



# EAUAC NEWS

Newsletter of the Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee

*"Toward an equal and positive partnership between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal citizens of Edmonton."*

# "NIKANIHEW"

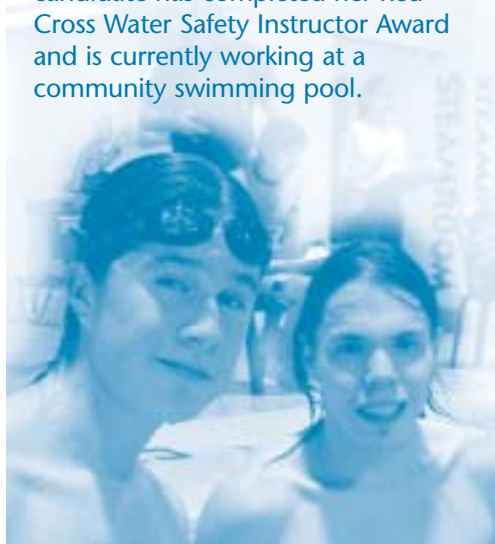
By Christine Belter

**In** March of 2003, eleven Aboriginal Youth completed the specialized Aquatic Leadership Program to train as future swim instructors and lifeguards. The six month-intensive training program was developed through the collaborative efforts of Amiskwacyi Academy, the City of Edmonton Community Services Department, and the Department of Canadian Heritage Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centres Initiative.

The Aboriginal Youth Aquatic Leadership Program was given the name Nikanihew by Cree Elders meaning, one who leads the way. The program combines the cultural teachings and guidance of Aboriginal Elders, with the instruction of water safety and leadership skills by experienced City of Edmonton Advanced Aquatic Instructors. This shared mentoring approach provides a very positive, stable and supportive learning environment. Youth participants entered the program with varying levels of abilities. The program provided them with opportunity to develop their swimming, lifesaving and leadership skills. All have made strong improvements completing several of the advanced aquatic certifications. The Youth received their Bronze

## Aboriginal Youth Aquatic Leadership Program

Medallion, Bronze Cross, and Senior Resuscitation. These awards are prerequisites in lifeguard training. All candidates completed their AquaLeader Award, the prerequisite to the Water Safety Instructor Award. The Youth were also involved in program observations and volunteer instruction at local facilities. One candidate has completed her Red Cross Water Safety Instructor Award and is currently working at a community swimming pool.



Year two for Nikanihew runs from October 2003-April 2004. The goals for second year are to pursue additional aquatic certifications in Aquatic Emergency Care, Red Cross Water Safety Instructor, and National Lifeguard Service Award. Student Work experience placements will be facilitated as part of the course work with employment preparation also incorporated. Upon successful completion, these Aboriginal Youth will be certified as Lifeguards and Swimming Instructors fully prepared to seek employment at local swimming pools. We are looking forward to another exciting year of hard work and success for students of the "Nikanihew" Aquatic Leadership Program! For more information about this program you can contact City of Edmonton's Rita Shakura at 496-5618. ✨

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# Message from the Chair

## Ahaw, mena Tawaw!

Hello and welcome! We are at the end of another year and we bid you good tidings! This has been a fantastic year for networking, talking to one another at different levels of government, making alliances and connecting with each other, all in efforts to create a stronger sense of community.

We are looking forward to exciting new developments and community participation in the New Year with particular input from Elders and Youth in the Aboriginal community. This participation includes making direct contact with the community people, organizations and agencies that represent the Aboriginal Peoples and hearing what they have to say about their urban community. Other initiatives such as the Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project (RFAOHP) will be completed early in the New Year and we look forward to reporting the findings. The members of that group have worked vigorously this year. To the RFAOHP Research Team and Project Manager, Pam Cunningham, "Congratulations on a job well done!"



Lewis Cardinal

This year we have covered much territory and the hard work of our committee has made these strides possible. The Charter for the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord has reached an agreement in principle with the City's Senior Management Team. Our next step, is to

gain final approval sometime this month or in January. At which time, the EAUAC will engage the Aboriginal community in consultations to design an "Accord" that will reflect an Indigenous framework. That will guide our communities and the City together with a common vision that works toward better relationships and strengthening our community with better support and inclusion of Aboriginal people in Edmonton.

