



## First Nations Language Keepers Gathering Workshop

**Cheryl Quewezance, Ted Strongquill, Ralph Keshane, Alvin Quewezance,  
Cuthbert Keshane, George Quewezance, Anna-Leah King & Andrea Sterzuk**

**Title:** What we've learned so far from establishing a Mentor-Apprentice Language Project

**Presenters:** Cheryl Quewezance, Ted Strongquill, Ralph Keshane, Alvin Quewezance, Cuthbert Keshane, Anna-Leah King & Andrea Sterzuk

**Biography:** Cheryl Quewezance is Saulteaux from Keeseekoose First Nation and the lead organizer of this language project. She has a BEd and MEd from the University of Saskatchewan. She has taught in First Nation schools, worked for Indigenous and Northern Affairs, and worked at the University of Regina as Acting Executive Lead of Indigenization. She currently works as a Language and Culture Consultant with Yorkton Tribal Council.

**Biography:** Ted Strongquill is Saulteaux from Keeseekoose First Nation, a fluent speaker, a ceremonial lodge keeper for 40 years and his role in this project is language Mentor. He was a band councillor for 25 years and farmer for 35 years. He has lived addictions free for 43 years. He is also an Elder counsellor at the Saulteaux Healing and Wellness Center on Cote First Nation. He is 73 years old, married with 4 children, 2 deceased.

**Biography:** Ralph Keshane is Saulteaux from Keeseekoose First Nation. He is a band councillor, grew up traditional, and has sung Pow Wow for all his life. He is married with nine children. His role in the language project is language apprentice.

**Biography:** Alvin Quewezance grew up participating in ceremonies and learning to pick plants for medicines. He started singing at ceremonies and Pow Wows at the age of 15 and is also a lodge keeper. He is an apprentice in the language learning project. He decided to participate to help himself, his family and others with the language. He has been married for 14 years and has one daughter.

**Biography:** Cuthbert Keshane was born and raised in Keeseekoose First Nation. He has been a band councillor for 15 years. He is fluent in the Saulteaux language and is also a ceremonial lodge holder. He sits on the Saulteaux Healing and Wellness Center as a board member and is a mentor in this project.

**Biography:** George Quewezance is a member of Keeseekoose First Nation. He grew up with the Saulteaux language and has sat on various boards and committees. He is a language mentor in the project.

**Biography:** Dr. Anna-Leah King (Anishnaabe, Manitoulin Island) is an Assistant Professor and the Chair of Indigenization in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina. Prior to joining the University of Regina as a faculty-member, she worked at the University of Alberta as the Coordinator of the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI). Dr. King's contributions to the project are related to her expertise in the areas of ceremony as research, Indigenous language pedagogy and her knowledge of protocols.

**Biography:** Dr. Andrea Sterzuk is a settler from Watson, Saskatchewan. She is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina. She teaches in the areas of linguistic diversity in schools, second language education, and issues of power, identity, and language.



**Abstract:** This presentation will share what we've learned from establishing a Mentor-Apprentice Saulteaux language learning project in Keeseekoose First Nation. The objective is to create a base of intermediate adult speakers of Saulteaux. These speakers will become the next generation of language keepers when the current generation is no longer present. The project began in January 2018 and involves four adult mentors (fluent speakers) working with four adult apprentices to learn the language by doing everyday activities. At times, all project members also meet together as a group to do language camps, have language meetings and participate in ceremony. Keeseekoose First Nation has also partnered with language education specialists from the University of Regina to work with the community, assist with grant applications, provide support in training the mentors and apprentices and study the benefits of the project. Keeseekoose will serve as a pilot project and that this project will expand to eventually include mentor-apprentice projects in other Saulteaux nations in Saskatchewan.

**Learning Outcomes: Participants will know more about:**

- Accessing sources of funding;
- Building a team;
- Incorporating Ceremony into the project;
- Working with university partners;
- Engaging learners;
- Acquisitioning language; and,
- Organizing a project.