

## LEGACY OF HOPE FOUNDATION

### PODCAST EPISODE FEATURING LIZ OSAWAMICK AND SHIRLEY WILLIAMS

Gordon: Hello and welcome to the Voices from the Land: Indigenous Peoples Talk Language Revitalization Podcast produced by the Legacy of Hope Foundation. Tansi, I'm your host, Gordon Spence, from the Tataskweyak Cree Nation in northern Manitoba. I also am the community facilitator for the Legacy of Hope Foundation. Today I am joined by my colleague and co-host, Andrew Bomberry, a Mohawk from the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Andrew is a curriculum developer, writer, researcher, and teacher. Welcome.

As part of the Legacy of Hope Foundation's mission, we are working to promote Indigenous language revitalization as a critical step in the healing of generations of survivors and their communities from colonial policies and practices which rob Indigenous peoples of their first language.

The goal of this project to help is to help support Indigenous language reclamation through interviews with Indigenous language teaching experts. The target audience for this work are Indigenous language teachers. We hope that by sharing accessible podcasts of interviews with people doing interesting and relevant work on language promotion, we can help facilitate the sharing of knowledge, ideas and practices that are relevant to the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages.

While there are many contexts that are particular to specific nations and dialects within their own regions, we are hoping to provide additional tools and a platform that can help with Indigenous language revitalization, despite the many differences.

Today we have two guests with us joining us on this podcast. The first one is Professor Shirley Ida Williams. She's got several degrees. She's from the Wikwemikong First Nation, residing in Peterborough now. Taught at Trent University, language and culture, for 18 years. And 18 summers at Lakehead University. Through the native languages instruction program, she has taught mythology, orthography, Anishinaabe literature for children, and has lectured in many colleges, universities and communities on language.

Self-publishing on Anishinaabe [Anishinaabemowin], she has published many language books, texts and stories. She is a residential school survivor, was part of the Where are the Children document. Received her honorary doctorate degree from the University of Toronto in 2017.

Our second guest today is Liz Osawamick. She is of the Anishinaabe and Odawa Nation and is originally from Wikwemikong, unceded First Nation located on Manitoulin Island. She is of the Beaver Clan. She is currently teaching Anishinaabe at Trent University. Liz utilizes Indigenous knowledge and teaching songs and ceremonies as a core

component in her teaching methods, and community work facilitating various language immersion programs and cultural teachings within first nations communities. She is in her sixth year as president for – of the Anishnaabemowin Teg Incorporated.

So maybe I'll start with asking you about what you do now and where you teach your community, and your Indigenous language that you teach. Maybe we can start off with you, Shirley.

Shirley: OK. [Anishinaabemowin: My Anishinaabe name is Migizi-aw-kwe - The Eagle Woman] I came from Wikwemikong unceded reserve. I'm now residing in Peterborough. I came to school here at Trent University, and this is where I started and they knew that I was a fluent speaker and they gave me a job so I stayed here.

I have taught the language for 18 years here, and in 2004 I retired, but not fully retired. I still teach courses part time on internet. I do research words. And I'm a transcriber or an interpreter for many of the documents. I just finished one now for the Government for Health Canada.

I also taught in a native language instruction program for 18 summers where students came to learn how to read and write.

Gordon: Thank you. Liz?

Liz: [Thank you] my spirit name is [Giniw Miigwan – Golden Eagle Feather. I am from Wiikwemkoong on Manitoulin Island.]. Hastings [Anishinaabemowin] So my English name is Liz Osawamick and my spirit name is Giniw Miigwan, which means Golden Eagle Feather. And I am originally from Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island. And I am a Anishinaabe in Odawa. I am related to the Bear but I'm of the Beaver Clan. And I'm right now I'm teaching at Trent University, teaching introduction to Anishinaabemowin, and also intermediate Anishinaabemowin. We do teach also a class at Fleming College in the evening and I, you know, for the past, over 25 years, I was teaching elementary and secondary level, probably for the past 12 years, secondary level, but I started off teaching at the elementary level. And then worked at the daycare and high school and college and now the university.

And so we – back home we started Nawewin Gamik, which is a language house, so I've been helping out with that. It started in August and it's still continuing today. And we have language every day seven days a week, and we usually have three sessions: from nine till noon, noon till three, and five to eight.

