

SASKATCHEWAN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S
CIRCLE CORPORATION
4th ANNUAL REPORT
TO
NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
33rd ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
APRIL 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007

Hello, Elders, President Jacobs, delegates and invited guests! We are pleased to present our annual report to the 33rd AGA of NWAC.

SAWCC is dedicated to promoting and enhancing the status of Aboriginal women and works to unite and involve women by addressing issues of concern through education, advocacy, research and resource sharing.

SAWCC's priorities for 2006-2007 include:

- * Enhancing partnerships and relationships with organizations, communities and all levels of governments;
- * encouraging training, employment and economic development opportunities for Aboriginal women;
- * conducting research and policy/protocol development for all forms of violence against Aboriginal women and girls
- * education to decrease racism and discrimination
- * balancing work and family
- * women and leadership
- * capacity building
- * governance

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

SIS Campaign

SAWCC hosted its first Sisters in Spirit Silent Vigil along with ten other communities across Canada on October 4, 2006. Over 50 people attended

and shared stories in an open forum at Yorkton City Hall Park. In an act of support and solidarity to our sisters, our Elder released balloons with the

names of those sisters who have come home and the participants tied balloons on the trees at City Park with the names of our sisters who have not

yet returned. The SIS Silent Vigil is an annual event for SAWCC.

Documentary on Sisters In Spirit - The Saskatchewan Story

SAWCC has partnered with Y'utthe Askiy Productions to produce a video documentary on Sisters In Spirit - The Saskatchewan Story. The script

writer is Angie Campbell.

Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons

As a crucial component of the Committee's work, we held three meetings with family members to discuss the current problems they face when a

loved one goes missing and how things can be improved. Several recommendations were made and are highlighted in the 'Interim Report of the

Provincial Partnership on Missing Persons' which will soon be ready for public distribution. This report concludes a first phase of identifying actions

that are seen as necessary to improve the overall response to missing persons. The recommendations from the families deal with actions to

improve public awareness and education about the risks of going missing and how to respond to missing person situations, what supports families

need to effectively respond to missing person situations, and what improvements are needed in response systems, such as police.

Matrimonial Real Property Consultations

NWAC held a national MRP consultation in Saskatoon in October followed by a 2-day regional MRP gathering in Yorkton in November. 29

participants considered the four research questions posed as they discussed possible solutions to guarantee a fair and equitable division of

matrimonial property on-reserve.

Sakimay First Nation vs. Gratia Bunnie

Several women came forward with heart-breaking stories during the consultation period. One such case in Saskatchewan was 'Sakimay v.s. Gratia

Bunnie'. Ms Bunnie and her granddaughter have been fighting an eviction notice ever since Ms. Bunnie's husband died in 2006. Sakimay finally

took Ms Bunnie to court in July 2007 resulted in the ruling to dismiss the (housing) application for possession with costs to the respondent. This was

a major step forward for the equality of Aboriginal women on reserve; however the fight is not over yet. Sakimay has appealed the ruling.

Governance Workshops

SAWCC held two regional governance workshops with over 40 women attending from across the province. The purpose of the gatherings were to

engage its membership, staff and Board of Directors in discussion on how to improve communications and to build the skills and capacity of

members to take on leadership and decision making roles at their community level, regional, provincial and national events, and committees.

These workshops were instrumental in the development of our 4-Year Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010.

Aboriginal Health Transition Fund

A provincial meeting in Moose Jaw was facilitated by Claudette Dumont-Smith providing information on the Aboriginal Health Transfer Fund.

CONFERENCES, MEETINGS, ACTIVITIES, EVENTS

SAWCC members were involved through several venues:

- * hosted a meeting on "Improving Housing Conditions for Women" in Regina (April)
- * attended the national conference on Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative in Regina (May)
- * Community Action Team Gang Awareness (May, July, September)
- * presented a workshop on 'Housing and Safety' at the Urban World Forum in Vancouver (June)

* hosted three members of the Aboriginal Women on the Move Cycle Tour in partnership with the Painted Hand Casino when they arrived in

Yorkton (July)

* participated in Aboriginal Women for Tomorrow training (CESO-NWAC) (August)

* annual Premier's Dinner hosted by the Chamber of Commerce (September)

* attended and participated in the NWAC Annual General Assembly (September)

* hosted 1st Annual SIS Vigil to support a nationwide day of remembrance (October)

* hosted an evening forum to honour and acknowledge Aboriginal women during Women's History Month (October)

* lunch meeting with the Saskatchewan Party to introduce them to SAWCC (October)

* represented NWAC at the launch of AWFT in LaRonge (November)

* participated in the NACOSAR meeting in Winnipeg (November)

* hosted the Employment Enhancement Program graduation (December)

* responded to outcome of the Kindrat-Brown sexual assault appeal (January)

* developed a youth awareness campaign on Aboriginal Diabetes (February)

* conducted a telephone survey with 10 women asking their views on Early Childhood Development (February)

* NWAC press conference regarding Matrimonial Real Property (March)

* hosted two Governance workshops (March)

* hosted NWAC's Health Director, Claudette Dumont-Smith for a meeting on the Aboriginal Health Transition Fund in Moose Jaw (March)

* worked on the first phase of our Strategic Planning (2007-2010)

