

**Young, Urban and Indigenous in Montréal –
Working at the Roundhouse Café**

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<http://www.ecologia.org/news/19.RoundhouseCafe.mp3> (58 minutes)

[JUNE 24 note: this transcript has the revised introduction, which has not yet been spliced into the audio podcast.]

Segment One

Randy Kritkauskys: Greetings, or may I say Bozho in Potawatomi, to those joining us for today's Indigenous Perspectives show. I'm Randy Kritkauskys, an enrolled Potawatomi tribal member, and the co-host of Indigenous Perspectives, along with Carolyn Schmidt. Today we're in Montréal, the largest city in Québec Province in Canada.

Carolyn Schmidt: The place where we are right now is part of the traditional unceded lands of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) peoples, part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. There is also a strong historic presence of Anishinaabe peoples in what is now known as the Greater Montreal area. Tio'tia:ke – its Mohawk name; Mooniyang – its Anishinaabe name - or Montréal, has also long been, and continues to be, a gathering place for many First Peoples from all directions.

Randy: We're in a small park called Cabot Square, which is in the Westmount arrondissement (district) of Montréal, home to the city's financial district and historically the center of its powerful minority anglophone community. It has a bronze statue of John Cabot (Giovanni Caboto) the Italian navigator and explorer who landed in present-day Newfoundland in 1497 and claimed the land for his backer, King Henry VIII of England. This statue reminds us that this was and still is in many ways the epicenter of Montreal's English-speaking community.

Today, we meet and talk with urban indigenous residents of Montréal, who are helping to write yet another chapter of ongoing decolonization, cultural revival and resilience.

Carolyn: Youthful descendants of Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, who now live in Montreal's urban setting, will tell us in their own words how they

are breaking free of the enduring legacy of the colonial past and how they are creating new futures with the help of a small round building in this park – the Café de la Maison ronde, or the Roundhouse Café. Since 2015, it's been the only café/restaurant in Montreal dedicated to serving Indigenous food. Working at the café provides job training opportunities for participants from urban indigenous communities.



Randy: We are recording outdoors. You may occasionally have to listen carefully to hear the indigenous participants' voices over the background of neighborhood and traffic noise, as they share parts of their personal journeys that brought them here. So if you can, pull up a chair, make yourself a cup of tea made of traditional herbs as served here at the Roundhouse Café, and listen carefully to their voices.

Carolyn: So we're going to start off talking with one of the people working here, Tricia O'Meara. And Tricia, the first question is how did you find the Roundhouse Café?

Tricia O'Meara: Hi everyone! So I found the Roundhouse Café through Native Montreal. I had just come back from Ottawa, and I was looking for some work and I

was referred to work here by Native Montréal. And I did Phase One for a few months when I was pregnant and then I had my second baby, and now I'm doing Phase Two, which is a more wider range program to help me get either back into the workforce or back into the education system.

So basically I'm - I have a long lineage of enfranchised Indians or indigenous persons from Saskatchewan. My great-grandmother married out of the culture and so she was like banished from her community and she moved here to Montreal. So we've been urban indigenous people for quite some time now.

Randy: And so there, there are many different varieties of indigenous, urban people. Some of them have lived here for a very long time, actually since the very founding of Montreal, others are people who have arrived recently as in days and weeks, from very, very far away.

Where in that spectrum, would you put yourself, are you a very urbanized indigenous person or -

Tricia: I'd say I'm very urbanized. , but I'm all - often called back to going to nature, going to Powwow, practicing indigenous culture. I'm a dancer, I'm a jingle dress dancer; I've been around elders.

I've moved around, I've visited Ottawa for a few years. I was in university there, trying to finish, been off for like two, three years now. So trying to get back into it, but yeah, I've been around. I think the community, the urban community - it's really important for like someone like me, that's been in the urban setting for so long.

Randy: So, Carolyn did a nice job of talking about diverse people meeting here. How truly diverse do you experience this place being? Because we've passed through on our bicycles and I've seen Inuit, I've met people who are Cree from 600 miles north; we're going to talk to someone who's Mohawk.

Tricia: I mean, the Roundhouse is basically all the indigenous peoples in like one setting, I guess. We're all from different backgrounds. We all kind of get along and that's, - I guess it's the urban community that we have here is being from Inuit, Métis

or First Nations, and then the other people we meet are non-indigenous people, some are, you know, traditional settlers, some are immigrants. And that, that makes - that makes really nice conversations.

