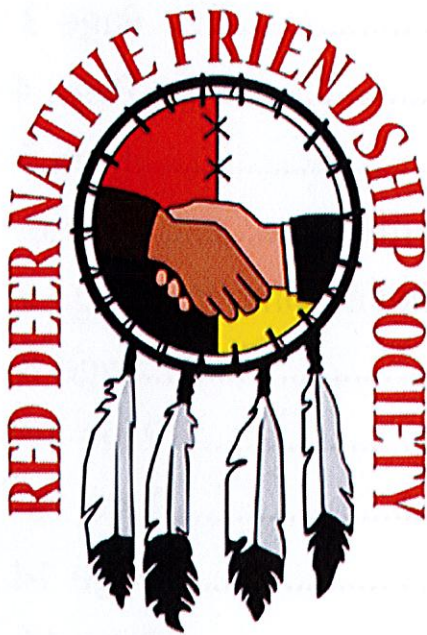


‘Empowering
community
through
friendship’



‘Building a place
where our elders,
youth and families
can flourish’

Annual Report

April 2015 - March 2016



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*President's Message

Over the past year, there have been many challenges faced by the Red Deer Native Friendship Society. We have faced uncertainty with program funding, core funding, and project funding for the Asooahum Crossing. Some of this uncertainty has been mitigated by the RDNFS' strong financial position though we are aware funding stability would assist in the success of program operation. There have also been many successes. The RDNFS Board of Directors has a stable complement of dedicated members and the management structure has changed to reflect our current needs. Thank you to everyone who assisted in the recruitment of new board members. As well, thank you to the new leadership team for all of your hard work!

We are now in the building stage of the new Asooahum Crossing. Although funding challenges have periodically threatened the affordable housing project, we have resolved these issues with the Province of Alberta and the City of Red Deer and we are very close to having our first residents move in to this brand new community.

Towards the tail end of this year we have had to temporarily halt our youth program due to funding uncertainty. We recognize the importance of serving and empowering our youth to become future leaders of our people. This includes the need to provide education and learning opportunities and assist the youth with creating or finding employment opportunities.

We continue to actively support our program participants through the Homelessness Prevention Program, Cultural Connections Program, and Four Directions Family Support programs. Additionally, the RDNFS maintains many community support programs such as: Women's Wellness, Little Paws, Wellbriety, Craft Circle, and Thunderbird Learners.

I look forward to the coming year as we complete the Asooahum Crossing development and can offer affordable housing supports to those in need. And for all of our programs, keep up the great work everyone!

In friendship,

*Darren Tootoosis
President*

Executive Director's Report

Dear Friends and Relatives:

Despite the economic downturn, RDNFS was fortunate to continue offering programs and services that improve the quality of life for our community members. Our numbers grew exponentially with over 3,650 people visiting the Friendship Centre last year or participating in one of our off site programs. We solidified partnerships with Red Deer Public School District, Shining Mountains Community Living Supports, Red Deer College, Youth and Volunteer Centre and Catholic Social Services. We celebrated continued funding from the FASD Network and support from United Way to continue our work with students doing the SCcyber Program. We celebrated high school completion of our first graduate from that program. This past year we participated in Urban Aboriginal Voices Society and hosted the Urban Aboriginal Strategy Regional meeting to identify community issues and goals. We made headway on these goals through continued project development of "Asooahum Crossing-a place where our youth, elders and families can grow and flourish."

The Board of Directors and the Asooahum Advisory Group continue their organizational review to explore the best organizational design that will support both the social services and ensure financial sustainability. I am grateful to the Board for their constant support over the years. Based on the community consultation the priorities for 2016-17 are:

- * Organization Review and Financial Stability
- * Completion of Asooahum Crossing and Cultural Programming
- * Youth Leadership Development for increased participation in the Economy
- * Community & Family Support Programming and Service
- * Housing Support and Cultural Connections

The Board of Directors has approved a new leadership model which will open a position for an Executive Administration Director. In the absence of this position the organization will function with a shared leadership team consisting of The Director of Administration, Lianne Hazell; Director of Programming, Nadette Agecutay; and I will be moving to the position of Director of Asooahum Crossing Project and Youth Leadership Development. Lianne Hazell has over 20 years' experience in non-profit leadership and will do a great job in the absence of an Executive Administration Director.

