

MAMOWI KAGIIKWEWIN: SHARING TEACHINGS AND LEARNINGS

Wabaseemoong Families

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE



Aniin, Boozhoo, Greetings,

This newsletter reports on a research project at Wabaseemoong. This research involves gathering and sharing knowledge about Anishinaabe experiences of family life and child welfare in the past, and about the experiences of Wabaseemoong parents and caregivers today. The project aims to support positive change in child welfare policy and practice based on Anishinaabe self-determination, including *Abinooji Inakonigewen* (Anishinaabe child care law).

Inside, you can read about:

- Wabaseemoong Parents Photovoice Project
- The latest news about Wabaseemoong's Family Services Customary Care Code
- An Elders' Gathering to discuss the history of child welfare in Treaty #3 territory
- The Northern Adoption Project of the Kenora Children's Aid Society, which placed many Anishinaabe children from Treaty # 3 territory in northern fly-in communities in the 1960s.

Cover photo: *My Generation of Change*, Donna Diaz-Lopez, Wabaseemoong Parents Photovoice Project

Who is doing this research?

The researcher is Krista Maxwell, from the University of Toronto. Wabaseemoong Chief and Council appointed Adolphus Cameron, Executive Director of Wabaseemoong Child Welfare Authority, as the community liaison for this research. Many people at Wabaseemoong, across Treaty # 3 territory, and beyond have contributed to this research.

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Adolphus Cameron, Executive Director of Wabaseemoong Child Welfare Authority/Wabishki Makinaakoons Abinoojii Niwiidabimaa is at **807-927-2222** or Adolphus.Cameron@aafs.ca.

My Generation of Change

Seeing my husband swing at the park with our daughter brings back memories of myself and my friends. Growing up in Winnipeg, we often went to the park as a group, without supervision. That lack of parental supervision is something I wanted to change with my children. I want them to remember their parents being there, connecting with them, and being sober.

A generation of change for me is very long and hard. I've overcome many obstacles in life, and endured things that I wish upon no one. I've experienced things that my parents also went through, but I choose to deal with them in a different way. I choose to break the unhealthy cycle, to show my children *mino bimaadiziwin* (how to live a good life).

Cover photo by Donna Diaz-Lopez, Wabaseemoong Parents Photovoice Project

Chi Miigwech

So many people have contributed to this research over the past six years. Here I want to thank particularly those who have contributed to the project since summer 2013, when the last newsletter was published.

At Wabaseemoong Independent Nations, *chi miigwech* to:

Elders and other community members who have generously shared their histories and teachings; Chief and Council for permission to conduct research; staff and management of Wabaseemoong Child Welfare Authority for their help and advice, especially Executive Director Adolphus Cameron; Myrna McDonald, Linda Cameron, and Dorothy Cameron for help with interpretation; Dorothy Cameron for providing a home-away-from-home; and Harold Piche and Marshall Hardy for excellent transportation services.

For help with the Wabaseemoong Parents Photovoice Project, *miigwech* to participating parents, including Marilyn McDonald, Donna Diaz-Lopez, Myra Muckle, Rina Fisher, and Sandra Prouty; photographer Dean Yik and research assistant Lynda Cameron; Principal Ron R. McDonald, Vice-Principal Gaye McDonald and staff of Mizhakiwetung Memorial School school, for providing meeting space; and Joy Carpenter for help with logistics.

For the Elders Gathering at Wauzhushk Onigum in June 2015, *chi miigwech* to:

Elders from across Treaty #3 territory who participated and shared their knowledge: Darlene Angecone (Lac Seul), Robert Gardner (Eagle Lake), Gilbert Smith (Naicatchewenin), Calvin Ottertail (Lac La Croix), Margaret Ottertail (Lac La Croix), Bessie Mainville (Couchiching), Bessie Tom (Big Grassy), Howard Copenace (Naotkamegwanning), Andy White (Naotkamegwanning), Irene Scott (Wabaseemoong), Mary Letander (Wabaseemoong), George Land (Wabaseemoong), Ron P. McDonald (Wabaseemoong), George Bunting (Wabaseemoong), Mary Bunting (Wabaseemoong), Maria Swain (Asubpeeschoseewagong), Ken Meekis (Sandy Lake), Susan Fobister (Asubpeeschoseewagong), Sarah Mandamin (Iskatewizaagegan/ Shoal Lake 39), Colleen Sandy (Northwest Angle 33), Allan White (Naotkamegwanning), Ida Skead (Wauzhusk Onigum).

