



SAMPLE MATERIAL FOR PREVIEW ONLY

# We Want You!

## Are you

- ▶ caring
- ▶ outgoing
- ▶ hardworking
- ▶ a change maker?

## Do you have

- ▶ listening skills
- ▶ self-motivation
- ▶ a sense of humour
- ▶ enthusiasm?

## Then we want you!

The Youth Department is looking for young people between the ages of 14 and 17 to mentor children in our community.



### IN THIS EDITION

By Calvin Racette and Jackie Taypotat

We Want You!	1
Role Models	2
Dream Team	5
Environmental Chatter	8

## You will

- ▶ pass down cultural knowledge
- ▶ keep traditional practices alive
- ▶ gain knowledge from program Elders
- ▶ inspire others to have pride in our culture
- ▶ gain leadership and communication skills
- ▶ *have a life-changing experience!*

*Look out ... I have a voice for change, and I'm going to use it!*  
 — Ashley Callingbull, Mrs. Universe, 2015

# Role Models

This week in class, Mr. Barry asked us to create info cards featuring our role models; we've posted them in class on our Motivation Station board. Look at all these amazing people! It's hard not to be inspired after seeing what they've accomplished.

**WHO:** Cadmus Delorme, Cree-Saulteaux

**FROM:** Cowessess, Saskatchewan

**HE'S MY ROLE MODEL BECAUSE:** At only 34 years old, Cadmus Delorme became chief of the Cowessess First Nation ... elected with a huge majority and with no real political experience. I want to be a leader like him! He gave up his job in student recruitment at the First Nations University of Canada, where he graduated with a business administration degree and was student president, so he could focus on being chief. He says the greatest gift ever given to him was from an Elder, and that was the ability to listen. I love that, because I believe listening is underrated. Cadmus also wants to improve life on the reserve so people who left will come back and share their talents.



**QUOTE:** *Education does not necessarily make you intelligent; how you apply it, especially if you can do it with a great attitude, makes you intelligent. — Cadmus Delorme*

**WHO:** Andréanne Dandeneau, Métis

**FROM:** Saint-Boniface, Manitoba

**SHE'S MY ROLE MODEL BECAUSE:** Two of my passions are my Dene culture and fashion. I didn't see a lot of overlap between them—until I read about fashion designer Andréanne Dandeneau. Andréanne, who is Métis of French Canadian and Anishinabe heritage, is also passionate about her culture, and she found a way to express it in her clothing line. She started Voilà par Andréanne in her parents' basement and grew it into an award-winning company. Her clothing is made in Winnipeg using fabrics made from fair-trade, sustainable bamboo and organic cotton. It is everything clothing should be: responsibly manufactured, environmentally friendly, truly Canadian—and absolutely beautiful.



**QUOTES:** *If you believe that every challenge creates opportunity, you will attract positive outcomes and good things will happen for you. — Andréanne Dandeneau*



**WHO:** Chelsea Vowel, Métis

**FROM:** Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta

**SHE'S MY ROLE MODEL BECAUSE:** Chelsea Vowel is trying to destroy myths about Indigenous peoples. She's a lawyer and a writer, and her book *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada* is a collection of essays that tell the TRUTH. So many people think that every single person who identifies as Indigenous doesn't have to pay tax, or that you get a free house if you live on a reserve. I've even had people say to me, it must be nice to get free university someday. A lot of that

is myth. Every Canadian should read Chelsea's book. Chelsea is Métis. She went to law school in Alberta, and then she moved to Quebec for a job. She moved back to Alberta in 2016 to do a Masters in Native Studies. One of Chelsea's passions is the Cree language, and it's one of mine, too.