While much has happened, we are also sad to bid farewell to two EAUAC members, George Vass and Gina Cosco, who have contributed much to the Aboriginal Youth and Employment and Business Sub-Committees. We thank them for their generous contributions to our Committee.

We also welcome the new members to the Committee who are coming aboard in January 2004! ✨

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**PIPON • WINTER 2003**

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 THE CITY OF  
**Edmonton** COMMUNITY SERVICES

## Oral Histories Project Winds Down

By Pamela Cunningham

The Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project is starting to wind down. In less than six months, the team of Jacqueline Pelletier, Melanie Poole and Dianne Stretch-Strang have contacted over 100 people and have conducted 27 interviews. Along the way, we have had the chance to meet many interesting people and have been honoured to hear your stories of the burial ground. We are wrapping up the final interviews and are in the process of writing a final report to the City of Edmonton that is due early January 2004.

At the beginning of February, the team will be hosting a public gathering where they will be presenting their findings. Information on this will be available in mid-January. For more information you can contact the Project team at (780) 462-3648. ✨

## ELDER'S PATHWAY...

Royal Alex Hospital

# "Oskapewsis"

## Aboriginal Cultural Helper

By Rosalie Cardinal

**O**n an August afternoon, this interview was held with Elder Robert Cardinal, the Cultural Helper of the Aboriginal Cultural Education. This program is offered through the Pastoral Care and Counselling Services at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. Started nine years ago, this program is the first of its kind in Canada.

Aboriginal Elders Raven Mackinaw, Madge McCree and Joe P. Cardinal were key players in starting this program. In the developing stages, in accordance with Aboriginal tradition, tobacco was offered to the Aboriginal Elders by RAH representatives who wanted Aboriginal people to come to the hospital and take leadership in performing cultural practices such as the smudging ceremony for patients. At the time, the Elders were pleased with this idea and suggested that an "Oskapewsis" position be created. An Oskapewsis, according to Bob, is a cultural helper whose role is to first serve the Creator, then serve the people, and lastly himself. Mr. Cardinal describes his role as a helper in providing services to patients and the administration, in receiving complaints, creating Aboriginal awareness and providing a facility. The facility is the Charles Campsell Room, which has been in operation for five or six years for patients and their families to use during difficult times. It is used as a place to rest, talk, smudge or hold ceremony. It is a well-insulated room because of the use of sage, sweetgrass or other incense-burning smudging ceremonies. Before the room was insulated people sometimes complained about the smoke, either because they had allergies or they would mistake the smoke for the smell of marijuana.

Often, Bob is seen as a mediator. In one incident, a family found themselves in turmoil when one of

their young members passed away. The family had differences in religious beliefs and could not agree on the type of prayer service to provide. Bob suggested that he could conduct a "sweetgrass" ceremony, but everybody had to agree to participate. Everyone agreed, but before the ceremony took place Bob stated, "In order to let him go in peace you have to come together in a good way." With the smudging prayer, tears flowed and the family came together.

Another story involved a young girl who had been in a terrible vehicle accident and was rushed to the hospital. Her mother and family members were called into the hospital. Bob was also called in to emergency to talk to the girl's mother. Upon his arrival he found the mother talking on the phone. When she got off the phone she said that it couldn't be her daughter because she was at home sleeping. Half an hour before, Bob came in to talk to the young woman who had been in the accident, but she had already died. The morgue prepared her body and Bob accompanied the mother for identification. In fact, the young girl who died was the daughter. The mother broke down and wept. It was very sad.

In another case a young man went in for a pneumonia test and was informed by the doctor that he was HIV positive. He was shocked and couldn't handle the news he had been given, expressing terrible anger and frustration. Bob was called into talk to this young man and helped to calm him with use of a smudging ceremony. The young man was then referred to several agencies and resources that could offer him the help he required.

Another sad story was about a man who lived on the streets and had



passed on, but could not be identified. No one knew who he was, and even with the assistance of the police they could not identify him. Fingerprints could not be used since he was not charged with anything. With collaborative efforts, the man was later identified. This particular incident led to some positive working relationships between the hospital and various organizations such as the city police, the Bissell Center, the Boyle Street Co-op, hostels, and others who work directly with people who live on the streets.

