

healing words

Volume 4 Number 3 • Fall 2004 • A Publication of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 1573519



<http://www.ahf.ca>



Umijuaq, Nunavik

inside

Inuit Traditional Diet

PAGE 3

Inuit Suicide
Prevention

PAGE 17

Inuit of Northern
Quebec Incarceration

PAGE 29

Inuit Games

PAGE 33

A Nomadic Life –
Between Two
Worlds

PAGE 40

Healing Our Spirit
Worldwide 2006

PAGE 22

Interviews with
Igloolik Elders 25

healing words
letters 2

poems 19

5
Chesterfield Inlet (1955-1969)

Sport Prevents
the Young from
Suicide

23

Country Food

6

Species Nutrition:
Ringed and
Bearded Seals

12

The Need to Define
“Elder(s)”

11

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 1573519
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
CIRCULATION DEPT.
330-123 MAIN ST
TORONTO ON M5W 1A1
email: circdept@publisher.com



Good morning:

I am an Aboriginal man who has been working as a therapist for fourteen years. Most of my clients (both female and male) are survivors of child sexual abuse and violence.

I am interested in subscribing to your newsletter, Healing Words (I would appreciate accessing the back issues?) with an aim to both learn about how this mammoth wrong is being addressed regionally across the country and participating in events/publications.

Kindest regards,
Fred Andersen

*

Dear Fred

You are most welcome to join our list of readers. Your interest and understanding of the issue is very encouraging to us, and I thank you.

The demand for our newsletter has grown to exceed our expectations and we are running short of back copies.

I have forwarded your contact information to the person in charge of our mailing list, so you should receive the next issues of Healing Words (free of charge) from now on.

Thank you again for your interest.

Giselle Robelin.

continued on page 21



Healing
Words

To receive Healing Words, write to us at Suite 801, 75 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5E7 or phone 1-888-725-8886. (In Ottawa, phone 237-4441). Our fax number is (613) 237-4442 and our email is grobelin@ahf.ca or wspear@ahf.ca. Keep in mind that the newsletter is available in French and English and is free. Also available on-line! <http://www.ahf.ca>

Healing Words Editors:



Giselle Robelin:



Wayne K. Spear:
wspear@ahf.ca



Published and distributed three times a year, *Healing Words* is a free publication that concerns issues related to Canada's Aboriginal residential schools (including hostels and industrial, boarding, and day schools) and healing.



healing words
submissions

Healing Words ISSN: 1703-5813

Submit your articles, letters, or other contributions by fax, mail, or email to:

The Editors, Healing Words
75 Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5E7

Our fax number is (613) 237-4442 and our email addresses for submissions are:

wspear@ahf.ca



Please include a short biography with your submission as well as a return address and phone number. We may need to contact you about your submission.

The ahf does not pay for published submissions, but we do provide contributors with copies of the newsletter.

The views expressed by contributors to *Healing Words* do not necessarily reflect the views of the ahf.

All submissions are subject to the approval of the editorial team and may be edited for spelling, grammar, and length.

Inuit issue

A SPECIAL
THANK-YOU TO
ALL OUR
CONTRIBUTORS

Inuit Traditional Diet



This information is available from the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami website at :

<http://www.itk.ca/english/itk/departments/enviro/ncp/nutrition.htm>

and

http://www.itk.ca/english/itk/departments/enviro/wildlife/seal_n.htm

The food we obtain from hunting, or what we call country food, contributes to our health and it gives us a sense of wellness by providing us with a way to participate in our culture. It is while hunting and living on the land that our elders teach responsibility and the skills that give us confidence.

The time we spend on the land helps restore our inner harmony and balance. It also helps maintain our mental and physical well-being. Much of the time we spend with our family and friends happens while we are out hunting, preparing the country foods, and taking part in meals. Eating land foods helps us to feel whole. It keeps us "in tune" with nature.

Maintaining a Traditional Diet

Over the past five thousand years, we have developed and constantly refined the technology, skills and knowledge needed not just to survive, but to flourish as northern hunters. One of the common myths or stereotypes about Inuit culture is that we are almost always experiencing

hunger, if not actual starvation. People from the outside world have a difficult time understanding that an environment that looks so empty can actually offer great abundance in every season of the year.

There have, of course, been times in the living memories of our elders when hunting was not successful and hunger was present, at least for a short period. Most everyone has encountered difficult times, but these make the best stories to tell. We seldom tell stories about the day-to-day reality in which everything seems to be okay. Sometimes, even a very good hunter can have very bad luck. The wind can blow for days or the ice can push against the shore or floe edge to prevent the movement of people and animals. Equipment can break down when hunters are far out to sea or a great distance inland. Any of us who hunt on a regular basis have had to face these experiences. Not too long ago, sickness, brought to our land from the outside, created great problems because it took away the health that hunters needed when searching for food.

Skills and knowledge are what it really takes to be a good hunter. Our knowledge about the movement and behavior of animals helps us to get to the right places at the right times, and our ability to read and understand the many signs of nature enables us to know what is going on and to make plans. It is from our skills and knowledge that we know how to walk quietly and to always stay downwind of the animals we are stalking. We know how to cut a small hole through thick freshwater ice, spot fish moving below, and then thrust our fish spear in the right direction at exactly the right time. We know how to find the breathing holes of seal in the winter sea ice, and we can tell which holes are being actively used. We have the patience to wait without moving in frigid temperatures, and we know when a seal is preparing to breathe and when to drive a harpoon accurately into the breathing hole. We have the skills to sneak up on walrus at their hauling-out spots, and when the time is right, to rush toward them and thrust a harpoon; or get a quickly killing shot with a rifle.

We know to be on watch in exactly the right location when the beluga or narwhals pass by close to the land in the fall, or along the floe edge in winter and spring. We know exactly where to go and what to do when we lower ourselves through cracks in the thick winter sea ice at low tide, so that we can search the tidal zone under the ice for a mid-winter meal of mussels, clams and seaweed. We have the skills and knowledge to find caribou when the population has declined and they are no longer moving about in large groups. We can find the small, well-hidden nesting sites of ducks so we can collect their eggs and gather down from the nest. We have the skills to lower ourselves down the sides of steep cliffs by ropes made from the skins

Inuit are very surprised by how little is understood by outsiders about the importance of the country foods that we continue to harvest throughout the year

of bearded seals to collect the eggs of the cliff-dwelling murre. And of course, when we encounter the polar bear, we have the skills and knowledge to return to our camp or community with the meat and skin. When we make a map of our land use, it looks quite simple. We simply say we go here or we go there to harvest the animals we need. But it is not simple. And it is very hard work to get the food that remains special to all Inuit. Even though things are much different in the way in which we live today, most Inuit still prefer to eat our own food.

Today we have what is referred to as a "mixed economy." This means that sometimes we earning a living through employment and activities such as carving or guiding tourists. Other times we are actively pursuing a hunting way of life. Almost everything in our communities now costs money, so Inuit must use money we earn to buy and maintain equipment that we use for hunting. We also use our money for buying foods imported from the south. We can now go to the store at any time of the year to buy these foods. Although this has created important changes to the way we eat, country foods still remain the most important part of our diet.



It wasn't so very long ago that the only imported foods that would be available to us throughout the year would be staples like flour, salt and sometimes lard for making bannock, maybe some powdered milk, and certainly tea and sugar. These would be brought by the ship that arrived once a year, in August. The ship would also bring things like potato chips and soda pop, cookies and candy bars that everyone would rush to buy. The supply of these items never lasted

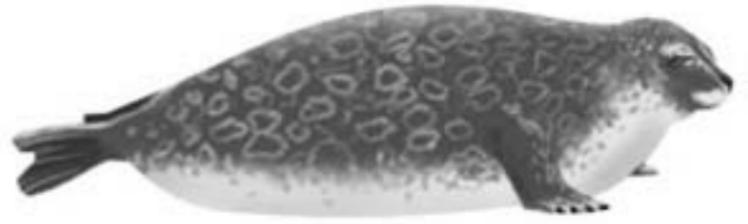
long, and usually by Christmas the local store would be back to offering not much more than flour, sugar, tea and a few other staples. Things like flour and tea have been with us long enough to really be part of what we consider traditional foods.

Inuit are very surprised by how little is understood by outsiders about the importance of the country foods that we continue to harvest throughout the year. During the court case to try to stop the negotiations around the James Bay Hydroelectric project, for example, Inuit were asked over and over why we wanted to look after our land and animals. Everyone thought that we got all our nourishment from cans shipped to our communities from the south. They seemed amazed to learn that this was not the case, and that country foods are a major part of our diet. When we tried to explain this, they didn't take us very seriously, so we had to call in anthropologists and other social scientists to speak on our behalf. It seems as though the court thought them trustworthier than our elders. All land claims processes across our territory seem to show the same thing, but now attitudes have changed. There is a new understanding by government, and hopefully industry, about the importance of country foods.

One of the ways we have demonstrated the continuing importance of hunting is by carrying out harvest studies to document on an almost daily basis the types and amounts of foods that were harvested by hunters. What these studies show is that in spite of the fact we can now go to the store to buy potato chips or even a piece of beef, most of our food comes from wild animals.

The kind of country food that we eat varies, depending on where we live and on the availability of major and minor species at different places and at different seasons of the year. Over the year, we probably harvest around 25 to 30 different species for food, including duck eggs, mussels, seaweed and various types of berries. We eat many different parts of the animals, including meat, organs, intestines, bones and blood.

Certain foods, such as caribou, ringed and bearded seals, beluga whale, muktuk, Arctic char and even duck eggs are often eaten raw or frozen. Fish, the intestines of ringed seals, and slices of meat from seal and caribou can be air dried and preserved for later use. Polar bear is always cooked, and frequently walrus as well, because of problems with parasites. The liver of polar bear and bearded seal are never eaten because of the high concentrations of Vitamin A. Ringed seal liver, though, is delicious. The eyes of seals, the meat inside the nose of caribou, plants and already-shelled clams found in the



Harvesting and eating country food is nutritious but also makes good economic sense when compared to store-bought foods

stomach of animals are still considered delicacies, at least for many older people.

The amount of country food consumed in the north is estimated to be 90 to 300 kg per person every year. Most of this is meat and fish. People elsewhere in Canada eat far less meat and fish, about 67 kg per person per year. Nutritional analysis of our foods have been carried out at the Centre for indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE), an NCP partner located at McGill University, Montreal.

Findings show that an average serving of meat or fish from the land can supply all the recommended daily requirements of a number of essential nutrients. The importance of country food is not declining, demonstrated by the results of detailed and long term research to determine harvest levels. This research has been carried out on a community-by-community basis in most of the regions, and shows harvesting wildlife resources can produce as much as 2.2 kg of edible food per person per day.

Harvesting and eating country food is nutritious but also makes good economic sense when compared to store-bought foods. Foods from the south are less nutritional, and cost much more.



CINE research shows that food to feed a family for a week could cost as much as \$254 in the north. The same, probably better quality food, would probably cost \$110 in the south. CINE researchers found that in one community, a kilogram of pork cost \$12.00, while the cost of harvesting caribou was estimated to be only \$0.29 per kilogram.

http://www.itk.ca/english/itk/departments/enviro/wildlife/seal_n.htm

Chesterfield Inlet (1955-1969)

Extracted from *Dreams and Visions*
Published by the Department of Education
Government of the Northwest Territories, 1991
Article by Lorraine Branson

In 1950 the Federal Government of Canada built a Day School with two classrooms at Chesterfield Inlet. From the time the school opened in September of 1951, Mr. Roland Lariviere took charge, until 1953 when two Sisters from the Grey Nuns of Montreal, Sisters Elisabeth Herauf and Pauline Cote, came to Chesterfield to teach at this school.

At this time the Apostolic Vicariate of Hudson Bay, now the Diocese of Churchill Hudson Bay, wished to facilitate "the education of the Eskimo for the benefit of the Eskimo community." With a view to this, the Vicariate, under the direction of Bishop Marc Lacroix, o.m.i. financed the construction of a hostel for students who would be flown in from communities outside Chesterfield Inlet.

Supervised by Brother Gilles Marie Paradis, the hostel was constructed in 1954 with the help of many local Inuit, some Fathers and three brothers. The hostel, called Turquetil Hall, was opened in 1955 to house students flown in from various communities in the Canadian Arctic. From 1955-69, the hostel's operation was taken care of by the Sisters of the Grey Nuns who took care of such necessities as laundry, meals and supervision.

When Turquetil Hall was first opened, the old two room school was not large enough for all students who were living at the hostel. As a result, classes were conducted in the new hostel for some time, while the Federal Government expanded the day school building.

Each year children were picked up by the aeroplanes provided through the Government in mid August and returned home to their own settlements in mid May. Approximately forty children, and progressing to about eighty children, came from settlements outside Chesterfield Inlet to take advantage of this educational opportunity. Students shared their rooms with other children and ate together in the dining room of Turquetil Hall. Meals of frozen food, meat, fish or muktuk were frequently provided for the students.

In a report describing the activities of the boarding school during the first year, the Principal, Sister Herauf wrote, "In every sphere of action one must know how to adapt himself to the mentality and mores of the people concerned. Henceforth, every effort was made to adapt our way of thinking and doing to theirs, the Eskimos, and not vice versa."

The compulsory curriculum guidelines and class books were supplied for the school by the Federal Government. As a consequence, English was adopted as the language of instruction although syllabic and Roman characters were also taught. This enabled the children to communicate in writing with their families who had learned these forms of reading and writing at the local missions. Each year seven to eight Sisters devoted themselves to this task of education. Altogether twenty-six Sisters worked at this hostel, which closed in 1969. In addition to the Sisters, approximately two lay teachers worked in the school each year.

In the mid 1960's the government purchased Turquetil Hall and in 1970 the Department of Education of the N.W.T. began to utilize the building for Adult Education programs. Today the upper part of the building has been closed and the basement is used by the local co-op, the post office and various government organizations.

Editor's Note:
Turquetil Hall was demolished in 1985.



Help!

Healing Words is looking for pictures of residential schools and Aboriginal people for upcoming issues. You can send electronic copies or the pictures themselves – we will handle them *very carefully* and keep them only long enough to scan them (a few days). We also receive many requests for school pictures from Survivors and their descendants. In some cases the schools no longer

exist and family members have passed on, and so pictures and records are among only a few ways these people can learn about their family's and community's history. You'll be helping us out and contributing to the telling of the residential school story as well ...

For more information, please contact us at *Healing Words* (see page 2 for address).

Country Food

Country food is more than just a tradition for Inuit. It is the embodiment of the connection Inuit have to the land and its bounty. It is also a connection to the traditions of Inuit ancestors. Feasts are a celebration of Inuit values – cooperation, sharing and spirituality. Country food is a part of the Inuit identity. As an Inuk once said, "When I eat traditional food I know who I am."

Country food is also a healthy alternative to the expensive pre-packaged processed store-bought foods. Foods such as seal and whale are rich in n-3 fatty acids, a class of polyunsaturated fats, which has been proven to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Country foods are also high in protein, low in saturated fat and rich in nutrients.

There is the added benefit of the activities to of gathering country foods – studies have shown that Inuit who hunt and fish even part time are leaner and healthier than those that do not. Physical activity, such as hunting, fishing and gathering berries lead to an active way of life.

Not only do country foods provide a nutritious meal important for physical health, country foods also improve the mental well being for Inuit. Consuming country foods has great social, cultural and physical benefits for Inuit. Add to that, the economic benefit by supplying an inexpensive, healthy food source, country food is a winner!

This section will continue to provide information on the health benefits of a diet that includes country food, as well as any important information about the Inuit diet.

Traditional country foods include caribou, muskox, arctic hare, muskrat, seal, duck, goose, beluga and bowhead whale, fish (whitefish, herring, inconnu, arctic char, and trout), and berries (akpiks, blueberries, crowberries, currants, and cranberries):

- Akutuq or Eskimo ice cream: A mixture of caribou meat, caribou fat or marrow and broth, stirred by hand until light and fluffy, then frozen.
- Caribou stew or soup: Diced caribou meat, vegetables, rice, and stock.
- Dry fish: De-boned fish hung to dry in the sun or smoked in a smokehouse. Either way, it tastes great.
- Mipku or dry meat: Thin strips of whale or caribou meat which have been hung to dry.
- Muktuk: Skin of a whale (beluga or bowhead), which can be cooked or eaten raw after aging.

- Muqpauraq or bannock: Made of flour, sugar, baking powder, lard and milk or water, then fried over an open fire or baked in the oven.
- Putuligaaq or Eskimo donuts: Deep fried donuts with 6 to 8 holes.
- Quak: Meat that is frozen raw and then eaten.
- Suvaq: Fish eggs that may be eaten frozen or cooked.
- Uksuk: Oil of the whale.
- Tea water: Many Inuvialuit believe that fresh water from lakes or blocks of ice should be used in the making of tea for that extra essence.

Nutritional Information

Country food provides the following:

Vitamin A

We need vitamin A to keep our skin, bones and teeth healthy. Vitamin A is also needed by our bodies to help fight off infections from bacteria and viruses. Caribou and seal liver, as well as blubber of whale, seal and walrus, are excellent sources of Vitamin A. To increase your Vitamin A intake, add chopped carrot to soup and stew. Drinking vegetable juice or milk instead of pop or Kool-aid will also increase your vitamin A intake.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C keeps our gums, teeth, skin and blood vessels healthy. It also helps wounds heal and helps our body fight sickness. We need extra vitamin C during times of illness, stress or surgery. Smokers need twice as much vitamin C as non-smokers. This is because smoking lowers the body's ability to use vitamin C.

The best source of vitamin C can be found in berries, fruits and vegetables that are eaten raw. Many traditional foods contain vitamin C such as: fish eggs, mussels or clams.

Calcium

We need calcium for strong bones and teeth. Calcium is also needed for healthy muscles, heart and nerves. Without enough calcium our bones will become brittle and will break easily and our teeth may decay.

Eating traditional foods such as: fish head soup, dried fish with bones, clams, caribou stomach contents and duck meat give us calcium. It is important to eat food high in calcium everyday and physical activity helps our bodies to keep calcium in our bones. Drink lots of milk!



Iron

We need iron everyday for healthy blood. Iron gives us energy to live, grow and be healthy. Without enough iron children may have slowed growth and poor learning ability. Without iron we may become tired and have no energy.

Eating dried fish, fish eggs or fish head soup provides a good source of iron. Iron from animal sources such as, caribou and seal, is absorbed by the body better than iron from plant sources like grains. All wild meats are an excellent source of iron.

Protein

Protein is used to build and repair body tissues such as muscle, skin and blood. Protein also builds antibodies to help fight infection. Meat from traditional foods is an excellent source of protein. Without enough protein we may have poor growth and weak muscles. Without protein we may have no resistance to infection or disease.

Traditional sources of meat, fish and wild birds such as caribou, seal, whale, duck, ptarmigan, char and fish eggs are excellent sources of protein. Protein can also be found in grain products, and milk products as well as other foods such as baked beans and dried peas.

Fat

Fat provides us with energy, helps keep us warm and protects our body organs. Blubber and fatty fish such as char and trout give us omega-3 fatty acids, which help prevent heart disease, and may help prevent cancer. The fat content of traditional meats, such as, caribou and musk ox, is very low (1-2%) when compared to 12-20% for beef, pork and poultry. Although traditional fats from seal, whale, walrus and fish provide us with important nutrients for health, too much of any fat (traditional or store bought) is not good for our health.

Allan's Story

The story below is from a series of interviews conducted, in January 2004, with Giselle Robelin, of the Aboriginal

Healing Foundation. *Healing Words* offers thanks and gratitude for the sharing of these stories.

When I first heard of the [AHF] program, I felt happy and proud for the people, the survivors of the residential school system. The reason I felt like that, because when I heard of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, I felt like finally the people will be heard and their stories will be heard, hopefully understood and they can heal from there.

I myself went to a residential school. My name is Allan. I was born in Cambridge Bay. At that time it was called the Northwest Territories, but now it's called Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, because of the new territory. I was born in 1961, and when I turned five years old – from the day I was born until I was five, I lived with my parents and my parents worked on the DEW line across the North and already, my sisters, my two older sisters were at Stringer Hall, a residential school in Inuvik, the Anglican Mission School.

So from the day I was born until I was five, I was mainly alone with my mother and father on the DEW line, and the only language I knew was Inuinnaqtun. I didn't know any English. But it came to a point where I was five and I remember that day, because my mother was rushing and rushing and rushing, saying, "We've got to pack up. We've got to pack up. We've got to go. We've got to go." And I knew what she meant by that, because we were always packing up to go camping, like fishing or hunting and whatnot. But for some reason, she felt – she acted different. She was sad. I could tell at even age five that she was trying to hold her tears.

So anyways, when I was five, my parents packed my bags up and went to the airport. I was in Cambridge Bay. And it was nice out. It was summertime, okay? But during those days in 1966, I think it was, you'd have to leave early, like a couple weeks, couple months, because there's so much travelling from Cambridge to Yellowknife to Norman Wells to Inuvik and then there was the intake of all the students.

I'd just like to mention one thing about that day I was shipped out. The plane was already there. We were just waiting for, I'm not sure, whatever, fuel, whatever, and it was time to go on the plane and my mom and dad were telling me, "Get on that plane now. It's time for you to

go." At that time I thought my parents were going to go with me or my mom or my dad or both, but I was wrong. I was going to be travelling alone, by myself, at five years old.

But at that time, my parents had no choice but to send me to residential school. It was the law. And they had no say. Once your child turns old enough to go to school, they take you. I had to fight my way to stay off that plane, so – I believe it was a DC-3, Douglas DC-3, and there was stairs going up, right? You can see that arch. And it had those long stairs going up and at first, one or two white guys, they tried, you know, carrying me and carried me up those stairs, but I guess I was maybe a little tougher than I thought, because they tried again. But this time it took four white people, four white grown men to grab each arm, one to grab one arm, one to grab the other arm, one to grab one leg and one to grab the other leg. And I was yelling and screaming, kicking and whatnot, because like why I was I going and not my mom or my dad? Because, you know....

It was a hard day. I cried all the way to Yellowknife and all the way to Inuvik, not understanding why, what was happening, why I was taken away. But I cried all the way to Yellowknife and then to Inuvik and then from the airport in Inuvik, I cried all the way from the airport to the residential school. I think that was the first time I seen trees and a lot of buildings and a lot of people, because I grew up mostly alone with my mom and dad and here's just one house and that's all there was, three people.

Anyways, we got outside the front door of Stringer Hall and I'd see a lot of kids. I even recognized a few of them, and I recognized my two older sisters. They were already there, waiting at the front door, because I think they heard I was coming. They were probably told, because they were already there. They were crying and screaming and yelling and I was too, and as soon as I got ahold of my sisters, I didn't want to let go. So I held on for dear life and at that time there was a lot of kids outside, you know. It's sort of like when somebody new comes in, all these kids, they're outside seeing who's all coming in. It's sort of like what happens today in jail when there's a new prisoner coming in. Everybody's watching,

who's that guy. It was the same thing with five, six-year-olds at Stringer Hall when I got outside.

