



NWTTA NEWS

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Avid Advocate for Language Revitalization

Congratulations **Gladys Alexie** from Chief Julius School in Fort McPherson (Beaufort-Delta region) who was awarded the Liz Hansen Indigenous Educator Award at the NWTTA's Annual Meeting of Central Council in Yellowknife April 29, 2023. The award recognizes an NWTTA Indigenous Member who has made a significant contribution to education in the Northwest Territories.

Gladys was born and raised in Fort McPherson and has long been an avid advocate of Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik (Gwich'in). As a long-term Indigenous Language Instructor at Chief Julius School, Gladys has been mentored by many influential and fluent Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik Elders, which has earned her high regard within Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik communities.

Gladys has been a strong voice for her community with various public platforms speaking up for the importance of language revitalization, resource development and training opportunities for Indigenous Language Instructors. Gladys sees and understands the efforts for language revitalization programming to help current students, and more crucially than ever, in language retention and use moving into the future. Hą́ Gladys for your significant contributions to education in the Northwest Territories.



*l-r NWTTA President Matthew Miller,
Liz Hansen Award winner Gladys Alexie*

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President's Update

Matthew Miller, President

As the 2022-2023 year begins to wind down, the NWTTA is already planning for the 2023-2024 school year to engage with members. Regional orientations, in-service dates, Executive Leadership and Planning Meetings, and other beginning-of-the-year events have all been set.

We recently held the NWTTA's Annual Meeting of Central Council (AMCC) in Yellowknife. Over two days, we provided committee updates, reviewed and passed the budget, debated changes to the NWTTA Bylaws and Policies and awarded Honorary and Distinguished Lifetime Memberships to qualifying members who are resigning or retiring. We had the opportunity to celebrate two extraordinary members who received special awards from the Association. On the cover of this issue is Gladys Alexie, recipient of the Liz Hansen Indigenous Education Award. The other member recognized was Pat Morris, who received the President's Award for outstanding service to the membership. Congratulations to both Gladys and Pat!



Pat Morris (left) was presented with the President's Award

We were pleased to have Sam Hammond, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation attend as Chairperson for our meetings, Department of Education, Culture & Employment (ECE) Minister R.J. Simpson with ECE Deputy Minister John MacDonald to speak and take questions from the councillors. It was wonderful to have past presidents Al McDonald, Amanda Mallon and David Reid attend our supper as guests.

A reoccurring topic during AMCC was the increased incidents of trauma, negative behaviour and violence in schools. Many factors may contribute to what is happening in schools, but we believe that mental health is at the forefront. The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened awareness of mental health issues. It has shone a spotlight on the difficulties many young people face in managing their emotions and coping with the challenges of daily life. Schools are often the first line of defense in providing mental health support for children, yet many are struggling to provide adequate resources to meet the growing demand. Teachers are reporting that they have been physically and verbally intimidated and attacked by students who need help. Teachers, who are there to support our students, are feeling overwhelmed, threatened, and are considering resigning due to the lack of support and resources.

I have written to the Minister of Health and Social Services, Julie Green



and Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, R.J. Simpson requesting to meet with the NWTTA to find support and to develop targeted strategies for addressing these issues in our schools. This trend is being witnessed across the country by other teacher organizations as well. Violence in schools is scheduled to be a topic when I meet with National Presidents from affiliate teachers' associations in Canada at the end of May. One thing is clear, educators do not deserve to be physically, verbally, or emotionally abused for doing their job.

Since the last issue of the NWTTA Newsletter and after a year of going through the grievance processes, arbitration, and preparing for the Supreme Court of the NWT, we have been successful in having the GNWT COVID-19 Letter of Understanding language recognized in its entirety as written in the collective agreement. It was a long process, but it was worthwhile to defend members' rights.

A frequent question we get is when members should include the NWTTA Central Office in an email addressing an issue with Human Resources. We recommend from the beginning when you first contact them with your concern. With the GNWT HelpDesk, members will receive an automatic response with a ticket number. We can use this ticket number to follow up on your behalf.

The volume of work handled by our staff has remained consistently high. Our staff have often been known to put in additional hours without complaint to provide exceptional service. It is important to acknowledge their efforts and the significant demands placed on them. I believed COVID-19 was the catalyst behind the workload, but it has become apparent that it was only one of several contributing factors. The issues that arise are often complex, and finding solutions can be a challenging and time-consuming process. However, our staff consistently demonstrate a commitment that goes the extra mile, working tirelessly to support the interests of our members. Thank you, NWTTA staff!

I want to close by thanking all of the members who have taken on NWTTA leadership roles in your school/worksites at the region, and territorial level. At a time when it seems more is being asked of educators, these individuals have volunteered their time to support and advocate for their colleagues, adding to their workload. Your dedication is appreciated and does not go unnoticed.

Wherever you find yourself this summer, I hope you find time to relax.

Northern Lights

Meet

Sean Daly
from Yellowknife (YK1 region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

Winnipeg and South Western Manitoba. I spent some of my high school summers working on a grain farm at Carmen, Manitoba. I'll actually be heading back to my high school's 60th reunion in June, Vincent Massey Collegiate in Fort Garry, Winnipeg.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

You might say it was bred in the bone. My grandmother, mother and two of my sisters are teachers. However, I was really motivated to make my mark in Arts Education because I had so many great formative teachers and 'arts' experiences growing up.

Q. What do you teach?

As you may have guessed, I'm teaching Music and Enhanced Fine Arts at NJ Macpherson School.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I am really pleased when a student experiences a growth in confidence and achieves a goal through hard work and taking some creative risks.

Q. How do you engage your students?

After all these years, it still needs to be fun and engage the intellect.

Forever Thankful for Colleagues

When I first arrived at William McDonald School in 1989, one of my first teaching challenges was to figure out how to teach visual arts to a visually impaired student. Needless to say, the journey of creative problem solving and collaborating with my peers began right away! I'm forever thankful for all the colleagues across the north that I have been able to meet and work with over the last 34 years! Cheers!

Infinite Gratitude

Yvette Jean-Jacques, Principal, Kakisa Lake School (Dehcho region)

I want to send a gigantic 'thank you' to Ms. Paula Chin and Mr. JP Bernard for all you do. You make a difference, and you serve selflessly. Your compassion, empathy, kindness, and caring are life-changing. Your passion, commitment, dedication, energy, and enthusiasm are infectious and inspiring. Your partnership, collegiality, collaboration, input, voice, and perspective are things I will never forget, nor have I ever taken them for granted.

As an English Language Arts teacher (grades 7-12) at Echo Dene School in Fort Liard, Ms. Chin is known for creating an equitable learning experience for her students. She connects learning to the real world and helps all students, regardless of reading ability, gains background knowledge in various content areas, increasing reading comprehension. If the grade twelve diploma exam is meant to be an independent predictor of how well students will perform in college or university, Ms. Chin's students nailed it. Every student in Ms. Chin's grade 12 Language Arts class passed their diploma exams.

