

TeLLiNG OuR SToRY

WOYAKI OWICAJKAPI • TIBAUGI MOIN •
É WÍTAMÁK NITÁCIMOWININÁN

Narrative Report to the Southern First Nations Chiefs and Councils

Summer 2013





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All stories written by Jim Compton



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Introduction



The Southern First Nations Network of Care (SFNNC)* has undertaken to provide the southern First Nations Chiefs and Councils with an overview report twice a year – summer and winter. The SFNNC is pleased to present the Summer 2013 report. Previous reports can be found on the SFNNC website at <http://www.southernnetwork.org>.

As the SFNNC approaches its tenth year anniversary, we are pleased to profile the tremendous work being done in the area of “Differential Response”. DR is the clinical term but among the front line workers it has become known as “A New Approach”. This new Approach is now streaming through all of the SFNNC CFS Agencies and the word on the street is that it is helping in ways that could not have been imagined a decade ago.

In this issue we will bring you two examples of how this New Approach is working with our front line / first response agency, All Nations Critical Response (ANCR) (The Picnic) and West Region CFS (A New Approach to Child Welfare is Upon Us). It shows that with dedicated resources we can prevent children and families from coming into care by assisting them through some rough patches.

We will also bring you the unique stories of children (Finding a Voice and Tears of Joy) in care that have overcome many obstacles and graduated. We will tell you an inspiring story of how one young lady has taken her dream further and is now attending classes at the University of Winnipeg through a unique “Pay It Forward” program (It’s the Dream). We will also profile Denise Everett. It is another inspiring story of how one woman rose from being in the system to working in the system.

And as you know, the SFNNC has a Council of Elders. In this edition we will profile John Murdock and his brother David. Both are Residential School survivors. Lastly we will walk you through our Connectivity Project and how it is revolutionizing how we connect with all of our southern CFS Agencies.

We hope you find this report informative and useful. We welcome any suggestions you might have for stories in the future. Please contact Jim Compton, Director of Community Relations and Communications at 204-783-9190 (toll free: 1-800-665-5762) or jim.compton@southernnetwork.org.

We would be pleased to come out to your community to meet with you on concerns you may have in relation to child and family services. Please contact Lorna Croitor at 204-783-9190 (toll free: 1-800-665-5762) or lorna.croitor@southernnetwork.org to arrange this.

We also encourage you to check out the SFNNC website at www.southernnetwork.org. In addition to resource information, you will find copies of annual reports and annual audits.

*Southern First Nations Network of Care is the operating name of the First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority, also referred to as the Southern Authority.

The New Approach

"But yet there is hope. As it is said in the time of the Seventh Fire... A new people shall arise."

What you are doing, what you are trying to do is part of what they are talking about."

Bawdway widun Benaïse

Eddie Benton-Benai

Healing Our Peoples Everyday (H.O.P.E.)

Differential Response



About a decade ago a question was put to Aboriginal People. The question was, “if we were to gain control of Child Welfare what would we do differently?” How would we deal with the myriad of children and families coming into care? Collectively we had come to a crossroads in time where we were asked if we wanted to continue down a path that simply apprehended children or embark on a new one that held prevention as the answer.

From children on down to elders the path chosen was to be one that held the most “hope”. That hope rests with a decision to deal with children and families that were coming into care with a different eye. An eye that looked at not only the negatives that brought them into care but an eye that also looked at the positives that would act as a glue to keep families together. That new way of doing things is now upon us.

In clinical circles it is something called, “Differential Response”. However in the eyes of the people (Clients and CFS workers) it is called a “New Approach” that is anchored in helping families in crisis get through their ordeal intact as a family with community help. It is felt that this is to be a new era filled with the hope of rekindling a new relationship that draws on the strength of the First Nation’s community.

Is the road going to be easy? The short answer is “no”. But the long answer is that there is tremendous hope that this “New Approach” over time will do two things. First will bring back a trusting relationship between CFS workers and the people it serves and at the same time strengthen the idea that “it takes a community to raise a child.” Second that it will bring communities back to a balance that was enjoyed not so long ago. And with that balance we will effect a change to keep First Nations families together.

Differential Response (DR) is a new approach in how child and family services (CFS) supports families with a focus on prevention and early intervention which allows parents to care for their children/youth at home. Working with a family’s strengths in a way that is culturally sensitive and inclusive of community partnerships, DR aims to keep families together while ensuring children are safe and protected. This new approach addresses problems before they become crises and also make for healthier family relationships. Providing services that account for all of a family’s needs helps children, youth and families live in stable, nurturing environments while continuing to include protection services when it may be required to keep children safe. The new approach to working with families in Manitoba strengthens our communities and ensures better outcomes for our children.

