

CHILD WELFARE SUMMIT

ABINOONJII OMBIG IGOS OWIN

ELDERS GATHERING ON TEACHINGS AND PRINCIPLES

October 10 & 11, 2012

GRAND
COUNCIL
TREATY
#3

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CHILD WELFARE SUMMIT
ABINOONJII OMBIG IGOS OWIN – ELDERS GATHERING ON TEACHINGS AND PRINCIPLES
Kenora, Ontario
OCTOBER 10 & 11, 2012

Day One – Tuesday, October 10, 2012.

Traditional Opening – Opening – Elder Clifford Skead

Co-Chair – Francis Kavanaugh, Former Ogichidaa/Grand Chief GCT#3

Co-Chair – Diane Kelly, Former Ogichidaakwe/Grand Chief GCT#3

Welcome Remarks – Co-Chair Francis Kavanaugh. Facilitated the discussion and provided Translations for each Anishinaabe Speaker¹.

Conference Report Writer – Irene Linklater-Couchiching²

Miigwech Endom Owe Naake Ebaakinigeyang – Chi maachi too yang – Treaty 3.

We have gathered here for the next two days to discuss the work that has been done coming from the Elders on the traditional way of raising and looking after our children. Ombig Igos Owin – it is hoped that we can pull together concepts for policy, standards and regulations.

Purpose of the Gathering:

Chief Eric Fisher – Wabaseemoong and Chair of Social Sustainability Chiefs Committee, GCT#3

¹ The Summit Report is written to combine the translation and interpretation provided by Former Ogichidaa-Grand Chief Francis Kavanaugh, to the majority of the statements of the Anishinaabe Speakers and the Writer's translation and interpretation.

² Speaks and understands Anishinaabemowin with a dialect from Pikangikum/ Little Grand Rapids First Nations. The report is written in English for the majority of statements made and interspersed with Anishinaabe wording in a summary – not verbatim.

Honored to be asked to do this work and the support to the Elders on the important contributions made to see the process come along and opportunity to review and discuss. Abinoonjii caring and family has been a long road for Wabaseemoong - we had over 300 of our children in Children's Aid - we barred the KP from entering our community – we took charge and began a long process of reclaiming our children – Today there are still children in care – it has been brought down to 100. We still have a way to go. Appreciate being asked to speak briefly and look forward to the conference with Elders.

Co- Chair Diane Kelly - Onigaming: The work was undertaken during my term as Grand Chief and began in 2010, the background is in the Conference Binder with a Draft Report for our review to be completed. This began in drafting the Child Care Law – Abinoonjii Inakonigewin 2005. This has always been a major concern for me as I saw through my work in the legal system for almost ten years that things had to be changed because the system in both the court system and child care system were not bringing huge improvements, our children, families and communities continue to suffer – There are opportunities in the provincial legislation provided to develop Traditional child and family care – regarding policies of the province in having an understanding of Customary Care – However, what was implemented through the provincial and judicial process was not necessarily the 'Tradition of the community'. This work that has been done within this process has not been to be an attack or to be negative about any Child Care Agencies. The idea behind the 2010 resolution was to strengthen and support – the "Traditional Way of Our Communities" and have the elders share and discuss "How did we look after Our Children" – We are so strong – We have not lost Our Traditions – We have here today having the Drum to open meetings and set us right – to retain the words and teachings and principles in the community – I had asked Gilbert Smith to work on this and Irene Linklater – this is in the Rolling Draft of what was heard in the communities. Today, this is a time to have your feedback and input on what is there - from you. Miigwech.

History of Abinoonjii Inakonigewin

Co-Chair Francis Kavanaugh - Naotkamegwanning

As many of you had been involved in the governance process there was a Child Welfare component that was worked on for several years – people here like Adolphus Cameron of Wabaseemoong and what happened in that process during those years - to the teams of people who worked on bringing life to our traditions in caring and raising our children – Chiefs advocated to protecting our rights to have our own traditions and the different rules that are placed by the government policies and legislation – We have our own knowledge and teachings – sacred ways – the Elders gave support and the leadership moved it along – it was with guidance from ceremony Atisookanag – Chi gwek isi too wad, to bring it back to our way of life – the lead taken by Wabaseemoong on child care.

