



# Wabun Sun

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Issue One

## Jamie-Lee Batisse Wins At NAIG

Jamie-Lee Batisse, a member of Matachewan First Nation, scored a medal winning performance at the 2008 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG), which were held in Cowichan, British Columbia in August 2008. Batisse, who is 13 years of age, took part in the games in several individual and team swimming competitions. She achieved a first place gold medal finish in the 50 meter back stroke competition in the bantam age category. In the 50 meter freestyle competition, she won a bronze medal for a third place finish. In the four person team relay events, her team won three silver medals in their age category. They had second place finishes in the freestyle four by 100 meter relay event, freestyle four by 50 meter relay event and the medley relay four by 50 meter event.

She also competed without making a medal placement in the female backstroke 100 meter event, female freestyle 100 meter event, female freestyle 200 meter event and the female freestyle 400 meter event.

"I was happy with my swimming events at the North American Indigenous Games. I really enjoy the swimming

competitions and the challenge of competing with others. I am thankful for the support of my parents and from my younger sister Cassandra for cheering me on. They have been there to support me at all my swimming competitions," said Batisse.

She has trained in competitive swimming for three years as a member of the Orillia Channel Cats, a competitive swimming club in Orillia Ontario. For the past two seasons, she has qualified in the short course and long course regional competitions. The club is an affiliated member of Swim Ontario and offers professional competitive instruction to all age groups for those with a basic swimming technique. Batisse received her training over the past three years from Elaine Thompson, Assistant Coach of the Orillia Channel Cats Swim Club. Thompson is a long time member of the city's YMCA swim department and has been coaching for the Orillia Channel Cats for the past 25 years.

"Jamie Lee did quite well at the Indigenous Games as her training for the month of July certainly paid off. She is a fierce competitor against herself

and she works hard at every practice which has shown in her improved times over the last swimming season," said Thompson.

Head Coach, Meredith Thompson-Edwards, a ten year veteran of highly competitive swimming events, also worked with Batisse in her training in the sport.

"Jamie Lee is very eager to please and listens well at every training session, she is one of the nicest swimmers on the team," said Thompson-Edwards.

Batisse's parents, Christine and Tom Batisse, are happy for their daughter's success.

"We are very proud of Jamie-Lee and her accomplishments. She is a very dedicated swimmer and she continues to work towards improving her best times. It is nice to see that she is always challenging herself in her competitions and training," said Christine Batisse.

Jamie-Lee's father Tom encouraged his daughter to take up the sport after seeing her natural enthusiasm for swimming. He is originally from and a member of Matachewan First Nation where he still has many relatives in the



**JAMIE-LEE BATISSE, A MEMBER OF MATACHEWAN FIRST NATION, WON ONE GOLD AND ONE BRONZE MEDAL IN INDIVIDUAL SWIMMING AND THREE SILVER MEDALS FOR TEAM SWIMMING EVENTS AT THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.**

community. In fact, Tom's brother Mario and his wife Anne Batisse, both of Matachewan First Nation, attended the NAIG in British Columbia to support Jamie-Lee during her competitions.

Jamie-Lee is grateful for the

support she has received from her family and friends.

"I am thankful to my family and to grandparents and relatives. I also have lots of support from my team mates at

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## Youth Suicide Prevention Funding Announced

Wabun Health Services acquired major funding from the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, to address the issue of youth suicide in the Wabun area. Funding that was received from the strategy amounts to a two year agreement of \$150,000 per year, a total funding amount of \$300,000.

"We had applied for this funding last year but never had the opportunity of having

our proposal accepted. Our health care team members were happily surprised to hear the news of the new funding as it will mean we now have the resources to go ahead with projects and developments to help our First Nation youth," said Jean Lemieux, Health Director, Wabun Health Services.

The Wabun Health Services team started planning soon after the announcement

to utilize the new funding resources. Lemieux explained that Wabun Health wants to provide a holistic approach to addressing and preventing youth suicide by training, educating and engaging health care front line workers, community members and youth. This will be accomplished through a series of workshops that will include all levels of front line workers, health care workers,

community members and youth during the course of the two year funding period.

