



Red Deer Native Friendship Society ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022-2023

John Sinclair: Elder

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Leadership Team

From left to right:

Ashley Patterson:
Four Directions Family
Support Program Coordinator

Laurie Patterson-Leith:
Operations Manager

Donna Bishop:
Kokum

Lianne Hazell :
Executive Director

Nadette Agecutay:
Director of Programs

Kelley Arnold:
Nanatawihowin
Culture Program Coordinator

Karen Beauchamp-Ahlquist:
Pimacihowin Housing
Program Coordinator



Executive Director's Report

April 2022 began with hope for a renewed community health and wellness. While pandemic conditions did improve throughout the year, there were still a few COVID hiccups that set us back for just a short time...and then we jumped right back on the path forward and out of the pandemic. We are all so very grateful to the public who have adjusted so well to accessing the Friendship Centre programs and services in a new way and who have been patient and understanding with our need to look after the wellbeing of our team so they could continue to support the community's ever increasing and ever changing needs of our community and its members.

Early in 2023, we reopened our doors to the public. We have not offered drop-in, however, people have been welcomed in to inquire about our programs, fill out an intake, and meet with case managers and other team members. It is heartening to see the community walking through the doors of the Friendship Centre again!

In the last few months, we have also restarted in-person programming. Wahkohtowin, Women's Wellness, Two-Spirit Youth, Circle of Safety, Wellbriety...and Little Paws! I'm sure you can all imagine how joyful it is to have children back in the Friendship Centre. All who have participated in programs; children, youth, and adults, have been so happy to come back in to the centre and be together in-person!

As we begin this slow transition out of a three year pandemic, we are grateful to have thrived during a time that other agencies, groups, and business have experienced loss. We are thankful to have many wonderful funders and partners who have been with us through the last three years, cheering us on and providing so much of the support we needed to continue serving our community. We thank you and we celebrate you all!

The Board of Directors of Red Deer Native Friendship Society, we are fortunate to have you providing the governance leadership of our agency. You are a fabulous group of multitalented individuals who work so hard to build and keep our agency structure solid so that the staff team can focus on doing their good work in and for the community.

And to the staff team of Red Deer Native Friendship Society, you are truly champions! This past year has been exhausting and incredible. You have all adapted constantly to the changing environment...moving ahead to do great things on one hand while slowly and steadily shaking off those negative pieces of the pandemic. And you have all, each and every one of you, done this work with humility, integrity...and laughter! Congratulats on successfully serving the community while (mostly) maintaining your sanity! ;)

As always, I am proud to be part of the Friendship Centre team!

Lianne Hazell

“Empowering Community Through Friendship”



Vision & Mission

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.

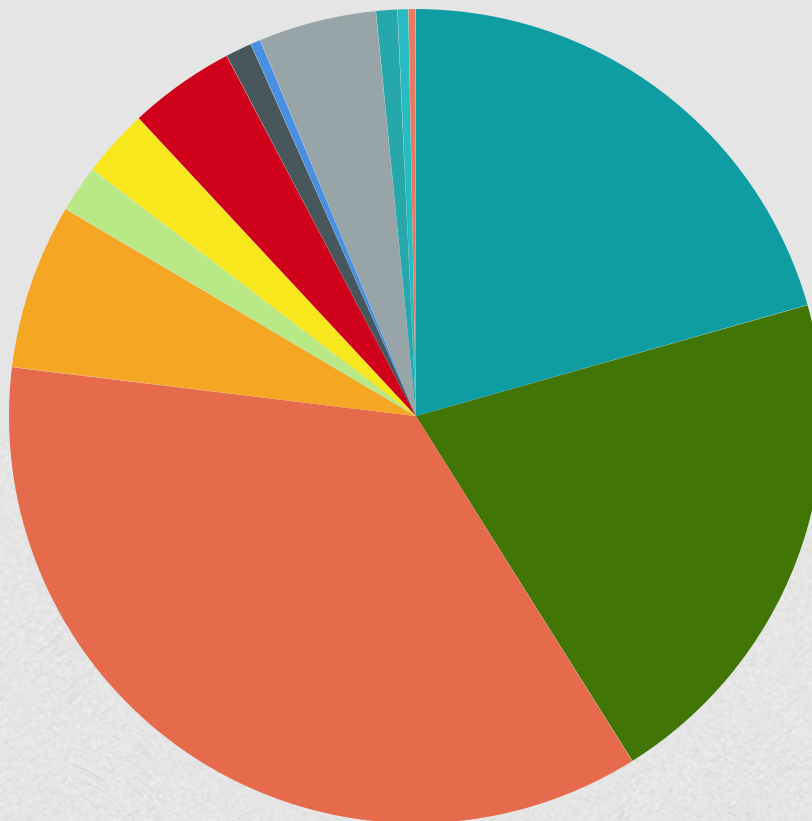
The RDNFS is a charitable Aboriginal agency dedicated to building an empowered community through Asooahum cultural housing, community development and the Aboriginal Youth Centre for Success.