So when we started that back in August, you know, I helped out with that and I did a lot of recording with speakers – language speakers. And I enjoyed doing that, you know, helping out where I could. And so, you know, incorporating, you know, language and, you know, ceremony in my teachings, you know, wherever I do teach. And doing, you know, language immersion camps. Also, you know, I graduated from Lakehead

University, you know, through the language program there. And so and that's how I became a language teacher.

And so [Anishinaabemowin].

Gordon: Our listeners may not know what you mean when you say Anishinaabemowin. Maybe you can just explain what that is.

Liz: So, Anishinaabemowin is a language. And so we have three dialects and we speak Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi. And so it's a word that is a language. And so we say Anishinaabemowin. So it refers to Ojibwe, Odawa or Bodwami. And so that is what I – when I refer to Anishinaabemowin, so it's referring to a language.

Gordon: OK. OK. Good. Thank you. My next question is to Shirley. Can you talk about the grammar structure of the language you teach, and how important or challenging that is?

Shirley: It has been challenging because we never had to do writing – reading and writing in our – it's always been taught verbally. We didn't have a writing system. Although we did by symbols, by writing; that's how we learned. But later on when the language came in 1974 there was a request by the Ministry of Ed that we had to do reading and writing. What happened was they adopted the Jesuit writing, which is the phonetic writing system – the alphabet that they borrowed from the English letters – and it was not very consistent.

So when we started the program at Lakehead in 1986 they decided that we should have our own. And there was a linguist who had been doing research on Algonquin language – Algonquian language is the mother language, and of the Algonquin language are the subdivisions of other, Oji-Cree, like, Oji-Cree, Cree, Ojibwe Odawa and Potawatomi. All of those, we can understand each other. There's others, some in Quebec, Mi'gmaq, Naskapi and that's what the language say.

When we came to – in 1986 he said here's the letters that I have researched, and these are the sounds that belong to you. If you want to use them, here's the writing system, and he presented that, and it really took off among the teachers that were learning how to read and write from the language program. And so that was one that was adopted by many of the teachers. But it wasn't really adopted by generally of Ontario; there's still some people who still use the alphabet – the phonetic writing system – because that's the one.

Actually, when we started, the Jesuits wanted us to adopt their writing system, which came from Greek. The teachers didn't really condone to that; they said we should have our own. So this is much easier, the double vowel writing system. So that's how we adopted it.

The writing system is, well, there's – I wish I could show you to tell you. We have letters. We have really good sounds. The two unique sounds that

we have are the nasal sounds – words that we have that comes through the nose, like, [Anishinaabemowin]. Those are the nasal sounds. But, well, what shows us when you do the writing is there's an N, AS, HN, or HN. NH or HN. The last one, we hardly ever see it, but the first three we normally see it.

The second unique sound that we have is the glottal stop with the [Anishinaabemowin], which is a catch in the throat. The sound that comes from way down here. So when they say the word the air stops here, and that's why they call it glottal stop, and then it come – then we sound it out. Those are the letters.

There are some sounds we don't have: F, L, Q, R, U, V and X. We don't have those sounds. So when we went to residential school we used to say, when they used to teach us father, we'd say podder or mudder [Laughter], right? Because we didn't have those R sounds. So it was difficult for us to see them. So in the syllable chart that was given to us we have three short vowels and four long vowels. A, I, O are the short vowels; double A, double I, double O and E are the long vowels that we have. So there's a chart of the letters that we have.

And then while we were there some of the older ladies, they said we should have an alphabetic song just like ABC like in English. But we don't – we didn't have one. So the races was on then; they said they could develop one. So what they did is they found a tune because they were singers in a church choir that they belonged to. So it was easier for them to come up with that tune. And the tune is really lively and we call it the vowel song – [Anishinaabemowin] – and it was made by Irene Snache from Rama reserve. And there's choirs that when we put it there there's letters. If you're a guitar player those are the tunes that you have.

So I'm just going to use one: bar, b, bo, beh. Bah. Beh. Bo. Those are the letters that we have.

It is a challenge to teach the sounds because we're so ingrained with the English letters and the sounds that it's hard for the students, if they're not speakers, to – or even the ones that are fluent speakers, to get the sounds right. And letters to write.

