



# NWTTA NEWS

VOLUME 24 • ISSUE 1  
SEPTEMBER 2022

## Welcome to the 2022-2023 School Year!

The NWTTA is excited to welcome you for the 2022-2023 school year.

The NWTTA is here to serve you, our membership. If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out through email, phone, or drop by our office in Yellowknife. Mobile phone numbers for after-hours urgent 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](http://nwtt.nt.ca), click on "REGISTER" in the top right hand corner and complete both pages of 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 2022-2023 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 2022-2023 Membership Card.





INSIDE:

Welcome to the 2022-2023 School Year!	1
President's Update	2
Northern Light Lorna Chambers	3
Professional Development	4
NWT Educators' Conference and Women's Symposium	5
Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do	6
CyberTips for Teachers	7
Take Notice of your Pay and Benefits	8
Northern Light Marissa Oteiza	9
Meet Your Central Office Team	10
Northern Light Samantha Sarty	11
What I did this summer.. Education Leadership Program (ELP)	12
Learn How to Manage Burnout and Depression with Starling Minds	14
Remembering Betty Wilcox	16
Math Puzzle!	16
Paddling Begadee River	17
Tlicho Regional Conference	18
Northern Light Sam Dehdashti	19
An Amazing Community Service Initiative - Helmets for Hardy	20
Catching Up Members' Life Events	21
Remembering Eugène Roach	22
Northern Light Anthony Hume	23
Newsletter Trivia	23
2022-2024 Central Executive	24
Central Office Contact	24



President's Update

Matthew Miller, President



Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! A special welcome to our new members. I hope everyone found time to relax during your much-deserved holidays. Although the NWTTA office was closed, we continued to work on your behalf, attending meetings and taking calls.


Of note, David Murphy and I attended the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) Annual General Meeting on July 5-8, 2022, for the first in-person meeting in three years. This meeting allows the Associations to have a voice nationally as well as hear from other member organizations. On August 16 and 18, 2022, we presented at the GNWT New to the North Education Conference (N2NEC). This is the third year in a row the conference was presented virtually. N2NEC is an important time for our newest members because it gives them the time to learn about the North and connect to other new educators and the Association.

On August 25, 2022, we met with GNWT Department of Education, Culture & Employment Deputy Minister John MacDonald, Assistant Deputy Minister Shannon Barnett-Aikman, and Director, Education Operations and Educator Development Jennifer Rae to renew communication for the new school year. During our meeting, we discussed Education Act Modernization, Recruitment & Retention of school staff, Housing, Challenges with HelpDesk (Human Resources/Finance), DEA/DEC Training, and JK-12 Curriculum Renewal.


As teachers settle into their communities, the Association has begun travelling. To date, we have travelled to Fort Simpson, Behchoko, Inuvik, Fort Smith and Hay River. We were also invited to speak with new members for YK1 in Yellowknife. Throughout our travel, I have had the pleasure of seeing members make connections with new and returning staff members within their schools and across their region. It has been encouraging to see so many smiling faces and excitement as we once again meet in person. More travel is planned as we return to orientations for Regional Executives and Local Receiving Officers for all nine NWTTA regions.

On the horizon is the NWT Territorial Educators' Conference and Women's Symposium. After several delays due to COVID-19, we are thrilled to host our approximate 900 members in Yellowknife on October 19, 20, and 21, 2022. This will be an opportunity for professional growth and to re-establish relationships with educators from across the territories. I want to thank Adrien Amirault, Trent Waterhouse, the Conference Committee members, as well as the NWTTA Status of Women Committee for the work they have completed. If you are not registered your online NWTTA membership account on the NWTTA website, please take the time to sign-up to ensure you receive mass emails regarding the conference.

I wish you all the best for the 2022-2023 school year!



Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre




## The museum has lots to offer NWT schools

### Edukits

We ship themed kits to schools containing lessons and props in a box ... for free!

### Online Resources

Our website has virtual activities, audio, and exhibits – including ‘Big River Journey.’



### School Programs

Available for a variety of grade levels at the museum in Yellowknife. Programs available in English and French.

**For a full list of resources:**  
[www.pwnhc.ca/education/educational-programs-and-services](http://www.pwnhc.ca/education/educational-programs-and-services)

**For more information:**  
Email: [pwnhc\\_education@gov.nt.ca](mailto:pwnhc_education@gov.nt.ca)  
Website: [www.pwnhc.ca](http://www.pwnhc.ca)

Northern Lights

Meet Lorna Chambers from Aklavik (Beaufort-Delta region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I was born in Jamaica and raised in Toronto, Canada.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

After living in West Africa for seven years in a humanitarian capacity, I returned to Canada and an opportunity opened for me to volunteer with the Northern Distance Learning program at Moose Kerr School in Aklavik. During my second year, after constant reminders from my aunt that as a child I used to gather rocks around me and teach them, I decided that the moment was right to pursue a life-long ambition.

Q. What do you teach?

I teach Grades 4, 5, 6 Health, Science, and Art and Physical Education Grades 4-12.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I enjoy teaching most when the learners start to realize their potential and start working toward them regardless of the difficulties they are experiencing.

Q. How do you engage your students?

Accept them as they are and provide opportunities which allows them to express their authentic selves.

Giving Back The Support Received

My uncle's wife is a teacher; she was instrumental in my learning journey during my elementary years. As I embark on my teaching journey, I want to give back the support I received back then.



# Professional Development

*Trent Waterhouse, Professional Development Coordinator*

Welcome back to another exciting school year. I am already receiving applications for funding from teachers eager to register for Fall courses. With that enthusiasm in mind, let's talk Professional Development (PD) - the continuous growth of personal and professional knowledge and expertise that enhances teaching in support of student learning.

As a GNWT NWTTA member you have several options open to you to engage in a broad range of activities that are committed to self-assessment, personal professional renewal and lifelong learning.

