



Introduction

Fall is here. Life goes on and the little ones continue to grow. And everyone is working towards another successful year of Head Start.

The success of Aboriginal Head Start can only come from the people involved, namely, the parents, teachers, care givers, boards and committees, sponsors and of course, the children.

On that note, congratulations to all the young graduates and everyone's hard work, time, sacrifice and commitment to the Aboriginal Head Start Program.

National Office – Name change Aboriginal Childhood and Youth Unit

The Childhood and Youth Division has recently undergone restructuring and as a result the National Office of the Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) Unit has adopted a new name. The Aboriginal Head Start Unit is now the: **Aboriginal Childhood and Youth Unit (ACY).**

Everything else remains the same, phone numbers and personnel remain unchanged at the national office.

The Aboriginal Childhood and Youth Unit will continue to provide national coordination and leadership to the Aboriginal Head Start Program. The Unit will continue to provide a

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quality early childhood intervention program that has seen many successes where the program is delivered.

In addition, the Unit will be assuming a coordinating role for non-reserve based issues related to Aboriginal childhood and youth.

Internet

An interactive World Wide Web (WWW) site to showcase the work of the Health Promotion and Programs Branch is on-line. The Aboriginal Childhood and Youth Unit is within this branch therefore – Aboriginal Head Start is on-line and on the “net.” **Check out AHS’s site** under Health Promotion and Programs Branch/ Children and Youth.



Health Promotion On-line

Get all your health information here, with web sites dedicated to the issues of the Health Promotion and Programs Branch of Health Canada, including:

- Tobacco Reduction
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Population Health Development
- Childhood and Youth
- ☞ **Aboriginal Head Start**
- Nutrition
- Aging and Seniors
- Health Promotion Development
- Workplace Health
- Healthy Environment
- Heart Health
- Family Violence Prevention
- Comprehensive School Health
- NHRDP

For more information, visit:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/health-promotion-sante/>
or email hppb_webmasters@hpb.hc-sc.gc.ca

The Aboriginal Head Start Program is also looking at the possibility of connecting all projects via E-mail. It is therefore necessary to know what equipment (i.e.: computer capabilities, hardware, software, etc) that AHS projects have. A letter will be going out to the regions/projects asking for this information.

A pilot project is being considered for one of the regions to test this communication tool that would be of benefit to all.

Certificates

AHS Graduation and Appreciation Award Certificates are in. For further information contact your regional Program Consultant.



National Aboriginal Head Start Committee (NAHSC)

The NAHSC is mandated to include individuals chosen by projects in every province and territory that has AHS projects.

New members chosen by the projects in their provinces and territories include: Murlene Browning, Prince George, B.C.; Judith Wright-Bird, Fort Smith, NWT; Millie Kuliktana, Kugluktuk, NWT; Joan Glode, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia; and Jenny Lyall, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador.



AHS and High/Scope

Training for the AHS – High/Scope Partnership begins in Winnipeg on September 2, 1997.

This training of trainers program was among several reviewed by the NAHSC and accepted as an optional resource for the AHS Initiative. Nine people from AHS projects from coast to coast to coast were chosen from a

project-wide call to take the seven week course over nine months in various centres across the country. They are as follows:

Linda Arkwright - Châteauguay, Que.
Andrea Fiss - Saskatoon, Sk.
Susy Komishin - Dauphin, Mb.
Elizabeth Lafferty - High Level, Ab.
Faith Lobzun - Windsor, On.
Lisa Roberts - Hamilton, On.
Susan Sinclair - Green Lake, Sk.
Maria Storr - Inuvik, NWT
Roberta Whiskeyjack - Mission, B.C.

By next May, there will be a training resource of certified AHS – High/Scope trainers who will then be available to train AHS teaching staff from interested projects.

Contact Guy Freedman for further information at (613) 952-9769.



Joke Time

Knock Knock jokes:

Knock Knock!

Who's there?

Amos

Amos who?

Amosquito just bit me!

Doctor, Doctor jokes:

Doctor, Doctor, Some days I feel like a tee-pee and other days I feel like a wig-wam.

→ You're too tense.

One liners:

Q: Why did the chicken cross the playground?

A: To get to the other slide!

Oxymorons:

"A little big"

"Completely unfinished"

"Act naturally"



Regional Updates

The Program Consultants have provided updates about the happenings in their region. For any additional information in that region please contact the Program Consultants at the number and address provided at the back of this newsletter.



