

Annual Report

YELLOWHEAD INSTITUTE | JUNE 2023 - JUNE 2024



We are grateful for the ongoing trust and support from our partners, Atkinson Foundation (Yellowhead School), Inspirit Foundation, and Laidlaw Foundation.



Faculty
of Arts

Yellowhead Institute is based in the Faculty of Arts at Toronto Metropolitan University. We thank Dean Pamela Sugiman for her leadership and unwavering commitment to Yellowhead Institute and Tanya Rumble, Executive Director of Development, for believing in our vision and translating it so effectively to our partners and supporters. We also thank Dianna Chu, Research and Accounts Officer, Jeff Pabillar, Sr. Human Resources Partner, Greg Fiorido, Director, Strategic Planning, Finance & Administrator, Kathryn Rowan, Manager, Academic Administration, and Jazel Alejado in the Dean of Arts Office.

Acknowledgements

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last November, for the first time in what felt like a very long time, Yellowhead hosted our board members, research fellows, staff and special guests for a two-day in-person gathering.

To see each other in the flesh, hug one another, and hear our voices bounce off the same walls in the same rooms, meant more to us than I think anyone expected. For so long, we've been confined to Zoom and G-Chat, but this year, we broke out and remembered how our community feels.

So, over the course of 2023 to 2024, we set an intention to gather as often as we could. We hosted the Yellowhead Gathering in November but also numerous research meetings for the next Red Paper, launched the Radical Policy School and Yellowhead Fire, and travelled from Heilstuk territory in Bella Bella to Nunatsiavut Inuit homelands in the Torngat Mountains to share the same physical space.

It felt good and right.

As we did this work, we considered how we meet and the importance of care and kindness in these times. After all, the subjects of our conversations tend to focus on our lived experiences of oppression and violence. So this year, Yellowhead became a space of mutual support and creativity, thinking our way through and around colonialism and enacting those ideas in our gathering spaces and beyond.

It is a new dimension to Yellowhead's work, or at least a return to something nearly forgotten. And we aren't going back. So, we are proud of the research and education initiatives you'll read about here, but prouder still about how we've brought them to life – over shared meals and meeting spaces and from hiking trails and boat bows – beside one another.

Hayden King
Anishinaabe, Beausoleil First Nation



Community Gathering

NOVEMBER 17 & 18, 2023 | TORONTO



For the first time ever, Yellowhead Institute hosted an in-person gathering for our community, bringing together our Board of Advisors, Research Fellows, and Yellowhead team members.

Informed by the conversations held with the Board and Research Fellows, the gathering provided space for big ideas, governance discussions and decision-making, planning, and collaboration, while also intentionally prioritizing flexibility in the agenda so that we could flow with the energy/interest in the group. Our time together included:

- A presentation and discussion on the current Red Paper in-progress by Reserach Director, Eva Jewell
- An afternoon of open-space where the co-created agenda included topics such as Radical Policy School, Protect the Tract, futurisms, and lateral violence
- A discussion on Yellowhead governance regarding our principles, harm/conflict policies and Terms of Reference for community members
- An art activity led by Nancy Deleary, who shared a short history of the thunderbird design we would be working with, and then supplied the group with individual looms, string, beads, and moose hide to create beaded bracelets using the design.

After two days together in Toronto, we wrapped up the gathering with strengthened relationships, energized about our shared vision for Yellowhead and eager to plan for future opportunities to meet in person.



Research Fellows Program

Since Yellowhead's inception, Research Fellows have been a constant part of the Institute contributing to our research and work, and representing Yellowhead in the media. We have endeavoured to platform and support their work as well.

With increased team capacity in 2023, Yellowhead decided to reimagine the program to establish deeper connections with this group and foster more collaboration. In conversation with the Fellows, we established the foundational program goals below. We look forward to holding ourselves accountable to this re-energized approach!

