

SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN CULTURAL CENTRE

presents

FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGE KEEPERS CONFERENCE



UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY
FOR LANGUAGE
PRESERVATION



NOVEMBER 26 & 27, 2014
SASKATOON INN, SASKATOON, SK

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

tānisi•Anīn Šikwa•Hau Kona•Hau Kola•Hau Koda•Edlānét'e



FNLKC at a glance

350+
participants

2
scholarship recipients

36
volunteers

18
breakout sessions

2
keynote addresses

18
exhibits

14
sponsors

7
multi-media presentations

4
prizes and awards

All Conference Photos by:
Curtis Cameron Photography

The 9th annual First Nations Language Keepers Conference was held at the Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Attended by a diverse group of participants, the conference featured many topics specific to Utilizing Technology for Language Preservation. Saskatoon was described as an ideal location, central for all of Saskatchewan.

The conference agenda blended researchers, practitioners, language developers and cultural advocates giving the audience a broad overview of language issues from a number of perspectives. While there are technology-driven strategies to promote and protect language, there continues to be challenges in moving forward with call for technological material and advancements. The dialogue at this conference was very important and served as an opportunity to advance language and technology; to enhance programs, policy and practice; and, to further prevent language erosion and loss. The common theme was how do you place a community-based language strategy in a context that increases fluency and personal growth.

Conference Objectives

The conference objectives act as the guide in the overall purpose and goal of the First Nations Language Keepers Conference. The intention is to provide and lead First Nations people and youth in the understanding that language is vital and critical in the sovereignty of First Nations people and asserting our inherent rights. Not only is the SICC First Nations Language Keepers Conference committed to addressing language retention for the immediate needs; it hopes to address future needs as well. Listed below are the four conference objectives:

1. To bring together First Nations educators, leaders, Elders, parents and students to share ideas and experiences on how to effectively teach First Nations languages and cultures both in and out of the classroom;
2. To assist communities in developing strategies for revitalizing their languages and cultures;
3. To provide participants with First Nations' worldviews, traditional practices, customs and oral traditions to revitalize and invigorate First Nations' traditional ways; and
4. To discuss strategies relating to the policy development, community advocacy, and administrative, technical and management support for First Nations language and culture programming.

Conference Summary

This summary captures a two-day program of presentations, panel discussions and interactive dialogue at the FNLKC which took place Nov 26-27 in Saskatoon. The event brought together over 350 participants to review the role of promoting technological language development, expand the capacity to address current and future development challenges, place language strategies in a context and position for increased growth and performance. It also provided valuable networking opportunity to set the stage for further cooperation, including First Nation communities at different stages of development.



Master of Ceremony

Tommy Christian, Fort Peck Reservation, Montana (Lakota)

The master of ceremonies played a critical role for our conference. Mr. Tommy Christian linked the keynote and plenary speakers by providing introductions and relevant comments after each speaker. At times, the master of ceremonies was able to fill five minutes when adjusting the schedule due to a speaker speaking for too long or when finishing early. Tommy Christian's language and cultural knowledge and his oratory skills were pivotal in the conference's success but also provided valuable peace of mind in ensuring a smooth process and delivery.

Guest Speakers and Welcome Address

The conference began with opening remarks by representatives of Tribal Chief Felix Thomas, Saskatoon Tribal Council; Vice Chief Bobby Cameron, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations; President's Welcome, Dorothy Myo, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre. Each leader welcomed Elders, delegates and presenters and reminded all on the importance of language and described new and noteworthy initiatives relevant to the themes.



**Welcoming Remarks
Tribal Chief Felix Thomas**



**Welcoming Remarks
Vice Chief Bobby Cameron**



**Welcoming Remarks
Dorothy Myo**

The Leading First Nations Language Conference in Canada



Elders Panel

An Elders Panel representative of the five linguistic groups of Saskatchewan concluded the morning each addressing oral-based knowledge systems and distinct versions of topics that connected the speaker and listener that instilled a sense of community amongst all present. SICC would like to thank and acknowledge the following Elders for their contribution, knowledge and perspective: *(Left to Right in above photo)*

- Elder Isaac Chamakese (Plains Cree) Pelican Lake First Nation
- Elder Peter Nippi (Saulteaux), Kinistin First Nation
- Elder Margaret Reynolds (Dene), English River First Nation
- Elder Lorraine Yuzicappi (Dakota), Standing Buffalo First Nation
- Elder Melvina Eagle (Dakota), Whitecap Dakota First Nation
- Elder William Stone (Nakota), Mosquito Grizzly Bear's Head First Nation
- Elder Ben Weenie (Cree/Assiniboine), Young Chippewyan First Nation *(not pictured above)*



Keynote Address

Wab Kinew, Skype Presentation (Ojibway)

Wab Kinew was skyped in to establish the main underlying theme and to establish a framework for the conference program and agenda. He was selected to raise interest with technology and language preservation. His insightfulness and articulation weaved his keynote message into the program and amongst participants.

