



# Dene Heroes Publications

2017 \$100,000 Youth Category Winner



## THE ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE

The Arctic Inspiration Prize is the largest annual prize in Canada. It inspires, enables, and celebrates the achievements of the people of the North, recognizing diverse teams with innovative projects in the fields of education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional knowledge; climate change; food security; and the economy.

### NOMINATOR

Daniel McNeely

*MLA Sahtu, Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories*

### TEAM

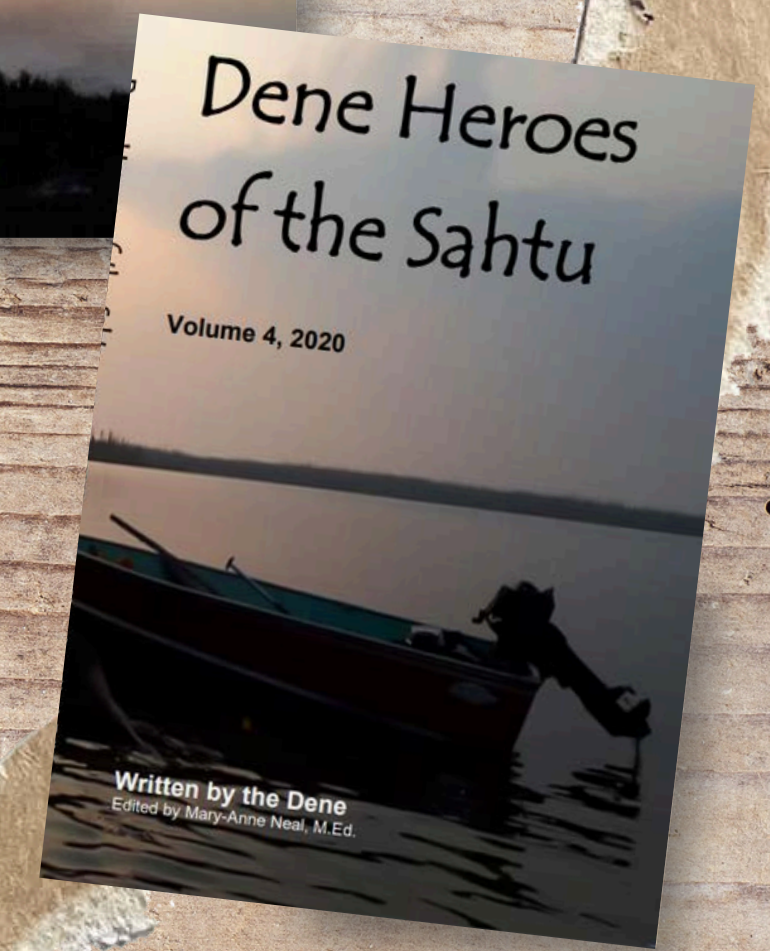
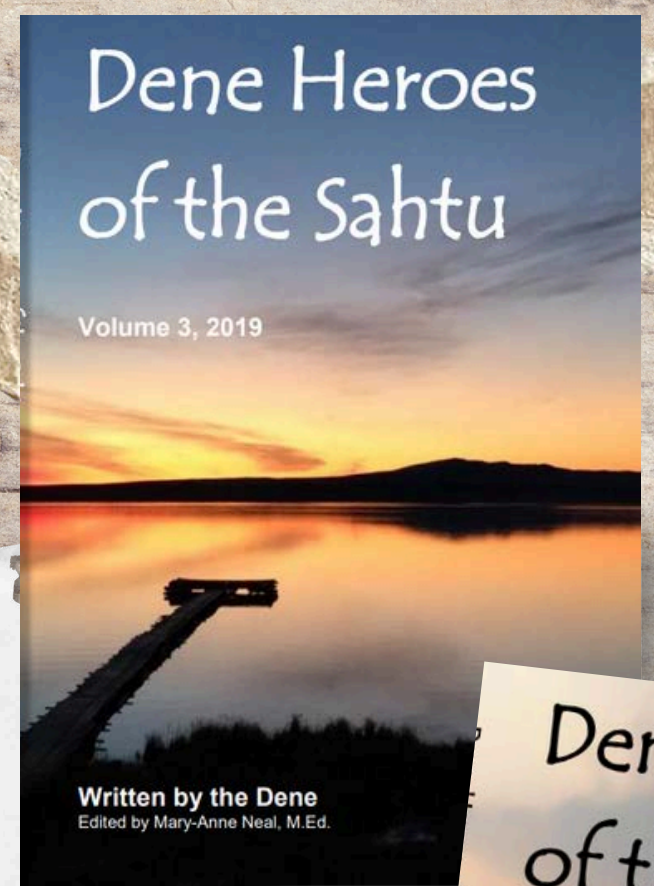
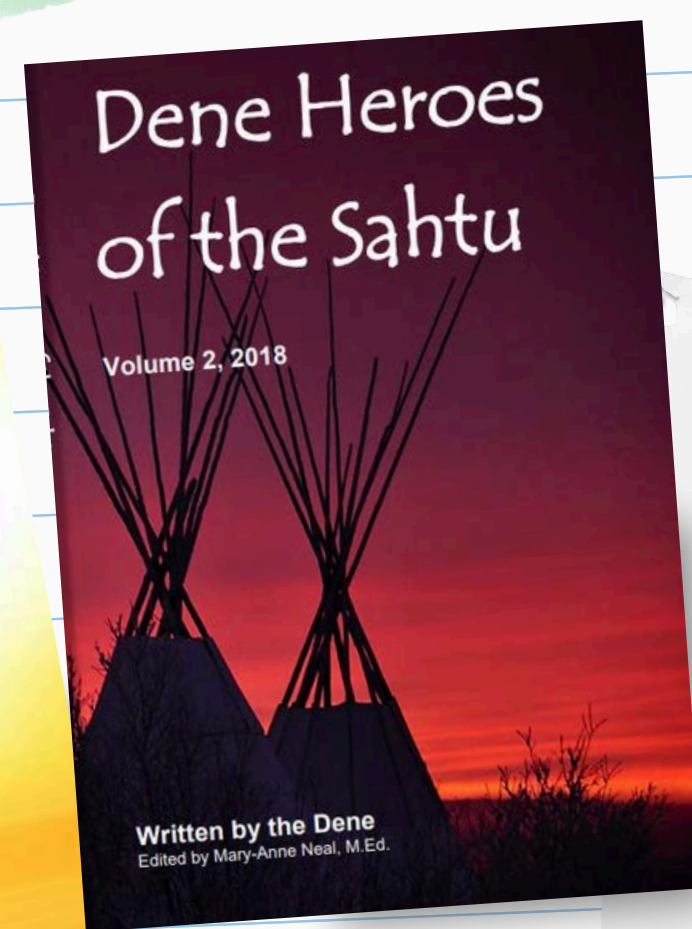
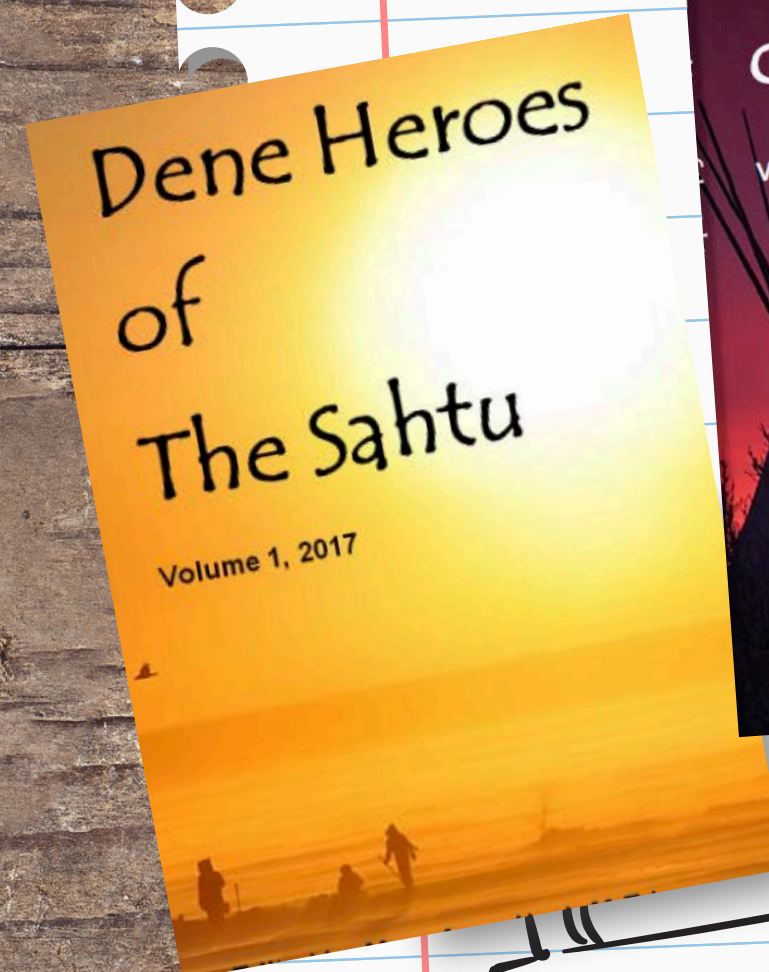
Dakota Orlias (Team Leader), Theresa Blanche, Barbara Ann Gully, Sunita Marie Kochon, Mary-Anne Neal, Martha Stewart, Isabel (Tutcho) Orlias

