



2021-2022

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



We respectfully acknowledge that Spirit North's head office is located on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Nations of Siksika, Kainai, Piikani as well as the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Wesley First Nations) and Tsuut'ina Nations, Region 3 Métis Nation of Alberta, and all others that make their home in the Treaty 7 region. We honour these lands as well as all other First Nations, Métis and Inuit lands and territories on which we work. These lands and our relationships with the First Peoples of these lands support our work toward reconciliation.





**I am strong,
capable of anything.
Have a community
with me all the way.**

We're removing barriers to sport so Indigenous youth can play.



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MESSAGE FROM BECKIE SCOTT

Five years ago, a small but mighty team was formed with the shared vision of a healthier, happier future for Indigenous children and youth. With our collective experiences and a bold vision, we set out to reduce barriers, create equity of opportunity, and share the joy of sport and play.

We've come a long way from those first days of cross-country ski programs. This past year, over 5400 Indigenous children and youth participated year-round in land-based programs that featured 14 unique sports and activities! We watched participants from the very first Spirit North ski programs become youth leaders—inspiring their peers and strengthening their communities. The collaborative dedication of school, community and Spirit North leaders continues to define us, and, along with the generous support of our donors, makes our programs possible.

Inspired by stories of transformation, we look ahead to the next year with reaffirmed confidence in our commitment to health, wellness and a brighter future for all Indigenous children and youth in Canada.

As always, from the bottom of my heart, thank you to the dedicated friends and supporters who share our vision and support this journey. We could not do it without you.

Beckie Scott

Founder and CEO, Spirit North

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Barbara Conkie,
Board Chair

Heather Bishop
Larry Greer

Andrew Harris
Jeff Horvath

Dr. Sean Lessard
Carla Robinson

Margaret Rosling
Laurie Thompson

Frederic Tolmie
Dr. Sam Wong

FIVE YEARS OF SPORT & PLAY

2017
☆

REWIND TO 2009-2016

Beckie Scott, OC joins Ski Fit North as ambassador. From 2009-2016, Beckie:

- Travels & skis with kids in northern AB communities.
- Observes the power of sport to uplift, create health & wellness benefits, and sees a chance to support many more youth!

Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada publish their report & 94 Calls to Action

- Includes sport in reconciliation.
- Sport as way to support health & healing.

Spirit North Takes Flight

Incorporate as Spirit North



Early Relationships

Early community programs flourish—the roots of lasting partnerships.

Beyond Alberta

Federal funding facilitates new programs in BC.



4570 unique youth participants,
34 communities, **2** provinces
Ski First program

2018
☆

We Receive Charitable Status!

UNDRIP

We contribute to all UNDRIP Sustainable Development Goals.

Moving East

Another Federal grant facilitates new programs in SK, MB and ON.

Co-Creation Workshops

Introduced individualized, community guided programs.



6155 unique youth participants,
57 communities, **5** provinces
Land-based games added

2019
☆

Roadmap for Success

First three year strategic plan created.

Office Space!

Elevates collaboration & support for our small & mighty team.

6 Sport & Culture Festivals

41 communities come together to share sport, games, food, culture and tradition.



6300 unique youth participants,
62 communities, **5** provinces, **1** territory
Archery, MTB added

2020



COVID-19 creates significant health & wellness impacts
Strong relationships enable us to support throughout.

Leaders, Inspirers & Community Role Models
Certified in ski, bike & archery instruction.

Urban Programs
Access to inclusive, participation-based sport & play in urban landscapes.



2700 unique youth participants,
40 communities, **5** provinces, **1** territory
Skateboard, Canoe added

2021



Year-round Connections
Deliver our first summer programs & community youth leader opportunities.

Photovoice
The power of voice & story in the hands of youth.

Trail Building
5.5 km of trails in 4 communities—connecting community members to each other and the land.



