

# News from Dianne Friesen

February 2010

**No more suicides in Eskasoni since I last wrote – praise God!** My last letter told about the wake and funeral of a young Mi'kmaq woman, and before my letter was sent out, a young man had also committed suicide. Since that time, there have been no more suicides. Please keep on praying for God to encourage people with His love – the winter is a hard time for many.

One of the attached photos is a picture of one of my friends – Elizabeth Stevens – and me. We are both studying Mi'kmaq grammar and literacy.

**Want to learn more about the Mi'kmaq?** I made this letter with many links to internet resources you can look up if you want to know more. This link is to the Mi'kmaq resource guide (<http://www.cmmns.com/publications/MIKMAWRGWeb.pdf>). It was written in 2003 and includes a lot of general information about the people and their situation.

**Mi'kmaq courses:** The courses I am taking this semester to learn more about Mi'kmaq are “Mi'kmaq conversation level 2” and “Mi'kmaq literacy for speakers”. I am also meeting with some Mi'kmaq conversation partners to learn more.

Some Universities that have programs for Mi'kmaq language related courses include Cape Breton University, St. Francis Xavier University, University of New Brunswick and McGill University.

**I have an office in the Department of Mi'kmaq studies at the University of Cape Breton!** Stephanie Inglis (the linguistics professor at CBU) found some space for me so that we can better collaborate. My phone number is below. Here is the website for the department if you want to look up who all is involved (<http://www.cbu.ca/academics/mikmaq-studies/index.asp>). Stephanie and I are applying for grants to hire a couple of Mi'kmaq students for part of the summer in order to collect and study some Mi'kmaq stories and other texts. We will have to fill out the application on that link. Please pray for God to guide us as we work.

**The Mi'kmaq school board for Cape Breton is extending their Mi'kmaq immersion program** up to Grade 6 (currently it goes from Kindergarten to Grade 3). Here is a link to the Eskasoni school: <http://www.eskasonischool.ca/eems/>. Helen Sylliboy (the Mi'kmaq Bible translator) and her sister Barbara (also involved in the translation work) are part of the curriculum development team. I have met with them concerning some possible books they can use in the language arts part of the curriculum. These books included one of Helen's fables and also some Bible stories that illustrate the cultural values on which they are basing the new curriculum. Please pray for these women (four curriculum developers and an artist) who are creating something completely new for their schools.

*Dianne Friesen*