

**May 3, 2024**

**Brigette Lacquette, Grande Prairie Mayor Jackie Clayton Visits Over 300 students at St. Joseph School May 8th in partnership with Classroom Champions and National Aboriginal Hockey Championships**

*Classroom Champions brings Grande Prairie students together for a night of inspiration and empowerment with Indigenous leaders and role models.*

**Grande Prairie, Alberta** – Leading international education charity Classroom Champions, in partnership with the [City of Grande Prairie](#) and the [National Aboriginal Hockey Championships](#), is facilitating a powerful community-wide event featuring Olympic silver medalist and the first First Nations hockey player to be named to Canada's National Women's Team, Brigette Lacquette. St Joseph's will open its doors to up to 1,300 local students, teachers and families, as well as Indigenous athletes from across Canada competing in the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships, to hear from Lacquette and community leaders to address important themes facing youth.

Classroom Champions brings Olympic, Paralympic and professional Athlete Mentors to classrooms across North America to provide important social and emotional skills to students through the mentorship of Athlete Mentors, like Lacquette. As a former long-time Classroom Champions mentor, Lacquette is no stranger to talking to kids about what it takes to set goals, persevere and dream big.

“Being a Classroom Champions Athlete Mentor was a life-changing experience for me both personally and professionally” said Lacquette. “I’m so proud to come back with Classroom Champions, the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship and the city of Grande Prairie to this student-focused event where I’m able to connect with kids and talk about the impact *they* can have in their own backyard. Particularly for Indigenous youth, I want them to know I believe in them and I believe they can do anything they set their mind to.”

Grande Prairie schools are long-time Classroom Champions participants. Grande Prairie Mayor Jackie Clayton understands the power of bringing positive role models to kids and bringing together communities across the city to address important themes.

“On behalf of City Council, I am proud to welcome all athletes, coaches, and spectators from across the nation who are joining us for the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships,” said Grande Prairie Mayor, Jackie Clayton. “It's important that we have mentors, like Brigette Lacquette, that help empower kids on and off the field. This event exemplifies the influence of sports to unite our youth and inspire involvement on a grander scale. I encourage everyone to experience the hospitality and beauty of our city, which I hope will leave you with lasting memories.”

In addition to all Grande Prairie schools being invited, community leaders from across the area will be invited to attend; Peace Wapiti, Kelly Lake, Horse Lake, Hythe, Beaverlodge, Wembley, and Sturgeon Lake. Students will participate in a discussion by interviewing Lacquette about **persevering in the face of obstacles and having the ability to bring what they face daily to their community.**

“It is always an exciting day when Classroom Champions students and kids across the city can meet their role model in person,” says Steve Mesler, Olympic gold medalist and Founder and CEO of Classroom Champions. “The impact that a mentor like Brigitte can have on an entire community is something spectacular to witness first-hand. We’re grateful for the sponsors we call the [Energizing Communities Collective](#), a group of Canadian energy companies committed to supporting the communities in which they operate. It’s *The Collective* who allows us to bring programming and events like these to Grande Prairie, and we look forward to welcoming more schools signing up for this powerful mentorship experience.”

**Media is welcome to join the event, from 5:15 -7:00 pm on Wednesday, May 8th in St. Joseph School auditorium.** For exclusive interviews with Lacquette or community leaders, please reach out directly to the contact below.

**For more information, contact:**

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**About Classroom Champions**

Classroom Champions is a non-profit that has empowered over 5 million children to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically through the mentorship and mindsets of world-class athletes. Working with 300+ Olympic, Paralympic, NCAA student-athletes and professional athletes who volunteer as mentors, Classroom Champions has provided more than \$10,000,000 in program and curriculum grants to underserved, rural, and Indigenous communities across the continent. Students participating in Classroom Champions see significant improvements in the classroom, teachers see improved engagement, and athlete mentors learn new skills to prepare for life after sport. Learn more at: [www.classroomchampions.org](http://www.classroomchampions.org).

### **About the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships**

From May 5 – 11, 2024, 14 teams of approximately 350 athletes and 100 coaches, plus officials, dignitaries, and spectators, will be travelling to Grande Prairie for the 2024 NAHC. An exciting blend of sport and culture, this event provides a forum for elite Bantam/Midget Aged Indigenous youth to not only compete for sport glory, but to also come together in ceremony and comraderies. Many players, both female and male have gone on to notable careers in hockey and sport.

Grande Prairie will be the first-ever Alberta community to host the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships and we are thrilled to have this opportunity to share our great province with all participants and spectators. The event will provide various cultural initiatives and immersive experiences to share and celebrate the diverse culture and traditions of the Treaty 8 people.