



# Walk Bravely Forward News

## Who Are We?

Walk Bravely Forward is a registered charity that assists offenders in the Federal Corrections System to rejoin the community as productive citizens. We work primarily with those individuals who are Aboriginal, but we also work with all offenders who are ready and willing to make necessary changes in their lives. Our society has been doing this work for the last four years, and currently our program extends throughout the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Our name is a message to the offenders who are demonstrating a readiness to take on their new responsibilities as free members of society...Walk Bravely forward.

Our goals are:

Community safety, family reunification, and facilitating individuals to become productive and independent citizens.

Over the years we have been encouraging offenders to become community volunteers as part of their reintegration plans. The advantages of this are:

- Offenders get reacquainted with, and develop strong ties to the community
- They gain new experiences, foster a sense of accomplishment, and develop strong and valuable contacts that will help them with future job searches.

- The develop a

sense of membership in a safe and healthy community

Our future plans include such things as: expanding mentorship programs in the community, expanding our staff and volunteers going into the institutions, expand on plans for the future formation of a healing lodge for long-term offenders coming back to the community, and to raise the profile of Aboriginal offenders in a good way.

*Ron Kears*

*(Ron is the Community Development Worker for the Walk Bravely Forward Society)*

## What is Section 84?

Section 84 is part of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and reads as follows: "Where an inmate who is applying for parole has expressed an interest in being released to an Aboriginal community, the service shall, if the inmate consents, give

the Aboriginal Community

1. Adequate notice of the inmate's application, and
2. An opportunity to propose a plan for the inmate's release to, and integration into, the Aboriginal

community.

*The Walk Bravely Forward Society and the Vancouver Métis Community Association is a Section 84 community. We will work with any offender from anywhere in the province or country.*

### Inside this issue:

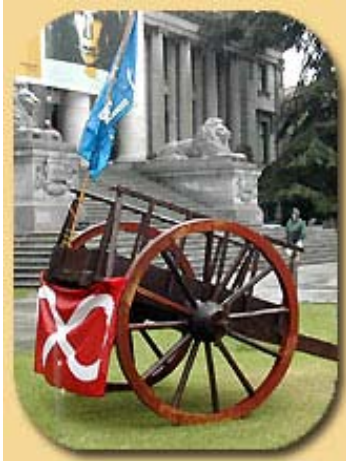
Elder's Corner	2
Message From ACDO- Section 84	2
Volunteer Coordinator	2
Vancouver Métis Community	3
Message From United Native Nations	3
Spiritual Focus	3
Section 84 to Expand?	4

### Special points of interest:

- The Walk Bravely Forward Society
- Who is the new Section 84 ACDO?
- 
- What Do Our Community Partners have to say?

## Elder's Corner

By Ken Pruden



My name is Ken Pruden, Chair Elder of the Vancouver Métis Community Association. My background is Cree-English, from Selkirk Manitoba. My past careers include: military (R.C.A.F.), Health Care and Project Management.

Allow me to introduce another very active Métis Elder, Don MacDonald (DonMac). Don's background is Cree-Scottish from Clandeboye, Manitoba. He taught school for many years as a Princi-

pal, and now runs two sales franchises for western Canada.

We have both been involved with CSC for a number of years, working with the Walk Bravely Forward Program: attending parole hearings, teaching short programs and interacting with offenders and staff. Don has taught an eight hour course in Setting Up Your Own Business, while I taught Métis history. Courses were given at Fern- dale and Mission Institu-

tions.

We feel the Walk Bravely Forward program is supportive and beneficial to offenders. The more support, encouragement and information provided them, the better their chances of success in the community. To this end, we stand ready to assist in this manner, as time available and resources allow.

Ken Pruden  
Chair Elder

## Message From Aboriginal Community Development Officer—Section 84 by Laura Baird

*“That day we saw the community’s involvement in the justice process give a sense of hope to this young family.”*

Many positive things have happened in a variety of communities across our Region. We’ve been successful in raising the awareness in our communities and levels of government for Aboriginal Men/Women and their families who are involved in the justice system. The community of Sechelt First Nation for example held its first Community Based Hearing in their longhouse for a Section 84 Com-

munity Member in 2007 and we were all witness to a family/Community in healing as they sat together with the National Parole Board of Canada. That day we saw the Community’s involvement in the Justice process give a sense of hope to this young family. As the ACDO for Section 84, I know that many of our men/women face personal, social and economic issues that are difficult for everyone to over-

come but with the support of a community that is willing to lend a hand or words of encouragement, I am confident that those who are willing will get the support they need. Support is an important part of release planning for Men and Women on Parole— and I truly thank those who give so willingly of their time.

## Message From Corrections Canada

By Sara Waters



The Vancouver and New Westminster Area Community Corrections Volunteer Program is currently in partnership with the St. Leonard’s Society of North Vancouver and has been in operation since 1995. The Volunteer Program consists of 80 volunteers to date and strives to successfully recruit, train and place these volunteers within community corrections.