THIS REPORT WAS COMPILED AND CREATED BY THE QATALYST RESEARCH GROUP, WITH THE HELP OF PEGGY JAY, THE PROJECT TEAM, AND AIP.

máhsı nıwε  
thankful



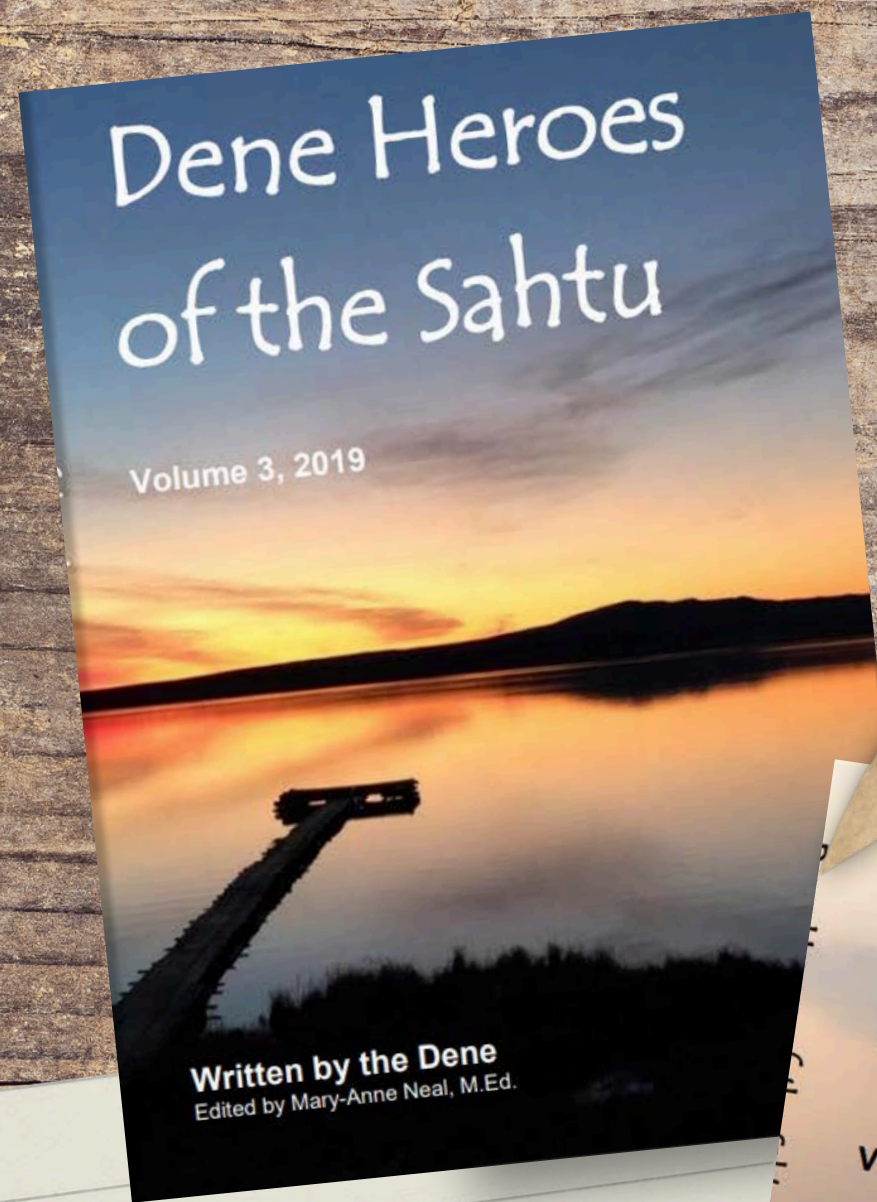
TIMELINE



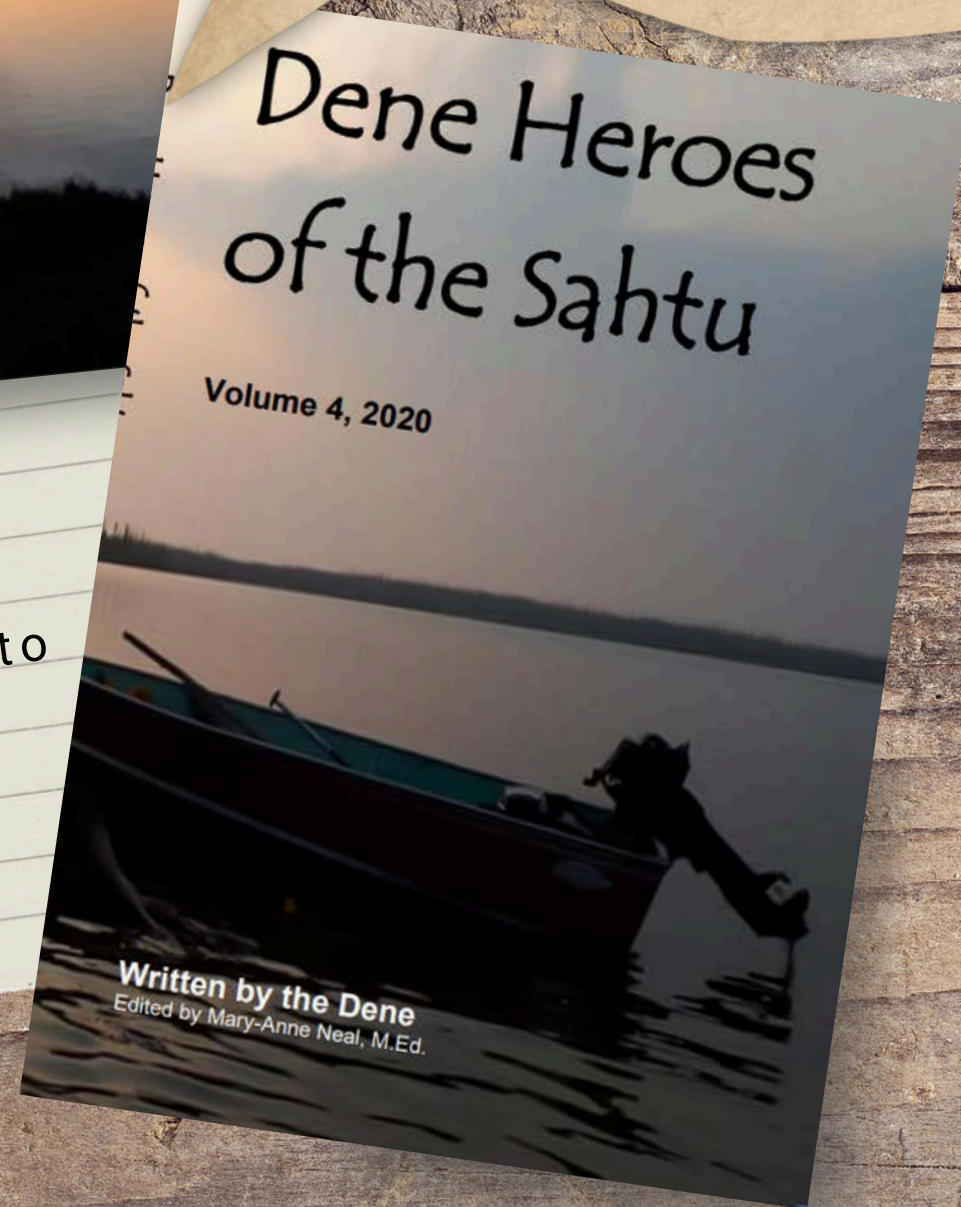
Dene Heroes Publications had already produced two volumes of stories before winning the 2017 Youth category prize from AIP. With this funding, they were able to create volumes 3 and 4 in 2019 and 2020.







Since receiving AIP's funding, two volumes have been published and over 80 additional people have contributed photographs, drawings, translations, and stories.



Filled with inter-generational stories, authors range from 10 to 82 years of age.

**DENE HEROES OF THE SAHTU,  
STORIES ABOUT THE DENE BY  
THE DENE**

"These stories capture the wisdom, courage, tenacity, and resilience of the Sahtu Dene People."

