



BIKIIWEWINIG NINDAWAASHISHIIMINAANAK

BRINGING OUR CHILDREN HOME INITIATIVE

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Survivors Working Circle #6

Our sixth Survivor’s Working Circle Gathering was held July 24 – 27, 2023 at the Nor’Wester Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay. There were 40 participants in attendance. The focus of this Gathering was to review and approve the Community Engagement presentation that was created by a smaller working group of our Survivors. Chief Bull acted as Facilitator at this Working Circle and helped us to do our work by ensuring there was respect for differing opinions and that consensus on wording was reached. After a few changes, the presentation deck was agreed upon by those present. This work will now be shared at Community Engagements in order to gather the thoughts of each Community.



Participants at the Gathering were provided with a framed group photo as a thank you for their contribution to the difficult process of creating protocols that will guide the Initiative’s work. The photo featured a border on which to gather signatures of those they had worked with over the past 14 months. As this was to be our last Survivor’s Working Circle in the foreseeable future, many took the opportunity for some reminiscing and laughs as they moved around the room asking everyone to sign.



Dora Beardy

We have lost a member of our Survivor's Working Circle. Dora Beardy, Bearskin Lake, began her journey into the Spirit World this past September. Dora was one of the first members to join our Working Circle and was an active participant in the creation of our protocols. Her advice, guidance, and humor will be greatly missed. Framed and signed pictures of our Survivor's Working Circle were created at our August gathering in Thunder Bay. Dora was unable to attend as she was in hospital, however we were able to deliver her copy to her complete with the signatures of everyone that is working together on this Initiative. Dora's contributions will carry forward as we continue to focus on the task of Bringing Our Children Home. Miigwech Dora.



We celebrated her 80th birthday with her in July 2022

Initiative Update

We currently operate out of two locations: Frenchman's Head and Thunder Bay.

We are a team of nine employees that work to ensure that the Search at the site of the former Pelican Indian Residential School is completed according to the direction of Survivors.

The work of the Initiative includes the facilitation of Community Engagements to the 33 First Nation communities in order to plan and implement a strategy as directed by the Survivors. This includes but is not limited to:

- Ensure entire process is Survivor lead
- Mental health and health supports are made available
- Conduct historical and archival research
- Ground survey and interviews
- Ground survey and search
- Bringing deceased children's families to the sites
- Repatriation
- Spiritual, customary and religious ethical considerations
- Ensure use of trauma-informed approaches
- Ensure that all sites are searched for the missing children



Survivors Working Circle Gatherings

A request went out to each Chief of the 33 SLFNHA Communities requesting names of Survivors to be submitted to participate in our Survivors Working Circles. The Survivors worked to create guiding protocols on how we are to approach the search of the grounds for missing children. Seven protocols were developed by the Survivors: Truth, Searches, Reconciliation, Reclamation, Healing, Communication, and Repatriation. Six gatherings were held: the first gathering was held in June 2022 with 10 attendees and the sixth and final gathering was held in July 2023 with 40 attendees.

Mapping Interview Sessions

Interviews with Survivors that wanted to share information regarding possible locations of missing children were conducted in the spring of 2023. Mapping interviews will continue throughout the duration of the Initiative's Work.

Community Engagements

Our next step is to engage directly with Communities and Survivors. Participants of the Working Circles will be facilitating the sessions with the support of the Initiative Coordinators. Mapping Sessions and oral histories will also be gathered during these visits to the communities.

Community Engagements were held in Lac Seul First Nation in August 2023. Additional community engagements in the remaining communities will be conducted over the winter months.

Mental Health

Our Mental Health team consists of 4 individuals who were recruited to address the needs of the Survivors, support community counsellors, and provide support during Survivor's Working Circles, Mapping Interviews, and Community Engagements.

Research

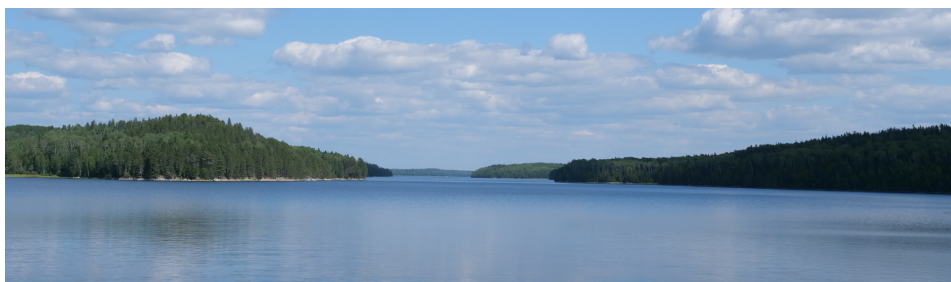
A consulting firm has been asked to establish and analyze a database of student records. They have identified 1525 student names from 1927 - 1970.

Records have been collected from Library and Archives Canada; Shingwauk Residential School Centre; Anglican General Synod Archives; Sioux Lookout Museum, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, and Ancestry.ca

These records are soon to be handed over by the consulting firm and in preparation, we have hired two researchers as part of our Initiative team.

Former Sioux Lookout Indian Hospital

The Initiative became involved in the Sioux Lookout Zone Hospital Meetings as of March 2022. A proposal for funding was submitted to Canada on December 16, 2022. Although funding has yet to be approved, this location will still be included as part of our search efforts.



CONTACT

Thunder Bay Office

106 Cumberland St. N

Lac Seul Office

Lac Seul Events Centre
- Wolf Room

A phone line was established for all Survivors of Pelican Lake Indian Residential School to share their stories, records, and information.

807-738-3282

On-Call Mental Health

Support Phone Line

staffed by our Mental Health Team

807-738-1084

Please call the National Residential School Crisis Line at **1-866-925-4419** if you or someone you know is feeling distressed.



Survivors Working Circle #6 in Thunder Bay, ON

July 25-26, 2023

