



2023 Indigenous Conference

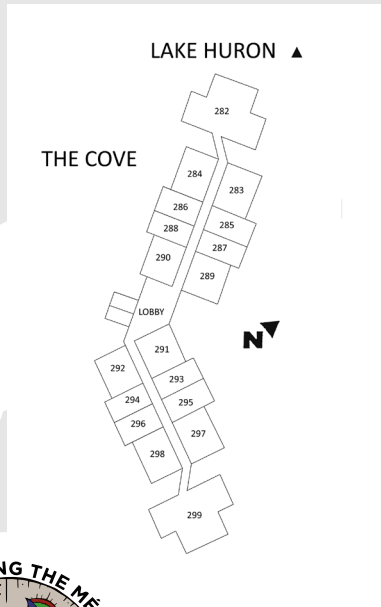
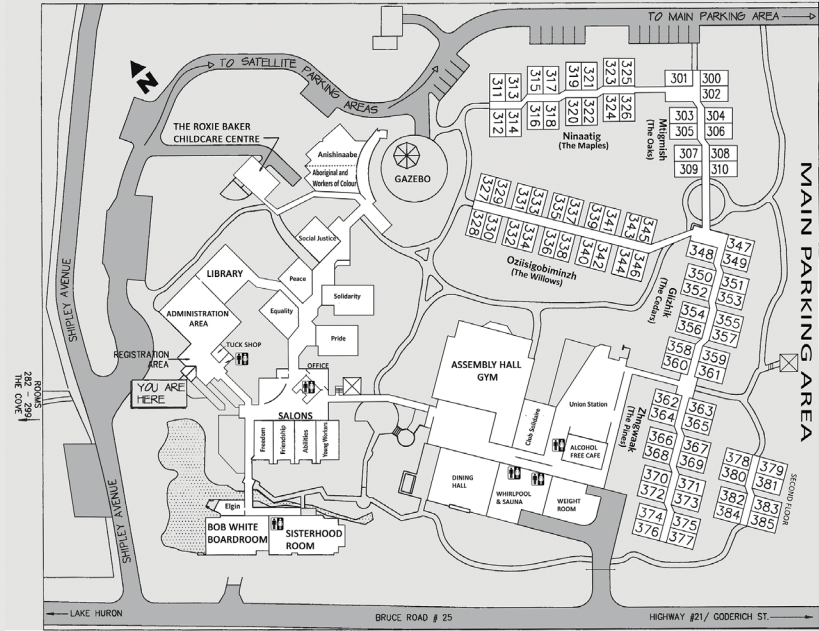
Discovering the Métis: The People of the Sash

