

TARRALIK

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Ivakkak 2025
Memories from the Dog Slaughter
Nunavik Treaty Self-Determination Simulation



Makivvik

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Tarralik

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Cover Photo: Preparing meat for the dogs at a stop during this year's Ivakkak race.
Photo by Lucasi Kiatainaq/Makivvik



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Louisa Cookie-Brown speaking in 2024
at a translator's conference in Montreal.

"It Was Like Burning Our Culture"

In Kangiqsujuaq on November 23, 2024, the long-awaited federal apology for the Nunavik dog slaughter was delivered. Following that event, *Tarralik* reached out to elder Louisa Cookie-Brown to ask about her memories of what life was like before, during, and after the horrendous killing of her family's sled dogs. What follows is a condensed and edited (for space and clarity) version of that discussion.

Please note that this interview contains potentially upsetting and distressing content, which could evoke traumatic memories and/or strong negative emotions

Interview with
Louisa Cookie-Brown,
who spoke from
Kuujjuarapik
on April 8, 2025

Tarralik: Could you share what life was like before the RCMP came and the dog slaughter began?

Louisa Cookie-Brown: Before the government came, we lived in the Richmond Gulf area. There was plenty of food, mostly seal, fish, some caribou. We travelled by dog team between seasonal camps. My parents, like many others, lived off the land. I was born on one of those journeys, before they even reached their summer camp. We were self-sufficient. Sealskins were traded through Kuujjuarapik where the RCMP were already set up by the 1950s. Eventually, we were told everyone had to register and move into the community. Many resisted, including my family, but there wasn't really a choice. We moved when I was about four.

Tarralik: When did the dog slaughter happen?

Louisa: In Kuujjuarapik, it was in 1963. I was 13, going on 14. My father had come back from seal hunting and was exhausted. He asked me to feed the dogs. We had 14. I remember hearing gunshots, so I rushed to get the dogs tied up. I saw a white man coming toward us with a gun. I didn't speak English then and I only knew one word: "Finished." I stood in front of him and said it, trying to protect the dogs. He ignored me. He pushed me down. I got up. I was yelling "no" in Inuktitut. He pushed me again, harder, and I hurt my side. My throat went dry. I couldn't cry; I was in shock. He shot every single dog, even the lead dog I was trying to protect.

I stumbled back into the house. My dad was under the blankets. He couldn't move. I didn't even know if he was alive. I told him the dogs were all shot. We had named each one of them, and I started calling out the dogs' names. My mother told me to stop. Then I went outside to make sure none of them were suffering. I saw other families' dogs were shot too. My uncle tried to drag his away to the shoreline, not wanting them killed near their huts. They were all shot as well. For days, we were silent. We didn't know how we would survive.

That's when everything changed. We entered into a system we didn't understand. Kids were taken to school. Parents lost their roles and people started drinking. My father was in bed for days, completely depressed. So, I wrote the names of each of our dogs on paper in Inuktitut. I told my dad, "Let's bury them." That helped him start to move again.

Tarralik: You buried the names of the dogs?

Louisa: Yes. We went to the burial ground and placed the paper. We said goodbye. I told him, "We'll never have dog teams again. Life has changed." After that, he left. He said, "I cannot be here. I'm going to the land." He signed up as a ranger and was gone for months. My mom raised the children alone.

Tarralik: Did you cry after the dogs were killed?

Louisa: Not right away. I was numb. But one day, my mom told me to get the harnesses. We undid the stitches, and she made a gun case from them. As we worked, I heard her softly

crying and humming. I hugged her and that's when we both finally cried. It was the first time.

Tarralik: What happened to all the dogs?

Louisa: They were taken down to the shore and burned. There were hundreds of them. It stunk. The day when they had to gather all dogs to burn them, it was like burning all our culture, and people wonder why we are so hurt. Afterward, we saw drinking, fighting, and violence in our community, things we had never seen on the land. Religion came too, telling us we were bad people. We had always seen ourselves as strong, capable, and spiritual. That was taken from us. We started seeing jealousy, gambling and abuse. It was a dark time.

Tarralik: You were at the apology in November. Did that do anything positive for you?

Louisa: It wasn't closure, but it helped me let go of things; my dad and the dogs. The apology helped bring some understanding,

Dog Team going to North Point, photo taken in 1957.





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Dog team resting in the snow, photo taken between 1910 and 1922.

but the pain stays. Each dog had its own role, like people do. We had dogs that could sense danger, some that were leaders in storms, others were workers. Some were trained to fight off wolves and polar bears. They were not just animals. I trained and fed them. They looked up to me.

Tarralik: What would you like young Inuit to know about what happened and how people moved forward?

Louisa: Dog teams kept us alive. Even having one or two dogs meant people had help to carry things. Now with Ivakkak races, I see the dogs, but they're different. These are racing dogs, not working dogs like we had. But I'm glad the tradition is coming back in some form. When you go on the land with a dog team, it's peaceful. There are no engine sounds, just the breathing of the dogs. It connects you to the earth.

We'll never live like we did again, but we can remember. The huskies we had were strong, smart. Now, the dogs are smaller, and mixed. Back then, we were allowed one as a pet. The rest were working dogs. We'd carry the puppies on our backs, play with them and protect them.

Tarralik: What do you think needs to happen further to help with reconciliation and healing?

Louisa: Money isn't healing. It's gone fast. Real healing comes from talking, verbalizing what we went through. Each community should be given a full week to let go, to talk about the past. When I spoke in front of the government in Kangiqsujuaq [as part of the apology event], it was just the beginning. We need more spaces like that. We've been carrying this alone for too long.

Tarralik: Do you feel like you've healed?

Louisa: Not fully. I've let go of some things by speaking about them. But I wish we had those healing sessions soon after it happened when it was still fresh. Now, it's incomplete. We were just kids. And those who lost their dogs, many still haven't spoken. Men especially hold it inside. Letting go, even a little, is like breaking the chain that holds you.

Tarralik: You work a lot with youth. Do you see hope there?

Louisa: Yes, there are young people who want to learn. They're interested in racing and raising dogs again. But they need to know that it's hard work. It's a full-time commitment. It's not just for the winter. Dogs need care year-round.



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Men finishing loading their qamutik near Kuujjuarapik, photo taken between 1902 and 1904.



© BILL APPLEWHITE, AVATQ CULTURAL INSTITUTE ARCHIVES

A winter camp, near Kuujjuarapik, photo taken during the 1950s.



© CHESTERFIELD, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Igloo and dogs laying on the snow near Kuujjuarapik, photo taken between 1902 and 1904.

Tarralik: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Louisa: There are still people who've never spoken about what happened. One elder lost her dogs while gathering wood across the river. The RCMP found her there and shot the dogs, leaving her. She was so in shock she couldn't speak for days. My mother and I visited her after she made her way home. She wasn't really seeing us, just looking through us. Eventually she shared her story. But many others haven't.

One thing I forgot to say: when I stood in front of the man (trying to protect the lead dog of her family's dog team) the second time, the bullet he shot made a hole in my jacket. He came that close to shooting me. I didn't even know until that night when I was removing my clothing and I realized, "oh, I almost got shot." I think God kept me safe.

Tarralik: Thank you, Louisa.

Louisa: Thank you for listening. We're still healing. But we're survivors. And we remember.

Tarralik would like to feature other elders' memories of the dog slaughter that was perpetrated in Nunavik. Please reach out to us at magazine@makivik.ca. ✨

Workshop Offers Marketing Tools to Artists

Peta Tayara has been selling her artwork since 1999. But after attending a workshop in Salluit this past January, she realized she had been underpricing her work for years.



Peta Tayara and Lynn Feasey.

© LYNN FEASEY X 3

Peta was one of 18 artists who took part in *The Wayfinding Sessions*, a three-day artist development program created by Lynn Feasey of Points North Creative Inc. Designed to empower artists both personally and professionally, the workshop welcomed creators of all experience levels.

Feasey co-facilitated the sessions with artist and educator Ulaayu Pilurtuut, who brought her experience as a practicing artist. Ulaayu also translated throughout the workshop, ensuring that every participant could engage fully and feel supported.

The initiative was organized by Lynn Moorhouse and Nancy White of Makivik, as part of an ongoing effort to uplift and equip Nunavik artists with the tools they need to thrive. Moorhouse said she connected with facilitators while attending the Great Northern Arts Festival in Inuvik last year.

Through a mix of presentations, hands-on activities, and role-playing, the workshop helped participants reflect on why they make art and how to align their business approach with their values and goals while still maintaining a sustainable practice.

For Peta, it was her first experience with a workshop like this and she found it incredibly valuable for both new and mid-career artists. In addition to learning how to price her work more accurately, she appreciated the opportunity to meet other artists and see their work. In the future, she hopes to explore more about different media and materials.

