Waasa-Inaabidaa - Look In All Directions
Gikinoo’amaadiwin - Knowledge

Education

“Education was continual and perpetual in everything that we did and that way you became a whole person… there was education for the body… there was education for the mind and for the unseen.”

--Larry Aitken, Leech Lake Ojibwe

Duluth, MN: In the Anishinaabe/Ojibwe world-view, knowledge is a gift that carries responsibilities. Ojibwe communities have long respected the role of Elders and spiritual leaders to pass on knowledge to younger generations in the extended family. To gain knowledge is to attend to the mind, body, emotions, and spirit of a person. This basic precept is the foundation of family and education in Ojibwe traditional life. This episode of Waasa Inaabidaa - We Look In All Directions airs (INSERT LOCAL AIR TIME).

In Waasa Inaabidaa - We Look In All Directions, Gikinoo’amaadiwin - We Gain Knowledge, Producer Lorraine Norrgard and writer James Fortier, examine the connection between traditional family structures and knowledge--from the clan system through the four phases of life: child, adult, middle age, and elder. For the Ojibwe, learning is a life-long activity of careful observation and respectful listening. There is a duty on the part of the wise to impart their wisdom and a corresponding obligation on the part of the unlearned to learn. This cyclical nature of education insured the survival of Ojibwe people from generation to generation.

Gikinoo’amaadiwin - We Gain Knowledge, chronicles the painful consequences of imposing western beliefs and values onto the intricate family and educational systems of the Ojibwe. Firsthand accounts tell of the painful legacy of the early missionary and government boarding school era, and celebrate the survival of traditional Ojibwe culture despite many cultural onslaughts by those who wished to diminish and assimilate the distinct Ojibwe
The viewer is invited into today’s modern tribally operated schools with parents making their own choices of how to mix the traditional cultural ways of gaining knowledge from children harvesting wild rice to modern high tech projects with teens creating lego robots. The Ojibwe, like other indigenous people in America, gain knowledge making choices between traditional and contemporary ways based on self-determination, empowerment, and Native pride.

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