

## Gord Fiddler - Presenter/Artist

The Heritage Centre is proud to introduce Gord Fiddler, another talented Anishinaabe artist who will be participating in the Woodland Arts Festival in July. Gord was born in Cochenour in 1955. When he was a baby, his father, Samuel, originally from Sandy Lake First Nation, was tragically killed when his boat hit a rock as he was on his way home from Cochenour to McKenzie Island one night. He had just left the Cochenour Hospital after being treated for an injury at the Cochenour Mine.

Without any means to support herself, Gord's mother moved to Red Lake where she had two more children. The family was very poor, and Gord remembers stealing food from grocery stores and raiding people's gardens to feed his sisters when he was only seven years old. He was placed in a foster home for a while, and sent to the McIntosh Residential School near Vermillion Bay for a few years. He later moved with his mother to Wawa then to Elliot Lake, where he now lives with his wife Barbara and their two sons.

Gord started painting when he was eight, and made his first sale at ten. His first jobs were painting signs and posters for grocery stores. Encouraged by an elementary school teacher who recognized his talent, he continued painting throughout his teen and adult years. He credits this teacher, who kept encouraging him over the years, for giving him the confidence to pursue an art career. Eventually, his art evolved to painting traditional Anishinaabe images, and today he makes a comfortable living as a commercial artist. His designs can be found on clothing, blankets, glass etchings, and many different types of arts and crafts. He also paints stunning canvasses that he sells to Canadian and foreign collectors.



Art by Gord Fiddler

Gord has had exhibitions in prestigious venues such as the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa, the Canadian Gallery in Vancouver, and at various private and public art galleries across the country. His art has also been shown at the Skydome in Toronto, as well as in Germany, Australia and Scotland.

Gord has never lived in Sandy Lake, but he has visited the community a few times. He still has many relatives there and they often refer to him as "the missing Fiddler". Gord, who will be accompanied by his family, says he is very excited about participating in the Festival and having the opportunity to reconnect with his family. "Nothing would make me happier than to come back to my home territory and show what I've been doing for the last 35 years", he says. Gord will conduct workshops for young people on the basics of becoming a successful artist, including how to read contracts, and how royalties and commissions work. He will bring examples of his work for sale and display.

Gord says his future plan is to teach young people all aspects of Traditional Aboriginal Arts.

For more information about the Red Lake Woodland Arts Festival, visit our website at [www.redlakemuseum.com](http://www.redlakemuseum.com), e-mail us at [rlhc@goredlake.com](mailto:rlhc@goredlake.com), or call us at 727-3006.