



NEWSLETTER



Ganohkwásra'

Family Assault Support Services

SPRING 2012

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Ganohkwásra' is a phrase in the Cayuga language meaning "Love Among Us."

Ganohkwásra' was chosen as the name for a family violence program for our community because it is the goal we seek for all families. It is through "love among us" that we, as a community, can put an end to family violence.

Now and Then

Our values as Onkwehonwe people are of a kind and nurturing way. According to our traditional ways, we were people who lived in harmony with each other, with the environment and Mother Earth. We were people who strived to keep a good mind and work together as a village, rather than individually, to have unity with our people.

The source of family violence within the Onkwehonwe population initially started during the years of European contact. Onkwehonwe people were greatly affected by a series of traumas such as contagious diseases, wars, Indian Act, residential schools and other forms of abuse. Small pox and other diseases devastated the Iroquois and spread across the entire continent from the southern to northern hemisphere for over four hundred years. The Europeans killed a large percentage of the Onkwehonwe population leaving the people physically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally traumatized. The historical

trauma caused deep breakdowns in social functioning that have continued for many years, decades and even generations. These devastating events in our history have left a deep unresolved grief and sadness that is present amongst Onkwehonwe people to this day.

What is carried on is called "intergenerational or multi-generational trauma". This occurs when the effects of trauma are not resolved in one generation. It will continue to be passed from one generation to the next. Some of the affects we continue to carry are; addictions to alcohol and drugs, lack of parenting skills, lateral violence, sexual abuse, generational abuse and the list goes on. The dysfunctional coping behaviours we may have learned growing up as a child and continue to utilize are what we likely pass on to our own children.

Violence and trauma have greatly impacted Onkwehonwe families across Turtle Island. This is in part how and why

Ganohkwasra came to be. A service was needed to assist individuals and families at Six Nations who were experiencing family violence and suffering from generational trauma.

Ganohkwasra provides education on family violence and its effects, the history of family violence in First Nations communities and breaking the generational cycle of violence. Ganohkwasra assists individuals in their healing journeys, as well as understanding and recognizing violence within their relationships and the community. Ganohkwasra also provides a safe place for individuals and their children who are experiencing abuse.

It is our duty as Onkwehonwe people to restore our traditional values for the future generations and to create love among us.

Ganohkwasra has the hope of ending the violence that began long ago. The board and staff will continue to

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strive to meet the vision of creating a safe and caring community for all generations.

The Spring 2012 newsletter is a special edition. This edition was produced to capture the history, in a glimpse, through memories of veteran staff and board members. Knowing our history helps remind us of the importance of our culture and traditions and who we are as Onkwehonwe. We would like the community to know the history of Ganohkwasra and how we have evolved as an organization. This is a reminder as to how and why Ganohkwasra came to be and what the original vision of the founding board members and the community of Six Nations actually was.

Veteran board and staff members were interviewed with the intent to capture the evolution of Ganohkwasra over its 23 years of existence. The board and staffs vision, foresight and passion to help revitalize the community with love among us is shared in this edition. Their empowering messages explain and give hope that with faith, hard work and the support of a caring environment, we can overcome any tragedy.

The Iroquois Nations

The history of the Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, a stable, structured and complex society, reflects a different view on abuse than mainstream society. In the matriarchal society of our culture, women and men share power and control through a balance of privilege and responsibility. Sex roles for women and men are defined not according to power, dominance or oppression of one gender over the other, but by the division of labour to sustain the community. We are a communal society, interdependent and cohesive; we are a familial society, with family ties that extend beyond blood ties to embrace the entire community; we are as well a spiritual society, with a humble view of not only ourselves, but any other living creature. We are one with the earth. We have respect for one another.

The theme of individual/family community is consistent throughout history and culture of our people. Each person is valued and respected as unique individuals, as family and as community members. Our individual autonomy and self-importance are tempered by the knowledge that the actions of one person affects all within our families and our community. From early childhood, we are taught the ways of our people by the example of the adults in our family and community. Structured, gender-based networks that span all generations, give advice about our responsibilities and teach us customs, roles and responsibilities. As we grow we are preparing to take our place as adults. In this

way, our culture and values are handed down from one generation to the next, and we learn how to live the values of our people.