"We are planning on providing a series of workshops aimed at educating and raising awareness of youth suicide issues with our front line workers, community members, those who work with and come into contact with youth and finally with youth themselves. This will ensure that we can empower the community, its members and front line workers with the knowledge and skills to deal with these issues. Our workshops will also include youth to help them directly in dealing with life issues and skills to prevent youth suicide," said Lemieux.

Wabun Health Services has a relatively short time line for the first year of funding that will stretch from September 2008 to March 2009. This first year will feature several intensive workshops for front line workers.

The first phase will feature a peer support workshop for front line workers which will take place during the week of September 22 to 26, 2008. The workshop will work with health care front line workers from the

Wabun communities. It will be facilitated by Christine McKay, a peer support specialist and co-facilitated by Mike Archer, Crisis Coordinator for Wabun Health Services.

"We have done similar training with our community crisis teams in the past but we have noticed that most of our work involves assisting youth after a situation has escalated to certain level. The goal of the workshops we are planning is to train and educate community members and health care workers that are close to youth and give them the skills needed to help young people at an early stage. If we can have our community members and support staff intervene and conduct preventative steps then negative situations involving youth will never need to arise," said Archer.

A week long leadership workshop will take place starting on October 27, 2008, as part of a second phase of training. This will be facilitated by Maria Trevizo, a traditional Native American teacher, of the people of Isleta de Sur Pueblo of Texas

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**LONG TERM PLANNING IS REAPING BENEFITS THROUGH FUNDING OF PROGRAMS FOR SERVICES GEARED TO WABUN COMMUNITY MEMBERS. PICTURED ARE JEAN LEMIEUX, HEALTH DIRECTOR, WABUN HEALTH SERVICES AND MIKE ARCHER, CRISIS COORDINATOR, WABUN HEALTH SERVICES.**



# Nancy Cyr Assisting Wabun Members Through Liberty Mines



**NANCY CYR,  
IMPACT BENEFIT AGREEMENT  
COORDINATOR, LIBERTY MINES  
INCORPORATED**

Nancy Cyr, Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) Coordinator for Liberty Mines is working to implement the IBA between the company and the three First Nations of Mattagami, Matachewan and Wahgoshig. She is a member of Matachewan First Nation and she draws her experience and knowledge from her background in the social services and an extensive education base. Cyr started her position on July 7, 2008.

Her main role as IBA Coordinator is to implement the Impact Benefit Agreement that was signed between Liberty Mines and the three First Nations on April 15, 2008. The IBA provides for First Nation approval on the operations of exploration activities and it offers education and training opportunities for First Nation people in the three signatory communities. To implement the agreement, several provisions are being managed

including: environ-mental issues, employment and training, business opportunities, health and wellness and workplace conditions.

"One of the main tasks I have been involved in has to do with developing business opportunities for our First Nations. There are challenges such as the size of services that our communities can provide but we are hoping that by pooling our resources in joint ventures with several First Nation businesses we can bid on some of the major contracts offered by Liberty Mines," said Cyr.

One of her goals is to raise the number of First Nation people employed at Liberty Mines.

"Employment and training will impact our First Nations directly. These positions can also include training and the help needed to lead to higher paying jobs for our people. We want to show the mining industry that First Nation people are capable of becoming part of this sector and that we are valuable assets to the industry," said Cyr.

She is also working with the company to provide cross cultural training to introduce non-Native employees to the history and background of area First Nations.

"Liberty Mines has made it a requirement for all its employees to attend our cross cultural training initiative. This will help us in building our partnership with the company and the First Nations. We are working hard to put forth a positive image of our people and to focus on how we can partner together for a better working environment," said Cyr.

She explained that the IBA is the first of its kind in the area and that other mining companies are looking to their example.

"Future developments in our region will include IBAs or similar agreements such as ours, so other mining companies are looking to us to set the example of how partnerships can be set up," said Cyr.

