



Community Update

Life Saved by Hunting Partner

A slip of his knife almost cost experienced hunter Ken Wavey his life on a hunting trip this winter. "If you're not careful, a small mistake can cost your life," said Wavey. This is a lesson he learned the hard way.

As usual, preparing to go out moose hunting, Wavey was excited, almost hyper, as he put on his sky blue hunting clothes. He was happy to be going out in the bush and thanked the Creator for the hunt before taking off. Wavey tracked and took down a large moose and brought home the kidneys and heart, returning the following day with his hunting partner John Kwandibiens Sr. to retrieve the meat. They left Wavey's Polaris snow machine at his cabin, about 3 miles from the kill and took the older, slower Elan to the site. "I kind of thought I didn't feel very good," said Wavey. "I sensed something was about to happen." However, Wavey "didn't bother" with this foreboding and they continued to the kill site.

The moose was big and it took about three hours, carrying the meat on their shoulders, to haul it all to the cabin. Wavey was kneeling down by the hind quarter, removing the thick, heavy hide from the meat with both hands on his knife when the knife slipped and cut into his thigh. "I felt stinging on my thigh and when I pulled the knife out blood was squirting out everywhere," he said. From 10 feet away, Kwandibiens leapt into action. He tore a strip off his sweatshirt and quickly tied it around Wavey's leg. Then he found a nylon rope and also tied that, very tightly, around the leg. Helping Wavey to the 1974 Elan, he told him to go, and to go quickly.

"You know how slow an Elan is, eh?" asked Wavey. The trail was rough and he got stuck along the way. Pulling the sled off the rock really started the blood spurt-ing again. "When I was on the portage, every time I hit a bump it was squirting," he said. Wavey managed to get to his cabin, only to realize he had left the keys to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INSIDE

Tracking a Moose	2
Life at Mile 50	3
Drug & Alcohol Crisis	4,5
Healing Wisdom	6
Missabay School	7
Charlie Bottle's Story	8



Isabella Spade, with Activator Mervin Masakeyash looking on, shown here with an ice fishing catch. They check the net on the lake regularly with the help of Jean Masakeyash and Vivian Lastheels.

Government Delays in Land Claim Issues

After the 1998 settlement with Ontario Hydro over Lake St. Joseph water rights, Mishkeegogamang entered into negotiations with the Canadian government over other outstanding grievances. These grievances include the failure of Canada to correctly survey the initial reserves, and the government's allowing various parcels of reserve land to be flooded and used for roads and other purposes, often without permission from or compensation to the band.

After more than ten years, these negotiations have not produced a resolution. In fact, the process was put on hold com-

pletely in 2001 when Slate Falls brought a similar legal claim against Canada. After the government changed lawyers nine times as a delaying tactic, a trial date for the Slate Falls claim has finally been set for January 17, 2011.

Meanwhile, Mishkeegogamang's representative, Councillor David Masakeyash, was examined for six days in March, 2009 by a researcher preparing Canada's response to the case. John Derouin was in attendance to oversee the examination, assist Councillor Masakeyash as required and to report back to Council and the

community.

Indian Affairs admitted back in 1994 that the Crown had broken its treaty obligations and should compensate Mishkeegogamang for flooded lands. More than 15 years later, the legal process is still dragging on. As the Slate Falls case continues, counsel for Mishkeegogamang will review all available information and use the facts to support its claims. We need to have all the evidence in place to prove Canada and Ontario's failure to set aside the lands as requested by Mishkeegogamang as part of the treaty process.



Ken Wavey cuts up a moose with more caution since his accident.

About Tracking a Moose

Ken Wavey combines the old and the new when he sets out to hunt a moose. He learned from his elders and continues to learn from hunting companions how to track and take down the majestic animal. "These are old skills from past generations," said Wavey. "It's because we still know these ways that) we still exist as First Nations people. It's pretty amazing to actually combine these things together before the hunt."

Tracking moose is his favourite thing to do and Wavey said he is always excited and hyper the morning of the moose hunt. Wavey thanks the Creator before and after every hunt. He used to carry the supplies of the hunters - things like a knife and a tea pot, tea, oats, lard and sugar to make tea porridge at the kill site - but he doesn't usually bother with that anymore, rather relying on a protein shake and "really good vitamins" for sustenance for the day.

The hunt is visualized and a plan is conceived long before the actual tracking begins. The hunters consider many variables, such as the wind "not just how it's moving today, but how it was moving two days ago," said Wavey. He considers the landscape and sorts his prey's tracks from the many on the land. He figures out which tracks are old, which are new, which way the animal is moving and how long he's going to move. He needs to know where the animal has bedded for the night and when he left to forage for food. "Once they start bedding like that they will move towards where the wind is coming from," he said. "You also have to know what kind of moose it is, what he's eating, the size of his pellets, the size of his bedding, size of his tracks, and which way he's going, especially in deep snow." He said once a moose knows food is plentiful, they'll stick around that area for awhile. To judge the direction of movement, Wavey uses the butt of his gun.

"You start poking tracks. They are hard in the direction he's going and soft in the back," he explained. "Most new guys don't know which way he's moving."

Every step counts on the hunt. "You can't break twigs or branches and you have to watch your steps," said Wavey. Hunting teachings include practical things such as how to hold a knife. "If you're not careful a small mistake can cost your life," said Wavey. He learned this the hard way when his own knife slipped and severed an artery in his leg this winter.

