

NORTHERN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



QUESNEL, BC

Final Report for *Connecting Northern Women: Northern Women's Conference*

This report is based on the events surrounding Connecting Northern Women: Northern Women's Conference, 2009 hosted by the Quesnel Women's Resource Centre. It provides an overview of the conference, the planning process, an outline of the conference weekend, recommendations that were a result of the conference, and a list of suggestions for the future.

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Overview of Project

The Quesnel Women's Resource Centre (QWRC) hosted *Connecting Northern Women: Northern Women's Conference*, April 17-19th, 2009 in Quesnel, BC. This conference was made possible through a Job Creation Partnership (JCP) with Service Canada. The JCP initiative allowed the QWRC to hire two women to plan, organize, and execute a northern women's conference - they will be referred to as the conference coordinators. In November 2008, the QWRC hired the coordinators to begin planning for this conference.

Prior to the coordinators' start date, the QWRC formed a steering committee to oversee planning details associated with the conference, provide feedback to the conference coordinators, and to ensure that input from various organizations in the community was heard throughout the planning process. The steering committee for this conference was made up of numerous women from various organizations in the community including: the Quesnel Tillicum Society; the Amata Transition House; School District 28; University of Northern BC; College of New Caledonia; North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society; RCMP; the Quesnel District Teacher's Association; Season's House; and the L'hoozkus Dene Nation. Numerous steering committee meetings were held throughout the planning stages of the conference and were a vital part to the conference planning.

While the JCP program provided the wages for the conference coordinators it did not provide any financial contributions to the conference itself. Therefore, the total dollars available at the beginning of the planning process for the conference was zero. All in all, the coordinators brought in \$14,040 dollars (\$6655 from registration fees; \$6775 from donations; \$450 in advertisements spots; and \$160 from vendor tables). The total expenses of the conference were \$11,882. The QWRC Collective members will decide where to use the surplus funds by taking a close look at the recommendations in this report and deciding which recommendation, or recommendations, that they will follow up on with the conference funds that remain.

The conference was attended by 152 women from various places across BC and included two women who attended from Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Six Women Centres were in attendance including the QWRC; the Williams Lake Women's Contact Society; the Northern Women's Centre; Victoria Faulkner's Women's Centre; 100 Mile House Women's Centre; and the Fort St. John Women's Centre. While other Women's Resource Centres expressed interest in the conference, such as the Terrace WRC and the Chetwynd WRC, they were unable to attend due to staffing shortages and scheduling conflicts.

The focus of the conference was determined through a needs assessment questionnaire that was distributed to various women in the months of November and December 2008. The keynote presentations and workshops during the conference reflected the results from the needs assessment.

Needs Assessment Survey

In order for the conference to accurately reflect the needs of all women in the north, the QWRC designed a needs assessment survey for women to fill out in regards to issues affecting women in their community so that the focus of the conference could be formed around the issues of priority to northern women. (See Appendix A: Needs Assessment Survey). The survey was distributed to women, groups of women, and organizations primarily located in the north - specifically from 100 Mile House up to and including the Yukon Territory.

The needs assessment survey was mainly distributed electronically through a snowball technique. The coordinators and members of the steering committee sent the survey to women, organizations, and groups who they thought would be interested in filling out the survey. The individuals who received the survey were asked to fill it out and return the survey and were also asked to send the survey to women in their own contact lists. As a result, there is no way of knowing exactly how many women received the needs assessment but rather only the number of women who submitted a completed needs assessment.

In addition, the survey was faxed to various organizations such as Aboriginal Bands, Friendship Centres, Women's Resource Centres, and various organizations throughout the North. In Quesnel, hard copies were also dropped off at the North Cariboo Aboriginal Program Family Society, the Quesnel Tillicum Society, Season's House Shelter and Support Society, and the Amata Transition House. As well, the survey was distributed with the help of Women's North Network (WNN), which distributed the survey electronically to its list of members. The WNN also sent out reminders for the QWRC about the deadline for submitting the needs assessment and this turned out to be a very successful avenue for eliciting responses to our survey and generating interest in the upcoming conference.

In the end, the QWRC received 61 completed surveys from women in both northern BC and the Yukon Territory. Individual women from various communities who were interested in our efforts at putting on a northern women's conference completed these surveys; as well as, women from various organizations, such as the Yukon Status of Women Council, Victim Services, Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Child Development Centre, various transition houses in northern BC, the North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society, Robson Valley Home Support Society, CNC Faculty, UNBC Faculty, various employment service places in the north, Teslin Tlingit Council Health Department, various women's centres from northern BC and the Yukon, and BC Healthy Communities. From these surveys it was determined that the highest ranking issue of concern to northern women was that of poverty followed by the issues of violence, addictions, and housing (in that order). These issues became the focus for our conference and were used to determine our keynote presentations and workshops.

The needs assessment also provided us with suggestions for guest speakers at our conference and alerted us to pre-existing research on the issues at hand. This proved to be an excellent avenue for helping to come up with some of our conference speakers and facilitators. As well, the needs assessment allowed us to form a regional contact list of

women interested in helping out with conference planning and or interested in follow up information regarding details of the conference.

Funding

As mentioned in the introduction, \$6775 was secured through donations. This includes the following:

- BC Coalition of Women Centres \$3000 (to provide travel subsidy to women from northern Women's Centres)
- BCGEU \$500
- HEU, Quesnel Local \$500
- Quesnel Labour Council \$500
- Amata Transition House \$500
- Lhooz'kuz Dene Nation \$500
- Health Science Association of BC \$500
- CNC Faculty - Status of Women Association \$375
- Kal Tire \$100
- QDTA - Social Justice Committee \$100
- Quesnel Employment Services \$100
- Fraserview Pharmacy \$100

In addition, through advertising in the conference program the coordinators brought in an additional \$450 and the rental of vendor tables raised an additional \$160. Various businesses throughout the community donated small items that were used for door prizes over the weekend. This included Safeway, Rona, Bumblebee Boutique, Curves, One World Treasure, Rev Bowling Lanes, Big Country Printers, Karin's Deli and Health Foods, A Page In Time, Cariboo Keepsakes, and Motherlode Car Wash. As well, Aboriginal Health donated items to be given away and several of the vendors also donated door prizes.

Due to the sudden downturn in the economy, the coordinators discovered that several funding agencies had stopped giving out money until the economic situation improved and securing donations from businesses also proved difficult due to the economy at the time. The coordinators also discovered that the deadline for many grants had passed or would not be awarded until after the conference had already concluded. Thus,

the majority of our support came from donations from organizations that had social justice committees, women's associations, or those that shared similar concerns regarding the issues of focus for the conference.

As new employees, the coordinators found it difficult to research the various organizations that may have had a vested interest in the conference while organizing and planning the conference all at the same time. In fact, right up to the start of the conference, the coordinators were still making contact with various organizations who were interested in taking part. For example, Aboriginal Health donated key chains, notebooks, and backpacks for giveaways at the conference and would have helped out more, but had just heard about the conference a few short days before its start date. As well, a donation was received after the conference had concluded from the Health Science Association of BC who had received our letter and just received approval to send funds. Community databases with lists of organizations would be a great way to discover potential organizations that may be willing to help out. Ideally a longer planning period - more than 6 months - would have opened up more opportunities for grant proposals.

