

LENTEN TALKING CIRCLES INVITATION 2025

As a citizen of Fort William First Nation, Tanya Talaga benefitted from the women who challenged the Indian Act's stipulation that First Nation women who married male Settlers and male Settler-descendants lost their Status and were removed from their band lists. As a result of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), these matriarchs advocated for legislation to overturn this policy of enfranchisement. In 1985, Bill C-31 was passed by the federal government giving Chiefs and Councils of First Nations authority to restore women who prior to 1951 had been removed from band lists for marrying non-Indigenous men. Further revisions of Bill C-31 made it easier for these women and their descendants to have legal rights in Canada as full members of their First Nation. Much more needs to be done for Indigenous Peoples to identify who are citizens of their communities independently of the Indian Act lists of members. As a graduate of the University of Toronto in journalism and then as a journalist with the Toronto Star, Tanya Talaga was encouraged by her uncle Hank (Henry/Joseph Rodgers) Bowen b 1924 d 2011 and her mother Sheila Bowen to search for her great-great grandmother Annie Carpenter b 1871 d 1937. After her uncle's death, Tanya Talaga received a bag of documents which her uncle Hank had gathered in his attempts at discovering his family tree, including the death certificate for the author's great-great grandmother Annie Carpenter who was admitted to the Lakeshore Psychiatric Ontario Hospital in 1930 and died there in 1937. As a journalist, Tanya Talaga gathered stories about seven youth who had left schools in their Indigenous communities and died while attending schools and published **SEVEN FALLEN FEATHERS: RACISM, DEATH, AND HARD TRUTHS IN A NORTHERN CITY (House of Anansi Press, 2017)** about what she learned. In recognition for her passion for justice and the elevated levels of suicides among youth and young adults, Tanya Talaga was invited to speak about her research for the CBC Massey Lectures in 2017 and 2018. Her presentations were published as **ALL OUR RELATIONS: FINDING THE PATH FORWARD (House of Anansi Press, 2018)**, illustrating the resilience, ongoing resistance to policies and practices of governments and churches in separating children from their parents and extended families, and activism in seeking justice. It was not until her journey in May 2021 to the Kamloops Indian Residential School and then her return to Kamloops in May 2022 to attend a memorial ceremony that Tanya Talaga began her search for her great-great grandmother. At that memorial ceremony to honour the children and youth who went to residential school but did not return to their families and communities, Tanya Talaga first encountered the term "**the Knowing**" and acknowledged the impact of this knowledge upon residential school survivors and their descendants. The discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools was not a surprise for them as it was for Settler-descendants in Canada. Surviving children from the Kamloops Indian Residential School told stories about being awoken in the middle of the night to dig graves in the apple orchard. Residential school survivors from coast to coast to coast remembered family members and friends who disappeared, sharing these stories with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Indigenous Peoples also knew about family members and friends who were sent to Indian hospitals and to provincial psychiatric facilities who did not return home. In this generation, children and youth who were brought into care and placed for adoption also disappeared. In this generation, Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls continue to be examples of systemic racism and cultural genocide. In **THE KNOWING (HarperCollins Publishing, 2024)**, Tanya Talaga shares her research in discovering information about her extended family members and provides us with a very different understanding about Canada's history. By being persistent and through connecting with other Indigenous individuals committed to searching for documents about their extended family members, Tanya Talaga learns much about her Anishinaabe and Omushkegowuk Cree heritage.

Over five weeks, we will explore **THE KNOWING**, following the sections identified by the colours of the Four Directions of the Medicine Wheel used by Anishinaabe Peoples:

BOOK ONE: YELLOW....BEGINNING THE SEARCH FOR THE GRAVE OF HER GREAT-GREAT-GRANDMOTHER pp. 9-100

March 13 from 7:30 to 9 pm

BOOK TWO: RED....LEARNING ABOUT ANNIE CARPENTER/SAMSON/GAUTHIER AND HER CHILDREN pp. 104-204
March 20 from 7:30 to 9 pm

BOOK THREE: BLACK....CONTINUING TO SEARCH FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND LEARNING OF THEIR LIVES pp. 219=310
March 27 from 7:30 to 9 pm

BOOK FOUR: WHITE....BECOMING A WOMAN OF ANISHINABE AND CREE HERITAGE FINDING HERSELF pp. 315-415
April 3 from 7:30 to 9 pm

MAP OF JOURNEYS; PROLOGUE; EPILOGUE; GLOSSARY; FAMILY TREE; ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS; NOTES pp. 1-4; 416-423, 425-426,427-428,429-434, 435-455 April 10 from 7:30 to 9 pm

In using a Talking Circle format, participants learn how to listen deeply to each other as well as to speak from our hearts and our experiences in life. It does not matter if you are just beginning this journey in being in right relationships with Indigenous Peoples or if you have been on this journey for some time, each participant is equal with all of those others in the circle. In answering the first question, "What caught your attention in this section of the book?", participants make an introduction to everyone else in the circle. Over the evening together, an exploration of the week's reading usually covers much of the content and offers opportunities to apply the knowledge and wisdom gained together.

THE KNOWING is available at Chapters/Indigo and through GoodMinds Bookstore in Brantford. Video clips of Tanya Talaga can be found on YouTube, being interviewed on **CHCH morning live** on October 10, 2024, about her newest book as well as through a podcast on **TVToday** on November 20, 2020, about the Anishinaabe Teachings (Love, Truth, Bravery, Humility, Wisdom, Honesty, and Respect).

Please register with the Trinity Office Administrator Kelly Clark in Aurora by calling her at 905-727-6101, providing your email address and telephone number in case there are difficulties connecting through the ZOOM link. Every week, Kelly Clark will send a summary of the previous week's conversations and some questions as a guide in preparing for the upcoming Talking Circle.

Nanockashee Jacob Charles from the Chippewas of Georgina Island moved in the summer of 2024 onto the Island in a renovated home to accommodate his family. Unfortunately, Nanockashee is not available to be our Indigenous Participant. Instead, the Haudenosaunee Grandmother Mim Harder has accepted a Tobacco Tie and once again will share her knowledge and experiences with us. When I worked as a social worker at Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, my last supervisor Erin Moe expressed an interest in joining us as a participant for as many Talking Circles as she can. For the last couple of years, Erin Moe has worked at First Nations Technical Institute on the traditional territories of the Tyendinaga Mohawk Nation, teaching about social work and now supporting Indigenous students at this college as a Dean. Erin Moe is a citizen of Lac Seul First Nation. Some of Tanya Talaga's extended family lived among those on the traditional territories of Lac Seul First Nation.

If you have any questions, please send the Talking Circle Facilitator David Franks an email at davidapfranks@gmail.com or by cell phone at 905-9-715-9997.