

**Mamawhitowin “Coming Together”
FNMI Educators Conference 2019
October 17 & 18, 2019,
Stonebridge Hotel, Grande Prairie, AB**

Thursday, October 17, 2019

6:30am - 8:30am Pipe Ceremony

8:30am - 9:00am Coffee/ Registration

9:00am - 9:15am Prayer /Welcome/Acknowledgements

9:15am - 10:00am Elders’ Panel “How can we honor Diversity and Inclusion in our schools?”

10:00am - 10:15am Break

10:15am - 12:00pm Keynote: “Diversity and Inclusion”, **Aaron Paquette**

12:00pm - 1:00pm Lunch

Thursday Breakout Sessions 1:00pm - 3:30pm (Integrated 15 minutes break)

A1. *“Literacy and Storytelling”* **Aaron Paquette**

A2. *“Awakening Your Spirit: Vision Quest Teachings”* **Holly Crumpton & Dennis Whitford**

A3. *“Weaving Ways - Teacher Resources”* **Etienna Moosetoos-Lafferty**

A4. *“Full Circle: Understanding Social Implications of Indigenous Realities”* **Cassandra Mercer**

A5. *“Education for Reconciliation: What’s It All About?”* **Kim Barker-Kay**

3:30pm Smudge

Friday, October 18, 2019

8:30am - 9:00am Coffee/Registrations

9:00am - 9:15am Prayer /Welcome/Acknowledgements

9:15am - 9:30am Opening Address

Friday Breakout Sessions 9:30am - 12:00pm (Integrated 15 minutes break)

B1. *"My Life: Growing up in Nunavut"* **Goota Desmarais**

B2. *"Embedding Indigenous Content into Curriculum"* **Charlene Noskey**

B3. *"Foundational Knowledge for Educators: Understanding the Métis in Canada"* **Brigitte Benning**

B4. *"Indigenous Education Resources: Where Do I Start?"* **Cassandra Mercer**

12:00-1:00pm Lunch

1:00pm – 3.00pm Keynote: "Inuit Connections", **Goota Desmarais**

***(A 15 minutes break has been integrated)**

3:00pm - 3:30pm Closing Remarks & Thank Yous

3:30pm Dismissal

Thursday, October 17th

Elders Panel – 9:15am - 10:00am

A group of local Elders have been invited to respond to the question, “**How can we honor Diversity and Inclusion in our schools?**”.

Opening Keynote Session – 10:15am-12:00pm: Diversity and Inclusion, Aaron Paquette

There’s a phrase that has always stuck with me: if you’re not at the table, then you’re on the menu.

It begs the question, “why is diversity and inclusion important?”

To answer this question, I walk the audience through traditional knowledge, oral stories, and modern best practices that demonstrate the ways in which diverse perspectives strengthen organizations, help them be more effective, innovative and nimble.

Most people know the world is shrinking, that technology and travel is bringing us closer together than ever. What we are still discovering, is how we cope with a shrinking world and an expanding landscape of perspectives.

Organizations, communities and individual professionals in any field can benefit from a deeper understanding of the unique and varied lenses through which we see our world.

We can create more productive partnerships and open new possibilities when we discover how we are all truly stronger together.

Thursday Breakout Sessions 1:00pm - 3:30pm

A1. "Literacy and Storytelling" Aaron Paquette

The power of literacy is the power to discover stories. To tell your story is to shape your life. Words create worlds

A2. "Awakening Your Spirit: Vision Quest Teachings" Holly Crumpton & Dennis Whitford

Learn more about an opportunity in the northwest region of Alberta to participate in a Vision Quest including how to prepare and what to expect while on a Vision Quest. Find out why you might want to incorporate these cultural teachings into your practice as an educator for the benefit of yourself and your students.

A3. "Weaving Ways - Teacher Resources" Etienna Moosetoos-Lafferty

This session will engage participants in "The Weaving Ways" resource guide to support teachers in considering how Indigenous knowledge systems can support a rich experience for students in their classrooms.

With an invitation to teachers to be mindful of Indigenous ways of knowing within current practices, Weaving Ways guides teacher exploration of the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples while engendering an environment of belonging for all.

A4. "Full Circle: Understanding Social Implications of Indigenous Realities" Cassandra Mercer

This workshop will examine core causes of intergenerational trauma, challenge common myths and misconceptions, as well as explore activities to foster effective relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, families and community.

Participants will explore assimilation strategies that have contributed to many current realities of Indigenous students, families and community.

You will gain an increased understanding of physical, mental, social and spiritual impacts, and strength-based initiatives to contribute to the advancement of the reconciliation process.

A5. "Education for Reconciliation: What's It All About?" Kim Barker-Kay

Lots has been happening in Alberta around Education for Reconciliation.

