A Lived Experience Research: Exploring the Meaning of Therapeutic Horticulture for Anishinabek Youth in a Brief Residential Treatment Unit.

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the
Degree of Master of Social Work
School of Social Work
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Thunder Bay, Ontario
Canada
Winter 2012

Abstract

If a social worker truly wishes to support Anishinabek peoples in healing, it is vital that their approach is guided from a personal place in line with a holistic worldview. As a healing practice, therapeutic horticulture by nature connects plant life and people together. Each supports the other in a symbiotic relationship to promote well-being for all. Therapeutic horticulture has many tenets that allow for connection with all life forms of this Universe.

With the long history of oppression and inter-generational trauma of Anishinabek peoples, social work practices must critically reflect on the approaches and structural practices in place in an effort to assess their relevance with this population. This can only be done by working with the people.

This qualitative exploratory research utilizes a hermeneutic phenomenology approach, employing photovoice and semi-directed interviews as the method of data collection. A hermeneutic approach is carried out in collaboration with the participants. As such, this study examined the meaning that Anishinabek youth ascribe to a therapeutic horticulture approach to healing. The main findings of this thesis share that the therapeutic horticulture approach to healing was meaningful for the youth. The following themes emerged as relevant experiences for the participants: Engaging the senses, humour, the social experience, cognitive experience, wonder, resiliency, skill building, and a sense of pride, interconnectedness, caretaking, memories, and the connection to the spirit world, culture and the enjoyment of the photovoice method.

By drawing on the voice of the youth, this research offers guidance for future approaches to therapeutic horticulture healing practices as well as policy making in the social work profession. This research may also inform future research as to relevant and honorable research practices with Anishinabek populations.

This thesis is dedicated to my son

Gibson Kenneth Bond,

for keeping me grounded through this experience,

and reminding me that,

no matter how busy we are,

we must always have time for snuggles and silliness.

Love you forever, my child.

You truly are a gift.

xo

Acknowledgements

In the spirit of holism, this thesis is truly a reflection of the hearts, hands and minds of many incredible people who have helped make this research a reality.

To the youth who participated in this research, it has been an honour and a joy to work and learn with you. Thank you for your participation, insights and candid sharing of your experiences. You have forever touched my spirit and I will continue to hold the lessons that you have taught me, near and dear.

To Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, and in particular, Darcia Borg, Tina Bennett, Cindy Merrill, the ABTU teacher Patricia Cummins and the ABTU staff, your support and commitment to the realization of this research is deeply appreciated. Your suggestions, guidance and assistance throughout have been invaluable.

I extend deep gratitude to my supervisor, Connie Nelson. Thank you for your patience, guidance and encouragement throughout this process. I am forever grateful for the wisdom you have imparted and the enthusiasm and skill you demonstrate in your work.

To my thesis committee, Marg McKee and Erin Cameron, thank you for your suggestions and guidance throughout this journey. Your support has meant a lot and proven invaluable.

To Mitchell Hewson, It has been an honour to learn from you. Your skill, expertise and compassion are truly inspiring. Thank you for the great work you do!

To Judi Vinni, I am very fortunate to have had such an incredible partner in this experience. Your commitment to the research process, the youth, and therapeutic horticulture is a shining example of your strength of character, and unconditional love of life. Thank you.

Last, but not least, I wish to express deep gratitude to my family for their tremendous amount of support and love through this experience. Scott, Gibson, Mom, Dad, Nana and Katie, I could not have done this without you.

To each and every one of you, Chi Meegwech and Thank You!

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Chapter 1

Introduction

It would seem that based on principle and practice, therapeutic horticulture appears to hold promise in terms of a healing practice with Anishinabek youth. Awiakta shares that these youth are the "seeds of the people" (Caduto & Bruchac, 1995, xvii). Metaphorically speaking, in order for these seeds to grow we must find ways to provide fertile ground in order to nurture and support their healthy development and growth; it is vital if the deep soul wounds of a history of oppression and colonization are to be healed (Duran, 2006).

Set within the classroom, the home, the gardens, and green spaces of Dilico Anishinabek Family Care's Assessment and Brief Treatment Unit (ABTU) in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada, this research explores the meaning of the lived experience of two groups of Anishinabek youth engaged in a therapeutic horticultural program over the summer of 2011. These youth range in age from 9-17 and participated in the voluntary treatment for behavioural and psychosocial support. I refer to the term Anishinabek as it is the identifying term used by the people. It is their word for themselves and means "First people" (Auger & Pedri, 2009). A focus on healing within a safe and culturally supportive environment is a key piece of this program.

The place of a therapeutic horticulture program significantly contributes to the overall experience for the participants and informs the design of the program activities. At the ABTU there were two private gardens for the youth to plant, care for and harvest. One was a raised bed vegetable garden, and the other, a twenty-foot medicine wheel garden comprised of annuals, perennials, and boreal forest dwellers. This location fostered accountability and group cohesion, as the gardens were private, accessible, and visible in their everyday life. Because of the location, the program design reflected the seven grandfather teachings and was guided by the teachings of the medicine wheel and the land. In the narrative tradition, each session began with a story, followed by garden assessment and chores, and a related craft or cooking experience all of which were also informed by the medicine wheel and listening to the land.

This research then, explores the meaning of therapeutic horticulture as a healing method with Anishinabek Youth within a voluntary short term treatment facility.

The benefits of therapeutic horticulture are far reaching and have proven successful and meaningful for a variety of populations. Hewson (2004), Simson and Strauss (1998) and Haller and Kramer (2006) cover at some depth the diverse needs that can be met and the benefits that can be achieved through horticulture as therapy. This healing approach offers diversity in terms of the different types of program designs that can be utilized and as such, it is very adaptable to meeting the needs and capabilities of all people; no one need be left behind in a therapeutic horticulture program. The research participants, despite having in common the fact that they are all in a short-term treatment facility and they are all Anishinabek youth, come with varying degrees of need, capabilities, and unique life experiences. This is essential to bear in mind considering the outcomes of this research are informed by the uniqueness of the individuals who participate. As is the case with hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher is also a participant in the research (Van Manen, 2006). As a white, female of European heritage and as a horticultural therapist in training, my experience also informs the outcomes of this research. Further discussion regarding this follows in Chapter 3, Methodology.

In terms of social work and other helping professions, there is a unique challenge in working alongside and healing with Anishinabek populations. Nelson and McPherson (2002) espouse concerns that require critical reflection in terms of social work practice that is rooted in a “positivist theoretical paradigm where reality is viewed as singular and absolute” (p. 2). It is argued that current social work practice is oppressive by way of needing to find an absolute reality; labeling, categorizing and differentiating with certain objectivity (Nelson & McPherson, 2002, p. 2). This perspective is further shared by Duran (2006), Sinclair, Hart and Bruyere (2009) and Borg, Sportak and Delaney (2010) as they discuss the intricacies and challenges in western allies working from within a western paradigm with Aboriginal peoples. There is considerable concern over the potential for harm and further oppression that can be caused if an Aboriginal worldview is not guiding and informing practice. Nelson and McPherson (2002) argue that the helping professions need to look to the "interface of cultures" to find answers to anti-oppressive practice. It is argued that by its own professional boundaries social work is not "ethnically competent" because it has attempted to "control diversity" rather than embrace it as a norm (Nelson & McPherson, 2002). However, there is growing awareness within the profession; we now have to find compatible ways of uniting, embracing, and working together. Supporting this perspective, Baskin (2006) suggests that just as there are different worldviews to practice, there is also a different worldview to research. An Aboriginal point of view recognizes that there are many ways of knowing, and certainty is not always necessary. The intuitive, spiritual, and organic ways of life can be accounted for, and though not necessarily measurable are no less true. Social workers wishing to support Anishinabek people in healing must recognize that "Indians are and Indians must remain the experts in promoting social health for Indian children and families" (Nelson & Kelley, 1984, p. 2). In order to move forward then, we must assess what has come before and what informs us.

Aboriginal context. The Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's document, *Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada* reveals a nation's history of a dominant Canadian Society creating and using decades worth of governmental policies in an attempt to assimilate and dissolve Aboriginal culture (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada [AANDC], 1996). According to the report, this attempt has been unsuccessful and today Aboriginal people as a nation honour their divergence from eurocentrism. “They have an enduring sense of themselves as peoples with a unique heritage and the right to cultural continuity” (AANDC, 1996). The *Report* shares that “There can be no peace or harmony unless there is justice” (AANDC, 1996) a right which is reiterated and upheld in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Despite the demonstrated strength and resilience of Aboriginal peoples, these unsuccessful assimilationist policies have left deep wounds in these Nations. According to AANDC (1996), the harm that has come because of these policies includes a lower than average life expectancy, with higher rates of illness, substance abuse and violence; a lack of secondary and post-secondary education attainment; and unacceptable living conditions, sometimes reminiscent of third world conditions, which are not uncommon to Aboriginal peoples. And while there are many fronts on which the injustices need to be made right, “most of all, they seek control of their lives” (AANDC, 1996).

Aboriginal social work and healing. Recognizing and understanding this then, foretells of the need for all helping professions to reflect on and implement those practices that will promote and encourage processes that will support ‘control of their lives’. By re-evaluating the roots of our practice and the implications of our methods, social workers will be closer to recognizing whether or not current systems support Aboriginal peoples’ healing journey or covertly sustain systemic assimilationist policies and practices. This is critical if we truly wish to become a step closer in deconstructing colonial practices and reaching outcomes that truly honour and support Aboriginal people. Nelson and McPherson (2002) suggest that Contextual

Fluidity as a practice model informing social work practices “has the potential to be the ‘anti-oppressive' model of social work” (p. 94) as it embraces the concept and reality of people as people. People are unique and the same all at once and “mutuality is the cornerstone for how people relate to each other” (Nelson, McPherson, & Kelley, 1987, p. 67). This model encourages social workers to be mindfully reflexive in a dynamic practice of supporting healing. Much like a horticultural experience, it embraces the reality that life is constantly in flux; from one moment to the next, it is fluid and ever-changing (Nelson & McPherson, 2004). The need for social workers to offer practice methods that are responsive to the societal constructs and worldviews relevant to a particular society is also emphasized by Sinclair, Hart and Bruyere (2009). Further to this Duran (2006), who is an Aboriginal psychologist, posits that there is a need for a unification of culturally relevant practice within current practice methods. In fact, Duran states that in order to meet this need for unification, “he has, for two decades, blended, in an alchemical amalgamation, western theory and traditional Aboriginal theory” (p. 1) in his own practice. Careful refection is needed in approaching practice paradigms with consideration to Anishinabek populations.

In 1994 the Canadian Association of Social Workers submitted an apology to the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples for “the social work profession’s problematic relationships with Aboriginal peoples and its dismissal of the Aboriginal worldview, and furthermore endorsed the right of Aboriginal nations to be self-determining” thus demonstrating the need for a change in the profession (Sinclair, Hart & Bruyere, 2009, p. 43). Aboriginal social work practice then must be grounded in “Indigenous philosophies, values, experiences and ideas” (Sinclair, Hart & Bruyere, 2009, p. 47) and yet “does not preclude euro-western ideas” (p. 48).

Hick (2010) also describes the need for an Aboriginal approach to social work practice and the challenges that accompany defining such an approach. A few of these challenges revolve around the fact that Aboriginal peoples are a diverse population with unique dialects, customs and philosophies. As early researchers in social work practice with Aboriginal people, Kelley and Nelson (1984) describe the complexity of the challenge claiming that there is no consensus as to the degree to which Aboriginal people follow or adhere to traditional ways, and this point is further supported by Borg, Sportak, and Delaney (2010). Kelley and Nelson (1984) also share their belief that non-Aboriginal social workers have a place in practice in assisting Aboriginal people in their journey towards health as long as the solutions comes from within and are not imposed by those outside. Hick (2010) adds another layer to this complexity by addressing the "longstanding legacy of mistrust and animosity" that "exists towards those in the helping professions, including social work" (p. 236).

Kelley and Nelson (1984) purport that "maximizing differences" (p. 19) is key to a successful relationship, in that the "legitimate input of both parties" (p.19) is critical. It honours the knowledge from both perspectives and recognizes the reciprocal and dynamic nature of respectful, supportive relationships. The role of a social worker with Aboriginal peoples is as a "catalyst" (p. 20) serving to promote "individual, family, and community problem-solving", as a "mediator" (p. 21) acting as a liaison between clients and resources and as an "advocate" in the predominant culture to match needs with resources (p. 21).

As leaders in Aboriginal social work practice, Nelson and Kelley presented at the International Congress of Child Abuse and Neglect (1984), that in order to provide support that is anti-oppressive, non-Aboriginal social workers "must first achieve understanding and, most importantly a sense of respect for the Indian helping process as viable and legitimate" (Nelson & Kelley, 1984, p. 2).

Further to this, Borg, Sportak and Delaney (2010) also espouse working from a strengths-based approach versus a medical model of social work practice focused on deficits. In this way the social worker assumes a non-expert role, working in collaboration with the person (p. 152). They encourage the "Wellness Model" approach because it looks at the person as a whole, not a "diagnosis" and consideration is given to whole person, where their spiritual, physical, emotional and mental needs can be attended to.

Aboriginal children: special considerations. Aboriginal children have been deeply affected by multi-generational grief (AANDC, 1996) much of which stems from the legacy of Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop and the eurocentric practices of the child welfare system that still today has a high number of Aboriginal children in care (Hick, 2010). The risks they face are so significant that the most recurrent phrases used to describe Aboriginal children and youth in well-being reports are "at risk, vulnerable and marginalized" (Blackstock, Clarke, Cullen, D'Hondt, & Formsma, 2004, p. 12).

Aboriginal children are gifts from the Creator (Blackstock, Clarke, Cullen, D'Hondt, & Formsma, 2004), they are the future generation, and have unfortunately been the primary target of Canada's assimilation policies. In the report *Keeping the promise: The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the lived experiences of First Nations children and youth*, published by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, Blackstock, Clarke, Cullen, D'Hondt and Formsma (2004) state that assimilating "children, while they were still in their formative years, was seen to be the most effective means of eradicating Aboriginal cultures" (p. 20).

Keeping the Promise (Blackstock, Clarke, Cullen, D'Hondt, & Fromsma, 2004) is a unique document that critically looks at the UNICEF's *Convention on the Rights of the Child* from an Aboriginal lens, and the importance of this in relation to the well-being of Aboriginal children. *The Convention* calls for continuous action and progress in the realization of children's rights based on four general principles defined by UNICEF (2002):

> 1. Non-discrimination (Article 2) – by which states commit to respect and ensure the rights of all children under their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind;
> 2. The best interests of the child (Article 3) – in which the interests of the child are recognized as paramount and budgetary allocations should give priority to children and to the safekeeping of their rights;
> 3. Respect for the child's views and right to participate in all aspects of democratic society (Articles 12-15) – which asserts that children are not passive recipients, but actors contributing actively to the decisions that affect their lives;
> 4. The child's right to survival and development (Article 6) – which claims the right for children to realize their fullest potential, through a range of strategies from meeting their health, nutrition and education needs to support their personal and social development.
>
> (Blackstock, Clarke, Cullen, D'Hondt & Formsma, 2004, p. 16).

As a legally binding document on an international level, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* ensures the special rights of a child, in addition to the United Nations human rights. In a special effort to protect Aboriginal children, the Government of Canada has ratified it with special consideration to Article 30 to ensure that every effort is made to support Aboriginal children's right to be "in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion and to use their own language" (Canadian Children's Rights Council).

Policies have been developed "to reduce the intolerable risks and conditions that First Nations children face on a daily basis, yet these policies have yet to be implemented" (Blackstock, Clarke, Cullen, D'Hondt & Formsma, 2004, p. 6). It is clear then from the above literature, that Aboriginal children in treatment have the right to culturally appropriate healing practices and care, and that they also have a voice and say in the practices so that their needs and wishes may be heard and they have the right to contribute to decision making.

Plants, people and an Aboriginal worldview. Working from the position of appreciation of an Aboriginal worldview that all life is interconnected, is integral then in guiding the direction of social work practice with Aboriginal peoples. Duran (2006) shares this perspective by stating that we must move beyond thinking that divides worldviews and consider an "epistemological hybridism" which "takes the life-world of the person or group as the core truth that needs to be seen as valid just because it is" (p. 14). In terms of an Aboriginal worldview, *Keeping the promise (Blackstock, Clarke, Cullen, D'Hondt & Formsma, 2004*) describe that "Aboriginal peoples share a preference for communal rights structures, deference to spiritual powers and a value for the interdependence of all worldly and spiritual things" (p. 17). It is significant then, that social work practice with Aboriginal peoples considers this worldview in order to truly be helpful, respectful and meaningful. As suggested by Sinclair, Hart and Bruyere (2009) there are many challenges and questions to implementing these worldviews in current social work practice, but finding the path forward is vital.

Reflecting this worldview of interdependence of all life realms, anonymous Indigenous proverbs can be found today such as this Elder's Prayer: "Walk tall as the trees, live strong as the mountains, be gentle as the spring rain, keep the warmth of summer in your heart, and the Great Spirit will always be with you" (Alberta Child & Youth Initiative, 2006, p. 3). Awiakta , an acclaimed author of Cherokee descent, writes in the foreword of Caduto and Bruchac's (1995) book *Native Plant Stories told by Joseph Bruchac,* that these stories "unify humans, plants and all that lives in the great cycle of coming and going, giving and receiving that is life itself" (p. xiii). Bruchac, an Aboriginal author with Abenaki ancestry, also says that "Plants stand between all life on Earth and eternity" (p. xiii). These words offer guidance for living and use nature as a metaphor for all life. Traditionally, Indigenous people lived in nature and of nature, not separate from nature. Awiakta also shares "Everything in the Universe is related in one family. All life is equal" (Caduto & Bruchac, 1995, p. xiv). One could consider this way of life as therapeutic in and of itself.

Notably in line with an Aboriginal Worldview, Hewson (1998) although not of Aboriginal heritage, articulates the inherent spiritual and cognitive value in the lessons of nature and the life cycle through therapeutic horticulture with his comment:

> There is something magical and curative about the powers of nature as seen in the growth of a plant. Flowers perpetuate themselves with their seeds, constantly repeating the cycle. Nature is forgiving, if a plant dies, another can be grown in its place. If a mistake is made, nature teaches how to avoid repeating it, because the life cycle of plants provides us with hope of life renewed and a chance to begin again. (1998, p. xii)

Bruchac directly describes the importance of plants for Aboriginal people by sharing: "Native traditions, and the stories in this book, do not take the plants for granted. They are life and we, as human beings owe our continued existence on this earth to the plants" (Caduto & Bruchac, 1995, p. xix). Further to this he shares an Aboriginal worldview of plant life with "the plant people are as aware and as deserving of respect as those living beings that do not have roots-such as humans" (Caduto & Bruchac, 1995, p. xx). In addition, *Reclaiming our Nationhood, Strengthening our Heritage, a report to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,* states clearly that "the environment is fundamentally important to First Nation Peoples. It is the breadth of our spirituality, knowledge, languages and culture". It further states that the environment "provides us with nourishment, medicine and comfort" (Assembly of First Nations [AFN], 1993, p. 39).

I have to wonder then, if a person's daily life, is situated in a natural environment and is reflective of a worldview that espouses interdependence of all life, how would that influence their physical, emotional, spiritual and cognitive health?

Such was the way of life for Aboriginal peoples, in the territory now called Canada, prior to colonization.

In terms of horticulture as therapy, Bringslimark, Hartig, and Patil (2009) suggest that although not formally documented as horticultural therapy the relevance of centuries of bringing plants indoors may represent a long-standing knowledge of the potential psychological benefits of visible plants. What had been a way of life that supported well-being for Centuries with one population became a therapeutic modality for another. Interestingly then, it would appear that the Colonizers adopted a medical model of Nature in order to fit their schema of health and healing. Barnes (1996) states that

> much of the mental health profession's history involves an avoidance of nature, a shying away from the spirit. One of the best, or perhaps in fact the very best, ways to avoid

> natural flow is to use words. When we use words we are up in our heads. True healing occurs below jaw level (p. 96).

Therapeutic horticulture helps bridge the gap of Western and Aboriginal healing as it moves us back to this 'natural flow' and more in-line to healing with an Aboriginal worldview that considers good health to be "more than the absence of sickness or disease. It is a balanced state of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being" (AFN, 1993, p. 52).

While further exploration of this subject is a matter for another paper, the relevance of mentioning it in work about bringing horticultural practices as a therapeutic modality within a eurocentric medical model of health care to an Anishinabek population is significant. The question, who is learning from whom, is relevant in shaping practice and approach, and care must be taken to ensure appropriation is not being perpetuated. It appears that the literature itself seems to demonstrate bias in that there is an unaccountable disconnect between therapeutic horticulture and a way of life that was so natural for Anishinabek peoples for centuries.

As Waisberg and Holzkamm (1993) share, the Anishinabek people have lived on the land for thousands of years, and up until 1925, for the Anishinabek "the making of gardens was an important phase of the industrial year" (p. 177). However when a new Act was passed in 1881 "which allowed the federal government to regulate the sale of Indian produce and provided for summary conviction of non-Indian purchasers" (p. 176) the Anishinabek "ceased further development of farming and abandoned cultivated lands" (p. 176). Horticultural activity then, was widespread prior to colonization, and thus is very much connected to a rich cultural history. Looking to literature on medicinal plants it is evident that Aboriginal peoples have had a close and respectful relationship with plants for Centuries. Marles, Clavelle, Monteleone, Tays and Burns (2008) address the long cultural history of this relationship with the land and plants in their book *Aboriginal Plant Use in Canada's Northwest Boreal Forest*. While their work is directly related to the botanical relationship with plants, mostly for physical ailments, it also includes plant use for improving emotional and mental health such as anxiety. This signifies the importance of plants in the process of holistic healing. Knowing this deep connection between plants and people within Aboriginal culture and the fact that they have resided with and within the woodlands of what is now known as Canada for centuries, reveals that there is knowledge in this area, yet it does not appear to be acknowledged in therapeutic horticulture literature.

Social work policy. Currently, social work policy is heavily steeped in a positivistic paradigm that makes it challenging to honour and champion the truth of all people. Human beings are diverse; as such, ways of knowing are diverse. Metaphorically speaking, garden zones have different needs and plants have different needs and while they all need light and water and nutrients, there are individual and geographic differences that need to be taken into account to help them thrive. Broader societal policy constructs determining and guiding practices in one location may be irrelevant and potentially even harmful in another. As Nelson and McPherson (2002) assert, "social work practice appears to be perpetuating a hierarchical and hegemonic practice approach that solidifies rather than eradicates conditions of injustice and oppression" (p. i). Macro policy being made outside of the context with which it is being employed runs the risk of being irrelevant and harmful. It needs to be loose enough to allow for difference, and be built upon similarities of humanness. It seems that the over-arching guiding principles of macro policy must embrace both the similarities and differences of people. This would better allow for all needs to be met and a truer representation of 'people as people' providing room for individual uniqueness and contextual diversity.

Deconstructing hierarchical indulgences through policy at all levels is vital to being contextually fluid and respectful in order to support true anti-oppressive practice. Horticulture practices, therapeutic or not, are universal, non-hierarchal and adaptable, allowing for individuality and interconnectedness. Institutions embracing therapeutic horticulture, offer a healing paradigm that promotes a method of supporting and healing that "begins from the assumption of seeing people as people" (Nelson & McPherson, 2002, p. 24). Therapeutic horticulture practices innately offer opportunities to work from a contextually fluid practice model that espouses mutuality as a key facet. "Today I help you; tomorrow you may help me. Because I can help today does not give me any permanent right to feel superior or better; We all have things to contribute to the community" (Nelson & McPherson, 2002, p. 26).

In an effort to provide an opportunity for representation, this research has provided an avenue for the youth to share their experience of this program and the meaning they have ascribed to it, while in the residential treatment unit. It offers insight into their world: what is important for them as only they can tell it. Together we have explored the use of therapeutic horticulture with Anishinabek youth to gain insight and understanding of their experience. It is hoped that this will inform future practice, decision making in funding programs such as these and policy at all levels to support an approach to healing that embraces Aboriginal worldviews, and non-hierarchical methods.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Horticulture as therapy. For the past 100 years formal horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture practices have been engaged as passive, adjunct or direct methods of treatment in mental health facilities due to their historic placement in rural areas (Flagler & Poincelot, 1996). Yet, formal research regarding the psychological and social impacts of gardening activities appeared only in the 1970s (Lohr & Relf, 1993). According to the American Horticulture Therapy Association, it seems some of the first accounts are documented with "care of hospitalized war veterans in the 1940's and 1950's" (American Horticultural Therapy Association) and these influenced and helped to grow Horticultural Therapy practices that are current today. "Horticultural Therapy is recognized as a practical and viable treatment with wide-ranging benefits for people in therapeutic, vocational, and wellness programs" (AHTA).

So, what exactly do the terms horticultural therapy, therapeutic horticulture and horticulture as therapy mean? All three are used in this research, and it is important to know the differences before moving forward. While the terms appear similar there is a definite distinction between the three. What is understood by the terms horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture has expanded over time and there are some notable variations. For the purposes of this paper, the following definition will be used. According to the Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association, horticultural therapy is defined as,

> a formal practice that uses plants, horticultural activities, and the garden landscape to promote well-being for its participants. Horticultural therapy is goal oriented with defined outcomes and assessment procedures. Horticultural therapy sessions are administered by professionally trained Horticultural Therapists

> (Canadian Horticultural Therapy Association)

On the other hand, Therapeutic horticulture is defined as

> the purposeful use of plants and plant-related activities to promote health and wellness for an individual or group. A therapeutic horticulture practitioner is trained to use horticulture to promote well-being but goals and outcomes for individual participants are not clinically documented (C.H.T.A.).

Horticulture as therapy is quite literal in translation and refers to utilizing plants and plant-based materials for healing. In regards to definitions, within horticulture as therapy often times the literature will only refer to the type of garden being utilized such as a meditation garden, healing garden, therapeutic garden, wandering garden, horticultural therapy garden (Relf, 2005, p. 236) instead of stating horticultural therapy. Then again, sometimes an article refers to horticultural therapy activities as “cooking, crafts, or plantings” (Jarrott, Kwack, & Relf, 2002, p. 408) and this seems to be the emerging acceptable understanding in terms of scope of practice.

As Hewson (2004) states, “what makes horticultural therapy unique is that it uses living material, requiring nurturing and care” (p.1). He further states that “a horticultural therapist utilizes plants and plant-related activities as a therapeutic medium to enhance physical, emotional, social and spiritual well-being” (p.12). Generally, goals of horticultural therapy programs are to address one or all of the following, “emotional, physical/sensory, social, cognitive/educational and discovery/wonder/spirituality” (Fried & Wichrowski, 2008, p.76). Caring for and utilizing plants helps assess and promote cognitive, physical, behaviour and social skills.

It is recognizable then that therapeutic horticulture is most diverse and adaptable, allowing for practice with individuals, and groups, as well as in community settings, such as community food gardens, known as community horticulture. Community horticulture is a term used to describe “those programs that use horticulture to improve quality of life through the development of individuals and communities” with “the purpose to offer services that provide human benefits” (Haller & Kramer, 2006).

While the literature is growing in the field, there are still gaps to explore around the uses and benefits of both horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture in the behavioural and social sciences. “If a researcher had seriously proposed two decades ago that it could improve medical outcomes, the position would have been met with scepticism by most behavioural scientists and with derision by most physicians” (Waldholz, 2003, p.2).

Literature from a number of discipline areas inform this research, including nursing, psychology, history, landscape architecture, education, public health, and social sciences. Online literature searches of SAGE on-line journals, Web of Science, Proquest and Jstor, using search terms of “horticultural therapy, therapeutic horticulture, and or garden therapy”, provided an eclectic mix of disciplines where research regarding horticulture as therapy practices is being explored.

According to the American Horticultural Therapy Association website,

> Horticultural therapy (HT) is not only an emerging profession; it is a time-proven practice. The therapeutic benefits of peaceful garden environments have been understood since ancient times. In the 19th century, Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and considered to be the "Father of American Psychiatry," reported that garden settings held curative effects for people with mental illness (AHTA).

Trends in the Literature.

The trend in the literature reiterates the idea that this area is still emerging in terms of the need for research to support or deny anecdotal evidence. While it is promising to see the growth in literature over the last few years my observation of the literature reveals that the research appears to be focused on pockets of very specific populations with the most concentrated areas of research involving the aging population and the effects on Alzheimer's disease, dementia. The following list, while not exhaustive, demonstrates a good portion of the literature dedicated to the effects of therapeutic horticulture with people who have Alzheimer's and/or Dementia (Jarrott & Gigliotti, 2011; Luk, Lai, Li, Cheung, Lam, Li, Ng, Shiu, So & Wan, 2011; Jarrott & Gigliotti, 2010; Detweiler & Warf, 2005; Gigliotti & Jarrott, 2005; Gigliotti, Jarrott & Yorganson, 2004; Barnicle & Midden, 2003; Lovering, 2003; Hellicker, Chadwick & O'Connell, 2001).

There are many possibilities as to why this may be. What is interesting is that according to Heath (2004), in terms of therapeutic gardens, "relatively few studies have evaluated the effects of gardens and gardening in an actual setting" (p. 239).

After some informal discussion with Mitchell Hewson, a well-respected Horticultural Therapist Master around his knowledge of the literature, and despite accessing rich, online literature sources and databases I was surprisingly unable to find research on the use of horticultural therapy or therapeutic horticulture practices with Anishinabek populations. This is interesting and begs the question, why not, considering the aforementioned connection to cultivation practices, and the fact that many Anishinabek peoples have a common holistic worldview that all things in the physical and spiritual world are interdependent and connected (Blackstock, Clarke, Cullen, D'Hondt & Formsma, 2004, Smith, 1999).

Other areas of interest that have received attention and which are further discussed in more detail are: horticultural therapy practice for psychosocial treatment of children with physiological health disorders (Fried & Wichrowski, 2008), the psychosocial impact of indoor plants within a high school (Han, 2009) as well as the impacts on psychosocial wellbeing of older people in long term care (Raske, 2010), the effects of a gardening program with children in a classroom (Blair, 2009; Hilgers, Haynes & Olsen, 2008; Waliczek, Bradley & Zajicek, 2001; Alexander, Wales-North, & Hendren, 1995) the improvement of quality of life and experience in assisted living facilities (Collins & O'Callaghan, 2008; Jarrott, Kwack, & Relf, 2002) how horticulture therapy can help strengthen the social connection of juvenile offenders with society (McGuinn & Relf, 2001), gardening in general as an influence on quality of life for people who live with chronic mental health issues (Perrins-Margalis, Rugletic, Schepis, Stepanski, &Walsh 2000), the impact of horticultural practices in correctional facilities (Ott, 2000), the effects of a gardening experience in terms of psychological and physiological changes in a person's experience of stress (Van Den Berg & Custers, 2010), therapeutic horticulture as a microrestorative experience (Han, 2009), horticultural therapy and its effects with adults experiencing depression (Gonzalez, Hartig, Patil, Martinsen, & Kirkevold, 2011; Gonzalez, Hartig, Patil, Martinsen, & Kirkevold, 2010; Gonzalez, Hartig, Patil, Martinsen, & Kirkevold, 2009) and the importance of the room for individuality and creativity within (Parkinson, Lowe & Vecsey, 2011). As mentioned, there is no extensive literature available in these categories, mostly just short term exploratory studies.

Benefits of Horticulture as therapy.

Porter and Porter (2009) define some of the reasons why there needs to be more consideration of horticultural therapy as a treatment of choice. Some of the benefits they list are that it:

> 1) can be used with many counselling theories, 2) can assist in helping clients reach therapeutic goals, 3) is appropriate for individual and group sessions, 4) can be adapted to meet age and cultural needs, offers non-threatening opportunities for socialization, 6) helps clients renew enthusiasm for living, 7) provide active involvement and exercise 8) provide sensory stimulation, 9) improve client concentration, motivation, manual dexterity and work skills, 10) provide relief from stressors of life, and 11) help clients reconnect with natural rhythms of nature (p.3).

Therapeutic horticulture in hospitals.

In terms of physical health and the healing connection with children in a hospital setting coping with blood disorders, cancer, and those with brain damage, the horticultural therapy research points to benefits such as improved “mood, stress, and distraction from discomfort during treatment, as well as, improved quality of life and overall satisfaction with treatment” (Fried & Wichrowski, 2008, p.77). There are three goals of implementing therapeutic horticulture practices in a hospital treatment setting. Listed first is to “provide respite for the children and their family members while they receive treatment” (Fried & Wichrowski, 2008, p.75) second, to “offer hands-on experiences with nature to stimulate sensory, cognitive, and communication skills,” (Fried & Wichrowski, 2008, p.75) and third, as a diversion to the treatment, and to “increase knowledge of nature, science, nutrition, and environmental concepts” (Fried & Wichrowski, 2008, p.76).

Söderback, Söderström and Schälander (2004) also report on the advantages of horticulture therapy with patients in hospitals for various reasons, highlighting its use with “rehabilitation following brain damage” (p. 245) sharing that “there were very few descriptions” (p. 256) of this in the literature. They also describe some important aspects attributed to a successful healing garden in a hospital, emphasizing the importance of opportunities for the “patients, friends, relatives and staff” (p. 246) to all be involved.

School-based therapeutic horticulture.

Research on garden activities within a school has reported effects on children’s feelings about each other, their school environment and experiences (Blair, 2009). While Waliczek, Bradley and Zajicek (2001) address the fact that research has shown that outdoor environments can enhance the mental health of youth, the research on gardening and its effect on children still has much room to grow (p. 466).

A pilot study of a Master gardener classroom garden project in an inner-city school in San Antonio used an experiential way of teaching children about horticulture, gardening, themselves and their relationships. These youth were exposed to “gangs, drive-by shootings, family problems, poverty, and chaos” as is the “daily fare of many minority, at-risk, inner-city children” and this was an effort to alleviate “fear, uncertainty, and unpredictability” by introducing “positive values and healthy role models” (Alexander, Wales-North, and Hendren, 1995, p. 256) to explore the possibilities that this might be a way to “enhance their self-esteem and help them develop a regard for life and nature” (p. 256). This research of bringing gardening to the classroom revealed the following six main themes: “moral development, academic learning, parent/child/community interaction, pleasant experiences, the influence of the Master Gardener, and perceived problems" (p. 258). The article further states that "children in the garden project appeared to have many opportunities to learn valuable lessons about life: delayed gratification, independence, cooperation, self-esteem, enthusiasm/anticipation, nurturing living things, motivation, pride in their activities, and exposure to role models from different walks of life" (p. 259).

Issues around diversity and individuality in a therapeutic horticulture program are reiterated with the recent research by Parkinson, Lowe and Vecsey (2011) as they found that "The therapeutic value of horticulture arose from a complex interplay of personal factors, including gender-based preferences, individual interests and social needs" (p. 525).

It seems that the evidence from research shows that people-plant interactions are helpful for psycho-social wellbeing, and Han (2009) also shows that exposure to plants in a passive way in a school classroom can also decrease mental fatigue, improve attention and behaviour (Han, 2009). According to Han (2009), there is "growing concern over mental fatigue in increasing urban environments and in schools" (p. 660) yet there is limited research on the influence that plants in a classroom may have on student success. Han's study defines "contact with nature as having some natural elements within one's sight" (p. 660) and he asserts that it "can provide temporary relief from attention depletion and psychophysiological stress in ordinary daily life, producing a microrestorative experience" (p. 660). The implications for children's success and well-being in the classroom are significant and could provide opportunities for exposure to plants in a learning environment in order to improve cognitive function and relieve psycho-social stress.

According to Blair's article (2009) and as cited by Rahm (2002), and Waliczek, Bradley and Zajicek (2001) outdoor gardening or nature programs have had a positive impact on "children's higher order cognitive skills" (p.34). In this review of a garden within school property and programming, "positive behavioural and social outcomes: heightened motivation and enthusiasm, improved sense of self, teamwork, community, and parental involvement" (Blair, 2009, p.34) were observed.

Horticulture as therapy with juvenile offenders.

It seems that improved social bonding is a common theme among youth engaged in horticultural practices. Improving social bonding through implementing a horticultural program with juvenile offenders has also been studied by measuring improvements in psychosocial functioning of inmates (McGuinn & Relf, 2001). This study shows a marked improvement in offenders individual's bonds with society when a "vocational horticulture curricula" (McGuinn & Relf, 2001, p. 427) was introduced. The study also suggests that it may be a tool to strengthen and subsequently evoke "changes in attitudes about personal success and perceptions of personal job preparedness" (p. 427). Increased levels of aggression and irritation tend to occur in adolescent brain development (Norton, 2010) and it is interesting that Horticultural programs have been "observed to reduce aggressiveness of institutionalized young offenders" (McGuinn & Relf, 2001, p. 428). The early literature seems to show improvements in the well-being of institutionalized juveniles in a corrections facility, the implications of furthering this research could make a great contribution to the lives of these youth and society.

Long-term care, Dementia and Alzheimer's.

Where therapeutic horticultural practices seem to have been implemented and studied the most, is in the area of long term care facilities and the elderly, as well as people who need assisted living resources. This may be because "horticultural and related activities represent the most commonly identified outdoor leisure activity or hobby of older adults" (Jarrott, Kwack &

Relf, 2002, p. 404). The studies seem to overwhelmingly show a marked improvement in the quality of life for this population when therapeutic horticulture and horticultural therapy are implemented in regular activities and daily life.

Collins and O’Callaghan (2008) found that assisted living facilities with horticultural activities improve mind-body connection which is important because “mastery and self-rated health are reliable predictors of future health outcomes, including mortality” (Collins & O’Callaghan, 2008, p. 617).

Both active and passive gardening had a great impact on well-being in a nursing home according to a study by Raske (2010). Passive gardening means it is done through environmental design that includes plants and greenery and the ability of these plants to provide “a degree of privacy, greater freedom of movement, more homelike spaces and improved sensory environments were associated with improved behavioural health outcomes for persons with dementia” (p. 337).

It seems the socio-cultural change in the environment is significant when gardens are created and implemented in the long term care residences. Raske (2010) also reports that the impact on quality of life through active gardening in terms of building, and maintaining a garden for residents in a nursing home was significant. The key benefit identified by Raske (2010) was the shift in a nursing home culture from one where people were just alive to one where the joy of living was captured. She further discusses that horticultural therapy practices are a way of overcoming the “threes plagues of aging: loneliness, helplessness, and boredom” (p. 349). While these are quoted as the three plagues of aging, this may be a shared plight across oppressed and vulnerable populations in general.

Anishinabek youth in a predominantly white eurocentric culture are at risk of feeling lonely. Feeling lonely can lead to depression (Epkins & Heckler, 2011). Sincerates of depression are significantly higher among Aboriginal communities (Ontario, C.M.H.A.) it is conceivable that these youth may also be at higher risk of depression and according to Norton (2010) depression in teenagers can be identified as “boredom, irritability, or difficulty experiencing pleasure” (Norton, 2010, p. 227).

