



INDIGENOUS INFLUENCERS

Catholic Virtual Learning Resource

Front Lines by Isaac Murdoch, Serpent River First Nation



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association



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RADIATING CHRIST

Dear Jesus, help us to spread Your fragrance everywhere we go.

Flood our souls with Your Spirit and Life.

Penetrate and possess our whole being so utterly,
that our lives may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through us, and be so in us, that every soul we come in contact with
may feel Your presence in our soul.

Let them look up and see no longer us but only Jesus!

Stay with us and then we shall begin to shine, as You shine;

So to shine as to be a light to others;

the light, O Jesus, will be all from You, none of it will be ours;

it will be You shining on others through us.

Let us thus praise You in the way You love best, by shining on those around us.

Let us preach You by our words and by our example,

by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what we do,

the evident fullness of the love our hearts bear to You. Amen.

— Blessed John Henry Newman



“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:14-16)

A SHARED WORLDVIEW

As teachers in Catholic schools, we share a unique worldview grounded in service and community. Through our professional practice, guiding students with our hearts and minds, the broader community, both present and future, also benefits. The learners we empower will eventually contribute to society through their own endeavours, continuing a pattern of flourishing and love.



*“Peace be with you!
For the sake of the Lord,
I will seek your good.”
(Psalms 122)*

A SHARED COMMITMENT

Regardless of the specific role we have in education at any given time, we are all educational leaders. Educating youth unites responsibility with service, a transformative element of our vocation. In fact, teaching is a profession that fosters all others, motivating students to apply learning meaningfully as life-long, engaged and contributing citizens.

Grounded in Gospel values, Catholic education nurtures an inclusive learning culture of high expectations for all learners across all learning environments. Diversity is championed as a strength, so that students with different backgrounds and experiences are collectively inspired to achieve to their unique potential and promote the common good. Created in God’s image, all learners matter.



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association

*“The Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association is pleased to serve with our Catholic student trustees in building, nurturing and promoting this Indigenous Influencers’ Resource. Together, may we build our understanding of truth and reconciliation through active listening, prayer and right action.”
– Pat Daly, President of OCSTA*



"No, we can't essentialize any one community to one experience. Much like in the Indigenous community, we don't want to be reduced to one voice, we should also acknowledge that the immigrant community has this huge diversity of experience." — *Wab Kinew, Director of Indigenous Inclusion at the University of Winnipeg, CBC broadcaster, Canada Reads panelist, hip-hop artist*

Image Credit: Isaac Murdoch

INDIGENOUS INFLUENCERS INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Peoples come from diverse, sophisticated, and magnificent nations that have existed on these lands since time immemorial. Their languages, cultures and complex knowledge systems continue to illuminate their brilliance and beauty.

Through their ongoing resistance and resurgence, Indigenous Peoples continue to share their epistemologies (knowledge systems) and deep understanding of our connection to the natural world, despite centuries of attempts to eradicate them through colonialism. Often recognized in Western terms, some examples include: pharmacology (plant medicine), agronomy (agricultural practices), astrophysics (understanding celestial cycles), engineering mathematics (buoyancy of canoes, structural design of igloos), and geography (navigating over enormous distances). As well, countless innovations and inventions can be attributed to First Nations, Inuit and Metis Peoples such as the kayak, sunglasses, chewing gum, snowshoes, red river cart, unique styles of artworks, and baby carriers, just to name a few.

Numerous Indigenous nations from this land, also referred to as Turtle Island (North America), have advanced governing systems allowing for a peaceful co-existence with each other despite having very different languages and ways of living. One example of this is the Haudenosaunee Confederacy – one of the oldest and longest running democracies in the world. It was so impressive that the founding fathers of the United States utilized aspects of their governance as a model for the creation of the American constitution and government.

This resource will explore some examples of incredible Indigenous influencers who have, and continue to, create positive change, and inspire others through their ongoing contributions. Curriculum connections are provided to highlight possible opportunities for educators to bring these examples into their classroom in order for students to learn about the beauty, joy and brilliance of Indigenous Peoples.

Each influencer featured in this book will include their impact on society, interesting facts about them, awards and achievements as well as how their contributions align with the Catholic Social Teaching and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.

An appendix featuring examples of inquiry prompts and connections to related subject and curriculum expectations has been included on page 125.



AL HACKNER

Ojibwa from Red Rock Indian Band, Thunder Bay

Researched and prepared by Bailey Clyne, Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Olympic athlete (curling).

Awards and Achievements:

- Canadian Curling Hall of Fame inductee—Recognized for his outstanding contributions to the sport.
- Two-time Brier and World Champion skip—Winning in 1982 and 1985.
- Canadian Senior Curling Champion (2006)—Showcasing his talent across different levels of competition.
- World Senior Curling Championship Silver Medalist (2007).
- Competed in 9 Briers as the skip for Northern Ontario—1980, 1981, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1992, 1995, 2001.
- Set a Brier record in 1992—His seventh appearance as skip and a record-breaking 51 career Brier wins.
- Notable 1985 Brier victory—Defeated Alberta’s Pat Ryan in a legendary comeback win.
- Creator of the 'Hackner Shot'—A famous precision curling move known for its high difficulty.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Nicknamed 'Iceman'—Al Hackner earned this cool nickname for his calm and composed demeanor under pressure on the ice.
2. Dominated the 1980s—He was considered the curler of the 1980s, making a huge impact on the sport with his skill and strategic play.
3. Retired in 2022—After an impressive career spanning decades, Hackner officially retired from curling at age 67.
4. Creator of the 'Hackner Shot'—A legendary curling move, the Hackner Shot is a difficult and precise draw used to protect a stone or set up a crucial scoring opportunity.
5. Lover of the Outdoors—Off the ice, Hackner enjoys hiking, fishing, and spending time in nature, reflecting his deep appreciation for the great outdoors.

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<https://www.curling.ca/hof/people/hackner-allan-a>

<https://anishinabeknews.ca/2023/09/08/sam-on-sports-al-hackner>

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Image, page 7

Image, page 8



“My longevity, to still be curling at this age and be competitive is something that I can be proud of and enjoy. My message to anyone would be to just keep playing and keep enjoying it.”

— Al ‘The Iceman’ Hackner

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Al Hackner’s dedication to curling and his role as a leader in the sport reflect many of the **Catholic Graduate Expectations**. Through his sportsmanship, teamwork, problem-solving and lifelong commitment to growth, he exemplifies qualities of integrity, communication and perseverance that align with Catholic values. His ability to make strategic decisions, support his teammates and continuously develop his skills highlights his strong moral character and dedication to excellence.

As **A Discerning Believer**, Hackner demonstrates integrity and respect in competition, embodying ethical decision-making and fair play. His role as

An Effective Communicator is evident in his ability to collaborate with teammates, make strategic calls and encourage others. He also showcases the qualities of **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker**, using deep problem-solving skills to analyze plays and adapt to challenges.

As **A Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner**, Hackner’s continuous improvement and commitment to his sport reflect the importance of developing natural talents and striving for personal growth.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Al Hackner’s advocacy for human rights, equality, and the well-being of marginalized communities aligns closely with the Catholic Social Teaching of the **Dignity of the Human Person**. This teaching reminds us that every individual, no matter their background, deserves to be treated with respect, fairness, and compassion. Throughout his career, Hackner has demonstrated these values, not only through his sportsmanship in curling but also through his dedication to supporting and uplifting those who face discrimination or hardship. His actions show a deep commitment to ensuring that all people are valued and included, which is a core principle of Catholic social justice.

By using his influence and leadership, Hackner sets an example of how to treat others with dignity, both in public and personal spaces. Whether on the ice or in the community, he embodies the importance of acting with integrity, fostering inclusivity, and standing up for social justice. His work reminds us that upholding the dignity of others is not just about words but about the choices we make every day. Through his commitment to fairness and respect, Hackner inspires others to recognize the worth of every person and contribute to a more just and compassionate world.



DR. ALAN OJIIG CORBIERE

Anishinaabe from M'Chigeeng First Nation

Researched and prepared by Carter Peios, Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Anishinaabe historian, researcher, educator and language advocate.

Awards and Achievements:

- Creator of an Indigenous Language Conservation Project—Developed a project to help Indigenous youth reconnect with the Ojibwe language, implemented at M'Chigeeng First Nation.
- 2019 Barbara Godard Prize—Best dissertation in Canadian Studies at York University, focusing on Anishinaabe history and language.
- Canada Research Chair in Indigenous History of North America—Dr. Corbiere holds this prestigious chair, focusing on Indigenous history, language revitalization, and cultural preservation.
- York University Teaching Excellence Award—Recognized for his outstanding teaching and dedication to bringing Indigenous perspectives into academia.
- Recipient of the Indigenous Language Revitalization Award—Honoured for his efforts to preserve and revitalize the Ojibwe language and promote Indigenous language education..

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Rediscovering His Mother Tongue—As a child, Dr. Corbiere's parents spoke Ojibwe to each other but used English with him. At age 11, he asked them to speak to him in Ojibwe, sparking his dedication to preserving his heritage.
2. Commitment to Language Preservation—Dr. Corbiere has devoted his life to learning, teaching and preserving Ojibwe. He created a conservation project to inspire Indigenous youth to reconnect through language.
3. Bringing Language into Schools—His project was implemented in M'Chigeeng First Nation's elementary school, creating a space for elders, youth, and the community to learn Ojibwe together.
4. Bridging Language and Nature—While studying environmental science at University of Toronto, Dr. Corbiere saw links between language and environmental conservation. He later earned a Master's at York University.
5. Leading Indigenous History Research—As an Assistant Professor at York University and Canada Research Chair, Dr. Corbiere focuses on language revitalization and broader cultural preservation efforts.

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Image Credits:

Image, page 9

Image, page 10



“...I still feel compelled to talk in Anishinaabemowin because our ancestors are all around and they still understand that.” — *Dr. Alan Ojig Corbiere of M’Chigeeng First Nation*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Dr. Alan Ojig Corbiere exemplifies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner** through his unwavering commitment to education, language preservation, and cultural revitalization. From a young age, he took the initiative to learn the Ojibwe language, recognizing its importance in maintaining his Anishinaabe identity and heritage. His dedication to learning did not stop with himself—he has spent his life teaching and inspiring others, whether in classrooms with elementary and university students or within Indigenous communities, where he works to preserve oral traditions and historical knowledge.

Through his work, Dr. Corbiere has made a tremendous impact on reconciliation and Indigenous cultural resurgence, demonstrating how lifelong learning is a powerful tool for change. By continually expanding his knowledge and sharing it with others, he fosters a greater understanding of Indigenous history, language, and traditions. His efforts serve as a testament to the idea that education is a lifelong journey—one that has the potential to empower individuals, strengthen communities, and shape a more inclusive and respectful society.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Through his life’s work, Dr. Alan Ojig Corbiere embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Participation**, recognizing that meaningful change comes from education, engagement, and active contribution to society. As a lifelong learner and educator, he has dedicated himself to preserving Indigenous languages, history, and cultural knowledge, ensuring that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities can participate in the path toward reconciliation and understanding.

His Indigenous Language Conservation strategy serves as a powerful example of how active participation can create real change. By involving elders, youth, educators, and

community members in the process of language revitalization, he has demonstrated that when people come together with a shared purpose, they can restore, strengthen, and protect cultural identity. Dr. Corbiere’s work highlights the importance of engaging with and contributing to one’s community, reinforcing the idea that true transformation happens when individuals take responsibility for shaping a better, more inclusive society.



ALANIS OBOMSAWIN

Abenaki Nation from Odanak Reserve

Researched and prepared by Bailey Clyne, Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Filmmaker.

Awards and Achievements:

- Donald Brittain Award for Best Social/Political Documentary (*The People of the Kattawapiskak River*).
- Humanitarian Award - Canadian Screen Awards (2014).
- Prix Albert-Tessier (2016), outstanding contributions to cinema.
- Luminaria Tribute for Lifetime Achievement - Santa Fe Film Festival (2007).
- TWIFT Outstanding Achievement Award in Direction. Acknowledged as a trailblazer for women in film for her work in Indigenous storytelling.
- National Order of Quebec. Honored for her exceptional contributions to Quebec's cultural landscape.
- Edward MacDowell Medal. Recognized for her artistic excellence and cultural influence in media arts.
- Several honorary doctorates (2023). Received from multiple universities for her work in film, advocacy, and Indigenous representation in media.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Trailblazing Indigenous Filmmaker: Alanis Obomsawin is among the first Indigenous filmmakers to present stories from an Indigenous perspective, ensuring authentic representation of Indigenous communities.
2. Prolific Director: She has directed over 50 films, with her most renowned work being *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993), which documents the 1990 Oka Crisis between the Canadian government and the Mohawk people.
3. Advocate for Indigenous Children's Rights: Her 2019 documentary, *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger*, was instrumental in advocating for the rights of Indigenous children, contributing to improved healthcare access for First Nations children.
4. Acclaimed Artist: Beyond filmmaking, Obomsawin is a singer, storyteller, and printmaker. She has performed traditional Abenaki music and exhibited her artwork in Canada and Europe, showcasing the richness of Indigenous culture through various artistic mediums.
5. Educator and Mentor: Alanis has taught at the Summer-Institute of Film and Television in Ottawa, sharing her extensive knowledge and experience with aspiring filmmakers.

Image Credits:

Image, page 11

Image, page 12



“So much history can be lost if no one tells the story—so that’s what I do. I tell the stories. This is my way of fighting for social change.” — *Alanis Obomsawin*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Alanis Obomsawin exemplifies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being an **Effective Communicator** through her groundbreaking work in film. By bringing Indigenous voices into both Canadian and international cinema, she has played a crucial role in highlighting the stories, histories, and cultures of Indigenous peoples. Her films are known for their artistry and emotional depth, making complex and often

untold Indigenous experiences accessible to a wide audience. Through storytelling, she not only educates but also inspires change, using film as a powerful tool for truth-telling and advocacy. Her ability to capture Indigenous perspectives with authenticity and compassion demonstrates her exceptional skill as an Effective Communicator, ensuring that these important stories are both heard and understood.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Alanis Obomsawin embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Solidarity** through her powerful films, which highlight the interconnectedness of Indigenous communities and their ongoing fight for dignity and justice. In documentaries like *Our People Will Be Healed* and *We Can’t Make the Same Mistake Twice*, she sheds light on the challenges faced by Indigenous peoples while also showcasing their resilience, strength, and cultural pride.

Her work calls for unity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, emphasizing that we

are all part of one human family. She encourages non-Indigenous people to stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities by acknowledging historical injustices and working toward a more equitable and just future. Through storytelling, Obomsawin educates, inspires action, and fosters understanding, ensuring that Indigenous voices are heard and valued. Her commitment to truth and justice reflects the true meaning of solidarity—standing with others in the pursuit of human dignity, equality and reconciliation.



ANGELA AMARUALIK

Inuk from Igloolik, Nunavut

Researched and prepared by Kellyanne Mangali, Wellington Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Singer and songwriter.

Awards and Achievements:

- Indigenous Music Award Winner (2018) – Best Inuit, Indigenous Language, or Francophone Album for her self-titled debut album.
- Indigenous Music Award Nominee – Three nominations: Best New Artist, recognizing her talent and contributions to Indigenous music.
- Arctic Music Awards Winner (2023): Angela was honored as the Indigenous Artist/Group of the Year at the inaugural Arctic Music Awards, recognizing her contributions to Indigenous music.
- Indigenous Music Countdown: Her song 'Summa Tamaani' from her second album, *Uvannik* (2022), climbed the charts on the Indigenous Music Countdown.
- Protégée in the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards Mentorship Program (2024): Angela was selected as a protégée in this prestigious program, reflecting her potential and dedication to her craft.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Angela Amarualik began writing songs in Inuktitut, skillfully combining traditional Inuit melodies and throat-singing with contemporary pop influences, creating a unique and culturally rich sound.
2. Her self-titled debut album (2018) won the Indigenous Music Award for Best Inuit, Indigenous Language, or Francophone Album, showcasing her ability to preserve and celebrate Inuit culture through music.
3. Angela has toured across Canada, bringing her music to diverse audiences and using her platform to share Inuit traditions and raise awareness about Indigenous identity.
4. Through both her music and personal journey, Angela has become a source of inspiration for young Inuit, encouraging them to embrace their language, heritage, and artistic expression.
5. In 2022, she released her second album, *Uvannik*, further cementing her place as an influential Inuit artist.

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"Amarualik has become a brave, strong, and independent artist with much to share with the world." — *Canadian Beats*
(<https://canadianbeats.ca/2022/10/27/angela-amarualik-unveils-the-new-single-stranger-of-my-kind-interview>)

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Angela exemplifies the qualities of **A Collaborative Contributor** by working with other artists and sharing her Inuit culture through music. She values teamwork and creative expression, using her talents to build connections and promote cultural appreciation. As **A Caring Family Member**, she reflects deeply on her community and family in her music, honoring the traditions and experiences that have shaped her identity. Her involvement in mentorship programs further demonstrates her

commitment to nurturing the next generation, as she guides Inuit youth through musical workshops. By empowering others and fostering a sense of belonging, Angela embodies the values of cooperation, compassion, and responsible citizenship—core principles of the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Angela Amarualik's dedication to preserving and promoting her Indigenous culture aligns with the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Human Dignity, recognizing that every person is valuable and deserving of respect. Through her music and advocacy, she uplifts Inuit traditions, ensuring that Indigenous voices are heard and celebrated. Her role as a community leader also reflects the principle of **Call to Family, Community and Participation**, as she actively engages with her community, strengthens

cultural connections, and mentors youth. By fostering a sense of identity and belonging, she empowers others to take pride in their heritage, reinforcing the idea that true justice is achieved when all people are respected, included, and given opportunities to contribute to society.



ANGELA SIDNEY (1902–1991)

Tagish and Tlingit from Carcross and Tagish First Nation (January 4, 1902 to July 17, 1991)

Researched and prepared by Monica Galstyan, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Author.

Awards and Achievements:

- Order of Canada (1986).
- Published author and cultural preserver—Co-authored Tagish Tlaagú: Tagish Stories and My Stories Are My Wealth.
- Cultural educator.
- Inspiration for Yukon Storytelling Festival.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Residential School Survivor and Healer—Angela briefly attended Chooutla Residential School, but left after her sister sadly passed away there. She then cared for her mother and learned both traditional Indigenous healing and Western medicine. She even helped her community as a nurse during disease outbreaks.
2. Multilingual Speaker—Angela was fluent in three languages—Tagish, Tlingit and English—and also understood Tahltan, Southern Tutchone and Kaska. She was one of the last fluent speakers of the Tagish language.
3. Preserver of Culture—Angela was passionate about keeping her people's traditions alive. She taught traditional stories in schools and to the wider public, helping to pass down important cultural values through storytelling.
4. Storytelling Legend—In 1985, Angela shared her stories at the Toronto Festival of Storytelling. Her powerful presence inspired the creation of the Yukon International Storytelling Festival, which began in 1988 and featured storytellers from around the world.
5. National Honour—For her dedication to language and culture, Angela Sidney was awarded the Order of Canada in 1985. She was the first Indigenous woman from Yukon to receive this national honour.

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Image Credits:

Image, page 15

Image, page 16



"I have no money to leave to my grandchildren. My stories are my wealth." — *Angela Sidney*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Angela Sidney embodies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **An Effective Communicator**. Her exceptional ability to share stories, rooted in her Tagish and Tlingit heritage, showcases her remarkable communication skills. Sidney's storytelling not only preserved the rich traditions, history and teachings of her people but also engaged audiences of all ages, making complex cultural narratives accessible and captivating. Her talent for bridging generational gaps and sharing deep cultural knowledge demonstrates her ability to connect with diverse listeners, especially younger audiences.

Through her participation in Toronto's Festival of Storytelling, Sidney made a lasting impact on authors and storytellers across Canada. Her

inspiring speech before a large audience led to the establishment of a similar event in Yukon, which invited participation from various Indigenous languages. Sidney's commitment to storytelling and language preservation highlights her passion for communication, ensuring that the Tagish and Tlingit languages and cultures continue to thrive.

Through her work, she exemplifies how effective communication can celebrate and preserve cultural heritage, inspire others and create lasting change.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Angela Sidney's dedication to preserving the Tagish and Tlingit languages and cultural teachings beautifully exemplifies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Solidarity**. Despite facing immense hardships throughout her life, Sidney's unwavering commitment to her community and cultural heritage reflects a deep love for her people. She often expressed her concern about the loss of language and the fading of traditional knowledge, especially as fewer people, including herself, were able to speak the languages fluently. Yet, rather than retreating in the face of this challenge, Sidney took it upon herself to preserve and pass on the wisdom of her ancestors through storytelling and teaching, ensuring future generations could continue to embrace their heritage.

Her work not only brought together members of her Tagish and Tlingit communities but also fostered solidarity between different groups, creating a space where individuals could come together to retain, practice, and learn from their traditions. Sidney's ability to unite people from different backgrounds around the common goal of cultural preservation serves as a powerful example of solidarity in action. Through her life's work, she has shown how solidarity can inspire communities to support each other in the shared mission of learning, understanding and nurturing collective heritage.



ARTHUR MANUEL

Secwépemc from Secwépemc (Shuswap) territory

Researched and prepared by Sahayma Omenye, Northeastern Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Leadership and government.

Awards and Achievements:

- Manuel was extremely influential in shaping NAFTA.
- Manuel's book *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-up Call* became a national bestseller and won the 2016 Canadian Historical Association Aboriginal History Book Prize.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Manuel was a bestselling author, with his first book titled *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-up Call*, and his second being *The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land, Rebuilding the Economy*.
2. Arthur Manuel was Chief of Neskonlith Indian Band from 1995 to 2003 and chair of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council from 1997 to 2003.
3. Manuel attended Concordia University located in Montreal.
4. Manuel participated in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues since its inception in 2002. He actively fought for Indigenous people at an international level with numerous submissions about the human rights violations against Indigenous Peoples by Canada to United Nations human rights bodies.
5. Manuel was a residential school survivor and attended three different residential schools. Kamloops, St. Eugene's and St. Mary's.

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Image, page 17

Image, page 18



“There is room on this land for all of us and there must also be, after centuries of struggle, room for justice for Indigenous peoples. That is all we ask. And we will settle for nothing less.” — *Arthur Manuel*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Arthur Manuel has expressed the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations through his countless years of advocacy for Indigenous peoples. In 1995, Manuel was elected Chief of Neskonlith Indian Band for the first time. He then went on to be elected another four times (Bokyo, 2023). During his time elected, he demonstrated his qualities as **An Effective Communicator**.

He dedicated his life to ensuring that Indigenous peoples do not lose their culture and empowered different communities to learn more about and understand Indigenous culture. His dedication and perseverance align him with being **An Effective Communicator**. He not only fought for Indigenous peoples' rights in Canada but also rights for their land.

In 2003, Manuel continuously argued with the Canadian government over the logging

industry. He submitted reports to the World Trade Organization regarding the protection of forests. Though Canada tried to prove that the industry was not being subsidized, Manuel argued that logging on traditional territory created a form of trade subsidy because the true owners of the land were not being compensated (Ivey, 2021).

His environmental stewardship and fight for justice connect him to being **A Responsible Citizen** and **A Caring Family Member**. While Arthur Manuel has advocated for Indigenous rights, the fight for their rights and land still continues today. Manuel has paved the way for generations to come, allowing them to continue his work and aligning with the Catholic School Graduate Expectations.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Arthur Manuel's activism deeply resonates with the Catholic Social Teachings. He has ensured that each Indigenous person understands that their culture isn't going anywhere, and that they should continue to express their spirituality and fight for their rights. This aligns with the teaching **Dignity of the Human Person**. He fought for the land regarding the logging industry which connects to **Stewardship of Creation**. In addition, he constantly worked toward having the owners of the land that the logging industry had taken over be compensated for what has been done. With this work he has connected to

Economic Justice. Manuel has served his community for countless years trying to make Canada a better place. He served in leadership positions for over 5 years and constantly advocated for his people. His leadership actions connect to **Subsidiarity** and the **Role of Government, Participation and Rights and Responsibilities**. Arthur Manuel has done countless good deeds, not only for British Columbia, but the entirety of Canada.



ASHLEY CALLINGBULL

Cree from Enoch Cree First Nation

Researched and prepared by Sahayma Omenye, Northeastern Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Actress and model.

Awards and Achievements:

- Mrs. Universe.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Callingbull is the first Indigenous woman to win the title of Mrs. Universe in 2015.
2. She is a game host for the NHL, Canadian Football League and the National Lacrosse League.
3. Callingbull is most known for her role in the television show *Blackstone* and has also appeared in the 4th season of *The Amazing Race Canada* with her stepfather.
4. She is married to Wacey Rabbit, a former NHL player.
5. Callingbull is an ambassador for Nike, RW&Co., Reitmans, and Hillberg & Berk.

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"I had to let go of the pain, my self-worth is something no one can take away from me." — Ashley Callingbull

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Beyond the film and modelling industry, Ashley Callingbull is an activist and has demonstrated the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of being **A Responsible Citizen**.

