

# Indigenous Education Report

SEPTEMBER 2019 - JUNE 2020



**I Matter  
At DSBN**



## **ANCESTRAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We begin this gathering by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

---

# STUDENT VOICE & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

## K-12

- 654 elementary and 358 secondary students at the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) are self-identified as First Nations, Métis and Inuit descent.
- Ness Griffin, a Grade 12 student from Laura Secord Secondary School is DSBN's first Indigenous Student Trustee and IEAC student representative.
- There has been a continued increase in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies (NBE) course offerings. In 2019-2020 there were 31 courses and 589 students enrolled, up from 24 courses and 485 students in 2018-2019. Members of the community who supported learning in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies courses included: Gary Parker; Karl Dockstader; Cindy Biancaniello; Nancy Rowe; Dallas Squire; Nikki Shawana; Jackie Labonté and Sheila Maracle.
- Flags raised throughout the year include Inuit, Louis Riel Day, Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Secret Path Week- Chanie Wenjack and the Two Row Wampum flag at the Education Centre.
- Indigenous Education Consultants worked with 10 Kindergarten classes exploring land-based learning and developing an appreciation for Mother Earth and her inhabitants.
- Over 130 elementary and secondary Indigenous students attended the annual Youth and Elders Conference at the Scotia Centre. Students watched many traditional forms of dance and were able to participate in dances on stage. They also had an opportunity to learn from their Elders, look at traditional craftsmanship, hear about Métis teachings, play some lacrosse and enjoy a community luncheon!
- 27 educators and 117 Grade 6, 7 and 8 students attended the Indigenous Youth Symposium at Heartland Forest. As part of the event, students deepened their connection to culture through language, built positive relationships and experienced cultural teachings. Students participated in workshops focused around language including: Anishinaabemowin Numbers and Game; Haudenosaunee Song and Drum; Outdoor games with Mohawk words; and the cycle of the One Dish with Oneida words.

*Secondary  
Indigenous  
Student Trustee  
Ness Griffin*



- The Indigenous Education Consultant worked with K-8 classes from 15 different schools, embedding Indigenous perspectives in History and Social Studies. The concept of 'Rights vs Responsibility' was taught in an age-appropriate manner, with the help of Wampums as examples.
- The Indigenous Education Consultant modelled traditional storytelling with more than 40 K-8 classes from 13 different schools. The story that was shared helped students to understand the concept of possessing something that was stolen and was adapted for Grade appropriate connections, with permission from Tehahenteh Miller.
- Students attended our first Elementary Student Voice event. Students attending expressed a desire for more Indigenous opportunities in schools and student gatherings outside of school. Many students expressed an interest in learning Indigenous languages. This event was led in collaboration with members of our local Indigenous community. Community guests included Karl Dockstader, Jackie Labonté and Amanda Pont-Shanks.