- Reciprocally create a meaningful Indigenous space of connection between and among Research Fellows, the Yellowhead Team, and Yellowhead collaborators;
- Engage Fellows in generative knowledge-building/sharing opportunities that are in line with Yellowhead's objectives;
- Provide support to Research Fellows with Yellowhead's institutional power (i.e. supporting the production of research, including editing, designing, distributing, and promoting works as well as sharing opportunities and providing funding when in line with Yellowhead policies);
- Effectively engaging the skills and knowledge of Research Fellows in various Yellowhead initiatives, collectively setting intentions and establishing shared expectations.



The Red Paper team led by Eva Jewell, Research Director, hosted a gathering in Winnipeg on the intersection of Indigenous-led care and harm reduction.

Our aim was to engage, listen, and build relationships with community members experienced in Indigenous-led harm reduction initiatives to guide the development of Yellowhead's next Red Paper. Following Land Back and Cash Back, the 2024 Red Paper will engage the concept of "Worlds Back" through the process of Indigenous-led care. This Red Paper asks, "How are Indigenous communities harnessing care to (re)create our worlds?" After months of concept development and research on care, we followed the lead of young Indigenous collaborators by inviting individuals with harm reduction experience and expertise to our first Red Paper gathering.

Key questions that framed this gathering:

- How is harm reduction valuable as a tool, practice, as well as a framework of Indigenous care work?
- How do colonial systems of harm collide with our ability to practice care as Indigenous peoples?
- What does this Red Paper need to say to empower the work that you do and the community you serve?



As part of the Red Paper harm reduction gathering, Sunshine House — an Indigenous and queer-led community resource and harm reduction space located on Treaty 1 in Winnipeg — gave us a tour of their Mobile Overdose Prevention Site (MOPS). MOPS is the most recent addition to Sunshine programming and is the first Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) in Manitoba.