Curriculum is changing, as well as standards that guide teaching and administrating in education.

During this session, you will learn about the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action in education and what is meant by reconciliation.

You will also learn about the TQS – Teacher Quality Standards – and the changes that happened in September 2019.

Most importantly, you will be introduced to actions you can personally take that will prepare you to support students and yourselves.

Friday, October 18th

Friday Breakout Sessions 9:30am-12:00pm

B1. " My Life: Growing up in Nunavut" Goota Desmarais

Goota shares her life experience of growing up in Nunavut and the challenges she faced to survive.

Note that some of the content of this presentation may be disturbing to some people.

B2. "Embedding Indigenous Content into Curriculum" Charlene Noskey

First part of the session will be an overview in understanding the historical and social implications of the Treaties and agreements with First Nations and Metis peoples, as well as the residential schools and their legacy.

The second half will focus on the program of studies and how to link Indigenous content throughout the 4 core subjects. Grade level resources will be available.

We will also touch on the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to Action).

B3. "Foundational Knowledge for Educators: Understanding the Métis in Canada" Brigitte Benning

Often referred to as 'the forgotten people', there are many misunderstandings about Métis people in Canada.

This session will explore the unique history of Métis people, their stories of oppression and resistance, their distinct culture, and their current experiences today.

As a Métis woman, Brigitte will share her family's story of reclaiming their Métis roots. Educators will be provided the opportunity to strengthen their own foundational knowledge and will leave the session with student-focused classroom resources.

B4. "Indigenous Education Resources: Where Do I Start?" Cassandra Mercer

This session will support educators in using resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

You will learn about culturally responsive resources to increase your capacity in foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

In addition, you will leave with tools to consider for critically reviewing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit resources for classroom and professional use.

Closing Keynote Session 1:00pm -3:00pm "Inuit Connections", Goota Desmarais

Introduction to Inuit Culture Inuit traditions and culture revolved around the land based resources of the North.

With the limited resources of the harsh arctic environment, the Inuit demonstrated resilience and innovation.

Goota passionately shares her culture through storytelling complemented by authentic Inuit artifacts.

Presenters' Biographies

Aaron Paquette is one of Canada's best-known First Nations Metis personalities. He is a bestselling, award-winning author, an acclaimed painter and artist, an illustrator, goldsmith and cathedral stained glass artist.

Active in his community, Aaron sits on various civic, provincial and national Boards and Advisory Councils.

On October 16, 2017, Aaron was elected to the Edmonton City Council to represent Ward 4 in the City's Northeast.

He is also fortunate to be alive. It was on a cold August night in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada that Aaron found himself on the guardrails of the High Level Bridge. A moment of crisis.

Over the intervening years, through ups and downs and many mistakes and learning opportunities, Aaron has found a way to voice his message. We all suffer, but none of us are alone. There is a strength within us and around us that we can constantly draw on, not only to get us through tough times, but to propel us into the life we always wanted. Aaron's public art and mural work is colorful, flowing and accessible, perfect for any community.

In great demand, Aaron is an engaging, exciting and inspiring speaker and gives generously of his spirit in laughter, joy and learning.

He has shared the stage with former and current politicians such as Phil Fontaine, Premier of Ontario Kathleen Wynne, Dr. Marie Wilson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, former Auditor General of Canada Sheilah Fraser, Right Honorable Paul Martin, among others.

In early 2013 he coined the term #Ottawapiskat which helped disrupt the way we look at the relationship between Indigenous Reservations and the Canadian Government in a constructive and humorous way.

It was a stark and paradigm shifting marriage of the words Ottawa (Canada's capital city) and Attawapiskat, a northern community under the grip of extreme poverty and suffering.

People immediately saw the potential and began creating their own highly charged, incisive, or just plain funny tweets around the new word. Making space for other's creativity and inventiveness is something that inspires Aaron's work and efforts.

Dennis Whitford is the owner/operator of 2Thunder Consulting (www.2Thunderconsulting.com) since retiring in June 2015 from the Government of Alberta, Child and Family Services, where he worked for 27 years as a caseworker, supervisor, Aboriginal policy specialist, and senior manager.

He completed Bachelor of Social Work, and Master of Social Work degrees, both at the University of Calgary, and is a registered Social Worker with the Alberta College of Social Workers.

He is most proud of reconnecting with his Indigenous heritage over the past thirty years through traditional dancing and experiencing and living the teachings of Indigenous Elders and ceremonialists.

Holly Crumpton has been an employee of Peace River School Division #10 for the last twelve years.

She spent the first eight years as a teacher and the First Nations, Metis and Inuit liaison for Peace River High School.