*Secondary Youth Symposium*



*DSBN students participating in Youth and Elders  
Gathering*



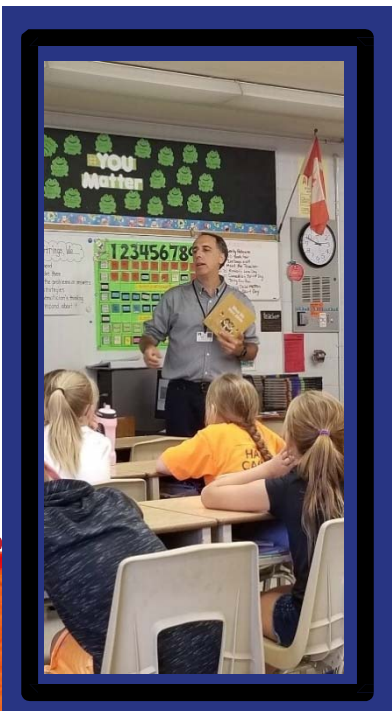
## INDIGENOUS Education Report

- The Indigenous Education Consultant and the Consultant of Innovation and Technology piloted an Indigenous Technologies project where intermediate students learned about fishing weirs used by First Nations peoples in Ontario. Students used modern technology to recreate this process.
- The Indigenous Education Consultant worked with 51 Grade 7 and 8 students, embedding Indigenous perspectives into their History classes. The wide range of topics included land acknowledgement, numbered treaties, Métis scrip, Residential Schools and Reconciliation.
- The Indigenous Education Consultant worked with Grade 5 classes from 5 different schools to explore the structure of the Haudenosaunee governance system. In the Grade 5 curriculum, students learn about the role of government, so it is important for them to know and understand that there were highly advanced systems already in place long before colonization and Confederation.
- The Indigenous Education Consultant worked with Grade 6-8 classrooms from 5 different schools to discuss issues in the media around the Wet'suwet'en protests. Students explored 'bias in the media', and 'who controls the message?' Students learned about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and Hereditary Chiefs and then were asked to explore the issue after acquiring a more complete picture of history.



*Secondary Student Voice*

- 55 Indigenous students attended the second annual Student Voice at Balls Falls. Students expressed the need to have more Indigenous student events and more Indigenous knowledge in the curriculum. They wanted continued opportunities to learn about knowledge, culture and language. Community guests included Karl Dockstader, Jackie Labonté, Nancy Rowe, Amanda Pont-Shanks, Cindy Biancaniello and Niagara Regional Native Centre (NRNC) staff.
- Orange Shirt Day was recognized board wide and in a wide variety of ways. Some schools held assemblies and involved drama such as tableaux performances about Residential Schools and Reconciliation. Project of Heart was an art-based education project conducted during this time that was designed to teach the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Some schools held 'Why Every Child'.
- Schools fundraised for the Mohawk Institute and the Downie Wenjack Fund. Bethany Reed from the Downie Wenjack Fund visited Harriet Tubman School to see, firsthand, some of the "ReconciliActions" taking place in our elementary schools.



*Elementary  
Classroom visit*



*Indigenous Technologies*

- 83 elementary and secondary schools are Legacy Schools. This is a national initiative to engage, empower and connect students and educators to further reconciliation through awareness, education and action. Each school was provided with educational resources and program development for Legacy Schools.
- Treaty presentations were given at schools by the DSBN Elementary Indigenous Education Consultants and Indigenous Advisor as well as Karl Dockstader from the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre (FENFC). Students learned what a treaty is, the significance of treaties and the meaning of the Dish with One Spoon and Two Row wampum agreements. 63 classes in 17 schools received presentations.
- 3 elementary schools received lacrosse demonstrations from the Ontario Lacrosse Association and Fort Erie Hawks. Students from DSBN who play for the Hawks assisted with the presentation about the history of the game and variations of the sport. Students had an opportunity to learn and practice lacrosse skills.
- 1359 secondary students have participated in First Nations Games and Lacrosse clinics with Dallas Squire. Workshops were offered in all 17 secondary schools, primarily through Grade 9 Physical Education classes.
- The Indigenous Studies focused classroom located in St. Catharines Collegiate has increased in size with a total of 18 students, including 4 Indigenous students.
- 33 Grade 9 Indigenous students attended the Drum Making workshops with Jackie and Oliver at Balls Falls.
- Students in the Indigenous Studies focused classroom explored outdoor and experiential learning at Balls Falls.
- Indigenous Education Water Days with Grade 9 Geography and Grade 11 Environmental Science students happened at Balls Falls and Stevensville Conservation Areas. Lessons and resources were co-created with Indigenous Education and Science and Canadian World Studies Consultants. Students learned water teachings from Nancy Rowe and participated in water quality testing with the conservation staff.
- The Stamford student art exhibit 'Facing Forward' was held in partnership with Brock University's Peter Vietgen, the Niagara Falls Museum, local Indigenous artist Samuel Thomas and students. The exhibit was modelled on the process used by Samuel Thomas for 'Opening the Doors to Dialogue' which was based on stories shared by Residential School survivors.



