



LOOKING OUT

LOOKING IN



PATTERNS

PATHWAYS

2017 - 2019

I can feel my light dimming,
I can see you barely care,
I can see my stars falling,
And all you do is stare.
It's how it is because I'm here to catch them
myself.
It's just that when you see the shattered pieces,
You pick out what I feel isn't fair,
You want happy so bad -
You can't see I'm barely there.
I'm just tryna provoke thought,
Let's make that clear.



Be grateful little bean.
You've had so much bestowed upon you,
So many incredible beings there for support.
Be sweet little bean,
This world can be bitter and we'll need some lov'n to get us through.
Be humble little bean.
You do not know everything.
Your path is much different from another's, know this.
Be patient little bean.
This will ever make complete sense, you're here to feel through the chaos to find
what calms your mind.
Be understanding little bean
Change is slow and can take a long time.
Cycles repeat and cycles break.
No need to call a lost soul fake.
You only know your own trauma
You're here little bean.
Appreciate the trees, the bees, the grass, the flowers, the sun in which we bask –
You don't need to know how long this will last.

PAINTING AND POETRY BY A.J. ELLENS HILL



FEATHER CARRIERS

L I F E P R O M O T I O N

"Then when he had flown a while longer, something brightened toward the north. It caught his eye, they say. And then he flew right up against it. He pushed his mind through and pulled his body after." - Skaay – Raven Traveling

VISION

We envision a world where all of life is embraced, accepted, honoured and promoted throughout time immemorial.

MISSION

Feather Carriers Leadership for Life Promotion is a grassroots movement that activates a paradigm shift, generating systemic change, social innovation and collective impact.

We promote deep roots to thrive, while providing the space and traditional teachings to grow through our stories of change. Together we carry our ancestral knowledge forward, and uplift a spirit of hope, meaning, belonging and purpose.

We are dedicated to re-storying our inherent power and establishing pathways towards a long, fulfilling life and natural death. We commit to meeting all people where they are on the life path, including supporting survivors of premature unnatural death and those who are grieving the loss of loved ones from premature unnatural death.

Values

We are guided by spirit and walk in relationship with our individual and collective values, always giving space for them to deepen, be expressed and come together - to nurture the collective good mind.

We gather our values through the wisdom of our stories of life and creation. Feather Carriers values are grounded in *promoting life* and reflect our collective teachings of natural law, diplomacy, inclusivity and integrity - fundamentally meeting life and all beings where they are on their life's journey.

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We respectfully honour and acknowledge the southern watershed of Manido-wizaagaiaagan (Spirit Lake), Georgian Bay and Wayeseyaaguining (Shining Lake) – Simcoe and centrally Lake Couchiching waters and land that have historically sustained the lives of Wendat and Anishinaabe – Anishinaabeg including the Ojibwe, Odawa and Pottawatomi Nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy of the Anishinabek and centrally Rama First Nation the keepers of the Mnjikaning Fishing Weirs. These sacred lands and water ways are recognized in the Robinson Huron Treaty, Williams Treaty and J. Collins Land Purchase. Recognizing all Nations and beings gathered and living here today from across Turtle Island including Haudenosaunee, Metis and Inuit Peoples.



Tânisi, Ashati Sakahikan, Erin Dixon nitisiyihkâson, Skeleton Lake, Orillia Ohci Niya. As a member of the Métis Nation of Ontario and Georgian Bay Métis Council, I personally relate to the nêhiyawa term, Otipemisiwak, “the people who govern/define themselves.” In relation to Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life Promotion I am related to the spirit of this work as a Feather Carrier – Life Promoter, Co-Chair of the Advisory Board, Ozhiitaajig trainer/helper and sit within the Bwaajigewin Dream Drum Circle. My intention and motivation within communicating the storylines throughout our retreats is to honour and weave the wisdom of a greater community voice and sphere intelligence to nurture the spirit of our collective leadership and the life potentiality of Feather Carriers.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Looking Out, Looking In – Patterns and Pathways serves as both an archival resource and reference to lift up the essence, emergence and visionary development across three retreats. Connecting the storyline of Feather Carriers oral history and founders, with the role of the advisory board as keepers of the vision, strategic development, sustainability, research, and wellbeing. Feather Carriers' is at another cycle of the circle, in organizational development and visioning, and the patterned essence below serves as markers to guide our pathway forward.

BEING: FEATHER CARRIERS FOUNDATIONAL STRENGTHS

- Spirit Led
- Land Based
- Ancestors, Elders, Founders, Community, Youth
- Sacred Circle: We are open and relational
- Cultural: Knowledge Bundles, Ancestral Knowledge
- Ceremonies: Pipe, Sunrise, Feasting, Fasting, Naming, Vision, Sweat Lodge, Songs, Dream Drums
- Miikans and Life Teachings, Story telling
- Two Eyed Seeing
- Respecting and understanding each person's gifts and teachings
- Accept and value individuals' teachers and teachings

COLLECTIVE GOOD MIND: CHALLENGES AND TENSIONS

- Recognition that we are in a developmental phase
- Living our values, walking our talk and bringing our teachings to life
- Walking with Vision: Don't get caught in the small stuff
- Honouring that people are at different stages of development
- A call for renewal and recognition of the impacts of colonization on our own thinking, processes and structure
- Transgenerational trauma: Lateral Violence to Lateral Kindness

PRIORITIES AND VISIONS

We are the voice of the people who can't speak and the community are grassroots and part of the national and international dialogue grow naturally and flow with change are spirit led and carry our culture, ceremony, songs and vision work through it together and take care of ourselves and each other

Founder
Dr. Ed Connors
reflecting on
Black Elk's Vision:

“He saw the hoop of the world, Mother Earth, the shape of all shapes in spirit, shaping all things. The hoops of his people, the hoops of all people and Mother Earth.”

Founder
Elder John Rice
reflecting on the drum

“The sound of no sound, Listen your spirit already knows what it's hearing, the drum helps you connect to what you came here with.”

INTRODUCTION

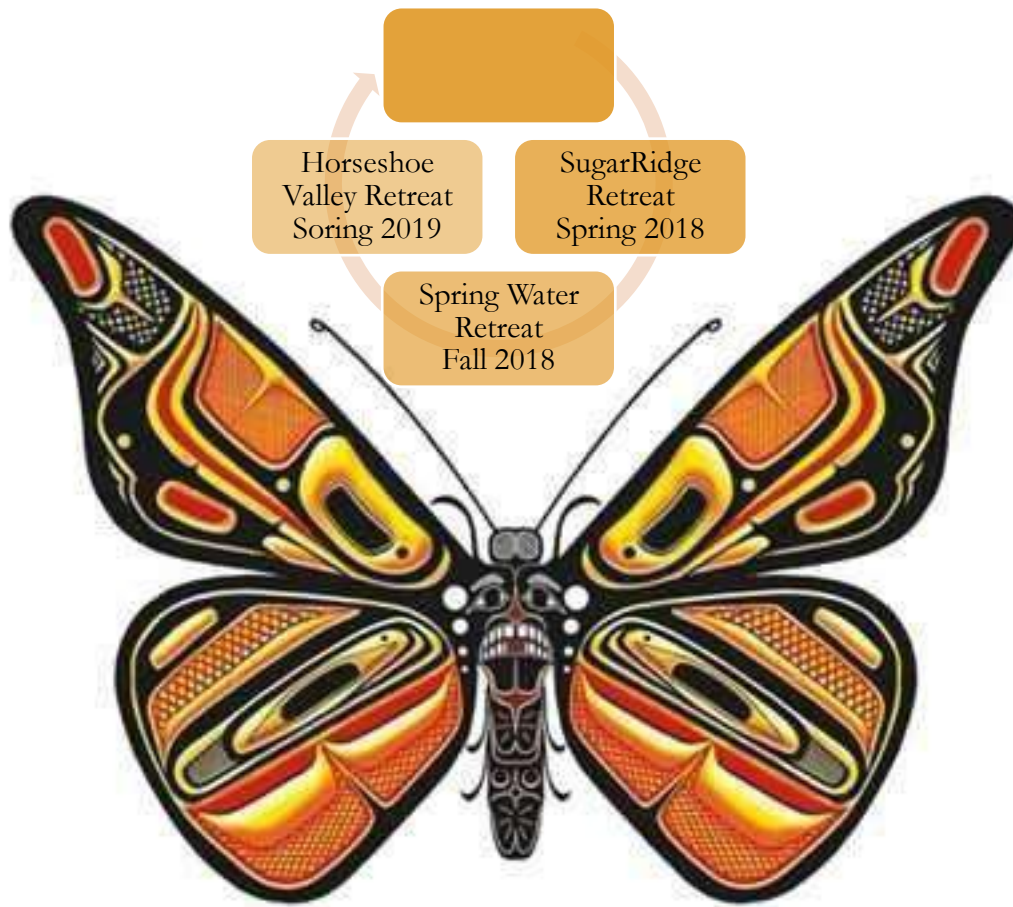
This report was designed to generate simplicity, synthesis and synergy. Tracking and storying Feather Carrier's developmental pathways and creation story, while storing the good seeds and providing an archive to generate a feedback loop to support the current phases of incorporation and development. Situational awareness and context is provided through grounding down into our bioregion – watersheds and power of place.

The report begins with the guidance in image and poetry from youth board member A.J. Ellis; inspired during our wayfinding meetings that sits as an artist's statement in symbolic co-communication with the written mission, vision and value statements. Across the retreats, it was highlighted that Feather Carriers uplifts and centralizes traditional songs, art, symbols, images – visions, poetry and other forms of communication in expression and meaning making. The painting on the front cover holds many stories and teachings and offers a reflection of the essence of Feather Carriers and the report.

The first section of the report focuses on context, situating self - writer, the land, watershed, alongside the story roots and vision of Feather Carriers. The second section provides an eagle eye's view of the retreats, in identifying general patterns, pathways and transitions, beginning with a high-level overview of each retreat in brief summary. This document is alive and written in a conversational tone to be accessed by peoples of all ages, from all backgrounds and of use at all times to lift out what is needed. Please do ignite, insight, engage and feed forward.

ALIGNING PURPOSE / OBJECTIVES

- ∴ Generate an archive and 'sensemaking snapshot' of the emerging patterns and markers within and across the three Feather Carriers board retreats.*
- ∴ Identify root systems, visions, priorities, principles, tensions, challenges and practices.*
- ∴ Potentialize alignment, integrity, connectivity and power*



CONTEXT: POWER OF PLACE

The intention of this report is to promote life and the spirit of 'all my relations – relatives' in the natural law of co-becoming. In honouring and re-centering that all of our collective work and knowledge brought forward rises through *spirit*, our Mother the Earth and our life waters, seasons and planetary cycles. As our Founder John Rice relates Feather Carriers is currently grounded in and sits within Wawaseyaaguming (Shining Lake), Lake Simcoe into Lake Couchiching the southern watershed of Manido'wi zaagaaigan (Spirit Lake) – Georgian Bay.

The grounding down and connection into our stories of place, illuminates the creative wellspring, guiding and empowering the nature, in work and vision, of the Feather Carriers. It is integral to balance the good mind by beginning where we are and uplift the creative essence and sacred stories of place from the Mnjikaning fishing weirs, Rama First Nation and our flowing watersheds.

The name Chippewas of Mnjikaning or "people of the fish fence" honours the community's commitment to care for the 4,500-year-old weir system which has recently been designated as a heritage site and which has made the community virtually self-sustaining in the past. Generations ago, Mnjikaning was a place of healing and renewal. Rama recently returned to its former name to honour the spirit of those who kept the place clean.

