

ANNUAL REPORT 2006 - 2007

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DODEM KANONHSA'

A Proud Partnership Between Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
and The Native Canadian Centre of Toronto



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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In addition to its role as an Aboriginal Education Centre, the Dodem Kanonhsa' is tasked with supporting extended holistic practices thru use of Traditional Resource People that are contracted to come and work at the Dodem Kanonhsa'.

The scope of this report will reflect on the activities that entail the Dodem Kanonhsa'. It's past and present are carefully addressed in the following pages.

This past year we had a 3.2% increase of participation. This was impressive for us as we did not have programming take place thru the months of July and August. There is also a list of groups who have used our services outside the Lodge as part of our Outside Referral Program.

Part of our goal for 2007 - 2008 will be to complete and finalize our website contract with Lathwell Productions. Our due date is for June 01, 2007 in time for our much popular National Aboriginal Day Event. We also hope to have our Elders Hall of Fame completed by September 2007 with, of course, continuous work being provided as each Traditional Resource Person visits.

2.0 DESCRIPTION

Our scope of work is to provide services to staff of both Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. Not only will this priority fulfill the partnership, but will also provides staff with easy and accessible services while fostering greater acceptance, understanding and appreciation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. In fulfilling this scope, it also provides staff with services that are current and informative for any questions and/or concerns within the workplace in order to facilitate improvement of the quality of service employees provide to their Aboriginal clientele.

The services offered by the Dodem Kanonhsa' are meant to encourage both the Native and non-Native people to partake in a program where they can explore the history, language and traditions of First Nations, Inuit and Metis People. By doing so, the program provides experienced and highly knowledgeable Traditional Resource People on a bi-monthly basis for individual and group appointments at no cost.

In addition, monthly workshops focussed on traditional practices, culture and individual well-being are available and offered by skilled practitioners, teachers and leaders.

To meet the needs of larger groups, the Lodge has also created an Outside Referral Program intended for the social and business sectors. Inquiries are assisted when events are held within the Greater Toronto Area for groups seeking an Aboriginal component.

In its ninth year of operation this September 21, 2007, the program continues to grow while reaching a unique and diverse group of people that make up the city of Toronto.

3.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Following the Oka Crisis in 1990, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) sought ways to improve cultural understanding among staff. One solution was to build a cultural facility in the Department's Headquarters in Gatineau, Quebec, that focussed on traditional teachings and counselling services provided by the most well respected people of the Aboriginal culture - Elders and Traditional Teachers. The 'Kumik Lodge' was built in order to provide Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees the opportunity to seek guidance and teachings from Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Teachers.

Building on the success of the Kumik, the opportunity arrived to build a similar facility in INAC's Ontario Regional Office in Toronto. On August 27, 1997 the Board of Directors of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto (NCCT) wrote to John Donnelly, INAC's Regional Director General. This letter indicated a desire by the NCCT to enter into a partnership with INAC to provide administrative and support services for the delivery of a Toronto-based Kumik project.

The Lodge opened on September 21, 1998, and was given the name Dodem Kanonhsa'. Dodem is an Ojibwe word meaning Clan and Kanonhsa' is a Mohawk word meaning Lodge, the name is also transcribed into Cree syllabics. This name was chosen in order to represent the main tribes currently prominent to the Ontario Region.

4.0 MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

To My Fellow Community Members:

Of the Traditional Resource People that I've had the honour of meeting over the past eight years, there's not one that has not had some profound effect on me. I've grown to appreciate and understand the importance of my duties and have had the opportunity of meeting with some of the most highly respected Traditional Resource People that this country has to offer. I am blessed.

I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with a great number of courageous, visionary and good hearted people, all of whom bring with them a level of deep and admirable knowledge. A grounded and simplistic teaching of life, an harmonious expression of thoughts and feelings delivered to send a message out - the meaning of life - from an Aboriginal perspective. Entailed in these messages confirms who we are, what we are to do, and, more importantly, what our relationship is to other beings and objects: animate or not. I have never been to a teaching or listened to a Traditional Resource Person tell the same story the same way for the simple reason that no two people are on the same life path.

This Lodge, the place where Traditional Resource People come to pass on their message, is inevitable to both the Native and Non-Native community. Traditional Resource People are a living form of oral and visual cultural and historical expression, and the Dodem Kanonhsa's duty has undertaken to preserve this mode of expression through oration.

