

Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig Students – Emerging Leaders

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[Education](#)**Submitter Name:**

Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig Students

Submitters Email:

communications@shingwauk.ca

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Press Release Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig Students – Emerging Leaders

(Sault Ste. Marie, ON)

Students, Renee Ojeebah, Alex Syrette, Joanna Nahwegahbow and Andy Rickard enrolled in Anishinaabe Studies, focusing on Social Issues and Movements, being offered in partnership with Shingwauk Education Trust- Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig and the University of Sudbury, housed at the Shingwauk Education Trust, in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario are proof that this “Centre of Excellence in Anishinaabe Education” is developing the next generation of leaders.

“It will be students such as these, that will advance nation building and nationhood of First Nations Peoples through the exploration and understanding of traditional governance models. These students are on their way and following a path that is fulfilling the vision of Ojibway Chief Shingwauk” explains Grand Chief, Eddie Benton-Banai, Three Fires Confederacy and Academic/Spiritual Advisor, Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig.

Students Alex Syrette and Joanna Nahwegahbow are members of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Indian Residential School Survivor Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee focus is on the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. “We are honored to be part of this Advisory Committee” says Ms. Syrette, “This next step will shed light on one of the darkest chapters in Canada’s history, a history that all Canadians should be aware of.”

“Through the important work of the Truth Commission, we will begin to truly understand our past and how we move forward” adds Ms. Nahwegahbow.

Both students have been serving on this AFN Advisory Committee since June 2007. The next meeting the students are attending is slated for next month in Quebec.

Student Andy Rickard was elected this past September as a Council Member of Garden River First Nation, the youngest Council member to date. “Our class is comprised of students of different ages, cultures and life experiences, but what brings us together as a group is that we all respect our differences and learn from each other. What I learn in class I use in all areas of my life” states Rickard. Andy is the son of the late and founding Grand Chief of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Andrew Rickard who believed in our traditional customs to govern us and inspired his children to follow in his footsteps.

Recently, student Renee Ojeebah, was elected as Chief of his home community Brunswick House First Nation, Chapleau, Ontario. “I have taken two classes at Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig. “What I have learned and experienced in these classes has provided me with a social and economic world view that I will be able to utilize and implement in my community-making it a better place to live, says Chief Ojeebah. My Professor, Jerry Fontaine has inspired me both academically and spiritually. He has and continues to provide support that goes beyond academics and studies” he adds.

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“Our classes are dedicated to opening the minds of all Anishinaabe and all post-secondary students to infinite possibilities. In our classes we provide our students with the knowledge that specifically addresses the growing needs of Anishinaabe communities. It is very exciting to see students being appointed on national committees, become Chiefs and Council members- this is a strong statement about the caliber of our students. These students have a role in changing history and making an impact on the future says” Professor Jerry Fontaine.

“These students are learning and sharing our story (Anishinaabe Dibawjimowin),” says Darrell Boissoneau, President of Shingwauk Education Trust and Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig, “Our students learn in a positive, cooperative and respectful environment” he adds, “Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig was founded to fulfill the vision of Ojibway Chief Shingwauk, who in 1873 told the people to build a Teaching Wigwam to preserve the history and culture of Anishinaabe people of all tribes and nations and to respect and understand each other’s knowledge and cultural differences.”

Classes are held Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00pm-4:30pm.

For interview and or photo opportunity please contact:

Darrell Boissoneau
President
Shingwauk Education Trust
Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig
(705) 942-5069
Email: dboissoneau@shingwauk.ca