Our conference could not have taken place without the numerous 'in kind' donations and partnerships that were created for the conference. Our choice of venue was made possible through the support of the North Cariboo Community Campus as the College of New Caledonia waived all fees associated with renting the space—except for the custodial fees, which was the only expense we paid associated with our venue. As well, BC Problem Gambling Services donated note pads, pens, and highlighter pens for our conference packages. The University of Northern BC was an excellent link for our selection of facilitators and keynote speakers with numerous UNBC faculty becoming a vital part to our conference. The Quesnel Cariboo Observer was our media sponsor who wrote articles regarding our conference and designed a full page ad for our conference and published it free of charge in the paper and their affiliate papers (See Appendix C: Observer Poster). Women North Network (WNN) was a vital link in broadcasting our survey and conference

information to women across the north and hosted a workshop during our conference. The work of Dawn Hemingway and Christina McClennan, from Women North Network, were of tremendous help to the success of our conference. In addition, Cathy Allen designed a conference logo, which was sewn onto cloth bags and sold during the conference. The bags were also given away as thank you gifts for women at our conference. As well, CUPE provided a political process workshop for Sunday (run by Heather Inglis) and provided four scholarships for women to attend our conference in the amount of up to \$250 per woman. Finally, Herizons magazine donated a copy of their magazine for each of the conference packages with the QWRC paying the shipping for the magazines and Sisters in Spirit donated pins for the conference packages.

Our conference fees were set at \$40 for early bird registration (before March 25th) and \$50 for registration after that date. The fee entitled you to full conference access for the weekend and provided the participant with breakfast and lunch on Saturday and Sunday; as well as, coffee and snacks throughout the day and for Friday nights meet and greet. Banquet tickets were sold for Saturday evening's optional banquet with keynote address by Marian Laval. These tickets were sold for \$15 each. In an effort to make our conference as affordable as possible, and realizing the expenses that women would incur traveling from northern areas to attend, we wanted to keep conference fees as low as possible—the ultimate goal was to have women in attendance NOT to make money from the conference. However, we did have several comments saying that we could have charged more for conference fees and would have had to if it had not been for the donations, both financial and in kind, that we received from our sponsors. We gratefully thank all those who contributed to our conference.

Expenses

As mentioned, the total conference expenses were \$11, 882. This money was spent in the following areas:

- \$1575 as travel subsidy for women from northern women's centres to attend (the remaining BC Coalition funds will be used towards one of the recommendations of the conference)
- \$5388 associated with food (breakfasts, lunches, a banquet dinner, coffee, tea, cookies, juice, creamer, plates, cups, etc)
- \$648 on office related supplies (folders, ink, paper, nametags, postage, fax and phone charges, etc)
- \$420 for the custodial fees for our venue
- \$3433 for facilitator expenses, including airfare, cab fare, gas, accommodations, and honorariums
- \$418 for the canvas bags

Planning the conference

The goals of the Northern Women's Conference were to educate women, politicians, and the public about current concerns of women in the north and to allow women from across the north to come together to discuss these important issues. As well, it was hoped that it would give individuals the opportunity to network, collaborate, and problem solve with other women facing similar challenges. All too often, women in the north are isolated and it was planned that this gathering would allow women to form lasting relationships and helpful networks that would continue after the conference. In addition, another goal of the conference was to formulate recommendations that could be used to address the issues of poverty, housing, violence, and addictions. Finally, it was hoped that the conference would increase women's political participation and knowledge of the democratic process.

Through several meetings and brainstorming sessions with the steering committee and conference coordinators the format for the conference was established. (See Appendix B: Conference Schedule.) Friday April 17th, was the conference kickoff and began at 7:00 PM with a 'meet and greet'. The evening allowed for women to check in, pay

any outstanding fees, pick up their conference package, and mingle with other attendees. Welcome and introductory speeches were given; coffee and snacks allowed women to meet each other before the next day's activities; and local vendors had their booths set up selling their wares (this component was an excellent addition to our conference and gave it a welcoming feel). Saturday April 18th, was planned with keynote speeches in the morning and workshop sessions in the afternoon. The morning keynotes began with an overview on the issue of poverty in the north, moved onto violence against Aboriginal women in Canada, and concluded by addressing the issue of violence against women and the Highway of Tears (Highway 16). Following lunch, women attended the workshop of their choice either on one of the main topics of poverty, violence, housing, or addictions. These workshops were set up to run concurrently and were interactive and discussion orientated. The format for the workshop was as follows:

Each workshop had between 2-3 facilitators and was set up in a similar format.

The following women acted as workshop facilitators:

Workshop – Violence against Women -- Workshop facilitators:

- Si Transken, Associate Professor - UNBC Social Work Department
- Dahne Harding, UNBC Master of Arts candidate (Gender Studies) and CNC colour theory instructor
- Theresa Ducharme, Community Development Coordinator, Native Women's Association of Canada - Sisters in Spirit
- Constable Jenny Collins, RCMP Aboriginal Policing

Workshop – Poverty and its Impact on Northern Women -- Workshop Facilitators:

- Katrina Ludwig, Research Associate and Coordinator, National Consortium on Aboriginal and Rural Public Health Education
- Dawn Hemingway, UNBC Social Work and Women North Network
- Audrey Schwartz, Executive Director, Active Support against Poverty

Workshop – Northern Housing Issues – Workshop Facilitators:

- Shannon Croy, Executive Director, Season's House
- Heather Peters, Professor, UNBC Social Work
- Gisele Maisonneuve, Women's Advocate, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre (Whitehorse, YK)

Workshop – Addictions – Workshop Facilitators:

- Bea Thatcher, Executive Director, Quesnel Addiction Services
- Theresa Healy, Regional Manager, Healthy Community Development, Northern Health and Adjunct Professor, School of Environmental Planning and Gender Studies, UNBC .

The workshops were scheduled Saturday April 18th from 1:30 - 4:30 (3 hours) - A break was given to participants halfway through. The facilitators ultimately decided individually how the workshops were run. Each began with introductions from the facilitators. Some had PowerPoint presentations regarding the issue and the experience that they had in dealing with that issue. Some workshops were more casual and conversational than others - each workshop ultimately reflected the facilitators who ran the workshop. This format worked best rather than 'forcing' the facilitators to stick to a pre-determined format that did not match their own personal styles. The coordinators gave the facilitators the following criteria:

- The ultimate goal of each workshop is to determine recommendations and strategies from the participants to take to the political panel discussion on Sunday, and for the report that will be written following the conference.
- The workshop facilitators should each give a short presentation on the issue at hand to identify current concerns and highlight some of the key elements surrounding the issue. This can be based on your individual expertise, knowledge, and experience with the issue and should be about 5-15 minutes - computer technology will be available if needed. These overviews are important so that all participants are on the same page and any misconceptions or lack of knowledge can be enriched prior to group discussion. The facilitators each represent a different area of knowledge/expertise (e.g., service provider, academic, and so forth) so a broad overview can be given.

- Following introductions, the workshop facilitators will lead the workshop participants in a discussion of the issue and its affect on different communities throughout the north. This could be done by breaking up into smaller groups or as a large group - depending on your preferences. Potential questions to be explored include:
 - What does this problem look like in your life and or in your community?
Are there good examples?
 - Who has the power to change things?
 - What is involved: laws, customs, time, money, etc?
- The workshop facilitators and the participants will conclude by formulating recommendations to address the problem. Potential questions to help come up with strategies and or recommendations include:
 - How should things be?
 - What would things look like if the problem was solved?
 - What are the solutions and what is needed to get there?
 - What has worked?
- The proposed strategies and recommendations from this workshop will be brought to the attention of politicians at the political panel discussion the following day by our panellists and note takers will attend each workshop to help capture the information that is presented and discussed.
- Therefore, the workshop had three parts:
 1. Introduction of the facilitator and overview of the issue
 2. Group discussion and or sharing of stories about what the issue looks like in various communities
 3. Formulating recommendations and strategies to address the issue

These workshops were well received and information from these sessions is in the results section of this report.

The Saturday evening was comprised of an optional ticketed banquet with a keynote address by Marian Laval on *Women Holding Vision - Together*. The evening was a great way to relax and unwind after an information packed day but it did make for a long day. It allowed women to network and meet women from other organizations and locations

throughout the north over dinner and ended the day on a note of inspiration and motivation.