She works under the guidance of the IBA Committee which consists of representatives from the company and the three First Nations. Committee members are: Dan Stubbe, Wahgoshig FN; Pam Cormier, Matachewan FN; Chris McKay, Mattagami FN; Shawn Batise, Wabun Tribal Council; Jennifer Cyr, Liberty Mines; Graham Reid, Liberty Mines and Gerry Stinson, Liberty Mines. Monthly committee meetings are scheduled during the year and they will be rotated to be held in each of the communities over time.

Cyr encourages First Nation members to contact her for possible employment opportunities with Liberty Mines.

"First Nation members should submit their resumes with all their contact information so that we can keep a

database of applicants that can be ready to apply for any opportunities that arise. It is essential that they provide an email address so that we have direct contact with them when new positions or training comes online," said Cyr.

She can be contacted by phone at the Liberty mines office at 1-800-894-8457, extension 5003, her cell phone at 705-266-3112, by fax at 705-222-6451 or by her two email addresses at nancycyr@wabun.on.ca OR ncyr@libertymines.com

She is based at her office at Liberty Mines three days a week on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays and at the Wabun office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Cyr explained that implementing the IBA is still in its early stages in regards to employment and training for First Nation people. Several First Nation people are currently on staff at Liberty. She is hopeful that more First Nation members will take on new positions opening up. Many new opportunities are becoming available as of September 2008. These range from janitorial postings to jobs at the mine site including equipment operators, mill-

wrights, miner positions and higher level supervisory positions.

She explained that this position is an opportunity for her to work with Wabun First Nations in a positive way.

"This has been an amazing opportunity for me. Our people talk about life coming in cycles and I feel that this position has brought me back to my cultural roots. It is very significant to me because of my background and spirituality as a First Nation person," said Cyr.

She is a recent graduate of Laurentian University in Sudbaur where she majored in Psychology with a minor in French. In addition, she has two Social Working Diplomas she acquired from attending Northern College in Timmins. Cyr is also a volunteer who has worked with several organizations in the Timmins area where she sat on committees focused on youth leadership and with local school boards. She is past President of Timmins Native Housing over three terms for the several years. She also been employed by Le Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes-Rivières in Timmins and Volunteer Timmins.

## Jamie-Lee Batisse At NAIG

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the Orillia Channel Cats and from my coaches," said Jamie-Lee Batisse.

Jamie-Lee, who is currently in grade eight attending school in Barrie Ontario, has taken part in numerous competitions in her region and at this stage of her athletic career she is hoping to qualify at the provincial level. To date she has won over 30 medals including a spirit award for her commitment and dedication to team spirit, most improved novice swimmer and numerous ribbon awards from her competitions. She is looking forward to working hard in her swimming competitions with the dream of competing internationally at the 2012 Summer Olympic Games.

As a young athlete, she has learned to become dedicated and committed to her sport. Thompson explained that competitive swimming is a very disciplined sport that emphasizes goal setting and time management which carries over into the swimmers' academic and social life as well as developing a child's self esteem and self-worth.

Jamie-Lee had helpful advice for other youth who want to take part in competitive sports.

"Follow your dreams and set goals to try and achieve them. Find someone inspirational in your life that you look up to and do everything you can to become like them," said Jamie-Lee Batisse.

Wabun Tribal Council provided funding support for Jamie-Lee Batisse to attend the North American Indigenous Games. Shawn Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council, commended Jamie-Lee and her parents for the efforts they have made to achieve wins at the Indigenous Games in British Columbia.

"Young people like Jamie-Lee make all of us very proud in their drive and commitment to first class winning performance in sport. I am sure that many of our Wabun members will look for more great news from Jamie-Lee in the future. Our council is proud to have provided support for Jamie-Lee and we are also happy to assist other athletes from our First Nation communities," said Batise.



