



Final Report:  
First Story App Youth Video Project

With kind support from The History Education Network, the First Story Toronto program at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto was able to host an 8-week summer project that provided the opportunity for four Indigenous youth living in Toronto to engage in learning about Toronto's Indigenous history and to contribute to our collaborative community project, the First Story App.

The four youth participants each independently created videos to be featured on the First Story App and its accompanying blog website. Their task was to share stories relevant to the history of Indigenous communities in the region through creative and engaging video storytelling.

The participants were given creative control in the format and style of their video, resulting in four unique projects.

Before the videos were uploaded to the First Story App and website they were first launched at a presentation event for family and friends, however this was also advertised through social media welcoming everyone to attend the presentation.

The poster is for a 'VIDEO LAUNCH PRESENTATION' on August 29, 2014, from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM. It features the 'First Story' logo and a list of featured videos by Bella McWatch, Joseph Harper, Samuel Kloetstra, and Michael Keshane. The event is held at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto (16 Spadina Road, 416-964-9087). Logos for 'THE HISTORY EDUCATION NETWORK' and 'THEN HER' are also present. The text 'FREE Event All are Welcome!' is at the bottom left, and 'FEATURING' is written vertically on the left side.

The video launch was scheduled on August 29, 2014, in the Talking Room at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. Approximately 40 people were in attendance to support the youth in presenting their work. Although scheduled for just one hour, the session lasted for almost two hours with the interactive reception. The event consisted of a presentation to introduce the work of the First Story App by the project's coordinator and was followed by the video launch. Each youth introduced themselves and their video to the audience, speaking on their experience in the project.



There was also a feast prepared for this gathering, and several audience members stayed after the video screenings to enjoy the food and praise the participants for their excellent work. The feedback from the audience was extraordinary, including comments such as getting chills from listening to the youth's introductory speeches about the importance of their video content, and questions about how to replicate the project for other Indigenous youth groups in the city.



The four new videos created for the First Story App are:

*High Park* by **Bella McWatch**:

Explore Toronto's High Park and learn about Indigenous peoples' contribution to preserving the park's rare black oak savannah ecosystem. [View here](#)

*Parsons Site* by **Samuel Kloetstra**:

Learn about the Parsons Site, an archaeological site revealing a 15<sup>th</sup>-century Huron-Wendat settlement. [View here](#)

*Wandering Spirit Survival School* by **Joseph Harper**:

Elder Pauline Shirt tells her story of opening the Wandering Spirit Survival School in the 1970s, which continues to be an important school in Toronto today, currently known as First Nations School.

[View here](#)

*Each Standing in the Other's Light* by **Michael Roderick Keshane**:

A conversation with Laureen "Blu" Waters, a traditional counselor living in Toronto, on local community history and the importance of passing on traditions. [View here](#)

After the video launch, these videos were uploaded on the First Story app, a free mobile application mapping the Indigenous history of Toronto. They are also featured on the [First Story Blog](#) for those who are unable to access the phone app.

Since the First Story App was created in 2012, it has gained wide recognition across the city as a unique educational tool that spreads awareness of rarely known stories encompassing an 11, 000 year presence of Indigenous communities in the region. The First Story Toronto project is managed by a volunteer committee of both community and academic leaders who work together to share the work of the app through delivering numerous presentations within the Toronto region. These new videos will be included as presentation tools for the First Story App to audiences at universities, grade schools, special events, workshops, and local community festivals and meetings.

We consider this project a success as the participants took advantage of an opportunity to strengthen skills in developing community and professional relationships, and an opportunity to contribute to a community project and have their work digitally published. The grant from The History Education Network provided a summer employment opportunity for the youth, supporting their time committed to reviewing historical resources, project planning, and artistic creation. The valuable experiences gained between the four participants included spending time with and learning from Elders, conducting research with help from University of Toronto staff, exploring City of Toronto and Native Canadian Centre of Toronto archive materials, and public speaking.

Chi Miigwetch/Thank you to The History Education Network Small Projects Grant for the ability to implement this impactful youth project at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto.