



December, 2009 • Volume 1 • Issue 6

MISHKEEGOGAMANG OJIBWAY NATION

Community Update

Training for a Trade

Did you know that there's an organization actively working to train First Nations members in a trade? The Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board (SLAAMB) is involved in two projects to promote this training.

In one project with Ontario Hydro One, SLAAMB surveyed 30 communities in northwestern Ontario. It found that most communities, when they need power line repairs, construction or maintenance, bring skilled labourers in from the outside, and those skills are not transferred to local residents. SLAAMB and Hydro One are working together to try to change this.

Hydro One is looking for potential candidates to train in many jobs, among them power line technician, arborist, mechanical maintainer, and nuclear operator. Fifty-five applicants from 17 of the 30 communities have so far applied to the program, including one person from Mishkeegogamang who meets all the requirements and is waiting for an interview. Some applicants will need to get their drivers' licenses and others will need to do upgrading to get their Ontario Secondary School Diploma before they can begin the actual training. The training is free and students might even qualify for support for child care and travel costs.

Another project is called CAAR (Centre for Aboriginal Apprenticeship Research). Since 2007, CAAR has been organizing many different types of training, both in-person and online, in trades like plumbing, carpentry, and electrical.

By November 2009, 428 First Nation people had taken some form of trades training. Although many haven't been able to finish, some have. There are now two Journeyman Electricians and four Journeyman Carpenters. The program report says "First Nation communities and members from off-reserve now know more and have a better understanding about apprenticeship, the trades and have the opportunity to participate in various construction jobs." SLAAMB is working with trade unions as well. Three years ago, this would have been impossible.



Mary Nowgeeshik, 100 years, and her great great granddaughter Kressida Loon, 3 years old.

A Century of Christmases

TRANSLATED BY DESTANI SKUNK

Mary Nayochekeesic isn't exactly sure of her age, but she figures she was 25 when she gave birth to her daughter Sophie Mishenene who is 75, and that would make her 100 years old. Mary was born at the Old Post to Marion and James Lastheels in the summertime. The Indian Affairs registry started in 1905, she said, and they put her birth date as January 13.

Early Christmases for Mary did not involve wrapped presents and Christmas trees and lights as they do today. It was only after the churches were established that the people were introduced to those things. In fact, when she was a child her family lived for most of the year on their trap line, rarely coming to the larger community. The children didn't have fancy toys, but Mary laughs when she remembers playing by the water with her siblings when she was young. She said they would dig a hole close to the lake, fill it with water and

minnows they would scoop up in a cloth wrapped loosely around their waists. Then they would dig a trench and watch the tiny fish swim back to the lake.

Later in her life, when the people settled on what is now the Mishkeegogamang First Nation, Mary and her husband and other volunteers from the church would put donated candy and oranges into paper bags and hand them out to the children at Christmas time. They would have a short Christmas service at the Anglican Church and then give every child a bag of goodies and even wrapped presents when donations came in.

Erin Bottler remembers looking forward to these goodie bags when she was a little girl. As a girl of about seven or eight years, along with her cousin Destani Skunk, she would look after younger siblings. They were more concerned with getting food and keeping warm than wondering what they would get for Christmas. But one thing

they could depend on and look forward to was the treat bag handed out annually by Mary and other volunteers. "Sometimes that would be the only Christmas present we would get," she said.

Mary is bright and fit and spry, moving around her home in her wheelchair with ease, but she says she has become too weak to put together a Christmas feast or help with the tradition of giving bags of treats to children at the church. She is happy to hear that her great-granddaughter and others have taken on the task.

Mary is also thankful for her health and the peace and quiet of her tidy home on the Main Reserve. She stayed healthy living off the food of the land, and she never drank alcohol or smoked. But that is not what she credits for her long life. "It is the Creator's will," she said. "He is the one that governs life. It isn't in man's control to determine how long a person's life will be."

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Christmas Picture Winners

"Prizes for each participating class donated by the Northern Store, Pickle Lake."



Jethro Loon, Grade 1 Winner



Ivory Panacheese, Grade 2 Winner



Jacob Masakeyash, Grade 4 Winner



Hannah McKay, Grade 5 Winner



Randell Kaye, Grade 7 Winner

Students from Missabay School enjoyed an early visit from Santa Clause this year.



Grades K - 2



Grades 3 - 6



Grades 7 & 8



Christy Skunk, Grade 6 Winner

Alex and the Bullies: A Christmas Story

BY WILSON FOX, GRADE 8

One time in Christmas there was this little boy named Alex. He was about 10 years old. His hobbies were playing hockey, playing video games and watching TV. It was almost Christmas - only about two weeks to go. There were about over 20 presents under his tree. His mom plus his dad went shopping for gifts again. So Alex spent all day playing hockey outside with his friends. He had several friends who lived in the neighbourhood and they usually played four on four hockey and a couple of boys would just come and play.

Alex had two sisters and one brother who was just an infant. One of his sisters was about six and the other was twelve. Soon Alex stopped playing hockey because these big boys were going rough and rougher so he asked his friends, "Do you guys want to play inside?" and they said yes. Just his friends were invited in, not those bullies. When they were done they would all go home. It was 6:30 when they looked at the clock. They heard a car parking outside and they looked out the window - it was their parents. Their parents came in with a lot of bags, which weren't see-through so the parents just stuck them in the closet. When they all were finished they went to bed and didn't wake up till morning.

