

# NOVA SCOTIA NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

## July 2020 Newsletter



### **A MESSAGE FROM KAREN PICTOU** **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NSNWA**

The Nova Scotia Native Women's Association will remain closed until public schools reopen in September. Essential staff may return to NSNWA locations prior to September if public health and safety guidelines are followed, including proper hand-washing, cleaning and sanitizing work spaces, and five people will be permitted in any NSNWA premises at one time and must remain six feet apart at all times. Please visit the website for the full list of guidelines that NSNWA staff members, volunteers, and clients will follow:  
<http://www.nsnwa.ca>.

The Jane Paul Centre is expected to open in Fall 2020. We recently hired a new director and in the process of hiring the prevention worker. Additionally, NSNWA has partnered with the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre to hire a full-time housing coordinator for Unama'ki. This individual will work with men, women, and two-spirited people from our Sydney sub-office.

Additional in-progress projects include: updating the NSNWA bylaws; updating NSNWA's Financial Management Policy; redesigning our engagement strategy for completing sessions with our remaining chapters; and completing our feasibility study for a new office building and resiliency centre. Schematic designs will be completed in early fall.

NSNWA recently implemented a new Human Resources Policy. We have also completed a strategic plan for the Jane Paul Centre and are finalizing all policies, training plans, and governance structure. NSNWA is currently completing our strategic plan which is expected to be completed by the new year.

I am proud of all the hard work of our staff and leadership!

### **JANE PAUL INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE**

Karen Bernard began her new role as Director of the Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre on June 1, 2020. The centre is expected to open in Fall 2020.

Thanks to the landlord, Dimitri Neonakis, the centre has been refloored, repainted, and all repair work has been completed. There is a new external side office for counseling in a furnished spacious area that will be very welcoming to visitors. Office spaces are in the process of being furnished for staff at the JPC and the NSNWA sub-office. The NSNWA sub-office is located at 5 Dethridge Drive and the JPC is at 440 George Street in Sydney, Cape Breton. The centre has also received a very generous donation of artwork by Indigenous artists from Rolf Bouman of Friends United which will adorn the walls of the Jane Paul Indigenous Centre and the NSNWA sub-office. Karen will be accepting monetary, food and clothing donations very soon as she prepares for opening day.

### **NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS**

- Updates from Chapter Presidents, including Acadia First Nation, Eskasoni First Nation, Bear River First Nation, and more (pg. 3-4).
- The [NSNWA website](#) was launched in June 2020! (pg. 5).
- The End of Life Doula certification course was attended by 20 Mi'kmaq women in February 2020 (p. 5).
- Update from Carley Gloade, Human Resource Manager, on new positions at NSNWA (pg. 6).
- The Gathering of the Grandmothers took place on March 8-10 in Unama'ki (pg. 6).
- Please email [jessicalong12@gmail.com](mailto:jessicalong12@gmail.com) to submit content for the next newsletter in [October 2020](#).

# A MESSAGE FROM ANNIE DAISLEY

## PRESIDENT, NSNWA



***To the board of directors, executive board, chapter members, staff, Indigenous and Two Spirited people of Mi'kma'ki; I am a firm believer in accountability and transparency. as well as, the benefits of hard work and "pushing the envelope".***

It has been an honour to work for you, by carrying each of your voices. I will take you on a journey of advocacy, ideas, hopes and dreams of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association. It was a beautiful Fall day, October 6, 2019, the sun shone so bright that day and honestly, it has not stopped since becoming elected as the president for the NSNWA. Over the past six months we have embarked on historical communication with the provincial and federal governments and various agencies, such as the RCMP and the NSHA. We have built solid relationships with people who have influenced the course of history by working together.

Throughout the last six months we have had Executive Committee meetings, met with numerous partners and have worked diligently to improve the capacity of NSNWA. One meeting stands out, it was the one-year anniversary of Cassidy Bernard's death. After our meeting, the Executive Committee stayed for the evening and stood in solidarity with my family and the community of We'koqma'q as we honoured the life of a beautiful soul lost way too soon.

