

## McDowell Board of Directors Approves \$80,000 in Research Funding

The end of the school year signals the start of seven new professionally led research projects funded by the McDowell Foundation. In late May, the Foundation board approved over \$80,000 in new research money for the 2017-18 school year.

The revitalization and preservation of Indigenous language and culture is the focus of a number of the new projects. In addition, two of the projects recognize the importance of action research in the classroom and include students as part of the research teams.

The projects approved for funding for 2017-18 are:

- Revitalizing Nêhiyawewin: Our Language, Stories and Perspectives – the use of storytelling in Cree immersion classes.
- Parent and Caregiver Voices: Exploring the Experiences of Parents and Caregivers Regarding the Education of Their Child – the role of parents and caregivers in the education of children with exceptional needs.
- Language Loss: A Deformity in Education – the benefit of immersion experiences in learning Cree language and culture.
- Saskatchewan French Immersion School: A Case Study in Best Practice for Aboriginal Student Success – the benefits of French immersion for Aboriginal students.

- Smooth Transitions: Integrating a High School and Pre-Service Teacher Education Program – encouraging high school students to consider a career in education.
- Catholic School Teacher Enacting Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si'* – enacting action research projects on environmental and social justice in the classroom (Year Two).
- Off the Grid: Students Leading Positive, Sustainable Environmental Change – student leadership and sustainable environmental change.

The scope of the research projects the Foundation is able to fund is exciting, and we look forward to the benefits to students and teachers that will occur because of our dedicated research teams and the hard work they do each year.

## Thank Your Child's Teacher Campaign

As the school year draws to a close and parents and caregivers across the province are looking for a way to thank their child's teacher, consider a gift to the McDowell Foundation in the teacher's name. For more information go to [www.mcdowellfoundation.ca/donations/](http://www.mcdowellfoundation.ca/donations/) or contact the Foundation.

# Learning From Practice: Bearhead Implores Educators to Have Courage to Do Things Differently



In February 2017, the McDowell Foundation was pleased to welcome Charlene Bearhead as the keynote speaker for this year's Learning From Practice conference. The education lead at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation spoke to more than 90 teachers, pre-service teachers and other educators as part of a daylong collegial exchange that focused on teacher-led research that directly benefits students and teachers in the province.

Bearhead commenced her presentation by reminding educators in the room that reconciliation and education is in fact one and the same if done well. She maintains that one of the most important roles of educators in the future is to genuinely listen to the students.

"If we can humble ourselves to listen, that's what grounds us – the people and the language and to have those important relationships. We need

to recognize that there's not one way to educate. Education needs to put the child first and maybe we should be embracing instead of assessing, and why ask the questions of students if you're not ready to give validity to the answers."

"When you look at the western style of education it's important that we also validate and incorporate Indigenous ways of education. Sometimes it's a matter of people just needing to get over themselves, or the future we hope for isn't going to happen. There's a sense of responsibility that goes with that," Bearhead said.

"We're all given a path and a role and as educators we need to recognize kids and not just focus on their shortcomings, but rather embrace what they are good at – maybe that's reconciliation. I think we're probably on the right track, but there's still a long way to go and we need to remember it's not about us."

Bearhead reminded those in the audience that we're in this together, and challenged them to contemplate what we have learned along the way and are we paying attention.

"You are going to be the ones moving this along. There's no such thing as the right time, but it will take will and courage and we need to be prepared to do something differently. It's about building true relationships instead of programming. As educators we need to inspire first and require next. You can be gatekeepers or champions so you need to ask, how courageous am I and what is my part in this?"

**Learning From Practice**  
— An Exchange of —  
Teacher Knowledge and Research

**Save the Date**

Learning from Practice 2017-18 is set for February 2, 2018. More details will be available in the fall of 2017

## 2016-17 McDowell Research Award: Students' Question Triggered Victorious Project

It all started rather innocently when the curiosity of a 15-year-old student was piqued as to why the river near the home community of Cumberland River was browner than usual.

