



Dodem 'Kanonhsa' turns 15 years

Miigwetch, We'lalin, Tansi, Wachiyeh, Thank you

To ALL for contributing your thoughts, ideas and recollections to this project:

Wayne Wong – former AANDC [Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada] Sr Intergovernmental officer, former Dodem Kanonhsa' Advisory Committee member

Larry Frost – Executive Director, Native Canadian Centre of Toronto

Jamie Maracle, Mohawk Nation – AANDC Manager, Informatics, Dodem Kanonhsa' Advisory Committee member

Susan Hunter, Cree Nation – former AANDC staff, former Dodem Kanonhsa' Advisory Committee member

Frances Sanderson – Former NCCT Anishinabek Committee member

Grafton Antone, Wolf Clan, Oneida of the Thames FN – Elder, NCCT Taam Kaadinakijik Elder Advisory circle member

Eileen Antone, Turtle Clan, Oneida of the Thames FN – Elder, NCCT Taam Kaadinakijik Elder Advisory circle member

Pauline Shirt, Red-Tail Hawk Clan, Plains Cree, Saddle Lake FN – Elder, NCCT Taam Kaadinakijik Elder Advisory circle member

Leea Litzgus – AANDC Associate Regional Director

Sophie Rdecki – AANDC Director LTS

Marsha Moshinsky – AANDC Sr Intergovernmental Relations Officer, Dodem Kanonhsa' Advisory Committee member

Victoria Pezzo – AANDC Funding Services Officer, Dodem Kanonhsa' Advisory Committee member

Penny Ramdeo – AANDC Sr Funding Services Officer, Dodem Kanonhsa' Advisory Committee member

Sarah Naveau – AANDC Manager, Workplace programs, former Dodem Kanonhsa' Advisory Committee member

Carolyn Young – AANDC Administrative Assistant

Brenda Nadjiwan – AANDC AWPI Regional Coordinator

Tony Tino – AANDC Sr Capital Advisor

Anna Rosen-Rung – AANDC Program Support Officer

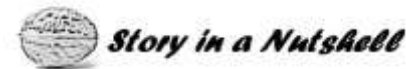
Daniel Johnson – AANDC Environment Officer

Amy Desjarlais, Beaver Clan, Ojibway/Potawotomi, Wasauksing FN – Dodem Kanonhsa' manager (Project Manager)

Special thanks to all of the Elders and Traditional teachers that visit each year and share their wisdom and knowledge with the Dodem Kanonhsa' community.

We would like to also acknowledge our past managers: Jenna Marasco, Darlene Solomon, Mary Ann Flett, and Julia Valencia

Special acknowledgments to the Elders who have traveled to the Spirit world: Lillian McGregor, Crane Clan, Birch Island FN; Lillian Pitawanakwat, Thunderbird Clan, Birch Island FN; Ernest Benedict, Wolf Clan, Akwesasne; Tim Brown, Mohawk Nation, Delaware; Curtis Hopkins, Turtle Clan, Delaware; Marjorie Noganosh, Turtle Clan, Magnetawan FN; Rose Loaan. Martin Clan. Wikwemikona and Susan Morrison, Turtle Clan, Cree Nation, Fort Albany



Sincere apologies if we have missed anyone

Produced by Story in Nutshell, September 2013

vera.ter.emm@gmail.com

Table of Content

Introduction.....	1
About Dodem Kanonhsa'	1
Insight into Dodem Kanonhsa' from the Founders.....	3
Insights from the Elders.....	14
Dodem Kanonhsa' Community Medicine Bundle.....	23
Comments from the Community.....	29



Introduction:

Dodem Kanonhsa' is celebrating 15th anniversary this September, 2013, the ninth month of Creation. The Corn moon. "It is the time the Creator gave Nookomis the instructions of the corn to become the teacher of the continuum of life. This happens when the life cycle is near completion and a new journey readies itself."ⁱ In recognition of this important milestone Dodem Kanonhsa' partnered up with Story in a Nutshell to create a book that commemorates and celebrates the elders, staff and community members who have dedicated their valuable time and resources to this organization. The book is built on the memories and stories of the participants collected through interviews and edited for clarity. The stories reveal the strong community and comradeship behind the organization that supports and carries on the traditions and teachings for all Nations.

About Dodem Kanonhsa'

Dodem Kanonhsa' Aboriginal Cultural Facility is a space for learning and fostering greater acceptance, understanding and harmony between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal peoples.

In a partnership between the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, we seek to express our mandate through direct service, public education and information.



(left to right) Amy Desjarlais, Victoria Pezzo, Penny Ramdeo, Wayne Wong,
(front) Marsha Moshinsky, (missing: Jamie Maracle & Lonny O'Brien)

sharing. We service the Greater Toronto Area, First Nations Communities and the Urban Aboriginal population. Supports and services are provided to those individuals seeking Aboriginal spiritual guidance and teachings – federal staff, government agencies, community groups, schools and the public at large. The facility provides one-on-one counseling sessions, culturally-relevant workshops, and referral services for organizations, cultural teachings, healing and space for meditation and smudging. The Dodem Kanonhsa' has forged a reputation for quality services, inclusiveness and community-oriented programming.

The majority of our events are FREE to the public!

ⁱ Anishinaabe Kendaaswin Publishing, Year of the Spirit Moon Calendar 1998



Top row: National Aboriginal Day; Middle row: Christmas at the lodge; Bottom row (left to right): National Aboriginal Day, Opening Ceremonies 1998

Insight into Dodem Kanonhsa' from the Founders



Susan Hunter, Jamie Maracle

How did the project start?

Jamie: The 1990s Oka Crisisⁱ resulted in having a cultural facility built in Ottawa [*Gatineau, Quebec*].

Susan: It was named Kumik [*Kiche Anishnabe Kumik*] and the main focus of this facility was to improve understanding among staff after the Oka uprising. Later on in the 90s there was a protest in Brantford which involved our employees and people from the public and to resolve these issues we felt there was a need for a similar cultural facility in Toronto.

Wayne: When Oka happened, there was a conundrum between the Aboriginal people who worked for the federal government at Indian Affairs [*Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada*]. They were morally in a conundrum, because on one hand they wanted to support the Aboriginal cause and on the other hand, they were working for the Crown. This was the premises for Kumik [*Kiche Anishnabe Kumik*], the vision was to provide Aboriginal staff with an opportunity to learn about their traditions, talk to Elders, get counselling, understand the reasons behind Oka uprising and what should have been done. Our mandate started out as such and we had a support from Scott Serson who was a Deputy Minister at that time, he said: "Given that Ontario has a large Aboriginal population, 128 reserves there is a need for similar facility in Ontario." The original mission was to support Aboriginal federal employees, but then we quickly realized that there is a whole community in which Aboriginal employees reside. So our mandate expanded to include all people: Native and Non-Native who are interested in learning about Aboriginal culture. We felt that the best way to facilitate learning and support the communities is to utilize Dodem Kanonhsa'

ⁱ "On July 11 1990, Quebec provincial police tried to dismantle a roadblock set up in mid-March by a group of Mohawks from the community of Kanesatake on the outskirts of Montréal who were trying to prevent the nearby town of Oka from expanding a golf course onto lands sacred to local Mohawks. One police officer was killed during the raid. For 78 days, armed Mohawk warriors faced Quebec provincial police, and later the Canadian Armed Forces, across a roadblock barricade. Just days before the conclusion of the Oka Crisis, on September 25, 1990, the Canadian government announced a new agenda to improve Canada's relationship with First Nations people" (A History of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (2011). Retrieved from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.)

