



Wabun Sun

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Wabun Health Directing Pandemic Flu Plan

Most people have been hearing about the possibility of a coming pandemic. The Bird Flu or Avian Flu is believed by many medical experts to have the potential to develop into a pandemic. It is only common sense to heed the warnings from our worldwide medical and scientific experts and to prepare for any possibility of such a wide spread disease possibility. Provincial experts don't agree on just how serious is the threat of the Bird Flu Pandemic. Dr. Donald Low, the chief microbiologist at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto claims that the threat is very real and that we should be very concerned and preparing for the inevitable. While Dr. Richard Schabas, Chief medical officer of health for Hastings & Prince Edward Counties, and former Chief Medical officer of Health for Ontario caution that we should not overreact to this situation. He believes much of this has to do with hype in the media and government in general. The disease has been around since 1997 and it seems Bird Flu has not yet taken the serious jump to human to human transmission.

An epidemic is known as an event that spreads rapidly and extensively by infection

and affecting many individuals in an area or a population at the same time. A pandemic is an epidemic occurring over a wide geographical area, throughout a region or even throughout the world

"Wabun Health is up to date with all of the latest news regarding disease and we do our very best to keep our communities informed and serviced. With that in mind it only makes good common sense for us to be prepared in case we see the development of a worldwide pandemic in the future. In no way do we want make anyone fearful or cause an over-reaction to the issue of pandemic flu. We believe that providing our First Nation communities with good information and being prepared is the best way to deal with any potential for the development of such disease. If you are educated about an issue it frees you from fear," said Jean Lemieux, Wabun Health Director.

For some time now Wabun Health has been working with its First Nation Leadership and Nishnawab-Aski Nation to develop a Pandemic Plan. In addition Lemieux has also been working with Health Canada Inuit Health Branch to develop Pandemic Planning and train-

ing related to it. As a matter of fact communities in North America and throughout the world are doing the same kind of planning.

Wabun Health has been very proactive in developing a Wabun Tribal Council Pandemic Pre-paration Plan. There are many levels of government, health and medical agencies and local authorities and administration to consult and work with in developing the plan. Currently Wabun Health has developed a draft of a Pandemic Plan which is being reviewed by Wabun Community Health Representatives and Community Health Nurses in each of Wabun's First Nations. To get to this stage Wabun Health has held meetings with Wabun First Nation Chiefs and Councils. Part of the development will involve identifying people from the First Nations to receive specific training as part of the Pandemic Plan and drawing up their roles and responsibilities. Health Canada is requesting a Pandemic Plan be submitted to them by March 31.

"There is no reason for anyone to be overly concerned about Pandemic Planning. All of the work that is going into this is important in terms of dealing with and

the prevention of our annual flu epidemics that arrive as sure as the snow and the cold. We are already doing much in this area through our Wabun Community Health Care Nurses in terms of prevention related to hand washing, awareness and annual flu shots," said Lemieux.

PANDEMIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTED

There are many phases or levels of planning for a pandemic. Surveillance is a big part of the plan as observing any evidence of sickness or flu and collecting that and then issuing it to the

proper medical authorities for analysis can make a big difference in prevention. This involves health staff, teachers, First Nation leadership and staff and nurses. The responsibility for a vaccine program also involves input from the First Nation leadership and nurses to make sure the people and resources are in place to service any need in the communities. Antivirals will be needed as part of prevention and its distribution will come from direction of medical authorities.

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Amy Sackaney Wins First Place In Basketball Free Throw

Amy Sackaney, a member of Wahgoshig First Nation, has taken first place in the Northern Ontario regional basketball free throw competition. The nine-year-old had attended several free throw competitions in succession to make it to the regional finals in Timmins on February 25, 2006 where she placed first in her age category. She received a plaque and t-shirt for her accomplishment.

"We are very proud of what Amy has accomplished in these competitions. She was a little nervous at first but in the end she was having fun at all her competitions. We are grateful to our community for helping us with transportation to get to one of our competitions in Kirkland Lake," said Ginger Nadeau, Sackaney's mother.

