

Agreement enhances First Nation education

BY BILL CLARKE

DALHOUSIE ▶ First Nation leaders are welcoming a new initiative that will see significant investment in education for students from their communities.

Since January, three First Nation communities whose students attend schools in District 15 have signed agreements whereby half the amount paid for their tuition will be reinvested in programs to ensure those students are well served by the school system.

Two of the three communities are in this area. The third, Pabineau, sends its students to schools in Bathurst. John McLaughlin, superintendent of District 15, said that the Aborigi-

nal component in this area is much more significant than in Bathurst. While there are only 33 students from Pabineau going to school there, 106 from Eel River Bar attend three schools in Dalhousie.

The situation in Campbellton is somewhat different, as Listuguj has its own school for students from Kindergarten to Grade 8. Still, it sends 173 students to Sugarloaf Senior High School, making up a significant part of the student body.

Glen Caplin, who handles social services and education at Eel River Bar, provided background for the agreement. He said that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern De-

velopment, through the bands, pays tuition for each Aboriginal student-attending provincial schools. He said that some First Nation governments had felt that they were not getting their money's worth and began withholding payments. Now, with an agreement in place that covers all First Nation communities in New Brunswick, Aboriginal students can be assured a quality education.

Chief Allison Metallic of Listuguj said that this agreement will be very helpful in enhancing language and culture programs for students from his community. He said that over the next five years, it will be worth about \$4.5 million, which will be very helpful in enhancing students' chances of success in high school.

Metallic said that this agreement had been in negotiation for the past two years or more. A committee of four or five representatives from the First Nation and as many from the school district has been established.

Allison Brooks, the consultant for First Nation education and the Department of Education said that, in the past, First Nation students had been put in a system that wasn't theirs and that their communities didn't have any say in how their education was delivered.

Now, there will be committees with equal representation from the school system and the First Nations. In the case of Dalhousie schools, for instance, the committee will include the superintendent, principals of the three schools and four representatives from Eel River Bar.

Caplin said that they are lucky, since they have a very low drop-out rate. In fact, he termed it "non-existent." Caplin said that Eel River Bar students are doing well not only academically, but also in sports and extra-curricular activities.

He attributed this to the encourage-

ment and support that students get from Chief Everett Martin and the band council.

He said that First Nation students will have the same curriculum as other students, but that the investment will allow them to identify students who may be having trouble with particular subjects and help them. As well, there will be things like a science and math summer camp and a lunch program to ensure students have good meals at noon, after school programs and enhanced cultural language programs.

Caplin said that he believes these agreements represent a very good program that will benefit all First Nation students and the schools as well.

Brooks placed the value of the reinvestment for the district at about \$1.5 million, most of that in the Campbellton-Dalhousie area.

McLaughlin said that the agreement provides significant amounts of money so that the district can provide additional services to First Nation students.



Allison Metallic



John McLaughlin

Barnaby film on reviving Mi'gmaq

LISTUGUJ ▶ A film exploring the efforts to preserve the Mi'gmaq language in Listuguj will be airing on television this week and next.

Filmed by Jeff Barnaby, originally from Listuguj, the short flick is part of the *Find our Talk 3* series. The series includes several other First Nations languages.

In Listuguj, efforts are being made to teach the language with a system whereby words are associated with graphics, photographs and objects, so that the student may more easily remember the word. Featured are students such as Maddie Metallic, who speaks Mi'gmaq at home. She hopes to go to the University of Cape Breton to study more Mi'gmaq and become a teacher of the language. Younger children are taking Mi'gmaq in immersion and school courses. Adults who knew little or no Mi'gmaq are taking an interest in the language through classes.

This is important culturally, for a language is not only a means of communication. It actually shapes the way a person sees and interprets the world. Thus, when a language is lost, a whole worldview is lost as well.

Elders such as John Isaac are delighted to see the return of the language after years of repression and are assisting with what they know before that knowledge is lost.

"I still dream in Mi'gmaq", says Isaac, who grew up at a time when almost everyone on Listuguj could speak the language. He worked for years in the United States before returning home.

The broadcast dates for the Mi'gmaq episode are, on APTN HD (Bell Express Vu, channel 808) today



Filmmaker Jeff Barnaby.



Elder John Isaac



Teaching Mi'gmaq to children by associating words with objects.

Wednesday, April 1 at 3 pm AST and Friday, April 3 at 3:30 a.m. and 3 pm AST.

On APTN on regular cable it will air on Wednesday, April 8th at 11:30pm AST.

Young volunteers rewarded

BY MYRIAM LAVALLÉE

CAMPBELLTON ▶ For three years, volunteering has been a cool thing to do for some youth in Restigouche.

On March 24, Restigouche Youth held its annual recognition evening for young volunteers Restigouche as part of its "Volunteering is cool" program.

This year a total of 301 youths up to the age of 30 took part in the program, accumulating a total of 24,250 volunteer hours in 62 organizations. Of the 301 young people, 81 have accumulated over 100 hours.

Some worked within their student council. Others visited the elderly in nursing homes or got involved in different sports.

Tessa LeBlanc, 16, attends Ecole Aux Quatre Vents in Dalhousie. During her first year in the program, she has accumulated a total of 1,333 volunteer hours. To achieve this, she offered assistance to people around her.

"I walked and minded dogs. I also babysat children. I stayed over with someone who was ill. I also cleaned

a house where someone had moved out."

During the evening, six scholarships worth a total of \$3,000 were awarded. Young people who had accumulated 100 hours of volunteer service were eligible for the draw. The six winners were Jérémie Charest (\$1,000) Josiane Gallant (\$750), Daphnée Thibeault (\$500), Marie-Eve Carrière (\$250), Vincent Lamontagne (\$250) and Rebecca Lavigne (\$250).

Scholarships must be used in different categories, such as education, sport or culture.



The recipients of the scholarships for volunteerism, from left, Daphnée Thibeault, Jérémie Charest, Josiane Gallant, Rebecca Lavigne and Marie-Eve Carrière. (Photo Myriam Lavallée/La Voix)



A day-long workshop was held on March 24 at the Eel River Bar band office hosted by the Gespe'gewag Mi'gmaq Resource Council. The main objective of the workshop was to report the results of salmon research project back to the three member Mi'gmaq communities of Listuguj, Eel River Bar, and Pabineau and to promote the importance of sustainable resource management. A salmon feast was also held in the evening with traditional drumming and dancing. These are dancers Amanda Larocque and Craig Isaac, dancing to drummers Stoney Bear Singers.

Tim Hortons

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