

NWTTA NEWS

VOLUME 23 • ISSUE 3
MARCH 2022

Introducing Central Executive 2022-2024

Congratulations to incoming Central Executive 2022-2024 members! **Matthew Miller, Gwen Young, Wendy Tulk** and **Colin Pybus** term of office will be July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024.

The fifth member of Central Executive, the Regional Presidents' Representative will be selected by the nine 2022-2024 Regional Presidents. If you are

interested in serving on your region's Regional Executive for 2022-2024, please contact a member of your current Regional Executive or Central Office for more information. Each region is responsible for their own nomination and election process with election timelines running between March 1 and June 30. The [Regional Executive Nomination Form](#) is available on the Forms page of nwtt.nt.ca



President
Matthew Miller



Vice-President
Gwen Young



Secretary-Treasurer
Wendy Tulk



Member-at-Large
Colin Pybus

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President's Update

Matthew Miller, President



I want to begin by congratulating the members who will form the 2022-2024 NWTTA Central Executive with me, Vice-President Gwen Young, Secretary-Treasurer Wendy Tulk and Member-at-Large Colin Pybus. I want to acknowledge and thank Todd Sturgeon for allowing his name to stand for the Vice-President position. Todd has held leadership roles at both the regional and central levels, as well as chairing and serving on NWTTA committees. I hope to see Todd continue in leadership roles within the NWTTA as he has the experience and knowledge to make a positive impact.

If you are looking to take on a leadership role with the NWTTA, [Regional Elections](#) will be occurring in all nine NWTTA regions. I encourage anyone who is interested to put their name forward to support the members in your region. Regional elections usually take place throughout the months of March, April and May. For more information on these elections, members can read their regional bylaws found on the NWTTA website in the Member Area, reach out to their current Regional Executive or contact the staff at Central Office.

A notable change to voting for Central and Regional Executive positions is the ability to vote online. In January 2022, NWTTA Central Council met to change our bylaws to allow for an alternative form of voting for elections and ratifications of collective agreements. In the past, voting could only occur in person at the worksite. This change was required as some schools remained closed due to COVID-19 during the Central Executive elections. Going forward, the Association will have the flexibility to allow for alternative voting that is secure and anonymous.

A lot has changed with COVID-19 over the last year. We are told we are turning the corner, so schools' response to COVID-19 cases has changed. Compared to last year, when I was writing my newsletter submission, vaccinations had just started rolling out. Many of our members are now fully vaccinated, including booster shots. We are now learning how to live with COVID-19 as the country shifts to remove mandates. I strive to be optimistic that we will finally move to the "new normal," but I am not without concerns and frustrations, especially around communication to our schools.

Much of what I hear regarding COVID-19 is regarding risk. As we move forward, there will be debates on how risk is managed and how decisions are made. During the shift, safety needs to remain a priority. I have heard from members who fully support vaccinations and prefer wearing a more robust mask such as an N95, while other members have made a choice not to be vaccinated and disagree with being tested. This demonstrates the divergence within the membership as recommendations and requirements change.

Health Professionals state the socialization and needs of our students must be prioritized over the risk of COVID-19. There is still a mixture of feelings ranging from fear to excitement regarding going back to in-person learning.

Many of our members want to be back to in-person learning as this is the job we signed on to do. I believe we still need to support those with high levels of anxiety and who are vulnerable/immunocompromised but without shutting down an entire school or the education system.

We fully expect teachers and their families across the Northwest Territories to travel during spring break. As of now, there is still an expectation that you complete a Self-Isolation Plan (SIP) regardless of vaccination status and follow the most current requirements when you return. Leisure travel is also anticipated to re-open across the Northwest Territories in the Spring, which will reunite some of our members with their loved ones. Acting Chief Public Health Officer Dr. André Corriveau says over the next couple of months, restrictions will be removed in the build-up to the public health emergency being lifted this Spring.

When the recommendation against non-essential travel is lifted, the Association does plan to travel within the NWT to visit schools. We look forward to engaging with members face-to-face. In the meantime, I have scheduled regional member engagement through Zoom this year. If advice against travel continues, I will schedule another series of virtual meetings before the end of the year to hear from members.

Negotiations have been one of our many priorities at NWTTA Central Office over the last two years. All three collective agreements (Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1), Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS) and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) schools) have been negotiated twice since I have taken office. All three bargaining groups have either ratified their most recent agreement or have an agreement in principle. I want to thank the members who served on negotiation teams with our office staff and Kristan McLeod, who served as our chief negotiator for all three negotiations this year.

Although the Thank you for Making a Difference campaign was a little different this year with some schools closed to remote learning, know that you inspire your students, and you do make a difference.

Respectfully,

Matthew

Matthew Miller
President



Northern Lights

Meet
Sean Magee
from Yellowknife (YK1 region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Brookville, Ontario, which is a small hamlet near Guelph.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

After about a decade of working in the environmental education/environmental justice world, I realized I needed a change. I wasn't satisfied with running programs in schools for outside organizations because they were so short-lived, and not as meaningful as I wanted them to be. I knew I loved the praxis of teaching and learning ever since I started instructing paddle sports as a teen, so I enrolled at OISE, UofT. My B.Ed helped solidify the importance of teaching in my mind and showed me how vital public education is for making and maintaining justice and equity in societies. Becoming a teacher was about doing something I love while trying to make positive change.

Q. What do you teach?

I'm currently on Parental leave, but I have been in elementary, middle school and Post Intensive French roles so far.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

The kids. They shock me, they amaze me, they push me to be better and they inspire me. There is no better feeling than seeing a student succeed – in whatever form that takes.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I get to know them. I spend a lot of time doing activities that help me know who they are so I can infuse their interests into our classroom. I also do my best to make sure my classroom and I am a safe space, which goes back to knowing them. I really want everyone to feel welcome, cared for, considered and seen.

Thrive When They Are Outside

Land-based teaching is where it's at! I'm not just saying this because of being in Denendeh; I've just never seen my students thrive so much as when they are outside. Fish Friday's at Range Lake North are the best!



Schools North Apprenticeship Program (SNAP)

SNAP is a work experience program for NWT high school students who are 16 years and older.

The program provides students interested in skilled trades a way to gain valuable work experience while completing their high school education, and earn work experience credits at the same time.

If this sounds like a good fit for your students, they can reach out to the **School SNAP Administrator** or to a **Career and Education Advisor** for more information today.

NWT Schools Photo Mystery

Can you identify these six
Northwest Territories schools?

1



2



3



4



5



6



Answers on page 23

Thank You for making a difference!

