

## **Remembering Jean Sutherland**

Monday, February 12, 2024

Jean Sutherland from Eagle Cree Consulting was a foundational member of our Living Space Relocation Review team. Since our first meeting in October 2023 at Aline's Tea Shop, we saw Jean bring a combination of courage and dignity, vulnerability and grace, and wisdom and care to her work.

She was new to the consultant role and brought both style and bravery to her approach. Jean was passionate about doing good work and bringing people together. Throughout the Relocation Review, she reached out to build relationships with Indigenous voices within and beyond Timmins to invite them to the conversation. It was Jean that facilitated the Indigenous meetings in October and November. She facilitated at the same time as letting people know that this was hard. And she still did it. She came to every meeting with confidence and kindness for all.

Jean worked to build bridges. It was Jean who took care to select a location for our November Indigenous meeting – the Social Venue on Maple Street South in downtown Timmins – to help signal that we welcomed different and diverse Indigenous voices to the process. It was Jean who reached out to the newly forming Mushkegowuk Youth Council to encourage them to participate in the youth working sessions. It was Jean that made posters to broaden our outreach to youth in schools. It was Jean that made sure we had a meeting with the Mushkegowuk Fire Keepers. It was Jean who made sure that we looked to the lessons learned during the emergency evacuations to see how they could be transferred to the challenges with the shelter. It was Jean that read our draft reports and sat through hours of Zoom calls and phone calls as we worked together to understand how we could acknowledge and respect the many tensions in Timmins and at the same time create space for people to come together.

Every time we faced something that we thought went a little wrong, Jean focused on what we had learned. She focused on the importance of hearing the experiences of Indigenous voices and the importance of providing support services in First Nations languages. She regularly talked about how much she relied on the guidance of Elders. Inspired by a participant in the Relocation Review, Jean was preparing a training program to help people better understand First Nations culture.

We have lost a beautiful human. We will carry forward the lessons we had the privilege of learning from Jean.

Nicole Swerhun

*On behalf of the Third Party Public team, including Ruth Belay who worked closely with Nicole and Jean through Parts 1 and 2 of the Relocation Review*