She then spent two years as a learning coach supporting teachers and other instructional leaders as they sought ways to more effectively support the learning of their students.

Returning to Peace High, Holly Crumpton has not only resumed her previous role but has also expanded her teaching repertoire to include Aboriginal Studies.

Etienna Moosetoos-Lafferty was born and raised in Grande Prairie Alberta. Her family is from the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation in Treaty 8 territory.

Etienna has 7 years of teaching experience both on and off-reserve, and in public and Catholic school systems. She spent 4 years working for an Indigenous perspective school with the Calgary Board of Education where she learned the importance of culture and language in Indigenous education.

She has since moved back to Edmonton has worked provincially as an Indigenous Education consultant helping to develop and implement workshops aimed at promoting reconciliation through teacher education.

Etienna has created resources for the ATA and ARPDC that help teachers better understand topics such as Residential Schools, Metis Settlements, Inuit history, Myths and Stereotypes of Indigenous people, progression of the TRC, and treaty relationships.

Today, Etienna is an Indigenous Education Coach for Evergreen Catholic Schools and is completing her masters full time at the University of Alberta. Additionally, she works as an assistant researcher for two Indigenous professors at the University and is learning a lot about provincial and local initiatives surrounding Indigenous education.

She is a mother to a 4 year old daughter named Layla and her husband is also a teacher and works as an assistant Principal for Edmonton Public Schools.

Etienna is thrilled to be back in Treaty 8 territory, a place that she still considers home.

Cassandra Mercer is a Cree-Metis from Northern Alberta. Her maternal family roots are from the Peavine and Kinuso Metis Settlements. Cassandra earned her Bachelor of Elementary Education degree from the University of Alberta and currently teaches Grade 4 for Grande Prairie Public School Division.

She is also an Indigenous Representative for the Alberta Education Math 5-9 Curriculum Working Group.

Cassie and her husband enjoy spending leisure time on Lesser Slave Lake with their four wonderful children, friends and extended family members. S

he is very passionate about her role as Indigenous Education PD Facilitator in Region A for the Alberta Teacher's Association and sharing her foundational knowledge with other educators and colleagues.

Kim Barker-Kay is a retired teacher, principal, and researcher. She was also a professional development provider.

Kim has an elementary generalist Bachelor of Education degree and a Master's in Educational Studies with a focus on the Roles and Responsibilities of Native Liaison Workers in Northern Alberta.

She has 33 years of experience as an educator in High Prairie and area. Kim spent many years researching and learning about barriers to Indigenous student achievement and how to remove those barriers.

Her journey led her in many directions, including an opportunity to put what she learned into practice. The results were highly rewarding for students and were encouraging for increasing minority student achievement.

Kim's work on closing the achievement gap was influenced by a variety of findings and experiences, including: The Equity Framework, Diversity Training, Cultural Awareness and Personal Wellness as well as Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Theory.

Over the years, Kim has become an expert on transforming school cultures and closing the educational achievement gap.

Goota Desmarais grew up on the south shore of Baffin Island in Cape Dorset, Nunavut.

Her early childhood was spent in a modern Inuit settlement during the winters and in a traditional camp during the summers.

Goota is now an urban Inuk, living in Sherwood Park, Alberta for the past 30 years. She stays connected to her Inuit culture through frequent visits to Nunavut and her involvement on the board of the Edmonton Inuit Cultural Society and Edmontonmiut Inuit.

Through her business, Inuit Connection, Goota has been educating people about Nunavut and Inuit culture for over 20 years.

She shares personal stories of growing up in the North that illustrate the unique Inuit way of life. Goota is currently working with Alberta Teacher's Association in their Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation Project.

Charlene Noskey is originally from Loon River First Nation, a small reservation of approximately 500 members. Loon river is situated near Red Earth Creek.

She is proud to say that she is a First Nations woman who is fluent in her Cree language.

She moved to Peace River in 2011 and completed my B. Ed in 2016.

This school year, her role is to assist her divisions teachers in meeting the new Teacher Qualification Standards.

Brigitte Benning was born and raised in Grande Prairie.

Brigitte is passionate about reconciliation through relearning Canada's history as a community and encouraging cultural pride in youth.

As a Métis woman, she appreciates the opportunity to share her story as well as continue to learn from others.

In her current role as the Indigenous Education Coordinator for Peace Wapiti School Division, Brigitte is able to work with students K-12, educators, liaisons, leadership and the community to ensure that Indigenous people are celebrated, represented and supported in classrooms and schools.

Prior to this role, she undertook a two-year research project exploring the role of Indigenous-based support in post-secondary education for her MA from UVIC. She is very grateful to be back in traditional territories and homelands of the Cree, Beaver, Dene and Métis peoples.