"People of Mnjikaning are extra special because we are people of the fish net. Native people are the original caretakers of this place. So for 10,000 years at least, my people have lived in this area and looked after Mother Earth, guarded the fish, held Council in the spring when the fish gather."

"Mnjikaning Is known throughout the province as a place of healing and renewal, where you can see a medicine person, offer him tobacco and be given a straight answer. It was a place where groups were fighting, whether it was Iroquois or Chippewa. They laid down their weapons to be here. We have to remember our responsibility in the year 2000. My history isn't just my life, my mother's life or my grandmothers. It goes back to the beginning of time. It is a special place."

Kindness appears to be one of Mnjikaning's " primary gifts" ...it is a unifier of Peoples.

Often in the interviews the phrase, "we do it with kindness" was expressed. An example of this gift of kindness is exemplified by one of its leaders, former Chief Lorraine, who was cited by a few community members as inspiring the traditional values of caring and sharing and "one who has both the leadership qualities of a tough negotiator" balanced by one who "works in kindness". Storytellers say that Mnjikaning's location on Lake Couchiching was an inducement for northern reserves traveling through the river and lake systems to stop in the community where they were welcomed to rest, treated with kindness, shared stories and were restored prior to and after their journey to York (Toronto).

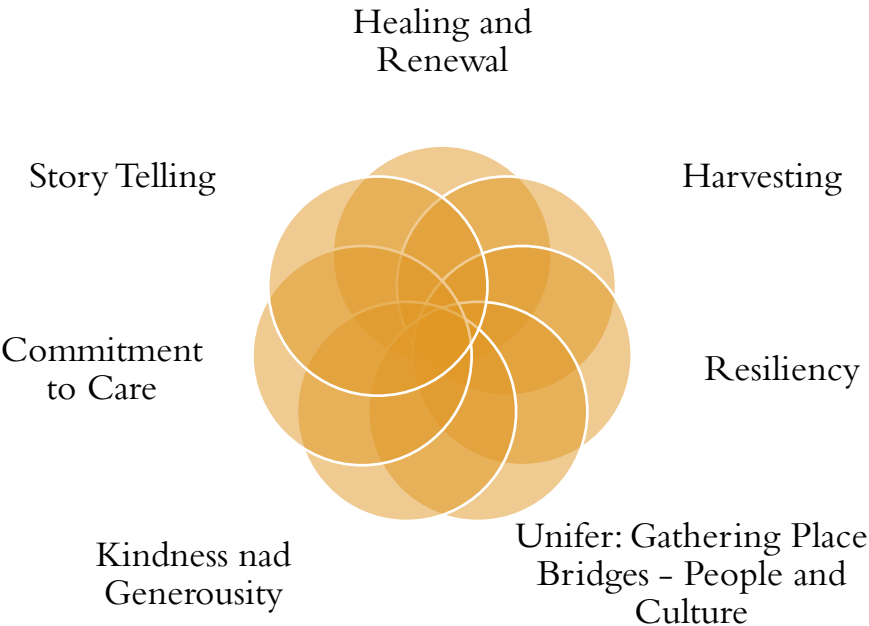
BRIDGERS OF TWO CULTURES

Mnjikaning people exemplify a resiliency. Some view themselves as "bridgers", moving back and forth between two cultures. Despite the devastating effects of colonialism, and those who were part of the residential school system that "literally beat the language and culture out of them", the people resisted by going underground in order to retain parts of their own culture and until it was "safe" to express themselves.

"My grandmother was raised in the United Church and also raised traditional by her grandfather. She could not only make a black ash basket by hand and porcupine quill boxes and know how to color the porcupine quills, she could also speak Ojibway fluently. But she could also do many other things that belonged in the white world. She learned those things from different members of her family but kept all those cultural things a secret because it was not a good time to be Indian."

BIIDAABAN: THE MNJIKANING COMMUNITY HEALING MODEL APC 23 CA (2003)

Weaving together community driven research from Biidaabim: The Mnjikaning Community Healing Model and oral stories from Rama First Nation, thematic patterns of place essence are presented in the diagram below to provide a general reflection and relation to our bioregion and the now Orillia and Simcoe County area. We align our natural power and culture when we rest and relate the work of Feather Carriers and this report to the aligned essence, bio-synergistic power and creative wellspring of Mother Earth.



WHERE DO WE COME FROM?

FEATHER CARRIERS ROOTS AND STORYLINES

[To uphold relational integrity the words and sentences remain dialogic and retain the essence and spirit of our founders – Elders. In so, the conversational tones and format have not been edited to fit into contemporary grammatic methods.]

The transcription is taken from a larger circle held in the spring of 2019 during the Feather Carriers Wishkabaaboo Sweet Water Retreat. We began with Founders and Elders Dr. Ed Connors and John Rice in conversation.



DIRECTOR MEGHAN YOUNG

Can we begin by having Ed and John talk about the beginning of Feather Carriers and then we could move around the circle and talk about how our lives has intersected with it? It is important to begin by grounding and deepening the storylines in which Feather Carriers Leadership for Life Promotion rises out of today.

FOUNDER DR. ED CONNORS

“So the way I usually tell it is that John and I were doing work separately around suicide prevention and both of us has had different experiences with different forms of suicide prevention, different training.

In my case, it was going way back to about 30 years ago, when I began to work with Elder Alex Skead with the sacred circle, with the request of the Chiefs from Treaty 3 region, where we were asked to come and help with what we call today a ‘suicide epidemic’, meaning simply that many of the people, particularly the young people, were either attempting to take their lives or have taken their lives. It was the Chiefs that came to the conclusion that it was too much and knew something needed to be done to change what was happening. And that’s when Alex and I were asked to join together and I returned to work in that region, with Alex, on what became known as the ‘sacred circle providing a way of life’. And Alex named it that, and he named in Anishinaabemowin and then translated it. And when he gave it that name, it just seemed really right to me and to us, because we had others who we had come to join us and work with us together. And so for five years, over five years, I worked with Alex on what we called the sacred circle providing a way of life, which was based on understanding how we needed to help our young people to be able to answer some very simple questions. Art Solomon actually stated this himself, when he talked in one of his teachings about identity, and how the importance of knowing who we are, and the way he put it at that time was, “You can’t know who you are, if you don’t know where you’ve come from. If you don’t know where you come from, and you don’t know who you are, then certainly you don’t know why you’re here and where you’re going.” And what Alex did in our work together was basically to help us understand the importance of that message. And we learned that through the young people as we went out and asked them about suicide and about taking their own lives and what they understood and knew about it, and why they believed that it was happening, why they were thinking of death.

And so it was through that, and through the speaking with the Elders as well, that we clearly came back to the understanding that what Art had said was true, that the central thing we needed to do if we were going to help young people connect to life, and not be encouraged to think about moving towards death, that we needed to be able to help them to answer those questions to know who they are, and where they come from. And

then they could vision into a future. And so that's what led us to do work in the sacred circle providing a way of life, which was based on the community there, we worked at Powell Island, and brought the youth together with the Elders and did teachings, central teachings that they hadn't been doing for a long time, and the young people had not been hearing, and they're all done in the language. Fortunately, in that area, the language had maintained, and the young people were being raised in their homes and their families had their language. So we were able to do the teachings and speak and do it in the language.

So what it taught me there, because I left from there, and I came south to work here. And I came with that understanding, but it was kind of dormant, I didn't really fully understand it and its importance until John and I started to say this what we're doing and suicide prevention right now it is not enough.

The Suicide Prevention ideas in terms of preventing death have value. But what is most important is that we focus on promoting life and helping young people to connect to the life. And doing so through the understandings of those questions that we now understand is the four central questions, which is, Where do I come from? Who am I? Why am I here? And where am I going? And that's just an extension, really, of what Art had spoken enough. And those are central questions that we know now have been throughout, for all people through all time, essential for living life well.

So when John and I sat down, and we shared with each other and that something more was needed, and what was that something more? And that's when John and I shared some of those thoughts, and then John start to speak about the Miikans. And so you can pick up there John.”

FOUNDER JOHN RICE

“So we both worked in this area for a long time together, but not together. The way I like to think of it is, we listened to survivors. We had known people who had experienced unnatural premature death, they had those stories. So when I was thinking about it, I was thinking that Feather Carriers would be the voice of those people. The voice of the people who can't speak for themselves now. We came together with this understanding, both of us had to put suicide in a place for ourselves. I know for me, that was a big thing for me was to finally realize, we are not going to eradicate suicide. We have a teaching that says, it's been here with us since the beginning of time. So it's too big, just like all other ways of dying, murder, these things we're experiencing now cancer, type two diabetes, there are many ways that we die. We talk about that. And we have to talk about the three of us because it was different when Deb came in because she didn't have the same kind of experience we had - the life experience working with people who

are struggling with life, she had a lot of academic experience. So her vision was naturally more idealistic and it took some time to get her to think less of fear. We know, we know you can't scare someone into living, 'suicide's a sin' – you would go to hell. Even though we hear those consequences to suicide, people still suicide. So it's not stopping. So the more we talked, we worked through that process ourselves and we became more thinking about the terms of life promotion. I think before that we just talked about changing how we talk about it, changing how we talk about life. Getting away from this scaring people who are killing themselves. And what do we do then - let's talk about life. Turn it into a conversation about what life is. So we made that transition, that kind of conversation. We were talking about that, then it became an awareness. You know, like, you hear that phrase changing the dialogue. That's what we need to do with our people in our communities. Whenever we have social problems, we have to itemize what's wrong with our communities, to get dollars to address it. So it's a negative source, we always have to talk about our problems in order to get money to fix our problems. So that's what kind of structures are thinking in our communities into that negative side. I know, it's very hard to fix the government to reinforce positive, positive things, because that's not what the government thinks/programed - so we talked about that.

When I was young, my step-dad say that a man is in his prime from 45 to 75, I believe. I believe that's the way you know, there not just stories from the past. Our ways are with stories from the past. So I believed him and thought that's what I'm going to do. And I'm in my prime right now and it will last until I'm 75 – and I will stretch it longer than that. So my belief is our stories, aren't just stories, they are accounts of our lives before contact. And then what happened one time, because Eddie Benton knew that I was keying into the Miikans teaching and reconstituting when you go through the initiation it is the second teaching of the initiation that you get to see and hear about the Miikans. But for me, I heard a lot more than was spoken I heard from the teaching itself and so that's really interesting because the first year I saw the lines in the sand in the sand teaching and saw the lines, the second degree I saw the spaces in between the lines, that's the only way to describe it, spaces, so in the third year I saw even more but I still haven't figured out why. So, the Miikans teaching became very important to me, especially since in a vision I received the symbol here the seven stages of life, so that's what became my teaching to learn in this lifetime. So, we talked about elements of the Miikans and a lot of it was we were to go back to our cultures, Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe teachings that's what influenced Feather Carriers. So what happened in the Miikans teaching outside of ceremonies one time and Eddie talked about, he said, you know, we live long enough to see here, to see Hailey's Comet three times in our life, so we used to live and be up to 130 hundred to 150 years old. He gave that teaching, that Miikans teaching. So, you know sometimes when we don't grow up with something, it's like you're not convinced it's truth – the knowledge – you kind of need to be convinced.