Key elements of Differential Response:

When a child or family enters the child welfare system they are assessed based on safety and risk. The Safety assessment determines the immediate safety of the child. The Risk assessment does exactly that, it determines whether the child is at risk of being harmed, abused or neglected in any way. A thorough, strengths and needs assessment

is conducted to determine a family's needs and what types of services are required to support the family. A determination is then made whether the case is "prevention" or "protection" (There is ability to move between the two while the case is active). One of the great strengths of using this as a new approach is its increased flexibility in responding to families with different needs to ensure child safety and their well-being. Some of these differential responses may be:

- Brief Services
- Referrals to community resources
- Family Enhancement (FE) Services
- Protective Services

DR also involves children, youth and families in the decision making and case planning of their situations. As well, CFS agencies work with community based resources to meet the needs of the family.


This co-operation between families and CFS agencies in Manitoba is a new stream of service called Family Enhancement (FE). It begins with completing a strength-based family assessment and working together to develop a plan based on the family's needs. Once this plan is developed, an agreement is made between the agency and the family. This agreement, called a Family Enhancement service agreement, provides services through 90 day agreements, and can be extended based on the family's needs.

Some of these services provided may include things such as in-home support, parenting programs, adolescent supports, individual and family counseling, addictions education, anger management, healing and cultural teachings just to name a few. For more information see the FE Pamphlet and Poster.

Important Dates:

As of July 1, 2012 all new reports of abuse or neglect will be assessed using "Differential Response". A Safety and Probability of Future Harm assessment must be completed and all cases that are to remain open will be streamed to either Family Enhancement or Protection. This is a requirement by all 4 Authorities. The Southern First Nation Network of Care agencies will also complete the Caregiver Strengths and Needs if the case is going to remain open and all cases open to Family Enhancement (FE) will open when the FE Service Agreement and Case plan is signed by the family.

All cases were required to be on CFSIS as of October 31, 2012 in order for the case to be funded. There is specific criteria that needs to be completed for each case category: VFS, FE, Protection, EPS or CIC cases. The Southern First Nation Network of Care will be working with agencies in providing CFSIS training and support over the next few months to ensure that all agencies will receive funding for their open cases.

SDM Training has been provided continuously over the past year. There was a Train the Trainer session held on July 17, 18 and 19 to ensure that agencies have the capacity to provide training within their own agencies. A CFSIS Supervisor's Training has been scheduled for August 2013. 





Early Intervention Program

The Picnic

It's a warm sunny summer afternoon in the middle of July. The birds are singing. The children are playing at Vimy Ridge Park. At this family outing everyone is busy having fun getting their faces painted and enjoying a hot dog and a soda. For most families the traditional picnic isn't a rare occurrence. But for many families coming into the Child Welfare system it is.

With all the issues facing the everyday family today finding time to unwind with the kids can be fleeting. The family picnic has become an afterthought.

But for Early Intervention / Family Enhancement worker, Tammy Kovich, it has become a useful tool dealing with families who come through the doors of the All-Nations Community Response (ANCR) Crisis unit.

“We find we need something immediately. Families are in crisis. The youth is out of the home at a relatives or a friends and they need mediation pieces. We need to stabilize it so they don’t have to wait weeks or months to get in the program.”

Jeanette Brazeau, heads up the First Nations Early Intervention Program team at ANCR. She agrees going back to the little things like taking the time to have a family picnic can help to open doors.

“Society is changing. It wasn’t so long ago that we weren’t really sure how to relate to teens or saw the need for parents to learn different skills, techniques and tools.”

Get Parents Thinking Change

“For us its easier to get the parent thinking change. We have found that they are feeling more empowered in their skills as a parent.”

This new approach complete with family enhancement tools are part and parcel of a new initiative by the Southern First Nations Network of Care (SFNNC), which over sees ANCR and nine other First Nations Agencies. Marcia Liske, SFNNC Differential Response coordinator says, “family enhancement is a new stream of service that’s geared to preventing less children coming into care.”

“The idea is to work around the issues. To look at the strengths and needs of the family and provide the right kind of service in a timely fashion,” adds Liske.

The fact that families are showing up at the monthly ANCR picnic and enjoying themselves gives the ANCR FE team a good idea how things are going on the home front.

“We find parenting teens is like parenting infants. Parents feel like they are walking on egg shells. Its all about parents sharing stories with their team and then establishing relationships with other parents,” says Brazeau.

Empowering Parents

“It was always about empowering parents to take charge and be in control over the bus that they are driving. We are giving those resources to parents and they are taking advantage of it and not moving further into the system,” adds Kovich.

Kovich scans the picnic area and points to a young woman volunteer who is prime example of how the new approach is working. I went into the home and the mother says, “she’s out of here next Tuesday. Because I gave her two weeks to smarten up!”


Police had been called a number of times. I said to mom, “Will you extend her two weeks? Mom said, ‘Yes. We’ll try it.’”

“Well its been five weeks. I connected her up to our life skills coach, job searching and and what not. She is now enrolled in school this September and she’s looking forward to it. And her mother didn’t get right up in her face.”

A Hand Up

Both Tammy and Jeanette know that the events that they put on once a month are small but at the same time big. “The families enjoy the hand up not the hand out,” says Kovich. “We had a mom who attended an event at Tinker Town. She said ‘God bless you people. We would never went because I don’t drive.’”

“The message is that prevention works by being proactive and establishing relationships. The odd time a parent says, ‘I need a break’ and their kid has come into care. So we work hard to do the whole extended family piece and mediate the process with the parent,” says Brazeau.

FE workers like Tammy and Jeanette know life is not always a picnic but but sometimes when you stop and smell the flowers it can put a whole new perspective on life. 

A New Approach



... to Child Welfare is Upon Us!

You can call them a new force ... a more caring force of CFS Workers. Their lofty goal is to simply prevent families and their children from coming into care. Over the past year the formation and strategic roll-out of Differential Response / Family Enhancement teams within Agencies mandated by the Southern First Nations Network of Care has taken place. One of those specialized teams is housed within the West Region Child and Family Services (WRCFS) office right here in the heart of Winnipeg. Its leader is Analyn Einarson, Ph.D. Her team's mindset is "Prevention!"

We caught up with a family recently that has just begun the journey into the Differential Response / Family Enhancement mindset. At a regularly scheduled meeting, a mother along with her 16 year old daughter, conference with their newly appointed Family Enhancement

worker, Marlene. The 16 year old daughter is six months pregnant and preparing for motherhood. With the help of a new Family Enhancement program here at the WRCFS she is getting help in the form of parenting and pre-natal classes while she studies for her Grade 12 high school exams.

“With our help we have encouraged her to stay in school and will continue to help her with things like day care and an educational plan to get her through grade 12,” says Marlene. The mom, who has two other school age children at home, hopes the program can keep assisting her young daughter right into post-secondary school.

“Our Mindset is Prevention!”

Urban Services Supervisor, Analyn Einarson, says this is just one small example where the new FE approach to “prevention” is helping to keep families together. Analyn says this is just one of the many cases that her 3 FE workers handle every day. “This one was straight forward, as the daughter has a loving, caring and supportive family. But, there are other cases that the workers find more challenging.”

“Some of our clients have been stigmatized. They have a fear that the agency and/or workers will not listen to them, will not work with them or will not understand their situation. This fear may have come from personal experience or they know someone who had a difficult time working with a CFS agency. So there is a reluctance to work with us. It’s hard to gain the trust.”

That reluctance led Analyn, with the WRCFS Urban Services Team, come up with a plan that caters to the needs of those families that were coming into the agency at low to medium risk. Families that they felt, with a helping hand, could weather the little storms that come up from time to time.

“It was tied to our DR FE Business plan. Previously, the CFS workers carried a mixed case load. We thought to be more effective in the services that we provided, we needed to look at the workers’ strengths and have them in specialized roles.” says Analyn.

“We created three teams based on three categories; Family Enhancement; Protection and Permanent Ward. This would allow us to be more focused and effective with dedicated teams and dedicated FE workers.”

Along with the creation of a dedicated team Analyn and her staff also needed to school themselves on something called SDM or Structured Decision Making. “It was very important to understand the initial safety assessment and the probability of future harm. Knowledge of history ensures that nobody falls through the cracks and that we are looking at the family’s strengths.”

Analyn added, “Implementing SDM was not too difficult as there was a plan laid out prior by the Director of Urban Services, Verna McIvor and the Urban Services CFS Supervisors.

“Don’t get me wrong, it was stressful and challenging to meet the June 30, 2011 SDM deadline because of the timeframe, but it was made easier because the CFS workers accepted the challenge and they understood the importance of completing the SDM assessments. Simply, everybody just stepped up and it was a West Region team effort.”

“The SDM and the new FE approach allow us to look at the whole picture and to understand the family’s whole story. Our job is to find the family’s strengths and find ways to keep the family together,” says Analyn.

She says that they have come across families that don’t want to work with them. That’s where the specialized FE worker comes in. “An FE worker who can convince and show parents that they have the opportunity to keep their family together is key. I call it a mindset. Our mindset is prevention!”

“Finding the Strength”

For example, Analyn points to one case in particular. “She used to be a protection file, where she had her daughter in care, who is now two years old. Mom worked really hard on her case plan and reunification plan with her CFS worker. Because of her rapport with her CFS worker, she was able to tell her worker if she was ready or not. We increased visits, mom continued to work with her case plan and in a year and a half her child was returned to her care.”