Jarrott, Kwack and Relf (2002) note that formal evaluation of horticultural therapy programs in nursing homes is limited. They also assert that since older adults make up a large group involved in horticultural activities, and combined with the general knowledge that the older adult population is increasing, and given the number of people going into institutional care homes, horticultural therapy may be an appropriate activity to include in these homes.

Therapeutic horticulture is arguably quite appropriate because it can be adapted to various levels of physical ability and its benefits can decrease or slow the negative behaviours associated with dementia (Raske, 2010).

Therapeutic horticulture is also quite compatible for people with cognitive and or social impairments, allowing for individuals to experience success in the activity regardless of their abilities. Therapeutic horticulture lends itself to a variety of capabilities and provides opportunities for “a sense of responsibility and belonging that is often lacking in an institutional” environment (Jarrott, Kwack, & Relf, 2002, p. 404). Therapeutic horticulture has the ability of “contributing a new sense of excitement” (Jarrott, Kwack, & Relf, 2002, p. 404). Horticultural activities seem to be forward focused and therefore offer hope, promise and growth towards the future for participants.

Stress relief and improved mental health.

Introducing, horticultural practices to improve quality of life for people who live with chronic mental illness is another facet of horticulture as therapy. Some key themes that Perrins-Margalis, Rugletic, Schepis, Stepanski, and Walsh (2000), highlight are “the group experience: group dynamics lead to feelings of accomplishment”(p. 22), “the sharing experience: a self-satisfying aspect of the horticulture experience”(p. 23), “the learning experience: the rewarding opportunity to learn new activities” (p. 24), “the sensory experience: the contribution of sensory components to one’s well-being” (p. 25), “the creative experience: an outlet for self-expression and self-confidence” (p. 25), the reminiscent experience: the rekindling of positive memories” and the “emotional experience: the fun and enjoyable aspects of horticulture” (p. 26).

Further to this, a study published in 2009 measures the clinical effectiveness of horticultural therapy with adults with depression, showing statistically significant improvement when engaged in therapeutic horticulture (Gonzalez, Hartig, Patil, Martinsen, & Kirkevold, 2009). This study “assumed that, as an active component in the intervention, fascination with the therapeutic horticultural activities and environment would promote attention restoration” (p. 12) (as cited in Kaplan, 1995). The data in this particular study correlated participant perception of fascination of therapeutic horticulture activities and a decline in depression scores (Gonzalez, Hartig, Patil, Martinsen, & Kirkevold, 2009).

In relation to horticulture practices improving stress levels, Van Den Berg and Custers (2010) conducted the first experimental design that proves that gardening “led to decreases in cortisol during the recovery period” (p. 3) and that these “decreases were significantly stronger in the gardening group” (p. 3) over a reading intervention. Van Den Berg and Custers (2010) discuss further that the benefits of improved mood are re-established and sustained (p. 3).

Horticultural therapy in correctional institutions.

Ragen, of Stateville Penitentiary in Illinois, has reported that he had been able to rehabilitate some of the toughest psychological criminals only by means of horticultural therapy. He suggests that other forms of manual therapy were different as they were done indoors, giving the example of wood carving, and did not have the same beneficial effects (Ott, 2000). As Ott's work is on the effects of light, mainly sunlight he reflects on considering the possibility that the benefits of horticultural therapy may be more related to sunlight exposure and not necessarily from getting the men closer to nature and working with flowers (Ott, 2000).

Therapeutic horticulture practice with children.

In their book, *Horticulture as Therapy*, Simson and Strauss (1998) devote a chapter to therapeutic horticulture practices with children. In it they define some of the benefits of horticultural therapy as learning to work together cooperatively, learning new skills and gaining transferrable skills that offer opportunities for success. Success contributes to a sense of mastery and heightened self-esteem. They also emphasize the significance of children working with helping adults and the opportunities provided by a therapeutic horticulture environment "in which to implement a broad range of therapeutic techniques that can be applied to the healthy management of behaviour, feelings, and relationships. In working with nature, children learn about their environment, the cycles of development and about themselves" (Simson & Strauss, 1998, p. 200).

Therapeutic benefits across the spectrum seem to fall into similar themes of well-being such as improved quality of life, social functioning, emotional and mental health, cognitive skills, and physical functioning. In terms of possibilities and implications with diverse populations, there is a need for more studies and for larger and longitudinal studies. There were no studies found that demonstrated any negative impact of therapeutic horticulture and no studies that suggest when it might be a best practice or healing approach of choice.

Theories informing practice. Han (2009) asserts that only two major theories are pertinent to the healing qualities of nature for humans. These are Kaplan and Kaplans' attention restoration theory and Ulrich's psychological-evolutionary theory (Han, 2009). This is because "both theories adopt a psychological perspective of human-environment interaction as a means to search for suitable habitats for well-being" (p. 664), or as Kaplan and Kaplan would call 'restorative environments'. They suggest that there are four levels of restoration that one must progress through in order to experience full restoration: clearing the head, recharged attention, soft fascination, and reflection on one's own life" (Han, 2009, p. 665). This is a reflection of what happens when one is engaged in interaction with nature, such as with therapeutic horticultural practice.

Ulrich's psychoevolutionary theory takes a different approach and believes that the benefit that is gained from people-plant interaction is "derived from the reduction of stress" (Han, 2009, p. 665) related to an environment that can "evoke feelings of mild to moderate interest, pleasure and calmness" (p. 665).

According to McGuinn and Relf (2001), Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory informs therapeutic horticulture practice with juvenile offenders because it maintains that delinquency occurs as a result of an individual's deteriorating bond with society. It espouses that the more an individual is "obligated to interact with society and therefore experience positive social pressure, the greater the chance that individual has of developing strong social bonds" (McGuinn & Relf, 2001, p. 428).

Simson and Strauss (1998) suggest three different theories are speculated to inform therapeutic horticultural practices. Firstly, mentioned in their book is “overload and arousal” theories that suggest our current world is so busy and complex that we become overwhelmed and overaroused, and as such distressed. Horticultural activities and green environments allow for a reduction of stress and less complexity. Secondly, Learning Theory is also identified by Simson and Strauss (1998). They explain that in relation to therapeutic horticulture, individuals will be more drawn to environments that are culturally relevant and related to their early life experiences. Thirdly, they refer to Evolution theory. This claims that humans have always been with plants and as such are, by nature, drawn to and heal from these environments. It also suggests that depending on geographic location of our Ancestors, we tend to be attracted to different kinds of plant combinations and land combinations. Simson and Strauss (1998) cite Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) as stating that we may enjoy certain features in gardens in landscapes because they have an evolutionary significance in survival.

Methodologies in the literature. The methodologies used are broad and for the most part, exploratory in nature with small samples and studies of six months or less. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods were used for most with predominance in qualitative research methods across the studies.

Hermeneutic phenomenological research techniques were used to describe and interpret the lived horticultural experience of the group of participants in one study (Perrins-Margalis, Rugletic, Schepis, Stepanski & Walsh, 2009) and grounded theory appears in the references of Alexander, Wales-North and Hendren’s (1995) classroom garden projects.

Across the literature the range of exposure to horticultural therapy varied in terms of hours per week or day and short term versus long term treatment. In active programs it seemed to be weekly for anywhere from 45 minutes to 3 hours. Passive exposure to horticultural therapy was also variable from around the clock in the lived experience or for short times in a classroom.

Various scales were used for testing including the affect balance scale (Barnicle, Stoelzle, & Midden, 2003), Zahn's conceptual model of quality of life (Perrins-Margalis, Rugletic, Schepis, Stepanski & Walsh, 2000), Social Bond Test and Career Aspiration Test (McGuinn & Relf, 2001) as well as the state anxiety inventory by Spiel, the restorative components scale, and the well–being measures scale (Han, 2009). Observational assessment was used in a number of the programs, with observers ranging from administrators and teachers of the programs, to the researchers. McGuinn and Relf (2001) also used the mentor's journals in the young offender's service-learning program to review for "consistency of comments and themes" (McGuinn & Relf, 2001, p. 431).

Quantitative research was most often performed with pre and post-test scores to measure the effectiveness of this healing approach with various methods. In one particular journal, Brascamp (2005) claims that as a methodology "conjoint analysis lends itself to the application in each of the research areas of human well-being, people-plant interactions in urban settings, children-plant interactions, and perceived quality of environment because it helps understand people's perceptions of multi-attribute items" (Brascamp, 2005, p. 546). It can include both perception as well as "physiological responses" (p. 549).

As social workers, we must be mindful that it is a western, empirical body of knowledge and its research paradigms that predominantly inform a helping profession working with Anishinabek people. In the reality of an Anishinabek worldview there can be more than one way of knowing. We must be careful to appreciate and recognize these other ways of knowing other than what our eurocentric approach teaches us. We are reminded by Baskin (2006) that there are "many pieces of the circle that contribute to Aboriginal ways of knowing and seeing the world. It is inclusive of spirit, blood memory, respect, interconnectedness, storytelling, feelings, experiences and guidance" (Baskin, 2006). From an Aboriginal worldview perspective certainty in knowing everything is not necessary as there is much that one can be aware of, yet cannot and does not need explaining (Baskin, 2006). There is respect for the organic quality of life. Baskin (2006) further explains that:

> I am aware, for example, that I carry teachings of my ancestors, that I do certain things according to the changes of the moon each month and that my brother who has passed into the spirit world is attending school over there. I am aware of these things, but I cannot offer explanations. I am also aware that this is the way it is supposed to be. I accept what cannot be known and recognize that this is part of my worldview (Baskin 2006).

It is understood and accepted that "knowledge, then, is based on experience" (Baskin, 2006). Further to this, Duran (2006) argues that "when the profession validates empirically tested therapies only from a western logical, positivistic paradigm, we engage in western supremacy disguised as perceived scientific objectivity" (p. 14). Smith (1999) claims that even the term "research" implies superiority and is pervaded by colonialism and European imperialism. Indeed by completing research using Western methods, and sharing knowledge that is not congruent with Anishinabek peoples, the risk of being entrapped "within a definition which does not connect to either oral traditions or lived reality" is great (Smith, 1999, p. 170). Menzies (2001) furthers this discussion by addressing the "challenges that confront researchers in mainstream institutions as they pursue respectful research relationships" (p. 19) with Aboriginal peoples and as such, completing research with Aboriginal peoples creates special "challenges that are simultaneously personal, institutional, and political" (Menzies, 2001, p. 20). Within all of this, the research questions must seek knowledge that is of interest for Aboriginal peoples (Rawana, Brownlee, & Rawana, 2010; Menzies, 2001; Smith, 1999). It seems then, when working with Anishinabek peoples in western research paradigms, a relevant methodology that can account for multiple ways of knowing and respecting that which just is, would be utilizing a qualitative approach to research within a hermeneutic phenomenology paradigm. The emphasis of phenomenology "is on the world as lived by a person, not the world or reality as something separate from the person" (Laverty, 2003, p.4) thus reflecting as close a compatible and respectful way in which to appease rigor in a western paradigm and honour Aboriginal knowledge as is. Hermeneutic phenomenology embraces the subtleties, the nuances and has room for dualities in knowing and understanding.

As Kirmayer, Simpson and Cargo (2003) state, Aboriginal youth have traditionally contributed in decision-making processes in their communities. Honouring this value, this approach sets out to encourage the voice of the youth to inform mental health practices that affect them and others who follow, to promote positive and relevant mental health service programs for Anishinabek youth.

Limitations. Some of the limitations in the literature point to experimental designs in an actual setting with an open system and therefore cannot control for all variables (Han, 2009).

"In terms of aging populations, lifelong learners tend to age better and are likely to be attracted to learning new skills, introduced through horticultural therapy so it is hard to know if it is anecdotal evidence" (Collins & O'Callaghan, 2008, p. 617). This highlights the fact that it is difficult to know whether or not this approach to healing or the attitudes of the people are the key components of improved well-being in therapeutic horticultural practices. All variables are not controlled for. This is reiterated by Bringslimark, Hartig and Patil (2009), when discussing concerns over validity. They suggest that self-selection for studies may influence the outcomes of some groups, and a lack of control over the external environmental factors such as office spaces and school environments may have affected outcomes. Other limitations that are more consistent across the literature are the small study groups and short time periods.

Gonzalez, Hartig, Patil, Martinsen and Kirkevold (2009) study refers to the challenges in obtaining a randomized controlled trial design due to difficulties recruiting a large number of participants, and states that potential participants were concerned about being a part of a control group. Gonzalez, Hartig, Patil, Martinsen, and Kirkevold (2009) determined that the length of the growing season limited the recruitment process.

Because Raske's (2010) study was implemented in only one nursing home the results cannot be generalized across long term care facilities. There is further need to see if the results are repeatable in other long term care homes. Bringslimark, Hartig and Patil, (2009) also discuss concerns over generalizability given the inter-individual variability and intra-individual variability. Other constraints on generalizability relate to variability in research settings, labs and field settings.

Knowledge gaps in the area. Identifying what aspect of this approach to healing is the catalyst for change is consistently raised as an area for further research (Bringslimark, Hartig and Patil, 2009; Han, 2009; Jarrott, Kwack & Relf, 2002; Ott, 2000). Is it the fact that it is a group activity, the social aspects of the interaction, or the plants and connection with nature, exposure to light, fascination, or something else? Is it culturally correlated? Do socioeconomic or educational statuses contribute to the outcome of the approach to healing? These are some of the variables that need to be considered and researched more closely.

More studies are needed to see whether or not the same results would be achieved and are repeatable if applied to a similar setting as the completed studies in the literature. Collins & O'Callaghan, (2008) refer to the fact that their study of plant responsibility in assisted living is the first of its kind. One study suggests that having regular, general use of quality of life surveys to compare to other activities is needed (Raske, 2010).

Garden design could also play a contributive role to the effects of the approach to healing and one author addressed the need to control for this by stating that "researchers and educators should pay attention to how they design the garden and the learning experience in the garden" (Blair, 2009, p. 35). Gardens can be designed and built to be more accessible so as to have unique features that meet the needs of a variety of populations. Evaluating this as a variable in the success of garden design and therapeutic outcomes is also needed.

Suggestions for further study. The literature raises many questions as to the need for future study in the benefits of horticultural therapy with a variety of populations. One of the questions raised from this literature is whether or not group based purposeful activities other than horticulture reveal similar themes (Barnicle & Stoelze-Midden, 2003; Perrins-Margalis, Rugletic, Schepis, Stepanski, & Walsh, 2000). Overwhelmingly the literature points to the need for well-designed longitudinal studies with greater numbers of participants (Lohr & Pearson-Mims, 2005; Alexander, North & Hendren, 1995), Blair's literature also addresses that "other productive future research would be (a) studies of reasons for garden failure and (b) reports on creative means of maintaining gardens over time" (Blair, 2009, p. 36). The amount of time spent in structured versus self-directed exploration also needs to be better defined in the literature in terms of successful outcomes and with which populations. "Researchers and educators also need to know whether the changes in environmental sensitivity and observation skills reported in qualitative studies of gardening are transient or long lasting" (Blair, 2009, p.36) to see if this approach to healing has long term sustainability.

An evaluative review of the effects of gardening in the classroom with children highlights that "studies of gardening involving high school students as participants are rare" (Blair, 2009, p. 31). Further on, the article also states that "I found no quantitative and only two qualitative studies connecting gardening with high school students" (Blair, 2009, p. 31) thus demonstrating the real need for research with a youth population, given the positive outcomes thus far. This theme is also voiced by Waliczek, Bradley and Zajicek (2001).

In terms of application of horticultural therapy with patients who have dementia, there appears to be a need for "further study into quality of life in nursing homes and the implementation of horticultural practices to be adopted as early as the architectural design stage" (Raske, 2010, p. 348), in order to facilitate therapeutic space availability and accessibility.

It is significant that it appears that there have been no studies to date applying therapeutic horticultural practice in healing with Anishinabek populations; yet the history of these people is traditionally very connected with the land (AFN, 2003). In fact, "it has been observed that Ojibway people in the north who practice traditional healing also utilize nature in the teaching of values" (Borg, Neckoway & Delaney, 2010).

> The mountain teaches us FAITH as it was created first and when all life forms are gone the rock will remain.
>
> The tree symbolizes HONESTY as it is tall and straight.
>
> The grass teaches us KINDNESS due to its comfort and durability.
>
> The animals teach us SHARING as they give up their lives so we can eat.
>
> (Borg, Brownlee, & Delaney, 1995, p. 121)

Conclusion and discussion of the literature.

Although the informal phenomenological experience of horticultural practice improving well-being has been recognized for over a century, this area is lagging in terms of first-hand, evidence. The research that has been completed to date is limited to mostly short term, exploratory studies employing a variety of research methods. It may be that this is because it only recently gained acknowledgement as a legitimate therapeutic approach to healing in the medical field and social sciences. Regardless, it seems there is great need for further research with a variety of populations. The potential benefits are widespread, and the studies are promising.

Jarrott, Kwack and Relf's (2002) study also showed the significance of horticultural therapy as a "way of engaging all participants of varying degrees of functioning and encouraged success" (p. 408), which implies that this type of therapy will be useful in engaging a variety of people across capabilities and cultures. It is an accessible form of therapy that can improve well-being, and has much to offer in terms of building life skills. One particular study (Collins & O'Callaghan, 2008) shows that taking on the responsibility of caring for a plant or garden while in an assisted living home improves quality of life because of its ability to assist the person's transition into the home. This occurs by increasing their sense of mastery and reducing the sense of being "in a home" (p. 618) and as such, offers significant implications for well-being. When considering this in terms of other institutionalized "homes" one has to wonder whether or not the results would be transferable when applied to different age groups, and different types of institutions. It seems that horticulture as therapy shows much promise in working with youth and children. Due to its accessibility, its ability to forge and support social connectedness between youth as well as between youth and society, it's adaptability to people with different capabilities and limitations, and the fact that it is easily facilitated in a therapeutic, classroom or place-based environment, there is potential for it to shine as a best practice model of treatment.

Because the connection to the land is an integral aspect of Anishinabek culture (AFN, 1993), it seems that therapeutic horticulture shows promise as a potential tool in a healing journey because it provides opportunities for healing all facets of a being, including emotional, physical, cognitive and spiritual health. It has the potential to positively build a sense of identity, self-esteem, social skills, and coping skills to name a few. It is vital that we as social workers find ways to work in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner in order to build the capacity and social capital of Anishinabek youth, and this may be one way to do it. In moving forward with this particular model of therapy, as a way of forging an honorable relationship between western empiricism and Anishinabek people, we must be conscientious and mindful to ensure appropriation and acculturation does not occur. We must work towards a symbiotic relationship honouring knowledge, experience and worldviews.

Aboriginal social work worldviews look at the holistic view of person and person-in-environment; this includes the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional aspects. This approach allows for a perception of reality that is inclusive of nature. “Indigenous social work perspectives consider the natural environment as paramount” (Sinclair, Hart & Bruyere, 2009, p. 50), which is a much broader perspective than the mainstream social work practice. Contextual Fluidity also espouses this perspective in terms of a healing practice model. The model works from the perspective that “meaning arises from the context, never through objectivity” (Nelson & McPherson, 2005, p. 205). It shifts power differentials, “abandoning a focus on objectivity” (p. 202), and instead the social worker becomes “embedded in the client system” (p. 202) available as a helper to the person seeking help.

When approaching social work practice with this Aboriginal worldview, “The provision of services is typically active and pragmatic as opposed to euro-western approaches, which tend to be more passive, often using talk as the primary means to provide emotional support or assist clients in problem solving” (Sinclair, Hart & Bruyere, 2009, p.53). Horticultural therapy and therapeutic horticulture naturally fall into a more ‘active and pragmatic’ method of healing because the work is hands-on and practical. All activities have a broader, ‘outside thyself’, meaningful purpose. Hewson (2004) reiterates that horticultural as therapy allows the practitioner to “build rapport without confrontation” (Hewson, 2004, p. 19). This is critical as Duran (2006) cites Sue and Sue (1990) when explaining the significance of the different approaches of western and Anishinabek helping in relation to eye contact and discussion of inner feelings. Duran (2006) further discusses the importance of considering the impact of client-centred practice versus a non-directive more systemic approach to healing. He posits that healing is likely better achieved through a less individualistic approach. As stated by Gone (2010) the western treatment paradigm “harbors great potential for harm” (p. 199) to an Aboriginal person.

Is there room then for horticultural practice in a healing paradigm with Anishinabek populations? How might it look and how might it honour the worldview of Anishinabek peoples? We must tread forward cautiously in this manner, and be ever mindful and diligent to Duran’s “perspectives and his intermittent warnings that most therapists are not spiritually anchored enough to effect positive outcomes with Native patients” (Gone, 2010, p. 211). Does therapeutic horticulture offer a modality that may by its very nature attract social workers who harbor a spirituality that is holistic? How can therapeutic horticultural practices be facilitated and utilized to promote health and healing with Anishinabek people, and is it even possible?

Chapter 3

Methodology

The research context. This research occurs within the classroom, the home, the gardens and green spaces of Dilico Anishinabek Family Care's Assessment and Brief Treatment Unit (ABTU) as an attempt to understand and shed light on the lived experience of Anishinabek youth engaged in a therapeutic horticultural program. In the philosophy of Husserl, the only experiences one can be sure about are the ones that are personally experienced (Groenewald, 2004). As such it was critical that these youth share their experience of the program in order to determine whether or not it is relevant for them. Having found it meaningful, it is hoped that this data will inform future program planning and implementation.

Over the course of many years, preferred terms for Indigenous people of Canada have changed many times and include Aboriginal, First Nations, Indians, to name a few. The term Anishinabek is chosen in this thesis as it comes from the language of the people, who participated in this research. It is their word for themselves; it therefore makes sense to respectfully engage this term. For the sake of clarity in this paper the term Anishinabe or Anishinabek means "first people". In Canada, many Ojibwe people identify themselves as Anishinabe (Auger & Pedri, 2009). These are the participants and effectively the co-researchers in this study.

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care is an organization in Thunder Bay that began in 1979 as a parallel to the Children's Aid Society but with their focus on the special needs of Anishinabek Children (Dilico Anishinabek Family Care. [Dilico] Main, History).

> In December 1981, Chiefs of Ontario Resolution endorsed: "That the child welfare agencies of Ontario and Manitoba shall not remove our children from our reserves

and shall return to their Bands those of our children whom they have removed in the past; and that we the Indian Nations in Ontario shall create our own Indian Child Welfare laws, policies and programs, based on the protection of the family and the preservation of their Indian culture within the Indian family.

In 1981, 65% of the children in Family and Children's Services in Thunder Bay were of Native descent. Family and Children's Services of Thunder Bay and the Chiefs of the First Nations Indian Bands - the District Liaison Council submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Community and Social Services which resulted in Band control of child welfare services to Native children's, families and communities. Dilico Ojibway Child and Family Services was incorporated on July 23, 1986. Dilico's mandate was to develop and implement a child welfare system to strengthen, maintain and support Anishnabek children and families.

In 1995, Dilico was designated under the Child and Family Services Acts as a Native Children's Aid Society for thirteen affiliated First Nations and their membership within the District of Thunder Bay and a portion of the District of Algoma.

In 1996, Dilico became responsible for Children's Mental Health services. The Health Transfer and the Long Term Care agreements initiated service responsibility for Community and Mandatory Health Nursing, Primary Care and the Community Long-Term Care Services.

In July 2007, Dilico announced a fresh new tagline for the agency. Dilico replaced "Ojibway Child and Family Services" with "Anishinabek Family Care" as the agency descriptor. This new tagline is consistent with the letter of intent of First

> Nations representatives in 1994 (Kitchi-gaa-ming Anishinabek Ogemaag) and with the development of Dilico's mandate in 1986 (Dilico, Main)

Dilico's core values found on their website are: "Client centred services based upon teamwork, quality service delivery that is ethical, caring, compassionate, and sensitive, partnerships that advance the well-being of the Anishinabek, role models who demonstrate positive leadership, and an environment that creates positive morale" (Dilico, Main).

Dilico has been progressive in creating programs to meet the needs of their youth, and in 1992 opened the Assessment and Brief Treatment Unit (ABTU) for "children and youth between the ages of 5 – 18 years old with long-standing behavioral problems" (Dilico, Main). This was the first of its kind in Canada and the only one in operation in Canada to this day.

The Unit is located in rural Thunder Bay Ontario and

> Individual care is provided through a longer-term treatment program lasting up to 120 days. Healing is assisted through multi-disciplinary treatment within a safe, culturally appropriate environment. A balance of counselling, prevention and support addresses the overall medical, psychiatric, social and academic needs of the child and includes structured individual counselling, group sessions and intensive family work (Dilico, Main)

Access to the voluntary program is primarily through various community referral services, including many of the services Dilico provides.

Setting description. The setting of a therapeutic horticultural program is significant in the sense that it contributes to the overall experience of the program. For example, a setting in a private institution is different than a setting in a public park for a number of reasons such as behavioural changes when you have a group of participants who know each other versus the dynamics of a group with strangers joining or, changing what is already there. The group is more cohesive and feel directly responsible for the successes and failures within the garden. As is critical in a phenomenological research design, a “rich and thick” description of the setting is offered in order for the research to be understood within the context of which it takes place. The place and the research are not separate from one another but each impacts the other.

In rural Thunder Bay, down a dirt road discreetly nestled among the mixed lush boreal forest, with towering poplars and majestic firs, surrounded by multitudes of deer and wildlife who regularly make an appearance on its grounds, humbly sits ABTU. The Unit is located in a split-level brown brick home that has been converted to meet the needs of the program. Utilizing a “regular” house allows for an optimal home-like environment to be achieved, which certainly impacts the healing journey and reduces the sense of institutionalization. It creates a place of comfort and warmth for youth who have been separated from their community.

The home is situated on a plot of Northern Ontario land. Upon arriving at the long dirt driveway, one also sees a large, white sided garage-like out building (which houses the school), a shed, an old, overgrown dog-run and vast green lawn area bordered by dense boreal forest. There is a square 3m x 3m raised wood garden bed with a whimsical handmade willow trellis along the North side. It is the home of the vegetable garden from which youth will plant, care for and harvest, as well as make delicious food. It is filled with traditional foods like corn, squash, green and yellow beans, flavourful herbs like lemon balm, mint and northern hardy strawberries. Situated about fifteen feet away and also near the back of the property is a (20) foot circular medicine wheel garden. In the summer, the medicine wheel garden is a mix of annual and perennial plants, small hardy northern shrubs, and in the centre stands the tree, planted by the staff in quiet memory of a beloved employee who has recently passed on. Tall grasses, wild dandelions, and violas find themselves interspersed amongst the more purposefully placed plants. An orange and yellow blanket flower is nestled next to the daylilies in the East and a large three foot clump of white peonies are found in the North quadrant. Around the outside edge of the garden there are a variety of large smooth, roundish rocks, obviously shaped by water and brought in from the surrounding area, which one comes to know as sacred grandfather rocks formerly from a sweat lodge and placed around the garden by prior participant's mothers.

As the garden is divided into quadrants there is a foot path between each and therefore at the corner of each quadrant there are also small round circular cement posts, each about 12" high and painted with the colours that represent the corresponding quadrant. The four colours of the medicine wheel are, red, and yellow, black and white. Standing in the garden in the summer, listening to the birds chirping, the wind rustling in the dancing poplar leaves, feeling the soft breeze and warm sun on your face, breathing in the smell of fresh dirt and green forest while seeing the four colours, the thunderbird symbol in the trees nearby, the grandfather stones and the Eagles soaring above in the sky, one cannot help but feel that there is culture and a sense of the sacred in this place.

As you turn back towards the house, between the gardens and the home, sits a brown painted wooden play structure complete with slide, swings and a fort decorated in pictures and slang words written in chalk by the children. The structure sits on a bed of crushed rock scattered with Tonka toys and shovels, remnants from fun and games during the children's free time. Also on the grounds are an old fire pit, some paths into the bushes, a couple of picnic tables, a couple of utility sheds, and a beautiful 10 foot tall apple tree in the field. The picnic tables are turned into arts and crafts tables in the summer to make wooden garden signs, explore watercolours and make driftwood wind chimes.

Upon walking the grounds one will find a sage garden on the south side of the home, as well as cedar and juniper bushes in the front. The only indication to an outsider that this is more than a “regular” residence is the large parking space on the North side of the driveway, which usually contains six or more vehicles of the staff. Even this however is not all that unusual as it looks a lot like a wide dirt driveway.

While there is an inviting front entrance, it is evident that the back door is the most used entrance to the home by the activity and layout of the property. Evidently the back door is in the East, and culturally the East is where we begin, and where the sun rises each day. Fittingly, the children enter their therapeutic space from the East. Upon entering the home one is greeted with the smell of the morning’s smudge. A large foyer leads to the first of two living rooms. It is comfortable with a low brick wall around a fireplace, a couple of couches, television and some posters on the wall reflecting the seven grandfather teachings. On this lower level one will find an arts and crafts room, and a hallway with a couple of locked doors, however these are out of general view of the everyday living area and really just have the appearance of closet space. After going up approximately six stairs to the main floor, one enters a large tiled dining room, a spacious well-lit kitchen both of which have windows that overlook the gardens, lawn and boreal forest. On the other side of the kitchen is a carpeted dining room with artwork created by former youth proudly displayed on the walls. A second spacious living room on this floor is filled with natural light from large windows and high-vaulted ceilings and is also furnished with chairs, couches, some games and a computer. There are chore charts in the living and dining area, and cultural posters and words posted throughout the house. Near the front door is a second flight of stairs to the second floor on which is a shared bathroom facility and 5 bedrooms. Again, the only indication that this is not a regular home is a discrete video camera high on the ceiling facing down the hall. A few stairs up from the second floor hall is a staff office space which is a loft style that opens to overlook the living room below but is walled in from the bedroom hallways. It is the night shift staff's home. Due to the lack of visibility, it could be easy for one to forget that there is a highly skilled administrative team organizing all of this behind the scenes. The well thought-out design of the administrative offices has them discretely located in the basement creating a consistent sense of a home-like atmosphere for the youth in order to maximize their healing while at the Unit.

The classroom, which is operated by one of the local school boards, is housed in a separate building and contains two rooms. One is for administrative purposes, to hold meetings, and the other is the classroom. The classroom is warm and inviting, with artwork from previous students on the walls, cultural posters, a bookshelf, a desk for each student, a round activity table and the teacher's desk and work area. This is where some of the therapeutic horticulture activities take place. Two windows allow for some natural light in the classroom and there are also two windows in the secondary meeting room. In the springtime, the seedlings are started in the second administrative room. There is a tabletop greenhouse that the children take turns tending and where they are learning the lessons of life; of birth and the importance of caring for life, responsibility, fragility, strength and resilience. They are learning that life requires interdependence of a broader ecosystem that includes all of us, even the "plant people" and the four elements of earth, the air, the sun, the earth and the water. These plants cannot survive on their own, neither can the youth. Learning about the importance of balance as well as the strength and fragility of life is a valuable life lesson in the greenhouse. The plants have much to teach us.

Hermeneutic phenomenology. In order to fully elicit the lived experience of the youth involved in the research a hermeneutic phenomenology approach within an interpretive framework is utilized. As the nature of this study is to understand the meaning of the youth experiences and make their voices heard, as well as to help them inform their treatment, and given that hermeneutics translates into "making the obscure, plain" (Neuman, 1997, p. 68), the fit of this style of research allows understanding to the true voice of the youth. They can speak in their own way, act in a familiar way and be themselves in this research and share what is known to them and how it is known to them.

While this research is looking to explore the lived experience of the youth while engaged in therapeutic horticulture, a phenomenological study also looks at the researchers experience as part of the phenomenon, the experience of that time is also influenced by the researcher and the researcher cannot be separated from the experience (Van Manen, 2006). As such, in this research, the interplay between the researcher as a white female of European Heritage and the youth meant it was even more important to design and implement a relevant method of data collection for the youth to best meet their cultural and developmental needs in a respectful and meaningful way.

Within the phenomenological research process, culture plays a significant role as it is impossible for humans to think aculturally (Struthers & Peden McAlpine, 2005). Everything we do is influenced by our culture and as such it is innately included in our perception. The results of this research with Anishinabek youth inherently brings their cultural lens to it. As Struthers and Peden McAlpine (2005) state "phenomenology is compatible with Indigenous peoples, because it is synchronous with holistic Indigenous cultural lifeway and values" (p. 1264).

Hermeneutic phenomenology "employs modes of discourse that try to merge cognitive and non-cognitive, gnostic and pathic ways of knowing" (Van Manen, 2006, p. xiv) thus revealing the felt meaning beyond positivistic paradigms. It is research providing insight from being in the world, it is inseparable from our own being, and helps shed light on the very nature of what is, what exists, what is known. Nietzsche said “whoever is searching for the human being first must find the lantern” cited in Van Manen (2006, p.4). The youth view the therapeutic horticulture program through their lantern, as well as through the light cast on the program by the researcher who is also a co-facilitator. It is an interplay between the two and therefore researcher and researched cannot be distinctly separated.

Hermeneutic phenomenology attends to the descriptions that define feelings, moods and emotions through descriptions of the lived experience in order to make meaningful what appears as meaningless, it uses the language from the research subject as the relevant language of the research (Van Manen, 2006). Language is a great reflection of culture and as such, in order for the researcher to stay true to lived experience research, in a phenomenological inquiry, language must embrace and employ the language relevant to the social life of the youth in this instance, looking to the meaning that their actions and words make as a collective group.

From the view of hermeneutic phenomenology, Van Manen (2006) explains “the world is given to us and actively constituted by us: reflecting on it phenomenologically, we may be presented with possibilities of individual and collective self-understanding and thoughtful praxis” (p. xi). This research offers the youth an opportunity for individual and collective self-understanding. They have the opportunity to participate and reflect on the program and the research while at the same time make choices that inform the program and the research through photovoice and dialogue.

Phenomenological research encourages empowerment, by creating opportunity and circumstances that allow the voice of the youth’s experience to inform practice. It is culturally sympathetic as it ensures that the youth share their lived perception in regards to the degree of relevance this approach to healing is for them. This research creates opportunity for empowering a vulnerable population in terms of informing relevant healing methods, potentially having a great impact on their well-being and the lives of the Anishinabek youth who follow them in brief residential treatment.

This research is approached from a social-constructivist lens. Social-constructivism espouses that “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work”…and that …“individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences” and that these “meanings are varied and multiple” (Creswell, 2009, p.8). This approach lends itself to learning the meaning ascribed to the program by the youth, while actively being involved in it. The youth are able to depict meaning with the pictures they take while engaged in the therapeutic horticultural program and discuss them in a semi-directed interview. This then allows for the research of the youth to inform future practice. Engaging the participants as the experts within the context of their environment and treatment allows for a deeper understanding of their connotation of the experience. Hermeneutic research is preferred by this researcher as it naturally allows the participant to be a collaborator in the research process.

Photovoice is a method that encourages the participant to become an active rather than passive partner. Due to the vulnerability of the study population being Anishinabek youth, it is critical to take measures to ensure that the manner of data collection is relevant to them in order to prevent the risk of oppression and repeat, in effect, the colonization process through the research process itself. Thus, photovoice was utilized to ensure their voice was accessed most naturally and they could be active in the process. Because the therapeutic horticultural program is new within ABTU the opportunity to allow young Anishinabek people to help inform the programs that are available and are created for them to assist in their healing journey is significant. While mental health protocols and treatments are inherently informed by western medicine and healing techniques developed in a eurocentric culture, which generally looks at healing as a fragmented form of minimizing or eliminating symptoms, Anishinabek people's perception on life and healing is holistic (Auger & Pedri, 2009). As such it makes sense that healing practices specifically for Anishinabek people be informed by their culture and the people themselves.

Smith (1999) cautions researchers about the oppressive nature and the superiority suggested when research is done "on" people, in particular Aboriginal peoples, rather than with them. This research has been careful to ensure that it is being done with the youth to inform practices that affect them. Because this research is completed with the youth and not on the youth, it is in-line with hermeneutic phenomenology and a social constructivist paradigm. Together they look to the nature of ascribed meaning of the experience, the importance of language within the understanding, offer opportunity to inform and shift practice and give voice to the vulnerable.

How the research came to be. As a student working towards a designation of Horticultural therapist, under the guidance of Mitchell Hewson, a Registered Horticultural Therapist Master at Homewood Health Centre in Guelph Ontario, and having completed a six month student placement as a Clinical Counsellor with Anishinabek youth in Dilico's Clinical counselling and support services, I wanted to see if and how therapeutic horticulture may fit as an approach to healing with Anishinabek people.

A number of factors impacted site selection including, suitability of population, willingness of management to implement a program, readiness of participants and guardians to partake, as well as appropriateness of space and conditions necessary for a therapeutic horticultural program, and resources to successfully execute it such as financial, material and staff support.

The idea of creating and facilitating a therapeutic horticulture program for the needs of ABTU offered a culturally relevant opportunity given the traditional importance of the land in Anishinabek beliefs, traditions and ways of the people. The management of Dilico were also quite interested in exploring this possibility with the youth.

First, as with any healthy therapeutic program working with a group history of oppression and colonization, it was critical that a sense of trust and rapport be established between myself, the youth and Dilico. From my previous experience with Dilico, trust in my ability to offer culturally sensitive practice had been established and was critical in exploring the research. Next, the interest of the Manager of the ABTU in this type of therapeutic program for the youth's healing process was critical. The suitability of the grounds to a horticultural program and the willingness of the organization to develop this partnership also played a role in the realization of this research. In May of 2010, the manager of ABTU invited Willow Springs Creative Centre and I to see if we would collaborate on a therapeutic program to deliver to the youth. Over the course of that summer a partnership with Dilico, myself, and Willow Springs, blossomed. After witnessing the youth experiences in the first summer of the program, the following year, the research began and over the course of May through September 2011 Willow Springs led the program at the ABTU site described earlier, while I assisted and completed the research with the youth. As I had been previously delivering the programming prior to the outset of the research, once the research began, I took on the role of assisting with the activities. This meant, participating in the gardening alongside the youth, helping others when need be, also providing supervision to ensure safe handling of tools and offering insightful lessons of the land through casual discussion during the activities.

> Willow Springs is a not for profit organization realized in 2002 by four creative, passionate and energetic women who develop and deliver "in-house and mobile creative expression and therapeutic gardening programs to organizations, social service groups, schools and the general public". These women "decided on the name Willow Springs because it embodied everything the women stood for; flexibility, growth, tenacity, using nature as inspiration and their art medium, as well as a trait that is a salute to their Finnish roots, sisu. Willow abounds on and around their property and the property's water source is a natural spring"
> (Willow Springs, 2012).

Sample. As Dilico's jurisdiction involves the Robinson-Superior Treaty area and parts of Treaty 9 the youth involved all originate from or have roots in these communities, covering a vast area in northwestern Ontario. They are either of Cree, Ojibwe or Oji-Cree descent (Auger & Pedri, 2009) and while majority of the youth have a permanent residence in Thunder Bay, many have moved here with their families in the past 3 years originally coming from their much smaller Northern communities.

