

Healing and Reconciliation through Education 2012: Gathering & Conference

Final Report from the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association – January 2013

TEXT

Beginning Friday, August 3 and running through Monday August 6, 2012, the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association, along with partners the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre and Algoma University, hosted the *Healing and Reconciliation through Education 2012: Gathering & Conference*, an initiative funded primarily by the Government of Canada under the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's *Commemoration Initiative*. This event had three distinct but interwoven streams: 1) a Survivor-focused *Gathering*; a *Healing and Reconciliation through Education* conference; and a suite of *Arts and Culture* activities.

All the events and activities described herein took place on the main campus of Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario with the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre and Algoma University providing in-kind human resources and infrastructure support and financial support through direct funding and discounted service provision.

Staff and Volunteers

Due to delays in cash flow under the Contribution Agreement between the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA) and the Government of Canada, the CSAA opted to hire two ***Event Coordinators***, to be managed by the Director of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre (SRSC), working out of the SRSC on the Algoma University (AU) campus. These individuals were hired for the period of June 5 – September 7, 2012.

The CSAA also retained a ***Special Displays Coordinator*** under the *Special Displays* budget line item for the period of June 21 – August 16, 2012. This hiring was necessary to accommodate the increased emphasis on educational exhibits within the *Healing and Reconciliation through Education* conference stream.

The SRSC also dedicated staff time to the event. The ***SRSC Director, Special Advisor to the SRSC, and SRSC Archives Technician*** each played key roles in the planning and implementation of the initiative.

The CSAA worked closely with event staff and SRSC staff to plan the event, including registration and travel support for Survivors, families and communities, and other visitors; to engage guest speakers and performers for the various components, including all travel and accommodation needs; to arrange catering and necessary equipment rental; to develop and disseminated promotional material; to develop and distribute *Reunion Information Kits*; to develop and distribute special gifts; and to develop and carry out entertainment activities.

Friday, August 3

Friday, August 3, 2012 saw the event open with the lighting of a Sacred Fire in the Arbour at Algoma University. This fire would burn under the careful watch of the fire keeper until the event's close on Monday, August 6, 2012.

Due to bad weather, an outdoor *Opening Ceremony*, to be followed by the *Commemoration Ceremony*, was cancelled in favour of an indoor program in AU's George Leach Centre.

The CSAA's Mike Cachagee was in Master of Ceremony for the evening, which began at 4:00 pm. The following distinguished, invited guests spoke about the importance of the upcoming unveiling of the commemoration plaques: Daisy Kostus, CSAA President; Darrell Boissoneau, President, Shingwauk Education Trust; Dr. Richard Myers, President, Algoma University; Chief Lyle Sayers, Garden River First Nation, Chief Dean Sayers, Batchewana, First Nation; Rt. Reverend Stephen Andrews, Bishop of Algoma; Mr. Steve Butland, City Councillor, representing the Mayor of Sault Ste. Marie; and Mr. Bryan Hayes, local Member of Parliament. Mike Cachagee also read into the record a message from the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs for Ontario.

This was followed by the unveiling of two plaques that name the Shingwauk site, which includes Shingwauk Hall and the Shingwauk/Fauquier Chapel and Cemetery, as a national memorial:

"In keeping with the spirit and intent embodied within the Shingwauk site, the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association, Shingwauk Education Trust and Algoma University hereby designate these lands as a National Memorial to all those who attended one or more of the many Residential Schools across Turtle Island. We hold a special place in our hearts for those children who never returned home. May their memories live on."

Commissioner Marie Wilson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada then delivered a short welcome and her keynote address.

Following the keynote address Lori Rainsville was invited to the stage to close the ceremony. Lori, presently the Missanabie Cree First Nation Band Administrator is an Algoma University alumni, with a BA in Sociology (1996). Her mother, Alice Fletcher (deceased), attended Chapleau Residential School from 1941-1947 and the Shingwauk schools from 1947-1953. Lori's two children are currently attending Algoma University, pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Anishinaabemowin and a Bachelor of Fine Arts, respectively.

A ***Memorial Feast*** with evening entertainment followed to close out the day's program.

Saturday, August 4

Registration

For the opening of the official Gathering & Conference component of the event, the SRSC had pre-registered 291 registrants by phone, through the website (www.shingwauk.org), and in-person at the SRSC.

