



ANFCA ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

RECOVER AND REIMAGINE

“Our way is not always soft grass; often it’s a mountain path with lots of rocks. But it goes upwards, forward, toward the sun.” Unknown



anfca
alberta native friendship
centres association

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Recover and Reimagine



The theme for this year's ANFCA Annual Report is Recover and Reimagine.

Recover recognizes the 21-member Friendship Centres that served as the front line during the battle against COVID-19 while responding to changing public health restrictions and the increasing needs of their communities ensuring access to supports, services, and programming they needed and recognizes that resilient leaders must find ways to replenish their strength and energy in order to keep moving forward.

Reimagine recognizes that the past two years have taught lessons that we can use to implement new ways of providing supports, services, engaging, and thrive during the new-normal that lies on the horizon.

MESSAGE FROM THE ANFCA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

As we see a new horizon going into this year, to say the last two years was challenging is truly an understatement. The global COVID-19 pandemic has affected — and continues to affect — our community's personal and economic wellbeing with rising mental wellness concerns and the rising costs of living.

This year has also been a time of great introspection for us all. We have witnessed the disparities in our community continue and grow, affirming our need as values-based organizations and to be leaders in its fair and equitable recovery.

If there can be a positive take on the last two years, it is witnessing the strength, determination and intentionality of Friendship Centres, their leadership, and staff as they support their community members and each other through the challenges. They did this with respect, integrity, and compassion. For that we thank the Alberta Friendship Centre movement.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

2021/2022 began for many with the sigh of relief and optimism with the rollout COVID-19 vaccines. Friendship Centres across Alberta held vaccine clinics or supported their members to get to clinics and also used empathy and compassion for those who chose not to be vaccinated.

Despite a year of contradictions, divisiveness over vaccinations, increased needs of Indigenous families in housing, food security, and safety, I draw my optimism from the profound impact of the work of the 21-member Friendship Centres and the progress we will all continue to build on. Indeed, if 2021 provided a lesson, it was Friendship Centres always do what needs to get done despite the obstacles in the way.

While the impact of the pandemic continues including increased mental health needs to financial insecurity, we can celebrate the successes achieved along the way and reflect on what has been learned during this difficult time. Moving forward we will continue to acknowledge the value of Friendship Centres, we will continue to build important relationships, and advocate for more caring, culturally informed partners and stakeholders, and we will be more resourceful and innovative in seeking solutions to long standing systemic barriers.

As ANFCA looks back on what was achieved in 2021/2022, and looking beyond – we continue to ask ourselves: How can we ensure our resources go as far as possible, as fast as possible? How can we continue to play an additive, complementary role to the Friendship Centres and their communities? How can we strengthen and diversify our partnerships to sustain impact at the local level?

To that end, I am pleased to share with you ANFCA 2021-2022 Annual Report. This document is one of the ways our association holds itself accountable to our members and external stakeholders.

It is an honor to be among the culturally driven and dynamic forces of the Friendship Centre movement. To all of you, ANFCA extends our deepest thanks.

Joanne Mason, ANFCA Executive Director

ANFCA OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

ANFCA Administration and Finance:

The association continues to operate with a high regard towards and a focus on the needs of Friendship Centres. Maintaining focus on ANFCA strategic plan has been key to the healthy forward movement of the association. Operationally, ANFCA has a stable team with diverse skill sets. Succession planning and realignment of duties has begun. Strong contract management and fiscal controls have endured post over outcomes during uncertain times brought about by covid.

Communication

ANFCA has continued to promote increased awareness and communication on behalf of membership and to the larger provincial and national community of funders and partners. Website update, research documents, and standardized newsletters have all played an important role in keeping partners and membership well informed during this reporting period.

ANFCA Human Resources

During the 2021/2022 fiscal year ANFCA's staff compliment included 23 employees, 19 Full-time and 4 Part-time. 3 fulltime staff left during the year for education attainment or moved out of province. 56 external contractors were utilized in 21/22 including weekly Rise Up workshop Facilitators; project evaluators for Rise Up, Filling Our Tipis, and Protecting Our Sacred Fires; graphic designers and Indigenous artisans for various project resources; sector specific experts in succession planning, UNDRIP, social enterprises, and other scopes of work to support ANFCA strategic plan.

ANFCA building

In an effort to address physical space limitations, structural concerns and to meet future needs of the association, ANFCA has been actively working with partners and an architect firm to design a space that will be home to the provincial office going forward. The multi-purpose new construction will support the future growth of the provincial Friendship Centre Movement. Work on this project is ongoing and the new building construction is anticipated to be complete in 2023.

