Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network

Angelina Amaral: MLSN Program
Coordinator

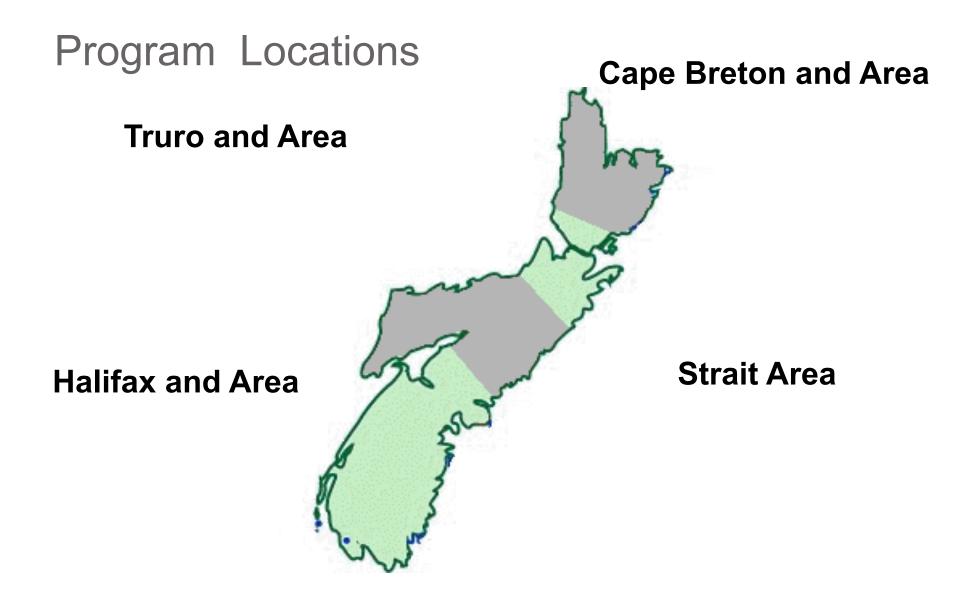**Grace Campbell**: MLSN Project
Coordinator

June 16, 2011

The Purpose of MLSN:

Is to develop and maintain a sustainable justice support system for all Mi'kmaw and Aboriginal people in the Nova Scotia justice system.

The Goal of MLSN:

Is to develop and maintain a new relationship between the Criminal Justice System and the Mi'kmaq and Aboriginal people of Nova Scotia.

Program Locations

Cape Breton and Area

Truro and Area

Halifax and Area

Strait Area

Overview of MLSN Programs

Since MLSN has been in existence a number of initiatives have taken place to improved the administration of justice for Mi'kmaw and Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia.

- Victim Support Services

- Building a Bridge

- Mi'kmaq Venture Program

- Justice Committees

Overview of MLSN Programs

- Court Worker Program

- Customary Law Program

- Mi'kmaw Inclusion in Regulatory Offences

- Mi'kmaw Interpreters Program

- Gladue Reports

- Cultural Gatherings

Customary Law Program

How is success measured?

In the Customary Law Program; SUCCESS is measured by how well the young person begins to recognize the full impact and consequences of their behaviour, and actively participates in making things right.

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The following table demonstrates the conflict between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal values in a court setting:

	Western Justice	**Traditional Aboriginal Justice**
Guilt	European concept of guilty/not guilty	Guilt is a feeling and a teacher
Pleading guilty	Accused has the right against self- incrimination. It is not dishonest to plead not guilty to a committed offence	It is dishonest to plead not guilty if one has played a role in a crime
Testifying	As part of the process, witnesses testify in front of accused	Reluctance to testify
Truth	Expectation to tell the "whole truth"	It is impossible to know the "whole truth" in any situation
Witnesses	Only certain people are called to testify in relation to specific subjects	The community gathers to engage in storytelling and identify ways to promote healing

