

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For immediate release – June 17, 2022**

### **First Nations Bank of Canada funds Elder/cultural space**

After two years of silence, the beat of the drum returned to Thornton Park at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools' annual Pow Wow.

"It's something a lot of students and staff look forward to every year," said Cornelia Laliberte, coordinator of First Nations, Métis and Inuit education at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. "Having online events was okay as a stop-gap, but it's very good for everyone to gather together and have a vibrant celebration of Indigenous culture and heritage."

After the grand entry—when Elders, dignitaries and guests enter the Pow Wow circle—Keith Martell, President and CEO of First Nations Bank of Canada announced the bank is donating \$100,000 to fund *nēhiyawitwāwin: A Culture, Identity and Learning Partnership & Elders' Cultural Teaching Centre* at the new St. Frances Cree Bilingual School scheduled for construction later this year. Nes Release

"Success in educating Indigenous youth is required in order to grow Indigenous prosperity," said Martell. "As our bank celebrates its 25th anniversary, we wanted to support education that reflects and respects the culture and language of Indigenous People, and as a result, attracts and retains Indigenous youth to prepare them for the future. St. Frances Cree Bilingual School is such a place, and we are proud to add our support."

"Cree language and cultural education at St. Frances has been as successful as it has been because of relationships and partnerships," said Diane Boyko, Board of Education Chair at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. "We're so grateful for the support of Keith and First Nations Bank of Canada to fund this space so Elders can build those relationships necessary to pass on the language, teachings and culture so students can be secure in their First Nations' identity."

While the Government of Saskatchewan funds construction of new schools, various aspects of schools, such as specialized learning spaces, cultural spaces, or playgrounds, are not funded. Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools has been seeking donors to fund parts of the school determined as critical to the school, but not core parts of government funding.

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