Social Enterprise

ANFCA has been working with interested FCs in their pursuit of social enterprise opportunities and has also begun exploration of for-profit ventures that would generate much needed funding and reduce reliance on government reliance.

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External Engagements and Partnership Building

ANFCA Staff sat on a number of committees and engaged with a variety of external stakeholders in 2021/2022. This includes but not limited to the Premiers Council, ALBERTA NGO Council, AHS Indigenous Integration Committee on Mental Health, AHS Indigenous Wellness Core, Alberta Governments Human Trafficking working group, Food Banks Alberta, Mind Fuel (STEM education), Keyera (Clean Energy), Alberta Treasury Branch, Alberta Teacher's Association (ATA) Indigenous Committee. ANFCA also participated in a number of federal engagement sessions on hate crimes, the National Advisory Council on Poverty 2022, and gender-based violence.

Funding and Proposal Development

A number of proposals were submitted in 21/22 including Filling Our Tipis to PHAC, Indigenous languages revitalization, Indigenous governance to the McConnell Foundation, Alberta Treasury Branch, New Horizons, Canadian Heritage, Keyera, SAIT, and to NAFC for the Student Support Learning Program and 2 streams of Infrastructure.

CAPACITY TEAM

Friendship Centre Support:

Training, Orientation and Capacity Building – With the involvement of the Executive Directors Committee and the Presidents Committee, training needs for Executive Directors and Boards has been defined and virtual format training modules developed. Virtual training opportunities and resources will continue to be available to ensure broadest involvement and participation. Executive Directors and key Friendship Centre staff have been invited to participate in skill development training and workshops related to fiscal literacy, business continuity preparedness and technology. To meet this varied and growing training needs of the community, ANFCA created a Leadership Training Series (webinars, resource materials and 1-1 enhanced sessions) which has included the following:

- Let's Talk Audit Workshop to support successful completion of the annual audit process
 - Annual Audit Guidelines and workshop
- An Introduction to the Leadership Series – EDs and Presidents
- Leadership Resiliency
- Financial Sustainability
- Keys to Effective Board / ED Relationship
- Leadership versus Management
- Strategic Planning Overview
- Board Roles & Responsibilities
- ED Roles & Responsibilities
- Operational Planning Overview
- Risk Management
- Data Collection
- Program Evaluation

Over 2021/22, ANFCA has continued to work to enhance community-based technology through supporting technology upgrades, internet speed testing, and training and has been working in collaboration to assist any interested Friendship Centre to access the technical support needed.

During 2021/22 Executive Directors met bi-weekly to provide ongoing support during the transitions felt during the pandemic.

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Program Funding and Managing Funding Contracts:

ANFCA works in a collaborative effort with local Friendship Centres, Alberta Indigenous Relations, regional technicians and NAFC staff to build effective resources, templates and to support the effective roll up of data for provincial and national reporting.

ANFCA distributed \$3,158,712 of UPIP OC resources to 21-member Friendship Centres throughout the fiscal year.

\$1,217,762 of UPIP PSS resources were administered among 21-member Friendship Centres for community-based projects.

Alberta Indigenous Relations Grant (AIR) - The Government of Alberta's Indigenous Relations contributes operational funding to ANFCA and further supports member Friendship Centres with annual grants of \$25,000/Centre.

Organizational Capacity Stream (UPIP-OCS) Is intended to offer a stable core funding base from which member Friendship Centres may continue to deliver programs or services or provide case management and referral services that support urban Indigenous peoples and communities. Organizational Capacity - Core funding covers the day-to-day operating costs of an organization such as salaries for specified key positions, utilities, rent, and travel. \$3,158,712 UPIP Operational OCS funds were administered.

Programs and Services Stream (UPIP-PSS) - The activities and outputs of the Programs and Services funding stream are intended to support investments in one or more projects area of focus -Women; Vulnerable Populations Youth; Transition Services; Outreach Programs; and Community Wellness. \$1,217,762 UPIP PSS FC Program funding was administered to Friendship Centres.

COVID Response Funding: With the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic, ANFCA and other PTAs from across Canada worked in collaboration with NAFC to secure emergency response resources. In total, Alberta's allocation of over \$8 million was administered over multiple funding rounds allowing greatest flexibility and ensuring equitable distribution and access to funds on an as need basis. In keeping with the spirit of the Friendship Centre Movement and cultural values, Alberta Native Friendship Centres worked in collaboration to ensure resources were distributed to Centres with greatest or evolving needs.

