



National Association
of Friendship Centres
Association nationale
des centres d'amitié

NAFC 32nd Annual Youth Forum

July 22-23, 2022 – Victoria Conference Centre
Victoria, BC

Day 1 – Friday, July 22, 2022

Call to Order and Opening Ceremonies

Emcee, Talon Fire Bird (Naotkamegwaning First Nation, Treaty 3), youth outreach worker/hip hop artist known as Mighty Big Bird, introduced himself and called the meeting to order. He acknowledged the territory of the Lekwungen peoples, the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ. He noted that simultaneous interpretation was available and asked that attendees observe Covid-19 protocols.

Elder Shirley Alphonse of the Cowichan Nation gave the opening prayer and wished all a good gathering.

“The land is us and we are the land” – Elder Shirley Alphonse

The Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) Executive Director, Ron Rice, sent his congratulations and expressed regret at not being able to attend in person.

National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) President, Kelly Benning, acknowledged the members of the NAFC Senate in attendance and thanked NAFC staff for their hard work. The Friendship Centre Movement (FCM) is a beautiful thing from coast-to-coast-to-coast, it raises leaders and creates a bright future for Indigenous youth. Your solutions are needed, so step into the circle and find your way.

NAFC Executive Director, Jocelyn Formsma, acknowledged the traditional territory and noted that it has been 3 years since the last in-person gathering. She grew up in the Friendship Centre Movement, starting 22 years ago, and met people she is still friends with today. She hopes that everyone could have that same experience and asks that new youth members are shown the ropes – to sit with one another, learn from them, and develop community. The forum is meant to ensure youth voices are heard and to create space – not to dictate to the youth on what to do. This is an opportunity to share your voices – hand over the mic. You are more than capable – we need to learn from you.

Thank you all for coming; there are a lot of serious things going on in our communities but remember the joy and the fun.

“This is an opportunity to share your voices, you are more than capable – we need to learn from you” – Jocelyn W. Formsma, NAFC Executive Director

NAFC IYC President, Desarae Bilinski urged the attendees to take the time to connect, grow and soak up the information and feel the energy in the room.

*“We are powerful as one voice. Take that feeling and carry it through the weekend”
– Desarae Bilinski, Former IYC President*

Talon Firebird gave an overview of how the forum would proceed.

Leadership Curriculum – Presentation by Leah Prisque

PPT: Decent Work for Urban Indigenous Youth – Leadership Development Project

The project had the following objectives:

- Vision – to empower urban Indigenous youth while navigating employment and other life aspects.
- Mission – to develop an urban Indigenous program to increase confidence and self-awareness.
- Strategy - youth-led, community-driven research to develop an understanding of urban Indigenous youth’s experiences in employment. Program development is aimed to empower and support urban Indigenous youth.

Components include curriculum development; youth-led community research; train the trainer, leadership training, and an employment forum. There are 6 chapters covering various topics including self-knowledge, relationships, education, and employment.

IYC Youth Report – Desarae Bilinski

IYC President Desarae Bilinski acknowledged the strength, courage and leadership in communities and gave an overview of the history of the Indigenous Youth Council, the aim of which is to “create positive change through inclusion, empowerment and culture”. The Council consists of 13 members and acts as an advisory to the NAFC Board of Directors, management, and the FCM on youth related issues.

The pandemic affected the ways in which the IYC could meet and interact but everyone adapted to an online format and monthly meetings continued. As the pandemic recedes, there will be a gradual move to more in-person meetings. Engagement continues to be difficult due to outside responsibilities such as school and employment. An NAFC Youth Coordinator position has been established and a network is being created. A partnership

has been established with BGC Canada and Tim Horton's Camps where NAFC hopes to run the leadership training.

IYC activities have included:

- Attendance at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples. This was 12 days of intense discussions on human rights with a focus on free, prior and informed consent and the UN Declaration.
- Participation at the Indspire Awards where NAFC Senator Marjorie White was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Youth representation at the Board of Directors Bylaw meeting, providing the youth perspective.
- The NAFC IYC logo has been updated to better reflect the diversity among urban Indigenous youth.
- The new IYC Action Plan will create more visibility; assist in development and implementation of a leadership strategy; increase opportunities for intergenerational learning; and provide professional development opportunities.