*Secondary Indigenous  
Culture and Language Day  
at Heartland Forest*



*Grade 9 Drum Making Workshop at Balls  
Falls*



## INDIGENOUS Education Report



*DSBN Student Art Exhibit with Samuel Thomas at NF Museum and Stamford Collegiate Art Class*

- 54 Indigenous secondary students participated in a Canoe Build with Master Canoe Builder Chuck Commanda. 35 students attended the canoe launch and ceremony. The build was funded by a grant through DSBN Ontario Youth Apprenticeship for Secondary Indigenous Youth and in collaboration with the Indigenous Education Secondary Consultant. Students were apprentices and they participated in the build each day. Students also learned how to sketch into birch bark and were able to take their birch art home to remember the day. Part of the day was also devoted to learning about significant Indigenous people in the community. Students had the opportunity to vote and name the canoe. The students named the canoe 'Autumn' after 15 year- old Autumn Peltier, an Indigenous World Leader and Water Warrior who has been a fierce advocate of water protection since the age of 8. Elder David Labbe led the opening and closing of the launch and Nikki Shawana led us into honouring the water with singing to the water.
- 90 First Nations, Métis and Inuit English Studies NBE students attended the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre to see the *HUFF* performance by Cliff Cardinal. Supporting chaperones included representatives from NRNC and Niagara Chapter of Native Women.



*Tanya  
Talaga  
Moccasin  
Talk Series*



- First Nations Métis and Inuit Studies Art Course (NAC10) students from Stamford Collegiate and the Indigenous Studies focused class attended a workshop at the Niagara Falls Museum with a guided tour of the exhibit 'Opening the Doors To Dialogue' with local Indigenous Cayuga beadwork artist Samuel Thomas who examined the dark legacy of the Canadian Indian Residential School system. Working alongside 120 survivors and their families, Thomas shed light on what happened behind the doors of these church-run, government-funded institutions.
- 65 secondary Indigenous students and 16 chaperones attended the Indigenous Career Fair. The Career Fair was held in partnership and collaboration with Indigenous Education representatives from DSBN, Brock University, Niagara College and Niagara Catholic District School Board. At the Career Fair, students had an opportunity to hear a DSBN E.L. Crossley Indigenous alumni share his journey through post-secondary school. Students toured the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Information Program (APSIP) section, which is a collection of Indigenous recruiters from Ontario and Quebec colleges and universities.
- 20 pairs of baby moccasins were handmade by educators attending the Moccasin Project workshop at the Secondary System Professional Development Day. After a round-the-table discussion about the project at IEAC, 17 pairs of the moccasins were gifted to the NRNC for the Welcoming Babies ceremony.



***DSBN Secondary Indigenous Canoe Build "Autumn"  
with Chuck Commanda***



- 54 secondary Indigenous youth attended our #Changemakers Indigenous Youth Culture and Language Day. Students had the opportunity to spend the day with community and engage in cultural activities such as: First Nations Dancing; Hiking with Cedar Tea; Wood Burning; Salve Making and Plant Medicines; Anishinaabemowin Bingo; Drumming; and First Nations Games and Lacrosse. IEAC partners from Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board (NPAAMB) and NRNC also attended.
- 20 DSBN Indigenous Studies educators and Consultants of Indigenous Education, Canadian World Studies and English attended 2 days of professional development for the curriculum roll out of the new First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies curriculum. This professional development was planned in partnership with the curriculum Consultants from the DSBN, Dufferin Peel Catholic DSB, Dufferin Peel DSB and Halton DSB. 2 days of professional development were completed in Mississauga. Presenters included Kevin Lamoureux, Elder Peter Schuler, Artist Naomi Smith, Nancy Rowe, Nick Bertrand from the Ministry of Education and Artist and Storyteller Issac Murdoch.
- A minimum of 8 Grade 11 and 12 Law lessons were created with Indigenous content and contemporary law issues involving Indigenous peoples. Lessons have been released for teachers to explore in classrooms. The Law Writing Team included Law teachers and Indigenous Education and Canadian World Studies Consultants. Lessons will continue to be vetted and tweaked with the support and knowledge of Karl Dockstader and Nancy Rowe to ensure Indigenous perspectives, programming and perspectives in the justice system are included.
- There was an acknowledgement of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) through a lunchtime vigil. Students were invited to attend on a voluntary basis. During this vigil, a verbal acknowledgment was held, and students shared their contributions in a circle setting. Red dresses were hung throughout the courtyard as a visual representation for missing and lost lives.
- Greater Fort Erie Secondary School and EL Crossley NBE students explored and analyzed the Indian Act, creating sketch-notes while they listened to The Secret Life of Canada podcasts, read the book '21 Things About the Indian Act' and listened to Dish with One Mic podcasts.
- NBE students at Welland Centennial sent messages of love and hope to MAKWA Sahgaiehcan First Nation in Saskatchewan. Over 50 cards were sent with the hope that their words provided some comfort and peace to the community.
- 500 books were sent to NBE courses, programs and library collections.
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies and Social Science students participated in the Moccasin Project ([www.sotheycangohome.com](http://www.sotheycangohome.com)). Teachers were provided with lessons on contemporary Indigenous issues and the overrepresentation of Indigenous students in care which were co-created with Moccasin Project creator Nancy Rowe, the Indigenous Education Consultant and the Social Science Consultant. The Indigenous Advisor supported the educators and students by helping them make the baby moccasins. Over one hundred students participated in making moccasins and completed 64 pairs. 60 pairs of baby moccasins were gifted to the Child Advocate in Manitoba.



