

My name is Karen Wasageshik; I am the youngest of 4 children but only three of us attended Holy Childhood Boarding school in Harbor Springs, MI. My second to the oldest brother is Ivan Wayne Wasageshik, attended 6 yrs., My third oldest sibling is my sister Sharon Kay Wasageshik, attended 4 yrs at Holy Childhood School. My attendance at the school was 1972 to 1978, first grade to 6th grade. We are all tribal members of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Peshawbestown, MI,

The HR 5444 The Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act not only will help locate and document all children still buried at boarding school facilities but will educate the public on what happened to us in these boarding schools, how did it affect us to this day and unknowingly of how much a survivor has kept the trauma stuffed way deep down inside each of us. We will get healing by bringing up those old memories and getting them out of our bodies.

After my father; Enos Steven Wasageshik, (attended Holy Childhood School) got custody of us children we went to California for a couple years, I stayed an extra year with my aunt when My father, brother and sister came back to Michigan. When I came back to Michigan I remember going to the school and being immediately scared. There were a lot of other kids there and I instantly felt lost and lonely. I didn't realize that I was not going to be away from my father that much and not see him every day. I came back from California to be with him, I thought. I don't recall why we had to be in that school anyway.

I remember seeing snow for the first time there. It was a happy day. From the day I started at the school I was told what to do; I was told when to go to bed, when to get ready for bed, when to shower, get up, make your bed, get dressed, brush your teeth, and get in line for breakfast. I was a chubby girl so I was not allowed to eat certain things, like bread, mashed potatoes, but we had to eat everything on our plate before leaving the dinner table, girls that didn't get ready in time would miss breakfast. I learned that being strict was going to bed because you coughed, being told you're dirty and stupid because you made a mistake. During Halloween we were chased by goblins, ghosts, and witches in the dormitory during the middle of the night, we were told that if there was a red pitch fork in your cup or white powder on your bed you were going to get a visit from a ghost. It was complete chaos.

During Christmas time we were sent to the Elks Club and put with a family to eat dinner with and open a present. We got into trouble if we didn't act right. They would dress us up all nice and pretty. I felt like I was on display. Corruption is another thing I learned; Our house mother Sister Maxine brought a family into the dormitory infirmary and let them live there, next thing you know the girls were in the dorm with us and then after that the Wife was not there anymore and Sister Maxine waited on that Man hand and foot, she even washed him up when he was taking a bath.

After the Bicentennial year things seem to change; us kids were fighting back! One time about 7 or 8 of us girls refused to go outside because there was nothing to do and we were bored. We all laid on our beds and refused to go outside. The sister got so mad that she ran down to the

convent to get help. After this we were given dance classes, ice skating classes, we were able to go to the ice-skating rink by ourselves. We got a little more freedom.

The abuse I saw was sad, I would be thinking to myself, if I just listen and do every thing they tell me to do then I won't get hit. I would be telling the girls be quiet, you're going to get hit. It was like you had to be perfect.

I suffer from loneliness even though I'm not alone, I suffer from separation anxiety, I have anger issues, I can't seem to read or finish a book, When I talk about my experience or hear other stories that are similar to mine and I can relate to it, I cry. I believed I was a sinner after leaving the school. I didn't know how to do anything. It's sad but true; As much as we went to church and made our confirmation and were baptized, I don't remember everything in church to this day.

I never thought that my attendance at a boarding school would have such a big effect in communities, and such. I appreciate the reconciliation.