Sunday, April 19th was organized with concurrent workshops in the morning and a political panel discussion in the afternoon. The morning workshop sessions included:

- Courageous Conversations by JoAnne Ward
- Women North Networking by Dawn Hemingway and Christina McClennan
- Self Care by Si Transken and Dahne Harding
- Youth Violence Prevention - Native Women's Association of Canada by Dorothy Wright
- Introduction to Participatory Leadership by Maureen Trotter
- Participating in the Political Process by Heather Inglis of CUPE

Following these workshops, a political panel discussion was moderated with a chosen panellist from each of the four previous day's workshops and political candidates Donna Barnett (Liberal party) and Bob Simpson (NDP party). The political panel discussion was set up in the following format:

- Welcome by Maureen Trotter with history and overview of women's issues and the effects of cuts to funding in the last eight years (15 min)
- Heather Gagnon - the moderator for the discussion - explained the format and the rules for the discussion.
- Discussion:
 - Representatives for each of the four issue areas spoke about the major concerns, the strategies and recommendations. Following each presentation, the political candidates were given 5 minutes to respond with information about how their parties would address the concerns and to answer any questions presented. Theresa Healy, one of the addictions workshop facilitators spoke about the issue of addictions; Gladys Radek, one of the workshop participants and one of our keynote speakers addressed violence against women; Shannon Croy, one of the housing workshop facilitators spoke about the issue of housing; and Dawn Hemingway, one of our poverty workshop facilitators spoke about the issue of poverty.
 - Finally, a brief presentation was given on the Single Transferable Vote (STV) by Anna Rankin for the *yes* to STV.

Results from the workshops: Recommendations and Strategies from Northern Women

Our interactive issue based workshops on Saturday were set up to facilitate discussion amongst workshop attendees and ultimately work toward formulating recommendations and strategies that could be used to help address the issues. The four issues that were focused on during our conference were poverty, housing, addictions, and violence against women with each issue having its own workshop. The workshops were each attended by approximately 35 women and each had between 2-3 facilitators to introduce and highlight some of the key elements of the issue, to lead discussion, and to help brainstorm recommendations that would help address the issue. The composition of the workshops were made up of women from different organizations, levels of government, service providers, women from various walks of life, and women from numerous communities across the province of BC and from the Yukon Territory. The information from these workshops was recorded by a note taker that was present in each workshop and through the notes/PowerPoint presentations of the facilitators and will be discussed individually below. Please note that these recommendations are thoughts and beliefs from the women attending these workshops and not necessarily the thoughts of the QWRC.

Poverty and its Impact on Northern Women:

The United Nations defines poverty as "a human condition characterized by the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights". The term, "feminization of poverty", refers to the increasing numbers of women making up the country's poor. One in five Canadian women is living in poverty and Canada has the 5th largest wage gap between men and women of the 29 most developed countries: "women earn approximately 71% of what men earn for full-time, year-round work, and are more likely to be found in low wage work" (Rothman and Noble, 2008).

In BC, 1 in 5 northern women are poor. More than half a million British Columbians (13% of the total population) live in poverty. Poverty does not affect all families equally. In fact, lone parents, particularly women, carry a disproportionately high burden and women constitute 80 - 85% of all lone-parent families (Rothman and Noble, 2008). British Columbia has the worst child poverty rate in Canada and in 2008 BC scored, for the 5th year in a row, 21.9% for its child poverty rate. In fact, BC is the only province where the child poverty rate was actually higher in 2006 than in 1997, despite increases in child benefits. The poverty rate for BC children living in families headed by lone-parent mothers was 50.3% (Rothman and Noble, 2008).

Poverty can appear in many forms. It can appear as an endemic mass, as pockets of poverty, as a sudden impoverishment due to a disaster, as temporary poverty, or as a persistent long-term poverty. But whatever its manifestation, the social exclusion which accompanies poverty constitutes both a violation of human dignity and can be a threat to life itself. Studies have linked poverty with poorer health, more young people in trouble with the law, higher rates of incarceration, higher justice system costs, higher school drop-out rates, and so on (Klein, Cohen, Garner, Ivanova, Lee, Wallace, and Young, 2008). It is also important to remember that anyone can be poor and according to a local poverty group in Prince George, working people are the fastest growing group falling into poverty. Thus, we are also dealing with the term "new poor"; it is possible to be employed and still need assistance from a food bank to make ends meet. The reality is that people from all walks of life can find themselves at the doorstep of their local food bank and there is a concern that the economic downturn may result in many more people accessing these services. In Quesnel, the local food bank has experienced significant increases in the use of its services - exact numbers though, were unavailable at the time of publication.

We need to remember that poverty costs this country money, with poverty being linked to higher hospital costs, higher mental health costs, higher community service costs, higher justice system costs, and so forth. Spending money to help reduce poverty

can actually save money in the long run. Studies have shown that "poverty drains community services; places high stress on family members, and diminishes the chance of success for young people in school" (Klein et al, 2008:7). There is a "strong consensus that governments can reduce poverty with concrete action and that a minimum goal of a 25% poverty reduction in five years is a reasonable goal" (Rothman and Noble, 2008:2). A cornerstone of "an effective poverty reduction strategy is to ensure that any person working full-time, full-year is guaranteed a life free from poverty" (Rothman and Noble, 2008:3). According to the Poverty Reduction Plan for BC this equates into seven priority objectives:

1. Provide adequate and accessible income support for the non-employed.
2. Improve earnings and working conditions for low-wage workers.
3. Address the needs of those most likely to be living in poverty.
4. Address homelessness and the lack of affordable housing.
5. Provide universal publicly-funded child care.
6. Provide support for training and education.
7. Promote the health of all British Columbians.

To read the priority actions that go with these objectives please see, *A Poverty Reduction Plan for BC* written by Klein, Cohen, Garner, Ivanova, Lee, Wallace and Young, 2008. Other documents propose that by increasing minimum wages, increasing federal work tax credits, and enhancing child benefits, child and family poverty will be substantially reduced (Campaign 2000, 2008 Report Card).

The Northern women's reality is that we have high rates of poverty, high rates of female headed households, high rates of aboriginal female headed households, high rates

of those not obtaining high school, and high rates of teen pregnancy. Something needs to be done to reduce poverty in the north and we must not be willing to accept poverty.

Recommendations/Strategies from the workshop:

- Increase education about poverty and diversity to the general public and youth; as well as increase education about democracy, government, the political process, and equality rights.
- Women could have reverse forums where politicians attend to listen to the issues.
- Women can start community kitchens, community gardens, and group shopping programs.
- Women can share information and stay connected (WNN)
- Create a transition plan/training for political parties who come into power after a change in government so that new ruling parties don't waste money completely revamping policies and programs that serve people.
- Politicians need to be educated about the issues: " promote walk a mile in my footsteps"
- Create a concrete poverty reduction plan that includes legislation with steps and timelines that is not affected by changing government. *For example, a recent poverty reduction plan for BC was written by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - BC office. Could the CCPA plan be endorsed?*
- Ministry of Poverty is needed or some dedicated body that would be responsible to ensure the success of the poverty reduction plan.
- Fund and regulate universal day care
- Increase affordable, safe, and accessible housing
- Increase minimum wage
- Reinstate the Ministry of Women's Equality and restore funding for Women's Centres.
- CPP death benefits should be increased to a reasonable level.

- Tuition fees should be eliminated and better funding provided for post-secondary education.

Addictions:

The women in this group were comprised of mothers, daughters, aunts, grandmothers, sisters, counsellors, volunteers, teachers, woman in recovery, victims, survivors, and warriors. They came looking for knowledge, tools, resources, understanding, and wisdom. What they came away with was empowerment, healing, hope, information, anger, power, friendship, compassion, and also discovered that when women get together they are an unstoppable force that can bring about great change!

