

GRAND COUNCIL TREATY #3 NEWS BULLETIN

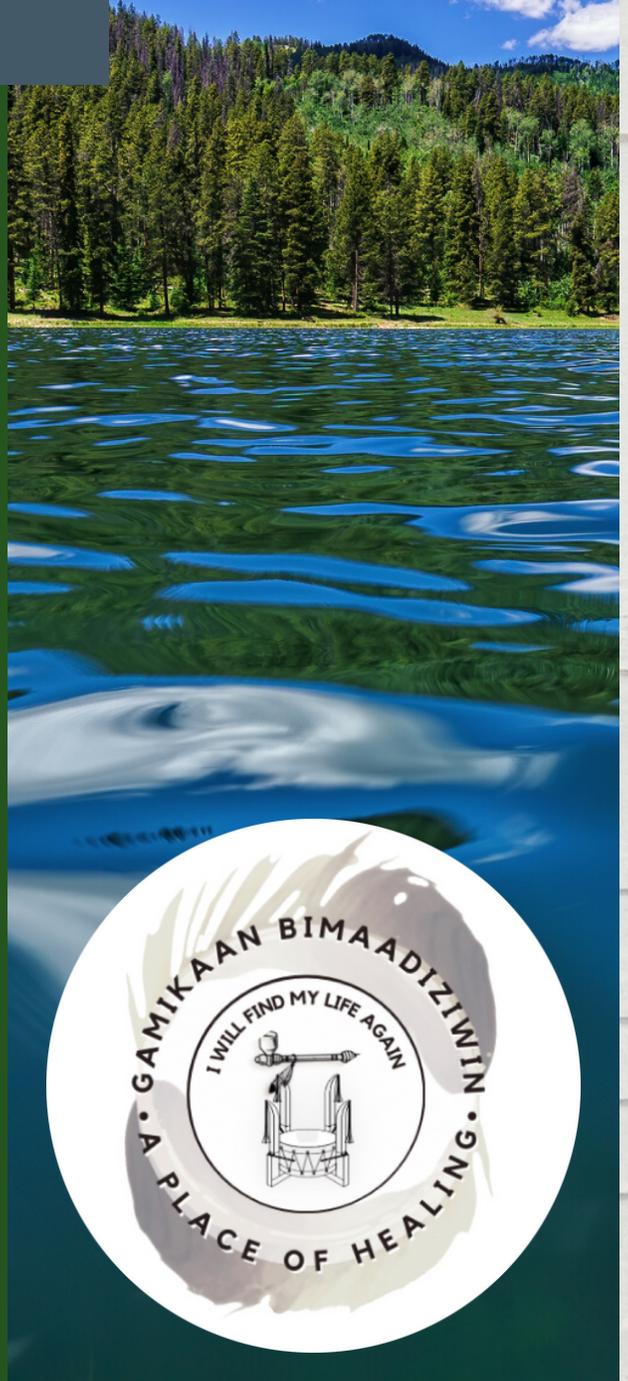


GAMIKAAN BIMAADIZIWIN AT BUG LAKE

An Update and Call to Action for our Members

Grand Council Treaty #3 is proud to support the development of Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin healing camp. The Creator has been at work alongside a growing team of individuals who believe that healing from complex trauma, addiction, and recidivism is a journey. That journey takes time, and requires opportunity to not only go back to ones roots, to heal by creating a sense of identity, but also to build skills that can bring pride, opportunity, and hope in the future. Working alongside Elder Langford Ogemah, participants learn what it takes to survive day to day when living on the land and are nourished culturally and spiritually in a healing journey. Providing this opportunity to heal through learning the Anishinaabe way of life is what is offered at Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin at Bug Lake. This news bulletin highlights work being done to move past piloting this type of modality of treatment amongst all the existing treatment modalities in the region. More than ever this journey has shown that sovereignty, self-determination and living off the land as the Anishinaabe ancestors did is healing, and should be valued as a viable and integral option for treatment.

We continue to look for support and donations towards the Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin healing camp. To learn more about the camp and how to support its sustainability you can visit the Indigenous Solutions Website at www.indigenoussolutions.ca



Heartfelt Miigwech to Partners and Contributors



The visionary on-the-land healing project was piloted with the support of GCT3 and has grown with the help from donations of regional organizations and businesses. On October 13, 2021 GCT3 Acknowledged the support and donations received to build up the camp so that participants could stay on their healing journey for as long as they need to feel confident in their path to mino-bimaadiziwin.