Over the years, our laws and customs, and the patterns of roles and responsibilities that sustained our community and supported our families and individuals, have been disrupted and eroded by the intrusion and influence of the mainstream society. Our traditional ways of socialization and support have been suppressed, but they have never been replaced. We still hold fast to our values through our traditional customs and practices that have been weakened by generations of interference and denomination. We know what is right and good, but without the foundation of strong, dynamic traditions to guide and support us, many of us struggle with how to live together and uphold these values today. The tragic reality of our struggle is most apparent in our families. Today in our community, women are being abused by their partners in numbers higher than mainstream society. The dilemma our women face who are and have experienced family violence is that the values they may have been taught to uphold may be contributing to the perpetuation of their own victimization - for some, at the cost of their lives.

Adapted from Ganohkwasra Family Violence Program Feasibility Study Report, January 1989



VISION STATEMENT

With GANOHKWASRA (love among us), we bury our weapons of violence to create a safe and caring community all generations.



Wilma General
Founder of Ganohkwasra

Ganohkwasra started with the vision of one woman who seen the need within Six Nations to end the violence and abuse of women and children in our community. Wilma was the concerned community member who originally went to the Six Nations Council with her request to build a women's shelter back in 1986. She was a strong advocate and active member in building Ganohkwasra. She worked hard to ensure that a Shelter was built. It became a quest for Wilma to strive for a holistic service to help her fellow community members to have a place of safety, where women and children could go to escape from violence. It started with her kind heart to house women and children in her own home, to keep them safe. She would then assist them to the best of her ability. It was Wilma's passion that was the driving force of the founding steering committee to persevere through difficult challenges in order to build a quality community based family violence program. The current Board, staff and volunteers continue to carry on the original dream of Wilma, which was to deliver a service of excellence that addresses and strives to eliminate family violence for the people of Six Nations.

Ganohkwasra F.A.S.S.

Philosophy

We are all born with ganikwi:yo (a good mind) and interconnectedness, therefore everything we need to end violence is within us.

WE BELIEVE

- In being respectful, caring and accountable for our own actions.
- In self-evaluation in all aspects of our organization
- All living things deserve respect and have a purpose in a holistic approach
- Safety is paramount for a healthy existence
- In the power of choice
- In inclusiveness of the whole family/community
- Everyone has the right to service
- Traditions and culture play a vital role
- In sharing our Onkwehonwe approach with everyone
- In living our lives purposefully
- In life-long learning
- In protecting mother earth

WE UTILIZE

- Keepers of Traditional knowledge to maintain our cultural integrity
- Various traditional and alternative approaches
- The strengths, knowledge and skills of clients, staff, volunteers, Board, funders, and community
- Technology and various resources to support our organization
- Ethical based practices
- Available funding sources
- Policies and procedures
- Open and active respectful communication
- Community partners

WE ASSESS

- Risk management accountability from many sources
- Safety in all situations
- The effectiveness of our programs and service delivery
- Community trends, ie. addictions, mental health, etc





Alice Bomberry
Board member since 1986

Alice Bomberry has been involved with Ganohkwasra for 25 years. She was a founding member of the Board and continues to participate as a board member. Alice became involved in the early stages of development, assisting Wilma General and other steering committee members to discuss concerns of violence on the Six Nations and how they might address those concerns. While interviewing Alice and listening to her memories of the development of Ganohkwasra, it was easy to hear the passion she has for the organization. Alice explained that Ganohkwasra is like her baby. She has watched it grow from the beginning and has seen it blossom into what it is today, through challenges and triumphs. Alice remembers when Wilma would not take no for an answer and pushed hard for a place to be established for those who were experiencing violence in their home. Alice recalls working out of Wilma General's house during the initial meetings. She explained that Wilma General had a vision and seen the need for a safe place within our own community. That vision was a result of Wilma using her own

