

FIRST NATIONS **CHILD & FAMILY**
CARING SOCIETY OF CANADA
ANNUAL REPORT
2013 | 2014



First Nations Child & Family
Caring Society of Canada

Please note that this annual report reflects activities from September 2013 to August 2014.

Copyright © 2014. All Rights Reserved.

First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada

Suite 401, 309 Cooper Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5

tel: 613-230-5885

fax: 613-230-3080

info@fncaringsociety.com

www.fncaringsociety.com

Contents

2 Honoring

3 Key Accomplishments for 2013/2014

4 About Us

4 The Caring Society Board of Directors

4 The Caring Society Staff

4 Projects and Services: Living Our Mission Statement

4 First Peoples Child and Family Review

5 On-line Database

5 Touchstones of Hope

6 Student Placement and Volunteers

6 Administration and Event Support

7 First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service

8 Child and Youth Rights

13 Future Directions

13 Want to Make a Difference for Aboriginal Children?

Honoring

The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (the Caring Society) expresses our sincere appreciation to First Nations child and family service agencies, our members, funding organizations and partners who have made outstanding contributions to the wellbeing of Aboriginal children, youth and families in 2013/2014. Special thanks to children and youth throughout Canada who are standing with First Nations children and families and to:

Alanis Obomsawin	Indigenous Bar Association	Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alberta Child and Youth Advocate	Indigenous Physicians Association	The Printing House
Allen Best	J.W. McConnell Family Foundation	Robert Grant, Gall, Legge, Grant and Munroe, LLP
Amnesty International Canada	KAIROS Canada	Sarah Clarke, Hensel Barristers
Andrew Bryce	Andrew Koostachin, Jenny Nakogee and Family	Sandy Tunwell Accounting
Ashoka Foundation	Leah Gryfe Designs	Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth
Assembly of First Nations	Liam Sharp, Liam Sharp Photography	Sebastien Grammond, University of Ottawa
Anderson Family, Norway House Cree Nation	Manitoba First Nations CFS Gala Committee	SNAICC (Australia)
Bentall Corporation	Many Hands One Dream Coalition	Stikeman Elliott, LLP
Canadian Auto Workers Union	Maurina Beadle and Philippa Pictou	Sisters of Service
Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions	McGill University Faculty of Law	United Food and Commercial Workers Union
Canadian Human Rights Commission	McGill University School of Social Work	UNICEF
Canadian Labour Congress	Melanie Vincent	UNIFOR
Canadian Paediatric Society	National Film Board	University of Alberta
Canadian Teachers' Federation	National Indian Child Welfare Association	University of Ottawa
Carleton University	National Union	University of Victoria
Communications Energy and Paperworkers	Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Ontario	Vancouver Foundation
Frontline Defenders	Ontario Arts Council	Web Kitchen
Counselling Foundation of Canada	Ontario Public Services Employees Union	
CUPE	Ousley, Hanvey and Deep, LLP	
Editorial Board of First Peoples Child and Family Review	Power Law	
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario	Project of Heart	
Factor Inwentash, Faculty of Social Work		
Goodmans LLP		
Harold Tarbell		

Key Accomplishments for 2013/2014

- The work of the Caring Society was recognized by the Nobel Women's Committee in 2013 when Cindy Blackstock was named one of the 16 most important female human rights scholars/workers in the world.
- We are the only national organization focusing on Indigenous children, youth and families.
- We have a comprehensive and free research database with information on Aboriginal children.
- We are proud to collaborate with the University of Alberta on the First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service (FNCARES).
- We were honored to collaborate with Project of Heart and the University of Alberta to host youth dialogue panels during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's education days in Edmonton and Toronto attended by over 4500 young people.
- We co-hosted public viewings of Alanis Obomsawin's documentary on Shannen's Dream entitled *Hi-Ho Mistahey* in BC, Alberta and Ontario.
- We published two editions of the *First Peoples Child and Family Review* and have a very special children's edition in production for the fall of 2014 and another edition on custom adoption for the winter of 2014.
- Close to 40,000 individuals and organizations are registered for our various public education and engagement initiatives.
- We have done over 100 presentations last year to educate the public on First Nations children, youth and families in Canada, the United States, Ireland and Australia.
- We shipped close to 200 information packages to people across Canada last year so they can learn more about First Nations children and families.