Communities

As always, there was a large local presence from the greater Sault Ste. Marie area, including Garden River First Nation, Batchewana First Nation, and Missanabie Cree First Nation. Registrants also hailed from many other communities near and far, including:

- Calgary AB
- Carp ON
- Chapleau ON
- Cochrane ON
- Guelph ON
- Hagersville ON
- Kashechewan ON
- Kenora ON
- Lake Isabella MI
- Marathon ON
- Massey ON
- Matheson ON
- Melbourne ON
- Mishkeegogamang First Nation ON
- Mistissini QC
- Mt. Pleasant MI
- Muncie ON
- New Post Reserve ON
- North Bay
- Ohsweken ON
- Ouje-Bougoumou QC
- Ottawa ON
- Pikogan Amos QC
- Sioux Lookout ON
- Syracuse NY
- Sagamok Anishinawbek ON
- Saugeen First Nation ON
- Sturgeon Falls ON
- Sudbury ON
- Thunder Bay ON
- Toronto ON
- Wallaceburg ON
- Walpole Island ON
- Wanapitae ON
- Waterloo ON
- Webequie ON
- Windsor ON
- Yorktown SK

Setting

AU's George Leach Centre (GLC) was the central hub for all Gathering and Conference activities.

Just inside the entrance was the *Resolution Health Support Worker* headquarters and a registration table for the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Statement Gathering*.

The GLC field house was broken into three sections: 1) Upon entering, a large communal gathering space was set up, where registrants could gather information and access volunteer services, as well as sit and mingle throughout the day; this was also where lunch and dinner was served each day, with refreshments available throughout the day. 2) The middle section contained the sound stage where key note addresses and other presentations would take place, as well as evening entertainment. 3) And the final section contained various educational exhibits and other information services, including:

- *Where Are the Children? Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools* (Legacy of Hope Foundation)
- *100 Years of Loss: The Residential Schools System in Canada* (Legacy of Hope Foundation)
- *Bakaan nake'ii ngii-izhi-gakinoo'amaagoomin (we were taught differently): The Indian residential school experience* (Lake of the Woods Museum)
- *Remember the Children (The Shingwauk Project)* (Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre)
- Art and artifacts from the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre archive.

Tours of the grounds were offered through each day, with Shingwauk Hall, the cemetery, Bishop Fauquier Chapel, the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, and the harbour, site of the Sacred Fire main focuses for Survivors and other guests.

As well, the Echoes of the World Drum Festival offered programming outdoors throughout each day, just behind the registration tent that welcomed guests to the GLC.

Gathering and Conference Programming

The morning opened with a prayer, followed by a video greeting from National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, as well as words of welcome from Dr. Richard Myers, President of Algoma University.

Conference Stream

- "Speaking My Truth" book launch/talk with:

Garnet Angeconeb is an Anishinaabe originally from the Lac Seul First Nation and now lives in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Garnet attended Pelican Indian Residential School near Sioux Lookout from 1963 to 1969. In 1975, Garnet graduated from Queen Elizabeth High School in Sioux Lookout. In 1982, he graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a diploma in journalism. In 1985, Garnet was elected to the council of the municipality of Sioux Lookout. It was there that Garnet spearheaded the founding of the Sioux Lookout Anti-racism Committee. Today the Sioux Lookout Anti-racism continues its work with an added dimension to mandate that being the Sioux Lookout Coalition for Healing and Reconciliation. The SLCHR membership comprises of local former Indian Residential School students, clergy and interested citizens. The main purpose of the SLCHR is to promote awareness and seek renewed relations as a result of the Indian Residential School legacy. Garnet co-chairs the Sioux Lookout Coalition for Healing and Reconciliation. He is a recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee award.

Mike DeGagné is the Executive Director of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, a national Aboriginal organization dedicated to addressing the legacy of Canada's Indian Residential School System. He has worked in the field of addiction and mental health for the past 25 years, first as a community worker on-reserve in northern Ontario and later with the Addiction Research Foundation (ARF), the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), and the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP). Mike lectures nationally and internationally on issues of Aboriginal health, Residential Schools, reconciliation, and governance. He serves on a number of Boards including Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), is currently the Chairman of the Child Welfare League of Canada, and past Chairman of Ottawa's Queensway Carleton Hospital. His PhD focuses on Aboriginal post-secondary education.

Shelagh Rogers is a veteran broadcast-journalist. She has hosted flagship programs with CBC Radio including *This Morning* and *Sounds Like Canada*. In 2000, she won the John Drainie Award, Canada's highest broadcasting honour. Shelagh loves being host of *The Next Chapter* on CBC Radio. The program is devoted to two of her favourite kind of people: Canadian writers and songwriters. She works with her long-time collaborator Jacqueline Kirk and Erin Noel, who comes to *The Next Chapter* from *Go!*. Tom Howell, the poetry guy, helps out whenever he can while he writes a book. Shelagh is the first ever Ambassador-at-Large for the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough because she believes we are all in the same boat. Shelagh is also a proud member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 45, Bonne Bay, NL where she hosts the annual Writers at Woody Point Festival. She is also an honorary member of the League of Canadian Poets. And she is a previous "Jack" Award winner for her decades-long promotion of Canadian literature.

