

ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF CALGARY
Many Nations. One Family.™

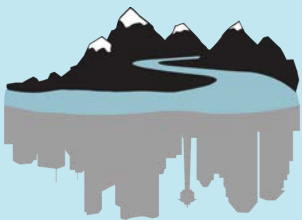
AFCC SUMMER 2025

NEWSLETTER

THE ENCAMPMENT SUPPORT AND TRANSITION PROGRAM

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) launched the Encampment Support and Transition Program (ESTP) to walk alongside Indigenous individuals in Calgary's encampments. Our goal is to provide genuine, culturally-grounded support that honours their dignity and fosters safety. By working collaboratively with other agencies, we assist them on their journey out of encampments and towards stable housing and well-being.

More in Page 2



ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF CALGARY
Many Nations. One Family.™



DONATE NOW!

To make a donation, please scan the QR code for more details or email us at info@afccalgary.org.

www.afccalgary.org



ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF CALGARY
Many Nations. One Family.™

THE ENCAMPMENT
TEAM/OUTREACH
PROGRAM FEATURE



AFCC ENCAMPMENT OUTREACH:

Hope on the Streets

Indigenous individuals face high rates of homelessness in Calgary, often living in encampments. AFCC's Encampment Support and Transition Program (ESTP) meets them there.

The Need: Indigenous people: <5% of Calgary's population, yet 30-40% of its homeless. "People were coming in hungry, cold... with nowhere to go."
– Ian Potapoff, Program Lead

Action: Mobile Units: Delivering essentials (food, water, gear) & vital connection daily.
Dedicated Team: Including Cashe Erskine, Jacob Sager, Krista White Pup.

Approach: Culturally safe, trauma-informed, meeting people with respect.

ENCAMPMENT SUPPORT & TRANSITION TEAM



Ian Potapoff *Encampment Program Lead*

Cashe Erskine *Encampment Coordinator*

Jacob Sager *Encampment Coordinator*

Krista White Pup *Encampment Cultural Lead*

Connection. Culture. Change.

Bridging Gaps:

ESTP helps navigate systems: IDs, housing, support. Breaking cycles of homelessness.

Culture Heals:

Reconnecting with Indigenous traditions, language, and ceremonies. "It started with language, with belonging." – Krista White Pup, Cultural Lead

Building Trust:

Consistent presence, shared understanding. Lived experience fosters connection. "They open up." – Jacob Sager, Coordinator

Our Goal:

Walking with people toward healing, housing, and hope.

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta under the Canada-Alberta Agreement for the Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments Initiative.



Action: Mobile Units:



**ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF CALGARY**
Many Nations. One Family.™



TRADITIONAL HANDMADE MOCCASIN MAKING

Workshop a Huge Hit!

As part of AFCC's CRCD Programming, the Traditional Handmade Moccasin Making workshop held on April 23, 2025, was met with overwhelming enthusiasm from the community. The event, guided by Blackfoot Elder and Knowledge Keeper Lucille Wright, invited participants to learn the traditional art of moccasin making in a full-day, hands-on session hosted at The Salvation Army on 17th Ave.

Attendees enjoyed a day filled with fun, laughter, and learning, with lunch, snacks, and refreshments provided. All materials were included, and the event remained free for registered participants. Stay tuned, more moccasin-making sessions are on the horizon!



Interest in the workshop was so high that organizers received more applications than anticipated. In response, the Cultural Reconnection Team shared,

THANK YOU EVERYONE!!! ”

We had so much interest that we need time to go through all the applications. With the amount of interest expressed in this event we will be planning more to come!



SUCCESSFUL "RECLAIMING YOUR POWER" SYMPOSIUM

Celebrated Indigenous Resilience and Healing

On March 27–28, 2025

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) proudly hosted the Reclaiming Your Power Symposium on March 27th and 28th, 2025, at The Westin Calgary Airport. The transformative two-day gathering was a resounding success, celebrating Indigenous resilience, culture, and healing. Elders, knowledge keepers, advocates, and artists came together to share invaluable wisdom, engage in meaningful discussions, and foster strong community connections through the power of storytelling, music, and dialogue.



