



# Wabun Sun

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## Long Time Beaverhouse FN Elder Featured

Elder Clara Mathias, of Beaverhouse First Nation, is the featured Elder for this issue of Wabun Sun. She has been part of the Beaverhouse First Nation community for most of her life and it was only 15 years ago that she moved into the town of Kirkland Lake on a permanent basis. She was born in 1927 and lived on the First Nations lands located in a remote area on the Misema River 40 kilometers east of the town of Kirkland Lake.

She was born on the land with her family in a traditional setting during a time when their people lived a nomadic way of life. She remembers growing up in a Native settlement on Victoria Lake near Esker Provincial Park northeast of Kirkland Lake. Her family followed a nomadic lifestyle of hunting, trapping and harvesting wild plants in this area. Her father was Basil No and her mother was

Pinomen (Mshigich) No. Their family also included seven brothers and three sisters who all passed on at very young ages. Elder Mathias learned the traditional lifestyle from her parents. She recalls learning how to trap and live on the land when she was a child. When she was young, their family traveled to several nearby areas and her father maintained a trapline near the Adams Mine site for many years. The Native settlement where she grew up as a child no longer exists as families from this area moved to the Beaverhouse First Nation community later on.

Her family also made the move to settle in the community of Beaverhouse First Nation yet they managed to maintain a nomadic lifestyle and they traveled to and from their hunting and trapping grounds throughout the year. As a child, she did not attend school as enforce-

ment of education on children was not possible with their family as they lived independently in an active nomadic way of life on the land.

"We never used any motors when I was young. We did a lot of walking in the winter and summer to get to where we were going. In the fall we went to our traditional areas then returned to the community in Christmas only to go back out after. In the summers we came back to Beaverhouse and returned to our traditional areas in the fall," said Elder Mathias.

In 1941, she married Isaac Mathias at the original church in Beaverhouse First Nation. After her marriage she stayed in the community on a more permanent basis but continued an active traditional lifestyle of hunting and trapping. Her husband was involved in mining and prospecting activities in the area but they also made a living by



**ELDER CLARA MATHIAS, OF BEAVERHOUSE FIRST NATION, SHARES HER LIFE STORY WITH WABUN SUN.**

trading furs. They spent most of their time in the Webster Lake area during the winters but went back to Beaverhouse in the summer. In the mid 1940s, she and her husband suffered a terrible loss when their only child, who was two years of age, died as a result of a tuberculosis outbreak at the time.

She values the cultural pursuits of her past and also the language of her

people. Few people in Beaverhouse First Nation are able to speak the traditional Ojibwe dialect that is unique to their region. Even though some Beaverhouse First Nation members speak Ojibwe, they find it difficult to communicate with others in the same language group from different regions. Elder Clara Mathias speaks this Ojibwe dialect fluently.

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## Protocol Signing Stays True To Traditional Ways

The signing of a new protocol between Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation (NALSC) and Child & Family Services Of Timmins And District will ensure a more culturally appropriate method of care for First Nation children and families. The signing of the document took place at the Child & Family Services Of Timmins And District Office in Timmins Ontario on Friday November 26, 2004. The new

document was signed by Celina Reitberger, Restorative Justice Coordinator for NALSC and by Richard Lambert-Belanger, Executive Director of Child & Family Services Of Timmins And District.

The protocol is an important step forward in the delivery of culturally appropriate services for First Nation people. The document will provide NASLC the opportunity to work with Child &

Family Services Of Timmins And District when dealing with First Nation families before any children are taken away from a situation. This will allow NASLC to work with families in need in a program called 'Talking Together', an innovative method of dispute resolution based on traditional circles. This program brings family members, front line workers, agency representatives, community Elders and community representatives in a circle gathering process. This circle of people can then discuss the situation in a non-judgmental manner to develop a plan that can be supported by the community. This process was created to return control of the planning and protection of Native children to First Nations. It was also developed as an alternative to the court process, which frequently resulted in children being removed from their home communities.

