

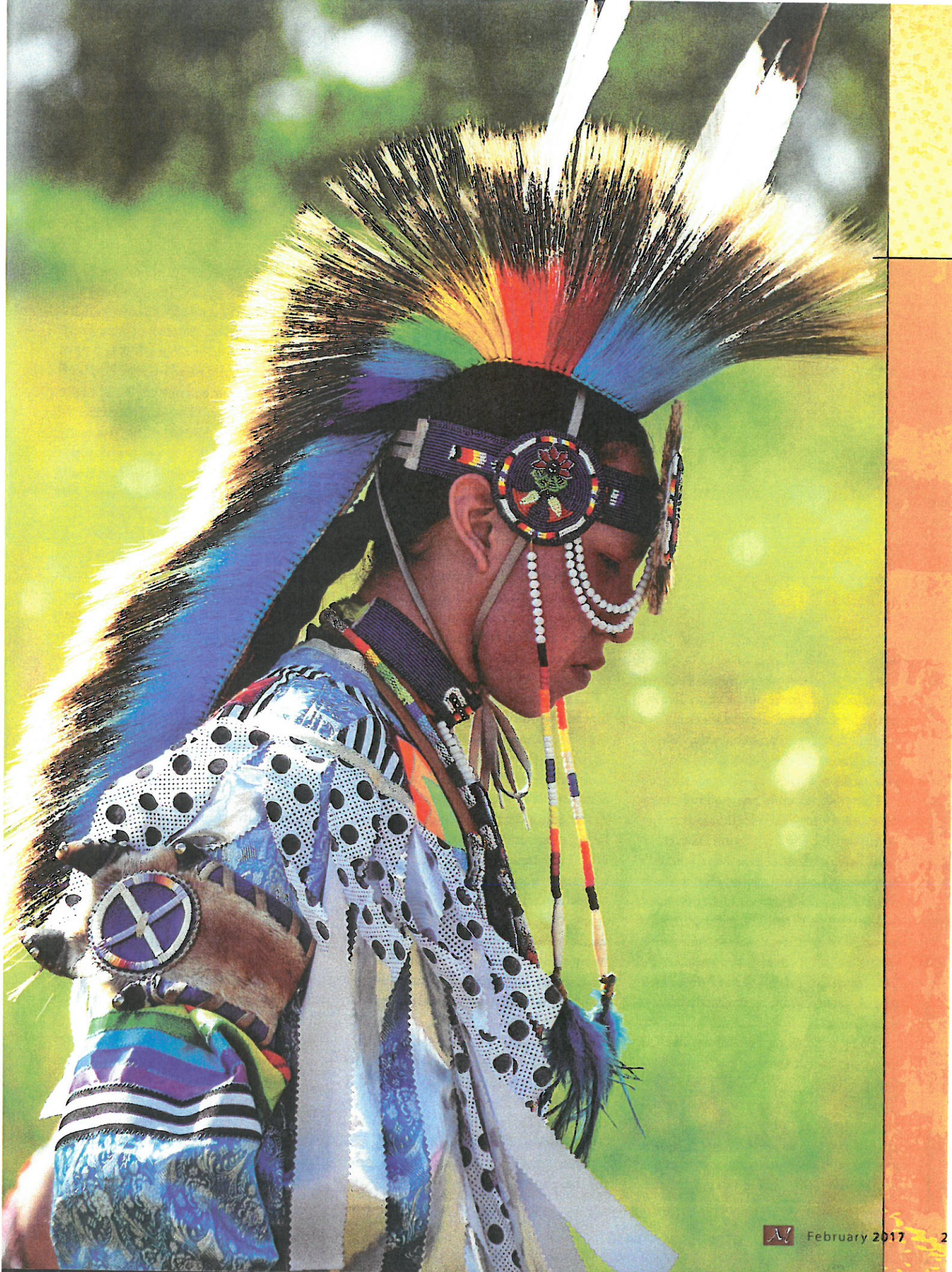
“I expect Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) kids to change the world, and I am eternally grateful to the Adventist school system for being the catalyst for that change.”