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.

program funding

April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023



Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association (20.61%)	Children Services (20.48%)
Outreach & Support Services Initiative (OSSI) (35.84%)	Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) (6.57%)
National Association of Friendship Centres (1.86%)	Red Deer Public School District (2.71%)
Women and Gender Equality Canada (4.23%)	Government of Canada - New Horizons for Seniors (1.05%)
Canada Summer Jobs Grant (0.4%)	Federal Government - Capital Research (4.68%)
Peter Gilgan Foundation (0.84%)	Reconnect - City of Red Deer (0.42%)
Red Deer Community Foundation (0.3%)	

Total Grants and Funding: \$2,240,988.45

3912

Drop-in
Visits

1447

Volunteer
Hours

68 166

Social Media
points of
contact!

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

RDNFS is an Indigenous Cultural organization but we serve all people.

Approximately 30% to 50% of participants in our programs at any given time are non-Indigenous.

CULTURE

Providing opportunities for cultural and spiritual connections for all citizens of Red Deer.

HOUSING

Connecting participants to ceremony, healing and housing stability.

**Program
Priorities**

FAMILY SUPPORTS

Promoting family unity, cultural pride and community connections.

YOUTH AND ELDERS

Increasing opportunities for youth and elders to connect and share cultural knowledge.

Providing opportunities for cultural and spiritual connections to all citizens of Red Deer.

Nanâtawihowin Connections to Healing Team

The Nanâtawihowin Team takes a lead role in providing Indigenous Cultural Supports to the staff at the Friendship Centre, our programs, partners, and community at large.

The Culture team was busy this year with new programming and offering cultural awareness sessions to the community!



33 Indigenous Seniors were supported with food security and activities to prevent social isolation.



programming to prevent suicide in 2SLGBTQ youth is being developed, as well as research into preventing gender based violence



7 Family Friendship Nights, providing a meal and activities for the whole family!



We supported 241 active youth in 18 youth events and sessions!



51 sessions of Wellbriety serving 53 individuals

7 Blanket exercises held throughout the year.

Student support services program started this year and connected families of students with basic needs support and access to school supplies.

2 Staff members worked with youth, families and employees in the Red Deer Public School district.

Our Kokum and Moshum supported staff and program participants with cultural teachings and lots of hugs and encouragement!

Success Stories

Alicx Mitten-Kowalchuk, Cultural Resource Connector: This month's success story comes from one of my visits to Aspen Heights to visit and sit with a young boy who has recently lost his father quite traumatically and suddenly. His family had mentioned that he had not been sleeping in his own room and hadn't had a night without a night terror waking him and his mother up. The schools CLW reached out to me and had asked if I could come in and make a dream catcher with him. He was extremely excited while I was there, and we were making it. Once he finished, he commented that the main hoop was made from metal and would not break because it was strong like him and now, he could sleep in his own room because it would catch all his bad dreams and the sun would burn them away. He insisted on going to show his principle and his teacher. This was such an amazing opportunity, and it truly touched my heart.

Thomas Martell, Nanatawihowin Cultural Helper: A participant from one of our programs was at the centre and I was asked if I could teach this person about smudging. I spent some time with this person listening to their struggles with a compassionate ear. I gave them my time and that was appreciated. We spoke about smudging, why we do it and how. We spoke about the medicines and when utilized properly how they can help us in every day. The information was seemingly absorbed and really appreciated. The person left in a calmer and more positive state then I found them. Culture was able to make a connection and assist with the quality of a human life that day.

Shoneen Edwards, Family Resource Connector: My success story for the month is a participant I have been constantly working with since September when my program was able to buy her a laptop and school supplies. She is 19 years old and is indigenous. A single mother to a 2-year-old, she is currently in school trying to get her diploma and is working part-time at a local hotel as a front desk agent. I have been helping with her filling out paperwork for Metis housing and legal aid forms. I have also been helping her understand the process of child maintenance. I have been connecting her with people who can also help her with the process.

Shannon Humphrey, Two Spirit Program Keeper: The biggest success this month was demonstrated by the openness and willingness of the RDNFS team to ask questions in an effort to truly understand gendered elements of identity, learn how to appropriately hold space for people, and build empathy and compassion to integrate into their everyday life. It has been really validating to have people ask uncomfortable or difficult questions in a good way. This was further demonstrated by the booking of a staff development session called "Creating Safer Spaces" to occur May 11 with Laurel from Alt Link in Strathcona County. Creating Safe Spaces is gender-based training that can be tailored to our organizational needs. I will be collecting questions or topics that our team would like to know more about in preparation for this session. I am very inspired by our team and the knowledge that they are so open to this type of learning makes me feel very safe and valued.