Adolphus, Executive Director, Wabaseemoong:

Honored to be asked - I worked with the Grand Chief on Governance – Bimiiwinitisowin Oma Akiing – that also had Abinoonjii caring discussed at communities – We have already the Inakonigewin – it is already in place for us to follow – It is for us to put it into place. Before they wrote the Abinoonjii Inakonigewin, two things occurred – there was a National Policy for Treaty #3 written in 2001, this was followed by a Gathering of the Elders in 2002 to develop guiding principles instructions to the Abinoonjii Inakonigewin. The Elders talked about Pimatisiwin, Bimiiwinitisowin, Miinigosiwin, and Kiikinomagewin. I would like to recognize the work of the working group – George Simard, Fred Kelly, Dennis Petiquan, lawyer Colin Gillespie - and I sat in also –they wrote Abinoonjii Inakonigewin on the Elders direction. The white people have written theirs. The Elders and the writers discussed – How it would be a good way to follow – it took a long time – they discussed and deliberated on how it would be good for Abinoonjii Inakonigewin. They met with CFS workers on this – they wrote some more – Way Way Ni Ka Kina Gagon they followed. It was taken to Chisikaaning – and so it is of great importance the Abinoonjii life and raising - then taken to Chiefs Assembly in 2005.

It was discussed how it would be done in communities. Now today, this is to be discussed – what they heard during the meetings this time – to be discussed for today. I will outline the process a little – Treaty #3 had a Governance process and the approach was to listen to the people talk about various things – Most common was about Children and Traditional laws, that we do have laws – lying dormant and needed to find a way to bring them back to life. There was a special table on governance on Child Care as a separate process – then as I stated the National Policy passed in 2001 and Elders Gathering in 2002 – it was instructed by the Elders that we cannot write the Creators Law, but we can write practical steps using Anishinaabe law as the foundation. And that is how it has to deal with mainstream law and finding a way how both would work without going into too much conflict ‘harmonization of both laws’ was the idea - the process went into ceremonies. There were consultations in the process with Child Care Agencies and people - once the feedback was received, the team would get together on what they heard and worked on many drafts, the final draft was #8. It was done very carefully and thoroughly – there were steps that needed to be taken, it was to go to community to have community aware, to work with officials to be aware, to get community to work on standards and mostly the work on the regulations would be to help. Miigwech.

Elder Gatherings on Abinoonjii Child Care and the Family 2011-2012

Elder Gilbert Smith: Naicatchewenin;

What I will talk about is how working with the Elders Gatherings on Abinoonjii caring got started and where it brings us here to this gathering. The first was to get in contact with the Chief and bring asaymaa (tobacco) and each community with their food feast and ceremonies. The work began in 2011 with a lawyer by the name of Joan Jack who came with me to the first two communities - Naicatchewenin and Naotkamegwaning – after that it was Irene Linklater, who is here, to the other communities – there were eight communities. It is what the Gitchi Anishinaabeg spoke that is written in the Report – it is still a draft for review – We did not do our own thinking in the writing of it. My role in this

was that when she Ogichidaakwe, Diane Kelly asked me if I would help – that I had some experience and working with people and that in my own family we have done customary care - We raised a young boy who came to us when he was six month old and he is now a young man – Inge Odaap inan aan Abinojii – Bizaan Igo gaa naa way nim Gi iko, do the young mother said – we had no written agreement – no payment for this – no monthly funding – We raised him ourselves as part of our family. This is why I was asked because of my life experience.

In working and listening to the Elders talking - Kii sun agut for Gitchi Anishinaabeg Emaan en daam owat – (It was very difficult for the Elders, this was very emotionally hurtful). I learned a lot during this time of hearing and listening – the Elders are up to the age into the 80 yrs. who spoke of their knowledge and experiences. Children’s Aid and Indian Affairs - Gi Gitchi go pachi ig go wat – (mistreated them terribly) – they spoke of what happened in their encounters with Child and Family Services – not to speak badly about Family Services but to speak about what happened and what they see – I will not speak English because you will hear about it from each other here.

Francis Kavanaugh:

The lunch will be served shortly. To let everyone know, the feast for the Child Care Agencies was done earlier this morning.

I do not like to use ‘customary’ care because of terminology – We are raising our own grandson – our daughter, his mom and he lived with us for his first three years of his life and when his mom had her own house as she was packing his things, he asked her - What are you doing? He did not want to move, he said he wanted to stay with us and that is how he stayed.

On the Elders Gatherings held – the communities visited covered a good cross section of Treaty #3 from Seine River and Lac La Croix across to Wabaseemoong, Grassy Narrows and in between is Big Grassy, Naicatchewenin, Eagle Lake and

Naotkamegwanning. So that the information obtained would be considered a very solid base to form your guiding principles.

Afternoon Session:

Diane Kelly: The methodology followed was to establish the community meeting and listen to the Elders then write the information gathered into a draft Report. The four questions asked were developed by Gilbert Smith and are in the report for your review. Gilbert will now be called upon to provide further details.

