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Strengthening Resiliency in Aboriginal Youth

Renforcement de la résilience chez les jeunes Autochtones

**Hôtel Delta Regina
November 12 – 14 novembre 2012/
Du 12 au 14 novembre 2012**



Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being
Coalition pour la sécurité, la santé et le bien-être des communautés



Strengthening Resiliency of Aboriginal Youth

**Delta Regina
12-14 November 2012**

Conference Report

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The Board of Police Commissioners of the City of Regina and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police gratefully acknowledge the support received from:

*Justice Canada
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Cameco
Regina Hotel Association
Canadian North
Regina Police Service
Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
Bear Claw and Painted Hand Casinos*



Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being
Coalition pour la sécurité, la santé et le bien-être des communautés



Strengthening Resiliency in Aboriginal Youth

Conference Report

BACKGROUND

The Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being was formed in 2005 when the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) invited dozens of national non-governmental organizations to join in a collective effort to promote to policy makers, practitioners and the public the importance of crime prevention through social development as a means to achieving safe, healthy and inclusive communities. Since 2006, the Coalition has held nine national consultations on various aspects of crime prevention through social development. In November 2011, partners came together at Community Safety Round Table III to consider the Coalition's strategic direction. Based on that visioning exercise, the CACP and its Coalition partners decided to hold a national conference on resiliency of Aboriginal youth.

Hopelessness is all too common and it is tempting to focus only on the negatives when considering the state of Aboriginal communities and youth in Canada. However, there are Aboriginal communities that are doing well and youth who are thriving – getting an education, finding employment and living healthy, productive lives. What has made the difference in their cases? What factors have protected them from offending or being victimized? What decisions are being taken by communities as well as police officers, social service agencies, government and corporations to address the challenges that face Aboriginal youth? What initiatives are enhancing their resiliency so that they will make positive choices in life?

The Board of Police Commissioners of the City of Regina entered into a contribution agreement with Justice Canada on 19 October 2012 to support a national conference, “Strengthening Resiliency in Aboriginal Youth”. The conference was hosted by the CACP, in association with the Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being. Several Coalition partners – Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, the Child Welfare League of Canada, the Church Council on Justice and Corrections, the National Aboriginal Health Organization, the Rama Police Service, the Regina Police Service, the Victorian Order of Nurses and YOUCAN – contributed time and expertise to the planning and delivery of the conference. This multi-disciplinary national consultation took place at the Delta Regina on 12–14 November 2012.

“Strengthening Resiliency of Aboriginal Youth” sought to increase awareness among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, the justice and social development sectors, governments, business interests, academic circles and the public of the challenges facing Aboriginal youth and how those challenges might be met. The conference stressed the value of fostering connections and exchanges across sectors to strengthen support for Aboriginal youth to be resilient. Specific initiatives that are contributing to Aboriginal youth making positive life choices were showcased for consideration by other communities as useful approaches.

The conference was funded through an agreement between the Board of Police Commissioners of the City of Regina and Youth Justice and Strategic Initiatives, Justice Canada (\$76,700). The Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice (Corrections and Policing) contributed \$20,000. A total of

\$9,000 was received from the following sponsors: Cameco, the Regina Hotel Association, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology and the Bear Claw and Painted Hand Casinos.

PARTICIPANTS

As with all Coalition events, care was taken to ensure that a broad range of perspectives would be heard. Some 144 individuals attended the conference. As always, solid support was

The conference increased my understanding of the sheer diversity and numbers of professionals that share the same depth of knowledge of the challenges. We are not alone!

*Reona Brass
Ranch Ehrlo Society*

provided by the policing community with 42 representatives of 15 police services participating. Other sectors represented at the conference included tribal councils, community development agencies, educational programs, community health and residential treatment centres, organizations serving children, youth and families, faith communities involved in restorative justice, and federal and provincial governments.

The detailed conference program is included at TAB 1. Most of the speakers' presentations are available on the CACP website at www.cacp.ca under the Coalition icon.

Conference participants were assigned to tables to ensure broad professional and geographic distribution. Every table included at least one police representative. Members of the Coalition and the CACP Crime Prevention Committee served as hosts and moderators. A participant contact list can be found at TAB 2.

I knew there were places out there that help youth. I just never knew how many there were and who they are.

*Penny Rockthunder
Yorkton Tribal Council*

While delegates' evaluations of the conference are summarized in this report, a more detailed compilation of their views can be found at TAB 4.

MONDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2012

OPENING CEREMONY: GRAND ENTRY

The Regina Police Service Cadet Corps led the Grand Entry procession to the drumming and singing of the Miller High School Young Eagles. **Elder Harry Francis**, acknowledging that the conference was taking place on the traditional lands of Treaty 4, offered a prayer in Cree and English. He noted that youth could be supported in their life journey if people worked together across agencies and throughout communities. Elder Francis spoke with warmth and optimism, enjoining delegates to "speak well from your heart."

The opening ceremony continued with **Chief Troy Hagen** of the Regina Police Service who observed that there was a sense of opportunity and optimism because of the great work being done in many communities to address the challenges faced disproportionately by Aboriginal youth. He noted that it makes tremendous sense to invest in youth and families at risk with a return on investment of \$7 for every dollar spent on prevention. It is crucial to remain positive and focused on best practices in addressing resiliency of youth. It is also important to celebrate achievements like Regina's First Nations University of Canada which has over 800 full-time students and the successful Aboriginal police preparation program introduced at the

Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. Chief Hagen emphasized three key objectives at the community level: pursue partnerships; make education a priority; and strive to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in economic growth.

The Honourable Christine Tell, Minister of Corrections and Policing, welcomed delegates on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. The Minister noted that a new approach has to be taken to address the problems experienced by Aboriginal youth who now make up one-third of the province's population. Unfortunately, the likelihood of criminal activity for many of these youth is increased because they experience violence, substance abuse, poverty, and loss of language and culture. Many exhibit low literacy levels and poor educational achievement. Many also live in remote communities where resources are scarce. While the emphasis has been on law enforcement and reintegrating youth into communities after they have offended, there is a move now, in partnership with First Nations and Métis, to work on "front-end" approaches: increasing education and employment opportunities; entering into alternative sentencing agreements with more attention paid to restorative justice practices; developing community safety plans; and encouraging community level collaboration across various sectors. Youth are inherently strong and initiatives such as the "Saskatchewan Plan for Growth" and "Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime", together with multi-sectoral cooperation at all levels, will strengthen their resiliency. The Minister concluded by urging participants to "do not do nothing...do something."

The full text of this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

Dr. Wilton Littlechild, Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), then delivered a thoughtful, often poignant keynote address describing the impact of the residential school system on communities, families and children. As Chair of the Commission on First Nations and Métis Peoples and Justice Reform in Saskatchewan, established in 2002, Dr. Littlechild found that among the growing Aboriginal population, the province was seeing increased imprisonment, increased involvement in the child welfare system, unacceptable poverty, more substance abuse, higher dropout rates, more youth unemployment and greater incidence of sexual abuse.

Although I am very well-versed in residential school impacts, Dr. Littlechild's words made the connection from then to now in a more meaningful manner that I have heard previously.

*Roxane Schury
Saskatchewan Justice
Corrections and Policing*

He observed that the resiliency conference provided an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of residential schools which were a direct attack on language, culture, identity and families. Among the ongoing, multi-generational effects of residential schools was a loss of parenting; as one man speaking at a TRC session sadly admitted: "I'm a father, but I don't know how to be a daddy." Parents turned to drugs, alcohol

and suicide to dull the pain of losing their children. Although grandparents tried to keep language and culture alive as they helped to raise children, youth too often joined gangs under the false impression that that association would provide a sense of belonging, importance and being loved.

Nevertheless, Dr. Littlechild sees growing resilience, the ability "to keep getting up after being knocked or falling down". What is needed is to end violence, end abandonment, bring families together, reconnect with the environment and spirituality, develop self-discipline and embrace Aboriginal culture. Aboriginal people are taking better care of themselves and reducing alcohol abuse. He concluded that forgiving and healing can create hope for the future. Reconciliation is the key – having good relationships, supporting each other and holding children up in high esteem.

TUESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2012

COMMUNITY SAFETY THEME:

Dale McFee, Deputy Minister of Corrections and Policing and former Chief of the Prince Albert Police Service, opened the second day of the conference by focusing on leadership and innovation in his “**Reflections on Community Safety**”. He related his experience in Prince Albert where the city had reached a crisis point in community safety. The Prince Albert Police Service’s growing call volume was 21% criminal in nature and 79% anti-social behaviour which could escalate to criminality if not addressed through collaboration and partnerships. As he emphasized, the issues facing the city and its police service were not those of First Nations, but rather of marginalized people.

The First Nations Grand Council, police and service agencies quickly learned that they had to work together, at the front end, before youth and their families became involved in the criminal justice system. Their innovative approach, “Community Mobilization Prince Albert”, involved creating the HUB which focuses on day-to-day risks for families and individuals and promises 24-48 hour response and the COR (Centre of Responsibility) where a variety of sectors (e.g., education, public health, addictions, police, child welfare) come together to address long-range

The only solution to these problems is for us to work together, regardless of organizational policies, beliefs or race. The challenges faced by Aboriginal youth affect us all in some way.

*Lawrence Avery
Edmonton Police Service*

community priorities, goals and initiatives and recommend systemic changes to address long-term problems like addictions and poor parenting. Community mobilization requires investments in individuals’ lives when and where the most impact can be made, with a clear focus maintained on outcomes and what makes a difference to people.

Failure is accepted as long as participants in this community-based approach learn from mistakes.

Now as Deputy Minister, his focus is on taking a crime prevention approach at the provincial level. Observing that “if it’s predictable, it’s preventable”, he noted that data are being used to determine where there is a need for services. The province-wide approach will be positive and innovative. Local solutions will be arrived at through work and intersectoral collaboration at the community level. As Sitting Bull counseled, “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.”

In the panel entitled “**Resilient Youth, Families and Communities**”, Inspector Mario Giardini of the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) looked at how to strengthen resiliency of Aboriginal youth in a large urban area so that they do not join gangs, while Marlene Bugler, Executive Director of the Kanaweyimik Child and Family Service, focused on steps taken by her organization to support families rather than its programs targeted at youth. Unfortunately, Chief Sandford Big Plume of the Tsuu T’ina First Nation was unable to participate in the conference.

Inspector Giardini described VPD’s East Side Aboriginal Space for Youth (E.A.S.Y.) program, a collaborative anti-gang initiative. The safe space provided for pre-screened Aboriginal youth from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM, Thursday through Saturday, offers medical consultations, mandatory workshops on financial literacy, parenting, anger management and conflict resolution as well as one-on-one mentoring, including resumé writing and interview preparation. Aboriginal Elders bring cultural teaching to the E.A.S.Y. participants, while a Métis police officer adds cultural and traditional content to recreational activities.

So successful is this program that some youth are mandated by the courts to attend E.A.S.Y. instead of going to jail. Unfortunately, E.A.S.Y. also exemplifies the problem of sustainability: initially funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre, the program is now supported through the time-consuming preparation of annual submissions for resources.

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

A different approach to helping to strengthen youth resiliency – enabling the existence of strong, nurturing families - was found in **Marlene Bugler's** description of the programs of Kanawayimik Child and Family Service which supports individuals and families in crisis in five First Nations communities in northern Saskatchewan. Kanawayimik takes a “whole community” approach with individual and group counseling and the incorporation of cultural values and practices in all programs and services. The “Prevention Program” offers a range of life skill courses, workshops, and support circles for parents, elders and youth, including suicide awareness and prevention and family violence prevention. Kanawayimik's wraparound approach empowers families with complex needs to choose the supports they need. Treatment plans using modern and traditional methods are developed for individuals to heal mind, body, emotion and spirit. Under the “Protection Program”, children at risk are taken into care if necessary, but efforts are made, with the help of elders, to get parents to accept their responsibility and to reunite these families using the available prevention supports.

Culture as healing – to me this is the fundamental piece. We must advocate (to) all levels of government to commit greater energy and resources to empowering Aboriginal communities to reclaim their stolen cultural practices. Self-identity is absolutely critical.

*Shaun Dyer
John Howard Society, Saskatoon*

Ms. Bugler pointed out that while the communities that Kanawayimik serves face serious challenges (e.g., dysfunctional families, addiction, poverty, substandard housing), positive things are happening: fewer children are being taken into care; fewer youth are ending up in the justice system; and intakes related to child abuse and neglect have decreased. She noted that Aboriginal people have been sufficiently resilient to withstand assimilation, adapt to a changing environment, connect to nature and find support in their extended families.

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

The “**Rehabilitation and Reintegration**” panel turned to another aspect of community safety: building resiliency of youth who have offended. David Varis, from the University of Prince Edward Island, addressed culture as healing and achieving resiliency through community with particular attention to substance abuse, while Hirsch Greenberg from the University of Regina discussed nurturing resiliency through peace-making circles and Walter MacDonald White Bear from the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary linked resiliency to the reintroduction of First Nations culture and traditional practices inside correctional facilities.

David Varis provided sobering statistics on the higher levels among Aboriginal youth of mental health problems, suicide, substance abuse, including alcohol, and incarceration. He noted that intervention, the earlier the better, has a great impact on the future of youth. Culturally appropriate substance abuse programs like those provided through the Correctional Service of Canada do work. Reconnecting Aboriginal offenders to their culture using traditional and modern techniques is key since only 22% of those individuals released into their communities return to prison. High self-esteem, pride in heritage and problem-solving ability are important protective factors as are feeling supported, parental care and support, parental monitoring,

attitudes and example, and support from peers and the wider community. Mentors, especially elders, are very influential. In the long term, attention must be paid to evidence-based interventions, eliminating systemic barriers, better funding, sharing best practices nationally, developing cultural competence and introducing culturally based programs.

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

It allowed me to think of youth outside of my own work area. I have more thoughts and information on looking at preventive measures rather than only focusing on introducing things for Aboriginal youth after they have entered or are vordering on entering the justice system. Also looking at individual and holistic approaches. One size doesn't fit all. Match the youth, match the community.

*Leah Messer
Saskatchewan Minsitry of Social Services
Child and Family Services*

Hirsch Greenberg stressed that crime is a symptom of trauma in youth's lives, not the result of a band of bandits unleashing terrible grief on communities, and that retribution and punishment do not turn young offenders into "normal" people. Unfortunately, incarceration takes youth from their families and communities. He noted how peace-making circles with their emphasis on sharing personal stories, encouraging connections through stressing the value of relationships and showing compassion to others can strengthen the inherent resiliency of youth. The "self righting" capacity of youth does not occur on its own, but needs mentors to listen, respect and care.

The full text of this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

The final speaker, **Walter MacDonald White Bear**, described how Aboriginal youth in correctional facilities can be reconnected to their culture. Each human being is born with a gift and need only be given the tools and opportunity to display it. Unfortunately, one of the impacts of residential schools is self-hatred which can not only make it impossible for youth to acknowledge the success of other Aboriginal young people, but can result in their refusing to have anything to do with their own culture. He outlined how traditional ceremonies such as the sun dance and sweat lodge are offered over and over again to incarcerated youth; eventually, many choose to participate. These traditional ways, as well as interaction with mentors who keep talking and listening, help youth reconnect with their culture and traditions which in some cases have evolved in response to to-day's challenges.

DELEGATE INPUT SESSION:

The first of two opportunities for delegates to participate in small group work focused on whether or not there were similar approaches to strengthening resiliency of Aboriginal youth living off reserve, on reserves that are doing well or on reserves that are struggling. The facilitator, **Elva Keip**, National Priority Advisor for the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, asked delegates to reflect on what they had heard so far and then report back in plenary on one specific issue or initiative discussed at their table. In addition to the plenary reports below, a list of additional initiatives mentioned by delegates can be found at TAB 3.

General Observations from Delegates' Discussions:

- Relationships are key and building them takes time, regardless of whether people live on or off reserve.
- Trust and relationships have to be built that are youth-driven, not top-down.

What I heard validates for me that our way of working is the right way to work and that is to build relationships, include youth in ideas and solutions and provide an opportunity for them to have a voice.

Rhonda Taylor, Frontier College

- Adults need to find the right path so that they can be role models for children and youth.
- Proactive involvement of elders with youth is crucial - it is important to ask youth and elders together in First Nations communities what they want to do, in the hope that long-term relationships can be built and generation gaps bridged.
- Programs should not be established unless the community has already bought in.
- Opportunities should be provided for youth to participate in events that they are interested in or have been afraid to try so that rapport can be developed and a respectful, positive bond created between them and service providers.
- Regular participation in sport enhances youth resiliency.
- It is important to increase literacy levels.

Specific Initiatives that Strengthen Resiliency:

- RCMP's Aboriginal Shield Program is a community-led, police-assisted program providing substance abuse prevention and healthy lifestyles coaching to Aboriginal communities.
- Aboriginal training programs in colleges in Chilliwack, BC and Ottawa produce analysts, court workers, etc. who are well versed in law enforcement issues rooted in historical context.
- Ranch Ehrlo Society in Saskatchewan provides culturally appropriate, holistic residential treatment for children and youth.
- 11UI (11 and Under Initiative) in Regina is a collaborative (police and various sectors) intervention program to help "at risk" children and families find services.
- Culture camps are offered in Saskatchewan for youth leaving care.
- An alternative education program for 15-25 year old dropouts in Prince Albert offers regular curriculum as well as what youth decide they need to know along with housing and addictions referrals and a "no suspension" commitment.
- A re-integration youth worker at Touchwood First Nation talks to youth about choices, the realities of gang life, the impact of a criminal record and the freedom for their future that education brings.
- "Moving Toward a Stronger Future: An Aboriginal Resource Guide for Community Development", sponsored by the Cree Nations Tribal Health Centre, The Pas, Manitoba, was created by a team of Aboriginal people funded by the Aboriginal Corrections Policy Unit, Public Safety Canada.
- "Walking the Path" is a youth empowerment program developed by the Ontario Provincial Police which in Rama First Nation brings male and female officers into the Grade 8 class for a ten-week program for all students that promotes positive self-image, leadership, awareness of Aboriginal culture and healthy lifestyle.
- Mi'kmaw Project Venture is a preventive program that offers experiential learning for children and youth in Eskasoni and Membertou First Nations in Nova Scotia.

Did the conference increase your understanding?

Immensely ... especially hearing about so many positive initiatives occurring in different parts of the country as well as challenges. Concrete examples provided clearly demonstrated evidence of problems for youth and brought a human face to statistics.

*Monique Verpoort
Child Development Institute*

One of the best things about this conference was sitting at a table with people from different provinces as well as the speakers. Learning that the challenges may be the same, but more importantly, people came here with solutions that have worked in their communities.

Russ Hodgins, Regina Police Service

EDUCATION THEME:

The second theme of the conference, “**Opportunity through Education**”, was explored by a panel focusing on improved literacy, the role of corporations in strengthening resiliency, encouraging Aboriginal youth to pursue higher education and preparing them for professional careers. It is generally accepted that education success translates into employment opportunity. In the case of Aboriginal youth, it is important that education, whether academic or skills development or on-the-job training, has a cultural component.

Rhonda Taylor, the Western Region Program Manager for Frontier College, described how literacy programs are taken to First Nations communities. Culture is embedded in literacy programs and the communities, themselves, determine what measures and traditions they want included. There is no set curriculum; instead, Frontier College focuses on students as individuals and tailors its teaching to what the participants say they need and want. Hands on projects are added to the literacy training; for example, the Junior Chef program lets students apply their reading, writing and math skills. The literacy programs build workforce skills so that First Nations communities can participate in economic opportunities. Enhanced literacy, reflecting culture and traditions and increasing the likelihood of graduating from school and finding employment, has a positive impact on youth resiliency.

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

The role of the private sector in strengthening youth resiliency was explored by **Darwin Roy**, Manager of Northern Community Relations for Cameco Corporation. About half of Cameco's workforce is Aboriginal with 1,500 workers coming from communities in Northern Saskatchewan where 50% of the population is under 25 years of age. He noted that industry has an obligation to play a larger role in the development of young workers through ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities. Cameco, through its Corporate Social Responsibility Department, undertakes a number of initiatives related to youth: visits to high schools to promote the mining industry, career fairs and youth conferences where 20-25 youth are taken to mine sites for a week of presentations on education, justice and health. Partnerships with communities are encouraged, with elders asked for their advice on priorities in Cameco's community investment program.

Mr. Roy noted that educational achievement is a challenge since standards for “Residents of Saskatchewan's North” (RSN) are lower than in the rest of the province and subjects such as math and science are not taught well. Entry level positions which require minimal education are filled and to get Aboriginal youth from Northern Saskatchewan into trades, geology, engineering, etc., more emphasis has to be placed on education, whether by encouraging distance learning or entering into partnerships with organizations delivering training.

Notes for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

There has to be community and leadership direction when First Nations youth leave their communities. Sometimes, youth get frustrated in urban centres, give up and go back to the reserve after failing themselves. It's not easy in urban areas.

*Jim Pratt
Saskatchewan Institute of
Applied Science and Technology*

Jacob Pratt, a business student at the First Nations University of Canada (FNUC), reflected on his educational history, from attending one of the last residential schools to various high schools where he was labeled a “bad apple” to an American community college to FNUC in Regina. The graduation rate for Aboriginal students is far lower than that of other populations. He observed that many First Nations youth do not see beyond their reserves because they

have never been beyond their reserves. The lack of vision of attainable horizons is detrimental to Aboriginal youth who need to be encouraged, not pushed, and given the opportunity to take on tasks where they can demonstrate leadership and be successful, often to the surprise of themselves and others. Besides encouragement, however, Aboriginal students need to be acclimatized to modern education systems if they are to be successful; it is a major culture shock for them to leave the support system of their reserves and attending FNUC for at least first year would increase their comfort level and likelihood of academic success.

The Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative (MAEI), created in 2007-08, now has 31 projects in schools in seven provinces and the Northwest Territories. **Dr. Carlana Lindeman**, MAEI's Education Program Director, observed that questions were raised about why there were no Aboriginal employees in upper levels of accounting firms. To fill this gap, long-term mentoring programs in accounting and banking were established in schools across the country. Teachers identify promising Aboriginal students in Grades 9 and 10 who are then mentored for ten years; they receive advice, tutoring, summer jobs and career entry, if they wish. These programs have been so successful that the law, information technology, medical and engineering sectors are considering them as potential models. Another initiative, the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Project, provides senior high school students with small grants to start micro-businesses and thus learn how to plan, promote, keep records and manage money. The MAEI partners with schools and school boards, private foundations, banks, accounting firms, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses, First Nations and universities in its various programs.

Dr. Lindeman noted that successful Aboriginal education programs have to build self-esteem, develop oral skills and the ability to work in groups, promote peer mentoring and involve a broad range of partners. Early literacy is a requirement and there is a need for better teaching; First Nations need to accept that it is just as important to develop good teachers as it is social workers and that low marks should be given if children and youth do not achieve desired results. MAEI is partnering with Free the Children to increase awareness of Aboriginal realities and has developed a website to share curriculum materials.

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

PROMISING PRACTICES BREAKOUTS:

A: EDUCATION SUCCESS: KITIGAN ZIBI KIKINAMADINAN

Alison Commando, Career/Student Counsellor at the Kitigan Zibi First Nation's school, described a very successful school program which blends regular academic subjects with traditional teachings. The incorporation of culture and language into the school program is one of its strengths. The KZ education program follows a holistic approach based on the Seven Grandfather's Teachings of respect, honesty, trust, love, wisdom, bravery and humility. Problems in relationships and behaviour are identified and addressed through the Enhanced Prevention Team which includes a family wellness worker, a life skills coach, an addictions counselor and youth prevention and diversion workers. The success of this education program is demonstrated by the fact that several students move on to university and college; not only do some graduates play important political and administrative leadership roles, but others are enjoying careers in nursing, social work, teaching, the law, the military, law enforcement, firefighting, finance and various levels of government.

Ms. Commando raised the question of equity. First Nations schools do not receive the same level of funding enjoyed by non-Aboriginal ones; her school does not have funds for enough computers, a library and other educational assets that off-reserve schools take for granted and teachers often sacrifice part of their salaries to ensure that their programs have necessary resources. As a result, the school has taken on an advocacy role, with some students actually traveling to the United Nations to present the “Our Dreams Matter Too” report.

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

B: 11UI, REGINA POLICE SERVICE

At the last minute, the speaker who was to have presented on the reintroduction of traditional ceremonies to the youth of the Akwesasne First Nation cancelled due to ill health. Fortunately, **Andie Schmalz**, Coordinator, and **Wendy Stone**, Crime Prevention Strategist, from the Regina Police Service came forward with a presentation on the 11 and Under Initiative (11UI). This approach, developed by the Regina Police Service in collaboration with government departments, school boards and community-based organizations, focuses on children up to eleven years of age who are exposed to risk factors that could lead to their involvement in unhealthy behaviour.

11UI is a collaborative, early intervention initiative, a conduit to programs and services in the community that can be accessed by families and their children. The program focuses on: the early identification of children eleven years old or younger who demonstrate behaviour that could put them or other family members at risk; the creation of seamless referrals to the appropriate service provider(s); increased information sharing among those providers; and connecting the children and their families to schools, community programs and other needed services. Children at risk are identified and referred to the Regina Police Service 11UI Officer who seeks their families’ agreement to accept assistance. Through its partners, 11UI shares information on the children and families; their needs are assessed and case management plans connecting the children and their families to existing services and programs are developed. Those plans are prepared with the children and their families and 11UI stakeholders, including community elders and representatives of the education, recreation, mental health and addictions, social services and law enforcement sectors.

In the long term, it is hoped that 11UI will result in more positive engagement in society by children and their families, more regular school attendance and engagement, better coordination of services, fewer children in care and families needing social assistance, more effective parenting and more safe, stable homes and crime reduction and prevention. 11UI is showing success in its initial stages, but the current number of referrals and interest in the initiative outweigh the capacity of the current staff so opportunities for additional support are being sought.

C: SWAMPY CREE SUICIDE PREVENTION TEAM

This breakout by **Corinne Isaak**, a Research Associate from the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Manitoba, and **Garry Munro**, Executive Director of the Cree Nations Tribal Health Centre, describes a university-First Nations partnership to address suicide, one of the key social issues facing Aboriginal communities. Suicide, especially among youth, is at crisis levels in many First Nations, although the risk factors are not specific to those communities. In 2007, a partnership was formed between the eight Swampy Cree Tribal Council communities,

the Cree Nation Tribal Health Authority and the Departments of Psychiatry and Community Health Sciences at the University of Manitoba.

The initial objectives were to: collect information on First Nations' perspectives on suicide, suicidal behaviour and suicide prevention; develop relationships with the various communities; compile suggestions for future wellness and suicide prevention programs and resources; and provide training in SafeTALK, a suicide alertness program for everyone. Two programs are being rolled out: "Sources of Strength", a suicide prevention program delivered by teen peer leaders to create a school/community culture in which high school students handle problems effectively with the assistance of caring "adult advisors", and to help all students become more resilient, especially during times of distress, and prevent problems such as feeling suicidal; and "Culturally Based, Family Centered Mental Health Promotion for Aboriginal Youth", a fourteen-session program for 10-12 year olds and their parents/caregivers which will support community development and strengthening families.

The Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team approach is based on reciprocal learning and trust building. Research initiatives are community-driven with ongoing consultation between the academic researchers, community members and community liaisons at annual conferences. Addressing suicide has shifted from a concentration on individual risk factors (the medical/mental health approach) to consideration of family and community (the indigenous approach). The gap between indigenous knowledge of healing and western science/mental health practices is being bridged. There is a greater willingness in the Swampy Cree communities to talk about suicide, although care must be taken when discussing the influence of Aboriginal or Christian spirituality on suicide prevention to ensure that the cultural practices being discussed are acceptable to everyone. There is increased focus on strength- and resilience-based prevention projects. Since the Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Project began, the number of suicides has dropped.

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

D: RESIDENTIAL HEALING PROGRAM FOR SOLVENT ADDICTION

Mary Deleary, Executive Director of the Nimkee NupiGawagan Healing Centre, in Muncey, Ontario, described a safe, loving and caring environment based on First Nations spirituality and traditional teachings in which youth are able to take responsibility for their solvent addiction and their future. The Centre which was founded in 1996 is part of a coalition of eleven treatment centres in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. Its culturally based program provides a residential place of healing for First Nations youth, aged 12 to 17, who are challenged with solvent addiction. Nimkee NupiGawagan uses traditional Native teachings (e.g., the Grandfather Teachings) and healing practices in its four-month, gender-based program. Assessments and counseling focus on the strengths of Aboriginal youth, family and community. The Centre provides culturally based activities (e.g., sweat lodge, welcoming feast, memorial feast, knowledge of the four sacred medicines and four sacred foods, fasting and meditation, drumming and songs) that enable youth to cleanse their mind, spirit and emotions. Knowledge of the Creator's original teachings, embodied in oral traditions dating from before colonization and residential schools, helps to prepare the healing path for youth and their families so that they can be reunited. The Centre's programs have evidence-based indicators and sixteen years of evaluation data to confirm their successful implementation.

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

E: RESILIENCY AND COMMUNITY BUILDING FOR 10-14 YEAR OLDS AT RISK OF OFFENDING

Jacob Gale and Patrick Wilmot introduced delegates to Mi'kmaw Project Venture (MPV), a three-year pilot project funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre and offered both in- and after-school in Eskasoni First Nation in Nova Scotia. MPV which originated in the United States and was piloted in Eskasoni, the first Canadian site, now operates in half-a-dozen communities in Canada. The program is considered an effective way to serve First Nations youth with regard to substance abuse and crime prevention. The experiential learning featured in MPV includes ice breakers, socialization, team building, hiking and weekend camping trips with activities and exercises that become increasingly complex and in-depth during the program. The increased comfort level that develops allows the leaders and youth to talk about issues and problems that matter. MPV values connection to the community and stresses the forming of partnerships; four adults – only some of whom are parents – help with programming. MPV empowers participating youth to become positive role models and future leaders.

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

DINNER SPEECH:

The Honourable James Bartleman, former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, reminisced about his life - growing up in Port Carling in Ontario's Muskokas, then moving on to university, a career in the diplomatic corps and senior positions in federal departments, and finally service as the Queen's representative in Ontario. The child of Aboriginal and white parents, as a youngster he experienced casual and systemic racism and lived in poverty. However, he discovered the importance of reading and was eventually sponsored by a rich American summer vacationer to attend university. From that point, the world opened up and foreign service became his career path.

The value and power of education cannot be over-emphasized when considering how to strengthen resiliency of Aboriginal youth. During his term as Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable James Bartleman initiated a program to deliver thousands of donated books to remote, fly-in Aboriginal communities in northern Ontario and started summer literacy camps which continue to this day. His reminiscences demonstrated grace and resiliency which are not unique - as he observed in closing, "Every one of us has our own story worth hearing".

WEDNESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2012

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES THEME:

The panel "**Healthier Communities and Youth Resilience**" brought together three very different perspectives: an urban health centre that provides health and social services to Aboriginal youth, many of whom are homeless; a partnership between organizations in southern Ontario and remote, fly-in First Nations communities in northern regions of the province; and a physical activity program for Aboriginal youth that stresses relationships and personal responsibility.

Great to hear the many initiatives – inspire me to go back to my community and organization with renewed energy.

*Karen Main
Leading Thunderbird Lodge
Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan*

All three programs are characterized by respect for youth and Aboriginal cultural values, the development of positive relationships, mentoring and youth involvement, including leadership.

Shannon Jones and her colleague, **Danene Lenstra**, presented on the programs offered by The Alex Youth Health Centre in Calgary. Since the 1980s, the Centre has provided health care to homeless and street youth, 35 to 40% of whom are Aboriginal. While street youth have much to teach about resiliency, many are lost to suicide, accidents and crime. The Alex's drop-in centre which operates from 1:00 to 7:00 PM Monday through Thursday and 1:00 to 6:00 PM on Friday offers a warm, safe space, referrals, job applications, status cards, condoms, etc. The Centre provides medical services five days a week (advice, prescriptions, pre- and post-natal care) and regular parenting classes. A bus is available to take youth to high schools as an encouragement to completing their education and to additional health services. Staff accompany youth to court and make home visits. Staff work with the youth and their families to re-establish relationships. Various professionals are brought in to respond to the needs of the youth using The Alex's services and efforts are made to engage the local business community. Aboriginal youth are free to take part in any of the programs and services at The Alex; as well, one staff member focuses on making referrals to culturally relevant programs. The Alex calculates that the social return on investment from its programs is \$1:\$6.46 in cost avoidance.