I remember vividly how we stood on the side of the highway for 4365 seconds, 4000 seconds for the estimated Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada and 365 seconds for every day we have waited for answers regarding Cassidy. In that moment I realized that this is where I am supposed to be; here with my sisters advocating for all Indigenous women in Mi'kma'ki – being a voice for justice, compassion and equality.

I have been invited to attend numerous speaking events on behalf of the NSNWA, the most memorable was the first. I was asked to speak at a gathering for families of the MMIWG in Eskasoni. I wrote a speech but decided at the last minute to speak from the heart, I spoke for just under a half hour. I am so passionate about our stolen sisters I often lose track of time, becoming lost in the moments of advocating for them and their families. Another speaking engagement was at the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, honouring the women senselessly murdered at the Ecole Polytechnique Massacre.

I was also invited to address the UN on the tragedy of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – this event was cancelled but Chief Leroy was able to deliver this speech on my behalf in Ottawa.

Another highlight of this journey so far, was being asked to represent NWAC and NSNWA at a Forced and Coerced Sterilization Symposium. It was an emotional two days, our NSNWA Secretary, Karina Matthews-Denny attended as well. Much of her work with Senator Christmas has revolved around this subject and her introduction of Senator Boyer to NSNWA has been pivotal in NSNWA's movement to aiding our women in recognizing forced and coerced sterilization within their own communities.

I have done my absolute best in representing all of you and the NSNWA. I will remain on this journey laid out before me and will continue to represent the NSNWA in the best capacity that I can. I want to acknowledge our staff who work on the front lines every single day. You are all advocates for the better good for our Indigenous women. You are carrying a sense of pride in our organization that is felt throughout this province. I am proud of every single one of you.

# NEWS FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENTS



## **Marilyn Francis, Acadia First Nation President**

Two Mother's Day giveaway ceremonies were held on May 4th and 7th to honour and remember our women, sisters and friends. Gifts were donated and mailed out to the winners.

We have purchased materials for making masks and hand sanitizer. Additionally, three women in the community are making face masks and others have also been making them on their own time and dime for our community. Families in our community are promoting COVID-19 protection by creating signs and displaying it in their yards. The three best posters recieved a \$50 gift.

A ceremony for MMIWG, men and family members was held on May 5, 2020. Red ribbon shirts and red dresses were hung in memory of our loved ones. Prayers for all our people.



Red ribbon shirt and red dress on May 5, 2020 (Acadia First Nation).

## **Charlotte Denny, Eskasoni First Nation President**

The Eskasoni Chapter held elections on January 31st, and the first executive meeting on February 26th.

On March 8th, 2020, we celebrated International Women's Day at our first chapter meeting. The meeting was funded through the Eskasoni Band with the help of Annie Gibbet Stevens. We had food catered and a smudge bowl bundle activity. We handed out tiny medicine packages of cedar, sage, tobacco and sweet grass. We'll definitely host this activity again in the future.

With the \$1,000 generously donated by NSNWA, the Eskasoni Chapter executives decided that food security would be the best use the funds. We have 45 women signed up which leaves five more spots open for the Eskasoni executives and Gibbet. Each woman will receive \$20. We are all excited about growing our own food. The Mother's Helping Mothers group in Eskasoni reached out to discuss providing more money to sponsor a few more women.



Cloth facemask made for COVID-19 Protection (Acadia First Nation).



# NEWS FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENTS



## **Dawn McEwan, Bear River First Nation President**

On December 10, 2019, our Chapter held its election:

- **President:** Dawn McEwan
- **Vice President:** Wanda Finigan
- **Secretary:** Lena Morrison
- **Treasurer:** Holly Meuse

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our former President, Marlene Joudry for her time and assistance in representing our Women and Girls.

Chapter President, Dawn McEwan has had preliminary discussions with members of council and they are open to partnering on some training initiatives, such as the provision of space for gardening. Future discussions are required.

Chapter Vice President, Wanda Finigan contacted Health Director, Christine Harlow, regarding a request to partner on the planting of tobacco seeds for ceremonial purposes. It was agreed that the L'sitkuk Native Women's Group could use space for this purpose. Wanda also raised \$208 for the L'sitkuk Native Women's Group by selling tickets on a Mandella.