Elder Gilbert Smith: On preparing for the writing of the information for the Abinoonjii Ombig Igos Owin report draft – four questions were asked – What was done for Abinoonjii care as you know it in your life? What happened when CAS came to the Anishinaabe for the Abinoonjii? How is it with Witchi it te win and Abinoonjii Agencies and your thoughts? From this meeting of questions then what was said by the Elders was written. Traditional protocols were followed – Asaymaa was provided to the Chiefs to be able to go into the communities. In looking at the Slide Chart on teachings and principles – the Elders talked about it and it is in the family connection picture – so it should be added to have “Inawendiwin” (Kinship – Relatives) as another principle. On the Child care information we heard a lot of stories of CAS and Indian Affairs – a lot of hurting stories. They did not share in an angry way – In a kind way when they shared their stories – sometimes cried. Nothing bad was said about Witchi it te win or Abinoonjii Agencies. There were eight communities visited. This was done on the instruction of the Leadership resolution at the time through former Grand Chief Diane Kelly and the Social Sustainability Chiefs Committee. In visiting eight communities it does not mean that other communities are excluded – No – We are all included - Like the Drum – We are all tied together. As a Helper – it was not easy to listen and hear – some very powerful stories – It hurt in here. We want your feedback. Miigwech.

Francis Kavanaugh: As Gilbert stated, the process unfolded in consultation with eight communities which were chosen based on encompassing across the Treaty #3 territory – in this way it provides legitimacy as it comes from a wide range and cross section of communities.

Comment: Cecelia Johnson: Seine River: My children and grandchildren were stolen from me. My responsibilities as a mother and grandmother were stolen from me and I have not been able to teach Anishinaabe traditions to them - This has damaged me and them so that it has made me very ill. Two grandchildren are still in Agency and this is not working – they are still living in white homes.

Comment: Rita Potson, Seine River; I raised my grandchildren and never got help or asked for Witchi it te win. My Okomis came from Shoal Lake. We have raised two, one aged 2 and 10 month old girl until she was age 6 and 10 years then they went to Thunder Bay. Now my Noshis is 20 yrs. old and with us – it is very different. Other grandparents live in two other communities – children bounce back and forth between communities. Nowadays monetary help is required. I approached Child Agency and Chief and Council and tried to send one to a healing camp – the grandchildren were left behind. I am taking care of them. They said they cannot help me or the grandchildren because –“They are not in care” I am told “They do not belong to this reserve.” I am told. The agencies are to start recognizing how our children are being raised. When my son was raising his children he did not know how to teach his daughter – for a young daughter becoming a woman. There is a lot we have forgotten on what we have to do to teach the children. My granddaughter is in school in Sudbury and she asked about Weegwas (birch bark) – this is not to be done in night time. My daughter said “You never told me about this Mom”. Another one cut his hair at night – We are forgetting to teach our children. Sometimes we forget to pass teachings to child and grandchildren – School kids had a school project and the kids are working on it during the night time – There are certain things not allowed to be done at night according to Teachings. One

grandson was asking why he was being raised by grandparents – That's why Grandmother was asking for help.

Today we raise four grandchildren and never get help from Agencies – We do not bother Agencies – Sometimes there are eight or nine grandchildren in our home. Long ago we never saw someone have Abinoonjii being taken – They raised their own children, provide food for themselves for the children –The family helped to raise the children if they were ever left alone – when parents were gone drinking. Oh nig ii goh (parents) look after child, if parents left the child then Grandparents, uncles, aunties would take the children, nobody ever asked for shooniah (money) to be helped to raise child. It was the Manitoon they ask for help – if someone takes a child it comes from your heart – Manito will help the child to help you raise the child by Gii zhay wat iziwin.

Comment: Elder Rosie Boshkaykin, Seine River; My mother died when I was age six and I was raised by Auntie (nisigos) and Uncle – I knew them as my (ni gi og oog) parents as though they birthed me. I learned everything I need to know living where we lived – I helped the parent that raised me, we did not live in a house there was no school – we lived on the land in tent, lodges (waginigan), a log house, trapped, fishing, berry picking – I watched and learned from them how they did everything, how they built houses, cutting trees for wood. We were not given food – we hunted our own meat – deer and got other food like flour, lard. Made hide – cleaning and tanning to make clothes, sewing and beading for selling to buy other food. Wild rice picking and processing, weegason – birch bark baskets. Saw the old lady and old man make everything. As I got older I started to do all they teach me. Message: That's what's lost today is communication aspect of Anishinabemowin – losing the passing on of Traditions – the repetition of parents teaching – what not to do as shown – These are the teachings to provide to children and grandchildren. Today the kids are in school and it is different – they speak English. Oshisaag (grandchildren) they watch TV. and do not want to listen and they speak a little Anishinaabemowin. The one about Weegwas (birch bark) is to be worked with only during the day, and to sewing only in day time, making

slippers and to be used when done. Reason why forbidden to do certain things at night – because in preparing for funeral these are done – preparing moccasins for the departed during the night time.

