

Meet Us, Meet Our Challenges



"Meet Us, Meet Our Challenges"

a Tlicho Youth Photovoice Project :

Life as we know it has its challenges and its blessings. How we deal with each is entirely of our own accord and the decisions we make today will continue to echo in our distant future. What we tried to do in this three day workshop was to see how the Tlicho youth can cope with adversity and how they benefit from the positives in their lives.

The photo voice workshop had a theme of resilience, the idea that despite adversity these youth can overcome their challenges and persevere. That although there may be something in their lives that is trying to keep them back they still see past their problems and continue on in life. In pain they will find joy, when they are down they will look up, and when darkness surrounds them they will find a way to break through to the light.

These photographs are the result of this workshop. We tried to find sources of strength, the tools that they use to overcome their obstacles in life, things that they can trust inexplicitly such as religion, music, friends, and family. The end result was something that went along those lines but I think went a little further. We can see how some of these youth cope with their problems. They have given us a glimpse into their struggles, their triumphs and what they love.

We couldn't have done this without the expertise and patience of long time northern photographer Tessa Macintosh. She has helped us open our eyes to the beauties of the world and what it has to offer. I would also like to acknowledge Susan Hopkins as head of the CJBS Mentorship Program for her dedication and steadfast belief in the youth and the financial support for the project. She has truly been a source of strength for us.

We have tried our best to add to the discussion of youth resilience. We hope when you see our photos, when you read our comments that you gain a better understanding of the Tlicho youth.

