Powwow 101
If you are not familiar with powwows, we hope this information will help you gain a better understanding. This book was made in collaboration with Saskatoon Public School Board First Nation, Inuit, Métis Education Unit and University of Saskatchewan.

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**DISCLAIMER:** We have collaborated with different community members within Saskatoon to compile this booklet. All cultures and communities are different within Saskatchewan and all Elders have different beliefs, so there may be some discrepancies between personal teachings and what is portrayed in this booklet. This is meant to be a tool for students and people not familiar with powwows. You should still consult with an Elder if you would like more information that is specific to a territory or culture. The powwow committee does not mean any disrespect to other beliefs or practices.
ORIGINS OF CONTEMPORARY POWOWS
Throughout time, song has been a primary medium for facilitating prayer, giving thanks, socializing and confirmation of honours within First Nations culture. The drum has historically been the fundamental instrument of accompaniment to First Nations songs while for many the message and response are further accentuated through dance. The origin of many songs and dances are attributed to visions. Each culture had individuals who were gifted in composition. Traditionally songs and dances were considered personal property or collective property of a specific group that could be given as gifts or bartered. In all First Nations culture song and dance played an integral role in demonstrating hospitality to visitors and celebrating events of significance.

Few of the early immigrants to North America acquired an appreciation for First Nations song and dance. In general, they were viewed as archaic and many perceived First Nations song and dance to be central to war rituals.

Regardless of the perceptions, the colonists knew song and dance played an integral role in First Nations culture so they became a target to assimilate First Nations.

All forms of First Nations song and dance were banned in Canada and the United States in the late 1880’s and persons rendering a song or performing a dance could be charged with an indictable offence. The policy was not repealed in the United States until 1934 when the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act was approved. In Canada, it remained in effect until 1951, when the revisions were made to the Indian Act. A significant number of First Nations songs and dances have been lost because of colonial efforts to assimilate First Nation’s culture and ceremonies.
The traditions of First Nations people are the roots of the contemporary powwows of today. Their evolution, however, began during the time of the ban when promoters arranged with Indian Agents to have First Nations encampments at their annual fairs and sports days as sort of sideshow attractions. The families were encouraged to dress in their traditional regalia and to perform traditional songs and dances at various times of the day. Another phenomenon which contributed to the evolution of contemporary powwows was the Wild West show. A feature attraction of these travelling shows was the performance of mock battles between First Nations and non-First Nations. Because promoters wanted a lively show that would attract an audience, they encouraged the performers to modify their dances and regalia accordingly.

The Grand Entry, men’s fancy dance, competition dancing and a number of specialty dances such as the hoop dance originated with the Wild West shows. The annual fairs and Wild West shows brought together dancers from various First Nations who had to work together to make a show that would appeal to the public, which led to sharing and blending of traditions. The use of the name powwow holds its origin to this time period. Powwow is an example of a word from a First Nations language being incorporated into English. The word originates from the Narangset First Nation from the east coast of the United States and actually refers to a shaman. However, settlers misconstrued the meaning to be making reference to a group of people who have gathered to perform rituals. The fair and Wild West show promoters used the term powwow to refer to dance demonstrations being performed.
The DRUM
There is no powwow without the drum. The sacred drum carries the heartbeat of all First Nations. It also carries with it the heartbeat of Mother Earth, and thus calls the nations together. The drum is a large base covered with buffalo or deer hide. Drum groups consist of eight or more people that drum in unison. Drum songs are created by the blending of the voices. These songs are often sung in the First Nations language of that drum group. It is the responsibility of the drum group and especially the drum leader to sing and play songs requested by the Master of Ceremonies or Arena Director.

