

Overview of Alberta On-reserve Shelters

Bigstone Cree Nation Women's Emergency Shelter



Bigstone Cree Nation Women's Emergency Shelter (BCNWES) is a shelter operated by the Bigstone Cree Nation. The shelter is located in Wabasca-Demarais. The shelter has 16 beds and second stage housing containing 4 units. The shelter opened in 1992. Services provided include the following:

- Children's Groups;
- Parenting Programs;
- Public Education Programs;
- Danger Assessment;
- 24 Hour Crisis Line;
- Child Support Programs;
- Education Programs;
- Clothing Bank;
- Non-Prescription Drugs;
- Client Recreation;
- Supportive Counseling & Case Management;
- Crisis Intervention;
- Toll Free Access to Crisis Line;
- Legal Services;
- Personal Incidentals;
- Court Support & Advocacy;
- Support Groups;
- Transport to Emergency Medical/Dental Care; and
- Follow-up Services.

The settlement population is largely Native Canadian and the four Bigstone Cree Nation reserves surrounding the settlement more than double the population base. These reserves, Wabasca 166, 166a, 166b, 166c, 166d, are the seat of the Bigstone Cree Nation, a Woodland Cree First Nation. The community is served by the Wabasca Airport. In 1899, ancestors of the Bigstone Cree First Nation signed Treaty 8. In 2005, there were 5874 registered Bigstone Cree, of which 2247 were living on reserve.

Wabasca-Desmarais is a large hamlet in northern Alberta, Canada, with a population of over 2000. The name Wabasca originates from the Cree word *wapuskau*, meaning "grassy narrows", the name for the Wabasca River. Located between and along the South and North Wabasca Lakes, at the intersection of Highway 813 and Highway 754, 123 km north-east of Slave Lake, it is home to the two communities of Wabasca and Desmarais. Wabasca is the seat of the Municipal District of Opportunity No. 17.

Bigstone Cree Women's Emergency Shelter Executive Director – Janet Gladue

Janet Gladue is currently the Executive Director of Bigstone Cree Women's Shelter and has been instrumental in developing services for Bigstone Cree First Nations women and children who have been physically, emotionally, sexually or spiritually abused.

She has developed programs to be delivered through the shelter that provide education and support in all aspects of domestic abuse, parenting and life skills to the women and their children as well as providing cultural guidance to meet the needs of the community she serves.

Janet has presented at conferences including the RED network meeting in Mexico City in 2006.

Eagle's Nest Stoney Family Shelter



Eagle's Nest Stoney Family Shelter is a shelter owned and operated by the Stoney First Nations. The shelter is located in Morley and opened in January, 1992. The shelter currently has 20 beds and 5 bedrooms. The shelter has Child Support and Outreach programs and an Elder on staff. Specific services provided include the following:

- Danger Assessment;
- Child Support;
- Outreach;
- Elder Support;
- Training Opportunities for Staff;
- 24 Hour Crisis Line;
- Crisis Intervention;
- Toll Free Access to Crisis Line;
- Clothing Bank;
- Cook on Staff;
- Food Bank;
- Supportive Counseling & Case Management;
- Personal Incidentals;
- Collective Kitchen;
- Transport to Emergency Medical/Dental Care; and
- Follow-up Services.

Stoney Nakoda is a Nation of almost 5000 people that inhabit the valley and surrounding hills of the Bow and Highwood Rivers, and the Big Horn. The primary encampment is situated between the #1 and #1A Highways in the town site of Morley, Alberta, which is located approximately 60km west of Calgary and about 50km east of Banff. Some 550 members of this Nation reside in Eden Valley, almost 100 miles south just west of Longview; approximately 250 live 100 miles north at Big Horn, west near Nordegg. Nation members speak both English and their native tongue, Nakoda Sioux.

Stoney Nakoda consists of the Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley First Nations. Each of these First Nations was represented at the Treaty No. 7 negotiations with the British Crown in 1877.

Eagle's Nest Stoney Family Shelter Director – Nora-Lee Rear

Nora-Lee Rear has been in the Calgary area since 1998. With a passion for working with families Nora-Lee returned to school later in life to complete her Bachelor in Child Studies and Children's Mental Health. When it came time to complete a practicum Nora-Lee approached the Native Women's Shelter in Calgary (now known as Awo Taan Healing Lodge) and was immediately enthralled with the work and the community.

Over the past 10 years she filled various roles within the shelter including Child Support, Family Violence Prevention Counselor, Outreach Counselor, Peace Coordinator and Coordinator of the Awo Taan Family Wellness Centre. With a strong background in program development, she was a part of many initiatives including a pilot project with Alberta Children Services called, Taking Action on Bullying where she worked collaboratively with the Calgary Board of Education and the Aboriginal community to create preventative programs for children and youth experiencing bullying in schools. She also sat on the organizing committee for the 8th World Indigenous Women & Wellness Conference: Building on Traditional Knowledge and Wisdom.

