



*Retention and Recruitment
May 2018*

NITHA *HEALTH EXPRESS*



Cover Photo: A scenic view of one of the NITHA communities

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A MESSAGE FROM MARY CARLSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Recruitment and Retention of Health Professionals continues to be a struggle in Northern Canada, and Saskatchewan is no different. While there are various reasons for this, one is largely due to its rural and remoteness and unknown expectations of our communities.

Many Canadians and residents of Saskatchewan have not experienced the beauty and tranquility our province's diverse landscapes have to offer. From the grasslands of the south, to the aspen parkland in the central and the forest in the north, Saskatchewan lives up to being termed God's country, much of the north is a part of the Canadian Shield, which in itself is breathtaking. The freshwater lakes, rivers, and waterfalls are of abundance. An interesting tidbit of information, our Province's name comes from the Saskatchewan River, whose Cree name is: Kisiskatchewanipi, meaning "Swift Flowing River". Also known as,



Photo: A picture of Nistowiak Falls; one of the hidden gems in northern Saskatchewan

the “Land of the Living Skies”, Saskatchewan boasts beautiful sunrises, sunsets and northern lights ranging from blue, yellow, purple, and green, which cannot be fully appreciated from within a city.

Those who appreciate nature, natural occurring landscapes, and seek adventure then northern Saskatchewan is a place to experience. Within the NITHA Partnership, we have staff born and raised in the communities who have always lived and worked here. Many people who move to northern Saskatchewan end up living and working here for the rest of their careers.

This edition of the newsletter focuses on some of the various health careers available

within the NITHA Partnership and provides an opportunity to showcase the talent that comes out of the communities. This edition also highlights recipients of the NITHA Scholarship Fund, which include a nurse, a medical doctor and an aspiring mental health practitioner. Please watch for future editions, which may include stories from other health related careers such as health directors, accountants and environmental health officers.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the NITHA Health Express. We hope to inspire youth to choose one of these careers and for more people to consider working in the north and making it their home.



Photo: A picture of the sun setting in a NITHA community

NURSING IN NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN

The nursing profession has essentially been around since the beginning of time, though the profession is continuously evolving. Presently, nurses are one of the most important professions in the healthcare industry. In the NITHA communities, nurses play an important role in delivering services to community members. With the scarcity of doctors in the communities and many communities having a nursing station, nurses act as the cornerstone of health in the community.

THE STANLEY MISSION NURSING CHAPTER

Connie– Born and raised in Stanley Mission and has worked in the community for 4 years

Annie– Born and raised in Stanley Mission and has worked there for 18 years

Judy– Has worked in Stanley Mission for 4 years and her mother is from Stanley Mission

Here is their story:

What are the benefits of working in northern Saskatchewan?

Being born and raised here gives us an opportunity to give back to the community. We get to work with our own people. We are able to speak our language and provide better help to our community.

It is undisputed for anyone who has been up north that we boast of one of the most beautiful environments in Canada. We get to live it and enjoy it on a daily basis. We get to enjoy doing the activities we grew up doing such as, fishing , boating, skidooing, ice fishing and many more.

We also get to enjoy tradition foods on a regular basis.

What challenges do you face working in your area?

One of the challenges we face is the remoteness. This is mostly evident when we have emergencies as the nearest emergency health centre is in La Ronge.

We also have a limited number of resources which renders health service delivery challenging at times.

Lastly, it is hard to predict the weather. At times this comes with unpredictable road conditions such as ,flooding that may hinder accessibility thus hindering our ability to provide the best possible care to our community members.



Stanley Mission Nurses during a perinatal workshop.
From left : Connie McLeod, Annie Crawford, Judy Rhode

What advice do you have for youth or anyone who wants to pursue a career in nursing in northern Saskatchewan?

It is challenging but rewarding. The rewards far outweigh the challenges.

If you aspire to be a nurse practitioner then northern Saskatchewan is the place to be. There is a much bigger scope for nurses compared to a bigger city or health centre.

Lastly, you will get to work with supportive staff and management and that makes work easier and less stressful.

LIVE, LEARN, AND WORK: LIFE AS A NURSE IN YOUR HOME COMMUNITY



Photo: James Smith Health Cree Nation Health Clinic and Band Office

Name: Eleanor Stonestand

Community: James Smith Cree Nation

I have worked in my community of James Smith for 22 years as a community Public Health Nurse.

What are the benefits of working in your community?

Being from James Smith I know everyone! It is a great feeling to be able to work with my home community. I have been able to show my community that I am trustworthy and confidential so I do a lot of counselling.