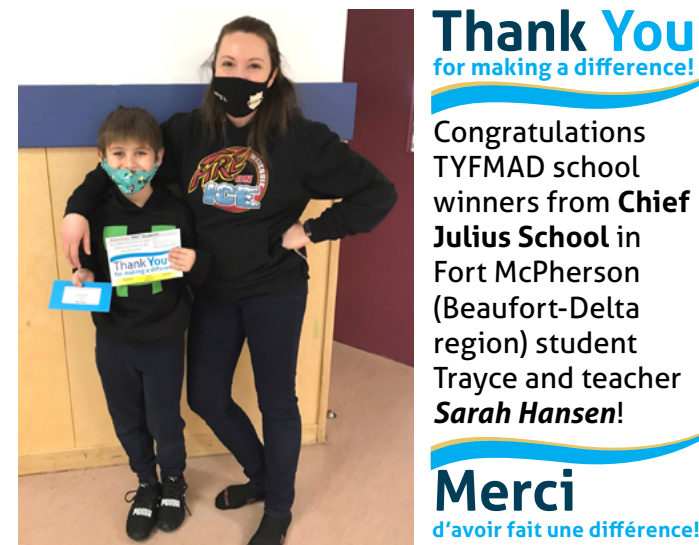
Merci d'avoir fait une différence!

The *Thank You for Making a Difference* (TYFMAD) program is an organized opportunity for students to send messages of appreciation to their teachers. The program, in its 25th year in 2022 is funded by the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

For three weeks in January, students can send a message to their teachers online on the NWTTA website or on paper at their school. At the end of the campaign a school prize drawing is completed at each school to pick one winner where the teacher who was written about and the student who wrote about them win gift card prizes. All messages written about the teachers are delivered to those teachers.

All active NWTTA members are then included in grand prize drawings where the winners receive a gift card from the vendor of their choice.

Scattered through this newsletter are photos of some of the school prize winners such as the one below.



Thank You for making a difference!

Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Chief Julius School** in Fort McPherson (Beaufort-Delta region) student Trayce and teacher **Sarah Hansen!**

Merci d'avoir fait une différence!

Northern Lights

Meet Pat Morris from Hay River (South Slave region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

We split our time growing up between Pointe-Claire, a suburb of Montreal, and Glengarry County in Eastern Ontario. We were fortunate enough to spend our weekends and summers in Glengarry, while we went to school in Pointe-Claire. The benefits of having a father who teaches!

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

Once I came to the harsh realization that I wasn't going to become a professional athlete, I started sifting through my plan b's and c's. Teaching runs in the family, and I've always been told growing up that I fit the mold. I spent a lot of time working in sports camps and other jobs involving working with kids, so the decision came kind of naturally.

Q. What do you teach?

I teach grade 6 Math here at Princess Alexandra School, as well as Phys Ed for grades 4 through 6.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I enjoy being able to have fun with the students. I learned early on in my career that the first two months or so is the time to be a drill sergeant, being strict and establish your rules and routines, and after that you are able to be yourself a little more with the kids and enjoy it. I find that many of these moments happen in the gym.

Q. How do you engage your students?

If we are in our math class, you'll see a lot of discussion going on. We learn to have conversations through respectful debates, how to properly agree and disagree. I also stress the importance of mistakes, working on building confidence, and the value of questioning.

Teachers Have Stories to Share

Not to downplay any other profession, but ask any former teachers about their career and they'll have stories to share; I know a few of my Grandma Kaye's by heart. She loves recounting the days when she had to pick the students up in a horse-drawn sled, plowing the snow on the way, and starting the fire for a single-room schoolhouse in the cold days of winter.

A Week in Isolation:

A first-hand account of volunteering at a COVID Isolation Centre

Colin Pybus, East Three Secondary School (Beaufort-Delta region)

For one week in mid-November 2021, several NWTTA members in the Beaufort-Delta region volunteered their time and energy to support the community of Tuktoyaktuk (Tuk). Tuk was in the middle of a COVID outbreak, had been placed into an isolation order, and like many of our communities, safe places for COVID-positive individuals to isolate were in short supply.

Mangilaluk School in Tuk, closed to in-person learning, had been offered as an isolation centre for residents to access if at-home isolating was not possible. However, with most of the hamlet's residents either COVID-positive, in isolation, or trying to support the community, workers for the isolation centre were at a premium.

Enter the volunteering NWTTA members who answered a call from the Beaufort-Delta District Education Council (BDDEC) and NWT Public Health and travelled to Tuk for the week of November 14-19. Most individuals were from Inuvik, as the schools in Inuvik had also been closed due to community transmission in town. One group of volunteers travelled up the highway to Tuk on Sunday night and got settled into what was later called the 'Big Brother Tuk' house. Carrying air mattresses, sleeping bags, pillows and some personal items, the first wave of volunteers settled into our home for the week; a three-bedroom, unfurnished house on the edge of the Arctic Ocean.

In the morning, we arrived at the school for our orientation of safety protocols and our first of many COVID tests. Following the guidance of the public health nurses on the COVID response team, we got

dressed in gowns, gloves, a mask and face shield and were given a tour of the isolation centre. In essence, the school had been turned into a make-shift hotel for COVID-positive individuals, and we were the 24/7 front desk workers, doing our best to keep our clients as comfortable as possible. Working eight-hour shifts in two-person teams, NWTTA members staffed the isolation centre for the entire week, volunteering on the front lines of the Tuk outbreak. Supporting clients within the isolation centre was our primary task. We also helped staff members of Mangilaluk School access materials from their classrooms for virtual learning and organize food hampers for delivery within the community. Days were long, overnight Midnight-8:00am shifts longer, hot in the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and a little unnerving being in direct contact with COVID. Also though, so rewarding to know you were helping, supporting a team from Public Health



Lori Brown at reception desk



Colin Pybus in PPE



Sonia Gregory demonstrates isolation centre bed

and other Government of the NWT departments, trying to do everyone's best for a hamlet in crisis. A bit of a routine set in, short-term friendships were made with the clients of the isolation centre, and things started to feel a bit smoother for everyone involved. One group of NWTTA members left on Tuesday, with new reinforcements arriving to finish the week.

A huge thank you goes out to all the volunteering NWTTA members who went to Tuk for some or all of the week to work in the isolation centre: Justin Guy, Lori Brown, Jacqui Currie and Sonia Gregory from the BDDEC Office; Tara Scaglione from Mangilaluk School; and Lisa Murphy, CJ Parr, Kevin Chiasson and Colin Pybus from East Three Secondary.

Snapshots from Grade 1 Online Meetings

That moment when your classroom management is different online than in the classroom:

Teacher: "Good morning everyone! Please turn off your microphones and turn on your cameras!"

Student 1: "Teacher, my camera isn't working."

Student 2: "I know why it's not working! It's because he LICKED it!! I SAW him!"

*All other students in the class: *start licking their cameras too**

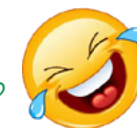
*Teacher: *face palm**



That moment when you have to turn off your microphone so your students can't hear you howling with laughter:

Teacher: "Okay class, please turn your backgrounds off."

Student: "But Teacher, I CAN'T turn my background off, my dad says our kitchen is too messy and he doesn't want you to see it!"