Clothing is an important consideration. Wavey prefers to wear light blue, the color of the sky, which he says enables him to get close to his prey. Recently he watched a large moose eating for about five minutes from about 30 feet away before pulling the trigger. Wavey's voice is filled with wonder as he recalled those minutes. "He was such a graceful animal."

Life Saved

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

faster snow machine in his pack by the kill. So off he went, 15 to 20 miles an hour to his home, and hopefully help, at Mile 50. "I still had a long way to go, but I just took the chance," he said. It was about 10 miles from where he took down the moose.

Before he left Kwanibiens, Wavey told his friend, "If I don't make it, you can have all the moose."

"He looked at me, straight in the eye, and told me nothing was going to happen." By the time he got to Mile 50, Wavey wasn't so sure. Every time he hit a bump, blood would spew from the wound. His vision began to blur and he was extremely cold and thirsty. But he knew not to panic. "I knew if I would panic my heart rate would go up and I would have lost more blood." He tried to keep warm by moving his upper body.

Thankfully, a neighbour with a vehicle was visiting and was able to take Wavey to the Nurses Station on the Main Reserve. Wavey nearly passed out on the 40 km journey. "I didn't panic then either. I accepted what was happening to me. If I was going to die that day, I accepted that," he said.

Wavey received prompt help at the Nurses Station. His wound had started to clot and he bleeding slowed down. But, once stitched up, he stood up and once more, the artery opened once more. An ambulance from Pickle Lake was called and Wavey was medi-vaced to the Sioux Lookout for treatment. For the first time in memory, Wavey felt completely drained. It took a week for Wavey's vision to clear up and for him to get his coordination back. It took two weeks of rest before he could walk properly again.

Kwandibiens, said Wavey, saved his life. At about 50 years of age, Kwandibiens has lived on the land for all of his life. He doesn't speak much English and has never taken a First Aid Course, but he's the guy Wavey wants with him on any hunting trip. "He's super connected to the land. He knows his way around out there and he won't panic. He knows what he's doing and he could handle any kind of emergency." Besides being, "very humble, very quiet" and a "gentleman" and all around "good guy," Wavey said his friend is the best of hunting partners. "Out on the land, that's the guy you want. He saved my life."

A month after the incident, Kwandibiens was honoured for saving his hunting buddy's life and to show respect for the traditions he, and other hunters, show in the act of hunting. At a community dance in the school, Kwandibiens was presented with a new chainsaw. "I hear he keeps it under his bed," laughed Wavey. "He doesn't want anybody to take it"

Bi-election called for Spring

The Chief and Council have called for a bi-election to replace Wayne J. Neekan who resigned his position as a member of council. The bi-election was officially called on February 1, 2010 and the vote will take place on May 24, 2010.



About 20 people live at Mile 50 with another 15 on traditional territories nearby.

Life at Mile 50

A balanced life with fresh air, peace and quiet, beautiful scenery, kids that heed their elders and food for the taking right outside your back door. Who wouldn't want to live there? In spite of the many benefits, most opt for a more convenient lifestyle. There is a price to pay for this idyllic lifestyle and it does not include dollars and cents.

There are about 20 people living at Mile 50 on the traditional lands, but not reserve lands, of the Mishkeegogamang First Nation. About half an hour's drive from Ten Houses, four families are tucked into cabins by the lake off the highway with their closest neighbours, another 15 people, at Mile 42 and Fitchie Lake. When asked what it's like to live here, the first answer is usually "it's hard." The second response is that, for the most part, most would not want to live anywhere else.

Dorothy Neekan is one of two teachers in the Mile 50 school. There are 14 students this year in two classrooms including Grades 3 - 11. Neekan said the families of Mile 50 and area have had to fight for funding to keep the school running. "We don't want to send (our children) anywhere else," she said. "It's our home."

Neekan has Grade 12 education and has been supervising students at Mile 50 for 15 years. The classroom is orderly with students working independently on their studies. A crib and baby toys are tucked neatly into a corner and Neekan holds

her baby boy Lucas on her lap while she corrects students' work. Neekan's parenting continues when she goes to work and her work continues when she goes home with her children. "It's hard work living in the bush," she said. "We have to chop wood and get water from the lake using pails." No running water? "Not unless I'm running up the hill with it," she laughs. Two five gallon pails of water last her about two days, she said, more for laundry and baths. Occasionally she goes to a Laundromat to do her laundry or heads over to her sister's place on the Reserve for a bath. Every two weeks she drives to either Pickle Lake or Sioux Lookout for groceries. Hunting and fishing supplement the family's diet and the children are included in the pursuit of game. "Of course" Neekan knows how to cut up a moose.

Ken Wavey, who also lives at Mile 50, said children keep out of mischief, learn to work, and learn more in school because they are "surrounded by a peaceful environment." "Awesome" hunting and fishing are right outside the back door. He takes children out to learn the skills of food gathering, but also takes them out to play.

"This is our playground," said teenager Clayton Derouin, taking in the vast expanse of the lake and forest with the wave of his arm. The children have clubhouses in the bush, sliding hills and ice fishing in the winter and favourite swimming holes and tree climbing spots in the summer. They know the dangers of being alone in the bush and don't go out alone with respect to the wolves and other dangers of the forest. Before dark children are called indoors and when the generators are turned off before 10 p.m. all are in bed.

Being out in the bush with the kids is a pleasure, said Wavey. "It's pretty neat to be out there with the kids. They really listen because they know you are an adult figure. They know that, so it's pretty easy."

Back in the settlement, there is a schedule that everybody follows. Wavey gets up at 5:30 a.m. to warm up the cabin for the family's wake-up at 7:00 a.m. There is wood to chop and water to fetch and everybody knows their chores for the day.