So one week passed and there was one more week to go. It was Sunday the 17th when they all woke up, had breakfast and got on the van to go to the church. When that was done they would just do the



Billy Kakekayskung, K5 winner.

normal things they do. Alex was the only one who was active. He would just wake up every morning and go out for a jog. When he was done that he would just get his hockey stick, take out his net and practice his shots, while his sisters were always watching TV and on computer. That's what Alex wished for - a new computer in his own room. Then another day passed and 6 to go. Their house was decorated with a lot of patterns of light which looked good. Now it was five to go and then two to go. The parents again went shopping and when they came back they had a lot of

bags. They wrapped all the presents and Alex was watching TV when he got told by his dad to go play ice hockey on the ice, so they went. When they got there he saw those bullies go in there but lucky his dad was there to keep him [safe].

He was a good skater. Soon it was dark. They went back, had supper and a couple of hours later they went to bed. The morning was Christmas and this was when they would open their presents. Alex opened his and saw a computer. What he wished for came true.

Christmas Eve Sliding Event

Sliding Event for community members will be held on December 24, 2009 location to be announced and posted. All are welcome to come out and have some fun in snow, come out and share a hot chocolate and hot dog roast. Support our children & youth during this event. Come out and bring the whole family for some fun and laughter. Please feel free to bring your own sliding equipment.

Pickle Lake Store Christmas Hours & events

Dec. 20 - No GST, open 12 - 5
Dec. 21 - Last minute sale, open 9 - 8
Dec. 22 - Tea for Elders
Dec. 23 - Last minute sale, open 9 - 8
Dec. 24 - Morning Madness, open 9 - 4
Dec. 25 - Closed
Dec. 26 - Candy Sale, open 12 - 5

Put Together a Pond Hockey Team!

Pelican Lake Pond Hockey Tournament hosted by Sioux Lookout Recreation Centre Feb 20 & 21, 2010.
Youth 12-17 \$75.00 per team
Women \$150 per team
Men \$150.00 per team
Open Recreation \$100.00

The Youth and Recreation Department would like to send a Youth team (ages 12 - 17) from Mishkeegogamang. Contact us at 928-2414 or 928-2045. Roster lists and fundraising will be taking place for the teams. Parents will be asked to take part in getting involved with their children by bringing them to practice and supporting them as they become a team.

Volunteers Needed for the Homecoming Committee

Homecoming is August 2-6, 2010. Please contact the band office at 928-2414



Join the Chief and Council of Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation in an

Alcohol-Free Christmas

Do it for yourself!
Do it for your children.

Alcohol steals time and our children's innocence.

Celebrate Sober!

Events

The last day of school before Christmas holidays at Missabay Community School is December 17. School starts again on January 4.

Feed the Children: A Christmas Party is planned for December 19. Feed the Children will be providing food hampers and Christmas gifts to families with needs.

Looking for interested youth to attend the Seven Sacred Fire Teachings hosted by the NAN Decade Youth Council in Thunder Bay in early January 2010 in Thunder Bay. Youth workers will be chaperoning this event. Call Erin Bottle or Destani Skunk for registration forms.

The Ten Houses Recreation Department is seeking volunteers to help build a new bench area for the hockey rink and to rebuild the hockey rink before the snow falls even harder and before we can flood the rink. Call Erin Bottle or Jason Mckay at the Band Office. Please leave your name if you are interested in helping rebuild the hockey rink. Honoraria are available to youth who are able to help.

Councillor Jeff Neekan has resigned. The date of a by-election to fill the vacant position on council will be announced.

CONGRATULATIONS to Steven Neekan for winning a laptop computer. The laptop raffle was held by Mishkeegogamang Thunder Women's Broomball Team and the draw took place at the radio station on Monday November 23, 2009. Thank you to all ticket buyers. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Youth Workers will be hosting a two-week Radio-a-thon along with other departments. Keewaytinook Okimakanak: Brian Walmark, Director of Digital Education Pilot Project will be coming into the Community December 14-16, 2009

Family & Community Skate Nights

Watch for Family & Community Skate Night coming to the Ten Houses Section & Main Site reserve this winter. Brand new skates have been purchased through the Recreation Activator Program to promote healthy and active living for the winter months. We have purchased 20 pairs of men's/boys' skates in various sizes and 20 pairs of women's/girls' skates, again in different sizes.

Ten Houses Hockey Rink has not been flooded yet. Volunteers are needed for transportation of kids who want to go skating at the main site area. Please contact Erin Bottle 807 928-2414 or Destani Skunk 807 928 2045/807 928 2881 should you wish to volunteer driving kids and families to Family & Community Skate Nights. All skates borrowed will be signed out and returned back to the Recreation Department once the skating session is over. All are welcome to bring their own skates.



Laureen Wassaykeesic has just won her fourth award for business woman of the year.

Councillor Wassaykeesic named Business Woman of the Year

Councillor Laureen Wassaykeesic has been presented with her fourth Nishnawbe Aski Development (NAD) Business Woman of the Year award.

Wassaykeesic owns Laureen's Gas and Grocery and was honoured for her business as well as providing financial support from her business to local youth groups, elders and organizations. "I try to stay involved with community events," said Wassaykeesic. "I sponsor different events and donate to the school and community or to kids going out of town for tournaments."