As I reflect on my time as the Executive Director I thank the Creator for allowing me the opportunity to grow spiritually and culturally and to share the responsibility of serving you, our members. The support of the community has made it possible for us to become what we are today. This is OUR center of friendship. Together we will continue to grow and flourish. Moving forward there will be tremendous need and opportunity for you to be involved in the Asooahum Crossing project. If you are interested in volunteering in ANY capacity PLEASE call the centre. We welcome and encourage your participation.

In Friendship,
Tanya Schur

* *Operational Overview*

In the spirit of Friendship, the Red Deer Native Friendship Society is committed to a community without need. We embrace and are guided by cultural wisdom and traditional teachings to provide a healthy and safe place of belonging for all people living in Red Deer.

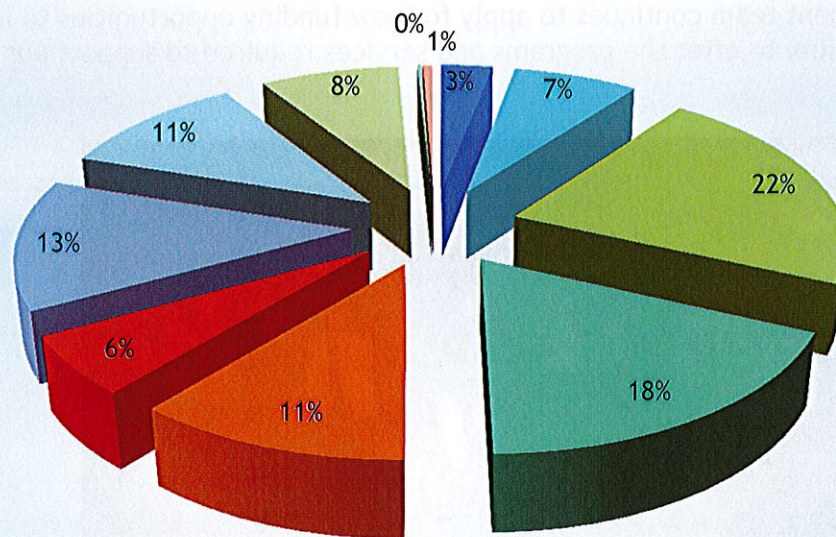
The RDNFS is a charitable Aboriginal agency dedicated to building an empowered community through Asooahum cultural housing, community development and the Aboriginal Youth Centre for Success.

We are awakening Aboriginal cultural teachings and family preservation services that promote wellbeing and assist with the adjustment to life in Red Deer.

We strive to extend friendship and foster positive relationships to bring awareness of Aboriginal people and culture to all citizens of Red Deer.

RDNFS Progam Funding for 2015 - 2016

- Alberta Aboriginal Relations
- Central Alberta FASD Network
- Child and Family Services
- Outreach & Support Services Initiative (OSSI - Provincial)
- Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS - Federal)
- United Way
- Community Capacity Supports Program
- Youth Urban Partnerships Agreement (ANFCA)
- Urban Aboriginal Strategies
- I Am A Kind Man Partnership Grant Agreement (ANFCA)
- Traditional Healing Connections Partnership Grant Agreement (ANFCA)



* Organizational Development and Sustainability

Core Business #1 Organizational Development and Sustainability

Goal #1: Maintain long term sustainability in both operations and financial management.

Goal #2: Build capacity by increasing training opportunities in core operations.

Goal #3: Increase capital and operational funding.

Goal #4: Build a safe place of belonging where our membership can grow and flourish.

It is important to the Staff and Board of Directors to be transparent and accountable to our community, our funders, and our membership through accurate and timely financial reporting and an audited year-end financial statement. Our Annual General Meeting was held in Red Deer at Gaetz United Church on September 15, 2015. Operational excellence in programs was assured by the Management team who review program goals and manage program budgets. Weekly staff meetings ensure programs remain on target with work plans.