Randy: You mentioned Phase One and Phase Two of the program. Can you elaborate a bit on what that is?

Tricia: So Phase One would be like, for someone who's probably just moved here; it's a paid cash kind of thing. You're on the call, so you're not always on the schedule. It's really to help you come out of like - like someone who's close to homelessness I guess, it's like a little extra money for them. If they're consistent, they shift to Phase Two, which is a more elaborated program, more responsibilities.

Randy: So this takes place in the context of operating this - really it's a small business.

Tricia: Yeah.

Randy: So just give us a little bit of detail on what you've done in Phase One, working here and what you're doing in Phase Two and what you hope to acquire.

Tricia: Yeah. So in Phase One, I was pretty much just a barista here. I learned the cooking skill, the barista skill, serving - that's pretty much Phase One. And then Phase Two, we have like an office space. So we do a couple of shifts at the café and then the rest of the time we're busy, I guess, building ourselves, working on our resumés, reaching out to like where we want to be - our goals, our long-term goals, our short term goals. So that's pretty much what Phase Two would be about compared to Phase One, which is just like going back into the workforce and, you know, respecting your shift, and whatnot.

Carolyn: I noticed obviously there's a lot of camaraderie and bonding and friendship among the people who work at the Roundhouse. Can you say something about the sense of shared being indigenous and how this can contribute to that?

Tricia: Well there's an understanding when you're indigenous towards another indigenous person - where we can like relate on a spiritual level or like traditional

level or like our traditional sense of community, of sharing cultures. It really makes me feel at home because due to my family being here for so long, there's like a loss of community between us and our relatives in Saskatchewan, for example. So being here makes me feel at home where I can be indigenous without any shame.

Randy: So you're encountering a lot of people who are also non-indigenous and when you look through the window - and I'm seeing people getting their wonderful food orders right now - there's in many ways, an enormous boundary to cross, and you're talking about going out into the workforce. This is the 21st century; in theory, one would hope that there wouldn't be obstacles for an indigenous person entering the mainstream. How do you see that reality?

Tricia: Well, huh. There's a lot of stereotypes I feel are still stagnant in today's world, even if we're in the 21st century or whatever, there's still a lot of backlash or prejudices towards our peoples. Like, meaning that we're lazy or whatnot. That's something you'd see in the past, but it's still predominant in the main society or the dominant society.

Randy: So like me, and again, this is a radio broadcast, not a television broadcast - to someone on the street - they wouldn't look at you or me and say, oh, that's an indigenous person. So we - we can, as they used to say, we could "pass" as settler mainstream white people in the culture. But that's a barrier also, isn't it?

Tricia: Yes.

Randy: If you want to take a job and people ask you who you are, do you feel obligated to hide your identity or now do you want to come forward with it?

Tricia: I'm more - I want to come forward because I want people to know that indigenous people, I'd say, come in all shades of coffee. I mean, some of us are really pale, like a latte. Some of us are dark roast. Some of us are caramel. So I mean - and that's through colonization, right? Like there was so much intermixing at one point, with some immigrants that came in, the classic Irish Scottish, there were the African-Americans that also came and got mixed up a little bit with us. So like, yeah, I mean, today, I'm just - yes, I'm indigenous. I'm not Pocahontas; I'm not your stereotype. And this is who we are as a people. So accept me to who I am.

Randy: Wonderfully explained. I loved your coffee metaphor.

Tricia: Thank you.

Randy: So we're - again, people won't know this for hearing it, but we're in a rather affluent part of Montreal. This is a business district and it's only a few steps away from the incredibly affluent Anglo neighborhood. I'm assuming you must have some people who stumble up to the window, not realizing where they are and who they're encountering. Do they ever have sort of aha moments that you can engage them in a kind of education, opening their eyes?

Tricia: Well, yeah, some people just come up to the window and they're just like, yeah, I'll have a coffee. And then they look at our menu and they're like, oh, it's an indigenous coffee. And I'm like, yeah, we're all indigenous here, welcome. We are here. We're still present. We're resilient. And I've heard someone tell me that this area here – Square Cabot - has always been a place for indigenous gatherings, and protests. So there's a lot of energy here and a lot of people are drawn here because of that.



Statue of Giovanni Caboto (John Cabot) in Square Cabot, Westmount, Montreal

Randy: Well, it's really ironic that the square is named after Cabot, who claimed this territory originally for the English -

Carolyn: Even though he himself was Italian!

