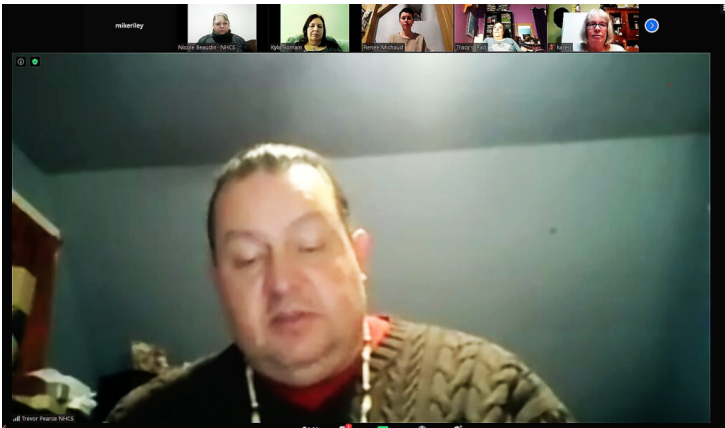


Guided drumming meditation counters COVID-19 stresses



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By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

North Hastings Children's Services put on a guided family drumming meditation on Zoom on Jan. 11. The event was hosted by NHCS's Indigenous cultural coordinator Trevor Pearce and Kyla Kraft-Romain, a meditation expert with over 15 years experience who currently works at the Petawawa Family Resource Centre through their employment service. Pearce does the drumming and sings songs, while Kraft-Romain guides attendees through a unique meditation experience. There will be another class by Zoom on Jan. 25 at 6:30 p.m. for anyone who is interested. To register for the second class, you can email NHCS at register@nhcs.ca.

Pearce says that he and Kraft-Romain got together around 10 years ago, with him doing the drumming on a hand drum and singing to relax people beforehand while she guided people on their mediation.

?We combined the two of them to bring people on a journey. And they go on their own journey. It's a powerful guided meditation,? he says.

While it is currently being done on Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions, Pearce says that eventually they'd like to hold the classes at the NHCS centre. Regarding his part of the process, Pearce says that he'll potentially play a different song to begin each class.

?Whatever the day is portraying for me. I'll sing a song just to relax myself for the meditation and for other people. It's funny, whomever it is, the creator God or whatever people want to call him, guides you on your own different journey. As soon as I tell them to close their eyes and I do a song of sometimes I'll just do the drumming, it gets everybody calm just before Kyla starts on the meditation. It's very beautiful,? he says.

Kraft-Romain, who also offers meditation classes at the Petawawa Library, describes the mediation aspect of the classes, and says that no two classes are ever the same.

?Sometimes I go in with a meditation and usually we open it up in the Zoom and everybody's chatting a bit. So, it'll change depending on what I'm hearing from people. I can also switch it up pretty easily. Sometimes you hear there's more anxiety, or there's more fear, people are just feeling frustrated. So, that's when I switch it up a little bit. So, it always depends on the class, what I'm hearing and feeling from them. It's walking them through a level of relaxation, but also to deal with these trying times,? she says.

There is a whole spectrum of group sizes from class to class from larger to smaller. If the latter happens, Kraft-Romain feels that it happens for a reason, as the people in that smaller group are going through something a little more than normal.

?So, the smaller group thing is perfect for them. They can get stuff off their chest that they wouldn't necessarily have said in a big group,? she says.

Pearce says that the classes have really helped people out, especially during COVID-19.

?We've had people that have had losses in their family come out, or those who've been with their kids all day and just need that hour to get away. We've also had families that come out that just need that time together. Sometimes it has a different meaning for everybody,? he says.

Kraft-Romain says that the classes are always successful and that she and Pearce just coordinate really well.

?I don't know why or how, but we're just kind of in tune with each other,? she says. ?So, it always seems to work.?