

## **DREAMCATCHER PROJECT – Integrative Science outreach**

– community and school of Membertou First Nation

Institute for Integrative Science & Health: [www.integrativescience.ca](http://www.integrativescience.ca)

- multiple years of support and funding to enable community project
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A giant community Dreamcatcher is suspended in the atrium of the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre in Membertou First Nation in Unama'ki – Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. It is one very large Dreamcatcher from which hang numerous smaller Dreamcatchers.



The project to create the community Dreamcatcher occurred over a seven year period, 2004-2011. It originated with the grand opening of the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre in 2004 and was lovingly brought to completion through the efforts of Mr. Nick Huard, a Mi'kmaq artist living in Montreal, in conjunction with children from the Membertou Elementary School. Each year, Nick visited for a week to work with the children to make their own individual Dreamcatchers and then to hang them from Nick's larger one. The children's are made from materials that Nick helped them collect in nearby woods, while encouraging them to connect with nature and to dream of their futures ... especially, to learn that no dream is too small.

### **Support and Funding for the Dreamcatcher Project**

The Dreamcatcher Project was fully endorsed by the Membertou Band Council and immensely facilitated by the Membertou Elementary School. Jane Meader, teacher at the school and long-time friend to Integrative Science, played a pivotal role in the overall creative journey for the Dreamcatcher Project.

Cape Breton University's Canada Research Chair in Integrative Science Dr. Cheryl Bartlett provided funding to enable the community Dreamcatcher project during its first five years (2004-2008), especially Artist Nick Huard's engagement with the school children to create new Dreamcatchers and then the yearly community celebration in which the children's were added to Nick's larger Dreamcatcher. This research program support was provided in association with the emerging understandings within Dr. Bartlett's community-based, participatory action research project entitled "Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to an expanding sense of wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land" funded by CIHR - IAPH (Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health).

Yvonne Mosley, Executive Producer of Maritime Television and Production Service, was the inspirational and logistical force behind the project from conception to completion; she also helped the Institute for Integrative Science & Health with other audio/visual production projects (see <http://www.integrativescience.ca/People/AudioVideoProduction/>). In addition, she produced a video each year that included the creative activities of the children in conjunction with Nick's assistance and also the community celebration in which the children's Dreamcatchers were added to the larger one in the atrium of the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre. Yvonne also produced a final video that was a culmination of the entire seven year project. Copies of these videos were presented to the Membertou Band Council.

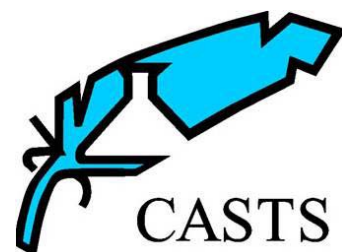
The invitational announcements for the community celebrations of the Dreamcatcher Project for the fifth year (2008) and the final year (2011) can be found at the end of this document.

### **2005 Special Event: Dreamcatcher Project celebration in conjunction with national CASTS conference**

In late September 2005, the national conference of CASTS (Canadian Aboriginal Science and Technology Society) was held in the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre, co-hosted by Cape Breton University and the Unama'ki



Institute of Natural Resources. The Dreamcatcher Project received special attention during this time when special guests at the conference participated in the activities and celebrations. This included Commander John Herrington, Chickasaw from Oklahoma, an astronaut and the first Native American to walk in space. Commander Herrington also visited schools in the area encouraging children to pursue their educational and career dreams.



**2008 Special Event: Dreamcatcher Project celebration  
in conjunction with chapbook launch**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2008, the Institute for Integrative Science & Health hosted a day of celebration at Membertou Trade and Convention Centre to launch the chapbook as a partner celebration to the Dreamcatcher celebrations. The chapbook is entitled “I Got It From An Elder; conversations in healing language”.



During the morning, the small Dreamcatchers created by the children of Membertou Elementary School were added to the larger Dreamcatcher made by Nick Huard. The morning's celebration marked the fifth year of the Dreamcatcher Project, a creative journey led by Elder Jane Meader (photo, left), a teacher at the school, in conjunction with Yvonne Mosley. The school children danced and drummed under the Dreamcatcher, reminding everyone that a bright future depends on the care we take with the present. Special guest and chapbook co-author Dr. Ivar Mendez (Neurosurgeon, Director of the Brain Repair Centre at Dalhousie University, Photographer, and Sculptor) shared his thoughts about dreams and aspirations with the school children, Elders, teachers, scientists, community members, university faculty, members of the Cape Breton Regional Police Service and others who had gathered for the celebrations. Mr. Lindsay Marshall (Associate Dean of Cape Breton University's Mi'kmaq College Institute) did likewise, adding a special emphasis on education.

In the afternoon's celebrations, the chapbook was launched. The drum group “The Sons of Membertou” performed and chapbook co-authors Dr. Marilyn Iwama, Elder Murdena Marshall, and Dr. Ivar Mendez participated in dramatized readings.