## GNWT Regional PD Funds

Each GNWT NWTTA region of the NWT has Regional Professional Development funds to support PD for the NWTTA members in that region. This funding is for individual, school-based or regional PD activities. Each region is unique and has their own policies and procedures in place for disbursement of these funds. Each Regional PD Committee guidelines and forms can be found in that region's Member Area page on the NWTTA website (login required). Applications for this funding are received and approved by your Regional Professional Development Committee. Please contact your LRO or Regional Professional Development Committee for more information.

## GNWT Central PD Funds

GNWT NWTTA Members can also access funds through the Central Professional Development Fund.

**You must apply and receive confirmation of approval BEFORE the start of the course to be eligible for reimbursement.**

You are eligible to receive up to \$4,000 in tuition reimbursement this fiscal year (September 1 - August 31). Applications must meet the following requirements:

- Coursework must be related to professional development (work-related skills and knowledge) or growth (advancing role within the institution), or part of a college degree program
- Reimbursement is for tuition and mandatory student charges only (meals, mileage, and related expenses are not included)

- Courses must be taken at an accredited institution
  - [Colleges & Institutes Canada](#)
  - [Universities Canada](#)

GNWT Central PD funding is available for reimbursement of the following PD activities:

- [Online Distance Credit Courses](#)
- [Summer Credit Courses](#)
- [Summer Non-Credit Courses](#)
- Educational Leadership Program Funding
- [Education Leave with and without allowances](#)
- Indigenous Language Acquisition Funding

## YK1 & YCS Members

Please contact your School Professional Development representative.

## PD Spotlight

### Indigenous Language Acquisition Funding

These funds are specifically for the purpose of professional improvement of language proficiency in one or more of the official Indigenous Languages of the Northwest Territories. GNWT NWTTA members are eligible to receive funds for:

- 1. Language Acquisition and Instruction Courses**  
Purpose: For GNWT NWTTA teachers to take courses aimed at improving Indigenous Language Instruction.

Eligible Expenses: tuition, on-site accommodation and per diems, travel costs and substitute costs to a maximum of \$6000

- 2. Individual Language Learning Activities**  
Purpose: Available to GNWT NWTTA Indigenous Language teachers to improve their Indigenous language skills. Activities with Elders or other Indigenous language speakers where there is the opportunity to hear and speak language, learn more about language, traditional ways and beliefs are eligible for this funding. This funding could also be used to connect Indigenous Language teachers with a language mentor in the classroom.

Eligible Expenses: honoraria to Elder/language mentor, substitute costs where applicable and/or warranted, materials to a maximum of \$6000.

# NWT EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE AND WOMEN'S SYMPOSIUM



October 19-21, 2022 | YELLOWKNIFE, NT

Registration is now open for NWTTA members to select their sessions for the NWT Territorial Educators' Conference and Women's Symposium!

After registrations close on September 23, 2022 we will be sending details for travel and accommodation for those outside of Yellowknife as quickly as possible.

Thank you to NWTTA members who are session presenters; your valuable experience and ideas will support and strengthen our Northern professional development community!

## Opening Keynote

### Monique Gray Smith



[moniquegraysmith.com](http://moniquegraysmith.com)

Monique Gray Smith is a proud mom of teenage twins, an award-winning, best-selling author and sought after consultant. Monique's most recent novel, Tilly and the Crazy Eights was long listed for Canada Reads 2021.

Monique has 7 books ranging for readers across the life span. These include Speaking our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation; My Heart Fills with Happiness, You Hold Me Up, Lucy and Lola, Tilly: A Story of Hope and Resilience and recently released, When We Are Kind. Monique's books are used to share wisdom, knowledge, hope and the important teaching that love is medicine.

Monique is Cree, Lakota and Scottish and has been sober and involved in her healing journey for over 30 years. She is well known for her storytelling, spirit of generosity and focus on resilience.

## Closing Keynote

### Dr. Jodi Carrington



[drjodycarrington.com](http://drjodycarrington.com)

Dr. Jody Carrington is a psychologist, best-selling author, and public speaker with an affinity for helping teams and organizations overcome their most complex, human-centred problems. Her glowing energy and incomparable ability to connect with audiences result in compelling keynotes and life-changing workshops.

The message is simple: we are wired to do the hard things, but we are so much braver together.

Jody speaks passionately (and humourously) about resilience, burnout, mental health, leadership, grief and trauma— and how reconnection is the answer to so many of the root problems we face.

## Conference Features

- NWTTA hosted Conference Social Wednesday evening
- Trade Show booths with information, resources and experts to inform and expand your understanding of the organizations and services that can support your school communities
- Women's Symposium Breakfast hosted by NWTTA Status of Women Committee Thursday morning
- Women's Symposium Highlighting: Women Who Inspire

Having members together from the GNWT, YCS, and YK1 from all across the vast geography of the Northwest Territories is quite an undertaking and there are many moving parts. Thank you to the Conference committee past and present for this 2022 NWTTA conference!

Travel safe as we gather in-person in Yellowknife for Professional Development!



# Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do

David Murphy, Executive Director

When the last school year ended in June, I was optimistic that the new school year would return to normal routines for educators, students and parents. So far, this optimism is holding and things appear to be back to the way things were before COVID-19 closed schools and played havoc with our lives including the education of children.

Students who are starting their school year in grade 2 are in their first year of school not wearing a mask, using hand sanitizer and sitting facing forward while trying to distance from other students. No more arrows to follow as they walk, all students going to recess at the same time, pizza days coming back and maybe a hug or two and a few high fives. When you think of it and try to view this new school year through the eyes of a current grade 2 student, things must look very different. Hopefully things keep getting better!

At NWTTA Central Office we too are looking at the new school year in a different way. This year our travel restrictions have lifted and we can travel to schools to meet with members and carry out the business of the Association. President Miller and I have attended regional teacher in-services at the beginning of the school year in several regions. We met with teachers in the Tlicho, Dehcho, Beaufort-Delta, and the new educators at Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1).

At each of these in-services, teachers appeared very eager to setup their classrooms, get started with the new year, meet their students in-person and not let the last years of COVID-19 dampen their spirits. From the meetings we had with teachers at the beginning of the year, our students appear to be in good capable hands. One teacher we met in the Beaufort-Delta just graduated from university and is starting her first year of teaching. While driving from her home province to Inuvik she got a flat tire on the Dempster Highway. She changed the tire by putting on the small spare tire and carried on her journey. She is looking forward to the new school year in her NWT community, enjoying teaching her students and experiencing her first winter in the NWT.

