

# WE'RE BACK ON CAMPUS!



## Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation

### 2023 Fall Newsletter

The mission of the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation is to increase the number of Indigenous students graduating from pure and applied science, engineering and mathematics programs in Canada.

4th Edition      October 2023

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## 2023 VJKF Program

We were finally back on campus for our 2023 VJKF Program, and we were more than thrilled to book students' flights, see them roll up their sleeves and get involved in all the labs planned.

This year's programs were held throughout May at The University of British Columbia, the University of Ottawa, the University of 1 Calgary, First Nations University of Canada, University of Manitoba.

105 Indigenous students graduated from our 2023 VJKF Program with the help of our university partner deans, professors, mentors, graduate students, coordinators, and other volunteers. Seeing students learning again on campus was amazing, and we've already started planning for next year.

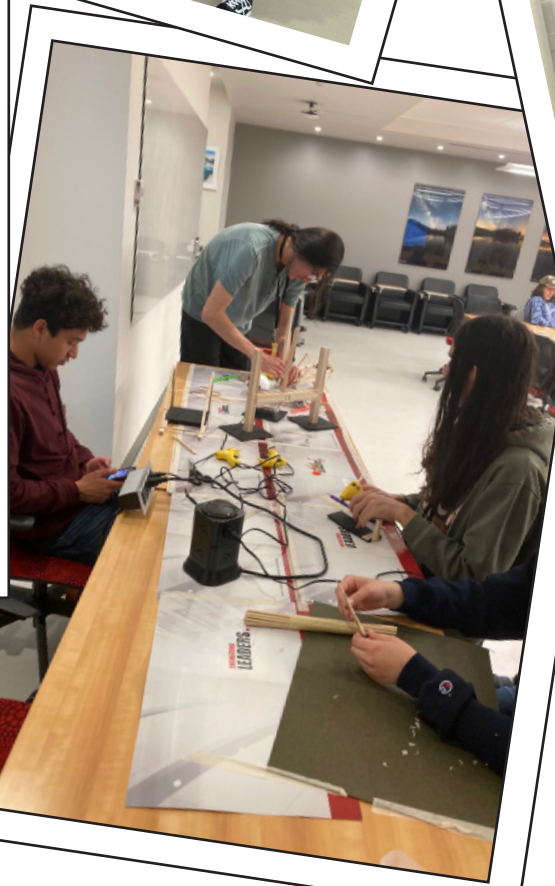
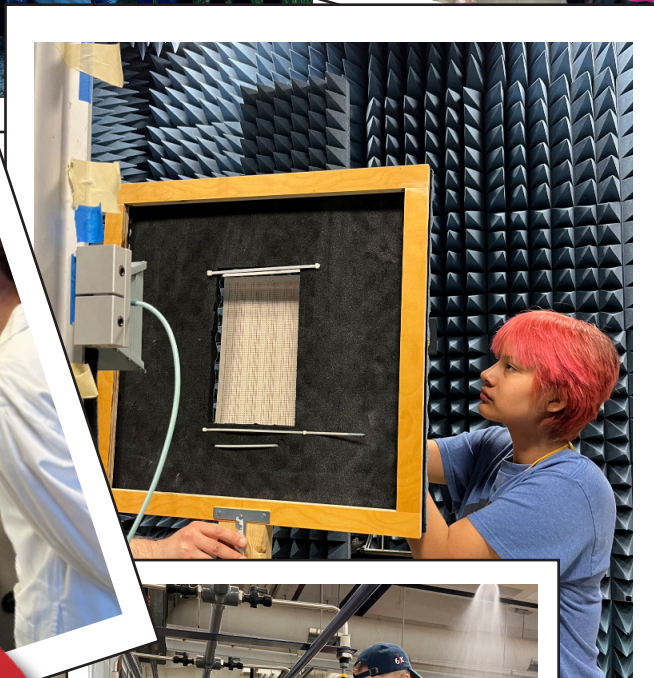
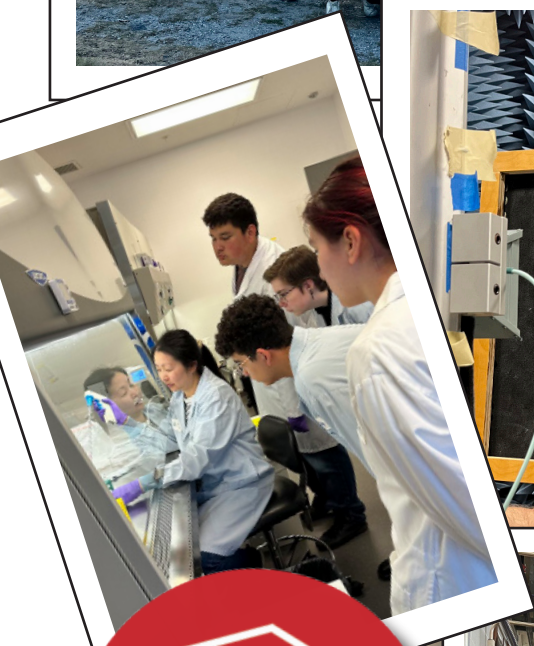
Some of this year's topics students learned about:

- Exploring Machine Learning
- Traditional Food Systems
- Migratory Landbirds
- Parasitism and DNA Sequencing
- Plant-fungal Interactions
- Cosmic Rays and the Aurora
- Antibiotic Resistance in Bacteria
- Baking a Better Bread
- Healthy Animals, Healthy Farms
- Water is alive!
- Ecohealth Learning Circle
- Tailoring Electromagnetic Waves
- Bacterial Resilience
- The Tooth About Dental Hygiene
- Coastal Oceanography
- An Exploration of Optical Effects
- Biology of Bees
- Preventing Environmental Disasters
- How Plastics can be Conductive
- Making Chemical Scents
- Brain Imaging and Mental Health
- Design and Building a Smart Robot
- Maker Space Ideas for Engineering
- Assistive Technologies to Help People with Disabilities

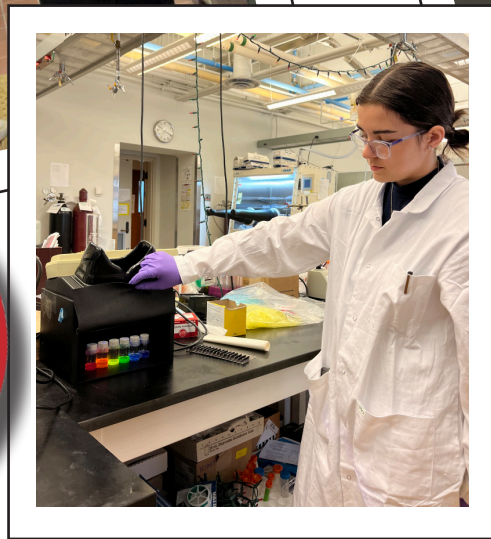
\*For a complete list of student topics please see our website.



# 2023 PROGRAM WEEK MEMORIES









# Our Program at a Glance

## VJKF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WHO HAVE ATTENDED UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE \*

### IMPACT AND REACH:

Of those students who responded and had not indicated they were still in high school, **98.7% of students had completed high school**, of which **89% went on to attend university or college**.

**89%**



HAVE ATTENDED TRADE SCHOOL OR HAVE NOT ATTENDED POST SECONDARY

**11%**



**55%**

of VJKF Alumni who have attended post secondary studied

**SCIENCE**

OR

**ENGINEERING**

Students from over

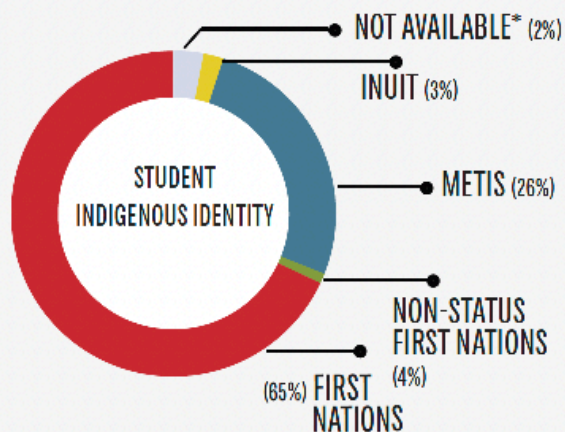
**175**

**COMMUNITIES**

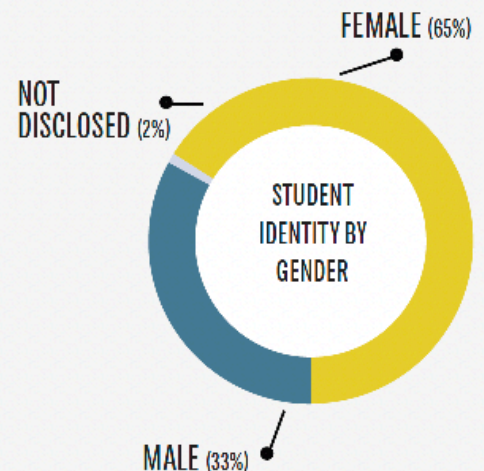
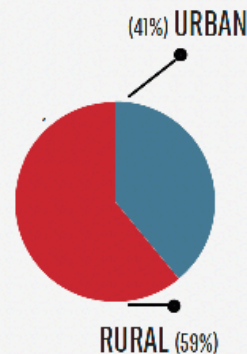
have attended our Programs from

**ACROSS CANADA**

### STUDENT STATISTICS



### STUDENT LOCATION



\*In 2022, we surveyed past participants, reaching 256 students to gather data on their academic achievements. The following summary is based on their responses.