Atlantic

Aboriginal Family Centre Open House a Success!

On Thursday, May 1, 1997, approximately 200 people from the Happy Valley area gathered to officially open the Aboriginal Family Centre. Guest speakers included Richard Budgell, Manager of the Aboriginal Childhood and Youth Unit, Madeleine Florent, AHS Program Consultant, Atlantic Region, Gordon Andrew, Innu Representative, and Diane Obed, one of the parents whose children are registered in the program, as well as sponsor representative and MC, Rennie Simms.

The Aboriginal Family Centre is located in central Happy Valley, near the Station B post office, and next door to the Royal Bank. Only four weeks into the program and they have already exceeded their goal of registering 40 children. There was certainly a surprising demonstration of support from the local community, including Metis and Inuit elders. All the children enjoy the program and they are now settled into the program, which started April 7, 1997.

After the guest speakers, the ceremony continued on with local talent Beatrice Hope, singing in Inuktitut, and Hughlett Clark, the Metis Elder, who sang with the children, and traditional food was served.

Todd Russel, the Labrador Metis Association President, summed up saying, "this program will finally bring all of the Aboriginal groups in the area together, and what better way than through our children."

The staff of the Aboriginal Family Centre surprised themselves and the community, and are proud of the successful program to date. Jenny Lyall, Program Director gives the credit to the parents, saying that, “in order for the program to succeed we need both parents and children to fully participate and they have exceeded themselves.”



Québec Region

Out of six (6) Aboriginal Head Start Program projects planned for Quebec, four (4) are already in operation at Kuujuaq, Inukjuak, La Tuque and Val d’Or/Senneterre. Projects for Montreal and Quebec city are in the planning stages and it is anticipated that these centres will be opening their doors in the fall.

For the school year that has ended, the projects which are currently in operation involved a total of one hundred and fifty-eight (158) children. These children participated in various activities, and the projects will be closed for the summer. Activities for the children and their parents will start up again in the fall except for the Val d’Or/Senneterre project, which is a more complicated undertaking as it involves activities conducted at two (2) separate sites. The Program Manager will be staying on the job for part of the summer and will be working to consolidate activities conducted at both sites.

Graduation ceremonies took place at all these projects and provided a happy and fulfilling experience to mark the children’s success.

The AHS Provincial Committee – Quebec Region held a strategic planning session in June. This exercise gave participants an opportunity to decide on the major areas of activity for AHS in Quebec for the next two years and to set an action plan for the current year. As well, the restructuring of this committee is proceeding smoothly and the sub-committee in charge of committee structure expects that it will be able to

finalize the committee mandate for approval at the annual general meeting to be held in early fall. The provincial conference is planned for November 13-16, 1997.

The AHS Team for the Quebec Region is also pleased to announce that Robert Young is back to work as of June after an eight month absence due to illness. Thanks to Linda Arkwright who helped out on a temporary basis during Robert’s absence.

Excerpt from the Val d’Or Native Friendship Centre Newsletter: The Centre’s Notebook

Playing and Learning at Home (going out).

Going out does not always mean spending money.

When you go out with children, take time along the way. Let your child stop, look, climb steps, jump in puddles, balance on low walls or swing around poles.

As you go along, look at people at work, notice numbers on letterboxes, colours of roofs, cars, trucks, buses, trains or boats.

Encourage children to see what is around them – fallen trees, blocked gutters, new leaves, shop windows, birds or gardens.

There are many places around you to visit:
A bus or train station; The park;
The library; The airport;
The beach; A pond;
Building with stairs to climb;
A friend or neighbour with pet animals;
Museums, Exhibitions; A farm;

You don’t always need BIG visits. Children can enjoy baby kittens as much as an elephant at the zoo. Take a snack to munch and a damp cloth to clean up sticky fingers.

Going out helps children get to know about people and feel part of the community. Getting there is often the best part.

**WE WISH YOU A SAFE
AND PLEASANT SUMMER**



Ontario Region

2nd Annual Regional AHS Training Workshop:

Planning for the 2nd Annual Regional AHS Training Workshop is under way. AHS project in Ontario agreed that the workshop should be held in Ottawa. The Inuit Head Start project was selected to flow funds for the workshop and to organize it in partnership with the other Ontario projects as project ownership of this workshop is regarded as vital to its success.