When asked if he would prefer to live in town in a house with running water and hydro power, Clayton hesitates. "I'm uncomfortable in a fancy house," he said, easily pulling a pail of water out of a hole in the ice on the lake.



Fourteen children from Grades 3 - 11 attend the school at Mile 50.



Students work on art projects and are instructed using the Accelerated Education curriculum.



Clayton Derouin can't imagine any other way to get the daily water supply.



Dorothy Neekan has been working in the school for 15 years and is able to bring her son Lucas to work with her.



Levius Loon pulls on the 100-yard net which is checked every two or three days.



Northern Pike, sucker, walleye, tulabee and eel were in the catch this January day.



Stephanie Wassaykeesic

Water treatment a career opportunity

Four high school graduates from Mishkeegogamang furthered their education in January with a two-week Operator in Training course for water treatment and distribution. Josh Roundhead and Reginald Roundhead are already employed at the water treatment plant and need certification for job security. Sheldon Neekan and Stephanie Wassaykeesic are looking for new career opportunities.

Wassaykeesic said she wanted to try something new and was enjoying the course, even though it is not something many females attempt. "It's really interesting," she said, adding the mathematical parts of the course were difficult. "I want employment. I want a career," she said.

Desmond Verassamy, who taught the examination preparation course, said it was unique to have so many high school gradu-

ates in his class. He also rarely teaches the course to females, but he finds they make good water plant operators. "Girls tend to do very well and take responsibility in a different way," he said.

Roundhead said the job is complicated and can be dangerous and learning proper procedures is very important. "It's a really responsible job and you have to be careful what you do," he said, explaining that plant operators wear protective gear and deal with acid, chlorine and pressurized valves.

Verassamy prepares potential water treatment and distribution operators for the provincial exam which would license them to work at the local plants. Currently a representative from Northern Waterworks comes to the First Nation once a month and reviews operational data and does analysis to ensure the plants operate normally and meet water quality and operational standards.

At Ten Houses, water comes from a well while at the Main Reserve water comes from the lake. The treated water is tested regularly to ensure water quality standards

are met. "People are terrified of the fact that we add chemicals," said Verassamy. "There is a belief that they are harmful and they can be if they are not handled right. That's why it is so important when we train operators that we teach them the concepts and how to treat water adequately." Chemicals used to treat the water for safe drinking are removed before distribution, he said.

Just down the road, Mishkeegogamang band members living on traditional lands drink water right out of the lake with no treatment. "Living in their natural habitat, their bodies build immunities," explained Verassamy. However, he cautioned, if their immune system is low, even these people could get sick from drinking untreated water.

Regulations are strictly followed in the water plants. "All humans, it doesn't matter which community you live in, everybody is entitled to safe water," said Verassamy. Having certified water treatment operators in the community will be a definite benefit to the people of Mishkeegogamang and the water they drink.

Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation Community Update

Feb., 2010 • Volume 2 • Issue 1

Publishers: Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation
Phone 807-928-2414
Researched and written by Rosetta Projects.
Email rosetta@projects@telus.net
Erin Bottle 807-928-2414 or Marj Heinrichs at 204-746-8208
Design: Frank Reimer Design
Printed by Kenora Daily Miner and News

Contribute to the Newspaper

Everyone is welcome to submit an article, photo or write a letter to the Mishkeegogamang Community Update. Share your opinion or idea with other readers. Editors reserve the right to edit for clarity and length.

Mishkeegogamang in the midst of a Drug and Alcohol CRISIS

Message from the Chief

Sometimes you're in the midst of a storm and don't know it. Mishkeegogamang is facing a serious social crisis. The use of drugs, especially prescription drugs and alcohol, has spiralled out of control and is causing untold harm to our families and our community.

A lot of these problems are created by our own doing. We live in the most beautiful part of the country, yet too few people go out to enjoy it. Many are too busy getting money for pills and drugs. We continue to see deaths, calamity, poverty. We don't need to be impoverished. Our poverty is of our own making.

Nowadays we are trying to help people and families with a case management model. But case management is not a new idea. My grandmother was a typical example of case management. If there was a problem, she would go and visit the family where the problem was happening. She always took me; at the time I didn't know why. She would go to the door and sit at the doorway. The women would come out and they would talk for a really long time about the issue and they would make a decision, woman to woman, mother to mother, grandma to grandma on that situation. When somebody was lost along the way, everybody got together to help. Somewhere we lost that. Some how we came away from that.

How do we work together for the betterment of individual, family and community? Case management is an old way of managing problems that is being renewed, formalized with the different programs we have. The community has many good programs, but they are not yet working together. We need to work together for the betterment of the community. We can't just deal with a father's alcoholism. We have to work with mothers, with everybody. We're here for the people, especially the little ones. We want to see something different for coming generations. Our people have been let down for too long already.

Our goal is healthy families, healthy nations. I want to see something different than what I saw growing up. This is my job, and this is a job for all of us. We want to go back to the old way, being responsible for each other and helping each other so that people don't get lost along the way. This is the beginning of a good journey.

Chief Connie Gray-McKay

"We live in the most beautiful part of the country, yet too few people go out to enjoy it."

– Chief Connie Gray-McKay

Alcohol and drug abuse are costing Mishkeegogamang a lot in dollars and cents. The LCBO store in Pickle Lake had sales of over \$800,000 last year, up 10% from the year before. This of course included customers from Pickle Lake, surrounding areas, and tourism, but sales to Mishkeegogamang residents are significant in this figure.