The signing of the document is part of ongoing development and assistance that has been provided

through the 'Talking Together' project. This project was initially developed through preliminary discussions between NALSC, Tikinagan Child & Family Services and Kunuwanimano Child & Family Services to establish a protocol that would allow the organizations to work together. Through these preliminary discussions a pilot project was developed to provide an alternative to the court system to the three First Nations of Mishkeegogamang First Nation, an independent First Nation in northwestern Ontario; Eababetoong First Nation, which is part of Matawa First Nation Tribal Council and Wahgoshig First Nation which is part of the Wabun Tribal Council. The 'Talking Together' circle process runs in tandem with the court process. Referrals are received by the Talking Together Coordinator through the agencies. The referrals are then sent back to the Talking Together Facilitators in each of the three pilot communities.

"We are very happy to

have this protocol in place. The fact that we can work with families and their children before anyone is taken away is an important part of taking care of our people. This allows us to access First Nation organizations for assistance as well as the extended family to prevent the child from falling into crown wardship and have to be taken away from their home community," said Susan Chokomolin, Talking Together Facilitator for Wahgoshig First Nation.

A Steering Committee that includes representatives from Tikinagan, Kunuwanimano and NALSC, as well as other First Nation leaders oversees the Talking Together program. Recently, Jean Lemieux, Wabun Health Director was asked to sit as part of the committee.

"I am happy to see this cooperative arrangement take place. This is a very positive step in keeping true to our traditional way of doing things," said Lemieux.



**NEW PROTOCOL SIGNING AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED BY CELINA REITBERGER (LEFT), RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COORDINATOR FOR NISHNAWBE-ASKI LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION AND BY RICHARD LAMBERT-BELANGER (RIGHT), EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES OF TIMMINS AND DISTRICT.**

## Elder Clara Mathias Reminisces

(CONT FROM PAGE 1)

"Language is important to me and I would like to see the young learn to speak even a little Ojibwe. Our youth should be taught and encouraged to use our language. It makes me feel good to hear younger people use the language even if it is just a word or two, it shows that they are trying. I enjoy hearing the language, as it is a comforting part of my life," said Elder Clara Mathias.

She is the last of her immediate family she grew up with in a traditional setting in Beaverhouse First Nation. Four years ago, she was saddened at the loss of Elizabeth Langueff, a lifelong friend she had grown up with in Beaverhouse First Nation. They were both the same age and had known each other for over 70 years.

Elder Mathias is now retired and lives in a retirement home in

Kirkland Lake. When she first moved to town 15 years ago, she had a hard time adjusting to the new lifestyle.

"When I moved to town I couldn't adjust to this way of life at first. I had a hard time sleeping and I was afraid of being here. It was different from the way of life I knew in Beaverhouse," said Elder Clara Mathias.

She is grateful that the local Beaverhouse First Nation administration provides numerous events throughout the year to bring community members together. Elder Clara Mathias is invited to these events to take part in as an Elder in the community and to speak to young people. She was also happy to see the recent reconstruction of the community church in the Beaverhouse First Nation.

Wabun Sun would like to thank Terry Mathias, Maintenance Worker at the

Beaverhouse First Nation office for his assistance in providing translation services for this interview. He is the great nephew of Elder Clara Mathias.

### Ojibway Translations

By  
Elder Mathias

Here are some Ojibway words and phrases with translation into English by Elder Clara Mathias, of Beaverhouse First Nation. We thank her for supplying Wabun Sun with this knowledge of the language. MAH-EE-KAN - Wolf, WAH-WAH-SH-KEH-SHO - Deer, OH-SH-KOH-TEH-L TAH-PAH-N - Train, WAH-KOH-SH - Fox, TAH-PEH-KEE-SOH-N - Clock or Watch, MAH-KWAH - Bear.

## Reflections

By Shawn Batise, Executive Director



There have been some big changes in my life lately. On July 6 Quinton Leo Edward Batise was born. It really is so great to have this new addition in the family. Quinton of course is a little brother to my stepdaughter Samyra. My wife, Nova and I couldn't be happier with such a full life and two wonderful children to make it even more interesting.

