

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 5, 2024

Alberta Blue Cross® announces the latest Indigenous Scholarship winners

Alberta Blue Cross is pleased to announce the 9 exceptional recipients of the 2024 Indigenous Scholarship program.

“We’ve been privileged to support some incredibly deserving individuals in their education journeys through this program,” says Brian Geislinger, senior vice-president of Corporate Relations and Community Engagement with Alberta Blue Cross.

“In 2023 we received a record number of applications for our Indigenous scholarship program, and based on this demand we doubled the number of mature student awards provided annually. We are thrilled to be continuing this program.”

For more than 20 years, Indigenous students across Alberta have been able to reach their goals with the help of the Alberta Blue Cross scholarship program. These 9 scholarships of \$1,500 are awarded based on personal goals, financial need and community involvement. This year, the program received a total of 73 applications. Alberta Blue Cross will begin accepting applications for next year’s program in September 2024.

This year’s recipients are as follows:

- **Jordan Chayer:** Jordan is currently enrolled in the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program at the University of Alberta. Though only 19, Jordan has organized community events to fundraise for local families and volunteers time and money to donate supplies to the unhoused in Edmonton. Jordan’s goal is to attain recognition on the first class standing.
- **Hailey Shukaliak:** Hailey is in the Practical Nurse Diploma program at Portage College. She is very involved in the Métis community and volunteers with Girl Guides, the farmer’s market and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 1. She plans to use her degree to work in her community of Lac La Biche because she understands the need for medical professionals in the area.
- **Demaris Young:** Demaris is also enrolled in the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program at the University of Alberta. Her mother is a teacher, and she wants to follow in her footsteps to make a difference for Indigenous youth and her community. Demaris received the Faculty of Education’s Undergraduate Celebration of Excellence and plans to use her education to work in her community.
- **Robert Tate:** Robert is studying to get his Doctor of Clinical Psychology at Concordia University of Edmonton. He is very involved in Indigenous culture and volunteers at sweat lodges, pipe ceremonies and sun dances in and around Edmonton. Robert plans on using his education to further work with Indigenous communities and is interested in working in correctional facilities.

ab.bluecross.ca

- **Penny Delver:** Penny is working towards her Corrections diploma at MacEwan University. She decided to pursue a career in corrections because she saw how disproportionately Indigenous people are represented in correctional facilities but not as correctional officers. Penny wants to work in the system so she can change it. Her goal is to work as a probation officer after finishing school.
- **Jennifer Auger:** Jennifer is attending Yellowhead Tribal College for her Indigenous Social Work degree. She has volunteered extensively within her community, from youth mentoring in making native regalia to supporting her community through deaths to offering mental and emotional support to her community members. Jennifer is a hockey coach and has worked bingos to provide funding for youth programs.
- **Mel-Lisa Belcourt:** Mel-Lisa is a mother of 4 working towards her BA in Indigenous Social Work at Maskwacis Cultural College. She works with Asikiw Mostos O'pikinawasiwin (AMO) Society in Louis Bull to help bring children in care back to their community. Mel-Lisa also works in the preventative program and assists with families and grocery support.
- **Michaela Lewis:** Michaela is a student in SAIT's Film and Video Production diploma and a frequent participant at the Indigenous Student Centre. A survivor of the 60s scoop, Michaela was taken at birth and illegally adopted to a non-Indigenous family until she was reunited with her birth family at 18. Michaela sees storytelling as a core value to Indigenous Peoples, and she intends to create documentaries that give a voice to her people and share their stories.
- **Courtney Crane:** Courtney is an Indigenous Education student at Maskwacis Cultural College. She has been an education assistant at Ermineskin Elementary school for 12 years and was inspired by colleagues to go back to school and become a teacher. Courtney recognizes the importance of having teachers who know the Cree culture and language, which she intends to pass on to her future students.

As Alberta's leading benefit provider, Alberta Blue Cross provides coverage to more than 1.8 million Albertans and has been ranked as one of Alberta's most loved brands. More information about the Indigenous Scholarship program can be found on the Alberta Blue Cross website at community.ab.bluecross.ca/programs/indigenous-scholarships.php.

==30==

For more information, please contact Sheena Moore, communication officer, Corporate Communications, Alberta Blue Cross, at shmoore@ab.bluecross.ca.



®* The Blue Cross symbol and name are registered marks of the Canadian Association of Blue Cross Plans, an association of independent Blue Cross plans. Licensed to ABC Benefits Corporation for use in operating the Alberta Blue Cross Plan.

® † Blue Shield is a registered trade-mark of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. ABC 31262 2016/05

