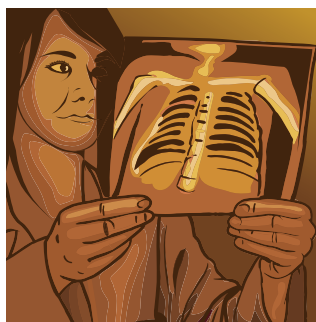


ROLE MODELS DIRECTORY

Project Coordination

FNQLHSSC Health Sector Team



Commission de la santé et des services sociaux
des Premières Nations du Québec et du Labrador

First Nations of Quebec and Labrador
Health and Social Services Commission

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MESSAGE FROM AFNQL CHIEF GHISLAIN PICARD

I am proud to have the honour to write the preface to this work produced by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission.



The project was undertaken in order to honour individuals who stand out in the fields of health, social services and certain other fields of activities in our communities. The individuals presented in this Directory are role models for us and sources of inspiration for our youth.

I wish to signal the efforts, the perseverance, the passion, and the concern of these individuals for the well-being of the members of our communities on a daily basis. Throughout their career, these people have proven time and time again their determination to meet the numerous challenges they have encountered throughout their careers.

We hope they will be a source of motivation for youth and that their successes will encourage young people to continue their studies and career projects; these are the kind of models we need!

We should be proud of our successes and confident in the future!

Enjoy your reading!

INTRODUCTION

The First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission is thrilled to present the Directory of Quebec First Nations Role Models. In autumn of 2008, an extensive promotional campaign was launched under the theme "Role Models, Come out of the shadows!" Posters were sent to all the directors of health centres and social services and post cards to all households in the communities. The initiative was also promoted on the FNQLHSSC website.

The following criteria were established for participation in the initiative:

- All candidates had to be members of the First nations or Inuit of Quebec;
- All candidates had to be involved in and recognized for their contributions in their field of activity (health, social services or related careers);
- The person nominating the candidate had to submit a short text explaining why the candidate was a good role model.

The primary objective was to celebrate the work of these people who stand out in their respective fields, health, social services or related disciplines. The supporting text had to illustrate the accomplishments, the activities and the achievements of these role models as a source of inspiration for today's youth. To accomplish this objective, all proposed candidates were contacted in order to confirm the information which had been sent in by the proposers. A selection committee was created to analyze the proposals and select the candidates within the criteria noted above.

Many candidates were proposed from twenty-five (25) First Nations and Inuit communities in Quebec. In order to thank them for their effort, the FNQLHSSC organized a draw for two prizes, a prize for the proposers of \$200.00 and a prize for the candidates submitted, a portable computer.

As the goal of this Directory is to provide a source of motivation and inspiration for youth, all the role models composed a special message to youth. Their valuable advice and career examples will stimulate and encourage the young and the not so young to make the right choices in order to accomplish their dreams.

We hope you enjoy reading this Directory!

Any individual interested in obtaining the contact information of a role model is asked to contact the FNQLHSSC at (418) 842-1540.

DISCLAIMER

The FNQLHSSC disclaims all liability for any wrongful acts that may be either directly or indirectly related to the role models to which we make reference in the Directory. In publishing this Directory, the FNQLHSSC has acted in good faith and complete impartiality.

In compliance with the provisions set out in the Research Protocol of the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador, all role models signed a consent form which confirms their acceptance of the publication and the appearance of their photograph along with the accompanying text.

ROLE MODELS

Note: Role models appear in alphabetical order.

Caroline Basile

Ekuanitshit - Innu Nation

"Maintaining good physical and mental health is the best guarantee of a long and bright future."

Caroline has been working in health field since 1967. She has successfully gone through several periods in her life with courage and determination. As a former resident of residential schools, aspiring to become a doctor, she successfully completed a course in nursing studies, because at that time Aboriginal women were not admitted into the faculties of medicine.



"I was one of the individuals who took part in the transfer of responsibility for health and social services to the Atikamekw and Innu nations. After this mission was accomplished, I returned to my community, Ekuanitshit, where I worked hard to encourage the population to take care of their health. Today I believe that people are willing to engage in prevention activities and that they understand the importance of a good health for the long term."

In order to add variety to my activities, I worked for seven years to help establish the Miam Uapukun Rehabilitation Center that provides therapy and services in the Innu language in the Uashat mak Mani Utenam community. For several years, I was in charge of nursing care in various Innu communities. I also developed expertise in home care, case management and prevention. In fact, I attach a lot of importance to prevention and awareness. The children whom I taught still remember me, because when I meet them in public today, they still talk to me about their beautiful white teeth and other positive things!

I came close to retiring in January 2006 but due to the love of my profession I continued to devote my time to a religious community who needed nurses for their sick sisters confined to bed. Sometimes, I replace nurses in Kawawachikamak, Matimekush-Lac John and Ekuanitshit."

Caroline has forty years of experience in the health field and her dedicated efforts to use knowledge acquired throughout her long career for the benefit of others are the outstanding qualities of this role model who inspires young and old.

Eleanor Gedeon Basque

Listuguj - Ni'kmaq Nation

"Get education as much as possible; get a job that you really love."



In 1950, Mrs. Eleanor Gedeon Basque was the first high school graduate of Listuguj from the Notre-Dame d'Acadie in Moncton, New-Brunswick. Upon her graduation, she attended nursing school at the Hôtel Dieu Hospital in Campbellton, NB. She completed the program in 1953 and then started on - the - job training at the Campbellton Provincial Psychiatric Unit. She then went on for further training and psychiatric nursing in Ontario. In 1955, she moved to the United States to work in various hospitals throughout the state from Yonkers, NY to New York City, Buffalo, NY, Glen Cove, and Long Island, NY.

"In 1958, I moved back to Listuguj and took a break from nursing to take care of my family. I was married to late Larry Basque and brought up a family of five children. I had two children when I returned to work in 1962. From that date, I continued working at the Hotel Dieu Hospital starting as a Registered Nurse then moving on to my duties as a recovery room nurse. In 1967, I was promoted to surgical nurse where I was on call for 39 years until the time of my retirement."

Being professional all her life, Eleanor was involved in many community organizations. "In 1962, I, along with a group of women from Listuguj, formed the Brownies and the Girl Guides for girls between the ages of 6 and 12 and was involved in all community activities and organizations. In the 1980s, I served as a band councillor and as an advocate for women.

At present, I am 76 years old and enjoying my retirement and I am still actively involved in the community as a member of the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Development Program and also a member of the Elderly Focus Group which assists in translation from English to Mi'gmaq. I am also an active member in the Land Claims Advisory Group. In the past, I participated in the Health Transfer, Education, and Police Committees. "

Listuguj is proud of Eleanor's accomplishments and is one of the most respected women of the Nation.

Ginette Charland Vollant

Pessamit - Innu Nation

"The greatest value we received from our ancestors is respect for others."

Ginette Charland-Vollant learned her goodness and respect for others from her mother, for whom she has very great admiration. Because of her ability to accept others without judging them and with an open mind, her door has always been open to all the friends of her children.



"At various times I joined different causes that were important to me as a volunteer. This gave me a great source of satisfaction because I was able to help others. For 20 years I was involved in the Essipit community as a volunteer in different causes. I often worked as a volunteer, going door to door to raise funds for breast cancer, the Red Cross and the Heart and Stroke Foundation, in good weather and in bad! I also acted as a volunteer escort on cultural excursions for both the children and the elders in the community."

I encourage you to remember that bad things don't always happen to other people; once, a serious misfortune befell one of the members of my family, and I felt my life was crumbling. However little daily acts, like a smile, a thank - you, a shoulder to cry on, or a hand extended to someone who has fallen can make all the difference. I think that the devotion of certain people such as nurses, researchers, and volunteers allow us to believe that all is possible."

I love children and I love people. When someone looks at me with a smile, it warms my heart and I know that it is enough to say thank you for everything we have received from life."

Very recently Ginette decided to give up her work and peaceful life in Essipit to take care of her older brother in Pessamit who has suffered a serious accident. She wanted to improve the quality of his life. Her brother refers to her as Mother Teresa because of her generosity and goodness of heart which is recognized by all the members of the family.

Bibiane Courtois

Mashteuiatsh - Innu Nation

"The health of our nation begins with the health of each individual. Here is the challenge which will allow us all to become the actors of our future!"



Bibiane is the mother of three children and worked in the hospital system of Saguenay Lac-St-Jean. In 1989, she achieved her career objective, which was to return and work in her community. She developed prevention programs in response to the enormous needs of the population, especially in maternal and child health. In 2000, she was promoted to work in the human resource sector in order to develop the health and occupational safety program. Bibiane then joined the managing board of the Amerindian Museum in Mashteuiatsh. In her opinion, the reinforcement of the cultural identity is essential for good mental health.

"I believe that young people should delve deeply into their potential and maintain their attachment to their community. I also believe that we should go as far as our ideas and projects will take us. I worked hard to reconcile career, family, and social life. I admit that life requires a lot of adaptation. However, we must have ideals and follow them as far as we can in order to find the means of fulfilling our dreams, however big or small they may be. I also think we need to take the time to experience different things and to remain open to all kinds of possibilities."

In concrete terms, Bibiane has been, among other things, a member of the Board of Directors of the Saguenay Lac St-Jean Regional Health Board, President of Native Women of Quebec from 1983 à 1987, President of the Mashteuiatsh Historical Society, Commissioner on the Quebec Human Rights Commission and member of the Status of Women Council of Quebec. She has organized thematic meetings at many different levels and taught best practices to help various organizations approach Aboriginal clients.

Bibiane has received a number of distinctions over the course of the years. In particular, she received the prestigious Merit Award from the Quebec Order of Nurses in 1998, which is an award granted to only one person among 60,000 nurses in Quebec; along with all accompanying distinctions and dedication.

Today Bibiane is retired and is the grandmother of three granddaughters. She is a model career woman, who has certainly many new challenges to take up .

Gilbert Courtois

Mashteuiatsh - Innu Nation

" Kuei! I hope that all First Nations and Inuit youth may contribute to the building of a better world by making good use of the valuable cultural heritage they received along with their individual talents. Together we can create a better future for future generations in a world that values sustainable development."



Gilbert began his career in the health sector in 1977 when he worked for a clinical organization conducting mercury screening in Atikamekw communities and in Mashteuiatsh. He then spent two years continuing his education in community health, before assuming responsibility as coordinator of Atikamekw and Montagnais community health representatives from 1978 to 1989.

In parallel to his own career, he directed the takeover of health services by the Atikamekw Council of the Montagnais, which began in 1980 and continued until the final signing of the agreement to transfer health services in 1989. One significant factor in this community endeavour was the participation of Local Health and Social Services Councils, consisting of the citizens of the communities involved.

From 1989 to 2005, he established and managed health and social services in the communities of Matimekush/Lac John (1989-1993), Opitciwan (1993-2001) and Mashteuiatsh (2004-2005). At the same time he also was an important actor in the creation of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC) as well as the National Indian & Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization of Canada (NIICHO). He was also one of the key actors in the creation of a university level training program in community intervention and of a training program for Aboriginal nurses.

He has also served as a national representative on a national drug abuse control program and was a major supporter in the creation of drug treatment centres in Eastern Canada as well as shelters for victims of violence.

Gilbert has also served five mandates in political office on the Montagnais Council of Lac St-Jean and was also President of the Société de communication Atikamekw-Montagnaise.

In addition to his role as political advisor, he continues to work in the health field and is a member of the Board of the Éco-conseil Program at the University of Quebec in Chicoutimi.

"I believe that there are many more objectives to be reached for the well-being of First Nations and the Inuit and that socio-economic development based on respect for the culture of First Peoples is one of the most sustainable solutions for the future. »

Marie-Pier Duchesneau Couillard

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"We are all capable of achieving what we want to achieve in life, all that is required is the will and the courage!"

Marie-Pier is a student in nursing sciences at cegep de Sainte-Foy. She has already completed more than half of the curriculum with great determination and a lot of effort.

Marie-Pier has a very human side and believes that it is important to give something back to people, which is why she chose to make nursing her career. At one time, she thought of a different career, but because of her attraction to field work, direct action and her love for the elderly and handicapped, she decided to change career directions. After her first field placements, she knew that she had found her true vocation.