In the north, addiction has a different face: it is in *our* face - it is our children, our parents, and maybe even ourselves. While the north fuels the economic engine of the province the north does not have enough resources, funds, or services to adequately deal with the issue of addictions and the problems it creates in the lives of individuals. Some thoughts from the group on this include: *"How anonymous is anonymous in a small community? You don't get a second chance. You're a bad risk for everything"; "Our communities in the north are going down the toilet while we pour money into showcasing a healthy BC for 2010".* Many individuals felt that there were not enough resources or help to deal with this issue and that all too often, the lack of resources could lead to a lack of life: *"He was ready to go [to rehab]. We phoned around, we checked the internet, by the time we got help, it was three months and he was gone. I lost my son. We have to be ready to meet them when they are ready to go".*

Recommendations and Strategies from the workshop:

- Unite our voices as women, come together to support and empower ourselves and each other.
 - We need to undo the "garage door phenomena" where we come home from work, drive our car into our garage, close the door, and stay inside and

disconnected. We have lost the capacity to be neighbours, to be involved.

We have become afraid and disenfranchised.

- Recognize mental and other health issues; separate this population out for help not punishment.
- Have mentors for our youth; be models that attract.
- Take personal responsibility for being part of the solution - start a conversation; take a stand.
- Reward the good behaviour - give the celebrity status and attention to the good kids; include the middle kids at risk of being at risk.
- Help communities build partnerships with police and courts and find ways to make the system work for people
- Break the silence on what addictions mean, reject the shame, and be honest.
- Implement fair share funding that recognizes the true costs of life in the north.
- Support needle exchanges
- Build supported houses not jails.
- Need a place for after care so that individuals can bridge the gap from prison and rehab to real life.
- Rural 911 response time is an issue - e.g. Alexandria rarely has a police presence except for emergencies - but never to connect with residents or to show a presence.
- Make clear and specific recommendations to government - e.g. supported housing: accessible, affordable and with services in place - and include people who live in it as part of the building process.
- The economic recession is an opportunity for government to get back into the business of building strong communities by funding services that provide what communities need.

- Start a cornerstone group to act as a symbol to identify we are against drugs such as CADD - community against drug dealers!
- Fund accessible counselling, detox and rehab programs that are longer than the tradition weeks in length.

Housing:

When discussing the issue of housing it is important to remember that a homelessness and housing continuum exists; therefore, solutions should also be on a continuum. There is absolute homelessness where individuals are living on the street, sleeping in their car, or accessing emergency shelter; there is also relative homelessness where an individual couch surfs, returns to their parents, or stays with a partner so that she/he can have a place to live- this is also known as hidden homelessness. There is also the housing category where an individual can be classified as having shelter, but due to the high cost of shelter she/he may be living in slum conditions, sharing a place with people they don't want to, or doing illegal activities for rent money. Finally, an individual can have a home that is owned or rented. As illustrated, these various continuums of housing need various continuums of solutions to be remedied. Not only do communities need emergency shelters, outreach services, and affordable housing, but also are in need of living wage levels for minimum wages so that individuals can afford adequate housing, tenancy right support for individuals, tuition support so that individuals are not coming out of school with massive debt, as well as other poverty alleviation solutions.

In addition, research shows that housing should not be contingent upon 'good behaviour' or being 'cured' from a mental illness or addiction. In fact, housing or other forms of shelter should be a FIRST response in addressing a person's issues. Associated issues are much more likely to be successfully dealt with if people are living in stable, safe, and affordable housing.

As mentioned, communities need to have a variety of housing supports such as: financial assistance for working poor; access to safe, affordable housing for everyone;

emergency shelters; transition houses for abused women; halfway houses for people being released from jail; residential treatment programs and halfway houses after the program is finished, and so forth.

There is a need to put housing first: everyone needs a home and society needs to accept people for who they are and where they are in their lives. Communities need to build supportive and affordable housing that does not ghettoize poor people, they need to create mixed income communities and maintain these buildings. There are many barriers to the solutions for housing shortages and those include: lack of human resources; lack of awareness on issues; lack of support services; lack of infrastructure; lack of a common dialogue.

Recommendations and strategies from the workshop:

- There is a need to engage in open dialogue about the root causes of homelessness.
 - Need for a collaboration and communication with landlords about issues
 - Outreach workers are needed
 - Increasing awareness and education on housing and homelessness is needed in order to change attitudes.
- Educate people and politicians about homelessness
- Community gardens along with housing projects.
- Combine income levels in affordable or subsidized housing plans because this is the most effective way to create a healthy housing/home environment.
- Increase awareness about the issue by using the media to get accurate information distributed - perhaps a weekly column in the newspaper.
- Lobby and educate local elected officials to encourage their involvement.
- Organize, demonstrate, and host/attend conferences
- The provincial, federal, and municipal governments must work together
- Need to work with the government to develop a long term strategic housing plan for all types of housing and supports

- Target 1% GDP to housing.
- Need supportive housing for various groups:
 - Abused women, Mental illness, Addictions, Disabilities, Development Issues, Seniors, Assisted Living, Long Term Care, Reserve, Rural, Urban
- Municipal governments need to make slumlords accountable and to clean up housing according to provincial health regulations
- Create halfway houses or housing with some independence plus on-site support to assist people in learning to live on their own.
- Ensure that urban planning incorporates social planning and a green space at a community level.
- Tenancy act needs to be overhauled to create a document that actually works. Tenants then need to be educated about their rights and laws and an ombudsman is needed to enforce the act.
- Increase minimum wage so that individuals can afford adequate shelter
- Eliminate tuition fees so that people are not finishing their education with massive amounts of debt.

Violence against Women:

Violence against women exists in all communities and cuts across cultural, racial and religious groups, and income levels. It is important to understand how power imbalances based on gender, race, economic status, ability and sexual orientation (among other differences in power) can make certain people in society more vulnerable to violence and victimization by their intimate partners. This risk is compounded if a woman lives with a number of power imbalances. The existence of different types of power imbalances at the same time (multiple oppressions) will increase a women's vulnerability to abuse from an intimate partner. Thus, women who are racialized and marginalized suffer from additional types of power imbalances and are thus more vulnerable to abuse. For example, Aboriginal

women are more than three times more likely to be victims of spousal violence than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Gurr, Pajot, Nobbs, Mailloux, and Archambault, 2008, p. 25).

There are numerous types of abuse against women: financial, physical, psychological/emotional, sexual, spiritual, and verbal. Violence often has the effect of making women feel powerless, as individuals and as a community. The reality is that violence against women is a learned behaviour reinforced by a society that is still largely dominated by men. Violence against anyone is not okay.

Violence against women in the North is different because isolation, lack of services, and the realities of life in small communities contribute to the effects of violence on northern women. A woman experiencing abuse from her intimate partner may not be able to obtain the same privacy and anonymity to consider her options—and often if she decides to leave a relationship, she may need to find sufficient resources to leave her community. However, at the same time, northern women are resilient, resourceful, and supportive of one another, which was particularly evident throughout our conference.

How prevalent is violence against women? Even statistics cannot accurately tell us what the real numbers are as most incidents of violence against women are never reported - but they can provide indicators or clues as to what is happening in society. According to Amnesty International, 1 in 3 women experience abuse, rape, torture, or attack. Attitudes and beliefs that condone or ignore violence, as well as social conditions such as poverty and lack of resources, contribute to the continuation of violence in our society. Women are particularly likely to be victimized by a current or former spouse, a current or former partner in a dating relationship, or a family member.

Recommendations and Strategies from the workshop:

- Work from a woman centered and feminist framework
- Transportation is often an issue for women - especially in rural and remote areas; it is hard to get volunteer drivers because of liability issues. Perhaps existing

transportation means can be used for women (e.g. the medical bus) in order to reduce incidents as a result from hitchhiking.

- Need to educate through multiple avenues - especially in schools. Role playing with youth is very important: knowledge is power.
- Need to better address women's housing needs
 - Develop a protocol with government to help women to retain or gain easier access to social housing such as rent subsidies for women who have left an abusive partner to keep their home or to secure a new one.
 - Develop safety protocols with the police to keep women and children safe in their homes
 - The development of second stage housing with programs that address multiple barriers of poverty, mental health and substance use including training programs for staff.
- Improve women's employability by developing employability programs that recognize the hardship and emotional and intellectual challenges that women who have experienced abuse face including the need to develop confidence in their ability and skills.
- Meet women's practical needs by addressing the everyday material and health needs of women such as food, clothing, medical needs and day to day essentials
- Increase community advocacy, counselling and support services
- Recognize that overcoming the compounding effects of violence is a process that requires time and ongoing quality support and service.
- Develop/increase supportive service provision where erratic behaviour is accepted and understood as a part of social disadvantage and long histories of abuse, mental health issues, interrupted education, homelessness, violence and poverty.
- Recognize and address financial hardships associated with rural living such as lack of employment opportunities and financial barriers to mobility.