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FC Executive Director Committee

Executive Directors' Committee (EDC) Generally meets on a regular basis in alignment with ANFCA Board of Directors meetings. This formal (EDC)committee is comprised of the 21-member Friendship Centre Executive Directors and provides recommendations to ANFCA Board of Directors for their consideration.

FRIENDSHIP CENTRE COVID RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS:

Mental Health:

One of the greatest impacts of the COVID19 pandemic has been the increased need for mental health supports. Understanding this need, Alberta Native Friendship Centres have recruited mental health professionals to create and provide culturally safe and informed supports, counselling and to coordinate referrals for additional mental health supports. Friendship Centres provided support to all community members with a significant increase in securing, developing and/or providing supports for youth, Elders and young mothers.

Many Friendship Centres were innovative in offering mental health support with a cultural foundation through connections to Elders, delivery of traditional medicines, craft supplies and sessions, story telling and virtually based cultural teaching and workshops. A pleasant yet unexpected side effect of creating the virtual cultural programming was a newfound ability to reach many more community members who were not mobile or engaged prior to the pandemic. This started last year and continued to grow in 2021/22 even as some centres began opening their doors for in person programming.

Food Security:

Throughout the pandemic, Friendship Centres were able to extend over **110,000** service points of food security support to their communities. To meet the growing need for food access, some centres renovated, updated and/or modified their kitchens and practices to provide more consistent access to hot foods, brown bag lunches, and groceries. All 21 community-based Friendship Centres in Alberta have provided some level of food security to their community during 2021/22. Creative thinking was put to work to develop delivery strategies to support those most in need and unable to come to the centre to access food security support. Just over \$1M was spent supporting Food security.

Elder Supports:

For many Elders in Friendship Centre communities additional support such as delivery of medications, transportation to medical appointments, access to technology and

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communication channels, food hampers, personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies were delivered by Friendship Centre staff. The important connection to community helpers and caregivers eases the intense isolation they were experiencing. With the introduction to technology resources and tools and innovative virtual learning platforms created additional opportunities for Elders to continue to access supports and increase community connections. The delivery of food, wellness and cultural supports provided a sense of security and continued community connection for the Elders.

Cultural Programming:

During this reporting period, the growth in cultural programming using alternative platforms has been nothing short of remarkable, with some programs continuing to grow over the past 2 fiscal years. Centres have demonstrated the ability to provide supports to all age groups and technology skill levels. And youth have benefited from enhanced cultural programming, traditional mental health support, and discussions with Elders. The delivery of traditional medicines enabled individuals, families, and communities to come together in prayer during difficult times. Innovation overcame isolation and created new ways for sharing and exploration of teachings, languages, and crafts – all of which have helped stabilize our communities. Centres have provided access to family support groups, wellness sessions, traditional crafting and sewing sessions, and cultural teachings that included Bannock making, beading, sewing, moccasin crafting, drum and rattle making to mention but a few highlights. This was complimented by the return of some in person programming.

Transportation

has been a barrier in Friendship Centre communities for many years and in more recent times has been further amplified by the discontinuation of bus and taxi services, leaving many Elders and families unable to access essential programs and services offered through local Friendship Centres. During COVID with the closure of public schools and school bus routes, transportation challenges grew, enhancing the level of isolation felt by many community members. Recognizing the urgent need to respond to this growing concern, Friendship Centres, largely in rural or remote areas, developed strategies to improve transportation access through the acquisition of commuter vehicles that would support the safe transportation of people away from unsafe situations and circumstances or to medical appointments and vaccine clinics or ensure the safe delivery of personal hampers, food and medical supplies, and traditional medicines. Starting in 2020/21 and continuing in 2021/22, Friendship Centres continued to purchase vehicles and provided hundreds of points of transportation support.

Innovation: Virtual programming, while not a new concept before the pandemic, grew increasingly popular to ensure Friendship Centre members had access to critical services.

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Throughout the pandemic, virtual programming benefited every age group from hosting support groups for parents and individuals, through to supporting knowledge and growth of children and education for youth, to social engagements and cultural teachings with Elders. In some communities, filling the delivery services gap during covid has created a potential social enterprise means post-pandemic. While in other communities, story time and cultural teaching time with Elders and language hubs have emerged as priorities. Friendship Centre Innovation has come in many forms during the pandemic.