June 16 - 18, 2023
Unifor Family Education Centre
Port Elgin, ON



Métis Nation
of Ontario 

Unifor Family Education Centre | Map



2023 Indigenous Conference:
Discovering the Métis:
The People of the Sash



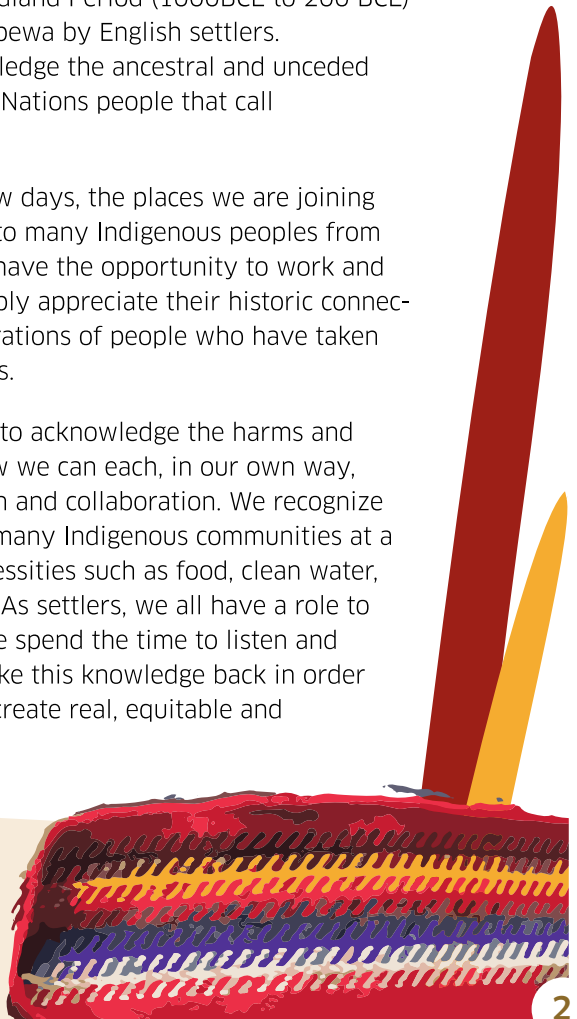
Land and Territorial Acknowledgement

We would like to begin the 2023 OPSEU/SEFPO Indigenous Conference by acknowledging that we are meeting on land that Indigenous peoples have inhabited from the beginning.

Long before today, there have been Indigenous peoples who have been the stewards of this place. While we meet today in Port Elgin, we would like to take a moment to acknowledge the importance of the land. We do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility in improving relationships between nations and to improve our own understanding of local Indigenous peoples and their cultures. In particular, we wish to acknowledge the land on which we gather which is the unceded territory of the Saugeen Nation. Archaeological evidence indicates that the area along the Bruce Peninsula has been populated since the early Woodland Period (1000BCE to 200 BCE) by the Saugeen Ojibway, known as Chippewa by English settlers. From coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations people that call this nation home.

As we gather in person over the next few days, the places we are joining from across the province are still home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work and live on this land. We recognize and deeply appreciate their historic connection to this place and thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land – for thousands of years.

Please join us in a moment of reflection to acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and to consider how we can each, in our own way, move forward in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. We recognize that existing systems continue to leave many Indigenous communities at a disadvantage when accessing basic necessities such as food, clean water, healthcare, employment, and education. As settlers, we all have a role to play in decolonizing structures. While we spend the time to listen and learn during this conference, let us all take this knowledge back in order to develop concrete strategies that will create real, equitable and meaningful change in our communities.



OPSEU/SEFPO

Statement of Respect

Harassment or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated at OPSEU/SEFPO functions.

Whenever OPSEU/SEFPO members gather, we welcome all peoples of the world. We will not accept any unwelcoming words, actions, or behaviours against our union members.

We accord respect to all persons, regardless of age, creed, political affiliation and racialization including and not limited to People of African descent, Black, Caribbean, South Asian, Asian, women, men, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, members of ethno-racial groups, people with disabilities, gays, lesbians, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, and gender diverse persons, Francophones and all persons whose first language is not English.

In our diversity we will build solidarity as union members. If you believe that you are being harassed or discriminated against, contact Kishandra Lewis or Megan Carter for immediate assistance.



Métis Nation
of Ontario



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Message from the OPSEU/SEFPO President and First Vice-President/Treasurer

Welcome to the 3rd Indigenous Circle Conference! Thank you to the Indigenous Circle and the Métis Nation of Ontario for hosting this weekend's long-awaited conference, and thank you to all participants for joining in celebration.

Being Indigenous is being rooted to one's community and culture – cultures that are native to the land we live on. After hundreds of years of colonizers working to eradicate Indigenous communities, there is great power in bearing witness to Indigenous cultures; saying, 'I acknowledge you, I hear you, and I stand with you.'

At OPSEU/SEFPO, we begin each of our events with a Land Acknowledgement and a Statement of Respect to set an intention for all of our interactions with one another. That intention is one of respect, acceptance, and solidarity. When we open our minds to learning about customs, languages and perspectives outside of our own, we are stronger for it; so too are the communities we live in.

To build a stronger, more just Ontario for all workers, no one can be left behind. Our union's goal is to dismantle systemic racism within all our union structures because we recognize that white supremacy is embedded in how we have done things. Just recently, we came together during Convention and won seven equity seats on our executive board. It's not enough, but it's a start.

To win better outcomes for ALL workers, we must organize for high participation in our workplaces and union structures. We must build power in our communities, and we must lead in the fight for access to clean water, justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous women and children, Indigenous rights to self-governance, and reconciliation – those fights are all of ours.

Moving forward in reconciliation and collaboration requires experiences like the one participants will have this weekend: an opportunity to learn, grow, and immerse yourself in the beauty of Indigenous culture. We hope you enjoy and share the knowledge and teachings with your communities and fellow members.

Maarsi. Miigwetch. Thank you.