A Catalyst for Change

BY LARRY WILKINS

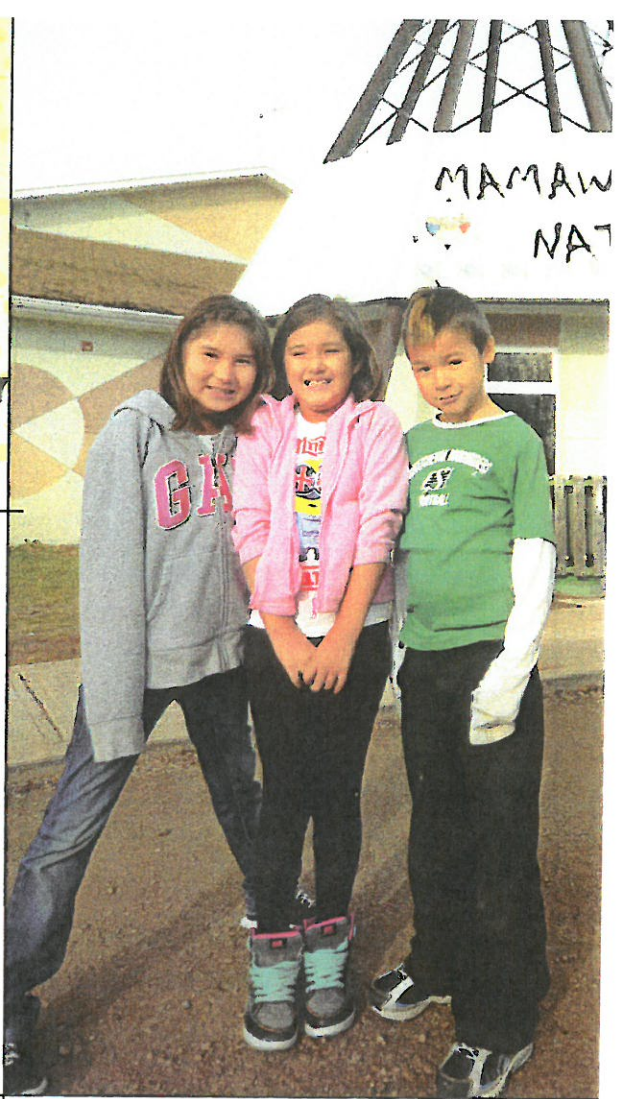
As a young man in high school, I was trying to understand myself and this world we live in. I wasn't just curious; I had a voracious appetite for knowledge and understanding. I studied all of the sciences. I loved studying our physical world. It all made sense to me, and it kept my mind very busy. In fact, I have never experienced boredom. For me there has always been more to learn, always more work to be done.

In high school, while my young mind was being developed, I was sold the biggest lie of all. In, amongst all of the pure sciences, they threw in a complete work of fiction so that my mind accepted it along with everything else. For a while in my formative years I believed in the theory of evolution.





The Original "Home" of MANS—Students feel good about coming to MANS because of the clear respect shown to their culture. The teepee at the entrance of the existing school is an important symbol for the Cree, traditionally associated with the mother and the giving of life.



McDowell did a story on me in the *Messenger*, and a faithful reader was inspired to match my donation. I knew that if I could increase the amount of my donation and the couple would match it, the building project would receive a much-needed boost in seed money. I asked Lynn to give me the night to think about it.

I didn't sleep much that night. I prayed and fretted and fought off the distraction of the No-Thing as hard as I could. I focused as hard as I could on Jesus and on God's words in Malachi. What a battle. The truth is I was petrified, anxious, nervous, sweating like a pig, and praying as hard as I could.

I thought about Jesus in the garden the night before He was to be crucified. While Christ was the embodiment of God on earth, He did wear a "meat suit" the same way everyone else does. He knew what was coming and He knew this was gonna hurt—every way that a body and mind could hurt.

So, I decided that if Christ was my example, I would put my big boy pants on and do it anyway. I called Lynn that morning and asked her to double my commitment and tell the donor. After I did that, my mind continued to race. I was a nervous wreck.

The next morning I looked out my window and saw my neighbour wheel into his driveway. Right behind him was a car I didn't recognize. My neighbor had moved out about a year and a half ago and never once, to my knowledge, returned. I was going to be late if I went

over to say hi, but I thought I should go to see how he was doing. As it turned out, the second car was the realtor's, and the realtor was there to list the house. He handed me his card and told me to call him later.

My neighbor had bought the house in 2007 before the real-estate crash. He paid \$700,000, then spent about \$200,000 in renovations. I offered him \$525,000 with no financial conditions and immediate possession. By 5 p.m. that day I owned the house that was ready to sell with a healthy profit.

The moment of time I had doubled my commitment to MANS to the time I had more than enough money to make my first year's payment (with zero sacrifice) was around eight hours.

This year the Alberta economy is down at least 14 percent, layoffs galore, and my competitors across the board are down compared to 2015. Yet, my businesses are up year-to-date 11 percent, and we are now the number one volume age management clinic in Northern Alberta and one of the top clinics in Canada.

Please understand: I did not suddenly become a much smarter businessman. I take no credit for my success. This is all from the hand of God. I am a firsthand witness to the hand of God in action. I don't know why, but the Alberta Conference gave me a front-row seat to watch our Father do His thing.

While we still need help and we are a long way from completing the MANS High School funding and construction projects, I am already eagerly anticipating what job our merciful Father is going to put us to work on next.

My prayer is this: "Lord, please don't fire me. Please let me work for you for the rest of my life. Lord, You know I get scared and I'm absolutely useless when I take my eyes off of You. Please have mercy on me. Let me focus on You instead of on this world, and let my work be Your will And Lord, please give me the faith and the bravery I need in this life in order to prepare myself to meet you face to face. Amen." ■

Larry Wilkins is Honorary Chair of The Bridge Campaign for Mamawi Atosketan Native School's high school building project. He is a Mohawk entrepreneur who owns and is CEO of External Affairs Medical Spas in Edmonton and St. Albert.

