On Monday April 27th, 2015, the Maskwacis Cultural College Library hosted the Augustana Human Library. The event consisted of the sharing of 2 Human Books: “One little, two little, three little Indians” by Mike Clermont and “Welcome to your gay life” by Paul Harland. The Human Books touched on topics that would not normally be discussed in everyday conversation; some would even say “taboo”. The topics discussed consisted of real life inspirational stories. Mike Clermont’s human book topic consisted of his experience of discovering as an adult that he was an adopted and a Native. His search for his family and identity is quite heartbreaking and motivational at the same time. Paul Harland’s human book topic was about a Gay Father “coming out” in a small-town in Alberta. Paul expresses the challenges of working at a faith based college and some of the surprising supports he found along the way. Now living in a long term gay relationship, enjoying his wonderful grown children, accepting the support of the mother of his children and her partner, and feeling the respect of his colleagues, Paul wants to affirm that “it does get better.” The Augustana Human Library is led by Augustana’s Head Librarian Nancy Goebel. The Augustana Human Library is an initiative in which people called “readers” who want to learn about a specific topic can “check out” people called “Human Books” for an hour of conversation. The Human Library was quite a wonderful and innovative experience that touches one’s heart in a very profound way. Should this event ever be available to the people of Maskwacis again, I strongly suggest you attend; it is a very enlightening experience that makes you realize that everyone is fighting their own battles every day.

What is a Human Book?
Human Books are people who have experienced prejudice or stereotyping or very significant life experiences; they are open about who they are and are prepared to share their stories. Human Books have made themselves available for Readers to listen, learn and understand what they have always wanted to know about the Human Books’ topics. For example, a Human Book could be a person who has lived in a war zone and has chosen “War Survivor” as their title. This Human Book could share the physical and emotional trauma of living in the midst of war and how it has impacted their life. Furthermore, they may share their perceptions of how others see them: the prejudice or stereotyping they may have experienced. The Reader of this Human Book would have opportunities to ask questions about the Human Book’s story.

What is a Human Library?
A Human Library provides an opportunity for Readers to borrow a Human Book for a given time and to hear their story. The Augustana Library offered Alberta’s first university-based Human Library. It is the aim of the Augustana human library to create a space where individuals may directly engage with those who have experienced prejudice or other significant challenges, for the sake of growing compassion and understanding.

A Human Library is:
- an opportunity to speak with a Human Book in a structured, protected, private yet completely free space within a limited time
- a place to tell your story
- a tool to foster peaceful cohabitation and to bring people closer together in mutual and careful respect for the human dignity of the individual
- a place that enables the Readers to focus and reflect upon their own prejudices and stereotypes, and to establish a peaceful, positive meeting with one’s prejudices
- a place to learn about experiences which are foreign to you, about which you are curious

A Human Library is not:
- a public relations exercise looking for spectacular headlines
- a zoo or display case for rare and exotic species
- a job recruitment agency or a place to exhibit famous people
- a forum for promoting a religious, political or ideological agenda
- an occasion to discuss problems, frustrations or other emotions related to experiences beyond a Human Book topic

http://www.library.ualberta.ca/augustana/infolit/humanlibrary/

On Saturday April 25, 2015 the Mamawi Atosketan School which is located approximately 14 kilometers southwest of Maskwacis held their annual Open House, this included a pow wow for its staff and students. Many attended the pow wow and everyone enjoyed the event. It was a very good turnout, the children loved to participate and witness the healing ceremony.

Above is Mr. Jerry Roasting a seasoned veteran of the Pow Wow circuit is seen leading the young men during the opening ceremonies.

Congratulations to all the staff and volunteers at Mamawi Atosketan School, to bring a ceremony of healing to the students. All who contributed will receive blessings for your efforts and care of the students.