Mason Mantla
Youth Mentor
March, 2010

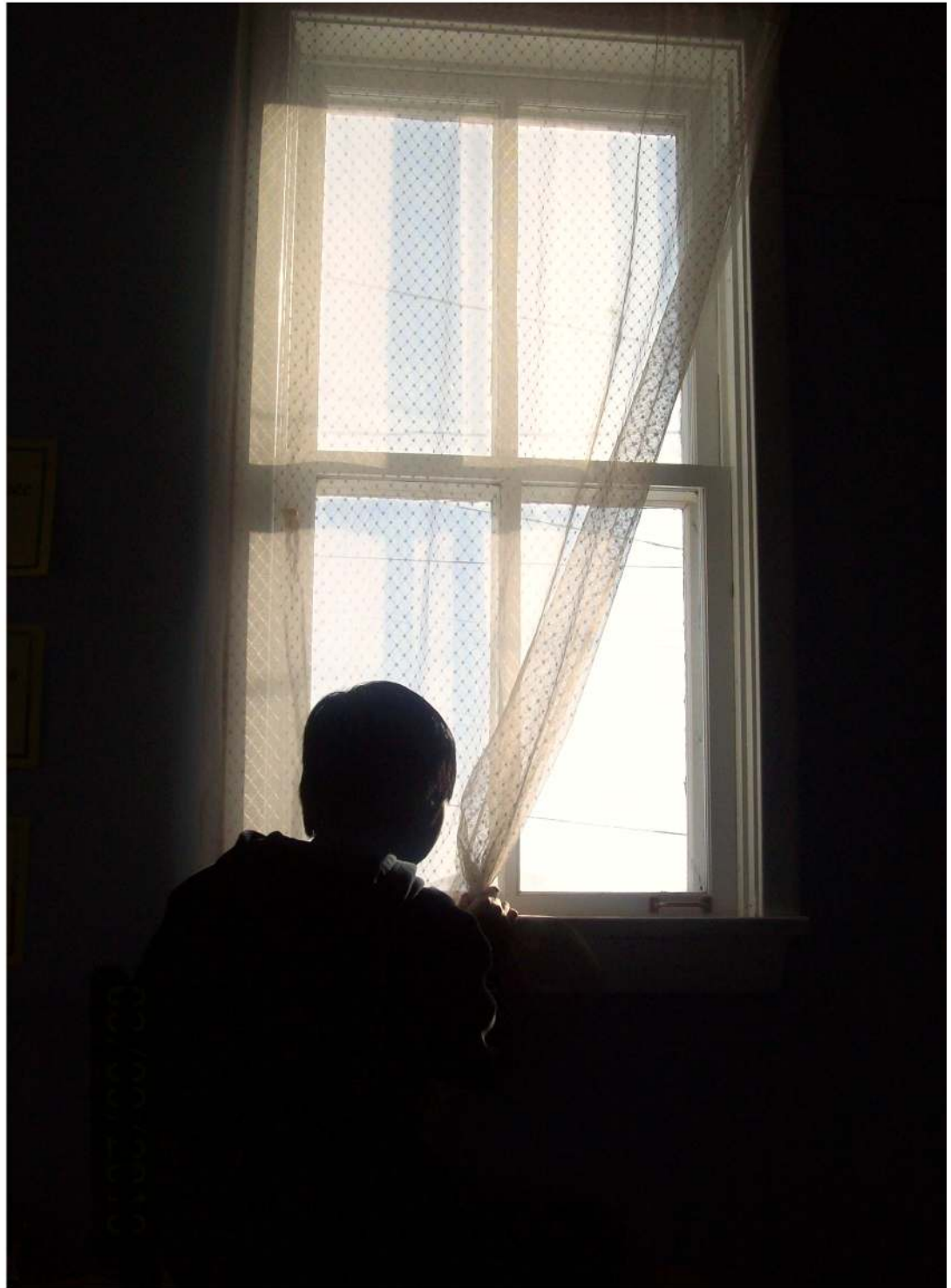


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I. Intervention from above. - Gracie Cameron

II. I think its great that the youth who have no where to go, have made their own place to play. They should keep themselves busy so they won't get themselves in trouble. I hope they keep finding ways to keep themselves busy and having fun.
- Tyler Charlo

III. Everyone has their dark times and don't know what to do, so they might need help from another person in order to see the light. - Vicki Vital

IV. Sometimes people might feel like they are in a long hallway and all the doors are closed. - Toby Kotchilea

V. It's important to know who you are and find your own path. - Logan Wellin



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I. This young girl is on the brink of succumbing to the peer pressure, yet she stalls. Will she jump?

No. - George Bailey

II. Child Within - I look young in this picture. It makes me think how a child needs caring and every adult has an inner child in themselves who needs care and security. - Destiny Rabesca

III. Sometimes life gets so hard there's nothing to do but hang on tight. - Toby Kotchilea



III

IV. Interaction - The youth and elder are shaking hands and you can see the light which seems to illuminate between them, a sort of wisdom that can be seen for generations afterwards. - Mason Mantla

V. Drawn to Light - Even when you just came into the world, you are more naturally drawn to light. This is a great scene to portray innocence. -Mason Mantla

VI. Want A Home - The hand pressed against the window is a form of want. The wanting of a better home perhaps than the one you are in. - Mason Mantla



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I. The Unbreakable Flight - John jumps to fall, because for every second he's in flight, he is indestructible. It is only when he meets the earth that he meets his fate. - George Bailey

II. The Invincible - Toby has no fear when he runs toward an on coming truck. He is fearless in doing so because he is indestructible like superman. - George Bailey

III. Healing Hands - He is demonstrating that hands have the power to heal, and show the possibility that they can also hurt when you see how he fades into dark. - Mason Mantla



IV



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IV. The Unstoppable - He is fleeing civilization in order to embrace his native culture. He flees for the land . He doesn't want to be a part of a society that has changed. He wants what his ancestors had, he wants to live free. - George Bailey

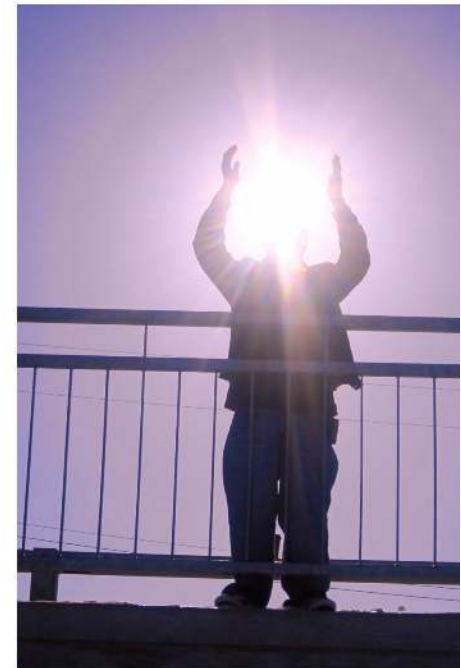
V. The Indestructible - Being struck would stagger most, yet he seems invincible. Is it medicine power? - George Bailey

VI. In the north you can never be too careful so be prepared and be strong. - Vicki Vital

VII. A Good Head- This guy gets through life because he is bright and has a good head on his shoulders. He can over come any obstacle with his brilliance. - Mason Mantla



