

WINTER| BIBOON 2023



NISHNAWBE-ASKI LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

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ACCESS COURT INFORMATION

Visit our website --> www.nanlegal.on.ca

Click the highlighted links for Advance Court Zoom connections and Northern Duty Council Calendar.

>> NALSC Advance Court - Virtual Zoom Connection

>> NALSC Northern Duty Council Calendar

****UPDATED FREQUENTLY****



NALSC All Staff Gathering



NALSC held their All Staff Gathering from November 14 - 16, 2023. For the three days, staff engaged in formal Introductions, Strategic Planning, Networking, Team Building and Years of Service Awards. It was a great week!



Ἰσχυρὸν Δυνατὸν



Staff Submissions - All Staff Gathering

I really enjoyed the All-Staff Gathering. I got to meet, in person, for the first time, so many different staff members. We are a good-looking bunch! 😊 And so many of us are fun-loving, which made the gathering that much more fun. It was also an opportunity to hear from each other what we think the organization is doing well and where there can be improvements. It's probably a pipe dream but I really liked that idea of the organization having its own aircraft! Wouldn't that be something. I also liked the idea of gym memberships being a paid benefit. What a great idea for de-stressing.

A couple of the things that were funny at the tables I sat at was the squeeze toy that made for lots of conversation and laughs and hearing how things were "Trudeau!" It was also inspirational to see how many staff are celebrating multiple years of service with the organization. Awesome job peeps! I will carry many memories from our gathering.

Leslie King, Red Lake-based Gladue Writer



Photo by Leslie King



Staff Submissions - All Staff Gathering

Indigenous Bail Verification Supervision Program & Community Release and Reintegration Program



Indigenous Bail Supervision, Indigenous Bail Navigator, Community Release and Reintegration Programs.

Left to right-

Back- Charles Benson (Weagamow Lake), Angus Miles (Fort Severn), Keith McKay (Kasabonika Lake), Jean Waboose (Fort Hope), Adam Mack (Timmins/Monteith), Catherine Gull (Timmins)

Front – Bobby Anishinabie (Sandy Lake), David Sutherland (Fort Albany), Morningstar Quill (Pikangikum), Amanda Ratte (Timmins), Elizabeth Norman (Timmins) – missing Brianna Owen (Pikangikum)

For more information on Indigenous Bail Verification and Community Release and Reintegration, please visit <https://nanlegal.on.ca/bail-community-release-and-reintegration/>

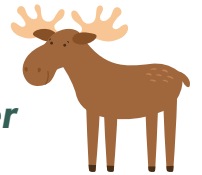


Staff Submissions - All Staff Gathering



"My photo is a selfie I took with the MC, Brent Edwards, on the last day of training. He had asked the staff earlier that morning if we could spread the Mooselegs (Mooselegs is his business' name lol). So, I asked him to take a selfie with me to post on social".

Feather Metatawabin, Gladue Writer



Brent Edwards aka Moose Legs was our MC for our All Staff Gathering. He was very engaging, funny, and made our event fun and enjoyable for everyone.

To find more information on Moose Legs, visit <https://mooselegs.ca/>.



Staff Christmas Dinner



Staff Christmas Dinner



Recognizing Years of Service

30 Years of Service

Heather Baillie
★ Jacob Mekanak

20 Years of Service

Doreen Stone
Leahan Parrott
Donald Sainnawap

15 Years of Service

Stella Kiokee-Koostachin
Chantelle Johnson

10 Years of Service

Carol Buswa
Roberta Wesley
Jocelyn Rae
Zelda Watt
Shirley Keesic
Keith William John Mckay
Heather Napash
Mary Kakepetum
Jacqueline Edwards
Evangeline Meekis
Vernon Morris

5 Years of Service

Bryan Phelan
Mary Spencer
Joanne Cheechoo
Kenneth Sackaney
Wilma Carpenter
Lloyd Comber
Elizabeth Johnson
Cecilia Fiddler
Catherine Gull
Terri Zoccole
Charles Benson
Steffany Meekis-Fiddler
Angus Miles
Jean Rabbit-Waboose
Lenard Comber
David Sutherland
Stallone Quequish

Chi-
Miigwetch
to all staff!



Legal Aid Staff Visits Attawapiskat

Community visit to Attawapiskat

On November 8 and 9, 2023 staff from the Legal Aid Department made a community visit to Attawapiskat. Director of Legal Services Renzo Caron, Staff Lawyer Arturo Acosta, Legal Aid Manager Heather Baillie, Senior Assessment Office Doreen Stone and Public Legal Education & Communications Coordinator Cheryl Suggashie were all in attendance. Staff Lawyer and PLECC held a two-day presentation Kattawapiskak Elementary School, from Grade 1 to Grade 8. Prizes were handed out for participation. The rest of the Legal Aid staff visited within Community and met with Chief Sylvia Koostachin-Metatawabin, who took them on a tour of the Community.





Are you from a NAN Community?

Do you need to apply for Legal Aid?

