

Ierihwakwenienstha ne
Nithotlionhsa Raotiwenna
Honoring Youth Voices



BY AKWESASNE CCVS STUDENTS
COVER ART BY BREANNE THOMPSON



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Meet the Youth

Tianna Kawennitake Frances-Forgues
(Snipe clan)



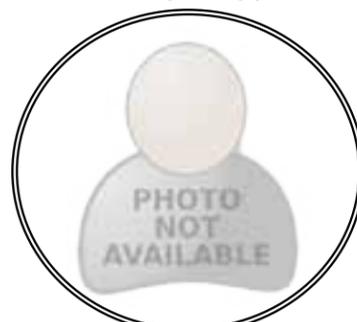
Tianna is 16 years old. She wants to raise awareness about the issues of violence in the magazine and hopes to help others. After high school, she plans on getting her masters at the University of Toronto.

Dalton Iothore Thomas
(Turtle clan)



Dalton is 15 years old. He enjoys writing and has an interest in politics. He wants to be a chief on the Akwesasne reserve when he becomes an adult.

Tritan Jock-Cole
(Bear clan)



Tritan is 15 years old. He participated in the project to break down barriers, overcome differences and strengthen friendships. In his spare time, he enjoys playing video games.

Tony Kanonsakeron Barnes
(Deer clan)



Tony is 14 years old. He participated in the project because it seemed fun and interesting. He hopes to become an animator in the future.

Kiana wentaneron Jacobs-Thompson
(Turtle clan)



Kiana is 15 years old. She saw the magazine project as a great opportunity to share with others. She plans on starting her own day care in the future.

Brittani Karakwiiio Lazore
(Wolf clan)



Brittani is an 18 year old high school senior. She participated in the project because she enjoys writing and wants to raise awareness about issues of violence. She's indecisive of her future career but plans to pursue a higher education.

Meet the Youth

Amanda Iahonketsariio Lazore
(Deer clan)



Amanda is 14 years old. She wanted to learn new skills and have a lasting experience. She hopes to open her own daycare because she enjoys working with children.

Aidan Kanatoktane Francis-Forgues
(Snipe clan)



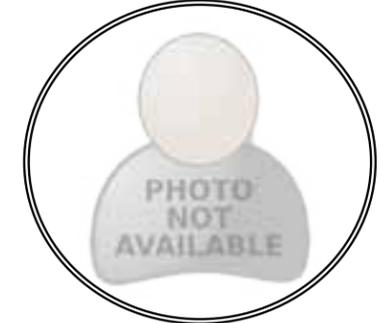
Aidan is a 14 years old. She wanted to contribute to the magazine as a youth from Akwesasne and feels the issues are of importance. She is currently focusing on finishing high school but plans to attending college in the future.

Lacey Kariwenhawi Jacobs
(Beaver clan)



Lacey is 16 years old. She participated in the project to gain community hours needed for high school graduation and wanted experience in writing. She plans on becoming a bio medical scientist in the future.

Donovan Tehonietaronwah Thompson
(Protection of Bear clan)



Donovan is 16 years old. He was interested in the opportunity of the magazine. He's an aspiring business owner and would like to become a mechanic in the future.

Lance Jacobs
(Beaver clan)



Lance is a 18 years old. He wanted to participate in the magazine in order to help the younger generation and to raise awareness about the issues. Lance plans on becoming an Iron Worker and enjoys participating in sports.

Kristie Teiwisasterathe Thompson
(Wolf clan)



Kristie is 17 years old. She is an aspiring writer and felt the magazine was a perfect way to gain experience for her future career. She is a talented traditional crafter and can make anything from ribbon shirts to moccasins.

Gang Violence Ripples Through Generations

By: Brittani Lazore and Lance Jacobs

Gangs in First Nation communities have been affecting our culture, our youth, and our people.

Gang violence has been taking away our culture by getting our youth arrested and bringing in drugs which clouds our minds. Most of First Nation peoples in Canada have now forgotten their language and culture.

Aboriginal gangs get people to join pretty easily because it's usually family members recruiting due to our small communities.

The youth would start out doing small and petty crimes until they get arrested. Once they are exposed to prison is when they really become engaged in the gang because they're influenced by other members, illegal connections, fights and sometimes murders.