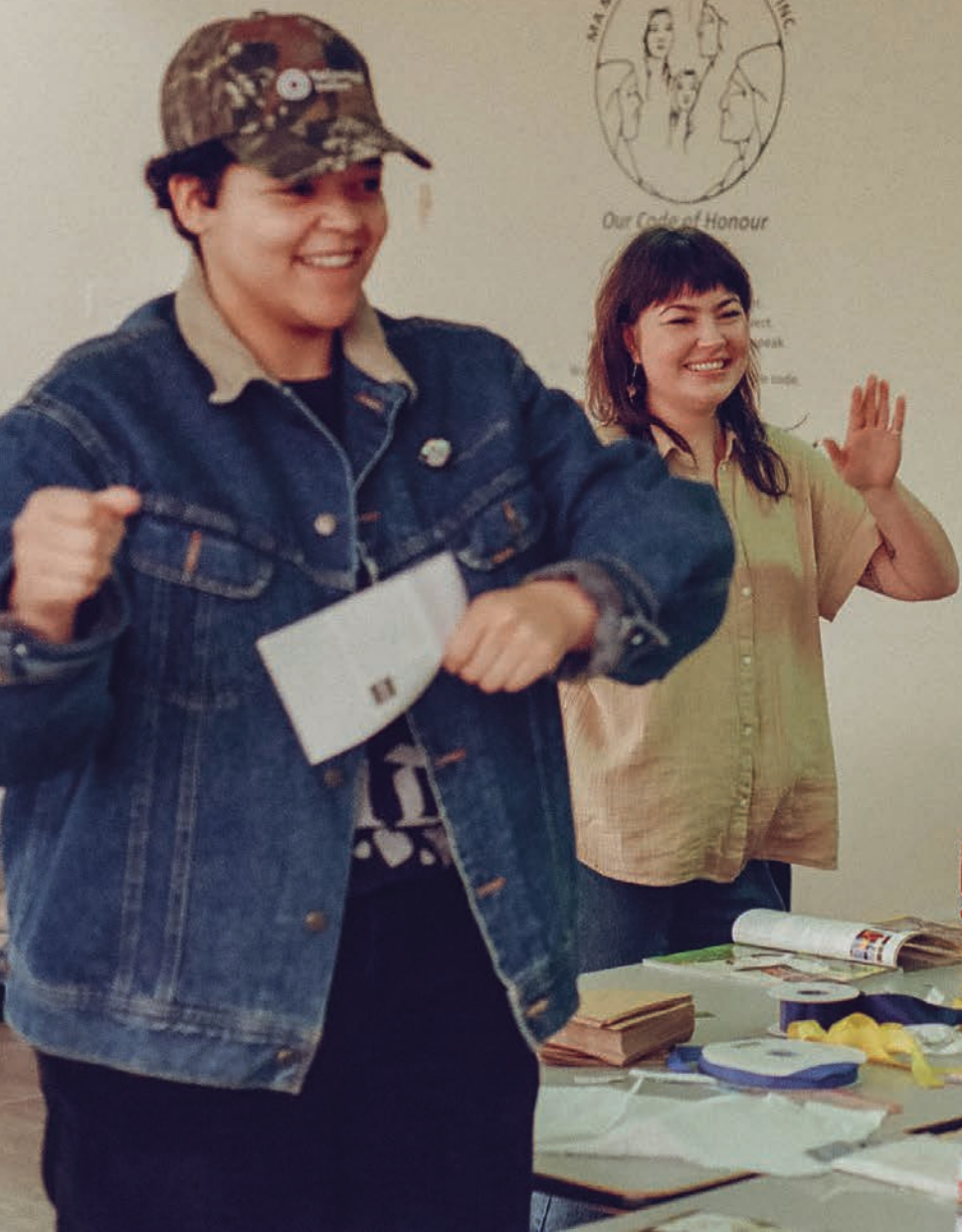


Cosmologies of Care: Critical Dialogues on Care Ethics, Disability Justice, and Health Equity

From October 7 to 8, 2023, the Red Paper team attended and presented at the Cosmologies of Care dialogue session hosted by the University of Houston. The aim of this gathering was to expand the epistemic heritage and horizons of care ethics, re-centring Black, Indigenous, and racialized practices of care-based knowing. The Red Paper team presented on Yellowhead's community-centred research approach and discussed the development of the Worlds Back Red Paper on Care, highlighting how Indigenous youth collaborators at the Freedom School in 2022 played a key role in the evolution of the paper and the team's own care practices in engaging and centring our community in how we work.

Red Paper Harm Reduction Gathering

MARCH 11 - 13, 2024 | WINNIPEG, TREATY 1



Treaty Future

JULY 19 - 22, 2024 | TONGAIT, LABRADOR

AUG 11 - 14, 2023 | IQALUIT, NUNAVUT





Are modern treaties strengthening Indigenous relationships to land or weakening that link?

To answer this question, a Yellowhead Institute research team led by Hayden King (Executive Director) hosted small gatherings in Tongait (Torngat Mountains) and Iqaluit in the summer of 2023. Both gatherings were two days, with significant on the land components. Land-based days offer the chance for dialogue to emerge outside of the typical research boardroom setting. At these gatherings we held facilitated but open-ended conversations on specific questions around modern treaty implementation, with a focus on land. Topics of discussion included land use planning, co-management and conservation, Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreements, and land claim implementation.

This research is supported by the Modern Treaty Implementation Research Project (MTPRP), a national, five-year project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, examining how Treaties are implemented in Canada. We aim to release this report in early 2025, after a community accountability workshop review in the fall of 2024.



