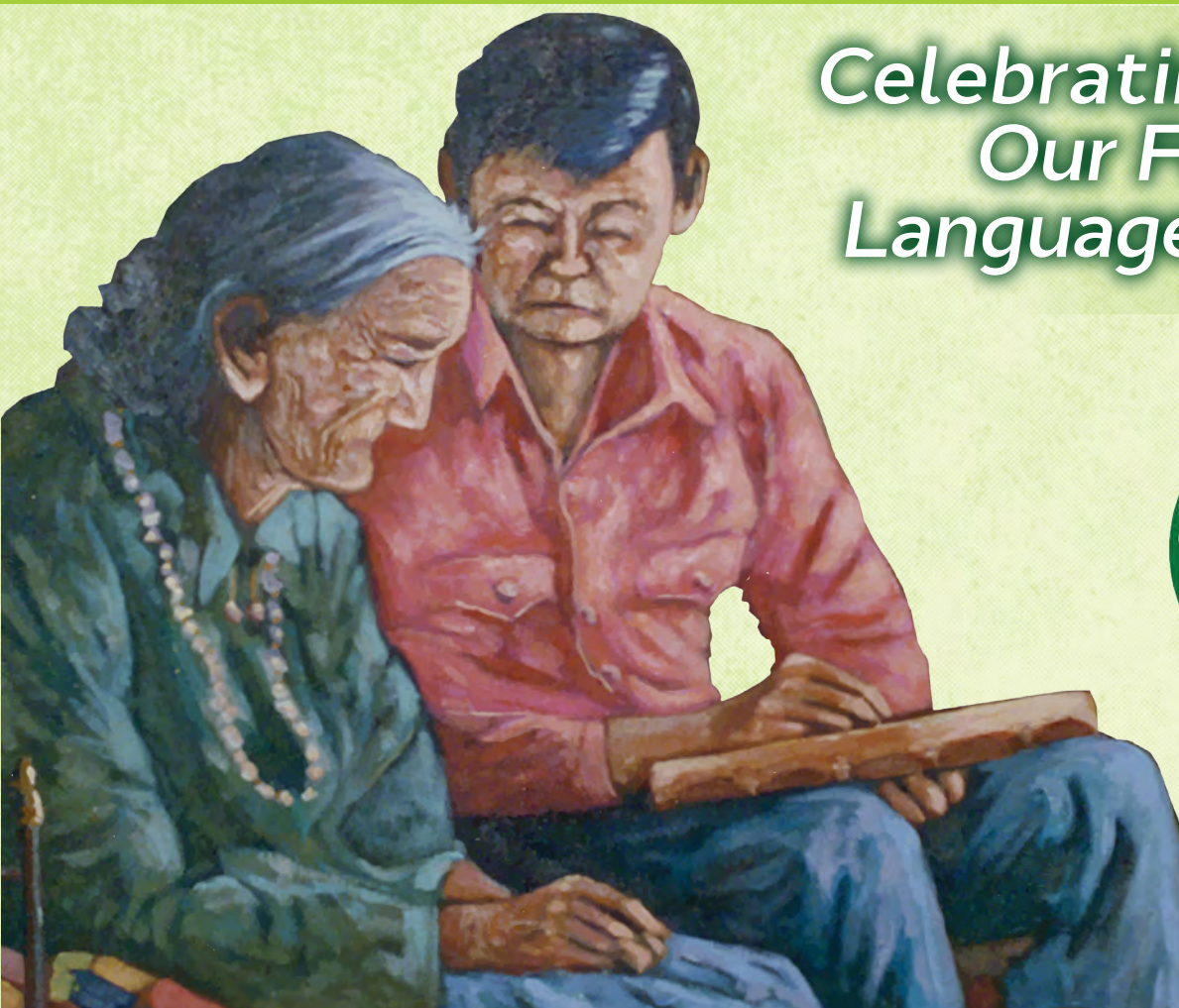


presents

FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGE KEEPERS CONFERENCE



*Celebrating Youth:
Our Future
Language Keepers*



NOVEMBER 23 & 24, 2016
SASKATOON INN, SASKATOON, SK

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

tānisi • anīn šikwa • hau kona • hau kola • hau koda • edlanét'e



FNLKC at a glance

425+
delegates

35
volunteers

18
breakout sessions

2
keynote addresses

20
exhibits

13
sponsors

31
door prizes

*All conference photos by:
m.pet productions*

The Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre (SICC) 11th annual First Nations' Language Keepers Conference (FNLKC) was held on November 23-24, 2016 at the Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The conference was attended by a diverse group of participants which featured many topics specific to this year's theme; Celebrating Youth: Our Future Language Keepers. Saskatoon was selected as the ideal location to host the event because of its central location in Saskatchewan.

The conference brought together researchers, practitioners, language developers and cultural advocates providing delegates with a broad range of language issues from a variety of perspectives. Although community-driven, strategies exist to promote and protect language, there are still barriers in moving forward as communities advance. Another important component of this conference was that it allowed opportunity to engage in dialogue and networking with other community projects across the country; to enhance programming, policy and practice; and, to prevent further erosion and loss of languages. The theme showcased community projects that have achieved success and how others can utilize these strategies to increase fluency and personal growth.

Conference Objectives

The conference objectives serve as a guide in the overall purpose and goal of the FNLKC. It is intended to provide and lead First Nations people and youth to understand that language plays a critical role in the sovereignty of First Nations people, as well as, asserting our inherent Treaty right to use our First Nations languages. The SICC FNLKC is committed to continue addressing language retention in the past, present and future. Listed below are the four conference objectives which aim 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;
- Assist communities in developing strategies for revitalizing (their) languages and cultures;
