

canoe.ca ... **CNEWS**

EDMONTON **SUN** .com 24 hours Click to view ▶

SERVICES **SUBSCRIBE** **EMPLOYMENT** **NEWS RESEARCH CENTRE** **CLASSIFIEDS** **ADVERTISING**

In Tomorrow's Paper

See what's keeping Ann Marie McQueen busy this week.

Find last weeks Trends column here.

24 hours **SUN** contests! **CLICK HERE!**

Current Conditions
 Clear
 2°C
 Full Forecast

SUN NEWS **Canada**

Sun, February 24, 2008



Legacy visits generations removed

Kids were taught their culture and beliefs were evil, and rigid obedience replaced family love

By **ANDREW HANON**,
SUN MEDIA

Email	Print	Write	Size: A A A
Share:		+	Help

Native elders call it "blood memory" and it's poisoned individuals, families and entire communities.

They say that the legacy of abuse from Canada's Indian residential school system penetrates right into its victims' bloodstreams and has been passed down from generation to generation.

Now, grandchildren two generations removed from the government campaign to eliminate aboriginal culture are still feeling the effects.

The system, where children were taken from their homes and sent to church-run boarding schools, was in place for a century across Canada and was at its peak from the 1920s to the 1950s.

More than 90 schools operated in all provinces, with the highest concentration, 28, in Alberta. In all, more than 150,000 children aged five to 16 attended.

Former students describe themselves as "survivors" of residential schools because of the psychological, physical and sexual abuse so many of them suffered at the hands of the people charged with educating them.

"The stories you hear are horrific," says Marlene Peters, who works with survivors and their families.

One man told her of how, when he was eight or nine years old, he lost a school-issued handkerchief. When his teachers figured he must have dropped it down a 13-hole latrine, they made him crawl inside the trench and search through the human waste to find it.

When he failed to locate the piece of cloth, they made him stand at the back of his classroom for several hours, covered in feces.

His classmates teased him mercilessly for the rest of his days at the school. He grew up to become a tortured, bitter, angry man who spent time in jail for manslaughter.

"People don't realize the impact these events have," said Peters, who works at the

SUN IN DEPTH
 RELATED STORIES

- [Demons from St. Albert's Indian Residential School](#)
- [Sinister social engineering](#)
- [Tortured by memories](#)

- Home
- News
- Edmonton
- Alberta
- Alberta Election
- Canada
- World
- Columnists
- Entertainment
- Sports
- Photo Galleries
- Opinion/Comment
- Columnists
- Lifestyle
- Business
- Contests & More
- Video
- Dating

Business Name, City

Find a Business

Find a Person

» Search

Featured:

- Hot Clicks
- Traffic Cameras
- Blogs
- Feature Series



Special Sections:

- Snow Scene
- WAG
- Truck Time
- Value Driven
- Colleges & Uni's
- Homes for Sale
- Feel Your Best
- Neighbourhoods
- Summer Swimsuits
- Active Edmonton

\$78/hr - Now Hiring!

Earn money from home this month. Earn up to \$1,700-\$7,900/month. www.ontariojobs.com

Looking for a new car?

Look at our large online inventory. Southgate Audi in Edmonton www.autonet.ca

Stocks info

Get info on stock quotes and news. Search from 14 search engines in 1. www.info.com

Dell laptops & notebooks

17" flat panel ultrasharp monitors from Dell. Shop online today! www.dell.com/ca/accessories

Find the right job for you

Browse listings and apply for jobs. Search from 14 search engines in 1. www.info.com

Klix.ca

Advertise!

Envirovision
Fore Golf
Pets On Parade
Police Beat
Autonet

Nechi Institute, which promotes health in native communities. (Interestingly, the institute shares space with Poundmaker's Lodge, a native-based rehab centre, on the site of the Edmonton Indian Residential School on the northern edge of St. Albert.)

Even if a child wasn't horrifically abused like the boy forced to slither through human waste, the system, by its very nature, was abusive, she says.

Classifieds:

Classified Extra
Obituaries
Jobboom
Autonet
Dating

"Children were taught that their culture and beliefs were evil and that if their parents weren't Christian, they were going to hell," Peters explains. "One of the major objectives was to get children away from their parents."

The children grew up in an institution, where order, obedience and discipline were driven into them, without any nurturing, affection or love. In essence, many were raised like convicts.

SUNshine Girl



"It was a very rigid environment, like being in the military," she says. Rules were strictly - often brutally - enforced, and the adults in charge were usually unbending, severe disciplinarians.

"Then you see the intergenerational impact," Peters says. "It's common to see adults who grew up in residential school withholding affection from their kids - rigid, strict and unable to express love."

On Canoe:

Health & Fitness
Trends
Eat
Sex Files
DIY
Gadgets
Lotteries
Comics
Crossword
Horoscopes
TV Listings
Movie Listings

Now the cycle of dysfunction is continuing to the third generation, with the children of residential school survivors raising kids of their own.

This cycle, says Leona Carter, is one of the key causes of the epidemic of substance abuse and addiction in native communities.

Carter, former executive director of Poundmaker's Lodge, says residential school was one of the most common threads among aboriginal clientele at the treatment centre.

"Our philosophy was that most addiction is just a band-aid over much deeper problems that are rooted in childhood issues," says Carter, who is now the City of Edmonton's aboriginal relations director.

Residential school was designed to strip children of their native culture and assimilate them into mainstream Canada. It ended up just taking away their identities, while racism and government policies kept them from being accepted into society.

Services:

Events:
whatsonEdmonton.com
Sun Underground
Subscriptions
Advertising
News Research
About Us
Employment
Privacy Policy

Outcast and unable to understand their shame and rage, residential school survivors turned to drugs and alcohol.

"That was what our program was designed to address," Carter. Residential school survivors - and many of their children - "are lost. They don't have that strong base that a sense of belonging and community can give. A lot of our treatment program was helping them reclaim their culture and dignity."

Got A News Tip? [Click Here](#)



Newspapers

This site is updated by 4:00 a.m. MST each day and includes stories and columns from the day's print edition of The Edmonton Sun.

[SUBSCRIBE](#) [EMPLOYMENT](#) [NEWS RESEARCH CENTRE](#) [CLASSIFIEDS](#) [ADVERTISING](#)

[Send a Letter to the Editor](#)

[CANOE](#) home | We welcome your [feedback](#).

Copyright © 2007, [Canoe Inc.](#) All rights reserved. Test