

Mawiomi Cafe: a chance to listen

By creating a relaxing atmosphere, with snacks, coffee, and calming music, the Mi'gma'wei Mawiomi Secretariat (MMS) hoped to get a sense of what is most important to the three communities it serves – Gesgapegiaq, Gespeg, and Listuguj.

The concept was developed by Donald Jeannotte-Englehart, the Community Engagement Officer with the MMS.

“MMS has not been involved in the ... three communities for a couple of years,” he said. “We wanted to reconnect with the people.”

The key was to have the sessions in an easy-going and informal way.

People are use to meetings where a speaker stands in front of a crowd to relay information. Unfortunately, some people can find these scenarios intimidating, especially when it involves

asking potentially embarrassing questions. The MMS is trying to find a way around this.

Over the course of six weeks, nine Mawiomi Cafes have been held – three in each community.

People were invited to come out to sit and talk over coffee.

“There’s no agenda,” Jeannotte-Englehart said.

The Executive Director, Tanya Barnaby, found that conversations often flowed naturally.

“You start by having one discussion, and it leads to something else, and then another question pops into someone’s head,” she said. “You started talking about wind, and you ended up talking about moose. And that’s really what I like to see.”

Like everything the MMS does,



Mawiomi Cafes invite people out for coffee, snacks, and conversations.

there’s a citizen engagement component.

“Top [priority] is definitely citizen engagement,” Barnaby said. “For us, it’s number one, no matter what you’re doing.”

At the end of the cafes, people were asked to fill out surveys, to help the MMS organize feedback.

“The most popular [topics] are the negotiation process, the land claim and Ango’tmeq Nm’tginen which is the GMP, (Gespegewagi Management Plan),” Jeannotte-Englehart said.

With the first round now finished, the MMS plans to use the findings to help inform people where it counts.

“We need to have the people know about this stuff, and it’s difficult because people have their own lives,” said Jeannotte-Englehart. “The goal – it’s to get the message to them, so they give us what they want for the future, for their kids.”



The team working a Mawiomi Cafe. From left to right: Andrew Lavigne, Juliette Barnaby-Doucet, Tanya Barnaby, Tanner Barnaby, Donald Jeannotte-Englehart, Philip Leblanc, and Oakley Barnaby.



Listuguj



Listuguj channel

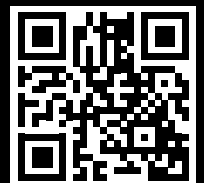


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WINTER POWWOW

As the “Summer Powwow” nears, Lita Isaac often wakes up at 5 a.m.

“Your mind wakes you up,” she said. “What has to be done?”

Isaac has been helping organize the Listuguj Powwows for 26 years now, since the beginning.

“Sometimes it’s overwhelming, it’s frightening,” she said. “It’s a great feeling when the Powwow happens, but at the same time – we’re stressed out, because there are so many things we have to keep an eye out for.”

The “Winter Powwow” happened in March.

Isaac would like to see a Powwow for every change of the seasons, but as of

now, there are three in the year. Each has a slightly different focus.

In the winter, the kids are encouraged to participate more, and even be the head dancers. It’s not as hot and demanding as the full Powwow weekend in August.

“It gives them the spotlight,” Isaac said.

And like every Powwow, the “Winter Powwow” is an opportunity for local artists and craftspeople as well.

“This is their chance, their spot light, to expose their art, their talent, and make some money,” she said. “That’s why we have First Nation vendors – because this is their time.”

With the Winter Powwow finished, it’s now

onto the next. Fundraising goes on all year, especially now.

“I never did so much fundraising in my life,” Isaac said, speaking about last year’s Summer Powwow. “Last summer we spent \$92,000 – the most we ever spent.”

The Summer Powwow continues to grow, unfortunately, funding has become increase difficult to secure. Processes are also complicated, requiring research and several revisions for every application. The Heritage Canada grant required a lot of back and forth last year.

“That was four or five times this year,” said Isaac. “And the amount we’re getting is a lot lower than

last year after all that.”

Filling out and submitting these applications requires a lot of time, all from volunteers.

“It could be up to 200 to 400 hours of volunteer [work] that we do a year,” said Isaac.

“I call myself the artifact. I’ve been here for 25, 26 years. And I didn’t have this much responsibility at

the beginning. I don’t know when it all just landed on my shoulders, but it did.”

She sometimes wonders if the Powwows would happen without her, and her “mental schedule,” that keeps her busy all year around.

“It would happen. I know it would happen,” she said. “It’s got a life of its own now.”



Powwow organizers, Lita Isaac, left, and Marilyn Jacques, right.



A reluctant author in Cuba

the Cougar Came to be Called the Ghost Cat. It is now used in the Grade 3 curriculum in Nova Scotia.

Isaac went on to write another book, *The Lost Teachings*. His work as an author is what brought him to Cuba.

One day, Isaac got a call from his publisher to go promote Canadian literature in Cuba.

“I certainly wasn’t going to question why or how,” he said.

He was one of 30 Canadian authors, along with Margaret Atwood and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton – author of *Fatty Legs*.

“I think [Cuba] was an ideal place for the book fair to be held,” Isaac said.

Aside from being an extremely literate country, Cuba’s indigenous peoples have had similar experiences to First Nations people in Canada.

“Plus, my books speaks to identity and I think that was one of their themes down in Cuba,” he said.

When Isaac handed in the first copy of *How the Cougar Came to be Called the Ghost Cat*, his professor told him that it was a simple, yet powerful story, which warranted publishing.

Isaac just said, “well sir, I wouldn’t mind just having a good mark.”

Years later, Isaac would run into the same professor again. Isaac hadn’t done anything with the book, so the professor threatened to publish the copy he handed in, unless he did something himself.