5489 unique youth participants,
61 communities, **4** provinces, **1** territory
Equestrian, Rock Climb added

☆ THE FUTURE

Further North
Year-round sport & play programs bring new opportunity to NWT.

Lasting Impact: Youth Leadership Program
Early Spirit North participants become program, youth & community leaders.
• Acquire leadership & life skills

New Sports, New Places, New Partnerships
Continuing to grow in all directions.



Kayak added



CELEBRATING 5 YEARS





**Rashaun
Powderface**

When sport becomes a part of life a world of opportunity opens up. Rashaun Powderface is applying his sport and leadership skills to inspire the next generation of young people in his community.

In the Lead

From Participant To Youth Leader

In 2017, Rashaun Powderface became one of Spirit North's first ski team members. Five years later, and now 15, Powderface has become a youth leader, inspiring his community members to, "just try. And have fun!"

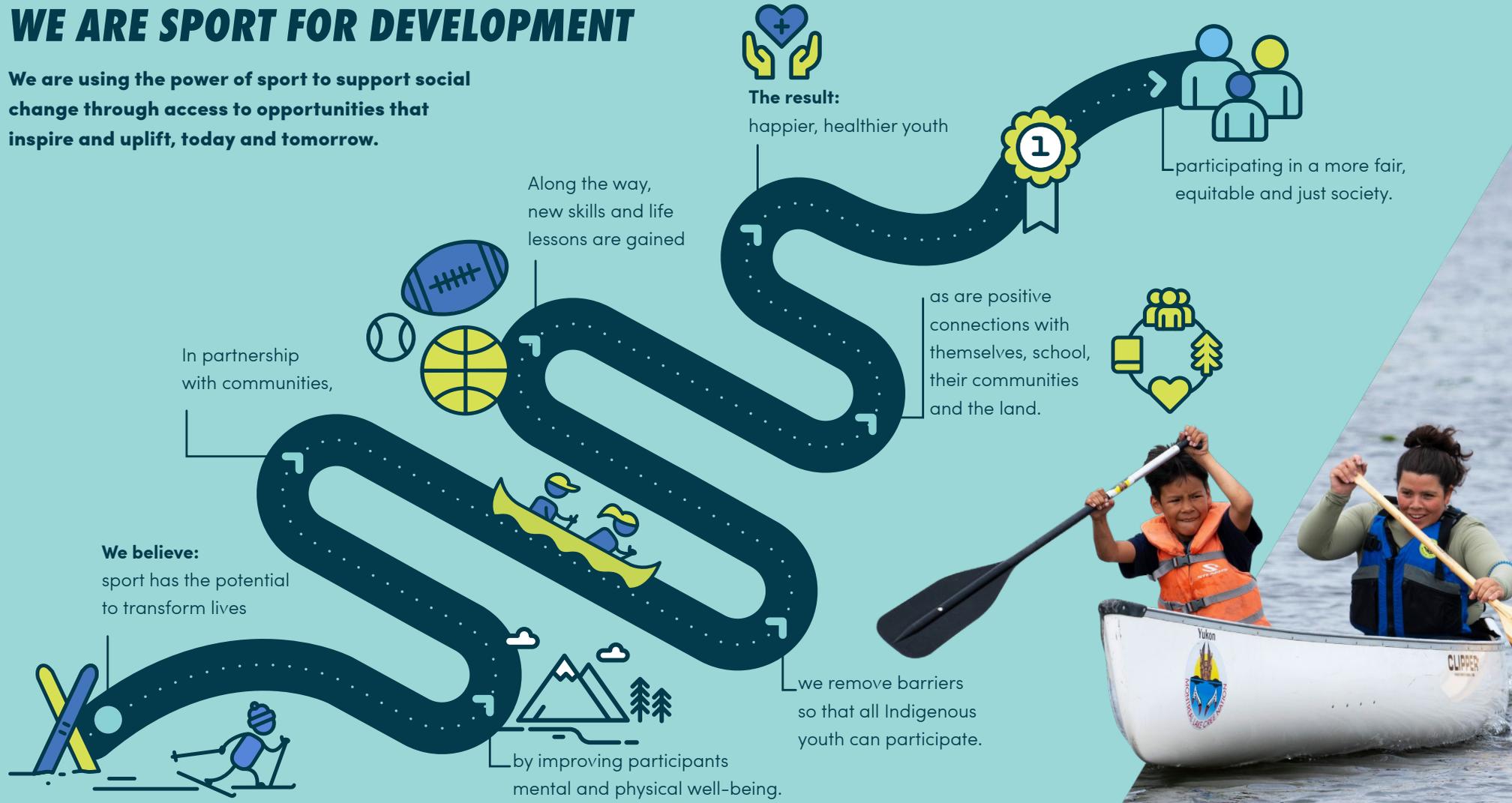
Recalling his first Spirit North ski experiences, the forthcoming youth remembers field trips, not knowing how to stop, and quickly catching on to that and other ski skills. Mostly, he recalls it being, "really fun."

