Rallying the Community
The Story of the Peerless Lake and Trout Lake First Nation Schools.
Agenda

1. History of the Peerless Trout First Nation
2. First Visit for their New Schools
3. Community Engagement
4. Local Context Matters
5. Making a School that the Community has Pride In.
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History of the Peerless Trout First Nation
Peerless Lake and Trout Lake is located in Northern Alberta.

**Fun Facts**
- Closest town is Red Earth Creek, one hour drive in good weather.
- Five hour drive north of Edmonton.
History of a Nation

- **1950s**: Peerless Lake and Trout Lake did not have community schools.
- **1980s**: Two identical schools were constructed by the Alberta Government in the community.
- **2010s**: Peerless Trout First Nation became an Official First Nation. Two new schools are currently underway in the community.
First Visit for their New Schools
Understanding the Community

Through formal and informal conversations, we discovered the following key issues that surround the new schools.

- School attendance
- Health of community members
- Cultural identity
- Business and training initiatives
School Culture

Current Situation
- Low attendance levels and graduation rates
- Recruitment of teachers in remote areas has challenges
- All kids are provided breakfast and lunch at school
Community Engagement
DRAW YOUR SCHOOL

Science lab!
With Chief and Council
With the Community
At least one plant.
Lots of windows.
Free space table.
Just a really nice, big library with older books and bean bag chairs + couches everywhere. Plants everywhere and Vincent Van Gogh (other painters too) paintings everywhere. Big windows for light inside.
The Cree Curriculum
Local Context Matters
Unique Culture

**You know what they say about assuming...**

- We didn’t do it in one meeting, the engagement is ongoing. Series of meetings, community reports, phone calls to the new school committee, additional meetings.
Unconscious Ignorance

Hit the ground running
• With the Stakeholder Engagement complete we went back to the drawing board and prepared a concept for the band.

Sustainable design features
• School was positioned close to the trees and next to a beautiful river
• Emphasis was on close proximity to nature
• Natural beauty was put at the forefront of the design
Conscious Ignorance

What we thought they wanted

School located close to the trees and nature!

What they actually wanted

We already live in the trees, don’t put us in the trees again!
Conscious Ignorance

What we thought they wanted

School nestled next to the spring/stormwater runoff.

What they actually wanted

We’re not interested in a creek, most of us have one in our backyards!
Conscious Ignorance

What we thought they wanted

Emphasis on natural beauty.

What they actually wanted

We want the school to be a part of our main street!
Creating a School that the Community has Pride In.
Peerless Lake School
Solution?

Create a virtual reality experience that allows the users to stand in their new school, before it is even built.
Virtual Reality Break
Thank You!