Now on to Mr. Jean-Paul Bernard, AKA JP Bernard; the best part about having an Information Technology Teacher (IT) Consultant is getting help immediately if and when needed. JP has a reputation



Paula Chin



JP Bernard

- Mársi**
Dēne Sų́líné Yatíé (Chipewyan)

kinanāskomitin
nēhiyawēwin (Cree)

Thank you
English

Merci
Français (French)

Haj'
Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik (Gwich'in)

Quana
Inuinnaqtun

Qujannamiik
Inuktitut

Quyanainni
Inuvialuktun

Máhsí
Dene Kádé (North Slavey)

Máhsí
Dene Zhatíé (South Slavey)

Masi
Tłıchų Yatıı (Tłıchų)

for working past his regular working hours. I am very grateful I have such an excellent IT consultant. I don't know how you are always available while working your busy schedule. Maybe you have secret superpowers, or it could be your perseverance. Sometimes people might feel annoyed with the thousands of emails I send you regularly. Your positive attitude helps a lot. I truly appreciate your encouragement and support.

Ms. Chin and Mr. Bernard work tirelessly on behalf of students and serve crucial roles in the lives of so many. Your impact is profound and reaches places and depths that, in many cases, you will never see or realize. The lives you touch and the service you provide are innumerable. Your unwavering focus on improving student experiences, outcomes, and opportunities is awe-inspiring. The love you demonstrate for our students, school, and community has shaped who we are and what we are known for. I am incredibly proud to work alongside each one of you.

Please know how fortunate I am to call you a colleague, teacher, educator, collaborator, contributor, and friend. I love each one of you and have the most sincere and profound gratitude for what you do with and for our students. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. You have impacted, influenced, and moved me every day.

Hometown Pride

NWTTA members are from all over, bringing with them diverse experiences and backgrounds. We asked our members to send us a selfie as a shout out to their home town. You will find some of those photos scattered through this newsletter.



For the past six years I've planned a summer mud volleyball tournament at home in Vawn, Saskatchewan. Bring on year seven of the tournament! -Brandon



Shout out to the one and only Chelsea in la belle province, Québec! -Liz



Career and Education Advisors

Career and Education Advisors are in every school and region!

They support Grade 9-12 students in their next steps after graduation and provide practical support with:

- resumes and cover letters
- work applications
- post-secondary program applications
- Student Financial Assistance applications
- bursaries, grants or scholarship applications

If you know a student who may be interested in talking to a Career and Education Advisor, encourage them to connect.

Scan the code to learn more:



Government of Northwest Territories

Working for Our Members A Glimpse of What We Do

David Murphy, Executive Director

At this time of year our schools are putting the finishing touches on a number of things to complete the year and looking forward to and planning for the coming year. We, too, at the Association are finishing up projects and commitments from the current year and looking ahead and planning for next year.

One of these was the Annual Meeting of Central Council (AMCC) where Central Council met on April 28-29, 2023 to transact the business of the Association. Central Council consists of Central Executive members and coucillors from each NWTTA region on the basis of one coucillor for each fifty active members or major portion thereof. At AMCC 2023 there were twenty-four coucillors comprised of five from Central Executive, four from the Beaufort-Delta, six from YK1, two from YCS, two from Tlichio and one each from the other regions, Dehcho, Fort Smith, Sathu, South Slave and CSFTNO.

The main focus of the Annual Meeting was to amend the Constitution and Bylaws, to approve a budget for the succeeding year, receive the auditor's report, discuss and debate resolutions, receive reports from Central Executive, Chairpersons of Committees and NWTTA Regions, award the Association's bursaries and confer Distinguished Lifetime Membership and Honorary Membership.

Our meeting was attended and chaired by Sam Hammond, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE). This was Sam's second time attending and chairing our annual meeting and as last time all went perfectly. Sam reminded us that we, as 950 members of the NWTTA, are not alone as we are part of a larger group of over 365,000 educators across Canada represented by other teacher organizations and members of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Sam did mention that one focus of CTF/FCE is the mental health and wellness of teachers. All went great as usual, Sam chaired our meeting perfectly and it was certainly evident he has a great passion for CTF/FCE, and all the Canadian teachers, as they were well-represented by him.

Minister of Education, Culture & Employment (ECE), RJ Simpson, and Deputy Minister, John MacDonald, accepted our invitation to speak to coucillors at the annual meeting and answer questions posed to them. Minister Simpson began by recognizing the positive relationship the Association and ECE have with each other. Minister Simpson acknowledged the complex work teachers do and there are times that this work may have an effect

on a person's mental and emotional health. Minister Simpson highlighted the work ECE is completing to modify the Education Act, said he is looking forward to the new British Columbia curriculum competencies and the new standards for teachers. He thanked the NWTTA for their involvement, insight and suggestions with these initiatives.

Our auditor, Paul Fleury, presented his last audit of the Association at AMCC 2023 as he prepares for retirement. Paul has been the Association's auditor for over 35 years and during that time he has monitored the Association's finances and assisted us ensure we remain a viable financially sound organization. Paul remarked that he had always enjoyed working for the Association and reminisced about his early years when former Executive Director Blake Lyons hired him and the financial growth that has taken place since then. Paul reminded us that we are in a great financial position and he is glad that he could have played a part.

NWTTA bursaries for 2023-2024, valued at \$2,000 each were awarded to:

NWTTA Members

Bonnie Kuchta - McCowan Bursary
Patrick Morris - B.C. Gillie Bursary

Indigenous NWTTA Members

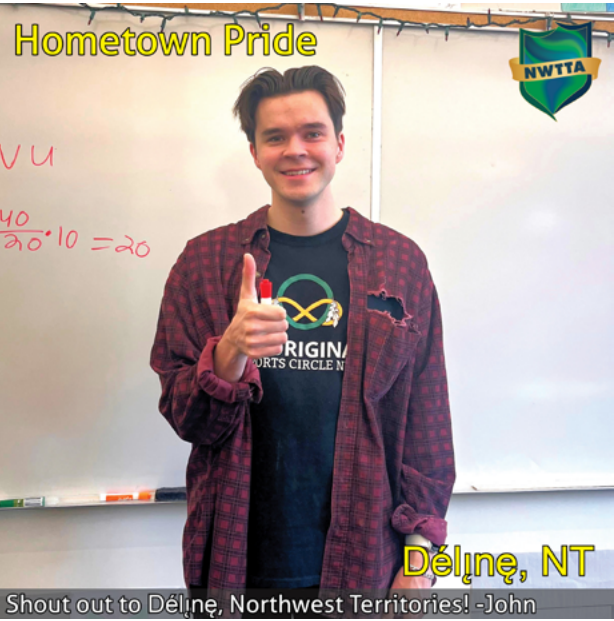
Melissa Mantla - Alice Bolduc Bursary

Children of NWTTA Members

Erik Arts - Ernie Comerford Bursary
Ally MacInnis - Lawrie Hobart Bursary

One very important aspect of AMCC does not take place at the meeting but at the AMCC dinner afterward. This is a time for us to greet past Presidents and our award recipients and thank them for all they have done for our Association. Let's take time to recognize the Past Presidents who were able to attend this years' event – Allan McDonald (1984-1988), Amanda Mallon (2004-2008) and David Reid (2008-2012). Congratulations to Gladys Alexie as the recipient of the Liz Hansen Indigenous Educator Award. This award was established to recognize a NWTTA Indigenous Member who has made a significant contribution to education in the Northwest Territories.