home as a safe house for women and their children who were experiencing family violence. They gradually moved from Wilma's home to the Old Lady Willingdon Hospital, where they rented one office to work out of. Wilma was very vocal and made it known that there was a need in the community to end the destructive family violence that was occurring in many family homes. Alice recalls the names of some of the women who were a big part of the steering committee and they were Wilma General, Reva Bomberry and Shirley Farmer. There were many people from different walks of life that helped Ganohkwasra become a reality. While in the process of planning and seeking funding they had to decide on a name for the program. Alice explained they had many possible names for the program but the most suitable name the steering committee decided on was Ganohkwasra. It was chosen for the program early in the planning to express the purpose and philosophy in creating a community-based program for victims of family violence. The name was chosen with help from a renowned Cayuga language speaker, Reg Henry. Ganohkwasra is a phrase in the Cayuga language meaning "love among us." The hard work and dedication by the steering committee was amazing and has assisted Ganohkwasra to become what it is today. From start to finish, they faced many challenges such as having to hire consultants to help secure funding, to build, coming up with an appropriate program name, hiring quality workers, gathering statistics on family violence occurring in Six Nations to creating policies and

procedures for the organization. Alice shared her fondest, most greatest memory of Ganohkwasra and that was when the shelter doors were finally opened for service. She explained that it meant their hard work wasn't just a vision or a dream anymore, it had become a reality. She recalled conversations in the community, that there was no need for an abuse shelter to be in Six Nations because it would not be utilized. Some community members were in denial about the violence occurring in our community, however, statistics proved a shelter was needed. Alice also recalled hearing some negative comments said about the shelter like, "bang them, beat them, and boot them place" or "that's where women go who don't listen to their men." The negative comments and criticisms were met with proof that Ganohkwasra was helping to keep women and their children safe from abuse. Over the years Ganohkwasra has experienced much growth. Alice has always had a connection with Ganohkwasra and has always wanted to help others because of her own story of living with abuse. Alice recognized the abuse that had occurred within her own family and she did not want to see anyone hurting from violence and abuse. Alice continues to assist in providing direction on the Board of Directors and has hopes that Ganohkwasra will continue to have the necessary resources to meet the needs of the community. She had seen growth from 1986, when a family violence program was just a thought to now, 2011, where Ganohkwasra is today. From one small office to 3 buildings and from 2 staff members to over 50 staff. Ganohkwasra is a safe, caring place to find help from violence and abuse that continues today.



Reva Bomberry

First Ganohkwasra Director

Before Reva Bomberry became the first Director at Ganohkwasra, she was a Coordinator for the Crisis Center. Reva had known Wilma General, founding Board member, in her role as the Crisis Coordinator. At that time, Wilma was a volunteer crisis worker. Wilma had called Reva up and asked her “What do you think about starting a women’s shelter?”. With no hesitation, Reva replied yes! Reva explained why she had no hesitation and it was due to a past violent experience. She was young maybe around 13 years of age when ending violence in our community was a vision of hers. She said when she witnessed a family member being abused by her partner. It petrified her, then angered her, it made her feel weak, but ultimately made her want to make a difference, so that it wouldn’t happen again. She wanted to help find or build a place for women to escape the violent abusive acts that were happening in their home. Reva’s idea and goal was to restore the power of women within our community. In the old way women used to be the care takers, and the decision makers, women had an important place and it seemed to be lost so she wanted to restore that. When starting the project there was

no question whether we should or we couldn’t, we just did it because there was a need for it. Wilma stated to Reva as she remembers, “I have the voice and you have the book smarts and if we work together we could make this work.” After Reva agreed to help establish the shelter, the committee experienced uphill battles. Reva recalls many helpers in the beginning stages, but the names that stand out to her are, Wilma General (founder), Audrey Hill, Alice Bomberry, and Shirley Farmer. She said there were many more who helped along the way but she doesn’t recall everyone. Reva said it appeared as if the community accepted women being beaten by their men at the beginning. People kept the violence hush hush in the beginning. It seemed as if no one wanted to get involved in other people’s business when violence was involved. Violence wasn’t really questioned in the community, she stated. When the shelter became known in the community, Reva remembers getting some backlash from community members. Some men would state; “that’s where the women go who don’t listen to their men.” Reva stated there was some ridicule within the community but not a lot. Even through the ridicule and trying to find funding this core group of women stuck with the challenges and pushed through. Reva, as the Director remembers that the feasibility study was probably the best thing they done to help get Ganohkwasra started. They completed the study and it showed the degree of violence within the community. This opened many people’s eyes. It wasn’t just a shelter being implemented in the community for no reason, the need was clear that community members needed to be safe. At the beginning

Reva stated “we really did a lot of PR to desensitize the community about violence, and that this wasn’t okay that this was happening.” Reva also stated that she had come from a traditional perspective and truly wanted to integrate our traditional ways into the healing of the people at Ganohkwasra. This was another task to combine mainstream counselling techniques with our traditional ways. Also to create programs using traditional knowledge and ensuring that they were approved for by the funding source.

