

Living in a Good Way with Dogs: Our Stories

First Nations Education

History, Approaches and Effective Teaching Methods

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First Nations Education - History and Approaches

Traditional Teaching Methods

Traditionally, the act of teaching in First Nations was an integrated process. Children were taught survival skills, emotional resiliency, spiritual traditions, cultural practices, good relations and knowledge of the land by adults and Elders as well as older siblings. Teaching was done in circles such as lodges, sweat lodges, medicine lodges, gatherings and ceremonies. Learning was relevant to life and to responsibilities and was integrated into everyday life.

Children and youth learned through oral storytelling, which was often done in the long winters. They also learned through music, and traditionally each song is taught with the teaching behind it being shared before children learn the song itself. Stories were passed on and transformed by the voices of the storytellers and those who listened. Children were encouraged to come to their own understandings of stories and the lessons contained in them.

Many traditional stories and collective memories were passed on using arts and crafts that had specific shared meaning. For example, pictographs and petroglyphs on stone walls, cliffs and shorelines contained communal knowledge that medicine people knew the meaning of. Some of that cultural knowledge is still valued in many nations and some has been lost through the 500 years of cultural genocide that our nations have experienced.

Other visual imagery was and is present from objects such as beadwork, baskets, sculptures, bowls, staffs, regalia, drums, clothing and other art forms. The symbols on these objects have meaning, and these images were used to teach children and youth about the worldviews, spiritual practices, clan teachings and other essential life understandings.

As the nations are diverse, we cannot as educators generalize about what is to be learned from oral history and visual traditions, but we can learn to integrate these approaches into our teaching methods. Children and youth also learned by observing adults, their role models, and by being shown how to do things. They learned by hands-on learning and by responsibilities. They learned by following adults and by ceremony.

This type of learning differs greatly from the Eurocentric knowledge-based education system that focuses on rote learning and text-based learning. Although some First Nations had written language systems prior to European contact, these writing systems served two purposes: 1) pictographs and petroglyphs that were used in medicine societies to transmit and enhance oral teaching and 2) birch bark scrolls that were used by messengers to send key information from one group to another group. There were no books as such for learning from. All was taught through oral language and experiential learning integrated into the way we lived.

Residential Schooling and Intergenerational Trauma

After Confederation, the Canadian Government decided to implement a practice of heightened colonialization through several means. One such means was day schools on reserves and later (1876) residential schools that eventually all First Nations students were sent to at the age of five. The purpose of these schools was to assimilate the children into European values and Christianity. The schools served to eliminate First Nations' languages, cultural traditions, and traditional knowledge and replace the worldviews

through indoctrination into Eurocentric values.

The Canadian government paid several churches (including the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the United Church and the Moravian Church) to run the schools. Children were forced to speak English or French, denied access to their family including their siblings of the other gender, and were forced to learn skills for trades chosen for them by the clergy who ran the schools.

Widespread emotional, physical and sexual abuse as well as murder meant that the five generations of First Nations children sent to the schools were traumatized, lost their knowledge of traditional values and practices, lost their ability to speak their languages and did not learn how to be good parents. The ripple effects can still be felt to this day on many levels.

The intergenerational impact of residential schooling cannot be underestimated, and it impacts not only the learners we teach now, but also the knowledge of the ways we humans were to interact with animals. This is relevant to consider as many parents and grandparents have not healed from the systematic cultural genocide experienced at residential schools, and many children have not learned how to be caring, trusting and respectful young people. This was not our traditional way of relating to animals.

This harm impacts not only how the parents treat their children, but also how the dogs in some nations are treated. Teachers need to be aware of this so they do not assume that children know their customs, their language or their traditional knowledge. Teachers also need to be aware that the re-traumatizing of each generation because of historic remembered trauma is very present in our nations today. The final residential school closed in 1996, so many of our families are still impacted by the legacy of the abuse and trauma experienced there. We need to be sensitive to this reality as educators of First Nations children and avoid judgmental thoughts about how children relate to dogs on reserves.

Other Cultural Genocide and Impact on Traditional Knowledge

There are other reasons why children in your classes may not know about traditional knowledge about dogs. In 1885, the federal government banned the potlatch, which was a traditional giveaway ceremony of North West Coast First Nations. They later made all ceremonies and gatherings illegal and seized many sacred items. They also arrested some Elders. The sacred items were sold to collectors, given to museums or destroyed.