Another patient was diagnosed as brain dead and was put on life support. The family came into town with very little money and ended up staying in the Charles Campsell Room at the hospital. This room has a kitchen, couches and blankets but has no budget for food, a situation that is often a concern.

Every year, Bob teaches a Cultural Helper or Oskapewsis, as mandated in the program to build bridges between Aboriginal way of life and the medical system's way of care and healing. It fosters an understanding of the diverse nature of Aboriginal cultures and traditions. In these lessons, particular attention is given to the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of human life and in the fostering of humility. This process begins with the teaching of the proper

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# IAAW Honours Author Warren Goulding

By Terry Lusty

**W**arren Goulding is a Saskatoon resident with a long track record as a writer and a newsman. For those who don't already know, Goulding penned the evocative, "Just Another Indian: A Serial Killer and Canada's Indifference" published by Fifth House/Fitzhenry & Whiteside (2001). It focuses on the murders of four Native women, three who were from Saskatchewan and one from southern Alberta.

Goulding was honoured with a Social Justice Award at Edmonton's Shaw Conference Centre by, The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW). He was selected for the award based on his tedious efforts in telling the stories of the murdered women featured in his book. Goulding was raised in Toronto and was a freelance writer for the Toronto Telegram. He moved to Saskatchewan in 1974 where he wrote for a number of community papers before accepting a position where he served as a court and police reporter for the Saskatoon Star Phoenix. It was during that time, that he covered such high-profile cases as, the Robert Latimer murder trial as well as the triple murder trial of John Martin Crawford. It was not unusual for



Goulding to get fired up about the serial killings by Crawford, killings that were executed by a bold sexual predator who showed no conscience in at least three brutal murders. One young girl succumbed to multiple stabbings, another was strangled and another had her arm almost totally cut off. All were sexually assaulted. In the case of Shirley Lone Thunder, "It's a remarkable story," that involved a medicine man from Montana who had a vision that provided clues to the whereabouts of the victims and the location described was so very close to the actual site of some of the remains. Goulding's manuscript began in 1999 with a \$5,000 00 advance from the Publishers who then rolled the book off the presses in 2001. It swiftly became a Saskatchewan bestseller with national distribution. The author admits to feeling strongly

compelled to write this book because the perpetrator was an individual who preyed on defenseless women. "He spent all his time looking for women, he'd cruise the streets and knew just who to pick on," he explained. They weren't just Native women, they were anybody but, usually included those who frequented the bars, those considered to be drunks, homeless or hookers. "They

were easy prey, it was a case of opportunity," said Goulding.

The indifference exhibited by the police and media bothered Goulding considerably. He thinks police did not give enough attention to the murders simply because the victims were Native. "It bothers me that media says three were prostitutes," he complained. "They were more than that, they were mothers, daughters, sisters and the media incorrectly labeled them as prostitutes." Besides, he added, even if they were prostitutes and Native, it doesn't make them any more deserving to die. As well, "I wanted people to know that at one time, they were little girls with dreams of their own," he stated. Sadly, their dreams never became reality.

There are other unsolved cases claimed Goulding and the police, he figures,

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## Adventure Play at Alex Taylor School



By Leonard Robinson

**A**dventure Play puts a new twist on the field of dreams. Instead of, "if you build it they will come" with Adventure Play, it was "when they come, they will build it!" And, build it they did! During this fall's 4-week pilot project, these neighborhood kids came and built a two-story fort with an attached bridge and tunnel. With Adventure Play, the kids are given lumber, saws, hammers and nails and asked, "What would you like to build?" The leaders' job was to help them make their dreams a reality.

There are Adventure Playgrounds all over the globe. Kim Sanderson, City of Edmonton, Adventure Playground Committee Co-Chair was introduced to this play concept in his travels and was instrumental in bringing Adventure Play to Canada. Hitoshi Shimamura from Japan's Adventure Play organization traveled to Canada to help with this pilot.