"I nourish my passion by working as a family auxiliary at the Marie-Paule Sioui Vincent Health Centre in Wendake. The comfort and the personalized care I can provide people to improve the quality of their lives are sources of great value to me. After completing my diploma, I hope to offer my services in the community because the elders are comfortable and can trust people they know."

To young people who can't decide what career to choose, I recommend that they take part in the open house days organized at different cegeps, because such an event helped trigger my choice. I was able to visualize the classrooms and the laboratories and even spent one day as a student. I recommend that anyone who is thinking of continuing their studies try this experience before embarking on such an important endeavour. It is essential to be comfortable and to like your environment."

We have to admit that studying is not all fun and games, but Marie-Pier is proud of her efforts and was rewarded by being chosen as one of the 12 students to appear in the 2008 edition of the calendar of health careers for First Nations and Inuit, produced by Health Canada.

In her opinion, a role model is a person who contributes something that will allow another individual to grow. When she talks about her future career, Marie-Pier is definitely a good role model because of her inspiring passion.

"I don't believe that anything is easy, but that everybody, without exception, can succeed if they are willing. You don't have to be first in your class; anyone who is sociable can enrol in health studies!"



Marc Dubé

Manawan - Atikamekw Nation

"Let us be proud that we belong to a great Aboriginal nation and work together to ensure that our nation continues to grow!"



A member of the Atikamekw community of Manawan, Marc was born into a family of 18 children. As an ex-resident of a residential school in Amos and the Indian residential school of Pointe-Bleue, he was one of the first members of the Atikamekw to work in social services at the end of the 1960s. Marc has enjoyed a long and fruitful professional career and received the "Personality of the year 2007/2008 Award" from his peers and colleagues in the community of Manawan.

In 1968, he was actively involved in local politics and became Band Councillor at the age of 21, a position he continued to hold for 38 years. He was one of the first former members of a residential school to win a political election.

He was also one of the first Aboriginal technical linguists trained at la Macaza in the early 1970s. Marc also enjoyed a successful career teaching at the Manawan grade school. He also worked as a consultant on the educational programs offered in the community.

In 1985, Marc was elected as Vice-President of the former Attikamek-Montagnais Council and subsequently became President of the Atikamekw Nation Council. Until 1999, he acted as chief negotiator for the Council in the comprehensive land claim process. He also directed the group responsible for consultation on land management in La Tuque in 2001.

During the General Assembly of the Atikamekw Nation Council in November 2001 in Manawan, Marc received an award for his contributions to the social field, in which field he has been a pioneer since 1967.

As the father of five children, he had to face one of the worst trials of his life in 1991 at the death of his son Francis aged 19. This was followed by long months of illness during which he had to suspend his professional career. In 2007 he had a liver transplant. Today Marc is much better and says that he is ready to resume work.

Rose Dumont

Lac Simon - Algonquin Nation

"If there's a will, there's a way."

Rose is a symbol of pride in her community because she is the first professional nurse from Lac Simon. As a child, Rose wanted to become a doctor, but instead she chose to become a nurse because of her deep desire to help the people in her community. Her mother told her to believe in her dreams and to pursue her goals by saying: "If there's a will, there's a way."



"In the same way that my mother did for me, I would like all parents to encourage their children. I had to take care of my two children while I was studying and the daily grind was not easy. However my mother always encouraged me to continue my studies and I was determined to continue college studies at the cegeps of Rouyn and Val d'Or. I received good direction from my parents when I was a child ... when I became a teenager I found myself in a context where I had to fend for myself and adapt to the consequences of my young life. I was a student during the Oka crisis and I could feel the disapproval in the way that some of my classmates looked at me. This was additional silent pressure that I had to deal with."

Rose met teachers who were very understanding and who helped her complete her studies and to successfully complete all the steps leading to her diploma.

Today, Rose would like to send a clear message to parents for them to surround their children with love, which is a task she continues to perform every day. "A child is a flower that blooms every day and I want all the children in my community to receive the love they need to grow up in good health."

Rose has now become the Director of the Lac-Simon Health Centre. The health and well-being of her community are very close to her heart and she never hesitates to put on her clinical uniform and lend a helping hand to the team and provide services to patients. In addition to these tasks, she is a very valuable resource for other organizations responsible for foster families at the Regional Youth Center that works in cooperation with the community services. Rose is a role model who devotes a great deal of energy to the improvement of health care services in her community.

Louise Fortin

Matimekosh Lac-John - Innu Nation

"In any undertaking, believe in yourself and persevere."



Louise has worked for community social services for close to ten years. Born from an Innu mother and a Quebecois father, she is a member of the Innu community in Matimekush Lac-John. She abandoned her studies for many years after dropping out of high school before completing her diploma. But one day she found the courage to resume her studies as an adult student.

"Through a series of circumstances, I had the opportunity to resume my studies in specialized education and I seized the opportunity. The program was designed for Aboriginals and I was part of the second cohort of students enrolled in this intensive training. The distinctive feature of this training was the addition of a course in social work."

"At the end of a very long process, I began to work as an educator for the social services in my community. My main task was to provide help to young children who had intellectual and/or physical developmental delays. I provided early stimulation in conjunction with the regional rehabilitation centre. As part of my work, I provided services to other youth that had specific needs such as help with homework."

"Over the course of time, I joined in a group of Aboriginal students working part-time to complete a study program for social and professional reinsertion offered by Laval University. For the last five years, I have been working as a social case worker in my community."

Like many other people who have returned to school after many years, Louise believes that every thing is possible if you have the will to succeed. Her efforts and achievements have borne fruit, for which she is the living proof.

Wanda Gabriel

Kanesatake - Mohawk Nation

"No matter how hard you hide from all your stuff, no matter where you go, no matter how far you run away, there you are. You might as well look in the mirror and accept and love yourself for who you are right now, right in this moment. In doing so you can change the darkness that sometimes creeps into the spirit. Tanon!"



Wanda has been a social worker with the Professional Order of Social Workers of Quebec for ten years; she has been a community intervener for close to 20 years. She has been an instructor at several universities and she has been involved in the healing movement since 1990, taking people through to the other side of pain and trauma. Her practice is a combination of social work and traditional teachings.

"During my childhood I was a victim of sexual abuse and for a long time I kept my pain hidden by consuming alcohol and drugs. At the age of 16, I dropped out of school and was expecting my first baby. At the birth of each of my four children, I began to realize that I had to embark on a healing process which led me to where I am today. At the age of 28, I decided to take charge of my future in order to live a more healthy life.

I returned to school in 1991 at the same point where I had dropped out twelve years earlier. I finished high school and went on to complete a Master of Social Work while raising my children."

Wanda has worked extensively with the youth of her community. As a volunteer, she helped with the creation of the Kanesatake Youth House and has travelled to different places to provide community intervention with the youth in Cree and Inuit communities. "I believe that it is very important to listen to youth and to help them find their path."

For 33 years, Wanda has shared her life with the same man and recently became grandmother of a grandson. Wanda now works in the James Bay Region and provides social support to construction workers in the Cree territory. Whenever she has the opportunity, she likes to work with young people with whom she is very open because no subject is taboo. She has always applied the same philosophy to her own children, ranging in age from 21 to 31.

Annie Girard

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Advance in life by taking care of and respecting yourself. You are an important and significant person on our earth!"

Originally from Lac St-Jean, Annie is a member of the Huron-Wendat Nation. She left her little corner in paradise at the age of 19 to study for a B.A. in psychology at the University of Montreal. Her dream: to work for the First Nations.



In 1997 she finally completed her university degree and worked for three years as a counsellor in a mental health transition house. When she realized the shortage of mental health housing in her region, she decided to found a new residence while continuing her work at the transition house. It was an unforgettable experience! She then began working on a Master's degree in psycho-education at the University of Quebec in the Outaouais Region.

"During my studies, I specialized in drug abuse prevention while working as a councillor in a community organization. I quickly became known in the university network because of my involvement as a research assistant and lecturer in drug abuse to undergraduate students. The subject of my Master's degree was designed for a training program for front line councillors working with clients who have gambling problems which I was preparing for the World Forum on Drugs and Addictions."

Toward the end of my Master's degree, I finally achieved my dream of working for the First Nations when I accepted a position as a psycho-educator at the Native Friendship Centre of Quebec."

This was a very rewarding experience and Annie then joined the new organization as psycho-educator at the Huron-Wendat Manpower Development and Training Centre. Her new position allows her to meet hundreds of students from communities all across Quebec. Annie has also designed a gambling awareness program for the Kanatha Foundation and she quickly implemented this program for a period of one year in the communities. She finds meeting so many people rich and rewarding and is even prouder to be a member of the First Nations of Quebec. She has developed positive relations based on trust and hope with the CDFM students, to whom she offers her time, her health and her talent. Annie is a woman who is always involved and always available and through her professional achievements she has been able to have a positive impact on people around her. She is grateful for all those who helped her advance and complete so many marvellous projects which have greatly contributed to help her become the person she is.

Suzy Goodleaf

Kahnawake - Mohawk Nation

"You are a perfect individual human being... Your journey is only to realize how this is true and how as an individual you are essential to the whole circle."



Suzy has been a psychologist in private practice for over ten years and she has serviced people from all over Quebec. She advocates for improving quality of life for all two-spirited people and she walks the red road in her professional and family life.

"I started the process of dealing with my own issues by choosing to be a psychologist. I first wanted to study in science but to be able to help people in a good way and to understand people, being a psychologist seemed to be the perfect choice."

I started to work as a youth protection worker in Kahnawake and I had to convince people to work on themselves. When I decided to open my private practice, I realized that people are motivated and they choose to come to see me. It was a nice change. I am amazed to see how resilient people are. Every day, I hear people dealing with their pain and speaking themselves out of their pain. I work with First Nations care providers and employees and I see a lot of stress. I believe that resiliency and determination are the elements that make our communities better."

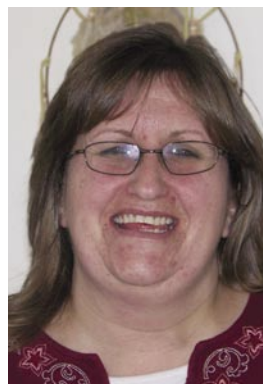
Suzy tries to keep a balanced life by being a role model and being healthy. She strongly believes that all youth have strengths and they need to find them and go for it. Youth can choose to be leaders. Suzie believes that a leader could be anyone and this is achievable in any field (hunting, sports, education, etc.).

Suzy is a role model for two-spirited people and she lives her life openly with her two children and partner. "To the people who are two-spirited, especially in Native communities, be true to yourselves, there are good people around you to listen to and care for."

Isabelle Gros-Louis

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Set your objectives and accomplish your dreams. Continue your studies and go as far as you can without being afraid to ask for help. The sense of pride we feel cannot be expressed in words. As individuals, we all have something to offer to other people around us. Never give up, you are important to us."



Isabelle is the incarnation of patience and love for children. She is a Huron-Wendat woman deeply committed to her community and she works for the Orak Early Childhood Centre as an educator.

"I have two children and I took care of them full time during their early childhood. I loved taking care of my sons, but one day I learned that there was a new technical early childhood training course available in Aboriginal communities. The course was to be given in Wendake and I wanted to register. I did not want to work in a factory for minimal wage. What I really wanted was to help children learn."

However before I began the course, I had to finish my secondary diploma. Then, I began my technical training course which I completed in 2002. When the EEC in our community was created, I was hired along with the other students with whom I was studying to complete my diploma. Today, I am an educator and I take care of babies in the nursery."

Whenever we decide to make major changes, I think we should advance carefully one step at a time, set objectives and never give up hope. At 30 years of age, I wanted to be a role model for my own children and I did not want to give up."

I encourage all young mothers to never be shy about asking for help when it is necessary because there are many people in our extended family who help us and it is important to take care of ourselves. We must go forward while listening to our own values."

I think our most important role as educator is to transmit our culture to young people and to provide them with stability. Every day, show them some love so that they can be comfortable with who they are. I am very happy when children succeed because they are so sincere and I love to see them smile."

Isabelle works on a daily basis with children who have behaviour problems. She tries to find out the reasons behind these problems and to establish a bond of trust. This is one of her great strengths. As she so often says, like a big mother bear, she never lets anyone judge them!

Louise Gros-Louis

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Eat healthy food, exercise and develop good habits for your body, because you need it for life!"