As a youth leader this past winter, Powderface enjoyed helping out: "to see other people try and succeed, ask for help, ask questions, and have fun." The teen says basic ski skills and an ability to communicate are essential to being a leader, and that the opportunity was a way to support his community, and help himself learn.

Powderface also continues to be a Spirit North participant as a way to hang out with friends and see where the next adventure will take him.

WE ARE SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT

We are using the power of sport to support social change through access to opportunities that inspire and uplift, today and tomorrow.



CO-CREATING WITH COMMUNITY

Since day one, we've been co-creating programs that reflect each community's unique values, goals and strengths and also respect local knowledge, experience and culture.

“The opportunity to share our passion for land-based sports on the unceded territory on which our family and community resides has been life changing. In exchange we have gained family, history, culture and language from the members of our local Six Nations.”

— **Rachelle van Zanten,**
Spirit North Leader, Recipient of
2022 BCPVPA Partnership Award.



OUR LEADERS HELP MAKE IT HAPPEN

With us since the beginning

Les Parsons shares his expertise and passion for cross-country skiing and trail building with remote Alberta communities.

53% are community members

Nate Nepinak, a member of Makadewaagamijwanong (Black River First Nation) is always ready to open the equipment shed to create opportunities for youth to be active.

Certified instructors

Our leaders have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver safe and fun programs so that every child can realize success. Tristan House is one of our recently certified kayak instructors.

Winning awards for positive community impact

Chris Paulson & Rachelle van Zanten in the Burns Lake region.

In partnership with community and school leaders

Nadya Crossman-Serb and Cam Roe worked alongside Montreal Lake Cree Nation to co-create unique programs.

Sharing His Best

A Way to Reflect Identity and Realize Success

Qwayqwayaxn Levi Bent has a keen passion for skateboarding, and is sharing it with youth from his community—inspiring them to courageously discover themselves and reveal their potential. For Bent, who never felt that he fit in and who couldn't identify with mainstream sports, skateboarding was life-changing. Twenty-nine years ago, the sport became a positive outlet for Bent's energy, introducing him to new friends, opportunities, and a new way of thinking. "In skateboarding, you are never a failure. It is so individual. It gets you moving in new and creative ways," says the Spirit North leader.

With a firm belief that physical outdoor activity can strengthen mental and spiritual health, Bent is using skateboarding to uplift his community's youth. Confident that each child has it within them, Bent, as a Nsyilxen-speaking community member, provides the basic tools to get started, encourages participation, and fun with peers. And then, he watches each child's potential take form.

Levi Bent

"I never found myself represented in the sports I saw. Skateboarding was on my own terms and was a way for me to express myself. Youth in my community can find success and freedom through this sport."



RECONCILIATION



We're committed to advancing reconciliation in Canada. In relationship with communities, we support Indigenous youth with resources and opportunities that seek to address the health legacy of residential schools and reconciliation through sport.