As many as three-quarters of Mishkeegogamang adults may be abusing drugs and alcohol.

Year	Total Sales Pickle Lake LCO
2003-04	\$644,243
2004-05	\$722,305
2005-06	\$677,298
2006-07	\$706,393
2007-08	\$750,258
2008-09	\$821,472

Alcohol costs are beginning to take second place to the cost of prescription and illegal drugs (see box). And the cost of these products in dollars and cents has a trickle-down effect. All this money spent on alcohol and drugs cannot be spent on food, everyday household needs, and things like education and travel that could enrich people's lives. Everyone in the family pays the price when just one person overuses and abuses alcohol or drugs.

One councillor estimated that as many as three-quarters of Mishkeegogamang residents over the age of 15 may be misusing alcohol or drugs.

Chief Gray-McKay emphasizes (see Message from the Chief) that poverty need not be the defining feature of Mishkeegogamang First Nation. There is a considerable amount of revenue available which in many cases would adequately cover basic needs. True, around 150 - 170 people per month receive social assistance in the community, and these amounts are not great, ranging from \$373 per month for a single person to about \$710 for a couple

The High Cost in Dollars and Cents

Look at the Trade-off	
A gram of marijuana =	\$25
A box of diapers =	\$25

Consider the costs

Income category	Average monthly income	Average daily income	Daily cost of prescription drug addiction
Employed by band (200 members)	\$2,000	\$67.00	\$30 - \$150
Welfare (single)	\$373	\$12.43	\$30 - \$150
Old Age Pension	\$1,000	\$33.00	\$30 - \$150

with one child. But there jobs available, with an average of 200 people employed, mostly full-time, by the First Nation, and other jobs available in Pickle Lake, and in mines, lumbering and services in surrounding areas. And there are also many opportunities for upgrading schooling and training, often at little or no cost to participants. Elders receive upwards of \$1,000 per month in old age pensions. Chief Connie emphasizes that opportunities are not lacking and money is not in short supply; it is just being used unwisely in so many cases.

The crisis is not limited to Mishkeegogamang. Chief Joe Meekis of Kee-waywin First Nation recently put out a press release saying that of the band's 400 members, about 80 of these are abusing prescription narcotics, mostly middle aged people. Of these, at least 50 are highly addicted and their habit costs them around \$140 per day. People are selling everything in their homes to support their drug habit. Children are going hungry.

What is the attraction?

What is the attraction of prescription drugs? They give a quick high, according to knowledgeable sources. Tylenol 3's are crushed and snorted to deliver this high,



Despair and indifference follow the high of narcotic drugs.

What can be done?

Councillor Maryanne Panacheese is deeply concerned about the social costs of alcohol and drugs in the community. She says the problem affects all ages, and she believes that the underlying causes of the crisis need to be dealt with. One of the key causes she identifies is the stresses Mishkeegogamang residents have to deal with every day due to the overcrowding in houses. Some homes have up to 20 people living in them, placing huge pressure on everyone and especially on those trying to supply food and keep the household running. "It's an epidemic," says Councillor Panacheese.

She believes that to tackle the problem, "There has to be a lot of education and awareness - maybe every day. We need to be dealing with this one on one, on the radio, with posters and billboards, in the schools." She suggests that especially children need to be convinced about the harmful effects of alcohol and narcotics. "We have to stop it somewhere, somehow, especially with the children. I don't want my grandchildren hurt by this."

More housing needed

Stress due to overcrowding is one of the problems underlying prescription drug abuse

Nursing Station Dealing with Increased Violence

The nursing station is dealing with the effects of greater violence in the community, largely as a result of increased alcohol use, according to Acting Nurse in Charge, Lois Pelletier. Pelletier has worked as a nurse in Mishkeegogamang for a total of seven years. She says while the number of cases they are seeing has not necessarily increased in recent years, the injuries she sees now are more serious than they used to be. This she believes is due to the increased intensity of violence of the incidents that caused the injuries. The injuries are from assaults, she says, "the results of not-so-polite conversations with their fists" ...and sometimes their boots.

Alcohol use has other effects, of course, including addiction, and the fact that when people drink they may not be taking the medication they need for such other

Nurses are seeing more serious injuries than they used to because of the increased intensity of violence in the community.

Tikinagan's Philosophy

The Creator has entrusted us with the sacred responsibility for developing and sustaining our families as healthy families are the foundation of strong and healthy communities. The future of the communities is our children who need to be nurtured within their families and communities.

diseases as diabetes and hypertension.

Pelletier hopes to see "people sort their problems out" and believes that the solutions will be found in "a combination of things - jobs, housing. People want to work," she said. She is thankful that the nursing station is adequately staffed to deal with the needs that arise. Although the clinic is technically classed as a Type 3 facility run from 9 to 5, in fact it is also a treatment centre, which means that someone is on call 24/7.

Number of Ambulance Trips Doubles

Mishkeegogamang community members required double the number of ambulance trips in 2009 as they did in 2008. The figures reflect only the number of trips up to September 8, 2009.

Children Pay the Price

- Number of children in care from Mishkeegogamang: **38**
- Children in long term care: **5**
- Children who are crown wards because no family members could care for them: **3**
- Children in Short-term Customary Care Agreements: **30**
- Number of open files (family service worker visits the family): **40**
- Families under Customary Supervision Agreement: **6**
- Number of local foster homes: **9** (more needed)

Is Mishkeegogamang a Police State?