The quick answer was perhaps simple enough in that there was increased sediment in the water. But from that seemingly innocuous question, it set the wheels in motion for what Renee Carriere said went on to become a life-changing experience in terms of engaging students and the northern community in honouring and combining both Indigenous and western ways of knowing via authentic land-based education.

Aided by the extensive use of Elders, knowledge keepers and community members, the end result

was the development of a high school credit recovery program at Charlebois Community School that is a perfect fit for the vision and belief statement of the Northern Lights School Division valuing Indigenous education.

"I challenge teachers to let go of the power sometimes and empower the kids. We need to do more of this, and we need to think outside the basket and not be afraid. We found it was great to give students a camera and that tells its own story. As educators we became those little kids again. Use curriculum as a guide but it's not a law. There are different ways to get to the outcomes and that makes it an authentic journey," she offered.

## McDowell Builder Award: Schultz Suggests McDowell Foundation More Important Than Ever

Honoured as one of the builders of the McDowell Foundation during the 25th anniversary gala celebrations, Harold Schultz had no problem recalling the most formative days of the initiative of which he played an integral role.

Schultz became involved when he joined the STF in 1978 recalling how at the time, professional development was still pretty much driven by the Ministry of Education. He recalled the integral involvement of then General Secretary Fred Herron as one of the most zealous advocates, not the least of which was in the fundraising area where Schultz was also to play a key role.

Schultz described the excitement of those early days, noting that for some the process was life and career-changing. He insisted that passion needs to be as strong now as ever. "Looking to the future, the need for a research arm of the STF has never been more important," he said.

According to Schultz, "we live in an ever-more complex society and teachers are the first responders



to the manifestation of social conditions, and the need for innovation in teaching and learning is so very important. I have a feeling that the teaching profession is due for a 'bump' to another level, and the basis for such a movement might very well have teacher-led research as an underpinning."

Schultz suggested that the collective voice of teachers is going to play an important role in the future; adding that if the profession accepts a leadership role then teachers can be the agents for transformational change.

# Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan Annual Raffle

A now familiar presence at the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan Annual General Meeting in May, is the McDowell Foundation table where \$2 buys you a chance at a number of prizes donated by local chapters and individuals from across the province.

The raffle originated with Elaine Broughton and Judy Buzowetsky six years ago, who developed the idea during a car trip to a meeting. While Judy has passed on, Elaine can be seen behind the table at the meeting offering tickets at \$2 each or 50 for \$100.

Thank you to the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan for your unwavering support of the Foundation and to this year's donors (Battlefords Chapter, Mainline Chapter, Regina Chapter and Esterhazy Chapter). Congratulations to this year's winners - Shirley Henderson, Bonnie Semenoff and Joe Kurtz!



Photo credit: Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan

## McDowell 25th Gala Address: Tupper Stresses Importance of McDowell Foundation in Current Climate

In her keynote address to the McDowell Foundation 25th anniversary gala, Jennifer Tupper, dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, told those in attendance that the work of the McDowell Foundation, and its support for teacher inquiry and research, is more important than ever.

Tupper expressed her grave concerns for preK-12 education in Saskatchewan and elsewhere, citing political, social and economic times that leaves us with much uncertainty when it comes to the current educational landscape in the province.

"Since 1991 when it was formed, the McDowell Foundation has supported an amazing legacy of

teacher-led research with real, immediate and lasting educational effects, funding almost 300 projects. Think about that for a moment – almost 300 projects. And then think about the number of students, teachers, and families who have been effected by and benefited from this work. Thousands!"

"The McDowell Foundation is about research that has an impact. Your commitment to transforming Saskatchewan classrooms and teaching for a better world is where hope resides in this post-truth and precarious world we find ourselves in. Together we are stronger."

McDowell Foundation **NEWS**

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