



Indspire

Indigenous education, | L'éducation des autochtones.
Canada's future. | L'avenir du Canada.

INSPIRING CHANGE

HELPING STUDENTS REALIZE THEIR DREAMS

Fall 2021

A message from Mike DeGagné

The start of a new school year always brings great excitement for students and teachers alike. This year, I know many are even more excited to be back in person with their peers and colleagues and we've heard from students what it means to them to hopefully be on the other side of the COVID pandemic.

The last year and a half has been a challenging time for students, but they haven't lost hope and commitment. This August we saw more than 3770 applications after the first of three deadlines and funding is on the way to students thanks to generous donors like you.

In this newsletter, you will read about incredible students like Angeline Brascoupé and Peter McKitrick, working hard to get an education. You will also see where Indspire funded students live across Canada and have an opportunity to watch the broadcast of the *Indspire Awards* online.

I wanted to include a special note about the outpouring of support Indspire has seen from Canadians from coast to coast this year.

As the sites of many former residential schools continue to be searched, please know that we stand with these communities and are grateful that so many Canadians are looking for opportunities to learn more about this history and taking action for a more positive future. Education is the key to a brighter future and with your support today's students can thrive.

Wishing you a wonderful Fall hopefully filled with reconnection to your family and friends.

Sincerely,

Mike DeGagné
President & CEO





Resilience and Optimism for the Future

Justin Singer-Delorme,
Métis, Winnipeg, MB

“I first found out about Indspire as I worked to understand my Métis roots, and had the desire to get my status card. At the time, I finished my undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Manitoba,” Justin says.

While working full-time for Safeway, Justin wanted to do more for himself and for the community. He continues thoughtfully, “I looked for a way to give back to people and to help. My parents had a tumultuous marriage that ended when I was young. As a result, I never grew up knowing any of my father's side of the family, the Metis side. Or of the impact of them being sent to residential schools. My challenge is to acknowledge that there are some situations that I will still find difficult, due to my childhood trauma.”

It was with this insight that he decided his future direction, “that’s when I knew I was looking to go back to school, train at the University of Manitoba and become a therapist with double degrees in psychology and social work.”

Justin wants to help clients in distress and help them learn to thrive, “I need this career path because I know that I can make a difference in people's lives through counselling and in the field of social work. This training will help me to grow by making me look at how I also need help, in the ways that I intend to help others. This means that I am seeing a therapist now, so that I can practice what I intend to preach to others; that we should all go see a therapist as we should all go see medical doctors from time-to-time.”

Once the decision was made to become a social worker and therapist, the first barrier of finances seemed daunting, “with a wife and young daughter to support, my dream seemed impossible,” he says.

When I received help from Indspire, my wife and I were so happy. There are so many compounding pressures in life – and Indspire helped to alleviate them. My worry went down, and as a result my grades went up. My ability to focus went up, and the support meant that a huge mental weight was lifted.”

He continues. “Donor support from Indspire means everything. For example, my wife is a nurse and this help also meant that she could be at home more to care for our daughter. And we didn’t have to use daycare.”

Justin has found that “the ongoing magic of Indspire is the power of helping one student – but also, making an impact on the lives of many thousands of Canadians.”

“Why is education so important? It has a positive domino effect. You are creating a positive cycle that can help so many others. The more education Indigenous students have, the more we can ask of life. Your gifts are so much appreciated. And it makes it possible for me to one day be in a position to give back to the community.”

Justin reminds us that, “donors need to know how much it means to the student to receive help from Indspire. It means the difference between being accepted into a program, or not. I’m a good example, and I can now prove what I am truly capable of doing.” •

The Power of a Bold Idea

Nathalie Gagnon, Anishinabeg, Ottawa, ON

Johanne Ranger, Ottawa, ON



Nathalie Gagnon

"We started a tangible, practical action toward reconciliation. It's a straightforward, excellent idea, and it really works!" says an enthusiastic Nathalie Gagnon. She's talking about the new Indigenous Women's Leadership Scholarship.

In 2021, 100+ professional women who wanted to actively contribute to the advancement of reconciliation agreed to donate \$100 each, annually.

The new scholarship is for a First Nation, Inuit or Métis woman. It's a renewable scholarship of \$10,000 per year for up to four years. In addition, Nathalie Gagnon says that:

"The recipient gets something even more valuable than the money. They can also count on a mentoring network of 100+ supportive and committed professional women! It can be very lonely and isolating for Indigenous students in the educational system. Our willing mentors will be on the student's side and dedicated to ensure educational and professional success."