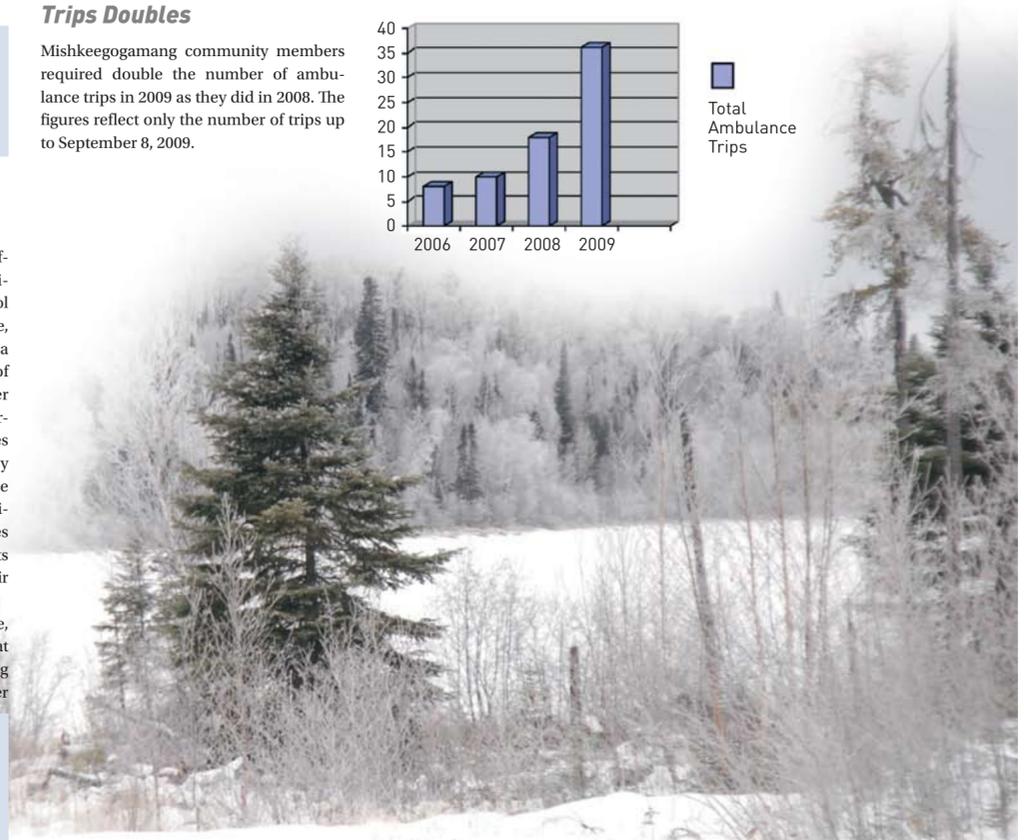
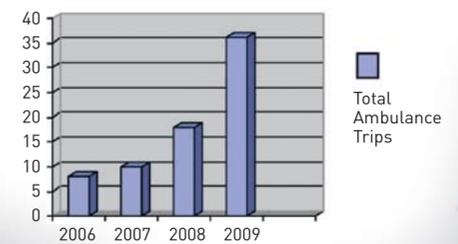
Chief Connie Gray-McKay wonders aloud whether she is living in a police state, and according to the statistics, she has good reason to wonder. Pickle Lake OPP has 13 officers (although right now two positions are vacant) and NAPS in Mishkeegogamang has 6, for a combined total of 19 officers to deal with whatever situations arise in the area. With a population of approximately 1,400 people, this works out to about one officer for every 74 people. This is nearly 11 times the ratio of other small communities, where there is often more like one officer for every 800 people.

While NAPS officers deal with all everyday matters on the reserve, they call in the OPP for more serious cases or when-

ever they need extra help. And quite often they do. In 2009 Pickle Lake OPP spent a total of 1,738 hours in Mishkeegogamang or on cases involving Mishkeegogamang band members. The OPP was called 829 times in 2009 for service in Mishkeegogamang and NAPS police used the Pickle Lake lock-up facility 371 times in 2009, while the total lockups in Pickle Lake were 1645 for the year.

- The OPP spent 1,738 hours on Mishkeegogamang last year, 543 of them for assault.
- Mishkeegogamang was #2 in the entire NAPS area for total number of calls NAPS responded to, and its population is far less than some other communities.

Community	Population	Total # of officers	# of people served by one officer
Mishkeegogamang & PL	1,400	19	74
Group of communities in Southern Manitoba	1,600	2	800





Shelane Donoghue is an Expressive Arts Therapist who helps children heal through play.

Play Therapy Helps Kids Heal

All work and no play? Not for Shelane Donoghue, an Expressive Arts Therapist with the Sioux Lookout First Nation Health Authority. Donoghue's work is play, or rather helping children on their healing journeys with play. "I'm using art, music, drama, stories and play to help people talk about their feelings," she said. "The idea is that children play out what they've seen."

All children grow and develop language and relationships through creating and playing. When there is trauma, adults will talk about events that trouble them while children will go back to these situations through play. Donoghue has an impressive collection of toys and art supplies in her therapy room. "Children play out what they have seen," she said.

If Donoghue sees a child playing out death and dying with animals in her toy collection, she will ask the child if they have known someone who died. If the animals are fighting one another, she will ask if they have seen fighting. "They will be surprised that I 'know' this, but they will start talking," said Donoghue. The therapist also watches play to see if the children are being rescued and if there are people there to help. "Sometimes they will move to medical toys and that shows they are healing, taking care of each other," she said. On the other hand, if children seem to be con-

stantly stuck in fighting, Donoghue will introduce new ways of "being in the world" through playing and toys.

