

New office opened at Chi Mukwa Recreation Center



**JENNIFER MCLEOD, DIRECTOR,
UNIT I**

Aanii Anishnaabek! It is a sacred time for Anishnaabe people, and especially so for people of the Bear Clan (Mukwa Dodem). Despite the severe cold, it is the time when baby bears are being born. In the darkness of a den, babies are born while their mothers sleep. Tiny cubs must find their way and latch on to their moms without help from anyone. It is a life or death struggle that plays out every year during the time of Mukwa Giizis, the Bear Moon (February). Anishnaabe Bear Clan people will often hold feasts at this time, to honor the bears. There are Anishnaabe teachings that tell us of the many gifts that Mukwa has given to our people, and for that we are grateful. At Bear Clan feasts, foods include the favorites of bears (fish, berries) as well as the favorites of people (mmm, frybread!). Sometimes there is drumming, singing, ceremonies, dancing and always great visiting. It is in this way that we perpetuate our way of life. Holding

fast to our traditions, and sharing them with our communities ensures that our ways will never disappear, that seven generations from now, during the month of February, Anishnaabe people will still be honoring the bears and all of the blessings they bring.

The month of February saw another “new life” of sorts, I have a new office! I’ve rented an office in the Chi-Mukwa (Big Bear) Recreation Center and it has been working out GREAT! The benefits over the space I was allowed to use in the downtown administration building are well worth the money. Unlike admin, parking is FREE, and readily available. There is no “sign-in” sheet. Big Bear is open after 5 p.m., and also on Saturday if I need it. PLUS, I don’t have to haul all of my things back and forth! I use the public Wi-Fi, provide my own computer and phone, so there is no additional cost to the tribe. In the short time I have been there, I have had many more people coming to talk with me about their ideas and concerns. I have office hours on Thursdays, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., barring other meetings that I must attend, or if I am out of town. I am also very willing to meet at other times by appointment, just give me a call or a text! I am located on the second floor, in the Big Bear administration offices.

On a personal level, I am announcing the “birth” of my website. You can find it at <http://jmcleodsaulttribe.com>. I have been working on this with Brila Media, which is Native owned and operated business (www.brilamedia.com). My website is

a “work in progress” and it is my hope that it will become a useful communication tool. Please feel free to visit, and give me your feedback/suggestions. Although I’m told that I’m “pretty tech-savvy for someone in your generation,” I would like this to reach beyond my fifty-something years, and be useful for all.

At the board level, I am seeing some positive change. There have been increased instances where the votes have been nearly unanimous! This does not mean that we are in total agreement with each other, but it is an indicator of cohesion. This is exciting because we are focusing on the development of a tribal strategic plan, and having cohesion will be helpful in creating a shared vision. Businesses, organizations and tribal nations need to have a shared vision in order to move forward, without it, there is chaos. We have had enough of the chaos! Granted, we are now in an election cycle, and elections come with their own “special chaos,” but it is my fervent prayer that our tribal leadership will not allow it to derail the efforts to create the very necessary “SHARED VISION.” Our children, and the children of the next seven generations are counting on us.

Speaking of our children, I have increased my efforts to be involved with the education of our tribal students. I am the chairperson of the JKL Fiduciary Committee, and we are working to solidify the vision and policies of our grant school, to ensure academic gain of our students and to work more closely with

the JKL Baweting Public School Academy. I am involved with their curriculum committee, am participating in educational events at the school (Science fair and Reading Month), and helping to develop links to our Anishnaabe Community. It is an exciting time of growth, and working in cooperation with Superintendent Theresa Kallstrom, I believe that we will continue to see academic growth and success for our children.

In closing, this Mukwa Giizis is seeing the beginning of many new things. Miigwetch to those of you who have been contacting me with your new ideas and sugges-

tions. I recognize your love for our tribe, and I want you to know that you are appreciated. Working together, we can move into the future with strength and confidence, secure in the knowledge that we are Anishnaabe gagige (Anishnaabe for always)!

If you’re in the Sault sometime, stop in for a visit! If not, visit me in cyberspace at <http://jmcleodsaulttribe.com> Until we meet again, stay safe and warm, Jen, (906) 440-9151, jennifer.mcleod.2012@gmail.com.

PS: March 28, 2014, is the DEADLINE to register to vote in the upcoming election. DON’T DELAY! Call (906) 635-6050!