Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NEWS RELEASE

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NAN FILM PREMIERE FIRST STEP IN YOUTH EMPOWERING INITIATIVE

THUNDER BAY: Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Deputy Grand Chief RoseAnne Archibald together with NAN Youth Council members Catherine Cheechoo and Serene Spence debuted the short film *The Four Directions Project* to kick off a youth empowering initiative based on story-telling through film during a news conference today.

"Young people have valid real stories that the world needs to hear," said NAN Deputy Grand Chief RoseAnne Archibald who developed the initiative to bridge the arts and youth portfolios at NAN – both of which she's responsible. "Story-telling through film gives young people the opportunity to tell their stories and heal through that process – it's empowering to them."

The short film entitled *The Four Directions Project* explores cultural rebirth, healing, and hope against the backdrop of the four sacred directions and themes of song, dance, prayer, and dreams. Catherine Cheechoo, Serene Spence, Brent Wesley, and Jocelyn Formsma's stories and poems are featured in the six minute film which was shot mainly in Thunder Bay and Moose Factory (one of NAN's 49 First Nation communities).

"The draw to this project for me was the opportunity for a different kind of expression", said Catherine Cheechoo who's poem is featured in the short film. "The experiences relayed in my poem I'm sure are experienced by many other young women – it's just another way young people can relate."

The Four Directions Project is the first phase in a NAN initiative to empower youth through film. Phase 2 will involve researching options to secure funding for film training for young people. Archibald is hopeful Phase 3 will mean a First Nations Film School available to young people throughout the North.

The Four Directions Project's official premiere will take place at the Weeneebeg Film Festival in Moose Factory Saturday March 10, 2007.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is an Aboriginal political organization representing 49 First Nation communities within James Bay Treaty 9 and Ontario First Nations part of Treaty 5 – an area spanning two-thirds of Ontario with a total approximate population of 45,000 members on and off reserve.

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