Donoghue has been working with the Sioux Lookout First Nation Health Authority for five years and has found many people in northern and isolated communities are faced with multiple issues and traumas. This is compounded by a lack of resources and often the level of grief can be shocking. "For a young person to lose one significant person in their life is traumatic. I'm hearing of kids who have lost three, four, five - sometimes through very traumatic situations such as house fires, suicide, or murder. A lot of people are living in a state of shock, where not feeling has become normalized."

Donoghue said the root of difficulties for many of her clients has been there for a long time, often stemming from residential schools and abuse. Donoghue said a lot of communities are in shock and stay there for a long time. "When there are multiple traumas, shock is a healthy coping mechanism, but eventually you want to move beyond that."

People use drugs or alcohol to numb their pain and this stops them from having healthy relationships with their own children. Children, left on their own, will go to their peers and are often introduced to substances at a very young age. "In a child and youth's mind, it feels good; they are not feeling pain. Unfortunately this is the wrong message they are learning," said Donoghue.

Eventually aggression becomes normalized and children don't know there is a way to be happy, free, caring people, explained Donoghue. "In order to get to that place, you have to be able to feel." For children who have witnessed a lot of trauma, feeling is too scary and threatens to overwhelm, she said. "So they shut down because they see people around them shutting down."

Along with the traumas she sees in her work, Donoghue is amazed at the resiliency she see in every child and in every family. "Even if a child has witnessed some traumatic event, in most cases they are able to play, be creative, and smile. That shows me that there is still a level of support that is happening in themselves, in their communities."

Donoghue said she sees people who are healing themselves and are taking responsibility for their feelings and their pain. "I hope the work that I and other counsellors are doing will help them to have places to talk and to express and be shown there is another way and they will grow up and develop into healthy adults," she said.

Anybody with a concern about a child can make a referral for the child to see Donoghue. She only comes to Mishkeegogamang occasionally, but works out of the Sioux Lookout site every month. Ongoing, consistent therapy is essential for healing to happen.

For a referral to Therapist Shelane Donoghue, call Nodin Child and Family Intervention Services 1-800-446-7863 or 1-807-737-4011.

Perspectives on Teaching in the North

Teaching in Ontario's north is an opportunity that only a lucky few get to experience. I have been privileged enough to be one of the lucky few to partake in such an adventure. This is my second year of teaching at Missabay Community School and there is never a dull moment. During the 2008-2009 teaching year I taught grade eight and during that year I was able to share my background knowledge with my students and staff at the school. This year I am teaching K5 which has been an adjustment, but the students keep me on my feet and always have me laughing.

Before continuing I will provide you with a bit of history on how I ended up choosing to teach in the north.

In the Spring of 2008 I travelled to Kenya, Africa. That experience changed my life and was my first venture out of North America. Previous to that experience, I had not even flown in a jet, let alone travel to another continent. Kenya provided me with an insight to poverty beyond what I ever imagined. However, with that fact said, the people that inhabited the beautiful country were the happiest people I had ever met - and they had no materialistic value to show for it. In Kenya, the people took pride in what they had and would give their last bag of tea if you came to visit. Their ability to look past the poverty they were experiencing and become educated is something to be reckoned with. That experience ultimately led me to where I am now. Upon arriving back to my home town, I realized that I wanted to allow myself to be immersed in another cultural opportunity that would have life changing effects. I expressed how much I had enjoyed my overseas experience and many people suggested that I apply for a position overseas. As much as I agreed with them, I also thought that there was a need for help in our north as well.

In addition, I was brought up learning how to hunt, trap, and fish and the value that these activities have to our natural world. I concluded that Ontario's north would be a great place to expand my knowledge of these areas and also a way to learn how the First Nations people pass their heritage onto one another. With that determined, I accepted a job at Missabay Community School and started the next chapter of my life.

I arrived for my first year in August 2008 after attending an Ontario Fur Managers Federation convention in Thunder Bay. As avid outdoor enthusiasts, my family and I attend numerous conventions per year meeting people with similar interests and also honing our skills. My parents and one of my younger brothers accompanied

me on the journey and we enjoyed the stunning landscape on our drive up here. Upon arriving to the reserve I was not sure what I had signed myself up for, but I knew I was ready for a challenge. I did not realize the extent of this challenge until I began to get to know the community and my students better. Many of the students in the school had experienced far more than I could have imagined experiencing at their age. Their skin was thick and their ability to trust outsiders was tarnished.

My first year at Missabay certainly came with its hardships, but also its celebrations. There were times when my class would venture onto the land during cultural outings and set beaver traps. Following the setting of the traps we would enjoy the warmth of a fire while I skinned a marten for the kids. As well, I would also bring my joy of trapping and skinning into the Native Language classroom, demonstrating how to skin a fox and a beaver. During these times, I allowed the students to try their hand at skinning. They thoroughly enjoyed it and just as every other activity, it came naturally to some and others had work harder at getting the feeling for skinning.

What surprised me most about the students and the community was that unfortunately there was not a large presence of trapping and back-to-the-land activities that were occurring. The community is positioned in such a beautiful part of our province and contains pristine land that would produce fur for generations to come if managed properly. It is my hope that there will be more of an emphasis put on the value of getting out on the land. In my own experiences, being out in nature puts me at peace and provides a solace that is rare to find anywhere else. I would hope that if I can achieve this feeling from being immersed in the beauty the land has to offer, that it could provide healing for the people of this community.