It is said that the drum was brought to First Nations people by a woman, and therefore a woman’s spirit resides inside the drum. Appropriately, it is to be treated with respect and care, and strict behavior is expected of anyone coming in contact with the drum. The drum is often thought to help bring the physical and mental side of a person in touch with his or her spiritual side. As with many things in First Nations culture, the drum is used to bring balance and rejuvenation to a person through their participation in dancing, singing or listening to the heartbeat. This is supported with the fact that we have all been inside a mother’s womb and the only thing that comforted and protected was the sound of our mother’s heartbeat.

A drum is more than just a musical instrument; it has a life and a spirit. The beat of the drum is like a heartbeat, starting slowly and then beating more quickly as the song progresses. The drumsticks connect the spirit of the drum with the spirit of the singers. Many of the drums used at powwows have been handed down within families or given to a drum group. Most of the drums have been ceremonially blessed and must be smudged and prayed over before being used. A drum must be treated with great respect.
The drum can also refer to the singing group, which may consist of anywhere from four to 12 singers. Many singing groups have sung together for a number of years and have an established reputation. Powwow committees usually extend an open invitation to singing groups and are honoured when a large number of groups respond. The committee will provide a honourarium or day money/pay to the singing groups for their assistance. Some powwow committees may have limited financial resources or may wish to have only certain groups sing at their powwow, and in that case, an open invitation will not be made and only invited drums will be allowed to sing.

Traditionally, a drum group from the hosting community was designated the host drum and given the honour of singing the honour songs. Today, committees often invite a drum group to be the host drum or will designate a Canadian host drum and an American host drum.

At some powwows, one or more singing contests may be sponsored. Some contests are general and others may require the singers to sing a specific type of song. In a singing contest a drum group is judged on their preparedness, song knowledge, the ability of the group to establish a beat and uniformly maintain it, the synchronization of bringing in the first and second lead or push up, the flow of the song, the ability of the singers to harmonize and the appeal of the songs sung.

There are different styles of singers noted by which territory they originate. Northern style and Southern style are quite different with the range of vocals where Southern style are quite a bit lower than northern style.
The SONGS
Most powwow songs have a six part structure:

- a lead or push up, which is usually sung by the lead singer;
- a second, which is a repeat of the lead, or push, and is sung by the entire group;
- a chorus;
- a first ending;
- a second chorus, which may actually be a repeat of the first chorus; and
- a second ending.

These six parts are repeated in succession as many times as required. Usually intertribal songs will be sung through four times, competition songs will be sang through four times and a grand entry or honour song may be sung as many as 20 or more times. At the end of many songs, the singers will take a brief pause and then repeat the second chorus and final ending, this is called a tail. Four to six loud accenting beats are inserted part way through the second chorus; these are known as honour beats or down beats. Some say these hard beats represent gunshots and others say they are representative of the four directions, Mother Earth and the Great Spirit. The dancers count these beats to know when a song will end. Dance contests are really a competition between the singers and dancers. Therefore the singers sometimes will be asked to sing a trick song for a competition. Trick songs have unusual stops built into them and if the dancer does not know the song, they cannot anticipate when the song will stop.
The songs that are sung may be hundreds of years old or they may have been recently composed by one of the members of the singing group. First Nations songs can be grouped into three categories:

1. Those that have only vocables (sound syllables used to carry the melody of the song);
2. Those that have few vocables and are predominately word songs; and
3. Songs in which the first part of the song is vocable but has words in the second chorus.

A large hide drum or a commercial base drum is used for accompaniment. Occasionally a smaller hand drum will be used for prayer songs, honour songs or round dance songs. Four basic beats are employed in the accompaniment:

- the roll, which may be a roll or a very fast drum beat, which is used in sneak up songs, feather pick up songs and some honour songs;
- the parade beat, which is a slow steady one or two processional beat in which each beat is accented

There are variations of these beats and songs will incorporate more than one beat into them.