Sackaney started playing in competitions when her talent was recognized at her school this past year. She is in fourth grade at the Joseph H Kennedy Public School in Matheson. She received a plaque for taking top spot in her first competition in Val Gagne on January 18. On February 18, she participated in a school district competition in Kirkland Lake. There she also won first place and received a medallion and cer-

tificate of achievement for her accomplishment. She then went on to attend the regional competition in Timmins which was held at the O'Gorman Secondary School.

"The whole family is happy for Amy. It is a big achievement for her and we are all proud of her performance at these competitions," said George Sackaney, Amy Sackaney's grandfather, who is also the community's Crisis Team Coordinator.

She also received a lot of support from her family including her younger brother Keith Sackaney and her father Chris Sackaney.



AMY SACKANEY, OF WAHGOSHIG FIRST NATION, WON SEVERAL FIRST PLACE POSITIONS IN FREE THROW COMPETITIONS IN HER AGE CATEGORY.

Wabun Scholarships Awarded

Wabun Tribal Council has awarded six scholarships this year to post secondary students. The winners shared in the Annual Wabun Scholarship Fund awards based on their academic performance. The annual awards are provided by Wabun Tribal Council and businesses interested in supporting Wabun First Nation students in regards to their education.

The \$1,000 Northern Telephone/Wabun Tribal Council Scholarship Award was split into two \$500 awards. The winners were Mary-Lee Boissoneau and Stacey Dunn. Karen Huard won the \$500 Mattagami Construction award and Marina Thompson garnered the \$300 First Nations'

Engineering scholarship. Delta Rey Flood was awarded the \$250 Matachewan First Nation scholarship and Johnathan Dunn received the \$200 Scotia Bank award.

"I want to congratulate our scholarship winners for their hard work and I wish them well with their future endeavors. I also want to put forth our heartfelt gratitude to our scholarship sponsor partners for believing in and supporting the efforts of our First Nation students," said Shawn Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council.

The annual scholarships are open to all post secondary students who are members of a First Nation community in the Wabun Tribal

Council and enrolled in a post secondary school. An annual deadline for applications is set for mid February each year. Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications starting in January of each year to apply for these scholarships. 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 should indicate what program he or she is attending. The applicant must also include a copy of academic performance and a recent transcript.

Working With Health Care Team On Pandemic Planning

(CONT FROM PG 1)

It is important that health services are available in the event of a pandemic. Health services come under direction from the First Nation leadership and involve First Nation staff, Health Director, Community Health Nurses and nurses. Plans have to be developed to ensure continued health service to all communities with enough health staff to do the job, contingency plans and resources. The First Nation Leadership is responsible for Emergency Response. That includes making sure all the essential community services are up and running and with enough people in place to keep it that way if a pandemic occurs. This involves the efforts of First Nation Staff, Community Health Directors, Band staff and nurses. Mike Archer, Community Crisis Team Coordinator for Wabun Health is involved in assisting with the development of this planning.

When it comes to Health Measures the First Nation leadership will make the decisions in concert with medical authorities. Measures could involve implementing infection control protocols and promoting practices that reduce risk of

flu transmission. A community effort will be needed to consider and implement any quarantine measures required to keep infection under control. It is also important to make sure that there is a flow of information if a pandemic becomes apparent and the First Nation leadership and medical authorities will work together to assist in development of a communications plan.

THE AVIAN FLU (A PANDEMIC?)

Nobody knows for certain when and where a Pandemic Flu will occur. However, the World Health Organization has been keeping a close eye on the situation in terms of the Avian Flu or Bird Flu worldwide. This Bird Flu is known as H5N1. Right now the concern is growing as Bird Flu has spread from Asian countries to Europe with the migration of wild birds. The Bird Flu was first noted as it spread within the bird species and resulted in the deaths of thousands of birds in Asia. Then the alarm was given when people who were taking care of these birds or in close proximity to them began to be sick with the flu. Many of these people died and were confirmed

victims of the Bird Flu. Recently deaths were reported in Turkey and Iraq among people who lived close to and handled chickens with Bird Flu. Africa has also recently reported cases of the disease.

