

# *Culture Builds Community!* **Engage**

Winter 2019  
VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

Sask **Culture**

FUNDING  
PROVIDED BY



A Lens on Culture

Gathering Helps Tell The True Story of Chief Big Bear

Culture Days: Connecting the heART to Wellbeing

# Contents

Winter 2019

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

## Engage

Published by  
SaskCulture Inc.,

is designed to

highlight  
the work of  
cultural leaders,  
volunteers

and the

diversity  
of activities

supported by the  
Culture Section of  
Saskatchewan  
Lotteries Trust Fund  
for Sport, Culture and  
Recreation.



### ON THE COVER:

Youth in Pinehouse enjoy the opportunity to get behind camera and photograph life, tradition, culture and more.

Photo Courtesy of Pinehouse Photography club.



CEO Message.....	3
Gathering Helps Tell the True Story of Chief Big Bear.....	4
Connecting the heART to Wellbeing .....	6
Classroom Learning Experience Keep Indigenous Cultures and Traditions Alive .....	8
Building Community and Sharing Culture Through Art .....	10
Finding a Connection to the Land Through Art.....	12
A Lens on Culture.....	13
Helping Indigenous Peoples Trace Their Roots.....	15
Moose Jaw Provides Platform for Residents to Engage with New Neighbours .....	17
Shiloh Community History Inspires Descendants to Embrace Identity .....	18
Living Heritage: Making Sense of Our Past in the Present ..	20
How Rivers West District is Creating Connections and Bridging Gaps.....	22
Report Shows Saskatchewan Citizens Spend Less Time on Leisure and Culture .....	23



### Direct Inquiries to:

Diane Ell, Editor  
dell@saskculture.ca

Busayo Osobade, Publishing Coordinator  
bosobade@saskculture.ca

404, 2125 11th Ave., Regina SK S4P 3X3  
Tel: (306) 780.9284

[www.saskculture.ca](http://www.saskculture.ca)

### Graphic Design:

J. Lauder Publishing & Design  
joanne.lauder@sasktel.net

### Contributing Writers:

Andréa Ledding, Miranda Hanus, Myrna Williams,  
Lauren Racette and Busayo Osobade

Print copies of this publication are circulated for free to SaskCulture members, partners and through community outreach activities as determined by SaskCulture Inc. **Engage** is also available in PDF version on the SaskCulture web site at [www.saskculture.ca](http://www.saskculture.ca). **Engage** is published thanks to financial support from Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation. The publication does not currently accept paid advertising. Article ideas for future publications can be submitted to [info@saskculture.ca](mailto:info@saskculture.ca) or by calling (306) 780-9284.

Published December 2019. Articles may be reprinted with permission.

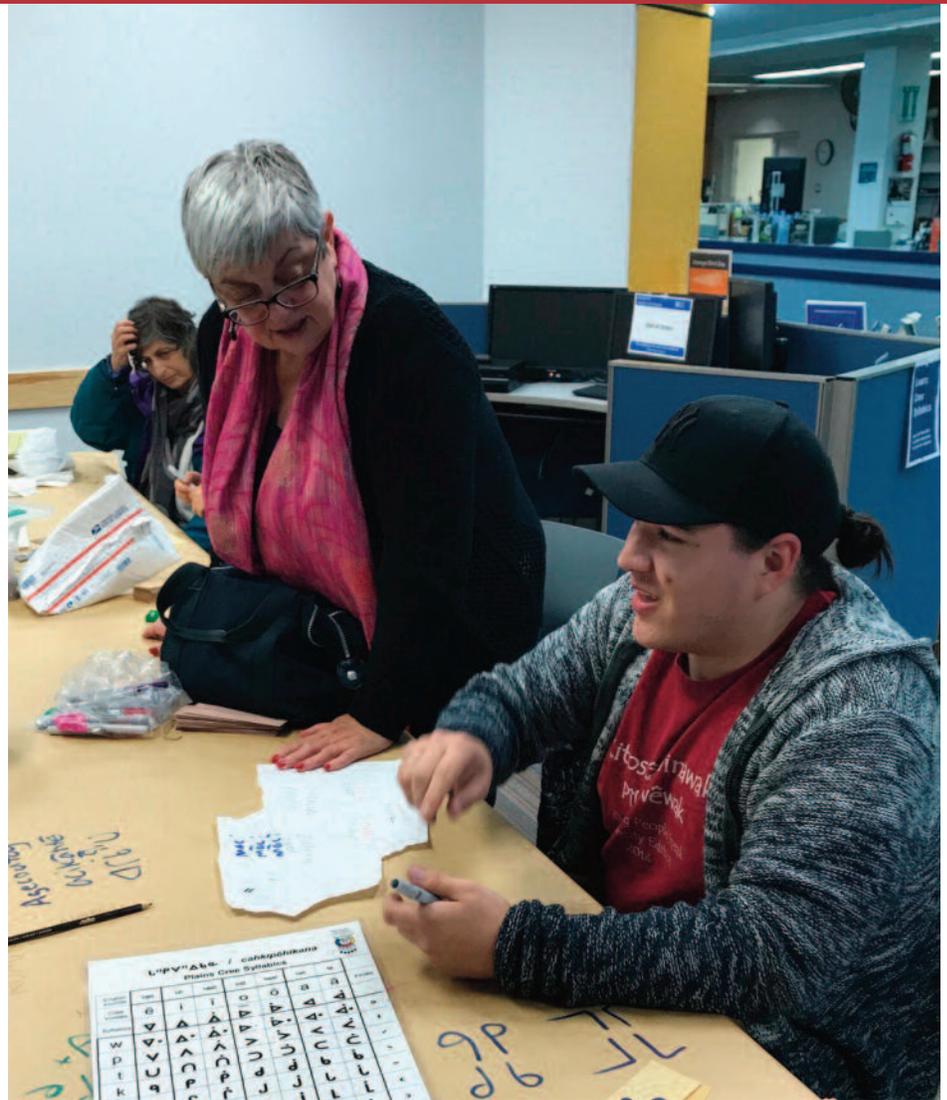


## Message from the CEO

**A** new report, the *Saskatchewan Index of Wellbeing: How are Residents of Saskatchewan Really Doing?*, was just released in the province. It points out that while the province has done well economically over the last ten years, this wealth does not necessarily translate into an increased sense of wellbeing in communities. While most areas measured by the *Index*, such as education, living standards, and community vitality, saw growth over the past 20 years, unfortunately, leisure and culture decreased by 10.7 per cent.

According to the report, this means there has been “less time socializing with others, fewer hours committed to volunteering for culture and recreation, shorter vacation trips and reduced spending of household income on culture and recreation opportunities”. These indicators suggest some deterioration in the amount of time available for the activities that help provide us with a sense of who we are as a people and reinforce our sense of belonging to our communities.