Partner recognition visit to Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin at Bug Lake shown with some of the contributing partners. Photo credit Selena Belanger (Indigenous Solutions). From left to right: Marlene Elder (Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong), Stephanie Green (Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong), Shirley Kelly (Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong), Brian Kilgour (MNR), Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh, Chief Jeffrey Copenace of Onigaming First Nation, Elder Langford Ogemah (Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin founder), Erik Homstrong (Weyerhaeuser), Matt Wilkie (Weyerhaeuser), Anneke Gillis (GCT3), Shannon Rawn (Miisun), David Lindsay (GCT3). Thanks for the donation of safety equipment, fuel and chainsaws!

In addition to partners present at the October 13th event, we want to thank True North Aid, CP Rail and Wolframe's who have been able to provide the needed resources to winterize the existing buildings and provide potable year-round water. There are many partners and supports from community growing as success is demonstrated.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry services donated a tractor, the trailer for the saw mill as well as several loads of saw logs for programming and Turtle lodge development, the saw mill was donated by Weyerhaeuser and EACOM Timber Corporation.

GITIZIMINAN ELDER'S COUNCIL

Our Elders remain integral to the operations of Grand Council Treaty #3 and the Office of the Ogichidaa.

Commencing in the winter of 2020 into this spring we have been supporting and assisting our Elders with the development of the Anishinaabe Wilderness Camp, located at Bug Lake on Hwy 71 south, with the continued support of the Chiefs of Wauzhushk Onigum Nation, Naotkemegwanning, Animakee Wa Zhing #37 and Northwest Angle #33.

This program was originally conceived in the late 1980s and through the 1990's the camp guided people back to mino-bimaadiziwin - "living the good life."

The program aims to assist those suffering from cycles of alcohol abuse, substance abuse, physical abuse, violence, self-harm, incarceration, homelessness, and those that are at risk of suicide, by providing them with the opportunity to return to the land and reconnect to their holistic lifestyle, through the assistance of our Elders, Healers and Helpers.

We have received many generous donations to assist us in moving this project forward, and I look forward to realizing the vision of all those involved.

- GCT3 Spring Newsletter 2021



About Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin Healing Camp

Located at Bug Lake, with Elder Langford Ogemah's vision and direction, the experience has been transformative for participants. As they embark on a journey of self-discovery, and path of recovery, by putting into action their own healing with cultural, spiritual, traditional, teaching and hard work to live in the Anishinaabe way on the land.

Rooted in the history of the Anishinaabe Healing Camp once held at Pickerel Lake its future now is in its new name, Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin meaning "I will find my life again". The work that takes place at this camp is for restoration that is based on supporting culture and land-based healing for individuals who have entered a cycle of involvement with the justice system, risk to life activities and ongoing struggle with their mental health and addiction illnesses.

People come to the camp when they are willing and through traditional processes of referral and assessment that supports individuals beyond the westernized healing cycle of 30 days. Individuals learn important life skills within the traditional healing process which are skills necessary to live independently and secure employment opportunities.



Elder Langford Ogemah in front of a newly installed Woodstove as Camp readies for winter. Just waiting for WETT inspections and then snow can fall!



Donna Sainnawap (in month 4 of healing at Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin has recently been hired as the Camp Intake Worker) and Elder Langford (Visionary and Program Founder) in front of Donated Containers. Thanks Janel, Mike and everyone at CP for this generous gift and True North Aid for helping us get here.

What is unique to this camp is that it is the essence of healing through the protection, preservation and enhancement of Treaty and Aboriginal rights through self-determination. This camp has evolved from the vision of a Treaty 3 Elder, was piloted by Treaty 3 leadership, preserves a healing process rooted in the Anishinaabe way of life and gives hope for renewed self-determination to Treaty 3 members who previously were unable to move beyond their mental health challenges and found themselves in a cycle of incarceration and addictions as they struggled with finding their way within the western justice and treatment options.

