

NEWSLETTER

AFCC
WINTER
2020



ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF
CALGARY

Many Nations. One Family.™



Kalum T. Dan

Artist: Kalum Teke Dan

PANDEMIC UPDATE

COVID-19 has created hardships for many Albertans. We've lost lives, livelihoods, and the ability to gather the way our communities have for thousands of years. The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary has faced its own challenges – however, our staff members, volunteers and partners have tapped into a deep reserve of creativity and resilience to rise to the occasion.



When Coronavirus arrived in our province in March, we were the first to mobilize a COVID-19 Indigenous Task Force – a team dedicated to ensuring community members had access to emergency resources such as food, along with the education to protect themselves and their families from the virus. We made tremendous strides and our hard work was recognized at the Calgary Resilient Business Awards in September. We are now collecting stories of the team's ingenuity, collaboration and perseverance to share with our community in a coffee table book.



As we move into our fourth season with COVID-19, the AFCC is shifting from reacting to the pandemic to developing sustainable supports and programming for Calgary and our surrounding nations. Stay tuned to our website for updates as we adapt to make it more functional and user friendly. We want to thank Alberta doctors, nurses, caregivers and frontline support workers for their unwavering commitment to help those in need. We encourage you to stay informed about Alberta's COVID-19 public health guidance at alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.

Shane Gauthier, CEO
Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary



Preliminary image courtesy of NORR and Landstar. Please note that renderings are subject to change.

GROUNDBREAKING NEWS:

AFCC to build a new seniors housing unit for Calgary's Indigenous seniors' community

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) is proud to announce the construction of modern housing for Calgary's Indigenous seniors.

"Our Elders deserve high quality, safe and accessible housing, and this project will provide that to our most cherished and important community members," said Shane Gauthier, CEO of the AFCC. "With our developer Landstar and our architect NORR, we're excited about the vision we're creating together. When opened, this facility will incorporate a cutting-edge design that brings modern conveniences and Indigenous culture together - a first of its kind in the city,"

The housing is made possible by the generous support of the City of Calgary. Special thanks to Canada Mortgage and

Housing Corporation (CMHC) for its generous support and guidance as we embark on this housing journey together.

"As we get older, we reflect on life, who we are, and touch base with the spiritual parts of ourselves," said Elder Ernie Poundmaker, Cultural Coordinator at the AFCC. "That's the beauty and power of prayer; it reminds you how important life is. To provide culturally-safe spaces for seniors to do just that...is a very good thing and it's very important."

AFCC will continue to update the community as the project moves forward.

BUILDING BRIDGES WITH POLICE

And working to address systemic racism and injustice



In the past two years, the iitaohkanitsini'kotsiiyo'p (Place of Conversation) — also known as the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary's Indigenous Hub — has worked on a model for improved relations between Indigenous people and law enforcement.

A report we commissioned earlier this year evaluated the Hub over a two-year period. Not only does the report shed light on the growing use of the Hub and the importance of Elders, traditional knowledge, and culturally-appropriate supports and programming for our clients, it also tells an important story about the progress we've made through our partnership with the Calgary Police Service.

We were able to share some of these findings through a recent op-ed in the [Calgary Herald](#).

You can read the entire evaluation report by visiting www.afccalgary.org

AFCC PARTNER PROFILE



Calgary Foundation is honoured to support the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary.

The partnership dates back to 1966 when the foundation provided funds to construct a new AFCC building. It remains strong today, with new grants supporting challenges such as the opioid crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. We both understand that impactful, lasting change requires the participation and wisdom of many.

"In just the last two years, Calgary Foundation has provided grants that total over \$400,000 to the AFCC," said Eva Friesen, president and CEO of Calgary Foundation. "One of the highlights of that is the creation of the Indigenous Hub. It is a drop-in anytime-and-be-supported hub for Indigenous people living in Calgary. That was a highlight - being a partner in being able to make that happen."

