



NISHNAWBE-ASKI LEGAL SERVICES

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2021



IN THIS ISSUE:

Gladue Program	3
Discharge Program	6
Legal Aid Department	7
Victim Witness Liaison	8
Staff Introductions	9
Gladue has Moved	12
Honoring the 215 Children	14
Support Resources	16
NALSC Vision Statement renewal by NAN Elders	17
Summary	18
Day One	19
Day Two	23
Conclusion	25

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Kenora: 308 Second Street S. Suite 14, Kenora ON, P9N 1G4
Please contact Thunder Bay Office for phone contact information

Gladue Program

The Gladue program works with Nishnawe-Aski Nation (NAN) members who are before the courts, in custody for bail matters or waiting in pre-trial custody to be sentenced. The Gladue writers, most often, will meet with NAN clients to do interviews for Gladue Reports. The Gladue writers sometimes hear from clients that they are not satisfied with the charges and the reasons for their detention. Gladue writers are not lawyers and we are not allowed to give legal advice to people in custody. We can only recommend they talk to their lawyers.

When you come into contact with police officers it is important to know your legal rights under sections 7 to 14 of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* especially when your freedom is at stake. The Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which is part of Canada's Constitution, amongst other things, sets out the rights that individuals have when they have been arrested. Below are some examples of "Knowing your Rights," it is important to know them.

Know Your Rights When Dealing with the Police

With every police encounter, know that you have certain rights that the police must respect. Most of these rights are protected by the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which is part of the Constitution. Let's have a brief look at some of those rights and how they can protect you.

First, upon a police encounter, ask yourself: am I being detained or arrested? What is the difference?

- Detained

You are being detained when you are stopped by police and feel that you have to comply with what they are asking. **You cannot be detained without reason.** The police can only detain you if they have **reasonable grounds to suspect** you've been involved in a crime. If the police say you are not free to go when asked, it means you are being detained. If a police officer assumes control over your movement by demand or direction, you have been detained. For example, a police officer prevents you from leaving by physically blocking your way with their body.

- Arrested

The police must have **reasonable and probable grounds** to charge you with a criminal offence. You are being arrested when the police formally take you into custody. For example, you are being handcuffed.

You can ask the officer, "Am I under arrest?" If they say yes, you can ask why. Otherwise, you can also ask the officer "Am I free to go?", and if the answer is no, then ask "Why not?".

Gladue Program

You have the right to be promptly told of the reasons why you are being detained or arrested.

This doesn't mean that you have to be informed of the precise charge or all the factual details of the case, **but you have the right to be informed of the reason for your detention or arrest.**

The information must be provided immediately upon detention or arrest as it is required to properly exercise your right to a lawyer.

You have the right to a lawyer.

The police must inform you of your right to a lawyer. You have the right to retain and instruct a lawyer immediately, even if you can't afford one.

You have the right to a lawyer of your choice.

Ask to speak to a lawyer to get legal advice.

If you have been arrested or detained, the police should give you the 24-hour, toll-free number to get free legal advice from a lawyer provided by Legal Aid Ontario.

You have the right to remain silent.

It is **strongly recommended** that you say nothing to the police until you have spoken with your lawyer.

The police will try to get you to talk. It is not in your best interest to do so. Remaining silent is your right and it protects you from potential self-incrimination.

If the sequence of events differs from what the police tell you, remain silent. Give your statement to your lawyer only.

You have the right to be informed of the specific offence you are being charged with.

Once you are charged, **you must be told what you are charged with.**

There may be a delay in giving that information, but that is only acceptable under reasonable circumstances.

You have the right to an interpreter.

If you do not understand or speak the language in which the police have read you your rights in, **you are entitled to an interpreter.**

This ensures you have the opportunity to understand and answer the charge you are facing.

Gladue Program

You have the right against arbitrary search and seizure.

- If you are being detained

Police can conduct a **pat-down search** with their hands to ensure that you're not a threat to them or the public.

They are allowed to take away weapons if any, but they are otherwise **not** allowed to empty your pockets, purse, bag, or any other personal property.