Legal Aid Direct Line:

1 (807) 935 - 7299

gennishls@lao.on.ca

Toll Free: 1- 800- 465- 5581

Phone: (807) 622-1413

Fax: (807) 344- 6904

www.nanlegal.on.ca

Hours of Operation: 9am– 5pm Eastern

Services available in Ojibway, Cree, Oji-Cree & English

COLLECT CALLS ACCEPTED

Talking Together Program



Talking Together Program

On December 8th the Talking Together Program had the privilege to present at a Band Rep and Kuno meeting which was held in Timmins.

Talking Together Facilitators, Melissa Sutherland, Susan Cheechoo and Mary Pearce presented for a group of 30 to 40 kuno and band representatives and one virtual participant. About the Talking Together Program and how the program works.

The presentation was well received by those attending and asked several questions.

Mary Pearce, Talking Together Program Facilitator





A few NALSC staff had the opportunity to attend the the Gawendum Gaakina Awaya Chiefs Forum (Thunder Bay Police Chiefs Forum) on December 12, 2023. The first of what will be ongoing forums, attendance included Anishinabek Nation Grand Chief and Deputy Chiefs, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Grand Chief, the Fort William First Nation Chief and Council, and Indigenous Community Partners such as ONWA, Nokiiwin Tribal Council, and Indigenous Friendship Centre.



Thunder Bay Police Service Chief Darcy Fleury, held what he plans to be ongoing forums with First Nation leadership in the hopes of creating better communication and rebuilding trust with the Indigenous community. This day marked the 5 year anniversary of the release of the OIPRD Report.

Miigwetch to Thunder Bay Police Services for inviting NALSC to this very difficult but important discussion. Although there is so much work that still needs to be done, this is a start.



Restorative Justice Article

Article Written by:

Restorative Justice Worker *Lorilee Lessard*

Restorative Justice Worker *Elizabeth Johnson*

Restorative Justice Sexual Assault Diversion

Worker *Alana Odawa-Lindstone*

The Article is published in a Magazine called

"KCI-Niwesq the magazine for The Native

Women's Association of Canada"

Imagine a justice system that restores harmony between wrong-doers and those they have harmed.

Imagine a justice system focused on rehabilitation rather than punishment.

Imagine a justice system that does not saddle young people with criminal records, but instead provides an opportunity for growth, learning, and pride.

That is Restorative Justice. It is a relatively new response to the over-incarceration of Indigenous people in Canada. But its foundations lie in the traditions of Indigenous societies around the world, including those in this country.

It's about diverting perpetrators away from courts and jails, and allowing communities to decide how their people who have committed crimes, and the victims of their actions, can best move forward.

Restorative Justice has been in place for two decades in many Indigenous communities across Canada. One of them is the Miawpukek First Nation, at Conne River on the south coast of Newfoundland.

Mi'sel Joe, the Chief of Miawpukek, realized 20 years ago that there had to be a better system of justice for his people – one that is controlled by the community.

Chief Joe was aware that Judge Robert Fowler was presiding at a courthouse across the bay from Miawpukek.

I sent a message to his court worker and asked him if he would come to Conn River for a meeting, and he said 'no, I don't have the time,'" Chief Joe said in an interview during a recent visit to Ottawa. "And I told him, if we can get you over to Conn River and get you back to your court in 45 minutes, would you come over. And he said 'yes.' So, I sent a helicopter over. It landed right next to our band office and that's how I got to meet him."

The two discussed the need to implement a system of restorative justice in Miawpukek. And Judge Fowler agreed that it should happen.

The majority of crimes in Miawpukek are minor break and enters, or petty vandalism of churches and the school. In the not-to-far-distant past, the 'restorative justice' for committing those types of offences would be meted out by one's parents, says Chief Joe. "If someone reports you to your parents, I mean, God Almighty, I would rather go to jail."

But, as the First Nations came under the control of the colonizers and their lawyers and judges, he says, that system went by the wayside, and those who committed minor crime in Miawpukek ended up in prison.

Restorative Justice Article

I know people who were put in jail for taking a piece of plastic from somebody's cabin," he says. There was one man who spent 30 days behind bars for borrowing a canoe – which is part of Mi'kmaq tradition. And Miawpukek men were regularly being incarcerated for hunting moose without a licence. "The RCMP would come in and take the meat right out of the pan on the stove and take the man who got the moose off to jail."

In Miawpukek, when someone is acknowledged to have committed a crime and is referred to the restorative justice program, they take a seat at a table with the victim, Elders, supportive people for both parties, and witnesses. There is a smudge, and a feather is passed from person to person. A judge may oversee the process. Then the discussions begin.

"At the end of the day, we have to come up with a resolution for what has been done. The first thing would be an apology," says Chief Joe. "And then (the offender) may have to do community work for 30 days or 40 days. They may have to cut wood for an Elder, or they may have to paint a fence. It all depends on the time of year."

But there are no criminal charges. No one goes to jail. And justice takes place in full view of community members who may sit as observers, says Chief Joe, rather than in a courtroom several hours away where the proceeding is out of the eyes of the people of Miawpukek.