Chapter Treasurer, Holly Meuse is researching setting up a bank accounts for non-profit organizations and getting an Air Miles Card for cost savings and benefits.

## **Karen Boyles, Piktukewaq First Nation President**

Our quilting group has resumed since the pandemic. We will be meeting weekly and participants will be making star quilts. We are also looking for a male to help run a men's groups in the community. Funding has been approved for men's activities. We are also planning a Women's Moose Hunt in the Highland on October 1 to 4, 2020 (dates are tentative due to the pandemic). We are also looking for additional financial support. More details will be announced shortly.

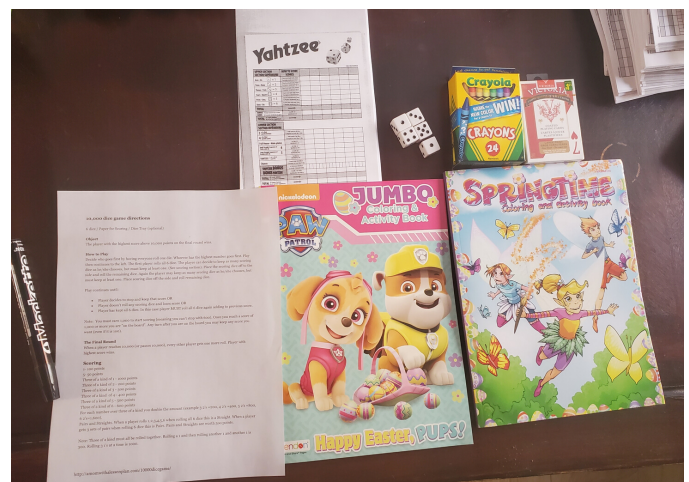
We purchased over 75 children activity kits and 30 adult kits with NSNWA COVID-19 funding. Additionally, we helped a mom who lost everything due to a house fire with bedding and cleaning supplies. We also purchased feminine products for women and girls during the pandemic. Thank you NS Native Women's Association for making this happen.

## **Marie Sack, Sipekne'katik First Nation President**

The Sipekne'katik Native Women's Chapter has been meeting very two weeks by group chat. We have donated \$200 to the Sipekne'katik food bank and \$200 dollars to Sipekne'katik Parenting Group.

## **Mary Isabel Poulette-Taylor, Paqtnekek First Nation President**

We have monies for the foodbank that the Paqtnekek Health Centre is happy about. We are currently waiting on storage for the items. Stay tuned for more updates!



Children activity kits and adult activity kits were purchased with NSNWA COVID-19 funding.

# NSNWA STAFF UPDATES



**Marie Sack,  
Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU)  
Community Outreach Specialist**

The Family Information Liaison Unit for Nova Scotia has been funded for another three years from 2020 until 2023. The agreement includes hiring a prevention worker from Cape Breton for the MMIWG and violence against women prevention. I will be starting workshops again soon, contacting families to do follow-ups, and planning a MMIWG Family Gathering for Fall 2020. Craft packages will be sent to family members who would like to do crafts for the gathering. The gathering will be in-person since restrictions have been lifted but we will still have to wear masks and social distance. A virtual gathering will be planned in case we are shut down again. I will reach out to family members and ask them what they would like to see at the gathering. I will start home visits with the families that are comfortable with this and follow COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

**Justine Maloney,  
Employment/Economic Development Coordinator**

On February 14th, 2020, the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association celebrated the completion of the End of Life Doula certification course by 20 Mi'kmaq women. The End of Life Doula certification course is designed for individuals who have been, or will be, called upon to provide care, support and advocacy for someone who is facing the end of their life. The training was five days and was held in central Millbrook First Nation.

Due to the sensitive and triggering nature of the topic, we wanted to ensure we had a traditional elder on site for individuals who may need to debrief or smudge, etc. The elder also took part in the training as an advisor for the instructor and participants to ensure that the Mi'kmaq traditions and values were incorporated to the training. It is our hope that these trained women will assist their community members with the teachings they have acquired through this unique program and be called upon when the time arises.

