

All AHIC Gathering 2016

ABORIGINAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEES
MAY 17-18, 2016



A replication, coloured by attendees at the AHIC Gathering, of the stained glass window in Parliament commemorating the legacy of Indian Residential Schools. See back page for additional information.



The Aboriginal Health Improvement Committees (AHICs) are action-oriented groups that support improved health and wellness for Indigenous people and communities through innovative and collaborative local initiatives.

Eight AHICs operate across the north: three in the Northwest, four in the Northern Interior, and one in the Northeast. AHICs include health representatives from Indigenous communities and organizations, the First Nations Health Authority, local Northern Health leadership, and other sectors. AHICs meet to review and discuss local issues and concerns, and work together towards practical solutions at local and sub-regional levels.

WE BEGIN...

Margo Greenwood, Vice President of Aboriginal Health, Northern Health, acknowledged the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh upon which this gathering was hosted. She also acknowledged the 54 First Nations in northern BC as the keepers and protectors of their traditional territories on which AHICs undertake their collaborative work.

The dedication and passion from community members, leaders, knowledge holders, and organizations that participate at these tables does not go unnoticed and is often a source of inspiration and teachings across northern BC.

The purpose of this gathering was an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the AHICs and their accomplishments since the last time they met in September 2015. Specifically, the goals of the gathering were to provide AHIC members with opportunities to:

- share successes, cultural resources, maps and cultural activities;
- participate in educational activities;
- reflect and enhance networks and partnerships; and
- participate in local planning for the future.

Representatives and members of the Northern Health Aboriginal Health Improvement Committees (AHICs) from across northern BC gathered in Prince George on May 17th and 18th, 2016. This third annual All AHIC Gathering also brought together representatives from First Nations peoples and communities as well as Aboriginal organizations and individuals across the north, Northern Health

Executive and employees, and First Nations Health Authority employees to share knowledge and experiences, and support one another in ongoing work and planning for the future.

Each AHIC was represented at this gathering:

- Lakes District
- Northeast
- North Coast
- Northwest East (Smithers and Area)
- Omineca
- Prince George and Area
- Quesnel and Area
- Terrace/Kitimat and Area

The theme of this year's gathering was *Growing Cultural Safety* and included a focus on sharing stories. AHICs have developed and initiated 32 local cultural resources and completed 24 Patient Journey/Process maps. These products continue to inspire the development of tools and resources by AHICs and have influenced decision-making and service delivery within Northern Health.

This two-day gathering was held at the Coast Inn of the North in Prince George, BC. The first day was opened with a prayer by Jennifer Pighin and opening songs by the Khast'an Drummers. The gathering was facilitated by Dr. Sarah de Leeuw (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, UNBC Health Arts Research Centre), with keynote presentations by:

- Cathy Ulrich, CEO of Northern Health;



Graphic representation by Colleen Stevenson of Cathy Ulrich's presentation.

“We have learned about ourselves, we have learned about the North, learned about your communities and all the communities we live within. AHIC work is all about innovation; it is what you have brought to the table collectively.”

Cathy Ulrich



- Megan Hunt, Interim Regional Director of First Nations Health Authority, Northern Region;
- Rose LeMay, Director of Northern and Indigenous Health, Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement; and
- Margo Greenwood, Vice President, Aboriginal Health, Northern Health.

The second day included a panel session on tools for telling stories, and a planning session that was supported by a creative activity overseen by Charis Alderfer-Mumma, Research Associate, UNBC Health Arts Research Centre. Graphic recording for both days of the gathering was provided by Colleen Stevenson.

DAY ONE

Sharing Stories and Building Cultural Safety

The theme for day one of the gathering was *Sharing Our Stories and Building Cultural Safety*. The speakers and presentations included keynote presentations from the CEO of Northern Health (NH), the Interim Regional Director, Northern Region of the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), and a panel presentation from the eight AHICs. To further this work and support the importance of cultural safety to all of us, Rose LeMay provided a workshop on cultural competence and safety.