Randy: So, you know, he's one of the founding displacer people, and you, the indigenous people are in a sense, taking it back. It's a wonderful, glorious story. I'm looking at the statue and laughing when I say it, but there are a lot of tears associated with that.

Carolyn: Could you just say a little bit about the different strands of indigeneity in your own background, and also your settler background as well? Because the whole point about "Indigenous Perspectives" is that - the whole diversity we want to honor.

Tricia: So, my great grandfather was Irish immigrant during the potato crisis, I've heard. Married a Plains Indian, so we're still trying to figure it out because I was told that we're Dakota -Lakota, but we may be a little bit Ojibwe as well, depending on the location. It's all about oral history at this point.



Tricia O'Meara

I am in the process of getting my S-3 status, my identity, which is nice. It's only been allowed since 2017, but a lot of research to be done. It's nice to be able to be indigenous outside of home, because I grew up only being allowed to be indigenous at home. And now I can be indigenous outside of home.

Randy: Take a moment to explain to us how this works in Canada, getting status. It's a little different than the United States, where for example, my tribe just looks at the enrollment as of a certain date and they don't care about what quantum. It's just who is your ancestor enrolled; and has it been continual? How, how does it work here in Canada?

Tricia: So here, it's still very like colonial, from what I understand. It's all done through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, so INAC, and depending on the year, because there's different types of statuses, right? There's like the C - 3 one. There's a C -4. There's S -3, which is new.

And then there's like the traditional status where it's from your band, you're born from your band, so you automatically have a status, versus someone like me, I have to do research; I have to find my community, which I'm still looking into.

Randy So are there different levels of benefits for the different statuses?

Tricia: No. Once you get your status, you have like the same as all the others. So I would have fishing rights.

Randy: Would you have rights participating in scholarship programs?

Tricia: Yes.

Randy: Ah, this is a very different understanding that what I had. This is very helpful.

Tricia: I mean, I could - I could still ask for a bursary, but then I also have to identify as being indigenous, like everywhere in my life and sign documents that I identify versus if I have a status, I just show my card. But then that's also very colonial because it's also very based with the blood quantum. So they'll look at like how many ancestors you have that are indigenous, how many non-indigenous, and the government chooses for you, not necessarily your band.

Randy: Oh, interesting.

Tricia: So like, I think you were saying that your band chooses for you based on enrollment, right?

Randy Correct.

Tricia: Versus here it's not necessarily the same.

Carolyn: Yes, that's the real difference, as I understand, between Canadian - First Nations, Indigenous, Inuit ancestry or Metis - and United States. Because in Canada, the federal government definition is the guiding one for everyone. In the United States, each individual band sets its own membership criteria. So a band can have U.S. federal recognition and have one set of criteria. Another band can have completely different set of criteria for membership in that one. So there are obviously - we had one Abenaki Vermonter said that they were the only - that Indians were the only group that has to have a card to prove, you know, a special card to prove what group they belong to. I guess that's true here?

Tricia: That's true here as well. Yeah. But more and more, younger Indigenous are not applying for status because it's a way to apply blood quantum, which was put in place by the government. And who is the government to say if I'm indigenous or not? That should be my choice. And it should be the choice of me having my culture and my traditions that I still practice today.

Randy: It's a very timely message for us. We're planning on having programs in the future on exactly that topic. In Vermont right now we're having an enormous controversy that just erupted in recent weeks because ironically some Canadians came and said our Abenaki aren't real Abenaki.

So, you know, this is a huge issue and it's growing and the more intermarriage and quote, "dilution" of the blood quantum, the more our tribes risk disappearing from the face of the earth. I love your affirmation that it's up to you.

Tricia: Thank you. Well, it's still the goal of the government to make everyone diluted, I guess!

Carolyn: Well, Tricia O'Meara, we really thank you for your insights and giving us much more of a sense of what being a person, an indigenous person, in Montreal today is like. So are there any final comments that you'd like to leave us with?

Tricia: I'd just like to say chi-miigwech [*great thanks, in Ojibwe*] for the interview and chi-miigwech to the community here. And looking forward to just seeing what Montréal has to give again, because I was gone for eight years and realizing there's a lot more indigenous presence today than there was when I was a little girl.

Carolyn: Great way to end. Migwech.

Segment Two

Carolyn: Now we're talking with Shlee Binesi, another person - another participant - working at the Roundhouse. So Shlee, can you tell us a bit about how you found this, and take it from there?

