



National Day of Healing and Reconciliation

Issue #1 - June 2004

IN THIS ISSUE:

- page 1...Olympic Vision: BC
- page 2...Cree Culture Camp: Alberta
- page 2...Celebrations: P.E.I.
- page 3...Senator Pearson: Ontario
- page 4...City Proclamations: Alberta
- page 5...Lt. Governor: Alberta
- page 6...Celebrations: Alberta & Northwest Territories
- page 7...Reconciliation Art: BC
- page 8...School Ceremony: Kanawake
- page 8...Community Conference: Bears paw First Nation
- page 9...Lnapksuk Project: Maritimes
- page 9...News from Australia
- page 10...Call to ACTION

A Vision for the 2010 Olympics

During the 2000 Summer Olympics, Australia stood still and the World witnessed an Aborigine female athlete named Cathy Freeman preparing to run her race. She ran her victory lap with an Aborigine flag draped over one shoulder, and the flag of Australia on the other. For that brief moment Australia was one with its people. Alex Nelson, recalls seeing an Aborigine Musical group performing at the 2000 Olympic Games Closing Ceremonies, and this group wore t-shirts with "I'm Sorry" written across the chest! He did not understand at the time its meaning but the following year he heard about Australia's new National Sorry Day to apologize to Aboriginal People for the Stolen Generation and realized the Aborigine runner was making an important statement to the world. This memory had an impact on Alex and now, as the CEO of Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Association of BC, he has a vision for the 2010 Olympics. What message can we give the world? How can we use this event to promote reconciliation and move Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations forward? For Alex we need to begin to build the momentum now. This year's NDHR event at the Esquimalt Bighouse in Victoria, BC was an opportunity to do just that.



A First Nations Elder celebrates NDHR at Esquimalt Big House

Gathering of the Fires was an NDHR celebration to bring people committed to reconciliation in the Victoria area together to begin a process of movement building for residential school reconciliation and ultimately preparing for the 2010 Olympics. As the nearly 300 guests arrived they brought food to share and a log for the fire as a symbol of their unique contributions for reconciliation. Chief Frank Nelson from the Musgamagw-Tsawatainuk First Nations, generously hosted the event. Recognizing protocol, the evening was opened with a traditional welcome by members of the South Island First Nations Dancers, as this event was located in a Coast Salish Big House and in their territory. Chief Frank Nelson and his family complemented the welcome through sharing their traditional songs, setting a spiritual tone and explaining the purpose for the evening. *(article continued on page 3)*

NDHR
is an initiative meant to effect healing and reconciliation among all races, creeds, and denominations now residing in Canada.

This newsletter is intended to build and strengthen networks from coast to coast and beyond.



Blue Quills Culture Camp Celebrates NDHR

Elders, families, and youth of all ages attended Blue Quills Cultural Camp 2004. Last year the camp focussed on colonialization and decolonization. The goal for this year's camp was to celebrate Cree culture, have opportunities to build relationships, and bring out the creative spirit in all. Participants got hands-on experience with the Celebrating Ourselves module of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation Project.

Every day approximately 200 people-Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people attended workshops on ceremony, the arts, and drama. Mornings began with a Pipe Ceremony. Sweat lodges were available every day as well as opportunities to participate in circle processes led by elders in the nine tipis on the campsite.

During the day, participants had the opportunity to learn sandstone sculpting, dancing, painting, and drumming. Evening activities included a Métis fiddler, a Pow Wow, and a final night where people show cased their art by dancing, singing, and displaying their sculptures and paintings.

Vincent Steinhauer, one of the organizers, was inspired to see people re-connect to their relations, hear the Cree language spoken by so many fluent speakers, and have the many elders attend and share knowledge about ceremonies and culture. He recounts "it was exciting to see people attend their first sweat lodge, make their first rattle or drum, and then use what they made in ceremony."

Together Blue Quills, Saddle Lake Boys and Girls Club, Native Counselling Services of Alberta, and Kitimavik put on a very successful event and NDHR celebration. Funding for this culture camp was provided primarily from the Aboriginal Healing Fund and will run out this year. If you would like more information or would like to make a donation, please contact Leona Makokis at Blue Quills: www.bluequills.ca



Learning Hoop Dances at Blue Quills Culture Camp

Dialogues for Reconciliation

Momentum for reconciliation is building. Inspired by Australia National Sorry Day (see p.9 for more details), Canada's National Day of Healing and reconciliation is already taking off like wildfire. Communities across the country, hungry for a venue for reconciliation, celebrated this year's NDHR. An Activities Idea Booklet has been designed to help individuals and organizations plan NDHR events. People committed to reconciliation for themselves, their families, their communities, or their country can use this resource as they wish (see www.ndhr.ca).