VI



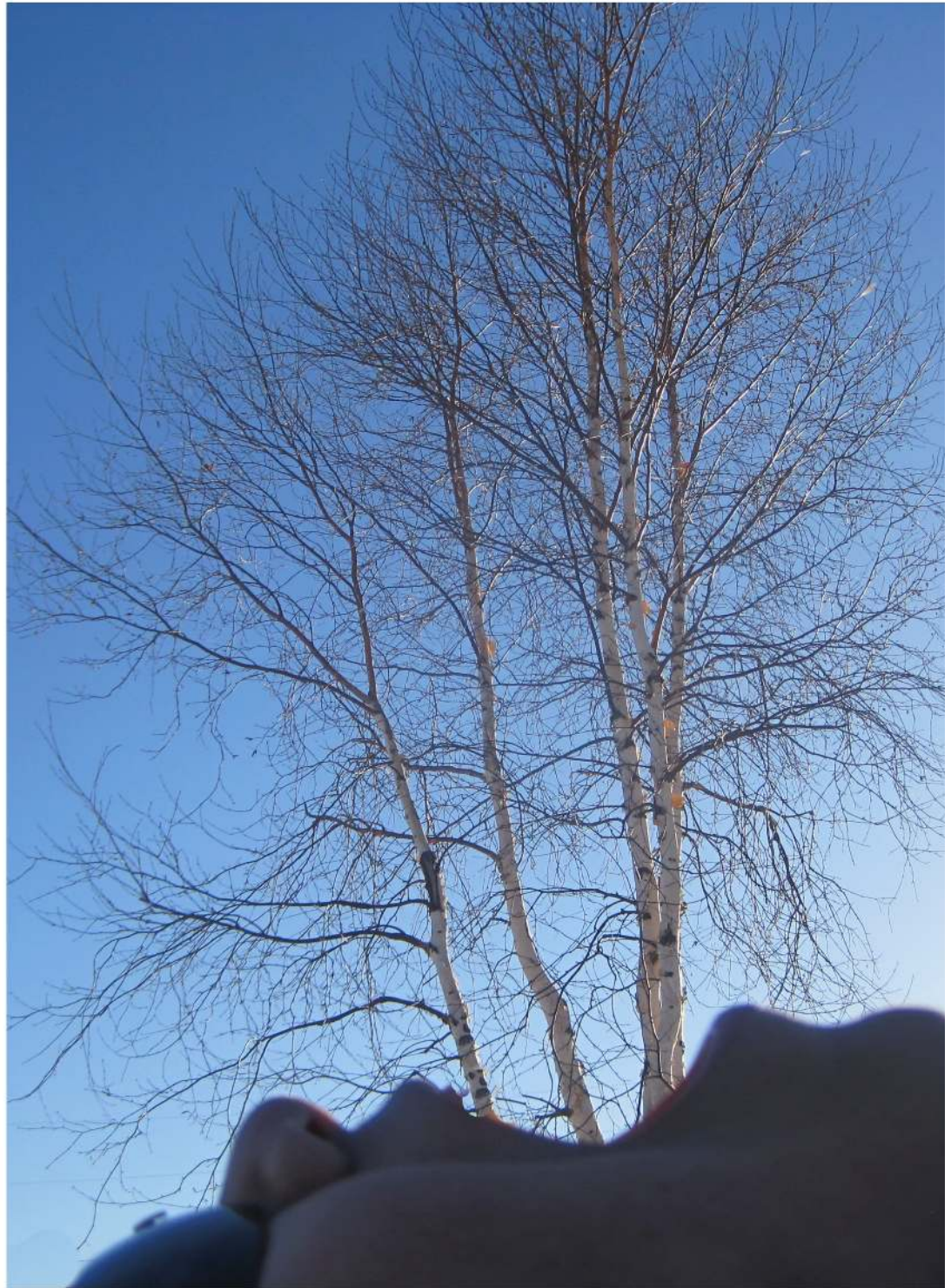
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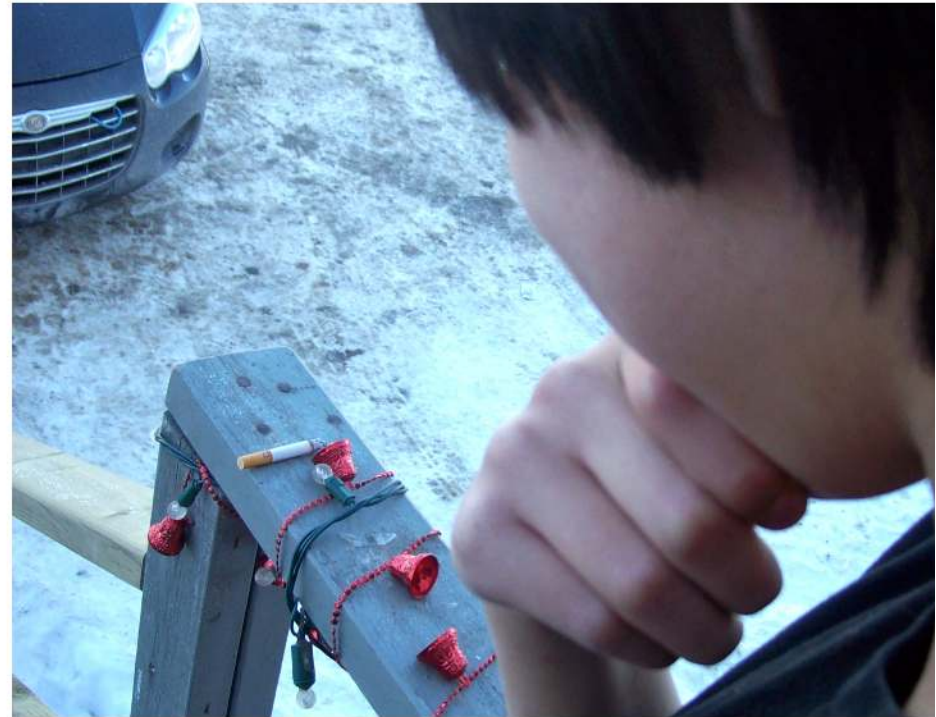
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I. Ice close-up- Nature has a way to shine that we as people can try to emulate. When there is trouble in our lives just focus on the brighter things and try to continue on. - Mason Mantla

