



NWTTA NEWS

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Welcome to the 2020-2021 School Year!

The NWTTA is excited to welcome you for the 2020-2021 school year.

The NWTTA is here to serve you, our membership. If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out through email, phone, the Online Quick Connect Form on our website, or drop by our office in Yellowknife. Mobile phone numbers for after-hours access are printed on the back of your membership card and on the contact poster in your staff room.

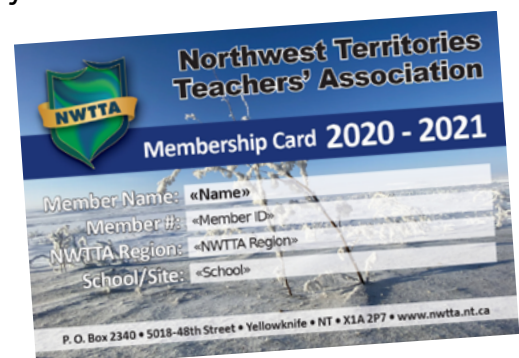
All new members are encouraged to create their NWTTA online membership account as soon as possible. Please visit nwtt.nt.ca, click on "REGISTER" in the top right hand corner and complete the simple sign-up. Once your status as a NWTTA member is confirmed, your online account will be approved/activated. You will receive automated emails throughout the process.

September 30 is the deadline to register your online membership account to receive a 2020-2021 Membership Card, which will be printed and

delivered to your school/work site in October.

Membership Cards can be used for proof of profession, and that you are eligible for various educator and/or government discounts. Returning members who already have online NWTTA accounts don't have to do anything, but please update your membership profile information if anything has changed.

Below is a preview of the 2020-2021 Membership Card. The background photograph was taken in March 2020 along the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway when it was -56°C.



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Working Together

Matthew Miller, President

Welcome back to the 2020-2021 school year! A special welcome to the approximately 100 new to the North educators. I am hoping members were able to find time to relax and recharge for what will undoubtedly be a year like no other. As teachers settle into their communities, I too am getting used to my new surroundings. Although my family and I are already missing the Beaufort-Delta, we are happy to explore Yellowknife and the surrounding area. One of the highlights of a move is the opportunity to meet new people and to try new things. As we do not yet know what travel will look like through the year, I am keeping my mind open to the unique opportunities the NWT has to offer.



COVID-19 has shown me the importance of working together. We need to be able to support and count on our colleagues and partners in education. I was fortunate to be able to join teleconference meetings with ECE, superintendents and board chairpersons in March of 2020 when the pandemic closed our schools—at that point, shutting the schools until the Easter Holidays seemed like a long time. The choice to do so was a collective decision to ensure the safety of staff and students. As the months wore on, meetings were occurring daily with information, sometimes changing by the hour. Fast forward to the opening of schools for 2020-2021 and those meetings are still ongoing with many departments. Although I feel at times information is not getting to educators as quickly as I would like, I know everyone is working hard to get the answers you deserve. The need to work in collaboration has never been more important for the education system of the NWT. Our positive relationships with our partners have provided an opportunity to voice concerns and celebrations of our members as well as take part in the decision making process. Working first hand with other departments has resulted in our ability to communicate factual information directly to educators.

The usual NWTTA visits to regions will not occur this Fall as we will follow recommendations from the Chief Public Health Officer to limit travel at this time. We have been able to visit some schools within and around Yellowknife by invitation following COVID-19 guidelines. There will be opportunities to reach out to teachers via video conferencing during the year. I know this cannot replace the face-to-face meetings and socials, but it is one way we plan to interact with the membership.

Along with the starting of schools, there will be a lot happening in September. Regional Elections, which were delayed from the Spring of 2020, will be completed. I encourage everyone to become involved with

the Association, and this is an excellent way to learn more about what we do. There will also be virtual town hall meetings to review the GNWT Collective Agreement in principle, which needs to be ratified. September 14, 2020, will be the first day of three video conference meetings to present to the GNWT membership and allow for questions. The following week on September 23, 2020, the ratification vote will occur. If successful, the agreement is applied retroactively to August 1, 2020.

The bargaining units for YCS and YK1 will begin their negotiations this Fall. Dates for YCS has been tentatively set to start on October 19, 2020. YK1 has requested to begin negotiation once the YCS negotiations have been completed.

Please take care of your mental and physical health as we navigate the year together.

Matthew

Returning to School

Educators, I am pleased to report that all 49 school re-opening plans for the NWT have been reviewed and approved by the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer.

I want to reassure you that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has been working with education bodies, the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer, and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association to ensure that the school plans provide an effective learning environment for students, while prioritizing the health, safety and well-being of staff, students and our communities.

Work is also underway to better support educators and students participating in blended learning. This work is informed by our recent experience with distance learning. We all need to be flexible and responsive, as well as patient and understanding, as we all adjust to a new model of learning.

