

# This month's čičye circle teaching



One of the things is always starting off by introducing yourself. I carry my grandfather's name, yax<sup>w</sup>sm. His name was John Louie also. That was my Dad's Dad, and his wife's name was Monta.

I was one that was impacted by the residential school. I was taken away at age 5 until I was 13. I think that has a lot to do with what has happened to our children. We never had a parent in those places, and the parents or grandparents suffered also. They held a lot of stuff in, and the ones that went to residential school held a lot of stuff too. So, the silence was passed on from generation to generation and the teachings never flowed through. A lot of those individuals never had the opportunity to share.

During that time there was no connection to our culture, our teachings, our taʔow. We were taught other things; we were only spoken to with negative words. That kind of thing has been passed down, too, but it isn't our way. We were forced to learn something that wasn't ours. So: I don't want to speak to my sons or daughters that way because I don't want them to hurt, so it's a different kind of silent. The Elders a long time ago would be silent in respect, but the ones that went to residential school would be silent in anger. Residential school, the sixties scoop, the Indian Act - it's a cumulation of these different systems we were put under. And the ones that grew up to have families didn't know how to love. They were trying to kill the pain inside them. Then a lot of kids were being taken away by the Ministry – and now we have generation after generation of people not learning how to parent in a traditional way.

Back in the day, the k<sup>w</sup>ok<sup>w</sup>pa, the čičye, and the čepθ would look after the young ones. They were always around family. Even though the parents were hunting or fishing or gathering, the family was still intact because the grandparents had a responsibility with the kids. The old people would show you how to do things. They'd hold you and give you all that love. For me, it's about teaching our kids *our* way. When we do our ceremonies - we've done them for thousands of years – that's how we take care of each other, how we look after each other.

You have to be proud of who you are. What are the values our people have? Honour, respect, care, love. Our taʔow taught all those things. If we can bring that to the little ones, we're going to be better off. We can do it. It's going to be a combination of learning, not only for children, but for the parents and also the community. How can we make those changes in a good way? We instill those values in everything that we do. We've got a long way to go, but we're in a better place than we were. If I'm doing something better, maybe my great-grandchildren will be better off because of it. That's how the change will come.



- yax<sup>w</sup>sm (John Louie), čičye Circle member