Feasey offered one key takeaway for Nunavik artists: “It’s important to always remember why you make your art. It could be for joy, cultural pride, peace, health, or income. Whatever your reason, create and sell your work in a way that honours that—and don’t let anyone tell you what to make.” ♦

It’s important to always remember why you make your art. It could be for joy, cultural pride, peace, health, or income. Whatever your reason, create and sell your work in a way that honours that—and don’t let anyone tell you what to make.

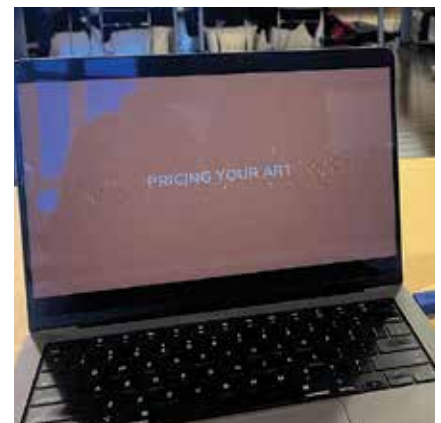


“We wanted to bring back a workshop that gives artists the skills to better understand pricing and how to market their work,” said Moorhouse.

This session in Salluit marked the second in the series, following a similar event in Kuujuaq last November. Moorhouse noted that future workshops are in the works, including one in September, with locations depending largely on hotel availability, as artists are flown into the host communities.

Lynn Feasey highlighted the unique challenges faced by Northern artists when trying to build a sustainable art practice.

“Many work in isolation, often without adequate space, materials, or opportunities to sell their work,” she said. “There’s also a gap in foundational business knowledge—especially around pricing, which is one of the most common and difficult hurdles. Too often, artists aren’t making enough profit—or any at all.”



NUNAAPIVUT

A short film from Secondary students at Jaanimmarik School in Kuujjuaq

From the 8th to the 15th of November, 2024, we, Secondary 5 students from the Jaanimmarik School in Kuujjuaq, got the opportunity as a team of 21 students to create a short film, with the Nuna Research Program. In just a few days we put all our ideas together to create a beautiful film about “nuna.” We decided to take a bit of everyone’s ideas and created a video about what our land means to us. We shared our experiences on the land, and our relationships with it.

Our movie starts with the meaning of our town’s name, Kuujjuaq. Because we are far from the sea we have to go far to harvest. In other communities the caribou access is easier, but as we are on the tree line and the tundra is pretty far, it is hard to access the caribou by snowmobile or by boat. The river’s current is very strong regardless of whether the tide is high or low.

We took videos and pictures of the town and landscapes outside of town, and also added a bunch of hunting and berry picking photos we already had. We filmed ptarmigan, beluga,



Submitted Photo



Submitted Photo

caribou, and geese hunting. We also showed some wheelies having fun with snowmobile. We recorded the ice, snow, and wind in the trees and water. We also got permission to use the beluga sounds from the Anguvigaq team and local artist Etua Snowball allowed us to use his song *Piqatiga* in our film. We interviewed an elder and the Secondary Inuktitut teacher. We questioned the elder about her memories of the land, including her time berry picking. The movie also includes the recipe for *suvalik*.

Nunaapivut



Screenshot from the film.

Everyone participated and had their own role in this film. Some of us filmed, some of us recorded the music and ambient sounds, and some of us helped edit and translate the interviews. In addition, we created a short video, “Behind the scenes,” about the making of this short film.

What we wanted to show in our film is that the land is beautiful, hunting is beautiful. We also wanted to share where we go hunting and why the land is very important to us. We don’t kill animals for fun.

To conclude, this workshop was a lot of work but also lots of fun.



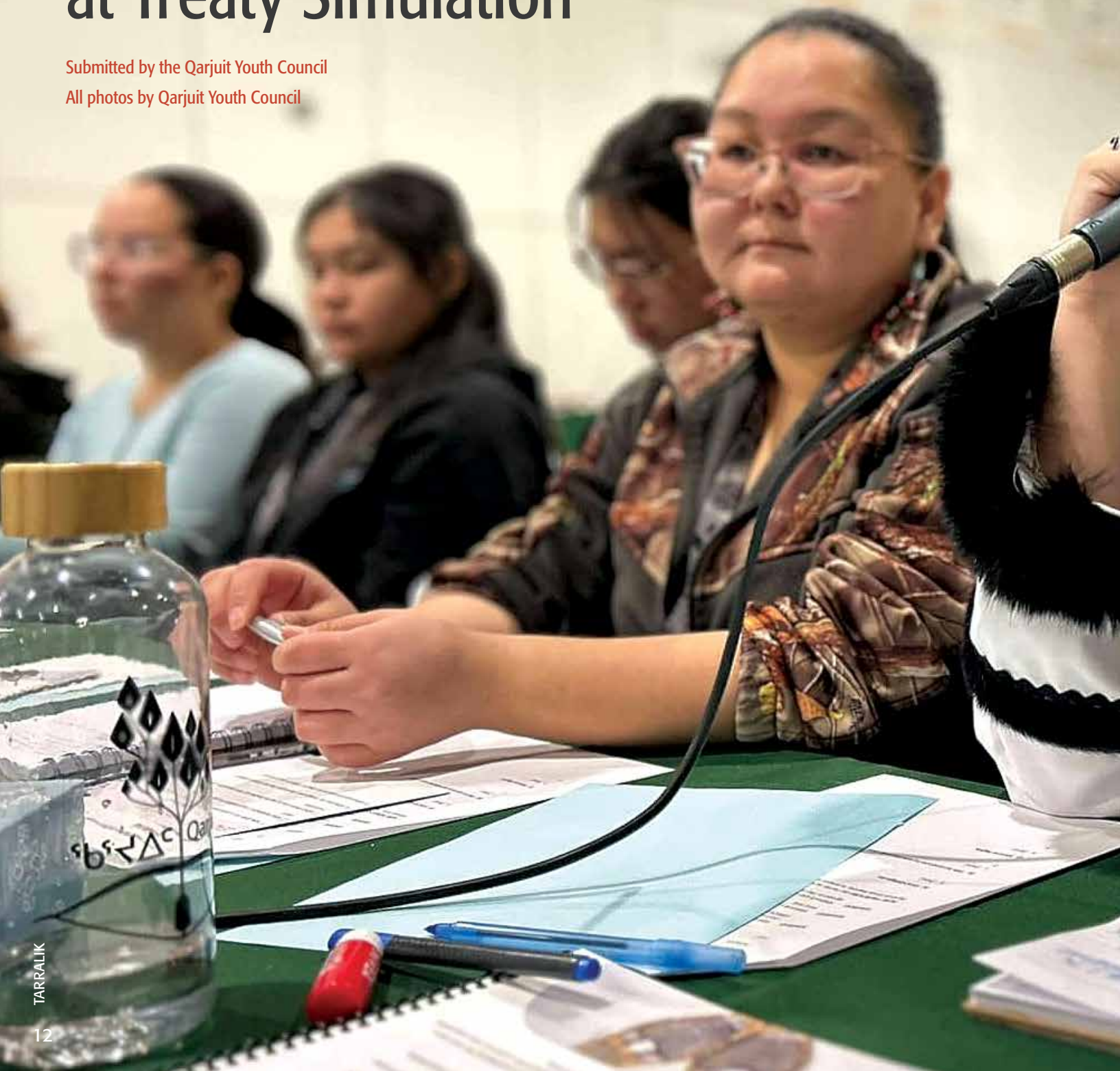
Submitted Photo

The Nuna research program (F. Joliet, L. Chanteloup, Th. Herrmann) is part of the OHMi Nunavik initiative, aimed at supporting the visual and narrative sovereignty of young Nunavimmiut. The program has organized several video workshops in various schools across Nunavik, allowing young people to share their visions and aspirations for their territory. All films produced during these workshops are returned to the schools and given to each young participant, enabling them to be exchanged and creating a portrait of contemporary Nunavik. This year, the research team (F. Joliet, L. Chanteloup, V. Antomarchi, K. Henchoz-Manita) was in Kuujuaq and received strong support from Jaanimmarik school in executing this project (J. Blais, D. Rooney, G. Koiter). ♦

Inukjuak 2025: Inuit Youth Step into Leadership at Treaty Simulation

Submitted by the Qarjuit Youth Council

All photos by Qarjuit Youth Council





From January 27 to 29, 2025, Inukjuak came alive with the energy of young Inuit leaders ready to dive into a topic that hits close to home—self-determination and land rights. The Nunavik Treaty Self-Determination Simulation brought together youth from across the region to learn, collaborate, and imagine the future of Inuit governance.

Organized by the Qarjuit Youth Council, Makivik, and the Gordon Foundation, the event focused on the land regime—a complex but crucial part of Inuit self-determination. It was more than just workshops and meetings—it was about reclaiming knowledge, amplifying voices, and empowering youth to lead.