Hon. R.J. Simpson,
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment



Government of
Northwest Territories

Self-Isolation Selfie

New to the NWT teachers are required to self-isolate for fourteen days in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith or Inuvik following NWT Chief Public Health Officer directives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

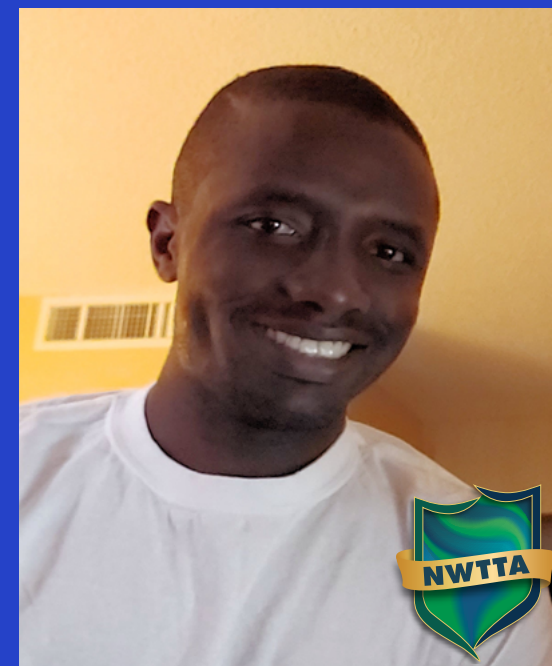


Shelley Watt

Self-Isolation Location: Fort Smith with Lexie the dog
Coming from: Fredericton, New Brunswick
Going to: Fort Smith as Literacy Coordinator

Self-Isolation Selfie

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Christian Aglah

Self-Isolation Location: Yellowknife
Coming from: Fredericton, New Brunswick
Going to: Colville Lake School in Colville Lake

Catching Up Members' Life Events

Aklavik just got a little bit bigger! **Crystal Norris** gave birth to Andrew 'Jarad' James Bernhardt on June 23rd, 2020, and **Lisa Schachtschneider** gave birth to Jake Tumma Schachtschneider on June 24th, 2020.



l-r Lisa Schachtschneider, Jake Tumma Schachtschneider, Andrew 'Jarad' James Bernhardt, Crystal Norris

Ed Hartley (Beaufort-Delta region) completed his Master of Education (Information Technology) from Memorial University of Newfoundland and has started a new job as Northern Distance Learning Coordinator at the Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council this year.



Ed has also passed his black belt grading for Judo. Ed runs the Kuzuri Judo Club in Inuvik and sits as Vice-President of the NWT Judo Association.

Mike Pickles, Curriculum Coordinator & Special Projects with Tlicho Community Services Agency in Behchoko, started a podcast called "The Daily Dill Podcast", centered around motivational & inspirational topics, as well as interviewing guests; such as three-time Juno Award Winner Susan Aglukark, the Beachcomber's Jackson Davies, New York Times Best Seller Dave Burgess, and many, many others.



Teaching can be stressful at times, so if you need a taste of motivation, a few inspirational stories, or just listen to entertaining interviews, subscribe to *The Daily Dill Podcast with Mike Pickles*. He's no Joe Rogan, but his podcasts will get you through a rainy day.

Spotify Podcast URL: www.shorturl.at/iAJ0Z

His podcasts are distributed via Google, Apple, Spotify, Anchor, Breaker, Overcast, Pocketcasts, RadioPublic, and other podcast platforms.

Self-Isolation Selfie

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Amanda Roach

Self-Isolation Location: Hay River
Coming from: Hay River, Northwest Territories
Going to: Joseph Burr Tyrrell School in Fort Smith

This summer **Sean Magee** (YK1 region), along with his wife Lauren and daughter Isla (3 years old) did a 10-day canoe trip from Deline to Norman Wells down the Sahtu De (Great Bear River) and Dah Cho (Mackenzie River) for Jackpine Paddle. They guided 4 Yellowknifers down the river and got to experience the incredible Land of the Sahtu region and the fantastic people of Deline and Tulita.



Northern Lights

Meet Brooks Skyers from Yellowknife (YK1 region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Oshawa, Ontario, which is approximately 45 minutes outside of Toronto.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

I have had several teachers throughout my years as a student who played a significant role in my development and growth in self-confidence, and I want to do the same for other students as well.

Q. What do you teach?

I teach Core French at N.J. Macpherson School.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I enjoy seeing students become independent learners and gaining confidence in both themselves and their abilities. I also like to hear them share their accomplishments from outside of the classroom. As someone who was active in several different sports and activities outside of school, it is heartwarming to see students find value in similar experiences within their own lives.

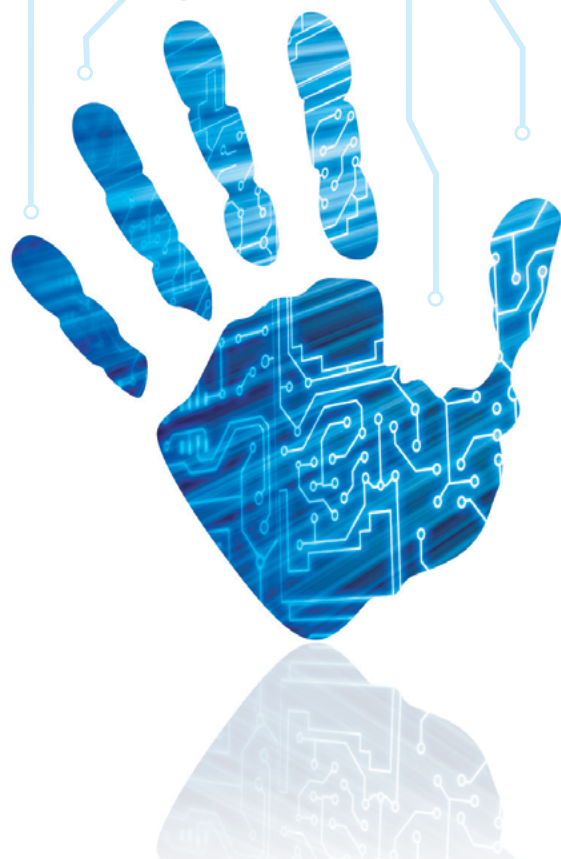
Q. How do you engage your students?

