



# Our Gifted Children

lakhinorónhkwa lakhio'okòn:a



## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- Elder's Corner - Pearl Gabona
- Student Success featuring Miigwaans Osawamick Sagassige
- Transition Planning for High School
- Translation Contest!





## Message from Chiefs of Ontario Director of Education

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Shé:kon  
sewakwé:kon. Ayá:wenhs  
sewakwé:kon sewata'karí:te nok  
sewatshennón:ni.

Hello everyone. I hope this greeting finds you well and happy. I would like to share a poem by Nishnawbe Spiritual Teacher, Arthur Solomon. Although this poem<sup>[1]</sup>, simply titled EDUCATION, was written several decades ago – it still resonates. I hope you enjoy it.

The traditional way of education was by example and experience and by storytelling.

The first principle involved was total respect and acceptance of the one to be taught.

And that learning was a continuous process from birth to death.

It was a total continuity without interruption.

Its nature was like a fountain that gives many colours and flavours of water and that whoever chose could drink as much or as little as they wanted to and whenever they wished.

The teaching strictly adhered to the sacredness of life whether human, animals or plants.

But in the course of history there came a disruption.

And then education became “compulsory miseducation” for another purpose, and the circle of life was broken and the continuity ended.

It is that continuity which is now taken up again in the spiritual rebirth of the people.

Skén:nen kénhak (let there be peace). E'tho nikawén:nake,

Julia Candlish.

Director of Education, Chiefs of Ontario

<sup>[1]</sup> From *Songs for the People: Teachings on the Natural Way*, Arthur Solomon 1990

## WHO WE ARE

The **Chiefs of Ontario** is a political forum and secretariat for collective decision-making, action, and advocacy for the 133 First Nations communities located in Ontario.

Guided by the Chiefs in Assembly, we uphold self-determination efforts of the Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk, Onkwehon:we, and Lenape Peoples in protecting and exercising their inherent and Treaty Rights.

Keeping in mind the wisdom of our Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, and the future for our youth, we continue to create the path forward in building our Nations as strong, healthy Peoples respectful of ourselves, each other, and all creation.



## Elder's Corner - Pearl Gabona



Pearl is a strong Métis leader and an Elder in the Métis Nation of Ontario. Her Métis roots go back to Drummond Island in the early 1800's. She has held many leadership roles that include Region 8 Women's Representative (2008 to 2020), Women's Council (12+ years), the Women of the Métis Nation, Les Femmes Michif Otipemsiwak (LFMO), and the 'She is Indigenous' campaign in 2018.

Currently, Pearl is a councilor on the Oshawa Durham Region Métis Council and a member of the All Our Relations Drumming Circle. Pearl is a member of the St Paul's United Church Circle of Indigenous Friends and Advocates

Pearl is a member of the Restorative Justice Council for the Métis Nation of Ontario. This Council is instrumental in working with Indigenous people charged with and convicted of a criminal offence (generally nonviolent offences) with the intent of returning the offender to THEIR Indigenous roots and values and avoiding punitive measures or incarceration.

Pearl is a retired police Detective having served for 30 years. She is a wife, mother, and grandmother to two young grandsons. She is actively instilling in her grandsons their Indigenous history.

Education is very important to me for many reasons. My Father was only educated up to grade eight, and I believe he was a very smart man. He managed to do a lot, but his lack of education kept him down. He didn't understand the value of education. Today, the world has changed; we are not in a world where we can have a grade eight schooling and do well. My opinion which is reflective in Indigenous families is that education enlightens and opens doors, it creates possibilities, and helps you to understand all things better. Access to education provides you with a more meaningful life.

I believe in lifelong learning in life and school. We need to ensure that children are educated to the best of their ability and with the understanding that education isn't always formal. Education is teaching children the ways of our people so that they have something to help them cope. The children need the kind of education that you get from listening to Kookum share stories. Elders and aunties are all very important in children's educational experiences.

I am Métis, and our special needs children have always been valued. This, I'm sure applies to all First Nations.

There is so much to be learned. It's important to place our students with special needs where they can be educated and they can educate others. We need to encourage our students and make future opportunities for them. We may not see an immediate response or value, but we need to continue to build them, make them, change them, and create the ability for them to be successful in life. I am called upon to help with conflict in the Métis community. The most important thing for anyone facing conflict, whether it's personal or environmental, is to go back to their roots. Go back to the land; the real world. I don't mean the real world as in the big city where everything is happening, I mean the real world of nature and plants and trees. Teach them how valuable they are and the whole creation. I know that when it comes to conflict, they need to assess it carefully to see why there is conflict. When I'm working towards conflict resolution, I always ask people what are "you" responsible for? What can "you" change? We are responsible for our own reactions and those we can change. When you are having conflict with anyone, look for common ground. You need to determine that there is an answer. We don't always

agree that there are answers, but there are answers to everything...they just need to be found.