**WHO:** Nelson Tagoona, Inuit

**FROM:** Baker Lake, Nunavut

**HE'S MY ROLE MODEL BECAUSE:** Nelson Tagoona makes incredible music, first of all. His style of music is called "throat boxing"—it combines traditional Inuit throat singing with beat boxing. Nelson also inspires me because he has overcome a difficult past. He grew up in a remote community in Nunavut and lost his father and several friends to suicide. He's dealt with depression and bullying but has found a way to turn his pain into something positive. Nelson also devotes his energy to helping other youth. He travels to remote northern communities with the Music Alive program, so he can perform for students. If that's not enough, he works with Blueprint for Life. In this program, he conducts hip-hop workshops with vulnerable youth who learn to deal with the same issues he's dealt with. He's amazing!



**QUOTE:** *No matter how dark your days have been, you'll see that shining light once again. — Nelson Tagoona*



**WHO:** Ta’Kaiya Blaney, Coast Salish

**FROM:** Powell River, British Columbia

**SHE’S MY ROLE MODEL BECAUSE:** Ta’Kaiya Blaney uses her singing voice to bring awareness to climate change and issues affecting Indigenous peoples. Ta’Kaiya is a member of the Tla’Amin First Nation; she is 15 years old, and she inspires me to do more. She’s spoken on a United Nations panel, sung at the Paris climate talks, and participated in protests around the world.



She started writing her first song, “Shallow Waters,” when she was only 8 years old. The song protested the Northern Gateway pipeline. Ta’Kaiya is also so passionate about her First Nations community and her identity as a First Nations person. She speaks up fearlessly and has helped me realize that it’s time my voice—and every young voice—is heard, too.

**QUOTE:** *It’s very important to be proud of your identity ... and feeling that sense of empowerment. Growing up as an Indigenous person, I didn’t get to see myself reflected in the pages of history books that I was taught from. — Ta’Kaiya Blaney*

**WHO:** Ty Fast Taypotat, Cree-Métis

**FROM:** Regina, Saskatchewan

**HE’S MY ROLE MODEL BECAUSE:** Ty Fast Taypotat makes riding a bucking horse look easy, and I aspire to be a professional rodeo rider like him. Ty is of Cree and Métis heritage and is a member of the Kahkewistahaw First Nation. By 17, he was a two-time International Indian Finals Rodeo Champion.



Today, Ty is a professional competitor, competing in five Canadian Finals Rodeos and the greatest show on Earth, the Calgary Stampede. He’s even been featured on APTN’s show, *underEXPOSED*, where a photographer followed him to the Canadian Finals Rodeo. I found out that rodeoing runs in Ty’s family. His grandfather, Louis, has been chief of the Kahkewistahaw First Nation for 35 years, and he also founded the Prairie Indian Rodeo Association. Ty’s dad, Curtis, did bareback riding and tie-down roping.

**QUOTE:** *If you believe, you will achieve. — Ty Fast Taypotat*

# Dream Team

*Shannen Koostachin, from the Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario, had a dream: safe and comfy schools and culturally based education for First Nations children and youth.*

*Many First Nations schools receive less funding per student than provincial and territorial schools do—and zero dollars for things like libraries, computers, languages, or extracurricular activities. Many schools also do not provide a safe and appropriate learning environment; some may pose serious health concerns.*

*Shannen worked tirelessly to try to give First Nations children a proper education. Unfortunately, she died in a car accident in 2010, at the age of 15, before her dream could come true. But, eventually, it did come true. In August 2014, a new school opened in Attawapiskat. The following is a letter Shannen's supporters sent to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2011.*



**Shannen Koostachin speaks on Parliament Hill.**

In memory of Shannen Koostachin, aged 15, we are the youth members of the Dream Team and other First Nations Children and Youth from across Canada.

We would like you to ask the Government of Canada why there are no schools in many of our communities and why so many of our schools are in such poor condition.

We want to know why the level of funding we receive for education is less compared to communities in other parts of Ontario and Canada.

We also want to know why we have to fight so hard for what our peers in other parts of Canada are able to take for granted.