With the direction of our Wabun Chiefs and through the efforts of our administration and staff things are developing in terms of career and employment opportunities for our community members. When governments and the justice system finally acknowledged our rights as First Nation people in regards to resource harvesting on our traditional lands we at Wabun were ready to move ahead in working with Forestry, Mining and Hydro developers.

Our motivation in reaching out to the private sector and government involved in resource development on our lands had to do mainly with improving the lives of our community members. In the past several years we have signed many agreements with mining, forestry and hydro developers. None of this happened over night. There was a lot of planning, thought and

## Reflections

by Shawn Batise, Executive Director

consultation between our Chiefs, our key executives, private sector developers and government agencies. Sometimes the going was rough and we had to become very good at negotiating sound and beneficial agreements with companies and government agencies and always with the aim at improving life for our community members.

We entered into these agreements with the commitment that we would reap economic benefits where possible and at the same time respect the land and our traditions. At this point I am very proud of the efforts of our Chiefs and administration as we have achieved some major breakthroughs in securing financial benefits, business opportunities and employment prospects for Wabun First Nations.

Matachewan First Nation spearheaded a three million dollar partnership between Service Canada, the mining industry and other Wabun First Nations. Through their efforts many of our community members will be moving ahead with employment and training for those that may be interested in careers in the mining industry. I would like to commend Matachewan First Nation and in particular, Pam Cormier for all her hard work and for heading up this important initiative.

This is exciting news for our community members who are actively looking for

employment. Many of these positions offer salaries that amount to as much as \$60,000 annually. Due to the fact that many of these developments, mostly in mining, are taking place on or near our traditional lands our Wabun community members have the benefit of being able to continue residing in their First Nation. They will have the best of both worlds in living on their traditional land and at the same time developing a career that pays well and offers a bright future. For example this is the reality for Mattagami and Flying Post First Nations as we have secured an agreement with nearby Lake Shore Gold. In addition our agreement with Northgate Minerals offers employment opportunities for nearby Matachewan First Nation.

I also encourage our community members to consider opportunities in spin off business in and around the mining developments taking place in our First Nations. Now is the time for our entrepreneurs to identify business ventures that could develop as spinoffs for the multi million dollar initiatives taking place right in our own backyards. Your Chiefs, administration and staff have put together substantial agreements that provide for many opportunities. It is now up to you to step forward and make the commitment and take advantage of these opportunities.



# Pam Cormier Developing Business And Employment Opportunities

Pam Cormier, Economic Development Officer (EDO) and Employment Counsellor for Matachewan First Nation, is the featured community person for this issue of Wabun Sun. She has been working in this position since the early part of 2007.

As an EDO, Cormier is responsible for identifying business and employment opportunities for the First Nation and for private First Nation businesses in the community. Before becoming EDO, Cormier worked closely with the previous EDO Anne Batisse, who had been in this position for 16 years. In her work as Employment Counsellor, she works directly with individual community members to seek out employment positions and opportunities. One of the main areas of employment possibilities she has concentrated on has been in apprenticeships. She has been working with area businesses and employers to provide apprenticeship opportunities for local First Nation members.

"I want to help our local members acquire training that can lead to employment. A good employment position will allow an individual to become self sufficient and help in building a healthy family in our community," said Cormier. In addition, she is a volunteer in her community

and is a member of the Matachewan Recreation Committee and as a member of the Elk Lake 100 Year Commemoration Committee. Cormier has also volunteered her time for events in her First Nation including acting as coordinator for the 100 year Matachewan First Nation Commemoration in 2006.

***"I enjoy working with our members to help them find training or employment," Cormier***

She is in regular contact with potential employers from the surrounding area and also with local First Nation members searching for employment. Cormier explained that it is gratifying to be able to help community members find jobs.

"I enjoy working with our band members to get them set up with training or to successfully find employment for them. It feels good to receive a thank you phone call or an email message from the people I work with," said Cormier.

She has gained some of her experience in local economic development as a

local entrepreneur. She established Pam's Diner in the community and ran this local restaurant for two years as an owner and operator in Matachewan First Nation. In addition, her business also operated as a catering business that serviced clients including Matachewan First Nation, Elk Lake Planing Mill, Elk Lake Legion and the Township of Matachewan. She was able to maintain her business from being involved in the restaurant and service industry for many years.

