Highlights From a Youth’s Conversation:

I went to treatment, and while I was there it was really weird because like…they had this like smudging thing and like all these white kids that were trying to show how much they knew about smudging themselves, the sage smoke, and I was like, yeah, you guys know your stuff, you white kids, and it was just like weird, and I was like people want to be Indians now. It like really offended me while I was there. Like I still went, and I didn’t pray. But my Nookum, I have been going to her lodge since I was like a little boy, since like, before I was in Kindergarten I think. And so like I’ve helped out at sweats and stuff, and I know the spirituality of it and stuff, and it was just, it was like, I have never walked around and bragged about how I can burn the sage like you guys are, and it was really like offensive.

I had been going to AA and stuff and I felt like I was really close to God and stuff, well their God. And then I was like, well whenever anything got really bad, I wasn’t like, “Oh God help me,” I was like, “Tansi Creator,” you know. So I just prayed the way that I was taught to when I was younger, and I prayed when I got home, and I prayed the next day that I could stay sober. I didn’t go to AA again after that, and I just kind of like, and it was weird because I wasn’t going to the programs, I didn’t go to treatment, I didn’t do this like they had said that I’d have to or else I wouldn’t stay sober. I just did it my own way, I just prayed to Creator and then that got me through the next semester of high school and then the summer came and I helped my Nookum on a fast because she was putting some people out and I stayed there for four days with her and I got this idea that throughout the months of me being sober, it wasn’t, like everyone says that God knows what you’re going to do, God, they’ll show you, like he knows what you are going to do, he knows what’s going to happen with your life, and he knows. And I always thought that was weird since I was young, like in grade two, I was like, no one can know what you are going to do, and then I just kind of thought that we’re given, we’re going down our road and then there’s a fork in the road with
two decisions that we have to make and Creator, God, or whatever, gives us these two paths that we can choose, like two decisions and it doesn't know what we are going to do but it knows we are going to do one of them. Its not like everything is going to happen because this person, this thing is not going to do it for us.

We have to do it ourselves. That kind of stuck with me the whole time is that no one is going to help you, no one is going to hold your hand through anything, no one is going to push you through your life, you have to do it yourself. So I was out at my Nookum’s and I felt like even though I was there and I didn’t have my phone, I didn’t have my IPod, I didn't have my computer, I couldn’t do all the stuff that everyone, well that I was so used to...And I was in there with my Nookum and I was like this is awesome...Then I came back and I kind of lost that. I lost the thinking that I used to have when I was out there because I have my phone and Facebook and everything now.

It’s kind of like, yeah I would say it is hard to balance the two [city life and traditional life] because you don’t think as critically as you would out there. I’ve been reading these books right, like Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee, that’s the one that I am reading now, I’ve read Half-Breed and I’ve been doing research on this, and the way that we lived before was so awesome, and then the white folk came and they kind of ruined it, and well they did ruin it. But now we have this, and I was really mad, and I was like why’d they have to ruin it because the way that I was out there at my Nookum’s would have been that way that we would have lived our whole lives, and it was like, “Oh, I wish I could have been around at that point.” But I've realized, like just now, that we can't, and you can’t change that, but I’ve been realizing that as sweet as it is to be out there and just to have that time to think about stuff, it’s also important to be here too because you learn all this stuff that you need to out there, and I am sure that there is still lots that I can learn out there, but there’s lots of stuff to learn in the city too.