

# Healing Words

Volume 3 Number 3 SPRING 2002 A Publication of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation www.ahf.ca  
Free



Courtesy of the private collection of Dr. B Caloyannis and Little Shell Art Studio.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALING, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

In his recent presentation to the Lafontaine-Baldwin lecture, Georges Erasmus posed a question: Why is communication between [Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal peoples] so difficult, so riddled with misunderstandings and tension? He goes on to affirm that these are due to "a problem of language," and that "even when we used the same words, Aboriginal people and government representatives were often talking about different things."

Nowhere is this difference of meaning, more evident than in the concept of healing.

We have, in many previous issues of *Healing Words*, explored several aspects of this Aboriginal sociocultural paradigm. Today, in Canada, Aboriginal communities are recognising the importance, relevance and efficiency of their traditional healthy worldview. We are taking steps to reaffirm and integrate this worldview in our individual and collective life.

Whether we are young people looking for a meaningful sense of self, or parents, wives, husbands wishing to give the very best of ourselves so our children and spouses may fulfill the potential gifted to them by the Creator—whether we are Elders on the last stretch of our path towards the Creator, conscious of the knowledge we still have to acquire ourselves and offer to others, whether we are Leaders

with the sacred duty to encourage and protect the well-being, health and prosperity of those we serve, whatever our individual characteristics and social roles, it is evident that the common principles underpinning the concept of Aboriginal healing and health are the best foundation for harmonious human development, relationships and meaningful prosperity.

How do we know this realisation is steadily gaining ground? Certainly not in the mainstream media, which is more concerned with sensationalising the worst in human nature and behaviour. In that artificial and insane media world, violence is the norm, the more of it the better. Holistic Healing is not a topic of great interest. But in Aboriginal communities in Canada and everywhere else in the world, it is the one issue one occupying the forefront of individual concerns and endeavours.

Aboriginal Healing principles and values are also making their steady way into many areas of Western life: principles of justice, holistic medicine, ecology, child rearing practices, education, human development and relations, decision making structures and processes, accumulation, transmission and use of knowledge, relationship between science and spirituality, etc...

It is however still a matter of surprise when we point these things out. For Aboriginal people,

this need to be said again and again: there is much to be proud of, much to share with each other, much to take heart from.

At the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, we see this happening everyday. The body of Aboriginal knowledge about healing is already immense and is ceaselessly growing. The process of healing can be given expression through a rich array of forms that are already well rooted in Aboriginal cultures: language, ceremonies and rituals, visual art, dance, architecture, clothing, meal-making etc. ... Since the beginning we have tried to encourage people to come out, tell us their stories, tell us how they transformed themselves and helped other find their strength to heal. For the first time, we are able to present you with an issue almost entirely written by contributors. We loved reading their inspiring stories and are very, very happy to be able to share them with you.

It certainly seems to us that the common message of Elders from every corner of Canada is beginning to be heard and being heeded: Today is a time of choices – treating the Creator with respect and gratitude, or not, treating the earth with respect and wisdom, or not, treating ourselves with respect and dignity, or not, treating other with love and respect, or not. As Always, there is a price to pay for choosing the "not," and that price is health and happiness. -GR

## Inside

### Letters

PAGES 2 - 5

### Ojibwe Cultural Foundation

PAGE 7

### Medicine Wheel: A Healing Beginning

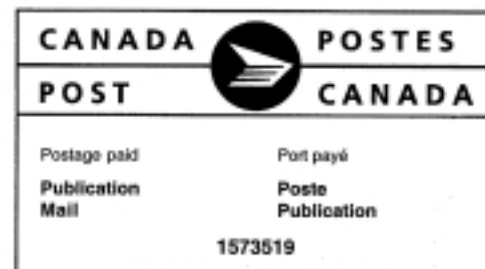
PAGE 11

### The Psychologist in Aboriginal Territory

PAGE 22

### Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation

PAGE 24





Hi there,

I would like to receive *Healing Words*. I would also be interested in a complete listing of resources on residential schools.

Thank you,  
Deseree.

\*

Hi, if you can provide me with info on: Your audience (people), focus (news), when you started, are you still in operation, are past issues accessible.

Also when is it out? Monthly/bi ?

Thank-you,

Yours truly, Ojibway post-secondary student Larry age 35.

Larry,

Our audience is over 30,000 people for each quarterly edition of *Healing Words*. This includes Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people. We have readers residing in the United States and beyond North America as well.

The newsletter's focus is upon healing. We therefore feature many articles that concern residential schools, survivor groups, healing programs, and history.

The first issue came out in 1999. You are now reading Volume 3 Number 3, our 11th issue. You can obtain back issues by contacting the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (see below for addresses).

\*

*continued on page 3*



*Healing  
Words*

To receive *Healing Words*, write to us at Suite 801, 75 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5E7 or phone 1-888-725-8886. (In Ottawa, phone 237-4441). Our fax number is (613) 237-4442 and our email is [grobelin@ahf.ca](mailto:grobelin@ahf.ca) or [wspear@ahf.ca](mailto:wspear@ahf.ca). Keep in mind that the newsletter is available in French and English and is free. Also available on-line! <http://www.ahf.ca>



Submit your articles, letters, or other contributions by fax, mail, or email to:

The Editors, Healing Words  
75 Albert Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 5E7

Our fax number is (613) 237-4442 and our email addresses for submissions are:



[grobelin@ahf.ca](mailto:grobelin@ahf.ca)



[wspear@ahf.ca](mailto:wspear@ahf.ca)

Please include a short biography with your submission as well as a return address and phone number. We may need to contact you about your submission.

The AHF does not pay for published submissions, but we do provide contributors with copies of the newsletter.

The views expressed by contributors to *Healing Words* do not necessarily reflect the views of the AHF.

All submissions are subject to the approval of the editorial team and may be edited for spelling, grammar, and length.

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO  
ALL OUR CONTRIBUTORS !**



*Healing Words,*

My name is Terena Hunt and I work at Burnaby Correctional Center for Women. I would like to request your newspaper *Healing Words* for the women here.

Thank you very much.  
Terena Hunt.

Hi! Terena

Thank you for your message, Terena. We would be very happy to add you to our mailing list for *Healing Words*. How many copies do you require?

We also are very interested in getting information about the work you do and about the women you work with. Please let us know if there are any issues related to Residential Schools that you or the women are interested in. Also, we are always looking for poems, letters, stories, drawings to publish in the newsletter, if this is of interest to you or to the women, please do not hesitate to contact us.

I am forwarding your contact information to our mailing list operator, just tell me how many copies you need.

Thank you, Terena, for your interest.  
-Giselle & Wayne.

\*

Dear Sir and/or Madam:

I brought a copy of your publication newspaper, HEALING WORDS from Yellowknife, NWT to Tuktoyaktuk, NWT. I would really love to subscribe for 12 copies. Your material is an excellent teaching tool for holistic healing, I can use for lesson plan. I am an adult educator at the Aurora College Tuktoyaktuk Learning Centre. Tuk is my hometown and we are in dire need of healing! In the yr. 2002, we've had 4 suicides & an uneventful tragic accident on the winter ice road where my brother was one of the deceased.

Thank you, I will keep you posted of the productive work from your newspaper.

Rosemary Lundrigan.

Hi! Rosemary,

What a positive and encouraging letter, Rosemary! Thank you very much. We are preparing the next newsletter and it is always an intense time for us, so your encouragement is very much appreciated. One of the Foundation mandates is to promote awareness and education, so you are helping us too in a very concrete way by teaching your students about Residential School issues. You are doing important work, please keep us posted about your work, we are interested.

There is no subscription fee for *Healing Words*. All we need is your mailing address and your telephone number, Fax if you have one.

We have a special column for readers' letters, and yours will be published in our next newsletter. Don't forget to e-mail me your contact information.

Thank you again, Rosemary

In the Spirit of Healing,  
-Giselle and Wayne.

\*

Received by e-mail:

Hello everyone,

My name is Edward Martin and I am the Conference Coordinator for the 1st International Circle of Children Conference – Intergenerational Effects of Residential School October 2003 to be held in Montreal.

I'm looking for people who are interested in having their name added to our mailing list.

I am looking for Residential School Survivors and Children of Survivors and anyone who is dealing with Residential School issues.

The purpose of this database is to actively involve Residential School Survivors and Children of Survivors nationally. Eventually I will have a survey/questionnaire that will capture relevant data for the project. Gradually in time, we will have an E-newsletter with current information on the Conference and updates, and articles from Residential School Survivors and Children of Survivors.

When responding to my request, please indicate if you're a Residential School Survivor or Children of Survivor and contact info.

You can also email your request to my work email at home [circleofchildren@sympatico.ca](mailto:circleofchildren@sympatico.ca)

For more information on the Conference please check out this website.

[http://www.visions.ab.ca/activities/conferences+seminars/international\\_circle\\_of\\_children.htm](http://www.visions.ab.ca/activities/conferences+seminars/international_circle_of_children.htm)

This conference will address the legacy of physical, sexual and cultural abuse endured by many generations by focusing on the needs identified by Residential School Survivors and the Children of Survivors. Through unity and a sense of Nationhood, we anticipate building on the understanding of the effects of Residential School by including the rest of the Canadian society to actively participate in the events prior to the Conference.

This project will also focus on the Children of Survivors and the future generations coming up. With the education of our Nations history being the most important element of concern, we intended to bridge the gaps of understanding of what our great grandparents, grandparents and parents survived through a series of healing workshops, round table discussions, spiritual ceremonies and fund raising events.

Wel'alin,  
Edward A. Martin  
Conference Coordinator  
Native Friendship Centre of Montreal  
514-499-1854 fax: 514-499-9436

\*

Ahneen.

Read the winter edition of *Healing Words*. The front story touched a deep inner part of my being. And I needed to share this with you.

Please find attached, one letter stating some of my history and the other is what I would like to share with all the Anishnabequa.

Hope everyone enjoys the article. It took me less than a week to complete it.

Baa maa pi Go waab min  
Verna Tabobandung.

[Editors' note: please see Verna's writing at page 17.]





Hi! Verna,

Thank you for your contribution, Verna. I really like it. I have placed it in our file for the next newsletter. Wayne and I will then look at what we have and finalise our choices for content. From my point of view, your contribution will be a great asset for the newsletter, and will fit very well.

Wayne just told me you phoned him enquiring if your e-mail was received. I received it with no virus problem. So thank you. I will confirm the publication of your article very soon. I know you have indicated your interest in its publication in the e-mail, but we have to ask you to send us a short letter indicating you authorise the AHF to publish your article.

Thanks again Verna, and congratulations.

- Giselle

\*

Dear Friends at *Healing Words*:

My husband and I picked up your Newsletter for the first time last month and we would like to be added to your mailing list.

Also I would like to send you a photo of one of my paintings. It is a 36" Circular Canvas painting. It is called "The Keeper of the Seven Fires" Also I am glad you called out for poets, as I do some writing. I am sending you the poem that goes with it the painting. I would be pleased if you could share it with your readers.

Hi! Zoey,

I had not received your first e-mail, but I am really glad that you persevered and contacted us again. I have passed on your contact information to the person in charge of the mailing list, and it is with pleasure that we will add you to it. I love your poem and would like to include it in one of our newsletters, if possible the next one, if not the one after that.

Thank-you both so much for your interest, and congratulations on your art work.

In the Spirit of Healing

- Giselle

\*

Hello all and Peace,

Is your publication still operating and are submissions still okay?

Thanks

Richard Tardif  
Montreal, Quebec.

Good morning Richard,

Yes, our publication is very much alive and we are always open to receiving contributions from readers. The deadline for our March newsletter has passed, but we would be pleased to consider your contribution, if you have one to offer, for our next newsletters. Thank you, for your interest, Richard.

- Giselle

## **Bulletin Board**

The Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association will be hosting their 5th Reunion August 2-5, 2002. The Gathering is in Sault Ste. Marie at the old Shingwauk School location which now houses Algoma University College 1520 Queen St. East Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The gathering is for all former students and staff and their descendants. We address the impacts of the former residential schools our way. Please plan to join us, we are quite welcoming.

For more information:

Theresa Turmel

Shingwauk Hall

1520 Queen St. East

Sault Ste. Marie, ON

P6A 2G4

Telephone: (705)949-2301, Ext. 217

Fax: (705)949-6583

E-mail: turmel@auc.ca

**Dear Readers: please help other survivors by sending your response to *Healing Words*.**

Dear Giselle and Wayne

Please find attached my testimony and support letter to a submission to AHF this past summer. Keep up the good work you have started. We all have to begin to talk.

Mahsi,

Joachim P. Bonnetrouge

[Editors' note: please see Joachim's writing at page 16.]

\*

Hello!

I would like to receive your newsletter *Healing Words* at home. I am a Cree student. I am working toward a Master's degree in psychoeducation and I find the information in your newsletter very useful. Could please tell me if there are costs involved?

Thank you very much.

Janet

Hi! Janet,

Thank you for your interest, I am very happy to learn our publication is useful to you. It is with pleasure that I add you name to our mailing list. *Healing Words (Le premier pas)* is free and you will soon receive the next issue published at the end of April at home. Just watch your letterbox!

Thank you again, Janet

- Giselle



· Rachel Kelly Dunn

Happiness

It was a beautiful day,  
I was laying on the grass,  
Staring at the big white clouds,  
Thinking of all the things that make me happy,  
Food to keep me alive and not to starve,  
Home to keep me warm and safe,  
Family to watch over me and to care for me,  
Medicine for when I get sick I can be treated,  
For work to give us the money to buy me all of these things,  
Clothes to keep me warm,  
Friends to lean on and tell them my problems,  
And for life, for all these beautiful things,  
I can go on and on and on,  
But,  
And Oh Yeah for swimming which I'm off to do right now!