In 2008, four students from Attawapiskat First Nation in northern Ontario, Shannen Koostachin, Chris Kataquapit, Solomon Rae, and Jonah Sutherland, wrote to the Committee on behalf of all students of Attawapiskat First Nation, to let you know that many First Nations children and youth were suffering because of the poor conditions in our schools and the underfunding of education and learning support programs. These circumstances make our right to receive a proper education almost impossible in many of our communities.

Children in Attawapiskat still go to school in rundown portables that are overcrowded, unheated, overrun with mice and placed only metres away from the polluted site of the original school building. The old school sat on land contaminated by the seepage of over 50 000 litres of diesel fuel.

Though the fuel leak was known to the government for years, no action was taken to safeguard the health of the children and youth in the community. Students and teachers alike became ill as a result of the leaked fuel while the government denied there was any problem. Eventually, the school was closed and replaced with portables that were supposed to be a temporary solution.

Since 2000, three separate Ministers of Indian and Northern Affairs, Robert Nault, Andy Scott and Chuck Strahl, have visited Attawapiskat and promised that a new school would be built. However, the portables remain and their condition continues to deteriorate while the children wait.

We know that there are 50 First Nations communities that need schools and that some First Nations schools are infested with snakes [and] mice and contaminated with black mould. How are we supposed to learn in these conditions?

The young people of Attawapiskat are not asking for special favours or to be treated differently from other young people in Canada. They are simply asking for the same level of resources provided to students living off-reserve and for the government to keep its promises and safeguard their rights.

That is the simple message behind Shannen's Dream, the letter-writing campaign and the efforts of students across the country that form the basis of this alternate report to the Committee. Shannen just wanted the government to keep its word to First Nations children and youth and to remember that receiving an education is a right for all children and youth in Canada.

She wanted government leaders to understand that it is hard for children to learn when they are in classrooms that are cold, unhealthy, poorly resourced, unsafe, and in need of repair—a common experience for First Nations young people on reserves across Canada. Can any adult imagine having to go to work in such conditions day after day, year after year?

Shannen wanted you to know that First Nations children across Canada have dreams of becoming doctors, teachers, grass dancers, engineers, cooks, producers and other things. We want to be successful people who help make our communities stronger.

She also wanted to let you know that the Government of Canada provides less funding for elementary and secondary schools on-reserve than for schools off-reserve. This makes achieving our dreams very difficult. Shannen was going to send the Committee a full report on what this difference in funding means for First Nations students but, sadly, she passed away last spring in a car accident.

Many of us are giving up hope because we can't get a proper education. As many as three out of four First Nations youth will drop out of high school because they have lost hope.

“School is a time for dreams,” Shannen said, “every kid deserves this.” There are many children who, like us, continue to struggle to make sure Shannen's dream of “safe and comfy schools” that reflect the culture of our peoples and provide the same level of education for First Nations students as non-First Nations students is realized.



We continue to work with people and organizations across the country to keep Shannen's dream and memory alive. The Shannen's Dream campaign is about young people and adults making sure that the Government of Canada provides the level of funding necessary on reserves so that First Nations youth can learn their languages and cultures in proper schools (not in polluted buildings, tents, or mouldy, mice-infested, and unsafe portables).



**Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth walk together to support Shannen's Dream.**

With the help of adult allies and supporters, we have been told that you can order a review under Article 45 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We are hopeful that when this review is undertaken, a Special Rapporteur will come to Attawapiskat and other First Nations communities in Canada and see the substandard conditions of our schools and the education we receive.

We know the law says that the same standards of education must apply to both on-reserve and off-reserve schools. We also know that no off-reserve community would tolerate the shameful conditions under which we receive our education. We want you to ask the Government of Canada why the schools

and standards pertaining to education for First Nations children are so markedly different from what is provided to students off-reserve.

In Shannen's, Chris's, Solomon's and Jonah's original letter to the Committee in 2008, they shared the view of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation that declared there are two standards of education in Canada, and that a system of "educational apartheid" exists for First Nations children.