In our culture, we know the importance of wisdom, humility, truth, and the seven grandfather's teachings. Do all things with integrity. Don't blame others. If you're in conflict, ask yourself, what is my role/responsibility in the conflict? Acknowledgment is a priority.

My advice to someone with educational goals is to move forward no matter what roadblocks are put in front of you. Step over and around all of them to get past them.

You can do anything; find what you need in your own spirit. It may not be easy and you may hit your lowest level before you pick yourself up to strive and succeed, but you have the power to change the way your life is going.

You have to take advantage of every opportunity.

It may be good, or it may be bad.

You don't know until you TRY.

**Seneca - Swampy Cree - Tuscarora - Lenape - Oneida - Potawatomi**

# Your Voice Matters

## Call for entries

We are looking to highlight your community language in the title of our Special Education newsletter... "Our Gifted Children"

**Submission Deadline: September 30, 2022, 5:00 PM EDT**

**Prizes: One of three \$50.00 Gift Cards**

(choice of between Tim Hortons, Walmart, or Amazon )

**Translate "Our Gifted Children" into your First Nation language**

**Submission link:**

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6885766/Translation-Contest-Our-Gifted-Children>

By entering, you are granting the Chiefs of Ontario permission to recognize you as the translator in our publication.

**In advance, we would like to thank and acknowledge all those who participate in our translation contest!**



## Transition Planning for High School



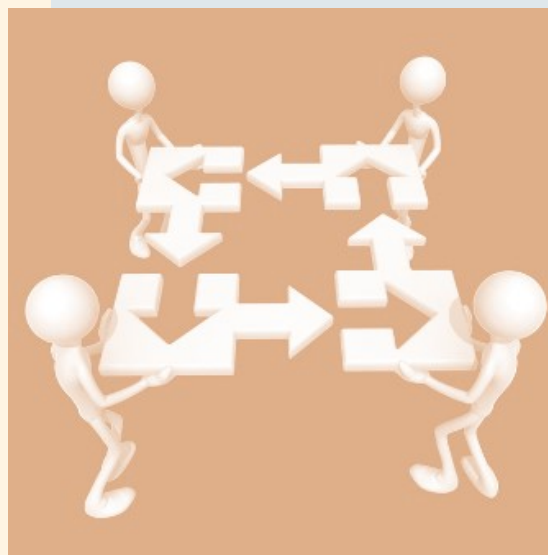
### Are you planning for a student's transition from Elementary to Secondary School?

A transition plan is a required component of the Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Students on an IEP, who are 14 years of age and older, require a transition plan as a part of their IEP to plan for post-secondary activities.

### Transition planning

- Acknowledges a student's right to education
- Is a collaborative process
- Is student-centered
- Promotes independence and self-advocacy
- Reflects inclusive practices
- Is necessary for all students on an Individual Education Plan.

Every transition plan will identify specific transition goals, support needs, the actions required to achieve the goals, roles and responsibilities, and timelines for the implementation and/or completion of each of the identified actions.



### The transition plan should:

Communication between the student's current teacher and the receiving teacher is vital in providing continuity in programming during student transitions from elementary to secondary school. Guidance and special education staff should be included in these discussions.

Identify goals consistent with the students' areas of strength and need

Define the actions that are necessary to help the student achieve the goals

Identify a timeline for the completion of each of the actions

Include orientation at the secondary school the student is transitioning to

Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the student, family, and school staff

## Grade 8

### Special Education Teacher(s)

- Ensure that all current information is in the student's OSR File (updated IEP, most recent report card, assessment reports, etc.).
- Share information about successful instructional resources and strategies, required accommodations, strategies for managing behaviour, the support that was in place, etc.
- Prepare the student for the move by learning about the new school, programming, and routines.
- Arrange for a visit to the new setting (either in person or virtually) in advance to meet with the special education department head and guidance staff. Include the student and parents/guardians.

## Grade 9

### Special Education Teacher(s)

- Review the contents of the OSR file paying close attention to the IEP, the most recent report card, assessment, and the IPRC's statement of decision (if applicable).
- Communicate with the student's previous teacher(s) and support staff to gather the information that will create an understanding of the student's strengths, needs, interests, and programming requirements.
- Arrange for the student to tour the new site and to spend some time in the school/classroom setting to familiarize themselves with the layout, review new routines, and meet with special education/support staff and/or guidance staff.

#### Special Education Transitions and IEPs: Links to Resources

- [Special Education \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca)
- [The Individual Education Plan \(IEP\) - A Resource Guide, 2004 \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca)
- [Transitions \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca)
- [Student Success/Learning to 18 \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca)
- [Creating Pathways to Success \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca)

## Student Success featuring Miigwaans Osawamick Sagassige



Miigwaans Osawamick Sasassige is an Anishnawbe youth and a band member of the Wikwemikoong Unceded Territory. His family's homeland is on the Manitoulin Island

In his family tree he is the youngest of three brothers and three sisters.