Visiting schools provided us an opportunity to re-experience things that we could only think about as we reminisce. For example, when we visited the Tlicho school, Chief Jimmy Bruneau, this year we were invited to stay for lunch. It was great to see teachers and staff lined up to serve themselves from the serving trays and containers that contained the buffet meal that was

prepared for them.

At Mildred Hall School (YK1 region), we met with new members to the district. My excitement in meeting the new YK1 teachers and Education Assistants surely did not go unnoticed. As I was walking from the back of the room to the front to speak to the new staff, I tripped in a dip in the floor causing me to fall. I immediately got up and after I did, I could sense that everyone who saw me fall were worried about me. I assured them I was okay and things went off without a hitch. Although I didn't like falling, meeting with the new staff was very much worth it. We were able to answer many questions they had and provide us an opportunity to build relationships that otherwise would not have occurred, especially during the last two years on Zoom meetings.

In the Dehcho, we met with teachers at an evening barbecue. This was a great time and as in the other schools we visited, the eagerness of the staff looking forward to the new school year was evident. There are new principals in several schools, new teachers, teachers who had left but this year are returning and of course many veteran teachers returning after teaching in the Dehcho for many years.

President Miller and I are currently holding the regional orientations with Regional Executives and LROs, and will continue to the end of September. Once all are completed Regional Executive members and Local Receiving Officers will have a better understanding on their roles within the NWTTA. As well we will receive input from participants that provide the direction the Association will take in a number of areas. This input from the regional orientations will be brought to the Regional Presidents and Central Executive at the Executive Leadership and Planning Meeting to be held in October for their discussion and help provide the goals of the Association for the year.

While I am optimistic that things are returning to normal, I would like to remind you that we must still remain diligent and continue to observe safety practices such as hand washing and wearing a mask if you feel safer in doing so. I hope you have a great year and I look forward to meeting you in-person at the NWT Educators' Conference and Women's Symposium in October.

In closing, please remember, 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.



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](http://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.*



# Take Notice of your Pay and Benefits

Sara McCrea, Assistant Executive Director

Central Office frequently receives questions and concerns from members about their pay and benefits. We advise members to review their pay stubs and ensure enrollment in their Health and Dental Benefits plans.

Confirm that you are correctly placed on the salary grid for your bargaining unit (Step and Category); if applicable, ensure you are receiving proper allowances.

A significant part of your compensation is the Health and Dental Benefits that you are entitled to. All three bargaining units have similar health and dental benefits, but they are not exactly the same nor provided by the same insurance companies.

It is important to understand your own benefits and best to contact your employer’s Human Resources Department for enrollment information, documentation and the plans available to you if you have not been provided with this information as of yet.

## Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

Teachers employed by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) are provided Health and Dental Benefits by two different providers. The Public Service Health Care Plan provides health benefits, and members are insured by Sun Life Assurance. Dental Benefits are provided through Green Shield Canada.

For new GNWT members, you will be eligible for Dental coverage on the first day following 3 months of continuous active employment. Your dependent coverage will begin on the same date as your coverage.

Please note that after your Public Service Health Care Plan application is submitted to your Benefits Officer, new plan members must complete Positive Enrollment on the Sun Life



website before any claims are processed and receive a benefit card from Sun Life. If you apply for coverage:

- **Within 60 days** of eligibility, coverage will take effect the 1st of the month following Human Resources receipt of your application in their office.
- **After your initial 60 days** of eligibility, coverage will take effect the 1st of the 4th month following our receipt of your application in our office.

GNWT: [Benefits Summary of GNWT NWTTA Pamphlet](#)

**Yellowknife Catholic Schools teachers (YCS) and Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1) members** are covered by Manulife Insurance. Though Manulife covers both, the benefits are not exactly the same for each bargaining group.



## Yellowknife Catholic Schools (YCS)

Benefits include Life Insurance, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Extended Health Care, Dental Care and Long-Term Disability.

In addition to Group Benefits, teachers are eligible for a Health Spending Account of up to \$500 per school year for any health-related expenses for the teacher and their dependents. Any unused amounts in a teacher’s Health Spending Account can be carried forward for one school year. Any amounts in a teacher’s Health Spending Account that are not used within two (2) School Years shall lapse.

YCS: [Benefits Summary of YCS NWTTA Pamphlet](#)

## Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1)

Benefits include Life Insurance, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Extended Health Care, Dental Care and Long-Term Disability.

In addition to Group Benefits, YK1 members have

access to a Health Spending Account of up to \$800 per school year. Any unused amounts in a teacher’s Health Spending Account can be carried forward for one school year, and within two (2) school years, the funds shall lapse.

Note: You must exhaust your Healthcare coverage under your Extended Care Plan and Dental Plan before you can access the Health Care Spending Account for the service used.

YK1: [Benefits Summary of YK1 NWTTA Pamphlet](#)

**All NWTTA members: Remember to check your Collective Agreements for other benefits unique to each bargaining group, benefits such as:**

- Maternity and Parental Leave
- Medical travel
- Professional Development
- Northern Allowance
- Removal Benefits
- Sick, Special, and other leaves
- Early Resignation bonuses
- Various Allowances (travel, admin, language...)

Not all of the collective agreements have the same benefits, so please check your agreement for information.

As always, please call Central Office if we can be of assistance.



# Northern Lights

Meet **Marissa Oteiza** from Hay River (South Slave region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**  
I grew up in the North. I lived in Yellowknife until I was eight years old and then my family relocated to Hay River, NT, settling on a piece of farmland in Paradise Gardens. My early childhood was spent busy with after school programs such as ballet, dance, piano, and theatre. Once we moved to Hay River, extracurricular activities were replaced with outdoor play and riding around on bikes with my friends. I stayed in Hay River for the remainder of my childhood, moving into town when I was 16 and graduating from Diamond Jenness Secondary School in 2007.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**  
I never planned on becoming a teacher, I wanted to be a journalist, but during my year at journalism school, I discovered a love for working with children and youth. I completed my Early Learning and Childhood Diploma and went on to become the director of the Hay River Youth Centre. During my time there I discovered my passion for working with youth, especially those lost and looking for a safe place. I went back to Edmonton to get my education degree at the University of Alberta with the intention of a fine arts minor so I could become an art teacher.

