



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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MKO Launches Virtual Workshops as COVID-19 Pandemic Continues

Treaty Five Territory, Thompson, MB – As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact children, youth, and families in Northern Manitoba, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is announcing the launch of free virtual workshops for people of all ages from MKO communities. The first online workshop takes place this Saturday, March 20, with workshops continuing every Saturday for the coming weeks.

MKO has been working to develop a child and youth wellness strategy with an online survey closing yesterday at 11:59 pm. The more than 1200 responses to the survey will help to provide MKO with direction on what types of supportive programming young people ages 12 to 18 are seeking as the pandemic continues. While the survey results are being analyzed, MKO citizens can access cultural lessons and stories via free online workshops.

“Today we are announcing the launch of a series of online workshops for MKO citizens,” shared **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. “While we have been working to gain insights on potential programs we can develop to support children and youth from MKO communities as the pandemic carries on, we are pleased to start supporting young people and their loved ones by offering a series of workshops sharing traditional teachings from various Indigenous facilitators.”

The first workshop is on Saturday from 6 to 7 pm during which time hand drummer **Darryl Buck**, from the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, will share stories about what the drum and its music mean to him. He will showcase some of his favourite music and will teach participants a song. Darryl was nominated for the 2018 Best Hand Drum Album at the Indigenous Music Awards.

Other confirmed workshops include:

- Saturday, March 27: The art of birch bark biting with **Pat Brederer** of Churchill, Manitoba
- Saturday, April 3: Indigenous heading workshop with **Robyn Shlachetka**

“It is essential we do what we can to support and empower children, youth, and their families during these pandemic times,” said Grand Chief Settee. “We know it is healing and empowering to have a connection to our cultures and our languages. While we aren’t able to safely host cultural gatherings in person at this time, we can gather virtually to share cultural knowledge and share stories and lessons that create pride for our people.”

In recognition of the limited availability of Internet access in Northern Manitoba, participants will also have the option to join the March 20 workshop by phone. For full details on how to register for and access these free workshops, please visit MKO’s website at: www.mkonation.com/workshops

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For more information:

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