**Opportunity Knocks  
by NPAAMB**



**Orange Shirt Day – Project Heart**



- 45 Indigenous students attended Opportunity Knocks, facilitated by NPAAMB. This event aims to provide youth approaching graduation with an overview of opportunities and possibilities for Creative Career Pathways. The Indigenous Education and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) teams attended and the Indigenous Advisor chaperoned the event. DSBN OYAP was a platinum sponsor for this year's OYAP Indigenous Youth Apprenticeship Grant. NPAAMB arranged for the attendance of Amazing Race Indigenous 2-spirited winners Anthony Johnson and James Makokis. The DSBN OYAP team displayed the Birch Bark Canoe Build at the Trade Show.
- 90 letters were mailed to students eligible for NPAAMB's Stay in School initiative letters.
- A graduation letter for potential secondary school graduates was produced for the third year and these were mailed to 94 Indigenous Grade 12 students who are on track to graduate. The letter includes helpful information, links to bursaries and scholarships and upcoming events such as the Career Fair and the Grad Moccasin Making workshops.
- Sergeant Raymond Starkes from the Canadian Armed Forces followed up with 19 students at four schools who were interested in the Indigenous Entry Programs into the Forces.
- An Influencer trip to Petawawa occurred in partnership with the Canadian Armed Forces (on-going relationship since 2008) with specific focus on encouraging female Indigenous employment. This included information on the outreach and recruitment of students to attend Indigenous summer programs and opportunities for education through the forces with their university tuition subsidy. Female geared trade programs information was also provided with an outline of immersive experiences and learning.
- Along with the Brock University Aboriginal Services, kits were purchased for bags and moccasins that students can create with the hope of raising awareness of Mother Earth and how important it is to take care of her for the future generations yet to come.
- DSBN purchased 150 Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Education Kits for schools. Each kit contains a variety of items including a sash, flashcards, fiddle music, a Michif workbook and a timeline of Métis history in Ontario. This is an exciting first step in providing an introduction to Métis history, culture, and heritage. Professional development and implementation will begin in the new school year.