**Q. What do you teach?**  
This year I will be teaching art, senior high fitness, and science at Diamond Jenness Secondary School in Hay River.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**  
What I enjoy most about teaching is building relationships with my students, getting to know their interests, and helping them discover their talents. A teacher can facilitate learning and help guide our students towards a promising future.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**  
I plan on engaging with my students by getting to know them first, getting to know their interests, a bit about what they like to do, what their hobbies are, and who they are. Then I try to provide invitations to learn and incorporate fun, color, music, and creativity.

**Environment Informs Learning**  
It is a privilege to be a teacher, to walk into our students’ lives where they are, and be a part of their learning journey. We are here to provide a safe place, inspire and spark creativity and help them discover what their talents are and who they are meant to become. A teacher must respect that the student’s environment informs learning and that their family, friends, and community are impacting them as much as the school setting.



# Meet Your Central Office Team

**David Murphy**, Executive Director

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, **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 available after hours to take urgent issue calls from members.

**Sara McCrea**, Assistant Executive Director, and myself, **David Murphy**, Executive Director, are the people you will contact regarding the many members' concerns you may have. We are prepared to assist with your questions regarding pay



Denise Works



Matthew Miller



Sara McCrea

and benefits, certification and salary assessment, your evaluations, job accommodation needs, discipline hearings, meetings with the employer and if need be, grievances and arbitration. They are available after hours to take urgent issue calls from members. Sara parle couramment français.

You may occasionally contact **André Corbeil**, Finance and Communications Officer, with regard to expense 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.

GNWT teachers may contact **Trent Waterhouse**, 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. Trent is the lead in finalizing the Territorial Educators' Conference & Women's Symposium taking place in October 2022.



André Corbeil



Trent Waterhouse



David Murphy



K'alemi Dene School (YK1 region) staff 2022-2023



Mackenzie Mountain School (Sahtu region) staff 2022-2023



Weledeh Catholic School (YCS region) staff 2022-2023

## Northern Lights

Meet

**Samantha Sarty**  
from Fort Smith (Fort Smith region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in a small community called Parkdale on the South Shore of Nova Scotia.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**

Though I had many positive experiences during my own schooling, my reasons for becoming a teacher actually stem from negative experiences I had. My goal with teaching is to ensure that a lot of these negative experiences that I had will never happen to students in my own classroom.

**Q. What do you teach?**

I can teach Science, Math and Social Studies.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**

Without a doubt the thing I enjoy most about teaching is watching students find a passion for Math and Science where there may not have been one before.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**

I use a lot of gamification in my teaching. In my experience, playing games related to what is being taught is not only a great review tool, but allows students to learn concepts without realizing they're learning.

**Feeling Valued**

Throughout junior high and high school, I was far from the perfect student. Things I was dealing with at home followed me to school and severely affected my academics. I was having trouble learning a concept in Chemistry class, and even after getting extra help I was still struggling to understand it. My teacher went home that night and researched different methods I could use to answer that type of question, and brought them to me the next day. How valued and important I felt in that moment is how I aspire for my own students to feel.



# What I did this summer... Education Leadership Program (ELP)

Between July 1 and July 11, 2022, a group of NWTTA members participated in the Educational Leadership Program (ELP) in Yellowknife and surrounding area. ELP is a two-phase program that is designed to help participants develop their leadership skills for use in northern educational settings. All school principals in Northwest Territories schools must complete this program to be eligible for Principal's Certification. The program is also open to educators with two or more years of NWT teaching experience who are not currently school principals. ELP is a two-phase program with NWT principals required to participate in both phases. ELP was cancelled during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19.

ELP is organized by the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment with the NWTTA Professional Development Coordinator as part of the organizing committee. If you have general questions about ELP, you can email NWTTA PD Coordinator Trent Waterhouse at [pd@nwtta.nt.ca](mailto:pd@nwtta.nt.ca).

ELP 2022 was Phase 1, had 26 NWTTA participants with three current NWT Principals (**Al Karasiuk**, Paul W. Kaeser High School in Fort Smith; **Vivian Harris**,

Lutsel K'e Dene School in Lusek'e; **Randy Caines**, N.J. Macpherson School in Yellowknife) serving as group leaders.

The photo below captures ELP 2022 participants and instructors taken at the BDene Camp, located approximately two kilometres outside of Dettah (approximately 25 kilometres outside of Yellowknife).

ELP 2022 NWTTA participants were: **Benjamin Adams** (Fort Simpson), **Graham Arts** (Yellowknife), **Sylvester Boadi** (Wrigley), **Jason Dayman** (Deline), **Kim Mabbitt** (K'atlo'deche First Nations Reserve), **Kaitlyn Fox-LaPierre** (Behchoko) **Lara Gerritse Mercier** (Tsiigehtchic), **Bryce Glendenning** (Whati), **Angela Griffin** (Fort Providence), **Dan Kearley** (Fort Smith), **Paul Kelly** (Yellowknife), **Tiffany Kelly** (Fort Smith), **Nicolas Kopot** (Ulukhaktok), **Alicia Larade** (Yellowknife), **Sylvie Larose** (Yellowknife), **Katrine Lavoie** (Hay River), **Christy MacKay** (Fort Smith), **Kally Moorhouse** (Behchoko), **Jason Morrissey** (Hay River), **Don Reid** (Yellowknife), **Matthew Sharpe** (Behchoko), **Bryan Strong** (Nahanni Butte), **Allison McArthur** (Fort Smith), **Jaspar Wong** (Wekweeti), **Matthew Zink** (Norman Wells), and **Lisa Zoe** (Behchoko)



# Regional Orientations Road Trip

A few Regional Orientations (Regional Executive & LROs) have already taken place.