Having a strong sense of identity, belonging and place speaks directly to our connections to our backgrounds, our ancestry, our heritage, and ultimately, our cultural identity. Many cultural activities have a key role in helping individuals get in touch with their roots and explore our place on this land. In this issue of *Engage*, you can read about how students learned about their heritage by recording the stories of Elders at Cumberland House, or how local artists in Maple Creek inspired their community to explore living heritage,



or how Prince Albert residents banded together to create the COMMUNITY heART project during Culture Days, or how a photography workshop held in Pine House Lake helped students heal. As with every issue of this magazine, there are so many great stories to share.

SaskCulture’s board just met in November to explore new strategic directions for the next five years. There were many great ideas, tons of stories, discussion and reflection, about how cultural activities contribute to the wellbeing of people in this province – particularly those who may face barriers to access. Many recalled the Northern Panel from our last AGM, where youth from northern communities spoke about how important cultural activity was to them as individuals, and to other youth in their communities. Others were interested in us building better systems to support increased Indigenous and

newcomer engagement, and help support us all on our paths to reconciliation. Our stories going forward need to demonstrate how we are continuing to break down barriers, provide more opportunities and engage those who have not had opportunities before.

Each of us has a role to play in helping ensure we all can find a strong sense of identity, belonging and place. Take the time to explore the *Saskatchewan Index of Wellbeing* at [www.saskwellbeing.ca](http://www.saskwellbeing.ca), discuss it with others, and be part of a strategy going forward that will build an even better and more inclusive culturally vibrant Saskatchewan.

SaskCulture CEO Rose Gilks learns about Cree Syllabics at 2019 Nuit Blanche festival. Photo by Diane Ell.



# Gathering Helps Tell The True Story of Chief Big Bear

BY MIRANDA HANUS

**P**iapot. Poundmaker. One Arrow. These are just a few of the First Nation communities in Saskatchewan that signed treaty agreements and named their community after their Chief. But according to the history books, one Cree leader, Big Bear, along with the people in his band, were unable to negotiate a land base after other leaders agreed to the terms of Treaty Four in the Fall of 1874.

This history inspired an Indigenous gathering called the “Gathering of the Descendants

of the Big Bear Band”, as a platform to share and listen to the true stories of Chief Big Bear at the Little Pine First Nation. The event, organized by the Big Bear Cultural Society, encouraged participants to share their kinship lineage to the Big Bear Band through oral tradition, piecing together their history by memory, and stories passed down through generations.

Terry Atimoyoo is one of the volunteer coordinators for the event and says much of the history surrounding Big Bear’s life, including the circumstances of his

imprisonment, are very different from the history books.

One of the stories not in the books, according to Atimoyoo, was that Big Bear attended a treaty signing prior to Treaty 4 negotiations. He said the leader had followed the buffalo south into the United States and witnessed the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty in South Dakota.

“He saw how little the First Nations peoples were getting in terms of their land, and he encouraged the leaders in Treaty 4 to negotiate for more,” he says.

---

*Participants at the Gathering of the Descendants of the Big Bear Band 2019 listen to the true history of Chief Big Bear. Photo by Harvey Knight.*



“The Canadian history books really misaligned us First Nations people,” including how tribes dealt with injustice from the settlers and Indian agents at the time.” - TERRY ATIMOYOO

“The Canadian history books really misaligned us First Nations people,” including how tribes dealt with injustice from the settlers and Indian agents at the time.

Another story was that after the Battle of Batoche, Big Bear, considered a hostile, surrendered, and this led to his arrest. He was charged with treason, and imprisoned for three years in Stony Mountain Penitentiary.

“Approximately 30 warriors were imprisoned for three year terms, but were released after one year. Big Bear was

released because he was dying, humiliated that as a once proud Chief of his band, he was made to take care of pigs in prison. It was too much for him,” said Atimoyoo.

Upon his release, Big Bear was welcomed onto the Little Pine First Nation. He passed away a short time later while visiting Poundmaker's community.

The Gathering held for the past two years, has continued to grow in attendance of about 250 people. The gathering featured an assembly area (outdoors around a fire) set up with a microphone. According to Atimoyoo, this circle was to encourage sharing, rather than to sit and listen. It turns out, Atimoyoo explains, that the participants were sharing stories around the kitchen table, where the food and coffee were served.

One of the challenges for the Gathering was finding people who were related to Big Bear or his band members. Atimoyoo says after 1885, Indian Affairs would “coerce families onto different reserves.”

Other band members changed their names for fear of reprisal by being a member of the Big Bear Band. He notes that this made it a challenge to find people who knew the original band members' names from 1885. Atimoyoo says they are limited by centralizing the gathering in one area because there are descendants that are hundreds of miles away who cannot participate. He says one possibility for the future is getting the speakers together for the winter, and going to different communities, to go and tell these stories in communities where there are descendants of the Big Bear Band.

Plans are in the works to publish a book of the stories shared by participants. “These stories humanize us,” he says. “We can help the younger ones with their identity. This means a lot to people to know their family was part of the Big Bear Band, with a leader who was a very influential man.”

This event received funding from SaskCulture’s Aboriginal Arts and Culture Leadership Grant. “We’re so glad that SaskCulture makes this possible,” he says. “The more we do to build up our identity, the better we have a chance of getting the younger generation to take up the legacy of the Big Bear Band.”

Atimoyoo welcomes everyone to the Gathering next summer. For more information, please see the Facebook page [Gathering-of-the-Descendants-of-the-Big-Bear-Band](#).



TOP: Terry Atimoyoo (Right) sits with an Elder and a researcher at the Gathering. BOTTOM: Participants share their stories at the “Gathering of the Descendants of the Big Bear Band” at the Little Pine First Nation. Photos by Harvey Knight.



# Connecting the heART to Wellbeing

BY SHAUNNA GRANDISH

**A**rts and culture can have a direct connection to health and wellbeing, and Prince Albert artist Cheryl Ring knows best how to make people explore how the arts feed the heart and mind.

Ring describes her art as an “eclectic mix of colour and texture with a social context.” She mostly works with clay but this is adaptable to any medium depending on how it fits her vision for a project.

A few years ago, Ring noticed the heart-shaped theme creeping into her work, and she decided to research how this shape became part of the human psyche as a cultural icon. The heart shape then became a focal point of her artwork.



Ring's interest in incorporating the heart-shape into her artwork was a perfect match to this year's Culture Days' theme of "Creativity".