Sharing Stories

– Cathy Ulrich, CEO, Northern Health, and Megan Hunt, Interim Regional Director, Northern Region, First Nations Health Authority

The CEO of NH, Cathy Ulrich, began the first day with reflections on the relationships with the AHICs followed by the recently released Strategic Plan that will guide NH for the next five years (2016-2021). She shared her gratitude for the AHICs and the partnerships they offer to NH while the organization works towards optimal and equitable care for all northern BC residents. Cathy expressed positive reflections on the learning that NH has received about Indigenous communities in northern BC

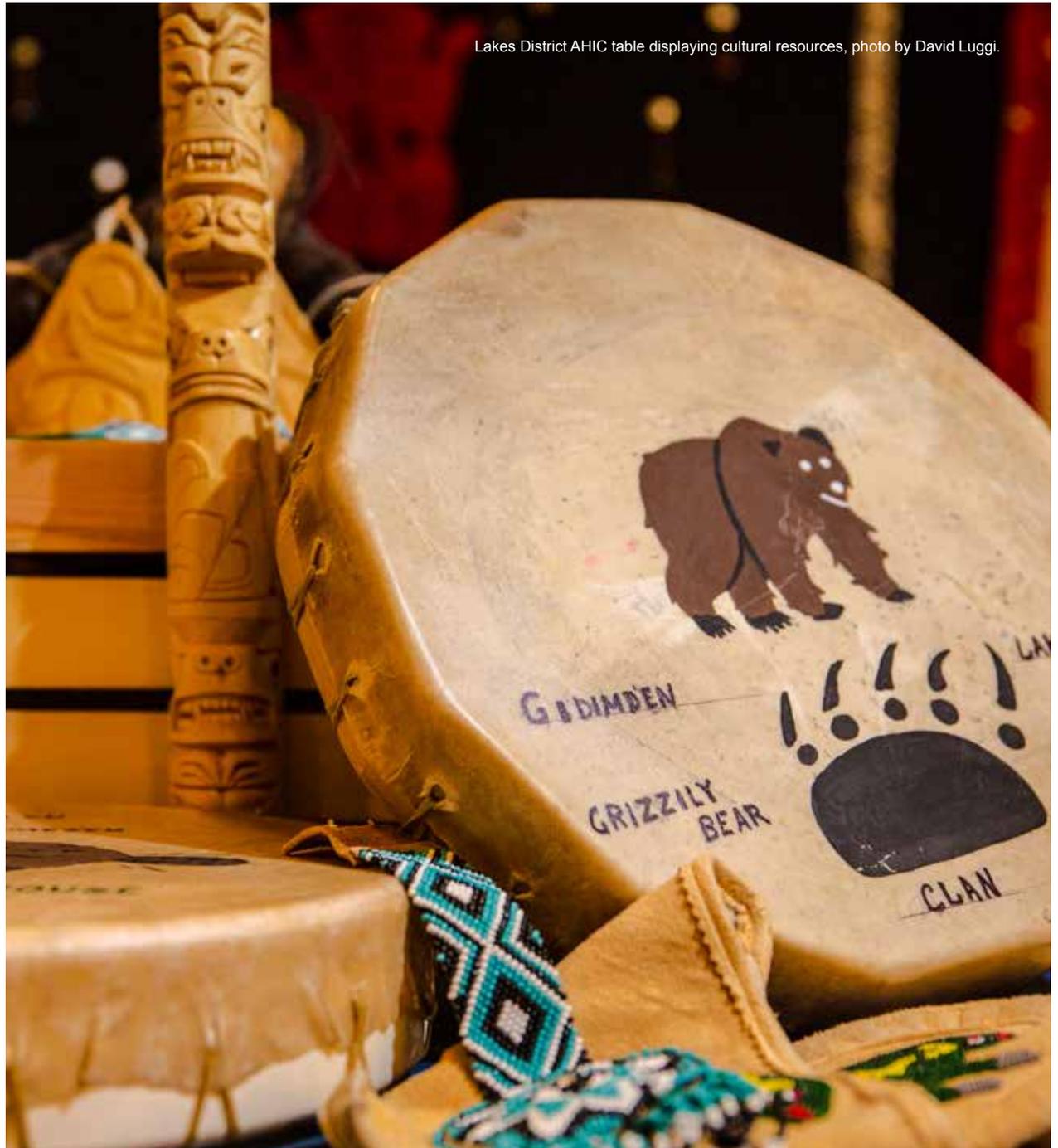
noting that this knowledge exchange results in part from AHIC innovation.