Reva served as Director for 10 years. She resigned from the position after she felt she had accomplished all she had set out to do with the Ganohkwasra family. She is very happy to have a place in our community for families and individuals that seek a safe place. Reva went on to pursue her childhood dream of being an elementary school teacher and has now worked as a teacher for the past 8 years. Ganohkwasra has not only affected the lives of community but has affected her life in a positive way as well. The community now has a shelter, a safe environment for women, children and men to escape the violence. Also to regain their true roots once again and to find their self while being assisted on their healing journey. This brings comfort to Reva to know she was a part of it and will continue to teach the education on violence within our community. She has many memories and connections to the Ganohkwasra building that keep her in touch with helping the community to end violence even though she is a teacher now.



*Dianne Beaver
1st Men's Community
Counsellor
20 years of Service*

Dianne Beaver, a well respected and committed team member, has been employed at Ganohkwasra for twenty years. Dianne's involvement began when she was contacted by Reva Bomberly (former Director) to do research and write a proposal through Social Services. The Shelter had not yet been built when Dianne was contacted, it was still just a vision. Dianne researched family violence occurring in Six Nations and completed a proposal. Later on, Dianne remembers the committee approached Gina VanEvery to do research and work on family violence issues. Prior to being hired as the first ever Community Counsellor, Gina had worked at a job where she gained much knowledge of family violence. Gina was also involved in helping to plan and shape what Ganohkwasra would later become. From the start, Dianne remembers there was always the idea of restoring the "family unit." This was a big challenge for Ganohkwasra, considering there was no such thing as a men's family violence program anywhere. In the beginning

Ganohkwasra was not able to advertise that there was a new program to help and support men. They kept it underground for a bit, as they were challenged to secure and maintain funding for it. The funding source didn't understand the dynamics of men experiencing abuse, their focus was violence against women and children. Ganohkwasra wasn't just a women's shelter, nor was it just a women and children's shelter, it was a family shelter and family includes men. Over the years, the service of helping men has been acknowledged more so than it was when the organization first started. After helping with research and the proposal, Dianne's contract ended. She was then approached to develop a program for men. Dianne explained that she would only take the job if there was a commitment towards having a program for men and for her to be able to see it through. She accepted the job offer and over the years has worked hard to develop the men's program. She has watched it evolve over the years to come to where it is today. The idea was to integrate the traditional culture and traditional healing ways into the mainstream counselling ways. Dianne said it was a challenge to keep going due to funding but they always managed to pull through. While promoting men and family healing, many times Dianne was scoffed at in the community. She also explained that the Six Nations Police weren't on board at first due to safety issues, but they later came around to help out more. While being at a conference and attending different seminars on domestic violence, Dianne remembers a pivotal point in her career. She stated, "I was sitting there in the audience with about 300 other people while they spoke of women

abuse and then one woman stood up to speak. This lady, who was a lawyer, told the audience that her life partner physically, emotionally, and mentally abused her and that she was a lesbian." Right then Dianne said you could of heard a pin drop in the room how quiet it had got. But she was glad that the women spoke up to tell her story, because it showed that it's not only men that are abusive. It just proved to her that violence can occur by anyone and that we all have the potential to be violent. She said she was just so amazed that it made her have hope again and strength to know that the men's program would work out. A big realization for Dianne was when the first man came into counselling. This is a vivid recollection for Dianne, remembering the first man to come through the doors to utilize the men's program. The male had come to Ganohkwasra on his own and was not referred by anyone. The feeling that was shared by the entire team was of great excitement and meant so much to Dianne. Through all the struggles and triumphs, Dianne explains that the work she does, doesn't feel like work to her. She is so honoured to be a part of the amazing team at Ganohkwasra because she strongly believes in the vision and philosophy. She also believes in the various modalities used to help assist people on their healing journeys. Dianne said it is a privilege to work here and do the work she is doing. She is glad to help men regain their true selves and to watch them grow as individuals.