CALL TO ACTION #19

Legacy: Health

We help close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities by promoting the physical and mental health benefits of sport and play activities.



CALL TO ACTION #89

Reconciliation: Sports & Reconciliation

We elevate sport and play as a fundamental part of health and well-being, and we support active communities through local events and dedicated programming.



CALL TO ACTION #90

Reconciliation: Sports & Reconciliation

We collaborate with schools and communities to create programs that reflect local needs, and invest in resources, training, certification and mentorship to ensure these benefits last for generations to come.

“Sport can heal, the land can heal and our culture can heal. We’re on a good path right now. We are heading toward our young people and communities being healthy and passionate about life.”

— Jeff Horvath, Principal, Morley Community School



OUR REACH

Transforming Lives

7

Treaty territories as well as unceded lands in BC

61

Communities across Canada

37

have partnered with us for 4+ years

YEARS IN PARTNERSHIP

5+ 5 4 3 2 1



Newest partner communities

First partner community, Kikino School

UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS

5489



44%

identify as female

29%

K - Gr. 3
Critical age for physical literacy development

36%

Gr. 7 - 12
Active adolescents connecting with peers

LEADERS MAKE IT HAPPEN

57%

of leaders identify as female

53%

are community members

71

youth leaders are role models & community supports



YEAR-ROUND EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY

907 in-school programs in 76 schools

1174 after-school program days and increasing demand

Increasing demand for summer programs = year-round connection to active living

7 communities invested in ski equipment for youth



OUR IMPACT

"Impact that goes far beyond sport—a game changer for the future of our youth and community."

—Dean Henderson, Vice Chief,
Montreal Lake Cree Nation



HEALTH



COMMUNITY



EDUCATION

89% ↗ ❤️

of participants reached or exceeded **60 minutes of physical activity** per day by participating in Spirit North programs.

96% ↗ 😊

indicate improved student **joy, overall wellness & willingness to try***

"Students are **more physically active** during programs. They also **self-lead** Spirit North games at recess!"

—Teacher, Mother Earth Children's Charter School

94% ↗ 👥

indicate improved **student-to-student relationships***

83% ↗ 👤👤

indicate improved **student-teacher relationships***

"My students **loved having instructors from their community.**

The patience, understanding, enthusiasm and love for the students was so evident."

—Teacher, Morley School

83% ↗ ☆

indicate improved overall **classroom focus and performance***

87% ↗ 💬

indicate improved **classroom participation***

"**Skiing saved my life in school** because I probably would have been expelled by now."

—Participant, Kikino School

"Students have **built skills and confidence** that will translate into deeper learning in the classroom."

—Teacher, Outma Sqilxw Cultural School

*Percent of educator respondents who noted improvement in the reported evaluation criteria.



Facilitating Joy and Lasting Change

Through Inspiring Leadership

“Laurie Thompson, nitsiyihkason. Kikino Métis Settlement ohci niya.” Indigenous educational leader Laurie Thompson gained her wings as the Kikino School ski program gained its. Her longtime relationship with Spirit North began at a point when Thompson was seeking better ways to connect school, learning, and the Métis Settlement community that she served. “I learned the importance of setting a culture of safety and joy to take risks; I quickly saw stories of indescribable joy unfold. I watched students enjoy physical activity and carry these positive experiences back to the classroom and into the community.”

Working alongside a non-Indigenous ally who held the same values for their children, Thompson, a long-time educator, found shared opportunities to celebrate different skills in manners that more closely aligned with Indigenous ways of teaching, learning and being. “Spirit North began a trajectory of change for me, and I was able to bring my team and students along with me. Hay-hay.”

Laurie Thompson

“Our students are on a trajectory of positive change.”



PHOTOVOICE

We're transferring the power of story telling into the hands of youth: capturing their unique experiences and perspectives in their voices.

1 "My favorite part about mountain biking is going fast down the hills."