If they get out of prison they will start doing more serious crimes to make money or in rivaling with other gang members.

If they don't return to prison they're of high risk to being murdered, gang members on the street rarely lead an average life.

Gang violence doesn't only affect the gang related individual, it affects the entire community and the younger generations that are looking up to their family members.

Children that are exposed to gang activities have a higher risk of conforming to gang violence when they've been raised in that setting.

"Aboriginal youth gang members aged 12-30 years are estimated to twenty-two percent of known gangs in Canada, there are between 800-1000 active Aboriginal gang members in the Prairie Provinces."

The impact of gang violence on aboriginal culture and language contributes to the reason of why it's slowly dying.

Suicide attempts have been linked to gang involvement. Con-

sidering that many of them become murder victims or get seriously injured, suicide becomes an option because they can't deal with what they've become and can no longer live with the decisions they've made.

At times, the person might decide that they don't want to be in a gang anymore but discover that leaving means they could face many risks, with the possibility of it escalating to violent extremes.

At the community of Akwesasne, there isn't gang violence that's comparable to what you hear of in other Native communities. We might have shootings, burglaries, violence, drugs and alcohol but every community has that, not just First Nations communities.

As a suggestion, there are a lot of things people can do to prevent their youth from embarking in gang activities; they can get the youth involved in sports teams, youth organizations and recreation departments to work towards preventing the effects of gang violence that now ripples through generations.



Gang Violence

By: Dalton Thomas



In recent years, gang violence on North American aboriginal reservations has grown due to many reasons such as poverty, lack of financial aid, lack of hope and unemployment.

Most gang members on North American Reserves are the descendants of warriors. However, an identity crisis due to genocide has changed the epic warrior into a warrior of violence.

The genocide of First Nations people by the colonial Government and the aftermath of the residential school era is the primary source behind the birth of this issue.

Every First Nations family has a history of falling victim to this legacy and important piece of history - only recently exposed to the world.

Instead of fighting against their known arch enemy - the US/CAN Army, they are fighting against each other. Imagine for a moment that they put this energy and spirit into healing their people?

This would leave one to question where to begin considering that the culture has been, for the most part lost and isn't followed by many elders due to fear that lives within their embodiment, as the survivors of residential schools.

Will we allow this cycle of abuse to continue or will we be the proud peoples and survivors we are?

In interviewing an ex-gang member, he stated that he respects the Mohawk people because we are a cultured based community and have high family values, more so than he experienced on other reserves.

He couldn't stress enough that we shouldn't aspire to be gang members from what we see on television and perceive as being cool. Gangs are very serious issues where people are hurt and many lives lost.

The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is situated in the poorest county of the United States making them the most gang prone reserve with over 5,000 gang members within 30 different gangs.

In the Western provinces of Canada such as Saskatchewan and Alberta lives a vicious cycle of identified gangs that date back to the mid 1980's. They populate 80% of the prisons where most Native Youth receive exposure and are forced into joining.

Most gang members grow up in dangerous conditions and come from alcoholic parents as well as poverty stricken homes.

Becoming a gang member offers them protection, a place to feel like they belong and to become a part of a brotherhood.

What they don't know is that this will eventually turn them into violent criminals with little to no way out. In having lack of hope and negative influences, they become prone to alcoholism and abuse. Not to mention, contributing to the statistics of high suicide rates plaguing First Nations peoples.

In entering the gang, they receive 'beats' and are considered a striker until they prove themselves loyal to the brothers. In this case they 'patch over' to become a high ranking 'full patch' member of the gang. This gives them a sense of power and authority over the new strikers.

Gang Violence cont

Many gang members know that what they are a part of is wrong. Any attempt to leave the gang could get themselves or family members murdered. With nowhere else to go or protection and guidance, they continue this vicious circle; they become what they were running from in the first place.

Our communities aren't perfect, we have problems

as well but as a youth, I am fortunate to have been raised in a community where gang violence isn't easily accepted.

The issue of First Nations gangs are a growing problem. It is a serious issue and something we should strive to keep far from our communities.

Date Rape

By: Aidan Francis-forgues

Date rape can happen anywhere. You don't always have to be at a party drinking, it could happen while you're on a formal date. It's a very serious and scary thing that you never see coming. The drug is odorless, colorless, and tasteless and can be dropped into your cup the second you turn your head.