As a First Nation person I know the importance of family right from the newborn baby all the way up to our elders. I come from a large extended family as does my wife. We are fortunate to have the support, love and encouragement of so many wonderful people we are close to and that makes for a better world for our children.

I was thrilled and really awe struck at the experience of being there for my wife when our son was born. Of course we were all very concerned due to the fact that Quinton was born prematurely by five weeks. Thank God our little guy struggled into the world in good health although he only weighed in at 5 pounds and ten and a half ounces.

Life has been good to me but you know now it is even better. I feel changed in some ways and my perspective on the

world is different. I feel more positive about the future and I have more hope. It is hard to imagine that such a little guy has altered my way of thinking so much. I have more appreciation for family and friends and I feel more purpose in my life and that has impacted on my personal priorities.

My work involves a lot of time and travel and I have found it necessary to become better at time management to make sure that I get to spend quality time with my family. I find now that when I am away from home I really miss the family to the point where I can hardly wait to get back to my wife, son and stepdaughter.

Little things like playing with my son, taking walks with the family and just enjoying their company with a quiet night at home have become very important to me. As far as the grandparents are concerned my God they can't get enough of Quinton. My mom Doreen picks him up and does not want to put him back down. My dad, Barney has a new friend to dote over and of course my mother in law Rachele thinks he is just the best baby boy in the whole world.

Mostly these days I am more focused on trying to use my energies and efforts to make this world a little better for my children. I try my best to remember this when I have to deal with the politics and decision making that comes with the type of responsibilities I have. My outlook now is less self-centered and has to do with planning for the future. We should all be thinking of leaving this world better for the children. It is a worthwhile goal.

## Wabun Development Corporation Gives Back To Communities

The Wabun Tribal Council Development Corporation has paid dividends to its member First Nations as a result of sound financial investments. The initial dividends amounted to \$5,000 for each First Nation and the funds are to be earmarked for community and economic development. At this stage the Development Corporation can not entertain any requests for loans to individual Wabun First Nation community members. However, as the development corporation builds on its investments that idea could become a reality in the future.

"We owe a great deal of gratitude to the Chiefs of Wabun who had the vision to put the Development Corporation in place. Today we are seeing the results of sound financial investments through the corporation that is resulting in profits that Wabun First Nation can share in. At this early stage in our development we still can not consider any loans to our First Nation members but we hope to do so in the future," said Shawn Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council.

The Development Corporation was put into place by the Wabun Chiefs and Board of Directors in 1996. This was done with the idea of developing a more independent and forward thinking concept dedicated to realizing profits from intelligent investments that would then be shared by Wabun First Nations.

"This has been a dream come true for our past and present Wabun Chiefs. We should all

be proud of the fact that we have the will and resources to move ahead with investments that produce profits for us all. I congratulate our Wabun Chiefs on creating the Development Corporation and I hope that it continues far into the future," said Batise.

Under the Wabun Development Corporation Wabun Tribal Council purchased a commercial office building in Timmins as a base for its headquarters. Wabun Tribal Council did this through sound financial management and with no grant assistance. This move has provided a means of raising income as space in the building is rented out and at the same time Wabun Tribal Council and Wabun Health Services have a central location in a modern building complex. Instead of paying rent for space to landlords, the development corporation itself is the landlord and receives rent.

The purchase and renovation of the building complex was the first big investment made by the Development Corporation. The benefits were far reaching and as a matter of fact the renovations were actually contracted out to local Wabun First Nation members.

Today the development corporation profits through the rental of the space in its own building and through smart money market investments such as GICs and T Bills.

Wabun Tribal Council

was formed or incorporated in October 1989 and started operations in Timmins in April 1990. The Council was formed under the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) devolution policy to coordinate and deliver services devolved from INAC to First Nation communities at the local level. The main objectives of Wabun include: promotion of self-reliance, provision for its members health, education, social and economic development needs and the enhancement of the unique cultures, traditions and language of its members. The Wabun Tribal Council is incorporated under the province of Ontario's Business Corporations Act, as a non-shared capital corporation (non-profit) and administers funds and performs services as contacted with various funding bodies, including INAC, Employment and Immigration Canada, National Health and Welfare Canada, the Provincial Ministry of Health and others. In 1993, Wabun was the first Tribal Council in Ontario to sign a health transfer agreement with National Health and Welfare Canada to take over the control of health programming from the federal government. In 1996 Wabun also assumed responsibility for long term care programming in First Nation communities from the Ministry of Health of the provincial government of Ontario.

