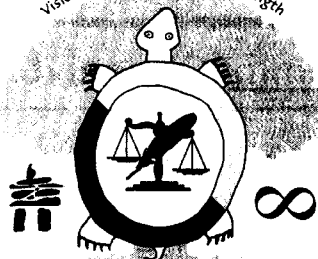


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Aboriginal Justice Learning Network  
 Réseau de la justice autochtone

# LINK

Volume 1, Issue 7

Winter, 2000

## Restorative Justice Conference

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Under the theme "Come Together: Restore the Balance," the File Hills Qu'appelle Tribal Council held an information exchange between First Nations and other communities. The three-day conference in Regina, Saskatchewan, in late April provided an opportunity to share knowledge in the areas of crime, crime prevention, and restorative justice models in First Nations Communities.

Prior to the conference, a sweat lodge was held for men, and a pipe ceremony opened the proceedings. A number of topics were included: police and family violence services offered by Saskatchewan Justice; mediation and the use of community justice forum; Aboriginal gangs; community justice committees; policing; corrections; alternative sentencing and probation; and

Saskatchewan and Environment Resource Management.

Presenters, facilitators, and panel members came from First Nations, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Assembly of First Nations, Regina Police Services, Winnipeg Police Services. The RCMP, probation services, the judiciary, Saskatchewan Justice, Correctional Services Canada, and the Department of Justice Canada. As the conference drew to a close, seven elders provided a summary and discussed the variety of roles that Elders take on. A pipe ceremony ended the conference on the final afternoon.

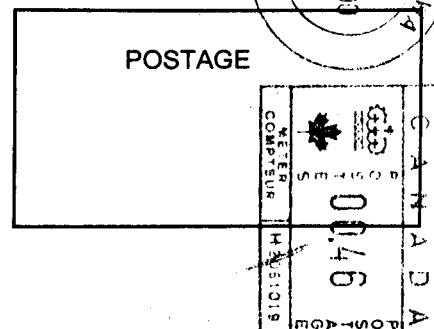
Several organizations assisted in sponsoring this conference: The National Crime Prevention Centre, the Aboriginal Justice Learning Network, the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, Sask Tel and First Nations Insurance-Services.

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## Departure of Mary Tobin Oates

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September saw the departure of Mary Tobin Oates from the Learning Network to Human Resources and Development Canada. As National Coordinator for more than a year, Mary was responsible for bringing new energy into LINK and the Network. As a result of Mary's efforts LINK was transformed from a one-page newsletter to a more in-depth printed resource distributed to thousands of individuals and agencies around the country. She was also responsible for informing numerous communities about the Aboriginal Justice Learning Network and the resources it has to offer. She represented the AJLN for the last time on November 9, 1999, speaking at the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation-Blueprint for the Future conference in Winnipeg. She will be sadly missed, and we wish her well in her new journey.

Tawnye Plewes is acting as the AJLN National Coordinator until a replacement is found.

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## Saskatoon Workout

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The Advisory Council meeting followed on the heels of the "Prairie Workout," a conference held in Saskatoon October 12-14, 1999. Over 120 community-based justice program coordinators and workers attended, representing 25 different community justice programs from three provinces (Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba). The conference, sponsored by the AJLN, Saskatchewan Justice and Saskatchewan Mediation Services, prepared an agenda for participants that focussed on "peer-learning". In other words, the facilitators of group discussion and focus groups were themselves directly involved with program development and delivery. The Workout also provided an opportunity for networking amongst programs as well as the sharing of information and best practices. The keynote speaker was Ray Yellowknee.

Thanks to everyone who was involved: your hard work and participation made the Workout a success.