She continues, "the donors are from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. They are women who just want to help. When we sent out the invitation to our networks, we emphasized reconciliation and the response just blew up!" Scholarship co-founder and donor Johanne Ranger adds, "We were just overwhelmed by the enthusiastic and immediate support. It took only 24 hours to register over 100 women donors!"

Nathalie points out that, "Donors knew this was a good thing because so many people knew of the reputation of Indspire."

"What changes in the world with this scholarship? Everything! I am Indigenous and was part of the '60's Scoop' – the mass removal of children from their

families. I later made my own way through university. But I always wanted to help the next generation of young women to succeed, to find a way to help remove the financial burden and let the recipient focus on her studies. If you put more success in the way of the person, there is no stopping them."



Johanne Ranger

Nathalie continues, "I say to donors, just say yes! Ask yourself, what is important to you? Is education important? Then help one person because it helps the entire community. You can help someone that other women will look up to, and this is how you start to make a big difference."

Why does Johanne contribute? She says "there is a deep need for Indigenous people to move up, to influence others, to make change all across Canada. Women in particular have different challenges – they may be single mothers, or have more social issues. Once they are accepted into university, we want to be there to help."

Johanne says, "to me, every little bit is vital and counts. I wanted to help anyway I could. Indspire was the perfect place to get started, and they helped us to set things up. Pooling resources means it is easy to give and we can meet our goal. When you donate to Indspire, you really will save the world. You are making something very big happen. Just commit and it starts to happen immediately." •



Monthly Change Maker

Deb Thomas
New Westminister, BC

Deb Thomas has been donating as a monthly Change Maker for four years and we connected with her recently to ask about why a monthly donation to Indspire matters to her.

1. Why is giving to Indspire important to you?

I believe strongly that Indigenous youth are vital to the future of Canada. Supporting educational opportunities for those Indigenous youth that allows them to pursue the careers that interest them can bring back those skills to their communities and, just as importantly, can influence positively the directions of the professions they occupy.

2. Why do you choose to give monthly instead of making one-time gifts throughout the year?

I am retired and on a fixed income so this enables me to spread the cost over the year, month by month. I do also give the occasional one-time gift when finances permit.

3. If your friend or family member were thinking about giving to Indspire on a monthly basis, what would you say to them about Indspire and your experience giving monthly?

I would talk about the value that I see in its goals as expressed in question one. And note that I am kept well-informed on its activities - through testimonials, annual reports, the newsletter, etc.

4. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your experience with Indspire?

I have been fortunate to have privilege in my life because of my race, my identity as an American-Canadian settler, and the support of ideas and education in my family, and feel privileged and proud to enable opportunities for Indigenous youth and to be part of the donor family of Indspire. I would also like to add that, in the light of the horrific discovery of many unmarked graves of children who had been forced to attend residential schools, Indspire's efforts to support healthy educational environments for Indigenous students and real choices for Indigenous youth stand as a strong positive response to that tragedy.

We are so grateful for monthly Change Makers' like Deb!

Become a monthly Change Maker to Indspire and support Indigenous students all year long:
<https://indspire.ca/ways-to-give/why-give-monthly/> •

**change
makers**

Creating a Positive Future for the Inuit Community

Peter Allan ᐅᐅ McKitrick
Coral Harbour, NU



Peter Allan McKitrick is an Inuk living in Ontario and in the final year of his Master of Education degree at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay. He wants to return north to develop new curriculum for Nunavut students – with a goal to promote higher education to support the northern lifestyle.

His mission of kindness and concern towards the community is built on a strong foundation of belief in human potential. “This is the right moment in history, Peter says, “we are in a transition period between colonialism, today, and an amazing future age of technology.”

Peter says that “to receive donor support through Indspire’s *Building Brighter Futures* program allows me to live away from home and focus on my studies without having to find work, especially during this pandemic. As well, it’s a big inspiration to others in the territory to know that they can go away for school and come back home to support their communities.”

His life is grounded in the fact that, “most of my family has grown up in the traditional way on the land, and they are now the generation to transition to the modern Inuit lifestyle. I was deemed a gifted child. We moved south to Thunder Bay so that I could attend a southern high school. And from there, to go on to university. I did well, and eventually completed an honours degree in mathematics.”

What led Peter to his vision of giving back to the community? “It was a terrible struggle to adjust to southern life. I switched to education for my masters, to develop northern education so that the Inuit would not have to leave their hometowns so young for a quality education. I missed a lot of time on the land, and a lot of time with members of my family that have since passed.”

