



BIKIWEWINIG NINDAWAASHISHIIMINAANAK

BRINGING OUR CHILDREN HOME INITIATIVE

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MESSAGE

Message from Wegimaawabid

Greetings!

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the supporting staff and to all the Survivors involved in this project.

On behalf of the Chief & Council and membership of Lac Seul First Nation we would like to acknowledge all the hard and difficult work that has been done by our staff and partners who worked tirelessly to get us to where we are today. Soon the ground search will commence at the two sites which will start the closure for our missing children, families and their communities. We must all stand ready and united for the results of these findings.

In closing I would like to thank everyone for their dedication and commitment on this emotional & historic journey.

Miigwetch



Derek Maud, Council Member of Lac Seul First Nation



National Gathering on Unmarked Burials: Upholding Indigenous Laws

I attended the event on March 27, 28, and 29th, 2023. I found the National Gathering on Unmarked Burials informative. Sharing from panel speakers and Survivors from many parts in Canada has informative. The Special Interlocutor has identified measures needed, recommendations for new federal legal framework, and to ensure the respectful and culturally appropriate treatment of unmarked graves and burial sites of Missing Children of former residential schools. The Special Interlocutor has a two year mandate. Special Interlocutor has been engaged with First Nations, Inuit and Metis people, and has examined existing federal and provincial laws, and identified areas of improvement in Canadian law and make recommendations for new legal framework on unmarked burial sites on former Indian Residential Schools and lands associated with the schools. At the Gathering photos were taken and live-streamed. Indigenous Teachings were included where Elders and Knowledge Keepers shared with audience or in separate rooms. Protocols, a Sacred Fire was lit at the Osgoode Hall Grounds and remained throughout the duration of the Gathering. Wellness and Cultural Health Supports were available throughout the Gathering, therapeutic services were available,



medicine teas, Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage were available for Survivors. Breakfast and lunch was served everyday. Youth had their own Sharing Circles about Unmarked Burials and were part of panel speakers. There was table/booths of information available to ask questions regarding unmarked burials and names of Missing Children of former residential schools. Arts and Crafts were available to Survivors as part of healing. Staff for the Gathering was always available. I found by attending the Gathering has helped in many ways to more understand the Unmarked Graves and Burials, and Survivors that shared their experience of Love Ones that never came home. For many it was an Emotional moment. I like to say Miigwetch to the Lac Seul First Nation Initiative; Bringing Our Children Home for letting me attend the important National Gathering on Unmarked Burials. Kitchi Miigwetch

- Fred Thomas
Survivors' Working Circle Member,
Lac Seul First Nation



Initiative Update

As we move into the spring and summer of 2023, we anticipate many events to happen concurrently. We will be conducting Community Engagements and are currently working on a travel schedule. There are several Communities that are not yet represented, and we want to encourage them to have their voice heard. Mapping Interviews in various Communities will be offered for those that have not been able to travel to the Initiative Team. We will work further with our Survivors as many have expressed interest in taking a more active role to facilitate Engagements. We are in the process of determining the best time for searches to begin on site. Now that our framework has been established, we are focused on building capacity within Survivors and Initiative Staff.



The Bringing Our Children Home Initiative would like to say thank you to our Lac Seul First Nation Council Members for their leadership and guidance at Survivors' Working Circle #5

Elvis Trout

Raymond Angecone

Stanley Littledeer

Website

www.bikiiwewinig.com

CONTACT

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

807-738-3282

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 #5 in Thunder Bay, ON April 18-20, 2023



Thank you to all of those who attended the April 18-20, 2023 Bringing Our Children Home Survivor Working Circle, a special thank you to the Survivors who came out to tell their stories.