2 "Skiing gives me confidence and makes me believe in myself."

3 "I like hills better than I like kilometres."

4 "Jumping off the cliffs with my friends was fun. My favourite part about canoeing camp is all the nice things we get to see being out in nature."

5 "It was tough going climbing...there was a risk that I would fall. But then I got to the top and it made me feel like a new person. Ever since then I felt like I didn't need to be scared anymore."



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Our co-created programs empower Indigenous youth to develop skills and confidence and connect with self, land and community.



Rock Solid Summiters

Eight Stoney Nakoda youth discovered new limits and the ultimate in courage, resilience, trust and teamwork while summiting Mount Baldy. The 2200 metre peak was the culmination of four days of intense skill development in a program that creates sustainable pathways to new adventures and active living. For the teens, who also volunteered as youth ski leaders this past winter, both opportunities were chances to experience and observe brave attempts, success, and skill development with peers. Equipped with their own gear and access to an indoor climbing gym, the teens are set to continue their climbing journey and inspire the youth of their community.

Paddling Many Waters

Up for the physical and mental challenges of kayak instructor training, 14 Spirit North leaders are now set to support participants from first strokes to feeling competent on the water. The intensive course saw leaders share ideas and build skills and knowledge specific to kayaking, but also transferrable to other paddle sports that Spirit North delivers. With water-based programs in four provinces, we're ensuring all of our leaders have the capacity and strategies to engage Indigenous youth to safely and confidently experience paddling as a way to connect with the power of the water.

Let's Ride Bikes

With wheels rolling beneath them, Indigenous youth are experiencing the exhilaration and freedom of biking in schoolyards and on local trails throughout BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Participant enthusiasm, access to bikes and nearby trails contributed to the incredible success of our first bike program in Burns Lake four years ago. And with an ever-growing team of community leaders committed to empowering youth to stride or pedal, bike programs and events in the Burns Lake area continue to expand and transform. Inspired by this successful model, more than a dozen communities in other regions and provinces had kids feel the land go by while astride a bike this past year.



Skiing Above the Arctic Circle

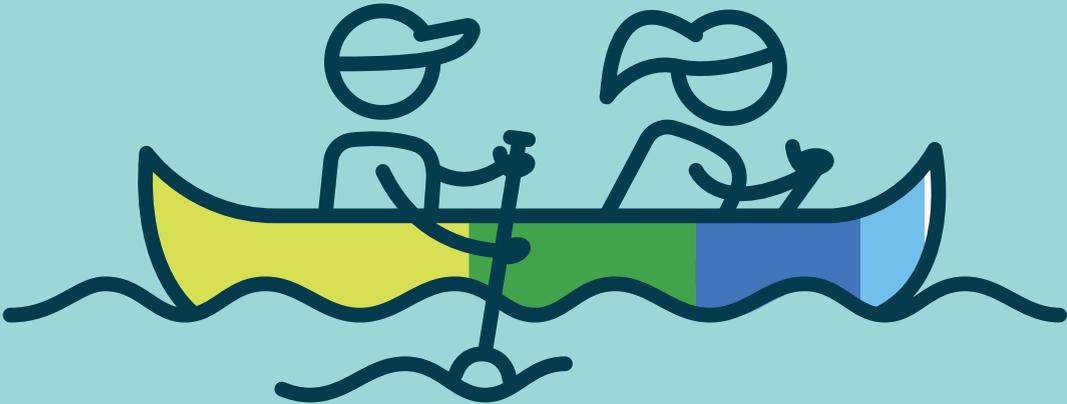
With the return of daylight, we journeyed north of the Arctic Circle to bring 24 days of smiles on skis to 185 youth in four Gwi'tchin and Inuvialuit communities. "For schools with a small staff, it is really difficult to take a whole class skiing. It was really rewarding to be a part of ski days and to see such enthusiasm in the kids," said Spirit North Leader Connor Speer. Experts in making skill learning fun and accessible to all, we are already looking to next spring when we can re-connect with partners in the Northwest Territories to nurture the sounds of laughter and gliding skis.