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## Advisory Committee Meetings

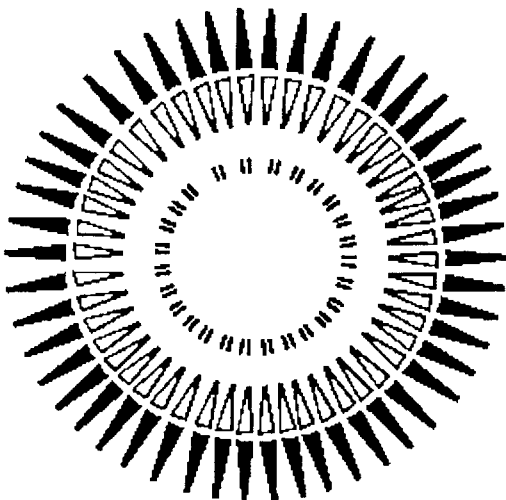
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Since its inception in August 1998, the Aboriginal Justice Learning Network Advisory Committee has met four times. The goal of the committee is to provide advice to Deputy Minister of Justice, Morris Rosenberg, and to the staff of the AJLN regarding activities that the Learning Network should undertake during the remainder of its mandate.

The Advisory Committee consists of 14 members and 10 alternate members from across the country-Inuit, Metis, First Nations and others. They draw from their experiences as community justice workers, lawyers, judges and police officers. An elders panel helps guide the Advisory Committee in spiritual and cultural matters.

The Advisory Committee held its first meeting in Ottawa in October 1998. This initial meeting allowed the members to get to know one another and familiarize themselves with the Learning

Network and the Aboriginal Justice Strategy. At that time, and during the second meeting in Regina, the committee discussed communications strategies (how to reach Aboriginal communities and organizations more effectively), honoraria for elders and committee members, how frequently to meet, and the mandate of the committee. During the third meeting in mid-June in Halifax, the group broke into smaller working groups to discuss communications, resources, training, networking, sharing, and other related issues. The fourth meeting took place Nov 29 - Dec 1, 1999 in Ottawa and was attended by all of the elders. Facilitated by Celina Reithberger and Harold Gatensby, the meeting drew the participants into subcommittees and structural plans to broaden AJLN's educational and communications outreach. The next meeting is scheduled for February 5-8 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and will be facilitated by Craig Nyirfa and Susan Swan.



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## Gang workshops

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Enoch Cree Nation, a small reserve about 16 kilometres west of Edmonton, is concerned about the growing numbers of youths involved in gang activity. Because of Enoch's close proximity to Edmonton, youth transience between the two communities is on the rise and is becoming increasingly unsettling. Chief and Council, community members, parents, and resource people felt that the emerging gang activity and gang recruitment of young Enoch members needed action. In response to this need, the Yellowhead Tribal Community Corrections Society hosted a series of workshops at the Kitaskinaw school on the Enoch Cree Nation. The focus of the workshops were to raise awareness for parents, youths and resource people while providing practical ideas for dealing with these difficult issues.

Workshops were set up to provide an arena for discussion and to enable the Enoch Cree Nation to develop their own support systems and course of action. Among the topics for discussion were the need to create increased awareness among youths of the dangers and consequences of getting involved in a gang. This also brought about an opportunity to show youths that people are both concerned and supportive of them. Constable Susan Swan from the Winnipeg Police Service spoke of the types of gangs in Winnipeg and Manitoba. She mentioned several factors as to why youth become involved in gangs: broken families, domestic violence, wanting a "family," romanticized view of an exciting or dangerous world, and intimidation. Troy Rupert from the Winnipeg Native Alliance also discussed why youths join gangs. Constable Alberts from the RCMP Stony Plain Detachment discussed the importance of community support when investigating criminal activity. Constable Sylniak of the Hobbema Police Service discussed gang activity in Hobbeman, particularly graffiti, gang dress codes, and losses caused by vandalism. Lawyer Tony Mandamin talked about Aboriginal justice initiatives; alternatives to youths detention, where youth are at high risk for recruitment into gangs; Aboriginal Crimestoppers; community service work to clean up graffiti; and way of making the community less desirable to gangs.

Between 65 and 75 people attended the workshops. Financial assistance was provided by AJLN.

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## Gladue Case Summary

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Judge Dutil gave the Advisory Committee the benefit of his understanding of the Supreme Court of Canada decision in R. Gladue, rendered April 23, 1999. It was recommended that AJLN make available to all a copy of this decision. The decision concerned s. 718 (e) of the Criminal Code (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46), which provides that all available sanctions, other than imprisonment, that are reasonable in the circumstances, should be considered for all offenders, with particular attention to the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders. The decision allows the sentencing judge to consider the systemic or background factors which may have influenced the Aboriginal offender to engage in criminal conduct and to consider the distinct concept of sentencing held by the offender, the victim's family and by the community. There was a full discussion of this decision by all present.

