Inspiring Aboriginal Youth: ‘Dreamcatcher’ turns 25

Edmonton – MacEwan University’s Aboriginal Youth Conference, Dreamcatcher, is celebrating its 25 anniversary. Over that time thousands of Indigenous youth from across Canada have come to MacEwan to explore educational and career opportunities, celebrate culture and develop new friendships.

Keestin O’Dell was 15 when he first attended the conference in 2007. “There were 15 of us from Frog Lake who came to the Dreamcatcher conference and we felt like we were home. The staff and volunteers were so welcoming and it made the experience memorable.”

“That experience was very important when I was deciding where to go for post-secondary education and I decided that MacEwan was where I wanted to be,” said O’Dell. “My mother is the principal at Chief Napeweaw Comprehensive School in Frog Lake, so education has always been important for our family. I graduated from MacEwan in 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in sociology.”

O’Dell has come full circle and now he’s a student advisor in kihêw waciston, MacEwan University’s Indigenous Centre. “It’s motivating seeing Indigenous youth come and experience the conference for the first time. It reminds me how excited I was the first time I walked onto the campus.”

“We expect about 500 Indigenous youth to participate in the two-day conference,” said Carolynn Kane, the lead organizer. “Our main goal is to empower Indigenous youth and let them know that if they pursue further studies that MacEwan is the place where culture is honored and celebrated—that they don’t have to leave their heritage behind when they move to the city.”

“Our keynote speakers this year include Zoey Roy, an artist, activist, and a community-based educator who has embodied self-determination since she was a child,” says Kane. “It’s important to have keynote speakers who can connect and understand Indigenous youth. We want them to comfortable here and make sure all participants feel welcome. And we want them to know there’s a home for them at MacEwan.”

When: October 27 & 28
Where: Robbins Health Learning Centre, City Centre Campus

To preview the schedule of activities, please go to: MacEwan.ca/Dreamcatcher

Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.

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