
September 2026



first LIGHT FIELD notes

What's happening,
what we're learning
& what's next.



Programs

Healthy Baby Club

Mon, Sept 14, 21 and 28 10 am to 12 pm

Growing Spirits

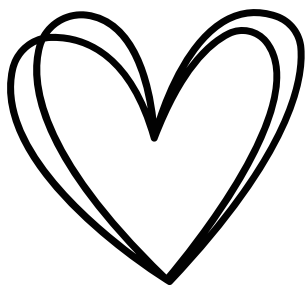
Wed, Sept 9, 16 and 23 10 to 11 am

Traditional Dance Class (ages 5 to 10)

Sat, Sept 12, 19 and 26 1 to 2 pm

GENERAL Program PAUSE

For the month of September, we will be pausing our group community activities and programming. This intentional pause will provide our team with an opportunity to evaluate our current offerings, refine existing programs, and explore new ideas as we plan for the months ahead. After a busy summer of connection, activity, and support, September also provides an opportunity for our team to recharge and prepare for an exciting season of programming ahead. While group programming will be paused, our Cultural Supports Team will continue to provide support through individual appointments throughout September. We appreciate your understanding and continued support as we take this time to evaluate and plan. We look forward to returning this fall with renewed energy and an exciting lineup of program offerings!



CONTENT WARNING

Sections of this month's Newsletter will reflect on topics related to **Residential Schools**, as well as **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, and Gender-Diverse People**.

If you need support, please don't
hesitate to reach out:

24/7 Suicide & Crisis Support

Call or Text 9-8-8

Support if you're thinking about suicide or if you're worried about someone else

24/7 Indigenous Support Call Hope for Wellness Helpline

1-855-242-3310

Culturally Safe Support for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people

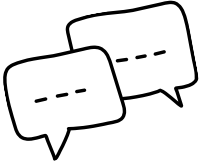
Youth & Young People

Kids Help Phone

Call 1-800-668-6868 or Text 686868

Free, confidential support | Available 24/7

UPCOMING EVENTS

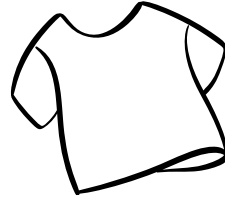


**GATHERING OF VOICES:
FALL FEAST**

Wed, Sep 23

**ORANGE SHIRT DAY
(NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH
& RECONCILIATION)**

Wed, Sept 30



SISTERS IN SPIRIT VIGIL

Sun, Oct 4

**SPIRIT SONG X EASTERN EDGE
GALLERY OPENING**

Fri, Oct 16



I Lost my TALK

By Rita Joe (1932 - 2007)

I lost my talk
The talk you took away.
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school.

You snatched it away:
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad, about my word.

Two ways I talk
Both ways I say,
Your way is more powerful.

So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me.

Born in Whycocomagh, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Rita Joe was the author of six books, including her 1978 debut collection *Poems of Rita Joe*. Her memoir, *Songs of Rita Joe: Autobiography of a Mi'kmaq Poet*, details some of her experiences at Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. She is widely considered the Poet Laureate of the Mi-kmaq people. She was also made a member of the Order of Canada and received an honorary doctorate from Dalhousie University.

PHYLLIS' STORY

By Phyllis Webstad

I went to The St. Joseph Mission Indian residential school (The Mission) for one year in 1973/1974. I had just turned 6 years old. I lived with my grandmother on the Dog Creek reserve. We never had very much money, but somehow my granny managed to buy me a new outfit to go to school in. I remember going to Robinson's store and picking out a shiny orange shirt. It had string laced up in front, and was so bright and exciting - just like I felt to be going to school!

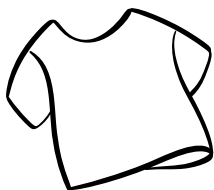
When I got to The Mission, they stripped me, and took away my clothes, including the orange shirt! I never wore it again. I didn't understand why they wouldn't give it back to me, it was mine!

The color orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us little children were crying and no one cared.

I was 13 years old and in grade 8 when my son Jeremy was born. Because my grandmother and mother both attended residential school for 10 years each, I never knew what a parent was supposed to be like. With the help of my aunt, Agness Jack, I was able to raise my son and have him know me as his mother.

I went to a treatment centre for healing when I was 27 and have been on this healing journey since then. I finally get it, that the feeling of worthlessness and insignificance, ingrained in me from my first day at The Mission, affected the way I lived my life for many years. Even now, when I know nothing could be further than the truth, I still sometimes feel that I don't matter. Even with all the work I've done!