He is a Grass Dancer and enjoys the pow-wow trail. His name in Ojibway means little feathers

Miigwaans is a graduate of Sir James Whitney, an Ontario Provincial School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing which is located in Belleville, Ontario.

### What can you tell us about your name?

My name in Ojibway means little feathers. Twenty-five weeks after I was born, I was just a small little one, born premature and weighing a pound and a half. I was still growing strong, and my mother said that I was a miracle child. My spirit name is "Wa squaa wa biin seht" Shining Sky Walker.

### Can you tell us about the culture and traditions of your homeland?

I am from Wikwemikoong Unceded Territory. I belong to "Menn We guun Lodge." My responsibility at the lodge is to be one of the door guardians with a female counterpart who sits on the opposite side of the door with me. We're there together keeping watch at the door. After a celebration has begun, we block the door of all entrances. Anyone who hasn't yet entered will wait until the ceremony or the celebration is finished. Then we can open the door again.

### What interests you about education or outside of education?

Speaking first to education, I'm interested in pursuing post-secondary now that I've graduated. I am also interested in sharing some of my community practices by merging the two and spreading awareness of First Nation ceremonies. Some of those include smudging ceremonies, teachings about the regalia and the colors we wear (mine is orange), and various celebrations we have with our children. There were many events that happened at school. Sir James Whitney always had a lot of life.

Some of my successes consisted of learning American Sign Language in 2004, I took culinary classes at my local community college, and I took many other courses that provided me with other relevant skills. I am involved in Osawamick Catering which can be found on the Pow Wow trail selling various foods and tacos.



**What do you find is the hardest part of school?**

The most challenging part of school was when non-deaf or hearing teachers/staff members at the school did not sign. We couldn't communicate! This led to frequent miscommunications and drops in communications. That lack of access to daily and ongoing communication was the biggest challenge.

**What are your strengths?**

My strengths are my connections; to my cultures, my community, to the deaf and hard of hearing community, the American Sign Language (ASL) community, and my Ojibwa community at school.

At Sir James Whitney, I was involved in the drama program and I'm quite a skilled actor and very animated. I've also been recognized for my work in American Sign Language (ASL) poetry. I have also been a water walker and eagle staff carrier for 13 years. Every Mother's Day, we do a ten kilometer walk for water. This was inspired by the late Elder Josephine Mandamin, a First Nation advocate for the protection of water. Our walks take us through the Kawartha Lakes area and the Lake McGinnis petroglyphs park.

**Can you describe your ideal school environment as a First Nation learner who is coming from the homelands/First Nations?**

In history, I know that many First Nation children have been taken from their homes to come to school. I want a school where these children have a sense of belonging and a sense of togetherness. Cultures, customs, and traditions should be present at every school so that students feel like they are supported, just like they would be at home.

**What are your career goals?**

I would like to further my education and I am thinking of studying at Trent University. My mom works there and there are American Sign Language courses available that I would like to take. I would also like to continue my studies of Indigenous cultures, and mentor/support other deaf and hard of hearing Indigenous students.



Special thanks to Amy King, Educational Consultant  
Resource Services – Outreach Program

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist (Ministry of  
Education), Dave Bell-Patterson – American Sign Language  
ASL Interpreter, and Lisa Mose - American Sign Language  
ASL Interpreter for your support.

# Congratulations

## GRADUATES!

### 2022





Joan Cachagee, graduated with Honors Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Learning from Lakehead University.



Left to right....Jordan Mekanak, Quentin Mamakwa , Tyler Mamakwa from Kingfisher Lake First Nation. All graduated Grade 12 from Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School, Thunder Bay.



Alina Skead from Big Grassy First Nation, graduated from the nursing program with a minor in psychology from Lakehead University.



Bethany Spence from Slate Falls First Nation, graduated from Sioux North High School.



Jessalyn Spence from Slate Falls First Nation, graduated from Sioux North High School.

★ FOLLOW  
★ — YOUR — ★  
★ dreams ★



## Ontario First Nation Special Education Working Group

In 2005, the Ontario First Nations Special Education Working group (OFNSEWG) was formed as a subcommittee to the First Nations Education Coordination Unit (FNECU). It is a joint technical and advisory body mandated by the FNECU to provide recommendations on issues and specific strategies for political review and/or approval for action. The OFNSEWG is made up of representatives from the First Nations Education Coordination Unit and Indigenous Service Canada.