Anyway, not too long after that I looked after this man in my community, he liked his wine that was his reputation. So there at the end of his life he needed someone to look after him, so I looked after him, checking in on him, sometimes I would find him on the floor and he couldn't move so I would pick him up and give him a bath and look after him that way. So, he was really old fashioned, he never took anything for free, he always paid back, and he knew my thirst for knowledge. So, he always gave me a teaching and he always gave me knowledge. One day in the fall we're driving into town and there was this thick fog, he says you see this fog, is telling you the first snowfall is going to be like this, big fluffy snowflakes everywhere is what he said. So, sure enough that's what the first snowfall was like. So, he would say things like that. Things to watch for, one day we're driving and he says you know I carry a sweat lodge, but I can't do it because I drink too much. I can't do that sweat lodge. I didn't ask him for the sweat lodge. But one day we're driving into town and right out of the blue he says, hey John you know we used to live long enough to see Hailey's Comet three times, and I just about drove off the road because here's this guy right from my community, grew up in our community and wasn't traditional so to speak even though he had a great amount of traditional knowledge, here he was validating what Eddie said. I took this as validation of that teaching, you know ordinary people are saying this, and if ordinary people this than it must have been the real thing. You know our teachers try to teach us things, they try to teach us - they try to give us more knowledge, but this came right from a good natural source.

Some of these memories that are foundational to Feather Carriers that our knowledge about the way we used to be, how we used to live, those are truths, when someone said something about the way it was, as the truth, and not just as you know these beautiful stories about the past, all the ways that we talked about life. So, that's why Miikans became a big part of Feather Carriers, is that we would tell people that the main thing about the Miikans is that it's not a secret teaching, it's not a secret because you just need to tell someone your life story, telling me the Miikans, telling you were born, you went through puberty, because it's a natural teacher not a secret. I know when I first started talking about the Miikans I spoke at an international gathering, people there were really concerned for me, one guy he came up and said you know this video is going to be shown in Canada as well, and your basically just giving this away, and I said no this is general knowledge it's about life. Now if I told a sweat lodge teaching and now go and do the sweat lodge, that would be giving something away. The Miikans, it's not a mystery either, you know before we had so much social media internet, television radio, it was common for many families to sit around and listen to the Elders or Old people talking about life, talking about Aunty, grandma, even coming from Europe and those kinds of stories. Those are the Miikans, that's what we need to remember, each one of us is a Miikans, so I've done that I have learned in the lodge about the Miikans, the

concept of fasting for some knowledges, but my main knowledge has come from listening to peoples stories, and when Ed and I talk about the storyteller, Ed's an awesome storyteller, and I am actually a listener, I love listening to stories, listening to the Miikans teachings. So, that's how we got that element of that dynamic, the storyteller and the listener, all stories are true.



MAPPING ROOTS COLLECTION, CHRISTI BELCOURT

So we did use a comparative, living works is a comparative, as we talked about not becoming so structured, one thing we understood is this had to be a fluid thing, because back in 1990s in my communities there were suicide epidemics and we took care of things in a way that was way better, native mental health started in Michigan for all the suicides that were going up and back along the coastline there, they didn't quite go away but they went way down, but then it came back came back up in the 2000s, so we needed to talk, and, so our youth Feather Carriers 40 years from now you'll be having to be talking and training to implement what's going on in their day. So, just like what went on in my day follows me my whole life, my peers, basically you could say that's my foundation of people, my age, is who I Feather Carrier for, because I'm not a youth, I don't know what they are experiencing today, and we talked about that, that the foundations of Feather Carriers would evolve and what we are putting together is a skeleton, you'll hear us saying that at the beginning of each training. We're creating a skeleton and each group of people will flesh it out. So, that's one of the elements of Feather Carriers, is that it will evolve as it goes along. With Assist, it was also so structured. We called Jack to the party, we got this guy jack in there and kind of repetitious and we felt it was somewhat insulting to the people we were training. We sent an email to living works expressing that and basically, they sent us back an email that was like a script. And so Ed and I, we had discussions about that. And so, we said we don't want Feather Carriers to be like that, we want it to be fluid and to evolve. So I'm going to pass the feather back to Ed and he can add some more."

FOUNDER DR. ED CONNORS

Miigwetch. So the piece then about identity, right and answering the question of where do we come from? As we began talking about this, what came to me and what had already come to me was what I've shared with you before, which is the teaching that we have of the Two Row Wampum. And, you know, the reason that this is so important in the skeleton, as John refers to it, is because it speaks to what our ancestors already knew. Right? Because it speaks to the fact that when we had contact, from the point of contact, that there were now two minds on this land, right? So, Turtle Island, which had one mind, up until that point of time, all of a sudden now came in contact with a different mind. Right. And that different mind was so clearly to our ancestors, so obvious that they actually ended up putting it into a wampum belt, which is a peace treaty. Because they basically were saying, they warned us in essence, through this, wampum belt, that that was going to create difficulty, if, as you heard before the canoe and the ship come in contact with each other, if they collide, if either passes into each other's paths, then it's going to create problems. But if we don't, and we actually live with respect for each other, right, acknowledge the differences, okay. But we need to respect the difference, right and live in equality, that everything is equal, again, in this is that the understanding of everything in creation is equal. Nothing is greater than or less than, if we, if we were able to do that, then we could then live in peace with one another. So that's what some of the teachings that are contained in here, there's many, many more, but it's a lesson and, and a teaching about how-to live-in peace on this land, how to live together with difference, how to live equal to one another. And so, you know, that's what's here. And that was kind of the warning. But we know what's happened, right? And so today, one of the concepts, one of the teachings that are in here, concepts like two eyed seeing, the concepts of, again that there are two minds, that we can use both minds, and we can use them effectively, if we understand and use the teachings that are within here with respect, and understanding of equality, not greater than or less than, if we do those things, and then we can live in peace with one another with all of creation. But that's what's essential in here. So today now, one of the things that's happening in the changes that we know, is that we're really promoting and certainly through Thunderbird Partnership, and through the First Peoples Wellness Circle, we've pushed for now bringing back of this other mind, because this mind, that shift has really dominated. That's colonization, right. But that mind, we're saying is not a healthy way of understanding ourselves, each other, all of creation, that we need to create the mind again that we've had before in order to be able to live in peace with ourselves, each other, all of creation, creator. And so that's what's happening now as we promote the concepts of culture as healing, it's to promote culture as healing, its about promoting all of this, again, to develop that mind, again, that we need to have, not just for ourselves, but for all the creation and for everything, for mother earth, for survival, for sustainability.

So that's what this tells us this is, that's what it reminds us of. And that's where it ties to the understanding of all of these issues that we talked about in terms of identity, right? What happened to how we answer that question of who am I? How to answer that question of where do I come from, when the information is not really available? Right? And what and what happens to us is, that's where we get into those five identities, that helps us to think about ourselves, and what it's done to us, and how that either promoted our health and wellness or it deteriorated. That's what we grapple with, and that's where we're helping people to come to an understanding with, all people, you know, again, as we teach this, and this is another thing because it's sometimes in our teachings, as John has mentioned, you know, it's, it's kind of like, well, this is just for Indigenous people. But we make it clear that we are all Indigenous, going back in time, these are all our teachings, not just on Turtle Island, but on Mother Earth.

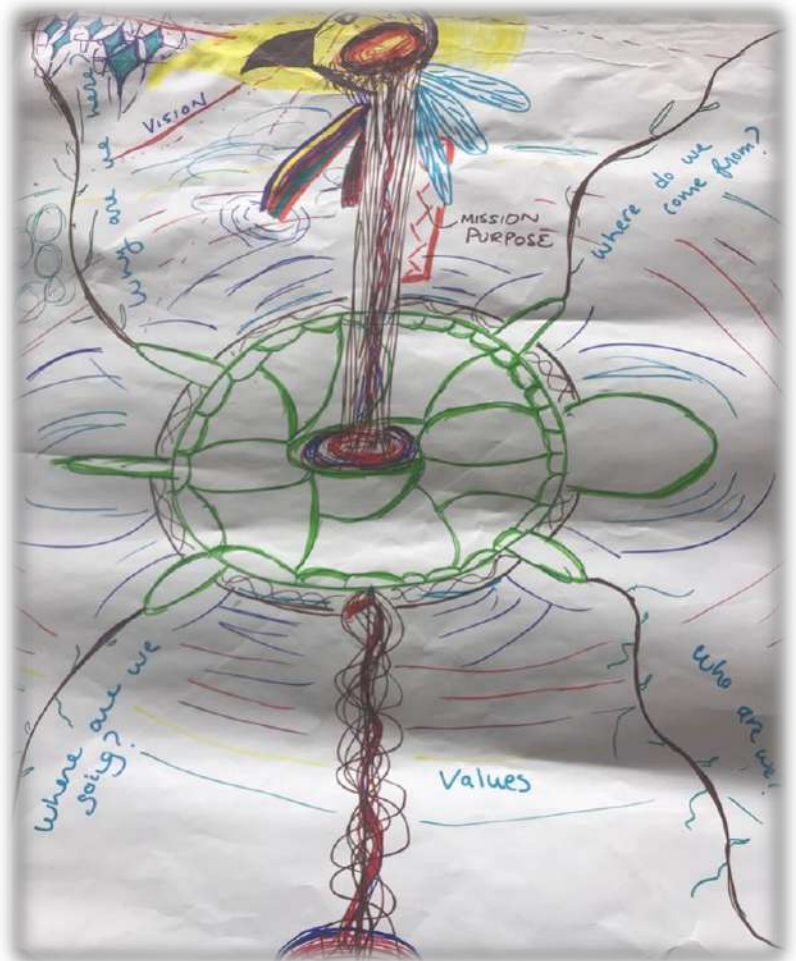
So we all have that in our DNA, we all have that in our ancestry going back, and we need to pull it forward. And that's I think part of the message that we're giving is that we need to pull this forward in this time now. That's the healing message. And we all need to do it. So that's the pieces then of, you know, healing of identity, healing of our minds, changing our minds, you know, bringing back the minds we've had, that live within us, and bringing them back into action into ourselves and into action in our lives. The most important thing, I think, in these teachings, and what we're actually saying is, is that it's not about changing other people.

It's about changing ourselves.

That's all we need to do. And if we focus on that, and do that, then yes, we promote life. We promote life in our own lives. And we'll do so by leadership and example. **That's where the concept came of providing what we said, it's the feather carriers, leadership for life promotion and that leadership for life promotion in my understanding is really important.** Because it's the emphasis is on leadership. Right? Give a good example walking the good talk, learning the Miikans so we can walk it well. And learning all the other teachings, that promote life, because if we look at them carefully, and listen to come to an understanding of them. That's what they all do. They all are teachings about promoting life, living life well - they're not about preventing death. In fact, they actually speak about promoting death, good death. Feather Carriers 2.0.

FOUNDER JOHN RICE

Cool, that's why you have the Turtle facing the West. (Organizational drawing from retreat), and there might still be people whenever we are doing something like that, maybe 10 to 15 years ago, think it was taboo, facing the West direction. That's positive because that direction is life too, I know 10 to 15 years if you presented that graphic in that way you would have been chastised. That's what we're talking about, we're talking about changing death, that mentality. Death is such a mystery. So that's fine when it becomes attractive, when its taboo they will want to do it until it becomes common knowledge and gets accepted as a fact of life.