Getting back to my story, we were outside the front door for a good, I don't know, maybe half an hour. I guess they gave me some time to maybe catch my breath from all that crying and whatnot and – and about half an hour later, they told me it was time to go. And again, at that time I didn't realize we were going to the boys' dorm, and I didn't know my sisters were going to the girls' dorm. It's the same building, but the girls were on one side and the boys on the other. And I didn't know that, you know. Here I was going to the building. Later on – I guess I cried for a good three months. Why was I here? What's happening to me? Who are all these people? How come my mom and dad didn't do anything to help in any way to make my travel, you know, easier or whatever you want to call it? But it took at least three months to cry myself out.

The funny thing about that, during all that crying, I'd see other boys from my hometown, you know, my friends, that we'd play out with or whatever. Even though I knew they were there, I just kept on crying. But later on that year, I got used to being at Stringer Hall. I guess what some people would call it would be – I guess he was finally broken in, into the system. I guess that's what I would call it. After being there for so long and the first time, after I cried out and then get so exhausted for the first few months, I guess I was finally broken in. You know, I needed to eat, I needed to sleep and – there was line-ups. I'd never seen line-ups before. Everybody was all lined up. Everybody was all quiet. But then when I saw food, you know, I just dug in. I was hungry. I needed food.

But during time, time and time again, I guess I got broken in and from age five until I was, I think, 14 or 15, a good nine years, ten years, I went to school there – eight years, I think, from Grade – Kindergarten or whatever all the way to Grade 6. I think I failed a few times. I'm not sure. Because I stayed there, like, eight, nine years. Because when I was five, that's the first time I went there and I went home when I was like 14 or 15.

The only times we went home were during the summer, and during the winter, when it was time for – like maybe last day after school in December, we were allowed to go home for Christmas, you know, like for a week, I think. I'm not sure. And for me it was twice a year to go home, back to Cambridge.

And getting back to my – before I went to Stringer Hall, the only language I knew was my mother tongue, Inuinnaqtun. I didn't know a word of English. And the first, I guess, six months, they turned that around. They didn't want me to speak my own language, because that's all I knew. And my friends were the friends that were there and family, they were telling me, "No, don't speak your own language. You've got to speak English." And they told me you'd get punished if you spoke your language. I didn't know what that meant. And one of the ways that the people at Stringer Hall used for me to stop using my language was they took a bar of soap and the Sun or Sunlife, I'm not sure what it's called, it's a long, yellow bar. Anyways, they took a piece off and they measured my mouth. They told me to open it wide, like really wide. So I'd open it really wide and then I guess they used their fingers and they measured the bar of soap with my mouth. And what they did was they'd break that off and put that in my mouth, like my mouth was so wide open, they put the bar of soap in. And I couldn't talk. I couldn't – I could breathe by my nose, but I was wondering why are they putting soap in my mouth?

And they did that every once in awhile, every time I spoke. You know, I'd ask people, you know, why are they doing this? What's going on? How come, you know – why are they cutting my hair? Why are they lining us up? Why are they, you know... Why are these other kids crying? And I guess that bar of soap must have worked, because I stopped using my language. The kids, the other kids and my other relatives, they were teaching me, even outside of class. "Allan, this is how you say, you know, your mitts, your boots, your parka, your scarf." They were teaching all these words on how to communicate in English.

For instance, one of the first things I was taught was, "Allan, go to bed." You know, it was bedtime and say "go to bed". They'd grab me, you know, put my pyjamas on. They'd unfold the sheets, put me in, cover me up and from there, it just clicked. But every night before we went to bed, we had to say a prayer, all the kids all at once, saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name..." We had to do this all in unison, you know, like there was maybe 30, 40 kids in one row. There was two rows here, two rows there and two rows there. So there was, like, 200 kids in the junior boys' dorm. Something like that. I'm not sure. And

every night it was like that. You go to bed. Before you go to bed, everybody says the prayer.

I got new clothes. I got a haircut. I got a locker. I still remember my first locker number. It was 243. For some reason, I can remember it. They said, "Allan, this is your locker."

So from age five, I was with the smallest kids in that dorm. It was one great big giant dorm for the junior boys. On one side of the dorm was the little kids like me, five years old. The next aisle, there was, like, maybe six, seven-year-olds. In the middle – there was two partitions in the middle, like that, but you could look over them. There's two rows of beds and there was like, maybe 30 – I don't know, 20, 30 beds, all lined up, one row here, one row there, and then there was sort of like a wall, a partition, and then there's two more rows, one here and one there and then there was another partition, and then there was two more rows. And the older kids were on the other side, you know, like ten, 12-year-old kids. And I got to learn to live that life until I was like 13, 14.

Anyways, from age five until I was 13, it was mostly a blur, like I can't remember most of it. But I can remember friends being there. You know, we'd play games, wintertime, summertime. And I'd get haircuts just about every week. A couple of times I pissed in my bed and I got punished brutally from the supervisor. You know, they'd yell at me and scream at me and then they'd put my face in the piss. "This is your piss." You know, "You've got to stop doing that. You're not a baby any more."

So they'd grab me by the ear, they'd drag me to the shower room and then they'd undress me and then they'd shower me. They'd have sort of like a brush and these great big bar of soap, Sunlife, whatever you want to call it, and they'd wash me with soap and with this brush, you know, the kind of brush you sort of like use to comb horses with. It's got little thick hair, you know. They'd use that. They'd go from head to toe, with my hair to my feet. You know, "This is all your piss. We've got to wash all that off." And that was painful.

The thing about hygiene and being clean to them was always – you've got to brush your teeth, you've got to comb your hair, you've got to take a shower every morning, every night, clean your room – well, not your room. It was one great big dorm. We had to sweep the floor and mop the floor.

I remember this one lady, she had a pup. She was the main supervisor for the dorm. She'd get this pup, I'm not sure why, but that pup – I guess it learned how to piss in a certain area in the washroom, and it was, you know, boy one, you know, this one boy had to clean it up. This

other boy had to clean it up. Like there was a hundred, 200 boys in there, and I'm pretty sure each boy in there must have cleaned that dog's piss and shit and even I had to clean that shit and piss and when I – when it became my turn to clean that dog's piss and shit, she'd pee right – like right here, in my face, you know, guiding me on how to do this and how to pick up shit and rub and scrub the floor and during all that, she'd be yelling in my ear, you know, "This is how you have to pick it up. This is how you have to brush the floor, mop it, sweep it." And she'd be doing this, yelling at me. And this was her dog.

And for me personally, I've never experienced any, what do you call, anything to do with sex. I was not harassed or sexually abused at Stringer Hall. Sure, the supervisors would wash me, you know, I'd be all naked. They'd wash my hair and my face and my neck, my chest, my legs, my bum, my – you know, my private parts, but they didn't do no sexual things to me, like some stories I hear. That's one thing I'm grateful for.

The only time – I've never told anybody this, but the only time I've been sexually touched was when I was in the foster home. Like my parents were on a DEW line, like I said earlier, and I guess they had to go to a different site from Cambridge Bay and that's when I was not in Inuvik. This was – my parents put my sister and I into a sort of like a foster home, but....

We were going to be there for maybe two, three months. I'm not sure. But they were not – they didn't have custody of us. I guess it was the education's way of, you know, these two kids are going to be with you for two or three months because their father's got to be working in the DEW line in different sites.

Anyways, it was like, I don't know, between maybe eight, ten years old, maybe 11, I'm not sure, but I was young. Maybe eight to ten, something like that. I got to – you know, I got to like that couple. They were okay at first. And like maybe the third or fourth month, I'm not sure, I'd start feeling my penis and my balls – I'd be sleeping and I'd start feeling something, you know, something woke me up. And I'd feel a hand touching my penis and my balls, and he'd be jerking me off. And I – I was too young, I guess. I didn't know what to do. So I'd just lie there. Just hold on.

He was an old man. He had grey hair. He had a moustache, great big beard, like – sort of like Santa Claus. And he'd do this to me every night for I don't know how long. Maybe after a couple of months he stopped, because I remember one night he was jerking me off and he was, like, kneeling by my bed and I was on my bed, and the door was open, over there,

right? And then all of a sudden, his wife walked by, 'cause the hallway lights were on. He walked by – or she walked by and happened to look in my bedroom's direction and she looked and she said to her husband, "What are you doing?" And I guess that's where – from there it stopped. I'm not sure what – I can't remember what excuse he used.

As a young boy, I didn't know who to turn to or what to say to anybody. I became really closed in. I didn't speak to anybody at school, or to my sister or my friends. I didn't even tell my parents when they came back. What are you supposed to say about, you know, this guy was touching me? 'Cause I thought if I told somebody, it would be my fault. He was doing this because it was me, because I felt it was my fault because it was my penis that was having an erection. But I didn't know. I was a kid.

But anyways, he'd stop after awhile. And we got back to living with my parents again and going back to Stringer Hall and we've never stayed with that couple any more, so I was happy they were not around. But many years later, when I was old enough to be drinking, I seen that couple again and I got drunk one night and I went to go see them, and I told his wife and I told that guy, "I know what you did to me when I was a kid. You sexually touched me. You jerked me off, played with my balls. You felt me up." And his wife kept crying and crying and crying and denying it, "No, he didn't. No, he didn't." I was drunk. I was pissed and I gave him hell, you know. But during all that time I gave him shit, he just sat there and looked like afraid, maybe because I was drunk or afraid that he knew he did it, I'm not sure.

But during all this time, I grew up more alone than when I was living alone with my mom and dad. There was people around, sure, but I didn't talk to nobody. I didn't play with anybody. I felt guilt. I felt shame and there was no other thing to do but live, eat and sleep and during all that time I was wondering, wondering, wondering how to deal with that situation.

And I've never told anyone that, not even when I was in rehab. I told you I was in rehab four times. I never told my AA sponsor, I never told my wife, my friends. I've never told anyone. This was happening in sort of like a group home, like a house. Like my parents would be at a different DEW line site for three or four months and we somehow ended up staying at their house.

But anyways, that stage went over and then went blank, until I was 12. This was back at Stringer Hall. I was 12 years old. And I remember because the 13-year-old boys that were in that dorm, they were being moved downstairs to the senior men's dorm, where the

guys were like 18, 20 years old. I guess just – that's the time Stringer Hall was getting close to being closed, and I guess the oldest person downstairs was, you know, 16 to 18 years old. So from age five until I was like 13 to 15, I lived in a residential school. You wake up, go for breakfast, go to school, go home for lunch, go back to school, go back to the residential building, and then during the evening, I guess we can go play out for maybe an hour or whatever.

And up until I was maybe 15, I finally found out what "R.C." stands for. You know, all I knew was those are the R.C. kids. I didn't know it was Roman Catholic. It was always whites with us kids and them. They were Indians, we were Inuit.

I'm not too sure what else to talk about in Stringer Hall. We – I learned quite a bit in that school, my A, B, C's, my 1, 2, 3's. I still remember that day we were learning – well, up until that point, we were learning about how to count, you know, pennies and nickels and dimes and quarters and dollars and five dollars and \$10 bills, \$100 bills, \$50 bills. And we got to learn what 100 was, 200, 300, 400, 500, all the way, until I got to a point where I learned how to count to 999. And my teacher would ask me, "What's after that?" I says, "I'm not sure. I don't know." Then he said, "You go back to '1' again." You know, 1, 2, 3. After 999 is 1000. And from there, the rest is history. Now I count to 20,000,000 if I had to.

Got to play sports and got to travel to Oclavik for soccer tournaments, basketball tournaments, because in those days, they sort of had sports competitions with other residential schools, and we'd play basketball against Oclavik, in Oclavik.

The food at Stringer Hall was – it was okay, but certain foods I didn't like, you know, the white fish and the worst I hate was – what do you call it? Spinach. Popeye food was what they told me it was, Popeye food. 'Cause I knew who Popeye was.

And during meals, we'd have to finish our whole plates. You know what a regular plate looks like? It's nice and big, right? Here they'd put a whole big pile of spinach on my plate. And the first time I tried it, I puked. Right on my plate, I puked. They said, "Pick it back up, chew it, finish it, even your puke." I hated spinach.

They told me, "You're staying there until you finish your whole plate." It took awhile. I think a couple of times I was last kid in the whole dining room, because I couldn't – it took a long time to finish that whole plate. And one of the other older boys, they told me, "Well, just plug your nose and, you know, chew real fast and swallow."

And the whatever you want to call it, the supervisor or caretaker of Stringer Hall, he was a great big tall man. He was like seven foot tall. He was a big guy. And he made sure everyone ate, 'cause they'd be walking around and they'd walk around, watching kids finish our plate. And if you wanted to be excused to go to the bathroom or if you finished your meal, you would have to put your hand up and then you'd wait for your turn. They'd finally come to you and say – they'd ask you to explain yourself. "I finished my plate." If they come to you with your hand up, then I would tell them, "I finished my plate and may I go now?" Or if I put my hand up and say I want to go to the bathroom, I'd have to ask permission to go to the bathroom, "May I go to the bathroom?" They'd say "yes" or "no."

One funny thing about that was I needed to take a shit one day. I was a kid, so I finished my meal real fast, put my arm up. I waited for a long time. Finally somebody came. I says, "May I go to the bathroom, please? I need to go." They said, "Yes, okay." You know, but it was almost – coming out.

So I sort of like had to walk slow to the door, because they told us never to run in the dining room. As soon as I pass the dining room, I took off to the bathroom.

I'll get – I'll move further ahead. I was 13 years old, no, I was about 14 or 15 at Stringer Hall and we were playing basketball and then one of the supervisors, he was a real good friend of mine. We were real good close, you know, we got along real good. And he came up to me in the gym, he said, "Allan, we've got to talk." And so we went and had a little chat. And he said, "Allan, you're going home. Your parents are sending for you. You have to go home. They want you home, so we have to go pack your bags. You're leaving tomorrow, at soon as possible moment." And I told him, "The school year's not even half done." You know, I was so used to staying there for the whole year.

And I think I was close to 15 years old, just before I turned 15, and I remember because I had my fifteenth birthday here in town. And we got here and from age 15 until I was 19, I became really happy. I got to play out, I got to do a lot of things without being told. The only thing I was told was, "Allan it's time for bed. You've got to go to bed." And the bell rang, you got to go home, you know, because you've got to go to school in the morning. So from age 15 until I was 19, it went pretty good.

But during that time, I knew what alcohol and marijuana was. I seen people drinking, that's why, and I knew a lot of older guys, older girls, smoking pot. And during that time, I told

myself I'll never drink or do drugs when I get older. My parents drank a lot. But I always promised myself I wouldn't drink.

But the sensation first came to me when I first touched alcohol. I felt high for the first time, and I remember like I'm sitting here today because everything seemed to get numb, like I couldn't feel nothing, no more pain, no more anger, no more sadness, no more happiness. Like once you get high, nothing else matters. It just felt so good to – whoa, everything's gone now, you know. And I guess from age 19, when I first turned 19, I started ordering liquor. I started drinking. So from 19 until 13 years later, that's going to be 33, something like that, I drank. From 19 on, for 13 years, I drank.

I guess during that time, all my anger, all my pain and all my suffering, I would tell when I was drunk. You know, I beat up on my wife. You know, I'd yell at her. Let it out.

And one form of letting it out was to drink, and to yell at my wife, my parents, my sisters, my relatives, and that was the only way I knew how to let it out, when I was drunk or high. And before I close, I just want to say that during those nights, I was 33 years old and I got so drunk I don't remember what happened, but I woke up in a drunk tank next day. I'd say to the cop, you know, "Why am I here?" You know? And he told me, "You're being charged with attempted murder and uttering death threats on your wife." They said, "You choked her, you let her drink Javex."

So I got charged for attempted murder and uttering death threats. They said she blacked out in a chokehold. They said I used the chokehold to try to kill her, but it's a good thing that she only blacked out and I stopped before it got any worse. And I got charged for attempted murder and uttering death threats, and I got four years and three months sentence. The prosecutor was asking for, like, eight to ten years, but I only got four years and three months.

That was a bad thing. You know, first time in jail. All my life, I never been to jail. Well, I'd been to jail, like, on weekends, you know, like for stealing or stuff like that – but this was serious. I got four years and three months.

One good thing I can say about going to jail was they had programs in there. I learned that they had anger management, they had OSAP, you know, dealing with alcohol and drug problems, they had family programs, how to be a good father or sister or brother.

And the first day I got to the federal pen, the minimum security – or not minimum, medium, the medium security prison, I – the first day I talked with my P.O. I asked him if there was

any program to deal with drinking. The first thing I said to him when I first saw him – he asked me, "Are you Allan? Your FPS number is..." I says, "Yes. My name's Allan. That's my right number." First thing I said to him before he spoke, I asked him right away, "Do you have any programs for alcohol and, you know, to deal with drinking, because I have a drinking problem." I said, "I need help on that." I never gave him a chance to speak. As soon as he said, "Are you Allan? Your FPS number is..." whatever, I just jumped in. I said, "I need help with my drinking." And he said, "Yes, we have programs for drinking. And I told him, "Put me in right away." I said, "I'm not kidding." You know.

From there, I did my time. I did a year at medium security prison. About maybe seven months before I left, I knew I was leaving, because my P.O. said to me, "I applied for you to take an alcohol and drug treatment program at Poundmakers Lodge." And this is sort of like in October, and this was – when he told me that, it was like May or June or something like that, April. And I knew like six, seven months beforehand, I knew when I was going to be leaving. But I never told nobody in that jail. My P.O. told me don't ever tell anybody you're leaving in October or September because if they find out you're a short-timer, they're going to try to pick fights and get you into trouble and make you stay longer. So I just did my time for the last seven months and then I knew, it was getting closer and closer and closer.

Anyways, I left that day. They drove me to Red Deer and from Red Deer I took my own bus to Edmonton and they gave me a phone number and the address of the halfway house I'm going to be staying at, and they told me it was called Stan Daniel's. And I didn't even stay at Stan Daniel's five minutes. I said, "My name's Allan. I'm here to report in, you know, 'cause I'm supposed to be here for the day parole," I think it was called. He said, "Here's your driver. You're going to Poundmakers Lodge. Pack your bags. Go with him." I didn't even stay at Stan Daniel's five minutes.

Right away, I went straight to Poundmakers Lodge for that 28-day program. I said, "Finally." You know, I was happy. I was out, you know, but I was happier knowing that I'm going to be taking a program on my drinking and I can finally learn about why I drink or how – why I was the way I was. I did that 28-day program. Three months later, I did a follow-up, two-week follow-up.

Every day for two years, I was at Stan Daniel's, every single day I went to three meetings, three AA meetings. The reason I did that was because I wanted to learn more what happens at AA, why people have AA and all those things. Then

when I first heard of AA, I thought these people have something here that I've always wanted. I've learned that in AA you have to share and there was a few times Stan Daniel's staff were telling me, "Allan, you've got to work. You're in a facility where you have to find jobs," and stuff like that. And that's one of your requirements on day parole is to find a job.

I guess I baffled my caseworker. He said, "You got to find a job." You know, "You've got to take care of yourself. You need money. You need money. You're always asking me for cigarettes," you know, to smoke. I said, "The only thing I want to take care of is me right now." I said, "That's why I go to AA meetings three times a day for two years." Number one reason, take care of me first.

Anyways, I end up going to Poundmakers Lodge four times. The last time, the last follow-up was when my son was – he passed away. And I couldn't grieve or anything like that in a place like Stan Daniel's because it was a halfway house and there was a bunch of, you know, halfway house inmates. I couldn't do it in a place like that. So I asked my caseworker could I go back to Poundmakers Lodge to deal with my grief, and I wanted to learn more about grief and – because my son just passed away.

Anyways, in closing, I left Stan Daniel's after two years and I did my last year – I know I said before – earlier I said I got four years and two months. My last year of my probation, I did one year here in town, looking for work, staying sober. I got my daughter back, my house back, and one of the things I did was I asked for support, financial support from an organization here in town, if they could sponsor me to take training at Poundmakers Lodge. Once they found out that would be a good idea, because I went to the meeting, what people call Town Council meetings, Band Council meetings, that sort of thing, I went to that meeting and I asked them for funding to pay for books and tuition and air fare to go to Edmonton to take this program.

Anyways, I finished that program. I became an alcohol and drug counsellor for my town. The last day I drank was November 7, 1994, the day I was put in jail, and today it's January 10th, 2004. And I've been sober ever since the day I was incarcerated nine years ago. And I've been living sober and I have my daughter with me.

So when I first got to – not when I first got to – well, during the time I was in Edmonton, I've heard of this – I was watching the news. I've heard of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation from Peter Mansbridge. He said the federal government is putting aside \$350 million to heal aboriginal people. You know. And I

Allan's Story continued

As for myself, I'm not too sure what I'm looking for from the residential school I went to, the Anglican church ... but I think for me, anyways, it would make me feel better if they said sorry to my mom and my dad.

think it was that same day, someone somewhere said – I think it was a priest for the Roman Catholics or Pentecostal or – I know it was not Anglican minister.

Anyways, it was a minister for a Presbyterian church or whatever. I heard him say, "On behalf of the church, we would like to say, you know, sorry to all the native people that was under our care for all the sexual abuse, the physical abuse." And when I heard that, I just cried. That was like a few, four or five years ago. I'm not sure when. All this happened in early '98 – when Jane Stewart announced – they apologized. The government apologized, the church, some of the churches apologized. Not the Catholic church, but the other ones.

And when I heard that announcement, I felt, you know, finally the people that went to residential school will be heard. They now have funding to take programs, to heal themselves. I think some of them got compensated for the abuse they got. And I was happy now that First Nations people and Inuit and Metis people that went to residential school were finally being told that they now have money for programs and it was also good to hear that the minister said to say that they were sorry.

As for myself, I'm not too sure what I'm looking for from the residential school I went to, the Anglican church. Am I looking for an apology or some kind of sorry, or funding? You know. But I guess the most important thing for me would be tell my mother, tell my father, "Sorry for taking your son." You know, I went through that whole system, but I think for me anyways, it would make me feel better if they said sorry to my mom and my dad. But my mother's no longer here, so... But I'm sure she knows about it now, so...

... When I heard a couple of ladies or three women are going to be coming to Kogluktuk for the program they're going to talk about, I went, "Wow. They're here?" I heard about it like five years ago and now they're here in town. And if you ever hear this message, whoever you are, I guess I can say there's hope. Take care.

The Need to Define "Elder(s)"

The Need to Define "Elder(s)", by Jose Kusugak, first appeared in the November/December 2003 issue of Above & Beyond, Canada's Arctic Journal. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation thanks Mr. Kusugak and Above & Beyond Magazine for authorizing its reprint. © Above & Beyond, Canada's Arctic Journal

One of the precious values of the Inuit Culture is respect for our elders.

Imagine my surprise when asked to meet with the elders of the Alliance Church in Arviat to see many of them younger than my 25 years at the time. I looked up the word in the dictionary and I was disappointed because it defined "elder of the church" just to mean officials of a church and not "knowledgeable" officials of a church. Nearly 30 years later, the "word" is haunting me again. I looked it up again and found two definitions: 1. A tree with white flowers and dark berries and, 2. "senior, of greater age". Elder Statesman on the other hand is defined as, "an influential experienced person of advanced age," which is really what I had in mind.

My romantic idea of the word "Elder" is nowhere to be found and I have a feeling I am not the only one looking for a better meaning of this living word. Increasingly in the North, both Inuit and Qablunaaq refer to nearly everyone over 50 or 55 years of age as an elder. Even Inuit Land Claims Corporations provide "Elders Benefits" as opposed to "Seniors" benefits.