Louise is a Huron-Wendat woman, who is 61 of age and head chef at the Marcel-Sioui Residence for elders, located in Wendake. Louise works very hard to provide a healthy and balanced diet for the elders.



"Before I worked at the Marcel-Sioui Residence, I worked as a cook for 16 years in the same place. Soon as I had the opportunity to apply for a job working with the senior citizens of my community, I took a course in food management because I love to cook. Furthermore as head chef, I was already preparing the weekly soup for the poor clients of the Native Friendship Centre of Quebec.

Senior citizens very often suffer from diabetes and heart disease. We must provide them with pleasure at their meals despite the minor ailments! In order to do this, I work on a regular basis with the community nutritionist to prepare balanced meals. In addition, my meals are also served to elders in the community who live at home but who are not always able to cook.

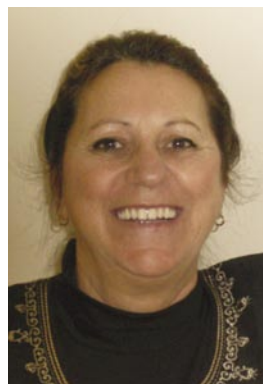
Residence life is like being in one big family and I respect the elders and their habits. However I often have to be very inventive and find new initiatives because so many senior citizens grew up on carrots and turnips! I prepare my own creamed vegetables and every day I make a different soup for the elders. I love inventing tasty alternatives and I also want to ensure that they get enough proteins at every meal. "

Louise works with people she grew up with in the community and now she sees them as they are getting older. She has developed a great bond of trust which keeps them all united and which makes her work all the more stimulating. She also has the conviction that she is contributing to the health of her people thanks to her cooking talents!

Marcelle Gros-Louis

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Nothing is free in life and we also have to bear our trials, but it is still worth believing in our dreams and seeking to accomplish them. The best way to discover the self is to experiment; one small victory leads to another... then another... and this provides a great feeling of success."



Marcelle is a Huron-Wendat woman, mother of two children and grandmother of three grand children.

She has been committed for more than 25 years in the defence of women's rights and she is one of the women who worked hard to recover rights for women after the adoption of Bill C-31, which bill was deemed to be unjust and discriminatory.

Marcelle earned a degree in social work and headed many prevention campaigns in her community, particularly for foetal alcohol syndrome. She has always worked for the Aboriginal community at various levels, both inside and outside the community. "I am always ready to help whenever a cause or an event arises. I never hesitate to defend the rights of all persons, including the rights of children."

Her work on various committees has allowed Marcelle to advance the causes of children and elders. "At the present time, I am working to gain recognition of residential schools in which some of the people of my community were enrolled because this issue is very close to my heart."

Many people can testify to the love she has for her people and the importance of her family in her life. Marcelle's work is worth recognition because she has invested so much effort which has given her great pride and satisfaction.

Yves Gros-Louis

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Listen to your passions and work to accomplish them"



Yves is a well-known psychologist and psychotherapist and has been in practice for 28 years, including twelve years in private practice at his office at Wendake. Since college, Yves has never thought of any other choice because he has always considered psychology to be an excellent profession to help people be better understood and happy. Through his profession, Yves is able to listen to people and to help them make important changes in their life.

As a trained therapist and lecturer in therapy focusing on solutions and the co-operative process, Yves conducts more than sixty days of training per year while continuing his private clinic practice. He created an original approach to work with unwilling or unmotivated clients and he is a specialist in problems related to addictions. He has also written many articles. *"The approach I use requires a great deal of cooperation by the client at every step of the change process. At certain steps, particularly at the steps involving solutions, the client is considered to be the main expert. Through this approach, two thirds of my clients have reached their objectives for change in less than ten sessions, and sometimes in only two or three sessions. My greatest motivating factor is to be able to settle the persistent problems in their life. I like to set challenges with the clients who have difficult problems and through training I like to provide social workers and psychologists with the tools they need. Efficacy and competence are two of my major concerns because I see there is such a great lack of training. This is why I teach courses to health professionals in hospital centres, CLSCs or youth centres. I believe it is a very useful part of my work because I have the opportunity to share my knowledge."*

I believe that we should love all of our work. For my part, I have a great passion to make people happy. People need help and my passion can be extended to training. We have to listen to our passions and the things which touch us most deeply!"

Robin Guyer

Kahnawake - Mohawk Nation

« Always go after your dreams. It pays off to do what you love! »

"I come from a community where only a handful of youth choose to continue their education. In 2005, she was the first nurse from Kahnawake to graduate from McGill (Bachelor's). I started out working as a floor nurse after my degree then moved to home care to help the elderly in the community.



All through high school, my goal was to be a doctor. I studied at John Abott College and although I did not like sciences I wanted to stay in the health field. My mother was a nurse and she is a model for me. I looked at my mother helping people and that influenced my career choice.

I always knew that I would work for my community; I wanted to service my own people. I started to work at Kateri Memorial Hospital with the elderly.

I think that First Nations students have great opportunities and must take advantage of them. Even if I wanted to quit my science studies, I realized that I needed to have good support around me. The community services were always there and informing me about scholarships and grants. Furthermore, the support of my family was also a success factor."

Robin is one of the youngest nurses to practice in Kahnawake. However, clients put trust in nurses and anything Robin knows, she strives to do her best.

Robin always said that she was going to go back to school; she does not feel that she is done learning. There are a lot of options out there!

"My advice to youth is to be more aware because many neglect their health. A healthy lifestyle is always recommended!"

Mary Hannaburg

Kahnawake - Mohawk Nation

"Believe in yourself, you owe it to yourself to give yourself a chance, it is in trying that you will find out if you are capable."



Mary Jane Hannaburg is a 57-years- old Mohawk mother of five children, one granddaughter and foster mom to one. She is presently residing on the Kanesatake Territory and she is of the Bear clan. Mary Jane has worked full time at the Kanesatake Health Center as a Mental Health Worker for a period of twelve years and as a Community Health Representative for one and half years. She is a Certified Trauma Responder through the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists and Certified Crisis Intervener through the American Association of Suicidology and Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention.

Mary Jane's counseling training and skills practicum have been through the Nechi, Poundmakers Lodge completed in 1999. She completed a DEC in Social Studies at Dawson College with one year in the field of Nursing. In 2006, she graduated at Concordia University with a Bachelor's degree of Applied Human Sciences with a Major in Human Relations having done so as a part-time student.

"My goal is to complete a Master's in Applied Human Sciences. I took a management course at the John Molson School of Business which I completed in December 2008. I have registered at McGill for a psychology course, which will help me in my employment."

In 2007, she was nominated to sit on the Task Working Committee of the United Church to develop the framework for responding to Legacy of Residential School Survivors which held five gatherings in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg and Ontario assisting residential school survivors

Elected Regional Vice- President of Quebec Native Women's Inc for several years, she participated in the Working Committee for Indigenous Women of the Americas, helped organize a forum to promote the reality of Indigenous women in the north and south. She finds her spirituality and her education to be the drive for her success. On October 7, 2007 she was honoured in her community at the Aboriginal Achievement in Kanesatake.

She is fluent in two languages, English and French oral and written. "I have attained the level of novice low for the Mohawk language in 2003, and I would like to pursue the level novice medium in my mother tongue because my language is important to me.

"I know that my choices and actions impact my family. Growing up with chaos and poverty was challenging but overcoming the self-doubt and fear of failure was an even greater challenge. I did it!"

Yolande Hervieux

Pessamit - Innu Nation

"Let yourself be lulled by your dreams because one day they will become a reality."



Yolande has been a nurse for 15 years. She earned her Nursing Degree at the Chicoutimi Cegep in 1993 and then earned a Certificate in Community Health at UQAC in 1995. She has worked in the community of Pessamit for ten years and she is in charge of first line and emergency services, a position which she has held for the last three years.

"At the age of 14, I decided to become a nurse after spending time in a hospital. I had great admiration for the nurses and the contact they had with people. I wanted to work for my community because there was such a great shortage of services in the Innu language. I know that a service provided in the native language of the people is a source of great trust, particularly for children and elders."

I have seen that some people suffer from great distress. As a first line worker, I sometimes have to deal with cases of suicide. My greatest motivation is recognition and gratitude of people. I love to work in emergency and very often there are cases where the staff of the health centre has saved lives. I am very grateful that I belong to my community. I have many responsibilities because the health centre has so few resources and the role of the nurse is much greater in communities which are located far away from urban centres."

"Because of the geographic distance during my study, I really wanted to do something with my life. I went back to my community as often as I could. But to achieve something certain sacrifices are required. I encourage young people by telling them that education will open many doors and will allow them to become independent and autonomous. My main motivation was to study without consideration for the salary."

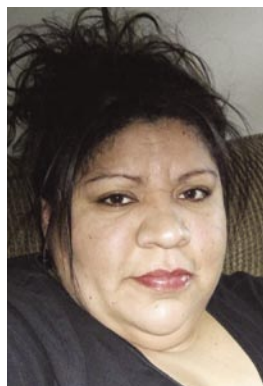
Yolande admits that she went through an existential crisis that she was able to overcome and she wants to show young people that some experiences are like trampolines that have brought her to where she is today. It is never too late to take charge of your life because doors will open. She believes that dreams are important in life and we should never fall to the temptation of depression and alcohol. Yolande also believes that more positive challenges still await her because her work is never routine or ordinary.

Donna Hester

Waskaganish - Eeyou Nation

"Take the time to figure out who you are before you rush into any major life decisions. Strive to become the best you can be. Believe in yourself if no one else will."

Throughout her journey, Donna had to jump through hoops, climb mountains and strive to become what she is today. The road hasn't always been smooth and upward.



"My inspiration to become an influential and positive role model prominently began when I brought my daughter into this world fourteen years ago. Suddenly I realized that I had a lot to learn from my child. In order to be successful, self-reliant and accountable to myself and my daughter, I had to use the most important tool: education."

I am grateful that I have been taught in my upbringing that I can become whatever I set my mind to and my achievements, no doubt, would not have been possible without my family standing by me and believing in me. I have learned that there is always a light at the end of the tunnel and that light is shining brighter each day. I have yet to move on and accomplish other things."

She began her Social Work career years ago obtaining a Diploma in the Social Services Worker Program (Native Specialty) at Northern College in Porcupine, Ontario. During her first year she obtained a Best Achievement Award. From there, she decided to further her education and relocated to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario to begin the Bachelor of Social Work program. She completed the first two years at Algoma University and then moved on to Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario for her final two years, graduating and earning her degree in 2004. It was at this time that she began to seek employment in her field of study as she had met the qualifications for obtaining a desirable occupation that she could be satisfied with.

For half a year she worked part-time before obtaining full-time employment at her current job as a Child Protection Worker. She has now worked at this job for four years and finds it very challenging, yet rewarding.

"In my career I have learned a lot and have faced many obstacles both in my professional and personal life. When things get tough I draw on the strength that got me here and continue my journey. Working in the mainstream field has its benefits in that I am able to teach and be taught as well as influence both the non-native and native community in ways that will allow for a better understanding of one another and bridge the gap between. I am thankful and appreciative for what I have and hope that the Native community will be inspired to become whatever they have set out to be in their dreams and to have the confidence and assertiveness to obtain a successful life."

Bill Ishpatao

Natashquan - Innu Nation

"We only live once so we must make the best use of it without spoiling it!"



Bill is 22 years old and works for recreational services for the promotion of physical activity in the urban community of Sept-Îles. He is a great athlete and works very hard. Many people would like to have him on their team if they had the chance! Bill is a true role model for the urban Innu population.

"When I was living in my community Natashquan, I participated as a volunteer in many community activities and often helped organize them. I would open gymnasium doors for the younger children just as a good deed. In the summer of 2003, I created a youth camp in my community. I also spent some time working at the community radio and the community daycare. "

Since June 2008, Bill has been working for Native Friendship Centre in Sept-Îles. He used his sense of innovation and creativity to create a volleyball league on a volunteer basis and organized games twice a week. He continues to open the gymnasium doors once a week in order to overcome youth isolation and provide youth with the place where they can go to practise their favourite activities. Bill takes part in all the regional volleyball tournaments in Sept-Îles and surrounding areas. He has also organized tournaments to have fun with youth! Because of the trust he has developed they sometimes share their problems with him and he is glad to help them where he can.

