

MEET BILL



Born into the Ojibway Tribe, Bill lived happily with his mother and father until he was 5 years old. His world was shattered when he was suddenly taken away from his family, along with his 3-year-old brother and 2-year-old sister, as a part of the Sixties Scoop, when thousands of Indigenous children removed from their homes. It is understood today how prevalent the abuse and neglect of children was in these residential schools.

At nine, Bill was moved away to a different residential school for youth. He would never see his brother and sister again. He would later learn that his brother had taken his own life, and as for his sister, "To this day, I have no idea what ever happened to her".

At age 10, Bill was adopted by a family and started "real school" for the first time. Bill lost his language, his name, his family and a connection to his culture and heritage. Bill's adult life was filled with the after-effects of this childhood trauma. He used substances to try to cope. He funneled his anger into fighting and as a result was incarcerated for many years. He experienced unemployment, poverty and eventually, homelessness. When Bill had no where else to turn, he came to The Bridges.

With the help of Cambridge Shelter, Bill has been making improvements to his life every day. The CSC Housing Workers worked with Bill to secure and sustain housing. They connected Bill with Indigenous connections at Lutherwood, as well as Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge and North Dumfries. One of the housing workers, Allison, has been able to personally offer Indigenous support, providing him with smudge and ceremonial supplies. He has secured full-time employment and is proud to say that he has been clean for 20 years.

With a place to call home, a full-time job, and supports in place, Bill now has hope for his future.