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.



Northern Lights

Meet Pierre Cook
from Hay River (CSFTNO region)

Q. Where did you grow up?
Born in Oakville, I spent most of my childhood in South Eastern Ontario, notably Hasting County (Belleville area), save for a few years that were spent in Devon county in South West England.



Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?
Following a number of summer camps in the cadre of the air cadet program, I worked as a staff member and very much enjoyed the passing of knowledge and positive leadership involved in working with young cadets. Following an arts degree with a specialization in piano performance, I began giving private voice and piano lessons to youth and adults as well. This brought me to the faculty of education at Ottawa University where I completed a two year bachelors in hopes I could bring music and joy to the classroom.

Q. What do you teach?
Presently I teach music and technology to K-6 students. Since 2017, I have been also teaching French language arts to grades 5-6 and 7-8 which I enjoy very much because I can bring an extra mixed media aspect to it, notably the French language podcast and radio show that we produce called Radio Boréale (shameless plug) which is available for online audiences at anchor.fm/radioboreale, on the podcast platforms, as well as on the FM waves of Radio Taïga in Yellowknife.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
I enjoy that I get to be myself. I enjoy being silly and making students smile. I love that I get to use my experience and background to help students grow in their own ways. Teaching the joys of music and creativity is the icing on the cake.

Q. How do you engage your students?
I think I can be quite theatrical in the classroom... Keeping a light heart, having a positive and caring attitude. Enough said!

We Have a Great Honour
As teachers we hold a big responsibility and we have a great honour in the way that we are part of our student's day to day lives. The impact can be huge! Getting to know each student is definitely one of the highlights. Learning about their interests, their favorite things, their passions and from there, seeing them use these in the classroom is truly a beautiful thing.

Educate a Girl, Educate a Nation

Canadian Teachers' Federation/Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants

"No one will have power over me. I will have power over myself...Through education I can overcome all that and achieve my goal of becoming medical doctor."

For 16-year-old Jessica*, living in Uganda's Serere, in the country's eastern Teso region, education is the gateway to the life she wants. Until recently, that opportunity was out of reach because of one simple but challenging fact: she is a girl.

Most girls in Uganda face countless barriers to pursuing an education, a career, and self-empowerment. Too often, girls are destined to stay home, take care of the family, and raise one of their own. Slowly, through collective action, in recent years, this was beginning to change. However, the COVID-19 pandemic brought that progress to a sudden halt in the spring of 2020. Only now, nearly three years later, the work towards gender equity is finally beginning again.

Pandemic struggle

In Uganda, pandemic measures put education on hold, leaving over 15 million Ugandan students out of school. In fact, Uganda set the world record for the longest school closures, lasting nearly two years.

A lack of Internet connectivity meant that online

learning was not an option, leaving teachers and students to depend on radio to deliver and receive lessons. But even when a radio was available, most students were unable to tune in to class. Many had to support their families financially by getting jobs, while others were counted on to care for siblings at home.

For some girls and young women, school closures led to life-changing events that education was helping to prevent, as was the case with Patricia*, who became pregnant during the pandemic. As a new mother, the 18-year-old from Ngora district, also in the eastern Teso region, believed a return to school was impossible. But her outlook and reality changed because of the Simameni project.



Sandy Plamondon, CTF/FCE Project Officer (fifth from left), is pictured with colleagues from UNATU at their office in Kampala, Uganda.

Simameni: Stand Up

The Simameni project, launched in early 2020, aims to not only show the benefits and advantages of secondary school education for girls in Uganda, but to also improve the conditions in schools to make them safer, welcoming, and gender-inclusive.

Simameni, which means 'Stand up' in Swahili, is active in 24 schools in Uganda's Western and Teso regions. Supported by Global Affairs Canada, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) has been collaborating with long-time partner, the Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) to make the Simameni project a key driver for change within the communities, and that

begins with attitudes towards girls in school.

Although the 5-year project was launched nearly three years ago, due to pandemic restrictions, it wasn't until September 2022 that CTF/FCE program officer Sandy Plamondon, was able to return to Uganda. With colleagues from UNATU, Sandy visited half of the Simameni schools to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project. Together, they worked to restart the project by planning and delivering activities and teacher trainings on preventing gender-based violence in schools and strategies for gender-sensitive classrooms and schools.

The school visits affirmed that, even with the challenges posed by the pandemic, progress has been made. "The school visits allowed the Simameni team to witness the students and staff's pride in sharing their school's improvements," recounted Sandy. "To hear their stories of change, and to see with our own eyes the remaining challenges, it was truly humbling."

Throughout the schools, the improvements are as welcomed as they are varied.

"Our school's infrastructure has improved because of training offered by Simameni," explained teacher Lydia Nakirya. Her Secondary School in the Western region now has better access to water, improved hygiene, and overall enhanced facilities.

Elsewhere, strategies have been developed to change school culture.

In the Teso region, teachers at one high school have implemented a gender equity strategy to improve the safety and well-being of students, both in and out of school. Some of the initiatives include the creation of leadership opportunities for girls and an increase of female staff to foster gender balance.

"Simameni is sending ripples of positive change throughout our communities. Although there is still work to be done, we are looking forward to seeing even more progress," said Filbert Baguma, General Secretary of UNATU.

Jumping Hurdles to Overcome Barriers

Even with Simameni moving ahead, students and staff say they continue to face barriers. Easy access to water

remains a challenge and a security concern as many students are forced to walk long distances alone to and from community wells. Due to the high poverty rates in the Teso and Western regions, many girls must stay at home to support family. At times, some girls engage in dangerous relationships with older men in exchange for food. Even while in school, where girls should be safe, gender-based violence persists. And, as seen during the school closures, teenage pregnancies and early marriages have increased.

To meet these challenges head on, some schools are providing boarding facilities to save students from long commutes. Other schools have developed alternative ways of raising funds to pay for school fees, boarding facilities, and lunches. Some schools have begun sharing the knowledge gained during menstrual hygiene management workshops with students and even to the nearby primary schools. Others have prioritized access to water over any other need, by installing a pump on school grounds to improve hygiene in the school's bathrooms, washrooms, and dormitories.

"Although we still struggle, and despite how modest some of the progress is, it is still progress that empowers our community", shared a head teacher.