Rachel Kelly Dunn  
Age 12  
Wednesday, July 4, 2001

Below: St. Andrews [Anglican] Boarding School, Athabasca.



Greetings!

As we are often working within first nations communities we found your newspaper *Le premier pas* at the Native Friendship Centre in Quebec. We would like to know if it would be possible to subscribe to your paper, and if there is a cost.

I am also attaching the press release we send out to announce our activities within the various reservations. If you would like more information about our services it would be my pleasure to send you an information package.

Thank you so much. I look forward to reading future issues of *Le premier pas*.

Elizabeth Lowenger  
Montréal (Quebec)

Good morning Elizabeth,

Healing Words/Le premier pas is entirely free, we just need your contact information in order to transfer it to our mailing list. This has been done in your case and it is with pleasure that we will send you the next issues of *Le premier pas*.

If you need several copies, please let me know.

I have passed on the news releases to our Webmaster, and it will be posted on our Website. Yes, I would definitely like to have more information of the work you (the Foundation) do, Elizabeth, and I look forward to receiving it.

Thank you very much for your interest, and encouragement.

Very best regards,

- Giselle

\*

Good afternoon;

I am the Aboriginal Programs Officer on the women's unit at the Regional Psychiatric Centre (Prairies). A friend of mine told me that there is an article about maximum-security federally-sentenced women in the winter issue of *Healing Words* and she passed on these e-mail addresses. I was wondering if it is possible to get some copies of this newsletter for our staff and patients. If there is a cost associated with receiving the newsletter I would need to know that prior to having it sent to me.

Audrey Hobman  
Aboriginal Programs Officer

Dear Audrey

Thank you for your request. We received several similar requests from Women's organisations and Institutions, and it means a lot to us to see that this publication is of interest to women and those who care for them.

*Healing Words* is free; I have forwarded your address to our mailing list administrator and you will receive the next issues.

I have also mailed out to you today several copies of the Winter issue. Thank you again, Audrey for your interest, and please convey our greeting and support to the women who will read it.

- Giselle

End of letters



· Zoey Wood-Salomon

*Keeper of the Seven Fires*

When I woke up this morning  
 I offered up a prayer to my Creator  
 and I laid my tobacco down  
 It was sunrise as I started my walk  
 I followed a small beaten path  
 Into a very deep and dark forest  
 But I was not afraid  
 I knew you were with me  
 You promised  
 The air in the forest  
 smelled so fresh and clean this morning  
 just like after a rain  
 Sweetgrass, Sage & Cedar  
 filled the air  
 Exhausted  
 I stopped and rested  
 among the tall dark trees  
 Sunlight was filtering in  
 as I picked up my drum and sang for you  
 Old Anishnabe songs spilled out into the air  
 as I sang to the mountains, to the birds,  
 to the flowers and to the trees  
 Songs of thanksgiving  
 for the wind and for the rivers



Zoey is from the Ottawa Nation, Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, Manitoulin Island, Ontario, but she resides with her husband in Sault Ste. Marie, ON.

“I started writing poetry at a very young age, and I have always been interested in painting, but one of my teachers told me at a grade school level that I had no idea what I was doing in art. So since then I hid everything I did – until I met my husband, who encouraged me to show the world what I can do. I started painting in acrylics in 1981, and with each painting also comes a writing, whether it is in story form or poetry form.

For a long time I was lost. I tried to blend into the dominant society but I never found a place where I felt good about myself. My Creator in His great love for me saw this and He opened up a way for me to get back in touch with who I am and where I come from.

Today, He is leading me gently back to my culture, my heritage and my people. He has done this through my writings and my art. My art and faith have become integral parts of my self-discovery. When I paint I pray. I find I get very dissatisfied with myself when I do not paint because I pray better when I paint, and so, if I am not painting, I am not praying.

Meegwetch,  
 Zoey Wood-Salomon.

I sang for my little brothers & sisters  
 as they scurried around me  
 that morning in the bush  
 Songs for my ancestors  
 and generations yet unborn  
 Elation filled my spirit  
 as one by one  
 each Grandmother came  
 and sat by my side  
 First there was love, then honesty  
 followed by trust, humility & bravery  
 Finally respect and wisdom  
 It was in this exhilarating moment  
 yet a moment so private, so peaceful,  
 so filled with love that I first met  
 me  
 an Anishnabe Kwe  
 “Keeper of the Seven Fires”  
 Aho!

- Written & Copyrighted by Zoey Wood-Salomon

# featured project



## OJIBWE CULTURAL FOUNDATION'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL PROJECT

### *The Residential School Experience – Reflections, Remembrance, Rejuvenation – A Symposium and Exhibition*

The principal goal of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation's Residential School project was to assist survivors in dealing with the residential school experience through artistic expression. This type of programming has been called 'healing through the arts', but we chose to call it 'moving from experience to expression'. The artistic emphasis of the program was complemented with archival research in order to create an exhibit that was both artistic and documentary.

### Purpose

One of the aims of this exhibition and symposium is to provide survivors and their extended families a safe haven in which to express their thoughts, memories and aspirations for individual and collective healing in a positive and respectful manner and which allows others who were not close to the experience to gain an understanding of the significance of this emotional and cultural holocaust.

An important part of the exhibition is presenting not only the creative and artistic submissions of survivors and their relatives but a collection of documentation, photographs and archival material detailing the history, policies and environment in which residential schools were operated. Such a collection is a powerful testament to the devastating impact of these schools on the families, relatives and communities of survivors and should be brought to light.

It is our hope that this exhibition will not only allow survivors an opportunity to heal through a form of art therapy but stimulate the beginnings of a healing dialogue in families and communities and respectful awareness and thoughtful discussion amongst the general public.

In this regard, the symposium is a key element of the exhibition launch providing a safe environment for reflection, sharing, discussion, and emotions. A theatrical work, sharing circles, small group sessions, one on one sessions with elders, healing ceremonies and the like are envisioned as part of the symposium to address the mental, emotional and spiritual needs of survivors, participants and their families.

The residential school can only be summarized as a cultural and emotional holocaust for survivors, their families, relatives and communities.

Scores of little ones were taken from the security of caring extended families, the familiar rhythm of the Ojibwe/Odawa/Potawatomi language and lifestyle, the carefree cadence and beauty of the seasonal cycle, and the circle

of their cultural identity never to return. They may have recovered from any physical indignities and walked out the doors at the end of their requisite 'education' but these were not the same people.

Loss of language, cultural identity, traditional knowledge, and self-esteem coupled with shame, emotional isolation, feelings of hopelessness and lack of self-worth combined to effectively cripple successive generations of Anishnawbek people, their families and communities. Much of this is manifested in high levels of alcoholism, substance abuse, family violence, depression, ill health and poor economic prospects for the affected individuals and their extended families.

Almost implicitly, very little has been said about these devastating effects. The more horrendous aspects of residential life including physical and sexual abuse are almost never spoken of. Sadly, today's youth have little awareness and appreciation for the effects this experience has had on some of their relatives due in large part to survivors' reluctance to unburden.

Unburdening has come about, in some instances, in more unhealthy ways such as excessive drinking, aggression, physical, mental, emotional and other forms of abuse no one likes to talk about.

This exhibition and symposium therefore proposes to provide an outlet for individual creative expression in any and all mediums for survivors and their extended families to share their memories, thoughts and feelings about the whole experience.

### Exhibition

A professionally mounted exhibition will assemble works submitted by anyone interested in sharing and participating in this initiative as well as archival information, photographs, written information and other materials of historical significance about the residential schools in our territory. The object



is to provide a form of release of therapy through creative expression which will allow survivors to finally share and unburden any feelings or thoughts they've been harbouring as well as express their hopes for the future generations. The juxtaposition with the archival information is needed to inform and remind people of the oppressive methods, policies and operation of these institutions. In some measure it serves to validate what survivors have experienced and raises the collective awareness of 'unaffected' youth and the general public who may not have an understanding of the impacts of residential schools.

## Symposium

As part and parcel of the launch of this important exhibition, a symposium is proposed which essentially is a forum for dialogue. Those wishing to share their experiences, thoughts or written materials with others in small group settings or sharing circles will be encouraged to participate. A play will be commissioned by the local theatre group which will incorporate as much as survivors are willing to share about the experience. The emphasis will focus not only on the past but the future as well. There are many aspects to the symposium which could be proposed, all of which of course, must respect the wishes and ultimately the safety and emotional well-being of survivors and their extended families.

## Goals

- 1) To provide a safe, respectful, emotional and expressive outlet for survivors, their families and relatives.
- 2) To validate and affirm the impact the experience has had on survivors' lives, their families and the communities in which they live.
- 3) To raise awareness amongst youth, communities and the general public about the legacy of physical, sexual, emotional and mental abuse in residential schools and the intergenerational impact on survivors and their families.

### Start & End Dates

1/1/01 - 12/31/01

### Primary Contact:

Paul Nadjiwan  
Executive Director  
Tel: 705-377-4902 ext. 24  
Fax: 705-377-5460  
Email: kate.roy@onlink.net

### AHF Contribution

\$98,000.00

### *Moving from experience to expression: The Ojibwe Cultural Foundation's Residential School Project*

The Ojibwe Cultural Foundation's (OCF) residential school project, "Remembrance, Reflections, Rejuvenation" is a program based upon the concept of healing through the arts. A program based upon healing through the arts lends itself to the creative and artistic nature of native people. However, such a program also allows for an expressive outlet for residential school survivors who may harbour memories that are too painful to talk about. However, artistic expression is

more than that, it is also a means of documentation. In an effort to assist residential school survivors to contribute their artistic expressions, the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation hosted a number of workshops in painting, creative writing, as well as a reading performance of a new play by Cree playwright Shirley Cheechoo (who is also a residential school survivor).

For the months of August and September, the OCF exhibited the works of art completed in these workshops alongside the paintings of more established artists such as Metis artist Jim Logan, Anishinaabe artists Ida Baptiste, Don Ense and Sean Couchie. To complement the artistic expression, the exhibit also displayed the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation's Spanish residential school photograph collection. The goal of the exhibit was to raise awareness, educate and showcase Native artistic talent. Another goal of the exhibit was to display the varied responses and perspectives of the residential school experience.

The two submissions that accompany this article are on display at the OCF's residential school exhibit. The photo is an unidentified Spanish student. The prose that accompanies the picture, entitled Mutual Wisdom was written by Mary Lou Cecile Debassige of M'Chigeeng First Nation. Mary Lou's mother attended St. Joseph's School for Girls in Spanish, Ontario. The prose is the product of one of the exercises conducted at a writing workshop held at the OCF and facilitated by noted Native author Lee Maracle.

The second submission is a painting created by Nishnaabe artist Don Ense. Although Don did not attend residential school he was inspired by the exhibit of photos and the paintings that were on display. Don felt that the paintings in the exhibit tended to depict the more negative aspects of the residential school experience without addressing the need for healing. His painting is accompanied by an explanation, in his own words, of his painting.

## Artistic Component

Three workshops were delivered throughout the summer of 2001. Two were held in M'Chigeeng and one in Sudbury. The first workshop was held in late July and was facilitated by Alan Corbiere. The workshop started each day with a circle and a prayer from an Elder or Traditional Helper (alternated between Liza Mosher and Jake Aguonia). After the circles, participants were asked to engage in the exercises that focussed on the theme words of "Remembrance, Reflection, and Rejuvenation".

Participants were asked to generate and illustrate ideas on remembering the experience - what had happened to individuals, to families, to communities and to our nations. The second day, participants focussed on reflecting upon how the residential school experience affected them personally, their families, and their communities. And finally, participants were asked to illustrate how they themselves can rejuvenate from the experience. Three tables were set up in the workshop area, each table corresponded to a focus word. Each participant was asked to contribute a drawing to these murals. The result was a mural on *Remembering*, a mural on *Reflecting* and one on *Rejuvenating*. After these murals were done, the participants were asked to paint a picture of their residential school experience.

The second workshop was called "Writing to Remember, Writing to Heal" and was facilitated by accomplished Sto:lo author Lee Maracle. Lee Maracle has taught creative writing for number of years in British Columbia at Enowkin School of Writing\*. Ms. Maracle had participants engaged in self-reflection exercises from the onset. These exercises involved working with your five senses. Participants described and 'journalled' their feelings, this journal became a point of reflection throughout the 3 day workshop. This workshop was held in M'Chigeeng at the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation. At the time of the workshop, the OCF Spanish Photograph collection had been mounted for display in the main hallway. A master of improvisation, Ms. Maracle had the participants utilizing these photographs in the exercises.

The first exercise was to pick a photograph and choose one of the boys or girls in the photograph and write a letter home on their behalf. A subsequent exercise was to then write a return letter to that child, but this time writing as the parent or sibling of that child. Another exercise was one Lee called 'snippets' or 'framing'. In this exercise, participants were asked to start with an image from their childhood, any image, which could be an open door, the light on or a thunderstorm. That starting image was then to be contextualized with a personal experience. The writing exercise involved dealing with a personal issue and bringing it to some kind of closure. In this 'writing as healing' exercise, the last line of the exercise was to 'close the book' or 'end that chapter' by using the initial image and reversing it. So that open door was then closed, the light that was on got turned off and that thunderstorm gave way to sunshine.