As I progress through my second year of teaching at Missabay, I can truly say that I have enjoyed my time working with First Nations people and that I will always remember this experience in the years to come. I will not forget the people here and the tragedy that they often endure on a regular basis. However, I do believe that with a renewed connection to the land tragedy and sorrow would decrease and the satisfaction of living off the land would increase.

Yours in keeping culture alive,
Ashley Tamlin
K5 Teacher
Missabay Community School



Missabay School teacher Ashley Tamlin was brought up learning how to hunt, trap and fish.

Improved Grade 1 & 2

Grade 1 and 2 students at Missabay Community School are experiencing a new hands-on reading program that will help them to learn more easily.

For one week in January, Grade 1 and 2 teachers joined many other teachers in the Sioux Lookout district for the Remediation Plus Workshop, hosted by KERC in Sioux Lookout. Participants had a wonderful opportunity to learn about the "Remediation Plus System," which is a scientific, research-based program focusing on reading, writing and spelling. This program began in 1999 and is being used with remarkable success in other school districts. Some students have shown two to three grade level improvements in their

reading and spelling after just 24 lessons. The lessons are interactive and engage students by combining reading, writing and spelling with special techniques that build memory associations between speech and print.

Support from Grade 1 and 2 parents during this learning transition is very important. Students will be bringing home word lists every day and are expected to read these lists aloud three times. If you have any questions about the program or would like to find out how you can help out, please feel free to call the school. Both Grade 1 and 2 teachers are excited to start the program and are looking forward to seeing their students achieve success.

Healing Wisdom

Do you want to be healthy? Live traditionally. That very briefly sums up what Dr. Larry Willms has learned from years of formal education, affirmed by First Nation Elders.

"The healing traditions of this culture don't separate the mind, body and spirit," said Dr. Willms. In fact, that separation - leaving the spirit to the church and the body to the physicians - is an idea a few hundred years old, compared to thousands of years of traditional medicine.

"I find a lot of the elders will tell you that they are sick because of emotional pain. They understand the relationship between emotional pain and physical symptoms," said Dr. Willms. As well, he said, the elders have a life span long enough to remember what it was like to live in a traditional way and the "vibrancy of health" that stems from that.

Dr. Willms frequently asks his elder patients about their wisdom in living a good life. "They always begin with real humility, saying they don't have anything special to say about that," he said. However, when he persists, the doctor gets ideas like "keep moving," "eat wild food" and "drink fish broth."

"The themes occur over and over again. To be healthy you need to live in a traditional way. You need to be outside, moving, participating in traditional activities; living off the land," he said. Another significant traditional medicine is the language. "The culture itself in its

practise, including language and activities, are medicine. Those are the things that heal us and keep us whole."

Dr. Willms said in his early years of practising with First Nations he was overwhelmed with the challenges he faced as a healer. Eventually he found that the very setting that provoked the crisis offered profound insights and wisdom that directly responded to that crisis. "After 13 years I have some understanding that the problems are here and the solutions are here," he said. Often, when he asks his patients when they last felt well, the answer is the same. People feel well when they are out at their cabins, camping, fishing and out of the reserve setting.

Dr. Willms said as he learns a little about the challenges faced by the people of Mishkeegogamang, he also has an increased sense of and appreciation for people's resilience. In spite of overcrowded living conditions, the cost of healthy food compared to cheaper, less nutritious food and the difficulty "exploring the hard stuff in counselling," many are seeking wellness.

"They don't just want to keep their sickness in check, they want to be well," said Dr. Willms. He said as people increasingly recognize and re-own some of the traditional ways of thinking about health, they are wanting to be less reliant on medicines and more self-reliant.

Sometimes people are surprised that the doctor is happy to hear they don't

want the medicine he can prescribe. "Our medicines should be last, not first resorts. It doesn't make people well, but it can help to take away some of the discomfort." People should not be too quick to leave traditional medicines, around for thousands of years, behind in favour of high tech conventional medicine that's only been around for about 75 "arrogant" years. "It is instructive to learn from the elders how much healthier and happier people were in the past, and to ask why this is so and what has changed," said Dr. Willms. "Increasing numbers of people are finding powerful tools for health and wellness in their traditional wisdom."

Dr. Willms said in many instances traditional approaches can be combined with conventional medical interventions, adding that "certainly with fast moving or severe conditions, conventional medicine plays a very useful and important role."

Mishkeegogamang has been proactive, with Health Directors and Community Health Representatives organizing nutrition seminars, yoga nights and other informative gatherings to empower people to take certain parts of their health into their own hands. "There is a strong understanding in the leadership of this community between poverty and health," said Dr. Willms. Making housing a priority and hiring extra mental health workers and physiotherapy are some of the ways leadership is working to fill in the gaps in services.



Drawing by Romeo Wesley.

Happenings at Missabay School

Teachers and students at Missabay Community School have been busy and productive this year. The staff is excited and working proactively to ensure that students achieve the best results they can. One highlight from this past year was a trip some of our students took to Sandy Lake. They got to experience life in another community, and also came away as winners of a broom ball tournament while they were there.

We've been working to keep our school as up to date as possible and have donated all of our old computers to a gentleman

in Dryden who refurbishes them free of charge and gives them to seniors and those in need. Missabay students now get to use new updated computers.

Another memorable trip was a cultural land-based excursion into the bush where the students learned about the land and about themselves. We have another trip planned to Camp Olympia, where the focus will again be on developing an awareness of self and community. Students are currently hard at work fundraising for this adventure.