Shlee Binesi: Hi, thank you. So I guess for myself, I - coming out of the pandemic or transitioning through the pandemic, sort of coming out of it, back in December, it was a very crisis time for everyone. And I just thought - I feel like I just was sort of guided on my journey in my life to just find resources. So like as an indigenous person, I was googling, you know, keywords of indigenous resources around Quebec, specifically Montréal. And through Native Montreal I found, or I was offered an experience through the Roundhouse program, , which is, I believe - is it funded or implemented by L'Itinéraire? Like another, a French community that's sort of like trying to bridge those gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous.

So I feel that's how that this opportunity came to me was based on that general understanding of - based on the climate crisis and everything that's going on in the world. I feel like people are aware of what's going on and they're just trying to - everyone's doing the best they can to help alleviate all the effects that have caused indigenous people to struggle in the ways that they have, the way that we are, and trying to repair that.



And I found the Roundhouse program and my - my feelings and my thoughts towards the program and everything that I've been learning and experiencing through it - I'm really coming full circle. Which is kind of - for me, it's kind of ironic, because it actually feels like the perfect time for me to be in here.

I'd just turned 30. So, that's a time in people's life where like, you're coming full circle because it's - you have to get on your path and do your work, right? I just know historically, this is a thing for people. So I'm like the Roundhouse; I'm coming full circle. Woo! I got through my twenties and before our twenties, we're teenagers and before that we're children.

So it's - in our indigenous way of life and our understandings, we have a Medicine Wheel, so I'm coming full circle on my medicine wheel through the Roundhouse program. So I'm really honored that I get to be safe through that somehow.

Carolyn: So by coming full circle, do you mean reconnecting with parts of your indigenous identity that you grew up with and then somehow lost?

Shlee: Yeah. Yeah, totally.

Randy: So what, what is, can you tell us a little bit about your indigenous background?

Shlee: What do you want to know?

Randy: What is it?

Shlee: My indigenous background, my identity, like my tribe or my clan system?

Carolyn: Yes.

Randy: Sure.

Shlee: So my tribe is - I'm Ojibwe from central Canada, the prairie tribes, and in terms of clan systems, which was something we used to have a long time ago, I was informed I'm from a clan of the bird. So I'm a bird clan and I'm governed by spiritual understandings - that's my clan system.

Randy: So how did you get from there to here?

Shlee: I was actually indirectly redirected by - I would consider this individual sort of like a soul mate who had a connection to the work that Louis Riel did, which sort of helped me towards healing myself, and the work that I need to do for others over time. So I actually I'm over here because of Louis Riel! And the work he did. And I didn't know about Louis Riel or who he was until I was in my young adult years.

Carolyn: Well, I saw you earlier, interacting, being very friendly and welcoming to another young woman who clearly had come, you know, for some coffee and snacks. So I gather that an important part of your work is making other people who come here feel comfortable. Is that correct?

Shlee: Being a big empath? I think, I think so. Yeah . You guys kind of walked in; that was emotional. So I feel like that makes sense for you to say that. Yes. Yeah.

Randy: So you mentioned Louis Riel, can you tell listeners who aren't from Canada why this person matters in Canadian history?



Shlee Binesi

Shlee: Louis Riel is such an important figure in Canadian history due to the fact that he tried to stand up for things that were opposing government systems, which was very brave. I don't fully understand the entire story. So I can't really comment entirely because I'm just - I've only started learning about this in my twenties, but you know, feeling the spirit of that through someone I felt a strong connection with sort of helped me be brave enough to leave to come over here.

And actually if you guys - if anyone knows of the Human Rights Museum in Manitoba, there's actually a plaque in the museum of historical figures throughout time. And they actually have Louis Riel right on the level there with Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus Christ. So that's how important Louis Riel was in the history of people who were leaders, who were spiritual and connected, helpers to the world and society.

Carolyn: And also advocating for the rights of his own people, the indigenous people, and Métis people against the intrusions, the violence, the dispossession by the Canadian government. So that's why he's a strong resistance figure as well.

Shlee: Yes!

Carolyn: So we need to take a break. We'll be back in just a minute, this is Indigenous Perspectives.

Segment Three

Carolyn: Welcome back to Indigenous Perspectives. We're at the Roundhouse Café in downtown Montréal. And now we're talking with Iohahiio Curotte, who is one of the participants in the programs there. So welcome.