Dilico's vision is "balance and well-being for Anishinabek children, families, and communities" (Dilico, n .d.). Its mission is to "embrace a holistic approach in the delivery of Health, Mental Health, Addictions and Child Welfare Services to complement the strengths, values and traditions of Anishinabek children, families, and communities" (Dilico, Main). The programs delivered at ABTU speak to this vision, and the introduction of a therapeutic horticultural program at ABTU is a reflection of this.

In all, two groups of youth participated in the study. The first group of four had been involved in therapeutic horticulture programming from the outset of their treatment and were in the last thirty day period of the end of their treatment while they participated in the research. This affected their experience of the programming as they were familiar with the daily and weekly activities and what it meant to be a part of the experience. For this first group, the therapeutic horticulture program took place during the hours that they would have been in the classroom doing seatwork.

As, horticultural activities are naturally affected by seasonal changes with time, this first group of youth were engaged in gardening where they would not participate in the harvest, although they had the opportunity to nurture plants from seed and see the successes of nurturing seeds to life. In the spring the youth started seedlings, prepared the garden for the summer and planted the seedlings. As they did this there was discussion around the fact that they were doing this for the other children who would follow and enter the program in August. Implications around the amount of effort and energy expended for another group, and what this meant to them and the future group often drove their actions.

As August began, the new cohort of six youth began the horticultural program. They came to the research experience knowing nothing of therapeutic horticulture, or of the treatment program itself. In terms of the therapeutic horticulture program, it was delivered in the mornings when the youth would have otherwise been sleeping in or having free time. These youth came to a garden in the final stages of growth and the beginning of the harvest season. The garden was also overgrown with weeds, and some of the plants had died due to a month long, planned closure of the Unit for the first time in the summer. It was the role of this group to salvage what was left from the initial group, reap the harvest, prepare the food and prepare the garden for winter.

All of the youth voluntarily engaged in this research by signing their own consent forms (Appendix B). The parent or legal guardian also signed consent forms, facilitated by the ABTU treatment manager (Appendix D).Prior to the research beginning, a meeting was held for each group of youth to explain the nature of the research, confidentiality, to ensure they knew they could withdraw at any time and to answer any questions they might have. All were provided with a letter stating this information as well as contact information for myself and my supervisor should they have any questions at any time. A copy of the parent and participant letters can be found in Appendices “A” and “C”. As well a copy of the letter requesting Dilico’s participation and a copy of the consent form that was signed are attached in Appendices “E” and “F”.

In total a purposive sample was utilized with ten youth aged nine to sixteen who participated, five male and five female. One youth in the ABTU in the first group chose not to participate due to her focus on her coursework. These youth came searching for healing in one or all of the areas of mental, emotional and spiritual health. A number of the youth also displayed cognitive and developmental delays.

I have taken care to eliminate the labels where possible and still provide enough information to give context to the experience. It is easy to see outward behaviours and speculate on the reasons and underlying causes in an isolated context of individual and micro systems. Vigilance in recognizing the broader macro influences that underlie and factor into these issues is also needed. This is reflective of an Anishinabek worldview as well, as it does not perceive anything as disconnected. In fact Archibald (2008) discusses the “common goal (of Aboriginal people) has been to attain a mutual balance and harmony among animals, people, elements of nature, and the Spirit World" (p. 11). It must be recognized that the challenges of the youth are not isolated and are connected to the colonization process of Anishinabek peoples that continues today, as well as many social problems Canadians in general face. One must also be cognizant of the role of normal development of a self-concept. At this stage in childhood and adolescent development individuals are beginning to conceptualize what their connection to other people is and what that connection means (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). All of these challenges are faced by youth regardless of race. However, for these youth, not only are these challenges of growing up a part of the norm, they are also compounded with identity issues and racism within a colonized society.

Archibald (2008) shares a very different perspective of understanding in the following rich quote:

> Among many First Nations, Coyote and her/his/its many manifestations is considered a Trickster character who has lots to learn and teach while travelling the world. The English word "trickster" is a poor one because it cannot portray the diverse range of ideas that First Nations associate with the Trickster, who sometimes is like a magician, an enchanter, an absurd prankster, or a Shaman, who sometimes is a shape shifter, and who often takes on human characteristics. Trickster is a transformer figure, one whose transformations often use humour, satire, self-mocking, and absurdity to carry good lessons. Other well-known Trickster characters include Raven, Wesakejac, Nanabozo, and Glooscap. Trickster often gets into trouble by ignoring cultural rules and practices or by giving sway to the negative aspects of "humanness," such as vanity, greed, selfishness, and foolishness.

> Trickster seems to learn lessons the hard way and sometimes not at all. At the same time, Trickster has the ability to do good things for others and is sometimes like a powerful spiritual being and given much respect. (p. 5)

Archibald (2008) further, states that she has come to know "The notion of the Trickster as a "doing" rather than a "being" (p. 6). Imagine using this metaphor to guide treatment through this lens: to understand these youth not only in terms of the challenges they bring but also the "good things" and relating back to diversion from cultural rules and practices. This can be utilized to not only individualize the problem, but to also consider the larger community as well. "To be connected is to be whole" (Smith, 1999, p. 149)

As previously stated, these external behaviours and the familial issues these youth experience must not be viewed in isolation and therefore, one cannot ignore the fact that these issues also overlap with the social determinants of health such as income and income distribution, education, early childhood development, food insecurity, social exclusion, social safety network, health, and Aboriginal status to name a few that seem to be directly linked (Mikkonen, & Raphael, 2010). However, it is not the nature of this research to speculate on causes but to learn what the therapeutic horticulture treatment approach to healing means for these youth.

Despite all of these challenges, the youth demonstrated much strength of character which would also help them on their healing journey. Most significant is their strength to voluntarily and willingly search for help and support. As observed by myself and Judi Vinni during these sessions, these youth also displayed, caring behaviours, empathy, self-regulation, creativity, problem-solving skills, a sense of humour, curiosity, bravery, persistence, wisdom, fairness, leadership, appreciation of beauty, spirituality and hope.

Most came to this program with little to no gardening experience, although they had various degrees of experience in the outdoors. As horticultural therapy is holistic in and of itself, it also includes activities with plants and plant-based materials including crafts and cooking. Some of the youth came with experiences that they were able to draw on and share, yet some were new to this.

Methods. Photovoice was chosen as the data collection method, followed by semi-structured interviews. This was chosen for the accessibility of meeting the participant's abilities to understand, recognize and participate in the process. Photovoice also offers opportunity for empowerment as it "provides youth the opportunity to develop their personal and social identities and can be instrumental in building social competency" (Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004, p. 49).

Photovoice.

Photovoice is a research method often used with people who have little money, power or status to empower them and create change by informing others (Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004). It offers opportunity for empowerment from within a feminist perspective by allowing the youth to be the experts in their experience (Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004). Only those who have an experience can authentically inform the process or treatment, otherwise it is an imposition to have someone or somebody outside of that context bring in from their culture a method of knowing, understanding and healing. The literature shows that photovoice is a relevant and useful tool when working with populations where there are challenges with written language skills and who are also vulnerable (Wang & Burris, 1997). These barriers are consistent with many of the youth who participated as not only are they Anishinabek, which in terms of the social determinants of health is a vulnerability in itself, they are also either young or working below their corresponding grade level in their education which presents unique challenges in articulating the meaning of experience, especially across cultures. Because photovoice is directly related to personal perception, feeling, mood and emotion it is a good fit with these youth and a hermeneutic, phenomenological study.

When one considers the ethics behind the use of photovoice as a research method, it is easy to recognize that the role of the participant as a researcher themselves is respectful and appropriate given the population. In considering my role as a white researcher of European Heritage, with an Anishinabek population, it is critical to recognize that in order to work from a "power with" perspective the youth must be a part of the process. As stated by Paulo Freire "leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organize the people—they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress" (Freire, 2010, p. 178). It is the intention of this researcher to work with the youth and offer them this opportunity to share their experience with the intention of the results being able to inform future healing practices. Freire (2010) also states that it is necessary to "trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason" (p. 66) and further "whoever lacks this trust will fail to initiate dialogue, reflection, and communication, and will fall into using slogans…and instructions" (p. 66). Action must be taken "with" marginalized groups instead of about or on them.

The process. Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants in the study as the aim is to look at the experience of Anishinabek youth within a brief treatment facility that offers a therapeutic horticultural program. In order to achieve this data, the Youth were given individual disposable cameras and invited to take pictures at their free-will over the course of one, two or three therapeutic horticultural sessions of two hours each throughout June, August and/or September 2011. At the initial meeting they were instructed on how to use the cameras properly and I also offered a short session on things to consider when taking pictures. For example, we discussed ideas around focal points in the image, ideas around close-ups and far away photos, as well as whether or not people in the photos. This led to discussion about confidentiality and photos, and how, if the pictures were shown to anyone, the eyes of the subjects in them would be made obscure or blacked out with a line. They were asked to take pictures of things they liked or didn't like and things that were meaningful for them. They could take pictures of when things felt good, or not, or just pictures that they liked throughout the program. Each camera was coded with a letter or letter and number, corresponding to a participant, and each camera was labeled with a marker. Each participant was responsible for the care and safety of their camera during the sessions. At the end of each session I collected the cameras and took them to a local photography store where the photos were developed.

I then sat down with each participant to learn the importance of each of their pictures with the use of a semi-directed interview.

Semi-directed interviews. Within one week of having the photos developed the semi-directed interviews were conducted with the youth to probe for a deeper exploration of the meaning of their lived experience. Sixteen one-on-one interviews were completed in total.

The semi-directed interview was utilized as it is culturally relevant given that it allows for some natural conversation. It is also age appropriate for the participants ensuring that the descriptions and explanations of the lived experiences are accurate and comprehensible for the youth. This is the story of the youth. Story-telling and narrative is a traditional way of communication for Aboriginal peoples (Auger & Pedri, 2009; Smith, 1999) and as such allows for respectful research with the youth. As cited in Archibald (2008), “Simon Ortiz reminds us of how the oral tradition reflects the belief system and consciousness of a people” (p. 25).

The interviews were held in June and September of 2011. I conducted each interview and all were completed in the ABTU crafts room at a table where the interviewee and I could sit diagonally facing each other a few feet away. This room was chosen due to its limited distractions and low noise level away from household activity in order to maximize the audio-recorder capturing the interview, and to help the youth focus. It also allowed for semi-privacy and freedom of speech for the youth so that they could feel comfortable sharing personal stories, and ideas. The door however was left open for safety concerns and this did lead to some minor noise levels as staff came and went.

An interview protocol was created and followed to ensure consistency of standard procedures. This included, a few minutes of icebreaker discussion at the outset proceeded by an audio introduction of the place, time and date of interview. I began with the first photograph on the stack and an open lead in question such as, “so tell me about this picture, what was important for you to share, in this picture?” which would then be followed up with probing questions. All interviews were audio recorded to ensure accuracy. The interview guide is included in Appendix “G”, and while not all the questions were asked, they were the starting points for discussing the pictures. It was the youth’s pictures that led the discussion. If no pictures were taken of a particular activity, it was not pursued in the interview. As is client-centred practice, the interviews were completed in a participant-centred way by using their photographs as the lead to ask questions and then allow the conversation to flow naturally from there. Interviews lasted anywhere from 6 minutes to 33 minutes depending on the number of photographs and the participant’s ability to focus on the conversation and pictures.

I then fully transcribed the interviews on my laptop computer, and coded for analysis using colour coding and a code book. Themes were identified and all themes are conveyed regardless of the number of times they were arrived at. As this is a lived experience research, all voices are needed, must be accounted for and must be effectively heard. This process is described in detail further in this chapter.

Each participant's interview was assigned a letter code that corresponded with the camera code and where there was more than one interview a numeric code followed. I.e.) Interview one was "B" and interview two was "B-2". Each interview was recorded on a hand held digital recorder and data was dumped onto a memory stick for locked and secure storage at Lakehead University.

Observational sampling methods. Field notes were also completed throughout May to September 2011 to help inform the research (Morgan, 1997). The following, are a variety of styles of notes which were taken to broaden the depth of understanding and inform the process.

> - Observational notes (ON) — 'what happened notes' deemed important enough to the researcher to make. Bailey (1996) emphasises the use of all the senses in making observations.
> - Theoretical notes (TN) — 'attempts to derive meaning' as the researcher thinks or reflects on experiences.
> - Methodological notes (MN) — 'reminders, instructions or critique' to oneself on the process.
> - Analytical memos (AM) — end-of-a-field-day summary or progress reviews.
>
> (Groenewald, 2004, p. 15)

Most of the ten pages of transcribed notes are taken shortly after the program each day; however some are also later recollections. As I co-facilitated the program with Judi Vinni from Willow Springs, she was the primary lead in the program during the data collection phase allowing me time to observe the participants more closely. This allowed for me to gain "intimate firsthand knowledge of the research setting" (Neuman, 2006, p.153) in order to understand the personal experiences of the youth that much more.

Validity and reliability. When one can have confidence that a researcher has accurately represented data and analysis of the social world in the field, it is then that the research can be considered valid, (Neuman, 1997). Creswell (2009) explains this can be done by employing various procedures in order to check for accuracy of the outcomes. Reliability of the approach should also be considered as "consistent across different researchers and different projects" (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). As suggested by Creswell (2009, p. 190), the following reliability measures were undertaken in this research:

1. Transcripts were checked by me to ensure no errors. Transcripts were proof-read along with listening to the audio-recording three times each to ensure accuracy. Headphones were used to improve sound quality and ensure accuracy of transcription.
2. A codebook was used to identify themes. Each theme was assigned a colour. A sticky colour dot was attached to a page in the book and a corresponding colour was attached to each relevant line that fit in the theme. The colour coded quotes were then typed up in a group and cross-checked for drift. While some data were valid for two groups, this was also identified and a quote could be coded in two

places to represent two separate themes. There were no other coders in this research so there was no need for an intercoder agreement (p. 190).

In terms of validity, Creswell (2009) recommends using a number of strategies to ensure the truthfulness of the results. Due to the nature of the research it seemed appropriate to use triangulation, a thick and rich description, a discussion on bias, peer-debriefing, presenting fairly the discrepant information offered and member checking (Creswell, 2009).

Triangulation is “the idea that looking at something from multiple points of view improves accuracy” (Neuman, 2006, p. 149). Through field observation, the use of recorded interviews, and photovoice, the research data was collected from multiple sources. The thick and rich description of the data and the analysis can be found in the discussion chapter. In terms of bias I have divulged where my biases may be earlier in the methods section of this chapter as it is true that as a horticultural therapist in training, and approaching this as a white, female of European Heritage I am aware of the insidious ways colonization and oppression can impose on the research and program. During the data collection and analysis sometimes conflicting information was shared regarding the participants experience, and all of this has been shared transparently in the discussion chapter in order to fully bring light to the lived experience. A peer within the University and who is familiar with this research reviewed the thesis, and discussions around initial themes naturally occurred with Judi Vinni of Willow Springs, the Teacher and staff of ABTU as well as with my thesis supervisors to ensure validity through means of peer debriefing.

Member checking mostly took place during the photo-voice interview as I would clarify what I had heard by rephrasing and asking them if I had understood correctly. In three cases, I went back to ABTU to do a follow-up interview to ensure I had understood correctly the meanings the youth were attributing to their photos. I also met with one youth outside of the ABTU. This involved bringing the photos and repeating the semi-directed interview process with them once again to explain the significance of the photo, followed by probing questions. Once again this was recorded on a digital audio recorder.

Limitations. During the process, while attempts were made to find ways to connect with the participants at their literacy and age level by using language and visuals, the cognitive and expressive capabilities of some youth are limited. Their vocabulary and ability to articulate in depth meaning and feeling reflected this during the interview process. Although there is a strong oral tradition with Anishinabek people, Archibald (2008) reminds us that while "Stories have the power to make our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits work together" (p. 12) the oral tradition has been "denigrated and diminished through western literate influences" that have "often assumed an overpowering position" (p. 12). Being the facilitator and a female of European heritage, completing this research, I wonder how this might have affected the process of interviewing and the power differentials in a relationship. While Menzies (2001) believes that "non-Aboriginal social science researchers can research and write about Indigenous people" (p. 21) he goes further to state that it must be done with an approach that "becomes part of a process of decolonization" (p. 21). During the program as well as the interviews, every attempt was made, to ensure the youth were empowered to share their expertise in the experience so as to lessen any authority of the experience by myself in order to reveal the true meaning of the experience for them.

Within this perspective of power differentials, it must be noted that a relationship with the youth had already been established which allowed for a comfort level and acceptance with me versus a stranger conducting an interview. A few quotes in the research certainly demonstrate the safety the youth felt in being completely honest with me as they also shared aspects of the program that they did not like. However, regardless of the researchers intention, it must be recognized that years of colonization will still inform this relationship between an Anishinabe participant/co-researcher and an other-than-Anishinabe researcher.

Moods and experiences external to the program also affected the interviews as one participant was given some difficult news the morning of his only interview, he was not interested in cooperating and although it was his choice to stay, he chose to only give minimal information except at points where he was swept up in the memory of the event he enjoyed. This was noticeable by a visible change in affect. While he appeared to be one of the most engaged and interested in the program, and having shown this in his photographs, he was more reserved in sharing this during the interview, likely due to his personal disappointment, coping skills and stress levels. Due to the end of his treatment time and his move away from the area after treatment, it was not possible to interview him with the photos again.

Forgetting to take pictures because they were so engaged in the program was another limitation to the research. It was surprising to see at the end of the program, that some pictures of various events that appeared significant to me, were not captured by the youth, and it seems that because they were so busy doing “hands-on” work, holding a camera did not coincide with their needs to be fully present in the program. On the one hand, this means they were very focused and engaged in the program, on the other hand, it means that there may be a better way to capture this data through a different method in data collection. Future research could have more field notes that could then be discussed with the youth during an interview to clarify for accuracy and not interfere with the program.

Another possible limitation is the delivery of the program being from someone other than the Anishinabek culture of the youth. The therapeutic horticulture program may have been received differently if facilitated by an Elder or another Anishinabe. This data only captures the experience of the youth with a facilitator and researcher of European heritage. It must be considered that culture plays a role in acceptance of, understanding of and ways of teaching in the program. There is also a difference between a White "helper" and a White "healer" who lives a spiritual life in line with an Anishinabek worldview and is self-reflective and aware of the processes of oppression.

Another limitation is locality of the participants outside of treatment. Having wanted to reach them to complete further member checks many challenges arose. Two had moved to treatment facilities in other urban centres, and there was no contact with four of the families after the follow-up period.

Angen (2000) also discusses the challenges of member-checking within the paradigm that knowledge is not static; it is dynamic and names how this can alter results if people change their minds about their perceptions over time, as well as how the influences of memory and other experiences may alter a participant's recollection of an experience. This is one reason why member checking was done with the youth during the interview processes. It helped to ensure that I understood their personal truth was shared correctly.

While this data is representative of the group at the ABTU during the time of the research, there may be limitations to transferability to other brief treatment units or other groups of youth.

Data analysis method. As cited by Hycner (1985), Keen states “phenomenology cannot be reduced to a cookbook set of instructions” (p. 279) and therefore there isn’t one particular method set out to analyse data. However, Hycner (1985) and Van Manen (2006) offer a reasonable guideline for analyzing interviews while recognizing that it is the data that needs to guide the process as well, much like the process of phenomenology itself.

In order to analyse this data I have, as Van Manen (2006) describes, recovered “themes that are embodied” (p. 78) within the data about the meaning behind these experiences. A theme is “the experience of focus, of meaning, of point” (Van Manen, 2006, p 87). This was completed without the use of software technology.

I began the process by transcribing the interviews in full and listening to them three times, with headphones in order to ensure accuracy and ensure a full scope of understanding of the wholeness of the material. I then went through the written field notes and transcribed them onto the computer for coding purposes. Both interviews and field notes were line-by-line number coded.

Next, with an approach of openness to emerging themes, I read the transcripts line by line and completed a first order interpretation (Neuman, 2006). When a theme emerged from the transcripts I assigned it a colour code and attached a corresponding colour sticker to the line in the transcript, then entered the transcript and line code into the codebook with the corresponding colour.

As a second order interpretation (Neuman, 2006), I retyped the transcripts by means of compiling the corresponding lines within the colour-coded broader themes. I then reread the material within each thematic context to identify if there were any sub-themes by looking for the meaning behind them.

Since the intention of this research is to capture all experiences, it is intended that all experiences are represented in the discussion and findings chapters. While some meanings were shared and repeated by the participants, others may have only been captured once. All of them are articulated in this research.

Chapter 4

Results

While these data have been divided into themes for presentation purposes, one must recognize that some of these themes overlap and in the true nature of holism, they are all interconnected. I urge the readers to understand that this is a reflection of life, and as such it cannot for the sake of even research be broken down and compartmentalized neatly.

A collection of all of the raw quotes from the participants follows the ‘Description of the program’. These quotes have been organized according to themes in order to provide the reader with a broader scope of the voice of the youth. These quotes capture the natural language of the youth, and have been transcribed to reflect this. A few quotes have been added from my observations to make some points that were relevant to the experience; however, I did not include all of them as this research is effectively about the voice of the youth. For identification, my quotes are marked with an asterisks “*” on each end of the quote. A discussion of these data follows in Chapter 5.

Description of the program. In order to provide some context, a description of the program and its structure will give an informed comprehension of the experience.

All sessions lasted about two hours and were offered on the same day each week. It was important they begin mid-morning before the bright, hot scorching heat of the afternoon sun had time to show its face and not too early so the youth would have time to awaken to the day. This provided a comfortable temperature and light level to work in. Each session was usually begun with the youth and facilitators gathering together to share a story, sometimes from a book, sometimes personal experiences and always outdoors, whenever possible. This was followed by a trip down to the gardens to explore what changes were observable from the previous week with anticipation and lots of questions such as: Had the seeds popped through the earth yet?, were there blossoms, or fruit? Had the deer had a feast? Had a squirrel buried its treasures? Often the youth's curiosity guided the discussion. Lots of wondering happened in this place, wondering about the dirt, how it came to be, about the insects and what their role in the garden is, the plants and how a seed knows how to be a particular plant. We also discussed at length, roots. Different kinds of roots, why they might be useful and then we reflected on our own roots as individuals and as human beings. The gardens, the environment offered rich learning in a metaphorical way about us, our interconnectedness. The earth taught us many lessons when we needed them and when we were ready to ask and search for answers. Sometimes she taught us hard lessons, like when our plants died from lack of care, other times about beauty, like the beautiful white blossoms of fruit trees set against a strikingly clear cerulean blue sky. Activities then followed in relation to the environmental needs and some form of planned craft or cooking activity. Did the earth need watering, weeding, fertilizing? As a group we'd determine the needs and as a group we tended the earth and the plants. As a group we worked on activities that required us to work towards a common goal, such as building a willow room in the forest, or as individuals we made crafts such as driftwood wind chimes. All of these activities were guided by the medicine wheel teachings. Each week a quadrant of the medicine wheel was enlisted for its teachings. The medicine wheel teaches us many things about life, that all things are connected. The following are just a few that were used to guide the horticultural program; "The physical world consists of four sacred elements: earth, air, fire and water. There are four groups of other-than-human persons: 1) plants, 2) animals, 3) birds and 4) fish and things that crawl" (Auger & Pedri, 2009, p. 20). We would look to these teachings as guidance in developing weekly themes through the program. The program itself worked in a circular nature through the quadrants of the medicine wheel and also through a rhythm of four throughout the session. A story, an outdoor exploration, tending to ourselves and the earth and an activity related to the quadrant of the medicine wheel. This of course was all quite loosely delivered as the interest level and curiosity of the youth, as well as listening and paying heed to the weather and plants helped shape each session.

Overall thoughts on research method.

"I don't know what I liked about it, I just like, ya…. (You just enjoyed it? It felt good?)*... ya.*

"I like that you are teaching us and you you let us take pictures with our cameras."

"Uh, I did like how you guys told us to take pictures of what we did like and what we didn't like"

"I took a picture of myself through the shadow cause I thought I was looking cool"

"I took a picture by my window…because it was on the top, like high"

"I had a fun time taking pictures"

"and she's having a good time, we're taking pictures."

"I jumped, actually took a picture in flight. So I jumped off the frigin thingy and then she's like AHHHH(animated, laughing)"

"(name) flash shot. She was making a funny face and she was like, don't take a picture of me. And I was like smile, smile big and she was like (funny face) and then I took a picture of her really quick. Flash shot!"

*"*it seems having a camera is novel and they are really excited to have the cameras."**

"note to self: cameras need to be taken away at break time in order to ensure photos stay on task"

"it appears that when they are really engaged they forget to take pictures."

"having the cameras has been really meaningful for them to get pictures of themselves and their friends. In some ways it has allowed them to have fun in an unanticipated way. It either* *takes away from the programming as they are so involved in taking pictures of themselves and looking cool, or they are so engaged in the program that they forget to take the pictures"

Direct garden and nature experiences

Likes, dislikes and the sensory experience.

"*okay that's the lemon balm.....I was thinking about the smell and the taste…Mmm.....I can still smell it in the picture mmm.....just kidding"*

"It felt nice….like when you have the fresh breeze over you and the sun's on you and you get to take pictures with other people"

"Well it really smelled good because I could smell the nature coming in and it was so relaxing and it was so just standing there."

"Ya so I I just wanted to take a picture of this tall cool plant because it smelled like mint" (Figure 8)

"*well I liked the white flowers there….I liked the smell…that's why I took a picture of it.*"

"OH! This is the lemon balm. I tasted it just now, it was really good!"

"I wanted to take a picture of you guys looking at the corn. That's what I like about the picture. And I like corn".

"that's the mint right there. Mmmmmmm"

"it was strong…it's put in gum and stuff"

"I like how it's in the garden"

"I just wanted to take a picture of it because it was pretty"

"I liked how they were standing by the yellow flowers" (Figure 7)

"it's about the apple tree…um, I really love apples and especially crab apples."

"I was uh feeling great because um the first time I heard that that was an apple tree, at first I thought that was a sage or something tree, and um, so I got all excited when I heard that, well I love apples, as in in apple pie. (laughing)."

"It's about the uh small little garden, the um, the garden bed or something like that. Um, well, I was kind of uh feeling uh, right in the middle a little bit on the good side, more on the good side. Um but I was when I took this picture I was thinking it would be a beautiful picture, and also I did like it."(Figure 3)

"the whole garden and um I did feel a little bit um good seeing it"

"I didn't want any part of the picture tooken of. That's the reason…ya the peonies"

"Mmmmm. They're planting flowers. Ya and we're having a fun time too."

"is about a real turtle crawling around the yard..yea…because turtles are cool!"

"it's about mint!...ya I tasted it five times already…Ya, I tasted it another five times…ya, just like thirty minutes ago."

"Uh it's about a tree growing with the whatever these things are called. …the blossoms….apple tree"

"um I like that you guys are teaching us about the garden, and you guys are really fun to have"

"There's a frog in that picture...I liked it"

"a turtle…in the bush…We went exploring in the bush"(Figure 13)

"and the bleeding heart, after we planted it in the ground"

"yes, I love animal life. Wild life."

"and my dear friend…Jimmy the groundhog"

"because that the carrots tasted sooooo good (smiles and laughs)"

"pulling, me pulling out the weeds. And I had so fun about it and it was really fun so I took a picture of it" (Figure 9)

"I took a picture of a lemon, a lemon….A lemon balm because I took a picture of it cause it smells good."

"an apple tree (smiles and giggles)…apple blossoms…it's nice and beautiful"

"because it's strawberries, I love strawberries."

"And the chocolate thing...the chocolate mint…it does like taste chocolate"

"and the other um mint thing….I don't know, it tastes good"

"Peas…I love peas"

When asked how it felt in the garden: "*Um it felt REALLLLY good, like smelling it and just "ahhhhhh" just smelling "ahhhhh" and just mmm tasting it"*

"I was feeling really good cause my favorite food is corn. I made you guys pose… And it was so nice taking it and just feeling the corn and smelling it. Mhm and it was really yummy too, eating it."

"The mint I really liked, but down here it looks like eyeballs are poking out too, so I really just liked the mint, just smelling it, just tasting it, just feeling it. I really liked tasting it"

"Lemon Balm! I really liked tasting it, it was really good, also I liked just like feeling it and smelling it, it was soo good….Well I don't really like lemons…..but when I just smelled it, well usually when I just eat something I smell it first, because it's like a habit because if I, if I don't smell it, if it doesn't smell good to me I'm like no thank you, but if it smells good, I'm like, Okay! Can I please have some."

"Well I really like the white flower cause it smelled good and it was really nice feeling it and just touching it"

"it was just really nice feeling it and letting roll through your fingers….the compost"

Importance of humour

"(teacher name) …her being funny."

"Me (name)! There doing something crazy though!" (laughs/smiles)

"well he was making the antler look like a moose antler that's why,…it was kinda funny, ya."(Figure 11)

Social experience

"(laughs) *I took a picture of you weeding because it was fun weeding with you."(Figure 1)*

"(staff) she's all like (imitates a chipmunk) (laughs)*"*

"oh ya, I wanted to take a picture of you guys looking 'member? I wanted to take a picture of you guys lookin at the corn. That's what I like about this picture. And I like the corn."

"me and you, um because you are teaching us about the garden, I liked it, yaaaa"

"Um, I liked that Judi was teaching us too"

"um I like that you guys are teaching us about the garden and you guys are really fun to have"

"mhm, and we went exploring in the bush, just kidding"

"that I liked you when you visited. I like the stuff you do here."

"and friends…uh huh…(nods and giggles)*"*

"um I also felt a little bit good that um things need teamwork"

"They're planting flowers. Ya and we're having a fun time too…my best friend that I miss is (name)"

"Wit my best pal….we're two guys, that's all"

"mmhm, my two best friends forever"

"a group of kids, stuff, mmm, happy"

"it's about my best friend, me and him took the picture."

"Me and (name) are taking a picture of me, an me and her. I took a picture of me and her and I took a picture of me and her. ….Everybody was happy"

"(Name) laughing while he was planting (smiles and laughs)" (Figure 12)

"(name) never giving up on taking up the weeds"

"yes, Working with everyone."

"I took it because I like my class and I like my teacher"

"um I also felt a little bit good that um things need teamwork"

"mhm I liked how people worked on that rock and put that little sun there."

Learning and meaning

"I was supposed to be holding a daisy, but then I moved my hand again….I liked the way it looked"

"Oh Ya! Seeds...they came from the daisy" (Figure 14)

"I liked the really really really nice plant. It looked like it was kinda dying though.

…I was really upset and I was thinking oh my gosh we haven't been like taking care of this thing, so we should maybe water it."

"oh, and we found a big giant worm. It was huge…It's his home…and he lives in the dirt with anyone and he tries to find food for his family...yayayya"

"yes the land is the animals home and the plants are where the animals lives and we planted lots of plants"

"Um, I enjoyed her from telling us about the garden and letting us pick some of the peppermint stuff and sniffing it and yes, thank you."

"What I learned about the earth…need need to be wate, watered everyday…. These are just all the dead plants. Weren't getting taken care of enough".

"uh a pumpkin…it's it's um, because it's bad….it died. Because they didn't have enough water" (Figure 20)

"Well I learned more about the land and what things are good, I mean um, it's meaningful to me because without the garden we wouldn't really, without the plants we wouldn't be really healthy".

When asked directly if there was anything you learned about yourself or the land during these activities or about your identity. The response is *"No"*

"*I took a picture of this it's a love thing cause it reminds me of my dad and how much I love him"*

"love back there that made me think of my dad too"

"um, Lillies. And that's my favourite, my mom's fave, favourite flower…..ya, and it's mine too…of lots of fun things we used to do...you know at the pow wow thing um, at the cascades I think, ya know there, that spinny thing, the chair spinny thing…and they reminds me of my mom, cause she always pushed me and I almost peed my pants (laughing) cause I was laughing too much" (Figure 22)

"Peony helps the ant, the ant helps the peony and the peony helps the ant."

"the strawberries that made it through the winter" (Figure 15)

"*Being in the bush…..It was fun…..It brings back memories…..in my reserve……I always used to go to the bush with my grandparents. When they would go cut wood and then play in the snow or play in the bush.*"

"A frog that we caught bouncing around the grass…and then someone, then I ran to go get the cup and then we put it in there….for a while and then we put it back on the rock…because it belongs to the wild." (Figure 21)

"It was that freshening breath thing….whatever that, that um tree that like once you put it in your mouth it smells like uh like it's a tree that you like, it smells like uh toothpaste…mouthwash and uh, it smells like a mint gum and I took a picture of it because it smells good it tastes good it's very nice, it's "the Woods! It's the deers home and it's the animals home!"

"*and there's a caterpillar…because I like how the leaves are chewed by the caterpillar because that's their food."*

"I like that you guys are composting….it turns it into dirt" (Figure 19)

"I like how the deer are living in them and the snakes and everything."

**"I am amazed to see (name) so focused and attentive in planting the corn. He was so methodic and took great care to ensure the seeds were planted just right"* (Figure 17)*

"Today we had a significant moment as (name) was able to plant a blanket flower next to the flowers that were her mom's favorite. The blanket flower was a reminder of "tucking in" and caretaking. It was a touching moment and a happy way for her to remember her mom. She took such care in planting the blanket flower today"

"(name) had an amazing breakthrough today. Once being scared of bugs but then being able to handle them, understanding their purpose and the contribution to the earth became fascinating for him."

"today (name) was able to face a fear of spiders. As we went to the bush he complained almost to the point of tears that he did not want to do it because of the bugs and spiders. Instead, once* *he participated in the willow building, he completely forgot his fear and his disposition changed."

"I just took that picture cause I was trying to make it look pretty and I liked this picture and it looked really nice so I just rather took a picture of it" (Figure 5)

"and there's another apple blossom. It looks nice…and I love apples"

"Sky, trees….Cause it looks beautiful."(Figure 6)

"Um it was a closeup of ants moving around on the peonies and helping out the peonies basically." (Figure 18)

"I helped uh put some of the soil on and put on the uh what are those things called?....the mulch…to stop roo or prevent roots..oh weeds..I mean ya weeds" (Figure 10)

"When I look at this picture it just reminds me of the flower I planted a long time ago at my old house…it was a tulip….Someone dug it up and threw it…..Well when my dad brought it and gave me this I thought oh my gosh maybe I should go plant it right now and then I watered it and I knew it only needed one cup of water, so I just gave it one cup of water…..So then I just said oh my gosh thank you daddy and I hugged him to death."

"I felt excited…Carrots! I finally realized those were carrots when Judi told me that it was carrots" (Figure 4)

"The beans that were so thoughtfully planted and cared for through the spring and then eaten by the deer seem to be making a reappearance "and "The perennial strawberry plants survived a cold winter only to be nibbled at by the deer throughout the spring, yet some survived much to the joy of the kids".

"took a picture of the crops that we planted"(Figure 16)

Cultural relevance

"*The Harvest Feast…Well, all our family coming and just spending time with them, uh, having fun, um also going to like like playing outside and showing our families and making the whatever you, you said we had to stand on when I caught my auntie.*"

"This one is about the corn….I took a picture of the corn because um it was growing and we can eat it for the September harvest feast we are going to have later" (Figure 24)

"I see two eyes of a frog. (smiling)*…Well I liked it because I'm always happy to see the Creator, the Creator's living things that he has made and we should all thank him and ya….and what the Creator has planned for us to see"*

"It's about us, we found an earth worm for our garden, which is really special because earth worms, they're really good for a garden and for us right now it was like a gift from the Creator for our garden, and we should all thank him. Now, our crops should be living better" (Figure23)

"Well I learned more about the land and what things are good, I mean um, it's meaningful to me because without the garden we wouldn't really, without the plants we wouldn't be really healthy"

"um the bleeding hearts…. in the garden…. in the north"(Figure 10)

When asked what was recalled around the history of squash and the three sisters, the reply was.

"I don't believe in that"

"I see two eyes of a frog. (smiling)*…Well I liked it because I'm always happy to see the Creator, the Creator's living things that he has made and we should all thank him and ya….and what the Creator has planned for us to see"*

"It's about us, we found an earth worm for our garden, which is really special because earth worms, they're really good for a garden and for us right now it was like a gift from the Creator for our garden, and we should all thank him. Now, our crops should be living better" (Figure 23)

"Um pumpkin I remember that you said they're a traditional plant"

"So cause its part of our cultural, culture so like I was like, oh, that's an eagle so I'm going to take a part of it because the animals live in the forest and the Eagles fly above us… It really really feels good and like and I'm just feeling really awesome inside."

Horticulture related activities.

Likes and dislikes

"It looks fancy!...sticks, the chair…Table" (Figure 26)

"We were taking a picture and we were like making um, we were making wood, wood, what's that called again?...the Wood wind chimes, and we were having fun making them but then (name) she, I took a picture of her because she had a to use a nail to get it over with. …it was awesome. Just kidding. It was kinda we, I felt sorry for her cause she was mad."(Figure 25)

"Yes! Making our thingies! I don't remember the name….yes the wind chimes. We used buttons we used beaver chopped wood too. Mhm and string (nods head) Ya! I like it!...ya and I liked how we had to like string it to hold it like."

"um (laughing) I took a picture of (name) nailing something, But I got him going like this…it's like he's posing."

"This is the right one? Yep. Um. I like how we did the weeding, mhm (makes motion of weaving), The weaving! Yes!, Ya um, I liked how me and Judi were doing it."

"Okay. I like how we're working on a Fort for more and we're gonna put something on top of it."

"Yep. I took a picture of the fish because it is really neat. I don't know how someone could do that, like that is so neat, so I just wanted to take a picture cause it's really nice and I like how they did their (inaudible) activity."

"Um, me and Judi and (name) worked on it. Uh and we just thought it would be a cute door, but the door was at the front under the rainbow."

"yes, we are making the invitations for the harvest festival…ya I liked doing it…yes everyone making their own invitation for their family." (Figure 27)

"of the cards…mhm…I liked, I liked the way the picture looked in the background."

"that I enjoyed that book...yep the Mishomis book….the one with the mouse and the turtle… to get something at the bottom… put it on the turtle's shell" (Figure28)

"I like how we read this book. It was really nice. That's all….He was trying to look for someone special…He asked a bear and he asked um, uh…yes he was a special person and that the wolf was."(Figure 30)

"um well because I was so happy that I won at something….(laughing) *It was fun spitting seeds. The bad think was I never actually practiced.* (laughs)"

"spitting! Uh gumballs! (animated funny) *...yes , sunflower seeds.. Have fun! (Yells)" (Figure 29)*

"Hmmm, you're reading the story to all the youth….gray wolf story…mmm and it was good being with Michelle….that's all I got to say…I liked it."

"you're reading to us guys….um, nothing, I don't know, that was boring."

"my awards….seed spitting (smiles), (emphatic) *Yesssss….."*

"this picture is significant because earlier that day I was not interested at all at her workshop….. but I did make an effort and I did appreciate my big structure." (Figure 2)

"I did not like the story, I'm too old for stories. Period….Yes it was boring…ya, I don't care but, I'd rather have someone else tell me stories, something that they actually know, they're not just reading from a storybook."

"the kids had a blast today with seed-spitting. The attitude that we were met with in the morning dissipated as they engaged playfully in the contest"

"two youth were totally disengaged from the Mishomis story of the great flood today. I'm not sure if it's that it's one of our first times together or if storytelling is not their thing. The other kids liked it and were totally engaged."