I like to engage students by bringing their personal interests into the classroom and giving them options when it comes to the activities we do every day. A regular school day can feel long for students, especially after such an extended period spent learning from home, so it's important to be mindful of this and flexible in the way I teach.

On Being a Teacher...

Every day provides a new opportunity for both myself and students to learn. Some days may not go as well as others, but perseverance pays off, and so does believing in yourself.

CYBERTIPS FOR TEACHERS



The use of technology has increased dramatically in recent years, but the standards of professionalism have not changed. Teachers are professionals and expected to model ethical and appropriate cyberconduct. Teachers hold a position of trust with students and will be held accountable if their actions expose students to inappropriate material or communications. Remember, **nothing is truly private when you communicate digitally**. When you use school board equipment and networks, your employer has access to all your messages and any sites you have browsed.

WHEN PRIVATE BECOMES PUBLIC

Nothing posted is ever completely erased from the Internet. Anything can generate unintended consequences far into the future. "Friending" students, posting pictures of partying, or sending overly casual messages or texts to students, parents and others may lead to professional difficulties you did not anticipate. People tend to feel safe when surrounded by "friends". While sitting alone in front of a monitor, it is easy to forget that you are on a public forum. Consequently, the line between our public and private lives becomes blurred, making it easy to mistake a webpage for a diary.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF USING EMAIL

- Do maintain exemplary professional standards when sending email messages to students, parents, colleagues and administrators.
- Don't use your personal email accounts to contact students or parents.
- Do keep copies of all your email messages.
- Don't share your user name and password with colleagues or students.
- Do use a teacher voice when communicating with students via email.
- Don't leave your computer on and unattended when students are around.
- Do use a signature that includes your name, assignment title and school name.
- Don't send unnecessary attachments with your emails.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

www.mediasmarts.ca

Media Awareness Network and its Web Awareness Program features lesson plans, classroom activities, background articles and Canadian resources for media education. It also offers practical tips for helping parents manage media in the home.

*Excerpt from Canadian Teachers' Federation **CyberTips for Teachers** brochure used with permission. [English](#) and [Français](#) brochures are available online and from NWTTA Central Office.*

Self-Isolation Selfie

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Abigail Bourgoin

Self-Isolation Location: Yellowknife
Coming from: White Lake, Ontario
Going to: Charles Tetcho School in Sambaa K'e

Self-Isolation Selfie

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Jordan Tuckwood

Self-Isolation Location: Inuvik
Coming from: Drayton Valley, Alberta
Going to: East Three Elementary School in Inuvik

Northern Lights

Rencontrer

Josette Therrien
de Yellowknife (région du CSFTNO)



Q. Où avez-vous grandi?

Je suis originaire du Nouveau-Brunswick sauf que les 25 dernières années j'habitais en Nouvelle-Écosse.

Q. Qu'est-ce qui vous a décidé à devenir enseignant?

Lorsque j'ai choisi ma carrière, je voulais absolument travailler avec les enfants. De plus, je cherchais à faire une différence. Je croyais et je crois encore que l'éducation est essentiel pour l'épanouissement économique, social et personnel.

Q. Qu'est-ce que vous enseignez?

Pour l'année scolaire 2020-2021, je vais enseigner une classe combinée de 5e et 6e.

Q. Qu'aimez-vous le plus dans votre enseignement?

J'adore l'interaction avec les élèves et mes collègues. On apprend à chaque jour des uns et des autres et les journées passent très vite. De plus, j'ai l'impression que les élèves m'aident à garder mon cœur d'enfant.

Q. Comment engagez-vous vos étudiants?

Souvent les élèves s'engagent davantage lorsqu'ils ont du plaisir. Il faut donc s'assurer de les connaître et leur faire confiance. Je crois aussi qu'il est important de les guider à prendre leurs responsabilités et à devenir autonome.

Un passeport pour l'avenir

À mon avis l'éducation est un passeport pour l'avenir. Les expériences, les connaissances, les discussions sont des outils essentiels afin de contribuer et de faire des changements dans le monde. J'ai eu l'opportunité d'enseigner à l'étranger plus spécifiquement en Égypte et j'ai vraiment aimé. Cette année, j'avais le désir d'apprendre davantage à propos de la culture et des gens des Territoires. Pour apprendre une culture, il faut la vivre alors me voilà!



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Remembering Tara-Jane Hulligan Zuk December 16, 1970 - July 13, 2020



My wife Tara was born in Liverpool England but brought up in Crosby, Merseyside. Her parents Jim and Carol were very involved in politics. Jim was a Labour Councillor for many years, and Carol was involved with the CND, and they helped Chilean refugees. That shaped Tara's interest in politics and she had a strong belief in social justice and socialism.

She attended Liverpool University and later got her Master's Degree in Special Education and Linguistics at the Open Learning University. Tara's first job was teaching at Rawson Road Primary, and then Crosby Road Primary. She then met her husband Walter and immigrated to Canada. She became interested in First Nations education and worked in Hartley Bay. Later she returned to England and worked with children on the autistic spectrum. Always adventurous, Tara applied and got a job teaching in the North West Territories, and later became a Program Support Teacher. She embraced the culture and enjoyed her time there immensely until she became ill with ovarian cancer. As well, Tara had a part-time post as an assessment specialist at the University of Cambridge.