Randy: So we've been chatting in preparation here for this segment about your background, which is a really interesting story in and of itself. So can you tell us a little bit about your indigenous background and then we'll talk about how that plays out here at the Roundhouse?

Iohahiio: Well, I'm a full blooded Cree from Ontario. However, I was adopted into Kahnawake when I was a very young age. So, culturally, I grew up Mohawk and - language wise and everything Mohawk.

Randy: So that contributes to a kind of dual or divided identity, yes?

Iohahiio: Yes. Very. You see like I meet up with Cree people, but they try to speak Cree to me, but I don't know it, because all I know is Mohawk, but I was always too Mohawk for Crees, and too Cree for Mohawks.

Randy: So we're used to dealing with people who are partly mainstream- settler-white and partly Native American Indian / First Nation. But you're the first person we've been able to talk to actually, on air, who comes from this kind of very complicated dual indigenous tradition. So what kinds of challenges did you have to deal with as a young person growing up with these?

Iohahiio: Fitting in. It's always been about, you know, fitting in and trying to be part of something, but never really accepted into it. You know, like I've - I've done my piece with the language, culture, tradition, ceremonies, practices and everything, but I don't know, I've never really felt part of anything in my whole life.

Randy: So here - here we are in a park, in downtown Montréal at the Roundhouse where people from all different kinds of traditions gather. How does it feel being in a diverse indigenous setting?



Iohahiio Currote

Iohahiio: More welcoming than ever. It's all diverse, everybody's different and we're all the same, if that makes sense. So I don't know, I'm actually enjoy coming here and you know, no one judges me, you don't feel judgmental or any comments or anything that – they're always welcoming, saying hello, smile on your face. And honestly, that's really what I've been looking for in my life.

Randy: That's - that's a really deeply moving and profound statement. If I can get you to dig a little deeper - how is this place cultivating an ethic of inclusion when indigenous cultures sometimes on the reserves don't succeed? What do you think is the success formula? What's the lesson to take away from that?

Iohahiio: Honestly, I don't know! Wouldn't be able to say, you know what I mean? It's kind of a difficult thing to really think of and go through at the moment, but - I don't know - they're just welcoming - the way they are and everything - like they know of exclusion and stuff like that, but they do their very best to include you in everything. And it's awesome, you know? They want you to better yourself rather than push you away and – you know what I mean? - exclude you.

Randy: So, how do you relate to other indigenous people who pass through here? I understand you've been here for a few months. Do you relate to them as being from a particular tribe or as being more generally indigenous?

Iohahiio: I don't really see- I don't really see that; I just see people nowadays. I've learned to push away all that and just - you know, see people as who they are, whether it be - I don't see colors, skin or anything. I just see people as people - good or bad, they are who they are. So, you know.

Randy: That's something we could aspire to in the mainstream society! So, a lot of non-indigenous people come here, this is a very affluent part of town, extremely affluent part of town. How, how do you think they see people here behind the window who are indigenous?

Iohahiio: Well, some looks they give, you can tell they see us as minorities and lesser - but honestly, like I said, I don't really mind what other people have to think about me or anything that anymore. So I do see a little bit. But I mean others, but like, I mean, I'm not going to say in general, but I mean, everyone's pretty good. They all try to do that. It's all right.

Randy: So where - where do you hope this experience will take you on your journey?

Iohahiio: Somewhere better. Maybe somewhere better in my life to actually be happy and maybe with a family one day, but everything in its time, you know, one step at a time.

Randy: So will it - will it help you with employment and being part of Montreal?

Iohahiio: Yes, actually, when I first started here, I was thinking of getting into journalism. However, I want to actually get into maybe culinary arts, since here, you know, we're cooking and stuff like that. So I'm thinking of going for chef or something.

Randy: So you mentioned employment and then previously you mentioned family. That's really important, especially for someone like you, you were adopted and you

were adopted into a tribe where you're not entirely made at home. How do you imagine that playing out? Do you have a dream of that?

Iohahiio: Well I've wanted that my whole life, right? Rejected at birth, given to a family - and even with that, it was always like, expectations of me were always too high. Just something I can never really achieve. Because everything I've done, it was never exactly good enough, right? They've always expected more of me. And they said you could do better. You do better. Graduated, did everything I could, did everything for them and they said you could do better. And so I actually wanted my own little family, so I would do something right. Like something I could actually be happy with.