Bill is now actively working to set up the First Nations Head Start Program for families in Sept-Îles. Because of his love for sports and sociable nature, Bill is an excellent role model who continues to surprise us through his immense sense of generosity.

Agathe Kaltush

Natashquan - Innu Nation

Agathe has worked at the Nutakuan Health Centre for 32 years. She is an Innu interpreter for clients who do not speak French.

She is the mother of one child and has a great deal of knowledge about human behaviour. Because of the work she does in the community, people trust her and often consult her because she is able to translate instructions and the labels on medication.



"I accompany patients who have to undergo medical examinations in urban centres, in order to help them understand how the process works. After many years in this work I have learned a great deal about health procedures!"

Thanks to her extensive experience acquired over three decades, Agathe has been a witness to many changes that have occurred in the community. She was one of the very first persons to be hired at the new community health centre set up by Health Canada.

Agathe is well known for her joyful, kind and welcoming nature. Elders like to work with her because she always boosts their moral. She wants to continue to help people. It is very rare to meet people like her these days!

"Every day I try to accomplish something. I have always enjoyed working for my community which is my true vocation. I encourage young people to pursue their dreams and to accomplish them. "

She has a great sense of humour and people trust her because she is easy to approach. After so many years of work she is not even thinking about retirement and continues to love her work. Agathe lives day to day without planning for the future. And she says so well for herself: tomorrow is another day!

Édouard Kaltush

Natashquan - Innu Nation

"Believe in your dreams! Make the right choices because the choices you make today will determine your future!"



"At some point or another in our lives, we all had a role model, a person we wished to imitate. When I was a young child, there was one person in the community for whom I had a great deal of admiration. This person was Mr. Sylvestre Malec, a good family man who had about 10 children. What I admired so much in him was his sobriety and his love of nature and the forest. He was a man who loved his children and his wife and you could feel the joy in his family. He had a great sense of humour. He was not rich but he was more than able to make do! Today it is easy to see that he transmitted his good values to his children and without knowing it has helped pass these values on! I am very honoured today to be a role model and very happy for such distinction but first of all I am grateful to Sylvestre.

Between the ages of 15 and 38, I had a terrible problem with alcohol in my life and lived alone my only companion was the bottle! One day, I understood that my life did not have any meaning other than paranoia; the fear of going outside, the fear of falling down, and the fear of fainting were ever present in my life. I was really sick. After 23 years of this kind of life, I decided that alcohol would no longer rule my life!"

For the last thirteen years, Édouard has been a substance abuse counselor in his community. His mission is to help people to get over difficulties, to accompany them and to increase their awareness of the harm caused by drugs, alcohol and tobacco. He often meets with the youth in school or people in the community, who ask him to help them and to listen to them. Sometimes at night, people knock at his door or call him on the telephone to come and intervene directly with the family or certain individuals. He contributes the best of himself by listening, supporting, and seeking to defuse the situation. He also teaches the children to make wood stoves, salmon flies and also participates actively in forest therapy.

"What continues to motivate me is my love for my community. I find a great deal of strength in my wife and two adopted children, Jade and Nipine.

When you really think about it.... in some strange way my life really does resemble the life of my role model, Mr. Sylvestre Malec. I often say to him: "Wherever you may be, thank you Sylvestre!"

Kentionkwaronkwas

Margie Meloche

Kahnawake - Mohawk Nation

*"Stay in school, learn your language
and pass it on to others."*



"As far as I can remember I always loved working with children. I would take my nephews camping, fishing, take them for walks, or just read or play games with them. I started working at the Kahnawake Youth Center in the winter of 1988. At that same time I also started out as a school bus driver for the schools in Kahnawake, so both my jobs have been and still are with the youth."

Because most of the activities offered at the Youth Center are sports related to help youth/teens to stay active, I got into being physical. The first three years I worked as a Program Animator and later as Acting Program Director.

My duties as a Program Animator were to help create activities for both youth and teens. About half of the activities are physical, and along with my co-workers, we carried them out with the youth/teen members of the Youth Center, whether it was ball hockey, basketball, dodge ball, soccer baseball. They had many trips sliding or skiing during the winter, and I had to learn how to downhill ski, then over the years I helped kids to learn how to ski when they had a trip on their schedule."

Margie taught fitness/aerobic classes for adults as well, so to get her certification she took part in a fitness certification program at the Y.M.C.A., first in 1991/1992 then again in 1995/1996. She participated in many sports workshops related to her job and many workshops related to working with youth.

Margie was also lucky enough to take two Intensive Mohawk Immersion Language classes for adults "Ratihwennahni:rats", the first in 1993/1994 then again in 2006/2007. "I do not consider myself a fluent speaker just yet, but I am proud that I am able to use the language in the community and with the children both here at the Youth Center and with the children I drive the school bus for. I also tried teaching beginner level Mohawk language to some of the staff at the Youth Center. Children are able to hear the language in other places than just at school. My duties these days at the Youth Center are mostly administrative, but I still help carry out the programming activities wherever I am needed."

It has been over 20 years that Margie has been working in her community, and the best thing about it is when she is out in the community and she meets the kids. They see Margie and yell out to get her attention just to say hello. "I feel good to know that I have an impact on children, especially when they are so happy to see me and when I hear them say with a big smile "that's my bus driver!"

Noka Kistabish

Pikogan - Algonquin Nation

"Pursue your dreams and at the most difficult times in life have courage and persevere because it is truly worth the effort."

"I am very happy to have the opportunity to sincerely recount the happiest as well as the most difficult moments that I lived throughout my student life."

At the age of 15, it was easy for me to make a career choice. I had many dreams but I did not know where to begin or how to reach my dreams. I simply decided to abandon my studies but never to abandon my dreams. "

During grade school and high school, Noka was a model student in the Pikogan community. She won many trophies in hockey, broom ball and the regional and provincial Aboriginal Olympic games. Sports was a great way for her to face her greatest difficulty: solitude.

"As a teenager, I experienced deep solitude for approximately two years. I could not understand what was happening to me because I felt different from others. Today I understand the experience I went through in those two years. I was haunted by my ambitions and dreams. I wanted a different life from the life I observed in the community."

I never abandoned my most important dreams ; one was to complete a technical degree in social work and to work for Aboriginal people in Quebec especially with youth; I also wanted to continue practising sports, get married, be happy and own a house.

My parents helped me a lot and my true friends were a great source of encouragement. They were a source of great happiness in the way they supported me. I succeeded because I am a responsible, determined, persevering, brave and devoted person but especially because I never worry about what others think about me."

Today Noka truly understands the meaning of the word unique. Noka chose sports because she loves athletic activities. She also chose to complete her diploma in social work because she wanted to find a job in this field. She now works at the Native Friendship Centre of Quebec for the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC). She chose to leave her community in order to gain new experience and also because she wanted to be closer to the man she loved.

"I like to remind youth, teenagers and adults that regardless of what may happen in life, we must seize the opportunities offered by life. We must be willing... to take risks and to hold unto our dreams because from the bottom of my heart I can promise you that it is worth every effort."



Darlene Kitty

Chisasibi - Eeyou Nation

"By choosing your career, you can achieve your personal and professional goals. Your post-secondary education, life and work experience may take you in different directions before you find a career that's right for you. Be strong and persevere".



Darlene is a family physician and she works at the Chisasibi Hospital. In high school she wanted to be a doctor. However, her career started with nursing. While working with the people in Toronto and Ottawa, she became interested in medicine as a career because she wanted to help and do more than nursing. In 1998, she went to University of Ottawa and graduated in 2002. She did her residency in Sudbury in Northern Ontario because to come back to work in the North in her community, she needed to train in a rural area. She did extra training in emergency medicine.

Darlene admits that she had a long dream and a slow start but as time went on, she was more certain of her goal. It was hard and today, one of the most difficult things is the challenges of the North. However, she is pursuing a rewarding career as a community leader and role model.

Coming back to her Cree heritage was very important because she spent many years studying in the South. At the hospital, she currently teaches about Aboriginal peoples' health status and social issues so that students understand the challenges. She also teaches about culture because she also wants people to look at the positive side of things.

"Life is a journey that is unique to each of us; we have our own paths to follow. Think about your journey, choose your career and make your goals, finding ways to achieve them. What kind of work would you like to do? Would you like to work with people, computers, learn a trade or become a health care professional. This may involve talking to someone who works in that field or role model and finding out what kind of post-secondary education and licensing is required. Often this means finishing high school and completing a cegep, college or university program.

Once you're in a post-secondary program, organize your study and leisure time. Take study skills workshops to learn how to study properly. Study with a friend and keep each other on track. Balance your school life and stress by participating in sports, clubs and going out. Ask for help from teachers, counsellors, friends and family if you're having problems and need someone to talk to. If you fail a course, repeat and complete...learn from your mistakes and this will help you through your courses and program. Moving and studying away from home can be difficult and you may feel homesick and lonely, so keep in touch with your family, old friends and make new friends. Look forward to the next time you go home for holidays."

Darlene also had to cope with her twin sister's death before she got into medical school. She realized that life is so short. It made her stronger and determined to persevere into her journey. Today, she feels that she needs to give back to her community and reach out to the youth, because someone else has done it for her.

Marielle Lainé

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"The important thing in life is to achieve your dreams regardless of the obstacles. The results are worth the effort!"

For the last 25 years, Marielle's career has been guided by her love for newborns and children. Her passion: babies!

In 1978, she completed a technical diploma as a licensed practical nurse. She first began working for seniors but she soon began to develop interest in children.



"After my daughter was born, I made the decision to pursue my dream and to become a nurse providing care for children. Thanks to the support from my community, I was able to begin my studies. I also wanted to prove that it was possible to study full time while being a single mother. I worked at the St-François d'Assise Hospital for 21 years. I'm now working at the Mother-Child Centre at the CHUL in Quebec and I spent three quarters of my time in obstetrics, where I requested to be assigned. I work with newborns in intensive care, premature birth, and babies suffering from malformation or other serious illnesses."

In 2007, despite her very busy career, Marielle completed a certificate in community health. She is well known in the community for her expertise in pregnancy and birthing, and she is sometimes invited to attend women giving birth. Because of her extensive knowledge about the complications and stress related to childbirth, she inspires trust in many women. She works as a volunteer to help new mothers who call her for support. Furthermore, people call her when their children are sick, because as Marielle explains, it is handy to have a nurse around!

"I am convinced of the importance for young people to keep studying. It is important not to stop studying because of a child, because in my opinion a child is never an obstacle, it is just a greater source of richness. We have role models for our children and I expect I will be going back to school some day because I have never stopped learning. "It is important for young people to study and having an obstacle should never be an obstacle."

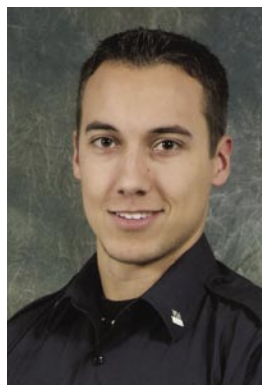
Marielle's love for children is not of recent date. At the age of 12, she began baby-sitting and has never stopped since! However at the age of 47, she continues to do it on a volunteer basis!

Alex Launière

Mashteuiatsh - Innu Nation

"Despite any obstacles we can always succeed if we persevere and remain faithful to ourselves."

Despite many obstacles, including his diagnosis of type 1 diabetes at the age of 18, Alex persevered and completed his training in police techniques. He took charge of his life and today he is a role model of success.



Alex is 21 years old and has always lived in the community of Mashteuiatsh. From a very early age his dream was to become a policeman. In the year 2000, when he was in grade 6, he enrolled in a contest named "Policeman for a day" and he won. He won the opportunity to spend a full day with Steeve Launière, who was a patrolman at the time and he took part in police prevention activities and spent time with them at the station.

"I began my training at the College of Alma and I was very motivated and determined. However in November 2006, I ran into my first big road block. I felt sick and the doctors diagnosed diabetes type 1. Diabetes is very wide spread among Aborigines, but type 1 represents only 10% of the cases. It is not hereditary and can happen to anyone anytime. In the past, I was always healthy and I do a lot of training and have a healthy diet. I won't deny that when I learned that I was diabetic, it was the worst news I had ever received as if the sky was falling on me. I might have started to feel sorry for myself or think that life was unjust and that I would never become a policeman. However with the help and support of the doctors, my family, and friends, I persevered. On October 10, 2008, I was proud to graduate as patrol officer from the National Police School of Quebec in the 87 cohort."

