



Aboriginal Healing Foundation

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*Our mission is to encourage
and support Aboriginal people in
building and reinforcing sustainable
healing processes that address the
legacy of physical and sexual abuse
in the residential schools, including
intergenerational impacts.*

*Notre mission est d'encourager
et d'appuyer les autochtones afin de
bâtir et de renforcer les processus
de guérison souhaitables qui
s'attaquent aux séquelles
des abus physiques et sexuels
dans le système de pensionnats,
y compris aux séquelles
intergénérationnelles.*

AHF funds first 35 community projects

(Toronto—June 23, 1999) The Aboriginal Healing Foundation today announced the next major steps towards healing for those suffering the legacy of physical and sexual abuse in Canadian Residential Schools.

“Our mission is to encourage and support Aboriginal people in building and reinforcing sustainable healing processes. The projects being funded today offer hope and support in communities struggling to bind the wounds arising from the trauma suffered in Residential Schools. The cycle of abuse and dysfunction within families will begin to be broken,” Georges Erasmus, Aboriginal Healing Foundation Chairman, told reporters at a press conference held at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto.

On January 7, 1998, the Hon. Jane Stewart, Minister of Indian Affairs, announced Gathering Strength—Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan, a strategy to begin a process of reconciliation and renewal with Aboriginal people. A cornerstone of Gathering Strength was the Canadian Government’s commitment of \$350 million to support community-based healing initiatives for Aboriginal People, on and off reserve, who have been affected by the legacy of physical and sexual abuse that occurred in the residential schools. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation was formed to manage those funds.

The 35 projects announced today met the Foundation’s first deadline (January 15, 1999) under the themes *Community Therapeutic Healing* and *Developing & Enhancing Aboriginal Capacity*. Types of projects funded under these themes include: sex offender programs; education, counselling, and trauma work; development of Aboriginal-specific materials; training of community members; employee assistance programs; and support for direct therapeutic approaches. Total funding for these initiatives amounts to \$2,053,307.

This information is up to date as of Friday June 11, 1999. The list continues to grow as the Foundation’s finance people continue to negotiate and conclude Project Funding Agreements daily.

The Board of Directors of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation regrets that all the proposals received couldn’t be funded this time around. Some projects weren’t approved because they missed the deadline or because they needed more work.

“Applicants whose proposals were returned should not be discouraged, however,” emphasized Erasmus. “We have told them we will work with them to refine their proposals so they can resubmit them in the next rounds. We will carry out several funding cycles over the life of the Foundation so everyone should have the opportunity to submit a proposal.”

Applicants who missed the first deadline can resubmit their proposals when new calls are made. Deadlines for each call will always be firm. The Foundation has four years to spend or commit the money and wants to get it flowing through the communities as quickly as possible.

“We are helping Aboriginal communities help themselves. We do this by providing resources for healing initiatives, promoting awareness of healing issues and needs, and by nurturing a supportive public environment. The success of the projects we are funding today, and those we will be funding in the future, will empower individuals, families and communities. That’s why we’re here.”

“We are committed to making strategic investments of the resources entrusted to us. We are determined to contribute to a climate of care, safety, goodwill and understanding for all Aboriginal people,” added Erasmus. “This kind of healing is a huge task but, as the proverb goes, ‘the longest journey begins with a single step’.”

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Allen Gabriel, Director of Communications