Colleagues and ex-students describe Tara as a dedicated and inspirational teacher. She supported students in many ways beyond her teaching – for example by running art club - and dramatic productions. When in Hartley Bay she did a project with the Network of Performance Based Schools and her project's research was used extensively.

Outside of teaching, Tara had a passion for literature that ranged from Charlotte Bronte to Raymond Chandler and loved films. Tara also wrote poetry, was involved in amateur drama when she was a student, and was very artistic. She also played the guitar, sang, and wrote articles about music, being especially passionate about Bob Dylan. When in the Northwest Territories, she met a group of musicians, led by Bob Mumford, and started playing and performing with a group called 'The Hummingbirds' which was tremendous fun for her.

Tara's energy, infectious enthusiasm, and kindness made her a stimulating companion and she was a loyal friend to many.

She is survived by her husband Walter, sister Samantha, brother Steven, nieces Elysia, Rebecca, Clara Isabella, and nephews James, Jacob, Thomas, and Michael.

Tara taught at Chief Paul Niditchie School in Tsiigehtchic and Echo Dene School in Fort Liard.

In lieu of flowers, Tara wanted any donations to go to ovarian cancer research. <https://tarajanehulliganzuk.muchloved.com>

Self-Isolation Selfie

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Eric Therrien

Self-Isolation Location: Yellowknife
Coming from: Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Going to: École Allain St. Cyr in Yellowknife

Self-Isolation Selfie

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Amanda Reynolds

Self-Isolation Location: Inuvik
Coming from: Toronto, Ontario
Going to: Moose Kerr School in Aklavik


Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do

David Murphy, Executive Director



I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to a new school year, especially our new teachers who are joining us for the very first time. This time of year is always very busy for everyone, returning to your communities and schools, attending the beginning of the year conferences and orientations and getting your classes ready for your students on that first day. This year I expect you will find yourselves even more busy as a result of COVID-19 and the preparations you will have to make in order to follow the guidelines from the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer. Although there will be many changes as a result of COVID-19. One thing remains the same - your students will fill your classrooms. On that first day of school parents, grandparents, other family members and guardians will come to the school and place their most prized possession, their children, into your care for you to nourish and care for the next ten months. Yes, as a teacher the first few days can often be quite daunting.

Your Association Team



Although we can't really help you with the many tasks you are doing to prepare for the year, we can, however, assist you with concerns you may encounter with your employment. If there is ever a time you feel you need support or clarification of an issue, please contact us. When you contact us through phone or email, unless you contact us directly, **Denise Works**, our Administrative Assistant, will be the person who will assist you. Denise is very knowledgeable about the general workings of the Association and can assist you with many of the questions you will have. As well, for those questions and concerns you may have that require a more in depth answer, she will direct you to the staff member who is best equipped to assist you.

Matthew Miller, your NWTTA President, is the elected official working in the NWTTA office. His main role is to reach out to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, Labour



Relations and Superintendents to make them aware of educational issues affecting our members. He is always available, 24/7, to take calls from members and often will contact members to discuss their concern and develop a plan as to how we can best support them.



Sara McCrea, Assistant Executive Director, and myself are the people you will contact regarding the many members' concerns you may have. We are prepared to assist with your questions regarding pay and benefits, certification and salary assessment, your evaluations, job accommodation needs, discipline hearings, meetings with the employer and if need be, grievances and arbitration. So far this year we have fielded many questions and addressed many concerns teachers have related to COVID-19 guidelines and as the year progresses we expect COVID-19 will dominate discussions.

You may occasionally contact **André Corbeil**, Finance and Communications Officer, with regard to expenses claims if you encounter expenses involving GNWT Professional Development (PD), or working on NWTTA business. As well you will receive emails from André periodically providing you with information about Association business regarding the newsletter, surveys, negotiations, PD and meetings. As a result of COVID-19 some restrictions have been placed on duty travel and non-essential travel for health and safety reasons. If you do have travel expenses while on duty travel for the NWTTA, Regional PD expense claims or some other form of financial compensation you will receive from the NWTTA, André is the person to contact.



GNWT teachers may contact **Adrien Amirault**, Professional Development Coordinator, to discuss Education Leave applications with or without allowances, short term assistance for summer credit courses, distance credit courses, educational leadership program and Indigenous language courses. Next year

the NWTTA will organize a teachers' conference if COVID-19's travel restrictions are lifted, where all teachers in the NWT are invited to come to Yellowknife

to participate in a Territorial wide conference. Adrien will play the lead role in organizing the conference and he will be providing you with lots of information about this later.

Adrien is also available to meet with Yellowknife Catholic Schools and Yellowknife Education District No. 1 members to offer support with their Professional Development initiatives and discuss PD opportunities that members may wish to avail of.

Human Resources – Pay and Benefits

Check your pay and benefits! Yes, please check your pay and other benefits you are entitled to see if you are being compensated accurately. Last year there were a number of teachers who contacted us regarding not being placed correctly on the salary grid, professional allowance, northern allowance, their principal's allowance and their health benefits for dental and prescription medications. If you find you aren't receiving your correct pay or benefits your first step should be to contact your Human Resource people.