In the weeks leading up to the 2019 Culture Days celebrations, Ring set up a large heart sculpture at the Gateway Mall. On September 28, as part of Culture Days, she asked participants to share what arts and culture meant to them, and its influence in their lives by writing it on a sheet of Japanese paper. Ring says she really wanted people to consider the value of arts in their daily lives and to be mindful about what they love to do and what feeds their hearts and minds. She also wanted to give them a chance to explore personal feelings and possibly encourage further exploration of other art forms.

Before the Japanese paper was placed on the shape, Ring made a newspaper layer, which was applied by students from Won Ska Cultural School in Prince Albert while they discussed the heart as a cultural icon and the reason for the layer.

"The result was a large heart covered with a meaningful narrative about how our community connects to art and culture," explains Ring. "The project helps justify arts and culture initiatives for the future and just how necessary it is for municipalities to support."

On a personal level, this project also fits with Ring's belief that health and wellbeing are very important to creating balance in her life. She explains that creating art and enjoying cultural activities allows her to "quiet the noise" inside her head, connect with her spirit, and recharge physically and mentally.

"This project is a direct reflection of my work and spirit. The heart is a symbol all of humanity recognizes for its meaning," Ring says. "Community is something I value and want to promote in my city."

She goes on to add, "None of this could have been achieved without the leadership of SaskCulture and all of the funding agencies in Saskatchewan that make events like this possible."

Opportunities, like these events offered at Culture Days, bring people together, create connection and allow an entire community to experience arts and culture. I cannot thank organizers enough for all of their dedication and hard work!"

“Opportunities, like these events offered at Culture Days, bring people together, create connection and allow an entire community to experience arts and culture. I cannot thank organizers enough for all of their dedication and hard work!” - CHERYL RING



Messages reflecting people's thoughts and feelings about arts and culture adorn the commUNITY heART. Photos by Alex Powalinsky



## Classroom Learning Experience

# Keep Indigenous Cultures and Traditions Alive

BY BUSAYO OSOBADE

**H**eld the past 37 years, the Cultural Week celebration in Cumberland House is known for engaging community members but even more for holding innovative initiatives that bring Indigenous history and culture into the classroom.

As part of this celebration, Mika Carriere, Cree language teacher at the Charlebois Community School in Cumberland House initiated the project “Learning from our Elders”, which involved bringing Elders into her classes – Grade 10 and Grade 12 Cree language students - to share their life stories with the students.

“As a school we are decolonizing the curriculum by using the Cree language in the classroom and by welcoming Elders in

to share their traditional ecological knowledge of the land and to reflect on the teachings of ‘mino-pimatisiwin’ – which is our school’s vision meaning ‘living the good life’”, she says. “Our students are still in the process of learning their native language. We encourage and inspire our *oskayak*- young people- to keep the language alive by telling them ‘Kawina pagicik’ (which means) don’t give up.”

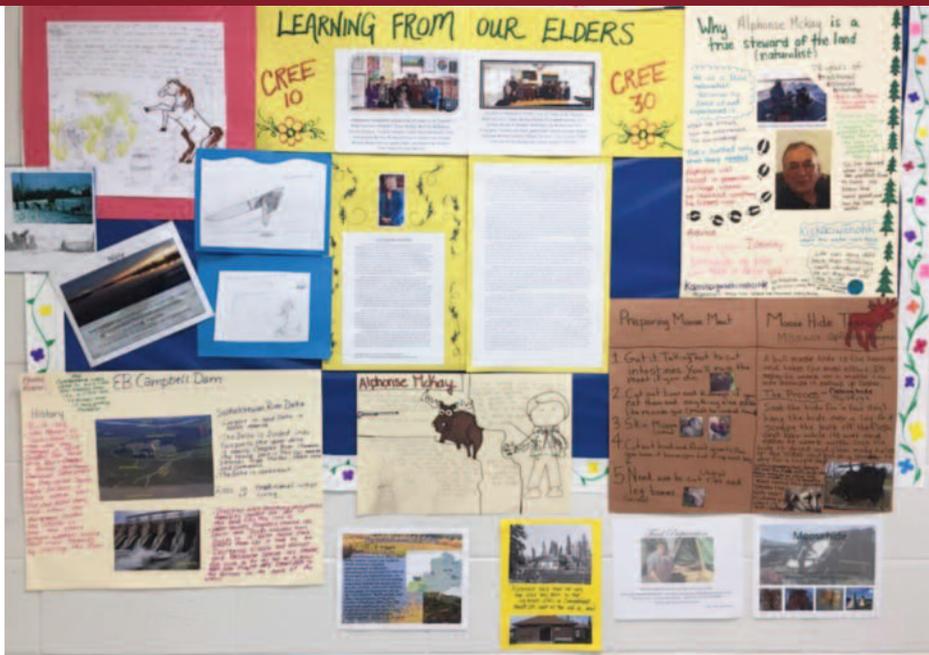
The project involved two Elders – Elder Alphonse McKay and Elder June Haybittle - and the students. They both grew up in the Cumberland House but had moved away from the community many years ago. Carriere says they were both visiting their families, and it was a blessing to have them visit the classroom and speak with the students about the past.

Carriere believes the youth need to listen to how challenging life was in the past because today they have so many amenities at hand, which are taken for granted. “We are teaching our students to take the time to truly listen, not only with their ears but with their hearts. We believe that in order to know who you are, you need to know where you come from.”

Elder McKay shared a few stories of how Cumberland people lived in the past. “We used horses to haul firewood and water to the people that lived in the town of Cumberland,” he says. “You have to have the desire to learn the trade and everything. You have to know all the different signs of the species we are making a living from because you are living off of the land.

“Life was simple back then; our Swampy Cree people did not see themselves as being poor but as being rich with the wealth of natural resources and family in their lives because they truly lived the *mino-pimatisiwin* (good life) way!” - MIKA CARRIERE

*Charlebois Community School Cree 30 class that attended one of the "Learning from our Elders Sessions." (L-R) Teacher Mika Carriere, Tambi McKay (Grade 10 student sitting), Kato Settee (Grade 9 student standing), Lily McKay-Carriere (Principal), Trystin Carriere, guest elder and Knowledge Keeper Alphonse McKay (center), Ebony Carriere, Tala Sayese, Ethel Cook and Wilma McKay, School Support Worker. Photo courtesy of Mika Carriere.*



Carriere goes on to say, “Life was simple back then; our Swampy Cree people did not see themselves as being poor but as being rich with the wealth of natural resources and family in their lives because they truly lived the *mino-pimatisiwin* (good life) way!” She adds that the “students were moved with emotion when Elder

Alphonse McKay shared how much has changed over the past 40 years in regard to the landscape and the water levels; tears were shed when he reflected on “how different life was like back then compared to now.”