Through her advocacy and motivational speaking, Ashley is also promoting peace and justice. As a sexual violence survivor, she shares her story with others to ensure they know they are not alone. This also makes her **A Caring Family Member** as she helps other victims know that they are never fighting their battles alone.

Ashley Callingbull is someone who has had countless struggles through her road to success. While social media can have a negative impact, Ashley has found a loving following and uses

her platform to educate others on Indigenous people. She has advocated for issues such as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. She widely addressed this issue during the 2015 federal election, which led to it being a largely talked about topic.

Callingbull's advocacy in addressing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women led her to also being **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker**. Ashley Callingbull has inspired countless women around the world and continues to make an impact today, demonstrating the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations in action.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Ashley Callingbull is an activist and has always been one to advocate for Indigenous people. She has consistently connected with the **Dignity of the Human Person**, specifically as a result of her work bringing awareness to missing and murdered Indigenous women. These women that she is trying to bring light to have not been treated with dignity. Callingbull has been shining a light on the women in an attempt for the government to address the issue. She has also spoken about the impact of colonization

on the environment of Indigenous land. This connects her to **Stewardship of Creation**. Ashley is trying to protect Indigenous land and raise awareness on how the government has attempted to take their land past and present. Ashley Callingbull has advocated for a plethora of issues and still continues to today. In line with Catholic Social Teachings, her actions are slowly changing Canada.



AUTUM PELTIER

Anishinaabe from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory

Researched and prepared by Sahayma Omenye, Northeastern Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Water rights and environmental advocacy.

Awards and Achievements:

- Chief Water Commissioner (2019)—She was appointed as the Chief Water Commissioner for the Anishinaabek Nation, succeeding her great-aunt Josephine Mandamin. This role allows her to continue advocating for clean water and Indigenous rights.
- International Children’s Peace Prize Nominee (2017, 2018, 2019)—She was nominated three times for this prestigious award, which recognizes young leaders making a difference in global human rights and environmental justice.
- Named one of Canada’s Top 25 Most Influential Women (2020)—Autumn was recognized for her environmental activism and leadership, placing her among some of the most influential women in Canada.
- Recipient of Ontario’s Premier’s Award for Youth Excellence (2020)—This award was given to Autumn for her exceptional contributions to advocating for clean water and raising awareness about environmental issues affecting Indigenous communities.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Early Activism—Autumn Peltier began advocating for clean water at just 8 years old after attending water ceremonies and learning about the water contamination affecting Indigenous communities.
2. Speaking at the United Nations—At 13 years old, she addressed the United Nations General Assembly, urging world leaders to protect water sources and uphold Indigenous rights.
3. Featured in a Documentary—Peltier’s activism is showcased in *The Water Walker*, a documentary that follows her journey as a young water protector.
4. Inspired by Family—Her great-aunt, Josephine Mandamin, was a well-known water activist and served as the Chief Water Commissioner for the Anishinaabek Nation.
5. Confronting Justin Trudeau—In 2016, she confronted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, challenging him on his government's failure to provide clean water to Indigenous communities.

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Image, page 21

Image, page 22



“Keep going, don’t look back, and if you have an idea, just do it; no one is going to wait for you or tell you what to do, use your voice and speak up for our planet.” — *Autumn Peltier*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Autumn Peltier exemplifies the qualities of **A Responsible Citizen** through her dedication to social responsibility and the common good. Her unwavering commitment to securing access to clean water demonstrates a profound devotion to social justice and environmental stewardship. By raising awareness of water insecurity and advocating for sustainable

solutions, she not only protects the Earth but also upholds the dignity of those most affected by environmental injustices.

Through her leadership and advocacy, Peltier inspires others to take meaningful action in safeguarding natural resources and ensuring a more just and sustainable future for all.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Autumn Peltier embodies the Catholic Social Teaching principle of **Stewardship of Creation: Care for God’s Creation** through her unwavering advocacy for environmental protection. As an Indigenous water protector, she emphasizes the sacredness of water and the collective responsibility to safeguard natural resources. Her work reflects the moral duty to respect and care for God’s creation, advocating for

sustainable practices that ensure the well-being of both people and the planet. By raising awareness of water insecurity and speaking out against environmental harm, Peltier calls others to recognize their role as stewards of the Earth, reinforcing the importance of preserving creation for future generations.



BRIDGET GEORGE

Anishinaabe from Kettle and Stony Point First Nation

Researched and prepared by Monica Galstyan, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Visual artist and illustrator.

Awards and Achievements:

- Junior Library Guild: Gold Standard Selection for "Autumn Peltier, Water Warrior" (Illustrator).
- Jane Addams Children's Book Award Finalist (2024) for "Autumn Peltier, Water Warrior" (Illustrator).
- Periodical Marketers of Canada Indigenous Literature Award for '21/22 "It's a Mitig!" (Author-Illustrator).
- Distinguished Alumni Award (2022) from Fanshawe College.
- 2022 Ontario Premier's Awards Nominee.
- TD Summer Reading Club: Recommended Read for "It's a Mitig!" (Author-Illustrator).

Five Interesting Facts:

1. George was raised on the traditional territory of her people by Lake Huron, where she found inspiration in her ancestry and the natural world.
2. She has a deep love for her community and parenthood. She is a proud mother to her son, Noah, and shares her home with her cat, Captain Rex.
3. In 2021, George graduated from Fanshawe College with an Advanced Diploma in Graphic Design, refining her skills as an artist.
4. She is passionate about positive self-image, lifelong learning and visual storytelling. Through her work, she actively fosters Indigenous representation for youth and children.
5. George's creative projects include her debut picture book *It's a Mitig!* and illustrations for *Autumn Peltier's Water Warrior*, among many others that celebrate Indigenous voices and stories.

Learn more about Bridget George at <https://www.bridgetgeorge.com>

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Image, page 24



“I am forever inspired by the natural world around me.”
— *Bridget George*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Bridget George is an incredibly talented illustrator whose artwork inspires and captivates audiences through its depth and creativity.

Her ability to evoke emotions, tell stories, and spark thought through her visual storytelling exemplifies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker**.

George’s work masterfully incorporates vibrant colours, dynamic shapes and symbolic imagery, each element carefully chosen to convey meaning and emotion. From butterflies representing the speech of elders to roots extending beneath the water’s surface, her illustrations are not only visually stunning but

also rich with layers of deeper meaning.

Through these artistic choices, she encourages viewers to look beyond the surface, reflect on the messages within and engage with themes of tradition, culture and contemporary society.

Her ability to intertwine heritage, storytelling and artistic expression classifies her as both **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker**. By weaving metaphors and imagery that celebrate Indigenous heritage and cultural identity, George’s work not only honours the past but also inspires new perspectives—fostering deeper understanding and appreciation for the world around us.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Bridget George’s artwork beautifully aligns with the Catholic Social Teaching of **Promoting Peace and Justice**, as her illustrations inspire understanding, empathy and unity. Art has the power to evoke emotions and spark reflection, and George’s work does just that—combining vibrant, youthful energy with a deep sense of peace and contemplation.

Despite the lively colours and intricate patterns in her illustrations, George’s art carries a gentle, reflective quality, creating a sense of optimism and harmony. Her imagery encourages viewers to not only appreciate the beauty of Indigenous identity, experiences and worldviews, but also to strive toward the peaceful coexistence and mutual respect that her artwork embodies.

Through projects like *Autumn Peltier’s Water Warrior*, George’s illustrations serve as a powerful call for peace and justice on a global scale, shedding light on environmental and social issues that impact Indigenous communities. By fostering awareness and inspiring action, her art contributes to the restoration of social fabric, cultural understanding and the pursuit of a more just and compassionate world.



BROTHERS WILDE, ETHAN AND NOLAN WILDE

Anishinaabeg from Kettle and Stony Point First Nation

Researched and prepared by Kate Bester, Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Music artists.

Awards and Achievements:

- 'Good Day' claimed the top spot on the 2023 Indigenous Music Countdown.
- Named 2023 Emerging Artist at Lucknow's Music in the Fields.
- Awarded 2019 New Country Duo of the Year by the North American Country Music Association.
- 2023 nominee for Country Group of the Year at the Forest City London Music Awards.
- 2022 nominee for World Group of the Year at the Forest City London Music Awards.
- Performed at the 2021 CCMA Launch Party.
- Opened for Chris Young at Music in the Fields.
- Opened for The Glorious Sons at the Revelree Music Festival.

Four Interesting Facts:

1. Brothers Wilde seamlessly blend country and rock, creating a unique and dynamic sound that sets them apart.
2. Their first song together, 'Roots,' is a heartfelt tribute to their home community of Kettle and Stony Point, celebrating their deep connection to their roots.
3. Beyond their music career, they are passionate about mentoring youth, helping them find their voices through personal songwriting.
4. Committed to giving back, Brothers Wilde volunteer their time to perform for seniors at their local assisted living facility, bringing joy through music.
5. Music runs in the family—aside from their own success, the brothers draw immense inspiration from their father, Garnet Wilde, who continues to influence their journey.

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Image, page 26



"We never thought we'd be doing this, but we've just loved it."

— Ethan Wilde, Brothers Wilde

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

The Brothers Wilde exemplify the qualities of **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learners** through their dedication to music and culture. They have embraced the gift of music that God has given them, using their talents to inspire others. As lifelong learners, they set ambitious goals and work tirelessly to achieve them, drawing inspiration from successful musicians and incorporating those influences into their craft. Their commitment to growth is evident in their performances, tours and music releases as they continually refine their artistry.

The Brothers Wilde are very connected with their family and friends. Their bond is inspiring

and reflected through their music. Beyond their success, they give back by mentoring younger musicians, ensuring that the music community remains strong and vibrant. They also take responsibility for preserving their culture, blending traditional and modern influences in their music and honouring their identity through songs like *Roots*. Through their passion and dedication, the Brothers Wilde not only thrive as artists but also uplift others, keeping both music and culture alive for future generations.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

The Brothers Wilde exemplify the Catholic Social Teaching of **Stewardship of Creation** by using their music to preserve and celebrate the Anishinaabe identity, which is deeply rooted in respect for the Earth. Through their songs, they honour the Indigenous value of living in harmony with nature, recognizing that creation is a sacred gift that must be protected and cherished. Their music not only reflects these teachings but also spreads an important message of environmental responsibility, encouraging listeners to care for the land, water and all living things.

By blending modern sounds with cultural storytelling, they bridge generations, inspiring others—especially youth—to embrace both their heritage and the duty to safeguard the Earth for the future. They understand that Indigenous culture and the land are inseparable, and by keeping traditions alive through their music, they actively contribute to the stewardship of both. Through their artistry, they remind us that caring for creation is not just an obligation but a way of honouring identity, history and the interconnectedness of all life.



CHARLOTTE EDITH ANDERSON MONTURE (EDITH MONTURE)

Mohawk from Six Nations of the Grand River in Ohsweken

Researched and prepared by Monica Galstyan, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Nurse and veteran.

Awards and Achievements:

- First Indigenous woman in Canada to become a registered nurse.
- First Indigenous woman in Canada to gain the right to vote federally.
- An elementary school in Brantford is named after her accomplishments.
- Elected honorary president of the Ohsweken Red Cross in 1939.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Monture faced barriers as a Mohawk woman pursuing education. She overcame obstacles, attended nursing school in the USA, graduating from New Rochelle Nursing School.
2. Her courage and perseverance allowed Monture to work on the front lines while only 27 years old. She worked at Buffalo Base Hospital 23 in Vittel, France to treat soldiers in fatal condition.
3. Monture recorded her hours of tireless work in her personal diary, noting her helping in other medical centres and traveling through battlegrounds to find hurt soldiers.
4. Post-war, Monture continued her advocacy to improve Indigenous healthcare and worked at a hospital on her reserve until she was 65.
5. Edith married Claybran Monture and raised four children in Six Nations, living peacefully with her family until her death at the age of 105.

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Image, page 28



"You are a sweet soul whose pure, calm, and mature presence acts as a source of healing for others." — *Charlotte Edith Anderson Monture*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Through her notable courage, determination, and intelligence before, during, and following her service in the First World War, Edith Monture fulfills the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, particularly as **A Collaborative Contributor**. Despite the social constraints on Monture's access to education, she adamantly continued her learning journey as a nurse between the United States and Canada. Once she was acknowledged for her strong resolve, Monture began serving on the front lines,

where she worked tirelessly and passionately to treat and save the lives of soldiers in the First World War.

Edith Monture's training and volunteering with fourteen others prepared her to assume her front-line role, along with the quick instincts she possessed to aid those with whom she served, truly highlighting her as **A Collaborative Contributor** to her community and cause.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Edith Monture draws connections between herself and the Catholic Social Teachings through her **Dignity of the Human Person**. Despite her initial rejection from accessing education, Monture passionately continued searching for the education she deserved in the field of nursing. Her role as a veteran and nurse during the occurrences of the First World War displays the value she assigned to the wellbeing of the human person. Her accounts in her

personal diary during the war retell her tireless work and efforts to support the health and life of soldiers during the battle, and demonstrate her connections with veterans and their families post-war. Moreover, her continued work as a nurse on her reserve even after returning from 14-hour shifts underscores her notable determination and concern for the wellbeing of God's creation and image.



CHERIE DIMALINE

Métis from Georgian Bay Métis Community

Researched and prepared by Elena Lionello, Northeastern Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Author, journalist, speaker, columnist.

Awards and Achievements:

- Emerging Artist of the Year at the Ontario Premier's Awards for Excellence in the Arts 2014.
- Governor General's Award for English-language children's literature at the 2017 Governor General's Awards, *The Marrow Thieves*.
- 2017 Kirkus Prize in the young adult literature category.
- Finalist in the CBC's 2018 Canada Reads competition.
- Finalist in the 2018 White Pine Award.
- 2021 recipient of the Writers' Trust Engel/Findley Award.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Cherie is the author of 6 books, including the well known *The Marrow Thieves*.
2. Cherie was the founding editor of *Muskrat Magazine*.
3. Dimaline's inspiration for becoming a writer was largely influenced from growing up listening to stories shared by her Mere (grandmother).
4. Dimaline is the coordinator of the Indigenous Writers Gathering.
5. Cherie's writing has been published and anthologized internationally.

Learn more about Cherie Dimaline at www.cheriedimaline.com

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Image, page 29

Image, page 30



“When we heal our land, we are healed also.” — *Cherie Dimaline, The Marrow Thieves*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Cherie Dimaline promotes compassion, collaboration, social justice and reflection, which are all values upheld in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. Her novels often explore complex themes, which causes not only the reader to reflect creatively, but also herself while writing these pieces of literature. Cherie demonstrates **Collaborative Contributor** measures in her writing through the characters she creates. They often work together to overcome challenges, highlighting the importance of collaboration and teamwork.

Cherie often shines a light on systemic issues affecting Indigenous peoples, promoting justice. She helps readers to become more aware of the injustices and encourages them to take action.

Cherie Dimaline's focus on family throughout her novels, specifically *The Marrow Thieves*, speaks a great deal about the positive impact of family. As family bonds are strengthened throughout the novel, it helps the reader realize that compassion and unity can make a great difference.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Cherie Dimaline focuses a great deal on the concept of **Human Dignity, Community and Justice**. Dimaline, especially in *The Marrow Thieves*, highlights the importance of environmental leadership (connecting the deep belief about the importance of the earth in Indigenous spirituality to how Catholics care for creation). She often speaks about the marginalized Indigenous communities, and her novels bring attention to the injustices that come with them. Solidarity is often a theme in her writing. Dimaline frequently writes about the

strength of community among Indigenous people, and how together, they combat systemic oppression. Overall, her writing style and format very much reflects how we should act and present ourselves as human beings. Cherie utilizes her words to bring to light issues that need to be more frequently and widely spoken. Additionally, she accurately describes relationships between Indigenous peoples and the rest of society as her characters value the common good over commercialized being.



CHRISTI BELCOURT

Métis from Cree Speaking Community of Manitou Sakhigan

Researched and prepared by Kaarhunyaa Sivapalan, Ottawa Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Visual artist, environmentalist, social justice advocate, land-based arts and language learner.

Awards and Achievements:

- Ontario Premier's Awards for Excellence in the Arts (2016): Recognizing her outstanding contribution to the arts in Ontario.
- Governor General's Innovation Award (2016): Honoring her creative work in both art and social change.
- Art Gallery of Ontario People's Choice Award (2015): For her piece *The Wisdom of the Universe*.
- Aboriginal Arts Award Laureate, Ontario Arts Council (2014): Celebrating her impact on Indigenous art in Canada.
- Influential Women of Northern Ontario, Aboriginal Leadership Award (2014): Recognizing her leadership as an Indigenous woman.
- Commemorative Stamp, Canada Post (2024): Her work was honored with a stamp to celebrate her contribution to Canadian art.
- Order of Gabriel Dumont Gold Medal (2024): Awarded for her contribution to Métis culture.
- Member, Order of Canada (2024): One of Canada's highest honors for her artistic and advocacy work.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. In 2015, Italian fashion house Valentino collaborated with Christi Belcourt, transforming her painting *Water Song* into fabric designs for their 2016 Resort collection.
2. Christi is a self-taught artist, learning her craft independently and drawing inspiration from traditional Métis beadwork and designs, without formal art training.
3. Christi designed a stained glass window called *Giniigaaniimenaaning*, which was installed in 2012 above the Centre Block's west entrance of the Canadian Parliament. It commemorates the legacy of Residential Schools and the Prime Minister's historic apology to former students and their families.
4. In 2023, Christi was awarded two honorary doctorates, one from Algoma University and one from Wilfrid Laurier University, recognizing her outstanding contributions to art and Indigenous advocacy.
5. Christi initiated the *Walking With Our Sisters* project, a massive community-based commemorative art project and memorial ceremony to honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and their families.

Learn more about Christi Belcourt by <http://christibelcourt.com>

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Image, page 31

Image, page 32



“...Perhaps it's time to place the rights of Mother Earth ahead of the rights to Mother Earth.” — *Christi Belcourt, The Wisdom of the Universe*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Christi Belcourt exemplifies the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker** through her ability to use art as a means of storytelling, advocacy and problem-solving. As a Métis artist and activist, she makes informed, ethical decisions that uphold the dignity of all people—particularly Indigenous communities—and promotes justice for creation.

Through her artwork, she raises awareness of Indigenous rights, environmental protection and

cultural resilience, embodying a commitment to the common good. Her involvement in initiatives like *Walking With Our Sisters* reflects her deep concern for human dignity and social justice, fostering remembrance, healing and action.

By using her creativity to inspire change, Christi Belcourt models the qualities of a critical and compassionate thinker who integrates faith, morality and artistic expression to serve others and build a more just world.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Christi Belcourt embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Stewardship of Creation** through her art, which is deeply inspired by the natural world and Métis beadwork traditions. Her work not only celebrates the beauty and diversity of creation but also serves as a prophetic call to action—urging people to respect, protect and cherish the Earth as a sacred gift from God. As a passionate advocate for Indigenous land rights and environmental conservation, she exemplifies our shared responsibility to care for the land, water and all living beings.

In collaboration with Isaac Murdoch, Belcourt actively works to defend the environment through various art and activism projects, including the Water is Life initiative. This project aligns with Catholic teachings on the dignity of creation and global justice, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of reduced inequalities and clean water and sanitation. Through her advocacy and artistic expression, she reminds us that caring for the Earth is not only an environmental duty but also a moral and spiritual obligation.



DR. CINDY BLACKSTOCK

Gitxsan First Nation

Researched and prepared by Ruben Da Silveira, Toronto Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Activist for child welfare and Professor.

Awards and Achievements:

- 18 Honorary Doctorate Degrees—Recognizing her leadership and contributions to Indigenous advocacy and children's rights.
- Officer, Order of Canada—One of Canada's highest honours, awarded for her extraordinary commitment to social justice and child welfare.
- National Public Health Hero Award from the Canadian Public Health Association.
- Chatelaine Magazine, Women of the Year.
- TD Spotlight on Achievement—Recognized by the Family Physicians Association of Canada for her contributions to health care and family welfare.
- Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize for her work in promoting peace and reconciliation.
- Stand Up for Kids Inaugural Award.
- Janusz Korczak Medal for Children's Rights Advocacy.
- Law Society of Upper Canada, Human Rights Award—For her exceptional work in advancing human rights in Canada.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Co-founded the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society—In 1999, Dr. Blackstock became the executive director of the national non-profit, which advocates for and supports Indigenous children, families and communities.
2. Human Rights Tribunal Ruling (2016)—Her advocacy led to a significant ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which found that the federal government's underfunding of Indigenous child services was discriminatory and ordered the government to fix funding inequalities and compensate affected families.
3. Created Touchstones of Hope—This movement brought together 233 First Nations and non-Indigenous groups to work together on reconciliation in child welfare, incorporating 30 languages and aiming for co-created solutions for the future.
4. Created the Spirit Bear Book Series—Dr. Blackstock developed this children's book series to educate students about Indigenous history, advocacy and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
5. Worked with Indigenous Youth and International Organizations—She collaborated with Indigenous youth, UNICEF and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to create a youth-friendly version of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

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“With every generation of children comes the chance to create a Canada anew. A chance to create a First Nations community anew. One that represents the ancestors’ dreams of that community.” — *Cindy Blackstock*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Dr. Cindy Blackstock exemplifies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **A Discerning Believer**, demonstrating faith in action, ethical decision-making and a commitment to justice and truth. Through her tireless advocacy for Indigenous children's rights, she embodies moral courage, compassion and a deep responsibility to uphold human dignity. Her unwavering pursuit of equity reflects the

Catholic call to seek truth and reconciliation—standing against injustice and working toward a more just and inclusive society.

By challenging systemic inequalities and advocating for the most vulnerable, Dr. Blackstock lives out the values of faith, integrity and social responsibility, inspiring others to act with conviction and a sense of moral duty.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Dr. Cindy Blackstock’s advocacy strongly aligns with two key principles of Catholic Social Teaching: **Rights and Responsibilities** and **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**. Through her relentless efforts, she upholds the principle of Rights and Responsibilities by advocating for the fundamental rights of Indigenous children, ensuring they receive equal access to essential services such as education, health care and child welfare. Her work also embodies the principle of

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable, as she challenges systemic inequities and prioritizes the needs of marginalized Indigenous communities.

By amplifying their voices and demanding justice, she strives to create a society where the dignity and well-being of every individual—especially the most vulnerable—are recognized, protected and upheld.



CRYSTAL SHAWANDA

Anishinaabe from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory

Researched and prepared by Carter Peios, Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Musician.

Awards and Achievements:

- One JUNO Award win and five nominations.
- Five Indigenous Music Awards wins and six nominations.
- One Canadian Country Music Association Award win and five nominations.
- 2013 JUNO Award for Best Indigenous Album for her album, *"Just Like You."*
- First Indigenous woman to serve as CEO of a record label.
- Performed at the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade in New York City.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Crystal Shawanda, from Manitoulin Island, is a successful artist who found her passion for music early in life, leading to a thriving music career.
2. Music career start—She discovered her love for music at Korah CVS, in Sault Ste. Marie, which inspired her to record an album in Nashville. Despite facing racism and discrimination in the music industry, Shawanda persevered, becoming a champion for Indigenous representation in country music.
3. Shawanda's debut album, *Dawn of the Day*, was released in Canada and the USA, reaching number two on the Canadian Country Albums Chart and receiving great acclaim.
4. She performed at the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade in New York City, won the 2013 JUNO Award for Best Indigenous Album and became the first Indigenous woman to serve as the CEO of a record label.
5. Shawanda has released eight albums and been nominated for five JUNO Awards and six Indigenous Music Awards throughout her career.

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“...I’m always wanting to know who are the originators, who are the mothers of invention, who inspired all of us?...” — Crystal Shawanda

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Crystal Shawanda exemplifies the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of **An Effective Communicator** through her powerful ability to share her story and advocate for Indigenous representation in the music industry. As an Indigenous woman navigating a colonial world, she has used her voice to break barriers in country music—challenging stereotypes and paving the way for greater inclusivity. Through her music, she communicates messages of resilience, identity and justice, inspiring others to embrace their heritage and share their own experiences.

Her mastery of storytelling through song has earned her numerous awards, recognizing her ability to connect with diverse audiences. Beyond her musical achievements, Shawanda continues to use her platform to inspire students—encouraging them to express themselves through music and embrace their unique voices.

By doing so, she not only demonstrates effective communication but also lives out the values of collaboration, active citizenship and authenticity, aligning with the Catholic call to use our gifts to uplift and empower others.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Crystal Shawanda embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Solidarity** through her commitment to fostering unity, representation and understanding through music. Solidarity calls us to stand together, see ourselves in others and work toward strengthening communities, and Shawanda has exemplified this by amplifying Indigenous voices in the music industry. Through her music, she has empowered Indigenous peoples—particularly Indigenous women and girls—by allowing them to see themselves and hear their stories reflected in an industry where they have historically been underrepresented.

Her work has not only built a broader community of Indigenous artists but has also fostered reconciliation by allowing non-Indigenous people to encounter and engage with Indigenous stories. By breaking barriers in a colonial industry, Shawanda’s music serves as a powerful symbol of **Solidarity**—demonstrating a commitment to justice, inclusion and ensuring that all voices are heard.