- Develop approaches that value women and children and that recognizes the division of labour and childrearing/parenting, encourages mutual respect and self-care.
- Develop/maintain cultural awareness of Aboriginal tradition and the effects of a colonial legacy and fund projects that provide Aboriginal women an opportunity to explore their own cultural traditions as sources of strength and inspiration in their healing journey.
- Develop projects that address the experiences and multiple barriers faced by immigrant/refugee/non-status women and specific to individual cultures that include loss of status, potential shame and cultural fears, unemployment and other stressors
- Increase social assistance rates and end the practice of removing children from women who have been escaping violence
- Police need to be educated about women who sometimes fight back and cease the arrest and harassment of women who are presumably engaging in "mutual battering".

The Evaluation

As part of a way to determine how the conference was perceived by women in attendance, the coordinators created an evaluation form (see appendix D) that was included in the conference package and asked women to fill out the form on the final day of the conference. Of the women in attendance, 57 women completed and turned in evaluation forms. The feedback was tremendously positive with minor suggestions for improvement regarding such things as food and sound quality being commented on for improvements. As well, the extensive use of Styrofoam by the caterer for the lunches was an oversight on our part and was commented on as 'violence against Mother Earth'. In addition, there were several comments that people would have enjoyed attending more than just two workshops and that Kleenex be supplied because of the emotional topics that were covered. Here are a few of the comments that were received that speak to the experiences of the women who attended:

Loved the vendors, dinner was awesome, liked the networking opportunities, the workshops were fabulous.

Lectures were informative and moving; workshops were inviting, open and informative.

Very well organized, friendly, comfortable in an informal sense, liked the choices of workshops and format, networking--even shopping!!! Diverse participants, lots of First Nations Women.

I felt comfortable, a very relaxed environment--full of care and laughter.

I really needed the self care workshop as day 1 (Saturday) was very tearful and emotional. The Sunday afternoon was good as it focussed on the personal and the political.

I liked the ability to come up with concrete, achievable return plans to bring to politicians--I love that they came to listen! Loved the fair trade market. Excellent variety of interesting speakers--enjoyed the intro to FN cultural protocols.

Class size was excellent--good facilitators.

I very much enjoyed the points on poverty, it was great to have those stats put out in black and white. I cannot say enough about the women I connected with and that the knowledge that I can bring forth to my organization. I honour their wisdom and courage to bring forth their life experiences that can further enable us in our roles as service agencies to assist those who cannot help themselves due to addictions and mental illness; my appreciation to the QWRC.

I was grateful to have witness the inclusion and honour paid to Aboriginal women's issues.

The issues discussed were relevant to our communities instead of flowery and fluffy discussions. Well thought out subjects.

This is the first conference in which I have felt respected and honoured as a First Nation Woman. I felt mutual care and respect was abundant in this facility. It is rare to experience authentic "equality" in a women's conference. There was no sense of imbalance of power difference between our Nations. The humanness of the keynote speaker and workshop presenters was much appreciated. See you next year??

I really appreciated all the choices (offered) of workshops to choose from. The amount of women that attended spoke volumes to the organizational skills of the two women hired to produce this conference and the support of the QWRC staff that gave their expertise and insights. The banquet dinner was wonderful.

Besides a few logistics in regards to food, packaging, water availability upstairs for workshop facilitators, sound quality (a reoccurring problem that the venue needs to address), and other minor details, the coordinators were pleased with the comments regarding the conference and were pleased at hearing how many women thoroughly enjoyed the conference and benefitted from the event.

What Now?

Based on the organization, implementation, and events of the conference future efforts that would be beneficial to women in the north include:

1. Promoting the use of networks, such as Women's North Network, as a way for women in the north to stay connected and informed on events that occur in the north.
2. Host a yearly "Northern Women's Conference" in northern communities so that women have the chance to come together, share information, partake in professional development, keep current on issues of concern to northern women, and develop/maintain relationships with other women/agencies. These events should be hosted by women's centres throughout the north so that the conference remains women centred and non-partisan. The Contact Women's Group Society in Williams Lake would be an excellent venue for the next conference and have expressed interest in hosting such an event for 2010!
3. Increase public/political awareness writing articles to local newspapers regarding issues of concern to northern women, cuts to funding, the difficulties that service agencies battle, and the success that has resulted from the effort of women and women centred agencies in the north.
4. Create committees that are able to address one issue of concern (e.g. the issue of poverty) and work together to follow through on recommendations from this report.

Final Comments

Connecting Northern Women: Northern Women's Conference was a tremendous success that accomplished the goals that it set out. Women from across the province of BC and the Yukon Territory were given the opportunity to network, collaborate, and problem solve with other women facing similar challenges. Women, politicians, and the public were educated about the current concerns of women in the north and women formulated recommendations to address these issues of concern. It is our hope that those recommendations, which have been captured in this report, be followed through on to elicit the changes that are needed in order to increase the quality of life for women in the north. Thank you to all those who supported our conference.

Works Cited

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Appendix A: Needs Assessment Survey

Connecting Northern Women
Northern Women's Conference 2009
April 17th - 19th, 2009

Phone: 1-250-992-8472

Fax: 1-250-992-6160

Email: gwrc@shawcable.com



October 29th, 2008

The Quesnel Women's Resource Centre, along with other community partners, is in the beginning stages of planning a Northern Women's Conference. In order to reflect the needs of all women in the north, we are asking you and your organization, or group of women, to assist us by having discussions about issues affecting women in your community and then filling in the attached survey. We are asking that surveys be returned to us via email or fax by December 12th, 2008.

The information we gather from these surveys will help us to identify the key issues that will be the focus of the Northern Women's Conference. The Northern Women's Conference will be held in Quesnel on April 17th, 18th, and 19th, 2009. We anticipate being able to offer a limited amount of travel subsidies to women throughout the north to attend this conference.

Please pass this survey on to any woman or groups of women you feel would like to participate. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to phone us at any time. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important survey.

Sincerely,

The Quesnel Women's Resource Centre & The Northern Women's Conference Steering Committee

Connecting Northern Women
Northern Women's Conference 2009
Needs Assessment Survey

1. What agency, organization, or group of women do you represent (if any)?

2. Can you please identify the top five issues you see affecting women in your community (please number 1- 5, one being the most important issue):

- Poverty
- Violence
- Economic Issues (Boom and Bust Economies)
- Addictions
- Mental Health
- Housing
- Women Centered Healthcare
- Political Education / Leadership
- Racism / Prejudice
- Childhood Sexual Abuse
- Unemployment
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Youth Violence
- Child Welfare Issues
- Other _____ (Please Specify)

Comments:

3. Do you have any data/evidence or examples of what the key issues look like in your community/or why these issues are important?

4. Who would you like to hear as a guest speaker at the Northern Women's Conference?

Topic	Name	Contact Information

5. Do you, or your group, want to be involved in the planning of the Northern Women's Conference by forming a regional steering committee for your area? This would involve providing feedback by teleconference. If yes, please provide contact information for yourself or a representative of your group.

6. Do you, or your group, have access to funding to assist you with attending the Northern Women's Conference in Quesnel?

7. Do you or your group have any ideas as to where we could apply for funding to help subsidize the Northern Women's Conference (ex: meals, travel subsidies, guest speakers etc)?

Please help us by sending this to any woman or group of women you feel would be interested in participating or attending the Northern Women's Conference.