I have taught immersion program and there was five ladies that came from Walpole Island, and I taught it on the weekend. So they used to leave early or midnight on Thursday night and then be there for nine o'clock or 8:30 for a class. And there was a lady in there; she was 70 – more than 70 years old. And she never learned how to read and write. One day as we were practicing, saying those words, and you just – oh my! I could read! I could tell about the words. And it was so beautiful to watch her discover herself, her learning, and – which is very, very, very good.

In our letters that we have, we have in teaching, we have many nouns and verbs, and these two, they must match and agree. Like, one noun,

something that's alive, inanimate, something that's not alive. Example would be that's not alive is a chair and animate would be [Anishinaabemowin], which is a chicken, or [Anishinaabemowin]. Those are all animate, so they must match and agree. So that's kind of hard to teach. We know the words and that if you're a fluent speaker, you know the words and that, but it's still difficult.

And so we have four unique verbs that we have. We have a subject and an object and they call animate intransitive, the second one inanimate intransitive, transitive animate, and transitive inanimate. So the four words that we have one word: [Anishinaabemowin] is inanimate. [Anishinaabemowin]; the woman is useful. [Anishinaabemowin] means the axe is useful. [Anishinaabemowin] is – I really don't like this word but it's a word that we have. So you could take [Anishinaabemowin] you can see that the farmer uses the horses to pull. And transitive inanimate is [Anishinaabemowin] It is useful to use something. [Anishinaabemowin] meaning that the woman is just the frying pan on a stove. So those are the four kinds of verbs that we have.

So, usually I teach that on the fourth level of the course. But I introduce it on the third one.

Gordon: Liz, did you want to add anything to that?

Liz: I just wanted to say the language structure in Anishinaabemowin, it teaches us – it's a way of learning. We learn orally through, you know, listening to the sounds that we use. And so at a young age, you know, we learn through – you know, we didn't have a, you know, a structured way. And so we just learned, you know, because we were spoke to every day. And but today, you know, a lot of Indigenous people don't have the language so it is, you know, it is hard, you know, because we, you know, the parents don't speak the language. And then so now when the students, you know, that learn the language in the public schools, it's hard for them to retain the language, you know, because their parents don't speak the language.

So, you know, it's something that we, you know, we need to teach our children. And the same with the parents, you know, to continue to, you know, to learn with them because, you know, because they're not – if they don't have the language at home, it's – it makes it harder, you know, for the students to learn.

Gordon: Do you – just a follow-up to that. You're teaching, you said, fourth level or something. Shirley, you made reference to the fourth level. I guess that'd be the higher level of the language. Are you finding that apart from people, new people that are trying to learn the language, are you finding that people that already speak Ojibwe, for example, do you find that they're coming back to learn to kind of improve under your speaking of their language?

Shirley: Yeah. We've had a few Anishinaabe students come to the university to get their BA, or they're going on to a teacher's ed program. So they come to take the language program as a grammar instructor so they can either go and teach if they're fluent speakers, but if they're not fluent speakers they still want to know.

So, first level is just a basic; second level is intimidated, which is Liz – is what she's teaching now, where we teach counting, family and things like that. And the fourth level is all of these things, and storytelling. The students really like storytelling. And we do have people who have gone on to university who are fluent speakers. One, for example, is now a chair from Duluth, Michigan, I think it is. He came from Wasauksing, and when he came he didn't know any of the language at all but it became fluent. He's now fluent.

There's another one; he came from Wikwemikong, and he was a fluent speaker but he didn't know the names of trees and fish and things like that. So he really thanked me when he left – that this is what he learned. And he was a board of education director for 10, 12 years, I think, and he's now teaching in Sudbury. So he learned a lot of things and what he's teaching now, he's using some of the words that they learn, you know, for young kids and that. Those are just a few examples.

Gordon: Zoom in meetings are becoming the norm now since this COVID pandemic. And so is learning, teaching various subjects, including teaching students and academics, music, and learning languages and so on. Tell us about your experiences about teaching an Indigenous language online. How effective has this been for you?

Shirley: Yes. I teach the internet language every spring. And what we – six years ago, I guess it started, and we pre-recorded. When we pre-recorded it I used pictures, flashcards, in order to teach, and to show. And oftentimes I would use my signs, you know. I had props with me and I would say, for example, for [Anishinaabemowin], teachings, you know? So I would say my name is, your name is, her name is. So things like that. So I use props; we use a lot of props.

