

Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement

Aboriginal
Healing
Foundation
Program

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Strength

I have the strength
Nothing can hold
me down
No worries, no hate
Just love
A butterfly
A bear
My Grandfather bird
flying above
Nothing's going to put
me down
I'm going
Red Road bound.
- by **Tammy Larose**

BALANCED LIFESTYLE

For more
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Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement Healing Journey “Meyo Wahkohtowin” Gathering

Thursday, March 25 and Friday March 26, 2010



Presenters Chief Clarence Louie, Osoyoos Band, BC and Leo F. Sawicki, Gimli Manitoba

Presenters Agree that the next step on the Healing Journey is Economic Development

A two day ‘Meyowahkohtowin’ Healing Gathering to honor Residential School Survivors and Inter generational Impacted Families was held at the Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement March 25 and 26, 2010.

Day One began with a panel of residential school survivors who told their stories of how they were treated. Their stories brought tears to the audience as they shared their memories and explained to the participants how acts of emotional, physical and sexual abuse as children shaped their relations with their families and community as adults.

After a break, the Inter generational Impacted Residential School Families Panel shared their stories of what it was like being a child of a Residential School Survivor. Their testimonials shed light on why their parents acted the way they did and how alcohol and lack of parenting skills had a great influence in their upbringing. While it was difficult, and at some times impossible to continue speaking, the panel helped to understand the effects and impacts of residential school.

Leo Sawicki spoke on how AHF funding has provided a means for ‘Niiwahsayabitooning’, (an Oji-Cree word for bringing in the light) at spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical levels in helping people move beyond Residential School Syndrome. She drew on the teachings of the Medicine Wheel Concept and shared the Contemporary Wheel of Life.

Day two, the first presenter Phil Auger, a Metis Elder from Peepeekisis First Nation, spoke of Traditional Parenting skills and shared his story of how he was raised in his community. A traditional healer, Phil shared how he has learned about medicines that plant life bring and how he is compiling information to help others on some part of their journey. Participants were able to ask questions and listened intently as he responded.

Chief Clarence Louie from the Osoyoos Band in British Columbia was the second Presenter of Day Two. As Chief of a prosperous band for the past 22 years, Chief Louie is a straight shooting, no nonsense, multi-tasker who is passionate about what he does and shares the wisdom his mother imparted to him as a young boy. ‘Go to School or Get a Job.’ Economic development, Chief Louie believes, is a big solution to social ills in First Nation Territory. Many of the participants were quick to nod their heads in agreement.

Conference Co-ordinator and Manager of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation program at the Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement, Evelyn Willier’s attention to detail made a successful gathering memorable.

Master of Ceremonies, Joe Blayn, kept the two day gathering on track. Thanks to sound and video technician, Billy Sinclair all voices could be heard.