"I'm amazed after doing the interview with (Name) that he even got the story, his behaviour during it was so restless, that it has taught me that sometimes we don't all learn and focus in the same way. He is an example of one who is paying attention and assuming the deeper meaning with an unconventional way."

"today it appeared that (name) was not going to join in and was firmly making non-verbal demonstrations of her resistance by actively not paying attention to the story, and challenging Judi about her age and alluding to the grouchiness of menopausal women. However Judi met this with absolute acceptance of her interest in engagement and showed her that she still accepted her by allowing her to engage when she was ready and allowing her to warm up to the program. Judi then asked for her assistance, at which point (name) helped. (Name) then actively participated in the building and even took on a healthy leadership role within the group."

The importance of humour

"looking at you guys make it, um (laughing)*…I always make you laugh"*

"He was trying to be a chipmunk, (smiling, laughs)

"(laughs) *He was trying to copy (name) He tried making himself look like a chipmunk with a peanut on his hand, or a nut"* (smiles and laughs)

"spitting! Uh gumballs (animated and funny) *Yes sunflower seeds! Have fun*!"(Figure 29)

"I jumped, actually took a picture in flight. So I jumped off the frigin thingy and then she's like AHHHHHH!" (animated and laughing)

"(Name) Flash shot. She was making a funny face and she was like, don't take a picture of me. And I was like, smile, smile big and she was like (funny face) *and then I took a picture of her really quick. Flash shot".*

"Um, (laughing) *I took a picture of (name) nailing something. But I got him going like this."*

Social experience

"Well I really liked when I got to screw it on and Judi was helping me, um I also liked when we put the buttons on when you were helping me"

"*It was awesome! Just kidding. It was kinda we, I felt sorry for her cause she was mad."* (Figure 25)

"I like how (name) made the antler. ...it was really fun yes!"

"um, I liked how me and Judi were doing it. ...I like how we're working on a Fort for more and we're gonna put something on top of it".

"(Staff name), and Michelle and (name) are making a rainbow which is my idea but they kept working on it. SO, I like how I came up with that.

"And I like how (name) was holding the wood for Judi, and I like how they were working together as a team"

"I like how Judi was pasting on this flower thing on hers so, so it goes to her boss to come."

"I liked how everyone was doing their own work and not copying everyone"

"um, I liked how (name) did hers she was just gluing it an pasting it"

*"and this is Michelle, she's trying to act cool too, with all the other youth. (*laughing*)…and my teacher"*

*"(*stutters*) and I knew he was getting mad so I took the picture."*

"when he was mad. Cause I touched his uh camera. And took one picture and he didn't notice."

"and I like how (name) was holding the wood for Judi and I like how they were working together as a team"

"Making the wind charms. I still have mine and I'm probably going to take it home and put it on my own tree."

"when the wind blows it's all like "do do do do" you know what it sounded like".

Learning and meaning

*"This picture is significant because earlier that day I was not interested at all at her workshop ….but I did make an effort and I did appreciate my big structure."(*Figure 2*)*

"I'm very experience with my culture and when I learn my culture I don't really wanna learn from someone who hasn't really actually experience it first-hand so I did not learn anything from my culture with you…because reading it from a book is not the same as learning from someone who has experience, who has been there, who has been done that, done this. No offence".

"it's about winning or losing….it doesn't matter….win or lose or win"

*"you teaching, uh doesn't matter who ya are, or where you're from, so or which culture you are to" *(*we are all important*)**

*"I like how we read this book. It was really nice. That's all…He was trying to look for someone special….he asked a bear and he asked um, uh, …yes he was a special person and that the wolf was" (*Figure 30*)*

"The stick, I found a stick that I made that looks like an antler….and in real life it doesn't look much, but in this picture it does. It looks a lot like an antler. It doesn't really look like an antler because, ya, if you come close it, if you look here it looks way more white….ya that's something I enjoyed"

Cultural relevance

"Ya, and it was really awesome to see everyone going and going and trying, taking their strength and just trying to get it. So they were really brave. And the muskrat was really really brave too because he actually got it but when I heard he got it I was really happy, but when I heard the news of Haiti I was really sad and I was like oh my gosh we have to get some money because at my school we had to raise money right and um I was the first one to put the money in the jar. Cause I had a tooney, a loonie and a five dollar bill, but I asked my dad for a twenty dollar bill, so he gave it to me and I was like, I said, thank you and then I asked him for lots of money and then I asked him for lots of money and he gave it and I kept on donating"

"The Thunderbird….it looks neat…I don't know I just liked it because it had the four colours on there."

"I like how (name) was holding her nose and I liked her dimples there and I like I just, smelling the nature and smelling the animals, except not their poop, and it was really nice just seeing hers and how it looks and how that bear is just right there. And I heard an Eagle…..Ya, It was really really nice. And I had a bear on mine too…Well when I heard the eagle I was like oh my god I haven't heard that in a long time. And I was just feeling, I was soo happy and I and once I heard that, I was like, that's part of my culture…Well I felt really really good and I felt proud because I hadn't heard that in a really long time."

"the turtle back. The turtle sacrificed himself so he could put the earth back. Right, okay that was from the that the great flood story too right?"

"ya, I don't care but, I'd rather have someone else tell me stories, something that they actually know, they're not just reading from a storybook."

"This is a picture of my spirit thunderbird. I like my spirit from what it done here…. Thank you" (Figure 31)

*"that I enjoyed that book…yep the Mishomis book….the one with the mouse and the turtle… to get something at the bottom… put it on the turtle's shell" (*Figure 28)

"um, I like that picture um…" in reference to the Mishomis book.

"I like the eagle, the thunder... the thunderbird"

"I was honored today when one youth told me that she did not want to learn culture from someone who doesn't know it first hand. This is significant to the program, but at the same time there have been youth who have appreciated learning about their culture from myself and Judi. It makes me think then that careful thought must be paid to where, when and how it may be appropriate to include."

"when the wind blows it's all like "do do do do" you know what it sounded like".

Cooking and food activities.

Likes and dislikes

"And I liked the soup and I liked the peas, and um liked the, and I really liked the ice cream and the apple pie and the pumpkin pie. It was so good."

"Kay. Um I was like cooking and we were making cookies…ya we were making uh flour and the recipe to make pumpkin pie…pumpkin cookies."

"I was tooking, I was taking a picture of when we baked our punkin cookies but it didn't really turn out well because it's just like so dark."

"This is the mix that we made…in the bowl...okay…stirring it, ya that was fun"

"I wanted to take a picture of the cookies, they were punkin cookies….that were really good. Ya I liked them. I ate, I ate four cookies of them."

"that's a picture of um, that's a picture of the cracked egg I cracked. ...I, I like to crack the egg usually, it's fun. Um ya, we were making pumpkin cookies…Good. They were good and soft….they weren't like peanut butter cookies…um pumpkin I remember you said they're a traditional plant."

"Mmmm, ya, I really liked that salad."

*"that's of cookie dough! (*big smile*)"*

*"yep, I like to eat it as well. I like doing the cooking but I like it when it's raw….. It was good, sugar (*big grin*)"*

"me and my best friend…cooking"

*"I liked cooking, I enjoyed that very much" (*Figure 32*)*

"The finished product, eating the cookie, I had three cookie, four cookie that day (laughs)"

"but I did enjoy your artistic side where we got to dos me art and cook and have that fun experience"

Social experience

*"you were cooking, you were checking the cookies I think. Ya, okay and you were talking away too" (*laughs*)*

"Um well (name) is a quiet boy, he doesn't say much but um well, that that when I took that he was very happy, he was being himself he was letting loose and smiling"

"oh letting (name) stir the cookies and everybody in on shot so that they, everybody was joining in and taking time and accepting."

"and she's having a good time, we're taking pictures"

*"there's (staff) being in the Opera. Dun dun dun, yes. (*staff's*) sad face or ghostly face"*

Learning and meaning

*"Oh, letting (name) stir the cookies and everybody in one shot so that, they, everybody was joining in and taking time and accepting." (*Figure 33)

"Vanilla, vanilla brings back your memories of cooking with your family or Kokum."

"consideration and caring was shown by the sharing of the egg. Selflessness and a sense of camaraderie was demonstrated today"

"ya I learned how to share"

"the thing I liked about her is that she let me crack the egg….and the she did something else instead"

Chapter 5

Discussion

"When you connect to the soil, your soul starts to heal and you become productive in life."

~Millie Richard-DaCosta H.T.T. (Green, 2008)

Beginning from the beginning: preparing the soil. *"We are part of the earth and it is part of us ... What befalls the earth befalls all the sons of the earth." Chief Seattle, 1852* (United States Department of Agriculture. Natural Resources Conservation Service)

The overall experience of the youth who were engaged in this program was one of enjoyment, engagement and relevance. The youth were actively engaged for the most part, but we found that despite their interest and our reminders, no one tended the garden between weekly sessions. This led to overgrowth of weeds and lack of watering. Regardless, much of the garden seemed to thrive and we were able to harvest delicious carrots, peas, radishes, corn, lettuce, beans and strawberries by late summer.

One significant impact to the gardens this year was the newly planned annual closure of the ABTU facility for the month of July; right in the middle of the growing season. Evidently, during this time some of the plants did not survive. When we came back in August, while many plants were still alive, they needed some serious attention to help them produce the food that we needed for the fall harvest feast. This also raised concerns in terms of how the youth arriving in August would perceive and respond to the garden. A lush green garden versus an untended green space would certainly impact interest levels.

While the youth were sometimes reluctant to get out into the garden at the beginning of each session, for the most part, once there they found they were having fun with each other, learning about their world and enjoying a laugh, all while gaining a sense of accomplishment and success.

What became interesting was the fact that in between sessions the helping hands of staff would sometimes find their way into the garden, which reinforced the sense that the garden was a group effort, appreciated and enjoyed by all. It seemed to foster a sense of community. As with all life, there was no ownership of it, it was a communal, shared space.

Importance of the Facilitator. A common theme linking through all of the activities emerged from the youth's photographs and their interviews regarding the nature of the relationship with the facilitators. The results of Alexander, Wales-North and Hendren (1995) also reveal the importance of the influence of the Master Gardener. In terms of social connectedness in the garden, the facilitator played a key role in developing a comfortable, safe and therapeutic environment. When describing photos with Judi or myself in them, responses such as "*I took it because I like my class and I like my teacher", "that I liked you when you visited...I like the stuff you do here", "me and you, um because you are teaching us about the garden, I liked it, yaaaa", "(laughs) I took a picture of you weeding because it was fun weeding with you" (Figure 1), "Um, I liked that Judi was teaching us too"* and *"I like that you guys are teaching us about the garden and you guys are really fun to have"* all reflect the importance of this relationship for them. There are a couple of ways of understanding this. First, it demonstrates the importance and relevance of what Carl Rogers refers to as "psychological safety" (Fodor & Steinnrotter, 1998, p.236). Two significant tenets of Rogers' psychological safety means that:

> the immediate social environment accepts the person as having unconditional worth,
> Second, the individual who is in an authority relation
> to the person under consideration understands that person empathetically,

> showing an intuitive capacity to assume the person's perspective, values,
> and attitudes.
> (Fodor & Roffe-Steinrotter, 1998, p. 236).

Of note, Hewson (2004) also states the importance of a Rogerian approach in his horticultural therapy practice. As Rogerian therapy is person-centred it just looks at healing the self. As referred to in Chapter 2, Duran (2006, p.4) posits that healing is likely better achieved with Anishinabek population through a less individualistic approach. It is through this lens that therapeutic horticulture as a healing method holds potential, because the focus is not so much on the individual but that which is outside them, the environment and the group. As previously stated in Chapter 2, therapeutic horticulture does not label individual problems or define goals and desired outcomes. A positive regard is espoused for all life and therefore embraces interconnected thinking and an Anishinabek worldview. Is this how therapeutic horticulture can be a tool that is used in healing with Anishinabek youth? Does it connect people to each other on the level of human beings and to the land? Does it contribute to acculturation? Although it appears there is no one right answer at this time, it seems both of these ideas inform us of the critical need to pay special care and attention to the nature of the facilitator's approach to leadership in a therapeutic relationship with Anishinabek youth.

Comments such as "*I like that you guys are teaching us about the garden, and you guys are really fun to have*" demonstrated the youth's recognition and appreciation of a facilitator who seems to have connected with them. A number of youth took pictures of myself and Judi, as the facilitators, commenting on their photos with "*me and you, um because you are teaching us about the garden, I liked it"* and "*Um, I liked that Judi was teaching us too"* and *"I like that you guys are teaching us about the garden and you guys are really fun to have".*

Of significance, in the first day of the program with the second group, it was observed that one youth exhibited distrust and defiance towards Judi, refusing to take part initially. However this was short-lived as Judi earned her trust and demonstrated unconditional positive regard, working from a place of respect and acceptance of the youth's interest and engagement level. The activity also likely played an important role in this relationship transformation as the opportunity to "build rapport without confrontation" (Hewson, 2004, p. 19) is inherent in the nature of therapeutic horticulture. It also likely appealed to the youth because it naturally excluded direct eye-contact (Duran, 2006), as hammering nails into willow demands that attention be paid to the activity. Once this relationship was established the youth was able to engage freely and fully in the program, often taking on a leadership role and actively participating. As she states "*This picture is significant because earlier that day I was not interested at all at her workshop*" (Figure 2).

From casual "in-the-moment" conversations with staff at the ABTU during the therapeutic horticulture program, as well as from observation of delivering the program in the classroom prior to the beginning of the research, perhaps of equal interest, were the observable challenges in behaviour and social dynamics indoors. They seemed to be less obvious as the youth became engaged in the gardens and activities.The reasons for this were not studied, however the findings of McGuinn and Relf (2001) and Han (2009) reveal a similar observation but with a different population of youth. The program itself allowed for both active and passive participation. There was always something for youth to do regardless of their energy level, capabilities or attitude in the moment.

"*I like how it's in the garden*" and *"I don't know what I liked about it, I just liked, (it) ya"* suggest they really liked the program. Another youth discussed how he felt when he took a picture of the vegetable garden*, "It's about the uh small little garden, the um, the garden bed or something like that. Um, well, I was kind of uh feeling uh, right in the middle a little bit on the good side, more on the good side. Um but I was when I took this picture I was thinking it would be a beautiful picture, and also I did like it" (Figure 3).*

The main themes have been divided into three different activities, namely, their experiences in the garden and with the natural environment, the horticulture-related crafts and the cooking activities. The data further demonstrates subthemes within each category regarding what they liked and didn't like, what was meaningful or learned for them, the social relevance for them and the importance of humour in their interactions. Culture also became an important sub-theme with mixed perceptions regarding the immersion of Anishinabek culture offered in different ways throughout the program. Aspects of Anishinabek culture were sometimes brought into the activities by the youth themselves and sometimes by the facilitators. Again to reiterate, the theme divisions provided for the purposes of analysis and discussion are not this disconnected in real life.

What also came from the data was the relevance of their experience with the actual photovoice method. While this isn't necessarily relevant to the horticultural experience, it impacted how the data was captured and may inform future studies interested in using this method in the future.

The garden and nature experiences.

The very nature of a therapeutic horticulture program can engage all of the senses: taste, touch, smell, sound, and sight. Further to this, it provides many learning opportunities to explore self, life, relationships and their interconnectedness. The photos and interview discussions capture the participants sense of wonder, of life outside themselves.

Engaging the senses. The delight and amazement in the experience of tasting the herbs and plants for the first time are evident in comments such as "*OH! This is the lemon balm. I tasted it just now, it was really good!*" and "*that's the mint right there. Mmmmmmm*". The spirits of the children were high when the sense of taste was engaged. "*I was uh feeling great because um the first time I heard that that was an apple tree….. and um, so I got all excited when I heard that, well I love apples, as in in apple pie (laughing)*." And just as exhuberantly others state, "*And the chocolate thing..the chocolate mint…it does like taste chocolate", "and the other um mint thing….I don't know, it tastes good" and* "*it's about mint!...ya I tasted it five times already…Ya, I tasted it another five times…ya, just like thirty minutes ago."*

Vegetables were tasted fresh out of the earth for the first time for many. In amazement they pulled long orange tap roots out of the dirt and couldn't believe they had grown the exact same thing as one could find in the grocery store. The connection to the land, as well as a sense of personal success was exemplified in pulling one carrot from the ground. One of the participant's smiles and laughs as she comments that she took the picture "*because that the carrots tasted sooooo good"* and *"I felt excited…Carrots! I finally realized those were carrots when Judi told me that it was carrots" (Figure 4).* Taking pictures of things they could relate to in real life, and that they really enjoyed was meaningful for them, "*it's about the apple tree…um, I really love apples and especially crab apples."* These were foods they ate every day from a grocery store, but there was a level of fascination in seeing them develop and grow in real life.

One participant reflects on the freshness of food right out of the garden: "B*ecause they're fresh out of the garden, when you eat them and they're small and sometimes you get to keep them more and eat them…Yaaaa…and they were soooooo good".*

The youth were able to relate to the food that ends up on their dinner plates and therefore find a connection to the earth. "*I wanted to take a picture of you guys looking at the corn. That's what I like about the picture. And I like corn"* and "*And I liked the soup and I liked the peas, and um I liked the, and I really liked the ice cream and the apple pie and the pumpkin pie. It was so good."* These youth are reacting to an innate connection to the land that they are feeling.

The evidence of the outdoors being an inspiration and offering opportunities for appreciation of beauty in nature was a repeated observation. How incredible for these participants to have the opportunity to be in a short term treatment facility and have the opportunity to be enfolded and nurtured in the nature experience, a place that has always been the home of Anishinabek peoples. Some of the youth reflected this in their photos such as "*I just took that picture cause I was trying to make it look pretty and I liked this picture and it looked really nice so I just rather took a picture of it" (Figure 5)* and "an apple tree *(smiles and giggles)…apple blossoms…it's nice and beautiful*". This participant captures it beautifully with "*Sky, trees….Cause it looks beautiful*" (Figure 6).

Some of the youth were evidently inspired by the strong, inviting colours of the flowers, *"I liked how they were standing by the yellow flowers" (Figure 7) and "I was supposed to be holding a daisy, but then I moved my hand again….I liked the way it looked", "I just wanted to take a picture of it because it was pretty".* What these examples demonstrate though is the fascination with the environment, with nature. As Alexander, Wales-North and Hendren (1995) identify, the pleasant experiences, were also appreciated and relevant with this group.

Their senses were fully engaged in this program. Some days we could hear the birds cawing in the background, other days we listened to the wind in the tall poplars. Then again, at times, we had "Lady Gaga" playing in the background. While not really captured through photovoice, these were experiences that the youth had during the program. We heard the chattering of the squirrels in the forest, the peck peck pecking of a woodpecker, the crunching of the leaves and twigs underfoot. Sometimes these sounds were distant in the background. These are ways of knowing that tended to be in the background, but no less relevant to the foreground lens of the visual. As in a holistic view, they impacted the experience but they were not captured by the youth. Because the focus of the research was on taking pictures, sound was likely not connected. The world is not silent and thus, being in the outdoors, hearing the birds chirp, listening to the wind, all have some influence on and connection to the experience.

Scent is the oldest of the senses and can bring back memories and affect us deeply. This was important for the youth too as they were drawn to taking pictures of the smells that they liked. No photos were taken of smells they didn't like. One participant shares, *"well I liked the white flowers there….I liked the smell…that's why I took a picture of it"and "Ya so I I just wanted to take a picture of this tall cool plant because it smelled like mint,"(Figure 8)* and another shares*, "I took a picture of a lemon, a lemon….A lemon balm because I took a picture of it cause it smells good"* and *"Um, I enjoyed her from telling us about the garden and letting us pick some of the peppermint stuff and sniffing it and yes, thank you"*. These are just a few of the comments that reflect the importance of the sensory experience around scent in the garden that the youth enjoyed. They do not offer any more than that verbally, however, it was their choice to take the picture of the "smell" as being a nice experience for them. In fact, while doing a member check a couple of months after the initial photos were taken one youth happily recalls *"okay that's the lemon balm…..I was thinking about the smell and the taste…Mmm…..I can still smell it in the picture mmm…..just kidding".* This experience evidently made an impression on her and she felt this with her whole being, an experience that connected her to the land.

The sense of touch, in terms of being physically active was captured by some as important. One youth playfully shares, *"pulling, me pulling out the weeds. And I had so fun about it and it was really fun so I took a picture of it*" (Figure 9). It seems this demonstrates the joy and sense of appreciation for the physical activity, skill-building and being active outdoors. Another youth commented on his connection to care-taking through an active physical process, "*I helped uh put some of the soil on and put on the uh what are those things called?....the mulch…to stop roo or prevent…. weeds*" (Figure 10). Yet another stated in relation to weeding, "*I don't know, like when you're going ducking down and you'll be like (deep breadth and exclaims) I feel much more healthier"* suggesting this improves a sense of well-being. These quotes are also a great representation of the youth responding to the "active and pragmatic" (Sinclair, Hart & Bruyere, 2009, p. 53) aspects of the therapeutic horticulture approach, and it's harmony with an Aboriginal approach to practice.

The garden provides opportunities for engaging different experiences of tactile touch too, as one participant shares "*Well I really like the white flower cause it smelled good and it was really nice feeling it and just touching it*" and another *"it was just really nice feeling it and letting roll through your fingers….the compost"*. This participant actually enjoyed knowing that composted vegetation was being recycled back to the earth and was able to handle the material with this understanding.

As demonstrated in the following comment, passive experiences were also important too, *"It felt nice….Like when you have the fresh breeze over you and the sun's on you and you get to take pictures with other people"*. Her experience speaks to the benefits of being outdoors for a therapeutic experience.

The fact that the youth captured these experiences in their photographs as something meaningful and relevant demonstrates the value in the stimulation of the senses and opportunities for meaningful physical activity.

Humour. Throughout the program the subsequent words about their photos demonstrate how much the children loved to laugh and loved silliness and fun and games, *"(teacher name) …her being funny*" and *"Me (name)! They're doing something crazy though!" (laughs/smiles).* Humour seemed to capture their attention and come naturally to all of them. In the garden, imitations of animals "*she's all like (imitates a chipmunk) (laughs)"* and "*well he was making the antler look like a moose antler that's why…it was kinda funny, ya*" (Figure 11) demonstrate the natural connection the children found between people and nature. *"(Name) laughing while he was planting (smiles and laughs)" (Figure 12).* They were so captured by their environment and the nature of the experience that many social challenges disappeared momentarily. They were a group working together having fun. According to these youth, a therapeutic horticulture environment is one that has room for antics, silliness, playfulness, and much laughter.

Social experience. The joy of living and being together, as referred to by Raske (2010) was also captured in their experiences with each other. One of the most photographed and talked about subjects during the experiences in the garden was around the social experiences. Comments arose revealing an appreciation for companionship, fun, joy, cooperation, and acceptance. The gardening activities provided opportunities for exploration and working together to accomplish a common goal in a fun and appealing way. The engagement of the youth is demonstrated with their quotes, *"They're planting flowers. Ya and we're having a fun time too*" and "*um I also felt a little bit good that um things need teamwork", "a group of kids, …., happy".*

Being able to foster friendships and connection within the framework of the garden also evolved. “*Me and (name) are taking a picture of me, and me and her. I took a picture of me and her and I took a picture of me and her. ....Everybody was happy”* and “*Wit my best pal….we’re two guys, that’s all”,* and “*and friends…uh huh…(nods and giggles)”* effectively articulate, the “sense of belonging" (Jarrott, Kwack, & Relf, 2002, p. 404) that was so important and significant for these youth.

The nature of this programming allowed for constructive freedom to explore the garden and the nearby natural environment. This was intentional to allow for personal strengths, interests and a natural curiosity to guide them. This also demonstrated trust and expectations of responsibility for the youth. One youth took a picture of how she and a friend chose to explore the bush and in doing so they found a turtle, *“a turtle…in the bush…We went exploring in the bush” (Figure 13)* and thus demonstrates that they enjoyed this opportunity to explore, be trusted and have some freedom within the program.

Learning and meaning. Simson and Strauss (1998) discuss that “in working with nature, children learn about their environment, the cycles of development and about themselves” (p. 200) and this appears true of these youth too. What was quite phenomenal about the learning and meaning-making experience in the garden was the number of pictures and comments that reflect the deeper feelings and understandings they shared. “(*name) never giving up on taking up the weeds”* was shared by one participant who was able to conceptualize the value of “never giving up” and the implied importance of “taking up the weeds”. This day we reflected on the nature of weeds and allowed for discussion on self-reflection about weeds in our life, what a weed really is and how they affect us. Some weeds are important, they are medicinal plants, but we dismiss them as they are so common we devalue them, some weeds over run a garden and have mechanisms to thrive and survive. Sometimes we need to pull those weeds, and sometimes we need to find the beauty in them. In the book "*Our words our ways, teaching First Nations, Metis and Inuit Learners*", a Teacher's story is shared about bringing a "traditional teacher" into the classroom. The story imparts the difference in pedagogical practice between the western and Aboriginal teaching methods. In this story, much like in the therapeutic horticulture program, teaching is approached through a practical experience and the participants are then invited to work together (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 37). Learning through doing was the key. The youth really embraced this method in the program. At the beginning of the garden work each day, there was often some hesitancy to beginning, but once they became involved, they were really involved. This theme of Learning and Meaning is further divided into six subthemes: Wonder, pride and skill development, resiliency, cooperation and interconnectedness, caretaking and memories.

Wonder. The garden portion of the program offered opportunities for learning about biology and finding the wonder in nature. One youth took a picture of the seeds that came from a flower. She had not considered before the process from seed to life, to death and regrowth. She was thrilled to learn this process "*Oh Ya! Seeds!....they came from the daisy"* (Figure 14) she exclaimed as she looked at the photo she had taken and the discussion that had ensued around the seeds coming from the daisy in order to grow more.

Again the time spent in the garden allowed another youth a safe way to face his fear of bugs, and develop an appreciation and understanding for something that had been very scary for him. As described in my field notes *"(name) had an amazing breakthrough today. Once being scared of bugs but then being able to handle them, understanding their purpose and the contribution to the earth became fascinating for him."* Also recorded in my field notes, *"today* *(name) was able to face a fear of spiders. As we went to the bush he complained almost to the point of tears that he did not want to do it because of the bugs and spiders. Instead, once he participated in the willow building, he completely forgot his fear and his disposition changed."* This youth was gently encouraged to join us and with the support of Judi appreciating his fear, taking time to educate him and inviting him with a manageable task, he was able to participate and it seems at times, completely forgot about his fear.

Resiliency. The natural world is of itself an incredible teacher in the lessons of resiliency. My field notes share "*The beans that were so thoughtfully planted and cared for through the spring and then eaten by the deer seem to be making a reappearance*" and "*The perennial strawberry plants survived a cold winter only to be nibbled at by the deer throughout the spring, yet some survived much to the joy of the kids".* This lesson was not lost on the kids as one photograph shows "*the strawberries that made it through the winter" (Figure 15).*

Skill building and a sense of pride. The garden provided a place for the children to find success and build skills. One participant states that they *"took a picture of the crops that we planted" (Figure 16)* demonstrating a sense of pride in the effort put forth, and the achievement of creating something.

From my field notes, as I observed the same youth as in the above quote, "*I am amazed to see (name) so focused and attentive in planting the corn. He is so methodic and took great care to ensure the seeds were planted just right. He seems to excel when there is active, physical work to be done; a tangible job, and a request for assistance and he's on it" (Figure 17.)*

Given that the youth in the Spring group began the plants prior to the research and were finished treatment prior to seeing the full results of the labor, I cannot help but wonder if this affected the outcomes. Is this less effective, ineffective or insignificant in terms of a sense of skill-building and pride in the work in the garden?

Interconnectedness. The garden portion also offered opportunities for experiencing the interconnectedness of life. "*Well I learned more about the land and what things are good, I mean um, it's meaningful to me because without the garden we wouldn't really, without the plants we wouldn't be really healthy"*. The children were able to learn the relevance of healthy clean air provided by the vegetation and the importance of healthy food and soil in order to nourish them.

Learning that micro and macro life processes affect one another was also an example of the development of understanding our interconnectedness. Many of the youth really understood this through the teachings of the Peony. The youth witnessed the plants and the insects in a symbiotic relationship, each needing the other. The significance of seeing a "wee one" making a meaningful contribution to a much larger life was also a moment for self-reflection and inspiration. These lessons were observed by the children as one shares *"Peony helps the ant, the ant helps the peony and the peony helps the ant"* and *"it was a close up of ants moving around on the peonies and helping out the peonies basically"* (Figure 18).

Recognizing that we all live together on this planet, on the earth equally with all life, spiritual, physical, animal, insect and person, were also lessons from the garden and the children responded to this by taking pictures "*yes the land is the animals' home and the plants are where the animals lives and we planted lots of plants*". One child took a picture of the compost heap on the back of the grounds stating *"I like that you guys are composting….it turns it into dirt" (Figure 19).* This demonstrates the invaluable lesson of returning to the land that, which you cannot use, as well as the lifecycle and the value of the lesson that everything has a purpose.

To be fair to the results, one youth, when asked directly if there was anything he learned about himself, his identity or the land during these activities, he responded *"No".* The meaning of this is unclear. The youth that answered this had received some very disappointing news just hours before and his disposition strongly reflected this. He was not nearly the cooperative, lighthearted and interested individual he had been through the program. Instead his mood was sullen and dark. His body language was closed, his head was dropped and he was slumped in his seat. Although I would have liked to have rescheduled the interview for another time he was scheduled to leave the program. So, while this is his answer and must be respected as such, it demonstrates the potential to be a limitation for responses during data collection.

Caretaking. The youth also had the opportunity to learn about natural consequences and caretaking through the garden. While some of these experiences were disappointing, there were also positive ones that represented the importance of care giving and care receiving.

It was difficult for the children to share their disappointment when some of their seedlings died over the week when no one was watering them. "*What I learned about the earth…need need to be wate, watered everyday…. These are just all the dead plants..weren't getting taken care of enough"* and "*pumpkin…it's it's um, because it's bad….it died..because they didn't have enough water"*(Figure 20) are photos that show the disappointment and learning from this, but also provided a teachable moment about caring for ourselves, and the life around us.

During our time in the garden, many critters came to visit us. The youth loved this opportunity for interaction with the animals and one captures the value of caretaking and understanding our impact on life around us with their picture of *"A frog that we caught bouncing around the grass…and then someone, then I ran to go get the cup and then we put it in* *there….for a while and then we put it back on the rock…because it belongs to the wild"* (Figure 21).

Memories and connection to the Spirit world. Interestingly, while these children were away from their families, and some had parents who had passed away, the garden provided a place for them to feel close to their relatives and connect with them. One youth shared that "*I took a picture of this, it's a love thing cause it reminds me of my dad and how much I love him"* while using her photograph to depict the wood and willow "Love" sign that had been made by the staff and placed in the garden. Another quote, "*love back there that made me think of my dad too".* This is incredibly significant as we are not separate from any life; all is connected despite the distance.

For some, the distance feels greater as was the situation of one youth whose mother had passed away. In her words, about her photo *"um, Lillies, And that's my favourite, my mom's fave, favourite flower…..ya, and it's mine too…of lots of fun things we used to do...you know at the pow wow thing um, at the cascades I think, ya know there, that spinny thing, the chair spinny thing…and they reminds me of my mom, cause she always pushed me and I almost peed my pants (laughing) cause I was laughing too much (Figure 22)".* My field notes correspond to this as I helped her plant the flower. We were working in the east of the garden, planting a yellow and orange flower. "*Today we had a significant moment as (name) was able to plant a blanket flower next to the flowers that were her mom's favorite. The blanket flower was a reminder of "tucking in" and caretaking. It was a touching moment and a symbolic way for her to remember her mom. She took such care in planting the blanket flower today, tenderly and quietly she worked. She is leaving this place knowing that these plants will stay together. The blanket flower and lillies shall remain in this garden side-by-side: A symbol of the new relationship for her and her* *mother, beginning in the East.* I left her alone for a few minutes with those flowers while the children were working in the vegetable garden. I recall thinking of how touching this moment was, how honored I felt to have been allowed to share such a tender moment with her. She was leaving that day to go to another treatment facility far away. I recall thinking how brave this young girl was to be going to another unknown place with strangers awaiting her, having to face an unknown future. I was inspired by her strength of character as she was able to switch between quiet contemplation and then a few minutes later be able to be in the moment and laugh with her new found friends. Also of interest is the fact that the other youth gave her space in the garden and it was like an unwritten rule had blanketed the group to give her space. It was almost as if silence fell while others found themselves busily engaged in the other garden. An eagle circled above us that day.

The experience of being in the garden situated by the bush, also provide another youth the opportunity to connect with memories of her family by "*Being in the bush…..It was fun…..It brings back memories…..in my reserve……I always used to go to the bush with my grandparents. When they would go cut wood and then play in the snow or play in the bush.*" This experience was able to help honor her family develop a connection with them in a spiritual way.

> Anishinabek people believe that a person has four aspects to his being, namely, the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. An Anishinabek person could meet all of his needs in each of these areas by forming relationships with members of the physical, spiritual, other-than-human person, and the human person worlds. The most important relationships in the human world are those of family and kinship. Family

> and kin provide warmth, support, stability, companionship, and emotional support. Family is everything (Auger & Pedri, 2009).

Culture. *"Well when I heard the eagle I was like oh my god I haven't heard that in a long time. And I was just feeling, I was soo happy and I and once I heard that, I was like, that's part of my culture……Well I felt really really good and I felt proud because I hadn't heard that in a really long time."* Auger and Pedri (2009) share with us the significance of the Eagle for the Anishinabek:

> The Anishinabek believe eagles have a special connection to the Creator and as such, should be honoured and respected. If you look at an eagle feather you will see it has both dark and light sections. In Anishinabek culture the eagle feather teaches the importance of recognizing the whole pattern of life – its bright and dark parts. This means we should embrace both positive and negative events that happen in our lives because they are experiences that help us learn and grow. The Ojibway word for 'feather' is meegwin, which is similar to meekina, meaning road or path. The sacred teaching of humility teaches us that in order to achieve balance, you need something outside yourself to guide you; and the eagle feather is a sacred item which guides a person towards a good path of life (Auger & Pedri, 2009).

What I believe is incredible in the sharing of this story and cultural information is the fact that this youth had an opportunity to see an Eagle, while in treatment, appreciate its significance and feel pride in her culture. Had the gardens been situated in an urban area, this precious moment likely would not have happened.

While the landscape and vegetation have shared their teachings, these youth were also able to experience the excitement and interconnectedness of animal, insect and amphibian life forms. Photos reveal glimpses of turtles, worms, frogs and their "*dear friend Jimmy the groundhog"*. Conversation around a photo reveals that it "*is about a real turtle crawling around the yard..yea…because Turtles are cool"*. A genuine connection and certain level of affection and warmth is generated towards this reptile. *The Mishomis book*: *The voice of the Ojibway* (Benton-Banai, 1988) shares the story of the Great flood and teaches us that our earth was built on the back of the turtle shell (p. 33). Another youth shares a photo stating "*There's a frog in that picture...I liked it"*. One youth describes the cultural significance of being in the outdoors and having the opportunity to connect with the Creator as important. *"Well I liked it because I'm always happy to see the Creator, the Creator's living things that he has made and we should all thank him and ya….and what the Creator has planned for us to see*". Further to this he also shared about another picture, *"It's about us, we found an earth worm for our garden, which is really special because earth worms, they're really good for a garden and for us right now it was like a gift from the Creator for our garden, and we should all thank him. Now, our crops should be living better" (Figure 23).* While these children were all excited to see the animals, and even discover the bugs, some also liked the opportunities for their cultural worldview to be innate in many elements of the program itself.

As feasts are an important part of Anishinabek culture (Auger & Pedri, 2009), we planned a fall harvest feast with the children. The youth were given the responsibility of planning the ceremony and menu with consideration of the harvest from the gardens. They flourished in this task and seemed to really enjoy the experience. Some of the connections with the land and cultural significance of the feast are shared with *"This one is about the corn….I took a picture of* *the corn because um it was growing and we can eat it for the September harvest feast we are going to have later" (Figure 24).* The process of growing food itself provided opportunities to embrace Anishinabek culture in the garden. We attempted to grow squash in the garden this year as well as beans and corn. The book "*Native Plant Stories told by Joseph Bruchac"* (Caduto & Bruchac, 1995) is one such book that shares the story of the significance of corn with the story of "The Corn Spirit" (p. 3).

In terms of food and its cultural relevance, we were talking about "the three sisters" and one of the youth shared about her photos *"I don't believe in that".* This is significant as it raises awareness and speaks to many things, whether acculturation, or just personal beliefs, we must always be mindful that we are all human beings and unique in our experiences. Within a group there exists uniqueness and subtleties.

More discussion around food and the Feast will follow within the sections of "Activities" and "Cooking Experiences".

The design of the medicine wheel garden is significant as its physical design aligns with the corresponding directions. To this regard, one youth took a picture of *"the bleeding hearts…. in the garden…. in the north*" (Figure 10) recognizing the symbolism of the bleeding hearts. They were not the common variety with pink on them, they were pure white. White is the colour of the North, and the North represents our Ancestors, those who have gone before us. He felt the connection of the bleeding hearts with his Ancestors. This created an opportunity for dialogue on the history of Anishinabek people and personal stories of Kokums (Grandmothers).

Horticultural activities, crafts and games.

Likes and dislikes. The crafts and activities were designed to learn from nature and enlist items from nature in their creation. The youth have articulated that this was a fun and enjoyable experience for them. The following quote "*We were taking a picture and we were like making um, we were making wood, wood, what's that called again?...the Wood windchimes, and we were having fun making them but then (name) she, I took a picture of her because she had a to use a nail to get it over with. …it was awesome. Just kidding. It was kinda we, I felt sorry for her cause she was mad"* (Figure 25). This experience also taught the youth compassion for one another when things don't go according to plan. One of the tools had stopped working just when the last youth needed to complete her project. Judi was able to improvise a tool to complete the task at hand, and while this particular youth was upset by this turn of events, all of the youth got to witness the resilience and problem-solving skills that led to success.

Another youth shares her thrill in making the driftwood wind chimes discussing the elements of water, earth and wind, making correlations to them: "*Yes! Making our thingies! I don't remember the name….yes the wind chimes. We used buttons we used beaver chopped wood too. Mhm and string (nods head) Ya! I like it!...ya and I liked how we had to like string it to hold it like."* We had used the driftwood to show how water and animals shape the wood, once reshaped into a new item, the wood is then moved by the wind to make beautiful sounds, and there is a common string that holds these things together. This youth reflected her interest in this with her photograph and comments. Another youth shares that it was the sound she liked with *"when the wind blows it's all like "do do do do" you know what it sounded like"*.