That moment when you can't believe what just came out of your mouth:

Teacher: "Please take out your pencils and papers and write your name at the top of your page...Caleb! Your dog does NOT count as a writing utensil!! Put him down and go find your pencil!"



Northern Lights

Meet

Sophie Bourgon

from Fort Smith (Fort Smith region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in the small French rural community of St-Albert in Eastern Ontario. We are known for our delicious "squeaky" cheese curds. I know every small French town claims this, but we make the best poutine. If you are ever in the Ottawa area, I recommend stopping to visit our cheese factory.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

My interests are all over the place. I'm an avid reader and love learning about history and current events. I enjoy any form of artistic outlet, and although not an athlete, I enjoy playing sports and being active. I constantly strive to learn more about any and every topic. Teaching seemed like the perfect fit for me. Every day, I have the opportunity to share knowledge that I am passionate about with our students, in hopes that they too will become lifelong learners and see value in continuously learning new skills. I also greatly value making connections with people, and who better to spend my days with than the future leaders of my community.

Q. What do you teach?

For the past two years I have been teaching grade 8 and electives such as World Religions and Psychology. Previously, I have taught French Immersion, Core French, Middle School ELA, Social Studies, and Science. I have also had the opportunity to teach the International Baccalaureate program when working overseas.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

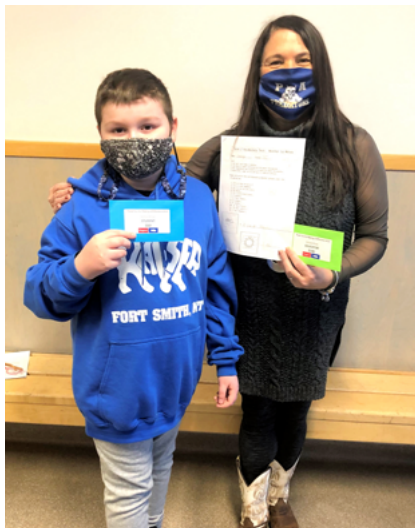
First and foremost, the students. Teaching middle school has demonstrated the importance of connecting with students. Living in a small community facilitates this connection. I also love the diversity that teaching provides. Every student is unique, every day is a new day. It's a profession where there is always something new to learn and as a lifelong learner, I greatly value that aspect of our profession.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I find it so important that students connect the content we are learning to the world they live in. Sometimes, the reason why we are learning something gets lost and I try as best I can to provide relevance to the content. My favorite part of a lesson is when a student asks a question to which I don't know the answer. I always say: "I'm not sure, let's find out together!". It teaches great research skills and I also get the opportunity to learn something new. Grade 8 students have great questions, so I learn a lot!

The Importance of Growth Mindset

I take such joy in seeing the incredible growth in my students and I like to think that I too grow as a teacher every year. This career has also had a huge impact on shaping who I am as a person. Relocating to the Northwest Territories has expanded my comfort zone and I have learned skills I would not have honed had I stayed in St-Albert. I constantly preach the importance of a growth mindset in my classroom and try to model that in every aspect of my life.



Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Princess Alexandra School** in Hay River (South Slave region) student **Landyn** and teacher **Marla Mateus!**



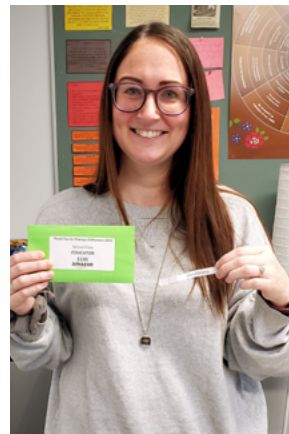
Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Diamond Jenness Secondary School** in Hay River (South Slave region) teacher **Michael Craig** and student **Halli-Rai!**

Thank You
for making a difference!

Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Echo Dene School** in Fort Liard (Dehcho region) student **Janna** and teacher **Bailey Weber!**



Congratulations TYFMAD school winner from **Yellowknife Catholic School Central Services** in Yellowknife (YCS region) Indigenous Education Coordinator **Gina Williams!**

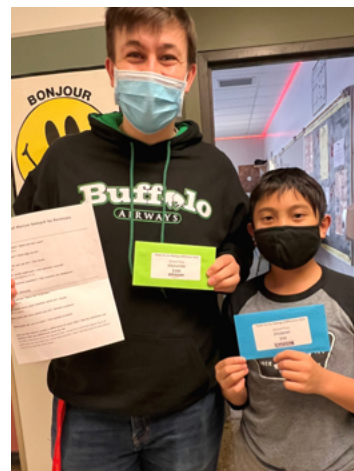


Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **École Sir John Franklin High School** in Yellowknife (YK1 region) teacher **Jeremy Kielstra** and student **Sophie!**

Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **École William McDonald Middle School** in Yellowknife (YK1 region) teacher **Paige Anderson** and student **Emi!**



Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **École St. Joseph School** in Yellowknife (YCS region) teacher **Marcus Golczyk** and student **Rovenjay!**



Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Paul W. Kaeser High School** in Fort Smith (Fort Smith region) teacher **Colin Hillier** and student **Michael!**

Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Deninu School** in Fort Resolution (South Slave region) teacher **Sherri Osted** and student **Liam (not pictured)!**



Merci
d'avoir fait une différence!

Give your students the tools for their future.

With the right resources, every student can achieve their dream in STEM. Apply for the **\$50,000 Sanofi Biogenius Canada Grant** to renovate existing laboratory facilities, purchase new scientific equipment, or develop programs that improve hands-on instruction at school, which can motivate students to explore everything STEM offers.

Find out more at biogenius.ca





Representation is powerful!

You have access to books and resources at your school that are inclusive and representative of LGBTQ2S+ communities.

The *Guidelines for Ensuring LGBTQ2S+ Equity, Safety and Inclusion in NWT Schools*, along with these resources, can help educators respectfully incorporate LGBTQ2S+ perspectives into all school environments.

For more information on how to support students and families email support_wellness@gov.nt.ca or visit the ECE website.