Volunteers are busy with numerous roles like mentoring, resume writing, job searching, transit tours, research, program facilitation support, income tax assistance, games nights, and providing support to offenders in connecting with community resources. All of our volunteers enhance the ability to accomplish the goals of CSC and provides a vital gateway for commu-

nity involvement I am endlessly inspired by people who freely give of their time to others, for the pure and simple vision of a better community. So, as a newbie in the position of Volunteer Coordinator I feel very privileged to be surrounded by the individuals who find themselves to be a part of this category; a group which, I believe, continues to inspire many more.

## The Vancouver Métis Community Association by J. Paul Stevenson

The Vancouver Métis Community Association strives to develop a safe, healthy and prosperous community for its members. This includes all of our members and Aboriginal Peoples that we work with.

Perhaps what makes Section 84 so important to us is that many of our families have been affected by crime, either with family members incarcerated, or as victims. It is important to see our family members come home

from incarceration with every opportunity to develop a new life.

It is really simple for us, a family member or community member has made a wrong decision in his or her life, they choose to make changes and we are honor bound to support that change.

We are a non-judgmental community and we look forward to assisting any person that wishes to better their

lifestyle. We have many bridges to Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal resources so that we can, in some small way, better the only race that counts—the human race.

All My Relations,

J. Paul Stevenson

*J. Paul Stevenson is the elected President of the Vancouver Métis Community Association*



The 2006-2007 Vancouver Métis Community Association Board of Directors

## Message From United Native Nations By June Scudeler

United Native Nations (UNN) was founded in 1969. The society is an Aboriginal political organisation that represents off-reserve status and non-status Indians, Inuit and Métis populations. The mandate of the UNN is to implement positive change for all Aboriginal peoples as outlined in the society's constitution. UNN's services include: B.C. Native Housing Corpora-

tion (BCNHC) is a wholly owned subsidiary of UNN. It contracts with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to deliver social housing programs to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people within the rural areas of BC, Volunteer Entrepreneur Networking Training Urban Resources and Employment Services (VENTURES) provides em-

ployment services to Aboriginal clients. We also have Adult Basic Education and wage subsidy advisors to help our clients upgrade their employment skills.

UNN is located at 200 - 678 E Hastings St in Vancouver. Our phone number is 604 688-1821 and our email is unns@unns.bc.ca

*“The mandate of the UNN is to implement positive change for all Aboriginal peoples as outlined in the society's constitution.”*

## Some Kind of Ongoing Spiritual Practice Keeps Offenders Focused

As any experienced person working within the Corrections System will tell you, you know that an offender has turned a positive corner when he or she develops a spiritual interest. This could mean anything from developing a positive relationship with an Aboriginal Elder, taking an active

interest in smudging or attending sweat lodge/Long House ceremonies on a regular basis, attending church or seeing the Chaplain on a regular basis. We encourage the offenders to take an active interest in spirituality of any kind as we have seen that such an interest keeps them fo-

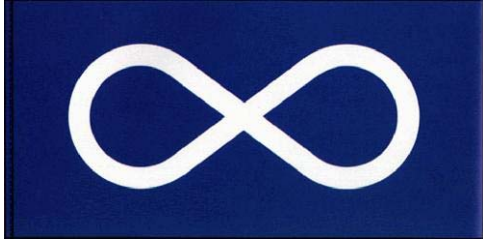
cused. That focus, in turn, usually translates into positive action by the offender in terms of behaviors, motivation and rehabilitation. It usually means they are willing to change their past behaviors and move forward in a positive way.



**Walk Bravely Forward  
Society**

#211-744 West Hastings Street  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V6C 1A5

Phone: 604-682-2933 (Office)  
Mobile: 604-817-4514 (ask for Ron)  
Fax: 604-683-3911  
E-mail:  
administration@walkbravelyforward.com



**We're on the web:  
[www.walkbravelyforward.com](http://www.walkbravelyforward.com)**



*The Section 84 logo is a concept by Jessie Blair who is a member of the Vancouver Métis Community Association. Buttons with this logo are available through the Pacific Region Office.*

## **Section 84 to Expand Beyond the Aboriginal Community?**



*Section 84—expanding its horizons?*

This is not a done deal, nor is it even being talked about within the Corrections Canada administration. In fact, the staff of Corrections Canada don't even know this is even being talked about, not yet. The Section 84 Community Development Officer for the BC Lower Mainland, and the Community Development Worker for the Walk Bravely Forward Society have been discussing future plans to bring the Section 84 concept outside Aboriginal communities.

It is the feeling of both people that other communities have the same right to consult with, and develop release plans for their incarcerated citizens as Aboriginal communities have.

Studies have shown that community involvement in the corrections process lessens the chances of offender recidivism. In this day and age where there is a lot of community concern regarding offender reintegration and recidivism, it makes sense that the more opportunities given to the community-at-large to get involved in the process, the better the chances that recidivism rates will drop.

Discussions are ongoing and in time, a draft proposal will be drawn up to be presented to the Regional Office. It is felt that such a move only makes sense from both a community safety and support point of view.

*Program to assist Aboriginal offenders reintegrate to the community.*