Heroes elevate us, inspire us, and bring us together. The heroic qualities of the Dene celebrated in the pages of these books motivate all of us to be better people.

arihtt'e  
book





xaré bóot'ineka  
family ♡

OUR VOICES MATTER

*The Foot Prints I Intend to Follow*  
By Kyanna Lee Lennie-Dolphus

I honestly don't know where I would be without my grandmother. I don't know where I would get the strength from or the courage to keep pushing forward. I believe God has blessed me with such an Amazing, Strong, Free Spirit, Unconditional loving grandmother I could ever ask for.

*Dene Heroes, Vol. 3, page 80*



*Dene Laws*  
By Dakota Orlias

It's up to my generation to pass on our Dene teachings, keep our Dene culture strong, and most importantly to look after our land and respect it, as past leaders did. We're rich in so many ways with our land. People need to recognize that and not take advantage of it.

*Dene Heroes, Vol. 3, page 47*

*From the Depth of Darkness to the Shining Light of Hope*  
By Melanie Gardebois

I'm going back to school to become an addictions counselor to inspire and help be the change in my community. I'm very happy and excited for my future now. I'm being guided by the Creator to spread hope and courage for the people behind me. I have a strong voice. My ancestors will be very proud of the woman I am today.

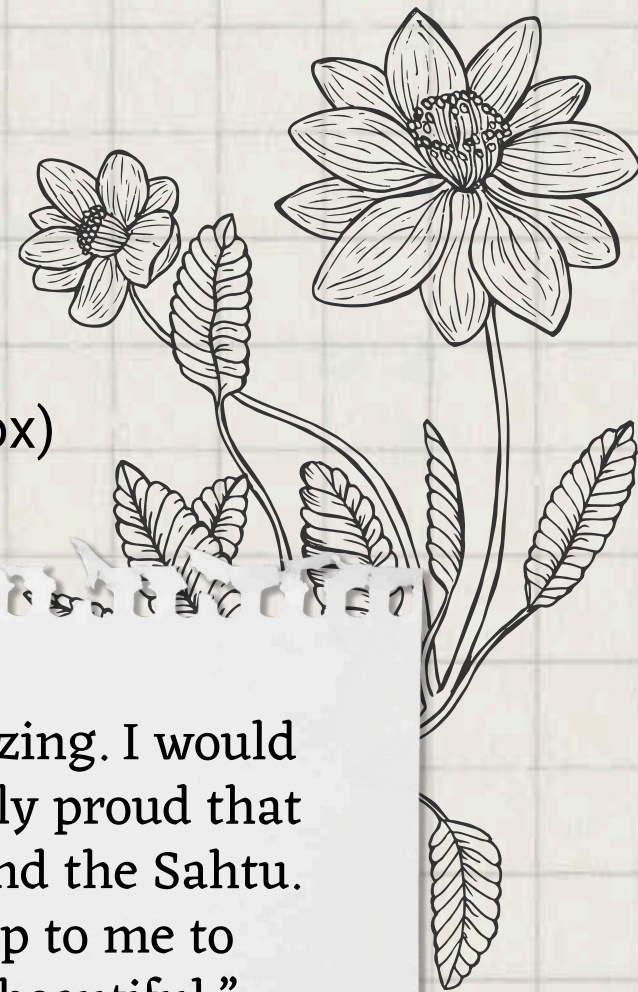
*Dene Heroes Vol. 3, page 67*



## THE DENE HERO PROJECT IS AN EXAMPLE OF ACTIVE, EXPERIENTIAL, MULTI-GENERATIONAL, AUTHENTIC LEARNING

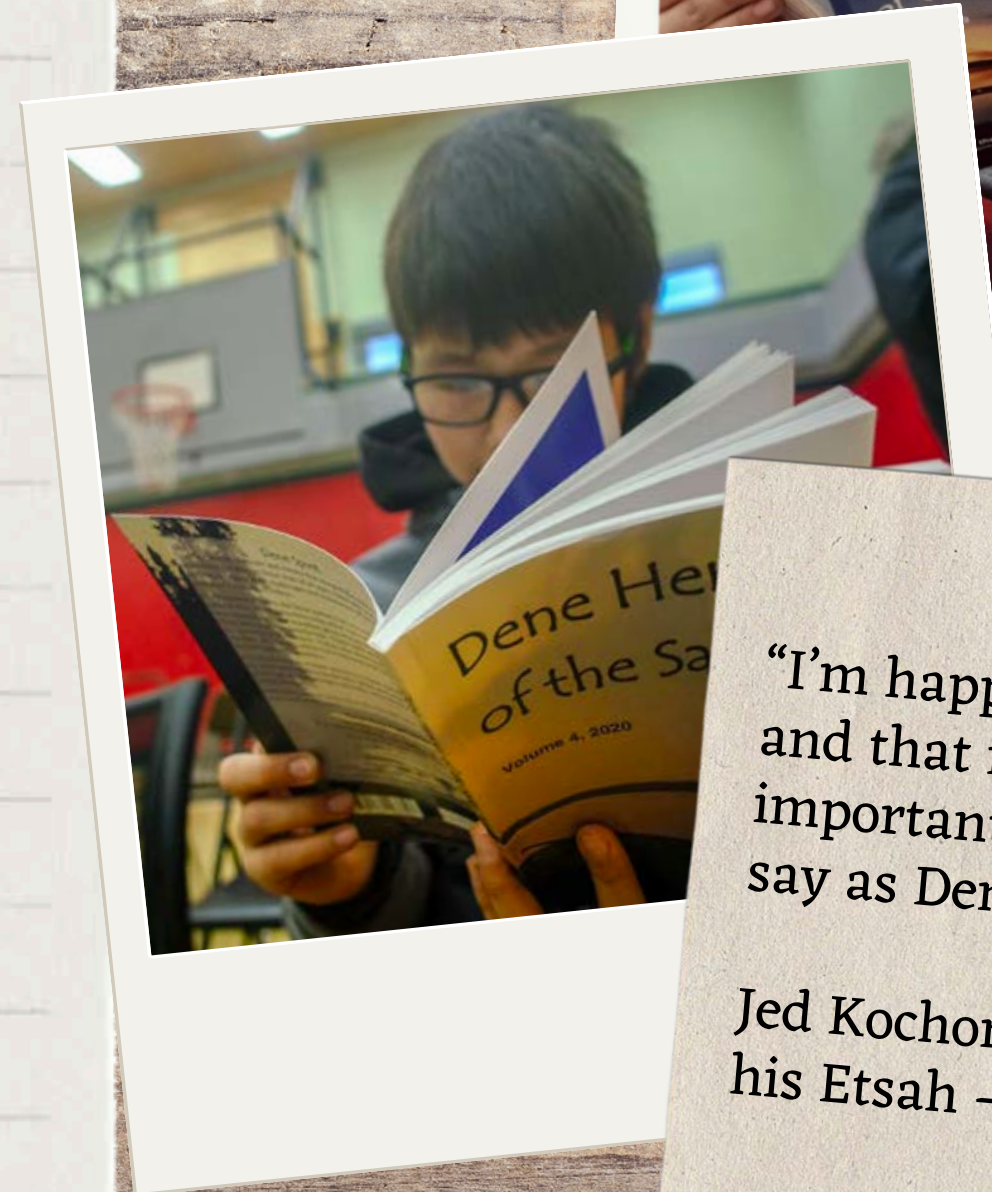
Youth in 5 Indigenous communities, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, Tulita, Déljñę, and Colville Lake, developed many transferable skills during the *Dene Heroes Publications* project.

- Literacy skills (writing, editing, reading)
- Financial literacy (budgeting)
- Collecting stories
- Interviews
- Public speaking
- Book publication
- Accountability
- Time management
- Use of technology (Excel, Dropbox)



“This opportunity was amazing. I would do it all over again. I’m really proud that I can help other youth around the Sahtu. So many youth have went up to me to tell me it [my story] was so beautiful.”

Shaylynn Marie Mackeinzo, Dene Heroes Champion



“I’m happy people will read this book and that my story would be in there. It’s important for people to hear what you say as Dene people.”

Jed Kochon, who wrote of his Dene hero, his Etsah – grandfather.



