



Indspire

Indigenous education,
Canada's future.

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

DONOR UPDATE

A message from Roberta Jamieson

This past November we hosted Indspire's fifth annual *National Gathering for Indigenous Education*, bringing together some 800 educators to share best practices in helping build brighter futures for Indigenous K-12 students both on-and off-reserve. Our conference theme this year – "Education and Reconciliation: Moving Forward Together" – was aligned with this important time in Canada's history since Confederation.

The passionate and dedicated educators that attend the *Gathering* – one of them featured in this publication – are on the frontlines of ensuring that First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth succeed in their classrooms, are encouraged to pursue a post-secondary education, and are ready for exciting careers as the future leaders of Canada.

I'm grateful to them for all their work in communities in every part of our country and to you as a donor for taking action in supporting Indspire and the programs that are having a positive impact on the education outcomes of Indigenous students.

Thank you, Merci,
Nya: weh, Miigwetch

Roberta Jamieson
President & CEO
Indspire





Innovative Mentor Takes the Helm to Steer Student Success

"I volunteer my time to lift others up and I learn too, as I'm a work-in-progress like most people."

Marilyn Spink is very active professionally – among many other distinctions, she's a lieutenant governor-appointed councilor to the Professional Engineers of Ontario, and contributes to several committees and task forces.

A dynamic engineer with a 30-year career, Marilyn Spink was interested in being paired with a female engineering student through Indspire's *Rivers to Success* mentorship program – and is helping an aspiring engineer from a remote First Nation reserve through a life-changing mentorship.

Marilyn discovered Indspire when she heard President and CEO Roberta Jamieson speak on a local radio program, and impressed with what she was hearing, decided to research Indspire further on social media. That's where she learned about the mentorship opportunities in the *Rivers to Success: Mentoring Indigenous Students* program, which pairs First Nations, Inuit and Métis students with mentors that help them stay in school and choose a career path.

Marilyn found it was very easy to get started: "I had an extra ticket to The Annual Claudette MacKay-Lassonde Women in Engineering Fall Forum, courtesy of McEwen Mining. This forum is a huge education and networking opportunity for young women engineering graduates. I was already pre-screened for the mentorship program and contacted Indspire to let them know I had this ticket so, let's match!" - and the relationship was launched.

Marilyn was immediately linked with Deanna Dobson, an Indspire-supported mining engineering student from Laurentian University. Deanna, who has 10 siblings, grew up in an isolated First Nations Community and actively volunteers with animal rescue organizations when she's not studying, reading or writing. She was thrilled to be matched with Marilyn and provided with the kind of opportunities that a lot of women, especially Indigenous women, are rarely given.

Marilyn is driven to be a role model to the next generation of engineers, particularly those making efforts to remove barriers for women and other under-

represented groups in her profession. She notes, "There are very few Indigenous engineers in Canada, and engineering is a non-traditional occupation for women." One of the first questions Deanna had for Marilyn was about some of the opportunities in mining and some challenges she may face in a male-dominated career. Marilyn sees the mentoring relationship as part of a much larger picture.

"If we really want to make change, then we must work together, and smarter, not harder. We need to leverage all talent. Data proves organizations that embrace true diversity, embedding it into the culture of the organization, result in innovations and better business performance."

Marilyn emphasizes an important distinction in her work; she's interested in more than diversity, she wants to ensure inclusion in the workplace.

"Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance. And that's where the action is and where all talent can fully contribute."

A metallurgical and materials engineer, Marilyn has a great deal of insight, energy and enthusiasm to pass on to her mentee Deanna. She also has experience in northern Ontario's pulp and paper industries, steelmaking

Marilyn Spink along with Deanna Dobson at The Annual Claudette MacKay-Lassonde Women in Engineering Fall Forum -- Deanna, who has already benefitted from her mentorship, noted: "My legacy? I want to be an individual who encourages and positively influences the people around me to grow and strive to be a successful and better version of themselves."



operations in both the US and Canada, and extensive experience executing large, complex mining and minerals projects around the world.