- Where Are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools exhibit talk with:

Richard Kistabish is an Algonquin from the Abitibiwinni first nation, Quebec, who speaks English, French and Algonquin fluently. He is the former president of Social Services Minokin and has been involved in the field of health and social services at the regional and provincial levels for many years. He served as administrator and manager of the health committee, Kitcisakik, as Chief of Abitibiwinni First Nation, and as Grand Chief of the Algonquin Council of Quebec for 2 terms. His publications include Mental Health and Aboriginal People of Quebec, the Green Book Position Paper of the Algonquin Nation on Environmental Issues, and the National Inquiry into First Nation Child Care.

Trina Bolam is the Director of Legacy Projects at the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the former Executive Director of the Legacy of Hope Foundation.

- Rosalee Tizya - Oral History Talk:

Rosalee Tizya is Vuntat Gwich'in and was born and raised in the Yukon Territory till the age of 17. She took two (2) years at the University of British Columbia after graduation in Whitehorse, Yukon. She attended Chooutla Residential School till the age of 13. She left the University of British Columbia where she was training as a teacher to help her people in the Mackenzie Delta stop the building of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline through the Porcupine Caribou herd's migration route. Through those years of hard work, her elders taught her many disciplines and showed her how to take in the beauty of the Gwich'in People's territory. Her parents are Peter and Clara Tizya of Old Crow, Yukon.

Survivor Stream

- Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement & Independent Assessment Process Updates:

Aideen Nabigon is Director General, Settlement Agreement Policy and Partnerships, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. She is a graduate of Algoma University.

Peter Rinaldi is Director, Client Services, Indian Residential School Adjudication Secretariat.

- Ted Quewezance - Family Model / Ed Sackeny - Healing Blanket
- CEP Remainder: Personal Credits - Update and Discussion

Arts & Culture Stream

- Echoes of the World Drum Festival presents: Mishi Bizhew workshop
- "High-Tech Elders: Integrating Ojibwe Language, Culture & Tradition With New Media" by:

Rene Andre Meshake is an Ojibwe visual and performing artist, author, storyteller, and new media artist living in Guelph, Ontario. By seamlessly fusing Ojibwe and English words into his stories, poetry and spoken word performances, Rene communicates his Ojibwe spiritual heritage to the contemporary world. He was born in the railway town of Nakina in Northwestern Ontario and was raised by his Okomissan grandmother. His education includes: Anishinaabe oral tradition, language, arts and culture and A diploma in Graphic Design from Sheridan College and a certificate in Creative Writing from the Humber School for Writers. Rene's body of artwork and his personal life experiences create a strong, expressive, and entertaining presentation for an ever-increasing audience.

- Jingle Dress Talk & Presentation by:

Cathy Syrette, Batchewana First Nation member, was born and raised in Sault Ste. Marie, ON. She attended Sault College in the business administration program. Cathy is 55 years of age and a mother of four and grandmother of four. She was raised in the Bawating area by her biological parents and through them learned the Anishnabe traditional way of living. Cathy is presently the Executive Director of The Indian Friendship Centre in Sault Ste. Marie and integrates with many organizations in the community working together to build a healthy community.

And the evening ended with dinner, a talent show, and entertainment provided by Roger Daybutch & Friends

Sunday, August 5

Conference Stream

- "Racism in Indian Residential Schools: A Collection of Poetry":

Brenda Gallander has taught in a variety of settings including grades five and six at Red Earth First Nation in Saskatchewan. For the Algoma District School Board, Brenda has mainly taught

grades four to six and most recently grade six at H.M. Robbins Public School. Brenda was the 2000 recipient of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario Anti-Bias Curriculum Development Award. She has been chair of the Algoma District Elementary Teachers' Federation Social Justice and Equity Committee for the past eight years. Brenda teaches her students about the injustices of the residential school system through literature and visits to the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, which includes listening to survivors of that and other residential schools. The students are then given the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about the cultural genocide caused by the residential school system by writing poetry.

- Legacy of Hope Foundation Teacher's Workshop: 100 Years of Loss curriculum:

Trina Bolam

- "Project of Heart" Keynote and "Project of Heart" Teacher's Workshop:

Charlene Bearhead is currently serving as the Program Manager for the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (NDHR) and the national coordinator for Project of Heart, both of which are hosted by Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA). A primary focus in this work is the education of Canadians on the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools in Canada, as well as the impact of federal government policy on various cultural groups throughout the history of Canada. The goal of both movements is to inspire, support and facilitate the building of positive and respectful relationships between all Canadians.