Keynote Address

Don Thornton, President of Thornton Media Inc. (Cherokee)

This was an informative keynote address in which President Thornton showed us statistics of the number of apps developed for First Nations or Native American people. Then he showed us how to use these products to author content and then build into multiple formats as required by users and customers.



Plenary Session

Zonnie M. Gorman, Historian & Educator (Navajo)

Zonnie M. Gorman is a recognized historian on the Navajo Code Talkers of World War II. Zonnie is the daughter of Carl Gorman, one of the original Code Talkers. Her address highlighted a developed and utilized code of their Navajo language that baffled the Japanese and helped win the American victory in the Pacific. She provided a touching story about the Code Talkers and in particular, her father's role as one of the first twenty-nine Code Talkers and how the US Government tried to eradicate Indigenous languages and cultures. She concluded by addressing how the code was developed with personal insights and information.

"The initial Navajo code was developed by the First Twenty-Nine Navajo Code Talkers, recruited in the spring of 1942 as a pilot project. They developed over 200 terms for the English alphabet, general vocabulary, ranks of officers, countries, military equipment and munitions. Later recruits into the program added to the code periodically. When new terms were added, the Code Talkers regrouped between battles for retraining and updating. When World War II ended in 1945, the Navajo code consisted of nearly 800 terms.

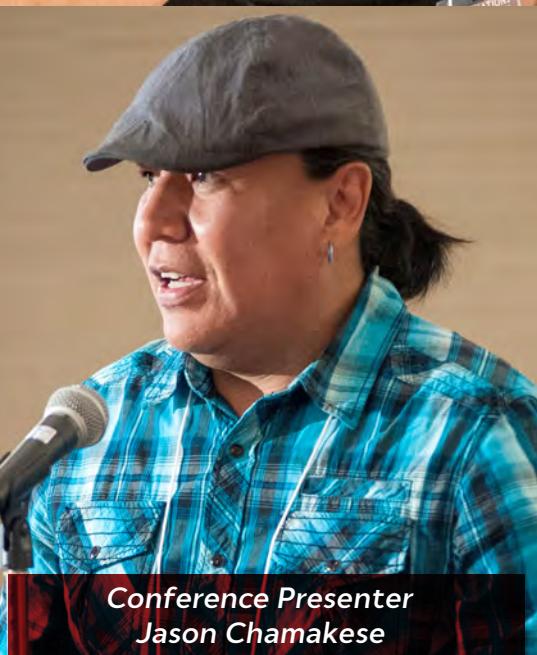
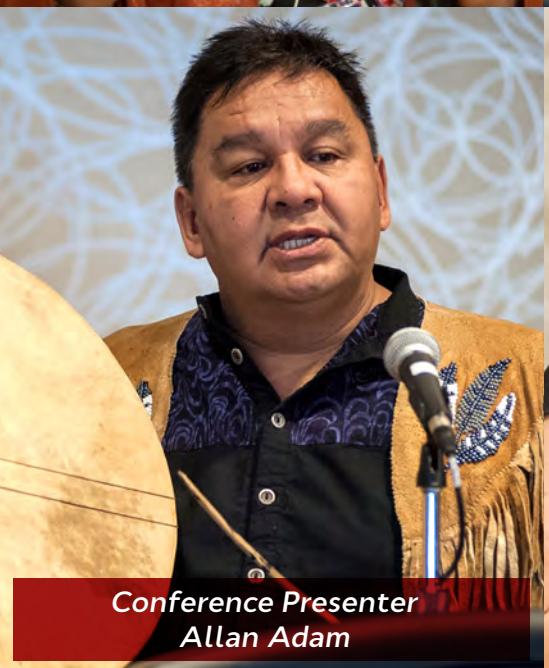
The Navajo Code Talkers provided the most sophisticated, accurate, fast and secure means of military communications during World War II in the Pacific. The code was used to send combat coordinates, troop movements, orders, and highly classified messages. Code Talkers served on the front lines, on ships and aircraft, with the US Marine Raiders, reconnaissance, and underwater demolition teams. Without the ability to send these fast and accurate communications, the United States efforts in the Pacific would have been greatly hampered, perhaps even lengthening the war and resulting in the loss of many more lives."