Singing is one of the best methods in order to teach, and storytelling. Storytelling is you write on the board, you start with a word and you ask students who have learned some of the words; they would use something else, you know. I would start. [Anishinaabemowin]: I saw. You saw what? So, and they would write a noun. I saw [Anishinaabemowin]. When? Yesterday. So those kinds of things that we did in order to entertain the students, and also teaching the language.

And also bingo was another one that we taught. So instead of bingo with numbers, we taught words in there, so they would cover. And I actually had prizes for them to win. So, for prizes we had internet is, if they won, we would send them by mail later on.

So I had technical – we had technical problems on the first game. We had to find a unique program that fits as to how we were teaching, like board now. And for assignments and things like that, they had to learn how to, what do you call it, video-tape what they've learned, like a little story, a short little story, about three to five minutes. That's the way [Anishinaabemowin] teaching students in academic.

Music. They love music. So, singing. Singing the alphabet song was really good, and some other songs.

Those are some of my experiences, but there's a lot more experiences on internet, especially this year, so I'll let her talk about her experiences.

Liz: So, just to add to that, for myself, when we began learning, you know, these different platforms, it was difficult for me because I'm – like, I'm old school, so it took me a while to get used to it. It's getting easier as I'm learning as I go through it. It's a bit challenging and it's hard when teaching Anishinaabemowin. I find it does work, although it does work when, you know, when we are teaching, because we are able to either pre-record or – in my lessons I, you know, record my lessons and therefore the students can review, you know what is being taught. And so they're able to go back to that video lesson and then they can get the correct pronunciations of the lessons that I teach in that given day.

So, you know, it has its up and down, like, you know, but I do prefer like, you know, teaching in class because you're able to do a lot more in class as opposed to the Zoom.

Gordon: What are some of the best practices and teaching methods you'd like to share or help – that would help other Indigenous language teachers be successful in teaching their Indigenous language?

Shirley: For a university we had to do reading and writing, listening and speaking. So, best practice is to repeat repetitive words that you are teaching, or repetitive sentences that you are teaching. One of the things that I did is I would say it three times, you know? Or a sentence, I would say it first, and I would say I don't – I didn't speak any English. They left the English outside the door and they come in. And they knew that, and so I would begin to hear the sounds and that. And I would teach them. And then on the fourth one is when I say they had to repeat it. And we repeat it in many different ways of the word. Then they would say it themselves. I would say it and then they would say it. And then we would practice and they would say [Anishinaabemowin], you know, your turn and so on. If I had a whole class, like, 13 or 15 of them.

Reading of stories, like, stories. I wrote a word and then you would fill it in the blanks and things like that.

They use assignments like crossword puzzles. They also like to hear the sounds also. They're a lot more – when I began there was no materials whatsoever. So we had to begin right from scratch, and thank god for the

Microsoft Word or computers. I know I didn't know how to work any computer until 1992. That's when I had to learn.

So they've become easier. We had to use pictures what we were going to talk about. We got pictures from magazines or whatever. And we took our own pictures and that.

When I started I saw an eagle one time and I really wanted to teach, you know, the parts of the eagle, you know, the beak, the mouth, the eyes and things like that – the whole of the bird. Well, I wrote to the person who took that picture – it was through the educational system. And I asked and you know what they said? If you want to use it, we would like five thousand dollars. Well, we didn't have five thousand dollars. At least I didn't have it in my program.

So I thought I'm going to go and learn how to take pictures. So I went to search that at college to go and take photography. So I went out to go and take pictures of my own in order to help me teach the language where I could use many, like, taking pictures of the orange, an apple. I went to grocery stores. I bought my own to take pictures and that to use as a teaching material.

Liz:

So, my best practices and methods when teaching Anishinaabemowin is often through songs, gestures, fun and games. When we engage with the students this way, they are apt to learning the language quicker. Also we do land-based learning when outdoors as opposed to, you know, indoor class.