RDNFS is committed to building capacity in our operations and provide many training opportunities for our staff. Once a month we close the centre for staff development day and offer our staff a wide range of learning opportunities. We were also fortunate to get staff trained in Wellbriety and Celebrate Families which will assist in our ability to bring new programming to our centre in the next fiscal year.

RDNFS started a capital fundraising campaign for the Asooahum Centre and was able to provide two great community events which raised funds while bringing awareness of the new housing development and Aboriginal Culture in the City of Red Deer. We look forward to continued fundraising efforts in the coming year.

The RDNFS management team continues to apply for new funding opportunities to increase our programming and ability to offer the programs and services required to support our community.



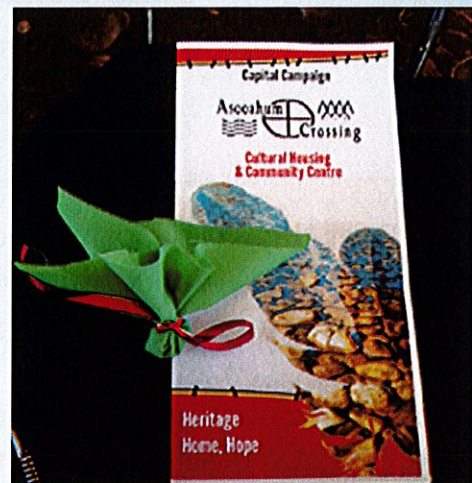
* Asooahum Cultural Centre and Housing Development

Goal: To build a safe place of belonging where our membership can grow and flourish.

We are building a place of belonging and sanctuary for our membership and offer culturally sensitive supports and services. We will provide 16 affordable and sustainable housing units along with the cultural programs and services to support the persons in the housing development along with an Aboriginal Cultural Friendship Centre in the city of Red Deer for Aboriginal people that will:

- * 1. Reflect Aboriginal culture & principles and relationships;
- * 2. Operate in harmony with (our) neighbours
- * 3. Include access to cultural programs, supports & services that improve quality of life;
- * 4. Provide all people with access to Aboriginal culture

The Asooahum Cultural Centre and Housing Development at the writing of this report have site preparation work completed on this project and foundations for the two eight-plexes have been completed. We were very fortunate to collaborate with ANFCA to combine the opening of the I Am a Kind Man program with the ground breaking ceremony at Asooahum in September. Site development began in the fall with the release of funding from the City of Red Deer Affordable Housing Program. The delay of transfer of funding for the land swap from Clearview Ridge and unexpected site development costs created the need to request for further funding. After considerable delay of release of funding and a change in Provincial Government the board and community advisory group requested that the Government of Alberta form a cross-ministerial meeting to find a solution to the issues that have been blocking the completion of this project. In November the cross-ministry team met facilitated by Aboriginal Relations. Aboriginal Relations took over the role of facilitating the funding requirements and was able to assist us so that we could hire an owner's representative to assist us with the details to complete this project. The joint steering committee comprised of representatives from the City of Red Deer, our board chair and Rodney Soonias will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to keep the project moving forward through the permitting process.



* Cultural Awareness

Core Business #2

Cultural Awareness

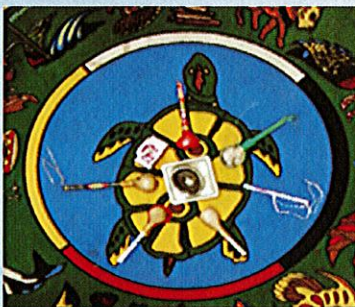
Goal #1: Promote opportunities to make cultural and spiritual connections for Aboriginal community members and all citizens of Red Deer.

Goal #2: Increase the public image of the Red Deer Native Friendship Society and our programs and services.

The Red Deer Native Friendship Society works hard to promote opportunities to make cultural and spiritual connections in the city of Red Deer as well as increase our public image. One way we assess cultural connections is through a quarterly survey.

