



Walk Bravely Forward News

Who Is the Vancouver Area Aboriginal Community Development Officer for Section 84?

The Section 84 Program is a huge success in British Columbia. In fact, whenever different regions throughout Canada think of Section 84, they are asked to look to BC as a leader in how the program works. Much of the credit for the success of the Section 84 Program goes to the Aboriginal Community Development Worker for Vancouver and area, Laura Baird.

For six years Laura has been doing this work and in that time she has taken a little known program, and made it a well known name.

Her passion for the Section 84 program is infectious. Just being around her makes one get excited and believe

that anything is possible.

And indeed, anything is possible. When the Walk Bravely Forward Society began our journey of assisting offenders return to the community, it was Laura who originally asked us to come on board. Since then she has been a major force in assisting our community in becoming familiar with the "do's and don'ts" of working within the federal penal system.

Thanks to Laura, our community program has come a long way since those early days. For example, after five years, we now have a registered charity with which we can secure funding to continue to work with incarcerated Métis citizens. It was

Laura giving us the confidence in our abilities that enabled us to make that step.

Laura continues to liaise with various Aboriginal communities around BC, various departments within Corrections Services Canada, the incarcerated men and women, and various resources to assist the community with capacity so they can address continuing care after an offender's Warrant Expiry.

There are further plans ahead for Section 84, some of them big. So we will keep you posted on their progress in future editions of Walk



What is Up for 2008-2009?

The Walk Bravely Forward Society is in expansion mode and we are implementing a two year program to expand all of our programs. We will hopefully complete phase one of our expansion by May 2009.

Some of the areas we want to expand right away include: bringing our community Elders into the institutions on a regular basis beginning this year, conducting research for a community resource book for the offenders on parole, and hopefully hiring a part time

front line worker by year's end (funding allowing), along with a host of other small but important steps to facilitate our future growth. We will keep you updated in the next newsletter as to our progress.

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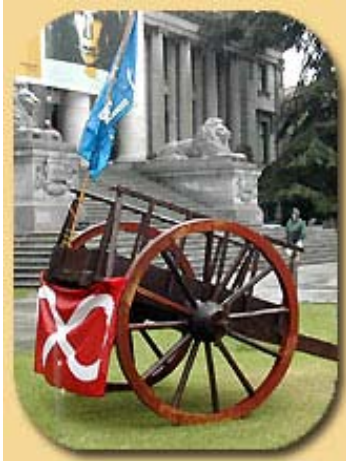
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Special points of interest:

- Future plans for the Walk Bravely Forward Society
- Who is the Section 84 ACDO?
- Ni Ta Ti Kawekeyah
- What Do Our Community Partners have to say?

Elder's Corner

By Ken Pruden



So far it has been a busy spring for the Elders in our community. Starting back at the end of January when I addressed a graduation and presentation ceremony at Pacific Institution, right through to February when I taught Métis culture for two evenings at Vancouver Community College. These presentations were done for a class of counsellors.

The Elders have been keeping busy with several things over the past few months as

well, such as visiting offenders in the federal institutions, attending two transformative circles at the Vancouver Native friendship Centre, and attending a weekend Transformative Justice Strategic Planning Convention held on Vancouver island on March 28, 29 and 30th.

We recently were the proud recipients of a Certificate of Appreciation from the St. Leonard Society for the work we have done with the of-

fenders over the past five years.

We are presently discussing a program whereby Walk Bravely Forward and Corrections Services Canada would arrange for all Elders to enter an institution at one time, have a separate room, and just spend time with individual offenders for the afternoon. I will keep you posted as to the progress of that program in future articles.

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

“So my job requires me to constantly seek new community resources and partnerships.”

People ask me what exactly does my job entail. In a nutshell, I assist the community with capacity so they can address continuing care after warrant.

What that means is, making sure both the offender and community have access to the appropriate resources which will enable them both

a successful and safe transition from incarceration to community living. So my job requires me to constantly seek new community resources and partnerships. These include: education, job training, housing, women's and children's resources, etc. It is time consuming work, but I find the results are very gratifying.

Work continues in gathering resources, forming partnerships and strengthening communities.

At this time I would like to say a big Thank-You to all of the Elders for their work both in the institutions and the communities. My thoughts and prayers are with them.