The symposium provided a vital and supportive space for learning and sharing, particularly in the collective effort to end gender-based violence and advance reconciliation.

Attendees benefited from a diverse agenda that included impactful presentations on critical issues such as colonial violence, Elder abuse response, the Moose Hide Campaign, and strategies for recentering self-connection to address gender-based violence in Indigenous communities.

The event was further enriched by inspiring keynote speakers, including Jaylene Tyme, a Two-Spirit Indigenous Trans Woman, Drag Artist, and Advocate, and Dr. Gabrielle E. Weasel Head, an Associate Professor in Indigenous Studies.

The symposium was filled with vibrant cultural performances and valuable opportunities for attendees to connect with various vendors, contributing to a memorable and empowering experience for all involved.





CELEBRATING MINISTER WILSON

Today was a truly special day as I had the pleasure of welcoming the Honourable Minister Rick Wilson to the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary. We came together to celebrate his incredible leadership and dedication to reconciliation.

Minister Wilson spoke passionately about his commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous Peoples across our province, including urban Indigenous communities.

A huge thank you to all the amazing community leaders and partners who joined us today, including the City of Calgary, the Calgary Homeless Foundation, CUPS, the Calgary Drop-In Centre, the Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth, Woods Homes, the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund, the First Nations Health Consortium, and many more. The highlight was Gerry LaRose, an Elder who lives at our lodge, giving a heartfelt speech about her healing journey.

Also, thank you to the AFCC Board, staff, and volunteers who made today such a success!

Finally, we want to give a special thank you to Elder Jackie Bromley for her beautiful Opening Prayer and for welcoming us with such warmth.

Today wasn't just about speeches; it was a heartwarming celebration of community and our shared dreams for a brighter future. Let's keep working side by side to better the lives of our communities!



OUR NEW DIGITAL HOME IS LIVE! EXPLORE AFCC ONLINE!

www.afccalgary.org

We're thrilled to launch the new Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) website! Visit us today at www.afccalgary.org to easily connect with our community, learn about our work, and discover how to engage with our services.

This new website is a key step in sharing our stories, amplifying Indigenous voices, and strengthening our community connections.



EXPLORE NOW!

Visit www.afccalgary.org



WHAT'S NEW & IMPROVED?

Easy Access: Quickly find clear information on our diverse services – spanning Cultural Reconnection, Housing Solutions, Community Member Support, and Elders Services – all in a new mobile-friendly design.

Discover Our Reach: Learn about AFCC's vital mission and the positive impact we have across our various community locations, support buildings, and through impactful programs and partnerships.

Connect & Get Involved: Stay updated with the latest AFCC news and events. Find clear pathways to access services, volunteer your time, or support our mission with our easy-to-use online donation feature.

JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE IN ACTION:

Partnering with FNHC to Support Indigenous Families

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC) is proud to recognize our ongoing strategic partnership with the First Nations Health Consortium (FNHC).

Together, we work to ensure First Nations and Inuit children and families in Alberta can access the culturally grounded services and supports they deserve.

FNHC plays a critical role in delivering Jordan's Principle supports, helping families navigate applications, secure funding, and access health, education, and social services without delay or denial.

Supporting First Nations children and youth in Alberta with access, advocacy, and community through Jordan's Principle and partner organizations

Their work extends beyond application support, offering programming in sports and recreation, youth engagement, elder education, and early childhood reading. Through this partnership, AFCC continues to strengthen wrap-around support for the community by collaborating on advocacy, service coordination, and initiatives that prioritize Indigenous children's well-being.

FNHC's commitment to continuity of care aligns with our shared vision of building healthier futures through community-driven solutions.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.ABFNHC.COM



FIRST NATIONS
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

Join Us for the AFCC 2ND ANNUAL MMEIP RED DRESS TRADITIONAL POWWOW!