The students created a visual display of all the lessons learned from both Elders. One

of the art pieces submitted by one student, Ebony Carriere, was donated to a local women’s group who were advocating for the health of the Saskatchewan River Delta. The painting had a quote written on it, which was said by Alphonse McKay. He said in Cree, ‘*Ekawina notina s̄piyi, kita – pimiciwin*’ which means ‘Don’t force the river, it will flow on its own’. Carriere said this spoke to the importance of keeping the community’s water clean. “It’s a message from an Elder who is telling us to leave things untouched, to let nature take its course.”

Carriere said with the community’s support and guidance, they would keep documenting the stories of the past, hoping that students can hear the voices of the Elders before it’s too late.

This project received funding from SaskCulture’s Community Cultural Engagement and Planning Grant. It also received the 2019 Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan Heritage Award for engaging students and Elders in the community to document and celebrate its unique living heritage.



TOP: Cree 10 & Cree 30 – Collaborative Story Board shows all the informational pieces that were created. Photo: Mika Carriere.  
 BOTTOM: His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan Russ Mirasty, and his wife, Donna Mirasty (far right), The Honourable Gene Makowsky Minister of Parks Culture & Sport (left), Elder Alphonse McKay, and Teacher Mika Carriere (center). Photo by Busayo Osobade.

# Building Community and Sharing Culture Through Art

BY MYRNA WILLIAMS



An award-winning program, developed and delivered by local artists with an interest in living heritage, recently guided one Saskatchewan community in exploring its unique identity.

Geoff and Connie Philips are an entrepreneurial couple who are both artists. They chose to move to Maple Creek and started an art business known as The Art House, with a studio, a gallery and a classroom.

Together with Royce Pettyjohn, an historian who serves as a board member of the South West Saskatchewan Old Timers' Museum & Archive, they proposed a series of living heritage workshops and received funding support from the Artists

in Communities Grant, delivered by the Saskatchewan Arts Board, with funding from SaskCulture thanks to Saskatchewan Lotteries.

They planned nine Living Heritage Art Workshops to run once a month, from September 2018 to June 2019. The workshops coincided with the school year, since students would be targeted participants, along with members of the general public.

"This type of project was new to us, and it was exciting to innovate and plan each workshop with fresh ideas to engage our various audiences," says Connie. "Each project evolved: the museum suggested heritage themes to us, we developed the art workshops to link to each theme, and

then each workshop came to life in its own way through the participants."

The heritage themes they selected include the Human Connection to the Natural Environment of the Cypress Hills, Living Heritage of Nekaneet First Nation, and the Living Heritage of the Cypress Hills Métis, among others.

Geoff Phillips found working with Pettyjohn and the participants to be an educational process, saying "Everyone involved learned so much. Participants studied the artifacts and archival material identified by the museum, and listened to stories about the heritage themes to be explored. Then, the participants shared their own stories and created art with us." At some workshops, the couple guided the art process; however, some workshops also involved other artists or cultural practitioners.

The community's response was enthusiastic; local newspapers and social media provided generous coverage. "The Museum had been struggling to get people through the doors.

But heritage doesn't exist only inside of museum walls: it's all around us," says Pettyjohn. "It's alive – in our language, customs, and our buildings – it's the identity of the community.

“But heritage doesn't exist only inside of museum walls: it's all around us. It's alive – in our language, customs, and our buildings – it's the identity of the community.”

- ROYCE PETTYJOHN

The workshops helped us reach a much broader audience than usual, and it was gratifying to have so much enthusiastic participation.

"The cultural educational opportunities for school children to meet and hear stories, and learn traditional skills firsthand from Elders and others in their own community is of interest: our workshops became something local people looked forward to each month. They provided opportunities for people from different parts of the greater community to come together, share stories, and talk about what community means to them. It was positive for everyone involved."

*Connie Phillips of The Art House at the S.W. Sask. Oldtimers' Museum providing instruction during the Living Heritage Art Workshop Series. Photo courtesy of S.W. Sask. Oldtimers' Museum.*



Pettyjohn adds that the workshop series has led to new events for the community to celebrate together.

“As a result of our second workshop on First Nations cultural heritage, the museum and Elders from Nekaneet First Nation have agreed to start a twice annual ‘Feeding the Spirits’ feast to commemorate the original users and artisans of the Indigenous artifacts entrusted to the museum.”

In addition to community recognition, the workshop series received accolades outside of Maple Creek. In October 2019, the series received the Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan Heritage Award for Community Development. Also in October, the Series was part of the reason the National Trust for Canada awarded its prestigious 2019 Prince of Wales Prize to the Town of Maple Creek, citing its “long track record of effective revitalization and demonstrated results in bringing heritage to life through exemplary municipal heritage conservation.”



ABOVE: Geoff Phillips of the Art House, encourages creativity during the Living Heritage Art Workshop Series at the museum. Photo courtesy of S.W. Sask. Oldtimers' Museum.  
 BOTTOM: His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan Russ Mirasty (center), the Honourable Gene Makowsky Minister of Parks Culture & Sport (far left) present award to Royce Pettyjohn (S.W. Sask. Oldtimers Museum) and Connie and Geoff Phillips of the Art House (right). Photo courtesy of Royce Pettyjohn.



# Finding a Connection to the Land Through Art

BY SHAUNNA GRANDISH



Arts enthusiasts had the opportunity to connect with the land during Regina's annual Nuit Blanche. A few snowflakes drifting down didn't keep people from enjoying art under the stars.

This is the second year Regina has hosted its very own Nuit Blanche – a free, outdoor, nighttime arts festival - showcasing art installations throughout downtown Regina. The festival was held on September 28, as part of the Culture Days celebrations.

Michelle Harazny, artistic director of Nuit Blanche Regina, and her team of three curators, who each came from a different part of the world before settling in Regina, chose this year's festival theme 'Reflections of the Land'. Harazny says they were interested in the human connection to the land and the stories that emerged as people move between places and spaces.

"For me personally, I like to think about public spaces and ways that they can be enhanced. For example, drawing attention to a building's exterior wall or a back alley. The artists highlighted public space downtown and engaged the public through their artwork," she explains.

All of the participating artists reflected the theme through their work. Estelle Bonetto

projected scenes from Regina's urban landscapes through a bicycle's rearview mirror as a method for the audience to connect with a specific place. Other artists, such as Sarah Cummings Truskowski, chose to reflect on the land and environment. Truskowski created an illuminated installation out of plastic waste to bring attention to human dependence on plastic and its impact on the land.

According to Harazny, the audience that evening really embraced the theme and found the artworks inspiring. "One attendee said that everyone can relate to the theme in some way, and it's important to think about how we are all connected through land," she notes. "Respecting the land and expressing that relationship through the arts is very special."

Harazny says her team is already starting to plan next year's Nuit Blanche Regina and are reaching out to other Nuit Blanche organizers in other cities to make the future version even better.