Traditionally most Northern Plains tribes did not have women’s singing groups. It is customary, however, for women to accompany the singers, joining in at the first and second chorus and to sing a little longer then the men at the second and final endings. The women usually sing an octave higher than the men, which adds to the beauty of the song. In addition to singing, the women may make unique trilling or lululing sounds when down beats are rendered or at the end of a song as an expression of appreciation or intense joy. This is usually done during honour songs, thanks giving songs, and victory songs.
GRAND ENTRY, EAGLE STAFF AND FLAGS

As a demonstration of respect, spectators are expected to stand during the grand entry, flag and victory songs, and invocation.

The Grand Entry, adopted from the Wild West shows and rodeos, is the gala parade of the dignitaries and dancers that opens each session of a powwow. One singing group is selected to sing in the grand entry, which is lead by dancers carrying the eagle staffs, and the flags. Provincial or state, tribal and other flags may also be brought in. A military guard, which may be comprised of veterans, those in active military duty, Royal Canadian Mounted Police and community police, follows the flag bearers. They are followed by the dignitaries (such as Chief and Council, visiting officials from other levels of First Nations, Provincial or Federal governments, special guests, corporate sponsors and the powwow organizers). The dignitaries are followed by the powwow royalty and/or visiting royalty.
They are followed by the men’s traditional dancers, men’s grass dancers, men’s fancy and men’s chicken dancer, women’s traditional dancers, women’s jingle dress dancers and women’s fancy shawl dancers. The youth follow the adults in the same categorical order. At a competition powwow all dancers are required to participate in the Grand Entry.

The dancers and dignitaries dance in a clockwise path around the dancing area until all have entered the dancing area. When all have entered the dancing area the Grand Entry song is concluded and another singing group is called upon to sing the flag song, which is comparable to the national anthem. The dancers and dignitaries remain in their position during the flag song. Following the flag song is the victory song during which the dancers and dignitaries dance in place to the beat of the drum.

At the conclusion of the victory song, an Elder is called upon to address the people and render a prayer. The eagle staff and flags are then posted, during which time the flag bearers and military guard are introduced.

**Once the eagle staff and flags have been posted, the spectators may be seated.**

Following the posting of the flags the dignitaries are introduced. At the opening session of a powwow, the Chief of the host First Nation or chairperson of the hosting organization gives a welcoming address. Other dignitaries may also be asked to make an address when being introduced. When introductions are completed, the announcer will call upon a drum group to sing an intertribal song that initiates the intertribal dancing for the session.

**During the introductions and speeches, the dancers remain stationary in their position.**
INTERTRIBAL DANCING

Intertribal dancing is a time for all to enjoy the spirit of song and dance. Everyone, including the spectators, are encouraged to dance and are free to dance their own style. On occasion the arena director may call for a specific type of dance such as the sneak up, crow hop, round dance or two step. At traditional powwows most of the dancing is intertribal. At competition powwows, rounds of intertribal dancing are done before the contest begins and between contest categories—this sets the mood and tempo for the session and provides an opportunity for the dancers to warm up.

Spectators are welcome to join in all intertribal dancing. You do not need to be in regalia; street clothes are acceptable.
COMPETITION DANCING
Each powwow committee establishes its own rules based upon their First Nations traditions and the evolving norms for competition powwows. Typically all dancers are required to register in one category which is determined by their style of dance and age. Today most powwows set their categories based on seven styles of dance: men’s traditional, men’s grass, men’s fancy, men’s chicken, women’s traditional, women’s jingle and women’s fancy. There are usually five age divisions: golden age, adult, teens, juniors and tiny tots.

In competition dancing, dancers are given numbers, which they must wear for identification. They are awarded points for participation in Grand Entries, intertribal and their performance in contests. Those earning the highest cumulative points in a given category are declared the winners. The committee predetermines the number of places that will be awarded for each category. Today winners are given cash prizes; other gifts and trophies are optional.

Dancers competing in contests must be in full regalia appropriate to the dance style of the category. Dancers who drop an eagle feather or another part of their regalia and those who overstep the drum or stop before the song is over should disqualify themselves for the session when dancing in competition.