For YCS teachers please contact Amy Curran, Pay and Benefits Officer and for YK1 educators please contact Stacey Mahe, Manager, Human Resources. Both Amy and Stacey are very knowledgeable about the pay and benefits available to the employees for their respective boards and they are very helpful when you contact them.

For the GNWT teachers you will contact the HRHelpdesk. While you can contact them by phone at 1-866-475-8162 I suggest you send an email to HRHelpdesk@gov.nt.ca and followup with a phone call if necessary. The HRHelpdesk receives many requests for many different reasons from not only teachers but all GNWT employees. When you send a message to the HRHelpdesk you should place in the email subject line the specific concern you wish addressed such as pay, benefits, Sunlife or Green Shield, allowances, etc. And in the email, itself, be sure to include your employee ID, updated contact information and specific details of your concern.

Occasionally teachers feel they need additional support after they contact their employer and they often contact us as well. If you find yourself in this situation please call us anytime.

Get Involved in Your Association

If you would like to know about your Association and find out how you can become more involved you should contact the Local Receiving Officer (LRO) at your school. Your Local Receiving Officer will be able to tell you which Region of the NWTTA you belong, who your Regional President and executive members are, when your scheduled Regional meetings are held, in person or by teleconference. Keep in mind that the more you are actively involved, we become more representative of your views and the stronger we become as an Association.

Have a great year! If you do encounter any bumps along the way please contact us and we will try our best to level them for you so your journey is more pleasant.

Northern Lights

Meet

Anna

Lynne

Ignacio

from Colville
Lake (Sahtu
region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in the Philippines. Though now, I have spent many years of my life here in Canada.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

Being a teacher is a noble profession. Children are the future, so to help and support them with their future is commendable.

Q. What do you teach?

I teach mathematics from grades K-12.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I enjoy being around children and watching their personalities and interests blossom. It's great getting to know everyone in my class, and becoming a supportive adult figure in their lives.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I like to make the topic interesting. Whatever we may be talking about, I do my best to make it fun and engaging for the students.

A Future with Opportunities

The profession of becoming a teacher was suggested by my mother. She said that it would be a job that the future needs. I decided that this was a great option and it would give me a good future with plenty of opportunities.

Northern Lights

Meet

Cheryl Lafferty

from Fort Resolution (South Slave region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Deninu K'ue - Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

After working four years as a teachers assistant, I developed a passion for teaching children in JK/K. In 2016, I decided to enroll in the Early Childhood Development Program at Aurora College. Through this part-time distance education program I was able to continue gaining valuable work experience and obtain my Early Childhood Development Certification in 2019.

Q. What do you teach?

I teach Junior Kindergarten at Deninu School in Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories. I am looking forward to this new teaching experience and putting my skills into action as an Early Childhood Educator. I also work as a Grade 7 Relief Support Worker.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I enjoy being involved in the developmental growth of each students progress I grew up in a classroom setting admiring my parents' teaching careers and share the same passionate work ethic today.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I engage my students by providing them with a loving, caring, and nurturing learning environment. Offering a positive proactive approach encourages children to explore and learn through play. Also, engaging students through song and dance, children are encouraged to speak the Dene language and practice the Dene Laws.

Benefits are Endless

The benefits of a career in education are endless as everyday is a new day to learn something new. To learn something new about a student's learning style, preferences and or interests. It's great to work with both elementary and secondary students and staff. I find this is beneficial to my ongoing work experience

Working For You

Sara McCrea, Assistant Executive Director

I had the privilege of joining Central Office on August 17, 2020. I'm impressed with the professionalism, hard work and dedication NWTTA provides members. These are unprecedented and challenging times for us all; nonetheless it is encouraging to know we are in good hands with NWTTA and we will get through this together.

I have been immersing myself in this new position and embracing a steep learning curve. With the guidance and expertise of the team at Central Office I have been involved in preparations for GNWT collective agreement ratification. I am excited to hold a virtual seat at Queen's University IRC's Labour Relations program from September 21-25, which without a doubt, will be put to good use as we are in a negotiation year for all three collective agreements. I look forward to working for you, and assisting with your questions and concerns regarding collective agreements, pay and benefits, certification and salary assessments, meetings with the employer, job accommodation needs, evaluations, discipline hearings, grievances and arbitration.

A few weeks ago I've had the pleasure of meeting some members during a short visit at École William McDonald Middle School where last minute preparations to welcome École J.H Sissons students and staff back to school was in full force. I was thrilled to witness the devotion and resilience demonstrated by members to do their best under the unusual and difficult circumstances they faced.

Hats off to you all, as you begin perhaps the most unusual school year in your career. I want you to know that the Central Office team is always available for members. You do so much to influence our youth, communities, teaching profession, and the educational and cultural environment of the NWT.



Community Playground

Students at Inualthuyak School in Sachs Harbour (Beaufort-Delta region) eagerly awaited the just completed new community playground. Thank you Angelo Brazil for the photos!



Self-Isolation Selfie

New to the NWT teachers are required to self-isolate for fourteen days in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith or Inuvik following NWT Chief Public Health Officer directives during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Kristene Welch

Self-Isolation Location: Inuvik
Coming from: Delta, British Columbia
Going to: Chief Julius School in Fort McPherson

Northern Lights

Meet

Maureen Tonge

from Yellowknife (YK1 region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Quispamsis, Southern New Brunswick, which means Little Lake in the Woods.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

I think I was destined to be a teacher. I come from a family of teachers - both parents, uncles, cousins. It was unavoidable destiny.