Comment: Sonny Kelly, Onigaming? Gii Ombig oyan – mostly raised in institutions – also recall good times from parents and uncles, legends mother told me, helping grandmother with jingle dress feasting where to face them and how long they should be there and what things not to do in being a man – to remain a boy even as we get older. My Dad use to trap and hunt before he drank – CAS came and took siblings and put into residential school – I was age 10. Anishinaabe way is strong. I raised my daughter from age 8 and she is now 21 gone away to study. I have a dilemma and do not know who to turn to – I have a son who is now age 8 and the last time I saw him his name is Powassin. I tried to find out where they are – I am not allowed to visit him – I want to ask Chiefs how I can see my son – I am fifty eight now, sober a long time and diabetic – I help my uncle in ceremonies. Where I am today, I wish to see my son back into my life.

Elder Gilbert Smith: My son split up with his partner and his ex-spouse said to us “We do not want you to see your grandchildren”. My wife was saddened. I told her “They will come to us.” And they did. They came to us last year. Gii gah odisig ingo ding (He will come to you, one day).

Comment: Elder Iris Jourdain, Lac La Croix, I worked for Abinoonjii Agency children in care. What I see – they are having children, always asking for Shooniah – wanting (money) for clothes, diapers and milk and – Young moms are becoming too dependent on Social Services system. They need to know how to take care of their children, like other lady said – We are forgetting to teach how to look after our own children, grandchildren. How difficult will it be to revive and implement our Traditional ways? Will we be beating our heads against the Provincial government? I see lots of knowledge here of the Teachings – To stop the dependency. It would be good for young moms to

get learn Life Skills curriculum according to our Teachings by Building a School to have our children learn, with instructions by our Knowledge Keepers.

Chief Arnold Gardner – Eagle Lake: Migisi Sagaigan: I think a lot about my children and grandchildren. I heard an old man named Peter Ochiese who said many things of Anishinaabe of long ago – Ga Inakoniged Manito, like the man and woman Gii miin igo isi. Young people are given how to live their life, also young baby and child; the Grandfathers and Grandmothers given their ways. He said – We have left the road. Others brought schools and all things that were not good for us. Manito gave to us what road to follow – Our Ways – never to forget – rules and responsibilities, to ourselves, child and grandchildren and in future, Miigwech.

Francis Kavanaugh: Gi don ishim igonaan. White people brought bad things to us like alcohol. Gii minigos iyong – Our Way of Life. All of us were given responsibilities – Man – Woman. Woman the water – moon cycle 28 days, Old woman The Turtle Mikinak has 28 parts with 13 plates – that’s the number of moons in one year.

Elder Agnes Kabatay: Mitaanjigaming, Ni mik qwayn dom – What I think, do not drop Kii kin maatiiwin for young girls teachings. What I learn I teach them Anishinaabe way, three sons, seventeen grandchildren, two great grandchildren girls. How to keep child – never had my child taken - I delivered my grandchildren. I teach each of them to be gentle. Raised traditional way but my late siblings went to residential school and terrible things were done to them there. The woman’s role is very important on raising children to nurture and to foster growth. Very important to go back to Teachings of Moon-time to young girls – asked to remain in one place and given teachings about life itself - to revive that. To be mindful that when we take kids out and run into obstacles with school authorities when we try to provide teachings to our children. They are texting or watching video when you are talking to them.

Francis Kavanaugh: My own five older siblings went to residential school and we went to Day school. When we have Family gatherings, Christmas, Thanksgiving – the older ones do not join us – They have problems with alcohol and damaged from residential school.

Take a look at the family kinship chart within the draft report. The question is – Could this be on a different format to be easier to follow?

Comment: Joe Daniels, Sagkeeng; There is a different speaking dialect to what I read on the chart like Niibaba, Niidadanaan (both refers to Father/Dad) and Atisokaanag and Kiinigayn. There is a difference like French to English. How do we teach young ones. White person tries to put us all into one name – We are Anishinaabe, and there are other like the Dakota/Lakota and calls us all Anishinaabe. Question: Ni shag wayn nim oyan sometimes to learn what is said – for young ones to learn this. Gi na nak omin in im Ka kina.

Elder Gilbert Smith: I never knew about “Ojibwe Ojibway”, I knew only Anishinaabe – They are different dialect. “Ojibway kii dah gosh inog” (The Ojibways have arrived) was what old ones said. If we say “We are Ojibway people...” I was asked, “are you Ojibway?” I said “No. I am Anishinaabe.” Nii shag wayn dahm ingo ding chi ikidoyan. I was born on reserve, I live on reserve, and I never left, although I worked some time at other places. Abinoonjii do not speak Anishinaabemowin – they are losing out on this knowledge. Only two of my own grandchildren speak Anishinaabemowin they all speak English. Nii ang wamis. Monshug ingii Wabandahn. Ni min ob undah ziin.

Francis Kavanaugh: The last two speakers referred to our own misleading of our children by using – slang or bastardizing our own language, from how it was given to us and that is why we are being challenged on how we transfer knowledge. That’s how governments refer to Anishinaabe – to all on Turtle Island, disregarding we are different Nations. We are Anishinaabe – sometimes we refer to ourselves as ‘Ojibwe’. When we

had Gatherings when ones came from the States we would say “Ojibway wii tag oshinog” was not taught properly. Miigwech.

Comment: Fred Kelly, Onigaming, Bozhoo Indinaway Maaganidoog – Greetings my relatives. I have many relatives in this room, so I will not be able to lie as they would straighten me out! I am sixty –five years old, I speak Anishinaabemowin and raised on trap line. My father-in-law taught me mah to ot isaan, how many rocks, how many Abinoonjii to bring in – Terminology in describing - I understand a little Ombig Igos oyang. I dreamed children were gathered in my room where I slept – Teaching on the Odis - umbilical cord and belly button – we used to keep it when it fell off, carefully wrapped in pouch, beaded or hung on cradle board – eventually it was buried under an oak tree to symbolize that the child would grow up strong as the tree. Reasoning behind the Dream –we have forgotten our teachings – this is why our children are confused and lost – Miigwech.

Comment: Elder Rita Potson: For my children Odis fell – I bundled it up and beaded. Different terminology from different areas – Nii na nak omah means Miigwech – In another version it refers to Manito.

Francis Kavanaugh: We use same words in different concept. Just like buckaday, I am skinny, but other places it means, I am hungry. All your comments are being recorded and incorporated for the final draft of Abinoonjii Ombig Igos Owin.

Comment: Ella Greene; Iskatewizaagegan: Ni gii ogoog (parents) , there was my younger sister “Ni shii may” and older sister “Ni sah yay”. I have always heard “hoh” – now today Miigwech. Noose – as Oda da ma, father. My grandfather would say of older ones – ‘Ga gi git tat isi wat’ , not called ‘Gitchi ahya aah”. Never heard Bozhoo. The white people are killing our way. Hoh!

Francis Kavanaugh - we have lost a lot of old Anishinaabe words. Miigwech is not really Anishinaabemowin, for example Bozhoo, must be from the hairy chested Frenchman. It is our own fault we are not able to teach our kids – we are not addressing our children. To also reach Atisokaanag – to teach the children because we are using incorrect words from true old Anishinaabe and the teachings that go along with it.

Comment: Marie Allen, Nigigoonsemencanning; Nokomisibun raised me. For children I heard her say maa naa ji (be gentle with them). I tried, I took them to school, when they returned home they did not want to learn Anishinaabe – same now for my grandchildren – have twenty –two and fifteen great grandchildren.

Comment: Frances Boshkaykin, Seine River; I was also raised different far away – sent to residential school at age eight when my late father passed. No one was helped that time by mother's allowance. At the school for six years terrible things happened to me there and lost what my grandfather taught me on what I had learned to teach my grandchildren – I have ten. Being there I was slapped on the mouth for speaking Anishinaabemowin – I did not understand the Nuns in their English speaking. Never saw my young siblings only saw them after- we were beaten if we tried to speak to each other at that school – At the Residential school after severe abuses I made a pledge to myself each night and keep it in my heart – my Anishinaabe spirit and language and it is still intact - “They will not take this from me.” After I left the school, did not learn teachings - I began drinking, I was ruined, destroyed. Children learn quickly and I think highly of those of us as we sit here – That is how with – Feathers, how I got healed. It is time to transfer Traditions to our children - If we are to revive our language and tradition we have to start while child is very young. Miigwech

Francis Kavanaugh: Wrapping for Day One. For each and every one of us to reflect this evening on what was heard today for tomorrow's discussions. Please take some time to complete reading the draft report.

Traditional custom of gatherings. Drum and Songs.

Day 2- Wednesday, October 11, 2012

Traditional start - Opening – Elder Clifford Skead.

Francis Kavanaugh: Welcoming back. Message from Elder: Asaymaa and Drum
Taiwaigan, Ishichigayinan. Maatotisonan, Chisikaa – to go to this, to sit with
Atisokaanag – Medicines – sometimes we wait too long. Chi maa maa we tag osi ang -
We talked yesterday of different dialects and dialects within dialects. Different word
example: Embarrassed – In daa gach and other is Nii mayn ni shi iway.

Elder Gilbert Smith: I learned a lot on what I heard yesterday. And I heard someone
commenting it would be nice if children were here sitting with us –and I say the same
way In do jaan imayn dahm, very concerned with worry as we have a son who is sick
right now. Will have Diane talk about where we go from here.