DAVID ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

Cree from Kinosao Sipi (Norway House Cree Nation)

Researched and prepared by Carter Peios, Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Author, public speaker, podcaster, freelance journalist.

Awards and Achievements:

- Governor General's Literary Award—A two-time recipient, David has won it for *When We Were Alone* and *On the Trampoline*, recognizing his exceptional contribution to Canadian literature.
- Union of Canada's Freedom to Read Award acknowledges his advocacy for children's rights to read and his commitment to promoting literacy.
- TD Children's Literacy Award (2022)—Awarded for *On the Trampoline*, recognizing his outstanding impact on young readers.
- Honorary Doctorate from the University of Manitoba (2023)—David received this recognition, following in the footsteps of his father, for his contributions to literature and his advocacy work.
- Hans Christian Andersen Award Nominee (2026)—David is Canada's nominee for this prestigious international award in children's literature, with the award ceremony taking place in Bologna, Italy.
- New Imprint with Penguin Random House Canada and Tundra Books (2025)—David is set to launch a new imprint, expanding his influence in the publishing world.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. David is a father to five children, ranging in age from 10 to 21, which keeps his home lively and full of energy.
2. He has a passion for collecting vintage action figures, comics, cards and records. He also loves cruising in classic cars, especially those with a tape deck.
3. Around 40 per cent of his year is spent travelling to different destinations, allowing him to experience new places and cultures.
4. Committed vegan—David follows a plant-based lifestyle, making conscious choices about the food he consumes.
5. A dedicated Pearl Jam fan, he's been to four of their live performances and continues to enjoy their electrifying shows.

Learn more about David Robertson at <https://www.darobertson.ca>

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Image Credits:

Image provided with permission by David Robertson.



“Stories always lead people somewhere, to a place, to a memory.” — *David Alexander Robertson*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

David Robertson exemplifies the qualities of both **A Collaborative Contributor** and **A Caring Family Member** through his unwavering advocacy for a child’s right to read.

Six years ago in Alberta, his book *Betty: The Helen Betty Osborne Story* was banned due to its discussion of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women—an issue of profound importance. Recognizing the critical need for students to learn about this topic, David spoke out against the ban, firmly asserting that young readers should not be shielded from essential truths. In conversations, he has reaffirmed his belief that students have the right to learn through reading and that books addressing significant societal issues should never be censored in schools.

Since then, David has remained a dedicated advocate for children's literacy, ensuring that young readers have access to age-appropriate books that explore meaningful and sometimes difficult subjects. His commitment reflects the Collaborative Contributor expectation, as he fulfils his vocation as both a writer and an advocate—working to create a more inclusive and educational literary landscape.

Additionally, his passion for empowering the next generation through literature demonstrates his role as **A Caring Family Member**. His advocacy is rooted in compassion, as he strives to provide children with the knowledge and resources they need to grow, learn and shape a better future.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

David Robertson embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of life and **Dignity of the Human Person** through his advocacy for mental health. Having faced struggles with mental well-being, he has made it a priority to openly discuss this important issue both in his books and public speaking engagements. He believes that when public figures speak candidly about mental health, it helps to destigmatize these struggles—encouraging others to acknowledge and address their own needs without fear or shame.

One of his most impactful contributions to this cause is his recently released book, *All the Little Monsters: How I Learned to Live with Anxiety*. In this deeply personal work, he chronicles his experiences with anxiety while offering guidance to others on coping with mental health challenges. By sharing his journey, David not only promotes awareness but also helps

restore dignity to those struggling—reassuring them that they are not alone.

The real impact of his advocacy is evident in the overwhelming response from readers. David has received 70–80 heartfelt emails from people thanking him for his honesty and for how his book has helped them navigate their own mental health journeys. He takes great pride in supporting his readers in this way, and this fuels his passion for mental health advocacy even further.

Through his work as both a writer and speaker, David actively challenges the stigma surrounding mental health and encourages individuals to seek support. In doing so, he truly upholds the Catholic Social Teaching of life and dignity of the human person—ensuring that everyone feels valued, heard and empowered to prioritize their well-being.



DESTINY MOSER

Ojibway from Rainy River First Nation

Researched and prepared by Amira Zamanifar, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Chef.

Awards and Achievements:

- Nominated for The Business Excellence Award for Tourism and Hospitality.
- Nominated for The Business Excellence Award for Environment and Sustainability.
- Nominated for Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Rogers Women of the Year Entrepreneur 40+.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Chef Destiny Moser started Cedar Spoon Indigenous Catering. The name reflects her Indigenous heritage and resilience, symbolizing healing and strength.
2. Growing up cooking for her large family, Destiny later taught cooking in her community and attended cooking school.
3. Moser's objectives for Cedar Spoon involved promoting Indigenous cuisine to the public, supporting local Indigenous cooks and chefs, and mentoring aspiring Indigenous chefs to help them succeed in the culinary industry.
4. Chef Moser highlights traditional Indigenous ingredients, using things like bison, maple syrup, sumac, and sunflower oil in place of conventional options.
5. Destiny, as a busy mother of three, is the owner and Head Chef at FoodZen, a pre-made meal delivery service created by a personal chef.

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Explore Waterloo Region. "Meet Chef Destiny Moser, Cedar Spoon Indigenous Catering." *Explore Waterloo Region*, <https://www.foodzen.ca/team>. Accessed 6 Apr. 2025.

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Image Credits:

Image, page 39

Image, page 40



"...Food is my love language, and it was naturally a way for me to learn. I immersed myself in it. Food is tied to everything in Indigenous culture." — *Destiny Moser*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Chef Moser is **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker** who is continuously solving problems that she observes within the culinary arts. She is creating a space for Indigenous cooks and chefs, which she previously observed there to be a lack of, and is sharing not only the knowledge but health benefits of Indigenous cuisine. Her work contributes to a greater

lifestyle for many, including those who cannot cook for themselves.

Chef Moser is also **A Collaborative Contributor**, working with a variety of chefs, schools and community partners, sharing her knowledge and services wherever she can.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Chef Destiny Moser is strongly concerned with the **Common Good** of others, providing affordable and convenient meals and making her services accessible to more individuals. She exemplifies **Solidarity**, understanding the importance of interconnected and interdependence, by sharing her culinary

talents and life experiences with a variety of communities. Chef Moser also puts a great emphasis on using ingredients that are hyper-local and ultra-seasonal. This not only speaks to her concern for the physical well-being of others but her **Stewardship of Creation**, procuring ingredients in this ecologically beneficial way.



DEREK SANDS

Ojibway, Potawatomi and Miami from Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong Territory

Researched and prepared by Kate Bester Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Filmmaker.

Awards and Achievements:

- Director for *Crave* series *The Trades*—Derek Sands is a director for the *Crave* original series *The Trades*, which explores compelling narratives about blue-collar workers.
- Nominee—Canadian Independent Film Festival—Derek's work was recognized at the Canadian Independent Film Festival, which celebrates both emerging and established filmmakers in Canada.
- Selected Filmmaker—2023 RNCI Red Nation International Film Festival and Awards—Derek was selected to showcase his work at the Red Nation International Film Festival (RNCI), an event dedicated to Indigenous storytelling in film.
- Nominee—2023 Art Film Spirit Award—His documentary *All Sacred Things* (2023) was nominated for the Art Film Spirit Award, presented by *Toronto Film Magazine* and IMDb. It was also the official selection in three film festivals.
- Master of Fine Arts and PhD—Derek holds a Master of Fine Arts in Documentary Media from Toronto Metropolitan University and is currently pursuing a PhD in Media and Design Innovation.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. PhD candidate—Derek is one of only six students accepted into the prestigious PhD in Media and Design Innovation program at Toronto Metropolitan University.
2. Film debut—His first film, *Ziidbaatogeng* (2020), explores the rich traditions of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation, focusing on their Sugarbush teachings.
3. Mentorship by Alanis Obomsawin—Derek is currently being mentored by the acclaimed documentary filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin, known for her powerful work in Indigenous storytelling.
4. Featured on CBC—His work is showcased in the *Stories from the Land* documentary series on CBC, which features Indigenous stories and perspectives.
5. Graphic design background—Derek holds a degree in graphic design, offering a unique visual perspective that he incorporates into his filmmaking.

Image Credits: Image provided with permission by Derek Sands.

Learn more about Derek Sands at https://www.instagram.com/indigital_films



"When I cross the bridge onto Walpole Island, it's like the weight of the world lifts off my shoulders. My ancestors are welcoming me home." — *Derek Sands*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Derek Sands embodies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **An Effective Communicator** through his powerful storytelling and commitment to sharing Indigenous culture and history. His documentaries serve as a bridge between tradition and modern audiences, ensuring that Indigenous voices and experiences are heard and understood. Through his films, such as *Ziidbaatogeng* (2020) and *All Sacred Things* (2023), Sands communicates the richness of Indigenous traditions, focusing on cultural reconnection and the significance of the Ojibwe Spirit Horses. In 2024, he screened *Gaa-zhaabwiiig, Survivors* for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation—a deeply personal project inspired by his father, grandmother and

great-aunt, who were all residential school survivors.

While serving as communications coordinator for Walpole Island First Nation, he took action in response to the discovery of 215 unmarked graves at Kamloops Indian Residential School by organizing a community event where 215 shoes were placed to honour the lost children.

Through his films, advocacy and response to historical injustices, Sands exemplifies what it means to be **An Effective Communicator**—one who uses his platform to educate, inspire and give voice to those who need to be heard.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Derek Sands' work as a filmmaker closely aligns with the Catholic Social Teaching of the **Dignity of the Human Person**. His films focus on honouring, preserving and advocating for Indigenous culture and history—using his platform to ensure that Indigenous voices are heard and their traditions recognized. Sands' documentaries tackle both the ongoing struggles and the resilience of Indigenous communities, serving as a powerful testament to their humanity and dignity.

Through his film *Gaa-zhaabwiiig, Survivors* (2024), Sands amplifies the voices of residential

school survivors, acknowledging their suffering and fostering healing. This documentary is not just a form of storytelling but an act of truth-telling—providing a space for survivors' narratives to be heard and valued.

Sands' other films, such as *Ziidbaatogeng* (2020) and *All Sacred Things* (2023), highlight the importance of reconnecting with Indigenous culture, reinforcing the value of cultural identity. Rooted in social justice, Sands challenges stereotypes and promotes inclusivity—using film as a tool to educate audiences and create space for Indigenous voices.



DREW HAYDEN TAYLOR

Anishinaabe, from Curve Lake First Nation

Researched and prepared by Jaden zhang, Ottawa Catholic School Board.

Best Known For: Playwright, columnist, film maker, lecturer and author.

Awards and Achievements:

- Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Award (2012).
- CBC Bookie for Best Character for Motorcycles and Sweetgrass (2011).
- Ontario Premier's Award for Creative Arts and Design (2010).
- Shortlisted for the Governor General's Award in Fiction, Motorcycles and Sweetgrass (2010).
- Victoria Martyn Lynch-Staunton Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement in Theatre (2009).
- Nominations for Gemini Awards in several categories, including Best Picture, Best Editing and Best Actor for a MOW for In A World Created By A Drunken God (2009).
- Shortlisted for the Stellar Book Award for 2009 to 2010 in the Teen Readers' Choice Award category for The Night Wanderer (2009).
- For many more, visit, www.drewhaydentaylor.com.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Taylor, who has shown his versatile abilities by doing stand-up comedy at the Kennedy Center, is now a director for Native Earth Performing Arts.
2. Taylor, a script writer, received recognition for the scripts he wrote for the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards in 2011 and 2012.
3. Taylor, in the past, has been a part of Berton House, University of Michigan, University of Western Ontario, University of Lunenburg and Ryerson University along with Wilfrid Laurier where he worked with many theatre companies.
4. Taylor completed a radio and television broadcasting diploma from Seneca College located in Toronto during 1982.
5. Taylor writes about First Nations culture and has written more than 20 plays and they have been produced around 100 times.

Sources:

Drew Hayden Taylor - Issuu

Drew Hayden Taylor

Drew Hayden Taylor | The Canadian Encyclopedia

What Is Indigenous?

Drew Hayden Taylor - The Globe and Mail

Image Credits:

Image, page 43

Image, page 44



"You must remember, all stories start somewhere."
— Drew Hayden Taylor

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Taylor's work aligns with the expectation of being **A Discerning Believer**, frequently including spiritual and cultural aspects in his storytelling. Through these subjects, Taylor encourages people to ponder the sacredness of Indigenous customs and the strength of their spirituality; this helps foster more profound comprehension and admiration among viewers.

Taylor is **An Effective Communicator**, shown in his skill to create stories that engage people from different cultures. He writes honestly and with care about the life of Indigenous groups, while pushing his readers and watchers to address issues regarding fairness in society and fixing broken relationships. Taylor also uses humour as a primary tool to reach audiences he

would have otherwise never been able to affect. In addition, Taylor's dedication to participating in community activities and speaking up for others aligns with the requirements of **A Collaborative Contributor** and **A Responsible Citizen**. Not just focusing on his art, Taylor is also involved in efforts that try to give power to Indigenous young people. He takes part in projects to maintain Indigenous languages and customs while supporting the rights of Indigenous groups.

By leading and advocating for these causes, Taylor shows strong responsibility towards the health of Indigenous communities as well as promoting Catholic Social Teachings like fairness, harmony and regard for human worth.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Drew Hayden Taylor's **Care for the Environment** is in harmony with Catholic Social Teaching about looking after creation. Being an Ojibwe writer and journalist, he stresses on the spiritual importance of land and connection between human beings and nature. Taylor highlights the necessity to protect Earth's resources for upcoming times, mirroring Catholic beliefs on stewardship principles and natural environment's fundamental worthiness.

Moreover, Taylor shows his dedication to Catholic social lessons by endorsing the **Principle of Preferential Option** for the poor. In his writings, plays and activism, he brings attention to social and economic inequalities experienced by Indigenous communities in Ontario and throughout Canada. He gives importance to making stronger the voices of marginalized groups, also pushing for policies that aim at dealing with systematic unfairnesses.

For example, in plays such as *'AlterNatives'* and "God and the Indian," he highlights struggles faced by impoverished Indigenous peoples along with showing how collective action can help solve these problems.

Also, Taylor's work and connection with Indigenous groups, as well as his support for participatory decision-making, show Catholic beliefs in **Subsidiarity and Participation**. The promotion of cultural reawakening activities among Indigenous people and guidance projects for the youth encourage them to learn about their history and culture more deeply. It also helps them become active participants in influencing positive change within their communities. By promoting inclusion and empowerment, Taylor contributes in shaping the social, cultural, and political environment of Ontario both at home and worldwide.



EMMA MORRISON

Mushkegowuk Cree, Chapleau Cree First Nation

Researched and prepared by Emily Esperanzate, Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic School Board.

Best Known For: Pageantry, cultural advocacy and community engagement.

Awards and Achievements:

- Miss World Canada 2022—Emma made history as the first Indigenous woman to win this national title.
- Beauty with a Purpose Award (2022)—Awarded for her “Reconnecting Through Ribbon Skirts” project, which honours Indigenous children and promotes cultural pride.
- Miss Teenage Canada 2017—She became the first Indigenous winner of this title.
- Miss Northern Ontario 2017—Her pageant journey began with this regional win, setting the stage for her national success.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Historic wins—Emma was the first Indigenous woman to win both Miss Teenage Canada (2017) and Miss World Canada (2022).
2. Cultural advocacy—She launched the “Reconnecting Through Ribbon Skirts” project to honour Indigenous children and promote healing in response to the unmarked graves found at residential schools.
3. Showcasing Indigenous culture—At the Miss World competition, she plans to perform a traditional dance in her fancy shawl regalia, celebrating her Mushkegowuk Cree roots.
4. Educational pursuits—Emma has studied Indigenous preparatory studies, tourism, aesthetics and hairstyling, blending cultural knowledge with personal development.
5. Community role model—She’s passionate about inspiring Indigenous youth and uplifting her community through representation and action.

Sources:

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"Life's most meaningful achievements often require time, dedication, and a steadfast commitment to the process." — *Emma Morrison*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Emma Morrison exemplifies the qualities of **A Caring Family Member** through her dedication to cultural advocacy and community initiatives. Her commitment to preserving and promoting Indigenous culture reflects a deep sense of

responsibility toward her community. By using her platform to uplift others and foster inclusivity, she demonstrates compassion, service and social responsibility—values that align with the call to care for and support those around us.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Emma Morrison's initiative, *Reconnecting Through Ribbon Skirts*, aligns with the Catholic Social Teaching of **Solidarity** by emphasizing the importance of community and standing with others in their struggles. Through her project, she fosters unity, cultural pride and resilience among Indigenous peoples, highlighting the significance of shared identity and mutual

support. By promoting the traditional ribbon skirt, Morrison not only celebrates Indigenous heritage but also helps heal historical injustices by reclaiming cultural traditions that were once suppressed. Her advocacy reflects the call to uphold human dignity, bridge divides and work toward justice—values at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching.



HENRY LOUIS NORWEST

Métis from Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta

Researched and prepared by Amira Zamanifar, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Veteran and famous sniper WWI.

Awards and Achievements:

- Merited the Military Medal and bar, one of 830 members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to be awarded this double honour.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Norwest worked as a Royal Northwest Mounted Police officer—He served for five months and was also a former ranch-hand and rodeo performer.
2. Military service with the 50th Canadian Infantry Battalion—During his time in the battalion, Private Norwest demonstrated remarkable skill and had a significant impact on Canadian military tactics.
3. Recipient of the Military Medal and bar—He was honoured with this prestigious recognition, awarded to only about 830 members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.
4. Known for exceptional patience—In addition to his marksmanship and camouflage skills, he was able to remain perfectly still for very long periods of time.
5. Nicknamed 'Ducky' by fellow soldiers—His shyness earned him this name within the 50th Battalion. Despite his reserved personality, he was known to be pleasant and kind-hearted when he spoke.

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Image Credits:

Image, page 47

Image, page 48



"Our famous sniper no doubt understood better than most of us the cost of life and the price of death." — *Fellow soldier of Henry Louis Norwest*

(<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/those-who-served/indigenous-veterans/native-soldiers/norwest>)

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Private Norwest is **A Collaborative Contributor** who found meaning and vocation in his work of fighting for Canada and world peace. In his pursuit of world peace, Private Norwest contributed to the common good of those he was fighting to defend.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Private Norwest was highly concerned about the **Dignity of the Human Person**, fighting for the conviction that everyone should be dignified and have freedom. He fought for the political **Common Good**, fighting for his neighbours locally and globally. Participating on the front lines of war, he greatly contributed to the progress of peace among God's creation.



ISAAC MURDOCH

Ojibway from Serpent River First Nation

Best Known For: Artist, author, musician, storyteller.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Murdoch has written two books titled *The Trail of Nenaboozhoo* and *Serpents and Other Spiritual Beings* which recount stories in both English and Anishinaabemowin relating to Nenaboozhoo the shapeshifter and stories relating to lessons divulged from serpents and spiritual beings respectively.
2. Isaac has released two albums *You Were Chosen to Be Here* and *Here to Stay*. His songs combine Indigenous stories and knowledge, powerful storytelling, as well as traditional styles of singing.
3. Many of Murdoch's artworks have become recognized worldwide, with his *Thunderbird Woman* and *Water is Life* paintings being the most notable. Isaac dedicates his earnings from his artwork to the Onaman Collective, an initiative that fosters language and culture learning for youth.
4. Isaac has been a key part in building Nimkii Aazhibikoong- a community where Indigenous peoples gather to learn the Anishinaabek language and ways of being. He built this community in collaboration with elders to fight climate change by instilling traditional knowledge and values in young people.
5. Although his artwork is incredibly well recognized, Isaac has never copyrighted his art to allow anyone to use his artwork to fundraise for various causes.

Learn more about Isaac Murdoch at <https://isaacmurdoch.com>

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Image, page 49

Image, page 50



"I truly believe that when we put our hearts together and unite for the Earth and people, we can achieve anything." — *Isaac Murdoch*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

As an artist and storyteller, Isaac Murdoch fulfills the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations as both **An Effective Communicator** and **A Collaborative Contributor**. Through his art, storytelling, and music, Murdoch uses his gifts to speak across the country to thousands of students, adults, government officials, and dignitaries to convey the importance of the restoration of Indigenous language and culture. His communication over

multiple mediums is contributing to action against the climate crisis and is helping individuals across the nation gain more connection to their culture.

In addition, he collaborates with other Indigenous peoples, such as Christi Belcourt, to make his mission of educating young people possible.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Isaac Murdoch talks often about the power of coming together as Indigenous peoples and working together to learn, create, and collaborate, all of which is reflected in the Catholic Social Teaching of **Solidarity**. Solidarity reflects working together with others to strengthen community and collaborate towards solutions. Murdoch has dedicated a large portion of his life with Nimkii Aazhibikoong to

create a physical place where young people can come together and connect with the land. In doing this he is paving the way for future climate warriors, knowledge keepers, and language speakers. His knowledge is incredibly valuable, yet he acknowledges he cannot work alone to fight against climate change and we must collaborate together to make change.



JAMES VUKELICH KAAGEGAABAW

Anishinaabe from Turtle Mountain, Twin Cities, Minnesota

Researched and prepared by Matthew Moss, St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: International speaker, author and digital creator.

Awards and Achievements:

- Bestselling author—His book *The Seven Generations and the Seven Grandfather Teachings* became a bestseller on Amazon.
- Language advocate—He created the Ojibwe Word of the Day podcast as an educational tool for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals to learn and appreciate the Ojibwe language and culture.
- Influential educator and speaker—Through his work, he has consulted with schools, historical societies and government agencies to develop Indigenous language and cultural programs.
- Social media influencer—Vukelich has built a large online following, with over 130,000 Instagram followers, 102,000 on Facebook, 22,000 on TikTok and 8,000 YouTube subscribers—helping to make Indigenous teachings accessible to a global audience.

Learn more about James Vukelich: <https://www.jamesvukelich.com/home>

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Language and cultural advocate—For over 20 years, he has led community language tables, worked with public and private organizations and travelled internationally as a keynote speaker to promote Indigenous language and culture.
2. Educational consultant—He has collaborated with school districts, colleges, historical societies and government agencies to develop and teach language and cultural programs, helping to preserve and revitalize Indigenous traditions.
3. Ojibwe language expert—His deep understanding of the Ojibwe language was shaped by speaking with and recording elders and native speakers in Canada, Michigan and Minnesota as part of the Ojibwe Language Dictionary Project.
4. Community leader—In addition to giving keynote speeches for academic, philanthropic, business and community organizations, he also facilitates local community roundtable discussions to encourage meaningful dialogue on Indigenous culture and values.
5. Author—Vukelich has published two books, *The Seven Generations and the Seven Grandfather Teachings* and *Wisdom Weavers*, which explore Indigenous knowledge, teachings and their relevance in today's world.

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Image Credits:

Image, page 51

Image, page 52



“In every deliberation, in every decision, think seven generations into the future...” — James Vukelich, *The Seven Generations and The Seven Grandfather Teachings*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

James Vukelich embodies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **A Collaborative Contributor** by using his knowledge and platform to promote education, cultural awareness and the preservation of Indigenous languages. Through his books, podcast (*Ojibwe Word of the Day*) and social media presence, he actively contributes to the common good by making Indigenous history and teachings accessible to a global audience.

His work is especially impactful for younger generations, who make up a significant portion

of social media users, as he fosters understanding and appreciation for Indigenous languages and traditions. By consulting with schools, historical societies and government agencies, Vukelich ensures that Indigenous knowledge is integrated into educational spaces—demonstrating his commitment to collaboration and the betterment of society as a whole.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

James Vukelich embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of the **Common Good** through his dedication to preserving and promoting Indigenous languages and cultures. By using his podcast (*Ojibwe Word of the Day*), books, public speaking engagements and social media presence, he ensures that Indigenous knowledge is shared, valued and never forgotten. His advocacy helps both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities understand the significance of language in cultural identity—fostering greater awareness and respect for Indigenous traditions.

Through his efforts, Vukelich contributes to the well-being of society by encouraging inclusivity, education and historical awareness. By consulting with schools, government agencies and community organizations, he ensures that Indigenous teachings are accessible and respected, strengthening the cultural fabric of communities worldwide. His work is a powerful example of how promoting education and cultural understanding serves the greater good of all people.



JASON SIMON

Anishinaabe, from Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Researched and prepared by Matthew Moss, Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Athlete (Hockey Player)

Awards and Achievements:

- Simon uses his platform to raise awareness about mental health, the lasting impact of residential schools, and the importance of healing through connection, culture and community.
- Simon received an Upper Deck NHL First Peoples Rookie Cards set as part of a special edition celebrating Indigenous hockey players. He was one of eight Indigenous players honoured in this collection.
- Turner Cup Champion (1994-95). Simon won with the Denver Grizzlies, the championship trophy awarded in the International Hockey League (IHL).
- Allan Cup Champion (2007-08). Simon captured the Allan Cup, Canada's senior men's ice hockey national title, with the Brantford Blast.
- Long-Awaited Rookie Card Recognition (2023). Simon received his Upper Deck Rookie Hockey Card as part of a special edition series celebrating Indigenous hockey players. He was one of eight players honoured.
- Induction into the Little Native Hockey League (LNHL) and was honoured in the Alumni category for his significant contributions to the hockey community and his role as a mentor and inspiration to Indigenous youth.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Simon had an hockey career spanning 17+ years, which included playing in the NHL with the Phoenix Coyotes and the New York Islanders.
2. Despite facing a challenging childhood filled with personal and family struggles, Simon was determined to pursue hockey after being inspired by his grandparents, who were residential school survivors and first took him to a hockey game.
3. Today, Simon is a motivational speaker who travels across Canada, sharing his story and encouraging perseverance and resilience among students and young athletes.
4. Connected to his Aamjiwnaang First Nation roots, Simon established a nine-week summer fitness program for Indigenous youth in his community, emphasizing the importance of health, discipline and perseverance.
5. Jason made history in 2008 as the Player General Manager for the 100th annual Allan Cup, Canada's prestigious senior men's hockey championship. He brought in key players, including Brent Gretzky (brother of Wayne Gretzky) from Brantford, Ontario, to strengthen the team.

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"It's exciting for me to be able to touch other peoples' lives and inspire them." — *Jason Simon*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Jason Simon connects powerfully to the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **A Collaborative Contributor**. As a professional athlete in a team sport, Jason had to develop and demonstrate a wide range of skills—communication, commitment, responsibility, and most importantly, collaboration. Success in hockey, especially at the NHL level, requires players to work together, trust each other, and strive for the collective good of the team, not just individual recognition. True collaborators understand that the greatest achievements come when everyone contributes and lifts one another up. Jason Simon embodied those qualities throughout his 17-year hockey career. Coming from Aamjiwnaang First Nation and growing up without the same privileges or resources that many other players had, Jason's

path to the NHL was far from easy. It took hard work, determination, and a willingness to support others on and off the ice. He had to not only perform his best, but also make sure that others saw his talent—proving himself through perseverance and teamwork.

Today, Jason continues to live out this expectation in his life beyond hockey. He travels across Canada, collaborating with students and communities, sharing his journey, and using his athletic and social talents to inspire others. His story encourages young people to pursue what they love, overcome obstacles, and understand the power of working together. Jason Simon is a true example of **A Collaborative Contributor**—in sport, in life, and in his commitment to empowering others.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Jason Simon embodies the Catholic Social **Teaching of Participation**, which emphasizes the right and responsibility of all people to take part in society in meaningful ways that contribute to the common good. Jason encourages individuals to use their gifts to uplift others, create change, and pave the way for future generations. As one of the first and few Indigenous players to reach the NHL, Jason has made a lasting impact not only in the world of hockey but also in the lives of Indigenous youth, giving them representation and the belief that they, too, can achieve greatness. His presence on the ice showed that Indigenous athletes have a place in professional sports, and his journey continues to inspire young people to believe in their dreams.

Jason has also been a powerful participant in his teams and communities, playing in various hockey leagues for over two decades, and contributing both as a player and a leader. Today, he continues to live this out by visiting schools and speaking to students, encouraging them to be active participants in their own lives, to persevere, and to pursue their passions with purpose.

Through both his career and his advocacy, Jason Simon models the essence of **Participation**—engaging fully in life, using his voice and story to make a difference, and helping others find their path.



JESSE WENTE

Ojibwe, from Serpent River First Nation

Researched and prepared by Lauren McGuire, Halton Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Journalist, author, activist, artist.

Awards and Achievements:

- Current chair of the Canada Council for the Arts.
- Directed film programming at the TIFF Bell Lightbox Theatre.
- Won the Arbor Award from the University of Toronto and was anointed a Massey fellow for his accomplishments in advancing Canadian Indigenous arts.
- Blanketed at a ceremony at the Imagine Native Festival in recognition of his contribution to Indigenous screen storytelling, 2017.
- First recipient of the Reel Activist Award from the Reelworld Film Festival.
- Received the Association of Ontario Health Centres Media Award Media, 2018.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Wente has served as a journalist at over 20 different CBC stations throughout Canada.
2. He attended the University of Toronto for a degree in Cinema Studies, having membership to Innis College Jesse Wente | University of Toronto Alumni.
3. He is a father to a son and a daughter. Journalist Jesse Wente has spent a lifetime being uncomfortable. Join him, won't you? The Globe and Mail.
4. He was the first director of the Indigenous Screen Office, which worked to help create and promote specifically Indigenous films.
5. He released his first book, an autobiography, *Unreconciled: Family, Truth and Indigenous Resistance* in 2021 to critical acclaim.

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Jesse Wente. "About." *JesseWente.ca*, <https://www.jessewente.ca/about.html>. Accessed 26 Apr. 2024.

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Image, page 55

Image, page 56



"When racism doesn't harm you personally, noticing it requires conscious effort, or at least empathy — just as acknowledging that you benefit from racism requires you to acknowledge its existence."
— Jesse Wenté

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

As a journalist and author, Wenté is **An Effective Communicator**, as he is able to speak about different issues related to Indigenous peoples in a very engaging and impassioned way. Wenté is also **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker**, as he provides a very well-thought-out

perspective to all pieces he releases. Wenté is also **A Responsible Citizen**, as he strives to promote justice for all people through his work in film highlighting diverse perspectives.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Wenté exemplifies all of the Catholic Social Teachings, but specifically the **Dignity of the Human Person**, the **Common Good** and **Solidarity**.

Wenté shows the **Dignity of the Human Person** through his support for marginalized people, as he amplifies these voices and their oppression

through film. He works towards the **Common Good** by creating awareness of issues in society through his journalistic efforts, and encourages us all to be aware and to be actionable citizens. Additionally, he shows **Solidarity** through supporting other marginalized communities and championing their causes.



JODY WILSON-RAYBOULD

Musgamagw Tsawataineuk and Laich-Kwil-Tach peoples, We Wai Kai Nation

Researched and prepared by Lauren McGuire, Halton Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Lawyer, author, politician; former minister of justice and attorney general of Canada.

Awards and Achievements:

- Minerva Foundation for BC Women Award (2011).
- Distinguished Alumni Award, University of Victoria (2012).
- Policy Maker of the Year (2017)—Her impactful work in Canadian politics.
- Indigenous Women in Leadership Award (2017)—Her role in advancing Indigenous representation in leadership.
- International Women’s Day Honouree Award—Recognized by the Harvard Women’s Law Association for her commitment to justice and equality.
- MADD Citizen of Distinction Award (2018)—For advocating stricter drunk driving laws in Canada.
- Newsmaker of the Year (2019)—For her influence in Canadian politics.
- Bestselling author—For three bestselling books.
- Significant legislative impact—She worked to strengthen Canada’s legal system, promote truth and reconciliation and advocate for Indigenous rights. Historian Ken Coates has called her “the most influential Indigenous federal politician in Canadian history.”

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Her name in Kwak’wala, Puglaas, means ‘a woman born to noble people’—Reflecting her strong leadership and heritage within the Kwakwaka’wakw Nation.
2. She was the first Indigenous person to serve as Canada’s Minister of Justice and Attorney General—Marking a historic milestone for Indigenous representation in government.
3. She helped create stronger laws around sexual assault and drunk driving while serving as justice minister—Improving Canada’s legal system for victims and public safety.
4. Her father, Bill Wilson, was a major inspiration for her career in law—He was the second Indigenous person to graduate from the University of British Columbia Law School and worked to enshrine Indigenous rights in the Canadian Constitution.
5. Before entering Parliament, she was a Crown prosecutor and Regional Chief for British Columbia—She fought for fair treatment of Indigenous peoples in the justice system and advocated for better access to land, education and health care for First Nations communities.

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Image, page 57

Image, page 58



“Canada, the provinces, and Canadians generally must be willing partners and support our individual healing and Nation-rebuilding agenda.” — *Jody Wilson-Raybould, From Where I Stand: Rebuilding Indigenous Nations for a Stronger Canada*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Jody Wilson-Raybould is a powerful example of what it means to be **A Responsible Citizen**, as described in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. A Responsible Citizen is someone who “gives witness to Catholic Social Teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.” Throughout her career, Wilson-Raybould has dedicated herself to achieving justice and fairness, especially for Indigenous communities.

Before entering politics, she served as a Crown prosecutor and regional chief, where she spoke

up against the unfair treatment of Indigenous peoples in the justice system. She helped shed light on the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in Canada’s prisons.

As a federal politician, she advocated for Indigenous self-governance and stronger relationships between Indigenous Nations and the federal government. By dedicating her career to justice, fairness and representation, she is an outstanding example of **A Responsible Citizen**—showing the importance of integrity, courage and standing up for what is right.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Jody Wilson-Raybould’s work as a leader and advocate reflects the Catholic Social Teaching of the **Common Good** and **Economic Justice**. The principle of the Common Good calls for societies to be structured in a way that benefits all people, especially those who are marginalized. **Economic Justice** ensures that all individuals have access to the resources and opportunities they need to live with dignity.

During her time as regional chief, Wilson-Raybould worked tirelessly to secure better education and health care for Indigenous communities. These resources are essential for communities to thrive, grow and break free from

systemic barriers that have historically kept Indigenous peoples at a disadvantage.

By advocating for these essential services, Wilson-Raybould helped Indigenous peoples gain the opportunities they need to achieve economic stability and independence. Her work supports truth and reconciliation, as it acknowledges past injustices and works toward meaningful solutions that benefit not only Indigenous communities but all of Canada.

Her leadership is a true example of working for the **Common Good** and ensuring **Economic Justice** for all.



JOHN HERRINGTON

Chickasaw from Wetumka, Oklahoma

Researched and prepared by Carter Peios, Peterborough Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Astronaut.

Awards and Achievements:

- Highly decorated military service—Herrington has received numerous military honours, including the Navy Commendation Medal and the National Defense Service Medal, recognizing his dedication and service in the United States Navy.
- International Air and Space Hall of Fame—In recognition of his historic achievements in aviation and space exploration, Herrington was inducted into the International Air and Space Hall of Fame in San Diego, solidifying his legacy among the world’s most influential aerospace pioneers.
- National Native American Hall of Fame—As the first Indigenous astronaut, Herrington was honoured with an induction into the National Native American Hall of Fame, celebrating his contributions to space exploration and his work in inspiring Indigenous youth.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. First Indigenous astronaut—In 2002, John Herrington made history as the first Indigenous person to fly in space, spending 13 days aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour on the STS-113 mission.
2. Honouring his heritage in space—During his space journey, Herrington flew the Chickasaw Nation flag, marking the first time an Indigenous nation’s flag had ever been flown in space.
3. Distinguished naval career—Before joining NASA, Herrington served in the United States Navy as a naval aviator, mission commander and patrol plane commander, gaining extensive flight experience before his transition into the space industry.
4. Inspiring the next generation—Herrington is dedicated to mentoring and educating youth, travelling across the U.S. to speak about his life journey, career and the importance of education in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). He shares his passion for space travel and his Chickasaw heritage as he gives children a glimpse into his astronaut training at NASA and his mission to the International Space Station in his book, *Mission to Space* (2016).
5. Cross-country adventure—In 2008, Herrington embarked on a three-month-long bike ride across the continental United States, using the journey as a way to promote STEM education and encourage young people to pursue their dreams.

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“The journey to success is not always easy. There will be challenges and setbacks along the way. But it is how we respond to those challenges that defines us. It is the resilience and determination to persevere that leads to greatness.” — *John Herrington*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

John Herrington exemplifies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner** through his unwavering dedication to education, leadership and personal growth. Throughout his career, he consistently sought knowledge and improvement—whether as a naval aviator, mission commander or NASA astronaut—demonstrating that learning is a continuous journey. Herrington’s perseverance and commitment to his goals serve as an inspiration to others, proving that with determination and education, even those from humble beginnings can reach extraordinary heights—literally beyond the sky and into space.

His journey to becoming the first Indigenous astronaut required years of rigorous training, problem-solving and adaptability—qualities that align with the expectations of a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner**. Beyond his time in space, Herrington continues to uphold this principle by travelling across the United States, speaking to young people about the value of education and the importance of always seeking knowledge. His work encourages students to embrace curiosity, push boundaries and recognize that learning does not end after school but is a lifelong commitment essential to achieving success.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

John Herrington exemplifies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Participation** by breaking barriers and paving the way for Indigenous representation in the space industry. Participation calls for all individuals to contribute to society and engage in their communities, ensuring that everyone has a voice and a role in shaping the world. As the first Indigenous astronaut, Herrington’s historic journey to space was more than just a personal achievement—it was a milestone for Indigenous participation in STEM fields, inspiring countless others to see themselves in industries where they have been historically underrepresented.

By carrying the Chickasaw Nation flag on his space mission, Herrington symbolically demonstrated that Indigenous peoples belong in every field, including space exploration. His success has encouraged young Indigenous students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), reinforcing the importance of diverse contributions in advancing society. Through his mentorship and public speaking, he actively encourages participation by sharing his journey and motivating the next generation to reach for the stars—literally proving that the sky is not the limit, but rather the universe is.



JOSEPH SHAWANA

Odawa, from Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve located on Manitoulin Island in Ontario

Researched and prepared by Mya Moore, Huron Perth Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Chef.

Awards and Achievements:

- His Indigenous cuisine restaurant, Kūkūm Kitchen, won the 'Best World Cuisine' award in 2019.
- Was named one of the top ten chefs in Ontario.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Joseph Shawana started cooking at the age of thirteen.
2. Chef Shawana is classically trained in French technique and Indigenous cuisine.
3. Chef Shawana is a professor and the Indigenous culinary advisor at Centennial College.
4. Chef Shawana uses traditional ingredients such as sweetgrass, fir tips, and seals in his meals.
5. Kūkūm Kitchen, his restaurant, does not sell any 'post-contact' food, so no beef, pork, chicken, dairy, or gluten.

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Image, page 61

Image, page 62



"It's my job to preserve our heritage through food. I feel that I have a duty and obligation to preserve as much culinary knowledge in Indigenous foods as possible." — *Joseph Shawana*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Joseph Shawana connects to the Graduate Expectations of: Accepting Change ("I accept change"), **Setting Goals** ("I set goals") and **A Caring Family Member**.

"I accept change" – Joseph Shawana shows he accepts change by incorporating French techniques when creating Indigenous cuisine.

"I set goals" – Joseph Shawana sets goals through his mission to share food from all over Turtle Island.

A Caring Family Member – Joseph Shawana shows he is a caring family member through his desire to teach Indigenous youth how to cook their own traditional food.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Call to Family, Community and Participation.

Joseph Shawana embodies this Catholic Social Teaching through his desire to teach Indigenous youth how to cook their own traditional food.

Joseph Shawana also embodies this Catholic Social Teaching through his goal to share food from all over Turtle Island.



JOSEPHINE MANDAMIN (1942–2019)

Anishinaabe from Wikwemikong First Nation

Researched and prepared by Monica Galstyan, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Activist (water activist), Anishinabek Nation Chief Water Commissioner.

Awards and Achievements:

- Anishinabek Lifetime Achievement Award (2012).
- Lieutenant Governor’s Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation (2016).
- Honoured by the Assembly of First Nations (2017).
- Inspiration for a children’s book (2017).
- Governor General’s Meritorious Service Cross (2018).
- Nominated for the Hugh Whiteley Lifetime Achievement Award (2021).
- Waves of Change Award (2021).
- Commemorative stamp, Canada Post (2024).

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Honoured as “Grandmother Water Walker”—Josephine Mandamin was affectionately known as “Grandmother Water Walker” and the one who comes with the light (Biidaasige-ba). The title “Grandmother” (nokomis) holds deep reverence in Indigenous culture, symbolizing wisdom, strength and leadership among women.
2. A lifelong advocate for First Nations communities—After relocating to Thunder Bay in 2017, Mandamin dedicated herself to supporting First Nations youth and families. She worked at Kashadaying Residence for First Nations students and Mino Bimaadiziwim, a group home for Indigenous children facing mental health challenges..
3. A prophetic call to action—In 2000, during a Sun Dance Ceremony, Grand Chief Eddie Benton-Banaise foretold a future where water would be as valuable as gold by 2030. This dire warning deeply resonated with Mandamin, igniting her lifelong mission to protect water and fight against pollution.
4. Walking for water protection—From 2003 to 2017, Mandamin walked over 25,000 kilometres around the Great Lakes, raising awareness about water preservation and the challenges faced by Indigenous communities. Her tireless efforts brought national and international attention to the urgent need for clean water on Indigenous reserves.
5. Deeply rooted in Ojibwe teachings—Mandamin’s work was firmly grounded in Ojibwe traditions, which honour water as a living being. She saw it as her sacred duty to pass down water knowledge to future generations—a legacy carried on by her great-niece, Autumn Peltier, a globally recognized water protector.

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Image, page 64



“So the message is, water is very precious, and I will go to any lengths to and direction to carry the water to the people.”
– Josephine Mandamin, *The ‘Water Walker’*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Josephine Mandamin embodied the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **A Responsible Citizen** through her unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and community leadership. As a respected Anishinaabe elder, she dedicated her life to protecting water, a sacred element in her culture, and educating others about their role in caring for the Earth. Her mentorship extended beyond advocacy—she empowered younger generations to embrace their heritage, stand up for justice and

actively contribute to their communities.

Through her inspiring Water Walks, Mandamin demonstrated the importance of taking action to protect natural resources, showing that being **A Responsible Citizen** means working for the greater good and safeguarding the world for future generations. Her legacy continues to motivate individuals to embrace their role as stewards of creation, advocating for a healthier, more just world.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Josephine Mandamin exemplified the Catholic Social Teaching of **Stewardship of Creation** through her lifelong dedication to protecting water, a sacred and life-giving resource. She recognized the growing pollution of the Great Lakes and took a stand against environmental negligence, advocating for the preservation of water for future generations. Through her Water Walks, Mandamin not only raised awareness but also inspired action—teaching that water is a gift from the Creator meant to be respected and safeguarded.

Her commitment to mentorship and education reinforced the Anishinaabe teachings of caring for all creation, aligning with the call for humanity to protect, honour and cherish the natural world. Mandamin’s work remains a powerful reminder of our responsibility to treat the Earth with reverence and stewardship, ensuring that its resources are preserved not just for ourselves but for all life to come.



LILLIAN EVA DYCK

Cree and Chinese, George Gordon First Nation

Researched and prepared by Sabine Cuesta, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Neurologist, senator.

Awards and Achievements:

- National Aboriginal Achievement Award (now Indspire) for Science and Technology (1999)—Recognized for her contributions to neuroscience and advocacy for Indigenous representation in STEM fields.
- YWCA Woman of Distinction Award for Science, Technology and the Environment (2003)—Honoured for her work in neurological research and commitment to raising awareness about Indigenous medicine.
- YWCA Lifetime Achievement Award (2019)—For her dedication to advancing women’s rights, Indigenous advocacy and scientific research.
- Officer of the Order of Canada (2021)—For her outstanding contributions to science, education and public service, as well as her tireless work advocating for Indigenous and women’s rights.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Groundbreaking scholar—In 1981, Lillian Eva Dyck made history by becoming the first Indigenous woman in Canada to earn a PhD in biological psychiatry, paving the way for future Indigenous scholars in the sciences.
2. Neuroscience and Indigenous medicine—As a professor at the University of Saskatchewan’s Neuropsychiatry Research Unit, Dyck focused her research on neurological disorders while raising awareness about the effectiveness of Indigenous medicine.
3. Historic political achievement—In 2005, Dyck was appointed to the Canadian Senate, making her the first Indigenous woman senator.
4. Recognition for advocacy—In 2018, Dyck’s dedication to Indigenous women’s rights was recognized when she was named one of “The Indigenous Famous Six” by the Feminist Alliance for International Action, honouring her work in justice and gender equality.
5. Inspiration for the arts—Dyck’s early life served as the inspiration for Kenneth T. Williams’s play *Café Daughter*, which tells the story of a young Indigenous-Chinese girl facing racial and gender barriers.

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“Trust yourself in your choices, and go forward with what you know is right. Talk to someone who has been there and stay connected to who you are.” – *Lillian Eva Dyck*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Lillian Dyck perfectly exemplifies the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of being a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner**. Despite facing early challenges in school, her determination and passion for learning propelled her to achieve remarkable academic and professional success. As the first Indigenous woman in Canada to earn a PhD in biological psychiatry, Dyck demonstrated perseverance, intellectual curiosity and a deep commitment to knowledge. Her role as a professor at the University of Saskatchewan further highlights her dedication to lifelong learning. She not only conducted groundbreaking research on neurological disorders but also worked to raise awareness about Indigenous medicine and its potential in scientific and medical fields.

Through her work, she combined Western scientific approaches with Indigenous knowledge, fostering a more inclusive and holistic perspective on health and wellness.

Beyond her academic contributions, Dyck shared her expertise with others by publishing more than 60 academic journal articles, ensuring that her research and insights could educate future generations of scientists, scholars and policymakers. Her relentless pursuit of knowledge and dedication to teaching exemplify the essence of a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner**—continuously seeking growth, knowledge and innovation to benefit society.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Senator Lillian Dyck strongly embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of the **Dignity of the Human Person** through her unwavering advocacy for Indigenous rights, gender equality and social justice. She has dedicated her career to standing up for marginalized communities, ensuring that all people are treated with respect, fairness and dignity. A key focus of her advocacy has been raising awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Dyck has tirelessly spoken out against the systemic violence faced by Indigenous women and the failure of institutions to protect them. She has worked to push for policy changes that address these injustices, ensuring that the voices of victims and their families are heard and respected.

Beyond her work on Indigenous issues, Dyck has also challenged historical discrimination against Chinese Canadians, particularly the discriminatory Head Tax imposed on Chinese immigrants. By addressing these past injustices, she has helped bring attention to the ongoing effects of racism and inequality, advocating for reconciliation and healing within Canadian society. Through her efforts, Senator Lillian Dyck has demonstrated a deep commitment to human dignity, justice and equality. Her work emphasizes the importance of standing up for those who have been silenced, advocating for fairness in society and ensuring that all people—regardless of their background—are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.



MARY SIMON

Inuk, from Kangiqsualujjuaq in Nunavik, Quebec

Researched and prepared by David Beshai, Toronto Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Politics, diplomacy, Indigenous affairs, and environmental advocacy. Canada's first Indigenous Governor General.

Awards and Achievements:

- Governor General's Northern Medal
- Gold Order of Greenland
- National Aboriginal Achievement Award
- Gold Medal of the Canadian Geographical Society
- Symons Medal

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Mary Simon played a pivotal role in the creation of the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation among Arctic states and Indigenous peoples to address environmental protection and sustainable development. She served as Canada's first Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs and was instrumental in the establishment of the council in 1996.
2. Mary Simon has been an advocate for Inuit culture and language preservation. She co-founded Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), a national organization representing Inuit in Canada which works to advance Inuit rights, language revitalization, and cultural preservation, and served as its President from 2006 to 2012.
3. Mary Simon's commitment to environmental conservation extends to her work as a commissioner on the World Commission on Dams, which focused on assessing the environmental, social, and economic impacts of large dams worldwide.
4. As a prominent Indigenous leader, Mary Simon has been a vocal advocate for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in Canada's foreign policy and international relations. She has emphasized the importance of Indigenous knowledge and governance systems in addressing global challenges such as climate change and sustainable development on the world stage.
5. Mary Simon's contributions to Indigenous rights and reconciliation have been recognized both nationally and internationally. She was awarded the Symons Medal in 2013 from Trent University for her outstanding contributions to Canadian life and culture.

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'My view is that reconciliation is a way of life and requires work every day. Reconciliation is getting to know one another,' said Simon at her installment. — *Mary Simon*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Mary Simon's life and work embody several aspects of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, particularly in fostering a sense of community and social responsibility, respecting diversity and the dignity of others and

demonstrating **Effective Communication** and **Critical Thinking Skills** in addressing complex social and environmental issues.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Mary Simon's advocacy for Indigenous rights and environmental conservation aligns closely with Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the promotion of the **Common Good, Solidarity with Marginalized Communities**, and

Stewardship of Creation. Her commitment to justice, reconciliation and respectful dialogue reflects the Catholic values of compassion, justice and care for the vulnerable.



MARY SPENCER

Anishinaabe from Cape Croker First Nation

Researched and prepared by Carla Khalil Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Athlete (Boxer).

Awards and Achievements:

- Indspire Award (2014)—Recognized for her outstanding contributions and achievements as an Indigenous athlete.
- Multiple national and international boxing championships, including:
 - 3 World Championships
 - 5 Pan American titles
 - 8 Canadian championships
- First Canadian female boxer to compete at the Olympics (2012)—Paving the way for future female athletes in the sport.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Started boxing at the age of 17—Proving that dedication and passion can lead to success even with a late start.
2. One of the first female boxers to represent Canada at the Olympics in 2012—Making history for women in the sport.
3. Won 3 World Championships, 5 Pan American titles and 8 Canadian championships—Establishing herself as one of Canada’s most decorated female boxers.
4. Advocates for Indigenous youth—Works with Motivate Canada’s Aboriginal Role Model Program to inspire and support young athletes.
5. Featured in major sports campaigns—Not only promoting boxing but also representing and uplifting Indigenous and male athletes in professional sports.