Q. What do you teach?

I am a Fine Arts specialist, mostly painting, but I also enjoy 3-D. Previously I also taught core French. They tried to give me Social Studies one time. I helped to develop the Yoga 11 curriculum and taught yoga at École Sir John Franklin High School since about 2002.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I enjoy the interaction with the students. Definitely not the adminstrivia.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I engage my students by treating them as I would wish to be treated.

Doing what I was born to do

As dorky as this sounds, I can't imagine ever doing anything else but teaching. I think I'm doing what I was born to do. I feel incredibly blessed that in this lifetime I was able to discover my calling and that makes me verklempt.

How does Maureen make you smile?

Hearing her sing out loud and dance with reckless abandon!

- Pam Schlosser

Mo's positive energy, love for animals, and the ability to create makes me smile and want to be a better person. My dad referred to her as 'the girl with the red dress' and often talked about how sweet she was. Todd and I were blessed to meet Mo 22 years ago when she opened her heart and home to us and our crazy dog, Angus.

- Seana Stewart

Maureen makes me smile when she celebrates the simple thing in life and finds such joy in the everyday.

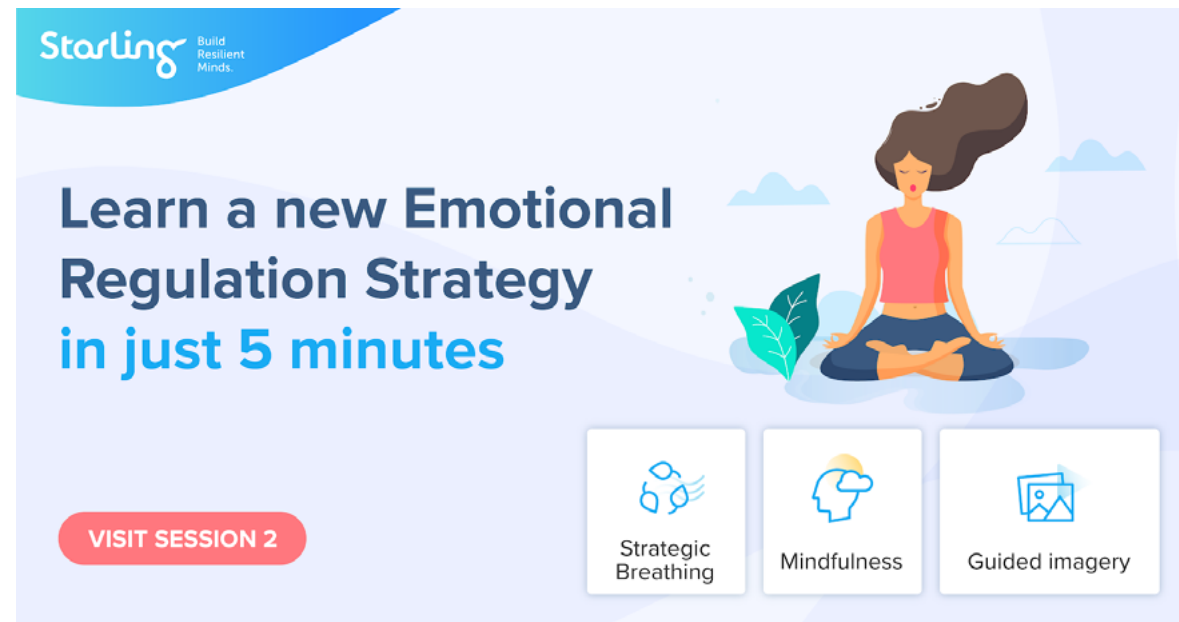
- Adrien Amirault

Pour moi Maureen, tu es une femme solaire! Et pour ça, merci!

- Micheline Ricard

Maureen makes me smile by sharing her joy and passion with the world. She shines brightness on everyone and everything around her.

- Angela Martin



COVID-19 has deeply impacted 79% of Starling Members' lives. In some professions, such as education, 60% say that their anxiety has increased significantly due to changes in routine and health concerns.

Although we know the importance of self care, we often use our time and energy helping others instead. With all the stress, anxiety, and uncertainty surrounding this upcoming school year due to the pandemic, it's more important than ever to make sure we are taking the time to recharge our batteries.

The good news is that self-care can be quick. In just 5-10 minutes, it's possible to learn new skills proven to help us improve our mental health and sustain it. Setting aside some time to identify what triggers our negative moods or to practice emotional regulation strategies will help us manage our stress in that moment, and on the go when the week becomes intense.

What is "Mental Fitness"?

Mental fitness is a concept that has only emerged in the past few years. It helps people understand that just as we can improve our physical health by exercising, eating healthy, and getting enough sleep, we can proactively improve our mental health and our abilities to manage stress and anxiety by strengthening our minds.

What is Starling Minds?

Starling Minds is an online program designed to help us build the skills we need to improve our mental health. The concepts are based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which is a form of evidence-based treatment that helps us understand how our thoughts, behaviours, and physiology affect how we feel.

Suite 103 - 131 Water Street, Vancouver BC V6B 4M3 | starlingminds.com

How does it work?

Learning techniques that improve our mental fitness can be broken down into three skills:

1. Recognizing the patterns that create difficult emotions and negative moods.
2. Integrating techniques to regulate overwhelming emotions and thoughts as they arise.
3. Resolving the patterns that detract from our well-being by building new ones.