Cormier has also worked as a Personal Support Worker where she was directly involved in assisting First Nation elders. During the construction of a new water treatment plant and a subdivision for the community, she worked for Pederson Construction company. She worked as a labourer and she also received on the job training to drive a rock truck, a large dump truck used during the construction.

She also works in developing programs and services for her community. Recently, she was involved in helping to secure funding to upgrade furnishings and equipment for local Elders to use at the Matachewan First Nation Community Complex. This funding was provided by Human Resources and Social Development Canada



**PAM CORMIER, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER AND EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLOR, MATACHEWAN FIRST NATION**

(HRSDC), Northgate Minerals and Matachewan First Nation.

"Our Elders use the community complex for many functions including gatherings, meetings and traditional craft classes for the community. The new furnishings will provide a more comfortable environment for our Elders. We are grateful to our funders for providing us this support," said Cormier.

She is hopeful to see further developments, added services and facilities for Matachewan First Nation.

"We would like to see more housing for our

community. This is something that every First Nation needs in order to provide a healthy environment for our families. We need to have more local services for our people including a medical department and a school for our children. These are services that I would like to see and also our community has wanted for many years now," said Cormier.

She is a member of Matachewan First Nation and she has a First Nation Ojibway heritage. She currently lives in the town of Elk Lake with her husband Wayne and their 14 year old daughter Kalene.

## Myrande Tremblay Making A Difference In Wahgoshig FN

Myrande (Mimi) Tremblay is the new National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) Worker for Wahgoshig First Nation. She started her new position on September 3, 2008. Her main role will be to assist community members and clients in accessing social service programs, counseling and health services. As part of her work, she will also take part in workshops and training sessions to add to her experience and background.

"I enjoy working for my First Nation and I am looking forward to helping my community. I am happy to be in a position where I can work with clients and help them lead a healthier lifestyle," said Tremblay.

Her work directly involves meeting and talking to community members on a regular basis.

"I enjoy being able to meet with those looking for help and giving them the assistance they need. I have been in the position before where I was involved with young people but not in an official capacity. I am grateful to have this opportunity to help my community as a member of the Wabun health care team," said Tremblay.

She operated a school bus service for local youth attending high school in

neighbouring towns for two and half years. Tremblay explained that the long commute with students gave her plenty of experience and opportunity to meet and relate to local youth.

She is looking forward to developing the NNADAP program in her community with the goal of providing more services and assistance for clients.

Tremblay has been involved in her community in the forestry sector for many years. Currently, she is the President of Wahgoshig Resource Incorporated, an entity that manages a sawmill and forestry operations in the community. She is also an active volunteer that has been involved in many activities and events for youth and Elders in the First Nation.

Her main occupation for most of her life has been as a trapper. She was born and raised in Lowbush and she lived her early life on the land with her family. Myrande was adopted at a young age by Jeandarc and Eugene Tremblay who raised her at their family trapping grounds seven miles down the Ghost River, a tributary of Lake Abitibi. She grew up living on the trapline along with her stepbrother Dennis Tremblay.

"I grew up learning the life of trapping and living

off the land with my family. From the time I was very young until I became a teenager, we spent most of the year at our trapping cabins on the land. It was a remote place and we only visited the towns twice a year to gather our groceries for the season. We lived right in the wilderness and we did not have any access to electricity. My step mother taught me at home when I was young and we grew up with French as our first language. It wasn't until later when we moved into town that I had to learn to use the English language

***"Myrande is a positive figure in her community with much traditional and cultural knowledge," Jean Lemieux***

on my own," said Tremblay.

The Tremblay family moved away from their traditional trapping grounds in 1973 when their father Eugene Tremblay became ill and needed to be close to medical facilities in Matheson.