With a focus on healing, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary excels at creating an inclusive environment where Indigenous community members are in the lead and everyone has a pathway to success.

"A statistic about the Indigenous community is that we are the fastest growing segment of the population so that should tell us a couple of things," said Tim Fox, vice-president of Indigenous relations for Calgary Foundation.

"That should tell the charitable sector - including the settler philanthropic sector - that we have to prepare ourselves for this growth by way of our hiring practices, the kinds of supports we're providing to community and the competencies we're including into our organizations."

Calgary Foundation looks forward to partnering with the AFCC for many more decades to come.

HONOURING OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

Through Challenging Times



From left to right: Shane Gauthier, AFCC's CEO; Leela Aheer, Alberta's Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism & Status of Women; Elder Adrian Wolfleg; Elder Dakota Eaglewoman; singer and songwriter Susan Aglukark; and artist Kalum Teke Dan.

On Sunday, October 4, AFCC held a ceremony to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited community members. We also unveiled a powerful mural by Blackfoot artist Kalum Teke Dan, the first of its kind in Canada. AFCC would like to thank Kalum for his incredible work. The mural can be viewed at the Awe Taan Healing Lodge.

A POWERFUL VOICE LEADS YOUTH WORKSHOP



On October 4, AFCC hosted a recognition dinner to honour our partners, staff and elders who have supported our community through the highs and lows of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Susan Aglukark - an Inuk musician, activist and Order of Canada recipient - joined us for the event. She shared words of wisdom and connected with our Indigenous youth in a workshop.



Paige Volz



Jared Noskey

SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE CAREERS IN HEALTH CARE

AFCC is proud to recognize Paige Volz and Jared Noskey as the 2020 recipients of the Margaret Richardson Memorial Bursary in Nursing. Congratulations!



HOUSING INITIATIVE AND SUPPORTS

The pandemic has resulted in community members experiencing homelessness to seek temporary housing throughout the city.

To help clients navigate the system, AFCC's Indigenous Housing Navigator and Support Workers are available over the phone, online, and in person at various shelter isolation sites for assistance. They will help clients with activities such as applying for personal benefits, locating and applying for affordable and supportive housing, and offering Rent Smart Education to help people make successful transitions from the temporary hotel spaces.

There is also an Elder dedicated to taking calls and offering advice.

For more information, visit/contact Cblake@afccalgary.org or Ljohnstone@afccalgary.org

GOING DIGITAL

WITH OUR CULTURAL RECONNECTION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

We're not offering hologram technology yet, but the temporary closure of our physical space has led us to convert our popular Cultural Reconnection and Community Development (CRCD) program to an online format.

The CRCD program has traditionally included opportunities for the community to get together and pray, smudge, drum and enjoy each other's company.

In light of the pandemic, the program has shifted to a virtual setting. In June, we launched 'Healing through your hands,' a series of online sessions with Elders that include teachings and traditional crafts.

We also offer virtual Blackfoot and Cree Language programs. Community members can also listen to traditional storytelling and open conversation with Elders for intergenerational learning. Our most popular program has been Traditional Arts and Crafts, where our staff create comprehensive activity packages that are safely delivered to our members' homes.

We are thankful our talented outreach team was able to adapt these programs to continue serving our community!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact **Alanna Manybears** at Amanybears@afccalgary.org or **Krista White** at Kjwhite@afccalgary.org

You can also call 587-572-3376



NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITY

WITH HEALTHY MEALS



Since March, our dedicated team has prepared hundreds of meals to support our elders during this pandemic. These are not frozen, bland, pre-packaged dinners, but vibrant, healthy, homecooked meals, such as roast beef, potatoes, carrots and fresh buns.

"It's a gift to my heart to have a meal brought to me. The bannock is my favourite part," said Betty Delorme.

Betty has spent a lot of time at home since the pandemic started so when Alanna Manybears arrives to deliver food each month, it brings her joy and connection.