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## K-12

- DSBN were sponsors of the Celebration of Nations and educators, staff and families attended and participated in several educational workshops.
- Educators attended the opening night of the Imagine Native Film Festival and the Downie/Wenjack concert at the First Ontario Performance Arts Centre in Toronto
- Indigenous Education Consultants attended the FENFC social welcoming Amos Key Jr to Niagara.
- Indigenous Education Consultants presented at the annual DSBN Parent Involvement Conference with a focus on Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum.
- Indigenous Education Consultants attended the NRNC social events at St. Catharines Collegiate during renovations of the centre.
- The Indigenous Education team attended the Indigenous Leads Gathering in Toronto. The Secondary Consultant led the presentation with the First Nations Métis Inuit Education Association of Ontario, (FNMIEAO) Chair highlighting the Star Gathering Leadership Culture Camp and the Birch Bark Canoe Build.
- 34 Grade 4-8 teachers were guided through the latest comprehensive resource: 'Truth and Reconciliation in the Classroom', from the FNMIEAO. Educators were shown how to use the ready-made classroom activities and videos in their virtual classrooms and examples and 'how to' videos were shared.
- 15 elementary educators attended 'Teaching Indigenous Curriculum Using Nelson History Text Grades 7 and 8'. This session helped to further their background knowledge and gain ideas for using the new text that all schools received, as a resource for teaching the Indigenous content in the new curriculum.
- Approximately 1500 educators and community members attended the four-part Tanya Talaga Moccasin Talk Speaker Series. Award winning journalist, acclaimed storyteller, and the Indigenous issues columnist for the Toronto Star, Tanya Talaga engaged the audience with an introductory talk about her book, Seven Fallen Feathers, a national bestseller. Tanya's strong words moved audience members and left educators with the sense of responsibility to learn about the effects of colonization and the legacy of residential schools in order to educate future generations. Promotional posters for this event were created by a Grade 12 Indigenous student from Governor Simcoe Secondary School Caden L.



*Teachers take part in Moccasin Project on November PD Day*



*Gord Downie/Chanie Wenjack Concert at Performing Arts Centre, Secondary Curriculum Consultants attended*

- DSBN Indigenous Education Consultants, FNMI teacher, Elder Grace Fox and FNMIEAO Chair Jodie Williams attended First Law of the Land: Sharing from the Great Dish with Alan Cobiere and Rick Hill at the University of Toronto.
- 32 elementary and secondary educators attended an after-school Speaker Series session that highlighted the Great Niagara Escarpment Indigenous Cultural Map Project. Tim Johnson and Mark Zelinski walked educators through this interactive digital resource. The Niagara Escarpment is 1 of 4 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Ontario. Each is mapped upon both traditional and historic Indigenous Lands.



## INDIGENOUS Education Report

- Educators participated in virtual PD sessions exploring resources with embedded Indigenous Perspectives and learned what the Land Acknowledgement is and why it is read.
- The Indigenous Education team attended the Inspire Gathering and spent a day with Niigaan Sinclair at his Pre-Gathering workshop 'Truth and Reconciliation in Canada'.
- A member of the Indigenous education team was selected for the Downie Wenjack Fund Education Advisory Committee, which meets at a national level.
- The Human Resources staff attended an event held at the Wandering Spirit School Toronto District School Board's fully Indigenous School: JK – 12. They presented and had the opportunity to network one-on-one with teacher candidates.
- Our Indigenous Student Trustee, Chair of our Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) and Indigenous advisor attended International Women's Day to hear Indigenous Climate and Water activist Autumn Peltier speak about environmental issues.
- Ten DSBN educators participated in a seven-session series of PD workshops. This professional development program for educators was based on the 'Ten Essential Understandings about Indigenous Peoples of the Niagara Region', created by the Landscape of Nations 360° team of scholars, historians, and Indigenous culture and language specialists. This informational resource highlights important themes and concepts that educators need to understand to effectively teach students about Indigenous history while fostering critical thinking skills. By supporting teaching that is culturally appropriate and historically accurate, the goal is to foster a climate where Indigenous students thrive, and non-Indigenous students can appreciate the proud legacy of First Peoples and see how their teachings informed the development of this nation.
- Author-artist Lynne Marie Sherry attended secondary subject learning teams Social Science and Humanities and English, sharing some of her work and learning journey with educators. Educators were gifted a copy of her novel 'Where Mary Went', based on her grandmother's experience in Residential School.