- Provide participants with First Nations' worldviews, traditional practices, customs and oral traditions as tools to revitalize First Nations' traditional ways; and,
- Discuss strategies relating to the policy development, community advocacy, and administrative, technical and management support for First Nations language and culture programming.

Conference Summary

The two-day conference took place November 23-24, 2016 in Saskatoon, SK. The event was filled with presentations, panel discussions and interactive dialogue. It brought together over 425 delegates from across Canada to witness the successes of community language projects, how they can adopt and utilize these strategies with their own communities, and provided an opportunity to network with other First Nation people from various communities at various stages of development.



Master of Ceremonies: (left to right)
Julius Park, Dion Tootoosis

Master of Ceremonies

The master of ceremonies play a key role in the conference with their ability to introduce speakers, presenters and performers, keeping the audience engaged while entertaining them, and generally maintain the flow of the event.

Julius Park, Dene, was born and raised in La Loche, Saskatchewan. His northern traditional lifestyle branches from the Dene culture, which was passed onto him by his parents, siblings, relatives, Elders, through on land cultural engagements and of course the entire community had a role in his upbringing. Early on, he was brought up without any interruptions of the English language and he continues to retain his language and local customs. He has achieved a Bachelor and Masters of Education Degrees, taught elementary school for 12 years, worked as a consultant in the provincial system and a Superintendent of Education for the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. He currently lives in La Ronge with his family for the past 11 years and works as a self-employed contractor in the education field.

Dion L. J. Tootoosis, Plains Cree, B. Ed is an established cultural enthusiast from Poundmaker Cree Nation, Dion keeps the family tradition alive in perpetuating and enriching traditional beliefs, values and culture through his work in education and the cultural-arts. His innovative and interactive sharing techniques impact and engage audiences at Pow Wows, Round Dances, and other gatherings as a professional Master of Ceremonies. Dion is also a performing artist of internationally renowned Indigenous Dance Theatre company, Blackfoot Medicine Speaks. He currently serves at the SICC as the Indigenous Programs Facilitator.