## New Member Of The Family



QUINTON LEO EDWARD BATISE was born July 6, 2004 in Timmins. Congratulations and best

wishes go out to happy parents Shawn and Nova Batise and stepsister, Samyra. Quinton was born five weeks premature and weighed five pounds and ten and a half ounces on arrival. His father Shawn shared in the birthing experience with Nova. Quinton was given the middle name Leo in honour and remembrance of his grandfather, Leo Therrien. His other middle name, Edward, was given in honour of grandfather, Barney Batise. Proud grandparents Barney and Doreen Batise and Rachel Therrien are thrilled to welcome baby Quinton into the large extended family with so many loving uncles, aunts and cousins to care for him.

## Beaverhouse FN Goes Back To Its Roots In Church Reconstruction

The community of Beaverhouse First Nation was grateful to see the reconstruction of a local Church on their First Nation territory. On October 5, 2004, the community held its first mass inside the newly constructed building. The church was built on the First Nation lands which is located in a remote area on the Misema River 40 kilometers east of the town of Kirkland Lake.

Several organizations provided support through donations for the project. Individual donations were also received. These donations assisted the First Nation which used its own funds for the project. Tembec Industries Incorporated donated milled and pressure treated lumber that was used in the construction of a decorative cross for the entrance of the church.

"We were happy to receive this help from organizations and people. We are grateful for the assistance in reestablishing our church in our community," said Deputy Chief Wayne Wabie, Beaverhouse FN.

Now that the church has been completed, the First Nation is planning on having a Grand Opening next summer. The community is hoping to have several catholic leaders attend the ceremony to bless the new church. The First Nation will announce their plans for the Grand Opening next year.

"The church building is a significant part of our community. The fact that we are taking care of a historic building on our First Nation instills a sense

of pride and ownership for everyone. The church and catholic faith has had a great impact on our history. Our Elders and members wanted to see this building maintained for the future," said Deputy Chief Wabie.

The community church was established in 1929 when the First Nation was a thriving village of 200 to 300 people. The building originally had a high roof but the structure began to deteriorate and it was feared that the church would collapse. In 1983, renovations took place that brought the height of the building down by four feet to reduce wind shear and minimize any swaying.

In 2002, the First Nation with the support of its members developed a plan to conduct renovations on the old building. Unfortunately, upon the start of the project, it was discovered that there was extensive dry rot and wood deterioration throughout the structure. This discovery turned the building into a liability and health and safety risk for the local community and for the renovation workers. It was decided that the building would be dismantled and rebuilt to similar dimensions of the original structure of 30 by 50 feet and to include an open concept design. In May 2004, the deconstruction began and the building was dismantled. Construction of the new church began in July by Brook Home Renovations, a contractor from Kirkland Lake the First Nation had worked with in the past. In early October 2004, the final interior and exterior details were completed and the

church was once again opened to the community. First Nation members Michael Maurer, Jimi Maurer and Terry Honey took part in the construction. Other members also assisted as volunteers in the project.

On October 5, 2004 a community mass was held for members on the first evening the church was completed. The mass was conducted by Reverend Ron Lofthouse, who is involved in ministering in the Hamilton / Niagara region. Reverend Lofthouse has a connection to the Beaverhouse Church as he is a former minister for the congregation. Father M.J. Scully, who was also involved with the Beaverhouse Church, assisted him in the service.

Wabie explained that the community decided on the construction of a new church so that it could



**TRADITIONAL GATHERINGS AT THE BEAVERHOUSE FIRST NATION SETTLEMENT BRINGS TOGETHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. PICTURED ARE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: NORMAN ANGUS, MAURICE THIVIERGE, RAYMOND MARTEL AND CHARLIE AUGUSTISHIG.**

accommodate more people and provide a real historical link for the First Nation. Several events such as funerals or gatherings have taken place in the past inside the old church and there was not enough space to accommodate those in attendance.

