a chance to be together and be part of their culture together which has been very special.”

Both of Annette’s parents are residential school survivors with strong connections to their cultures. Having that sense of empowerment to embrace her roots growing up has had a huge impact on her life and the work she’s pursued.

“I came from a really strong identity from both of my parents but language was always that one thing that made us who we were,” she said. “One thing for me that’s so important is that not all of our children live on reserve or go to school on reserves... and they still need access to those resources that are so foundational.”

Dr. Bliss had been working closely with Blackfoot communities for two decades when she connected Annette, she’s seen a lot of interest in language revitalization and documentation projects.

“There’s a really keen interest in giving families the tools to unpack some of those big words in the [Blackfoot] language... and there’s a ton of information packed into each word so you can’t just memorize, you really need to look at each individual piece,” says Bliss.

This approach has enabled Bliss to walk the family participants at Aikamotsiipohtoo’p game night through grammar lessons and help them develop the tools to tackle the long and information-packed Blackfoot words with an emphasis on making the process fun.

Heather said the connection to Elders within the events has been, from her perspective, one of the most important parts of the whole project.

“Working with urban families,

many who have grown up off the reserve, they may not have those connections with Elders, they may not have grown up with that so giving them that opportunity to connect has been everything.”

While Annette and her team wait to hear if they’ll secure funding to continue running the program, she said she’ll continue doing what she can to support Indigenous people on their journeys to cultural connection and discovery.

“We have so many young people who really want to have their identity as a Blackfoot person or an Indigenous person and we’re trying to support that without being critical, without judgement. It’s about giving them those opportunities to be in touch with their identities, whatever that looks like for them.”

Check out everything Mioohpokoiksi Stories and Games for Our Children has to offer here.



Artwork by Ikktsaakii

LANGUAGE LEARNING RESOURCES

Compiled By Shaye Trudel

Learners are encouraged to pursue opportunities through their local post-secondary institutions and support services. If you have trouble navigating the systems, please contact USAY and someone can help you out.

Newjourneys.ca

This website is perfect for anyone looking for resources, apps, classes or podcasts. Touches on the following languages: Blackfoot, Cree, Haida, Inuktitut, Mi'Kmaq and Ojibwe.

MyCBL.ca (learn Blackfoot link)

This is a wonderful interactive website, you can learn and review colours, numbers, people, weather, food and other common topics and items.

Blackfoot-revitalization.cs.sfu.ca

They have excellent resources, fun activities and engaging quizzes to really test your knowledge. A really a great way to get started on speaking a new language.

FirstVoices.ca

This site has a variety of different Indigenous languages to choose from. It is a bit more difficult to navigate, but has a large selection of Indigenous languages.

Learncree.ca

This website has a simple design and is simple to navigate. They have all kinds of activities, download and printable content.

Miskanawah.ca

This is an organization to help bring the Indigenous community together in Calgary. They offer online Cree language courses and much more!

Rupertsland.org

This web page has a selection of free games, activities and videos to help you learn Michif.

Blackfoot.algonquianlanguages.ca/grammar/

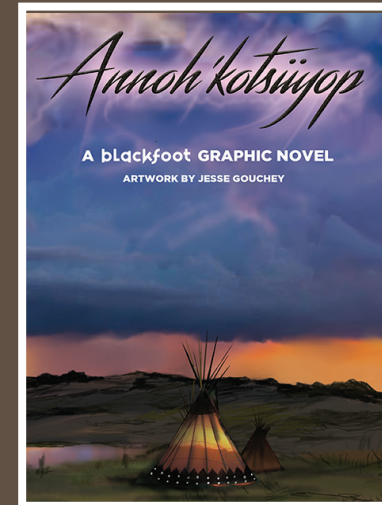
This site is easy on the eyes and packed with information for any level of Blackfoot speaker or learner.

Calgary Public Library-Indigenous language resource centre

In person and access to online resources can be found on the 4th level of the Central Library where you can meet Elders, share stories under the night sky installation, view traditional items and learn Treaty 7 languages.

USAY's Blackfoot Graphic Novels

By Shaye Trudel



An idea that was sparked by youth involved in USAY's programming has become an accessible and fun starting point for those looking to learn the Blackfoot language.

The Blackfoot graphic novels have evolved into animations and AR experiences. Youth from the community play a big role during the creation of these projects; performing voiceover work for the animations, creating the illustrations and writing pieces for the graphic novels.

Animations and game play experiences are available on USAY's YouTube channel, @USAYCalgary. AR experiences are also available from the App store on your device. USAY continues to find great ways to incorporate Blackfoot language through their various apps and virtual reality experiences and games.

The Blackfoot graphic novels are available at the USAY office and on their website. Email info@usay.ca if you would like to get a Blackfoot Graphic Novel, or book a virtual reality demonstration.



More on USAY's Blackfoot Graphic Novels here.

CODE MIXING

By Shaye Trudel

Code mixing is the act of mixing two or more languages when speaking. It is common to hear code mixing from people that speak more than one language, often their brains do it automatically for them. Code mixing is also a very practical way to learn new languages, including Blackfoot.

Code mixing can often be found in USAY's graphic novels where English power words (nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs) are replaced with Blackfoot words.



2023 Changemakers

The USAY Changemaker Awards is an annual ceremony that shines a spotlight on the remarkable achievements of Indigenous leaders and community members who have played pivotal roles in instigating positive transformations within their communities. This event goes beyond recognition; it serves as a platform to share and celebrate the inspiring stories of those individuals who have made a lasting impact.