I am honored to be able to tell my story so that others may benefit and understand, and maybe other survivors will feel comfortable enough to share their stories.



learn more at orangeshirtday.org



REFLECTIONS from COMMUNITY



Elder Marjorie Muise writes about how food connects us, through harvesting and sharing

Our communities have relied on harvesting for years. Though modern-day foods are convenient items and can be bought at the grocery stores; harvesting remains important for several reasons.

Learning from our Elders

One of the most essential parts of harvesting is learning from the Elders and knowledge keepers. They teach younger generations about traditional foods, showing them how to harvest, prepare, and preserve food. These teachings are vital for maintaining food security and self-sufficiency, particularly when food costs at the store can be so high.

Elders pass on knowledge about various foods like berries, halibut, spring salmon, wild rhubarb, and many other traditional foods.

They also teach the traditional ways of preparing these foods—peeling, drying, filleting, and more. By sharing their recipes, Elders ensure that future generations will have the skills to feed themselves and continue the harvesting practices that have sustained the communities for centuries.

Feeding the Community Healthy Foods

The food gathered during harvest season feeds the communities long after the spring. Our communities work together to preserve and store this food for the months ahead. Teamwork strengthens our communities and can provide healthier food choices than those found in a grocery store.



Connecting with Others

Harvesting also brings the communities closer together. Working together to store and preserve food helps the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people bond with one another. Harvesting has historically been a way to connect with other Indigenous communities. In the past, Indigenous people traded what they gathered. This tradition of sharing continues today, fostering strong connections.



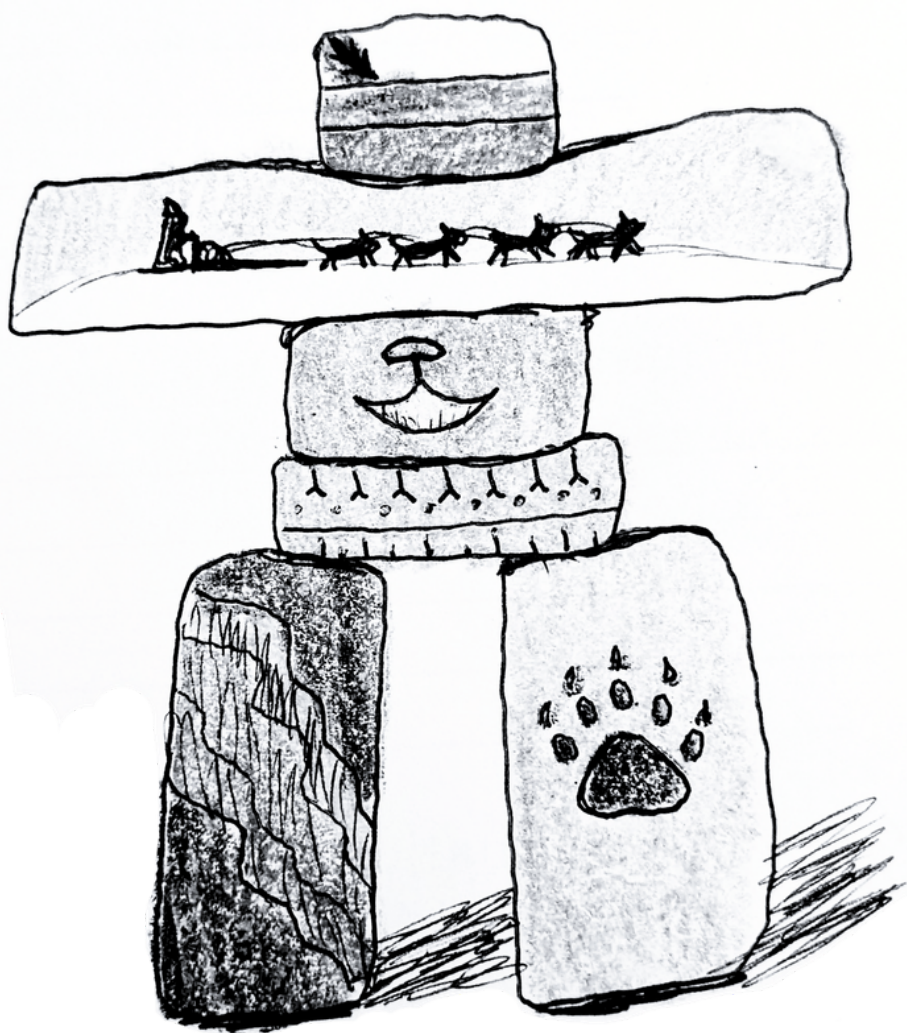
Food All Year Round

Harvesting is at the heart of Indigenous culture. Even as the world changes, the importance of this tradition remains. By continuing to harvest, the communities stay connected to the land and ensure that future generations can gather, share, and enjoy food just like their ancestors did.

