

## That's A Wrap!

More than 500 attended the Gala Banquet on closing night – the most popular event of the conference each year. People dressed up in their best and came out to indulge in a delicious dinner, celebrate achievement, share in special honours, and enjoy entertainment.

DerRic Starlight is a comedian and puppeteer who amazes audiences from around the world. He surely amazed the Vision Quest crowd, and had the whole room laughing when Grand Chief Morris Shannacappo joined him and his puppet Granny on stage.

The evening also included traditional dancing and drums performed by Curtis Assiniboine and family, a video summary of the 2008 conference, and a performance by Reddnation, Canada's Aboriginal rap sensation. Reddnation also conducted two popular youth workshops at the conference – Anti Gang Awareness, and Alcohol Awareness and Goal Setting.

## Our New Team

Vision Quest Conferences Inc. welcomes our new 2009 coordination team:

Conference Coordinators:  
**Debbie Maslowsky and Melanie Rennie**

Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper:  
**Jocelyn Lobster**

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## Special Thanks

Vision Quest Conferences Inc. is a non-profit charitable organization formed through partnerships with six Community Futures Development Corporations:

Cedar Lake CFDC; Dakota Ojibway CFDC; Kitayan CFDC; Northwest CFDC; North Central CFDC; and Southeast CFDC

Therefore, Vision Quest would not exist without the generous support of our Sponsors. Once again, we'd like to acknowledge and say thank you to our 2008 Sponsors:

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# Vision Quest CONFERENCE 2008

Promoting Aboriginal Business, Community and Economic Development

## A Star Attraction



**Adam Beach**  
Keynote Speaker at  
Vision Quest Conference  
May 14, 2008

The 12th annual Vision Quest Conference took place May 13 to 15 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. This year's event was the largest to date, with nearly 600 registered Delegates – including 177 youth – and a very busy tradeshow presenting 82 Exhibitors. Thank you to everyone for participating. It wouldn't have been a success without you!

To our Speakers and Presenters, you are the reason that Vision Quest stands out from other conferences, and your involvement is truly invaluable. We are grateful you took the time to take part. Special thanks also goes out to the more than 60 volunteers who helped pull it all together, and contributed their time and energy.

*We hope everyone enjoyed themselves at the 2008 Vision Quest Conference, and we sincerely hope to see you again next year. Mark your calendars for May 11 to 13, 2009!*

### From the Board of Directors Vision Quest Conferences Inc.

Kim Bullard, Dakota Ojibway CFDC  
Carol Johnston, Southeast CFDC  
Rick Ducharme, Cedar Lake CFDC  
Marc Randy Ranville, Kitayan CFDC  
Leann Brown, North Central Development  
Leona Olson, Northwest CFDC

Participants at Vision Quest were honoured to have Adam Beach take part as a Keynote Speaker, and in delivering the powerful multimedia presentation *Kigeet*.

Probably the most recognizable Aboriginal actor in Hollywood today, Adam's talents have earned him numerous roles on television and in major motion pictures. His credits include Clint Eastwood's *Flags Of Our Fathers*; *Windtalkers* where he played alongside Nicholas Cage; the epic television movie *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee* with Aidan Quinn and Anna Paquin; and the television series *Law & Order: Special Victim's Unit*.

Adam shared personal segments of his life's journey with the Vision Quest audience, and acknowledged the significance of having support and mentorship along the way. He spoke about the importance of staying in school and education.

He encouraged youth to focus on their futures, and listen to their Elders. He told them to be patient for that door of opportunity to open, but work hard in the meantime – so when it does open they'll be ready. He also reminded everyone to have self-respect, to share stories both good and bad, to look for solutions to problems, and to learn from mistakes.