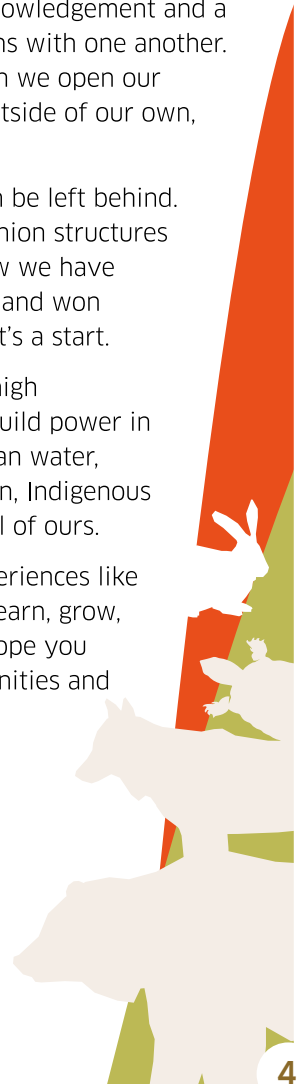
In solidarity,



JP Hornick
OPSEU/SEFPO
President



Laurie Nancekivell
OPSEU/SEFPO
First Vice- President/Treasurer



Message from the OPSEU/SEFPO Indigenous Circle and the OPSEU/SEFPO Indigenous Conference Planning Committee

Welcome to the 2023 OPSEU/SEFPO Indigenous Conference! We are excited to spend the next few days with you as this event has been years in the making. It is also something that many OPSEU/SEFPO members have wanted to take part in for some time! The 2023 conference theme is Discovering the Métis: The People of the Sash. It was chosen as a way of educating people on Métis culture and the Métis people's way of life. In addition, we will also look at addressing and clarifying any common misunderstandings or the lack of knowledge that people may have. This conference is an opportunity for participants to truly discover everything there is to know about Métis people.



We would also like to offer a heartfelt thank you to the Métis Nation Ontario (MNO) for their tremendous support and for the role that they're playing to make this conference a success!

Be prepared to come into the space with an open heart and open mind. We encourage you to ask plenty of questions. Don't be afraid to participate in discussions with the Elders, members of OPSEU/SEFPO's Indigenous Circle and other conference participants.

Remember to have some fun! Métis people love music, art, dance, and laughter, so enjoy this time of learning. Marsii.

In Solidarity,

**OPSEU/SEFPO Indigenous Circle and the OPSEU/SEFPO
Indigenous Conference Planning Committee**



**2023 Indigenous Conference:
Discovering the Métis:
The People of the Sash**



OPSEU/SEFPO Indigenous Conference Goals

The goal is to inspire and equip OPSEU/SEFPO members to partner and work with Indigenous communities during this time of reconciliation. The Conference is being planned with citizens of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO). Participants will be equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively network with Métis members within and beyond OPSEU/SEFPO on various projects and campaigns.



Protocols

The Elder leading the ceremonies during the Conference will announce any protocols. The OPSEU/SEFPO Indigenous Circle recognizes and respects the incredible diversity that exists among Indigenous communities on Turtle Island.



Conference Speakers/Facilitators

(In alphabetical order)



Alicia Blore

Alicia is an award-winning Métis fiddler. Some of her most notable performances include the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention (NAFCO), Cirque de Soleil's production of the Pan Am Games Opening Ceremony in Toronto in 2015, the Governor General's Swearing-in ceremony of Canadian Cabinet in Ottawa in 2021, and the Pope's apology in Quebec City in 2022. Alicia strives to pass down the fiddle traditions of her Indigenous elders and Métis ancestors.

Website: [MétisStrings.ca](https://metisstrings.ca) / **Email:** Metis.strings@gmail.com / <https://linktr.ee/metis.strings>



Elder Leora Couture-Wilson

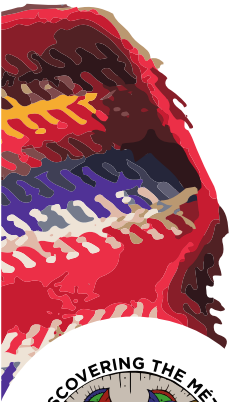
Leora Couture-Wilson was firstborn of four children to Rudy, a commercial fisherman, and Jessie Couture, in Owen Sound in 1938, during the throes of the 2nd world war.