Dr. Judy Finlay, co-chair of Mamow Sha-way-gi-kay-win: North-South Partnership for Children, explained how this relationship between chiefs and tribal councils from thirty fly-in communities in Northern Ontario and non-governmental organizations and individuals in the southern part of the province is increasing the resiliency of youth and their families. The program which started in 2006 grew out of her concerns, as Child Advocate for Ontario, and those of chiefs and elders in remote communities that Aboriginal youth were experiencing serious problems that all too often resulted in their suicide. Cultural continuity can be a hedge against suicide, but many youth had lost their sense of identity and links to their cultural and traditional roots. Twelve to fourteen year olds had to leave their communities to attend high school and this dislocation left them fearful, vulnerable and feeling hopeless.

Did the conference increase your understanding?

The depth of need in remote communities and the requirement these initiatives have for sustainability.

*Mike Chadwick
Saanich Police Department*

Mamow Sha-way-gi-kay-win (Searching Together) recognizes that how society shares social and economic resources determines the well-being of communities. Its objective is to help meet the needs of children, youth and families in remote First Nation communities so that they can achieve their full potential while embracing their culture and heritage. The northern partners determine what their communities require (e.g., a healer, an all-weather road) and the southern participants broker resources to meet those needs; through this collaboration, gaps between traditional and modern cultures are being bridged. Youth engagement workers encourage the participation of young people in their communities' priority setting and projects and facilitate the development of north-south youth-to-youth relationships which are supported by caring adults and enabled by social media. Clinicians work with elders to prevent suicides. Community capacity building is supported because projects are long-term; with partners required to commit to a decade of involvement, annual funding approvals are not required.

Photographs illustrating this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

*Key systemic changes needed?
Having [youth] more active and
ensuring that they are included in all
planning activities regarding their
future.*

*Garry Munro
Cree Nations Tribal Health Centre
The Pas, Manitoba*

Kluane Adamek from the Assembly of First Nations Youth Council described IndigenACTION, a program started in 2012 by Olympian Waneek Horn-Miller who wanted to increase physical activity and health among Aboriginal youth and support Aboriginal athletes to achieve success (e.g., qualifying for the Olympics). IndigenACTION's long-term objectives for Aboriginal youth are to foster partnerships and encourage them to

stay active and be healthy. An environmental scan identified issues related to fitness, wellness, sport and recreation at the community level, best practices are collected and programs are introduced with the support of existing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations and "in kind" contributions from the private sector. IndigenACTION stresses youth leadership at the local level, role modeling and peer mentoring, and incorporation of community values and traditional knowledge. Working through the AFN Youth Council, IndigenACTION helps to connect young people from remote communities to mentors and expert advisors. Grade 11 and 12 students mentor younger youth to help acclimatize them to schools since many have to move away from their communities after Grade 8 to continue their education. Ms. Adamek stressed that Aboriginal youth need someone else to connect with – another youth, a professional, a parent – if they are to be more resilient.

*The youth mentorship will be
something I will be looking into to see
how I can incorporate an aspect of
this in my organization.*

*Cindy Freeman
Ranch Ehrlo Society
Pilot Butte, Saskatchewan*

The PowerPoint for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

The panel "**Belonging and Resiliency**" offered two different perspectives on strengthening the resiliency of Aboriginal communities and youth: the role of police in working proactively with First Nations youth to nurture a sense of belonging that contributes to stronger young people and healthier communities and a community-based society that links generations and provides social supports which result in enhanced resiliency of Inuit youth and families.

Assistant Commissioner Russ Mirasty, RCMP Commanding Officer in Saskatchewan, noted that reducing criminal activity and victimization among youth is one of the force's strategic priorities. The RCMP's focus is on identifying risk factors in First Nations youth and early prevention measures rather than concentrating solely on reactive policing. It is important for police officers to be involved in their communities, whether by demonstrating their individual commitment and passion through such "feel good" activities as coaching sports teams, visiting schools, leading cadet corps, etc. or by participating in community mobilization initiatives. Community leadership is crucial; police must take an inclusive approach that does not merely impose solutions on youth and their communities.

The First Nations Community Cadet Corps is an example of how police can encourage youth engagement. Since its creation in 1998 by an RCMP member in Carry the Kettle First Nation in response to an elder's urging that something be done about youth in trouble with the law, the Community Cadet Corps program now operates in 18 First Nations with 1,200 youth participants in Saskatchewan, alone. Anecdotal evaluations of the cadet corps program indicate that participating youth show positive change; their sense of belonging is enhanced and their resiliency improved, they are more involved in their communities, they work with Elders to strengthen cultural connections, youth crime rates have dropped, school marks have gone up and some cadets have moved on to the Canadian Forces' Bold Eagle Program or the Canadian

Rangers. Individual communities are investing in the cadet corps program, with some school boards offering academic credits to participating students.

Assistant Commissioner Mirasty concluded by reflecting on his thirty-five year career in the RCMP, from his youth in a Cree First Nation in northern Saskatchewan to his current leadership role. The traditional core values which he learned from his grandparents are similar to those of the RCMP. He noted that he has been successful because key people in his life supported him, from the Chief of his First Nation to individuals inside the RCMP. He observed that there are people beyond the police who are ready to help Aboriginal youth and underlined that those potential partnerships are critical. In the end, strengthening resiliency and a sense of belonging are all about relationships: without positive relationships, youth cannot even start to think about possibilities and the process of positive change in which they must play a significant role.

Did the conference increase your understanding?

Better understanding of how widespread social ills are and how much youth have to overcome in the first place by virtue of geography, community needs, etc.

*Janet Handy
Church Council on Justice and Corrections*

Jakob Gearheard, Executive Director of the Iliisaqsivik Society in Clyde River, Nunavut described how a community came together to address its high suicide rate, domestic violence and addictions. Frustrated by the lack of government support and fly-in professionals who arrived unable to speak the local language and unaware of Inuit culture and history and who leave quickly, the community formed Iliisaqsivik (“A Place to be

Recognized”) Society, a non-profit community health and wellness organization that helps families and individuals of all ages find healing and develop their strengths. Its various programs are delivered by community members and honour Inuit societal values, with elders using traditional approaches to address social issues.

Iliisaqsivik blends traditional and modern approaches to strengthening resiliency; for example, it offers a land-based harvesting program as well as a film and digital media program that captures elders’ teachings. “Our Life’s Journey” works with youth, parents and grandparents to encourage positive life choices. The “Women’s Sewing Group/Prenatal Nutrition Program” provides young women with a safe place to meet to learn traditional skills and good nutrition practices; elders and counselors also attending the program act as mentors, thus eliminating the stigma young women would feel if seen going to formal counseling. “Ataata Ammalu Irniq Nunami” (“Father and Son on the Land”) is a two-week, land-based program that gives men an opportunity to pass on to youth traditional hunting, fishing and dog teaming skills, develops new role models for the young people and increases the adults’ sense of worth. Another initiative that enhances a sense of belonging and appreciation for Inuit culture is “Sapiliqtailigiiit”, a hip hop program that lets youth express their feelings and deal with issues like anger and social isolation through dancing. During the breaks in the dance workshops, positive messages are provided on harm reduction, literacy, nutrition and smoking. Elders, invited by the youth to participate, provide information on Inuit culture that is added to the hip hop routines.

The holistic health and wellness programs offered are showing positive results, but Iliisaqsivik faces a challenge common to many community-based, Aboriginal organizations. While its programs are stable, its funding is not. With no multi-year core funding, programs are resourced through one-time project dollars with the result that there is incredible staff turnover and considerable time has to be spent writing funding proposals. Efforts are being made to find funding to accredit social workers, counselors and service providers who will be required to work in Inuit communities.

Illustrations for this presentation can be found at www.cacp.ca.

DELEGATE INPUT SESSION II:

In the second session of table discussions, facilitator Elva Keip asked delegates to consider the presentations they had heard and then suggest what key things they could do to support Aboriginal youth in their communities or those they served. What changes could they initiate and how could they engage youth? What principles would they take back to influence work in their communities? How could they build relationships so that youth would believe that they, their services and their programs are serious about being there for young Aboriginals?

The following suggestions were made in plenary:

Approaches to Youth:

- Youth need to be asked what they want – it is important for adults to risk building relationships with youth. Youth should be consulted before a program is designed and a proposal submitted. Parents and elders need to “show up” for youth programming, but not impose. Youth need to be listened to even when it’s difficult and helped to find their strengths.
I will continue to encourage all people to converse and listen to our youth as they’re our future. Youth have amazing solutions and the energy to compete; just listen, support and watch them.
Gertrude Maxwell
RCMP
- A safe, comfortable space should be provided where youth can gather to discuss issues, strategize about how to get the things they need and participate in healthy activities. Communities should look at developing a youth shelter.
- Youth should be empowered to organize and create the programs they want. They should be trained to be leaders and their accomplishments valued, even the smallest achievements.
- Youth need access to activities and sports. More programming is important – some of the programs available at the elementary level could also be implemented in high schools. A cadet program would be a good addition to many communities.
- Focus should not be limited to the troubled youth but also the “successes”.
- Craft nights could be held for youth, perhaps with elders teaching beading, dancing, etc. Representatives of various services and programs could attend to talk about issues and facilitate discussions while people are engaged in the crafts.
Youth need to be heard. They need to know that what they are saying is important and that they themselves are very important.
Penny Rockthunder
Yorkton Tribal Council
- The early years (0-7) should be targeted since this is the most crucial time in a person’s life.
- Friendship Centres can have an important impact on youth by providing daily activities.

Education and Social Media:

- Education is key, but it needs to have a cultural component. Common connections between culture and media should be explored – mentoring using Facebook could also teach youth how to be respectful on-line. Elders should be consulted about how to find a balance between new media and Aboriginal culture.
Families ... are the first step for healthy people/youth. You can't push education if the home life is in crisis. Teach parents to parent. First, give basic necessities (i.e., roof, water, no black mould).
Nola Mahingen
Yorkton Tribal Council

Building Relationships:

- Community services, including police, need to listen with open ears and open minds to the voices of children, youth, parents, families and the broader community and consult on program development.
- Building relationships is key: mentoring youth, becoming volunteers, setting up cultural camps, consulting and engaging youth, providing parenting programs in institutions, etc.
- Strategies need to be developed to reduce “compassion fatigue” and enable long-term relationships. Some policies may need to be changed so that longer assignments are permitted (e.g., teachers, nurses, police) because it is important for youth to have constant, dependable relationships.
- Various sectors (e.g., justice, health, education) need to find a way to work together and share information.
- Agencies and police services need to be aware of programs in their communities and develop lasting, inclusive relationships. Egos and mandates should be left at the door in order to concentrate on what is best for youth.
- Partnerships can be created with remote communities and cultural differences explored.

Increased communication and collaboration among groups working with Aboriginal youth will enable us to better partner for their success and hope.

*Al Hoeft
The Salvation Army*

Role of Police:

- Police services should connect with elders and encourage cultural awareness among their members and the public. Youth need positive reinforcement and that can be supported by police attending their activities, hearing their voices and helping them develop ideas. Members should mentor youth whenever the opportunity presents.

[The conference] strengthened my resolve that we have to have open communication and work together.

*Steven Smith
RCMP*

Role of Parents:

- Parents need to be educated about their responsibility for their children - they have to stop blaming others for problems in the family.
- Connections have to be maintained with children and grandchildren throughout their lives.
- Parents and service providers need to keep their word, do what they say they are going to do and set a good example.
- Community members can provide training in life and work skills.

