

Indigenous Education Fund Opportunity: ?EL,?ELO?EN ?E S,ISTEW?

<https://dsai.ca/news/indigenous-education-fund-opportunity-kel-keloten-ces-istew/>

VANCOUVER, BC – With a goal of healing, encouraging and supporting Indigenous people pursuing post-secondary studies in engineering or architecture, several companies in these industries have established an education fund for Indigenous students residing in British Columbia. The first ?EL,?ELO?EN ?E S,ISTEW? award of \$5000 will be presented to one successful applicant this November for the 2021/2022 academic year.

The genesis of the ?EL,?ELO?EN?E S,ISTEW? education fund stems from a group of consulting firms, engineers and architects, being drawn together to compose a proposal for a large Federal project in the Sidney/Central Saanich area of British Columbia. As part of this project’s requirements, the team prepared a comprehensive plan to include the communities of W?SÁNE? Nation and Malahat Nation. The development of the proposal sparked deeper conversations and commitments from the firms to move forward on instigating change, within these Indigenous communities and others like them, across the province.

Although the team was not awarded the project, its members emerged united in a greater and more selfless cause: improving the educational opportunities for Indigenous technical professionals. Since the summer of 2020, they have remained committed to creating an education fund. They have aligned as founding partners to form a steering committee for the fund, which includes the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Gwaii Engineering, the AME Consulting Group, Diamond Schmitt architects, Number TEN Architectural Group, AES Engineering and RJC Engineers. Together, they have established an endowment to launch ?EL,?ELO?EN ?E S,ISTEW?. The group’s first award of \$5000 will be presented to a deserving Indigenous student this coming school year, and for years to come.

The naming of the post-secondary education fund acknowledges the territories of Lekungen, W?SÁNE? and Malahat Peoples. The lands of these Coast Salish Peoples brought the group together to pursue this initiative as a team. Without the openness and collaboration of the W?SÁNE? Leadership Council and Malahat Nation, the group would not have been able to lay the foundation that allowed them to develop the fund. To honour the local Nations the team worked with the SEN?O?EN Language-Revitalization Group to name the award and begin in a good way. What emerged through conversation was this phrase: ?EL,?ELO?EN ?E S,ISTEW?. The English translation is “a dream for what becomes of you.”

According to Nadia *S’ahn N’ahn Guu’as* Salmaniw of the Victoria Native Friendship Centre “This initiative will bring more Indigenous voices into architecture and building design, imbuing these industries with Indigenous values, perspectives and ways of knowing, being and doing.”

AME Consulting Group and Gwaii Engineering contributed the initial funding for the endowment, solidifying this initiative and bringing together a range of cross-country partners to support the fund’s inaugural launch. The fund’s other founding contributors include: Toronto and Vancouver-based architects, Diamond Schmitt, the Victoria offices of Number TEN Architectural Group, AES Engineering and RJC Engineers. Victoria Native Friendship Centre will provide vital leadership and guidance to this group. These collective contributions to the endowment fund enable financial sustainability in perpetuity and ensure that financial support will be available to future Indigenous engineering and architecture students, no matter what.

“There are very few Indigenous professionals working in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Many engineering and architecture firms work with Indigenous communities, but few have Indigenous professionals working within their organizations. Our partners recognize this and want to help Indigenous

people pursue careers in our industry,” said Kear Porttris, Committee Chair and Métis engineering graduate.

Students are invited to apply for the fund beginning on June 21, 2021, National Indigenous Peoples Day. Eligible students must be working toward a career in engineering or architecture and be enrolled in post-secondary studies for the 2021-2022 academic year. The deadline for expressions of interest is September 30, 2021. Fund recipients will be announced on November 15, 2021. For more information on eligibility requirements, please visit: www.IndigenousAEaward.ca

EL, ELO, EN, E S, ISTEW education fund Partners:

AME Consulting Group Ltd is a full-service mechanical consulting engineering firm specializing in sustainable design. Our projects not only create a space of experience for us today, but reflect our purpose to future generations. Since inception in 2005, AME has grown from a single small office to locations in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, and Revelstoke. Our talented team of professionals offer extensive experience designing strategic solutions for a diverse range of projects, locally and across Canada. For more information please visit: www.amegroup.ca

Gwaii Engineering is an Aboriginal consulting company located in Victoria, B.C. offering expertise in project management, civil/environmental engineering, physical hydrogeology, land development, housing, and planning. Our strategic vision is to service First Nation communities on Vancouver Island, the BC coast, and beyond. We are a proud member of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business and are registered under the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business. Our team of Gwaii partners have been in business together for over eight years, working in the engineering industry on Vancouver Island since 1990. For more information please visit: www.gwaiieng.com

Diamond Schmitt is a global architecture firm delivering architecture that empowers people, communities, and organizations to harness change for the greater public good, employing a collaborative research process to create bold designs renowned for their exceptional performance and meticulous craftsmanship from its four studios located in Toronto, New York, Calgary, and Vancouver. For more information please visit: www.dsai.ca or email Melanie Coates: mcoates@dsai.ca

Number TEN Architectural Group: We serve our clients and communities by designing places that make life better. We love working with people who go the extra mile, strive for design excellence and push themselves to achieve more than expected. At Number TEN, we are known for having a positive approach, down-to-earth style and an ability to lead while building lasting relationships. Our passionate and highly specialized team of architectural and interior design professionals will listen carefully to your project goals and find the right path to help you get there. Using innovative technology, sustainable design strategies, efficient processes and a team-focused approach, we thrive at creating exceptional spaces that work, beautifully. For more information please visit: www.numberten.com or email Barry Cosgrave: victoria@numberten.com

AES Engineering: is a leading Canadian consulting firm providing electrical engineering, lighting, and technology services for the built environment. Established in 2001, we have grown to over 130 people across British Columbia and Alberta while servicing clients nationwide. We provide solutions for building construction and infrastructure through mindful design and future-ready technology. Our unique approach prioritizes long-lasting sustainability, innovation, value, and well-being. Our focus is simple: We are designing a better tomorrow. For more information please visit: www.AESengr.com or email: info@AESengr.com

RJC Engineers is a national engineering firm that celebrates creative thinking, prompt service and technical excellence in the design and maintenance of structures. Bringing the best of RJC to every project for over seven decades, we integrate ingenuity and practicality to create success for our clients. For more information, please

visit www.rjc.ca or email Tanya Kennedy Flood: tkennedyflood@rjc.ca

Victoria Native Friendship Centre is a vital resource for urban Indigenous individuals and families in Lekungen, Coast Salish, and W̱SÁNE? territories. Their mandate is “to encourage and promote the well-being of Urban Aboriginal People, by strengthening individuals, family, and community.” For more information please visit: www.vnfc.ca

Victoria Foundation: Since 1936, the Victoria Foundation has been managing charitable gifts to create permanent, income-earning funds that support hundreds of charities each year. We grant nearly a million dollars a month, and to-date we have distributed more than \$269 million to support charities locally and across Canada. For more information please visit: www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca