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in Nelson House
Makes History **10**

SEPTEMBER 2015

Nisichawayasi Achimowina

Wellness Centre Significantly Reduces Children in CFS Care

Since the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Centre was transitioned to a new funding model in the fall of 2012, the Centre is continuing to see the results of the shift in delivery approach. The Centre is pleased to report the overall number of NCN Children in Care (CIC) has decreased from 427 in 2013 to 274 in 2015.

"A reduction of 153 children in care over two years is a big positive for our children and community. It proves we are taking steps in the right direction and working to help more families stay together," explained Felix Walker, CEO of the Centre.

Thompson saw the biggest change to their numbers reducing children in care by 55% from 130 to 59, and this can be attributed to the Weechihitowin Project. The Nelson House office was already practicing the *Circle of Care* approach and still had a 46% reduction from 167 kids to 90 (77 fewer children in care). The new model provided much needed funding for the prevention and family enhancement programming. Nelson House also made a fundamental shift in its approach to apprehension and thus apprehension numbers have decreased significantly. Brandon reduced the number of children in care by 12% and Winnipeg by 2%.

"We believe it is better for children to remain at home. It is well documented; many children feel the blame and have feelings of guilt when they are the ones removed from the situation. The ultimate goal of the Centre's programs is to provide services and support for family reunification," said Felix, recognizing the

accomplishments but focusing on the work ahead, "although there were many highlights in this years reports, more work needs to be done to provide the best care possible for children."

Within the family enhancement work that was being done

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— FELIX WALKER

surrounding reunification of families in Thompson and Nelson House, the Centre saw an emerging need. Now that families are being more readily prepared to take children back home, it was noticed in follow ups that bonding and attachment issues are apparent. The next work will be to strengthen families' ties and the Centre will be looking at developing a program to deal with attachment and bonding concern.

In 2015/2016 the Centre will be focusing more on the approach of leaving children in the home and removing parents from the residence in cases of apprehension. The *Intervention and Removal of Parent Program* has been supported in the community of Nelson House, but is not always an option in Winnipeg, Thompson and Brandon.

To improve further, the Centre will also be looking at investing in the revitalization of its IT assets both on/off reserve. Now that there is a definitive plan for the training of front line social workers, the Centre will look at development



Wellness Centre is helping to keep more children at home and has reduced children in care by 153 over two years.

and training for statistical and financial staff.

It is estimated there are more than 10,000 children in Manitoba who are wards of CFS. A vast majority of these youth are in foster care and most are Aboriginal. It is hoped the Centre's approach to care can be adopted and used by other First Nations in Manitoba. The Centre works to continually provide methods to care for children that are influenced by child apprehension and further reduce situations where the child is at risk.





PCH Nurses Strike Resolved by *Mediation*

It is back to work as usual for the Personal Care Home nurses in NCN after a mediation process and an application at the Manitoba Labour Board had a contract put in place this month.

Five nurses from the Nischawayasihk Personal Care Home in Nelson House went

on strike four months ago on May 11 because of concerns with wages. The nurses union reported the community nurses were being paid less than other nurses in Manitoba and measures have now been taken to ensure the nurses return to work.



Personal Care Home nurses return to work to care for elderly.

Opening New Doors to Reduce Housing Shortages

For many years, housing has been and continues to be one of the biggest concerns that our community faces. Poor housing conditions, overcrowding, vandalism and fire damage have added to the ongoing housing shortage and concern. The NCN Housing Authority has announced a new program that allows NCN Citizens to get into their own new home and adds much needed housing units in Nelson House.

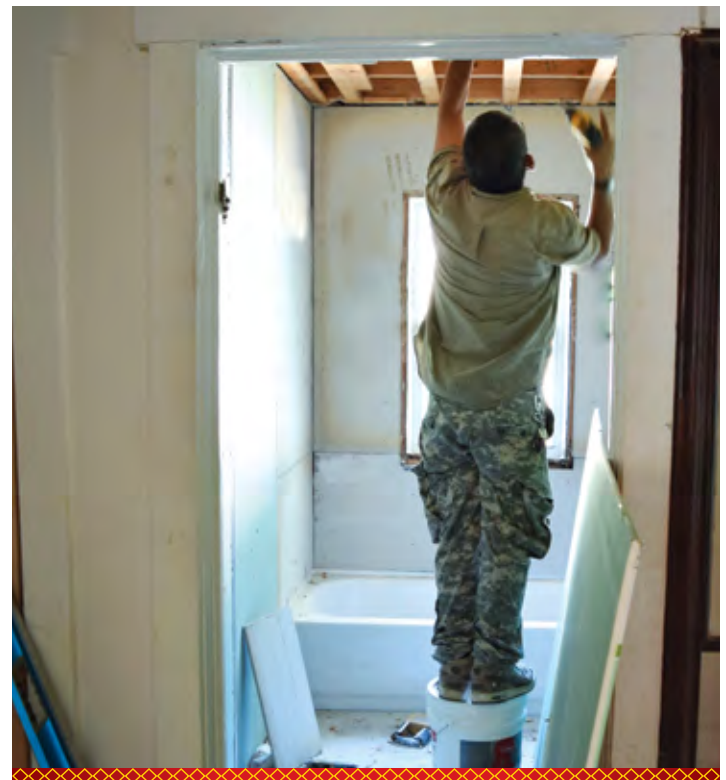
Chief and Council have secured the funding through the Wuskwatim PDA Supplement 2 to begin construction of nine new homes in Nelson House. The Authority has assigned four of these homes to be rent-to-own and have begun accepting applications and a deposit of \$5,000.

The selection process will begin after the Monday, November 30, 2015 deadline for submissions to assign the new home owners/renters. Anyone interested in taking part in the program is asked to contact the NCN Housing Authority to discuss terms, the selection process and the allocation process.

Construction of the new 1,104 square foot, five bedroom,

two bathroom, bi-levels homes is expected to begin as soon as possible. It is also reported that financing for construction for an additional 20 new homes will be in place over the next few months and construction will continue into next year's building season. Chief and Council hopes to have details and funding finalized to build 20 or more houses each year to improve the current housing shortage.

Chief Moody said, "If we can encourage more



Chief and Council have secured the funding through the Wuskwatim PDA Supplement 2 to begin construction of nine new homes and repair other houses in Nelson House.

Continued on Page 4

Attention NCN
Citizens, you are
invited:

NCN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, September 23, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at Gilbert McDonald Arena

Purpose: To provide an update on Chief and Council's current projects and initiatives.

**Please note
the revised
date.**

citizens to take part in home ownership programs and own and maintain their new homes, they will have the benefits of owning property and an investment for the future. They will have homes that are built to quality standards and we will then be able to put the funds from the purchase back into building more new homes. It is a sustainable model for our community that is a win-win."

The Housing Authority
has also started to prioritize

houses that have issues that impact health, such as mould, and get them addressed as quickly as possible. Advisory notices on preventing and removing mould have been sent to Citizens. Repairs and renovations to existing homes are also being prioritized. Using provisions in Taskinigahp Trust and our Wuskwatim revenues plans are in place to secure more funding. A \$10 million to \$15 million in bank loans will be added to the \$6 million negotiated as part of PDA Supplement 2. These moneys will be used for new housing, a new water treatment plant, a new community hall and other community projects.

The Authority is ensuring new houses will be built under proper standards. This means taking steps to ensure houses will last longer, be more easily repaired and have little or no risk of mould damage.



The Housing Authority has started to prioritize houses that have issues that impact health, such as mould, and get them addressed as quickly as possible.

ATTENTION NCN CITIZENS:

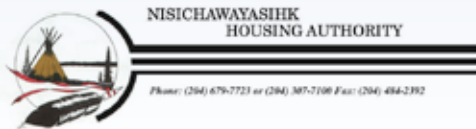


RENT-TO-OWN A HOME

NCN community members that are interested in applying for a Rent-to-Own home must submit a deposit of \$5,000.00 and write a letter of interest to the attention of the Nisichawayasihk Housing Authority Board of Directors. The Housing Authority will have Four 1,104 sq. ft., 5 bedroom, two bath Bi-Levels. Your deposit of \$5,000.00 may be made payable to the Nisichawayasihk Housing Authority and dropped off, along with your letter of interest, to Pam Hart, the Housing Finance Clerk, at the NCN Government Finance office. If the required deposit is not fully made, before the selection process, your application will not be considered.

The deadline for submissions is Monday,
November 30, 2015 at 12:00 p.m.

For more information please contact:
Nisichawayasihk Housing Authority
Phone: (204) 679-7723 or (204) 307-7100



Welcoming Staff and Students Back to School

NCN welcomes new and returning staff and students back to school and we hope this will be another great year that builds on the successes of last year. Chief Marcel Moody and Deputy Chief Ron Spence took part in welcoming staff to Nelson House on September 3, 2015 at the gymnasium as part of orientation and the kick-off to the school year.



NNOC and O.K. school teachers and new staff are welcomed by Chief Moody and Councillor Ron Spence for the new school year.

NCN Now on Facebook!



Stay current with NCN's latest news, events
and updates on your computer, smartphone or device from our official NCN Facebook page.

Singing Talent Aalayna Spence Wins Competition in The Pas

A Powerful Voice for Transgender Rights and Awareness

A young transgender woman from NCN has been striving her whole life to be true to herself and face the challenges of showing it in front of others. Aalayna Spence has had to overcome more than just a little stage

fright when taking center stage and doing what she loves to do. The talented youth recently won a singing competition in The Pas but admits the road to getting there was not easy.

Spence has been singing since the age of two and recalls performing country music with her grandmother. By the age of 10, she had a professional gig and has always enjoyed the blessing of music in her life. She knew she was different from others at a young age because of her interest in tea, parties, dress up games and dolls. Even before she was in her teens Spence was facing bullying, severe depression and thoughts of suicide. The bullying continued through the time of her transition and she recalls writing letters to her family saying she could not stand the hurt anymore. But she learned to calm the pain and uplift her spirits through music. Aalayna would sing songs to help her through the rough times.

The adversity in her life showed her that she had the strength to never give up and could face the difficult challenges head on. This attitude proved useful when she was told she could not perform in the Cross Lake and Norway House female singing competition categories by organizers. Because she had not yet changed her name and gender on her ID, she was refused entry in the female category and told she must perform in the male event.

Spence said, "Them saying no felt like they were taking away my right to be who I really am. I decided I wasn't going to degrade myself, but I felt like I was defeated and striped of my identity. I hung up the phone and I started to cry. I felt like I lost a little bit of my dignity because what they said."

Spence did not give up and decided to stand for her



Aalayna Spence is becoming a vocal advocate for LGBT rights.

Spence has been singing since the age of two, and by the age of 10 she had a professional gig, always enjoying the blessing of music in her life.

rights. She took her voice to Chief and Council and with some convincing they decided they had much to learn and admired her stance. Aalayna said, "The final decision was that I could sing in the female category, and it was a really great experience to have such a great victory."

Spence appreciated the outpouring of fan support and is proud to be a spokesperson for transgender and human rights. For those dealing with bullying or depression, she wants them to know that they should never give up. She hopes that by sharing her message, other transgender individuals and indigenous peoples of the north will be encouraged to believe in themselves. Aalayna believes if more people like Brielle Beardy and others speak up and become active in talking about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights, more youth will never have to face the same horrible situations in their lives that she did.

Spence advises, "It is okay to be proud of who you are, stay true to yourself and what you believe in."



VOTE IN THE FEDERAL ELECTION

Call Elections Canada 1-800-463-6868 or online at ereg.elections.ca if you need to register to vote

Be Sure to Vote!

Elections will be held Monday, October 19, 2015

ATTENTION STUDENTS Want a Chance to WIN A TABLET?



All you have to do is be a perfect attender for the month of September and do not miss even one day of school.

Two draws will be made for one boy and one girl.

Draw date September 30th, 2015

Earth Rangers Give O.K. School Kids Wild Lesson

On September 14, 2015 O.K. School students had the wonderful opportunity to take part in the Earth Rangers Kids Conservation Organization presentation. The fun and interactive program for students, put on by Vale gave kids the chance to learn about science and wildlife and ways to make our planet a better place for all living creatures.

The Earth Rangers School Assembly Program is a dynamic and fully interactive presentation for grades 1-6. The program consists of a

The fun and interactive program for students gave kids the chance to learn about science and wildlife and ways to make our planet a better place for all living creatures.



Energetic presenters from the Earth Rangers Kids Conservation Organization entertained and educated students about the importance of animals and conservation.

high quality, visual show, which uses positive, science-based information to educate students about the importance of protecting biodiversity, while highlighting a variety of conservation initiatives across Canada. Through the power of live animal demonstrations and exciting audience interaction, the program inspired students, and motivated them to become actively involved in protecting the environment.

Earth Rangers visit over 800 English and French schools across the country, directly reaching over 236,000 students each year. To find out more visit www.earthrangers.org.

Traditional Goose Recipe

Wild Goose with Onion Stuffing

Many northern Cree people celebrated the flight of the geese at this time of year with a weeklong hunt. In the days before commercial food, fresh meat was a big part of Nehetho diets. Wild meats and roasted goose were a main part of traditional food. There are many ways to prepare goose but stuffing it with a seasoned filling over an open fire was among the most practical when travelling or returning from the hunt. Today goose can be roasted in the oven similar to roast turkey or duck.

INGREDIENTS:

2 1/2 quarts toasted bread crumbs
1 1/4 cups butter or margarine
1/3 cup minced onion
1/2 cup chopped celery
2 tbsp. dried parsley leaves
2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. poultry seasoning
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
Prepared wild goose

several hours as shown in the photo (being sure to rotate often). Be sure not to overcook and to save the goose fat in a drip pan for cooking other recipes like potato pancakes or perfect pan-fried potatoes and vegetables.

Place all ingredients in a mixing bowl. Mix well. Stuff the wild goose lightly into the body and crop cavity of the wild goose, ready to cook.

Cook the
goose in the
oven roaster
or on an open
pit fire for



Have you got a traditional recipe for Caribou Stew, fried goose hearts, roast duck, Cree donuts, Pineapple Weed tea, stuffed beaver or traditional medicines or other recipes you would like to share? We would love to include them in the next issue of Achimowina. Please send your traditional Nehetho recipe to achimowina@gmail.com.



Voice of Our Youth

Chief Lennard Busch

By: Freddie Kosmolak, NNOC Student, Grade 11

Chief Lennard Busch is the greatest, most caring, loving and smartest man I have ever had the honour of knowing; I call him Grandpa. He loves his family, his friends, and just has a kind vibe towards everybody around him.

My Grandfather is the Chief of Police for Files Hills First Nations in the Treaty 4 territory. He attends mass and does readings at a variety of churches around the area where he lives regularly. My Grandpa loves me with all his heart, I know this just by the way he makes me feel.

He has always showed me right from wrong and has given me the most valuable advice when needed. My grandfather has showed me so much, I wouldn't be who I am today if he hadn't been in my life. He's a man of God and a man of peace. His life is all about the happiness and he always sees situations in a good way.

When faced with problems, he always knows the best and non-harmful way to deal with things and shows this skill to those around him.

I know that he sees lots of potential in me, I can see it in his eyes. He's the greatest man I know; the closest thing to a real life super hero. I will always cherish him and love him until I can no longer and even then he will always be in my heart showing me the path of life. The thing I love the most in this world is just to spend time with him and create memories with him.

The most important person in my life is my Grandpa, Chief Lennard Busch.



Best Friend in My Life

By: Guantia Billy Spence, NNOC Student, Grade 11

This one amazing girl that I love with all my heart is my best friend.

She's been there for me since we were in elementary together, even when I moved out of the community she's been there for me. Through the good and the bad days, she will always have my back. I will always have hers as well; just like a bra strap I will never let her down, just keep lifting her up.

She's my partner in crime, my "ride or die," and the best thing that ever happened to me. I honestly don't know what I would do without her, she made me who I am today. Without her I would not be able to trust, or love anyone or anything, because she was there to love, care and show loyalty to me. I would take a bullet for her.