Alongside this learning is NH's commitment to person and family-centered care in communities, Indigenous health, and culturally safe practice. Cathy noted that the AHICs and NH have been on this journey together for several years. As explained by the NH CEO, the vision for how the *Northern Way of Caring* should look and feel within the organization and to those being served by NH was developed with extensive input from stakeholders and community members:

- Empathy: Understanding each individual's experience
- Respect: Accepting each person as a unique individual
- Collaboration: Working together toward the best care possible
- Innovation: Recognizing what is not working and doing things differently

Northern Health strategic priorities are designed to enable northern BC residents to live well. Achieving these strategic priorities will include: providing health services based in a primary care home; helping NH employees to flourish in their work; and implementing effective communication systems that enable service delivery. This work is supported by existing partnerships engaged in creating transformational change designed to promote Indigenous peoples' health.

The health of Indigenous people and communities in northern BC is intricately linked to existing partnerships with NH and also with FNHA through the Northern First Nations Health Partnership Committee. Megan Hunt, Interim Regional



Lakes District AHIC table displaying cultural resources, photo by David Luggi.



Graphic representation by Colleen Stevenson of the two AHIC panel presentations.

“Thank you for making this opportunity available to us. It’s great to see this group of people with such passion for the work. It’s also validating to know that other areas have common issues and strengths.”

Participant

Director for the Northern Region of FNHA, shared information on the rich diversity of cultural practices and languages in northern BC and the importance of educating health care providers about Indigenous community strengths and resilience.

Megan highlighted several exciting activities undertaken in partnership with NH in the last year which included:

- a partnership with NH to provide awards to Indigenous students from northern BC studying in health-related disciplines;
- implementing video capability in the Prince Rupert Regional Hospital emergency department for decisions around emergency transport needs;

- the development of the Northern Biobank Project (a partnership between NH, UNBC, UBC, and FNHA); and
- the ongoing work establishing Mobile Support Teams (MSTs) focused on mental wellness and substance use with Joint Project Board funding.

Sharing Stories

– The AHICs

Following the presentation from Megan Hunt, AHIC representatives shared highlights from their committees on one of two panels. The first panel included representatives from Terrace/Kitimat and Area, Northwest East, North Coast, and Prince George and Area AHICs and was hosted by Victoria Carter.

The second panel included representatives from Omineca, Lakes District, Quesnel and Area, and the Northeast AHICs and was hosted by Jessie King. Each AHIC shared accomplishments and challenges encountered since the last gathering, their vision for the future, and advice they would give to other AHICs. Themes from the panels included:

- working toward partnerships and inclusion at each AHIC table;
- being mindful of not taking on too much and taking small steps;
- identifying gaps in service delivery and finding solutions;
- creating resources and events that began conversations and/or answered common

“Expect healing and success for our grandchildren. We are changing the world for our kids.”

Rose LeMay



Graphic representation by Colleen Stevenson of Rose LeMay's presentation.

questions about Indigenous people and communities;