With her new mentee relationship established, her goal now is to champion and help facilitate Deanna's education and networking. Marilyn wants this to be "a relationship where I can directly help someone. I want my mentoring work to speak for itself. If I can help my mentee be happy, then I've done my job. But the mentee must drive the relationship, for success to happen."

Marilyn recognizes an important point: the mentee must get "what she truly needs from the mentor. The goal is actually not just to get opportunities, but rather to

manage them." Deanna's goal: "To gain more confidence creating relationships within my field and gain a different perspective on my professional development."

Marilyn Spink has heartfelt advice to someone thinking about joining the *Rivers to Success* mentorship program at Indspire.

"Being a mentor is a rewarding way to take something you are doing already and potentially have a big impact on Canada. Mentoring breaks down siloes. It increases equality, and connects you with someone you wouldn't normally connect with. And it is so important for young people – you can't dream to be what you don't see." 🌈

Tracie Léost Is Running for ReconciliACTION

"We are the generation that will pick up the broken pieces, we, the youth, will make the changes our people need, so it is time we come together."

Growing up in Winnipeg, Tracie Léost always had big plans. Now that she's been a torchbearer for the 2017 Canada Summer Games and addressed the nation at Parliament Hill, she's well on her way to being one of the biggest changemakers of her generation.

Tracie is the recipient of a 2018 Youth *Indspire Award*, and has received funding from Indspire for her degree in Social Work at the University of Regina. At only 19, she's accomplished a great deal: gracing the pages of *Vogue* as a stunning role model, she's also a star athlete with multiple medals. In 2015, she came into the spotlight when she ran 115km to raise awareness and funds for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Her journey was the inspiration for a music video, and the first step on her journey to "connect with youth so that we can come together to build a stronger future," says Ms. Léost, calling on her peers to take the journey with her. Celebrate Tracie at this year's *Indspire Awards*!



photo credit: John Woods

An accomplished athlete, activist and advocate, Tracie's journey takes her from the race track to the halls of Parliament Hill in search of social justice

Indspire Student Wins Prestigious Art Award



Audie Murray will make you see dirty laundry like never before

"I use art practices that still hold roots to our culture and passed down understanding of these art forms, like beading, hair tufting, ceremonial dances and basket weaving."

Audie Murray joins the growing list of Indspire Alumni who are garnering national attention: she's a recipient of funding for her post-secondary education through Indspire's *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries and Scholarship Awards* program, and she's definitely doing her part to make the future brighter on the Canadian arts scene.

Audie's the Saskatchewan winner of BMO 1st Art! 2017, awarded for "Pair of Socks", a piece that juxtaposes the practicality of basic socks and the beauty of Métis-style bead work in the most unexpected place – on the soles of a stained pair of sports socks.

For Audie, financial awards from Indspire were made possible by several funders and notably the generous support of the Linda Joyce Ganly Scholarship. A successful Indspire bursary applicant in 2012 and 2013, Audie started with a Bachelor of Education from the University of Regina before moving to BC to pursue her artistic talents. Keep an eye on this rising star; in photography, sculpture, murals and tattoos, Ms. Murray's provocative art is sure to become a mainstay at galleries and exhibitions across Canada.



Insightful Canadian Makes a Moving Tribute in Memory of Her Parents

“I want to make a difference in this world, and I know that education equips people to make positive, lasting changes for themselves and the world we live in.”

On-going learning is a top priority for Heather Waldie, a retired teacher motivated to play a role in Canada’s reconciliation: “Indspire gives hope and means to many Indigenous students who want nothing more than to realize their dreams.”