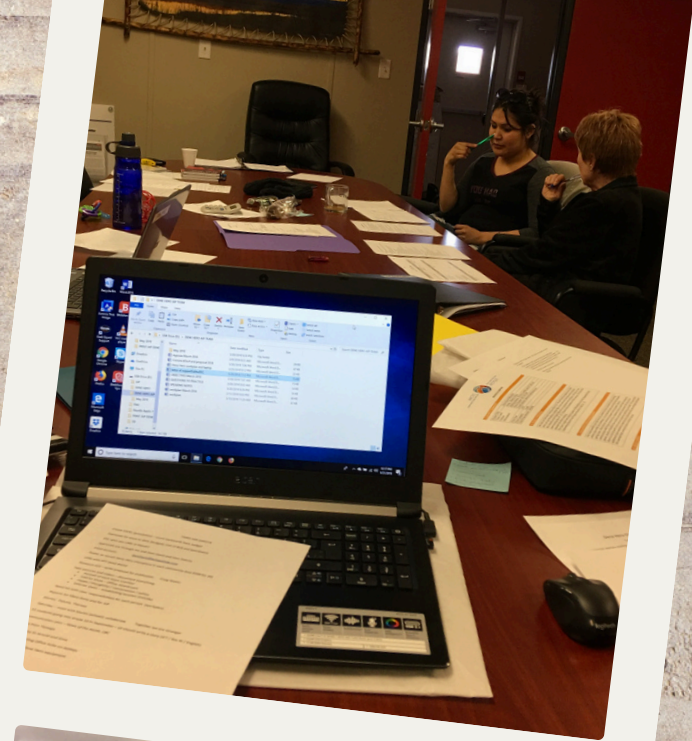
gqzhq - smart

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

6 youth were hired to aid in all aspects of the *Dene Heroes Publication* project, providing them with skills and setting them up for future opportunities.

One youth now has a career with North Wright Air as a direct result of their experience working with *Dene Heroes*.

Another is serving their second term on the band council of Behdzi Ah'da First Nation.





## FOSTERING PRIDE

*Dene Heroes Publications* hosted book launch celebrations in Déljñę, Fort Good Hope, and Colville Lake.

In addition to book distribution and readings, participants enjoyed feasting, speeches, and drum dances to honour the contributors.

- Déljñę: 2020 – 75 participants
- Fort Good Hope: 2017 – 80 participants
- Colville Lake: 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 – 30-40 participants each year



"The stories are written by the Dene, for the Dene to improve literacy, pride, and traditional knowledge."



*Dene Heroes Publications* has received extensive attention from various sources, including several videos highlighting contributors and the stories they shared. View the video above for a profile from APTN reporter Charlotte Morrith-Jacobs.

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/388610812>

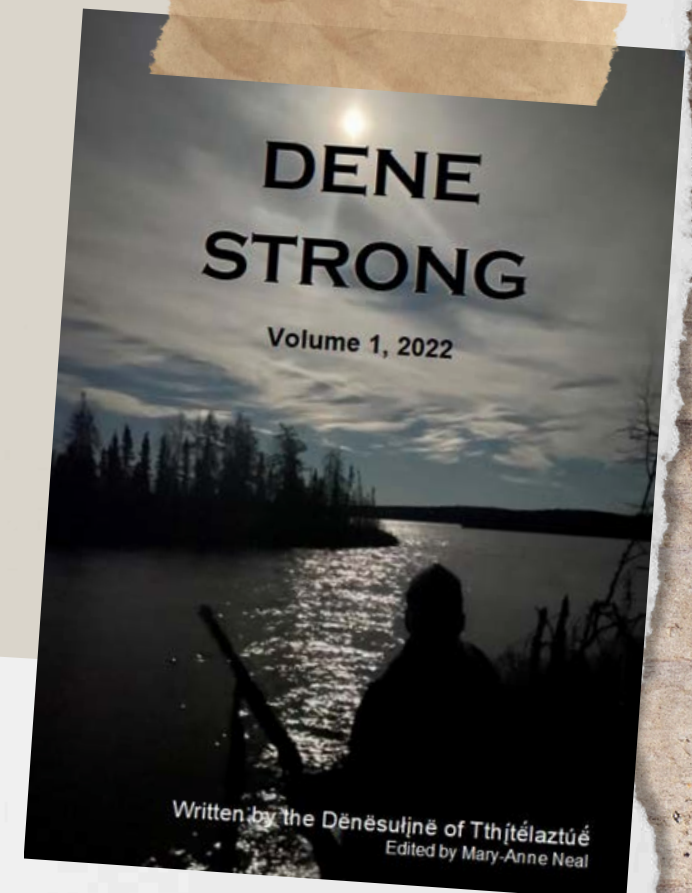


## DENE STRONG: STORIES FROM THE LAND OF THE BIG POPLAR

Having heard about *Dene Heroes of the Sahtu*, Shane Janvier was inspired to create *Dene Strong*, a compilation of 30 stories centered around La Loche, Saskatchewan. 1,500 copies of *Dene Strong* were printed, honouring the Dene people and preserving their heritage.