Under the old system she admits that all could have been missed. “So now mom is working with an FE worker and the FE worker’s job is to continue to strengthen Mom; to help empower her; to give her the confidence; to advocate for her child when she is not doing well in school. Something she could not do on her own before.”


In another case she points to an FE case where the mother and dad had alcohol issues. “They had three kids. They were 16, 17 and a three year old. The FE worker had a family conference that included the maternal

grandmother and two maternal uncles. The worker posed the questions: “What are we going to do when they drink?” “What are they as a family going to do?”

At the end of the day all agreed to a safety plan that gave them ownership of the problem and the solution. “We feel we are giving them chances without putting children at risk.”

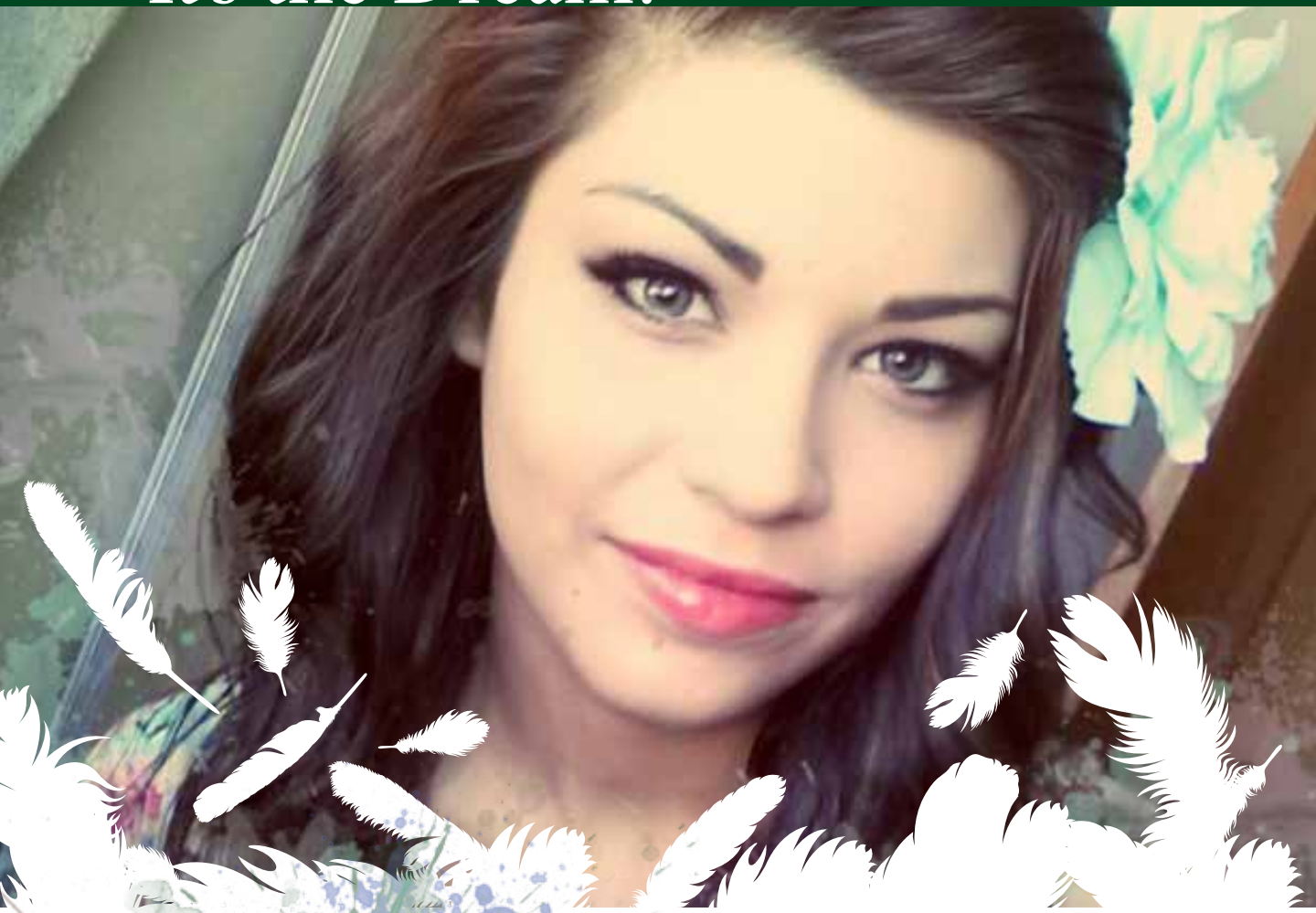
“Sending a message”

“We are sending a message that we care,” says Analyn. “That we are not out there to dismantle families, we are there to strengthen them. We are saying to parents that they have the skills to be better and to be more confident.”