"Everyone is happy to see the completion of the church. The construction went through without any serious complications. As a new landmark it has turned out very well and the community is happy to be able to use it again. The newly reconstructed church provides a sense of pride for all of us," said Wabie.

## Wahgoshig FN Takes Part In Women's Retreat

Wahgoshig First Nation members recently attended the 'Women Walking Together' Women's Retreat at the North Bay Indian Friendship Centre. The event took place on November 5, 6 and 7, 2004 at the Friendship Centre's location in North Bay. Nine female Wahgoshig members from 19 to 25 years of age took part in the retreat. They were Ginger Nadon, Olivia Sutherland, Christina Morris, Anna Ellison, Christine Widdifield, Alisha Sutherland, Tanya Matthews, Melanie Wilson and Tess Matthews.

"Everyone who took part in the event was happy to attend the retreat in North Bay. These types of events are important to bring women together and learn about different issues related to First Nation women," said Evelyn Black, National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (NNADAP) / Community Healing and Wellness Worker for Wahgoshig First Nation.

Black organized the participation of local members to attend the North Bay event. Part of her work includes helping local members access workshops and events to learn about health and wellness issues. In addition, her role in the community is to provide education on drug and alcohol abuse issues and conduct workshops. Black, who started working in this position in

1998, also provides referrals and assists community members in accessing treatment facilities for additional assistance.

She explained that originally a women's retreat was planned to take place in Lowbush on the Abitibi River. Lowbush was once a small community where many families that are part of Wahgoshig First Nation lived in the past. Unfortunately, the planned retreat for Lowbush could not take place because of time constraints and it had to be cancelled.

"We did not have time to organize the retreat for Lowbush like we had planned. However, the North Bay 'Women Walking Together' event was an opportunity for us to reorganize our retreat by attending this gathering instead," said Black.

The Women's Retreat in Wahgoshig First Nation is an annual event that is planned by local community members. A retreat was organized last year that took place in the community and included cultural activities such as craft making and traditional teaching on women's issues. Previous retreats have taken place as wilderness camping events held in conjunction with other Wabun communities including Matachewan First Nation and Beaverhouse First Nation. In August 1999, Beaverhouse

First Nation hosted a retreat with Wahgoshig and Matachewan First Nations which included a two day canoe trip on the river system near the community site of Beaverhouse First Nation.

Black explained that the women participating in the retreat in North Bay will gain new skills and education on women's issues.

"This was a learning experience for the participants. One of the main goals of the retreat was for them to receive cultural teaching on women's roles and learn to cope with stress in everyday situations," said Black.

In addition, they learned how to deal with crisis situations and how to support one another during times of need or to seek help from others. There were also several First Nation women speakers who made presentations. These centered around the importance of acting as role models for others.

The three day event featured workshops on several issues including: women's teaching and songs, residential schools, self care techniques, laughter and play, self esteem, using humour and addictions. Traditional ceremonies were held to open and close the event. Special events were also held including an Indian Auction, Women's Hand Drum Socials and a feast.

## Wabun Scholarship Announced

Once again it is time to start thinking of applying for the Wabun Scholarship Fund. This year the deadline for applications is February 11, 2005.

The scholarship application is open to any Wabun Tribal Council First Nation student as long as he or she is enrolled in a post secondary school.

The applicant must send a letter to the attention of: Scholarship Fund, Shawn Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council, 313 Railway Street, Timmins, Ontario P4N 2P4. The letter should detail a little about

why the applicant feels he or she deserves this scholarship and indicate what program he or she is attending. Preference will be given to those in programs relating to telecommunications, health, engineering and business. The applicant must also include a proof of academic performance or a recent transcript. Several scholarships are available. So, all you Wabun First Nation councilors, those people in First Nation administration and students themselves this is your opportunity to submit your application for the Wabun Scholarship Fund.

