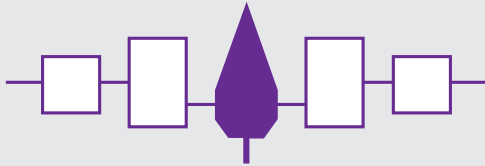




GRAND ERIE Indigenous Education

Newsletter



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Indigenous Student Leadership Explodes in Grand Erie

Two years ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada outlined 94 calls to action meant to begin repairing the harm caused by the residential school system. The 63rd item on the list forms a foundation for Grand Erie's Indigenous student leadership strategy:

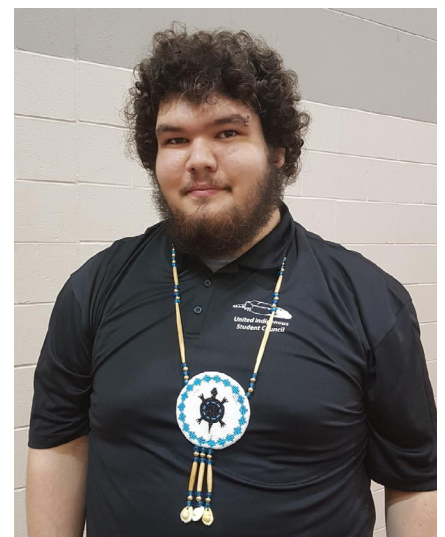
"Build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect."

The strategy really began last school year with a project called "Living the Two Row". The 2017-18 academic year built on that foundation to expand leadership opportunities on many levels for Indigenous students.



First Ever Indigenous Student Trustee

On Thursday, April 26, Allan St. Pierre was elected the first ever Indigenous Student Trustee at the Grand Erie District School Board Student Senate Trustee Election.





Indigenous Student Leadership

On Thursday, October 12, the implementation of the strategy began with Indigenous student leaders from eight Grand Erie secondary schools coming together to start this important work by sharing ideas and setting goals. After this day, they returned to Cayuga Secondary School, McKinnon Park Secondary School, Hagersville Secondary School, Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School, Pauline Johnson Collegiate and Vocational School, Tollgate Technological Skills Centre, North Park Collegiate Vocational School, and Waterford District High School with concrete plans for the year ahead.

The plan is that each school's Indigenous Club will meet regularly, plan programming and events, share information, and carry out the intention of the calls to action with their fellow students. Grand Erie's Indigenous Education team, who planned the day, will be there to provide support throughout the year.

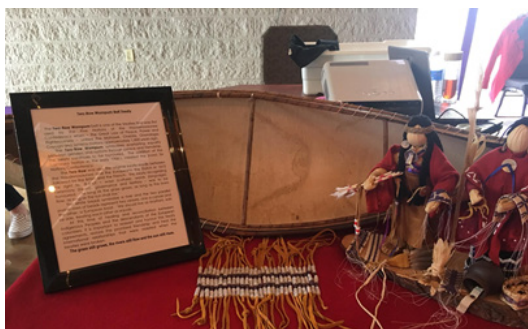


"Starting high school is a big transition, and it brings opportunities to share our culture and values, and change viewpoints," said Gene Jamieson, guest speaker and Pauline Johnson C&VS graduate. "It's a chance to step out into the larger community and proudly say who you are and where you come from."

Jamieson concluded his motivational talk with an observation and an invitation: "You have brilliant ideas, and change will happen through the impact you have. What will you do?"

On Friday, April 6, the second part of the leadership strategy was hosted at Kanata Village with 2 representatives from each participating school gathering as an Indigenous caucus. With funding support from the Ministry of Education, three schools joined the initiative; Delhi District High School (Grand Erie), Assumption College School from the Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board, and Kawenni:io Private School, a Cayuga and Mohawk Language school at Six Nations.

Students learned from Elizabeth Doxtater, owner of Everything Cornhusk, about the traditional roots of our Haudenosaunee leadership system. Elizabeth shared many examples of how to apply lessons from stories and history to our daily lives.





Stacy Hill, Native Advisor for Grand Erie, explained the process of consensus building founded by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council of Chiefs. After lunch the students used the process to determine the structure of the group moving forward. Their maturity and consensus-building skills impressed all staff advisors in the room.

Hill, along with Jeannie Martin, Indigenous Support and Engagement Teacher, are leading the strategy for the Board. The next step in the strategy was to have Indigenous Student Association reps join the secondary student council reps at Grand Erie's Student Senate on April 26th where elections were held for the Board's first ever Indigenous Student Trustee.