All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential and the information provided will be used only for the purposes of conference planning and not shared with any outside agency without permission.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please email or fax back to gwrc@shawcable.com or 1-250-992-6160. Surveys can also be mailed to: Quesnel Women's Resource Centre 690 McLean Street, Quesnel BC, V2J 2P6.

Appendix B: Conference Schedule

CONNECTING NORTHERN WOMEN: NORTHERN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Conference Schedule

Friday, April 17, 2009

7:00 – 9:00 pm Welcome and Opening Prayer
Welcome to Quesnel from Mayor Mary Sjoström
Address by Theresa Ducharme, Sisters in Spirit, NWAC
Meet and Greet with Refreshments

Saturday, April 18, 2009

8:00 – 9:00 am: Registration and Breakfast (provided)

9:00 – 9:15 am: Welcome and Opening Prayer

9:15 – 10:30 am: *The Impact of Poverty on Women in the North*. Presented by: Katrina Ludwig, National Consortium on Aboriginal and Rural Public Health

10:30 – 10:45 am: Nutrition Break

10:45 – 11:30 am: *Sisters in Spirit: Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women in Canada*. Presented by: Theresa Ducharme, Sisters in Spirit, NWAC

11:30 – 12:15: *The Highway of Tears*. Presented by Gladys Radek, Social Activist and co-founder of the Walk4Justice 2008

12:30 – 1:30 pm: Lunch (provided)

1:30 – 4:30 pm: Concurrent workshop sessions: (choose one)
Poverty and its Impact on Northern Women
Violence against Women
Addictions
Northern Housing Issues

Optional Banquet: Must purchase tickets to attend

5:00 – 6:00 pm Appetizers and Networking

6:00 – 7:00 pm Banquet

7:00 – 8:00 pm Keynote by Marian Laval: *Women of Vision*

Banquet: There are a limited number of tickets available to the banquet on Saturday evening. Tickets can be purchased for \$15 on the registration form for conference registrants and for \$25 for non-registrants. There will be an inspirational keynote speech after the dinner by Marian Laval.

Schedule continued below...

Sunday, April 19, 2009

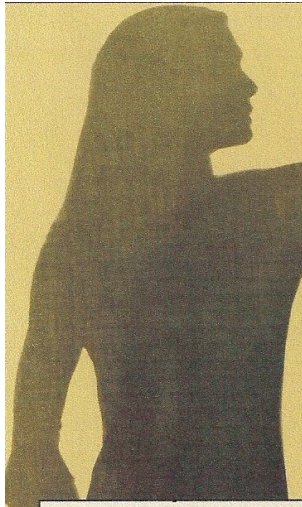
8:00 – 9:00 am	Breakfast (provided)
9:00 – 9:15 am	Welcome and Opening Prayer
9:15 – 12:15 pm	Concurrent Workshop Sessions: (choose one) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Participating in the Political Process: Elections and Beyond</i>- <i>Introduction to Participatory Leadership</i>- <i>Youth Violence Prevention Workshop</i>- <i>Self Care</i>- <i>Women North Networking</i>- <i>Courageous Conversations</i>
12:15 – 1:00 pm	Lunch (provided)
1:00 – 2:15 pm	Presentation of the Issues and Recommendations to the Politicians
2:15 – 2:30 pm	Nutrition Break
2:30 – 3:45 pm	Political Response
3:45 – 4:00 pm	“Yes” to STV by Anna Rankin
4:00 pm	Closing Remarks

Accommodations: If you need to stay overnight in Quesnel, we have arranged special rates at the Best Western Tower Inn. The hotel is downtown and has a lounge and restaurant. Address: 500 Reid Street. Phone: 250-992-2201. Rates are \$64.95 for a single and \$79.95 for a double. You need to say that you are with the Northern Women’s Conference when you call. This rate is guaranteed only until April 1, 2009 so book early if you can!



If you would like to be billeted please call the Quesnel Women’s Resource Centre at 250-992-8472 to make arrangements.

Appendix C: Observer Poster



Northern Women's Conference

Connecting Northern Women
April 17th - 19th, 2009

*For all women including, service providers; client advocates;
industry and government representatives; social workers
and the general public*

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Theresa Ducharme
Native Women's Association of Canada

Katrina Ludwig
National Consortium on Aboriginal
and Rural Public Health Education
University of Northern BC

Gladys Radek
Walk 4 Justice 2008

Banquet keynote speaker
Marian Kotowich-Laval



Conference location:
100 Campus Way, Quesnel
North Cariboo Community Campus

Registration: March 26th - April 10th, 2009 *\$50
Conference fees include breakfast and lunch for Saturday and Sunday.

Optional Banquet Tickets:
\$15 each for conference registrants or \$25 each for non-conference registrants.
The Saturday evening banquet will include keynote speaker Marian Kotowich - Laval.

For more information contact:
Melanie MacDonald, Jodi Baker or Tammy Collet at The Quesnel
Women's Resource Centre: qwrc@shawcable.com
Phone 250.992.8472

WORKSHOPS:

Sat., April 18th, 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Concurrent workshop sessions:

- Violence Against Women
- Northern Housing Issues
- Addictions
- Poverty and its Impact on Northern Women

Sunday, April 19th, 9:15 am - 12:15 pm
Concurrent workshop sessions:

- Participating in the Political Process: Elections and Beyond
- Introduction to Participatory Leadership
- Self Care by Si Transken
- Courageous Conversations
- Youth Violence Prevention
- Women North Networking

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Appendix D: Evaluation Form

Appendix E: Conference Session Information



Connecting Northern Women: Northern Women's Conference April 17th – 19th, 2009

Conference Presentations and Workshop Descriptions (Program to date – February 16th, 2009 – may be subject to change)

Saturday morning keynote presenters:

Katrina Ludwig, Research Associate and Coordinator, National Consortium on Aboriginal and Rural Public Health Education

Description: Katrina will present a multi-media presentation on the impact of poverty in the north – particularly its effect on racialized and marginalized women. (Total time: Approx. 1 hour)

Theresa Ducharme, Community Development Coordinator, Native Women's Association of Canada (Sisters in Spirit Initiative)

Description: A power point presentation on missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. As well, the Sisters in Spirit initiative will be discussed and their community information toolkits will be explained. (Total time: 45 minutes)

Gladys Radek, Human Rights Activist and Co-founder of the Walk4Justice2008.

Description: Gladys will present the film, "Highway of Tears" produced by Sharmeen O'Baid Chinoy, and will answer questions in regards to the film and also talk about the Walk4Justice2008 initiatives. (Total time: approx. 45 minutes)

Saturday afternoon's interactive issue based workshops:

The Saturday afternoon of our conference will be comprised of four concurrent interactive workshops surrounding the issues of poverty, violence, addictions, and housing. Registrants can choose which workshop they would like to participate in at the time of registration. Each workshop will have between 2-3 facilitators and be set up in a similar format.

The workshop facilitators will each give a short presentation on the issue at hand to identify current concerns and highlight some of the key elements surrounding the issue. Following this, the workshop facilitators will lead the workshop participants in a discussion of the issue and its effect on different communities throughout the north. Potential questions to be explored include: What does this problem look like in your life and or in your community? Are there good examples? Who has the power to change things? What is involved: laws, customs, time, money, etc?

The workshop facilitators and the participants will conclude by formulating recommendations to address the problem. Potential questions to help come up with strategies and or recommendations include: How should things be? What would things look like if the problem was solved? What are the

solutions and what is needed to get there? What has worked? The proposed strategies and recommendations from this workshop will be brought to the attention of politicians at the political panel discussion the following day. Please see the choices of workshops below.

