



Wikwemikong Nursing Home: Story 1

MEGAN: So, Darryl, when we were hanging out at the nursing home, I was immediately struck in the first set of interviews about how interconnected everything was, like, everybody is related. It's really really different.

DARREL: Oh, definitely. So, you know, in the community, you know, everyone is either a relative or a close friend. Every member of the community has a connection to the nursing home, either an aunt or uncle had gone there, or grandmother, or grandfather or...

It is something that's important to the community. And it's played a central role in in the lives of many of us, and we don't always take the time to perhaps reflect upon that. It's a continuity of life.

MEGAN: And now we're gonna hear from Josh, a worker at the home, on this interconnectedness.

JOSH: I'm Joshua Wemigwans, I'm from here in Wiikwemikoong. I've been a PSW for almost, I'd say, for about ten years. Like, it is a small community. So, I do have my brother working here, my mom, I also have my cousin who's working here. More than one, probably, and it makes it nice too because you know who you're working with.

LORETTA: My name is Loretta Recollet. This course came up PSW, I said, "Oh I'll take that," and that was in 1987. So, I've been here since, thirty-six years next month.

MEGAN: So, one thing that I've heard in every interview is that everybody's related. So, do you work with relatives, or do you take care of relatives?

LORETTA: Oh yes. I had an uncle and an aunt here and my dad was here. I had a sister worked here, a brother. My younger daughter was a PSW, she stayed home to take care of her granddaughter. Eventually she'll be back. [laughs]

MEGAN: Loretta's comments really underscore the role of the nursing home as an important employer in the community, huh?

DARREL: Yes, it's a place where many have worked there for their entire career, or it's a place where many have started their career.

MEGAN: Here's Mike Jon, a long-time worker at the home.

MIKE JON: I went to high school at MSS Manitoulin Secondary, graduated. Came right to work at the nursing home here. Especially in Wiky, they didn't have a lot of jobs. When I got it, it was full time right off the hop. I enjoyed I, and it kind of grew on me over the years.

We try to get everybody out into the community and socializing and different events, to pow wows, and going to Little Current. We had the Fall Fair the other day where we actually put a float. Most of the residents helped build that float.

MEGAN: So, reflecting on families' engagement in care homes that I've seen elsewhere, my perception is that Wiky, the engagement is a little bit broader to the welfare of the home. As a whole.

LORETTA: A lot of people will bring Christmas gifts for the residents, slippers, knitted hats, and mitts.

DARREL: You can't really separate the life of the nursing home from the life of everybody else. And so, they are still part of stories and experience. When we were there, for instance, during the fall fair

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weekend, which is an important time of the year for the community, residents had gone over to watch the community horse poll, and so they were visible within the community. They're active in in the everyday, but they're part of the nursing home itself. So, it's not really possible to separate them.