Through this unique teaching model and with the help of a drum and pipe, Treaty 3 Elder Langford Ogemah works individually and in group with clients through the grandfather teachings with the ultimate goal to support people who struggle with life by giving back that sense of trust in self, and the Anishinaabe way of life, through healing relationships with self and others so they may pass these teachings on to their families and communities.





Grand Council Treaty #3 is now working on a transition plan to empower the programs independence. In 2021 Langford and his team founded the not-for profit organization, Indigenous Solutions and has started working with Grand Council Treaty #3 to empower the programs independence. The Indigenous Solutions team extends the Treaty 3 Elders vision and is working toward holding and support the sustainability of Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin program. It provides tailored support solutions to individuals with traditional restoration programs, skills training, support services that foster self-determination, sustainability and positive development for generations to come.



Indigenous Solutions Team including: Selena Belanger, Elder Langford Ogemah, Donna Sainnawap (camp client and new Camp intake worker) and Jackie Marcine are working with GCT3 Health Transformation Team to create a independent Non-for profit to build the ongoing sustainability of this innovative land-based camp entirely rooted in Aboriginal and Treaty rights.



To learn more about the camp and how to support its sustainability you can visit the Indigenous Solutions Website at www.indigenoussolutions.ca or reach out to dave.lindsay@treaty3.ca or Langford@indigenoussolutions.ca





Donna Sainnaway has been a camp client whose story of strength and self determination speaks for itself Donna is now the camp intake worker and a valued member of the team as a mentor and front-line support for those starting their journey.

A STORY OF HEALING AT GAMIKAN BIMAADIZIWIN

My given names by my parents, is Donna Lee Sainnaway. I'm from the, fly in, community called, Wunnumin Lake First Nation. I am Ojicree , when I was 8 my family moved to a town, called Sioux Lookout. The reasoning behind this relocation was for my dad to attend Bible school which was offered back in early 90s. From that moment on, I grew up living in Pentecostal home. With my father, and my (late)mother , my 2 siblings brother and sister I was the youngest of them. Although, I also have 2 more brothers. One half brother who I didn't know until I was 12. His name is Donald. And my brother Kevin who left our community at age 12 or 13 in the days before we all left the community. I've always felt disconnected with my family and the community.

Growing up, I lived a very sheltered home , also growing up in town was an adjustment to learning from my community . My struggle to speak in Ojicree and English was difficult enough. My dad spoke in English and my mom spoke in Ojicree. But to speak in English fluently wasn't easy due to my pronunciation. But living in Sioux Lookout, and not hearing my language felt a part of me was missing.

Not only that , being raised without my extended family / relatives due to living off the reservation. I always felt disconnected and different from how the "normal" kids lived. With how connected their family lifestyle was. I seen the culture of it and longed for it. I also seen their involvement with pow wow. I remember when I was 9, at school in Sioux Lookout. Hearing the beat of the drum. How my heart reacted to it. At the time, that feeling I felt. I didn't know it, awakening spirit. My heart desired to know more about this pow wow and this drum . But because of how I grew up. I wasn't allowed to attend any traditional ceremony that happened in the school. I learned at the time, that way of living isn't right or fitting with how my parents were taught that God and Jesus were the only way and that the traditional way of living is bad. But I honestly knew, that drum and that feeling in my heart had, when I heard that drum beating, had the connection with how my life became about and how that beat drew me to finding myself today at age 40.

I will admit that coming here, to Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin, I had no knowledge of any of the teaching. Only to find out that all that I've been through in this life, was preparing me and use my experience as ways to connect, heal and help my people wake up , get back into our way of life. Which is to follow what our ancestors left us with is the 7 grandfathers teaching. We have forgotten how to live and we all forgotten who we are. We, nishanbes , we all have gifts and we are very intuitive people. I always knew we were before I came here. I stumbled upon this camp that I call home, back in June. (2021) when I was in jail. I wanted change within myself and the lifestyle I lived, is how I ended up in there.