As the 16 year old, her mother and worker Marlene wrap up for the day, they are comfortable knowing that the immediate and long range plans have been looked at and are being taken care of. One where a young expecting mother can focus on her education, her new born and her future... with a little help from her CFS agency. 



It's the Dream!



Educational Institutions Paying it Forward

She speaks with all the enthusiasm and spirit of a newly elected politician. And if you ask her why she will tell you, “It’s the Dream! I want to be the next Prime Minister!”

After completing her first year at the University of Winnipeg, 19 year old Rayna Gopaul feels she has gone through a life changing experience. “Being here at the University you learn so much. For someone like me it’s totally empowering. I know with every bit of suffering that if I work hard one day I can picture myself at the podium doing the acceptance speech.”

Rayna's dream of being a future politician gained a whole lot of momentum when she was accepted to the Tuition Waiver program offered to youth in CFS care through the University of Winnipeg. Last year Rayna registered at the U of W with the help of her support worker, Wendy McPherson.

"Rayna never fit into the regular school system. She felt out of place and had a few altercations. She blossomed at the Job Works Alternative school. Her marks were high and based on that I recommended she take a look at the University of Winnipeg. She's never looked back," says McPherson.

Since she was four years old Rayna has been in the care of CFS. Today the only family she speaks of is her grandpa who is also her foster parent. Over the past year she feels her supports and new found family can be found through the Aboriginal Student Centre here at the U of W.

"There are good supports here. Everybody is easy to talk to. Coming here is the best experience of my life, having coffee, going over papers with the tutors here and getting advice," says Rayna. "People think I'm a nerd because I say, 'yeah, we're getting a new assignment today'. I love researching with my headphones on, listening to my classical music. I'm in my zone."

The idea for waiving tuition for youth in care came from one of the U of W's board members. Jay Rogers, who is also the CEO of the General Authority, was asked by his board how they could help the youth going through the CFS system. In a sentence he said, "waive their tuition and allow them the opportunity to get an education."

Since the inception of the U of W Tuition Waiver Program 25 students have taken part. And the idea is being offered to other post-secondary institutions. Red River Community College is offering 20 full year equivalents for any of their programs on any campus; Brandon University has 10 students starting this fall; and Assiniboine Community College

has confirmed participation as of Sept 13. The U of MB, St. Boniface College, the University of the North and Booth College have been contacted to take part in the program.

Rayna considers herself extremely lucky to have the opportunity to go to University and she doesn't take anything for granted. "I don't go out to the clubs or want to ride in fancy cars. I'll do that later when I get my education."

In the meantime Rayna stays focused on her studies, her dream and her new political hero...Barack Obama.


"I did a speech about him in one of my classes during the Presidential election. The focus was how Mitt Romney made life easier for the rich and would undo all the changes Barack Obama made during his term."

But what impresses Rayna the most about President Obama is that he is a family man. "He's open about his family and cares about women's rights, the rights of students. He's made it easier for them to get an education."

One day Rayna hopes to shake his hand and tell him what a great inspiration he was. "I would tell him what a great inspiration he was to me and that I wouldn't be where I am without looking up to him."

For now Rayna is working on her own campaign to restore Mother Earth. She has created her own website complete with her political page. "I want to change how things are run so we don't destroy the ozone layer. If it breaks there is no more oxygen and it's the end of the world. I will be the politician that gets up and says, 'I didn't allow that to happen!'"

"Wow, what a difference a year makes," says Wendy. "Her confidence has grown and she now knows what she wants."

With all that new found confidence, Rayna has a message to go along with her dream. "Keep going. I didn't have a family to say 'keep it going'. I know I'll make sure when I have children they will have the family I never had." 

Finding a Voice



Norma Paul with her dad, Bruce Lavalley and ACFS Administrator, Emma Edwards

18 year old Norma Paul beams with pride as she speaks about her time with the Sea Cadets of Canada. While she is out of uniform she imagines she has it on as she describes the many merit badges and stripes she has earned. “I am a Chief Petty Officer First class. I am what they call a Boatswain and at a Marksmen’s level three.”

Anishinabe Child and Family Services Administrator, Emma Edwards says, “She also has a license to drive a power boat and she’s not afraid to use it.”

For Mary Mahler, who works with aging out children for ACFS, the transformation in young Norma is quite remarkable. "Norma has been in care since she was three years old and she's been through a lot. She has always been shy and quiet but today on her graduation we are all pleased to see she has found her voice."

"As the Boatswain I get to call the messages to the ships company from the captain. It makes me feel good because people listen," says Norma.