Parents need to learn how to parent and kids need to learn healthy relationships.

*Les Vonkeman
Lethbridge Regional Police Service*

Community Wellness and Development:

- A community wellness perspective is essential – everyone has to be healthy and shared physical activity can lead to interaction and, eventually, bonding.
- Communities should learn about the Search Institute’s “40 Developmental Assets” and start by implementing one.

- Community members need to challenge each other to help themselves and stop looking for and expecting everything to be done by outsiders.
- It would be helpful to develop a database of funders that support youth projects and make that information widely available across Canada. Another database of successful youth programs and how they can be duplicated in other communities could also be created.
- Focus should be on building security and stability for existing programs which are successful. It is important to see the value in what communities are already doing.

Embracing Change:

- People need to love and respect themselves, moving away from intergenerational violence and learning to celebrate.
- There will be no one easy answer or quick fix, but multi-generational change, slowly picking up the pieces and people along the way.

Key systemic changes needed?

Systemic commitment to work collaboratively to address challenges/needs within the Aboriginal community. We all hold a piece of the puzzle and together with youth we can create a future of hope, accomplishment, pride and success.

*Karen McCullagh
Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada
Western Region*

FINDINGS AND CLOSING REMARKS:

Gordon Phaneuf, Acting CEO of the Child Welfare League of Canada and Co-chair of the Steering Committee of the Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being, reflected on the conference, noting the richness of the discussions and the active participation of so many different sectors and professions. He summarized the findings by listing the top ten ways, as expressed in the presentations and delegate input sessions, to improve resiliency of Aboriginal youth:

- 10) Acknowledge, respect and support Aboriginal culture, traditions and values.
- 9) Understand the connections between adverse events (e.g., residential schools) and adverse outcomes (e.g., incarceration).
- 8) Focus on parenting supports.
- 7) Focus on newborns, infants, children and youth.
- 6) Make “front-end” investments (e.g., support for daycare) to reduce expenditures for correctional responses.
- 5) Focus more on prevention.
- 4) Focus on training, job coaching, skills development and education.
- 3) Inspire Aboriginal youth with good role models and dreams.
- 2) Build lasting relationships.
- 1) Empower youth with the tools, support, supervision, coaching and resources to take charge of their lives.

In closing the conference, Mr. Phaneuf thanked the sponsors: the Regina Police Services Board and Youth Justice and Strategic Initiatives, Justice Canada; the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice (Corrections and Policing); Cameco; the Regina Hotel Association; Canadian North; the Regina Police Service; the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology; and the Bear Claw and Painted Hand Casinos. He expressed appreciation for all of the speakers and

I want to commend the CACP for taking the initiative to support the Coalition to put on cutting edge conferences for participation across Canada.

*Karen Hoeft
The Salvation Army*

noted that Elder Harry Francis had been called away to support a family which had experienced a death and thus could not offer a closing prayer as planned. He acknowledged the hard work of the Coalition partners on the conference planning team that put the program together and moderated sessions. Finally, he thanked the project coordinators from the CACP National Office and the Coalition Manager for their efforts in organizing and delivering the conference.

The PowerPoint for the conference findings can be found at www.cacp.ca.

CONFERENCE EVALUATION:

The 144 conference participants represented police, teachers, public health nurses, child welfare organizations, faith communities, corrections, tribal councils, agencies serving children, youth and families, and federal and provincial governments. Following the conference, 80 evaluation forms were collected, an excellent return given that several delegates had left before sessions ended on the last day.

Following are synopses of the responses to each question on the evaluation form:

Question 1: Using a scale of 1 (little value) to 4 (high value), how worthwhile did you find this conference?

Participants responded that this was a valuable consultation, with no one rating it below 2.5. Seven participants (9% of the evaluations received) did not provide a numerical score, although their subsequent comments were positive, one rated it at 2.5, 21% pegged it at 3, 6% assigned it 3.5, 55% ranked it at 4 and six particularly enthusiastic delegates (7%) assessed it between 4.5 and 10.

What would have made the conference better?

While the overall rating of the conference was excellent, with eight respondents going so far as to say that it couldn't have been improved, 66 participants (82% of the evaluations received) shared ideas on how it could have been even better. Responses to this question related to the planning and organization of the conference as well as content.

Nothing. Liked the format, energy, delegate composition and organization.

*David Varis
University of Prince Edward Island*

Four participants (5%) noted that there was a lot of information to absorb in a short period of time and that it would have been better to add another day. Other delegates commented that the issue of finding sustainable funding could have been addressed and that people who could help with resources (i.e., Ministers, Members of Parliament, corporate executives) should have been at the conference. Three delegates thought that more elders should have spoken, while another stated that First Nations leaders (i.e., chiefs) should have attended so that they could take ideas back to their communities.

To have those who can allocate funding at the conference. To have some of the “youth” speak at the conference to share their views, needs and wants.

*Terry Burgess
Ranch Ehrlo Society*

By far the most common reaction, however, concerned youth participation, with 31 delegates (39% of evaluations received) pointing out that young Aboriginals should have been there. The lack of youth delegates was also a great disappointment to the planning team; unfortunately the anticipated resources to support 25 youth delegates' travel and accommodations costs were not forthcoming.

Question 2: How has participation in this conference increased your understanding of the challenges facing Aboriginal youth and their communities?

I work in an urban setting. I've increased my understanding of clients coming from rural settings.

*Bert Lang
John Howard Society, Saskatoon*

Only two participants chose not to answer this question. Of the remaining 78 participants, 42 (52% of the evaluations submitted) confirmed that their understanding of the challenges facing Aboriginal youth and their communities had increased. Another 15 (24%) noted that while they already had a good understanding of those challenges, the

conference had made them aware of programs elsewhere, while 8 respondents (10%) observed that attendance had confirmed what they knew. Other delegates commented on the good networking opportunities, greater understanding of the need for sustainability and the valuable information that could be taken back to communities.

It gave me a better understanding of the missing link between parents and youth due to residential schools.

*Serge Dubé
Junior Canadian Rangers
Department of National Defence*

Question 3: Will what you heard at the conference influence how you do your job?

Seventy-eight delegates answered this question with 75 (94% of the evaluations received) indicating that the conference would influence how they did their jobs: they had learned about programs that could be adapted to their communities and organizations; they realized how

I have learned a lot of great ideas that I can take back to my service. I am more motivated to make a difference with the youth.

*Dana Boldt
Rama Police Service*

important it was to empower youth in seeking solutions to challenges; they would put more energy into forming relationships with youth; they would try harder to influence youth to change; and they would incorporate more cultural content in their work. Four (5%) noted that the networking they had done at the conference had been valuable and five (6%) indicated that they would make an effort to enter

into more partnerships with other programs. Even the nine (11%) delegates who indicated that the conference would not necessarily influence how they did their jobs planned to pass information on to their colleagues and their communities.

Question 4: What key systemic changes do you think are required to strengthen the resiliency of Aboriginal youth?

Increase the information sharing among service providers and with youth. Provide opportunities for youth to find their identity/culture. Make changes one relationship at a time.

*Russ Hodgins
Regina Police Service*

Seventy-seven delegates offered a variety of suggestions on what systemic change was necessary. Fifteen (19% of the evaluations submitted) thought that the most helpful change would be a greater focus on collaboration, partnerships and relationship building. Another 13 individuals (16%) noted that youth should be empowered, with their input taken into consideration regarding the development of programs and services.

Nine delegates (11%) observed that sustainable, stable funding should be available; resources should be directed to prevention, not reaction. Seven people (9%) responded that the focus should be on strengthening families and communities, by providing better housing, working to end violence and addressing poverty.

Another seven delegates (9%) pointed out that there has to be a focus on providing educational opportunities, securing employment and providing basic human needs (e.g., clean water, safe, healthy homes). The need to stress cultural and traditional values to increase youth resiliency was suggested by six delegates (7%).

Service providers need to become educated on the traumas and root causes of residential schools and that all Aboriginal people are affected. Then come out of silos of programming dollars and begin/continue with collaboration of wraparound programming to create/sustain help for the human being where ... he/she needs help.

Cynthia Provost, Calgary Police Service

The remaining 22 observations included: improving parenting skills; addressing the effects of colonialism, racism and residential schools; enhancing communications so that more information on existing programs is available and shared; increasing the general public's awareness of the challenges facing Aboriginal youth and their communities; taking a strengths-based approach when responding to the needs of youth; ensuring less turnover of staff working with youth; and repealing the *Indian Act*.

First of all, recognize and include cultural values in all interventions developed with the First Nations, then engage the Canadian public to recognize an act vis-à-vis their native communities.

Tatiana Romero, Save the Children Canada

Question 5 : Do you have any further comments ?

Thank you for providing this conference. It has provided me with so many ideas/challenges that I can't wait to share with my community and police co-workers.

*Kim Robson
Saskatoon Police Service*

Fifty delegates (63% of the evaluations received) offered additional comments. The most frequent comments (23 or 29%) were congratulations on the quality of the program, the great speakers, the professional organization of the conference and the comfortable venue. Eight respondents (10%) appreciated the networking possibilities and the opportunity to learn about other programs. Some delegates reiterated that

more youth should have been present; as well, more organizations could have attended. A variety of other comments were submitted, including optimism for the ability of youth to meet their goals, the value of more ongoing communication and collaboration and the need for the Canadian public to be educated about the challenges facing Aboriginal youth and their families and communities.

Love opportunities to learn, share and network. If we can nurture a sense of PRIDE in the youth, their resilience will grow with it. Pride in themselves, past, present and future. Pride in their culture and history and pride in their communities.

*Sheri Woolridge
Battlefords Boys and Girls Club*



Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being
Coalition pour la sécurité, la santé et le bien-être des communautés



TAB 1

Strengthening Resiliency in Aboriginal Youth

Delta Regina, 12 - 14 November 2012

Conference Program

Monday, 12 November 2012

4:00 – 7:00 PM

Registration

7:00 – 7:45 PM

Opening Ceremony: Grand Entry

Miller High School Young Eagles Drumming Group

Regina Police Service Cadet Corps

Chief Troy Hagen, Regina Police Service, Conference Host

Elder Harry Francis, Piapot First Nation, Saskatchewan

The Honourable Christine Tell, Minister of Corrections and Policing, Saskatchewan

7:45 – 8:15 PM

Session 1: Keynote Address

This presentation will provide context on the historic and current challenges facing Aboriginal communities and youth and why they may not be resilient (e.g., impact of residential schools, poverty, substance abuse, suicide, etc.). The speaker will take a positive look forward at what changes can be and are being made to strengthen resiliency of Aboriginal youth.

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Wilton Littlechild, Commissioner, Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Moderator: Inspector Curtis Olson, Calgary Police Service

8:15 – 9:30 PM

Meet and Greet

Tuesday, 13 November 2012

7:00 – 8:00 AM

Breakfast

8:00 – 8:30 AM

Session 2: Reflections on “Community Safety”

This session will describe the approach to community mobilization being taken in Saskatchewan and will reflect on its impact on Aboriginal communities and youth (e.g., crime prevention, rehabilitation and re-integration, reducing recidivism).