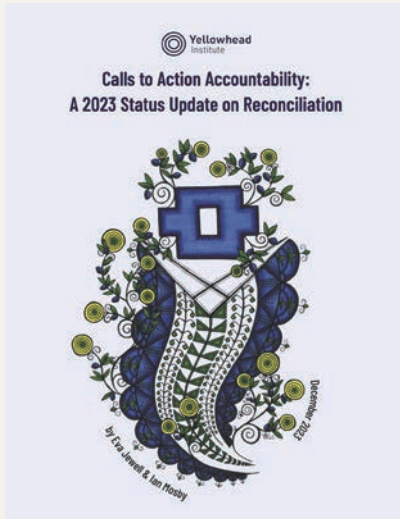
Northern Economy Special Report

Defining our economic activity in the contemporary North is an integral piece to reclaiming Indigenous ways of life and ourselves. This is all the more important considering the dramatic change in the North. What do we mean when we talk about a Northern economy?

In addition to Treaty Future, Yellowhead has been working on a Northern Economy-themed special report. Informed by existing publications developed by the Yellowhead Institute such as Land Back (2019) and Cash Back (2021), the Northern Economy Special Report seeks to conceptualize “economy” from primarily Northern Indigenous perspectives and grapple with the emerging challenges in a Northern economic context. This is a unique contribution and hopefully one of many that offers a re-centering of Indigenous perspectives on Indigenous futures.

Topics in the report will include an introduction on conceptualizing “Economy,” followed by perspectives on energy and social services on the one hand to country food markets, hunting, and creative economies on the other. We aim to release the report in the early fall of 2024; an edited volume with over 16 contributing Indigenous writers, creatives, and researchers. The editors of this report are Hayden King, Kunuk Inutiq (Yellowhead Board Advisor), and Shari Fox.

Special Reports



Calls to Action Accountability: A 2023 Status Update on Reconciliation

2023 marked eight years since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and the fifth and final year of authors Eva Jewell and Ian Mosby tracking Canada's progress on completing those Calls.

In this edition of their annual Calls to Action Accountability analysis, Jewell and Mosby reflected on the past five years of reconciliatory movements in Canada. What barriers to reconciliation have been witnessed? What has compelled Canada to act? Who has pushed progress on these Calls to Action forward?

As Yellowhead presses on in different areas and ways to push for transformative change, we are grateful for all of the support for this work, and how these reports have been taken up in communities.



Data Colonialism in Canada's Chemical Valley:

Aamjiwnaang First Nation and the Failure of the Pollution Notification System

This Special Report was a collaboration between Yellowhead Institute and the Technoscience Research Unit (TRU) at the University of Toronto.

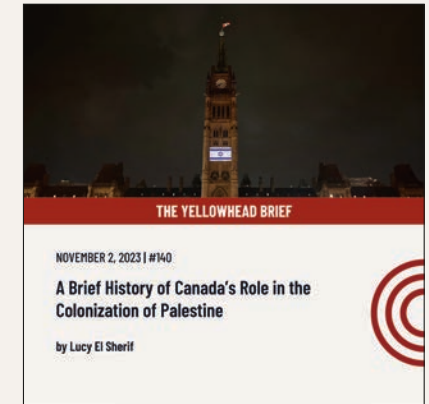
Central to this relationship is pollution: the spills, flares, and air releases and how those events are communicated to the community. The report describes the permission-to-pollute system in Chemical Valley, explains how industry manipulates data, and looks to community members of Aamjiwnaang First Nation for alternatives to data colonialism.

In addition to the report, we launched this project with a Pollution Notification Map (led by TRU), a FAQ about the map and data in the report, and recommendations for Industry, Government and the Blue Water Association for Safety, Environment, and Sustainability (BASES).

Research Publications

Top Read Briefs

published June 2023 - June 2024



NOVEMBER 2, 2023 | #140

A Brief History of Canada's Role in the Colonization of Palestine

by Lucy El Sherif



NOVEMBER 14, 2023 | #141

Settler Moves to Indigeneity: From Canada to Israel

by Megan Scribe



DECEMBER 7 2023 | #143

Powley, Rights Recognition, and the Rise of "Métis Denialism": A Response to First Nations' Calls for Accountability

by Stephen Mussell



Return to Gale Creek

In November 2023, Yellowhead was invited by the Heiltsuk for a community screening of the the film we co-produced, *Return to Gale Creek*.