GOVERNANCE:

Policy and Research:

Throughout 2021/22, ANFCA continued to conduct important governance work of the Association and provided assistance to member Centres through the development and sharing of materials, resources and support on specific matters related to governance in a post pandemic recovery time. Some of this included:

- Cybersecurity Framework - Information Security and Use of Information Technology Resource Policy
- Briefing on NAFC policy on Indigeneity
- Briefing on NAFC Bylaw Committee's 2021 & 2022 Bylaw Package, and draft resolutions
- Briefing on Clarifying Autonomy of member Friendship Centres in Relation to ANFCA Membership Agreement
- Draft Conflict Policy
- Terms of references were developed for local board committee work
- Draft Terms of Reference for ANFCA's two new Standing Committee's -Finance and Personnel Committee and Governance Committee. The members struck the two committees at the 2021 AGM in accordance with ANFCA 2020 Bylaws.

Friendship Centre Support:

ANFCA works in partnership with members Centres in the review, recommendation and revision of Bylaws, policies and to assist with the supporting good governance practices in the development of AGM planning and process support. ANFCA has developed a virtual AGM planning guide and has assisted interested Friendship Centres in planning and hosting of community-based virtual AGMs.

Emerging Friendship Centre Support:

Each year ANFCA is contacted with expressions of interest for the addition of a Friendship Centre in a community not currently being served. Since 2020, the number of community contacts seeking information and support to establish a new Friendship Centre have

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quadrupled. ANFCA currently is working with five communities in their preliminary exploration of processes involved in the Friendship Centre membership process.

Training and Capacity:

ANFCA Board and Presidents: Planning and coordination of President Meetings all with a focus to support Indigenous Leadership.

Introduction of Executive Director Leadership training series including, but not limited to Let's Talk Audit to support annual audits – workshop and guidelines; Resiliency, Financial Sustainability, Keys to Effective Board / ED Relationship, Leadership versus Management, Board roles and responsibilities, Operational Planning, risk management and evaluation.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Alberta Aboriginal Youth Council

For decades ANFCA has remained dedicated to providing on-going support to the AAYC. In addition to hosting regular youth council meetings, ANFCA coordinates workshops, youth training sessions, and actively seeks new partnerships and funding options to advance youth initiatives. The AAYC is composed of urban Indigenous youth representatives from 21-member Friendship Centres. The AAYC provides recommendations to the Board of Directors on matters of common concern or areas of opportunity.

AAYC held three virtual meetings throughout the year - May, September, and January.

Youth And Elders Gathering

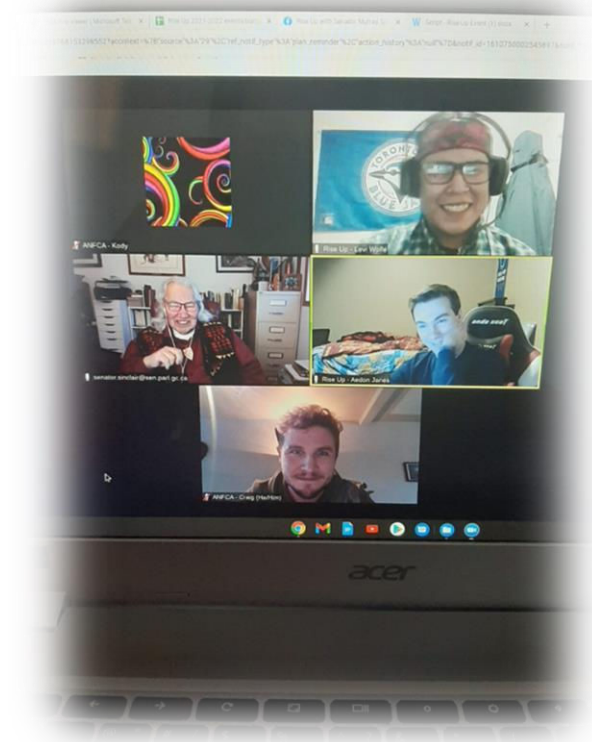
The Youth and Elders' Gathering (YEG) began in 1997 by late ANFCA Provincial Coordinator, Ray Chambers, and since then has become an annual tradition. This event brings together youth and Elders from across Alberta Friendship Centres for workshops, presentations, cultural ceremonies, games, and crafts that are led by youth, Elders and special guests. The 2021 YEG took place virtually over Zoom as the event was adjusted to take place virtually due to the COVID 19 pandemic but to ensure youth & Elder interaction. YEG 2021 included workshops and activities, as planned by youth and Elders, such as: tribal challenges, cultural teachings, Youth & Elder entertainment, ceremonies, and workshops.