SPECIALS
Specials can be sponsored by families, organizations or the powwow committee and are scheduled into the powwow agenda. Possible specials include an honour song for an individual or group, an initiation ceremony for a dancer dancing for the first time, a dance contest, which is sponsored by an organization or family to honour one of their members who
dances or enjoys that style of dance, or a blanket dance to raise funds to aide an individual, family, group or organization. In contemporary powwows there has also been specials initiated by different corporate sponsors and private businesses.

Ideally, families or organizations wanting to sponsor specials should make arrangements with the powwow committee prior to the powwow. However, it is possible to approach the Arena Director during the powwow to request time for an unscheduled special. Most powwow committees are willing to grant time for specials.

HONOUR SONGS
These are special songs sung to demonstrate respect for an individual or group in recognition of their accomplishments, return from military service, birthday, or anniversary. At times they are sung as a demonstration of support for individuals or groups facing adverse situations or in memory of someone deceased. The individual or group requesting the honour song will select a drum group to sing the song and serve them with the appropriate protocol. In some cultures, individuals have their own song, which is sung for them when they are being honoured. If a person does not have their own song, a generic honour song will be sung. Often the traditional name of that person will be inserted into the song. During the honour song, those being recognized will dance around the dancing area clockwise. At the conclusion of the song, the spokesman for those who requested the song will address the crowd informing them as to why the individual, family or group is being honoured.

Tobacco should be offered to the powwow committee or Arena Director and to the singing group when requesting an honour song. After the song and explanation of why the song was requested, a monetary gift should be given to the singing group and to the powwow committee.
During the honour song the crowd is expected to stand in demonstration of their respect to the individual, family or group. To further demonstrate their respect, they may go out into the dancing area to shake hands with the family or group. After shaking hands they may dance behind the family or group.

You may want to get into the gifting spirit yourself if you are enjoying the powwow. You may show your support by making a donation to the powwow committee or if you like how a certain dancer danced or enjoyed a particular song, you may express your appreciation by making a donation to the dancer or the singers. Donations of any amount are always welcome. During a dance contest, you may also show your support for a dancer by putting money at their feet while they are dancing.

Donations may be made at the announcers stand. The announcer will announce your donation and call forward those who you are gifting so they can shake your hand and thank you.

FEATHER PICKUP

During a feather pick up ceremony, the crowd is expected to stand and remove their hats or caps. Picture taking—with still or video cameras—is NOT permitted.

Most First Nations believe eagle feathers are sacred because they retain the spirit of the eagle who is the Great Spirit’s messenger. If an eagle feather is dropped during the dancing, a special ceremony is held to retrieve the fallen eagle feather. The beliefs and customs pertaining to fallen eagle feathers vary among First Nations. Usually four veterans are selected to dance a feather pickup song. During the dance the dancers will find the feather four times and one of the dancers will pick up the feather after the fourth time. When the dance is completed, the veteran who retrieved the feather will pray with it. The dancer
may elect to address the crowd to relate his qualifications for retrieving eagle feathers and about wearing eagle feathers. The feather is then returned to the dancer. In some cultures, friends of the unfortunate dancer will give away in honour of the dancer. More often, though, the dancer will give a monetary donation to each of the four dancers, the singers who sang the song, the announcer and the powwow committee. Usually the dancer’s family and friends will donate to the dancer to help him or her fulfill their obligations.

**WHISTLE SONG**

Some male dancers have earned the right, based on their culture’s protocol, to carry a special whistle when dancing. During the course of a powwow one of these whistle carriers may blow their whistle when a singing group is singing to prolong a song he favours or to have a certain song sung by a singing group.