Heather Waldie’s relationship with Indspire began with an unexpected letter in the mail. “I opened it up and within a few moments, the reality of Indigenous education struck a chord with me.” She knew about the history of residential schools, having taught about it in both elementary and junior high school, and realized she was being offered a wonderful opportunity to support Indigenous students. Heather knew that Indspire was right on target, “I decided to learn more about this part of Canadian history, and became a monthly donor right away.”

Motivated by this new focus, “I went to hear Roberta Jamieson speak at the University of Alberta. That day, I also had the chance to hear the story of a young woman who had received scholarship support, and about how this help changed her life.” Heather was moved by the powerful drumming, the presentation of a beautiful quilt by Alberta’s own distinguished Muriel Stanley, and the eloquence of Roberta Jamieson as she shared some of her own journey and the history of Indspire.

“Since my 20’s I’ve had direct experiences of the power of education around the world. These experiences shaped me and my understanding of how vital access to education is – education equips young people with strong tools to tell their stories. Education is community. Education is healing.”

Heather recognizes education as an opening of doors to so many things, “Education teaches us to open our hearts! We learn about what has gone before and how we can use that to create a better world where fairness, justice, and compassion are the norm. Where we have a world in which everyone thrives.”

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission held meetings in Edmonton, a motivated Heather Waldie decided to go and bring along two of her grandchildren, “I wanted them to remember being part of this momentous event and to be able to recall it when they were older. I wanted them to remember that they had eaten cupcakes with hundreds of others to mark Indigenous birthdays that had never been celebrated while those students lived in residential schools.”

Based on her lifelong experience, she says, “As a teacher, I know that education can provide an understanding of the past, but you can’t be stuck there – it’s necessary to move forward and Indspire really does this. It is only with an understanding of where you came from that you can appreciate what is possible, and to move toward healing.” In fact, Heather states, “I believe that true compassion can only be created by understanding what has gone before. I am very interested in the principles of reconciliation and healing, but I realize this is not going to be an easy process. That is why Indspire’s positive focus on education and empowering young people made perfect sense to me.”

“I was looking for an opportunity to honor my late parents, I knew that it was through Indspire that I could blend my two goals of supporting others and honouring my parents by contributing to the important work that Indspire does.”

Heather Waldie believes her investment in scholarships makes it possible for Indspire to address long-term, sustainable solutions. “Being a woman, I also wanted to support the education of women and girls. >

Beyond monthly donations, Heather also made two generous gifts in honour of her late father, Bob, and mother, Dorothy, who was also a teacher.



My mother taught me the importance of independence and I know that very often, empowered women are also the heads of families.”

On top of all this, there is an unexpected benefit in being involved with Indspire.

“I get great satisfaction from this relationship because I also want to be a learner in the process. I’m excited about my own learning, and to hear about the depth and breadth of the relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and about our future together.”

The Voices of a New Generation are Calling for ReconciliACTION

“Youth from all nations need to be ready to step into leadership roles so we can work towards the world of harmony and peace that our Elders, prophecies, and legends talk about.” - Gabrielle Fayant

A team of young advocates has been assembled to lead a high-profile national project for Indigenous youth, and there are a few familiar members of the Indspire family taking part!

Maatalii Okalik (*Indspire Award* Recipient in 2017, Youth-Inuit) and Gabrielle Fayant (*Indspire Award* Recipient in 2015, Youth-Métis), along with André Bear, were chosen by Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, for an important job: to create the Indigenous Youth Voices initiative. Young people need to be involved in deciding on the most effective ways to disperse multi-year funding to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action 66 ‘establishing a national network to share information and best practices’. Indspire’s Youth Laureates will help do just that.