A Powerful Start

The event began with an inspiring opening prayer led by Elder Louisa Cookie-Brown, grounding everyone in Inuit values and the spirit of self-determination. Following this powerful moment, the youth heard from Peter Inukpuk, one of the original signatories of the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)* and the current mayor of Inukjuak. His reflections on the negotiation process that shaped the *JBNQA* gave youth a firsthand look into the history of treaty-making in Nunavik.





Learning the Ropes

Over three days, participants took part in interactive workshops and training sessions with experienced advisors, who guided them through real-world negotiation tactics. These sessions helped youth understand how to think critically, communicate strategically, and navigate complex political conversations—skills that are essential for the next generation of Inuit leaders.

Together, they explored key topics like:

- The deep meaning of land to Inuit identity
- The ongoing impacts of colonization
- The legal and cultural intricacies of the *JBNQA*

Land, Climate & Responsibility

A powerful theme emerged: our land is our future. Youth spoke openly about how climate change, resource extraction,

and development are affecting their communities. They called for stronger Inuit-led environmental stewardship and emphasized the need to balance economic interests with respect for the land and future generations.

The Negotiation Simulation

The highlight of the event was the mock negotiation simulation—a dynamic, role-play scenario between representatives of the Quebec government and the Inuit. Youth were divided into teams and, with the guidance of advisors, stepped into the roles of negotiators on both sides.

They applied their newly learned skills to debate, strategize, and collaborate—mimicking real treaty negotiations and experiencing the pressure and complexity of defending their communities' rights.





Before the simulation began, youth led a cultural welcome through traditional throat singing and drum dancing, grounding the exercise in Inuit values and respect for the land. While the simulation didn't end with a final agreement, it offered something just as valuable: a real sense of what's at stake—and what it takes—to move self-determination forward.

Looking Back—and Ahead

As the event wrapped up, participants gathered in a closing circle to reflect on what they had learned. Many shared feelings of empowerment, connection, and excitement for the future. They also offered suggestions for the next event—like including more outdoor time to strengthen the connection between land and learning.

The Journey Continues

This simulation was just the beginning. The Qarjuit Youth Council is already planning the next event, focused on a new theme aligned with Nunavik's long-term goals for self-determination.

To every young Inuit voice out there: we see you, we hear you, and your time is now.

Stay involved. Stay proud. The future is in your hands.

More is coming—stay tuned! •



Charlie Angnatuk Wins 2025 Ivakkak Dogsled Race

All photos by Lucasi Kiatainaq/Makivvik



Charlie Angnatuk and partner Zachariah Saunders, both from Tasiujaq, won the 2025 Ivakkak dogsled race with a total race time of 26 hours and 23 minutes. The race covered 328 kilometres, beginning in Kangiqsualujjuaq on February 26 and ending in the winners' hometown on March 6.

Angnatuk's team finished just 14 minutes ahead of fellow Tasiujaq racers Willie Cain Jr. and Tamisa Saunders. Although Cain Jr.'s team arrived first on the final day, Angnatuk and Saunders had a faster overall time. Jean-Marie Beaulne and Jackusi Amamatuak of Puvirnituk placed third, finishing in 27 hours and 45 minutes.

The race was originally scheduled to begin on February 24 but was delayed two days due to poor weather. "The original date was supposed to be February 24. But because of the weather conditions, we delayed it to February 26," said Lynn Moorhouse, Socio-Economic Development Manager at Makivik and lead organizer for the Ivakkak race.

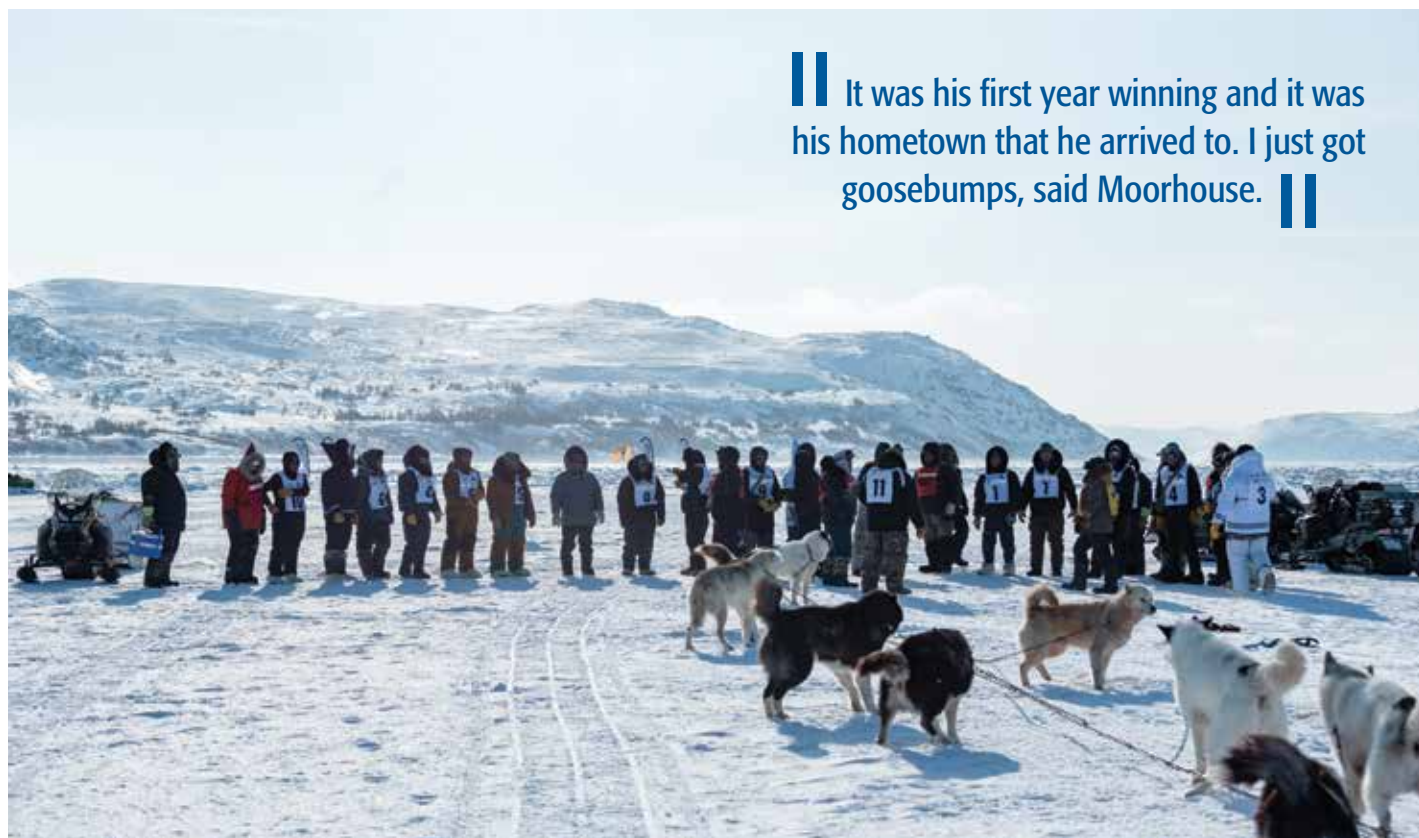
Conditions throughout the race were difficult. Teams faced temperatures around -30°C , whiteout conditions, and challenging terrain between George River and Kuujjuaq. "One of the days where they were just getting ready to start the race, they said we had white out conditions, kind of like a blizzard. So, they had to unpack everything again," said Moorhouse.



Trail grooming was required this year, something not always necessary, she said noting that in 2024 they only had to evaluate ice conditions and did not need to take additional measures.

The 2025 Ivakkak crew members were hired from six communities: Quaqtaq, Tasiujaq, Aupaluk, Kuujjuaq, Kangiqsualujjuaq and Kangiqsujaq. The race veterinarian also flew in from Quebec City. The route between Kangiqsualujjuaq and Kuujjuaq includes steep climbs and forested sections. "Because of the trail conditions, and the mountain, the climbing of the mountains, we had to hire extra crew to carry equipment," Moorhouse said.

|| It was his first year winning and it was his hometown that he arrived to. I just got goosebumps, said Moorhouse. ||



Teams travelled in pairs again this year, a decision made by the mushers. "This year it was good that they were in teams because of the trail, the trees, and ups and downs," said Moorhouse.

Eleven teams participated, although 16 originally registered. Some teams decided that they were not ready and some teams encountered challenges with their dogs.

Each community along the route welcomed the teams with a feast, including a two-day stop in Kuujuaq to allow dogs to rest. "They're always excited for the teams to arrive. They get hyped up," said Moorhouse.

This was Angnatuk's first time winning the Ivakkak race. "It was his first year winning and it was his hometown that he arrived to. I just got goosebumps," said Moorhouse.