Wayne (cont.): as a facility where people can discuss any issues, learn about the culture, share their concerns, opinions, learn about policies and politics of the Aboriginal people.

Jamie: I remember going to our “Aboriginal Employment Steering Committee” meeting and getting all my arguments ready to present that we need such a facility in Ontario. Our Regional Director General was delivering a presentation, and one of the key things she said in her closing statement was, “...the Ontario region needs to have a facility like the facility in Ottawa.” That made my presentation easier!

Susan: We wanted it to be an Elder facility, we envisioned Elders, visiting schools, employees, everyone having teachings, participating in circles, having a feast and enjoying art displays.

Jamie: Dodem Kanonhsa’ was established eight years after the Kumik [*Kiche Anishnabe Kumik*] facility was established and it was about six years before any other region had established similar facilities. The Ontario region led the way by long shot, and it is the best equipped facility, I would say.



Opening Ceremonies 1998



Opening Ceremonies 1998

Who were some of the contributors?

Wayne: We entered into the partnership with non-profit, non-political Aboriginal agency with a great reputation which is the Native Canadian Center of Toronto. It is a partnership that works well and it is a very productive relationship. Dodem Kanonhsa’ is an initiative that was developed with joined cooperation between Aboriginal community, the Native Canadian Centre [*of Toronto*] and the Federal Government.



Opening Ceremonies 1998

Susan: We had people from the Department of Public Works [*Public Works and Government Services Canada*], Indian Affairs [*Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada*], the architects from Rutherford Contracting – Robin Tharin and Horst Theis; Lillian McGregor was the Elder at that time.

Our Regional Director (John Donnelly) was in favour of such a facility; and as such Dodem Kanonhsa' was created. The Native Canadian Centre of Toronto has been providing administrative and support services for this project.

Jamie: I remember, we had five committees set up and I was on four of them, and then I was pulled to the fifth one! Those were fun times, because it was an important project and of course it is near and dear to my heart.

[Members of the committees: Frances Sanderson, Rodney Bobiwash, Martin John, John Loukes, Melanie Fengler, Sarah Naveau, Brenda Nadjiwan, Walter Luciŵ, Paul Mountjoy]

What were some of the challenges?

Jamie: Our first challenge was finding someone to partner with. We wanted a community organization that knew how to connect with the Elders and knew the traditions. We approached a number of different organizations and the Native Canadian Centre [*of Toronto*] came forward and said that they are willing to assist us with this project and partner up. From there I can't think of any other major challenges – we had very good support from management.

I have a cute story which I love sharing! We wanted to find a Native architect to design the facility, but we couldn't find any that were willing to take on the project, as they were all out of town, so we ended up hiring a Non-Native firm.

Jamie (cont.): To preface the story I want to make it clear that the architects [*Robin Tharin and associates*] did a wonderful job. They were excellent, they came up with a number of ideas that we didn't even think were possible, like the fact that the roof is pitched; we thought it would have to be flat, provided the layout of the room. They also came up with the idea of the skylight. Kudos to them!

But the cute part of the story is: on our initial meeting we talked to them about the importance of burning sweetgrass for smudgingⁱ. At the next meeting they came back with their blue print drawings outlining fire containment, fire suppression, and fire dampening. I was a little surprised, "Wow, do we really need all that?"

"Oh, yes, in order to pass fire department standards and regulations, you will need all of these."

"But we've been burning sweetgrass in the office all the time!"

So I went and I got some sweetgrass, took it down to the meeting, and explained what it is all about. "Oh, that's what it is!" they realized and we all had a good laugh. They thought we were going to have a bonfire in there!

Another part of this story is when Susan Hunter and I walked out of this meeting, we looked at each other, "Darn, we should've gone ahead with the idea and have the bonfires in there! Maybe cook a rack of moose!" (But again, I am sharing this story a little bit at their expense, so I would like to highlight again that they did a great job, they provided a lot of good ideas and were very capable.)

ⁱ"Smudge: Common to some nations, this is a ceremony of purification, involving the burning of sacred medicines, and using the smoke to cleanse spaces and clear the senses." (*Key Terminology Guidebook for Reporting on Aboriginal Topics*. (n.d.). Retrieved from SABAR - Strategic Alliance of Broadcaster for Aboriginal Reflection)



Dodem Kanonhsa' 2013



Lillian McGregor, AMMSA website

Naming of the Lodge:

Jamie: Lillian McGregor was a good guide for us and she helped us very much with naming the facility. We wanted a name that is complete, that reflects all three traditions - the Cree, Rotinonshon:ni and Anishnawbe. We wanted to find a short name for the lodge, so that it wouldn't get shortened, that is why we went with Dodem Kanonhsa'. I am still guilty at advisory committee [meetings], as I am always the one who keeps nagging everyone when they call it just the "Dodem".

Susan: The word "Dodem" exists in both Cree and Ojibwe languages and it means - *clan*, "Kanonhsa'" Kenienkaha (Mohawk) means - *lodge* and it is transcribed in Cree syllabics.



How do you like the way the Dodem Kanonhsa' has developed?

Frances: It was developed as a resource facility to help government personnel who had dealings with Aboriginal organizations and Aboriginal people. I think this worked out really well; it is true to its purpose.

Susan: I am happy with how it has developed. The programs are great. Some of the programs are run consistently and we always have a variety of new or different programs running as well, which is good.

Jamie: We have had a number of good Program Managers at Dodem Kanonhsa' and they've all brought their own talents, perspectives and abilities - this helped the facility grow tremendously. It keeps developing and we have had very good participation from the community. We struggle a little bit with regards to the participation from the office itself, but that's just the time pressure.

Wayne: I am very pleased with the way Dodem Kanonhsa' has developed as we have a very good reputation within the Aboriginal community. We have the respect of the Elders because we have the respect from the community. We are non-political, we provide decent service and we work well with other agencies that provide complementary services. I would like to acknowledge our partner - the Native Canadian Center [of Toronto]; they certainly have been a strong ally in the delivery of programs and services.



Workshop at Dodem Kanonhsa'



National Aboriginal Day



Teachings

What are your aspirations for this organization?

Jamie: Native traditions are so important, so I hope it continues on in the way that it has. Dodem Kanonhsa' has offered many good programs and brought many great Elders. I hope we continue working on the development of the "Aboriginal Awareness" course in Dodem Kanonhsa'. The only thing I would like to see in addition to what we already have would be a bit more participation from the office.

