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Image created in kâniyâsihk (Ministikwan,
Saskatchewan)

Collaborators:
Matilda Lewis & Kevin Lewis

Images of Research Competition
University of Alberta

Matilda Lewis with a hand-made birch bark canoe

Third Place Winner (2020)

Dr. Lana Whiskeyjack, nêhiyaw scholar, is conducting the Reconnecting to the Spirit of Language research project. The work involves holding dialogue circles to discuss nêhiyawêwin (Cree language) revitalization. Dr. Kevin Lewis, nêhiyaw scholar, is the founder and coordinator of kâniyâsihk — a series of accrediting year-round on-the-land nêhiyawêwin immersion camps held in Ministikwan, Saskatchewan. Those at kâniyâsihk recently built a traditional birch bark canoe, which has been taken out on the nearby lake.

We held a dialogue circle at kâniyâsihk, and used a small model of the hand-held birch bark canoe as a speaking tool. The holder of the small birch bark canoe is the person whose turn it is to speak. This photo features the hands of Matilda Lewis, who is the mother of Dr. Kevin Lewis, holding a mini-birch bark canoe during a dialogue circle in which we discussed effective nêhiyawêwin language revitalization methodologies in nêhiyawêwin.

Dr. Lana Whiskeyjack hired MACT student Kyle Napier, a fellow nêhiyaw scholar, as a graduate research assistant to assist with this project. He is trained in journalism, but now works at the convergence of digital technologies and Indigenous language revitalization. He took this photo of Matilda Lewis' hands while recording the dialogue circle.