Healing and reconciliation; however requires a sustained commitment to building on-going relationships of mutuality. No easy feat in the context of historical and contemporary injustices. Dialogue circles, bringing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together, are beginning to emerge across the country. For example, last year the Nechi Institute hosted, in collaboration with NDHR and Initiatives of Change, two weekend retreats, which led to weekly dialogue circles. It is in these circles knowledge is often gained, genuine feelings are expressed, and a seed is planted for authentic relationships. (See page 9 for information about another inspiring circle process for righting relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous people.)

Barbecue, Cake, and Celebrations on PEI

Around twenty-five Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people gathered to celebrate NDHR at a national park on PEI. Hosted by Aboriginal Survivors for Healing, their Board's Spiritual Elder and President addressed the gathering providing information about the residential school experience and the current Aboriginal Healing Foundation efforts to promote individual and community healing. The address was followed by a delicious barbecue and spectacular NDHR cake to celebrate this special event.

For more information contact: ash@pei.aibn.com

Senator Supports NDHR in Ottawa

Alex Nelson was the M.C and took opportunity to share his stories, as well as his vision. His brilliant harmonica playing filled in between acts. Speakers Chief Frank Nelson, Jessie Sutherland, Bishop John Hanen, and Gerry Ambers inspired the audience as they spoke from their heart sharing their own journeys, and visions for the future. These speakers fulfilled the purpose for the evening, Healing and Reconciliation. The *Getting Higher Choir*, a local community choir, sang songs of inspiration and hope as people feasted and intermingled. After the feasting was finished the celebration continued. Chief Frank Nelson's family generously shared more traditional dances from their territory, honouring all those who attended.

As the formal part of the evening came to a close, those in attendance shared their songs and dances from their own traditions. Egyptian belly-dancing, Celtic music, a Blackfoot song, and more of *Getting Higher Choir's* favourites were on the agenda! For the finale, Shimon Robinsong, one of the Getting Higher Choirs' Directors invited everyone to gather around one of the fires and taught us all to sing "We are the ones we've been waiting for" and "We thank the Creator" (a re-discovery song taught to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth). Finally, Alex Nelson gathered everyone in one large circle around both fires and played "Amazing Grace" on his harmonica as we all sang along.

Through feasting, dancing, singing, and sharing relationships were formed and new insights were gleaned. For example, Gloria Hansen, assistant director to the Getting Higher choir and a non-Aboriginal explains she now realizes that non-Aboriginal people need to also begin a healing process.

The following groups contributed to developing new partnerships and making this event possible: the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Association of BC, the Kwagwiltz Urban Society, the Anglican Church of Canada, BC Association Friendship Centre, the Getting Higher Choir, Celtic Reflections, and Worldview Strategies. The fires in the Victoria area are definitely being gathered and the bonfire is getting stronger every day! Imagine one big international bonfire at the 2010 Olympic Games!!

On May 26, thirty people, from Aboriginal organizations, Government departments, Churches, students, and members of non-governmental organizations such as Initiatives of Change gathered in a circle at the Odawa Native Friendship Centre to celebrate NDHR for the first time in Ottawa. The day started with an abridged version of a traditional Mohawk thanksgiving address given by Kanatitio Gabriel setting the spiritual intention for the day.

Keynote speaker Senator Landon Pearson said that she would try to have this day declared a National Day. Senator Pearson noted that several days had been officially set aside to remember events such as the holocaust, the Armenian genocide and the expulsion of Acadians from New Brunswick. "We must tell the history and recognize our responsibility for that history, but that is only part of what is needed," she said. In order to complete the process there should be a day to think about healing and reconciliation. Having raised a family of five children, she had seen many examples of healing. "Healing is to make whole again," she said, "Reconciliation is to make the circle whole."