Native people began to stop their traditional spiritual practices or hide in order to practice them. It became a risk to hold big ceremonies and teaching lodges, so much traditional knowledge was lost and only a few people met to carry on their ancestors' traditions. Although legally this ended in 1951, there are still many Elders who do not trust that their knowledge can be safely passed on.

In day schools, children were not allowed to speak their language and many learned to be ashamed of traditional knowledge and activities. This impacted their pride, their sense of self-esteem and what they passed on to the next generation of young people. In some schools, this continues to happen today.

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Many families moved off reserve to rural and urban centers. Their languages were not available (and in many places continue to not be available) in schools. This dislocation from the land of the ancestors impacts youth, as does the associated social issues that urbanization brings to Indigenous peoples worldwide. Children and youth become influenced by other worldviews and don't always learn to appreciate their own cultural values.

Entire First Nations have been removed and relocated from their traditional territories by the government for various reasons. That dislocation has an impact on those nations' wellbeing.

1972—Indian Education for Indian Children

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood, which was later replaced by the Assembly of First Nations, released a document on the education of First Nations elementary and secondary students across Canada. This document was a seminal piece in that it advocated for culturally authentic education, revitalization and preservation of original languages, and effective education that not only provided First Nations children with opportunities to feel pride in who they are but also to prepare for life as adults in modern times. Since then, other documents such as the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples has called for an education system for First Nations children that supports the revitalization of languages, cultures, and worldviews, while giving young people the skills they need to have meaningful work and lead good lives.

Native Teacher Education Movement in Faculties of Education

In the last 20 years, there have been many universities that have developed Native Education programs that train teachers to teach in schools run by their nations. This movement is also now producing research that advocates for not only authenticity in the curriculum that First Nations students learn from, but for measures to improve their success in school.

As more First Nations candidates graduate from faculties of education and more indigenous professors are hired to train them, there is an understanding that these adults are significant role models for students in reserve schools. IFAW has identified that a significant number of teachers in the communities they partner with are non-native, and this is why we have opted to include cultural perspectives and information about indigenous-centered pedagogy in this Program Overview.

How This Curriculum Is Framed—Culturally Responsive Aboriginal Education (CRAE)

What is Culturally Responsive Aboriginal Education? CRAE is grounded in embedding traditional teaching methods and authentic content into the approach of teachers who work with indigenous children and youth. CRAE demonstrates to First Nations learners that their culture(s), values, family, Elders, language(s) and knowledge are not only welcome in the classroom but actively embraced and encouraged. This can mean, for example, having a practice of ensuring that the First Nations language of the territory the child is living in is supported, developed and revitalized in the school context.

Educators who are culturally responsive make efforts to be aware of their own values, own worldviews and own beliefs and realize

they are in a position of power and influence. They are sensitive to not imposing their own value system on their students but instead give space physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually for the students to have their cultural practices acknowledged and celebrated.

CRAE is based on the concept that school systems strive to not only value, but support traditional cultural knowledge and ensure that no school, nor educator, nor administrator forces students to abandon traditional knowledge. This approach to Indigenous education seeks to ensure that revitalization and reconciliation of traditional knowledge is a central focus of curriculum preparation and pedagogical approaches. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has affirmed that Indigenous children have a right to an education that respects their culture, language and identity.

This means that children have opportunities to become fluent in their own language in the schools they attend. This means that Elders, traditional teachers, parents and other community resources are welcomed in the school to ensure children learn culturally authentic content. It also means that students acquire traditional knowledge at school such as traditional crafts, plant knowledge, medicine teachings, hunting and fishing skills, alongside knowledge that will prepare them for the reality of earning a living and raising a family in the world today.

CRAE also requires curriculum planners and teachers to identify what are authentic resources and learn about the nations they work in so that they can support their students' rights. CRAE values First Nations learners having role models who are First Nations and seeing themselves, their families, their nations and the natural world reflected in what they learn.

The units that have been created for *Living in a Good Way with Dogs: Our Stories* follow the approaches of CRAE. You will see that Elders have advised the writers prior to creation of the Student Activity Books, the Instructor Guides and the other resources. Also information from and short profiles of role models are embedded in the Student Activity Books and Instructor Guides. Several Elders and role models were interviewed during the creation of this program. The foundation of the content for the program comes from the knowledge they shared and connects to the goals of IFAW and curriculum expectations.