Even though I have diabetes, I am now a police officer in the Atikamekw community of Wemotaci. I think this can be a source of inspiration. It will help many young Aborigines to persevere, because nothing is impossible. Even if some people say that in such a case it is impossible to succeed, it is necessary to persevere and pursue the dream."

Élizabeth Launière

Mashteuiatsh - Innu Nation

"You have to forge on, never give up and never stop believing in yourself, because this is the key to success."

From a very young age, Elizabeth chose to take part in the sports that were organized in her community and elsewhere. Through this experience she learned how to surpass herself and take care of her health. Today through her involvement in Inter-Council Aboriginal Youth she is able to maintain a healthy attitude.



Her involvement in the First Nations Youth Council helped her discover many potential solutions that can be used to help youth in the community. Elizabeth has attended many information meetings and sessions. She is also a member of the committee responsible for implementation of the Puamung project, the goal of which is to create front line psycho-social intervention services that are adapted to the First Nations. This project will improve the quality of life for the members of her community. *"At the present time, I am a police officer and my professional priorities are to protect life, to prevent crime and to work in cooperation with the health centres, to provide immediate assistance in situations of distress, to conduct prevention work and to take an active role in social and community life."*

It gives me great satisfaction when people ask me about my career and why I chose to become a police officer. I always gladly provide the necessary information and I encourage youth when they ask me for advice. I think we have everything we need to succeed as long as we have the will to do so, because we find the capacity when we need it.

There is one example I would like to share with you; because of its perseverance, the Canada Goose is the creature that resembles me the most. Flying into the wind, these are very powerful birds that never give up. Despite the obstacles that come from mother nature, they continue their route. They never abandon their fellow geese and they know how to help each other out. For me, the V of their flying formation is a symbol of victory, therefore success.

I am very proud of my mother "Neka" as a role model. Now I would like to encourage young girls and young boys to never forget that they represent our future and our greatest source of pride. Shuk tuta tshimeskanam ishkuess kie tshil ussinitshu. (Go forth young girl and young man and pursue your route). "

Cheryl MacDonald

Kanesatake - Mohawk Nation

"Think of school as an opportunity to learn and prepare yourself for the future – read everything! Each person you meet and interact with gives you the opportunity to grow intellectually and emotionally. Do your best in every job you hold because it will reveal and develop your natural abilities and lead you to the career for which you are destined. Be kind and respectful to yourself and others, and always do what you know is right. Never let life's struggles stop you from following your dreams!"



Cheryl has been involved in social development for over 10 years. Through programs under the Aboriginal Human Resource Development, she has been working alongside many individuals to assist them in developing their labour and entrepreneur skills. She is very dedicated to providing higher education and empowerment to First Nations. Her approach is very compassionate and non-judgmental. A true professional.

"After graduation from high school, I enrolled in college, but I was unsure of what my career goals were so I quit to find employment. In 1987, expecting my second child, my husband, daughter, and I moved to Kanesatake. There were few local employment opportunities, especially without knowing the French language. When my youngest child entered school, I applied for a part-time job at the local First Nation Commission as a secretary/receptionist. Within ten years, I had advanced as the administrative assistant, employment counsellor, program coordinator, and program director. I returned to McGill University to acquire a Certificate in Human Resources Management, continued to work full-time and attended evening classes in Montreal. Within two years, I completed my studies and applied for the position of Assistant Executive Director with First Nations of Quebec Human Resources Development Commission.

For the last 17 years, I have been mentored by many technicians, colleagues, Chiefs, and Human Resources Development Canada representatives and learned how to administer employment and training services which I shared with my colleagues in the other local First Nation Commissions.

Through the years, there were times when I felt guilty for focusing so much of my time and energy on my career rather than being at home with my family. My three children tell me that I was the best role model for them and the community."

In her interactions with participants, board members, colleagues and subordinates, Cheryl always takes the time to listen, to inspire, gain trust, be truthful and respectful regarding decisions and opinions, and most importantly support people in pursuing their dreams. She told one former training participant who found employment in the filming industry that she couldn't have been more proud of her as if she was her own daughter! Being able to walk the walk by embodying good work ethics and behaviours is Cheryl's way of being an ambassador and role model for the First Nations Human Resources - our most valuable resource!

Cécile Mark

Pakuashipi - Innu Nation

"I encourage all young people to pursue their goals as far as they can go"

For the last twenty-five years, Cécile has devoted her time and energy to the well-being of her community through prevention and awareness work in the health field and with other professionals who work with all age groups. As a role model in the community of Pakua Shipi, she encourages young people to remain positive and to choose a healthy path which will always be a source of great pride for them.



Jonathan Mathias

Winneway - Algonquin Nation

Jonathan is a 30-year-old Algonquin from the community of Winneway. He started his own business and now owns two gas stations in two communities. He also owns a haul and outfitting business. Entrepreneurship is Jonathan's cup of tea!



Jonathan is undeniably a young man of great courage, because at the age of 17 he suffered a serious accident on an all-terrain vehicle. He spent two years in hospital and when he was released his left arm was paralyzed. "I admit that unfortunately I drank far too much alcohol between the ages of 12 and 17, but after I realized that I had almost lost my life through this accident, I took the bull by the horns and I invested the full amount of the insurance compensation I received to start my first company."

Fortunately, he had the brilliant idea to order, purchase and distribute products that are not readily available in the community. After the success of his first company, he opened two gas stations. Thanks to his business acumen, he has received several awards, particularly the First Nations Award of the Quebec Entrepreneurship Competition as well as the Chamber of Commerce Award of Best Emerging Young Business Professional.

"Everything I have learned comes from the elders. For the last eight years I have been working one hundred hours a week and in two years I hope to stop working to be able to enjoy life in the forest and join the elders in the activities that we enjoy. However I would be just as ready to resume work at the age of 40 if necessary!"

I recommend that all youth should learn languages because in business bilingualism is essential. Furthermore, it is important to take care of oneself and one's reputation. I remember when I was young that I liked to fight at school, but I am now a living proof that people can make a positive change as long as they have a vision of their future objectives."

Robert Dean Meloche

Kahnawake - Mohawk Nation

"Do what you enjoy and try to be your best at it!"



Most of Robert Dean's life in sports revolved around doing things that he found fun and enjoyable because of either the social aspect of sports or the training aspect. His love of fitness, the outdoors and children began at a young age. This experience shaped what would become a career in fitness for children as a physical education teacher at Kateri School in Kahnawake and he has a DEC in Recreation Leadership and a Bachelor of Physical Education.

Robert Dean's first achievement in sports was at the international level in the International Polynesian Canoe Federation World Championships of 1992. He was part of a twelve man outrigger crew.

"On a personal front, my own fitness level has increased in my priorities. I need change and challenge in my recreational activities to keep things interesting so I started to train for and participate in triathlons. I also play hockey, volleyball, softball and golf. I think that a positive and healthy attitude is magnetic and infectious. My utmost satisfaction is that I share my passion for active living with my family and three children."

At the professional level, his students are a part of the fitness, well-being circle. When he first began teaching at Kateri School in 1999, there was very little in the way of sports or competition at the school. He began by organizing recess and lunch activities. Having very little resources, he painted games on the asphalt and taught the children to enjoy outdoor activity. Throughout this time he became involved with parent committees which led to safety committees and then playground committees. Eventually, he participated in fundraising activities for a new playground for our school. To this day, Robert Dean has realized the importance of that playground. Not only does it promote outdoor physical activity but also helps develop friendships, teach social skills and improve self-esteem.

He organized afterschool activities at the youth center and started a basketball team and works on annual events such as Racers for Health (including the Kahnawake School's Diabetes Prevention Project), and Track and Field Day. Today, the community has a school spirit committee which organizes validation events, after school activities, monthly challenges, house challenges and much more. Robert Dean has been a part of this from the very start and he is very proud of it.

"I realize how influential I can be to the generations that surround me. In my community, I represent family, health, activity, fitness and a love of life. I cherish this role that I have built for myself and I look forward to the future influences I will have on my family and community."

Paula Menarick

Chisasibi - Eeyou Nation

« Imagination is everything; It is the preview of life's coming attractions. »

- Quote from Albert Einstein

After graduating from high school, Paula had many keys to open many doors to opportunities. There were only thousands of college courses to choose from! But she was blessed with a pregnancy. After the birth of her daughter she put her education aside for a year to raise Creelynn. A year had passed when she enrolled in a one year Pathways program to a three year Nursing course at John Abbott College.



"It was a big step to move away and I lived on my own with my daughter in Montreal. But that one step was the first and biggest step that led me to where I am today. The first year I did the prerequisites for nursing. Nursing school was a great experience and I was fortunate to have two Cree colleagues in my nursing program. I thought it was tough going to school and raising my one-year-old daughter at the same time. Being away from my community of Chisasibi was hard because I missed my family, friends, traditional seasonal activities and being out on the beautiful lands of Eeyou Istchee. I graduated from nursing school and obtained my diploma.

Today, I work at the Chisasibi Hospital. It is the beginning of my career and I feel excited and honoured to work for my people of Eeyou Istchee. Clients appreciate having someone they can speak to in their Cree language. My most rewarding experience as a nurse is the gentleness, appreciation of care and smiles of the clients.

In the future, I wish to further my studies and obtain my bachelor's of nursing. I also set a long term goal to enroll in medical school. But for now, I am enjoying being a mother, a new nurse, spending time with my family and friends, participating in traditional activities such as powwows and ceremonies, learning my Inuit and Cree culture through song and dance, language, and crafts.

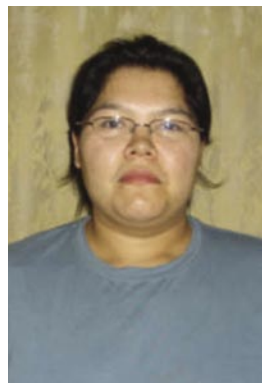
I strongly encourage youth to enter the field of health for a career. It is truly rewarding. Do not be afraid to make that first step. It all starts with imagination, an idea, followed by an action and focus which all lead to a rainbow of your dreams! Nakurmiik! "

Caroline Mesténapéo

Natashquan - Innu Nation

Caroline is a second year student in nursing at the Sept-Îles college. She is a very courageous woman who is able to combine full-time studies and taking care of her four children. When she went back to school her youngest child was only eight months old and she was still breast-feeding.

Caroline always dreamed about going back to school but she kept putting this decision off because of her responsibilities as a young mother and her work as an early childhood educator. She heard about the possibility of studying nursing and she was very interested in this field because she likes taking care of people.



"I think you need to have a lot of courage and perseverance to fulfil this kind of dream because there are many obstacles that have to be overcome. You must never give up. I encourage all young people to resume their studies. I was successful with four children. Therefore, young parents should not be discouraged. I am now studying in Sept-Îles and I know I will have to remain there for several years in order to acquire experience, but I do intend to return to my community Natashquan to work with my people. I face many obstacles particularly in terms of communication because I usually use my native language, Innu, to express myself. However, all the instructors are very understanding. I recommend that those people who are in the same situation should get support from the help centres located in the college.

I don't think that the number of children should be an obstacle because I always wanted to have many children. It is a question of organization and of getting the support you need from friends and family. Despite the distance, I recommend that any parents who are interested in studying outside the community should seek the assistance that is available from daycare centres located in urban communities. I want to tell young people to believe in themselves, to take care of themselves and to enjoy what they are doing. As for me, I always had an idea in mind and I pursued this idea. I won't become discouraged and I am always glad to get advice from the people around me and my family. Perseverance is the key to success; and along with determination, dreams can come true!"

Cindy Mesténapéo

La Romaine - Innu Nation

"Try not to dwell on the negative side of life (drugs, alcohol). Forge on ahead and be positive. Set goals and pick yourself up every time you run into a problem. You are the most important person in your own success!"



Cindy is a young 30-year-old woman studying nursing at the Huron-Wendat Manpower Training and Development Centre. She just enrolled in an intensive program that will finish in autumn 2010.

"I have always been interested in nursing, because the staff members always speak the Innu language in my community. Many members of our community do not speak French and I want to help them. It would be even better to increase the number of staff people to speak Innu to help the elders. . After my studies I want to return and work in and with my community.