Message From Corrections Canada

By Cindy Allen



I would like to introduce myself as the new Volunteer Coordinator for Vancouver Community Corrections in partnership with the St. Leonard's Society of North America. Since my start in February of 2008 the program's focus has centered on recruitment with great results. 10 new volunteers have completed the application process following information sessions

held at local colleges and universities. I continue to be amazed by the enthusiasm and dedication shown by those who despite full-time studies commit themselves to assisting offenders in making a smooth and successful return to our communities. In keeping with our Aboriginal Initiative the Volunteer Program was represented at the Public Forum on Section 84 held March

27, 2008 at the Harbour Center. To this end the Volunteer Program will continue to look to Aboriginal communities to fill our volunteer roster as well as offering workshops aimed at providing information and resources for non-Aboriginal volunteers. I look forward to our continued relationship with the Métis Society and the guidance and experience of Ron Kears

The Vancouver Métis Community Association by J. Paul Stevenson

Tansi,

For this edition of the Walk Bravely Forward News, I would like to talk a bit about Escorted Temporary Absences, or ETA's. Our VMCA Office is always open to Métis, and other offenders, who would like to participate in cultural ETA's to their communities. We have had several successful

cultural ETA's to our community in the past, and we look forward to many more in the future. This is a great way for offenders to reacquaint themselves with their chosen community.

Our community always enjoys visits from parolees. If an offender needs a place to go to be with members of his/her community, our of-

fice door is always open. They can come for a visit to chill, do some volunteer work, (there's always something to do), or just talk and have a coffee, they are always welcome into our office, and by extension, our community.

In the Spirit of Riel,

J. Paul Stevenson



At Celebration Métis 2004

Message From United Native Nations By June Scudeler

United Native Nations (UNN) represents off-reserve status and non-status, Inuit and Métis populations. UNN is located at 200 - 678 E Hastings St in Vancouver. Our phone number is 604 688-1821, our email is unn@unns.bc.ca and our website is unns.bc.ca

UNN's services include the Volunteer Entrepreneur Networking Training Urban Resources and Employment Services

(VENTURES), which provides employment services to Aboriginal clients. We also have Adult Basic Education and wage subsidy advisors to help our clients upgrade their employment skills. Contact Anne or Theresa at 604 688-1821 for more information.

UNN is in the process of establishing a BC Aboriginal Women's Council in BC to represent the interests and issues of Aboriginal

women. UNN also developed an Aboriginal Youth Council to increase youth participation at all levels of government.

On August 15-17, UNN will have its Annual General Assembly in Kelowna with elections for President and Vice-President. We'll let you know the results in the next issue of *Walk Bravely Forward News*.

"UNN is in the process of establishing a BC Aboriginal Women's Council in BC to represent the interests and issues of Aboriginal women. ."

Ni Ta Ti Kawekeyah (Our Community) By Ron Kearse

A program that was developed by two of our Elders for federal offenders is now being offered to members of the community. Ni Ta Ti Kawekeyah is Michif for Our Community and is a two-part program that firstly, instructs the participants in Métis culture and history; and then offers instruction on how

to develop and maintain your own business. Classes will be two hours in total duration, once a week and spread out over four weeks.

Though this program was originally developed with offenders in mind, our elders Ken Pruden and Don MacDonald have been talking with

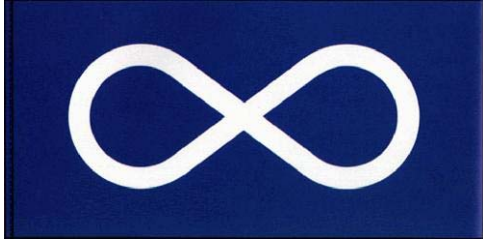
various members of the community, and due to the positive response they have been given, Ken and Don have decided to take this program to the community. We will keep everybody updated as more information becomes available.



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**We're on the web:
www.walkbravelyforward.com**



The Section 84 logo is a concept by Jessie Blair who is a member of the Vancouver Métis Community Association. It was refined by Nasser Gholizadeh of Digitech Printing in Vancouver. Buttons with this logo are available through the Pacific Region Office.

**Walk Bravely Forward Society Continues to
Build Partnerships with Other
Communities**



*Kokopelli—the Ancient bearer of seeds
and God of Agriculture. May his spirit be
with us as Walk Bravely Forward contin-
ues to grow.*

This coming year we are concentrating on expanding our programs, and have been building partnerships with other communities and community organizations in our quest to build ever-expanding resources for offenders. Lately, our partnership building has deepened to the point where we seem to be generating a lot of interest in what we are doing. And, it seems, a lot of community groups are coming on-board.

We have always had an excellent relationship with the ACCESS Program at the Vancouver Native Friendship Centre. This program provides education and trades training for all Aboriginal people.

We have begun talks with United Native

Nations on how our communities can pool our resources when it comes to justice issues. There are several areas in which we can come together and move forward such as housing, (BC Native Housing), and one-on-one education through their VENTURES Program.

We have also just entered into a wonderfully supportive partnership with the Anglican Church of Canada, who have graciously granted us some funds, making it possible for our Elders to go in to the prison system to work with the offenders on a regular basis. These funds will cover the transportation costs of the Elders to get to and from the institutions.

Program to assist Aboriginal offenders reintegrate to the community.