# Welcome Back

Welcome back to our returning educators – I hope you had a well-deserved summer break. To all those who are new to the north – welcome to the Northwest Territories. The NWT is a spectacular place to live and work and I hope your experience reflects this.

At the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, we're excited to kick off the 2022-23 school year with a number of new initiatives aimed at better supporting educators and students.

We are launching a new online certification system for educators, piloting a certificate program for Support Assistants, and introducing new professional Educator Standards. The exciting work of renewing our Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum will also continue. We look forward to working with educators as we transition to British Columbia's curriculum and adapt it to reflect people, cultures, and land of the Northwest Territories.

As you begin this school year feeling renewed and ready to get back to normal, I ask that you continue to keep yourselves and others safe by continuing the healthy habits we have all learned over the past two years. Thank you for your commitment to our students and to education. I wish you all a great school year.

Government of  
Northwest Territories



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



# Learn How to Manage Burnout and Depression with Starling Minds

## 6-Week Mental Fitness Challenge on Burnout and Depression

In-depth training to create your mental fitness plan to manage burnout and depression.

Weekly on Tuesdays: Oct 18th - Nov 22nd | 5:00 PM MDT

**Register Now**



Hosted by:  
**Dr. Andrew Miki**, Chief Science Officer  
Starling Minds

The impacts of the pandemic and its variants have created a massive strain on members. According to recent polls, 70% of people are struggling with burnout, yet do not have the time and energy to care for themselves.

In partnership with NWT Teachers' Association, Starling Minds provides you and your family members free digital mental health training and live practices to support you in your mental health journey and help you better manage your worry, anxiety and depression.

And with the massive success of the Mental Fitness Challenge last spring, our partners at Starling Minds have invited NWTTA and its members to join their 6-Week interactive Mental Fitness Challenge this fall hosted by their Chief Science Officer, Dr. Andrew Miki to help members prevent and combat depression and burnout.

**Date and Time:** It's a recurring webinar series on Tuesdays from October 18th, 2022 - November 22nd, 2022, at 5 PM MDT.

- The webinar series topics include:**
- Session 1:** What is Burnout 101?
  - Session 2:** Managing stress, anxiety, and depression
  - Session 3:** Finding emotional regulation skills that work for you
  - Session 4:** Making effective plans and assertive goals to move forward
  - Session 5:** Managing your thoughts when you're down
  - Session 6:** How to manage burnout and your work
- After the spring 2022 Mental Fitness Challenge, members experienced:**
- 51% improvement in depression score
  - 43% improvement in anxiety score
  - 81% of members who started as unhealthy showed symptoms improvements
  - 46% of members experienced overall symptoms improvement

## How do I sign up for the Starling Minds 6-Week Mental Fitness Challenge on Burnout and Depression?

To participate in the Mental Fitness Challenge with Dr. Andrew Miki, you need to:

- **Step 1:** Register for the webinar series by clicking on this link: ["6-Week Mental Fitness Challenge Series with Dr. Andrew Miki"](#)
- **Step 2:** Register or log back into Starling Minds by visiting [member.starlingminds.com](https://member.starlingminds.com) and enter your access code: **NWTMEMBER**
- **Step 3:** Take a check-up before the 1st interactive session
- **Step 4:** Attend and participate in the various interactive activities throughout the challenge

By practicing good mental health habits you can be at your best and feel as recharged as possible.

**Mental Fitness Challenge Registration Link:**  
<https://info.starlingminds.com/2022-6-week-mental-fitness-challenge-series-october-nwtta>

## Starling Minds will be at the conference!

**Tara Achkar**, Starling Minds Customer Success Manager will be a presenter at the NWT Educators' Conference and Womens' Symposium for the following session:



**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** is the gold standard to combat the greatest workplace mental health challenges: stress, anxiety, and depression. Starling minds Supports Teacher Mental Health through their online platform. All NWTTA members can freely access this terrific resource. Come and see what Starling Minds has to offer NWT teachers.





# Remembering Betty Wilcox

Betty Wilcox (retired École Sir John Franklin High School, YK1 region) of Stanhope, PEI passed away peacefully on Thursday, July 7, 2022 at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Charlottetown after a long battle trying to recover from a massive heart attack, she had suffered in early May that had left her with only 20 percent heart function. She had just turned 72 on June 24 and had hoped for many more creative and fruitful years on her adopted island home.

Predeceased by her parents, Johannes and Jantina Mensink, she is survived by her husband, John Wilcox, sister, Maryke Mareti , brother, John Mensink, partner Catherine Ostell and their daughter, Jessica Mensink. Betty was an aunt to John’s sister, Cathy’s children, David and Laura, and a great aunt with the births of Henry by Laura and later Mavis by David’s wife, Kandas. She leaves behind numerous cousins, both here and in the Netherlands and Betty made innumerable friends as she journeyed through her life.

Born in the Netherlands in the aftermath of WW2, Betty along with her parents and sister arrived in Ontario, Canada and over time adapted to a different way of life. She spent her adolescent years and young adulthood in Kitchener-Waterloo where she met her future husband, John. They married in July of 1971.

After John’s college graduation, the couple moved to Victoria on Vancouver Island and settled in for a 14 year stay. The University of Victoria proved to be exactly right for Betty. She blossomed and in 1984 she received Bachelor of Arts degrees in both History and Art History. She received her Bachelor of Education degree in 1989.

Economics precipitated a move back to Ontario shortly thereafter but after two years there and dealing with another economic downturn, Betty managed to land a teaching job in Yellowknife, NWT and off they went. This move allowed Betty to thrive in all aspects of her very



2007 École Sir John Franklin High School Fine Arts New York Trip Chaperones l-r Betty Wilcox, André Corbeil, Landon Peters, Janice Daly

visual world and she threw herself into every challenge and thrived: Teaching, Painting, Illustrating, Murals on buildings, Murals in the school, decorated garbage bins, Fibreglass Ravens, Talent shows, Art shows, Department head for fine arts, many awards and too many more projects to list. These were vibrant years for Betty.