In addition a signed proclamation from Ottawa Mayor Bob Chiarelli for a day of healing and reconciliation was read as well as a letter from Ron Singer, Communications Director, Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) acknowledging the day and a commitment to support NDHR. Richard Weeks, a participant was pleased to see that a representative from Mandela Day was also present. Every year during Black History month, a reconciliation day is set aside on February 12th, the day after Mandela walked to freedom. One participant suggested that work needed to be done to connect the NDHR and Mandela Day together. Clearly momentum for a National Day for Healing and Reconciliation is quickly reaching all sectors of society.

As Dr. Maggie Hodgson put it so eloquently on that day; "Nobody can heal in a day and we're not expecting you to either but we can start a dialogue on healing and reconciliation that will open the doors of understanding and acceptance between us." As shared by another participant; "I can wrap my mind and my heart around reconciliation but I'm not so sure about the healing aspect of NDHR - maybe I'm not ready for healing just yet!" These comments provide a glimpse of where two separate and distinct individuals are at with healing and reconciliation and underlines the need to continue advocating to have the Day proclaimed by all parts of Canadian and Aboriginal societies.

For more information about next years event contact: ndhrcanada@pacificcoast.net

Cities Recognize May 26th as National Day of Healing and Reconciliation

The cities of Hinton, Grande Cache, Jasper, Edson, and Edmonton in Alberta have all proclaimed and officially recognized May 26th as the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation. Lisa Higgerty, program manager for Hinton Friendship Centre, lit up on the idea of a national day of healing and reconciliation and has been organizing ever since. She explains that they have a good relationship with the mayors of Hinton and the other cities so it was a matter of a simple phone call to have NDHR made official.

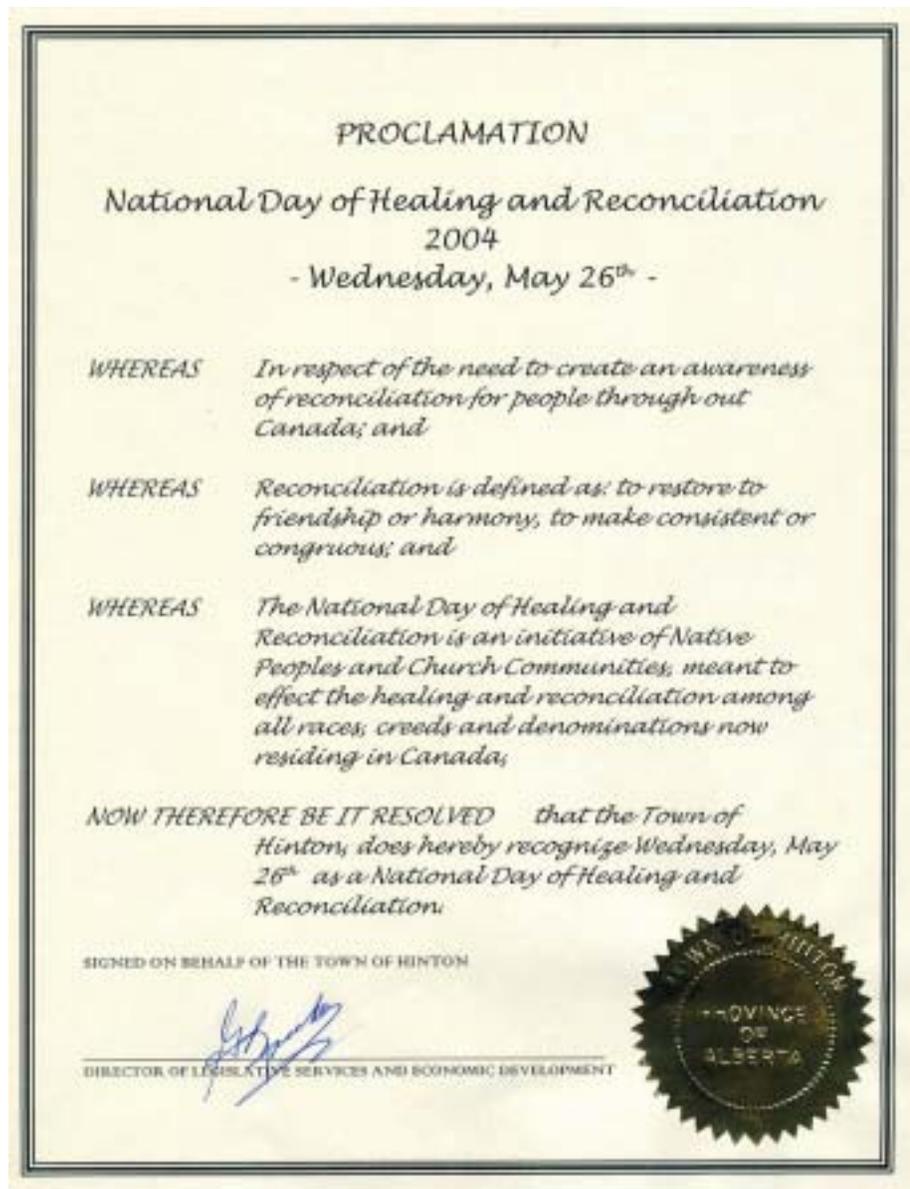
To celebrate NDHR an organizing committee from the Hinton Friendship Centre hosted a two-day conference with keynote speakers Maggie Hodgson, Brian Thorpe, and Bishop Steve Kristenson. Close to 200 people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, attended and participated in smaller circle processes held in break out room where two or three elders guided each group and shared their experiences in residential schools. The conference ended with a feast and traditional drummers from the O'Chiese Band.