There are no warning signs of someone about to drop the drug into your drink so you need to prepare yourselves beforehand. You might feel silly, like you're preparing yourself for something that might never happen, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

Bring a friend with you if you plan to attend a party, even if you know everyone there. That way if one of you needs to use the washroom, the other can stay behind and watch your drink for you until you get back. It'll also help if either of you end up drinking more than planned.

Bring a friend with you that's aware of the possibilities because it will be helpful in keeping an eye on each other. It can be helpful in more than just preventing you from date rape. It's like killing two birds with one stone, right.

You could make the decision to refrain from drinking too. That might be less fun because you're going to a party, you want to drink right, but that'll stop you from having to worry about the dangerous possibilities or someone dropping something in your drink. If you're on a date you might feel like a fool for not ordering a drink, but you can never be too sure. This is probably the least likely option you'll choose to prevent date rape, but it is also the most highly effective.

Also, if you leave a drink unattended for a minute or longer, just go get another one. Don't make up any excuses; just go get another one because

**When it comes to sex,
MAYBE means NO!!!**

Date Rape cont



you can never be sure if it's been tampered with.

If you end up becoming the victim of date rape, you wouldn't be able to tell. The only thing that makes it obvious is if you're in some room with no pants on. But even then, they don't always leave your pants off, they could put all of your clothes back on and when you wake up you wouldn't even be aware of what happened the previous night.

Not knowing what happened the night before is a side effect from the drug. It causes you to lose memory and black out. In some cases, your friends wouldn't even be able to tell if you've been drugged because it would appear as though you're really intoxicated. Plus, the drug is out of your system after 12 hours so if you suspect you were drugged and went to get tested the next day, test results wouldn't be able to trace what drug was in your system, if any at all.

It's a serious and scary thing and you should take all measures to protect yourself. Even if you have a small thought of it possibly happening, don't push it off, stick with it and protect yourself so that it doesn't. You don't want to end up living your life a victim of being raped and not knowing it happened or who did it to you.

Rape, date rape or any kind of rape is a crime and the rapist should be charged and sent to jail. This is a very serious thing and you need to report it because if the rapist isn't caught, he is more likely to repeat what he/she has done to you.

Please be conscious of the fact that this is a possibility and could happen to you, a friend or a family member. Protect yourself and contact the police if you believe you or someone you know could be a victim of rape.

Cyber Bullying

By:Tianna Francis-forgues

High school and middle school are said to be the best years of your life but, sometimes it's all about survival.

From childhood you dream about becoming a teenager and going to high school but once you get there you wish you could be young again.

You not only have the stress of your schoolwork but the stress of being in style, fitting in and sometimes bullied.

At high school age you begin to find yourself and learn what society wants from you. Sometimes when you obey the rules regardless of how hard you try, society deems you imperfect and you find yourself with a low social standing.

Bullying was once limited to verbal and physical violence but with the newest form of socialization, bully can be done through the internet.

Cyber bullies hide behind anonymity and find courage to say things they normally wouldn't say in a face to face confrontation. Be cautious of what you share online with online friends.

Online friends might actually be hiding behind another identity and you shouldn't openly trust a stranger who could spread your business to your real life friends or

misuse your photos.

Bullying is bullying and it ruins lives. In extreme cases regarding teenagers, it causes them to not want to attend school out of fear or create mental illnesses. Most cases of bullying goes unreported because the victim fears the violence will increase for telling.

A bully victim might begin to hide themselves from everything they enjoy such as sports teams, after school programs and lunch rooms. Their grades sometimes start slipping and they might consider suicide, thinking that is the only answer.

Bullying has taken thousands of lives; it has ruined many dreams. Some teenagers who have survived bullying still live in fear and focus on surviving the day. To many victims, surviving the day is a huge success.

Bullying isn't taken as seriously as it needs to be. In Ontario the law of safe schools on bullying and cyber bullying can suspend or expel the bully. How many schools can tell when bullying is going on? How many cases are actually reported? How many situations are solved?

In the end, in my opinion, middle school and high school is about surviving. If you have or are being bullied I suggest you talk to an adult you trust. Be strong and see it through to the end. Things will get better. It might not seem like it today but it will. So smile, you'll make it.