In 2010 she and her husband moved to Stanhope, PEI and their new-built home. These years on PEI were filled with activity and a determination to enjoy a fulfilling retirement. Despite being hampered by a tremor from her Parkinson’s disease, she was still able to produce some wonderful artwork, share her skills with others, took art classes and had become part of PEI’s art community.

Betty was a visual artist, she was a teacher, she was kind, she had a big heart, she wanted to see fairness prevail, she loved animals, she was one of the nicest and most thoughtful people you could ever ask to meet. She is missed.

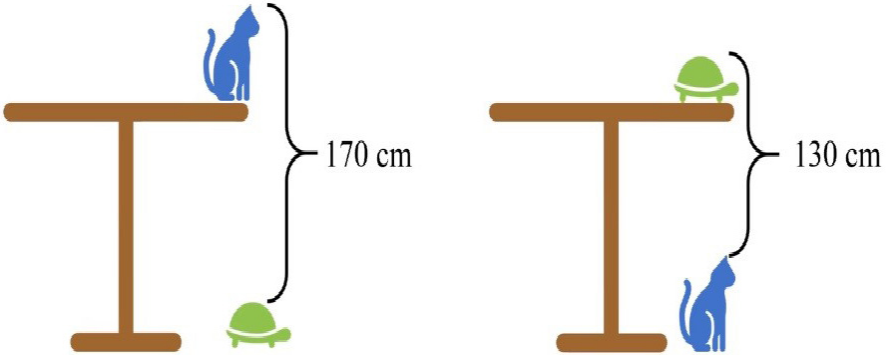
# Math Puzzle!

Given that the total height from the tortoise’s shell to cat’s head is 170cm.

Also the total height from the cat’s head to tortoise’s shell is 130 cm.

Find the height of the table.

By Mr. Sushil Jasper M.Sc., B.Ed.,  
Mathematics and Science Teacher  
Liidlii Kue Regional High School (Dehcho region)



Answer on page 23

# Paddling Begadee River

Scott Willoughby, YK1 region

This summer Yellowknife Education District No. 1 teachers set out on a unique professional development experience. The group spent twelve days paddling down the Keele River. The intent of this trip was to answer the question "Does spending time with Elders in a spiritual place influence the practice of northern educators?" The two Elders, both from Tulita, were Ricky Andrew and Leon Andrew. Their contribution to this experience was incredible. They told ancient stories, passed along traditional learnings, shared their language, led beautiful ceremonies and began everyday with their great sense of humour. The land also put on a show. The river known traditionally as Begadee, offered crystal clear waters, majestic mountain views, wildlife sightings and incredible weather everyday.

This experience led to lots of learning, sharing of ideas and was transformative for everyone. Spending time with Elders in spiritual places really does contribute to developing great educators in the north.

## Begadee River Paddlers

l-r Ricky Andrew, Ken MacDairmid, Gillian Waugh, Andrea Harding, Leon Andrew, Scott Willoughby, Jolene McDonald, Kim Poitras, Mike Mansfield, Matt Sinclair, Nathan Doering





Government of  
Northwest Territories



## Celebrate Indigenous Languages Month this February

For ideas on how to celebrate Indigenous Languages Month in your classroom, visit:

- [www.ourlanguagesnwt.com](http://www.ourlanguagesnwt.com)
- [www.pwnhc.ca](http://www.pwnhc.ca)
- [www.nwtliteracy.ca](http://www.nwtliteracy.ca)

Contact us at [indigenouslanguages@gov.nt.ca](mailto:indigenouslanguages@gov.nt.ca) for more information or visit our booth at the NWT Educators’ Conference this October.





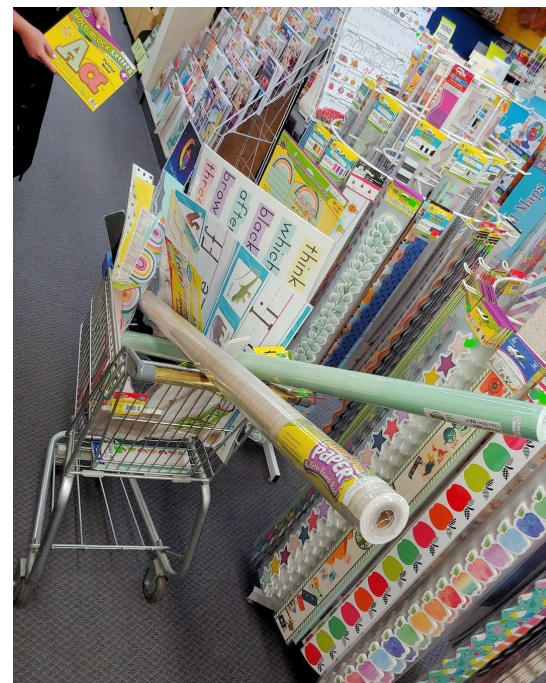


## The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is pleased to announce the launch of Certified NWT!

- Easily apply for JK-12 educator certification
- Submit documentation electronically
- Receive email notifications on your status
- Apply for, and print, salary letters
- View and print teaching certificates

Visit [CertifiedNWT.ca](https://CertifiedNWT.ca) today to renew your teacher certification or apply/re-apply for certification.

Government of Northwest Territories



## Summer Teacher Activity

Stocking up and shipping myself materials for school from Toronto during the summer.  
-Amanda

## Northern Lights

**Meet Sam Dehdashti**  
from Norman Wells (Sahtu region)



**Q. Where did you grow up?**  
I grew up in Iran and Toronto.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**

Through studying many subjects and working in different fields, I discovered my love for teaching by accident. I realized that I love breaking down various concepts and explaining them to others. I started teaching as a volunteer in Spain and it made me happier than I've ever been.

**Q. What do you teach?**  
I teach ESL and Elementary Grades 3/4.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**  
My favourite thing about teaching is its creative aspect. It gives me the freedom to create unique lessons and help my students learn with a variety of fun and interactive methods.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**  
I try to find out about my students' interests. This helps me curate my lessons for their individual and collective needs. Depending on grade level, I also find music, singing and movement to be very effective in motivating my students.

