

Good evening Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Monica Kovacs. I am one of the graduating students of Humanities 101; I am so very proud of everyone.

My fellow classmates, we've come a long way, we each had our own journey, but our trails intersected every Thursday night and I am so happy for that.

I have met so many fascinating people, students, professors, doctors and members of the community. I am so grateful.

The journey I had coming here was ... hard, but it was worth it.

In my hand, I am holding a feather. It belongs to an owl. The owl's name is Boo. After bonding with it for a couple of hours, it gifted me this feather. This feather represents wisdom, it represents strength.

Coming to Thunder Bay, being from Red Lake and lived in Kenora, but what made me come to Thunder Bay was my friend, Jennifer McKenzie; she is here with me tonight as one of my honoured guests.

I was in the UK with Boo; in Scotland specifically, where I was basically homeless. I had nowhere to go. I thought, "Who are my friends? Who do I know?" and I thought of Jennifer. We go way back, to Red Lake, to kindergarten; and not just her, but her entire family has always been there for me throughout all the years.

So while I was in the UK, I told her my story, about what happened. I said, "Jennifer, I have nowhere to go... can I come live with you?" and of course she said yes, you are welcomed.

But I was apprehensive, I was scared; I have never lived in a city before until finally, she told me through face chat, she said, "It's time to come home now, Monica."

It was that word, "home", that made me say, "YES! I can do this!". I am so grateful to her and her entire family. I am also grateful for Faye Peterson Transitional House for Women; specifically, Maria Albizurez, who unfortunately could attend tonight. Donna is here representing Faye Peterson House, thank you so much.

I hope that our trails intersect in our journey. I don't know if anyone from our class are going to further their education; I highly recommend it. I love learning and I've been bitten by that love bug, and I'm infected, it's contagious, but it should never be quarantined.

I'd like to take a moment to thank all the teachers, professors, doctors, and lawyer for their time, their knowledge, their wisdom, and good energy. Thank you so much, I hope that our trails really do intersect.

I will miss you guys all.

Thank you so much.

Yours Truly,

Monica