Ontario First Nation Special Education Working Group	
Name	Organization
Julia Candlish	Chiefs of Ontario
Sherry Britton	Nishnawbe Aski Nation
Mindy Taylor	Anishinabek Nation
Kyla Stonefish	Association of Iroquois Allied Indians
Sherri Kabatay	Grand Council Treaty #3
Debbie Terrance	Independent First Nations
Shelley Knott-Fife	Indigenous Services Canada

## The Special Education Technicians

### What is a Special Education Support Technician (SEST)?

There are two SESTs providing support to the First Nations in Ontario. They are based out of the Thunder Bay. The role of the SESTs is to support and assist First Nations with:

- effective use of funding provided for Special Education
- understanding and addressing capacity issues around Special Education;
- collection and analysis of information related to improving the First Nations Special Education programs;
- strengthening relationships with First Nations, Tribal Councils, Chiefs of Ontario, school boards and other organizations;
- identifying and addressing barriers and challenges in the delivery of Special Education services;
- policy development, and education agreements;
- professional development , organize Special Education Sharing Forums across Ontario.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT TECHNICIAN COMMUNITY LISTING



### Central, North Eastern & Southern Region

**Patricia Magiskan**

**416-970-0521**

[Patricia.magiskan@coo.org](mailto:Patricia.magiskan@coo.org)



### North Western & Southern Region

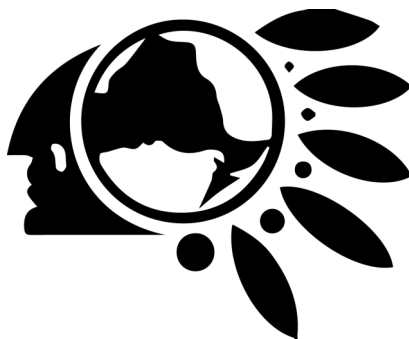
**Susan Deley**

**807-407-6233**

[Susan.deley@coo.org](mailto:Susan.deley@coo.org)

Aroland First Nation	Nibinamik First Nation
Attawapiskat First Nation	Neskantaga – Lansdowne House
Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation	North Caribou Lake
Batchewana First Nation	Northern Nishnawbe Ed Council
Bearskin Lake First Nation	Ojibways of Saugeen #258
Brunswick House First Nation	Pays Plat First Nation
Cat Lake First Nation	Red Rock First Nation
Chapleau Cree First Nation	Sachigo First Nation
Chapleau Ojibway	Sagamok First Nation
Constance Lake First Nation	Sandy Lake First Nation
Eabametoong First Nation	Serpent River First Nation
Fort Albany First Nation	Sheguiandah First Nation
Fort Severn First Nation	Shibogama First Nations Council
Fort William First Nation	Taykwa Tagamou Nation (New Post)
Ginoogaming – Long Lac #77	Temagami First Nation
Independent First Nations Alliance	Thessalon First Nation
Kasabonika First Nation	United Chiefs and Councils of Mniidoo Mnising/KTEI
Kashechewan First Nation	Wahgoshig – Abitibi #70
Keewaytinook Okimakanak Tribal Council	Wawakapewin First Nation
Ketegaunseebee (Garden River)	Webequie First Nation
Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek	Weenusk First Nation
Kingfisher Lake First Nation	Wikwemikong Unceded
M'Chigeeng First Nation	Whitesand First Nation
Matachewan First Nation	
Mattagami First Nation	
Marten Falls First Nation	
Mississauga #8	
Missanabie Cree First Nation	
Moose Cree First Nation	
Muskrat Dam First Nation	

Alderville First Nation	Moravian of the Thames – Delaware Nation
Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation	Naicatchewenin First Nation
Animakee Wa Zhing	Naotkamegwanning
Anishnaabe of Naongashing	Nigigoosiminikaaning
Big Grassy First Nation	North Spirit Lake First Nation
Bkejwanong (Walpole Island First Nation)	Northwest Angle #33 First Nation
Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point	Obashkaandagang
Chippewas of the Thames	Ochiichagwe'babigo'ining
Chippewas of Nawash – Cape Croker	Ojibways of Onigaming
Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation	Oneida Nation of the Thames
Couchiching First Nation	Pikangikum First Nation
Curve Lake First Nation	Poplar Hill First Nation
Deer Lake First Nation	Rainy River First Nation
Eagle Lake First Nation	Seine River First Nation
Grassy Narrows First Nation	Shawanaga First Nation
Hiawatha First Nation	Shoal Lake #40
Iskatewizaagegan #39	Six Nations of the Grand River
Keewaytinook Okimakanak	Slate Falls First Nation
Keewaywin First Nation	Wabaseemoong First Nation
Kitchenuhmaykoosib	Wabauskang First Nation
Lac La Croix First Nation	Wabigoon Lake Ojibway
Lac Seul First Nation	Wahta Mohawk Territory
Mishkeegogamang	Wapekeka First Nation
Mississaugas of New Credit	Wauzhushk Onigum
Mitaanjigaming First Nation	Wunnumin First Nation
Mohawks of Akwesasne	
Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte	



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