Global pandemics are rare and most people turn to the great Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918 when discussing the seriousness of this threat to humanity. Millions of people died all over the world as a result of the pandemic. This time experts are making great efforts to track disease worldwide to make sure we know if a pandemic is approaching and there is much work being done to prepare for any such development. To date 94 people have died world wide with avian flu that has jumped from bird to human. The great danger that all the experts are worried about is that this flu will start spreading among the human population from person to person. It is thought that this has not yet happened. As a matter of fact the World Health Organization is not really sure this has not already happened. In some limited cases close family members have died around a cluster involving the Avian Flu. This could be because

they were exposed to the same birds in the same way another family member was or that they got the flu from close relations to their family member. The concern is that once this does happen it will create a pandemic. The problem then is that we do not have vaccines to treat the Bird Flu and it is feared that many people will die as a result while a vaccine is being developed and provided for the population at large.

Currently the only possible defence to the Bird Flu are two anti viral flu drugs Tamiflu and Relenza. These drugs have been taken off the open market and are being held in case of a pandemic so that those in the greatest need or who are in positions of leadership, health and security can have access to protection while they work on the front lines dealing with the crisis. However, it is not known to what extent these drugs will actually protect a person from getting Bird Flu.

It is thought that less people will be affected in the developed world considering factors like medical access, infrastructure, higher standard of living and health in general and more resources to deal with a pandemic. However, it is feared that the

affects will be very high in third world countries where all of these resources and standards are much lower or not in existence.

Currently it looks like the Bird Flu in its most dangerous strain H5N1 has not reached North or South America. However a strain of bird flu was discovered on a poultry farm in Fraser Valley, B.C. in November 2005. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) says it was not the same type that has been blamed for killing people in Asia since 2003. The H5 virus was found in one commercial duck on a Chilliwack, B.C., farm. The CFIA says there was no immediate risk to domestic birds, but there are concerns the virus could mutate. The agency ordered a cull of all 55,000 ducks and 800 geese on the farm. B.C.'s chief veterinarian said that 14 wild birds have tested positive for an H5 strain of avian flu, but it's unlikely to be the deadly H5N1 strain. There is concern in the First Nation community that if the severe strain of Bird Flu does arrive in North America it will be passed on by migratory birds.

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Chief Willis McKay Heads Mattagami First Nation



CHIEF WILLIS MCKAY
MATTAGAMI FN

Chief Willis McKay is the featured Chief for this issue of Wabun Sun. He was elected to the position of Chief on April 11, 2005.

Chief McKay has worked for local community government for many years. He held the position of Chief in 2004 for a one year term. In addition, he was Chief for a three year term several years ago. In recent years, he held the position of Councillor for four years before becoming Chief again this past year. Chief McKay started working for his community many years ago in local administrative duties. In the late 1970s

and through the 1980s, he worked as a Membership Clerk, Band Administrator / Manager and as one of the first Welfare Administrators in Mattagami First Nation.

He is involved in just about every local activity and event in the community. He volunteers his time to work with local fundraising committees and events that take place in Mattagami FN.

"Our community members regularly organize events for the First Nation and our Council and leadership is always looking to developing projects for the future. As Chief I take on an official role in just about every activity that takes place in our community. I enjoy working with our community. I think that it is important to have our people participate in our local development," said Chief McKay.

He is working with his Council to develop more opportunities in the areas of education, employment and economic development. Recently, Mattagami FN signed a franchise agreement with a company based in Huntsville, Ontario that deals

in environmentally friendly cleaning products. As part of this new development, two local Mattagami FN members are receiving training in Huntsville. Chief McKay explained that this type of franchise is a first in Northern Ontario and it will be targeted to major businesses and companies based in Timmins. As part of this franchise agreement, Mattagami FN Chief and Council will oversee and facilitate the marketing and distribution of the company's environmentally safe cleaning products.