Wassaykeesic started her business in 1998, four years after returning to the First Nation from university in Thunder Bay. A few credits short of a four year nursing degree, Wassaykeesic said she just couldn't cope with the struggles and financial difficulties of going to school as a single parent of two children. "So I came home and I've been here ever since."

It took three years of research and planning to get the store up and running. Wassaykeesic said her cousin wanted to go into business with her, but he wanted to start a taxi service and she saw the need for a store, so she pursued the dream on her own. Finally, with a loan of \$300,000 from Nishnawbe Aski Development, the store was opened in 1998. That loan had to

be paid off in five years and Wassaykeesic admits to "being broke for awhile," but she did it.

Today, while Wassaykeesic tends to business as a band councillor, young people run the store. She teaches them how to operate the store, job skills and proper work ethics. "All the staff I've had has been excellent," she said. So excellent, in fact, that other programs and businesses keep luring them from her store to their operations. "I train them and then they're pulled away to work for others," she said with a laugh.

Wassaykeesic grew up in Pickle Lake, attending school alternate years in Pickle Lake and Mishkeegogamang to fulfill her grandmother's wish that she learn her language and culture as well as the ways of the non-native community. "There was a reason she wanted me to do that and I think I know it now," she said.

Wassaykeesic worked as a clerk interpreter at the Mishkeegogamang nursing station before moving to Sioux Lookout to work at the zone hospital and eventually going to Lakehead University. Ten years after opening the gas and grocery store, Wassaykeesic said it is "nice to have somebody recognize that you make the effort." She also won the award in 2001, 2002 and 2005.

Other Partnerships: Churches, Missions teach and inspire

Mervin Masakeyash is thankful for the many partnerships formed through his church, the House of Prayer. Located at Cedar Rapids between the two reserves, this is sometimes called the "red roof church." One of its local connections happens when the pastor of House of Prayer goes to Mile 50 House once a week and conducts a Wednesday Bible study there. The church also regularly brings in special speakers or evangelists from out of town to teach and inspire.

Mishkeegogamang residents can also benefit from a seven-month recovery program offered by New Hope Ministries in Minneapolis, a Christian-based organization.

A Daily Vacation Bible School (DVBS) team comes out in summer and other teams such as the Overcomer Teams come to do family-oriented seminars.

Outstanding Students Missabay Community School

Each month the teachers at Missabay Community School award one student from each grade the "Outstanding Student Award." The students who receive this award are magnificent students who make teaching and learning enjoyable! Keep up the great work!

Outstanding Students for October

K4 – Shyann Kaminawaish
K5 – Malachi Masakeyash
Grade 1 – Carmen Roundhead
Grade 2 – Whitney Muckuck
Grade 3 – Nayah Masakeyash
Grade 4 – Trisha Mishenene
Grade 5 – Marcella Fox
Grade 6 – Mathew Keesickquayash
Grade 7 – Kariya Skunk
Grade 8 – Moses Spade
Transitional Program – Skyler Masakeyash
Special Needs – Nina Skunk

Outstanding Students for November

K4 – Mason Panacheese
K5 – Bobbi-Sue Muckuck
Grade 1 – Chad Kwandibens
Grade 2 – Michaela Skunk
Grade 3 – Shinae Kaminawaish
Grade 4 – Melissa Lawson
Grade 5 – Harmony Lastheels
Grade 6 – Raven Muckuck
Grade 7 – Randall Kakekayskung
Grade 8 – Jarel Wassaykeesic
Transitional Program – Jarel Wassaykeesic
Special Needs – Ashley Skunk

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Contribute to the Newspaper

Everyone is welcome to submit an article, photo or write a letter to the Mishkeegogamang Community Update. Share your opinion or idea with other readers. Editors reserve the right to edit for clarity and length. Remember that you're most likely to convince someone of your idea if you back it up with evidence and facts.

Correction – Survivor

The poem in the October 2009 issue was incorrectly titled "Residential School Survivor." The correct title should have been "Survivor." The writer of the poem intended it to be for survivors of sexual abuse.

Naming Ceremony

BY ERIN BOTTLE

During this past summer I embarked a journey to “light the fire” with my family in reclaiming our identity as Anishnawbe People. We began to learn the customs relating to the naming ceremony and then participated in a naming ceremony for my children.

Sacred tasks and preparations precede the ceremony. My mother Edna Skunk, who has been my continued supporter in reclaiming our identity, was my strength in assisting me to prepare for the naming ceremony. I am grateful to her for always searching for truth and what is right and for teaching me to find balance in taking care of family.

We found clean ground for the sacred ceremony, then gathered “Grandfathers” (term used for rocks). Offerings of tobacco to the elements and prayer to the Creator and those Spirits were a reminder to me of how giving thanks for Creation has been the main principle I received from my late grandfather Samuel Skunk. He was gifted as a lodge carrier and a person to have been able to give names.

The August morning when the naming ceremony took place was a cloudy one. The morning before, I and my cousin Munzie Skunk, my brother-in-law Fabian Sakakeesic, my mother Edna Skunk and my little brother Davery cleared the land. Was it ever a sight with the mosquitoes attacking from every direction. When we got home from the clearing, I prepared the food and the items to be given away after the ceremony.

