

ANNUAL REPORT 2007 - 2008

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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= over the past fiscal year beginning April 01, 2007 thru to March 31, 2008.

Compared to the statistical data recorded for last fiscal year we had a 12.46% increase of participation. This increase is extremely impressive compared to previous years in which a 2 – 3% increase was taking place. Part of this large increase is the result of launching the program's own website. There is also a list of groups who have used our services outside the Lodge as part of our Outside Referral Program. This particular list is impressive in that some of the more recognized companies (ie. American Express) have used our services over the last year.

Part of our goal for 2008 - 2009 will be to continue increasing our statistical data thru participation of the Greater Toronto Area. We will also be celebrating our 10th Year Anniversary. A large one week event comprised of various activities will take place and will end off with each Traditional Resource Person in attendance on the final day of the event.

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 provide staff with easy and accessible services while fostering greater acceptance, understanding and appreciation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. In fulfilling this scope, it will 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.

Now heading towards its 10th year of operation this September 21, 2008, 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:

I am honoured to have been given the opportunity to continue and grow the mandate of the program over the past five years, and of course, to be able to continue working for you. When I first stepped into the Lodge many moons ago, I would have never have seen myself here in five years – but yet, here I remain. I am delighted to still be here and over the years have personally set aside two goals I continue to try to fulfill and remind myself to do. One is to thank you – for your support, for the belief and commitment that you have shown and continue to show in the Dodem Kanonhsa’.

My other goal is to boast, unabashedly, about your program and its services. I say your program with good cause – although, I admit, in the last five years, there have been many moments that I wanted to take pride in the accomplishments of “my baby”.

Really, the Dodem Kanonhsa’ belongs to all of its participants, staff included, and Traditional Resource People. And on a day-to-day basis, the most important of those participants are certainly each and every one of you – staff, community member or Traditional Resource Person - that have taken the time out of your busy schedules to attend a program where its main purpose is to build greater acceptance, understanding and harmony between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. It is truly touching to know we are all working towards the same goal.

There have been more than 50 various Traditional Resource People with various gifts in attendance to the program. Each one who has visited has come with energy and vigour. They bring us inspiration and a sense of purpose, and they continue on determined to build a better understanding, because, in return, you bring them inspiration and a sense of purpose.

The program is also deeply indebted to the Advisory Committee. The program could truly not function without such dedicated individuals.

I enjoy my job. I am energized by community members when they come to participate, encouraged by staff and the Advisory Committee and inspired by each and every Traditional Resource Person that has come to share their knowledge and wisdom. I go home feeling a sense of accomplishment, and I also go home knowing, that, without you, very little of this would be possible. So thank you. Thank you for your faith and trust in all that we try to do for you. Thank you on behalf of all those who have enjoyed the benefit of your willingness to learn about what the Dodem Kanonhsa’ is all about.

Sincerely,

Julia Valencia
 Manager

5.0 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

April 2006 - 2007	April 2007 - 2008	INCREASE/DECREASE
5257	6005	+12.46%

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.

Bookings thru the Lodge include participation from the following groups:

Organizations (includes Government and Schools)	Businesses	Corporations
Dalai Lama Visit	Big Soul Productions	Citifinancial
Ryerson University - Media Relations Program	Phoenix Theatre	American Express
Aboriginal Tobacco Strategy	IMAGINative	Bank of Montreal
Osgoode Hall Law School	CBC: Toronto Living	SCOTIABANK
Cancer Care Ontario	Metro Toronto Convention Centre	CIBC
African Food Basket		Aveda Hair Salon and Spa
York University		
Aboriginal Legal Services		
Ministry of Education		
Toronto Board of Education		
Native Child and Family Services		
Conference Board of Canada - Canada, U.S. and Europe		
Canadian Food Inspection Agency		
Law Society of Upper Canada		

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care		
Catholic District School Board		
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada		
Canada Revenue Agency		
Canadian Connection		
Assembly of First Nations		
Foreign Affairs		
St. Vincent de Paul		
Police College		
Urban Aboriginal Strategy		
Elm Spa		
Ontario Power Authority		
Art World of Sherway		
Health Canada		
Council of Achievement Awards		
Branksome Hall Collegiate		
University of Toronto - Medical Department		
Centre for Addiction & Mental Health		
Ontario Early Years Centre		
HRSDC Labour Program		

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 fulfil 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 are planning to have our Elders Hall of Fame displayed by September 2008 with continuous updates as each Traditional Resource Person visits.

Currently, the Dodem Kanonhsa' is going under a small "renovation overhaul" that will include new updated furniture and hopefully, new flooring and painting. This is being done as part of our 10th Year Anniversary Plans.

Our biggest project will be making our 10th Year Anniversary Celebrations a success and an event to remember. Some exciting plans for our week long event are taking place and we look forward to sharing in our celebration with staff, community members and Traditional Resource People.

On a continuing basis, the Advisory Committee continues to work on the Guidelines for the Dodem Kanonhsa= which are specific towards: Traditional Resource People Protocols, payments, complaints resolutions, how TRP=s are chosen and roles of the Advisory Committee Members, Manager and any forms required for TRP=s that also include Service Agreements, Confidentiality Forms, etc.