These youth leaders will gather input from Indigenous youth to find ways to engage and empower young people, to help create programs and activities with community organizations. The three leaders are aided by an administrative crew featuring two more Indspire-supported young professionals. Keep in touch to learn how this project impacts Indigenous youth across Canada! To learn more, please visit www.indigenouslyouthvoices.com



Maatalii Okalik



Gabrielle Fayant

Indigenous Youth Voices initiative puts the future of Canada’s students in the capable, compassionate hands of Indspire’s Youth Laureates

From Eabametoong First Nation to Downtown Toronto in Search of Success



Indigenizing City Hall in the nation’s most populous city: a big task for a small-town student like Craig Waboose

“I hope I can be an inspiration for those looking to go into the legal field. Whenever I can, I’ll try providing any legal advice to whomever may need it. Afterwards, I want to go into politics, whether it’s provincial or federal.”

So many students who’ve been supported by Indspire are going on to do incredible things! Craig Waboose is one more to add to our list of top achievers; he recently earned an internship at Toronto City Hall, a perfect fit for the 29-year-old from Eabametoong First Nation, north of Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Craig was awarded an Indspire bursary in 2016, and after completing his Paralegal Diploma, continues to pursue his studies in Justice. Like many other Indigenous students, he’s overcome a lot of challenges: financial hardship, homelessness, unemployment, and the instability of moving from a small town to a big city, are just a few of the hurdles he’s jumped.

Craig’s six-month gig in Toronto gave him access to the inner-workings of municipal politics, while providing him an opportunity to share his Indigenous culture with co-workers. Craig’s ultimate goal is to become a criminal or constitutional lawyer; he’s one to watch – stay tuned for all the great things he has yet to accomplish!



Champion Educator Changes Perceptions and Challenges Colonial Learning

“These young people are going to be tomorrow’s teachers, leaders and lawyers. It is our job to help them find opportunity and hope. The landscape is about to change.”

Dr. Gordon Martell is Superintendent of Learning Services with the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School District, as well as an adjunct professor in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan, and is a member of the Waterhen Lake Cree First Nation in Treaty Six Territory.

Dr. Gordon Martell has been advising and advocating for communities in the development of on-reserve First Nations education systems for 30 years and counting.

He says, “As a First Nations education leader, I followed Indspire closely for many years, and referred many people to them for funding opportunities, mentorship, and program support. Not just young students, but staff and community members as well.”

Gordon says Indspire has become an essential resource for the community.

“To start with, Indspire’s website enables greater opportunities to connect. As well, I attend the growing *National Gathering* conferences for inspiration. We use a lot of the concepts from *National Gatherings*, and we put them into practice every day; thoughts on how to Indigenize the curriculum, how to engage the larger community and how to make good connections with our young students. Indspire is very good at cross-pollinating ideas.”

In addition, Dr. Martell is grateful for the help of Indspire’s highly successful *Nurturing Capacity: Documenting Community Success* program, a powerful initiative that helps schools and communities to improve educational outcomes.

“Support from the *Nurturing Capacity* program allows us access to proven ideas happening elsewhere – new models and new sharing opportunities. We do better together. I know we have more to learn than we have to teach.”

Three innovative schools in Saskatoon received assistance from *Nurturing Capacity*. With a clear vote of confidence, each also later won the Premier’s Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education. The schools were St. Mary’s Wellness and Education Centre, winning in 2008; Oskāyak High School, winning in 2014; and St. Frances Cree Bilingual School, winning in 2017.

“St Mary’s Wellness and Education Centre was the first project and the focus was on reducing the astronomical health outcome disparity among our students. We had to first address the experience of poverty as an integral part of school life. Then, Oskāyak High School was next in 2014. This project focused on strong educational results that could be clearly measured.”

Today, the St. Frances Cree Bilingual School is the largest Indigenous-led initiative of its kind in the province, and likely in Canada. He continues, “Indspire helped get our feet underneath us in terms of language and now we can serve over 650 First Nations and Métis students onsite.”