In the morning, I prepared dishes of wild rice, fish and berries and gathered our sacred items. Then my partner Mark

Monture, my children Katsitsia:howeh Monture (daughter, pronounced Gaah-jii-ja-how-way) and Tewa:honateh Monture (eldest son, pronounced Day-wah-Ona-Day) along with my mother and younger brother and Donna Roundhead made the pilgrimage to the clearing between Eric Lake & Ace Lake. The conductor of the naming ceremony, Don Waboose, was there when we arrived. We immediately put our children in a screen tent that had been set up to protect them from mosquitoes. Rays of sun shone through the clouds every once in a while.

The first task of the naming ceremony was one that was in a sense spiritual and exciting, as if to say their names were a rebirth of their identity. Then came my own naming ceremony. A month before the naming ceremony, an offering of their naming ceremony had taken place, at which their names had come to the conductor.

My son’s Anishnawbe Weesowinan (Indian Name) Tewa:Honateh Monture name is: Ode-wee-gun Wa-wass-kwaneh Inini, meaning when he sings to the drum his voice sounds like lightning. And my baby girl’s name is Katsitsia:howeh Monture her Indian name is: Geesis Ahn-shay-kwaneh Ikwe, meaning Beautiful Sun Women. My name which was given to me is Manitou Peetawanakwat Ahn-shay-kwan-nay Ikwe to mean Beautiful Woman, the Creator’s Sun Rays look upon me. I was given these names in the dialect of the Anishnawbeg from the Wikwemongong Area in the Odawa Language. I have the option to translate our Anishnawbe Names in the Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Dialect. I look forward in seeking those translations with knowledgeable people in our



Erin Bottle (Manitou Peetawanakwat Ahn-shay-kwan-nay, Beautiful Woman Creators Sun Rays Look Upon Me) and Mark Monture with Tewa:Honateh Monture – Ode-wee-gun Wa-wass-kwaneh Inini, When he sings to the drum his voice sounds like lightning. Their daughter, Katsitsia:howeh Monture-Geesis Ahn-shay-kwaneh Ikwe, Beautiful Sun Women is missing from the photo.

community capable in translation. Prior to seeking those translations I am to follow the basic components in offering tobacco and a gift to the person I am seeking those translation from. Gitchee Meegwetch to Ronald Roundhead in providing me with the fish used in preparing the spirit plates and ceremony food used in the naming ceremony. Your assistance in this special ceremony will be remembered when we feast our names every spring and fall solstice.

I feel a sense of responsibility to light the fire in bringing our identity and culture to my children. It was a great day to have received our names and I look forward to teaching our children the meaning and ceremonies of the Anishnawbe Peoples.

Meegwetch to the readers in taking the time to share this experience with me. Happy holidays to you all and may the Creator bless you all with happiness, safety and warmth during the Christmas holiday and New Year!

Pickle Lake OPP Investigating Human Remains

The Pickle Lake Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are investigating the discovery of human remains located just off the Nord Road, north of the Town of Pickle Lake.

The discovery of the remains was made by a hunter in the area during the afternoon of Saturday, November 23, 2009. A post-mortem has been scheduled in Toronto for November 24 in an attempt to determine the identity of the remains and a possible cause of death.

Foul play is not suspected at this time. Police are looking for any information regarding the matter. Please Contact

Pickle Lake Ontario Provincial Police
Phone: 807-928-2211



Mary, Amelia and Frances Muckuck visited the Musselwhite mine this past summer. Here they are in the cafeteria with Dave Jensen (electrical team leader) and Chris Warren (Assistant Camp Manager, standing).

School helps healing process

Georgie Skunk doesn't expect any Christmas presents this year, but he is giving himself something pretty special. At 47, Georgie is back in school, working hard to replace memories of residential school and too many Christmases in jail, with education - learning that he might one day be able to use to help others.

He gets teased about going to the adult education centre and upgrading along with much younger students, but Georgie doesn't care. This experience can't begin to compare with the horror of his first school experience. Georgie was four when he was sent to residential school in Brantford. "I wasn't sure I wanted to go to school when I was four," he said. Bad things happened in the next seven years there. Really bad things. He remembers leaving his bed to cry in the washroom. Staff came to get him and put him back to bed, but he went back to the sanctuary of the washroom to cry in privacy. They put him back to bed again. And again. Then, they tied him to the bed where he said he had to soil himself because they wouldn't let him go.

It is memories like this that keep coming back, leaving him "weak inside." Georgie left school when he was 11 or 12 and was in jail by the time he was 15. He has spend most of his life in various penal institutions. When he left the last time, his counsellor said, "Don't come back," and Georgie replied "I'm not coming back."

Georgie said he is only beginning to speak of his residential school experience. When he was asked when he went to jail if he'd ever been to residential school, he said "no." Now he knows he can't deny what happened to him. But at the same time, he can't cope if that is all he thinks about.

"I come in to school to keep my mind busy," he said. "School helps me to do something else instead of remembering over and over."