Cyber Bullying Q & A

By: Kristie Thompson

Q:What is Cyber bullying?

A: Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior.

Q:How do I know when I or a friend is being Cyber bullied?

A: Most people know when they're being bullied, but the person doing the bullying may often not realize that what they're saying is hurting their victim. Talk to your friend gently about it if you feel you are being bullied. If you don't know the person well enough to talk about it, you can talk with the bully civilly and explain the consequences from bullying and cyber bullying. If it's a friend, be supportive and offer them this advice.

Q:How do I get out of Cyber bullying?

A: Options:

1. Tell someone such as an adult you trust. Talk to your school counselor if you feel there's no one else.

2. Walk away. Knowing that you can step away from the computer (or turn off your phone) allows you to keep things in perspective and focus on the good things in your life. Ignoring bullies is the best way to take away their power.

3. Report it to your service provider. Sites such as Facebook, MySpace and YouTube take it seriously when people use their sites for violence to post cruel comments or set up fake accounts.

4. Block the bully. Most devices have settings that allow you to electronically block the bully or bullies from sending notes.

5. Don't respond. Resist the urge to "fight back." In

some cases, standing up to a bully can be effective, but it's also more likely to provoke the person and escalate the situation.

6. Although it's not a good idea to respond to a bully, it is a good idea to save evidence of the bullying if you can. It can help you prove your case, if needed.

Q:How do I prevent Cyber bullying?

A: Be safe online. 'Password protect' your cell phone, online sites and change your passwords often. Be sure to share your passwords with your parent or guardian. It's also wise to think twice before sharing personal information or photos and videos that you don't want the world to see.

Q:Who is affected by Cyber bullying?

A: Many people can be affected by cyber bullying. The child or teen is the direct affected victim. Parents and friends can also be affected by actions that the victim takes due to violence, should the situation lead to depression.



Domestic Violence in relationships

By: Amanda Lazore

Domestic violence in relationships comes in many forms. There is physical, mental, verbal, sexual and emotional abuse that sometimes transpires and might include you or your partner.

Beginning warning signs of domestic violence is when you feel like your partner is trying to take control of your life or is jealous of your interaction with others.

Other ways to identify abuse is if you feel scared of your partner, nervousness, guilt, anger, depression or becoming violent towards others.

Verbal abuse is another warning sign that begins mid way through an abusive relationship. Usually by this time you realize that you're a victim and find yourself wondering how it happened.

Mental abuse is harder to identify within yourself. Mental abuse erupts with negative comments from your partner and in turn you begin believing the put downs.

It causes you to begin changing your thoughts, your image and you think differently of yourself. All of these changes are made primarily to please your partner.

First Nations women have a higher risk of falling victim to abuse than any other nationality in Canada. Five in seven teenage girls will experience an abusive relationship and not notice.

Often we believe it's only women who are abused in relationships but men are equally abused.

Women are physically unable to defend themselves against their dominant partner and in turn feel helpless to their situation. There is always help and there is always a way out.

Domestic violence hurts more than just the victim.

Usually the first person to notice that you're in an abusive relationship is your best friend. It also hurts your family, friends and children. (If you are a parent) Many times the abuser feels ashamed and guilty for the actions they have chosen. Regardless of if your spouse is abusive only under the influence and isn't abusing you sober, they are still making you a victim. Therefore abusive!

Sometimes when you experience violence in a relationship you make excuses for yourself to stay with your partner. It's hard to leave someone you love especially if you have children with them but the emotional scarring on yourself and children is not worth the risk.



Painting by Ange Sterritt "Protect the Future"

There is Help out there, when you are ready

Women are the strength and power in the Kaniienkeha'ka nation. Our women are the title holders of the land and pass the clans to their children. The Kaniienkeha'ka is a matrilineal society, therefore; the women select the chiefs who represent the people.

In honoring our traditions we interviewed women from our community to see what their opinions or experience is on the issue of domestic violence.

Q1: Have you ever been in a physically abusive relationship?

A: Yes, I have.

Q2: If so, how did you feel?

A: I went through a lot of emotions but I was mostly sad. I felt as if it was my fault and was scared. I also felt belittled, frustrated and worried.

Q3: How did you manage to get out of your abusive relationship?