Dr. Martell emphasizes the big picture thinking of this school: “We are interested in the ‘whole child’ and we focus on final marks and graduation rates as measurements. Our results also include positive self-image and community image. For us, the landscape of success means giving back by keeping traditional teachings, traditional languages, and the visions and values of the First Nations community alive. This is our robust response to calls to action. This is our contribution to Truth and Reconciliation.” ➤

Award-Winning Educator is Optimistic for the Future

Along the way, Dr. Gordon Martell has won many prestigious community and professional awards, as well as receiving Indspire's *Guiding the Journey: Indigenous Educator of the Year* award.

When asked about the future of education and what it means to have support for Indigenous students from all over Canada, Dr. Martell is very

optimistic about the wide range of possibilities for the future.

"The scope of the challenge is great in terms of education. Yet, I have never been more encouraged in terms of what we can accomplish." 🌈

There's No Journey Too Difficult for Theland Kicknosway, 2018 Indspire Award Recipient for Culture, Heritage & Spirituality

"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."

At just fourteen years old, Theland Kicknosway is one of the youngest students to ever receive an award for such a lengthy list of achievements, in such a short time. When he was in grade three, he wrote a letter to his school explaining why an annual pow wow would be a great learning opportunity for all the students AND teachers. In 2017, Century Public School celebrated its fourth annual pow wow!

Theland is renowned for being much more than a youth leader and activist: he's also a singer, drummer and dancer; in 2015, he led Justin Trudeau and his cabinet into Rideau Hall for their swearing in ceremony! Theland's goal is to spread awareness about Indigenous issues across Canada, primarily Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Since he turned eleven years old, he's made an annual 130km run from Ottawa to Kitigan Zibi to raise awareness and garner support for the children dealing with the loss of important women in their lives. A compassionate, motivated young man like Theland reminds us all that we can do more to make Canada an inclusive, exemplary nation of strong minds and big hearts.



From Walpole Island Bkejwanong Territory to Rideau Hall, Theland goes the distance to help bring Indigenous issues into the spotlight

Donate With Confidence

Indspire has been named a Top 10 Impact Charity for 2017 by Charity Intelligence, and the Financial Post has named Indspire as one of the most trusted and accountable charities in Canada for 2017.

To learn more, please go to indspire.ca and click on the 'Donate with Confidence' button!



**Indspire
awards**
Celebrating Indigenous Achievement



Featuring live performances from some of the biggest names in Indigenous entertainment, the 2018 *Indspire Awards* being held in Winnipeg on March 23 are a celebration of culture showcasing the diversity and significant contributions of Indigenous achievers.

Celebrate the *Indspire Awards* 25th Anniversary

Did You Know?

- After 25 years, the *Indspire Awards* have honoured 350 outstanding First Nations, Inuit, and Métis recipients.
- This year's 13 recipients include an extraordinary list of some of Canada's most accomplished people.
- The *Indspire Awards* promote self-esteem, pride and outstanding role models for Indigenous youth, supported by Presenting Corporate Sponsor, TD Bank.
- The *Awards* ceremony will be broadcast nationally on APTN and CBC in June.
- The three Youth recipients include the first First Nations woman to become both Miss Canada in 2010, and be crowned Mrs. Universe; the first Inuk cardiac surgery resident; and a Métis woman who ran 115 km in four days to raise money and awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

"The 2018 *Indspire Awards* are the highest honour bestowed on Indigenous people, marking the significant contributions of our people in Canada. We not only recognize the recipients' individual successes, their discipline, drive and determination to set high standards and accomplish their goals, but also to share and celebrate, the impact of their stories and journeys with all Canadians. We also celebrate the future, through our three youth recipients, each of whom serves as a role model, promoting self-esteem and pride for the Indigenous community at large and providing outstanding role models for Indigenous youth across the country."

— *Roberta L. Jamieson, President and CEO of Indspire and Executive Producer of the Indspire Awards*

Hope you can join us!

2018 *Indspire Awards* Ceremony will be held in Winnipeg on Friday March 23, 2018

— for more information, visit indspire.ca/indspire-awards

If you can't be there in person, you'll be able to tune in to APTN and CBC in June to watch the national broadcast!



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