I live in James Smith so I do not need to travel far to work.

I love that I am close to family. Although sometimes emergencies happen but I have learnt to step away at those times.

I have had the amazing opportunity to watch children I immunized grow up, have children of their own and bring them to me for immunizations. These are just some of the benefits to working in my community.

What are the challenges of working in your community?

Putting my personal feelings aside in order to do my job, especially in times of tragedy and emergency.

Reaching those who really need support and help that is available for them for instance in harm reduction strategies.

Sometimes being from the community and working in the community is a challenge in itself, some days are more difficult than others.

What advice do you have for youth who would like to pursue your career?

I would say go for it! It is such a rewarding career and so many different options to choose as a nurse. All the hard work and determination, the studying, the long late nights and the early clinical hours are worth it. If you need to leave your home community for your education it can be difficult but maybe one day you can return home and work as a nurse like I did. It was the best decision I ever made. Stay focussed and follow your dreams.



NITHA SCHOLARSHIPS

As a health service delivery organization, NITHA strives to improve the health and well being of its members . This is done through providing various opportunities for members to learn and ensuring the best talent from the communities not only benefits in receiving health services but also gets opportunities to advance in educational endeavours. One of these ways is providing scholarships to students who are members of one of NITHA's Partners and are pursuing careers related to health.

The rising costs of living, tuition expenses and costs of textbooks can be challenging for students to deal with. Scholarships can go a long way in relieving these stresses and enabling students to focus on school.

To be eligible for the NITHA scholarship, applicants must be a band member of any of the NITHA communities and a fulltime student in a post secondary health related program of study such as, but not limited to the following: nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, lab technology, physiotherapy, dietetics, nutrition, medicine, and health administration or public health policy. The program of study must be a minimum of 2 years.

The annual application deadline is September 30th of each calendar year.

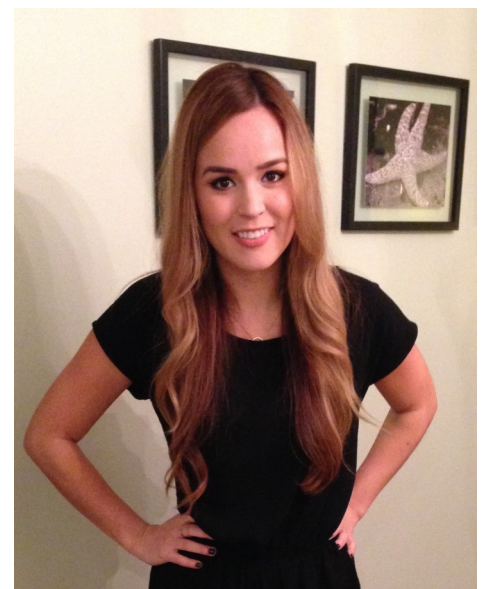
Below are examples of NITHA past scholarship recipients. Their story can be found on page 7.



Brenda LePage, RN,
English River First Nation



Phillip McLeod, Enrolled in
Mental Health & Addictions
Program from Stanley Mission



Shay-Anne Daniels, MD,
Hatchet Lake First Nation

NITHA HEALTH CAREERS SCHOLARSHIP

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

- You must be enrolled as a full-time student in a post-secondary health related program of study such as: nursing, dentistry, pharmacy, lab technology, physiotherapy, dietetics, nutrition, medicine, health administration or public health policy that is a minimum of two academic years in length.
- A band member of one of the NITHA's Partners: Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Lac La Ronge Indian Band or a band member of one of the first nations belonging to Meadow Lake Tribal Council or the Prince Albert Grand Council

AMOUNT OF SCHOLARSHIP AWARD: \$3,000

APPLY TODAY

The Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority (NITHA) is the only First Nations Organization of its kind in the country. The organization is comprised of Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Prince Albert Grand Council and Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and each has extensive experience in health service delivery. Formally established in 1998, the Partners joined together to create NITHA to deliver a service known as Third Level. NITHA provides services directly to the Multi-Community Bands and Tribal Councils in the areas of disease surveillance, communicable disease control, health status monitoring, epidemiology, specialized program support, advisory services, research, planning, education, training and technical support. Our environment is friendly, cordial and team-oriented and our operations are evolving to meet the needs of the Partnership.

TO ACCESS AN APPLICATION PACKAGE:

Download from www.nitha.com
or e-mail an application request to: receptionist@nitha.com

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

SEPTEMBER 30
Every calendar year

Northern Inter-Tribal
Health Authority Inc.