Susan: There is a reason for the facilities existence and people appreciate what the facility offers. It is on a good path and I hope it continues that way and people continue to use the facility for various workshops.

Frances: Bigger. It needs to be more far-reaching. It needs to be developed into an Educational facility.

Wayne: It is a good core operation; it's built on policies that were developed over the last 15 years. People feel comfortable to have teachings, participate in circles or share stories here. We work very well with schools, and they bring students to hear legends and learn about how Aboriginal people lived. We have sound programs and services within the limits of the budget, we are well managed and we deliver stable services. So in regards to the future, I hope Dodem Kanonhsa' maintains its existing direction.



National Aboriginal Day



Celebration at Dodem Kanonhsa'

What are some of the most memorable events/teachings/impact?

Susan: I would say that the major impact for me was on the cultural side. When working from nine to five, it is difficult to find time to be exposed to cultural teachings. When Dodem Kanonhsa' opened, and the cultural teaching became available to us we finally had a chance to learn. I know some employees are more in tune with the cultural teaching than others, for instance Jamie lives and breathes culture,

but I didn't have that exposure, so it was an eye-opening experience when I was finally introduced to it!

Jamie: They are all very valuable to me, and I wouldn't be able to single one out. I remember, Curtis Nelson talked about "Reconciliation" teaching, I also remember Anishnawbe teaching about "Relationship with the World", "Stages of Life"; and "History", and they are all so beautiful. I am struggling to highlight just the one.

It is amazing how much teaching an Elder can fit into just one lunch hour. In some cases Amy [*Program Manager*] has coordinated day-long sessions, which people can attend as well.

There have been many Elders that have provided open teachings for which I am thankful. We've had many excellent programs: workshops, language classes, First Nations Day [*National Aboriginal Day*]ⁱ celebration, "Visiting Schools Program" [*Aboriginal Education Outreach Program – AEOP*]. It is beautiful how Dodem Kanonhsa' has grown environmentally as well – when we first built the facility there were just blank walls, because we wanted the facility to grow into itself.

ⁱOn June 13, 1996, the Governor General of Canada proclaimed June 21st to be National Aboriginal Day, offering Aboriginal peoples an excellent opportunity to share their rich, diverse cultures with family members, neighbours, friends and visitors.... June 21st was chosen because of the cultural significance of the summer solstice (first day of summer and longest day of the year) and because many Aboriginal groups mark this day as a time to celebrate their heritage. Setting aside a day for Aboriginal peoples is part of the wider recognition of Aboriginal peoples' important place within the fabric of Canada and their ongoing contributions as First Peoples. (*National Aboriginal Day History*. (2010). Retrieved from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada)

Jamie(cont.): Then, one day an Elder came in and said, “You should have a mural here” and there it was. Another Elder came along, “You need to have the Clans represented here.” The facility keeps on growing and this is beautiful because it is its own facility.

Wayne: I am a Non-Aboriginal myself: my mother was Scottish and my father was Chinese, I grew up in the Northern Ontario. There were some racial overtones in the Northern Ontario, between French and English, black people, Aboriginal people but I grew up with a mindset that we are as good as anybody else, and didn’t dwell on racism. Aboriginal communities really accepted me for who I am.



Wayne Wong

I found that the extent of their family is beyond their immediate family bloodline. In my case I was married to an Aboriginal woman and we had a child together. Later on we got divorced and she had other children, I didn’t separate the children, and helped raising her children as my own. That is how Aboriginal community is; everyone helps each other out and cares about each other. I have four grandchildren all together! Every child is a blessing.

Frances: Oh my goodness, the individual teachings are good and the opportunity to gather to feast is good. The mini pow-wow which they have for the First Nation’s Day [*National Aboriginal Day*] is a good awareness event. The inclusiveness of the Dodem Kanonhsa is a good thing.

Part of the teachings I do myself. It is always good to listen to other Elders just to hear the same story with a different accent, with a different twist as it reinforces the teachings that you know already and that are common to your own nation. It is the opportunity to listen to the wide range of Elders that broadens the educational value of it. I like different teachings, I liked when Rose did hers, I liked Jackie Laval’s teaching when she made huge “Dream-Catchers” using the little ones. I like to listen to Alex Jacob talking about the



Top row: Vern Harper, Steve Teekens; Bottom Row: workshop

Frances (cont.): language. There are many, there is always something beneficial from every single teaching and every single Elder I have ever listened to.

Are you an Elder?

Frances: Unfortunately! *[laughs]*

How did you become an Elder?

Frances: Age. It happens when you wake up and you are old one day! It happens when you have been around for a long time and you have learned. Other Elders have passed on information through me for the next generation. Being an Elder is nothing more than being a bridge, a bridge from the past to the future. That is exactly what an Elder does – bridges the generations. They teach you that it is not what everybody does; it is only what you do. It is general and it is the information that people can take away and apply to their own life.

What is your fondest memory?

Jamie: Every time I go to Dodem Kanonhsa' it is my fondest memory! Just walking in reminds me of all of the wonderful Elders that have been through, beautiful dances that we've done there, great workshops that we had there, all the great program managers and excellent people on the advisory committee. Every time I walk in there and see an Elder that I haven't had a chance to visit with in a long time I feel the joy to see that individual again!

Susan: My fondest memory about Dodem Kanonhsa' is the camaraderie feeling – it is open and it brings people together. People of different nationalities come and participate to have a better understanding of our cultures.

Wayne: I have one that is very recent. When I worked with the Union of Ontario Indians I have noticed that they display images of their Elders on the wall of the lodge. I thought it is a great way to recognize the Elders and we could do something like that at Dodem Kanonhsa'. It took quite some time for this project to get off the ground, but eventually we build upon it, hired a professional Aboriginal photographer to take pictures of the Native Canadian Center [of Toronto], invited people and had a great turnout. I think the Elders really liked the experience! Now the project is up and running and you can see the images of the Elders and members of the community on the TV in the waiting room, I think we have about 30 images at this point!

Another fond memory that I have is when I was leaving. Before I retired, Amy [Program Manager] and I went to meet with the Elders counsel. I had spent a number of years as a treasury of the Native Canadian Center [of Toronto], so I wanted to explain to them that I have learned a lot and that I am very grateful for the experience. When I finished going through my personal recollections, I was nominated for an "Eagle Feather"ⁱ by the Taam Kaadinakijik Elder's Advisory Circle.

Last time I was at the Dodem Kanonhsa' they had a ceremony to present me with an "Eagle Feather". This is a very high honour for me and of course I am very touched by it. We had a First Nations [National Aboriginal Day] picnic, Dan and Mary Lou [traditional teachers] wanted to present the "Eagle Feather" outside while we were having a picnic, but they got into a fender-bender and couldn't make it. So they had a shorter ceremony with another "Eagle Feather", and when the picnic was over we had a small ceremony at the Dodem Kanonhsa' with the original one.