For Lisa this event was extremely positive. She recalls feeling the whole effort was worth it when one youth told her that after listening to the elders talk about their experiences in residential school, she now understands why her parents are the way they are and has more compassion.

Jean Whitehorse, president of Mamowichitowin First Nations explains that since the conference understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities is already changing. Now that more people understand what Native people went through, "they look at you differently...they're nice."

The event strengthened as well as fostered new partnerships between the United, Anglican, and Lutheran churches, the Edson and Hinton Friendship Centres, Yellowhead emergency shelter, and the Aseniwuche Winewak and Nakcowinewak First Nations.

For more information please contact *Lisa Higgerty* at 780-817-4000 or email: hfcmlh@shawbiz.ca



Celebrating Diversity with Dignity in Edmonton

The city of Edmonton proclaims and officially recognizes May 26th as the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation, the Lt. Governor of Alberta gives her full support for NDHR, and diverse community members share their vision for healing and reconciliation at Edmonton's NDHR 2004 celebration. The main foyer of Edmonton City Hall came alive as Cornell Tootoosis of the Poundmaker First Nation sang and drummed a traditional welcome song for the 200 people gathered for this historical event. Thirty-four students from a local junior high school, Mother Earth's Children's Charter School, sat in the front row watching attentively as the day unfolded. Lt. Governor Lois Hole, keynote speaker impressed many when she hugged each student and in her address gave full support for NDHR. Several participants later commented her speech was awe-inspiring

In an article reporting the event, The Edmonton Journal noted that Lt. Governor received a standing ovation as she called for more resources for public education, the fine arts, and the alleviation of poverty. She insisted that the eradication of poverty is necessary to avoid repeating historical injustices. Lt. Governor Hole expressed shame at Canada's disproportionate wealth. She insisted, "this is not a status quo conducive to peace and brotherhood," She called on everyone to believe with Jimmy Hendricks, the American guitarist that "The Power of Love can overcome the Love of Power." Her speech inspired people to think beyond self-interest and rather remember "We are one human family and one earth family".

The Journal also quoted MC Lewis Cardinal's opening remarks, "We have a lot of work to do for strengthening our communities right here in Edmonton. We need to be able to understand each other, and that is why this event... is going to become a very important part of Edmonton in the future."

Muslim and Jewish leaders spoke of reconciliation from their faith perspectives and the opportunities we have to model reconciliation for the world right here in Edmonton. Rabbi David Kunin emphasized that according to Jewish scripture reconciliation starts with an apology but also requires forgiveness. Founder of an international program, Walking Together, where he brings Jewish, Christian and Muslim children and their parents together to learn, Rabbi Kunin speaks from experience about the importance for developing respect and appreciation of differences. **"this is not a status quo conducive to peace and brotherhood."**

Karen Hamdon, speaking on behalf of the Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities said, "The Day of Healing and Reconciliation is more than just a day - it is a call to hold this concept in our hearts whenever we are tempted to see the "other" as the enemy or less than ourselves. It is an invitation to enter into a state of perpetual healing and reconciliation in every moment of every day - in our relationships with one another, and with our environment. In order to truly know one another we must sit together, learn to listen deeply to one another's stories of joy and of sorrow of pain and suffering. We must listen with the intent to understand the other more deeply. My experience as a member of the Arab Jewish Women's Peace Coalition in Edmonton has taught me the power of compassionate listening and the possibility of reconciliation."