Days of dwindling fish population were tough ones for the Coutures. From age 14 to 16, Leora worked after school, and weekends at Harrison Park Inn, completing 2 years of high school. Upon graduating Grad 10, she worked at Bell Telephone as an operator for two years.

Leora met and married Keith Wilson in 1957. They bought and moved to Keith's family farm at Markdale, where they were blessed with 1 son and 3 daughters. Leora learned to farm, while Keith pursued construction work, taking him around the province.

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Work always found Leora. In the early years, she plucked chickens and turkeys almost annually around Christmas time and took a part time job conducting market surveys. Later, she did stints as a clerk for an antique shop, two grocery stores and a hardware store, before becoming a chiropractic health assistant, where she worked until retiring in the early 2000s. Through the years, Leora and siblings formed and performed as musical groups. And she still plays her autoharp, and enjoys singing in church and choirs.

Around the mid 80's, Leora and her mother began researching Guillaume Couture, who in 1642 served as a layman to the priests at Forte St Marie among the Hurons in Midland. This led to the discovery of her paternal Métis roots. It was noted that Joe Couture, her great grandfather, a "French Canadian fisherman", had been a squatter at Squaw Point, near Leith in the 1850's. Further research proved him to be part of a Métis Community, which had migrated from Drummond Island in 1829, and made their way around the lakes, settling small communities in various locations.

The Couture family eagerly embraced the history, applied for and received their Métis citizenship. Brother Rudy served as president of the Owen Sound Métis Council for some years. Leora was nominated for senator of the Owen Sound Métis community and won. Among achievements were helping produce the community newsletter, and being part of a project that added First Nations and Métis history to the public school curriculum. She retired her Senatorship in 2011, remaining active in the Métis community.

Leora spends as much time as she can in nature, enjoys a large vegetable garden each year, and has always been interested in crafts of all kinds





Teagan de Laronde

Teagan de Laronde (she/her) is a citizen of Red Sky Métis Independent Nation with familial roots from Drummond Island and Penetanguishene. She currently works for the University of Toronto on the 'Relations on the Land' project.

Teagan helps to lead Storytelling tours across Toronto with First Story Toronto, and she also serves on the Indigenous Education Council for George Brown College.

Marjorie Dubeau

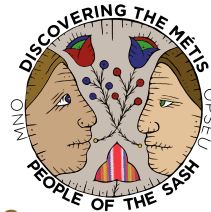


Marjorie Dubeau is a recently retired educator and a proud Métis Citizen. Since retiring, she has enjoyed learning about her forgotten Métis culture, a culture she did not grow up in. Her grandparents passed away at an early age and so her father never knew of his ancestral lineage and ties to Indigenous culture.

During this journey she has attended numerous workshops including language and culture workshops to learn many traditional Indigenous crafts; beading, leather work (moccasins and mittens), drum-making, rain stick making, and fish skin tanning. One workshop has her recording her learning of the forgotten culture, to share with others. Though she is not an expert, she has enjoyed exploring each one and bringing them together to create unique items that represent and celebrate her newly rediscovered culture.

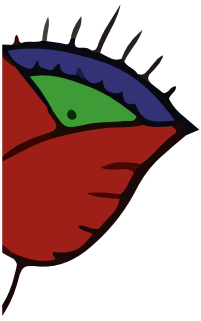
Marj has a small business, where she has created a full line of apparel graphics for Métis people, celebrating its unique language – Michif.

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Marjorie's ancestors, Lisette Milabiki and Louis Lépine, came from Drummond Island in 1828 to Penetanguishene in a bateau, bringing two horses with them. Marj and her family continue to reside in the Penetanguishene area, only a few minutes from where Louis and Lisette settled several generations ago.

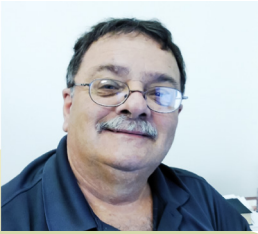
As of April, Marj is working with local genealogy experts to find a missing document for her family and the entire lineage of Louis and Lisette to be re-established, as the Louis Lepine lineage documentation has been recently considered incomplete.

Marj believes that when we learn something we should share that knowledge with others. She hopes that you enjoy learning to bead.