Dr. Stanley Vollant, an Innu doctor, has always been my source of inspiration. I know that he succeeded in becoming a doctor and therefore I can succeed and become a nurse. I already have children and it is for them that I am continuing to study so that I can show them what I am capable of doing. It is hard because I don't see them often. I have to leave them with my parents and my aunt at La Romaine. My parents helped me a lot, but we are trying to plan for my children to come and join me in Quebec in September 2009. I did not want to disrupt their daily life and I want to do everything to make them comfortable when they come to join me here.

We must not dwell on the negative side of life, but persevere towards the future with a positive attitude. The most important thing is our Aboriginal identity. I would like to transmit this healthy attitude to young people. Many people are very motivated by sports. Rather than wasting your life in drugs and alcohol, it is much better to engage in healthy and positive activities. We must have goals in life and take the necessary steps to reach them. When I decided to return to my studies, I began by a brief session of therapy in order to develop a more positive attitude in life. My family encouraged me. My mother, who is a teacher by profession, was very supportive and told me that this was better than doing nothing. Both she and my uncle have been a great source of inspiration and I am very fortunate to have them both in my life.

I come from an isolated community. Our life is not always easy. Many young people ask how I managed to lead such a healthy life and they are surprised when I give them the answer. I want to continue to act as a role model to both youth and elders. The future belongs to youth. We must continue to move forward with a positive attitude because the youth in isolated communities must understand how important it is to make healthy choices. "

Anne-Philomène Mestokosho

Ekuanitshit - Innu Nation

"Persevere and walk along the path of Nutshimit - the inland territories. Learn your culture, your values and continue to speak our language, INNU AIAMUN."



Anne-Philomène is a very generous woman who has learned a great deal about life and knows how to take care of little children when they hurt themselves. Anne-Philomène comes from the community of Ekuanitshit and she speaks mainly in her native language Innu. Her daughter Rita would like to pay homage to her through the following eloquent text.

Nakaui means "my mother" in the Innu language. Philomène Mollen is an Innu woman who had seven daughters and two sons. She worked for many years at the Teueikan School, teaching Innu culture. She encouraged excursions to the forest to allow children to get to know and appreciate mother earth and all the benefits she provides us. Her daughter Rita recognizes that her mother earned her diploma with great distinction because of her patient love for children whom she never judged. Even today she continues to teach her family how to effectively solve conflict situations. Rita is one of her daughters and is aged 42 and is a mother of two children, including a 19-year-old, Mishta Napeu, and a daughter aged 16, Uapukun. She chose to propose her mother Anne-Philomène as a role model because she continues to be present and she wishes to honour her mother while she is still alive on this earth.

What more can we say about Anne-Philomène? Her courage is legendary in the history of d'Ekuanitshit, and she still finds time today to teach history to the children. She takes care of children because of her unconditional love for life. Because of her close connections with life, she is a model woman, mother and elder who is greatly esteemed by her family and community.

Chi Metallic-Larocque

Listuguj - Mi'gmaq Nation

"An optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." - Quote from Sir William Churchill

"I am a member of the Mi'gmaq First Nation and a lifelong resident of Listuguj. I am 35 years of age, a wife and a mother of four beautiful children (Kara, Alexa, Ashton and Tayla). My previous employment experiences include a Youth Protection Delegate under the directorate of Listuguj Community Social services for eight years and the Community Health and Social Services with the Gesgapegiag First Nation for three years."



She has extensive experience of working with children and youth along with their families. Prior to becoming a Youth Protection Delegate, Chi worked at a Solvent Abuse Treatment Center for children and teenagers. She enjoys volunteering her time for different events and activities in her community. She believes volunteering is one of many ways of staying connected to her community.

In 2006 she was one of three women "Aboriginal Women on the Move" that cycled across Canada from Vancouver to St. John's (Newfoundland) to raise awareness on violence against women. The women wanted to learn and hear about the realities of family violence being faced by our women and how the cycle of violence is being broken in families and in communities.

In January 2008, Chi began her practicum under the directorate of the Listuguj Community Health Services working in the field of Home and Community Care. She is a strong advocate for the clientele she works for, and believes that everyone needs to be treated with the upmost respect and dignity.

In April 2008, Chi secured a permanent position with the Listuguj Community Health Services as the Social Worker/Case Manager for the Home and Community Care Program. In July 2008, she graduated with her Bachelor of Social Work Degree from St. Thomas University.

"I strive to live a healthy lifestyle which includes lots of exercise, eating healthy foods and lots of laughter! My husband and I are very physically active and enjoy many sports together such as walking, running weight training, cycling, boxercise and softball. I encourage my family, friends and co-workers to become physically active and speak of the benefits of choosing a healthier lifestyle."

Céline Mochon

Puvirnituk - Inuit

"Continue and invest all the effort that is necessary to succeed at school because it is very important."

Céline Mochon is a young Inuk girl, originally from Puvirnituk. From the age of two she grew up in La Tuque and was very involved in the community from a young age. At the age of 13, she was a volunteer counsellor at Les Migrateurs Summer camp (summer camp for young Aboriginal children from urban communities, ages 6 to 12 years). For the last three years, she has been a member of the Air Cadets which she joined at the age of 12. Furthermore she is involved in many other volunteer activities which help to improve life in her community. Among other things, she is taking part in fundraising activities, in volunteer activities such as packing groceries at the grocery stores, door to door collections for the United Way, bottle collections for the Youth Home, spring cleanup at the Parc des Chutes with the Air Cadets, selling chocolate bars and tickets for school activities and for the Cadets, and selling souvenir cups, pens and pins for squadron 646 of La Tuque.



"Although it is sometimes very hard in the Cadets, I am working diligently to move up the ranks. Over time, I succeed in becoming Duty Caporal and I am also trying to help other cadets become more independent, develop self-confidence and to pursue their objectives in life. "

Two years ago, Céline was the winner of the perpetual trophy from squadron 646 for her perseverance.

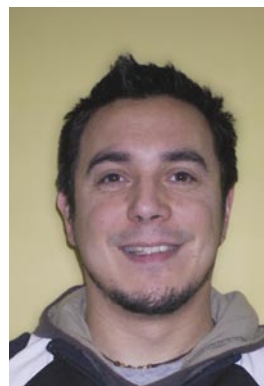
"I like helping other people. I think this is why I was chosen to be a young role model. In order to continue in the same direction I will keep up my regular volunteer activities, help with the funding campaigns for my high school and remain involved without hesitation in the Youth House in La Tuque. I also want to continue in the Cadets until I am 18. However, my main goal is to finish high school and go to cegep and then become a veterinarian or a special educator."

Trevor Monaghan

Wemindji - Eeyou Nation

« *Effort Equals Outcome!* »

Trevor Monaghan is 34 years old and he is Cree originally from Wemindji. He has been living in Chisasibi for about a year and he has such a great impact on the youth. Through his previous job as a replacement teacher, having played football for Ottawa University and Murray State in Kentucky, he brought back with him his knowledge of football and shared it with the teenaged students at the Wemindji school. Trevor started off with a flag football league (non-contact) and that led to him bringing over 20 kids to different football camps in Ottawa for them to have the opportunity to experience contact football.



"Thanks to one of these football camps, one of the coaches there spotted a young football rookie, named Derek Neacappo, who was just learning the basics of the sport, and saw a lot of potential in him to play. Soon after that, I trained Derek for the team's tryouts. That young man now plays in the Junior Major Football League for the Ottawa Sooners. I see a lot of potential in these kids in the community, whether the kid is big or small. The big kid can do the blocking, while the fast little one can run for the touchdown. These are kids that felt they had no room in hockey, which is the dominant sport in the community. I am proud that I have given them another option: football."

Trevor has since established the James Bay Eagles Football Program and it has been a great success. Parents have seen differences in their troubled teens as they are more present in class and also have been getting better grades on their report cards. As a certified personal trainer, during the off-season, Trevor trains young athletes at the local fitness center, both hockey and football players, showing and teaching them the important balance between good physical and mental health.

When the kids go up to him and say: "Hey Coach!" It is visible that they look up to him. Some parents have even mentioned to Trevor how he is their son's hero, literally.

Susan Montour

Kahnawake - Mohawk Nation

"Never give up on your dreams and educational goals. If at times you feel discouraged, try not to doubt yourself- you can do it! Reach out to friends, family and other professionals for support and encouragement; they can be the best resources available to you to help you along the way".



Susan is a dental hygienist who is helping her own community children to take care of their teeth and keep their beautiful smiles sparkling and healthy by teaching healthy habits at a young age.

After completing high school as an honour student, Susan entered CEGEP with dreams of working in the health care field, so she signed up for the Health Sciences program at Dawson College. After a brief year, she decided to take a break from school and go to work full-time.

"For five years I worked in Kahnawake as a meter reader for Hydro-Quebec. Although I enjoyed the daily challenges of my job, I always felt that I wanted to help people and I started to research other career options. My attraction for dental hygiene comes from my experience with orthodontic treatment. The doctor and his wonderful staff treated me with warmth and professionalism that eventually sparked my interest in pursuing a career in the dental health field. I signed up to take adult education night courses in order to meet prerequisites of health career programs in cegep.

After successfully completing the required courses I entered the Dental Hygiene Professional Program at John Abbott College. After many ups and downs in the program, at the half way point in the program I almost withdrew, convinced that dental hygiene was not for me. Thankfully, it was not without a tremendous amount of support and encouragement from my family to reconsider my decision that I finally decided that I would finish the program."

Susan worked for different dentists and later on decided to write dental articles because she received so many dental related questions during her workday from patients and parents. *"I approached the editor of a local health newsletter called Aionkwatakariteke and asked if I could submit an article once a month (for free of course) and she agreed. I ended up writing about 8 articles, ranging on topics of baby bottle tooth decay, dental emergencies, how not to be a victim of a dental scam, tongue piercing etc.*

Since becoming a new parent myself, I gained confidence in giving advice on how to care for baby teeth and or breastfeeding because I have experienced this firsthand not too long ago! All I have to say is that you never stop learning, and new experiences can only make you better at what you do."

Marie-Anne Napish Ekuanitshit - Innu Nation

"Follow your dreams because if you persevere you will succeed!"

Marie-Anne is a 58-year-old Innu woman who has devoted many years to volunteer pastoral service in her community. She prepares the sacrament of First Communion, Confirmation and Funerals as well as the Sunday prayers

She is a woman of few words but of important action. Marie-Anne inspires trust and knows how to listen to people both young and old. According to her friends, Marie-Anne is very devoted to the Aboriginal community and it is rare to find people with her goodness and who are ready to devote so much time for the well-being of her community. She is very discreet and has many talents that should be recognized although she prefers working in the background.

In addition to her volunteer activities, she enjoys teaching arts and culture to the young students at the grade school in the community. She has even used her great talents of imagination to develop courses.

"I know that not everything about youth is all rosy, but I tell young people to take charge of their life because they have to think about their future. I think that parents are a very important source of motivation which helps children to continue their studies. In my opinion, education is essential because the future of the community is based on its youth. I encourage all young people to adopt positive thinking and to look towards the future in order to reach the goals they have set. "

Marie-Anne has done volunteer work for thirty years but she tries to respect her limits. Furthermore, she expects to retire soon but her generous nature will always be greatly appreciated by all. "I strive to do my best for the well-being of the community and I think that the young people will be there to pick up the flame!"



Eniko Néashish

Wemotaci - Atikamekw Nation

"Take good care of your physical, emotional and spiritual health."

Eniko graduated as a nurse six years ago. She has worked as a nurse at Pakua Shipi on the Lower North Shore and is now in her second year of employment in Wemotaci. However, she did not follow a straight career path to nursing.



"I began a B.A. in physical geography and I then began to work in Attikamekw land negotiations. This work was very interesting, but I really missed the contact with the population and therefore, I decided to pursue nursing. As I had already completed my studies in an urban centre, I went back to school, but not without difficulty because I had two children. I knew I could count on my family, my friends and the financial support from the community council.

I knew that the first steps in my new career would require a lot of courage. I must admit that as a young mother it was doubly hard but with a little bit of discipline I was able to continue my studies. My children were a great source of motivation because I wanted to demonstrate to them the sacrifices parents have to make to overcome obstacles.