The year wrapped up on June 1 with a celebratory event at McMaster University's Altitude program with 8-10 students from 12 participating schools coming together to practice leadership skills, report on their activities and have some fun while participating in team building exercises. Allan St. Pierre, newly elected Indigenous Student Trustee, was gifted with a Turtle medallion, a symbol of Turtle Island to remind him to stay grounded in his work as a leader for our Indigenous students. He was also given a pouch that contains items representative of things that every good leader requires.

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Walk A Mile in my Moccasins

Hagersville Secondary School embarked on a reconciliation project involving the making of moccasins, guest speakers and a local field trip. The aim of this project was meant to support the building of bridges between the local First Nation communities and surrounding towns. It involved two parts, one focusing on Indigenous culture and the other understanding local settler history and agriculture. This project was funded by the Grand Erie District School Board Indigenous Education Board Action Plan.

The project involved 54 grade 9 Visual Art and Expressing Aboriginal Cultures students as well as 3 teachers and 3 Educational Assistants. The students were involved in making their own pair of moccasins from scratch. They had to cut out the pieces for their moccasins from deer hide, punch holes, and hand sew all of the pieces together. Some students were able to add bead work while others burned designs onto the leather of their moccasins. Teachers were very creative in adapting the work so all students could be successful and feel good about their moccasins.

Darren Thomas (Seneca, Bear Clan, Six Nations) was invited to each class. He spoke on traditions around relationship with animals, harvesting vs hunting and Indigenous rights. Mallory Johns, a Hagersville Secondary School graduate came in to assist with the teaching of beading and the sewing of the moccasins. This month long project also included a field



trip focusing on Indigenous culture and the understanding of local settler history and agriculture. The first stop on our tour was an informative visit to the Cayuga Museum where we learned about the United Empire Loyalists' settlement of the area. Here we learned of the special relationship between the Haudenosaunee and the Loyalists who were both loyal to the Crown. Next we had lunch in a longhouse at Kayanase Greenhouses. The students enjoyed ham and scone, traditional strawberry juice and Indian cookies. Kerdo Deer spoke to us about life in a longhouse and the construction of it. "It brings tears to my eyes to even think about how beautiful it was to be at the longhouse and hear a language so beautifully spoken, a language that someone tried to destroyed." - Karla Queckenstedt (teacher).

Our final stop of the day included a tour of Chiefswood National Historic Site, the homestead of Pauline Johnson, Mohawk Poetess. Here we learned about her life living at Chiefswood as well as that of her family. We learned that her brothers were sent to the

Mohawk Institute known as "The Mush Hole," the residential school in Brantford. Her father was a Chief and her mother was a British woman. We learned that they had to keep their love and engagement hidden for years as her parents would not have approved.

As our project came to an end and our moccasins were completed the students were introduced to a few Haudenosaunee social dance songs. These were taught to us by former Hagersville Secondary School graduates, Chezney Martin and Makasa LookingHorse. Wearing their newly made moccasins, all of the students had fun participating in this social activity. Learning some of the dances helped our students be better prepared to participate in a Social that held on May 2nd in conjunction with a visit from Logan Staats!

This project really helped students to learn a little more about one another. There was excitement from the students every day. If they weren't working on the moccasins on a particular day, there was obvious disappointment. Students often made comments like, "I can't believe we get to make our own moccasins." and always asking "When can we take them home?" At every opportunity to try them on, they did. "It was a precious experience." - Patti Zadanyi (teacher)

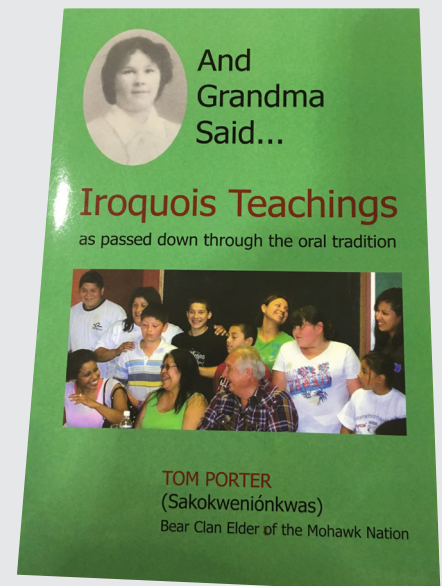


Tom Porter Stops in for Lunch During Treaty Week

"The problem with history is it's his story, not our story," says Tom Porter, knowledge keeper and Bear Clan elder of the Mohawk Nation. He's speaking to a group of Grand Erie educators and staff ahead of Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario, sharing some of the lessons imparted in his book, *And Grandma Said*, a collection of Iroquois teachings passed down through oral tradition.