II. If trees could speak- This image can convey the notion that from your mouth things can grow - whether it be good or ill is entirely up to you. - Mason Mantla

III. Raven just takes it one step at a time. - Nick Richardson

IV. At the Stop Sign - Youths end up smoking because they want to be like some of their peer group, not to be confused with role models. They do it to "fit in" or to be accepted. - Tyler Charlo

V. I'm deciding whether to smoke or not. I've decided not to smoke. George told me it isn't cool. - Toby Kotchilea

VI. Only chaser - Why sip from the bottle that causes a faint burning sensation that must be put out with - chase. - George Bailey



VI



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IV

I. Elder Challenges - Can I survive out there in the present ? I was raised in the past trying to live by what Mother Earth provided. - Logan Wellin

II. Someone can always stand tall but can never stand alone long enough, until they realize they need help from another person or a friend. - Vicki Vital

III. A self-portrait - I felt compelled to write a song for the victims of residential school. "We sing for those who've been abused. We sing for those who've been ill-used. We sing for those who are still bruised. We sing so they can seek the truth." - Mason Mantla

IV. These glasses have seen many great things, wonderful things, enough to fill a book with memories and wisdom. - Logan Wellin

V. The Defeated - This young guy was unsuccessful in his battle with the light; he is going away from it. He is going toward the dark side. He isn't going to be alright ... therefore he cries. - George Bailey





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I. Kids can make any place into a journey so no one can take their dreams away from them. - Vicki Vital

II. ' Strong like Two People ' - Logan Wellin

III. Between a rock and a hard place , the world may seem like it's closing in on you but you can always choose the right path to move on. - Vicki Vital

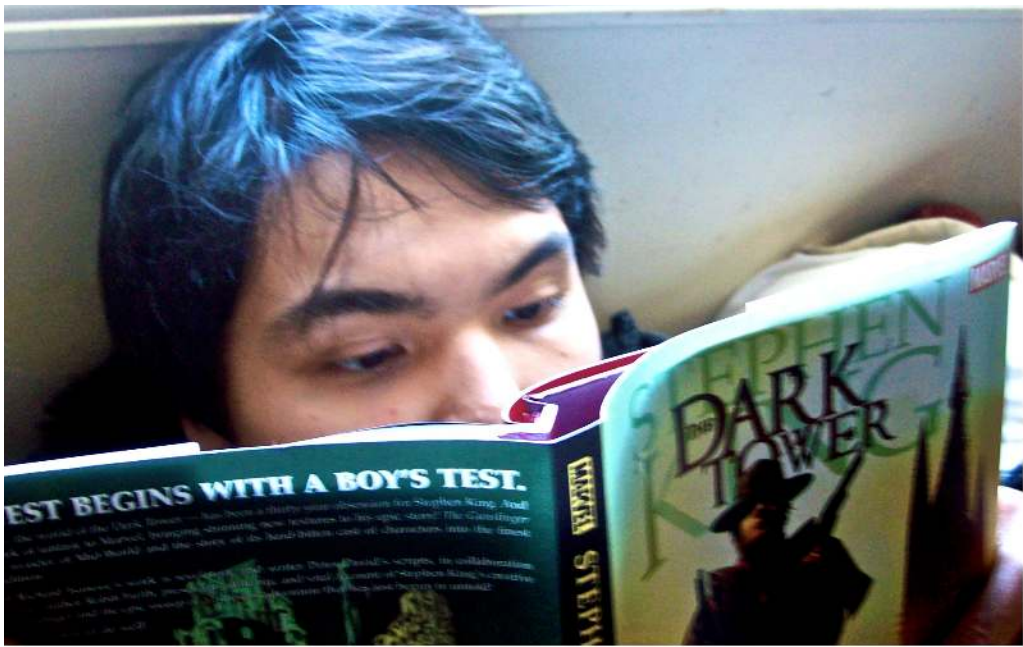
IV. Mason likes to read and inspired me to pick up a book and read it. Information in books can help you get through problems and obstacles. - Toby Kotchilea