With the Simameni project slated to continue until the end of 2025, there remains time to continue the progress, one girl at a time.

For more information and updates, please contact Sandy Plamondon at splamondon@ctf-fce.ca.

*names changed to protect privacy.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation

Founded in 1920, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE) is a national alliance of provincial and territorial teachers' organizations that represent over 365,000 teachers and education workers across Canada. The NWTTA is a Member Organization of the CTF/FCE.



Making Connections through Musical Collaboration

From a small town in Ontario to a small town above the Arctic Circle, award-winning Americana artist, **Abe Drennan** is a storyteller, connector and powerful performer. He was the Fan's Choice winner at the 2022 NWT Music Awards and a Top 10 finalist in "Becoming 2022" performing over Zoom at the El Mocambo in Toronto. He is also a teacher at East Three Secondary School in Inuvik.



Abe Drennan is releasing a new EP in June 2023

Influenced by Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan, his songs are a reminder of the common ground we all walk. He writes songs about connection, belonging and making the world a better place. He creates a sacred blend of simple truth that generate hope in the harsh realities of the present. Through his smooth vocals, raw acoustic performance and harmonica playing, he creates an unforgettable connection with his audiences.

Abe moved to Inuvik with his family in 2013. He has taught mostly junior high English but was also a generalist teacher in grade 6 before moving into teaching music and drama for the elementary and high school. He describes this as his dream job and making connections through his work is what inspired his current project.

Abe will be releasing his third album in June thanks to a collaboration between **Andrew Shedden**, a teacher in Fort Smith at Paul W. Kaeser



Jim Black plays guitar on the EP

High School, and **Jim Black**, a teacher in Fort McPherson at Chief Julius School. The songs are produced, mixed and mastered by Andrew, and Jim plays guitar on the songs. Abe and Andrew met while collaborating on a funding proposal for the NWT Arts Council to secure a grant to record the album. Andrew is the owner/operator of Bell Rock Recording, a state of the art recording studio in Fort Smith. Abe and Jim met at an in-service and became fast friends. Abe was quick to invite Jim to contribute to the project after learning of his incredible skills

as a guitar player. This project is truly made in the NWT and Drennan's best work yet thanks to these collaborations.

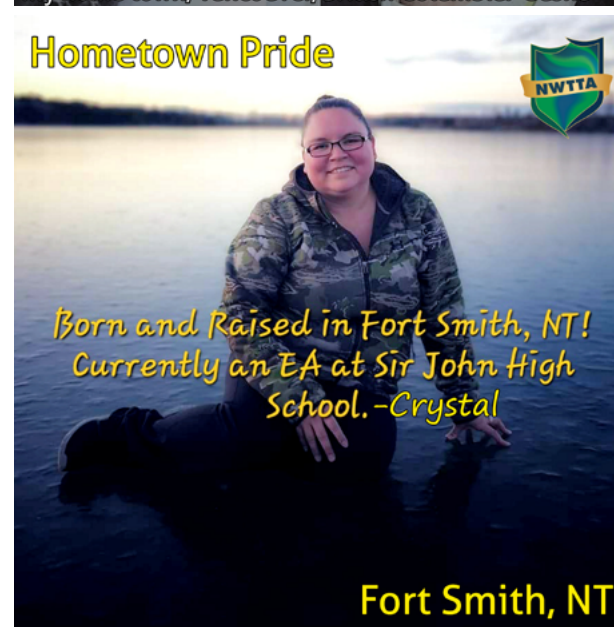


Andrew Shedden produced, mixed and mastered the EP

Abe has mentored under Lorraine Lawson of Lawson Vocal Studios and is an avid supporter of the LVS community. He has opened for Rose Cousins, Jim Byrnes, Alex Cuba, and Leela Gilday. His debut album, "We All Have a Dream"

(2015) was an independent release with his former band, ONE. He recorded his second album, "The Igloo Sessions" (2019) in the iconic Igloo Church in Inuvik, Northwest Territories. He has performed at the Great Northern Arts Festival (Summer 2015 and 2021), Folk on the Rocks (Summer 2021) and showcased at the NWT Music Awards (Fall 2022).

Listen to Abe's music on your favorite streaming platform or check out his website at www.abedrennan.com, jump on his mailing list or order some exclusive merch!



Catching Up Members' Life Events



Piper McConnell-Bucci was born on March 30th. Congratulations to parents **Josie McConnell** (East Three Elementary School, Beaufort-Delta region) and **Peter Bucci** (East Three Secondary School)!



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COMMISSION**

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nwthumanrights.ca/resources/forteachers/

nwthumanrights.ca

The Gordon Foundation Treaty Simulation in Tulita

Alison Tomczynski, Teacher, Chief Albert Wright School (Sahtu region) & **Steven Showalter**, Learning & Engagement Coordinator, The Gordon Foundation

The [Gordon Foundation](#)'s Treaty Simulation model is an impactful and hands-on learning experience that brings together emerging leaders and others to learn about treaties in Canada.

Both Historic Treaties and Modern Treaties (also known as Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements) are important in shaping the relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canada. They help define the rights of many Indigenous peoples and their paths to self-determination. The legacy, process, and impact of both types of treaties are important for Canadians and emerging leaders who may be getting involved in negotiating or implementing treaties.

In partnership with GNWT Education, Culture and Employment Department (ECE); The Gordon Foundation is working to integrate the Treaty Simulation model as an addendum to the Northern Studies curriculum and launch three pilot classroom Treaty Simulations in high schools across the territory this semester.



Community leaders, Knowledge Keepers and school staff provided guidance to students

"With an emphasis on reconciliation, Northern Studies 30 and the Treaty Simulation are practical learning modules that deal with relevant real-world issues and events. As we all work to advance reconciliation, Treaties and local and territorial political structures are especially relevant to high school students, as they move toward graduation and take on responsibilities as citizens of the NWT. Both these initiatives are centred on respectful relationships with local Elders, Knowledge Keepers and communities. I am pleased to launch Northern Studies 30 and the Treaty Simulations in NWT schools so we can further set our students and territory up for success."

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

On March 29th and 30th, high school students and teachers from Chief Albert Wright School in Tulita participated in The Gordon Foundation's classroom Treaty Simulation. Students came together at the Hamlet of Tulita's Cultural Centre. They met and worked with experienced community members to better understand the history and impacts of treaties in the Sahtu region and across NWT.

Students learned about Treaty 11 and the Sahtu Dene

and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement and were tasked with creating a recovery plan for a fictional herd of caribou. Students were placed on one of two teams representing the Sahtu Renewable Resource Board (SRRB), and GNWT's Environment and Natural Resources department (ENR). Each team worked with an advisor to develop proposals that included ideas for researching and monitoring caribou and determining threats to the habitat. The two teams then came together to present their proposals and negotiate with each other, working toward a consensus.

