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# ASINÎWACIY ÂCIMOWINA

ASENIWUCHE STORIES ᐊᓯᓃᐊᐧᒋᐩ ᐋᒋᒧᐃᐧᓇ

# 2026 ANNUAL ROUND DANCE

## BRINGING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

*Contributed by Nadine Alexis*

This year's Annual Round Dance was a tremendous success, bringing together community members, families, Elders, youth, and visitors in a spirit of unity, culture, and healing. Guests travelled from near and far to take part in the celebration, creating an evening filled with connection, laughter, song, and shared traditions.

The strong turnout and positive energy throughout the event reflected the importance of gathering together to celebrate culture, strengthen relationships, and support one another. The success of this year's Round Dance has many already looking forward to next year's gathering.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the volunteers, Aseniwuche Group of Companies staff, Board of Directors, Round Dance Committee, Return to the Hunt Youth Group, Aseniwuche Youth Council, Elders, Master of Ceremonies, Stickmen, Singers, and Smoky River Grill for providing the catering. Your hard work, dedication, and support helped make the event a meaningful and memorable success. We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to our industry partners for their continued generosity and support. Your contributions help make gatherings like this possible and continue to strengthen opportunities for community connection, cultural celebration, and healing.

Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, sponsored, and contributed to making this year's Round Dance such a special occasion. We look forward to gathering together again next year.


THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

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# REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

## 2026 UNIVERSITY GRADUATE

In March 2026, Marc Jr. Doire (Susa Creek Co-operative) walked the convocation stage to celebrate his graduation from the University of Alberta. Marc completed his Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Native Studies, along with certificates in Indigenous Governance and Partnership and Interdisciplinary Leadership Studies.

Marc's academic journey began after dropping out of high school, when he witnessed his family come together in Susa Creek to teach law students their community's legal principles through the central activity of brain-tanning a moose hide. Marc's grandmother, Mabel Wanyandie, who was one of the teachers, told him, "if you go back to school, you can make change." Marc took his grandmother's words seriously since he returned to high school, upgraded, graduated, and earned acceptance into the Transition Year Program (TYP) at the University of Alberta. From there, Marc became involved in Indigenous student governance and took on several Research Assistantships in the Faculty of Native Studies and the Faculty of Law.

Marc also served as an oskapêwyo for his mentor, Elder Dr. Francis Whiskeyjack, and as a Lead Volunteer for the First Peoples' House Annual Round Dance, which was the late Audrey McDonald's last round dance.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF MARC'S JOURNEY

For Marc, there are three highlights of his university journey:

1. taking the course that inspired him to pursue a post-secondary education in the first place–LAW 589: ᐋᐧᐦᑯᐦᑐᐃᐧᐣ wahkohtowin Intensive: ᒥᔪ ᐄᐧᒉᐦᑐᐃᐧᐣ miyo-wîcêhtowin Principles and Practice
2. Completing his Honors thesis under the supervision of the legendary historical geographer Dr. Frank Tough
3. seeing his family, including his grandmother Mabel, attend his convocation ceremony.

> if you go back to school, you can make change.

Alongside this academic accomplishment, Marc was named the recipient of the 2026 Jason Delorme Memorial Award for Youth Leadership. This award recognizes a young individual who has worked hard or is continuing to work hard to achieve their goals. As a role model to youth, the recipient promotes a positive and well-rounded lifestyle. Marc's accomplishments reflect dedication, perseverance, and a strong commitment to education, leadership, and community. Marc shared that he is honoured to receive this award and hopes that the youth see themselves in his journey, especially those who dropped out or are considering dropping out of high school. Marc says, "if you go back to school, you can make change."

AWN congratulates Marc Jr. Doire, BA (Hons) on this important milestone and wishes him continued success in all his future endeavours.

**2026 JASON DELORME AWARD RECIPIENT**

> To everyone who walked beside us, thank you. Your presence and solidarity mean more than words can express. If we have unintentionally missed recognizing anyone, please accept our sincere apologies. The preparation leading up to the hike and the day itself involved many helping hands, and each person holds a special place in our hearts.

# TAWOW HOSTS SECOND ANNUAL MMIWG2S+ HIKE

## 2026 WALK

*Contributed by Tara Crane*

On behalf of Aseniwuche Winewak Nation (AWN), Tawow extends heartfelt gratitude to everyone who participated in our second annual MMIWG2S+ Hike. This meaningful day of remembrance, healing, and solidarity would not have been possible without the many individuals, organizations, volunteers, and supporters who helped make the event a success.

This year, more than 130 people gathered at base camp on Grande Mountain to honour and remember Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit People, Children, and Relatives. In the quiet early morning hours, a sea of red hoodies and T-shirts served as a powerful reminder that our loved ones are never forgotten.

Before the hike began, participants joined together in prayer as Tiran Smallboy-Zorthian and Charlie McDonald shared an Honour Song. Elders then led the way up the mountain, followed by Return to the Hunt youth and mentors, symbolizing their commitment to protecting and supporting Indigenous women, children, and relatives.