Randy: So do you think you would want to live in an urban environment that is broader minded, like Montréal, or do you dream of living in the countryside closer to nature? What image do you carry around?

Iohahiio: Well, I mean, I've done both things. I've lived in a safe place in Richelieu for a little bit. And it was all farmlands as far as the eye can see.. living in an urban setting, you know, but I mean, living in the city has these benefits and all that, but I don't know, I'm more of a quiet type guy, you know, big fields and stuff like that and trees. And so when I do picture a family, I do picture big yards and stuff like that, you know? Couple of rug rats running around and stuff!

Randy: Well, it's wonderful. I mean, it's actually sort of the - we call it in the United States "the American dream" - of having your own little place. I hope this works for you as well as it has for the other people we've talked to. And as I've learned in my own life, these journeys take us to places that we, we just don't expect. They just, they happen. They find you. It sounds like this is the place where you might be found.

Iohahiio: I think so too.

Randy: Thank you for telling us your story.

Iohahiio: Oh, no problem.

Carolyn: So thank you very much. We'll take another break and see you in a bit.

Segment Four

Carolyn: Welcome back to Indigenous Perspectives. We're here in Montréal at the Roundhouse Café talking with another one of the indigenous participants, Patrick Metallic. Welcome, Patrick.

Patrick Metallic: Glad to be here.

Randy: So tell us a little bit about your background.

Patrick: I'm a Native American. I grew up in Listiguj, Québec. I'm from part of the Mi'gmaq tribe.

Randy: So if you're Native American, how did you end up growing up in Québec?



Patrick Metallic

Patrick: I was born in Québec actually. And for me being in Montréal, I basically came down to start a new life, pretty much. Back where I was staying, we pretty much had nothing, so I had to really go out there to experience more stuff.

Carolyn: So how did you find the Roundhouse Café?

Patrick: I got it from the Native Montreal center, Native Montreal Friendship Center. They told me about - they asked me if I wanted to look for work. So I took up - I jumped at the first offer, pretty much.

Randy: So when was that? How long ago was that?

Patrick: That was back sometimes in November of 2021.

Randy: So tell us what's happened. What have you been doing here?

Patrick: Basically, a lot of times we have a chance to - I prepare the food, I keep the place clean and deal with customers a lot of the time. It's made me able to open up more to be like, just having to chat with my coworkers. It's - I like it here. There's not - it's not very demanding sometimes.

Carolyn: So what kinds of things have you learned here? What's been the - what's been the hardest kind of thing in your time learning here so far?

Patrick: The kind of hardest thing I learned was trying to deal with the cash register! I try my best to really get it going, because I'm not very good at French. So it has also helped me to interact with French people, cause I'm - the only language that I really know is English. And to be able to put bits and pieces here, and just enjoy listening to them. It's kind of a good thing, actually. I'm still not good at the cash register, but I'm getting there.

Randy: So for, for our listeners who aren't aware of it, Montréal is the largest Francophone city in the world outside of Paris, but we're in a part of the city where there are a lot of English speaking people.

Patrick: Yes.

Randy: But you're having to deal with the real challenge of being in Québec, which is, you really need to be bilingual to function, yes?

Patrick: You do actually. So it's not a mandatory thing; -it's - you kind of just need to know the bits and pieces, to really get there.

Randy: So are you picking up French as you go along? Or are you just picking up French at the cash register?

Patrick: Picking up French at the cash register mostly, but sometimes I do like try to get myself out there more, cause at the café I have a chance to. Like, before the café, I was staying home all the time. But at the café, it gives me opportunity to go out more, explore.

Carolyn: And have you met other Mi'gmaqs in particular or is this not a question you normally ask when you meet with other people here?

Patrick: There's a few more Mi'gmaq peoples in here that work at the café. I do have the chance to talk to them - like different cultures because there's - I think there's Ojibwe and others, and we talk about each culture is different. So it is just having a few chats about our heritage, what we learned, what we grew up to. So it's more innovative, really, just to increase your knowledge.

Randy: So what kinds of common experiences are you finding that you share?

Patrick: Common experience is basically the powwows! It's pretty much the same, some do it different, but other than that, the common experience I know is like the powwows, the festivals, couple of rituals here and there.

Randy: So do you participate in your own tribe's powwows and rituals, or do you participate in those with other tribes?

