

Remembering first steps on our journey of understanding

Have you ever wondered where the Indigenous medicine wheels that hang in the front of every school in Chinook's Edge came from?

As it is National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, we wanted to take the opportunity to remember how this special piece of artwork came to be, and recognize it as one step on the Chinook's Edge journey towards truth and reconciliation.

The vision for the project started at École Deer Meadow School about eight years ago, with some staff members and a group of Indigenous students.

Tracy Laut, who served as the Indigenous Lead and a Family School Wellness worker at Deer Meadow said, "our idea was to place some artwork in a visible area where it would greet people as they entered our building. Specifically we wanted the art to communicate welcome to Indigenous students, staff and families."

A group of 32 Indigenous Deer Meadow students - together called Tribestone - agreed. The students accepted assignments, as a part of the planning process, to research symbols and images that would represent First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

Janice Gallant, the Deer Meadow teacher who painted the artwork, was pleased with the symbols Tribestone students chose. "The medicine wheel, which frames the images, is an important Indigenous symbol as it represents the four directions, times of day, and four seasons."

Gallant said each of the four panels within the wheel reflects those elements, and also brings in symbols from each of the three Indigenous cultures. For instance, the spirit whale, inukshuk, and northern lights for Inuit people, and tipi, buffalo and the eagle for First Nations people, as well as the Métis flag and cart for Métis people. She said, "there is so much soulfulness in Indigenous teachings."

"I was honored to be asked to paint these images," said Gallant. "I think there is so much to learn as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people come together. Also, as we have come to understand the impact of residential schools for

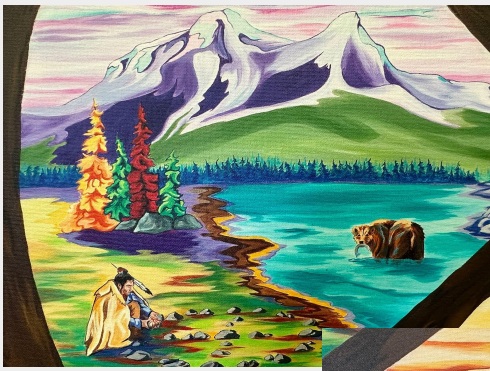


Janice Gallant, a teacher at Ecole Deer Meadow School in Olds, painted the artwork in this Medicine Wheel that hangs in every Chinook's Edge school.

Indigenous families, we wanted to be a part of the work of healing and rebuilding trust in schools."

Once the art was completed, Deer Meadow held an unveiling and smudging ceremony with an Indigenous Elder. Shortly after that Gallant started to receive requests from other schools in Chinook's Edge asking for copies.

"We never intended for this to become so big," says Laut, "but we are thrilled that it did. I am still so proud of this project and all of the students that were involved with it. I loved that this was something we did together and that the students walked away with an increased sense of pride in themselves and their culture."



Images from the Medicine Wheel designed by Ecole Deer Meadow students, and painted by Janice Gallant.

For more coverage of National Indigenous Peoples Day including:

- Insights about Indigenous culture, shared by Patrick Mitsuing, Indigenous Education Coordinator
- Celebrations in our schools

Check out the Chinook's Edge [Facebook page](#).

Two Chinook's Edge trustees complete first-of-its kind Trustee Governance program

Chinook's Edge trustees Kathy Kemmere and Linda Wagers have completed the Trustee Governance Program, a one year course offered by the Alberta School Boards Association and the University of Calgary. This is the first time the program has been offered. The program involved attending classes twice a month for a year, with two sessions in person and the rest virtual.

The course touched on governance, the fiscal responsibility of trustees, risk awareness and assessment, strategic thinking and planning, conflict resolution and digital transformation.

"As a new Trustee, I felt this course was indeed an incredible opportunity to be able to learn more of the intricacies of the role, and to be much better prepared when facing some challenges and issues if and when they come to our attention as a Board," said Linda Wagers. "Being able to interact with other trustees from across the province also allowed for good comparisons and constructive discussion when studying case studies and important aspects with the instructors through the U of C, who were all exceptional."

Kathy Kemmere said, "I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from the amazing expertise in this program to support my role as a trustee. The learning from these experts and the connection to other trustees across the province was so beneficial."



Trustees Linda Wagers (left) and Kathy Kemmere (right) recently completed the Trustee Governance Course through ASBA and U of C

"Congratulations to Kathy and Linda on completing the program," said Holly Bilton, Board Chair. "Our Board will benefit from their increased knowledge and will be better able to serve our students, our communities and the education system."