It is very important for me to be able to contribute something to my community by working with the population in a clinical context, especially because the nature of my work allows me to exercise a certain amount of autonomy when I have to initiate treatment in the absence of the doctor. I am now in charge of the women's health program. As a professional, I would like to encourage young women to take good care of their health which belongs to them, because self-affirmation is important as is knowing how to say no.

I encourage all young people to continue their studies until the end and to accept the challenges required to reach their dreams even if at times it seems to be impossible for youth living in the communities. But look around and you will find that support is always available. I would also like to tell young people not to wait to be told what to do but to be proactive and take initiatives."

Jimmy Nicholas et Robin Skye

Kanesatake - Mohawk Nation

"Believe in yourself, you have experience to offer at any age, we are all related."

Robin and Jimmy live on the Mohawk territory of Kanesatake, and presently raising a family of five. They have a family-based catering and cake business.

Robin has worked in the Social, Health, Education and Justice areas since 1981. Her lifetime of community service work developed through passion for creative art work and the empowerment of creating change through cultural expressions. Following her studies in Commercial/Graphic Arts program and training opportunities in Social Work she started helping youth and families living with AIDS, mental illness, addictions and abuses combining her assets: her passion for creativity, cultural expression and fostering change in people's lives. Her multidisciplinary and creative approach was used in her work as a family-violence-intervention coordinator at the Kanesatake Health Center. This Center was emerging at a time when natural helpers and community workers were needed to bring focus to cultural importance as community services were looking at capacity building. She also worked as a Youth Protection worker for Kahnawake Shakotiatakehnnas community services for five years and has recently started working as an outreach counsellor for the Onen'to:kon Treatment Center.



Jimmy has taken numerous trainings and workshops in the areas of grief and trauma. He has worked in the healing program "Breaking All Barriers" after the 1990 crisis as a community worker. The Kanesatake Health Center became another community resource that allowed Jimmy to expand on his knowledge and experience to help develop and establish the Kanesatake Youth Center in 2000. Jimmy has obtained his certificates in counselling for addictions with the NECHI Institute, Training of Trainers with Jane Middleton-Moz in 1997. He also pursued certificate in community development at Concordia University. Presently, he is working on contractual basis in the Northern communities of Nunavik in the areas of trauma, suicide prevention and debriefing communities. He co-facilitates workshops with community elders and provides education and awareness in teamwork setting. He respectfully works with elders from the respective communities and community service workers and youth groups. Jimmy believes in having a place for youth to socialize and play in a drug/alcohol free environment so kids can have a place to talk openly, receive guidance and enjoy a place that is safe.

In Jimmy's spare time he has enjoyment from martial arts and music. Robin enjoys being part of a Mohawk traditional singing group, gardening and creative arts. Jimmy and Robin encourage a lifestyle that strengthens healthy family values; their home is always open to the neighbourhood children, they value education, healthy eating, creativity, traditional values, humour and laughter, uniqueness for each child and physical activities. Home is really the best place to be in their family!

Presently, they both do volunteer work at the Step by Step Child and Family Center in Kahnawake which offers an inclusive and safe environment for creating advocacy for children and families.

"It is there that we found the strength and constant encouragement to develop skills and individual strengths to be able to nurture and help create a consistent foster care environment within our home. It also provided us with a strong and empowering educational learning environment for all our children, to them as individuals, as a couple, as family – "We are all related."

We hope to continue this and carry these words into the future because it has sustained us in our journey together despite the grief and trauma that persists in our communities. Natural helpers of a child's community are of great value and importance in this day and age. The Mohawk language and culture and traditional teachings are essential in their visioning for ongoing community health and development."

Louis Picard

Pessamit - Innu Nation

"Believe and you will overcome all barriers in life."

Louis lived for a good part of his life in Quebec where he first became familiar with and began to study the mentality of non-Aboriginal people. He was always determined to come back to his community, Betsiamites. He finally succeeded in 2000.



"As far back as I can remember, I was always involved in the business community." After his studies he earned a diploma in auto mechanics and electronics from Aviron Institute, but spent most of his life working for himself in a variety of fields before he found "the right business". "Obstacles always spurred me on to keep trying. The proof of my determination is that my company is currently expanding and I never hesitated to engage in promotion."

He decided to try a new idea by founding a company to place nurses in Aboriginal communities. In 2001 he created his company which he called: Innu Secours. Innu Secours provides training for cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, first aid and first response. His company is accredited by Human Resources Canada/Labour Force Branch. It became the first Aboriginal business of its kind in Canada. Innu Secours serves Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal clients across the North Shore covering a very large territory. The company was selected in Spring 2008 by the popular television program of Claire Lamarche called Job Hunting as one of the twelve out of thirty companies that were selected.

"I am currently working on the construction of a new head office which will provide employment to people in the community and help with expansion of the company."

I am also interested in culture and I am on the Board of Directors of the regional Council for Culture and Communications on the North Shore, for which I have been a Board member for six years. I devote this time to support Aboriginal artists. Furthermore, I am an artist at heart because I designed the logo for my company, Innu Secours."

Today many young people of the community express their gratitude to him and the pride they feel due to his business accomplishments. Louis believes that there is much more room for business development in the communities in both health and other related sectors.

Nicole Picard

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

Life can present many traps but we should never give up because with the help of the people around us and who love us we will always find the right solutions. Be of good courage!"

Nicole is a Huron-Wendat nurse. She is very devoted, dedicated and always smiling as she listens to her patients and inspires confidence in them. The patients report that she is always able to convince them when they have to make an important decision and she is a very positive influence on them.



From the time of her teenage years, Nicole took care of the elderly people in her community. She began her career as a licensed practical nurse, a position which she held for twenty years. However, at the age of 37, she decided to go back to school and to complete her nursing degree, followed by a university certificate in community health. In 1999, she was hired as a nurse at the Marie-Paule Sioui-Vincent Health Centre. She is now team leader for home and palliative care and takes care of all kinds of patients.

"I really enjoy my work with the people in the community because it is a profession that brings me a great deal of satisfaction. It is not always easy to accompany people who I have known since my early childhood, but I have learned to listen to people because the best way to provide physical care is by listening to them. I enjoy talking with my patients, giving them advice about their health and especially about the medications they have to take. I also try to relieve their solitude by frequent visits and by organizing activities and accompaniment services in cooperation with the health centre staff.

I encourage young people to follow their intuition and never to be discouraged or to succumb to negative influences. It is best to listen to your heart. Nursing is a wonderful profession because we can always do something good for people. You just have to remain sociable, be yourself and listen without judging.

I invite young people to knock at the right doors, to listen to their feelings and to take advantage of life without endangering their well-being. It is easy to give up but life can be beautiful. There is always a solution to get you out of the difficult situation. Even when a young person does not like school, there is always time to go back to school as an adult. I was back at school at the same time as my children! I have no regrets and I am very proud of what I have accomplished in my personal life and in my professional career."

Priscilla Pichette-Polson

Winneway - Algonquin Nation

"Kwe, to our youth of today. Cherish your cultural values and believe in yourself for determination and perseverance will get you where you want to be in life. Be proud of who you are! Let your voices be heard for you can make a difference!"



Priscilla completed the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. The program was completed in December of 2007 and her graduation ceremony was in June of 2008. "I am of Algonquin heritage and my community is Long Point First Nation which is located in north-western Quebec. I am married to a wonderful husband who has also completed the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the same time as I did. Attending University was not a simple task with four children. But through perseverance and determination, we both succeeded on the educational venture that we chose to undertake.

"I strongly feel that I can become a definite asset to my community. Throughout my schooling, I always returned and worked as a summer student within my community and soon realized that there are many areas where I could assist in improving situations via the health care sector. One such domain is prevention measures which would focus on addressing the problem upstream instead of just dealing with it downstream; simply put, let us tackle the root of the cause!"

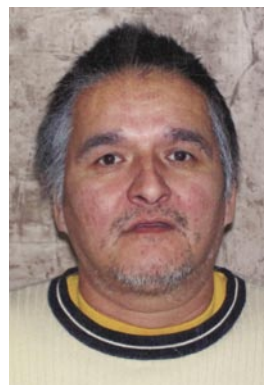
Priscilla has worked as the Director of Health and Social Services for her community and knows firsthand the numerous health issues that exist within her community. It is living this experience that led to her decision to enter this field of study which is to become a nurse. Her First Nation community is English-speaking but they live in French-speaking surroundings and the language has become a major obstacle encountered by the community. *"I firmly believe that in order to provide adequate health care, one of the most fundamental aspect is the ability to communicate with one another.*

I have now reached 10 years of sobriety and I know the destructive impact that substance can have on an individual and his/her family. My culture has always been an important aspect in my day to day life. I am a strong believer in Aboriginal rights and I always raised my children to stand proud of who they are. I practice my values and beliefs on a daily basis and they shed light on the many issues that arise especially when it pertains to Aboriginal culture and life."

Fernand Pinette

Pessamit - Innu Nation

"It is important to light the flame of volunteer work because the smile that lights up on a person's face is our reward and motivation to offer our time as volunteers."



For the last 25 years, Fernand has engaged in volunteer work in his community, Pessamit. Through his dynamic involvement and his great dedication, he has served many people and organizations within the population.

Fernand works as a volunteer for home care to the elderly, by cooking the meals for families going through grief. During his 25 years of volunteer work, he has organized a radiothon to collect money for the church. Among other activities, Fernand always found the time to take care of the community hall and the recreation hall.

Once a year, he organizes a trip for about 50 people, both young and old, to visit Ste-Anne and Cap de la Madeleine. Fernand also organizes fund-raising activities to pay for the annual trips. Recently, Fernand received a gift he has always dreamed about: he went to Rome in Italy with a group of 16.

"For me volunteer work means doing good in my community." The community members have long recognized the volunteer work accomplished by Fernand.

"I often say that I intend to stop my volunteer activities, but I can't get used to this idea or refuse to help people because it makes me feel useful when I can render service to others. I learned this goodness from my mother who was constantly involved in volunteer work. She was a great inspiration for me. .

Volunteer work is the greatest activity I can imagine because it always inspires me with a great sense of value. People are so grateful. Now it's my turn to warmly thank my community and all the other people for engaging in volunteer work."

Fernand's colleagues are very proud to render this homage to him. They also wish to thank him for everything he does every day.

Ginette Romain-Descombes

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Grab on to your passion!"

Ginette is from the Huron-Wendat Nation and worked for 28 years as a secretary in the local grade school, but her work has never been limited to her role as secretary. In fact, she loves her job and she takes care of everything or almost!

The secretary has an important role to play in a grade school with school staff and specialists as well as with the daycare service. Ginette takes care of the children when they hurt themselves and she is often present to act as a relay between the students and the staff. She also provides a point of contact with parents. Sometimes Ginette has to settle a dispute among students.



"My contact with children has a great deal of value to me. I love helping children and parents because I often have to provide them with reassurance. After working for more than 25 years in under-privileged schools, I was very often witness to difficult situations. People who are in charge of children have a lot of work to do and very often with very few resources. Very often several children will be in my office. Some of the children are very poor and cannot go back home. Because of my job responsibilities I must help the children remain calm and help them to get over whatever hurts them!"

I advise parents to take good care of the children, to give them a good breakfast and to make sure they get enough sleep at night. I have seen so many cases where we act out of love for the children, it comes naturally!"

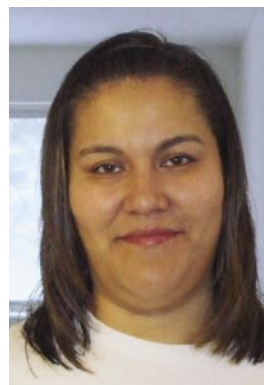
Ginette's involvement has no limits. She has always had a great sense of innovation at school where she spent most of her career. For ten years, she taught the Red Cross Babysitting course. She also enjoys organizing the singing competition at the schools. Today, this competition has become very popular and many schools participate which allows children from poor neighbourhoods to attend, because they have such a dire need for infrastructure. Ginette will retire in a year and a half but she left her mark for the improvement of the social conditions and the health of under-privileged children.

Glenda Elizabeth Kitty Sandy

Kawawachikamach - Naskapie Nation

"Do not let mistakes determine your future potential. Embrace the lessons learned and move on!"