Building something constructive and tangible with natural materials in the nearby woods also generated a lot of enthusiasm. What was particularly interesting with this project was that the first group of youth began the task and the second group continued on. There was a connection in a shared experience despite not seeing or meeting one another as this participant describes, "*I took a picture of the fish because it is really neat. I don't know how someone could* *do that, like that is so neat, so I just wanted to take a picture cause it's really nice and I like how they did their activity."*

The creativity and teamwork involved in building the willow fort was significant too as they enjoyed designing the structure and its decorative features. *"The weaving! Yes!, Ya um, I liked how me and Judi were doing it"* and "*Um, me and Judi and (name) worked on it. Uh and we just thought it would be a cute door, but the door was at the front under the rainbow."*

As previously mentioned, this activity was also able to engage a youth who was initially resistant to the activity. She took a picture of it stating *"It looks fancy!...sticks, the chair…Table"(Figure 26)* and genuinely loved the end result. It seems that this activity with its non-confrontational approach demonstrates potential in engaging resistant participants. "*(Name) then actively participated in the building and even took on a healthy leadership role within the group."*

The youth were also involved in creating their invitations for the harvest feast and this was done outdoors with natural materials and floral papers. A photo is described by one youth as "*we are making the invitations for the harvest festival…ya I liked doing it…yes everyone making their own invitation for their family"* (Figure 27). This was another way to connect the youth to nature and their worlds outside of the treatment facility, embracing that they are all a part of a larger community.

Another portion of the programming sometimes involved reading a story relevant to the Anishnabek. I had heard Elder Gerry Martin speak of *The Mishomis Book* (1988) as one he recommended. As such, it was one that was used often in the program. Often, we would begin with a story and most of the time the children were engaged and liked the teachings. A couple of different sessions and stories are captured by the participants, *"that I enjoyed that book..yep the*

Mishomis book….the one with the mouse and the turtle… to get something at the bottom… put it on the turtle's shell"(Figure 28) "you're reading the story to all the youth….gray wolf story… that's all I got to say…I liked it" and *"I like how we read this book. It was really nice."* For the majority, the stories captured their attention and silence would befall, however, an older participant expressed a different perspective. "*I did not like the story; I'm too old for stories. Period….Yes it was boring…ya, I don't care but, I'd rather have someone else tell me stories, something that they actually know, they're not just reading from a storybook".* This shares the significance of authenticity in oral narrative tradition for the youth, as well as a concern about age-appropriateness. All perspectives must be considered when sharing stories in this type of program, and careful consideration of what Archibald (2008) shares "The Elders taught me about seven principles related to using First Nations stories and storytelling for educational purposes, what I term storywork: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy" (p. 9) need to be embraced.

Another of the activities that was well-liked and built camaraderie, success, self-esteem and was tied into our garden work was the seed spitting contest. This was introduced after we had been working on seeds in terms of physical planting, seeds as food and many other wonderings that seeds offer. We brought this in at the end of the session as a fun note to leave on. The children loved the games: *"um well because I was so happy that I won at something….(laughing) It was fun spitting seeds. The bad thing was I never actually practiced. (laughs)"* and "*spitting! Uh gumballs! (animated funny) ..yes , sunflower seeds.. Have fun! (Yells) (Figure 29)* were reflections from the kids.

Social experience. Teamwork again came through in the activities as important for the youth in comments like *"And I like how (name) was holding the wood for Judi, and I like how* *they were working together as a team" and "Well I really liked when I got to screw it on and Judi was helping me, um I also liked when we put the buttons on when you were helping me".* This reiterates Blair (2009) and Alexander, Wales-North, and Hendren (1995) findings that cooperation and community were recognized as important aspects of the therapeutic horticulture program.

The youth also commented on the importance of room for individual creativity with a group process *"I liked how everyone was doing their own work and not copying everyone".*

"Looking at you guys make it, um (laughing)…I always make you laugh" was the comment from a participant about her photo of a day when she was fairly new to the program and reluctant to participate. She still chose to take a picture of the group doing the work. She was able to be a part of the group and enjoy the experience of being with others and in nature even though she was feeling very withdrawn that day. It also demonstrates the value in the group's acceptance of passive gardening experiences and respect for each other.

The photos and words of the youth also show an appreciation of personal qualities. Phrases like, "*I like how (name) made the antler. …it was really fun yes!"* show an appreciation for someone outside of themselves. This particular youth had used a piece of wood from the forest floor that he thought looked like an antler and held it up to his head as such.

Learning and meaning. The youth offered their own insights into what was meaningful to them as well. Related from the story Gray Wolf's Search (Swanson, 2007) *"I like how we read this book. It was really nice. That's all……He was trying to look for someone special….he asked a bear and he asked um, uh, …yes he was a special person and that the wolf was"(Figure 30)* and *"doesn't matter who ya are, or where you're from, so or which culture you are to"* (we are all important). The deeper level learning around the importance of the journey not the winning, and that every living thing, animals and humans alike is special were evidently meaningful parts of the stories these children connected to.

Culture. One of the projects for the first group was to create a visual piece of artwork for the garden. Out of wood, hammers and nails, and paint a, approximately four foot tall Thunderbird was constructed, painted and hung in the trees near the garden. Both the activity of creating a thunderbird sculpture for the garden and passive experience of it in the garden were meaningful as each group captures it. *"The Thunderbird….it looks neat…I don't know I just liked it because it had the four colours on there"* and *"This is a picture of my spirit thunderbird. I like my spirit from what it done here…. Thank you" (Figure 31) "I like the eagle, the thunder….. the thunderbird".* This was an opportunity for embracing Anishinabek culture, creating a sense of place and honour which seemed to resonate with the youth.

The following quote reflects the experience of listening to the story of the Great Flood: *"Ya, and it was really awesome to see everyone going and going and trying, taking their strength and just trying to get it. So they were really brave. And the muskrat was really really brave too because he actually got it but when I heard he got it I was really happy, but when I heard the news of Haiti I was really sad and I was like oh my gosh we have to get some money because at my school we had to raise money right and um I was the first one to put the money in the jar. Cause I had a tooney, a loonie and a five dollar bill, but I asked my dad for a twenty dollar bill, so he gave it to me and I was like, I said, thank you and then I asked him for lots of money and then I asked him for lots of money and he gave it and I kept on donating".* While at first glance, this may seem lengthy and unrelated to culture, I believe this is also a representation of Anishinabek culture revering all human life, and the interconnectedness of stories, of people and experiences. Nothing is in isolation. This was also captured in the cyclical nature of the program each week addressing various quadrants of the medicine wheel teachings. This particular week, in looking to the lessons of elements and water, the story of the great flood and how the Universe was created was shared. This youth was obviously moved by the story, recognizing the great team effort that was required to create the Earth and further to this it sparked this youth's memories of home, of school community, and of the world. She found meaning in this story on many levels and recognized the value of teamwork also in helping others far away.

One youth also shared her perspective of including culture in a program delivered by a white facilitator, *"I'm very experienced with my culture and when I learn my culture I don't really wanna learn from someone who hasn't really actually experienced it first-hand so I did not learn anything from my culture with you….. No offence".* It is an honour that this youth would feel comfortable enough to give such a thoughtful perspective of her experience. This in itself demonstrates bravery, honesty and truth, tenets of the seven Grandfather teachings. This raises a significant question as to whose place it is to share cultural teachings. It also demonstrates the different tastes of the participants as many enjoyed learning about culture from us.

Cooking.

Likes and dislikes. In general, cooking was enjoyed by all. Photos with their corresponding comments shared perspectives such as *"I liked cooking, I enjoyed that very much" (Figure 32), "This is the mix that we made…in the bowl..okay…stirring it, ya that was fun"* and "*I wanted to take a picture of the cookies, they were punkin cookies….that were really good. Ya I liked them. I ate, I ate four cookies of them."*

Expressions such as,*"that's a picture of the cracked egg I cracked. …I, I like to crack the egg usually, it's fun"* not only demonstrate the fun involved but also pride in building skills.

There was opportunity on reflecting where ingredients came from, how they grew and discussion around aromatherapy. One youth enjoyed the smell of Vanilla, took a picture and shared with the group that *"Vanilla, vanilla brings back your memories of cooking with your family or Kokum".* Again, this was an opportunity to connect with loved ones and life outside of the immediate group.

One youth, in reflecting on Judi and I as non-Anishinabek facilitators in relation to the cooking activities, shared *"but I did enjoy your artistic side where we got to do some art and cook and have that fun experience"* meaning that the experiences themselves were fun, interesting and relevant for her as, in her mind, they were not culturally relevant.

Social experience. The experience of the program with their peers was also significant as they took pictures of each other and made comments about it's worth throughout. Ideas were shared around taking the time to be together, accepting each other and working together. These are reflected in "*Oh, letting (name) stir the cookies and everybody in one shot so that, they, everybody was joining in and taking time and accepting." (Figure 33) "Um well (name) is a quiet boy, he doesn't say much but um well, that that when I took that he was very happy, he was being himself he was letting loose and smiling".*

From my field notes I also observed "*consideration and caring was shown by the sharing of the egg. Self-lessness and a sense of camaraderie was demonstrated today".* These reflections were also shared by the youth in their photos and comments *"ya I learned how to share"* and *"the thing I liked about her is that she let me crack the egg….and the she did something else instead".*

Culture. Food insecurity is a big issue on Aboriginal Reservations in Ontario. As cited on the Gender and Health website, "Fort Severn Ontario reports that 70 % of households are faced with food insecurity issues" (Gender and Health). Developing the skills to grow, harvest, prepare and cook their own food should they desire is a possible broader outcome from a therapeutic horticulture program. As Richard-DaCosta, an Aboriginal horticultural therapist explains of a group of Aboriginal adults she works with in Manitoba, "it empowers them knowing they can feed their own families with healthy food produced by their own hands" (Green, 2008). While it is not the responsibility of children to provide for their families these are skills that they may wish to share, or cultivate at a later date in their lives. The growing, harvesting and preparing of the vegetables in this garden to ultimately serve them at the Harvest Feast made an impact on the youth. As one shares about the feast, *"And I liked the soup and I liked the peas, and um I liked the, and I really liked the ice cream and the apple pie and the pumpkin pie. It was so good.....Mmmm, ya, I really liked that salad".* Much of the produce had been picked fresh that morning, including the apples from the much loved apple tree. Having the families come out and participate in the program was also meaningful. During the feast we offered daffodil and tulip bulbs for each of the family members to plant in the garden together. We had brought a bulb planting tool for everyone to use and the following is the experience of one of the youth, *"The Harvest Feast…Well, all our family coming and just spending time with them, uh, having fun, um also going to like like playing outside and showing our families and making the whatever you, you said we had to stand on when I caught my auntie".* She and her Auntie and Grandma took turns catching each other as they planted the bulbs and almost lost their balance when stepping on the unsteady bulb planter. Laughs and moments of tenderness and caring were shared. This further demonstrates the importance of community and family with the healing paradigm. Blair (2009) also shares that parental involvement was an important part of the findings in a gardening program with children.

Photovoice method.

An unanticipated aspect of this research was how much the youth would enjoy having the cameras and how this would affect the photos taken.

In terms of how it affected the ability to capture the wholeness of the experience, they proved a bit challenging. The nature of the work being hands-on combined with the intense fascination and involvement meant that the cameras were sometimes left on the sidelines and forgotten about during an activity they really enjoyed, thus resulting in no pictures of it. As we did not want to influence the data we were cautious about reminding the youth to take photos, only giving verbal reminders sporadically and usually during breaks. However, the youth "*had a fun time taking pictures"* of the program and of themselves*, "I took a picture of myself through the shadow cause I thought I was looking cool".*

For future research, consideration could be given to the possibility of taking more field research notes to revisit with the youth in an interview so as not to disrupt the program, yet still capture these moments.

Something else we didn't anticipate was the ability for the cameras to be used as a tool for engaging in antagonistic behaviour. This is shared by one youth in *"and I knew he was getting mad so I took the picture"* which was a result of "*he was mad, Cause I touched his uh camera. And took one picture and he didn't notice."*

Interestingly in regards to confidentiality one youth did not take photos of any of the other youth as he *"didn't want any part of the picture tooken off. That's the reason".* This also limited the photos that he could take, but it also made him pay careful attention to the composition.

Overall, photovoice did capture much of the meaning for the youth, and in any of the interviews I did offer them time to share any thoughts or reflections that weren't captured by the cameras but meant something for them. All of them shared that they felt their photos were representative of their experience.

Conclusion.

This research has established that therapeutic horticulture as a method of healing worked well with these groups of Anishinabek youth. The youth shared their experiences from the gardening, cooking and other hands-on activities that were offered through a therapeutic horticulture program as well as what it meant for them to be involved in the research method of photovoice. A number of themes emerged from the data revealing what was meaningful for them.

The opportunity for an engaging social experience that included room for humour and fun, as well as opportunities for connection with and memories of family were very important for them. This reiterates the findings of Blair (2009) and Alexander, Wales-North, and Hendren (1995) that cooperation and community are important aspects of the programs.

The youth also shared that they appreciated the therapeutic horticulture activities in terms of providing opportunities for skill building, growth and creativity.

Unique to this research, the ability to connect to their culture through the place and the activities was also important for them. Guiding any future programs this data must be honoured with sensitivity if a non-Anishinabek facilitator delivers the program. This is the only theme that emerged with mixed perceptions of the experience. While some of the youth were thankful for the cultural teachings that we were able to share, just as importantly one youth felt that having non-Anishinabek women sharing Anishinabek cultural teachings within the program was not appropriate. The meaning that these youth ascribe to this experience is one that requires care and caution in any future development of a therapeutic horticultural approach to healing with Anishinabek youth. Care must also be taken to recognize that "not every Aboriginal person in the north practices the beliefs of the medicine wheel" [yet] "many Aboriginal and other than Aboriginal people could benefit from borrowing the values and principles the wheel teaches" (Borg, Sportak, & Delaney, 2010, p. 155). Ultimately care must be taken to ensure the activities in the program and the research promote decolonization (Menzies, 2001).

Traditionally knowledge sharing has been through "Zhinoomoowin: Modeling and Learning by Doing" (Simpson, 2011, p. 131). By nature therapeutic horticulture practices espouse similar values in terms of a learning experience and building social relationships through learning by doing. Simpson (2011) offers this relevant story about the importance of nurturing relationships, counselling and justice:

> Former Crown attorney Rupert Ross recounts this experience in his book, *Returning to the Teachings:* "At one point I asked what the community used to do in traditional times, before the courts came, to those who misbehaved. An old lady answered immediately. Through an interpreter she said, 'We didn't do anything *to* them. We counseled them instead' (p. 131).

In-line with this, therapeutic horticulture doesn't do anything "to" them either. Instead all is done *with* people and the healing is through the doing 'with'. Contextual Fluidity as a practice model offers potential for informing anti-oppressive social work methods utilizing therapeutic horticulture because it is based on:

> helping as support, not planned change directed toward remediation and solutions of identified problems; helping as occurring within the natural environment of

> community; helping as accepting of change but never controlling it; accommodating the complexity of multiple roles; focusing on the present; and having respect for being (Nelson & McPherson, 2004, p. 200).

It is apparent from the photographs and the youth descriptions that they seemed to really enjoy the experience of a therapeutic horticulture program. Not only were they able to engage effectively with each other but the youth were also able to build meaningful relationships with the facilitators and staff. They were able to develop respect, love and caring for one another, their ancestors, the land and themselves through this experience. Similar themes to Alexander, Wales-North and Hendren (1995) article were presented as they took photos of cooperation, enthusiasm, nurturing, and pride in their activities (p. 259).

Simson and Strauss (1998) reveal that horticultural therapy improves socialization skills. The importance of the socialization for the youth was captured time and again as significant for them. Therapeutic horticulture activities naturally create opportunities for demonstrations of the Anishinabek seven Grandfather Teachings. The youth took pictures and demonstrated the importance of caring for one another and the land throughout this program.

The use of Horticultural therapy is also significant in terms of supporting social functioning (Simson & Strauss, 1998). The nature of the programming allows the youth to engage together, work through processes and personalities, all while connecting to the larger world (Simson & Strauss, 1998), embracing the worldview that all is interconnected and interdependent.

As well the cognitive benefits of a therapeutic horticultural program provide opportunities for complex thought processes to be engaged in a meaningful way (Simson & Strauss, 1998). The youth captured this as an appreciable experience for them too, in that they were able to consider the larger ecosystem, the importance of culture and interconnectedness of all life, in-line with an Anishinabek worldview. The lessons the children relay that they learned from the earth also reflect the Grandfather Teachings of respect, love, wisdom, bravery, truth, honesty and humility.

They also learned the value of enjoying the fruits of the harvest when life is cared for and tended to, as well as the consequences of when it's not. When plants survived, when cooking and crafts worked out, a sense of pride was felt. In line with what Simson and Strauss (1998) state as the primary focus of a social therapeutic horticulture program, the youth also demonstrated feelings of self-esteem through their photographs. In this vein, "Activities can be designed to enhance creativity and self-expression" (Simson & Strauss, 1998, p. 133). These youth also articulated their appreciation of how being able to use their own creativity and expression in the activities was important to them.

Utilizing photovoice and semi-directed interviews as the methods was embraced by the youth. They commented many times on how much they liked using the cameras. The methods allowed the youth to capture experiences that were meaningful and relevant for them in a way that was accessible given the variety of capabilities.

However, one particular challenge presented itself with using photovoice when, in one incident a camera was put down by one youth and another youth mistakenly picked it up, despite the cameras being labeled. Avoiding this in the future may include painting the cameras a specific colour so it is obvious whose is whose at a quick glance, or having lanyards attached to the cameras to ensure no one leaves their cameras for others to pick up while involved in a task.

While the opportunity for social interaction was revered, many pictures that were not related to the program were taken during the designated breaks, resulting in developing many pictures unrelated to the program. As well, due to using disposable cameras we were disappointed to find that many photos did not work out, mainly due to issues around exposure and lighting. This meant that although the youth recalled from some details in the photos, what the meaning was at the time, they are difficult to discern for outsiders to the program. If possible, giving everyone a digital camera would have helped avoid this, as pictures could be viewed and set up on the spot.

Having employed an interpretivist paradigm utilizing hermeneutic phenomenology has allowed the authentic voice of the youth to share their social construction of reality. They have been able to share the meaning that they ascribe to the experience with their own words and images in terms of what the experience means for them, not someone else; it is their reality that is captured through my interpretation. This paradigm also espouses that the researcher's observations and interpretations also inform the outcome. This seems to be very much in line with an Aboriginal worldview in that the world is dynamic, can be perceived from multiple perspectives and there is more than one way of knowing. Laverty (2003) cites Denzen & Lincoln (2000) explaining that hermeneutic phenomenology upholds that "Realities are not more or less true, rather they are simply more or less informed" and ”that knowledge is seen as the best understandings we have been able to produce thus far, not a statement of what is ultimately real" (p. 12). This "storytelling" for the youth through oral and visual means is a way to not only honor but as Simpson would espouse, is also ”at its core decolonizing" (p.33) and in this way she states, Anishinabek people "can envision our way out of cognitive imperialism" (p. 33).

Follow-up in terms of member checking poses potential challenges with this diverse group. Four member checks were conducted in total. After leaving treatment, contact with these particular youth was limited due to a number of issues. Some of these included moving to longer term treatment facilities in other urban centres, voluntary withdrawal from the ABTU treatment program, and lack of contact between the Agency and the youth. This may not be the case with another group as each individual's circumstances inside and outside of treatment vary greatly.

Suggestions for future study. While this thesis has explored the meaning for this particular group of Anishinabek youth in a therapeutic horticultural program, various aspects of the research offer opportunities for further inquiry.

In terms of the delivery of a therapeutic horticultural program some of the following questions arose: How might the program content and delivery change if there was an Anishinabek facilitator leading the program? If an Anishinabek person was the facilitator how would it be received? Given the small sample size and the uniqueness of individuals, are the results transferable to other treatment centres or other groups? How does the location of the treatment facility impact the overall delivery and design of the program in terms of being culturally appropriate?

What are the long term effects of a horticultural therapeutic program with Anishinabek youth, and are they measurable? Should a positivistic paradigm even be employed, would it be ethical? While many answers and new knowledge has been generated from this thesis, many more questions are yet to be answered.

Given the fact that there appears to be no additional literature, on therapeutic horticulture with Anishinabek youth from which to draw on, this research is significant because it brings awareness to and informs this gap in the literature. It is important that this research be replicated in other brief treatment units as well as with other groups within this ABTU to see if the findings are generalizable. Also of significance, these youth revealed that data collection through photovoice was fun and appropriate.

These data demonstrate that it is the overall therapeutic horticulture experience itself, of being connected to the gardens, the social interaction and the opportunity to learn new skills, exploring spirituality and the self, which was meaningful. Data shows that the meaning was derived from the active and pragmatic activities connected to the gardens and nature as well as the crafts and cooking activities. Continuity from soil preparation through to harvest does not appear necessary in this type of program as it is the process itself that is meaningful.

In terms of recommendations for future programs, these data show that a number of elements appear to be important to the success of such a program.

Opportunities for sensory experiences are critical as the youth shared how the visual beauty, tastes, scents of nature and the sounds of the experience captured their fascination and were enjoyed by them. In future gardens it seems including foods, herbs, ornamental and local plant species will allow for a multitude of sensory activities and reflective lessons. Collecting seeds, harvesting and cooking with the foods from the garden are also recommended activities.

Opportunities to express creativity through craft activities and garden design allow for individual interests and strengths to shine. For example, these activities may lead to useful results, instead of just being busy work. They must be related to plants or the garden and have some purpose, whether decorative or active, in order to make them meaningful. These activities may promote success and skill-building as these were identified as important for the youth; as such, all programming must be adaptable to the cognitive and physical capabilities of the youth.

The youth have shared that the experience must be fun, making space for humour, social engagement and room for exploration within the garden. This includes freedom for personal space and expression in activities. While some attention to time is appropriate, it should not be allowed to overly direct the activities. The program should be allowed to flow naturally with the energy level and interest of the participants. Allow for wondering, and let the interests of the youth guide the time and transition to activities. Often nature has things in store that are unplanned; be open to these and accept them. This will model flexibility and adaptability for the youth. Some of the youth would say that this is the Creator's way of teaching us. You cannot plan to see a frog in the garden, but when one appears, as one youth shared, the Creator is showing that frog to us. He means for us to see it. Take the time to see it, and reflect on the lessons inherent in it.

Another significant recommendation for future programs is the importance of being able to include families, and celebrate with them in a culturally meaningful way, such as with a Feast. The nature of working through the medicine wheel garden and reflecting on the lessons it shares is also a key element of connecting with culture. For some this will have more significance than for others, but there are valuable lessons for everyone in terms of balance, wholeness and interdependence. Connections to culture are important and require sensitivity and care. It is vital that the facilitator shape the program based on the lessons of the medicine wheel, but does not assume that all youth prescribe to traditional Anishinabek ways. As the facilitator plays a key role in developing a comfortable, safe and therapeutic environment it is strongly recommended that the facilitator be attuned to the culture of place.

The youth shared that it was fun learning with us and spending time with us, and the literature shows that the relationship with the facilitator plays a key role in the success of the program. Creating a safe, unconditionally accepting environment for these youth, embracing their strengths and knowledge, is essential to developing a healthy, harmonious relationship with the youth. The values of the seven Grandfather Teachings can guide us in this way. Open your spirit with love to these youth, to see the real truth of who they are; be honest with yourself and with them at all times; demonstrate courage in not being the expert and by providing support even in the difficult moments; respect them, their knowledge, their skills, their strengths, demonstrate respect for all life; show wisdom in your mindful actions, words and ways; and approach your work with humility, recognizing the inherent equality of all, in the interdependence of life that makes the circle whole.

“One of the oldest teachings among Native people is that we must always turn back to the natural world for guidance”….“humans are prone to forget those instructions. Fortunately for us, the natural world remembers and is ready to teach us. The plants are among our best teachers” (Caduto & Bruchac, 1995, p xxiv).

The youth have offered us a gift in sharing their teachings with us regarding the meaning of their experience of a therapeutic horticulture program within a brief residential treatment facility. We now have the responsibility to listen to and heed their experience to inform future practice and planning.

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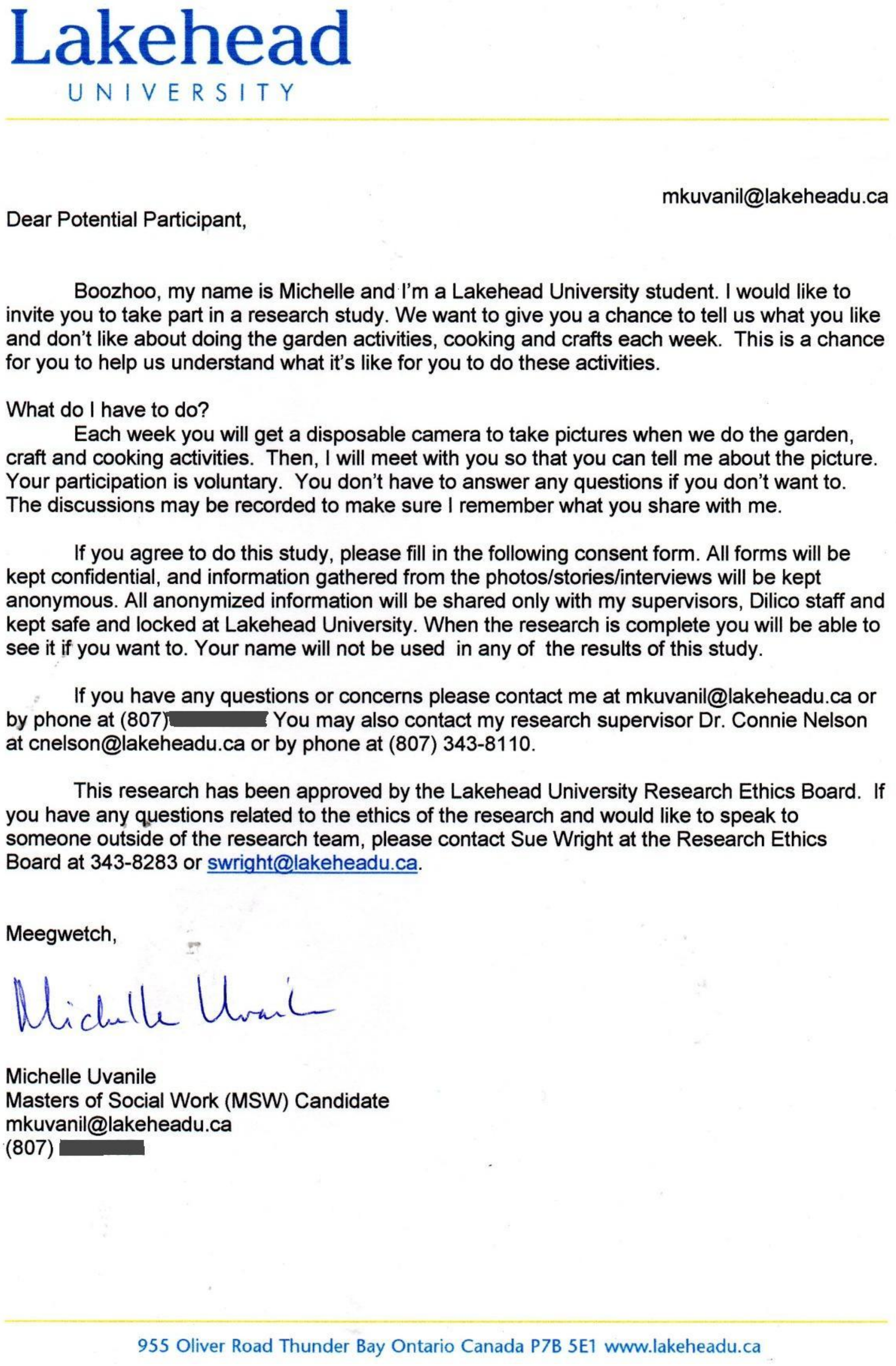
Appendices

Appendix A



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca

Dear Potential Participant,

Boozhoo, my name is Michelle and I'm a Lakehead University student. I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. We want to give you a chance to tell us what you like and don't like about doing the garden activities, cooking and crafts each week. This is a chance for you to help us understand what it's like for you to do these activities.

What do I have to do?

Each week you will get a disposable camera to take pictures when we do the garden, craft and cooking activities. Then, I will meet with you so that you can tell me about the picture. Your participation is voluntary. You don't have to answer any questions if you don't want to. The discussions may be recorded to make sure I remember what you share with me.

If you agree to do this study, please fill in the following consent form. All forms will be kept confidential, and information gathered from the photos/stories/interviews will be kept anonymous. All anonymized information will be shared only with my supervisors, Dilico staff and kept safe and locked at Lakehead University. When the research is complete you will be able to see it if you want to. Your name will not be used in any of the results of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca or by phone at (807)[redacted] You may also contact my research supervisor Dr. Connie Nelson at cnelson@lakeheadu.ca or by phone at (807) 343-8110.

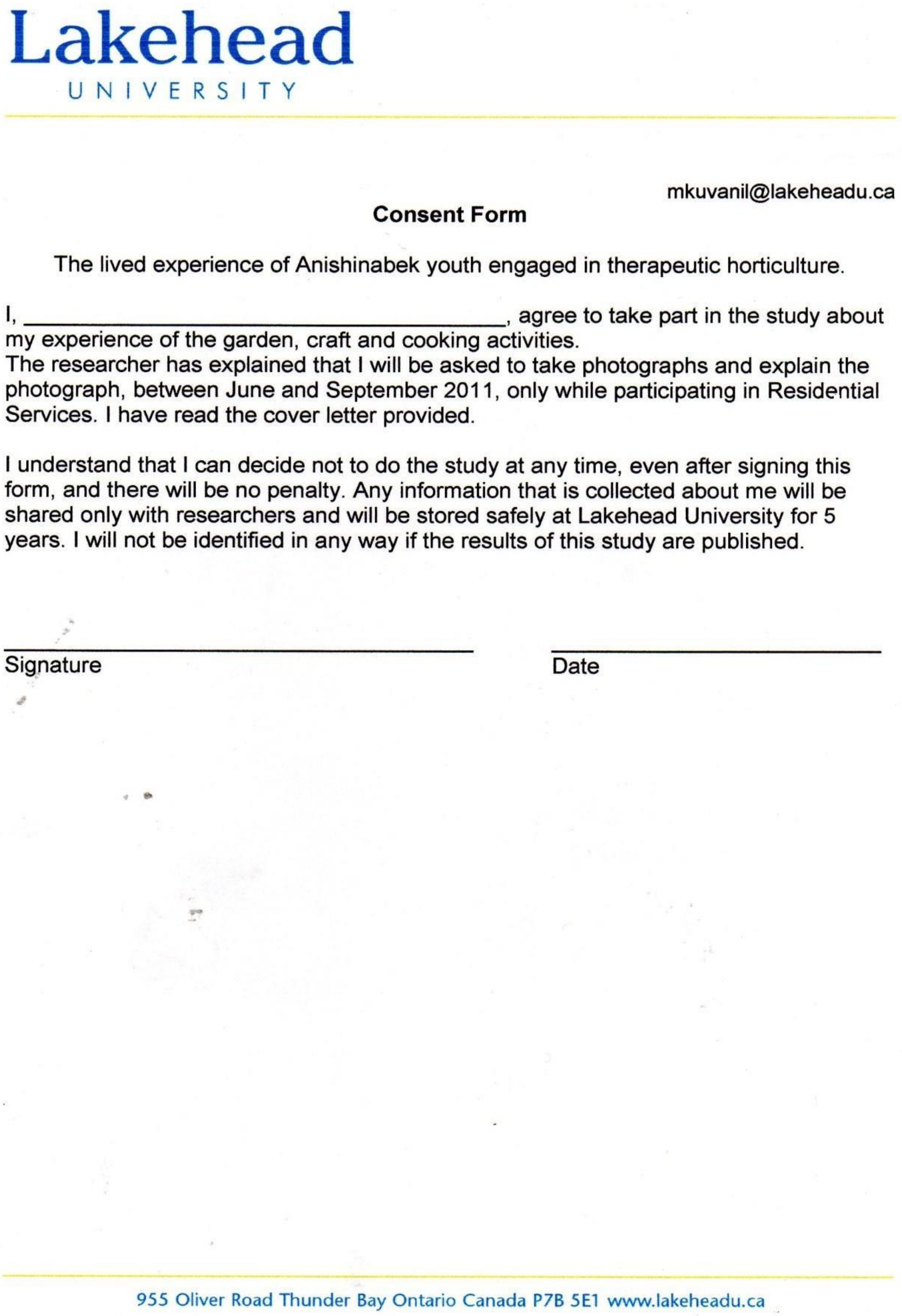
This research has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of the research and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team, please contact Sue Wright at the Research Ethics Board at 343-8283 or swright@lakeheadu.ca.

Meegwetch,

Michelle Uvanile
Masters of Social Work (MSW) Candidate
mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca
(807) [redacted]

955 Oliver Road Thunder Bay Ontario Canada P7B 5E1 www.lakeheadu.ca

Appendix B



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca

Consent Form

The lived experience of Anishinabek youth engaged in therapeutic horticulture.

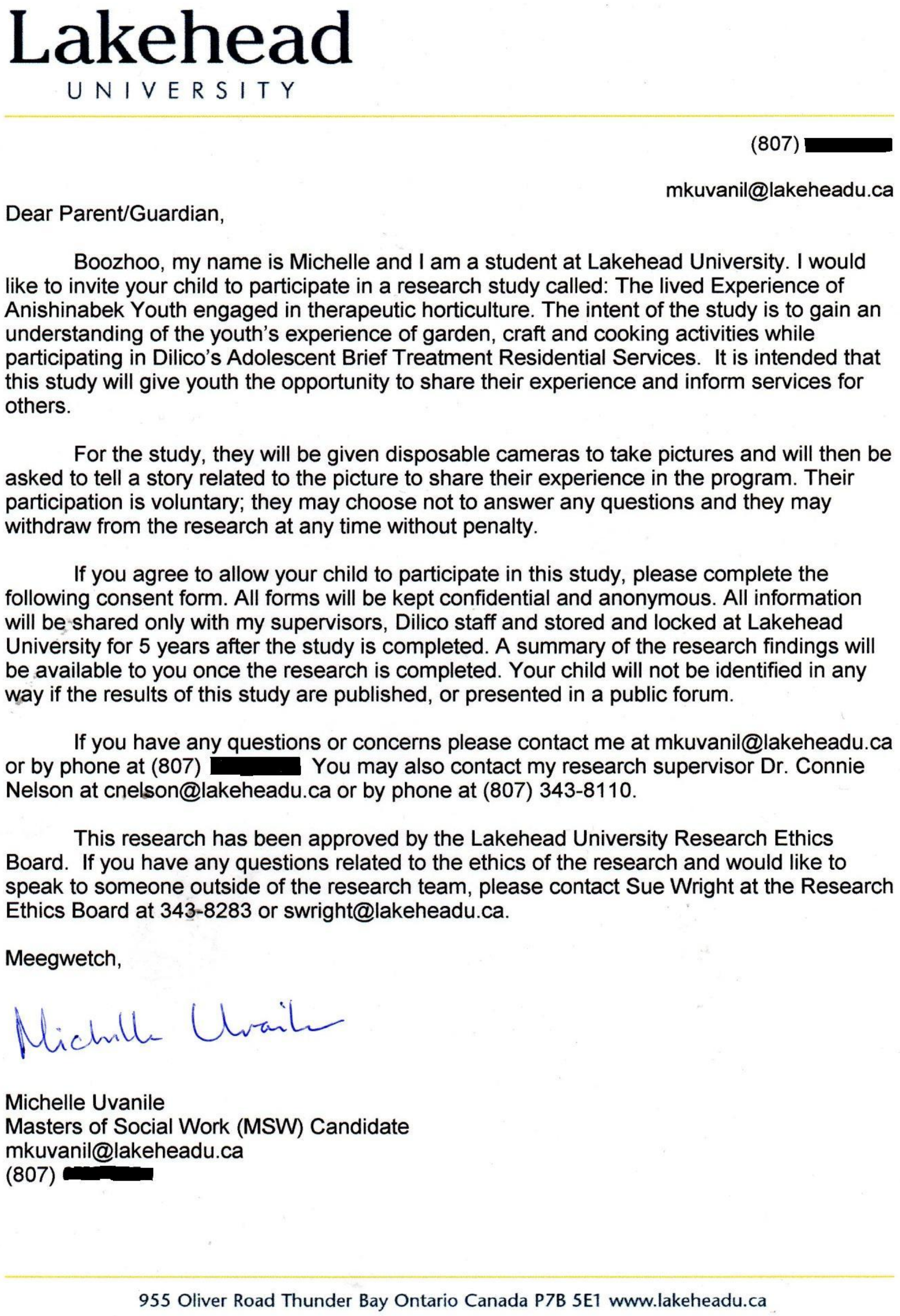
I, ____, agree to take part in the study about my experience of the garden, craft and cooking activities.
The researcher has explained that I will be asked to take photographs and explain the photograph, between June and September 2011, only while participating in Residential Services. I have read the cover letter provided.

I understand that I can decide not to do the study at any time, even after signing this form, and there will be no penalty. Any information that is collected about me will be shared only with researchers and will be stored safely at Lakehead University for 5 years. I will not be identified in any way if the results of this study are published.

____________________________________ ____________________________
Signature Date

955 Oliver Road Thunder Bay Ontario Canada P7B 5E1 www.lakeheadu.ca

Appendix C



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

(807) [redacted]

mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Boozhoo, my name is Michelle and I am a student at Lakehead University. I would like to invite your child to participate in a research study called: The lived Experience of Anishinabek Youth engaged in therapeutic horticulture. The intent of the study is to gain an understanding of the youth's experience of garden, craft and cooking activities while participating in Dilico's Adolescent Brief Treatment Residential Services. It is intended that this study will give youth the opportunity to share their experience and inform services for others.

For the study, they will be given disposable cameras to take pictures and will then be asked to tell a story related to the picture to share their experience in the program. Their participation is voluntary; they may choose not to answer any questions and they may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, please complete the following consent form. All forms will be kept confidential and anonymous. All information will be shared only with my supervisors, Dilico staff and stored and locked at Lakehead University for 5 years after the study is completed. A summary of the research findings will be available to you once the research is completed. Your child will not be identified in any way if the results of this study are published, or presented in a public forum.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca or by phone at (807) [redacted] You may also contact my research supervisor Dr. Connie Nelson at cnelson@lakeheadu.ca or by phone at (807) 343-8110.

This research has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of the research and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team, please contact Sue Wright at the Research Ethics Board at 343-8283 or swright@lakeheadu.ca.