Rise Up: Empowering Urban Indigenous Youth

Rise Up supports Alberta Friendship Centre youth to increase their participation within the Friendship Centre Movement.

The initiative's specific objectives are to define reconciliation from a Friendship Centre youth standpoint; increase youth awareness of the UNDRIP and the TRC's 94 Calls to Action; Increase

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opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth to collaborate on community initiatives around Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in gaining knowledge and understanding, as well as building leadership skills and a sense of personal empowerment; increase youth civic awareness and engagement in social development; and, increase opportunities for multi-generational learning and sharing.

During 2021/22, Rise Up saw an increased level of youth engagement at the community, provincial, and national stages, the 2021 Youth and Elders' Gathering, at the 2021 Rise Up: Today and Tomorrow Youth Conference, and within local Friendship Centre events. The planning and implementation of a provincial youth forum, Rise Up: Today and Tomorrow

Conference saw 81 youth from across the province participate in a three-day virtual conference filled with workshops, keynote speeches, and training. The Rise Up: Today and Tomorrow event was documented and widely shared through video means.

Other events and activities hosted by and for youth have included:

- A United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)'s 94 Calls to Action weekend training event
- Youth Resource Development
- Weekly virtual youth meetings
- Development of a Youth Planning Committee
- Community Engagement Sessions for youth hosted by Rise Up youth

Additional Statistics:

Total volunteer hours by Rise Up participants, April 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022: **5,469.5**

Graduates of Rise Up (have completed more than **120 hours** of participation/community volunteerism): September 2021 - 9 / March 2022 - 12

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Community Engagement Sessions held at Friendship Centres 5 (Rise Up youth hosted a community session, with a minimum of 10 youth in attendance, which shared a teaching they learned from Rise Up. Topics have included Tipi Teachings, UNDRIP/TRC, and Community Engagement)

Youth Facilitation Training (with OFIFC) - 12 attendees (Rise Up, Youth Coordinators)

Rise Up Provincial Conference (May 2021) - **81 youth registrants** for 3 days of learning, keynotes included Buffy Sainte Marie and Notorious Cree/James Jones.

Rise Up Provincial Conference (March 2022) - over 80 youth registrants for 3 days of learning, keynotes included Manitoba NDP Leader Wab Kinew, Kairyn Potts, and Clayton Thomas-Muller

Rise Up Youth Meeting/Opportunities - over **60 Unique Opportunities** (meetings, workshops, including UNDRIP/TRC, Art Therapy, Entrepreneurship, Civic Engagement, The 5 C's of Community Engagement)

Outputs of Rise Up - Youth Facilitation Training Kits, Youth Facilitation Trainer & Participant Manuals, Youth Council Resource Guide, ANFCA & Friendship Centre Passports, Friendship Centre Stamps, Rise Up promotional videos, Reconciliation Graphic Novel & Comic Book (in progress), Every Child Matters T-shirts and Face Masks.

286 Wellness Bundles sent to Rise Up youth to support positive mental health and wellness

An External Evaluation of Rise Up was Conducted - Findings: Rise Up provides Indigenous youth with a unique context to forge crucial social connections, explore cultural teaching and identity, and build the confidence needed for active participation in local leadership opportunities. Its province-wide reach and multi-generational approach enrich the participants by granting them exposure to voices and experiences that change their perceptions. The program's participants self-report a greater ability to understand their histories, and active involvement in initiatives around reconciliation. Facilitators have observed their growth in confidence and a stronger sense of identity and community among the students. These outcomes have been achieved despite the challenging environment posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Rise Up students and facilitators universally agree that the program is achieving its goals of increasing leadership development, cultural teaching, and youth participation. This remarkable result is the strongest possible endorsement for the program, and the most persuasive case for ensuring that it continues.