In newspapers and magazines, pictures of older Inuit are often captioned as "Elder so and so". Pictures of mainstream older Canadians are captioned as who they are, Doctor, Mr., Ms., and so on, but never as "Elder Qablunaaq". I suspect "Elder Inuk" is assumed to have influential knowledge and has earned our reverence and respect. But is that always the case? Who among the elderly are the "Elders"?

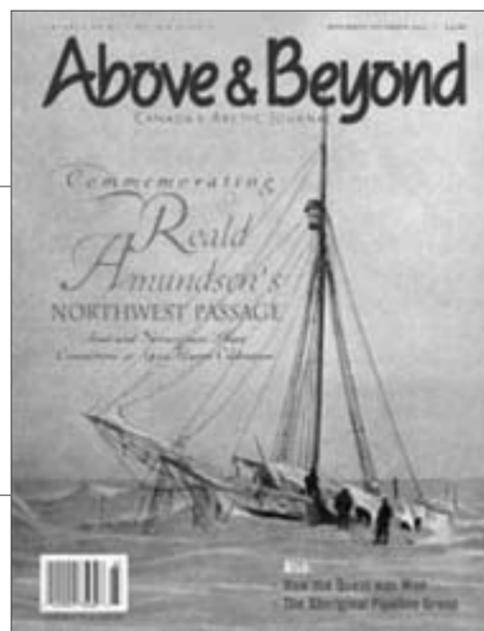
In my personal life, even to this day I have my respected "Inuk Elder" Marianno Aupilaarjuk of Rankin Inlet. He was awarded the Aboriginal Achievement Award for his wisdom and teachings and I frequently ask him for advice. To me "Elder" is a word without a proper home. I think it's a darn good word with connotations of well-earned status, but it needs clear definition and should be used in the proper context. I believe we need to consider ways of using our organization and committees to recognize and sanctify our true "Elders". Recipients of the Order of Canada get "OC" after their names while others have "MD," "PhD," and so on. Shouldn't the true "Elders" with a capital E be awarded something equivalent? There could be an Elder of Art, Elder of Music, Elder of Culture, etc. Perhaps you could think about this and write your MLA, your Language Commissioner, or ITK and give us your views on this worthwhile word chase?

If we are going to use this haunting word with real meaning, we ought to get the dictionaries to include it in future editions.

Elder : adj. An honorific given to senior, experienced and knowledgeable people usually Inuit (ex : atanaarjuag ELD).

Then we can ask, "will the real "Elder" please stand up?"

Jose A. Kusugak
President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami



Species Nutrition - Ringed and Bearded Seals

Traditionally, seal have provided one of our primary country food resources and this dependency has existed throughout our history. There are four species of seal found in the coastal waters of our territory but for most communities the two most important species of hunted for food are the common or ringed seal that we call netsik, and the bearded or square flipper seal that we refer to as udjuk. Both of these species are hunted for country food in every season of the year and the skin still has many uses. In earlier times the skin of ringed seals was used for tents, for the covering of the kayak and for the upper part of the traditional skin boot. The square flipper skin is used for rope and for the sole of the boot. The fat of both seals was used as fuel for the traditional lamp. Beginning the mid 1960s the skins of all four types of seals became a valuable source of income for our hunters, but in recent years the impacts from the anti fur movement has brought this important economic by product from our harvest of country food to a halt.

The patterns of hunting can vary from place to place depending on the particular environmental factors at different seasons, but the same general principles apply to almost every seal hunting area. Neither the common or bearded seal are migratory, but hunters explain that both of these seals tend to move about and change their areas of feeding and concentration from one season to the next. Hunters also explain that although the ringed seal is more numerous than bearded seals they are usually found together. Although both species are widely distributed, hunters identify specific seasonal locations that are known to be more productive for hunting.

In summer (late June to mid August) both species are scattered throughout the coastal waters and move further from shore. During this time, they are the most difficult to hunt with any assurance of success. By mid to late August, the seals begin to move closer to shore and into the bays. At this time, hunter knowledge becomes more specific concerning their location and patterns of movement. The geographic distribution becomes even better defined as fall progresses. Fall hunting has always been important since in provided the supply of food that could be used for food during the winter. As open water is replaced by the early formation of ice, seals will move seaward keeping in open and ice free waters, or begin to develop the characteristic "breathing hole" which is then maintained throughout the winter. The distribution of the seals along the floe edge or under the land fast ice, establishes the primary geographical and ecological patterns that are

reflected in our choice of winter hunting along the floe edge or at the breathing hole. In areas adjacent to the floe edge where new ice is continually reforming during the winter, both types of hunting can be carried out in close proximity. In the central arctic, the expanses of land fast ice are much greater, and the it is here that we would establish large winter settlements on the sea ice itself in order to hunt at the breathing holes.

By April and May large cracks can begin to develop in certain areas from the action of tides currents and winds and from the "heat" generated by the lengthening of the arctic day. When this seasonal change takes place, our hunting begins to focus on the seals that move onto the ice to "bask." This provides a much more productive hunting. Until recently, the harvest of seals during the spring was stored for winter dog food. As the deterioration of the sea ice continues, spring hunting gradually gives way to the open water hunting of summer.

What we know about Seal

Elders tell us that seal is a "special food" for our people. Seal meat and organs keep us healthy and help to keep us warm. Seal is also used as a medicine to heal the body and soul from sickness. Almost all parts of the seal are eaten. The skin and other parts of the seal are used to make clothing, such as kamiks, in crafts and for fuel oil.

| Body Part | Intestine | Liver | Flippers | Blubber | Meat | Brain | Eyes |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Excellent Source (supplies 25% or more of daily need) | Protein | Iron, Protein, Vitamin A | Iron | Fat, Vitamin A, Omega-3, Fatty Acid | Iron, Protein, B Vitamins | Iron, Protein | Vitamin A, Iron, Protein |
| Good Source (supplies 15-14% of daily need) | Iron | Vitamin C | | Iron, Vitamin C | | Fat | |
| Fair Source (supplies 5-14% of daily need) | Fat | Fat | | Protein | Fat | | |

Did you know

Seal meat eaten raw, frozen, boiled, dried or aged (fermented), is an excellent source of protein. We need protein to build and repair our muscles, skin and blood. Protein also helps us fight sickness.

Seal liver, blubber and eyes are excellent sources of vitamin A. Vitamin A is needed for healthy skin, bones and teeth. It also helps our body fight sickness.

Most parts of the seal are excellent sources of iron. Iron helps make healthy blood that flows through our bodies giving us energy and making us grow. Healthy blood keeps us from getting tired.

Seals and Healthy Inuit Nutrition

Prepare foods safely!

Botulism is a type of poisoning that people can get from food. If a food with botulism germs is stored at warm temperatures in a container without air, these germs can grow into a poison.

To prevent Botulism poisoning, seal should be aged in a very cool place. Store it in containers which allow air in. If the meat is being aged in oil, stir often to let the meat contact the air. Ask you Health Centre for more information.

Healthy eating!

Seal fat can be used as a dip with seaweed, fish or meats such as dried caribou. mix the fat with berries to make "ice cream" or to preserve the berries.

Based on the Nutrition Fact Sheet Series (Inuit Traditional Foods): Produced by Baffin, Inuvik, Keewatin and Kitikmeot Health Boards, in conjunction with the Community health programs, Department of Health and Social Services, GNWT. Prototype developed by Dene Nation and Mackenzie Regional Health Services. March 1996

For more information on the benefits of Inuit country foods, please visit:

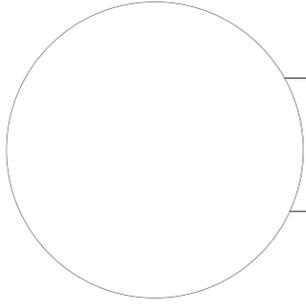
http://www.naho.ca/inuit/english/country_food.php

<http://www.irc.inuvialuit.com/cultural.foods.asp>

http://www.itk.ca/english/itk/departments/enviro/wildlife/seal_n.htm

Photos of seal Hunt: W. Kem, Walrus Harvest: Parks Canada at:

http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Inuit_Haida/inuit/English/Our_culture/country_foods/country_foods.html



Interview with John

Hi, my name is John "Evalugak" and I was born and raised in Cambridge Bay. I now live in the community of "Okoloto" and I've been here, going on twenty-two years now. First of all, I'd like to thank Giselle for coming down to have a little interview with some of the families that are in the town of "Okoloto" and I'd like to tell a little bit of my story, of where I come from and where I went to school.

I'm a survivor of a residential school, which was based in Inuvik, NWT, and called Stringer Hall. Before I went to residential school, I always lived with my grandfather out on the land. I was born and raised in the country side of the North and I love the land, but the government, back in 1959, took me away from my grandparents and brought me to residential school in Inuvik. At that time, I didn't quite understand why I was being taken away from my grandparents. I didn't totally understand why. Anyways, in the school in Inuvik, I rejected everything that they tried to give me. I fought to the bitter end. I got into a lot of trouble because of that. I rejected everything they wanted to give me. The schooling they wanted to give, I never really liked because I couldn't be with my people, especially with my grandfather whom I loved very dearly.

Before I went to residential school I had my language, which is Inuktituk. My Inuktituk language at the age of nine was very, very good. I was able to speak to my grandparents, understand what they had to say to me, and in turn I could speak the language very good. Today, I can't say the same. But during the school years in Inuvik, in Stringer Hall, if I spoke my language, I got slapped in the mouth. I had to learn English. Even in school, I defied everything that they tried to do for me there.

And I got into a lot of trouble. I got beat up lots by other children because I was a very small person. At the age of nine, I weighed only about seventy, eighty pounds, which is very, very small. In 1959, I went to school there and my school days in Inuvik finished in 1966 because I got into a lot of trouble and I didn't know law at the time. And I was brought down to a place in Manitoba, called Portage La Prairie home for boys, which from what I understand today is like a youth prison where there was different races in the system and different units for different ages. And I was in the second unit because at the time I was fifteen years old. I was with other troublesome youth. And there again, I got into a lot of fights because of who I was and the place had a lot of Indians. In those days, the Indians and Eskimo people didn't get along very well. When they found out that I was an Eskimo, I got into a lot of fights and I got beat up a lot.

To this day, I still don't understand why I had been taken away from my grandparents. I didn't know the law at the time. The teachers, you know, you make some mistake in class and you get a lot of strapping on the hands, with open hands with rulers. And you get a spanking. And you get grounded a lot. You couldn't do much. To my knowledge today now, being incarcerated in prison, it's almost the same thing. Throughout my life, I got into a lot of trouble because of that. I defied every law they tried to implement to me in the school system and I got hurt a lot from people. Within Stringer Hall, I completely lost my language and I couldn't understand once I returned home for the summer. But before I went to Stringer Hall, I could understand what my grandparents said in my Inuktituk language. When I returned home, it was hard for me to grasp what a lot of the words were being said to me in the language.

The abuse that I received in Stringer Hall – I can't really understand why that happened. Sometimes I don't understand why I was put into a world where I didn't understand being taken away from the culture that I knew, in my own home community where everything was very, very loving and caring. And to be taken away from that and put into a place where it's totally strange and it made me a person that I didn't want to be. I became very resentful towards people. I became very resentful to the system so I defied every law. I hated. I hated people. I became a very alone person because I never had any help from any other students or anyone. I had no comforting thoughts. I didn't have anyone to go to, to cry on shoulders like I did with my grandfather. If I got hurt in some way, at least with my grandfather, he was there to comfort me and talk to me. When I went to Inuvik, I didn't have that. You were alone. You were left standing alone to fend for yourself and to survive the best that you knew how.

When I got back home to my home community of Cambridge Bay, the food that I saw, the food that I tried, I couldn't eat. It was revolting to see people eating wild meat raw.

And you had to go through the system if you wanted to survive. I was sent off to Manitoba for some years where I became a totally different person. And once my time was finished in Portage La Prairie Manitoba home for boys, they turned around and put me into a foster home because they didn't want me returning up North. I still fought to the bitter end until I got to know my foster parents, who were very caring people. And there again, I was alone. I was with white people where I became totally white. I completely lost my language and somehow they tried teaching me French. And I didn't want to learn French. I knew in my heart who I was and what I was. I was an Inuit person. I didn't know who to talk to or I couldn't talk my language because I totally forgot how to talk my language. My culture was gone where as before I used to go out on the land with my grandfather. I didn't know that anymore.

I was in Ontario for some years. I don't know. In those days, there was a lot of loneliness, a lot of self-pity and yearning to go home. It was very strong with me. I wish I had my autobiography where I could turn back but I do have an autobiography up in myself. But I just can't, I don't know, I completely. I know it's in the house somewhere. My grandfather, whom I loved very much, when he was with me and I was with him, we did a lot of things together, hunting out on the land. I just seem to be jumping from one end to the other.

When he was home with me, he treated me like I was his own son, but he was my grandfather. When I came to realize that I had been adopted out, again there were a lot of thoughts that came out of my head. I began to ask a lot of questions. Why was I adopted out? Why was I given away? That's when I became of age. All these years, I thought my grandfather was my biological parent. And when I found out that I was adopted out, a lot of thoughts came into my head, because I began to understand. Living down south for so many years, I was starting to think like a white man.

I returned from Ontario, back North. The home that I went to wasn't the same anymore. My grandfather had gotten old. He was crouching low and he wasn't the same person as when I left. By that time, I was seventeen and

I was a totally different person. I was a very hateful person, very resentful person towards, in general, towards white people because they were the people that took me away from the people that I love very dearly. When I got back home to my home community of Cambridge Bay, the food that I saw, the food that I tried, I couldn't eat. It was revolting to see people eating wild meat raw. I couldn't see myself eating that. My grandfather asked me to eat with him. He spoke to me in his language and I didn't understand what he was saying. It so happened that my older brother, when he was alive, had to translate for me. And I had to tell my brother: "You have to tell Dad that I don't understand what he's saying." My grandfather cried when he realized that I had lost my language and I had lost the will to eat the way that he ate wild meat.

The food that I saw on the floor was very revolting to me because I had adapted the white man's law, the white man's way of living where you ate with forks and knives. And to return home, to my community, and seeing all this again, where the food was on the floor and I had gotten used to food on the table. And to see that in my own community was very revolting. I couldn't do it. I couldn't eat the meat that my grandfather tried to give me. And he cried. And I asked my brother to explain to him why we were eating like this? Where is the table and where are the forks and knives? My grandfather cried and my stepmother started yelling at me because of what I was saying and doing and my older brother was translating what I was saying to my grandfather. I was speaking to my grandfather. I didn't like my stepmother at all. I never did get along with her. I never liked her.

And you know before I left, I had always gotten that abuse from my stepmother. I got slapped a lot from her. I got hit from her when my grandfather wasn't around. By the time I went back home, I was seventeen and a very hateful person. I carried a lot of hate in me. And at the time, my stepmother was trying to yell at me when I had returned, you know. I wouldn't eat what they were trying to serve me and my stepmother got mad because of that. And she tried yelling at me. I turned around and I told her, "You get the hell out of the house. Get out of the house, I want to be with my grandfather." And she got scared because I had started fighting back.

I learned the kind of power that I had in me to hurt other people that had hurt me before. You know, pay back time. And when I knew that I could beat other people in fights, I went around looking for people that had hurt me, and I hurt other people. I got into a lot of trouble because of that. That's when my prison days started to come in. My first prison term was when I broke the law in Cambridge because I beat up another person and I hurt this person pretty good. I put him in the hospital. That's the kind of power I realized I had, and it felt good.

I didn't care about the prison system because I already knew it from being in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba home for boys. I was used to the system already and going into a bigger prison system where the men were, that didn't bother me. It was like home. A home I understood. Where other people understood me. Where we got along good because we understood each other. And it's a place that I couldn't get away from. It's a place that I needed to be. I was comfortable in the prison. I guess you can say at the time I was institutionalized because I couldn't get along in the community any more.

I couldn't adapt to their way of living. You needed good jobs; you needed to have good education. I have a good education, but I never did make use of it. I couldn't stay on one job for too long, because I always got into trouble. I didn't like bosses; I never liked bosses: they're always telling you what to do. The superiority that they held over me, I didn't like. It reminded me too much of Inuvik, where they were always telling me to do this and that. Well, I was always telling them, "Screw you. You want this done? Do it yourself, and screw you."

I didn't care about the prison system because I already knew it from being in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba home for boys. I was used to the system already and going into a bigger prison system where the men were, that didn't bother me. It was like home.

My defiance towards law was very strong. I upheld that within myself. Like I was saying, I couldn't get along with the community. I wasn't comfortable anymore. Where with other people, law-abiding people, I became very, very resentful. I had a lot of hate. I had no love. Anything that I got a hold of, I hurt. I owned out a lot of women but I never did hang on to one because it's something I had no control over. You know, I'd stay out of prison for maybe a month, six weeks, two months at the most I'd stay of prison. I tried going back to my home community and I got into trouble all over again. I wasn't comfortable in Cambridge at all or anywhere for that matter. The only system that I knew was inside of a prison where the prison became my home. Anytime I returned to prison, I got happy of where I was, you know. I was given three square meals a day. I was given clothes. I was given my own room and I was with people that I could understand. They were the same as me. They broke the law and I broke the law.

And this went on and on for many, many years. I returned home one month, in 1980 or 1979. I was in Nanisivik working, trying again to see where I could go. I had a lot of other jobs. But I always got fired because of the anger I held in me. I was always defying authority. I wanted to be my own boss; I wanted to be me – because I was a macho type of person. I was the type of person who liked control. And so, in 1979 I believe, I returned to Cambridge Bay. And pretty soon, you know, thoughts started to come: Where am I going? What am I doing? What do I want to do? Why am I in this world? I was a drunk and a druggie, and it's hard, the combination of both. I needed to have the drugs. I needed to have the drink to forget the memories of abuse that I held within me.

When I was in Stringer Hall in 1963, I was sexually assaulted. I had no control. I didn't know at the time what was happening. I knew in my mind that what was happening wasn't right. But I held it in me. I've always held it inside of me, letting nobody know what had happened because I was ashamed of it. I was ashamed. In later years, I realized what had happened to me was wrong. But at the time, I couldn't do anything about it because the person that had sexually assaulted me got killed. So I could never return to that person and tell him, "What you had done to me was wrong. What you had taken from me was wrong." When I talk about it now, it eases my pain to have to talk to someone about it. It relaxes my mind and gives me a sense of peace to be able to talk about it now that I'm much older. When I release, I can let go. And sometimes I say, you know, I forgive this person for what he's done to me. Now, today, that can help another person, that's okay.

In 1980, I tried committing suicide in Cambridge Bay because of what was happening with me. I didn't know what to do. I didn't have anyone to turn to. I didn't know how to approach a person, because I never was taught to approach another person for help. A lot of people gave me advice, but I didn't like that at all. I wanted to be the boss; I liked the control that I had. I liked the power that I held towards other people when they were scared of me. That I liked, because I could control other people and hurt other people the way I wanted to.

But in 1980, I tried committing suicide. There was a pastor in Cambridge who I could talk to. He asked me if I had any relatives in Cotton Mine – at that time it was called "Cotton Mine" – and I told him I knew some

people. He asked me, "Why don't you go there? Go there, I'll pay your way." I told him, "No, I've got the money. I can pay my own way." But no, he paid my way here to Okoloto. And I went to two other people that I was pretty close to. They were my cousins and they were coming here to visit relatives. So I felt comfortable being with them. At least they knew people that they could introduce me to.

That's when I met my wife. I think it was the first or second day that I met her in this town. And something clicked in my head when I saw her, because we went to her house.

Today, this home here is a safe environment for my family, because I'm a totally different person. I came here in 1980 and I met my wife, and we started going out. I think it was within six months that I had been in town here and my wife and I were married. I sort of talked her into marrying me, because I had fallen in love with her. She was totally a different person from the women that I had gone out with.

I don't know what attracted me to her but I wouldn't let go. She tried running from me, but I always was able to retrieve her and keep her with me. It was a happy marriage at the time, because I had tried to quit drinking when we got married. We didn't even have a great big party like other marriages. There was no alcohol in our marriage because I had tried to quit drinking at that time.

But that didn't last long. Once I got a job in town here as a housing maintenance service person, and I made good money, I started to order a lot of booze. I really got into drugs again. And I think the first time that I ever hit her was in our first year of marriage. I got sent off to prison for that. I think it was something like six months. But anyways, after doing another prison term I couldn't understand why I had come back into prison. I was trying to stay out of the prison system. All of a sudden, I'm a married person now. What am I doing here? But anyways, I did my six months. I was used to it. The time went faster because I knew what to do inside the prison. I was getting any help, though – no alcohol and drug services or anything like that. Just went in, did my time, and got out.

This went on for, I think, the first ten years of marriage. There was a lot of abuse. I talked about the control; I liked to have the control within the family. I was the boss, no more could be said about it. I'm the boss. You go by my rules, not yours. You know, every time I came home my wife didn't know what to expect of me. She knew sooner or later something was going to happen, because there was this abuse. I was very, very abusive towards my wife because of what had happened in my past. I never dealt with it. I never took the time to understand why the abuse was there. But in later years, I began to understand.

Each time I ended up in prison because I assaulted my wife. I always ended up in prison because of that, because I fought my wife when we got drunk. You know, time and time again, my wife tried to leave me, but I always talked her into coming back to me. "I'll make these changes," I'd say. "I promise you, I promise you. I'll make these changes. I won't do this stuff anymore." And it went good for a little while. I tried taking alcohol and drug addiction courses, and stuff like that. And it would work for a time, because I had to do it. I opened up a little bit toward some of the things that had bothered me.

But there was a lot of things that I was hiding, and there was a lot of abuse in my past that I didn't want to bring out. I guess that was always bothering me, and the only comforting thought, the only thing that could comfort me, was alcohol. With alcohol, I'd forget for a little while, maybe for one night. My train of thought would divert to another thing. And then, all of a sudden, I was happy again because I was drinking and forgetting.

Why, I wondered, does nobody understand me? It's because I wasn't well. I was sick and very resentful, very hateful, with a lot of anger towards society. And I decided that I needed to do something.

But, you know, eventually I would I sober up. I'd become a very, very quiet person, and I would do anything that a husband is expected to do – to bring food to the table for the family, and so on. My wife lived in fear because of the way I treated her, because of the control that I had over her. She lived in fear for many, many years. And sometimes, you know, I thought we were happy, because I was sick up here. All these many years, I thought we were happy and I couldn't understand why some days I'd catch her crying alone. And, you know, I'd go up to her and say, "What the hell's wrong with you now? Why are you crying? What the hell's wrong?" I wasn't there for her. There was no comforting words for her to hear from me. It was just a rough, loud voice asking "What the hell is going on? Why are you crying? I don't want to see that, quit it." And that was it. She'd stop, but she'd hold it in because of my control over her.

Anyways, in 1995 and again I assaulted her and I started drinking. I assaulted her again and I assaulted her good this time where the court was putting me away for four years in a federal penitentiary. Now this is big time because before that there was always just a small little prison like YCC where it's just a little minimum-security prison. Well, the prison I was going to was a maximum security in Edmonton, where the big wigs are. There's a lot of murderers, but you know something? I was comfortable there because they were my type of people – the kind of people that I could understand and get along with. And again, my wife said that's it, no more. She won't take no more of it. She made me understand that. But I was writing to her a lot, asking for her forgiveness, begging for her forgiveness. And a lot of things went through my mind in the prison because I was doing four years. I was alone, but I wasn't scared. I was lonely – not because I was missing my family, but because I was alone.