The pilot playground was located next to Alex Taylor School in the inner city. On any given day there were between 10 to 20 neighborhood kids building under the watchful eye of these three hard working leaders, Clay Haman, Michelle Muspl and Jen Gray. The two-story 18' long by 6' wide fort that was built by the kids. It could be entered from a tunnel or by the attached bridge onto a smaller room. This kids also built swings, a tower and a worktable. During the last week of the pilot, Aboriginal Elders also helped the kids set up a tipi and taught them how to make bannock and cook it on a stick over the fire.

The pilot was a great success! Many of the children had never before held a hammer and these same kids returned day after day, becoming more confident with each passing day. The Adventure Playgroup helped show the kids how to make their dreams a reality while having fun building. For more information you can contact Kim Sanderson at 496-4925. ✨

# Reclaiming Youth:

## An evening with Dr. Martin Brokenleg

Nora Fernandez

**O**n November 7, 2003, Dr. Martin

Brokenleg was the keynote speaker at the Family Violence Conference. Later that evening, he presented "Reclaiming Youth" to the community at Amiskwaciy Academy. Dr. Brokenleg is Lakota/Sioux and grew up on reservations and border towns in South Dakota. He earned his bachelor degree from South Dakota State University and his Master of Divinity degree from Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He obtained his doctorate in educational psychology and counseling from the University of South Dakota. He has extensive experience working with children and youth at risk. He is currently a professor teaching at Augustana College (USA). In the near future, Dr. Brokenleg will come to Canada to mentor and teach at the University of British Columbia.

Martin Brokenleg is more than an accomplished professional, or well-known inspirational, motivational speaker; he is a loving father and husband, a caring person, and a visionary who brings us a message of hope for the future through commitment to children and youth. It was an honor to have him in Edmonton at Amiskwaciy Academy School. His presentation to the community was well attended, by both families and professionals from a variety of fields. Some participants came from Hobbema, Saddle Lake or Lloydminster, braving winter weathr conditions to hear his message. The value of Dr. Brokenleg's applies not only to Aboriginal people but, to all; it forces us to reflect on how we view children and youth. We are often exposed to perspectives that blame youth, and offer punitive solutions to challenges. Martin Brokenleg explained the difference between discipline and punishment and identified children and youth at risk as having great potential, even if they come from the most challenging backgrounds. Reclaiming youth embodies a philosophy by which



no child is "disposable" but all are valuable and needed to build a better society. The Circle of Courage further expands this philosophy through the cultural values of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. It is a unifying theme to Aboriginal people as well as the cultural birthright of all children and youth in society.

During his presentation, Dr. Brokenleg walked us through these values while making connections to his personal life. These values are present in many cultures and can be identified also in the professional field of psychology and address universal developmental needs. Belonging reflects the universal longing for human bonds cultivated by relationships of trust, so that the child can say: "I am loved." Mastery reflects the inborn thirst for learning, so that the child can say: "I can succeed." Independence or free will is cultivated by responsibility, so the child can say: "I have power to make decisions." Generosity reflects the need we all have of "being good" and it is cultivated by concern for others, so the child can say: "I have a purpose for my life."

The event's atmosphere was one of peace and discovery because of the wisdom shared. Amiskwaciy Academy was the perfect venue for our evening following in the Aboriginal tradition. The event opened with a prayer by Elder Marge Friedel and included sharing a meal with Dr. Brokenleg prior to his presentation. People responded well to his teachings, asking questions openly or consulting with him in private. To learn more about Reclaiming Youth and The Circle of Courage you can visit their site at: [www.reclaiming.com](http://www.reclaiming.com). ✨



## "Oskapewsis" continued from page 3

protocol to seek guidance from Aboriginal cultural specialists. This year, Cultural Helper Mark McKennitt completed this training and has since secured another position where he will take his new skills forward on his journey. Mark described the program as an excellent learning experience that taught him knowledge and provided experience with some of the Aboriginal cultural ceremonies, and ultimately how to work compassionately with people. Bob offers cultural awareness in-service sessions to hospital staff when requested.