Traditional Knowledge Connects to the Curriculum and to the Strength of Our Children

Traditional knowledge is infused across the curriculum in the CRAE model of indigenous education. Traditional scientific knowledge can be incorporated into the study of dogs. Traditional stories, traditional knowledge of how dogs lived with humans, traditional songs, dances, ceremonies, prayers, artwork, etc., are all sources of knowledge that can be shared. Traditional knowledge also includes worldview and values.

This program is based on the values we held about living in a good way with all of our relations. The phrase "All My Relations" is found in many first languages, and it means we must have good relations with all people, animals, birds, bugs, reptiles, plants, rocks and the Creator. This worldview was disrupted through colonialization. This valued traditional knowledge about connectedness is a thread running through this curriculum but may be new to some learners.

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Most important perhaps in considering traditional knowledge is the need for each teacher to consider what local knowledge you, as a teacher, can gain from the Elders in your community. Are there Elders who remember how dogs were once treated? Who have heard stories about dogs? Who have values about how dogs could be treated? Who know dog songs, dances, ceremonies, etc.? Access to local knowledge will depend on the community you live in and its relations to dogs both traditionally and currently. Finding this out can be challenging depending on the wellbeing of the community you are in and the relations your school has with the Elders in the community.

You could start by asking the Elders you know, and if they don't carry that knowledge, you could ask if they might know someone who does. You could also start by asking your students, their parents and their relations if they know of any dog stories that could be shared. Or perhaps, depending on the grade level you teach, you could have students do a rich performance task that includes one option of interviewing an Elder about dogs.

Elders, faith keepers, traditional teachers, medicine people, healers, drummers, grandparents, parents and indigenous arts people are all sources of both traditional and modern knowledge. When approaching people who you are hoping will offer and share their knowledge, it is important to consider protocols for asking for their knowledge. In most cultures, money is not what is shared, but there are specific protocols. In many nations, an offering of tobacco is made, but in some nations food is offered, or something sacred was written, we sought to include ideas for activities that can be done out of the classroom in order to strengthen our children's ties to the land around them.

In modern times, television, the Internet, video games and smart technology are having an impact on how our children are learning and what of our cultural practices and values are being lost. We purposely have included activities that allow our children to be outside learning from the land. Where you teach will have an impact on which of the ideas you can do with your students. The land around you, the ecosystem, the seasons, and the dog population will guide you and perhaps offer you ideas that we have not included.

Spirit and Spirituality and Balance in Life and Education

You will see many references to many traditional spiritual values and beliefs in this program. These are authentic resources for your teaching. At times, the nation or community where you are located may have been converted to other faiths and this may impact how you use this program. We acknowledge this, yet have created this program to be culturally authentic. This includes the embedding of spirituality in the resources we share, lesson suggestions we provide and the Student Activity Book content.

Living in a Good Way with Dogs: Our Stories has been framed using traditional spiritual teachings and current pedagogical knowledge. The teaching of balance is one based on the traditional knowledge of several nations. To be healthy, a human needs to be in balance spiritually, physically, emotionally and intellectually. We have used that understanding to frame the entire program, units within the

program and several specific instructional activities. Although this teaching may not be understood by yourself, the community members you work with, or the contemporary society we live in, we affirm its validity to the wellbeing of all children, families and nations. Other spiritual teachings are reinforced in this program. You will see this as you progress through it. We know that the knowledge of our Elders and ancestors gives us the strength to teach in a well-balanced way.

Learning through Our Languages

There are dozens of First Nations Languages across Canada and hundreds of dialects. As this program was created for a national audience and for many nations (First Nations) we cannot use one indigenous language throughout it. Many of our languages are in danger of being lost, and some are no longer spoken at all. This resource affirms the importance of restoring, revitalizing and protecting the languages of diverse nations. We have highlighted words from varied First Nations in order to support original language teachers and nations seeking to encourage young people to value the language of their ancestors. We hope this role modeling will be reinforced when resources are available for circles in native languages, vocabulary in native languages, songs, etc.

The limitation of doing a resource for schools in diverse nations is simply we cannot write it in every language. The gift we feel in sharing the words of diverse languages is in letting our children know that their languages are beautiful and carry valuable knowledge. If you are not a speaker of the language of the nation in which you teach, perhaps you could work with a Native Language Teacher to develop some lessons that support what you are doing with your students.