OUR FINANCIAL PICTURE

Spirit North is a registered charity. 798035515 RR0001

INCOME



41%
Grants

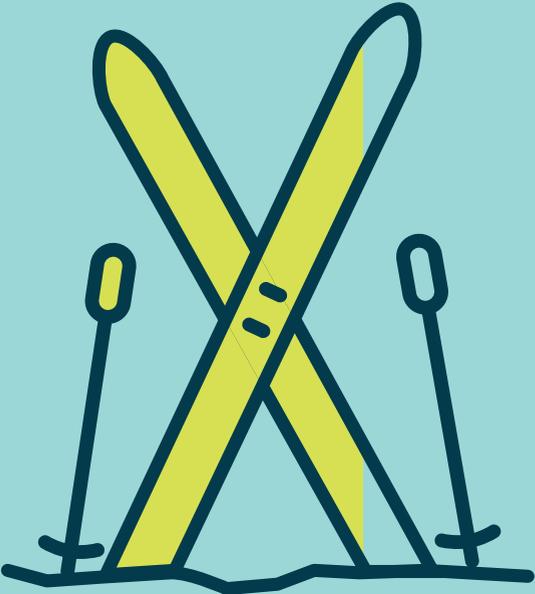
29%
Donations

21%
Corporate
Partnerships

8%
Community
Partnerships

1%
Other

EXPENSES



80%
Programs
& Operations

20%
Administration
& Fundraising

“Spirit North leaders are amazing! They bring such energy, enthusiasm, and skill to our learners and teach perseverance and stepping outside of your comfort zone!”

—Teacher, Decker Lake Elementary School





THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS

Your belief in our work has brought smiles and opportunity to Indigenous children and youth.