ⁱ"Eagle Feather: Special significance is attached to the eagle and its feathers. A symbol of respect and honour, it is a sacred item, often used in ceremonies. To be given an eagle feather is the highest honour that can be earned within many Aboriginal cultures." (Key Terminology Guidebook for Reporting on Aboriginal Topics. (n.d.). Retrieved from SABAR - Strategic Alliance of Broadcaster for Aboriginal Reflection)



Wayne Wong and Dan Smoke



Teaching



Visiting Schools Program



Workshop

What would you advise for the new generation to strive for?

Susan: I would encourage the youth to participate in the “Visiting School Program” [*Aboriginal Education Outreach Program – AEOP*] at the Native Centre [*Native Canadian Centre of Toronto*]. It was actually born at Dodem Kanonhsa’, when employees went to schools and introduced “Aboriginal Awareness” sessions. It is still ongoing, and it is very successful. Also, I would encourage youth to go to the Dodem Kanonhsa’ for a teaching.

Jamie: Traditions. Know who you are, take strength in your traditions. So many beautiful teachings, so much wisdom and knowledge in all of the cultures, it would be devastating to lose that. The previous and current generations have done what we can to keep those traditions alive, therefore it is important for the next generations to keep the knowledge and build upon that, strengthen the people and community.

Wayne: Recently, I was at convocation as my son just got his degree at Carlton University, and the keynote speaker Thomson Highway (Aboriginal playwright) was sharing the words of wisdom with the new graduates. He has mentioned happiness. I agree, new generations should strive for something that makes them happy, something that interests them. They should share the wonders of life and take the time to see people, for who they are.

Frances: The language. The language is such an important aspect of the Aboriginal culture. That will be the one thing that any Elder that I have spoken to would encourage people - to gain some knowledge of their language. Even if it is just a little bit.

Insights from the Elders:

When did you first come to know Dodem Kanonhsa'?

Pauline: I've known Dodem Kanonhsa' from the very beginning, when they just started to talk about it.

Eileen: I first came to know Dodem Kanonhsa' when I worked at the Native Canadian Centre *[of Toronto]*. I worked with students that were looking to enhance their career prospects. So when they had the grand opening for Dodem Kanonhsa' in 1998, my students and I went there to hear various Elders doing traditional teachings.

Later on when I started to work at the university again, I would on occasion take my students to Dodem Kanonhsa' to hear traditional teachings.

The other reason I went to Dodem Kanonhsa' was because I was singing with the Wahahi:io singers and it was at Dodem Kanonhsa' where we practiced our social songs.

Grafton: I was working at the Native Urban Ministry in Toronto and I was connected with everybody! Frances Sanderson was a chair on the board of the Native Urban Ministry of Toronto and she had invited me to an event. She said, "We are having an event at Dodem Kanonhsa' and we'd like you to be there." So, I was there, with all my literature, dancing shoes and everything else!

I remember everyone coming in, us building up and smudging the lodge, it was a really nice event. I was helping them and they were helping me. That is how I came to know Dodem Kanonhsa'.



Pauline Shirt



Eileen Antone



Grafton Antone



Pauline Shirt

Can you share a story about your journey to being an Elder?

Pauline's journey to being an Elder:

It's been a beautiful journey, with its ups and downs and that is what life is all about. My life is dedicated to taking care of the spirits (the spiritual self) and to make the community a healthy place. Whatever I could do to help out, I would do.

I speak my language and I was brought up in our "Way of Life" therefore spirituality is a thing with which I am very comfortable. I came to Ontario from Alberta about 45 years ago, as there were a lot of questions in regards to our culture and not a lot of sessions that could provide the insights. We had started the "Native Concerned Citizen" group sessions at the Native Canadian Centre *[of Toronto]* where we could talk about various needs such as housing issues and developing social programs. Also, I was asked to help out with

the programs that involve Elders, which is the focus of *Dodem Kanonhsa'*. I was particularly interested in the education topic with respect to our "Way of Life".

Now, my children are following my footsteps and are also traditional teachers.

Can you explain what your "Way of Life" is?

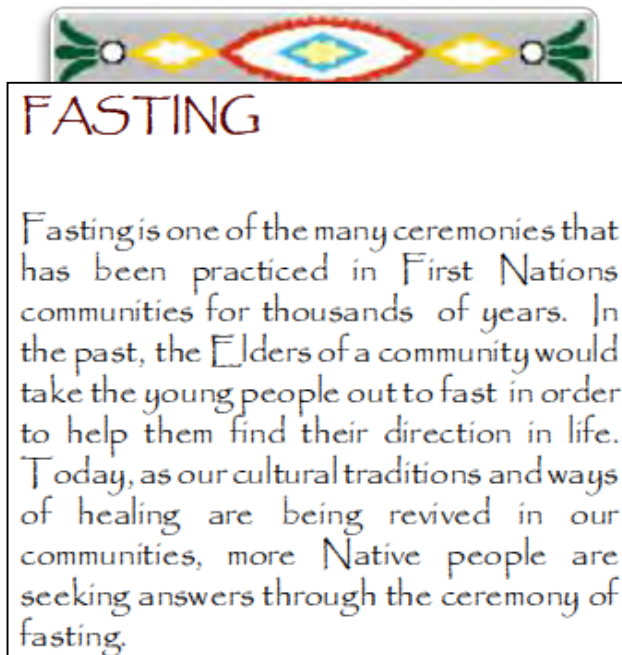
I am 70 years old now and I was brought up in this "Way of Life". When I was born I chose both of my parents as my vehicles and I chose the sacred Red colour, I chose to be a Cree woman of a Cree nation with a spiritual name. When I came into this world I was raised by my mother in her womb for nine moons and that is where I have received my education, my Foundation for Life and understanding of what is our "Way of Life". I have learned the "Seven stages of life", and all the sacred tools that I was going to use. When I was ready to be born and able to breathe on my own my grandmother was there, my siblings were there, and my father was there to meet me and help me out with fire and food. I was really well grounded and had a very good support system with my mom and my dad. I also, had a good education from the "dominant" culture.

Part of our “Way of Life” education is fasting and I started fasting when I was very young. I always had strong support all around, even if I would wander off the trail, there was always someone to help me out. My father was a farmer and he taught me to respect and take care of the Mother Earth and to love the animals. My mother did a lot of gardening and taught me the love and appreciation of beauty and flowers. I then had my children and I have learned what it is like to be a parent. As I was growing older and was going through the seven stages of life, I tried to deal with it in the best way I could.

Now my children have children and their children have children; I have three great-grandchildren and I feel very rich in this sense. I was able to relish the good way of life, as everything was given to us in a good way. I was blessed with a lot of good things for which I am grateful.



(from left to right) Luanna Harper, Pauline Shirt, Rhonda Seebach



Information is taken from Anishinawbe Health
Toronto pamphlet, 2000, Fasting

At this point I can look back and smile at my moccasin tracks. But when I look at the tracks that are a little dusty, I sweep them away and correct the situation. This has always been my Life.