# Wabun Women Run For Health

Mattagami First Nation members, Juanita Luke and Jennifer Constant along with Therese Mannila, Community Health Nurse, Wabun Health Services took part in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon. The three participants ran as part of the Lymphoma and Leukemia Society of Canada, Team in Training, to raise money and awareness for the organization. The weekend long event which was held September 24, 25 and 26, culminated with a series of marathon and walking events held on Sunday September 26, 2004.

Luke wanted to take part in this event as part of the team for the Lymphoma and Leukemia Society of Canada. In the summer of 2003, she was diagnosed with lymphoma.

"I wanted to do something about the fact that I had been diagnosed with lymphoma. The challenge of taking part in a marathon made me feel like I was taking an active part in dealing with my disease. It made me feel good to be physically active but also to know that I am helping to raise money for research and development for treating lymphoma," said Luke.

She works for her community as Finance Clerk for the administration office. At first Luke wanted to attend the event by herself but decided to look for support and assistance from com-

munity members. She invited Jennifer Constant, Regional Governance Coordinator for Wabun Tribal Council to go to the event and help her with training leading up to the event. Mannila also joined the two community members to offer her support and assistance for the event.

Constant said that this was the first marathon she had ever participated in.

"This was a really inspirational event and it felt great to be part of a team to support a good cause. There were many other teams running for charities and it was amazing to see runners of all ages taking part. I am thankful to Juanita. If she had not have asked me to go I would never have taken part in such a great event," said Constant.

Both Luke and Constant trained for the event together in Mattagami First Nation to prepare for the event.

"We trained on our own but I found out during the event that it was more work than I had imagined. It was a lot of work but we were able to finish the event. We walked the length of the course and it was a big help to have two friends participate with me. Jennifer is more physically active and could have gone faster but she decided to stay back and provide support throughout the event. It felt real-

ly good that we went as a group from our community and it was a big help to have both Jennifer and Therese participate with me," said Luke.

The three marathon participants asked for funding assistance and received support from their First Nation and from Wabun Tribal Council to attend the event. In addition, donations were also received from individual community members. The funds they raised to attend the event went to the Lymphoma and Leukemia Society of Canada.

"We are grateful for the help and support we received from our First Nation and Wabun. There was also a lot of moral support and encouragement from many people in our community. Even during the race it was inspiration and uplifting to receive shouts of encouragement and cheers from strangers who lined the event course in Toronto. I can't describe the feeling but it felt great to see others being happy and clapping for you. I will definitely be doing this again," said Luke.

Lymphoma is a less severe form of two types of cancer that arise in the lymphatic system of the body. The other form of lymphoma is non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The lymphatic system is an important network of vessels in the body that distributes a fluid containing white blood cells for the immune system. The Lymphoma and Leukemia Society of Canada is



**WABUN WOMEN (FROM L-R): THERESE MANNILA, JUANITA LUKE, AND JENNIFER CONSTANT.**

using its funds to operate the Leukemia Research Fund of Canada. This fund is used to work towards the goal of eliminating leukemia, lymphoma (Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin) and myeloma by funding vital Canadian research and promoting public understanding of the diseases until permanent cures can be found.

Luke and Constant are now planning on attending marathon fundraising and awareness campaigns for diabetes in the future. They are hoping to become part of the first Aboriginal team to take part in

international marathon events for diabetes. To prepare for future events, they are planning on going through training and conditioning to make sure they are in shape.

"These events are exciting and challenging experiences and they provide a way for us to promote and raise awareness as well as fundraise for worthwhile causes. It is a means to help a charity. It also gives us an opportunity to take part in a special experience and become physically active," said Luke.

## Walking Challenge

Wabun Health Care Workers staff challenged themselves to promoting healthier lifestyles by participating in a four month Walking Challenge. Wabun Health Care workers monitored their walking with daily and weekly goals during the four month period to promote physical exercise. The Walking Challenge started on May 9, 2004 and ended on August 28, 2004.

"The main goal of the walking challenge was to encourage everyone to go out and participate in regular exercise. Anytime we help people to go out and exercise is a success," said Peggy Claveau, Assistant Health Director for Wabun Health.

