

## Looking Forward as We Reflect Back

By Ellen Whiteman, Manager, McDowell Foundation



As our #MF30for30 celebration continues to showcase past and present researchers, volunteers, and donors, I am amazed by the variety, professional integrity, and forward thinking that is represented through this body of work.

Over the past few months, we have shared stories that reflect the time, passion, and commitment teachers have to their profession, to action research, and to the opportunity to contribute beyond their classrooms and communities. For our research teams, the autonomy to pursue a topic that they are passionate about or that will directly contribute to their own classroom, school, or community is what ties the work together and makes it unique in Canada.

The work that Saskatchewan teachers have done and continue to do with the support of the McDowell Foundation drives changes in the classroom but also influences decisions at broader tables. Research into land-based learning, parent engagement, and student anxiety in schools have impacted decision making and policy at the school division level. The summary document, *Lessons from School: COVID-19 Directed Call*, was well-received and provided valuable teacher insight into teaching during a pandemic. McDowell final reports are included in post-secondary courses at both universities in the province and the Salon Series continues to grow in its online format.

The Foundation strives to continue to meet the research needs of teachers and students. The Special Directed Call focusing on Student and Teacher Well-Being released this January aims to continue to support the work as we move through COVID in the classroom. The Directed Call on

Indigenous Education that is part of the 2022-23 Call for Research continues to respond to the Calls to Action even as it honours a retired staff member. This is in addition to the ongoing research that teachers bring to the Foundation each year and is the heart and soul of McDowell research.

In his #MF30for30 greetings, Our Patron, His Honour, The Honourable Russ Mirasty described the importance of research in supporting the future of education, and that this is particularly important in thinking about education and reconciliation. As I look forward and reflect back, the importance of teacher-led research that is fueled by passion, commitment to the profession, and professional autonomy seems more important than ever.

The next 30 years will again bring significant change to the province, the profession, and the classroom. I want to thank our donors, researchers, volunteers, and friends who continue to support the work of the Foundation and allow us to continue to impact teaching and learning in Saskatchewan.

Special Directed Call  
2022-23 Funding  
**McDowell Special  
Directed Call:  
Well-Being**

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## #MF30for30

By Ellen Whiteman

October 5, 2021, was the 30th anniversary of the To celebrate 30 years of McDowell research, the Foundation will highlight 30 stories of past researchers, board members, donors, and friends. In addition to those that appear in our newsletters, our #MF30for30 stories will also be shared on social media, on our Facebook page, and on Twitter at [@STFmcdowell](#), as well as the McDowell Foundation website.

### Lily McKay-Carriere

In 2007-2009, I took a Master's in Education and my Action Research involved interviewing Elders. We formed a group of teachers over the summer to turn those stories into units to help classroom teachers teach Cree Literacies.



The three students reflected in the photo are students in a community-based teacher education program through the University of Saskatchewan and they are studying to become teachers.

They learned Cree literacies designed as an output of the McDowell Foundation funding that helped with creating the Cree units of study. The video we developed is of the students singing a song about gratitude for the earth, animals, trees, Elders, children and water.

## Que(e)rying the Curriculum: Resistance and Reception in Anti-homophobic Education

By R. James McNinch

Our Project was Action Research in the Humanities 10 class of Marilyn Totten at Robert Usher Collegiate in Regina in 2004. I collaborated with Marilyn, a graduate student of mine, and university colleague Dr. Scott Thompson on a two-week unit exploring Homophobia, Heterosexism and Sexual Orientation.

### Key Findings

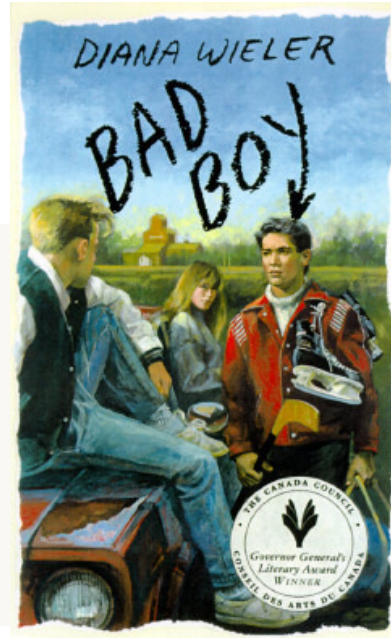
1. There was both resistance and reception to our action research and the topic itself. The students were "captive," if you like, to our agenda.
2. There was more resistance from the bureaucracy of the school division than from students or parents. It took more than a year for this project to be approved by central administration with the insistence that students had the right to opt-out of this teaching and learning. Unfortunately, 17 years on, despite much progress, this resistance continues to be a problem in many Saskatchewan schools.
3. Only one student opted out for ("religious" reasons): "This is because I love God and want to receive rewards in heaven for doing his will." Many of the boys in the class were hockey players and school leaders. The girls took the topic seriously.
4. For this elective humanities course it was easy to find and integrate appropriate teaching and

learning materials including a coming-out novel, NFB films, and articles about same sex relationships, homophobia, bullying and LGBTTO realities.