All of the exercises culminated in the final task of pulling all of the generated images into a short story. But this short story was to be written for one of the scenes depicted in the photograph collection. The end result was some powerful personal stories that effectively utilized the photographs as generative themes. Some of these stories were then typed out and mounted alongside the photograph.

The third workshop was facilitated by Nishnaabe artist Will Morin. Will's approach differed from the other two workshops but resulted in some beautiful artwork. Will started the workshop with a talking circle. In the talking circle, Will explained that as adults, we have been conditioned to separate our essential selves, that is we separate our physical selves, our mental selves and our spiritual selves. We do so by repressing our emotions, by not saying some things we would like to say, and by foregoing some child-like activities. This workshop was aimed at re-acquainting ourselves with these aspects through art exercises. Will had participants fingerpainting, using some basic Reiki while demonstrating some simple, yet effective artistic techniques.

Some of the art produced at the workshops was displayed at the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation's residential school exhibit. These amateur artists' work was complemented by some more established artists such as Metis artist Jim Logan, Ojibwe artist Sean Couchie, Nishnabe-kwe artist Ida Baptiste and Nishnaabe artist Don Ense. Jim Logan's series "Requiem for our children" was loaned to the OCF courtesy of the Friends of the Gallery, Yukon Permanent Arts Collection in Whitehorse. Sean Couchie's haunting painted images of the boys' and girls' school at Spanish starkley contrasted the OCF photograph collection. M'Chigeeng artist Don Ense, viewed the work of Jim Logan and found that the series did not attempt to address the need for healing or reconciliation. Don went to work and produced the amazing "I shall fear no evil".



*Courtesy of the private collection of Dr. B Caloyannis and Little Shell Art Studio.*

The art of the workshop participants, the accomplished artists, and the OCF's Spanish Photograph Collection was complemented with quotes from infamous/notorious government and church reports. Also on display was some newspaper clippings from the Sudbury Star and the Sault Daily Star both of which reported Spanish graduations and hockey championships. Even the Garnier School (Spanish boys school) song was on display.

One of the final events of the program was the performance of "Moose River Crossing". This is the latest play by Cree playwright and residential school survivor, Shirley Cheechoo. Shirley Cheechoo invited a few actors to assist her in the reading performance of this play. The play is about residential school reunion that takes place at the very train station these survivors used to board to get to the residential school. Ms. Cheechoo, through various characters in the play, was able to capture the spectrum of varied perspectives regarding the whole residential school experience. Indeed, some of the characters told their stories of abuse, while other characters attested to the

school's positive contribution to their 'success'. The play was well received on both the Friday night and the Saturday night reading performance on Labour day weekend.

Currently, the OCF is investigating the possibility of hosting a symposium on the Residential School Experience. The symposium would provide a forum for residential school survivors and the community at large to listen to a few guest speakers discuss contemporary issues concerning the residential school and how it has impacted our communities. Three presentation themes are being proposed: the residential school experience and its effect on (1) Native leadership, (2) Native education, and (3) Native traditions. Guest speakers will all be Spanish alumni and will have served as a chief, teacher, principle, and a respected elder or pipe carrier.



*Photo courtesy of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation.*

## Mutual Wisdom

1. A young Native girl inside a hand-made, cardboard canoe. ... I too, a young Native girl inside an un-natural secular system. Linear perspective with an A equals B. Mind and Body fixation equals alienation.
2. She holds a cardboard and small board for a make-believe paddle, and acts as if paddling ... I too, held fast to an unfit role-model, authoritative figures, both coated with male and female adult attire.
3. She pretends there is a body of water under the faked canoe ... I too, pretended this was the ideal system but kept seeing and getting images from various places to tell me otherwise. There was no showering me with positive, concrete and worthwhile fountains of truth of any type.
4. A theatrical play, skit, performance, concert ... I too, played the jailed part, inside the trail (or trial?) of traumas which resulted from cultural genocide(s), holocaust(s) and massacre(s) of my people.
5. The background consists of a curtain filled with pasted-on, cut-out hearts with initials SJS and GRS on them. This tattle tale means 'the society of jesus' but it also means Saint Joseph's School for Girls and the other initials means Garnier Residential School for Boys ... I too, tried to believe this was a loving "Society" by celebrating St. Valentine's Day, February 14th of each year. Instead, they relied on a 'faked I love you idea' by giving me the name of both a virgin (Mary mother of god), and a prostitute (Mary Magdeline, the one who wiped Jesus's feet supposingly). I filled neither. I am Kineugeeshigoo Kwe/ Golden Eagle Woman. ▶

## ◀ OJIBWE CULTURAL FOUNDATION'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL PROJECT

*The Residential School Experience – Reflections, Remembrance, Rejuvenation – A Symposium and Exhibition*



6. She wears imitation Native clothes and headgear. Instead of intricate, designed leather dress, it is a potato sack with unevenly-cut fringes around her neck. Instead of a genuine headdress with real eagle or other bird's feathers, it is a headband with artificial feather plumes ... I too, dressed the part for too long. In the wintertime, I wore some rich, old shagnosh she kwe's (non-Native woman) discarded coat. ... Which my mother had bought from a rummage sale behind the Roman Catholic Church. She had hemmed it to my knees. On my head, I wore a folded-in-half headsquare or bandanna. Deprived of care connection, from an unimaginable soft, warm animal skin.

7. There is a small arrow on the surfaced, right hand side of the artificial canoe, to the Native Girl's right hand side ... I too, was and still am put in a life-context. I am and come from the Odawa, Pottawatomi, Chippewa,

Ojibwe and Scottish background. I know some things about our Native Traditional Ancestor's seven teachings and directions. Their "Wholistic Law of Life in the Universe" banner comes under one's tribal name. This is the natural law of life and all life on Earth Mother contributes to it. It is a place where all munidoo-wen (spiritual) life is sacred, respected and accounted for. It has always been and still is a form of spontaneous communicative and collaborative interconnection and results in ritualistic exchange ... with a Ceremony of Life inside this eternal Life-Cycle. Ahau! §

---

*Alias mary lou cecile debassige. © Written for OCF creative writing workshop July 27-29, 2001 facilitated by Lee Maracle.*

---

*continued from page 23*

### ◀ The Psychologist in Aboriginal Territory

Community response is of primary importance, the individual therapeutic process often becoming fully meaningful for the person when he can fit his personal process within a perspective of family or community healing. Group approaches that include elements of the traditional culture are in keeping with the importance attributed the group in the Aboriginal community. Concrete approaches that lead groups to exchange and teach each other new skills are appreciated and deemed helpful by the clients. They are less biased culturally and effectively address the communities' need to be the principal actors of their own recovery.

The use of non-directive techniques, the psychologist's style of communication, and the adoption of a stance of "cultural apprentice" are other important ingredients. Some Aboriginal people are afraid of the Western health system; they anticipate that professionals use specialised language, rational language, a cold language that excludes them. The adoption of a very permissive approach that shows a sincere interest in the culture seems essential to the establishment of the therapeutic relationship.

Finally, through the use of dreams, cultural metaphors, traditional artistic activities and art therapy, it is possible to identify a rich cultural heritage and to engage in an exchange in a protected and free space. The symbolic process that takes shape with the aid of these techniques makes it possible to go beyond the limits of common vocabulary between therapist and client, to create a potential space and open up communication. These are the very conditions for a return to normal development and for harmonisation in the therapeutic context.



· Gloria Sault Hudson

"Sago,

I am a Mohawk from Brantford, Ontario. Mom Mohawk from Six Nations, Dad Chippewa from New Credit reserve. I am 52 years old. My name is Gloria E. Sault Hudson. I wrote this to my sons."

— to my sons —

I give thanks to the creator all through the day  
For healing my heart and spirit and showing me the right way  
A few years ago, i was emotionally almost dead  
My heart and spirit was almost broken  
But the elders were there with their words of wisdom  
Sometimes i stumble and fall  
Then i ask the creator to show me the way  
The creator says  
Get up your works not done  
You still have two sons to show the way  
Then i say  
Please show me the way  
So i may help my sons find their way.

Ona,  
Gloria Sault Hudson.



## Medicine Wheel: – A Healing Beginning

by Verna M. Wittigo

Traditionally the medicine wheel is recognized as the sacred circle of life. We are medicine wheels ourselves. We go around the medicine wheel countless times a day for new Beginnings (East), Growth (South), Death & Rest (West) and Wisdom (North). In this article I will share with you my knowledge and understanding of the medicine wheel and how I use it for self care, healing activities I participate in and when these activities may be helpful to the practitioner.

First I would like to share with you some of my background.

I was raised in the hamlet of Jousard on the South shore of Lesser Slave Lake in the Province of Alberta. The population was three hundred. The first settlers came in the early 1900s. The hamlet settlers were mostly French and lived by raising mink, fur trade and commercial fishing. The residential school was also a means of economic support to the residents. The Sucker Creek Cree Nation reserve was by the hamlet of Jousard. First nation members moved to Jousard and proceeded to live by hunting, trapping and gathering. They followed the seasonal movements of the animals. Some of the trappers and hunters had trap lines to fill their quota of furs they sold and hunted to maintain a balance of the animal population.

I am of the Cree tribe. The Medicine wheel was not a part of my tribal history that I heard of.

Later in my life I heard from my mother say of my father placing tobacco on mother earth to give thanks. My father was a quiet man he only spoke when it was necessary. He provided for us by hunting, guiding and trapping. My father lived in the St. Bruno Residential School – as he was an orphan – until his grandfather Wittigo took him out at age fourteen. He enfranchised us from our treaty rights to prevent us from attending residential school. I later heard from my older siblings of the sad stories he told of his experience of residential school. I had six sisters and two brothers. For our education we were sent to attend a catholic public school. We were taught to speak French, pray, attend mass. We were baptized and learned about heaven and hell. We had to confess our sins to the priest sometimes we made stories so we would have something to confess. We were strapped to behave and to be obedient. We kept in close contact with my Kokum and Mochum. We children could not be kept apart. We had a good back alley trail from our house to theirs rain, snow or shine. My mother had eleven sisters she was the oldest. Three of her sister died before we could get to know them. I was named after her sister Madeline who died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-one. We called our first cousins mission beans because we were told this is what they ate at the mission. I loved all my relatives as we shared common pillars our grandparents. We would go to the mission and buy clothes and toys from the little store the nuns have. I remember how the children were dressed in uniforms and had short hair. The boys helped the priest for mass. My kokum always had food on the stove and a warm bed if we went over to sleep. My mochum would tell us scary stories about the spirits this part of life always fascinated me. We always had a vehicle and had the most modern convenience my father could afford. He always spoiled us made sure we had a television and telephone. Our first cousins from the mission area would always come over and watch TV. Sometimes the visitors would fill half the kitchen to watch a movie. Our mochum used to boil roots and medicines we were not taught what they were. We heard of bad medicine and medicine men. Some women made hides, my mother used to make moccasins and take us picking berries. We always had horses, they were used for travel to the bush or packing if on horseback. As family we attended the pilgrimage and mass. The ways of colonization gradually changed our way of life.

Our aboriginal children and youth need to trust, feel secure and safe to be permitted to be themselves and allowed to live the natural path of life.

There is always a beginning and mine was in 1976 when I first realized how spiritually ill I was.

In my search the Creator gave me a hand by guiding me through my dreams. After talking with my kookum I connected to this part of my culture for a firm foundation. This is one of the ways we learned, listening inward and looking outward. I was with alcoholism. I attended treatment and started my recovery. Today I am in my twentieth year of recovery. The connection from the spirit world started perhaps earlier but at the age of thirteen is when I started seeing. I have never feared the other side. These messages were from the metaphysical world involving other people. I continued my lifestyle until I met a person who extended his hand to marriage and a new way of life. This was my new pathway to family and recovery in 1981. I had a relapse

1982 I attended my second trip to the treatment center. This is where I had a visit by an enlightening hand as if to affirm my path was right. My inner knowing told me I was going to recover. I was to go on living the truth and receive guidance by the Creator and all my helpers. I started out by pursuing my education and commenced working in the helping field. I decided to work in the addiction field.

I attended the Nechi Institute in St. Albert. The three-year training program involved cultural and spiritual teachings, which I recognized and took to like a bee to honey. I did not know it then but I found the First aspect of my medicine wheel, spirituality. I loved the medicine wheel at the first introduction everything seemed to fit. I started to see where and how I fit in for the first time to the world I came to live in. I was amazed and to this day I have shared my knowledge and understanding of the medicine wheel to many others. My belief is I can only walk you as far as I have walked.

The discovery of myself, applying the medicine wheel objectives to my life is a daily process.

Today 2002, aboriginal children and youth are having difficulties as we had, however because my world was much smaller then I may not have been aware of the universal issues or provincial issues pertaining to this age group. In our community the aboriginal children issues were kept within the family system(s). We had to have absolute trust in someone and were loyal although we knew it was wrong. Through our religious teachings in school we trusted to share our sins with the priest at confessional and repented. This procedure usually absolved our well being for awhile. One must remember we were protected from the truth by the religious beliefs and dysfunctional natures of our family systems back then. Not all was lost we had functional natures in our families. The truth is those of us who found a healing path and continue on it today was helped along the way. Our parents gave us love as much as they could. As pure and innocent children we recognized the good stuff. We were tripped up and devastated by others and we internalized it. Now we are overwhelmed by the truth of our children and family systems.



## ◀ *Medicine Wheel: – A Healing Beginning*

by Verna M. Wittigo

... *continued*

Our aboriginal children and youth need to trust, feel secure and safe to be permitted to be themselves and allowed to live the natural path of life.