Strategic Planning Session for AHS Program Delivery:

The AHS staff in Ontario undertook a strategic planning session on June 11th. Participants in this session included 5 AHS projects, Marilyn Miller (National AHS Committee), and Health Canada staff working on AHS. The main outcome of this session included the gathering of vital feedback from participants on effective program delivery services by Health Canada.

AHS Committee Meeting – June 5th:

The Interim Regional AHS Committee and representatives from AHS project met on June 5th to commence discussions on the regional AHS committee transition process. Another meeting was scheduled for late July.

Manitoba

Recent newspaper clippings demonstrate the kinds of success that the Aboriginal Head Start Program is having in Manitoba, as the community and families take part and share in the celebration of the children's graduation.



“Happy kids lead parade to healthy community” by Mike Maunder and Virginia Maracle
– Winnipeg Free Press, Jun 27, 1997, A3

The PRIDE of Little Red Spirit was paraded down West Broadway yesterday as graduates of the community's preschool program marched to their next school.

The 27 preschool kids were in an Aboriginal Head Start program at Broadway Community Centre. They take Cree in the morning, Ojibway in the afternoon, as well as their ABCs and crafts. They're taught traditional ways by elders.

Yesterday, they donned pint-sized graduation caps and traditional shirts sewn by their mothers, and paraded to Mulvey School, the next step up in their education.

Volunteer Luke Arcouette provided a trailer and a float with a miniature teepee. Red Wind Singers and Dancers led them down the busy streets with drumming and dancing. Community Const. Mark Pruden stopped traffic to let the beaming kids and parents wind their way through the community.

“I've helped out at Little Red Spirit whenever I can,” said Pruden, who's on the program's board. “This program is giving them a firm foundation in their own culture. That's a sense of pride that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.”

“This is a neighbourhood that really needs to show off this kind of pride more often,” said resident Jesse Wood.

Mulvey principal Lori Wilcosh welcomed the parade.

“They showed everyone along Broadway and Sherbrook that learning is part of the community,” she said.

It was a proud day for Tracy Fiddler. Since her daughter Rhoda started at Little Red Spirit last fall, she has decided to return to school herself and is now taking academic upgrading. And yesterday, she learned her Grade 3 son, Daniel, scored the highest mark in Mulvey on the provincial math test – 73, way above the provincial average of 58.

“This program helped the mothers as well as the kids,” she said.

“I came here to help with Rhoda and I got help and moral support from the other mothers. We were able to talk to elders about problems at home.”

She said they went on outings to places like discount store Value Village, someplace she'd never be able to get to on her own.

"This place was like a little safe haven."

Program director Diane Redsky said an important part of the program is that mothers, most of them single parents, come for half the time their children are there.

The program is funded by Health Canada at eighteen sites in Manitoba.

"In our teachings, the child, the family, the community and the nation are all part of the circle," said Redsky. "If children are cared for, the family is healthy. If the families are healthy, then the community and nation are strong. We start here at the beginning, with the child and the family."

At yesterday's ceremony, six children also made their official move up to higher education's halls of learning in Mulvey's Grade 1 class – Alec Morrisseau, Margarita Mousseau, Lionel Starr, Breanne Fisher, Lee-Wayne Nippi and Jordan Mink.

Children learn life skills – Aboriginal projects aid confidence

by Nick Martin, Staff Reporter, Wpg Free Press, City Page-A3, June 13, 1997

Paula Coutu doesn't see the same shy little daughter after five months in an aboriginal Head Start program. Daughter Vicki graduated in a ceremony at the Andrews Street Family centre yesterday, her time at Oshki-Majahitowlin ended now that she'll be entering Grade 1 in September. "It was good. I've seen that Vicki's learned a lot from the program," Coutu said. "She's not that shy any more. She's into books now."

Funded through Health Canada, there are 13 Head Start sponsors in Manitoba, including four in Winnipeg. They opened last fall, though the Andrews Street project was delayed during renovations.

Five of the 37 participants graduated yesterday because they're moving into a full day of school, and there's a lengthy waiting list, said program co-ordinator Bev Smith. The culturally-based program prepares children aged two to five for the school system. "She learned to sing Ojibway songs," Coutu pointed out. "She learned some school stuff; she knew them, but she developed more skills. "Before, she got her

letters all mixed up, now she knows them. She knows her colours and all that."

Ray Roulette said son Donald is noticeably less shy after half a day at Head Start and half a day at kindergarten. "They go on field trips, they have people coming in. They hold meetings on Sundays, the whole family comes."

