

This month's čičyε circle teaching



"I love children. Even though Alex and I had seven children, there seemed to be extra children all the time in our home. That's where they came after school - it was the kids' hang out. I was cooking for 15 people at dinner time regularly, so it was nothing new: the big family, the huge meals, the bread. It seemed like I was always out of bread!

One boy - he didn't have anywhere to go, so he ended up staying with us until he came of age. He became like family to all the kids. And then over time we added on other relatives who lived with us. We legally adopted several of them, to get them out of the system.

I always taught my children to clean, do dishes, do their laundry, make their beds. If someone is coming in, clean your room as if your best friend is coming. As they got a little older, I wanted them to excel in school, so I would give them 20 dollars and say 'don't tell the other kids.' But little did they know I gave it to each of them too! I called it my incentive money, and everybody felt really special. I was a real stickler about birthdays, too – special days for all the children. That's something we never had at residential school. And I think that's one of the main reasons why birthday parties were so important in our family. Even if I had to put five names on this big cake, I always made sure they got the piece with their name on it. Things like that that brightened their day, brightened their lives. And Alex trained the young boys in a soccer league. He was always there for them. They were good, happy times; it was fun!

And my love for children continued. I worked as a teacher's aid and loved it. Even though I was dealing with alcoholism at the time, these children were like medicine for me. They're like healing medicine that makes you forget why you are upset. So, I loved my job, I loved working there. Then in 1999, I was one of six women who founded the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents. I was vocal for the children. It was exciting and challenging, and it made a world of difference.

When I read all the letters I've received from the children over the years, I feel good. And sometimes I get emotional, and that's where my quilt comes in handy. If you were a residential school survivor you could get a quilt that a group of women made. So a lot of the times when I'm upset, I'll wrap myself in that quilt, and do you know? It's almost like somebody's holding me. So that's what I do to make myself feel better."



- Doreen Point, Les.Pet
čičyε circle member