Do you know where the food that you eat comes from? An important question we should all ask ourselves... Msit No'kmaq !



Food for Thought!



Drawn by Mak (2026)

Sisters in Spirit

Remembering Marguerite

Marguerite was born in Labrador and moved to St. John's later in her life. She was the mother of eight children and is remembered as a caring and compassionate woman with a strong spirit.

Marguerite volunteered at the St. John's Women's Centre and found that she could relate well with many of the women who came through the doors.

The women who knew Marguerite and worked with her say that she had a contagious laugh and let her smile could warm a room.

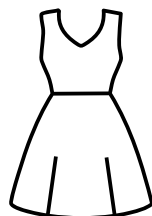
Marguerite was living in a boarding house in an unsafe circumstances when she was killed just a month before her birthday. Her murderer was convicted of second-degree murder.

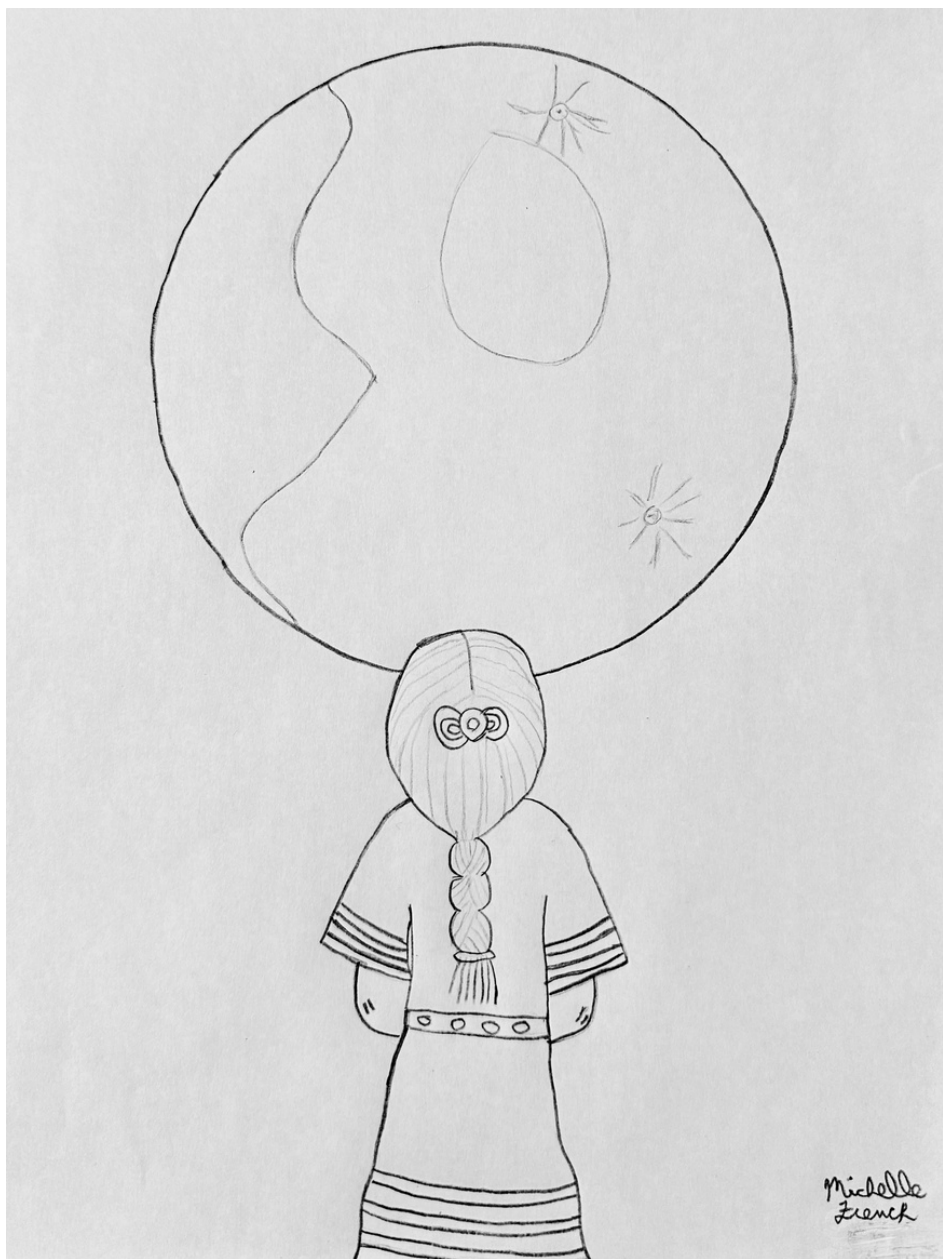
Marguerite's place is a tribute in memory of Marguerite's life. Marguerite's place houses the office and programs of the *Women's Centre and the St. John's Status of Women Council* and provides a continuum of housing supports for women.