Speaker:

Dale McFee, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Corrections and Policing, Saskatchewan

Moderator: Chief John Domm, Rama Police Service, Co-chair, Coalition Steering Committee and Co-chair, CACP Crime Prevention Committee

8:30 – 9:45 AM

Session 3: Resilient Youth, Families and Communities

This panel will address crime prevention: how to strengthen resiliency so that Aboriginal youth do not offend. Three panelists will speak to prevention from the perspective of individual youth, families and communities as a whole.

Speakers:

Insp. Mario Giardini, E.A.S.Y. Program, Vancouver Police Department

Marlene Bugler, Executive Director, Kanawayimik Child and Family Service, Saskatchewan

Chief Sandford Big Plume, Tsuu T'ina First Nation, Alberta

Moderator: Corporal Tracey Dunnigan, Regina Police Service

9:45 – 10:15 AM

Break

10:15 – 11:30 AM

Session 4: Rehabilitation and Reintegration

This panel will focus on building the resiliency of youth who have offended, both during incarceration and after release. Communities have an important role and responsibility - they are part of the solution. Panelists will suggest ways to improve reintegration and reduce recidivism.

Speakers:

*David D. Varis, Department of Sociology and Anthropology,
University of Prince Edward Island*

*Walter MacDonald White Bear, Cultural Liaison Officer,
Boys and Girls Club, Calgary*

*Hirsch Greenberg, Department of Justice Studies,
University of Regina*

*Moderator: Janet Handy, Executive Director, Church
Council on Justice and Corrections*

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Session 5: Delegate Input

*Are there similar approaches to strengthening resiliency of
Aboriginal youth living off reserve, on reserves that are
doing well or on reserves that are struggling?*

[Small group discussion with pre-arranged seating.]

*Moderator: Elva Keip, National Priority Advisor, Canadian
Centre on Substance Abuse*

12:00 – 1:00 PM

Lunch

1:00 – 1:30 PM

Session 5 (cont'd): Debrief on Group Work

1:30 – 3:00 PM

Session 6: Opportunity through Education

*Panelists will reflect on how education provided in a cultural
context can give Aboriginal youth hope for a productive,
secure future. The particular roles of the private sector,
Aboriginal education authorities and youth, themselves, will
be explored.*

Speakers:

*Dr. Carlana Lindeman, Education Program Director, Martin
Aboriginal Education Initiative*

*Darwin Roy, Manager, Northern Community Relations,
Cameco Corporation, La Ronge, Saskatchewan*

*Rhonda Taylor, Western Region Program Manager,
Frontier College, Winnipeg*

Jake Pratt, Cote First Nation, Saskatchewan

Moderator: Rachel Gouin, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

3:00 – 3:30 PM

Break

3:30 – 4:15 PM

Session 7: Promising Practices

and

These “Promising Practices” presentations are repeated so that each delegate can attend two.

4:15 – 5:00 PM

- *Breakout A: Education success: Alison Commando, Career/Student Counsellor, Kitigan Zibi First Nation, Quebec*

Moderator: Rachel Gouin, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

- *Breakout B: 11 and Under Initiative, Andie Schmalz and Wendy Stone, Regina Police Service*

Moderator: Janet Handy, Executive Director, Church Council on Justice and Corrections

- *Breakout C: Swampy Cree Suicide Prevention Team: Corinne Isaak, University of Manitoba and Ron Cook, Cree Nations Tribal Health Centre, The Pas, Manitoba*

Moderator: Jane MacDonald, Vice President, Public Affairs and Community Engagement, Victorian Order of Nurses

- *Breakout D: Residential healing program for solvent addiction: Mary Deleary, Nimkee NupiGawagan Healing Centre, Muncey Ontario*

Moderator: Dave Farthing, CEO, YOUCAN

- *Breakout E: Resiliency and community building for 10-14 year olds at risk of offending: Patrick Wilmot and Jacob Gale, Mi'kmaw Project Venture, Eskasoni First Nation, Nova Scotia*

Moderator: Corporal Tracey Dunnigan, Regina Police Service

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Session 8: Dinner

Guest Speaker: The Honourable James Bartleman, former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

Wednesday, 14 November 2012

7:30 – 8:30 AM

Breakfast

8:30 – 10:00 AM

Session 9: Healthier Communities and Youth Resilience

This panel' will link resiliency to the delivery of health care to Aboriginal communities and to youth in urban settings. Such topics as preventive measures, culturally relevant health care delivery, training of Aboriginal health care professionals and environmental impacts on living conditions will be addressed.

Speakers:

Shannon Jones, Team Lead, The Alex Youth Health Centre, Calgary

Dr. Judy Finlay, Co-chair of Mamow Sha-way-gi-kay-win: North South Partnership for Children, Ontario

Kluane Adamik, member of National Youth Council, Assembly of First Nations

Moderator: Jane MacDonald, Vice President, Public Affairs and Community Engagement, Victorian Order of Nurses

10:00 – 10:30 AM

Break

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Session 10: Belonging and Resiliency

Panelists will address ways to strengthen communities by creating a feeling of belonging, security and mental well-being among Aboriginal youth through traditional, cultural teaching and reinforcing connections between youth and Elders.

Speakers:

Assistant Commissioner Russ Mirasty, RCMP Saskatchewan

Jakob Gearheard, Executive Director, Ilisaqsivik Society, Clyde River, NU

Moderator: Chief Constable Michael Chadwick, Saanich Police Department, member of CACP Crime Prevention Committee

11:45 AM – 12:30 PM

Session 11: Delegate Input

- *What key things can you do to help support Aboriginal youth in your community or the community you serve?*

Moderator: Elva Keip, National Priority Advisor, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

12:30 – 1:30 PM

Lunch

1:30 – 2:30 PM

Session 11 (cont'd): Debrief on Group Work

2:30 – 3:00 PM

Session 12: Closing Remarks

Gordon Phaneuf, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Child Welfare League of Canada and Co-chair, Coalition Steering Committee

3:00 – 3:15 PM

Evaluation Completion and Draw for Prizes

Delegates' comments are helpful in the planning of future Coalition conferences. These evaluations are also key deliverables for funding agreements.



TAB 3

Strengthening Resiliency in Aboriginal Youth

Participant Evaluation Report

The 144 conference participants represented police, teachers, public health nurses, child welfare organizations, faith communities, corrections, tribal councils, agencies serving children, youth and families, and federal and provincial governments. Following the conference, 80 evaluation forms were collected, an excellent return given that several delegates had left before the sessions ended on the last day.

Following are synopses of the responses to each question on the evaluation form as well as a sample of participants' comments:

Question 1: Using a scale of 1 (little value) to 4 (high value), how worthwhile did you find this conference?

Participants responded that this was a valuable consultation, with no one rating it below 2.5. Seven participants (9% of the evaluations received) did not provide a numerical score, although their subsequent comments were positive, one rated it at 2.5, 21% pegged it at 3, 6% assigned it 3.5, 55% ranked it at 4 and six particularly enthusiastic delegates (7%) assessed it between 4.5 and 10.

What would have made the conference better?

While the overall rating of the conference was excellent, with eight respondents going so far as to say that it couldn't have been improved, 66 participants (82% of the evaluations received) shared ideas on how it could have been even better. Responses to this question related to the planning and organization of the conference as well as content.

Four participants (5%) noted that there was a lot of information to absorb in a short period of time and that it would have been better to add another day to the conference. Other delegates commented that the issue of finding sustainable funding could have been addressed and that people who could help with resources (i.e., Ministers, Members of Parliament, corporate executives) should have been at the conference. Three delegates thought that more elders should have spoken, while another stated that First Nations leaders (i.e., chiefs) should have attended so that they could take ideas back to their communities.

By far the most common reaction, however, concerned youth participation with 31 delegates (39% of evaluations received) pointing out that young Aboriginals should have been there. The lack of youth delegates was also a great disappointment to the planning team; unfortunately the anticipated resources to support 25 youth delegates' travel and accommodations costs were not forthcoming.

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I would not change any of it. I thought it was really good.

Lester Houle, RCMP

Nothing. Liked the format, energy, delegate composition, and organization.

David Varis, University of Prince Edward Island

Nothing to compare to. Thought it was outstanding.

Steven Smith, RCMP

I can't really suggest anything – was very impressed.

Monique Verpoort, Child Development Institute

The presence of youth and hearing their perspective.

Doug Libretti, Dakota Ojibway Police Service, Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation

Hearing some Aboriginal youth from across the country.

Aaron Cramer, Vancouver Police Department

To have those who can allocate funding at the conference. To have some of the “youth” speak at the conference to share their views, needs and wants.

Terry Burgess, Ranch Ehrlo Society, Pilot Butte, SK

I think elders (i.e, Harry Francis) should have had an opportunity to speak. Panel of youth representatives would have been nice to see. Closing prayer as well.

Karen Main, Leading Thunderbird Lodge, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

Some more presentations/information on younger youth (12-15) as my impression was that the bulk of information was geared to older youth (16-20) .

Shaun Dyer, John Howard Society, Saskatoon

More people who could actually help with funding. Ministers, MPs and corporations.

Sheri Woolridge, Battlefords Boys and Girls Club

It would have been nice to see local and provincial First Nation Justice portfolio leaders here to get some good ideas for our communities.

Jim Pratt, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Wascana Campus

I have not seen or heard from a lot of people from the federal government at this session.

Maybe it would be beneficial for them to attend and hear from the different initiatives and at the same time they could share with all what are their mandates.

Serge Dubé, Junior Canadian Rangers, Department of National Defence

I needed shorter sessions. It was a lot of information for a short period of time.

Erica Azak, The Salvation Army

First Nations leadership at reserve levels to attend. Chief and Band Council need to attend these partnerships to learn and take back these initiatives to their home communities.

Participant from Community Diversity Cultural Unit, Regina Police Service

A panel on government (provincial, territorial/federal). Opportunity for more networks: mix up the tables. Ensure that all presentations focus only on Aboriginal students.

Carlana Lindeman, Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative

I had hoped to hear more of a positive message right at the start of the conference. Some of this stuff came out later in the week. I was happy the shift was made.

Rhonda Taylor, Frontier College

It would have been nice to have more time to network with others. I appreciate everyone's time is valuable, but adding a day would allow for shorter "programmed" time and more networking.

Karen McCullagh, Boys and Girls Clubs, Western Canada

All of the organizations involved coming together to show interest. I can go back to work and let youth in the home know there are others looking out for them.

Iris Keshane, Yorkton Transitional Homes for Youth.

Question 2: How has participation in this conference increased your understanding of the challenges facing Aboriginal youth and their communities?

Only two participants chose not to answer this question. Of the remaining 78 participants, 42 (52% of the evaluations submitted) confirmed that their understanding of the challenges facing Aboriginal youth and their communities had increased. Another 15 (24%) noted that while they already had a good understanding of those challenges, the conference had made them aware of programs elsewhere, while 8 respondents (10%) observed that attendance had confirmed what they knew. Other delegates commented on the good networking opportunities, greater understanding of the need for sustainability and the valuable information that could be taken back to communities.

* * * * *

I feel this conference opened my eyes to more of the issues, but mostly that we all have the same message and have to work together.