*The whistle carrier is expected to make a donation to the singing group he has honoured by blowing his whistle. In some cultures it is expected that the whistle carrier address the crowd to relate how he has earned the right to carry a whistle.*
DANCE STYLES AND REGALIA
MEN’S TRADITIONAL

This style of dance stem from the days when hunting and war parties, upon returning to their home villages, would celebrate their successes by recounting their encounters with the prey or enemy. The regalia worn is highly symbolic and the colours are more subdued then those worn in other dance styles. Traditional dancers wear a single bustle made of feathers from birds of prey, such as the eagle, which converge on the hunt or battle site upon its conclusion. The bustle is representative of the battle field and its circular shape is symbolic of the cycles of nature and the unity which exists among all things. The two spike leathers pointing upward symbolize the link between all things on Mother Earth and the Great Spirit. Most traditional dancers wear a porcupine headdress called a roach, which is topped with two eagle feathers that signify enemies meeting in battle. The dancers usually carry items that denote their status as warriors such as a shield, coup stick (which is used to challenge the enemy and is decorated with eagle feather representing achievements earned in battle) and an eagle-wing fan. The movements of the traditional dancer are patterned after those used in tracking or of the animals and birds tracked.
MEN’S GRASS
During this century the grass dance or freestyle has been the most dominate of men’s dance styles in the northern plains. This style of dance was introduced into the northern plains and promoted by the Dakota/Nakota/Lakota who purchased, from their Omaha relatives, the right to organize grass dance societies and execute the ceremonial dances of the society. Membership in the Omaha Society, as it is called by the Dakota/Nakota/Lakota, was extended only to the most accomplished warriors who wore braids of grass tucked in their belts during the society dances, thus giving the name grass dance. The regalia of today is comprised of a fringed shirt, pants and apron decorated with bead and ribbon work. Feather bustles were only worn by the society’s officers when specific songs were sung for them during their dance ceremonies, therefore bustles have not been a standard part of the regalia.

Those dancing the grass dance style characteristically shake their shoulders, sway their torso from the hips in a side to side motion, dart suddenly changing their direction, and employ a series of trick steps, giving them the appearance of being off balance and thus resembling the grass blowing in the wind. The dancers keep their heads moving up and down in beat with the drum or give a quick nod with each beat to keep their roach feathers moving, which is a sign of a good dancer.
MEN’S FANCY
This style of dance can trace its origins to the Wild West show days of the late 1800’s and early part of the 1900’s when promoters incorporated men’s fancy war dance demonstrations and contests into their show routines. The performers were asked to wear two bustles and to make their regalia more colorful. Also they were told to jazz up their steps and movements. The men’s fancy war dance was a crowd pleaser in these shows. Those who danced with the travelling shows introduced this style of dancing into their home areas where it also became a spectator favourite. Thus the wild west show men’s fancy war dance competitions actually paved the way for the evolution of the contemporary competition powwows of the Northern Plains and a northern style of men’s fancy dancing evolved. Since the 1950’s this has been a preferred dance style for many boys and young men, but it has never gained prominence over the grass dance style even though it is a spectator favourite.

The northern style of men’s fancy incorporates acrobatics, spinning and speed with the standard double steps and movements of the grass dance style making it very challenging. The dancers execute fancy footwork and an array of complex moves while keeping beat with the drum and in competition must stop with both feet on the ground or in a split precisely when the drum stops. Trick songs, with unpredictable stops, are often sung for men’s fancy dance competitions and exhibitions. The men’s fancy dancers are the most vibrant and colorful of dancers.
MEN’S PRAIRIE CHICKEN DANCE
The origin of the Prairie Chicken Dance is claimed by both the Blackfoot and Cree Tribes. However, the Chicken Dance is more prevalent with the Blackfoot of southern Alberta and northwest Montana, who also have societal and ceremonial ties to the dance. One explanation of the origin of the Chicken Dance is that a young Blackfoot warrior was hunting and came across prairie chickens and before he took them for food, he observed their movements. That night, while having a restless sleep, he was given a vision in which the prairie chicken taught him the dance. That morning, with offering in hand, he revealed his dream to a Medicine Man and subsequently songs were made after for the dance. The prairie chicken dance mimics the movements of a prairie chicken and the regalia consist of a small feather bustle, headdress, beaded cape, armlets, ribbon shirt and a strap of bells from waist to ankle on both sides. The songs that accompany the Chicken Dance are of quick tempo, with a variation of a straight/shake beat of the drum. The Crow double beat style of song and dance has become the norm in contemporary powwow competition.
WOMEN’S FANCY SHAWL