**Working with Aboriginal children and youth:** Introduction to the Medicine wheel age group is always beneficial. I found that they are always looking for answers as well to make some meaning to their existence. I have related the paradigm, explained the ties and relationship we have to the Medicine wheel to our nature. This paradigm is essential for the knowledge of traditional therapists working with aboriginal children and youth. The only requirement is that the client wants to heal and maintain a balanced lifestyle. The client will always know what they need to incorporate wellness into their lives.

**Self-care and Healing:** Overall to living well I need to recognize, believe and live by four principles of the medicine wheel Faith, Honesty, Sharing and Kindness. I look up to the symbols each day and use them in my life. To manifest these from our clientele we need to live them for youth and children are very apt to look for and recognize how truthful you are living by demonstrating what you live and how you teach. Because during these age group years children and youth look up to us to teach and live up to us in a way where we will approve of their learning. This latter concept reaches closer to home. I remember having a favorite teacher and showing her I learned was very important to me as well as my parents.

**Journal Documentation:** This helps me by letting go of feelings and thoughts. Keeping in mind of the medicine wheel a client can apply the four components of their daily life by placing their page to cover what they experienced emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually. Most often then not an individual will recognize the balance or imbalance and where it is affected.

**Example:** emotional, express feelings: Physical, a walk: Mental, a lesson learned: spiritual, prayer. This is the “Awareness Wheel” the youth and children can be introduced to method of healing and given a journal, can be made up very easily. For example:

### Awareness Wheel

The “Awareness Wheel” journal can be made to individual requirement. The more alive and colorful to this age group I believe would be better utilised.

**The rock is the symbol of Faith.** I use the rock in my healing circle as my talking tool. The rock gives the participants the faith to be heard respected and to expect confidentiality. Sometimes if I am asked to do a talk I carry my rock remind me to have faith.

In my daily life I live with rocks for they are the oldest storytellers. I sometimes sleep with them and I dream of the stories they have to share. Some rocks are empty and have not yet received a story. I talk to the rocks when know one is available mostly when I am doing my studies.

This type of story telling is also beneficial to the youth and children group. We have to take into consideration the spiritual background as to not contradict the teachings of their parents. I have had many healing circles with youth and children they have given me a lot of respect and to the process. I was awed at the outcome and involvement this age group paid to this ceremony.

The belief in this is sweetgrass is Mother Earth's hair. When we cut, step or burn grass it keeps coming back showing us kindness. The sweetgrass is also braided as the warriors did each morning in prayer to the Creator to unite their body, mind and spirit.

This is very therapeutic to allow participants in letting go of the pain and issues.

**Honesty:** I use to maintain stability to be proud and look at others with straight eyes. Practicing this principal enables me to sleep in peace and harmony. I find we can easily become dishonest with others if we are lying to ourselves. When I find I lied to someone I will go to him or her and let them know sometimes I find in recovery telling a lie is easier than telling the truth. As one practices this principle it becomes a part of you character. You become like the tree strong, reliable and immovable.

**Sharing:** like the animals that share themselves to give us sustenance so should we to others.

In my daily life I ensure I eat the food I need to live, I also take my scraps to Mother Earth to share with the other creations. I strongly believe in the balance of life and doing my share gives me strength. I also know I have more than enough when I can share with others. I give thanks daily. I also share myself with others by being there when they need my help or just want my company. I was told I have a good sense of humor and I value this because to laugh is positive energy.

**Smudge Medicines:** Kindness, I offer to myself when I smudge with sweetgrass and to others when I smudge them.

The belief in this is sweetgrass is Mother Earth's hair. When we cut, step or burn grass it keeps coming back showing us kindness. The sweetgrass is also braided as the warriors did each morning in prayer to the Creator to unite their body, mind and spirit. I practice this myself if I need more focus for a particular task. To me we are all warriors. The other smudges I use are: fungus, cedar and sage.

**Tobacco:** I always carry a pouch of tobacco in other to achieve information from an elder or to ask for a pipe ceremony or a sweat. I also take it with me when I need to pray to a certain animal spirit in this ceremony I offer the tobacco and eat the food the animal eats. I have received powerful help from these prayers. I rely a lot on my animal protectors and guidance from their powers. Traditionally tobacco was used to pray to the Creator and now we are doing it more. Belief is the right ingredient to achieve what it is you are seeking to live well.

**Example:** I see myself as a tool kit. One day I got my car stuck in the bush five miles from any help. I had a good cry and then I remembered my tobacco. I found a beautiful spot to make my offering and proceeded to pray for help. I remembered my tool kit. In my tool kit I had my mind, body and spirit. And from here I found the skills I needed to take my car out of the rut.



## ◀ *Medicine Wheel: – A Healing Beginning*

by Verna M. Wittigo

... continued

Taking charge and applying my skills, knowledge and the use of mother earth's gifts I assessed the situation and made a plan. I built a bridge out of rocks which took me two hours to pick in the hot sun. I drove my car back and forth to place the rocks until they held firmly under the car and after which I could drive it out. With this experience I used my belief in spirituality, let go of my emotions (I had a good cry first) and used my mental capacities and physical body.

**Grieving:** Burning letters at sunset, when I need to communicate with someone who has gone to the other side I use this ceremony. I always ensure I lay down tobacco read the letter aloud and burn it when the sun is setting. For the West is the place of death and rest. I also place my bed to the West so when I sleep I rest and rise to the East where newness begins each day.

**Sweats:** I attend when I need a more powerful connection to healing or seek answers. I go into the sweat lodge for it is Mother Earth's womb. I come out of there with a feeling of being reborn. It is important to find someone who you trust because you are going to bare you pain And you are vulnerable then.

**Letting Go:** Hair cut it in order to assist someone who you have died and offer it to the Creator. It is preferable you let the hair go in the wind. This ceremony is to assist the spirit to travel to the other side in safety.

**Rejuvenating and obtaining energy:** Example, In hugging a tree and sitting against its trunk I find a sense of renewed energy. I sit at the base so the energy enters my body through our only external trunk (colon) we were given. Lying flat on ones back is also a means of getting energy from the earth.

**Analyzing dreams:** we are able to define some messages or meaning to our issues or problems we may or may be aware of. It is very crucial to write them down when you awake.

An individual knows if the dream is significant. We are our best dream analysts we can always find guidance if we need it sometimes we over look things. Example: Last spring I prayed for a rebirth in earnest. One night I dreamt of my father who died in 1991. In this dream I was looking for a little girl. I looked for her in a lodge where women were walking in silence. They told me the little girl was not there. They spoke through telepathy. As I talked away from the lodge moving west I saw my father to the left of me. The season was winter which means wisdom. My father walked toward me from the south which means growth. My father came up to me and told me he had a message as we proceeded to walk toward the west death and rest.

My father spoke telepathically as well. He told me I was going to die and told me how and by whom. I became very angry and woke up. I thought of the dream and chose to believe it was positive and death is not always physical. I knew the creator heard my prayer and I looked forward to my rebirth a new spiritual awakening.

There are a number of different types of dreams.

**Healers:** could be very powerful resource if an individual is not sure what is going on or needs medicinal healing. Example: In 1991 I sought out a healer who told me I had a curse put on me and I thought I was dying. The medicines he gave me cured the curse. I also approached a healer to find my Cree name. When I found this out I was a whole person. All the past events with a certain animal made sense and gave me clarity and a good sense of self.

If someone is to show you a kindness you give another a kindness. The kindness may be a greeting, compliment, act of kindness or a gift. I believe strongly in what goes around comes around. Giving back to Mother Earth is necessary as she is our life-giver.

**Thanks:** to the Creator on a daily basis with a smudge or when I go for my walks I offer tobacco.

**Forgiveness:** I ask on a daily basis for my shortcomings. We have to remember we are human and have limits.

**Humble:** We do not put on airs, we give thanks. We do not boast about our accomplishments or be better than others because of their faults or weaknesses. We earn what we need.

**Humor:** I practice in a good way. Example: When I make a mistake I will laugh at myself or I will laugh with others. Laughter is a powerful medicine this experience releasing energy will also leave room to cry in a better way.

**Giving Back:** I find this most powerful for the more you give the more open you are to receive.

**Example:** If someone is to show you a kindness you give another a kindness. The kindness may be a greeting, compliment, act of kindness or a gift. I believe strongly in what goes around comes around. Giving back to Mother Earth is necessary as she is our life-giver. We depend on her for our essentials of life. We love her as much as we love ourselves.

In the past work with youth and children I used the "Problem Solving Tool" This tool help to bring the problem into focus as we sometimes magnetize a crisis.

**How this works:** Put issue in the middle of a wheel. Northeast of wheel, chose one of the five senses of how you identify the problem. East of circle, identify how the problem made you feel. South of wheel, what were your thoughts. Southwest of wheel, list your intentions of how to solve the problem. Northwest of wheel, chose your action and Do It!. It is a simple tool to use for everyday crisis.

Thank you to grandchildren children Axel and Fiona. To nephew Tyler, daughters Angela and April who inspire me to move forward and share who I am.

Hai! Hai! \$



## Where Are The Children? – Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools

**National Archives of Canada – Exhibition Room B**  
395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
June 22, 2002 to February 2, 2003

For more information: Angie Bruce  
Toll-free: (888) 725-8886  
In Ottawa (613) 237-4441



*After the Treaty Dance at Fort Rae, the children are bound for the convent at Fort Resolution, NWT, aboard the mission schooner Guy, 1937. Photographer: Charles Keefer. National Archives of Canada/PA-073735*

*Children in the classroom of the North Camp School on the Blackfoot Reserve, Gleichen, Alberta, August 24, 1892. On the left is teacher Hugh Baker and standing to the right is Reverend J.W. Tims. Glenbow Archives/NA-1934-1*



a photographic history of residential schools across Canada. The images in the exhibition are drawn primarily from The National Archives of Canada as well as nine additional archival sources, including four church archives. The historical narrative begins with a photograph taken in 1884 and concludes with new photographic portraits of contemporary survivors of the residential schools who are positive figures in today's Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal-based lawsuits have reframed the way the photographs are interpreted and used today. We look to the past to understand today's systemic problems. Why is the Aboriginal population's rate of drug and alcohol abuse, poverty and unemployment, sexual and physical abuse, suicide rates, and incarceration so much higher than the rest of the Canadian population? Canada's failed program of social engineering and the sexual, mental and physical abuse that took place in residential schools, has had devastating inter-generational consequences. The exhibition encourages Aboriginal youth to question and seek solutions. To see the past is to understand the present and to move towards a healthy future.

He says nothing could stop him from remembering who he was. Pappa is always teaching us our Gitksan language. This is something he is very proud of ...

## My Grandfather

**M**y grandfather is John Banek, who is in Wilps Wegyet of the Gitksan Nation. My grandfather was Born December 2, 1923 in a Beautiful place called Andimahl. I like to call him 'Pappa.'

Pappa was raised in Andimahl by his Mother and Uncles. He especially learned most of his skills from his uncle Simogyet (chief) James Wegyet. My pappa learned how to fish, hunt, trap and harvest real medicine, berries, cedar, tea, and whatever was needed for daily living. Pappa says that uncle James also taught him the very important things to become a good simgeget (house member) like Respect all that lives, take only what you need, and share what you have. All of these things he has taught my mother and my sisters, brothers and myself. My pappa is the best teacher in the world.

In about 1929 when my pappa was six years old he was taken away from his home and family to the Edmonton Indian residential school. Pappa says this is where he stayed until he was in grade nine, then he was sent home because he was getting too smart. I can tell it wasn't a good time there for him.

None of the Gitksan people or any other Native people were allowed to speak their language and if they did, they were punished. Pappa says the punishments were something he would have never done to any human being on earth. My pappa never forgot his language.

He says nothing could stop him from remembering who he was. Pappa is always teaching us our Gitksan language. This is something he is very proud of.

In the residential school my pappa worked all morning and went to school in the afternoon for two hours. This he didn't mind. But one thing that he'll never forget is the gwe'e (poor) meals everyone was fed for all of the very very hard 10 hours of work that was done on a day. For breakfast they were fed mush, just mush, with a slice of bread, just bread. Pappa cooks us mush with ice cream and fruit in it, and fresh warm bannock with lots of butter and homemade jam. They were dressed very poorly in the residential school.

He made sure my mom who makes sure all of us, are dressed very well. My heart hurts for him. He tells me his mother (my great grandmother) died while him and his brother Mike was there and the nuns and priests didn't even tell them, and they couldn't even make it to the funeral or feast.

He says there is a lesson in all of this. My pappa makes sure that we make it to all funeral and all feasts. Pappa says he made sure every no good thing that was taught to him, he would never teach or do to others. No matter what they tried to take away from him ... is with him, even stronger than ever now. When my pappa was kicked out of residential school for being too smart he came home and worked and helped out his family. It was lots of work and lots of fun he says. He loved being home.

In 1944 my pappa joined the Canadian Army. After training my pappa became a corporal and a medic. He was sent to the Korean War during the peace talk time. Pappa says it wasn't really a peace time. It was bad, the only good thing he says was that he was able to travel to other parts of the world.

My pappa looks at me and tells me that it is always important to protect what is yours – even if it means risking your life. That's it about the war, ok, he says.

My pappa is interested in passing our ancestors laws to young children. He means to teach us the old ways, and how to behave at all times. I want to be like my pappa. The thing I desire most about my pappa is his Love. He is very loving and caring of everyone and everything.