Guest Speakers and Welcome Address

Each day, the conference began with a Pipe Ceremony, followed by opening remarks and welcome addresses. Elder William Ratfoot (Plains Cree) from Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation opened day one with an opening prayer and morning song. Elder Rose Anne Adam (Dene) from Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation opened day two with an opening prayer and Glen Chamakese provided the morning song.

The Master of Ceremonies, Julius Park (Dene) and Dion Tootosis (Plains Cree) welcomed delegates. Welcoming remarks were provided by the Director of Education, Saskatoon Tribal Council Val Harper, Treaty Six Education Council Director Pat Buglar, Miss FSIN Stephanie Bellegarde (Plains Cree), Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Bobby Cameron (Plains Cree) from Witchehan Lake First Nation, Board of Governors Chief Dennis Dustyhorn and SICC Interim President Belinda Daniels (Plains Cree) from Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark and SICC FNLKC Chair Melody Wood (Plains Cree). Sponsor addresses were made by Past President Pat Grayston of SaskCulture. Each of these leaders welcomed Elders, delegates and presenters and shared their knowledge on the importance of language and noteworthy initiatives relevant to the themes.



Welcoming Remarks
Pat Buglar (T6EC)



Welcoming Remarks
Mayor Charlie Clark (Saskatoon)



Welcoming Remarks
Pat Grayston (SaskCulture)



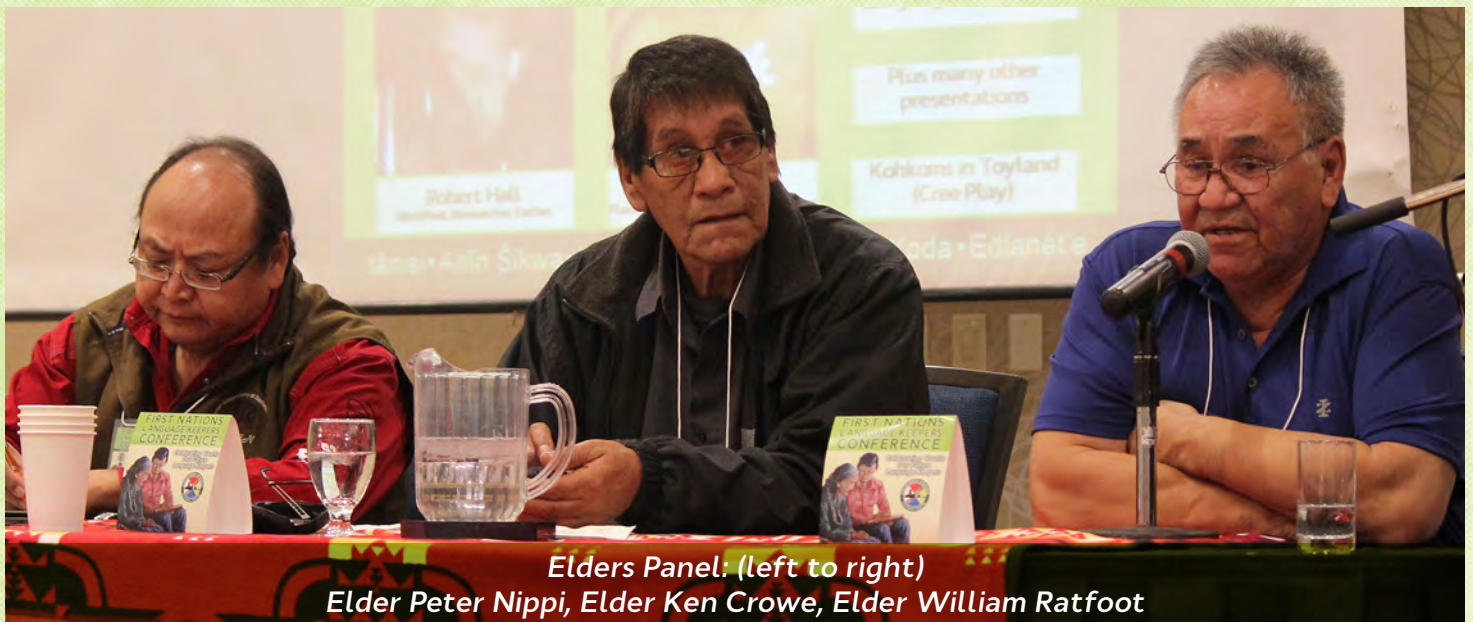
Welcoming Remarks
Chief Dennis Dustyhorn (SICC Board)