V. I'm proud of our new Ticho flag. - Nick Richardson

VI. Into the organic lens - In a culture where history is really only contained in oral form why don't more people enjoy the pictures they see through the organic lens. - George Bailey

VII. Anyone at all, even if you're old or just a little kid, you can always get help from our Father, Lord Jesus Christ. - Vicki Vital

VIII. Fear, the Mind Killer - Baby has an absence of fear and hopefully she can continue on in life without becoming held down by her fear. We were all born like this. - Mason Mantla



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I. Music can help someone find the right path.
- Logan Wellin

II. Balancing act - He is showing a great balance and that he faces a choice between light and darkness. You can see him tilting more towards the light . - Mason Mantla

III. Elder waiting by Window - Seeing what's going on outside, things are changing out there. He's watching life go past him, waiting patiently. - Logan Wellin

IV. Dancing Friends - Everybody has to let loose sometimes and just dance it out with your friends or just by yourself with your shadow.
- Vicki Vital

IV. Let it go - Gracie Cameron



III



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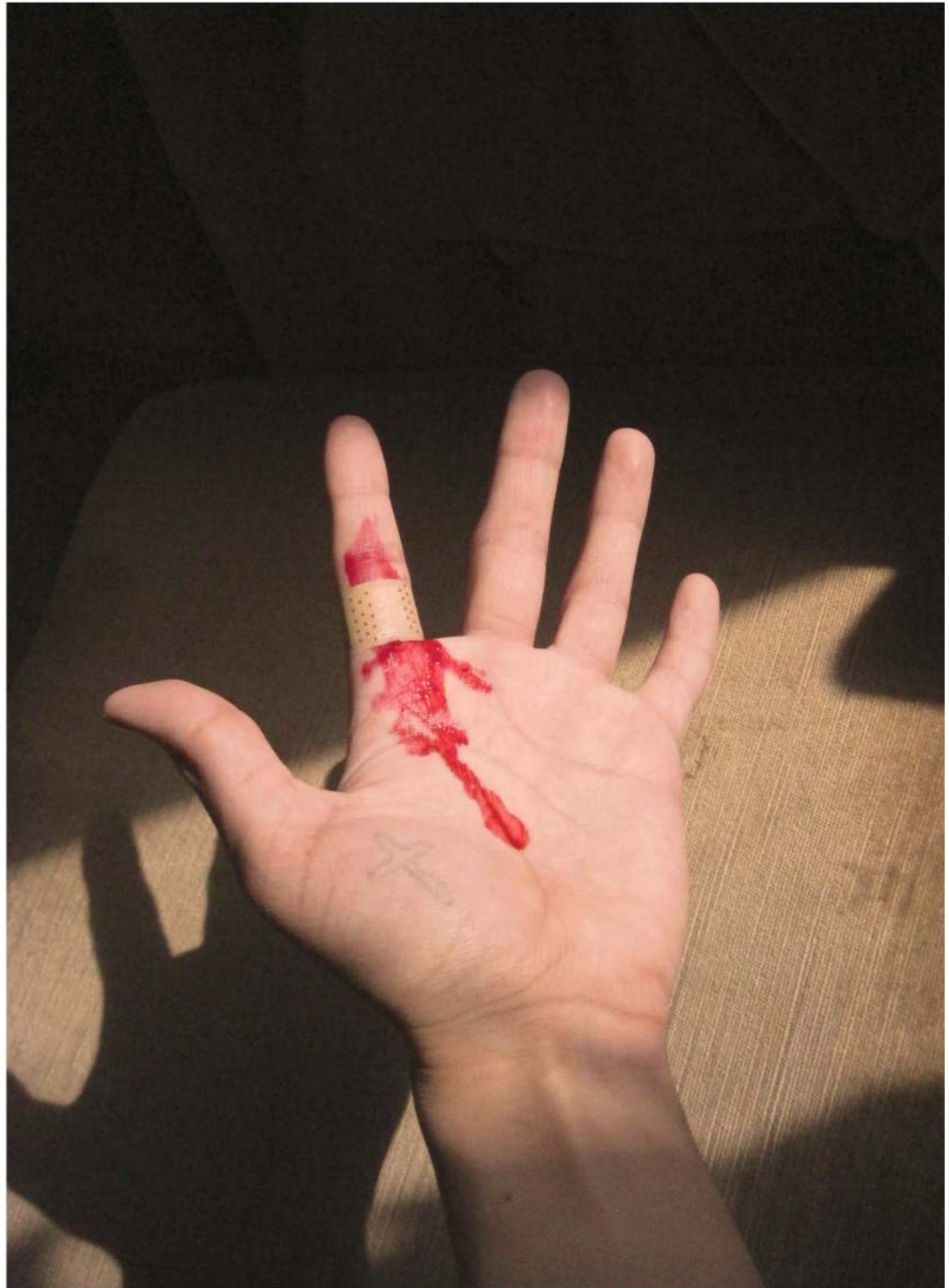




