

# BOARDS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## STORIES FROM YOUR COMMUNITIES

## THE CANOE OF HOPE

Contributor:

**Candace Spillbury**

*Chair*

Aboriginal Education Committee

The following poem was written by Talia Peters, a Grade 11 student at Belmont Secondary School in Langford, BC, which is a part of the Sooke School District. Last year, while in Ms. Davis' English class, she was inspired during a visit by Elder Henry Chipps from the Scia'new Nation.

Elder Chipps shared a story book with Talia's class and planted a seed of inspiration in her. Her poem is about a little girl who leaves her home to go to residential school and how her father made her a tiny canoe necklace so that she would not lose hope.

*The Canoe of Hope* won the BCTELA Student Writing Journal Contest. Talia will be reading her poem to a group of English educators from throughout British Columbia next month.

Elder Chipps visits Belmont Secondary School once a week. He stops by various classrooms during his time or can be found having a discussion over coffee with staff and students. We are lucky to have Elder Chipps in our school community.

Watch out for a feature article regarding a personal account of experiences in a residential schools in the next issue of *The Education Leader*.

### The Canoe of Hope

By Talia Peters

Born 7 pounds 3 ounces, a necklace lay on my neck  
forever.

Dad made me a canoe, put it on a chain,  
Something that will carry my memories, look cool,  
and give me lots of hope. But for one day I will dread,  
not speaking to my sis, silent for a year,  
hard labour in a farm everyday, small meals,

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL,

I hold my chain tight, hoping to see my family once  
again,

I sleep every night, however, there is a beacon of  
hope around my neck.



Talia Peters with Elder Henry Chipps. *Photo credit: Natasha Burke, Aboriginal Literacy Teacher, Belmont Secondary School*