This year's prize pool saw more than \$187,000 distributed to participants, in addition to airline tickets donated by Air Inuit and Canadian North, as well as other monies and airline tickets awarded to Rookie of the Year (Kyle Aitchison), Sportsmanship Award (Itsaja Angnatuk), and the Traditional Showcase Award (Kului Tukalak). FCNQ also donated generous gift certificates to this year's winning team.

Final planning for the 2026 Ivakkak race will begin after Makiwik's board of directors meet in the fall.

Anyone interested in participating as a musher or support staff is encouraged to contact Lynn Moorhouse directly lmoorhouse@makiwik.ca or Nancy White at nwhite@makiwik.ca. ♦





The Ronald Ningiuruvik Turner Memorial Award for Rookie of the Year was given to Kyle Aitchison.



The Adamie Inukpuk Memorial Award for Sportsmanship was won by Itsaja Angnatuk.





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Makivvik would like to recognize the invaluable assistance of the 2025 Ivakkak race sponsors, shown here.



Nunavik Inuit Perform Well at Avannaar Games

All photos courtesy of Avannaar Arctic Games

Christopher Angatookalook says the inaugural Avannaar Arctic Games was the experience of a lifetime.



"I fell in love with the people, the place, and the general welcome from everyone in the host town of Ilulissat," the 29-year-old says. He proudly represented Nunavik, participating in most of the events, and brought home a very impressive honour.

"I brought home a silver medal in Kneel Jump, a bronze medal in One Foot, but I am most proud of bringing back the recognition of being awarded the title of Fair Play in my division," he says.

Christopher was one of 14 Nunavik athletes who travelled to Greenland for the inaugural event that ran February 8-13 and are set to be held every two years going forward. In addition to a cultural component, almost 70 athletes descended on the town that has a population of about 5,000. Unlike the Arctic Winter Games, which includes athletes from all Canadian northern regions, the Avannaa Games included exclusively Inuit competitors from Nunavik, Nunavut, Alaska, and Greenland.

Christopher says there were also differences in that the Avannaa event was focused on traditional games instead of the broader spectrum of athletic sports, and there were differences in the lodging, the food, and the connection with local people.

"We had a hotel room with one roommate instead of being in a classroom with other athletes. We were able to shower in peace, and we had comfortable beds. Avannaa hired locals to prepare meals. We had incredibly tasty and filling food," he says, joking that he still dreams about the mattak stew!





"Since the Avannaa Games will be exclusively in Ilulisaat, I noticed the locals were much more receptive and open to communication with the athletes. With the Arctic Winter Games, each event is hosted in a different location, both the sport being played and AWG as a whole. We interact with others in our sport, or our team competing in another venue, but we hardly get the chance to speak with the locals."

Willis Tagoona is Makivik's Sports and Youth Initiative Coordinator. He says the Nunavik team was comprised of delegates ranging in age from 15 to early 30s. Each team was allowed to bring four junior athletes (17 and under) and 12 open class athletes (18 and older). It was a fairly quick turnaround in terms of choosing the athletes and travelling, but he agrees with Christopher about the experience, along with the topnotch accommodations and food.

"We were all fed by elders, traditional food. It was great."

Willis along with other support staff travelled with the athletes after spending a few days in Kuujuaq before departure so they could all meet and hold a few practices. In the future, he says, he would like to have more time to prepare athletes for competition and really be able to see what talent is in the region. But this event showcased Nunavik well.

He says Christopher really stood out in Ilulissat both athletically and in how he carried himself, resulting in his Fair Play award. And another Christopher, 15-year-old Christopher May Drullard from Kuujuaq, also excelled at the games, earning a gold medal in the Airplane event.

“He was always competing for a medal, for what it seemed like almost all his events,” Willis says of the youth. “He was one of ours and we didn’t expect him to really do that well. He kind of came out of nowhere with that!”

Having more opportunities to compete would not only help the region identify where the talent is, it would also help the athletes themselves.

“We have such talented athletes, the only Achilles heel, I guess, is that we don’t have a lot of experience in competing,” Willis says. “When we go compete, it’s almost always something new to everybody.” More opportunities to get experience is something he hopes to facilitate in his role moving forward. In the meantime, he says, being able to compete in games like Avannaa offers a real sense of community.

“These events, traditional games specifically, it really gives a sense of family. That’s one thing I’ve learned during my experiences is everyone’s really close.” he says.

Everyone kind of becomes one big family and then they’re competing against each other, but really, they’re supporting each other, which is really cool to see.



“Everyone kind of becomes one big family and then they’re competing against each other, but really, they’re supporting each other, which is really cool to see.”

Christopher Angatookalook says his favourite part of Avannaa wasn’t the competitions, the food, or even the hotel room – it is the memories and connections he made.

“What I cherish are the memories of Ilulisaat. The town is beautiful, the people are warm and welcoming, and I was able to walk on an iceberg while out boating with a friend I made that day.”

Here is a list of the athletes who represented Nunavik at this year’s first Avannaa Arctic Games in Ilulissat, Greenland.

Open Male	
Inukjuak	Joseph Nowkawalk
Kuujjuaq	Emmanuel Dion
Kuujjuaq	Yuliusie Saunders
Kuujjuaraapik	Christopher Angatookalook
Kuujjuaq	Aquyak Snowball
Inukjuak	Gary Metuq
Open Female	
Inukjuak	Mary Jane Qinuajuaq
Salluit	Judith Nalujuk
Kangiqsujuaq	Tina Mifsud
Kuujjuaq	Hullik Gadbois
Kuujjuaraapik/Whapmagoostui	Samantha Rupert
Jr Male	
Kuujjuaq	Christopher May
Jr Female	
Kuujjuaq	Amy May
Kuujjuaraapik/Whapmagoostui	Ambriel Rupert

Graduates Honoured

Eleven current and former Makiivik employees complete McGill University Public Administration and Governance Certificate Program

All graduates were gifted a sealskin ulu to attach to their graduation caps.

The program, which ran for three and a half years, culminated in a convocation ceremony on June 3 at McGill's downtown Montreal campus. Indigenous graduates were also celebrated by family, faculty, community members, and peers in a special event filled with culture, speeches, and throat-singing by graduate Phoebe Atagotaaluk and her daughter.

"This is more than just education, it's about building capacity, leadership, and investing in careers," said George Berthe, Makiivik's Treasurer. "These women are role models for their families, for all of us at Makiivik, and for Nunavik. We hope others follow in their footsteps."

The 10-course program was designed to give participants formal training in governance, leadership, and administration. For Laly Keatainak, a travel coordinator at Makiivik, joining the program was an unexpected journey that turned into something she feels every employee should experience.

"I didn't know what to expect, but I'm so glad I did. I learned things that really help us work better and more efficiently."

Keatainak juggled her studies while raising three young children—often working on assignments late into the night.

"Trying to read and write with three small kids... forget it! I could only work when they were asleep," she said. "But I wanted to show them that anything is possible."

When she walked across the stage, the sense of achievement was overwhelming.

"It's an amazing feeling—it's like getting your first job all over again."

For Victoria Okpik, who works in Makiivik's Justice Department, the journey presented very different challenges. Midway through the program, she was diagnosed with cancer and had to pause her studies for a year of treatment.

"I had to step away, then come back and make up what I missed," she said. "Finishing felt like such a relief after everything."

Okpik also played a key role in shaping the graduation ceremony to reflect Inuit identity. After seeing past Indigenous McGill graduates wear sashes with symbols like feathers and turtles which are important in other Indigenous cultures, but not Inuit, she pushed for a change.

"We wanted something that represents us," she explained. "We chose the Inukshuk, which symbolizes guidance and represents both men and women in our culture. I asked that we use a style without arms, and everyone agreed. We did keep the feather, to honour the Anishinabe territory where McGill is located."

Makiivik employees current and past at a graduation event for McGill University's Public Administration and Governance Certificate Program. The white, red, and black scarves were designed by graduate Victoria Okpik.

The certificate program was guided partly due to the vision of Makivik's Director of Human Resources, Mike Iorio. While training has long been a focus at Makivik, Iorio believed that formal education opens even greater doors.

|| This is more than just education—it's about building capacity, leadership, and investing in careers," said George Berthe, Makivik's Treasurer. "These women are role models for their families, for all of us at Makivik, and for Nunavik. We hope others follow in their footsteps. ||

"Workshops are great, but a certificate from McGill? That carries real weight," he said. "This gives people the opportunity to move up, to take on more responsibility, earn more, and be seen as leaders."

When Iorio first joined Makivik in 1992, Inuit were rarely found in senior roles.

"Back then, most of the higher-level staff weren't Inuit. We want to change that. And this is a big step in that direction."

The impact is already being felt. A second cohort of 22 Inuit employees is currently enrolled in the program and has completed about 30 per cent of the coursework.