When asked what he thought of Vision Quest, Adam said he was honoured to be asked to participate, and during the week found his own inspiration: "This kind of conference is very important,

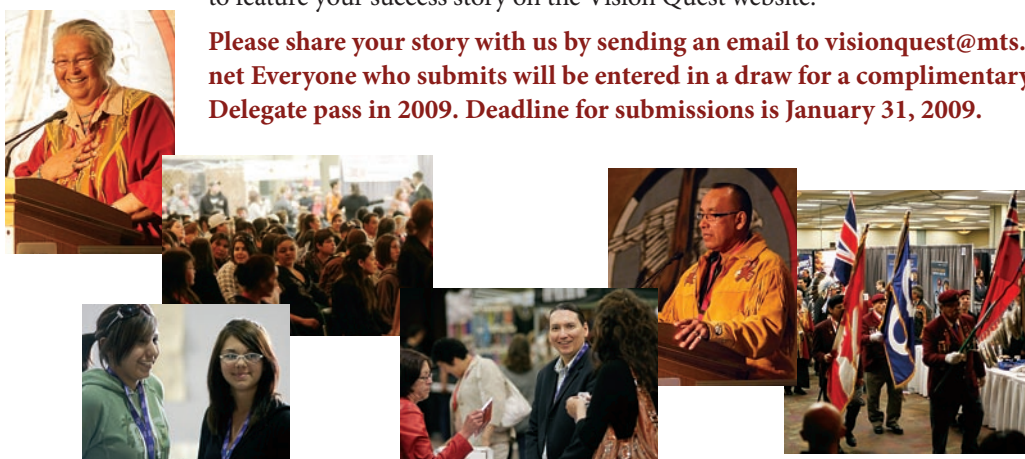
*continued...*

## MARK YOUR CALENDERS for the 2009 Vision Quest Conference, MAY 11 to 13 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre

*But before next year rolls around... Vision Quest wants to know your good news from this year!*

If you made special connections at Vision Quest in 2008, discovered a new opportunity, or found the conference to be a great place to "seal a deal"... we'd love to feature your success story on the Vision Quest website.

**Please share your story with us by sending an email to visionquest@mts.net. Everyone who submits will be entered in a draw for a complimentary Delegate pass in 2009. Deadline for submissions is January 31, 2009.**



### Vision Quest Conferences Inc.

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### Vision Quest Conference Partners



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## TAKING IN THE TRADESHOW

Vision Quest once again had a tremendous response to the Tradeshow, which took place over two days during the conference. All of the 82 Tradeshow spaces were sold out, allowing participants to visit a vast array of business suppliers, service providers, hospitality groups, economic development organizations, educational institutions, and information services, along with crafters and artisans.

Exhibitors came from across Manitoba and Canada to be part of the Tradeshow. Irene Sorgenfrie who runs Crafts By Irene participated for the first time this year, and was pleased with the opportunity.

*“Vision Quest is an excellent marketing opportunity with friendly people. It was a great experience that I’m looking forward to repeating in 2009.”*

*Irene Sorgenfrie, Crafts by Irene - Exhibitor in 2008 - 1<sup>st</sup> year attended*

*“Star Attraction” continued....*

especially in regards to teaching the younger generation about opportunities that are out there, and in giving them some motivation and direction in career choices. It’s important for our people to see that we are successful.

“Vision Quest provides strength in leadership, and challenges old ideas about leadership. It’s not good enough anymore at finding excuses and showing lack of leadership – on reservations and in the cities. We need to find solutions, and Vision Quest provides an opportunity to address some of the challenges and make economic development a reality.”

On Wednesday afternoon, more than 1100 people came out to the free showing of *Kigeet*, a multi-media stage play

*“Kigeet brought a hard dose of reality to many in the audience. Some laughed nervously during the play, some left with tears running down their cheeks, others sobbed quietly in their seats. Beside me sat two sisters, unable to contain their grief. I passed them tissues to dry their tears, but there will never be enough tissues to heal their hearts.”*

*- Dennette Munro*

## MURAL MURAL ON THE WALL

Graffiti Art Programming Inc. (GAP) is a not-for-profit community youth art center located in the core area of Winnipeg. Also known as the Graffiti Gallery, they use art as a tool for community, social, economic and individual growth of high-risk youth in Winnipeg communities.