Marguerite Dyson
51 years old
St. John's Newfoundland
November 4, 1996



If you need assistance,
visit sjswc.ca

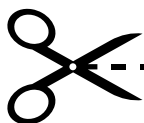
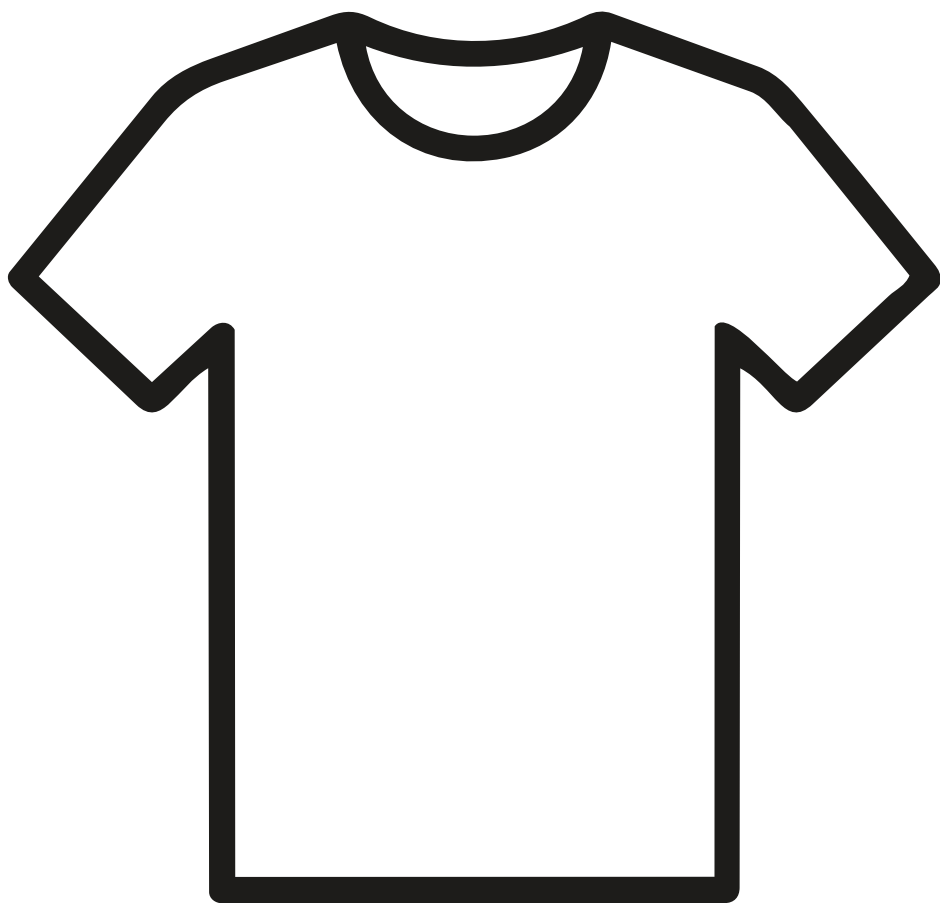




Drawn by Mi'kmaw artist
Michelle French (2026)

FULL MOON

BEADING PATTERN



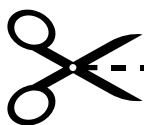
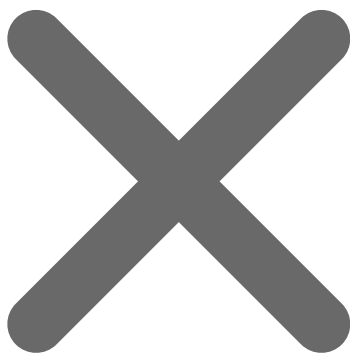
ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Rally for Reconciliation - September 30