"It's a win-win. Even if someone eventually leaves Makivik, we've helped build their capacity, and that's something to be proud of," he said.

"Hopefully one day we'll see more Inuit in high-level positions. That's the goal. This is only the beginning." •

The inaugural graduated cohort of McGill's Public Administration and Governance Certificate Program includes:

Phoebe Atagotaaluk
Liliane Emudluk
Laly Keatainak
Navarana Kleist
Lynn Moorhouse
Tammy Nolan

Victoria Okpik
Nancy White
Dannella Okpik
Jennifer Matchett
Laina Grey





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2025 Orders of Nunavik Awarded

At Makivvik's Annual General Meeting held in May, the Order of Nunavik, the organization's highest honour, was awarded to two exceptional individuals whose long-standing dedication has helped positively shaped life in Nunavik.

The first honouree, Eva Deer of Quaqtaq, is a name synonymous with strength, compassion, and leadership. From her teenage years interpreting for nurses, Eva has spent her life advocating for the wellbeing of Inuit across the region. She served as mayor of Quaqtaq, leading key community initiatives, including the founding of Nunavik's first daycare centres and spent more than 25 years as a school principal. Eva has also held board member roles with Makivvik and Air Inuit and later served as a Nunavik Governor. Together with her husband, she co-founded the Aaqitauvik Healing Centre, and she continues to lead healing workshops across Nunavik and in correctional facilities.

William Tagoona of Kuujuaq, the second recipient, joined the AGM virtually to receive his award. A trailblazer in Inuit journalism, broadcasting, and music, William has spent decades amplifying Inuit voices and culture. After starting out with *Inuktitut* magazine, he founded *Tarralik*, providing critical coverage during the early years of land claims. As President of the Avataq Cultural Institute, William continues to champion cultural preservation and revitalization. He also made a lasting mark through his work with CBC North, where he created Inuktitut-language programming for over 30 years. A founding member of the first Inuit rock band, *The Harpoons*, and a pioneer in Inuit country music, William has recorded and produced numerous albums through his Qimuk Music studio, supporting and inspiring a new generation of Inuit artists.



© MAKIVVIK

2025 Order of Nunavik Recipient Eva Deer has spent her life advocating for the wellbeing of Inuit across the region.

Makivvik's Order of Nunavik honours Inuit whose lives reflect dedication, leadership, and enduring commitment to their communities. This year's recipients embody those values fully. ●

Three Honoured with Nunavik Bravery Awards



At its Annual General Meeting this past spring, Makivik presented the Nunavik Bravery Award to three courageous individuals who risked their lives to protect or save others. The award, which recognizes Nunavimmiut who act selflessly in the face of danger, was given to William Tuuka, Julia Kumarluk, and Jomie Williams.

William Tuuka – Kangiqsujuaq

Nominated by Lydia Jaaka, William Tuuka was honoured for his life-saving actions in May, 2024, during a spring fishing trip for elders. When a snowmobile carrying Asivak Kiatainaq and Abigail Jaaka broke through thin ice, William acted without hesitation. He ran toward the sinking vehicle and managed to grab Asivak's arm just as she began to go under. His quick and selfless response, despite the risk of falling through the ice himself, saved a life that day.

Julia Kumarluk – Akulivik/Umiujaq

Nominated by Juliet Fleming, Julia Kumarluk was recognized for her bravery during a violent and traumatic community crisis in June 2017. Julia responded to a chaotic emergency in Akulivik and took the initiative to help transport victims to the clinic using her spouse's truck. She also confronted the suspected perpetrator directly, urging him to stop. Her courage during this crisis showed bravery and a willingness to put her own safety at risk to help others.

Jomie Williams – Inukjuak

In an event dating back to the 1980s, Jomie Williams was nominated by Nunga Weetaluktuk for saving the life of Philpoosie Weetaluktuk, who was drowning in the Inukjuak River. Realizing something was wrong when Philpoosie failed to resurface while swimming, Jomie dove into the water and pulled him to safety. His quick thinking and willingness to jump into danger made a lasting impact on his community.

The Nunavik Bravery Award considers the level of personal risk and the determination shown in the face of danger. These three recipients demonstrated remarkable courage, putting their own safety second to the lives of others.

Makivik encourages all Nunavimmiut to recognize acts of bravery in their communities by submitting nominations for the award, available on the Makivik website or through the Communications Department. ♦

How to know if Someone is Eligible for a Nunavik Bravery Award?

Example of an act that would be considered for a bravery award: ✓

In June 2024, Mary saw someone fall through the ice. Even though it put herself at great personal risk of going through the ice, she crawled out with a paddle and was able to reach it toward the struggling person. She was able to assist pulling them onto the ice and they both made it back to the land.

- Within the last three years? **YES**
- Mary put herself at risk to save someone else in danger? **YES.**

Mary is eligible for a Bravery Award nomination.

Example of an act that is valuable and important, but NOT eligible for a Bravery Award: ✗

In June 2024, Mary was camping with a friend who accidentally cut themselves very badly with a knife. Despite there being a lot of blood, Mary used her knowledge of first aid to put pressure on the wound and then called for help. Without her help, Mary's friend would have died from blood loss.

- Within the last three years? **YES**
- Mary put herself at risk to save someone else in danger? **NO.**

Although her friend was in danger, helping her did not put Mary at any personal risk, so she is not eligible for a Bravery Award nomination.

Ungava Coast communities now have access to dedicated Dash8-100 for emergency medical transport

Early in 2024, Air Inuit signed a 10-year air transportation service contract with the Tulattavik Health Centre, the provider of health care and social services to communities on the Ungava Coast of Nunavik. The agreement included a first for the region: a dedicated and medically engineered Dash8-100 for medevac missions.

Our teams were ripe for the challenge as it aligned with Air Inuit's commitment to innovation and its promise to continuously strive to improve services offered to Nunavimmiut. Airlifting people in urgent need of medical care is one of our most essential and time-sensitive services. Until now, medical evacuations were exclusively carried out by King Air or Twin-Otter aircrafts. Albeit their sturdiness and versatility, these planes do offer restrictions in terms of capacity. A larger medically configured aircraft

would ensure quicker handling of urgent matters and a more comfortable transfer for individuals and their families.

The Dash8 was acquired and modified in Montreal where our skilled teams proceeded to convert it into an aircraft specifically engineered and adapted for evacuations. The design itself was a joint effort, worked on to fulfill the Health Centre's needs. External engineering teams were involved to optimize features and integrate the necessary medical equipment. The process took 18 labour-intensive months to complete.

The aircraft was finally unveiled at the Kuujuaq Airport in February 2025. Air Inuit and Tulattavik's executives were on site with media to offer a glimpse of the aircraft's state-of-the-art technology and upgraded configuration. Features include an incubator for newborn babies, a designated area to access





and load stretchers on specialized ramps, and enough space to welcome 14 seated passengers. Previously, medical equipment such as incubators had to be partially disassembled to be placed inside the plane. This is good news for both patients and medical staff who can more safely and efficiently do their jobs in critical moments. The aircraft is also equipped with an auxiliary power unit (APU) to ensure operational independence during layovers.

Now in service, the specialized Dash8-100 will significantly enhance the quality of medevac services to the Ungava communities and streamline operations for our teams. The aircraft will be able to carry out medical transportation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with its dedicated medical team. ●

Medical Evacuations (MEDEVAC) on the Ungava Coast

(Statistics provided by Tulattavik Health Centre)

917 medical evacuations by air in **1** year
(between April 1 and March 31, 2024).

50,000 km² of territory served north of the
55th parallel.

More than **7,000** residents on the Ungava
Coast living in **7** villages.



Impact Assessment in Nunavik

Aside from providing content for the Green Corner in *Tarralik*, the Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC) also examines Impact Assessment procedures applicable in Nunavik.

What is an Impact Assessment? It's a planning and decision-making process used to assess the potential positive and negative effects of development projects on ecosystems, resources, and the quality of life of Nunavimmiut. The assessment process ensures that public information and consultation mechanisms consider the values of individuals, organizations, and communities.

Given that assessment processes can be complicated, and that more than one can apply to a given project, the KEAC feels it is important to promote an understanding of the processes that apply in Nunavik. We also understand the importance of public participation in the early stages of any project to ensure community and regional concerns are heard.

In Nunavik, modern treaties provide for constitutionally protected procedures related to Impact Assessments that were developed in collaboration with Nunavik Inuit, the Cree, Naskapi, and the federal, territorial and provincial governments. In Nunavik, up to four distinct processes can apply to development projects depending on its location, type, features, and activities. Here is a description of these for processes and a map of the areas where they apply:

1. The Provincial Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and Review process, which was established by the 1975 *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA)* and applies to projects of provincial jurisdiction in mainland Nunavik. It is led by the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission (KEQC).
2. The Federal Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and Review process, also established by the *JBNQA*. It applies to projects of federal jurisdiction in mainland Nunavik and is led by the Environmental and Social Impact Review Panel (COFEX-North) and its Screening Committee.