Authenticity of Teaching Resources

There are many good and authentic teaching materials, videos and books available for teachers in First Nations schools, and there are those that are not authentic. Some are written in a way that is not based on true knowledge, or is stereotypical or overly generalized. In order to aid you in creating a unit that is truly authentic, we have provided a guide to assessing the authenticity of the resources you use in the classroom. It can be found in Appendix 1.

Diversity of First Nations and Cultural Practices

This resource has been guided by the beautiful diversity of nations, cultures, Elders, knowledge and values of First Nations across Canada. Although we have not been able to include every nation's knowledge about dogs, we have attempted to teach through diversity. This is important for all young people, both Indigenous and non-native, as we can learn from each other in a good way.

This program has been reviewed by panels of First Nations educators, has been facilitated and written by a First Nations-run consultant company and has utilized the knowledge of Elders and role models from diverse First Nations. The program, given the target audience of teachers on reserves, has also been reviewed by non-native teachers as they bring their own perspectives to how they can teach their students to be respectful and caring dog owners and community members.

Effective Teaching Methods for First Nations Learners

There has been much research about student success for indigenous learners in the last thirty years. We know that First Nations children are gifted and intelligent and learn in ways that may differ from children from other ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds. For this reason, we are explaining some of the knowledge about First Nations pedagogical approaches in order to give the teachers who use this program a sense of why the instructional activities have been created in specific ways.

Douglas Cardinal, Métis and Blackfoot architect, has said that our children need to be raised with a drum in one hand and a computer in the other. This phrase echoes two underlying principles in First Nations' education: the importance of cultural survival and pride and preparation for life in contemporary times.

The Importance of Oral Language

In the program, oral language is reinforced, as this is a significant traditional way of passing on knowledge. The knowledge children carry and their understanding of the world needs to find a place in the classroom. They can express what they know verbally and share with each other their knowledge on topics.

In this program, all of the Elders and role models shared through oral language. This is the way our ancestors have shared knowledge for thousands of years. Oral language promotes important skills: the ability to tell rich varied stories, the ability to listen well, the ability to think for yourself, the ability to listen for the significant truths, the ability to share with others in a real way and the ability to grasp concepts on a deep level. Our storytelling traditions need to be valued in the school system as it is the prime mode of sharing knowledge in our communities.

Teaching in Circles

The circle is a complete and equitable format for teaching, learning and sharing, and it is central to all First Nations cultural and social frameworks. Not only are medicine wheels circular but our worldviews, however diverse, are all circular. Circles are used in healing, in gatherings, in teaching lodges, in decision making, in conflict situations, in teaching, in communicating, in dancing and in all aspects of traditional life. Our communities, our architecture, our social structures and our gatherings are non-hierarchical and circular. They start before we are born and live on after we pass on to the spirit world. Circles are very important to all First Nations children and youth and are valued and respected parts of teaching and learning. Thus the Instructor Guides have many suggestions for circles, and Appendix 2 explains some teachings for traditional talking circles that can be used as teaching circles and listening circles in our classrooms.

Experiential Learning

There is much evidence that First Nations children learn well through experiential learning, as do most children. As our education system is predominantly text-based and based on communication through text, many First Nations students do not achieve as they would if the system valued experiential learning. First Nations children need to learn through all of their senses, through actively doing things both in the class and outdoors, by trying things out, by solving problems, by experiencing ideas rather than reading about them. This program utilizes experiential learning.



Time for Thinking

Indigenous student success models have demonstrated that First Nations students by and large take time to contemplate ideas before responding. This is a trait of children from many nations. Time to reflect is valued, and often First Nations children will not respond until they have thought things through. They may not answer at all, or they may simply want to consider possibilities before responding. Teachers on reserves may need to teach in a style that accepts silence, accepts time for contemplation, and allows learners to respond when they are ready. This time for thinking is also built into the teaching suggestions.

Role Models Who Are from One's Nation or One's Ethnicity

This program has purposely sought out role models for the student materials. We believe that our children and youth need to see successful adults doing things that are interesting, diverse and valued. They need to see that our adults and Elders have had careers, families and responsibilities. This is why each Student Activity Book has the readers "meeting" and learning from First Nations adults. We have sought to include varied role models from different genders, nations, careers and social roles. This role modeling is important so our youth have a sense of hope about their own futures. They need to see that they can grow up, have jobs, have families, have responsibilities, and live in a good way.