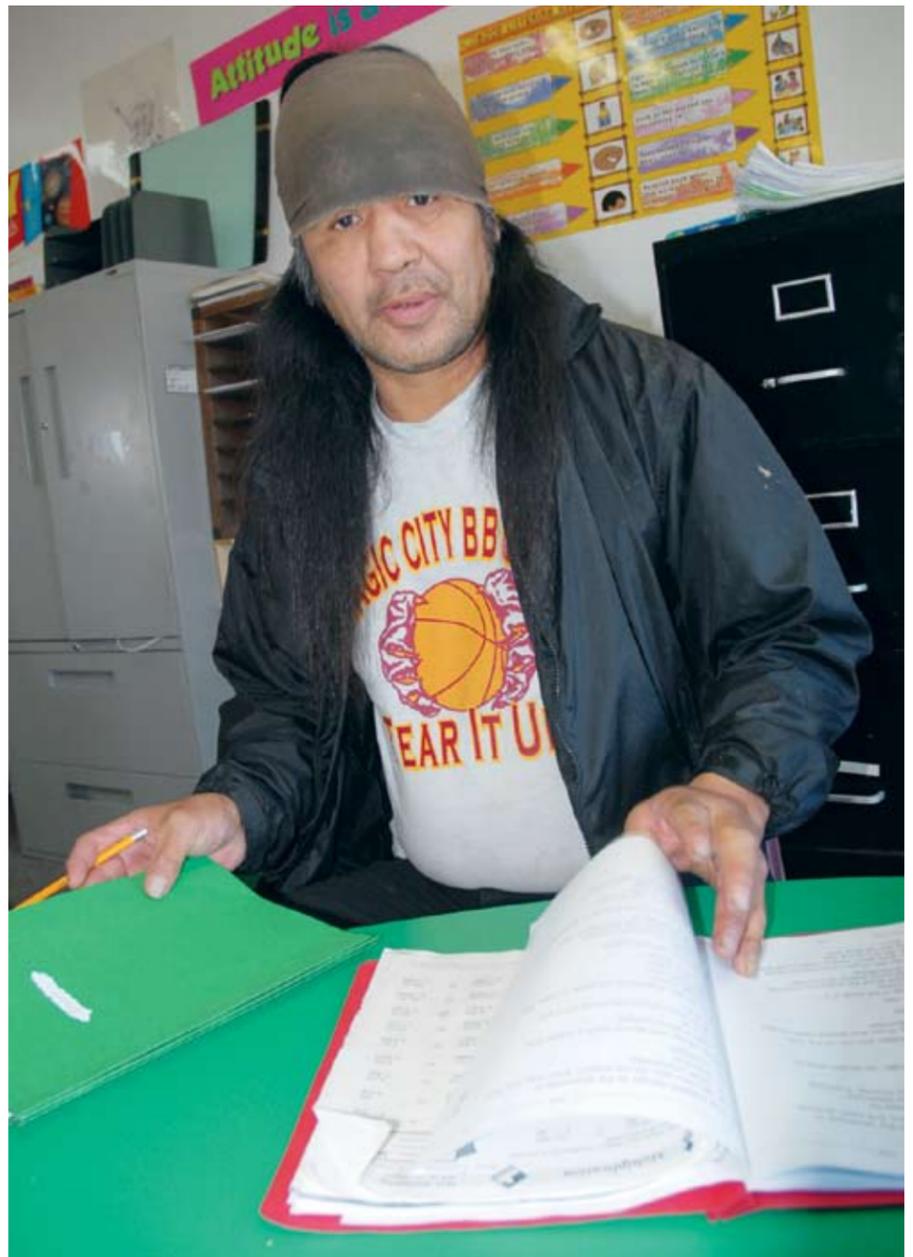
Alcohol is a constant battle and Georgie started drinking again some months ago after two years of sobriety. It's difficult to stay sober when the memories keep coming back, no matter how hard he tries to forget. "You can't erase the past," he said "But I'm trying to do my best to get myself on the right track. I want to be helpful to others."

The first step to healing was a hard step to take. "You have to do it yourself. Other people can help, but you have to start yourself," he said. "It's kind of hard." Where he used to think only about the wrongs done to him, not only in school, but by authorities who picked him up when he was drinking, Georgie is working to take responsibilities for his actions. Being picked up and hit with a flashlight by a cop when he was quietly waiting for a ride home from the hotel is wrong, Georgie said, but he has also learned that drinking in the first place was his mistake. "School affected me inside, but now I have to draw from my birth time, a time before I went to school. I have to concentrate on myself."

"It's like a see-saw," said Georgie, "Trying to equal myself to the problems I caused and the problems I had happen to me."

Georgie completed Grade 9 in jail and is now upgrading in order to access high school courses on KNET or WAHSA. He is also working with a counsellor and a lawyer on his residential school compensation.

"Nobody's perfect," he said, "but I'm doing my best."



Georgie Skunk is going back to school, determined to get a high school diploma in order to help himself and possibly others as well.

Traditional Ceremonies for Healing

Christmas, for many, is a time for joy and celebration - a time to spend with family and friends. For others, it is a painful reminder of loss, of loved ones that have passed on and the grief they live with every day.

Tom Chisel is a traditional healer. He is also coordinator of the Traditional Healing program of the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority. He was in Mishkeegogamang in November and, as he mixed herbs to make medicine tea, spoke about his perspective on both Christmas and healing.

Chisel doesn't personally celebrate Christmas any more. As a Midewiwin, he practises a traditional way of life, although he is not opposed to joining his family for a turkey dinner and gathering during the holidays. He prefers, however, to concentrate on more traditional Anishinabe ceremonies and thinks of Christmas "as just another day."