- If you are being arrested

If you are being arrested the police can conduct a more thorough search. **Depending on the circumstances of your arrest** they may be able to search you, anything you're carrying, or in your car if they have reasonable grounds to search those items in relation to your arrest.

- If you are driving

A police officer can stop you if you are driving to check if you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the mechanical quality of your vehicle or the validity of your driver's licence and auto insurance. They can look into the car and may even shine a flashlight through the windows but **cannot search the vehicle unless they have reasonable and probable grounds to search it.**

If you believe your rights have not been respected, you can make a complaint to the [Office of the Independent Police Review Director](#). Follow the process outlined on their website to make a complaint or call Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services at 1-800-465-5581.

Disclaimer

This newsletter entry is for general information purposes only and is not legal advice. The legal information provided is not intended to be used as legal advice for a specific legal program. If you wish to speak to a lawyer, please call Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services at 1-800-465-5581

Resources

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/how-rights-protected/guide-canadian-charter-rights-freedoms.html>

<https://stepstojustice.ca/questions/criminal-law/what-are-my-rights-if-im-detained-or-arrested/>

Discharge Program

Holly Sitch – Discharge Coordinator

The Discharge Team is almost full as we have hired our Discharge Workers:

Lenard Comber – West Region – Sioux Lookout Office

Cell: 807-632-0316

Email: lecomber@nanlegal.on.ca

Karen Honan – Central Region – Thunder Bay Office

Cell: 807-630-6244

Email: khonan@nanlegal.on.ca

Bonnie MacDonald – East Region – Timmins Office

Cell: 705-221-8888

Email: bmacdonald@nanlegal.on.ca

Interviews have been completed for three of the four Discharge Drivers who will work out of Sioux Lookout, Kenora, Thunder Bay and Timmins. We were fortunate enough to have acquired four (4) new SUV's to help cut the cost of transportation with taxis so that we could use the money towards getting more people home.

We have had an extremely busy first quarter of this fiscal year with 98 clients being assisted home. The West region had 45, Central had 17 and the East had 36 clients. As well as all of the discharges we have had to deal with outbreaks in all of the regions. We have worked with resources in each region in order to keep our people safe and with a roof over their heads. With having two new hires added to the team it was a learning curve they sure didn't expect but they have succeeded in connecting to a huge network and have gained many resources to assist during these trying times.

We have received so much gratitude from the clients who were so happy to have received the help and backpacks with PPE and hygiene supplies, as well as underwear and socks. We have also included the NAN Hope swag and information brochures in the backpacks in case the clients need supports.

With such positive team who are dedicated to make sure everyone is able to get home as quickly and as safely as possible, I see only success for the program.

Legal Aid Department

The Legal Aid staff continue to work from home until further notice. Staff are available by cell to take legal aid applications. The advance day and northern courts are held virtually. The CLW's participate in the all virtual/audio courts and will forward notices/posters to the communities. The northern court calendar is on the teams shared drive for all staff to access.

The advice lawyer is available Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

The advice lawyer calendar is on the teams shared drive for all staff to access. Please email advice_lawyer@nanlegal.on.ca with contact information if you are referring a client to the advice lawyer.

Financial eligibility will continue to be waived for domestic violence and child protection issued until September 30, 2021

Effective May 17, 2021 Legal Aid Ontario persons can apply online. On line application will be available to persons with specific criminal and family issues who

- Have not income or
- Receive Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program payments, and
- Do not own property

Legal Aid Staff:

Doreen Stone, Jocelyn Rae, Mary Kakepetum

Community Legal Workers:

Jacob Mekanak, Don Sainnawap, Stella Kiokee-Koostachin, Roberta Wesley, Jackie Edwards, Lloyd Comber, Darlene Suggashie, Danielle Meekis

Please email legalaid@nanlegal.on.ca if you have any questions regarding legal aid, northern courts, duty counsel, court calendars.

Victim Witness Liaison Program

Booshoo from Sioux Lookout,

The Victim Witness Liaison team had the pleasure of visiting Mishkeegogamang & delivering items to the Elders of the community with the blessing of David Masakayash. We had 42 care packages & many happy homes.

This was excellent day for Mishkeegogamang.