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I. Tlcho Mafia - He can choose a life of crime and danger or he can choose to walk away and not give in. - Mason Mantla

II. Handshake - The voice of the past is being given to the youth. His face is illuminated and he is getting that wisdom. - Mason Mantla

III. Band-aid - Some boo-boos need more than just a band-aid solution. - George Bailey

IV. Respect can come though the past to the present. No matter who you are, always show respect. - Logan Wellin

V. Willing Hand - This hand that I give, I do so willingly, hoping in the future it might be taken. - Mason Mantla

VI. Story Hands - His hands with all the wrinkles and calluses have a history. - Mason Mantla

VII. Past + future - We are like a mirror image to each other so we can learn from each other. - Logan Wellin



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VII



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III



IV

I. Up Hill Climb - Gracie Cameron

II. This young man is a deeper thinker asking, 'Why am I here and what am I supposed to do with my life?' - Logan Wellin

III. Laughter Medicine - Sometimes when life gets hard you just have to push through. Reminding yourself to laugh can be therapeutic, and having friends smiling with you, you can be helpful. - Mason Mantla

IV. A youth may have been through a lot of trouble in their life but when you see the sparkle in their eye you know all hope is not lost. - Vicki Vital

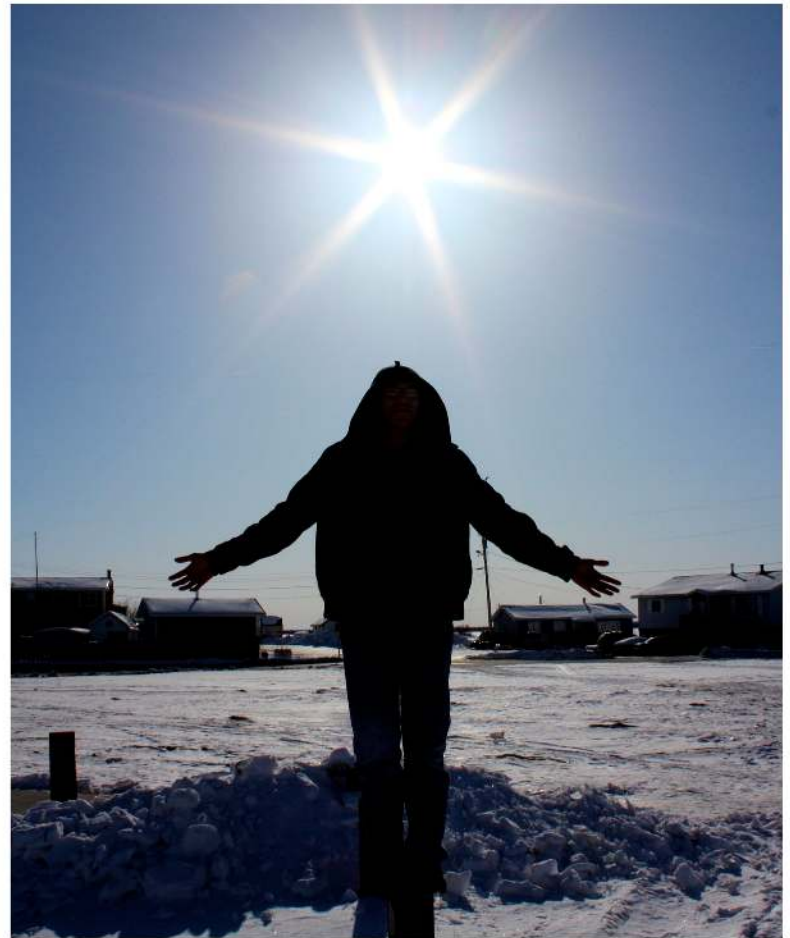
V. Go after your dreams and don't let go. - Logan Wellin

VI. A young man with his child are trying to find a way to live together. Also he gets strength from his daughter to go on and strive for her. - Logan Wellin



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IV



V

I. Music can save someone from drowning in their problems and may help them find the right path. - Logan Wellin

II. Faith at home. - Gracie Cameron

III. Hand that Needs - When life get you down don't be afraid to ask for help when needed, or you may just find yourself in ruin forever. - Mason Mantla