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary invites everyone to come together on May 24, 2025, at The Big Four Roadhouse for a day of healing, remembrance, and celebration of Indigenous culture. This poignant event honors the lives of Murdered Missing Exploited Indigenous Peoples through traditional dance, sacred songs, and the symbolism of the red dress.

“CEO Shane Gauthier remarks,
"This ceremony is a heartfelt remembrance and a celebration of our resilient cultures. It's an open invitation to all to share in the spirit of 'Many Nations. One Family.'"

A heartfelt thank you to our sponsors for making this event possible! Let's gather to honor, heal, and connect as a community.

JOIN US FOR THE AFCC 2ND ANNUAL MMEIP RED DRESS TRADITIONAL POWWOW!

ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE OF CALGARY
Many Nations. One Family.™

2ND ANNUAL MMEIP

MURDERED MISSING EXPLOITED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

RED DRESS

Traditional Powwow 2025

All are welcome

No registration required for dancers

Vendors, Concession, & Security on site.

For more info, please contact:
info@afccalgary.org



MAY 24

Doors Open 12:00 PM
Grand Entry 1:00 PM
Event Ends 5:00 PM

At The Big Four Roadhouse
Big Four, Parking lot, 1801 Big Four Trail SE, Calgary, AB T2G 2W1

MCs:
Sarah Good Medicine & Kent Ayoungman
Sayder Duck Chief

Arena Director:
Eddie Wolf Child

Host Drum:
Blackfoot Drummers

Invited Drum Groups:
Blackfoot Confederacy
Bad Eagle
Pipestem Creek
Nakoda Nation
Sings Many Songs Women



THANK YOU SPONSORS

ABORIGINAL FRIENDSHIP CENTRE OF CALGARY
Many Nations. One Family.™

2ND ANNUAL MMEIP

MURDERED MISSING EXPLOITED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

RED DRESS

Traditional Powwow 2025

SCAN TO CONTRIBUTE
AND BE PART OF THE
HEALING.



THE CRESCENT HEIGHTS AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT

The Crescent Heights Affordable Housing Project is a culturally safe, Indigenous-led housing initiative by the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary (AFCC), located at 320 - 15th Ave NE, Calgary.

It will offer nine residential units (including barrier-free, family-sized, and studio options) alongside an on-site AFCC office providing wraparound services and cultural programming.

With eco-friendly features like solar panels and a walkable, transit-accessible location, the project supports long-term affordability and community well-being.



It aligns with Calgary's 2023–2030 housing strategy and is expected to be completed by 2026, pending funding and approvals.



Knightsbridge
ARCHITECTURE & CONSTRUCTION

NORTH WIND
MANAGEMENT CORP.



**ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF CALGARY**
Many Nations. One Family.™



ELDERS LODGE HEALING CIRCLES

Foster Understanding and Reconciliation

Healing Through Connection: AFCC's Indigenous Sharing and Healing Circles

In the wake of the profound trauma inflicted by Indian Residential Schools, Indigenous communities across Canada are seeking to reclaim their identities, heal from generational wounds, and foster resilience within their families and communities. One essential initiative in this journey is the Indigenous Sharing and Healing Circles organized by the AFCC (Aboriginal Family and Community Centre). These circles provide a safe and supportive environment for Indigenous Peoples to share their stories, honor their experiences, and engage in collective healing.

The Purpose of Sharing Circles

The concept of sharing circles is deeply rooted in Indigenous traditions, where storytelling plays a crucial role in cultural preservation and intergenerational knowledge transfer. In the context of AFCC's initiatives, these circles serve multiple purposes: facilitating open dialogue, encouraging emotional expression, and promoting understanding among participants. The circle format allows each individual to have a voice, thus fostering an atmosphere of respect and inclusivity.

By bringing together individuals who have experienced similar traumas, these circles help participants recognize that they are not alone on their healing journey. The collective sharing of experiences not only validates personal narratives but also helps to break the cycle of silence that often surrounds trauma. Participants can witness the diversity of experiences while also identifying common threads, which can be instrumental in fostering a sense of unity and understanding.

