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I am the Executive Director of Maeqtekuahkihkiw Metaemohsak, Inc., Woodland Women, and a Tribal Legislator

I am from the Menominee Nation and my Menominee name is *Namaewkukiw*, which means Sturgeon Woman. I am an advocate, an activist, an organizer, and I am *metaemoh*, woman. I am, and I always will be a helper in our ways. I have been advocating for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault for many years. That has evolved into fighting for our land, air, and water — because everything is interconnected.

I am an advocate and organizer and I fight for our land, air, and water. I lead the fight against gender-based violence and bring awareness to our missing and murdered relatives as Executive Director of Maeqtekuahkihkiw Metaemohsak Inc., Woodland Women. Woodland Women lead this fight in our communities by providing cultural care, traditional life ways, and support to those who are struggling with violence, addiction and recovery, homelessness, and issues affecting our community.

Woodland Women started as a support group 7 years ago around a kitchen table and now we have evolved into an organization that helps our women make connections to who they are by relying on and utilizing our elders' traditional teachings, stories, and support. They are our backbone in our families and communities. Before the pandemic Woodland Women would meet at the Menominee Language and Culture building

because we needed more space to gather. We would bead, sew, weave, have talking circles, retreats, and plan events to bring awareness and help in different ways in our community. As we coped with the effects of COVID19 in our communities we were not able to gather together but we were able to keep providing supplies to everyone to bead, sew, and weave. This helped with our mental health and staying busy. We started to have zoom meetings to help each other stay connected. Our elders would still be available to us in safe space. We continue to do this work.

When I organized Woodland Women, I just wanted to provide a safe space for our women to gather and come together in support of one another. Now, 7 years later, I realize that this is bigger than all of us. It's our life ways that we are connecting to and leading us to reclaiming what was taken from us. I want to be able to leave a legacy for our young ladies. I would like our women mentor these young ladies in the community to be the leaders they are as women. The life givers, water carriers, the prayers of our ancestors. We have a responsibility to our next 7 generations to leave a world that was provided to us by our ancestors. Through our ancestor's strength, their struggles, and their sacrifices for all of us to be here on our original land, we must hold ourselves accountable and leave this legacy as we continue to evolve.

I am married and have 8 children and 14 grandchildren.