Whole-hearted community support was shown, including the Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan attending the book launch.

*Dene Heroes Publications* hopes that their work continues to inspire other parts of Canada to participate in this type of storytelling to preserve and celebrate their histories.



Shane Janvier and Mary-Anne Neal at the *Dene Strong* book launch.



<https://www.northwest.ca/community/community-engagement/658/stories-of-dene-heritage-preserved-on-the-page>

Click this link to read the story on NorthWest.ca

“IF I CAN CHANGE ONE PERSON’S PERSPECTIVE [ABOUT SOCIETY’S VIEWS OF THE DENE PEOPLE], I KNOW I HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE.”

SHANE JANVIER



# Sahtu Lands



DENE TS'IL!  
WE ARE DENE

## THE FUTURE OF *DENE HEROES*

*Dene Heroes* books are available in Sahtu schools and housed across NWT libraries. The Publication Team produced 700 copies of Volumes 3 & 4, and there are plans to create a 5th volume.

The team hopes that educators in schools across the NWT will turn to the *Dene Heroes* stories as a source of knowledge about Dene ways of life and heritage.





## PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

The success of the *Dene Heroes Publication Project* would not have been possible without the help of volunteers, staff, contributors, Champions, and the Dene people themselves.

*mahsi cho* to the following partners who contributed their time and resources:

Mary-Anne Neal  
Ayoni Keh Land Corporation  
Behdzi Ah'da First Nation  
K'Asho Got'ine First Nation  
Yamoga Land Corporation  
Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated  
Colville Lake, Fort Good Hope, Délı̨ne





Sahtúgot'inek'ə gokədə

book: ərihtt'ə

family: xáré bóot'inekə

friend: báhtáə / báhttí,

grandchild: becháa / bətsáə

grandfather: bətsáə

grandmother: bətsɪ

library: ərihtt'ə k'ə gots'ede dahk'ə

medicine: náídí

past: hɪnɪl ts'ə

people: deneke

person: dene

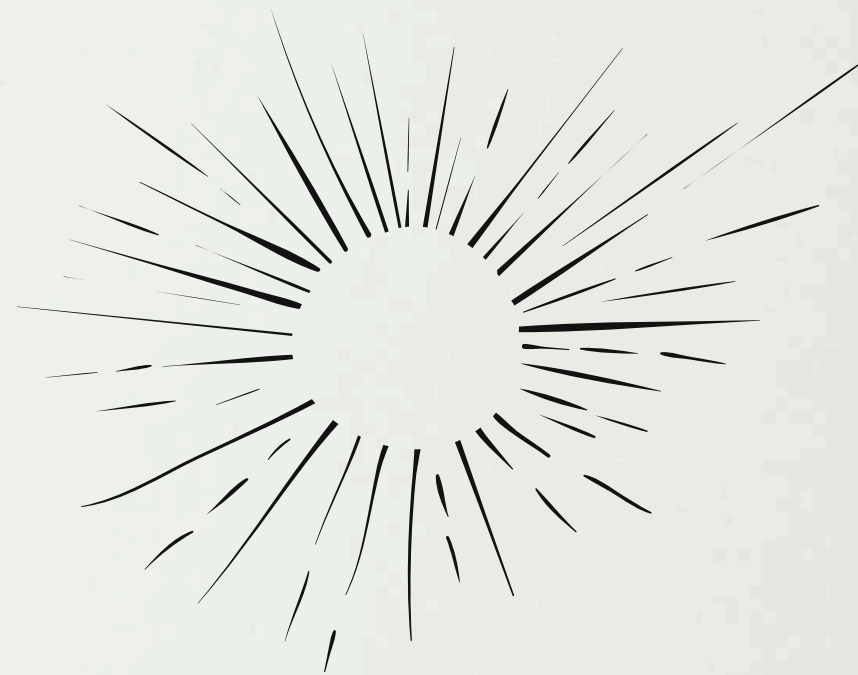
please: hánɪ

relatives: bóot'ine

remember: asɪl hənats'edí

smart: gɔzhɔ

thankful: máhsɪ nɪwə



From Sahtúot'ine Gokedé, a publication that reflects the Délıne dialect of Sahtúgot'inek'ə gokədə.

<https://deline.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Sahtuotine-Gokede.pdf>