- Of those participants who responded to the question 100% agreed that the Friendship Centre offers programs that are culturally appropriate.
- Of those participants who responded to the question, 93% stated that the Friendship Centre helps them learn about their culture.
- 98% of those who responded said yes when asked to answer the following statement; as a result of attending Friendship Centre programming/participation in cultural ceremonies, I feel good about myself and feel pride in my heritage.

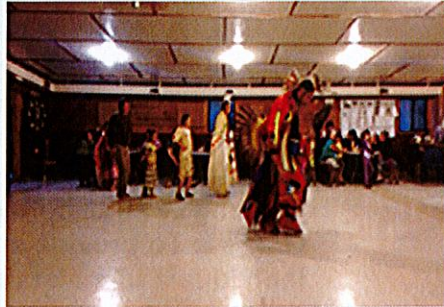
All programs at RDNFS promote culture and spirituality. This year we had the opportunity to offer more cultural programming with added Elder involvement through the Traditional Healing Connections Partnership Grant. We incorporated this program into our Four Directions Family Support Program and were able to offer feast food teachings, talking stick teachings, rattle making workshop, moss bag teachings, star blanket teachings, women's rights of passage, crafts with Elders and we added storytelling to our Family Friendship Night in the housing program.



RDNFS held a culture camp on August 27 – 30, 2015 at Camp Alexo. We have a partnership with the Youth and Volunteer Centre who run the camp. There were many cultural learning opportunities for our youth and families including sweat lodge teachings, Aboriginal games, Sacred Circle Diabetes awareness workshops, tipi teachings, and a pow wow dance demonstration among many other fun activities. There were 5 Elders who led the cultural workshops, 17 adults, 24 children and 14 youth participated.

PARTICIPANTS SAY:

- * They keep me motivated; give me strength and courage to keep going.
- * It makes me feel better because I have a place where I can get cultural teachings.
- * They make me feel involved, like someone cares.
- * I feel more connected and I feel like I have more pride in myself.
- * I leave feeling more awake, vibrant, self-motivated and feel the need to pass it forward to others I see who are struggling.
- * Just being able to feel a sense of belonging has been very uplifting.



The I Am A Kind Man program launched this year on December 10, 2015. I Am A Kind Man provides a supportive, holistic model for community healing. The program addresses violence against Indigenous women and recognizes the challenges Indigenous men face as a result of colonization and historical trauma. It encourages men to reconnect with their traditional roles within families and communities. We ran 10 sessions with 15 individuals attending, not all men attended all sessions. We also ran a youth talking circle with 12 participants. Each session was run by a trained facilitator and an Elder.



NÉYA NAPEW NA MUTON
I AM A KIND MAN

RDNFS signed an MOU after a pipe ceremony with the Red Deer College University of Alberta Collaborative BScN Program on February 29, 2016. We have an agreement to help create opportunities to engage with the Aboriginal Community and build relationships, develop an advisory group to provide guidance and feedback about learning activities and outcomes over the four years of the BScN Program, and create an Indigenous knowledge methodology research program representing the diversity of the Aboriginal community to identify outcomes and best practices in this process. RDNFS has provided cultural awareness to all the first year nursing students at RDC in the 2015-2016 academic year. We look forward to this continued partnership to educate nursing students about Aboriginal culture and health needs as well as help increase the numbers of Aboriginal students at RDC.