# NEW BOARD MEMBERS



**Dr. Tim Vine**

Dr. Tim Vine  
Board Member

Dr. Vine lives and works in rural Northern Ontario as a hospital C.E.O.. With an undergraduate degree in economics and graduate degrees in business and political science, he has served in senior finance roles in the private, not-for-profit, municipal, and hospital sectors. Dr. Vine has served on many boards, including the University of Sudbury, and is passionate about post-secondary education. He is a member of the Finance Committee of the VJKF Foundation.



**John Lovell**

John Lovell  
Board Treasurer

John Lovell, FCPA has a 40 year career providing Financial Accounting Consulting and Management predominantly to First Nation Communities in Manitoba and Northern Ontario through his own consulting firm. He has served on the National and Provincial Accounting Boards. John, after many years on the Board, as well as Finance Chair, is currently the Board Chair of Marymound Inc.

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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# PARTNER UNIVERSITIES



# Congratulations!



## 2021 VJKF STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Due to COVID-19, students accepted into our 2021 Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation Program were unfortunately not able to receive the typical VJKF on-campus experience. In light of this, The Foundation promised a one-time \$1,000 scholarship to students who completed the 2021 Virtual Program and later attended a publicly funded university or college. This scholarship remains open until December 2025.

If you or someone you know is eligible or has questions, our office can be reached by phone at: (587) 814-0444 and by email at: ProgramManager@vjkf.org.

The Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation proudly announces 2021 VJKF Scholarship Recipients for this year!

- Meeya Beyer
- Caitlyn Molander
- Silas Mitchell
- Sunny Kruger
- Julia Banik

## NEW 2023 VJKF STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

This year we gave away our first 2023 VJKF \$500 scholarships to 20 Indigenous students who participated in this year's VJKF program.

This scholarship was only available to students in grades 11 or 12 who completed the application and had completed the 2023 VJKF program.

Congratulations to all our 2023 VJKF Scholarship Recipients!

- Isadora Weathered
- Lily Ingram
- Sunny Kryger
- Ryder Stockmann-Smoke
- Elise Reban-Olson
- Hailey Peebles
- Anabella Perez
- Chayce Welburn
- Hudson Bolduc
- Amy Cooney
- Marissa Buffalo
- Ella Jobin
- Aurora Martens
- Samantha Gillis
- Marcus Malinski
- Maggie Morris
- Toryn Bosanko
- Raven Kage-Thevarge
- Mayumi Hinatsu-Willie
- Kendall Davies





SHAD Canada is a registered Canadian charity that offers STEAM and entrepreneurship programs for grades 10 and 11 students. SHAD has partnered with the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation for a number of years, providing a full scholarship for two of our Kirkness Scholars to attend SHAD's month-long program in July.

A HUGE congratulations to Maximus Barten and Samantha Gillis for receiving this year's SHAD Scholarships.



## Susan O'Brien Memorial Scholarship

Susan O'Brien was a shy, intelligent, yet athletic youth with a passion for basketball. After high school, she attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she completed her degree in science.

In 2008, Susan and her husband, Ron Woznow, co-founded The Family Food Research Foundation, a registered charity with the mandate to help Indigenous youth from across Canada pursue a post-secondary degree. The Family Food Research Foundation was later renamed the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation and shifted its focus to introduce Indigenous students to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs at universities. In her volunteer role as foundation administrator from 2009 to 2020, she facilitated 550 students' attendance at 10 different universities. Her commitment to the Foundation and our students was relentless and she worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and care of all participants.

Sadly, on January 18, 2022, Susan passed away suddenly. To commemorate Susan's hard work and dedication to the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation, our Foundation awarded a \$1,500 scholarship to Nydia Goosehead this year. Congratulations Nydia!



## REMEMBERING TONY WILLIAMS

It's with great sadness that we announce the passing of our long-time Chair of the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation (VJKF) Board of

Directors, Tony Williams. Surrounded by family, he passed away peacefully on June 27, 2023, in Okotoks, AB.

Before retiring, Tony provided actuarial and investment consultation for First Nation Settlement Trusts and other trust funds. During his retirement, he devoted much of his free time to volunteering and philanthropic work. In 2022, Tony was presented an Eagle Feather in recognition of his work with VJKF and Indigenous communities, and was gifted the name Necetenmnin, meaning "Leader."

Tony had a passion for promoting higher education and established several bursaries at the University of

Manitoba to support Indigenous students enrolled in science programs. He was a member of U of M Alumni Council, the Dean of Science's External Advisory Board, and a member of the Wawatay Advisory Board (a program supporting emerging Indigenous students).

We will be forever grateful for Tony's dedication to our organization and his friendship. He led the Foundation through our growth years, through the COVID years, and now through the rebirth. Both wise and kind, and dear to us all. His presence will be deeply missed at our board meetings.

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



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For a complete list of our sponsors, please visit our website at [www.vernakirkness.org](http://www.vernakirkness.org)