I am educated in the “dominant” culture and in our “Way of Life”. I am 4th degree grandmother in our Three Fires Lodge and also Buffalo Grandmother Chief and the Grandmother’s Council. I am, also, the Elder at George Brown and I love it.

I, also, know that there is a beautiful life ahead of us. Hai, Hai for asking me to share some good thoughts and insights for Dodem Kanonhsa’.



Grafton Antone, Red works Studio

Grafton's journey to being an Elder:

I was born! *[laughing]* I went to school. I was fortunate to have solid parents, big family: my mother had eleven children and I was number four (four is a lucky number as it completes all four elements!) I was fortunate to have good health, good parents, and good teachers. I had an Aboriginal teacher, which was rare at that time. I became friends with other good students, received good grades and grew up in a good community. I was on a good path. I played sports, went fishing, hunting, going through the stages of life.

I grew up on a small self-sustaining farm, where we had horses, cows, pigs, cats and dogs (of course), we, also, maintained a garden. The men used to help my father with farming: they would come with a threshing machine to separate the grain from stalks and husks and then move on to the next farm. On the other hand, the women were preparing excellent meals for all the men that were coming to help. I learned how to take care of the farm and the animals.

While I was in Detroit, I saw people that became drunks, losing everything. Those were the people that I knew, but I didn't want to follow their life style, so I went to church, and this helped me to stay focused. I was responsible all the time (not just part-time) and looked after my wife and my children, and I still do.

There are many routes in life, and I chose a faithful and responsible route. I believe I have a good and strong family. I continued to work hard when I came back to Canada. I followed a good path, helped anyone I could help along the way. I then went to university and got my degree and then got my masters, all of that was part of the good work that I was doing. When I came to Toronto I joined The Toronto Urban Native Ministry. There were a lot of good people around, and I was well known to all the leaders. I've done weddings, baptisms and funerals. Then, eventually, somebody put my name forward, I believe it was my wife (I have to say good things, she is not too far away!) *[laughing]* and that is my path to how I became an Elder. Lillian McGregor helped me out a lot, she was an Elder in Toronto and she was a good friend of ours. She had a good reputation; she brought me along and opened a lot of doors for me. Dodem Kanonhsa' was a place where Elders would meet, and that is where our paths crossed many times.

Eileen's journey to being an Elder:

I grew up in the Oneida community, on a self-sustaining farm. We had our animals for food; we had gardens and fields of vegetables. We supplied food not only for our own family but for other people as well. My father supplied milk to dairy companies and cucumbers to the pickling plant in Leamington, while my mother was canning vegetables for us for the winter. It was from my parents that I have learned about being self-sustaining. I went to school in the community from grade one to grade six. It was at school Oneida #2, where I took all the European courses. It was during that time that they started to offer music classes at a different school. Music was part of my tradition: my grandfather was a musician, he played a clarinet, my father played a clarinet, my uncle played drums, clarinet, saxophone and piano and my other uncle played piano, drums. On my maternal side, my grandfather played trumpet, trombone, other wind instruments and piano. Music was available to us in the community. While in grade six, I started to take music – I played a trumpet, but it didn't last very long. We had an instructor that did not appreciate children the same way our people did, so I got out of the band for several years. Later on, I started to play clarinet again with our community in the marching band.



Eileen Antone, Red Works Studio

All my children and grandchildren followed the tradition and play instruments as well. Music is part of my background and part of my learning. It taught me to co-operate, work in a team, be respectful and other things that are necessary to be part of a community. When I went into the “Non-Native” world, these are the kind of things that went with me. This is one part of my journey.

Then, I graduated from school, went on to university, received my undergraduate degree, after that I received a degree in teaching, then my master's degree and finally I earned Doctor of Education. I was offered a job in University of Toronto where I worked with Native and Non-Native students who were interested in learning about traditional teachings of our people.

You are calling me an “Elder”, but I don't call myself an “Elder”. It is people around that make that decision. They recognize when you are doing a job that they appreciate, and let you know if they think you are an Elder or not.

I worked a lot with Lillian McGregor and I learned a lot from her. She worked at University of Toronto, and when she would do teachings, she would invite me to be her helper. She was one of the teachers who enabled me to work in the community and with the people. I had an opportunity to learn more about our community.

What is your fondest memory of being at the lodge?

Pauline: My fondest memory of being at the lodge is just looking at people while I am praying. When I am in communication with all of the spirits and I see people at the lodge, I see their beautiful smiles and I know they are using their spirits in a good way. I see beautiful energy, light and I feel that we are all being of one mind. I have had many experiences like that at the lodge, because we are all there together and it is beautiful.

Grafton: Dodem Kanonhsa' is a place set aside for Aboriginal employees to have cultural understanding and for cultural events to happen. I walked my path and I have visited Dodem Kanonhsa' and done teachings for the staff and whoever else came there. Fifteen years went by so fast! The impact on my life has been the friendships that I have developed - that is what I value most.

Eileen: I have a lot of fond memories, I remember an Elder that came in and had a teaching about "Medicine Wheels". She used flowers, yarn and feathers to explain the four directions, journey of life and the "Seven Grandfathers". She showed that the feathers that are coming off the four directions give us the opportunity to make choices; the other symbols give us the opportunity to know that our life comes from the "spirit" world to which we pass again. She explained the "Seven Grandfathers": Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth. I really appreciated the teachings and it was very helpful to have all the material for the teachings. I still remember it very vividly, as it was hands-on and I was able to relate to the teachings. I, also, really enjoyed the fact that you could listen to the Elders and speak with them.

I think when they invite Elders it is very important, because it enables people to come to the lodge and gather together to hear some of the teachings which are very prudent to the Aboriginal community. Dodem Kanonhsa' has an ambience that gives the feeling that we are part of this place.

What would you advise for the new generation to strive for?

Eileen: I would advise the new generation to know where they are and who they are, because if they know who they are, they will not be afraid and will not put other people down in order to raise themselves up.

For the Native people I would advise them to learn their language, learn their culture as what they learn in the language will show them how to live. I would advise them to continue getting an education. For the Non-Native people I would advise them to study the history of Canada, which includes the Aboriginal people.

Grafton: I would advise our young people (both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal) to learn languages. You should become a master in your own language as that is what you need to preserve the culture. It is not a burden to be multi-lingual, you should learn Ojibwe, Oneida, English, French, pick up some Chinese, Spanish and Russian!

Pauline: I would advise the new generation to strive for living a good life, and by good life I mean they should care about their body, mind and spirit:

- carrying and using their medicine bundle in a good way,
- never forgetting who they are,
- being happy and enjoying their life.

It is a beautiful life. We are very rich and our richness is in our medicine bundle.

THE FOUR SACRED MEDICINES

Tobacco is the first plant that the Creator gave to Native people. It is the main activator of all the plant spirits. Three other plants, sage, cedar and sweetgrass, follow tobacco, and together they are referred to as the four sacred medicines.