At the conclusion of our interview, Bob's final words of wisdom were, "If a person follows their heart, they never go wrong if they leave it up to the Creator." He was formerly a Chairman of the Education Authority in his home community at the Enoch Reserve. If you wish to help out with donations of food such as bannock, fruit, or other goods, please contact Bob at (780) 477-4425 at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. ✨

## Goulding continued from page 4

"don't care if they solve them at all." Although some police agree with Goulding, he hopes his book will be a wake-up call for many others on the force. Investigating the cases took a lot of work that involved researching old police files, court transcripts, as well as meeting with families of the victims and RCMP. Although he was cautioned that First Nation people would be reluctant to talk about their losses, that they would rather close the chapter by simply saying that the women were with the Grandmothers, Goulding found matters quite the opposite. "They honoured me with their stories." Had they not, he confessed, the book may never have happened because these families were a vital part of the stories. At present, Goulding is writing for the Eagle Feather News out of Saskatoon. His book, *Just Another Indian*, is now in it's third print. ✨

# Upcoming Events

## CITY OF EDMONTON PROGRAMS

The City of Edmonton offers many affordable recreation activities for everyone! For more information contact your local:

- Library 496-7000
- Swimming Pool/Leisure Centre 496-7946
- Free Public Skating and Shinny 496-4999
- Community Recreation Programs 496-2966

For more information about the Fee Reduction Program call the Community Services office in your area:

East 496-5860, West 496-7320, South 496-1475, Central 496-7275

**For General Community Services Information call: 496-4999**

## BrightNights 2003

BrightNights is Canada's largest drive through Christmas lights theme park sponsored by the Lions Clubs of Edmonton. It contains over 395 animated and static Christmas displays, some over 25' tall. Showcased in beautiful Hawrelak Park, brightNights is the perfect family event, running 45 days through the holiday season. All profits go to the Chamber of Commerce Endowment Fund for Children In Need benefiting Edmonton's School Lunch Program. November 21 - January 4  
William Hawrelak Park, Edmonton, AB

## Fort Edmonton Park

7000-143 Street, Edmonton, AB  
Offers a variety of programs year-round  
Phone: (780) 496-2925  
Email: attractions@edmonton.ca

## ANFCA Funding & Information Conference

February 19-21, 2004  
Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton, AB  
Phone: (780) 423-3138  
Email: anfca4@telusplanet.net

## Alberta Conference on Diabetes & Aboriginal Peoples

March 25 -26, 2004 at Fantasyland Hotel  
Edmonton, AB  
Tel: (780) 423-3138  
Email: info@albertafriendshipcentres.ca  
Web site: www.albertafriendshipcentres.ca

## 1st Annual WARRIORS ON ICE

National Native Hockey Championships  
"A Gathering to Promote Aboriginal Unity and Culture through the Sport of Hockey"  
March 26 - 28, 2004  
Yellowknife, NWT  
For more information contact: Joe Bailey  
Phone: (867) 444-1864  
Email: info@warriorsonice.com

## Aboriginal Healing Foundation National Gathering for Survivors of Residential Schools

July 8, 2004  
Shaw Conference Centre, Edmonton, AB  
For more information: Phone: (613) 237-4806  
Email: programs@ahf.ca

## Healing Our Spirit Worldwide

5th Gathering 2006  
August 6-11, 2006  
Edmonton, AB  
Web site: www.nihb.org

**ARKISEPÉSIM**  
(Wicked Month, January)

**ARMIKISIWPÉSIM**  
(Eagle Month, February)

**ARDNISKIPÉSIM**  
(Goose Month, March)

**ARNÁYÉKIPÉSIM**  
(Frog Month, April)

**AREPINIWÁWEPÉSIM**  
(Laying Month, May)

**AREPÁSKÁWEPÉSIM**  
(Hatching Month, June)

**AREPUSKOPÉSIM**  
(Moulting Month, July)

**AREOHPÁHOOPÉSIM**  
(Flying Month, August)

**ARENOCHIHITOOPÉSIM**  
(Mating Month, September)

**AREKUSKUTINOPÉSIM**  
(Freezing Month, October)

**AREYÉKOPÉWPÉSIM**  
(Foggy Month, November)

**AREPAWÁSTUNPÉSIM**  
(Drifting Month, December)

If you would like to include your community event or program please fax the information to (780) 496-4929 or call (780) 496-4936.



# EAUAC NEWS



THE EDMONTON ABORIGINAL URBAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE • WWW.ABORIGINAL-EDMONTON.COM