Government of
Northwest Territories

www.ece.gov.nt.ca

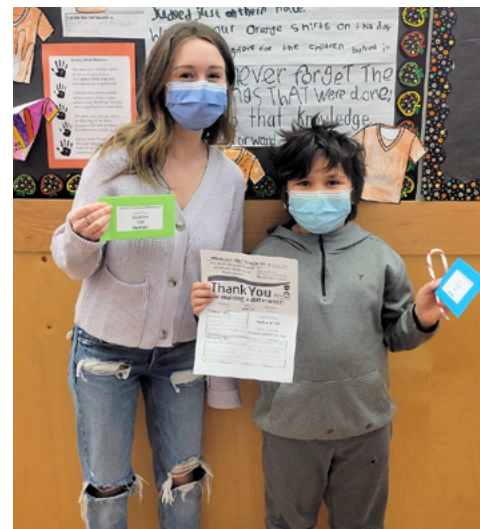
LGBTQ2S+ Principles

Kirstin Prescott, École Sir John Franklin High School (YK1 region)

As a teacher within YK1, and a Gender & Sexuality Alliance leader, I use these six principles from ECE's *The Guidelines for Ensuring LGBTQ2S+ Equity, Safety and Inclusion in NWT Schools* to guide me in assessing how inclusive my teaching is in representing the LGBTQ2S+ community. I am available to work with any educator in the NWT who wants to work towards incorporating these principles in their own teaching practice. kirstin.prescott@yk1.nt.ca

LGBTQ2S+ Equity, Safety and Inclusion

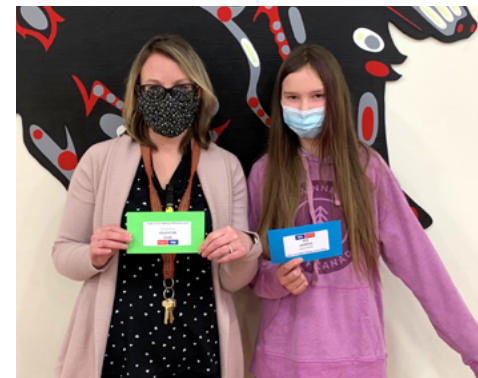
- 1 Self-identification is the sole measure of an individual's orientation, gender identity, gender expression and/or sex.
- 2 All members of the school community, regardless of identified or perceived sex, orientation, gender identity and gender expression:
 - Are treated with dignity and respect;
 - Have the right to be open about who they are, including expressing their orientation, gender identity or gender expression without fear of consequences;
 - Have the right to privacy and confidentiality; and,
 - Are actively included in the collaborative decision-making processes that support members of the LGBTQ2S+ community within the school.
- 3 Members of the LGBTQ2S+ community have the right to have their unique identities, families, cultures and communities included, represented, valued and respected throughout the school environment.
- 4 All members of the school community share the responsibility for supporting students and staff and building a positive environment for members of the LGBTQ2S+ community within the school.
- 5 Homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and gender-based discrimination and bullying are demeaning to all members of the school community, and will not be permitted or tolerated.
- 6 School staff must consider each student's needs and concerns. An accommodation must be student-centered, individualized and appropriately implemented.



Thank You
for making a difference!

Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Echo Dene School** in Fort Liard (Dehcho region) teacher **Gillian Quinn** and student **RJ**!

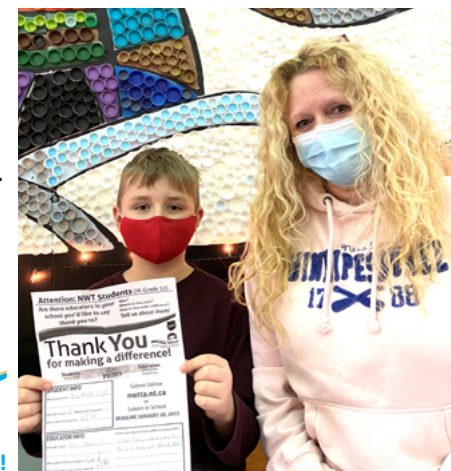
Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Joseph Burr Tyrrell School** in Fort Smith (Fort Smith region) teacher **Amy Turner** and student **Mya**!



Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **École J.H. Sissons School** in Yellowknife (YK1 region) teacher **Manon Radford** and student **Hayden**!

Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **N.J. Macpherson School** in Yellowknife (YK1 region) student **Damon** and teacher **Marilyn Moran**!

Merci
d'avoir fait une différence!



Northern Lights

Meet Nadine Downey Chaulk
from Fort Liard (Dehcho region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up on the Rock in St. John's, Newfoundland. Newfoundland is my happy place and I miss it dearly. I can't wait to get back there . . . hopefully this summer!

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

Growing up I would play school with my friends and would often be the teacher. As I got older I became the baby sitter, the tutor and the one you went to for help with school work or whatever. I was always the one who was looking out for my friends. Once I got into University I had no idea what I wanted to do, I just took a bunch of courses to try to figure myself out. Then I started babysitting for an Educational Psychologist and she suggested doing a career aptitude test to help me figure it out. Well Teacher was one of my results. Everyone had always said I should be a teacher and I loved working with kids. It just fit, I started taking education courses at Memorial University of Newfoundland and loved every minute of it! I had found my calling.

Q. What do you teach?

I am currently the Program Support Teacher at Echo Dene School in Fort Liard. This is my 4th year as PST. Before that I was Literacy Coach for 2 years, Junior High ELA teacher and High School CTS teacher. And before that a mixture of K-3.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

This is my 16th year at Echo Dene School; I love watching the students grow and develop into the young adults they have become. I love watching those Ah-Ha moments when a student who has been struggling finally gets it.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I engage my students by developing trusting relationships with them, making sure they have everything they need to succeed. By not being afraid to make mistakes and to make sure those mistakes are celebrated because you cannot learn without making them.

Hard Work So Worth It

Being a teacher is hard work, it takes a certain type of person that has patience, persistence and the ability to plan. But it is so worth it, once you see those students learning and enjoying learning your whole world changes.

Sick Leave & COVID-19 Leave Provisions

Sara McCrea, Assistant Executive Director

With the ongoing pandemic, widespread Omicron variant, and upcoming March break travel, sick leave and COVID-19 leave are common topics of conversation. Each bargaining unit has its own sick and COVID leave provisions. The collective agreements govern sick leave. To determine the entitlement that applies to you, please check your collective agreement and contact Central Office if you have questions.

Once sick leave benefits in the collective agreement have been exhausted, members may be eligible for Employment Insurance Sickness Benefits under Federal Legislation. Members must contact Service Canada.

This newsletter article will present general information about teachers' rights concerning time spent away from work for medical reasons. Teachers and administrators care deeply about their students, school, colleagues and community. The dedication is admirable; however, there is sometimes a feeling of guilt for missing work. It may cause extra stress when one needs to take time off work for their health and well-being. It is important to be mindful that your health is what is most important for yourself and everyone around you. If you need time off work for your health, inform your employer and seek medical attention.

Depending on the number of days the doctor recommends taking time off work, the employer may require a doctor's note. You should follow your doctor's advice. **If you are off work on sick leave, you must not perform work duties.** Ensure your administration is informed of your sick leave request and provide a medical certificate as necessary. Teachers should have 3-5 days of emergency lesson plans ready as a general guideline. When you return from sick leave, you would be required to replace any used lessons from your emergency plans. Teachers should not be requested to create lesson plans while on sick leave.

Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Article 14 Sick Leave

At the start of each academic year, GNWT members are advanced 15 days of sick leave. The advanced days are prorated for members who work part-time or do not work the full academic year. Unused sick leave credits will accumulate. There is no maximum cap. If you have insufficient or no credits to cover sick leave with pay, the employer will advance up to 15 days of sick leave credits, which shall be charged against future sick leave credits as earned. Members must make a statement that they are unable to perform their job duties due to illness. If

requested, members must provide a medical certificate. For a longer-term illness, you may be eligible for Disability Insurance. The waiting period is 13 weeks or the expiration of all sick leave credits, whichever is later.

GNWT: COVID-19 Sick and Special Leave

In the last round of negotiations, parties agreed to a Letter of Understanding (LOU) for COVID-19 Sick and Special Leave banks. The parties agree that COVID-19 related sick leave and special leave for mandated isolation will no longer draw from employees' existing sick leave and special leave banks. Time previously entered as sick leave or special isolation leave due to COVID-19 will be reinstated in employees' respective leave banks.

Furthermore, the GNWT has a new Quarantine Leave clause under Article 13 Special Leave. Employees shall be granted special leave with pay for time lost through quarantine when the employee provides the employer with a medical certificate to that effect. The quarantine leave is available to members who must quarantine for communicable diseases. Examples are Cholera, Infectious Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Smallpox and Yellow fever.

Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS) Article 9 Sick Leave

YCS members are advanced twenty (20) days of sick leave at the beginning of the school year. The leave will be prorated for members who work any portion of a school year. Sick leave credits that are not used will accumulate with no maximum cap. For long-term illness, members are required to apply for long-term disability on or before the 90th calendar day of any uninterrupted sick leave. The YCS Board will require a medical certificate for sick leave over three (3) consecutive days.

YCS: COVID-19 Sick and Special Leave

During the 2020-2021 negotiations, YCS and NWTTA negotiated a COVID-19 sick leave coverage memorandum of understanding (MOU). To ensure that members are not penalized for restrictions related to the pandemic. COVID-19 sick leave has been created to cover mandatory self-isolation due to the following: medical travel and compassionate leave outside of NWT, COVID-19 testing period, CPHO exposure control recommendations, public health contact tracing period. Sick days post COVID-19 positive results are automatically covered under COVID-19 sick leave. Should a member require COVID-19 sick leave due to personal non-essential travel, personal sick leave banks will be used.

Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1) Article 18 Sick Leave

Every YK1 member is granted twenty (20) days of sick leave at the beginning of the school year. This amount is prorated for members who are hired after the commencement of the school year. Members accumulate two (2) days of sick leave for each school month worked to a maximum of twenty (20) days per year. Unused sick leave credits will accumulate to a maximum of one hundred and fifty (150) working days. In the event a member does not have enough sick leave credits, the employer shall permit the employee to borrow up to fifteen (15) days of sick leave credits, which shall be charged against future sick leave credits as earned. Members must apply for benefits under the Long-Term Disability Plan for a longer-term illness, the qualifying period is ninety (90) days. The YK1 Board can request a medical certificate where the absence is for more than three (3) days.

YK1: COVID-19 Sick and Special Leave

The YK1 Superintendent has provided a COVID-19 Leave Provisions letter to the NWTTA Executive Director. The letter stipulates that a COVID-19 Special Leave has been created and funded to cover mandatory self-isolation due to the following: medical travel and compassionate leave outside of NWT, COVID-19 testing period, CPHO exposure control recommendations, public health contact tracing period and members testing positive for COVID-19. These leave provisions do not apply for COVID-19 sickness and mandated isolation due to personal non-essential travel.

As always, please take good care, stay safe and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Northern Lights

Rencontrer

Gwenan Guillas-Letaï de Yellowknife (région du CSFTNO)



Q. Où avez-vous grandi?

J'ai grandi dans Dauphin, Manitoba, une petite ville agricole de 8500 personnes.

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

Pendant le secondaire j'ai commencé une troupe de théâtre avec les enfants de 5-12 ans, et c'était une expérience qui m'a marqué ma vie. Travailler en collaboration avec les jeunes artistes m'a inspirée à poursuivre les arts dramatiques en université. Après plusieurs années de travail dans les camps d'été, j'ai réalisé que le meilleur endroit pour moi de créer des expériences créatives c'est dans nos écoles avec nos élèves!

Q. Qu'est-ce que vous enseignez?

J'enseigne les arts plastiques de 1re année à 11e année, et anglais 3e-6e année. Cela me permet d'apprendre à connaître chaque élève dans notre petite école, et lancer des projets avec l'ensemble de l'école qui intègre mes deux passions: la littérature et les arts!

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

J'aime tellement partager mes passions avec mes étudiants, et apprendre de nouvelles choses de mes étudiants. Les meilleurs moments de mes journées sont souvent quand je vois des nouvelles créations de mes élèves, quand je reçois une nouvelle recommandation d'un livre qui les a inspirées, ou en lisant les textes que mes étudiants écrivent pleins d'imagination et créativité. L'énergie et les idées que les élèves apportent à l'école assure que chaque journée est une nouvelle aventure pleine de changement.

Q. Comment engagez-vous vos étudiants?

J'engage mes élèves par l'inclusion du choix dans mes cours. Dans mes cours d'arts plastiques j'essaie le plus possible de laisser mes étudiants choisir l'inspiration, et comment ils vont le mettre en œuvre. En anglais, j'engage mes élèves par l'encouragement de s'exprimer eux-mêmes avec leur écriture, et prioriser leur voix dans notre salle de classe avec la collaboration et l'intégration des arts.

Connecter Notre Communauté

L'année passée, après un long hiver avec les restrictions, nous avons été capables d'accueillir toute notre communauté scolaire pour une expo d'art à l'extérieur de notre école. Avec aucun nuage, les élèves de notre école étaient capables pour la première fois cette année de montrer leur fierté de toutes leurs créations, qui était affichée sur la clôture et les arbres. C'était un moment qui m'a montré la force qu'une école peut être pour lier notre communauté avec les choses simples: créativité, joie, et les nouvelles idées de nos jeunes.

DROP-IN SESSIONS

Mental Fitness Live Training Sessions

Date: Every Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays
Time: 5:30 PM MT

Register for our drop-in sessions to learn tools and techniques for better mental health

Tara Achkar, Customer Service Manager, Starling Minds

Hello there,

Mental health affects everyone and now, more than ever, it's important that we continue the conversation on how we can support ourselves and the people around us.

We are thrilled to share an exciting initiative hosted by Starling Minds to help you **build skills to better manage your mental health**.

The goals of the live training sessions are:

- To provide you with a deeper understanding of mental health
- To help you develop your own toolbox of strategies to increase your mental fitness
- To guide you through Starling Mental Fitness Program and use it alongside the live training sessions

The '**Mental Fitness Live Training Sessions**' initiative is hosted by Dr. Andrew Miki, a renowned psychologist, and Tara Achkar, our Mental Fitness Coach.

Be sure to register for Starling Mental Fitness at member.starlingminds.com using the access code: **NWTMEMBER**

You can find the Live Training Sessions in the "Training" tab in your account.

