



Season's Greetings!



Touchstones Community Sessions

This fall, the Nisga'a and Haida Nations hosted community sessions in partnership with the Northern British Columbia Touchstones of Hope Advisory Committee and the Caring Society. The sessions invited community members in the respective nations to develop their own community based visions of healthy and safe children and then put in place a plan to achieve that vision using the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope process. October 6-7, 2010 marked the fourth community session hosted by Nisga'a Child and Family Services in Terrace, British Columbia. We had a wonderful turn out with about 80 participants from Nisga'a CFS, Nisga'a citizens and the Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD). The Culture, Language & Holistic Touchstone talk was given by three Elders and a lady in the community who has been learning from them. Troy Morin talked about Non Discrimination and Structural Interventions (dealing with issues like poverty that put children at risk but are outside of the direct control of parents to influence) was done by Rhonda Ducharme and Dianna Mould. We were very pleased that the Grandmother's group from Lax Kw'alaams was able to join us and share their story on how their influential group was created and ways in which they are involved in their communities. At the end of the session when all of the small groups reported back to the large group regarding their visions and plans for Nisga'a children and families, one of the next steps recommended by the group was that a grandmother's group for the Nisga'a area be created.

The second community session occurred on November 2-3, 2010 with Haida Child and Family Services in Masset, British Columbia. The 40 participants included community members, staff from Haida Child and Family Services and MCFD and two Native American guests from the United States who are interested in the Touchstones of Hope process for use in their Nations. Presentations on each of the Touchstones were done by members of the Northern BC Touchstones Advisory Committee. (Continued on Page 3).

First Nations in Saskatchewan join the Touchstones of Hope Movement

“It was a great honor to assist with the Northern BC touchstones gathering in Victoria, BC in March 2010. Diane & I found the gathering very respectful and engaging. The two days were very exciting and informative for all that were involved. We left the conference with many great ideas and feedback that we have used to assist us in our Touchstones preparations here in Saskatchewan.

In September 2010 Diane & Bonnie Musqua held the first Touchstones workshop in Regina, Saskatchewan. The workshop was held with the Ministry of Social Services & First Nations Family Helpers staff. The workshop was well received and the two groups left with action plans for future work and their working relationship. We are excited to hear that the reconciliation movement is continuing in the province of British Columbia and are very thankful to have been a part of the process!”

Diane & Bonnie Musqua

*First Nations Provincial Training & Practice Analyst
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Shannen's Dream

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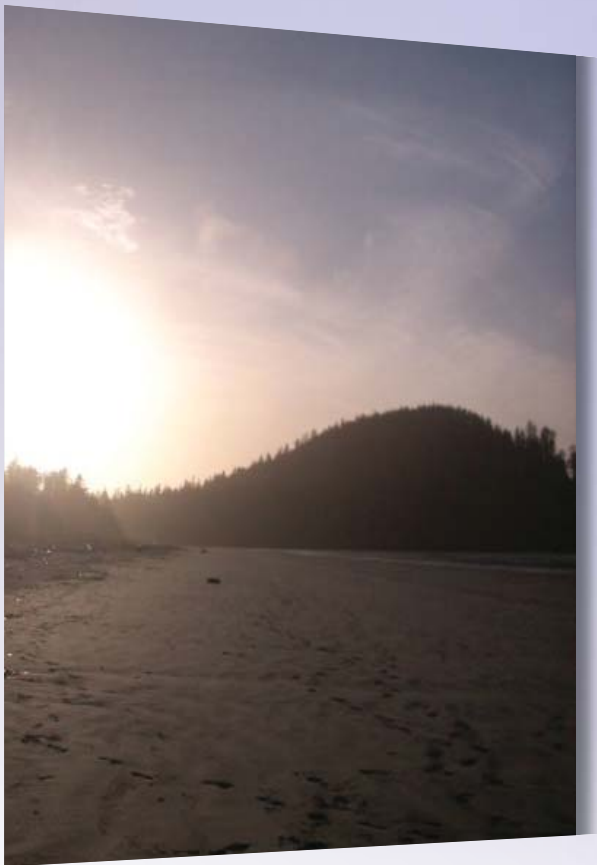
<http://www.fncfcs.com/shannensdream/>



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Small group reports back to the large group were done in a circle and each group presented the next steps that came out of their discussions. The ending circle encouraged open sharing and the discussions culminated in a community based vision and plan for child and family wellbeing.

A warm 'thank you' to Nisga'a Child and Family Services and Haida Child and Family Services, and to the Elders, youth, community members and other participants for their fantastic participation.



North Beach - Masset, Haida Gwaii

Touchstones of Hope in the United States

The interest in the Touchstones of Hope philosophy and the reconciliation movement is starting to diffuse and catch people's interest. Other parts of British Columbia are hoping to engage in this process and host their own Touchstones community sessions, including the possibility of a session for youth. In Saskatchewan, two Touchstones trainers have been hosting workshops with organizations invested in children utilizing the Touchstones of Hope (see Reflections below). Lastly, the Caring Society has been working with the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) on a project funded through W.K. Kellogg Foundation. NICWA's goal is to work with Native American peoples in three States to improve relationships and be able to move forward to improve the situation for Native American children. One of the roles of the Caring Society is to update the Touchstones for Leadership curriculum. This updated version of the curriculum will be completed by January 2011 and will be comprised of a series of compact discs accompanied by user manuals. See NICWA's website for more information: www.nicwa.org

New Resources

(<http://www.northernbctouchstones.ca/resources.html>)

Shielded Minds is a film project by Canadian Roots (<http://www.canadianroots.ca/>) which is an exchange initiative that invites Aboriginal and non Aboriginal youth to actively engage with First Nations communities for 8-10 days as well as to partake in their own journey of self discovery and to learn about all aspects of Aboriginal peoples and communities in a meaningful way. Go to <http://shieldedminds.ca/watch/> to watch this inspirational video.

Also see the article **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Canadian Government Positions Incompatible with Genuine Reconciliation** by Paul Joffe.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE NORTHERN BC TOUCHSTONES OF HOPE, PLEASE CONTACT:

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