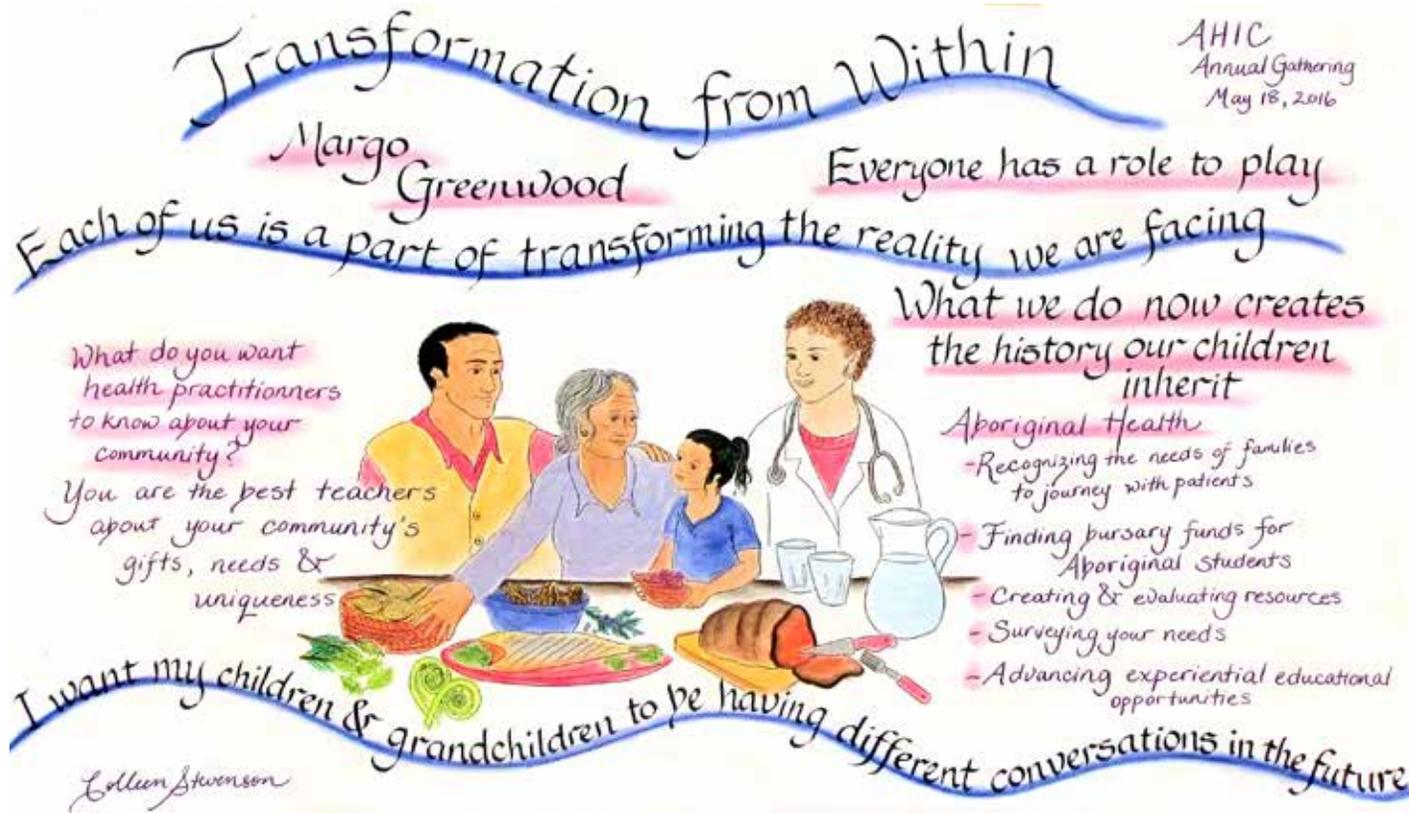
- addressing the difficulty many face in deciding to approach the health care system alongside the challenges of obtaining access;
- developing resources aimed at education and shared understanding;
- beginning conversations and projects to increase/enhance Indigenous presence in health care facilities (ie. digital stories on monitors in the hospital, signs in local languages, First Nations art in facilities, finding space for inclusion in facilities).

Learning Together: Building Cultural Safety

Building on the theme of the gathering, *Growing Cultural Safety*, the afternoon of the first day was devoted to keynote Rose LeMay, Director of Northern and Indigenous Health with the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement (CFHI). Her presentation on Indigenous Cultural Competence included: a participatory activity on the history of colonialism and assimilation; information on resulting traumas that are transmitted and accumulated intergenerationally; and concluded with themes of resilience and reconciliation.

After an introduction to cultural competence, Ms. LeMay led the group through an activity that

identified the timeline of historical events in Canada related to colonization and assimilation. The activity highlighted events not commonly known by Canadians and the importance of this knowledge to building collaborative relationships and healing. Ms. LeMay explained that, Indigenous peoples have experienced accumulated trauma as a result of colonialism and assimilationist policies. Healing from trauma is key to achieving wellness for everyone and is needed to build positive relationships. Indigenous communities and NH are engaging in partnerships that have the potential to enable common healing. Cultural competence can mitigate negative health care experiences that are related to an unresolved colonial history. Moving towards reconciliation demands healing through



Graphic representation by Colleen Stevenson of Margo Greenwood's presentation.

partnerships and relationships, including addressing racism in the health system. Ms. LeMay encouraged the group to engage in the 'difficult' conversations by identifying problematic behaviours and not attacking individual people. She acknowledged that the AHICs are a forum for partnership, building new relationships, and where these difficult conversations can occur.