3. The Development Impact Assessment Process which applies to projects in the Nunavik Marine Region and flows from the 2008 *Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (NILCA)*. The Nunavik Marine Region Planning Commission (NMRPC) and, more importantly, the Nunavik Marine Region Impact Review Board (NMRIRB) play a direct role in this process.

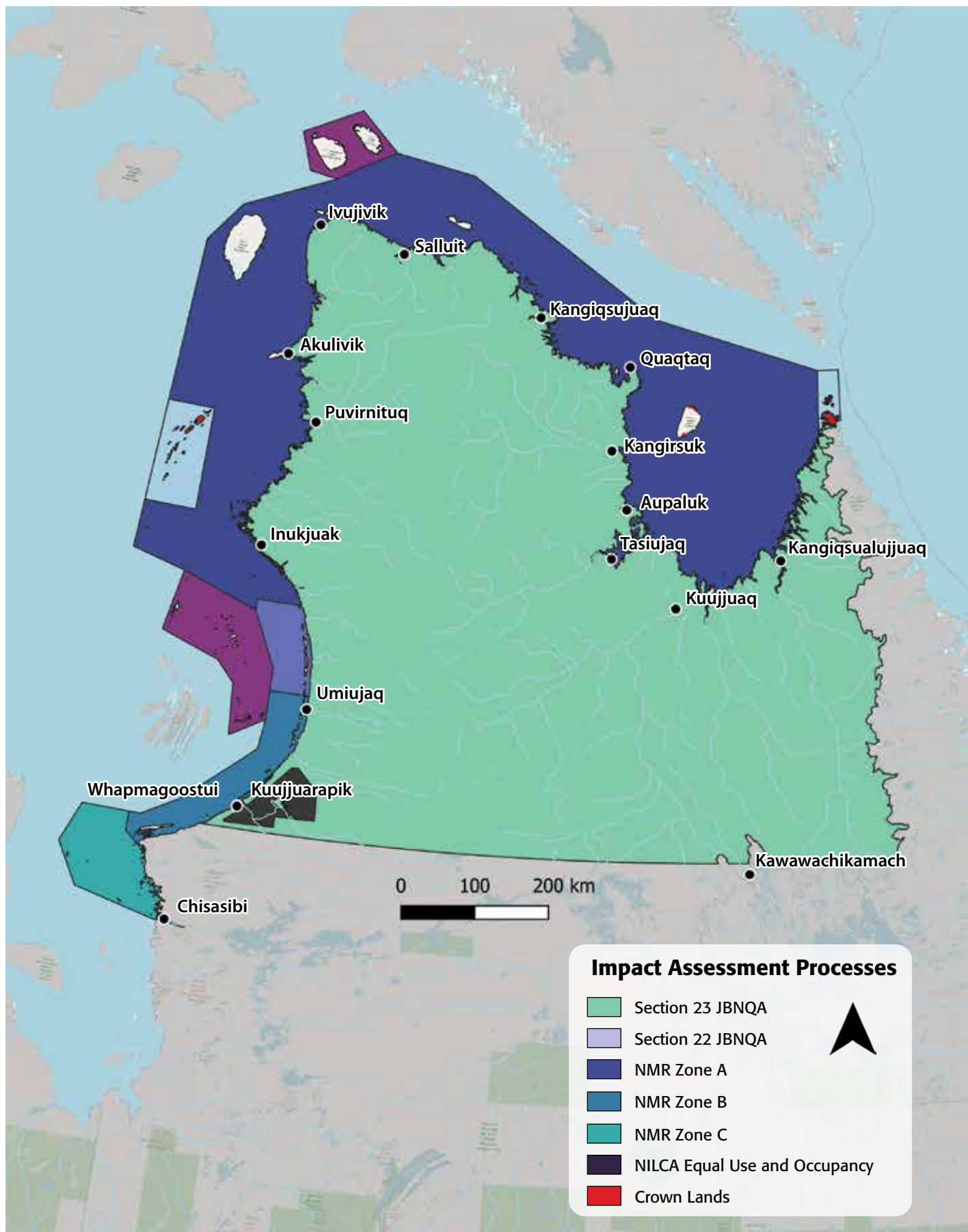
In offshore areas where Nunavik Inuit share rights and responsibilities with the Cree of Eeyou Istchee and the Inuit of Nunavut, four land-use planning and impact assessment bodies have been created by the *NILCA* to play a role in impact assessments.

4. The 2019 Impact Assessment Act (IAA) outlines a process for assessing the impacts of major projects in Canada. This process places a particular attention on increasing public participation and transparency in assessments led by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, improving participation of Indigenous peoples, and reducing duplication of IA processes with a vision of "one project, one assessment." •

SPECIAL EVENT:

The KEAC, along with Makivik and the Naskapi Nation of Kawawchikamach, will be hosting Impact Assessment Community Workshops in 2025-2026. The goal is to increase awareness of Impact Assessment processes in Nunavik and to discuss how Nunavik communities wish to engage and be equipped to participate in development project consultations.

If you would like to know more information about the impact assessment process and how to get involved, you can visit the KEAC website at: <https://keac-ccek.org/en/impact-assessment-in-nunavik/>. You can also email the KEAC Secretariat at keac-ccek@krg.ca. •



When Justice Holds a Feather – Sworn Declarations and Oaths

A discreet announcement was made last November 2024, when the Court of Quebec issued instruction allowing members of First Nations and Inuit communities to use an eagle feather when making sworn declarations and oaths in said Court proceedings.



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In 2019, the sacred eagle feather was officially recognized as a valid form of oath in all courts across Manitoba. Then, in 2020, the Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island launched the “Eagle Feather Initiative,” allowing individuals to use the feather in the same way as a Bible when swearing an oath or making an affirmation. Those choosing the eagle feather for their testimony may hold it while affirming to tell the truth, or when providing an affidavit, sworn statement, or statutory declaration. Each courthouse in PEI reportedly has an eagle feather available for courtroom use. In 2022, Justice Michelle O’Bonsawin took her oath of office as a judge of the Supreme Court of Canada holding an eagle feather in her hand.

Following this, with this recent announcement by the Chief Judge of the Court of Quebec, their judges, substitute judges, and justices of the peace are now encouraged to accept the use of the eagle feather during oaths and testimonies given by First Nations and Inuit. This recommendation is part of a broader movement toward reconciliation.

Indeed, over the past 50 years, various commissions of inquiry have highlighted the need to begin a genuine process of

reconciliation with First Nations and Inuit, particularly following the systemic discrimination revealed by the Viens Commission. In its Calls to Action, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2008–2015) recommended measures to ensure Indigenous cultural safety and the Indigenization of public institutions, including the integration of Indigenous objects and practices—especially within the justice system.

In response, the Canadian justice system has increasingly incorporated culturally appropriate practices for Indigenous peoples into its procedures. It is in this context that the eagle feather may be used for sworn declarations or testimonies, serving as a way “to acknowledge and integrate First Nations and Inuit cultures into the conventional judicial system and to promote respect for Indigenous culture.”

In several provinces and territories, Indigenous individuals appearing in criminal court—whether as accused, witnesses, or victims—can already take an oath while holding an eagle feather instead of placing their hand on the Bible. Another example, according to the Society of Advocates, Indigenous Bar Association, and Law Society of Ontario, is the fact that since 2018 Indigenous

persons have been able to request that an eagle feather be present in the courtroom to help others show courage and speak truthfully. Similarly, several detachments of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have become custodians of eagle feathers, providing victims, witnesses, suspects, and police officers with “a spiritually meaningful option on which they can take legal oaths or hold for comfort” (RCMP, 2021).

All these reconciliation initiatives emphasize the respectful and ethical use of the sacred eagle feather. In the case of the Court of Quebec’s announcement, it is specified that it remains the **responsibility of the individual** wishing to swear an oath on the feather to bring it on the day of the hearing to the Court of Quebec and to request permission from the presiding judge. If the judge refuses, the decision must be justified. The solemn affirmation remains mandatory but may be accompanied by an eagle feather if a First Nations or Inuit person so wishes. The use of this procedure in no way diminishes the obligation to comply with all established rules for a solemn affirmation, as it is an additional element and not a substitute.

Yet, what are the rules for a solemn affirmation, and what are the consequences of non-compliance, as offences against the administration of law and justice?

Testimonies are an important aspect of any court processing, as this is how during a trial the judge must assess the credibility of the parties and of the witnesses, the consistency of their statements, and the relevance of the facts presented. Testimonies are usually decisive in the judge’s final decision. Testimonies will be made under an **oath**, by swearing or by solemn affirmation. In accordance with the regulation of the Court of Quebec, the administration of the oath or solemn affirmation is carried out by the court clerk in the presence of the judge.

