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Grannies' wisdom, humour key to Cree community

MONIQUE POLAK, Special to The Gazette

Published: Sunday, February 03

But Danyluk seems to have figured grandparenting out - at least according to her 18-year-old granddaughter Cassandra. "She's so good. She was kind of like my mum and grandmum. She does not judge," Cassandra said.

There are gookums everywhere in Wemindji. We met another one at the airport as we were leaving town. Her face is lined with wrinkles, but Harriet Georgekish, 91, has retained her girlish laugh. She has 25 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and a 29th on the way.

Her granddaughter Leona Shecapio had accompanied her gookum to Val d'Or for a medical appointment. Asked whether Leona was her favourite grandchild, Georgekish burst into laughter. Because Georgekish speaks only Cree, her granddaughter acted as her translator: "I treat them all equally. That's all I'm going to say."

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Writer Monique Polak and photographer Monique Dykstra visited

Wemindji as part of a Blue Metropolis educational project called Quebec Roots. For more about the project, visit

www.blue-met-bleu.com/u/pdfs/quebecroots.pdf

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