Chief Frank Andrew, Gordon Yakeleya, Danny Yakeleya, Frederick Andrew, David Etchinelle and Jessie Campbell joined as advisors for the Treaty

Simulation, sharing their knowledge and experiences with students. One advisor shared, "This is what I went through when I was young like you guys. Know what you are doing here is very important. Caribou are important for the future, and you want to preserve it for the next generation"

One student described the event saying, "I think it is a great way to connect with Elders. Out there, there is a gap between us. But things are different now,



Student teams representing SRRB and ENR present their proposals

connecting like this is a good start. Strengthen the bonds." -Landon Bayha

By participating in a classroom Treaty Simulation, students build skills in negotiation, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, public speaking, leadership, proposal writing, consensus building, and teamwork. Students learn about themselves, discover skills they did not realize they possessed, and better understand their role within the community. Through connecting with Elders and advisors, students build a network for future support and learning.

Chief Albert Wright school (CAWS) staff were excited to participate in the Simulation as it engaged students, Elders and Knowledge Keepers in a

meaningful and impactful way; the first real deep 'school' connection since the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. Our students took on roles during the negotiation process that they had not previously considered as possible for themselves. Additionally, as a group, they came to understand how hard past leadership worked to establish the current Tulita Dene and Metis Land Claims Comprehensive Agreement, how people who were not trained as negotiators stepped up and received direction from Elders and the whole community to fight on behalf of the region to ensure that rights were maintained and acknowledged for generations to come.

As we are a small school, Chief Albert Wright School would like to continue to initiate, participate and host Treaty Simulations for our high school students. We will likely look at a format where we partner with another Sahtu Divisional Education Council school to ensure that we have enough high school participants, challenging students with a regional issue that would have meaning for both student and Elder participants.

Are you interested in running a Treaty Simulation with your class or school? The Gordon Foundation and GNWT ECE have partnered to support Northern Studies teachers who are interested in running the

model in their classrooms. The Gordon Foundation has also created the NWT Educator Toolkit for teachers to access the Treaty Simulation documents and lesson plans. In addition to the [NWT Educator Toolkit](#), interactive videos and online learning tools are also available through the [Understanding Our Treaties](#) website. Check it out to learn more!



Free Mental Health Support for Teachers

Erica Comacchio, Customer Success Manager, Starling Minds

Stress is the health epidemic of the 21st century, and teachers are at the forefront of our minds.

Never has it been more important to think of and appreciate our teachers and all they have done for their students. Teachers give us our first sense of community and are instrumental in guiding us through our most formative years. It's one of the hardest jobs in the world and we have seen how teachers worked tirelessly to foster a healthy and purposeful environment for their students, despite the stress it can bring to them.

But what is stress and why is it important to understand?

Stress is a feeling of strain or pressure caused by demands put on us by our environment, other people and of course - ourselves. Many believe that stress is bad for us, but in reality, it is normal for us to experience it from time to time.

But when stress becomes chronic and unmanageable, it will deeply impact our work and lives. This is the type of stress that many teachers often feel and continue to experience as they tend to prioritize

others' needs above their own.

If this goes on for a prolonged period, it's much harder to bounce back from. It can also lead to sleep and functioning problems, engaging with life, or even a chronic condition. But with the right support, you can learn how to manage your stress and teach it to your students.

You deserve the best support for your mental health and well-being and we want to help.

Designed for teachers, Starling Minds is a free, confidential digital mental health program that is right for you. In simple, easy steps, you can build powerful habits to help you take control of your life—anytime and at your own pace.

Ready to get started? Visit member.starlingminds.com and enter your access code.

Your access code: **NWTMEMBER**

Invite family members 16+ years old with the access code: **NWTFAMILY**

[Register Now](#)

Questions? We'd love to hear from you. Email our Support Team at members@starlingminds.com.



Thank you for everything.

It's time to take care of you.



Hometown Pride



Stephenville Crossing, NL

My home town is Stephenville Crossing, Newfoundland and Labrador! -Jennifer



L-r Holly Elemie, Summer Sewi, Jackie Dayman

?ehtseo Ayha School students from Deline (Sahtu region) Holly Elemie and Summer Sewi had the opportunity to participate in The Gordon Foundation and the Land Claims Agreements Coalition [Treaty Simulation Workshop](#) in Ottawa, Ontario in February 2023. Participants were split up into three groups: representing First Nations, Yukon Government and the Federal Government. Each group had to create a proposal for a land claim agreement that they presented to each other to negotiate. Students learned how to create proposals as well as what the negotiation process looks like. There were representatives from different First Nations from across Canada.

Jackie Dayman was the teacher chaperone.

Northern Lights

Meet

Maryssa Camacho
from Inuvik (Beaufort-Delta region)



Q. Where did you grow up?

I was born in Cornwall, Ontario, and grew up between there and Kingston, Ontario after my family relocated when I was in high school. My family lived for the outdoors and I was fortunate to be able to enjoy many outdoors sports and recreational activities.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?

It might be in my genes! My dad was a teacher and I spent many weekend afternoons in his classroom "helping" him with his planning. I enjoyed working with children throughout my older childhood years, and this definitely influenced my decision to become a teacher. Two out of three of my siblings also joined me as teachers, and we all teach at schools across our country.

Q. What do you teach?

I currently teach K/1 French Immersion at East Three Elementary School, but I have been lucky to teach every elementary grade throughout my career in Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I enjoy watching the progression of students throughout the year, to see them learn and grow from the lessons I provide. Being able to teach my primary language as their secondary language instills a sense of pride and accomplishment in my ability to share my culture and heritage.

Q. How do you engage your students?

I enjoy teaching in an involved and dynamic classroom: the students learn via experience and tactile exploration. I incorporate outdoors activities in as many lessons as I can, to encourage students to embrace the same love for nature and the land that impacted me in my youth.

You Made a Difference

A TEDx speaker once said: "You may never be famous by the world's standard but when your student tells you that "You made a difference", it is the best feeling in the world", and I couldn't agree more.

GNWT Summer Professional Development Funding

Trent Waterhouse, Professional Development Coordinator

As the year comes to a close you may be considering professional development opportunities.

In Article 16 of the GNWT Collective Agreement, there are funded opportunities for summer Professional Development (PD) that NWTTA GNWT members can apply for. The deadline for applications is May 30, 2023.

Summer Credit Courses

There is \$2500 available to NWTTA GNWT members to attend a university during the regular vacation period to take a credit course. Due to the nature of the global pandemic and possibility that restrictions may still be in place at institutions or for member travel, the Central Professional Development Committee has extended the use of this fund for Distance Education summer credit courses if needed.