Recently, Myrande

Tremblay was able to pass on some of her traditional knowledge in trapping to youth at the Second Annual Youth Workshop which was held in Brunswick House First Nation in August 2008. She provided a well rounded program to introduce youth to the traditional activity of trapping. The workshop featured trapping equipment, tanned pelts and hides and informative presentations on the history of trapping in the Wabun area. Myrande Tremblay was able to facilitate this workshop because of her years of experience in the field and also from her certification as an instructor in trapping which she acquired through the support of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) in 2006.

She continues to visit her family trap grounds in Cool Township east of Wahgoshig.

"My parents taught me how to trap. We walked for miles along our trapping routes where we set up cabins to stay over night along the way. Mom cooked everything we gathered from the bush and we were self sufficient in our wilderness home. As a teenager I always wanted to visit town but mom always assured me that I would like the wilderness better. When we finally moved to town and I became part of it, I decided that she was right as we all missed our home on

the land," said Myrande Tremblay.

In 1972, she had the opportunity to meet with her birth family which included her sister Elizabeth Babin, her brother Dave Babin, who is current Chief of Wahgoshig First Nation; her half sister Bernadette Morris and her half brother Raymond Black. Her birth parents are Edward and Anna Babin.

Her daughter Anna and son in law Brian Gelinas have three children Kara, Arron and Chelsei. Myrande Tremblay also has a three year old great grand daughter named Willow.

Myrande Tremblay started her new position after Evelyn Black stepped down to spend more time with her family at home.

"Evelyn resigned her position in order to spend more time with her family. We want to wish her all the best and we are grateful to have worked with her as part of our Health Care team in Wahgoshig. We also want to welcome Myrande into the position of NNADAP Worker. Myrande is a positive figure in her community with much traditional and cultural knowledge and we look forward to working together to help the First Nation members of Wahgoshig First Nation," said Jean Lemieux, Health Director, Wabun Health Services.



# Beneficial Programs Planned For Wabun First Nations

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and the Tarascos of Mexico. She has a degree in psychiatry and substance abuse counselling and she has worked in the health and wellness field with youth and adults in many Native American communities in Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Lemieux added that as part of a holistic approach, the workshops are designed to include every member of the health care and social services fields regardless of separate funding organizations and agencies.

"We have opened up these workshops for all front line workers such as Nishnawbe-Aski Police Services and child and family service workers. These people play a major role in community building and they are in contact with youth and their families on a regular basis. The skills and knowledge that can be shared at these workshops will go towards benefitting everyone that works in our communities and allow all of us to work together in preventing youth suicide," said Lemieux.

A third week long workshop will take place starting November 17, 2008 with a focus on Suicide and Crisis Intervention for front

line workers. This workshop will be facilitated by Dan McLeod and co facilitated by Archer.

The National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy identified Aboriginal youth suicide as an urgent matter for First Nations. The strategy identified that the overall rate of suicide among Aboriginal youth is five to seven times the national average for Canadian youth. The suicide rate increases in the north where suicide rates in Inuit territory is 11 times more than the national average. The rate of Aboriginal youth suicide have been linked to cultural identity and self esteem, cultural change, trans generational grief, the child welfare system and being members of a marginalized and economically disadvantaged group.

"There are more instances of suicide than the national average rate in our communities. However, it is also unsettling to know that there are many unreported events where suicide was unsuccessful. We do not want to see any successful attempts at suicide but we also want to be there to identify and prevent these situations from happening

in the first place," said Lemieux.

Wabun Health has also received the support of the Chiefs and Councils of all Wabun First Nations in this initiative.

"Our leaders believe that this is a positive contribution to our communities and it has shown in the numbers of participants that have signed on to the first series of workshops," said Archer.

In the coming year, Wabun Health is preparing to

***The goal of the strategy is to reduce risk factors and promote protective and preventative factors against suicide.***

develop a series of workshops targeted towards First Nation youth. Several of these workshops are being designed for each community to take place over the first part of 2009. These workshops will feature visiting facilitators to work directly with youth in dealing with life issues and skills.