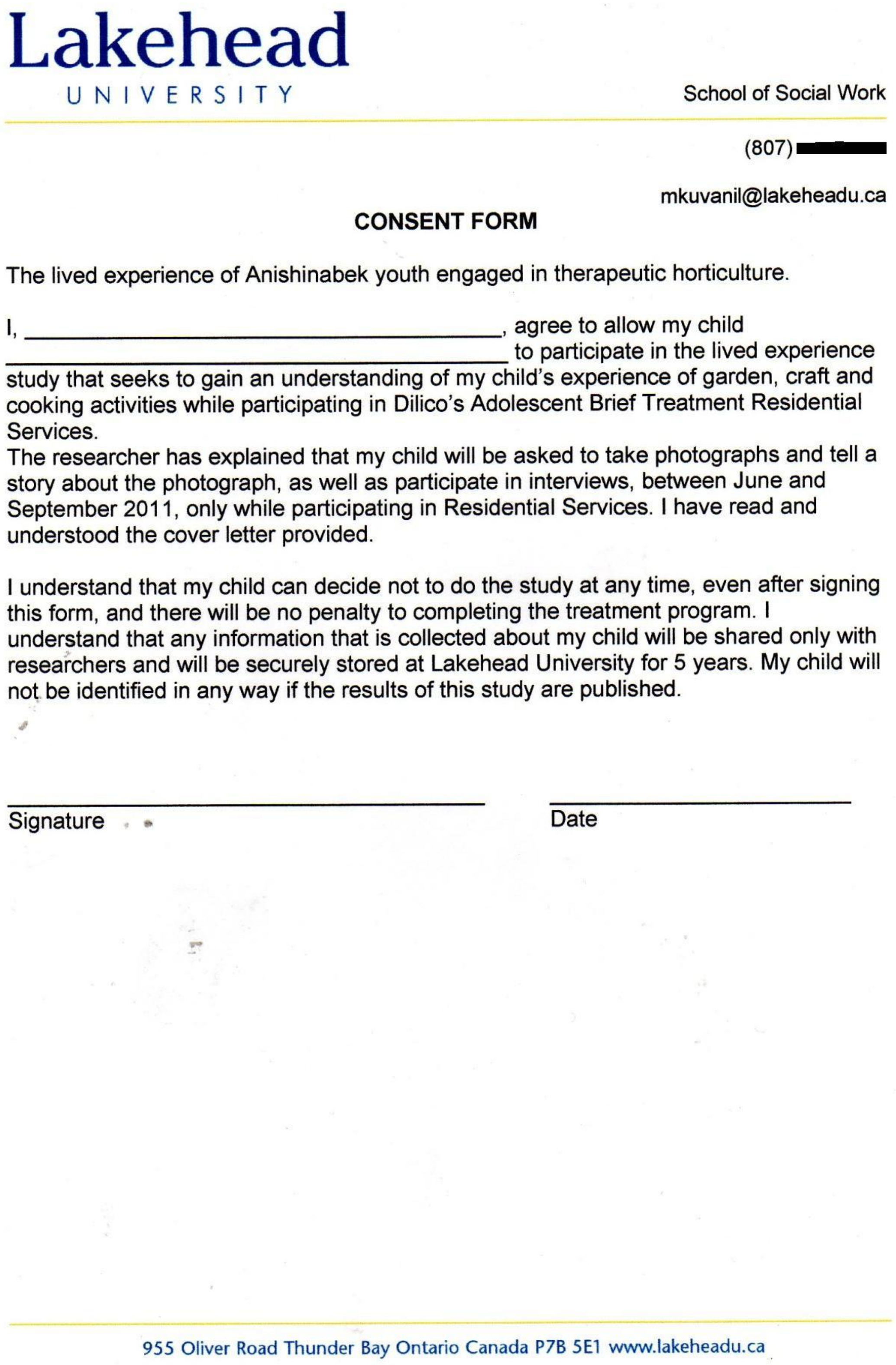
Meegwetch,

Michelle Uvanile

Michelle Uvanile
Masters of Social Work (MSW) Candidate
mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca
(807) [redacted]

955 Oliver Road Thunder Bay Ontario Canada P7B 5E1 www.lakeheadu.ca

Appendix D



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

School of Social Work

(807) [redacted]

mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca

CONSENT FORM

The lived experience of Anishinabek youth engaged in therapeutic horticulture.

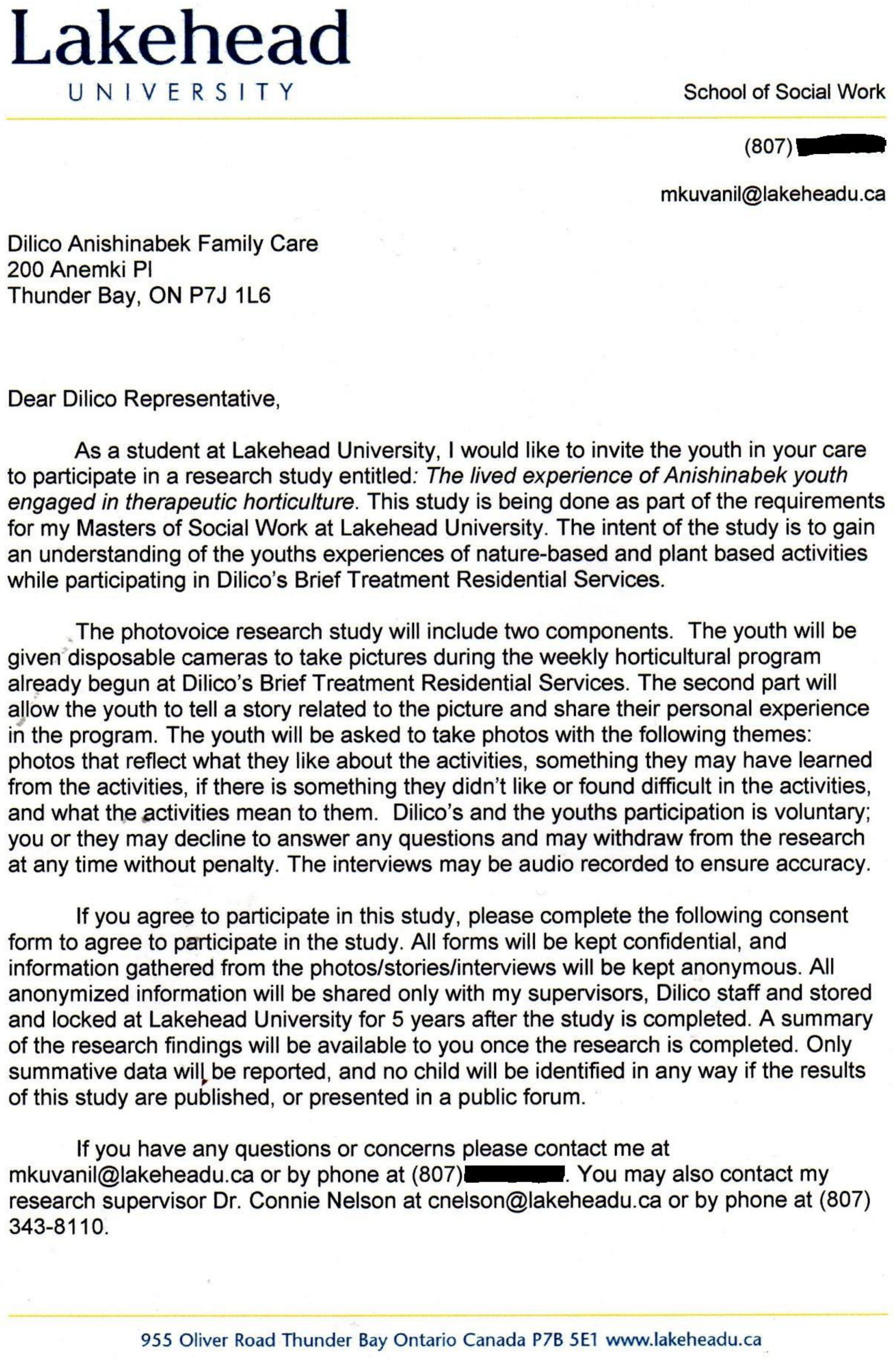
I, ______________________________, agree to allow my child ______________________________ to participate in the lived experience study that seeks to gain an understanding of my child's experience of garden, craft and cooking activities while participating in Dilico's Adolescent Brief Treatment Residential Services.
The researcher has explained that my child will be asked to take photographs and tell a story about the photograph, as well as participate in interviews, between June and September 2011, only while participating in Residential Services. I have read and understood the cover letter provided.

I understand that my child can decide not to do the study at any time, even after signing this form, and there will be no penalty to completing the treatment program. I understand that any information that is collected about my child will be shared only with researchers and will be securely stored at Lakehead University for 5 years. My child will not be identified in any way if the results of this study are published.

______________________________ ______________________
Signature Date

955 Oliver Road Thunder Bay Ontario Canada P7B 5E1 www.lakeheadu.ca

Appendix E (1 of 2)



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

School of Social Work

(807) [redacted]

mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care
200 Anemki Pl
Thunder Bay, ON P7J 1L6

Dear Dilico Representative,

As a student at Lakehead University, I would like to invite the youth in your care to participate in a research study entitled: *The lived experience of Anishinabek youth engaged in therapeutic horticulture*. This study is being done as part of the requirements for my Masters of Social Work at Lakehead University. The intent of the study is to gain an understanding of the youths experiences of nature-based and plant based activities while participating in Dilico's Brief Treatment Residential Services.

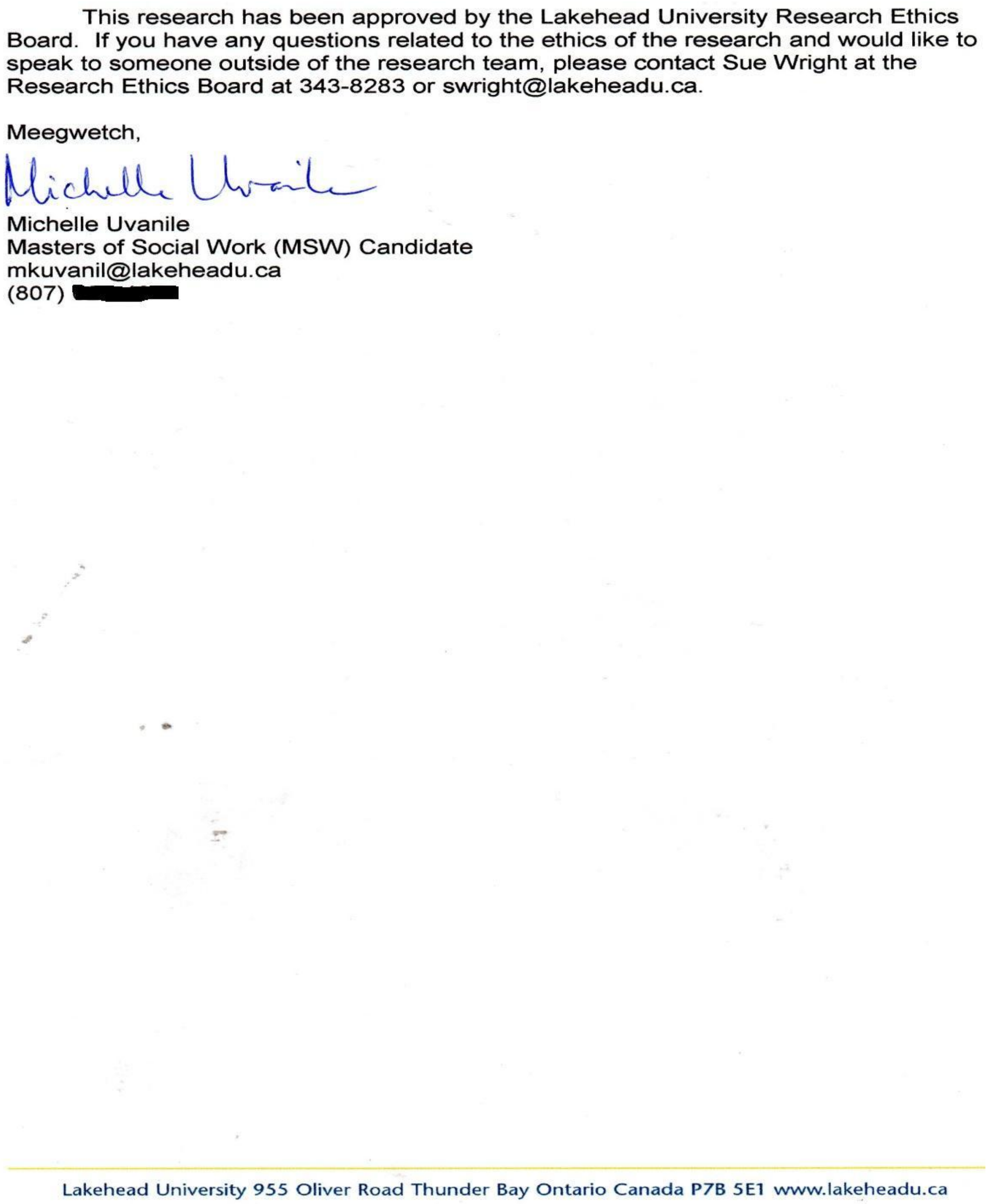
The photovoice research study will include two components. The youth will be given disposable cameras to take pictures during the weekly horticultural program already begun at Dilico's Brief Treatment Residential Services. The second part will allow the youth to tell a story related to the picture and share their personal experience in the program. The youth will be asked to take photos with the following themes: photos that reflect what they like about the activities, something they may have learned from the activities, if there is something they didn't like or found difficult in the activities, and what the activities mean to them. Dilico's and the youths participation is voluntary; you or they may decline to answer any questions and may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty. The interviews may be audio recorded to ensure accuracy.

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the following consent form to agree to participate in the study. All forms will be kept confidential, and information gathered from the photos/stories/interviews will be kept anonymous. All anonymized information will be shared only with my supervisors, Dilico staff and stored and locked at Lakehead University for 5 years after the study is completed. A summary of the research findings will be available to you once the research is completed. Only summative data will be reported, and no child will be identified in any way if the results of this study are published, or presented in a public forum.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca or by phone at (807)[redacted]. You may also contact my research supervisor Dr. Connie Nelson at cnelson@lakeheadu.ca or by phone at (807) 343-8110.

955 Oliver Road Thunder Bay Ontario Canada P7B 5E1 www.lakeheadu.ca

Appendix E (2 of 2)



This research has been approved by the Lakehead University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions related to the ethics of the research and would like to speak to someone outside of the research team, please contact Sue Wright at the Research Ethics Board at 343-8283 or swright@lakeheadu.ca.

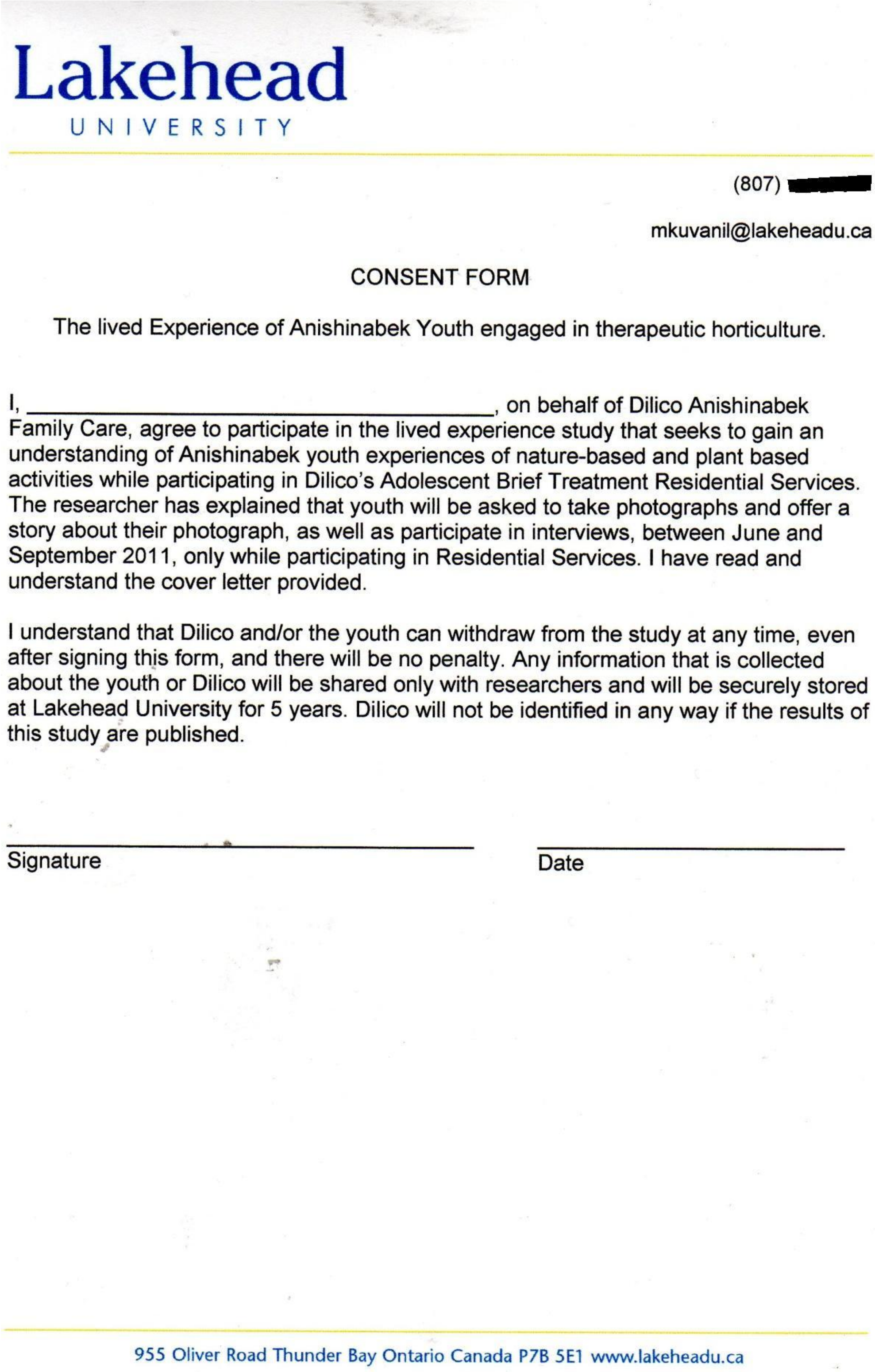
Meegwetch,

Michelle Uvanile

Michelle Uvanile
Masters of Social Work (MSW) Candidate
mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca
(807) [redacted]

Lakehead University 955 Oliver Road Thunder Bay Ontario Canada P7B 5E1 www.lakeheadu.ca

Appendix F



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

(807) [redacted]

mkuvanil@lakeheadu.ca

CONSENT FORM

The lived Experience of Anishinabek Youth engaged in therapeutic horticulture.

I, ______________________________________, on behalf of Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, agree to participate in the lived experience study that seeks to gain an understanding of Anishinabek youth experiences of nature-based and plant based activities while participating in Dilico's Adolescent Brief Treatment Residential Services. The researcher has explained that youth will be asked to take photographs and offer a story about their photograph, as well as participate in interviews, between June and September 2011, only while participating in Residential Services. I have read and understand the cover letter provided.

I understand that Dilico and/or the youth can withdraw from the study at any time, even after signing this form, and there will be no penalty. Any information that is collected about the youth or Dilico will be shared only with researchers and will be securely stored at Lakehead University for 5 years. Dilico will not be identified in any way if the results of this study are published.

______________________________ Signature

______________________ Date

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Appendix G

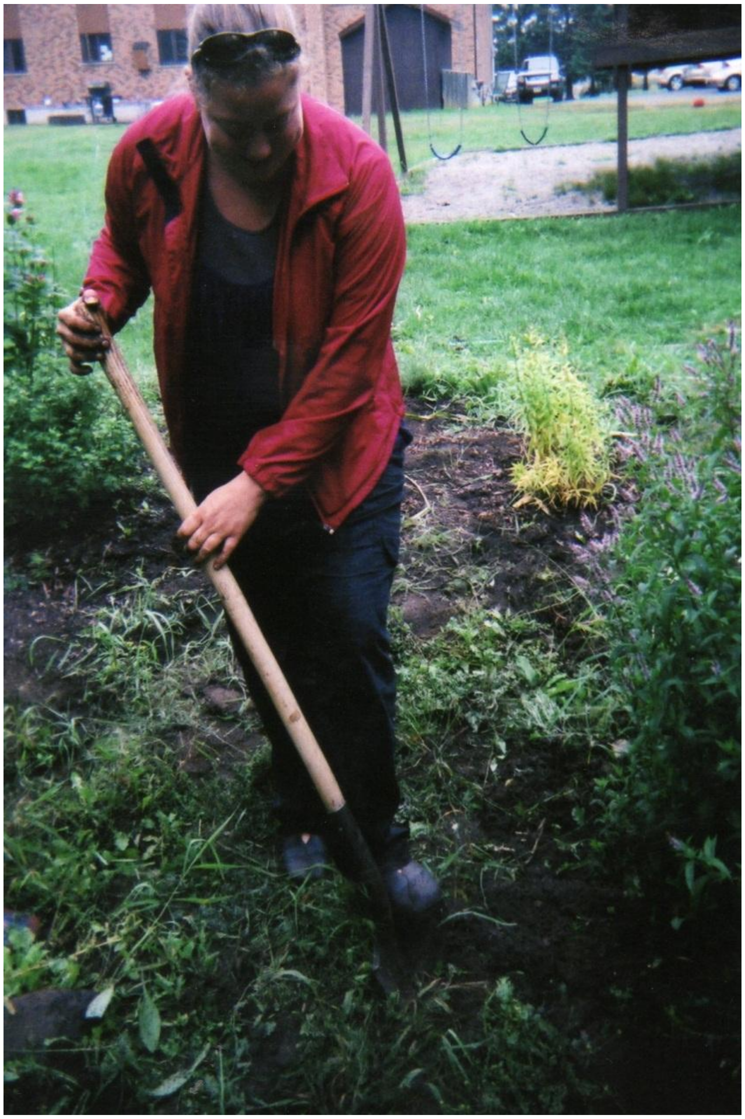
Guide for Photovoice Narrative Questions

1. How does this picture show what you enjoyed most about the garden?
2. How does this picture show what you enjoyed most about cooking?
3. How does this picture show what you enjoyed most about craft activities?
4. How does this photo show something that has been meaningful for you when doing the crafts?
5. How does this photo show something that has been meaningful for you when participating in the garden?
6. How does this photo show something that has been meaningful for you when you were cooking?
7. What does this photo show about what you have learned about yourself from this program?
8. What does this photo show about what you have learned about your identity from participating in this program?
9. What does this photo show about what you have learned about others from these activities?
10. What does this photo show about what you have learned about the land from these activities?
11. What was something that was difficult for you or that you didn't like while doing these activities.

I will use these questions to begin the interviews and will then ask for expansion on an idea as necessary and using reflective listening with the children.

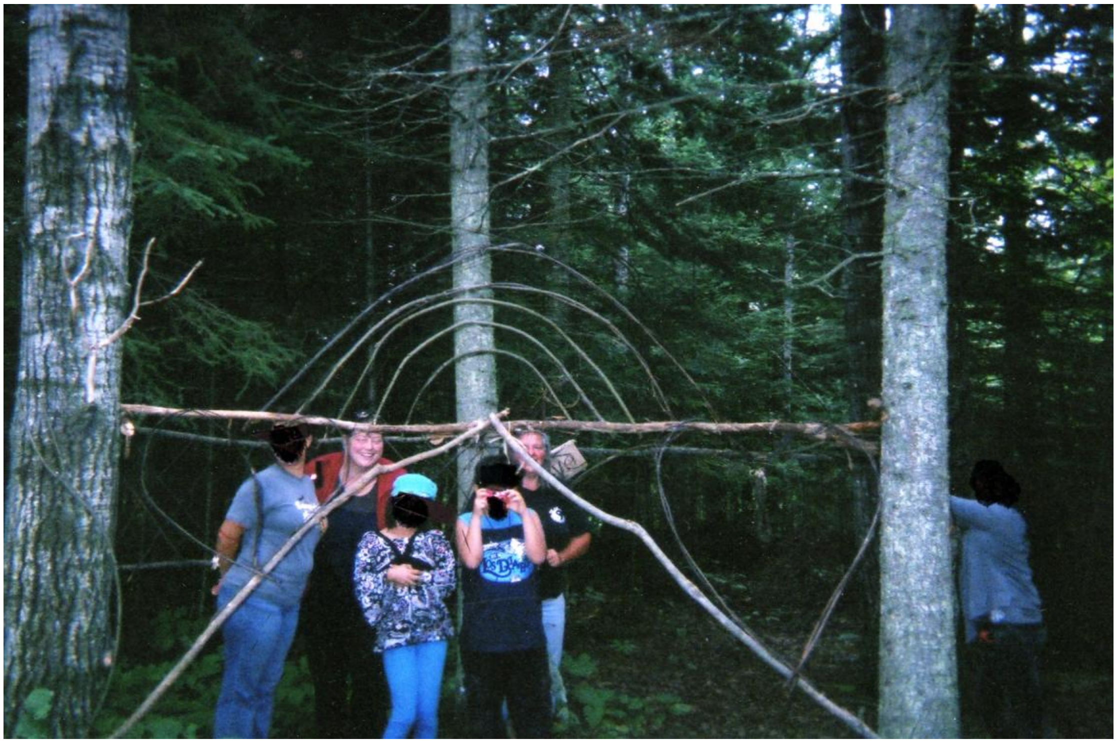
Figures

Figure 1



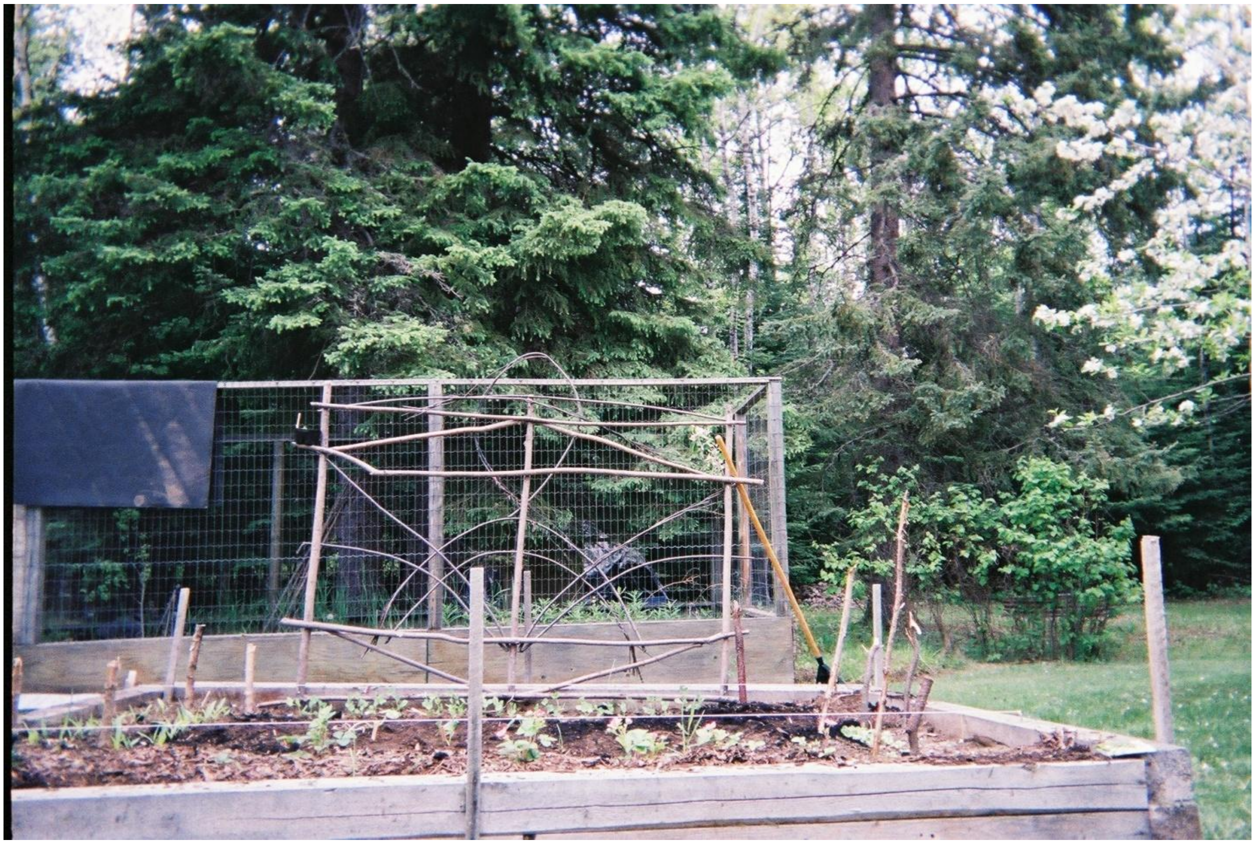
"(laughs) I took a picture of you weeding because it was fun weeding with you"

Figure 2



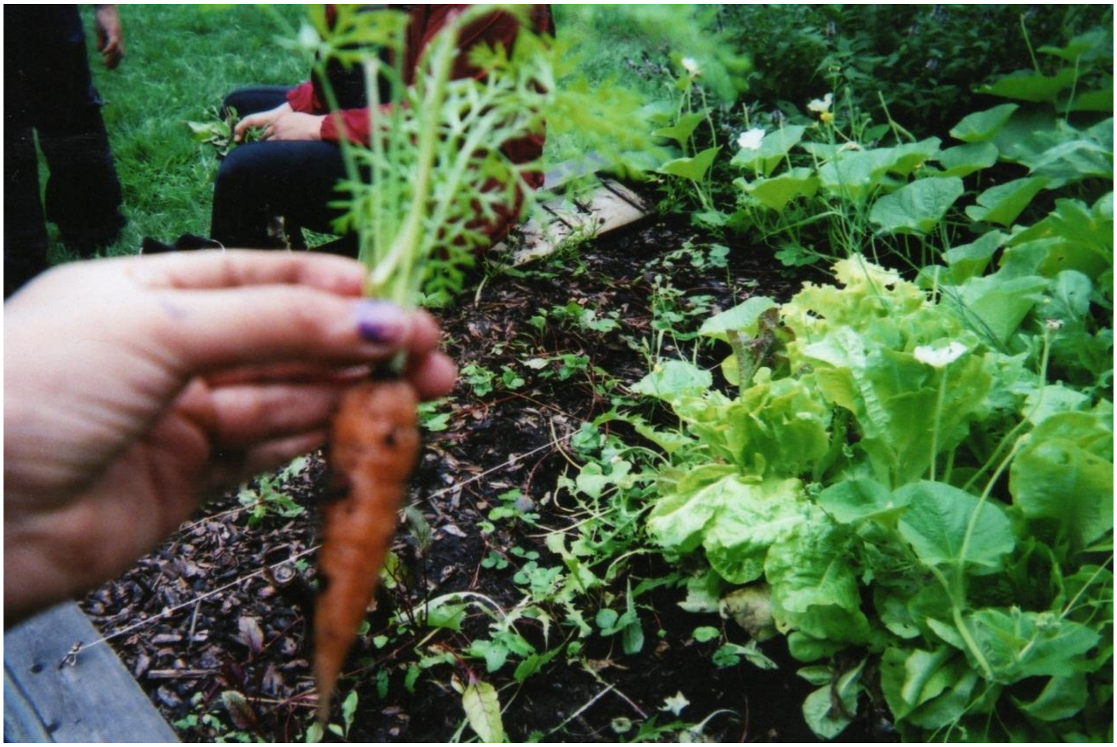
“ This picture is significant because earlier that day I was not interested at all at her workshop ….but I did make an effort and I did appreciate my big structure.”

Figure 3



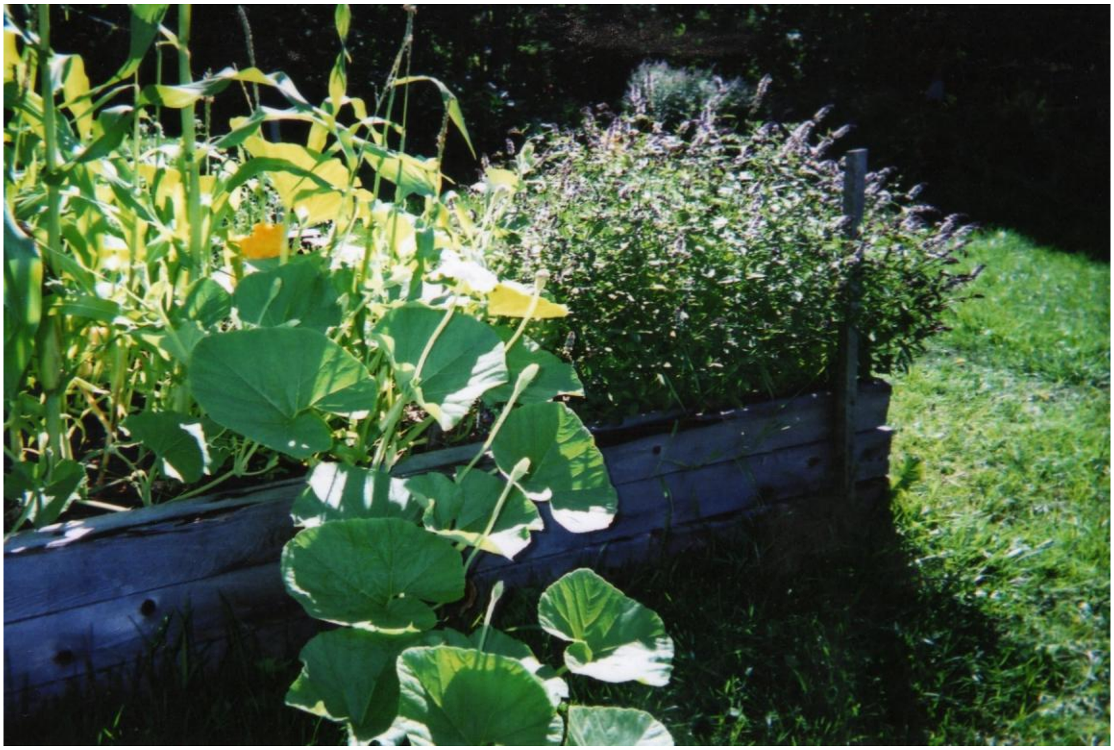
"It's about the uh small little garden, the um, the garden bed or something like that. Um, well, I was kind of uh feeling uh, right in the middle a little bit on the good side, more on the good side. Um but I was when I took this picture I was thinking it would be a beautiful picture, and also I did like it".

Figure 4



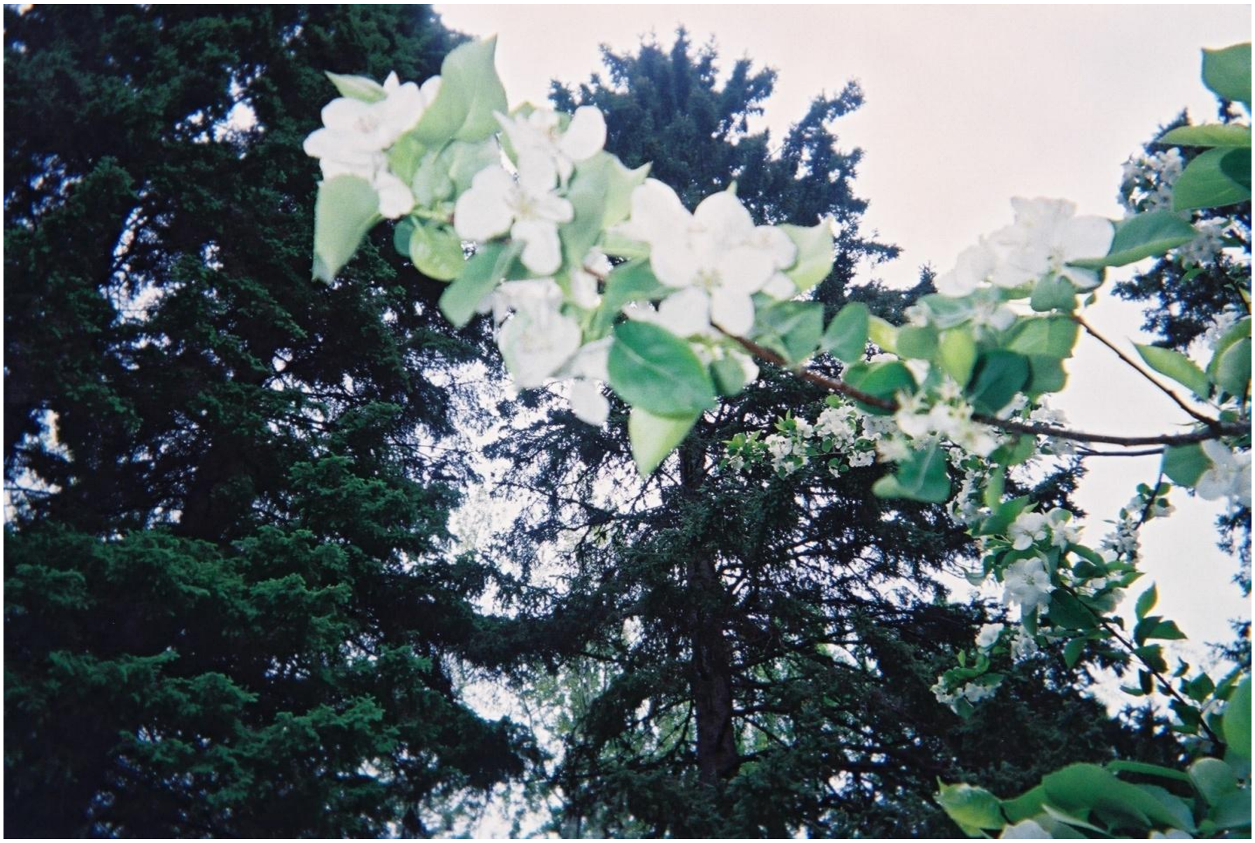
"because that the carrots tasted sooooo good" and *"I felt excited…Carrots! I finally realized those were carrots when Judi told me that it was carrots"*

Figure 5



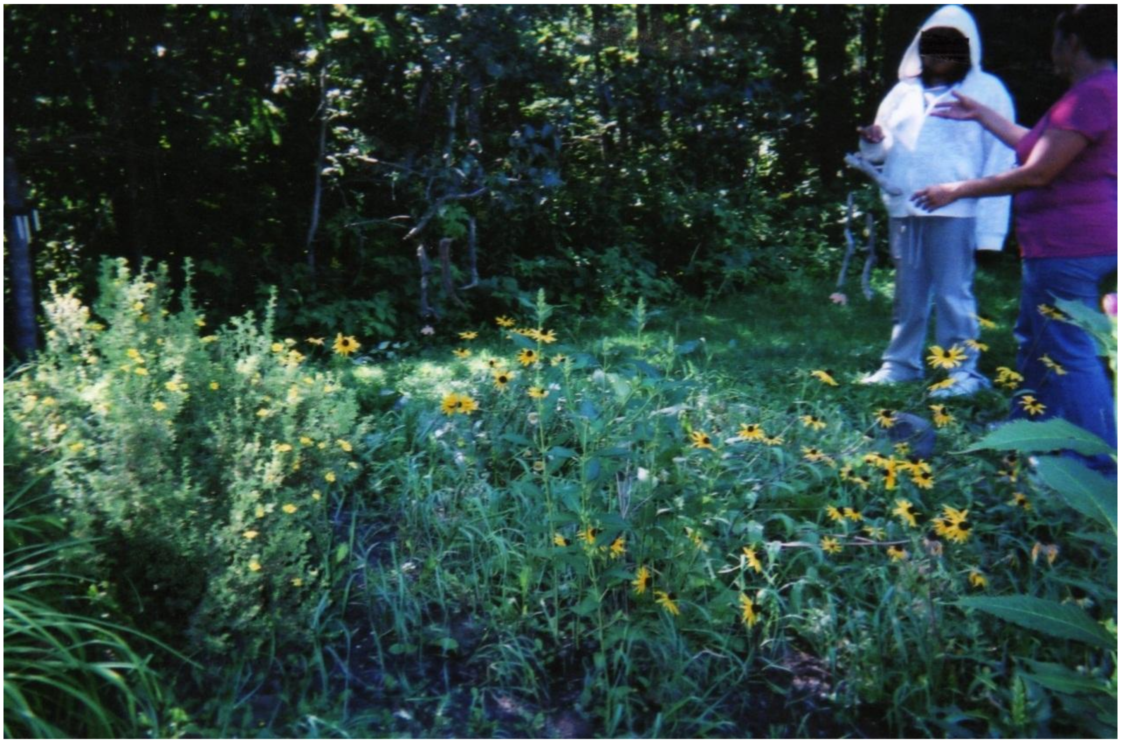
"I just took that picture cause I was trying to make it look pretty and I liked this picture and it looked really nice so I just rather took a picture of it."

