



## ***Ni'NOXSOLA***

Elders in Residence Program  
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools

Sheila Buchanan

'Kindness'



I don't know if you are able to read the article below, but I thought it would be nice to share with everyone what it means to be nice to people even the less fortunate.

This was taken in 2006 and it was on the front page of the Edmonton Journal. I made stew and bannock. I would go home after work on Friday and start baking bannock so I would have enough time the next morning to make my stew and butter the bannock before I wrapped it up for serving.

I did this out of my own pocket money and was dedicated to doing it every single weekend no matter how cold it was. I froze my fingers but it was only for a half hour, the homeless were outside all day and all night if they didn't find shelter. The hot food was at least a pacifier for a little while. I was told by some that what I was doing was a waste of time and I was stupid for doing it. I didn't feel stupid at all, I felt very rewarded for what I did.

At Christmas time, I got a bonus from work and I spent it buying gifts for them. I went to the united way store and bought a toque, gloves and scarf set for \$1.99, then I took them home and wrapped them up and wrote male or female on the present. I went to IGA and bought some oranges, candy, cookies, chocolates and candy canes. I wrapped them up in little Xmas bags from the dollar store with little ribbons, handed them out when I went to feed them just before Xmas.

You would not believe how grateful these people were and if I ran out of gifts, they understood. I used to feed at least 100 or more. If I ran out of food I went home and made more and went back.

I don't like to see anyone go hungry and it doesn't matter to me if they have a drug or alcohol addiction, they still have to eat. A lot of people do not understand that they are unable to work due to their addiction. It is an illness which is difficult to over come. Only those who have worked with these people or that have been there themselves understand. Not all homeless people have an addiction. Some have gone through circumstances beyond their control which left them homeless and is normally temporary.

That's my story about being nice to people. I try to follow this in my everyday life with anyone I come across. It only takes a few minutes to be nice and it is rewarding as well.

Kookum Sheila

# Parole officer a 'saint' to city's hungry

## Family's old bannock recipe helps feed homeless

KAREN KLEISS  
Journal Staff Writer  
EDMONTON

On Saturday mornings, Sheila Buchanan makes a big batch of stew and bannock bread, loads it into her old Dodge minivan and drives to the inner city, where she looks for hungry people to feed.

She does it every weekend, no matter the weather. The money to buy the flour, milk and meat comes out of her own pocket. Most weekends she has no help, and she tends the simmering pots alone in the tiny kitchen of her rented duplex. "It just breaks my heart that these people are out here hungry," Buchanan says as she packs the last of the bannock into bread bags. "They are just so grateful."

Buchanan started doling out soup in April because she couldn't stand to see people go hungry. She works as a parole officer at the Stan Daniels Healing Centre, and people kept coming to the door asking for food. She decided to take matters into her own hands.

On Saturday afternoon, the mercury hovered around -10 C and Buchanan parked her battered green van beside the York Hotel in Edmonton's downtown.



CHRIS SCHWARZ, THE JOURNAL

Sheila Buchanan, left, hands out bannock, soup, and oranges to homeless people on Saturday.

Word spread fast, and minutes after she popped the trunk, a dozen people had gathered around her steaming pots of beef stew.

"She is going straight to heaven, this lady," said Stanley, who has been living on the street for three years and didn't want his last name published. "She is a saint."

See BANNOCK / A7

## Non-judgmental grandmother adds care to her recipe

BANNOCK

Continued from A1

Like Stanley, most of those who come live on the streets, and some struggle with alcohol and drug addictions. Their soup tips out of their bowls and runs down their chapped, dirty hands.

"I'm not judging these people, I'm just feeding them," Buchanan says. "What they do with their lives is their business."

Many who come are also aboriginal, and they are thrilled to have traditional fried bannock for lunch.

Several said it is the best bannock they've had in a long time.

"It's not even a recipe," Buchanan says. "It's a little bit of this and a little bit of that. My grandmother made bannock this way, and I learned it from her."

The stew is Buchanan's own recipe.

She buys the ground beef at a local meat shop every Monday, when it's 50 per cent off. She fries it up with some onions, adds turnips, potatoes and

carrots, and thickens it with flour — the same recipe the 62-year-old grandmother cooks for her own family.

"It is a commitment," Buchanan says. "I'm not rich, but I'm doing OK. I figure that if I can go and put \$40 in the slot machine at the casino, I can certainly feed the homeless."

"This is just more important to me than playing crib on Saturdays."

For more than an hour, she stands in the freezing cold, ladling soup into plastic bowls and passing around spoons. Some people come back two, three and even four times, tucking fried bannock and tangerines into their pockets. Buchanan beams.

"On a day like today, this really helps out," said Wayne Nataway, who has been living on the street for more than a decade and has eaten from Buchanan's stew pots many times. "It makes me feel better, and not just because of the food. She cares."

kkleiss@thejournal.canwest.com