This film project began in 2020 as part of our Land Back Red Paper knowledge mobilization efforts highlighting Indigenous-led restitution efforts. While *Return to Gale Creek* took time, the development of the film and relationships with the production team, cast, and Heiltsuk leadership and legal team has been meaningful and steady over the years. In conversation these folks, it was decided that the path forward for the completed film would begin with a community screening and ceremony in the Heiltsuk Big House. We were honoured to attend. This was the first screening using the new state-of-the-art AV system in the Big House and more significantly, we finally met, the two individuals featured in the film, Russell and Latoya Windsor, in-person.

We will be moving forward with a Toronto event featuring *Return to Gale Creek*. It is also featured in the upcoming Land Back curriculum, which will be released in the fall of 2024.





Radical Policy School

RADICAL RELATIONALITIES | MAY 2024 | ONLINE & TORONTO

2023-2024 was the inaugural year of Yellowhead School programming. We were very excited and honored to host 20 participants for our first Radical Policy School in May 2024.

For RPS' 2024 focus, the Yellowhead team initially intended to organize a program centered on economics. Considering the ongoing genocide in Palestine, as well as other local and global crises, there was a desire to be responsive and reflexive in our programming. As such, the RPS program shifted to focus on the theme “radical relationalities” in alignment with Yellowhead’s core objective of building relationships with Black and racialized communities towards decolonial futures.

RPS featured four weekly synchronous online lectures and culminated in a three-day intensive in-person co-learning gathering. Grounded in the spirit of radical relationalities, the design of the program topics was collaborative; faculty members and students created and selected subjects that revolved around their unique expertise, skill sets, and community needs. Programming included the following topics and guests:

- Indigenous Solidarity with Palestine with Ellen Gabriel
- Black Feminist Care and Collective Imagination as a tool for Abolitionist Futures with Stephanie Latty
- Somatics Grounding with Nazbah Tom
- Tatreez Discussion and Workshop with Razan Samara

In addition to everything they were able to learn and put into practice in their work, communities, and other endeavours, participants described RPS as a space where they felt cared for. They were able to grieve, share their personal struggles and challenges in life and work, and laugh together — embodying the decolonial future we continue to strive for.”



We were overwhelmed and honored to receive 227 applications for RPS 2024, a number that reflects the interest and need for programming that speaks to the topics covered in this year’s program. Ultimately, 20 students were selected; 50% Indigenous, and 50% Black, Palestinian and racialized.

“ I’d like to share the profound impact the Radical Policy School program has had on me. From the transformative connections I made to the space to truly be myself, and the opportunity to share, imagine, and co-create liberatory solutions based on authentic relationships. All of these thoughtfully designed elements have kept my hope alive and changed my beliefs in what’s possible for the better.” - RPS PARTICIPANT

“ When we bring in our brightest thinkers such as yourself, the hope is that sparks will fly, and that you, [YI Fire audience] will also recognize that flame within yourself. Maybe you're not always tending to it though, so that's what we do for each other here at the Fire events: create a safe space where we can come together and put in the work that has to go into tending a fire and spaces like these.

- MEGAN SCRIBE, EDUCATION DIRECTOR

GRADIF #3

ARMED
RESISTANCE

RULE OF
WOMEN/
NOT CIS
MEN IN
MILITARY

Honesty

REALITY
CHECK
V.S
"CULTURE"
OF FEAR



Yellowhead Fire

Yellowhead Fire brings together established and emerging scholars, activists, and artists to discuss pressing concerns and issues, exchange ideas, and offer critical Indigenous perspectives on settler colonialism and the reclamation of Indigenous land and “the good life.”