Ms. Lemay's presentation closed with encouragement to develop a vision for the future that will guide present actions and directions. The remainder of the day was dedicated to visioning the future.

DAY TWO

Building the Foundation: Looking Ahead

The overall focus of day two was on building a foundation of skills for sharing stories and action planning for the future. It began with a presentation by Margo Greenwood, VP Aboriginal Health. In her presentation, Margo highlighted the accomplishments of AHICs and the development of local cultural resources and mapping activities. The work gives us examples of tools, products and

processes that support a culturally safe health system.

Transforming the health care system involves learning about shared histories, acknowledging trauma, and working toward reducing health disparities for Indigenous people. Culturally safe practice is successful when health care recipients feel respected as a partner in their care. Margo reminded us that we are working for positive change so that our children will not have to.

Acknowledging the immense amount of work and dedication shown by each AHIC over the years,

"We are working in a way to ensure that our children will not be having these same conversations"

Margo Greenwood

and with a desire to continue to support that work, Margo announced a financial commitment of \$20,000 to March 31, 2017 for each AHIC to continue their projects and undertake new ones.

Building the Foundation: Storytelling

Following this presentation, a panel session introduced six different approaches for storytelling and sharing knowledge in order to support ongoing AHIC work:

- Photovoice is a participatory group method that combines photography with narrative to undertake grassroots social action (presented by Hilary McGregor and Jessie King).
- Digital storytelling is a short form of digital media production that allows everyday people to share aspects of their life story (presented by Valerie Ward).
- Webinars are an accessible way of collaborating online and sharing a variety of media including video, audio and PowerPoint presentations in real-time or recorded (presented by David Loewen).
- Arts-based activities include a wide range of visual ways of sharing information and stories including collages, sculptures, painting, and drawing (presented by Charis Alderfer-Mumma).
- Graphic recording is a method of capturing information in drawings and words that provides a visual story (presented by Colleen Stevenson).
- Written-word and publishing in a variety of journals are options for sharing stories and experiences (presented by Sarah de Leeuw).

Building the Foundation: Addressing Wicked Problems

The afternoon built on the information and methods from the gathering into visioning and action planning. David Loewen led the AHICs in these activities beginning with an introduction to the concept of “wicked problems.” To explore ways of addressing such complex and multi-faceted challenges, the group was asked to draw the steps for making toast. This activity revealed the diverse ways that people intuitively break down complex issues and processes into step-by-step models. This way of visualization within organizations has been rapidly gaining popularity because it allows diverse groups of people to synthesize a large amount of ideas visually. Focusing in on processes within organizations creates a path to solutions with the potential of achieving better outcomes for the “wicked problems” we may face.

Building the Foundation: Expressing Through Art

Throughout the afternoon, AHIC members were invited to participate in an arts-based activity led by Charis Alderfer-Mumma in response to guiding questions:

- Where are we coming from?
- What are our successes?
- How do we visualize cultural safety?
- Where do we plan to go from here?

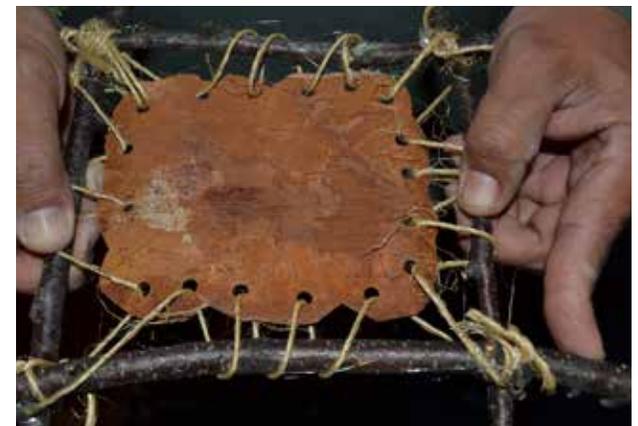
Using natural items/art materials (sticks, twigs, rocks, beads, feathers, paper, moss, etc), participants and AHIC members built mobiles in response to these questions. The art activity was informal and materials were available throughout the two-day event.