Not all children have these role models in their families and communities, so it is important that all curricula for First Nations children reinforce how it is to live in a good way as an adult and as an Elder. In developing this program, several First Nations Elders and First Nations role models have been interviewed. Their insights have been invaluable and the children are introduced to each of them in the units.

Integrative Learning

This traditional approach to education values learning through everyday experience. Children learn by doing and by reflecting on what they are doing. They learn at home, at play, with family and at school. This integrative approach is reinforced in the lessons and activities. Home and school must both be learning places and parents must be involved in their children's education whenever possible.

Also this program is cross-curricular in its approach. By integrating the subject disciplines, the isolated skills that may not hold meaning on their own will be reinforced through the content and the pedagogy that integrates knowledge into all subject disciplines.

Talking Circles, Listening Circles, Teaching Circles, Sharing Circles

Circles are common to most First Nations, and this appendix explains some teachings about how to lead circles in a good way. It is important to note that every nation has its own teachings and you may want to invite an Elder from the community you teach in to do the first talking circle and to learn from him or her about how circles are done in that territory.

Circles are important because they are never ending. Conversations that start in a circle go around the circle and go around more than once. When you do a circle in class, it is important to leave time for it to be done in an unhurried way. It is important to also realize that when you first use circles for discussion your students may not at first speak a lot. They will need to build trust in the circle and who sits in it before they may be ready to share. Because the circle is about sharing, please do not assess or evaluate what happens in it. You could have students write reflection journals after a circle and evaluate those, but circles should be free of judgment even from you.

What do you need for a circle? The answer is not a lot. You need a space to sit—on the floor, on the ground or on chairs. The space must be large enough so every student fits into the circle. In some circles an opening is left in the circle towards the East. This depends on the territory you are in. This opening is called the doorway to the circle.

You need an object to pass. In some nations a talking feather is passed, in others a talking stick, and in some a talking stone. This object can be decorated in some way with ribbons or beading or paint, but this is not necessary. It should be kept somewhere safe such as in a basket, a bag or a box.

In most cultures the participants smudge before starting to talk. Smudging is done with a clay bowl or a flat stone or a large shell. Herbs that are sacred medicines such as sweetgrass, sage, and/or cedar are used for smudging. Smudging involves burning the herbs while you hold the object that carries it. The smudging helps cleanse the participants and also helps them focus. You may want to consult a local Elder to assist you with smudging at first so you can learn the local traditions. When people smudge they draw the smoke towards themselves. Although teachings vary, in general, smudging is done while the person being smudged gives thanks and focuses on doing things in a good way. As a person smudges his ears he thinks of listening well to each person in the circle and each person in life. As a person smudges her eyes, she thinks about noticing others and seeing what needs to be seen in life. As a person smudges his nose he thinks about opening all his senses including scent. As a person smudges her mouth she chooses to speak only in a good way to others. As a person smudges his head he thinks about thinking about others in a good way, free from gossip and harmful thoughts. When a person smudges her heart she thinks about loving and caring for every person even if it is hard at times to feel that way. Then the person smudges the rest of his body: his legs, arms, and, if feeling okay with it, gets the smudger to smudge his back as well. Usually the person smudging uses a feather or a fan of feathers to sweep the smudging smoke over the person's arms, legs and back. The sacred object is also smudged at the start of the circle.



Here are guidelines for an effective circle:

- Ensure before you start that every member of the circle sits in such a way that he or she can see the faces of every other participant.
- Remind students that only the person holding the sacred object (feather, stone, stick) can speak and that everyone else should be trying hard to listen in a good way to what that person says.
- When the sacred object goes around the circle (some nations pass the object in the direction of the sun—to the left; others pass it in the opposite direction), a person may speak if he or she has something to share, but he or she does not have to. This is important to note as no one should be reminded to speak if he or she is not ready to speak. Any person can opt out of speaking in the circle by simply passing the sacred object to the next person in the circle.
- Before you start, remind the students that a person can only hold the sacred object and speak if he or she can speak in a good way, free of anger. If the person cannot at present control negative emotions, then he or she must pass the sacred object on. If a student does get upset, ask him or her to please pass the object on after you smudge it again. This helps ensure that the energy from the person is not also passed on. The students need to trust that you or the person leading the circle will ensure they are emotionally and spiritually safe and that you will ensure that the object is well respected and used for talking in a good way only.
- When the sacred object has traveled around the entire circle, the person who started the circle (you, for example) will decide if it needs to travel around again. This is done when there are things that have been left unsaid or if there seems to be people who want to say something more.
- You may at times have to stop a circle to ask someone to leave the circle. When someone has not respected the sacred object or cannot use his or her emotions in a good way, you can first ask if the person is ready to follow the guidelines. If he or she is not, then he or she will exit the circle.
- When you sense the topic of your circle is done and every person has had a chance to speak you may close the circle.