Mike Murakami, who was born in an internment camp for Japanese-Canadians in the interior of British Columbia during World War II, put into words the sentiments of many of those present when he said, "The more events like the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation where cross-cultural dialogue and deep listening like this occurs - the better chance we have of achieving a better world. Because as decent people, we know what is at stake." Healing and reconciliation is more than national and community wellness, it is a whole-hearted engagement that often starts at home. For example, fourteen-year-old Andre Cardinal shared his moving story of finding an answer to bitterness, hopelessness and a life of drug and alcohol abuse through the care of his stepfather, Charlie Monkman who stood on the platform with him.

Julien Hammond, Director of Pastoral Services of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, later commented that this NDHR "celebration reminds us that we are not alone in this concern. In fact, we are reminded that our concern is precisely part of a larger interest for healing and reconciliation that is shared among a wide breadth of people."

This event was organized in collaboration with Native Student Services at the University of Alberta, Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee, Riverbend United Church, the Nechi Institute, the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Initiatives of Change Association Canada, the Mahatma Gandhi Canadian Foundation for World Peace, Native Counselling Services of Alberta, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society Breaking the Silence, as well as dozens of volunteers from all walks of life.

When Yi Yi Datar, one of the organizers and member of the United Church, was asked how they were able to organize such a successful event she explained, "it was not us who organized this event but the Creator who made it happen."

**"We are one human family
and one earth family".**

Edmonton Celebrations Continued

The Edmonton group continued their NDHR celebration the following day with a picnic in a park. Yi Yi Datar explains that when they arrived an African drum group was getting their picture taken so they invited them to join the NDHR festivities. Very interested, the drum group learned about NDHR and in turn performed for the group and even taught some of the group how to drum!

Asked how she got involved in NDHR, Yi Yi explains she met Dr. Maggie Hodgson about a year ago and immediately took a liking to her. When Maggie suggested that she and other church members begin a circle process using the United Church workbook "Toward Justice and Righting Relationship", she immediately got involved. Since that time, three workshops, each involving 20-25 people-Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal have been held to learn about the residential school experience and how to begin to build right relationships in the present. Two 90 minute sharing circles were also conducted in May 2004 for delegates to a United Church gathering from Northern Alberta and B.C and the Yukon and NWT. In the Fall they will be broadening the circle topics to give other Canadians an opportunity to share their experiences and hopefully build new bridges of understanding. Yi Yi explains through this experience she has learned the importance of developing personal relationships to make things happen. Most importantly, she has discovered that "reconciliation is catchy if you believe in it."

If you are interested in joining the circle meetings in Edmonton or planning future NDHR events please contact: Jack Freebury at (780) 484 0325 or email freebury@telusplanet.net or contact Yi Yi Datar at (780) 437-8559 or email yidatar@shaw.ca

Residential School Survivors Celebrate Life in Inuvik

First time ever, celebration of National Day of Healing and Reconciliation for survivors of Residential School in Inuvik. Ellen Smith, a residential school survivor explains that "NDHR was an opportunity for us to celebrate our own healing journeys and to celebrate life."

Fourteen people gathered for a potluck supper followed by viewing a video of the Vuntut Gwich'in Residential School Syndrome from the Yukon. Afterwards there was a Sharing Circle when everyone present had an opportunity to tell stories or express their feelings. Caregivers were also available for anyone needing to talk after the event was over. The event was very successful as it brought everyone closer together and helped create more awareness about the need for residential school healing and reconciliation. Ellen looks forward to seeing the NDHR momentum build in Inuvik and thanks the Band Office and local retailers for their donations to make the event possible.

contact info: Ellen Smith (867) 777-8056

Potluck Suppers for Reconciliation in Fort Providence

Twelve people gathered for a potluck supper to celebrate this years' National Day of Healing and Reconciliation in Fort Providence, NT. Guest speaker, Gerald Bradbury, spoke about forgiveness and related a touching personal story, setting the tone for an intimate and meaningful event. Everyone signed pledges to support the declaration that May 26th be National Day of Healing and Reconciliation. The combination of good company, delicious food, and an inspiring speaker meant for a very successful first event. Those gathered were enthusiastic to continue to have reconciliation potlucks and have already begun to organize another one for the end of the summer. As Margaret Mead once wrote, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has." Contact info: Joachim Bonnetrouge tamba@ssimicro.com



Cornell Tootsi drums a traditional welcome song for NDHR in Edmonton

Art from the Heart: Planting Seeds For Public Education

Picture forty people delighting in making reconciliation public education posters to celebrate NDHR. That's what happened at Tsow Tun Le Lum Treatment Centre on Vancouver Island. Elders, staff, clients, counsellors, a corrections officer, a teacher, and many others came together to plant seeds for reconciliation.