Diane Kelly: There have been several processes in Treaty #3 and fifteen years since
the Governance process which started the written part of Abinoonjii Childcare
Inakonigewin – we have advocated in many areas regarding Natural Resources,
Education, and Health – to protect what was given to us. The Millennium resolution of
2000, said we would go back to strengthen our ways – despite the Governance process
being stalled with the federal government. Elders directed that we continue as a Nation
without seeking or depending on government funding - and as the former Grand Chief –
the approach I always followed was that we did not need the province or federal
government telling us what to do. We know in our ways about Manomin and what had to
be done within the territory, the same for Child Welfare – I have also experienced
personally in my own family and childhood and community – the connection of a child to
the family, the community and the nation – a child being taken into another home was
also done by my family experience with my Dad who was raised for a time with his
grandparents although his parents were still living. These were done as internal family

arrangements for a specific purpose, although I am not clear as to how that purpose was – It is all there in the language and ceremonies. We are starting to forget the language – but we have an opportunity to strengthen it. We have Child Care Law – Abinoonjii Inakonigewin, it is written in this paper, in 2005 at the Chiefs Assembly in Big Grassy. We have to take the next steps to implement the laws of our Nation to Child Care and Family Care – Pimatisiwin to childcare has been heard in the teachings as was heard in 2000. There are seven principles also in this draft document. What we can do is write down Guiding Principles and values consistent throughout the territory and each community to adopt or adapt according to their custom of each community. As in the draft chart on the screen what was heard – the child is a gift from the Creator. It is for us to develop Guidelines. What are the specific teachings is for each community. The Resolution (2010) is seeking to develop a Standard Guideline. It is an on-going process.

Francis Kavanaugh: There has been some comment about calling it a 'law' – that, that term is too much like the white system. What should be the proper terminology?

Comment Elder George Boshkaykin, Seine River: Message: Leading up to the signing of the Treaty #3 – it went up to Manito Inakonigewin. From a Dream – we need to Feast the site where the signing of the Treaty took place because that is where the Spirits are to the signing of the Treaty to go back and honor them and to thank them. Also, difference between our Culture and Western medicine that derives from the plant life as well – when the Anishinaabe goes to the medicines, Asaymaa is offered and prayers for gift. But the prescription drug way, they just take and nothing is offered in return – only concerned on how to benefit from the sales of drugs. We need to stay strong and not to forget Asaymaa minand.

Francis Kavanaugh: As the first Grand Chief selected again in the Traditional way, I went to ask the Chiisikaan Shaking Tent how to implement - I was told to Feast the site every spring and fall. I believe succeeding Grand Chiefs continued. I do not know what

is going on today. Chi wiik onge jii gaa deg ohway” – Feasted. Apichi Gii gaa gwait to gi omin – we must continue to Feast the signing of the Treaty – Daa biich inish kaa maa gut. To Feast before the winter falls.

Comment Elder Bessie Mainville, Couchiching; we need to think at this time, of those who have gone before us Gaa gii gotat isi, (Old Ones). We were given great ways. We have to do Pimatisiwin. They work hard those who work at Agencies, together to bring it around to our ways, and to work with those infants and young ones. We need to try something different. Pay attention to young parents, what is happening in our communities, so young people will help their young ones – And those young ones will carry this forward. Too busy with business part of the Child Care Services. This is not to complain but it seems like we are too busy in running a Business on Child Care and we forget about having Child Care – I sit on the Elders Council for Witchi it te win. There are many people who have obtained ways of the European and they become Canadian professionals, lawyers, child care agency workers, administrators. We need to recognize that. That many of us have forgotten our language and customs. Good work of the Agencies is recognized – they are qualified and have capacity to do what needs to be done. Bimiiwinitisowin should be what we have to offer – while also having academic by mainstream – Some do lack language and customs – and it is important that the action done is in being Anishinaabe. It is my hope that those who lack language and cultural ceremonies revive the inherent Anishinaabe spirit through whatever avenue we can rekindle Anishinaabe spirit, the potential is there. This is the way to reach children at very young age is in repetition to reinforce their minds and spirit the ways to be guided in the right directions – I wish the Agency to refocus and to have programs to provide Guidance to young ones and to support parenting skills. Agencies do not provide this – it should be essential service and to make sure the money to operate Agency is used for those needing this type of services reaches them.

Francis Kavanaugh: On the programs to support young ones and young parents – there is in Toronto a Kookum Program that has Elders matched up with young parents with interaction and the child is a part.

Comment Bob Gardner, Eagle Lake: I also worked for an Agency – what I see is that we are not moving we are still talking. What the Elder lady said, we have been talking about same thing for years – we have to do something now – We are losing technical people – We have to have a professional adequate acceptable document for Child Welfare by our people who can do it, in our areas, experienced Social Workers fluent in Language and know Culture. Lawyers who speak the language. Put document in place and need to put it into Action. Good document is needed to get funding to put all this down. Witchi it te win and Abinoonjii Agencies have been trying to adapt – using ‘harmonization’ – but that is not good enough - We have to get working on it at all times, steadily until it is done.