Contributors

International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

Janice Hannah

Humane Indigenous Communities & Northern Dogs Project Director

Janice Hannah, BSc, MEd, works with Indigenous communities and not-for-profit organizations in Canada and the United States to build humane and sustainable programs that improve the health and welfare of both animals (particularly dogs) and their people. Jan's focus on companion animal welfare merges her long-term interest of working with animals and communities in culturally applicable, empowering, and creative ways. Community partnerships, along with tools such as education, capacity building, and service provision, are cornerstones to IFAW's work that prioritizes on-the-ground solutions that focus on each community's unique set of challenges and opportunities.

Writers and Educational Consultants

Gaétan Lefebvre (Algonquin)

Kehingi Consulting

Gaétan Lefebvre BBA, is an Algonquin father, Community Pipe Carrier, healer, drummer, dancer and businessman who studied Business Administration specializing in Human Resource Management at L'Université de Québec en Outaouais. He has done research on First Nations topics including: Aboriginal veterans, Elders, and traditional governance. He has run several small businesses, worked in various industries and provided leadership in two non-profit organizations.

Marg Boyle (Métis, Mi'gmaq)

Kehingi Consulting

Marg Boyle, BFA (Visual Arts), BFA (Art Education), OCT is a stepmom, teacher, drum carrier, medicine person and artist. She has done writing and reviewing of resources and curriculum on contract for The Ministry of Education of Ontario, Pearson Publishing, The Ontario Teachers' Federation's *It's About Time* project, and numerous in-service programs for teachers. She has taught at publicly funded schools since 1989. She has also taught at Faculties of Education at OISE of the University of Toronto, Queens University, and University of Ottawa. She has sought to advocate for culturally appropriate education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in schools. Marg is founder of the First Nations, Métis & Inuit Education Association of Ontario. She has also provided leadership for varied nonprofit cultural and educational organizations.

Kitchi Miigwetch, Wela' lieg for all who have contributed to the diversity of voices, of teachings, and of ideas found in this program.

Elders

Elaine Kicknosway (Swampy Cree)

is originally from Northern Saskatchewan, Wolf Clan. She is a member of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. She is a singer, women's traditional dancer, participant in ceremonies and ongoing learner. She works at Minwaashin Lodge Aboriginal Women's Support Centre as the Children & Youth Manager. The Centre raises awareness that violence is not a part of our culture but is related to the intergenerational impacts of residential schooling and the child welfare system.



Willy Bruce (Ojibwe, Mi'gmaq, Scottish)

is of Anishinaabe and Scottish descent. He is a Native Veteran with service in Vietnam. He has been a Pipe Carrier and Carrier of the Aboriginal Veterans' Eagle Staff for Aboriginal Veterans Autochtones for over 25 years. Willy is Oshkaabewis to the East Region Aboriginal Relations Team of the Ontario Provincial Police. He offers traditional ceremony and teachings in conjunction with Aboriginal and academic institutions across the Eastern Ontario Region. Willy is experienced in "Alternative Conflict Resolution" and cross-cultural communication. He is Wolf Clan and has a lifelong association with and love for dogs. Willy is active in his culture as a Pow Wow Dancer and Drummer, and as an artisan working in traditional media and forms.



Lee Maracle (Stó:lō)

is the author of a number of critically acclaimed literary works including: *Sojourners and Sundogs* [collected work of a novel and short stories], *Polestar/Raincoast*, *Ravensong* [novel], *Bobbi Lee* [autobiographical novel], *Daughters Are Forever* [novel], *Will's Garden* [young adult novel], *Bent Box* [poetry], *I Am Woman* [creative non-fiction], *Celia's Song* [novel], and *Memory Serves and other Essays* [creative non-fiction], and is the co-editor of a number of anthologies including the award-winning publication, *My Home As I Remember*. Ms. Maracle was born in North Vancouver and is a member of the Stó:lō nation. The mother of four and grandmother of seven, Maracle is currently an instructor at the University of Toronto. She is also the Traditional Teacher for First Nation's House and instructor with the Centre for Indigenous Theatre and the S.A.G.E. [Support for Aboriginal Graduate Education] as well as the Banff Centre for the Arts writing instructor. In 2009, Maracle received an Honorary Doctor of Letters from St. Thomas University. Maracle recently received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work promoting writing among Aboriginal Youth. Maracle has served as Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the University of Toronto, University of Waterloo, and the University of Western Washington.