Welcoming Remarks
Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth (PAGC Education)



Welcoming Remarks
Miss FSIN Stephanie Bellegarde

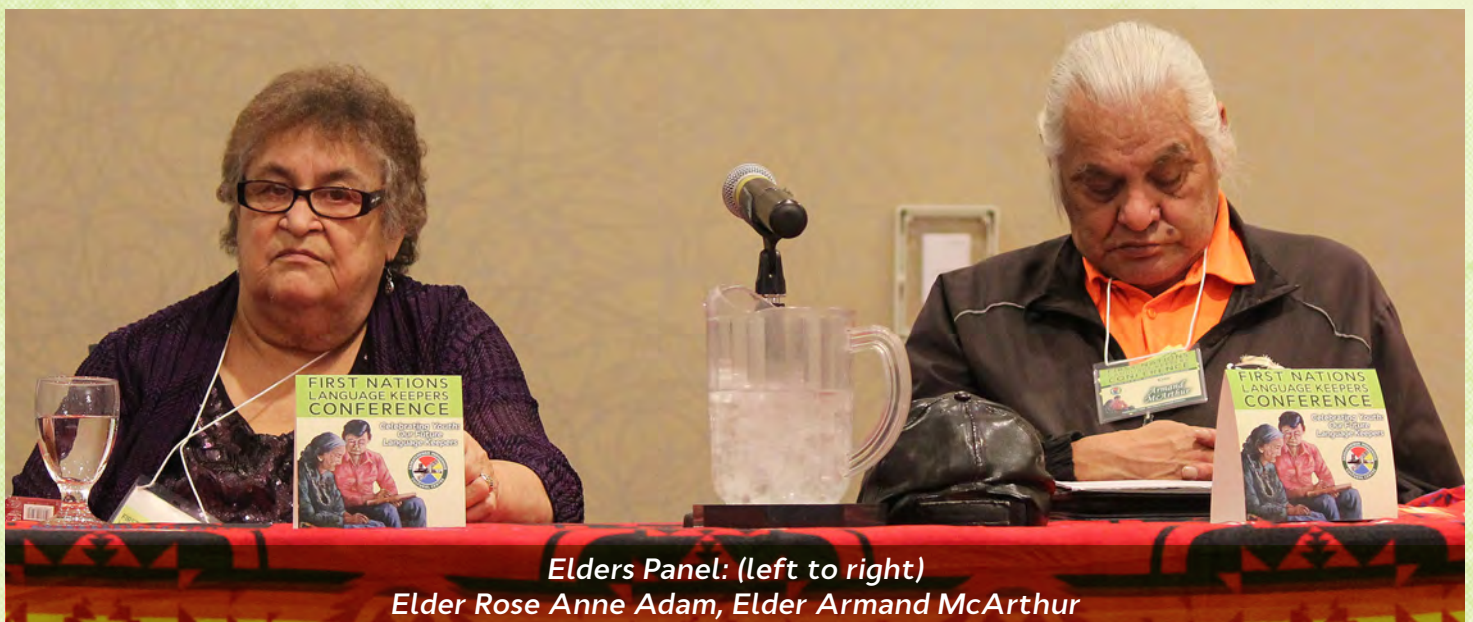


Elders Panel: (left to right)
Elder Peter Nippi, Elder Ken Crowe, Elder William Ratfoot