When we both finish school, get jobs, and have a lot of money, I would really enjoy traveling the world with her by my side, it has been our plan since we were little kids. We're even going to live in a log house that I will personally build for us. I wouldn't have it any other way with anyone else!

I honestly love everything about her, her

gorgeous beauty, her laugh, her smile, and her cute little dimple that's just an inch above her top lip, I also enjoy spending amounts of time with her.

She is honestly so gorgeous, I swear if anyone tells you otherwise tell them to come see me! I would rather my hands get dirty instead of hers.

I just want to thank God for bringing her into my life and I thank her for staying by my side.

My best friend carried my God child for nine months, he was born on September 3rd 2014, and he is just as beautiful as his mother. He is also one year old this year, Alexandre Jason John Moore, I love him with everything I've got.

Darien Rochelle Dolli Swanson, I love you girl! For everything you ever done for me, thanks for being a part of my life, I can't wait for more amazing memories with you.



History Made at MKO Annual General Assembly Held in Nelson House

First Female Grand Chief Elected

The Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak Annual General Assembly was hosted by NCN on September 1–3. The event brought representatives from nearly 30 Manitoba First Nations. Several issues and concerns were brought to the forefront and among the main topics were the importance of housing and infrastructure, inquiries into our murdered and missing women, ongoing concerns about child and family services and the MKO Grand Chief Election.

History was made at the event when Sheila North Wilson was elected as first female Grand Chief. North Wilson took the lead in the first round of ballots cast on the Wednesday, a round that also saw the incumbent David Harper eliminated for the second round.

The first ballot numbers were: 44 votes cast for Sheila North Wilson; 35 votes for NCN's Elvis Thomas; 24 for Tyler Duncan; and 23 for incumbent David Harper.

In the second ballot, North Wilson took 74 votes over Thomas who had 58. Wilson was officially elected Wednesday, September 2 after two rounds of ballots were cast.

NCN candidate Elvis Thomas commended Sheila on her victory and added, "I thought I had a good chance at it when both Tyler Duncan and incumbent David Harper publicly threw their support behind me in the second round of votes."

Originally from Oxford House, North Wilson moved to Winnipeg to finish school when she was 15 and has experience as a reporter with



Outgoing MKO Grand Chief congratulates newly elected Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson.

NCI Radio, CBC and CTV. She also spent time as the communications officer for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. The new grand chief starts her three-year term immediately.

"It feels good to be a part of history like this and it's credit to the chiefs and the council that elected me, and they saw a vision, they captured it and they ran with it and elected their first female grand chief and I'm very happy," Sheila North Wilson said.



Nearly 1,000 First Nation people from across Manitoba took part in the three day MKO Annual General Assembly on September 1–3, 2015 in Nelson House.

Don't Be a Head Scratcher. Be Aware of Head Lice

What are Head Lice?

Separate the hair into sections and begin by checking the crown of the head first. Then check the nape of the neck and around the ears.

If you find something that you think might be a lice egg or nit, try to remove it with your fingers. If it comes off easily, it's not likely a lice egg or nit. Lice eggs or nits are cemented on the hair shaft and can only be removed by sliding them down the hair shaft between your fingernails or with tweezers.

What if I'm not sure?


Head Lice Prevention and Treatment Tips

Teach and Practice Good Sharing Habits

Limit Contact and Don't Go Head-to-Head

Space It Out in Spaces

How Can Head Lice be Treated?



Forecast September 1 – October 31, 2015

During the month of October the level of the lake is expected to fall 2 inches to an elevation of 794.7 feet by the first week of the month and then rise 2 feet 2 inches to an elevation of 796.8 feet by the end of the month.



NCN Family
and Community
Wellness Centre

**REDISCOVERY OF FAMILIES
2015 CAMP RETREATS**

Dates are subject to change depending on weather conditions and forest fire hazards. To sign up or register for the RDF camp, please contact: Charlene Kobliski, Jackie Spence and Dolly Francois
© 204-484-2341 ext. 2292.

DATES
September 28 – October 4

WORKERS
Dolly

TYPE OF RETREATS
Father/Son

LOCATION
Balduck Lake