Premiere Partner

**Jumpstart
Bon départ**



Official Partners

ATCO

Alberta

Canada



vancouver
foundation

Community Partners



cenovus
ENERGY



Five years of sport & play with our community partners! **Alberta** Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation – Alexis First Nation School • Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Métis Settlement • Beaver First Nation – Rocky Lane School • Beaver Lake Cree Nation – Amisk Community School • Big Horn Reserve – Taotha Community School • Bigstone Cree Nation – Oski Pasikoniwew Kamik – St. Theresa • Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement – Caslan School • Calling Lake School • Chipewyan Prairie First Nation (Janvier) – Father R. Perin School • Cold Lake First Nations – LeGoff School • Conklin – Conklin Community School • Dene Tha First Nation • Driftpile Cree Nation – Driftpile Community School • East Prairie Métis Settlement – Hillview School • Edmonton – Ben Calf Robe – St. Clare School – Amiskwaciy Academy • Elizabeth Métis Settlement – Elizabeth School • Enoch Cree Nation – Maskekosak Kiskinomatowikamik – Kitaskinaw School • Ermineskin Cree Nation – Ermineskin Jr. Sr. High School – Ermineskin Elementary School – Ehpewapahk Alternate School • Fishing Lake Métis Settlement – J.F. Dion School • Fort Chipewyan – Athabasca Delta Community School • Fort McMurray #468 First Nation – Anzac Community and Bill Woodward School • Fort Vermilion – St. Mary School • Frog Lake First Nation – Chief Napeweaw Comprehensive School • Garden River First Nation – Sister Gloria School • Giff Lake Métis Settlement – Giff Lake School • Heart Lake First Nation – Heart Lake Kohls School • Jean-Baptiste Sewepagaham School • John D’or Prairie School • Kapawe’no First Nation • Kikino Métis Settlement – Kikino School • Kehewin Cree Nation – Kehewin Community Education Centre • Little Red River Cree Nation – Fox Lake Elementary School • Loon River First Nation – Clarence Jaycox School • Louis Bull Tribe – Kispitnahk School • Mikisew Cree First Nation • Montana First Nation – Meskanahk Ka-Nipa-Wit School • O’Chiese First Nation – O’Chiese First Nation School • Paul First Nation – Paul Band Education – Mother Earth’s Children’s Charter School • Peavine Métis Settlement – Bishop Routhier School • Peerless Trout First Nation – Peerless Lake School – Kateri School • Saddle Lake Cree Nation – Kihew Asiniy Education Centre – Onchaminahos School – Saddle Lake Elementary School • Samson Cree Nation – Nipisihkopahk Secondary School • Siksika Nation • St. Theresa School • Stoney Nakoda Nations – Exshaw School – Nakoda Elementary School – Morley Community School • Sturgeon Lake First Nation – Sturgeon Lake School • Sucker Creek First Nation – Jousard School • Sunchild First Nation – Sunchild School • Tallcree Nation and Beaver First Nation – Fort Vermilion Public School • Trout Lake • Tsuut’ina Nation – Chiila Elementary School – Chief Big Belly Middle School – Tsuut’ina Many Horses High School • Upper Hay River • Whitefish (Goodfish) First Nation #128 – Pakan School • Whitefish Lake First Nation #459 – Atikameg School • Woodland Cree First Nation – Cadotte Lake School **British Columbia** Burns Lake – Chief Atahm School – Grassy Plains Elementary – Lake District Secondary – William Konkin Elementary • Carrier Sekani • Chase – Chief Atahm School • Chesalatta • Hazelton • Kispiox – Kispiox Elementary School • Lake Babine Nation – Morris Williams School • Okanagan Indian Band – OKIB Immersion School • Osoyoos Indian Band – Caledonia Secondary School – Gitwinksihlkw Elementary School – Nisga’a – senpaq’cin School – Suwilaaks Community School • Penticton Indian Band – Outma Sqilx’w Cultural School – West Bench – Skaha Lake Middle School • Prince George – Ron Brent Elementary School • Nudesh Yoh • Terrace (Kitsumkalum) – Na Aksa Gyilak’yoo School • Wet’sewet’en – Decker Lake Elementary • Westbank First Nation – Sənsisystən House Of Learning • Witset – Moricetown Elementary School **Manitoba** Berens River First Nation – Berens River School • Birdtail Sioux – Can Kaga Otina School • Black River First Nation – Black River Anishinabe School – Little Black River School • Bloodvein First Nation – Miskooseepi School • Cross Lake – D.R. Hamilton School • Hollow Water First Nation – Wanipigow School • Miskooseepi School • Mosakahikan Cree Nation • Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (Nelson House) – Otetiskewin Kiskinwamahto-Wekamik School • Norway House – Jack River School • Peguis First Nation • South Indian Lake – Thunderbird School • Winnipeg – General Byng School – NorWest – Vincent Massey Collegiate – Westgrove Elementary School – William Whyte School **Northwest Territories** Gwich’in Tribal Council (Inuvik) – East Three Secondary School • K’atl’odeeche First Nation – Chief Sunrise School – Harry Camsell School – Princess Alexandra School • Tetlit Gwich’in Band Council (Fort McPherson) – Chief Julius School • Tsiigehtchic – Chief Paul Niditchie School • Tuktoyaktuk – Mangilaluk School **Ontario** Thunder Bay – Matawa Education Centre **Saskatchewan** Lac La Ronge Indian Band – Sally Ross School • Mistawasis First Nation – Chief Mistawasis School • Montreal Lake Cree Nation – Senator Allen Bird Memorial School • Prince Albert • Sturgeon Lake – Sturgeon Lake Central School • Thunderchild First Nation – Piyesiw Awasis School



“Students have become courageous and willing to try new things! Learning alongside peers and teachers was an opportunity to encourage each other, share success, laugh and cheer together.”

— Teacher, Nipisihkopahk Secondary School



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