Please support the Caring Society
by becoming a member
or making a donation at
www.fncaringociety.com



About Us

Building on the interest of First Nations child and family services leaders to create a national networking organization, the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (the Caring Society) was developed at the Squamish First Nation in 1998 at a national meeting of First Nations child and family service agencies (FNCFS). Meeting delegates agreed that a national non profit organization was required to provide research, policy, professional development and networking to support First Nations child and family service agencies in caring for First Nations children, youth and families. An interim board was elected and the plan was approved at a second national meeting at Kingsclear First Nation in 1999.

Using a reconciliation framework that educates and engages First Nations and non-Aboriginal peoples, the Caring Society provides quality resources to support First Nations communities to support children, youth and families. The award winning Caring Society proudly works with our partners in Canada and around the world to promote the rights and wellbeing of Indigenous children.

Projects and Services: Living Our Mission Statement

First Peoples Child and Family Review

The *First Peoples Child and Family Review* is dedicated to interdisciplinary research honouring the voices, perspectives and knowledge of First Peoples through research, critical analyses, stories, standpoints and media reviews. Since

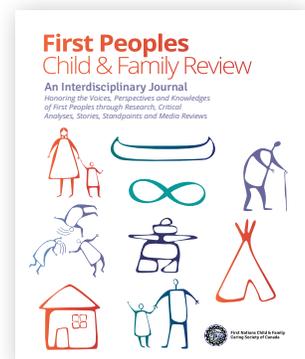
The Caring Society Board of Directors

- Elsie Flette**, President, Southern FN Authority, Manitoba
- Joan Glode**, Vice President, Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services
- Bill Gillespie**, Treasurer, Southern FN Authority, Manitoba
- Raymond Shingoose**, Board Member, Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services
- Derek Montour**, Board Member, Kahnawake Shakotiiia'takehnhas Community Services
- Kenn Richard**, Board Member, Native CFS of Toronto
- Landon Pearson**, Board Member, Carleton University
- Deborah Parker Loewen**, Board Member, Saskatchewan Member at Large
- Judy Levi**, Board Member, First Nations agency delegate, New Brunswick
- Mary Teegee**, Board Member, Carrier Sekani Family Services

The Caring Society Staff

- Cindy Blackstock**, Executive Director
- Tammy Morgan**, Executive Assistant
- Andrea Auger**, Reconciliation and Research Manager
- Brittany Martell**, Acting Education and Public Engagement Coordinator
- Jennifer King** (currently on maternity leave), Education and Public Engagement Coordinator

our last annual report, the *FPCFR* published three issues. In collaboration with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research (ACFCR), we published:



- Volume 8, Issue 1, 2013 – Special Issue on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
- Volume 9, Issue 1, 2014 – Special Issue on Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental, Cultural and Spiritual Health.

Volume 8, Issue 2 (2013) provided articles and community stories from many authors on various subjects relating to Indigenous peoples. All had a common theme of addressing challenges through Indigenous cultural practices and traditional knowledge.

In October, we are excited to publish a special children's edition of the journal featuring submissions exclusively authored by children and young people on the theme of reconciliation. In order to provide the greatest learning opportunity and inspire children to learn more about research publication, children are also serving as peer reviewers and have designed the journal cover for the special edition. This issue will use the Touchstones of Hope as a framework to showcase these publications on reconciliation and the views of these young people on equality and equity for First Nations children and youth.

Watch for this exciting edition to be released in the fall of 2014.

In December 2014, we look forward to publishing Volume 9, Issue 2 a special issue in collaboration with the Siem Smun'eem Indigenous Child Wellbeing Research Network at the University of Victoria on Custom Adoption.

The Editorial Board would like to thank all authors, reviewers and others who have continuously supported and contributed to the *FPCFR*.

On-line Database

The Caring Society hosts a free on line database to assist students, academics and members of the public to identify research and publications on Aboriginal children and families. The

database features over 3500 annotated summaries of resources and publications and is updated on a regular basis to ensure it includes the most up to date information. Once users identify a resource of interest they can locate it either by visiting the URL or contacting the publisher. This year we added an additional 50 new resources including, films, reports and publications on a variety of topics related to Aboriginal peoples like health, child welfare, justice, children's rights, structural interventions and promising practices. Search the database at www.fncaingsociety.com/publications/search.