IV. Two Sides of a Corner - The cane on the side of the building being illuminated is a symbol of wisdom of the elders. The fire is a symbol of the trash of being in the darkness; ignorance. - Mason Mantla

V. Disabling Distance - If you can't be brought to the celebration, bring the celebration to you. - George Bailey

VI. It's a long road, but I may find a friend along the way. - Nick Richardson



VI



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I. Two guys play fighting in the hallway at school but it looks like they are building a bridge for a connection at friendship. Instead of fighting you can meet with each other. - Destiny Rabesca

II. Young + Old - From the young person's perspective, the Elder's wisdom can be even seen in the atmosphere by light seemingly coming from him. - Mason Mantla

III. It looks like a run down old house, but inside it is beautiful. Never judge someone, cause you never know what it's like on the inside. - Logan Wellin

IV. Back to his Religion. He feels that he can fall back onto his faith, and that it will always be there for him. This is his source of strength. - Mason Mantla

V. This guy is trying to fit in a school locker but he can't. Some people might peer pressure you into doing things or you just want to fit in but you can't. It just might not be right for you. - Destiny Rabesca

VI. Kids can use a big brother or mentor to have someone to look up to and learn to live a good life. - Vicki Vital

VII. Love Love Love. Love is all there is. - Logan Wellin



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VII



I

I. Resilience Pledge - " I am, I have, I can and I will. " - George Bailey

II. Musical Growth - Music can be an expression of your feelings. It can help you grow into the person you want to become as symbolized by the tree. - Mason Mantla

III. Little Mountain - This boy has the will to face insurmountable odds. He shows inner strength that he can always draw from. - Mason Mantla

IV. Separation - Maybe two heads are better than one, but sometimes the only way to move forward is to leave the past behind. - George Bailey

V. Sugar Coke - I was bored in a restaurant and spilled some sugar, then made a line. I had a straw and it looks like I'm doing coke /drugs. Some people do drugs to get away from things. - Destiny Rabesca

VI. Waiting to be Free - These guys were wondering when the sportsplex will be open so they can have that freedom to have fun. - Vicki Vital

VII. Evie Elizabeth Lila Mantla - This is a profile of my source of strength. My daughter helped me see the greater side of life. - Mason Mantla

VIII. 'Work in the day and sleep at night.' That is one of the Dene Laws. - Nick Richardson

IX. If you don't exercise your life could be upside down in other ways. - Tyler Kotchilea



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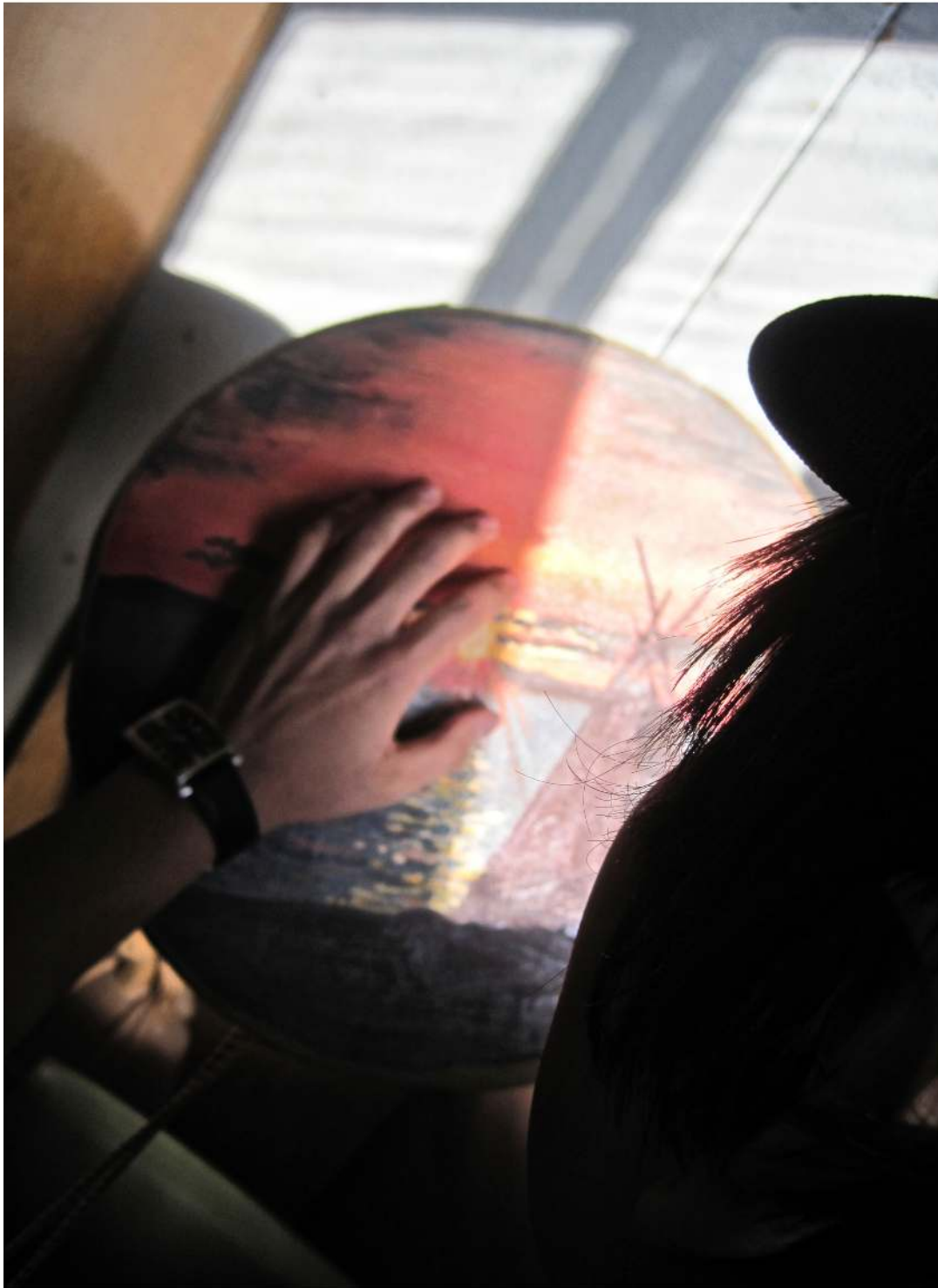
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I. This man has his hand on a painted drum as if he will get strength from playing it and learning his culture to be strong like two people. - Logan Wellin