Sharon Isaac

Sharon Isaac (Anishinaabe Kwe (Ojibway) filmmaker/storyteller/ and writer from Saugeen First Nation. Currently I am employed at M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre as an Indigenous Cultural Facilitator. I work towards restoring lost cultural knowledge while actively engaging in crafts such as beading, sewing, moccasins and mukluks, and puppetry. I enjoy speaking to young children, adults, elders, and groups of people about my Ojibwa heritage.





René Laurin

René Laurin was born in Lafontaine and now resides in Penetanguishene. He is a Franco-Ontario Métis from the Dusome Clermont Verified Family Line with the 1828 migration from Drummond Island. René has a Bachelor of Aboriginal Education from Brock University (2005) and is presently a Métis Languages Specialist with the Métis Nation of Ontario.



Hawk Mason

Hawk Mason is an Oji-Cree/Mohawk multi-instrumentalist. In addition to his musical pursuits, Hawk is the manager of Mino Bimaadiziwin, an artist-led market in the heart of Toronto.



Michael Smith

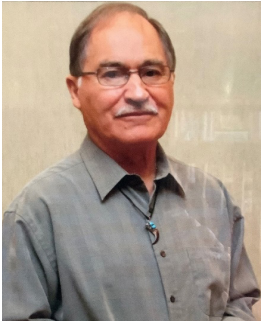
Michael Smith has worked for the Métis Nation of Ontario since 2016 in a variety of roles and currently serves as a Bilingual Post-Secondary Education Officer. Michael is an MNO citizen who was born and raised in the Penetanguishene/Midland area and now lives with his wife and daughter in nearby Chatsworth.



Megan Southwell

Raised in Hampton, Ontario, Megan Southwell is Métis with historic roots from Drummond Island and Penetanguishene. She is a graduate of the University of Toronto and continues to reside on Dish with One Spoon and Treaty 13 territory. Megan has a passion for learning about her culture and history and sharing it with others through Métis jigging, decorative arts, and engaging in conversation. The youth movement that contributes to the resurgence of Métis culture continues to be a source of strength for Megan.





Elder Roland St. Germain

Elder Roland St. Germain comes from a large Métis family and grew up along the banks of the Red River in Manitoba. Roland is Eagle Clan and his spirit name is Giiwaadin Nodin (North Wind).

As a young man, Roland worked across Canada in the bush, factories, mines, and railroads. A mature student at Seneca College, he graduated from Municipal Administration and worked over 27 years with the Ontario government.

An Honorary Senator, serving on the governing body, he advised on MNO's Conflict Resolution Team, the Infinite Reach Mentor program and conducted a Sentencing Circle in Ottawa. His portfolios included alternative justice, violence against women, youth, education, healing and wellness, scholarships, and bursaries.

He served many years as a visiting elder at Georgian College and currently sits on the Council of Knowledge Holders for the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (MWMO).

Roland enjoys working with youth and sharing his knowledge of Métis issues, history, and culture. He and his best friend Jane married in 1964 and reside in Owen Sound. He is proud father of Marc and Jennifer, and "Bumpa" to beautiful granddaughters Hanna Lily and Autumn Rose.



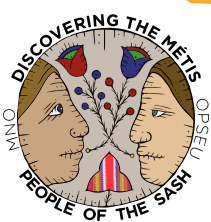
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Morgan Turcotte

Morgan Turcotte is a Métis woman with her heritage coming primarily from the Stoqua, (De)laronde, and Sauvage family lines. She has connections to the Mattawa/Ottawa, Georgian Bay and Ste Sault Marie Historic Métis Communities, as well as the Red River. Morgan is the proud owner of a small business called Beaded Roots and has worked and volunteered with the Métis Nation of Ontario in different capacities over the last few years. Morgan has been a part of the Summer Youth Program team for the past 4 years throughout the summers, has been an Infinite Reach Facilitator and has sat as Youth Representative on a community council. Morgan has recently completed her Honours Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies from Trent University, where she also worked as an Ishkodehwin Peer Mentor. She will be continuing her education in the fall at Algonquin College for Community and Justice Services.