Figure 6



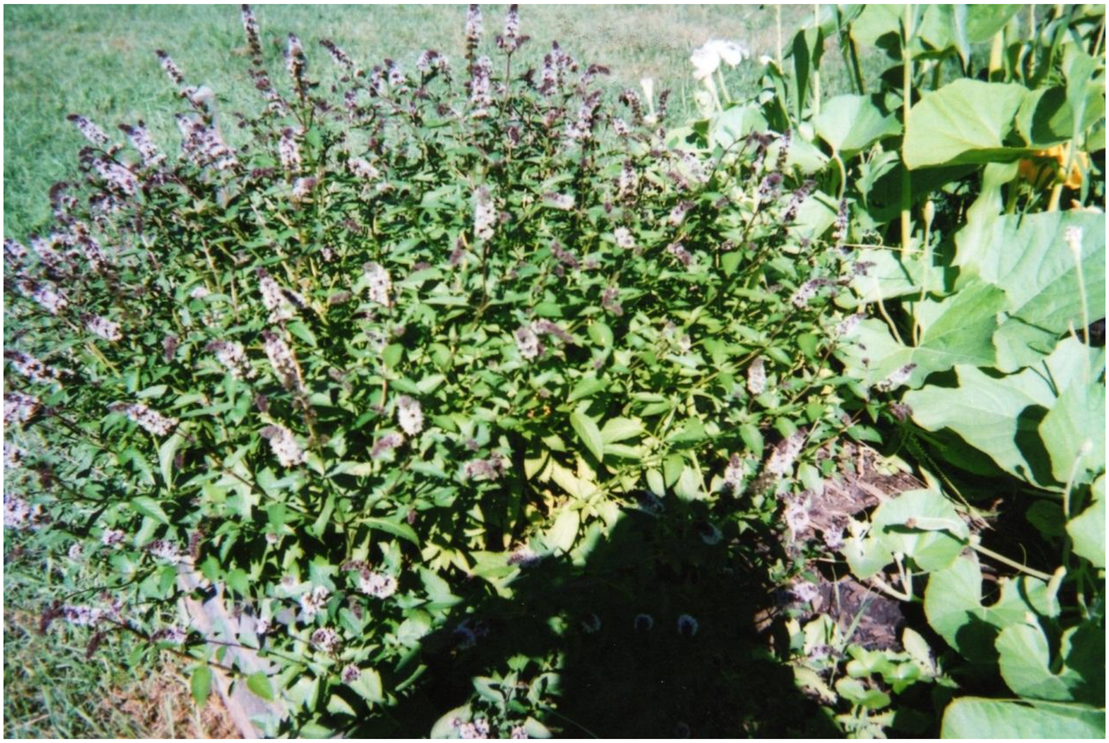
"Sky, trees….Cause it looks beautiful"

Figure 7



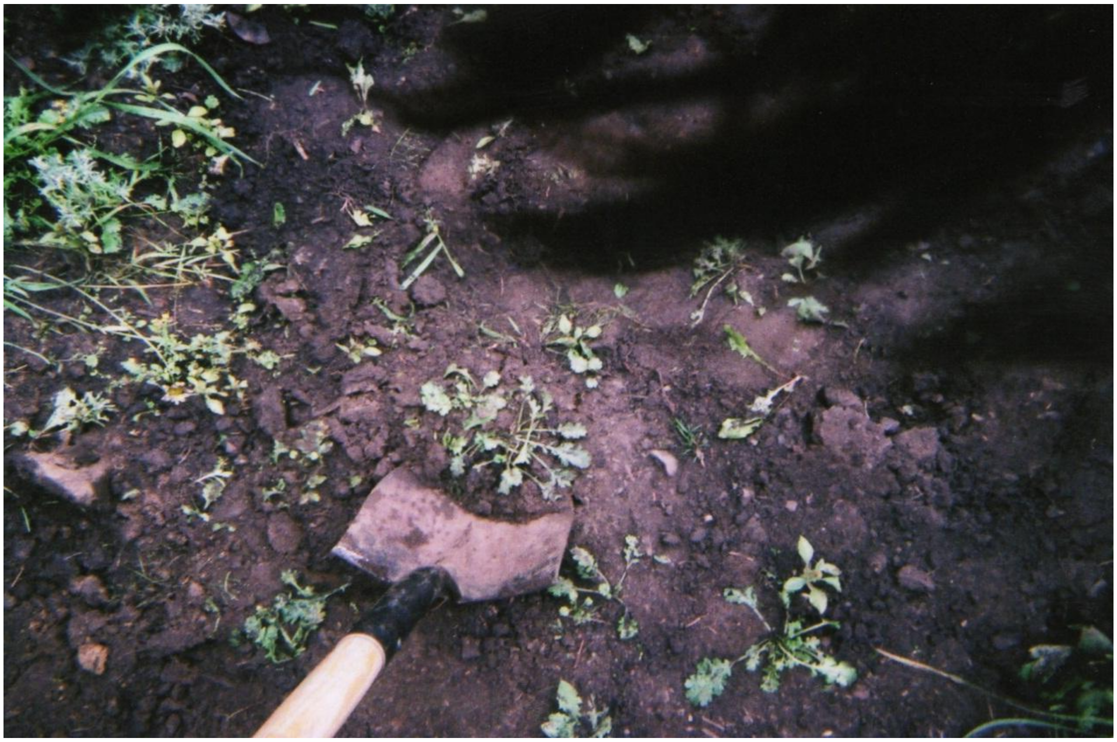
"I liked how they were standing by the yellow flowers"

Figure 8



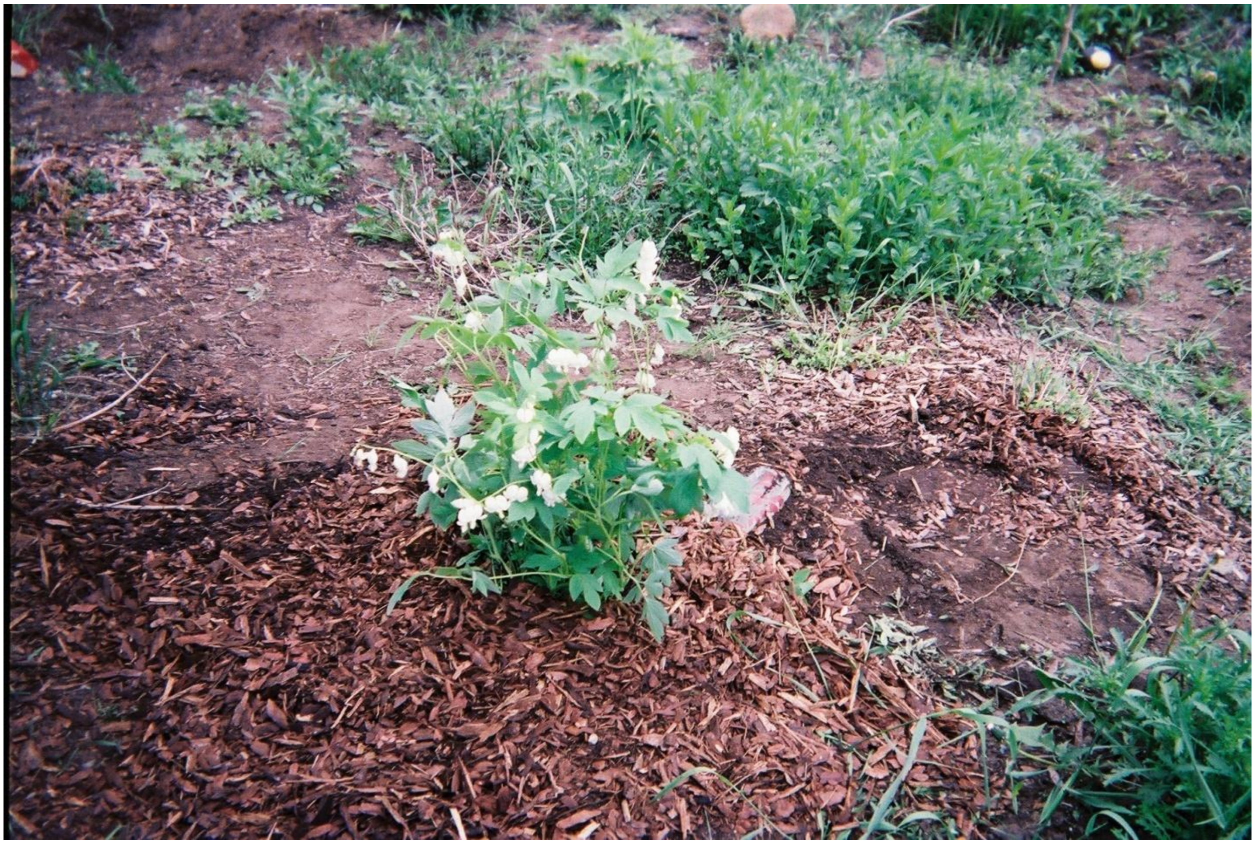
"Ya so I I just wanted to take a picture of this tall cool plant because it smelled like mint"

Figure 9



"pulling, me pulling out the weeds. And I had so fun about it and it was really fun so I took a picture of it"

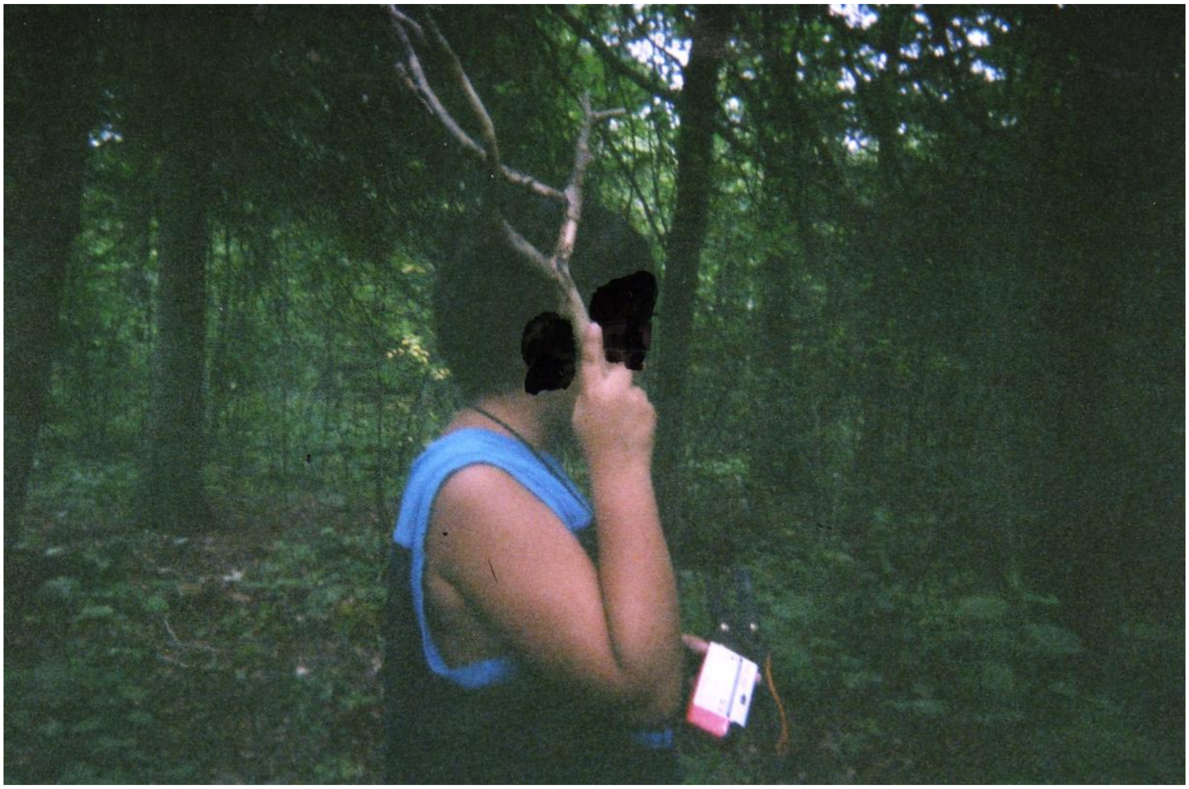
Figure 10



"the bleeding hearts…. in the garden…. in the north"

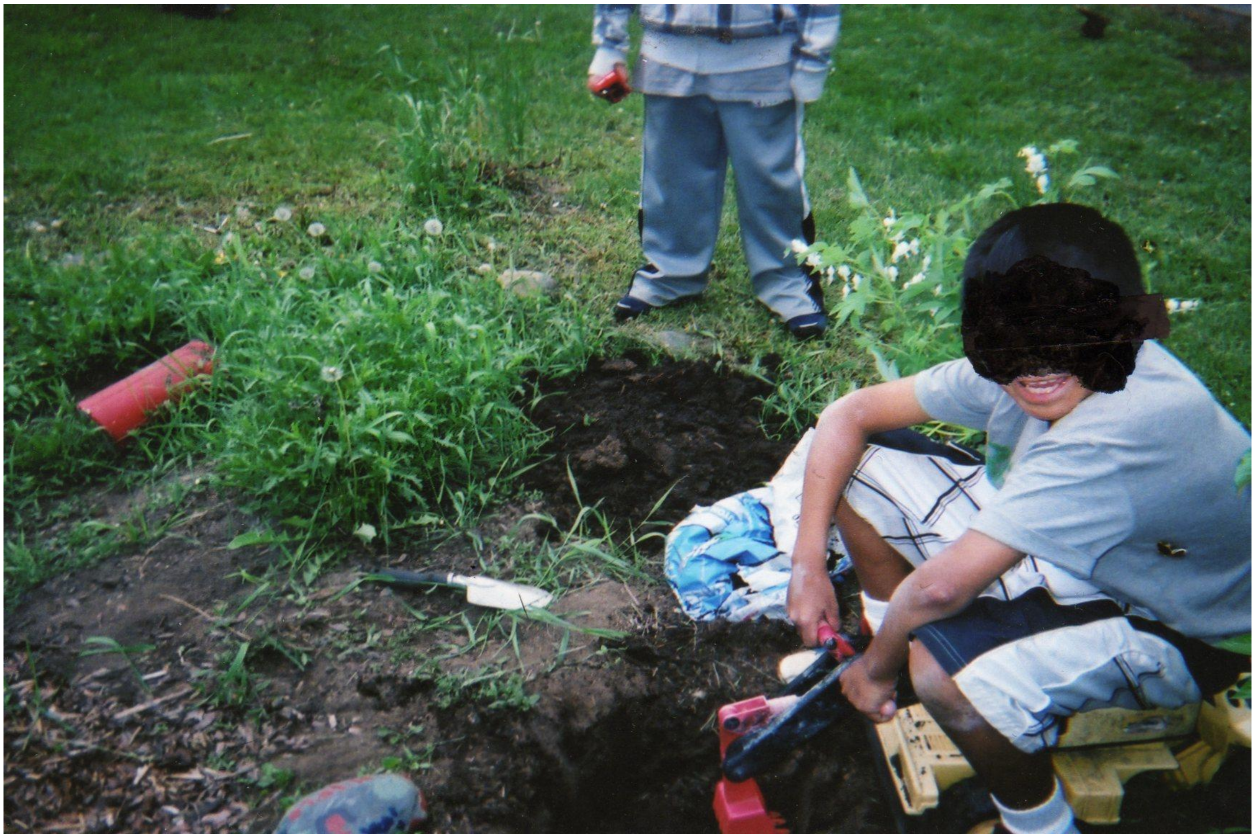
"I helped uh put some of the soil on and put on the uh what are those things called?....the mulch…to stop roo or prevent roots..oh weeds..I mean ya weeds"

Figure 11



“well he was making the antler look like a moose antler that’s why,…it was kinda funny, ya”

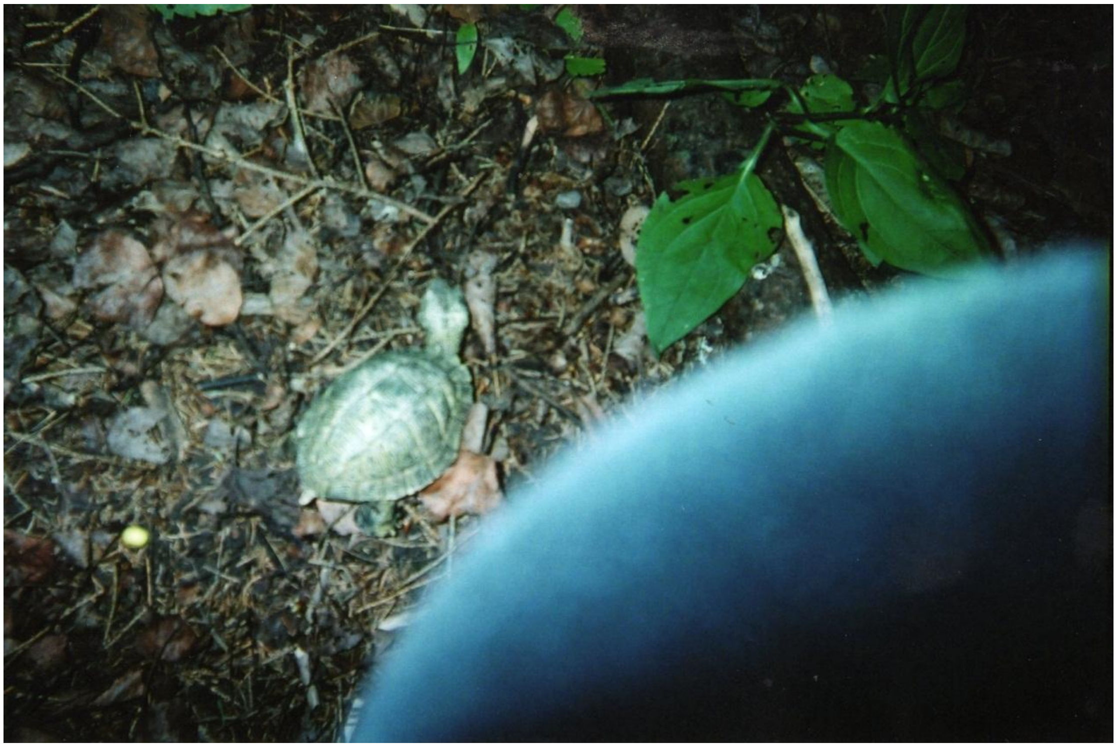
Figure 12



[redacted]

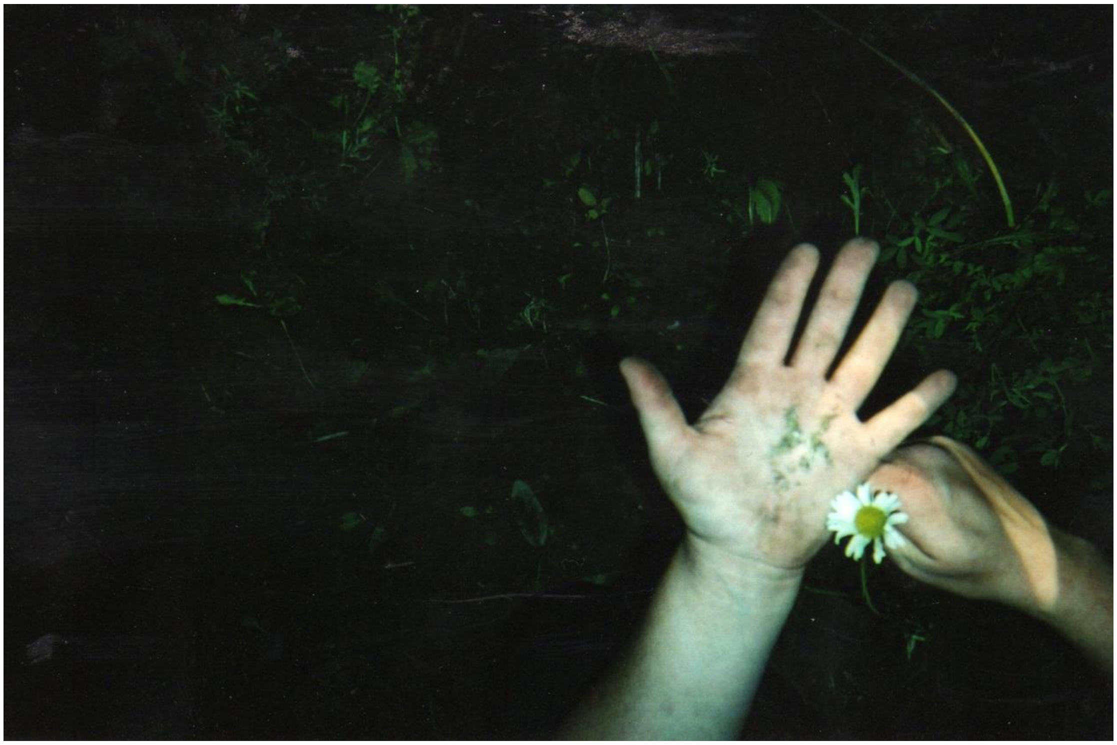
“(Name) laughing while he was planting (smiles and laughs)”

Figure 13



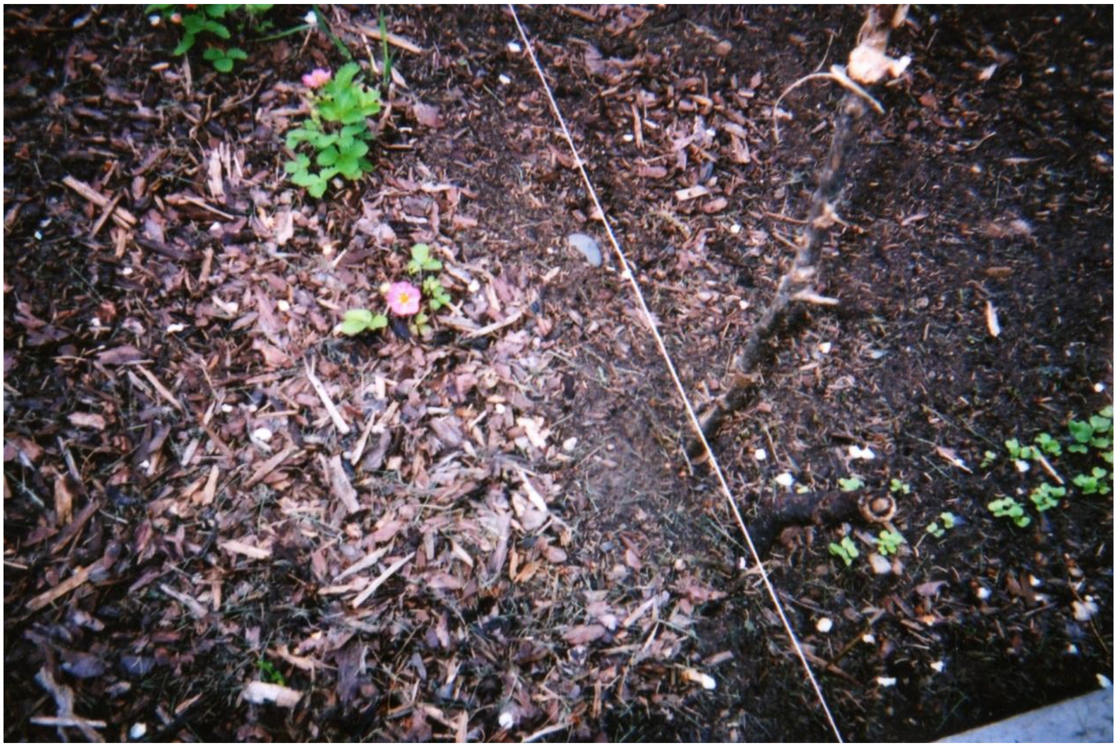
"a turtle…in the bush…We went exploring in the bush"

Figure 14



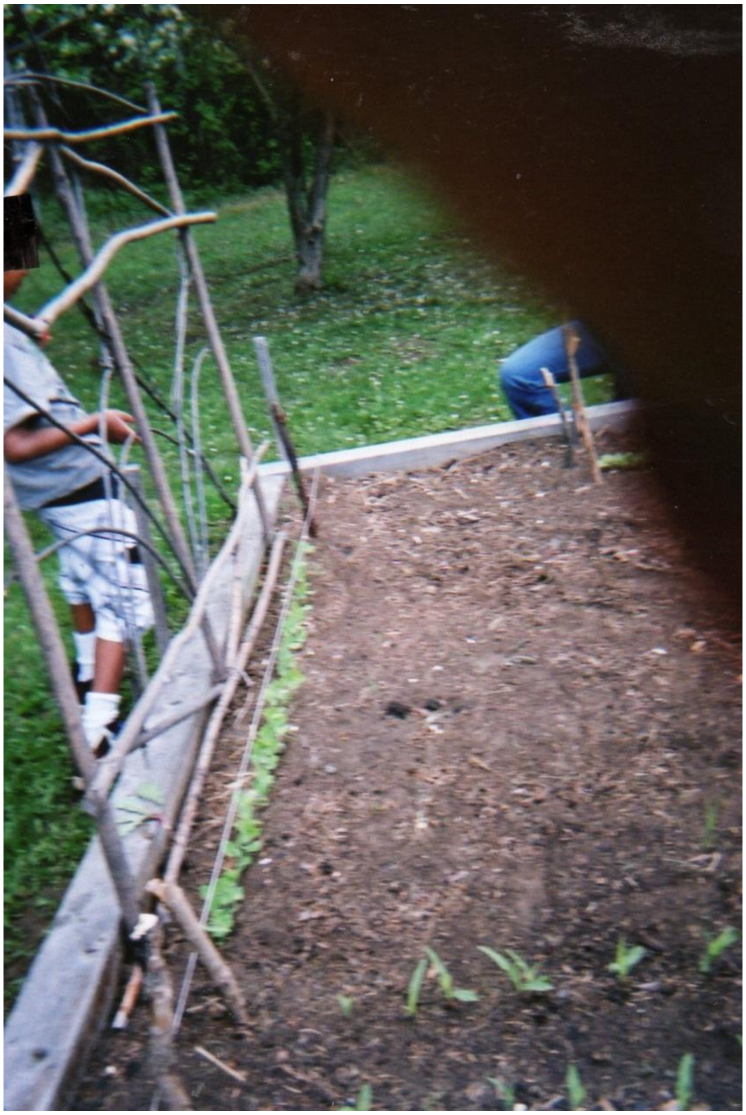
"Oh Ya! Seeds!....they came from the daisy"

Figure 15



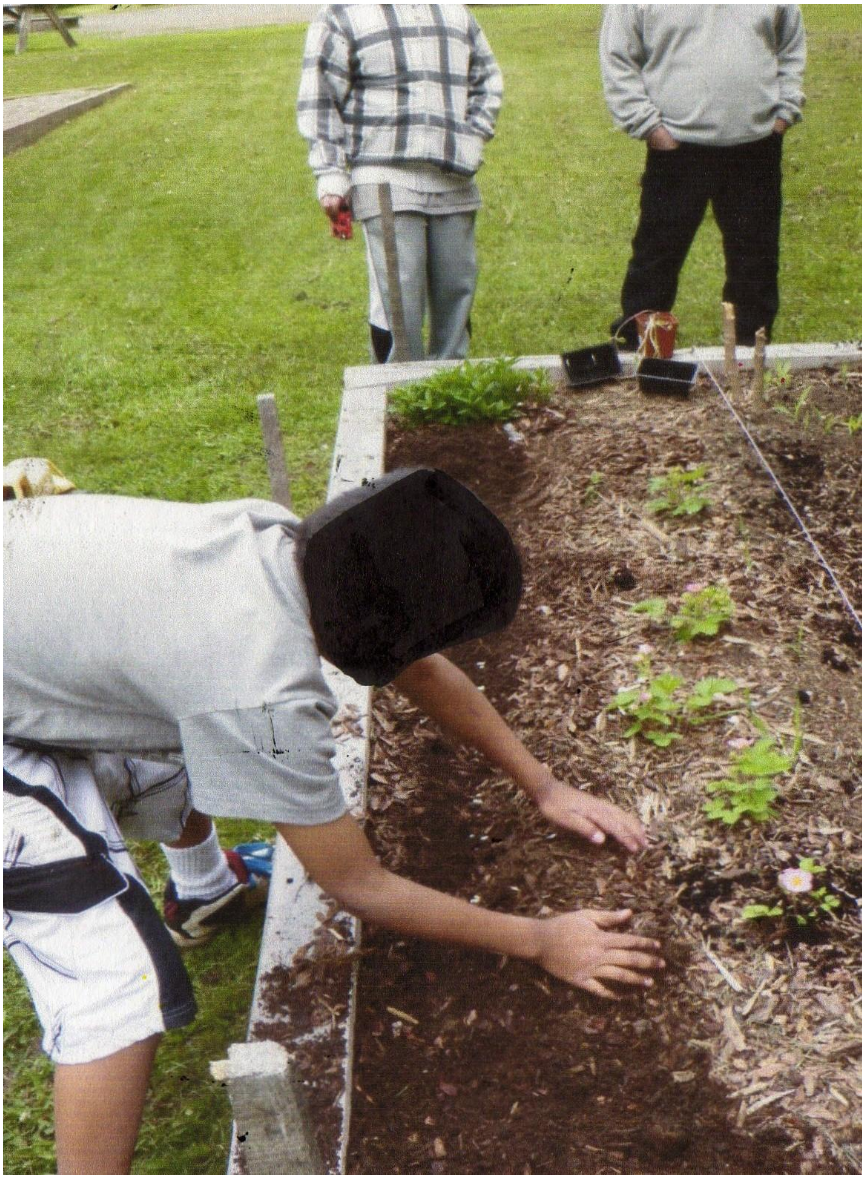
“the strawberries that made it through the winter”

Figure 16



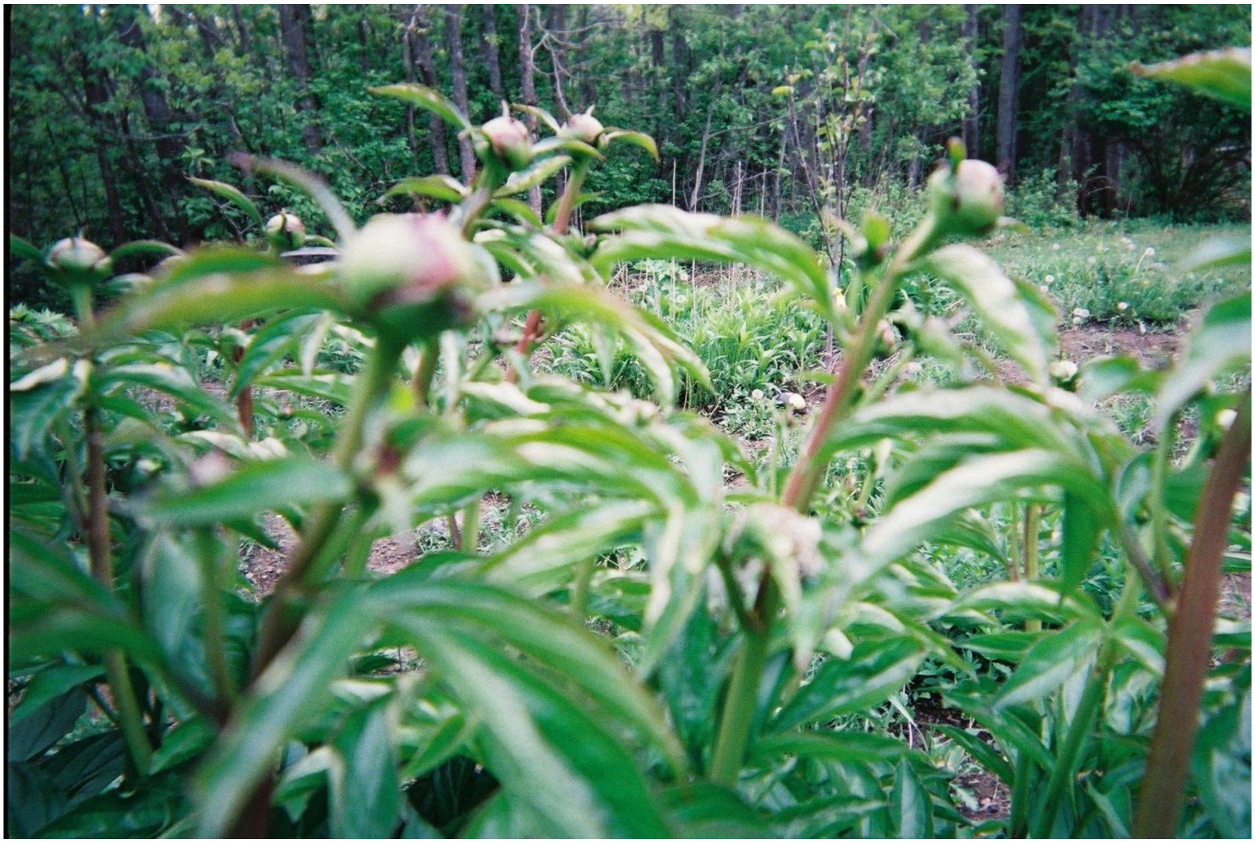
"took a picture of the crops that we planted"

Figure 17



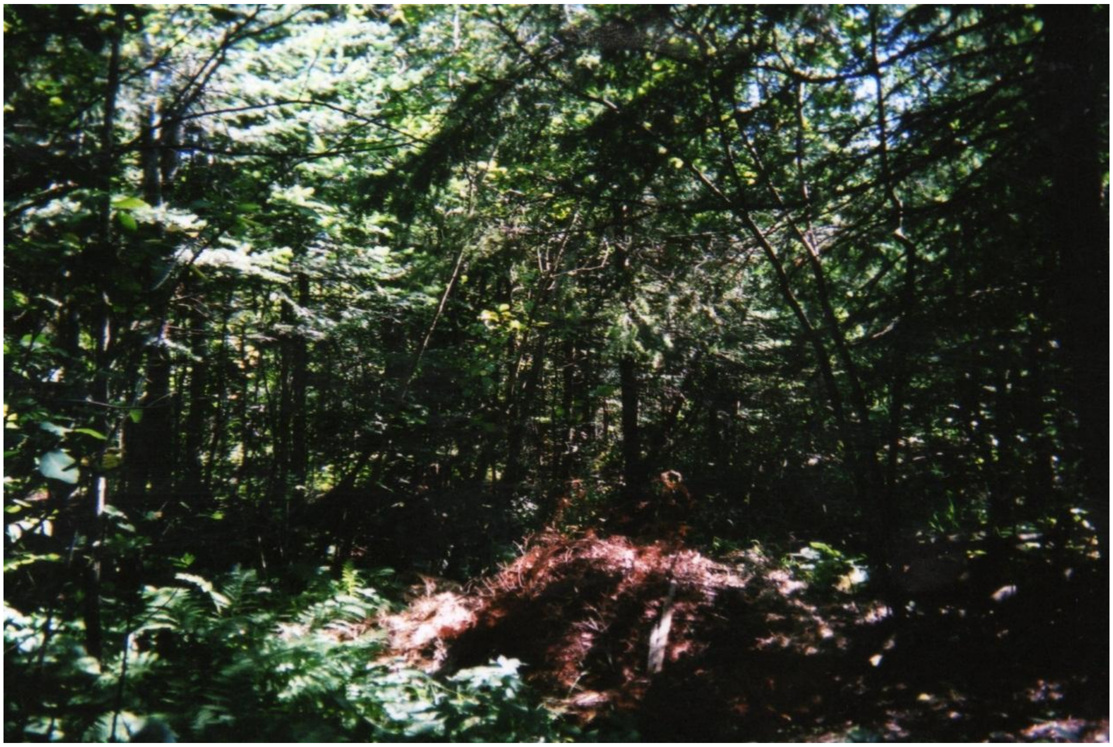
I am amazed to see (name) so focused and attentive in planting the corn. He is so methodic and took great care to ensure the seeds were planted just right. He seems to excel when there is active, physical work to be done; a tangible job, and a request for assistance and he's on it.

Figure 18



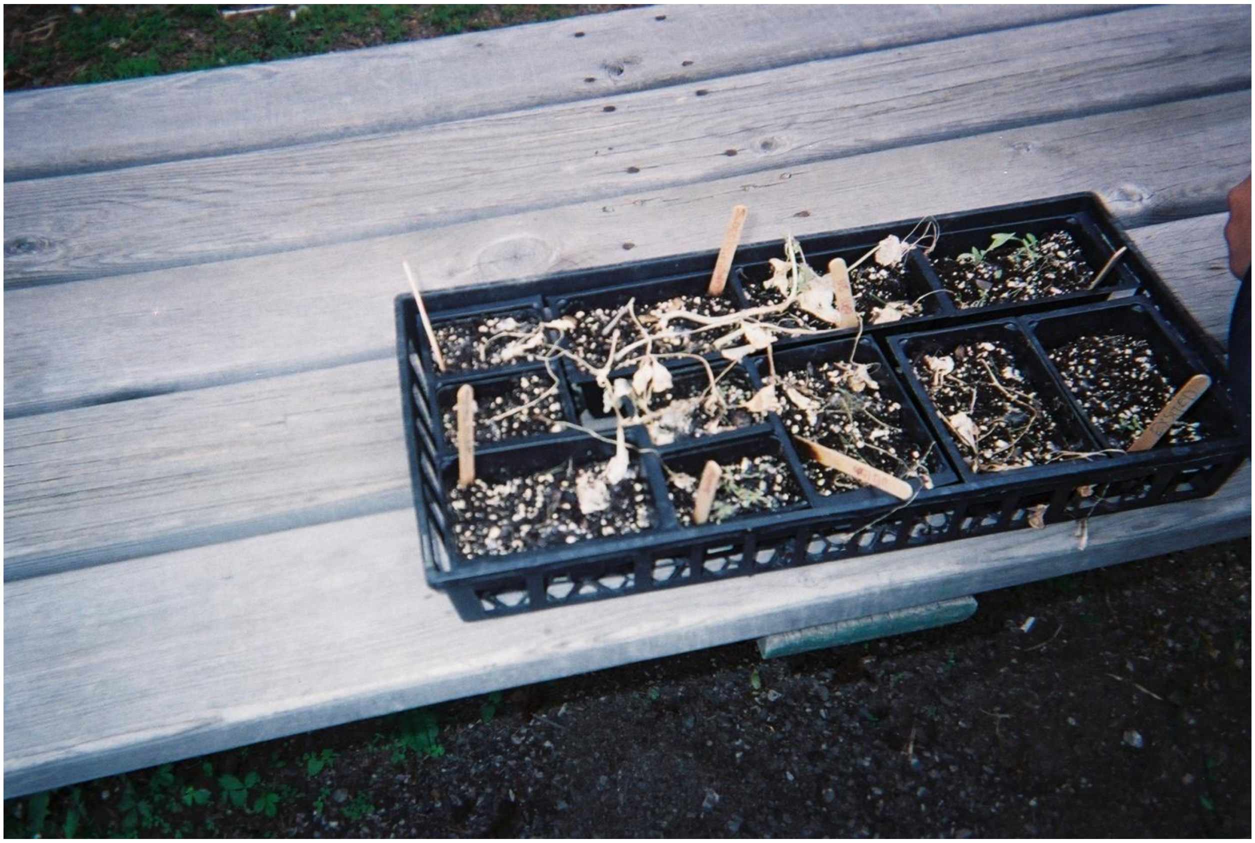
"it was a closeup of ants moving around on the peonies and helping out the peonies basically."