Recently, we attended the McIntosh Residential School Survivor Pow Wow on June 7th. It was a very beautiful day to be with survivors especially hearing about the 215 bodies of children in Kamloops. Listening to stories of the former students it was very emotional.

With Covid, we all took precaution. As we move forward & staying safe, We wish everyone a wonderful summer.



Ann Hiller - Public Legal Education



My name is Ann Hiller. I am a former Police Officer from back in the 80's. I was first stationed in my home community of big Grassy First Nation. Then I moved on to Manitoba & policed there for a few years I learned a lot from the RCMP, it was never a dull moment. I moved back to Ontario & joined the OPP. I had a lot of fun there with the town of Pickle Lake & Mishkeegogamang. I recently went back to Mishkeegogamang & met the former Chief Connie Gray-McKay.

After my policing career I combined my profession with the Child Welfare system & became a "kiddie cop". I continued with courses at the Ontario Police College. I became a forensic interviewer with Sex Offenders & became excellent at interviewing children. I look forward to working with NAN & dealing with the Human Trafficking we are facing with the young women & men from our communities. Also keeping up with our VQRP. I hope I can eventually meet everyone at some point & bring awareness of NAN Legal Services Corp to our communities.

Shirley Keesic - Restorative Justice Worker

Well, hello everyone! Gitchi-boozhoo!

I am sitting here thinking about what I should write about. I will be "short"...lol! Since the pandemic, it hasn't really stopped me from doing my work. Although I miss the one-to-one contact, it hasn't really slowed me down. The work has to continue for the client's sake and their court matter(s). The pandemic is really no excuse for anyone NOT to do the work. It would drive me nuts if I didn't have my work to do daily, and if there's no client work, then I do something else such as cleaning, sanitizing, mopping, taking inventory of supplies & equipment, lots of stuff to do! From past experience, a tremendous amount of work needs doing whether I like it or not. I strive to do better with all that I do and also try to be pro-active. In this position one tends to "know what's coming up" just by reading emails, talking to clients, etc. I am finding my workload has not slowed down when it comes to doing Circles. I have lots of empathy for people who are trying to better their lives. Where there is a will, there is a way. I also get unusual requests from clients and reluctantly have to turn them down because of policies that are in place. It is to keep us protected. So, for now I have to pack up this office since plans are being made to put in new windows and flooring. Yay! Everyone have a safe & happy summer. I realize that some new staff hires have come & gone already! I hope some day we can all get together and see each other, just like "the old days"...lol. Take care! Be safe & stay healthy!

Meegwetch,

Shirley Keesic

Karen Honan - Discharge Worker

I have been working in social services and economic development for most of my working life. I live in Thunder Bay and have a home in Gull Bay First Nation, I have two adult children and we enjoy spending time as a family vacationing in the sunny south or hunting, fishing and camping. I am a dog lover, and we presently have 3 dogs. Family is important to me, and I spend lots of time cooking and having family for meals especially during this pandemic.



Bonnie MacDonald - Discharge Planner



I am a Mother of two daughters and Grandmother to four . I am a former nurse and social service worker who has worked with the communities since 1988. I was born and raised in Cochrane, Ontario but lived in Iroquois Falls for thirty years then Ottawa for many years. My husband passed away in 2014 in Ottawa and my grandchildren really wanted Gramma back up north.

My daughter and I bought a home in Timmins a year ago as she works in the legal field in Timmins also. My other daughter lives in Iroquois Falls and just ended eight years working with the youth at a Young Offenders facility in Cochrane but it was shut down. She is now a Community Support Worker at a counselling centre.

My background includes mental health and addictions, crisis intervention and court room work. I have been retired since 2012 and I have just come back into the work force as a Discharge Planner for NAN Legal in Timmins. The best decision I have ever made was to return to work. I have so much to offer our communities and God willing I will be able to do that for many years to come.

The Gladue Program in Red Lake has Moved ... and in other news...