Shady Hafez gave an overview of the IYC Elections Process. Four positions were up for election: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. He urged all youth delegates to consider running for a position. Ella Mayer, who also grew up in the FCM, served as Elections Chair.

Keynote and Book Signing – Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould

The Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (JWR), the first Indigenous Minister of Justice and former Member of Parliament, sat with Desarae Bilinski in a casual Oprah style chat. They discussed the challenges faced in her previous roles, but also made note of the advances made while she held the portfolio. JWR credited being raised in her culture and teachings by her Grandmother Matriarch. She believes in inclusion, equality, equity and justice for Indigenous peoples.

They discussed the need to rebuild governing institutions according to our laws and legal institutions and move away from the Indian Act.

A lively and involved Q&A session followed.

“Incorporating urban Indigenous voices is important; community involvement is important – More Indigenous youth need to be elected to work and make change, to be a part of rebuilding the nation” – Honorable Jody Wilson-Raybould

LUNCH

Workshop #1: Honouring Self, Community, and Earth Through the Reimagination of Success – Larissa Crawford

Larissa Crawford is the Founding and Managing Director of Future Ancestors Services. She has a background in conflict resolution and has been given teachings from the Métis, Anishinaabe and Blackfoot Nations. She also has experience in navigating government spaces, including the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate, Ontario Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. Future Ancestors is Indigenous and Black-owned/operated. It is a youth-led, intergenerational Black, Indigenous, racialized Queer, disabled and Francophone group providing speaking, training, research and consulting.

“In the settler mind, land was property, real estate, capital, or natural resources. But to our people, it was everything: identity, connection to our ancestors, the home of our non-human kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us.” Robin Wall-Kimmerer, “Braiding Sweetgrass”

Her presentation focused on skills to build on – our way of existing is valuable and a qualification to live differently. Settler views do not hold space for us to assert that value.

Recognize the ancestors as a component of self. Who am I responsible to? What impact am I leaving? Future Ancestors brings together community. Share in the pursuit of sharing our experiences is valuable. A group sharing session addressed several subjects related to honouring the responsibilities of being a “future ancestor,” in shaping just and sustainable futures for the next generation.

“Earth is an extension of self. We come from, and are cared for, by Earth. What is Earth to me – beyond the physical realm of a living being? It connects us to our ancestors and future generations” – Larissa Crawford, Founding Director of Future Ancestors Services

BREAK

Workshop #2 – Quebec Youth Report – Expedition to Cape Scott Provincial Park

Several members of the Quebec youth delegation participated in a land-based program which culminated in a 55km hike through the Pacific Rainforest to Cape Scott (Vancouver Island). The program was intended to be a language and cultural exchange as well as an opportunity to gain self-sufficiency and understanding of self as Indigenous youth. A number of the participants told of their experiences and what it meant to them. The program was thought to be highly successful.

Workshop #3 – Youth Teambuilding/World Café

Meeting adjourned for the day.

Day 2 – Saturday, July 23, 2022

Morning Ceremony – Opening Prayer by Elder Shirley Alphonse

Talon Fire Bird welcomed the meeting

Various Elders noted the importance of the sacred space and urged participants to make use of the facility.

Workshop #3 – T’áncháy Redvers

T’áncháy Redvers (they/them) is a writer, creator, actor, and performer who has worked in youth engagement and mental health for 10 years. Their workshop topic was about breaking cycles and creating ripples of change in communities.

We are whole beings – mind, body, heart, and spirit. We need to take care of ourselves – T’áncháy Redvers

Build practices and tools to manage wellbeing.