Frances Kavanaugh: The message is clear. Just Do It. When we talked of Guiding Principles Framework .

Kathy Kelly: Worker for Onigaming at Witchi it te win. We go to the Elders and they help in our work and that is how we are strong. And it is complex and difficult with the government regarding documents. Elders put together into a document a sharing of their experiences on what is needed. I get my courage as my role being a mother and grandmother and in trying to develop and effective process and to meet the needs of the families – It is very difficult to follow government standards and policies. With the Executive Director we are trying to identify Anishinaabe processes that best meets the needs of our people “Nah neegan Abinoonjii” if my title and the Feather I carry – it is for the child in ten First Nation communities. The Elders help to identify the path of how to help our children and families and had opportunity to consult with communities. There are five steps to be followed when a child comes into the system and how we help the family. These are the very things I hear today and see in the document – those are the

most powerful tools on how to best help our families. It is difficult to have a one-way approach for everybody. I hear that from the community and family. There is strength in diversity of our people – in how to help each other. The question for us is on how to create a bridge of the past to today. Young people have different tools – Technology. I was raised by mother and grandmother on teachings from giving birth, raising children and to them becoming adults on the Values – within my relatives and community Gii nitow iginow oson. Ideas – maybe we need to work with Audio Videos and not only paper. We are moving forward – there is no one-approach, each community has their way - we need to protect the workers in the community

Fred Kelly: Dream: I was in a boat on Lake of the Woods – the purpose was for family preservation to Our Way of Life – As we went (he described a series of land marking points along the shore and islands) and placed tobacco on there. Miigwech Noshis the bird on the rock said “I did not know some people are still making offerings.” – I am trying to help our children learn Clan and Names – the little bird is Atchkaday he replied.” I will come too and help as much as I can”. I saw an oak tree with a broken top and put tobacco for your strength to help us I spoke to the tree. When Migisi stuck his head from the hole at top of the oak said “Gi biz indah win” I am listening to you he said. “Me too, I will help too.” I am a Witchi it te win Board of Director and I spoke to George Simard the former Executive Director and do not know if I spoke of this to the new Board of Director (Laurie Rose). I see here my Teachers all around me but cannot do it myself to put it another way “My hockey legs are gone.”

Francis Kavanaugh: Fred reminded us how we get reconnected to sacred sites on lakes, rivers, our community still does that with help of funds from Band Office that provides gas for ten boats every spring. This is a message from Pawachi igan (Dreams) – Gii Pawachigayt Fred.

Comment: Elder Calvin Ottertail Lac La Croix: I heard a woman talk about why we are struggling – I come to this meeting in support of what I have heard for the past six years.

What are we doing at community level on the problems that we deal with on a day to day basis- I know we are here talking about what we should be doing. We were trying to figure out where words come from. The Teaching Lodge – nothing is so sacred that we couldn't utilize it at community level. Great Spirit to know how desperate we are to helping our children. What I hear is to bridge the Youth and the Elders – we are experiencing a continuing loss of Elders and the loss of wisdom and knowledge. Need to do this now – maybe a lot will go and start to allow the recording of the Teachings. I will try to help anyway I can. Elders tell a Story – that is the way of Teaching – that is how we are relaying to youth e.g. Hunting stories etc. Me and Leon are part of group to be last to witness the old ceremonies at Lac La Croix. My three kids have not seen those ceremonies

To Honor Pawachiigaag Awiyah – Drum Song for Migisiwon Gag ii bi gaan oon igood.

Francis Kavanaugh: Tentative Plan – Next Steps to complete the Document:

Recommendation presented with Discussion from the floor: Keep working group 6 to 7 small enough to get work done otherwise we can bog down. Young people are waiting for us – Just Do it. To continue with the ones that have been working – and those with traditional knowledge and experience in language, culture, leadership, academic, community, and corporate knowledge. Tasked: to fine tune the report and incorporate past two days. Maybe it will be that the final work will go into the new year, with the Chiefs Committee responsible. The Chiefs are responsible to appoint Working Group.

Comment: Elder John Paishk, Wabaseemoong; We once had 300, that was twelve years ago and through a lot of effort and work the Agency and reliance on the Elders culture, language and his Dream the numbers came down to 100 now in care: Dream I was walking through a thick forest faced with obstacles in my path and someone approached me and perhaps it is a Spirit and said "Let's go this way" that lead to another road to an open field, barren ground - it was frightful – No one in sight. The

spirit guided and told me – ‘You need to work hard at what you are doing today on Child Care, need to continue the work do not give up because if you do , you will not see any child - This is what it will look like – You will not see any more children. Message: If we do not follow what we know there will be no more children – To go back to the Elders to do Anishinaabe Ways. I talked to Witchi it te win on Anishinabetchigewaag Child Care law – how much longer do we talk. We are ready to accept what is there for our community: This is where we need to go if we need help Tawaiganag Drum to follow Anishinaabe ways. Do it now. Shay maak - Right Now.