The Gladue Program in Red Lake has moved into new digs. The move was successfully made over several days at the end of April 2021. The original plan was to hire a local person to help me move; however, complications in scheduling meant I ended up doing the move myself. The most awkward thing I had to move was a filing cabinet, but that was greatly assisted by the use of a moving dolly. Those things are lifesavers! Or back-savers! The move was not as daunting as it may sound as it was decided that the desk in the old office would be left there, and another desk would be delivered to the new office. That was a great relief as I was not looking forward to helping with moving a desk; especially if it had to be disassembled and reassembled. I'm sure it would not look like the same desk if I was in charge of reassembling it. LOL. If it had been done by me, it may well have ended up looking like a desk Picasso would be proud of.

The new space is great and because the fiscal year ended for the organization who owns the building, only one worker from their program was in the office as of May 1, 2021. This has made going to and working at the new office, when it is necessary, a less stressful endeavor. I look forward to being productive in the new space. Thank you to the members of management who made the move possible as there were challenges to working in the old space; with the key word being "old". As that saying goes, "Out with the old, in with the new."

Aside from the move to the new office, an event that really impacted me in the last couple of months, was the confirmation that 215 Indigenous children who had died at the Indian Residential School in Kamloops, BC, had been buried in unmarked graves; like their deaths were meant to be hidden. And the truth of their deaths was hidden until the remains of their innocent little bodies were detected by ground-penetrating radar on May 27, 2021. As an Indian Residential Survivor, myself, this news threw me off-kilter for some time. I couldn't seem to focus on my work for at least a week and found myself being way more emotional than I usually am. Thankfully, management responded to the horrific news by acknowledging the impact the news would likely have on staff and provided information on mental health supports that were immediately available. Management also offered an opportunity for staff to gather virtually via Zoom so that staff could share how the news of the discovery of the 215 children was affecting them. An Elder sensitively moderated the session and I am so very grateful that we were offered this time and space to share during that difficult time.

The Gladue Program in Red Lake has Moved ... and in other news...(Continued)

Previous to the Zoom session, I had attended a gathering at the site of another former Indian Residential School at McIntosh, ON, some 25 kilometres northwest of Vermillion Bay, ON. The gathering was held on Saturday, June 5, 2021, and at least 10 people from Red Lake attended, myself included. Seven drum groups were also there, as were a number of people in their dance regalia. Once the traditional protocols, introductions and announcements had been attended to, a feast was provided. This was followed by dancing which included a dance to honour the 215 children who had been found in Kamloops, as well as a dance to honour the Indian Residential School Survivors who were in attendance at the day's gathering. Participants were also invited to dance in honour of members of their own families who had attended an Indian Residential School and who could not be in attendance that day. I joined the circle several times. Survivors also shared stories to round out the day's events.

I'm really glad I was able to attend this important gathering with members of my extended family. I know it provided healing from the stirring up of old memories and hurts that were re-lived when I heard about the finding of the 215 Indigenous children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. That event made it clear to me that I am not fully healed from my own experiences with Indian Residential Schools, but it also reminded me that healing is a life-long journey, and this was yet another chapter in that story. I hope others found some healing too from emotions and memories that may have been brought to the surface from hearing about the 215 buried Indigenous children in Kamloops.

Thank you again to management at NALSC for being sensitive to the mental health needs of the staff. I hope we continue to support one another in good ways as we go forward together in our professional and at-home lives. Take care, and Miikwech.

Leslie King

Gladue Writer – Red Lake

Sacred Fire

**MAY 31 AT 3 P.M.
UNTIL JUNE 4**

**In honour of the 215
children found at the site
of the Kamloops Indian
Residential School**

A Sacred Fire will be lit at the site of the former St. Joseph Indian Residential School in Thunder Bay (Pope John Paul II Senior Elementary School) to honour the spirits of the children and support the grieving and healing of the families, communities and Survivors.

The Fire will be lit Monday at 3 p.m. and will burn for four days.

As requested by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir we encourage you to wear orange, the symbol of Orange Shirt Day, on Monday to honour all the children who died in the Residential Schools.

Everyone is welcome to offer prayers and tobacco. Please follow public health guidelines and wear a face mask if you wish to enter the teepee.