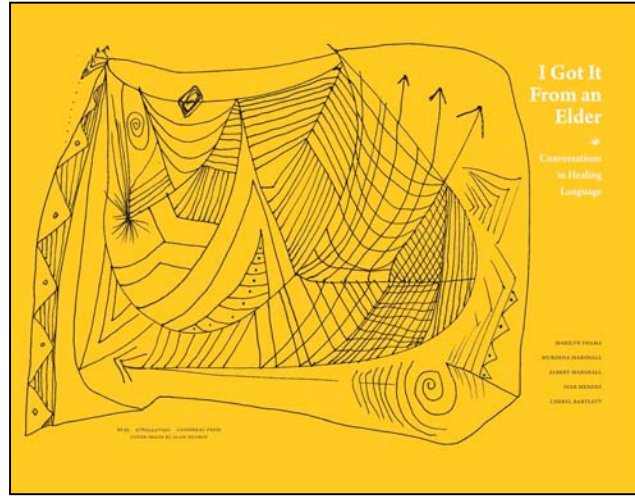
Information on how to order the chapbook “I Got It From An Elder; conversations in healing language” (2007, No. 20, Devil's Whim Occasional Chapbook Series; Gaspereau Press, Kentville, NS) can be found at: <http://www.gaspereau.com/1554470501.shtml>.

*BELOW:* co-authors of the chapbook “I Got It From An Elder; conversations in healing language”. Left to right: Dr. Ivar Mendez, Elder Albert Marshall, Dr. Marilyn Iwama, and Elder Murdena Marshall; missing from the picture is co-author Dr. Cheryl Bartlett



## An invitation to the Cape Breton University community, to attend Canada Research Chair in Integrative Science events for 28 February 2008 in Membertou First Nation

Dr. Cheryl Bartlett, Canada Research Chair in Integrative Science, extends an invitation to all within the Cape Breton University community to attend special events to be held in Membertou First Nation on Thursday, February 28. The day will highlight two projects enabled by this CBU Canada Research Chair, a chair whose efforts bring together mainstream science and Indigenous knowledges for the purposes of science education, research, applications, and outreach to Aboriginal youth and communities.



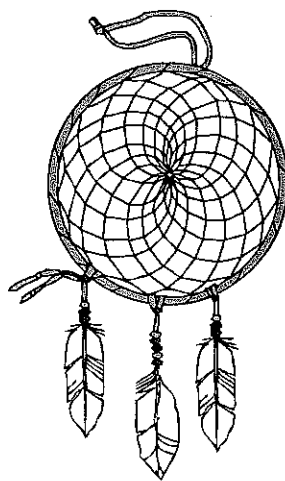
1) At 10:00 am, at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre (MTCC), activities surrounding Membertou Elementary School's "Dreamcatcher Project" will begin. There will be drumming, dancing and a video of the children involved in this project. Mr. Lindsay Marshall (Associate Dean of CBU's Mi'kmaq College Institute) and Dr. Ivar Mendez (Neurosurgeon, Director of the Brain Repair Centre at Dalhousie University, Photographer and Sculptor) will speak on the theme of dreams and aspirations.

The Dreamcatcher Project is now in its fifth year, having originated with the grand opening of MTCC in 2004 when a huge dreamcatcher created by Mr. Nick Huard, a Mi'kmaq artist living in Montreal, was unveiled in the Centre's atrium. Each year, Mr. Huard has worked with the children to make their own individual dreamcatchers to add to his. These are made from materials collected in nearby woods and in the process the children are encouraged to connect with nature and to dream of their futures, to learn that no dream is too small. The morning will feature this year's addition of new dreamcatchers, with the understanding that the "Dreams of the Children of Membertou" are a gift to the community of Membertou from their school.

2) At 1:00 pm, at the Membertou Elementary School, activities will launch the chapbook "I Got It From An Elder" (Gaspereau Press Ltd.), a collaborative publication by Murdena Marshall, Albert Marshall, Ivar Mendez, Marilyn Iwama and Cheryl Bartlett. In addition to short dramatized readings, the afternoon will feature The Sons of Membertou drummers.

The launch of this chapbook highlights the personal relationship that has grown between Dr. Mendez and Mrs. Murdena Marshall (Mi'kmaq Elder from Eskasoni First Nation, and retired Associate Professor of Mi'kmaq Studies at CBU). A few years ago the two engaged in dialogue about the Mi'kmaq language and, in particular, what Murdena calls the "healing tense" within the language. Dr. Marilyn Iwama (a Research Associate with the CRC in Integrative Science) has woven the chapbook into existence from these dialogues.

[Note: Lunch at Membertou Elementary School is not included in this CBU wide invitation, sorry!]



*Students and Staff at the Membertou Elementary School  
cordially invite you to attend a ceremony marking the seventh and final year of our*

*Dreamcatcher Project*





This final Ceremony will take place under the Dreamcatcher in The Atrium at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre, in Membertou, on May 10<sup>th</sup> between 12 noon and 1pm

*This Dreamcatcher is a gift from the children of Membertou Elementary School to the Community of Membertou. Each of the seven years of this project symbolically represents seven generations and most importantly contains the dreams of the children of Membertou.*

The idea behind the Dreamcatcher Project is to convey to young people the message that you can have a dream, you can be anything you want to be. There is an impressive list of men and women who over the last seven years have shared their dreams with these young people; from Elders to educators, from the First Native American Astronaut to a Neurosurgeon, from politicians and poets to scientists, the Canadian Coast Guard, the police and the list goes on...