In 2003, the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples’ Health (IAPH) within CIHR awarded a research grant to Cheryl Bartlett for a project entitled “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”. Mi’kmaw Elders in this project worked with researchers to envision outreach activities that could pilot the Elders’ belief that children need experiential learning with and in the natural world. Elders felt that such might foster root level growth for healthy living and healthy communities by emphasizing creative relationship and creative choice as elements in the life paths of children.

We named one of these outreach activities “From The Forest Comes Our Story” and envisioned it as an innovative puppet making and puppet performing exercise. And so, in Summer 2004 undergraduate summer research assistants Bonnie Bernard, Dina Bernard, Stephanie Bernard, Jenna Doucette, and Mimi Simon along with research assistants Sana Kavanagh and Nadine Lefort and artist Basma Kavanagh gathered diverse and easily collected materials in the woods, such as pieces of bark, leaves, twigs, lichens, mosses, pine cones, and made puppets out of them. The puppets made were characters that appear in Mi’kmaw legends: a rabbit, bear, squirrel, owl, fox, turtle, green frog, porcupine, leader, and Kluskap.

The student puppet makers were guided in their efforts by professional puppeteers from Nova Scotia’s world class Mermaid Theatre who conducted a week-long training exercise involving basic puppet construction and basic puppetry skills. This customized training was enabled by a Nova Scotia Health Research Fund award to Cheryl Bartlett.
In addition, graphic designer Kristy Read created a series of nine posters featuring these puppets along with photographs of the natural materials used to make them. On the posters, these materials are labeled in both Mi'kmaw and English. The posters can be viewed in the pages that follow.
a series of nine posters for activity

FROM THE FOREST COMES OUR STORY – NIPUKTUK WEJIAQL ATUKUAQNN

posters by graphic designer Kristy Read

community-based, participatory action research for project “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”
Puppet Poster #1

Ti’tikli
Great Horned Owl

community-based, participatory action research for project “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”

CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Integrative Science youth and community outreach, and language revitalization
Puppet Poster #2

Muin
Black Bear

community-based, participatory action research for project “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”

Integrative Science youth and community outreach, and language revitalization
Puppet Poster #3

Mikjikj Wood Turtle

Community-based, participatory action research for project “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”

Integrative Science
Youth and community outreach, and language revitalization
Puppet Poster #4
Apli’kmuj Snowshoe Hare
community-based, participatory action research for project “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”

Integrative Science youth and community outreach, and language revitalization
Puppet Poster #5

Wowkwis
Red Fox

community-based, participatory action research for project “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”

CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Institut de recherche en santé du Canada
Puppet Poster #6
Atu’tuej Red Squirrel and Matues Porcupine

Integrative Science youth and community outreach, and language revitalization
Puppet Poster #7

Sqolj Green Frog

community-based, participatory action research for project “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”

CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada
Puppet Poster #8

Nikanus Leader

community-based, participatory action research for project “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”

Integrative Science youth and community outreach, and language revitalization

CIHR IRSC Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institut de recherche en santé du Canada
Puppet Poster #9

Kluskap

community-based, participatory action research for project “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”

Integrative Science youth and community outreach, and language revitalization