Touchstones of Hope

The Touchstones of Hope movement is a community driven child welfare change process premised on five Touchstone principles (self-determination, holistic response, structural interventions, non-discrimination and culture and language). The process engages First Nations and other stakeholders to re-vision child welfare in a culturally based way and then supports the realization of that vision using sustainable change processes that are continually evaluated to inform the process of positive change for children. The movement was piloted with great success in British Columbia from 2008-2012. In concluding our collaboration with First Nations and the Province of British Columbia in 2012 on the Northern BC Touchstones of Hope movement, we reported back to participating First Nations Child and Family Service agencies, provincial government employees and other stakeholders on the evaluation completed by the University of Toronto. We also updated the Touchstones of Hopes CD toolkit which provides a comprehensive set of resources ranging from beginning a conversation on Touchstones to evaluating its impact.



The Caring Society uses the Touchstones of Hope framework across all of our work as it provides guidelines for reconciliation across all culturally-based equity initiatives that we work on. We are especially excited to frame the upcoming children and youth journal around the Touchstones of Hope reconciliation process.

We acknowledge the support of the McConnell Foundation in supporting us to update our existing Touchstones of Hope resources, develop new materials and publicize the Touchstones of Hope movement. In 2014, we sent out Touchstones of Hope information packages to all 105 First Nations child and family service agencies in Canada and we have continued to provide updates on the movement in our newsletter and on the Caring Society website.

Expanding our resources for the Touchstones of Hope movements at a community level such as those underway in First Nations and the Ministry of Social Services (MSS) in Saskatchewan. First Nations have been using the Touchstones of Hope as the foundation for information-building and implementation of the Saskatoon Flexible Response Model in order to build a more engaging approach with families. The MSS will be reviewing outcomes of the initiative to determine next steps for families, First Nations and Métis Child and Family Service providers and the Ministry staff.

We continue to educate others and provide information on the Touchstones of Hope nationally and internationally. We presented to organizations in Alberta about the Touchstones of Hope movement and how to become engaged in a reconciliation movement. Dr. Blackstock has shared the Touchstones of Hope model with First Nations in Alberta, New Brunswick and Ontario and also presented the model to over 1000 delegates at a Native American conference in the US and to over 2500 delegates attending the Childhood Trauma conference in August 2014 in Melbourne, Australia.

We are excited to continue our work in 2014 and into 2015 with online Touchstones of Hope train-the-trainer sessions, continued newsletter and website updates and follow-up with participants of the sessions as well as existing Touchstones movements.

Student Placement and Volunteers

The Caring Society is committed to providing positive educational opportunities for students and has proudly hosted many academic student placements over the years. We provide placement and volunteer opportunities that meaningfully contribute to the student's professional and scholarly development. During the 2013/2014 year, we hosted students from Carleton University, the University of Ottawa's Community Service Learning program, the University of Victoria, and McGill University. We are sincerely grateful to the students and volunteers for their contributions to our organization and we also want to acknowledge the commitment of their placement supervisors and host universities.

In addition, we would like to thank all of the dedicated volunteers who devoted their time and energy to helping out with Have a Heart Day and the Our Dreams Matter Too walk. Special thanks to Elliott, Bethany, Brittany and Elizabeth Wyn Wood Secondary students for their help with the Ottawa event!

The Caring Society team looks forward to meeting new students and volunteers in the fall of 2014!

Administration and Event Support

Here are a few interesting things we have been working on:

- This past year, Caring Society staff provided over 100 different presentations/keynotes across Canada and around the world. If you would like to invite Caring Society staff to come and speak at your event please complete the speaker's request form at: www.fncaringsociety.com/presentation-request