*The Aboriginal Housing Program

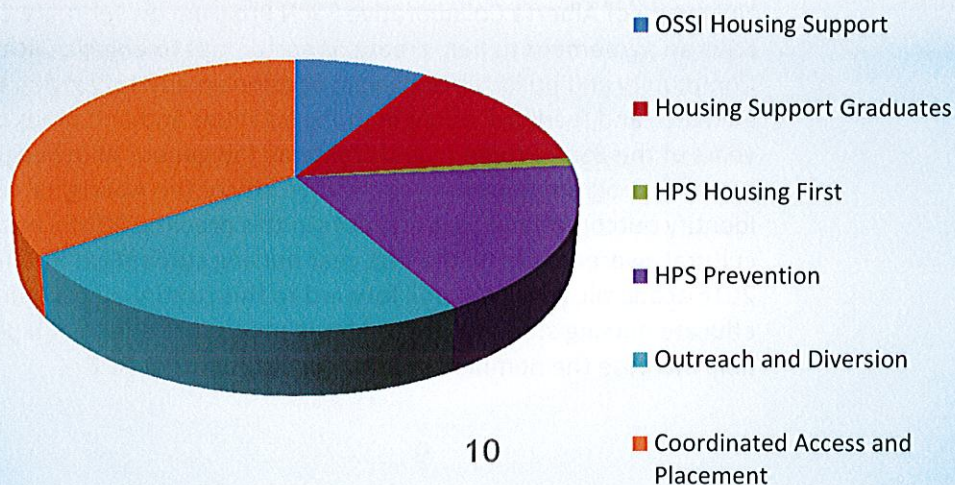
Core Business #3 The Aboriginal Housing Program

Goal #1: To provide accessible, affordable housing to all people of Red Deer.

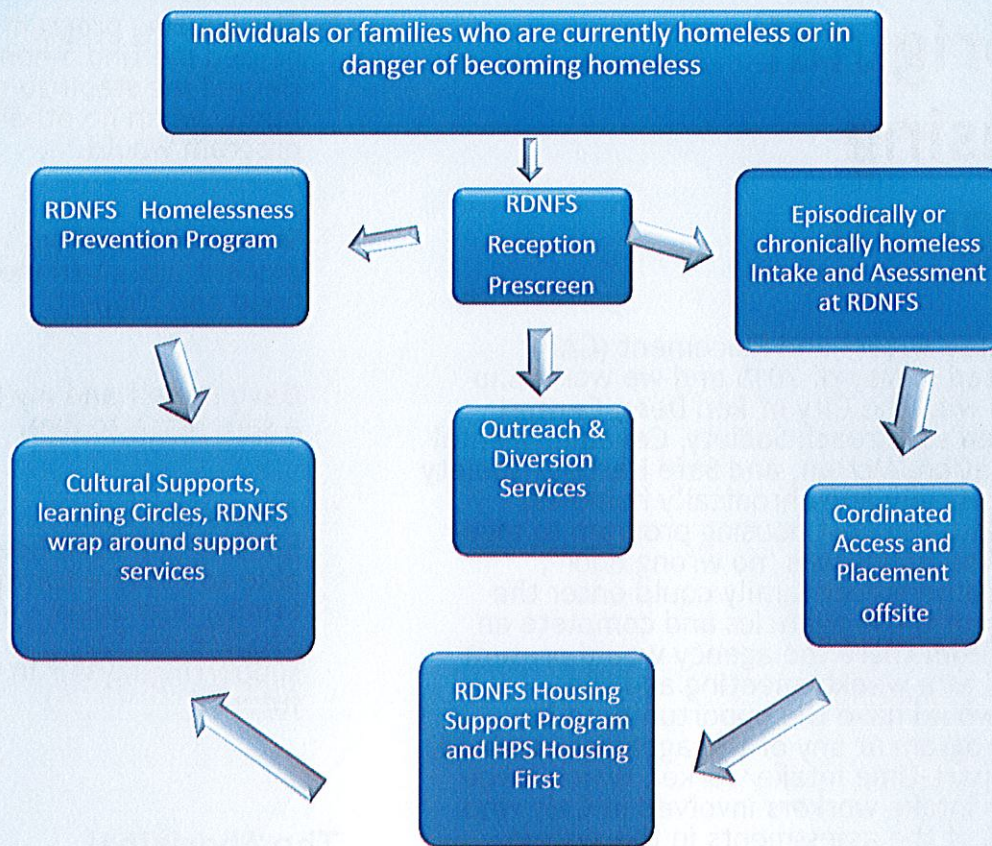
Goal #2: To provide supports and services for individuals to maintain housing and access basic needs.

