



First Nations Drum

March 2011

Volume 21 Issue 3



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CANADA'S NATIONAL NATIVE NEWSPAPER

Fostering For Future

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Yah I am a foster parent, it was role modeled to me because my dad was a foster parent and my mom too. It is something that is role modeled to you; I guess you can learn it, but it is like other adults teaching you how to love other kids. Sometimes it is kind of hard if you have kids in the family and Indians all got a cup full of love but everybody gets a shot of it, but everyone wants the whole jug. That's what I understood later on about being a foster, having foster kids you know, that I was loved, but it was just in our family that my parents passed their love to kids who needed it too or them other kids were going to die. That is the way and I see it happening.

So yah, my sister is a foster parent, my sister raised a son, these guys are schooled, they are grown up now. Myself we have two foster kids. We got two when they were preemies. They were being passed around to families and I personally did not want them, I did not want to raise no kids, because, you know why, I was about me back then. I was about looking good. But I went through alcohol treatment AA, and all those programs. They taught me that I had to change things, they taught me if you want something to happen, you have to change things. So what I could see was all my uncles, they were in the army, they didn't know how to be uncles, they only knew how to be soldiers. A lot of men and woman are third generation boarding school and that's just like the army. My uncles were too busy getting drunk. I hate to say that about

them, back in the day, at the time when I needed them and their lives changed, because they were forced to quit or die. I told my wife, I do not want no kids, that was my personal opinion about it because I was angry when they came to my house. It is not all happy about being a foster because those kids come and teach your kids other bad stuff. That is what you got to know about foster parenting, these kids are coming mocked up. They come to the Creator and then they come to us and they come damaged. But things can be changed because love



Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth, Montana 2010
photo by Oren Lyons,



Don and Janet McClouds legacy
photo by Danny Beaton

changes everything. I just want one on one with these guys, that's all, I will tell you the story how I got them.

The CPS called me up one day that's the Children's Protection Agency for the State of Washington as we were the next of kin. When we first seen the kids one was in a crib, they made a real mess, because they were in their crib for 2 days. One was in the high chair, Ruben, when I went in there I cried hard, they had the saddest look and they were so happy to see me, I still can remember it all when I think of it

right now. I got mad; you know he's my kin. The worker said to me what do you want to do? And I said I will take them right now. So when it came down to it, you know in life, that's what I learned from your people brother One Mind. We're over here with six or seven, you know me, they, them, all that, that's a language in our heads and One Mind means we're all One. I'm all One Minded, it took me awhile to get there, it took Mac awhile to get there. But that's what happened, Mac became One Minded and realized my young people needed

help! I use to follow my uncles, you know, being myself and trying to look good. So when I saw those kids and they were twins, I had to bring them both home. Those kids were like mascots, people don't know how to parent kids, I tell you, kids don't come packaged like everything else you buy. When you buy a computer you get instructions and rules on how to work it or run it. When you get a baby you don't get any instructions or manual. All you going by is what you know,

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what mom taught you are your parenting skills because there aren't no books on it here in the USA that I know of. Well there are but not on drug effected kids or kids who have been relocated, traumatized, sexually abused over and over again, molested or damaged by dad making Methadone which the baby had to crawl in. So we took those kids my wife and I and we made room for them. They were messed up with ear infections, diaper rash; they even quit breathing as they had intense asthma because they were suffering from disconnection and neglect.

You can never replace your mom or dad; nobody can be your mother just mom can, there's only one mom so nobody can replace mom in their life. The kids know when something is wrong in their life; they can feel it especially children. This is what goes on in peoples life's when you're a baby, you don't talk but you can feel when something is wrong. When they feel something is wrong, then after awhile they feel alone and then pretty soon they're on there own. It can happen in that stage or all at once. So I ended up being a foster parent, yah and you know my sister Binah she raised 2 foster kids, one of her boys was damaged too, he was a nephew too and now he's in and out of jail all the time. He gets that money and it gets him in trouble so he's in and out of jail and I try talking to him telling him he is welcome in my Sweat Lodge. But that money is in his pocket and he's grown up and does what he wants to. It's kind of a job being a foster but the kids are suffering all the time, that's why I became a foster. My family is well known in these parts, as my mom started Sappa Dawn for elders to do ceremonies and youth come here to be clean and sober. Everyone wants me to raise their son. I say you had fun making him now you have some fun raising him man. I only do it if they have no dad. My twins are 14 years old now; they don't look like twins though; they're both in high school and they are a big part of my life as I love them like they are my own. I told them guys 4 more years then you're 18 and I know you're out of here man. I raised them to live their lives so you know when them feathers get big enough you'll fly but you'll always come back. You'll always have your room.

I am just very grateful to my mother and father for sending me



Mac McCloud Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth, Montana 2010
photo by Danny Beaton

to places to learn how sacred life is and that you won't stay young forever. Get an education first. All I can do is give my kids a bed and food, a spiritual connection because there not really my kids they are the Creators kids, he just sent them to me to meet the right people. Kids come to me for smoked fish because that's what I can offer them so I try to give them knowledge too! Some people charge money for everything, I don't feel that way, We're it, we're the protectors and we're the caretakers of the land that's what I was taught.

How do I know, my mom and dad taught me when I was young? I was taught our ceremonial way of life and our Ceremonies are the most powerful thing I know brother!

We have Winter Moon Ceremonies, Burning Tobacco Ceremonies, Sweat Lodges and we go to the Sun Dance every year; my kids are the Fire Keepers next year! If I don't do my job right now, I don't get to graduate, we don't just get to walk into the Creators World because we're natives, we have to prove it, we have to earn it, otherwise we have to come back and do it again until you get it right. That's all I know because a lot of knowledge came through our house and I am sure glad I was listening. That knowledge is growing like a garden inside me.

If we go back a thousand years brother and our fire went out in our village and you were the fire keeper from another village and

I was sent to get you to start our fire what do you think our people would be doing with no fire? They would be freezing their butts off and eating raw meat but they would be gathering wood and tender and praying for you so you would get here. So when you go to survival school if you want to learn how to start a fire with 2 sticks or survive you have to be positive. Because being positive is the only way to start a fire or survive. You can't start a fire with a bunch of negative people standing around. You have to have a mind set to start a fire or survive, that's a fact! There's only one Sacred Fire and I can start that Fire but I can't show off because the people won't like you no more if you show off.