Roulette said Donald has been tested academically, and has scored well after the program.

Elders are brought to the program to teach tradition. The morning class offers Ojibway, the afternoon Cree.

Andrews Street executive director Dilly Knol said most of the parents – required to put in 10 hours of volunteer work a month – happily show up far more often than required.



The Four Feathers Inc. project, in Winnipeg sent along a poem to share with everyone.

Four Feathers Inc.

*F – is for Families, who are here today
O – is for Others, who will show us the way
U – is for Understanding, when a child is bothered
R – is for Respect we have for each other*

*F – is for Feather, the symbol of our culture
E – is for Elders, who prepare us for our future
A – is for Advisor and those who really care
T – is for Trust we must all share
H – is for Head Start, for fortune and fame
E – is for Earth, from which we all came
R – is for Remembering, to which I recall
S – is for Spirit, born within us all*

*I – is for Idea, a well thought out plan
N – is for Nurturing, which is of great demand
C – is for Creator, to lend us a helping hand*

By Jenny Sanderson



Alberta

Spring brought about great activity in Alberta. As the snow melted the projects were able to start the renovations and outdoor playground development. This time last year the projects were watching their dreams unfold – today they can see concrete proof of their organizations' abilities to develop and complete plans.

The project evaluation framework developed by the Alberta AHS projects is complete. A two-day workshop for the project staff and their evaluators was facilitated on April 10 and 11, 1997. This workshop provided an opportunity for the projects to come together with their evaluators to share their experiences to date, and to discuss the "how to" phase of the project evaluation. Project staff and evaluators were introduced to and trained on the data base that combines their Quarterly Monitoring Report and the Child and Family Assessment Form which the group developed together over the past year.

Brian Ward, Director of the Childhood and Youth Division, visited the Edmonton and Calgary Offices of HPPB and was invited to the "Mother Earth and Me" AHS project sponsored by the Ben Calf Robe Society. Mr. Ward participated in a sweetgrass ceremony, observed and played with the children and met with the project staff.

A new Alberta AHS Committee has been formed. Each of the six representatives from the projects will be responsible for representing their own project as well as those within their geographical area. The new committee members are: Don Harper (High Level, Fort Chipewyan and Grande Prairie); Peggy McCarthy (Peavine Métis Settlement, Gift Lake Métis Settlement, Peerless Lake and Trout Lake); Alice Peters (Rocky Mountain House and Hinton); Judy Livingston (Lac La Biche, Kikino Métis Settlement and Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement); Martha Cardinal (St. Paul, Bonnyville, Fishing Lake Métis Settlement and Elizabeth Métis Settlement); Alice Bolduc (Edmonton and Calgary). There are also two representatives from the provincial government: Jeannine Carrier-Laboucane, Associate Director, Aboriginal Child Welfare and Dianne Dalley, Director, Community Planning and Supports, Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children.



It is hard to believe that the first school year is over. As the projects in Alberta prepared for graduation parties, we feel the need to reflect on the accomplishments of the Alberta Aboriginal community. Looking at the pictures from the grand openings and seeing the excitement in the eyes of the Elders, parents, children and staff – and still seeing that excitement today – this is an indication of success!! Eighteen of the twenty AHS sites are fully operational in Alberta. Approximately 482 children participated in the program during this school year. This initiative has produced approximately 80 jobs in Alberta. Children are learning, parents and Elders are participating and the staff are looking forward to summer break!

"Native kids get Head Start – Eagle feathers symbol of proud young grads' accomplishments"
– Edmonton Journal, June 1997.

When an eagle feather is passed to four-year old Ryan Bruno, he dodges dozens of other children standing on the school stage and runs straight for mom.

"I'm so proud I could cry," says Kathleen Bruno as her son hands her the feather, a symbol of wisdom, strength and honesty.

Ryan is one of 48 children who graduated Thursday night from the Mother Earth and Me Aboriginal Head Start Program. He got the feather because he was one of the youngsters who made special accomplishments throughout the year.

"By the time he was three he'd only said one word," Kathleen says of her son. But after taking the Head Start Program, "He's just opened up and now he comes home and talks about school all the time."

The program, geared toward native children living in the inner city, has just wrapped up its first year. It is one of 18 federally funded Head Start programs now running in Alberta.