Healing Through Cultural Practices

AFCC's Indigenous Sharing and Healing Circles incorporate various cultural practices that resonate with Indigenous identity. Traditional ceremonies, such as smudging, singing, and drumming, are often integral components of these circles. These practices not only encourage spiritual healing but also reinforce cultural connections that are vital for recovery. Engaging in cultural activities allows participants to reconnect with their heritage, which has been a significant aspect of their identities that was often suppressed or lost due to the legacy of residential schools. This reconnecting process is not only therapeutic but also empowering, as individuals reclaim their narratives and cultural practices that have been passed down through generations.

Building Community and Support Networks

One of the most impactful outcomes of AFCC's Sharing and Healing Circles is the formation of long-lasting support networks among participants.

As individuals engage in discussions about their healing journeys, they often forge connections that extend beyond the circle itself. These relationships can provide ongoing support, reinforcing the importance of community in the healing process.

Moreover, these circles contribute to a broader movement of reconciliation and healing within Indigenous communities. By creating spaces for dialogue and understanding, they promote awareness of the intergenerational impact of residential schools and encourage non-Indigenous allies to become advocates for change.



The Conclusion

AFCC's Indigenous Sharing and Healing Circles are vital initiatives that underscore the importance of community, culture, and connection in healing from the traumas associated with Indian Residential Schools.

Through the power of storytelling and collective support, these circles facilitate both individual and communal healing, fostering resilience among Indigenous Peoples as they navigate their personal journeys.

As these initiatives continue to evolve, they represent a beacon of hope and a pathway toward restoring dignity, identity, and strength within Indigenous communities.



**ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF CALGARY**
Many Nations. One Family.™





AWARD OF THE PRESTIGIOUS KING CHARLES III CORONATION MEDAL

We are proud to celebrate a significant moment of recognition for the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary. Shane Gauthier and Terran Shepherd have been awarded the esteemed King Charles III Coronation Medal, an honour that highlights their unwavering dedication to community service and advocacy.

This medal not only recognizes their individual leadership, but also stands as a powerful tribute to the collective strength of the AFCC team (our staff, board members, and volunteers) who work every day to support and uplift Calgary's urban Indigenous community.

Shane and Terran have humbly accepted this honour on behalf of the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and all those whose stories and resilience guide our mission. This recognition strengthens our shared commitment to fostering belonging, cultural connection, and Indigenous empowerment.



IAIN DE JONG'S PRESENTATION

On April 7, 2025, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary was proud to co-host an inspiring and impactful event in partnership with the Calgary Homeless Foundation and the Calgary Drop-In Centre. The evening featured Iain de Jong, a renowned thought leader in the field of homelessness, whose powerful presentation explored the complexities of homelessness with a particular focus on the urgent challenges facing Indigenous communities.

Iain's message centred on the need for culturally informed, inclusive strategies that honour Indigenous voices and lived experiences. His insights underscored that meaningful progress requires collaboration, mutual respect, and a deep commitment to equity.



The gathering was enriched by the presence and wisdom of community leaders. Mayor Jyoti Gondek offered warm opening remarks, followed by a heartfelt opening prayer from Grandmother Leanne. Krista White Pup provided a Land Acknowledgment that grounded us in place, and Grandfather Clement's closing prayer left us with a renewed sense of hope and determination.

In a moving gesture of gratitude, Elders and partners wrapped a ceremonial blanket around Iain as the Blackfoot Drummers performed an Honour Song, symbolizing collective support for his mission to advocate for those too often left unheard.

We extend our sincerest thanks to everyone who joined us. May this gathering be a catalyst for continued dialogue and tangible action as we work together toward solutions that are compassionate, inclusive, and culturally grounded.