Elders Panel

The Elders Panel continues to be an important aspect of the conference because it represents the five linguistic groups in Saskatchewan. The Elders share their oral-based knowledge systems on various topics that connect the speaker and listener while at the same time building a sense of community amongst all those who attended the event. The SICC acknowledges the following Elders for their contribution, knowledge and perspective:

Elder William Ratfoot (Plains Cree), Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation
 Elder Ken Crowe (Dakota), Wahpeton Dakota Nation
 Elder Peter Nippi (Saulteaux), Kinistin First Nation
 Elder Hartland Goodtrack (Lakota), Wood Mountain First Nation
 Elder Rose Anne Adam (Dene), Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation
 Elder Armand McArthur (Nakoda), Pheasant Rump Nakota Nation



Elders Panel: (left to right)
Elder Rose Anne Adam, Elder Armand McArthur

The Leading First Nations Language Conference in Canada



Keynote Address

Language Revitalization, Innovation & Hope - Robert Hall is called maato'ommstatto'osi (First-Winters-Sun) and is from the Blackfeet Reservation. He listened when Elders told him he must learn his language, niitsiipo''sin. He began studying dictionaries, grammar books, and linguistic literature focused in his language. He also studied Linguistics and Speech Pathology to assist him. He learned a fair bit of the Arapaho Language under his friend and mentor Neyooxet Greymorning who developed a language teaching method, Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA). For a brief period, he spoke and understood Arapaho better than his own language. He left the city to return home with the purpose to learn more of his language and to teach his language. He met William Big Bull who became his friend, mentor, big brother, and inspiration. They, with his cousin, Sterling Schildt, started a non-profit, The aasisstto Language Society to help reach people scattered across North America. He believes Indigenous people are still the protectors of the Earth and our languages help us understand the natural world.



Keynote Address

Inspiring Indigenous Learning - Belinda Daniels, SICC Interim President from Sturgeon Lake First Nation shared with delegates a story; your story is ultimately her story because our lives are interwoven with many Indigenous peoples, such as the Denesulene, Micmac, Anishnabec, Sioux peoples, Blackfoot, Mohawk, Tlingit (kling-kit), and the nêhiyawak people (just to name a few) right across this great nation, this vast continent. It is a story of resistance, survival, and renewal. We are all in search of respect, equality and emancipation. Belinda believes that we are all still here because we all stand on the shoulders of greatness, courage and spirit. The spirit within each and every one of us is that we still carry a connection to each other, our kinship, our relations and our ancestors. "kahkiyaw niwahkomakanak" is the truth and this is what it means. While we do not live in the past, the sentiments of our collective identity still exist in the long ago stories still told, songs still sung, ceremonies still practiced, natural laws still honored, sacred places and spaces still remembered and most importantly, our languages are still spoken.



Community Showcase

nastow anehiyoweyak (We only speak Cree) - In their house, Ira, her husband, their 13 year old grandson Davis and their adopted five year old son, George only speak Cree. Her husband will not respond to the boys or acknowledge them if they speak English. Delegates will understand that we can and are still able to pass down our languages. Davis is a fluent Cree speaker. In many communities, he is recognized and people often acknowledge him and his language fluency. Through video clips and a powerpoint, Ira will show Davis speaking and visiting with his mosom in Cree only. She also has videos of Davis teaching George Cree words and how at his young age, that he too is a Cree teacher. Davis is no stranger to SICC, he was acknowledged at age five in 2015 when he won the annual book writing contest.

