



WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

CHAPTER 12 - *EKO-MDASSVI-SHI-NIIZHVVAACHING*

Nokomis Annie decided it was time to get active! She would need to call upon Noodin, Ziigwan, and Waaban for some ideas. She wondered what else they could do to help turtles and their wetland homes. They would need to tell others about what they saw living in the wetland. She would invite Elders to come with them to speak about the medicine plants, traditional places, and the importance of turtles.

Nokomis Annie would begin by mapping her community. She knew that this was important because the sacred spaces and special places would be respected and protected for future generations. A clean up of the waterways and the shoreline would be a great idea too, thought Nokomis Annie. She would put out garbage boxes and recycling bins. Turtle crossing signs must also be put up to help protect turtles on their way to nesting areas. Water should be tested to ensure it will be safe for future generations to come. Most importantly, Nokomis Annie and the children would have to

share what they learned with Chief and Band Council. They needed much more help to get all the work done!

Nokomis Annie decided to tell Ziigwan and Noodin right away about the plans she had for the day. With so much to do, they had to get right to it! Cleaning the wetland was first on the list and Nokomis Annie knew that Ziigwan, Noodin, and Waaban would do a great job!

“Invite your friends to take part in our very special project today,” encouraged Nokomis Annie as she gathered all of the outdoor clothing she could find and quickly filled a backpack with a delicious lunch. It was going to be a long day!

Everyone gathered at Nokomis Annie’s house to walk to the shoreline together. Children from the community came to help, along with their parents. Nokomis Annie thought it was nice to see parents as excited as their children.

The group walked down to the wetland and broke up into groups to walk the shoreline. This would ensure the most thorough clean up. Everyone carried a garbage bag, along with a bucket for recyclable litter. Noodin and Ziigwan went with Nokomis Annie and three other groups went in different directions to start the clean up.

Noodin and Ziigwan were so excited Nokomis Annie could barely keep up with them. “Hey slow down, you two! If we go too quickly, we might miss some litter that needs to be picked up!” Their *Nokomis* was right! There were many little pieces of litter and fishing line which were easy to miss, but could make a big difference to the creatures living in the wetland.

“Hey guys! I will make it my responsibility to pick up all of these bottle caps and plastic rings! I heard that these can be very harmful to turtles and other species living in the wetland,” said Noodin with concern.

“Yes, that is a great idea Noodin! I will be in charge of cans and bottles. We can recycle them when we get back to Nokomis’s house later” said Ziigwan. Nokomis Annie was proud that her grandchildren were



developing an appreciation for the land and a greater understanding and responsibility of the importance of taking care of *Aki*.

Before they knew it, their section of the wetland looked as clean as it could be! Noodin and Ziigwan were proud of the work they completed and Nokomis Annie was happy to see their wetland looking so beautiful. The group came together once everyone was finished working to enjoy lunch. The local paper came to report on the good work of the community. What a successful day and what a wonderful story the children could tell when they got back to school! Nokomis Annie was sure that this was the beginning of a special new task that the community would continue for years to come.