Deponents and witnesses are sworn in before testifying, meaning they must promise to tell the truth. When making statements under oath, whether in a written declaration or testimony before the court, it is essential to stick only to what you personally know to fulfill your responsibility to tell the truth. **It is always important to tell the truth, but this principle takes on particular significance within the judicial system.** When a person takes an oath or solemn affirmation to tell the truth and fails to uphold that promise, the consequences can be quite serious.

This is referred to and under certain conditions in the Criminal Code as **perjury**, a serious offense that can have severe repercussions for the individual who commits it. Perjury is a legal term that refers to the act of making false statements, lying, or providing misleading information while under oath (by swearing

or by solemnly affirming to tell the truth) or when taking an oath in a judicial or legal context. The maximum sentence for perjury is 14 years of imprisonment. The offence of perjury is considered undermining the integrity of the judicial system and compromising the search for truth in legal proceedings. For example, perjury can distort the outcome of a trial, influence court decisions, and hinder the administration of justice. Courts take this offence seriously to protect the integrity of the judicial system and to deter dishonest behaviour. The length of the sentence for a person found guilty of perjury will vary depending on several factors, including the severity of the perjury and the circumstances surrounding the commission of the offence. When determining the sentence, the court may consider the harm caused by the perjury, whether to the parties involved in the trial or to the court itself.

In addition to potential criminal penalties, an individual who lies under oath may also be found guilty of contempt of court. This additional charge can lead to other types of penalties, such as fines or an additional prison sentence.

Possible defenses may be available to counter perjury charges—such as a good faith mistake, lack of intent to lie, or lack of materiality. It is essential to consult an experienced criminal law attorney for competent legal advice and representation. •

Legal Tips aim at explaining to the Nunavik Inuit clientele in a general and broad manner some elements of the law applicable in Quebec and are not legal opinions nor legal advice which can be obtained by contacting private practitioners (lawyer or notary).

Reminiscence of a Toxicologist

By Michael Kwan

January 15, 2025, was my last day at work at the Nunavik Research Centre (NRC) and then I began my retirement. No fuss, no fanfare at the office; I just finished my last day of work and walked away quietly and uneventfully. Just the way I like it. After 29 years of service at the Research Centre I began a new chapter of my life here in Kuujuaq, my only home. I arrived in Montreal in 1995 from the U.K. where I spent 16 years studying and working. At that time the then Makivik Research Centre in Kuujuaq sent fish samples to the Centre of Indigenous People's Nutrition and Environment (CINE) at McGill University for mercury analysis. Being a research fellow working at CINE, I was responsible for carrying out the analysis. That's when my connection with Kuujuaq and Makivik started. The next year, the Research Centre managed to secure fundings from the federal, provincial and regional governments to set up the very first toxicological and contaminant analytical facilities in the Eastern Canadian Arctic. The then Director of the Makivik Research Centre, the



The fieldwork team that carried out the environmental baseline study of the upper watersheds of George River, September 2024. From left to right: Michael Kwan, Peter May, Noah Brosseau, Natalie D' Astous (helicopter pilot) and Paul Papak.

COURTESY OF MICHAEL KWAN X7



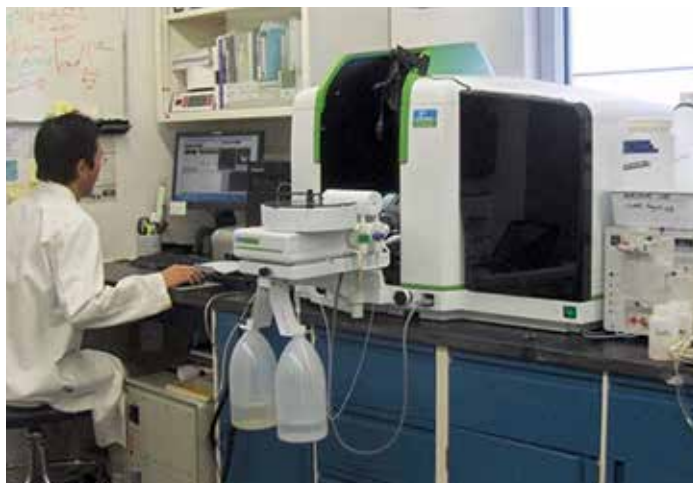
Kwan began his career as a contaminant researcher in 1980 at King's College, University of London, the U. K.



The original team of the then Makivik Research Centre in 1997. From left to right: Willie Adams, Daniel Leclair, Sandy Suppa, Lizzie Gadbois, Michael Kwan, Barrie Ford (summer student), Chesley Mesher, Alix Gordon and Bill Doidge.



Installing the very first atomic absorption spectrometer at the new analytical lab in 1996.



Using the atomic absorption spectrometer at the analytical lab to measure heavy metal levels in wildlife samples, 2013.



Fieldwork at the Caniapiscou River, summer 2015. Carrying out on-site water quality assessment from the research boat.



Fieldwork at the Vachon River west of Kangirsuk, summer 2013. Collecting sediment samples for contaminant analysis.

late Dr. Bill Doidge asked me to come up to Kuujuaq in the summer of 1996 for a six-month contract to set up the brand-new analytical lab and purchased all the necessary equipment. It was fun setting up all these new instruments. I am a tinkerer, and I just love analytical instrumentation. Kind of like a car enthusiast but it is for lab instruments instead of cars. I can still vividly remember when I first arrived at Kuujuaq, the very first northern community I ever visited. Kuujuaqmiut are super friendly and warm; many were curious about this new arrival and came to shake my hand. Many started talking Inuktitut to me without realizing I am not Inuk. Even now I still suspected that back then I might well be the first Chinese person who took up residence in Kuujuaq. Toward the end of my six-month contract, I was offered the full-time position of toxicologist at the Research Centre and have been responsible for all the files relating to contaminants and toxicology ever since. And Kuujuaq has become my home.

My first big project was the federal Government's Northern Contaminants Program (NCP) funded study of spatial and temporal trends of heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in ringed seals and Arctic charr in the Canadian Arctic. The project spanned between 1998 and mid-2000. I still remember I was so eager to announce to the research community down

south of our unique trace metal analytical facilities in Kuujuaq which still is the only such facilities in the Eastern Canadian Arctic to date. Southern researchers were astonished and excited that such intricate analyses were being done in the North at a quality control and quality assurance level on a par with any southern lab. At this early stage I was trying to put our analytical capability on the map – just to say, 'Hey we are here! And we can do such analyses just as good as any southern lab.' In the NCP project our lab analyzed close to 2,000 samples collected by 24 communities throughout the Canadian Arctic including all 14 communities of Nunavik for trace metal contaminants. It was the most extensive survey of contaminants in ringed seals and Arctic charr ever undertaken for the Canadian Arctic.

Over the years I have identified two overall objectives for our analytical lab: (1) to analyze all wildlife species harvested for food by Nunavimmiut for metals that have important human health implications: mercury, lead, cadmium, arsenic, and selenium in order to build a database to ascertain the long-term time trends of contaminants in country foods over decades and (2) to provide contaminant data to the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHS) for formulating public health messages regarding food safety for communication to communities. Unlike many southern universities and research groups that carry

out research purely for the sake of scientific interest and with the ultimate aim of publishing findings for peer scientists; the research carried out by the Nunavik Research Centre is first and foremost to address concerns voiced by Nunavik communities and to generate results which are beneficial to Nunavik which I would say is the mandate of the Research Centre. In such respects we are very different from most southern researchers. Contaminant research at the NRC has evolved over the last three decades with new technologies and methodologies but our mandate remains the same.

Apart from analyzing samples in our lab, my work had taken me to different parts of Nunavik to carry out fieldwork to collect samples for contaminant analysis and doing on-site water quality assessment upon requests from communities expressing concerns about mining and other infrastructure developments nearby that might affect their lands, watersheds, and wildlife.