I have learned how to cook and how to plant flowers so they can grow perfect. I have learned many more skills too, to live a good life, all from my pappa. The characteristics of him I hope to have is his knowledge about the past and his strength to hang on to, and pass onto me.

I will never ever forget the times he brought me to Andimahl with him. I will never forget that one day when we saw fresh bear tracks in the wet sand by our boat that weren't there when we first got there. We were looking down at the tracks then when we looked at the Ksyen (skeena) river there was the bear swimming across. That is the day I will never ever forget.

My pappa wants to go home, he wants to live back in Andimahl where him and his family lived many years ago.

I am very proud to say the I am John Banek's Granddaughter. Or Ne Ye'e John Banek.

- Kimberly Deborah Archambault, Grade 6 Muheim Elementary, Smithers, BC.



## the Testimony of Joachim Paul Bonnetrouge

I was taken away from the Big Point village by the R.C.M.P. with a dog team and taken to the Sacred Heart Mission School in Fort Providence the fall of 1952 when I was six years old. Big Point was a Dene village about 40 miles downstream from Providence. My mom and I were living there with her uncle's family. I remember trying to hide under the bed at our house because I must of sensed or overheard that the R.C.M.P. had come to our village to take me to the sister's house. I cried myself to sleep on the dog sled ride that day.

Funny, I don't remember very much from that day on. My older cousin Charlie told how I was so small and that he basically took care of me. He said how at night I used to be so scared that I slept with him sometimes in his bed. I honestly don't remember too much from that day on. I recall how one summer, must be at the end of June, my mom and I were visiting my sisters Marie and Denise in the parlour at the mission. Then all of a sudden, we were all running into the bush way behind the wood lot by the mission. And then spending all day out in the bush, then coming out in the evening to a small house by granny's where my mom and I lived.

Because my mom was not married, I recall that when we were not living with relatives in the bush, in Providence or Hay River, I was living at the Mission in Fort Providence. I believe I must have spent at least six years in the mission. I have endured a lot of physical abuse at the hands of the sister during my stay at the mission. I have endured a lot of ridiculing, shaming in the mission. We were forbidden to speak our Dene language and other boys would tell on us if we spoke "Indian". If you were caught speaking Dene, you got a strapping or hit on the hands with a ruler. I got hit many times with scissors on the hands for playing too rough with smaller boys and if they happen to get in an accident and were crying. I was also a witness to too many crazy incidents in the mission school – for many years I thought I was imagining these things or that I was losing it. I also witnessed brutal physical abuse being carried out by the sisters on some of the older boys. I suffered my first sexual abuse in the mission school by a bigger boy when I was eight years old. Strange, but some time later, I was already trying to kiss a smaller boy. I must of thought that it was a normal thing to do. My, how quickly, the cycle of abuse becomes a reality.

Then in 1959 I went to Grollier Hall in Inuvik for 1 year. In 1960 I attended Lapointe Hall in Fort Simpson for 3 years. Then in 1963 I attended Grandin College in Fort Smith for 3 years. In 1966 I went on to attend N.A.I.T. in Edmonton. I could not study because I was already a full-blown alcoholic by 20 years old. I stayed down south for a few years trying to go to school. I make it as far as Ottawa for 9 months studying to become a radio operator. In spite of my drinking I made through to attain a certificate and was stationed in High Level, Alberta. After a year and half I could not function on account of my drinking. Finally, I went AWOL and came home to Fort Providence. I carried on with a lot of abuse and crazy making. I married a nice local girl although I was still abusing myself and people around me. We had 4 children and I regret that my wife and children have been affected by my craziness and attempting to kill my pain through alcohol. I have even spent time in jail during these years.

Even as Chief of my community I drank to try and kill my pain. Then in 1979 my Band Council gave me an ultimatum, either go for treatment or resign as chief. I went for treatment in March 1979. Now, I recall I went on what is termed a dry drunk for the next while. I went into a deep depression a couple of times. Then something happened to begin turning my life around. I guess my wife heard about a men's weekend retreat in St. Albert, Alberta which I attended with a couple of other local men from my com-

munity. After this spiritual awakening, I began to work on my healing journey. I attended numerous alcohol workshops; follow-up treatment program and even took some training as a drug and alcohol counselor.

They say that a healing journey is like peeling an onion, just when think you have dealt with an issue and feel good, another issue begins to surface into your life. I have begun to deal with my alcoholism and many dysfunctions in my life. Just recently I am learning how to be a good dad to my kids and good husband to my wife. Can you imagine, that I only understood what love was all about at the age of 48? Love actually means caring about people unconditionally, spending time with others and nurturing by being helpful around the house and community.

About 5 years ago I started to try to come to terms with my mission school experience. Part of the work meant to undo and unlearn a lot of crazy things like attitude and behaviours from the mission school experience.

2 years ago, a friend suggested that we ought to begin helping ourselves further and others by organizing a proposal from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. At the outset, it was really tough because many of our own elders were still drinking and blasted us for trying to deal with the residential school issue. Despite no support and 2 more people who were brave enough we submitted a proposal. So far we have begun to make some headway in creating an awareness of the residential school issue.

I fully support the initiative that the Aboriginal Healing Foundation is embarked upon. This initiative is available to all native peoples that would like to see something that could help them at least begin to deal this seemingly heavy issue. But I believe that we have to begin with small steps. Also we are fully aware that many of our own family and community members may feel threatened at the start. But we need to be firm in our resolve to begin this healing journey and pray that we become role models in our own family and community.

Since our proposal has been funded, I have been fully involved in this project. Our first task was to spread the word out to former students and survivors that it is alright to talk about the mission school experience and that we are not talking against God. We are talking about our experiences and begin to talk about the effects of our experience in the mission school.

During the workshops that were conducted, finally I have had an opportunity to tell my story. Now I am beginning to understand the "effects" of the residential school syndrome/experience. What was most important to me was during these gathering, we created a safe place in which we could talk about the pain in our lives.

I will do whatever is necessary to keep on this process we have started. It would be sad to think that our group may be left in a lurch with no support funding and resources. There is still so much to be done for the survivors of mission school, their families and our communities.

I will keep being involved with workshops/gatherings and eventually would like to take some training so that I may be more effective dealing with this issue and be a better role model in my community.

Mahsi.

Joachim P. Bonnetrouge

Fort Providence, N.W.T. – July 17, 2001. §

## *The need to acknowledge my strengths*

By Verna Tabobandung

**M**y ancestors had cleared a path to show that I have a right to live and was given a purpose in life that needs to be acknowledged and validated or else I wouldn't be here.

I need you to understand that I, too, have experienced powerlessness, helplessness, distrust and betrayal. The existence of my birth-right has always been threatened by the **assimilation & domination** process, which is To Be Ruled or Controlled by a Superior Power. This type of process is not for me, so I stand before you because it never allowed me to be me.

Today, I am reclaiming my rights:

- To voice my needs as nobody is able to read my thoughts.
- To be angry because it is okay to be vulnerable so I can grow stronger.
- To be respected as a Human Being.
- As a Human Being to understand that I am responsible for my own self & the choices that I make.
- As a human being who has the right to live as *I choose*.
- As an Anishnabeas my ancestors provided me with privileges to identify my heritage.
- As an Anishnabequa, who possesses determination and stamina to stand proud.
- As an adult, who is able to make decisions and choices for myself.
- As I was given a voice so I can be heard.
- As I was given a physical body so I can be seen.
- As I was given a higher power so I wouldn't be alone.
- As I was given a heart so I can feel the heartbeat of life.
- As I was given ears so I can hear my neighbor.
- As I was given emotions so I can cry, laugh and get mad.
- As I was given a brain so I can think for myself.
- As a **Tabobandung**, who was given the sight to see afar.
- To carry out the responsibilities of the **Beaver** clan.
- To carry out the responsibilities of being a **Libra**, which is to strive for balance.
- As being the First-born female in my generation because I need to be courageous and humble.

### About Verna Tabobandung ●

Wasauksing First Nation has been my home for the past 43 years. My first family consists of my parents and myself, the eldest of eleven with eight surviving younger brothers and sisters. The violence that we endured as children, still keeps us separated today. With the assistance of the Assimilation and Domination process, I was made to feel that being the eldest female was a crime and being a female was just as bad. I quit drinking in 1986 and quit smoking last June/01. I do not like it when people abuse alcohol only to inflict pain on vulnerable, defenceless children, spouses and pets.

Today, my immediate family consists of two beautiful daughters, one 23 years and six years old and a grandson, all whom I love with all my heart.

Since 1998, I obtained my **ged** and completed two years of College with honours while holding a part-time job and raising my three-year old. Was the successful winner of the Mary Lou Fox Native Language Award with very little knowledge of the Ojibway language. Also, two of my articles were published in the *Anishnabek News*. Immediately following College, I obtained a part-time job, which I am currently holding as a part-time **nnadap**

· As the eldest in my family, I suddenly realized that this position needs to be recognized as there are a lot of responsibilities to ensure that the provisions of the ancestors are maintained, such as (Anishnabe identity, treaty rights, hunting & fishing, caretakers of the land & water, etc). So they will continue to be there for the younger generation.

· As a woman who was given the natural power to give life.  
· As a woman to know that I am nobody's possession.  
· As a mother of two beautiful daughters, who will carry on the birth-right of our People.  
· To be a sister to my younger brothers and sisters when they need me.

· As an Auntie & a Grandma, to pass on the love, caring and kindness that my Grandmother passed on to me.

· As a parent, who is going to ensure that my children continue to have a future as an Anishnabe.

· As a member of this First Nation as there is a need to trust the current leaders (as a whole) to carry out their duties and responsibilities to ensure that the existence of our Anishnabe identity is protected.

· To trust the current leaders to make the decisions and choices as they see fit to benefit the whole community.

· To ensure that my rights as an Anishnabe are protected by the leaders of the community.

· As a member to ensure that nobody else claims these lands as "theirs" as it is not "theirs" to own or possess that is why our land is known as "common-land."

· To be **me** and that is all I ever wanted out of life.

· **To acknowledge my right to take my rightful place in this world.**

– January 31, 2002.

Worker in another First Nation Community. I hunt & fish and also sing with the Wasauksing Women's drum group in my spare time.

I have been learning about my past history due to the severity of the different types of traumas that I have survived. Upon telling my story, people have asked if my background has a residential school history. I have had Uncles who were in the army, where this is another avenue for brainwashing techniques. There is a newspaper article about my Grandfather's family history and having been forced to flee from the States.

Even though, I have no memory of my first eighteen years, I have survived a horrific history of physical, sexual, emotional, mental, social, environmental & financial abuse. So far, my history does not have a beginning as I have not received any form of validation, only the body memories of the physical and emotional hurt and pain that was passed onto me. Whenever, a body memory is triggered, the back of my head or my back is the receiver of all the pain, now I am capable of accepting, validating and moving on in my life, thanks to two special people that have entered my life in the last two years.

# Healing – Reconnecting with Things Unseen

<http://siksik.learnnet.nt.ca/DOCS/DeneKede/concepts.html>

*"[There are] things unseen, the sounds of animals, the wolf's cry, echoes wailing around us. We hear these things unseen. These were believed. Now we only believe what we see, not what we don't see. That is why things have been destroyed. The spiritual world is unseen. This comes to us from our ancestors. The spiritual world has to be made clear to our children. We have to make our children believers again. They have to learn to interpret the unseen."*

- Elizabeth Mackenzie in Yellowknife, June 1991



<http://savethewolf.com>

## Dene Perspective

Every culture has a world view whether it is stated or not. It gives people a characteristic perspective of things which runs through every aspect of their lives. This perspective tells the people what is important and why. It tells the people how they must behave in life. Perspective explains life for a people and gives it meaning.

## The Creation Story

The Creation story is fundamental for the Dene, for in it, the order of our universe is laid out. The order enables us to see ourselves as a people in relationship to the world. This is our world view – our perspective, the perspective from which we see life and all things around us.

In the Creation story, people are the last to be made. The land and the animals made before us did not really need people and therefore people had no reason to exist. When Dene were created, they were the only people that relied upon everyone else for their survival. They were the weakest of all creatures: hence, the Dene perspective is that survival would be difficult and people, in their relationship to the land, would have to be humble and respectful. As each of the animal people was being defined, a special spiritual relationship between these animal people and all others was defined. For example, as the spider was given its special identity, it was decided that this creature would be the most powerful of people. It would have powers that transcended the earth. Its webs would create beautiful rainbows and be able to capture rain in the heavens enabling the Dene to survive: hence, the Dene perspective that the small, the unseen and the seemingly most insignificant all possess power and thus deserve respect.

In order to survive they had to learn to cooperate and to think about the welfare of the group. It was agreed that they would use consensus to settle conflicts, and if consensus could not be reached, a contest would be held. It was also agreed that whatever decision was reached, it would not be final. Laws could be changed if they were not workable. These together became the basis for the Dene perspective on how to settle conflicts and make decisions.

The creation of the Raven is an important part of the Creation story. The Raven was created the leader among leaders. It was the most powerful and clever of persons and its knowledge and experience were sought by one and



<http://www.indigenouspeople.org/natlit/raven.htm>

all. But it was also vain and selfish. When the birds were being painted, it insisted that it should be painted better than all the other birds. Its reward was of course to be painted black. The Raven's weakness was that it did not see itself in relationship with others around it. It saw itself as complete and finished.

From the Raven story we derive the Dene perspective that we must continually push ourselves to grow rather than remain complacent and smug in what we are or have become.

