
Life in a Modern Inuit Community

The initial impression of a visitor to a modern Inuit community might well be disappointment. There are no skin boats, no snow houses, no soapstone lamps and no one is wearing caribou skin clothing. There are very few sled dogs. There is no small white clapboard, red-roofed trading post. Instead, there are rows and rows of small, frame houses, connected by streets, power lines, and utility corridors, and illuminated by street lamps. Gasoline-powered vehicles are everywhere: snowmobiles, three-wheelers, cars, light trucks, metal boats with outboard engines. There is a large, modern school building, a nursing station, a grocery and general store, a small power house, garages for trucks and heavy equipment, a number of modest offices housing municipal and territorial agencies along with local community organizations, a satellite receiving dish and an airstrip.

This community looks rather like many other small rural towns in southern Canada. True, there are no trees, lawns, gardens, or pavement, and there are no fences or other demarcation between the houses. But there are children going to school, men and women going about their work in offices and shops, driving trucks, repairing equipment, collecting the garbage, and sitting in the coffee shop. The casual



Mother and child at Grise Fiord (Jamie Flaherty)