

information

Life in an Aboriginal Community



My name is Shaun and I come from the Blue Hill First Nation. We are members of the Cree Nation.

We didn't always live right here in this community, but my ancestors lived in this part of the country and hunted and fished in the same territory as we do today. When I go out on the land with my parents, they tell stories of places and people that used to live there.



Unlike many First Nations, my ancestors were allowed to select their reserve when they signed their treaty. They chose this place because it was special. This

I belong to our Bantam hockey club, the Blue Hill Rangers. We travel to tournaments and games around the province and I find that First Nations communities are very different from each other.

On the other hand, life in some Aboriginal communities is much like that in any rural Canadian community. We go to school, play video games and ball and make plans for our future just like people everywhere.

But our community is special in that it is where my family has lived for generations. Aboriginal communities were originally formed by groups of families that lived together. Because of this, the old people can tell where someone comes from just by their last name.

is my homeland and I feel close to it.

We elect our band council that takes care of the reserve much like a town council. The big difference is that we make our election rules and all the members are allowed to vote even if they don't live here. Unlike in a small town, our people are still members of our community even when they move away.

Today Aboriginal people can't live off the land like they used to. Unemployment is one of our biggest problems. Some of our people have jobs in the community working for the band council or the school.



We also have a few farmers on the reserve, but it takes a lot of land to be a farmer and our reserve can only support a few. As a result, about half the members of our reserve have left and moved to the city. Our Chief and council are always looking for ways to create new jobs for

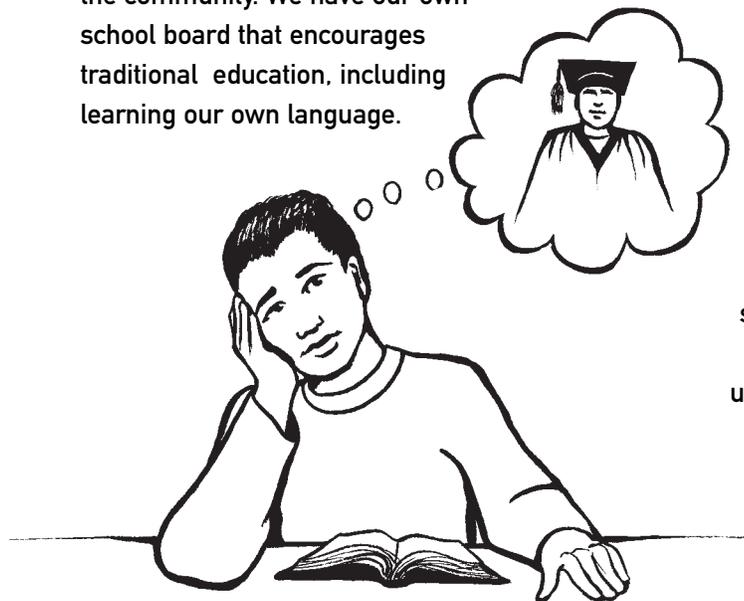
more of our people.

My mother is a teacher and my father drives a school bus.

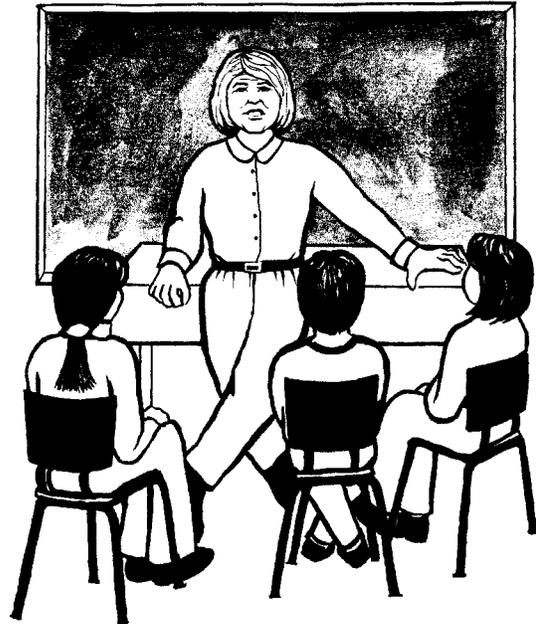
A few years ago our band council took over our education program, and my mother was one of the people who went to university and

became a teacher.

Our school is special because it is run by the community. We have our own school board that encourages traditional education, including learning our own language.



This means that Elders, including my grandparents, come into our class and tell us stories about the old days and how they lived back then.



After school some of us play hockey at our local rink. We have a team that belongs to a local league. We also have some girls on our team. The girls have their own volleyball team and they have done well. Last summer they were selected to represent the province at the North American Indigenous Games. They didn't win a medal but we were still very proud of them.

When I finish school I plan to go to university and become a teacher. I would like to combine my love of sports with my education and become a coach or gym teacher. I may have to move somewhere to get a job but this will always be my home. /

This information is also available on the Internet at: <http://www.inac.gc.ca>.