

NORTHERN SUN



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LIVING ON THE LAND

Wapawekka Winter Camping Trip was a four night, five day ceremony on our traditional lands and waters. The trip took place on January 17th to the 21st. Youth and knowledge keepers were brought out to the camp. The temperatures ranged from -6C with freezing rain to whiteout and blizzards with a -46C windchill.

The youth and knowledge keepers were able to disconnect from the grid and reconnect to spirit. nīhithowīwin (Cree language) was taught and used throughout.

The experience of living on the land, during winter, without the perks of internet access, running water, flush toilets and electrical power is not an accomplishment many youths can relate to. It is ceremony.

We traveled by 16 snow machines across Treaty Six Adhesion Territory, mistahi sākahikanihk (Lac La Ronge), crossing portages that took us into Wapawekka Lake to the ancestral trapline of the Bird clan. Local expert knowledge sharers and 20 youth spent five days in the remote wilderness.

Our cabins were very rustic, and the students learned the importance of keeping the fire going on the stove all night long. By the end of the week, they were taking turns getting up to stoke the fire. The cold temperatures were made even



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**Christine Ravenis
La Ronge, Saskatchewan**

more intense by the northwest wind that blew steady each day. Lifelong teachings on how to properly layer and dress for winter were learned.

A daily part of camp life was cutting wood in the bush with deep snow. Then, hauling out the logs to the sleighs before bringing the wood to camp where the logs were cut stove size and split before bringing the wood into the cabins. We were also able to set and lift the net under the ice, set beaver and lynx snares, track wolves, moose, and caribou, and hear stories of the Big People that underlined the sacredness of the place we were on. The harvest of a moose was celebrated,

and teachings were shared. A lot of work went into cutting up and properly preparing the meat to distribute and for our consumption.

Every night, after smudging and sacred drum song, students shared more and more of their lives, their thoughts and their hopes and dreams.

The intensity of the experience and how much of a positive impact on the youth is what compels us to attempt to recreate the experience time after time. All credit to our Creator and the spirit helpers who kept us safe in temps that dropped to -46 C and blizzard conditions.



Photos and story courtesy of Christine Ravenis

A SUMMER WITH CHICKENS



Raising chickens in Dallas Red Rose

Bernice and Steven had an interesting summer of learning how to raise chicks into fully grown chickens to be harvested for food. Although they came across some issues with predators attacking some of their birds, they managed to raise upwards of 45 chickens in their homemade chicken coop!

Steven and Bernice both took part in harvesting the chickens once they were ready. They made sure to save some Red and Barred breeds. Both Reds and Barred chickens are popular for their beauty. They hope the remaining chickens will propagate for another season of chicken rearing in Dallas Red Rose!

Bernice's self built 8x8 chicken coop in Dallas Red Rose

Bernice and Steven's chickens running free in the yard.



Photos and story
provided by Bernice
Steffanson



PINAYMOOTANG'S GARDENS

Alfred Pruden has been working as Pinaymootang's ADI worker for the past 15 years. He has also been gardening since then, with much success! However, due to COVID-19 everything was different this year, including how Alfred runs his ADI program and specifically his community gardening project.

To encourage community members to continue gardening, but while still respecting the social distancing guidelines, Alfred put together 80 gardening packages for community members. His gardening packages included seeds, labels and instructions on how to plant a garden. He then left them at the front of the local health centre and encouraged community members to pick up a package for themselves.

Alfred expected to see approximately 100 community gardens in Pinaymootang this year. Many community members used the gardening packages that Alfred put together, but there are also community members who no longer need his support, this newfound gardening independence is great news to Alfred. Some community members are buying their own tillers and other gardening tools, allowing them to grow bigger and fuller gardens!

Alfred also promotes traditional medicines such as Chaga and Muskeg tea. He teaches community members how, where and when to pick the medicines, as well as how to prepare the medicines for use, all while socially distanced of course!



Alfred Pruden
Pinaymootang First Nation Health



Photos and story provided by the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative



The community of Pinaymootang went from under 40 community gardens to having one in almost every home!



“Community gardens are a place where people can be active, productive, and grow fresh, nutritional foods. Gardens create a better quality of life for everyone who has contact with one, by receiving nourishment from the food grown within it.”

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