Program	April 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016	Total
OSSI Housing Support Program	Participants Enrolled	19
	Participants Dismissed	12
OSSI Housing Support Graduates	Successfully housed for one year or more.	31
HPS Housing First (only 1 participant at a time)	Participants Enrolled	2
	Participants Dismissed	1
HPS Homelessness Prevention Program	Participants Enrolled	40
	Participants Dismissed	38
Outreach & Diversion	Participants Enrolled	53
Coordinated Access and Placement	Numbers of participants who were assessed and referred to other housing programs	76
Total Participants		221

Aboriginal Housing Team Participants



*** Aboriginal Housing Team Process**
April 1, 2015 - March 31, 2016



The Homelessness Prevention program assists people who are in danger of losing their housing or who have become recently homeless to access supports and services that prevent them from slipping into a pattern of homelessness.

The Housing Support Program serves those who are episodically homeless and working at sobriety to find and maintain affordable housing.

Both programs offer cultural support, housing skills learning circles, and case conference with the other programs at RDNFS to provide wrap around supports to ensure housing stability and success.

Those who don't qualify for our programs are supported through outreach and diversion to make sure they don't leave our office unsupported. We work with participants, and other agencies, to find the right resources to support their needs.

* Aboriginal Housing Program

The Coordinated Access and Placement (CAP) program started in May of 2015 and we worked in collaboration with the City of Red Deer, Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society, Canadian Mental Health Association, McMan, and Safe Harbour Society to place episodically and chronically homeless participants into the best housing program to meet their needs. The policy was 'no wrong door', meaning that a person or family could enter the system at any of these agencies and complete an assessment. From there the agency would present the individual at a weekly meeting and the participants would have the opportunity to be placed in a program at any of the agencies involved. RDNFS had 1 part-time intake worker, which made up 10% of the intake workers involved in CAP, who produced 20% of the assessments in the system.

On January 8, 2016, City of Red Deer introduced the Systems Framework for Housing and Supports for OSSI funded programs and a call for proposals was released not long after. This new framework does not include our current housing support program and pulled out cultural support as a stand-alone program. RDNFS wrote proposals for the Coordinated Intake Team, Rapid Rehousing and Indigenous Cultural Supports. We were approved to provide Indigenous Cultural support only. As a result, RDNFS will no longer be able to provide a cultural sober living program option for people seeking housing supports in Red Deer. We will now provide cultural supports to all programs in the Systems Framework but no direct housing support. We will continue to provide Homelessness Prevention programming. As you review our statistics, you will understand the impact of this loss.

Participants say:

- * The housing program helped me find a home. Helped me stabilize my family when no other program would.
- * Since being without a place it has given me hope and support.
- * Gave myself and my kids a safe place to live.
- * 'I have affordable housing and have been able to provide for my family, also helps prepare me for supporting myself in the future.'

The Aboriginal Housing Team included four full time positions:

- * Intake and Outreach Worker
- * Prevention and Outreach Case Manager
- * Housing Support Worker
- * Housing Resource and Cultural Support Worker

*Community and Family Supports

Core Business #4

Community and Family Supports

Goal #1: Support family unity and prevent child apprehensions to Child and Family Services.

Goal #2: Provide teachings of the Medicine Wheel and nurture cultural pride.

Goal #3: To increase the number of Aboriginal families and individuals connecting to the community.

Goal #4: To provide support and advocacy to families accessing health care services.

The Four Directions Family Support Program focuses on providing support to families to promote the healthy well-being of children, families and individuals through Aboriginal culture and traditions. Using the medicine wheel teachings as a way of life we help families to improve parenting and coping abilities, address behaviors which may place a child, family or community at risk, prevent unnecessary long term out-of-home placements of children, promote reunification of families and support at the time of crisis, as well as providing health advocacy.

We have also added the Aboriginal Parent Child Assistance Program (PCAP) to the team which provides intensive supports to women of child bearing years to prevent future FASD affected births.

The Family Support Worker, Cultural Family Educator, Health Liaison, and Aboriginal PCAP Mentor work together to meet the needs of families in our community. Together they provide holistic supports and drop in programming to meet all the goals stated above.