Sheri Woolridge, Battlefords Boys and Girls Club

It gave me a better understanding of the missing link between parents and youth due to residential schools.

Serge Dubé, Junior Canadian Rangers, Department of National Defence

The networking helps to broaden understanding of the scope of the issues facing our youth today. The speakers were excellent. They pushed us to hear and see the beauty and hope to be found in our youth!

Karen Hoeft, The Salvation Army

Better understanding of how widespread social ills are and how much youth have to overcome in the first place by virtue of geography, community needs, etc.

Janet Handy, Church Council on Justice and Corrections

Learned so many things! Great speakers. Very practical application. The possibilities!

Elva Keip, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

Immensely... especially hearing about so many positive initiatives occurring in different parts of the country as well as challenges. Concrete examples provided clearly demonstrated evidence of problems for youth and brought a human face to statistics.

Monique Verpoort, Child Development Institute

Historical context. Complexity of issue. No one answer but a variety of many. Similar issues nationally.

Karen Main, Leading Thunderbird Lodge, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

Although I am very well-versed in residential school impacts, Dr. Littlechild's words made the connection from then to now in a more meaningful manner than I have heard previously. The entire panel on rehabilitation and reintegration – Varis, Greenberg and MacDonald - amazing and an excellent balance of academia and the practical. Greenberg and MacDonald are wonderful story-tellers.

Roxane Schury, Saskatchewan Justice, Corrections and Policing

I knew Aboriginal youth faced many hurdles in life because I am Aboriginal myself. It showed me that it is a nation-wide problem that needs to be addressed on a wider scale.

Mike Keshane, Yorkton Tribal Council

The conference increased my understanding of the sheer diversity and numbers of professionals that share the same depth of knowledge. We are not alone!

Reona Brass, Ranch Ehrlo Society, Pilot Butte, SK

My work provides regular opportunities for me to see first hand the challenges faced by Aboriginal youth. For me, it was more about making connections with other people to see how we can come together to better support youth.

Rhonda Taylor, Frontier College

I am coming away with not only valuable reminders of these challenges, but also a broader understanding across indicators, i.e. education, health, physical activity, justice, etc.

Karen McCullagh, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, Western Region

I work in an urban setting.. I've increased my understanding of clients coming from rural settings.

Bert Lang, John Howard Society, Saskatoon

It has made me more aware of the Northern communities and the challenges they face.

Lawrence Avery, Edmonton Police Service

It allowed me to think of youth outside of my own work area. I have more thoughts and information on looking at preventive measures rather than only focusing on introducing things for Aboriginal youth after they have entered or are bordering on entering the justice system. Also looking at individual and holistic approaches. One size doesn't fit all. Match the youth, match the community.

Leah Messer, Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, Child and Family Services Division

One of the best things about this conference was sitting at a table with people from different provinces as well as the speakers. Learning that the challenges may be the same, but more importantly, people came here with solutions that have worked in their communities.

Russ Hodgins, Regina Police Service

It confirms that we are all connected – North/South, urban/rural, etc.

Shannon Jones, The Alex Youth Health Centre, Calgary

The depth of need in remote communities and the requirement these initiatives have for sustainability.

Mike Chadwick, Saanich Police Department

J'ai écouté Judy Finlay et ce m'a touché. Comparer à ma communauté, son challenge est encore plus fort. Je m'inspire de ce pour travailler encore plus fort en ma communauté.

Marie-Rose Papatie, Centre de santé, Lac Simon, QC

All the presentations focused on the same components, identity, self-confidence, get to know their culture. If we combine all these with giving the youth a sense of pride, resiliency will strengthen.

Heather Shepard, Regina Police Service

Question 3: Will what you heard at the conference influence how you do your job?

Seventy-eight delegates answered this question with 75 (94% of the evaluations received) indicating that the conference would influence how they did their jobs: they had learned about programs that could be adapted to their communities and organizations; they realized how important it was to empower youth in seeking solutions to challenges; they would put more energy into forming relationships with youth; they would try harder to influence youth to change; and they would incorporate more cultural content in their work. Four (5%) noted that the networking they had done at the conference had been valuable and five (6%) indicated that they would make an effort to enter into more partnerships with other programs. Even the nine (11%) delegates who indicated that the conference would not necessarily influence how they did their jobs planned to pass information on to their colleagues and their communities.

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Absolutely! Information is a powerful tool.

Paulete Poitras, File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council

Certainly impact long-term planning in specific regions of my responsibility.

Al Hoeft, The Salvation Army

The conference has provided some great ideas for strengthening our existing programs.

Terry Burgess, Ranch Ehrlo Society, Pilot Butte, Saskatchewan

Yes! I will take some of the information I learned and try and develop programs and events with other agencies to help our citizens understand about all the cultures within our growing city. I will try and assist in gathering necessary resources, from translators to elders to other specific cultural needs, to help Weyburn people embrace, respect and understand each other.

Melinda Mintenko, Weyburn Police Service

Possible connections.

Carlana Lindeman, Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative

It has affirmed a lot of my current practices, but reminded me of the importance of partnering with other organizations.

Erica Azak, The Salvation Army

Strengthened my resolve that we have to have open communication and work together.

Steven Smith, RCMP

Yes...what I heard validates for me that our way of working is the right way to work and that is to build relationships, include youth in ideas and solutions and provide an opportunity for them to have a voice.

Rhonda Taylor, Frontier College

Yes, I will be "respectfully stepping on toes" in order to break down communication barriers.

Diane Walton, Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services

Absolutely. All of the sessions provided valuable information, stories and reflections. I have a greater awareness of programs and initiatives that I can connect with.

Karen McCullagh, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, Western Region

I have learned a lot of great ideas that I can take back to my service. I am more motivated to make a difference with the youth.

Dana Boldt, Rama Police Service

To take the lead. Be more available. Not to rely on others. Let youth have a voice.

Tammy Michelin, Charles J. Andrew Youth Treatment Centre, Sheshatshiu, NL

The youth mentorship will be something I will be looking into to see how I can incorporate an aspect of this in my organization.

Cindy Freeman, Ranch Ehrlo Society, Pilot Butte, Saskatchewan

Yes, definitely. In my line of work, I'm seen as a role model. I see how important it is for youth to have positive influence, someone to look up to and listen to them. I'm going to be even more engaging with the youth than I currently am when I'm out in public or attending PR events/youth initiatives.

Lester Houle, RCMP

Yes, specifically with developing our Theory of Change model.

Tim Fox, Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary

Yes. I always believed prosecution was over-used to deal with Aboriginal youth and all youth involved in crime. My belief is even stronger now.

Aaron Cramer, Vancouver Police Department

It reinforces what we do so we are inspired to continue.

Shannon Jones, The Alex Youth Health Centre, Calgary

It has given me an awareness of some of the local and provincial initiatives. The program I manage, the Junior Canadian Rangers, will certainly be made aware of some of the initiatives.

Serge Dubé, Junior Canadian Rangers, Department of National Defence

I will share information at my workplace: look at direct ways we are interacting with youth, but also look at how we connect work between ministries, provinces and community to be there for youth.

Leah Messer, Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, Child and Family Services Division

Yes, definitely. Great to hear the many initiatives – inspire me to go back to my community and organization with renewed energy.

Karen Main, Leading Thunderbird Lodge, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

Yes, I will take the knowledge I have gained and discuss it with my co-workers and apply it to the Community Cadet Corps we run.

Heather Shepard, Regina Police Service

I will continue to encourage all people to converse and listen to our youth as they're our future. Youth have amazing solutions and the energy to compete; just listen, support and watch them.

Gertrude Maxwell, RCMP

I appreciated hearing about the NGO programming including Ilisaqsivik. Would like to do more partnering with community-based organizations....Much of the content has given me ideas and contacts for (sic) the service provider training that I manage provincially.

Roxane Schury, Saskatchewan Justice, Corrections and Policing

Absolutely, become more visible in my community. Engage the youth more. Share my own experiences of resilience.

Doug Libretti, Dakota Ojibway Police Service, Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation

Question 4: What key systemic changes do you think are required to strengthen the resiliency of Aboriginal youth?

Seventy-seven delegates offered a variety of suggestions on what systemic change was necessary. Fifteen (19% of the evaluations submitted) thought that the most helpful change would be a greater focus on collaboration, partnerships and relationship building. Another thirteen individuals (16%) noted that youth should be empowered, with their input taken into consideration regarding the development of programs and services. Nine delegates (11%) observed that sustainable, stable funding should be available; resources should be directed to prevention, not reaction. Seven people (9%) responded that the focus should be on strengthening families and communities, by providing better housing, working to end violence and addressing poverty. Another seven delegates (9%) pointed out that there has to be a focus on providing educational opportunities, securing employment and providing basic human needs (e.g., clean water, safe, healthy homes). The need to stress cultural and traditional values to increase youth resiliency was suggested by six delegates (7%).

The remaining 22 observations included: improving parenting skills; addressing the effects of colonialism, racism and residential schools; enhancing communications so that more information on existing programs is available and shared; increasing the general public's awareness of the challenges facing Aboriginal youth and their communities; taking a strengths-based approach when responding to the needs of youth; ensuring less turnover of staff working with youth; and repealing the *Indian Act*.

* * * * *

Systemic commitment to work collaboratively to address challenges/needs within Aboriginal community. We all hold a piece of the puzzle and together with youth we can create a future of hope, accomplishment, pride and success.

Karen McCullagh, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, Western Region

Increased communication and collaboration among groups working with Aboriginal youth will enable us to better partner for their success and hope.

Al Hoeft, The Salvation Army

More collaboration – integration – advocacy.

Edgar MacLeod, Atlantic Police Academy, Slemon Park, PEI

Increase the information sharing among service providers and with youth. Provide opportunities for youth to find their identity/culture. Make changes one relationship at a time.

Russ Hodgins, Regina Police Service

Youth have input into what others feel they need to have. Too often it's the adults that dictate what they need.

Robert Yee, John Howard Society of Saskatchewan

Involvement of youth – empowering them. Holistic wellness is key. Community must be involved and work together and collaborate on initiatives.

Karen Main, Leading Thunderbird Lodge, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

We need to see our youth as active participants in building relationships. We need to mentor the leaders of the future.

Karen Hoeft, The Salvation Army

Get their ideas, find out what they like, what their priorities are. Incorporate it into the program, whether it's a health program, education program, police program and so on.

Lester Houle, RCMP

Having them more active and ensuring that they are included in all planning activities regarding their future.

Garry Munro, Cree Nations Tribal Health Centre, The Pas, MB

More youth input, more cultural inclusion in all programs offered to youth (i.e., mental health, addictions, education).

Faye Ozmun, Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice

Ignorance of general public and short-sighted funding strategies. Education through social media to make more people care and feel outrage about the plight of Aboriginal youth...such a crime.

Monique Verpoort, Child Development Institute

Innovation and collaboration will be key as well as sharing resources between partners. We need to ensure the effective use of the resources that exist. The message we hear repeatedly is that governments have limited budgets...that is a challenge, but my question is "how is the money used"? All of us need to recognize that in order for change to happen, there needs to be investment and that investment does include a financial contribution.