Grand Council Treaty #3, especially Debbie Lipscombe, Rachel Copenace and Karen Skead; facilitator Clarence White; transcriber-interpreter Jan Hardy; and Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation, who hosted the gathering.

At Sandy Lake, *chi miigwech* to:

Chief and Council for permission to conduct research; Councilor Russell Kakepetum for help with logistics; Elders, parents and adoptees who shared their histories; Monias Fiddler for help with interpretation and research; Vivian Thomas for providing a room for Krista.

Krista Maxwell



Wabaseemoong leaders meet with Ministry staff.

Whitedog Community Asked to Approve *Waabishki Makinaakoons* Family Services Customary Care Code

Wabaseemoong Child Welfare Authority is making good progress towards bringing in a new child welfare system for the community — one based on traditional Anishinaabe values and practices.

Over the past two years, Elders have been helping Wabaseemoong Child Welfare Authority (WCWA) to develop a Customary Care Code. The Code is now in the form of a 13-page draft, which provides a detailed outline of child welfare practices, following traditional Anishinaabe child care law. The Code is based on principles of community, family and individual responsibility, and Anishinaabe self-determination.

Adolphus Cameron, Executive Director of WCWA, expects that this Customary Care Code will eventually replace the current Ontario child welfare system at Wabaseemoong. The next step in developing the Customary Care Code will be to seek approval from the Wabaseemoong community. The agency is inviting grandmothers, Elders and traditional practitioners to advise on the best way to do this.

For more information, contact Adolphus Cameron, Executive Director at 807-927-2222.

Wabaseemoong Leaders Meet with Ministry of Child and Youth Services

On March 24th, 2017 Wabaseemoong community leaders held a productive meeting with senior officials from the Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services. This is the government department responsible for the entire child welfare system in the province. Deputy Minister Nancy Matthews, Assistant Deputy Minister Darryl Sturtevant, and several others from the Ministry participated.

Opening the meeting, Chief John Paishk declared that 1960s child welfare policy was not made for Anishinaabe people. He described Wabaseemoong's twenty-six year struggle to free the community from the Ontario child welfare system. In response, the Deputy Minister expressed the Ministry's commitment to listen and learn from Wabaseemoong and to work together going forward.

Larry Jourdain, who has been working closely with Adolphus Cameron in writing Wabaseemoong's Customary Care Code, explained that this Code is the community's application for exemption from the provincial Child and Family Services Act. *(continued on page 11)*

Wabaseemoong Parents Photovoice Project

Elders from Wabaseemoong and other Treaty #3 First Nations have identified the need to improve communication between young parents and Elders as a priority issue for the future of Anishinaabe child welfare. Acting on this advice, researcher Krista Maxwell consulted with Wabaseemoong Chief and Council, Ronnie P. McDonald, Cindy Cameron, George Boyd, and Adolphus Cameron, to develop new research called the Wabaseemoong Parents Photovoice Project.

Photovoice is a form of research in which people taking part use photography to tell stories about their lives. In June 2016 Krista began work with a group of six parents at Wabaseemoong. These parents learned basic photography skills from local photographer Dean Yik, and were given digital cameras to document their experiences of being parents at Wabaseemoong. They are now sharing and discussing their photographs in a private Facebook group.

In future, we plan to share these photographs and the stories they tell more widely, to encourage community and policy discussion about the challenges facing today's parents, and how Anishinaabe families can be better supported.

You can see some of the early work from this project on the back covers and page 11 of this newsletter.



Myra Muckle is one of the parents participating in the Photovoice Project. Photo credit: Dean Yik.



Researcher Krista Maxwell with Elders advising on the Wabaseemoong Parents Project. Photo credit: Dean Yik

RESEARCH REPORT: Elders & Researcher Discuss Histories of Anishinaabe Child Welfare in Treaty #3 Territory

On June 10th 2015, twenty-two Elders from fourteen different Treaty Three First Nations, and one visiting Elder from Sandy Lake First Nation, gathered at the Round House at Wauzhusk Onigum, to meet with University of Toronto researcher Krista Maxwell. Elders attending from Wabaseemoong were George Land, George Bunting, Mary Bunting, Irene Scott, Ronnie P. McDonald, and Mary Letander.

