



## Listuguj takes ownership of group home

Soon, the Gignu Group Home will be run entirely by the community. On January 19th, Integrated Health and Social Services Centres (CISSS) signed over the responsibility to the LMG. The transfer has been in the works for over ten years.

Nearly 20 people gathered at the newly constructed building to witness the official signing. There is no exact opening date as of yet, but job advertisements for the new positions have been posted.

“What I really like about this agreement is the fact that we’ve been able to work out a way that we as Listuguj, will – over time – take over the running, the administration, the direction of the services that will be provided to our youth, by our people,” said Chief Darcy Gray.

Connie Jacques, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, said the project started out simply to construct a new building, and along the way everyone decided that it was a good time to start the transfer of ownership. There had been discussions before she got involved, 10 years ago. The entire program will eventually be developed out of Listuguj.

“We’ll have a transition step where the center will be run by the Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government and with support from our services,” Jacques said. “But

eventually, the goal is that we’re not here anymore.”

The event also took the opportunity to honor some of the long standing employees of the Gignu Group Home, like Dolly Barnaby.

“I initially thought that this was for recognition of Susan’s retirement,” Barnaby said.

Susan Basque retired on January 11th. But four others were recognized for working more than 25 years. Barnaby has been there for 31 years, since the beginning. She said the center was their baby, right from the start.

“We were all very young,” she said. “The whole team was very young and we had never worked in a readaptation, rehabilitation center before. And so it took quite a while to establish ourselves – for the community to recognize us and to believe in us and trust their youth with us.”

Barnaby admits that there’s been bad times along with the good, but if they’ve helped just one kid, then they’ve succeeded, she said. With the new building, and new ownership, she



Long term employees of the Gignu Group Home were honored on January 19th, with artwork from Tracey Metallic-Barnaby.

doesn’t see much changing.

“The way we work with the youth is not going to change,” she said. “We’re just going to have the space to be able to do the work that needs to be done.”

One change however – which excites her – is the steps to indigenize the programs more. Chief Darcy Gray echoed this vision.

“I would like to see more cultural knowledge, traditional practices, Mi’gmaq ways of healing and working together and bringing about healthier people,” he said.

For many, seeing exactly how this will all develop is exciting, and a source of pride.

“I feel we’ve just put a child forth in the world,” said Jacques. “Now we’re gonna watch it grow up.”



Listuguj



Listuguj channel

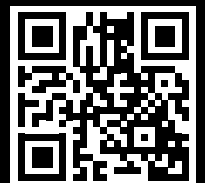


ListugujNews



news@listuguj.ca

Scan the QR code to read the newsletter





# Helping a friend in-need

Almost immediately after hearing the news about their friend, Dylan Montgomery, several students jumped into action.

Montgomery was recently diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma. Montgomery and his family have been travelling back and forth from Halifax every week since Christmas.

“We wanted to make him happy,” said Embrey Isaac.

Isaac and her classmates organized

a bake sale in their school to help out financially, however they can.

“He was always nice and giving to us,” said Amelia Rioux. “We just wanted to give something back to him.”

Two tables were set up along the main entrance of the school. They were filled, front to back, with cookies, cupcakes, banana bread, and more.

Anna Smith teaches Grade 7 & 8 French Immersion.

“Right away, Monday, they started

planning,” she said.

Smith helped organize and supervise the bake sale.

“I just think it’s a really nice thing to see that the kids from both communities coming together and caring about each individual, and doing something special, no matter who it is and where they’re from,” she said.

The following week it was announced that the bake sale had raised a total of \$900.

## HIV/AIDS workshops at AGS



Misty LaBillois, LPN at the LCHHS is doing a presentation on STI’s and Blood Borne Infections.

Community Health Services (LCHS), and was separated into several stations. A station for condom and dental dam demonstrations; a station on HIV/AIDS and what it is, how it’s transmitted and how one can lessen the risk of transmission; and a station explaining situations of risky and non-risky behavior with Drugs and Alcohol.

The Haven House was also present, talking about healthy and unhealthy relationships, how to recognize it and what can be done.

“We talk about ‘no means no’ healthy relationships, so that students are aware,” said LaBillois. “It’s not always as clear as we think ... I guess they need a role model in the community sometimes to say ‘this is appropriate and this is inappropriate behavior in a relationship.’”

A lot of the day was focused on preparing the students should they end up in certain situations.

“We talk about abstinence of course,” said LaBillois. “It’s the same as drugs and alcohol. We don’t want them to drink, we don’t want them to use drugs. But if they do, how are they to be safe in doing so.”