"We are so grateful to SaskCulture and Saskatchewan Lotteries for supporting us through Culture Days funding," she says while adding that SaskCulture also helped the festival reach wider audiences by advertising Nuit Blanche Regina on their social media channels.

---

*Regina's second annual Nuit Blanche festival featured art installations, performances, and interactive community projects during Culture Days event such as an illuminated installation by Sarah Cummings Truskowski. Photos by Diane Ell.*

# A Lens on Culture

BY ANDRÉA LEDDING



**A** local photographer is helping kids build their self-esteem and achieve wellness through connecting to culture.

Dre Erwin is a photographer who knows first-hand the potential for the camera to save lives. He was at the lowest point after a traumatic divorce when he reached for his camera. He credits it with being beyond therapeutic. Now he has the whole community of Pinehouse, participating in a life-giving lens on culture and wellness.

“For me [photography] was a wake-up call, I was focusing too much on the negativity when there’s too much to be thankful for,” says Erwin. “It gave me hope, focus and direction and also courage. Courage to take on things that I normally wouldn’t.”

This awakening was what inspired his move to Pinehouse as a primary caregiver. A chance encounter with the northern lights while letting his dog out, began his pursuit of night photography, which he began sharing on Facebook. When youth began asking him how to take these types of photos, the program evolved and continues to grow in popularity.

“They were telling me how it helps with depression and anxiety, mental health, addictions...an escape from the pain they’re going through,” he says. Photography saved my life and it’s helping them and can help more people — all by focusing on the good in life.”

With a studio, a full-time employee, and eight computers and printers, the

Pinehouse Photography Club currently works with over 300 kids a month.

Thanks to funding from SaskCulture’s Métis Cultural Development Fund, the Pinehouse Annual Elders’ Gathering, held June 16 to 21, 2019, was able to engage over 150 youth in learning photography at an event. This program was a highlight.

“They had shirts, ID, cameras, and they walked around for an entire week taking pictures of Elders, dancing, music,” says Erwin. “Kids that normally wouldn’t have cared are encouraged to take part in these events as a photographer. So now hiding behind a camera watching and seeing this, and getting community members celebrating what they’re doing, increases their self-esteem.”

“They were telling me how it helps with depression and anxiety, mental health, addictions... an escape from the pain they’re going through. Photography saved my life and it’s helping them and can help more people — all by focusing on the good in life.” — DRE ERWIN



Erwin explains further that while the youth were learning from Elders, and recording memories, they were also doing something for their community, understanding what it feels like to help others, and gaining understanding of their culture, community, traditions and teachings.

“They’re preserving those memories and showcasing them, enlarging pictures and doing presentations,” he says. “We are wanting to put a book together with some of their work as well as stories of Elders and traditional practices.”

The club has expanded to Beauval, the Pinehouse Mental Health and Addictions Treatment Centre, and is duplicatable across the country.

“We’re looking at the good in life instead of always focusing on the bad. As they’re looking through the lens they’re seeing life in a new way on a day to day basis. The buds, the sunrises and sunsets: such an important part of mental health is prevention. Photography is just one tool they can use.”

Erwin hopes to continue to expand so others can capture culture and landscape and lives through their lenses, and publish their work in book form.

“All these kids need to feel they’re part of a community — photography connects them to their own culture. It gets them out of the house and into a group that’s supportive and focuses on their traditional aspects and how being a part of the community and your culture makes you feel better about yourself.”



TOP: Dre Erwin (second left) uses photography to engage youth. BOTTOM: Youth in Pinehouse enjoy the opportunity to get behind camera and photograph life, tradition, culture and more. Photos courtesy of Pinehouse Photography Club.



## Helping Indigenous Peoples Trace Their Roots

BY MIRANDA HANUS

Some consider genealogical research a hobby, but others need this information to shed light on their cultural identities. In particular, the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society (SGS) has been able to help many First Nation and Métis individuals find answers to questions they may have about their ancestry and lineage.

Laura Hanowski, volunteer and former librarian at the SGS, has spent considerable time assisting individuals and groups interested in tracking their Métis heritage.

She says that public records dating back as far as the 1901 Census are able to identify racial origin. Research into the Census information, registries, scrip documents, and other records are able to help First Nation and Métis peoples clarify their ancestry, which would help them determine their status, their rights and most importantly, give them a better sense of their identity.

Hanowski says public records begin with the 1926 Census, but the 1901 Census asks for racial origin, identifying if one's

ancestors were French, English or Scottish. "If families were members of a band, you could look into annuity treaty payments up to 1909." For specific Métis ancestry searches, Hanowski says family members can search for the scrip documents and registries. She adds that not all of them have been digitized. Some are still found in correspondence files of the Dominion Lands Branch.

"For people who were of French Roman-Catholic faith, there are Saskatchewan church records online," she says.

In addition, the Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, hosted by the Gabriel Dumont Institute, is a wealth of information and the Saskatchewan Archives still has files available to the public on microfilm.

To help people trace their Indigenous ancestry, the SGS has developed important partnerships, such as one with the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MNS). Tammy Vallee, registrar for the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MNS) and former SGS board member, says the partnership with SGS is informal, but mutually beneficial. Vallee is responsible for the Provincial Citizen Registry, which is used to help individuals find their Métis roots.

In addition, the Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, hosted by the Gabriel Dumont Institute, is a wealth of information and the Saskatchewan Archives still have files available to the public on microfilm.

Yorkton Branch Finding Your Ancestors Conference Sept 2019. Photo courtesy of SGS - Yorkton Branch.



Laura Hanowski presenting at the Yorkton Conference held this year. Photo courtesy of Laura Hanowski.

“I’ve presented to the SGS staff what the role of the registry is and what we do,” explains Vallee. “A lot of what we do is information exchange. It’s knowing how to best help clients.” She says her staff will refer clients to the SGS for research support, and the SGS will refer people looking for information on Métis status to the MNS. “We have connections to each other and we try and promote each other as much as we can.”

“It (the book) outlines what the sources are and is a guide on how to use them. It’s there to help you find information and where to look for the records.” - LAURA HANOWSKI

Vallee recommends the SGS courses to anyone interested in ancestry workshops. In addition, Hanowski continues to conduct workshops throughout Saskatchewan, including several in northern Saskatchewan.

“At the end of September, I worked with the Yorkton Branch (of SGS), and put on a mini-seminar, where I was invited to present a session on tracing your Aboriginal and Métis ancestors,” she explains. Due to her work in this area, she was invited to become part of a research team with the Métis National Council. Besides this course and various resources, she worked on a book *Tracing Your Aboriginal Ancestors on the Prairie Provinces: A Guide to the Records and How to Use Them*, which was published in 2006 and updated in 2013, by the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society, with financial support from the Métis National Council.