Patrick: I - if I can, I go to any one I'm able to. So I do go to other peoples' powwows, I go to sweat lodges. I try my best to be more innovative of my culture. And I try my best to listen to other people's cultures. We might butt heads here and there, but that's the point of giving your opinions, I guess.

Carolyn: What are some special things that you feel you bring as a Mi'gmaq when you're talking with the other people? What are your sort of things that mean the most to you?

Patrick: Only thing I can really say is experience. Like - I bring my experience to the table. They bring their experience to the table, so it's never a one way thing. It's like, I've been through it - they went through theirs; I went through mine. This is what I've been told and grew up with. They, they bring up these things that they grew up to. So it's best to - all I can say is experience.

Randy: One of the themes that's coming out in talking to people who work here is that this is a really diverse environment, and that you do find some common grounds. Do you- do you find that that is pulling you away from your native ancestral heritage? Or do you find that it is awakening an interest in those ancestral connections for you?



Patrick: It's kind of growing, to be honest. When the right conversation hits you, it gets to the point you think. And for my point of view, be able to have those conversations - try to be open minded - it does help me. But it's not like an everyday thing where we talk about our native heritage. Sometimes we just talk about the weather or what's going on. So it's not a constant thing to talk about spiritualists and all that stuff. But when it happens, it's intense pretty much. It's like, it gets going, it gets people thinking and it gets people feel to be like, oh yeah, okay.

Randy: We've been told several times today that sometimes the conversation gets pretty heavy.

Patrick: Oh, yeah -

Randy: And other times it's light. I just want to say for anyone passing through this neighborhood, this is a very welcoming, very cheerful place.

Patrick: Oh, definitely. There's a lot of times we are just having a blast, listening to music when it's not busy! But when it comes to innovation, conversation wise, sometimes yes, it does go intense. And a lot of times we would scream at one another. But other than that, it's okay.

BREAK

Carolyn: And now we're going to wrap it up for today with our final guest, Marilou Maisonneuve. She is the project director of the Café de la Maison Ronde, the Roundhouse Café, and she's running this whole program that you've just heard participants speaking about. So welcome Marilou, and just say a few words about what you do here and why it - what it means to you.

Marilou Maisonneuve: Okay. Thank you very much. Yeah, I'm the project manager for the Roundhouse Café and program. The Roundhouse Café is a really interesting project. It's unique actually, because we are a social economy café for indigenous participants to work at and to benefit from workshops and outings that we do in the city. We participate to the indigenous activities of the Indigenous community in Montreal.

And what I do basically is coordinate the team of intervention workers who are really on a day to day basis with those participants, who run the Roundhouse Café with them. And I help make everybody feel comfortable, that they they're heard in the program, that they can learn new things working at the Roundhouse Café. And also I do the logistics and administrative side of the project. So, office stuff, but it has to be done, you know!



Marilou Maisonneuve

And I really love this project because myself I'm Métis, I'm part French Canadian, and also have Aninishinaabe ancestry. I don't identify as an indigenous person, but I really want to be - like as a Métis people, a mixed ancestry person - I really want to be an ally to indigenous people who face such great challenges. And, I really believe this program, this Roundhouse Café, helps them.

Randy: Migwech – thank you – Marilou.

Thanks to the Roundhouse Café, Cabot Square today is humming with optimism and energy - a gathering and support place for a diverse urban population. The voices of the indigenous participants you've heard throughout this program were delivered just a few steps away from the statue of John Cabot, but now, in mid-afternoon, his tall statue no longer casts such a long and dark shadow. Bright sunshine and rays of hope are making him a bit less intimidating, a lot less statuesque – a part of the past while the young descendants of the First Nations peoples are now creating new futures for themselves.

Carolyn: So as we wrap up our program today, a heartfelt Migwech – thank you - to our guests from the Roundhouse Café: participants Tricia O'Meara, Shlee Binesi, Iohahiio Curotte, and Patrick Metallic, and also project manager Marilou Maisonneuve.

Randy: And Migwéché – thank you - to our listeners. I hope the broadcast has given you time and space to reconnect with your roots in Mother Earth, your ancestral roots. Before your busy day distracts you from this moment, I encourage you to take a few minutes to reach out and feel the presence of living flora, fauna, and perhaps even that of your ancestors. Allow yourself to touch their presence, capture that moment and hold onto it. And, if you will, write to me and let me know about your experience. I can be contacted through my website, at www.randykritkausky.com where you can also find transcripts and supplemental materials for all Indigenous Perspectives shows.

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