A: I waited until he left the house and packed all of

mine and my children's belongings. After we left I was still quite scared that he would find me.

Q4: How do you feel about abuse in relationships?

A: For me, being in an abusive relationship can really ruin someone's life. It doesn't matter how long you were in the relationship, it still does the same damage.

Q5: Have you or someone you know ever been verbally abused?

A: For me no, but some of my friends have been.

Q6: What is your opinion on verbal abuse?

A: From what I have seen and been told, verbal abuse is just as bad as being physically abused.

Q7: What advice would you give to someone in these two types of relationships?

A: It's not their fault and they shouldn't stay. There's help out there when you're ready.





Abusive Relationships: Myths and Facts

“Take a stand to end the violence, your new life will begin.
Our Indigenous sisters are proud and strong, it only starts within.”

Myth: Abusive relationships are restricted to certain “problem” families, minorities, uneducated or poverty stricken areas.

Fact: Abuse be it physical, emotional or psychological pervades every ethnic, social strata with financially successful people being just as likely to suffer abuse as people on low incomes. It is therefore not dependent on the social standing but rather on an individual’s need for power and the belief that they have the right to control someone else.

Myth: Domestic abuse is a private family matter.

Fact: Battering, assaulting or raping another person is a criminal offense where the perpetrator should be punished.

Myth: An abusive relationship is not such a big problem. After all only a few women are actually badly hurt.

Fact: Did you know that an estimated 1.8 million women are battered each year with batter-

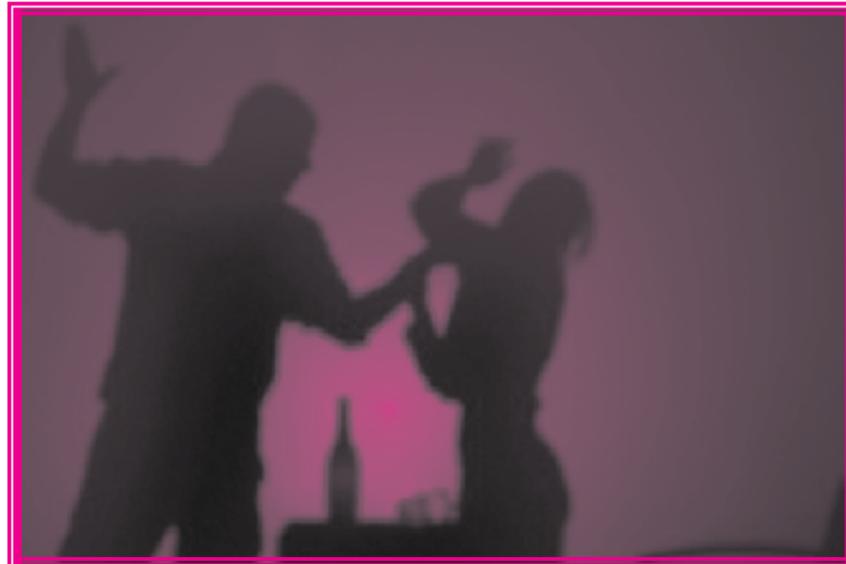
ing being the single major cause of death to women? It exceeds rapes, mugging and auto accidents.

Myth: Some people provoke it and deserve it.

Fact: Nobody wants or deserves to be abused. This myth just does the job of shifting the blame from the abuser to the abused and avoids the dark reality that only the abuser is responsible for his/her own actions. In fact people are beaten for reasons as ridiculous as the dinner being cold, the TV was turned to the wrong channel or the baby was crying.

Myth: If it was that bad, she/he should leave.

Fact: Leaving a partner in an attempt to end the relationship is just not that easy. There are many emotional, spiritual, financial hurdles and other relationship issues to overcome before someone being abused can leave. Sometimes, leaving or trying to leave an abuser sparks fear within the victim that the violence might increase.



Nia:wen/Thank You

The Akwesasne CCVS students would like to give a big Niawenko:wa (Thank You) to the Akwesasne Family Wellness Program for funding the Honoring Youth Voices Magazine Project and making this publication possible. A Special Thanks and acknowledgment to the following people:

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- Justin Kotyk- Youth Speaker (Gang Violence)

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- Ashley Tarbell- Communications Officer and Magazine formatting

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Akwesasne Family Wellness Program

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