The theme for the inaugural Yellowhead Fire 2023/2024 was, “A Different Kind of Education,” with a focus on Indigenous knowledge and learning. Our two main Fire events featured Yellowhead Institute Research Fellows, Shady Hafez and Dēneze Nakehk’o, who spoke about “Experiences in Community-based Indigenous Education” and “Dene Ke K’o: Honouring Creative Fires”. Both events were offered in-person and online, where we used the Easy Retro platform to engage online participants. After Dēneze’s talk, we hosted a circle discussion where in-person participants could ask questions and reflect on what they had heard and learned that evening.

“ To be Dene is to listen to the stories that engage our creative and imaginative muscles in our minds...to learn how to think about things in a creative way. [And] also to use all our senses, when we’re trying to learn and to do things in a kinesthetic, tactile way.
- DĒNEZE NAKEHK’O

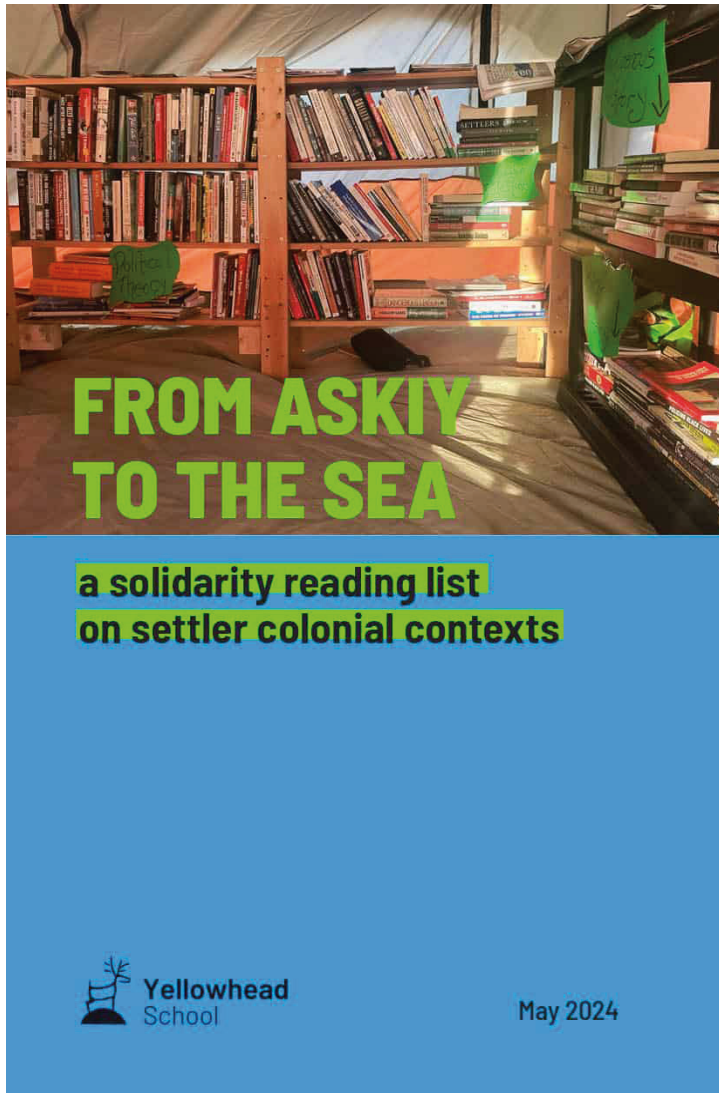
Dēneze Nakehk’o speaking at our February Yellowhead Fire event.



Megan Scribe, Education Director and Lillian Smallboy, Indigenous Education Programming Coordinator with Shady Hafez

“ I strongly believe that our communities need to have access to critical knowledge: critical information on our communities, on our histories, but also on how to build and develop our infrastructures and our governance systems, and how to heal and help each other within communities.
- SHADY HAFEZ





Yellowhead School Educational Resource

In May 2024, Yellowhead School released the Reading List, “From Askiy to the Sea,” in a move to meet our collective present. As the calls for Palestinian solidarity and support grow, Indigenous people continue to learn and reflect on the shape of that solidarity. Now, more than ever, understanding the global context and nature of settler colonialism is critical to moving past and beyond it. While we can’t think our way free without corresponding activism and active resistance, thinking alongside one another can help forge the path to liberation. This reading list was created to help readers understand and explain this relationship better.