Nominations for Changemakers come directly from the community, ensuring that the voices and choices of those who are intimately connected to the work being done are heard. A dedicated committee of respected Indigenous leaders carefully evaluates the nominees and selects the deserving winners, adding a layer of authenticity and community involvement to the entire process.

Central to the success of this initiative is the support from corporate sponsors, who contributed vital resources to fund the event. Their involvement reflects a commitment to uplifting Indigenous voices and fostering positive change. By participating in the USAY Changemaker Awards, not only did we all join in the celebration of these extraordinary individuals but also contributed to the continued success and growth of this impactful community-driven initiative.



Angel Day Chief



Monique Fry, Christy Morgan and Jennifer Fournier



Elder Rose Crowshoe and Elder Reg Crowshoe



Photo Credit: Albert Woo



See the Changemaker event come to life

KEEPING UP WITH THE BEAT AROUND MOHKINSTSIS

Back by popular demand! Local photographer Albert Woo shares his favourite pics from the around Mohkinstsis.



National Indigenous Peoples Day Reconciliation Walk, June 21, 2023
Hundreds of people joined in a walk from the Harry Hays Building to Fort Calgary.



Aboriginal Awareness Week Calgary Family Day Powwow, June 24, 2023, Enmax Park
Actor and singer Nathaniel Arcand ("Heartland").

MEET ALBERT WOO



Woo is a photographer who covers many community and cultural events throughout Calgary. He works with the urban Indigenous community to bring attention to social justice events, rallies and other powerful gatherings. He has become widely known for photographing the vibrancy and diversity of those who contribute to Calgary's unique cultural landscape, New Tribe Magazine is excited to welcome him to the team as he keeps up with the beat around Mohkinstsis.



Every Child Matters Traditional Powwow, Sept. 16, 2023, Scotiabank Saddledome
Youth dancers at the second annual Every Child Matters Traditional Powwow hosted by Siksika Health Services and the Calgary Hitmen.



Search the Landfill Rally, August 9, 2023, Municipal Plaza
Organizers, speakers and volunteers at the gathering at City Hall for the Mohkinstis "Search the Landfill" march and rally.



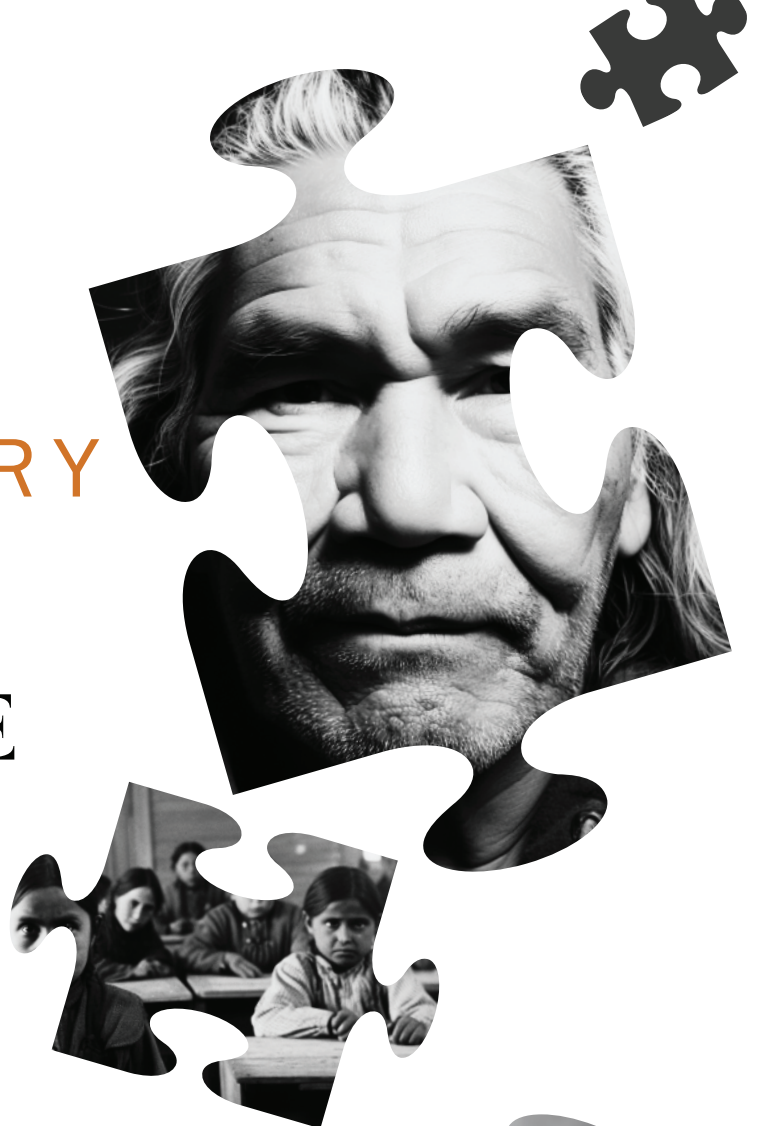
Aboriginal Awareness Week Calgary Family Day Powwow, June 24, 2023, Enmax Park
2023 First Nations Princess Alayah Wolf Child speaking at the AAWC Family Day Powwow. Her Blackfoot name is Massamahkoyinnimaki which roughly translates to "Long Time Thunder Pipe Woman."

JAMES' STORY

UNCOVER THE TRUTH

EXPLORE THE IMPACT OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

A FACILITATED,
VIRTUAL ESCAPE ROOM



SIGN UP
YOUR TEAM