But finding her voice and graduating has not all been smooth sailing for Norma and that comes out in her message to young people. "Don't do drugs and stay in school."

Mary says that there was a rough patch when Norma was in grade ten and just like other youth she got into drugs. Her commitment to Cadets, a supportive family and a very understanding older sister helped her to overcome that challenge. "Jen is my older foster sister. She's 30. She helped me a lot by just talking to me and encouraging me to complete school."

The future is full of activity for the Chief Petty Officer First Class Norma Paul. She will return to Comox, B.C. to train other cadets for life on the high seas of the Pacific. "I fly out on the 2nd of July. I'm thinking of becoming an officer one day."

That's an affirmative. 



Tears of Joy



Hayley Paul and her proud grandparents, Joan and Douglas

They say sometimes in life things go full circle. For 17 year old Hayley Paul and her grandparent's a life cycle within a generation has definitely come full circle. You can see it in the eyes of Hayley's grandmother Joan as Hayley speaks about a major milestone in her life...graduating Grade 12.

"I'm happy it's over and done. I missed 5 months of the school year but I caught up and now I'm graduating," says a relieved Hayley. That was a transition time for Hayley as she had decided to move back to her grandmothers care in Lake Manitoba from her foster home near Selkirk.

"I was going to Selkirk High School and had to transfer to Lundar High School," says Hayley.


For Hayley who has just been reunited with her biological family over the past year it has been a long and winding road to get to where she is today. Seven years prior Hayley's grandmother Joan watched helplessly as Hayley was placed in a Foster home.

"When Hayley was 10 she was going through some hard times. She was running away. So her mother and I voluntarily let her go into care. It was a good foster home. "

Today Hayley thanks her grandmother and her foster parents for getting her through hard times and eventually High School. Her message to other youth is, "Never give up and just keep going."

For Grandma Joan it is a extra special time as she remembers back to her early days in school. "I never knew my family. I had six brothers but we were separated at the Fort Alexander residential school. I never graduated. I was too shy. I had no confidence."

As you look into Grandma's eyes you can see her pride well up inside her as she watches her granddaughter receive her High School diploma. "I hope she keeps going. I know she wants to be a hairdresser but that's just for now. I hope she goes to University."

(Hayley has enrolled in the Scientific Marvel Hairdressing School for the fall.) 



Strengthening



Through Family Enhancement

Denise Everett has piercing eyes behind a welcoming smile. Upon meeting her you soon realize she has acquired wisdom through a life of challenging experiences. Hers is a story that can often be overlooked or forgotten among the many in our communities today. She hopes that by sharing her story she can offer encouragement and a little inspiration to others involved with the Child and Family Services system.

Denise struggled with addiction and faced many challenges in raising her young family as a single mother. Addicted to cocaine, she was faced with the prospect of losing her children to apprehension by Child and Family Services. She knew that she required a drastic change in her life.

“My kids are all I’ve got. If I lose my kids I have nothing”, says Denise. With some help and guidance, Denise found herself enrolled in a treatment program. That program put her in touch with an Elder, who in turn helped guide her to self-discovery and identity as an Aboriginal woman.

Having completed treatment, Denise was feeling much stronger and one day, while walking, she found herself attracted to a brightly coloured mural with Aboriginal images.

That building is the Snowbird Lodge on the corner of Sherbrook Street and Sargent Avenue in Winnipeg. Encircling the Lodge building is a brightly coloured mural painted by some of the children who participated in programs at the lodge. The mural includes the work and images of Tracia Owen. Tragically Tracia took her own life in 2004 at the age of 14. She was one of many sexually exploited Aboriginal youth.

Impressed and intrigued by the mural Denise found herself asking, “What is this place?” So, she went inside. “I was dressed in nice clothes that day, and the receptionist immediately asked me what organization I was from.”

Denise found this funny, and explained, “I was merely there to find out what went on in such a place. The receptionist explained some of the programs offered, including those that fall under Family Enhancement.”


Looking around, Denise noticed a picture of an Elder. It was the same Elder she was connected with in her treatment program. That Elder was Paul Daniels. It put her at ease. She knew then that she was on the right path.

Having grown up in an Icelandic town, Denise belonged to one of only two Aboriginal families in her community. Her grandparents had been sent to residential school and rarely spoke of their culture or practiced Aboriginal

ways. Having missed out on these experiences in her early life, Denise’s journey of discovery of her identity as an Aboriginal person made her hungry for more. “You know when you eat a certain kind of food you really like? You want more and more. That was like me with my culture.” Growing up, having felt like she didn’t fit in had become “normal” for Denise and it made her angry. But, her new path started a renewal within her and began to positively affect her life. “When I heard the drum, I felt shivery inside me. How come I felt like this? I realized, it’s because it’s in my blood. I was angry before and then I learned to be thankful.”