Date: Weekly on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays

Sign up Today!



Pattern Recognition Mondays with Dr. Andrew Miki

Sign Up Now

Mondays
5:30 PM MST

Learn how to identify and recognize key patterns impacting your mental health and how to better manage it.

Wellness Wednesdays with Tara Achkar

Sign Up Now

Wednesdays
5:30 MST

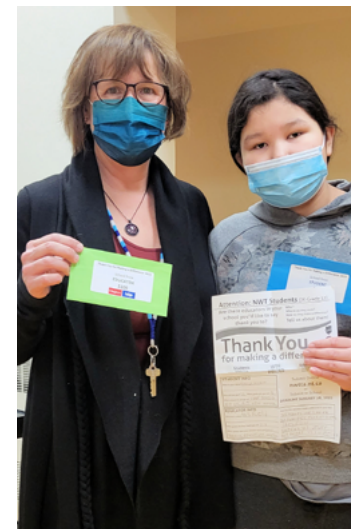
Gain a deeper understanding of how breathwork and meditation can be used as a powerful tool to balance your energy and ground yourself.

Assertiveness Thursdays with Dr. Andrew Miki

Sign Up Now

Thursdays
5:30 MST

Learn how to create more assertive thoughts to better coach yourself and assertive goals for a greater chance to achieve them.



Thank You
for making a difference!

Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Chief Sunrise Education Centre** on K'atl'odeeche First Nation Reserve (South Slave region) principal **Deborah Reid** and student Kassidy!

Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Chief Jimmy Bruneau School** in Behchoko (Tlicho region) student Cheryl and teacher **Jill Bellanger**!



Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **École Sir John Franklin High School** in Yellowknife (YK1 region) teacher **Kim Poitras** and student Ella!

Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **East Three Elementary School** in Inuvik (Beaufort-Delta region) teacher **Josie McConnell** and student Kohl!



Merçi
d'avoir fait une différence!

2022 NWT Educators' Conference Update

Adrien Amirault, Professional Development Coordinator

Conference planning as we come out of the pandemic has been a little nerve racking, but we are officially a "go" for the next Territorial Professional Development Conference October 19, 20 and 21, 2022 in Yellowknife. Expect a lot of details coming as we get ready for the first round of registrations in June of this year for returning NWTTA educators.

At the moment the conference committee has to meet to decide on a final line up. Many NWTTA members have offered their services to present at the conference, as part of their own professional development. We also have local presenters lined up, and of course a few guests from other jurisdictions in Canada.

Here are a few presenters from the Corwin group that will be at the conference:



Yana Ioffe is a professional learning consultant and leadership coach who is passionate about and committed to leading and learning, a strong believer in establishing safe and supportive learning environments that recognize, validate and showcase everyone's talents, is committed to collective efficacy, to nurturing and developing leaders, and to empowering people to self-actualize



Ricky Robertson has had the privilege to work with students from pre-K to 12th grade who have persevered in the face of adverse experiences and trauma. Drawing from experience as a teacher and Behaviour Intervention Specialist, Ricky coaches educators in developing a relationship-based approach to teaching and learning that inspires transformation through compassion, humour, deep listening, and "real talk."



Vince Bustamante, M.Ed. is an instructional coach, curriculum content developer, and author who currently works for Edmonton Catholic Schools as a curriculum consultant. Vince is passionate about teacher clarity, assessment, and creating classroom environments that foster deep learning experiences where teachers understand and evaluate their impact. He has published two books: *Great Teaching by Design* and *The Assessment Playbook for Distance and Blended Learning*.

Educator Mental Health Beyond Resources: We Need to Address our Work Culture

Nichole Grant, Researcher and Policy Analyst, Research and Professional Learning Program & **Pamela Rogers**, Director, Research and Professional Learning Program, Canadian Teachers' Federation



Nichole Grant



Pamela Rogers

As we write this post in January 2022, many teachers and education workers across Canada have returned to emergency remote and online teaching, or are in a state of pedagogical limbo, back to in-person teaching but fearing the next turn of events. After two years of a global pandemic, with its parade of abrupt shifts, ever-changing mandates, and frustrations, we continue to collectively face public health challenges. The tumultuousness of the past two years cannot be ignored when understanding the current state of education workers' mental health and well-being.

Since spring 2020, our research on teachers and education workers' mental health has focused on changes in workload, pedagogy, the status of the profession, and their effects on educators. As part of this work, the CTF/FCE Research and Professional Learning team conducted 32 education worker interviews with the goal of better understand their experiences in the 2020-2021 school year. The narratives in the ensuing "[But at what cost?](#)" research report paint a picture of worsening mental health and well-being that has been largely unmitigated and unaddressed. Although mental health resources have been made available to teachers, including a push for greater self-care, such resources and suggestions do very little to quell underlying systemic issues that contribute to ongoing mental health crises in public education.

Listening to participants' everyday experiences through our interviews highlighted the paradox of self-care. On the one hand, education workers discussed how they wanted to have more time dedicated to maintaining their mental, physical, and emotional well-being. While some teachers were able to fit this time into their week, it was most often only a few hours with their family on a weekend morning, as they needed to schedule preparation and assessment time into their weekends as well. On the other hand, the amount of work they needed to complete in a day,

along with additional stressors such as increased demands from online teaching, continually shifting contexts, and prolonged exposure to acute (now chronic) stressors, made the thought of adding another task overwhelming.

In this way, instead of fitting work into their life, their well-being needed to fit around their work. Not only did teachers have little time and energy in their day to take care of basic necessities like cooking and tending to their families and relationships outside of work, the thought of making time for their own mental health paradoxically amplified feelings of anxiety as they navigated increased workloads and pandemic stress. Although messaging around the importance of self-care practices increased, and resources were made available, teachers felt that their mental health was an individual issue that rested entirely on their shoulders without any structural supports to lessen stress and anxiety. As such, self-care was another item that many teachers felt they were not able to work hard enough on, or able to attain, which deepened feelings of guilt and shame around work and their personal lives.

For almost all the interviewees, such working conditions and attempts at maintaining a sense of personal well-being have proven to be unsustainable and unachievable. One of the many factors that keeps these conditions in place is workplace culture. An undercurrent ran through the teachers' experiences, and that was how the culture of work in publicly funded public education was contributing to the deterioration of education workers' mental health and well-being.



Teachers and education workers told us that all too often, across Canada, the current work culture has been one where teachers: work most or all evenings and weekends, make themselves available through online platforms and emails at all times of the day, feel personally responsible to keep the system going at the expense of their own health, and carry a massive weight when they cannot live up to these unrealistic standards. Although teachers and education workers are not contractually obligated to do so, their jobs simply cannot be completed in the hours they are paid, but for the sake of their students, they continue

to work above their capacity. This culture of work is upheld by informal norms and expectations, including through complex relationships between teachers, parents/guardians, administrators, school boards, Ministries of Education, and through public perceptions. In some cases, institutional inertia has kept educators bound to historically gendered patterns of self-sacrifice for the sake of their work – these patterns have brought teachers to a crescendo of imbalance in the pandemic and have laid bare a damaging work culture at the heart of public education.