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## The National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention

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In June 1998, the Government of Canada launched the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention to work with Canadians in tackling the root causes of crime.

The National Strategy works in partnership with the “experts” – Canadians in their communities – to reverse the risk factors that often trigger criminal behaviour. Poverty, inequality, substance abuse, and child and spousal abuse are just some of the risk-factors we know to be at the root of crime.

The Government of Canada has committed \$32 million annually to fund projects that target these issues and build safer, healthier communities in every part of the country. Some of the most innovative and successful projects to date have been in remote northern communities.

Ms. Karetak-Lindell, Member of Parliament for Nunavut Territory, said during an announcement last August of eight projects in Nunavut, “these projects are the result of a partnership between governments, but above all, they underline the accomplishments of the people of Nunavut, whose reputation for ingenuity, courage and determination is well reflected in these crime prevention initiatives.”

The National Strategy focuses on children, youths, women’s personal security, and Aboriginal peoples.

Like the Government of Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan, *Gathering Strength*, the National Strategy is also committed to community-based healing and working with Aboriginal people to build skills and expertise that help them develop their own solutions to the challenges they face.

Successful community projects are ones which adapt to the problems that Aboriginal people face, such as isolation, boredom, disillusionment and a disconnection from their language and culture.

To foster meaningful change in these situations, many projects focus on positive early-intervention programs and use innovative ways to reach young people and give them a sense of belonging.

Under the National Strategy, the Government funds culturally tailored programs and activities that reduce isolation and boredom. They build self-esteem, strengthen relationships between youths and elders, and keep youths in school.

The **Elder-Youth Language and Cultural Camp** project in Hamlet of Kugluktuk in Nunavut, for example, brought at-risk youths together with elders on a one-week boating camping trip. Over the week, elders taught traditional caribou and moose hunting, skinning, preparing moose hide for tanning, carving, drum making and outdoor survival skills to youth. Elders spoke their traditional lan-

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language and encouraged the youths to do the same. Evenings included serious discussions of traditional values and teaching social skills, sharing and working together.

Not only did the participants learn and benefit from the experience, but the community and local businesses became so intrigued by the project that many donated food and camping supplies to the project staff and participants. The project raised the spirit of the community, strengthened ties between elders and youths, and raised their self-esteem. Participants and the community as a whole are looking forward to next year's camp.

Another example of how communities can work together to find innovative solutions to tough issues, is the Gwich'in Tribal Council's Outdoor Classroom Project, in the communities of Fort McPherson, Aklavik, Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic in the Northwest Territories.

The Traditional Outdoor Classroom is used throughout the school year as an alternative teaching environment. Students, teachers and community resource people combine academics, traditional and cul-

tural activities, and effective counselling to develop pro-social behaviour, supportive relationships with peers, anger management and safe play skills.

Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Secretary of State for Children and Youths, spoke of the project when the Government of Canada announced funding for it in September. "The Gwich'in Outdoor Classroom Project is a thoughtful, tailored and flexible initiative that demonstrates how governments and communities can successfully work together to address difficult issues," she said.

The project provides an opportunity to test an approach that integrates culturally appropriate programming into effective "mainstream" crime prevention strategies for Aboriginal children, youths, families and communities.

If you have a crime prevention or community safety idea for your community and want information packages on programs, eligibility criteria, project funding or about the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention contact:

**National Crime Prevention Centre  
Department of Justice Canada  
St. Andrew's Tower  
284 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0H8**

**Toll-free: 1-877-302-NCPC (6272)  
Tel: (613) 941-9306  
Fax: (613) 952-3515  
E-mail: [ncpc@web.net](mailto:ncpc@web.net)  
Or visit the Centre's Web site at  
<http://www.crime-prevention.org>**

**Ask for our Newsletter *Prevention* to find out about other crime prevention activities projects and information re-**