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“Never be afraid of encountering obstacles. My proudest moments have always been successfully overcoming obstacles or setbacks.”
— Mary Spencer

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Mary Spencer is a great example of a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner** because of her dedication to personal growth and improvement. She started boxing at 17 and worked tirelessly to become one of Canada’s top female boxers, even representing the country at the Olympics. Her determination to push herself, learn new skills and continuously improve shows her commitment to lifelong learning.

She is also **A Responsible Citizen** because she uses her platform to advocate for Indigenous representation in sports. As one of the first

female boxers to compete for Canada at the Olympics, she has broken many barriers for both female and Indigenous athletes. Through her work with Motivate Canada’s Aboriginal Role Model Program, she inspires and empowers young Indigenous athletes, encouraging them to follow their dreams despite obstacles. Her achievements in sports and her dedication to making a difference in her community make her a strong role model who embodies these Catholic Graduate Expectations.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Mary Spencer strongly represents the **Catholic Social Teaching of Life and Dignity of the Human Person** through her dedication to uplifting and inspiring Indigenous youth. She understands that every person has value, worth and potential, and she works hard to ensure that young people—especially those from Indigenous communities—believe in themselves. As a mentor and advocate, she helps Indigenous youth develop self-confidence, resilience and a strong sense of identity. Through her involvement with Motivate Canada’s Aboriginal Role Model Programme, she encourages young people to pursue their dreams, whether in sports, education or other fields.

Beyond her mentoring work, Mary Spencer is also a powerful advocate for Indigenous representation in sports. She has broken down barriers for female and Indigenous athletes, proving that talent and dedication should not be limited by gender or background. Her efforts show that everyone deserves the opportunity to succeed and be treated with dignity and respect. Spencer continues to speak out on the importance of resilience and overcoming challenges as an athlete and as an Indigenous role model. By leading as a role model and inspiring the next generation, she reinforces the idea that each person is important and has the ability to make a difference in the world.



MAURICE SWITZER, BNESI

Anishinaabe from Mississaugas of Alderville First Nation

Researched and prepared by Kellyanne Mangali, Wellington Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Author, publisher, professor; commissioner on the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Awards and Achievements:

- Adjunct professor—Taught communications and Indigenous studies at Laurentian University.
- Ontario Human Rights commissioner—Appointed to help advance equity and justice across the province.
- Author—Wrote *We Are All Treaty People*, a widely respected book used in education to promote understanding of Treaty relationships.
- Anishinabek Nation Lifetime Achievement Award (2010)—Honoured for his significant contributions to public education and communications within Indigenous communities.
- Nipissing District Human Rights Hall of Fame inductee—Recognized for his dedication to human rights and efforts in promoting equity and justice in the Nipissing District.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. First Indigenous student at Trent University—He made history by being the first Indigenous person to attend the school.
2. Trailblazer in journalism—Maurice became the first Indigenous publisher of a Canadian daily newspaper.
3. Leadership in communications—He led communications for both the Assembly of First Nations and the Union of Ontario Indians.
4. Founder of Nimkii Communications—Through his organization, he educates the public about Treaty relationships in Canada.
5. Ontario Human Rights Commission member—His advocacy for Indigenous rights earned him a place on this influential body.

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"Reconciliation is about listening. That's how you learn, by listening. The biggest challenge with reconciliation is education. Education is the key to all of the world's problems. The truth part is about learning and education..." — *Maurice Switzer*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Maurice Switzer exemplifies the qualities of **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker** by educating the public on Indigenous history and addressing widespread misconceptions. Through his work, he encourages critical thinking and problem-solving, challenging individuals to engage thoughtfully with complex social and historical issues. His writing and advocacy demonstrate a deep sense of moral responsibility as he strives to promote truth, reconciliation and justice.

Additionally, Switzer embodies the qualities of **An Effective Communicator**, using various

platforms—including writing, public speaking and education—to share knowledge and amplify Indigenous voices. His ability to articulate complex topics with clarity and purpose fosters understanding, dialogue and meaningful change. Through his dedication to education, advocacy and ethical leadership, Switzer models the values of faith, integrity and lifelong learning, inspiring others to think critically and act with compassion and justice.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Maurice Switzer's work powerfully upholds the Catholic Social Teaching principles of **Dignity of the Human Person and Community and Participation**. Through his dedication to education and advocacy, he highlights the inherent worth of Indigenous peoples, working to correct misconceptions and foster understanding of their history, rights and contributions. By amplifying Indigenous voices and promoting truth and reconciliation, Switzer reinforces the belief that every person deserves respect, justice and equal opportunity.

His efforts also embody the principle of **Solidarity**, as he advocates for unity and meaningful partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Through his writing, public education and leadership, Switzer challenges systemic injustices and calls for collective action in pursuit of justice and reconciliation. His work reminds us that true social progress is achieved when all people are valued, heard and empowered to participate fully in society.



MOSES LUNHAM

Anishinaabe from Kettle and Stony Point First Nation

Researched and prepared by Layla Hashim, St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Visual artist.

Awards and Achievements:

- Recipient of the Jack Disley Award—Recognized for outstanding performance in the Advertising Art program at Fanshawe College (1990).
- Lifetime Achievement Award for Art (2015)—Honoured by the Anishinabek Nation for decades of dedication to cultural expression and community engagement through visual storytelling.
- Selected artist for Bus Shelter Art Project (2023)—Moses's artwork was chosen for the Huron Shores Area Transit's Bus Shelter Art Project, enhancing public spaces with Indigenous art.
- Featured artist in public art installations—His work has been showcased in various initiatives, including the Bimose Agaming | Walking along the Lake project in Burlington, Ontario.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Moses is a graduate of the Advertising Art program at Fanshawe College (1990)—He has since dedicated his life to sharing and celebrating Indigenous art and culture.
2. He has collaborated with numerous Indigenous businesses and organizations—These include *Nativebeat*, *Aboriginal Voices Magazine* and *Anishinaabe Kendaaswin Publishing*, while also working independently as an artist for more than 30 years.
3. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Moses offered free painting lessons on Zoom—He used art as a form of healing and connection during isolation.
4. He designed the cover art for the bestselling novel *Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley—Helping bring Indigenous imagery into mainstream literature.
5. In 2024, Moses reopened his family's arts and crafts store—Originally founded by his parents in the 1970s, the space allows his family and community to showcase and sell their artwork.

Image Credits:

Provided with permission by Moses Lunham



“Art is my passion....Art has worked really well in my life...it has actually given me a voice. I realized at a very young age I had a gift to be creative and to make art.” — *Moses Lunham*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Moses Lunham exemplifies the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of being a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner** through his dedication to leadership, personal growth and service to others. He has taken the initiative throughout his life to make a positive impact, using his artistic talents not only for personal expression but also to uplift and support those around him. His commitment to advocacy is evident in the way he has stood by his friends and family during challenging times,

including the pandemic, demonstrating resilience and compassion.

By opening a family store, he has created opportunities for others to advance their careers, reflecting his commitment to community and shared success. Through his creativity and generosity, Moses has channelled his God-given gifts to serve others, leaving a lasting legacy that will continue to inspire future generations.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Moses Lunham’s actions deeply reflect the Catholic Social Teachings, particularly the **Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**, as he has consistently prioritized the needs of others, especially during difficult times. His unwavering support for his community, including during the challenges of the pandemic, demonstrates his commitment to uplifting those who are struggling. Additionally, Moses embodies the principle of **Call to Family, Community and Participation** by fostering a strong sense of belonging and empowerment

among those around him. Through his leadership, artistic talents and dedication to helping others grow personally and professionally, he has created opportunities that extend beyond himself, strengthening his community.

His selflessness and commitment to service will continue to inspire future generations to lead with compassion and work toward a more just and inclusive society.



THE HONOURABLE MURRAY SINCLAIR (1951–2024)

Anishinaabe from Peguis First Nation

Researched and prepared by Kaarhunyaa Sivapalan, Ottawa Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Lawyer, judge, senator; chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

Awards and Achievements:

- National Aboriginal Achievement Award (1994): Honoured for contributions to law and Indigenous communities.
- Equality Award (2001): Advancing justice and equality in legal field.
- Medal of Justice (2015): Awarded for TRC leadership and service.
- Distinguished Service Award (2016): Honoured for decades of legal and reconciliation work.
- Meritorious Service Cross (2017): Recognized for outstanding leadership in Indigenous rights and reconciliation.
- Inspire Lifetime Achievement (2017): Celebrated for lifelong advocacy and Indigenous community service.
- Symons Medal (2019): Honoured for advancing public service and reconciliation in Canada.
- Order of Canada (2021): Canada’s highest honour for justice and Indigenous rights.
- Order of Manitoba (2024): Contributions to reconciliation, public service.
- King’s Counsel (2024): Distinction for excellence in Indigenous advocacy.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Breaking barriers in justice—In 1988, Murray Sinclair made history as the first Indigenous judge appointed in Manitoba and only the second in Canada. His appointment paved the way for future generations of Indigenous leaders in law and justice.
2. A voice for truth and reconciliation—From 2009 to 2015, Sinclair served as the chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Through his leadership, he brought national attention to the legacy of residential schools, amplifying the voices of survivors.
3. A dedicated public servant—In recognition of his commitment to justice, Sinclair was appointed to the Canadian Senate in 2016, where he served until 2021. He later became the 15th chancellor of Queen’s University.
4. Champion of Indigenous language and culture—Sinclair and his wife co-founded the Abinochi Zhawayndakozhuwin Inc. Ojibwe Immersion Nursery School in Winnipeg, offering children the opportunity to learn the Ojibwe language and culture.
5. A legacy that lives on—Murray Sinclair leaves behind a lasting legacy of courage, truth and reconciliation. His dedication to Indigenous rights, education and the legal system will continue to shape Canada’s future.

Image Credits:

Image, page 75

Image, page 76



"The road we travel is equal in importance to the destination we seek. There are no shortcuts." — *The Honourable Murray Sinclair*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Murray Sinclair exemplifies the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of **A Collaborative Contributor** through his lifelong dedication to advocating for Indigenous rights and justice. As chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, he worked alongside survivors, communities and leaders to uncover the truth about residential schools and amplify the voices of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. His leadership demonstrated a commitment to justice, dignity

and respect for all, reflecting the expectation that **A Collaborative Contributor** works to build a more equitable and inclusive society.

Sinclair's efforts to promote reconciliation, foster dialogue and encourage collective action have contributed to the common good, reinforcing the importance of working together to heal relationships and create meaningful change.

His work is a powerful example of how collaboration, respect and shared responsibility can lead to justice and reconciliation for all.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Murray Sinclair exemplifies the Catholic Social Teaching of the **Common Good** through his unwavering commitment to justice, reconciliation and the recognition of Indigenous rights. Throughout his life, he worked to reshape Canadian society—legally, politically and socially—to ensure Indigenous voices were heard and respected. As chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he urged all Canadians to take responsibility for past injustices and work toward a future rooted in equality and mutual respect.

Sinclair embodied selflessness, prioritizing human dignity over political and commercial

interests. By amplifying the voices of residential school survivors and advocating for systemic change, he showed that true healing and justice require collective responsibility. His leadership reinforced the interconnectedness of all people, emphasizing that human dignity is only fully realized when society promotes fairness, inclusion and reconciliation for all.

As we reflect on his profound impact, we honour and deeply appreciate all that the Honourable Murray Sinclair has done to advance truth and justice in Canada. His legacy continues to inspire generations to uphold the principles of reconciliation, unity and the common good.



NADINE RENA CARON

Anishinaabe from Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation

Researched and prepared by Monica Galstyan, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Surgeon.

Awards and Achievements:

- Hamber Medal, Dr. Jay C. Cheng Memorial Medical Education Foundation Prize.
- Dr. Jack Margulius Memorial Prize, top graduating student in Medicine, MD degree, and best cumulative record in all years of study.
- Dr. John Big Canoe Memorial Scholarship, Canadian Medical Association (1997). Caron was the first recipient of this award.
- 100 Canadians to Watch, *Maclean's Magazine* (1997).
- Outstanding Alumni Award, Simon Fraser University (2011).
- Dr. Thomas Dignan Indigenous Health Award, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (2016).
- Women of the year: 12 Canadians who rocked 2016, *Chatelaine Magazine*.
- Wallace Wilson Leadership Award, University of British Columbia Medical Alumni Association (2017).
- Honourary Doctor of Laws, University of the Fraser Valley (2017).
- Honourary Doctor of Science, Simon Fraser University (2019).
- Athletic Hall of Fame, Terry Fox Humanitarian Category, Simon Fraser University (2019).
- Inclusive Excellence Prize, Canadian Cancer Society (2020).
- Member, Order of British Columbia (2022).

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Dr. Caron was the recipient of 20 major academic awards when studying at Simon Fraser University, including becoming the top undergraduate student in 1993.
2. Beyond being an exceptional student, she had an aptitude in athletics and was recruited as a star basketball player by Simon Fraser University.
3. Throughout her career, Dr. Caron has emphasized Indigenous health and Canadian health policy as her main interests, participating in several national and international presentations.
4. Dr. Caron is a prominent researcher recognized by the Canadian Cancer Society for her leadership and continual contributions to many areas of cancer research.
5. She led a study which discovered that it is 30% more likely for Indigenous Peoples to pass away after surgery in comparison to those of non-Indigenous descent.

Image Credits:

Image, page 77

Image, page 78



“Society enjoys celebrating these accomplishments, but should we? What burden does being the first to achieve something put on the person?” — *Nadine Caron*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Throughout her life, Dr. Nadine Caron continues in-depth research and education at every level. It is clear through her numerous achievements that Caron has a passion for knowledge and is a dedicated **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner**. She directed studies to fully educate herself on discrepancies in Indigenous

healthcare and is a constant advocate for the quality of life for these communities.

Overall, she is a wonderful representative of a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner**—as in relation to the Catholic Graduate Expectations.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

As a certified surgeon and researcher in cancer research, Dr. Nadine Caron has dedicated her life to the **Common Good** of both the communities she serves, as well as international wellbeing. Upon discovery of the discrepancies in the healthcare system, she dedicated her life to research in medicine as well as spending time

in her community with her husband and daughter. Ultimately, she follows a myriad of the Catholic Social teachings, but easily emphasizes the importance of **Common Good** through her activism, research and care.



NAOMI SMITH

Ojibwe, from Neyaashiinigiing Anishinaabek (Chippewas of Nawash First Nation)

Researched and prepared by Mirari Ubani, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Beadwork artisan, graphic designer and educator.

Awards and Achievements:

- At the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, Naomi was featured as a First Nation Artisan.
- Naomi's work has been showcased at the Smithsonian National Museum in Washington and she is one of only thirty North American artisans selected for this exhibition.
- Naomi's art has been showcased at the Boston National Museum of Fine Art. Naomi Smith: Fleming College

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Naomi is a knowledge keeper. She holds classes where she teaches native people interested in their heritage, as well as others who hold a genuine interest in native culture, about the significance of the native tradition of beading. She shares these traditions so that they will live on.
2. There is much meaning behind her artwork. Naomi hones her craft while including narratives and symbolism in her work. Indigenous Beadwork with a Modern Twist: Naomi Smith | Interweave
3. Naomi was part of the Sixties Scoop, where she was assimilated into a non-native family. She later reconnected with her birth mother and described it as 'the pinnacle moment' in her life to learn more about who she was. Renowned bead work artist now teaching others - Anishinabek News.
4. Naomi owns Black Tulip Designs, a store for her handmade designs and artwork, and where she runs beading workshops. Black Tulip Designs.
5. Her craft involves the woodland saddle-style beadwork method. She is inspired by a raised floral design technique that originated in 1820. Naomi also pulls inspiration from patterns made in moose hair and quills. Beadwork revival a life's journey for artist Naomi Smith - Anishinabek News

Image Credits:

Image, page 79

Image, page 80



"I did my first piece of beadwork when I was seven...and I still have it. ...I wanted to know more about how they're made...I'm just a custodian of these artifacts. ...They tell a story about our people and our culture. I want people to understand that even though this is historical work, it is still very much a part of our culture and that the art form is living on." — *Naomi Smith*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

A Collaborative Contributor who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects rights of all and contributes to the common good.

Conducting classes, where she teaches the art of Ojibway beading, Naomi collaborates with her community. She keeps her learners engaged and involved, creating an environment of unity and collaboration. There is meaning and dignity in the work Naomi Smith does as a knowledge keeper. She honours her heritage through the

preservation of Anishinaabe traditions as well as the sharing of those traditions and knowledge. Her job is not only a job, but it is a vocation, driven by a sense of purpose.

Additionally, the beading classes Naomi Smith teaches are not exclusive. They are meant to serve people who are curious about their own heritage as well as anyone who holds a genuine interest in Indigenous culture.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Naomi Smith showcases the Catholic Social Teaching of **Solidarity**, recognizing the importance of unity and the strengthening of community. Naomi Smith's classes bring together people with different stories to learn about the Indigenous traditions of beading. Unity is a key aspect of **Solidarity** and her classes bring people together, fostering this Catholic Social Teaching. Solidarity does not stop at local

communities, it goes much further. While Naomi Smith's focus may be on Indigenous traditions specific to her region, her commitment to solidarity promotes the need to stand together with others all around the world to promote meaningful causes.



NICOLE AUNAPU MANN

Wailaki, enrolled member of the Round Valley Indian Tribes

Researched and prepared by Emily Esperanzate, Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Aerospace engineering, military aviation, space exploration.

Awards and Achievements:

- Selected as a NASA astronaut candidate in 2013 and successfully completed astronaut training in 2015.
- Served as the mission commander for NASA's SpaceX Crew-5 mission, overseeing all phases of flight from launch to re-entry.
- On Jan. 20, 2023, she conducted a spacewalk, becoming the first Native American woman to do so.
- Inducted into the Academic All-America Hall of Fame in 2019—Recognized for her exceptional academic and athletic accomplishments at the U.S. Naval Academy.
- Recipient of the 2023 Marine Corps Military Order of the Iron Mike Award—Honoured for outstanding contributions and service in the Marine Corps.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Nicole became the first Native American woman in space during NASA's SpaceX Crew-5 mission to the International Space Station in October 2022.
2. A U.S. Marine Corps colonel, she has logged over 2,500 flight hours in 25 aircraft types, with 200 carrier landings and 47 combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.
3. She holds a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy and a master's in mechanical engineering (fluid mechanics) from Stanford University.
4. While at the Naval Academy, Nicole was a varsity soccer player, playing 75 matches as a defender for the Navy Midshipmen women's team.
5. Her aviator call sign is 'Duke,' a nickname from her early years as a naval pilot that stuck throughout her military and NASA career.

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Image, page 81

Image, page 82



"Our planet is so beautiful and so magnificent," said Nicole Aunapu Mann. "You can see there's that little thin line there at Earth's rising. All humans and animals are kept alive from the vacuum of space by that thin line of air. You see the planet in all of its beauty and all its majesty and power. It just makes you feel so incredibly alive."

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Nicole Aunapu Mann exemplifies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner** through her unwavering dedication to intellectual growth and skill development. She continuously seeks knowledge and applies it effectively, as seen in her pursuit of advanced education in mechanical engineering and her mastery of complex skills in aviation and space exploration. Her achievements reflect a deep commitment to learning, problem-solving and innovation,

demonstrating the importance of perseverance and adaptability in facing new challenges.

Beyond personal success, Mann uses her expertise to contribute to the greater good, inspiring others to embrace learning as a lifelong journey. Her dedication to education, discipline and the pursuit of excellence reflects the Catholic call to develop one's talents and apply them in service to others, reinforcing the values of faith, responsibility and leadership.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Nicole Aunapu Mann embodies the Catholic Social Teaching principle of **Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers** through her remarkable achievements as an astronaut and U.S. Marine Corps officer. Her dedication, perseverance and commitment to excellence highlight the value of hard work and the pursuit of one's vocation. Mann's career serves as a testament to the fulfillment and dignity that come from using one's talents in service to society, whether through scientific exploration, leadership or

inspiring future generations. Her journey also reflects the importance of equitable opportunities in the workplace, demonstrating that all individuals should have the right to meaningful work that respects their dignity, fosters personal growth and contributes to the common good. By breaking barriers and advocating for diversity in STEM fields, Mann's work underscores the Catholic call to ensure that every person has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to a just and inclusive society.



NIIGAAN SINCLAIR

Anishinaabe from St. Peter's (Little Peguis) near Selkirk, Manitoba

Researched and prepared by Emma-Leigh Johnston, Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Writer, journalist, activist.

Awards and Achievements:

- Governor General's Literary Award for Non-Fiction (2024)–*Wînipêk: Visions of Canada from an Indigenous Centre*
- Canadian Columnist of the Year (2019)–National Newspaper Awards for his *Winnipeg Free Press* columns. Recognized as Canada's Columnist of the Year for his contributions to journalism.
- Peace Educator of the Year–Peace and Justice Studies Association, Georgetown University.
- Maclean's Power List–Recognized as one of Canada's most influential individuals.
- Monocle Magazine's 'Canada's Top 20 Most Influential People.'
- 'On the Same Page' Competition Winner (2012)–His co-edited anthology *Manitowapow* was selected as the top book for Manitobans to read.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. In 2024, Niigaan Sinclair received the prestigious Governor General's Literary Award for Non-Fiction for his book *Wînipêk: Visions of Canada from an Indigenous Centre*.
2. In 2019, he was honoured as Canada's best columnist, earning a National Newspaper Award for his insightful contributions.
3. Sinclair co-edited *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water*, a collection that was voted the top book to read in Manitoba's "On the Same Page" competition in 2012.
4. He serves as a professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies at the University of Manitoba, educating and inspiring students.
5. Sinclair's writings have appeared in prominent publications such as *The Guardian*, *The Globe and Mail* and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, where he shares his perspectives on Indigenous matters.

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“Perceptions require second, third, and fourth looks to be re-made. They require time, commitment, sharing.”

— *Niigaan Sinclair*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Niigaan Sinclair exemplifies the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **An Effective Communicator** through his powerful writing, public speaking and advocacy for Indigenous rights and reconciliation. As a journalist, educator and author, he uses storytelling to share Indigenous perspectives, challenge injustices and promote dialogue between communities. His ability to articulate complex social issues in an engaging and accessible way encourages meaningful discussions about

history, identity and justice.

By fostering understanding and empathy, Sinclair helps others develop their own voices to advocate for truth and reconciliation. His work reflects the Catholic commitment to respectful and purposeful communication, inspiring students to listen actively, express their ideas with clarity and use their words to promote dignity and social change.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Niigaan Sinclair’s work aligns closely with Catholic Social Teaching (CST), particularly the principle of the **Dignity of the Human Person**. His advocacy for Indigenous rights, reconciliation and education reinforces the fundamental belief that every individual is inherently valuable and deserves respect. By addressing historical injustices and amplifying Indigenous voices, Sinclair actively promotes **Solidarity and the Pursuit of the Common Good**, key tenets of CST. His efforts to educate others on Indigenous histories and traditions reflect the Catholic commitment to rights and responsibilities, ensuring that marginalized communities are heard and valued. Through his writing, public speaking and teaching, Sinclair

fosters a deeper understanding of social justice, calling society to action in the spirit of reconciliation and respect. His work not only advances Indigenous empowerment but also reflects the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, as he advocates for those who have been historically oppressed. Niigaan Sinclair is a prominent voice in Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation movement. His work, both in academics and media, helps educate the public about the 94 Calls to Action and the importance of Indigenous perspectives in shaping Canada’s future. Sinclair’s contributions strongly resonate with Catholic Social Teachings, inspiring others to work toward a more just and compassionate world.



NORMA CONDO

Mi'kmaq from Gesgapegiag

Researched and prepared by Carla Khalil Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Chef of Indigenous cuisine.

Awards and Achievements:

- Recognized Entrepreneur—Promotes Indigenous culinary traditions through her catering business, Mi'kmaq Catering.
- Promoting Indigenous Food Culture—Showcasing Indigenous foods and traditions to a broader audience, educating others about her heritage and the significance of traditional ingredients in Indigenous cultures.
- Cultural Ambassador—Celebrated for her role as a cultural ambassador, using food to foster understanding and connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Montreal and beyond.
- Mi'kmaq Community Advocate—Gained recognition for advocating the preservation and revitalization of Mi'kmaq culture, focusing on sustainable practices in food sourcing and preparation.
- Recipient of Indigenous Entrepreneurship Recognition—Acknowledged for her contribution to Indigenous entrepreneurship, encouraging economic growth within her community while staying true to cultural roots.
- Featured in Local and National Media—Her work and efforts to elevate Indigenous culinary traditions have been highlighted in various local and national outlets, celebrating her as a trailblazer in both the food industry and the promotion of cultural heritage.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Indigenous-Owned Business in Montreal—Norma Condo's catering company is one of the very few Indigenous-owned catering businesses in Montreal, making her work unique and significant in the city's culinary scene.
2. Founder of Mi'kmaq Catering—She founded Mi'kmaq Catering, a business that specializes in Indigenous cuisine, bringing traditional flavours and cooking methods to a wider audience.
3. Reconnecting with Her Cultural Roots—Condo's motivation for starting her catering business was to reconnect with her Indigenous heritage through food, embracing traditional recipes and ingredients.
4. Bridging Communities Through Food—One of her biggest goals is to create a bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities by sharing cultural traditions and history through food.
5. Highlighting Indigenous Ingredients—Her dishes incorporate traditional Indigenous ingredients, such as berries, bannock and wild game, preserving and celebrating the rich culinary heritage of Indigenous Peoples.