- Dr. Blackstock presented at the following international events:
- United States– NICWA Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- **Australia** – Childhood Trauma Conference in Melbourne and Leading Practices Conference in Sydney
- **Ireland** – Frontline Defenders
- We would like to express our gratitude to our nearly 200 members who support the Caring Society in conducting its work.
- If you are not a member of the Caring Society, please join at: www.fncaringsociety.com/become-member
- This past year the Caring Society shipped close to 200 packages of educational material such as book, bookmarks or buttons and newsletters to individuals, schools/ universities and community organizations so they can learn more about First Nations children, youth and families.
- The staff members are very excited to announce we have transformed the format of our Caring Across Boundaries Exhibit featuring photography by Liam Sharp from an exhibit of 40 large panels to a roll up banner format that is easier to set up and more economical to ship to locations across the country. We also have an electronic slideshow of the exhibit that is available in both English and French. If you would like to book our Photo Exhibit for display at an event or your organization please visit our website at: www.fncaringsociety.com/hosting-caring-across-boundaries-photo-exhibition or contact us at info@fncaringsociety.com



**First Nations Children's
Action Research and
Education Service**
([www.fncaringsociety.com/
fncares](http://www.fncaringsociety.com/fncares))

June 2014 marked the completion of the second year of operation for the First Nations Children's Action Research and Education

Service (FNCARES), a partnership between the University of Alberta and the Caring Society. Using a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach, and drawing on well-established research on the structural drivers of disadvantage for First Nations children, youth, and families, FNCARES is committed to translating this research into pragmatic, community-based solutions that improve safety, well-being, and success for First Nations children and youth.

FNCARES has active collaborations with over 20 researchers throughout Canada, the USA and Australia in fields as diverse as economics, community development, education, social work and First Nations studies. Along with research, we also organize public events to educate about the structural drivers of disadvantage and promote further discussion and action to ensure culturally-based equity for First Nations children and youth.

Activities Carried out This Year

Film screenings of Alanis Obomsawin's *Hi-Ho Mistahay!* (2013):

The film features the story of Shannen Koostachin and the Shannen's Dream campaign for equitable education for First Nations children. FNCARES, in collaboration with Project of Heart, organized the following screening events:

- Film screening and presentation by Cindy Blackstock and Charlene Bearhead at Ben Calf Robe Elementary and Junior High School in Edmonton. Over 300 students from Ben Calf Robe Elementary/Junior High and guests from other schools attended the screening and discussion, and Ben Calf Robe students presented their fantastic Jingle Dress and screened a film about their Jingle Dress project for guests.
- Film screening and panel discussion at the University of Alberta. With sponsorship from the NFB, the Faculty of Extension and the Kule Institute for Advanced Study, and with the help of Gail Gallagher, we hosted the

director, Alanis Obomsawin, who introduced the film and participated in a panel discussion after the screening with Charlene Bearhead (Project of Heart) and with Cindy Blackstock.

- In collaboration with the Leading Spirits Aboriginal Youth Council at Jasper Place High School in Edmonton, FNCARES hosted students from Jasper Place and other Edmonton high schools at two separate screenings of *Hi-Ho Mistahey!*

These events facilitated greater involvement of FNCARES at the University of Alberta, and in the wider Edmonton community, in the growing reconciliation movement through mutual learning and discussion about the barriers to equal education for Aboriginal children, and about the determined children and youth working to achieve educational equity for their peers. The events helped to connect Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, educators, faculty, staff, organizations and individuals in the wider community through a shared learning process and discussion about current and future efforts to achieve equity in education for all children and youth.

Research in Progress

- *What Works? A Literature Review on First Nations Child Poverty and Intervention Trials*. Supported by a grant from the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta and by the University of Alberta Grant Assists Program
- Co-Investigators on the SSHRC-funded project *Building Research Capacity with First Nations and Mainstream Youth Protection Services in Quebec*
- Collaborators on SSHRC-funded project *Exploring the rights of the First Nations child through the arts: Our dreams matter too* with Dr. Mary-Elizabeth Manley of York University.
- *The First Peoples Child and Family Review* is an interdisciplinary, peer reviewed,

free e-journal that focuses primarily on First Peoples and Aboriginal child welfare administration, practices, policies and research. *Supported by a SSHRC Aid to Scholarly Journals Grant*

Migration of FNCARES website to Caring Society website

- You will now find the FNCARES website nested comfortably within the Caring Society's recently revamped website, making it more accessible to visitors and easier for staff to connect overlapping content and update and edit content to keep it current.

Child and Youth Rights

The Caring Society believes all children, including First Nations children, have a right to grow up safely in their families, go to good schools, be healthy and proud of who they are. These rights are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Canadian Government has ratified the UNCRC and has expressed support for UNDRIP and thus we work actively to ensure the realization of these rights for First Nations children, youth and families.