5. The students' loyalty and respect for Miss Totten went a long way to ensure success of this project.
6. It was liberating for me for the first time to be an out gay high-school teacher, and to collaborate with a teacher who was an advocate and ally and open about her lesbian daughter.

The funding received by the McDowell Foundation was important because it legitimized this anti-homophobic initiative and showed leadership in continuing to break the silence on LGBTTO issues.

I am proud we made a small contribution to the McDowell legacy.



## Special Directed Call 2022-23 Funding McDowell Special Directed Call: Well-Being

The McDowell Foundation is inviting PreK-12 teachers and other educators to submit an application to a special directed call for research that will focus on student and/or teacher well-being in the [post] COVID-19 public education system in Saskatchewan. We are seeking research projects focusing on student, teacher, and principal/vice-principal well-being as this relates to teaching and learning.

Research grants of up to \$5,000 per project will be awarded. There has been \$10,000 set aside for this initiative. Research projects should be completed within three to six months of receiving the funding. For this directed call, there will be a single application process.

Please contact [mcdowell@stf.sk.ca](mailto:mcdowell@stf.sk.ca) to request the application package.

The McDowell Foundation provides research grants to explore new and innovative ways to best meet the educational needs of students in Saskatchewan. Given the unprecedented events of the last two years, the Foundation believes that targeted, teacher-led research documenting educator and student experiences of well-being as impacting teaching and learning can make a significant contribution to the current education landscape.

Grant applications are due **March 15th, 2022**.

# Supporting Our Educational Community

By C. Ostoforoff

Over the past year, Canadian charity trends continue to focus their sustainability and programming options through the impacts from that nasty “C” word – COVID-19. We thought vaccinations were going well and life started to feel almost like before the pandemic. Some people travelled for holidays – although it might have been to a new corner in your hometown or in our province, COVID still rears its ugly head affecting everyone on earth.

We know that normalcy is coming and as we think about what that means, the McDowell Foundation has successfully pivoted to alleviate the impacts on our researchers as much as possible. Fundraising is an important job in any not-for-profit organization as it does more than raise funds. It helps staff work together towards a common goal with the accessible funding to plan for upcoming events. This continues to be vital as fundraising helps keep the organization sustainable all while fulfilling our mission of supporting teacher-led research.

Agility has been any charity's key word for the past two years. It is vital to continue to support and to inspire cooperation and creativity in education through our funded research projects through a variety of methods.

We continue to present workshops, meetings, have one-on-one conversations, and presentations primarily virtually to spread the great work of our researchers through our new social media platforms. Our reality is digital: we pivoted to combine aspects of social media through our website, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to help spread the word of our educational researchers. Would you like to be a part of something bigger in our educational community? Why not join us on our Facebook page

or Twitter accounts? All are accessible through our website: <http://mcdowellfoundation.ca>. If your local association or STS chapter is interested, one of our staff is happy to make a virtual presentation at any of your monthly events.

COVID-19 has affected our ability to gather to celebrate many special moments like birthdays, weddings, retirements, and more. The good news is that you can not only celebrate by honouring someone through a donation In Honour of someone's special celebration or In Memory of a person who passed away but do it as a donation to the McDowell Foundation. Donating has been made easier through our website and helps everyone at the same time. The integration of the online giving platform allows all our supporters to be safe and still be able to donate to continue to support our worthy research projects we are funding.

One of our biggest impacts through COVID has also been our special directed call. The McDowell Foundation is finding our way through reconciliation through understanding and research outcomes and also addressing teacher and student well-being in the [post] COVID-19 public education system in Saskatchewan. The Foundation continues to provide and inspire research grants to explore new and innovative ways to best meet the educational needs of students in Saskatchewan as we all continue to find our way through the impact of COVID in our communities.

Aside from the daily challenges we all face due to COVID, we are still open for business. Our projects and activities are always student-centred and relevant to successful instruction in today's classrooms virtually or not. If you are interested in donating or submitting a research proposal, contact us on our website.

McDowell Foundation **NEWS**

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