The four sacred medicines are used in everyday life and in ceremonies. All of them can be used to smudge with, though sage, cedar and sweetgrass also have many other uses.

Information is taken from Anishinawbe Health Toronto pamphlet, 2000, The Four Sacred Medicines

Special Thanks to Our Wisdomkeepers

**Chi-Miigwetch
We'lalin
Nia:wen**

for your contributions, guidance & teachings through the years.

**To see more stories and biographies, please visit:
www.dodemkanonhsa.ca**





Mary Assinewe,
Sagamok FN



Joanne Dallaire,
Attawapiskat FN



Isaac Day, Serpent
River FN



Kevin Deer, Six
Nations



Jim Dumont,
Shawanaga FN



Rodney Eli,
Batchewana Bay



Troy Greene, Six
Nations



Vern Harper, Cree



Alex Jacobs,
Whitefish Lake FN



Doug Knockwood,
Shubenacadie FN



Laini Lascelles,
Moravian of the
Thames



Arrole Lawrence,
Keeseekoownin FN



Janice Longboat, Six
Nations



Brenda MacIntyre



Curtis Nelson,
Akwesasne



Eleanor Pine,
Sagamok FN



Ernie Sandy,
Beausoleil FN



Gilbert Sewell,
Pabineau FN



Clayton Shirt, Cree



Paul Skanks,
Kahnawake



Sarah Smith, Six
Nations



Dan Smoke, Six
Nations



Mary Lou Smoke,
Blind River FN



Anne Solomon,
Anishinawbe



Yvonne Thomas, Six
Nations



Renee Thomas-Hill,
Six Nations



Gordon Williams,
Cree Nation



David Willow, Rama
FN

Dodem Kanonhsa' Community Medicine Bundle

Symbols and Stories of the lodge from S. Amy Desjarlais, *[Manager of Dodem Kanonhsa' Cultural Facility]*

Do you have any stories about how you first came to know the lodge?



Amy Desjarlais

I will never forget my first week: I met over 300 people!

It was the Tenth Anniversary of the Dodem Kanonhsa', I met staff at Aboriginal Affairs, and hosted a large tour of building neighbours. The celebration was already in full swing on my first day. The committee had planned to host a wonderful display of artifacts from the Royal Ontario Museum, a luncheon and photo shoot of the Elders at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. It was a great way to meet the Elders, as they were already gathering together. It was fantastic! I wanted to have something for them, so Susan Hunter and I went out shopping the night before the luncheon!

It was just a really nice way to start my new life here in Toronto!

There was a nice ceremony for the outgoing Manager – Julia Valencia, and then they introduced me as the new manager. I was nervous and excited. I said a few words of appreciation and gave out the gifts to the Elders.

Which value do you consider most important when dealing with the lodge?

It is always important to demonstrate Respect. Respect for the lodge, means keeping a clean and tidy appearance, welcoming and respecting each visitor through the door, respecting people's views and perspectives on life. It is important to ensure that the lodge is a safe place to express those opinions and perspectives.



Wayne Wong, Julia Valencia

Respecting yourself is, also, very important. Some of the things I noticed when working here is the importance of self-care. Energetically, a lot of people come through those doors. A lot of really intense healing, learning and sharing happens here.

There are so many people coming to learn and ask questions we must keep ourselves balanced and grounded. One way to do that is to cleanse our work area and ourselves. Just as you pick up dirt, grime and need to shower, so your spirit and energy pick up negativity, stress and need to be cleansed. Whatever helps you to feel good about yourself – do it. You could, also, discuss with the Elders, different ways of grounding yourself, attracting positive energy and/or clearing negative energy.

I would suggest talking to the Elders about protocols (there are certain protocols when visiting an Elder for the first time). Lodge staff or the helper will share protocols about Offering of tobacco, Sacred items, Moon time, Smudging. Discuss protocols with clients when they arrive for their first visit with an Elder.

Finally, as Wayne Wong always says, “Always be sure someone is at the lodge in case someone is in need.”

What does the lodgekeeper need to know about taking care of the lodge?

This question is quite interesting, because on the surface the job appears like any other managerial position: plan, organize, document, take minutes, answer phones, etc. You can further your development by taking training such as leadership, project planning, management, coordinating, office administration, etc. These types of skills are transferrable to any other position, especially for the ambitious people who want to further a career in business management, program management or supervision.

What is not readily apparent are the lodgekeeper duties. When I came for the interview and received the tour of the lodge the interviewers alluded to it. Barely. For example, when we walked into the lodge, they mentioned that the building cleaners are not allowed into the lodge to clean. Maintenance and cleanliness of the lodge itself are solely the responsibilities of the lodgekeeper. I became slowly aware of these types of responsibilities, as I grew into myself and became better aware of the lodge.

I don't know why but I always refer to the lodge as a “She”. After so many years of ceremonies at the lodge and taking care of the people I feel that as if the lodge has developed her own personality. She is the inviting one. She is the welcoming one. It is her spirit that we must remember to care for.

Why Having a Spirit Name is Important

Everything in Creation has a name. The trees, animals, plants, fish, water and air all have names. When we receive our spirit name, we know who we are in Creation. We are able to identify ourselves when we communicate with the spirit of each thing in Creation.

A spirit name is important for a good beginning, strong prayers and the good life. A spirit name is important for personal protection against sickness and disease.

Your spirit name is said to be fifty percent of your healing and balance because, with it, you know who you are, you know where you belong, you know where you are going and you know where you came from.

Information is taken from Anishinawbe Health Toronto pamphlet, 2000, Your Names and Colours

Can you share some insights about naming the lodge?

An Elder searched for her name. It was along process to find her name, in the end, one came for her – Dodem Kanonhsa', *Clan Lodge*. This is her spirit name. This understanding came after I, also, received my own spirit name from Lillian Pitawanakwat - one of the grandmothers who came to visit the lodge. We are told to care for our name and search for the meaning. I often refer to Dodem Kanonhsa' as an "All Nation" lodge, where all peoples from all nations, backgrounds, and heritage can come to learn. Everyone is welcome to come here to learn about Aboriginal, First Nations, Metis peoples and also to learn more about themselves. In order to care for the name, we hosted a special potluck in 2011 to honour and feast the name of the lodge. I was not sure if it had been done since the opening and so, I wanted to remind people about why the lodge is here and to give thanks. She'd done a lot of work in the thirteen years she had been here – she must have been very hungry! *[laughing]*

Do you know any of the stories behind the lodge's bundle and how they came to be at the lodge.

For lodgekeepers, whatever the traditions from your background are, be sure to include the lodge in your ceremonies. I am Anishinabekwe. So, the things I do to take care of my own bundle, I do the same for the lodge bundle. Every time I feast my drum, I also take the lodge drums and feast them too, so they can continue to do the work they do for the community. I learn what items are in the bundle and make sure I can trace the stories of each item. Stories are an important part of passing along the history.