Pippy Park - Northbank Lodge

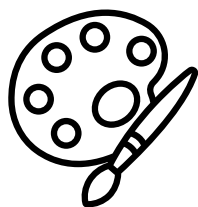
2:00 to 3:30 pm

BACK OF PATTERN



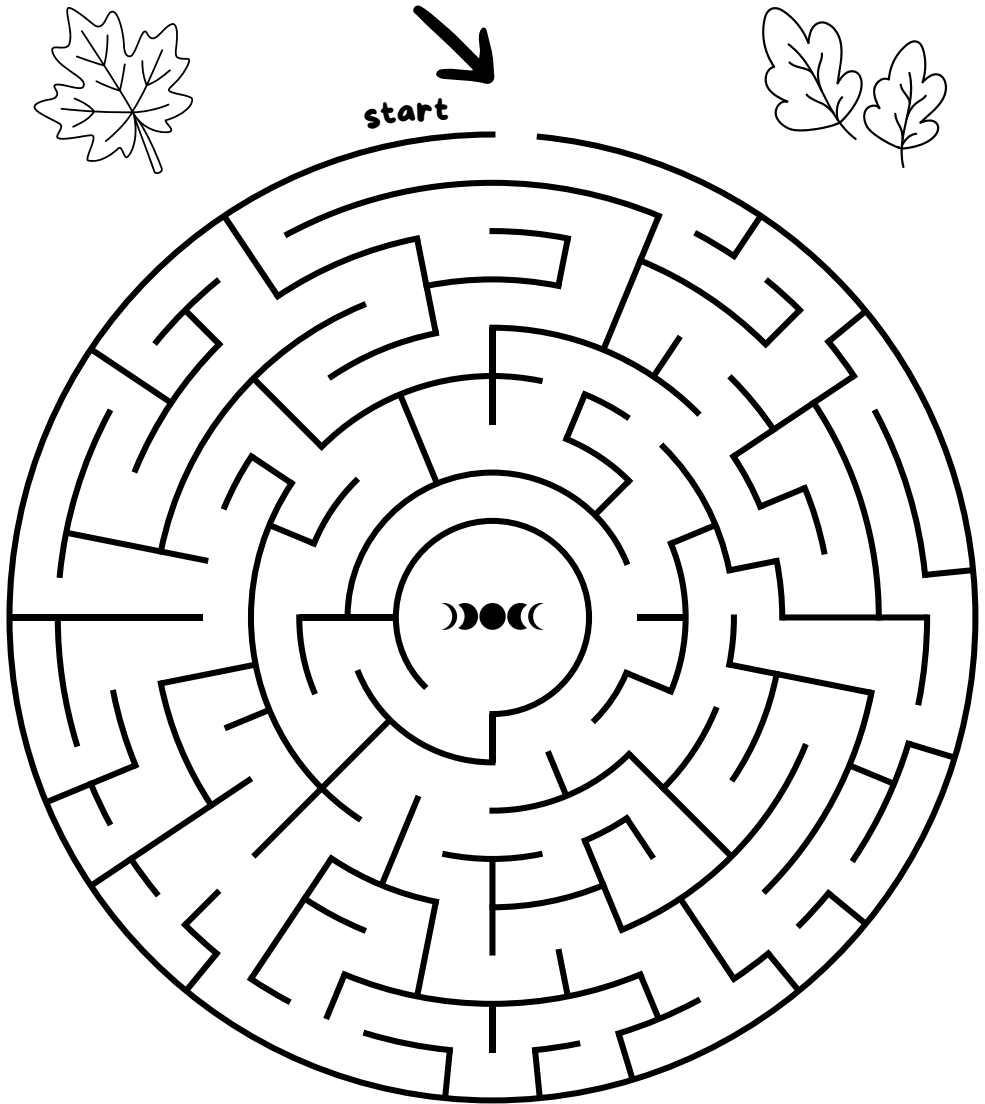
SUBMIT YOUR ART

Want your art or stories featured in
Field Notes? Submit your work now!



MAZE GAME

find your way to the centre of the circle



solution available at firstlightnl.ca/field-notes

COLOUR ME!



Marcus Gosse ©

illustration by Marcus Gosse

