

## January 2023

Our Grade 6 classes started back strong after the break and learned about National Ribbon Skirt Day which will be celebrated on January 4th each year. The process of positive social change through action aimed at reconciliation was hopeful. We also related learnings to an example of the introduction, debate and passing of a bill in Social Studies. Students were invited to create their own designs and learned about how Isabella Kulak a student from Saskatchewan inspired a movement of support across Canada. They also reflected on the importance of ribbon skirts culturally and how it is connected to identity and individuality.

At SouthPointe School we had our first smudging teachings with cultural advisor, Mrs. Leaha Atcheynum, January 12th. Thank you to all the families for returning the permission form or permission click and for understanding any hiccups. I have formally received the teachings from Elder Joyce Beaver after years of personal practice. I am so excited to offer this more often as part of a student club or when requested for indigenous students.

We have been focusing on Wisdom this month, learning from the Beaver to strengthen our knowledge of the 7 Grandfather Teachings. The gifts we share are unique and individual. We help our community by working together, respecting the talents of those around us. Please let me know if you have art, or talents you would like to share, or your child would like to share with our community and anyway I can help.

On a personal note, I completed my first pair of mukluks with the guidance of Elder Joyce Beaver! My journey to reclaim identity through art, language and cultural teachings has given me new window into wisdom. I look forward to contributing this wisdom to help build a strong community at SouthPointe School.

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## Upcoming Events and Important Dates

**ASBA Honouring Spirit: Indigenous Student Awards | Deadline: Feb. 3, 2023**

Submissions are now open for the 2023 *Honouring Spirit: Indigenous Student Awards!* [Nomination packages](#) in both English and French are available online. The deadline for nominations is **Feb. 3, 2023**. Hosted by the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), these

awards celebrate exceptional First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, nominated by members of their education communities, based on their exemplary leadership, courage and commitment to their cultures and educational paths. Last year, ASBA received over 200 unique nomination letters and submissions from across the province. Students may be nominated by other students, teachers, principals, superintendents, education directors, trustees, school staff, Elders or a member of the education community. [Watch past student recipients speak about why these awards are so special.](#)

If you're interested in having your child nominated, connect with your school's administration or lead teacher to begin the process.

### **Family Gatherings | February, April and June**

The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team will be hosting family gatherings again, but we'll be in person this year. Gatherings are a time in the evening when we can meet together to share, learn and connect. All family members are welcome and dinner will be provided at all gatherings. More details and registration will be shared with families closer to each event, but for planning purposes, the dates are as follows:

- **Thursday, February 16** from 6 to 8 p.m.
  - Explore the Indigenous Peoples' Giant Floor Map (hosted at James Mowat Elementary, Fort Saskatchewan)
- **Thursday, April 20** from 6 to 8 p.m.
  - Art with Métis knowledge holder Connie Kuhlavy (hosted at EIPS Central Services, Sherwood Park)
- **Thursday, June 8** from 6 to 8 p.m.
  - Land-based Learning (hosted at EIPS Central Services land-based learning space, Sherwood Park)

### **Cultural Programs | Late Winter and Spring**

The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team is busy working with Elders and knowledge holders to plan a variety of cultural learning experiences for students and families. More details will be shared as plans are finalized, but know there are many exciting opportunities coming soon!

## **Direct Student Support**

**Study Help for Métis students** Rupertsland Institute has secured access to Alberta ExamBank for K-12 Métis students to test their understanding through online practice. Métis students can sign up for the [RECC Room](#) to find the login for their MNA Region. Questions? Contact [education@rupertsland.org](mailto:education@rupertsland.org).

**Is your child in Grade 12 and looking to move on to post-secondary education?** There are a [variety of scholarships, bursaries and grants](#) available to First Nations, Métis and Inuit

students to attend trade school, college or university. Talk to your child's lead teacher for more information or support in filling out applications.

### **Métis Nation of Alberta Outstanding Youth Award | Deadline: Jan. 30, 2023**

Do you know an outstanding Métis youth in your community who you'd like to nominate for the 2023 Outstanding Métis Youth Award? [Fill out the submission form](#) by January 30. The nominee must be between the ages of 12-29 and must be a citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta. For more information, email [youth@metis.org](mailto:youth@metis.org).

### **Verna J Kirkness Scholarship | Deadline: Jan. 31, 2023**

First Nations, Métis and Inuit grades 11 and 12 students can apply for this year's VJKF Program Scholarship to attend a Canadian university for a week in May. Program participants will learn from university mentors and take part in STEM research.