Choices of issue based workshops include (participants choose to take part in one only):

Workshop – Violence Against Women

Workshop facilitators: Si Transken, Associate Professor - UNBC Social Work Department; Dahne Harding, UNBC Master of Arts candidate (Gender Studies) and CNC color theory instructor; Theresa Ducharme, Community Development Coordinator, Native Women's Association of Canada – Sisters in Spirit; Constable Jenny Collins, RCMP Aboriginal Policing

Workshop – Poverty and its Impact on Northern Women

Workshop Facilitators: Katrina Ludwig, Research Associate and Coordinator, National Consortium on Aboriginal and Rural Public Health Education; Dawn Hemingway, UNBC Social Work and Women North Network; and Audrey Schwartz, Executive Director, Active Support Against Poverty

Workshop – Northern Housing Issues

Workshop facilitators: Shannon Croy, Executive Director Season's House; Heather Peters, Professor, UNBC Social Work; Gisele Maisonneuve, Women's Advocate, Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre (Whitehorse, Yukon Territory)

Workshop – Addictions

Workshop facilitators: Bea Thatcher, Executive Director, Quesnel Addictions; and Theresa Healy, Regional Manager, Healthy Community Development, Northern Health and Adjunct Professor, School of Environmental Planning and Gender Studies UNBC .

Saturday evening optional banquet:

On Saturday evening there will be an optional ticketed banquet to attend. After dinner, a keynote presentation will be given by Marian Laval who will speak about her life and the learning experiences that have shaped her into a woman of vision. She will also share her passion for her way of life, family, career, and in supporting people in realizing their personal vision and mobilizing their gifts. Marian will talk about women in leadership, holding and developing a vision, and the role of guides and guidance. Marian is a spectacular speaker from Terrace and we are excited to have her speak at our banquet! Her presentation will be empowering and an inspiration to hear.

Sunday morning workshops:

Registrants choose to participate in one workshop at the time of registration.

Participating in the Political Process: Elections and Beyond

If you and your organization want to elect someone who shares your vision for social justice, this workshop will provide you with the information and tools you need. In a healthy democracy, everyone has a role to play. Find out how to be part of a campaign team and to keep politicians accountable once elected. Brought to you by CUPE and facilitated by Heather Inglis.

Introduction to Participatory Leadership

This interactive workshop will look at what good leadership is, who is a good leader, and participants will examine how they are leaders in their own lives. We will look at our visions for our lives and communities and the process involved in achieving these changes. Presented by Maureen Trotter.

Self Care

Given the stress and 'soul battering' we sometimes experience as workers with the oppressed and traumatized, it is important that we continue to find ways to keep ourselves strong. Our 'righteous rage' has to find outlets. Some of these outlets are activism, friendship networks, journaling, creative activity (such as painting, carving, etc.), physical activity, etc. In this workshop we will review what the best of us have been using and we will find ways to expand or deepen our commitment for these activities. This workshop will be presented by Si Transken who has been a social justice activist for almost 3 decades. Co-facilitating this workshop with Si will be Dahne Harding, UNBC Master of Arts candidate (Gender Studies) and CNC color theory instructor.

In the face of impossible odds -- we've managed (womynaged?) to continue fighting and playing and rising up? Si will bring materials for journaling, graffiti, and other creative re-energizing activities. Poetry and storytelling will be shared. Bring some of your own best creative moments? Bring some of your most important inspirational artefacts or memories? Let's share these three hours -- by sharing where / how we've been wounded and where/ how we've been healed. Si will begin the group with some of her own best affirmation and inspiration moments and processes. If you have special themes, questions, or considerations that you'd like brought up in this session please email or phone Si so she can customize this session for you and your comrades -- please email the Quesnel Women's Resource Centre and we will forward your messages to Si.

Courageous Conversations

This workshop will provide you with the skills, the strategies and the perspectives you need to become a more powerful, confident and courageous communicator. No matter what the issue that comes up in your relationships – regardless of how sensitive, contentious or potentially emotional – you will be able to address it in ways that will lead to more trusting and collaborative relationships, allowing you to become a woman who others look up to with respect, for guidance and for encouragement, and enable you to simply enjoy more intimate, open and authentic relationships with the people in your life. Regardless of how much or how little confidence you feel in your ability to speak up, you have a lot of untapped courage that can help you take your conversational mastery to a new level. It doesn't matter where you are right now – all that matters is that you are committed to becoming more confident, more courageous and more masterful in the conversations you are having. This workshop will be presented by JoAnne Ward of Stepping Stones Life Coaching Services.

Women North Network: Networking to Build and Sustain Healthy Northern Communities

On average, women in northern BC have a shorter life expectancy than women of similar age and circumstances in the south. Geography, climate and inadequate means of transportation can isolate northern women within their communities and isolate one community from another. Comprised determinants of health such as inadequate level of income, gender inequality and limited access to health services coupled with ongoing social service and health cutbacks exacerbate the often challenging situation faced by northern women and their families. Building from the strengths and expertise gained from creating strategies and solutions to these challenges, women from across the North came together in the spirit of collaborative change to initiate a transformative networking process – the Women North Network (WNN).

Created from a health promotion perspective, WNN is a web-based organization of *northern women by northern women* that provides an electronic space (website, email news list and networking environment) for information sharing and discussion as well as for research, policy development, social action and other collective work to facilitate health and wellness of northern women and their families.

This workshop will begin with a demonstration of the WNN and their experiences using the network. Dawn and Christina will engage conference participants in an interactive discussion about networking and organizing experiences. Through this process, we seek to strengthen our collective voice and, most importantly, come up with a concrete plan of action that we can implement together to improve the lives of northern women, our families and our communities!

For further information contact: Women North Network (WNN) / Northern FIRE
Dawn Hemingway, MSc, MSW, RSW, Associate Professor & Chair, UNBC School of Social Work OR Christina McLennan, MSW, RSW, Network Coordinator, Phone: 250.960.5284 Fax: 250.960.5273 Email: wnn@unbc.ca
Websites: <http://www3.telus.net/public/wnn/> and <http://www.unbc.ca/northernfire/>

Youth Violence Prevention Workshop

The Native Women's Association of Canada has put together a Violence Prevention Toolkit, which is aimed at raising awareness about violence and violence prevention issues among Aboriginal youth with special concern for issues affecting youth Aboriginal women. The goal of the Toolkit is two-fold:

- 1) To provide Aboriginal youth, and girls in particular, with tools to protect themselves; to teach them in a straightforward manner and in a safe environment about safety nets and a community of resource people that exists in or outside communities; and to educate them about appropriate and inappropriate responses, safety programs, new threats such as date rape drugs, and so on.
- 2) To provide communities and community organizations with tools to address violence prevention issues with youth in communities.

This three hour workshop will host two 1.5 hour components: one on domestic relationship violence and the other on emotional/psychological violence. By registering in this workshop, participants will take part in both components.

Domestic Relationship Violence: This workshop will start with definitions of domestic/relationship violence and tackles major issues related to this type of violence including the cycle of abuse in communities. Major early signs of partnership violence are identified as well as ways to recognize if someone you know is in an abusive relationship. The workshop also deals with why women end up staying in violent relationships and what are some obstacles specific to young people in Aboriginal communities that prevent them to respond effectively to these types of violence. The workshop ends by highlighting healthy relationships.

Emotional/Psychological Violence: This workshop explores the basic types of emotional/psychological abuse such as sexual and racial harassment and some youth experiences with this type of violence. The workshop also deals with emotional abuse in relationships and ways to respond and reach out to friends who are being emotionally abused. The workshop will also talk about root causes, ways to deal with this type of violence, and include a number of interactive activities for participants.

Presented to you by Dorothy Wright.

Sunday afternoon political panel discussion:

Sunday afternoon will be spent in the campus' atrium where a panel of women, selected from the facilitators for our issues based workshops, will present a brief description of the issue and how it is affecting women in northern communities to conference attendees and the invited politicians. Our panellists will present the recommendations and strategies that were formulated during the issue based workshops on Saturday and ask the politicians in attendance to address how they will attend to these issues.