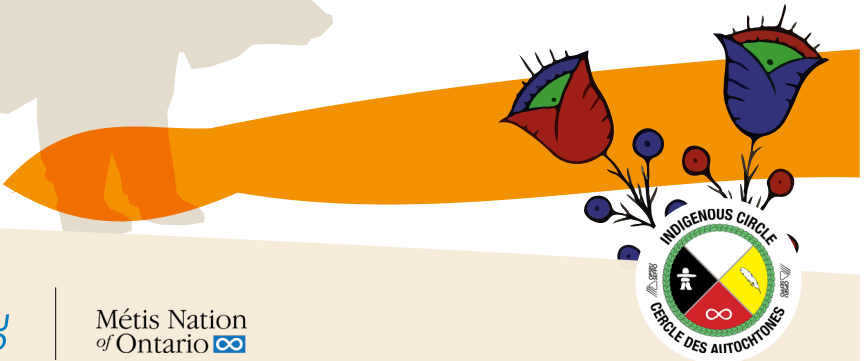
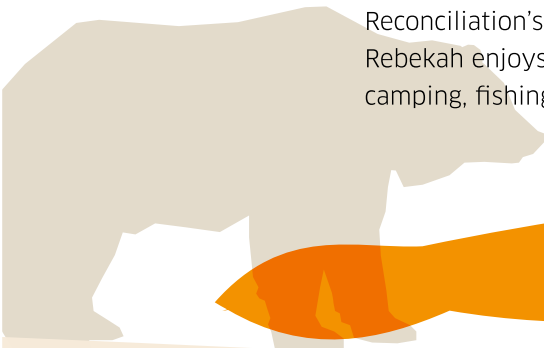
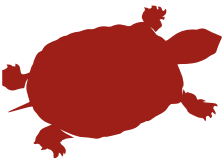


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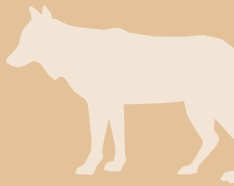


Rebekah Wilson

Rebekah Wilson is a proud citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario, with roots in Drummond Island and the Georgian Bay region of Ontario (Penetanguishene). Rebekah began her career managing and implementing an Indigenous youth sport for development program, supporting First Nation, Métis, and Inuit youth to realize their potential through sport leadership. Rebekah has also worked in negotiations between First Nations and Municipal communities on solid waste management and spent some time in the recruitment industry, helping to match organizations with skilled Indigenous leaders to fill managerial and executive level positions. Rebekah now works with the Nuclear Waste Management Organization in the Indigenous Relations department. In this role, Rebekah works with an independent advisory body to the organization comprised of First Nation and Métis elders and youth who provide advice and guidance on Reconciliation and Indigenous Knowledge work. Rebekah also co-develops and co-delivers training to fellow employees on Reconciliation to help their colleagues foster positive relationships with Indigenous communities across Canada. Additionally, Rebekah leads the review of corporate governance using a Reconciliation lens in response to the Truth and Reconciliation's Call to Action # 92. In her spare time, Rebekah enjoys writing, reading, beadwork, painting, camping, fishing and spending time with family.

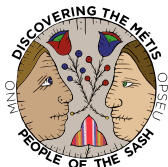


Métis Nation
of Ontario 

Conference Agenda

	FRIDAY JUNE 16	SATURDAY JUNE 17	SUNDAY JUNE 18
7:30 to 9:00 AM		Breakfast (provided)	Breakfast (provided)
9:00 to 10:30 AM		Métis History and Stories	*Workshop IV
10:30 to 10:45 AM		Break	Break
10:45 to 12:15 PM		*Workshop I	Sharing Circles Closing Ceremony
12:15 to 1:30 PM		Lunch (provided)	Depart (box lunch provided)
1:30 to 2:45 PM		*Workshop II	 
2:45 to 3:00 PM		Break	
3:00 to 4:15 PM		*Workshop III	
4:15 to 5:00 PM		Break (time to visit vendors)	
5:30 to 7:00 PM	Registration (Dinner provided at the centre)	Dinner (provided)	
7:00 to 9:00 pm	<p>Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Opening Remarks from OPSEU/SEFPO First Vice-President/Treasurer Laurie Nancekivell</p> <p>Presentation from the Métis Nation of Ontario</p> <p>Métis traditional Music and Dancing</p> 	<p>Story Telling and performance by the Toronto Métis Jiggers</p>	

*Workshops include Finger weaving, Michif language, Beading and Jigging



Childcare Service Hours
 Friday 5:00PM - 9:30PM
 Saturday 8:30AM - 5PM & 7PM - 9PM
 (parents take kids to dinner)
 Sunday 8:30AM - 12PM