He encourages people in grief to do exactly that when they are suffering during the holidays. "What if it was just another day? Pick any random day and put that day over here in that [Christmas] day," he suggests.

Chisel has suffered many losses in his own life. He lost his grandmother when he was 16 and then, several months later, lost his grandfather, aunt and uncle in a house fire. He contemplated suicide, but realized

it would just be another pain for his family to endure, and didn't go through with it. He drank and experimented with a variety of pills, trying to numb his pain.

It was after he married a woman whose father was a traditional person that he started to learn healthy ways of healing. He learned the basic teachings about Anishinabe, why we are here, creation stories, purpose and "who we are as a people." "I began to change my whole perspective on who I am, my relationship with God and how I should relate to Him and my world around me," he said.

Four years ago he started working with medicines, a gift he believes he was born with. "You're already gifted, you just have to do it," he said. "[These gifts] don't do you any good in your head." In fact, Chisel believes everybody has been given gifts and that we become sick when we don't use those gifts. "The Creator gave them to you to use with the people."

When you share the gifts of the spirit with other people you become whole, said Chisel. "You are fulfilling the intent for what the Creator sent you. You become a happy person."

Chisel learns a lot from dreams. He dreams of various medicines and their uses and basically, just "started wandering around in the bush picking plants." He is delighted when he discovers plants he has

been dreaming of and has been affirmed in his work with medicines by a respected Elder. He believes he was sent to this earth for a specific purpose and when he is finished his work and the Creator says it is time to go, he'll go.

Chisel has dreams of family members that have passed on. "Dreams are like a doorway to the spirit world, where you connect with the person that has passed on," he said. Chisel said when you dream of a loved one that has passed on, you should "feed them" in a ceremony. "In all our ceremonies food is used to help people. When you offer that food you are also feeding the spirit of the one you dreamed of, plus feeding yourself in an unconscious way. You are doctoring that grief, that sadness, with that spirit food. You are healing yourself. When you feed their spirit, you are also feeding your own spirit."

Chisel said acknowledging your own grief and sadness "settles it down." "When you acknowledge that feeling of sadness, that emotion, say 'megwetch, you love me, thank you for loving me. Here's some food for you, I love you too,' they return that love to you in a spirit way. You heal, you become strong. That's what they're there for. They just moved on to a different phase."

Chisel said the Ojibway tradition includes honouring ceremonies when people pass on. This ceremony includes a

feast and a circle where each person gets an opportunity to say something about the person that has passed on. This is done four years in a row and is a good way of knowing within the family where everybody is at in terms of processing their grief. "It's a way for the family to know who they need to support more," he said.

Chisel sees every new day as an opportunity to learn. "All of the things in nature, the trees, the plants, the animals, are there to teach you something. The Creator sends you little messages. It's beautiful," he said.

It is important to realize the importance of mind, body and soul, said Chisel. "Our people used the mind to survive. It is a powerful gift. The Creator gave us our heart, representing our emotions, to help us to be good to each other, to feel the earth and to feel why we are here. Within our spirit is the purpose we are here," he said.

Chisel said he was given a song that describes, in the language, the love of the Creator. "The Creator is hearing us, seeing us, feeling our feelings, loving us, blessing us."

It is only when people realize that they are the only ones that can heal their inner selves, that they can be truly well. "You do this by doing a ceremony, a ritual that makes sense to you," he said. "In the doing is where we begin to move. Nothing changes if you don't do it."

—Copy for OSNABURGH NURSING STATION—
 RUN DATE: 11/09/08
 RUN TIME: 1802
 938-2071

SIoux LOOKOUT MENO YA WIN HEALTH CENTRE
 CLINICAL LABORATORIES
 82-7th Ave. N., Box 909
 Sioux Lookout, Ontario P8T 1B4
 Page: 1

PATIENT: GRAY-MCKAY, CONNIE
 AGE/SEX: 45/F
 DOB: 15/10/1962
 BAND: MISHKEEGOGAMANG

UNIT #: SL00105472
 ACCT #: SA031361/08
 RESIDENCE: OSNABURGH

LOCATION: SL LAB REF
 ROOM:
 BAND #: 776

DATE COLLECTED: 11/09/08
 01115

ORDERING PHYSICIAN: MARILYN KOVAL MD
 REFERRING CLIENT: OSNABURGH NURSING STATION
 OTHER CARE PROVIDERS:

Test	Result	Flag	Reference	Site
CHEMISTRY				
DRUG SCREENING				
URINE DRUG SCR				
METAMPHETAMINES	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
COCAINE	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
CANNABINOIDS	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
BENZODIAZEPINES	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
TRICYCLICS	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
BARBITURATES	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
PCP	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
AMPHETAMINES	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
MORPHINE	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	
METHADONE	NEGATIVE		NEGATIVE	

Chief Connie Gray McKay recently submitted to a drug test, and has convinced Chiefs of NAN to do the same, leading by example.

Prescription Drug Use Declared an Emergency

On November 26/09 NAN passed a resolution declaring a State of Emergency as a result of the prescription drug use epidemic on NAN First Nations. Growing numbers of First Nation members are addicted to such narcotic prescription drugs as OxyContin and Percocets. The Chiefs of Ontario, in Resolution 08/68, have already mandated the development of an Ontario-wide Prescription Drug Abuse Strategy, and work is in progress for the formation of an Advisory Panel that will help develop the strategy. NAN is calling on both the provincial and federal governments to respond with immediate action by enhancing community programming, training workers, and improving security and land-based programming.