*"All the world has laws. There are many thousands of different animals on this earth and they all have their own laws. When we walk in the bush we think about all of them. This is how we learn the way of all life and the things we don't know."*

- Jimmy B. Rabesca in Rae-Edzo, Nov. 1990.

## Dene Kede Concepts

### Survival

*"How do generations after generations replace one another?...It is possible only through teaching each other."*

- Jimmy B. Rabesca in Rae-Edzo, Nov. 1990.

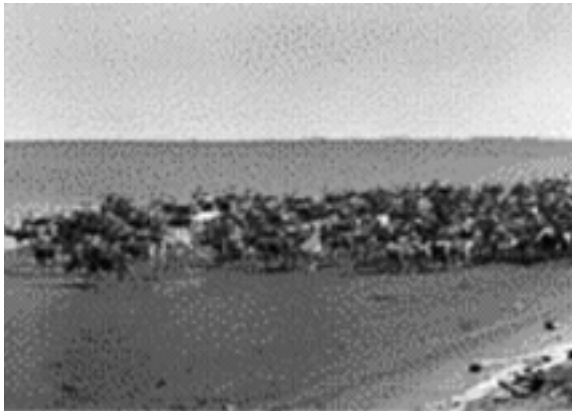
For generations and generations, before the coming of the non-Dene, the Dene were able to survive on this land. They were able to survive in the harshest of climates because of the accumulated experience, knowledge and wisdom of the Dene combined with their self-discipline. It was a matter of life or death for each individual to learn as much as possible from the elders and others around them.



## ◀ Healing – Reconnecting with Things Unseen

*"We have to listen to the elders, even though the elder is not our father or our mother. We have to respect those people by word and attitude. We haven't yet benefited from our own experiences. If we keep their words well, we will save ourselves through them. They relate to us their experiences of how they lived and worked."*

- Jimmy B. Rabesca, in Rae-Edzo, Nov. 1990.



### Survival Today

In the recent past, the young Dene have sometimes questioned the value of the traditional knowledge and skills of our people. They see technology from the south as having replaced most of the traditional skills and knowledge.

In many many ways it has

seemed as though, in today's world, our survival no longer depends upon Dene knowledge and skills.

What many have finally come to understand, however, is that the Dene teachings have very much to do with survival. What we look to now is the very core of what it is to be Dene – our perspective, our world view. We are just beginning to understand that our survival as a people depends very much upon a change in our way of relating with the land, the spiritual world, with others and with ourselves.

### Survival of all Humanity

*"Aboriginal people, when the world started, had their own law given from the Creator ... Dene Laws don't mean the justice of the White Man's laws. They have different consequences: good words and good life versus jail. How do we choose which laws to teach our children, with what kind of enforcement? ... There are a lot of Dene Laws which conflict with modern times. ... What is the purpose? Survival of the group. Without rules, there is no group. Everyone is surviving individually. The laws enable group survival and we want to get back to that."*

- George Blondin in Yellowknife,

We are beginning to understand that these perspectives, which have been at the root of all Dene teachings since time immemorial, have a timeless quality which can be applied to any situation, any place, any people. We understand that we cannot simply talk about Dene survival. In order for us to survive as a people, we recognize the need for the survival of all people and for the survival of the earth. Indeed, in today's world, the Dene perspective is sorely in need.

Changes and crises have forced many who are not Dene to recognize the need for a new way of looking at life. People are losing touch with each other and their communities and, in the process, gradually losing touch with whom they are as individuals, as a people and as human beings. As people move away from the heart of the land and as they become deaf to the spiritual sounds around them, they are destroying that which gives life.

### Dene Perspective

The four fundamental Dene perspectives that are given us in the Creation story have to do with our relationships:

- In our relationship with the land we should strive for respect and a sense of humility.
- Our relationship with the spiritual world is based upon acceptance of things that can neither be seen nor touched.
- Our relationship with other people is based upon cooperation and consensus and the welfare of the group.
- And finally, our relationship with ourselves is one which requires continual self-evaluation and growth while accepting our inherent self-worth.

Dene life has been guided since time immemorial by these basic perspectives. And it is these perspectives which we must pass on to the succeeding generations.



*Indian Residential School in Fort Resolution, NWT*



*Children and nun at Fort Providence (?)*

### The Child

*"If a child is born, he is human, just in being born one minute. ... Everyone born is a miracle ... beautiful mind, gentle heart. ... The child has everything, and he will have everything if he is respected and respects."*

- Elizabeth Mackenzie in Fort Franklin, Jan. 1991.

### The Child is Our Future

Dene elders have said that the child is born grasping the Drum. The child is holding in the palm of its hands the accumulated knowledge, skills and perspectives of the Dene. This drum ensures the continuation of the Dene as a people. The child becomes the community and the community is the future of the people. The child is therefore the future.



## The Child is Born with Integrity

In the spring, nature inevitably comes to life, providing that the nurturing winds and rains are there. The things of nature have in their smallest seeds, the forms that they will become. Elders say that a child is like a seed, born with all that it is meant to be, born with integrity. Recognizing this integrity in a child enables the child to remain true to itself as it grows.

## Each Child is Unique



<http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~daghidaleducation.htm>

Each child is unique in talents and abilities. The task of those around the growing child is to provide experiences which will enable the child to become what it is meant to be. The right way is shown and explained to the child, and in some cases, decisions must be made for the child to ensure survival. But, in the end, it will be up to each child to choose what is right for itself.

If the appropriate experiences are given the child, the child will develop the basic skills required for survival, as well as those special gifts that make him or her unique. It must be remembered that the gifts come in many forms. For some it may be the gift of special skills on the land, and for another it may be the gift of laughter.

Affirm that you are Dene. As a Dene, you search for yourself. You seek those who are skilled and pattern yourself after them. Learn the skills they have. You will become the Dene envisioned. The Real Person, The Dene. (Elizabeth Mackenzie in Yellowknife, April 1990)

## Trust in the Child

Because there was a belief in the inherent integrity of the child, from the time it could walk the child was given the respect of being its own person. This respect took the form of trust in the child's natural curiosity to learn and the child's need to learn. The Dene child responded to this trust by constantly challenging and motivating itself to new levels of accomplishment. In any experience, the child could be trusted to learn what it was ready for. Rather than focusing on what the child had not yet learned or mastered, attention was given to what the child had accomplished. Because of the constant focus upon survival, there were few children who did not rise to the challenge of becoming fully who they were meant to become.

## Education



*"What do the young people know? What do the old people know? We teachers must go between them with this curriculum. We are the link between the children and the elders and the future. We need to hold onto each other. We talk about the kinds, principles, etc. We are talking about the future."*

- Fibbie Tatti in Fort Franklin, Jan. 1991.

## Education for Survival

There is a Dene way of understanding education. Education consists of providing the skills, knowledge and perspectives that will enable survival. The educational content has come down to us from generation to generation through our elders in the oral tradition. Our elders are the primary source for any real Dene-based education.

## Learning through Experience



Traditionally, education was not schooling. Learning for survival happened during all the waking hours, each and every day, and all life long. Learning occurred through life experience – not in abstraction or set apart from on-going life activities.

## Cyclical Learning

Also, learning occurred in a cyclical fashion. Through repeated exposure to experiences, children began to learn at their own rate of readiness. Reality was not hidden from children because it was thought they were not ready for it. Children were constantly learning as they lived life.

*"Once we [elders] speak in the presence of the children, it will be their responsibility. When we have talked to them clearly and they have been taught both Dene and non-Dene cultures completely, it will be up to themselves. It will be their fault if they become poor for not acting on our words."*

- Johnny Eyakfwo in Rae-Edzo, Nov.1990

## Self-Motivation



In this kind of education, the children were always very aware of why they were learning something. This was fundamental to their self-motivation. Very rarely was motivation to learn based on simple interest or pleasure. Most often it was based on an acute sense of the importance of learning any one thing.

The task for those around the growing child was and is to provide experiences which will enable the child to become what it is meant to be. Behaviour and skills are modeled and explained. In some cases, decisions are made for the child to ensure survival. In the end, however, it is left up to the child to choose what is right for itself.

*"We have been assimilated for a long time. The Non-Dene did not take into consideration that there was already some culture here...But it can't go on forever like this. It has to stop sooner or later. The Dene have to say what we want. It is up to us. I used to think if you learn Dene in School, then school would be blocked. But I think it can be done. But everyone has to be involved. This is a great commitment. The creator put us here for a purpose. We have to live in a certain way in order to survive."*

- George Blondin in Fort Franklin, Jan.1991.



## ◀ Healing – Reconnecting with Things Unseen



Photos used in this article are from <http://www.deneculture.org/sustain.htm>

### Community Participation

The whole community (traditionally, the community was the band or family camp) participated in the education of the child. People understood that if they educated the child well, the child would grow to give back to the community, thus ensuring the future of generations to come. The elders, the grandparents, the extended family, people with special gifts or specialty training, all helped the parents in educating the child.

### The Role of the Parents

When a child fails to grow with the integrity it was meant to have, elders will evaluate the parents, not the child. It is seen as the responsibility of the parents to ensure that the conditions for growth in the child are provided. Observations and evaluations are not to be taken as criticism but rather as suggestions that will enable survival.

## HEALING THROUGH EDUCATION

*Dene Kede Erihtl'e: Dene Language and Culture, General Expectations*

In order to survive and to live life to the fullest, Dene students must develop respectful relationships with the Land, the Spiritual World, Other People and Themselves. These relationships are best developed with the aid of the Dene Elders and their voice which is the Dene Language.

### The Land

In their relationship with the Land, students are expected to, with the aid of the Dene Language,

- Enjoy the Land.
- Become capable on the Land.
- Understand the Land.
- Appreciate and respect the Land.
- Be familiar with the Dene history of the Land.

### The Spiritual World

In their relationship with the Spiritual World, students are expected to, with the aid of the Dene Language,

- Recognize powers greater than themselves.
- Recognize what is spiritual in the world around them.
- Appreciate and respect the spiritual forces.
- Recognize and develop their personal spirituality.

### The Self

In their relationship with Themselves, students are expected to, with the aid of the Dene Language,

- Work to maintain integrity in their relationships.
- Know and respect themselves.
- Maintain humility.
- Be aware of how one's behaviour affects others.

### The People

In their relationship with Other People, students are expected to, with the aid of the Dene Language,

- Learn from and respect their Elders.
- Be generous to others.
- Work with others putting group needs before personal needs
- Accept and enjoy others.
- Know the traditional relationships and changes in these over time.
- Recognize similarities and differences between Dene and others.

## The Psychologist in Aboriginal Territory

*Intervention in the Aboriginal Community: Understanding the past for more effective action today*

Judith Morency and Richard Kistabish

Psychologists are among the many intervenors who have studied the social problems of Aboriginal Peoples in recent years. While such study was generally in the form of a one-time project of assessment or intervention assigned to a psychologist "from the south," psychological care has become enriched by the experience of psychologists integrated into these communities. The effectiveness of their interventions is dependent on respect for the values and traditions of the people for whom they are intended.

Reflection about the contribution of the psychologist to the well-being of Aboriginal communities falls within a vast and complex historical context whose broad outline we can touch on only lightly here. From the outset, it places intervention in an intercultural context; but in this particular context, it concerns a culture that not only is different from, but has been colonised by, the Western majority culture. It is therefore necessary to reflect on the positioning and contribution of psychologists and mental health professionals from the dominant culture in this cultural area, which has been suppressed in a process of assimilation that is counter to any kind of healthy and optimal development of its human potential.

This writing exercise is carried out in a spirit of drawing together and mutually enriching the two cultures, in the search for an intersection of two different circles existing side by side, as opposed to one larger circle encompassing a smaller one. It is our humble desire to share our questionings and our vision.

### The reality of the communities

The picture of the living conditions in Aboriginal communities has steadily become clearer over the last 20 years. It has been necessary to go through several stages before getting a clear vision of the critical situation of Aboriginal Peoples and their particular needs. Following the period of "great darkness" which prevailed in the communities between the 1950s and 1980s, with massive sedentarisation and the advent of residential schools, a number of communities undertook a process of healing by gradually introducing programs to combat drug addiction and violence against women and children.

In the 1990s, an impressive national consultation of Aboriginal communities led to the publication of the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996. This report documents the unacceptable living conditions that still prevail in a number of communities. These conditions are similar to those in Third World countries: endemic poverty, communities without running water and indoor plumbing, little schooling, lack of jobs, housing shortages and overcrowding, and so on. The picture is also bleak with regard to mental health: alarming suicide rates, drug addiction, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and so on. While no two communities are the same (rural or urban, different socioeconomic levels, differing degrees of acculturation, etc.), the report paints a disturbing picture of the communities generally, as well as of Aboriginal peoples living in urban areas.

In 1998, the federal government recognised the wrong done to Aboriginal communities through the residential schools, and released \$350 million for the development of community healing strategies for the lasting effects of the physical and sexual abuse suffered in those schools. These funds, grant

## What is the source of the suffering in Aboriginal communities? Why does it seem so widespread and persistent?

ed to all Aboriginal nations in Canada, are managed by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (founded in April 1998).

Finally, with a view to acquiring services consistent with their values and their needs, a number of communities are currently directing considerable energy into taking control of their social, health and legal services. A number of communities are making a sustained effort to regain what was lost when the culture and traditional healing ways were shunted aside and taking a greater interest in their potential contribution to the healing process.