### Seeing the Best in All Human Beings

I had a student with brittle bone disease. He was unable to hold a pen and even write single letters of the alphabet. Everyone thought his language skills were not sufficient. The school did not have enough resources, so I decided to bring my laptop to see if it can help. Using the keyboard, the student was able to write full sentences and paragraphs. It was amazing to see his capabilities shine through. His language skills were there, but he did not have the outlet to show them to others. This is why we have to create opportunities for all our students to show their abilities. All students need a teacher that believes in them, and sometimes that single teacher will make the biggest difference in their life. I want to be that teacher, at least I hope I can be.

## Tlicho Regional Conference

Tlicho members gathered in Behchoko August 23-25 before the start of classes for students.



Pehtseo Ayha School (Sahtu region) staff 2022-2023



Paul W. Kaeser High School (Fort Smith region) staff 2022-2023



# An Amazing Community Service Initiative Helmets for Hardy

*Christina Silzer, Teacher and Interact Club Teacher Advisor, École St. Patrick High School (YCS region)*

The Helmets for Hardy helmet giveaway has been held each year since 2012 in honour of Yellowknife teen Josh Hardy, who passed away after suffering a head injury while skateboarding without a helmet. While his parents Jackie and Ed Hardy usually plan the event, they recently moved away, so this year's giveaway was taken over by the Interact Club from Josh's alma mater, École St Patrick High School.

The École St. Patrick High School Interact Club had amazing support for this event with a grant from the Yellowknife Community Foundation and financial support the Yellowknife Elks Lodge #314, the Yellowknife Rotary Club, True North Rotary, Event Rentals Yellowknife, Territorial Beverages Ltd, the RCMP and Yellowknife Catholic Schools.



Back Row l-r Ed Hardy, Jackie Hardy, Brian Mason, Emma Smith, John Ruiz, Alex Smicer  
Front Row l-r Marianne Bumaat, Tafadzwa Mufandaedza, Christina Silzer, Halimah Adepoju, Isha Jha

There were well over 400 families and youth who came to this event! Interact students were able to talk about the importance of helmet safety, instruct children and their parents how to properly fit a helmet AND give away over 170 multi-sport helmets!!! Way to take initiative!

# Catching Up Members' Life Events



**Sarah and Josh Hansen** (Chief Julius School, Beaufort-Delta region) would like to announce the birth of their son, **Eli Carver Jones Hansen** who was born July 10, 2022. Sarah and Josh are excited to be taking the school year off to spend with Eli and look forward to introducing him to everyone at home in Fort McPherson next year.



Congratulations to **Chantal Berthier** (École St. Joseph School, YCS region) and now husband **Marc Bourgeois** who celebrated their marriage in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia on July 30, 2022.



l-r Executive Director **David Murphy** & President **Matthew Miller**, pictured in Inuvik (Beaufort-Delta region) have been meeting with members during DEC regional gatherings during school year startup



## Did you know that more than 300 Support Assistants worked in NWT schools in the 2021-22 school year?

They work with teachers to help meet the diverse needs of students.

This year, ECE is offering a free pilot course to 30 Support Assistants across the NWT to earn their Education Assistance and Inclusion Certificate.

This program will help them develop specialized skills that encourage the wellbeing, development, and education of NWT students.

To learn more, visit [www.ece.gov.nt.ca/support-assistants](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/support-assistants).

Government of  
Northwest Territories



# Remembering Eugène Roach

**Eugène Donald Roach** (December 5, 1976 - July 25, 2022) (École St. Joseph School, YCS region) passed away peacefully; nearly four years after receiving a diagnosis for stage 4 metastasized lung cancer.

Eugène was born in St John, New Brunswick in 1976 to Linda Roach. During his formative years he was surrounded by the love and strength of his “extra” family Sylvain and Mildred Vautour and their children, who treated Eugène like instant family and often refer to him as their little brother. Soon after, Linda met Isidore and he joined the family, being Eugène’s role model, father and friend.

Raised in the Acadian village of St Louis de Kent, he helped out his uncles in the summer on their lobster fishing boats. From a young age, Eugène was obsessed with sports. Thanks to his godfather and grandfather he acquired a love for hockey and baseball and would spend hours outside playing catch. He loved it when he could travel outside of New Brunswick and discover new places.

Upon graduation from the Université de Moncton, Eugène traveled north to Mayo, Yukon to start his teaching career. He left the Maritimes with lessons in hand from his mentor Aldeo Richard and embarked on a dream of fishing, biking and skiing. After three years, he transferred to École St. Joseph School in Yellowknife, to teach physical education. Over the next 18 years, many special students crossed his path, and he strived to ensure they learned valuable life lessons through sports.

It is in Yellowknife that he met the love of his life, Cynthia (Mildred Hall School, YK1 region) and soon encompassed a life with her. Through their marriage, Eugène became a father to Courtney and took this role very seriously. As a family they could be found traveling during school holidays (as long as the trips revolved around food, sports, Acadian culture or music), or planning their next Northern adventure over a board game at the kitchen table.

As the winters were long in the North, Eugène had many hobbies, one of which was music. Many music parties were hosted in the Roach house, with friendships formed through the strum of a guitar. Thanks to the support of the music scene in Yellowknife, Eugène fulfilled a lifelong dream of recording two albums with other talented musicians, allowing the world a glimpse into the depths of this quiet man.

Eugène liked to spend as much time outside as possible, whether that be hunting, or on the water in his boat. Great

Slave Lake was his sanctuary and exploring it with Cynthia and Courtney became a summertime ritual. Many shore lunches and camping trips were shared, and Burnt Island Man Spas always held a special place in his heart.

As a coach, player, organizer and occasional cheerleader, Eugène became involved in all aspects of the sporting community in Yellowknife. His passion for hockey led him to be a proud member of the WIMP Hockey Organization and he was known by his teammates for a great ‘floppy fish’ save.