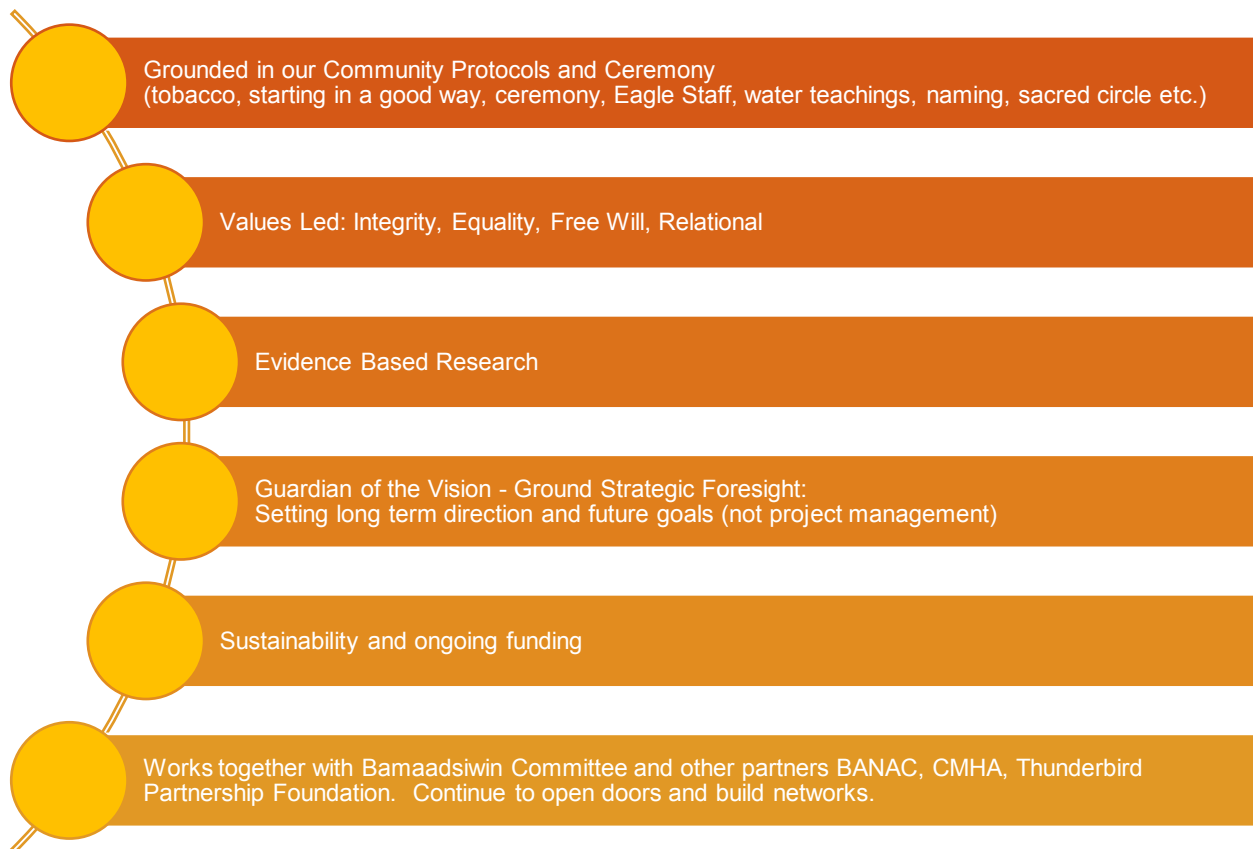
DIRECTOR MEGHAN YOUNG

Thank you both for sharing I think it's important for us to capture that history and understand this so we can ensure that we understand where we come from.

RETREAT I: APRIL 2018

In spring 2018 an overnight retreat was organized to support the bond and formation of the board to carry the initial stages, work and vision of Feather Carriers forward. We began in the evening and were supported by founder Dr. Ed Connors and Dr. Debby Wilson Danard in pipe ceremony and in teachings/sharing circle at Sugar Ridge retreat centre. The following day began with a sunrise ceremony, with Elder Zahgaushai, John Rice with support from fire keeper Jamie Nodin, used throughout our day together. This was the first opportunity to spend time listening to the founders and everyone – including partners, gathered together. Our afternoon session was facilitated to guide the direction of the board towards the now advisory capacity. Reaffirming the primary role of BANAC in acting as an incubator, holding funding, function and legality, with the recognition of CMHA as a central pillar and partner. The graphic facilitation and recording was supported by Tanya Gerberand and provides a powerful window into where we have traveled through over the past 18 months and what remains of integral spirit, role and relevancy for Feather Carriers. For further reference and record, a more in-depth overview of the spring 2018 board retreat report is on file.

ROLE OF FEATHER CARRIERS ADVISORY BOARD



Feather Carriers - Leadership for Life



Beginning in a good and right way

We celebrate **Life** and share with each other the vision of life promotion



2 GRANTS APPROVED

Partnerships



SPREADING OUR WINGS

our vision is unfolding

We represent the people

We're the Board

feather carrier principles

organic development & growth

life promotion for all our relations equal relationships



7 Grandfather Teachings



stepping into leadership - even within our individual journeys

worried and committed

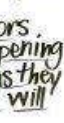
humbled + full of gratitude



you hit the mark

acknowledging + addressing intergenerational trauma

engaging community starting with parents



doors opening as they will

finding passion enduring challenges

gratitude

MIIGWECH

You're not alone!

HOPEFUL AND GOOD. LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR LEADERSHIP

Spirit names

honour Grandmothers Lessons

CLAN TEACHINGS

ALWAYS KEEP OUR GOVERNANCE IN THE CIRCLE

water teachings

LISTEN TO WHERE OUR GIFTS COME ALIVE

earth fire wind water

balance

work with Hospitals

promote life through economics

FEAST + UNITE

Right + Free Falling



walk in full harmony

MIDLAND, ONT. APRIL 2018

live recording: tanya@tanyagerber.com

FEATHER CARRIERS - Leadership for Life



BOARD DEVELOPMENT TODAY

suicide interveenor
Assist training

intersections
listen to spirit
Seeing cycles repeat

PROMOTING Life

INDIGENOUS Ways of Knowing

disconnected & lost experience

Role of police

Cultural aspect
clinical aspect

Suicide is one way to die.

LIFE PROMOTION

This is the BIG picture

Belonging culture connection

fluid process
suits the people for today

Youth Focus

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

BANAC has legal responsibility
working from home
CMHA DONATES JOHN'S TIME
HOLLY'S TIME
CMHA WORK SPACE virtual
THUNDER BIRD PARTNERSHIP
IN KIND OR P. PARTICIPATION
CO-CHAIRS by default
TOBACCO PROTOCOL
AT THIS STAGE WE'RE AN ADVISORY BOARD
DEB WRITE APPLICATION with help from others

BANAC - Looking to move
CMHA - expanding space

UNDERSTANDING PURPOSE of the Board

BANAC ~ OKAY IF FEATHER CARRIERS EXPANDS + DEVELOPS IS OWN OVERSIGHT

BOARDS ARE MANAGEMENT
• AUTHORITY
• RESPONSIBILITY
• ACCOUNTABILITY

National Youth Coordinator
Community Life promoter (M)

RESPONSIBILITY
↳ COMMUNICATION/LIASON
↳ CLEAR ROLES
↳ PROGRAM PROPOSALS/APPLICATIONS
↳ ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS
↳ PLANNING
↳ STAFF OVERSITE/LIASON

TYPES OF BOARDS
ADMINISTRATIVE
(INVESTED OWN FUNDS)
POLICY
(AUTHORITY TO HIRE, LEGAL AGREEMENTS, CREATE SUITABLE ENVIRONMENT.)
ADVISORY
(ADVISE THE ORG., ADMINISTRATORS WILL ASK FOR ADVICE WHICH THEY TAKE/NOT, DON'T MANAGE \$, DON'T HIRE)

'ADVISORY' COULD TRANSFORM INTO A 'POLICY'-TYPE BOARD
Lead Trainer + Reports
ED ANSWERS TO NEEDS OF BOARD AND STAFF
HOLDS RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION
PRACTICE DIRECTOR

EMERGING ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

APR, 2018

MIDLAND, ONT.

tanya@tanya.gerber.com

3

WE ARE EMERGING...

REGISTRATION + WAIT LIST
JOHN + DEB
NEW DIRECTOR position

PLAN TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Life Promotion
e-mail

DRDP Box
File sharing

each session costs about \$2K to offer
(covered by 3+7 Grant)

BANAC WILL CONTINUE...
We'll need to define our roles within the Advisory Board



- NEXT STEPS**
- Trillium Grant review
 - Flesh out Budget @ BANAC - event measures
 - Create Terms of Ref.?
 - Review Salary, equity
 - review reporting structure

Established Thunder Bird Partnership

process in place to access

Boards set direction + look at long term development, etc...
not project supervision



The primary responsibility of the FC Board is to...

ADVISE ADMIN INTEGRITY

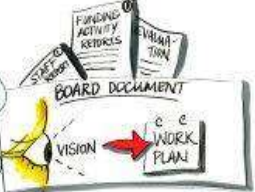
guardian of the vision

KEEPING UP EVIDENCE-BASED

DIVERSEE + GUIDE PROJECT

Setting direction + future goals

legal protections



free will dictates a lot of our behaviour

creator didn't make any errors

guard the eagle staff

fundraising

Look of salaries need equity

opening doors

THUNDER BIRD
Jobs @

BANAC
Loan
Logos

FEATHER CARRIERS

sign off on pay times + cash reg

ADVISORY BOARD
Meet monthly

FOUNDING ADVISORS

Peer M.H + Addiction workers support

BAAMADISWIN COMMITTEE

Director
Katherine Youth Coordinator

Then, decide the structural future of the Board (incorp? etc)
(Don't duplicate the Banac role.)

RETREAT II: FALL 2018



The second advisory board retreat was held in the fall at Spring Water park currently co-managed by Beausoleil First Nation. We began the day together in sunrise ceremony, recognizing all of those who stood in sovereignty over the years for the acknowledgement, accessibility, protection and promotion of the land and waters in their traditional territory.

Director Meghan Young worked with consultant Andrea Johnston towards a vision to centralize Indigenous evaluation and provide a process to discuss; what's working, our strengths and priorities, the tensions and challenges, alongside the greater vision. This would inform Feather Carriers key strategic direction and the boards terms of reference. The information gathered in the following section is from Andrea Johnston's point form notes only, transcribed from participants reflections within set reflections through a BINGO card participatory method. A process whereby participants were individually invited to reflect on a series of concepts and questions that were written and then reviewed in silence and signed off for each other. Andrea was not able to complete the process and in so, the notes and wording have remained close to participant input and have been organized to provide crystallization, coherency and gravity across the collective responses.

