**Loretta Kegg-Kalk Sharing Traditions with Children and Grandchildren**

I have a 16-year-old granddaughter who my son is having a hard time keeping inside.  She always wants to be outdoors.  She told me, “Grandma, I can go fishing and fillet a fish better than I can run a vacuum cleaner.”  I told her that it’s alright that she can do both.  My son is a single parent, so I get to teach my granddaughter everything a grandmother knows.

Growing up, I was always following my dad and brothers around outdoors.  My sister, Betty, was the one who stayed inside to cook and clean.  She was by my mom’s side learning how to bead and make crafts.  I really didn’t get into beadwork until just recently, because I was always too busy outside.

When my parents would catch up to me and make me sit still, I sat with my mother and watched her make quilts and beadwork.  I still remember the things my mother taught me.  It was good to have both my mother’s and my father’s influence on my life.

Today, I make many quilts and blankets.  My sister has helped me a lot.  She taught me how to bead a medallion, which I used to watch being made.  As a child, I didn’t realize how important these things would be in my life today.  I’ve learned how important it is to teach my sons what my parents taught me.

A couple of years ago, I took my sons to the powwow grounds and told them that they were going to build a wigwam.  They had an idea of how it should look, but had never built one.  I just stood back and told them how to build one – they did a really good job.

Now I’m trying to teach my grandchildren what I have learned.  Even when they are visiting me for only a half hour, I try to give them something of our culture that they can fit into their lifestyles.

Right now, my 13-year-old grandson is really into hunting deer.  It’s amazing that I’ve seen my dad and brother hunt, my sons, and now my grandchildren.  You always remember the first deer you shoot, because it is a tradition that you clean and prepare it and share a feast with the community.  I told my grandson that I would be standing by to guide him and help him make the feast.   I’ve taught him a lot of things.  I tell him that you kill what you eat – you don’t kill birds or squirrels for the fun of it.

It’s enjoyable teaching kids today.  I have 16 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, and I’m trying to teach them what I know.  I tell them that generations of our ancestors came from here.  I tell them that they should to be very proud of who they are and never hide the fact that they are Ojibwe.  I tell them that it’s okay to learn about our culture and traditions on both sides of their descendants.

I tell my grandchildren that they are special because they have two worlds.  When they come to my house, I speak to them in Ojibwe.  But when they visit their other grandparents, they may not have this.  It’s important to reassure our children that it’s alright to know both sides.  This is part of their identity.  This is why it is important to pass down our traditions.