Creativity and crafts at the AHIC Gathering.



Making mobiles that represent where we are coming from, our successes, how we visualize cultural safety, where we are, and where we are going.



Creativity and crafts at the AHIC Gathering.



Members of the North Coast AHIC present their visioning and planning results.



Lakes District AHIC members pose with their table of cultural resources and web of networks from the 2015 AHIC Gathering.



Mobiles made by AHIC Gathering attendees.

Building the Foundation: Looking Ahead

The final activity of the visioning and planning for the future exercise was to spend 15 minutes reflecting on AHIC work using Post-it notes. David asked the group to take five minutes for each of the following topics:

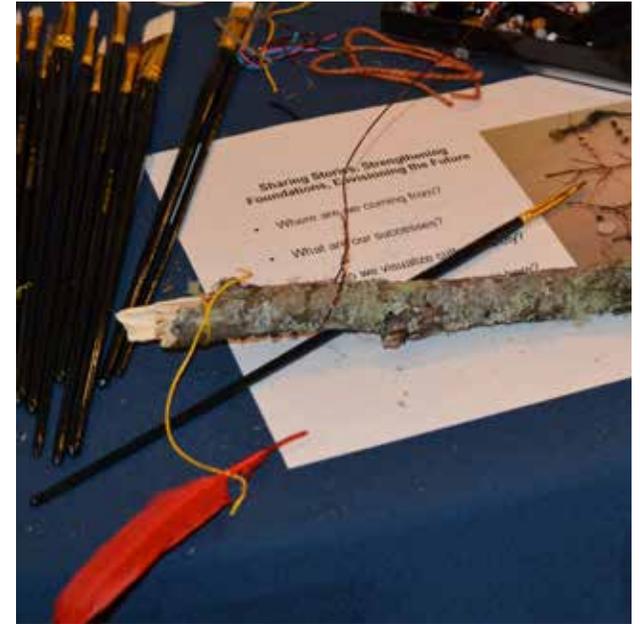
- What celebrations has your AHIC had since you were formed?
- Where is your AHIC now?
- What does the next year (and 2 to 5 years) look like for your AHIC?

The result was a collection of thoughts and ideas that each AHIC could take back to their communities and use in the development of action plans to carry them forward in the next year and beyond. AHICs shared with the group their visioning exercise and mobiles.

REFLECTIONS

The All AHIC Gathering is an annual event that ensures AHICs are supported, connected and well resourced. For many, this yearly gathering is the only time that people and groups doing similar work in geographically distant places have the opportunity to see one another, share stories and successes, and to connect with fresh perspectives on persistent and complex challenges.

In this third gathering, it was evident that AHICs are agents of transformative change through their innovative and collaborative work. Together, AHICs are developing practical solutions to improve health care experiences for Indigenous people and communities across northern BC.



"Sharing Stories, Strengthening Foundations, Envisioning the Future" - an arts-based activity.



The Khas't'an Drummers performed opening songs at the beginning of the gathering, photo by David Luggi.

Inside cover image

The image on the inside front cover is a replication, coloured by attendees at the AHIC Gathering, of the stained glass window in Parliament commemorating the legacy of Indian Residential Schools. Keynote speaker Rose LeMay brought it to the gathering and invited participants to colour sections of the window.

Background

The stained glass window in Centre Block of Parliament commemorates the legacy of former Indian Residential School students and their families, as well as the Prime Minister's historic Apology in 2008.

A five member selection committee comprised of leading Aboriginal art experts and former Indian Residential School students with First Nations, Métis and Inuit representation was established to oversee the artist selection

process. The design of renowned Métis artist Christi Belcourt was unanimously selected by the committee.

The window was installed directly above the west door of Centre Block in October 2012 and presented to the Speaker of the House on November 26, 2012 in a dedication ceremony on Parliament Hill.

This permanent commemoration of the legacy of Indian Residential Schools and of the historic Apology will encourage Parliamentarians, as well as visitors to Parliament for generations to come, to learn about the history of Indian Residential Schools and Canada's reconciliation efforts.

Content and images from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website:
www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1332859355145/1332859433503



Location of the stained glass window directly above the west door of Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings.



Stained glass window in Parliament commemorating the legacy of Indian Residential Schools.



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