



# Indspire

Indigenous education,  
Canada's future.

L'éducation des autochtones.  
L'avenir du Canada.

## DONOR UPDATE

### A message from Roberta Jamieson

Our children are the future, and carry with them a great potential to lead this country. As Canada's fastest growing demographic group, Indspire youth hold particular promise but they need your support!

In this issue of your Newsletter, we talk with long-time Indspire donors, *Colleen and Michael Sidford* and their philosophy on giving back, based on their firm belief that "Charity begins at home" (p2). Theirs is the kind of investment that motivates an Indigenous student out west, who was close to dropping out, to apply for medical school – and he was accepted! Read *Ryan Danforth's* story on how his ambition is now impacting his family and his community (p3).

We are delighted to share some thoughts from Canada's first female Indigenous psychiatrist, *Dr. Cornelia (Nel) Wieman*, who worked in a community-based mental health clinic on the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve and was recently elected the President of the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada (IPAC). Dr. Wieman received the *Indspire Award* in 1998 for outstanding achievement in

Health. She is a shining example of someone who is devoting her life's work to improving the quality of life within communities, one patient at a time.

Thanks to your generosity, we are building brighter futures for more Indigenous youth every year. This is only possible because of you!

**Roberta Jamieson**  
President & CEO  
Indspire





# Education: The Key to Opportunity

## Charity begins at home

After successful careers in the financial sector, two children, two grandchildren and 20 nieces and nephews, Colleen and Michael Sidford are passionate about giving back. The Sidfords have a genuine desire to share their success with their local communities through ongoing volunteer work on non-profit Boards and through their own personal philanthropy.

Colleen and Michael are both passionate about travel and have learned that all of us want basically the same things for our families - healthcare, safety and education - which universally unite us as human beings.

"Charity begins at home," says Michael Sidford, going on to say that he made a conscious and deliberate

choice to support Canadian charities that benefit Canadians now, and also well into the future.

Colleen and Michael hold the belief that people can improve their situations through education. They have seen a strong imbalance in the opportunities afforded to Canada's Indigenous Peoples and have always wanted to get more involved in finding solutions. "Indspire, through education, is making solid improvements in the lives of Indigenous Peoples," said Michael. "This is what drew us to support the exceptional work of Indspire."

Coupled with their passion to give back and their belief that education is a great leveler, Colleen and Michael have chosen to leave a bequest to Indspire in their final estate plans.

They feel strongly that they and their children have been blessed with opportunities that will continue to provide for the next generation. They wanted to extend their generosity to charities that they feel a very personal connection to. A passion to give and a passion to help others after they are gone is very important to them. ●



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*If you would like more information on how you can leave a gift in your will to Indspire, please contact Paul Klein at [pklein@indspire.ca](mailto:pklein@indspire.ca) or toll free at 855 463-7747 x227*

## Making a Difference

My name is Ryan Danroth and I am an aboriginal student who can personally speak to the difference an award can make. Allow me to share my story.



I grew up on the K'omoks reservation in Comox BC with my father and older brother. When I was real young, I dreamed of being a doctor. But over and over again, I was told I would never make it. I was told that I didn't have the money or the mind or knew the right people to get into a university, let alone medical school. That kind of talk got to me – and I began to believe it. I dropped out of school in grade nine to help pay bills at home. After that I started drinking, fighting, using drugs and fell in with the wrong crowd. I couldn't name you the name of a Canadian university at 18, let alone dream of attending one. But that story isn't unique, as we well know. It's tragically too common with our people's youth.

There was a time when I saw no future for myself that didn't end with me in jail or in a box. But through personal struggle and a few dips to rock bottom, I sobered up and attended North Island College to get my grade 12 diploma. It was at college, where I rediscovered this passion for science that I used to have as a kid, where I restored this drive to help others and where I reconnected

with that childhood dream of being a doctor that I abandoned.

My teachers at North Island College helped me apply to Simon Fraser University, where I was accepted with an entrance scholarship. But, there still wasn't enough money to go to school. My family had to fundraise just to afford the \$450 acceptance deposit. That's when I started looking for scholarships and found Indspire.

I applied and received the award that allowed me add to before university. That's how it all started. That was the start of my new life. And I'm proud to say that I've received an award every year since then, along with other scholarships.

My older brother is now talking about going back to school for his grade 12. My cousin wants to be a computer programmer. Let me stress that these awards don't only help the students, they echo throughout the student's community.

If it wasn't for Indspire, I wouldn't have my degree or have the encouragement to pursue my dream of becoming a doctor.

Thank you for giving me the chance to be something better. ●

799 award recipients,  
valued at over \$2.4  
million in bursaries and  
scholarships, chose  
to study Health  
Programs

In 2015-16, *Indspire*  
awarded over \$12.2  
million in bursaries and  
scholarships

*This past year, your generous support enabled  
Indspire to support the educational dreams of  
3793 Indigenous students*



## **Interview with Dr. Cornelia (Nel )Wieman, Psychiatrist**

I am delighted to have this opportunity to write about mental health care in Canada and the special needs of Indigenous people as witnessed by my own experience as an Indigenous psychiatrist.

My story begins as an Indigenous girl whose adoptive parents had less than eight years of schooling. Always ambitious, as a young student, I told people I wanted to be a doctor. I was told that I likely would not be good at it. I had a keen interest in track and field and completed my Masters of Science in Biomechanics - Kinesiology. I then studied medicine, earned my M.D. degree and specialized in psychiatry. Peoples' life stories always fascinated me and I knew I could make a significant change in my communities by helping them to help themselves.

As a psychiatrist, I have visited many reserves and heard thousands of heartbreaking stories. Generational trauma is very real and many of our youth are struggling with self-esteem, addictions, their identities and managing life in general. Many do not graduate from high school.

Mental health research is improving and being conducted with rigorous guidelines. More students are enrolling in medicine, with seven Indigenous medical students starting next month at McMaster University, where I hold an academic appointment. With results from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, universities are getting more serious about culturally-safe training and healthcare, and creating Indigenous health studies curricula.

Canada's First Nation, Inuit and Métis people need to be cared for by fellow Indigenous people especially in the area of psychology and psychiatry. We understand one another at a profound and spiritual level. Trained professionals know that the therapist / client bond is what fosters trust when sharing very painful memories. As Indigenous people, we have similar stories; we have lost loved ones; we have been lost ourselves; and we have cried the same tears. Healthcare delivered by Indigenous people for Indigenous people is the most effective method of reconciling and building brighter futures for our youth, their

families, our communities and the whole of Canada.

With Indigenous youth being the fastest growing demographic in Canada today, our future doctors, nurses, psychiatrists and even politicians will come from this group. The biggest impediment to Indigenous education is lack of funding.

One by one, Indigenous people are rising above and creating new lives for themselves, for their families, and for the generations that will follow.

I was once told I would never be a doctor. There were people who helped me realize my dream to be where I am today. Your commitment to the future of Canada's Indigenous youth is truly inspiring and is helping today's Indigenous youth realize their dreams.



**Dr. Nel Wieman,**  
M.D., FRCPC

**Indspire is committed to transforming Indigenous education. And it's good for Canada. Please renew your support or join our monthly donor program. For more information, visit [indspire.ca/donate](https://indspire.ca/donate).**

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