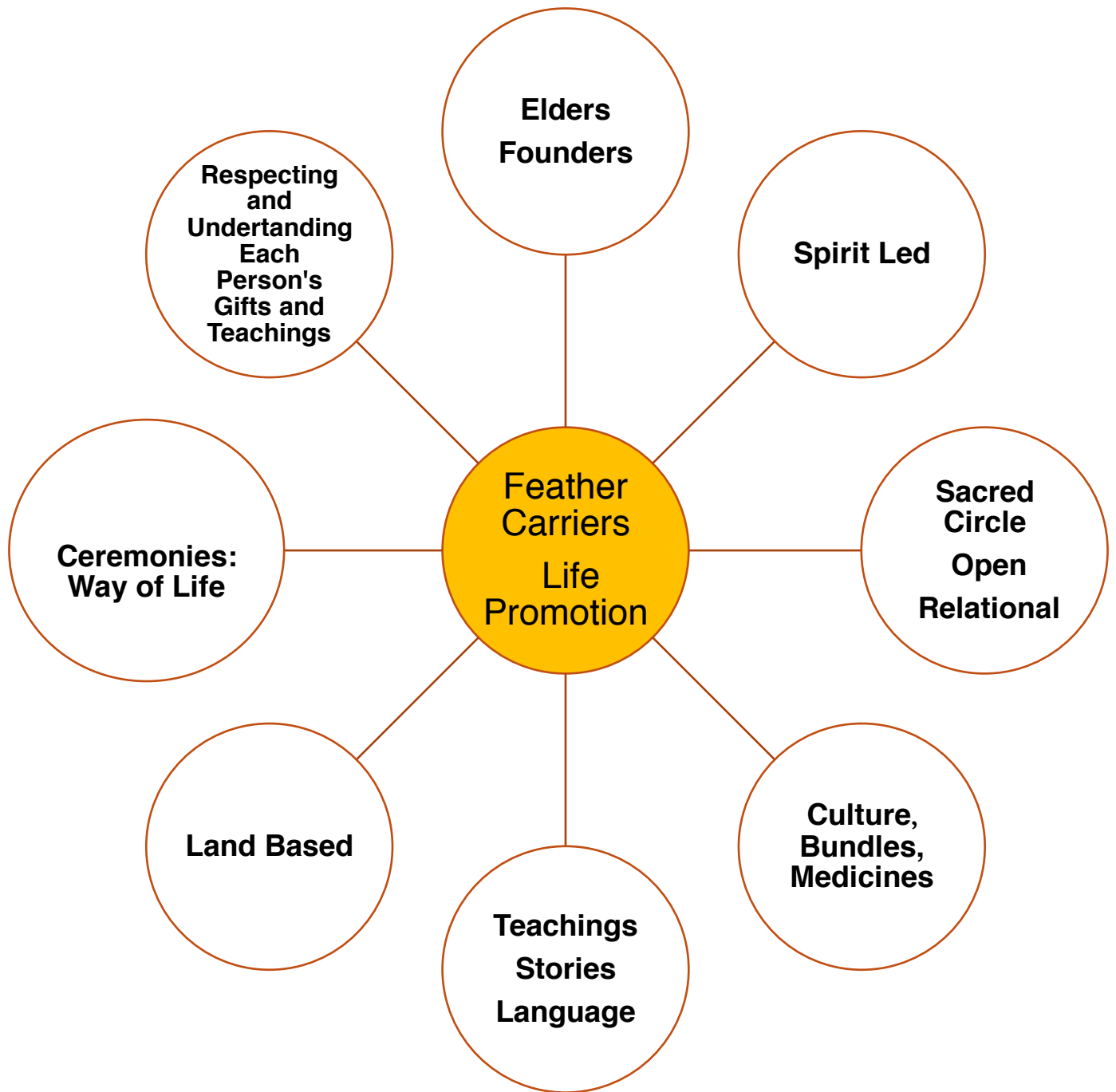
It is important to relate to this process within a larger sphere or living systems view of the individuated questions; and in so the information is first presented with an eagle eyes view of the landscape to explore key patterns, waves and markers. Please remain in inquiry and as you review the second section in more detail, make note of what stands out for you and what may be missing. This report is not flat or written as a passive recourse but to invite each reader to tend to the life of their development and our collective work.

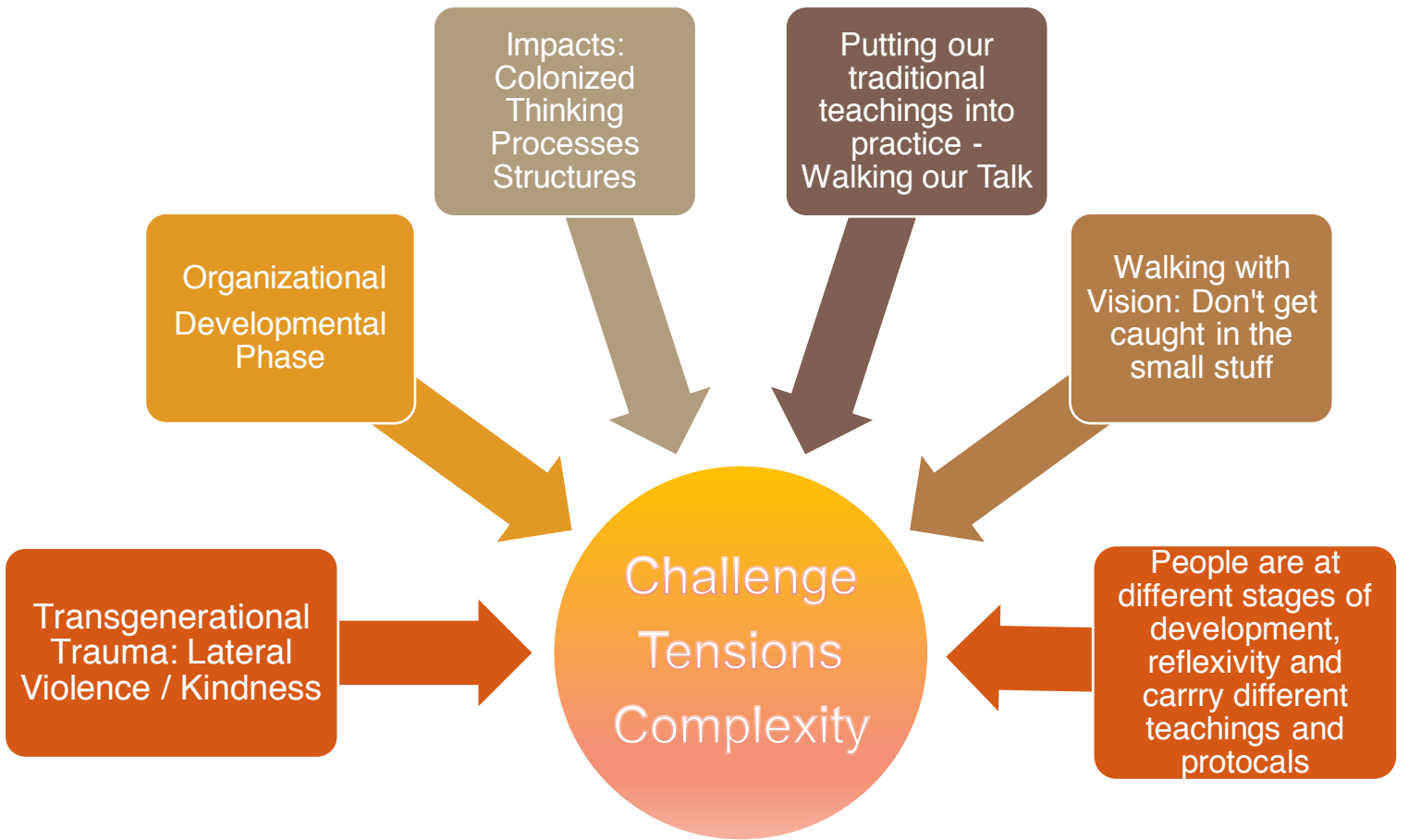


This is an image taken from the pathway leading into the meeting space of the retreat.



BEING IN LIFE: FEATHER CARRIERS STRENGTHS





COLLECTIVE MINDFULNESS

PRIORITIES AND VISIONS



We are a part of the larger national and international dialogue



Grow naturally : Flow with change



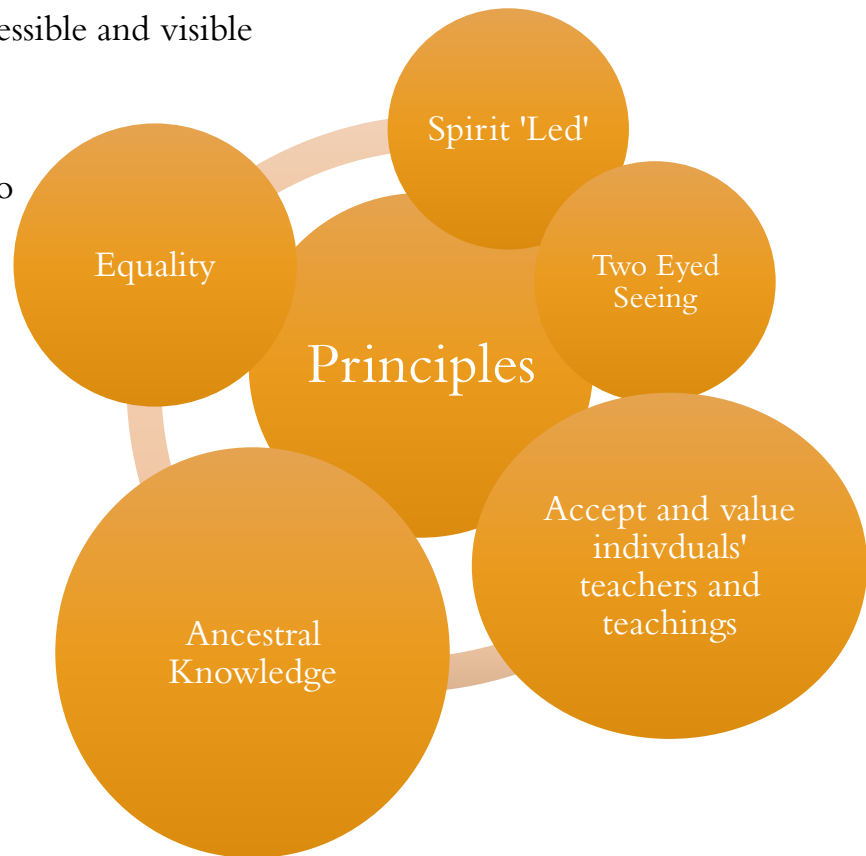
The voice of the people and community:
Feather Carriers is accessible and visible



Putting our traditional teachings into practice: *Walking our Talk*



Culture : Ceremony : Vision : Songs



ANISHINAABE INEDAMOWIN THINKING

- **How will this board bring in indigenous ways of thinking in this work?**
- **How does the board go about creating a process and safe space for the spiritual thoughts and ideas to flourish and support the work of the Board and the Feather Carriers?**

All discussions are held as Talking Circles with smudge and emotional supportive people identified to support the process of speaking from heart

STRENGTHS / VISIONS	CHALLENGES / OPPOSITES
Listen with an open heart and mind: open to hearing from spirit; open to one's feelings and others	Sometimes not on same page and acknowledgement of the challenge of having a community of people at different stages
Decolonizing our way of thinking: supporting original knowing; holistic healing - sacred circle providing a way of life	Different Nations and teachings which to follow: acknowledging past issues with protocols around different members teachings
Continue to utilize our knowledge keepers to provide teaching and ceremonies – and when possible relate teachings from the language	Nonindigenous organizational structures tend to predominate, and we sometimes don't realize we are thinking and acting this way
We emphasize from our teachings that we are all equal and accept and value individuals' teachers and teachings	Colonized thinking and relating: getting away from western ideology when we've been educated in that way i.e. Union – Corporate. Thinking has been influenced by the main stream world view
We begin all of our work with prayer and ceremony and emphasize that all our work begins from spirit and creator	Organizational Policy

ANISHINAABE GIKENDAASOWIN KNOWING

How does the board bring knowing into it's work?