### The source of the suffering

What is the source of the suffering in Aboriginal communities? Why does it seem so widespread and persistent? It is now recognised that most of the current difficulties in the communities are the direct or indirect consequence of the traumas of colonisation: loss of territory, confinement on reserves, drastic changes in the way of life, residential schools, loss of ceremonies and traditional healing rituals that ensured individual and social harmony, and so on. These conditions gradually eroded the communities' freedom of action and movement and limited the opportunities for the people to lead a descent life and develop their full potential.

Colonisation and the experience of the residential schools (between the 1950s and 1980s) deeply scarred individuals, families, tribes, communities and Aboriginal nations as a whole. The residential school was usually hundreds of kilometres from the community (for example, children from the Atikamekw communities of Obedjiwan, Manawan and Weymontachie, in Haute-Mauricie, attended Saint-Marc-de-Figuery residential school in the Amos region of Abitibi). Although the parents were able to visit their children, there was no mechanism in place to facilitate their travel to the residential school or to allow the children regular outings with their families (transportation). Consequently, five-year-old children could be deprived of contact with their parents for the entire school year (10 months of the year).

These prolonged and repeated absences (sometimes for up to 11 consecutive years) and the culturally foreign nature of the instruction given these children at residential schools had a major impact on the quality of the emotional bonds between parents and children. The residential schools had no mechanism for alleviating the intensity of the children's reactions to the sudden separation from their parents. Instead, all the conditions apt to increase the anxiety felt in response to their separation were present: strangeness of the situation, the language and the pace of life, coldness and anonymity, assaults on the child's personal, physical and cultural integrity, physical and sexual abuse, and so on. Besides the significant impact of the psychological, physical and sexual abuse the children suffered in residential schools, their early, sudden and prolonged separation from their parents resulted in a major loss of parental boundaries.



The separation of children from their parents and the religious instruction imposed in residential schools also had a major impact on the access to, learning and practice of traditional spirituality. Thus, the children were unable to receive the teachings of their parents or to participate in the ceremonies still observed in their communities, already becoming rare occurrences (or performed in secret) as a result of the evangelisation work of the missionaries. What resulted from this deep spiritual disconnection of the children in residential schools was an ignorance, a misconception, even a negative perception of the spirituality of their parents and ancestors. Today, polarised positions coexist around the issue in many communities, and several religions are now practised. This heterogeneity of spiritual practices is sometimes the source of division and conflict between generations, within families and between individuals.

Subject to forced sedentarisation (establishment of reserves) and powerless in a situation in which all children were systematically removed and sent to a residential school, the equilibrium of a number of parents and families declined, and a range of psychosocial problems developed or became more acute (alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic abuse, etc.), further eroding families and the social fabric. The psychosocial problems experienced today in the communities have therefore been handed down generation to generation and are deeply entrenched. Obviously, such conditions promote the emergence of a number of mental health problems.

### Culture and traditional practices

We will identify here only a few elements of Aboriginal culture apt to clarify our thinking (the interested reader is referred to the brief bibliography accompanying this article). First of all, health is perceived as a state of equilibrium or harmony among the physical, rational, emotional and spiritual dimensions of individuals. These dimensions are represented on a circle symbolising their interrelationship, and the "inseparability" of the individual, the family, the community and the world. Sickness is thus perceived as the result of an imbalance among the four dimensions or even of the relationships with the family, the community or the world, and the healing of individuals goes hand in hand with the healing of families and communities. Because the culture encourages vicarious learning (learning by observation) and means of communication based on respect, conflict avoidance, humility and listening, each has its place in the large circle of life. The emphasis is placed on role modelling, group consensus and social support.

Traditionally, the spiritual and moral values passed on by the elders are closely linked and all aspects of personal life, relationships with others and relationships with the land are codified. Traditional ceremonies, organised by one or more elders, leave aside the normal working mode and open the door to a protected space in which symbolic language takes shape and is used in the service of healing. They invoke a complex symbolic system and set in motion a healing process that mobilises collective solidarity, provides social support to the patient and resolves conflicts between the individual and collective dimensions affected by the problem.

The report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommends an expanded role for traditional practices of medicine and healing. The return to traditional practices, however, falls within a context of social diversity, and there is no consensus in the communities about the usefulness and social significance of these practices. Some Aboriginal individuals do not trust the mental health services of the majority culture, which they perceive as dominant and insensitive to their reality: they do not use these services or discontinue treatment prematurely. Other Aboriginal persons do not identify with traditional healing methods and fit more comfortably into a structure of contemporary psychological services. In our experience, to ensure that the particular needs of the individual are met, it is desirable to make both traditional and Western approaches available with a view to complementarity. In fact, for the healing process to be consistent with the values and culture of

it is important to revise our traditional view of the family. The childrearing practices of Aboriginal communities revolve around extended family systems, beyond the nuclear family.



individuals and communities, the resort to traditional ceremonies must be left to the client's discretion.

We might emit a warning, in passing, about the "borrowing" by non-Aboriginal psychologists of elements of traditional practices (sage, drum, feathers, etc.). In our view, it is more appropriate to refer the client directly to an elder who will accompany the individual through an integrated process, rather than attempt to "integrate" (assimilate) these elements into the Western therapeutic context. In the following section, we will identify some techniques the psychologist can incorporate into his or her practice in a culturally sensitive context, without employing those elements culturally coded as being reserved for elders or persons specifically trained over many years to use them.

### Various avenues leading to the intersection

What therapeutic framework is culturally appropriate for Aboriginal communities? How can it be adapted to respect, or even better, to serve as a lever of Aboriginal culture? How does one ensure that what remains of the cause of the wounds is not reproduced within the therapeutic framework? How can Western practices be linked to traditional practices? Certain approaches and techniques are found where the traditions of Aboriginal peoples and contemporary psychological practices intersect.

First, it is important to revise our traditional view of the family. The childrearing practices of Aboriginal communities revolve around extended family systems, beyond the nuclear family. For example, aunts and uncles may share some parental functions, cousins are treated like brothers, and grandparents and great-aunts and -uncles may play as important a role for the child as the biological parents. The contemporary family therapy model must therefore be adapted accordingly.

When someone is referred to a psychologist, several members of the immediate family, of the extended family or of the community, are involved to varying degrees, either contemporary to the problem or retrospectively because the current situation stirs up memories of previous, unresolved situations. Psychological intervention must therefore take into account the historical origins of current problems, retention factors, motivations and the respective positions of the various actors involved. In order to restore equilibrium to the life of the children, their parents and the community, considerable effort must be made to propose interventions sensitive to all these elements, systemic intervention here being the rule rather than the exception.

*continued on page 10*





# featured project

## STANDING BUFFALO DAKOTA NATION

*Accepting Our Past: Creating Our Future*



Positive community is perhaps the greatest challenge among First Nations bands. It seems from the stories I have heard at AHF conferences that it is the simple band politics that are causing distrust and dissension. The psychosocial issues from our past feed the confusion of the present! So why not sew instead!

### Purpose

The project provides the opportunity for Elder community members to talk about their residential school experiences, breaking the isolation they feel as well as their inherent shame in holding the 'secrets' of their abuse.

Through this sharing, they are able to begin the process of healing themselves. With the support of the sharing, teaching and therapeutic guidance, they are able to understand the effects the residential school experience had on their lives, specifically with respect to addiction, family violence and lack of or poor parenting skills, reducing the guilt and self-blame and opening the door to effecting positive change by being able to better understand the nature of the problems they have experienced in their lives.

### Goals

1. To redress the negative impacts of the residential school experiences of Elders in the community and residents of Lakeview Lodge, with a view to addressing the shame and guilt they carry and break the physical and emotional isolation they experience.
2. Mitigate against losses experienced by years of residential schooling by culture, spiritual, traditional practices and teachings, specifically language and ceremonies; provide support in breaking the cycle of addiction, family violence and lack of parenting skills.
3. To break the pattern of addiction and abuse common in the community through sharing traditions and cultural practices with children in the community.

### Expected Results

1. Family Violence
  - More awareness in the community about the issue of family violence;
  - Community members, including Elders, being willing to attend workshops on family violence and healthy relationships, rather than denying any problems.
  - Community members and Elders recognizing the intergenerational nature of family violence.

### 2. Alcohol and Drug Abuse

- Increased number of Elders acknowledging their addiction and participating in alcohol and drug awareness programs;
- Elders willing to participate in alcohol and drug awareness workshops with youth.

### 3. Parenting Problems

- Increased participation in parenting workshops offered, including participation by Elders.

### 4. Loss of Culture

- Elders and other community members offering and participating in an increased number of cultural activities;
- Elders and other community members attending language instruction classes;
- Elders beginning to share their knowledge with children of the community;
- Establishment of an Elder's Council.

Start & End Dates:  
4/1/01 - 3/31/02

Primary Contact:

Mrs. Stella Isnana  
Band Councillor - Health  
Tel: 306-332-4685  
Fax: 306-332-5953  
AHF Contribution:  
\$170,000.00

Organization Address:

Box 128  
Fort Qu'Appelle, SK S0G 1S0

SEWING A HEALING PATTERN  
WITH THREADS OF FRIEND-  
SHIP AND LAUGHTER

The Star Quilt



The eight (8) point star was used by the Dakota people for direction. The Dakota people referred to the star for many day to day discussions, ie., the morning star, evening star and universe in which they used the stars to tell seasonal events - all depended on how the people performed their duties.

The colors of the star quilt were used in rainbow colors, sunburst colors and northern lights colors. Each color had a meaning to the universe and Mother





Earth. Previous to material and cloth, quill work or painting was used. It was a social time for women to gather away from children and family, to exchange ideas and designs and also for mothers and grandmothers to pass on their work to the younger generation.

- Lorraine Yuzicapi, Elder Advisor to AHF staff

Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation in Fort Qu'Appelle Saskatchewan has been active in healing work through the generous support of the AHF. Like many projects we have struggled to present the issues of healing to our community in such a way as to encourage involvement. We have had success with healing circles, one to one counselling and workshops. The residential school in Lebrét, Saskatchewan, a few miles down the valley from our home, is a place of significant memories both positive and negative for our people. Most significantly perhaps was the damage caused to our family systems and the relationships we had when our children were taken to school and their language lost. Family lines became blurred and a sense of community was lost forever. The legacy of abuse from the residential school system now lives in the subtleties of the people who live here as we struggle to build trusting ways of caring and sharing.

Counselling and group therapy has enabled and equipped many of the survivors to continue their healing journey. Addictions counselling and workshops have rid our people of many of their unhealthy habits but community through our families has not improved. The children who are now in our own school struggle with issues of anger and resentment which they act out upon each other. As witnesses to the hurt and shame of their parents and grand parents the children act out the pain and bring the cycle into their generation.



The AHF team has brainstormed, plotted, planned and configured a hundred ways to break the cycle of hurt and shame and finally as intentionally as a falling star we began to sew! Sew!

The band council generously donated the use of a empty building near the health station for our programs. We decided to name our facility the Sharing-Caring Place and began the usual offering of healing circles and sharing groups but it was a sewing machine that was the spark. That spark has lit a fire within our community and has inspired other communities to do that same. Every Wednesday evening the ladies of the community (men are welcome too) gather to sew star blankets, pillow cases and other crafts.

The natural pattern of conversation intertwines with thread and colourful designs. Everyone has their project, and traditions are naturally woven into the work thanks to the knowledge passed on by the Elders. Sewing a star blanket thus becomes a way to connect with our culture, a means to learn and heal. Other activities also enrich our time together, learning our language through the vocabulary of our sewing project: colours, forms, traditions. We listen to our music, and to each other. The three main rules that

govern our sewing activity: No gossiping, no politicking, finishing what we start, also reconnect us to our traditional principles of healthy interpersonal relationships and harmonious community living.

In sewing the star quilt there is a ritual to the cutting, connecting, stitching and finishing of the product. Also, in the evening the sewing project is put away in a container or covered with another piece of material. One very important aspect of working on the quilt is not to do the work when in an individual woman's moon time. The respect accorded the star quilt makes the sewing of a star quilt a very spiritual experience.

As we respect these rules in our group, the politics of our community are lost and the healing has begun. We have learned that the pleasure of being together and doing creative work also helped us to share: the group has established a donation jar for material (which is very successful) we can use what others bring, but must also bring something in exchange for others to use.

The Sewing/Sharing Group also does other projects workable and do-able for ages 4 - 64, and this includes sewing vests, book bags, tea-towel and face-cloth kitchen knick-knacks, crocheting, knitting, rugmaking/latch-hook, star quilts and quilting cushions.



The projects are taught by a hands-on approach which was the way our mothers and grandmothers had taught us. Much of the material and craft supplies were donated by the participating individuals and if one chooses to keep their finished product or sell their product, the Sewing group ask that the individual replace the materials used or donate other supplies. At the end of an evening of sewing, all the participants names are put into a hat and a name is drawn to bring a snack for the next night of sewing. There have been many proud cooks who have shared their baking in the Sharing/Sewing Group.

Regarding orders of star quilts or items, etc. to the Sharing/Sewing Group, we offer to share our knowledge and teach other individuals how to make the items they are interested in.

The Standing Buffalo Sharing/Sewing Group has been approached to assist other communities to start up their community sewing groups, which we are willing to do.

Busy hands have begun to care for and teach the younger people in our community how to relate in a positive way. Sometimes the conversation weaves its way back to that old residential school a few miles down the road of our past (it has long since been torn down) but more often than not it ends up sidetracked in the gentle laughter so familiar to our ancestors as they worked around the fire or tanning hides. So we sew a healing pattern and invite other communities to join the fun! Our project is now expanding to Friday evenings as a replacement for some bad habits like bingo. ▶

## ◀ Healing Through the Star Blanket Making

[http://www.dakotacurriculum.com/lessons\\_pdf/starblankets.pdf](http://www.dakotacurriculum.com/lessons_pdf/starblankets.pdf)

"I would... perform many ceremonies wrapped in that quilt. I am an old man now ... but I still have that star blanket my grandmother made for me. I treasure it; some day I shall be buried in it."