It is a similar process that takes place when minor crimes are committed in the First Nations that are part of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nations north of Thunder Bay, ON.

Restorative Justice is a unique way of seeking alternative justice within the community that benefits the victim, the offender, and their families, and ultimately supports the community," says Elizabeth Johnson, a restorative justice worker with the Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation (NALSC).

Lorilee Lessard, another NALSC restorative justice worker, says it is the Crown attorneys who determine whether a person charged with committing a crime would be a good candidate for the alternative form of sentencing. But recommendations can come from many sources, including arresting officers.

Restorative Justice frees up court time, and is less costly than a criminal trial. But the real advantages flow to the offender, the victim, and their community.

When Ms. Lessard receives a referral from the Crown, she first calls the person who has broken the law, who she calls a 'client,' to talk about the crime. She asks them to explain what was going on at the time the offence was committed, and how it has impacted their life. Then she contacts the victim to ask the same questions, and to determine ways to correct the harm that resulted.

"Then I would facilitate a healing circle which would include the offender, the victim, an Elder, supports for the offender, supports for the victim," says Ms. Lessard. "And in that circle, we would talk about how we can correct the harm."

That may include an apology letter, and community service.

"

Restorative Justice Article

We encourage culturally based community service, says Ms. Johnson. "So, spending time on the land, spending time with an Elder if they go hunting."

Connections to the Elders are so important for young people who have strayed afoul of the law, says Ms. Lessard.

A week and a half ago, we had an excellent Elder in our circle who was reiterating to that offender the importance of choosing the good path, and connecting with your culture, and being more traditional in your way of thinking, and learning respect," she says. "And I think that impact of Elders speaking, it really gets through to our clients that this is your chance to get on a good path."

Alana Odawa, Restorative Justice Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence worker of NALSC, says it is difficult for someone who has served time in a settler correctional institution to turn their life around once they are released.

The programs for people who are being incarcerated are supposed to rehabilitate and help those individuals," says Ms. Odawa. "But, when they come out, they're still painted with the same brush because, even years later, society sees them as who they were before."

No one wants to be labelled a criminal, says Ms. Lessard. "Everybody makes mistakes in life," she says. Some of her clients have long backgrounds of "addiction, trauma, there's so many things you have to look at. And when they come through the restorative justice program, there is that talk of treatment. There's so many more options."

There are no statistics available to prove that restorative justice works in the Nishnawbe Aski communities. But Ms. Johnson says that, in the years she has worked for NALSC, she has never had a client reoffend. Ms. Lessard says that has been her experience as well.

"We want to look at them as individuals," says Ms. Odawa. "And then we ask what can we do to support this individual to make some healthier changes, so that they're not continuously going down this path of causing harm ... our ultimate goal is to be breaking that cycle."

Chief Joe tells the story of a young man in his community, who was repeatedly getting into trouble.

"He went before Judge Fowler" as part of the restorative justice program, says Chief Joe. "The young man was a pretty good artist, and Judge Fowler said you have to do a picture of an Aboriginal person. They can be sitting down, lying down, standing up, whatever -- and it will be hung in a courthouse. And he did that. That was his sentence."

The young man did not offend again. The message, says Chief Joe, is that when someone has committed a crime and needs to be set on a straight path: "Give them something they can do that they can be proud of."

For more information on our Restorative Justice Programs please visit our website:

<https://nanlegal.on.ca/restorative-justice/>

E-mail:

rjreferral@nanlegal.on.ca

New Staff Biography: Discharge Driver - Kenora Ted O'Flaherty

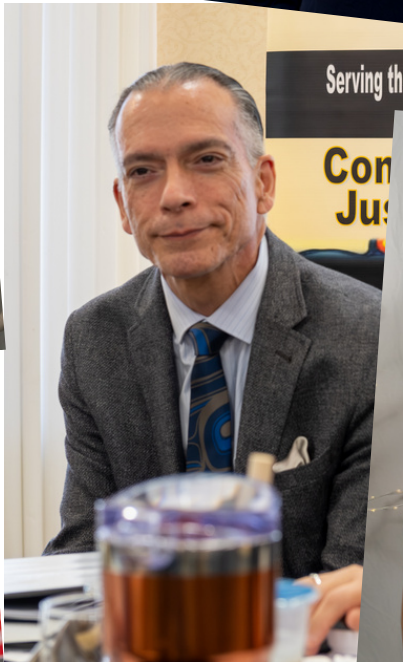


I am an outdoors enthusiast with a passion for helping the community I live in and the communities that surround my home, Kenora. I love to play music and perform in local bars and restaurants. I am also a volunteer firefighter recruit for the city of Kenora. I look forwards to working with everyone in the agency and helping clients get home.

Board of Directors & Elders at our “All Staff Gathering”



Christmas Photo Dump



Christmas Photo Dump



**NISHNAWBE ASKI LEGAL SERVICES
CORPORATION, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
& STAFF**

Wish you a
Merry Christmas
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

**HOLIDAY CLOSURE
MONDAY DEC 25, 2023
TUESDAY DEC 26, 2023
MONDAY, JAN 1, 2024**



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