The NAN Executive Council will work with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the Ontario College of Pharmacists, and Ontario Medical Association to deal with prescribing practices and policies that affect NAN First Nations.

NAN also passed the following two resolutions:

Nishnawbe Aski Nation
 Draft Resolution 09/94

Voluntary Drug Testing

Whereas the Mishkeegogamang First Nation hereby challenges all Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) First Nation Chiefs and Councils and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Executive Council to a drug test;

Whereas Chief Connie Gray-McKay has voluntarily submitted a copy of her 2008 drug screening test to NAN that proves she is clean and free of: Methamphetamines, Cocaine, Cannabinoids, Benzodiazepines, Tricyclics, Barbiturates, PCP, Amphetamines, Morphine and Methadone;

Therefore be it resolved the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Chiefs-in-Assembly will respond to the challenge put forth by the Mishkeegogamang First Nation and will submit the results of drug tests to demonstrate our commitment to lead by example in the betterment of our people.

Dated at Thunder Bay, Ontario this 26th Day of November, 2009
 Moved by: Chief Connie Gray-McKay, Mishkeegogamang First Nation
 Seconded by: Chief Joshua Frogg, Wawakapewin First Nation

Nishnawbe Aski Nation
 Draft Resolution 09/83

Support for Mishkeegogamang Road Stop and Search

Whereas illicit and licit drugs have been entering the Mishkeegogamang First Nation through Highway 599;

Whereas the use and abuse of these substances undermines the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of community members and families; Whereas the Chief and Council of Mishkeegogamang First Nation plans to establish a road stop and search to seize illicit and licit drugs in an effort to curtail drug trafficking and substance abuse on Mishkeegogamang territory;

Whereas Mishkeegogamang First Nation will be pursuing resources to establish the road stop and search;

Therefore be it resolved the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Chiefs-in-Assembly supports Mishkeegogamang First Nation in establishing a road stop and search Finally be it resolved the NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly also supports other First Nation communities who want to establish stop and searches on their traditional territory

Dated at Thunder Bay, Ontario this 26th Day of November, 2009
 Moved by: Chief James Mamakwa, Kingfisher Lake First Nation
 Seconded by: Chief Joshua Frogg, Wawakapewin First Nation



Dena Wavy is the Finance Manager at Mishkeegogamang as of November 4th.



Pickle Lake's OPP Sergeant Mark Downey is the acting Commander of the Pickle Lake Detachment.

OPP Press Releases

Winter Driving

The Pickle Lake OPP reminds motorists that winter is here and that precautions should be taken while driving at this time of year.

Always drive according to highway and weather conditions. Reduce your speed in poor weather. Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you in case you have to brake suddenly on a slippery surface.

Keep your vehicle in good working order and get your vehicle winter ready with a maintenance check-up. The condition of your vehicle's tires is important. Worn or damaged tires can be a danger. Have your tires checked or replaced. Check tire air pressure frequently, as it decreases in cold weather.

Before driving, clear all snow and ice from windows, lights, mirrors, and the roof. After starting your vehicle, wait for the fog to clear from the windows.

Always have a winter survival kit inside your vehicle with items like snack bars, water, extra winter clothes, candles and matches.

Community Policing Committee Established

The Pickle Lake OPP has re-established a Community Policing Committee. All interested individuals are encouraged to participate in an effort to identify local concerns and to plan effective ways to address these concerns.

All residents of Pickle Lake and Mishkeegogamang are encouraged to attend. Call the OPP if you're interested in being a committee member.

New Detachment Commander

The Pickle Lake OPP would like to congratulate Sergeant Nathan Schmidt on his promotion to Staff Sergeant and Detachment Commander of the Sioux Lookout OPP Detachment.

Acting Sergeant Mark Downey will be the acting Detachment Commander of the Pickle Lake Detachment. A selection process for a full time Detachment Commander will begin shortly.

Acting Sergeant Downey is an experienced officer who has served over 5 years with the Peel Regional Police and has been a member of the Pickle Lake OPP for 1 ½ years. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience and is eager to serve the citizens of Pickle Lake and Mishkeegogamang.

New Distracted Driver Legislation

The OPP would like to remind motorists that effective October 26, 2009 it will be illegal in Ontario for drivers to use any handheld communication and entertainment devices while driving.

As of this date and up to February 1, 2010, there will be a 3-month education period where police will not issue tickets. However, motorists should be aware that OPP officers will maintain discretion to lay charges by way of summons under this new law where it is appropriate to do so.

Police continue to have the ability to lay charges, where warranted, of Careless Driving or other offences under the Highway Traffic Act or Criminal Code for situations where drivers are using electronic devices. This new legislation will enhance traffic safety by creating a specific offence for driving behaviour which is known to distract drivers from driving safely.

Distracted drivers are a safety risk to themselves and others. The OPP is committed to ensuring the safety of all motorists in Ontario.

Mishkeegogamang Well Connected

Mishkeegogamang has strong connections with various "helping groups" around Ontario and even in the U.S.



