



In the photos

Above: David Perley, Wolastoqi elder and one of the course facilitators. (Photo courtesy of Walter Thiessen)

Top right: Participants in the Education for Reconciliation Certificate program gathered to learn, share and discuss topics relating to Indigenous culture, history and reconciliation in New Brunswick. (Photo courtesy of Walter Thiessen)

“The time at the camp was so eye-opening and such a gift to me.”

Brent Bilsky, Education for Reconciliation Certificate participant

This spread excerpted from



2022/2023

Annual Impact Report

EASTERN CANADA

YOUR SUPPORT IS WORKING TOWARD RECONCILIATION

The Education for Reconciliation Certificate program at New Brunswick’s St. Stephen’s University offers a variety of classroom and practical opportunities for students to learn about Indigenous culture and history from elders and community leaders. MCC provides financial support for the course, including the costs of inviting elders to come facilitate different sessions.

A highlight of the program this past year was a week-long, land-based course that allowed participants to experience Wabanaki ceremonies and traditions. The elders also shared traditional knowledge and discussed different worldviews. The program was developed in consultation with Indigenous elders, and this course was facilitated by David and Imelda Perley, Wolastoqi elders from Tobique, New Brunswick.

The course was held at Camp Chiputneticook, graciously offered by Chief Akagi of Peskotomuhkati Nation. Throughout the week, participants learned about Indigenous history and heard hard truths about elder David’s personal experiences in the larger context of the long-term oppression of the Wabanaki people. Students were also exposed to language, culture, customs and ceremonies through the teaching of elder Imelda. They participated in talking circles and learned to connect with each other and the natural world. “The time at the camp was so eye-opening and such a gift to me,” said participant Brent Bilsky.



“To be exposed to so much knowledge and ceremony in such a short span of time is something special.”

The highlight of the week came when participants helped build a sweat lodge and finished the day with a sweat lodge ceremony. Many of the participants were not Indigenous and were experiencing these ceremonies and activities for the first time. It was an opportunity for them to learn about and understand the value and significance of each ceremony, and to show respectful appreciation for Wabanaki culture. The week finished on a positive note with hope for the future of positive relationships between Wabanakis and non-Indigenous people.

“I believe that a strong partnership between Wabanakis and allies will lead to positive change and ultimately transform [New Brunswick] society into a welcoming, respectful and inclusive society,” says David Perley, a Wolastoqi Elder.



Students from the Education for Reconciliation Certificate program participated in a week-long, land-based course, culminating with the building of a sweat lodge. (Photo courtesy of Walter Thiessen)