In the early 1900’s the shawl replaced the buffalo robes and blankets worn traditionally by young women participating in public events such as dances. The women informally compete with one another to make the most unique and eye catching shawls. During the dance revival of the 1930’s and 1940’s, this competition became an integral part of women’s participation in the dances and they would on occasion incorporate some fancy footwork in an effort to accent their shawls while dancing. This naturally led to the inclusion of women’s fancy shawl dance competitions when the contemporary contest powwows evolved in the 1950’s. Adding more fancy footwork and spins, the fancy shawl dancers resembled dancing butterflies which many found appealing and it became the dominant style of dance for young women and girls until the 1980’s when the jingle dress was reintroduced. By the 1970’s the dancers had replaced their traditional buckskin dresses with light weight cloth dresses but the shawl continues to be the dominant feature of their regalia.
JINGLE DRESS
This style of women’s dance is believed to have originated in the Great Lakes area where it is said that an Ojibwa holy man dreamed of four women wearing these dresses. In his dream he was taught how to make the dresses, what songs to sing for the dance, and how the dance should be performed. He and his wife made four of the dresses, which they presented to the women he saw in his dream and he instructed them on how to dress and dance. From there the jingle dress and its style of dance spread throughout Ojibwa territory.
WOMEN’S TRADITIONAL
In the past women only danced on the sidelines in support of the male dancers unless songs were sung specifically for them to come into the center to dance. Their styles of dance were very modest and dignified, the most common being the stationary, the graceful walk, and the side step. It was not until the evolution of the contemporary powwow in the 1950’s that women came out to dance alongside the men in intertribal dancing. The woman’s traditional style of dance carries forward the dance traditions of women and is either done stationary or in the manner of the graceful walk. When dancing stationary, the women remain in one place bending their knees slightly and moving their bodies subtly up and down in beat with the drum while slowly moving their feet to make a discreet turn in one direction and then the other, symbolically seeking the return of their warriors. Those dancing the graceful walk take discreet steps in beat with the drum. When dancing, if the women hear the name of a relative in the song being sung or when the honour beats are rendered, they raise their fans. The symbolism associated with this act varies from First Nation to First Nation. For some, it is only those who have lost a son, brother or husband in battle who may raise their fan and it symbolizes their unending quest for their return.

Women dancing the traditional style may wear dresses of buckskin, which have fully or particularly beaded yokes or they may wear cloth dresses decorated with elk teeth, shells, coins or ribbons. Most traditional dancers carry a shawl draped over one arm and an eagle wing fan.
AGE DIVISIONS
Within a powwow every age, gender identities, and participants have a special role within the powwow. Most competition powwows have different age divisions such as adult, teen and junior dance categories. Honorariums/day money will be paid for all non-placing dancers in the dance categories.

**TINY TOTS**

Parents and grandparents take great pride in preparing tiny tots to dance. Many have elaborate outfits, which are modeled after those typically worn by adults. Young children are encouraged to join in with the older dancers. First Nation’s dance is not taught like other dances. Most dances are learned by observation, imitation and practice, which makes Tiny Tots such a special site to see.