Book Launch:

NORTH OF NOWHERE BY MARIE WILSON

March 3, 2025 –
Kanakaaatsi'nom – 'All Friends
Place' Elders Drop-In Centre

On March 3, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary had the honour of hosting Dr. Marie Wilson at Kanakaatsi'nom, the 'All Friends Place' Elders Drop-In Centre, for the launch of her powerful new book North of Nowhere. The event featured a reading and book signing, and drew a full house, with all copies of the book sold out.

Dr. Wilson, a distinguished commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, shared moving passages from her book, which explores the lasting impacts of the Indian Residential Schools system and the importance of reconciliation in Canada. Her words offered deep insights and helped foster a space for reflection, learning, and healing. Through her storytelling, she highlighted the strength and resilience of Indigenous communities and encouraged meaningful dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.





We extend sincere thanks to Krista White Pup for organizing the event, Lowa Beebe for serving as emcee, Brad Mistaken Chief for his thoughtful questions, and Grandmother Leanne for opening the gathering with a grounding prayer.

The evening was a meaningful celebration of Marie Wilson's contributions to truth and reconciliation, and a powerful reminder of the importance of community, conversation, and continued commitment to justice.



Event Write-Up:

HONOURING PHYLLIS WEBSTAD AT AFCC'S ELDERS' DROP-IN CENTRE

On March 6, 2025, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary had the profound honour of welcoming Phyllis Webstad to the Elders' Drop-in Centre, Ka na kaat si nom (All Friends Place). The evening was more than a visit; it was a heartfelt gathering rooted in truth, healing, and community.

Phyllis Webstad, the founder of the Orange Shirt Society and originator of Orange Shirt Day, is a

powerful national voice for the survivors of Canada's residential school system. Her personal story of arriving at residential school wearing a bright orange shirt that was taken from her sparked a movement of remembrance and reconciliation across the country. Through her work, Phyllis has become a symbol of strength, resilience, and unwavering dedication to justice for Indigenous peoples.

In her own words, Phyllis shared how visits like this bring her rejuvenation and remind her of the importance of the work being done through the Orange Shirt Society and the Orange Jersey Project. “It’s hard being immersed in residential school on a daily basis,” she said, “and it’s nice to come to events like this, to share a meal with friends, old friends, make new friends... and to remember why we do the work we do.”

The evening was filled with moments of deep reverence and celebration. Blessings and prayers from Grandmothers Jackie Bromley and LeeAnne Sleigh, and Grandfather Clement Leather brought sacred energy to the space. The Sings Many Songs Women delivered powerful drumming and honour songs that lifted the spirits of all who attended.

Phyllis was joined and celebrated by many distinguished guests including Chief Campbell, Dr. Tyler White, Sandra Clarkson, Patricia Jones, Heather Morley, and others. Kasey Blackwater served as emcee, Krista White Pup offered a heartfelt land acknowledgement, and Brenda Twoyoungmen provided a delicious meal for everyone to share. The gathering was also marked by a touching gift—a one-of-a-kind artwork titled *We Walk Together*, presented to Phyllis by artist Ken Letander as a lasting symbol of her time in Calgary.



In the words of AFCC CEO Shane Gauthier, 

“WE HELP OURSELVES WHEN WE HELP THE COMMUNITY. YOU SAVE ONE LIFE, YOU’RE SAVING HUMANITY.”

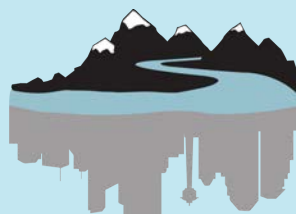
That spirit of unity and care was felt deeply throughout the evening, echoing the very purpose of the Orange Shirt Project: to ensure that every child matters, and that the stories of the past continue to shape a more just and compassionate future.

KEY AFCC PROGRAMS & SERVICES

HOUSING & SUPPORT SERVICES:

This is a cornerstone of AFCC's work.

