

## **Pimatisiwin Nipi Annual Report for 2019**

At our first meeting of 2019, Archbishop Mark offered this important reflection:

“The Gospel clearly claims the compassion of God toward humanity as taking precedence over everything, even over religious law. Compassion sets the agenda and priority for all that we do.”

The Pimatisiwin Nipi (Living Waters) Group, led by Archbishop Mark MacDonald and supported by The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, has supported the installation of safe water and indoor plumbing to more than 20 homes in the Northern Ontario community of Pikangikum First Nation from 2011 until 2019. *See back page for a full timeline of our Work 2011-2019*

Funds remain available to Pikangikum, raised by both PWRDF (Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund) as well as a government grant that matched our funds, to be able to continue with further clean water initiatives in this community going forward. Pikangikum has faced a number of challenges this year, with two evacuations of the community because of wildfires, as well as significant turn-over in the band’s leadership.

While Pikangikum recovers from these two 2019 wild fire evacuations, Pimatisiwin Nipi, in continued partnership with PWRDF, decided to focus our annual fundraising campaign, Advent Conspiracy, on raising funds to support other Indigenous communities without safe drinking water. We have had to pivot, at least for the time being, from our work in Pikangikum into new partnerships with other Indigenous communities. It was always our plan to expand our partnerships beyond Pikangikum. And while we hope and pray that the work begun in Pikangikum can reach its completion with regards to clean water for this community, we also feel hopeful about the new possibilities for partnership on the horizon. Archbishop Mark has been in touch with Bishop Lydia Mamakwa (Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh) about future partnerships. At this time, a concrete next partnership has not been identified, but our financial gifts could support the purchase of a water truck as well as training community members in water infrastructure and maintenance.

Meanwhile, PWRDF is involved in a number of projects across Canada with Indigenous ministries, including language reclamation, suicide prevention, midwifery, and strengthening relationships with ACIP. The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund’s five-year strategic plan includes accompanying First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the priorities of Indigenous communities and organizations in Canada. The learnings from our eight year journey with our Pikangikum partnership will be valuable in helping PWRDF navigate and strengthen all of these initiatives.

While the water project in Pikangikum has at least temporarily been put on hold, the Pimatisiwin Nipi network did continue our connection and friendship with Pikangikum, particularly with regards to two other initiatives. The first was the Pikangkum Clothing Drive.



Late in 2018, Dave Gordon, a parishioner with a long history of advocating for Indigenous issues, received an email from Jennifer Manitowabi, the Vice-Principal at the Eenchokay Birchstick School [EBS] in Pikangikum, identifying 70 students from Kindergarten to high school who did not have winter jackets and many who did not have winter boots. Of the 300 students from kindergarten to Grade 3 only 30 had snow pants. Thanks to the generous outpouring of financial support from All Saints' King City, St. Timothy's North York, Grace Church Markham and other individuals we were able to raise \$10,366.00. With these funds we were able to purchase for children, youth and adults: 75 pairs of Snow Pants, 60 pairs of Boots, 66 pairs of winter mitts and 20 pairs of Ski Do Mitts at seasonal discount prices. Many merchants gave an additional discount when told of the reason for the purchase. Leah Springford through her involvement with 'Newmarket Lions - Coats for Kids' provided 72 new Winter Jackets.

Dave Gordon also worked tirelessly with Eenchokay Birchstick School to fundraise for a Grade 8 trip from Pikangikum to southern Ontario. Unfortunately, these plans were derailed by the summer wildfires.

### **2020 And Beyond**

Going forward, with support from faithful and generous people all across Canada, PWRDF can continue to partner with groups that are improving clean water and sanitation, and advocate for greater support from the federal government to address these unacceptable inequities in our own country. Let us pray that God's law of Compassion will continue to set the agenda for all that we do, that partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canada can heal and flourish, and that a more just country for all Canadians will be made possible.

## Summary of Pimatisiwin Nipi partnership with Pikangikum 2011-19

# PIMATISIWIN NIPI

## Living Water

### FALL 2011

#### WHAT CAN WE DO?

Seeing the systemic failure to respond to the living condition in indigenous communities, violation of human rights and the alarmingly high rate of Youth Suicide, the question being asked was, "What can we do?" Bishop Mark MacDonald establishes Pimatisiwin Nipi around four pillars of Advocacy, Partnership, Education & Strategic Giving.

### WINTER 2012

#### ADVENT CONSPIRACY

- The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, PWRDF, joins the group
- Pilot Project: Five churches commit to raise funds through Advent Conspiracy for Water for Indigenous communities in need. Approximately \$18,000 is raised that first Advent.

### 2013

#### PHASE 1

- Churches and community groups across Canada begin to commit to the project.
- Because of these commitments, PWRDF contributes \$100,000 to Phase 1 of the Pikangikum Water Project.
- The networks of Pimatisiwin Nipi now must raise the \$100,000 committed.
- Phase 1 of the Pikangikum Water Project begins with implementing partner Frontier Foundations to install clean running water and waste water removal systems in 10 Pikangikum homes.
- Across Canada, people choose to give differently by joining the Advent Conspiracy and giving the gift of water to their loved ones.
- We reach our \$100,000 target through the generosity of Advent Conspiracy!

### 2014

#### CONTINUED

- There is continued support through the year for the Water Project.
- November 2014 the power grid of Pikangikum reaches its capacity, bringing our work on the Water Project to a temporary halt.

### 2016

#### PHASE 2

- PWRDF enters a partnership with Habitat for Humanity Manitoba for the next ten homes in Pikangikum.
- The community has identified the most vulnerable people so that they will be the ones to receive these new water systems.
- In the 12 priorities identified by Pikangikum for Pikangikum, Water was the second priority. The first priority was to get a new school. That new school opened and held its first Christmas Concert to a parked house.

### 2017

#### TRAINING

- Phase 2 is completed, with 10 more homes receiving running water and waste water removal capabilities in their homes. Upgrades have been made to the systems we are using since Phase 1, with water tanks in the homes now holding twice the capacity of water from what was used in 2013.
- Five young people from Pikangikum are being trained in carpentry, plumbing and electricity skills. These young people, PWRDF reports, are now expressing "interest in being involved in other community programs that the Band Council at this remote Northern Ontario First Nation community might initiate in the future."
- Work to connect Pikangikum to the Ontario power grid begins.

### 2018

#### MATCH FUNDS

- Federal government agrees to "match funds" for water in Pikangikum.
- Connection to the power grid is completed and Pikangikum is energized.

### 2019

#### MOVING FORWARD

- Pikangikum Council is planning for another 15 homes to receive water.
- Money continues to be given from all across Canada to this work in Pikangikum and to other communities in need.

Bob White, Chair of FWG, reflecting on a visit to Pikangikum with [Former] National Chief Sean Atleo: "To see the happiness in the faces of the family getting hot and cold running water made my day. Also to see the actual work being done was gratifying. You guys have done amazing work in convincing the people you work with to reach out and lend a hand of support. The National Chief remarked that he saw the dignity returned to the family, the 4 generations living in that house. Keep up the great work. This was possible because of you and the thousands of Anglicans that know that through love a better world is possible."