Medicines

We carry four sacred medicines and strive to ensure each medicine is available upon the request of our visiting Elders for their ceremonies and during their visits. The four sacred medicines are Tobacco, White sage, Cedar and sweetgrass. Sometimes the medicines are purchased, either to support local vendors or suppliers. Other times we acquire medicines through trade, or via donation by community members.

Seven Grandfather stones

Anishinabe teachings talk about the Seven Grandfathers, a story often spoken about and referred to by many of our Elders, in reference to a set of values. The actual values vary depending on the Elder and their teacher, though the most notable as shared by Edward Benton-Benai, Grand Chief, Three Fires Society: Wisdom, Love, Honesty, Humility, Respect, Bravery, and Truth.

These particular stones were gifted by an Elder on their visit to the Dodem Kanonhsa' to assist with the teaching of the Seven Grandfathers. Stones are said to be our oldest relatives on Earth.



Drums

The original Dodem Kanonhsa' drum was a community effort. The **hide** was made by Dave White formerly of Moona-Wagin Native Crafts, it was recovered by Richard Lathwell, Wolf Clan, Nakoda Nation. Richard volunteered to host Yoga classes here. He now lives on Manitoulin Island. While he was in Toronto he was involved with many, many organizations as Board member, volunteer, etc. (He was one of the first people to help get me oriented in the city and introduced me to many people when I first arrived!) The **frame** was donated by Steve Teekens. Steve facilitates many of our hand drum making workshops. The **drumstick** was made by Jamie Maracle.



A second hand drum was gifted by the mother of one of my drum sisters. Her name is Marieta Hollo. She gifted it to the Dodem Kanonhsa' in recognition and gratitude for the hand drum circles she attended. She lived in the Yukon, and came to the circles because of her daughter. She learned a great deal and really enjoyed the circles she attended.



The third and final hand drum was made by Amy Desjarlais *[myself]* and purchased specifically for use by community. People who want to learn how to drum, but do not currently have one can use the drum to experience the drumming circle.



Four directions flags

The four directions flags are made from a yard of cotton in each of the four sacred colours: red, yellow, black and white. These teaching tools are often referred to by our Elders in their teachings. They represent many teachings, the four directions: East, South, West, North; the four elements: water, earth, air, fire; the four stages of life: infant, youth, adult, Elder; and many, many more.

These particular flags were hung by myself on request from Pauline Shirt, they contain a bit of samaa (Tobacco) in one corner.



Smudge bowls

The smudge bowls are changed regularly. You could use either an abalone or a soap stone shell. Sometimes these are gifts from visitors (bought or even acquired as giveaways).



Sash

Inherited as part of the Dodem Kanonhsa' teaching tools, it is photographed in many of the early events hosted here at the Dodem Kanonhsa', unfortunately its story remains a mystery. Perhaps, once this book is shared, the person who donated it will come forward.

Seventh Generation Mural

I recently came across the history behind the mural in the Elder's room (place where many Elders sit during their one to one visits with clients. The youth created this particular mural. Native Child and Family Services has a long-running program called Seventh Generation Image makers. The program is designed so that youth working with Native Child and Family Services have access to art supplies and learn different artistic techniques which are then used to create murals across the city and within organizations like ours.



The youth continuously change as they move through the program and the creativity of our youth is constantly encouraged, honoured and expressed.



Turtle

Inherited as part of the Dodem Kanonhsa' teaching tools, he has helped in many of the circles and teachings unfortunately its story also remains a mystery. Perhaps once this book is shared, the person who donated it will come forward. The turtle is reflected in our friend here, as well as in the centre of our Lodge. The image of the Turtle reminds us of our beginnings.

A symbolic animal of the Anishnabem and Haudenosaunee people, North America is still referred to as Turtle Island. "Father Sky's wife fell through a hole in the sky, and to keep her from drowning, little Muskrat managed to bring up a handful of soil from the bottom of the Ocean...she placed it on the turtle's wide back..." (exerpt from Haudenosaunee Creation Story)



Susan Morrison

Eagle Feathers

There are two different sets of Eagle feathers, one was gifted from an Elder when the lodge opened, and I believe that one came from Lillian McGregor. Susan Morrison dressed the feather with the name of the lodge, and beaded the feather case for it. The other feather case is a gift from Pauline Shirt, it also contains a red-tail hawk feather.





Comments from the Community:

For complete stories from community, please visit our website! www.dodemkanonhsa.ca

Larry Frost: My vision for the Dodem Kanonhsa would be a healing place, and turtle island house where people of all cultures, and come and receive education on the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Leea Litzgus: The Aboriginal community is responsible for why I'm here. My mother's family Algonquin is from Baptiste Lake, so it's who I am. It guides me in everything I do. It's not just one part. It's all of me. Being able to practice ceremony is sometimes really difficult in downtown Toronto. Having a community that I can reach out to and having the Dodem Kanonhsa' has really been helpful in keeping the connections. Dodem Kanonhsa' is a place where I can get reconnected, where I can go for inspiration, reaffirmation, for sharing. Sometimes it's where I go to work

when I present awards, it's a good place for coming together to celebrate...it has a very warm special place in my heart. Whenever I walk in there, I automatically calm down.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Lillian Pitawanakwat, I just loved visiting her there and I brought my husband and my children to meet her. I had so many experiences and teachings with her, including a circle after she passed, where I was able to share stories of her life and let my grief go. I couldn't mention the Dodem Kanonhsa' without mentioning her name.

I would like the Dodem Kanonhsa' to continue to do what it is doing: support for staff with the important work we do with First Nations and educating our youth. I'm thinking more about Non-Aboriginal youth learning our messages, ceremonies and culture. If we get people interested while they are young they usually stay interested and become advocates, ambassadors, friends, and allies.

Marsha Moshinsky: Joining the department over a decade ago I felt particularly green on the indigenous knowledge side and, indeed, it was at the Dodem Kanonhsa' where I received my first 'live' introduction to Aboriginal culture and spirituality. Following that open teaching with the visiting elder, I continued visiting the lodge regularly particularly on my early years at AANDC. Whether it is a visiting elder or workshop, National Aboriginal Day, or a pot-luck-bannock-breakfast-or-other-reason-to-eat, and celebrate and share, I tend to leave the Dodem Kanonhsa' with a sense of having learned from others as well as about myself. I am grateful to be able to give back a little and work with those who help make the Dodem Kanonhsa' such a special place!

Sophie Radecki: It's about connecting people to something that has more meaning outside of just sitting at your desk doing what you need to do for your work responsibilities. That, I think, has been one of the strongest benefits. There is a wonderful feeling as soon as you go into the space. Despite not having great flexibility in my schedule to take advantage of many of the planned events, I know that the Dodem Kanonhsa is a very key support to some of the staff.

I'm always curious when I ride the elevator on the "55 side of our building", because the Citizenship and Immigration office is located on the 2nd Floor. It's very easy for people to miss their stop, or get confused on the elevators. Sometimes when the doors open on the sixth floor a wonderful aroma from a smudge can come into the elevator. I wonder how many visitors might drop in that way. It (the aroma) can draw people to ask 'what 's going on here'.