**If you need support
please contact:**

IRS Survivors Society
1-800-721-0066
or
NAN Hope
1-844-626-4673



Honouring 215 Children found at Kamloops Residential School

In honour of the 215 children found at the site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Fort William First Nation, a Sacred Fire was lit at the site of the former St. Joseph Indian Residential School, Thunder Bay, ON, now called "Pope John Paul II Senior Elementary School," to honour the spirits of the children, to support the grieving, to support the healing of the families, communities, and Survivors. The Sacred Fire was lit Monday, May 31 with opening prayers and remarks, and burned for four days.

As requested by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Indian Band, Office of the Cehif: Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir, we encourage everyone to wear orange- the symbol of Orange Shirt Day to honour all the children who died in the Residential Schools.

Everyone was welcomed to offer prayers and tobacco; donations of little shoes were also requested. The community came together in dropped off other donations such as toys, stuffed animals, drawings, flowers, candles, letters, cards, beadwork, baby bonnets, moccasins and even food offering. The response was overwhelming and line ups were long to offer tobacco in the sacred fire.

Everyone was also to follow public health guidelines and wear a face mask.





On Friday June 4th – 7th 2021, a Sacred fire was also lit in “Honor of those who did not make it home,” in the Traditional Lands of Fort William First Nation, on Anemki Wajiw, also know as Mount Mckay. Requests for Moccasins were made. There was allot of visitors, a feast was held, a small dance, and drumming.



If you need support for yourself or others close to you, please connect with someone. Below is a list of Resources that you can contact and connect with:

Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society

Toll Free 1-800-721-0066

<https://www.irsss.ca/>

NAN Hope

Toll Free 1-844-626-4673

Text: 1- 844- 626- 4673

<https://nanhope.ca/> with Chat feature

Indian Residential School Survivors and Family 24 Hour Crisis Line:

Toll Free 1-866-925-4419

<https://www.irsss.ca/faqs/how-do-i-reach-the-24-hour-crisis-line>

Talk 4 Healing

Services in Ojibway, Oji-Cree, Cree, English, French

24/7 culturally sensitive counselling, advice, and support to Indigenous women.

Toll Free: 1-855-554-4325

www.talk4healing.com

Hope for Wellness Help Line

24/7 Services in Cree, Ojibway, Inuktitut

Toll Free 1- 855- 242- 3310

<https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/> with Chat Feature

Native Women's Association of Canada

In-house elders offering support, Monday to Friday 9- 11am and 1 – 3 p.m. Eastern Time

Toll Free: 1- 888- 664- 7808

<https://www.nwac.ca/>

MMIW Crisis Line

24/7 support to family, friends and community members impacted by the loss of a missing or murdered Indigenous woman, girl or Two-spirit person

Toll Free: 1- 844- 413- 6649

Crises Line

Toll Free: 1- 866- 996- 0991 (if your outside Ottawa)

<https://crisisline.ca/>



Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation

*A Summary of the Elder's Session re:
NALSC's Vision Statement Renewal*



Summary:

Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation is in the process of completing their new Strategic plan. Within the strategic plan is a need to renew the Vision Statement.

The board decided to host an online event for Elder's of NAN for their input and guidance on renewing the Vision Statement.

This event took place on Zoom on April 27th and May 11th, 2021.

The facilitator of the event was Doug Semple.

Notes were taken by multiple staff members in summary and verbatim.

A few of the Elder's who participated in the event were involved in the development of NALSC in the 1990's and others were involved in justice specifically in their communities, other organizations, political movements etc.

Day 1 - consisted of historical background given by Bentley Cheechoo, Rosie Mosquito and Frank McKay, who were integral during the early development of NALSC.

Doug Semple continued the meeting in an almost open discussion format. As the Elder's would cite their experience, speak on their understanding and give story-based examples.

A group of staff worked on developing drafts of the renewed vision statements from the notes gathered during the first day.

Day 2 - continued the discussion but focused on further developing the drafts of the vision statements created by staff based on day 1. Elder's who did not get a chance to speak on day 1 were given the opportunity and further spoke on justice and their own experiences. Once all Elder's spoke, the group discussed further and decided on the final draft of the vision statement.

Day 1:

There were many points to consider regarding how to develop or influence the justice system to support our indigenous people. Much of what the elder's spoke on were their life stories - achieving justice is not only something that has been difficult to do, but is also a lifetime journey in the indigenous world view which is summed up in the word:

Pimatisiwin

(Pih-mah-ti-si-win)

This word is shared in between the Cree and Ojibway languages. It is the word for life. Further translation describes the word to mean "Being alive well".