An elder in residence, started the session off with a prayer, followed by a welcome introduction from Yvonne-Rigsby Jones, Director for Tsow Tun Le Lum Lodge. Jessie Sutherland and Carrie Reid followed with an inspiring workshop on reconciliation that included a powerful slide show and a hands-on experience using "art from the heart" as a tool for public education.

Jessie started this session off with a spectacular slide presentation about reconciliation from both local and global perspectives. The power point slide show included dramatic and powerful images from around the world to illustrate the connection between cultural losses, violence, and reconciliation. Jessie used her academic background that reflected the spirit of her heart. Jessie believes that "worldviewing skills" are necessary for righting our relationship with others and all of creation. One elder, Lloyd Haarla commented that this presentation reflects many of the teachings of "the Anishinaabe as I am sure it is in the teachings of all indigenous peoples. There are so many that need to be made aware."

Carrie Reid then led the group in a highly interactive and creative process that connected each participant personally from their own heart to a larger movement for reconciliation. Participants were divided into groups of four and sat at separate tables filled with art supplies. She asked everyone to think about what it would be like to see one million people apologize like in the Australia's National Sorry Day in 2000. Each group was asked to first brainstorm ideas for a public education campaign for reconciliation and write the ideas on the paper tablecloths on their tables. After ideas were generated and written down, she asked each group to change tables and make the poster based on the ideas generated from another group without asking them for help. When they were completed the groups returned to their original tables.

After the posters were made Carrie facilitated a dynamic discussion about what it was like to build on someone else's ideas without communicating. Each group pointed out their areas of confusion and of wonderment. What did it feel like to see how someone else worked on your ideas? What did it feel like to create something without really knowing what people wanted? Each group commented differently. One group said that what the other group created was different than what they intended - neither bad nor good. Another group said that the other group improved on their idea. A third group explained that they were afraid to disappoint the original group. While other comments were shared, the common insight was that if they worked toward a common goal of reconciliation, they were more able to be open to other people's work.

Following the workshop Louise Milburn, a First Nations awareness educator, commented that for her "the day at Tsow-Tun Le Lum was another expression for unity - all coming from the same source, just different pieces of the puzzle. Thank you for the global work you are doing."

For information on future NDHR events at Tsow Tun Le Lum treatment centre call (250) 390-3123



Reconciliation Art for NDHR Celebrations

Kanien'kahaka Traditional Tobacco Burning Ceremony For NDHR

Kanawake's Survival School ended classes early on May 26th to have a school-wide ceremony to honour the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation. Students, staff, parents and community members gathered to participate in a Kanien'kehaka (People of the Flint - Mohawk) Traditional Tobacco Burning Ceremonial led by Mohawk teacher Tewenhni'to:ken. The 220 student body gave Thanksgiving for all of creation while standing in a circle around the fire and participating in the ceremony. Each added support to the healing and reconciliation movement that is quickly gathering momentum.

In preparation for the event students learned about NDHR in their personal development, social studies and local arts courses. Tewehlni'tatshow, the school's principal, explains that the intention is to create a peaceful school site and he intends to make NDHR an annual event. Clearly Kanawake's Survival School is no ordinary learning institution. They already have multiple projects to foster healing and reconciliation. For example, the Canadian Half Pints, an anti-bullying and anti-racism educational organization will be coming soon to the Survival school to teach the students tools to create a violence-free environment. In addition, this summer 252 students from across Canada will be coming to Kanawake to learn about Kanien'kahaka culture, meet the Survival School's students, and participate in a Pow Wow.

We will have to watch out for the 2005 Friendship Games which will bring together all the schools in the area including Oka and Chateaugay for youth to participate in a wide variety of activities such as sports, theatre, and dance. Imagine if all schools made healing and reconciliation part of the mandate what a different world this would be! For more information email: konoronkwa@hotmail.com or call 450-632-8831

Community-wide Healing and Reconciliation

Eden Valley Stoney Bearspaw First Nations gathered for a three-day conference to work towards community-wide healing and reconciliation May 25th -27th 2004. Inter-family conflicts and violence has divided the community and lingering animosity remains. Eden Valley's Networking Against Violence decided to take a community-wide approach for healing and reconciliation. The goal of the conference, "Let's Begin the Healing Journey," was to give an opportunity for networking in a different environment as well as foster a new awareness of victims' rights. However, the results surpassed all expectations.