He continues, “my mother was a residential school survivor. Her story was hard, and it was hard for my brother and I to grow up around her trauma. I have lost many family members to suicide. They call it ‘Post Traumatic Stress Disorder’ in the south. I have had to grow to be mentally strong where I can, and mentally clever where I can’t be strong.”

When Peter returns north to Coral Harbour to teach Indigenous education, he will bring fresh skills to help achieve his dreams. “I hope to give an Inuit perspective and voice and, ensure that our lands and people are not exploited. I will make it easier for Inuit to access quality education in their hometowns.”

“I want to reach students and help them learn Indigenous history. I hope to give the Inuit a sense of purpose and pride so that we don’t lose so many to suicide.”

Peter says, “I want Indspire donors to know that they help to balance the scales for Indigenous students. By that I mean that when you can give to help other people, you make so many new opportunities. To go to school is such a big barrier for so many.”

Peter concludes, “As a supporter, you make things possible and we are so grateful that you give. Indigenous students need your help to adapt. We need new knowledge to bring back to our communities. And we need to apply these new skills to move forward, so that we can all do well in the future.” •

The Drive to Achieve Success

Angeline Brascoupé,
Kitigan Zibi and Batchewana First Nation



Angeline Brascoupé says simply that “to cook keeps me connected to my culture.” Yet this extraordinary young woman has catapulted herself far beyond this short statement.

She recently graduated with honours in the Culinary Management diploma program at George Brown College in Toronto. Today, she is in the final semester in the Culinary Management Degree program, also at George Brown. Angeline’s goal is ambitious:

“I aspire to be the first Indigenous woman Master Chef of Canada, the highest culinary degree to ever achieve.”

How did her drive start? She says, “as an Indigenous woman, I have made it my lifetime goal to be a role model for the younger Indigenous youth. I grew up within a traditional household where my family taught me all I know about being a strong, resilient Indigenous woman.”

The impact of Indspire funding was clear for Angeline, “Receiving donor support from the *Building Brighter Futures* program meant so much and encouraged me to maintain a high GPA throughout my program.”

“I want to tell donors and potential donors that all the difference in the world is made when Indigenous excellence is achieved. You are supporting our future. We are able to thrive and succeed with our academic studies.”

She continues, “my passion for culinary has also helped me with my medical challenges. I always believed that during a hard time in my life - that I would amount to

nothing. It was during the late hours of the night that I found that cooking calmed my anxiety disorder. I was able to focus on my passion over my fears, and I grew strong to overcome my obstacles.”

She says, “to cook helps me fight to be someone, to strive for higher education and make my family proud. As a young aspiring Indigenous chef, I always reflect on the women in my life who cooked before me, like my grandmother who was a chef in New York. She adds:

“Graduating with honours within the degree program means I that can be a role model for my Indigenous community and show that anything is possible.”

This work is intense, and constant 12–13-hour days are normal in the industry. Despite hardship, Angeline says, “I try to think from a positive mind frame when enduring challenges. My past has led me to push myself mentally, emotionally and physically to obtain a higher education for myself. I do not let anxiety and panic disorder define me or break me down. In those moments of fear and pain, I push myself to fight for my ultimate goal.”

In addition to her full schedule of work and study, Angeline volunteers her skills at the Native Women’s Resource Center of Toronto. She does it to, “give back to the Indigenous community, specifically Indigenous women. The Centre is a safe space for women who may experience domestic abuse, homelessness, who have a low income, or expecting mothers. I give my culinary knowledge to the kitchen staff and office staff, and to clients who wish to learn more about cooking.”

She continues, “I give an extra hand during feast ceremonies. During these times, I reflect on myself as an Indigenous woman giving back, and on my traditional teachings.”

Angeline is also happy to share a family recipe for meat pie, as a way to say thank you for all of your support. •

Wild Game Meat Pie Filling

Preparation Time: 10 minutes Cooking Time: 1-1 ½ hours

Unit of Measure	Ingredient/Specification	Count
500 g	Ground beef	2 cups
400 g	Ground deer or moose meat	1.69 cups
2 pc	Onions, chopped	2 medium onions
500 ml	Celery, chopped	2 cups
125 g	Flour	½ cup
500 ml	Water, Cold	2 cups
To Taste	Salt and Pepper	
As Desired	Oil, for sauteing vegetables.	