I am honoured to be here. I've had nothing but good fortune with the Advisory Committee whom have always supported me and the activities taking place. Thank you to everyone.

Sincerely,

Julia Valencia
Manager

5.0 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

April 2005 - 2006	April 2006 - 2007	INCREASE/DECREASE
5089	5257	+3.2

Statistical information is based on the number of people whom have participated in the program which includes; Traditional Resource People bookings, one-to-one counselling session, open teachings, tours, interviews, Dodem Kanonhsa' Lodge use and meetings.

Due to the fact that July and August 2006 were very slow and programming for the Dodem Kanonhsa' was paused, the increase this year was much appreciated.

Bookings thru the Lodge include participation from the following groups:

Organizations (includes Government and Schools)	Businesses	Corporations
Elementary's Teachers' Federation of Ontario	Big Soul Productions	Citifinancial
Ryerson University - Media Relations Program	Phoenix Theatre	American Express
Aboriginal Tobacco Strategy	IMAGINative	Bank of Montreal
	CBC: Toronto Living	SCOTIABANK
Cancer Care Ontario	Metro Toronto Convention Centre	
African Food Basket		
York University		
Aboriginal Legal Services		
Bridge Point Hospital		
Toronto Board of Education		
Native Child and Family Services		
Nuclear Waste Management of Ontario		
Canadian Food Inspection Agency		
Law Society of Upper Canada		
Fred Victor Centre - Employee Resource Centre		
Catholic District School Board		
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada		

Canada Revenue Agency		
Campaign Against Child Poverty		
Assembly of First Nations		
Foreign Affairs		
Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto		
County of Lambton		
Urban Aboriginal Strategy		
George Herman House		
Ontario Women's Directorate		
West Hill Collegiate		
Health Canada		
Ontario Bar Association		
Humber Institute of Technology		
University of Toronto - Medical Department		
Centre for Addiction & Mental Health		
Ontario Early Years Centre		
Leutenant Governor General		

6.0 GUIDING PHILOSOPHIES

Vision

To create a welcoming place for people to share in the oral teachings of the First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nations Across Canada

Mission

The Dodem Kanonhsa' will strive to ensure space is open for learning and sharing fostering greater acceptance, understanding and harmony between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Values

1. Provide our services to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff in a way that is accessible, appropriate and easily understood.
2. Act in an honest, fair and just manner
3. Aim to have both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples' participate in the program

4. Share with each other openly and respectfully

7.0 PRIORITIES

The programs main priority is reflected in its Mission but also includes:

Priority 1 - to forge partnerships and share knowledge

Develop and nurture Aboriginal Awareness partnerships with both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff and surrounding community members.

Priority 2 - to respect Aboriginal cultures

Maintain, open, two way communication with staff and participants and ensure that our invited Traditional Resource People provide adequate and relevant information

Priority 3 - To build capacity

Build Aboriginal awareness capacity, especially among the non-Aboriginal community.

8.0 VISITING ELDERS AND TRADITIONAL RESOURCE PEOPLE

The whole purpose of our program is Aboriginal Education. In order to fulfill this purpose we provide relevant and up-to-date information thru use of contracted Traditional Resource People. Also referred to as Elders, Traditional Teachers, Seers and Healers, these gifted and knowledgeable individuals are selected based on their experience, their spiritual and traditional knowledge, and their ability to pass on this experience to others in a one-to-one setting or small/large group setting.

Their main purpose is to provide culturally relevant services such as spiritual counselling, traditional concepts and beliefs, ceremonies and practices, be available to serve as a source of accurate information of Aboriginal culture and to celebrate the accomplishments of others when requested. Traditional Resource People are available on a bi-monthly basis and are promoted through posters via email, fax and mailing lists to staff and community members.

Each Traditional Resource Person brings with them a unique perspective based on Traditional Native Teachings from various Nations. Many have returned after successful visits and a few were first time visitors.

By taking part in the program, staff and community members have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and understanding of Native culture and have increased their ability to work and communicate effectively in a multi-cultural setting.

9.0 2007 - 2008 OBJECTIVES

We have finalized our website completion for a due date of June 2007, in time for our National Aboriginal Day Event. Check it out so far at: www.dodemkanonhsa.ca

We should also have our Elders Hall of Fame up by September 2007 with continuous updates as each Traditional Resource Person visits.