During the first day, facilitators talked about healing, acknowledged violence in the community, and emphasized the need to help each other. The next two days participants were divided into four different talking circles for elders, women, men, and youth. Each group went to different locations in the community. Before going into their groups the facilitators reminded everyone that the circles were not a place to seek vengeance but rather a place of healing. Sykes Powderface, a band member and elder explained "it isn't who is right but what is right." He reminded participants to honour our grandfathers, be honourable through being peaceful with one another.

Wanda Rider, one of the organizers, sat in the elders circle and was very moved to see how far their group travelled together. In the morning, each participant shared what happened to themselves and their family. Then they slowly began to share what their grandchildren are doing and finally they began to discuss their common need to come together for all of our grandchildren.

On the final day, the participants gathered and shared the key points that came out of each circle. Wanda explains that the common desire, coming from every group, was to bring our community together and help the youth. For Wanda, the fact that many of the youth stayed behind voluntarily to help clean up was an indication of how much the conference meant to them. In fact, since then, the youth have initiated a baseball intramural and a fishing derby for all ages. They have asked for more circles and hope to spend more time with their elders. Most recently Eden Valley has received news that they have been selected as a suicide prevention community and will receive money from the province.

This event was organized by ten women who worked as a team in collaboration with the Band Councilor Gordon Wildman, Stoney Bearspaw's Social Services agencies, Child and Family Services agencies as well as the local school, store and wellness centre. For more information please contact Sherry Littlechief or Wanda Rider at 403-558-2135 or email: sherilc@telusplanet.net

Towards Living the Peace and Friendship Treaties in the Maritimes

Fisheries, fighting, and conflict tend to be how Burnt Church is portrayed in Canadian media. Did you know it is also at the cutting edge of transforming Aboriginal and Canadian relations? gkisedtanamoogk, a Wampanoag man who has married into the Mi'kmaq First Nations, explains that the Peace and Friendship treaties between the two nations, Mi'kmaq and Canadian, are still in effect, we need to simply start living them. Together with Margaret Tusz-King, a member of the United Church, they are the staff of Lnapskuk - Neighbours Project. In Mi'kmaq, Lnapskuk means "looking again at the wampum belt," a series of 17th century treaties, known as the Covenant Chain, that symbolizes and confirms peaceful coexistence between the two nations.

During the fisheries crisis a few years ago, the Tatamagouche Centre (a United Church lay education centre in Nova Scotia), the Aboriginal Rights Coalition - Atlantic, and the Wabanaki Nations Cultural Resource Centre (Burnt Church, New Brunswick) partnered to create a witness program with the intent that their presence might diminish the violence. Their experiences in this made them realize the poor level of relationship and understanding between First Nations and Canadians. And so Lnapskuk was born. The goal of Lnapskuk is to promote a culture of peace, justice and mutuality between First Nations and Canadians in the Maritime region.

Last October, Lnapskuk brought together the Anglican and United Churches in the region, to look at how to encourage the use of their resources Toward Justice and Right Relationships (United Church) and The New Agape (Anglican), that address the churches' legacy of Residential Schools. They quickly realized that they needed First Nations people to work with them on this, and so invited First Nations people to their next gathering. Meeting monthly, their circle quickly expanded to include Menonites, Presbyterians, and many other communities and organizations. Their ongoing goal is to be able to model what they hope to promote among church people, as they begin the journey toward healing and reconciliation. gkisedtanamoogk explains that there are many frank discussions and so far no one has run away.

This Fall, this circle of partners is organizing a three-day retreat called *Moving Forward Together*, sponsored by Lnapskuk and the various church partners. Participants will be selected to attend from four different regions of the Maritimes. The idea is that groups of 10 from each region (half Aboriginal and half Canadian) will attend together. The three days will give participants new information, and more importantly will help towards building relationships of mutuality so that when they return to their communities they will also be able to start circles together.