*Secondary Graduating students Moccasin Project*



*International Women's Day*



- 11 elementary educators and one principal completed the First Nations Métis Inuit (FNMI) Studies Additional Qualifications (AQ) course accredited by Lakehead University. This was the second cohort of educators to complete this course which enables teachers and principals to further their understanding of Indigenous perspectives, histories and ways of knowing. Educators were empowered to convey this learning back to their students, using culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy. Some of the topics covered in this AQ included: Residential Schools; Intergenerational Trauma; 60's scoop; Indian Act; Treaties; and Truth and Reconciliation. Working with Lakehead University in delivering this blended, in-class and online model of additional qualification course allowed for rich, authentic learning experiences to happen. Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Métis and Inuit Community members were part of the learning journey for these educators and played an important role in sharing their stories and knowledge with course participants. Some of the classes provided experiential learning opportunities ranging in diversity from visiting the Landscape of Nations and Old Fort Erie to learning about Indigenous contributions in the war of 1812, to visiting local Friendship Centres, where they experienced traditional foods and learned about programming offered, to the Niagara Falls History Museum where they experienced Cayuga artist, Sam Thomas' exhibit, 'Opening The Doors of Dialogue' and took part in the Awakening Métis Culture through Art workshop.
- The Secondary System Professional Development Day included 22 Indigenous Education workshops, with seven community members. There was a total of 215 registrations for the 22 workshops. Workshops included: Samuel Thomas Tour of Opening the Doors to Dialogue at the Niagara Falls Museum; Karl Dockstader One Dish Sharing and Social Justice; Nancy Rowe Indigenous Law Lessons; Grade 10 Indigenous Education Lessons, Grade 9 Geography and Grade 11 Environmental Science Water Lessons; Nikki Shawana Traditional Dancing; Dallas Squire First Nations Games and Lacrosse; Jodielynn Harrison Decolonizing the Canon; White Privilege and Six Nations Right to Hunt; Christine Lafferty and The Moccasin Project, Sheila Maracle.
- An additional 13 secondary educators successfully completed the AQ First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples 'Understanding Traditional Teachings, Histories, Current Issues and Cultures', Part 1 Course facilitated by Colinda Clyne. Trips included Landscape of Nations, NRNC Pow Wow and the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Huff Performance with Cliff Cardinal. Community speakers included Gary Parker, Karl Dockstader, Michelle-Elise Burnett, Tim Johnson, Nick Bertrand (Ministry of Education Indigenous Education Officer), Nancy Rowe, Cindy Biancanello and Amanda Pont-Shanks. Traditional lunches included wild rice, bannock with berries and maple syrup, strawberry juice, cedar tea catered by community member and proud DSBN Nokomis (grandmother to Governor Simcoe student) Gail Stup. Deepening understanding, raising awareness and building empathy in educators were key reasons why this course was impactful.



**Welland Centennial Drama class produced a tableau for Orange Shirt Day**



**Welland Centennial NBE Class raising the flag for Downie Wenjack Secret Path Week**



**Indigenous Student Voice**

# DSBN INDIGENOUS TEAM

## K-12

Indigenous Advisor—Sheila Maracle

Indigenous Education Lead, Elementary Consultant—Ronda Menard Indigenous  
Education Elementary Consultant—Jamie Groat

Indigenous Education Secondary Consultant—Erica Zombolas  
Student Achievement Leader—Geraldine Davies  
Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Achievement—JoAnna Roberto

### IEAC Membership 2019-2020

Gary Parker / FENFC  
Jennifer Dockstader / FENFC  
Shari St. Peter / NPAAMB  
Brittany Clause / NPAAMB  
Christiane Muir / NPAAMB  
Mia Bakker / NRNC  
Willow Shawanoo / NRNC  
Dawn Moughtin /NRNC  
Ashley Buck / Niagara College  
Ness Griffin / DSBN student rep  
Bobbi Jones Japp / DSBN parent rep  
Erica Zombolas / DSBN  
Jamie Groat / DSBN  
Ronda Menard / DSBN  
Deana Davies / DSBN  
JoAnna Roberto / DSBN  
Tammy Givans / NCDSB parent  
Brian Kon / NCDSB  
Krista Moscato / NCDSB  
Marco Magazzeni / NCDSB  
Ted Farrell / NCDSB  
Emily Schutt / Niagara College  
Ashley Buck / Niagara College  
Louise Hickey / NCNW  
Wendy Sturgeon / NCNW  
Sandra Wong / Brock  
Cindy Biancaniello / Brock  
Amos Key Jr. / Brock  
Cindy Biancaniello / Inuit Council  
Kelsey Dick / Niagara Region Métis Council  
Derrick Pont / Niagara Region Métis Council





*Birch Bark Canoe Build on display  
at the Education Centre*