Elder Gilbert Smith: I remember something when Kathy talked – An old man Isaac Mandamin saying –“We own the names only” “We have no say” about the Agencies. “We are still being directed by Government . Child care services came from Anishinaabeg. I have had my share of difficulties with the Agency – and have told them “We are not policies, we are human beings.” We will tell the government - We will take care of our Abinoonjig. They say they understand but they do not because they do not live in Naicatchewenin, do not understand the struggles we face in our communities. It’s not easy for me to say this – I know there are people more qualified than me, how I got that is what I see here. We got to go back to our ways of life and to pass onto the next generation. That is what I heard when I went to the eight communities – I think of it every day – it is a Good Message. There was also to have some changes and that will have to be for the Chiefs to speak to. Accept honor.

Chief Eric Fisher: On what John Paishk said, not to have offended – Wabaseemoong, he said we are going to take back to Wabaseemoong. Our history – the past Chief Roy McDonald in 1991 kicked our Kenora Patricia (KP) that took our children away with 300 children in care, Chief and Council blocked them off from coming into the community – and we petitioned with the help of Josephine Mandamin who got a plan and went to Toronto to meet Premier Bob Rae – mother of Wabaseemoong coming to meet him and Bob Rae was waiting at the top of the stairs when she got there. She told him we are tired of other people taking our children. We got Witchi it te win and George (former

Executive Director) helped us out. We had forgotten and regained our Tradition and our children – they had been scattered to USA and all over Canada. We are still healing because we know child welfare is not working for us, I thank John as he is the president of Abinoonjii Family Services. Theresa (Executive Director -Abinoonjii) is going to need a lot of help. I am one of the Chiefs responsible on Chiefs Committee. I support a small working group. Wabaseemoong are going to go ahead and are adopting the Principles for the Child Care law. What Gilbert said – When we have organizations in name-only because the province dictates to follow their policies. Task is how do we bridge those understandings to change those dynamics – to get them to see our way – Perhaps invite them to our ceremonies, or visit our communities – the pulse, pain, trials and tribulations - To educate them.

Francis Kavanaugh: Thank You Chief Fisher. That is second community that has adopted. I have been told Onigaming has endorsed.

Comment George Simard: I worked in child welfare for twenty seven years. I knew our community would have to do something about it. How I was raised I do not have to play second place to anybody – Absolutely no reason why that can't prevail. The question really becomes Do believe to work on behalf of our children. My granddaughter looked at me in the eye – she looks you in the eye and says to you- 'During your lifetime what did you do for me to make it a better world?' I got scared, what if I only did status quo – Not what we did in, in spite of boarding school. In twenty seven years with a lot of people in this room we had to replace Child and Family Agencies. In order to replace - 1987 CAS – the law said we had to become a CAS – Once you accept designated – comes prescribed obligations – It isn't Ours. So it's a blessing to hear Wabaseemoong and Onigaming taking Aboriginal best practices. But there are two parts you have to be concerned with – we have Abinoonjii Inakonigewin and the Social Sustainability leadership – to take to communities – to do this because CFSA – If you want emergence of Aboriginal Best Practices – consider – How would I put that into place – That's what I thought of last night as it is the – Elders, Political and Technical. Let's get on with it.

Elder Agnes Kabatay Mitaanjigaming: Yes that was long ago what George Simard said. We tried to help the Chiefs from the Women's council to the Abinoonjii Inakonigewin. To raise it upward. This is to give words of encouragement.

Adolphus Cameron: I think a lot of the Chief that I work with. I heard the Gitchi Anishinaabe who said "Do not ask for government to give you Pimatisiwin, Bimiiwinitisowin – You already have these – Children to be first – Anishinaabemowin – If you accomplish this – Obimatisiwin.

Comment Former Grand Chief Leon Jourdain: All I hear, I believe in it – on children to be taken care of – We have talked for a long time – We have had much stolen from us. As to the working group we are asking for someone from Lac La Croix or Seine River. Last week I read in the paper on native children – there are now 36,000 in foster care system today – Taking of our children is still alive – They will keep taking if we do not stop this. All of us in this room are parents, grandparents. I agree with speaker who said a movement of people on the ground and Chiefs to come on defence of children to stop use of child for non-Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies and not concentrating on where money coming from. Born by blood of our Nation – this is the right thing to do – Our duty to our people – nothing will stop us – Child was center of people as a society in the circle of people consisted of people who we see here today. Through assaults of colonization on our children and societies – it must be given rebirth if we believe on ground swell on where the warriors that use to stand in guard for the child is standing on their own – time to return to obligations to protect the sacredness of our children.

This concludes the Gathering.

Traditional Drum and Prayer by Elder Clifford Skead.