"She always takes the time to talk to me...I tell her, 'Someday - I don't know when - we should go for tea someplace.'"

We want to thank our wonderful cooks, like Brenda Twoyoungmen (pictured here), for helping to nourish our elders during this time.

DELIVERING FOOD &
JOY TO OUR ELDERS

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY

With Cancer Education



FOR THE LAST THREE DECADES, THE CANCER RATE AMONG CANADA'S INDIGENOUS POPULATION HAS BEEN ON THE RISE.

The AFCC's Indigenous Cancer Education and Awareness Program aims to change course by consulting our community about barriers to health access and providing the knowledge needed to prevent the disease. Dr. Gabrielle Lindstrom – a professor, consultant and member of the Kainaiwa First Nation – has developed workshops to raise awareness about cancer.

"The workshops we are doing are really focusing on not only bringing in resources like cancer screening resources from AHS, but also drawing on traditional Indigenous

healing," Dr. Lindstrom said. "It's really delivered through an anti-colonial, anti-oppression lens. We trace these impacts of health disparities back to colonization but also provide cultural knowledge through the use of elders - and that is empowering."

Workshop sessions cover nearly two dozen topics including an introduction to cancer, smoking cessation, risk factors, nutrition, healthy relationships and traditional medicine. Dr. Lindstrom is hosting Zoom sessions every Wednesday from 1-2:30 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact **Gabrielle** at gabriellelindstrom73@gmail.com or **Andrea** at andreakbrookscalgary.com



VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

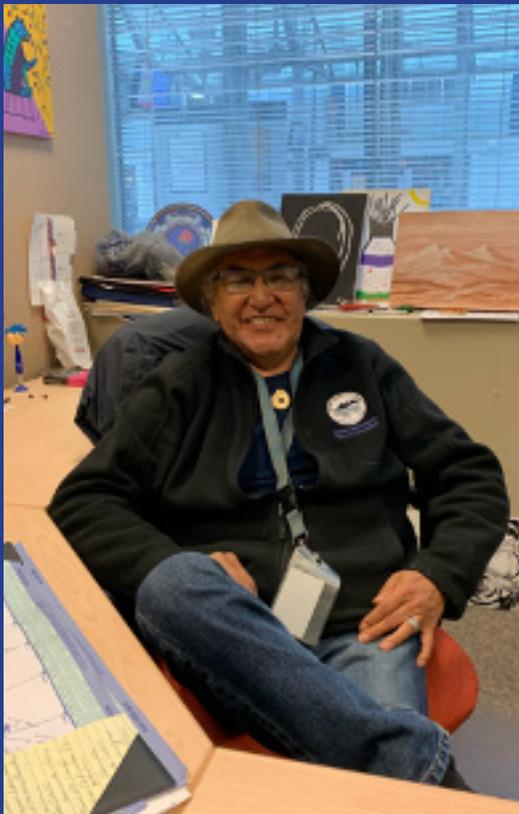


As the holidays approach, the AFCC and our partners want to make sure this season is special in spite of the challenges experienced by families in 2020. With the support of the Calgary Foundation and Toys R Us, we are delivering holiday hampers to more than 100 families. Each hamper includes holiday dinner ingredients, a toy for each child, a family game or activity and a traditional Indigenous cookbook. Some families will also receive a recipe book for people with Diabetes. We would like to acknowledge our hardworking staff members for helping to bring joy, support and relief to our community.

AFCC socio-cultural research coordinator Seannah Rose and Board Treasurer Carla García help prepare our Very Merry Christmas Hampers.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Our elders are always a great source of wisdom, but during this pandemic their insight is even more valuable. They have two things you can't buy: experience and perspective. Elder Ernie Poundmaker leaves you with this advice:



"To me, this is the time to look after yourself emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically. Isolation is not always a bad thing. Sometimes it's an opportunity to look inward and heal. It's important to reach out and have an open mind. We must humble ourselves and explore other perspectives."