The Family Support worker has a caseload of 15 while the PCAP Mentor has a caseload of 7 participants. The Cultural Family Educator provides in-home parenting supports to those 23 participants if needed. All other programs are drop-in. The Four Directions drop-in programming includes traditional parenting workshops, weekly parent circles, crafts with Elders, women's wellness, little paws, and thunderbird learners. Elder support is offered as much as possible to provide the best cultural learning opportunities for our participants.

The Four Directions Family Support program made 1983 contacts throughout the year through their case management and drop-in programming. This program continues to be essential to our participants and supports so many families in our community to begin their healing journey, connect to community supports and cultural identity.

*The Impact of Family Support

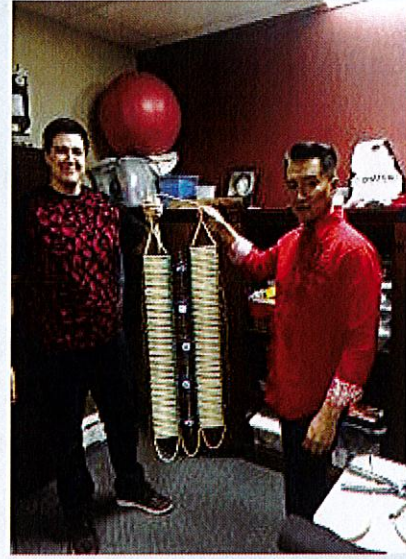
In April of 2015 Ashley and her Community FASD Worker came to the Friendship Centre Parent Circle. Ashley was reluctant to disclose that she was Aboriginal and that she did not know anything about her culture. She even went so far as to say, "I don't feel comfortable around culture and don't know if I should be here." Ashley grew up in an urban center her whole life; she stated she got away with not identifying or being seen as an Aboriginal person because of her light complexion. She said, she knows where she is from but has never visited her ancestral lands of the North West Territories because it is too far.

Ashely became a parent four years ago and welcomed her second child 2 years later. She explains that she loved being pregnant and parenting was fairly easy until she had to learn how to parent two preschool children. With her hands up in the air, she says, "I lose it with my kids! I don't know why, I don't want to anymore. I need help, can you help me?" So, over the last year Ashley began her traditional parenting & cultural journey with the Red Deer Native Friendship Society, where she received In Home Parenting Support for the first 8 months, she was very grateful that she had supports to come to her so she didn't have to get her two young children out of the house and use the public transit system to get help. In the last four months the parent has extended out into the community where she is now actively involved in the Women's Wellness & Little Paws Program.

Ashley has put a lot of focus, thought, time and energy into changing how she interacts and communicates with her children and their father's. She has learned that it takes consistency, clear boundaries and support to change old patterns and beliefs. She gained self-awareness with regards to who she is as a woman, a parent and what she wants for her family by reflecting on the intergenerational impacts and negative consequences of the historical breakdown on the Aboriginal family structure while taking action to apply the cultural parenting values and learning into building her new family foundation.

Participants say:

- * I always feel welcomed and respected.
- * They keep me motivated, give me strength and courage to keep going.
- * Opens my eyes to certain rights I have as an individual and they are very informative of other helpful service providers.
- * Ability to have time out and explore and challenge myself in the area of growth, grief management, support, friendship, group settings, personal level, human kindness, and spending some time in happiness. Spiritual growth and wellbeing.
- * Woman's wellness has been great and all the people (women). I came to the Tea and the end of the year party (AWESOME). Wellbriety: have only been to one and will continue. People very open and welcome. Little Paws for the children is excellent!



* Aboriginal Youth Centre for Success

Core Business #5

Aboriginal Youth Centre for Success

Goal #1: To provide opportunities to increase youth's social, economic, and personal prospects.