NWT

Prayers, strong words, and celebration were experienced across the north this past spring as many AHS projects opened their doors. Opening Day celebrations marked the participation of children and their parents, Elders, family, community members and leaders into the program. The energy of celebration and ceremony, and the commitment by all, is an important sign that AHS is vital and strong in the north.

Eleven of the thirteen projects are operational, with one project offering home-based programming while waiting for renovations to be completed, and another focusing on staff training as the facility is prepared. During the spring, AHS projects have been working to design the curriculum, involve Elders and parents, train staff, and build partnerships in the community.

While some projects will operate into, and through the summer, many have temporarily closed. A unique feature of AHS programming in the north is its tie to the traditional movement of families returning to the land for the fishing and hunting season. For example, the majority of Nunavut projects were closed by the end of May and will re-open in August.

As projects now have operational program experience, attention is turning to what has been learned. Evaluation is now a familiar word for project staff. Two months ago a Planning Group, involving project coordinators from Nunavut and the Western Arctic, was formed. Planning Group dedication to conference Calls – now too numerous to mention – has resulted in a participatory Evaluation Plan that will strive to “build self-evaluation capacity and strengthen the community’s ability to evolve their Aboriginal Head Start efforts for maximum results.” As a result, an Evaluation Retreat near Yellowknife has been organized this summer to: 1) facilitate a comprehensive approach to evaluation in the north; 2) develop an approach that illustrates that evaluation is a daily activity embedded in the community’s culture; 3) become self-sufficient in evaluation; and 4) bring project coordinators together to share their insight and knowledge.

In late May, Health Canada staff had a rare opportunity to visit a Nunavut project in the community of Arviat. The beaming faces of children, and the satisfying and content look of staff, were telling signs of what we were to learn is a model AHS project. This project offers a program rooted deeply in culture, language, and tradition, and focused on the healthy development of children in their community.

Congratulation to all AHS project staff, children, parents, Elders, family and community members who have taken the first steps. The capacity of Canada’s most northern communities demonstrate that cooperation, sheer determination, strength of character, and laughter are ingredients that make good things happen. While AHS projects still have much to experience and learn, there is no shortage of the necessary ingredients.

NWT AHS Summary Info:

Estimated number of children:	200
Estimated number of staff:	24
Number of sites:	13
Number of programs operating:	12

New Developments:

– Evaluation Retreat June 23-25



Calendar of Events

September 1997

Sept 29-Oct 5 – National AIDS Awareness Week.
Canadian AIDS Society.

October 1997

Oct. – National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Oct 16 – Winnipeg, Mb. 4th Annual Manitoba
Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards.
Info (204) 957-7930

Oct 27-28 – North Vancouver, BC. A National
Conference for First Nation's Women's Business
Conference. Info: 1-800-337-7743

November 1997

Nov 6-8 – Toronto, ON. Family Service Ontario/Family
Service Canada National Conference "Rise to the
Future!" Building Strong Families and Healthy
Communities: Finding Hope, Meaning and Direction
in Time of Change. Info: FSO/FSC (416) 231-6003,
Fax (416) 231-2405

Nov 16 – Louis Riel Day

Nov 16-19 – Quebec Training Workshop, Montreal,
Que. Contact: Suzette Jeanotte (514) 283-3065,
Fax (514) 283-3309

Nov 20 – National Child Day – National Child Day
Activity Guide, Info: Health Canada, Childhood and
Youth Division, (613) 952-1220, Fax (613) 952-7046

Nov 16-22 – National Addiction Awareness Week.
Nechi Institute 1-800-769-6229, (403) 460-4304

Nov 25 – International Day to End Violence Against
Women. Status of Women Canada (613) 232-5751

Newsletter

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Aboriginal Head Start News is published
in the interests of promoting issues relating to
Aboriginal Head Start to all Aboriginal Head
Start projects in Canada and other interested
parties. Readers are encouraged to reproduce
Aboriginal Head Start News in whole or in part,
provided the source is mentioned.

Let us know what type of information you
would like to see included in the next edition.
We hope that you will be willing to share some
interesting newsworthy stories relating to
Aboriginal Head Start. Articles should not
exceed one page in length. Please send in your
interesting articles and photos to the Aboriginal
Head Start Office in Ottawa. Deadlines for new
articles are: September 12, 1997, December 12,
1997 and March 13, 1998.

Aboriginal Head Start News is also
available in French. If you want additional
information on Aboriginal Head Start, please
feel free to get in touch with a regional contact,
or:

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