He is also working with the Council in developing long term opportunities for the community. Recently, Mattagami FN signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with Ontario Power Generation for the future development of Hydroelectric production in a partnership venture. In addition, Chief McKay and Council have secured approval with the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CHMC) to build six new housing units and rehabilitate or renovate nine existing homes in the

community this year.

In addition to all the projects that are taking place in the community, Chief McKay, First Nation Council and the local administration office are working together in restructuring the administrative duties of their First Nation. As part of this restructuring, individual roles and responsibilities are being redefined and budgets will be allocated to each separate program area. Each program area will then be led by a director to oversee each individual department.

"The restructuring of our office was a process we started in September 2005 and it will be an ongoing project for some time. We wanted to take this opportunity to redevelop our organization and better manage our programs, services and political advocacy in a more efficient manner. This change in organization will also allow us to provide more transparent and accountable services for our community. In the past, our Chief and Council leadership spent up to 80 percent of their energy on administrative duties which took away the

focus on other matters. We want to reverse this trend by developing separate program areas so that our leadership can concentrate more on addressing political issues," said Chief McKay.

In August, Mattagami FN established the Mitika Anookewin Logging Company. The company was created to harvest lumber wood for allocations provided to Tembec and Domtar. Chief McKay explained that the company is a project that came out of a working relationship with the two companies and current leadership and past Chiefs and Councils in Mattagami FN. The company now employs six workers and is currently providing training to three trainees.

Chief McKay has lived most of his life in Mattagami FN. He is 55 years of age and he has an Ojibwe background. His father had a Cree background and his mother was an Ojibwe First Nation person. He enjoys taking time to pursue traditional activities such as fishing and hunting at a wilderness camp in one of the community's traditional trapping areas.

Pandemic Flu Planning Underway In Wabun First Nations

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Wild goose and duck are very popular among First Nation peoples in Canada and it is feared that at some point our bird populations in this country could become infected.

FLU PREVENTION

The most effective way to prevent getting a flu has to do with a person's own actions. It is a good idea to get an annual flu shot if you are concerned about getting the flu and this is advised to elderly people, children and people with compromised immune systems. Remember when you see people with the flu or cold you must be extra careful. Also remember that when in public you come into contact with surfaces like door-knobs, hand railings, money and ATM machines that can be contaminated. To protect others, cover your nose and mouth if you sneeze and use tissues then discard them immediately.

Another easy thing to do

is to wash your hands often and correctly. Good hand washing techniques include using an adequate amount of soap, rubbing hands together to create friction and rinsing under running water. To wash hands with soap remove all rings and other jewellery from hands and wrists. Rinse hands under warm running water. Apply soap (liquid soap in disposable containers is best). Rub your hands together and lather well and then scrub your hands, fingers and wrists and forearms for 15 seconds. Rinse thoroughly under running water and then dry hands on a clean disposable towel or under an air dryer. Use a dry paper towel to turn off taps. Protect your hands from touching dirty surfaces as you leave the bathroom or in fact any public rooms. Keep fingernails short and do not use fingernail polish or artificial nails. If you use hand washing waterless gel then apply gel to palm of one hand, rub

hands together covering all surfaces of hands, fingers, wrists and forearms. Ensure enough gel is used to cover all surfaces and rub into hands until dry or about 30 to 60 seconds.

FLU SYMPTOMS

For adults, from day one to three, you may have a sudden fever, headache, muscle pain, weakness, dry cough, sore throat or stuffed nose. Day four, your fever and muscle aches should decrease, a hoarse dry cough or sore throat and mild chest discomfort may become more noticeable. Day eight, symptoms decrease but a cough and tiredness may last from one to two weeks. See a doctor if you become short of breathe while resting or doing very little or if breathing is difficult or painful and if you are coughing up bloody sputum or you are wheezing. Also, get checked up if you have started to feel better and suddenly you get a high fever and start to feel sick again or if you have had

a fever for three or four days and it is not getting better or worse.

The best thing to do if you have the flu is to get lots of rest and stay away from people. As well, take plenty of fluids to bring down your fever. Children under 18 years of age should not take Aspirin. The combination of ASA or aspirin and influenza in this age group has been known to cause Reyes Syndrome. Antibiotics are not effective against influenza. However, you might end up with bacterial infection when you have the flu and at that point you may have to take antibiotics.

For children, you must remember not to give Acetaminophen (Aspirin).

Avoid cool baths and provide plenty of fluids when a child is awake. **Bring the child to the hospital to see a doctor if he or she is less than six months old and has a temperature over 38.5 Celsius (or 101.3 Fahrenheit) for more than 12 hours that is not responding to Tylenol as prescribed for children.** Also, seek medical help if your child is constantly irritable and will not calm down and is drinking so little fluid that he or she is not urinating at least every six hours when awake. Also, seek medical attention if your child has been vomiting for more than four hours, has severe diarrhoea, or has any lung disease or chronic illness.

Family Violence Workshops For Wabun First Nations

Wabun Health Care workers are providing an educational workshop on family violence to all Wabun First Nations. Edna Hanson, National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (NNADAP) Worker / Mental Health Care Worker for Matachewan First Nation and Mike Archer, Regional Crisis Coordinator for Wabun Health will be facilitating the Family Violence Workshop during the month of March. The workshop is being produced by Wabun Health Services.

These workshops will present information on identifying different types of abuse and provide a Native perspective with an emphasis on giving information to women.

"We will try to offer as much information on these forms of abuse to the people that will attend these workshops. We are planning on covering several different topics and to educate participants on how to deal with these issues," said Hanson.

The Wabun Health Care workers are planning on featuring forms of abuse such as mental, physical and emotional. This education will include learning about the affects of abuse on a person, the family and the community as a whole.

"In addition, we have decided to talk about how women can be the ones causing the abuse as well. We want to show that men are not the only ones that can cause the different forms of abuse in a relationship," said Hanson.

The workshops will also show participants the steps in dealing with abuse. Participants will learn how to deal with abuse and how to contact the legal system in a safe way to resolve these issues.

"One of my goals in these workshops will be to help people who may be in an abusive

relationship to recognize that they are in an unhealthy lifestyle. This can include marriages or common law relationships at any age.

Many people experience emotional abuse which few recognize as abusive. The problem with this type of abuse is that in time, it can escalate into more violent forms of abuse," said Hanson.

She added that this education is important for all and could really help those who are in the community and are thinking about seeking opportunities outside their First Nation at some point. This information could make that process more successful.

"I think this kind of knowledge is more important in our First Nations because of the challenges we face. A lot of our people have to leave their community to live in a new environment in a city or town for work or education. Many times they feel that they are not able to access the support they need to deal with abuse or problems in a relationship. Sometimes people just don't know what to do or where to turn to for information. In a strange community, if they are unable to cope with these issues they feel that the only option is go home to find the help they need and at the same time give up on their goals of employment or an education," said Hanson.

As a NNADAP Worker / Mental Health Care Worker for her community, Hanson has gained a lot of knowledge on this subject through her work. She has also gained valuable first hand experience in helping others while working as a Women's Counsellor for a shelter for abused women in Southern Ontario from 1993 to 2001.

Evelyn Black Provides Information Session on Crystal Meth



EVELYN BLACK,
WAHGOSHIG FN

Evelyn Black, National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (NNADAP) Worker for Wahgoshig First Nation facilitated an Information Session on Crystal Meth for Wabun Health Care Workers on February 27, 2006. The day long workshop was provided by Wabun Health Services and it took place at the Wabun Office Complex in Timmins.

"The goal of this workshop was to help health care workers spot the early warning signs of crystal meth abuse. This also included information on how health care workers can work with communities in addressing this issue in our First Nations," said Black.

Crystal Meth is a street form of the drug, methamphetamine hydrochloride, that is inhaled or smoked. In recent years, this drug has become problematic in rural and small town centers due to the ability of individuals to produce the drug in home-

made labs using available ingredients. Experts agree that Crystal Meth is one of the most addictive substances. The relapse rate for Crystal Meth addicts is known to be higher than cocaine.