“ I’m part of an informal reading group that meets once a week. I learned about this reading list through an [Instagram] post and presented it to the group. We are going through the readings week by week, and everyone is seriously enjoying, learning, and appreciating all this material that you’ve prepared. It’s frankly really...awesome to be able to so easily access this material that draws out the connections between Indigenous struggles and experiences and what’s been happening in Palestine for the last half a century plus.

I am recommending this reading list to other friends.

- EMAIL FEEDBACK

Celebrating six years of Yellowhead at NAISA 2024, Bådåddjo

Yellowhead had the opportunity to celebrate our sixth birthday in Sápmi while presenting some of our latest research at the annual Native American and Indigenous Studies Association conference. Thank you to our Sámi hosts for making this opportunity possible!

And thank you to our Yellowhead community and those who choose to engage with our work. We are grateful for your interest in what we put out to the world and we look forward to doing it for many more years.



Board of Advisors

Emily Riddle
nehiyaw iskwew,
Treaty Six,
Alexander First Nation
(Kipohtakaw)

Janice Makokis
nehiyaw iskwew,
Treaty Six,
Saddle Lake Cree Nation
(Onihcikiskwapiwin)

Fallon Simard
Anishinaabe-Métis

Kris Statnyk
Gwich'in,
Vuntut Gwitchin
First Nation

Naiomi W. Metallic
Listuguj Mi'gmaq First
Nation, Gespe'gawa'gi

Kariwakeron
Tim Thompson
Mohawk Nation,
Bear Clan Family,
Wahta Mohwak Territory

Kunuk Inutiq
Clyde River Inuk

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Beausoleil First Nation
Executive Director

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Anishinaabekwe,
Deshkan Ziibiing
(Chippewas of
the Thames First Nation)
Research Director

Megan Scribe
Ininiw iskwew,
Norway House Cree
Nation
Education Director

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(Mohawk), Kanehsatà:ke

Christina Gray
Ts'msyen member of Lax
Kw'alaams, Dene, and
Métis from Lutsel K'e

Shady Hafez
Algonquin Anishinaabe
& Syrian, Kitigan Zibi
Anishinabeg

Robert Houle
Wapsewsiipi (Swan River)
First Nation, Treaty 8

Shalene Jobin
Cree and Métis, Red
Pheasant Cree Nation,
Treaty Six

Minnawaanigogiiizhigok
a.k.a Dawnis Kennedy
Waabizheshi Marten
Clan, Anishinaabe Nation
& descendant of Canadian
settlers

Andrea Landry
Anishinaabe
Pays Plat First Nation

Elisa Levi
Chippewas of Nawash
First Nation

Dëneze Nakehk'o
Dene, Liidlii Kue
First Nation

Sherry Pictou
Mi'kmaw, L'sitkuk,
Bear River First Nation

Brock Pitawanakwat
Anishinaabe,
Whitefish River
First Nation

Raven Sinclair
Nehiyaw (Cree), George
Gordon First Nation,
Treaty 4 Territory

Courtney Skye
Mohawk, Turtle Clan
Six Nations of the Grand
River Territory

Dr. Gina Starblanket
Cree/Saulteaux,
Star Blanket Cree Nation,
Treaty 4 Territory

Vanessa Watts
Anishinaabe and Mohawk

Tara Williamson
Opaskwayak Cree Nation,
Gaabishkigamaag

Riley Yesno
Anishinaabe
Eabametoong First
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Inuk

Kaitlin Rizarri
Filipina and mixed
Mi'kmaw/ settler)





Shalma
slow



قسط
جزء

مخاضك يسر



Commitment
CRIMES

amin



FREE
PALESTINE



play share care trust listen

POWER

She



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