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I was angry at the world and even to the creator. I blamed my parents and my ex husband and my abuser for how I turned out. I didn't use that card before. I had been understanding and forgiving. But when I started using drugs in 2016, it was the first time I've ever decided to part take into it. My positive side slowly left. My anger and bitterness came out more. I married a man back in May 21, 2005 and we have 4 kids together, also he had a daughter before me. Then divorced 2017. But things happen in our home life that resulted with me not knowing how to live with the pain of watching my kids pain from losing their grandmother dying from cancer and burying her November 4, 2015. I had pretrial for November 13, for something that happened that my older two kids witnessed and was suppose to testify in. I couldn't allow it happen, and seeing how their father absence effected them I used that as an excuse to numb to find something to numb my pain. My kids ended seeing me. Changing to this positive person, to being a withdrawn mom who stayed in her room to do her drugs. The more I did the drugs the more I wanted them. I seen how much I've effected my kids, with this lifestyle and I needed to change. I told my kids, that I must break the cycle somehow. And that soon I will be away from them. But I didn't realize it was gonna be that soon. I've always had my kids, they were never taken from me . My life and my existence was about them before... but the last 4 years before they left me. It wasn't about them. It was my choice of drugs. As a consequence of it, Child family services were investigating me. I knew it was time to make that hard decision. Either watch them get apprehended by child family services and have them be separated or send them to their father and be together. Either one was hard. I sent them to their father. Which was only supposed to be short term, that was in 2019. I honestly feel it was the hardest decision I've ever had to make . My heart torn apart. I felt lost. I felt disconnected. My ex-husband, still has my kids to this day. As I told my kids. I was on the mission to find myself and break the cycle. As the lifestyle gotten harder in to my life. And the absence of being away from my kids drove my loneliness into drinking, which started early 2020. This is when I got myself into trouble with the law. Which prevented me farther from being with my kids. I had gotten angry with myself. As charges came . I ended up in jail. I remembered asking the creator, to help me as I face and acknowledge my wrongs. I admitted to my offence and ready to accept that I won't see my kids for a awhile.

Creator had other plan's for me. He lead me here at, Gamikaan Bimaadiziwin . I remembered that feeling of sense of Belongingness and home when I gotten out of the van. As I looked around with knowing that I have, no knowledge of the 7 grandfather teaching n living traditional. Nor have I ever seen a sweat lodge. I remember asking Langford's son Charles, pointing towards the sweat lodge, "whose tent is that?" He, laughed and surprised at what I had asked. He told me what it was. I was amazed at what I was seeing. As I stood there, I felt like I was here before . I found out, later that I could receive my Indian name n my clan. But going back to my sense of, "I've been here before ". It wasn't until in September 2021. Langford and I went to Shoal Lake doing a sharing circle with a group there. That it hit me. I drew the camp before, a year and half ago. N not only that. I drew flowers n plants which I am now recognizing are medicine plants . Being here, I am being taught how to reconnect with, my spirit helpers.

Like I said, when I arrived here June 29, 2021 I gave tobacco to one of the elders that was doing the sweat that day. I received my Indian name and my clan and my colours after 4 days of being here . Let me tell u, that moment leaving my first sweat. That feeling I had of when I first heard that drum at age 9 and that led me to here. All the vision prehand before coming here all made sense . The creator has been showing me and directing me in different ways to come home. I felt my identity was restored and my journey just became more clear as each teaching I received here. I was being trained for this road that the creator wanted me to help my people to get their lives back . Back to our way of living back to our teaching.

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We, all have it within ourselves but our negative side effect our emotions especially when we are under any stances of drugs and alcohol. Langford's vision is help our people to live. He isn't here to take the glory or have people acknowledge his work. He's about helping us, find ourselves and putting his unconditional love towards us. Because we have forgotten how to love and help ourselves . We aren't alcoholic or drug heads . We are nishabe. That is who we are. And once we know who we are . Our positive side will over power the negative side and that is when ,we understand the 7 teachings. That is when we start to learn how to live Bimaadziwin. I will find my life. The name of our home. I truly believe and wanted to live. And it is when I understood why the creator chose this camp name. This home works in a circle just like how life is. He focuses on 4 parts. Physical, spiritual mind and emotional. In order for growth and healing to take place we must have the willingness to change. I am committed here. I will continue to grow and heal. I will teach my kids how to live when that time comes. My kids, I love them and miss them. But I made a promise to myself that I will end and break the cycle and I am. My children? I haven't forgotten.

This is Naa Kam a koo . Makwa todam. I choose life.