“We should be using a consensus model so we can all see ourselves in the decisions made”

GIFTS / STRENGTHS/ VISIONS	CHALLENGES / OPPOSITES
Culture: Ceremony; Oral Teachings – Miikans; Storytelling; Fasting; Sweat Lodge; Sunrise and Pipe Ceremonies; Visions; Deep Listening, Reflection and Prayer; Ancestral Knowledge – Spiritual Guidance	We can easily fall into nonindigenous practices that lead to strong voices dominating
Grounded and guided by Elders Ed and John, other founders and larger community	There are traditional practices that guide the process of discussion and introduction of new topics
Written knowledge is secondary to primary knowledge that comes from within, lived experience and story.	We need to keep learning and putting into practice our traditional teachings – walk the talk
Ensure processes and spaces that honours and respects the value of all voices and 4 quadrants and spheres of well-being: consensus; it's ok to disagree; openness; everyone has the right to share; respect for members thoughts as they arise	No current AGM, centralize community voice to guide the work
Agendas are set but always open to natural process, fluidity, and ideas from staff and board members as they arise	Trusting knowing as a kind way of resolution to all issues - positive and challenging
Feather Carriers hold their feather during all F/C business when possible	Evaluations and unpublished work
Funding and Publishing Collaboration	Process - Sharing – that everyone may not have the opportunity to share

ANISHINAABE INAADIZIWIN BEING

How will the board operate?

We need to study, learn and put into practice the teachings that best guide our communications with each other.

To flow in all directions with equal weight, people have different roles, but their voice is given equal consideration. We are responsible to the community and each other.

STRENGTHS / VISIONS	CHALLENGES / OPPOSITES
Founders are ex-officio-able to mentor staff and board in F/C vision and larger processes: always working within the vision of the board; not losing sight of why we are here.	Flow of decision making can be rushed due to time limits and rapid growth
Board is voluntary and was formed as a response to community need: we are here because we want to be, flow with changes and grow naturally. listen to the guidance of founders and staff	Checking in if you are in the right time in your life for this work, personal life 'issues', members and staffs feeling burn-out and overwhelmed, lack time re: commitments
Decision making by consensus	Assigned positions for board, chair co-chair, secretary etc. Hiring must always be a competition
Staff seeing board as a support: accountable through reports and activity sheets; highly accountable; transparent	Passing the language to our co-workers and participants
Circle of care for each other; trust, reciprocity, interacting with one another with equal weight to voice	Having a better understanding of who we are and where we come from
	Transparency of funding has been an issue

ANISHINAABE IZHICHIGEWIN DOING

How is the board accountable to the broader community?

What is it that the board does, that makes it an Indigenous board?

This work came from the community and involves and evolves with the community. Our bzamibamadzewin (Indigenous Mental Wellness group) is our community organization that we report to and receive feedback from.

STRENGTHS / VISIONS	CHALLENGES / OPPOSITES
Being transparent: AGM and Audit	Not getting fixated on the day to day operations
Fluent in the way things are done -not fixed or linear: acknowledging constant state of change; flow and flux; transforming – shapeshifter; trickster	No process set up for direct community feedback other than staff
Support for each other: Life promotion 4 colours of peoples acknowledged	Feather Carriers creation story known by all involved
Board follows spirit and our traditional – ancestral ways of knowing	not an official board = “no actual power”
Community should be members with which they have the opportunity to guide the work	Integrity to maintain our decision-making power while working with holding agencies rules/policy
Ceremonies on the land and workers to renew relationships	Systemic structures that are oppressive
Explore what comes from traditional leadership and organizational structure so we can put this into practice	Fear to commit to decisions of accountability / responsibility

ANISHINAABE ENAWENDIWIN RELATING

How should the board support in the building of relationships for Feather Carriers?

- ∴ Continue education about life promotion, so we can continue to be effective leaders in this work.
- ∴ Continue to regard this work as essential for the healing development of our communities.
- ∴ Continue to reflect on how we are evolving as an indigenous organization that is committed to redeveloping our indigenous worldview - the world around us makes this a true challenge

Continue to learn about and define true indigenous based life promotion practices so we can be part of the larger national and international dialogue

STRENGTHS / VISION	CHALLENGES / OPPOSITES
The board will build relationships naturally through community and networks – and in supporting the current staff	Forgetting the beginning
All working together to discover processes	Getting too focused on the logistics
Everyone has or has the opportunity to complete a Feather Carriers training	Communication: press release
Collaboration and learning from wise/best practices – BANAC, CMHA, RAMA, ENAATHIG, LHIN	Visible to community
Promoting life always the spirit of discussion: building up; honouring (celebrating); feast the spirt; seasonal changes and teachings	Balancing two world views of governance / while understanding FNMI as foundation
Promoting the need for mind shift – paradigm change: recognition of historical patterns; advocating on policies that reflect our teachings	Representation at tables, events, etc.
Board acknowledges that current staff are new and developing	Work more closely with the BANAC Board

GIDAKIIMINAAN CONNECTING TO THE LAND

What are the board commitments to ethics?

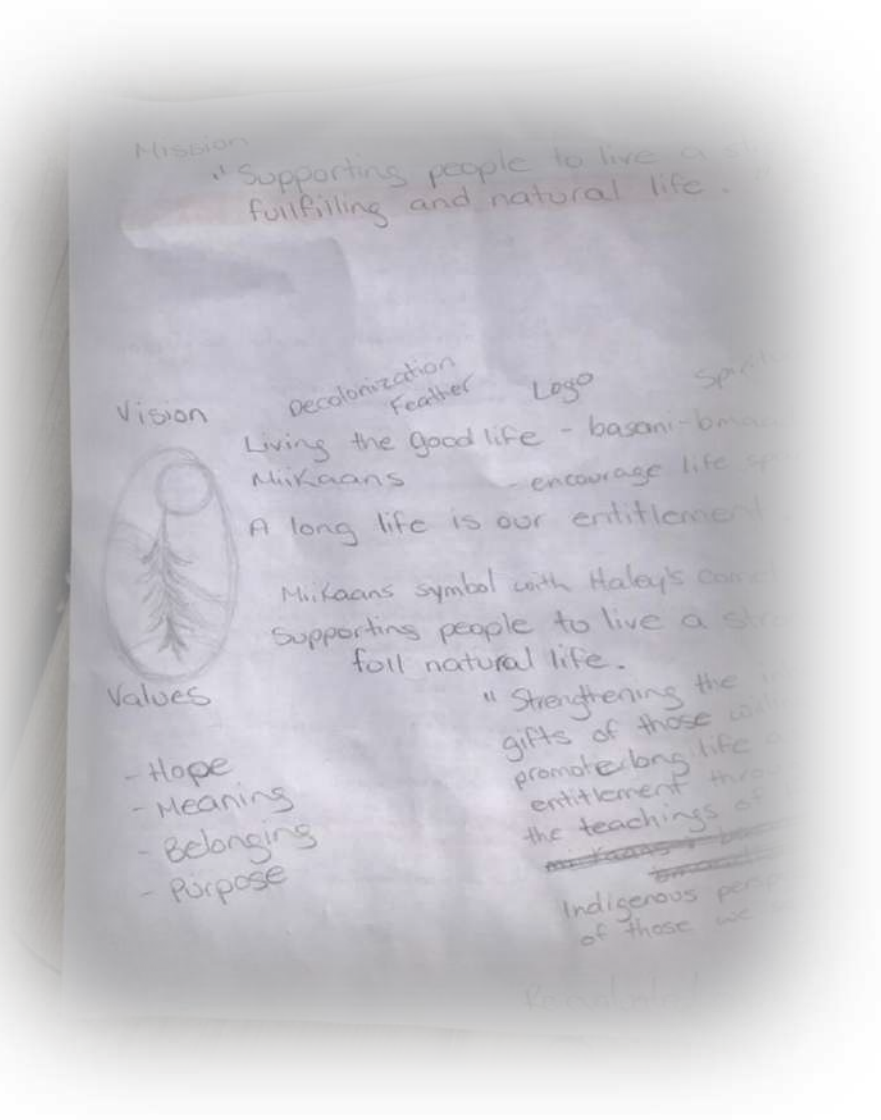
- ∴ The board needs to continuously reflect on and state the ethics and values that we are relearning, committing to and putting into action. This is a difficult process that we need to commit to and work at daily. Challenge each other in respectful ways about this so we are constantly supporting each other to learn and live our indigenous ways and walk the talk.

“Feather Carriers is founded on connecting to the land and our teachings and ceremonies – using ceremony throughout, in meetings, and all work – it is life.”

STRENGTHS / VISIONS	CHALLENGES / OPPOSITES
Roles in board structure based on our clan systems: need to have ethics and transparency about relationships and accountability	Not having access to land to host events and other ceremonies.
Culture: ceremony; sunrise ceremonies; sacred teachings; feather teachings; medicine wheel	We are not on the land as often as we'd like to be.
Always honoring the gifts of life within the work being done: everything happens in a good way; ceremony guides the board by remembering to respect self and others.	Develop an ethical process to dissect ethical dilemmas. Building ethics out of the culture while maintaining the culture
Making space to address lateral violence with compassion, kindness, care, and healing.	How do we honour relations – environmental sustainability in our materials (paper, food and plates/cutlery etc.)
We reflect and connect with the larger community partners and service the microcosm - grassroots network	Have not held a sweat lodge for staff and board members yet
All dedicated to life promotion	Gathering place / space for offices, training and meeting
Annual retreat with sweat prior to “AGM”, to honour our commitments to each other, work and our ancestors	

NOTES OF INTEREST: RECOGNIZING LEADERHIP

Feather Carrier and staff Tiffany McCue stepped in to facilitate the board towards terms of reference. Her notes and image from the retreat were weaved forward into the Wayfinding Committee's work towards communicating the vision, mission and value statements.



RETREAT III: SPRING 2019



A spring retreat was held at Horseshoe Resort to create the space needed to carry the vision of Feather Carriers' forward into the next phase of collective:individual development. The retreat was designed to create an opportunity to go deeper together and bring forward the lessons learned from the retreat with Andrea Johnston in the fall. Creating a space to connect to life and move in the spirit of consensus, to truly see and hear each other. A retreat package included pre-readings and videos, and though an agenda was set to establish flow, pathway and seed outcomes, it naturally followed its own course and came to life in relation to what the group needed, individually as collectively. A significant event occurred in receiving news of a pre-mature unnatural death within our community and Elder John Rice led in song – ceremony. This centralized the role of Feather Carriers' mission and the life path teachings to come within Feather Carriers 2.0. The Bwaajigewin dream drum circle also closed the retreat with a teaching and pipe ceremony with founders John Rice and Dr. Ed Connors. The letter to follow is the invitation Director Meghan Young prepared for all board members, founders and employees that invited an integral turning point and threshold.

The opening of this report provided the oral history of Feather Carriers recorded from a conversation within the circle from this spring retreat. Further dialogue throughout the retreat was transcribed and reviewed by the wayfinding committee at length and is the foundation of the vision, mission and values that look out together with A.J.'s artistic statement in painting and poetry. It is to note that not all members, ex-officio's, founders, and employees could attend the retreat or certain sessions and in so not all voices are represented and quoted below. As Feather Carriers is in a foundational stage of development, the voices, stories, notes and patterns are logged to support a direct relationship to the soils, roots, seeds and time of foundational sense making.

Biindigeg

In the Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life Promotion training, we ask both the participants and facilitators to be vulnerable. To be vulnerable with themselves as they reflect on their identity and four aspects of hope, meaning, belonging and purpose; to be vulnerable in sharing their thoughts, experiences and stories with the group; and to be vulnerable in listening to one another, even when what we are hearing evokes a lot of emotion within ourselves. Through this process we hope to create a sense of connection and belonging, and as Brené Brown shares, creativity, joy, connection and belonging are born out of vulnerability.