1. Ok not to be ok
2. Healing is not linear
3. Love and joy is traditional
4. We deserve to stand firm in our boundaries
5. You are not your mental illness/hardships/insecurities – you are much more
6. We are not responsible for the pain that others carry
7. Do not be hard on each other; be hard on the systems (lateral love, not violence)
8. Even when you feel alone, the land proves otherwise
9. Our communities need tender warriors – healers, the soft-spoken ones, the storytellers – give more hugs and say, “I love you”.
10. Change is slow and steady

“Embody respect, humility, love, wisdom, courage, truth, and honesty. Be a seed planter in your community – it will grow for someone. You are as strong as the ones who walked before you” – T’áncháy Redvers

BREAK

Workshop #4 – Victoria Urban Reconciliation Youth – Nathan Potts

Reconcili-ACTION Visioning Session

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission spoke of:

- Reconciliation in schools
- Reconciliation at work
- Reconciliation at home
- Reconciliation in our communities
- Reconciliation as a process

SWOT Analysis Exercise – processes of reconciliation

- **S**trengths
 - Things we do right; healthy relationships
- **W**eaknesses
 - Disadvantages: things that detract – things to enhance
- **O**pportunities
 - Reasons we are likely to succeed; emerging needs that can be met
- **T**hreats
 - Factors beyond our control; put our goals at risk

Big Hairy Audacious Goals

- What are you deeply passionate about?
- What can you be the best in the world in?
- What drives your economic engine?

SMART Goals

- **S**pecific
 - Set goals with real numbers/deadlines
- **M**easurable
 - Make goals trackable
- **A**ttainable
 - Set a goal that is challenging but possible
- **R**elevant
 - Goal that aligns with the mission
- **T**ime Bound
 - Set a time for achieving the goal

Workshop #5 – International Experience Canada: Indigenous Youth Success Stories - Melanie Gratton and Leah Prisque

International Experience Canada allows Canadian youth between 18-35 to obtain work permits to work and travel in over 30 partner countries and foreign territories. Some

destinations have Indigenous communities. Benefits include improved life skills; increased opportunities; enhanced worldview. Leah Prisque spoke of her experience in New Zealand. The experience taught her to depend on herself.

A short discussion followed and application steps were reviewed and explained.

Workshop #6 – TikTok Canada: Storytelling on TikTok – Akash Sidhu, Kairyn Potts & Desarae Bilinski

Akash Sidhu, the Public Policy Partnerships Lead for TikTok Canada, stated that one of TikTok's goals is to "elevate the voices of their creators while building inclusive and diverse communities." TikTok is committed to providing a platform for creators to share their stories and launch their careers. Indigenous creators are using TikTok to build audiences within and outside of Indigenous communities. In 2021, TikTok launched the TikTok Accelerator for Indigenous Creators – a partnership with the National Screen Institute where 30 creators were given customized online training on audience building, content, and skills development.

Kairyn Potts (he/him) is Nakoda Sioux from Alexis Nakoda Sioux Nation in Treaty 6 Territory and currently based in Toronto. He is a TikTok content creator and a passionate advocate for Indigenous youth and whose work focuses on Two-Spirit resurgence, mental health awareness, and IndigiQueer identity.

He shared his experiences with Desarae Bilinski and the youth delegates and conducted a Q&A session following his presentation. Kairyn, Desarae and the youth delegates then filmed a short video for TikTok.

Exhibitors announced the door prize winners.

BREAK

IYC Elections:

After a review of the 2020 Minutes by Desarae Bilinski, Shady Hafez and Ella Mayer (Elections Chair) reiterated the elections procedure for the IYC Executive.

Nominations

Motion to open Nominations:

Moved by:

- Aedon Janes (Grande Prairie, AB);
- Seconded by: Sarah Shuttleworth (Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres, MB)
- CARRIED

Nominations for:

President:

Nomination: Averi Doxtator

- Nominated by: Jessie Arens (Native Montreal, QC)
- Seconded by: Christina Latter (Native Montreal, QC)

Averi Doxtator accepted the nomination.