Krista reported on her ongoing research on social histories of child welfare in Treaty Three First Nations, and the Elders shared further knowledge and guidance on next steps. Over 50 people have shared personal, family and communities histories as part of this research, including Elders from several Treaty Three First Nations (most from Wabaseemoong), and Anishinaabe and child welfare workers from the 1970s – 1990s. Krista is also examining records from the former Kenora Children's Aid Society.

Anishinaabe Values: Community and Family Responsibilities for Children

Elders who shared oral histories shared with Krista described how most families functioned well through the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Although Anishinaabeg faced many challenges during this period, including children forced to attend residential school, family and community social ties remained strong.

Describing life at One Man Lake, Margaret Quewezance, Mary Jane

Scott and Ida Bunting all emphasised how young parents were helped and supported by older relatives and other community members. At the same time, young people were raised to be responsible parents, and to teach their children to be responsible from a young age. George Bunting recalled how his grandfather, Jacob McDonald, taught him to work hard and provide for his family, beginning when he was a child and was expected to do a lot of chores for his family. When he became a parent, his grandmother, Jane McDonald, taught him to prioritise his children's needs. George remembered, "When my oldest son was a baby, we were living with my grandmother. My wife and I, like most young people, loved to sleep. At 5am she would come and tap our feet, saying 'Get up. Feed the child. Change his diapers.'"

Krista noted that it is important that family and community members provided care to *both* children *and* parents. This was a care which respected the connection between parents and their children. In contrast, today's child welfare system often claims to protect children, but punishes their parents.

In response to Krista's presentation, Elders at the Gathering said that raising children well requires Anishinaabe language, traditional teachings, and ceremony, including naming ceremonies. They commented that the traditional values of wiisokidaadiwin, helping each

other, and naatimaasiwin, collective supervision of children, are fundamental to Anishinaabe child-rearing. These practices are still relevant today.

Histories of Anishinaabe Resistance: Ojibway Tribal and Family Services (OTFS)

Krista described the many ways that Anishinaabeg have tried to keep their children in home communities over many decades. Once child welfare workers started coming onto Treaty Three reserves in the 1960s and 1970s, some parents tried to hide children on their traplines. At Wabaseemoong and elsewhere, many families opened their homes to children who were fleeing alcohol abuse and violence. Community members provided care for children over the short-term and the long-term, often without any external support.

From the 1970s, some Anishinaabe workers have tried to change the child welfare system from within, by opening up more foster homes on reserves, for example. Sometimes white social workers helped, by being flexible about record-keeping.

Wabaseemoong took the lead in establishing Ojibway Tribal and Family Services in the mid-1980s. This agency has a very interesting history. OTFS took a ground-breaking approach: they rejected the dominant focus on child "protection", and instead focused on "prevention" – in other words, supported families, in line with Anishinaabe law. *(continued on page 6)*

Research Report: Elders & Researcher Discuss Histories of Child Welfare Treaty #3

(continued from page 5)

OTFS achieved several important things: they focused attention on healing from addictions as central to child welfare; introduced the concept and practice of customary care into child welfare policy; refused to support the court system and the permanent removal of children, and instead supported parents who had to go through the system; built in a structure for Chiefs to engage in political advocacy on behalf of the organization; and provided worker training outside of the provincial framework.

Since OTFS worked against the dominant child welfare system in so many ways, it is not surprising that agents of the Canadian state worked against OTFS. The OTFS leadership faced major challenges in advocating for even basic resources, including private office space, separate phone lines, and adequate administrative support. Their work was also undermined by long-term under-funding of both worker salaries and child care allowance, which remained well below the minimum values in the Ontario system. Former OTFS workers described very difficult working conditions and not enough support for workers.

At the Gathering, Elders added more perspectives on the history of OTFS. They recalled how Wabaseemoong Chief Roy McDonald took action in the early 1980s, when the Kenora CAS apprehended around 400 children

from the community. He approached Elders at Naotkamegwanning for help. Together, these two communities developed the ground-breaking prevention service of OTFS, based on the Anishinaabe model, to prioritize caring for children in their communities.