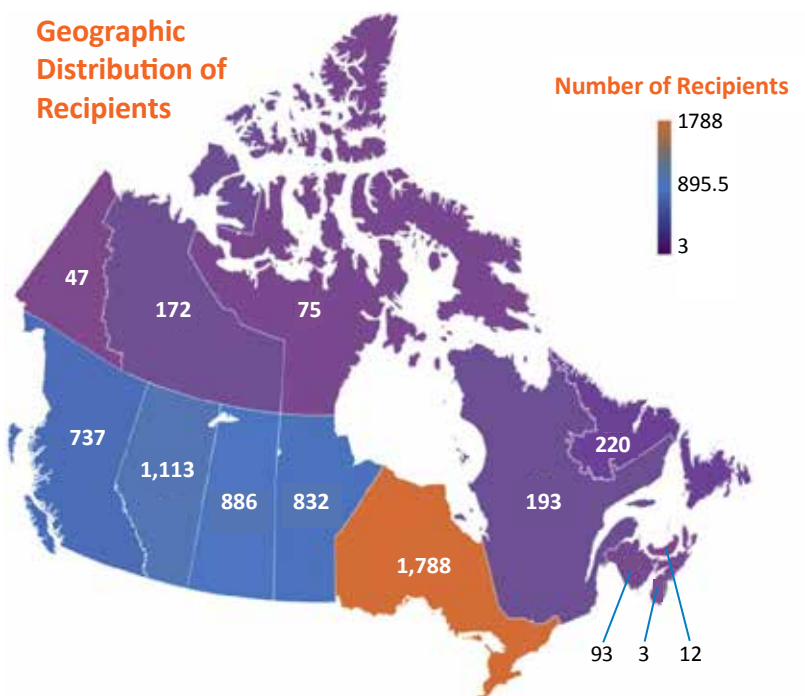
Preparation:

ml = milliliters g = grams pc – pieces L = Liters

1. Pre-Heat oven to 400f (204c).
2. In a pot, mix and season meat. Reserve for searing.
3. Chop/dice vegetables and sauté until translucent. Feel free to add in a few sprigs of herbs such as thyme (remove once vegetables are cooked).
4. On medium heat, sear seasoned meat until fully cooked, add in the cooked vegetables.
5. In a bowl, whisk cold water and flour until a thick paste. Mix in with the meat pie filling.
6. Continue to cook for 5-10 minutes. Add extra water as needed.
7. Allow the mixture to cool and fill the pastry lined pie plates.
8. Place into the oven and allow to bake for 1-1 ½ hours or until golden brown.
9. Brush milk or egg yolks on the crust if desired for an extra crispy/flakey pie.
10. Recommended to serve with mashed potatoes, gravy and side vegetables such as broccoli, green beans, etc.
11. Enjoy!

Geographic Distribution of Recipients

Number of Recipients



Where Indspire students live across Canada

Here you can see a breakdown of where students who have been supported by Indspire live across Canada. More than 6240 bursaries, scholarships and awards were funded which accounted for almost \$20 million dollars! The future impact of this can be hard to imagine and is only possible thanks to the generous support of donors like you – thank you.

Watch the *Indspire Awards* broadcast online

The *Indspire Awards* represents the highest honour the Indigenous community bestows upon its own people. After 28 years, the *Indspire Awards* have honoured 384 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals who demonstrate outstanding achievement. The show is a nationally broadcast celebration of culture showcasing the diversity of Indigenous peoples in Canada including performances by Canada's biggest names in Indigenous entertainment.

Twelve outstanding Indigenous achievers from a diverse list of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities were honoured during a special broadcast which you can watch on our website: <https://indspire.ca/events/indspire-awards/>



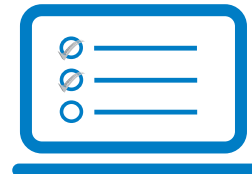
Aeroplan points a HUGE success thanks to donors like you!

During National Indigenous history month this past June, we partnered with Aeroplan on a points matching campaign with the hopes of raising one million Aeroplan points. Thanks to generous Indspire donors, we raised 2.8 million points – truly incredible! Your donated Aeroplan points will be used to help students travel to Indspire events like *Soaring: Indigenous Youth Empowerment Gathering*, connect students with their *Rivers to Success* mentors, and to help students travel home when family emergencies arise. Aeroplan points can be donated all year long by visiting: <https://indspire.ca/ways-to-give/donate-airline-or-hotel-points/>



Thank you for your help with Indspire's donor survey!

This May, we conducted a comprehensive donor survey, as we always want to make sure we are listening to you - our wonderful donor. We received almost 2000 responses and here's what we've learned about Indspire donors so far:



- Many donors give because they value education and the difference this makes in the lives of Indigenous students.
- Donors love hearing about the impact of their gifts through student stories and updates.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this survey!