The drug is easy to produce in small labs by mixing a cocktail of about 15 substances, mostly pseudoephedrine (a cold remedy), red phosphorous and iodine, but also including ammonia, paint thinner, ether, Drano and the lithium from batteries. These products can be collected or bought from pharmacies and hardware stores.

Crystal Meth is the most popular form of the drug because it is so easy to make that anyone can set up a lab. Crank is a smelly, yellow type of Meth which is usually snorted. It is the cheapest form of the drug. Lith is short for the lithium taken from batteries as part of battery manufacturing. Lith comes in a paste form that is usually smoked and it is more expensive than crank but cheaper than the crystal form.

Crystal Meth is a synthetic central-nervous-system stimulant that increases stimulation of the dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine receptors in the brain. It can be swallowed, smoked, injected, or snorted. It provides a sense of focus and euphoria. Meth can cause hallucinations. Users may also hear voices telling them to harm

themselves or others, or think people are following them. Coming down, users often experience an intense craving for the drug, anxiety, confusion, fatigue, head-aches, and profound depression. They may be irritable, unpredictable, and suddenly violent.

The information session taught participants how to identify drug use, how the drug affects the body including the physical and psychological affects and provided help on how to prevent use.

"It is important to provide this information to our communities. Crystal Meth has developed into a very dangerous drug in Canada. When used it is a very corrosive substance for the body. It is also very addictive and the average life span of a user from the point when they start is seven years," said Black.

She received her training in Drug Abuse education through a certified program offered by the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology. In November 2005, Black completed the program in Thunder Bay. The program was made possible through Health Canada and it was part of Black's training as NNADAP Worker for her community.

For more information on Crystal Meth go to <http://www.kci.org/>

Feature Health Care Worker Is Mike Archer



MIKE ARCHER
REGIONAL CRISIS COORDINATOR

Mike Archer is the Regional Crisis Coordinator for Wabun Health Services. Archer works with all six of Wabun's First Nations to help maintain and coordinate the activities of the Crisis Teams in each of the communities. Although he makes regular visits to all of Wabun's communities, he is based at the Wabun office in Timmins. Archer started

this position on June 6, 2005.

As Regional Crisis Coordinator, he works with all of Wabun's First Nations in numerous areas including health, family violence and suicide. Archer works directly with each community and with each of the Crisis Teams. He maintains regular contact through visits that take place twice a month to each community. Archer is also available to provide one on one meetings at his office at Wabun in Timmins. He is actively involved in working with a planning team in developing a Pandemic Plan and prevention measures associated with that planning. In that regard he is working closely with Wabun Leadership and Wabun Health staff.

Part of his work is to develop training and educational opportunities for health care workers and

First Nation members. Currently he is organizing an Anti-bullying workshop for children and parents and a Family Violence Awareness workshop.

"I enjoy working with our First Nations and being able to contribute my knowledge and experience to help them develop. One of the main goals that I looking to address in this position is to help reduce family violence and suicide. I also want to stay focused on addictions. I feel that these are some of the main issues that are hurting our First Nations," said Archer.

He has worked in numerous positions in the past. Archer was employed for 20 years in Northern Ontario as a transport truck operator, a miner and as a heavy equipment operator. However, he explains that he has always had compassion to help others. After an accident rendered him

unable to continue his work, he realized that he needed to build and develop additional skills.

"I felt hopeful when I realized how important a good education was. I saw it as a challenge and went back to college to pursue a new goal. The time I spent in college became my greatest accomplishment. I am grateful to have been able to follow through with my goal and add to my education," said Archer.

He attended Northern College in Timmins for two years where he took part in numerous academic programs.

Archer also went to Canadore College in North Bay where he completed a Social Work program and graduated with a diploma in 2005. Archer has also dealt with his struggle with addictions. As part of his recovery, he has conducted inspirational speaking

engagements with First Nations and to First Nation students. He explains that passing on this education and knowledge is something he is passionate about. His presentations provide examples of his earlier life and show youth that there are positive choices in life.

"I speak to high school students about my experiences, strengths, and hope. I hope that students will hear my message so that the choices they make are healthy ones. Life is about choices and change and no one has to follow the road of addiction. I believe that educating our young, strengthens our future," said Archer.