At the tipi, participants gathered to reflect, visit, and honour those carried in their hearts. Despite challenging snow conditions, many continued on to the summit, demonstrating the strength, resilience, and determination that defined the day.
The hike concluded with a community BBQ, laughter, fellowship, and conversations already turning toward next year's event.

A special thank you is extended to our Elders, Return to the Hunt youth and mentors, horse riders, volunteers, and community supporters whose contributions helped make the day possible. We also gratefully acknowledge AEC, ADC, Country Pump Out, Grande Cache Institution, Grande Cache Transition House, The Evergreen Foundation, Tawow Wonder Women, Grande Cache Search and Rescue, and the many individuals who donated their time, resources, and support.

We look forward to gathering again next year.

*— Tara, Laverne, Penny, Kelisha, Stephanie, and Eileen*

## RED DRESS & MMIWG2S±

### WHAT IS IT?

May 5 is the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited people in Canada, Its is a day to honour their spirits and to support those mourning their loved ones, as well as raise awareness.

The inspiration for Red Dress Day came from the REDress project installation by Metis artist Jaime Black, for which she hung up empty red dresses representing missing and murdered women.

A red handprint over the mouth is a powerful symbol representing the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIW) movement, particularly in North America. It signifies solidarity with those who have been affected by violence and injustice against Indigenous women and girls, and is often used to raise awareness about the crisis and the need for justice. The handprint, typically painted red, is seen as a way to give voice to those who have been silenced or are no longer able to speak for themselves.

# ENVIROTHON 2026

## ALBERTA ENVIROTHON CROWNS PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONS

*Contributed by Chantelle Bambrick*

Students from across Alberta gathered at Lakeland College in Vermilion from May 6–8, 2026, for the Alberta Envirothon Provincial Competition.

Envirothon is North America's largest high school environmental education competition. Students in Grades 9–12 participate in hands-on learning and field experiences focused on environmental stewardship, natural resource conservation, and problem-solving. The program combines STEM education with outdoor learning to help youth address real-world environmental challenges.

This year's theme, "Non-Point Source Pollution: It Begins at Home," challenged students to explore how individual and community actions can help protect water resources. Throughout the competition, teams tested their knowledge in aquatics, forestry, wildlife, soils and land use, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and a current environmental issue.

2026 Provincial Champions

🥇 Strathmore High School
🥈 St. John Paul II High School, Grande Prairie
🥉 Parkland Composite High School, Edson

As provincial champions, Strathmore High School will represent Alberta at the 2026 NCF-Envirothon International Competition.

Aseniwuche Winewak Nation was represented at the event through the participation of community members who provided cultural guidance and shared Indigenous Knowledge with students and organizers. AWN members Vivian McDonald, Robert Wanyandie, Jacob Wanyandie, and Vicki Wanyandie contributed to the Indigenous Knowledge component of the competition, helping support Envirothon's Two-Eyed Seeing approach that brings together Indigenous and Western perspectives on environmental stewardship.
The Alberta Envirothon program will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2027, with next year's competition scheduled for May 12–14 at the University of Alberta's Augustana Campus in Camrose.

# INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

## CELEBRATE, HONOUR AND LEARN

June is National Indigenous History Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. It is an opportunity to honour the resilience, strength, and knowledge that Indigenous Peoples have carried forward through generations.

Throughout the month, Canadians are encouraged to learn, reflect, and participate in activities that support understanding and reconciliation. Attending cultural events, reading Indigenous authors, supporting Indigenous artists and businesses, and learning about the history of the land we call home are meaningful ways to celebrate.

By taking time to listen, learn, and connect, we honour the enduring contributions of Indigenous Peoples and help build stronger, more inclusive communities.

# SUMMER SOLTICE

## JUNE 21ST 2026

*Contributed by Nadine Alexis*

The summer solstice is the time when the sun stands longest over the earth, reminding the people to give thanks for life, light, and all our relations. It is a sacred turning of the seasons, when ceremony, song, and the land come together.

# COMMUNITY AWARDS CELEBRATION

## AWARD WINNERS 2026

We proudly acknowledge this year’s award recipients for their dedication and leadership:

- **Milton Joachim Award of Excellence**: Stuart McDonald, Mabel Wanyandie
- **Ernie Delorme Memorial Award**: Stuart McDonald
- **James Wanyandie Memorial Award for Cultural Preservation**: Stuart McDonald
- **Jason Delorme Memorial Award for Leadership:** Marc Jr. Doire

### JOIN US FOR THE CELEBRATION OF OUR 2026 AWARD RECIPIENTS!

- Date: July 2, 2026
- Location: GC Inn & Suites – Sulphur Banquet Room
- Doors Open: 6:00 PM
- Dinner Served: 6:30 PM

Celebrate the achievements of this year's award recipients with family, friends, and community members. We look forward to seeing you there!

# LOCAL CELEBRATION

## ASENIWUCHE WINEWAK NATION IN COLLABORATION WITH MOUNTAIN METIS

Join us as we celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day on Friday, June 19, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Tourism Centre!