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HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND GENDER-BASED INITIATIVES

Centring Relationships

This past year, Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association, the Alberta Sexual Assault Association of Alberta, and the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters embarked on a 24-month journey towards exploring how to build meaningful and authentic relationships between our three provincial agencies with the aim of increasing support for Indigenous women in Alberta who have experienced violence. This journey was deeply inspired by the opening chapter in Reclaiming Power and Place: the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls which was titled Centring Relationships to End Violence. As partners, we have adopted its guiding approach, which states:

"Relationships are key to both understanding the causes of violence and to making changes to end violence in the lives of Indigenous women" (p. 95)

Our three provincial organizations are committed to continuing this work on a provincial level and are now ready to begin inviting some of our community-based member agencies to join us. With support from the federal government Ministry, Women and Gender Equality, and the Canadian Womens Foundation, we named this initiative Centring Relationships to End Violence.

Protecting Our Sacred Fires



This 36-month project began in April 2021 with the intent to develop and implement an Indigenous youth led, culturally relevant prevention training and education program that will advance knowledge, awareness and empower at-risk Indigenous youth and Indigenous survivors of human trafficking in Alberta.

This will be achieved by assessing gaps in knowledge concerning human trafficking and Sexual exploitation by developing a culturally relevant workshop curriculum; provide training and empower Indigenous youth to become facilitators and community advocates of human trafficking and sexual exploitation prevention; and provide virtual workshops and engagement with Indigenous youth delivered by peers.

In 2021/2022 a 'baseline assessment' of the current level of understanding of sexual exploitation and human trafficking (SE/HT) among Indigenous youth in Friendship Centre communities was completed. An online survey consisting of true or false questions and

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definitions was created to gather information from urban Indigenous youth within Alberta, the survey was open for 8 weeks from August to October 2021.

Demographics of survey:

- 40% aged 13-17
- 60% aged 21-27

Gaps in knowledge identified via most incorrectly answered survey questions:

- 67% incorrectly believed those trafficked are held against their will
- 60% are unaware that two-spirit individuals are more vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation
- 60% of youth do not know how to get out of a sexually exploitative situation
- 33% believe traffickers are older men who prey on young girls

Out of all respondents not one answered all 17 questions correctly, showing that there are varying degrees of understanding across all genders and age ranges (13-29) that must be improved through education and prevention training.

ANFCA has created an Advisory Committee made up of Friendship Centre staff and leaders and has provided workshops and community engagements to begin to teach youth about human trafficking and sexual exploitation and hear from the youth in Friendship Centre Communities. This has helped recruit youth to become facilitators who will begin training in the fall of 2022.



Filling Our Tipis

The Filling Our Tipi (FOT) program was designed as a holistic approach to mental wellness and resiliency building for urban Indigenous youth and delivered in three Friendship Centre communities in Alberta from 2019 until 2022 including Sagitawa, Lloydminster, and Miyaasin Friendship Centres.

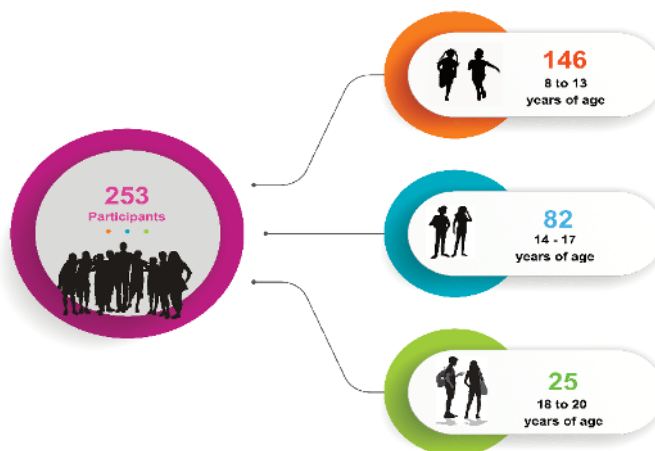
The program was based on the Tipi Pole Teachings, an Indigenous based model, that align to western mental health protective factors and based on the understanding of risk factors impacting mental wellness for urban Indigenous youth that can multiply to cause severe stress in an Indigenous youth's life residing in urban and rural communities. Building resiliency among youth at a young age can give them the ability to adapt or even grow in the face of stress or adversity as they age. Resilience is also a resource that grows through an accumulation of protective factors,

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sometimes called health assets, which contribute to positive mental wellness, increased ability to deal with stress or adversity, and resilience-building behaviors.

253 youth took part in the Filling Our Tipis program over the past three years, many taking part in a cohort numerous times. Each cohort ran for approximately 3 months.

Over the past three years of delivering the Filling Our Tipis program (2019-2022), through the storytelling evaluative tools designed for the program, have shown a positive impact on youth in program as well as increased relationships with caregivers and external stakeholders in all three communities.