Why, I wondered, does nobody understand me? It's because I wasn't well. I was sick and very resentful, very hateful, with a lot of anger towards society. And I decided that I needed to do something. I needed to work with someone that I could trust. I didn't trust nobody. When you start trusting a person, they, in turn, turn around and talk about you and it came to a point where I didn't trust anyone anymore. But I got to know someone in the prison system who went through the exact same things that I was going through. And I used to tell him, tell my friend: "You haven't gone as far as I have. You haven't been where I have been. You can't understand who I am. You can't understand what I'm going through." And he'd tell me: "Yeah, I guess you're right. You want to be the man that's in control." I said: "No, I don't want to be. You just don't understand who I am. I mean, you just don't understand me."

And he referred me to an anger management course, held in Saskatoon, at a nut house people would say. I told a lot of my friends that it's a nut house, but it's a place also where you get real good help – first class, first hand help from professionals, people that know what they're doing. People that can give you tools to work with.

I took that course. It's an eight months course where you work with your inner self. The first thing that they did was they asked me to write an autobiography, right from the time that I could remember to the time where I was right now, in prison taking this anger management course. And they gave me one month to work with this autobiography. Pretty soon, I started to see things that I really didn't want to see, and that's what they wanted me to see so that I could work within myself.

And so I got that autobiography done and I gave it to my counselor who happened to be a female. She turned around and gave it back to me and she told me, "John, I want you to read this tonight, the whole thing. I want you to read the autobiography and then bring it to the group when we're having our session in the morning." I listened to what she had to say. So I started reading my own autobiography. During the time that I read the autobiography, I cried about the things that I was seeing and reading. That was me that had written in the book, and it opened a lot of doors. I don't know, but something warm came over me. And again, the next morning, I did exactly what she wanted me to do. I shared my autobiography with my group. I was hesitant. Again I was hesitant about bringing my story to other people. But my counselor said, "No John, take your time, read it if you want. When you're comfortable." And the others were sitting around me, just waiting. I was sitting there shaking with tears in my eyes.

One of my friends that I had gotten real close to came up to me and said, "John, it's okay. It's okay to cry." I started reading this autobiography in front of my peers and that opened a lot of doors for, not only for me, but for others. They were coming up to me and saying, "You know John? That's me. That's who I am. You just told my life story." That autobiography opened a lot of doors for me because I started learning to work with myself. I knew right there and then what I had been doing was wrong. It opened up my heart. It opened up my train of thought, how to bring out the garbage and let it go. I couldn't wait to get back home so I could share a lot of this with other people. My wife wrote to me again: come home, she said, we'll give it a shot again.

And I did come home. I came home to a beautiful home, to my wife and my daughter. My son was already at Tosca, down south. During his growing up years, I never once touched my children with my fists or my hands. But the kind of abuse that I gave my children was verbal. I did a lot of damage there. But my son to this day still loves who I am, because I'm the only father that he's ever known. I've apologized. In Yellowknife, we had a family get-together with my son, my daughter, and my wife. We were able to work together in Yellowknife and, you know, it's at the time that I apologized to my son for what had happened, because I verbally abused him. I scared him out of his wits in times with my mouth. And I still have trouble today with what I have done. I knew what I had done to my children was wrong. I knew what I'd done to my wife, using my fists on her, was wrong. I know that was wrong after I had gotten this course that I went through.

When I came home, my wife couldn't get used to who I was now. She didn't know how to take who I am. First time I started talking to her openly about some things, she backed away from me. She backed away from me so rapidly. "What's wrong? Where you up to? What are you doing now?" She was used to a person that was voiceful and always in control. And when I tried talking with her and working with her, she backed away from me. She got scared. She thought I was just up to something else. It took her the longest time to get used to that. It took her a long time when I brought her into my arms to cry. It took her a long time to get used to sitting beside me and me holding her by the shoulders while she cried and while I talked to her. And she still is today hesitant with some things because she was so used to me being rough and voiceful and loud. She couldn't get used to the new me because I was more soft spoken. I wasn't loud anymore. I wasn't so bossy anymore.

I can't say that this marriage is totally one hundred percent perfect. My wife and I, we still have our ups and downs. But now at least we can talk about what had happened, what's going on. You know. I've learned to tell my wife, "Look, I need time out." Whereas before, I got mad at my wife. I just walked out without her knowing what had happened. I just left her standing there not realizing why I had gotten mad, and I wouldn't let her know. Even when I came home from wherever, I just forgot about it and never talked about it. And I just left her standing in fear because of that.

I did a lot of damage to this family by placing a mistrust in this family, because of the way that I treated them, the abuse that I've given. Which I know now today was wrong, because of a lot of hurt and bullshit that I got in the past – the abuse that I got in residential schools.

When is the next time he's going to get mad? At least today she'll know why I got mad, because I'll tell her. I talk with her. I'll comfort her.

She's slowly getting used to the idea of that, the new person that's in me because I can work with her now. I can cry with her, whereas before she cried alone. There was nobody there to cry with. I always left her standing there, crying. "Okay, you want to cry? Go cry." But now I can grab her in my arms, and cry, and say, "Go ahead honey, cry. Cry it out. I'm there with you." I can begin to understand the relationship. My relationship today with my family is not as perfect as I wanted it to be. My wife still has to put a lot of thought into the things that we do today.

It's just about a month ago, she told me that she's got to build up that trust again. And I'll give her all the space that she needs. Today, we have a happy home because I was able to work within myself. And now I'm trying to do what I want to do, to work with other people. I still provide for the family. It's a lot of fun. I've learned to take time out when I need my time out. This afternoon, I wanted to get away from the meeting because I needed time out. That's why I had to get away from the meeting today. And I realize my wife is happy. I can comfortably say that I'm starting to enjoy my life today because I love my family. I love my children. I love my grandchildren. I can laugh and joke and be merry and laugh with my wife, not laugh at her but laugh with her. Be merry. We still have a lot of things that we need to work with, but at least we know we can talk about it now. And I have a long ways to go. I did a lot of damage to this family by placing a mistrust in this family, because of the way that I treated them, the abuse that I've given. Which I know now today was wrong, because of a lot of hurt and bullshit that I got in the past – the abuse that I got in residential schools.

I don't blame them anymore. I've forgiven a lot of people that have hurt me and I've gone to a lot of people and said sorry. I still have a long ways to go. Now at least I can work a day at a time.

And with this, I'd like to thank you for coming to my home and hearing part of my story. And if it can help another person come out of their shell like I did, I'm happy. I can only say that I did a lot of damage in this world, in this community. Hopefully, one day, I can give back what the community has given me: comfort, a home, and a loving family. And I can only hope I'll be able to return that favour with another person.

Thank you very much.



*Healing
Words*

Foreword

Many young Inuit take their own lives and leave behind their friends, family and communities to mourn their loss. Youth suicide among Inuit in the Canadian Arctic is a serious problem and there is no indication the problem will disappear.

There is currently no shortage of research and documentation on the general issue of suicide, but there are no real answers or solutions. Recently, however, Inuit have been discussing suicide and suicide prevention more openly and there is a growing sense of urgency to take action.

The NIYC has adopted suicide prevention as one of their priority areas for action, and young Inuit across Canada's north are taking matters into their own hands and taking responsibility for the well-being of their peers through a variety of small local projects and initiatives.

The National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Framework is the product of hours of research, lots of reading and many discussions with friends, individuals, organizations and government representatives. It is a starting point for the National Inuit Youth Council (NIYC) and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), as well as their partners, to take a serious and in-depth look at the issue of suicide among young Inuit.

Many great things are happening all across the north, yet there remains much to be done to stop people from cutting their lives short. More specific research is needed to better understand suicide from an Inuit perspective so that we can take appropriate action. Our society must make small changes to help each person understand their true value and contributions to our communities – to develop meaning in our lives. Inuit youth and elders must share together and ensure the wisdom and meekness inherent in the Inuit spirit is passed on, so that our people can once again be filled with the quiet pride of a people so closely connected to the land and all its fruits. We all need to recognize our ability and our yearning to take responsibility for our own affairs, while engaging in mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with our fellow individuals, families, communities, governments, organizations and other institutions. We must all stop counting the beans – and give everything we can to others, for the benefit of all life everywhere.

Suicide is an existential problem – there is not one solution that fits everyone – we all have our unique existence, our personal and shared beliefs and understanding of our place in "the grander scheme of things". Governments are called upon to support local, small projects and initiatives that provide personalized instruments for young people to enjoy life. Specifically, we urge Health Canada must continue to provide assistance to Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the National Inuit Youth Council to address the issue of suicide.

Working on this framework has been quite educational, often fun, and frustrating at times. It is our hope that this framework will contribute positively to the work towards healthy communities.

“Suicide Prevention is not the responsibility of organisations or governments alone. It is for the people to discuss and to take action on. Organisations and governments must be there to make this be known, to provide resources and to assist the people in taking appropriate action for the betterment of all.”

National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Framework

Introduction

This document describes work and research undertaken by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, on behalf of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the National Inuit Youth Council, on the National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Project. It also presents background information on how the project came about, how it has been managed and coordinated and presents recommendations for future action on Suicide Prevention for Inuit Youth. Any questions or comments on the work or this report can be directed to Qajaaq Ellsworth. Contact information is provided at the end of this report.

Background

The National Inuit Youth Council (NIYC) is working with the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) on developing a National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy. The QIA entered into an agreement with ITK, under which QIA receives funding for the hiring of a National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Coordinator (contracting 2 individuals) and the development of a National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Framework. Work undertaken by QIA on this project is done on behalf of the ITK. This agreement binds QIA to providing certain deliverables and following certain reporting and financial control requirements. This report/Framework presents the findings of work undertaken as a part of this contract between November, 2002 and March 31, 2003.

Objectives

The objectives as set out in the agreement between ITK and QIA are as follows:

To hire a National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Coordinator who will report to the National Inuit Youth Council. The duties of the Coordinator are as follows:

- Ensure that the National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Coordinator attends meetings of the NIYC;
- Ensure that Youth Coordinators and delegates participate in suicide prevention training and workshops;
- Review existing data related to suicide in Inuit communities;
- Validate *"Suicide Prevention in Inuit Communities – Draft Report – A review of Capacity, Best Practices and Recommendations for Closing the Gap"*
- Disseminate information on suicide and mental health to Youth Coordinators, elders and regional/national Inuit Organizations;
- Ensure that suicide prevention is discussed at the National Inuit Elder and Youth Conference;
- Examine links between suicide prevention and justice issues;
- Collaborate with Regional Inuit Associations;
- Consult with youth, elders, frontline workers and governments; and
- Prepare a National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Framework.

This document describes the work undertaken towards achieving these objectives.

Activities undertaken

Contracting of 2 individuals to conduct work

While efforts were made to hire 1 individual to fill the position of the National Inuit Youth Suicide Prevention Coordinator, it did not work out and we contracted 2 individuals to conduct the work as described above. Lisa Stevenson and Pierre Wolfe are the two individuals QIA contracted to carry out the work.

National Inuit Elder and Youth Conference

The National Inuit Youth Council hosted the National Inuit Elder and Youth Conference in Inukjuak, Nunavik from March 11-14, 2003. Youth and elder delegates from Inuit communities gathered in Inukjuak for the conference along with members of the National Inuit Youth Council, 1 member of the Suicide Prevention Coordinator team, staff of the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) and a number of other guests and speakers/presenters. Several issues were discussed, including suicide/suicide prevention/mental health. The NAHO facilitated a brief presentation followed by a break out discussion, in which the delegates split into small groups and discussed the issue of suicide. The delegates were asked to identify research priorities in relation to suicide and suicide prevention. The research priorities are listed and given further description in the Research Priorities section, below.

Circumpolar Suicide Prevention Workshop

From March 12 to 14, 2003, approximately 40 people from Nunavut, Greenland, Nunavik, the Northwest Territories and Alaska gathered in Iqaluit to discuss the progress of suicide prevention programs in the circumpolar world. These delegates were joined by health care professionals and researchers from southern Canada, England and Australia. Funded by Nunavummit Kiglisiniartiit (the Evaluation and Statistics division of the Government of Nunavut's Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs), the workshop was intended to:

- bring together practitioners from within the circumpolar world who had experience with suicide prevention;
- summarize existing suicide prevention programs in the circumpolar world;
- discuss issues surrounding the administration and evaluation of culturally appropriate suicide-prevention programs;
- identify 'best practice' from suicide prevention programs that might be appropriate for Nunavut; and,
- identify appropriate methods of evaluation for suicide prevention programs

The discussions focused on the successful programs and program management in the various Inuit regions across the arctic. Following is a highlight of the main points raised:

- Some participants felt that non-competitive funding sources were quite successful in soliciting proposals from communities
- Not all projects were referred to as "suicide prevention", but programs dealing with community wellness fit under the umbrella of "suicide prevention" initiatives
- Communities that take control and responsibility for the prevention of suicide had a lower incidence of suicides than communities with fewer or no projects
- We are currently lacking effective and dependable evaluation criteria with relation to community wellness programs and their role in contributing to the prevention of suicide
- Some jurisdictions currently do not have suicide prevention strategies in place, despite the World Health Organization's recommendation that all countries have a National Suicide Prevention Strategy in place
- While there are many assumptions made by individuals and organizations surrounding the issue of suicide, there is very little evidence-based knowledge to come to a common understanding of the problem and to take appropriate action
- There is currently a lack of educational and promotional materials specifically designed to help young people develop an understanding of suicide and healthy lifestyles
- Some materials are currently being developed in Greenland for introduction into the school system
- Mainstream and popular music, etc. has been an effective method for raising awareness and changing attitudes towards the issue of suicide in Inuit communities
- Suicide prevention training has been perceived to be more effective when attention is given to the emotional needs of the participants and when discussions/workshops cover the issue of grieving the loss of loved ones
- Suicide prevention training cannot be a one-time deal – further emphasis on ongoing support and continued, follow-up training is required in order to continue to be effective
- Regular gatherings of frontline workers is required in order to curb burn out and the feelings of isolation of the workers and to share new knowledge
- Governments need to pay more attention to and incorporate traditional knowledge and practices into the formal systems
- In order for any Inuit suicide prevention initiatives to be successful, Inuit must escape the colonial mode of thought and the bureaucratic system of approaching everyday issues
- Funding, per se, is not always a problem. One of the major obstacles to developing and

implementing effective suicide prevention initiatives is the lack of clear government vision and the fact that there are many differing views and opinions on the real problems and how they need to be addressed. It is difficult to bring the players to a point where we can develop a unified vision

- The formal system – schools, health and social services, and the police – should see themselves as a support network for the primary, informal system of family and community
- Intergenerational issues (pain or trauma passed on from one generation to another) play a role in creating an unstable environment for young people. The destruction of the family unit may in turn lead to suicide in later generations
- Culturally specific indicators of "at-risk youth" need to be developed and adopted

The participants at the workshop felt the discussions and presentations were very useful. It was felt, however, that the work accomplished there was just a start. The delegates called for more circumpolar workshops focusing on the issue of suicide prevention and recommended the establishment of a circumpolar network of frontline workers and policy makers.

Traditional Healers/Counselors Workshop - March 31st/April 1st 2003, Pangnirtung, Nunavut

Facilitators: Abraham and Meeka Arnakak

The participants at this workshop (funded and organized by Nunavut's Department of Health) came from many different communities in the Baffin Region of Nunavut. Led by two elders from Pangnirtung participants discussed Inuit-specific modes of healing from psychological pain. Two of the main themes of the workshop were the relevance of Inuit metaphors for illness and healing (e.g. a qamutik as a metaphor for the family and a meat cache as a metaphor for buried feelings) and the need to use a "talking cure" for emotional problems rather than relying on medication. Recurring topics of conversation at this workshop were:

- Gender issues. Specifically the way men have come to feel humiliated and inadequate in recent years and also the need to treat your wife "like glass";
- The possibility of inter-generational transmission of psychological pain;
- The Inuit custom of spiritually and psychologically preparing for a child's life while it was still in the womb;
- 1) The extreme cultural bias of the current justice system. That is, the court system, by separating the victim and defendant and "speaking for" the victim through a third-party intrinsically violates Inuit belief that

disputes should be settled face-to-face; 2) the prejudice of the court system against men.

Some key quotes from the conference:

"Since the 1960s women have had a higher status than men... Women are bringing men down too much, women consider themselves higher than men. We need to bring out the strengths of men. If women would be more proud of us... Women have a higher profile than men. Women have to be more appreciative of men..."

"If our parents went through something bad and terrible we can keep that inside ourselves too. Our ancestors, uncles, cousins, if they've had a really difficult life we can take that into us and carry it around."

"We hear very little about this today. We don't even touch pregnant bellies. That has been taken away from us. We planned for children while they were still in the womb. Many things we believed then have been left on the sidelines. The godparents would plan mentally how that person will grow up. People were trained right from the womb. This is Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit."

"Today couples are forced apart and told not to meet by the courts. Inuit way is to bring the couple closer together to work it out. The courts help only one side. Even though that person could be lying. This can result in suicidal thoughts."

People don't think they're good enough. Suicidal thoughts are not necessary. We are stuck between two worlds, the Inuit and the Qallunaat way."

"Inuit and Qallunaat ways are very different. In Qallunaat law you don't speak to the person you

hurt. This even causes suicides. When they tell you not to talk, we listen. Better to talk about problems and try to get past them."

"My young daughter was crying. I thought she must have a reason for crying. I just let her cry. I went to get someone from the airport. My son asked me to come over and told me my daughter had tried to commit suicide. She thought nobody loved her. Our lives are changing so fast our love for our children is dying too."

"The whole earth is run by the sun. Even though we're in the arctic we have the sun. People who are hurt, are broken, the sun is shining them. The same sun shines on the sick and the well people. It's the same with love."

"I used to try to hold in the tears. Make it to the throat but not come out. Stomach in a knot. Crying is a very good medicine for you to take. Qalunaat say, "Don't cry when you're talking". Inuit recognize that crying was the first language we ever spoke. When we left our mother and became a person what did we take with us? Nothing. What was our first language? Crying."

Documents reviewed

1. Working together because we care: Final Report of the Suicide Prevention Regional Forums in the NWT
2. Cultural Continuity as a hedge against suicide in Canada's First Nations. Transcultural Psychiatry
3. Inuit Suicide and Economic Reality
4. "Risk Factors for Attempted Suicide Among Inuit Youth: A Community Survey
5. Unikkaaruit: Meanings of Well-Being, Sadness, Suicide, and Change
6. "Inuit Concepts of Mental Health: Uitsalik/Nuliatsalik and Uuttullutaq."

7. First Nations and Inuit Suicide Intervention Training: Best Practices
8. A Framework for Prevention: Establishing a National Suicide Prevention Program
9. Inuit Specific Mental Wellness Framework
10. 2002 Suicide Prevention in Inuit Communities: A Review of Capacity, Best Practices and Recommendations for Closing the Gap
11. Acting on What We Know: Preventing Youth Suicide in First Nations

For additional information or to ask questions or provide comments, you can contact:

Raurri Qajaaq Ellsworth, Regional Youth Coordinator, Qikiqtani Inuit Association
P.O. Box 1340, Iqaluit, Nunavut XOA OHO
867.975.2384 (P) / 979.3238 (F)
qiayouth@nunanet.com (email)

"The simple solution"

Often times, someone will speak publicly about topics such as suicide and encourage people to just be more loving and caring towards each other. Many people will dismiss the statements as being too simplistic – going with "the simple solution". True enough, it can be quite simple to love a little more and be more caring. Yet few people take this message to heart and love a little more.

There are many recommendations presented in this report, but the most effective will be this "simple solution." Give it a try for a week and see if you can see any "results".

(If you don't get the results you want,
go another week . . .)
Have fun, love life and pass it on!



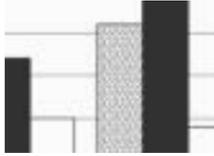
Poems from Songs are Thoughts

THE MOTHER'S SONG

It is so still in the house,
There is a calm in the house;
The snowstorm wails out there,
And the dogs are rolled up with snouts under the tail.
My little boy is sleeping on the ledge,
On his back he lies, breathing through his open mouth.
His little stomach is bulging round –
Is it strange if I start to cry with joy?

Anonymous

Suicide in the Northwest Territories – Some Facts and Figures



Extract from *Suicide in the Northwest Territories - A Descriptive Review*, a joint project between: Sandy Isaacs and Jamie Hockin, Laboratory Centre for Disease Control (LCDC), Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit; Susan

Keogh, Department of Health and Social Services, and Cathy Menard, Office of the Chief Coroner, both of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) invited the LCDC to work together on reviewing data and identifying subgroups of the population who are most at risk of suicide, and to describe the circumstances surrounding the suicides. The report was submitted on March 31, 1998 to HSS.

Definition and Statistics

The study defines suicide as follows: When a person takes his or her own life with the intent to do so.

In 1992 the estimated annual suicide rate for Canada as a whole was 13 per 100,000. The Northwest Territories' average annual suicide rate during the 11-year period from 1986 to 1996 is 41.3 per 100,000.

The average annual suicide rate for Nunavut is 77.4 per 100,000.

The average annual suicide rate for the Western Northwest Territories is 20 per 100,000

Suicide rates by region

The rates of suicide for males and females in each region are ranked as follows:

1. The Baffin region has the highest male suicide rate at 133.9 per 100,000, and the highest female suicide rate at 47.1 per 100,000.
2. The Kitikmeot region has the second-highest male suicide rate of 130.2 per 100,000, and a female suicide rate of 20.5 per 100,000.
3. The Keewatin region has a male suicide rate of 75.5 per 100,000, and a female suicide rate of 16.1 per 100,000.
4. The Inuvik region has a male suicide rate of 40.7 per 100,000, and a female suicide rate of 9 per 100,000.
5. The Fort Smith region has a male suicide rate of 29.7 per 100,000, and a female suicide rate of 6.2 per 100,000.

Ethnicity and gender

Inuit people experience the highest suicide rate at 79.3 per 100,000.

Dene people are second at 29.3 per 100,000.

People of other ethnic descent (including Métis) are third at 14.8 per 100,000.

The male suicide rate in Nunavut is three-and-a-half times that of females at 118.6 per 100,000 males, and 33.8 per 100,000 for females.

The male suicide rate in the Western Arctic is twice that of females, at 32 per 100,000 for males, and 16.8 per 100,000 for females.

Year Analysis

An analysis of data during a 12-year time period from 1985 to 1996 indicates that the rate of suicide in Nunavut is increasing. Average annual suicide rates were calculated in three-year time periods over 12 years.

Nunavut

According to Nunavut's chief coroner Tim Neily, 107 Nunavut residents committed suicide since the territory was created in 1999 up until May 2003. Nunavut government numbers (2003) reveal that the Nunavut suicide rate of 79 per 100,000 (between 1986 to 1996) is six times the 2003 national rate of 13 per 100,000.

The annual rate of suicide for Nunavut in three-year periods is as follows:

- 48.7 per 100,000 from 1985 to 1987;
- 66.7 per 100,000 from 1988 to 1990;
- 75.1 per 100,000 from 1991 to 1993; and
- 85.5 per 100,000 from 1994 to 1996.