Students seem to retain the language when seeing objects and relating to any outdoor activity. I also incorporate culture when I teach. And as the two work hand in hand. So, teaching culture is very important, as it is our identity as an Indigenous person. And so at the university I always include at least two or three classes that I have. We have a TP on campus and so I, you know, I have at least two or three classes out there. And the students really enjoy it. They say that's their best, you know, you know, a something that they remember is having, you know, the classes out there. Because we have, you know, a fire and then we, you know, explain, you know, the teachings about the, you know, a sacred fire.

And, you know, we smudge out there and we do all kinds of activities while we're in the teepee. And sometimes I – what we do is we make, you know, cedar tea. And one time we, you know, we just cooked, you know, outdoors as well and we made some fry bread and, you know. So it was amazing, you know, to see the students that, you know, that really enjoyed, you know, being out there.

And but it was hard when our, you know, when my class had, you know, when it was a full class – over 60 students – that we couldn't all fit in there. So I had to break, you know, to two classes and, you know, split them up to have that class.

But otherwise, you know, when we – at the beginning of the year we do another class out there and we include storytelling. And usually I'll invite an elder to come out and they share, you know, stories as it, you know, wintertime they, you know, they share stories and legends. And so we do that at the beginning of the year, so.

When my daughter was young I had to go back to work and so I had to leave her at the day-care. And so at the day-care where she was at, there wasn't too much language there. And so what I did was I recorded myself, so I made a CD that went with her that – you know, that she was able to learn, you know, through song. And so that was something that I had to do, because she – there wasn't a language speaker there every day. So they only had language maybe twice a week and so therefore, you know, doing that CD really helped her. You know? And so today she, you know, she sings these songs. And it's, you know, a good teaching tool for, you know, for people to, you know, to learn that way.

Shirley: Because language and culture, you know, I heard a lot of parents say I want my children to learn the language but I don't want them to learn the culture. You know why that is, eh? So, but these two as a language speaker, influence speaker, they do go hand in hand. They're together. They can't teach one or the other.

An example would be [Anishinaabemowin], which is February. Why do we call it [Anishinaabemowin]? This is when the bear turns over and it kicks the cubs out. If they go out and play, that means it's going to be early spring. If they run back in again, it's going to be another cold winter.

So those are the culture stories beyond what that word is. So that's really important. That's language and culture together.

Language – culture is the way we live; language is identified by how we speak or to describe what we are seeing and feeling. So we have nouns, verbs and adjectives and so many English words that pertain to our own language which we are just discovering to fit the academic ways and that, you know? We've never had to do this but we are doing it and there are now teachers, influence speakers, who are getting education in order to do this, so.

Gordon: Yes. A good point. I was just going to say that. Like, language and culture to me go hand in hand. With one you're missing the other and together as a whole you get the whole you get the whole picture. You know? You understand more about the culture. There's people and there's places in the cities and towns that teach and talk about native culture. But unless you know the language, you don't really have a full understanding of the culture and the way that people are.

Liz: Yeah.

Gordon: That's just my personal feelings on it.

Shirley: Hmm.

Gordon: And there's another side to that too – that there's the humorous side of a language, of our languages, our different languages across Canada. The one commonality I find is that there's always humour in our language, in our native languages, and it's part of – I guess it's kind of like a survival mechanism. You know? It makes us happy, you know, to tell jokes and tease each other and that's just kind of who we are and that's part of our culture.

I just wanted to ask Liz or Shirley. Trent University used to have a workshop – a cultural workshop. Do they still have that? I think it used to be in the spring. It was a weekend thing where you could go to different workshops throughout the day.

Shirley: We just finished one.

Gordon: Oh.

Shirley: We had it on Zoom just this past weekend. We had it on Friday, Saturday and Sunday which we called the Elders Conference.

Gordon: Right. Right.

Shirley: Yeah. It was the first time that we did it. Because we've always had it, you know, in the open. People came and they would make a weekend out of it. This time we can't because of the COVID, and so we found ways and means.

We didn't really know how it was going to turn out but it really turned out really good; they had really good speakers. The only thing that happened was you're only given 15 minutes to speak, and because of other speakers, so you really have to time yourself. You really had to be disciplined so you don't take somebody else's time.

Gordon: Yeah. I found a very interesting. An absolutely beautiful weekend I spent in Trent, Peterborough, with a group of people from the Odawa Friendship Centre.

Shirley: Oh yeah.

Gordon: Back in the day, and that's when I first heard about Tom Porter, the Mohawk from Akwesasne, speak.