Both Margaret and gkisedtanamoogk say that at times the process can be challenging for everyone. Nonetheless both brim with optimism. For gkisedtanamoogk, working on this project has helped him deepen his own faith, rooted in his community's traditional teachings. He explains that when challenges emerge he is tested to discover "how much do I believe in my faith." Similarly, Margaret has learned to listen to hard truths and has discovered the joys of trusting relationships that emerge out of the chaos. Burnt Church, as well as many other First Nations communities, and spiritual legacy, gkisedtanamoogk explains, depends on faith and love for each other.

For more information on the Lnapskuk project, contact: gkisedtanamoogk or Margaret via the Lnapskuk link at the Tatamagouche Centre website:
www.tatacentre.ca

News From Australia

In 2000, over one million Australians took part in walks calling for reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. Many carried placards calling for an apology to the 'stolen generations' - the Aboriginal people removed from their families as children and placed in institutions and with non-Indigenous foster families. Today Australia's Sorry Day continues to grow and this year a memorial to the stolen generations was dedicated in Canberra. The wording and design of the memorial was decided through consultation with all those involved. Its heading reads, 'This place honours all who have suffered under these policies. It also honours all those Indigenous and non-Indigenous, whose genuine care softened the tragic impact of what are now recognised as cruel and misguided policies. For more information on Australia's National Sorry Day and the Journey of Healing see www.journeyofhealing.com

A CALL TO ACTION...



To support NDHR you can:

1. Organize your own NDHR event. For a copy of a NDHR activity booklet please see www.ndhr.ca
2. Make a charitable donation. Please make cheques payable to Nechi Institute and clearly indicate somewhere on the cheque "NDHR Donation." Nechi is a registered charity and will issue charitable donation receipts.
3. Sign and send the following letter of support to:

National Day of Healing and Reconciliation, PO Box 34007, Kingsway Mall PO, Edmonton, AB T5G 3G4

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I wish to support the declaration of a National Day of Healing and Reconciliation in Canada for May 26th of each year. This day will focus on healing and will coincide with "the National Sorry Day" which was pioneered by the Aboriginal people in Australia. This is an opportunity for all Canadians to be engaged in activities that acknowledge how far we have come on the reconciliation movement and to examine what challenges we still have to deal with in strengthening relationships when examining some of our collective history.

This is an opportunity to focus on individual, family and community healing. This day would offer an opportunity to provide more education on our collective history that has affected us all indirectly or directly. I am confident the churches, government and communities will join in supporting activities on May 26th across Canada on this year and each year thereafter.

(Please sign your name and include your address, phone number, fax, and email)

RESOURCES

Research, writing, and production of this newsletter was done by **Jessie Sutherland**. Jessie also offers workshops and presentations on "worldviewing skills" to groups and organizations committed to indigenous and non-indigenous reconciliation. Contact info: (250) 642-6184 / jessie@worldviewstrategies.com / www.worldviewstrategies.com

The Nechi Training, Research and Health Promotions Institute hosts and administers the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation. NDHR is an initiative meant to effect healing and reconciliation among all races, creeds, and denominations now residing in Canada. For information, resources, and innovative ideas visit www.ndhr.ca, email: info@ndhr.ca, or phone (800) 459-1884.

Alex Nelson is a member of the Musgamagw Tsawatainuk First Nations, BC. He is a seven year product of the Residential School System and is a survivor of his son's suicide. He believes that sport is a tool toward Wellness, Healing and Reconciliation. Alex is available as a speaker. Contact info: (250) 544-8172 / email: alex.nelson@asra.ca

Carrie Reid, Coast Salish professional art therapist offers workshops and group therapy for adults and elders. She specializes in residential school issues, grief, and colonial rage. Fee negotiable plus travel expenses. Contact info: 250-7579848 or email: mostlysalish@shaw.ca

Ellen Smith is from Inuvik and is a survivor of residential school. She can be contacted for speaking engagements and workshops at 867-777-8056 or email: ellen-smith@gov.nt.ca.

This newsletter is part I of a series of articles on healing and reconciliation initiatives as a way to build and strengthen networks coast to coast and promote Canada's new National Day of Healing and Reconciliation celebrated on May 26th each year. This edition is a collaborative effort between the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation and the Nechi Training, Health Promotions, and Research Institute to highlight healing and reconciliation initiatives and NDHR celebrations across Canada.



For More Information on NDHR, Contact:
1-800-459-1884 / info@ndhr.ca / www.ndhr.ca