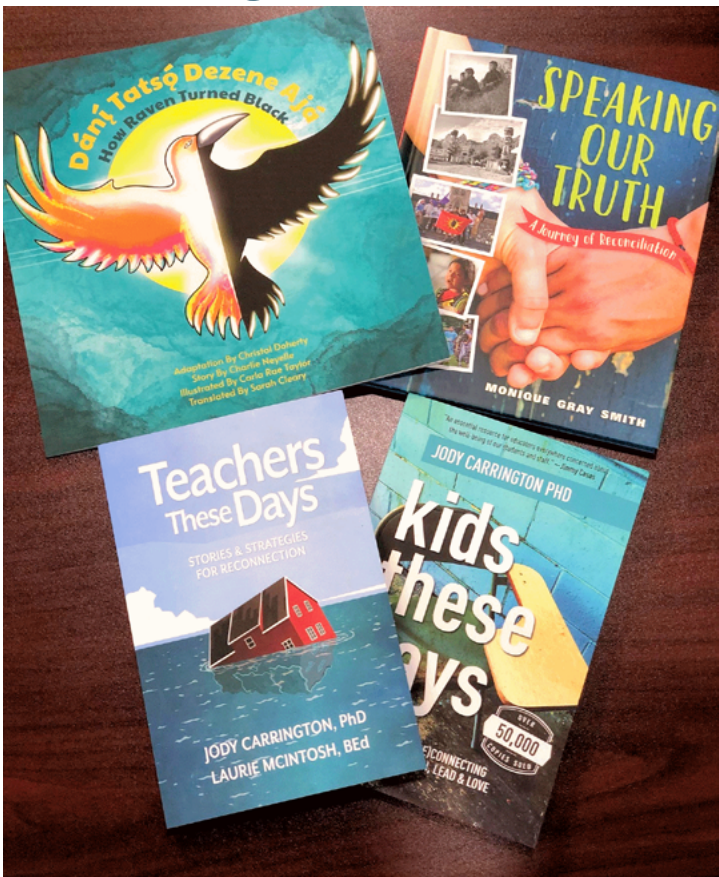
Summer Non-Credit Courses

There is \$500 available to NWTTA GNWT members to support non-credit courses during the regular vacation period (examples are first aid, computer classes...)

CILLDI

There is \$6000 available to NWTTA GNWT members to support Indigenous Language proficiency or instruction.

The University of Alberta's Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) is requesting that NWTTA GNWT members interested in summer programs to [fill out this form](#) There are in-person and online options available. If you are interested in learning more about CILLDI summer school, [reach out to me](#) at the office.



Congratulations to Chrissy and Kelly, our March prize pack draw winners! If you are interested in a PD Resource prize pack, please send me an email (pd@nwtta.nt.ca) answering the following question. In the March 2023 NWTTA Newsletter: how many years has the Thank You for Making a Difference (TYFMAD) campaign been running? Include your answer in the subject line of your email along with your school or mailing address you would like the prize pack sent to. I will randomly draw from all submissions on Friday June 2, 2023. Members who won last newsletter are not eligible. Tell a Friend!

Math Puzzle!

Cinderella is four times as old as Hercules today.
In five years, Cinderella will be twice as old as Hercules.
What will be the age of Hercules after ten years?

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

Answer on page 23



Member Inquiries and Concern Tracking

Sara McCrea, Assistant Executive Director

The day-to-day inquiries from members make up the most significant work performed by Central Office staff. Questions regarding pay, benefits, pension, leaves, workload, supervision, evaluations, dismissals, resignation and hiring practices were common areas of inquiry by members. Upholding the collective agreements and various related policies, directives, and legislation is an important part of our daily work.

Since August 2022, the President, Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director and PD Coordinator/Member Services responded to over six hundred member inquiries. It is important to note that this number does not include the countless next steps and follow-ups required to resolve some of these questions and concerns. For example, a member issue will be recorded once but it can actually take months to resolve, involving numerous correspondences, meetings, and phone calls.

The pie chart shows the distribution in percentages of concerns/inquires per Region. The legend on the right shows each Region and their percentage of membership within the NWTTA.

For example:

29% of concerns and inquiries were received by members from the Beaufort-Delta Region. The Beaufort-Delta Region represents 20% of NWTTA's total membership.

17% of concerns and inquiries were received by members of YK1 District. YK1 represents 31 % of NWTTA's total membership.

7% of concerns and inquiries were received by members of YCS District. YCS represents 12% of NWTTA's total membership

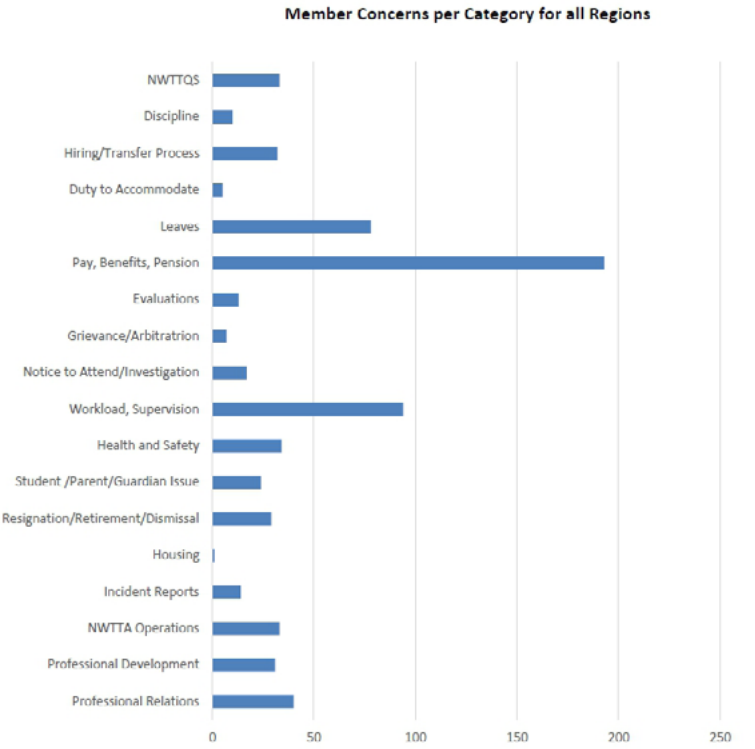
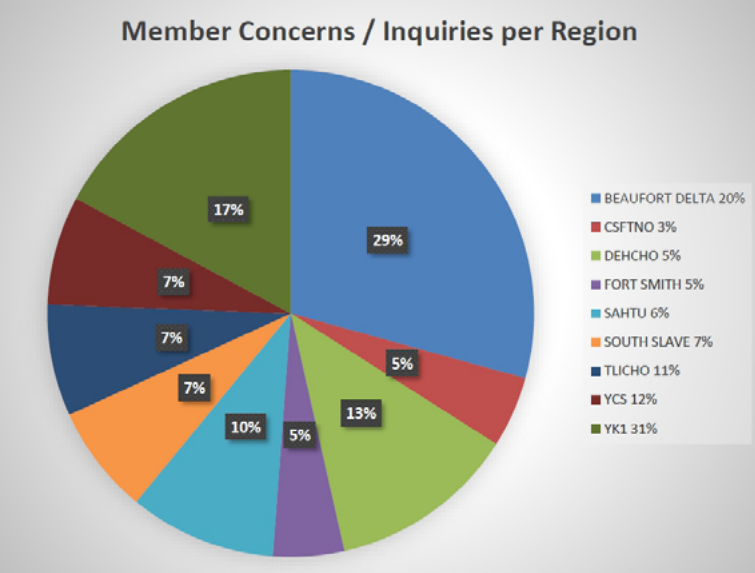
And so on...