Circle of Light Navajo Education Project, 2004.

Breakout Sessions

There were eighteen session, 10 on Wednesday and 8 on Thursday. The following are workshop titles with names of presenters:

- Teaching Traditional Languages with the iPad and iPhone – FHQ Language App, Carol Johnson, Lori Poitras, Bill Cook and Leon Ryder [Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota and Nakota]
- Create Your World Through the Medicine Wheel and Its Teachings, Margaret Reynolds (Dene’)
- Our Dene’ Language in the Modern Age – Adopting Technology to Share the Language and Culture, Allan Adam (Dene’)
- A Community Framework to Address Language and Culture, Darrell McCallum (Woodland Cree)
- Nahkawē Language and Cultural Initiatives, Brenda Kayseas and Sandra Kayseas (Nahkawē)
- Using Technology and Music to Strengthen Indigenous Languages, Laura Burnouf (Michif)
- Integrating Language Technology and the Provincial Curriculum, Celia Deschambault (Swampy Cree)
- Sacred Sites, Tyrone Tootosis (Assiniboine/Cree)
- When Everyone Thinks Alike, Nobody is Thinking, Mike Parkhill (Say IT First Inc.)
- Using Total Physical Response (TPR) Across the Language as a Way to Teach Value, Culture and Tradition in the Contemporary Classroom, Calinda Duquette (Plains Cree) and Jason Chamakese (Northern Plains Cree)
- E-Learning Cree Language Resources: Current Developments at the First Nations University, Dr. Arok Wolvengrey (First Nations University of Canada)
- Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALS), Dr. Peter Wood and Dr. Bettina Spreng (University of Saskatchewan)
- Saulteaux Ceremonial Protocols of the Nahkawē People, Peter Nippi (Saulteaux)
- Wahkôtowin at the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), Yvette Arcand, Rita LaPlante, Andrea Michael, Irene Oakes (University of Saskatchewan)
- Sâkêwêw Substance Awareness and Empowerment for Youth (SSAEY) Inc., Celeste Tootosis and Youth Presenters (Plains Cree)
- Nîcimos – Interactive Play, Saskatoon Native Theatre Company
- SaskCulture: Support and Opportunities for First Nations Language Initiatives, Damon Badger-Heit and Paul Gingras (SaskCulture)
- Kapêsiwin: Elder/Youth Language Camp, Erica Beaudin and Darren Okemaysim (Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services – RT/SIS)



The Leading First Nations Language Conference in Canada



2014 FNLKC Round Dance at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge

Ceremonies and Round Dance

Traditional First Nations ceremonies are an integral part of the SICC's First Nations Language Keepers Conference annually. These ceremonies include a sweat lodge, morning songs and prayers, traditional feast, round dance and give away ceremony.

The conference organizers held a community feast and round dance held on the evening of November 26, 2014 at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge in Saskatoon. The Round Dance was a huge success with delegates, Elders, community members and youth in attendance. The SICC wishes to express great appreciation to:

- Elders: Leonard and Wendy Eyahpaise, Beardy's & Okemasis; Maurice Nicotine, Red Pheasant; Maggie Chamakese, Pelican Lake First Nation
- Master of Ceremonies: Dion Tootoosis, Poundmaker First Nation
- Master of Ceremonies: Donnie Speidel, Standing Rock Sioux
- Stick Man: Harvey Dreaver, Big River First Nation
- Whip Man: Glen Chamakese, Pelican Lake First Nation
- Guest Speakers: Leslie-Ann Wilson, SaskArts Board; Winston Walkingbear, Onion Lake Cree Nation

Video Presentation – Maria’s Story

This short documentary told the story of Marie Wilcox, the last fluent speaker of the Wukchumni language (Yokuts tribe of California, U.S.A.) and the dictionary she created in an effort to keep her language alive. The video demonstrated how a people's language is an important insight into the culture and thoughts of that people when a language becomes extinct and there is no record of it all, we are all diminished greatly. The intent was to present Elders and participants this video in hopes of motivating others, despite age, to preserve the language and culture of a people. This video can be viewed on YouTube at: <http://youtu.be/iRDmRXCizEM>