The annual HIV/AIDS workshop at Alaqsite’w Gitpu School focuses on more than safe sex. It uses the opportunity to discuss other important aspects of growing up – recognizing what an unhealthy relationship actually is, and self-acceptance.

“What we’re really trying to do, is create that network with our students,” said Lynn Labillois. “So growing up, you know, [the kids will think] ‘hey, that’s the nurse. I can go and speak to her.’”

The workshop is organized by Listuguj

## There are no closets in tipis



Gina Metallic speaking at AGS.

The HIV/AIDS workshops at AGS opened the door for a broader conversation about acceptance and inclusion. Gina Metallic spoke to the students about two spirit issues.

“It is recognized in our tradition, and the fact that two spirit people were always part of the community and always part of the circle,” she said later in an interview with the Nujignua’tegeg. “It was really colonization that changed ... the talk about that.”

Gina spoke of the traditional understanding of LGBT two-spirit people, and the respected position they held in the communities.

*(continue, Page 3)*



# Culture Day



The Alaqsite'w Gitpu School held a culture day on February 2nd. Local drum group "Spirit Bear" was playing for the event. This time a film crew from FNEC (First Nations Education Council) was present. They were visiting Listuguj that week to gather footage on a documentary on the Forest Kindergarten Program.



(...continued)

Some First Nations, like the Navajo people, had eight different types of genders, she said.

“When we were colonized, we were instilled with this homosexual, heterosexual, male and female – this binary system,” she said. “In our community, we didn’t have this.”

For Gina, receiving Listuguj’s 2013 Role Model of the Year was the starting steps to bringing this this discussion forward in the community. She’s been speaking about these issues elsewhere, but this was the first time talking about it on a reserve, or for children. She was nervous.

“We have LGBT two-spirit kids in the school for sure,” she said. “We need to create a safe space to make sure that they’re not turning to self-harm behaviour because they’re told that it’s not right and that’s it’s wrong. So, you know, in order to do that, you have to put somebody at the forefront of it.”

To her surprise, Gina noticed for some of the students that were present were engaged in this discussion. “We could learn so much from our kids - if adults were to just hear them speak - they

would learn so much from them” she said. “Growing up - it’s so normal and if becomes normalized it’s not a conversation we need to be having, and that’s my goal.”

While Gina says these conversations weren’t happening 10 years ago, there still a lot that needs to be done, She would like to see events like the pride parade organized in Eskasoni last summer happen in Listuguj. She would like to see more discussions, film screenings, sweats, feasts, anything to make LGBT two-spirit people just simply another normal part of a community.

“It’s a very simple, easy thing. Like we’re just asking people to accept people for who they are,” she said. “The fact that we even have to explain that is a little bit crazy but we have to and it’s a process right?”

It’s a process that goes hand-in-hand with decolonization, and rethinking ideas that have been instilled over generations.

“Our culture is so rooted on the Seven Grandfather Teachings of Respect, Humility, Bravery, and it’s like we just need to uphold the Seven Grandfather Teachings. It’s very simple.”

## Small change to the food bank

The Listuguj Community Social Services has an active program (initiative to fight poverty) for community members in need. The initiative is funded by Quebec and Labrador Social Services Commission, and through this, the community food bank was created in April 2016. The food bank is typically held on the third Tuesday of every month, however dates still can be subject to change.

For those who come to the food bank, they would be given an assortment of fresh foods and non perishable items. Basic food items such as eggs, milk, bread, pasta, potatoes, breakfast cereals and much more.

With the amount of recipients the food bank gained over the past few months, this has brought a few changes. Starting February, they are implementing an evaluation process in order to avoid abuse of the services and to provide to those truly in need.

“They just meet with me once. They have to provide their proof of income & proof of expenses (Hydro, Telephone) and we’re going to create a file for them here,” said Jessie Gallant

“Once you meet with me, then you’re good to go. Your always welcome every month.”

For more information, call Jessie Gallant at the Listuguj Community Social Services. (418-788-3039



The food bank is typically held on the third Tuesday of every month. Anyone in need is welcomed.

## Events & Notices

### • Community Meeting

WHERE: Listuguj Community Development Center  
(Bingo Hall)

WHEN: Feb. 16, 6:00 p.m.

### • Family Day

WHEN: February 20th

### • Science East

WHEN: March 1-3

WHERE: A.G.S

### • Listuguj Lobster-Fishing Plan

WHERE: Listuguj Community Development Center  
(Bingo Hall)

WHEN: Feb. 21, 5:30 p.m.

(Supper starts at 6:00 p.m.)

Please send us your organization announcements & activities for next issue: deadline Feb. 24  
Check us out online, and be sure to share our work!