Sylvia Smith is a high school teacher in Ottawa, Ontario. Since 2007, Sylvia has been coordinating an Indian Residential School Commemoration Project called Project of Heart, a learning module she created with the help of her Grade 10 history students. She has presented to community organizations, faith groups, labour organizations, elementary and secondary schools, school boards and universities. In December 2011 Sylvia won the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching History for Project of Heart.

- Youth Panel: "The Future of Reconciliation" with Andrea Landry, Theodore Syrette, Samantha Boyer, and J. P. Chalykoff
- "Revitalizing Our Language – Reclaiming Our Voice" film screening:

Barbara Nolan is grateful to have survived the attempts by Canada's Indian residential schools system to take her Nishnaabe language from her. As a vibrant first-speaker of Nishnaabemwin, Barbara has spent several decades working with a variety of organizations to revitalize our language. Her most recent nine years have been particularly exciting for her. Partnering with John Paul Montano as his mentor, one of her biggest dreams has come true: Barbara's language has been successfully passed on to the next generation! She is so very thankful that John Paul is now a speaker of the Nishnaabe language.

Since her retirement as a counselor nearly a decade ago, Barbara has remained actively involved in facilitating Native community gatherings aimed at implementing healing strategies to address

the residual effects of residential school experiences. Barbara particularly enjoys consulting with Native communities on the effective development of language nests, as well as training Nishnaabemwin speakers in methods of immersion instruction. Barbara is a proud Nishnaabekwe, formerly from Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, who now resides in Garden River First Nation.

Survivor Stream

- Chapel Services
- Elders Tea & Chat
- Presentation by Dan & Mary Lou Smoke:

Dan Smoke is a member of the Seneca Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy. Originally from the Six Nations Reserve, Grand River Territory, Dan has been gifted with extensive traditional knowledge and teachings. He is of the Kildeer Clan and is a lifetime member of the Onondaga Longhouse. Dan is an Eagle Staff Carrier for the N'Amerind Friendship Centre and Community. In addition to their vast traditional knowledge and cultural experience Dan, along with his partner Mary Lou Smoke, are successful television and radio broadcasters.

Mary Lou Smoke is Ojibway from Blind River, Ontario. She shares the songs of the Sweat Lodge with Native women based on the teachings gathered from visiting many lodges. She has been honoured with requests to help with many ceremonies throughout the years. Along with her partner, Dan Smoke, Mary Lou is a successful radio and television broadcaster.

Arts & Culture Stream

- Pipe Ceremony
- "How Can I Reclaim My Language for Myself or My Descendants?":

Patricia Margaret Ningewance is a former student of Shingwauk School and has worked in native language teaching, and native language materials development since leaving Sault Ste Marie. She is owner of Mazinaate Inc. and an artist. She is also a board member of the Indigenous Language Institute.

Sunday ended with a Feast and entertainment provided by Echoes of the World Drum Festival.

Monday, August 6

Conference Stream

- "Kahkiimewat (They Ran Away)" Story & Digital Presentation:

Henry and Keith Angecone are members of the Lac Seul First Nation and their clan is the caribou clan. This is their first collaboration using a digital medium.

Henry attended the Pelican Lake Residential School for six years near Sioux Lookout, and also spent two years at the Shingwauk Residential School in Sault Ste. Marie. Henry is a fluent speaker of Ojibway and has a BA in Anishinabemowin from Algoma University. He also taught at Sault College's language program, and can write in Ojibway using the syllabics system. Henry has spoken at Algoma U about his residential school experiences as well as his knowledge of the Anishinaabe language and culture. He is an accomplished storyteller and artist.

Keith is Henry's eldest son. He has inherited his father's artist ability and has developed a unique style of his own. His work has been made available through local artistic events and venues. He has completed murals for the local separate school board, and has collaborated with his father and other family members to produce other murals, and language resources.

- "Reconciliation in Education through the Shingwauk Covenant":

Minnawaunagogeezhegoquay is an Ojibwe Marten Clan woman from Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation and a first degree Midewiwin of the Three Fires Lodge. Also known as **Dawnis Kennedy**, she is an assistant professor at Algoma University in the Law and Politics Department, an Anishinabe law professor at Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, former Trudeau Scholar and SJD Candidate at the Faculty of Law, University of Toronto. Her dissertation, Anishinabe Onakonigewin: Relating to and through Anishinabe Law, asks how we might strengthen ourselves by learning to work with the laws given to Anishinabe. Minnawaunagogeezhegoquay is also an avid beadworker and learner.

- Legacy of Hope Curriculum & Edu-Kit Workshop:

Trina Bolam

Arts & Culture Stream

- Book talk - "Children of the Creator" by Cliff Standing Ready