After a great lunch discussion with staff, Tom was welcomed by a group of students and staff for a talk at Pauline Johnson Collegiate.





Indigenous Mentorship Day



Caption: The day's presenters shared their unique career paths

The path after graduating secondary school is often full of twists and turns. Determining next steps and finding the supports necessary to achieve your goals can be a difficult process.

It can be especially difficult for Indigenous students who don't always see themselves reflected in the college and university programs, or sometimes even the careers they aspire to.

Presented as equal parts information fair, guest presentations, and student social and dance, the Indigenous Mentorship Day, on March 28, 2018, aimed to ease this transition to post-secondary education for Grand Erie District School Board Indigenous student as well as inspire and empower their decision making.

"Part of my role here at Grand Erie is to help students navigate the world beyond secondary school," said Joe Tice, Grad Coach (Post Secondary Navigator) for Indigenous Students, who took the lead in organizing the day. "The event is about opening doors of possibility."

Guest speakers included Sergeant Raymond Starks of the Canadian Armed Forces; Yotakahron Jonathan, a medical student

at McMaster University; Randi Garlow, banking advisor at RBC; and Cameron Sault, addictions and outreach worker with New Directions. All are highly accomplished in their chosen fields, and brought advice and guidance to the captivated audience.

"You didn't see many Indigenous people in uniform when I started in my career, that's for sure," said Starks, who began 25 years ago with the Canadian Armed Forces. "However, it's come a long way, and now there's a lot more knowledge about supports available."

Also on hand were Indigenous student association representatives from a number of area colleges and universities. The post-secondary institutions were there to highlight the services and supports available, as well as to show students the ways in which Indigenous culture is embraced and celebrated on their campuses. Indigenous student associations and services at the college and university level make it easy to access resources and supports, take part in events and connect with other Indigenous students, and achieve their academic goals. For students, the message of the day's event was received.

"Hearing from the speakers, it's clear to me that sometimes the way you think you're going isn't where you ultimately end up, and

that's okay," said Dallas, student at Brantford Collegiate Institute. "I'm considering a few possible career paths, and learning more about other people's paths is really helpful."

For Sam, a fellow BCI student, the highlight of the event was the dance in the afternoon.

"The singers, the drumming, and the dancing is a great way to celebrate our culture and socialize."

Thanks to events such as the Indigenous Mentorship Day, students will take this energy with them, whatever path they choose to pursue.

Grand Erie's Multi-Year Plan includes Equity and Achievement as two of its main pillars. Events such as Indigenous Mentorship Day set high expectations for students as they work towards goals, and recognize that the paths to achievement are as unique as each student.

Grand Erie District School Board's Student Recognition Program

The recognition program is the Grand Erie District School Board's way of honouring and celebrating students who have excelled in academics, arts, athletics or community involvement. The Student Recognition Awards program supports the Achievement indicator of Grand Erie's Multi-Year Plan and Success for Every Student through the following statement: "We will set high expectations for our students and staff."



Ascension Harjo, Pauline Johnson Collegiate and Vocational School



Ascension was introduced to hoop dancing at a very young age through his family's involvement in the traditional healing dance, and today the Grade 11 student at Pauline Johnson Collegiate & Vocational School is an accomplished artist in his own right. This past summer, the spotlight was on Ascension as he performed at the Indigenous Games Opening Ceremony in front of athletics and delegates from across North America. From hoop dancing to shooting hoops, he also competed in basketball during the Games, and his talent, passion, and commitment to both pursuits sets him apart.

Aleria McKay – Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School



In her final year as a Grand Erie student, Aleria McKay has made impressive contributions to arts, culture, and community involvement – all with an important message behind them. Earlier this year, she was crowned Miss Teenage Ontario. She is the first Indigenous winner in the competition’s history. This

summer, she will move on to compete for the title of Miss Teenage Canada. Aleria’s commitment to raising awareness and erasing the stigma surrounding teen suicide set her apart in the competition, as she demonstrated impressive leadership and courage. This spring, she continued her efforts through a different vehicle: the theatrical production of *And She Split the Sky in Two*, which she wrote and directed. The play, which deals with Indigenous issues and teen suicide, was the winner of the district drama festival, and has advanced to the upcoming regional competition. Aleria was recently accepted to York University’s theatre program, and hopes to enter the teaching profession as a drama teacher after that.



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