Connecting with herself and the Family Enhancement program has seen Ms. Everett grow closer to her children. “I got to do things with my kids in a healthy way. Nobody showed me that I was doing it wrong.” But the road to a healthier way was not without challenges. “Nobody wanted to work with me. I was an angry person and I thought the world owed me something. Seven weeks in treatment changed my life. People always say there’s nothing in the North End. I used all these programs to get where I am today.”

Family Enhancement has done just that for Denise Everett and her family, it has enhanced their relationships and made them stronger. “Family Enhancement allowed us to grow closer as a family through ceremony. We’ve been involved in summer programs, gone medicine picking and participated in sharing circles. My nine year old has learned to be very respectful. She’ll ask me, ‘Where’s my skirt?’ I want to go to ceremony.”

Denise Everett is now enrolled in the Inner City Social Program and by the end of next summer expects to have her Bachelor of Social Work Degree. 

Two Eagles



Two Eagles are perched on a large tree branch overlooking the waters along the shores of the shallow Fisher River. They look at each other and then scan the river for any sign of a movement. One picks up his head. He can see a slight ripple of a fish as it surfaces to eat. He raises his talons, spreads his wings and swoops down.

On a back stoop of his brother's house 70 year old David Murdock watches intently. It is a sight that he has witnessed time and time again. It reminds him of a time when he and his brother John Murdock were boys. Memories of happier times long ago when they played together along the shores of the Fisher River. Today David can no longer play or even walk along the river. He has recently lost two legs to Diabetes. For him it's even a struggle to get to his brother John's home.

But on this rainy day in May David has a special purpose in coming to his brother's house. John has cooked up a feast and will share it with a special friend of his. This special friend has come to bestow a traditional gift on the two brothers. Although they have both began their own personal healing journey long ago they know this gift they will receive today will help them even more.

Shane Patterson is their special friend. He is a renowned singer and holy man from South Dakota. He has heard the story of John and David. Their story is one of many that have been told in recent times about experience in residential schools.

"I have heard the story of your experience in residential school. In hearing that story there is a song that I see to help you in your healing. That's our way of acknowledging the gift of Song... of prayer. You smoke your pipes with us. That is our protocol."

Both John and David have prepared their pipes for prayer.

"This song that I will share with you comes from the Sun Dance Lodge and the Dakota people. It's one of the rites of the Chanupa (Pipe). I'm going to sing it four times through and leave it here with you. I know you have a Sweat Lodge and you are welcome to use that song in there. You can use it in your feasts, your Pipe Ceremonies or where ever you want to use it in a ceremonial way."

John and David look on as the song starts out in a slow but rising chant from Elder Shane. A verse is then sung in Dakota.

"Tanka Shiela! Ushama deo! Wah nee Wa Chee ado!" In English it translates into,

"Grandfather! Have pity on me! I want to live!

"We are not going home."

John and David's story begins in happier times ... a time when they both played in comfort along the shores of the Fisher River.

"We lived in a big old house and were very close to our parents," says John.

That all changed one day when the local Priest and Indian Agent came and told their parents that they would be taken to the Pine Creek Indian School near a place called Camperville.

"It was pretty sad. I had a bad feeling. They talked to my parents and my dad came and said that we have to let you go. You're going away to school," says David. "My dad says that if he doesn't let us go they would arrest him."

John and David thought that they would both be there for only a few days. Those days turned into weeks and then months.

"Over the next few nights I began to miss my parents. I'd ask my older brother when we are going home. He said not until the next summer. I started crying. I was lonesome for my parents."

"We grew up hardened of heart."

John and David have many bad memories of their time at residential school.

"We were not allowed to speak our language. The nuns would call us 'Savage,'" says David. "I remember this one guy. They made him knee in front of us and



they were kicking and slapping him. The nun said, 'this is what will happen if you look at me the wrong way.' I said to myself that if that comes my way I would fight."

"If we cried they made us sit up all night. So we learned to keep everything inside," says John. "I was always used to being hugged and kissed when I went to sleep. In four years they never once told us they loved us. We grew up hardened of heart."

"I wanted to die"

"My Dad told me one day that I was being transferred to Fort Alexander. My life was going to change," says John.

"I had a bad feeling when the priest came. I was 11 years old. He locked the door of his office with a skeleton key. I was powerless."

"My mother brought me up to respect my body. She said to never let anybody touch your body. I blanked it out. The priest said it was for my own good. I asked how this could be good?"

"It happened to many of the kids. We were told we were all bad. We were all savages."

"I was fighting all the time. I was 17. I felt the best way was to fight," says David. "I was on the football team and I had long hair. Our coach was a big German. He cut

my hair in front of everybody. I hit him and walked out.”