NOTE: The Board and Staff at Ganohkwasra would like to congratulate Dianne on her recent 20 year anniversary of continuing to make the Men's program a success.



Julia Bomberry

Manager of Therapeutic Services

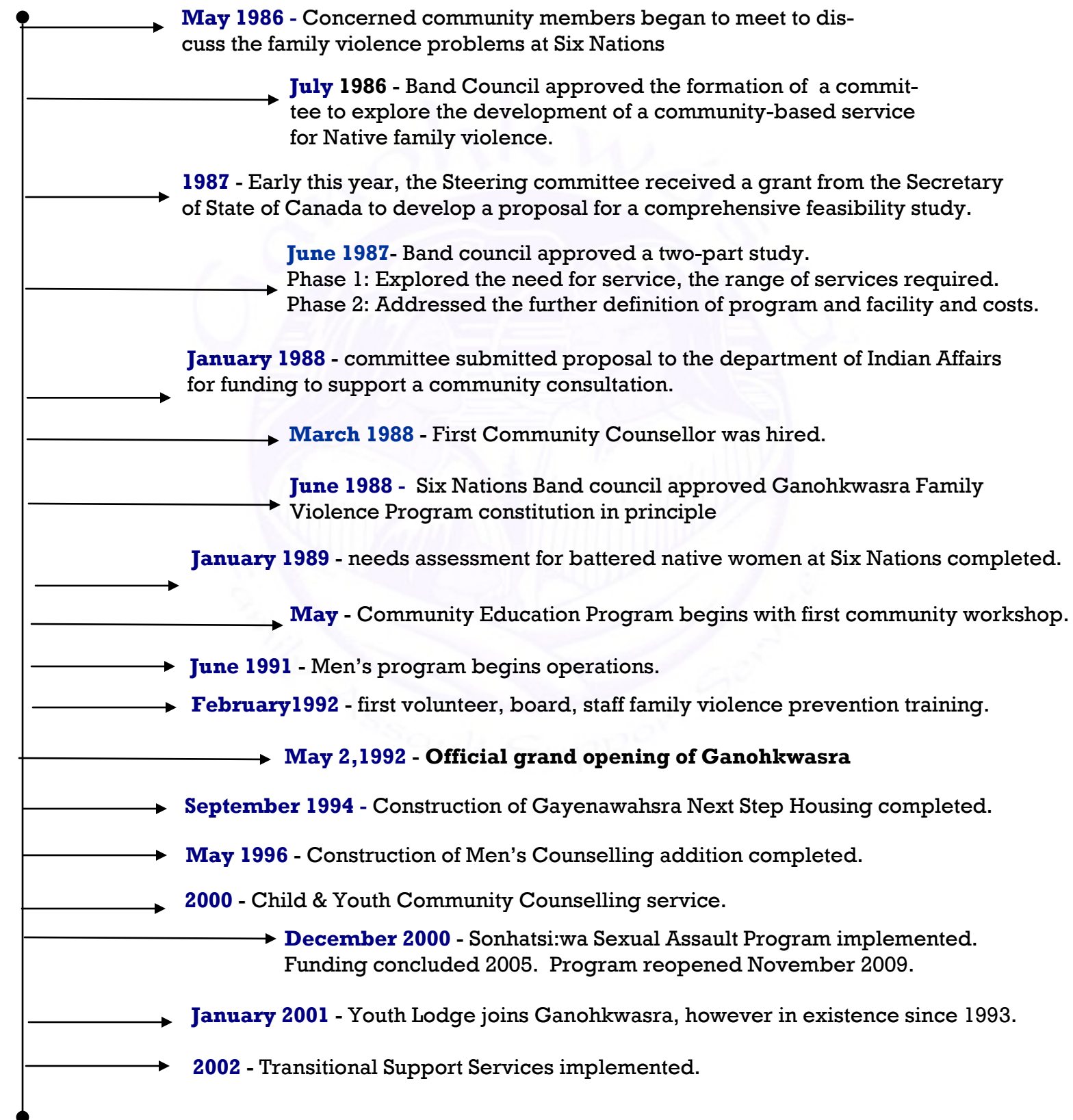
Julie Bomberry started her connection to Ganohkwasra back in her days at college. Julie was looking for a place to do her placement for the Social Service Worker program she was enrolled in at the time. She was drawn to Ganohkwasra after speaking to Margaret Thomas, past Community Counsellor and Shelter Supervisor, about what they did at Ganohkwasra. Julie clearly remembers when Ganohkwasra first started they were working out of the old White Pines building. She said she remembers there were only three workers over there. Julie had a history of violence in her family and she too wanted to help end the violence that was occurring in our community. She remembers her sisters and sometimes her brothers would come home beaten. She can recall some very scary memories of her sisters getting beaten. That past history in her own life shaped Julie to a path of wanting violence to end. She was glad that there was a place where people could come to escape the violence and be safe. After Julie's meeting with Margaret, she had it set in