Participants were given pedometers to monitor how much walking they performed over a period of time. The Challenge was set up for participants to perform 20 kilometers or six hours per week. A contest was added to provide an incentive for people to take part in the challenge. Participants who completed 20 km were given two playing cards to create a poker hand at the end of the month. Those who completed an additional 20 km per week were given another card. At the end of the month, participants used their accumulated playing cards as a poker hand to win prizes. In addition, each participant who completed six hours of walking per week received a participation ticket to submit to a grand prize draw. Contestants could enter as many times as they liked depending on the amount of walking they recorded. At the end of the four month challenge a grand prize winner in the participation ticket draw was announced.

The grand prize winner for the challenge was Darlene Lafontaine, Financial Advisor for Wabun Tribal Council. She received a \$250 gift certificate for the Timmins Square. She logged 89 hours of walking during the four months with a total combined distance of 483 kilometers.

Claveau explained that the challenge was a pilot project to develop a similar project for Wabun communities in the future. The Walking Challenge was suggested by Cindy Giguere, Community Health Nurse for Wabun Health. The challenge was further developed by Wabun Health staff with the goal of introducing the idea into Wabun communities in the future.

"We learned a lot by putting this challenge together for our staff and we hope to do this again in the future for our Wabun communities. We all know the importance of physical exercise so we are planning on developing this challenge for our First Nations. It is important that we help and encourage as many people as possible to lead healthy lifestyles," said Giguere.

Starting from the 21 participants who initially took part in the challenge, there was a logged total of 1,183 kilometers or 276 hours walked during the four months.

"The four month challenge was a test for all of us at the office because we all lead busy lives. It took extra effort to find the time during the day to exercise. Everyone who participated in the walking challenge needs to be commended for their efforts," said Claveau.

## Anne Chookomolin Moves Ahead In Health



**ANNE CHOOKOMOLIN, WAHGOSHIG FIRST NATION**

Anne Chookomolin, a member of Wahgoshig First Nation, is working towards a career in the health care field. She is currently attending a one year Personal Support Worker program at Northern College in Timmins.

Chookomolin has worked for her First Nation as a health care worker in the past. She was employed by health services in her First Nation as a Personal Support Worker for two years but she did not have certification. However, Chookomolin has received health care training, through a General Health Sciences program at Cambrian College in Sudbury. She also worked in a Medical laboratory in Timmins as an assistant to a Laboratory Technician. While in this position she took a year of training in a post secondary program for a Laboratory Technician. In addition, she completed a one year Registered Nursing Assistant program from Northern College in Timmins.

As a Personal Support Worker for her First Nation, Chookomolin provided numer-

ous workshops to promote and create awareness of diseases such as diabetes. She received training in specialty care such as performing advanced foot care for clients with a Community Health Nurse. As a Personal Support Worker, her roles included assisting clients to monitor blood pressure, monitor patient medication and help clients meet their doctors away from the community. In addition, she held the position of Homemaker as part of the Home and Community Care Program in her community.

Chookomolin is considering taking additional training in her college education through a process called 'bridging over'. This will allow her to take her program as Personal Support Worker and add a second year as a Registered Practical Nurse (RPN). A normal RPN program is a two year program.

"I wanted to get my certification as a Personal Support Worker for my community. I feel good about going through with this training and I am also considering adding to my education and continuing the training I had in nursing. I want to stick to the nursing field because I feel

that there are more opportunities in this career," said Chookomolin.

Wahgoshig First Nation is sponsoring her post secondary program at Northern College.

"I want to thank Wahgoshig First Nation for helping me to acquire this training. It has turned out to be the best for our family as I can now be with my son who is attending his final years of high school in Timmins," said Chookomolin.

She is currently living in Timmins where her son Tyler Gunner is attending secondary school in the city. At 36 years of age, Chookomolin has a First Nation Cree background and is originally from Moose Cree First Nation on the James Bay coast. She transferred her First Nation status after marrying her husband Roger Chookomolin.

In her spare time, she enjoys being with her family. She describes herself as a hockey mom and enjoys helping her son attend tournaments during the winter season.

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