In the video, Brené also shares that with vulnerability also comes a sense of fear and shame, which drives our feelings of disconnection and unworthiness. Through the work of Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life Promotion, we understand that fear, shame, disconnection and unworthiness are also driving forces behind unnatural premature death. One of ways the training helps us to reflect on these deep seeded beliefs driven by fear, shame, disconnection and unworthiness, is through the picking up and letting go ceremony.

We ask the group to reflect on those thoughts, values, beliefs and practices that they want to pick up and carry as part of life promotion, and what are the ones they are ready to let go of as part of life promotion. We also offer the medicine of ode'imín (the strawberry), which reminds us about the sweetness of life. Ode'imín, however, is also a teacher in vulnerability, as ode'imín carry their seeds on the outside of their fruit. While their plant systems remind us about the power of connection in life promotion, as their runners spread to create daughter plants and grow more fruit.

In reflecting on these aspects of the training, and our goal of growing the Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life Promotion initiative into its own organization, we recognize that vulnerability is an inherent part of this process. As such, we want to develop points

of connection as we move forward in this creative process of visioning a new organization. One of the ways we can develop these connections is through understanding each other's values that we are bringing forward to our work in promoting life.

I recognize that we have experienced many challenges as we have begun to grow and develop as an initiative. I believe some of these conflicts are a result of not having clarity on our own values (the beliefs we carry that guide our practices), as well as not sharing our values with others so that we can see with clarity points of connection and disconnection. As a result, we wanted to take this opportunity to start the Staff and Advisory Board retreat by connecting to creation in the land, and reflecting on these relationships as we move into sharing our values and how these guide our work in life promotion. We will be concluding Day 1 with a picking up and letting go ceremony, so that we can release any of those pieces we no longer need to carry. The purpose of Day 1 is to provide us with a foundation in understanding "where do we come from?"

Moving into Day 2, we are planning to start with a sunrise ceremony and pipe ceremony to help us transition into our dreaming/visioning phase. In building on individual values that were shared in Day 1, we will be focusing on creating the collective values of Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life Promotion, and how we plan to put these values into practice (operationalizing our values). Our hope is that this work will provide us with the foundation in understanding "who are we?", collectively as an organization.

The values will be our guide as we shift into articulating our collective vision (dream), which will help us to envision a pathway forward, and begin to answer the question "where are we going?". The last session we are planning for Day 2 is a working session on developing our organizational purpose. This way we can ensure our purpose and organizational activities remain rooted in our foundation, which are our collective values. Our hope is that this session will help provide some clarity regarding "why are we here?". From there we plan to close the day, but with the understanding this is an opportunity for growth and change as we move forward in bridging the gap into our next stage of life as an organization.

Miigwech – Thank you

Meghan Young





INCLUSIVENESS

“So I think for me, the values that I see, from the beginning is that it's always been about inclusiveness. Inclusiveness, based in Indigenous ways, but inclusive, inclusiveness about where people view suicide.” - Holly LaForge

DIPLOMACY : OGICHIDAA

“Ed and I recently had a discussion about that and it's an important element of being that Ogichidaa, English word, diplomacy. That's a big part of what they call Ogichidaa to being diplomatic. I remember this guy that was really powerful and he always did things to get power, and when Eddy came he did things, he would show very good diplomacy towards this man. But that he offered his role as a leader and he was really diplomatic towards that. And that's when I saw that. That was important. But that also means we don't put our emotions aside.” - John Rice

MINDFULNESS

NON-JUDGEMENTAL

HUMILITY

“The one thing that was coming up for me, is being able to, to leave the judgment at the door, being able to check yourself and I just think it is practicing mindfulness, right, just being really conscious of where your biases are, and things like that. And again, not that you have to let go of those things, but that we recognize them and that's impacting our perspectives and things like that.

And there's so many things that come to mind when we talk about the values, something I've been trying to practice a lot is humility, And, I was forgetting all of the pieces around community and our people and, thinking about the generations to come and understanding that's it's not just about taking care of my family, it's about taking care of the land, and all of life's gifts, and they come from all around us. The land, and the animals, fish, and birds, all of the things that Ed gave thanks to this morning in our prayer, and I just want to make sure that I'm embodying humility and respecting all of those things and showing love for all of those things.” - Jillian Morris

RESPECT EQUALITY LIVE IN FRIENDSHIP GREAT GOOD MIND

“But what were the things that stood out to me, as I came to understand that; so laws, culture, beliefs, leadership, respect each way, equal to using a good mind. Respect, equality, live in friendship, and respect. And that will give us peace. We say that friendship and strength form the great good mind. And the good mind requires that we work towards common interests, not differences. That peace requires the use of the good mind. Peace requires good communication, using strength that comes from these, which equals friendship. So in that I also see and think of again, these are pieces of what is diplomacy. Again, teachings that lie within the two-row.” Dr. Ed Connors

INCLUSIVITY – 4 DIRECTIONS BIG HEARTED PEOPLE

“Some of the things that came up for me was, when you're talking about inclusion was one of the things - the ways that Feather Carriers is articulated, and has been, since it was born, or started to be written about, was the gathering of the hearts and minds from all the four different directions. In that it's not just about indigenous people here, it is from all of the different directions. And so looking at the inclusivity - I think that that's something that's always been there and, and hearing it now, it's needed and has become clear in my mind what that looks like. And thinking about what Tiff shared is about collectiveness, like that it's a team, this work together, even the way the trainings delivered, delivered by a team, because it doesn't rest with one person to know everything that we recognize that we come together, and all have knowledge doesn't matter how young or old we are, we all have knowledge and all have values and we can share that. And so for me, that's another really important piece. And the last one, I think, is the value of having big hearts. I think everyone that's involved in feather carriers has a huge heart..... And enjoying talk about the storytellers, and that at the festival the storytellers are those big hearted people... And so I think for me that that's really powerful. And it's helpful when we come together in this way to have those conversations and have that discussion so that we're, you know, seeing that vision together”. - Meghan Young

AUTHENTIC GENUINE COMPASSION COLLECTIVE HEALING

“So what I would I get a sense in myself as I listen to what you're sharing is the call for me the call to be genuine and authentic in my, in my actions in this world. Starting with, again, myself that, again, I guess simply put it, you know, it's, for me, it's one thing to talk the talk, it's a very different thing to walk the walk and walk the talk.

I don't know where it came from, it was maybe my dreams last night. But I said to him, because this was what was really coming to me very clearly and just tried to share it. And I said, I said, you know, the big challenge we have in our ways of thinking is to be

able to, to understand the behaviors that come from others, and also come from ourselves, because it has to start there. To understand them in the context of not just the behaviors at the moment. And this is where I can see that, you know, we're all the same that we all, our behaviors, and our emotions, and everything comes from the past, you know, in so many ways we express it in the present, but it's influenced heavily from like this, what are the teachings we have to understand, you know, the issues that you're dealing with from seven generations ago, understand the knowledge that comes out of those experiences, in order to now think about what you need to do seven generations ahead. That's a huge challenge, when you think of it to form that way of thinking. But it is really what it's for me what it's about that I you know, I'm working to understand how people are often in relationship with me, from what has happened in there, you know, through seven generations. But it is the way we need I need to stay in order to understand better and be loving, caring, kind and compassionate.” Dr. Ed Connors

PARADIGM CHANGE

“And that's when I really heard you really talk about life promotion, and turning that on its side, turning away from trying to talk about death. And, often someone talks about death without honouring it, it's a fear based, it's an almost punishable kind of feeling. It's not really with a lot of heart and soul. So when I heard you talk about that, and I started to understand what you're saying, ... I was on board. I just thought that's it. That's exactly it. That brings the heart and the spirit of people's stories of people's life path of their struggles that all of us can, can touch or, or hear and feel in a real heart, spirit way. So I was overwhelmed. I was really excited. I was really, I thought you did it, you found something that really speaks to what we what we need to do. So that for me was, you know, that clinched it for me. I am so happy because that really resonates to me is the only direction that makes sense.” - Aleta Armstrong

ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE

“the value of picking up, as Ed had mentioned, stretching back seven generations and beyond, and pulling that through, pulling it forward there's also something around the connection and relationship to the orange spheres of life... But that's actually for me I think the greatest value is that call to life right now. Because there's so many people that are waking up.” – Erin Dixon

SELF CARE

COMMUNITIES OF CARE AND VISION

“This group is our place to cry, to share, to be vulnerable, to grow and vision and feel safe. I want to continue that vision moving forward and help that vision lead into other areas of our lives and those people that are coming to the trainings start to feel that in

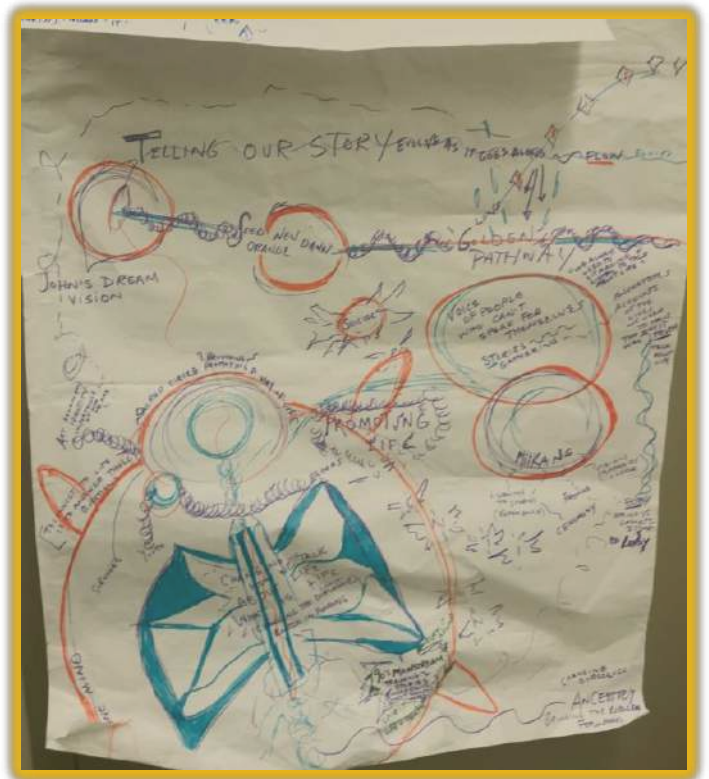
their lives because we need to be able to support each other and pick each other up when we're down – to stop to take care of ourselves.” – Tiffany McCue

DIALOGUE NOTES

Visual Representation: Waves and Tracks from the Feather Carriers' Story

Image: “The pathway glows” (connection with all of life; orange spheres (John’s vision); DNA, turtle and butterfly hold the paradigm shift to transforming how we are in and talk about life).