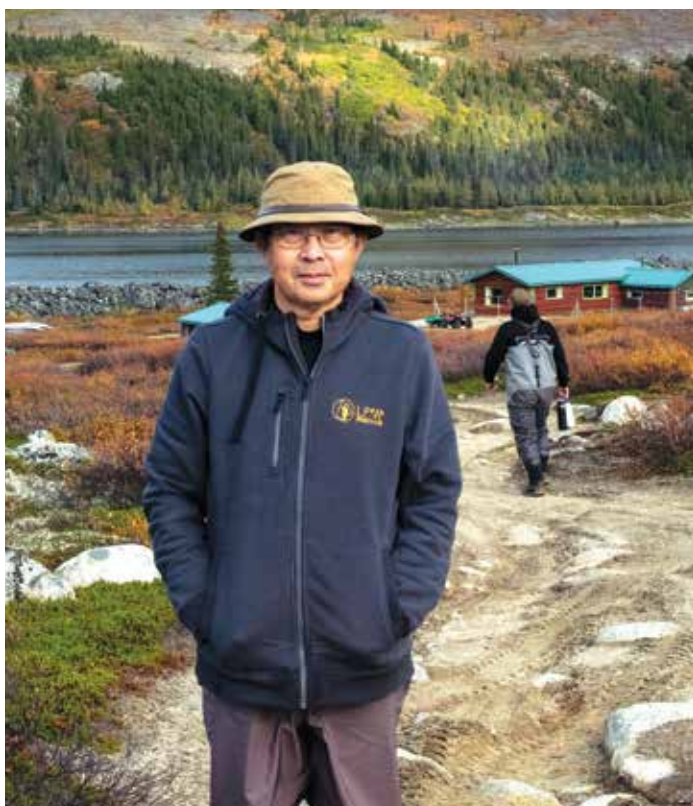
Our contaminant research is heavily reliant on the active participation of local hunters, fishers, wildlife wardens, and students from communities in sample collecting and in their expert knowledge of the lands. Many of our research projects would not have been possible without the help of Nunavimmiut and we make it our utmost priority to communicate our findings back to communities.

We have always been a small, tight-knit team at the Research Centre, with expertise and skillsets that complement one another in many projects. Looking back, I am proud to have been part of this team—it has been the most rewarding period of my career as a toxicologist. Over the years, I have seen many colleagues move on to new opportunities, but the Research Centre has remained a place where people dedicate many years of service before taking the next step in their careers. As I said at my retirement party, which my Makivik colleagues so kindly arranged: ‘It’s been a great run.’ ♦

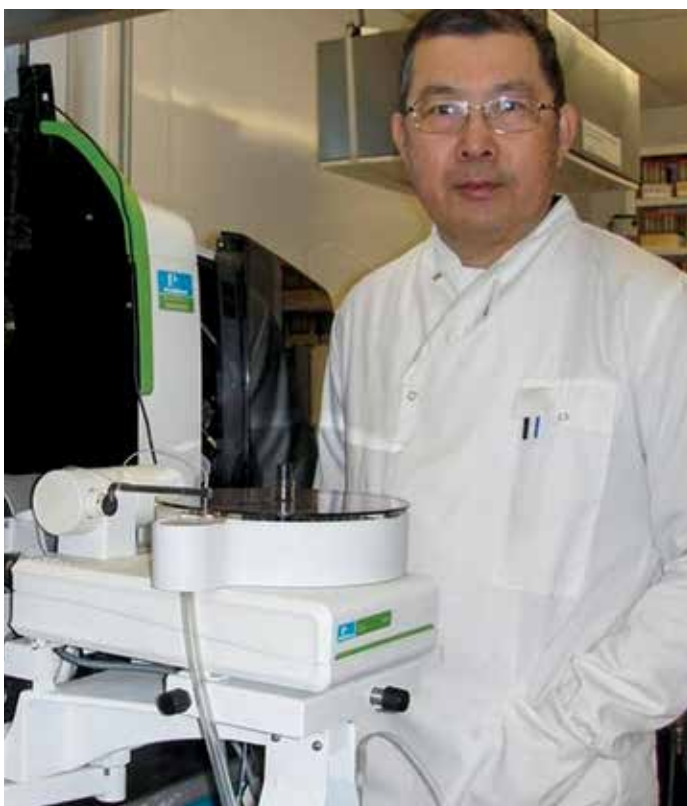


Photo taken at Peter May's camp along the George River.

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© NOAH BROSSÉAU/MAKIVIK



COURTESY OF MICHAEL KWAN

The last photo of Kwan working at the analytical lab of the Research Centre, winter 2024.

NUNAVIK PLAYERS

Full name: Christopher Drullard May

Birthday: February 9, 2009

Place of birth: Kuujjuaq

Home community: Kuujjuaq

Role model: My role model is my grandfather, Johnny May

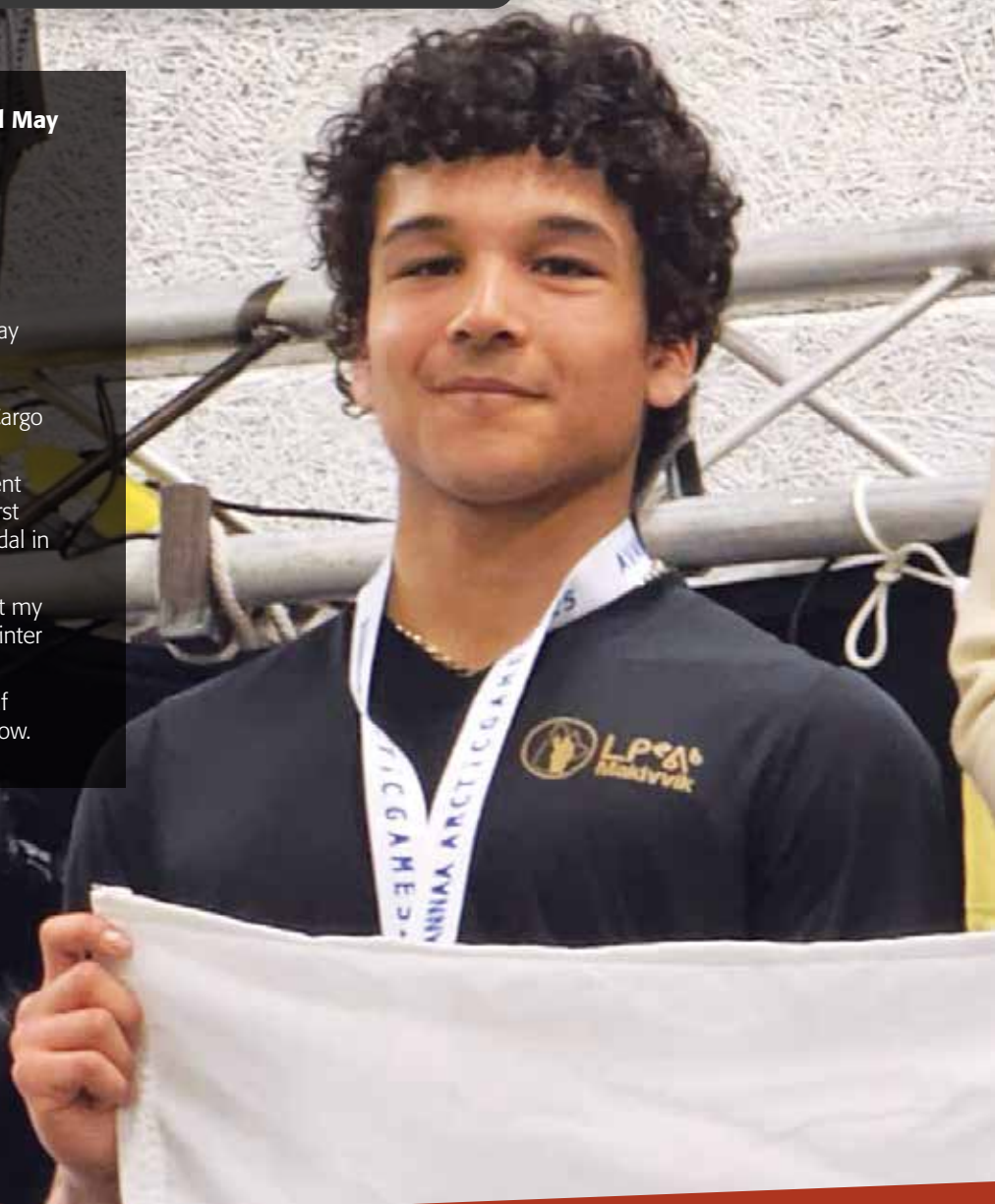
Favourite food: Bacon poutine

Occupation: Student and Air Inuit Cargo on the weekends

Proudest moment: My most proud moment was when I won my first ever Arctic Games medal in Greenland.

Future goal: My future goal is to get my first ulu at the Arctic Winter Games.

Best advice you can offer youth: Don't expect the later if you're not doing the now.



CHRISTOPHER DRULLARD MAY

MYSTERY PHOTO CONTEST

Congratulations to Larry Putugu, who correctly answered the Mystery Photo Contest from Tarralik Issue 135!

You could win \$100 if you correctly guess what this mystery photo is. Mail your answer to the address below, or you can email your answer to mdewar@makivik.ca.

Mystery Photo Contest
Makivik
P.O. Box 179
874 Naalavik St.
Kuujjuaq (QC)
J0M 1C0

WHAT IS THIS ? ►



Nakurmiik, Kuujjuaq

As we say farewell to our Montreal-Kuujjuaq route, we want to thank everyone who has been part of our journey for the past 35 years.

For us, it was never just about distance, it was about connection. Between communities, families, and friends.

Thank you for flying with us.