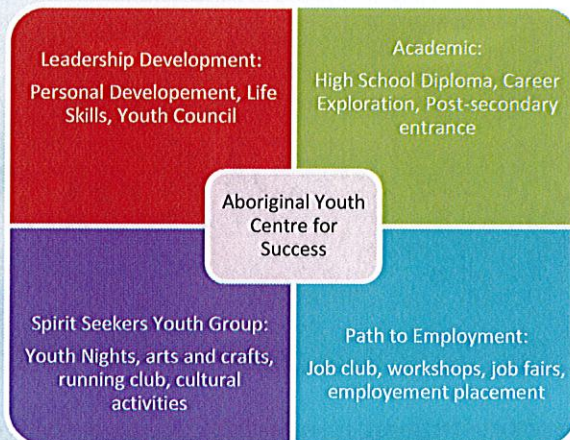
Goal #2: To provide youth opportunity to complete their high school diploma.

The Aboriginal Youth Centre for Success (AYCS) was designed to provide youth with a place of their own to improve immediate and long term social, educational, economic and health outcomes through supports and services that meet their individual and cultural needs.

AYCS has provided many opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills, access cultural learning opportunities, attend cyber school while working towards a high school diploma, as well as support to access employment opportunities.

AYCS included innovative programming such as public speaking through toastmasters, developing a youth council that serves on a community board - Urban Aboriginal Voices Society, cultural activities, youth and elder potluck lunches with conversation Cree, Art lessons with a local Aboriginal artist, running program for boys and self-esteem programming for girls. The Path to Employment Program was introduced this year helping youth access employment opportunities and was 100% successful with its first group of participants. One of the successful participants went on to volunteer as a youth worker in our youth drop-in program.

The entire AYCS programming made 2748 points of contact affecting youth 13 to 29 years of age.



Testimonial

'This program has worked for me, helped me to get motivated to reach my goals with the help of this program. I wouldn't know where I'd be today. I'm back in college taking political science.'

*Organizational Excellence

Our Volunteers:

Community volunteers are an important asset to Friendship Centres; the hours they dedicate to our Friendship Centre demonstrate the great level of support for and appreciation of our services that we have in our community. Their time and efforts assist with program/service delivery, provide guidance to Friendship Centre Board and Staff and contribute to successful special events. Included among our volunteer numbers and volunteers' annual hours of service are the committed members of our Board of Directors.

Number of Volunteers	Approximate Annual Volunteer Hours
25	Over 1000 hours

Total Number of Friendship Centre Members as of March 31 st , 2016	Total number of Friendship Centre Board Members as of March 31 st , 2016
115	6

Highlight of the Past Year:

The Red Deer Native Friendship Society worked very hard to solidify new formal and informal partnerships with many organizations in Red Deer.

- Red Deer College
- Catholic Social Services
- Red Deer Public School District
- Red Deer Catholic Regional Division - FNMI services
- Youth and Volunteer Centre
- Eastview Middle School
- Alberta Health Services
- Primary Care Network
- The City of Red Deer
- Red Deer Regional Hospital

Our Housing programs received accreditation through the Canadian Accreditation Council, providing us with external recognition that our programs adhere to industry standards. Our housing programs are the only housing programs in Red Deer with accreditation status.

Red Deer Aboriginal Youth Centre for Success received an award from the Alberta Native Friendship Centers Association for exemplifying exceptional program and service delivery.

* Our Staff

April 2015 - March 31, 2016



Management Team:

Tanya Schur, Executive Director
Nadette Agecoutay, Program Director
Jim Moreau, Operations Manager / AYCS Coordinator
Laurie Patterson, Administrative Assistant

Four Directions Family Support Program:

Teresa Cardinal, Family Support Worker
Diane Gardipy, Cultural Family Educator
Pat Marcellus, Health Liaison
Kelley Arnold, Aboriginal PCAP Mentor

Aboriginal Housing Team:

Lianne Hazell, Prevention and Outreach Case Manager
Kimberly Wickens, Housing Support Worker
Leslie Stonechild, Housing Resource and Cultural Support
Mary Ann Butterfly, Intake Worker

Aboriginal Youth Centre For Success:

Danielle Chamryk, SCcyber Mentor
David McMann, Employment Talent Developer
Talitha Klym, Youth Worker
Ryan Willert, Art Teacher and Casual Youth Worker
Heidi Coltman, Casual Youth Worker