Figure 19



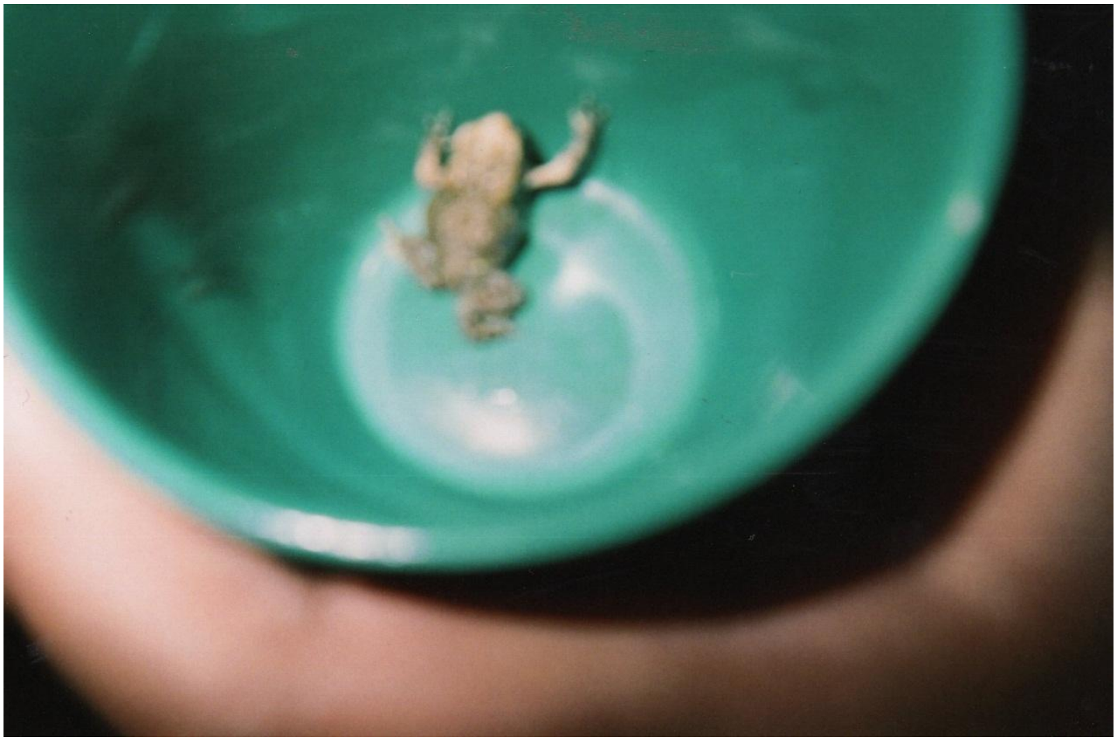
"I like that you guys are composting….it turns it into dirt".

Figure 20



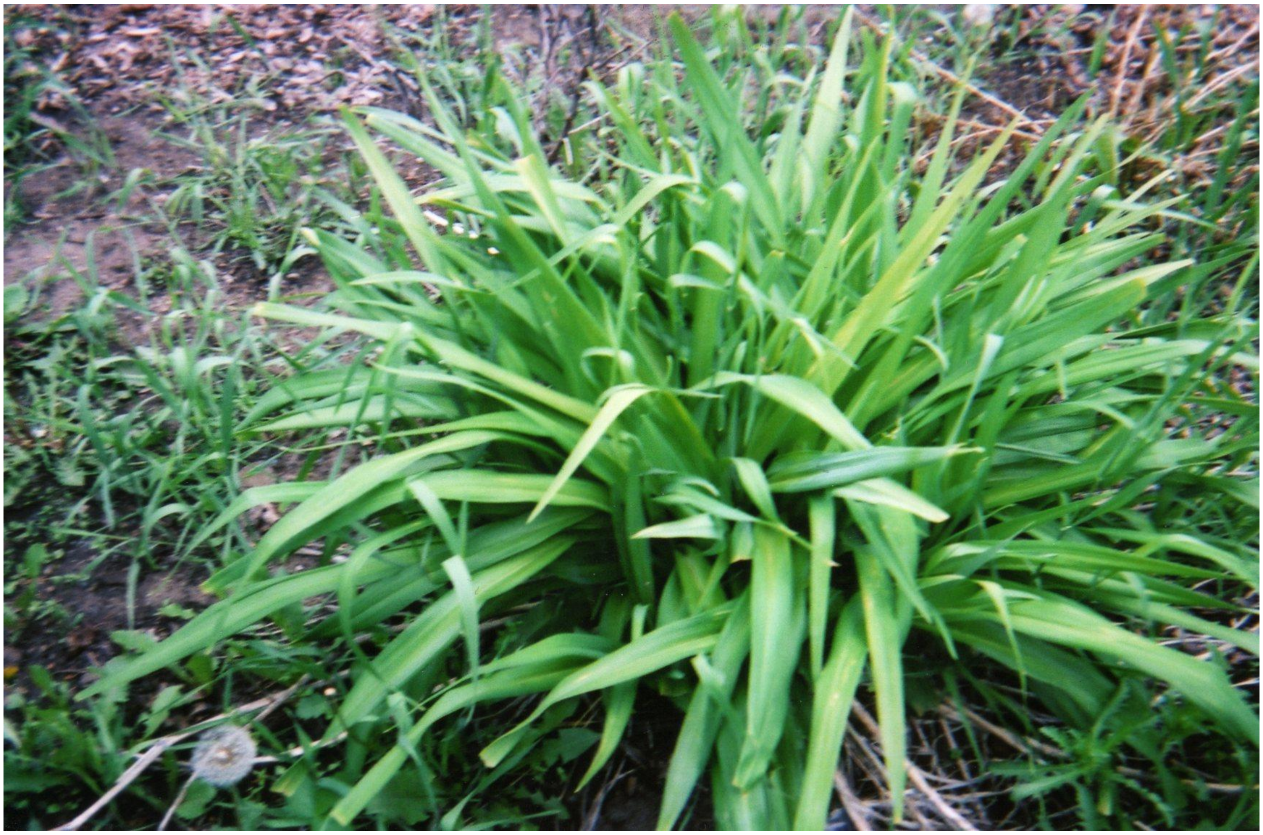
"uh a pumpkin…it's it's um, because it's bad….it died..because they didn't have enough water"

Figure 21



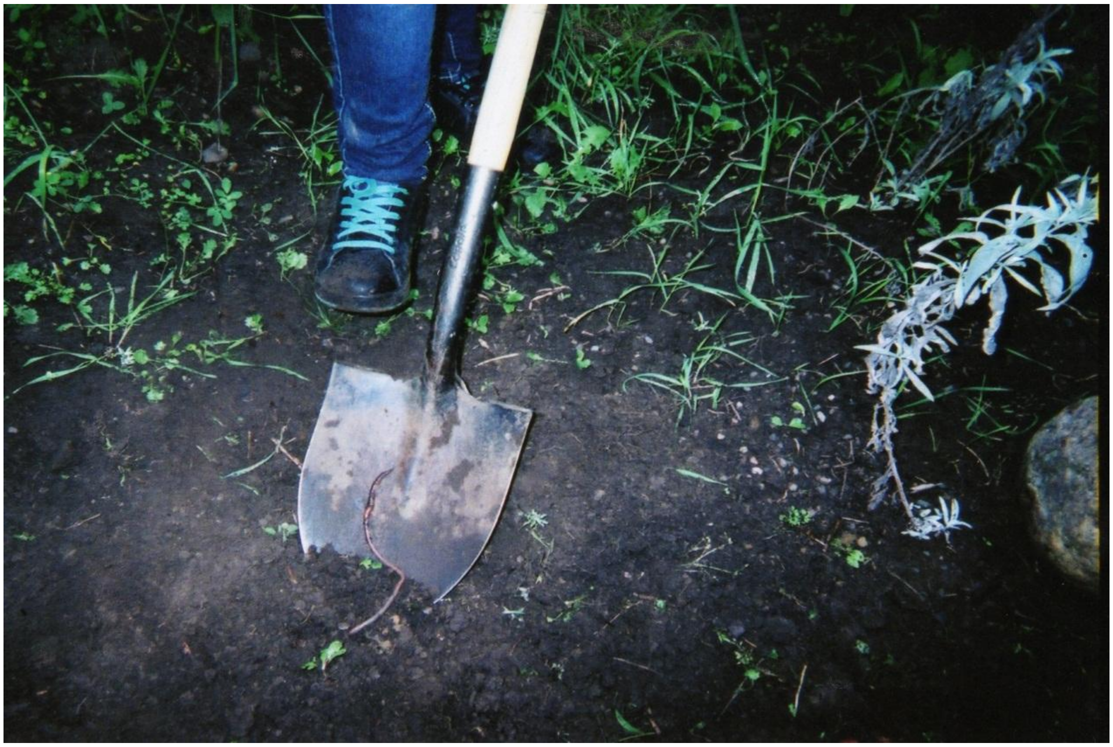
"A frog that we caught bouncing around the grass…and then someone, then I ran to go get the cup and then we put it in there….for a while and then we put it back on the rock…because it belongs to the wild."

Figure 22



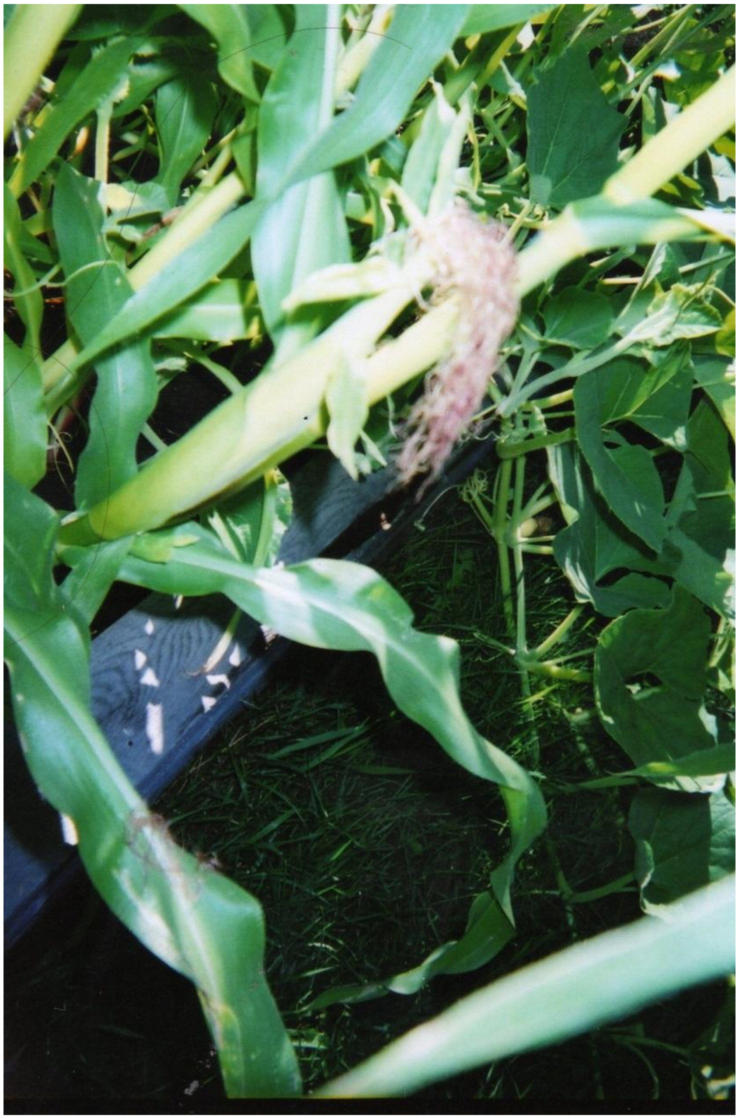
"um, Lillies. And that's my favourite, my mom's fave, favourite flower…..ya, and it's mine too…of lots of fun things we used to do...you know at the pow wow thing um, at the cascades I think, ya know there, that spinny thing, the chair spinny thing…and they reminds me of my mom, cause she always pushed me and I almost peed my pants (laughing) cause I was laughing too much"

Figure 23



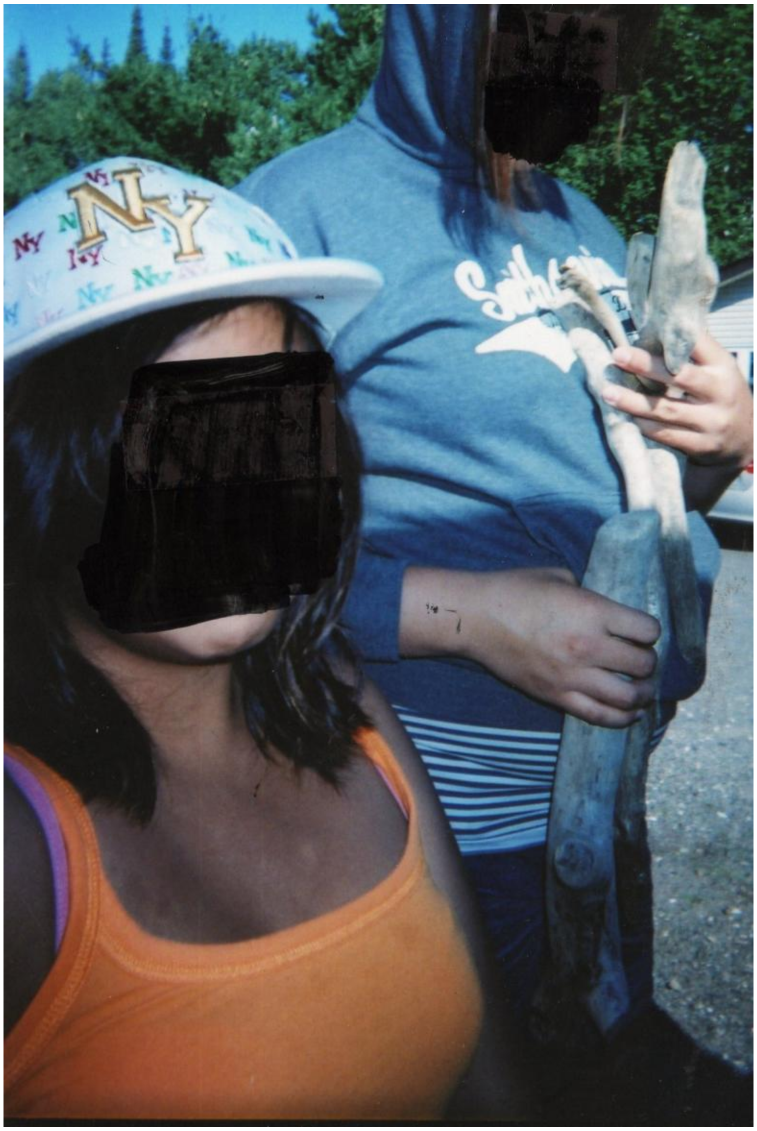
"It's about us, we found an earth worm for our garden, which is really special because earth worms, they're really good for a garden and for us right now it was like a gift from the Creator for our garden, and we should all thank him. Now, our crops should be living better"

Figure 24



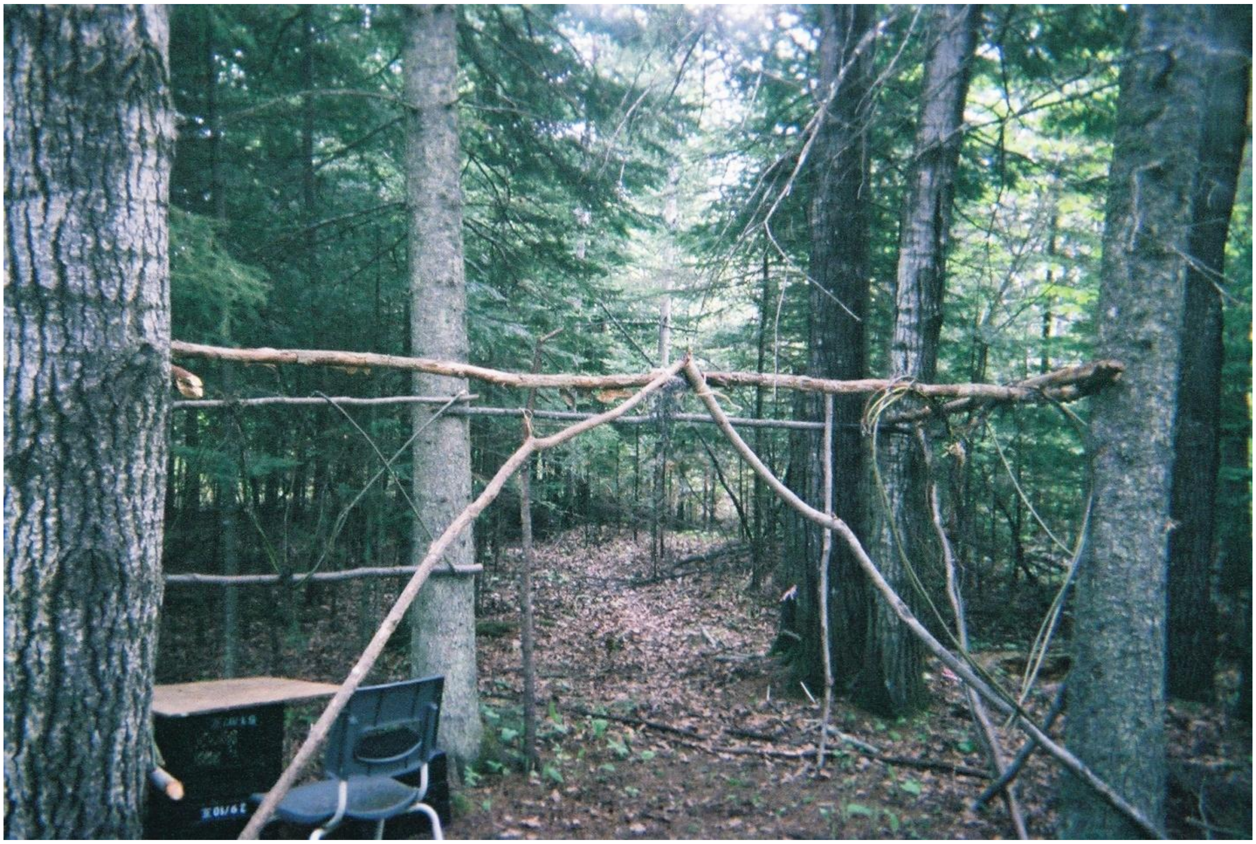
"This one is about the corn….I took a picture of the corn because um it was growing and we can eat it for the September harvest feast we are going to have later"

Figure 25



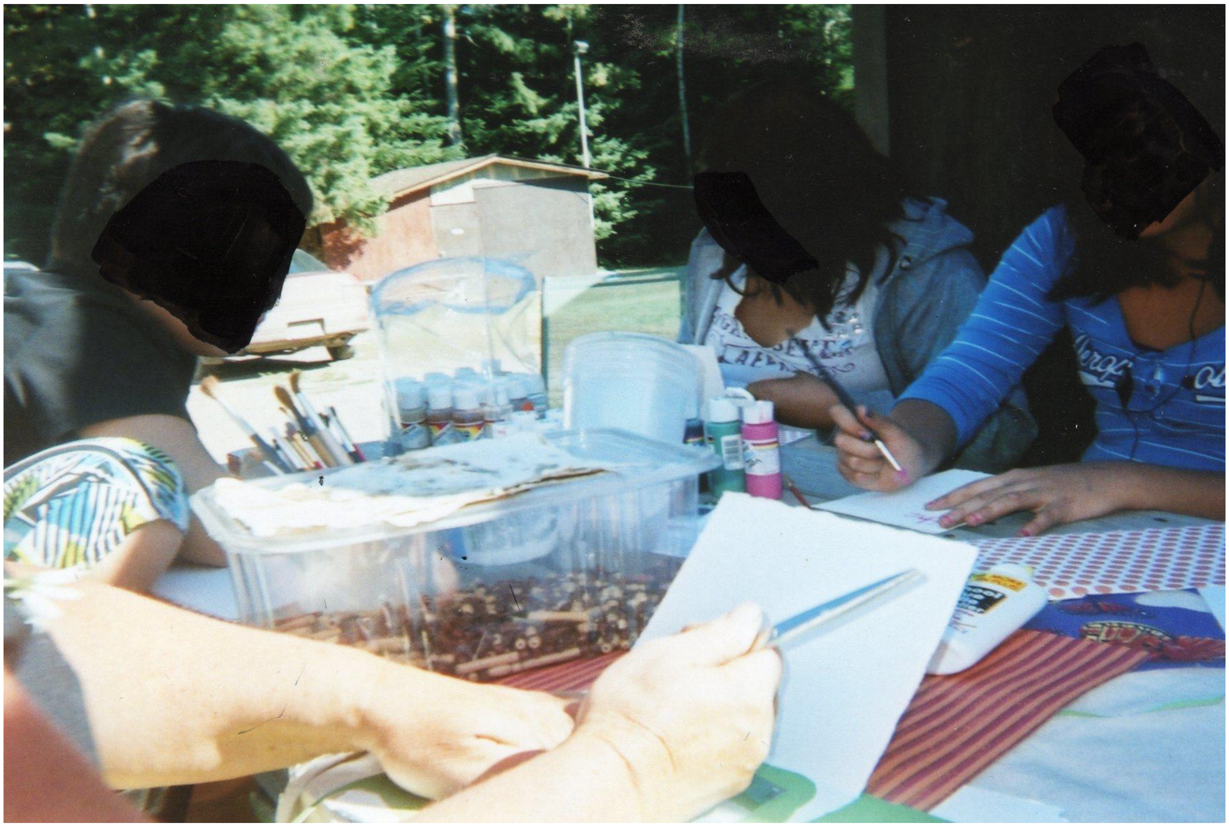
"We were taking a picture and we were like making um, we were making wood, wood, what's that called again?...the Wood windchimes, and we were having fun making them but then (name) she, I took a picture of her because she had a to use a nail to get it over with. ...it was awesome. Just kidding. It was kinda we, I felt sorry for her cause she was mad."

Figure 26



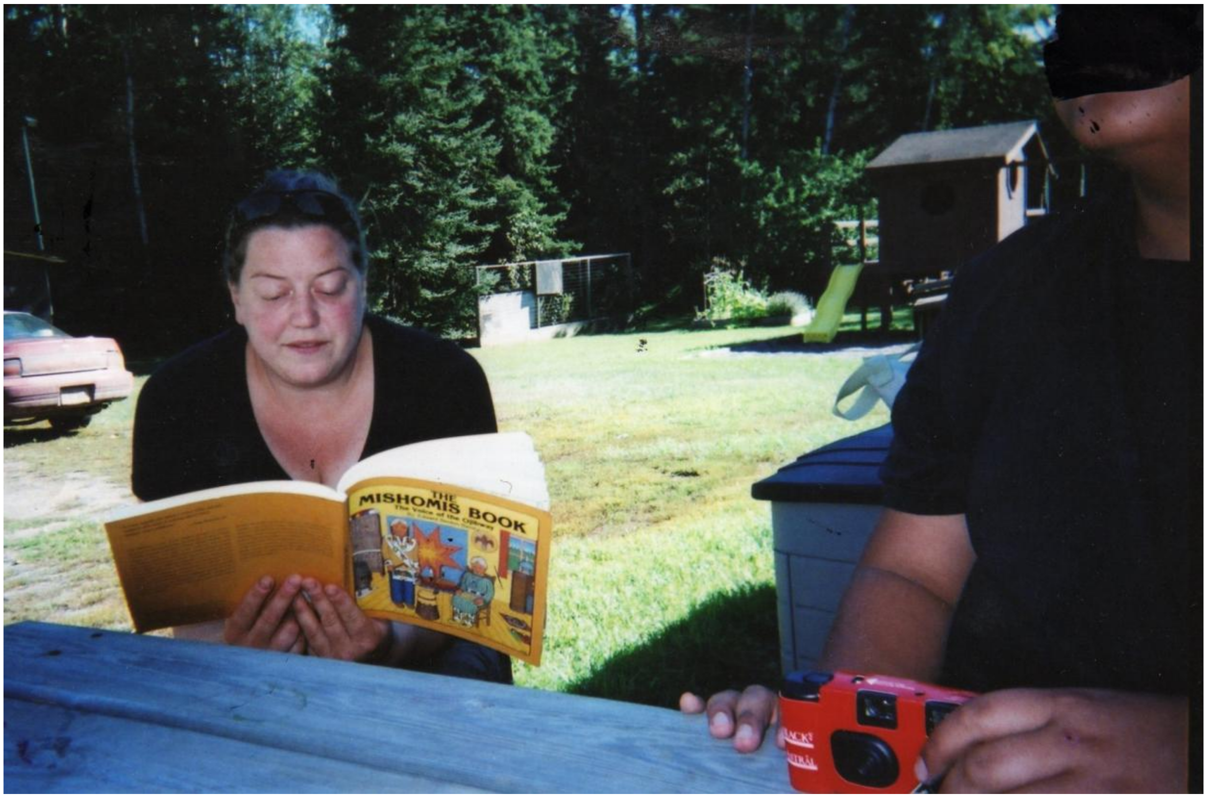
"It looks fancy!...sticks, the chair…Table"

Figure 27



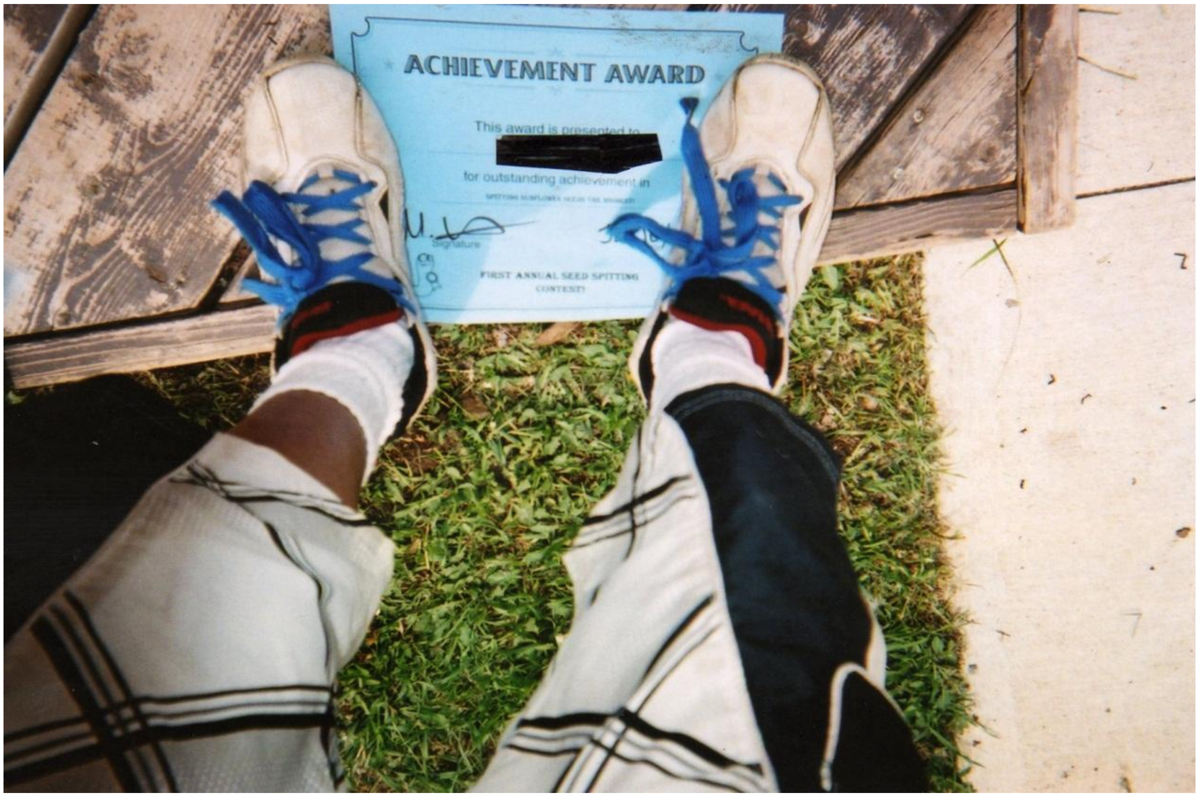
"we are making the invitations for the harvest festival…ya I liked doing it…yes everyone making their own invitation for their family"

Figure 28


THE
MISHOMIS BOOK
The Voice of the Ojibway

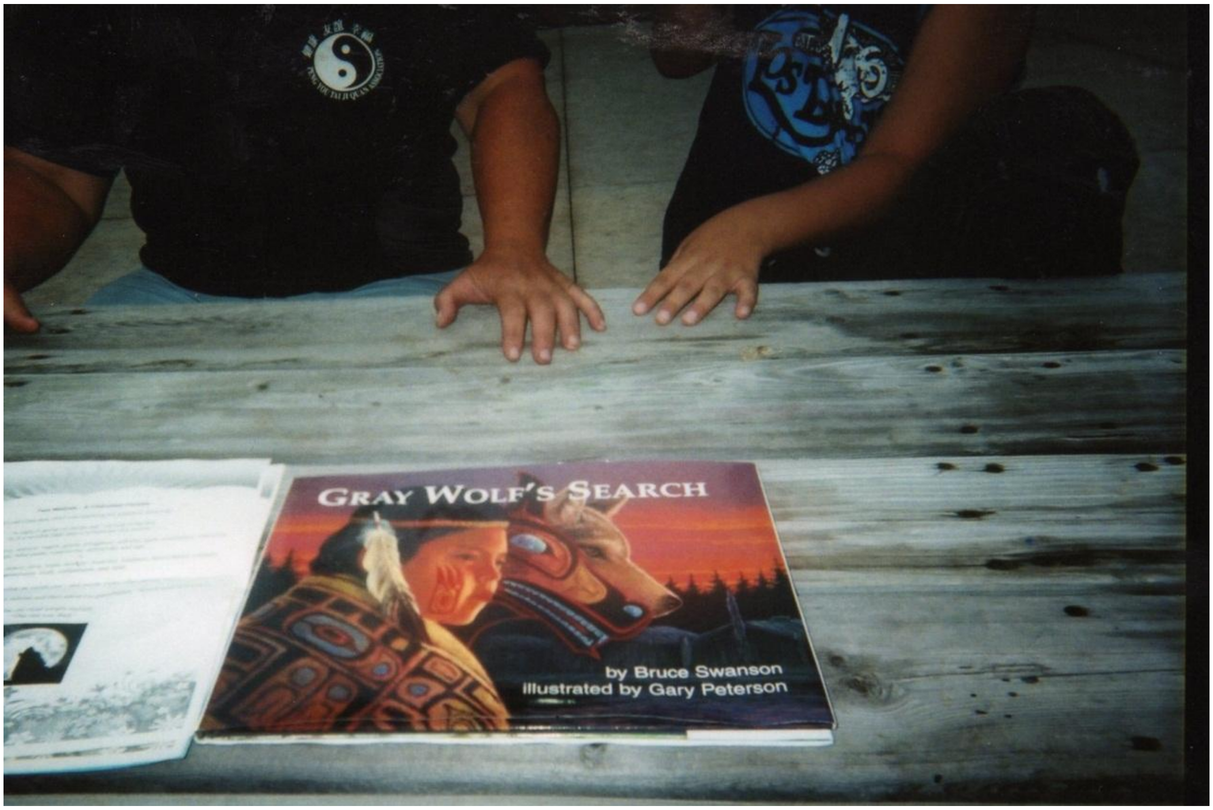
"that I enjoyed that book..yep the Mishomis book….the one with the mouse and the turtle… to get something at the bottom… put it on the turtle's shell"

Figure 29


ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
This award is presented to
[redacted]
for outstanding achievement in
Signature
FIRST ANNUAL SEED SPITTING CONTEST!

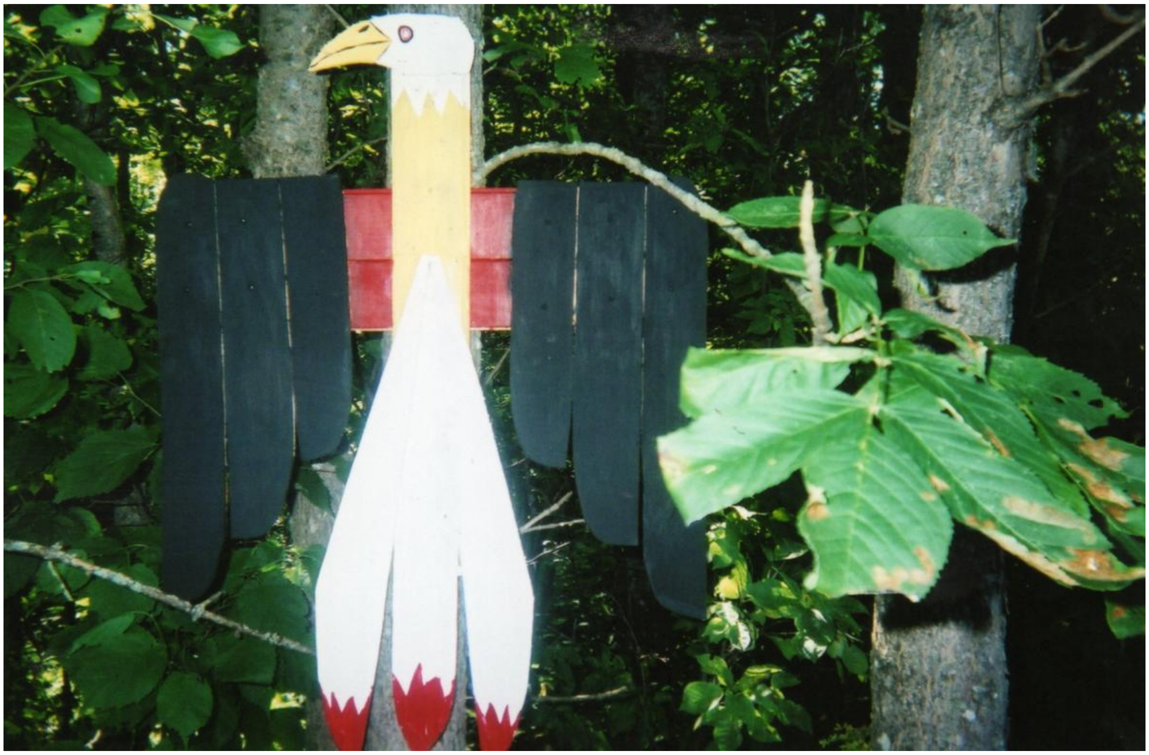
"Yes sunflower seeds! Have fun!"

Figure 30


GRAY WOLF'S SEARCH
by Bruce Swanson
illustrated by Gary Peterson

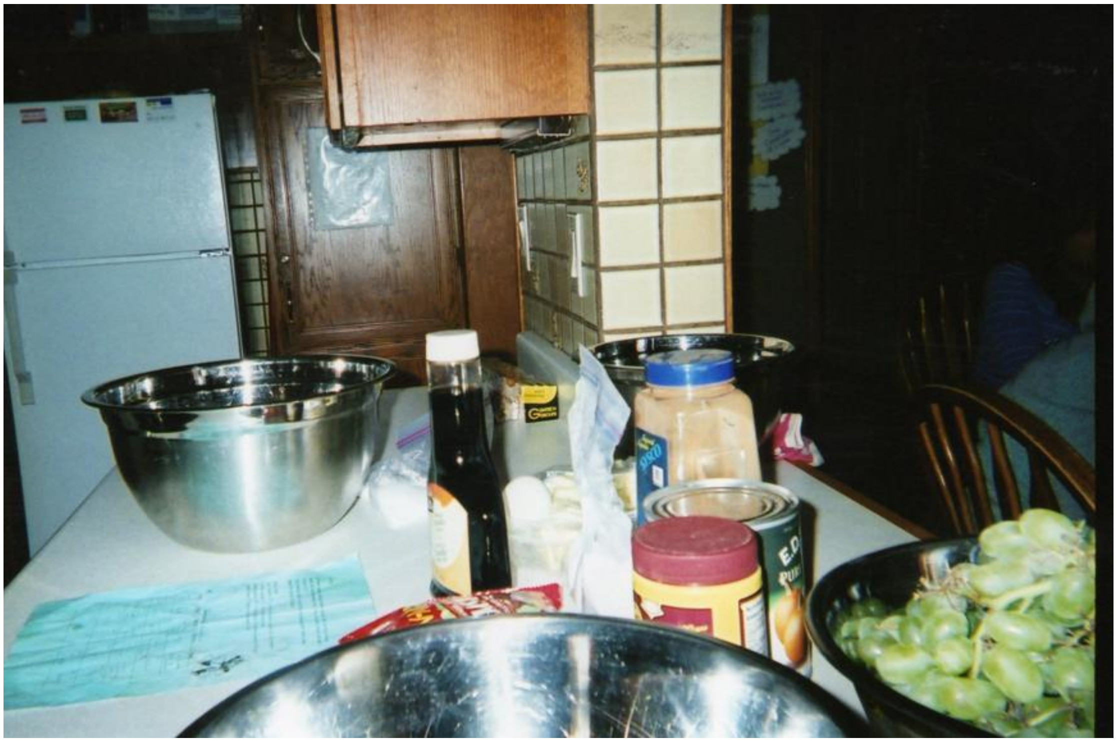
"I like how we read this book. It was really nice. That's all……He was trying to look for someone special….he asked a bear and he asked um, uh, …yes he was a special person and that the wolf was"

Figure 31



"This is a picture of my spirit thunderbird. I like my spirit from what it done here…. Thank you"

Figure 32



"I liked cooking, I enjoyed that very much"

Figure 33

"Oh, letting (name) stir the cookies and everybody in one shot so that, they, everybody was joining in and taking time and accepting."