**Scholarship Winner
Sherry Deschambault**

SICC First Nations Language Scholarships

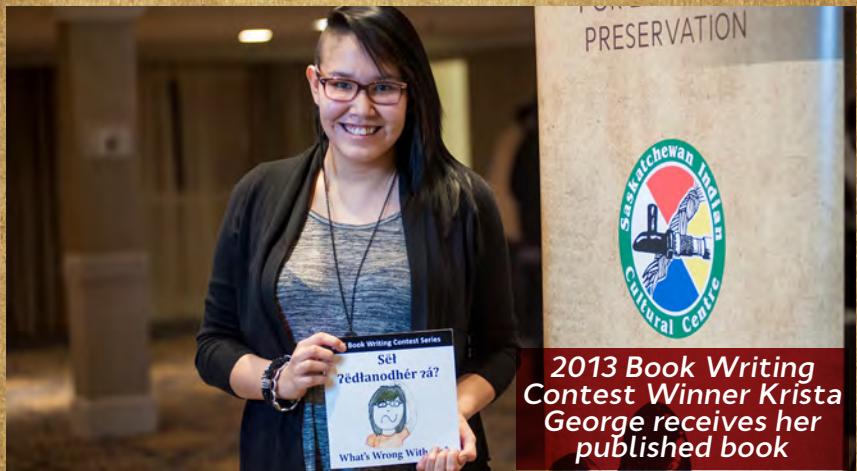
Two students received the SICC First Nations Language Scholarship. These are awarded to students registered in the First Nations Language Instructor's Certificate Program. Each scholarship is valued at \$2,500 and are awarded to committed, dedicated students who have proven that academic achievement can be attained with scholarship and program support. We are pleased to announce this year's recipients:

- Delphine Vincent,
Waterhen First Nation,
Northern Plains Cree Dialect
- Sherry Deschambault,
Cumberland House Cree
Nation, Swampy Cree Dialect.

Volunteers

A total number of 36 volunteers participated in the conference. The majority of the volunteers were students attending the University of Saskatchewan and assisted with:

- registration
- attending to the needs and requests of conference participants
- assisting with the use of technical needs of the conference
- disseminating and gathering workshop evaluation forms
- participating with serving at the feast and partaking in the round dance



2014 SICC Book Writing Contest

The two winners for the Annual Book Writing contest were announced. The winner was a Woodland Cree book titled pahkwēsikan or Making Bannock by Derrick Oesch of the Little Red River School. Derrick received \$500 and when the books are created, 20 copies of the book. The runner up is also a Woodland Cree book titled pwātisimowin or The Sturgeon Lake Pow Wow by Lacey Turner-Halkett of the Little Red River School.

Summary

In addition to summarizing the highlights of the FNLKC program, this report analyzes their implication for future research, policy and programming.

The conference agenda blended researchers, practitioners, and language advocates giving the audience a broad overview of language issues from a wide range of perspectives. While there are technology-driven strategies to promote and protect language, there continues to be challenges in moving forward with a new wave of behavioural change. The dialogue at this conference was important and served as an opportunity to advance technological developments, programs, policy and practice to further prevent language erosion and loss.

Focusing more on advancement, the FNLKC delegates heard the latest developments in language and technology – with a shift toward the goal of technological design, adaptation and development. In addition, considerable discussion addressed unique issues facing adolescents. Another area of interest throughout the conference was ensuring intergenerational transmission of language and culture.

Closing Remarks

President Dorothy Myo conveyed her gratitude to all participants, particularly session moderators, panellists and presenters. She extended thanks to the organizing committee for their efforts, and expresses her satisfaction with the interactive nature of the discussions while congratulating participants of the extensive networking that had taken place.



**SICC President Dorothy Myo with the SICC Staff
and FNLKC Organizing Committee**

Thank you to the Sponsors of the 2014 FNLKC

Bison Sponsors



Caribou Sponsor



Bear Sponsors



Wolf Sponsors



In Kind Sponsors



The Leading First Nations Language Conference in Canada



Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre
305-2555 Grasswood Road East
English River Business Complex
English River First Nation #192J
Saskatoon, SK S7T 0K1
Phone: (306) 244-1146
Fax: (306) 665-6520
E-mail: conference@sicc.sk.ca
Website: www.sicc.sk.ca



/SaskatchewanIndianCulturalCentre



@S_I_C_C



/siccmultimedia