her heart that Ganohkwasra was where she would do her placement. In April of 1993, Julie completed her 3rd year placement at Ganohkwasra. Once her placement was finished, she was fortunate to be hired on a contract position a couple of months later. That contract ended in December and she was offered a full-time position in December of 1993 as a Community Counsellor and has worked at Ganohkwasra since that day. Julie has held many different positions over the years. Julie stated, "We didn't have a specific community counselling program for children at the time, so as a Community Counsellor, I worked with everyone, except for men. Dianne was responsible for counselling the men." Julie also stated she remembers her "partner in crime" was Margaret Thomas until Margaret moved to working in the shelter. After that is when Peggy Logan, currently the Sexual Assault Counsellor, was hired as a Community Counsellor. After working as the Community Counsellor, Julie moved to the position as the Child, Teens & Women's Counsellor for awhile. Julie then provided counselling for women and children at Gayenawahsra Next step Housing, and helped them design their counselling program. Julie then moved back to the main building and developed the child and youth community counselling program and eventually became the Child and Youth Supervisor. After being involved in the development of the child and youth program, she moved into her current position as the Manager of Therapeutic Services. When Julie started her work with Ganohkwasra it was only the shelter. Throughout all of her years with Ganohkwasra she explained

that she has watched it evolve into so much. The introduction and inclusion of Gayenawahsra and Youth Lodge was awesome along with the development of the child and youth program. Then, came the evolution of the Sexual Assault program also known as Sonhatsi:wa program, which translates as, "becoming your true self." The name of this program came about through the process of counselling and exploring the impacts of sexual assault, one discovers and reclaims their spirit, their "true self." There is also a very recent program called Oha[^]hiyo. It is a 16 week co-ed program that meets the requirements if you are mandated to attend counselling for family violence or abuse. Julie said that Ganohkwasra tries to meet the needs of the community in the best possible way. The evolution of the staff is awesome and amazing as well, each staff member is very knowledgeable in so many areas. After all this time with Ganohkwasra, Julie explains she has never gotten tired of her job. There is always so much to learn and to be able to grow as a person at Ganohkwasra. You not only help clients but you learn on your own as well, helping to make yourself a better person. Julie explains Ganohkwasra is very supportive to staff members and clients, especially helping anyone get through tough times.



Ganohkwasra Timeline and Development over the years





Linda Jamieson

l.

p.

Linda Jamieson has been a team member at Ganohkwasra for 16 years. Before she began working at Ganohkwasra, Linda was a nurse. She has always had a passion to help others. With that in mind, she decided a change was necessary and went to work at the Woodland Culture Centre in Brantford. After working there for some time she had a “spiritual nudge” to continue to be at service for others in need. In 1996 Linda graduated from Mohawk College and earned her Social Service Worker diploma. Linda applied for the Community Education/Volunteer Coordinator position at Ganohkwasra. Linda explained how during her job interview, she cried throughout the interview. Linda was no stranger to family violence and claims half of her life she lived with violence. She had first hand experience of generational trauma and family violence and many other types of abuse. Linda explained after she left the interview she felt as if she blew it because she cried. She thought there was no way she would get the job, but shortly after arriving at home, she received a call letting her know that she was the successful applicant. Linda started at Ganohkwasra in Community Education, which was a