Glenda is the first Aboriginal registered nurse that the Naskapi community of Kawawachikamach ever had. She is a woman of proud Naskapi and Cree descent. She and her boyfriend have 2 children, Raven and Kyle.



"My decision to pursue my career in health came after I had my daughter, Raven. Her arrival sparked a determination and drive to make something of my life and to make hers better. I graduated with my Nursing Diploma from St. Lawrence College, in Kingston, Ontario, in 2003."

In that same year, her picture was featured on the Inuit and Indian Health Careers Program (calendar) through Health Canada. During her time in Kingston, she worked at the Kingston General Hospital for a year, in the area of Internal Medicine.

Glenda returned home to Kawawachikamach and began working at the CLSC Naskapi in April 2003 as a registered nurse. Her son, Kyle, was born later that year, as well. She then decided to go back to school to pursue her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2006. She will receive her BScN from Queen's University in 2009.

"While in Kingston, I learn a lot of skills that I will be able to take back to my community once I complete my degree. I am proud of what I was able to succeed in what I have accomplished so far with the loving support of my immediate and extended family in Kawawachikamach, Quebec and Cross Lake, Manitoba. Without their help, I would have been faced with obstacles that I do not think I could have overcome otherwise."

Isabelle Sioui

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"I hope that every young person will find a dream to accomplish their future. Dreaming helps up progress!"



At the beginning, Isabelle had doubts about being a role model for young Aboriginal people. She is a little bit shy but she admits quite candidly that she loves her work. Isabelle's involvement with young teenagers provides her with a great source of satisfaction knowing that she has been able to render important services.

For the past four years, she has been training the cheerleading team called Les Pulsiions de Wendake. The team is made up of a majority of young girls, but the team also includes two young Aboriginal boys, one aged 8 and one aged 18. Cheerleading with Isabelle is not only an extreme sport but it is also a healthy life style which is very popular with people who like sports. Here is what Isabelle does with her team.

"I help them to remain sober and I use a reward system. I make various objects including water bottles, key chains, sports bags, tee-shirts, etc. Everything is personalized! The athletes have to have total confidence in me during practices, because sometimes I ask them to execute very difficult and they do it!

I invite them over for supper and sleepovers on holidays. They tell their secrets, their joys, their difficulties, their loves, and their hormones! This is a lot for any adolescent to deal with! Many of them have absentee parents (they are too occupied!) and therefore some of them see me as a substitute mother!

I try to help the young people act responsibly and to help them get involved in organizing the choreography, the practices, the competitions or the meals we all share. All members on the team have the right to speak and to tell it like it is! I have a great deal of respect for these young people and their imagination."

The cheerleading activities can go much further. Isabelle will take the time to teach a young 16-year-old to drive or she will help the young girls do their hair. She also discusses and negotiates with the parents! Cheerleading is not only a sport: it is also a way of life!

Isabelle also works as a councillor at the Kanikantet Centre which is part of the Native Friendship Centre of Quebec. At the Centre she helps young people aged nineteen to twenty-nine become more independent while conserving their Aboriginal activity through the activities she proposes.

"I love working with Aboriginal teenage boys and girls. They have so much they can teach me! When I am with them I feel like a Eternal adolescent!"

Marie-Délina Sioui

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Believe in your vocation and go through with it until the end."

Marie-Délina Sioui was born on the ancestral territory known as Quarante-Arpents in the region of Quebec City. She is a Huron-Wendat elder aged 86 years old. She worked for many years in the health field working as a nurse in the poorer neighbourhoods. Without judging those less fortunate, she chose as her vocation to spread happiness around her.



"Before beginning my nursing studies, I began teaching in a great school although I was only 16 years old. I wanted to become a doctor but at that time the government did not allow Aboriginal women to study medicine. In 1947, I earned my nursing degree with distinction. I practised in several hospitals in Quebec city in order to deepen my knowledge about the problems related to diabetes and arthritis." She has been a long time member of the Aboriginal Nursing Association of Canada and has taken part in many meetings since the beginning of the association.

She worked for many years on a regional health unit. She covered a very large territory as a nurse, visiting schools and private houses. Marie-Délina had many responsibilities and even delivered babies when no doctor was available.

"Today I am very interested in modern medicine. I have never retired from my health vocation because it is an endless vocation." Her great love of learning helped her earn a B.A. in literature at the age of 74. She is a great reader and keeps up to date on the news. In her spare time, she likes to paint, particularly scenes representing nature.

She is a great woman with a good philosophy of life and she would like to help the youth of today to not give up on their vocation. She would like to see everyone live in peace, harmony, joy, and the good humour which is so characteristic of the First Nations' families at the time of her youth.

Michel-André Sioui

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Even if the road is often filled with roadblocks, set small objectives and always hope!"

Michel-André is a psychologist and a social worker who takes care of the mind rather than the body. Whether he is working with young people or elders, he always finds the right word of encouragement.



"My love for the elderly comes from my grandmother whom I loved very much. My work is a vocation. The study of human behaviour fascinates me, and I am particularly interested in the aging process and the values of our elders. I have immense respect for this generation of people who led the way."

For the last fourteen years, Michel-André has been working at the Marie-Paule Sioui Vincent Health Centre and prior to that he spent one year working for the Inuit. As a Huron-Wendat, he would like to use his expertise to provide these individuals with the tools they need to remain autonomous.

"I believe that young people should choose work which they love to do. You can always change your mind. There is always hope even for the elders and it is never too late to accomplish your dreams."

I draw great strength from the elders, because they keep me connected with the essential. They do not have the same concept of time and the knowledge and experience they can transmit to us is invaluable. Given the great breakdown of our modern families, at a time when abuse has become more and more frequent, I appreciate having such contact with the elder population.

The elderly people I serve often say that they do not feel very useful. However, I am there to listen to them and to encourage them in their daily routine. I think the right word is "hope" because it is impossible to work with the elderly without hope and there is always a way to bring quality to their life."

Sonia Sioui

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Appreciate the great abundance we have in life!"

Sonia is a Huron-Wendat woman, 40 years of age, who has been working as a licensed practical nurse for 19 years, including 14 years at the Marcel-Sioui Residence for seniors.

Sonia is a very important person for the people she serves on a daily basis. As she provides care in the residence, she never has the impression that she is working but rather that the senior citizens are there to welcome her. She is very familiar with all the habits and likes of the residents. She does not just provide medical care, because she takes the time to talk with them and to explain to them the importance of the care.

"I believe that you have to be very patient, have a good sense of observation, a critical mind, and a sense of initiative and compassion when working with the elderly. I can see the pain in their eyes and I can quickly sense when they are sick and need comfort. I know when something is wrong or whether an elder just needs to talk about it."

Because she is so conscientious, Sonia does practically everything as she tries to spoil her patients by doing small favours such as sewing a button, fixing a hem, writing a card, decorating a room, taking care of their clothes, repairing small personal objects, helping them do their hair and make up or accompanying the elders who need to go shopping.

"I try to entertain the patients in my own way with a joke or a song. Because the elders appreciate this kind of attention, I also like to recognize that they teach many things for which I am very grateful."

These are the keys to success that Sonia uses in her work with the elderly: kindness, vitality, a smile, respect and love!



Francis Verreault-Paul **Mashteuiatsh - Innu Nation**

"Believe in yourself and in your capacities!"

Francis is a young 21- year-old man originally from the community of Mashteuiatsh. He began to skate at the age of 3 or 4 and to play hockey. Hockey is his passion, which comes from his father and his uncles who are all great sports fans. 'I think I was born with a hockey stick in my hand. From a very early age, I used to telephone all my friends and we would play hockey for hours and hours."



At the age of 14, he left his family and community to play hockey in the higher leagues. To the general surprise of all, he was drafted by the Saguenéens of Chicoutimi (Major Junior Hockey League of Quebec) with whom he played for five seasons. Because of his leadership skills, he was named captain for the 2007-2008 season.

Francis was then drafted by the McGill University Red Men for the 2008-2009 season, where he is currently studying kinesiology in English. He is also the lead scorer on the team!

"I don't want to have any illusions because chances of making the national Hockey League are very slim, which is why it is very important to have an alternative career. I always knew that it was more important to be successful at school than to play hockey. Today I am a student at one of the best universities of Canada and if I had dropped out of school when I was young, I would never have had this opportunity.

I recommend good balance between study and sport. I'm now studying to earn a Bachelor of Sciences and one day I would like to begin a Master's degree and perhaps become a psychologist."

Francis has become accustomed to the rhythm of hockey and he hopes to be able to continue to play for McGill University because this experience may also open the doors to a career in Europe. He wants to complete his studies first but without a doubt he would jump at the experience!

"I recommend that all Aboriginal young people use their talents, study and fight to maintain their values and their roots and make them more and more well-known." His great dedication to work, his love of his family and his origins, his desire to go beyond himself make of him a role model who is constantly changing.

Marie-France Vincent

Wendake - Huron-Wendat Nation

"Learn languages, travel and cultivate your knowledge. It is never too late to begin!"

Marie-France is a young Huron-Wendat nurse aged 30 who is presently working at the hospital of Chisasibi. She learned English in order to be able to work with the Cree of James Bay and the Inuit of Nunavik. She is the granddaughter of Marie-Paule Sioui-Vincent, the first Aboriginal nurse in Canada. Marie-France chose her vocation across the generations!



Marie-France is a model of tenacity and perseverance. Her personal and scholastic development is proof. After she finished high school, she spent one year at the Institut de technologie agro-alimentaire in La Pocatière studying horticulture and the environment. In 1996, she decided to change directions, to become bilingual, and to use her English in order to fulfil her dream of working as a nurse in the Far North.

In order to accomplish this she found a job in Prince Edward Island in a small locality where no one speaks French. She set a very high standard, but she succeeded in holding two jobs. She won her first challenge and now that she had the linguistic ability she set out to conquer the second challenge and become a nurse. "It is never too late to pursue your dreams and at the age of 24 I went back to school. I had to spend a full year preparing myself to study nursing techniques at the Cegep of Limoilou. "For three years, she studied hard and made many sacrifices. During this time, she worked at St. Brigid's Home (Quebec) as an assistant to elderly English speaking patients. She began to reap the benefits of her efforts because if she did not speak English she never would have been hired. She graduated as a nurse in 2006, with honourable distinction.

After a few months working at the Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus in Quebec in various departments, she began to think of that very high mountain... Puvirnituk! She wanted to climb her Everest.

"I adapted quickly in Inuit culture and worked in the Far North without any difficulty. It is never monotonous: extended working hours, variable shifts according to the needs, and there are many, accompanying patients by plane when they are taken for care outside the community, I worked as a front line resource. I spent one full year working there and with this experience I decided to go a little bit further south and work with the James Bay Cree in Chisasibi where I am now working as a nurse."

Marie-France was never afraid and never gave up on her goal which she was able to reach. She can now put down her flag. She has climbed her Everest!

Lisette Wylde Rankin

Pikogan - Algonquin Nation

"Be ambitious. Have dreams, objectives and courage and persevere and believe in yourself. Never give up! Work hard and always be a proud Anishinabe!"

Lisette has been working for the community in Pikogan since 1981 as an Income Security Officer. Her great sense of fairness and justice have made her a role model because she was able to adapt to the various political changes that occur within the universe of social assistance as well as the political changes that occur in her community.



"Although I was never trained in this field, I had to leave my community to obtain a certificate in administration from Quebec. As a survivor of residential school, I didn't want to go back to school where I had so many negative experiences!"

Since she assumed her duties she has seen many changes in the band council, including six election mandates with different chiefs. Such changes have had an effect on program administration over time but Lisette has acquired a great capacity of adaptation. Since 2006, Economic Development and Income Security were merged in her community, which allowed Lisette to join a fantastic team!

After the Income Security reform in 1996, Lisette worked in the implementation of major projects including the creation of the ImplicAction Training Centre and déjeuner École (PNE). From 1997 to 2008, Lisette was part of the extended working group on Income Security Framework Policy. She was also a member of a women's group in Pikogan and a member of the organization called CALACS –ABITIBI Action IKWE, which is an Abitibi-based centre for help and assistance against sexual aggression.

"Despite all my professional successes, I am first and foremost a mother, a grandmother and an expectant great-grandmother." Her employer has strongly encouraged her to express everything that she has contributed to her community through perseverance and fidelity.