Western NWT

The annual rate of suicide for the Western NWT in three-year periods is as follows:

- 18 per 100,000 from 1985 to 1987;
- 26.4 per 100,000 from 1988 to 1990;
- 18.6 per 100,000 from 1991 to 1993; and
- 12.7 per 100,000 from 1994 to 1996.

Age

Persons between the ages 15 to 29 accounted for 56 of the 78 suicides (73%). The break down is as follows:

- 20 in 15 to 19 age group (26%);

- 20 in the 20 to 24 age group (26%); and
- 16 in the 25 to 29 age group (21%).

Ethnicity

Inuit people are at highest risk of suicide with 68 suicides (87%). Other people, including Métis, had six suicides (5%). Dene people had three suicides (4%). The ethnicity is unknown in one of the suicides.

Cause of Death

Hanging was the main method of suicide in 49 deaths (63%). Firearms caused 27 (35%). Drug overdoses caused two (3%). Behaviours immediately prior to suicide

RCMP and Coroner's investigations are the sources of information for reported behaviours preceding suicide. The investigations included interviews with individuals who knew the deceased, such as family, relatives and friends. Some behaviours or events may not be reported due to varying levels of thoroughness in each investigation.

Unusual or distressed behaviour in the 24 hours before death was observed in 68 cases (88 %). Behaviours included:

- Reporting emotional distress or depression in 31 cases (40%);
- Alcohol or drug use in 24 cases (31%);
- Stating an intent to commit suicide in 21 cases (27%); and
- Aggressiveness in 15 cases (19%).

Other behaviours that were reported include social withdrawal, staying away from school or job, saying goodbye, attempting suicide, exhibiting anger, being tired or sick, or unusually happy, obtaining means to commit a suicide, unusual quietness, giving away possessions, and seeking help.

Discussion and Conclusions

Nunavut is experiencing a growing rate of suicide in comparison to the Western NWT. The Nunavut suicide rate of 79 per 100,000 for the period of 1986 to 1996 is six times the current national rate of 13 per 100,000. Inuit people have the highest rate of suicide in the Northwest

Suicide in the Northwest Territories – Some Facts and Figures

continued...

Territories and are 85% of Nunavut's population.

Males, aged 15 to 29, are at most risk, which is consistent with other populations in Canada, including Aboriginal populations.

Personal distress as a result of family and relationship breakups and troubles was observed in 36% of the suicides.

Alcohol intoxication appeared in 33% of the suicides. This report highlights that homes are not necessarily safe havens for individuals at risk of suicide. The method most often used is hanging from the clothing rack in the bedroom closet, but not all hangings involve the clothing rack.

Friends and family have a high awareness of individuals being in emotional distress, but are not necessarily aware of their risk of suicide. Suicide must be considered the result of an accumulation of many factors, in the individual's environment and personal characteristics.

Resolving social issues such as unemployment, poverty, poor education, lack of opportunity and loss of cultural identity, may lower rates of suicide, which may resolve other issues such as crime, family violence, and alcohol or drug abuse, which contribute to suicide.

There is a need for ongoing community awareness and training to identify people at risk of suicide. Family and friends need the tools to recognize when a person is at risk of suicide. Individuals at risk of suicide need to be identified more quickly. Members of the community must be empowered to act immediately with or without the cooperation of emergency services.



continued from page 2

Dear Editors:

We have a class on aboriginal education (EDUC 4200: Aboriging Education) in which we focus on residential schooling a lot. Could we have a set of this issue (Healing Words, Volume 4, Number 2) as the literature review is very important to students of this historical era.

We would need at least 75 copies for 2 classes. Thank you for your consideration.

Lauri Gilchrist, Ph.D.
Co-ordinator, Edmonton Division
Social Work Program
Maskwacis Cultural College

*

Hi! Lauri

I have just come back from the North, this is why I could not acknowledge your request immediately. We are sending you the newsletters today. We wish you the best with your class, and really appreciate your using our newsletter.

Best regards

Giselle Robelin.

Thank you Giselle for your reply and package. We are connecting your newsletter with an assignment in the course, so we are using this information and about 60 students will digest and carry the message to their respective communities. Keep up the good work.

Lauri Gilchrist, Ph.D.

*

Good Morning Giselle:

I am reading Healing Words and see that I can receive the newsletter by request. Below is my name and address and I would love it if you could put me on the mailing list. Thank you so much! I enjoy the articles. (Just for information I am currently a project officer for five projects here in my office, one being the Aboriginal Offender Project Committee, hence my ongoing interest in Aboriginal history and culture).

Lyn MacNeill
A/Regional Communications
& Project Officer, National Parole Board.



*Healing
Words*



HEALING OUR SPIRIT WORLDWIDE

The Fifth Gathering 2006

<http://www.healingourspiritworldwide.com/>

Our Mission

Gathering from around the world, Indigenous peoples will celebrate our spiritual strengths and cultural values. As members of Indigenous families, communities and nations, we will share our healing solutions to devastation brought about by cultural and political oppression manifested as substance abuse, violence and alienation. As united peoples, we will draft a Covenant of our intent to work with governments to recognize our right of self-determination and help us heal our nations from within.

"Substance abuse, domestic violence and oppression harm more than our bodies – they kill our souls."

- Anna Whiting Sorrell,
Confederated Tribes of Salish & Kootenai

A Worldwide movement

The Healing Our Spirit Worldwide movement began as one person's vision to create an international forum and movement focused on the alcohol and drug abuse issues and programs in Indigenous communities throughout the global community. Maggie Hodgson, a Carriere First Nation woman, began her lobbying efforts with the International Congress on Alcohol and Addictions (ICAA) and the World Health Organization in the late 1980's. By 1990 the ICAA included a special track on Indigenous addictions issues at their Berlin Conference. Attended by Indigenous peoples of Canada, New Zealand and Australia, this forum led to a discussion that became the foundation for an international healing movement. Plans for this event began in 1991 with conference hosts Nechi Institute on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education and the National Native Association of Treatment Directors inviting the National Association for Native American Children of Alcoholics as co-hosts. The event was named Healing Our Spirit Worldwide. The first gathering in Edmonton in 1992 attracted 3,300 people from 17 countries of the world. And the celebration of our successes, programs and stories began. The second gathering was held in Sydney, Australia in 1994. The third in Rotorua, Aotearoa (New Zealand) in 1998. The Healing Our Spirit Worldwide events have been a cultural and spiritual movement celebrating the tenacity and resiliency of Indigenous peoples around the world in the struggle against alcohol

and drug abuse. The fourth gathering of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide, held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in September 2002, expanded the vision with the inclusion of health and governance issues in relation to alcohol and drug abuse.

The Fifth Gathering of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide will be held in Canada from August 6 to 11, 2006. Aboriginal people from Canada met during the 2002 HOSW Conference and selected Chief Austin Bear (Sask), Allen Benson (Alberta), Maggie Hodgson (Alberta) and Rod Jeffries (Ontario) to lead Canada in the planning and implementation of the Fifth Gathering. As a result, the International Indigenous Council for Healing Our Spirit Worldwide was formed. This new organization has several major goals including the planning & implementation of the 2006 Gathering, international outreach with Indigenous people of developing countries, continuing the work of the 2002 Covenant and an international voice for Indigenous peoples healing & health issues and programs.

No history of the world's Indigenous people is complete without including the struggle against alcohol and drug abuse, other addictions and related issues. More important is the healing movements Indigenous people have created to rebuild individuals, families, communities and nations from the tragic effects of oppression and alcohol & drug abuse.

A summit will be held in Adelaide, Australia in 2004 to discuss the continued development of the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Covenant on Alcohol and Substance Abuse.

A Covenant

Declaration:

We affirm a covenant among Indigenous peoples of the world for development, prosperity, preservation and strengthening of Indigenous communities of the world. We, the Indigenous peoples of the world and tribal leaders from across the United States, have come to the Fourth Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Gathering to affirm these rights stated:

We continue to live our lives in the traditional ways of our ancestors through respect, integrity, and honor. We must now prepare our nations for the next Seven Generations.

We support our brothers and sisters in their traditional healing efforts.

Through generations and future generations we will maintain and keep our integrity and our right to self-determination, protection of the human rights of Indigenous peoples of the world.

We urge national governments to adopt measures that ensure the full enjoyment by Indigenous peoples of their rights, on the basis of equality and non discrimination, including their full and free participation in all areas of society; and to officially recognize the identity and rights of Indigenous people and to adopt, in agreement with them, the administrative legislative and judicial measures necessary to promote protect and guarantee the exercise of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The HOSW Gathering calls upon sovereign nations and the Indigenous Permanent Forum of the United Nations with Indigenous peoples to convene an International conference on Indigenous issues within the United Nations system to address Indigenous issues relating to health and human rights, economic and social development, culture, the environment, and education. [A/CONF.157/24, (Part I), chap. III, sect. II.B, para. 32.]

The Fifth Gathering of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide will tell the story of this growing momentum from around the world. The 2006 Gathering will be a celebration of the health and healing of Indigenous peoples around the world.

The past Gatherings have included tracks and workshops on the following:

- Prevention and treatment of addictions
- Residential school issues and healing
- Overcoming cultural oppression and colonialism
- Trauma and shame
- Public health systems and disease prevention
- Indigenous cultures, arts and medicines
- Spirituality health and healing
- Governance & self-determination issues and challenges in health and healing
- Research, evaluation and training
- Indigenous children and families
- Impact of the drug wars and wars on Indigenous populations
- Sexuality, sexual abuse and abuse prevention
- Elder tracks



HEALING OUR SPIRIT WORLDWIDE

The Fifth Gathering 2006

- Youth healing tracks
- Mental health and wellness

Healing from the Center

The Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference brings together Indigenous people from around the world to focus on the critical issues of substance abuse, health care, traditional healing and leadership. This important gathering is the only global event to spotlight these critical concerns that impact the daily lives of Indigenous people everywhere.

Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference will bring together Indigenous people from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico, Central and South America as well as other countries from around the globe.

Participants will come from a variety of interests from tribal leadership, native treatment centers to community self-help groups and governmental representatives.

The Power of a Global Gathering

The Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference is truly an evolving process. The Planning Committee composed of tribal representatives from around the globe seeks to heal nations from within. Indigenous healing solutions to alcohol and substance abuse will be structured to address the needs individuals, families, communities and First Nations.

The Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Covenant was prepared prior to and throughout the gathering as a declaration of individual, family, community and First Nations leadership goals.

SPORT PREVENTS THE YOUNG FROM SUICIDE

Sport prevents young Aborigines from killing themselves
By Karen Balling Radmer

"If an Aboriginal child is expelled from the football team, for that child it means the end of the world"



Until 1960, suicides among aborigines were unknown. It did not exist in the culture or tradition, and they did not even have a word for it in their native tongue. Today, the Aborigines have the highest rate of children committing suicide in the world. Colin Tatz, professor at the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Australia, has studied the phenomena and points out three risk factors: Sexual abuse, high obsession with cannabis and the absence of sport. "Sport means more to Aborigines than to other parts of the population, he says."

"Suicides are measured per 100,000 in the population. If you take New Zealand, which has the highest rate, it is 19-20 for men and 7-8 for women per 100,000. But among Aborigines it is 128-148. That is off the charts" Colin Tatz says.

From 1996 to 1999 he went on several field studies exploring the connection between sport and juvenile delinquency and suicides in Aboriginal communities. He found that the Aboriginal culture and society have been almost destroyed, leaving behind a gap in rituals, beliefs and values. Life expectancy is very short, around 50 years. This means that there are no elders in the society to pass on traditions.

"I found that among children below the age of 14 the suicide rate was 130 per 100,000. A terrible rate. There were kids as young as 8. I do not know how these children form the idea of self-destruction. Some of them simply said that they could not handle this life and would take their chances "on the other side". But I also found that in areas with a high promotion of sport the suicide rates and the juvenile delinquency rate went down", he says.

"Sport means more to the Aborigines than to other parts of the population, because much of the Aboriginal society is fatherless. There are no

elders, very few Christian marriages, no beliefs and far too many funerals. Rituals have simply disappeared. But the ritual of belonging in sport is unchanged. The sense of belonging, the rituals of brotherhood, loyalty and discipline is still in sport," argues Colin Tatz.

"If an Aboriginal child is expelled from the football team, for that child it means the end of the world". I investigated many cases of kids who at one time had a football career. Suicide tended to occur outside the football season, or when they were expelled from that sporting group. I'm not claiming that sport prevents suicide, but where there is a high level of sport, there is a reduction in suicide and delinquency" Colin Tatz says.

But is sport then the magic spell? you might ask. "There are proofs pointing in that direction. When children belong to a team as a player, coach, fan, water carrier, anything, then they do not try to kill themselves. The problem is that many Aboriginal teams are expelled from competition, allegedly for violence or bad language from their fans. Here it should be noted that the Aboriginal teams almost always win" Colin Tatz explains.

He believes that more government funding should be used on sport.

"I recommend sport. Especially the girls, who get a raw deal. For every 1000 dollars spent on sport, only 100 goes to the girls, and the suicide rate for girls is increasing. They used to take tablets, but now they hang themselves. Hanging is confronting – it is right in your face and they do it in public. Hanging is associated with white colonial oppression. Therefore, much Aboriginal art contains scenes of hanging now."

<http://www.play-the-game.org/magazine/pdf-02/21-preventing.pdf>

Interview with Ernie

Hello. For over fifty-five years, I've been dealing with my hurt, my things that happened to me in residential schools at ten months old until I was fifteen years old. For many years, I carried the pain of not knowing my parents, to turn to alcoholism, to try to commit suicide two times and to keep running away. That's the only way I found out that I could deal with my pain, until I came to realize that I'm going to be out of breath pretty soon. And because I turned sixty years old in October, I decided I have to stop. And now, I'm beginning my inventory about my life. I found out in my inventory that I was certainly abused, but I never dealt with it properly. I found out too that for too many years I was hit by nuns. There are many things, so I thought about this project from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and I realized there must be other former students who attended residential schools here in Kugluktuk that have the same problems that I'm having, dealing with, and experiencing.

So I did my homework for about ten months. I went to some Elders. They said that was a good idea, we could help. So I found two more former younger students, younger than myself. "Yeah, Ernie I want to help. I went to residential school. I have a lots of pain and sorrow, but I want to heal." So we had a few meetings on our own and we decided, well, I might as well phone Lina and Monica. They came to Kugluktuk and helped us to develop our program. With this program, we hope that the former students who attended residential school in Aklavik or Inuvik can realize that they might pass some of the symptoms on that they have from school days, pass it on through their children without knowing it. It's best if you deal with it first. That way you're safeguarding the future of your children. You're safeguarding their innocence and you have to give them love.

For me, growing up in school from ten months old until fifteen years of age, they think that I missed the most for someone to say that I love you. This is the hardest thing. I think it's harder to give love when you never had love when you were growing up than to suffer abuse because you never, never learn to love yourself. You find it that much more difficult to love even your wife and your children because that four letter word, love, was never given to you in school. The reason for that is there were too many kids: the nuns could not give you one-on-one, so you were treated like a number. My number happened to be fifty-nine. The highest number because I was the youngest. Gradually I went down to thirty-two. By the time the doors closed my number moved down to thirty-two.

So this program by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation – we should have had that in place long ago, you know. But it's better to start somewhere. Better to start now than never addressing the issues and the concerns that we had as young children, young innocent children growing up. You know, like we run away. Or we beat up; like for me, I beat up my wife because I was always hit by a nun. Now I'm beginning to realize I did wrong. It's not right to do things that that go against the law of the land or against society. It's not in our culture to do those things. So I'm making a first step to say that I want to heal, starting from my own self. I have to heal myself first before I could even talk about my residential school to my children. They know I went to school but I have to be honest with them. I have to trust myself. But most of all, I think I have to love myself and then with love, many things are going to come, the world gonna open to you. That's how I have to address it from my own self. I cannot speak for other former students. I have to speak for my own self.

You have to forgive. In my case, I have to forgive my dad because he dumped us, he left us in school. He never wrote us letters. Never said I love you. And gosh, I'm sixty years old now and I never heard him say, "Ernie, I love you." When am I going to hear those important words to make my eyes shine? You know, like a lighthouse. I have to hear those, and now he's ninety-three years old. I've never heard that yet. I'm not about to beg him, but I certainly could forgive him now because I learned something from this workshop that we had from Monica that stayed in me. I have to realize that people out there went through the same situation. Their pain and their sorrow is like mine, but they're willing to share how they grew out of it. As some of them say, it's a never ending journey to heal but at least, here in Kugluktuk, we're going to start that journey. And slowly, you know, families will grow healthy. But I think the most important thing is for me, right now, everybody have their own opinion on life. I think that with love we could conquer many things. That's what I think.

It's not the forgiveness. It's not anything. You got to believe in God. I believe in God, but I believe too the most important thing is to love yourself, love your wife, love your children. You're gonna pass these on to your children, to the community, especially to people who need help. Lot of people in our community, all they need is someone to put their arms around their shoulder and say, "I care. I love you as a human being." But you have to mean it. That's the thing. Love has many expressions – but if we use love in the

I have to realize that people out there went through the same situation. Their pain and their sorrow is like mine, but they're willing to share how they grew out of it. As some of them say, it's a never-ending journey to heal but at least, here in Kugluktuk, we're going to start that journey.

right way, it's going to conquer a lot of the harm that we've done in Kugluktuk. You know, not knowing that we harm people, but if we learn to love ourselves and to love your mate and your children and to love God, you're going to, our community have a chance to flourish really good.

And forget about the residential school. The residential school is there now as part of a history that wasn't meant to be. But in those days and age, that's how they fixed it. We cannot continue blaming society, you know. It's a thing that happened, but we have to look at it too. We have to look at it on the positive side. We had the best education system when the nuns and the priests taught us. The nuns and the priests in the school, they never railroad you. You had to earn your grade five. You had to earn your grade six, and up to grade nine. If you fail, they're there to help you, but you have to repeat it. I'm very proud of the system that I come from. The education system was the best in the world. Now no one can equal it, not in the computer age. If your computer breaks down, does that mean your brain is dead? So the education system in our time, I think the government should seriously look at the ways that they're offering education, especially the math, reading and writing. It's not through computers, because you are not thinking. You're not using your God-given talent. So look at those things. That's what the residential school gave me – that ability to use my talent. I know I had to go through, from one grade to the next, knowing I made it on my own.

But the residential school had bad parts too, you know. And I'm glad our government and Assembly of First Nations are going to try to help us here in Kugluktuk deal with the problems that we have as former students, former residents of the residential school system, because we're all good people. It's just somehow we've gotten, you know, we experienced things that should never have happened.

Interview with Ernie

continued

I went to the Elders long ago. I know that as a society sometimes we have a tendency to leave the Elders alone and just make them gather their pension. For me, that's not approaching our Elders with respect. But this program is going to give them the respect that they rightly deserve. They have lots of wisdom, knowledge, trust, and love – things that we may be missing as young people.

I went to the Elders first because I want them to share their history of how they survived long ago: how they love, how they brought up their children the way they're supposed to. So I went to seven or eight Elders to make a good core group. Some of them are very good at family counseling. Some are very good in how they managed to quit drinking. Some of them are very knowledgeable out on the land; the land skills are very important. So I selected a good group of Elders, very good in most areas. Some are stronger in areas like the family part and the quitting the booze. They're willing to share these things with us and those are the things that we need to hear from them. We have to build on their strengths. Because right now, we're not doing that.

So it's really important that this program is built upon the wisdom of the Elders. I asked them first. I didn't say be part of it. I asked them, "Would you be kind enough to help us? We need you now because we're going to have to replace you when you pass on." We need that knowledge, that trust, the skills, the language – everything that made them who they are. So that's why I approached the Elders first. And it's going to be like that right from the start to finish, to make the Elders a very big part of this program that we're about to deliver here in Kugluktuk.

AKUNNIQ PLANNING REGION: INTERVIEWS WITH IGLOOLIK ELDERS

Interview with Nathan Qamaniq, Igloolik Elder - October 26th, 2000

Interview with Igloolik Elder Nathan Qamaniq took place at the Elder's home and the questions were asked by Jayko Alooosoo and written by Peter Mannilaq. You can find this story and others on <http://npc.nunavut.ca/eng/regions/akunniq/elders.html>

Nathan: I lived mostly around the Igluqjuaq, Kangiqsukjuaq, Kangiqsimajuk, Qaggiuyaq and the Siuralik area. (Steenby Inlet on the North-west tip of Baffin island).

The Igluqjuaq area I noticed started changing while we lived with Ipilee's and us (Qamaniq's) while living together along with other families in the area. And the main diets consisted of country foods such as seal, walrus and caribou at that time and minimal fishing was done at the time.

July 27th, 2000

Formerly "Spence Bay" ... still is a bay though! The name "Taloyoak" ... meaning caribou passing route blind is there ... (where hunters would hide in makeshift blinds alongside the "blind" & wait for the caribou to start passing through ... basically heading back south from the summer caribou calving grounds)

However ... I did go out and catch some ptarmigan that were abundant during the early part of the fall season.

I remember going in-land twice and that was the only time that I remember of and it may have been a year or two apart. There was myself, brother-in-law and perhaps 3 other men at that time that I recall.

During the spring-time it was basically fishing and enjoying the warm weather with the families and we would go and catch some polar bears, but the majority of the summer time was spent hunting the walrus and later when the temperature was ideal we would cache them for winter food.

The main diets consisted mostly of walrus, seals and caribou during the year.

After the people began settling to what is now Igloolik...caribou meat seemed to get harder to catch and I noticed that it seemed to be eaten less by the people in the community...perhaps more people were catching them in larger numbers? I noticed that the meat didn't last as long.

Wildlife quotas when first introduced into the community wasn't a problem... and there were times when the polar bear tags weren't being used-up during the open season for them. But the way they stand now is that the other guy cannot get the chance to catch the polar bear he wants during that time.

I know that there seems to be two different types of people (cultural-wise) that live amongst each other now in the community of Igloolik.

I also notice that there seems to be a lot more walrus in the Baffin area than what there was a number of years ago ... as well as two different types of the species ... the bigger and the smaller.

I'm not the kind of guy who will talk a lot and go on and on ... that's how I am ... I know I'll remember more things from the past once you guys leave ... laughs!!!



Healing
Words

Interview with Monica

I used to be the proposal writer, because at the time the Nunuvut Social Development Council got funding from AHF for my position. So, what I did was I went around the communities and requested, with Lena Ellsworth, to help groups in the proposal development process, like what we do now. But when NSTC was dissolved, it became a department of NTI. So now my file's changed into the residential school file.

Like when we went around the communities we could sense their issues were the same; things like alcoholism, anger, isolation, suicidal tendencies, PTSD, and so on. But here, incarceration is more prevalent in other communities. I always came home sensing the pain, and I always felt "how can I help?" I wish I could be able to help, because I'm a residential school survival also. I was in Chesterfield Inlet, from '58 to '64. I went there when I was seven years old, and before I went there we had a winter camp and we roamed around in springtime and summer time from camp to camp, depending on the availability of the animals that my father and brothers hunted.

I had three brothers. We went out in groups, like my father always went with his brother. So we always had cousins coming along with us. And I remember because I was the only girl in my family. I had a sister but she died when I was about 2, 3, or 4. I remember her dying. I became the only girl in my family, but I was treated special. Like my mother was proud of my long hair because I was a girl. She made girl's clothing for me, and she showed me how to sew because me and my cousin used to play dolls. Those days we had wooden dolls and my mother would cut out patterns and we'd sew them. We'd sew the top and the pants. And we planned to go to the next camp, which was the next house so.