Shirley: Yeah. Yeah.

Gordon: And what a wonderful speaker. A great person who, you know, really taught me something just in that one hour when he talked about his culture and the history of his people. So I found it to be a fascinating weekend of learning different cultures, not just, you know, just one –

Shirley: Yeah.

Gordon: Many cultures. You mentioned that you're involved in an annual language conference through an organization called Anishinaabemowin, and how that they support Indigenous language teachers: new learners, elders and Indigenous language speakers. Can you talk a bit about that in a little bit more detail?

Shirley: I'm one of the founders of the Anishinaabemowin Teg. You know that the language was start from 1974 only for 10 minutes. And AFN put in a conference in 1983 which I attended in Ottawa, and at that time they were – the Ministry of Ed was looking for – to have a common writing system, which didn't go very well because we're all from different speakers, different dialects, right across Canada.

So, in Ontario we have 13 languages and the year before that we came to get together to discuss about the – how we should develop the writing system, and how we're going to teach it in school. And it is that we began to teach the language not just for 10 minutes but we finally got one hour to teach it.

And one of the things that they were arguing about is the different dialects and how we're going to solve that. One of the elders got up at that time, which really had a profound effect on me: Fred. And he said, you know, we are so lucky to have our language taught in a school system, which never happened for the last 500 years. If we are going to argue, you know, this should not be or should be or, you know, [Anishinaabemowin], well for god's sakes adopt the language that that's there in front of you. Because if we're going to argue for the next 500 years, surely for goodness we are going to forget about the language. So that's what he said at that time.

So in 1994, then, many of the teachers were already teaching in the school system. They were really having a difficult time. And they were coming to us as teachers, and they can't. And us teachers that were there: what could we do?

So we did the research as to a – because what we were hearing was a lot of negative things. Like, I don't want to learn the language; I'm an Indian; I don't have to learn it. I don't like learning the language because there are homemade materials. You know? It's a shame. And we were saying, how can we turn that – those negative remarks to positive remarks? How can we have our own people admire our own language?

And so we came together perhaps in 1993, but in 1994 teachers, entrusted people, elders and teachers and linguists, all came together for a conference, because the conference, the ATEC, was to speak for the people, to teach them, you know, how the language is, what they could teach, how they can teach, whatever they want to learn. So we had fluent speakers come. And not just old Anishinaabe people – those that Anishinaabemowin – but we had Cree, other Iroquois people, Delaware, and things like that, as speakers to talk about their own languages.

So the organization that we started was that we had to incorporate so that we can get funding, because we needed money. But when we first started I remember three of us driving from up here in Toronto, picking up people because they didn't have a ride. And we bought bread and butter and baloney, and that's what we would eat at the hotel. One of us that were working, we could help each other and pay one hotel and then we could all fit in there, just like little pigs, in order to survive – to have the language survive.

So that's what – how we got started. We made the Anishinaabemowin Incorporation. We needed money for travel and teachers, speakers coming to us. What they were experiencing was there was no classrooms, and not knowing what to teach, no curriculum to follow or ready-made lessons. We had to make our own lessons to use. So, this is where we taught them, how to make things, what they could do, in order to help them to teach the language.

So, I'll let Liz take over from here.

Liz: So, just to add to that. So, I've been president over the last six years. And so it's been an honour to sit on the board of directors with the elder senate and youth representatives. And so our organization is dedicated to promoting language, teaching and developing Anishinaabemowin language, and cultural pride. We gather as leadership, elders, teachers, friends, new learners and community partners. You know? It's something that we, you know, we gather to, you know, to open dialogue, to discuss initiatives and issues facing our nation's languages and culture.

So we believe that our diverse and dynamic group of speakers and panelists provide that in-depth insight, as well as actionable and practical tools and engagement and methods that have worked in their communities.

So we share, you know, with each other as, you know, as people, you know, when we come together. I know a lot of people that attend our conference, you know, they get so much out of it. You know? And, you know, we hold them in Sault Ste. Marie, you know, forever. And, you know, this past year, we are doing it through Zooms.

And so we're doing that this year, which is tomorrow – March 26th and 27th. So we're going to just try it out and see how it goes. And because we had to cancel our 26th annual conference last year, and the reason why we chose, you know, Sault Ste. Marie is we have, you know, all kinds of Anishinaabe from all over, you know, Canada and the United States, so they travel, so it's kind of like a central place.

