

FOR RELEASE #06-157  
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**FUNDING AIMED AT PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT AGAINST FIRST NATION WOMEN**

WHITEHORSE - Funding for five community-based projects focused on preventing sexual assault against Aboriginal women were announced today by Elaine Taylor, minister responsible for the Women's Directorate.

"Reducing the incidence of sexual assault against women is key to building healthy communities," Taylor said. "These self-directed projects address this very serious issue in ways that are unique to each community."

This initiative will enhance the public education campaign on violence against women and children (Circles of Respect and Equality, or C.O.R.E., campaign), which will focus its second year on the prevention of sexual assault.

A total of \$100,000 has been allotted for programs and events designed and developed by Aboriginal women for their communities. The following five projects will each receive \$20,000:

- *Young Women Regaining Their Power* - Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Education Department;
- *TKC Women's Craft Healing Circle* - Ta'an Kwach'an Council Health Department;
- *"It's Okay to Tell"* - Kwanlin Dun First Nation Justice Programs;
- *Healing Through Participation* - White River First Nation; and
- *Aboriginal Young Men and Women Against Sexualized Violence* - Skookum Jim Friendship Centre.

These community initiatives will be completed by March 31, 2007. These initiatives complement others that have been underway for the last two years.

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Attached: Detailed description of the five programs.

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## **List of Funded Projects**

### ***Young Women Regaining Their Power - Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Education***

Fifteen young women will take part in three workshops to take place near Old Crow and in Whitehorse. Participants will learn to recognize sexualized violence, develop communication skills, and receive support and develop skills for self-empowerment, understanding conflict, problem solving and positive body image and self esteem. Alcohol and drug issues will also be addressed. (Contact: Kim Rumley, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, phone 456-3826)

### ***TKC Women's Craft Healing Circle - Ta'an Kwach'an Council Health Department***

Women will participate in healing circles over several months, incorporating a healthy supper and traditional crafts, as well as awareness about sexualized violence. Participants will learn about self esteem, healthy relationships, sexual abuse and violence, support systems, personal safety and other topics. (Contact: Brenda Sam, Ta'an Kwach'an Council, phone 668-3613)

### ***"It's Okay to Tell" - Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Justice Programs***

In recognition of the benefits of involving both men and women in community healing, members of the community will participate in a series of support circles. Residential school issues, the impacts of cultural oppression and the restoration of balance that has resulted from the sexualized violence and trauma will be the focus. Some participants will attend the Healing Our Spirit Conference (Edmonton, AB) and will bring information back to the community. A workshop on victimization is also planned. (Contact: Darlene Scurvey or Yvonne Smarch, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, phone 633-7854)

### ***Healing Through Participation - White River First Nation***

A group of 12 women will take part in a variety of cultural and learning events including a river trip to Dawson City to participate in Moosehide Gathering, camping at Snag, a winter trip to Wellesley Lake and ongoing quilting healing circles. The women will gain knowledge about sexual abuse and other types of abuse, and will develop a support network for each other. (Contact: Eldria Christiansen, White River First Nation, phone 862-7802)

### ***Aboriginal Young Men and Women against Sexualized Violence - Skookum Jim Friendship Centre***

Youth between the ages of 14 and 18 will attend a six week program which will combine the traditional First Nation knowledge of gender roles and values with the understanding of mainstream society. Topics will include the prevention of sexualized violence, healthy relationships and lifestyles, and other topics. (Contact: Karen Keenan, Skookum Jim Friendship Centre, phone 633-7693)