

# Papaashi Bufloo: The Buffalo Who Raced Horses

*Salt Spring Island artist launches beginner Michif language children's book on National Indigenous Peoples Day*

**SALT SPRING ISLAND, BC — June 2026** — Métis Cree artist and author Sherry Leigh Williams will launch her debut children's book, "Papaashi Bufloo: The Buffalo Who Raced Horses," at Indigenous Peoples Weekend 2026 on Sunday, June 21 — National Indigenous Peoples Day — at 1:00 PM at the Farmers' Institute on Salt Spring Island. The event is free and open to the public.

Illustrated with original acrylic paintings by Williams, the 32-page book tells the story of her great-grandmother Mary Anne Deschamps Rabaska, born in 1875 near Pigeon Lake, Alberta. As a young girl, Mary Anne finds a buffalo calf alone near an old cabin and names him Toneur — Thunder in Southern Michif. They grow up together, and when her Mooshoom enters Toneur in a town horse race, Mary Anne places her Kookum's beaded tuppie on his back. Together, they win.

The book introduces young readers to Southern Michif, the traditional language of the Métis people, and includes a Michif glossary, cultural pages about Métis beadwork, and the history of the Deschamps dit Rabasca family and the Papaschase Cree. The Michif language content has been verified by Elder Bruce Dumont, Former President of Métis Nation BC, and reviewed by Métis Nation BC.

*"My great-grandmother Mary Anne was a remarkable woman, and I have carried her story with me my whole life," said Williams. Her home, the cabin they lived in, still stands today as part of John Walter Museum, Edmonton, Alberta. "This book is for the children — so they can hear her name, learn words in our language, and know that our Métis stories belong on the shelf beside every other story. When a child reads 'Toneur' out loud for the first time, that is our language living."*

Indigenous Peoples Weekend 2026 runs June 18–21 at the Farmers' Institute on Salt Spring Island, featuring music, ceremony, workshops, and cultural exhibits. The festival is presented by Sweetgrass Arts and Music Society and is supported by the Canadian Arts Presentation Fund, Salt Spring Island Foundation, and Capital Regional District. A reading at the Salt Spring Island Public Library is also planned for fall 2026.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sherry Leigh Williams (BFA, DipFA) is a Métis Cree artist, songwriter, and community organizer based on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia. She is President of Sweetgrass Arts and Music Society of Salt Spring Island and founder of Salt Spring Music Events. With Celtic ancestry on her maternal side and Papaschase / Red River Métis ancestry, Williams's work honours her family's history and the Métis tradition of storytelling through art. "Papaashi Bufloo: The Buffalo Who Raced Horses" is her first book.

## BOOK LAUNCH DETAILS

<b>Date</b>	Sunday, June 21, 2026 — National Indigenous Peoples Day
<b>Time</b>	1:00 PM
<b>Location</b>	Farmers' Institute, Salt Spring Island, BC
<b>Admission</b>	Free
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sherryleighwilliams.com">www.sherryleighwilliams.com</a>
<b>Festival</b>	<a href="http://www.indigenouspeoplesweekend.ca">www.indigenouspeoplesweekend.ca</a>