



# BIKIIWEWINIG NINDAWAASHISHIIMINAANAK

BRINGING OUR CHILDREN HOME INITIATIVE

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**MESSAGE**

## Message from Ogiimaakaan

“Greetings! I hope my message finds you well! It has been great working with the “Bringing Our Children Home” staff and Survivors’ Circle. Truly, this is very important work that is needed to be done. It’s has been many years where we couldn’t get the answers, now it is our job to find answers.

We will be the voice for all the children that were lost and never returned to their home and parents. I look forward to being a part of this very important initiative. I want to thank Chief Clifford Bull and James Cutfeet for their knowledge and leadership.

I know we have a lot of work ahead of us, but I’m hoping and praying that we will find the children to bring closure for so many families that have waited so long.”

Chief Crane is an active member of the Survivors’ Working Circle Gatherings representing Slate Falls First Nation and being a huge contributor to the Initiative. She had served as a council member for her community for sixteen (16) years and is currently holding her seat as Chief going on her fifth (5th) term.

Her high priority and aspect of life along with her primary goal is to be an advocate and a voice for her people and to make a difference in our first nations.



Chief Lorraine Crane of Slate Falls First Nation





## Protocol Development

To guide the Bikiwewinig Nindawaashishiiminaanak Initiative (its objectives, and processes), Residential School Survivors within the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) catchment area were invited to participate in a Survivors' Working Circle (SWC). Thirty (30) individuals responded to this invitation and participated in three (3) Survivors' Working Circle Gatherings which occurred from June-July 2022. The Survivors' Working Circle and its style of work were inspired by the Lakota principles which state that:

*In the circle, we are all equal. When in a circle no one's in front of you and there's nobody behind you. No one is above you, no one is below you. The circle is sacred because it's designed to create unity.*

Between July 26th and July 28th 2022, the Survivors' Working Circle gathered in Thunder Bay, Ontario for the third time. At this gathering, Survivors shared with each other their experiences at residential school and how these experiences impacted them and their families. They discussed how they hope to continue to share, uncover, and preserve the truth about what occurred at residential school, as well as how they plan to bring home the Missing Children (including their own Inner Child). They further discussed how they envisioned reclaiming what was destroyed through colonialism, how to move forward through reconciliation, and how to heal from these experiences, and their lasting legacy. Though all discussions are ultimately interconnected, we have organized Survivors' contributions into five (5) Protocols: Truth, Searches, Reclamation, Reconciliation, and Healing. In the spirit of the Working Circle Principles, there is no protocol in front or behind. No order of importance. The protocols will be continually refined over time by Survivors and will be the guiding principles for the Bikiwewinig Nindawaashishiiminaanak Initiative as we work to Bring Our Children Home.

— James Cutfeet, Director of Operations  
Bikiwewinig Nindawaashishiiminaanak Initiative

## Garnet Angecone, Residential School Survivors Honoured at the Bikiwewinig Nindawaashishiiminaanak Gathering

Bikiwewinig Nindawaashishiiminaanak (Bringing Our Children Home), the initiative carrying out a search of the former site of the Pelican Lake Indian Residential School (PLIRS), honoured Garnet Angecone, survivors, missing children and fire keepers with a day of ceremony and speeches last Tuesday.

While the initiative is tasked with conducting searches and identifying missing children, it is part of a broader push toward healing and reconciliation in impacted communities.

Angecone reflected this in his address to the Survivors, "This is another chapter that is going to be difficult. We need to focus together on what we're doing and why we're doing this." He said.

"Stay together. Be strong. Have courage. Listen. Listen to the people. Listen to the silent voices of the children. Listen to the voices of the lost spirits wondering around aimlessly and let's help bring them home."



Garnet Angecone honoured at the Pelican Falls First Nation High School and being gifted a painting by Don Ningewance.





# The Meaning of the Logo by Don Ningewance

Don Ningewance is one of our well-known artists from Lac Seul First Nation, he is recognized on countless occasions as one of the greatest painters. The Bringing Our Children Home Initiative commissioned Don to design our logo and his vision for the initiative's brand had yet brought us to our amazement. His reflection on the design is to keep awareness of the missing children that never came home from the Indian Residential Institutions, strong that every child matters. In the center, a mother is reunited with her children as the sun shines on them which represents a new day while the hands at the bottom holding the family depict the Creator bringing the child home. Finally, the flowers in the background of the family and the beaded flower on the top signify new growth, our culture and reclaiming our ways as Nishnawbe people. We would like to thank Don Ningewance for his passion and creativity to give the Initiative an identity to achieve our goal.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Community Visits

The Initiative will be traveling up north with Red Roots Productions to gather video documents and build connections with our communities from September 11-17. Selected communities to be determined.

### Survivors' Working Circle

Our Survivors will meet for the fourth initial Working Circle Meeting. A date for the next one will be October 18-20, 2022. We are still looking to welcome additional Survivors from several communities that have yet to send representatives. If you know of any Survivors that are interested in joining us, please contact Lauren Augustine at 807-738-4762 or [lauren.a@bikiiwewinig.org](mailto:lauren.a@bikiiwewinig.org)

### Signing of Memorandum Of Understanding

Signing ceremony of the MOU documents on October 19 at the Delta Hotel in Thunder Bay. Time to be determined.

## 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 Circle Gathering in Thunder Bay, ON July 26-28, 2022



Thank you to all of those who attended the July 26-28, 2022 Bringing Our Children Home Survivor Circle Gathering, a special thank you to the Survivors who came out to tell their stories.