Moving forward, we need to acknowledge all layers of the system as playing a role in the overall well-being of teachers and education workers, and by extension, students. It also means mental health and well-being are not "solved" through positivity, hero narratives, or one-day workshops. Changing and repairing this work culture involves navigating relationships with multiple layers of stakeholders, building a nuanced understanding of educators' everyday realities, and the complex, often emotionally tenuous work culture teachers exist within, to advocate for systemic, sustainable change for the profession.

Read [But at what cost?](#) for a glimpse of the professional and personal challenges faced by teachers and education workers throughout the pandemic and to learn why Canada's publicly funded public education systems are teetering on edge.

To address work culture in public education, we need a national conversation. This is why the CTF/FCE is calling on the federal government to create a national education advisory table to strengthen publicly funded public education across Canada. To find out how you can encourage provincial and territorial governments to take action, please visit www.voteeducation.ca.



Northern Lights

Meet **Jacqueline Stanbridge** from Yellowknife (YCS region)



Q. Where did you grow up?
I grew up in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?
I knew I wanted to teach from about the age of five years old, my dad put a chalkboard up in the playroom so I could play school.

Q. What do you teach?
Program support teacher at École St. Patrick High School.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
I love building relationships with students and staff, creating a school culture that feels like a family.

Q. How do you engage your students?
I try hard to build connections, learn about their story and listen with care.

Feel So Blessed
I feel so blessed to have had a career where I have learned so much from my colleagues and also the students that have blessed my life.



Running for a Good Claus!

Allie McDonald, Paul W. Kaeser High School (Fort Smith region)

On Saturday, December 4, 2021, over 50 Santas of all ages braved the cold (-28 degrees!), to support the Fort Smith Food Bank by participating in a 5km Santa Dash around town. The Santa Dash was the brainchild of Paul W. Kaeser (PWK) High School's phys. ed. teacher, Anna McDonald and was organized by her grade 11 and 12 students. The event proved to be extremely successful, raising over \$1,700 for the Fort Smith local food bank.

The event started off in PWK's new outdoor culture centre to warm up, register and donate to the cause. After registration, students, teachers, parents, children, dogs all suited up and hit the snow covered trail mapped out by the organizers. While the Santas were out running, a group of volunteers stayed back at the yurt to make sure the fire was going, to take photos and to prepare bannock on stick for all participants. As Santas began to cross the finish line, volunteers helped hand out snacks and water and cheered on their peers as they finished their "race".

"It's important to be an active member of our community and help out. Christmas can be a difficult time for families and we just want to do our part in helping make the holidays a little better for everyone." (Kian Berro, PWK Grade 11 student)

With help from the Mackenzie Rec Association, 100% of registration went toward the food bank. PWK hopes to make this an annual event that not only promotes giving back, but gives youth opportunities to be leaders in their community!

- Photos:
1 - Allie McDonald, Nashra Kamal & Sarah Nelson featuring Fireball & Tucker
2 - Joseph Virassamy, Kavita Sewruttun & daughter
3 - Carolyn Matthews & son
4 - Grade 12 students crossing the finish line
5 - Santa community members



Catching Up Members' Life Events



Matthew Sharpe and Elaine Weng of the TCSA office (Tlcho region) are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Derek Yongdao Sharpe, on October 13, 2021 in Yellowknife!



Long-time Dehcho teacher Sherri Thomson passed away December 6, 2021 after a multiple year battle with cancer.

Sherri's colleagues remember her fondly as a kind person who was thorough in her knowledge of literacy and showed a true passion for improving literacy in the Dehcho region.

Northern Lights

Meet Jaspar Wong from Wekweeti (Tlcho region)



Q. Where did you grow up?
I was born and raised in the Greater Toronto Area. I have very fond memories and close ties relating to the GTA, and know that no matter what happens, I can always rely on the Toronto Maple Leafs to let me down one more time.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?
My lifelong dream growing up was always to become a professional soccer player! However, given my university credentials as a History major (and lack of professional soccer clubs vying for my signature), I decided to pursue teaching instead, and I am ever thankful that I chose to embark upon this career path! Balancing lofty desires and grandiose dreams with sensible pragmatism is integral to successfully navigating this human journey!

Q. What do you teach?
I currently teach a split K-5 classroom at Alexis Arrowmaker School in Wekweeti. It is certainly one of the most unique teaching experiences I have ever been a part of - and I am cherishing every moment!

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
I love seeing my students grow and progress not only as pupils, but as people! Seeing their literacy and numeracy acquisition is great - seeing their maturation in emotional self-regulation is a prized bonus! It is truly humbling to think I might play a small role in rolling them onwards toward success, and it gives me immense hope for their future!

Q. How do you engage your students?
I frame my classes as classrooms of storytelling, exploration, and discovery. I am always looking to incorporate stories, activities, and songs into my lessons, intentionally forging evocative backdrops to anchor their learning memories.

Revolutionary Power of Education
My grandfather's education was truncated by the death of his father; he was forced instead to tend cattle for his family at the ripe old age of five. As a teenager in Hong Kong, my father studied late at night under dimly luminated street lights, not wanting to disturb familial slumber in their single-room abode. Through my family's story, from illiteracy to professionalism in two generations, I am well-aware of the revolutionary power of education to alter and shape life's trajectories - I seek to instill this foundation in my students, upon which they will be well-primed to build upon and achieve success!

Student Success Initiative (SSI)

Adrien Amirault, Professional Development Coordinator

The Student Success Initiative is a partnership between the Divisional Education Councils, the NWTTA and the Department of Education Culture and Employment (ECE). The purpose of the funds are to support projects that align with one or more of the following focus areas:

- a. Literacy
- b. Numeracy
- c. Inclusive Schooling
- d. Indigenizing Education
- e. Professional Learning Communities

Proposals are submitted to the SSI committee for approval every spring. The committee is made up of representatives appointed by the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education and Culture, and two representatives of the NWTTA. The NWTTA also administers the NWTTA portion of the funds including having an annual audit prepared, and paying for the cost of the committee meetings.

The two Yellowknife regions and the schools in Dettah and N'dilo receive funding directly from ECE. GNWT regions receive direct ECE funding, and a contribution from the NWTTA which is received as per Article 16 of the Collective Agreement.

The SSI Committee approves all submitted projects.

The funding sources are for different parts of the projects. ECE funds can be used for things like hard capital items, resources, travel, accommodations, and presenter fees. NWTTA funds are more directed for professional development (travel, accommodation, presenter fees, release time, etc.) ECE funds do not roll over, but unspent NWTTA funds can roll over to another year if underspent. This has actually happened the last two years as COVID-19 restrictions have made professional development in person quite difficult. Many regions have some significant amounts rolled over, so hopefully next year some of these projects can get going again.