**GOLDEN AGE**

Golden Age is for dancers who are 55 years of age or older. Usually older dancers do not have the same energy as the younger adults. This category consists of a competition of all the different dance styles for either self identified male and females.
TWO SPIRIT
RAINBOW
FLAG
The contemporary term “two-spirit” is rooted in First Nation pre-contact history and refers to a broad spectrum of people who have certain similarities with the terms lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transitioning or questioning (LGBTTTQ). This two-spirit is drawn from a traditional worldview that affirms that sexuality and gender diversity within First Nation culture and community are interwoven. The term two-spirit has been used widely throughout Canada by many Aboriginal people, often with nuances particular to the diverse tribes, communities, and language groups that have adopted it. While Western notions of gender, sexual orientation and race are generally conceptualized as discrete and independent, two-spirit identity involves the amalgamation of all three of these categories within the context of a shared cultural history.

Understanding the value and need for our two-spirit community to feel comfortable and safe and included at the powwow, the U of S added the Pride flag to the Grand Entry for the last five years. The colours of the flag symbolize:

- **red** (life)
- **orange** (healing)
- **yellow** (sunlight)
- **green** (nature)
- **blue** (harmony)
- **purple/violet** (spirit)

The rainbow flag acknowledges, represents, and honors lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and two-spirit (LGBTTT) members of Aboriginal communities and their friends and families. Most First Nations across North America historically have had a tradition of honoring and respecting two-spirit people. The University of Saskatchewan’s Graduation Powwow recognizes this history and welcomes everyone to join this celebration of culture.
1. **WHEN DO YOU STAND UP AND TAKE YOUR HAT OFF DURING A POWWOW?**

If you are able to stand, you should stand during the Grand Entry, Flag and Veteran Song, Honor Songs and the opening prayers. Please listen closely to the Masters of Ceremonies as they will let you know when you should stand.

2. **CAN I TAKE PICTURES OF THE POWWOW?**

You may take pictures or video footage. However, it is expected that if you are going to use the pictures or footage for something more than your personal enjoyment, that you do get the proper permission. If you plan to take wide-angle shots of a group of people, speak to the Arena Director or someone on the powwow committee. If you are planning to use individual shots, get the permission of the individual dancer.

3. **WHAT ARE THE DANCERS OUTFITS CALLED?**

Dancers outfits are called regalia, it has usually taken many months/years to create these outfits. Many people do not like regalia to be referred to as a costume.

Do not touch a dancer’s regalia without the dancer’s permission. If you notice that a dancer has dropped part of his or her regalia, inform them, but allow them to pick up the item themselves unless they ask you to assist.

4. **WHY DO ELDERS/ VETERANS GET SPECIAL TREATMENT?**

In First Nation’s culture there is a high level of respect shown to those who are older. They have gained wisdom through their experiences and the knowledge that they have acquired. Please remember to show the appropriate respect and if needed, provide assistance to the elderly and/or those with limited mobility.
Veterans have made sacrifices for our collective safety and defended our lands and territories. Within the powwow, Veterans are honored in many different categories as well as in the Grand Entry. Traditionally the powwow was used to recognize Veterans and their tour of duties. When the males would come back from war, they would reenact in dance and song their tour of duty and display their valor.

5. **CAN I JOIN IN AND DANCE WITH THE POWWOW DANCERS?**

The Masters of Ceremonies as they will let you know when Intertribal round is happening. If you see many different dance regalia dancing, then it is likely an intertribal dance. Please feel free to join and partake in the culture.

6. **WHERE CAN I SIT AT A POWWOW?**

At many powwows there will be designated places for spectators to sit such as bleachers and chairs. Many people bring their own chairs as there is usually limited seating. If you see a blanket or regalia placed over chairs, it should be assumed that the spot is reserved.

If you have children with you, we ask that you have them sit with you. It is very easy for young children to get lost in the crowd.

Please ensure that you are far enough away from the drums to allow judges, arena staff, and the singers to move around the drum.
The Powwow Committee would like to acknowledge the following for the support and teachings in the writing of this powwow booklet.

**DARLENE SPEIDEL** is an advocate of First Nations self determination and governance as well as First Nations control of education and the development of First Nations bilingual/bicultural education programs. She holds a Masters Degree in Education with an emphasis in bilingual/bicultural Education and has held a wide range of positions in education ranging from a teacher’s aide to director of education from the head start to university level.