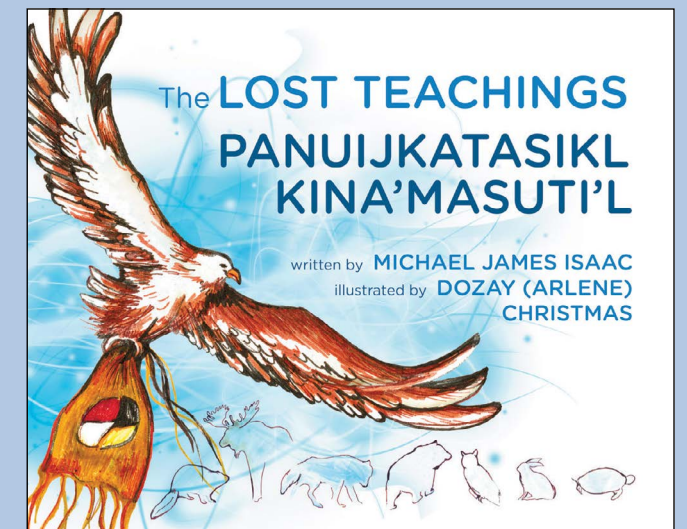
Now, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia want to include the book in the curriculum of various grades, and subjects. The book carries a message that applies to a lot of people.

“[It’s about] trying to live in two worlds,” Isaac said. “Trying to better understand their world, from whatever indigenous nation they’re from, and at the same time, trying to fit into the eurocentric world.”

He followed the book up with *The Lost Teachings*.

He believed that while The Seven Teachings are often be seen, it’s often in a “decorative” way. He believes that by actually following The Seven Teachings it will build good character, as oppose to good citizens who simply follow the rules.

“Good character will automatically direct you to become the good citizen. You will be doing the right thing,

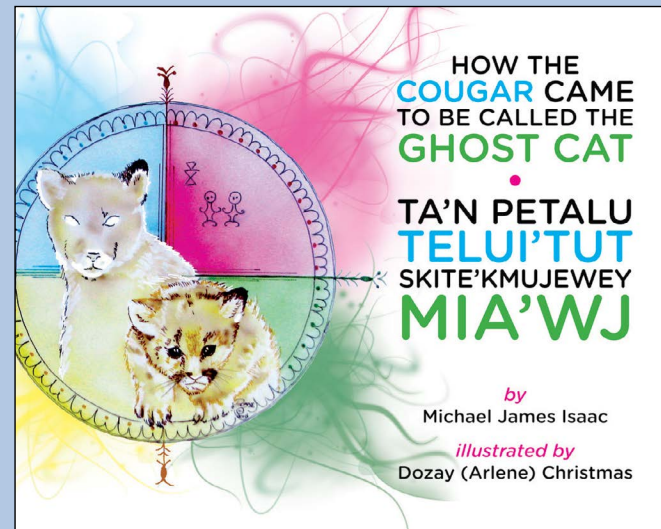


because it’s the right thing to do.”

That book is now carried in a Grade 5 curriculum.

Isaac said he doesn’t want his books to just be a “flash in the pan.” He’s got some ideas, and hopes to work on them after he retires.

“I’ve got the bug in me now,” he said. “I won’t have to be bullied into it this time.”



While attending school at St. Francis Xavier University, Mike Isaac Sr. was up against the wall. He had to write a children’s story with a moral or lesson for a class. He hadn’t written much, and wasn’t sure how to approach it.

“Then, I reflected upon my experience,” he said. “Then I came up – very quickly – with this story.”

The resulting project would become a children’s book – *How*

A healthier community



At the end of February, the Listuguj Community Health Services (LCHSS) kicked off its new Smoking Cessation initiative.

Coordinators Corey Metallic and Wanda (Beddase) Metallic hosted a Brunch at the Elders lodge to kickoff the program. During the session the LCHSS brought in Marc Carrier, a pharmacist from the Campbellton and Pointe a La Croix Jean Coutu branches. Carrier was invited to provide info to the public on the dangers of smoking along with explaining various quitting aids. “They’re effective, to get information to people – when they’re ready to quit they’ll have the information and know about the products to start with” said Marc.

During the presentation, Marc explained the various quitting aids that are available. “There are all kinds,” he said. “There’s the pill, Champix treatment, Zyban treatment and there’s also the most common one -nicoderm patches. And there is helper too like nicoderm gun, inhaler, and lozenges too.”

Marc had also explained that the prescription may not be covered for the desired time that a patient would prefer.” Usually the insurance they pay for like 12 weeks or 14 weeks; After that, they’ll pay again but only in a year.

Marc said, “So if we have extra supply here, people can be on for another 4-6 more weeks and it’s going to help them make sure they quit and they’re not going to restart.”



Staying safe in the home

Earlier in March a “staying safe in the home” workshop was held.

This program was designed to educate women and young girls on domestic violence. This workshop in particular was aimed towards educating children what to do in a case of domestic violence. George Martin was invited to explain to the children and their parents the dangers of Domestic Violence as well as internet safety and fire safety.

Children needed to stay safe in the home and often times they don’t know how to do that in the event of domestic violence or an intruder” Cathy Martin said or as George was saying “internet safety, fire.”

Events & Notices

• Quebec Regional Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Workshop

WHEN: May 11th

CONTACT: Delphine Metallic

EMAIL: dmetallic@globetrotter.com

PHONE: 418-788-2136

• The Return

A gathering, an exhibition, unique and current transmission tools of your own design expressed through experimental workshops!

WHERE: Bingo Hall

WHEN: May 16, 5:00 p.m.

*Includes a film screening of “Indian Time” at 6:30 p.m.

Please send us your organization announcements & activities for next issue: deadline May 8th
Check us out online, and help us out by sharing our work!