

Inspiring Approaches

to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning



changemakers



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National Initiative Announces Top Awards to Innovators in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education and Learning

(March 26, 2012/Toronto) Ashoka Canada, The Counselling Foundation of Canada, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative, and partners* announce award-winning ideas and projects that take the top honours in the Changemakers Initiative: [Inspiring Approaches to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning](#).

“More than 50 global Changemakers initiatives have been held on many different topics,” noted Elisha Muskat, Ashoka Canada’s executive director. “However, *Inspiring Approaches* is the first in Canada, and has been especially meaningful. The collaboration of many diverse groups has led to the most important outcome: an outpouring of inspiring ideas and projects whose quality is demonstrated by the winners.”

Through its website, the Changemakers initiative received 266 entries offering innovative ideas and insights into First Nations, Métis and Inuit education and learning. More than \$90,000 will be awarded to 30 winning ideas and projects, ranging from integrating Aboriginal stories and storytelling techniques into video-game design, to a program that helps First Nations girls in foster care reconnect with their culture and heritage.

“The Changemakers initiative on First Nations, Metis and Inuit learning demonstrates how much can be achieved when organizations work together with the national Aboriginal leadership” stated The Right Honourable Paul Martin. “I am very pleased to see the range of submissions. The projects and ideas demonstrate that creativity and partnership can combine to creative innovative solutions.” The guiding vision of the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative (MAEI), a registered charitable organization established by Martin and his family, is to empower Aboriginal students with the knowledge and confidence they need to complete secondary school and go on to post-secondary studies.

Entries for awards were assessed on the strength of their innovation, social impact, and sustainability. After the initial screening and shortlisting of all 266 entries, finalists were moved forward in two ways.

A panel of judges** – seven education and learning leaders from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities – selected the 16 finalists for the five Community Awards. These finalists were then put to an online vote – the public cast close to 1,800 votes over a two-week period.

All other award winners were chosen by the award sponsors and/or the Ashoka Changemakers team.

“A critical key to employment is closing the education gap,” said social entrepreneur Kelly Lendsay, a judge for the initiative and an internationally recognized innovator in Canada. “To receive 266 entries signals the change, innovation, and impact that is happening in our schools and communities across the country.”

Award winners will be honoured at a summit to be held in Gatineau, Quebec, from April of 16 - 18, 2012 – a celebration that connects people, ideas, and funders to generate new opportunities in First Nations, Métis and Inuit education and learning.

Award Winners:

[Aboriginal ECERS](#) (British Columbia)
[Aboriginal eMentoring BC](#) (British Columbia)
[Aboriginal High School Mentorship Program](#) (Ontario)
[Aboriginal Student Links](#) (Ontario)
[Actua in the North](#) (Ontario)
[ArtsCan Circle](#) (Ontario)
[A Tap on the Shoulder](#) (Manitoba)
[Ateliers de Formation du Wapikoni Mobile](#) (Quebec)
[Balancing Strategies: Self-Directed Life and Career Exploration for Indigenous Students](#) (British Columbia)
[Cleq'melt: Groups for Aboriginal Children and Youth in Schools and Community](#) (British Columbia)
[Dechinta Bush University, Denendeh \(NWT\)](#) (Northwest Territories)
[Dialogue & Accompagnement d'Adolescents Autochtones par l'Art](#) (Quebec)
[DreamCatcher Mentoring: E-Mentoring for Northern High School Students](#) (Yukon Territory)
[Elephant Thoughts First Nations and Inuit Education](#) (Ontario)
[Exchanges Unite Us - Intercultural Exchanges in NWT](#) (Northwest Territories)
[First Nations Studies Expo](#) (British Columbia)
[Imagination Library - Free Books for Preschoolers](#) (Manitoba)
[Increasing Aboriginal Economic Inclusion through the Use of E-Learning Technology in the Aboriginal Community](#) (Alberta)
[Indigenous Women in Community Leadership \(IWCL\) program](#) (Nova Scotia)
[Just Move It](#) (Ontario)
[Making Dreams A Reality](#) (Alberta)
[Mi'kmaq Music, Songs, and Stories for Babies](#) (Nova Scotia)
[Nunatsiavut Government Sponsored Bachelor of Social Work Program](#) (Newfoundland and Labrador)
[Ojibway Language Books for Children](#) (Ontario)
[Porteurs de rêves et boîte d'outils pour un enseignement des arts visuels autochtones à l'école secondaire](#) (Quebec)
[Revolution: Girl-Style](#) (Ontario)
[Skins Workshops on Aboriginal Storytelling and Video Game Design](#) (Quebec)
[TASK \(Trade Awareness, Skills & Knowledge\)](#) (British Columbia)
[To Learn: Sharing, Wisdom, Strength, and Unity](#) (Ontario)
[Urban Butterflies](#) (British Columbia)

*Partners for the initiative include: the Ashoka Changemakers, Chagnon Foundation, The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, The Counselling Foundation of Canada, Donner Canadian Foundation, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, The First Nations Education Council, The Girls Action Foundation, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, Lawson Foundation, Mamow Sha-way-gi-kay-win: North South Partnership for Children, Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation, Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative, Ontario Trillium Foundation, RBC Foundation, Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec, Small Change Fund and Vancouver Foundation.

** Judges for the initiative included: Dr. Christy Rochelle Bressette, Terry Fortin, Udloriak Hanson, Jasmine Learning, Kelly J. Lendsay, Dr. Nathan Matthew and Dr. Noella Steinhauser

Changemakers.com is one the world's most robust spaces for launching, discussing, and scaling-up ideas to solve the world's most pressing social problems. Changemakers builds on Ashoka's three-decade history and vision for an "Everyone a Changemaker" world by creating a place where the best ideas in social innovation can be shared, refined, and funded.

Visit Inspiring Approaches online at www.changemakers.com/fnmi-learning
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