



RURAL COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION *of* NOVA SCOTIA

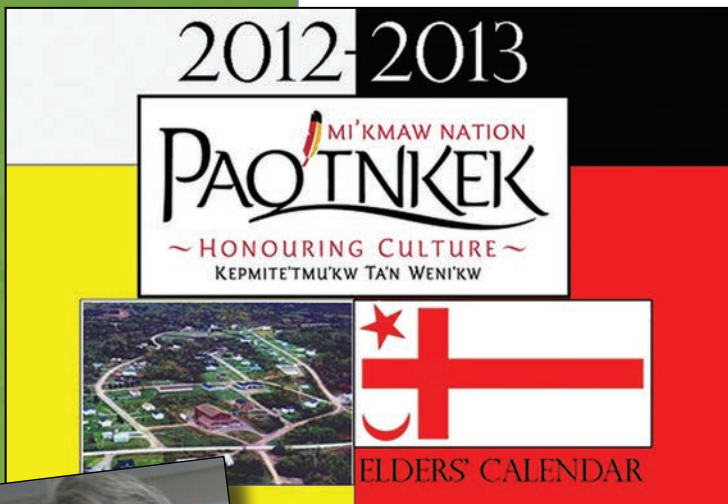
Dedicated to a prosperous and thriving rural Nova Scotia!

Paqtnkek Mi'kmaq Nation Elders Activity Program

A Rural Nova Scotia Community Success Story

Sheila Bernard recognized the need for the elders of her community of Paqtnkek to have opportunities for social interaction and recreation. With a 2010 Rural Leadership Initiative Grant, Sheila created an elders program that was culturally specific, and included activities and events that integrated Mi'kmaq culture, traditions and language. During the program, 32 elders aged

55+ years enjoyed potluck suppers, traditional craft making, movie nights, card games, storytelling and field trips to visit elders in other communities. Sheila facilitated the elder circle meetings in the Mi'kmaq language which many of the elders still speak. They rediscovered the humor that is inherent in their language and it brought much laughter to their get-togethers.



Sheila Bernard

The program was to run for sixteen weeks from January to May 2011, but it was extended so Sheila could produce a traditional Mi'kmaq calendar for the elders. The Mi'kmaq calendar follows the old lunar calendar of 13 months with 28 days each. Sheila's calendar includes biographies and photos of the elders involved in the program and highlights important dates like National Aboriginal Day (June 21) and Treaty Day (October 1).