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Image, page 85

Image, page 86



"I learned from my grandma, and now I'm teaching my kids. I pass down the traditions to them and explain why it's important." — *Norma Condo*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Norma Condo is a great example of the **Caring Family Member** expectation from the Catholic Graduate Expectations. She shows how caring for others and preserving culture can bring people together. Through her business, Mi'kmaq Catering, she works hard to keep Mi'kmaq traditions alive, offering Indigenous dishes made from ingredients like berries and bannock. This helps her community stay connected to its cultural roots and ensures that future generations will know and appreciate their heritage.

Not only does she help Indigenous people reconnect with their culture, but she also shares this experience with non-Indigenous communities. By doing this, she provides a way for everyone to learn about and respect Indigenous traditions. This helps create understanding between different groups, promoting empathy and unity. Norma Condo's work shows that by caring for our culture, family and community, we can create a more connected and supportive world.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Norma Condo exemplifies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Community and Participation** through her work in promoting Indigenous culinary culture. Through her business, Mi'kmaq Catering, and her various workshops, she creates opportunities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to come together, learn and engage with Indigenous traditions. By sharing her knowledge of traditional Indigenous foods, she encourages active participation in preserving and celebrating Mi'kmaq culture.

Her initiatives not only highlight the importance of community involvement but also provide a platform for everyone to learn about and

respect Indigenous customs. Norma's work emphasizes the value of participation in a shared culture, where people of all backgrounds can contribute to creating a more inclusive, understanding and supportive community. Through this, she fosters a stronger sense of belonging and unity, aligning with the Catholic Social Teaching of Community and Participation. Her work addresses food insecurity within Indigenous communities by promoting and creating access to traditional foods, while preserving the rich history and culinary traditions passed down through generations.



RICHARD WAGAMESE

Anishinaabe from Wabaseemoong First Nation

Researched and prepared by Monica Galstyan, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Author, journalist, mentor.

Awards and Achievements:

- National Magazine Award (1991)—Outstanding work in journalism.
- Writers' Guild of Alberta Award (1995)—Honoured for his contributions to Alberta's literary scene.
- Canadian Authors Association Award (2007)—Canadian writing.
- Honourary Doctor of Letters (2010)—Received from Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops for his literary impact.
- Harvey Stevenson Southam Lecturer in Journalism (2011)—Appointed at the University of Victoria to share his expertise.
- George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in Literature (2011)—Celebrated for his writing's impact on social awareness.
- National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Media and Communications (2012)—Recognized for his influence in Indigenous media.
- Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prize (2013)—Canadian culture.
- Burt Award for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Literature (2013)—Honoured for his excellence in Indigenous storytelling.
- CBC's Canada Reads People's Choice Award (2013)—Canadian author.
- Matt Cohen Award: In Celebration of a Writing Life (2015)—A lifetime achievement award for his impact on literature.
- Atwood Gibson Writers' Trust Fiction Prize (2015)—Recognized for his exceptional contributions to Canadian fiction.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Before becoming a successful writer, Wagamese worked in many different jobs, including tree planting, sugar beet picking, railroad crew labouring, dishwashing, fish cleaning and washing big rigs.
2. Despite facing many personal hardships growing up, he spent much of his teen years and early twenties in libraries, where he taught himself the art of writing and storytelling.
3. His motivation was to create a deep emotional connection with his readers, making them feel as if they were part of the storytelling experience.
4. Contributions to TV and Radio—Beyond literature, he also worked in television and radio, contributing as a scriptwriter for the TV series North of 60 and writing for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996.
5. Wagamese taught creative writing at various universities and serving as a faculty advisor on journalism at institutions like the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and Grant MacEwan Community College.

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Image, page 88



"All that we are is story. From the moment we are born to the time we continue on our spirit journey, we are involved in the creation of the story of our time here." — *Richard Wagamese*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Richard Wagamese is a powerful example of what it means to be a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner**. Growing up in foster care and experiencing significant challenges, he did not have the same educational opportunities as many others. However, instead of allowing these difficulties to hold him back, he took control of his own learning. As a teenager, he found refuge in libraries, spending hours reading and teaching himself how to write. By 16, he had dropped out of high school and was living on the streets, yet remained committed to expanding his knowledge and improving his storytelling skills. Through perseverance and self-motivation,

Wagamese developed into one of Canada's most respected Indigenous authors. His journey of self-discovery and personal growth is reflected in his writing, where he shares lessons about resilience, identity and lifelong learning. He constantly sought new challenges, working in journalism, radio, television and literature.

Wagamese's dedication, perseverance and thirst for knowledge define him as a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner**—someone who takes initiative, adapts to challenges and seeks wisdom to better themselves and their community. His story serves as an inspiration, showing that no matter the obstacles, learning and growth are always possible.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Richard Wagamese exemplified the Catholic Social Teaching of **Solidarity** through his writing, mentorship and dedication to uplifting Indigenous voices. More than just an acclaimed author and journalist, Wagamese used his platform to bring awareness to the struggles, resilience and cultural strength of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring their experiences and histories were heard and acknowledged. His works often focused on healing, cultural reconnection and Truth and Reconciliation, reflecting his commitment to bringing people together in mutual understanding and respect. Wagamese didn't just tell stories—he built bridges between communities. He mentored

young Indigenous writers, fostering an environment of collaboration, encouragement and shared storytelling. He believed in the power of words to create change and hoped that readers would feel a personal connection—almost as if they were co-creating the story with him.

Through his commitment to uplifting others, his efforts to educate through storytelling and his role as a mentor, Wagamese lived out the values of **Solidarity**—standing with his people, advocating for justice and reminding us all that we are stronger when we listen to, support and learn from one another.



ROBIN WALL KIMMERER

Potawatomi from Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Upstate New York

Researched and prepared by Mya Jensen, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Scientist, author, professor, director.

Awards and Achievements:

- Her first book, *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*, won the prestigious John Burroughs Medal for nature writing.
- In 2014, her second book, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, received the Sigurd F. Olson Nature Writing Award, recognizing its contribution to environmental literature.
- She was awarded the 2022 MacArthur Fellowship, also known as the 'Genius Grant,' for her work in blending Indigenous knowledge with Western science.
- In 2023, she received the National Humanities Medal, awarded by the U.S. government for her contributions to literature and environmental advocacy.
- In 2024, she was named the Stone Award Winner, further cementing her legacy as a leader in environmental literature and Indigenous ecological knowledge.

Learn more about Robin Wall Kimmerer at www.robinwallkimmerer.com

Five Interesting Facts:

1. *Braiding Sweetgrass* was adapted for young adults by Monique Gray Smith in 2022, making her teachings on Indigenous wisdom and environmental science more accessible to younger audiences.
2. She holds a PhD in Botany from the University of Wisconsin and specializes in plant ecology, focusing on the intersection of traditional Indigenous knowledge and Western science.
3. Kimmerer is the director and founder of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, which promotes the integration of Indigenous ecological knowledge with scientific research.
4. In 2015, she addressed the United Nations General Assembly on Healing Our Relationship with Nature, emphasizing the importance of Indigenous knowledge in global environmental efforts.
5. She is a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology at the State University of New York, where she inspires students to see the natural world through both scientific and Indigenous perspectives.

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“To love a place is not enough. We must find ways to heal it.”
— Robin Wall Kimmerer

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Robin Wall Kimmerer connects to the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **A Collaborative Contributor** through her work as a scientist, teacher and author. As a scientist, she bridges the gap between Indigenous wisdom and Western science, fostering a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the environment. She encourages people to see nature not just as a resource but as a relationship that requires gratitude, care and respect.

As a teacher, Kimmerer emphasizes the importance of reciprocity—the idea that humans and nature must take care of each other.

Through her lessons, she instills shared responsibility for environmental stewardship, ensuring that future generations inherit a world treated with respect. Her book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, serves as a powerful tool for fostering collaboration, encouraging people from all backgrounds to engage in sustainable practices, promoting a balance between scientific knowledge and Indigenous teachings.

Through her work, Kimmerer inspires unity and shared action in protecting the Earth, aligning perfectly with the values of **A Collaborative Contributor**.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Robin Wall Kimmerer deeply embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Care for God’s Creation** through her advocacy for environmental stewardship, sustainability and the sacred relationship between humans and nature. This teaching calls for the honest, responsible and accountable protection of the Earth, recognizing it as a gift from God that must be cared for with respect and gratitude.

Kimmerer’s work as a scientist, author and teacher reflects this commitment, as she highlights the interconnectedness of people and the environment. In her books, such as *Braiding Sweetgrass*, she emphasizes that nature is not just a resource to be used but a living entity that must be honoured and

protected. She advocates for sustainable practices, reciprocity and gratitude, encouraging individuals to take an active role in preserving creation for future generations.

Through her teachings and writings, Kimmerer inspires others to live out the values of environmental justice, respect for nature and community responsibility, aligning with Catholic teachings on caring for God’s creation.



ROMEO SAGANASH

Cree from Waswanipi First Nation

Researched and prepared by Ruben Da Silveira, Toronto Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Former member of Parliament, politician and lawyer.

Awards and Achievements:

- Served as member of Parliament for Abitibi–Baie-James–Nunavik–Eeyou from 2011 to 2019, representing Cree and northern Quebec communities at the federal level.
- Held the role of deputy grand chief of the Grand Council of the Crees of James Bay from 1990 to 1993, advocating for Cree rights and governance.
- Received the Prix d'excellence (Lifetime Achievement Award) from the Université du Québec à Montréal for his enduring contributions to Indigenous leadership, law and reconciliation.
- Honourary Doctorate of Law: In 2021, Université Laval awarded Saganash an honorary Doctorate of Law in recognition of his significant contributions to advancing Indigenous rights.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. In 1989, Romeo Saganash became the first Cree person to earn a law degree in Quebec, graduating from Université du Québec à Montréal.
2. He founded the Cree Nation Youth Council in 1985, promoting youth engagement in political and social issues tied to Truth and Reconciliation.
3. Saganash played a key role in the negotiation of the Paix des Braves agreement (2002), a long-term resource revenue-sharing deal between the Quebec government and the Cree Nation.
4. In 2011, he made history as the first Indigenous person to run for leadership of a major federal political party in Canada—the New Democratic Party (NDP).
5. He contributed 23 years to the development of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, helping secure international recognition of Indigenous rights.

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“Today any Indigenous person wishing to speak their language during a speech or during question period, can do so without fighting for that right.” — *Romeo Saganash*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Romeo Saganash exemplifies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **A Responsible Citizen**. As a survivor of the residential school system, he has dedicated his life to promoting justice, human dignity and reconciliation. His work introducing Bill C-262, which aimed to align Canadian law with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, reflects his unwavering commitment to fairness and equity—core values within Catholic social teaching.

Saganash consistently speaks out against discrimination and advocates for a more inclusive society. His pursuit of truth and reconciliation highlights the Catholic call to act with integrity, stand up for the vulnerable and contribute to the common good. Through his leadership, Saganash shows how **A Responsible Citizen** can be a powerful force for positive and lasting change.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Romeo Saganash’s lifelong advocacy for Indigenous rights powerfully reflects the Catholic Social Teachings of the **Dignity of the Human Person** and **Solidarity**. As a residential school survivor and political leader, he has devoted his work to defending the inherent worth and rights of Indigenous peoples—fighting systemic racism and promoting justice, equality and self-determination. His efforts emphasize that every person is deserving of respect, regardless of background or identity.

Saganash also exemplifies **Solidarity** by recognizing that the challenges faced by Indigenous communities are part of a broader global pursuit of justice and human rights. His work to advance reconciliation, including his introduction of Bill C-262, demonstrates a commitment to standing with others in the struggle for fairness. Through his leadership, he calls us to walk together in unity toward a more inclusive and just world.



ROSANNA DEERCHILD

Cree from O-Pipon-Na-Piwan Cree Nation

Researched and prepared by Matthew Moss, St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Writer, poet, radio host.

Awards and Achievements:

- 2009 Aqua Books Lansdowne Prize for Poetry: Won for her debut poetry collection.
- Published Poet: Poetry featured in literary magazines such as *Prairie Fire* and *CV2*.
- Anthologized Writer: Work included in *Post-prairie: An Anthology of New Poetry*, *Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival*, and *#NotYourPrincess*.
- Award-Winning Author: *Calling Down the Sky* won the Lowther Memorial Award (2016).
- Editor and Contributor: Edited and contributed to *Gush: Menstrual Manifestos for Our Times*.
- Featured in *Maclean's*: Highlighted on the cover of *Maclean's Magazine* for her influence in Indigenous storytelling and journalism.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Host of the CBC radio show *Unreserved*, highlighting Indigenous community, culture and conversations.
2. Debut poetry collection *This is a Small Northern Town* explores reflections on growing up in a racially divided place.
3. ICo-founded the Indigenous Writers Collective of Manitoba, creating a space for Indigenous voices in creative writing.
4. Wrote *Calling Down the Sky*, a powerful book about her mother's survival of the residential school system.
5. *The Secret to Good Tea* was the first Indigenous-written play to premiere on the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's mainstage (2022/2023 season).

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Image, page 94



"The voices of our people are reclaiming and recalling the history that we are. We as storytellers have a responsibility and a gift to tell these stories back into being." — *Rosanna Deerchild*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Rosanna Deerchild's work strongly aligns with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, particularly the expectation of being **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker**. She uses her creativity and storytelling skills to shed light on the truth about Indigenous experiences, including the trauma caused by the residential school system. By transforming her own and her mother's trauma from past experiences into poetry, books and radio shows, she not only heals through art but also educates others on Indigenous history and culture.

Her ability to use storytelling as a means of advocacy and awareness demonstrates problem-solving through innovative and meaningful ways. Through her work, she challenges stereotypes, sparks important conversations and ensures that Indigenous voices are heard, aligning with the expectation to think critically and use creativity to seek truth and justice.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Rosanna Deerchild exemplifies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Participation** through her active involvement in advocating for Indigenous culture and storytelling. She uses her platform as a writer, poet and radio host to amplify Indigenous voices and share the rich history, traditions and struggles of Indigenous communities.

Through her novels, poetry books and radio show *Unreserved*, she creates spaces for important conversations about Indigenous

identity, resilience and history. Her dedication to storytelling ensures that Indigenous perspectives are included in broader discussions, fostering a more inclusive society. By actively engaging in her community and using her talents to educate and inspire, she encourages others to participate in meaningful dialogue and cultural preservation, reinforcing the idea that everyone has a role in shaping a just and compassionate world.



SNOTTY NOSE REZ KID

**Darren 'Young D' Metz and Quinton 'Yung Trybez' Nyce.
Haisla, from Kitamaat Village, British Columbia**

Researched and prepared by Mya Moore, Huron Perth Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Rap duo.

Awards and Achievements:

- They signed with Sony Music Entertainment Canada (2023).
- Nominated 'Best Hip Hop Album' at the Indigenous Music Awards (2018).
- Won 'Best Hip Hop Artist' at the Western Canadian Music Awards (2018).
- They were nominated 'Best Indigenous Music Album of the Year' at the Juno Awards (2018) and won Best Rap Album, Juno Awards (2025).
- They were shortlisted for the 'Polaris Music Prize' (2018).

Five Interesting Facts:

1. They first met in high school because they were both writers; Darren Metz used to write poetry and Quinton Nyce was a storyteller.
2. They originally started recording under the name "Minay Music" because of a project that Metz was assigned when he was in his audio engineering program at Harbourside Institute of Technology.
3. They toured Australia, as well as Canada and the US in 2018.
4. "Savages", one of their singles, was on the Indigenous Music Countdown for 20 weeks.
5. Darren Metz have published music every year since 2020, which is fairly rare for most artists. They became the first indigenous group to win the Juno award for the Rap Album of the Year in 2025.

Learn more about the Snotty Nose Rez Kids at snottynoserezkids.com

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Image, page 96



"We wanted to create a song that reflects our people's strength and resilience in the face of ongoing colonialism and environmental threats." — *Iākupa Apurinã (Rosenir Fernandes de Souza)*

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

The Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectation of being a **Collaborative Contributor** calls students to work effectively with others, respect the dignity of all people, and contribute to the common good. Snotty Nose Rez Kids embody this expectation through their music and activism, which center on uplifting Indigenous voices and building solidarity across communities. Their collaborations with other Indigenous artists and their participation in movements for social and environmental justice

show a deep commitment to collective action and mutual respect. By addressing issues such as land rights, identity, and systemic inequality, they inspire listeners to recognize their responsibility to work together for a more just and inclusive society. Through their art, Snotty Nose Rez Kids demonstrate that true collaboration is rooted in a shared commitment to dignity, community strength, and positive change.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

The Catholic Social Teaching of **Call to Family, Community and Participation** emphasizes the importance of human beings thriving in community, recognizing that our dignity is realized through relationships and active engagement in society. The music of Snotty Nose Rez Kids powerfully reflects this teaching through their celebration of Indigenous identity, community resilience, and collective empowerment. Their songs often address the struggles and triumphs of Indigenous peoples,

calling attention to systemic injustices while uplifting the strength of their communities. By using their platform to amplify Indigenous voices and advocate for land rights, cultural pride, and self-determination, they embody a commitment to participation and solidarity. Snotty Nose Rez Kids show that true belonging and justice emerge when communities are strengthened, honored, and given the space to fully participate in shaping their future.



STEPHEN W. TOOSHKENIG

Anishinaabe, Mohawk, Lenape, from Bkejwanong Territory

Researched and prepared by Layla Hashim, St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Athlete, inspirational speaker.

Awards and Achievements:

- Courage and Bravery Award—Presented by the Ministry of the Attorney General, recognizing Steve's exceptional courage and perseverance in service to others.
- Dedication to Ontario Award—Honoured for his ongoing commitment to supporting communities across Ontario through mentorship, leadership and advocacy.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Steve is an inspirational speaker who shares messages of hope and resilience, empowering audiences across North America.
2. A member of the Professional Golfers' Association of Ontario, Steve actively competes as a PGA of Ontario golfer.
3. For nearly a decade, Steve has opened his heart and home as a foster parent, supporting children and youth in care.
4. He currently works in business development as a facilitator, helping organizations grow through leadership and strategy.
5. In 2024, Steve was featured in a FIFA 2026 World Cup commercial, celebrating Indigenous representation on a global stage.

Learn more about Steve Tooshkenig: www.stephentooshkenig.com

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Image Credits:

Provided with permission by Stephen W. Tooshkenig



"Walk in that good way, helping and sharing your journey so those before you can smile." — *Steve Tooshkenig*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Steve Tooshkenig exemplifies the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of being **An Effective Communicator** through his ability to connect with and inspire others. His gift for public speaking allows him to share messages of hope, purpose and perseverance, encouraging individuals to strive for personal and professional growth. His communication skills have played a vital role in building strong relationships, whether as a member of the

Professional Golfers' Association of Ontario, a respected media presence or a leader in business development. Through his ability to articulate ideas with clarity and passion, Steve fosters meaningful connections and empowers those around him. By using his God-given talents to uplift others, his influence extends far beyond his immediate community, leaving a lasting impact that will continue to inspire future generations.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Steve Tooshkenig's work embodies the Catholic Social Teachings of **Call to Family, Community and Participation** and **Dignity of the Human Person**. His dedication to public speaking, mentoring and empowering others helps strengthen communities by fostering a sense of inclusion and shared purpose. His role as a foster parent further demonstrates his commitment to nurturing and supporting individuals, particularly children, to reach their fullest potential, affirming their inherent dignity.

Through his business development and work with the PGA, he creates opportunities for others to grow, both professionally and personally, and emphasizes the value of

teamwork and collaboration. Steve's involvement in community initiatives, coupled with his recognition for bravery, showcases his strong commitment to the common good and a spirit of service, key tenets of Catholic Social Teaching. By helping others recognize their own worth and capabilities, Steve lives out the principles of solidarity and human dignity, ensuring that all people feel valued and empowered in society.



SUSAN AGLUKARK

Inuk from Arviat Nunavut

Researched and prepared by Sahayma Omenye Northeastern Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Musician.

Awards and Achievements:

- Vista Rising Star Award (1994): Presented by the Canadian Country Music Association, this award acknowledged Aglukark's emerging prominence in the country music scene.
- Arts and Entertainment Award (1994): Granted by the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards (aka Indspire Awards), this honour celebrated her contributions to the arts within Indigenous communities.
- Juno Awards:
 - Best New Solo Artist (1995)
 - Best Music of Aboriginal Canada Recording (1995)
 - Humanitarian Award (2022)
- Officer of the Order of Canada (2004): One of the country's highest civilian honours, acknowledging her contributions to Canadian music and her role as a mentor within Indigenous communities.
- Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement (2016): Celebrated her enduring impact on the Canadian arts landscape.

Learn more about Susan Aglukark: <https://www.susanaglukark.com>

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Susan Aglukark made history as the first Inuk artist to win a Juno Award, breaking barriers in the Canadian music industry.
2. In 2012, she founded the Arctic Rose Foundation, a charity dedicated to supporting Indigenous youth through arts and cultural programs.
3. Her critically acclaimed album *This Child* sold over 300,000 copies in Canada, earning platinum certification and solidifying her influence in Canadian music.
4. Her single 'O Siem' became the first song by an Inuk performer to reach the Top 10 on Canadian charts, bringing Indigenous music into the mainstream.
5. In 2007, she delivered a powerful performance at the Vimy Memorial in France to honour the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, paying tribute to Canadian soldiers.

Sources:

<https://www.susanaglukark.com>

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<https://arcticrose.org>

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“Here I was, living a life I never imagined, but I was struggling to understand who I was.” — Susan Aglukark

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Susan Aglukark embodies many qualities that Ontario Catholic schools encourage in their students, especially being **An Effective Communicator**. This means she expresses herself clearly and thoughtfully, aligning with values taught in Catholic education. Through her music and storytelling, Susan raises awareness about Indigenous cultures. She helps listeners understand both the challenges Indigenous people have faced and the beauty of their traditions. Her song *O Siem*, which topped Canadian charts in 1995, invites people from all backgrounds to unite in celebration and respect. By blending Inuktitut and English lyrics with contemporary melodies, she effectively shares Inuit culture with a wide audience.

Beyond her music, Susan advocates for Indigenous communities. She has worked with various non-profit organizations supporting Indigenous youth, including leading writing workshops for Attawapiskat First Nation youth and addressing food insecurity in Northern Canada. These efforts demonstrate her commitment to honest and sensitive communication, fostering understanding and empathy. By highlighting both the struggles and the beauty of Indigenous life, Susan exemplifies the qualities of **An Effective Communicator**, promoting cultural awareness and correcting the narrative.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Susan Aglukark’s work and advocacy align with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the **Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**. Through her foundation, the Arctic Rose Foundation, she directly supports marginalized Indigenous communities, particularly youth. The foundation’s focus on mental health, literacy and cultural revitalization reflects a compassionate approach to addressing the needs of Indigenous youth, empowering them through arts-based programs and projects.

By prioritizing the well-being of Indigenous youth, Aglukark demonstrates a commitment to uplift those who are often overlooked or neglected by broader society. Her work

promotes healing, cultural preservation and community-building, embodying the Catholic call to serve those in need and to create spaces for hope and opportunity. Susan’s advocacy not only supports vulnerable populations but also promotes social justice by ensuring Indigenous voices and cultural practices are valued and integrated into society. Through her actions, she exemplifies the Catholic teaching of **Solidarity**, fostering unity and understanding across communities.



TANYA TAGAQ

Inuk from Cambridge Bay (Ikaluktutiak)

Researched and prepared by Mirari Ubani, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Throat singing, author, composer.

Awards and Achievements:

- Member of the Order of Canada.
- Polar Music Prize winner.
- JUNO award winner.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Throat singing usually consists of two women, however Tanya Tagaq decided to go solo.
2. Tanya has a memoir, *Split Tooth*, that was published in 2018. www.tanyatagaq.com
3. Tanya is an advocate for Indigenous land rights, as well as the Inuit tradition of sealing. Tanya Tagaq #sealfie provokes anti-sealing activists | CBC News.
4. Sinaa released in 2005 was nominated for five awards at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards. Tanya Tagaq | Who We Are | Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet.
5. Tanya Tagaq taught herself to throat sing using audio tapes given to her by her mother. Tanya Tagaq | Who We Are | Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

Learn more about Tanya Tagaq at www.tanyatagaq.com

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Image, page 35



“We are product of the immense torque that propels this universe. We are not individuals but a great accumulation of all that lived before.” — *Tanya Tagaq*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

An **Effective Communicator** is one who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values. Tanya Tagaq exemplifies this expectation through her social commentary. Through her music, Tagaq highlights the effects of colonization and climate change, as well as advocating for Indigenous rights. Her music is an effective means of communication as it transcends barriers of language and culture.

Tagaq tours the globe, bringing people together with her music. Finally, she uses her platform to promote gospel values such as justice, compassion and solidarity.