**BOB BADGER** is from Kawacatoose First Nation and is the Cultural Coordinator at the University of Saskatchewan. He is both an avid Powwow dancer and singer and has played a key role in the U of S powwow for the last three years.

**DONNIE SPEIDEL** is the Cultural Resource Liaison at the Saskatoon Public School Board. He supports the respectful inclusion of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis histories, languages, cultures, traditions, and protocols. He has been our longest standing Master of Ceremony and organizer and has been a part of the powwow for over 20 years.

**JACK SADDLEBACK** is a two-spirit, transgender man from the Samson Cree Nation in Maskwacis in Alberta. He works with the University of Saskatchewan Student Union and has spent the last 10 years educating and advocating for gender and sexual diversity issues.
The University of Saskatchewan, in collaboration with Aboriginal leaders, Elders and other stakeholders, has developed a suite of Aboriginal symbols representing Aboriginal cultures from across Saskatchewan. These symbols have been designed and will be used to diversify the University of Saskatchewan’s visual identity, and to better promote and communicate Aboriginal initiatives.

**Tipi**

The tipi is a dwelling for First Nations people. Being nomadic people and always on the move, the tipi was designed for easy transport. Secure, mobile and providing shelter, the tipi symbolized the Good Mother sheltering and protecting her children.

**Inukshuk**

An extension of an inuk (a human being), the inukshuk were left as messages fixed in time and space. They may represent personal notes or a grief marking where a loved one perished. They act as markers to indicate people who knew how to survive on the land living in a traditional way.

**Eagle Feather**

The eagle feather is a symbol of truth, power and freedom. The dark and light colours represent balance. It is a very high honour to receive an eagle feather, and usually marks a milestone. When one holds the eagle feather, one must speak the truth in a positive way, showing respect at all times.

**Buffalo**

The buffalo symbolizes subsistence, strength and the ability to survive. The buffalo is a spiritual animal as it provided many things such as food, clothing, shelter and tools.

**Medicine Wheel**

The medicine wheel contains four quadrants of life each representing a certain aspect of holistic make-up: intellectual, spiritual, physical and emotional self. The four colours represent the four directions: red, yellow, white and blue (or black, green or darker colours depending on the Aboriginal group). Four is a very significant number in Aboriginal culture.
Hide With Willow Hoop
All First Nations believe that their values and traditions are gifts from the Creator, including the land, plants and animals. Hides are believed to be offered by the animal as the Creator wished and, therefore, as the animal died the hunter would thank the animal for its offering.

Rainbow
The rainbow is a sign of the great mystery, the Creator’s grace reminding all to respect, love and live in harmony. Rainbow colours are seen as stages in life and they follow individual belief systems of various First Nations.

Métis Sash
The sash is a symbol of present-day Métis identity but had many uses in the early days, often functioning as a rope or a belt. The infinity sign (∞) on the sash symbolizes two cultures together and the continuity of the Métis culture. The sash uses traditional woven patterns and colours to represent their individual communities.

Drum
Traditionally given to men for ceremony and prayer, the drum is the heartbeat of the Earth, and feeds our spirit. The drum has the spirit of the deer and the tree that were offered as a gift from the Creator for the drum, and it guides people home.

Turtle
Symbolizing Mother Earth, the turtle is depicted with 13 inner markings, each representing a cycle of the Earth around the sun. There are 28 smaller outer markings of the shell representing the days of each cycle.

Red River Cart
The primary means of travel and transportation of goods for Métis people, the Red River cart has become synonymous with the Métis.

Star/Star Blanket
The star symbol on star blankets ends with eight outer points to represent one’s travels from grandmother, to daughter/son and then to grandchild and to Mother Earth. Eight diamond quilted shapes form the centre and pieces are added to each row to increase the size of the star pattern.