Please remember that the NWTTA and the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) provides you and your family members with a free mental therapy resource called Starling Minds™. Your answers and interactions are always anonymous. Learn and practice tools like emotional regulation, thought balancing, mood tracking, and goal setting.

How can I get started with the program?

Register with your NWTTA ID number, which you can find on your NWTTA Membership Card. Create an account today: <https://app.starlingminds.com/registration/nwt>

If you already have an account, login at <https://app.starlingminds.com/>

How can I refer family members or colleagues to the program?

To share the benefits of Starling with a friend or colleague for free, simply:

1. Log in to <https://app.starlingminds.com/>
2. Click on the dropdown menu on the top right hand side
3. Select "Referral"

Questions? Email Starling Support at members@starlingminds.com



Suite 103 - 131 Water Street, Vancouver BC V6B 4M3 | starlingminds.com

Member Benefits

Sara McCrea, Assistant Executive Director

An important part of a member's compensation are the Health and Dental Benefits that they are entitled to. While all three bargaining groups of the NWTTA have similar health and dental benefits, they are not all exactly the same. The procedure for enrolling into the benefits plan are also different for the three bargaining units.

Once you have received your benefit information, it is an important responsibility that each member has to ensure they understand the benefits available, and the procedures for accessing the benefits. Members usually have a responsibility to claim benefits in a timely manner, and to follow the procedures as set out by each employer.

Each plan treats part-time employees differently, and for further details if you are a part-time employee it would be best to contact your employer.

Below is some information about each plan. For the most up-to-date and complete information it is important to check plan documentation.

Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS)

Benefits are provided by Manulife Financial. They include Life Insurance, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Extended Health Care (prescription medication, supplies, vision, etc.), Dental Care and Long-Term Disability.

Members working for Yellowknife Catholic Schools are provided a group benefits enrollment form from the Plan Administrator. Once completed the form is returned to the Plan Administrator who then forwards the application to Manulife Financial. For more information on this process YCS members can contact Amy Curran at the YCS office.

Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1)

Benefits are provided by Manulife Financial. They include Life Insurance, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Extended Health Care (prescription medication, supplies, vision, etc.), Medical and Non-medical travel emergencies,

Dental Care and Long-Term Disability.

Members working for YK1 are provided a group benefits enrollment form from the Plan Administrator. It is important to complete the application material provided to you from YK1 as soon as possible to start your benefits. For more information on this process YK1 members can contact Stacey Mahe at the YK1 office.

Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

Teachers employed in GNWT schools are provided Health and Dental Benefits by two different providers.

Health benefits are provided by the Public Service Health Care Plan and members are insured by Sun Life Financial. Your initial employment documentation forms to enroll in the plan are usually provided, and these are submitted to your benefits officer. **It is important to apply as soon as you are able as there is a waiting period from time of application.** If this enrollment information has not been provided yet, please contact your employer at HRHelpdesk@gov.nt.ca. **It is extremely important that after your documents are submitted that you complete a Positive Enrollment on the Sun Life website. This is mandatory before any claims can be processed.**

There are some optional benefits that you will be able to select as you enroll in the plan.

Health benefits include Hospital Coverage, Medical Travel, Employee Family Assistance Plan, Supplementary Death Benefit, Disability Insurance, and 80% reimbursement of most expenses.

Dental Benefits are provided through Green Shield Canada. Members are eligible for dental benefits following three months of continuous employment. There is an annual deductible depending on the type of coverage (family or single).

If you are unsure of the benefits you have available or if your need assistance in enrolling please contact the NWTTA office or your employer for assistance. It is important to get all of these benefits in place before you need them.



Wellness

A partnership between the NWTTA and the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment through the Education Renewal and Initiative now provides access for members to the [Starling Minds Health and Wellness Online Toolkit](#), developed specifically for educators by Dr. Andrew Miki and is based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). Starling is Canadian, based out of Vancouver, BC.

There is no cost to NWTTA members and their family members to use Starling and confidentiality and privacy are assured through this program.

More information on Starling, including introductory videos and how to create an account can be found in the [Starling section](#) of the Health & Wellness page of the NWTTA website.

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a negotiated benefit for NWTTA members from all three bargaining units (GNWT, YCS, YK1). This service provides 24/7 confidential support services for assistance with work, health or life concerns. An [EFAP brochure](#) is available in the [EFAP section](#) of the Health & Wellness page of the NWTTA website.

English Helpline: 1-844-880-9142
French Helpline: 1-844-880-9143
English & French Hearing Impaired Helpline: 1-877-338-0275

Online Counseling: www.shepellfgiservices.com/ec

Let us help

MORNEAU SHEPELL

Access your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) 24/7 by phone, web or mobile app.

1.844.880.9142 TTY: 1.877.338.0275
workhealthlife.com

Download My EAP app now at your device app store or scan the QR code.

Laissez-nous vous aider

MORNEAU SHEPELL

Accédez à votre programme d'aide aux employés et à la famille (PAEF) en tout temps, par téléphone, sur le Web ou à l'aide de votre appareil mobile.

1.844.880.9143 ATS-ATME : 1.877.338.0275
travailsantevie.com

Téléchargez l'application Mon PAE à partir de la boutique d'applications de votre appareil ou saisissez le code QR ci-contre.