Motion to close nominations:

- Moved by: Shelby Provost (Napi Friendship Association, AB)
- Seconded by: Sarah Shuttleworth (Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres, MB)
- CARRIED

Vice-President:

Motion to open nominations:

- Moved by: Sophie Bennett (First Light Friendship Centre, NL)
- Arianna Price (Friendship House, BC)
- CARRIED

Nomination: Shelby Provost (Napi Friendship Association, AB)

- Nominated by: Demetra Good Rider (Napi Friendship Association, AB)
- Seconded by: Aedon Janes (Grande Prairie Friendship Centre, AB)

Shelby Provost accepted the nomination.

Motion to close nominations:

- Moved by: Hinauri Nehua-Jackson (Canadian Native Friendship Centre, AB)
- Seconded by: Savanna-Lee Kopecky (Elbert Chartrand Friendship Centre, MB)
- CARRIED

Secretary:

Motion to open nominations:

- Moved by: Aedon Janes (Grande Prairie FC, AB)
- Seconded by: Hinauri Nehua-Jackson (Canadian Native Friendship Centre, AB)
- CARRIED

Nomination: Sarah Shuttleworth (Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres, MB)

- Nominated by: Shelby Provost (Napi Friendship Association, AB)
- Seconded by: Aedon Janes (Grande Prairie Friendship Centre, AB)

Sarah Shuttleworth accepted the nomination.

Motion to close nominations:

- Moved by: Zack McNab (Deh Cho Friendship Centre, NT)
- Gena Morrison (Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan, SK)
- CARRIED

Treasurer:

Motion to open nominations:

- Moved by: Shelby Provost (Napi Friendship Association, AB)
- Cash Portlock (Miywasin Friendship Centre, AB)
- CARRIED

Nomination: Malcolm Lafferty (Tlicho Friendship Centre, NT)

- Nominated by: Averi Doxtator (Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, ON)
- Seconded by: Jessie Arens (Native Montreal, QC)

Malcolm Lafferty accepted the nomination.

Motion to close nominations:

- Moved by: Hinauri Nehua-Jackson (Canadian Native Friendship Centre, AB)
- Seconded by: Mario Ahenakew (Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre, SK)
- CARRIED

All positions on the IYC were filled by acclamation.

Motion to accept results of the election for IYC Executive:

- Moved by: Zack McNab (Deh Cho Friendship Centre, NT)
- Seconded by: Hinauri Nehua-Jackson (Canadian Native Friendship Centre, AB)
- CARRIED

Elections closing followed by Desarae Bilinski, former IYC President, who led a lively and entertaining Zumba session.

Mock Annual Meeting – Jocelyn Formsma

Jocelyn Formsma reviewed the corporate structure of the NAFC, the procedures and order of events at an AGM. The annual meeting gives youth an opportunity to have a voice. There are 130 Friendship Centres in Canada. The Friendship Centres, started in the 1950s, are one of largest federated non-profit networks in Canada.

The NAFC Mission Statement: www.https.nafc.ca/about-the-nafc

The Bylaws and Constitution are the governing documents. At the Annual General Meetings, issues are passed by consensus and Robert's Rule of Order currently govern procedures. The aim of the AGM is to facilitate and foster participation by all in attendance. The AGM Committees – Procedures; Resolutions; Credentials; and Elections – oversee various aspects of the AGM. Voting is conducted electronically.

Noting several regional vacancies on the IYC, Jocelyn Formsma encouraged youth delegates to consider putting themselves forward to represent their region.

IYC Business/Youth Forum Roll-up

The Nelson Mayer Youth Recognition Awards for 2021 and 2022

2021 Award: *Cash Portlock (Miywasin Friendship Centre, AB)*

2022 Award: *Hinauri Nehua-Jackson (Canadian Native Friendship Centre, AB)*

Talon Fire Bird thanked the presenters, sponsors, NAFC staff and participants for a successful forum. He acknowledged the traditional territory of the Lekwungan, Songhees, and Esquimalt nations.

Jocelyn Formsma welcomed former NAFC President Chris Sheppard to the AGM and acknowledged the contributions made by the outgoing IYC President, Desarae Bilinski and presented her with a gift in thanks for her leadership.

The closing prayer as given by Elder