This special community gathering will feature a free BBQ, live entertainment, and local community vendors. It is an opportunity to come together, celebrate Indigenous cultures, and enjoy an afternoon of connection, food, and fun with family and friends.

### EVENT DETAILS

**Date:** June 19

**Time:** 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** Tourism Centre

Free BBQ

Entertainment

Community Vendors

Please remember to bring your own lawn chair for seating.

*We look forward to celebrating with you!*

# VENDOR LOOKOUT

## CALLING ALL VENDORS!

We are looking for community vendors for our National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration on **June 19** from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Tourism Centre.

This event is a great chance to showcase your products, artwork, crafts, or services while engaging with the community. Indigenous artisans, entrepreneurs, community groups, and local businesses are all welcome to participate!

### INTERESTED IN BECOMING A VENDOR?

Please contact Nadine at 780-827-5510 or **admin@aseniwuche.com** to reserve your space and receive additional event details.

Spaces are limited, so be sure to register early!

# Research Project Invitation: Walking Together

## Your Story Matters

*Contributed by Asher Friedland*

### Interested in Participating?

If you are interested in learning more or potentially taking part, I would be happy to connect. You can reach me at:

**ASHER FRIEDLAND**
(780) 501-5463
asher.friedland@ucalgary.ca

**RESEARCH SUPERVISOR**

You are also welcome to contact my supervisor if you have questions about the research process.

**DR. ELISA LACERDA-VANDENBORN**
(403) 220-3631
elisa.vandenborn@ucalgary.ca

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for considering being part of this work.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this study (REB26-0127).

## About Me

tan’si,

My name is Asher Friedland, and I am from Susa Creek. I am currently completing my PhD in Counselling Psychology at the University of Calgary, where I am working on my dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Elisa Lacerda-Vandenborn. As part of this work, I have the opportunity to carry out a research project.

> The goal of this project is to listen and learn from people’s stories of reconnection

## About the Project

This project, Walking Together: Honouring Indigenous Journeys of Reconnection and Belonging, is something I have been building toward for several years. It comes from a place of respect for the knowledge, experiences, and wisdom within our community and beyond, and a hope to both learn from and give back in a meaningful way. I am grateful to the AWN board for their guidance and for suggesting I share this project here in the newsletter.

This research focuses on Indigenous experiences of separation and reconnection with culture, community, and family; experiences that may be connected to residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, Millennium Scoop, adoption, foster care, or other forms of separation.

## Why This Research Matters

While these experiences are deeply important, I have seen and heard many stories where they are misunderstood or under-supported, particularly in mental health and community services.

The goal of this project is to listen to and learn from people’s stories of reconnection, and to work with those learnings to help create a practical, community-oriented resource. This resource is intended to support individuals, families, communities, and organizations who are navigating their own journeys of reconnection.

## Who Can Participate?

If you (or someone you know) have experienced reconnection and might be open to sharing your story, please feel welcome to reach out.

Participation would involve a relaxed conversation lasting about an hour, shaped around your comfort level. This can take place in person, over the phone, or on Zoom. There will also be opportunities to review what was shared, offer feedback, and help shape how the knowledge is carried forward.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you can choose to step away at any time.

Participants will be given a $50 gift card for their time and contribution to the project.

# TAWOW EVENTS

| 2026 | | | | | | JUNE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | |

**June 15th**
Safe Space Presentation AEAAC

**June 24th**
Food Bank 1-3pm

### WOMENS WELLNESS CIRCLE

June 9th, 16th, 23rd , 30th  1:00pm - 2:30pm

### MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION

June 3rd, 10th, 17th 11:00am - 1:00pm

### NA GROUP

June 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th 2:00pm - 3:00pm

### WONDER WOMEN GROUP

June 18th 5:30pm

### RECOVERY GROUP

June 12th, 19th, 26th 3:00pm - 4:00pm

# WOMENS WELLNESS

## CHECK OUT TAWOWS NEWEST CIRCLE

*Contributed by Stephanie Cabral*

Tawow is launching a new Women's Wellness Circle—a six-week journey focused on strength, resilience, and holistic wellness for women seeking connection, healing, and growth. Through culturally grounded, trauma-informed sessions facilitated with care and compassion, participants will explore topics such as everyday challenges, life transitions, personal growth, and wellness in mind, body, spirit, and community.

Each session is thoughtfully paired with hands-on crafts and meaningful activities designed to honour our roots, build inner strength, support cultural healing, reclaim personal power, connect with community partners, inspire action, and celebrate each woman's journey. This group offers a safe and supportive space to share, learn, heal, and grow together in community.

# JOB OPPORTUNITIES

## JOIN OUR TEAM! WE HAVE SOME NICE PENS

### CURRENT OPENINGS

- Human Resources Advisor
- Violence Prevention Coordinator
- Crisis Management Coordinator
- Cultural Navigator
- Indigenous Patient Navigator

### HOW TO APPLY

Visit our careers page (or scan QR code) to view full job descriptions and apply.

ASENIWUCHE WINEWAK NATION

QUESTIONS? • HR@ADCALBERTA.COM • ASENIWUCHE.CA/JOB-OPPORTUNITIES/