

# Woman bringing art to schools

**By Sam Odrowski**

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An indigenous artist hosted an art workshop at Crossroads School in Devlin last Wednesday for its "Parent Engagement Night," where well over 100 students and their families gathered for a wide array of crafts, games, and activities.

Groups of students and their parents gathered in a classroom to create a setting sun landscape using chalk pastels.

At the end of the class, all the drawings the art workshop participants created were framed up and sent home with them.

Shawna Grapentine, the Cree-Ojibway artist who hosted the workshop, was born in Winnipeg and raised in the small Métis community of Manigotagan.

She recently moved to Rainy River District from Winnipeg and has been able to share her art with a handful of area schools so far.

J.W. Walker, Donald Young, Riverview, and now Crossroads all have experienced Grapentine's art workshops, which she has been involved with for more than eight years.

Just last month, she finished a year-long contract with the Frontier School Division in Manitoba, where she hosted art workshops at 15 different schools in a number of indig-



**Shawna Grapentine held an art workshop at Crossroads School during its "Parent Engagement Night" last Wednesday. She taught groups of students and their families how to create a sunset with chalk pastels.**

—Sam Odrowski photo

enous communities.

"They had flown me into a lot of the remote communities that don't get the opportunities to do stuff like this," Grapentine explained.

"I'd go away for a week out of the month," she noted.

"They would have me do two schools out of the week, spend two days in each school, then carry on."

What Grapentine loves about hosting the workshops is "getting out into the community, getting to know people, and working with the kids."

During the workshops, she said she "wants them to have a little fun with art."

"If they're afraid to do artwork, it's fairly easy and I'm

here to help them through the steps," she assured.

While workshop participants follow her directions, Grapentine encourages them to be creative and experiment with colours.

"I'm just here steering them in the right direction to make sure they're not lost," she remarked.

Grapentine is passionate about art and loves creating it. She feels very privileged to be able to share and teach her passion to others.

"To do artwork is so much fun," she enthused. "But to be able to teach it is a whole other level of just being blessed; to be able to share my gift."

Grapentine is the founder of

Moon and Back Custom Art, and she has run the custom art business for the past eight years.

She sells a variety of custom-painted products like fridges, snowmobiles, saw blades, deer skulls, moose antlers, and other decorative pieces.

Grapentine also has done sketches and artwork for the Klondex Fire Creek Mine through her custom art business.

Moving forward, Grapentine is going to try to do more art workshops at district schools whenever possible.

"It's a fun part of the job," she smiled.