“One time I started a fight with my cousin and I stabbed him. I just missed his heart. My dad came and I almost stabbed him. I was drunk and angry.”

David spent two years in Headingley Jail. There he spent most of his time in solitary confinement for his violent behavior. Eventually he was sent to the Selkirk Mental Hospital for treatment.

“I walked back and forth. I hit the walls to get the anger out. I wanted to die,” says David. “They used to come and get

me once a week for insulin and shock treatment.”

That stayed with me for a long time

“My mother never made a promise to us that she couldn’t keep, says John.

“One time she promised to pick us up at Christmas. I told my brothers and sisters that Mom was coming to pick us up. We were happy. I watched the children leaving. After a long wait I realized she wasn’t coming. I said some things I shouldn’t have about my mother.”



(Today both John and David share their experiences and survival with all who listen).

“A cousin of mine asked me about three weeks later if my mother was Elizabeth Murdock. I said yes. He told me that my mother had passed. I stood in a state of shock. I knew why she hadn’t showed up,” says John. “The superintendent told me it was in my best interest to not go home. I was the eldest and had to tell my brothers and sisters. I had to be the one. That stayed with me for a long time.”

The lives of John and David had been changed forever. Their experience at residential school had a lasting and devastating effect on their entire family.

“I ended up living on the street. I had no place to live. Then I met a lady from my reserve named Mary Guilbault. She showed me a lot of kindness,” says David. “I decided to clean up. I wanted more. It is at this time that I began to visit the elders.”

“My problems followed me no matter where I went,” says John. “The memories and the helplessness followed me. I became a bad alcoholic. I went through a marriage and have three boys. But I couldn’t control my emotions.”

The Gift

At the end of the song John and David smoke their pipes. They quietly acknowledge Shane for his gift. They ask


if he can put it on tape for them to learn. Shane promises to get them one.

“I’ve heard that song before. Grandfather be good to me. I want to live,” says David. “The spirit listens to one song. I feel it inside.”

“David found it hard to share his experiences. He ended up in mental institutions. We have patience with him and we welcome him back. It’s a big difference to get where he is today,” says John.

“I had a dream that a song was coming to me. It’s touching the spirit that is suffering. But we have to heal and work within ourselves.”

As is the tradition John has prepared a feast of stew and bannock. David lifts himself up from his wheelchair and slowly makes his way around the living room. Over the years he has acquired many eagle feathers ... some he found along the shores of the Fisher River ... some that were given to him. Today he wants to share these with all who have come to take part in the feast and ceremony. The eagle feathers will be strong reminders of the in the power of belief, of prayer and song.

Today both John and David share their experiences and survival with all who listen. 



Connectivity Project



KEY Activities:

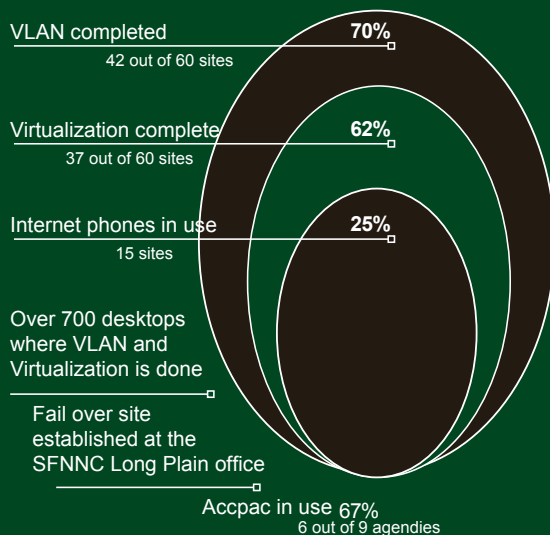
- High speed through a “private” network, rather than through the Internet, as more secure and without risk of interference (VLAN)
- Replacing desktop computers on reserve
- Virtualization of server
- Upgrade all software to current versions
- Switch to Internet phones (VOIP)
- Purchase, install, and train all agencies in use of Accpac
- Upgrading cabling at sites

Sites: 60 Includes all on and off reserve sites for all agencies



* ANCR remains on the government server and is not included in this project

Status Update:



Target date for completion: 31 March 2014

**Funding: AANDC
Government of Manitoba**

Benefits:

Quick and efficient back up capabilities

New desktops at most sites

Greater use and efficiency of network printers

Computers connected between offices - can "talk" to each other

All software upgraded and all sites now use same software which allows for easy sharing of information

Agencies have video conferencing ability with the installation of the VLAN

Most desktop support and set up can be quickly and efficiently provided from one central location

Staff can get their voice mail through their Blackberry | iPhone | and/or through any desktop on the virtual network



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