

Honoring Mi'kmaw Heritage: A Pathway to Reconciliation, Renewal, and Respect

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I would like to acknowledge that this article is being written on land that was stolen from the Mi'kmaq by my ancestors. Working on this unceded land is a privilege long denied by Settlers and in recognition of this privilege and its inherent sense of power, I am truly dedicated to learning and growing as a teacher, mother and woman. Some of the ways I will devote my time, and energy is to engage meaningfully in dialogue, conversation and action to help ensure the original peoples of this land and their traditions are honoured and shared with utmost reverence and respect they deserve—and ought to have lived over hundreds of years.

October has arrived and has once again brought us one of the most beautiful reminders of the process of renewal with beautiful colours.

As a brief update, your professional learning team is busy facilitating workshops, both virtually and in person; connecting with our pre-service teachers through their B.Ed. programs and partners with the EECD to provide input on behalf of our members moving forward.

This month, we are celebrating [Mi'kmaw History Month](#) with this year's theme of *Mijipjewey Na Mawa'luksi'k (Food Gathers Us Together)*. By clicking the link above, you will find a beautifully informative website that contains an enriched collection of resources that can help us to learn about the history and Mi'kmaw ways of being and knowing.

To help acknowledge and support our path towards reconciliation and building our knowledge, we are proud to share this month's Pathways to PL giveaway, *Waiting for the Long Night Moon*, a collection of stories by Amanda Peters, an author of Mi'kmaw and Settler ancestry, whose home community is Glooscap First Nation.

As described on the [publisher's website, in this collection](#), "Peters melds traditional storytelling with beautiful, spare prose to describe the dignity of the traditional way of life, the humiliations of systemic racism and the resilient power to endure. A young man returns from residential school only to realize he can no longer communicate with his own parents. A young woman finds purpose and healing on the front lines as a water protector. An old man remembers his life as he patiently waits for death. And a young girl nervously dances in her first Mawi'omi. The collection also includes the story "The Berry Pickers," which inspired Peters' critically acclaimed novel of the same name, as well as the Indigenous Voices Award-nominated story "Pejipug (Winter Arrives)."

"At times sad, sometimes disturbing but always redemptive, the

stories in Waiting for the Long Night Moon will remind you that where there is grief there is also joy, where there is trauma there is resilience and, most importantly, there is power."

As we close this month of learning and growing in our understanding and appreciation, let us aim to carry the honoring of Indigenous traditions recognized by interweaving them in our practice in ways that are respectful and honoring of their stories.

Consider the following ideas while adding your own inspiration in sharing and making connections to honoured traditions.

November: Remember and honour our histories by connecting with community elders and extending an invitation to share stories and traditions.

December: Recall the power of food to gather us together as we gather for our own celebrations at this time of year, focusing on our connections to one another.

January: Learning about Indigenous teachings that speak to new beginnings as we enter a new calendar year, acknowledging Western concepts of time with Indigenous ways of measuring and marking time based on the phases of the moon and signs from the land.

February: Continue to explore Indigenous traditions around caring for one another and kindness-connecting to the sacred teachings of respect and love.

March is nutrition month: This is an opportunity to revisit the theme of Mi'kmaq History month with making a traditional Mi'kmaq dish, with the guidance of an elder and a reflection piece of how food can nourish not just our bodies but also our mind and spirit through a sense of belonging, learning and carrying on traditions.

April: continuing to explore land-based traditions as spring arrives and brings new growth and restarting of the life cycle.

May: Explore the medicine wheel and Indigenous ways of healing during Mental Health month.

June: Indigenous learning about transitions and moving forward to our next chapter as you close out your school year. This is also an opportunity to learn about the importance of making time reflect from an Indigenous lens; sharing that opportunity with your students and yourself and sit with the challenges and triumphs.

Wela'lloq,

Amanda