The Indigenous youth who took part demonstrated an increase in resiliency and protective factors through the tipi teachings and the positive mentorship of both Friendship Centre staff and local Elders. The pandemic impacted everyone's mental wellbeing and post pandemic there is speculation that it will have a long-term effect on mental health. All three communities saw an increase of suicide ideation during the public health restrictions, however, youth and caregivers turned to Friendship Centres for supports. This program was vital to the communities in which it was delivered.

"No matter what happens we can overcome anything." Youth Participant Quote

"He is one of the youngest to take part in Filling Our Tipis Program. I, as a parent want him and all the youth his age to be a part of this. The fact that he is enjoying it and interacting with other youth who are in a different age group from an early age and learning about his culture and traditions is fantastic. I am sure my son will be a resilient, strong, Indigenous man when he grows up. This program changed our lives." Parent Quote

Youth Quote: "My favorite teaching was the one on suicide prevention as I now know how to make sure my friends are okay."

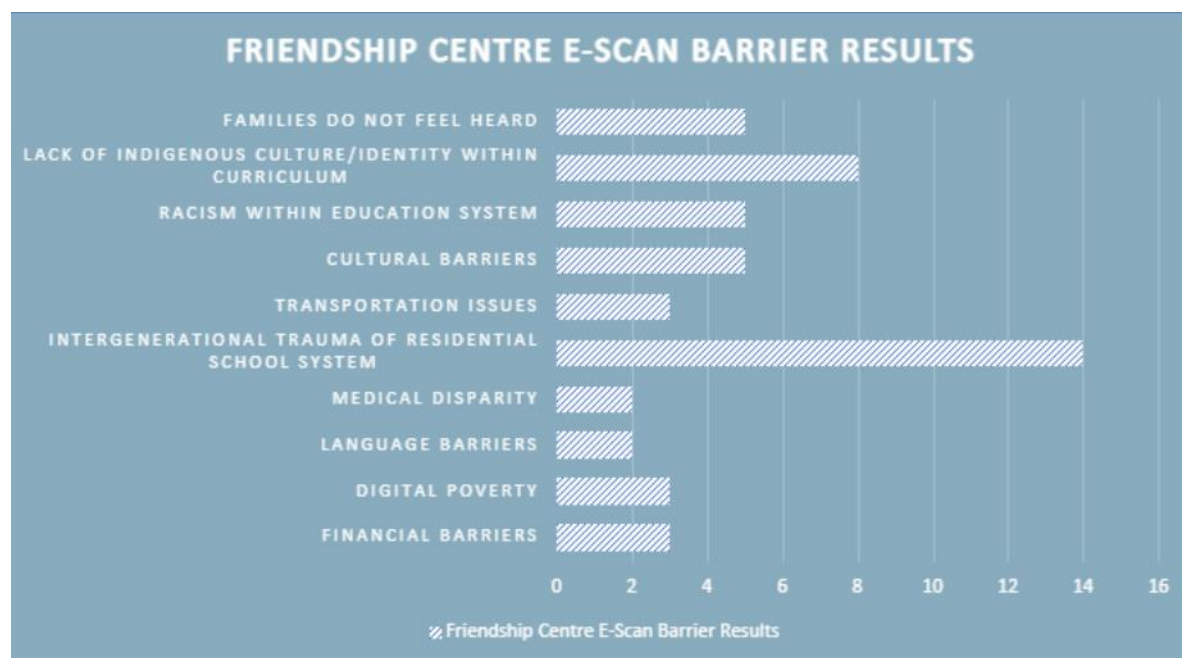
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Children from Circle of Learning Parent Night, 2019 Hinton, AB

EDUCATION:

Circle of Learning – An Urban Indigenous Framework Initiative came to an end June 30th, 2021. A final report (available on ANFCA website) was prepared and provided to Alberta Education with 5 Actionable Items captured by the work done in our sites of exploration with the Hinton Friendship Centre in Hinton and the Napi Friendship Centre in Pincher Creek. The report includes Support Impact Highlights, Differing Definitions of Involvement, Environmental Scans, Resource Development, Policy Influence, Transitional Services, Notable Tried-and-True Practices, Lessons Learned, Framework for Education, Research, and much more.



Friendship Centre Environmental Scan results of 21-member Friendship Centres

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Student Supports Learning Program (SSLP)

SSLP was funded by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and administered by National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC).