Rhonda Taylor, Frontier College

Service providers need to become educated on the traumas and root causes of residential schools and that all Aboriginal persons are affected. Then come out of silos of programming dollars and begin/continue with collaboration of wraparound programming to create/sustain help for the human being where ... he/she needs help. But, those front-line workers need to be supported by their institutions and the policies within those institutions. We need to ask the question: how committed are our institutions with moving the interests of our Aboriginal community forward and how can we trust you?

Cynthia Provost, Calgary Police Service

Abolish poverty for all Aboriginal youth and their families and communities.

Elaine Bishop, North Point Douglas Women's Centre and Quakers Fostering Justice, Winnipeg

More partnerships like this conference. Less silo funding.

Jane MacDonald, Victorian Order of Nurses

Sustainability of funding.

Mike Chadwick, Saanich Police Department

Consistent long-term funding = change in government thinking! Much higher and stronger focus on prevention in a wide range of programs.

Elva Keip, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

The idea of placing more emphasis on preventing issues instead of treating later problems is key.

Erica Azak, The Salvation Army

Move towards a more strength-based approach rather than deficit= based (e.g., core funding for programs that work).

Diane Walton, Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services

Families, I believe, are the first step for healthy people/youth. You can't push education if the home life is in crisis. Teach parents to parent. First, give basic necessities (i.e., roof, water, no black mould).

Nola Mahingen, Yorkton Tribal Council

Ensuring basic needs of youth and family are met is first. Address poverty issues. Housing, food, clothing [and] education are basic rights for every child/youth. Easy access for youth to programs, supports and services. But most important, the voice of children and youth needs to be heard and once heard, something [done]. Don't just sit and listen.

Leah Messer, Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, Child and Family Services Division

Parents need to learn how to parent and kids need to learn healthy relationships.

Les Vonkeman, Lethbridge Regional Police Service

Former un groupe de cadet et plus d'activités culturelle et intergénérationelle.

Mathieu Leduc, Service de police de Lac Simon, QC

There has to be community and leadership direction when First Nations youth leave their communities. Sometimes, youth get frustrated in urban centres, give up and go back to the reserve after failing themselves. It's not easy in urban areas.

Jim Pratt, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology

First of all, recognize and include cultural values in all interventions developed with the First Nations, then engage the Canadian public to recognize and act vis-à-vis their native communities.

Tatiana Romero, Save the Children Canada

Culture as healing – to me this is the fundamental piece. We must advocate (to) all levels of government to commit greater energy and resources to empowering Aboriginal communities to reclaim their stolen cultural practices. Self-identity is absolutely crucial.

Shaun Dyer, John Howard Society, Saskatoon

I am an idealist, but I think we need to repeal the *Indian Act*.

David Varis, University of Prince Edward Island

Question 5 : Do you have any further comments?

Fifty delegates (63% of the evaluations received) offered additional comments. The most frequent comments (23 or 29%) were congratulations on the quality of the program, the great speakers, the professional organization of the conference and the comfortable venue. Eight respondents (10%) appreciated the networking possibilities and the opportunity to learn about other programs. Some delegates reiterated that more youth should have been present; as well, more organizations could have attended. Various other comments were submitted, including optimism for the ability of youth to meet their goals, the value of more ongoing communication and collaboration and the need for the Canadian public to be educated about the challenges facing Aboriginal youth and their families and communities.

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I liked this being in Regina! The leadership being taken by women and young women is worthy of affirmation.

Elaine Bishop, North Point Douglas Women's Centre and Quakers Fostering Justice, Winnipeg

Excellent conference. Very professional and well put together – loved all the pages to write notes – excellent coverage of various themes such as education, health, belonging, etc. Good food.

Monique Verpoort, Child Development Institute

Thank you for providing this conference. It has provided me with so many ideas/challenges that I can't wait to share with my community and police co-workers.

Kim Robson, Saskatoon Police Service

Love opportunities like this to learn, share and network. If we can nurture a sense of PRIDE in the youth, their resilience will grow with it. Pride in themselves, past, present and future. Pride in their culture and history and pride in their communities.

Sheri Woolridge, Battlefords Boys and Girls Club

I really enjoyed listening to many of the speakers. It was nice to hear [about] the resiliency of many and how that encouraged growth and where it took them in their lives. Very encouraging.

Damian Azak, The Salvation Army

Merci, j'ai aimé la façon ouverte de la conférence à trouver des solutions locales. Qu'il n'est pas de solution miracle.

Gilles Ross, Centre de santé Lac Simon

Great conference – excellent people.

Tammy Michelin, Charles J. Andrew Youth Treatment Centre, Sheshatshiu, NL

I enjoyed the conference very much. Would (have) been nice to see more organizations present.

Representative of Community Diversity Cultural Unit, Regina Police Service

Very motivating to hear such a variety of programs and the passion that people have for our youth.

Tara Danielson, Saskatoon Police Service

I appreciate the hard work to help Aboriginal youth. We need to not only to put our heads together but also our hearts and show kindness towards all.

Mike Keshane, Yorkton Tribal Council

Youth need to be heard. They need to know that what they are saying is important and that they themselves are very important.

Penny Rockthunder, Yorkton Tribal Council

I want to commend the CACP for taking the initiative to support the Coalition to put on cutting edge conferences for participation across Canada.

Karen Hoeft, The Salvation Army

The only solution to these problems is for us to work together, regardless of organizational policies, beliefs or race. The challenges faced by Aboriginal youth affect us all in some way.

Lawrence Avery, Edmonton Police Service

I wish there was a federal/Canadian database/website where people could access information about youth across Canada to see what works, what hasn't, if it works how it's done – so other provinces could work on duplicating and adapting to their own areas.

Leah Messer, Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, Child and Family Services Division

We didn't hear much about gangs. Aboriginal youth may stand out as a people in need of help, (but) much of what we heard applies equally to other disenfranchised youth. Much of the focus was on older youth - there are many problems that need to be addressed for younger youth.

Bert Lang, John Howard Society, Saskatoon



TAB 4

Strengthening Resiliency in Aboriginal Youth

Specific Initiatives that Strengthen Resiliency

In addition to the initiatives and programs mentioned earlier in the report on the first delegate input session, participants mentioned the following:

- **“Youth for You”** is an on-line youth volunteer program where young people are accepted by businesses and organizations to shadow workers and develop skills.
- **Stop Now and Plan (SNAP)** is an evidence-based program that teaches six to twelve year olds to stay in school and not engage in negative acts.
- **Gatehouse Program** for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse enhances resiliency.
- Yorkton Tribal Council purchased a big screen television for **“Youth Nights”** where movies are watched. games played and issues (e.g., building healthy relationships) discussed with mentors.
- **Buffalo Riders** is a culturally based drug prevention program for eleven to thirteen year olds in Manitoba.
- **STR8UP**, a gang exit project in Saskatoon centred on the Aboriginal medicine wheel as the journey to healing, is 90% Aboriginal and has been successful both in reducing recidivism and equipping youth and adults to live culturally rooted, healthy lives after dropping their colours.
- Saskatoon’s **Community Outreach Program**, comprised of 70% Aboriginal youth with little or no community/social supports, provides recreational, housing and addictions support.
- **D.A.R.E.** (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is a proactive prevention program that involves police officers going into elementary schools to teach students about the harmful effects of drugs and violence and the development of positive life skills.
- Cameco provides **“site elders”** who provide guidance to Aboriginal workers.
- **Edmonton Police Service’s new youth unit** works with probation officers and lawyers to check up on offenders, provide referrals and work to prevent re-offending.
- **Fox Valley Counselling Services**, Regina provides a range of culturally appropriate preventive and restorative services related to abuse, neglect and addictions.

- **Start Smart Stay Safe: Children and Family Projects**, a collaborative initiative between the Calgary Police Service, the Calgary Catholic School District, the Calgary Board of Education and the Mount Royal University's Centre for Child Well-being, includes a police safety education program being piloted for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 to enhance their ability to avoid risky behaviours and victimization as well as a complementary parenting program.
- Calgary's **Multi Agency School Support Teams (MASST)**, consisting of a police officer and a social worker, are part of an early intervention initiative that supports children and youth between the ages of five and twelve who are exhibiting behavior which puts them at risk for criminal involvement or are at increased risk for victimization.
- The **Youth at Risk Development Program (YARD)**, an early intervention program that supports Calgary youth aged 10 to 17 who are gang members or at high-risk of gang involvement, provides individual, coordinated and managed interventions that empower youth to make positive choices and recognize alternative solutions.
- The **Gateway Initiative**, a Calgary Police Service/City of Calgary Community & Neighbourhood Services program designed to facilitate a connection between the police, young people, their families and appropriate community resources, offers quick access to effective intervention for youth, and allows police and court resources to focus on more serious crime.
- **Right to Play** uses sport and play to help teach important life lessons and develop skills like cooperation, leadership and teamwork.
- **Gang Reduction and Suppression Program (GRASP)** is a prevention/intervention approach started in the United States.
- Police, elders and youth in some communities participate in week-long **sustenance hunts** following which meat is distributed to the community.
- Rama Police Service offers **Personal Finance Education**, a program taught to Grade 7 students by police officers.
- Police services in many communities provide **School Resource Officers** who build positive relationships with children and youth and identify potential youth at risk.
- RCMP's **Youth Leadership Workshops** in Regina provide tools for youth to do problem-solving and learn how to work through issues and develop plans to deal with problems when they return home.
- **North Point Douglas Women's Centre** in Winnipeg is a community-based women's resource centre that offers a range of programs (e.g., working with victims of abuse, helping prevent children from dropping out of school, bullying intervention, organizing a walking school bus).
- The Salvation Army in northern British Columbia operates a week-long **teen camp** to support older youth moving into leadership roles.

- The **Canadian Junior Rangers Program**, operating in remote and isolated communities of Canada, embraces culture and tradition, promotes healthy living and positive self-image, and reflects the proud military legacy of the Canadian Rangers.
- The **Bold Eagle Program** is a summer employment program combining Aboriginal culture and teachings with military training that helps to develop self-confidence, self-discipline, teamwork, time management, respect and fitness.
- **Wanska School** in Prince Albert which focuses on culture, supporting to students and involving elders offers an evening program of socialization.
- Moose Jaw has a **Crime Prevention Program for students in grades 4 to 8** that addresses a variety of issues.
- Sheshatshiu's **Solvent Abuse Program** blends in-house and on the land programming.
- Moose Jaw and Prince Albert have introduced "**positive ticketing**" initiatives where youth are rewarded for good behaviour with movie passes and gift certificates.
- The **WITS** program helps prevent peer victimization by teaching children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 four simple conflict resolution strategies: **W**alk away, **I**gnore, **T**alk it out and **S**eek help.
- The **RespectED** program of the Canadian Red Cross educates adults living or working with First Nations/Inuit/Métis on how to recognize and prevent violence against children and youth.
- Miller High School in Regina has implemented a **First Nations drum group** facilitated by a recognized First Nations elder and helpers who teach traditional First Nations drumming to a group of 15 boys.
- The **La Ronge Junior Council** is a youth council for the town that uses mentorship to develop leadership, social responsibility, public speaking skills, etc. among young people.