- **Elders Lodge:** Emphasize its role in providing safe, affordable, and culturally rich housing for Indigenous seniors, fostering a community environment with access to cultural activities and support.
- **Aboriginal Housing Initiative (AHI) & The Bromley Place:** Highlight these initiatives that offer supportive housing solutions for Indigenous individuals and families who are transitioning from homelessness or seeking stable, culturally appropriate living situations.
- **Indigenous Warming Centre:** A critical seasonal service providing shelter, warmth, and connection during colder months.
- **Navigation and Support Centre:** This centre is crucial for connecting vulnerable and unhoused individuals to a wide range of services including shelter access, employment and financial aid, Alberta Health card and ID services, Indigenous cultural supports, and mental health and addictions support.



**ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF CALGARY**
Many Nations. One Family.™

CULTURAL CONNECTION & COMMUNITY BUILDING:

These programs are central to AFCC's mission and resonate widely.

- **Indigenous Hub ("iitaohkanitsini'kotsiiyio'p")**: As the main office, it's a central point for numerous services. You can feature:
 - ***Cultural Programs***: Workshops, traditional arts and crafts, language revitalization efforts (like Blackfoot, Cree, Michif camps), ceremonies, drumming, and singing circles.
 - ***Status Card Clinic***: A vital service helping community members obtain or renew their Secure Certificate of Indian Status.
 - ***Smudge Vow Program***: Focuses on cultural and spiritual practices to support Indigenous individuals transitioning from the justice system.
- **Elders' Programs & Drop-in Centre ("Kanakaa'tsinom")**: Beyond the Lodge, this dedicated drop-in space ("All Friends Place") offers programming, meals, traditional ceremonies, language revitalization, and social support for Elders.
- **Healing/Sharing Circles (at the Elders Lodge and potentially other locations)**: As you know, these are ongoing and crucial for education, awareness (especially for youth), and healing from intergenerational trauma, often guided by Elders like Jackie Bromley. Emphasize that reconciliation is a journey.
- **Community Events**: Highlight significant events like the annual Red Dress Powwow (honouring MMIWG2S+), Traditional Round Dances, community feasts, and other cultural celebrations that bring people together.

FAMILY & YOUTH EMPOWERMENT:

- **Honouring the Bonds**: A widely recognized parenting program that beautifully integrates traditional Indigenous teachings with contemporary early childhood development practices.
- **Youth Engagement Strategy & Programs**: Initiatives aimed at empowering Indigenous youth through leadership development, cultural connection programs, drumming groups, and land-based learning.

OUTREACH & CLIENT SERVICES:

- **Outreach Program & Cultural Reconnection**: These programs focus on connecting with the broader community, offering cultural teachings, and providing support. This can include activities like traditional harvesting.
- **Client Services**: General support and referrals for housing, food, clothing, education, health, and skills development.

An illustration of a landscape with blue mountains and a winding river. A large black location pin is placed on the right side of the river. The title 'AFCC LOCATIONS' is written in large, bold, black letters across the middle of the image.

AFCC LOCATIONS

**The Indigenous Hub -
"iitaohkanitsini'kotsiiyio'p"**
316 - 7 Ave SE

**Elder's Drop-in Center -
"Kanakaa'tsinom"**
4630 - 16 Ave NW

**The Navigation and
Support Centre**
420 - 9 Ave SE

**The AFCC Elders' Apartment
Building - Elders Lodge**
352 - 34 Ave NE

**Aboriginal Housing - The
Bromley Place**
120 - 29 Ave NW

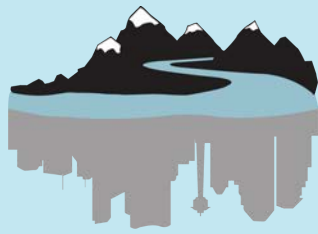
**The Indigenous Warming
Centre**
4628 - 16 Ave NW

COMING SOON

**The Confluence - Memorandum
of Understanding (MOU)**
750 - 9 Ave



**ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF CALGARY**
Many Nations. One Family.™



**ABORIGINAL
FRIENDSHIP
CENTRE OF CALGARY**

Many Nations. One Family.™



(403) 270-7379 | info@afccalgary.org
316 - 7 Avenue SE, Calgary, Alberta T2G 0J2