



Jared Louison

Sunchild School teacher - Grades 7,8 9 Teacher for Math, English and some Socials

When Jared Louison runs, he feels the spirit of his great grandfather in him.

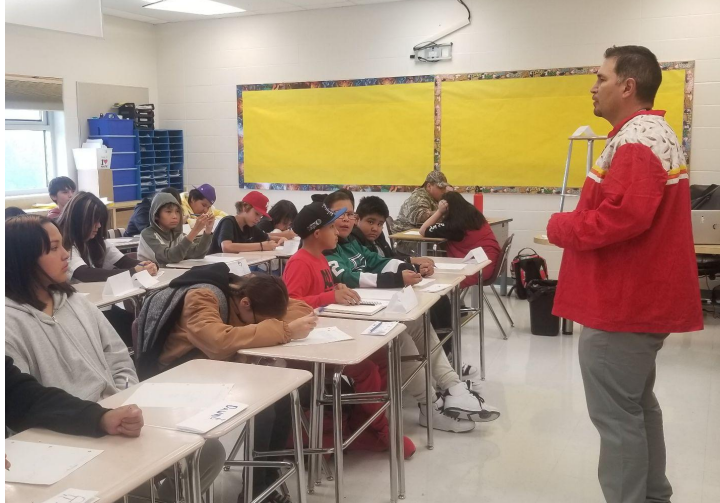
“I come from a long bloodline of long distance runners. My great grandfather Paul Acoose was a long distance runner in the early 1900s on the Canadian team. He turned pro and ran in 1909 in New York. Then in 1910 he beat Tom Longboat, and he retired.”

Long distance runners know that every stride is necessary on the journey, and every stride takes you closer to your goal.

The journey and the goal are both something that Jared thinks about.

“We need to have dreams and set goals, but there’s one common denominator, and that’s to put in the work to achieve those goals,” he says.

“”We need to appreciate the journey of hard work and sacrifice.”



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Jared's journey has taken him from Calgary, to Airdrie, to Saskatchewan, where he spent most of his childhood at Kahkewistahaw First Nation near to the Qu'Appelle valley, south of Yorkton.

"Kahkewistahaw means 'he who flies around' and the symbol is a flying eagle," notes Jared, who has also moved around more than a little. "I've had the experience of living on reserve and off-reserve," he says.

From Calgary and Saskatchewan, Jared's family moved to Airdrie for several years, and then back to Calgary. Since becoming a teacher, Jared has taught in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, and back in Alberta again, before coming to Sunchild.

"When I was growing up, they never had schools on our nations," Jared explains. "But when I graduated from university, at the convocation, I took part in indigenous ceremonies. I started Sundancing and sweats and being active and learning about our traditional medicine." He's continued his journey of learning.

Jared believes that schools like Sunchild can improve First Nations education. “Bringing the culture to the curriculum is a huge factor” in improving education for First Nations who were exposed to colonial education for so long.

“You really want to be able to adapt and thrive in both situations,” whether living on-rez or off-rez, says Jared.

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Jared doesn't just run, he skates. He's spent many years playing amateur hockey. “We're a hockey family. My son plays hockey, my daughter is preparing to play hockey.” Jared plays defense.

Since he's lived in Calgary, what's his favourite hockey team?

“Calgary Flames,” he says, without apology. “I know there are people at Sunchild who like the Oilers, but Calgary is my team.”

When he played with several men from Sunchild First Nation, as well as O'Chiese, that's how he heard about the teaching position open at Sunchild school.

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But Jared did not always want to be a teacher. As a child, he wanted to be an architect.

“I was very good at math. At a very young age I learned times tables like the back of my hand, in grade 4...even in high school I still wanted that. I even did the prep courses to get into university. But then, life can take you in different directions.”

Jared became drawn to teaching. “Teaching runs in the family too. My

mother was a teacher, my auntie was, and other family members also.”

“Being an elementary teacher, you’re required to do art. I do some art, like arts and crafts, but I’m not one to emphasize fancy details.

“I like sports. Sports has a great way of introducing you to people and you play alongside them. You can make friends through sports.”

Like many hockey players, Jared plays golf, too. He’s golfed with his wife for more than 7 years, but it’s not just golf, it’s also a chance to practise his teaching skills.

“As a teacher I have to have patience, and I teach patience,” he explains.

“I’ve been teaching her, and having patience teaching her, like when a shot goes wild, for many years. I want to be encouraging when someone’s learning a new skill.”

He pauses. “And after 7 years, she beat me!”

She had a good teacher.

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Whether it’s the stress of learning to play a sport or learning to master a subject, or life itself, Jared has a handle on beating stress.

“Dealing with stress effectively comes with experience and training. Just be patient, not jumping the gun or jumping to conclusions, and that comes with experience.”

“Take time to identify the problem, think about the variables, and identify solutions or outcomes. This takes time. You need emotional stamina, physical stamina, and spiritual stamina.”

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Jared thinks back to other lessons he has learned about life. “As we get older we feel the gratitude in our lives. Every day is another gift to do good in this world.”

“A variety of people have inspired me. My Father used to tell me education first, work second, and remember respect, and be classy.”

“Everyone has a creator. Our creator works through us, and we have to listen. We make decisions based on what our creator wants us to do. Whether your creator is God, or Jesus, or someone else, we listen.”

And when you listen, when you're out for a long distance run, you might hear a voice from your ancestors, or feel a spirit working through you, like Jared does.

Jared Louison teaches Grades 7,8 9 Math, English and some Socials at Sunchild School.