

# Healing Words

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Free



## MYTHS & STEREOTYPES

The social renewal and healing movement, growing ever stronger throughout Aboriginal communities, is re-establishing the importance and relevance of Aboriginal traditions and cultures that have been for generations the subject of contempt and rancour by a dominant culture. It is also dismantling the distorted perceptions of the history, identity, potential, and realities of Aboriginal people.

These new reactions are positive not only for Aboriginal people but also for Canadians. The efforts to cultivate a pseudo-image of Aboriginal people and their experience seem unrelenting at times, but as a recent article in the *National Post* on residential schools shows, they are now seen, both by informed Canadians and Aboriginal people, as an opportunity to challenge and educate. Those are the positive steps that will lead more directly and speedily towards healing and reconciliation.

Deepening cracks are clearly showing in the monumental myths, prejudices, and stereotypes which for so long have kept the self-esteem of entire Aboriginal communities at ground level. The recovery process is gaining momentum, and it has taken a long time to come

to this point. Just as the abuses of the past are now seen in a clearer light, it is also possible to envisage that these social constructions will in a few decades be clearly acknowledged and admitted as a form of social abuse.

Celebrating and encouraging the courageous advances towards healing and reconciliation is *Healing Words'* mandate. When a people begin to shatter negative myths, this is something important to celebrate and encourage. As difficult and courageous as this challenge is, it is a "liberating experience." Aboriginal people have many positive myths about themselves and their culture. A positive myth is like a well-loved reflection in a good mirror. The time has come for Aboriginal people to hold that mirror to each other.

A single issue of *Healing Words* cannot possibly hope to explore or explode the complexity and scope of such a topic. A hundred newsletters would surely not be enough. But understanding what myths are, what they do, where they can be found, and how they can be dismantled is essential to healing the individual and collective psyche of Aboriginal people. This is core healing work.

-Taken from Editor's note, page 4

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# letters

21 February 2001

The Editor:

I am attending the Edmonton Residential Schools Survivors Gathering on February 23-25, 2001.

I am a Dene person, born in 1938. I attended Beauval Indian Residential School from 1944-1954 [see photo].

I was the FIRST person from Northwest Saskatchewan to go to and complete a grade 12 education, in 1958. I graduated from Lebret, St. Paul's high school. I attended Teacher's College in 1958-9 and taught school in St. Thomas, Ontario (grade 7), Sacred Heart School, in Paris (grades 5 and 6), and Meadowlake, Saskatchewan (grades 5 and 6).

1963 to 1966 I taught grades 5-8 in Heron Bay, Ontario, and from 1966 to 1969 the same grades in Aroland, Ontario. I went back to Heron Bay in 1969-70. I tried attending University of Saskatchewan during my drinking years and flopped miserably in 1970-71.

In January 1972, I ended up in Manitoba. I taught grade 3 and Jr. high in Cross Lake. In 1973-4 I worked as an Education Counsellor with Indian Affairs in Thompson.

In the years 1974-1979, I attended the University of Manitoba, attaining my B.Ed. 1979-83. I taught Jr. high in Norway House, Manitoba and then moved to the Hollow Water Indian Reserve in Wanipigow, from 1983 to 1995.

Then I retired. Worst move I ever made. In 1966-98, I moved back to my home Reserve, called English River First Nation, in Patuanak, Saskatchewan, and taught grades 8 and 9.

From August 8, 1998 to the present, I have worked with the Meadow Lake Tribal Council as Director of Education. In October, 2001, I plan to run for Chief of my home reserve, and I am 99.9% certain I will be elected.

I have led an interesting life, even though I look "Indian" and not European. I am 63 years old and have no plans of slowing down. Beauval Indian Residential School gave me the incentive to succeed in whatever I set out to accomplish. I quit alcohol drinking at 2 p.m., Saturday, April 30, 1988. I don't smoke tobacco and I have my red belt with black stripe in Tae-kwon Do from Juna Park Tae-kwon Do Center in Winnipeg.

RALPH PAUL,  
Meadow Lake, SK.

Please see Ralph Paul's description of Beauval Indian Residential School on page 19.

\*

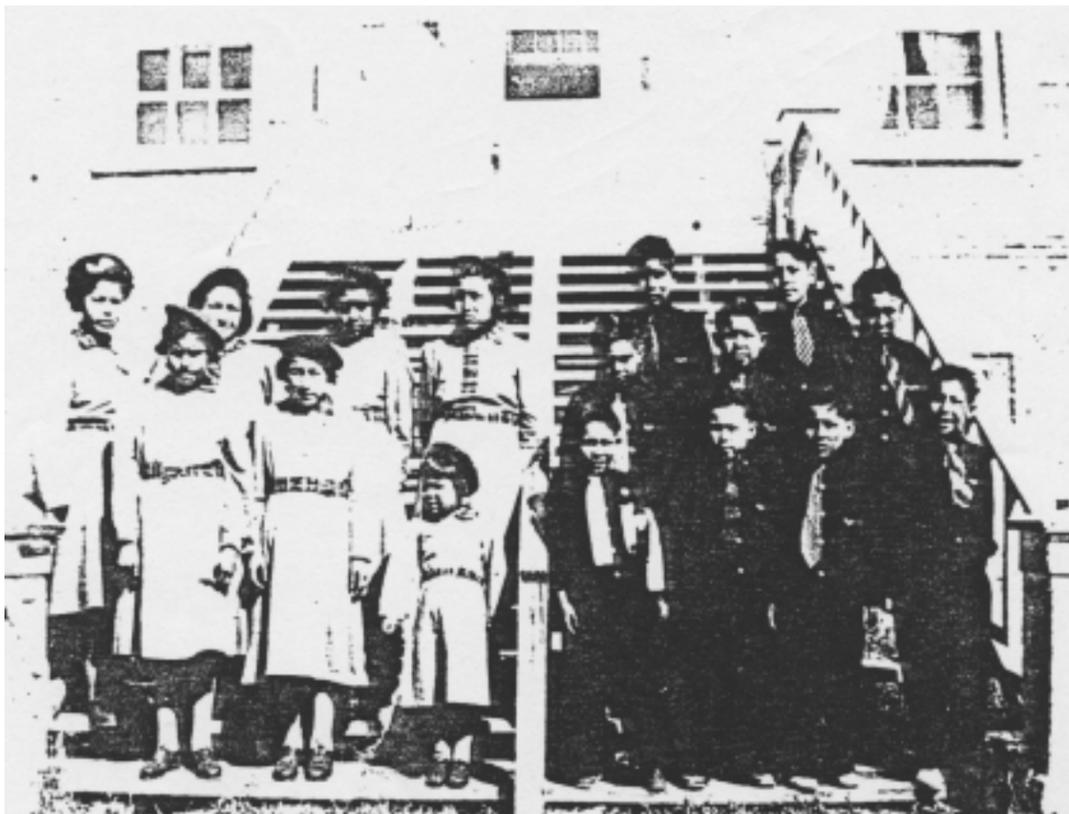
22 February 2001

Dear Editors, *Healing Words*:

My name is Beverley Carter-Buffalo, Manager of the Samson Cree Nation Healthy Families Project in Hobbema, Alberta. This is actually the first issue of *Healing Words* that we have come across in our office. We are very impressed with your newspaper and would like to be added to your mailing list.

If this request can be fulfilled, we thank you in advance.

Respectfully,  
BEVERLEY CARTER-BUFFALO BSW, RSW,  
Hobbema, AB.



▲ Beauval Indian Residential School, 1947. Ralph Paul, age 9, is the second boy from the left, front row.

27 February 2001

Dear Sir/Madam:

I work as a school counsellor in my community and I am interested in getting information to help me in my life and profession. I got a copy of *Healing Words* volume 2, number 2 at the Residential School Conference held in Edmonton and I would appreciate the previous issues of this magazine sent to me.

Will you kindly put me on your mailing list, to have the magazine of *Healing Words* mailed to me? Thank you.

FLORENCE LARGE,  
Saddle Lake, AB.

\*

28 February 2001

I would like to receive the *Healing Words*. Do I just give you my address? I really enjoy reading your newsletter.

Thank you. (Masi Cho!)

TINA SANGRIS,  
Yellowknife, NWT.

\*

Dear Editors:

It gives me great pleasure to be able to thank you for submitting articles in regard to Native school survivors, and I'm very grateful that I have the opportunity to read the newspaper, *Healing Words*, of which I have come into contact about two weeks ago. It's very informative, and at the same time it makes you sad as to what had happened to

our Native people while being residents in the Residential Schools. I want you to know that I'm one of those Residential School Survivors, and that's why I'm interested in the articles you've published, so that the White society can see what had occurred in years past. You tell the White people, church people, and other people, what Native people had endured while at the hands of the churches. They would not believe you; they would say, "Our church, our priests, our nuns, are sacred people and would not commit such atrocities toward any human beings on this earth," as if to say these are all lies. (What can you say?)

I guess my reason for sending you an e-mail is I'm wondering if it would be possible for you to send two articles that you published on the back page of the newspaper ("Residential School Resources"). There are two that interest me: 1) Burke, S Report: Residential School. Shingwauk report, 1993. 2) Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Breach of Trust, Breach of faith: Child Sexual Abuse in the Church and Society. Ottawa: Concacan, 1992. Filfillment of our request will be well appreciated.

Sincerely,  
WANDA BAXTER.

\*

Dear Editor:

We have been reading and following your stories and comments among our relations in regard to healing. We would like to acknowledge and give thanks to others who have put a lot of time and effort and support to these important issues. For five years we have started at a grass roots level that has developed into a healing camp. We have gotten help and support from different societies and cultures. We were wondering because we would like to reach out to our relations and let them

know that they can reach out and participate and flourish in the path of healing and unity. We were donated a web site from the Huron territory of Quebec city and if you would like to see what we are all about and our goals you may find it at [www.publiccite.com/weniente.html](http://www.publiccite.com/weniente.html). We would also like to extend this opportunity to people who are on their healing path, that they are more than welcome to come. In 1990, after the crisis, we had a lot of support from a lot of nations, and now we are all on the road to healing. This is our way of giving thanks to the ones who came here to help us in our time of need. To the editor, we ask, do you think that our camp is applicable and essential to your magazine? We ask for your support and if you would kindly put our camp in your magazine for others to read about. I thank you for anything that you can do for us and I await to hear from you.

Sincerely,  
DONNA BONSPILLE,  
Kanehsatake, QB.

\*

Tansi! (Hi!)

My name is Karen McGilvery of Saddle Lake, Alberta. I found your website when I was researching for a project in school. I attend the Leadership & Management Program at Blue Quills First Nations College and my project was on how to incorporate healing into the Leadership and Band run programs. I found your website interesting, more so, the *Healing Words*. I loved it and would like to learn more about it, how to get it and to spread the word about it. It is very good and I feel that my community, school, and area of work could benefit from it. Your early response would be greatly appreciated. Hiy Hiy! (Thank You.)

\*

*Please see next page for more letters*

#### A TYPICAL DAY IN A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

- The boys get up at 5:30 am to do morning chores—milking cows, feeding animals, etc. Everyone else gets up at 6:00 am, washes, and goes to chapel for Mass.
- Breakfast:
  - a sticky porridge cooked by students the night before, a piece of bread with some butter and a glass of milk.
- Morning cleaning duties.
- Classes:
  - the first hour is religious studies.
  - two hours of academic studies.
- Lunch:
  - a mush of potatoes, carrots, turnips, cabbage and chunks of meat. Fridays – mushed up fish.
- Work Time/Chores:
  - girls learn to sew, cook and clean.
  - boys learn to farm and grow a garden.
  - some boys learn basic carpentry and shoe repair.
- Cleaning groups clean their designated part of the school (boys and girls).
- Study Hour.
- Supper.
- Clean-up.
- Recreation Time.
- Prayers.
- Bedtime.

(This refers specifically to the Kamloops Indian Residential School and is taken from the book *Resistance and Renewal*, by Celia Haig-Brown.)

## submissions

You may submit your articles, letters, or other contributions, by fax, mail, or email. We prefer electronic submissions in Corel Word Perfect or MS Word. Please send your writing to:

*The Editors, Healing Words  
Suite 801 – 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 send email submissions of photos in TIFF grayscale format, if possible. We ask for a resolution of 300 dpi. We cannot be responsible for photos damaged in the mail.

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.

There is no set length for manuscripts, but please try to keep submissions to a reasonable length (under 3000 words). 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 !

#### S . O . S . P O E T S

Thank you also to those poets whose work we publish here from other sources. Do you know how hard it is to find you? PLEASE, to ALL poets out there in communities, young, older, already published or not – send us your thoughts, your work, in poems, prayers, chants or songs.

It is especially difficult to find poems that we can publish in our French newsletter. But we would love also to get poems and songs in your own language.



*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>*

2 March 2001

Dear Editors:

We receive your paper here at our office, Native Healing Connection. We receive many calls from residential school survivors and reading the articles has been most enlightening.

The Native Healing Connection is a project of World Vision, Canada's Aboriginal Programs. It is a national referral line which connects adult survivors of childhood or adolescent sexual abuse with trained helpers nation-wide. Our primary goal is to help survivors of childhood sexual abuse begin or continue a healing journey. When an individual calls we listen to their story and then refer them to appropriate resources (people, books, and conferences) in their area. In addition we provide callers with a helpful booklet, "When Trust Is Broken." A copy is enclosed for your information. I was wondering if any of your readers would also find our referral line information helpful. We can be contacted toll-free anywhere in Canada at 1-888-600-5464.

I encourage you to keep up the great work in communicating to us as readers to be more informed and educated. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
HEATHER ATKEY,  
Edmonton, AB.

\*

Hi,

I just read with interest *Healing Words* and would like to make the following note. In New Brunswick there was a boarding school in Newcastle called St. Mary's Academy run by the Nuns of Congregation de Notre Dame where native children who reached Grade nine (girls) were sent to school there because they could not go to provincial schools. This was in the '60s. Boys went across the bridge with the priests at St. Thomas. If you wish to know more – you can always contact me or others.

Thanks,  
MARY JANE PETERS,  
Big Cove, NB.

\*



## healing myths & stereotypes



Above: NWT/Yukon Community Support Coordinator Frank Hope and Communications Officer (and Healing Words Editor) Giselle Robelin, in Rae-Edzo, NWT.

by  
Giselle  
Robelin

### Editor's Message

The social renewal and healing movement, growing ever stronger throughout Aboriginal communities, is re-establishing the importance and relevance of Aboriginal traditions and culture that have been for generations the subject of contempt and rancour by a dominant culture. It is also dismantling the distorted perceptions of the history, identity, potential and realities of Aboriginal people.

**Understanding what myths are, what they do, where they can be found, and how they can be dismantled is essential to healing the individual and collective psyche of Aboriginal people. This is core healing work.**

These new reactions are positive not only for Aboriginal people, but also for Canadians. The efforts to cultivate a pseudo-image of Aboriginal people and their experience seem unrelenting at times, but as a recent articles in the *National Post* on residential schools shows, they are now seen, both by informed Canadians and Aboriginal people, as an opportunity to challenge and educate. The United Church ([www.uccan.org](http://www.uccan.org)), as well as the AHF responses are good examples of the will not to let misinformation create further rifts between Aboriginals and the Canadian public. Those are the positive steps that will lead more directly and speedily towards healing and reconciliation.

Deepening cracks, then, are clearly showing in the monumental myths, prejudices, and stereotypes which for so long have kept the self-esteem of entire Aboriginal communities at ground level. The recovery process is gaining momentum; it has taken a long time to come to this point. Just as the abuses of the past are now seen in a clearer light, it is also possible to envisage that these social constructions will in a few decades be clearly acknowledged and admitted as a form of social abuse.

Celebrating and encouraging the courageous advances towards healing and reconciliation is *Healing Words'* mandate. When a people begin to shatter negative myths, this is something important to celebrate and encourage. As difficult and courageous as this challenge is, it is a "liberating experience." Aboriginal people have many positive myths about themselves and their culture. A positive myth is like a well-loved reflection in a good

mirror. The time has come for Aboriginal people to hold that mirror to each other.

A single issue of *Healing Words* cannot possibly hope to explore or explode the complexity and scope of such a topic. A hundred newsletters would surely not be enough. But understanding what myths are, what they do, where they can be found, and how they can be dismantled is essential to healing the individual and collective psyche of Aboriginal people. This is core healing work.

So, as a start and as a means to encourage your own exploration, we propose in this issue to look briefly at the source, the evolution, and the dissemination of myths and stereotypes, as they are applied to Aboriginal people. We hope that the article Myths and Facts about Alcohol Consumption in Aboriginal Communities will lead to changing some ingrained assumptions and to further questioning.

We felt that the subject was important and relevant to healing, as the public acceptance of myths has at least two major impacts: on Aboriginal people's will to heal and on Canadians' willingness to reflect on their own relationship with alcohol and other substances. The point of this article is not to place non-aboriginal Canadian drinking habits in a comparative bad light. It is to offer a different perspective on the subject as well as alternative conclusions about Aboriginal drinking habits.

### Holding up a different mirror, seeing a good image

Sharing successes, acknowledging positive images, and rejecting stereotypes can only accelerate this healing process. There is no need to make anything up; it is all there – courage, endurance, generosity, excellence, wisdom, spirituality, beauty, compassion, humour, hospitality, creativity, knowledge, expertise, laughter. We hope that you will see yourselves in the mirror of this issue, in a good way. –GR.

*Aboriginal people everywhere are remembering to look at the world and themselves with the truth-seeking eyes of the Eagle, to embrace life challenges with the strength of the Bear, and confront hardships and problems like the buffalo, who unlike other animals will not turn downwind in a storm, but faces it head on.*

– Message from Johnny Dayrider, Elder, to Youths attending AHF Conference, March 2001•

Danet'e:

Welcome to the Spring 2001 issue of *Healing Words*—the seventh edition of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation newsletter. I hope you find this material helpful and encouraging.

*Healing Words* is a unique publication. It belongs to the survivors of residential schools, their descendants and communities. In the pages that follow, you will read the words of residential school survivors, in the form of letters, stories, and poems.

Many have shared with us their pain and suffering, as well as their anger. We also receive messages that inspire and challenge. *Healing Words* is a place to share the feelings and ideas that are of importance to Aboriginal people involved in the work of healing and reconciliation.

I know that there is a great need at this time for sharing of stories and successes—and difficulties too. In my visits to communities, I have heard many times that the Foundation must help communities by bringing together and sharing the work of Aboriginal people across Canada. *Healing Words* therefore plays an important role in promoting the strengths of Aboriginal communities.

Future issues will continue to feature healing projects. We will do our best to encourage and support survivors and their descendants, by presenting articles and resources on a variety of topics. Most important, *Healing Words* will continue to be your place to gather, share, and support one another.

From the Chairman, Georges Erasmus



A handwritten signature of Georges Erasmus in cursive script.

We have a large and growing community of readers. Over time the newsletter has evolved, as I'm certain it will evolve in the months ahead. If the needs of Aboriginal communities change, *Healing Words* will change too. I look forward to the opportunities ahead.

There is a great deal of difficult work to be done. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation acknowledges the courage and strength of people in the communities. Nothing is harder than beginning the healing process. At first there is much resistance and anger. Even the strongest people become discouraged and consider quitting. Only the thought of their children's future, and the future of their community, can give them the strength to continue. They draw this strength from traditions, teachings, and people.

Just as there is resistance in Aboriginal communities, there is resistance to healing and reconciliation in Canadian society. Recently, a few people in the Canadian media have suggested that the residential school legacy is a myth. There is denial of the assimilationist intentions of the residential school system. Aboriginal people, in particular those who attended residential school, are not generally supported by the media. *Healing Words* will address these and other related matters by sharing Aboriginal experiences and perspectives with Canadians in a way other newspapers do not.

I invite you to participate in this work by writing to us.

Masi.

## Year 2000 Regional Gathering Summary Report

Please go to page 28

Right: At the Iqaluit Regional Gathering, Air Cadet Hall, September 28, 2000.

In this issue of *Healing Words*, we include a summary report of the Year 2000 Aboriginal Healing Foundation Regional Gatherings. These Gatherings took place in Iqaluit, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Ottawa and Moncton. In January, 2001 Regional Gatherings were also held in Yellowknife and Whitehorse. See page 28 for the Summary Report. •



### *Healing Words*

*The purpose of Healing Words is to be an instrument for honouring the Foundation's commitments to survivors, their descendants, and their communities. It is one of the means by which we demonstrate our respect for the agreements the Foundation has signed. It is also a vehicle for supporting the mission, vision and objectives of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation as well as the goals of the Foundation's Communications Strategy.*

In the mid-1980s, Willie Abrahams discovered a unique way to undertake his healing journey –by cycling the streets of Vancouver, British Columbia. He saved some money working as a dishwasher and bought a bike, and he has been riding ever since. “It was a great way to see the city,” he says. Among other things, cycling helped him overcome alcoholism.

Willie Abrahams is a survivor of St. Michael’s Indian Residential School in Alert Bay (Vancouver Island), which he attended from 1950 to 1957. “I was 10 when I went in and 16 when I came out.” Not long ago he returned to the former school, as part of his healing. “The building is still there. I hadn’t been there in years, but I went to see it. I don’t care what they do with it now.”

Willie Abraham’s 1998 bicycle tour, undertaken with four other riders, was called “Honour Our Tears.” He cycled from Prince Rupert to Nanaimo, via the Fraser Canyon, a route of roughly 1500 kilometres. For those who don’t know, it’s an arduous trek through mountains and intermittent patches of driving rain. A remarkable accom-

Along the way, Willie plans to perform traditional dances of the Haida Gwaii. “The first dance, the Wild Man Dance, represents what I suffered at residential school. The second, the Eagle Dance, represents my healing journey.” He is asking for permission to take with him 2 Haida Gwaii masks.

Willie, who cycles 20 kilometres every day, will begin his latest cycling journey in early June, returning to B.C. in early September. At present, the local community is helping him to raise the money he’ll need to cover the costs of the trip.

How much he’ll need depends on the nature of his plans. “The committee suggested I get a vehicle to drive out to Halifax. I think I can do the trip by myself for \$6,000. I’ll need about 25 [thousand] if I bring others.”

As for the attention of the Canadian media, Willie is glad to have any support. His interest is in meeting with other Aboriginal people and sharing his message with other survivors. “I’m planning to participate in workshops and healing circles, and

The whole concept is to cycle through Canada and let other survivors know I’m okay –to let them know how I started my healing journey. I want survivors to have hope.

-WILLIE ABRAHAM

to talk to Elders. I’ll be visiting the communities as I travel.” The focus of this trip, he says, is healing. “I want survivors to have hope.”•



plishment for anyone, the journey is even more impressive when one considers that Willie was at the time 57 years old.

He’s remarkably humble speaking of the trip. “I’ve got a 21-speed bike. The bikes they’ve got now have so many speeds –that makes it easier. For this trip I’m looking at getting a 26-speed bike, if I can get the money.”

This time Willie plans to undertake a bicycle journey from Halifax to Victoria, a trip he expects will take 3 months. “I can average 100 kilometres a day, but 80 is safer.” And if he has time, he says he will paddle up to Campbell River when he arrives in Victoria.

Forced to attend residential school, where he was sexually abused, Willie is not the first person to use a physical journey as a means to address the effects of the residential school system. Others have brought attention to the legacy of residential schools by walking across parts, and even all, of Canada, alone or in groups. As Willie said at the time of his 1998 ride, “the general public has only a vague idea of the effect residential schools had.”

The purpose of this latest journey is simple and straightforward. “The whole concept is to cycle through Canada and let other survivors know I’m okay –to let them know how I started my healing journey.”



Above, left: St. Michael’s Indian Residential School, Alert Bay; above, right: students at St. Michael’s

### St Michael’s Indian Residential School: some facts

- Built in 1929
- Closed in 1975
- This building now houses the Nimpkish Band Council and the Alert Bay outlet of North Island College
- Prior to the construction of “St. Mike’s” (designed for a capacity of 200 students), children had been accommodated in two separate buildings. In addition to regular academic subjects, the curriculum included carpentry, boat building, and farming. During the 1950s, the school was virtually self-sufficient, with its own farm, herd of cattle, and water and electric plant.
- The building was turned over to the Nimpkish Band in 1973

(NOTE: Another school, Alert Bay Indian Day School, was built in 1900. Mrs. Paterson Hall, the Reverend Hall’s wife, was its first teacher. During the Potlatch Trials of 1922, the building was temporarily co-opted as a lock-up for Kwakwaka’-wakw Elders accused of participating in the Village Island Potlatch. The Day School was closed in 1947. In 1948, the school was renovated and subsequently reopened as a Council Hall.

• Sources: Aboriginal Healing Foundation records and <http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/umista1/alrtor-e.html>

# featured project

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.  
We all work together to help one another

The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (Ma Mawi) has been operating for the past 14 years. Ma Mawi was established in September, 1984 as a non-mandated support to Aboriginal children and families within the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. It was the first organization of its type in Canada, designed to provide culturally-based, community appropriate, developmental child and family services. The Centre stands as a model for supporting families by following the values, beliefs and practices of the cultural and traditional community and blending these with conventional social work practice in modern society.

## Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. *We all work together to help one another*

The Centre was formed in response to the recognition that mainstream systems and services were, more often than not, non-responsive and punitive to Aboriginal families. Unwittingly, these systems tended to aid in family breakdown and often resulted in a deterioration of our values, norms and capacity to care for ourselves. Ma Mawi recognised those strengths and natural abilities of self care in Aboriginal communities and therefore committed to providing services that would support these strengths.

The name "Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata" translated from Ojibway means "we all work together to help one another." This statement implies that all individuals within the community have a role to play in supporting each others' needs, and to help the community to grow. Ma Mawi is committed to the growth and development of the entire community, which has the responsibility to support and nurture the future generations.

In our current society, growing reliance is often placed on the professional service system. Ma Mawi is actively seeking opportunities to reverse this situation, to enhance the role of the community in supporting itself. One primary method to achieve this is to build on, and support, the strengths that exist in community members, providing them with the opportunity to take greater responsibility for the collective well being.

We offer a diverse range of culturally-appropriate and culture-based services and programs, organized into: a Family Support Program; a Nicikwe (Homemaker) Program; a Provincial Correctional Support Program; Ozosunom (Foster Care) Program; an HIV/AIDS Program; an After Hours Program; a Youth Support Program; a Family Violence Community-based Program; and a Family Violence Stony Mountain Project.

Since 1984, the Aboriginal community has grown and changed significantly. In keeping with those changes, Ma Mawi recognises the need to evolve service delivery. Ma Mawi continues to recognise and celebrate the importance of the child, family and community. Ma Mawi remains committed to facilitating the development of the Aboriginal community through creating opportunities to learn from one another, collectively addressing local issues and building community capacity as a way to support each other.

*Over the past few years, Ma Mawi has made a concerted effort to re-engage the community in the care*

*of our children. Direct actions include a re-structuring of the organization to locate directly within several city neighbourhoods; additional partnerships with neighbourhood-based service agencies; development of opportunities to build community capacity, and an examination of options to stimulate volunteer activities in support of families.*

Within urban centres such as Winnipeg, the Aboriginal community's responsibilities for the care and support of its families has been eroded to a point where concerted effort is now required to rebuild capacity and skills.

*This emphasis is based on the recognition that the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg has many strengths and experiences. What is often lacking is the means to organize and utilize these strengths in a consistent manner. We believe that it is ultimately important to strive to facilitate development of the community, and to serve as a vehicle to support this development. We must create and maintain opportunities for healing and growth at all levels—the individual, the family and the community.*

## Today, in our community

- There are approximately 5,280 children in care in the Province.
- Of the 5,280 children in care in Manitoba, approximately 75% are Aboriginal.
- Research has predicted that the number of children in care in Manitoba will increase by 500 next year.
- Manitoba has the highest number of children in care in the Western Hemisphere.
- The Status Quo is not working! We believe it is imperative to get our direction from families with experience.

## Overview: The current situation as a legacy of residential schools

Over the course of the past twenty years, and on a growing inter-generational basis, the lives of Aboriginal peoples continue to be affected by the aftermath of the residential school system. While the physical reality of residential schools no longer exists, their legacy has been largely transferred to the child welfare system.

Much of the system was designed and operates to

protect children, which can be a necessary and valuable response to current situations. In reality, it operates with many elements that are frighteningly similar to those of the past:

- Aboriginal children are removed from their homes, families and communities to 'protect' them and provide them with opportunities for a 'better' form of life;
- Family and community involvement and decisions regarding removal are minimally respected, as their capacity to decide what is best for the child is viewed as being of little consequence;
- Removing the child from family and community is seen as the expedient way of bringing about change, rather than working to build the capacity of the parents and child within a nurturing community setting; and,
- The current child protection system is largely adversarial in nature and reduces opportunities to maintain and support families.

As a result, the focus of much current child protection effort ends in the removal of the child from his/her natural home, and serves as a penalty to the child. As children are removed from the care of their natural parents, family bonds are broken and parenting skills are lost. As children in care are abused, and parents believe themselves powerless to stop this abuse, a sense of failure and hopelessness is created. A further generational consequence of residential schools is therefore maintained.

At issue is the fact that, within urban centres such as Winnipeg, the Aboriginal community's responsibilities for the care and support of its families has been eroded to a point where concerted effort is now required to rebuild capacity and skills. These individual do not normally operate within neighbourhoods, do not contribute to the local resource base, and do not acknowledge the existing skills and capacity of neighbourhoods and residents.

## Requirements for Change

In order to bring about changes that can have a meaningful and positive impact on the children being served, the environment under which the current system operates must be acknowledged and adjusted. The current system does not tend to acknowledge that there are limited employment prospects for parents, which directly impacts on

◀ **Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.**  
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the family's capacity to cope. There is a significant level of over-professionalization. Families are often subject to so much interference in their lives that, as a result of a growing dependency, they automatically turn to the "system" to respond, rather than turning to community people instead.

The child and family 'system' needs to closely reflect the situations of families and work to become more accessible, supportive and focused on the needs of families. Targeting of effort should not focus on 'correction of the problem,' but rather upon the elimination of the conditions that work against the care of the child, including the need for recognition and addressing of the inter-generational effects of residential schools. Change should emphasize work to build capacity within families and the community to care for their children.

Involvement of the Aboriginal community in the process to bring about change requires formal ownership of the situation and the means available to resolve it. This point is reinforced in the recommendations of the *Final Report... of the Manitoba Round Table on Environment and Economy Urban Aboriginal Strategy* (public consultation process) of 1998, which recommends

*Trusting the Aboriginal community and providing support to facilitate goals that strengthen and empower individuals and families to take greater control over their own destinies. To demonstrate this trust, government must appropriately provide resources and facilitate the transfer of control over programming and services delivery (page 26).*

The principles under which change is proposed have been echoed on several occasions, by numerous sources. They represent a common sense approach to strengthening families and the communities in which they live, to retain responsibility for the care and nurturing of Aboriginal children.

The foundation of more appropriate approaches to programming needs to be built on the belief that parents need to be supported, not penalized; approaches need to build networks with the communities to ensure that support is focused on community members helping each other. Consistent with the directions proposed by the Province of Manitoba, within its New Directions initiatives, these principles emphasize the return of capacity of the community to care for its members, through neighbourhood networks, skills sharing and coordinating neighbourhood resources.

Efforts to this end must acknowledge that

- A focus on the neighbourhood implies the hiring of people from local neighbourhoods, giving them training, support and good supervision;
- Capacity building requires a transfer of skills that can be matched with local experience and commitment to the care of the child.

### **Opportunities for Change**

In order to accomplish a community-centred healing strategy, an emphasis must be placed on increasing the capacity of the broader community

to care for its members. To facilitate increased capacity within the community, its members must have access to opportunities to participate and to increase their skills and expertise.

From our organization's perspective, these efforts should also equip community members to enable ownership of the well-being of children and families. As part of this, Ma Mawi has actively supported the involvement of the community in identifying issues and opportunities, setting directions, and participating in different approaches for the provision of family support.

Our efforts are based on the assumption that increased community capacity results from a number of factors, working collectively:

- The provision of opportunities for community members to become involved, to learn from and support each other, builds confidence and is the initial step in capacity building.
- The acknowledgement of a collective responsibility towards the community, through actions that promote ownership of the situation and methods to address it, thereby building recognition that everyone has a role to play; and,
- The continual reinforcement of the strengths that exist within the Aboriginal community, by seeking and using input and advice, and by calling upon community members to take an increasing role in supporting children and families, so that their capacity to act as a community to affect change is increased.

Many plans have been established and partnerships developed. There is also recognition that

- child and family services, parenting practices and issues, child protection and the current situation facing many families is a direct impact of the residential school system;
- while a wealth of information may be available to provide knowledge and techniques to address these issues, this information is scattered or not in the form that is accessible or readily transferable;
- 'professionals' in the human service field need to have the best available information and techniques to assist the community in addressing complex issues;
- the community (through its broad membership) is in the best position to affect real change;
- the community membership requires skill development and a transfer of knowledge to enable it to begin to address its issues, support its families, and to achieve its capacity;
- the 'professional' community can support and assist through guidance and technical expertise; and,
- the more individuals that are involved in dealing with resolutions, the fewer there will be engaged in the problems.

As a result, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre is proposing to take a leadership role in Winnipeg, in support of the capacity building of the community to heal and support itself. To this end, it requests assistance in addressing these issues and building a community-centered support mechanism that greatly expands the limited efforts of professionals and the systems.

**The overall intent of our project is to strengthen the ability of community members to identify risk factors early, to support children and families in dealing with or containing the impact of the risk factors, and to build on and celebrate their resilience and ability to thrive even in their challenging circumstances.**

### **Building a caring community**

As is outlined in numerous books and reports written on the effects of the residential school era, many Aboriginal people living in poverty-stricken rural and urban areas are under severe stress at the present time. The aftermath of this era has exacted a tremendous toll in human suffering and a litany of social problems including high suicide rates, substance abuse and dependency, crime and violence, gangs, unsafe sex practices, single parenthood and teen pregnancies, homelessness, and child abuse and neglect. Unfortunately, the bureaucratic child and family services system often has been a part of the problem rather than part of the solution, as evidenced by deteriorating communities and the disproportionately high number of Aboriginal children in care.

The overall intent of our project is to strengthen the ability of community members to identify risk factors early, to support children and families in dealing with or containing the impact of the risk factors, and to build on and celebrate their resilience and ability to thrive even in their challenging circumstances. The project will serve Aboriginal individuals, families and children residing in 4 inner-city neighbourhoods identified as exhibiting characteristics of extreme need, particularly with respect to children and families. These families are most often represented by Aboriginal single parent arrangements, extended families or foster parent relationships.

At the community level, the Community Care Model provides a vehicle to identify community issues and engage all partners and stakeholders in designing solutions.

The Community Care Model fosters various mechanisms to ensure that partner agencies and other stakeholders work together to provide for Aboriginal children and families.

The model has developed human and educational resources that address the intergenerational

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effects of physical and sexual abuse at residential schools. The development of individuals and the development of their families and community go hand in hand. The strengthening of families and the development of community directly contributes to the healing and development of individuals. The healing approach is informed by the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical aspects of the healing process.

The concepts presented in the Community Care Model are a direct result of consultations held with community stakeholders. Neighbourhood residents play a role in devising strategies for project activities and are engaged in strategic planning sessions for the project's on-going implementation. Neighbourhood residents own the improvement process.

**Model-building**

Our first step in building a Community Care model was to address the issue of capacity building and skills development, to assist with community healing and community-centered child and family support. The following operational objectives and related tasks are presented as an outline of the work that we believe must be undertaken.

**1-3 months**

To assemble, design and make available the collective wisdom within courses, workshops and curriculum that deal with family healing and support.

Within this objective, tasks to be undertaken include:

- Contact with other child and family serving organisations to identify and obtain information on courses and workshops material that are currently available;

- Review of available materials to identify and select appropriate content and methods of using materials within a community setting;
- Identification of training/information needs that remain unmet;
- Curriculum and workshop development to design additional training;
- Reproduction of material for distribution and use within future training.

**3-6 months**

To develop skills and capacities within 'professional' staff to train families and community volunteers to deliver support programming

Tasks to be carried out in support of this objective include:

- Identification of the current skill base in terms of courses, workshops and information presentation (trainers and potential trainers);
- Determination of gaps in information and priority skill development to enable a broad range of community-centered support to be made available;
- Identification of additional staff from sister agencies who wish to train;
- Organisation and scheduling of training sessions;
- Providing follow-up and organising initial community training and delivery sessions.

**6-12 Months**

To increase the levels of skills available within the community to conduct sharing circles, parenting courses and workshops

Tasks to be undertaken include:

- Identification of courses/workshops and support programming (holding sharing circles, etc...) that are appropriate for presentation through community helpers and volunteers;
- Curriculum and training content design and scheduling;
- Conducting courses and training sessions;
- Providing follow-up and support to those taking training.

**6-12 Months**

To engage a broader segment of the community in supporting families and healing measures through the use of skilled and committed volunteers;

Within this objective, the key tasks to be undertaken include:

- Soliciting and identifying individuals from neighbourhoods willing to take training and conduct sessions;
- Promoting the use of community residents as helpers and family supports;
- Identifying, to supplement, current income levels.



**E.F. WILSON**

*from White Man's Burden to Radicalization and Resignation*

**E**.F. Wilson was deeply committed to Christianizing and educating the Indians. Like most educated colonialists, however liberal, his outlook was Christian and Eurocentric. He thought that the non-white races had simply got left behind and that eventually they would have to join the historical trajectory envisaged by "his" civilization. His mission was simply to minimize the pangs of their assimilation. Gradually, however, the experience of natural ways, "the wild and free life" as he called it, worked its power and he began to understand the challenge and opportunity presented by the resistance, humanity, and wisdom of the Indians. His insight was not shared by his fellow colonists. The military suppression of the Indians' defence of their Western homelands in 1885 (the second Riel Rebellion) confirmed his suspicion that his own people and Government's policies were misguided. To determine how to respond he undertook detailed research into "The Indian Problem," and by



1890 came to advocate self-government and self-determination for Indians, and the preservation and study of their languages and cultures. He recognized that assimilation and cultural genocide were wrong and would not work. But also and unfortunately, his Government and Church disagreed. No challenge to their authority was tolerated. After several years of disagreement and strained relations with his superior, the second Bishop of Algoma, in 1892 Wilson was forced to resign as Principal of the Shingwauk Schools. When a new Shingwauk Hall replaced the old central building in 1935, a cairn commemorating Wilson was built from some of the stones on the spot his residence.

*For more information on the Shingwauk Healing Project: <http://people.auc.on.ca/shingwaukproject/indexintro.html> —or contact Donald A. Jackson: [jackson@auc.ca](mailto:jackson@auc.ca). See also the Aboriginal Healing Foundation website [ahf.ca](http://ahf.ca) for project info.*

# Healing, Reconciliation and the Media

*English-language Canadian print media coverage  
of Residential Schools  
from 1 February 2001 to February 28 2001*

- by WAYNE K. SPEAR

## Note on the Study

This was not meant to be a scientific exercise. A scientific study of media would take a larger sample –say, a year’s worth of clippings. I have, however, read the print coverage of residential schools back to February 2000. Although I haven’t listed a year’s worth of articles (there are far too many to list), I have drawn observations in the notes that follow. One last point on method. I focus on English-language media because I’m a reader of English. There is interesting French-language coverage of residential schools, and I hope to discuss it in a future issue.

## Summary

When writing of residential schools, journalists focus on lawsuits. The possible bankruptcy of churches and the costs of litigation to government are top concerns. Some of the articles include a brief history of the residential school system, some do not. Church and government officials are quoted more often than survivors of the schools. But above all else are the costs of litigation and a sense, from the points of view of the church and government, of crisis.

During February 2001, there was greater than usual interest in matters of healing and reconciliation as a result of the APTN, CBC, and Vision TV special, *Residential Schools: Moving Beyond Survival*. A study restricted in its focus will reflect the momentary focus of the media, and so I found more articles considering the historical depth and social meaning of residential schools than I suspect I otherwise would. Having said this, a few results of this brief study are in my estimation reflective of general trends over the past year.

The *National Post*, which in February published the greatest number of residential school articles, has led the way. Richard Foot and Rick Mofina both write for the *National Post* and both focus on lawsuits – in particular the prospective bankruptcy of churches and the cost to government of litigation. (Rick Mofina, by the way, put forward a \$10-billion speculation of litigation damages.)

The relative weight of regional focus is also representative. Ontario and British Columbia generate the greatest amount of media coverage of residential schools, followed by Alberta and Saskatchewan. Ontario coverage follows Ottawa’s response to the residential school issue (that is, the potential costs of lawsuits to the Federal government), and in British Columbia litigation is bound up with local political and legal issues: land claims, treaty negotiations, and the recent BC Supreme Court residential school rulings, for examples. I’ve found over the year that British

Columbia print media contain an exceptional amount of hostility, not only over the lawsuits but on the matter of ‘race relations’ also. This may be a result of that province’s high-profile and controversial experiences with aboriginal legal affairs.

The adversarial nature of legal confrontation, which in the media is presented as a crisis, has unfortunate potential. Are healing of residential school survivors and reconciliation of Aboriginal people and Canadians adequately considered by the media?

Has there been an adequate effort to put the lawsuits into a meaningful historical context?

## Conclusions

Healing and reconciliation are not prominent media concerns. A quarter of the articles published in February 2001 consider healing, three-quarters do not. Focus on litigation poses the church and state in a defensive position and shifts attention from the broader social upheavals brought about in Canada by the residential school system. Examinations of the history addressed by the lawsuits –of the residential school system itself– tend to have the opposite effect. There is no question that the prospect of church bankruptcy is a matter of concern to Canadians. But the interest of the churches is, by their own acknowledgement, healing and reconciliation. It is perhaps indicative of Canadian media bias that people who understand the residential school system –survivors, historians, and healing workers– are quoted far less often than are lawyers and government and church spokespersons. The Canadian media, in short, see the “residential school problem” as principally a financial problem

of the church and government, rather than as a problem of Aboriginal people and Canadians.

The residential school story is told, in many instances, as a tale of contemporary confrontation and crisis. Lawsuits, although significant, need to be placed into context. Consider: according to a study conducted by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, roughly 107,000 attendees of Indian residential schools were alive in 1991. Today about 7,000, or 7 percent of that number, are involved in a lawsuit. Even accounting for deaths in the past 10 years, the point remains that many survivors are marginalized by the focus on litigation. Theirs is another story.

Many today seek healing. When the lawsuits have been settled one way or another, and the crisis of the church is no longer a story, will there even be a residential school “issue” in the Canadian media?

*See next page for the full list of media articles...*

## Quantitative Summary

- Total number of English-language Canadian (i.e. non-aboriginal) print media residential school articles considered in this study: 36.
- Total number of pages of English-language Canadian print media clippings dealing with aboriginal people, for the month of February, 2001: 2,485.
- Total number of pages of English-language Canadian media clippings dealing with residential schools, for the month of February, 2001: 42.
- Percentage of media clippings pages dealing with residential schools in February, 2001: 1.71%
- Dominant topics: hunting/fishing rights, waste and fraud in aboriginal management of government funds, land claims, Corbiere decision, suicide/drug abuse.
- Number of articles concerning residential schools, by region where publication originates: Ontario (14), BC (10), Alberta (4), Saskatchewan (3), Nova Scotia (2), Manitoba (1), Yukon (1), PEI (1), Nunavut/NWT/New Brunswick/ Newfoundland (0).
- Focus of residential school-related articles considered in this study: lawsuits (64%), trauma experienced by/need for healing of survivors (25% – includes 2 articles on the CBC/APTN/Vision TV program), other (11% – survivor groups, workshops, letters to editor).
- Number of articles openly disclosing support for survivors of residential school: 13 (36%).
- Number of articles openly disclosing opposition to survivors of residential schools and/or lawsuits: 3 (8%).
- Greatest amount of coverage of residential schools in this sample, by number of articles published: *National Post* (4), *Times Colonist* (4), *Kamloops Daily News* (3), *Edmonton Journal*, *Chronicle Journal*, *Globe & Mail*, *Calgary Herald*, *Leader Post* (2).

## The articles

*Star Phoenix*. Saskatoon, SK. Feb 1. C-12. CP. "Feds float fund for Native suits: \$2-billion proposed to cover residential school cases." Litigation, church bankruptcy, and proposed government fund to help churches cover costs of litigation.

*National Post*. Toronto, ON. Feb 1. A4. Richard Foot and Justine Hunter. "Ottawa guessing at liability in abuse bailout: Churches. Plans to spend at least \$2B. Religious officials dispute figure since few claims tested." Church officials say federal plans to spend at least \$2-billion on residential school lawsuits are based on a faulty and speculative estimate of the country's liability for sexual and physical abuse in aboriginal schools.

*Toronto Star*. Toronto, ON. Feb 1. A7. Valerie Lawton. "Ottawa, churches in abuse-cash fight: At odds over share of \$2 billion in compensation." Government meeting with church representatives to discuss lawsuit liabilities.

*Edmonton Journal*. Edmonton, AB. Feb 1. A-6. Charles Rusnell. "No \$2B proposal for natives: Cost estimate for native residential lawsuits not official." Government dismisses report that it is proposing to spend \$2 billion to cover the cost of residential school lawsuits.

*Kamloops Daily News*. Kamloops, BC. Feb 1. A9. Anon. "Anglican diocese remains in limbo." Local head of Anglican diocese wonders if proposed \$2-billion government fund will help save the Cariboo diocese.

*The Chronical Journal*. Thunder Bay, ON. Feb 2. A-3. Kimberly Hicks. "Lawyer frustrated at delays: Federal minister hasn't responded to residential school lawsuit." Lawyer seeking to discuss lawsuits with Herb Gray.

*Kamloops Daily News*. Kamloops, BC. Feb 2. A4. Darshan Lindsay. "Native school plans reunion, healing time." Discusses residential school abuse, and a healing and reunion conference this summer for former students of the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

*Kamloops Daily News*. Kamloops, BC. Feb 2. A4. Robert Koopmans. "Federal fund could reduce court suits, church lawyer says." Discussion of government fund to help churches cover costs of lawsuits.

*The Simcoe Reformer*. Simcoe, ON. Feb 2. 18. CP. "Ottawa proposes \$2-billion fund." Coverage of *National Post* story, "Ottawa guessing at liability in abuse bailout: Churches: plans to spend at least \$2B. Religious officials dispute figure since few claims tested."

*Alaska Highway News*. Fort St. John, BC. Feb 2. A11. CP. "Feds may fork over \$2 billion to cover the cost of school lawsuits." Coverage of *National Post* story, "Ottawa guessing at liability in abuse bailout: Churches: plans to spend at least \$2B. Religious officials dispute figure since few claims tested."

*Globe & Mail*. Toronto, ON. Feb 3. A9. Peter Gzowski. "Residential schools: money alone is no answer." Money alone will not address damage; there needs to be rebuilding of languages and dealing in good faith with first nations.

*Journal Pioneer*. Summerside, PEI. Feb 3. A3. Anon. "David MacDonald guest panelist on TV shows about native residential schools." Former PEI MP, now special advisor to the United Church of Canada, participates in a two-part television panel discussion about the nation's residential schools February 4 and 11. Briefly discusses residential school history and current lawsuits.

*Times Colonist*. Victoria, BC. Feb 5. A7. R.H. Eldridge. "Abuse of Natives: The church must fight back." The facts supporting native claims of abuse are few and in most cases non-existent; churches must fight back; native claims along with the devious complicity of our

Liberal government must not be allowed to destroy our Christian heritage.

*Times Colonist*. Victoria, BC. Feb 5. A7. Kevin Ward. "Not cultural lawsuits." Most lawsuits are for physical and/or sexual abuse; there is no precedent in Canadian law for compensating cultural loss.

*National Post*. Toronto, ON. Feb 6. A4. Richard Foot. "Abuse suits may hit \$10B, lawyer says: Non-physical claims would inflate size of federal estimate." Article interviews lawyers for plaintiffs on the subject of culture and language lawsuits.

*Whitehorse Star*. Whitehorse, YK. Feb 6. Page 5. Stephanie Waddell. "Aboriginal group official praises regional gathering." Coverage of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation regional gathering in Whitehorse.

*Kingston Whig-Standard*. Kingston, ON. Feb 8. Page 27. Anon. "Special tells story of residential schools." Report on the CBC/APTN/Vision TV program *Moving Beyond Survival*. Mentions lawsuits for physical and sexual abuse and cultural loss.

*Chronicle Herald*. Halifax, NS. Feb 10. A4. Jackie Fitton. "United Church pays \$27,000 healing grant: money going to aboriginal survivors of abuse at ex-Shubenacadie school." Shubenacadie Residential School Survivors Association is given grant from church to deal with long-term effects of the residential schools.

*Winnipeg Free Press*. Winnipeg, MB. Feb 10. B2. "Shows advance native healing." Announcement of CBC/APTN/Vision TV program *Moving Beyond Survival*. Focuses on need for healing.

*Chronicle-Journal*. Thunder Bay, ON. Feb 10. A3. Kimberly Hicks. Announcement of CBC/APTN/Vision TV program *Moving Beyond Survival*. Focuses on need for healing and interviews local survivors. Quotation from Chief Mike Cachagee on the impact of residential schools.

*Times Colonist*. Victoria, BC. Feb 13. A7. Colin Brown. "Churches must take responsibility for abuse." Response to R.H. Eldridge letter supporting survivors and calling for church to accept financial responsibility for abuses.

*Prince George Citizen*. Prince George, BC. Feb 13. Page 4. John Williams. "Natives aren't the bad guy." Letter by a survivor of residential school about backlash against natives.

*The Temiskaming Speaker*. New Liskaard, ON. Feb 14. 2D. Walter Franczyk. "Native counsellor has been there." Article about the work of Shirley Roach, an addictions counsellor who grew up in a residential school.

*Globe and Mail*. Toronto, ON. Feb 21. A13. William Johnson. "Confronting aboriginal anguish." Article about Jean Chrétien's failure to deal with the fundamental issues which divide Canadian society and aboriginal peoples. Mentions residential school lawsuits.

*National Post*. Toronto, ON. Feb 21. A4. Richard Foot. "Ottawa must pay for cultural abuse of natives: Senator: 'Good of our society' depends on accepting non-physical claims, Douglas Roche says." Mentions Herb Gray task force and RCAP.

*London Free Press*. London, ON. Feb 21. A13. Mark Richardson. "Vision TV show can help begin healing." Concerns the CBC/APTN/Vision TV program *Moving Beyond Survival*. United Church member and columnist Mark Richardson argues that individuals, not church, should be held responsible for abuse. States that 7,000 former students seek compensation totalling \$15 billion. Blames United Church for indulging in guilt and states that the Vision TV program can help both natives and non-natives see each other as individuals.

## Healing, Reconciliation and the Media

*The Citizen*. Duncan, BC. Feb 21. Page 8. Innes Wight. "Am I one of these oppressive, guilty 'Whites?'" Response to aboriginal columnist Meaghan Walker-Williams. Accuses Walker-Williams of racism against whites and states that her comparison of residential schools to Nazi concentration camps is not credible. White people suffered abuse in residential schools, too. The people upset by her racism are taxpayers, and taxpayers want equality. "Natives do not come across to the taxpayer as oppressed ... but rather as 'spoiled children' who have found a trough, a trough full of endless, limitless funds..."

*Calgary Herald*. Calgary, AB. Feb 22. B7. Daryl Slade. "Judge speeds up aboriginal suit: Lawyers have 90 days to finalize questions." Discussion of Alberta lawsuit dates and proceedings.

*National Post*. Toronto, ON. Feb 24. A4. Rick Mofina. "Plan seeks end to residential school crisis: presentation to cabinet, church group fears being left in debt to Ottawa." Follow-up on the February 1 *National Post* article, "Ottawa guessing at liability in abuse bailout: Churches. Plans to spend at least \$2B. Religious officials dispute figure since few claims tested." Quotes letter from church to government urging the latter to prevent bankruptcy of church. Mentions \$350 million healing fund. Government settlements, the writer states, could "represent a potential payout of more than \$1 billion."

*Calgary Herald*. Calgary, AB. Feb 24. A12. Rick Mofina. "Church fears deal will leave huge debt: Cabinet poised to review proposed solution." Shortened version of above article (last 5 paragraphs dropped).

*Edmonton Journal*. Edmonton, AB. Feb 24. B3. Susan Hagan. "Natives seek closure on legacy of abuse." An article about Doug Horseman, who blames residential school for the alcoholism in his family. Discusses the effects of residential schools, the Residential School Conference held in Edmonton at the Shaw Conference Centre, and the need for healing.

*Leader Post*. Regina, SK. Feb 26. A1. Rick Mofina. "Church wary of school settlement." A syndication of the February 24 *National Post* article, "Plan seeks end to residential school crisis: presentation to cabinet, church group fears being left in debt to Ottawa."

*Leader Post*. Regina, SK. Feb 27. A7. CP. "Widespread sexual abuse charged." Report on 50 civil lawsuits, filed since 1997, alleging widespread sexual abuse of Innu children. Mentions Innu substance abuse and suicide which have received national media attention in recent months. Quotes Simeon Tshakapesh, Chief of the Innu band in Davis Inlet.

*Times Colonist*. Victoria, BC. Feb 27. A4. CP. "Lawsuits allege widespread abuse of Innu children in Labrador." Same article as above, but with the 8 paragraphs concerning Simeon Tshakapesh removed from the original.

*Truro Daily News*. Truro, NS. Feb 27. Page 5. CP. Same article as above two, with 6 paragraphs removed from original.

*Sault Star*. Sault Ste. Marie, ON. Feb 27. A4. Brian Kappler. "Churches still play important role but litigation threatens extinction." Follow-up on February 24 Rick Mofina article, "Plan seeks end to residential school crisis: presentation to cabinet, church group fears being left in debt to Ottawa." Southam columnist Brian Kappler defends the churches and argues for individual responsibility rather than generalized reparations for historical wrongs. •

## Stereotypes in the Media



For a dominant ideology which controls the means to communicate, to disseminate, to educate, it is easy to set the agenda, confer status, convey encoded messages—in other words, to privilege certain interpretations and thereby promote dominant interests.

This definition of prejudice gives us the clues to the fragility of its roots:

*“Prejudice: a feeling, unfavorable or favorable, toward a person or thing prior to, or not based on actual experience. Antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalisation, or based on unsubstantiated data.”*

Aboriginal peoples have long complained of media stereotyping. Historically, minorities were presented in a manner consistent with prevailing prejudices and attitudes. Images of minorities were steeped in unfounded generalizations—virtually to the point of near parody.

For example, media stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples dwelt on themes of “the noble savage,” the “savage Indian,” the “drunken Native,” and the “subservient squaw.” Other racial minorities were labelled as dropouts, pimps, and drug pushers, while still others were stigmatized as mathematical or scientific geniuses. Only rarely did minorities appear with something significant to say or do. Their lived experiences were reduced to the level of an “angle” or “jolt” for spicing up plot lines.

Minority characterization rarely led to critical views of prevailing myths of society, namely, (a) things will get better, (b) systemic racism is not a problem, (c) working within the system is the way to get ahead, and (d) whatever your colour, the American dream is within reach. Through stereotypes, minorities were put down, put in their place, or put up as props and adornments for audience gratification.

The film industry, as an important cultural institution, must shoulder its share of the blame for perpetuating stereotypes. According to Michael Parenti, the author of *Make Believe Media: Politics of Film and TV*, minorities were historically caricatured as heathen savages or as subordinates in devoted service to white masters (e.g., Tonto for the *Lone Ranger* and Cato for the *Green Hornet*). Minorities were obligated to know their place on the silver screen, a subservience often conveyed by deferential actions related to serving, smiling, or shuffling.

Progress toward eliminating mass media stereotyping is proceeding at glacial speed. Race-role images continue to be reinforced, perpetuated, and even legitimized through selective media coverage. Identifying a person by racial labels even when

irrelevant to the story (“race-tagging”) remains an occasional problem.

The net effect of this stereotyping is that minorities are slotted or labelled as unusual or negative, and this “foreignness” precludes their full acceptance as normal and fully contributing members of society. As well, stereotyping obviously conveys false information. The presence of a few highly visible entertainers or athletes in advertising is hardly typical of minority life experiences.

### Sometimes the only way to survive is to laugh

Herein lies a social function of stereotypes. In an industry geared to image and appeal, there is pressure to enforce the rule of homogeneity and conservatism through stereotyping. Images of consumer goods need to be sanitized and stripped of controversy or negative connotation for fear of lost audiences, hence revenue. Stereotypes “sanitize” perceptions of the world. Majority apprehension of minorities is rendered less threatening through exposure to familiar and reassuring images.

—Dr. Augie Fleras teaches in Toronto, and is co-author of *Breaking the Mould: Redefining the Representational Basis of Media Minority Relations in a Multicultural Canada*, a project using both primary and secondary data to look at 25 years of media minority images. Excerpted from *Please Adjust Your Set*, by Augie Fleras, in *Communications in Canadian Society*, 4th Edition, Nelson Canada, 1995.



#### Images on screen promote aboriginal cliches

Article published in the *Ottawa Citizen*, February 1997.

LETHBRIDGE, Alberta - The fighting warrior, sexual savage and mystical Indian are all stereotypes that undermine aboriginals searching for a positive self-image, says a native actor. And Gary Farmer lays the blame on TV and the movies. There’s rarely a dramatic movie made with aboriginals that doesn’t involve scenes of violence and alcohol, says Farmer.

As a result, people fear Indians because of the image of the “fighting warrior.” “To some extent,

fear is also the reason you don’t want to live next door to them,” he says.

Even a movie as apparently benign as *Peter Pan* fosters it. “We think of it as classic cinema we would like to share with a child.” But it has one of the most disturbing images of the Indian as a savage to be feared, says Farmer, co-star in the new movie *Dead Man*, which just won the Felix Award from the European Film Academy for best foreign film. “Consider the impression left on young aboriginal people when they see themselves portrayed this way time and again. It’s hard for them to have a positive image of themselves.”

“Poor self-image is one of the biggest problems facing native communities,” says Farmer. “We don’t need a lot of money to change the way people see things. We just need an opportunity to broadcast our own images.”

*Black Robe*, the successful Canadian film about a Jesuit missionary’s quest to save the Hurons’ souls, made it far worse, he says. “*Black Robe* perpetuated every negative stereotype about our people there ever was. But it was named best film of the year and the company received \$60 million from the Canadian government to go out and do more of the same.

*Black Robe* misses a key element. “The story of the newcomers’ interaction with the Mohawks is always told from the point of view of the Jesuits.” Nobody explains the Iroquois Confederacy’s five centuries of peace between the six nations. The truth is that by the time the Jesuits came, there were 50 chiefs who were required to agree before the confederacy could go to war, he says. “It had to be a unanimous decision, so it was very difficult to get.” But the Hurons saw the devastation from the alcohol brought by the newcomers. “It was seen as a decay that had to be rooted out,” says Farmer. “The Iroquois told the Hurons everyone not affected should leave and they would go in and clean the area out. “There’s never an understanding why that was done and so the story of a classic conflict between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples has never been told.”

Farmer says aboriginal people must control the images presented about them if they are to take control of their lives. “There’s no information in the media that pertains to aboriginal people. We’re bombarded by images that don’t reflect our reality.” When he realized how little influence actors have over the stories told in cinema, he decided he also had to become a producer. That carries its own set of troubles.

Farmer says the job of changing the picture of aboriginal people sometimes seems overwhelming. That’s when his people turn to toxic humor to help.

“Sometimes the only way to survive is to laugh.”•

# DEBUNKING MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES

*Drunken squaw*  
*Dirty indian*  
*Easy*  
*Lazy*

Every Canadian knows these common words to describe and identify Aboriginal women. Many Canadians are fooled by this construction of native womanhood.

The dirty easy squaw was invented long before poverty, abuse and oppression beset our people. She was invented and then reinforced because she proved useful by the coloniser. The “uncivilised” squaw justified taking over Indian land. She eased the conscience of those who wished to sexually abuse without consequences. She was handy to greedy consumers. Dirty and lazy, she excused those who removed her children and paved the way for assimilation into mainstream culture. She allowed for the righteous position of those who participated in the eradication of Native culture, language and tradition.

- Kim Anderson

“A Recognition of Being

–Reconstructing Native Womanhood.”

Negative myths and stereotypes are social constructions. A negative stereotype is an essential component in the dynamics of aggression. In all acts of aggression, whether in war, colonisation, genocide, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, harassment in the workplace, violence against women and children, etc...the pattern is the same: the aggressor always places its victims in a position of a non person, so that the aggression has its own justification. The foundation of aggression is dehumanisation and demonisation.

The Western view of the world is hierarchical: God, man, woman, children, animals, the inanimate creation. In this scheme, God and man are the “Persona grata” [wanted persons] “Persona non grata” [unwanted] occupy the other echelons, in diminishing order of importance. This lower order is also graded by colour, so that in the Persona non grata echelons, white woman is the highest. Below her are coloured man, coloured woman, coloured children.

This scheme also includes, in each echelon, an age factor.

In Canada, contrary the United States, Aboriginal People’s land was taken not by force but through-negotiated treaties. Treaties are formal covenants signed by equals. But colonisation is not a dynamics of equals, it is an act of aggression. In order to overstep the agreements of treaties, Aboriginal people had to be made Persona non grata, by the usual means: negative stereotypes. History books, school curricula, media, research, all carry to this day negative stereotypes, the vested interests of the early days of colonialism having increased, not diminished under the reign of capitalism.

*Stereotypes have an important function in the maintenance of racism. Between 1500 and 1800 A.D., the stereotype of Indians as savages served to justify the dispossession of Indian lands. The dispossession*

*and its legacy have created a powerful-powerless relationship between white and Native peoples. In order to maintain this power structure, new stereotypes of Native peoples have been created, as the need has arisen (Larocque, 1989, p.74).*

There is very little interest, in Canada, in the origin, nature, harmfulness or tenability of negative stereotypes and the obstacles they place on the path of real healing for Aboriginal people. The only positive change is that Aboriginal people now have the strength of spirit to debunk them.

...there is a definite dearth of interest in the proverbial invectives that have been hurled against the natives ever since Christopher Columbus and later explorers, settlers, and immigrants set foot on the American continent. As people look back at these slurs in the year when the world commemorates the quincentenary of Columbus’ discovery of America, it is becoming ever more obvious that the native population suffered terribly in the name of expansion and progress. Native Americans were deprived of their homeland, killed mercilessly or placed on reservations, where many continue their marginalized existence to the present day. The early concepts of the “good Indian” or “noble savage” quickly were replaced by reducing the native inhabitants to “wild savages” who were standing in the way of expansionism under the motto of “manifest destiny.”

-Wolfgang Mieder, *The only good Indian is a dead Indian: history and meaning of a proverbial stereotype.*



Negative myths and their offsprings –stereotypes, clichés, prejudices, and discrimination– extort a heavy toll on those they misrepresent. Aboriginal people have mostly paid with their self esteem. It is difficult to like oneself when the image mirrored back to you and to the rest of the world is demeaning. Myths about Aboriginal peoples are transmitted in cultural forms and practices. Cultural productions which replicate and reproduce these stereotypic images include educational material, research reports of all kinds, all forms of media, and other written texts.

When mainstream Canadians think of Aboriginal people, it is often in terms of stereotypes. In the industrialized Western society of the 20th century, myths and related types of tales continue to be told. Such stories often reinforce stereotypical attitudes about the moral superiority of the settlers to the native Indians.

To be dispelled, a myth must be challenged. The renewal and reconstruction of Aboriginal communities is a movement which is having profound impacts on all aspects of Aboriginal life. With the construction of a clearer, more solid identity comes the strength of spirit necessary to challenge and deconstruct the negative identity carried by myth and stereotypes. It is hoped that the growing number of informed Canadians will also grow and find the strength of spirit to help others challenge and dispel these stereotypes, and accelerate the process of healing and reconciliation.

## To be dispelled, a myth must be challenged.

*While the outline of myths from a past period or from a society other than one’s own can usually be seen quite clearly, to recognize the myths that are dominant in one’s own time and society is always difficult. This is hardly surprising, because a myth has its authority not by proving itself but by presenting itself. In this sense the authority of a myth indeed “goes without saying,” and the myth can be outlined in detail only when its authority is no longer unquestioned but has been rejected or overcome in some manner by another, more comprehensive myth.*

### From stereotypes to ideals

Aboriginal peoples within the “dominant” Euro-Canadian framework often emerge as portrayals of pejorative, historically inaccurate stereotypes, despite the diversity of traditions among the First Nations. Even though a great deal of literature has provided some substantive insights into the histories of Aboriginal peoples within this country, these histories continue to be presented less in relation to the Aboriginal’s world than to that of the non-Aboriginal, illuminated by references to indigenous culture. The paradigms on which Aboriginal communities are basing their social and cultural reconstruction are still at odds, in many cases, with Western world views.

Even though each Aboriginal community –each Aboriginal nation– is unique in many aspects, communities share a greater number still of common values and ideals. These values and ideals, as we have explored in previous issues of *Healing Words*, are a deep sense of the sacred connectedness with a Creator and its entire creation, a belief in the essential role of balance in all aspect of life, a belief in the value of healthy and loving human relationship as the true basis for prosperity, a belief in the inherent equality of all human beings, and a traditional trust in their capacity to grow towards maturity and wisdom, a deep respect for the spiritual legacy that Elders bring to a community.

*Show Respect to Others: Each Person Has a Special Gift.*  
*Share what you have: Giving Makes You Richer.*  
*Know Who You Are: You Are a Reflection on Your Family.*  
*Accept What Life Brings: You Cannot Control Many Things.*  
*Have Patience: Some Things Cannot Be Rushed.*  
*Live Carefully: What You Do Will Come Back to You.*  
*Take Care of Others: You Cannot Live without Them.*  
*Honour Your Elders: They Show You the Way in Life.*  
*Pray for Guidance: Many Things Are Not Known.*  
*See Connections: All Things Are Related.*

These values and beliefs, in turn, are the means by which healthy, sustainable social systems can be strengthened: justice, education, decision-making, health, environment.

The road back to healing is long and difficult, but without values and ideals, there would be no road. Let no one scorn such values and ideals as mere myths, If they are, they are very good ones. •

# The Drunken Indian

Roger Dennie

Sobriety.  
It's a far cry  
from being passed out  
in the midday sun  
on the side of Station Road  
in faraway, lonely Wawa  
with kids throwing stones at me.  
I joke about it now  
lying down meditating,  
As I call it.  
A white man I met once  
at an AA meeting in the west side of town  
told me it must be difficult for you  
staying sober he said  
when you're on welfare.  
He thought he was being kind.  
I didn't tell him that I had  
been working at the steel plant  
for the last ten years.  
I didn't prick a hole  
in the old drunken Indian cliché  
and let the air out of his prejudice  
But i should have.  
The white man.  
what makes him think  
he is so superior?  
he is the one  
who gave us the booze  
in the first place.  
Besides,  
what was this white man  
doing at an AA meeting  
anyway?

## From myth to marginalisation

No other words could resume better than Roger Dennie the content of this article. A negative myth is a formless, deeply rooted belief from which are fashioned a host of other creations. For example, from the myth of Aboriginal drunkenness has emerged a stereotyped creation, dressed up in the rags of prejudice: untrustworthiness, unreliability, criminality and weak-mindedness. The "unredeemable" Aboriginal, a good candidate for marginalisation. And although the journey from Myth to Marginalisation is often a journey from the past to the present, from the subconscious to the conscious, marginalisation is very much a 21st century social activity, no longer acceptable or tenable.

*The perceptions of native people that most Canadians have are defined and limited largely by the second-hand images they see in the media and by the first-hand encounters they have on the street. Given these limited and superficial sources of information, it's not surprising that the stereotype of "the drunken Indian" looms so large in the warped perception that many Canadians have of native people. Although this stereotype is not fully shared by all Canadians, it is nevertheless deeply rooted in the*

*Canadian psyche. In fact, it is as firmly rooted in Canadian belief as the fairy tale that Europeans settled this land peacefully and without bloodshed.*

-Brian Maracle, *Crazywater*.

On the subject of Aboriginal alcohol abuse, research has been the vast reservoir of data, statistics feeding much public debate and generating a vast array of programs of all sorts, all directed to the eradication of "Aboriginal addictions problems."

The myths about Aboriginal alcohol consumption have had subtle and not so subtle influences on research.

- The ingrained assumption that alcohol abuse is universally rampant in aboriginal communities led research to focus an inordinate amount of attention on Aboriginal communities, directed to "curing" the problem, rather than looking into the root of it.
- Failure to address the root of Aboriginal Alcohol consumption and recognising that Alcohol abuse is a secondary cause of problems in Aboriginal communities has led to failed remedies, which in turn fed the stereotype of the "unredeemable" Aboriginal alcoholic.

## Myth:

In Canada we know all there is to know about Aboriginal Alcohol consumption.

## Fact:

Despite extensive studies, little is really known about the subject.

*In an effort to address the conditions that give rise to substance abuse, government subjects Aboriginal people to a never-ending barrage of epidemiological studies and social surveys. Yet an explanation of the under-lying causes of substance abuse among First Nations people eludes us still. Clearly, this fundamental gap in knowledge about a high-risk population prevents the development of strong and effective substance abuse programs. Substance abuse is only a symptom of deeper individual and community problems.*

-Aboriginal Substance use: Research issues Proceedings of a joint Research Advisory Meeting CCSA & NNADAP.

## Myth:

Canada has in-depth and long-standing expertise in research and research analysis regarding Aboriginal Alcohol consumption.

## Fact:

The relevance of scientific approaches that examine cause and effect to Native problems are questionable.

*There are also many methodological weaknesses in current (research) efforts. For example, where survey research is available, few studies discuss the construct validity and reliability of their instruments. In addition, because some communities have been grossly over-studied, data collection is tainted with apathy or majority non-participation. Holistic versus reductionist principles and the inconsequence of numbers and written words makes western scientific methods uncomfortably foreign in Indigenous communities. Significantly greater value is placed on the subjective in Indigenous science and other cultural barriers complicate communications, data collection and interpretation. The more narrowly defined research population of Indigenous people lacks a satisfactory addictions database with which to assess the representativeness of a sample; as a result, mainstream Canadian groups often serve as a comparison group despite non-comparability on several demographic variables.*

-Aboriginal Substance use: Research issues Proceedings of a joint Research Advisory Meeting CCSA.

## Myth:

The methods used to research Aboriginal alcohol consumption are sound and culturally appropriate.

## Fact:

When it comes to research into Aboriginal Alcohol consumption, or any other Aboriginal social "problem," methodologies contain flaws. These include:

- Combining data from different communities means very different groups and milieus are being aggregated;
- Studying smaller, more homogeneous communities means that small numbers of cases exert a large effect on reported results which may be of no statistical significance or of limited generalizability;
- The definition of who is an Aboriginal person is often a problem due to people living on or off reservation, mixed parentage, style of living, self-identification, etc.;
- Census data may be biased by problems of ethnic identification and sampling which in will alter population prevalence rates;



- Aboriginal people in some settlements may be much more closely studied or scrutinized than neighbouring rural communities, leading to a more complete reporting of cases (e.g. of suicide) and hence, the impression of a higher prevalence of problems where none exists;
- Studies do not take into account ongoing culture change;
- In small communities there may be a significant problem of reactivity in research: that is, the researcher may have substantial impact on the community which both threatens the validity of findings and introduces new factors into the system.

-Laurence J. Kirmayer, MD, FRCPC, *Emerging Trends in Research on Mental Health Among Canadian Aboriginal Peoples*.

**Myth:**

All research findings point unanimously to the fact that Alcohol abuse is rampant in Aboriginal communities.

**Fact:**

There is no coherent approach to researching the problem, and no cohesive data on a national scale. The evidence put forward by researchers in the field is often contradictory.

*Community-based health data are collected primarily by the federal government (e.g. MSB, HWC), whose collection methods and research priorities vary considerably across regions and differ from provincial systems. This circumstance makes normative data about the use and abuse of alcohol by Indigenous people unavailable on a national basis.*

Have alcohol and substance abuse problems become more prevalent or less prevalent? Has the nature of the problems changed? Is there any relation between prevalence and degree of community organisation and political action?

No one seems to know the answer to these questions, because there were no methodologically sound surveys available then to compare with more recent surveys, which are still not being conducted.

**Myth:**

Alcohol abuse is one the primary root cause of social problems in Aboriginal communities

**Fact:**

There is real debate in health care circles, not only in First Nation's communities, whether alcohol, drugs, and other substance abuse is a primary problem by itself, or whether substance abuse is merely a manifestation of other more deeply rooted problems. Put simply, there are real debates over whether substance abuse is a cause or an effect.

Research on Aboriginal Alcohol consumption and

the resulting intervention programs are designed primarily by non-Aboriginals. For this and other reasons, the historical legacy of colonisation and assimilation is not necessarily seen as the root problem. For most Aboriginal people, and some researchers, alcohol abuse is a secondary cause of individual and community dysfunction.

*Survivor Syndrome Theory*

Researchers Beane, Hammerschlag, and Lewis (1980) define the active pathology in the Native culture as survivor syndrome. They postulate that attempts by Christian settlers to subdue the "savage" prompted 100 years of enforced dependency on Federal policy; the constant erosion of sacred culture, dislocation from homelands, controlled poverty, and humiliation have resulted in survivor syndrome.



Aboriginal people are the first to recognise that various forms of addiction, including alcohol, remain a serious problem at the community level, and they are taking measures to change. But the picture painted by the many research reports and statistics, so often accepted at face value, is far from accurate and has shed very little light on the root, the nature, and extent of alcohol consumption in Aboriginal communities.

**Myth:**

Drinking among natives is higher than drinking among the general population.

**Fact:**

Research indicates that the prevalence of native drinking is approximately the same in non-native groups, and lower in some of the group categories used for Canadian statistical purposes.

*Survey data from a number of sources indicate that alcohol consumption rates among Aboriginal people are in fact lower in some measurement categories than among non-Aboriginal people. The primary source of national data is the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS). The picture it presents is based on self-reports, and as such must be regarded with some caution, though it is regarded as reasonably reliable by experts in the field.*

**Myth:**

All aboriginal people have a problem with alcohol addiction.

**Fact:**

Not only do many individual Aboriginal people and families not drink at all, but entire communities throughout Canada are dry or almost dry. The well-known story of Alkali Lake is by no means unique. Also, many communities, in particular Northern communities have had since the 70s a strict system of alcohol restriction and control in their community, put in place and implemented by the communities themselves.

"No discussion of community-based programming would be complete without highlighting Alkali Lake, British Columbia, where almost 100 per cent alcoholism was turned around to 95 per cent sobriety. With bootlegging eliminated, a voucher system for social aid benefits and a job reward for alcoholism treatment completion, the efforts of a determined chief and council transformed a despairing situation to one of industry and hope. In Ontario, isolated communities have shown short-term benefits from prohibition (56). Although it is not known how many communities in Canada maintain prohibitive alcohol bylaws."

-Volume 3, *Gathering Strength*.

**Myth:**

Aboriginal people with an alcohol problem live in a constant state of stupor.

**Fact:**

The APS found that a lower proportion of Aboriginal people than Canadians drink daily or weekly. Although alcohol and drug abuse is a problem in most Native communities, it is a different problem from alcohol and drug abuse in the general population. The Yukon survey found that abstinence is about twice as common among Aboriginal people as among other Canadians. It also found that, of those who do report drinking, more Aboriginal people are heavy drinkers, both in the frequent ('regular') and infrequent ('binge') patterns. This means that the pattern of drinking is different, with mainstream Canadians drinking more regularly on a moderate to heavy basis, depending on socio-economic factors.

**Myth:**

It's in their genes. Aboriginal have always been drinking.

**Fact:**

The fabrication and use of alcohol was not part of the social fabric in traditional Aboriginal cultures. Alcohol was introduced to Aboriginal people in the course of trade and social interaction with European explorers, fur traders and merchants. It was deliberately and routinely used a means to induce a state of inebriated pliancy in Aboriginal people selling their goods, so that



they could be manipulated. The effects were somewhat similar to those of introducing smallpox and other infectious diseases: Aboriginal people had no “immunity” to alcohol, in the sense that social norms and personal experience can “protect” against over-consumption.

Not only alcohol was deliberately used as a powerful tool of colonisation and assimilation. The fabrication and perpetuation of the Drunken Indian stereotype was, and is, a ludicrous fact given the western colonisers own relationship with alcohol, dating back thousands of years.

*In 1823, “Gentlemen in Canada appear to be much addicted to drinking. Card-playing, and horse-racing are their principal amusements. In the country parts of the province [Ontario], they are in the habit of assembling in parties at the taverns, where they gamble pretty highly, and drink very immoderately, seldom returning home without being completely intoxicated. They are very partial to Jamaica spirits, brandy, shrub, and Peppermint; and do not often use wine or punch. Grog, [watered down rum] and the unadulterated aqua vitae, are their common drink; and of these they freely partake at all hours of the day and night.”*

-A social history of drinking in Canada  
[www.canadafirst.net/our\\_heritage/drink](http://www.canadafirst.net/our_heritage/drink)



**Myth:**

Aboriginal people always have problems and they just turn to alcohol to cope.

**Fact:**

People cope with life difficulties in different ways. The ways Aboriginal people cope are not very different those of Canadians. Most Canadians, for example, say stress plays a dominant role in their daily lives. A recent Decima Research study showed that only 26% of Canadians feel that they know how to handle their stress well. The study indicates that people often cope with the stress by engaging in harmful lifestyle habits. About 75% of the respondents say their coping mechanisms include eating fatty comfort foods, watching TV, smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol. Statistics Canada estimates that the annual cost of work time lost to stress is \$12 billion per year.

“First Nations communities have a lower health status than other communities, and there’s a lot of history and social deprivation that would lead to abuse, but in terms of absolute numbers, their population is no better or worse than the general population.

“It’s stereotyping,” says Dr. Hodes, Health Canada’s assistant regional director for Alberta’s community health programs.

**Myth:**

Aboriginal people are not doing anything to help themselves with their alcohol problem.

**Fact:**

Beside the sobriety movement and the drive towards dry communities mentioned above, Aboriginal people everywhere are advancing on the path of healing and social reconstruction. They have recognised the root and nature of their addiction, are well aware of the need to rebuild healthy communities, and are turning to their own traditions and spiritual legacy to do so.

The following principles are examples of the kind of blueprints Aboriginal communities have developed and are implementing to fight addictions and rebuild healthier and more balanced communities.

**Alcohol abuse is a social problem. It is a problem that affects both mainstream and Aboriginal Canadian societies. But it affects them differently and for very different reasons.**

DETERMINANTS OF WELL-BEING & HEALTH

**BASIC PHYSICAL NEEDS** – adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, pure drinking water, sanitary waste disposal and access to medical services.

**SPIRITUALITY AND A SENSE OF PURPOSE** – connection to the Creator and a clear sense of purpose and direction in individual, family, and community life, as well as in the collective life of the nation.

**LIFE-SUSTAINING VALUES, MORALS, AND ETHICS** – guiding principles and a code of conduct that informs choices in all aspects of life so that at the level of individuals, families, institutions, and whole communities, people know which pathways lead to human well-being, and which to misery, harm and death.

**SAFETY AND SECURITY** – freedom from fear, intimidation, threats, violence, criminal victimisation, and all forms of abuse both within families and homes and in all other aspects of the collective life of the people.

**ADEQUATE INCOME AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES** – access to the resources needed to sustain life at a level that permits the continued development of human well-being, as well as processes of economic engagement that are capable of producing sustainable prosperity.

**ADEQUATE POWER** – a reasonable level of control and voice in shaping one’s life and environment through processes of meaningful partici-

pation in the political, social, and economic life of one’s community and nation.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY** – a fair and equitable distribution of opportunities for all, as well as sustainable mechanisms and processes for re-balancing inequities, injustices, and injuries that have occurred or are occurring.

**CULTURAL INTEGRITY AND IDENTITY** – pride in heritage and traditions, access to and utilisation of the wisdom and knowledge of the past, and a healthy identification with the living processes of one’s own culture as a distinct and viable way of life for individuals, families, institutions, communities, and nations.

**COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT** – to live within a unified community that has a strong sense of its common oneness and within which each person receives the love, caring, and support they need from others.

**STRONG FAMILIES AND HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT** – families that are spiritually centered, loving, unified, free from addictions and abuse, and which provide a strong focus on supporting the developmental needs of children from the time of conception through the early years and all the way through the time of childhood and youth.

**HEALTHY ECO-SYSTEM AND A SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN BEINGS AND THE NATURAL WORLD** – the natural world is held precious and honoured as sacred by the people. It is understood that human beings live within nature as fish live within water. The air we breath, the water we drink, the earth that grows our food and the creatures we dwell among and depend on for our very lives are kept free from poisons, disease, and all other dangers. Economic prosperity is never sought after the expense of environmental destruction. Rather, human beings work hand-in-hand with nature to protect, preserve, and nurture the gifts the Creator has given.

**CRITICAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES** – consistent and systematic opportunities for continuous learning and improvement in all aspects of life, especially those connected to key personal, social, and economic challenges communities are facing, and those which will enhance participation in civil society.

**ADEQUATE HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SAFETY NET** – programs and processes to promote, support, and enhance human healing and social development, as well as to protect and enable the most vulnerable to lead lives of dignity and to achieve adequate levels of well-being.

**MEANINGFUL WORK AND SERVICE TO OTHERS** – Opportunities for all to contribute meaningfully to the well-being and progress of their families, communities, nations, as well as to the global human family.

Four World International Institute  
<http://home.uleth.ca/~4worlds/4w/visionsanddeterm nants/fuldeter.htm>





## Is there an After-myth?

Debunking a myth leaves a gap where certainty existed before. What now? What can I believe now? Debunking myths is about changing long-held perceptions. This is not easy. In the matter of cultural myths and stereotypes, this is even more difficult, because it involves having to look at oneself, one's attitude, one's behaviour and admitting that they were not, after all, perfect.

In the light of this article about Aboriginal drinking, what are the After-myths?

First, an affirmation: yes, alcohol abuse is a social problem. It is a problem that affects both mainstream and Aboriginal societies. But it affects them differently and for very different reasons. In the matter of alcohol abuse there is simply no valid or useful ground for comparability between mainstream and Aboriginal societies. I would add that there is no real useful ground for a national portrait either. It perpetuates a false image of Aboriginal communities in the eyes of mainstream Canadians and has a discouraging effect on Aboriginal communities.

The current portrait of alcohol abuse in Aboriginal society etched by Canadian official research (government, national health organisations) is not accurate or reliable for several important reasons. Two of them are offered here:

### Cartesian versus Holistic

Most research on the subject is statistical. Based on a Cartesian model, its aim is to look closely at the parts and provide statistics, from which a global portrait is drawn, conclusions made, trends forecasted, recommendations presented and programs developed. The subject of "Aboriginal alcohol abuse" has fed a whole mainstream Canadian "helping" industry.

Statistical research on the subject of alcohol abuse, as a glance at any research report will show, is more concerned with the who, the what, the how much, the how often and the where (sometimes the how) than the why. The why is drawn later, from the analysis, at the stage of global portrait development.

There is a major difference in the way Aboriginal view health and balance at an individual and collective level. Aboriginal societies' views of the world are not Cartesian, they are Holistic. In this model, the why of alcohol abuse is not an after-thought; it is the key to the answers that will drive the dynamics of recommendations and effective, integrated and holistic program development.

The root of alcohol abuse in Aboriginal communities is historically and culturally specific and cannot be compared, except on a superficial basis, with Canadian alcohol abuse.

### Assimilation of non-comparable data

Every single Aboriginal community throughout Canada is different from the others. However, to provide the necessary homogeneous statistics for national research on alcohol abuse, statistics are collected and collated in two ways: 1. by categories (i.e. gender, age, social and economic status, geography etc.) which reflect the structure and realities of mainstream Canadian society, certainly not

Aboriginal societies. Statistical research, nevertheless, continues to assimilate Aboriginal societies into mainstream categories.

This leads to unfair and inaccurate results. For example, drinking habits of unemployed Canadians and Aboriginals are compared although the realities of both are not comparable. Another example relates to comparative statistics for the same geographical (provincial) area, where the economic situation of mainstream Canadians will be enormously different from Aboriginals on their reserves.

2. by communities, through governmental department programs and partner organisations. This data, reflecting at source some of the uniqueness and complexity of every community, is then centrally collected for analysis on a national scale.

## Alcoholism as an illness is a purely ideological slogan.

This process of categorisation and amalgamation of data gives birth to regional and national research findings and statistics which have lost their accuracy and reliability.

National statistics depicting alcohol abuse in Aboriginal communities are simplistic and have no real usefulness. As Alkali Lake and countless other communities have shown, alcohol abuse is far from being the universal phenomenon asserted in current statistics. They have also shown that Aboriginal peoples themselves are the ones best able to develop healing strategies, simply because they know themselves and the specific realities of their community best.

### A different picture

Official research does show some commonalities, but also major differences in Canadians and Aboriginal people's drinking habits and level of alcohol abuse. Self-reports by Aboriginal communities show data that run, in many instances, counter to official surveys statistics and findings. The following stand out:

- The geographical repartition of alcohol abuse is different than stated in official findings
- The consumption patterns are different from mainstream Canadians but consumption itself is similar
- The root of the problems is different from that of Canadians
- The ways Aboriginal people view alcohol abuse is different
- The methods and preferences for Recovery and Healing are different

### The Aboriginal holistic and integrated approach to alcohol abuse

*"Alcoholism as an illness is a purely ideological slogan."*

-H. Fingarette, *Heavy drinking: the Myth of Alcoholism as a disease.*

Although a critical analysis of the dominant ideology (which affirms that alcohol abuse is an illness, a physiological phenomenon which must be treated through an efficient medicalisation system) is

beyond the scope of this article, one thing remains it is an ideology only, whose efficacy is highly questionable. Its most important tenets are: alcohol is a physiological phenomenon, alcoholics are powerless in the face of their addiction and abstinence is the only course of action.

"The concept of alcoholism as an illness supposes that the individual is deprived of any will, when it is precisely because he has been disempowered in relation to his life that he has turned to alcohol."

-Amnon J. Soussa, *Pourquoi l'alcool n'est pas une maladie (why alcoholism is not an illness).*

It is important to underline that recent research, despite the hostile reactions of the dominant ideology, highly supports the holistic, integrated approach of Aboriginal communities in regard to alcohol abuse. The lists below illustrate the important differences between the two approaches:

### Alcoholism as an illness approach

- You are forced to admit you are dependant.
- The therapist or the group is the expert on your illness.
- You must be made to confront your obvious dependency.
- Only negative information is admissible.
- You must admit that you are powerless and out of control.
- The diagnostic is that the illness is with you for the rest of your life.
- You must wear the label of sickness and dependency for the rest of your life.

### Holistic approach to alcoholism

- You can consider your problem as being on a scale between severe and minor.
- You must make your own decision regarding your problem.
- You become conscious of the impact of a variety of choices.
- You control and evaluate your habits as your life evolves.
- You can leave dependency behind.

-S. Peele, *The truth about Addiction and Recovery.*

### In conclusion

Statistics do not show the immense odds Aboriginal people have and are struggling against in their movement towards sobriety. It is time to celebrate all those who won their sobriety and are now helping others, all those who are new on the path, and all those who will make the choice one day.

We hope this article will encourage a process of reflexion, of discussion, and that it will bring new ideas and perspectives on the development of your own community research, healing and education activities. Above all we hope that you will gain new pride and courage: Yes, there is a problem; yes, it can and is being solved, and yes, the image in the mirror is good, very good –because we got rid of some of the myths that disfigured us. •

# p o e m s



## *These Ivory Towers*

BY ELIZABETH ESQUEGA

In a bureaucratic jumbled heap,  
lies buried beneath the walls, so deep,  
majestic papers, scribed and scrawled,  
of entire Nations bullied and falled  
into their dungeons of oppression amass.  
Why? Oh! Why? How could this last?

Their crimes appear plenty judged tried and true,  
for what harm did these Nations unto you.  
Thier walls of misery, still below the halls,  
These Ivory Towers hear still their calls.

As greed and power looms overhead,  
These Ivory Towers remain in their stead.  
Men garbed in robes, stand triumphantly staged,  
Yet Nations though many stay captively caged,

Memories hold secrets, known only to a few,  
Where Nations arise in numbers they grew.  
Legends are whispered in swirls of smoke,  
The drum beats steady, the shackles are broke.

Nations are gathered throughout the land  
to claim their victory, together they stand.  
These Ivory Towers crumble and wait  
for Nations to regain their own fate.

Centuries have passed, it's time to take hold,  
the future is now, our Elders have told.  
These Ivory Towers that shone so white  
no longer can do what is not right.

The Grandfathers say no tears shall be shed,  
For despair is over where many have bled.  
These Ivory Towers will scribe once more  
an end to the ravages of a stately war,  
And bury beneath the walls and the ground  
the paers that held these Nations bound.

These Ivory Towers that stood so tall  
Will know what it's like to stumble and fall,  
as judgements are rendered to be fair,  
First Nations are ever so aware  
that pride in victory is bittersweet,  
when another falls at your feet.

These Ivory Towers continue to be  
where Nations rebuild their destiny.  
Let's bury the shame of this place,  
and return it to a State of Grace,  
These Ivory Towers.



## Beauval Indian Residential School 1944-1954

BY RALPH PAUL

Because I was considered to be an INDIAN under the Indian Act, at age six I was sentenced to 10 years of assimilation and acculturation at BIRS –the Beauval Indian Residential School. Prior to my being indoctrinated to the whiteman’s culture, I was a happy, contented, care-free Dene child. For the first six years of my life I knew no words in English. I was afraid of the whiteman. I was naughty, vibrant, and possibly (in today’s terminology) a child that had ADHD, because of my excess energy and liveliness. I was often told by my parents at that time that if I did not behave, the white man would come and take me away. I did not listen. The white man *did* come and get me. Thus began my 10-year sentence to BIRS.

The loneliness set in when I had to return to BIRS every 15th of August. I cried and felt very depressed. But my parents could do nothing about it. I reluctantly returned to BIRS every year. The loneliness lasted about 2 or 3 weeks, and I adjusted back to BIRS existence. I had to keep on living in another world from the previous world that I knew. This is where I was introduced to a world of RULES, REGULATION, and RELIGION. Those were the 3 Rs that were now my way of life.

The ten years that I spent at BIRS turned me, a Dene, into a caricature of their lives. The regimentation was closely associated with their religious life. We had no freedom. We were not allowed to think or to reason for ourselves. It was a military type of existence.

The religious personnel of BIRS –Oblate priests and brothers, and the sisters of the Grey Nuns of Montreal – were our rulers and masters. These French people taught us to think, to speak, and to try and be English. They were very strict, unloving, and impersonal human beings. They tried to make us clones of themselves. For example, these nuns and priests and lay brothers had taken vows when they became members of their respective religious organisations. They expected us to follow these vows also:

The vow of *Obedience*...

They expected us to obey unquestioningly every command they issued. Ours was not to question why. We had to do what we were told, whether we liked it or not. The consequences for disobedience were scolding, yelling, slapping, strapping, hitting, spanking, kneeling in corners, or being sent to bed early. Many times they used peer pressure. I can assure you I endured all the above at one time or another.

The vow of *Poverty*...

This vow was taken on the premise that they would not be responsible for material things. They were too heavenly to be human. Their only concern was to do God’s will –whatever that means– and to follow the Gospel teaching “to give everything to the poor and follow Him.” Poor as we already were, we stuck to this rule as students of BIRS. The nuns and priests dressed in their peculiar “Habits,” each identical to the rest. We children were dressed in the same way. We were given the same haircut: for the boys, over the ears, and the for the girls, Dutch-type hairdos. We were taught to practice humility, another biblical reference. They taught us that earthly, material things were useless and even sinful. Money was the root of all evil on this Earth. As a result, I never knew how to budget, spend money wisely, or save for a rainy day. I have never respected money, even to this day. Our meals were very unappetising and repetitious. Stew (ough).

The vow of *Chastity*...

They taught us that sex was dirty and sinful, and also that it was against the sixth and ninth commandments. It was a mortal sin even to entertain in our minds anything associated with sex. At BIRS we were kept separated from

the girls. We could hardly ever even communicate with our own sisters and cousins. If a boy was caught communicating with a girl, or if he had a crush, he was publicly ridiculed and made to feel shame. They made us ashamed of our own sexuality. I didn’t know where babies came from until I was about 18 years old.

The ten years that I spent at BIRS turned me, a Dene, into a caricature of their lives. The regimentation was closely associated with their religious life. It was a military type of existence. We had no freedom. We were not allowed to think or to reason for ourselves. If we questioned their directives, we risked being scolded, ridiculed, or punished. We were fenced into our playground, as if in a concentration camp, and if we went inadvertently beyond the fenced area to retrieve a ball, we were punished. If we talked back, we were punished. We lined up for everything. We were summoned by a whistle, like dogs. If we were late, we were punished. The school learning we endured in those years was by rote and memorisation. It was as if we were parrots. The boys had to learn the Latin Mass responses. If we did not properly recite these responses, we were punished. We had to confess our sins every week. We were lined up for the confessional, to tell our sins to the priests and to ask for forgiveness. Many times I made up sins, because we were told that we were prone to commit seven sins daily. An example was, “Father, I had bad thoughts.” I did not know what these bad thoughts were supposed to be. Then, for punishment, we were told (again) to say “ten Hail Marys.” Or, if we had put something into our confession that was thought to be terrible, we had to say the whole rosary. Their teachings were based on fear rather than on the comfort that religion was supposed to convey to its adherents. Today, because of these experiences, I have rejected the Catholic teachings and religion in general. ▶



I learned to hide my feelings. I never talked about my hurts to anyone. I cry as I write this out. I hardened myself emotionally. I could never express love to anyone. I could never say “I love you” to my wife with complete comfort. I was never taught love in this institution. I could never touch or hug any member of the opposite sex because, as a result of my years at Beauval Indian Residential School, I was afraid, scared, and ashamed.

I recall one incident when I was 7 as if it had occurred yesterday. I had been crying and lying on the floor, expecting to be comforted as my parents used to do. Suddenly, I was picked up roughly by the Brother in charge at the time, who started to spank me on the bum. I remember his words: “If you want to cry, well, here’s a reason to cry.” Spank, spank, spank. I expected to be comforted, but all I got was punishment. Right there and then, I decided to hide my feelings. I started to be very impersonal, unloving, and uncaring, like they were. So much for building up my self-esteem and humanity.

*My first marriage was a failure. I was very abusive to my wife every time I got inebriated. I never picked up this type of behaviour at home with my parents, because I grew up in BIRS. BIRS is where I picked up this negativity. Nothing I did there was good enough. I learned abuse at BIRS, not love.*

Yes, I experienced abuses, except sexual abuse. I can’t recall the number of times that I was punished for one thing or another. I was physically abused countless times, partly because of my personality. I can relate many stories on this type of abuse. In regard to cultural abuse, we were taught that the whiteman was better than we were. When we watched the old western movies, we all wanted to be the cowboys rather than the savage Indians. These “Indians” murdered innocent settlers. I did not know, then, that the settlers stole Indian land. We were exposed by these films to the idea that the whiteman was the good guy and the Indian the bad guy. When John Wayne shot 5 Indians with one shot, we cheered. That’s the type of cultural learning we experienced. When our parents came to visit us at school, they were billeted in an old barn, down hill away from the school. When white people came to the school, they were given rooms at the school and accorded royal treatment by the nuns and priests. This was one way of showing us who was the better of the two groups. Our parents were second-best.

Emotionally, we were abused in many forms. For me, the worst was alienation from my parents, sister, and brothers. I never completely bonded with my parents or siblings. I thought that my parents didn’t care for me because they kept sending me back to BIRS. Only later did I learn that my parents had been threatened

with negative consequences, by the Indian Agent, if they kept me home. I never learned anything about my family or home life. It really affected my personal life later on in ways which I could not understand then. My first marriage was a failure. I was very abusive to my wife every time I got inebriated. I never picked up this type of behaviour at home with my parents, because I grew up in BIRS. BIRS is where I picked up this negativity. Nothing I did there was good enough. I learned abuse at BIRS, not love.



There were good times. I made many friends that are out there today. We all share a special bond. We were together 10 months of every year. Of the 120 months between 1944 and 1954, I was at home 20. 100 months I was at BIRS. So I spent more time with the students than I did at home. I loved going out to the bridges –to first and second portage, as we used to say– to play to our hearts’ content. I did not mind the baloney sandwich we were given. It was like steak to us, in the bush by a campfire. I enjoyed snaring rabbits at 10 cents each. We played hockey. We became an excellent team. Today, I see big men hugging each other when they score a goal. In our time, when we scored we did not display any emotional outburst, but continued as usual. That is what we were told to do, score a goal and try for another. No display of emotion whatsoever.

These are some of my thoughts of my time at Beauval Indian Residential School. •



Above: Beauval Indian Education Centre, 1927-1995.

## p o e m s

### *Shingwauk Tide*

BY THERESA TURMEL

Rest, oh rest o’ wicked one  
For I know best  
As we reach the crest  
Of Change

Lay not the blame  
On the ones who sleep,  
But focus on the generations  
Who continue to weep.

We can make a difference  
Yes, you and I,  
For we are the instruments  
Of the Shingwauk tide.

We gather as Family they say,  
To laugh and remember, to cry and pray,  
To heal our own way,  
Our Own Way

Because dear brother or sister  
There’s one thing that I know is true  
Is that the only one I can truly count on,  
Really count on – is you.

### *Biography*

Theresa was born in Toronto but moved to Hawk Junction, Ontario when she was eighteen. In 1988 she moved to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario where she was asked to be the volunteer registrar with the 1991 Shingwauk Reunion. At the time she didn’t know very much about the Residential Schools but in the ten years with the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association has become somewhat an expert. In 1998 she completed her Master of Public Administrator, and in 1999 she was hired as the Office Administrator/Healing Coordinator to carry out the objectives of the Alumni and host the various gatherings (Reunions), and Healing Circles, and meetings. Theresa loves her work and is very committed to the healing process and the many Alumni she has met and has come to love. •

*Healing Words* is available by mail and from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation website: [www.ahf.ca](http://www.ahf.ca)

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## featured project

The vision for our community is to improve the quality of life for our members by providing wholistic healing processes that support the unique needs of individuals and families.

Wholistic healing and well-being supports the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being of the people

Community well-being supports the social, cultural, political, resource-based and educational needs of the community

The main objectives of this project are to conduct an in-depth community needs assessment; research and document the stories and history of residential school survivors and intergenerational family members; research and document the history, traditions, culture, ceremonies of the Lower Similkameen Nation; develop various community groups; undertake healing work that is reflective of traditional healing practices and /or contemporary healing practices; partake, develop and deliver education, training and workshops to the community.

The Similkameen Unity – Creating Wellness project is guided and supported by the following principles:

- A strength approach draws on the strength of the people and the community and opens the door to community empowerment.
- Allows survivors and intergenerational family members to have voice and tell their stories in a safe and confidential environment.
- Incorporate traditions and culture of our people.
- Utilise the talking/healing circle.
- Educate and provide awareness to second generation and multi generations regarding residential schools.
- Respect is a key value and principle.
- Takes into account the seventh generation of children to come.
- The answer comes from within.
- Individual rights and choices: people have their own rights and choices.
- Key values: Building trust, creating safety and confidentiality, having honesty and truth, maintaining our sense of humour.
- The project must support the wholistic well-being of the members of the community.
- The project must support capacity building, empowerment of families and community relations.

- There must be an appreciation and respect for the diversity among the membership in philosophies and healing approaches

### Only recently have First Nations people become involved in the process of telling their stories.

#### Our first step: finding out what others said

*Prepared by Norma Manuel*

As a component to the start-up of our project, we conducted a literature review. The following is a summary and recommendations of what others have said in books and videos regarding residential schools. This literature review focuses primarily on Canadian residential schools. Much of the literature selected (17 books and several videos) defines the impact of residential schools on students with only a small emphasis on therapeutic healing strategies, as many of the authors hold the view that healing must be designed and delivered by the communities. There are many stories that are waiting to be told and shared.

#### Healing work

This is a literature review of residential school material and other relevant material to provide a source of direction and information to guide and support the Creating Wellness project. This paper will review several sources of pertinent literature on residential school. The review analyses, integrates and summarises applicable materials that identify interests: how the impact of residential schools on individual families and communities was assessed and the therapeutic strategies used in addressing the issues stemming from attendance at residential schools. Also included are any conclusions or recommendations derived from the study that may be useful to this project. The review will also attempt to create a typology of survivors, those who did not attend residential schools and second-generation effects on women, men, youth and the community as a whole and community institutions.

The survivors of the residential school experience suffer a wide range of consequences from lowered self-esteem, loss of identity, abandonment, issues and abuse of mood and mind-altering chemicals. Many interested writers have endeavoured to record the stories of the residential school period. Only recently have First Nations people become involved in the process of telling their stories. Most of the literature was composed of the survivors' stories with healing methods appropriate for the First Nations involved.

In *Indian Residential Schools: The Nuu-Chah-*

*Nulth experience* (1996), published by the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council (N.T.C), the aim is to put down the words and stories of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people, depicting real people's history and the owning of that history. The study is about the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people, not about the larger residential school story. It also states that many studies tend to be academic, highly theoretical and impersonal, losing the individual and personal effect of the process. It stresses that the study is intended to be helpful to all individuals with their own residential school issues. The N.T.C. formed a steering committee whose mandate was to develop a questionnaire stemming from attendance at residential school so that the Health Board and staff would be prepared to deal with the issues. Two members of the N.T.C. interviewed one hundred and ten Nuu-Chah-Nulth people, and their findings form the base of this study. The interviews were conducted whenever and wherever possible. The interviews were carried out at the convenience of the individual and in a relaxed manner. Given this environment and the nature of the interview, interviewees were highly emotional and time was spent attending to the individuals' needs to ensure they were not left in a distressed state. Small recorders were used, in the session, to tape interviews. The interviews were also documented on paper. A single video was made of interviewees lasting sixty minutes. Some of the interviews were conducted in pairs, couples and groups. Many of the groups interviewed were Elders. This method seemed to help the interviewing process as interviewees reminded each other of forgotten facts.

Similar themes have surfaced from research on residential school effects on First Nations people. Common themes found in the literature were methods to obtain information, core issues and healing strategies (N.T.C., 1996, Assembly of First Nations, 1994, Fournier, 1997, Knockwood, 1992, and the Chiefs special Assembly on Residential schools, 1996).

Healing strategies were a combination of a holistic model of healing that included counselling. Therapy working towards litigation, compensation, amends, and some use of traditional practices that included ceremonies and ritual, were also used (Fournier, 1997). Individual holistic healing is seen as the foundation of family and their community healing. Healing strategies addressed the four life areas of mental, emotional, spiritual and physical concepts that included education and rebuilding (Assembly of First Nations, 1994). Healing strategies also incorporated discussions on safety and exploration of principles of respect, responsibility and co-operation. The study stressed the need for safety for the survivor to begin the healing process of exploring the events that happened in the residential school and the impact it had on the survivors. The healing process needs to be structural so that respect for oneself and others is fostered to promote a sense of worthiness regardless of their limitations or imper-

## Lower Similkameen Indian Band Similkameen Unity – Creating Wellness

fections. In this manner, different belief systems can exist harmoniously without judgement. Healing requires adults to take responsibility and accountability for one's actions, not continually placing blame on others. Co-operation is interconnected through all the healing principles. Through stories, a healing process is seen to develop that includes the four aspects of recognising, remembering, resolving and reconnecting. These aspects help the survivors to move through stages of recovery at their own pace. Engaging in these stages takes the individual away from thinking, feeling and behaving as victims of residential school experience. It also helps the individual to integrate his experience in a manner that enables him to stand as a survivor in his world and to show him that he is capable of living a life of his own making. The uniqueness of the individual will dictate the victim's response to the healing process (Assembly of First Nations).

Breaking the Silence (1994) concluded that a model of healing should be based on an Aboriginal perspective including a holistic approach. The healing model will integrate First Nations' history that provides a context for understanding present circumstances and forms an essential part of healing for residential school survivors. First Nations' people have experienced cultural loss and have been torn from traditional way; therefore it can be assumed that First Nations' people have first hand knowledge of their histories (Pierre 1995). Christopher (1998) documents Christian activities during the gold rush period along the Fraser River, especially the Fraser Canyon. It tells of the confusion among First Nations' people during this period. The study offers background information that will help in understanding how strong First Nations' cultures allowed their children to be taken from their families. The Anglican Church of Canada eventually established a residential school at Lytton, B.C., similar to the Roman Catholic residential schools scattered throughout the province. B.C. contained the largest population of First Nations in all of Canada. The Anglican Church and Roman Catholic orders divided up the province into small religious areas where a concerted assault on the spiritual and cultural practices of First Nations took place by taking away their most vulnerable and precious resources, their children (Fournier, 1997).

In this light, healing from the atrocities of the residential school experience requires unique and individual techniques. In 1996, at the First Nations Summit of B.C. Grand Chief Ed John emphasised that there is no one solution that addresses the unique issues and stated that each First Nations community must decide its own path (Fournier, 1997). John further states that survivors must have some personal support as well as access to therapy and other resources they may need before they speak out. Resources are being drawn on in urban and reserve-based communities. Resources range from mainstream psychotherapy to sweat lodges, rituals, and spiritual counsel (Fournier, 1997). Five area Shuswap communities, outside of Williams Lake, utilise the Nen'gayni Treatment Centre as a source of healing. A concern that was expressed in resourcing support was the way the governments provided funding on an individual basis and not in the context of a holistic approach.

Fournier discussed the Hollow Water program for sex offenders. It is a community-based program attending to the needs of the victim first, then offering the offender jail or the community route. The offender is charged by the RCMP but will remain out of jail or probation as long as he/she participates in the community-based program.

In the Kootenay region of B.C., the Ktumaxa-Kimbasket people resolved to "embrace and integrate their generations of alcohol-affected people, from infants to elders, instead of surrendering them to hospitals, foster care, jails and institutions" (Fournier, 1997). With funding in place for five years, the Ktumaxa hired staff that included nurses, educators, elders and life-skill tutors. They launched their Comprehensive Community Healing and Intervention Program (CHIP). Chief Sophie Pierre states, "This allow ourselves to be guided by what the people want to do. We bring in speakers from the community, elders often, and we work on life skills, but we don't preach or dictate."

Knockwood (1992), in her book *Out of the Depths*, describes how the talking stick is employed. The Talking Stick is used among a circle of people who have committed themselves to participate in a healing process. Commitment means not leaving or walking about during the circle. Individuals wanting help state the problem, and then focus on steps taken to solve the problem. When the individual is finished, the Talking Stick is passed to the left and continues around the circle until it arrives at the person who first spoke. In this manner, those in the circle comment on the problem, share their experience and offer suggestions. Everyone in the circle gains from the exchange.

The literature review revealed a substantial amount of information that will benefit the Creating Wellness Project. Assessment of the impact of the residential school experience was documented in two reviews. The assessment method used was a combination of written response and story telling guided by a comprehensive set of question (Assembly of First Nations and Nuu-chab-Nulth tribal council). The assessment identified participants' core issues and determined appropriate healing techniques for the individual. Three reviews supported holistic, client-centered, healing techniques integrated appropriate to the background of those First Nations people. One review stressed the uniqueness of First Nations people. One review stressed the uniqueness of the First Nations Communities and choosing a "healing path" that would work for them. One review stressed the need for the safety of the survivors as paramount in addressing the impact of the residential school (Assembly of First Nations). Recommendations derived from the literature review are:

- To design and develop a comprehensive assessment using the Nuu-chah-nulth tribal council and the Assembly of First Nation's material as guides.
- To use pieces of literature in training, giving historical background and understanding of residential schools (i.e. political, religion).
- To ensure that skilled help is available to support survivors.

- To involve the whole community in whatever manner and level they want to participate.

- To obtain and review Ktumaxa-Kimbasket Comprehensive Community Healing and Intervention program.

- To obtain and review The Hollow Water Project which deals with sex offenders at the community level.

### planning strategies, involvement of the community, and flexibility are key components of becoming engaged with survivors in the healing process

The literature reviewed did not specially address the impact of the residential school on women, men and youth. Isolated stories indicated certain stressors for one gender and not for the other. The residential school impacted the family and community by taking away the children, the nations most valuable resources. Stories tell of the loss of learning traditional ways, which were lost through attendance at residential schools. Many survivors are abusing alcohol and drugs as a way of dealing with unresolved core issues. The residential school experience causes many First Nations communities to be split and diseased.

The community institutes are continuing to respond to the challenge of meeting the needs of their First Nations clientele while functioning within the jurisdiction of the Federal/Provincial governments. More responsibility is given to the First Nations community institutes with less money to provide needed services.

Conclusions gleaned from the literature review are that planning strategies, involvement of the community, and flexibility in one's approach are key components to becoming engaged in the healing process with survivors of residential schools. The literature reviewed stemmed from factual reporting of painful emotional disclosure that revealed the generational suffering taking place at this writing.

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# p o e m s

## *The Child Who Cries Within*

BY BARNEY BEAVER,  
*Webequie First Nation,  
Residential School Survivor.*



A lonely old man sitting on a park bench,  
thinking of what his life has been through.  
Over the years, his thirst needs a quench,  
a bottle by his side, is what he has to show.

“Misery loves company” is the motto for people  
who cannot admit and resolve their own problems.  
To seek help, guidance and support is very simple,  
but a person who hurts does not agree to these terms.

Many things were taught in a wrong way at residential school,  
from being who we really are to what we were not.  
The school system made us who we are and that’s no denial;  
Lost of native tongue and culture was what you got.

Taking out his bottle and pouring it into a small cup,  
his bad memories of the school set in.  
How did he survived for so long without any help?  
it must have been the child who cries within.

### *Biography*

I am an Ojibway-Cree (Oji-Cree) native living in a remote Northern Ontario native community of Webequie. I attended the Shingwauk Hall Residential School with my two older sisters and an older brother in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario at the early age of six in 1963/64 until it closed in 1970. I have worked for the Webequie First Nation Indian Band for 12 years. Today, I work as an Aboriginal Healing Coordinator funded by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF), helping out the community’s seventy residential school survivors in a small community of 668.

## *Our Prayer*

BY JOSEPH SHEEPSKIN

Oh Great Grandfather, Grandmother, Spirits of the sky  
Hear our voices, hear our cry.  
In hope we pray for the words of a song  
Show us the way back where we belong.  
Always in touch with ourselves and the Creator,  
You’re guiding us in life, we’ll find sooner than later  
Either in ceremonies, sweats or the Sweetgrass we burn.  
We find ourselves and seem to learn.  
From our mistakes we correct and forgiveness in prayer.  
We feel your presence because you’re always there.  
Making amends and purifying our soul  
Praying for our people that one day we’ll be whole  
That we walk in harmony and balance as you once did,  
And that all our mixed emotions will finally be rid.  
For which the words you once spoke they were so strong  
I pray now for our people, that the road we travel will not be wrong.  
So, please take these tears and wipe them from our eyes,  
Oh Great Grandmother, Grandmother, Spirits of the sky.  
All my Relations.

## *Healing Tracks*

BY LOIS PROVOST TURCHETTI

The road is slow and tortuous  
in teaching others how to  
read Earth’s mind through traditional ecological knowledge . . .  
sounding through skies . . . shores . . . body . . . spirit,  
but we hear the voice of the Turtle and we are not alone.  
Let the winds lift up our still-small voices  
til the sound of many waters  
moving over once-sharp stones  
polished smooth  
by the touch of many fingers  
traces the path of knowledge  
our Mother has mapped out for us to follow  
and our spirit soars with the flames.

## *Certain Song*

BY LOIS PROVOST TURCHETTI

winds weave songs of shore love humbly . . .  
humbling calling out your name.  
mountains rising from inertia  
answering witnessing our pain.  
beaten, silenced, lonely, weeping  
in the earth-song with the dawn,  
tender, hoping, fiercely hoping,  
with the lightwaves we are born.

wind is shore and waves are mountains  
ever-moving, always free  
always speaking, ever sharing out Your  
awesome love to me.  
speaking softly with the moonlight,  
singing surely with the sun,  
each child’s deepest, heartfelt yearnings,  
each child’s wanting to belong

and the secret, sacred silence  
of this shore-song from the start  
speaks the Spirit’s great desire for  
the mountains of my heart  
wind and water, wishing, kissing,  
children loving from the soul  
make me certain, surely certain,  
we are part and we are whole.

### *Biography*

Lois Provost Turchetti is a mythteller, freelance writer, and artist in popular education of spoken word poesis in the global indigenous storyarts. Her work has to do with myth, culture, history, and with oral tradition as healing. She speaks as an indigenous person born in Jamaica (Xaymaca), an off-shore territory of Greater Turtle Island, of Chinese, French, German, Asian Indian, Irish, Jewish, Scottish, African, Welsh, Italian and Maroon-Arauc-Carib (self-identified tribal affiliation) ancestry and heritage.



# THE TALKING QUILT – A HEALING JOURNEY

## Stardale Women's Group Inc. Foundation "Breaking the Cycles by Creating the Circles"

The Stardale Women's group is a grass roots community organisation operating in the rural community of Melfort, Saskatchewan. The program provides an opportunity for women to rediscover the experiences of abuse they were subjected to while attending residential schools. In doing so, the women share their experiences with one another while engaging in the making of a quilt. The quilt reflects the personal experiences and feelings of the women. Through the shared quilting a healing process begins. The quilt also provides the women with the ability to share their experiences with others.

12 Aboriginal women participated actively in the program. Their ages vary between 18 to 45 years. All the women quilters have between one and five children. Half of the women attended at least one residential school. All of the women have at least one member of their immediate family who attended residential school.

The Quilt was unveiled on May 17th, with a traditional ceremony. Participants came to the unveiling from many different parts of Canada. The group made a video of the group quilting process and wrote the story of their experience, which they share here with us. If you are inspired by this project and wish to obtain more information, please contact the AHF at 1 888-725-8886 and ask for Giselle Robelin or Wayne Spear.

### 'The Talking Quilt' A Healing Journey

*(Based on Eliza's Story & the discussions of the group of women who made the Quilt).  
Talking poem written by Oya Aral.*

*Early in the morning  
as the sun's rays colour the gray sky  
in hues of pink, crimson & gold,  
we are on our way to another day  
full of learning, caring,  
& friendship  
in the women's quilting circle.*

*Our drivers pick up the women,  
& we share a ride to Melfort.  
While some of us gaze out the window  
into the crystalline white snow  
covering the hills & beyond,  
others are still half-asleep or snoozing.  
It is a quiet ride to town.*

*For the watchful eye in tune,  
the tapestry of trees in white,  
shining & sparkling icicles bright,  
create a dazzling show  
that winter's beauty is in bloom.  
The icy road disappears behind each hill  
of this fascinating scene.*

*We always see with excitement  
the white owl and the hawk  
dancing in the air  
encircling us in their daily ritual  
& find them perched up on a tree  
waiting for us at Stardale  
upon our arrival.*

*In the quietness of the morning drive to town,  
we think about the quilt we are making,  
& its relevance in our lives:  
we reflect on our childhood days —  
a first blanket at home or at the residential school,  
then the families we formed  
under the quilts that we shared.*

*Spending time in silent solitude, cold & chill of the  
morning brings to mind sweet & sad memories,  
some horror stories of our growing up years. The  
women that smoke light up a cigarette before get-  
ting into town & sink deep into their own thoughts.*

*Such warm welcome it is indeed.  
Helen awaits us  
with cheerful greetings  
every bright or gloomy day.  
Her symbols of nature  
the white owl & the hawk  
cheer us from the trees.*

*How eagerly we look forward to  
coming together one more time  
to share our childhood memories,  
our lives on the Reserve,  
our families & children,  
& the long lost traditions  
of our past ancestors.*

*As our quilt starts taking shape  
in the company of our laughter & tears,  
our feelings pour out in discussions  
like colours of pink & purple reflecting sweet memories;  
dark gray, pitch black or crimson red flags  
signaling the dangers,  
& the horror stories in our lives.*

*Loss, grieving, anger & hate  
are just some of the emotions  
we carry always in our hearts & souls;  
and we have to deal with all of these  
in every day  
of our lives.*

*Our spirits soar like an eagle  
in search of the tradition of our ancestors.  
We ask for the boldness & pride of our tribal cultures  
to return to us, & give us comfort.  
We seek the tenderness of love & caring  
from our long lost generations  
to come & find us in our family affairs.*

*Piece by piece we contribute to the quilt  
presenting a story from each of us.  
Our emotions & memories  
stitched with our tears & fears,  
embroidered with our joy & cheers,  
& in the belief of our success  
standing in harmony  
& togetherness.*

*We share each other's grief,  
desolate times of despair, fear, anger & hatred,  
the events in our growing up years:*

*the traumas —  
the booze, drugs & gambling addictions —  
the learned behaviours  
that destroy our families.*

*We look at each day as a new piece of thread —  
as if threading the beads of sorrowful stores,  
we search & seek in our discussions,  
new ways & resolutions to our spiritual traumas —  
in grieving & letting go the past,  
our personal relationships,  
problems in raising our youth & family affairs.*

*Each new & enlightening day  
brings us to educational programs,  
life skills, sculpting & quilting,  
we gain self esteem & communal pride;  
we learn new methods & skills  
to break the cycles of addictions,  
to develop parenting, job qualifications, & social  
relationships.*

*We have lost —  
We have lost the roots of our ancestral traditions:  
where are the cultural values of our great grandfathers?  
What happened to our serene beautiful life in harmony  
with nature, family & friends?*

*Our childhood memories are full of horrible experiences.  
we were separated from our families,  
& taken to residential schools,  
could not even hold hands with our sisters & brothers,  
did not even get to see them in our growing up years.  
We became a number in the school,  
& if we could not remember our number, we got hit;  
if we could not remember our number, we got hit!*

*We lost touch with our families — mothers & fathers,  
missed the safety & security of our homes.  
Fun times with the grandparents were all gone.  
Sisters & brothers separated,  
we were not allowed to communicate with each other —  
the family bonds & unity  
in our lives were destroyed.*

*The school days were dreary & pitch black at times:  
molested & abused by our teachers & supervisors,  
wearing the same uniforms, our hair cut short  
above the ear,  
we had to line up for everything, even to use the  
bathroom,  
If we were too slow taking a shower,*

*we had to walk around with soap on our bodies all day;  
force-fed to eat the food, we never had eaten before.*

*We listened to the cries & screams of the boys,  
& sounds of battering behind the walls.  
We were also strapped on our hands or other parts of our bodies  
which made us feel like we were on fire.  
Even as adolescent female students, we could not escape  
the trauma of being publicly beaten with pants down  
on the private days of our lives.*

*Shameful, shameful – as we think about those days,  
we feel naked & abandoned – our pride gone,  
all alone in a world foreign to us,  
not knowing where to turn.  
The traumas In our lives led us into  
alcohol, drugs, addictions,  
& abusive actions.*

*The value of self, & respect for others – lost;  
incest & physical abuse,  
we could not create  
healthy & happy families.  
we even failed in raising our own children properly,*

*All these things were done to us & more,  
in the name of “God” we were told.  
It became a fearful world,  
not understanding the meaning of “God” at all.  
One of the quilters asked one day:  
“How come they did this?”  
And another one answered,  
“Because they knew they could get away with it!”*

*Days of discussions on relationships,  
drugs, alcohol, & abusive partners.  
What happens when incest  
becomes a repeating pattern?  
When a destitute mother watches her daughter  
as she goes through the same experiences?*

*God have mercy on us,  
we need to break these cycles.*

*Loss, grieving, anger & hate  
are just some of the emotions  
we have to deal with  
in everyday of our lives.  
We need to break these cycles  
as we learn new skills.*

*Everyday is a new bright & cheerful day  
if we care enough to make it that way.  
We can erase the darkness  
slowly out of our lives.*

*We have a chance,  
a God-given chance to understand life  
& to choose a righteous path  
closer to the Divine.*

*We share our feelings & emotions  
along this healing journey  
as we create our quilt together,  
with tears, laughter & joy.  
In our praying circle,  
we pray for each other –  
to break the addictions & repetitive cycles.*

*We can create a wonderful world  
for our families & children  
if we change the old habits,  
teach new values, respect & manners  
& promote a new vision  
for the betterment  
of our communities.*

*We are the protectors & guardians  
of our generation;  
& we seek to be the wise mentors  
for generations & generations to come.*

*The “dark night of the soul”  
must be resolved in our lives,  
we must reach within ourselves  
to search for the truth.*

*We need to destroy the barriers  
to freedom of thought & understanding.  
We must be true to our feelings & emotions.  
We must have compassion for peace & harmony  
in our lives.*

*We must trust in the process of healing.  
We must use our new skills  
in altering our perceptions and beliefs.*

*Our prayers will transcend us, help us redefine who we are,  
& bring us closer to the Divine.*

*Our souls feel the harmony of nature,  
that we cherish all around us  
& the wonder of the universe  
God’s creation is all around us,*

*we feel overwhelmed by its beauty & peace.*

*The life that we create for ourselves  
& the people we love  
should have the same harmony as in nature –  
caring & sharing we shall stand together  
not only in making this quilt,  
but, also by using our new skills,  
we shall excel in life.*

*We shall soar like an eagle,  
as we strive to be successful participants & leaders  
in our communities.*

*Creating such a beautiful Quilt  
has been a healing journey for us women.  
We have come a long way  
crying, laughing,  
denying & changing  
to a new light dawning on the horizon –  
we shall make it shine.*

*Look at each piece of the Quilt,  
examine it in detail,  
look at our stories from the past,  
depicting our frustrations & anger  
that still linger  
deep in our hearts.*

*This Quilting process has been a new awakening –  
an awesome healing experience for us.  
We learned many new skills along the way,  
tested our emotions,  
& looked into each other’s lives.  
With prayers in our praying circles,  
we created a powerful cosmic healing force.*

*We gained a new understanding  
& a renewed interest  
in our ancient culture & traditions.  
We need to help each other more & more,  
& give a helping hand –  
be there for one another at all times,  
to hold the hand of mistreated & distressed ones.*

*We the women are the enablers & the rescuers.  
We shall survive the conflicts & abuse.  
We shall be the leaders  
to change the cycles forever.  
We shall overcome as we stand together,  
hand-in-hand,  
to face the new world,*

*The Stardale Women’s Group Foundation  
gave us this opportunity  
to tell our stories through the Talking Quilt.  
We have made changes for the better already,  
we are grateful & thankful. •*

p o e m s

## SURVIVORS

At the age of seven , they took us from our homes  
They cut off our braids  
Told our parents they would go to jail  
Without fail  
If they did not send us to residential school  
Our parents were not fools  
They knew they were going to be used as tools  
for the priests and nuns

What a process they put us through  
Took away our culture, language and tradition  
They shamed and sexually, physically, mentally  
abused us  
All in the name of the Lord

As we grew older  
We could not forget the past  
It would for generations last  
What the priests and nuns did  
To a once proud race  
Now we have alcohol and drugs to make us forget  
Our ways are lost  
But not by choice  
But by who ruled at the time

*Written by Ron Soto  
Member of Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Alberta  
February 26, 2001  
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# Hay River Dene Band

## Healthy Youth and Parent relationships



**Y**outh and Parent Development and Recovery for the Dene of the Hay River Reserve is designed to create opportunities for the Hay River Reserve residents and band members to regain the self-reliance lost with the introduction and operation of a residential school in Hay River from 1929 to 1939. During this period, many of the elders of today had some experience with the residential school. There are many Hay River Reserve Dene today who are direct descendants of the victims of the residential school. There were other impacts to the Dene community in the area that are still affecting their descendants today.

The introduction of the wage economy and service provision created a sense of dependency on the residential school for some families. Some left the traditional economy to provide services or labour for the residential school. When the school closed in 1939, it is said that the people who were depending on the school for work and services could no longer provide for their families. The trauma experienced would be similar to the present-day layoffs that occur on a regular basis. Some of these people went back to the traditional economy, but many did not and stayed dependant on the wage economy to make a living. There being no jobs available, families became dysfunctional. This resulted in all forms of addictions. Some stayed in the community and indulged in addictive activities. They influenced the other people that were still in the traditional economy, by introducing them to addictions. These

and other oppressive activities led the Dene of Hay river to become almost totally dependent by 1970.

The goal of the Youth and Parent Development and Recovery for the Dene of the Hay River Reserve is to develop personal power for youth and their parents, in order for the youth to be able to make healthy choices in life and to prepare the youths to become healthy leaders.

### **Meeting the needs of the community**

Through this project, the youth, parents, adults and elders of the Hay River Dene Band can address issues that have been affecting the community since the introduction of residential school in Hay River. By addressing youth issues, the community is preparing itself better for the next millennium. Access to healing practitioners who the community trust and feel comfortable with, and who can speak the Dene language, helps the participants grow and create personal power.

Community-based, participant-designed healing programs ensure that the unique needs and priorities of each participant are addressed. The project will involve ongoing community-based healing circles, support groups, and other healing programs. More important, however, is the community benefit of healing that will be derived from witnessing positive changes in participants. Knowledge and skill, and first-hand experience with the methods and results of the training and subsequent

healing processes, are other benefits. Community-based healing also enables participants to continually be with their family and friends, sharing with them the immediate effects and experiences of the programs.

Not all of the training process occurs in the communities. There are strategic advantages of the on-the land programs, which will give the participants an opportunity to engage in Dene cultural and traditional activities. It is important to immerse the participants in the on-the land programs to challenge the idea that the land is of no value. Through immersion they will experience what it means to live on the land, getting out there and getting their hands dirty.

### **Who is served by this project?**

Youth and Parents Development and Recovery for the Dene of the Hay River Reserve will serve the Hay River members and Hay River Dene Band members in Hay River. Other Dene people who may be in the Hay River Reserve area will be encouraged to participate. The Hay River Dene Band firmly believes these programs and services will better serve the youth, parents, adult and elders of the Hay River Reserve.

The Youth and Parents Development and Recovery for the Dene of the Hay River Reserve addresses residential school issues that are related not only to those directly affected by residential school, but also the



intergenerational impacts. Participants are encouraged to gain self-confidence in their own inherent capacities, talents and strengths, so as to build enough self-esteem to continue their healing work. Notions of ethics, pathology, self-growth, actualisation of potentials and mental abilities will be used in an active and concrete way so that the participants will become able to empower themselves to go beyond healing of psychological scars.

Those community members who participate in this community-based Healing Programs benefit through participating in a healing process led by familiar, credible and trustworthy community peers, who, upon completion of the program, will be available for support and guidance.

### Parenting Development and Recovery

It is vital that the parents of the youth also participate in this program. The parents are ultimately responsible for the needs and development of their children. This responsibility will be given back to the parents by providing parental and personal growth workshops and cultural and traditional programs. The parents are encouraged to take responsibility to support and guide their children in education, employment and justice.

Throughout the project, the Hay River Dene Band is kept abreast of all developments through reports and participation. All programs involved in the project are required to write monthly reports. In addition, each participant is required to do evaluations based on participation. The Coordinator supervises the effectiveness of the program by randomly reviewing participants' reports.

### Youth program development

The Hay River Dene Band Youth Development Program supports and assists the youth in education, employment and justice. Personal growth and healing programs are intended to create personal power for youth, allowing them to make healthy choices in life. When the youth run into problems, they are supported. The support is available from the parent whenever possible. However, if the parents cannot provide support, the youth gets support from the Hay River Band program staff. The parents of the youth will be encouraged to take part in the process. The approach is not to remove the responsibility of the parents but to create responsibility.

The youth are given knowledge and skills to function in today's world. The knowledge and skills allow them to create opportunities in their lives that would otherwise be unavailable. With the development of personal power, they are able to

make healthy choices. The discipline developed enables them to challenge life without fear and to create well-being in their own life, as well as to support one another in making healthy choices.

The parenting workshops train the parents to give support to their youth. They are given parental knowledge and skills which enable them to respond to any problem their children may encounter. The parents develop this knowledge and skill by participating in our Parenting Workshops and by getting involved in their children's daily life.

Other adults in the community support parents and one another in the development of the youth. They have the opportunity to participate in all the workshops. They also participate in the on-the-land programs and community gatherings. They are teachers, facilitators, spiritual role models and cultural guides. The adults are then able to enhance their abilities to regain their traditional roles lost through cultural oppression.

The Elders are once more able to take on their role as teachers, spiritual guides and cultural and traditional advisors in all aspects of life. They regain the respect of the young people and are once more able to become the centre of the community. Their involvement breaks down the generational gap created by the introduction of new systems.

Our goal is to become a real community, where families support one another, where traditional and cultural knowledge will be revived and become once more part of the Dene life. Our goal is to be once more self-sufficient and self-reliant.

### Our programming activities

Our project consists of a series of programming activities aimed at skill-building and knowledge-sharing. These activities are three fold: workshops for parents and youth, on-the-land programs and cultural gatherings.

#### Workshops for parents and for youth

Our series of parenting and youth workshops are designed to develop knowledge and skills and to create personal power in youth and parents so that they are able to make healthy choices, support and guide their children.

#### Dene Life Cycle workshop series for parents

These workshops are each 3 days' duration: Gestation, Childhood, Puberty, Relationship, Parenting, Grand Parents/Elders.

Other Workshops (5 days each):

Communications and conflict resolution, Assertiveness, Self-esteem, and Self-awareness.

Last series (3 days each): Aboriginal Self Awareness, Role Models, Anger Management.

An additional series of workshop is specifically aimed at youth (3 days each): Culture and Spirituality, Building Youth Support, Family Tree/Pride.

### On-the-Land programs

*Spring Camp: A spring goose hunt to Buffalo Lake for Youth and parents:* A seven-day trip when the geese are returning for the summer. The families have an opportunity to hunt goose and prepare it for cooking. Programs in the evenings are organised to learn about traditional values and beliefs with elders and each other.

*Fish Camp for families, approximately 15 miles east of Hay River, on the South Shore of Tusho.* This seven-day trip provide families with the opportunity to fish, hunt and gather berries, and to make dry-fish, dry-meat and other food. The youth are given the opportunity to participate in visiting nets, in hunting moose, setting rabbit snares and gathering wood. In the evening, camp gatherings are organised to learn traditional values and beliefs and where Elders tell legends and historical legends.

*Fall Moose Hunt:* A seven-day trip in late September, where families have the opportunity to participate in hunting moose and in skinning it and transporting it back to base camp. They also make dry-meat and scrape and flesh the moose hides. Families also have the opportunity to prepare camps for the winter trapping.

### Community Gatherings

These gathering are held on the Hay River Reserve to enhance Dene cultural and traditional values and beliefs.

*Spring Gathering:* A feast and drum dance in June, which is also the annual community gathering, involving political, spiritual, traditional events and family participation. An annual Fire Ceremony to give thanks for the past years provisions, gifts and health.

*Summer Gathering:* A feast and drum dance in August.

*Fall Gathering:* A feast and drum dance in September.

*Winter Gathering:* A feast and drum dance in January. •



# Regional Gathering Report Summary

## RECOMMENDATIONS, COMMENTS, AND STORIES FROM THE 2000-2001 AHF REGIONAL GATHERINGS

*Information needs to be distributed to communities that the AHF funding process has been reviewed and that some concessions have been made.*

*Real change needs to come from Regional Gatherings like this.*

*-Recommendation from a Regional Gathering, 1999.*

(Editors' note: a full copy of the 75-pqge Regional Gathering report is available from the Aboriginal Healing Fuondation.)

### INTRODUCTION

#### LESSONS LEARNED FROM 1999

The 1999 Regional Gathering report, which included transcripts and minutes taken at the Gatherings, highlighted the comments, feedback and recommendations from the participants.

The AHF Board, responding to feedback from the 4 Regional Gatherings held in 1999, made some changes to its funding process, its program operations, its communication strategy, and its structure. The following is a short description of this feedback and responses:

- Many grass-root groups and smaller communities told us that the application form was complicated for them, for the type of project they wanted to propose. As a result the AHF developed a separate, simplified application form for projects under \$50K.
- Many individuals, groups and communities told us that they wanted a more equitable distribution of healing resources across the country. To this end, taking into account the limited life of the amount granted to the AHF by the Government, the Foundation designed and implemented a new policy stating that in cases where an applicant has already two funded projects and then applies for another, this third application will be set aside until proposals from other communities and organisations in the region have been considered.
- In response to concerns that disclosed identifying information may be used in court cases, the AHF will not fund any video, written, or other proposals that disclose the identity of healing program participants or other individuals.
- In response to feedback on the greater safety, accountability and wisdom needed regarding the larger amounts allocated to Healing Centres, the AHF designed and implemented a two-part, comprehensive process for Healing Centre applications. This process will also enable applicants whose project can be processed as a regular proposal rather than a Healing Centre to benefit from a shorter review process.
- Many communities told us that our limit for larger projects was too restrictive. The AHF has therefore raised the funding ceiling to \$150,000 per project per year, while creating a new stream for smaller project (projects under \$50K) .
- We were told at the Gatherings that staff assistance was needed in order to clear misunderstandings about the application process, to provide support and help in strengthening applications. The AHF has revised the proposal review process, put personnel and structures in place to provide the help requested and needed, and increased staff in two major areas, Proposal Review and Community Support.
- Many groups and communities told us that in order to have fair distribution, the AHF needed to encourage and help grass-roots groups to develop their proposal development capacity and help them to build

a network with other individuals and communities for mutual support. The AHF responded to this concern by hiring Regional Co-ordinators, whose role is to help develop proposals and build networks and partnerships, by organising Proposal Development Workshops and networking workshops in all parts of the country.

- In response to concerns expressed at Regional Gatherings about accountability and sustainability of projects, the AHF has developed key indicators to monitor and evaluate funded projects. This also enables the AHF to assess applicants interested in multi-year funding.
- Communities asked us to give them the chance to improve and resubmit their projects. The AHF set two deadlines a year so that applicants have another chance to resubmit without having to wait another year to do so.
- In addition, the AHF has revised its review process to keep channels of communications open with applicants whose application needs to be improved before it is sent to external review. Applicants whose application needs to be improved will have time to resubmit within the same deadline. This gives applicants whose proposal is not accepted for funding the opportunity, information and support to develop a better proposal.
- The AHF also encourages communities and groups to submit their application in advance of the deadline if they wished, so that feedback can be integrated sooner.
- Many individuals, groups and communities told us of their need to get information about the healing work, projects, and successes of other groups and communities elsewhere in the country. To this end the AHF has developed principles of best practices, engaged in research which will be disseminated and shared with communities, and extended its communication strategy and outreach. Any question or request can be addressed to the Foundation either via our toll-free line, e-mail, or regular mail. Our regularly updated website contains documents and information about all the activities of the Foundation. Our newsletter is sent to an ever growing number of people and communities.
- Some individuals, groups and communities indicated their dissatisfaction with the Foundation approval rate. The efforts of the AHF to develop the capacity of communities to develop proposals, to put in place a process by which applicants can discuss and improve their application with AHF staff, resulted this year in a 50% approval rate.

### **Regional Gatherings: Face to Face dialogues with a growing Aboriginal Grassroots Healing Movement**

Regional Gatherings remains one of the most effective tools the AHF uses to collect, face-to-face, the reactions, comments, ideas, and recommendations from Aboriginal survivors as well as individuals, groups and communities interested in the work of healing in general and in developing healing projects.

The feedback from the Regional Gatherings added important information to the many comments sent to us or discussed with us over the phone or by E-





mail. Feedback is the driving force behind the AHF efforts to improve the quality and efficiency of its assistance to survivors of residential schools, their families and communities. As a result of the numerous requests to meet and talk face-to-face, the AHF Board decided to increase the number of Regional Gatherings for the year 2000 to 5, with a further 2 Gatherings at the beginning of 2001. The following report highlights the questions, comments and recommendations made by the participants at the gatherings.

“I just wanted to say thank-you for all your hard work that you are doing and to all the people in this room. I would like to recognise how appreciative I am of your presence here today and for the positive spirit, respect and understanding that is here in this room today.”

*-Charles, Vancouver Regional Gathering.*

### GATHERINGS 2000-2001

- September 28, 2000, Iqaluit
- October 12, 2000, Winnipeg
- October 26, 2000, Vancouver
- November 9, 2000, Ottawa
- November 23, 2000, Moncton
- January 26, 2001, Yellowknife
- January 30, 2001, Whitehorse

To reduce the costs while offering more opportunity for the Board to maintain the face to face dialogue that was requested, it was decided that only some members of the Board would attend, including the Board member from the region visited.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September, October and November 2000, members of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation's Board of Directors gathered in five Canadian cities to engage in dialogue with Aboriginal people on the Foundation's funding process, issue an annual report, provide an update on funded projects and announce new initiative.

The first Regional Gathering occurred in Iqaluit, NT, September 28, 2000 at the Air Cadet Hall, Royal Canadian Legion. Further meetings took place in Winnipeg (October 12, 2000, Indian & Metis Friendship Centre), Vancouver (October 26, 2000, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre), Ottawa (November 9, 2000, Odawa Friendship Centre) and Moncton (November 23, 2000, Delta Beauséjour).

In addition, the Board decided to organise two more Gathering in the North, in January 2001: in Yellowknife (January 26, 2001, Royal Canadian Legion) and Whitehorse (January 30, 2001, Nakawataku Hall, Kwanlin Dun First Nation). Board Directors enjoyed this opportunity to continue their dialogue with Aboriginal individuals and organisations. The objective of this exchange was to bring back to the Foundation comments and suggestions which would then be considered and integrated in the planning and implementation of the AHF administrative and programming activities.

Each of the Gatherings was organised around the same agenda, which gave AHF board and staff the opportunity to fulfil both its accountability mandate and to listen to Elders, Survivors, their descendants and communities as well as their grass-root organisations and Community Leadership representatives.

#### Reporting Agenda

Georges Erasmus, President of the AHF Board of Directors, opened each Gathering by providing an overview of the Foundation's mission and funding activities to date and introducing the Directors present at the meetings.

Following each Director's self introduction, Georges Erasmus together with Mike DeGagné, Executive Director of the Foundation, provided an overview of the AHF Annual Report, specifically with regard to the following:

- Creation of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation
- Foundation's mandate and obligations under the Funding Agreement
- Proposal Deadlines and Theme areas in the first funding cycle
- Proposal assessment process

- Outcome of the first funding cycle pertaining to the number of proposals received by the deadlines
- The total amount for approved proposals
- The number of requests and proposal assistance grants distributed
- Feedback received on the program handbook
- Consultation and communication activities

Mr. DeGagné then introduced staff members present at the Gathering, and Ernie Daniels, Director of Finance, introduced and explained the Foundation financial reports.

Following the presentation of these financial documents, Georges Erasmus called for questions from those in attendance. The full text of these questions and answers is contained in the Regional Gathering Report.

Mike DeGagné, Executive Director, presented an overview of new initiatives that will affect future funding cycles. He informed participants of the revisions that were made to the Program Handbook and the proposal review process based on feedback received from survivors, communities and members of the Board in the first funding cycle. New initiatives noted included:

- A more interactive process where Regional Co-ordinators and staff in Ottawa will assist and encourage communities to develop better proposals
- New, separate and simplified application for projects under 50K
- Streamlined review process
- Hiring of individuals around the country to assist communities which did not submit many proposals, i.e. The North (an individual speaking Inuktitut will hold Proposal Development Workshops).
- A two step process for Healing Centres
- Restriction on disclosing identifying information
- Raising of funding ceiling
- Renewal funding
- Foundation mandate
- Increased assistance for the North

### OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

In addition to the question period allocated for the Financial Reports of the Foundation, each Regional Gathering reserved several opportunities to provide feedback.

The full text of these exchanges, arranged under common themes, is provided in the Regional Gathering Report.

### QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS ON COMMON THEMES/ISSUES

Reporting of the discussions and questions asked during the morning and afternoon sessions are organised under common themes for each of the Gatherings.

- Mandate of the Foundation
- Language issues
- Accountability/transparency issues
- Board issues
- Approval/refusal of proposals issues
- Administration issues (financial, staffing etc..)
- Funding Criteria
- Application issues
- Funding issues
- Contribution Agreement issues
- Fair Distribution of Funds
- Communications issues
- Information sharing/linkages
- Community Support Workers
- Proposal Review Process
- Survivors issues
- Monitoring/reporting/Evaluation issues





In addition to questions and feedback, many participants were able to tell their stories and make recommendations. These stories and recommendations are included at the end of each Regional Gathering summary.

### **IQALUIT REGIONAL GATHERING**

Date: September 28, 2000  
Time: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Place: Air Cadet Hall, Royal Canadian Legion

Participants: 20+

Directors Present: Georges Erasmus, Simona Arnatsiaq, Angus Cockney.  
Elder: Annie Nattaq.

Staff Present: Mike DeGagné, Executive Director, Al Gabriel, Director of Communications, Rae Ratslef, Assistant Board Secretary, Frank Hope, Community Support Worker.

### **SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

The remoteness of our territory provides many additional barriers and challenges to accessing resources and funding with which to promote and encourage wellness and healing. For example:

Advocacy groups that could support initiatives and projects are often located closer to national centres;

Skilled personnel who could help to develop financial or technical aspects of proposals are not often located in smaller communities;

Opportunities and funding sources, which may be widely advertised in major centres, may only become known after time as the news reaches more remote areas.

I would like to suggest to the Foundation that to eliminate these barriers and increase your effectiveness in promoting sustainable healing processes that you:

- Have Inuit staff in your headquarter operation;
- Have a presence in as many communities of Nunavut as you can and hire and train local people; and
- Establishing a partnership with the NTI to utilise some of its agencies such as its Nunavut Social Development Council.

The other comment or suggestion I have regarding the AHF and its proposal process is that the review process is too exhaustive. I recommend that the proposal forms and the review process be simplified and that more Inuit influence be incorporated into the proposal forms, the review process and the organisational structure of the AHF.

There is need for more communication here in the North. People do not know about the AHF.

### **WINNIPEG GATHERING**

Date: October 12, 2000  
Time: 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM  
Place: Metis & Indian Friendship Centre

Participants: 120 +

Directors Present: Georges Erasmus, Ken Courchene, Carrielynn Lamouche.  
Elder: Laurence Houle.

Staff Present: Mike DeGagné, Executive Director, Ernie Daniels, Director of Finance, Giselle Robelin, Communications Coordinator, Rae Ratslef, Assistant Board Secretary, Diane Roussin, Community Support Worker.

### **SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

The CD needs to be developed even more because some people came to a blockade in using the CD, people who don't know how the technology works. It was very frustrating for us to use. We had to cut stuff out and really shorten our submission in the process. The CD needs a little more work.

I would like to recommend that the AHF address languages. All the languages are important to preserve. I think it is very important to be considered as a criteria to do presentations.

If you think there are problems with the proposal, contact the applicants to talk about it.

Our main concern since we started this work is that there was a non-existence of community liaison workers and a lack of peer support and referral services. The AHF should take a look at this –connecting people.

Does the AHF provide feedback on the quarterly reports?

Because I work by myself most of the time it is frustrating at times because I don't have anyone to talk to –although I do talk to staff at the office quite often. It would be most helpful if we could get together like this and share stories and support each other. If the AHF planned something like that to bring together projects it would help make us all more successful.

### **VANCOUVER GATHERING**

Date: October 26, 2000  
Time: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Place: Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre  
Participants: 260+

Directors Present: Georges Erasmus, Carrielynn Lamouche, Bill Lightbown.  
Elders: Dorris Peters (Board Elder), Theresa Jeffries.

Staff Present: Mike DeGagné, Executive Director, Ernie Daniels, Director of Finance, Giselle Robelin, Communications Coordinator, Daryle Gardipy, Finance Officer, Pauline McCrimmon, Community Support Worker, Rae Ratslef, Assistant Board Secretary.

### **SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

I hear about our new Chief setting up trust funds for his children from the funding that was provided. We need to take care of our people. A lot of these things need to be looked into and very carefully.

I would like the AHF to look at every aspect of helping people heal.

I believe there is a need for healing centres

The residential school issue needs to come to the top –the head of our nations

The residential school issue has affected all bands in North America. Other bands could benefit by holding Regional Gatherings for brainstorming and commenting on what is and what is not working. It would go a long way if we all sat together to exchange ideas where the objective is for all bands to benefit from this process. Nowhere in BC are there any youth treatment centres –those types of ideas need to be discussed in a forum like this on an annual/periodic basis.

### **OTTAWA GATHERING**

Date: November 9, 2000  
Time: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Place: Odawa Friendship Centre  
Participants: 230+

Directors Present: Georges Erasmus, Garnet Angecone, Richard Kistabish, Charles Weaselhead Elder: Irene Lindsay.

Staff Present: Mike DeGagné, Executive Director, Ernie Daniels, Director of Finance, Giselle Robelin, Communications Coordinator, Wanda Gabriel, Community Support Worker, Rae Ratslef, Assistant Board Secretary.

### **SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Regarding evaluation –when you give money to a community group–assess





to make sure all community members are satisfied and that the money is used properly – not just asking the people who received the money but the people in the community.

We think the networking funding should come from the AHF. Set aside a pocket of money and then receive recommendations from areas for networking meetings. I don't think you'd take away money from the community projects by doing this.

One of the reasons I feel my proposal was successful was because I had face-to-face access with people who could assist me along the way in the development of the proposals. In grassroots communities, they need assistance on proposal development and face-to-face assistance.

I was thinking that the best reception I ever received was from the AHF. There are a lot of programs about model personalities, people, etc. But the AHF should be thinking about a model of a community that is healing well and re-harmonising itself.

We'd like to see a network for the people to get together on a regular basis to deal with problems and issues and to build their relationships and as a mechanism in dealing with the situations that they face in their projects.

We pay a lot of expenses to consultants from the south and it would be very helpful for us to have a direct line to other projects.

The number of women in proportion to the women on the Board needs to be equal.

The process for applications is oppressive and unfair. We're competing against each other and it should be on the basis of needs. Some communities don't have people who can write proposals –this needs to be rethought by the AHF.

I would like to ask the AHF to rethink its whole process for funding. When you reject proposals its very painful for communities, organisations and individuals. It makes us feel small and not worthy. It's traumatising in itself. The process is oppressive and is excluding people. We need to look at meeting everyone's needs instead of formulas and numbers, etc. Your process is hurting our people.

We are very far from the AHF and our access to you is nil. I'm asking you to come to our community, assess our needs and to help us start healing.

There should be an AHF Children of Lost Parents program.

#### MONCTON GATHERING

Date: November 23, 2000  
Time: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Place: Delta Beauséjour  
Participants: 30+

Directors Present: Georges Erasmus, Susan Hare, Viola Robinson. Elder: Margaret Labillois.

Staff Present: Mike DeGagné, Executive Director, Ernie Daniels, Director of Finance, Wayne K. Spear, Communications Coordinator, Caroline Garon, Controller, Kevin Barlow, Community Support Worker, Rae Ratslef, Assistant Board Secretary.

#### SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The survivors themselves should be looked at, not the community as a whole.

The way the funding proposals are written its tied into survivors, we have to bring in the survivors and identify the issues behind them so I can see how people could place blame on them. In order for us to access funding we had to pull in our 6 or 7 survivors even though they were not necessarily ready.

We can't get the funding without doing that and it does place a feeling of blame on the survivors. Maybe you can put a disclaimer on the application process that survivors are not to blame. I can see how the survivors would feel blamed. You can't put the blame for all the problems in the whole community on the heads of the survivors.

I think that for the project to address 15% of our survivors is good, but is the AHF getting its money's worth? Equal opportunities should be granted to those of us who left the church and took up our bundles in the traditional way. An equal if not greater emphasis should be placed on us.

Is it possible for the people in the local areas to get together and help each other with proposals? We have some experience in writing the proposals and could help others. Your staff worker could co-ordinate the people as a referral service.

#### YELLOWKNIFE GATHERING

Date: January 26, 2001  
Time: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Place: Royal Canadian Legion  
Participants: 30+

Directors Present: Richard Kistabish, Vice-Chair, Simona Arnatsiaq, Angus Cockney. Elder: Georges Blondin.

Staff Present: Mike DeGagné, Executive Director, Ernie Daniels, Director of Finance, Giselle Robelin, Co-ordinator, Frank Hope, Community Support Worker, Rae Ratslef, Assistant Board Secretary.

#### SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

For people to talk about the physical and sexual abuse they've experienced takes a long time. In the south they've had access to the healing process for many years, through Elders, programs, etc. In the north there is access as well but it's very difficult to come out and deal with these things to address your healing journey. We need more time, 10 years will not be enough. It takes generations for corrections to be made.

I recommend that at least one reunion in a region per year be allowed.

#### WHITEHORSE GATHERING

Date: January 30, 2001  
Time: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Place: Nakawataku Hall, Kwanlin Dun First Nation  
Participants: 100+

Directors Present: Richard Kistabish, Vice Chair, Rose-Marie Blair-Smith, Angus Cockney. Elder: Ida Calmegane.

Staff Present: Mike DeGagné, Executive Director, Ernie Daniels, Director of Finance, Wayne K. Spear, Communications Coordinator, Frank Hope, Community Support Worker, Rae Ratslef, Assistant Board Secretary.

#### SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Are there any plans, in terms of the liability insurance for organisations, for a global insurance plans for funded projects to cut down on the costs?? There seems to be a lot of duplication with every proposal needing its own insurance.

We need to hear from the AHF, you need to hear from us.

We would like to ask the AHF to be patient with us, it takes a while to get a program from scratch going into a full time program.





A concern we had with the AHF was that they would only allow us to bring on our cook in January 2001. He's worked incredible overtime to get the kitchen ready. When you're starting an organisation you need to have a lot of time to prepare before opening.

We were invited to put our proposal in for a second year proposal, the letter from the AHF was dated January 4, 2001, it arrived here on the 17th and a response was due on the 26th. In the North we get communications long after the due dates and we miss out on things.

As a Society, we don't have a slush fund. We can't borrow from other programs to pay our bills. Our program funding ran out on the 31<sup>st</sup> and we don't have money. We have about \$6 left in the bank. The 10% hold back is a problem for societies –direct deposit will help speed up the process

My only message to the Board is to visit these sites and check out the projects and get a real picture of them, witness it, feel it, and know what the Yukon First Nations are striving for. •



*Gathering Quotations continued from page 34*

“There's a lot of teachings towards healing. We have seven gifts - there is a meaning and a direction to every gift.”

“I love my life today –it's difficult but it's a good feeling when I get up in the morning without having to think about the pain that I went through in residential school. I try not to ask for too much strength and I ask for balance for others to follow my example. All I can be is a messenger through songs, prayers and teachings. It's how you use your heart that matters to me. That is one of the most important things that was given to us.”

“I appreciate the work that the AHF is doing. It's a lot of money to handle and a lot of people to satisfy and it's not an easy job. Thank you.”

“Today is a good day because we are still here to talk about our history of what happened and we are here with people who love and support us. Sure it's not perfect, but the AHF is fair, the money will go to help survivors. This is the commitment that we have as survivors, that's why they call us survivors. We will survive through the storm to come down here and help our children, our families and our communities.”

“A long time ago before the residential schools issue came up an Elder told me to go back to my community because there is a sleeping giant and I had to go and wake it up, gently. I thought he meant the Elders but when the residential schools issue came up, I knew what he was talking about. He said that when the truth came out it would reverberate throughout the world.”

“There are all kinds of healing and levels of healing. We have utilised Elders to come to the gatherings and they are just tremendous. I think good things are happening.” •

# Regional Gathering Stories

## the following are the words of speakers taken from AHF Regional Gatherings

*From the Iqaluit Gathering*

Inusiq.

I grew up here, in Iqaluit. There is one thing that I've always worked hard at here in Iqaluit. When I was a little child going to school I was abused by one of my teachers. I had no one to turn to and then the person that I confided to told me I should contact the RCMP but there was nothing done and it has had a big impact on me. As I was growing up I have been told numerous times by the Elders to talk to people that I can confide in, but at times my mind is overcome with thoughts of suicide.

missing from my life. I tried going to Church, but there was nothing there for me. I take up pow wows and ceremonies, and that is how I've started my healing process.

I still have a hard time discussing because we couldn't speak our language and so I had a hard time speaking out in class. That was taken away from me as a child. I was punished, and so all through school, college and university I never volunteered or spoke out in class unless I was forced. Now I know we have to tell our stories in such a way that we can have some good positive feedback, because the public doesn't know what we went through.

**Now I know we have to tell our stories in such a way that we can have some good positive feedback because the public doesn't know what we went through.**

At times it's very hard because I see that person every day. Because I've been taught not to hurt, I don't hurt this person. I've worked sporadically from time to time but often when I apply for jobs I don't get them because of the abrupt cut in my education. I used to sniff gas but then questioned if it was affecting my mental ability and then stopped, and now I help people, no matter what their ethnic origin. I have helped a lot of people right here in this community. I enjoy helping other people and I look for jobs, but I just want to further my education so I can get a better job. I have talked to the local education authority but they tell me there are no placements. I have approached them when courses are going to be opening up, I just wanted to make those comments.

I looked for a place to send my children to school and eventually found a Catholic school, but I pulled them out because they were being discriminated against. Then I put them in a public school and it was very hard because the public schools are not very kind to the Aboriginal students. It's hard to get rid of racism in our society because they don't know the harm that they're doing to other people. We have to get over the racism in our society because it's really detrimental.

*From the Vancouver Gathering*

I am an urban street native and a residential school victim. In 1944 I first entered the school when I was five and for the next ten years, the best years of my life, to learn some skills and technology, I was forced to be converted to a harsh, Roman Catholic religion. Because of my experiences with the school, I think the corruption began from the first day I entered. It was the beginning of a changing world for many of us, we were no longer salmon hunters, buffalo hunters or whale hunters. We had no alternative.

There's been a lot of pain that's gone on in our world –the pain still haunts me and I feel that I'm still in residential school. I'm a victim, I've lost a lot of my culture. They tampered with our philosophy as Natives –luckily I was able to maintain the honesty of our grandfathers' teachings. In the ten years that I spent in school I had a rough time, so did others. I'm a survivor and a chronic alcoholic and drug-abuser. I've experienced hitch-hiking, jail, beatings. I've quit heroine for 27 years, and alcohol for 20 years. I've had jobs, hard labour because I didn't have any skills. Now that I have arthritis I can't work and have been on disability for five years but I feel I could work in counselling.

*From the Winnipeg Gathering*

I'm a residential school survivor and both my parents also went to school so I'm second generation. I know we had a sense of great loss and my grandparents were very spiritual. When Christianity came it took away our culture, our language and our family relations and ability to communicate to one another. We were separated from our families, our brothers and sisters, so it was hard for the children to mingle with one another because we were separated as a family unit.

Since then I have picked up my culture and there's a whole lot of information there that's

There are a lot of people walking our streets that have had the same experiences that I have. It's





heavy to be sober and to be able to stand what's going on, poverty, etc. There's been a genocide here. I believe that I'm healed within my spirit and mind because I can understand what's happened. I'm in the process of protecting our identity as Natives and our future identity. We have a future. I would like the AHF to look at every aspect of helping people heal. I believe there isn't enough money here –it's definitely a start– but I want some form of compensation to provide me with some form of business. I'm all alone, there's no unity here among our tribes. Forget the past, forgive. There's a lot that's happened here and I'm glad that I'm from a culture that does not encourage to go out and kill, exploit, etc.

Canada is a beautiful country and we have a lot of people that are trying to help us. I believe that there are too many stipulations for the law for a legal lawsuit. I know more about heaven and hell than St. John the Baptist– I could take his seat. It's been very tough on our people and our people are hurting. The technological system is working faster, beyond my comprehension.

Is there any way that we could all work together and accept each other as we are, whether we're jobless, prostitutes, drug-addicts, etc.? We only have one chance in a lifetime to put our hopes and dreams to a better destiny for all of us. Whatever you have, give it the best you've got for our survival.

**As far as I'm concerned I was lost one day. I didn't hear the drum beat, I heard the organ. It took me 36 years to find out who I am.**

*From the Ottawa Gathering*

When I was growing up, when I was in the residential schools, I was lost for a very long time. I tried going to Church, even though I was forced to go to school, they forced me to pray –I didn't really know how. They observed me, I was quite a rebel being abused at school by the white man and then by my father who was an alcoholic. Now I'm finding some peace in learning my own culture. I went to see the Elders and get my spirit name and I found my way in our culture. I am a warrior but I'm also a peace maker. I was given visions to follow through the spirit world. I've always had faith in our culture. Finding my peace could only come through following our culture. We need to listen to the little ones, the melody in their song and laughter, to guide us.

As far as I'm concerned I was lost one day, I didn't hear the drum beat, I heard the organ. It took me 36 years to find out who I am. One of the spirit songs I was given to sing that says for grandfather to watch over us because we are your children. I was asked to use this song in every place that I go to –that is something I did not acknowledge earlier but my spirit tells me that I have to sing this song for the spirit. There's a lot of teachings towards healing. We have seven gifts– there is a meaning and a direction to every gift. If we can follow those maybe we can find meaning. Open your heart and you will find strength. When I was given my Indian name my spirit came into my life so strong as to what I'm supposed to do in this life

that I'm living today. Through native spirituality of our Elders is the way that I found healing for myself –sometimes I wish it could be that easy for everyone else.

I hated everything when I was in residential school. I never found anything there but I found the power of healing and faith through our ancestors. It doesn't matter how hard it is or how difficult it gets but while I'm sitting there I think about my past and cry about the pain that I've gone through, I get angry. The power of tobacco helps me stay strong when I need it the most because of the faith I have in my ancestors. These are the ways that I've found my own healing. I do not preach to my brothers and sisters on the streets about the Church, detox, etc. I try to be an example for them to show them how simple it is when you put your heart and mind to something that you really want. Open your heart and let the light shine in so you can see instead of wandering around in the dark. Use what you've learned in a positive way.

I'm only one year old in sobriety. 35 years I've wasted. Half of it was wasted through the hands of a white man trying to show me how to pray, talk, be. I can't live those ways anymore. I've been in and out of the circle for so long, I'm tired of being an insider-outsider. We all belong in the circle. When we use drugs and alcohol we're outside the circle; we're thinking with a different mind that's not us.

I love my life today - it's difficult but it's a good feeling when I get up in the morning without having to think about the pain that I went through in residential school. I try not to ask for too much strength and I ask for balance for others to follow my example. All I can be is a messenger through songs, prayers and teachings. I laugh every day but at night I cry because of the brothers and sisters I leave on the street. They say that children are lost because their parents were lost. There should be an AHF Children of Lost Parents program. If anyone truly cares they will do something in a good way about this healing centre to help out these little people that are powerless over alcohol, drugs and mental anguish. We're all lost because we can never get to the truth –to be honest with yourself so you can be honest with everyone else. Titles and labels don't mean anything to me. It's how you use your heart that matters to me. That is one of the most important things that was given to us.

*Monton Gathering*

I'm a survivor for 13 years. I'm speaking on behalf of the people in Halifax that can't speak for themselves, they are afraid to talk. I stayed away from home when I left residential school, I got a job as an Asian and brought my children up as white people. No one on the Reserve knew I was a survivor, they just thought I was going to a special school. People are now beginning to know me

but I will never learn my culture because I'm deaf in each ear.

Yes, I went to the gathering and I healed on my own but my biggest healing was to forgive my parents for the physical abuse, the mental abuse and the rape. I know that they were sick, they were alcoholics. That's why I became a survivor in the school.

You can't blame the survivors for the problems on the Reserve, I didn't grow up on the Reserve. I'm just a survivor like everyone else. The schools taught us how to survive hatred and to get by. When you look at any one of us, we are all part of one big scar. No matter what you do to us we will survive and we will fight together.

*From the Yellowknife Gathering*

I am a residential school survivor. As I look into the AHF's Annual Report, I am annoyed. When the AHF was created, it was to focus on the residential school survivors. As it has progressed I have noticed that outsiders are giving their point of view about the AHF. We survivors have a lot of issues to bring forward and we can help each other. We know who we are; we know what it took for us to be away from our families. We have gone through how it feels to be lonely, and going through the grieving impacts us. If I tell you my feelings and my situation –if you can feel my trauma– there is a way that I can be held and reached and overcome my residential school experiences.

The AHF is not focussing on residential school experiences. How many of your staff have gone through what the survivors have gone through? They can't help us. You can only help others when you've gone through what we have.

The federal government knows all the students who went through the schools. Have you contacted those people to let them know about the AHF program? There are many who will try to take advantage of your program just because there is money involved. I don't want to see that because the program was created for survivors. I want to address this very strongly. I am standing here very hurt because I see that there is a lot of money that's been spent, and we're talking about occupation, space, equipment, etc. I went to residential school at 4 years old. I was fluent in Dogrib and didn't speak any English. My cousin Alice assisted me, interpreting because she had already been in school for a year before me. They had to assess me, they had to give all the personal information about who I was. I have thanked Alice many times for helping me with this. When they realised I was 4 they were going to send me home and then decided to let me stay to have three meals a day, a roof and because I had been flown in, they made me stay. The hard part was that I couldn't communicate. I was strapped for speaking my language –but I took it. It was my way of being punished and to be strong for who I was.

I stayed in residential school for 10 years after that. The first year I went home to Yellowknife for the summer holiday with a whole bunch of kids, everyone was happy to meet their parents and I was afraid because I didn't know who my mom and dad were until my brother showed me. The





thing that helped me to go through this is that my father could speak English and communicate for me with my mother who spoke only Dogrib.

When I met my mom I didn't greet her, hug her, because I believed that my mother was a Nun at the school. I can say gracefully that the Nun took care of me, she was a very good Nun to me and taught me many things that I didn't know. When I saw my mom I wasn't happy at first because I didn't know who she was.

As the years progressed, I remembered my grandmother's advice to never forget my language. She said that once I lost my Aboriginal identity that I would fall apart and not know who I was. As many lickings as I got for speaking my language, my grandmother's wisdom held me together through the years.

## The hardest people to work for is your own. We can't battle amongst ourselves. We need to work together in a collaborative effort. With limited resources we can't be fighting amongst ourselves.

If the AHF is going to help people like me you better do a very good job because many of us are not sure who we are. I found help at a treatment centre. I was sober for 7 years and then two years ago adopted a beautiful girl. Then I lost her when I had a relapse. I needed help and I tried to put my pride aside but I was too ashamed.

Now I'm not ashamed because I can relate to others about how it was growing up in a residential school. I don't want to see outsiders involved, if we can all come together it would be a great relief. We need to help ourselves so we can help others, especially the ones that are worse off than me. Help us to recover so we can be proud of who we are.

My question is –how many of you have experienced residential schools in the office? This is for us, the survivors. There are generations of us. My father went to residential school: what he went through I'm going through. Are you going to start listening and paying attention to those people? Pay attention to us people because we want to help ourselves.

This program has to ease our pain and I want the AHF to do its homework. The survivors are listed with the federal government so no one can take advantage of this program that was created for the survivors. That's where everything will start from. It will hurt me really bad if there are outsiders taking advantage of the process just to get money. Your process should ask Were you in residential school? How can you help?

### *From the Whitehorse Gathering*

My mother is a survivor of residential school, I am an adult child of a survivor. She has brought me along and helped me together with the family and the community. The intergenerational impacts of residential schools go on when you consider the few people who went. I assisted a youth who had committed a sexual offence. The youth had committed a sexual offence and you could trace back

that he was abused as a youth, who was abused by members of the community, who were abused at residential schools. We can always trace it back to residential schools.

The government traumatised our people sending them to residential schools, then sent us home with the problems. And then the government runs programs to fix us. This youth was sent to a youth program, the government is telling us that we must come to them to get better. Who are they to tell us how to get better? The government is responsible for where we are today. How dare they tell us that they will heal our people in the European fashion! We know the healing that our people need. We know what's best for our people, we will look after our own –this was the argument to the judge. The judge withdrew the youth from the government run program and gave him back

to us. He's now our responsibility, we know what's best for him, for his family, for our community. The government is not going to tell this story to people. You have that right and responsibility, take ownership of your people. Government is not our biggest enemy, it is ourselves. The hardest people to work for is your own. We can't battle amongst ourselves. We need to work together in a collaborative effort –with limited resources we can't be duplicating services and fighting amongst ourselves. We all need to work together so we all move together as one Nation, not 14 communities, towards that goal of healing, with all our brothers and sisters.

### *Gathering Quotations*

"It seems that a lot of us have led two lives but yet we don't show all of our pain at the skin level."

"I think that the Aboriginal Healing Foundation has a key role to play and that we here in Nunavut can make use of it. As president of NTI, I would like to work with your organisation in building and maintaining sustainable healing processes."

"We need to think of the children as our future leaders, and with that in mind, we need to help the residential school children who have to face their problems, because their parents were taken away when they were very small they were not the only ones who were affected. It also affected their children. The love that was coming from their parents didn't change, but there was a huge impact on the residential school children and on their family members."

"I am a survivor of the residential schools and of sexual abuse in my family for many generations because of the residential schools. I took the initiative to start healing myself because I can't go out to help my community until I help myself."

"As an adult we can say what we need to say. Regardless of whether the AHF helps us or not, we have to help our children and do something in our communities now. Help from the outside may not come so you have to go out and work in your community to encourage them for healing."

"We need our language back, we need our culture back, we can't be ashamed anymore. I want to be a voice in my community for the women and children. I want the women and children to stand up and talk about their abuse –it's healing. I want all the Aboriginal people to stand together with one voice. Dreams can come through for our people if we believe in ourselves."

"I don't even have a family tree. I find myself so little of everything –the language the culture. However, that little makes me a proud guy. So language is the foundation of every nationality on earth."

"We have a future. I would like the AHF to look at every aspect of helping people heal."

"When we deal with hurts on the West Coast we turn to our Elders to look for guidance, and some of us use them for our therapists. I just wanted to share and say thank you to those people sitting there for making it possible for our parents to talk to one another because that's what the AHF has done for us."

"I'm on my own healing journey. I've been sober for nine years –now I'm able to acknowledge some of the things in my life that I'm not proud of and move on. We have to take small steps when we're working on something as delicate as healing. Healing is the top priority for me. I encourage everyone here to keep fighting for their own communities."

"I still speak my language even though they tried to take it away from me. I want to make the AHF aware of how scary this first stage of the healing is. I want to say how proud I am for being a part of the healing in the three communities that got together in my Nation for healing."

"I would like to salute our Elders who have come through the residential schools and would like to acknowledge people who are part of the AHF. This is the first time I've seen everyone come together. I would like to give my greetings to everyone here and to my family."

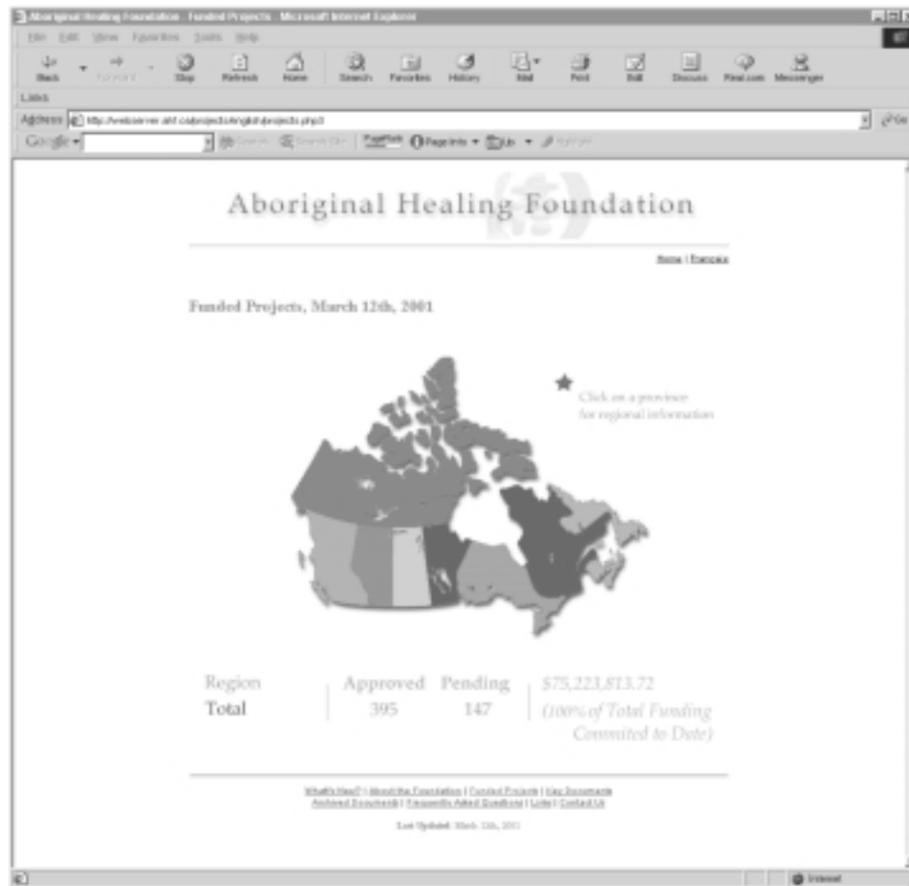
"I am happy to be here. My community has gone through stages of questioning the AHF's acceptance of projects. We are doing consultation in the community. Sometimes there are personality conflicts that come from the consultation but we move forward because we know they've been trying for 500 years to extinguish our nature."

Today Aboriginal people have to rebuild our society. Honesty, humility, sharing and strength are values transmitted to us from our Elders. I am an apprentice grandfather."

"We should not forget that we are working with human beings. We should never lose sight of this. I feel the respect, a lot of respect. If I were to give an award for respect it would be to the AHF because they are very humane and respectful. Through the healing process we are learning to know our personal qualities."

*continued on page 32*





## The Aboriginal Healing Foundation website <http://www.ahf.ca>

Visit our up-to-date website for the following:

- Announcements
- Handbook Download
- Annual Reports
- Application Forms
- Newsletters
- Press Releases
- Code of Conduct
- Ethics Guidelines
- Healing Centre Information
- Foundation Workshops
- Weekly Funded Project Update
- General Foundation Information and Background
- Board of Directors Biographies
- Funding Agreement, By-law, Letters Patent
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Links
- Residential School Workshops
- Conferences

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

The following form will help us to ensure that, if you move, *Healing Words* will continue to be mailed to you without interruption. Please clip this form and mail to:

Healing Words  
C/O Aboriginal Healing Foundation  
Suite 801 - 75 Albert Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E7

Name:

Old Address:

New Address:

Do you have any comments or suggestions for *Healing Words*?

On the move



HEALING WORDS

# Residential School Resources



The following resource list is provided as a public service. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation does not endorse these materials. Included are books, articles, videos, audio tapes, reports, survivor groups and websites that address residential schools and/or their intergenerational legacy. A resource list with new entries is presented with every issue. See earlier issues for other resources.



## Articles

English-Currie, Vicki. "The Need for Re-evaluation in Native Education." *Writing the Circle: Native Women of Western Canada*. Edited by Jeanne Perreault and Sylvia Vance. Edmonton, Alberta: NeWest Publishers, 1990.

The following articles are listed on First Nations Periodical Index (Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre). Contact: 120-33rd Street East, Saskatoon, S7K 0S2. Phone: (306) 244-1146 Fax (306) 665-6520, or visit:

<http://moon.lights.com/sifc/INTRO.HTM>

Acoose, Janice. "An Aboriginal perspective." *Saskatchewan Indian*. Vol.20 No.4 (September 1991): 16. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: ABCOM, 1991. E 78 S2 S27

Angus, Denis J. Okanee. "Remembering: preserving residential school history." *Saskatchewan Sage*. Vol.1 No.10 (July 1997): 6. Edmonton, Alberta: Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta, 1997. Woodland Cultural Centre museum and residential school history as seen there.

Angus, Denis J. Okanee. "Residential schools: Telling your story is the start of healing." *Saskatchewan Sage*. Edmonton, Alberta: Aboriginal Multi-Media Society, 1999. Denis Okanee Angus shares his story on the impact residential schools has had on him and on communities.

Dickson, Stewart, reviewer. "Hey Monias!: the story of Raphael Ironstand." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*. Vol.15 No.1 (1995): 167-169. Brandon, Manitoba: Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 1995. Biography of Raphael Ironstand, of Valley River Reserve, Manitoba, residential schools, abuse, alcohol abuse, forced assimilation. E 78 A1 C353

Fortier, Mary. "Survivors of boarding school syndrome." *Aboriginal Voices*. Toronto, Ontario: Aboriginal Voices Inc, 1999. Excerpt from Mary Fortier's unpublished manuscript. A glimpse at the experiences had by Mary Sackaney-Fortier at the Ontario residential schools of St. Ann and St. Joseph. E 78 C2 R87

Hookimaw-Witt, Jacqueline. "Any changes since residential school?" *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta, 1998. A look at how formal education is a factor to Aboriginal social problems. LC 2629 A1 C23

McKinley, Rob. Pain brings hope to residential school students. *Alberta Sweetgrass*. Vol.5 No.1 (December 1997): 2. Edmonton, Alberta: Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta, 1997. Lethbridge workshop helps people come to terms with their residential school memories.

Miller, J.R. "The irony of residential schooling." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. Vol.14 No.2 (1987): 3-14. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: University of Saskatchewan, 1987. Residential school movement. LC 2629 A1 C23

Mirasty, Gordon. "Beauval Indian Residential High School graduation." *Saskatchewan Indian*. Vol.11 No.7 (July 1981): 24. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 1981. E 78 S2 S27

Trevithick, Scott R. "Native residential schooling in Canada: A review of literature." *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*. Brandon, Manitoba: The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 1998. An analysis and summarization of the importance of the development in literature regarding residential schools. E 78 A1 C353

Urion, Carl. "Introduction: the experience of Indian residential schooling." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. Vol.18 No. (Supplement 1991): i-iv. Edmonton, Alberta: Dept. of Educational Foundations, 1991. Residential, industrial, boarding schools. LC 2629 A1 C23

## Books

Funk, Jack and Harold Greyeyes. *Information—knowledge—empowerment: Residential schools and crime*. First Nations Free Press. Sherwood Park, Alberta: First Nations Free Press Ltd., 1999. Explains how the abuse at residential schools is a factor for the high number of Aboriginal incarcerations.

## Video

The following videos are available from

*Za-geh-do-win*

Information Clearinghouse P.O. Box 40, Naughton, Ontario, P0M 2M0  
<http://www.anishinabek.ca/zagehdowin/videos.htm>

*Beyond The Shadows*. (A documentary which deals with the devastating emotional effects residential schools had on First Nations people in Canada. Provides tools for dealing with the trauma of residential schools within their communities or organizations.)

*First Nations: The Circle Unbroken, Vol. 5*. (This is the fifth video in the series *First Nations: The Circle Unbroken*. There are 4 short videos included in this video that cover current issues, cultural identity and healing of the First Nation's people. The stories included in this video are: *Qatuwas: People Gathering Together*, *O'Siem*, *Mi'kmaq Family: Migmaoei Otjiosog*, and *The Mind of a Child*.)

*The Healing Dance Has Begun*. (Narrated by Liz Edgar-Webkamigad and Bea Shawanda and deals with different types of abuse. Includes a teaching on multi-generational abuse and it's effects on the family as a whole, as well as the individual.)

*The Nitinaht Chronicles*. (This film follows the journey of one community – the Ditidaht First Nation on BC's Nitinaht Lake Reserve – over a seven-year period as it deals with the legacy of sexual abuse. The healing process that they are going through to break the cycle of abuse is revealed through their own voices. Their stories also reveal the effects of the residential school system.)

*One Mother's Journey*. (This video looks at the story of Keitha Kennedy and how she overcame her past hurts to begin a journey of rediscovery. Keitha is a single mother of three that lived in a home that was abusive and attended residential school. Keitha began addicted to drugs but eventually found courage to change her life.) •