“It outlines what the sources are and is a guide on how to use them,” Hanowski explains. “It’s there to help you find information and where to look for the records.”

She notes that more resources are becoming available in digitized form online all the time.

*The SGS receives funding through SaskCulture’s Annual Global Fund.*

# ENJOY SASK EVENTS!

**VISIT [SASKCULTURE.CA/EVENTS](http://SASKCULTURE.CA/EVENTS) FOR A LISTING OF ARTS, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL EVENTS HAPPENING AROUND THE PROVINCE.**

**THE NEW ONLINE EVENTS GUIDE WELCOMES ALL ARTS AND CULTURAL EVENT POSTS TAKING PLACE IN THE PROVINCE.**



## Moose Jaw Provides Platform for Residents to Engage with New Neighbours

BY MYRNA WILLIAMS

The Moose Jaw Community Connection Program celebrates World Refugee Day by inviting residents to engage with newcomers and refugees.

Community members had a chance to hear firsthand the stories of refugees who fled the horrible situations in their home countries to make Moose Jaw their home.

This past summer, the Moose Jaw Council's Community Connection Program invited community members to a special event to hear these eye-opening stories, and to screen two films that document refugee experiences in Canada.

As the Community Connection Coordinator, Tyler Bastedo's job is to help refugees and newcomers to Canada meet new people, improve their English, and get to know more about their community. He planned the World Refugee Day event, inviting Paulin Apipila from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Shakir Ullah from Afghanistan, to address the audience before the films were screened. They spoke about their experiences as refugees,

arriving and learning to fit into the Moose Jaw community.

"The documentaries were well-received, but having them introduced by guest speakers who we welcomed just a few years ago made the films more personal and powerful," Tyler explains. "Both men arrived in Moose Jaw as refugees in 2014 and have settled in the community. By hearing their stories, the audience learned firsthand about the persecution they fled, and the many barriers to integration they had to overcome.

Bastedo says Moose Jaw welcomes about 60 individual refugees each year. "We have a large refugee population in our city, and work to get them involved in community life by fostering a welcoming environment in our city."

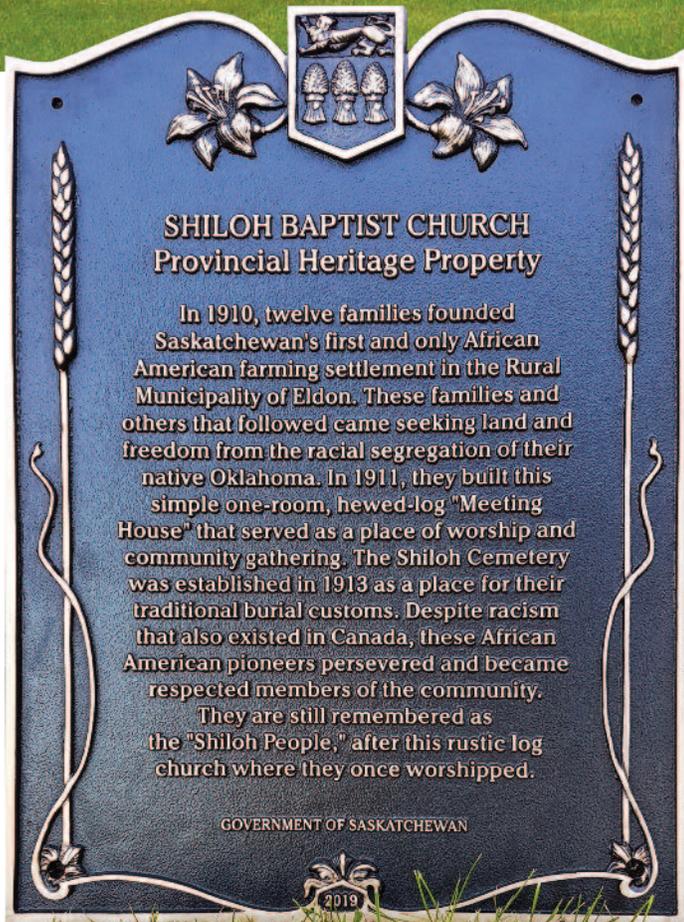
In addition to supporting newcomers, Community Connections program also helps the Moose Jaw community understand what the newcomers face, through public speaking engagements, awareness campaigns, promotional resource development, and intercultural communication and integration training for community agencies and the general public.

"We've held a variety of events over the past few years to celebrate World Refugee Day," Tyler says. "This year, our goal was to bring people from all backgrounds together to create understanding and unity within the community. The films we selected were eye-opening for everyone in the audience, as they heard from refugees rebuilding their lives in Canada."

Both films are available online for viewing. *Last Chance* is a feature length film that tells the stories of five asylum seekers who fled their native countries to escape homophobic violence. The other film, *19 Days*, is a short documentary that follows several refugee families during the 19-day timeline established by the federal government, when an initial assessment is done and refugees are assisted with everything from airport reception and orientation to referrals, documents, and counselling. You can view both films on the National Film Board of Canada's website.

*This event received funding from SaskCulture's Multicultural Initiatives Fund.*

Tyler Bastedo, Moose Jaw Community Connections Coordinator welcomes Moose Jaw residents to screen two films that document refugee experiences in Canada. Photo courtesy of Tyler Bastedo.

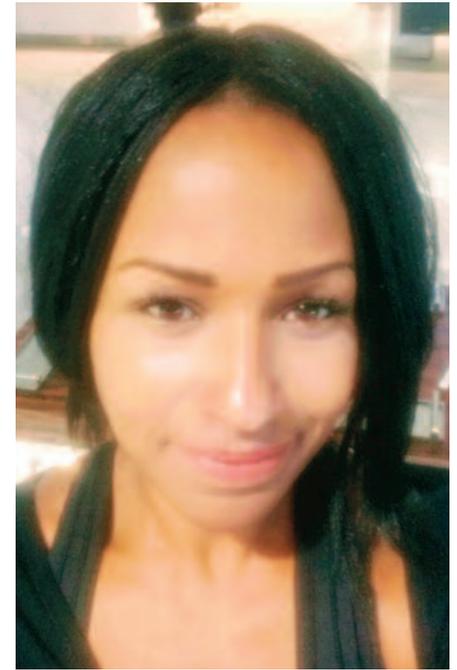


## Shiloh Community History Inspires Descendants to Embrace Identity

BY BUSAYO OSOBADE

**E**arlier this year, the Shiloh community - the first black community in Saskatchewan - received provincial heritage property designation. The Shiloh community was founded by dozens of families, who seeking freedom from discrimination, found their way to Maidstone, Saskatchewan in 1910. The Shiloh church, which received designation, was the first building that was built by the families.