But I don't think we ever finished sewing, because I don't remember going to the next camp. (Laughter) It was always fun, like my oldest brother gave me a thimble when I was about ... maybe I was about 10, 11 or 12.

But when I went to school that was a totally different experience for me. I never heard about the world out there. I never imagined. We had a priest who was a Hudson Bay Clerk, but that was about it in those days. Maybe an RCMP came in once in a while. And so, we used to fly to Chesterfield Inlet and land in the water. So we went there and ... I remember seeing a nun for

I always came home sensing the pain, and I always felt "how can I help?" I wish I could be able to help, because I'm a residential school survival also.

the first time with the habit ... with that strange clothing and everything. I didn't know what they were. I never ... they were the last people I saw, you know, when we went to bed, and they were the first people we saw when we woke up. So I never thought they slept, never thought they had hair, or went to the bathroom – or anything like that.

So, there was a bunch of us girls, we were upstairs. The girls' dorm was upstairs and the boys' dorm was downstairs. And when we ate, one side of the room was just girls, and on the other side the boys sat down to eat. We weren't allowed to talk to boys. But there was this nun, she was ... she said she was a Cree from Saskatchewan, she was a teacher. She would take her veil off and she had long hair, and she taught us how to dance. She said they danced with their feet close to the ground, and she would sing, and she would tell stories. She was the best teacher I ever had in those days.

She was human. She had feelings. She laughed and she sang, and she danced like she was normal. (Laughter) And she's the one who taught me if you feel you can do anything, or if you're scared to do something, you should say, "I can do it, I must do it, I will do it." That has been my motto as I was growing up. When I was scared, that helped me.

They weren't all like that. I had another teacher, a guy, who was verbally abusive. He used to call us little nincomepoop and bloody dodos. "Stop doing that or else I'll hang you by your toe nail," he'd say. I remember one day he got so mad that – he was our math teacher and he kept asking this girl a question, and she was so ... he was yelling, and of course the girl was scared. So she just froze up. And that made him angry. So anyway, he's looking around, and I guess the first thing he saw was this blackboard eraser. He grabbed it and threw it at her, and she didn't move or wince, but I saw blood trickling down her hand. The eraser had hit one of her knuckles. She didn't even cry; she just sat there frozen in her chair.

I remember he grabbed one boy and shook him and threw him against the wall. I think there were four grades in our class and he happened to have a brother in the highest grade. So he stood up and went up to him and they almost had a confrontation. So, the teacher kind of cooled down a bit. There's more stories like that. And we used to line up for the ruler if we ... I don't know, I think it was if we didn't do our homework or something like that.

We only went home in the summer times. And the teachers would stick gum on our noses if we chewed gum. We weren't allowed to chew gum in school. They would stick gum in our noses and make us stand in front of the class, and make fun of us. They would put a dunce cap on us, and make us stand in front of the class just to shame us. For some reason we would sit in a corner for I don't know how long. And in the hostel, we would get strapping for something.

I remember the first day in school, we were told through an interpreter that we weren't to speak unless we spoke in English, and of course we spoke very little that first year, because the only English word I knew was hello. We could speak outside during recess or out of school, but we only had to speak English in school.

A Cree nun allowed me and my brother to play Jacks one time, so that was nice. But other than that we weren't allowed to talk to boys, including our brothers. But the sixth year I was there, we could visit our brothers for 15 minutes every Sunday afternoon. Well, what could you say in 15 minutes? And when you've been conditioned to, and told that ... I mean, we weren't allowed to talk to boys. They instilled that in you. It felt shameful to even talk to your own brother.

I remember when we went home for the summer, this guy was making fun of me and my brother because we were together. He was saying that we're like boyfriend and girlfriend. That's how distorted we became. I had a cousin – I have a cousin – who I grew up with, and we were best of friends. Wherever we went, we used to hold hands. I remember a nun telling us that only

Interview with Monica

continued

lovers hold hands. So that kind of changed our friendship. We weren't as close anymore

I remember we had porridge in the morning. But I should say that my husband who is older, he went to school when they were still building the hostel, when they weren't quite finished with it. I remember he was telling me that they only had a slice of bread and water each day. A slice of bread and water, that's all they had all day.

I don't know how they could survive. But I guess they must have started feeding them when the hostel was finished. As for us, we used to have porridge every morning, except Sunday's. We used to have Corn Flakes, and I thought that was a treat. But what I didn't used to like were fish heads that were old, and tasted awful.

They were boiled in water. So I didn't really like that. And what used to make me throw up was these beans with very oily ... with pork I think, with fat in them. I hated sardines in those days also.

When we went home my uncle used to tease me and say what a little white girl I was, because I guess I was behaving differently – like a white person. You know, you got conditioned into it, and we were made fun of and the bonding was gone. Bonding with our parents was gone. There was hardly any communication, and we didn't talk about our experience, because it hurt too much. Our parents never really talked to us about it.

After I left the school, I went to Chesterfield Inlet for 6 years. Three years in Churchill, and 2 years in Winnipeg. Other people who have never gone to Chester thought it was so regimental and strict. But for us, no way. What a freedom!

So, anyway, I got married in 1969 – I got forced into marriage. Our parents had arranged our marriage.

We had drinking problems. There was a lot of abuse, all kinds of abuses. You know there was no love. He was a product of residential school, and so am I. We didn't know how to love or respect each other. Personally, I didn't know anything about life. Somebody had to teach me how to be jealous, because some lady was taking my husband home. His aunt told me that this lady was taking my husband home, and I said oh! And she said, "well, aren't you going to do something?" "I don't know." "Well, I'll go with you." So, I'm all excited we're going after this

He was a product of residential school, and so am I. We didn't know how to love or respect each other. Personally, I didn't know anything about life. Somebody had to teach me how to be jealous, because some lady was taking my husband home.

woman. So she told me push her when we get close and grab your husband. Okay, I'm laughing. So I push her and I grabbed my husband took him home. He was drunk; I have never seen anyone drunk except when I was in Churchill, when I was going home from baby sitting. I didn't know my husband was drunk.

We had a very protected life in the hostel. We didn't experience anything about home life. So I took him to his mom's place, which is close. He started talking, and then he started crying and I cried with him. But his mother said, "don't take it so hard, you know he's just talking about something that really bothered him." So this is the first time he's ever talked about it. "He's crying, but you don't have to cry with him," she said – or something like that. But anyway he fell asleep and I just started reading, and my mother in-law said, "you can go back to the dance if you want, he'll sleep all night."

So, I went back to the dance and then I went to the bathroom and this lady was there and I apologized to her for pushing her. That's how naive I was about these things. Probably because I didn't feel any love for him, I couldn't be jealous. So, things like that. But anyway they became, I guess, lovers, and I didn't know how to deal with that.

I didn't have any coping skills. When things got really bad I tried to commit suicide. After awhile I couldn't take the abuse, so I took 22 Valium pills and I almost died. But they pumped my stomach. Then this social worker came and asked me if I wanted to talk. I said no. Well, I wanted to, but when I became emotional I just swallowed, then I was okay. I couldn't talk anymore, I'd just clam up. So I did that, and she said, "oh you can cry or scream or anything as long as you let it out." So I started talking and crying and I'm talking about this, about something else, about something that happened long ago and about ... like it was all coming out, but not in any chronological order, because I was so full of garbage that I had kept over the years.

After I had a good session, the crying and talking, I could see, I could hear. But before, it was like I could only see through a little slit, a very narrow slit. Now I was aware of things around me. So after that I decided I can't take it anymore. I left my husband.

But things got worse. I went down to Ottawa. I was there for 6 months. I've worked, but I left 2 of my kids and took one of them with me. But it was like ... I was in, I was grieving for my ... no matter how bad things were, that's the only guy I ever knew. So I would call him and thinking like I'm so sorry. He'll say that "I'm so sorry I treated ... please come home." He would say, "Come home and I'll beat you up." So I'd say, "alright forget it, never mind." I would drink more, like I was becoming an alcoholic, because all I did was drink and work, drink, work, drink, work. That's all: work to drink.

But one day ... the night before I had been so drunk I felt like I was going to pass out, and maybe lose myself. Either I would be taken to jail, to a drunk tank, or a bouncer would throw me out and I would die of exposure. Or some crazy man would do things to me and I would die, or ... that's how much fear I had at that time of losing myself. That's the stage I got to.

So, luckily, somehow I found myself at home. I didn't know how. But there, I was at home and I was so disgusted with myself and thinking I never wanted to be this way. If my father saw me, just think how disappointed he would be. The Church, you know, it was like I betrayed it. Betrayed the Church and my people, on and on I was thinking that way. So I was feeling like, oh I remember the priest telling us in Catechism that Jesus came to Earth to save sinners. So, I thought I should pray, because a thought came to me go to your room and pray. When I heard that it reminded me of a phrase that was read to me once. If you go to the closet, if you pray in secret, your father will reward you. Go to your closet and pray. So even though I was alone in my apartment, I went to my room and started praying. Because my boss had told me to shape up or ship out, and I hadn't paid the rent. I was 3 days late and my landlord told me if you don't pay your rent tomorrow, you'll be evicted. And because I had no money, my friends were gone, like I had nothing I had hit rock bottom. It was like God put me in the corner where I couldn't look anywhere except look up and that's what I did. So I went to my room and prayed, and I told him I came to Ottawa to fix my life, but I'm making a mess of it. So please, Jesus, come into my heart and fix it up for me. That's all I prayed.

I was crying and praying that simple prayer. After that I got up and went out and I could see the

Interview with Monica

continued

sky for the first time. It seemed for the first time in my life a wide world out there, so blue and so bright, a big world out there I had been missing. So I come back in and I realized how dirty my place was, I never even seen the dirt before, it was like my eyes were open.

People nowadays talk about being saved, but I didn't. Being saved was something that the priest didn't teach you, except when you die you'll be saved. But it wasn't a concept that was taught to us, that it was possible for being on earth.

I remember the peace. I don't remember that I felt I was saved. I remember the peace because I was feeling so fearful of my husband, fearful of my parents, fearful of the church, fearful of the society for having left my husband. I was feeling so guilty about it. I felt I couldn't face anybody anymore, but now that was gone, I felt peace. I felt so much peace it was like, I don't know, I can't describe it. It was like there was a great big wind and it stopped.

So I decided to have a bath. I was cleaning up the place and I started singing hymns. When I started singing a hymn, I would be reminded of another hymn. I would sing that and it would remind me of some other hymn, and it was like I was trying to catch up on all the time that I had wasted. I felt so happy.

So I took a bath and decided I'll go to work. And on my way to the bus stop, I came across this bookstore and there was a table of books on sale. I couldn't resist that in those days. I used to read books about real life stories, because nobody ever told me about life. I didn't know anything about life, and I only learned from books.

So I picked up this book and it talked about this woman who was in the Appalachian Mountains . She went there to teach, and this older woman who was a Christian was here mentor. This lady was asking all the questions I've always asked – like why, if God is love, does he let these things happen? Why this and why that? Some of them got answered, and it so happened that the lady I worked with at Indian and Northern Affairs, her father was a minister. I asked her a simple question and she explained something to me. Anyway, in those days another guy I worked with used to teach Inuktitut at Ottawa University and he was out on holiday or something . So I took his place. I would teach Thursday nights at the University. She was one of the students. So we decided that we'd go to her place for supper and after supper will go to the University.

As she was preparing the food, I sat down, and on the coffee table was this little book. I started reading it, and it talked about this 17 year-old girl who had tried to commit suicide and this pastor was talking to her and asked her why she had tried to commit suicide. She said that nobody loved her, she had gone from one foster home to another and nobody cared for her,

nobody loved her. And the pastor said, "I know one who loves you." Well, who? "Jesus!" Who's he? "He's the one loved you so much that he died for you. So that if you're sick or if you're in sin, you know he will forgive your sins and heal your wounds, so that you won't have to suffer. He did the suffering for you, so that you'll be healed." Wow! What an eye opener for me.

When I prayed I prayed that God, because I was making such a mess of my life, would fix up my life for me. He started fixing up my life for me right away. Somehow the money came. I think it was severance pay, because this was about 6 months after I had quite my job and run away.

My healing started whether I realized it or not. It started. So when the money came, I paid all my bills and there was enough money left to go home. Whereas before I was fearful of my husband and everything, I decided I put myself in that situation, so I should face up to my ... face up to what all I have coming, face up to my responsibilities. And so I went home. Of course, you know, we were both scared. He sat on the couch, and I sat on the sofa, across from each other. And I didn't know where I was going to start. There was so much to talk about, and I was scared what he would do. I looked at him, and I could sense the same: he had the same feelings, same fears. So I felt compassion towards him. I went up to him and sat on his lap and hugged him, and we cried. We just cried. After that we started talking.

Pelican Lake Indian Residential School



INUIT OF NORTHERN QUEBEC INCARCERATION

Extract from the Survey of the Administration of Justice
Respecting the Inuit of Northern Quebec

http://www.psepc-ppcc.gc.ca/publications/abor_policing/NorthernQuebecSurvey_e.asp

Introduction

For many years the administration of justice in Inuit settlements in Northern Quebec has been a matter of concern to many people. Social service organizations, workers within correctional facilities, Native and non-Native social workers, attorneys, and jurists alike, have called into question the validity and the morality of a system that purports to offer equal justice to a segment of Canadian society with recognizably different sets of values, traditions, and cultural norms.

The Inuit, themselves, are often unaware of the consequences of becoming involved as offenders under the Canadian system of justice. Their traditional environmental influences bear little relation to the adversarial nature of the justice system. And while individual offenders are most often bewildered by the procedures they are subjected to, in most cases, they lack Inuit professionals to turn to for guidance.

Further, the Inuit most often deal with the justice system outside of their own settlements. Whether they are removed from the scene of the crime, are sent to holding facilities in Amos, Quebec, are brought to neighbouring Inuit communities for court appearances, or are transported to correctional institutions in southern Quebec, these offenders seldom face the system in the context of familiar surroundings. Consequently, they must not only learn to cope with the complexities of the criminal justice system, but they must also learn to cope with simple, but difficult human preoccupations at the same time.

To say that the administration of justice within the Hudson's Bay and Ungava Bay regions of Quebec offers fairness and equality with such administration in southern regions of Canada is clearly wrong. For the expression of such a statement indicates a fundamentally flawed, seriously misinformed point of view.

Inasmuch as non-Native offenders in the south are probably not experts on the justice system either, they at least have the opportunity to learn how the system functions without being transported out of their customary geographic environment. Southern offenders are not

subjected to such disorienting factors as dramatic changes in diet, abrupt changes in climate, disturbing noise levels, or unfamiliar crowded places. Yet Inuit offenders are faced with these and other equally disconcerting influences. Consider, if you will, a comparison between this practice, and the culture shock that would be experienced by a Montreal offender transported to the streets of Calcutta for incarceration after sentencing. While the analogy may seem far fetched, there are reasonable parallels to be drawn from it.

The Inuit of Northern Quebec possess a unique set of identifiers, a specific range of traditional characteristics, a distinct model of social behaviours, and a particular focus on communal harmony that is virtually unknown to southern inhabitants of this country.

Adhering to the approach of "equal justice for all" in the delivery of judicial and correctional services to Inuit people is, in itself, a miscarriage of justice. As Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella noted in the final report of The Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (Ottawa : October 1984) "...to ignore differences or to refuse to accommodate them, denies access to equality and constitutes discriminatory behaviour." By failing to recognize the need for changes and improvements to the current system, a long-standing problem will continue to plague this isolated, good-natured people.

Waseskun House, a proposed halfway house for male native ex-offenders located in Montreal, is particularly concerned about this situation, because of its potential direct involvement with Inuit offenders who may have come through the system. In previous research studies, it has been noted that Inuit offenders seem to have particularly negative experiences when they are incarcerated. Because of the small numbers of Inuit inmates housed in some institutions, they must contend with the destructive aspects of isolation, having almost no means of communication because of linguistic difficulty. Their traditional dietary patterns are drastically altered, and they do not benefit from existing programs or services such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings. Of course, the geographic location of correctional institutions completely precludes any contact with family or friends.

Waseskun House hopes to shed some light on the overall contradictions that appear to exist in the administration of justice as it applies to the Inuit of Northern Quebec.

In an effort to meet the needs of potential residents, and more immediately, to address the very real difficulties experienced by Inuit who come into conflict with the law, Waseskun House hopes to shed some light on the overall contradictions that appear to exist in the administration of justice as it applies to the Inuit of Northern Quebec.

The document presents the findings of a brief study of two Inuit communities: Kuujuaq and Kuujuarapik, located respectively on the Quebec shores of the Ungava and Hudson's Bays. The study undertook to examine several aspects of the administration of justice as it applies to these communities and, more specifically, as it applies to those offenders who have come into conflict with the Canadian justice system. Observations and conclusions are presented with the intention of forming concrete recommendations to the Solicitor General.

Crimes Committed & Charges

The most common offences were identified as breaking and entering, assault (physical and sexual), and to some degree, drug offences. Crimes against property totalled 75; against persons, 41.

It was identified that nearly all criminal activity was in some way alcohol or drug related. Either offenders were under the influence during the commission of the crime, or the crime itself was committed for the purpose of obtaining drugs, alcohol, or money to finance substance abuse.

The courtworker noted that the use of inhalants was also on the increase.

While exact figures for juvenile vs. adult offenders are now being collected, summary

forms for the courtworker program did not contain such a breakdown in previous years. However, a manual count of courtworker files yielded the summary contained in Table 3, which indicated that slightly over 10% of the offenders processed through the courtworker's office were juveniles.

Contributing Factors

A number of factors common to all Native offenders contribute to criminal activity among Inuit people.

High levels of unemployment, low levels of recreational or social activities, high levels of drug and alcohol consumption, and the resulting socio-economic turmoil all figure to some extent in the incidence of crime.

Tragic family background is also cited as a contributor since many offenders have experienced childhood victimization by alcoholic parents. Upheaval of family structures or relocation of communities have also played a part in causing offenders to turn to crime as an outlet for frustration and/or hostility.

Education is also seen as a contributor to two contradictory findings. On the one hand, many offenders have little formal education, since it is common for young people to drop out of school. On the other hand, the courtworker and probation officer noted that offenders most often charged with serious drug trafficking offences usually had higher than average (Secondary I & II) educational levels.

A more recent phenomenon of increases in the number of sexual assault/conjugal violence charges was explained by both the courtworker and probation officer. It was not felt that any real increase in the frequency of these incidents had occurred; but rather, an increase in their reporting had. In recent months, a public education campaign combined with information sessions may have prompted a larger proportion of victims to come forward. In addition, it was noted that recent policy changes on the part of intervening police officers meant that more women were being encouraged to lay charges by the police. Therefore, this combination of recent changes may be, in themselves, contributing factors to the increases observed in this area.

Sentencing & Disposition

To a great extent all resource people consulted felt that sentencing was realistic and was always based on the nature of the crime. There was some concern, however, that sentences given for crimes in the North were not equivalent to those given in the South. This issue will be dealt with later.

Statistically, a great majority of sentences involved restitution fines, community service or suspension. Of dispositions to correctional facilities, it appears that the vast majority involve periods of less than 2 years' duration and, therefore, are served in provincial institutions. Observations indicate that a great deal of plea-bargaining goes on, resulting in sentences that do not remove the individual from the community.

If adult offenders are sentenced to incarceration, they are most often detained at the Amos Detention Centre, while juvenile offenders are detained at the Youth Reception Centre in Val d'Or. It was noted that for the period of the study, the caseload of juvenile offenders was approximately 28-30 individuals at the Val d'Or centre.

At least one resource person noted that the judges travelling with the Circuit Court were sensitive to the needs of the offenders and appeared to pronounce sentences with this thought in mind.

Where sentencing involved support programs or other services such as Alcoholics Anonymous sessions or counselling therapy, it was clearly felt that these were ineffective.

In the matter of equivalency between sentencing in the Northern and Southern regions of the province, some individuals suggested that, because of the nature of the system, lighter sentences were given by northern courts than if those offenders were to have been tried in the South. These observations were confirmed by comments from Inuit people who originate from these communities, but work in urban centres in the South. They characterize sentencing practices for serious crimes in Northern regions as "a slap on the wrist". Other findings confirm that residents in the communities feel threatened by the fact that so-called troublemakers, or people they consider to be "dangerous offenders," are allowed to return and pose potential risks to their well-being.

This issue emerged within the context of a discussion of the exorbitant costs involved in the circuit court system. Because of the logistical difficulties in assembling the accused and the witnesses for specific court dates, hearings and trials are often delayed or at times, dismissed. In fact, failures to appear have become so frequent that the court has initiated a travel cost reimbursement program to pay offenders to appear in court. By failing to appear bench warrants are routinely issued, adding to the already long list of infractions. It seemed that the reimbursement program was established to improve efficiency.

... community people will continue to refer to the imminent arrival of what they have termed the "Circus Court"

Because of the administrative costs of holding court, however, it appears that some degree of expediency has come to characterize the proceedings. Cases are dealt with rapidly, particularly when a large backlog of charges exists.

Whether lighter sentences are imposed because judges are "sensitive," or "feel bad" or whether they are imposed because of expediency, there appear to be negative consequences that impact on the communities. More in-depth research would be needed to ascertain answers to the following questions:

- Are offenders aware of what is going on in court?
- Are cases rushed to avoid additional expense?
- Are case dismissals/withdrawals jeopardizing the delivery of justice?
- Are the needs of victims being met by the sentences?
- Are the needs of offenders being met by the system?
- Are communities adequately served by the system?

While it is worth repeating that case workers currently working in this region have noted the appropriateness of sentencing, it was observed that the answers to the above questions may shed more light on the situation as it exists today.

It is recognized that the individual people involved in the administration of justice respecting the Inuit of Northern Quebec do their best in the context of a cumbersome, almost haphazard, system. It is acknowledged, however that the system, and not necessarily the individuals within it, urgently require assessment and modification. Otherwise, community people will continue to refer to the imminent arrival of what they have termed the "Circus Court."

Conclusion

In conducting the study, a number of contradictions were identified in the administration of justice in Northern Quebec. Similarly, a number of questions remain to be answered before concrete proposals can be developed to deal with them. Moreover, a significant amount of basic research also remains to be done.

One fact that is quite evident is that the current

system of administering justice is cumbersome, awkward, haphazard, expensive, and appears to be inconsistent with norms found in southern regions. Many public statements have been made to this effect, and a commonly held view exists that something must be done to improve the situation in the shortest possible delay.

Current methods of dispensing justice are doing a disservice to the offenders, to the victims, and to the Inuit communities themselves. And this disservice can be found throughout the various stages of the system.

From the moment an Inuit comes into conflict with the law until such time as he or she is released from the jurisdiction of a correctional facility, the offender is forced to pass through a foreign and inappropriate system. Victims and communities in general are also poorly served by current criminal justice policies and procedures.

A complex, adversarial, British system of law has been imported into a sparsely populated, remote territory where aboriginal people with unique sets of cultural characteristics, and severe socio-economic difficulties survive in isolation from the rest of Canada. This system does not adequately uphold the peace and security in Inuit communities.