Overall, Tanya Tagaq's approach to communication showcases sensitivity and critical engagement in line with gospel values, while advocating for social change and Indigenous rights.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Tanya Tagaq showcases the Catholic Social Teaching of **Participation**. She does so by recognizing the importance of community and the fact that every person is entitled to inclusion. Tanya Tagaq exemplifies this teaching through her advocacy for Indigenous communities. She uses her platform to amplify the voices of Indigenous people, creating opportunities of participation in conversations about heritage

and culture. This ensures that Indigenous voices and perspectives are heard during public discourse. Using her music Tanya Tagaq creates safe spaces for Indigenous individuals to share experiences and engage in dialogue relevant to heritage and culture. Her commitment to solidarity highlights the need to stand together with others all around the world to promote meaningful causes.



TANYA TALAGA

Ojibway, Anishinaabe from Fort William First Nation, but grew up in suburban Toronto

Researched and prepared by Elena Lionello, Northeastern Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Author, journalist, speaker, columnist.

Awards and Achievements:

- Winner. First Nation Communities Read Award: Young Adult/Adult (2018)
- Finalist. Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Nonfiction Prize (2018)
- Finalist. BC National Award for Nonfiction (2018)
- Winner. Shaughnessy Cohen Prize, Political Writing (2018)
- Winner. Royal Bank of Canada Taylor Prize (2018)
- Winner. Atkinson Fellowship in Public Policy (2017)
- Nomination (Team). Canadian Association of Journalists, Open Media (2016)
- Winner (Team). National Newspaper Award, Special Project (2015)
- Winner (Team). Canadian Association of Journalists, Open Media (2015)
- Nomination. Canadian Association of Journalists, JHR/CAJ Award for Human Rights Reporting (2015)
- Winner (Team). National Newspaper Award, Special Project (2013)
- Winner (Team). Canadian Medical Association, Excellence In Print: News (2007)
- Winner (Team). Michener Citation of Merit (2007)
- She has been nominated five times for the Michener Citation of Merit in public service Journalism.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Tanya was the first Anishinaabe woman to be named a CBC Massey Lecturer in 2018. She holds an honorary doctorate from Lakehead University, as well as honorary degrees from Victoria University in the University of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan and Ontario Tech.
2. Tanya heads Mawka Creative Inc., which is a production company focused on ensuring Indigenous voices are heard through documentary films, television and podcasts.
3. Talaga was employed by the Toronto Star for over twenty years covering a large span of topics ranging from health, to education, investigations and Queen's Park. She was also the Indigenous Issues Columnist.
4. Tanya is the author of many well known works including *Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death and Hard Truths in a Northern City* and *All of our Relations: Finding the Path Forward*.
5. Award winning journalist for the Toronto Star.

Image Credits:

Image, page 103

Image, page 104



“In Ojibwe and Cree culture, leadership didn't mean power; it meant caring.” — *Tanya Talaga*

Sources:

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Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Tanya Talaga speaks, writes and listens honestly, making her **An Effective Communicator**. She is clever with her words, and can accurately describe the feelings and thoughts of others, especially those of Indigenous peoples. In her writing, she reflects a lot on subjects such as social justice and reconciliation, prominent topics within the Catholic faith. The Catholic faith teaches justice for all, and Talaga uses her voice to communicate important ideas, and to promote Indigenous ideas and understandings.

She is **A Responsible Citizen**. Her work encourages people to understand their roles in society and how they can work towards a more equitable world and the greater good. Tanya's writing embodies the values of the Catholic Graduate Expectations, and demonstrates how they can have a positive impact, when someone embraces reconciliation and justice. Talaga is a perfect example of someone who embodies the Catholic Graduate Expectations, and lives them out in the real world.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Tanya is an advocate for **Human Dignity**, and her writing highlights systemic issues involving the suppression of Indigenous peoples. She has a focus on ensuring that all people are included in society, especially Indigenous peoples. Tanya upholds the Catholic Social Teaching of **Rights and Responsibilities** by addressing the rights of Indigenous peoples, and shedding light on the

injustices that are faced by them. She also highlights and brings to light issues of justice, human rights and community. Tanya advocates for social change and reconciliation. Her writing emphasizes the unity and interconnectedness of all people, whether Indigenous or not.



TERESA ALTIMAN

Anishinaabe from Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong Territory

Researched and prepared by Elena Lionello, Northeastern Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Visual artist.

Awards and Achievements:

- Honoured with an honorary fellowship from the Ontario College of Art and Design, recognizing her outstanding contributions to the arts.
- Featured in the Gordie Howe International Bridge project for the Windsor, Ontario-Detroit, Michigan region, where her artwork was showcased as part of this significant cultural initiative.
- Created a striking turtle sculpture and an impressive 11-foot-tall textile piece, both proudly displayed at Point Pelee National Park, celebrating Indigenous artistry and storytelling.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Her Indigenous heritage and spirituality serve as powerful inspirations for her artwork, deeply influencing her creative process.
2. She works in a diverse range of mediums, including acrylic painting, textiles, wall hangings and craftwork.
3. The natural beauty of Walpole Island First Nation often inspires her pieces, reflecting the landscapes and traditions of her community.
4. She created a turtle sculpture for a parkette along the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway and designed artwork featured along the Parkway's multi-use path.
5. A graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto, she has combined her education and cultural roots to create meaningful works that celebrate Indigenous identity.

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“It's a marvellous opportunity to teach people a little bit about who we are as First Nations People.” — *Teresa Altman*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Teresa Altman embodies the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations through the way she expresses her spirituality, identity and cultural heritage in her artwork. As an artist, she effectively communicates her experiences as both an Indigenous community member and a broader member of society, aligning with the expectation of being **An Effective Communicator**. Through her creative process, Teresa has also shared that she gains a deeper

understanding of herself and her spirituality, demonstrating the qualities of a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner**—another key Graduate Expectation. Her work not only serves as a personal journey of growth but also fosters greater awareness and appreciation of Indigenous culture in society.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Teresa Altman expresses her deep respect and love for the Earth, particularly her home on Walpole Island, through her artwork. By focusing on themes of nature and the environment, she uses her creativity to highlight the beauty, interconnectedness and importance of the natural world. Through various artistic mediums, she brings attention to the landscapes, wildlife and ecological balance that are essential to both Indigenous culture and the well-being of the planet.

Her work not only serves as a personal expression of her connection to the land but

also acts as a reminder of our collective responsibility to protect and cherish creation. Through her art, she inspires others to develop a deeper respect for nature, fostering awareness about environmental stewardship and sustainability. This commitment aligns with the Catholic Social Teaching of **Stewardship of Creation**, as she encourages people to recognize the sacredness of the Earth and take action to preserve it for future generations.



THE HALLUCI NATION

Thomas “Bear Witness” Ehren Ramon from Mohawk of the Six Nations of the Grand River, and Tim “Zoolman” Hill from Cayuga First Nation

Researched and prepared by Sabine Cuesta, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Musicians.

Awards and Achievements:

- Indigenous Music Awards (2013)
 - Best Producer/Engineer
 - Best Pop CD (Nation II Nation)
 - Best Group or Duo
 - Best Album Cover (Nation II Nation)
- Juno Awards
 - Breakthrough Group of the Year (2014)
 - Group of the Year (2018)
- Album of the Year (2017)–We Are the Halluci Nation, Independent Music Awards

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Pioneers of ‘Powwow Step’–The Halluci Nation fuses traditional powwow recordings with electronic dance music, creating a unique and influential sound.
2. Live performances showcase Indigenous culture–Their shows feature Native dancers, self-produced films and visuals that challenge stereotypes and celebrate Indigenous identity.
3. Their self-titled album (released as A Tribe Called Red) was made available as a free download in 2012, independent of a record label.
4. They have performed at major events like Osheaga Music Festival and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, while also giving free shows on First Nations reserves.
5. They contribute to a growing cultural movement that highlights powerful contemporary Indigenous artists and redefines Indigenous representation in music. As of 2025, they have released four albums, five EPs and two singles.

Sources:

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“Indigenous people need to define their identity on their own terms. If you share this vision, then you are already part of The Halluci Nation.” — *The Halluci Nation*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

The Halluci Nation exemplifies the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of being **An Effective Communicators** through their impactful music and artistic expression. They use their platform not only for entertainment but also as a tool to educate, inform and inspire both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences about important social, cultural and political issues. By blending electronic beats with traditional Indigenous powwow music, they create a unique and engaging sound that captivates listeners while sharing meaningful messages about Indigenous identity, history and rights.

Their live performances go beyond just music; they incorporate powerful visuals, Indigenous dancers and storytelling elements that deepen the audience’s understanding of Indigenous culture. Through their lyrics and multimedia productions, they communicate complex topics such as reconciliation, representation and the struggles Indigenous communities have faced and continue to experience. By using their voice and artistry, The Halluci Nation encourages people to listen, learn and take action, making them outstanding examples of effective communicators who foster dialogue and promote change.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

The Halluci Nation embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Solidarity**, which emphasizes unity, mutual support and standing together for justice. Through their music, they bring people from diverse backgrounds together with a shared mission of celebrating and promoting Indigenous culture. Their unique fusion of electronic music with traditional powwow sounds allows them to reach a wide audience while honouring and preserving Indigenous traditions.

Beyond their own work, The Halluci Nation actively collaborates with other Indigenous

artists, including their idol John Trudell, a legendary activist and musician. By working with and uplifting fellow Indigenous musicians, they create a supportive and inclusive artistic community. Their commitment to **Solidarity** is also evident in the way they use their platform to shed light on important social issues, advocating for Indigenous rights, reconciliation and cultural appreciation. Through their music and collaborations, The Halluci Nation demonstrates how solidarity can foster a stronger, more connected world where all voices are heard and celebrated.



THELAND KICKNOSWAY

Potawatami and Cree from Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong Territory

Researched and prepared by Kate Bester, Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Speaker, singer, hoop dancer, activist.

Awards and Achievements:

- At the age of 14, Theland became the youngest recipient of the Indspire Award in the Culture, Heritage, and Spirituality category, recognizing his significant contributions to preserving and sharing Indigenous culture.
- His efforts have garnered attention from major media platforms, including Nike, Disney, BBC, Teen Vogue, Entertainment Tonight, and Complex, highlighting his role as a cultural ambassador and influencer.
- Since he was 9 years old, Theland has run over 130 km every year from Gatineau, Quebec to Kitigan Zibi to raise awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S).
- Theland has performed singing, drumming, grass dancing and hoop dancing in Canada, Mexico, the USA and Switzerland, showcasing Indigenous art and culture on a global stage.
- In November 2015, Theland performed a drum song at the swearing-in ceremony of Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party at Rideau Hall.
- As part of the #NativeTikTok movement, Theland actively shares Indigenous culture on social media, inspiring a new generation of Indigenous youth to embrace their heritage while educating non-Indigenous audiences about Indigenous traditions and values.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. At just Grade 3, Theland Kicknosway wrote a letter to his school suggesting they hold a powwow. His vision was to create an event that would be educational and emphasize the importance of Indigenous culture.
2. Theland's deep connection to his culture is inspired by his mother, a Sixties Scoop survivor, who was taken from her community and torn from her culture. Her experience has fueled his passion for reconnecting with his Indigenous roots and advocating.
3. Theland played an active role in reconciliation efforts, particularly focusing on Residential School Survivors. He contributed to the 2008 Apology and Trust and Reconciliation Closing Commission by singing and participating in ceremonies that helped foster healing and recognition for survivors.
4. Theland has harnessed social media to amplify his cultural advocacy. His TikTok account has amassed over 430,000 followers, where he shares cultural teachings, dance performances, and personal stories.
5. Theland Kicknosway is an Indigenous youth who uses his voice to spread his message, advocate, and highlight Indigenous culture.

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Image, page 109

Image, page 110



“Everything that I do is to give back to all Peoples of our Nations. I want to help the youth learn more from the Elders and pass it along to the future generations so they can walk and create the new path that all of us have begun.” — *Theland Kicknosway*

Sources

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<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/ottawa-mmiiwg-run-theland-kicknosway-1.5562425>

<https://iswo.ca/theland-kicknosway>

<https://nac-cna.ca/en/bio/theland-kicknosway>

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Kicknosway embodies the Catholic Graduate Expectation of being a **Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker** through his proactive and thoughtful actions in addressing important issues. At just Grade 3, he reflected on the lack of Indigenous education at his school and creatively proposed a solution by writing a letter to implement a powwow, which successfully raised awareness of Indigenous culture. His annual 130 km runs to raise awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, and Gender Diverse People (MMIWG2S+) demonstrates his commitment to tackling pressing issues through creative and

holistic approaches, using both physical endurance and education to promote change.

Theland's ongoing advocacy work showcases his responsibility in making decisions that benefit the common good. His creative use of social media, performances and public speaking to educate others about Indigenous culture and history also reflects his holistic approach to solving the problem of Indigenous education. Theland's focus on both reconnecting Indigenous peoples with their heritage and educating all people about these vital issues demonstrates his deep commitment to the common good.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Kicknosway exemplifies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Subsidiarity and the Role of Government** through his participation in efforts aimed at reconciliation and Indigenous advocacy. He played a key role in the 2008 Canadian Government apology regarding Residential Schools, where he contributed by singing as part of the ceremony. His involvement in this significant national moment highlights his collaboration with government efforts to acknowledge and heal the wounds caused by the residential school system. In 2015, Theland again worked alongside the government when he performed a drum song at the swearing-in ceremony of Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party at Rideau Hall, contributing to the spirit of reconciliation and recognition.

Moreover, Theland uses his platform to advocate for justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, and Gender Diverse People (MMIWG2S+) through his annual run from Gatineau, Quebec to Kitigan Zibi. By doing so, he draws attention to this critical issue, urging both government and society to take responsibility and action toward finding solutions. His advocacy work exemplifies subsidiarity by calling for grassroots action and collaboration with government bodies to address systemic issues facing Indigenous communities. Through his efforts, Theland supports the idea that both individuals and the government have a role to play in ensuring justice, reconciliation and the preservation of Indigenous culture.



TIA WOOD

Cree from Saddle Lake Cree Nation

Researched and prepared by Bailey Clyne, Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Singer.

Awards and Achievements:

- Juno Award nomination (2022)–Tia was nominated for the prestigious Juno Award in 2022, showcasing her growing influence in the Canadian music scene.
- Juno Award nomination for Contemporary Indigenous Artist of the Year (2025)–Nominated again in 2025, further cementing her place as a rising star in Indigenous music.
- Artist of the Year–Indigenous Music Awards (2023)–Recognized for her contributions to the Indigenous music community.
- Best New Artist–Indigenous Music Awards (2022)–Earned for her debut release, highlighting her impact and talent.
- Album of the Year–Indigenous Music Awards (2023)–Celebrated for blending traditional Indigenous sounds with modern influences.

To learn more about Tia Wood visit <https://tiawood.ca>

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Tia Wood began building her fan base in 2020 through her TikTok account, where she gained widespread attention for sharing her music and Indigenous culture.
2. Her first song and music video were filmed in her home community in Alberta, showcasing her roots and cultural pride.
3. She took a bold leap of faith, moving to Los Angeles with only one month's rent, determined to pursue her dreams in music.
4. In one of her music videos, she ensured that distinctive Indigenous-made pieces were featured, highlighting the beauty and significance of Indigenous artistry.
5. Music and dance have always been a part of her life–she grew up performing with her family, some of whom were members of the Grammy Award-winning group Northern Cree.

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Image, page 112



“Everything I sing, even if it isn’t Indigenous music, is still Indigenous storytelling because it’s coming from my perspective.” — *Tia Wood*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Tia Wood exemplifies the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **AN Effective Communicator** through her ability to express meaningful stories, emotions and experiences in a way that deeply resonates with others. She uses her natural talents in singing, songwriting and storytelling to amplify Indigenous voices, preserve cultural identity and advocate for representation. Her music is not just a form of entertainment; it is a powerful tool for educating others about Indigenous traditions, struggles and resilience.

Through her lyrics, performances and online presence, Tia Wood thoughtfully expresses her personal journey, the history of her community

and the beauty of her heritage, ensuring that important narratives are not forgotten. She engages with her audience in a way that fosters understanding, empathy and appreciation for diverse perspectives. By using her platform to inspire change, raise awareness and uplift Indigenous culture, she demonstrates the power of communication in building connections, breaking down stereotypes and encouraging dialogue. Tia’s ability to use music as a bridge between cultures reflects the importance of sharing one’s voice to make a positive impact in the world.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Tia Wood strongly embodies the Catholic Social Teaching of **Solidarity**, which emphasizes unity, collaboration and the commitment to building a just society. Solidarity calls for recognizing that we are all connected as one human family and encourages us to stand together in support of one another. Through her music, Tia Wood actively fosters this sense of connection by shining a light on Indigenous traditions and culture, ensuring that these stories and histories are acknowledged and celebrated.

By sharing her heritage through traditional music and storytelling, she not only preserves

and uplifts her own community but also invites others to learn, appreciate and stand in support of Indigenous identity and resilience. Her work promotes cultural pride and awareness, helping to bridge gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. In doing so, she exemplifies the true meaning of solidarity—strengthening community bonds, advocating for justice and encouraging greater understanding and respect among all people.



TOMMY PRINCE (1915–1977)

Anishinaabe from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation

Researched and prepared by Mya Jensen, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Veteran.

Awards and Achievements:

- Awarded for acts of bravery and devotion under enemy fire.
- Recognizing his dedicated service to Canada during wartime.
- Honouring his courageous service in the Italian Campaign during World War II.
- Given for his exceptional contributions in the liberation of France and Germany.
- Acknowledging his commitment to protecting Canada and its allies.
- War Medal (1939-1945)—Recognizing his participation in World War II.
- Awarded for his role in United Nations peacekeeping efforts.
- U.S. Silver Star—One of the highest military honours awarded by the United States, given for gallantry in combat.
- 1939/45 Star—A distinguished honour for his service in the Second World War.
- War Medal (Korea)—Recognizing his heroic actions in the Korean War.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. At his funeral, Prince was honoured with the highest tributes from his First Nation and the governments of Canada, the United States, France and Italy, recognizing his incredible bravery and service.
2. A decorated soldier, Prince earned 11 medals for his courage and leadership in World War II and the Korean War, cementing his legacy as one of Canada's greatest warriors.
3. Prince stood among an elite few, being one of just three Canadians to receive both the Canadian Military Medal and the American Silver Star, a true testament to his heroic actions.
4. Despite overcoming the hardships of being a residential school survivor, he faced life with unwavering strength and dedication, ultimately serving his country with pride.
5. Born into a large family of 11 children, Prince was raised by Harry and Elizabeth Prince, who instilled in him values of honour, perseverance and service—qualities he carried throughout his life.

Sources:

Tommy Prince | The Canadian Encyclopedia

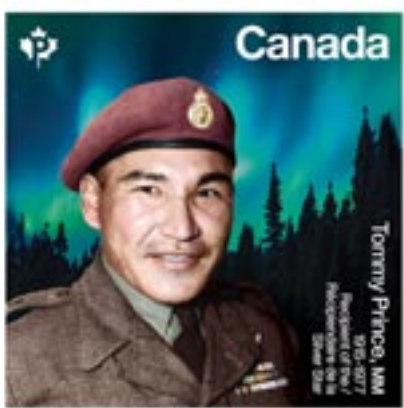
Tommy Prince | Accomplishments, Childhood, Biography, & Facts | Britannica

Tommy Prince | Military Wiki | Fandom

Image Credits:

Image, page 113

Image, page 114



“All my life I had wanted to do something to help my people recover their good name.” — *Tommy Prince*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Tommy Prince exemplifies the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectation of being **A Responsible Citizen** through his selfless service, unwavering bravery, and dedication to justice. As a decorated war hero, Prince risked his life in both the Korean War and World War II, not for personal gain, but to protect the freedoms and lives of others. Despite the dangers he faced, he remained committed to the greater good, showing immense courage, perseverance, and sacrifice.

Beyond the battlefield, Prince was a strong advocate for Indigenous rights, using his

platform to fight for justice, equality and respect for Indigenous communities. He understood that responsibility extends beyond personal actions—it means standing up for others, even in the face of adversity. His life serves as a testament to the importance of acting with integrity, promoting justice, and leading with compassion—values that align with the core teachings of the Catholic faith and the expectations of a responsible and moral citizen.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Tommy Prince’s life deeply aligns with the Catholic Social Teaching of the **Life and Dignity of the Human Person**. As a courageous soldier who fought in both World War II and the Korean War, he put himself in harm's way to defend the freedoms and rights of Canadians, fully aware of the risks to his own life. His bravery underscores the belief that every human life has inherent value and dignity, and his actions exemplify the sacrificial nature of defending the rights and freedoms of others.

In addition to his military service, Tommy Prince was an advocate for Indigenous rights, fighting for the recognition and respect of Indigenous

people and their dignity. He understood that every person—regardless of ethnicity, background, or culture—is entitled to basic human rights and respect. Prince's life serves as a powerful reminder that standing up for the dignity of every person, especially those who are marginalized or oppressed, is essential to creating a just society. His dedication to both protecting the lives of Canadians and advocating for the equality and dignity of Indigenous peoples reflects the core values of life, dignity, and respect for all people



KATSI'TSYO TAWNYA BRANT

Mohawk from Six Nations of the Grand River in Ohsweken

Researched and prepared by Monica Galstyan, York Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Chef and business owner.

Awards and Achievements:

- Top Chef Canada Season 10 Competitor.
- Mohawk College Alumni of Distinction Award Recipient in entrepreneurship: Aboriginal Small Business Management.
- 2021 Ontario Chamber of Commerce Small Business Award.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Tawnya Brant's first job, at the young age of 12 years old, was at a local café in her home village of Ohswe:ken, where her work ethic was developed.
2. Tawnya had a freelance career which allowed her to work all throughout southern Ontario, western New York and Manitoulin Island.
3. The birth of her oldest son led to a career change, where Tawnya realized that she wanted to settle down in her village at Ohswe:ken and began her journey at Mohawk College, where she also founded Yawekon Foods ('Yawekon' in the Mohawk language means 'it tastes good!').
4. Most of her summers, Brant can be found in her home garden spending time with her mother on her passion project: Mohawk Seedkeepers Garden.
5. Most of Brant's cooking includes the vibrant flavours from her Haudenosaunee childhood, as she shares her Indigenous food knowledge.

Sources:

"About." Chef Tawnya Brant, www.cheftawnyabrant.com/about

"Chef Tawnya Brant." YouTube, Chef Tawnya Brant - YouTube

"Chef Tawnya Brant on Canadian Food & Entrepreneurship | MENU." MENU Magazine, 13 March 2024, Chef Tawnya Brant on Canadian Food & Entrepreneurship | Menu

"One Dish, One Spoon filming approved on Six Nations." Canada-info.ca, 3 October 2023, One Dish, One Spoon filming approved on Six Nations - Canada Info

"Tawnya Brant." Mohawk College, 1 January 2023, Tawnya Brant | Mohawk College

"Tawnya Brant." Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, 27 March 2023, Tawnya Brant

"Terrylynn Brant." Community Seed Network, Terrylynn Brant | Community Seed Network

Image Credits:

Image, page 115

Image, page 116



"The bustle of the tables developed my work ethic; but my love of the industry came from my interactions with the cooks... I have developed my culinary range to include the flavours of my Haudenosaunee childhood." — *Chef Tawnya Brant*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Through her passion and love for her community, Chef Tawnya Brant is an outstanding example of **A Caring Family Member**, as described by the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations. Following her freelancing career, she worked in various locations beyond her hometown. Tawnya Brant chose to return to Ohswé:ken to open a restaurant for her community and raise her son with roots in her beautiful village. Moreover she volunteers with Mohawk Seedkeepers Garden, where they monitor food security and offer the traditional

workshops on agricultural methods at a newly built Earthship Seedbank. Through this work, she fosters continuous joy in sharing her own knowledge of Indigenous culinary arts and that of her ancestors. Overall, Chef Tawnya Brant is a wonderful example of a caring family member as she raises her two children, contributes to her mother's passion project, Mohawk Seedkeepers Garden, and shares her knowledge and talent with her greater community.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Through her **Stewardship of Creation** and participation in her community, Chef Tawnya Brant's work actively connects to the Catholic Social Teachings. Tawnya Brant continues to develop her career as a chef, owner, and a show host with her sister. Within her passion for the culinary arts is also a passion for sustaining healthy food sources on our planet. In an interview with Menu Magazine she states: "*We need to look at genetically modified foods and realize our environment is not going to sustain their growth.*" Within her career, Brant clearly

cherishes Earth's life-sustaining properties, as well as how her traditional Haudenosaunee palette supports this very cause. By actively participating in her greater community through her show, her restaurant, food programs, and volunteer work in local gardens, Chef Katsi'tsyo Tawnya Brant passionately supports her role as a steward of creation and participates in uplifting this Catholic Social Teaching.



WAB KINEW

Anishinaabe from Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation

Researched and prepared by Bailey Clyne, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Politician, musician, author.