As one of the original descendants of the Shiloh people, Crystal Mayes, director, Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum (SACHM), is pleased with the designation as it recognizes the history and contributions of African-Canadians to the province.



kids can be proud of their history and embrace their western life. “I did not know our family history that well. So as a nurse, when I am out seeing my elderly clients in their homes in the community, people would ask me where I am from and I would say Saskatchewan. They’d say ‘no where you came from,’ and I would say my parents are from Saskatchewan too,” she explains. “When they finally understand that my family has been here as long as the European settlers, then they’d understand that this is my home too.”

When asked to describe the church, she says it is a “pretty cool place and historic,” and it makes her feel like she is stepping back in time to what it would have been like for the families in 1910. “There are pictures that increase people’s awareness of the history of the Shiloh people, and the community. There is a picture of my great grandmother right at the front.”

Mayes says there is more information about the building and the history of the families on SACHM’s website. “There are plans to have a reunion at some point but that would be a couple of years down the road. SACHM always has events going on at the site, and all those histories are on that website as well.”

*SACHM received funding from SaskCulture’s Multicultural Initiatives Fund.*

“It’s just really a story of perseverance. They (the original Shiloh members) were overcoming really great obstacles and were still successful.”

- CRYSTAL MAYES

Crystal Mayes is the great granddaughter of Mattie Mayes, who is a member of one of the first families in the Shiloh community. She says her great grandmother was the only midwife for the community of Maidstone at the time. This, and the accomplishments of the community, inspires her daily to embrace her history and identity.

“Growing up here (in Saskatchewan), I did not really know my place. In the town that I grew up, there were no other kids my age that were black. As I got older, I started searching for more about our family histories and that really inspired me,” she says. “It makes me feel very proud that

she was my great grandmother and she was a great role model for everybody in my family, myself and my siblings.”

She believes the designation will help educate people that the black community has been in the province as long as many European settlers.

“It’s just really a story of perseverance. They (the original Shiloh members) were overcoming really great obstacles and were still successful,” she says. “They were not allowed to have a lot of things, but they were allowed to have a church so that would have probably been everything to them.”

Mayes hopes that other African-Canadian

*RIGHT: Crystal Mayes' great grandmother, Mattie Mayes is one of the original Shiloh people. She was the only midwife in the Maidstone area when she came to Canada in 1910. Photo courtesy of Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum. RIGHT: Crystal Mayes is one of the original descendants of the Shiloh community families. Photo courtesy of Crystal Mayes. PREVIOUS PAGE: Shiloh Baptist Church. Photo by Carol Lafayette - Boyd.*

# Living Heritage: Making Sense of Our Past in the Present

BY BUSAYO OSOBADE



**D**efining heritage could be a challenging task, and it becomes even more challenging when “living” is added to it. Over the years, the use of “living heritage” has become increasingly popular in discussions, however this term is sometimes used interchangeably with Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), which may be confusing.

To better understand these terms, and how heritage is essential for contemporary and future wellbeing, *Engage* writer, Busayo Osobade, spoke to

Kristin Catherwood about the growing popularity of living heritage.

Catherwood is a folklorist, and Heritage Saskatchewan’s Director of Living Heritage. She facilitates workshops and training in the province to help communities discover, interpret, and celebrate their living heritage. She has coordinated living heritage projects across the province and is currently working with the community of Cumberland House on a documentation project.

*Kristin Catherwood, director of Living Heritage at Heritage Saskatchewan, explains living heritage in presentations all over the province. Photo courtesy of Kristin Catherwood.*

## Q&A



**Q.** What is Living Heritage?

**A.** Living Heritage is a term which Heritage Saskatchewan uses to acknowledge that our values, beliefs and ways of living shape our identity, belonging and place – connecting our past, present and future. It defines our sense of identity as individuals and our relationships with others, shaping our communities and quality of life in the process.

Therefore, it is deeply connected to our wellbeing and our quality of life, and plays an important role in nurturing community resilience. This was demonstrated through our work producing the *Saskatchewan Index of Wellbeing*, a resource that expands our understanding of how well our communities and citizens are faring beyond the economic measures of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Heritage Saskatchewan was thrilled to recently win the Governor’s Award from the National Trust for Canada on this groundbreaking project.

**UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) defines Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) as follows:**  
*The practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. ICH is transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.*



**Q. How do communities identify living heritage?**

**A.** Communities may use a different language than we do to describe ICH or living heritage, and so it's our job to listen to what they are concerned about and find ways to assist them. A community may contact us saying they want to preserve their community's stories, or they are worried about losing some traditional knowledge, or that they have a building they want to save, and part of that process is documenting the ICH connected to that building, for example.

**Q. How can communities safeguard their ICH, especially when many societies today seek to adapt to global change?**

**A.** It is an ongoing challenge to safeguard ICH in a rapidly evolving, globalized, and technologically driven world. This is why UNESCO saw the need

to create the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. There are tools within that document to help in this work, including creating inventories of ICH. Since Canada has not signed this Convention, some provinces have decided to implement the UNESCO recommendations as much as possible. Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec have actually put them into legislation. In Saskatchewan, this work is being undertaken by the non-profit sector, led by Heritage Saskatchewan. More specifically, I employ the four goals of Safeguarding ICH in my work, which are documentation, recognition and celebration, transmission, and community development (including economic development).

Though we are all part of a global world, we live locally. Individuals, families and communities who are interested in safeguarding their cultural traditions will find ways to make that happen, and Heritage Saskatchewan offers resources, knowledge, and support to help them achieve their goals.



**Q. How does Heritage Saskatchewan provide communities with these resources, knowledge, and support?**

**A.** Heritage Saskatchewan advocates for ICH at a provincial and national level, and we offer resources for communities that are interested in safeguarding their heritage. In 2018, we added the category of Intangible Cultural Heritage projects to our Lieutenant Governor Heritage Awards to recognize the great work that communities, organizations, and individuals are doing to safeguard ICH around the province.

We collaborate with organizations within and outside the heritage community to reach as many networks across the province as possible. Thus, we can

connect communities to the specific resources they need to help them in their efforts to safeguard ICH and build resilient communities.

We respond to communities based on their unique contexts and work with them to develop the project, process, or program that they are looking for. This often starts with me visiting the community to offer a living heritage workshop to help them identify their unique cultural heritage assets. After that initial community visit, we maintain an ongoing relationship with the community. Sometimes that first workshop is enough to jumpstart their work. Other times, our connection leads to a formal collaboration in the form of a living heritage project.