Here are some of the projects that have been approved this year:

Yellowknife Catholic Schools:

- Student Agency
- Student Wellness
- Curriculum Compacting and Standards-Based Assessment
- Literacy and Numeracy Essentials
- Daily 5 and Daily 3
- Empowering Courageous Leadership

Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council:

- Indigenizing Education Across the Curriculum

Commission Scolaire Francophone Territoires du Nord-Ouest:

- Cadre de Numeratie – Numeracy – Grade 1-9. Alignment and follow through to grade 12

South Slave Divisional Education Council

- Leadership for Literacy – All schools
- Powerful Guided Instruction – Diamond Jenness Secondary School
- Numeracy Intervention – Deninu School Intervention Program Support – Harry Camsell and Princess Alexandra School
- Improving Numeracy Intervention on the Essentials – Joseph Burr Tyrrell Elementary School
- Improving Literacy and Numeracy – Lutsel K'e Dene School
- Closing the Gap: Maximizing Jr. High to Sr. High transition success through targeted student and staff support at grade 7-9 – Paul W. Kaeser High School

Tlicho Community Services Agency

- Response to Intervention – Tier 1, 2 & 3 - Literacy

Yellowknife Education District No. 1

- Engaging All Learners – Inclusive Pedagogies

Northern Lights

Meet

Paige Driscoll

from Tuktoyaktuk (Beaufort-Delta region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I grew up in a small fishing village on the Lower North Shore of Quebec, called Saint Augustine River. I went to university near Sherbrooke and then lived and worked in the U.K before moving to Tuktoyaktuk, NT in 2018.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

Education has always been important for me and I always knew I wanted to pursue a career working with children. I thought teaching would be a fulfilling career and a great opportunity to travel.

Q. What do you teach?

I currently teach Grade 4 and work part-time as Vice-Principal. I teach all subject areas, although Math and Art are most enjoyable for me.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

Working with students is by far my favorite part of teaching. It makes me so happy watching how students grow and learn together over the year. I enjoy seeing how they develop their skills and confidence as the year progresses. In addition to this, I love how every school day is different, you never know what each day will bring!

Q. How do you engage your students?

In order to engage my students, I strive to ensure that learning content is culturally relevant and meaningful. I enjoy incorporating contextual themes and learning opportunities that align with local community traditions, history and events. I like participating in experiential learning opportunities, encouraging my students to work together and learn from one another. In addition, I ensure that my students have the proper support and scaffolding in order to be successful.

Learning Together

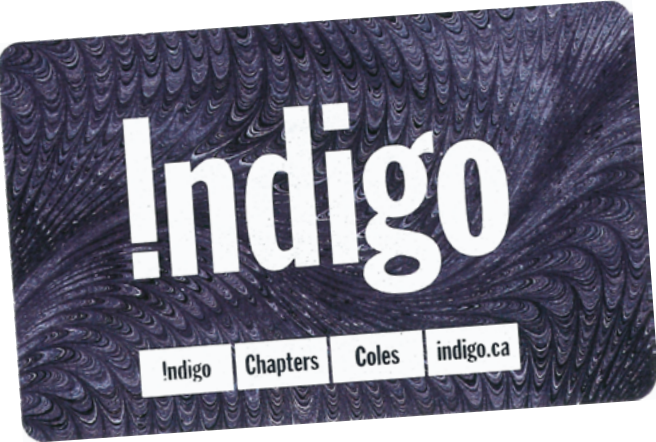
Teaching is a very rewarding, yet humbling experience. Kids are so funny and honest, and you really do not know what they will say. Most recently, during a Math coding lesson, I was stumbling and struggling with some coding blocks. One of my students came up to the Smart Board and showed his peers the correct sequencing, saying, "You're an adult and you need help from a kid!" We all had a good laugh and it was a great learning experience for everyone. It is so good for students to see that adults are life-long learners as well. It is such a privilege learning with my students and I am so grateful that I get to do a job I love every day!

Newsletter Trivia

Send your answers to the trivia questions below to news@nwttta.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: **April 25, 2022**



Win a \$50 Chapters-Indigo Gift Card!

1. What year is the Thank You for Making a Difference program in for 2022?
2. Does Caleb's dog count as a writing utensil?
3. If you are off work on sick leave, should you perform work duties?
4. When will the first round of registrations be for returning educators for the 2022 NWT Educators' Conference?

Tara Scagilone from Mangilaluk School (Beaufort-Delta region) is the winner of the December 2021 Newsletter Trivia.

Cover: Congratulations TYFMAD school winners from **Mildred Hall School** in Yellowknife (YK1 region) teacher **Courtney Jung** and student **Claude!**



NWT Schools Photo Mystery Answers (page 4)

1. Chief Paul Niditchie, Tsiigehtchic
2. Paul W. Kaeser, Fort Smith
3. École Sir John Franklin, Yellowknife
4. Elizabeth Mackenzie, Behchoko
5. École Boréale, Hay River
6. ?ehtseo Ayha, Deline

2020-2022 Central Executive

Matthew Miller

President

matthew.miller@nwttta.nt.ca

Loralea Wark

Vice-President

loralea.wark@yacs.nt.ca

Todd Sturgeon

Secretary-Treasurer

tsturgeon@ssdec.nt.ca

Wendy Tulk

Member-at-Large

wendy_tulk@edutlichon.net

Valerie Gendron

Regional Presidents' Representative

vgendron@ddec.ca



l-r Sonja Hunt (nominator), Catherine Son (winner)

Congratulations **Catherine Son** (YCS region), winner of the 2021 Aboriginal Sports Circle Teacher Award! Catherine is an amazing teacher who is very dedicated to ensuring students learn their culture and traditional games. Catherine is also involved with the Traditional Games Championships every year.

You can watch a video of the award presentation at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBr_BLmmezM



**ABORIGINAL
SPORTS CIRCLE NWT**

Central Office Contact

P.O. Box 2340, 5018-48 Street,
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7

Phone: 867-873-8501

Fax: 867-873-2366

Email: nwttta@nwttta.nt.ca

www.nwttta.nt.ca

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Friday: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

NWTTA PERSONNEL

Denise Works

Administrative Assistant

denise.works@nwttta.nt.ca

André Corbeil

Finance & Communications Officer

andre.corbeil@nwttta.nt.ca

Adrien Amirault

Professional Development Coordinator

adrien.amirault@nwttta.nt.ca

FOR URGENT MEMBER ASSISTANCE CONTACT:

Matthew Miller

President

matthew.miller@nwttta.nt.ca

Mobile: 867-678-5968

David Murphy

Executive Director

david.murphy@nwttta.nt.ca

Mobile: 867-444-0253

Sara McCrea

Assistant Executive Director

sara.mccrea@nwttta.nt.ca

Mobile: 867-688-7643

