

Thunder Bay Evacuee Activity Report

Throughout July and August, Thunder Bay has been home to communities from all over Northern Ontario who had been evacuated due to the out-of-control wildfires that have been spreading rapidly over the summer. During this time, we in the Restorative Justice Department had the amazing opportunity to spend time with these individuals and host family friendly events for the kids to have fun and promote community bonding. After speaking with some of the evacuees we found out that although they greatly appreciated the fun events for their children, what they really wanted was to be able to have homemade cooking and cook for their families. So, to help out we put together a big family event at the Valhalla where there were art activities, fun outdoor waterslides, and bounce castles for the kids to play, and a cookout kitchen set up for members to use. The kids had an amazing time, and everyone came together to make soup and bannock for everyone plus a few extra dishes. We were very proud to be able to assist our NAN members and make their time away from home a little bit more fun.

Please enjoy the updates, pictures, and the firsthand reports of the RJ staff ☺



Thunder Bay Victoria Inn/Chippewa Park Waterslide, Bouncy Castle, and Painting July 27th, 2021, Victoria Inn 30+ participants We had Funtastic Castles come to Victoria Inn for a waterslide with fire evacuees from Pikangikum and Poplar Hill Youth.

They had so much fun on the waterslide, for the other group of youth and some volunteers inside the hotel we held a painting contest. We gave away prizes the first prize being Beats Solo headphones. We asked securities that were working at the hotel pick the paintings they liked.

July 29th, 2021, Chippewa Park 150+ participants Pikangikum evacuees from 3 different hotels in Thunder Bay came to Chippewa. I really enjoyed working, I even brought my kids to Chippewa for the waterslide, bouncy castle, and some painting. My kids had the most fun in the bouncy castle and if they needed to cool off, they would go on the waterslide. It was pretty awesome seeing the families get together and take their minds off the fire that was threatening their home.

~ **Chris Beardy** – *Youth Justice/ Youth Intervention Worker for Pikangikum & Kingfisher Lake*



On Saturday, July 31st NAN Legal hosted an event at the Valhalla in Thunder Bay for the Deer Lake community members. They were evacuated in mid July due to the forest fires. Not all Deer Lake residents were staying at the Valhalla, according to some members they were in other cities. It was a nice afternoon; we had many families come and enjoy the blow-up water slide from Fun-Tastic Castles. Many of the children, were so happy and enjoyed their time playing with their friends and cousins. The kids had many laughs and made up their own games while playing. It was nice to see so many come together and enjoy the afternoon. While the kids were playing, some of the youth and adults did some artwork. We supplied art kits with canvas and paper and had some pretty awesome artwork.

Having this opportunity to be together and enjoy an afternoon outside with some of the Deer Lake community members, was refreshing and a nice change of scenery. We did some draws for the participants, and everyone was very thankful. During our time there, it was mentioned that the ladies missed cooking for their families. So, this created an idea to have a cook out with soup and bannock.....they were so excited for this and our team started a plan. Stay tuned for our next get together with Deer Lake residents.

~ **Alana Odawa** – *Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Restorative Justice Worker*



On Tuesday, August 10th, NAN legal RJ hosted an event at the Valhalla inn in Thunder Bay for the Deer Lake community members who were currently staying at Valhalla Inn due to forest fires near the community. We had a blow-up water slide and two bouncy houses from Fun-Tastic castles, we also had a cook-out for the adults and children, we cooked hamburger macaroni soup and had 5-6 people from Deer Lake cook Bannock. It was a fun-filled afternoon, it rained on us a bit but that didn't stop us from sharing stories and eating good food. It was great to get to know some of the people from Deer Lake, hear their stories about family recipes and how they learned to cook. One of the ladies that made Bannock even folded Klik slices into her Bannock and it was amazing! A lot of us from NALSC that were at the event have never tried that, so it was a very exciting treat! After a full year of not gathering due to COVID it was nice to have a small gathering like this in Thunder Bay for the people of Deer Lake.

~ **Liz Johnson** - *Restorative Justice Worker – Matawa Communities*



During the fire evacuations we did events for the evacuees.

First event was at Victoria Inn – Poplar Hill/Pikangikum

- Water slide
- Painting contest

This event was a very good turn out

Second Event was at Chippewa park – Pikangkum/ Polar Hill

- Water slides
- Bouncy Houses
- Painting contest

Last Event was Valahalla – Deer Lake

- Bouncy Houses
- Water slides
- Cookout
- learned how to make klik in a Bannock

Well attended, all events were good turn outs.



~ **Derek Atlookan** – *Pre-Charge Youth Restorative Justice Worker*

Submitted by:

Chantelle Johnson - RJ Manager

Natasha Salatino Mach - RJ Coordinator,

Alana Odawa - Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Restorative Justice Worker,

Liz Johnson - RJ Worker Matawa Communities,

Derek Atlookan - Pre-Charge Restorative Justice Worker, Thunder Bay

Chris Beardy - Youth Justice/ Youth Intervention Worker for Pikangikum & Kingfisher Lake