II. Carry a rainbow with you wherever you go. There is always a rainbow after the storm. - Nick Richardson

III. When someone lends you a helping hand, don't take it the wrong way. - Toby Kotchilea

IV. Life and Times - This photo shows an Elder who has gone through many things, yet is still here to tell the tale. There is always a window of hope only if you care to look. - Mason Mantla



III



Photographers



George Bailey has lived in Behchoko for most of his life . He graduated from Chief Jimmy Bruno School. He doesn't have dreams, he has goals and his goal is simple, but that's for another time. Presently he is working numerous jobs to save money for college.



Toby Kotchilea grew up in Behchoko. He is in grade 7 and is 12 years old. He loves to read, spend time with friends and play video games like Oblivion. Photography is something he really enjoys.



Logan Wellin is 19 years old, born in Behchoko. He graduated in 2009 and is now working at CJB School as a youth mentor. He likes helping young people to try and achieve their dreams. He loves music, break dancing, hand-games and drumming.



Mason Mantla is 19 years old Tliche citizen. He resides in the Behchoko area with his girlfriend and daughter. He aspires to be an artist hoping to do work in music and short films. Photography is a great form of expression that he is interested in as well.



Gracie Shed Cameron grew up in Rae, left at 16, graduated high school in Texas, joined the US Army at 18, returned to Rae in 2008, married, and just moved to B.C with her husband. "Rae is my home and there is no other place like it on earth."



Destiny Rabesca describes herself as an 18 year old Slavey girl who loves to draw and hopes to make that her job one day. She moved to Behchoko from Deline after her Dad passed away. She is funny and hyper and likes to be a bit crazy!



Nicolas Richardson lived in Behchoko for 7 years. He is in grade 5 at Mildred Hall School in Yellowknife. He likes to play xbox360 on the weekend. He likes to play outside, walk around Yellowknife & Behchoko and hang out with cousins and friends



Vicki Vital lives in Behchoko. She is 18 years old and in grade 11. She likes to read, run and walk a lot. She loves hanging out with her friends, "but most of all I love my family, my brothers mostly so don't tell my mum - lol". She also loves to daydream.



Tyler Charlo lives in Behchoko. He is 17 and in grade 11 at Chief Jimmy Bruno School. He plans to go to school down south to become a hair stylist. He is also interested in making music. Tyler has great expectations for his future.





Meet Ticho youths as they meet their challenges during a resilience photovoice project in Behchoko, NWT, in March 2010.

With this book of their own thought-provoking photos and comments, you have a view into their world. They face the very real problems of drugs, gangs, teen pregnancy and more. Some qualities that give them the resilience to carry on, to strive to meet these challenges are courage, determination, respect, compassion, an appreciation of nature and music, a desire to be 'strong like two people' and yes - wisdom.

You are invited to review this book and use it as a catalyst for your own considerations on this very important subject of youth resilience. This may be a book to inspire all of us.