Jordan's Principle (www.jordansprinciple.ca)

The Caring Society has worked with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Norway House Cree Nation to promote Jordan's Principle. This child first principle to resolving governmental jurisdictional disputes regarding funding for children's services has been endorsed by over 2600 individuals and organizations. In May of 2007, MP Jean Crowder (NDP) tabled a private members motion in the House of Commons in support of Jordan's Principle. On December 12, 2007, Private



Members Motion 296 in support of Jordan's Principle was passed unanimously by the House of Commons. Jordan's father, Ernest Anderson and his older sister, Jerlene, were joined by other children and families from Norway House in the gallery of the House of Commons to witness this historic moment. As Ernest Anderson so rightly pointed out the good done in Jordan's name that day would be nothing but a moral victory unless the provincial and federal governments implemented it. Unfortunately, the Federal Government of Canada's response to Jordan's Principle narrows it to apply only to children with complex medical needs with multiple service providers and excludes disputes among federal government departments.

This past year the Federal Court found Canada had breached its obligation to implement Jordan's Principle in a case involving Jeremy, a youth from Pictou Landing First Nation, with significant medical needs. The teen's mother, Maurina Beadle, cared for the child with limited support until she suffered a traumatic stroke when Jeremy was 15 years of age. The stroke was so severe she had difficulty walking and could not manage Jeremy's physical care. Health professionals assessed the family and recommended respite care for Jeremy while Maurina recovered. The Government of Canada suggested that Jeremy would only be entitled to the fixed amount of care set out in Nova Scotia policy. That policy, however, had been wholly rejected in a Supreme Court of Nova Scotia decision that said the care provided must be in accordance with the child's needs and not an arbitrary fixed value set by government officials. For reasons that are still not clear, the federal government discounted the application of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia's decision in Jeremy's case. Maurina Beadle and Pictou Landing Band Council brought a legal case against Canada for failure to properly implement Jordan's Principle. The case was argued on June 11, 2012 and the Federal Court decision was released in the spring of 2012 ordering the Government of Canada to pay for Jeremy's care as well as the legal fees for Maurina Beadle and Pictou Landing Band

Council. The Government of Canada appealed the decision to the Federal Court of Appeal and then dropped their appeal in July 2014- just weeks before the hearing was to begin.

Jordan's Principle is supported by close to 8,500 people and organizations making it one of the most broadly supported child rights initiatives in Canadian history. The Caring Society has just released an updated information sheet on Jordan's Principle which is available in French and English.

Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on First Nations Child Welfare (www.fnwitness.ca)



Allegation before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

In February of 2007 the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society (Caring Society) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) filed a complaint alleging that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's provision of First Nations child and family services was flawed, inequitable and thus discriminatory under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (www.chrt-tcdp.gc.ca)

The Tribunal adjudicates complaints filed under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. The Tribunal has the authority to make a legal determination of discrimination and order remedies.

Parties to the Proceeding

Complainants: First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, and Assembly of First Nations

Commission: Canadian Human Rights Commission (representing the public interest)

Respondent: Attorney General of Canada (representing the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada)

Interested Parties: Chiefs of Ontario and Amnesty International

Case History

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) requires First Nations child and family service agencies to operate pursuant to provincial/territorial child welfare laws. The federal government controls the nature and extent of child welfare delivery on reserve through a variety of policies, programs and funding regimes. Internal AANDC reviews and Auditor General of Canada reports (2008, 2011) found AANDC's flawed and inequitable approaches contribute to growing numbers of First Nations children in child welfare care. The complaint was filed in the best interests of First Nations children after AANDC failed to implement two solutions it jointly developed with First Nations.

The Federal Government Response to the Case

The Federal Government denies the allegations and has spent over 3 million dollars in its unsuccessful efforts to get the case dismissed on technical grounds arguing that child welfare services delivered to First Nations should not be compared to those delivered to all other Canadians (known as the comparator argument) and that funding is not a service pursuant to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (known as the service argument).

Hearing Evidence

The Tribunal began hearing testimony from 25 witnesses (18 for the Commission and the Complainants and 7 for the Attorney General) on February 25, 2013 and concluded on May 30, 2014. Approximately 500 documents were filed as evidence during the proceedings. This case will set an important precedent for addressing inequitable Federal Government service delivery to First Nations peoples in other areas such as education, health, housing, and water.