* a member of the First Nations Working Group on Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative

* Yorkton Partnership Against Violence (Quarterly)

* Saskatchewan Action Plan for Women (Annually)

* Several missing sisters walks throughout the year (Annually)

* Preparation for the National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS) in Cornerbrooke, Newfoundland, June 2007

- * Responded to several calls for advocacy, support and resources (daily)
- * Several AHRDA meetings
- * Numerous media interviews
- * Membership drives

PARTNERSHIPS

Provincial government and community partnerships were established with the following groups:

- * Canadian Heritage - Governance Workshops
- * CBO - Diversity Works
- * CBO - City of Yorkton, Gang Awareness
- * CBO - Balancing Work and Family Alliance
- * CBO - Saskatchewan Council on Community Development
- * CBO - Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) to Violence
- * Metis Employment & Training (METSI) and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT): Project - Corporate Circles
- * Saskatchewan Justice - Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons
- * Saskatchewan Justice - Family Law Focus Group Research
- * Saskatchewan Labour - Balancing Work and Family Focus Group Research
- * Saskatchewan Institute on Public Policy (SIPP): Project - First Nations Self-determination and Good Governance: Connecting Research To

Practice

- * Service Canada: Project - Employment Enhancement Program
- * Sunrise Health Region - Accreditation Committee
- * Y'utthe Askiy Productions - SIS video documentary

RESEARCH

- * SAWCC has moved to the second phase of our Justice Research project on "Separation and Divorce in Aboriginal Communities" which focuses

on the justice needs of Aboriginal women in Saskatchewan, and the services, programs and resources available to or required within Aboriginal

communities. Consultations took place with Justice officials for Aboriginal perspectives on Access to Justice issues in family and youth matters.

SAWCC, Metis Community and Family Justice (MCFJ) and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Women's Secretariat

Commission were the informants.

* SAWCC has completed the first phase of our "Balancing Work and Family" research project. This initiative promotes awareness and discussion

within the Aboriginal sector through focus groups on work and family issues and wellness strategies such as incorporating positive changes in the

workplace. The findings were presented at a conference entitled "The Next 10 Years: Work-Family Balance & Labour Force Shortages". This

national gathering was sponsored by the Work and Family Unit - Saskatchewan Government and the Balancing Work and Family Alliance of which

SAWCC is a member of.

* A poster campaign was developed to raise youth awareness on the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative. 400 posters were made and distributed.

* A telephone survey with 10 women was conducted on the Early Childhood Development Initiative.

PROGRAMS

* Resources and Support - SAWCC provides resources and support to several women and their families on all issues including health and

wellbeing, safety, housing, self-sufficiency, violence and referrals to appropriate helping agencies.

* AHRDA - We were able to fund 35 women with 19 of them being youth. Altogether, we had over 60 inquiries and applications. It is very difficult

and frustrating to have to turn down funding requests from women who are trying to improve their life situation. We must call on Service Canada to

increase our Contribution Agreement allotment to provide women an opportunity to become self sufficient.

* SAWCC partnered with Service Canada to provide Aboriginal women who were underemployed or unemployed the opportunity to increase their

life skills and gain work experience with 18 businesses in the Yorkton region. Our Employment Enhancement Program concluded successfully in

December with seven of the ten participants graduating.

* We are working to finalize "100 Years 100 Aboriginal Women's Contributions to Saskatchewan" book project. This project is a celebration of the

enduring spirit, courage, strength and honour of Aboriginal women. It is taking us longer than anticipated to complete due to a shortage of funds.

We are hoping to have the book available for Christmas.

YOUTH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE - TORI LYNN WANOTCH

Tori Lynn attended the national Economic Development Summit hosted by the Saskatchewan Government in January and the national Health

Summit hosted by the British Columbia Government in March. Three SAWCC Youth Council members were able to attend the Health Summit along

with Tori Lynn. At the Economic Development Summit, Tori Lynn facilitated four workshops and breakout sessions.

On the provincial front, Tori Lynn was appointed a member of the Provincial Youth Advisory Committee (PYAC) which advises the Saskatchewan

Government by providing a youth perspective on issues such as 'Heritage & Culture' and the 'Anti-Racism Strategy'.

SAWCC Youth participated in a Provincial Youth Summit in Saskatoon, February 3 & 4. This gathering focused on retention of youth in the Province

of Saskatchewan as well as identifying ways towards inclusive workplaces for the Aboriginal population.

Saskatchewan was the host of a pilot delivery of the Youth Violence Prevention Toolkit developed by the NWAC Youth Council.

Other meetings attended included:

- Several NWAC Youth Council meetings
- SK Ministers' meeting regarding capacity funding for SAWCC

- Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons
- Awareness walk for Missing Sisters

RESIGNATION

On a final note, SAWCC accepted the request for a leave of absence from President Sandra Opikokew with regrets in September 2006. Sandra

was an integral force toward uniting Aboriginal women across Saskatchewan. At the national level, she held the position of NWAC Vice President.

Sandra left her post to be able to spend more time with her teenage children and to bring home that paycheque to run a household. We wish

Sandra and her family all the best life can bring. We know she will miss us as much as we miss her.

That's all for this year! Best wishes to everyone for an enjoyable Annual Assembly.

Written and submitted by Judy Hughes, President