

## **MARCH 31- 2013 – March 31 of 2014 REPORT**

**This** year has been filled with lots of projects to promote our culture and traditions.

The committee to work with White Point on a project to showcase Mikmaq culture and traditions on the project called Ancient Mikmaq Culture Reemerges is still working hard to be ready for June 20 and 21, 2013. On our Committee we had former Mayor John Leefe ,Eric Lebelle , Donna Hatt , and from our AFN Donna Whynot, Lisa Francis , Todd Labardor and Melanie Robinson. We run this two day event June 20 and 21 at White Point. Live at Five was there to do their show on the 21 and showcased our event. This event had over one hundred people registered and we feel it was a big success. White Point has been a huge partner in helping us get our foot in the door with tourism. During this event we had videos made to use for projects down the road. This project took months of preparing and doing proposals to get the money we needed to put it on, also Acadia First Nation helped us with our budget. We had presentations done by

Kejimikujik National Park , Archeologists who worked on the Mersey River dams in 2004. We had a crafters day to showcase and sell crafts and dancers and drummers and campfire at night with storytelling as well as a sunrise ceremony. We also had a traditional planked salmon feast. A medicine walk and some traditional teas were served. It was a full two days of culture and traditions by our Mi'kmaq community.

January February are the two months I go into the High schools in the area and do crafts with the Mi'kmaq classes , I take a volunteer crafter Cherry Whynot along to help with these classes. We do this free of charge for the schools and I provide the craft material.

I worked with the Region of Queens to put together a program for a summer student for the Visitor's center in Liverpool. I put together a series of workshops that one of our band members could do

with tourists during the summer. It was very successful and helped to showcase our culture during the summer with the people visiting our area.

During the summer I also am asked by some groups like boy scouts and others and do some work with them. This year was asked to their scout camp at lake Muh a Muh and did crafts and talks about our culture and traditions. As always I go to the cultural day at Port Royal to do crafts with the tourists young and old but mostly children. Once a year this park showcases our culture and traditions by having a special day for our culture.

I am now working on a project with Kejimikujik National Park, this is very exciting as we have so much history in the park. We have received word that our proposal for funding has been granted of 20,000 dollars from Destination Southwest Nova Task Team which will give us funds to do a 12 week project during the summer where we will do a

Mi'kmaq experience one day a week for the 12 weeks. The funds will provide money to make traditional clothes, all materials we need for the program as well as advertising and training. I have a committee of people from tourism and the region of Queens as well as Rachel Pictou , Donna Whynot, Cathy Leblanc and myself and a representative from Keji. This is a very exciting project and we are hoping to add to the visitors at the park by doing a lot of promotion in the tourism market. The program will be two hours long and will be done in Merrymakedge in the park, the area that has a wigwam of birchbark and a fire pit. This program will teach tourists about our culture and traditions through a look at reproduction artifacts from the Mersey Collection, a spirit walk where they will learn about our four sacred medicines. They will then sit around the fire and do a craft with beads and rawhide. They will do bannock over the fire and sample blueberry tea.

In September we did an unveiling of a Mi'kmaq artwork done by Ed Benham for the Emera Center as a gift from Acadia First Nation. It is a beautiful piece of art and its hanging inside the front entrance of building in the main lobby.

In November I was asked to open for a Women's conference at White Point Beach Lodge. This was a honor to be asked as they came from Ontario and it had to do with in powering woman in business.

Liverpool is putting on The Christmas on the Mersey this year December. Acadia First Nation has been asked to participate. We will be part of this event, where I will have three canoes coming across the Mersey River from the parking lot area to Lanes wharf, I will have drummers their drumming them in then one of them will lite a fire and we will sing a blessing. The choir with one of our band member will do silent night in Mi'kmaq. A lot of people are very interested in our part of this Christmas event, just have to hope for great weather. I will also use one of our band members to be part of the

storytelling on Dec. 8 at the Rossignol Centre. We had Canoe and Camera Club members volunteer their canoes and take our teens across the water safely.