PO Box 787
Prince Albert, SK
S6V 5S4

Phone: (306) 953-5000

www.nitha.com

NITHA SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS STORIES

We followed up with a few recipients of the NITHA Health Careers Scholarship and asked them a number of questions:

1. What is your name and what community are you from?
2. What was your program of study?
3. How did you find out about the NITHA Scholarship?
4. How did the NITHA scholarship help you in your studies?
5. Where do you work now and what piece of advice do you have for youth who would like to pursue your career?

Brenda Le Page

My name is **Brenda LePage**. I am from the English River First Nation Reserve.

My program of study was the 4 year Bachelor of Science in Nursing program offered through the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing in Prince Albert.

I found out about the scholarship from one of the Indigenous newspapers, the Eagle Feather News.

The NITHA scholarship helped me pay for some of my nursing textbooks and I also used it to purchase a laptop. I did not receive any funding from my band so the scholarship was greatly appreciated.

Currently I work for PAGC as a homecare nurse at Red Earth First Nation. Youth who are interested in pursuing a nursing degree will find it a very rewarding career choice with many opportunities for advancement. The demand for nurses in Saskatchewan as well as other provinces is growing. If you are a compassionate, caring, hardworking individual I highly recommend that you consider a career in nursing.

Phillip McLeod

My name is **Phillip McLeod**. I am from Stanley Mission First Nation.

I am taking the Mental Health and Wellness Diploma through SIIT.

I found out about the scholarship through a work email prior to coming to school.

The NITHA scholarship helped me with groceries, rent and some trips home. Saskatoon is approximately 5 hours from home. I came on a student loan which gave me \$655 a month and my rent was \$650 a month so it was a big financial relief.

I am currently still in school finishing up my studies. My advice to youth is do not let fear of failure define who you are. I am almost completing my studies and the fear of failure is still there. My passion, determination and dedication is my fuel to succeed in university and in the field of Mental Health.

Shay-Anne Daniels

My name is **Shay-Anne Daniels**. I am from Hatchet Lake First Nation.

I studied medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. I graduated in 2016 and now I am doing a residency in Internal Medicine in Victoria, British Columbia.

I found out about the scholarship through my mother who works at NITHA.

In addition to the generous support from the Hatchet Lake First Nation, the scholarship helped me cover extra expenses. Medicine is challenging and does not allow time to work for extra money.

I graduated in 2016 and I am now doing a residency in Internal Medicine in Victoria, British Columbia. I will be finished my residency in 2019 and hope to pursue a fellowship in infectious disease after that. My advice for anyone wanting to pursue a career in medicine is to work really hard in your undergraduate years because it is difficult to be accepted to medicine. Once you figure out where your passion is plan your electives around that so you can build up your medical experience in that particular medical field.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EATING WELL for your health just got easier!

EAT WELL SASKATCHEWAN IS A FREE SERVICE CONNECTING SASKATCHEWAN FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES TO A REGISTERED DIETITIAN

UNTIL JUNE 29, 2018, you can ask a registered dietitian questions about food, healthy eating for your family, budget-friendly meal ideas, heart health, diabetes and more—for free!



HOURS
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Monday to Friday



1-833-782-7800



info@eatwellsask.ca



Facebook: Eat Well Saskatchewan



Website: www.eatwellsask.ca

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INFECTION CONTROL TRAINING FOR FIRST NATION HEALTH STAFF

- Want to learn how to prevent the spread of infections?
- Complete “Infection Prevention and Control”- the FREE online course designed for First Nations health staff
- Click on ‘My @YourSide Colleague® Account’ at www.saintelizabeth.com/FNIM
- For more information please contact the NITHA Infection Control Advisor

OTHER NEWS

COMPUTER TRAINING

Computer training is available for all members working in the NITHA Partnership. Some of the course offered include:

- Computer Basics
- Excel Basics
- Outlook Basics
- Introduction to Microsoft PowerPoint
- Windows 10 Basics
- Windows 7 Basics and many more

Please contact the NITHA IT Helpdesk at:

- 1 (844)-486-4842,
- 1 (306) 953-5008, or
helpdesk@nitha.com for more information

TIPS FOR THE SUMMER SEASON

- Drink plenty of water during the hot summer months
- Apply sunscreen
- Exercise regularly and practice good nutrition
- Keep food safe during community events
- Drink responsibly and never drink and drive

For more information about events, stories and health information covered in this newsletter please call 306-953-5023, visit us at www.nitha.com, or follow us on social media @ Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority.