You know, because we celebrate Anishinaabemowin [unintelligible 00:42:40] March 31st. So we try and do that, you know, close to that day to celebrate that Indigenous language day. And so –

Shirley: Just to add to that, I know over the years because I followed the issues of languages and the political arena also. AFN did a huge conference in 1989 and we all went and at that time it was Georges Erasmus that was the AFN chief. And the people wanted a day where they could celebrate, so they chose March 31st, 1989.

And at that time it was declared the Aboriginal Language Day. It is to design and promote appreciation for native languages. This day has been set aside to encourage native people to recognize and practice their languages in their workplace or in a social setting. Declaration of National Aboriginal Language Day, Aboriginal Language Day is our birthright. Language is essential to culture. Aboriginal language is an asset. Aboriginal control of languages is essential. Aboriginal languages are just as equal as English and French. Actually, we should have our own celebration of our language because language, Anishinaabemowin, right across Canada, many from many different tribes, use their own languages. But the official language is English, and French. So we should demand that our language should be one of the three official languages.

And it's going to be really good because we are in a process that the language is going to be put in the legislation, which I am participating next week in AFN, is what are we going to put. Something like traditional reconciliation. It's an empty shell, but we want to put in there from the native people what is it that we want to be essential? What do we want to have right in the legislation for the languages? And so we have – now have a big, huge chance in order to say what we want in our languages, in the legislation.

Gordon: Excellent. Just a couple of notes that I've picked up while you guys were talking. I didn't know there was – March 31st was Indigenous Language Day; that's good to know. I'll keep that in mind for future years. And also to pass on to other people that, you know, that would be of interest to them, including my children and family. And also I just wanted to say that – I'm sure you know about this – the United Nations has declared this decade, from 2021 to 2031, as a decade of Indigenous languages. Just a piece of information.

Andrew: I just appreciated listening to everything, although I did, in particular, enjoy the story about they wanted five thousand dollars for that photograph. Well, I'm going to learn how to take them by myself.

Shirley: Yes. [Laughter] We've all got to be photographers in order to make our own materials, because there is no materials for language speakers as to how we want them. So if we have the skill of taking our own pictures and then we can tell a story behind that. Thank god now we have, what do they call it, the iPhones now where we can record. We can do a recording of our own stories and describe what we see. It's really fun to do that and to make our own materials and that.

I'm a self-publisher. A few years ago when I started, because I did my MA on research on Manitoulin dialect. And at that time I wanted to

publish it. I went to publishers and the publisher said there's no money, economically, you know, in publishing native languages. So that was the end of it.

So I went to the elders and the elders said, oh, well, why don't you learn how to be a publisher? And I thought about it. Oh, that's so many things that you have to learn. But anyway, I went to learn how to be a self-publisher. So we publish our own – at least I am, anyway – our own stories, you know, to be used in schools, like, thematic dictionary, stories about [Anishinaabemowin], stories about my early life, so that – I just got a word just yesterday, one of my friends who read a story of what I experienced as a child, about the good story. And she told that her class, that I think they were six or seven years old, she told a story to – those kids really loved that story. Because they didn't make the scone after; they said they bought biscuits. It looked like – so they pretended it was scone.

So that's what they experienced was something what they heard in the story – how that impacted them.

You can look at [goodminds.com](http://goodminds.com); this is where I have a list of books that I've made.

Gordon: Excellent.

Andrew: OK.

Gordon: Maybe you can provide us with some of your resources. I'm particularly interested in your publications. Somehow maybe through Andrew we can follow up with getting some of this resource information for our project report, and any other links. And also I was interested in your bingo – teaching the language using bingo. I think that's a very interesting method. And of course singing. And any other resources that you might have on teaching Indigenous languages would be excellent.

And on that note I want to thank you for taking the time. You both have a wealth of knowledge and experience in your work and your contribution to this project enhances the success of this project.

And it's the first time we've had two people, you know, such as yourselves speaking to us together on this podcast; all the others were individuals and this has been really interesting. And made a big contribution to the success of this project, and I want to thank you for the great work you're doing in preserving the Ojibwe language, and thank you very much on behalf of Legacy of Hope Foundation.