Given the context of the event, how can Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation renew their vision statement to further support and address injustice felt by the indigenous communities of the NAN region?

It is only fitting that the Elder's provided their guidance using their life experience in trying to achieve *Pimatisiwin*, the barriers, and the opportunities to improve access to it.

"What happened is we ended up trying to fit in, not cause we wanted to, but the resolution Rosie mentioned is still relevant. If we want to run our own show, we have to go back to the teachings of our elders. The teachings are the seven great laws, which include principles we have to get back to. When we move forward, we have to consider the teachings to be the foundations of our laws."

Bentley Cheechoo

There were 4 reports that were frequently referenced throughout the event. These will be available upon request.

- 88/45 NAN Resolution and 89/40 NAN Resolution
- Letters Patent with attached – NAN Resolutions attached 90/26, 90/26A.
- (2020) NAN Resolution 20/14 Justice and law Transformation in NAN Territory based at NAN office.
- Osnaburgh Windigo Justice Review Part 1 of 2 – July 31, 1990

Day 1 (Continued):

"...and we need to start thinking of us together as a people. We need to stand in unison to develop and fight our battles. The seven teachings that are given to us, they are not a cliché. Its being used when its convenient. They are laws, and they have been used for thousands of years. And that's really important to me and how we've survived as Anishnawbe."

Maggie Chisel

There were many references to Indigenous law – primarily including the 7 great teachings. These are foundational to achieving *Pimatisiwin*.

Truth

Humility

Respect

Love

Honesty

Courage

Wisdom

"When thinking about revisioning, understanding that the current system of justice is damaging, we need to rethink about our own justice system and our traditional ways."

Rosie Mosquito

Alongside the need to utilize Anishnawbe laws within the current justice system, there were also calls to action for prioritizing Self-Identity, Autonomy, and Sovereignty. This theme of self governance and sovereignty repeats throughout the entire event.

Day 1 (Continued):

"To go back, disintegration of the current system may be something we have to start looking at."

Goyce Kakegamic

"So with the vision statement my idea is reclaiming the child, our past, our ceremonies."

Gary Martin

"If you want an alternative justice system it has to be really different, cause right now its just an extension of the current justice system."

Sam Achneepineskum

"...they had elders sitting with the courts. The judges who were sitting at the courts really respected the elders. The judge would ask what the elders would recommend for sentencing. Instead of jailing them, a lot of time the elders would make recommendations in court and they were taken seriously. And it worked."

Teri Fiddler

The notion of sovereignty is based on restoring the natural and holistic balance indigenous people of Turtle Island had with nature for thousands of years prior to colonization. While there are calls for independence, it is not for the sake of independence. There is need for deconstruction of certain aspects of the current justice system, wherein we would build towards a new system that utilizes indigenous law as well as westernized law in an equilibrium. One prime example of this is deconstructing laws that focus on criminalization and punishment, and then reforming law to focus on restorative justice – which is incapsulated by one of the programs offered by NALSC.

The Restorative Justice Program.

Day 1 (Continued):

The calls to action by the Elders are for these indigenous based concepts to be applied at the governmental level, where the most impact would take place. However, for this event, this guides NALSC on how we can further envision ourselves as an organization.

“If we develop a system that works for turtle island. It is for those who are not yet born. We are developing a society for those who aren’t here yet. At our expense we are not going to take too many resources, money, planes, housing. We leave it for those who aren’t here yet.”

Edmund Metatawabin

Elder Edmund Metatawabin speaks of having a system that sustains the earth (Aski). The concept of sustainability is one of the most important paradigms in the indigenous worldview. There is an Anishnawbe law that states we must preserve and sustain the earth for the next 7 generations. If every generation did this, the world could be sustained perpetually. This potentially allows for *Pimatisiwin* to be achieved by every generation.

“I was looking forward to coming up with the vision statement with how to move forward. I think we all agree, is to restore the objective of the justice system, to restore peace, reconciliation.”

“To survive, inspire, and refocus on that.”