Nora-Lee is a member of the Child and Youth Care Association of Alberta, the Child and Youth Studies Alumni Chapter and has sat on various advisory committees such as the Alliance to End Violence Association.

Nora-Lee joined the team at Eagle's Nest Stoney Family Shelter in Morley in January 2010 as the Director and hopes to continue working collaboratively with the community to provide programs for women and children fleeing family violence.

Ermineskin Women's Shelter Society



The Ermineskin Women's Shelter is owned and operated by Ermineskin First Nation in Hobbema. Although owned by one First Nation, this shelter offers services to all First Nations in the area. The Shelter opened in 1992 and has 16 beds within 4 bedrooms. Services provided include the following:

- Children's Groups;
- Outreach Services & Programs;
- Parenting Programs;
- Public Education Programs;
- Danger Assessment;
- Training Opportunities for Staff;
- 24 Hour Crisis Line;
- Child Support Programs;
- Education Programs;
- Crisis Intervention;
- Toll Free Access to Crisis Line;
- Cook on Staff;
- Legal Services;
- Personal Incidentals;
- Collective Kitchen;
- Court Support & Advocacy;
- Elder Support & Counseling;
- Healing/Talking Circles;
- Traditional Healing Summer Camps; and
- Transport to Emergency Medical/Dental Care.

The Ermineskin Cree Nation (Reserve #138) is one member of the Four Nations of Hobbema, Alberta - located in Central Alberta about fifty miles south of Edmonton on Highway 2A, halfway between the towns of Ponoka and Wetaskiwin. The Ermineskin Cree Nations land base is approximately 25,000 acres. This area is traditionally known as the Bear Hills or Maskwacheesihk. The Cree people of the Ermineskin Cree Nation have a historical relationship that extends over centuries to the area of land that now comprises the Ermineskin Reserve. The Ermineskin Reserve was established in 1885. The Ermineskin Cree Nation belongs to the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations. As of 2008, there were 3758 registered Ermineskin Cree, of which 2606 were living on reserve.

Ermineskin Women's Shelter Society Executive Director – Sandra Ermineskin

Sandra Ermineskin is a Cree woman from the Ermineskin Cree Nation in Hobbema, Alberta. She has been married for 34 years to Chief Gerry Ermineskin. Together they have two sons and eight grandchildren. Sandra and Gerry share the same vision for good health and wellness for the community. Sandra has been the Executive Director of the Ermineskin Women's Shelter for the past nine years. Previously, she was the Director for the Education Trust Fund for the Ermineskin Cree Nation. Sandra has developed many programs for the community as they relate to health and wellness and in particular for women and children who have been physically, emotionally, sexually, or spiritually abused. Under Sandra's leadership, the Ermineskin Women's Shelter has the following successful programs: Outreach, Child Support, Violence Prevention, Elders participation, and Cultural components. She has also implemented renovations to the shelter to improve the safety for shelter workers and clients.

The Ermineskin Women's Shelter is currently working on a new strategic plan, which will include prevention and second stage housing. Sandra is currently a member of the ACWS Board. She also sits on many Boards and Committees for her community, such as those for the RCMP and Victim Services. Because of Sandra's

hard work and commitment to the community, the RCMP is initiating a domestic violence unit in the Maskwachees RCMP K Division. Sandra is a member of the On-Reserve Shelter Committee for Alberta and she is a strong advocate for women and children in Canada. She is successful in gathering support for women and children by speaking at many conferences as well as Chiefs and Aboriginal leadership meetings. She continues to work towards achieving parity for all on-reserve shelters.

Paspew House Women's Shelter



“Paspew” is a Cree word that loosely translates as “you made it.” Paspew House is a women’s emergency shelter owned and operated by the Mikisew Cree First Nation and located in Fort Chipewyan. It opened in 1992 and was funded by contributions from INAC and Health Canada, this facility exists to provide emergency transitional housing for mothers and children suffering from abuse or wishing to leave abusive relationships. Anyone admitted to Paspew House is limited to short-term stays of no more than 21 days, in transition to other more permanent options, including addictions treatment and allocation of their own housing unit. Residents receive counseling and assistance as well as sympathetic support.

Paspew House has 8 beds within 5 bedrooms. Services provided include the following:

- Danger Assessment;
- Public Education Programs;
- Training Opportunities for Staff;
- 24 Hour Crisis Line;
- Toll Free Access to Crisis Line;
- Education Programs;
- Clothing Bank;
- Non-Prescription Drugs;
- Client Recreation;
- Legal Services;
- Collective Kitchen;
- Transport to Emergency Medical/Dental Care; and
- Support Groups.

The Paspew House Women’s Shelter is managed by the Mikisew Cree First Nation’s Director of Community Services, Mary Simpson; the facility is operated by a team of crisis intervention workers on an as-needed and on-call basis.