Thomas Louttit (Moose Cree)

is a member of the Moose Cree Band on James Bay. He was born in September 1948 in Coral Rapids, Ontario, where his dad worked for the Ontario Northland Railroad. He is the second oldest of nine children and he spent his childhood living in Moose Factory, Ontario. At five years of age, he was sent to the Fort Albany residential school. He worked as a flat roofer for 32 years. In 1994, he went back to school to become a counselor. He learned from Elders, and he has been helping with men's healing circles and conducting a sweat lodge to help people heal. He speaks often in classrooms from grade schools to universities about his experience through residential schools. Thomas is an Elder who is often seen and heard in the Ottawa aboriginal community centers like Odawa Native Friendship Center, Wabano Health Center, and Natural Resources Canada. He also helps NWAC and Correctional Services Canada. He is a resident Elder for Health Canada. In 2013, he was the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his service to the community.



Teacher Focus Groups

TerryLynn Brant

(Haudenasaunee
Six Nations of the Grand River)

Theda Brant

(Haudenasaunee
Six Nations of the Grand River)

Mike van den Hengle

(Retired Math Teacher)

Camila Devila

(Teacher)

Jeanie LeLacheur

(Teacher—Gaspé Elementary
School and Environmental
Community Organizer
program—Listuguj Mi'gmaq
First Nation)

Tyler Thorne

(Teacher)

Katelyn Merkley

(Teacher)

Role Models

Captain George Leonard (Anishinaabeg, Manitoba)

is an Anishinaabe and the founder of the MSAR (Meghan Search and Rescue) and Courageous Companions, a veterans service dog program. Courageous Companions was started after the first Canadian soldiers returned from Afghanistan, and his program has been featured in many newspapers and on national television. Captain Leonard is a certified master dog trainer and has been inducted into the Purina Animal Hall of Fame in Toronto with multiple dogs that have saved many lives—both through their search and rescue efforts and as service dogs for veterans. He wrote the National Service Dog Standard for testing and certification and is still training dogs for civilian duties, police duties and military duties. He lives outside Winnipeg, Manitoba, and he advocates for the rights of First Nations. He says he has his dream job: "I work with dogs and I assist my people." To this day, Captain Leonard and his team have trained more than 371 dogs.



Stanford Owl (Ojibwe)

is the Animal Control Officer at Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation. SAFN is an Ojibwe community located on the north shore of Georgian Bay Lake Huron, Ontario. The community is populated by 2500 members with a 1200 on-reserve population. There are 365 homes with a pet population of 260. Stanford Owl is a member of the Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation and resides locally with his family. He is married to his lifelong friend Patty Ann and has three beautiful children. Stanford is also a grandpa and lives a holistic lifestyle as a hunter and fisherman. He enjoys spending his time within the community providing health and wellness programs with an animal rescue foundation and IFAW.



Stanford was contracted by chief and council to explore animal control, to implement a dog control bylaw and to communicate responsible pet ownership to community members. Some of the initiatives that occur in the community are re-homing of unwanted animals and pets, vaccination and wellness clinics and community outreach. Stanford also has a pet food distribution service as needed. There are many community members interested in spay and neuter programming in which pets are taken out of the community to London to be treated by IFAW.

With management of the dog and cat registry, Stanford reports to chief and council and provides regular updates to the community. The community is progressive and recognizes the need to manage pets in a healthy and safe manner. Further implementation tasks are to have all dogs registered and tagged with vaccinations against rabies and to control the overpopulation of dogs and cats.

Sagamok Anishnawbek has supported the animal control operations for the last five years. Miigwetch to our leadership for recognition of the need.

Sky Commanda (Ojibwe)

grew up in Northern Ontario. She and her family moved around a lot when she was a child, and she never had any pets. After she grew up she continued to move around a lot and has lived in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia taking her cat with her. Sky came back home to Serpent River First Nation to live and it was then that she decided to get a dog. That's when she started helping to rescue animals.