Benefits of applying:

- Hands-on science experience in a university laboratory.
- Meet Indigenous students from across Canada.
- Learn more about Indigenous cultures and see what supports are available to you.
- Student grades are not a factor in being accepted.
- All program and travel expenses are covered by the Foundation thanks to sponsors and donors.
- Graduates of the VJKF program are eligible to apply for VJKF university scholarships

To apply online:

1. Visit [www.vernajkirkness.org](http://www.vernajkirkness.org).
2. Hover over the "Apply Now" tab.
3. Click on "2023 VJKF Program (In-Person)."
4. At the bottom of the "2023 VJKF Program (In-Person)" page, students can enter their email address and click "Next" to access the online application. The application can be completed and submitted directly online or completed and then printed to email or mail to the Foundation.
5. What's needed to apply:
  - a. Completed parental consent form.
  - b. Personal reference from a teacher.
  - c. Essay simply outlining why you want to attend (50-400 words).
  - d. The attachments—essay, references, parental/guardian consent—can be emailed to [ProgramManager@vjkf.org](mailto:ProgramManager@vjkf.org) or attached to the online application.

To apply using the print application:

1. Visit [www.vernajkirkness.org](http://www.vernajkirkness.org).
2. Hover over the "Apply Now" tab.
3. Click on "2023 VJKF Program (In-Person)."
4. Download the full application package

5. Print and complete the application, then email the application, references, parental consent and essay to [ProgramManager@vjkf.org](mailto:ProgramManager@vjkf.org).

**Student grades are not a factor in being accepted!**

## Resources of Interest

### Beautiful Michif Album

Métis singer/songwriter/actress Andrea Menard recently released her latest album, *Anskoonamakew lii Shansoon*, meaning Giveaway Songs. The collection of 10 songs are sung in and translated into the different languages and dialects of Michif people and are a way for Andrea to help share and preserve the Michif language. The songs can be streamed from a variety of platforms. A short video, the album and the lyric sheets are available on [her website](#). Did you know: EIPS teacher Shelly Grauman's daughter, Tai Amy Grauman, is a Métis playwright, and a song from one of her plays is included in the collection? Amazing talent!

### At-home Supports for Métis Youth and Families

Are you a citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)? The MNA Children and Family Services team offers a [variety of supports, programs and resources](#) at no cost to citizens.

### Opportunity for Youth in the Fort Saskatchewan Area

The Indigenous Society of Fort Saskatchewan is offering powwow teaching for youth in the community.

**Wednesdays, Jan. 25 to June 14, 2023**

6 to 7:30 p.m.

No classes March 29 or May 10

Location: TBD

Spaces are available for 25 girls and 25 boys. There will be a performance during the MMIWG2S Gathering at Legacy Park on May 5. Register by emailing [isfortsask@yahoo.com](mailto:isfortsask@yahoo.com).

### Winter Land Learning at Métis Crossing

Whether you and your kids are outdoor enthusiasts or like to keep busy and warm indoors, one thing is true, Metis Crossing has it all. Snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, skating rink and so much more! Enjoy our signature, locally sourced barista coffee at the Bistro in the Lodge or indulge in Métis-inspired lunches at the Cultural Gathering Centre. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 780-656-2229 or visit [metiscrossing.com](http://metiscrossing.com).

### U of A First Peoples' House Annual Round Dance | January 28

The University of Alberta and First Peoples' House will host their annual Round Dance to honour grads on January 28.

**Saturday, January 28**

University of Alberta Main Gym, Van Vliet Complex

Doors open: 4 p.m.

Round Dance: 5 to 11 p.m.

[Event poster](#)

The event will be hosted by MCs Cornell Tootoosis and Adrian Lachance and feature stickmen Lyle Tootoosis and Colin Raine and firekeeper Kyson Morin. Parking is available at the Education or Stadium parkade for \$5.50. For more information, call 780-492-5677 or email [FPH@ualberta.ca](mailto:FPH@ualberta.ca).

### **Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society: Community Round Dance | February 4**

The Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society and Women Building Futures will host an Honouring the Community Round Dance on February 4.

**Saturday, February 4**

Alberta Aviation Museum

2 to 10 p.m.

[Facebook event](#)

[Event poster](#)

The event will be hosted by MC Elmer Rattlesnake and feature stickman Rocky Morin. For more information, contact the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society at 780-481-3451, extension 0.

### **Local Cultural Workshops**

Elders and knowledge holders are busy preparing courses for the community, offered through Michif Cultural Connections in St Albert. On **February 10**, knowledge holder and bead artist Connie Kulhavy will offer a class on beaded hearts. Visit the [Michif Cultural Connections Facebook page](#) for all upcoming events, workshops and gatherings and for details on how to register.

Metis ALIVE in Beaumont offers a wide variety of wonderful cultural workshops with local Elders and knowledge holders. The next course, sewing traditional mittens with Elder Joyce Beaver, takes place **February 11**. Visit the [Metis ALIVE Facebook page](#) for more details.