The traditional lands of the Mikisew Cree First Nation range over much of the area where the Athabasca Oil Sands deposits have been found. Mikisew Cree First Nation shares this territory with four other First Nations that make up the Athabasca Tribal Council. At the present time, most Mikisew Cree First Nation members reside in Fort McMurray, Edmonton, Fort Smith, NWT, and Fort Chipewyan. This Nation has the largest population of the five Athabasca Tribal Council Nations. In 1986 Mikisew signed a Treaty Land Entitlement with Canada that created several Reserves in and around the Fort Chipewyan area and into the area north of Lake Athabasca. In 1899, Mikisew signed Treaty 8.

Paspew House Women’s Shelter, Director of Community Services - Mary Simpson

Mary Simpson (Cookie) was born on Dog Head Indian Reserve on August 19, 1950 in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta. This is one of the reserves owned by the Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN). Cookie went to school at the Residential School in Fort Chipewyan till Grade 8; then she went to Grouard for Grade 9; she completed Grades 10 to 12 at Grandin College in the N.W.T. She graduated as a CHR and then went on to Nursing. She worked as an RN for nine years before she decided she wanted to make a difference at home. She has worked in many different positions for the Nune Health Board, Chip Child Development Society, and her First Nation. Cookie has two daughters, one granddaughter, and 3 grandsons; she also has two beautiful great-granddaughters. She lovingly calls them her ‘Hunny Bunnies’. Cookie enjoys volunteering and helping

out wherever she can; she sits on various boards, such as the Aboriginal Nurses Association, Nunee Health Board Society, and FCSS Board, to name a few.

Cookie is the Director of Community Services for MCFN. In this capacity she oversees the Education Department, Elder's Program, Social Development, and Employment Services; she is also the Director of Paspew House, Women's Shelter. She is always looking at different programming for the shelter, such as Cree Language Studies, Women Drum Group, Jingle Dress dancing, and the Elder's monthly luncheon. Mary is making positive changes in her community.

Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter



The Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter (SCWES) is owned and operated by the Sucker Creek First Nation. It is located on the Sucker Creek First Nation reserve and is approximately 5 km east of Enilda. Its Executive Director is Darlene Lightning-Mattson and its mandate is to provide shelter for women in crisis as well as abused women and children. This includes short-term accommodation and support. The Shelter first opened its doors in 1992. It is comprised of a 12-bed emergency shelter and 12-bed second stage units. Services provided by SCWES include the following:

- Children's Groups;
- Outreach Programs;
- Public Education Programs;
- Training Opportunities for Staff;
- 24 Hour Crisis Line;
- Child Support Programs;
- Toll Free Access to Crisis Line;
- Education Programs;
- Parenting Programs;
- Clothing Bank;
- Non-Prescription Drugs;
- Cook on Staff;
- Supportive Counseling & Case Management;
- Personal Incidentals;
- Comfort Allowance;
- Collective Kitchen; and
- Transport to Emergency Medical/Dental Care.

Sucker Creek First Nation is a small Cree community of approximately 700 people on reserve, and a total membership population of 2217. It is located along Highway 2 on the west shore of Lesser Slave Lake in northern Alberta, 390 km north of Edmonton. It is one of five Nations in the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council (the others are Kapowe'no, Driftpile, Swan River, and Sawridge). Sucker Creek has several small businesses, including three gas stations, two liquor stores, a heavy-duty mechanical repair shop, and several trucking companies. The First Nation also operates a museum and numerous programs through the administration office and the Health Centre. Sucker Creek First Nation is a signatory of Treaty 8, which was signed in 1899. It is the original location upon which the Treaty relations were concluded with the Queen's representatives.

Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter Executive Director – Darlene Lightning-Mattson

Darlene Lightning-Mattson is a Cree woman from the Samson Cree Nation from Hobbema, Alberta; however, she was raised on the Driftpile First Nation reserve. She has been married to her husband Richard Mattson for 33 years. Together they have three daughters, one son and eight grandchildren.

Darlene has been the Executive Director of the Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter for one year. She comes with a background of accounting and truck driver.

Darlene worked in the accounting field for 13 years, which includes 7 years with the Driftpile First Nation and 6 years with the Sucker Creek First Nation. Darlene has always loved to travel and she got her Class 1 license with Northern Lakes College in Grouard. In 2004, she decided she needed a break from accounting and started a trucking business with her husband, R&D Mattson Trucking.

Darlene drove all the well-known highways: Klondike, Alaska, Dempster, and Yellowhead highways. Her most memorable trips were driving the ice roads in NWT and going across Canada from Vancouver to Halifax.

After four years of living in her semi, she decided to plant down her feet and get a day job. She brings to the shelter her motivational and life skills experiences. She supports and encourages her staff for self development and she enjoys spending time with the clients doing Native arts and crafts.