The Graffiti Gallery had a presence at Vision Quest this year, and spent two days painting a large mural onsite. Many youth participants joined in on the project, resulting in a beautiful work of art for all to see.



*“This is a very important conference for young Aboriginal people. They are shown the many opportunities available to them and hear stories from successful role models from their communities.”*

*Carole Fréchette, Outreach Coordinator Equity & Diversity Branch, City of Winnipeg – 6 years attending the conference*

created by Chris Beach and the late Derek Quill. Designed to bring awareness to suicide prevention, *Kigeet* featured a captivating performance by Adam interacting with other performers pre-recorded and projected onto large screens beside the stage.

Chris told the audience he was moved to do something when a foster child he had cared for at one time took his own life: “I want people to know that suicide is a very serious issue among our people – especially our young people. If we can take a performance like *Kigeet* and tour it to different places and create awareness of suicide, maybe one day we will save someone’s life. That’s my hope.”



*Keynote Speaker Southern Grand Chief Morris J. Swan Shannacappo*

## Leading The Leaders

Southern Grand Chief Morris J. Swan Shannacappo was the second Keynote Speaker to address the Vision Quest audience. Residing from Rolling River First Nation, Chief Shannacappo was elected in 2007 to lead the Southern Chiefs Organization. He is a tireless supporter of economic and community development, and expanding the role of Aboriginal people within the economy.

Optimistic about the future, Chief Shannacappo spoke about opportunities for growth. Like Adam Beach’s address,

he emphasized the importance of teaching the younger generation to make positive choices. He encouraged youth to accept guidance from mentors and Elders, and to take advantage of the many resources available today that were not there for his generation. He affirmed the need for people to invest in youth in order to have a more sustainable future for all Aboriginal people.

Chief Shannacappo expressed the significance in communities coming together, looking at the wealth of resources around them, and striving for collective success. He reminded people to identify resources within themselves, and use ideas and knowledge to improve programs so they are better suited to the way Aboriginal people learn, and so they also retain Aboriginal culture and beliefs. “Most programs are not working because they are not our design,” he said.

He talked of the dream of self-governance, and the journey towards self-sustaining communities. “How do we get back to the days before funding, back to the days of trade and commerce?” he asked. While there is no easy answer, he spoke of the responsibility of community members to hold themselves accountable to their communities, and to ensure their council is accountable. Self-governance begins on the inside and grows outward from there.

## LADY LUCK WANTED ON OPENING NIGHT

New to Vision Quest this year was Casino Night, the opening event in support of the Aboriginal Tourism Industry. Using real Roulette, Blackjack, and Wheel of Fortune tables, participants tried their luck betting ‘fun money’ and bidding on prizes.

The evening was sponsored by South Beach Casino, with a number of great items given away including home electronics, office equipment, gift cards, and a 42” television. Two roundtrip airline tickets to New York were also given away, donated by Manitoba’s



Clement Travel Services. Proudly celebrating 20 years of business in 2008, Clement Travel Services is a genuine economic success story. *Congratulations Clement!*

*The Vision Quest Board would like to dedicate this newsletter in memory of Curtis Assiniboine. For the past several years, Curtis and family provided cultural entertainment during the opening and closing ceremonies for the conference. We have been truly honoured to know Curtis. He will be missed.*

## Award Presentations

**Business Plan Competition Awards**  
presented by the  
**Aboriginal Business Service Network**

### Adult Category

Urban - Shirley Prieston of Winnipeg for *Living Spirit Rehabilitation Services*

Rural - Carlos Hall of Thompson for *C & R Wilderness Adventures*

### Youth Category

Business Plan (Individual) - Melissa Keno of Argyle Alternative high School for *First Faze Café...with Internet*

Business Plan (Team) - St. John’s High School for *Harmony Instrument Cleaning*

Business Start - R.D. Parker Collegiate for *Foods-R-Us*



### RBC Foundation Scholarship Award

Junior Achievement  
Nichole Ironstand (finalist)  
Melissa Keno (winner)



### University of Manitoba Vision Quest Bursary

Steve Prince  
Memorial Award  
Claude St. Hilaire