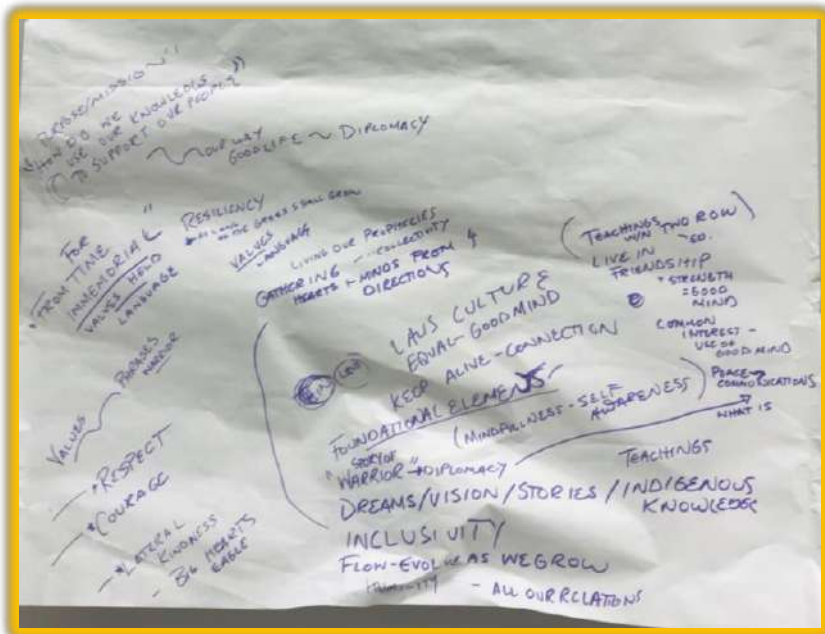
- ∴ **Orange Spheres:** *time of the new dawn; golden pathways – life glows as you walk upon it weaving together John’s visions with teachings shared.*
- ∴ **Telling our Story:** *It evolves as it goes along, staying open, in flow, fluid.*
- ∴ **Changing the way we talk about life:** *Changing our story – What is life.*
The challenge is changing the dialogue rooted in funding and turn around the 90s mainstream narrative, though it was a start, it is important to understand what’s hollow, what was missing and the spirit of honouring all of life and death.
- ∴ **Changing Ourselves:**
Art Solomon teachings on Identity and the importance of 4 questions and the turning towards life and living life well. “To connect to life is to answer those questions.” **Ancestry bringing forward our knowledge across the planet.**
- ∴ **Miikans – Life Path Teachings**
Sacred Circle Providing a Way of Life Ceremony / Vision / Fasting / Naming
- ∴ **Voice of the People who can’t speak for themselves**
- ∴ **Gathering Stories:** *We always used to sit around to listen to talk about life, survivors, experience, youth, Elders etc.*



WHAT DID WE HEAR?

COLLECTIVE PATTERNS VISION / MISSION / VALUES

- “How do we use our knowledge to support our people, good life, diplomacy”
- For time immemorial
- Resiliency “As long as the grass shall grow”
- Respect
- Courage
- Lateral Kindness
- Big Hearts – Eagle teachings
- Living our Prophecies
- Collective – Team and Voice of the People - Community
- Gathering hearts and minds from 4 directions
- Story of warrior (diplomacy)
- Dreams/Vision – Spirit
- Stories
- Teachings Indigenous Knowledge
- Mindfulness / Self Awareness
- Inclusivity
- Flow – Evolve as we Grow
- Humility
- All My Relations
- Values – teachings within Two Row Wampum etc.
- Laws – Culture
- Good Mind – Returning the Good Mind – Collective Good Mind
- Alive – Connection



WAYFINDING COMMITTEE





FEATHER CARRIERS

L I F E P R O M O T I O N

"Then when he had flown a while longer, something brightened toward the north. It caught his eye, they say. And then he flew right up against it. He pushed his mind through and pulled his body after." - Skaay – Raven Traveling

VISION

We envision a world where all of life is embraced, accepted, honoured and promoted throughout time immemorial.

MISSION

Feather Carriers Leadership for Life Promotion is a grassroots movement that activates a paradigm shift, generating systemic change, social innovation and collective impact.

We promote deep roots to thrive, while providing the space and traditional teachings to grow through our stories of change. Together we carry our ancestral knowledge forward, and uplift a spirit of hope, meaning, belonging and purpose.

We are dedicated to re-storying our inherent power and establishing pathways towards a long, fulfilling life and natural death. We commit to meeting all people where they are on the life path, including supporting survivors of premature unnatural death and those who are grieving the loss of loved ones from premature unnatural death.

Values

We are guided by spirit and walk in relationship with our individual and collective values, always giving space for them to deepen, be expressed and come together - to nurture the collective good mind.

We gather our values through the wisdom of our stories of life and creation. Feather Carriers values are grounded in *promoting life* and reflect our collective teachings of natural law, diplomacy, inclusivity and integrity - fundamentally meeting life and all beings where they are on their life's journey.

During the retreat and wayfinding committee sessions, there was a reflection and acknowledgement of how our stories and teachings are traditional communication vessels and knowledge bundles for our values. It was determined within the committee that there wasn't enough time to actualize this transmission with the level of depth and integrity imagined and to track it as a future opportunity to promote life and bring our ancestral ways forward. Some of the teachings that were tracked across the retreats and meetings are listed below for record, while many are reflected in the painting, poetry and statements. To follow is a list of values brought forward by Feather Carrier board member Kelly Brownbill, it was decided collectively to track the values at a general level at this time and are captured here to catalogue for future spark and reference. As Founder Dr. Ed Connors reflected, our current vision, mission and value statements are alive and reflect where we are right now, and we will continue to revisit and refresh them as we walk forward.

- Creation Stories
- Eagle Staff teachings
- Sacred Circle Providing a Way of Life
- Life Path – Miikans Teachings
- Dream Drum
- Two Row Wampum
- Tree of Peace
- Turtle
- Orange Spheres
- Star Blanket
- Prophecy Stories
- 7 Sacred Teachings of the Grandfathers / Grandmothers / White Buffalo Calf Women
- Medicine Wheel
- Trickster – Opposites
- Dream Catcher
- Willow Frame
- Two-Eyed Seeing
- Life Ceremony

2019 FALL REVIEW: BOARD MEMBER KELLY BROWNBILL

To support a review/edit Kelly Brownbill submitted her reflections on further clarifications, specifications and additional values Feather Carriers' may want to consider.

- ∴ We embrace self-identification of those tracing their heritage to the Indigenous Nations of Turtle Island and are not bound by current political ideologies.
- ∴ Although we are required to use labels in our documentation, we support the right of all individuals to identify in any way that is meaningful to them.
- ∴ While we respect traditional gender roles, we support all individuals in finding peace in their own place within those teachings.
- ∴ We recognize the worth of every individual's journey to Feather Carriers and Life Promotion and honour every path.
- ∴ We recognize the concept of non-interference and strive to respectfully model the truth and wisdom of our traditional teachings.
- ∴ As human beings, we accept the role of stewardship of our Mother Earth and will strive continuously to reflect that responsibility in all we do.
- ∴ Decision making for Feather Carriers will follow the concepts of mutual respect and consensus building that are imbedded in our traditional teachings.
- ∴ As the natural world teaches us, we will create no systems that are hierarchical and do not respect and honour individual gifts.
- ∴ Feather Carriers is inclusive collective and individual values and ways of relating to identity meeting people where they are at.

CONCLUSIONS: LOOKING OUT

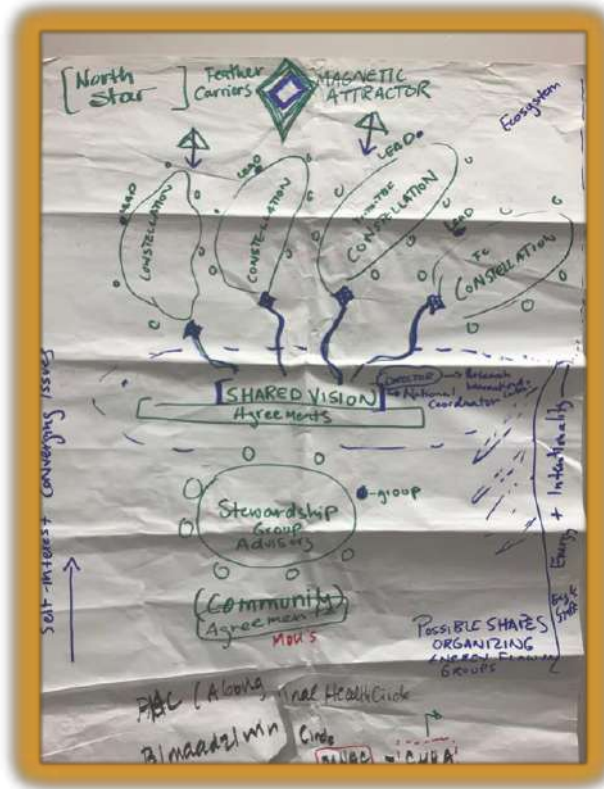
In following the Feather Carriers' tracks, '*looking out : looking in, patterns and pathways*' through three distinct retreats and turnings, we understand the value in generative still points. 'To go slow, to go fast' – and 'to go back, to go forward' as core principles to keep us attuned to the deeper pulse of spirit, life and relationality that is calling the work and path – way forward.

We invite those reviewing this report to each in our own way, take a longer view to appreciate how we have changed and the nature of the work has changed, as we have come into relationship with it. The next phase for Feather Carriers in moving towards incorporation is to continue to strengthen our inherent capacity to way find and move into a larger sphere of visioning, organizational structure and strategic foresight. We are attuned to the level of community requests for the work - vision of 'Feather Carriers:

Leadership for Life Promotion' and we need to collectively care for these next steps to maintain the integrity of form, pathway and balance.

This diagram generated in the first gathering of board members in early 2018 at CMHA, in sensing into organization structure and how community mobilization could be expressed and reflected.

We have returned and are moving full circle into another season and cycle of Feather Carriers.



WAY FINDING: SPHERE INTELLIGENCE

“Today’s wayfinders are the living face of a philosophy of being that has been orally transmitted from one generation to the next through millennia. The Inuit who read the snow, Australian Aboriginals who track the desert, Bedouin nomads who traverse the sand dunes and Polynesian voyagers who navigate the oceans are some of the wayfinders who continue to practice their ancient craft in cultural pockets around the world.

The great wayfinding tradition of the Polynesian navigators offer a powerful approach to uncertain, complex, and rapidly changing world, able to more effectively release the potential in others and in situations. The practice of wayfinding deepens discernment about what is really going on, while at the same time be more responsive to subtle shifts and nuances. It develops integrative thinking and perceptiveness – the ability to see connections between things that others do not see and to make sense of complexity. Wayfinders adapt more naturally to change and harness the potential of uncertainty, ambiguity, and the unknown. And they experience greater relaxation, presence and calm –especially in the face of adversity.”

Spiller, C., Barclay-Kerr, H., & Panoho, J. (2015). *Wayfinding leadership: Ground-breaking wisdom for developing leaders*. Huia Publishers.



Wind Song

Noodin nd'noondaan nanagoodinong

I hear the wind sometimes

Pii "ziiziigwaa" nagamowaad zhingwag

When the pines sing "ziiziigwaa"

Pii shkwandamag mawiiwaad

When the doors cry

Pii baapagishkaawaad waasechiganag

When the windows shake

Miidash gwekaanimad, boonaanimad nengatch piitaanimad

Then the wind shifts, lets up and slows to a new speed

Noongwa jiisakinini da shkitoon weweni jiisakaanke

Now the tent shaker can carefully build a tent

Miidash maajigaaskanozwaad noodinong

And the wordless whispers begin in the wind

Gekaa jigba wiindamaaiyangidwa bimaadiziig ezhi-wiindeying

The old ones tell us to live as we are named

Miikojiinangidwa debwemigad nikanananig

And we feel their wisdom in our bones

Giishpin bizindaanmaad

If we listen to the wind

Margaret Noodin, 2014