

Return to traditions, natives told

By David Judd, Expositor Staff

NEW CREDIT — Native families must return to traditional values, community service workers were told Thursday.

"Native families in the 1990s should look at native families of the 1890s and look at their values," said Claudine Van Every-Albert, second language consultant with Six Nations and New Credit schools.

"We must give children a strong sense of identity and who they are. Unless children know who they are, and feel good about themselves, we cannot survive."

More than 30 community service workers attending a social action forum continue discussions today at the New Credit administration building.

The theme is "Caring — the most important tradition."

Many people taking part in the forum expressed concern about drinking and drug

abuse, broken families and other social families on the two native reserves.

But they agreed that getting back to traditional values is hard to do.

Values are not taught in school because people don't agree on what children should learn, Mrs. Van Every-Albert said. Home life, politics and religion cause disagreement.

"We must come to some agreement on principles so we can give children a firm background."

'Not sharing'

Native values, such as kindness, sharing and strength, have been lost as people have relaxed family ties, said Pat Corbiere, a counsellor on New Credit.

By locking up the elderly in old folks homes "we're locking up values . . . We're not sharing the land or the people."

Children learn non-native values from television shows like *Dynasty*, where success

comes from stepping on others, Mr. Corbiere said.

"We didn't have these values before newcomers arrived."

Iowne Anderson said she needed help from her sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles and grandparents to raise her 10 children.

But Melba Thomas, family service worker with the Children's Aid Society, urged natives to be realistic about changing values.

"You cannot impose your values from the '50s on your children, not entirely."

Mrs. Thomas expressed support for mothers who work, and for birth control.

"Birth control gives women a choice over what they do rather than what they're forced to do."

The forum continues today with discussion of what it takes to become a whole woman and how to get the most out of community services.

Previous forums have discussed suicide, stress and the Young Offenders Act.