Due to COVID-19 there was an urgent need for increased connectivity as many schools transitioned to online learning. SSLP supported equitable access to technology and learning supports for Indigenous youth and vulnerable community members across Canada. 17 of 20 Alberta Friendship Centres (\$654,684.21) participated in Student Supports Learning Program impacting over 2250 participants with 95 Elders involved with the program.

The Program aimed to support equitable access to technology and learning supports through:

- Ensuring Indigenous youth continued their studies both academically and traditionally
- Enabling the building of relationships between Indigenous youths, mentors, tutors, and Elders
- Increasing the number of underrepresented youths receiving learning and mentoring supports

Program Activities included:

- Providing resources for youth to receive traditional learning and have access to cultural leaders
- Increasing the capacity of local Friendship Centres, to offer youth in the community access to online learning tutorials
- Purchasing laptops, Chromebooks, and tablets to facilitate online learning and completion of homework and corresponding software

As a grassroots organization, Friendship Centres are uniquely positioned to address the needs of individual communities. This was evident as stories surfaced about activities, resources, and events that filled crucial demands and reduced gaps in learning challenges. Land-based teachings, virtual Indigenous language classes, coding workshops through Zoom, tutoring sessions, fitness challenges, tuition payments, literacy bags, recreational activities, art therapy sessions, outdoor survival skills, GED tutoring, increased access to technology and internet services, connection to Cultural Knowledge Keepers and Elders are only a few of the many creative ways that Friendship Centres met clients needs.

Alberta Education reported that 25,000 children did not register in school during September 2020 after COVID-19 lockdown was lifted. It was imperative that Friendship Centres reach these children and others to mitigate the disparities within the education system that were likely to arise due to the disconnection with the education system.

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Technology purchased included:

- 490 Fitbits for physical and mental wellness
- 190 Stem Kits for coding
- Laptops: 36
- Tablets 10
- Chromebooks 105
- 1 Smartboard

GREEN INITIATIVES:

ANFCA has applied and advocated on behalf of Alberta Friendship Centres for the following Infrastructure Funding from NAFC:

Stream 2:

10 Centres received \$937,153.57 (windows, doors, lighting upgrades, mold removal, roof repair, bathroom repairs, urgent building repairs)

Stream 3:

5 Centres received \$461,925.48 (mechanical systems upgrades, water damage remediation, roof repairs, lighting, building code upgrades)

UIPI Minor:

1 Centre received \$104,800 (exterior renovations)

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, Alberta Friendship Centres received \$1,503,879.05 for infrastructure projects.



*Mannawanis Friendship Centre
aerial view of new roof with solar
panels reinstalled.*

SAIT Green Building Technologies:

ANFCA has entered a 3-year partnership with SAIT Green Building Technologies (GBT) which recognizes the following core project goals:

- use of green building science and technology as an engagement tool for climate change awareness in Alberta's Indigenous communities.
- empowerment of Indigenous Albertans in opportunities and initiatives around climate change action.
- Target: 20 tonnes of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reduced through retrofit activities.

The project has completed its first year of three years with the following outcomes recognized:

- Finalized the Partnership Agreement, Confidentiality Agreement, Working relationship
- 15 Friendship Centre Building Condition Assessments were completed and reports delivered.
- The Facility Documents and Resources binder was created for each of the 21 Friendship Centres to assist in understanding facility systems and maintenance.
- 4 Friendship Centres (Grande Prairie, Nistawoyou, Mannawanis, and Miywasin) were selected to participate as Hub sites for workshops, training sessions, and retrofits. All Friendship Centres are invited to participate in the workshops, training sessions, and summits.

ANFCA applied to **Indigenous Clean Energy (ICE)** technical services grant and were awarded \$7000 which was utilized to engage Cambium Indigenous Professional Services to host a

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workshop, for Friendship Centre Executive Directors and contractors, on how to apply for the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program (GICB) through Infrastructure Canada.

A relationship was developed with **Generation Power** and **Future Ancestors Services** to engage in monthly workshops and training sessions. Generation Power is an Indigenous youth clean energy and career training program.

- Developed by and for Indigenous youth, Generation Power engages a holistic, strength-based approach positioning Indigenous leadership as essential to advancing a more sustainable and equitable energy future. ANFCA looks forward to strengthening our relationship to offer mentorship for youth and network with industry players.
- Future Ancestors Services supports clients and community in honouring our responsibilities as future ancestors to shape the just and sustainable futures our next generations will inherit.