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Provincetown Schools
Mayflower Essay Contest
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What does your tribal history mean to you?

Canadian Blackfoot

I was adopted when I was four years old. Today I live in Provincetown with my Mom and six of my nine siblings. I was born in Seattle, Washington. When I was six years old my Mom told me that I was Canadian Blackfoot. So, what does my Canadian Blackfoot history mean to me?

I don't really know much about Canadian Blackfoot history. I am going to use this question as a way to learn about my tribal history. A couple of weeks ago, my Mom gave me a Dreamcatcher, to catch all my bad dreams. A dream catcher has wolf hair surrounding a circle with thick string that is woven and some skinnier threads in the middle for a design. There are nine beads on a woven string that has a brown bird feather at the end. Some of the feathers might be seagull feathers because they are grayish, whiteish.

I've learned that the Blackfoot were hunters who hunted bison and deer. And, they collected nuts, fruits and vegetables to add to their diet. The Blackfoot were known as fierce warriors who were able to back off the European settlers for a long time. They also used sweat lodges to focus themselves and get their stress off their mind.

Residential schools and other cultural policies eroded traditional language and the Blackfoot stopped using their own language and culture. In 2016, *Statistics Canada* put out that 5,565 people identified as speakers of a Blackfoot language, with 98.7% living in Alberta,

Canada. However, this figure does not specify the number of fluent speakers. The Blackfoot language was close to being a lost language, but several language programs exist to promote people speaking the language again. The Alberta Ministry of Education, consulted with Blackfoot elders and educators, to provide full curriculum support for Blackfoot language education from kindergarten to grade 12, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. I might be interested in learning the Blackfoot language some day.

I appreciate how the Canadian Blackfoot people don't give up about stuff and that they use the natural world for resources. Instead of cars, they use horses and donkeys. They don't go grocery shopping; they go hunt for their food and they do not waste a bit of their food. They are very thankful people and I am thankful for that because when we eat, we just throw the bone away, but they make jewelry out of the bones. Also, I like how they are fierce and they work hard. They like to hunt bison and deer to eat as their main course and some other food for sides.