At 48 years of age, he grew up in Timmins but his home First Nation is at Dokis First Nation where he is a member. Archer is a First Nation Ojibway person.

Wabun Health Care Workers Attend Workshop

Wabun Health Care workers and Wabun community members took part in an intensive abuse prevention workshop for Aboriginal communities called 'Walking The Prevention Circle'. It was presented by the Canadian Red Cross, Timmins and District Branch. The workshop was hosted at the Kunuwanimano Child & Family Services office in Timmins on February 21, 22 and 23, 2006. The three day workshop was attended by 22 First Nation people.

The Red Cross workshop was developed by and provided for Aboriginal people as well as people working in First Nation social services, education, health and legal services. During the 18 hour workshop, participants explored the history, challenges and potential of Aboriginal people and their communities. Participants learned about issues relating to abuse, neglect and interpersonal violence. They also learned to identify and deal with abuse issues and to learn to work towards a path of healing and recovery. One main focus of the workshop was to help people to become aware of these issues and move towards a lifestyle of prevention.

The workshop provided information on the root causes of abuse and neglect from

historical perspectives that included the impact of the intergenerational residential school system and the Indian Act; identifying the different types of abuse and neglect and their effects on children and youth; how to respond to disclosures and follow procedures and the legal reporting process and how to prevent abuse and neglect at the individual, organizational and community levels. Each participant received a comprehensive manual and all the information and discussions during the workshop were supported by video resources.

"The presentations that were given opened my eyes to the past of the residential school system and how that has affected our families and communities. I believe it is important to have this kind of knowledge to help our communities. We need to break the cycle of abuse and neglect by taking steps in awareness and prevention," said Theresa Sutherland, Education Assistant for Wahgoshig First Nation at the Joseph H Kennedy Public School in Matheson.

Twenty women and two men from all across the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) area took part in the workshop. Sutherland along with Pauline McKay and Mike Archer, Regional Crisis

Coordinator were sponsored by Wabun Health to take part.

"We learned a lot of knowledge and new skills from this workshop. I think that it is important to help our communities deal with these issues. This workshop seems to have come at a good time for us as we at Wabun as we are preparing to offer our own workshops and presentations on the subject of abuse and neglect to our First Nations," said Archer.

Sutherland will be continuing her education and training on this subject and she will be attending the RespectED: Violence and Abuse Prevention program for trainers. This is a more intensive program by the Red Cross that provides education and certification for participants to become Prevention Educators.

"We need to promote safe and supportive relationships for individuals. We need to show others that awareness of these issues is the first step to break the cycle of abuse," said Sutherland.

She has worked for over 15 years in the education sector for First Nation communities. Originally from Fort Albany First Nation on the James Bay coast, Sutherland first worked for

six years as school counselor in her home community. She attended the Native Classroom Assistant Program and Special Tutor Program at Nipissing University in North Bay from 1995 to 1997. In 2000, she graduated from a Social Workers program offered through the First Nation Technical Institute. She then went on to start her current position in Matheson in 1997.

As Education Assistant for Wahgoshig FN, Sutherland works directly with First Nation students on a one on one basis and as a liaison between student, teachers, principal and parents.

"I enjoy working with our students and by helping them be more comfortable in the school environment. I have many duties but I think one of my main roles is to be there for our students as a local community person they know and trust. I also take the opportunity to introduce our Native culture to the school and make everyone

aware of our cultural and traditional lifestyle," said Sutherland.

Both RespectED and the Walking The Prevention Circle workshops are provided by the Red Cross under the organization's umbrella program titled 'Walking The Prevention Circle'. The program which has been developed by First Nation people, is geared towards First Nations individuals and communities to develop individual, group and community wide practices to identify and prevent abuse and neglect. The programs and workshops also help communities and health care workers to develop a community based organization to organize and coordinate efforts for education and support, to build a prevention education framework, provide community education, provide education programs for youth and set up a monitoring process and support for educators.

Wabun Sun



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