Some of the most evident contradictions are:

1. Although only a small percentage of the 6,000 people living in the North do come into conflict with the law, disproportionately large expenditures appear to be involved in the administration of justice.
2. When an individual commits an offence, and a complaint is filed against him by another member of the community, the victim and the offender are often forced to interact within hours of the incident because of the small size of the community. Such examples are common, and are contradictory to harmonious social relationships.
3. When disputes are resolved between the complainant and the offender during the delay period before the court arrives, it seems redundant and inefficient to pursue court proceedings.
4. If offenders have seriously harmed a neighbour, it seems contradictory to pronounce sentences that appear to the community to be based on compassion for the offender, and disregard for the victim.
5. When criminal offences occur within a large urban centre, it is perceived that severe penalties are often assigned. But when similar offences occur within small communities, where the impact is likely to be felt more strongly, less severe dispositions are granted. Whether or not offenders have steady jobs, or are attending school should not justify inconsistencies in sentencing.
6. Victims, such as battered women, should not

be faced with the presence of the offender following the arrest.

7. Adversarial proceedings designed for one culture, should not be imposed on another, whose values, traditions and beliefs are not consistent or even similar.
8. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms includes provision for the right to be tried within a reasonable period of time following commission of an offence. In fact, recent decisions rendered by the Supreme Court of Canada have referred to this clause, and have impacted on the system of justice in the Province of Ontario. Where excessive delays have occurred, cases have been thrown out. This revelation, that justice delayed is justice denied, has prompted suggestions that Ontario's system may be in need of an overhaul. The practices in Northern Quebec may very well be analogous.
9. Where it has been proven in earlier studies that visits from family and friends are beneficial to inmates, such opportunities are denied to Inuit inmates incarcerated in southern institutions.
10. Young offenders require specific forms of support and counselling within the context of their own culture. Current intervention strategies are obviously inadequate, given present recidivism rates.
11. Court orders that require Inuit offenders to attend AA meetings, find steady employment, or complete educational programs are not only unrealistic, but paternalistic as well.
12. Community Service orders that lack effective supervisory provisions or strategies are also contradictory.
13. Assigning non-Inuit employees to work in these regions without extensive, effective cross-cultural awareness/sensitivity training and preparation, is unacceptable.
14. It appears contradictory that while consensus exists in the general population that problems exist with the justice system, individuals working within the system do not appear to hold similar opinions.
15. Whereas the justice system exists to ensure peace and security, community members feel threatened by the presence of offenders awaiting trial, or the presence of ex-inmates who have had very little support for reintegration.
16. Court orders that require ex-inmates on parole to fend for themselves in large urban centres, and deny them the right to return to their home communities for long periods of time, are built-in mechanisms guaranteed to perpetuate the cycle of recidivism.
17. Normally, one of the cornerstones of the judicial system is the attention given to procedural exactitude, decorum, ritual, formality, and protocol. This aspect ensures respect for the bench, heightens concern for detail, and ultimately reinforces credibility in the process.

Contrast this practice with the image of a plane-load of people dropping in, setting up shop,

rendering decisions, and then packing up and leaving until the next visit. There should be little wonder that respect is lacking, credibility is suffering, and impact is almost negligible. Moreover, if objectivity and impartiality are also fundamental to the system, offenders must know that serious consequences await them, dispensed by individuals they know, respect, and understand.

As mentioned previously, these are only some of the most evident contradictions that were found in this study. No doubt, others exist.

In conclusion, contradictions in the administration of justice are at the base of the problem. Furthermore, the complexities of the problem are immense and require realistic solutions.

Of course, in defining innovative and creative options for any replacement structures, all concerned parties must participate actively in the process. The governments of Canada, Quebec, and the Inuit must work toward establishing effective alternatives to the present system of administering justice. Persons with firsthand knowledge and expertise should be participants in the process of change as well. This consultative group should include at least the following:

- judges who have presided over circuit courts
- crown prosecutors and defence attorneys
- probation and parole officers
- courtworkers and liaison workers
- social workers and community professionals
- representatives of victims and offenders
- policing agency representatives
- local municipal officials
- spiritual and educational representatives
- drug and alcohol counsellors
- elders

Because of the concrete nature of this problem, as well as the widely recognized consensus that there is a problem, the potential for solution appears good.

By resolving such concrete aspects of daily life as education, health and justice, the more abstract notions of autonomy, jurisdiction and pride will come into clearer focus. Given the current political context, all parties concerned with the administration of justice have much to gain by working towards a system that will provide peace and security to these regions, in a context of equity and fairness to all concerned.

One model that is suggested as a starting point for discussion is outlined below:

* A network of community and territorial tribunals would be established, to be overseen and administered by a tripartite advisory body. These tribunals would be responsible

for hearing cases dealing with minor offences under the criminal code

* Clear terms of reference would empower the local tribunals to hear evidence, determine responsibility and pronounce sentences that would be limited to fines, restitution, or community service.

* Tribunals would be supported by managerial and clerical staff to ensure fiscal responsibility and to follow up community service obligations.

* Adults, juveniles and elders within the community would be answerable to the tribunal for these offences under the jurisdiction of the tribunal.

* Serious crimes and repeat offenders would continue to be dealt with by the conventional court system.

* Circuit courts would cease to exist, and serious offenders would be processed through existing offices, courts and detention centres in Amos and Val d'Or.

* Coordination would be required to transport those accused, and appropriate holding facilities would necessarily be required in all communities. This aspect could be dealt with by local authorities such as public security officers.

* Distant reception and detention facilities in Amos and Val d'Or would require Inuit staff and interpretation services. All non-native personnel would require intensive cross-cultural education and training.

* Correctional institutions, both provincial and federal, would require Inuit-specific programming and services, and efforts should be made to decrease the frequency of transfers of Inuit inmates between facilities.

* Drug and alcohol abuse counselling program would be essential in the communities; at reception/detention facilities, and in post-release halfway houses.

* Policing could involve either services similar to peacekeeper operations, or could be negotiated with existing policing agencies. The "special constable" concept, however, has proven to be ineffective and should therefore be avoided.

* Careful consideration should be given to the matter of reintegration of ex-offenders. Support counselling would be essential to deal with the problem of recidivism.

* Extensive training programs would be required for tribunal members, tribunal support personnel, Inuit employees of reception/detention/corrections facilities, peacekeepers, interpreters, liaison workers, drug and alcohol counsellors, as well as non-native intervention personnel.

* On-going communication and evaluation would play an important role particularly in the initial stages of implementation.

This model is presented only as a point of departure for further discussion. Obviously, much more analysis and developmental mapping would be required.

Lena Ellsworth - Community Support Coordinator, Nunavut

I was born in Iqaluit, when it was still known as Frobisher Bay. This is also where my mother Rosie Naulaq is from.

I have a beautiful daughter who is now nine years old.

Before coming to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, I worked at Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated as an Executive Secretary, at Northwestel as a Call Center Representative, and as a counsellor at the Innuusiqsiurvik Treatment Center, in Iqaluit.



WORDS

Amaiya-ai, ja-jai, ai-ja,
I'm a timid man –
A quietly spoken one –
Never mocking,
Never heaping evil words
On men.
That's my way,
That's how I am,
Amaja-ja.
Words cause movement,
Words bring calm,
Words tell the truth,
And words tell lies,
Amaja-ja-ja!

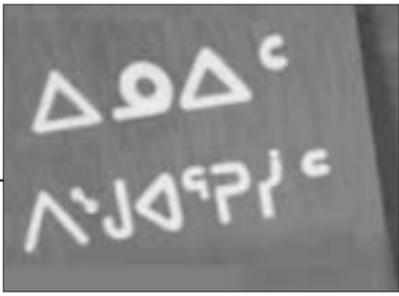
Anonymous (Umanatsiaq)

Reference : SONGS ARE THOUGHTS: POEMS OF THE INUIT

Edited with an Introduction by Neil Philip
Illustrated by Maryclare Foa

ORCHARD BOOKS (New York)
ISBN 0-531-06893-5

GAMES



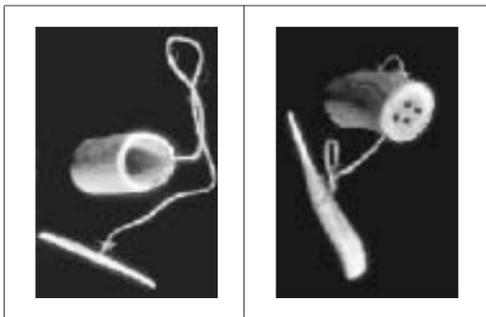
<http://www.ahs.uwaterloo.ca/~museum/vexhibit/inuit/english/inuit.html>

Inuit Bilboquet

As indicated on the main page concerning Inuit Games (see http address, above), the Inuit version of Bilboquet is an adapted copy of a wide-spread European game. In the Inuit Language, the people of Repulse Bay call this game *Iyaga*, while other Inuit groups may have another name for the game. For example, the drawing above (Government of Canada: Ministry of Indian & Northern Affairs, 1975, #QS-8050-000-BB-A1), of an Inuit woman playing the game, is by Sorosilutoo and titled *Ilukitatuk*. This artist is from Cape Dorset.



Inuit carvers occasionally make the game equipment from the point of a muskox horn, but more frequently from a humerus of a seal. Normally, a hole is drilled off-center into one of the ends of the piece of "target" bone, in order to attach a plaited piece of sinew cord. The other end of the cord is attached to a sliver of bone shaped into a long pin. By swinging the "target" bone in the air the player attempts to catch it on the point of the long pin. The following two photos, below, illustrate two different types of this game. The left one illustrates a "target" bone that has a large single hole in which the pin can "spear" the "target."



Inuit Blanket Tossing Games



The drawing at the left is of an Inuit blanket tossing game. It is a game often played at festivals and other Inuit

celebrations and reminds one of non-Inuit contests which make use of a trampoline. This sketch is by Sorosilutoo and is titled *Qumuaqataijut*. This Inuit artist is from Cape Dorset (Government of Canada: Ministry of Indian & Northern Affairs, 1975, #QS-8050-000-BB-A1).



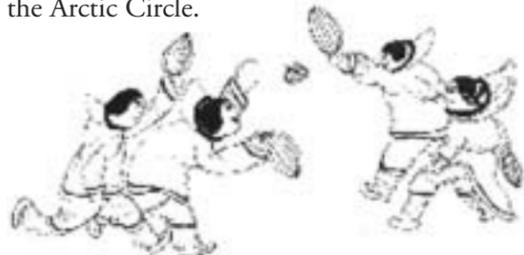
The photograph at the left was taken in the Northwest Territories in 1978, and illustrates the Holman Island version of the game, which has the name *Nalukauq*. The "blanket" for the game is usually made from seal or walrus skins, and thus it can withstand the pounding that results every time a player lands back on it after a "toss." The game is often

played in rounds – the winner is the player who bounces the highest. The Museum does not have the equipment required for this game in the Collection; however, the Museum does have a number of prints and photographs illustrating the game – such as the following one.



Inuit Ball Games

Many ball games from elsewhere have been adapted by the Inuit. The drawing below is of an Inuit ball game. It is a sketch by Sorosilutoo and is titled *Ajutatut*. This Inuit artist is from Cape Dorset (Government of Canada: Ministry of Indian & Northern Affairs, 1975, #QS-8050-000-BB-A1). The sketch appears to illustrate a modification of what might be the game of lacrosse, played by aboriginal peoples south of the Arctic Circle.



Perhaps because of the lack of wood in the Arctic, Inuit players hold baskets without wooden handles – baskets in which to catch the ball. A modification that reminds one of the game of *Jai Alai*. In 1993, *Iyola Kingwatsiak* (also from Cape Dorset) created this related stonecut and called it *Tossing Game*. Tossing the ball is exactly what happens in the game of *Jai Alai*. The original stonecut is 51" x 79" in shades of black and orange.



The stone cut above is by *Napachee*, the daughter of *Pitseolak* – who is also a noted Inuit artist from the Cape Dorset Cooperative. It is a similar type of group ball game. Created in 1967, the print is in shades of green, blue, and black.

Pitseolak, in *Pictures Out of My Life*, Oxford University Press, 1971, has this to say about the ball game:

"This is how we played the game – we threw a ball underhand and tried to catch it in a sealskin racket. The racket was called an *Autuk*. We made the ball from caribou skin and stuffed it with something. We used to play this game a lot, even in the winter. It was a good game, but they don't play it now; they are following the world."

The stonecut (see next page), by *Tikitu Qinnuayuak* (Cape Dorset), printed in 1990 and titled *Aqijut*, is originally 28" x 62" and is in blue, brown, and red. Many other ball games, for

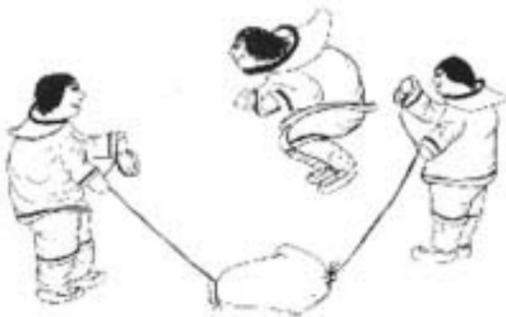


partners or as multi-player circle games, are played by the Inuit. On Holman Island, as elsewhere, the Inuit have long played a type of football known as Akraurak or Aqijut, which is mentioned in some of their myths. (F.H. Eger, Eskimo Inuit Games, Vancouver: X-Press, 3 edition, page 58).

The football is made of hide, stuffed with hair, moss, feathers, wood shavings, or whalebones. Two lines of players face each other, some distance apart. The ball is kicked between the lines until it passes through one line of players. Then all players rush to kick the ball into their opponent's goal.

Inuit Jumping Games

The drawing below is of an Inuit jumping game. It is a sketch by Sorosilutoo and is titled Kilaujatut. This Inuit artist is from Cape Dorset (Government of Canada: Ministry of Indian & Northern Affairs, 1975, #QS-8050-000-BB-A1).



Pitseolak had this to say about the illustrated jumping game:

We played lots of games. One game was Illupik – jumping over the Avatuk, the sealskin float that hunters used to tie the harpoons so the seals would stay on the water after they were killed. I hear young people in Cape Dorset still try to jump the Avatuk at the youth club meetings. (Pitseolak, Pictures Out of My Life, Oxford University Press, 1971.)

In 1970, Sorosilutoo created an 18" x 24" stone cut, which was printed in brown, green, and black. It illustrates a more complex type of jumping game – known to many non-Inuit children throughout North America as Double-Dutch, a very popular rope jumping game (see top of next column).

It is to be noted, that the Museum does not have an Avatuk in its collection!



There are a number of other Inuit jumping games. For example, on Holman Island, a jumping game called Nauktak requires that a player lie on the ground with feet against a barrier, mark the place where the top of the head touches, then rise and crouch by the barrier and attempt to leap out to the mark on the ground. Qijumik Akimitaijuk Itigaminak is a jumping game that requires players to hold their toes and try to jump as far as they can while continuing to hold their toes.

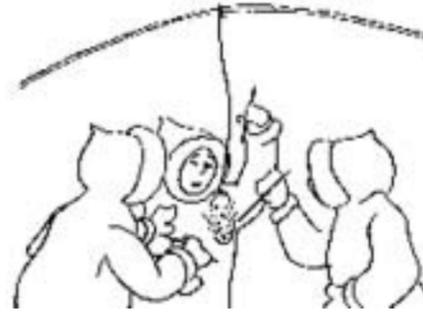
Some jumping games are combined with a kick. In the Holman Island game of Aratsiaq, a target (such as a piece of bone or fur) is suspended at a given height. According to the Northern Games Association, a player may not be more than 10 feet from the target when the jump starts. From a standing start with both feet together on the ground, a player jumps up to kick the hanging target with one foot. The target must be clearly struck by one foot and the landing must be on the foot which kicked the target. Balance must be maintained on landing. Games are played in rounds. The order of play is determined by a draw which is maintained throughout a game. The target is raised a few inches in each round, and players are eliminated when they fail to kick the target. Any player may "decline" to jump when the target is raised. In Akkratcheak, a player jumps and attempts to kick the target with both feet and land back on the ground in a standing position.

Inuit Target Game

Primarily used as a gambling game, it is played by two or more men during the long winters. It can sometimes be physically dangerous to the hands, so often heavy mitts are worn while playing!

The closeness of the players to the target and to each other explains somewhat how physical injury could occur. As the target spins, players "stab" at the target in turn – one right after another! The detailed line drawing, top of next column and titled "Nugluktaq," illustrates the game. (F.H. Eger, Eskimo Inuit Games, Vancouver: X-Press, 3rd Edition, Page 63, ISBN: 0-919015-07-7.)

A set was purchased in 1978 through a dealer who acquired it for the Museum at an Inuit



Cooperative in Northern Canada. The "target" bone is 12.4cm long x 1.5cm wide. There is a hole .4cm in diameter carved through the center and at each end. Pieces of sinew are tied through each end hole. Each of the 3 "spears" have wooden shafts, approximately 35cm long. A sharpened piece of bone (about 8cm long) is tied to the end of each shaft with sinew, making each "spear" approximately 40cm long. Using the sinews at each end, the "target" bone is suspended from the top of the hut or snow house, and anchored at the bottom. As it spins – players try to jab a spear in the center hole. No "rules" were included with the equipment, but field sources indicate that the "rules" vary from group to group!

Inuit Juggling Game



The sketch above of an Inuk playing with juggling balls, by Sorosilutoo, is titled "Ilukitatuk." This artist is from Cape Dorset.

On Holman Island, juggling games are known as Illukisaaq or Illukitaq. In this game, the intent is to keep at least three objects in the air as long as possible. Normally, the game begins with two objects, a third is added, and then perhaps four or more. A skillful player may try to juggle all objects with only one hand. At times a song accompanies the juggling. Two or more jugglers may compete with one another.

During the summer months, in the outdoors during the day, a competing juggler may use small stones or bones for practice purposes. In

the winter, special juggling balls are used for this game. Juggling balls purchased by the Museum from an Inuit Cooperative in 1979 are made from Caribou hyde, and are flat spheres, hand stitched, each about 8cm in diameter. The stuffing is unknown.

Inuit Bola

A Bola was primarily a hunting weapon used by many aboriginal peoples throughout the Americas in the past. While those in the south may have made their Bolas from a range of local materials, the Inuit made theirs from sinew and bones. The Bola was whirled overhead and thrown at an animal's legs to entangle the legs and prevent the animal from running. No longer used for hunting purposes by aboriginal peoples, it is still found in use, at times, by the Gauchos who herd cattle in southern South America.

An Inuit Bola was purchased in 1973 from an Arctic cooperative, and called Kiipooyaq. When extended to its full length, it is 22cm long. The



three pieces of slant cut bones each have a hole on one end and are suspended from a piece of braided hemp tied through the hole. The three pieces of hemp are tied together at the other ends into a loop which is used as a kind of handle.

Another Bola, purchased by the Museum in 1979, is made of two bones approximately

4.8cm long x 3cm wide x 1.3cm thick. A small hole is bored in the narrow ends of each bone, and a piece of braided hemp is tied into each hole. The other two ends of the hemp is knotted together making the length of the object 86.5cm.

Two methods of play for this equipment appear to exist. In the first method, a target such as a piece of wood is suspended and the Bola is whirled around and aimed at the target. The second method is an entirely different game call Chuk Chuk on Holman Island. In this method a player holds the tied ends of the hemp in one hand, and the bones in the other hand. Then letting go of one piece of bone, the hand holding the hemp swings that bone in a clockwise direction. When ready, the player lets go of a second piece of bone, sending it in a counter-clockwise direction while maintaining the direction of the first piece of bone. Finally, in the three-bone version, the third piece is dropped and all three must move in their own arcs without interfering with each other. The winner is the player who can do this. To complicate the game various body positions are taken, such as

maintaining the movement above a player's head, or holding the hemp knotted end in the teeth and moving the head up and down. (F.H. Eger, Eskimo Inuit Games, Vancouver: X-Press, page 108.)

Inuit Yoke Puzzle

Purchased from an Inuit cooperative in the Arctic in 1979, this puzzle is not a game traditionally played by the Inuit. It is an object made for sale purposes in other parts of the world.

The carved bone backing is a flattened piece of antler horn 4cm long x 10.5cm wide. Three holes have been drilled into the bone, and a knotted leather thong 1cm wide has been looped through these holes. A round piece of antler horn has been threaded through the loops. The intent of the game is to move both round pieces of antler to the same loop without undoing the knotted thong.

Found in many cultures, this manipulative puzzle has many names and variations.

Inuit Tug-o-War Games



A copy of a stone cut titled "Nushuraoto," by Pitseolak, was created in 1968. The original print, reproduced above, is in blue and white and measures 17" x 24.5". It depicts a "tugging" game as played in Cape Dorset. It is typical of the Tug-o-War games played all over the world, and may not be indigenous to Inuit culture.

In contrast, a copy of a stone cut also from Cape Dorset, created by Sorosilutoo and titled "Nusutinguatut," or "Ear Tugging" (Government of Canada: Ministry of Indian & Northern Affairs, 1975, #QS-8050-000-BB-A1), portrays a type of Tug-o-War game which appears to be unique to Inuit culture.

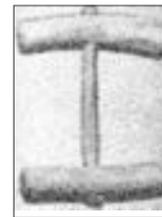


The Ear Tugging contest appears as part of a sequence in a 1983 National Film Board of Canada feature on Inuit games, titled Northern Games. A length of soft leather is looped around each contestant's ear, and the players may start in

the same position – but, by pulling or tugging, their positions change.

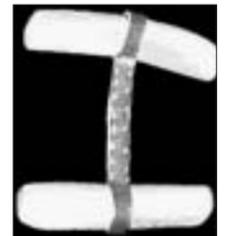


An additional photo, above, from the Public Archives of Canada illustrates another type of Inuit "Tugging" game, known as "Ac Sa Raq." In this game, contestants start by sitting on the ground facing one another, legs straight, feet placed against the opponent's feet. The intent is to pull the opponent up off the ground.



The device which contestants use in this tugging game is pictured on the left. At times the device is made of wood or antler or walrus ivory connected by means of a short thong. The device in the photo called an Aksalak is from Igloolik, Baffin Island (E.H. Mitchell, Canadian Eskimo Artifacts, Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Producers, 1970).

The photo at the right is an Aksalak in the Museum's Collection. It was made by Gyta Tirearnab in 1973 and purchased by the Museum from an Inuit Cooperative in the eastern Arctic.



The device is approximately 8cm long x 9cm wide, and is made of two pieces of carved bone, held together by a stiff piece of hide. The .8cm wide hide wraps around each bone in a groove, and is glued in place. There is a 5cm separation between the bones.



The 1972 illustration, left, is for a tugging game which uses an Aksalak like the one in the Museum's Collection. The stone cut is by Kalvak, a Holman Island artist, and is 18" x 24", printed in shades of brown.

In this version of the game a man and a woman stand on one foot, hands behind their backs, and each holds one bone of the Aksalak between their

teeth. The intent is to pull one's opponent until they fall against the other opponent. This version of the game is generally not considered a show of strength – but in the spirit of a "courting game" or social activity.



Another Holman Island tugging game is depicted in this copy (above) of a 1966 stone cut by Akourak. The print is in black measuring 23.5" x 19.5". Here the opponents in a sitting position, feet touching, hold an antler. Like in other "tugging" games, the intent is to pull an opponent across a designated line.