We want to know why.

As children and youth, we continue to write letters to the government but nothing changes. The discrimination and denial of our rights continues. We need your help. Please read our letters. Please come to see us! Please help! Please stand for Shannen who never saw the promised school built in her community. It is in her memory that we are keeping her dream alive and writing to share the message she wanted you to hear.

Please join with us and ask the Government of Canada to meet its obligations to ensure First Nations children and youth have access to the same education opportunities as all young people in Canada. It is our right.

Signatories,

### **Dream Team Members**

*River Tenasco*  
*Daisey Brascoupe*  
*Shawnesia Ottawa*  
*Chelsea Edwards*  
*Sauna Jerome*

### **First Nations Children and Youth from across Canada**

# Environmental Chatter

Last night, a bunch of us had a group chat about environmental issues in Canada. It was an eye-opening chat, and inspiring, too. We're young, but we're informed, and we plan to speak up.

Cayden



Pipelines are my big issue. I don't want them running through forests in British Columbia. I read online that a pipeline has been approved from Edmonton to Burnaby. It will be able to carry 890 000 barrels of oil per day! I realize companies are trying harder to ensure oil spills don't happen, but when I think of the possible harm to forests, streams, rivers, and animals, I just think, "How can anyone think pipelines are a good idea?!"

I'm from Nunavut, and we have a big problem up north because of climate change. Lakes and rivers are melting early, so we can't go on ice to cross the ice to traditional campsites. Even the ocean ice is melting. Plus, the Elders we look up to for their ability to predict the weather are having a hard time doing so. They say it's because the wind and cloud patterns are changing ...

Jess



I live in Ottawa, Ontario, and this may sound weird, but my mom used to skate the Rideau Canal to get to work in the winter. She said it was the perfect way to avoid traffic. But she doesn't skate it a lot anymore. Cold winter temperatures aren't guaranteed, and sometimes the canal isn't frozen—in the middle of February!

Ann

I'll be the Alberta representative! A lot of people I know work with natural resources. Some work in oil, others in forestry or mining. I think people need good jobs, so I'm not against using our natural resources. But I think we have to use them responsibly so we don't ruin our planet. And Indigenous people have to be consulted if the resources are anywhere near their communities!

Maya



East coaster here. The provincial government in New Brunswick (where I live) put a ban on fracking in 2014, but some companies are trying to get it lifted. (In case you don't know, fracking is a way to get shale gas from underground rock.) The companies say fracking will bring jobs and be good for the economy, but I agree we have to do this more responsibly. What makes it worse is that the companies are not consulting with Indigenous groups.

Dave



## Let's Talk

1. What are some of the ways Indigenous youth are taking control of their own futures?
2. Who would you feature on an Indigenous role model info card? Why?

**Photo Credits:** 1: © Wawmeesh Hamilton; 2: (top) Courtesy of Cadmus Delorme, (bottom) Courtesy of Andréanne Dandeneau; 3: (top) © Marc Rimmer, (bottom) THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wyld; 4: (top) Michael Wheatley/Alamy Stock Photo, (bottom) © Mike Copeman; 5: © Charles Dobie; 7: Photo by First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada; 8: simo988/Thinkstock  
**Text Credits:** 2: (top) Courtesy of Cadmus Delorme, (bottom) Courtesy of Andréanne Dandeneau; 3: (top) Used by permission of Chelsea Vowel, (bottom) CTVNews.ca; 4: (top) Quote from Ta'Kaiya Blaney is from the article entitled "Vancouver teen Ta'Kaiya Blaney's voice captures the world's attention" by Darryl Dyck, The Globe and Mail, December 31, 2016, (bottom) Used by permission of Ty Fast Taypotat; 5–7: Used by permission of The Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (Ontario)

NELSON

nelson.com 10/17

ISBN-13: 978-0-17-686166-7  
ISBN-10: 0-17-686166-1