As Eugène’s disease progressed, he left the North with Cynthia and headed to Vancouver Island. The lure of year round fishing, easier climates, and their daughter and son-in-law down the road, made Sooke, British Columbia the perfect spot to be.

Eugène lived each day to the fullest, despite his diagnosis, and ignored any suggested time lines or statistics. He lived life large, but focused on the small things, drawing some of his strength from a special student who shared this understanding deeply. Seeking joy daily, he reminded us all that he, not the cancer, was in control.

Eugène leaves behind to cherish his memory his loving wife Cynthia, his daughter Courtney, son-in-law Lionel, parents Linda and Isidore, parents-in-law Donna and Ray, step-brothers Eric (Trina) and Robert, step-sister Micheline (Simon), brother-in-law Scott, nieces Alaria (Massimo) and

Mara, nephew Spencer, godparents Lucille and Marven, his beloved Bear and many many special friends, aunts, uncles, cousins and students too numerous to name.

Eugène was predeceased by his special little buddy Jonas, Grandmothers Mildred, Jeaninne, and Aurore, Grandfathers Sylvan, Eloi and Oscar, and sister-in-law Janet.

Eugène’s family gives thanks to the amazing medical team that spanned from Yellowknife to Edmonton to Victoria. They left no stone unturned, listened to his wishes, believed in his strength, and supported him along his journey.

At Eugène’s request, a cremation has taken place and the family will gather to spread his ashes at a later date. A Celebration of Life was held for Eugène on Saturday, September 3rd, 2022 at the Weledéh/École St. Patrick High School gym in Yellowknife, NT.

A scholarship in Eugène’s memory has been established with the Yellowknife Community Foundation - [www.ykcf.ca](http://www.ykcf.ca).

## Northern Lights

**Meet  
Anthony Hume  
from Yellowknife (YK1  
region)**



**Q. Where did you grow up?**  
I was born and raised in Edmonton, Millwoods specifically.

**Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?**  
I had two teachers in the 12th grade that taught social studies and physical education who had a great impact on me and even allowed me to come in and shadow them when I wasn’t sure of what I wanted to do with my life.

**Q. What do you teach?**  
I currently teach high school: social studies, ELA, math, science, and CALM; however I trained as a physical education specialist.

**Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?**  
My favourite part of teaching is sharing moments and laughter with the students through moments of learning. Unadulterated youth happiness and joy is like a contagious virus you actually want to catch.

**Q. How do you engage your students?**  
Usually through laughing at my own jokes. When that fails, I attempt to find areas of interest from my students’ personal lives and incorporate their interests in my lessons, or even conversations we have in between classes.

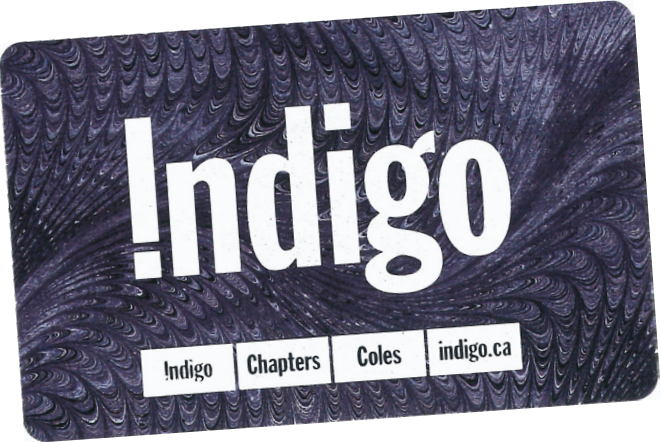
**Teaching Begins with Connections**  
Teaching begins with connections. Whether it’s to the students, staff in your school, or the community around you; the choice to be a teacher is an active one that requires investing in those relationships and allowing them to grow. Integrating this into my practice is how I navigate everything from what I’m going to talk about in class, to how I will choose to manage my classroom and any conflicts that should arise.

## Newsletter Trivia

Send your answers to the trivia questions below to [news@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto: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: **November 4, 2022**



### Win a \$50 Chapters-Indigo Gift Card!

1. What information should be in your work email signature?
2. What high school did Marissa Oteiza graduate from?
3. How many phases are there in ELP?
4. What is the traditional name for the Keele River?

**Danika Jobin** from École Itt’o (YK1 region) is the winner of the May 2022 Newsletter Trivia.

**Cover:** Tlich Regional Conference in Behchoko August 23-25, 2022. l-r **Rosa Mantla**, Tlich board member for Behchoko teaches **Stephanie Bonnar** and **Marca Simba** how to pluck a duck.

**Math Puzzle!** (page 16) answer:  
150 cm



# 2022-2024 Central Executive

**Matthew Miller**

President

matthew.miller@nwttta.nt.ca

**Gwen Young**

Vice-President

gwen.young@nwttta.nt.ca

**Wendy Tulk**

Secretary-Treasurer

wendy\_tulk@edutlicho.net

**Colin Pybus**

Member-at-Large

beaufortdelta@nwttta.nt.ca

**Todd Sturgeon**

Regional Presidents' Representative

tsturgeon@ssdec.nt.ca

## 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](mailto:nwttta@nwttta.nt.ca)

[www.nwttta.nt.ca](http://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](mailto:denise.works@nwttta.nt.ca)

**André Corbeil**

Finance & Communications Officer

[andre.corbeil@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:andre.corbeil@nwttta.nt.ca)

**Trent Waterhouse**

Professional Development Coordinator/  
Member Services

[trent.waterhouse@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:trent.waterhouse@nwttta.nt.ca)

### FOR URGENT MEMBER ASSISTANCE CONTACT:

**Matthew Miller**

President

[matthew.miller@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:matthew.miller@nwttta.nt.ca)

Mobile: 867-678-5968

**David Murphy**

Executive Director

[david.murphy@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:david.murphy@nwttta.nt.ca)

Mobile: 867-444-0253

**Sara McCrea**

Assistant Executive Director

[sara.mccrea@nwttta.nt.ca](mailto:sara.mccrea@nwttta.nt.ca)

Mobile: 867-688-7643

