

Alberta Native Friendship Centre Association
December 2 & 3, 2011 Quarterly Meeting
National Youth Representative

Since being elected as the National Youth Representative, I have had two meetings with the AYC, one face to face two days after I was elected and a conference call to follow up from the face to face.

My first AYC meeting was quite eventful, got on a plane for my very first time two days after I was elected and went to Ottawa, because many of us attending the meeting were fairly new to the AYC, the meeting was filled with lots of discussion about how things are run and giving out basic guidelines for what the AYC does. It was quite the learning experiences filled with lots of acronyms and confusion. We spent time getting to know each other and deciding what committees we were going to be on and what our focus was, as well as learning the basics of what the AYC does. Although things were a little hectic and crazy, we did get quite a bit of business done that includes:

Success Stories: The Success Stories were the AYC's main focus for last year and they have been completed and copies of them were sent to all centers, the book was titled ``We Stand Together: The positive impacts of Aboriginal Friendship Centres for Canada's Aboriginal youth`` and the DVD is titled ``We Are Success: Impacts of Friendship Centres on Aboriginal Youth``. They are truly touching stories and I urge everyone to view them with the youth at their centres.

Joint Statement: We are currently working on joining together with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for a joint statement on The Rights to Water and Indigenous People. Andrea Landry finished a draft of the joint statement and sent it to some organizations that might want to partner with us. Working with the United Nations is going to be a great opportunity for the AYC and we are looking forward to what is going to come of it.

Youth Engagement Package: We are currently in the process of preparing a Youth Engagement Package on Media Relations which includes how to talk in front of a camera, how to be interviewed, key points to provide when you are preparing for an interview and things to avoid when you are being interviewed. The package has been prepared and after our last conference call we were just waiting for one more piece and then it was to be sent out. We are aiming for the Youth Engagement package to be released to all the centers in January 2012.

Next Steps in Advocacy: We discussed issues that need to be brought to everyone's attention on a National level and decided that we are going to work on a Suicide Prevention Campaign as the AYC's main focus for the coming year. We are hoping to acquire the skills needed to put together our own campaign and have it brought to all the centres across Canada. This is a work in progress and it is not yet set in stone but with new ideas being brought to our attention all the time it should be in the beginning processes by early next year. We are also aware that NWAC is working on a suicide prevention strategy and we are going to get in contact with them to see what is needed from us and maybe there will be a partnership or they will guide us when it is the further steps of preparation.

Things have been running somewhat smoothly, I am still a tiny bit confused and still very new but I am very thankful for this opportunity and learning experience. I have already learned so much and really love the support I get from everyone at the provincial office. I am looking forward to learning more and voicing the youth of our province in a positive manner.

In friendship,

Jessie Johnson