Keynote Speaker Biographies

Katrina Ludwig is the coordinator for the National Consortium on Aboriginal and Rural Public Health Education. This is a collaborative of 5 Universities from across Canada with a focus on education with/for practitioners to specialize in the needs of those communities which are rural and/or Aboriginal. Katrina is also a sessional professor for Health Sciences and Social Work (focus on health needs of woman/Aboriginal and Ethics of practice). Previous to this she was the Project Manager for the Patients First Project, which developed interprofessional health/social teams for the north. For eight years Katrina also held various positions with the Ministry for Children and Families – in particular front line work and I developed protocols for community relations.

Katrina is a registered Social Worker and holds a BSW and MSW. Her graduate work was the development of a parenting program for parents who have FASD. Her research and front line practitioner work has been in the area of inequalities, access to services, rural and Aboriginal needs, inter-professional team work, women/children's health/social issues, and Ethics of good practices. Katrina's PhD work will focus on ethics and forensics in Social Work. Katrina also sits on various boards and steering committees most notably the BCASW and the Public Health Association of Canada (inequalities committee).

Gladys Radek is a Human Rights Activist and Co-founder of the Walk4Justice2008. She is a mother of 5, 4 daughters and one son and has 5 grandchildren. Gladys was raised in the Gitksan Wet'su'wit'en territory in northern British Columbia and now resides in Vancouver, BC. Her social activism came about in May 2000 when she launched a Human Rights complaint against Tinseltown Mall and Securi-guard for assaulting her. A landmark decision was granted through the British Columbia Human Rights Commission July 13, 2005 with her proving systemic racism and winning \$15,000.00 for injury to dignity and also changing the legislation in regards to security policies in British Columbia. It was approximately 2 months after her landmark case was won that her niece, Tamara Lynn Chipman, disappeared from Prince Rupert, BC, now dubbed, the Highway of Tears. Since Tamara's disappearance Gladys has advocated for the missing and murdered women from the Highway of Tears, the Downtown Eastside, Vancouver, BC and nationally by co-founding the Walk4Justice2008.

The W4J left Vancouver, BC June 21, 2008, arriving in Ottawa, Ont., for a rally September 15, 2008. This walk was to raise awareness and to seek justice, closure, equality and accountability for the far too many (2932) women and children and their families, who have gone missing or been found murdered over the

past, at least 2 decades in Canada. Today, Gladys continues to raise awareness to general society and leaders about the plight of our women and children. She is very active in the political arena nationwide in raising awareness on these very sensitive issues surrounding these women and children. She has dedicated her life to being a voice for those who cannot do so.

Theresa Ducharme is the community development coordinator for the Sisters in Spirit Initiative for the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Marian Kotowich-Laval resides in Terrace, BC with her family and is a mother and a grandmother. She originates from Regina, SK and her Cree-Métis roots are from Cumberland House, SK. She is a co-principal of AMR Services (2002), a web design and consultancy company. Marian currently works for the University of Northern BC (UNBC) in Terrace as the Aboriginal Teacher Education Bridging Coordinator (ATEB) and is also an Associate Faculty member with Royal Roads University (RRU), supervising two Master students. Marian is an exuberant life-long learner, spanning the old traditional ways with modern contemporary knowledge and technology. Trained in several disciplines, Marian has blended these often divergent arenas into one integral whole, e.g., her aboriginal culture, natural healing methods, personal-growth work, community development, advanced computer technology, and formal education at both the University of Victoria (UVic) and RRU. She holds a certificate in the Application and Management of Information Technology through UVic and a Masters degree in Leadership and Training from the RRU (2005). Marian's research focused on Indigenous Leadership, Challenges, and Indigenous Leadership Training. She is trained in group-facilitation and has a Life Skills Coach certificate through the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. Marian is also the founder of the Women of Vision and Excellence Network – WOVEN, see: www.woven.ca. WOVEN provides a venue for women to share inspiration and ideas for their life's work or vision within a supportive network that cultivates values of excellence.

Marian's vision espouses unity and healing for humanity today and for future generations. Marian believes that the leadership of women is critical in bringing about greater harmony to the world by bringing people together through shared vision, inspiring integral change, and balancing the predominant leadership models. She proposes that by knowing one's core beliefs and reinventing oneself if necessary, will not only empower and nurture the self, but will also contribute to a greater movement of vision and life-giving energy. She believes that when holding a vision, one must take time to pause, breath, and reflect. However, this slower pace may seem to be in direct opposition to contemporary lifestyles and in addressing the challenges of today's world. Marian supports the emergence of new social and educational models that acknowledge our inter-connectedness with all things and thereby achieving meaningful connections in the ever-expanding circles of one's self, one's spirit, and humanity.

Keynote Topic: Women – Holding Vision...Together

Marian will speak about her life and the learning experiences that have shaped her into a woman of Vision. She will also share her passion for supporting people in realizing their personal vision and mobilizing their gifts. Marian will speak about:

- Women in Leadership: The unique leadership qualities and perspectives women can bring to leadership
- What holding a vision can mean
- Experiences that develop vision and how to bring it about
- What elements can diminish and extinguish vision
- The unique interplay of women and vision and people holding vision together
- The role of guides and guidance - Elders, ceremony, family, and belief
- WOVEN – Women of Vision and Excellence Network

Appendix F: Registration Form

REGISTRATION FORM:

CONNECTING NORTHERN WOMEN: NORTHERN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
(Location: 100 Campus Way, Quesnel, BC)

Mail completed registration form & cheque / money order (payable to Quesnel Women's Resource Centre) to the Quesnel Women's Resource Centre, 690 McLean Street, Quesnel, BC, V2J 2P6. Or fax completed form to 250-992-6160 and then mail your registration fees. Conference to take place at: North Cariboo Community Campus, 100 Campus Way, Quesnel, BC.

Name: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Please list any special needs: _____

Registration Information

Early Bird Registration (before March 25th) _____ \$40
Registration Fee (Deadline April 10, 2009) _____ \$50

This fee includes breakfast and lunch, Saturday April 18th and Sunday April 19th. Please indicate what type of meal you prefer and if you have any special dietary needs. _____ Vegetarian
_____ Non-Vegetarian

Special Dietary Needs: _____

Saturday Optional Banquet 5-8 pm: _____ No I will not attend

____ Yes, I will attend the banquet. I would like ___ # of tickets @ \$15.00 each for a total of _____.

____ Yes, I will attend the banquet, but NOT the conference. I would like ___ # of tickets @ \$25.00 each for a total of \$ _____.

Sponsorships: If you are an individual or organization willing to sponsor someone who is not able to afford the registration fee, please check the box below, # of individual(s), and submit payment with registration fee. _____ Yes, I can sponsor _____ (#) individual(s) = _____ Total

If you would like to apply for a travel subsidy please check the box below. IF, money becomes available to help with this we will contact you. _____ Yes, I would like to be added to this list and understand that

there may not be any funds available.

Cancellations: Written cancellation must be mailed or faxed at least fourteen days prior to the conference to receive a full refund. After that time, no refunds will be accepted – however, a replacement person is welcome.

Please complete the following:

I will attend the following events:

- Yes No Friday evening meet and greet
 Yes No Saturday morning keynotes (9:00 – 12:30)
 Yes No Sunday afternoon political panel discussion

Please rank order your top two choices for each session. We will try to accommodate your first preference.

Saturday, April 18th, 1:30 – 4:30 pm Concurrent workshop sessions:

- _____ Violence against Women
_____ Northern Housing Issues
_____ Addictions
_____ Poverty and its impact on Northern Women

Sunday, April 19th, 9:15 am – 12:15 pm Concurrent workshop sessions:

- _____ Participating in the Political Process: Elections and Beyond
_____ Introduction to Participatory Leadership
_____ Self Care
_____ Courageous Conversations
_____ Youth Violence Prevention (NWAC)
_____ Women North Networking

If you will require childcare during the conference OR if you are interested in being billeted – please call, or email us, to make arrangements. 250-992-8472 or qwrc@shawcable.com

***** Please note: Both the *Conference Schedule* and the *Registration Form* have been modified to fit into this report. In their original layout, they were produced in a landscape page format on one page each.**