	Western Justice	**Traditional Aboriginal Justice**
Eye contact	Eye contact conveys that one is being truthful	Eye contact with a person of authority is a sign of disrespect
Verdict	Accused is expected to show remorse and a desire for rehabilitation	Accused must accept what comes to him/her without a show of emotion
Incarceration / probation	Means of punishing/rehabilitating offender	Completely absolves Aboriginal offender of responsibility of restitution to victim
Function of Justice	Promotes conformity, punish Deviant behavior and protect society	Healing, restoring balance, and providing guidance and support to an offender, victim, and community

Wela'lioq

Mi'kmaw Venture Program

M i'kmaw Venture Program

Three year pilot initiative; Pictou Landing, Indianbrook, M embertou and Eskasoni

Statistically proven to have success with Aboriginal youth in the reducing of drug and alcohol abuse.

National Indian Youth Leadership project, Gallop New M exico.

First Canadian Project Venture site.

Positive youth development and experiential approach.

Supported by community working group members.

Funded by National Crime Prevention Centre of Canada.

M i'kmaw Venture Program

Outdoor adventure activities include ropes course, rappelling, canoeing, backpacking, camping, mountain biking, etc.
Service Learning projects are youth centered and designed to address culture, environmental and other community needs.
Cultural and Native values based leadership
Based on traditional wisdom and values of our
M i'kmaq People.

Mi'kmaw Venture Program

Population

  Middle school aged Aboriginal youth (grades 5-8) 20 participants per community

Program Components

 Experiential education
 Connection to outdoor adventure and natural world
 Physical and emotional challenges
 Service Learning

Service Learning
 Active learning
 Connections to the academic themes
 School or community service
 Critical thinking and analysis skills
 Connections to culture and language
 *Roots & Shoots
 Culturally based leadership
 Service ethic in tribal context
 Language, history and values
 Cross-cultural exchange and awareness
 Elder/intergenerational

MVP Program Delivery

Sequence of progressive programming
Physical, emotional safety
Four components of programming;

     In school
     After school
     Weekends
     Summer

In-School Component

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES
- Ice Breakers
- Socialization
- Team Building
- Problem Solving
- Trust Building
- Skill Building

Out-of-School Component

EXPERIENTIAL
ACTIVITIES
- Team Building
- Problem Solving
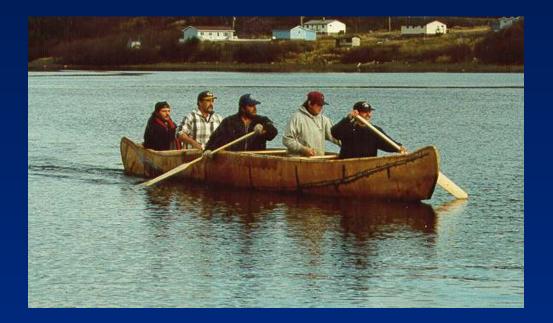- Skill Building
- Trust Building

Weekend Extended Trips

Extended trips/treks during school vacation breaks include;

Increasingly challenging experiential activities such as,

- High Ropes Course
- Hiking, Camping
- Rappelling, Biking
- Cultural experiences

Summer Camps/Treks

4 to 8 days in length
Mi'kmaq values and norms
Service ethic
Nutrition principles
Journaling
Connect with natural world and spiritual understanding.

M i'kmaq Cultural Values

M VP continues the on going process of adapting experiential learning to compliment our traditional values and teachings.

Some of the teachings will include:

- Medicine
- Sweats
- Wigwams
- Drumming
- Dancing
- Language
- Hunting/ Fishing
- Moose Harvest
- Canoeing
- Sports
- Story telling
- Games

Service Learning

Youth led
Meaningful
"Service Leadership" ethic
Projects begin with simple,
move to complex
Relationships emphasized
Culturally relevant
Skill building
Reflection and dialogue

FUN!

Having fun is critical to success in experiential programming. Fun serves a purpose in supporting participants as they struggle to complete challenges, overcome obstacles, and solve difficult problems.