In March of this year I started talks with the Region of Queens about townhall and an opportunity for us to have a gallery space in it when they revise the use of townhall. Construction on the improvements of the townhall is set to go in September and if all goes well when the construction is done between January of 2015 to March we could have a home for some of our Mersey artifacts.

I am going to Saltsclapes the end of April to help sell our tourism experience at Keji. I will also attend a two day training session in May to help me with tourism experiences.

As I get closer to our Keji tourism program ,I have lots of meetings with Keji to get ready for our two hour tourism program set to run July 4 to Sept. 19 of

this year. The program is complete and we will do a test run in May with tourism people to see if there are any changes that is needed. We will launch it in June on the 21 at Keji Park.

## **UPDATE**

The summer program at Keji went very well and we had lots of tourists take the Mi'kmaq experience. We hired three students to help with this experience, Liam Howard, Gracie Labrador and Robyn Whynot and Cherry Whynot as the grandmother figure we needed for the program. The response from the tourists was very positive. We had around 200 people to our program from all age groups. The tourists were from USA , Europe , Japan and New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. We will be running this program next summer because Mi'kmaq tourism experiences are in demand. The money we made from this experience will go back into the program so we can hire a Mi'kmaq interpreter next summer to keep the program going July and August, it will run one day a week.

Also Port Royal had a day of showcasing Mi'kmaq culture and it was an opportunity to promote Acadia First Nation and I was invited to take part. We had 200 visitors to the park that day and had lots of fun doing crafts with the tourists.

The Multicultural Festival took place in Yarmouth July 12 and 13. This was the first time for Acadia First Nation to take part. We had a lot of volunteers helping out with this and everyone had a good time. We took part in the food tent as well as two of our dancers performed and we had some take part in the fashion show. Our wigwam was put up on the waterfront and looked great lite up at night.

The official opening of the Queens General Hospital was July 22 and we were asked to take part, Lucas Francis and Cherry Whynot did the smudging ceremony. There is also a room with a plaque on it

with our logo and name for the donation Acadia First Nation made to the hospital.

October the 4 and 5 we will work with Keji to put on Hunter's moon. It will be an evening to gaze at the night sky and learn how our ancestors viewed the night sky as well as have a presentation by Dave Chapman from the astrological society. It is just in the planning stages now so will put posters out there as soon as they are ready.

The Region of Queens is redoing town hall and Acadia First Nation will have space on the main floor that we can finally bring home some of the Mersey River artifacts. Rachel Pictou and I will be working on getting things ready for this space over the next few months. The doors should open next spring if everything is on time. We will be working with the Museum of Natural History to choose the artifacts that we want to put on display, as well as work with

a committee to come up with a name for our gallery space and policies by which it will be run.

Christmas on the Mersey will become an annual event in which we will be part. We have been asked to be an important part of this event as it was well attended last year and the committee overseeing it would like it bigger and better. We will do our part to get some of our band members taking part in this event. If anyone of our members would like to be part of this event please call the Greenfield office. The date for this event is December 6 and will be held in the evening.

I will begin meetings with Keji and Nova Scotia Tourism on the Mi'kmaq experience for next summer. We will look at how we will continue to run this program and if and what changes we need to make to improve the experience for tourists. Also Nova Scotia Tourism will set up a photo shoot in October of our Mi'kmaq tourism experience for the

Doers and Dreamers guide. This will help advertise it for next summer. Also our program and partnership is being used as a pilot project by The National Parks of Canada so other national parks in Canada can use this partnership to help them partner with First Nation 's across Canada.

This year will be a busy one attending tourism meetings and getting help to make our townhall space work for us and promote our culture and traditions through our Mersey Collection and works of art and our crafts.

If anyone has any questions or ideas that would like to talk contact Judy Boutilier at the Greenfield office at 902-685-2956.