Fun at the Mishkeegogamang Adventure Camp, 2009

Christian Horizons

A 24-foot truck filled with food, new toys, winter coats, boots and household items has come to Mishkeegogamang this December. The truck comes from Christian Horizons, a non-profit organization based in Toronto which tries to send two trucks a year.

One of the goals of Christian Horizons is to support First Nations communities in Northern Ontario. It was established in 1965 to serve people with exceptional needs. The organization has a global outreach, focusing on improving living conditions, providing education and training, promoting social awareness and better opportunities for those with exceptional needs.

Paul Burston, who works for Christian Horizons, arrived in Mishkeegogamang along with the truck. "Supplies are not the only things we support in Ontario's far north First Nations communities," he wrote. "We also provide six weeks of camp and take up work teams to repair homes." Christian Horizons is working with other organizations and businesses on a plan to build a sustainable economy in Mishkeegogamang and other northern Ontario communities.

Feed the Children: Responding to community requests

Canadian Feed The Children has had a significant impact on Mishkeegogamang over the years. It is a registered Canadian charity that exists to reduce the impact of poverty on children. "Every child has vast potential," says its website. "But poverty can stop it dead, keeping children from wellness, strength and success. With careful attention to everyday needs, Canadian Feed The Children removes the barriers imposed by poverty, so a child struggling with hunger, illness or isolation can know health, well-being and a childhood without fear"

Karen Ward is one of 24 Feed The

Children staff members who work out of Toronto to help children around the world. Karen works part-time for Feed The Children and part-time for the North-South Partnership based in Guelph.

She and her team were in Mishkeegogamang this summer for the highly popular Adventure Camp. Her organization sends food and supplies to 30 northwest Ontario communities, including Mishkeegogamang. The organization is working hard to be sure the right donations get to the right people. Communities can make requests, and the boxes are labelled

with their contents and the communities they should go to.

Donors connected with the North-South Partnership also donate to the Feed The Children warehouse. When there are enough donations for a truckload, the truck takes the donations to Pickle Lake and from there Wasaya helps to distribute them.

Karen Ward hopes to visit Mishkeegogamang in December for a Christmas banquet and to re-connect with the many campers and their families she and her team got to know at Adventure camp.

North-South Partnership (Mamow Shaway-gi-kay-win)

Chief Connie Gray-McKay was recently elected to the Governance Circle of the North-South Partnership. The North-South Partnership for Children was formed to improve life for children, youth and families in First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario.

The Partnership has its roots in a Tikinagan presentation at a conference in 2005. Tikinagan and a Guelph group called Friends of Tikinagan joined together to promote friendships between communities in northern and southern Ontario. Soon many other organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, had joined them. Now chiefs and other leaders from 30 northwestern Ontario communities, along with individuals and voluntary organizations based in southern Ontario, are building respectful, sustainable relationships. The Partnership has no religious or political affiliations.

The Partnership secures resources to meet basic needs and provide programs, training and other forms of support. An example of a partnership is one that has formed with Feed the Children Canada, where donations are funnelled through the FTCC warehouse and from there shipped to Pickle Lake to be distributed to other communities, including Mishkeegogamang.

NATWIN: Focusing on winter needs

One group that's been active in the community is NATWIN, a twinning group between Peterborough and Mishkeegogamang. NATWIN Chairperson Sheila Nabigon-Howlett is familiar with the communities of Northwestern Ontario - her first husband and children are Ojibway.

This is the tenth year that Sheila and the board of NATWIN have mobilized Peterborough residents to participate in sending truckloads of gifts to Mishkeegogamang. She advertises in the newspaper and through churches and service clubs, so people know when and where to bring their contributions.

Sheila's goal is to gradually move away from the "sending" model and develop a link of friendship and support with Mishkeegogamang. NATWIN is becoming aware of other groups like the North-South Partnership for Children, Feed the Children and the Julia Project, who all have links with Mishkeegogamang as well.

Rather than just sending random gifts, NATWIN inquires in Mishkeegogamang

as to what their needs are and then focuses on those needs. The group recently coordinated funds from a Peterborough church and service organization to send over a skate-sharpening machine. "We have our knitting ladies," says Sheila, "who every year send toques and mitts and afghans." Last year a quilters guild made and donated

The Julia Project: Making a Difference

The Julia Project is aimed at helping children around the world, and this year has partnered with NATWIN to fill and send over 40 boxes full of winter clothing, baby items, toys, books, skates and warm blankets to Mishkeegogamang. Project members had hoped to come to the community in mid-December, but for this year the trip has been canceled because of scheduling difficulties. The Julia Project has a heart-warming story behind it.

Julia lives in Ontario. At five years of age, she had already developed compassion for those less fortunate than herself. Wanting

40 beautiful blankets.

Lately, Sheila says, she has been getting "a little more political" about the problems faced by northern reserves. Specifically, she is addressing with her MP and others issues such as the high number of children in care, and the shortfall in social services funding on reserves.

to help, she began saving her money to give to poverty stricken children. Julia saved one thousand, seven hundred pennies! Her determination to help grew when her parents took her to Africa the following year, and before long many people were joining her project.

The Julia Project blog reports being "overwhelmed with the generosity and support of our community who have dropped off so many wonderful donations for the children and families at Mishkeegogamang First Nations," and ends its report by saying, "Together we can make a difference!"