Not too Late for Healing

At 72, Charlie Bottle is reflecting on his life and looking for answers to questions that have plagued him for most of his life. He attended a five-day gathering at the Mishkeegogamang Resource Centre for residential school survivors in January. Facilitator Bill Mequanawap translated as Bottle told his story.

Technically, Bottle didn't go to residential school. His family lived and worked in Pickle Lake and he was sent to the summer school there for three and a half summers. He doesn't know what happened to other students at the school, but Bottle said he had a bad experience at the school. He was punished "in a certain way" that hurt him. When he didn't finish his homework, he was hit on his hands. Sometimes he was made to stand in a corner with his hands behind his head and hit from behind.

One day Bottle decided not to go back to school. He would leave in the morning, but would not go to school. When his father found out he was not going to school, he told the young boy he would have to go to work. Bottle thinks he was about 10 years old at the time. Following in his father's footsteps, he worked for the Koval family and he worked hard. That's how he coped all these years, he said, by working hard. When he was about 14 years old he was told he had to go to Pelican school but his father, remembering his first experience with school, wouldn't let him go. Bottle said he is thankful to his father for not sending him to residential school and also for teaching him to work hard.



Elder Charlie Bottle tells his story to counsellor Bill Maquanawap

Bottle has been unable to work due to declining health in the last couple of years. As recently as two years ago, he said, he could work hard, but now those days are over. So now he is looking for other ways to cope. He said he wants to know what went on in residential school and if other children suffered the same kinds of punishments that he did. He doesn't want to run from his memories any more, he said. He wants to deal with what happened to him.

Mequanawap didn't go to residential school either, but both his parents and two of his brothers went and he was "a receiver through those coming home." Mequanawap remembers hiding under a boat because he didn't want to go on the plane to school. The year he would have been forced to go, the school burned down, something he now understands through stories he has heard in his work as a counsellor. "A lot

of hurt, punishment and unwanted stuff happened there," he said. "I cannot say that I really know what they experienced, but I can understand the pain."

Mequanawap said he wants to give survivors hope through the gatherings he facilitates. "I want them to have an opportunity when they are here to do what they need to do. If they can take something out of here and make it into a positive, when I run across them again, their heads are up. I'm just returning the favour from the many people that have helped me."

People like Bottle, said Mequanawap, simply need a place to share their grief and begin, or to continue, a healing journey. As much as possible, Mequanawap works the traditional language, believing the people of Mishkeegogamang validate themselves through the language. "They just need somebody to give them that chance," he said. "A chance to make a good life."

Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation Chief and Council Emergency Contact Numbers

Chief

Connie Gray-McKay
Work: 807-928-2414
Fax: 807-928-2077
Cell: 807-472-2083
Home: 807-928-2083
Email: conniegraymckay@msn.com

Head Councillor

Tom Wassaykeesic
Work: 807-928-2414
Fax: 807-928-2077
Home: 807-928-2014

Senior Councillor

David Masaykeyash
Work: 807-928-2414
Fax: 807-928-2077
Cell: 807-252-1412
Home: 807-928-2927
Email: davidmasaykeyash@msn.com

Councillor

Maryanne Panacheese-Skunk
Work: 807-928-2414
Fax: 807-928-2077
Cell: 807-629-8624
Home: 807-928-2151
Email: maryannepanacheese@hotmail.com

Councillor Laureen Wassaykeesic

Work: 807-928-2414
Fax: 807-928-2077
Cell: 807-252-1412
Home: 807-928-2927
Email: laureen.w@hotmail.com

Volunteers Needed for the Homecoming Committee

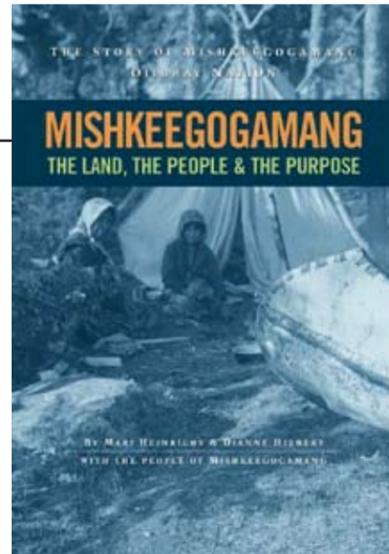
Homecoming is August 2-6, 2010.
Please contact the band office at
928-2414



Accessible by boat in the summer and snowmobile in the winter, the Mishkeegogamang Pashkokogan Healing Lodge is the camp setting for a variety of community wellness initiatives. Funding from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation runs out at the end of March.



A sled, steps at the Mishkeegogamang Band office and two children make for a laughter-filled winter ride.



Mishkeegogamang: The Land, the People and the Purpose

Read all about the history of Mishkeegogamang; learn the wisdom of the elders.

Copies of our history book are now available at the band office.

\$40.00

Foster Homes Needed

Tikinagan Child & Family Services has a great need for foster homes. We are looking for dedicated people who are able to provide a home and meet the needs of a child in care. There are a number of different types of Foster Homes which can be specific to meet a child's need.

- Specialized Foster Homes: For children that would require more care and attention.
- Regular Foster Homes: Short or Long term placements.
- Emergency Foster Homes: For children on an emergency basis.

Tikinagan Child & Family Services is committed to keeping our children within our communities, but we need your help in order to make this happen.

Please contact us today if you are interested or need more information regarding how you can be a part of helping a child.

Mishkeegogamang Tik office: 807-928-2990 fax: 807-928-2024.