- John Fire Lame Deer, Lakota

### Symbol & Significance



When white culture met Native American one of the crafts they shared was that of the star blanket. The star pattern is based on the symbol the morning star, the teaching that the elders share,

"There is a moment of time in this world everything is in a pause. In that moment we acknowledge the "Great Spirit" with all our needs in prayer. The making of the star blanket is based on development, healing,

growth, and kindness in giving with return to all others. Symbolic gift in healing that presents unity, respect, honor and the generations of life."

Traditional hand made star blanket is a process of time in need to be able to develop one's own teachings and techniques with colored fabric. It is also based on care, growth, and self-awareness toward one's life. Contemporary star blanket making is a fast way in presenting one's self to the market. It is a short cut, an easy road, and is able to introduce a person new ways in developing symbols, color, patterns, and freedom of expressions.

Star quilts, legend has it, result in good dreams and a prosperous life. The star represents the element of nature. The star imitates the stars above and the colors show the beauty of nature.

Star quilts are presented to honor people on significant occasions. They are given in memory of a deceased loved one, to honor a soldier upon returning from war, to welcome a newborn child, to congratulate newlyweds and at naming ceremonies. In many ways to all people of the four directions, the star quilt has replaced the buffalo robe as a gift of honor. As long as the morning star is faithful to the inhabitants of earth, life can sustain itself. That is why each star quilt is a tribute to the life-giving star.

To receive a star quilt as a gift indicates that the giver of the blanket holds you in very high esteem for your generosity or accomplishments. That is why a star quilt is one of the greatest gifts a person can receive. The wealth in the star blanket is not how much you own but rather how much one shares with others and gives.



'My sun! My morning star! Help this child to become a man. I name him Rain-dew falling! I name him Star Mountain!'

(Tewa)

The Tewa grandmother's song above is part of a naming ritual performed by the mother and grand-mother who stand on the housetop before dawn. When the baby is named a live coal and a corn cob are thrown, signifying life and health. For peoples across the world, the morning star symbolises renewal, new life and hope, for it is the sky herald of the life-giving sun each day. The morning star and the 'star nation' are woven into the myths and ceremonies of many tribes.

Despite the suffering that took place when white settlers came into contact with the tribes, some aspects of non-native handwork were readily adopted by tribal people. New materials, such as glass beads and woven fabrics meant new scope for craftwork design. The tradition of re-using materials has always been integral to tribal life, indeed to sustainable lifestyle anywhere. §

## Bernice Morin

My name is Bernice Morin and I identify myself as a Cree First Nation person. I hail from the remote village of Granville Lake, Manitoba, which is located in the North of 56. Having been raised in a traditional Cree-Metis lifestyle of trapping and fishing, I have come to appreciate all the modern day conveniences that many take for granted. Cree was the language of preference in our home and was spoken fluently within the village. Granville Lake offered few services and unemployment was high. The school went from Kindergarten to grade 8, students wishing to continue their education were required to leave the village.

I left home at age 15 to attend Frontier Collegiate Institute, in Cranberry Portage, Manitoba. Cranberry Portage offered residential boarding for students who came from communities that did not offer education past grade 8 or 9. There were approximately 150 girls and 200 boys at any given time of the year. I remained there for 4 years, till I

graduated in 1990, with many athletic rewards including Athlete of the Year 3 times and Queen trapper, to name a couple. My high school experiences gave me a good head start at being an independent person. I am very fortunate to have such helpful and caring counselors who were always looking out for me.

After graduation I headed to the big city of Winnipeg, where my family had relocated to, having left the village. For the next four years, I made Winnipeg my home. Finding work was not always easy, as I had a limited amount of employment history. A few of the positions I was able to find were waiting tables, sales person, counter personnel and reception at Transport Canada. I soon learned that the fast pace of life in the city was not allowing me to grow as an individual in the way I had hoped

A year after the birth of my son in 1993, and much consideration, I left Manitoba in the spring

and headed West to B.C, in hopes of making a better life for my son as a single parent. I arrived in Penticton B.C and immediately found work as a waitress and was soon promoted to prep-cook. I settled in Penticton and was soon involved in a relationship which resulted in the birth of my daughter. In 1996 my spouse (from France) and I moved to Montreal where he had found work. I took a course offering French as a second language, completing it in June of 1997. A week later we moved our little family back to BC for employment purposes.

We arrived in the Okanagan in the peak of the fruit harvest, when work was plentiful. We have worked in the fruit industry since then. We do seasonal work beginning in the spring and ending in the fall. We have been able to support our family in this fashion. This type of work has allowed us to live out our passion to live the kind of life we had always wanted.



<http://www.ahf.ca>

- announcements
- funded project information
- publications
- links
- bulletin board
- search engine
- contact us
- news releases

*The Aboriginal Healing Foundation*

## Regional Gatherings – 2002

Calgary – October 1

Prince Albert – October 3

Prince George – October 15

Kenora – October 17

Moncton – October 28

Quebec City – October 30

The public is welcome to attend each gathering, but participants must cover their own travel costs. The Foundation will provide refreshment and a light lunch.

For more information or to register (recommended but not required): Marilyn McIvor, (888) 725-8886. In Ottawa: (613) 237-4441.

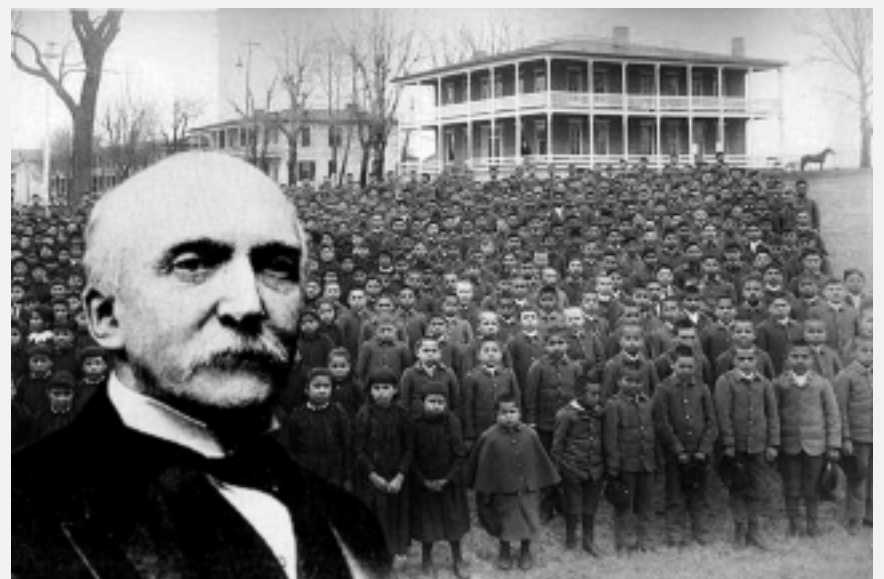
The Aboriginal Healing Foundation's Board of Directors will be gathering at these places to engage in dialogue with Aboriginal people on the Foundation's funding process, to issue an annual report, to provide an update on funded projects and to announce new initiatives.



Nicholas Flood Davin

*Journalist, politician, lawyer and author*

**N**icholas Flood Davin was born at Kilfinane, County Limerick, Ireland in 1842. Orphaned as a child, he was raised by Anglican foster parents. In 1872, at age 32, he left England where he had gained experience in law and journalism. Arriving in Toronto, he took work as an editorial writer, first at the *Globe*, and later at the *Mail*.



*Composite photo showing Davin and Carlisle Indian Residential School students, 1892.*

After a failed attempt at politics, in 1878, Davin was chosen by the Canadian Government to study the American Indian Residential School System, initiated under the Grant administration in 1869. Davin's 15-page *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds* was submitted to the Minister of the Interior, John A. Macdonald, on March 14, 1879.



*The Regina Leader Company building, c. 1887 (Regina City Archives)*

Praising the Americans for their policy of "aggressive civilization," he recommended similar arrangements for Canada. The Report elaborated an agriculture-based industrial school model and included an accompanying plan for building a school "of the cheapest kind." Davin made 13

recommendations and urged that "if anything is to be done with the Indian, we must catch him very young. The children must be kept constantly within the circle of civilized conditions."

In 1883, he established the *Regina Leader*. On the day that Louis Riel was hanged, Davin sneaked into the prison disguised as a priest to conduct an interview published November 16, 1885.

Nicholas Flood Davin became the first representative of West Assiniboia (the Northwest Territories) in 1885 and remained in politics until his defeat in 1900.

In 1901, Davin shot and killed himself in a Winnipeg hotel. •





## Resources for this Issue

The following resource list is provided as a public service. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation does not necessarily endorse these materials. Included are materials that address the topics covered in this issue. A resource list with new entries is presented with every issue. See earlier issues for other resources.

For a complete list of Residential School Resources, call Wayne K. Spear at the Communications Department:

1-888-725-8886 – extension 237.



### The Aboriginal Healing Foundation

Suite 801-75 Albert Street  
Ottawa, Ontario

Canada  
K1P 5E7

Phone (Ottawa) 237-4441

Toll-free: 1-888-725-8886

Fax: 613-237-4441

Email: [programs@ahf.ca](mailto:programs@ahf.ca)

Web: <http://www.ahf.ca>

#### Executive Director

**Mike DeGagné**

Senior Executive Assistant

Linda Côté

extension 236

#### Director of Finance

**Ernie Daniels**

Executive Assistant

Leanne Nagle

extension 261

#### Director of Research

**Gail Valaskakis**

Executive Assistant

Jackie Brennan

extension 306

#### Director of Communications

**Kanatiio (Allen Gabriel)**

Executive Assistant

Marilyn McIvor

extension 245

#### Community Support Manager

**Karen Jacobs-Williams**

Administrative Assistant

Mary Debassige

extension 327

Adams, David Wallace. "Fundamental Considerations: The Deep Meaning of Native American Schooling, 1880-1900." *Harvard Educational Review* 58(1): 1-28 (1988).

Anderson, Kim. *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood*. Toronto: Sumach Press, 2000.

Armstrong, Samuel Chapman. *The Indian Question*. Hampton, VA: Normal School Steam Press, 1883.

Attneave, Carolyn. "The Wasted Strengths of American Indian Families." In *The Destruction of Indian Families*, edited by Steven Unger. New York: Association on American Indian Affairs, 1977.

Axtell, James. *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Barr, Thomas P. "The Pottawatomie Baptist Manual Labor Training School." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 43(4): 377-431 (1977).

Battiste, Marie, and Jean Barman, eds. *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995.

Biglin, James E., and Jack Wilson. "Parental Attitudes Toward Indian Education." *Journal of American Indian Education* 11(3): 1-6 (1972).

Briscoe, L. S. "The Legal Background of *in loco parentis* as Applied to the Education of Indian Children." *Emergent Leadership* 4(2): 24-31 (1980).

Buffalohead, W. Roger, and Paulette Fairbanks Molin. "'A Nucleus of Civilization': American Indian Families at Hampton Institute in the Late Nineteenth Century." *Journal of American Indian Education* 35(3): 59-94 (1996).

Carter, Sarah. "Demonstrating Success: The File Hills Farm Colony." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory, November 1989.

Child, Brenda J. *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Child, Brenda, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, eds. "Boarding School Education." Special issue. *Journal of American Indian Education* 35(3) (1996).

Coleman, Michael C. *American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993.

Fleras, Augie, and Jean Leonard Elliot. *The Nations Within: Aboriginal-State Relations in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Hamley, Jeffrey L. "Cultural Genocide in the Classroom: A History of the Federal Boarding School Movement in American Indian Education, 1875-1920." Ed.D. diss., Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1994.

Hoxie, Frederick. *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.

Hultgren, Mary Lou, and Paulette Molin. *To Lead and to Serve: American Indian Education at Hampton Institute, 1878-1923*. Charlottesville: Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy in cooperation with Hampton University, 1989.

La Flesche, Francis. *The Middle Five: Indian Schoolboys of the Omaha Tribe*. 1900. Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978.

Lindsey, Donal F. *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995.

Littlefield, Alice. "Learning to Labor: Native American Education in the United States, 1880-1930." In *The Political Economy of North American Indians*, edited by John H. Moore. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993.

Lomawaima, K. Tsianina. "Domesticity in the Federal Indian Schools: The Power of Authority over Mind and Body." *American Ethnologist* 20(2): 1-14 (1993).

Lomawaima, K. Tsianina. "Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools, 1898-1910: Politics, Curriculum, and Land." *Journal of American Indian Education* 35(3): 5-31 (1996).

McBeth, Sally J. *Ethnic Identity and the Boarding School Experience of West-Central Oklahoma American Indians*. Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1983.

Meriam, Lewis. "The Effects of Boarding Schools on Indian Family Life." In *The Destruction of American Indian Families*, edited by Steven Unger. New York: Association on American Indian Affairs, 1977.

Neely, Charlotte. "The Quaker Era of Cherokee Indian Education, 1880-1892." *Appalachian Journal* 2(4): 314-322 (1975).

Southwick, Sally. "Educating the Mind, Enlightening the Soul: Mission Schools as a Means of Transforming the Navajos, 1898-1928." *Journal of Arizona History* 37(1): 47-66 (1996).