Ongoing Challenges with the Child Welfare System

Krista noted that although Ontario child welfare reform in 1984 created a framework for First Nations to have a bit more control over services within the Canadian child welfare system, this system does not truly understand or respect First Nations' sovereignty over child welfare. Also, the dominant system itself has changed, and in some ways, now conflicts with Anishinaabe child-raising values more than it did in the 1960s. Protecting children now involves more and more bureaucracy and intrusion into family life, while parents' rights — particularly those of poor and Native parents — seem to be valued less and less. The system focuses strongly on preventing and managing risk and protecting children, and provides even less support to help parents who are struggling with housing problems, poverty and addictions.

Elders added that the Canadian state continues to dominate First Nations-run agencies. Many people call these agencies the "Brown CAS", because they continue to follow the provincial system. Most homes on reserves still cannot qualify as care homes under

the provincial system. Some Elders observed that First Nations agencies have become industries in their own right, making money through child welfare. The state-controlled customary care, enforced by legislation, is different to our practice, they said. And Elders are very concerned about the well-being of children returning home after being in care, who do not receive adequate support.

Concerns about Today's Parenting Practices

Several Elders expressed concerns, such as young people becoming parents for the wrong reasons, using technology for babysitting, and the effects of drug abuse on parenting. Several people commented that we need to find ways to encourage young parents to be responsible and learn from Elders.

A New Model for Anishinaabe Child Welfare

Elders asserted that Anishinaabeg need a new model of child welfare, one which is not constrained by provincial legislation. They spoke about the value of learning lessons from other First Nations, and of communities from across Treaty 3 territory working together to develop and implement a new model.

For a detailed report of the Elders Gathering, contact Krista Maxwell at krista.maxwell@utoronto.ca

Sandy Lake Elder Raises Questions about the “Northern Adoptions Project”



Ken Meekis with researcher Krista Maxwell, Sandy Lake, March 2014

Ken Meekis represented Sandy Lake First Nation at the Elders Gathering. Sandy Lake was one of several northern communities to adopt Anishinaabe children from Treaty Three territory in the 1960s.

Ken spoke about his own experiences of adopting Frank Meekis, whose parents were originally from Wabaseemoong. At the time he was adopted, Frank's skin was badly burned. Ken and his wife were never able to find out what caused these burns. Other parents also had questions about the health histories of the children they adopted: none of this information was provided by social workers. The adoptive families were encouraged

to change the children's names. The Sandy Lake community, especially those who were adopted and their adoptive families, have a lot of questions about how and why these adoptions happened.

During informal discussion at the Gathering and afterwards, Treaty 3 Elders shared with Ken some information about his son's birth family. Another Elder gathered information from Ken which she hoped would lead to reconnection with her own family members, who were adopted out. In future, we hope to bring together more people from Treaty 3 First Nations with the adopting First Nations in northern Ontario, for important conversations like these.

RESEARCH REPORT:

The “Northern Adoption Project”, 1964-1965

Many people have heard about Anishinaabe children from Treaty 3 territory being taken away by plane in the early 1960s, to be adopted into northern, Oji-Cree communities. Early on in this research, Krista Maxwell found records in the archives of the Kenora Children’s Aid Society which show that these accounts are true.

Between September 1964 and September 1965, at least sixty-four Anishinaabe children were flown to northern reserve communities and were placed for adoption. The adopting communities were Sandy Lake, Pikangikum, Round Lake, Deer Lake, Trout Lake, Bearskin, Sachigo Lake, and Cat Lake. The Kenora Children’s Aid Society (CAS) called this the “Northern Adoption Project.”

In March 2014, Maxwell visited Sandy Lake First Nation, one of the largest adopting communities, to learn more about these adoptions. She met with Chief and Council and the Elders Council, and documented oral histories from four adults who were adopted as children during the early 1960s, and six adoptive parents.

All of the parents remembered vividly the community’s excitement about the children’s arrival in Sandy Lake. Agnes Beardy, adoptive mother of Salio (now a grandfather aged 56), described the joy of the mothers and grandmothers. Speaking in Oji-Cree, she told Krista, “I’m very happy that I got to accept, to keep, and to raise this child in Sandy Lake.”

From these oral histories, and from written records Maxwell has reviewed, many people in Sandy Lake and other northern communities were eager to adopt these children. But how did the children end up in particular homes? One of those adopted, David Kakegamick, told Maxwell, “families that wanted to adopt children went down there [to the dock] and chose who they wanted”. Similar rumors circulate in Treaty 3 territory: that children were randomly taken by whoever showed up at the dock when they arrived. Are these accounts true?