"We want our communities to prepare their youth for these upcoming workshops and to contact our office and support staff for more information as it becomes available. We encourage youth to participate in these workshops as it is another step in our effort to help our communities," said Lemieux.

Archer explained that these workshops are supported by other initiatives that Wabun Health has conducted over the past two years to support and educate community members with life skills, communication and peer support. These initiatives include an annual men's and women's workshop which are open to all adult community members and a regular Elders gathering where First Nation elders are brought together to communicate with and support one another.

"All the workshops that we have had over the past two to three years and the new ones we are planning are starting to come together in a holistic strategy that is positively affecting our community members in our youth, adults and Elders. It is allowing our people to better communicate and support each other through difficult life situations to

create a healthier environment for all of us," said Archer.

The National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy came out of a meeting with First Nation leaders, First Ministers and the Prime Minister in September 2004 to develop an initiative to prevent suicide amongst Aboriginal youth. A \$65 million funding amount was allocated in the 2005 budget for the strategy over a five year period. The goal of the strategy is to reduce risk factors and promote protective and preventative factors against suicide. The framework of the strategy was drafted by the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tappirit Kanatami and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Health Canada. The strategy was developed to include traditional and cultural knowledge, to build on existing structures and processes and respect federal, provincial and territorial mandates. As part of the strategy, separate guides were also included to include First Nations living on reserve, Inuit and Inuit communities and off reserve Aboriginal groups including Metis and urban Inuit.



## Health Matters

by Jean Lemieux, Health Director

resolution to proceed with accreditation under Accreditation Canada.

Wabun Health decided that it was time to look at becoming certified for several reasons. For a start we want all of our good work to be recognized at a National and International level, as that provides us with a high level of credibility. This process will also help to make sure that we are continually developing and producing quality services and care for our First Nations. We welcome the scrutiny that accreditation provides, as we understand that Wabun Health will benefit from this process on many levels. It will further assist in ensuring that our clients get the very best in health care services and programs.

Accreditation Canada addresses First Nations in its accreditation process and it will look at the communities as a whole to ensure the policies and procedures are the same right across all of our communities.

Accreditation Canada's mission is to drive quality in health services through accreditation. This non profit entity helps organizations across Canada and internationally examine and improve the quality of service they provide to their patients and clients. Accreditation Canada's accreditation process is both rigorous and thorough. It

consists of a self-assessment, an on-site survey, and follow-up action for improvements. Organizations examine all areas of their service, obtain advice from peers, increase credibility, and involve partners and clients during on-site interviews.

As part of the development to accreditation we have hired a policy analyst. She is working hard to review existing policies and researching new policies so that Wabun Health is servicing its communities to the fullest. Through contact with Accreditation Canada we are moving ahead in developing Wabun Health to the point where we will win Accreditation Canada approval. All of this development is being done with an eye on future growth.

Once we are far enough along in this process we will be presenting our policy manual to Wabun Health Care Workers for review. After this step we will

bring everything back to our Chiefs and administration for approval. Then we will work with Accreditation Canada for accreditation.

This process of accreditation is lengthy but well worth the effort. The process involves much input through meetings, reviews and consultations so that everyone concerned understands what this is all about. We are happy to have received funding from Health Canada to accomplish this. At the end of the day we will have a good picture of how we stand as a health centre and we will know what areas we are excelling in and what we must do to improve our programs and services.

Once Accreditation Canada does a review and then follows with an evaluation we will know our status. At this point we have the option to improve in areas where we need to meet certain

criteria and once that is done then we can expect our accreditation. We expect this might take place as early as spring 2009.

I am so excited and really proud that Wabun Health has developed to the point where we are looking at accreditation. It is very rewarding to have been part of all of the successes here at Wabun Health over the years and I see all of this development from my view as Wabun Health Director and also from the standpoint as a member of Matachewan First Nation. Everything we do at Wabun Health is aimed at making life better for our First Nation members. Soon we will have a stamp of approval for our efforts and we will continue our development based on high standards in health care.



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