Awards and Achievements:

- Best Rap or Hip Hop Album (Live by the Drum).
- Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards (now the Indigenous Music Awards) 2009.
- Honorary Degree, DLitt, Cape Breton University 2014.
- Manitoba's first Indigenous Premier.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Before entering politics Wab Kinew was a musician, broadcaster, university administrator and a host of programming on CBC Radio and CBC Television.
2. Wab Kinew is Manitoba's first Indigenous Premier.
3. Wab Kinew is the host of the Indigenous series 8th Fire. The 8th Fire is a four part documentary series that talks about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada.
4. Wab Kinew is a best selling and award winning author who has written and published four books: *The Reason you Walk*, *Go Show the World*, *The Everlasting Road* and *Walking in Two Worlds*.
5. Wab Kinew was a rapper. His most successful songs are Good Boy, Heroes, and Last Word.

Sources:

A look at Wab Kinew's journey to become Manitoba's 1st Anishinaabe premier | CBC News

Wab Kinew | The Canadian Encyclopedia

Wab Kinew Facts for Kids

Wab Kinew Bio - CCAB

CBC's 8th Fire - Canada's History

Wab Kinew Collection

Ethics commissioner tells Manitoba premier not to write new books, promote old ones while in office | CBC News

Wab Kinew's YA novel *The Everlasting Road* tackles grief by way of the supernatural – read an excerpt now | CBC Books

Wab Kinew introduces a new generation to Indigenous trailblazers in picture book *Go Show the World* | CBC Radio

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Image, page 118



“We have a choice in life—we can choose how we are going to behave. We can determine whether we reflect the good around us or lose ourselves in the darkness.” — *Wab Kinew*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Waub demonstrates the characteristics of **A Discerning Believer** in his role as a writer and storyteller. He incorporates spirituality and sacredness into his narratives. In *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, Waub delves into subjects like faith and toughness within an Indigenous group dealing with an apocalyptic situation. Rice, by means of his stories, honours the signs of God's existence in difficulties which makes readers contemplate their personal journey with faith as well as ethical decisions they have made in life.

Waub demonstrates the importance of being **A Responsible Citizen**. He uses his position to support social fairness and care of Indigenous peoples. His work in journalism frequently focuses on topics like Indigenous rights, environmental problems, and the effects of colonialism. By letting those who are not often heard speak up and encouraging discussions on social matters, Rice actively participates in promoting peace, fairness as well as honouring the value of human life.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Wab Kinew is connected to Catholic Social Teaching: **Rights and Responsibilities**. As Premier of Manitoba, Wab Kinew has the responsibility to look out for everyone's human rights. Kinew is an advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples through all the work he has done. Wab Kinew's advocacy for not only Indigenous people, but for all the citizens of Manitoba, aligns with the Catholic social teaching of solidarity demonstrated through his commitment to strengthen community and promote a just society.



WAUBGESHIG RICE

Anishinaabe, from Wasauksing First Nation

Researched and prepared by Jaden Zhang, Ottawa Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Author and journalist.

Awards and Achievements:

- Independent Publishers Book Award for *Midnight Sweatlodge*, 2012. Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, Ltd.
- Northern 'lit' Award for **Midnight Sweatlodge**, 2012. Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, Ltd.
- Debwewin Citation for excellence in First Nation Storytelling, 2004.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Although he is now an accomplished fiction author, Waubgeshig first found his writing roots focusing on non-fiction in the world of journalism working with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation while only writing fiction in his spare time!
2. Waub is a Maple Leafs fan despite living in Sudbury.
3. Waub does Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and he even has his black belt.
4. With Waub's hard-hitting novels, it's no surprise that he is a self-proclaimed metalhead.
5. One of Waub's most decorated novels, *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, was inspired by the Northeast Blackout of 2003 and his community's resilience when living off the land.

Sources:

About - Waubgeshig Rice Author Journalist. Retrieved from www.waub.ca/about/
Waubgeshig Rice shares journey to Moon of the Crusted Snow - Anishinabek News.
Waubgeshig Rice on Twitter

Image Credits:

Image, page 119

Image, page 120



"I believe in the resilience of Anishinaabe people and Indigenous nations as a whole." — *Waubgeshig Rice*

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Waub demonstrates the characteristics of a **Discerning Believer** in his role as a writer and storyteller. He incorporates spirituality and sacredness into his narratives. In *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, Waub delves into subjects like faith and toughness within an Indigenous group dealing with an apocalyptic situation. Rice, by means of his stories, honours the signs of God's existence in difficulties which makes readers contemplate their personal journey with faith as well as ethical decisions they have made in life.

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Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

The principle of **Preferential Option for the Poor** in Catholic Social Teaching is shown in Rice's activism. In his writing and involvement with community issues, Rice always gives priority to making the voices of Indigenous peoples louder in fighting for their rights. Indigenous peoples have a long history of being pushed aside, evident from the effects they suffer due to unequal systems. The novel "Moon of the Crusted Snow" and other writings by Rice address socio-economic problems that Indigenous communities encounter, emphasizing how important it is to unite in dealing with poverty, inequality and unfairness.

Rice has also demonstrated a commitment to **Taking Care of Creation**, another important Catholic Social Teaching. As an Indigenous author from the Wasauksing First Nation in Ontario, Rice has a strong appreciation for the relationship between humans and nature. This is shown in teachings about how everything in life is connected by Indigenous understanding. In his books, he frequently looks into matters such

as environmental endurance, looking after ecology and the spiritual importance of land. His storytelling underlines the significance of valuing and safeguarding Earth's resources for future generations,, which reflects the Catholic concept of caretaking along with creation's inherent worth.

Moreover, Rice's endorsement of participatory decision-making and community empowerment is in line with the Catholic Social Teaching that emphasizes **Subsidiarity and Participation**. By involving themselves with Indigenous communities, paying attention to what they require, and making their voices heard, Rice encourages people to have control over their stories and push for change. Through activities that promote cultural rejuvenation along with initiatives for mentorship, Rice cultivates feelings of membership as well as recognizing the potential of Indigenous young people. This encourages them to participate actively in forming Ontario's social as well as cultural-political environment.



WILFRED BUCK

Cree from Opaskwayak Cree Nation

Researched and prepared by Carla Khalil Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Astronomer.

Awards and Achievements:

- 2023 Qilak Award for Astronomy Communications, Public Education and Outreach honours Mr. Buck's outstanding efforts in sharing Indigenous astronomical knowledge.
- 2018 Trailblazer/Lifetime Achievement Award acknowledges his significant impact and dedication to Indigenous education.
- Best Canadian Documentary Award recognizing the film's excellence in portraying Mr. Buck's journey and teachings.
- Women Inmate Jury Award at the Montreal International Documentary Festival, further highlighting the documentary's impact and resonance.
- *'Tipiskawi Kisik: Night Sky Star Stories'* (2018): This book delves into the night sky from an Ininew (Cree) perspective, sharing traditional star stories that have been passed down through generations.
- *'Kitcikisik (Great Sky): Tellings That Fill the Night Sky'* (2021): An expanded edition of *'Tipiskawi Kisik,'* this work continues to share Indigenous star knowledge, featuring stories of constellations.
- *'I Have Lived Four Lives'* (2021): In this memoir, Buck recounts his transformative journey from a challenging and impoverished childhood to becoming a respected educator and scientist.

To learn more about Wilfred Buck, visit <https://acakwuskwun.com>

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Wilfred Buck is a Cree Elder renowned for his expertise in sharing traditional Indigenous star knowledge, preserving the celestial teachings of his ancestors.
2. His journey to becoming a respected Indigenous educator was one of resilience, as he overcame personal struggles, including displacement and addiction, to reclaim his identity and purpose.
3. He played a key role as a science facilitator at the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, where he worked to integrate Indigenous knowledge into science education.
4. Through his teachings, he bridges Indigenous astronomy with Western science, demonstrating the deep connections between traditional star knowledge and modern scientific understanding.
5. His work is featured in the documentary *Wilfred Buck*, which explores his unique perspectives on the cosmos, highlighting the rich and ancient wisdom of Indigenous astronomy.

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Image, page 122



“We arrive at knowledge from many different paths. And the more aware we are of other possibilities, the more sensitive we will be to understanding and difference.” — *Wilfred Buck*

Sources:

<https://collection.nfb.ca/film/wilfred-buck>

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Wilfred Buck exemplifies the Catholic Graduate Expectations of being **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker** as well as **An Effective Communicator** through his dedication to Indigenous education and storytelling. As **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker**, he seamlessly bridges Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, encouraging students to think critically about multiple worldviews and recognize the interconnectedness of science, culture and spirituality. His work challenges conventional perspectives, fostering deeper understanding and appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing.

Additionally, as an **Effective Communicator**, Buck masterfully uses story to captivate diverse audiences, making complex teachings accessible and engaging. His ability to weave traditional star knowledge with modern science ensures that Indigenous perspectives are not only preserved but also valued in contemporary education. Through his teachings, he inspires others to think deeply, communicate effectively and embrace a more inclusive understanding of the world.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Wilfred Buck’s teachings strongly reflect the Catholic Social Teaching of **Care for Creation**, as he emphasizes the sacred relationship between humanity, the stars and the natural world. Rooted in Indigenous wisdom, his teachings highlight how everything in creation is interconnected and must be respected, aligning with the call to protect God’s creation. By sharing traditional Indigenous star knowledge, he encourages people to see the universe not just as a collection of celestial bodies, but as a living, spiritual entity that carries deep meaning and responsibility. His lessons reinforce the idea that creation is a gift to be cherished.

Through his storytelling and educational outreach, Buck instills a deeper appreciation for

the environment, urging people to recognize their role as stewards of the Earth. His work inspires individuals to respect nature, preserve its beauty and pass down these teachings to future generations. By bridging Indigenous perspectives with modern scientific understanding, he fosters a holistic worldview that acknowledges both spiritual and scientific truths about creation. His teachings remind us that the natural world is not simply a resource to be used but a living entity to be honoured and protected. In doing so, Wilfred Buck embodies the principles of **care for creation**, encouraging all to reflect on their relationship with the Earth and take action to ensure its well-being for generations to come.



ZOEY ROY

Diné, Cree, Michif, member of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation

Researched and prepared by Lauren McGuire, Halton Catholic District School Board.

Best Known For: Artist, spoken word, poet, academic.

Awards and Achievements:

- Queen Diamond Jubilee Medal.
- Women of Distinction Award in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
- Congress of Aboriginal People Youth Leadership Award.
- Inspire Award.
- Indigenous Graduate Leadership Award at the University of Saskatchewan.
- University of Saskatchewan's One to Watch.

Five Interesting Facts:

1. Zoey is currently pursuing a PhD in Education at York University.
2. Zoey has performed her spoken word all around the world including in Dubai and Australia.
3. Zoey released her first book, a memoir called Homecoming in 2016 and has released 2 spoken albums called Made Up and Zoetry in 2021 and 2022 respectively.
4. Roy left home at the age of 13 and struggled with being unhoused and facing poverty.
5. She does a great amount of outreach with young kids, often going into schools to teach hip hop related spoken word to Indigenous students.

Sources:

Retrieved from Zoey Roy's website, Indigenous Arts Collective of Canada at www.indigenousartscollective.org/zoey-roy

Artist and social activist Zoey Roy finds her cause in community

'We're sounding like one': Poet uses hip hop for cultural connection in Indigenous classroom | CBC News

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Image, page 124



“I never really fit into one circle, and I never really fit into another circle. Someone once told me that ‘stars don’t fit into square boxes.’ I am Cree. I am Dene. I am Métis. That took me a long time to know.” — Zoey Roy

Connecting with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Roy exemplifies being a **Self Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner, A Collaborative Contributor and A Responsible Citizen**. Roy's upbringing was quite challenging as she left home at age 13, causing her to drop out of school. She eventually was able to go back to get her high school diploma and is now pursuing a PhD. Her dedication to education even after facing challenges is inspiring, and aligns with the graduate expectation of being a **life long learner**. Roy is also a **collaborative contributor** as she often works with many

different individuals and organizations to do her work. For example, she often works with schools to deliver programming to Indigenous children, showing how she works with others for the common good. Roy is also a **A Responsible Citizen** as she always stays true to her morals. For example, she once called for a boycott of Spirit Halloween Stores for selling costumes that depicted Indigenous peoples in a demeaning manner. Overall, Roy upholds the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations in many ways.

Connecting to our Catholic Social Teaching

Roy exemplifies the Catholic Social Teaching of the **Common Good, Participation and Peace**. In all that she does, Roy aims to improve conditions for Indigenous people through her poetry. This has helped her to contribute to the fight for Indigenous rights throughout the country, allowing her to advance the common good. Roy is also an active participant in her community as her grassroots community work, such as her school projects work to uplift Indigenous youth. She also promotes peace through her artistic work that looks to connect

settlers to the Indigenous peoples on their lands. This helps non-Indigenous people to better understand the unique challenges faced by Indigenous communities and inspire them to take action. As she mobilizes all to stand up for Indigenous peoples, Zoey Roy helps to bring greater peace to Indigenous communities. Overall, Roy is able to personify the Catholic Social teachings of Peace, Participation and the Common Good.



“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

(1 Peter 4:8-10)

Image Credit: Shannon Paul

APPENDIX A- INFLUENCERS EXPLORED: CONNECTIONS TO THE CURRICULUM

The following provides examples of how influencers can be explored in various subject areas and how these can connect to the curriculum.

Influencer	Curriculum Connections
Bridget George	The Arts
Moses Lunham	The Arts
Naomi Smith (Anishinaabe)	The Arts
Susan Aglukark	The Arts
Tanya Tagag (Inuk)	Music and English
Tanya Talaga (Anishinaabe)	English
Zoey Roy (Dine, Cree, Metis)	English and The Arts
Waubgeshig Rice (Anishinaabe)	English
Drew Hayden Taylor (Anishinaabe)	English
Tawnya Brant (Mohawk)	Food and Nutrition
Mary Simon (Inuk)	Food and Culture
Derek Sands	Civics and Careers
Norma Condo	Civics, Political Science
Wab Kinew (Anishinaabe)	Civics, Political Science
Dr. Cindy Blackstock	Civics and Careers, Law and Politics
Arthur Manuel (Secwépemc)	Canadian and International Law, Canadian and World Politics
Autumn Peltier	Civics and Careers, Environmental Science
The Honourable Murray Sinclair	Politics
Dr. Alan Ojiig Corbiere	History
Henry Louis Norwest (Métis)	History
Maurice Switzer	History
Tommy Prince	History
Alanis Obomsawin	Communications Technology, Media Arts

Influencer	Curriculum Connections
Christi Belcourt	Fashion and Design, Social Justice and Equity
Jason Simon	Challenge and Change
Niigaan Sinclair	Challenge and Change, Indigenous Issues in a Global Context
John Herrington	Physics – Dynamics and Forces in Space
Nicole Victoria "Duke" Aunapu Mann	Physics – Dynamics and Forces in Space
Wilfred Buck	Earth and Space Science
Al Hackner	Physical Education

APPENDIX B - CONNECTIONS TO THE CURRICULUM

THE ARTS

Visual Arts, Grades 9 - 12	Sample Inquiry Prompts
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by examining, interpreting, evaluating, and reflecting on various art works;	How does learning about the history and impacts of colonialism help to better understand artworks created by Indigenous artists today?
B2. Art, Society, and Values: demonstrate an understanding of how art works reflect the society in which they were created, and of how they can affect personal values;	How are Indigenous artists expressing themes such as identity, connection to the natural world, nationhood?
B3. Connections Beyond the Classroom: demonstrate an understanding of the types of knowledge and skills developed in visual arts, and describe various opportunities related to visual arts.	How have Indigenous artists become successful and widely known? How has social media influenced their ability to become successful?

Expressions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Cultures Grade 9	Sample Inquiry Prompts
A3. Self-Determination and Nationhood: demonstrate an understanding of the role of sovereignty, self-governance, and nationhood in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit world views, analysing how self-determination is expressed through various art forms and arts disciplines;	Why do you think legislation is needed to address the issue of misappropriation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultural knowledge, language, and traditions? How are Indigenous artists being impacted by appropriation?
B3.3 integrate tools, techniques, and/or technologies from more than one arts discipline to create an integrated art work/production that communicates a specific message about an issue affecting First Nations, Métis, or Inuit communities;	How are Indigenous artists using their artworks to rise awareness about issues affecting them?
C4.2 describe various ways in which First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists are incorporating new technologies into traditional art forms and analyse the impact of this innovation on how the work is experienced.	What are some innovative ways that contemporary artists are using interactive technologies to tell First Nations, Métis, and Inuit stories?

THE ARTS, CONT'D

Exploring and Creating in the Arts, Grade 11 or 12	Sample Inquiry Prompts
<p>B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by applying it to study works from various arts disciplines as well as integrated art works/productions;</p>	<p>What particular aspects of this art work most affected your initial impression? Why do you think this aspect of the work had an impact on you?</p>
<p>B3. The Arts and Personal Development: demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between the arts and personal development, including their own personal development.</p>	<p>How are Indigenous artists using their artworks to convey messages about who they are?</p>
<p>B4. Connections Beyond the Classroom: demonstrate an understanding of and apply the types of skills developed through creating, presenting, and analysing art works, including integrated art works productions, and describe various opportunities to pursue artistic endeavours outside the classroom.</p>	<p>How can art be used as an agent for change in society? How are Indigenous artists using their artworks to invoke societal change? How are Indigenous artists expressing themes such as nationhood, self-determination, impacts of colonialism through their artworks?</p>
<p>C2. Contexts and Influences: demonstrate an understanding of symbols and themes associated with art works produced by various cultures from around the globe and of past and present influences on works from various arts disciplines.</p>	<p>How does this inspire change?</p>
Media Arts, Grade 10 - 12	Sample Inquiry Prompts
<p>B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by using it to monitor the creative process, and by examining, interpreting, assessing, and reflecting on media art works;</p>	<p>What was the artist's intent in creating this art work? How effectively does the artist communicate that intent? What specifically does he or she do to achieve that intent?"</p>
<p>B2. Identity and Values: demonstrate an understanding of how media art works reflect personal and cultural identity, and affect personal, cultural, and community values and their awareness of those values.</p>	<p>How have Indigenous artists been historically underrepresented in media arts? How has social media changed this?</p>

MUSIC

Music, Grade 10 - 12	Sample Inquiry Prompts
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: use the critical analysis process when responding to, analysing, reflecting on, and interpreting music;	What was the inspiration for this style of music by the musician?
B2. Music and Society: demonstrate an understanding of social and cultural influences on and effects of traditional, commercial, and art music;	How are Indigenous musicians using their songs to bring forward themes such as impacts of colonialism, nationhood, calls for solidarity?
B3. Skills and Personal Growth: demonstrate an understanding of how performing, creating, and critically analysing music has affected their skills and personal development.	How has exploring music from other cultures enhanced your appreciation of how music can impact society?

ENGLISH

English Destreamed Grade 9	Sample Inquiry Prompts
A3. Applications, Connections, and Contributions: apply language and literacy skills in cross-curricular and integrated learning, and demonstrate an understanding of, and make connections to, diverse voices, experiences, perspectives, histories, and contributions, including those of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals, communities, groups and nations.	How are Indigenous authors interweaving their histories, knowledges and perspectives through their literary works?
C1.7 Indigenous Context of Various Text Forms: read, listen to, and view a wide variety of text forms by diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit creators to make meaning through Indigenous Storywork about First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories, cultures, relationships, communities, groups, nations, and lived experiences.	How can reading Indigenous literatures help to further understand their diverse identities and perspectives, relationships, legacies and truths in order to create positive change in society?

ENGLISH, CONT'D

English Grades 10 - 12	Sample Inquiry Prompts
1. Reading for Meaning: read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, informational, and graphic texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning;	Why is it important we include Indigenous literatures?
2. Understanding Form and Style: recognize a variety of text forms, text features, and stylistic elements and demonstrate understanding of how they help communicate meaning;	How are Indigenous authors using various literary devices to convey important messages and meaning?
1.8. Critical Literacy: identify and analyse the perspectives and/or biases evident in oral texts, including increasingly complex texts, and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, identity, and power.	How are Indigenous authors dismantling stereotypes, colonial ideologies and racism through their literatures? How does learning from Indigenous authors and literatures disrupt the harm presented in single story narratives?
English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices Grade 11	Sample Inquiry Prompts
A1. Exploring: explore themes related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit identities, relationships, and self-determination, sovereignty, or self-governance, as reflected in text forms created in Canada, formulating questions and comparing perspectives to stimulate a well-reasoned exchange of ideas about these topics;	Why is it important we include Indigenous literatures?
C5. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices in Contemporary Literature: identify various contributions of individuals, organizations, and initiatives, including technological initiatives, to the development of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit literature, and analyse the social and cultural influence of those contributions;	How are Indigenous authors using various literary devices to convey important messages and meaning?
E5. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices in Contemporary Media: identify various contributions of individuals, organizations, and initiatives, including technological initiatives, to the development of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit media production, analysing the social and cultural influence of those contributions and the role of media literacy.	How are Indigenous authors dismantling stereotypes, colonial ideologies and racism through their literatures? How does learning from Indigenous authors and literatures disrupt the harm presented in single story narratives?

HISTORY

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada Grade 10	Sample Inquiry Prompts
E2.4. assess the significance of Indigenous contributions to wars in which Canada participated during this period (1876-1969).	How did Indigenous fighters contribute to World War I? How were they treated after the war?
Canadian History since World War I, Grade 10	Sample Inquiry Prompts
B2.2. analyse, with reference to specific events or issues, the significance of and perspectives on Canada's participation in international relations between 1914 and 1929;	Why is there little information shared about Indigenous veterans? How might this misinform society about their contributions? How can we correct this?
B1.4. explain the impact on Canadian society and politics of some key events and/or developments during World War I.	What impact did military enlistment have on the status of First Nations men and their families?

CIVICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada Grade 10	Sample Inquiry Prompts
F3.2 analyse the contributions of some individuals and groups to efforts to raise awareness about sovereignty/self-governance and to gain recognition of Aboriginal title and/or treaty rights during this period (1969 - present).	How have Indigenous leaders fought for recognition of their inherent rights as well as treaty rights to be upheld?
F3.3 analyse actions taken by Indigenous individuals, communities, and/or organizations during this period in response to some developments that have had or could have a negative effect on the environment and explain how these responses are related to Indigenous identities and self-determination (1969 - present).	How did Indigenous leaders come together in response to the colonial 1969 "white paper"? What actions did they take and how were they successful?

CIVICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, CONT'D

Civics and Citizenship Grade 10	Sample Inquiry Prompts
<p>B2. Canadian and Indigenous Governance Systems: explain, with reference to a range of issues of civic importance, the roles and responsibilities of various institutions, structures, and positions in Canadian and Indigenous governance systems, treaty relationships, and other Crown-Indigenous relations.</p>	<p>How are Indigenous leaders fighting to have the Canadian government respect and uphold the law with respect to Treaties?</p>
<p>B3. Rights and Responsibilities: analyse key rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship, in both the Canadian and global context, and some ways in which these rights are protected or may be infringed upon.</p>	<p>How are Indigenous leaders calling on Canadians to take action on human rights violations experienced by Indigenous peoples across Canada?</p>
<p>C1. Civic Contributions, Inclusion, and Service: analyse the importance of various contributions to the common good, and assess the recognition of beliefs, values, and perspectives, in communities in Canada and internationally.</p>	<p>How have Indigenous leaders while fighting for Indigenous rights to be upheld and protected, at the same time also fight for the common good and the betterment of society as a whole?</p>
Politics in Action: Making Change, Grade 11	Sample Inquiry Prompts
<p>B1. Factors Affecting Political Engagement: analyse how various factors can contribute to, and present a barrier to, their own and others' political engagement.</p>	<p>What unique barriers have Indigenous leaders faced in the attempts to advance Indigenous rights? How have they navigated these barriers?</p>
<p>B2. Issues of Political Importance: explain the political importance of some current issues and analyse various perspectives associated with these issues.</p>	<p>Why are some issues politically important while others, particularly Indigenous issues tend to be ignored? How have Indigenous leaders brought Indigenous issues forward despite push back from the Canadian government?</p>
<p>C1. The Influence of Individuals and Groups: analyse the objectives and strategies, and assess the influence, of individuals and groups in addressing issues of political importance.</p>	<p>How have Indigenous leaders made changes to racist laws such as the Indian Act and played a role in the creation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?</p>

CIVICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, CONT'D

Canadian and International Politics, Grade 12	Sample Inquiry Prompts
B2. The Evolution of Modern Politics and International Relations: analyse the role of ideology, diplomacy, and conflict, including conflict related to decolonization, in the evolution of politics in and relations between various countries around the world in the past century	How have Indigenous leaders responded to the political approaches/ideologies reflected in Canadian and provincial policies towards First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people?
B3. Influences on Canadian and International Politics: analyse how social, economic, and geographic factors influence contemporary politics in and relations between various countries around the world	How have First Nations fight for the right to self-determination with respect to governance, land, and resources influenced Canadian politics?
C1. The International Influence of Governments: analyse how strategies/practices used by a state or states can affect the policies and status of other states	Why must Indigenous leaders fight Canada for their basic human rights to be upheld at the level of the International Court?

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