



The Children's Foundation

Aboriginal Service Development Update

September 2006

Inside This Update

- *TCF Aboriginal Advisory Council*
- *Aboriginal Awareness*
- *Teepee Pole Peeling & Teachings*
- *National Aboriginal Week*
- *Sweat Lodge Pilot Project*
- *Aboriginal Employment Strategy*
- *Spirit of the Children Society*
- *Honours*
- *Youth Role Model*

Greetings,

It has been over a year now since TCF has implemented an Aboriginal Service Development Initiative within the agency. In response to the disproportionate number of Aboriginal people utilizing TCF programs and services, there was a need to create a culturally safe environment and to adequately respond to the unique needs of Aboriginal peoples. This update will serve to highlight and provide information on past and current projects, activities, events and training. Thank you to all who participated and assisted in the planning and organizing in this past year's activities and look forward to another year.



Aboriginal Advisory Council



The Children's Foundation has an Aboriginal Advisory Council assisting in guiding the development and implementation of culturally appropriate programming. The role of the Council is to assist the programs and services at TCF to be sensitive to the cultural diversity of Aboriginal peoples.

Another role of the Aboriginal Advisory Council is to review existing TCF programs and services at the request of program directors to determine how these programs and services could be revised to better meet the needs of the Aboriginal community.

Meetings are held monthly in both Surrey and Vancouver locations, and on the second Tuesday of every month. Staff is encouraged to attend to meet with council members and if interested, please contact Andrea Martel.

Members in photo: Glida Morgan, Andrea Martel, Gaye Smith, Deborah Auger, Sandy Niles, Wayne Spence

Missing: Roberta Genesisius, Bill Lee, Sharon Lund

Aboriginal Awareness



The Métis flag is a symbol of nationhood. The infinity symbol represents the coming together of two distinct and vibrant cultures.

Many of the Aboriginal peoples in Canada is diverse and is composed of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples – each with a different history, culture and society.

In promoting a better understanding of Aboriginal peoples there are three areas of awareness training: historical matters; culture and heritage; and contemporary issues.

Goals

- To provide an understanding of diversity of culture and worldview, history and current issues facing Aboriginal peoples.
- To provide an opportunity to appreciate the history, values, customs and beliefs and aspirations of Aboriginal people.

"Through understanding, there's knowledge, therefore, acceptance"

"Wow what an experience! High in the mountains of Chilliwack (not Hope) deep in the bush (kinda)!!! I've learned lots from Tony and do appreciate the teachings and experience he has given me."

-Angie

Teepee Pole Peeling and

Many of the children, youth and families attending the TCF programs and services are of Aboriginal heritage. In order that our services provide cultural security and support for the children, the staff is embarking on a journey of awareness to learn more about the cultural roots of the children we serve. Four traditional (12ft) teepee's have been purchased and is currently being used by the children and families in the Alderwood Program.

One larger (21ft) teepee has been purchased for the use of all TCF programs and staff. The teepee has central cultural importance because it traditionally provided warmth and protection and was used

National Aboriginal Week

The Children's Foundation marked the 10th Annual National Aboriginal Day with a cultural celebration that lasted from June 20th to June 24th. The events included: teepee set-up and teachings, drum eagle feather and medicine wheel teachings, children's activities, Aboriginal cultural performances and entertainment. This was also combined with the musical presentation of Ed Peekeekoot and Winston Wuttunee. The children's activities were administered with the aid of Phil Gladue.

The staff worked together to put their newly purchased teepee's on the Alderwood property with the assistance of Tony Solomon.



Grass Dancer Kyle with Alderwood blanket.

Sweat Lodge Pilot Project

Three organizations have partnered together to offer sweatlodge ceremonies to the people in the community.

- The Children's Foundation
- The Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents
- The BC Federation of Foster Parents

The sweatlodge on the Alderwood property is open to staff, youth and families that The Children's Foundation serves.

A calendar of the male, female sweatlodge ceremonies for the month of Oct will be announced.

For those children, youth, families we serve; staff and community members who are interested in participating in upcoming sweatlodge please contact Gaye Smith (Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents)

Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents

Phone: 604-291-7091

Fax: 604-291-7098

Email: info@fafp.ca



Alderwood sweatlodge.

Aboriginal Employment Strategy

The Children's Foundation is currently in the process of developing an Aboriginal Employment Strategy with the objective - recruitment, hiring and retention of Aboriginal people. Chris Beaton from CBA Consulting has been contracted to assist in the development of this project. He has met with TCF staff and our Aboriginal Advisory Council so far. The final draft and recommendations will be completed this fall.

Spirit of the Children Society

Since April 2006, The Children's Foundation accepted the invitation by the Fraser Regional Aboriginal Planning Committee and MCFD to begin working with the Aboriginal communities of Circle 6 (Burnaby, New Westminster and Tri-Cities) to develop an Aboriginal Family and Children's service centre that will be registered as an independent society with its own Board of Directors. This new organization will be based on Aboriginal values, will be governed and staffed by Aboriginals and will be guided by the needs of Circle 6 Aboriginal Peoples.

On Sept 5, 2006 the Executive Director (Robert Kiyoshk); Family Strengthening Program Manager (Shannon Courchene); and ECD Program Manager (Denise Lacerte) were recently appointed. This organization was also given the name "Spirit of the Children Society." They will be temporarily located in our Surrey office until the move into their new location. Please welcome them.

Honours

National Aboriginal Week would have not been possible without the great contributions by our Elders: Tony Solomon, Phil Gladue, Ed Peekeekoot and Winston Wuttunee.

Special thanks to all the staff, community members and partners who participated and contributed to the success of National Aboriginal Week and this past year's Aboriginal training, activities and workshops.

Thank You Megwech (Ojibway)



Youth Role Model

We would like to recognize Kyle for his tremendous efforts and proud performance. He graced us with a traditional grass dance of the Prairie First Nations.

He danced for the visiting elders, staff, children and families who were present at the National Aboriginal Week celebrations.

The crowd was delighted to see his performance in his amazing regalia. It is always a rewarding experience to be able to see a young person connected to their roots and embracing their traditional heritage.

Grown men can learn from very little children for the hearts of the little children are pure. Therefore, the Great Spirit may show to them many things which older people miss. – Black Elk

June 22nd performance of the Powwow Grass Dance.



The Children's Foundation

The Children's Foundation: Supporting, Encouraging, Building: Children, Families, Communities

For further information you can contact Andrea Martel at 604-434-9101 ext 113 or (cell) 604-376-9852