Kelley Arnold, Nanatawihowin Program Coordinator: At Family Friendship Night this month we had a great attendance of over 100 people. We served stew and Bannock and offered a vegetarian option. For the activity we played Indigenous Pictionary. I was the host for the evening and facilitated the game. We used cultural words to draw and when they guessed the right answer, I would ask the player if they knew the definition or teaching of the word. If they didn't know the answer, I would ask the other players if they did and if they didn't I would give them the answer. This was a great way to have fun and learn about the Indigenous Culture. At the end of the game, we were given such positive feedback on how much they learned and how much fun they had.

**Promoting
family unity,
cultural
pride and
community
connections.**

Four Directions Family Support Team

The Four Directions Family Support Program provides in-home and in office supports to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families and individuals focusing on prevention and intervention services that meet each family or individual's needs for parent/child development and cultural support.

Did you Know?

The Four Directions Family Support Program expanded to offer Wahkohtowin Traditional Parenting Programming to Wetaskiwin and Rocky Mountain House.

Wahkohtowin

**Wetaskiwin:
59 participants**

**Rocky Mountain
House:
25 participants
attended
programming**

Red Deer Supports

1355

children, youth and adults were supported through all programs offered in Red Deer.

Participants

All participants report an increase in connection to culture.

Parents/guardians have reported increased confidence in their parenting skills.

Family Support Case Management

Case managers support participants and their children, providing weekly in-home parental support using prevention and intervention strategies focusing on the medicine wheel.

Family Support Outcomes

Children and families are socially connected with their natural support networks using community referrals.

Support includes goal planning and achievement. Goals can include any area of life such as parental, spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, vocational, physical, marital or financial. Achievement of goals helps participants learn life skills that increase parental capacity.

ALL RED DEER PROGRAMS

Family Support Case Management
Wahkohtowin Traditional Parenting
Women's Wellness
Circle of Safety Cooking Class
Health Workshops
Thunderbird Learners
Bond to Literacy
Little Paws

Success Stories

Adnan Ali, Four Directions Family Support Case Manager: It is almost certain that one of my participants will get her child custody back from CFS, she worked so hard and overcame her addiction, as well as renounce her relationship with her ex-boyfriend and move into a pregnancy care network. After renouncing her ex-boyfriend, she made the biggest decision of her life and decided to have a child. My current focus is on getting her financial independence and into a housing program. Due to the fact that after a certain period of time, she will have to move out of the pregnancy care network and will be required to have her own accommodations. My appreciation goes out to her hard work and dedication with the Family Support Program that allowed her to become a responsible mother by standing on her own feet.

Sasha Sage, Cultural Family Educator: This month I have been able to complete some outreach work with a new community member and Wahkohtowin participant. I have been able to set her up with a rec pass, a referral to bibles for mission, listened to her concerns of her current rental, application for the action bus and a visit to the food bank was all accomplished on an afternoon of outreach. I recognized how much I enjoyed getting out and supporting community members access resources unique to their current life situations. Brings me joy. I have also provided a young lady with a referral to our family support program. This young lady has been out of our program for over a year and in that year, she has completed treatment, lost the father of her children to overdose and acquired a unit in Julietta's place. Until a final decision can be made of her accessing our program, she has enrolled in Wahkohtowin and Women's Wellness. It was so nice to see her still in recovery and working toward reunification with her children.

Ayaa Musuya, Cultural Family Educator: The one attendee from RMH has seen a lot of growth since she started the parenting program last year. She continues to show motivation for including Indigenous teaching and tools (medicine wheel; tipi teachings) in her daily life and says she has been able to share and support her friends who have noticed a huge difference in her confidence and sense of self. She is also thinking of getting herself training so she can become a fulltime mentor and support worker for 'people like her' - as she calls it - because she says she has realised she loves to help people grow.

**Connecting
participants
to ceremony
and healing
and
supporting
housing
stability.**

Pimacihowin Aboriginal Housing Team

The Aboriginal Housing Team provides case management and support to Aboriginal individuals and families experiencing homelessness or who may be at risk of experiencing homelessness. Rooted in Indigenous culture these programs have a strong emphasis on connecting participants with ceremony, traditional practice, community and cultural activities in support of their healing journey and housing stability.

Housing Programs



Homelessness Prevention

75 Individuals/families were prevented from becoming homeless or having their utilities cut off.



Rapid Rehousing

20 Episodically homeless participants were supported.



Intensive Case Management

72 Chronically homeless individuals were supported.



Aboriginal Coordinated Entry

Through RDNFS' intake **156** participants were matched to a housing program within Red Deer's System's Framework for Housing and supports to meet their specific needs.