Next Steps and More Information

Final arguments for the case will be heard from October 20–24, 2014 (9:30–4:30) with a ruling

expected in 2015. All hearings are open to the public (11th floor, 160 Elgin Street, Ottawa, ON) For more information visit www.fnwitness.ca

In Appreciation

The Caring Society would like to express our deepest appreciation to our legal team: Robert Grant, Gall, Legge, Grant & Munroe; Sebastien Grammond, University of Ottawa Faculty of Law; Anne Levesque, David Taylor and Michael Sabet of Power Law; and Sarah Clarke, Hensel Barristers. We also acknowledge the significant contributions of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the Assembly of First Nations, Amnesty International Canada and the Chiefs of Ontario in ensuring the very best case for the children was placed before the Tribunal for their consideration.

Shannen's Dream

(www.shannensdream.ca)

The Auditor General of Canada has found that First Nations children do not receive equitable education funding on reserves and the Parliamentary Budget Officer has raised serious concerns about the condition of many on reserve schools. On the ground, these inequities mean First Nations children often have fewer teachers, books, learning resources and many go to run down schools or live in communities where there is no school at all. These inequities have persisted for many years, so thousands of First Nations and other children and youth are joining the Shannen's Dream campaign to educate Canadians and promote positive change. This child and youth led movement was started by teen education champion Shannen Koostachin of Attawapiskat First Nation, who wanted "safe and comfy schools" and equitable education for First Nations children.

Shannen never went to a proper school. The only school in her community sat on a site contaminated by diesel fuel located beside an active airstrip. The school was closed by health



officials in 2000, so the federal government brought up portable trailers and put them on the playground of the contaminated school. Over time the condition of the portables deteriorated, making learning almost impossible. The children of Attawapiskat thought that if the federal government heard first-hand how bad things were they would build a new school and provide equitable education. Shannen helped organize the younger children in her community to write letters to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and she created You Tube videos inviting non-Aboriginal children to join the letter writing campaign. Thousands of children responded and joined the letter writing campaign.

Shannen was mindful of all the other First Nations children who did not have good schools so she vowed to continue the campaign. For her efforts, Shannen was one of 45 children in the world to be nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize awarded by the Nobel Laureates. Tragically, Shannen passed away in a traffic accident in 2010. Inspired by Shannen's passionate message, the Caring Society proudly partnered with Shannen's family, community and many supporters to launch Shannen's Dream on Wednesday, November 17, 2010 in Ottawa. Shannen's Dream calls on caring Canadians of all ages, especially children and youth, to sign up to support Shannen's call for safe and comfy schools and culturally based, equitable education.

It has been another great year for Shannen's Dream! There are now over 10, 500 Shannen's Dream supporters and the National Film Board documentary, *Hi-Ho Mistakey*, is being seen across the country. Thanks to the children's efforts, a new school is opening in the fall of 2014 in Attawapiskat! The community chose the school name Kattawapiskak, which means "people of the parting rocks."

Progress has been made, but there's still more to do. Thousands of First Nations children are still attending unsafe schools, without a proper education. In the 2011 AFN School Survey, 47% of First Nations schools surveyed self-identified the need for a new building.¹ Of those schools, over 60% have been waiting for 5 years or more. Shannen's Dream is about ensuring that EVERY First Nation child has a safe and comfy school and quality education.

Meaningful reconciliation engages children and youth in learning about Canada's history of colonization, as well as contemporary issues. The Caring Society recently partnered with the British Columbia Teacher's Federation to bring Shannen's Dream to schools in BC with the goal of nurturing student citizenship, agency and self-confidence by empowering BC teachers with knowledge and resources.

Interested in learning how to nurture reconciliation and student citizenship in your area? Check out Shannen's Dream, Jordan's Principle, and I am Witness school resource pages for resources and examples of learning in action: fncaringsociety.com/shannens-dream-school-resources.

