FNLKC Conference Workshop Presenter

Workshop Title: Young Women are our Future, Let's Put Indigenous Knowledge, Language & Culture First
Name of Presenters: Rochelle Starr & Heather Blair

Biography: Rochelle Starr is a doctoral candidate in Indigenous Peoples Education. Rochelle is also the director of the Young Indigenous Women's Circle of Leadership (YIWCL) in the Faculty of Education. YIWCL is for young Indigenous women aged 10-16. In this program, Indigenous language and traditions are foundational. Young women learn drama, dance, digital technologies, leadership building and much more.

Biography: Heather Blair is a full professor working in Elementary Education based at the University of Alberta. Her research focuses on intersections of languages, literacy, culture and gender. Her work is grounded in socio-cultural theory and ethnographic research practices. Dr. Blair is the co-founder of the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) and the Young Indigenous Women's Circle of Leadership (YIWCL) at the University of Alberta.

Abstract: The Young Indigenous Women's Circle of Leadership (YIWCL) has been practicing many of the TRC's calls to action and is in alignment with the necessity to mobilize Indigenous languages and Indigenous knowledge transfer. YIWCL offers a unique pedagogical approach to Cree language immersion to young women who may not have access to their ancestral language. In this presentation, we will discuss ideas for communities setting up their own program and tips on implementation. This program and its pedagogy are centered on passing on the Cree language and cultural traditions to the youth in authentic and holistic ways. It is our hope that such pedagogies and program development ideas will bolster and inform language policies currently under development in Canada.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this workshop, delegates will:

- Understand YIWCL's unique approach to immersion for young women
- Learn how communities can set up their own program