**Ellen Marshall,  
Events Manager/Public Relations Officer**  
We are pleased to announce that we launched a newly designed website in June!  
Check out [www.nsnwa.ca](http://www.nsnwa.ca).

**Mary Jane Abram,  
Legal Advisor**

I've been helping each of the chapters with setting up bank accounts. This helps the local groups with accountability and keeping track of their money. The chapters will also need a bank account in order to apply for grants and writing funding proposals.



20 Mi'kmaq women at the End of Life Doula certification course on February 14th, 2020. The feedback from the participants in this program was very positive and they would recommend it to their peers.

# NSNWA STAFF UPDATES



## **Carley Gloade, Human Resources Manger**

On May 15th, we hired the Director of the Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre. Karen Bernard was selected as the successful individual and transition from Sexualized Violence Prevention Program Coordinator to Director of the Jane Paul Centre on June 1st. The Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre is in the process of hiring a Housing Coordinator for the Cape Breton Region, this individual will work out of the Sydney Sub-Office of NSNWA under the supervision of the Director of the Jane Paul Centre.

On June 8th, we held interviews for the Director of Sexualized Violence & Systems Mobilization. We are currently completing the interview process to select the best candidate. Additionally, in the next couple of weeks we will be hiring the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Prevention Worker. We also received funding for a Summer Student Position, the Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre Assistant (Summer Student). The position will start at the beginning of July and end the last week of August.

## **Karen Bernard, Sexualized Violence Prevention Program Coordinator (Jane Paul Centre Director as of June 1, 2020)**

The Gathering of the Grandmothers took place on March 8-10 in Unama'ki. The Mi'kmaq Circle of Hope, NSNWA and the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq (UNSM) all assisted in hosting this event. It was a weekend of acquiring traditional knowledge from the Unama'ki grandmothers around the subjects of courtship, parenting, marriage, storytelling and ceremonies.

Other events hosted include:

- **Kairos Blanket Exercise:** Facilitated this workshop to a group of interns from Dalhousie medical school, doctors and nurses in Eskasoni to help them to understand all the trauma that has impacted our people.
- **2SLGBTQQIA Gathering:** A focus group on gender-based violence towards Indigenous people that identify under 2SLGBTQQIA and what can we do. We invited 18 2SLGBTQQIA professionals to the group, which went from an in person gathering to a virtual gathering due to COVID-19 and facilitated by Dr. Graveline.
- **Impacts of Historical Violence on Today's Indigenous Women:** Spoke to professionals who work in social justice to educate them on historical impacts in regard to sexualized violence at a human trafficking conference in Membertou.



Gathering of the Grandmothers in March 2020.



# NSNWA STAFF UPDATES



Dawn McDonald,  
Intergovernmental Liaison/Tripartite Coordinator

The NSNWA has been working with the Tripartite on reviewing the Terms of Reference, which will now incorporate a Code of Conduct. The Terms of Reference review will make necessary changes to the roles of each table, membership, and responsibilities to ensure all parties are represented at the working tables and meetings are conducted in a fair and safe environment. The new format will be announced and shared once it is completed and signed by all parties. The NSNWA has named the following representatives to the respected tables:

- **Education and Economic Development:** Justine Maloney
- **Culture and Heritage:** Marie Sack
- **Officials:** Karen Pictou
- **Sports and Recreation:** Ellen Marshall
- **Health:** Karen Bernard
- **Social:** Carley Gloade
- **Justice:** Mary Jane Abram
- **Executive:** Annie Bernard Daisley

With the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the tables are reformatting how they are meeting and how to get the work of the tables moving forward. Meetings have moved to web based and phone conferencing. If you have any questions on the work of the tables please contact the NSNWA Liaison, Dawn McDonald or one of the table representatives.

The NSNWA is currently working on developing a **Five-year Strategic Plan**, which will provide a structured approach to the direction of the association and set goals for our future. In creating the priorities and framework of the plan, the NSNWA is seeking input from our Chapters. Community focus sessions started in the Summer of 2019 and we have met with nine of the chapters to date. The remaining seven chapters will be done in a different format due to COVID-19 restrictions. The goal is to have all information collected by Fall 2020.



Community focus group in Membertou First Nation.



Community focus group in Bear River First Nation.