The second graph lists the various categories of member concerns and inquiries. The three main categories with the most concerns/inquiries are:

- 1. Pay, Benefits, Pension
- 2. Workload and Supervision
- 3. Leaves

This year, we have experienced increased calls regarding professional relations, harassment, health and safety and human rights.

Respectful professional relationships, communication and teamwork are essential for a healthy workplace. Creating safe and respectful workplaces requires commitment from everyone. These issues within a workplace can significantly negatively impact members' mental health and career. We will continue to discuss this topic with Central Executive, Superintendents and CTF/FCE member organizations to identify ways we can best support NWTTA membership with these matters.



How to prepare a fox's fur and the best ways to use it

Nubia Shaw, Teacher, Mangilaluk School, Tuktoyaktuk (Beaufort-Delta region)

Students from grade two in Mangilaluk School had the privilege to gain knowledge from one of the Elders in the region, Mrs. Marjorie Ovayuak. With a warm heart, patience and love for the students, she answered all the questions and transferred excellent knowledge, not only about the topic but also about life, traditions and way of doing things in Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories. The students were delighted with her stories from the past, her songs, and her activities.

Mrs. Marjorie Ovayuak was born and raised in Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories. Her native name is Anikiin. The government changed her clan's name from Anikiva to Ovayuak, because it was one of the largest clans in the area. Her grandparents were from two different regions. Her grandfather was from Baille Island, Northwest Territories, and her grandmother was from Alaska, USA. However, she

traveled all over the region. They had camps in Army Camp, in Whitefish Station and other areas. When they arrived at the camps, all the children had chores. She was the middle child of thirteen siblings. The

activities they did at the camp were countless. They cleaned all the surrenders, picked up the garbage, grabbed the wood and kept the camp warm. During the day, they fished, sled, picked berries or went hunting or trapping animals, activities she still enjoys today, "it was like camping" she said.

Her best memories are spending time on the land, when getting ready for winter, so they do not go hungry on those cold winters. Also, she remembers her mother singing and juggling with rocks and singing and playing the string and toe game.

The *kindness* and *knowledge* were the main traditions she gained from her elders. Now, she is not only sharing those traditions with her five children and 19 grandchildren, but also with us the students and teachers at Mangilaluk School.



Elder Mrs. Marjorie Ovayuak



Traditions to keep in our hearts

Our Elder Mrs. Marjorie Ovayuak advised my students to:

"Listen to what the people say, "Atta."

"If you know that something is wrong, use your mouth. If you hear something strange, "you tell." If you hear something different! If you hear something is not nice, you know it is not right. If you know if something is not right from here (pointed to her heart) you have to be strong. If someone picks on you, or somebody made fun of you or said bad stuff. Nooo... don't say nothing, walk away."

"You have to be kind! You have to respect! Listen to the Elders and pray every night!"

Transferring knowledge

How to trap a fox:

As for her explanation on how to trap a fox, the first thing to do is to dig a hole in the snow, then place a trap and secure it. For the bait, they used small pieces of stink fish, and covered them with loose snow. There are 25 traps in a trapping line. When the fox smells the fish, it comes closer and then, it gets trapped.

How to skin a fox:

You cut the fox with a sharp knife, the front legs from the elbow down to the paws. Then, take the hind legs and you peel the fur back by hand and carefully slow down, separating the skin from the body until you reach the top of the legs. Next, carefully separate the tail and cut from the backside to the neck, then slide the fur to the neck of the animal, peeling carefully the front legs. Finally, you slide the whole fur through the head, and you will have an entire piece of fox fur, as Mrs. Ovayuak mentioned.

The best ways to use a fox's fur:

Mrs. Marjorie Ovayuak taught us that no one piece of fur is wasted. The fox's fur is used more frequently for children's clothing, for the inside of the mitts or the lining of Kamiks. However, they use the scrap for cushions, making blankets or ice worms (toys). Also, she explained that in the past when men were



traveling, they used the fox's fur as a neck warmer to protect their face, neck and chest. As it is to keep warm, it was easy for them to shake out the snow and put it back in their neck coat.

Our guest told us that she always sews the fur by hand. She claimed that it is soft skin and is easy to work with. She mentioned that Fox's fur is not as expensive as the wolf's or wolverine's fur, but it is as desirable as the others.



YK1 Long Term Service Awards

Kirstin Prescott, YK1 Region Vice-President

On April 15, 2023, Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1) honoured employees with a Long Term Service Awards ceremony. Teachers, Educational Assistants and other District members were given awards for service and retirement.

To tie in with this ceremony, the YK1 NWTTA region hosted an evening event which included dinner and recognitions at the Yellowknife Elks Club. Highlights from the evening included dinner, games, and raffles for prizes.

The YK1 NWTTA Region would like to congratulate the following NWTTA members who are retiring and receiving NWTTA awards:

- Sean Daly (34 years), past YK1 NWTTA President
- Cynthia Russell (31 years)
- Maureen Hans (31 years)
- Paul MacDonald (30 years)
- Dawn Marie Ashlie (21 years)

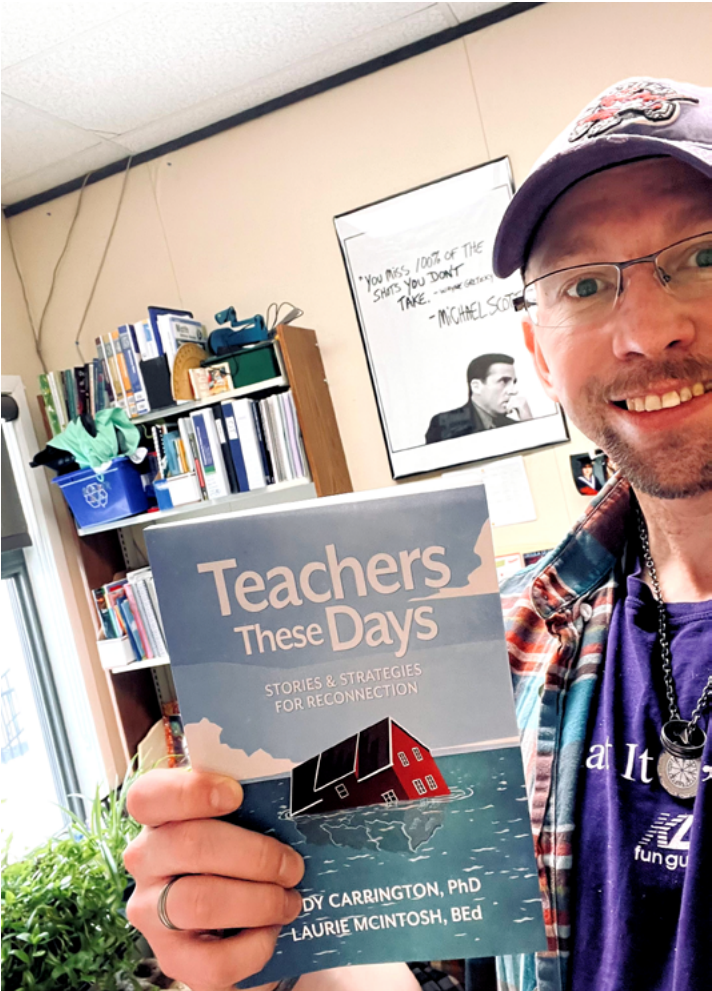
On April 29 at the Annual Meeting of Central Council, Distinguished Lifetime Membership was granted to Sean Daly recognizing long-term membership of ten (10) years or more and service to the NWTTA at the Regional Level, and Honorary Membership was granted to Cynthia Russell, Paul MacDonald, Maureen Hans and Dawn Marie Ashlie recognizing outstanding contributions to education in the NWT.