Arctic Hunt



This game purchased by the Museum in 1973 has been manufactured in the North West Territories since the mid 1960s for sale in tourist shops which sell Inuit art and artifacts. It is a version of the standard European row game known as Three Man Morris and in North America known as Tic-Tac-Toe.

The board (19.5cm long x 20.5cm wide) is a brownish leather with rounded corners. Nine squares are stenciled on the surface in black. Each square features a stylized design of an animal reminiscent of various Inuit stone cuts. Printed around one edge of the board is the manufacturer's name and copyright date. A leather thong (49cm long x 1cm wide) is included in the box, to be used tie the board together when it is rolled up. Six pieces of antler horn are included for use as playing pieces. Each is 3.5cm in diameter x .6cm thick. On three pieces, animal designs are stenciled in black, and on the other three, similar designs are stenciled in red. A sheet of instructions in both English and French is included in the box.

Inuit Bone Gambling Game and Puzzle

Purchased by the Museum from an Inuit cooper-

ative in Pelly Bay in 1973, this game is unique. It is called Inukat or Bone Gambling Game. The bag is made of caribou leather and is 21.5cm long x 16.5cm wide. Its texture is rough. It is wider at the bottom than at the top, and tapers to 11cm wide at the neck. The sides are hand sewn. The thong which binds the bag is 43cm long and attached to one of the side seams.

Inside the bag are approximately 41 animal bones – some from seals, some from birds. Along with the bones is another thong 63cm long x .5cm wide, tied into a noose at one end. Printed instructions were received with the game. The game appears to be a cross between a "jigsaw puzzle" and "fishing."

How The Game is Played

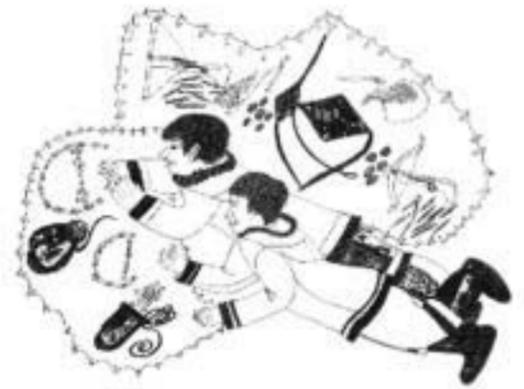
In E.H. Mitchell, Canadian Eskimo Artifacts, Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Producers, 1970, Father Van de Velde, a Belgium Jesuit missionary and ethnologist living for many years with the Inuit in the high Arctic, describes the game of Inukat. His description is almost identical to the printed one the Museum received with the object. Here is Father Van de Velde's description :

This game consists of a bag of mixed bones most common of which are the tarsal bones of the seal flippers, though the tarsal bones of birds and polar bears may be included.

The game has several variations, one of which is to form small heaps of bones, one for as many players as are participating. At a given signal the players lay out the bones in rows and endeavour to reconstruct the skeletal anatomy of the seal's hind flipper. Chance and the zoological skill of the player in compiling the first seal's flipper decides the winner. Tarsal bones other than seal bones are permitted, however, the game is complicated by disallowing the use of certain bones. A popular form of the bone game is to insert into the open end of the bag a thin thong with a running noose. The neck of the bag is held closed with the fingers, and inverted, the noose is then pulled tight. The one who can extract the greatest number of bones contained within the noose is the winner. All bones are identified by fictitious names and in some forms of play have specific values.

The copy of the lithograph(next column, top) is called "Inugaktuuk" (Bone Game), and was created by Mayoreak Ashoona (Cape Dorset) in 1993.

The original is approximately 56" x 76", printed black on white. At the top of the picture one sees a range of other Inuit implements used in hunting. Although the Museum copy of the game equipment comes from Pelly Bay, the game appears to be quite common throughout the Arctic.



Inuit Dart Games

In the non-Inuit parts of the world, within Pubs and Taverns many people try their skill at throwing a pointed feathered missile at a target attached to a wall. Those feathered missiles have evolved from arrows – as in bow and arrow!

In contrast, an Inuit Dart game evolved from another source, and is played quite differently than Pub and Tavern dart games. Within the traditional tool kit of the Inuit hunter were a number of devices used for drilling holes. One was the Niortut – a shaft made from caribou antler with a point made of caribou or polar bear bone, but later the point was made from a piece of metal such as a nail. The top end of the shaft was tapered to fit into a bone "mouth piece" – the Kingmiark. A similar device was the Puttu – used for putting holes into a hard object. A third device, the Kikiadlaksit, was used especially to drill holes into the splicings and bindings of a kayak frame. (E.H. Mitchell, Canadian Eskimo Artifacts, Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Producers, 1970).



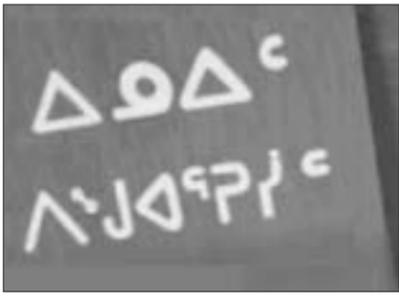
The graphic at the left illustrates a Niortut. It was purchased by the Museum from an Inuit cooperative in 1979. It is 16.5cm long x 3.1cm wide x 1.5cm thick. Information received with the object indicated that when used in a traditional Inuit game, the following occurred. Another object was placed on the ground as a target or a target was scratched into the ground or snow. The Niortut was placed on the head with the point facing forward. The

player aimed, the head was then tipped, and the Niortut was allowed to fall toward the target!

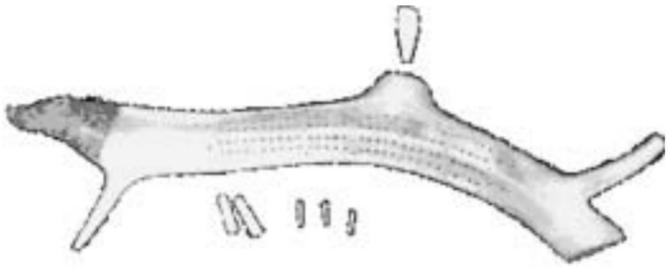
Inuit Cribbage Board

A Cribbage Board is a score keeping device used for playing a specific card game that is believed to have been first developed during the 17th

GAMES



century in England, and in modified form is still very popular throughout the world.



Purchased by the Museum in 1978 from an art gallery, this Cribbage Board was in a private collection and was later sold to the gallery. The sculptured board was created by Simanek, an Inuit artist who lives in Lake Harbour on the southwest coast of Baffin Island (eastern Arctic). Carved to resemble a running animal, the head is made of green soapstone, while the body is composed of a caribou antler. The entire sculpture is 39cm long x 4cm wide x 4.5cm high. The soapstone head is glued to the antler. The sides of the antler have been drilled with rows of holes so that it may be used as a Cribbage Board. A protrusion on one side of the antler has been carved out to serve as receptacle for keeping five score keeping pegs (approximately .2cm diameter x 1.7cm long). A flat, tapered bone (3.5cm long x 1.5cm wide x 1cm thick) has been carved to fit into the protrusion so the pegs don't fall out when stored inside.

There is a long history of Inuit artistry with respect to carved ornamentation fashioned into figurines representing animals – as exemplified in this Cribbage Board. However, after contact with European and North American traders in the 18th century, carvings such as this Cribbage Board were produced primarily for trade purposes and not for Inuit use. Indeed, the game of Cribbage is not an indigenous Inuit game. Encouraged by the Canadian government, sculpture and print making of traditional Inuit culture has become a mainstay of the Inuit economy



history BRIEFS

THE INUIT & RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

While the Inuit attended a number of northern residential schools, federal day schools, hospital schools, and/or missionary day schools, most were sent to Yellowknife (Akaitcho Hall), Inuvik (Stringer Hall and Grollier Hall), Chesterfield Inlet, Aklavik, Coppermine, Tuktoyaktuk, or Churchill in Northern Manitoba.

According to the 1925 Indian Affairs Annual Report, a modest amount of federal money had been allocated to “Eskimo Mission Schools” at Aklavik, Shingle Point, and Herschell Island in the MacKenzie District. There is also a reference to the “Lake Harbour School in Baffin Land.”



Above: Photo taken from Indian Affairs Annual Report

It was during the 1922-23 fiscal year that an amendment to the Indian Act provided that the Inuit – about 6,000 in number, according to the latest census – be brought under the charge of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.

Amendments to the Indian Act aside, the government was slow to develop policy and to build schools. The employment demands of northern economic activity and the DEW line led eventually however to an emphasis of vocational training.

In 1955, a residential school was opened at Chesterfield Inlet. Others followed at Yellowknife (1958), Inuvik (1959), and Churchill (1964).

By 1966, 33 schools were in operation in the Northwest Territories and Arctic Quebec: 28 federal-run day schools, 2 mining company schools, 2 separate (Roman Catholic schools).

The predominant model adopted for the Inuit was a day school under federal government control with an accompanying residential hostel, whose management was contracted to the churches. The government controlled curriculum and standards, while the churches carried out their work of indoctrinating Aboriginal people with Christian values.

From the beginning, there was under-resourcing across the system, and the churches (particularly the Roman Catholic) resisted participating in an arrangement which entrenched non-denominational education for Aboriginal people. The Inuit, who supported vocational education, objected to the use of a system which would remove children from the home to far-away locations. As elsewhere, in the North the residential school system contributed to the breakup of families and communities, the undermining of cultures and languages, and – most acutely for the Inuit – a profound change in the traditional diet.

Interview with Rachael

My name is Rachael Horn. I'm a community wellness coordinator in Povungnituk, and that's basically it. I've been in this community for about twelve years doing a variety of work. I worked in the high school for a while, then the airlines a little bit, then I ended up in Povungnituk – first as recreational officer, and then as the wellness coordinator.

I didn't expect to work in this area, but I think in Povungnituk, one of things that is very recognizable is people acknowledge the need for change. And I wanted to be part of that, to help where I could – to bring the vision of Nunavut to help the Inuit become leaders and models in the vision that they have for Nunavut and the communities. So that's where I stand right now.

When Nunavut was first formed, the new legislature set forth a document called "Butter's mandate," which puts forth a vision for the people of Nunavut over the next five, ten and twenty years. And part of this is to add to the wellness of the people, identifying in the past the trauma and problems from the speed of going from land-based to being a twenty-first century territory. A lot of the people in town were brought up on the land, born in igloos. The adults, between thirty and fifty, were the generation that went to the residential schools. And the children who are at school right now are the first generation to actually attend high school, to grade twelve, in Povungnituk.

When the "Butter's mandate" came into being, one of the first things that was done was to identify a wellness plan along with economic plans and other things. Povungnituk was one of the first communities that actually set forward a wellness plan that was devised by the people of Povungnituk. We identify at this stage that there was a strong vision in this community. There were very strong leaders with a vision and the traditional knowledge to put this into place. They are, however, probably lacking in ideas of how they can do this physically. I believe that our partnership in Nunavut is to help them achieve their visions by allowing ourselves to be tools for the Inuit and their vision. Not by imposing our western beliefs on them, but by finding out how our western skills can match with their traditional and cultural skills and knowledge to achieve the vision of Nunavut and wellness in the communities.

That's my vision. That's my place in this town – to be a support tool to try and understand where traditional knowledge works in the twenty-first century and to help the youth also understand that by talking to their Elders, they can get the

strength from the Elders to build the strength and possibilities and potential of the youth.

what we are trying to achieve is getting the youth back to understanding their cultural heritage and getting them to learn traditional knowledge

About three years ago, about the same time as we were developing the wellness plan for the community, the youth, as well as other groups in the town like the Elders and everything else, had been asked for their vision as to how they wanted to see the community wellness grow. During these discussions, the youth committee put together a document that specified that part of their vision for community wellness was to have support for them through peer counseling. They wanted to have a place that they could call their own, that they had control over. They wanted to have trained peer support counselors who could help the youth with their problems. And from that we developed the special prevention plan at schools. We have four youth from Povungnituk hired and training as counselors to work one-on-one with youth in town. They also want a crisis line which provides immediate crisis intervention and then referral to professional services whether it be social services or RCMP or the women crisis shelter.

We also provide them with a building to be used as a youth center. We provide them support through our youth coordinator with their two youth groups in town. We have a senior youth group and a junior youth group who basically run activities for youth in town. We supervise the youth centers so there is a safe shelter that kids can feel safe going to, knowing that they're healthy and it's a good environment. We also offer food services for kids who haven't had food for whatever reasons. We can provide them food. It's also a quiet place if they want to do their homework. We have computers set up in there. And if they just want to relax and watch tv or listen to music, they can also do that there too. So that was the idea behind this special prevention program.

It ties into the Aboriginal Healing Foundation because one of the major problems for the youth, especially in this part of Nunavut and Povungnituk, is the loss of culture which is directly related to the residential schools, where the parents of these youth and the grandparents of these youth were taken out of the community, told not to use their language, and only came home once a year feeling very displaced. The youth have definitely suffered. There is very little communication between the youth and the Elders. This has started changing over the last couple of years through the wellness plan but what we are trying to achieve is getting the youth back to understanding their cultural heritage and getting them to learn traditional knowledge. And that's done through the part of the future program as well as partnerships through the youth center and the youth group.



Okay, activities. Throughout the year the youth are involved in different parts of the community. One of the parts of their vision that they really wanted to put up and foremost, well there's two parts they thought were really important. First, being very visible in the community and showing that they were the future leaders of the community. And the second was to work with the Elders to get the communication and traditional skills back.

As far as the first one, we provide help for them to run activities during the Christmas games. This year, on the 31st of December, the youth group organized and ran the community celebrations. They threw a feast, a big turkey feast for the whole community, which they cooked for and they cleaned up for and served. Followed by a dance and games, they gave out prizes. And that, to me, was just incredible that, without any adult help, they put on a, basically, a party for fifteen hundred people in town. Which went down very well. They have also in the past, maybe every couple of months, they'll throw a teen dance for all the youth in town, which is up to about four, five hundred kids. During the natik folliks, which is a spring festival (natik is seal), they throw a dance. They become very involved in winning some of the games, and that's more traditional games, arctic sports, seal hunting, sharp shooting, foot games for kids and honey bag tosses. That sort of thing. It's fun.

They also were involved in a music camp last year. The music camp, that's organized by one of the high school teachers in town, but the youth groups were very active helping out with that, getting kids to pick up guitars or drums, using their skills and feeling confident. One of the biggest things we find, a lot of kids in town have a lot skill but lack self-esteem and self confidence to try stuff out or to keep going in stuff. So setting small goals and reaching them is very important, and the youth centers had a lot of success in setting the small goals with the youth.

Also last year, we had a couple of camps. We had spring camps, which again were very much involved with the youth group. And every weekend, we had about four Elders who would take out three or four kids each over a weekend from Friday to Monday. And they'd do traditional hunting, fishing, camping and that went down very well. We had about nine weekends of that. In the past spring camps, we were able to attach maybe fifteen kids to a group of Elders and we thought that this way we really want to get as many kids involved as possible. It means we probably end up having about sixty or seventy kids taken out over that weekend.

This is important because, well, many kids do have parents and relatives who go out on a regular basis. There are other kids in town who

One of the biggest things we find, a lot of kids in town have a lot skill but lack self-esteem and self confidence to try stuff out or to keep going in stuff. So setting small goals and reaching them is very important, and the youth centers had a lot of success in setting the small goals with the youth.

never get taken out, who's parents don't do traditional hunting anymore. So it gave them a chance to get some traditional skills and also gave them a chance to meet with the Elders and just really talk to them about whatever was on their minds and just learn from the Elders. That was great.

In the summer, we took out about twenty-five youth with again, I think about ten Elders, for two weeks. They built cabins that can be used in the future for other youth camps. And again, that was a great thing because as well as the traditional skills, they were also helping build cabins for community use. Yes, they're permanent. That was an exciting venture.

The senior youth group are mentoring our junior youth group. Again, this is purely off their own back and their own vision. What happened was that the senior youth group initially didn't want to have younger kids around the youth center. They felt it would be putting them down, detract from the older kids who wanted to hang out there. But then they felt that if they could make their own committee and give the younger kids a time of their own where they could have the youth center and they could organize their own events, fundraise their own money and feel some achievement, that would be a good partnership. So they went about setting up their younger brothers and sisters and the friends of the younger brothers and sisters. They formed their own youth committee and now there's a very good partnership between the two of them, that some things that they'll do together as a mass committee and other things they'll let the younger kids do on their own. Also then the older kids get to do some stuff on their own too.

And they're planning some big barbecues in the summer to get more members on both comities and again it will bring the youth center back into the public eye. So that's good.

We started small. When we first started the project, we were still working on getting a youth center. There were a couple of buildings we looked at, and they weren't quite working out. Our first major thing was to get our peer support workers trained. We thought it was very important. We wanted to make sure they had some skills and some confidence in their own abilities if they did have someone come to them, they knew how to address that problem or how to just listen to somebody and how to get the involvement in place.

So probably once, I'd say once a month, we have some sort of training for the peer support workers and it can vary from informal training with social workers to actually structured classes through Arctic college. What we've had over the last two years, we've had this project running. We have four staff on a regular basis but we've trained probably about twelve to fifteen kids at different levels. That to me is the most important thing I think we've done. The more kids we can meet, the more youth we can reach just to explain what community wellness is and why they are important to it. Then that, to me, is a huge step in the right direction.

The high school has started a high school athletic association. They basically bought the arcade in town, a kids arcade yeah. And they use it for fundraising for sports events. They have a very good staff at the high school who encourage youth to express themselves through sports. And in our community, sports are huge. I think pretty much seventy-five percent of the high school kids are involved in some sport team or other.

Attached to this is a stay in school thing. The kids have to have a certain attendance, I think it's eighty-five percent attendance, that they can play on sport teams and travel. Now with the association owning the arcade, they're getting so much money that they can travel so each sports team pretty well travels two-three times a year which compared to other communities, sometimes you go a whole year without traveling just because it's so hard to fundraise by running teen dances or whatever.

So the high school is doing a very good job with increasing attendance. School attendance has probably quadrupled in the last two years because of their program. We work in partnership with them but we're also very much concerned about the youth who aren't in school or the kids who can't keep their attendance up. So between the two programs, we do feel that we are reaching most of the youth in town and that is really important we feel. We also make sure there's regular news in town just to let the kids know what's going on, that there are places to go, there's activities all over the place. Any given day of the week, be it a Sunday or in the middle of a holiday, there's always stuff for them to do and it's important they know that. Because the biggest complaints, three years ago, we were putting the wellness plan together, was that the kids said that they were bored. There was nothing to do.

We're not going eradicate all pain in town. What we're trying to do is to make ourselves accessible as possible to them and let them know at the same time that there are consequences to everyone's actions.

So what we do is give them options and we also stress that it's always their choice. If they choose to be bored then, yes, they will be bored. But there is always stuff for them to do.

About five years ago, when we were putting together the wellness plan, the reason we were doing this was because Provingnituk had the highest suicide rate in town. And we were also very much sensible to clusters, cluster suicides where one person killed themselves, the whole town held their breath because we knew there'd be another one and probably another one and another one. Some years, we had up to four, five deaths amongst your youth. This was combined with other things but we were at a rate of probably one suicide attempt a week and the ones who did kill themselves would lead to others. So if you compared those figures to today, we've had, I think, two suicides in the last three and a half years. Which although we lost two people, we are very excited by the fact that it's not the epidemic it was. We think this is a very big part of the wellness plan, that we are reaching the kids who need to be reached.

And obviously there's a long way to go yet. We'd like to say in ten years time, we haven't had any suicides for ten years but I do believe that the youth and the adults who have been feeling this way know that there are places they can go to get help. We're trying to give them as many options as possible. We have the youth coordinator who's a trained counselor. We have our peer support workers. We have very good staff at the health center who are making themselves available to people twenty-four hours a day. We have local volunteers in town who do counseling twenty-four hours a day who's phone is always open and house is always open. The women's group are doing a very good job in town. They run the women's quest shelter but they also have twenty-four hour care. If someone wants to talk, people know there are places to go.

There's a lot of services and there's a lot of volunteers in town who are working very hard for this.

We're not going eradicate all pain in town. What we're trying to do is to make ourselves accessible as possible to them and let them know at the same time that there are consequences to everyone's actions. All we can do is show them there is one way to do things, but we do leave them with the choice at the end of the day. And then, if they choose to vandalize or to do crime, then all we can do is be there the next day for them, and say, "Okay, how can we help you today?" There will always be failures for every ten successes. You know – it's a balancing act. And hopefully, we'll reach them eventually.



"A Nomadic Life" first appeared in the November/December 2003 issue of *Above & Beyond, Canada's Arctic Journal*. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation thanks Mr. Irniq and *Above & Beyond magazine* for authorizing its reprint. © *Above & Beyond, Canada's Arctic Journal*.

A Nomadic Life Between Two Worlds

Peter Irniq,
Commissioner of Nunavut.

Here, I was slapped on my hand with a yardstick for speaking my own language, Inuktitut. "Don't ever let me hear you speak that language again in this classroom," my teacher said to me.

I was born in an iglu and lived in one for the first 11 years of my life. In an iglu we had to go out first thing in the morning because of the tradition called ittuqtarniq, the ability to go outside in the morning to see what the weather is going to be like and to breathe fresh air. I caught the end of the Inuit way of life and saw the beginning of the space age.

Whenever we would travel, by dog-team, to Naujaat-Repulse Bay and go into the Hudson's Bay Company store, we always used to say Qablunaaqsunni mamaqtu-aluqak – "the smell of Qablunaaq smells really delicious." It was our reference to the beautiful smell of Qablunaaq material, clothing and things. I guess living in an iglu had its own smell, of whatever we had, maybe seal skin. It smelled rather good.

In 1958, I was taken away to a residential school at the age of 11. This was before I had a chance to fully live and understand my Inuit way of life. Like so many other Inuit children from the Kivallirmiut/Amitturmiut and Nattilingmiut, I am the product of a Roman Catholic residential school system. When a Roman Catholic priest came to pick me up from our outpost hunting and fishing camp in August 1958, I don't think he realized what an impact this would have on my family and me. He brought me to Naujaat by boat and then a few days later I was flown to Igluligaarjuk (Chesterfield Inlet) to attend Sir Joseph Bernier Federal Day School. Here, I was

slapped on my hand with a yardstick for speaking my own language, Inuktitut. "Don't ever let me hear you speak that language again in this classroom," my teacher said to me.

Igluligaarjuk is about 300 kilometres south of my home town of Repulse Bay. I went from a 12x14 tent that sheltered five of us to a huge three-storey building, the first time I was ever inside a building for the night. It smelled so good in that large building called Turquetil Hall. I wore shoes for the first time, a bit uncomfortable when I was used to wearing sealskin boots. We prayed a minimum of 10 times a day. In school, we were taught to read stories about Dick and Jane and Spot. I hated the meals the staff served. Sometimes, they used to feed us Inuit boys and girls some frozen cow meat, or bread soup, and my favorite was corned beef. We used to have this once a week. They did feed us some maktaaq (whale blubber and skin) and Arctic Char, also once a week. I always used to look forward to eating maktaaq, as that was something I had quite a bit at home in Naujaat. Arctic Char was good too, but it never tasted as good as the fish back home.

We returned home to our communities each year in May for a few months until it was time to go back to school in August. Assimilation was the objective, to have Inuit join the mainstream of Canadian society. With me, they did not succeed. I still speak my language and live my culture.