Have a Heart Day: February 14, 2014

Have a Heart Day is a national, annual event to educate children on the rights First Nations children have under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and engage them in respectful citizenship actions to ensure First Nations children have an equitable chance to grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy, and proud of their cultures. People of all ages can participate by either hosting a party on February 14 to raise awareness, sending a Have a Heart Day postcard to elected leaders, or by spreading the word through social media, like YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Like all Caring Society activities, participation is designed to be fun, free, respectful, non-partisan and easy to do.

1 Assembly of First Nations. (2012). *2011 AFN School Survey Results*. Retrieved from Education: <http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/education-survey-results.pdf>

Have a heart
for First Nations
children

www.
fnwitness
.ca



Have a Heart Day on Parliament Hill, February 14, 2014.

The Caring Society supports Have a Heart Day celebrations across Canada with free education and event resources available on the event webpage. The event page also offers a gallery with links to videos and other resources to support video and audio learning preferences. Have a Heart Day would not be possible without the generous support of our partners, such as the labour movement, professional teachers' organizations, Project of Heart, KAIROS and Amnesty International Canada.

This past year, participants across Canada celebrated love and fairness by taking part in Have a Heart Day for First Nations children. Over 400 e-valentines were sent, along with countless letters from events across the country. In Ottawa, over 400 children and young people from Ontario, Quebec, and even Manitoba gathered on Parliament Hill for the Have a Heart celebration

Our Dreams Matter Too: June 11, 2014

Like Have a Heart Day, Our Dreams Matter Too is an annual, national event educating students on reconciliation, citizenship and culturally based equity for First Nations children. It is another opportunity for people of all ages to stand with First Nations children to ensure they receive proper services that make them feel proud of who they are. Children, families,

schools, communities, and agencies are encouraged to research the situation of First Nations children and get involved by writing letters to elected officials so that First Nations children can grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy and proud of who they are.

On June 11, thousands of people participated in at least 31 walks across the country this year, totaling over 4000 walkers. Almost half of the walks were organized by elementary and secondary students, and others were organized by

schools and First Nations communities or agencies. The Caring Society provides a variety of materials to help promote events on the event webpage, including: posters, bookmarks, buttons, a sample letter, tips for organizing a walk in your community and much more.

In Ottawa, Caring Society Staff were honoured to celebrate Our Dreams Matter Too with more than 500 children and youth, as well as educators, community members, and supporters. Despite a change of location due to weather, students from Ontario and Quebec were determined to share their letters and support for First Nations Children.

The Caring Society would like to extend a sincere and heartfelt thank you to all those who took part in Have a Heart Day and Our Dreams Matter Too this year. Your dedication to learning and citizenship matters and truly makes a difference!



Our Dreams Matter Too Gathering in Ottawa, June 11, 2014..

Future Directions

Our vision of Canada is one where all First Nations children are loved, respected and honored. We know just what to do to make that vision a reality and it will require the education and active engagement of caring Canadians and organizations to make it happen. Over the next year we look forward to making the following visions a reality:

- Publish the children's edition of the First Peoples Child and Family Review.
- Support First Nations child and family service agencies, governments and stakeholders' engagement in the Touchstones of Hope Movement and host two train-the-trainers sessions.
- Complete a comprehensive literature review on the effects of poverty on Indigenous children and best practices for remediating poverty.
- Continue to participate in the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on First Nations Child Welfare and look forward to a ruling in 2015!
- Developing more educational resources for Shannen's Dream, Jordan's Principle and the promotion of children's engagement in research and positive social change.
- Publish two editions of the *First Peoples Child and Family Review* and continue updating the on line database.
- Expand the distribution of the reconciliation themed photography exhibit "Caring Across Boundaries" and compliment it with additional educational materials.

A warm thank you to our members, volunteers and the many thousands of caring citizens of all ages who have joined the effort to ensure culturally based equity for First Nations children, youth and their families.

Want to Make a Difference for Aboriginal Children?

Go on line to www.fncaringsociety.com to learn more and join the movement for culturally based equity for First Nations children, young people and families. You will find seven ways you can make a difference for Aboriginal children and youth in under 15 minutes and think about supporting the Caring Society by becoming a member or making an on line donation at www.fncaringsociety.com/donating-caring-society.



7 free ways
to make a
difference

www.fncaingsociety.com



First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada
309 Cooper Street, Suite 401, Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5
tel: 613-230-5885 | fax: 613-230-3080 | info@fncaingsociety.com