K'alemi Dene School NWTTA members

l-r: Courtney McLean, Ashley Deavu, Meagan Wowk, Anthony Hume, Kirsten Sangris, Dene McDonald, Jolene McDonald, Mike Mansfield, Danielle Cote, Ali McConnell, Chris Pyke, Janna Linnen, and Annie Casson



Above - Icebreaker Bingo was a success!
Below - K'alemi Dene School was represented by almost their entire staff!
Newsletter Cover - Retiring YK1 members in attendance at the celebration dinner



Gregor McGregor from Mackenzie Mountain School (Sahtu region) enjoys a book featured at the October 2022 NWT Educators' Conference & Women's Symposium.



I was born and raised in Banff. This is me at the top of Tunnel Mountain with Banff behind me. -Rachelle



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

For more information:

Email: pwnhc_education@gov.nt.ca
Website: www.pwnhc.ca

Courage to Stand Up

Kirstin Prescott, YK1 Liaison Counsellor & GSA/Rainbow Club Coordinator (YK1 region)

On April 26, Yellowknife Education District No. 1 welcomed a visit from Martin Boyce. He is one of a handful of surviving Stonewall Riot activists, sharing the story of one of the most pivotal queer/trans actions in history. Martin's visit was sponsored by Days of Pink, as part of the 2023 Courage to Stand Up tour (<https://www.dayofpink.org/stonewalltour>).

Martin spoke with YK1 teachers and students from gender and sexuality/rainbow clubs at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in a morning presentation, and spoke again to the public in an evening presentation.

The Stonewall Riots were a series of spontaneous demonstrations by members of the gay community in response to a police raid that began in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in New York City. Patrons of the Stonewall, other Village 2SLGBTQIA+ bars, and neighbourhood street people fought back when the police became violent. The riots are widely considered a watershed event that transformed the gay liberation movement and the twentieth-century fight for LGBT rights in Canada and the United States.



It's an exciting time in Northwest Territories schools!

The Government of the Northwest Territories is getting ready to introduce new adapted Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum.

It's a modern and flexible curriculum that focuses on literacy and numeracy - not just reading, writing and math, but also communicating and problem solving.

Find out more about the curriculum, teacher training and timelines:



Government of
Northwest Territories

Northern Lights

Meet
Nick Fullerton
from Behchoko (Tlicho region)



Q. Where did you grow up?
I grew up on the east coast in a small town near the Bay of Fundy called Hillsborough, NB.

Q. What made you decide to become a teacher?
I got a sneak peek into teaching, as many of us do, through a parent. My Dad was (and is) a career teacher, teaching shop and technology. My drive to become a teacher was twofold; helping others and effecting change wherever I can for the better.

Q. What do you teach?
I currently teach senior high science courses: Biology, Chemistry, and Experiential Science.

Q. What do you enjoy most about teaching?
Some of my favourite moments in teaching are the ones when I am a bit subversive or stretching expectations. I try to be creative with the students and have them view high school as an opportunity to do science in the service of the community or create rock-star-level work worthy of their resumes. I enjoy developing relationships with students that I know will last through their tough times and continue on past graduation.

Q. How do you engage your students?
Experiences are one of the best teachers around, second only to arguments. So we do both a fair amount in my class. Debating the meaning of results, developing hypotheses, questioning, and testing what we believe as a team are things that usually generate engagement.

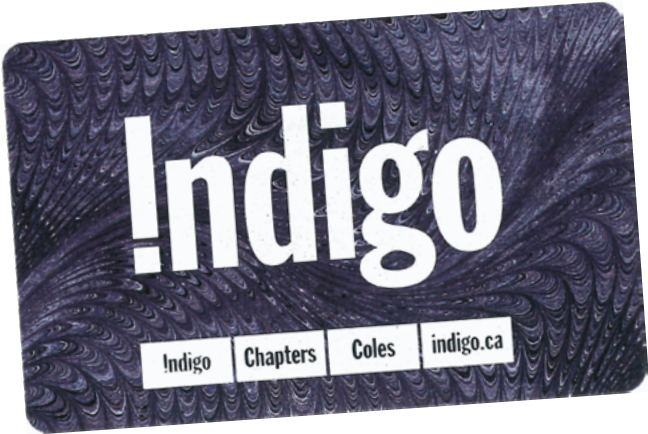
Small Moments with Students
The small moments with students in and outside the classroom are my favourite. Seeing students in the grocery store, the big waves while walking down the street, and the "do you remember me's?" from days gone by. All of those moments add up to the impact a teacher can have on the lives of their students and I'm grateful for that opportunity.

Newsletter Trivia

Send your answers to the trivia questions below to news@nwta.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: **June 12, 2023**



Win a \$50 Chapters-Indigo Gift Card!

1. How do you say/write "Thank you" in one of the eleven official languages of the Northwest Territories?
2. What does "Simameni" mean in Swahili?
3. Who are the three NWTTA members who have collaborated on a new EP release?
4. What is Crystal's hometown?

Darcey Murphy from Joseph Burr Tyrrell School (Fort Smith region) is the winner of the March 2023 Newsletter Trivia.

Cover: YK1 members retiring at the end of 2022-2023 pose with YK1 Regional President at their Long Term Service Awards Dinner. L-r **Maureen Hans** (31 years), **Sean Daly** (34 years), **Gwen Young** (YK1 Regional President), **Dawn Marie Ashley** (21 years), **Paul MacDonald** (30 years). Regrets: Cynthia Russell (31 years).

Math Puzzle! (page 16) answer: 12.5 years

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Regional Presidents' Representative

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Megan MacKenzie from Mackenzie Mountain School (Sahtu region) enjoys a book featured at the October 2022 NWT Educators' Conference & Women's Symposium.

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