Before the children were placed in Sandy Lake and the other adoptive communities, social workers from the Kenora Children’s Aid Society visited and did some very basic investigations, called “home studies”. Maxwell has confirmed this by reviewing written records. The home studies included taking up character references from the Indian Agent, nurses and missionaries. Some of the adoptive parents who spoke with Maxwell recalled these visits by white social workers. Also, some parents had specifically requested children of a particular age. On the basis of these home studies and requests, many children were assigned to particular adoptive parents before they arrived.

But oral histories indicate that a small number of children were adopted without any prior planning: in some cases, children were simply taken from the dock by adoptive parents who wanted

them, without advance approval.

This contributed to a sense among some of those adopted that they were not valued: as one adoptee said bitterly, “(it was) like, ‘which little puppy do you want?’”

Like Treaty 3 Anishinaabeg, the people of Sandy Lake have a lot of questions about why and how these adoptions happened. For example, social workers did not provide any information about the children’s birth families. Adoptive parents wondered, why were these children taken from their parents? At this time, people at Sandy Lake had not experienced social workers removing children from their own community. They imagined that these children were not wanted by their parents, that their families “abandoned” them, even “threw them away.” It seems this was the impression given by Jack Copeland and the other Children’s Aid Society workers, who were the only source of information about the children.

Sandy Lake Adoptees Describe Childhood Experiences

This common misunderstanding that the adopted Anishinaabe children were not wanted by their birth families contributed to the challenges these children faced growing up in Sandy Lake. All of them described the hurtful experience of hearing themselves described as “garbage.” One woman recalled her adoptive mother telling her when she was 14 years old, “‘They got you from the garbage’: in Oji-Cree, ‘webinagun.’”

Two of the four adoptees described feeling extremely angry about their experiences in Sandy Lake. David described how, before being adopted into Sandy Lake, he had spent 4 or 5 years with a foster family in Dryden, where he felt secure. In his Sandy Lake family, he was the oldest of five children, expected to work hard, and was hit regularly. Several Elders, and all of the adoptees themselves, commented on the hard labor which these children did.

In making sense of this, it is important to understand that at Sandy Lake in the 1960s, it was normal for children to work hard. People lived in shacks, with no electricity or running water. Most relied on canoes and sleds for transport. With only a basic HBC store, families relied on fishing, hunting, trapping, and gardening to survive. Child labor was essential. One Elder explained to me how strict his father was: "If anyone had seen my father disciplining me ... Jack Copeland would have taken me away! But I always had respect for my father. He raised our family with no welfare, no store. If he didn't catch rabbits, we would starve. What one person calls 'abuse' ... some might say those of us who were raised that way were abused."

Clearly, standards and practices of family life in Sandy Lake in the 1960s were different to what they are today. But even given this, several people observed that some adopted children suffered violence and abuse which went beyond usual expectations of hard work and



Anishinaabe children and CAS workers prepare to fly to northern communities, 1964.

punishment. In some cases, according to adoptees and Elders, this included sexual abuse of children by adoptive parents.

What Can Be Learned from these Painful Histories?

This research raises important questions about the history and future of First Nations child welfare.

Is simply placing First Nations children in First Nations homes enough to ensure their long-term well-being? The experiences of the children involved in the Northern Adoption project suggests that it is not.

At Sandy Lake, did the common belief that adopted children were unwanted by their birth families contribute to violence against those children? This damaging misunderstanding points to the importance of birth families and communities maintaining active relations with adopting families and communities, including other First

Nations. Children and adopting parents need to know that children are still valued by their birth families and communities, even when they cannot care for them.

Are Native communities today discussing the fact that physical and sexual abuse does occur within their homes? Retired social workers report that this fact was widely ignored for several decades: child welfare practice in Native communities focused almost entirely on parental alcohol abuse and child neglect, while sexual and other forms of abuse were not discussed. How can First Nations make sure that all children are able to talk about experiences of abuse with someone they trust, and that adults know what to do if they learn that a child is being abused within their family? How can First Nations encourage more effective conversations about, and action against, family violence, including sexual violence?

Histories of Family Relations in Wabaseemoong: Learning from Elders & Interpreters

As a researcher, one of the activities I enjoy most is listening to Elders talk about the past. We can learn so much about why things today are the way they are, by better understanding what has happened before.