Breakout Sessions

The conference consisted of 18 breakout sessions over the two days of the conference. Below are the workshop titles, names of presenters and the applicable linguistic group:

#StandingRockSyllabus Project: Teaching & Learning through Decolonial Struggles, Elsa Hoover (Dakota)

Building Relationships: Engaging Indigenous Youth through Technology to Strengthening Cultural Language & Identity, Holly Toulejour (Dene)

UnBQ Language Programs, Wayne Jackson & Jessie Sylvestre (Dene & Cree)

Youth Engagement in Lakota Country Success Stories from the Language Movement, Elliot Tinker (Lakota)

We cho hank ge ne - Traditional Teachings, John Spyglass (Nakota & Cree)

4 Connections, Resiliency at its Best, Joline Mearon-Bull, Charlene Barclay, Ida Bull (Plains Cree)

Connecting Youth to Sights and Sounds of nêhiyaw Language, Reuben Quinn (Plains Cree)

From the Page to the Stage, Curtis Peeteetuce (Plains Cree)

The Kairos' Blanket Exercise, Treaty 4 Language Sovereignty Spin, Student led oski-pimohtahtamwak otayisîniwaw (Plains Cree)

nêhiyaw Summer Language Experience, Belinda Daniels (Plains Cree)

Land Based Elder Driven Curriculum, Sylvia Weenie, Noella Mitsuing (Plains Cree)

Saulteaux Anishnabe (Nakawe) Worldview & Importance of Language, Peter Nippi (Saulteaux)

First Nations Educator's Classroom Essentials, Celia Deschambault (Swampy Cree)

Telling Our Traditional Stories to Recapture Culture, Solomon Ratt (Woodland Cree)

Building Competent Storytelling, Understanding Anatomy of Words, Robert Hall (Blackfeet)

Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey Education in Mi'kmaq Language Development, Blaire Gould, Yolanda Denny (Mi'kmaw)

Tactics Fail, Strategies Work, That's SIC, Mike Parkhill (Multi-Linguistic)

SICC Programs, Melody Wood, Andrea Custer, Jessica Generoux (Multi-Linguistic)



Kohkoms in Toyland

Humour is healing! Instead of having our annual Round Dance in conjunction with the FNLKC, the committee decided to incorporate humour with language in our conference and with the help of Gordon Tootoosis Nīkānīwin Theatre (GTNT) through their theatre play Kohkoms in Toyland. The play features kohkomak of Kiwetinohk in a story filled with storytelling, humour and heart. Sihkos, Zula and Clare make their holiday return. With Christmas bonus cheques out, Sihkos and Zula are looking for the best gift ever. They believe that Toyland, a new discount store just north of the reserve, will have that gift. When they arrive the mischievous store-owner welcomes them with open arms. Soon, Zula and Sihkos are drawn into the store's surreal, mysterious and questionable presence. Note: this theatre production is recommended for ages 12 and up.



Volunteers

There were over 35 volunteers with the majority of the volunteers were students from the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies and the University of Saskatchewan who assisted with various stages of the conference including: conference registration, distributing and gathering conference and workshop evaluation forms, serving Elders at the conference and set up and take down at the Saskatoon Inn.



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 involved researchers, practitioners, and language advocates giving the audience an opportunity to go over a broad range of language issues from various perspectives. Efforts to continue promoting and protecting First Nations languages are constantly faced with challenges and barriers in moving forward. This conference is a great opportunity to create an open dialogue to discuss and share important issues pertaining to advancements made in areas such as community developments, programs, policy and practice and to continue working towards language revitalization with special attention focused on advancement. The FNLKC delegates heard the latest developments at the community level – with a shift toward the goal of addressing the need for more educators to become speakers and to address the need for families and communities to continue their efforts to involve children, youth and their communities in language learning and revitalization.



Closing Remarks

Interim President Belinda Daniels conveys her gratitude to all of those who were involved in various stages of the conference including, but not limited to, the hosts, delegates, guest speakers, presenters, Elders and youth. She also would like to thank the organizing committee for their tremendous effort to make this conference another great success.

Thank you to the Sponsors of the 2016 FNLKC

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FIRST NATIONS LANGUAGE KEEPERS CONFERENCE



Original Artwork by: Shannon Two Feathers



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NOVEMBER 22&23, 2017
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

2017 Conference Theme

**Resurgence:
Reclaiming Indigenous
Knowledge Systems**

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



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