Total Participants Served

323 Participants were supported through our housing programs

Indigenous Homelessness

"Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes First Nations, Metis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, and appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous world views. These include individuals, families, and communities isolated from their relationship to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally, or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships." Finding our Way Home: Research Report on Indigenous Homelessness in Canada.

Red Deer Native Friendship Society's approach to providing supports is based on the medicine wheel, considering each participant's mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing and supporting their path to healing when they are ready.

Success Stories

Chelsea Datema, Housing Case Manager: One afternoon Blair and I were working in housing when one of Michele's participants came to the door. He was really struggling with his mental health, had no food, no where to go, explained how he is an easy target on the streets as he is paralyzed. Blair and I talked with him, told him we could get him some gift cards and ect...However, Lianne was there and we went and talked to her. After the three of us talked, we came to the decision to put him up in a hotel for the remainder of the month. When we went back to talk to him he was overcome with emotion and could not believe what we were going to do for him. He was still pretty emotional, and I asked him if he needed to come in and talk, which he said he really needed. Before he left we sat and smudged and sent him off to the hotel, and the next day Michelle got him groceries and hopefully today we will have him in temporary, safe housing.

Christal Makokis, Aboriginal Coordinated Entry Specialist: In February, three participants from my caseload were picked up from the CAP list and matched with housing programs. 1. male youth participant, whom had just finished treatment was matched to Acadia House with McMann. 2. A young male participant employed and striving to make it on his own needed housing support was matched with a Rapid Rehousing Program with the Outreach Centre. 3. An elderly gentleman who had lived in a unit in an apartment building for 17 years with his pet cat that he has for his mental health support, received an eviction notice due to the new owners taking over the building and issuing eviction notices to all people in the building who had pets. He stated that a lot of elderly people, some who have lived in the building for 20 years or more, were crying when receiving their eviction notices. He was on the CAP list for two weeks and matched with a Rapid Rehousing program with the Outreach Centre.

Amabelle Bacuno, Housing Case Manager: A new participant is only 19 years old was abandoned by his mother alone in their rental house. This teenager was also left with a significant amount of rental arrears and has nothing to start with. The participant reached out to RDNFS for help and was referred to the Homelessness Prevention service. This writer did an intake with the participant and the writer did notice how determined this young gentleman is to make everything right in his life. The writer is also in contact with the landlord and they have expressed their willingness to help this young man because of his attitude they wanted to keep him. With a collaborative effort, the participant was transferred into a smaller suite for a lower monthly rent. The Pimacihowin Housing Program have helped this individual not only by settling the existing rent arrears and/or paying first month's rent but rather it fosters hope for this young gentleman to start anew. The participant is in the process of applying for a full-time job and currently in contact with Indigenous program coordinator at Red Deer Polytechnic with the possibility of applying for a post secondary program.

Lori Martell, Pimacihowin Cultural Helper: I have been assisting with the facilitation of weekly Wellbriety meetings. We have been using other helpful holistic approaches to connecting and healing as Wellbriety is about searching for health and wholeness within one's self, the family and the tribe. The participants of the program have been very open and receptive. These meetings have been going very well. Participants bring with them stories of trauma. Hearing these stories and experiences creates a sense of connection, the vulnerabilities expressed in these circles connects the participants to one another, thereby strengthening the circle. This is truly something to experience, especially having worked with addictions for the past 10 years.













Thank you!

Thank you to our Funders:

Government of Canada:
Reaching Home
New Horizons for Seniors

Canada Summer Jobs

Women and Gender Equality Canada

Government of Alberta:
Outreach Support Services Initiative
(OSSI)
Children's Services

Red Deer Public School District

Alberta Native Friendship Centres
Association

National Association of Friendship
Centres

Other:
Peter Gilgan Foundation
Red Deer Community Foundation

Thank you to the following organizations for your partnership and/or support with events and programs:

CARE for Newcomers

Youth HQ

Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery

Red Deer Polytechnic

Red Deer Public School District

Red Deer Cultural Heritage Society

Urban Aboriginal Voices Society

The City of Red Deer

Red Deer Catholic School Division

Red Deer Public Library

YMCA

Outreach Centre

Street Ties

McMann

Amethyst House

Shining Mountains Community Living
Supports

Metis Local #492

Wetaskiwin Boys and Girls Club

Central Alberta Pride Society

Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support
Centre

Red Deer RCMP

Hearthstone Property Management

McMan Rocky Mountain House

Second Harvest

Mustard Seed

Telus Mobility for Good

Alberta Health Services

Red Deer Wellness Alliance

Red Deer River Watershed Alliance

Marvel College

Red Deer and District Community
Foundation

Ubuntu

Safe Harbour Society



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