I have learned a lot about social histories in Wabaseemoong from working with two interpreters from the community, Mary Letander and Myrna McDonald. My own Anishinaabemowin is limited to “Boozhoo”, “Miigwech” and “Biindigen”, so I need expert help to communicate with Elders who are most comfortable speaking in Anishinaabemowin. With Mary’s help, I recorded oral histories shared by the late Annie Cameron and George McDonald, both citizens of Wabaseemoong, then residents at Birchwood Lodge, Kenora. Myrna provided interpretation during meetings



Mary Letander, with research contributor Annie Cameron.

with Ida Bunting and Harriet Bigblood, at Wabaseemoong.

Anishinaabe Kinship Concepts: *Kinabaangoma*

While sharing some of his family history, George McDonald gestured towards interpreter Mary Letander and told me, “I call her my sister”, even though they have different biological parents. So I was introduced to the concept of *kiinaabangoma*. George and Mary told me about how George’s family lost a daughter who was about the same age as Mary, so they adopted Mary as a way of helping to cope with the pain of that loss. Mary explained, “Native people do that. When you lose somebody and somebody else reminds you of the person you lost, you adopt that person.” Usually the adopted person is the same gender and around the same age as the family member who

died, sometimes even having a similar appearance. The families agree to the arrangement through discussion; there is no ceremony. “I didn’t live with them, but we did everything together,” Mary recalled. Dorothy Cameron explains the significance of the root “*baangoma*”, which means a collective agreement to care for a person.

So interpreters do more than simply translate between Anishinaabemowin and English. They also help to document kinship concepts in Anishinaabemowin which cannot simply be translated, but require more careful explaining. Such concepts are important for understanding how Anishinaabe families worked in the past. They may also be helpful for planning positive changes towards future systems which better support Anishinaabe families.



Photo credit: Myra Muckle

Uncle Alex's House

My uncle Alex built this house. He was a kind and generous man. My uncle loved being around kids, sharing stories, teaching them, helping them find the right path in life. He worked at the old school as a janitor, and always gave kids money for the canteen when they needed it. I really appreciate what he did for this community.

Myra Muckle, Wabaseemoong Parents Photovoice Project

Whitedog Community Asked to Approve *Waabishki Makinaakoons* ... (continued from page 3)

In response, the Assistant Deputy Minister confirmed that this Act is now being reviewed. The Ministry hopes that the new Act, which should come into effect by April 2018, will allow for more flexibility for First Nations.

Adolphus Cameron reported that the number of Wabaseemoong children in care has reduced from 200 to 60 over the past six years. This is still 60 children too many. He emphasized that Wabaseemoong's goal is total exemption from the Child and Family Services Act.

Short-term priorities are:

1. Create more customary care homes for children in the community, and
 2. Provide more support for youth coming out of care.
- Wabaseemoong has the will and the ability to achieve these, but the Ministry needs to provide adequate resources.

The meeting closed with both sides agreeing to meet again soon to develop a practical plan towards addressing community priorities.

Chi miigwech! Thank you for reading this newsletter. We look forward to hearing your feedback. You can contact the researcher by email at: krista.maxwell@utoronto.ca



The Old Hospital, Kenora. Photo credit: Sandy Prouty

The Old Hospital, Kenora

This building in Kenora, and the services based here, have played a big part in my family's history. My older sister was born here in 1964, when it was St. Joseph's Hospital. My mother was 18 and away from home and family in Whitedog. She told the story of how a nurse kept at her for a couple of days, wanting to take my sister, to adopt her. I couldn't imagine having that experience, especially while separated from family.

In 1984, when I was 14, my siblings and I were in care. The Kenora Children's Aid Society was here. We sat in a room on the second floor of this building for a family visit.

In the late 1990s, I worked in this building, at the Okonungegayin (Breath of Life) Solvent Abuse Program's main office. The actual residential program was located down the Pickerel Lake road. This solvent abuse program served Whitedog and many other communities in northwestern Ontario. My son attended a daycare in the smaller building off to the side of this building. This building holds many memories for me.

I have raised my children trying not to repeat the past, to take the experiences, the good and bad and to build on it and change it when I could. When my children are frustrated with me and my parenting, I tell them, "Take everything you think I did right, and do that with your children. Take everything you think I did wrong, and change that with yours."

Sandy Prouty, Wabaseemoong Parents Photovoice Project