Goyce Kakegamic

The first day can be summarized in the idea of restoring the traditional methods that Anishnawbe people have used since time immemorial.

How can we move forward and restore those traditional methods, achieve reconciliation, revive the wellbeing of our communities, and reform law for the NAN region?

This begins with renewing a vision statement that NALSC can refer to every step of the way forward, which happens on the second day of this event.

Day 2:

The second day of this event was not planned, but it became clear as we moved through the agenda that there would be more time needed to capture and express the wisdom stated by the elders. A spontaneously created vision statement on the spot would not do the event justice.

A working group of staff worked on creating early drafts of the vision statements in the time between the two dates of the event.

On May 11th, 2021, most of the same attendees from the first meeting reconvened to complete the vision statement.

Facilitator Doug Semple recapped and summarized the first meeting before presenting the various drafts of vision statements.

Below are the drafts that staff members of the working group tried to capture the essence of what the elder's spoke of on the first day.

1) Taken from Draft #1 from the Strategic Plan, and reworded into Revised Draft #1

Our Vision is to support the Communities existing variation of Restorative Justice models, to continuously revitalize and support our Traditional and Cultural Restorative practices through land based and community-based approaches, with the valuable role of Elders. When diverting Criminal and Family matters directly to NALSC, members will be processed through our own education, principles, and values, rooted in healing and well-being resulting in healthier, and united Families and Communities. And further establishing an even stronger self-governed, self-sufficient Justice models, and evolve as a Sovereign respected nation.

2) Taken from Draft #2 from the Strategic Plan, and reworded into Revised Draft #2

Our vision is to restore individual well-being, family healing, and Unity. By continuously using our Traditional and Cultural practices of Justice, with the wisdom of our Elders, as People guided by the Laws of Nature, it is our inherent right(s) given to us by the Creator, that we uphold our principles. We do this work to ensure that all injustices are restored, while educating our people through Teachings and Land Based practices. As community members we each hold a responsibility to Self-Govern, take care of our children, to love our youth, to honour and respect the lands, as a Sovereign Nation.

Day 2 (Continued):

3) Draft #3

To support NAN community's inclusion of members and the diversity of language (S) and nations. To heal and build respectful justice diversions for the inherent laws for our nation's values, language, sovereignty. To restore our balance for who is not yet born and for the well being of our children and youth with the guidance our elder(s). To restore our own traditional laws to reach sovereignty, self determination, education. To bring family principles to heal trauma and protect culture, teaching, values, and unity of nation.

4) Draft #4

To establish cultural teachings as a foundation within the current westernized justice system for it to recognize, reconcile, and adequately protect indigenous people. The realization of self governance and sovereignty amongst the NAN communities. Healing and restoration of the NAN region through decriminalization, revitalization of traditional laws, and supporting inherent leadership. Ensuring NALSC contributes to the safety and abundance for the next seven generations of Turtle Island.

5) Draft #5:

Our Vision is to respect the sovereignty of each First Nation and support their re-establishing of traditional forms of justice, structures and laws within NAN communities and recognize the importance of individual members to access legal services in the existing justice system and to diverting our members from that court system; affirm the integral role of Elders within the justice processes that preserves our ways of life, languages, customs, traditions and teachings, to advocate restorative justice education together with training and increased land-based healing programming in each community for sustained community well-being resulting in hopeful, healthy, strong and vibrant families, children and youth for today and in the future.

Conclusion:

A youth attendee brought up an important point to consider on this first day that directly applies to day 2.

"I believe that the vision statement can be simple. I feel like its best that it's made simple."

Gavin Wesley

Gavin's story cited that simplicity and action were very effective in his journey to achieving Pimatisiwin. He pointed out that the logo was simple and effective as an example.

With this perspective, the elders reviewed and discussed which draft they wanted to use.

The elders decided to use the first draft but distilled it down into a very simplified yet effective version.

The vision statement that best suits NALSC's future in the eyes of our NAN Elder's is the sentence below.

"To respect and revitalize restorative justice forms of justice through Indigenous laws and Pimatisiwin."

**Please note the Final vision statement is still going through its final stages with the Board of Directors and Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation Strategic Plan 2021– 2026 document.*

