

- Channing Lavallée from St. Ambroise, Manitoba.
- Katelyn Matthew from Chase, British Columbia.
- Ry Moran from Victoria, British Columbia.
- Candace Polson, from Timiskaming First Nation, Quebec.
- Shaneen Robinson from Pimicikamak Cree Nation, Manitoba.
- Heather Watts from Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario.
- Jennifer Williams from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Supporting the National Aboriginal Role Model Program (NARMP) is National Spokesperson James Makokis from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Alberta.

“First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth are choosing to lead healthy, active lives and succeeding in all areas, including the arts, humanities, commerce, politics, sports, science and technology,” said James Makokis, the National Spokesperson for the NARMP. “Role models are authentic individuals who are true to their identities. They give others the courage to push beyond their own potential, opening the door to new possibilities.”

The NAHO CEO, Dr. Paulette C. Tremblay and the 12 Aboriginal Role Models will be available to answer questions after the award ceremony at Rideau Hall and from 6:30 p.m. -7:30 p.m. at the Summer Solstice Aboriginal Arts Festival in honour of National Aboriginal Day at Victoria Island, (Ottawa) Ontario.

The National Aboriginal Health Organization is an Aboriginal-designed and -controlled body that works to influence and advance the health and well-being of Aboriginal Peoples through knowledge-based strategies.

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For more information, visit:

www.naho.ca/rolemodel

National Aboriginal Role Model Program materials include:

- Biographical information of the National Spokesperson and 12 role models
- Posters and trading cards of the National Spokesperson and 12 role models

BACKGROUNDER

LEAD YOUR WAY!

2008 National Aboriginal Role Models

The National Aboriginal Role Model Program celebrates the accomplishments of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth aged 13 to 30.

Lead Your Way! inspires Aboriginal youth to strive to reach their goals.

Each year, 12 Aboriginal role models are nominated by their peers. They are selected for their achievements, leadership, and innovation. Throughout the year, the role models will attend celebrations, school functions, workshops, and conferences to share their stories with other Aboriginal youth.

Lead Your Way! is hosted by the National Aboriginal Health Organization and funded by Health Canada.

The National Aboriginal Role Model Program aims to:

- Promote healthy lifestyles and self-esteem among Aboriginal Peoples.
- Strengthen Aboriginal identity.
- Create positive public images of Aboriginal Peoples.
- Facilitate availability of Aboriginal Role Models to Aboriginal youth and communities.
- Influence behaviours and attitudes of Aboriginal youth toward healthy lifestyles.
- Foster Aboriginal-inspired leadership.

Our first National Spokesperson was Jordon Tootoo. In 2004, he helped launch the program and encouraged Aboriginal youth to nominate their role models from their communities.

This year, we are excited to have James Makokis as our National Spokesperson who will help promote the program.

Posters and trading cards of the 12 role models will be sent to Aboriginal schools across Canada. The role models will visit Aboriginal communities throughout the year, where they will attend community celebrations and visit schools to talk about their experiences.

The National Spokesperson for the program was selected by an advisory committee and will hold the position for two years. The spokesperson will attend conferences to promote the program to communities and Aboriginal youth. The spokesperson's poster will be sent across Canada with the role model posters.