**Q. Since Living Heritage involves making our past relevant, please share some tips on how youth can be included and engaged?**

**A.** We must give youth the opportunity and the platform to share what is important to them, to be creative, and to have their perspectives valued. We need to ask them what they care about, and ask them what makes them feel connected to their place, the people who live there, and their cultural heritage. Specifically, we need to provide youth with opportunities to express their creativity and share their worldviews. One really valuable and useful way to do this is to connect them with tradition bearers, and to give the youth the opportunity to actively lead that process. For example, if a community plans to do a documentation project on some element of its cultural heritage, inviting youth to do the interviews and have a hand or lead the process of documentation can be a very effective tool to engage youth with their community.

**Q. How can communities access to Heritage Saskatchewan's resources and workshops?**

**A.** Heritage Saskatchewan's community engagement work is adaptive and responsive to individual community and organization needs. Email [ich@heritagesask.ca](mailto:ich@heritagesask.ca) or call the office at (306) 780-9191, or visit our website at [www.heritagesask.ca](http://www.heritagesask.ca)



## How Rivers West District is Creating Connections and Bridging Gaps

BY LAUREN RACETTE

**T**hanks to a focus on grant writing and relationship building, the Rivers West District has been successful in supporting the efforts of various First Nations and Métis groups in accessing funds needed to engage their communities in cultural activities.

Bonnie Mills Midgley, community development coordinator, Rivers West District for Sport, Culture and Recreation (RWDCSR), believes that a mix of networking opportunities, communication linkages, and program support, is important to helping groups prepare successful grants.

“Communities are always looking for

funding for their various projects,” says Mills Midgley. “We try to provide participants with knowledge and best practices for a successful funding application,” she says, adding that the District also provides a space to network, build relationships and create connections with various facilitators and participants.

Over the past few years, groups such as Poundmaker Cree Nation, Miyawata Cultural Association, Dog Patch Music Festival, Big Bear Cultural Society and Chief Poundmaker Museum, are a few of the groups offering Indigenous programming in the District, supported through funding from SaskCulture’s Multicultural Initiatives

Fund or the Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Leadership Grant.

Part of Mills Midgley’s work is focused on providing funding assistance to people in the area, which she accomplishes by organizing grant writing workshops in communities throughout the District. Mills Midgley believes that participants who are able to get first-hand information about the various funding opportunities available, such as presentations by funding agencies, are more likely to be successful.

Rivers West often partners with SaskCulture in the delivery of grant writing, or project development, workshops for this purpose. Dominga Robinson, outreach consultant, SaskCulture, often facilitates these types of workshops. She agrees that these are an important resource for helping residents build the skills they need to access funding opportunities.

“I believe that working with Rivers West has been a really positive experience for both them and us (SaskCulture) in terms of collaborating in community engagement. This is especially true with the First Nations and Métis communities being the main benefactor of that connection between us.”

“ I believe that working with Rivers West has been a really positive experience for both them and us (SaskCulture) in terms of collaborating in community engagement. This is especially true with the First Nations and Métis communities being the main benefactor of that connection between us. ”

- DOMINGA ROBINSON

Robinson goes on to say, “It takes time to develop these relationships. Trust is the key and by sharing information and spending time in the communities, we see that impact as well as a higher quality of applications.” She mentions that the discussion is no

*Participants learn tips and tricks to applying for a grant. Photo by Dominga Robinson.*

longer around the lack of clarity with the projects, but about how much of an impact it's going to have in the community. This has always been part of her goals when facilitating these workshops.

"The network has grown because of the outreach and the connections made. It is an opportunity to invite the community to be a part of our network and build capacity in regard to successfully applying for community-based project funding."

Going forward, Mills Midgely hopes that an emphasis can be placed on successful grant applications that workshop participants complete, saying, "When a community can access outreach consultants who can show them these tips and tricks, the funding possibilities for their projects increase."

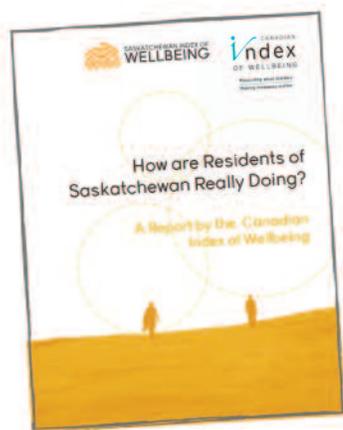
The Rivers West District is one of the seven districts supported through the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund that help local groups and organizations ensure that culture, sport and recreation programming thrive in the province.

“ The network has grown because of the outreach and the connections made. It is an opportunity to invite the community to be a part of our network and build capacity in regard to successfully applying for community based project funding. ”

- DOMINGA ROBINSON



SaskCulture Outreach Consultant Dominga Robinson delivering a grant writing workshop. Photo by Bonnie Mills Midgley.



## Report Shows Saskatchewan Citizens Spend Less Time on Leisure and Culture

over the last 20 years. This means there has been "less time socializing with others, fewer hours committed to volunteering for culture and recreation, shorter vacation trips and reduced spending of household income on culture and recreation opportunities".

Some of the noted changes in Leisure and Culture include:

A substantial drop in arts and culture participation over past 20 years, but it has been on the rebound since 2012, with it currently sitting at 7.4 per cent above the Canadian average of 4.3 per cent.

A 34.3 per cent overall drop in hours volunteering per year for culture and recreation organizations in Saskatchewan; yet, average hours volunteering (49.8 per cent) is still

slightly higher than the national average (48 per cent);

Time spent socializing with friends slipped by 40 per cent; back in 1994 people spent 18.6 per cent of a day socializing, and by 2014, this amount had slipped to 11.6 per cent. On the positive side, attendance at performing arts events, and levels of physical activity, have grown over the past 20 years.

These indicators suggest some deterioration in the amount of time available for activities that help provide us with a sense of who we are as a people and reinforce our sense of belonging to our community. For more information, read the full report on Heritage Saskatchewan's website at [www.heritagesask.ca](http://www.heritagesask.ca).

**T**he Saskatchewan Index of Wellbeing (SIW): *How are Residents of Saskatchewan Really Doing?* is a report by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, released in partnership with Heritage Saskatchewan and the Community Initiatives Fund. Some results from the report paint an interesting picture of wellbeing throughout the province.

According to this report, there has been an increase in education, living standards, and community vitality. However, it also measures a decrease in leisure and culture



Messages reflecting people's thoughts and feelings about arts and culture adorn the community heart.

Photo by Alex Powlinsky.

Sask **Culture**

FUNDING  
PROVIDED BY

Saskatchewan  
**LOTTERIES**

404 - 2125 11th Avenue  
Regina, SK S4P 3X3  
info@saskculture.ca  
www.saskculture.ca

Publication Mail Agreement #40063014

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:  
Administration Printing Services  
111-2001 Cornwall Street  
Regina, SK S4P 3X9  
Email: adminprint@sasktel.net