Some of my direct exposure to Aboriginal cultures, has been through events, whether it's some of the feasts or potlucks, or our ceremonies held in recognition of employees. These have always been rich and fulfilling. There is something about the acoustics within the Dodem Kanonhsa', allow for there to be bigger warmth and richness to laughter - there's a depth that gets added to everything. I'm unsure of how it factored into the original design concepts, but it certainly is something that is tangible.

Daniel Johnson: One of my favourite story is probably just how the Dodem Kanonhsa' brings us together. We've had many potlucks and award ceremonies there.

Carolyn Young: I've been on many of the teachings and workshops and the one that stands out in my mind (I guess it's not even fair to say because you're picking one person, when they're all great). The person that stood out for me is Pauline Shirt. Having a one-on-one conversation with Pauline, proves to be very interesting: things that your parents taught you, Pauline confirms. Pauline has an easy way of drawing one's feelings out of them, guiding them to a balanced place in their life and on to their life's journey.

In regards to the future of Dodem Kanonhsa' I would recommend holding onto our Elders that come to the Dodem Kanonhsa', seeking out new Elders and new teachings. The more Elders we have the better it is. As our generation gets older, it would be a shame if we didn't have the information that I could share with my daughter. But by going to the Dodem Kanonhsa' and connecting with the Elders, I have learnt many things, many teachings and these teachings I can pass down to my daughter.

Anna Roosen-Runge: There is no room large enough in the AANDC Department's office space to allow employees to congregate together comfortably, except in the Dodem Kanonhsa'. Our children are always welcome in the Dodem Kanonhsa'. Many babies have toddled on and around the turtle in the wooden floor. Santa has been to the Dodem Kanonhsa' many many times. The Dodem Kanonhsa' has seen many of us stretching our bodies, our minds and our emotions on the 6th Floor. In my work with the Public Service Alliance of Canada, I have held many union meetings in the Dodem Kanonhsa', with either a positive or negative agenda, and the surroundings have added a calmness to our proceedings that I have always appreciated. Thankfully all employees in Toronto have the opportunity to participate in activities and make the Dodem Kanonhsa' a part of the 'office'.

Sarah Naveau: I have enjoyed the opportunity to take part in various events at the Dodem Kanonhsa' over the past 15 years. Some examples are: employee recognition ceremonies; talking circles with Elders; National Aboriginal Day celebrations; dancing, drumming and singing; arts and crafts displays and sales; and other special celebrations such as retirements and baby showers, or send offs for staff leaving the department. I feel like I've benefitted greatly as an employee of the federal government, and just as a person really, in having been able to have a connection to First Nations cultures on a regular basis through the activities at the Dodem Kanonhsa'. In other work environments I wouldn't have this opportunity and I'm grateful for it. Even if I don't have the chance to make it to as many events as I would wish I still like to know the Dodem Kanonhsa' is here, closeby and available for us to take part in events and be part of the community. That's a very special thing. Miigwetch and here's hoping for another 15 years of success!

Patrick Ku: The Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC) Technical Services unit used to work next door to the Dodem Kanonhsa' since its inception. The current Dodem Kanonhsa' location was originally part of Technical Services office space. We've witnessed the construction of the Dodem Kanonhsa' and its growth, as well as the many uses of the lodge including visits by school children, many AANDC Appreciation Award ceremonies, Children's Christmas parties, yoga sessions, Tai Chi lessons and the fabulous FOOD! and many, many more. Dodem Kanonhsa' is a "home" to many people where they can find peace and relaxation.

Dodem Kanonhsa' has always fulfilled its mission of promoting and sharing of Aboriginal culture with Non-Aboriginal people. The success is attributed to the many volunteers and most of all, the many able and dedicated Administrators who manage the Dodem Kanonhsa'. We congratulate you on your 15th Anniversary and we are confident that there will be many more celebrations in the years to come!

Tony Tino: The Dodem Kanonhsa' for me has been a place with many opportunities to learn, share and experience many of life's wonderful moments, and shed a few pounds when the lodge is full to capacity and temperatures hovering around 40 degrees. Coming to the office in the morning, I often smell the sage, sweet grass and the sacred medicines being used. On special occasions you will also smell the fried bannock from the many social gatherings at the Dodem Kanonhsa'. We have been fortunate of having such incredible and caring individuals managing the Dodem Kanonhsa' and I would like to personally thank Amy and everyone else that supports this special place.

Events at the Dodem to remember include Funding Services and Economic Development meetings, Children's Christmas parties, Yoga classes, teachings, and several ceremonies in recognition of those that support the Aboriginal community and First Nations. The Dodem Kanonhsa' reminds me of our large full family gatherings at my parent/aunt's homes, which I always look forward to. I wish the Dodem Kanonhsa' continued success.



Brenda Nadjiwan: I have always really enjoyed coming to the Dodem Kanonhsa. Apart from all that bannock I have had fun making over the years, I have, from time to time, held meetings, talking circles and workshops here. Many, many participants have talked about the significant contribution this environment has made in terms of the work we've done together. More often than not, words like "profound awareness" would be written into evaluations and I believe it is because of the environment that the Dodem creates. I rarely spoke of this while conducting workshops. I never needed to. People were able to walk into this space and experience it firsthand. People have reflected very deeply and very openly in this space and I do feel it's because of the energy that is created here. It made my work easier, and I am very grateful for that.

A person's energy does change when they come into this area. The Dodem is like a "welcoming home"; it is a place where Aboriginal influence has been allowed to flourish. I'm glad to see that signings take place here; important recognition ceremonies take place here, too. When we recognize staff, I think this is a really good place to do that, because it not only recognizes the person, it acknowledges the spirit, too!

Brenda's Make-it-Sticky-for any-occasion-Bannock

2 cups of unbleached all-purpose flour

¼ tsp baking soda

1 tbsp. of sugar

2 tsp Magic baking powder (I have always believed that everyone needs a little touch of magic in one's life – and here's a good place to start)

1 tsp. salt (if you're one of those "health freaks" I've heard or read about - you can always make it sea salt.)

- Combine all dry ingredients.
- Mix ~half & half of buttermilk and warm water (one cup of each to start)
- Add enough of the butter milk and lukewarm water mixture to make it moist, but still sticky (this should be drier than pancake batter, but wetter than pie crust, kind of shiny and, well, sticky).
- Pour onto a well-floured board. Sprinkle with enough flour, so that you can gently pat it into, about a 2 inch thick blob. Cut into 2x2 inch squares. Cut an X into the middle of each square piece. Fry in about an inch or two of good quality vegetable oil (I use sunflower) until golden on each side. Keep warm in a low heated oven, until ready to serve.





(left to right) Top row: NAD volunteer certificate, National Aboriginal Day, NAD volunteer certificate; Middle Row: NAD volunteer certificate, National Aboriginal Day, NAD volunteer certificate; Bottom Row: National Aboriginal Day, Christmas at the lodge