very demanding job she explains. She was in this position for 7 years and she remembers in one year doing 200 presentations alone and held a conference. Her 2nd position was as the Supervisor for Community Education. Linda then applied for her 3rd position as a Women’s Community Counsellor. Currently, Linda is the Supervisor of Community Counseling and has held this position for the past three years. Linda explained, working at Ganohkwasra never feels like she is coming to work. Linda made it clear that the staff of Ganohkwasra is her family, “the healthy family I have never had.” The people you work with throughout your years come and go and some you gain attachments to. Working at Ganohkwasra has allowed Linda to see the growth of not only the programs and services but also growth in herself and her co-workers. One of the biggest lessons Linda has learned from working at Ganohkwasra, is that it’s okay not to be perfect. Linda explained, everyone in and out of this building has a unique story to tell. Everyone needs help through life’s struggles. Linda said it’s difficult to explain the good feelings and vibes at Ganohkwasra and how much it means to her to be a part of this healing environment. She has witnessed much growth since she first began to work at Ganohkwasra. The training opportunities at Ganohkwasra are phenomenal and definitely help all staff to experience growth personally and professionally. Since she has been employed at Ganohkwasra, Linda has received various trainings such as Reiki, Emotional Freedom Technique, Tapus Accupuncture Technique and much more. Major changes and area of growth Linda has witnessed throughout her years at Ganohkwasra are, the inclusion of

a Sexual Assault program, Youth Lodge facility, assessments and plan of care implemented and a Simplicity Social Services software program. Linda has also seen more younger people using the service, stating “It is great that young people are identifying family violence and seeking help.” Linda has also seen the development of the Ohahi:yo program, which was designed and implemented mainly to assist individuals who are mandated to attend counselling. In the beginning, Ganohkwasra did not have mandated clients. Individuals were coming in to seek help of their own free will. Linda has seen Ganohkwasra undergo many challenges. She remembers people making offensive jokes about Ganohkwasra saying, it’s “the wouldn’t listen place.” There was also the challenge of proving Ganohkwasra to be a caring, holistic agency, that utilized our teachings to help our people heal. It was also a challenge in the beginning to design the program to suit our community, to be representative of our culture and to reflect the will of the community. The board ensured that the funding sources understood the need for the program to fit the community’s need and not operate the same as a mainstream shelter. The board was aware that family is the cornerstone to who we are as a people. Adequate funding and office space has always been a challenge. Overall Linda explains her gratitude to Ganohkwasra and what it has given her. Linda talked of her personal growth, the growth in the agency and her connection to Creator. She feels as if she is living her life purpose, and she feels very fulfilled working at Ganohkwasra. Working at Ganohkwasra is an honour and a



The Start to a new beginning

**May 8th 1992
Official Opening**

Ganohkwasra ribbon cutting

**Gayenawahsra
Official Opening**

What would love do?

They seen the need, and they strived to help end the violence in the community. These are some people who helped make a difference



Shirley Farmer



Sandy Porter



Fran Froman



Belva Monture



Joanna Bedard



Doris Henry
20+ years of service



Linda Staats



Chris Martin



Lillian Montour



Elva Lickers



Alice Bomberry

*When you look down onto the earth from up above
you don't see individuals you see a whole, an entire
earth as the creator see's us as one. We are one.*

-Linda Jamieson

NEWSLETTER

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Ganohkwásra'

Family Assault Support Services

Board of Directors

Chairperson

Mary Monture

Secretary/Treasurer

Alice Bomberly

Member

Shirley Farmer

Member

Belva Monture

Member

Rebecca Harrison

Member

Wanda Smith

Member

Barb Harris

Member

Sandy Hill-Bomberly

Six Nations Council

Representative

Melba Thomas

New Credit Council

Representative

Cecil Sault

Mission Statement

"To provide, through a non-profit charitable organization, for the stabilization, maintenance, revitalization and enhancement of the family structure in a culturally sensitive manner."

Revitalizing

Mental

Emotional

Ganohkwásra'

Physical

Spiritual

Family Assault Support Services

Families

Vision

With GANOHWASRA (love among us), we bury our weapons of violence to create a safe and caring community for all generations.

Philosophy

We are all born with ganikwi:yo (a good mind) and interconnectedness, therefore everything we need to end violence is within us.