Self-Isolation Selfie

New to the NWT teachers are required to self-isolate for fourteen days in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith or Inuvik following NWT Chief Public Health Officer directives during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Katie Fontaine

Self-Isolation Location: Inuvik
Coming from: Windsor, Ontario
Going to: Angik School in Paulatuk

Self-Isolation Selfie

New to the NWT teachers are required to self-isolate for fourteen days in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith or Inuvik following NWT Chief Public Health Officer directives during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Sherry Langland

Self-Isolation Location: Yellowknife
Coming from: Edmonton, Alberta
Going to: Deh Gah School in Fort Providence

Professional Development During a Pandemic

Adrien Amirault, Professional Development Coordinator

Credit Courses

The majority of university courses that NWTTA members take during the school year are by distance. All three NWTTA bargaining units have provisions through their collective agreements for members to take courses and be reimbursed up to a certain amount for the courses they successfully complete. For the most part things should progress as usual over the coming school year as distance courses have been the norm for many years now. Over \$110,000 in courses were approved for GNWT members to take last year, and as of the writing of this article \$17,800 in courses for the coming year have already been approved in the GNWT bargaining unit.

In the GNWT, courses have to be applied for before they begin, and members must pay for the course in advance. Reimbursement is made once the course is successfully completed. There is a limit during the school year of \$2500.

Other Professional Development

The other aspect of Professional Development that members usually participate in is attendance at conferences, workshops, and face-to-face courses. This is likely going to prove to be a challenge in the coming school year. The usual practice of leaving the territory to attend a conference or workshop is impractical when you are looking at two weeks of self-isolation upon your return. It is also impractical to have 900 teachers gather at one event when there is a concern over the spread of coronavirus. This is the main reason that this year's Territorial Educators' Conference was postponed.

There are some things that members can do within the territory to support their Professional Development:

- School based Professional Development is an option where the staff of a school can decide the type of PD that is important for the needs of the school. Use of local (NWT-based) expertise is easiest, and the type of PD can be tailored to each school site.
- Regional Professional Development can be tailored to the needs of a region. A region may have a certain goal in mind and the persons delivering the Professional Development can travel within the region, or small regional

gatherings may be appropriate.

- Online workshops and conferences have become available during the pandemic. There have been many changes in the last few months as major conferences have switched to online formats. These web-based conferences may be what a teacher wants to study to meet their own PD goals. This option is certainly cheaper than travelling, and can be attended individually, or possibly in a school-based setting.
- Web-based Professional Learning. There are many companies that offered web-based PD where teachers share their ideas and lessons with each other. Enrollment in these services may be a good use of PD funds.
- Teacher school visits have been popular over the last few years where a teacher spends time in another teacher's classroom to observe, share, and learn from each other. These would be quite easy within the territory.

The school year certainly is going to be a challenge as teachers adapt to the new reality of teaching during a pandemic. Teachers can still access engaging and relevant PD in the school year. If there is a way that I can help organize, or deliver Professional Development in your school, region, or classroom, please contact me any time.

Self-Isolation Selfie

New to the NWT teachers are required to self-isolate for fourteen days in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith or Inuvik following NWT Chief Public Health Officer directives during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Amy Gatus

Self-Isolation Location: Hay River
Coming from: Calgary, Alberta
Going to: Fort Simpson as Itinerant Music Teacher

Northern Lights

Meet

Ashley Townsend
from Behchoko (Tlicho region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Chilliwack, BC.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

I've wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember. I grew up with my mom running a daycare in our home so that was probably the most significant influence. I'm also very passionate about travelling and I appreciate how teaching gives me the opportunity to live and work just about anywhere in the world.

Q. What do you teach?

I have taught grade 6, 5, and 4 at British Columbian international schools in Cairo and Bangkok. This year I am in a 3/4 split at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Behchoko. Every year I seem to move down a grade level!

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

The relationships I build over the year are always special to me. I also love when my students are engaged and having a great time with the lessons that I've prepared. It's a wonderful feeling when they complain that the school day is already over, or when someone remarks that they don't want to go to recess because math is just so much fun.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I think it's really important to offer a lot of choice for my students in how our classroom runs and the activities that we do. I find that when my students have autonomy to choose how and what they learn for the day, it's easy to keep them engaged. I really like 'Daily 5' and 'Genius Hour' models of learning.

Reciprocal Learning

I think the best part of 21st century learning is that it's very reciprocal. My students teach me something new everyday. Being a teacher is such a privilege because I'll never stop learning and having my perspectives challenged.

Newsletter Trivia

Send your answers to the trivia questions below to news@nwtta.nt.ca with subject *Trivia*.

Trivia answers are contained within this edition of the newsletter. Newsletter Trivia contests are open to active NWTTA members.

Deadline for entries: **November 3, 2020**

Win a \$50 Chapters-Indigo Gift Card!



1. How many school re-opening plans for the NWT were received and reviewed by the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer?
2. What is Starling Minds?
3. Who provides benefits for YCS and YK1 members?
4. What is Mackenzi Mutch's dog's name?

Cover photo: Staff at École William McDonald Middle School (YK1 region) in Yellowknife at the end of the first week of school for 2020-2021. Thank you Liz West for the photo!



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will be selected by Regional Presidents in
October 2020

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Self-Isolation Selfie

New to the NWT teachers are required to self-isolate for fourteen days in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith or Inuvik following NWT Chief Public Health Officer directives during the COVID-19 pandemic.



l-r Laura, Nicole,
Sully the dog, Mackenzi

Mackenzi Mutch

Self-Isolation Location: Inuvik

Coming from: Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

Going to: Moose Kerr School in Aklavik

