



BCAAFC | BC Association of
Aboriginal Friendship Centres

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

BC's 25 Friendship Centres hits one million points of service per year

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Victoria, BC – BC Friendship Centres hit milestone service delivery across BC with over one million points of service within a year. The 25 Friendship Centres that make up the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres saw over 4,500 clients a week walk through their doors seeking services in a year.

Through a variety of programs and services open to all community members ranging from health care, education and employment training, housing, as well as supports for youth, Elders, children and families, advocacy services, Friendship Centres are meeting people where they are at, with holistic and culturally supportive programs and services.

Friendship Centres have been active in BC for over 60 years with the first Friendship Centre opening in Vancouver in the early 1950's. Established in 1972 the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres goal is help support Friendship Centres in the province at the provincial and national level.

With the transition of Indigenous peoples moving to urban centres in search of housing, education, employment, and other supports, service need has been steadily increasing. BC has seen the urban Indigenous population increase substantially in recent years to an estimated 80% of Indigenous people in BC living in urban areas. Those moving into the urban centres can access culturally safe advocacy, supports and programming through any Friendship Centre, becoming a place of community and gathering.

“Our Friendship Centres provide much needed resources and support for Indigenous people across BC, providing over 400 programs annually through our 25 Centres. That service uptake is increasing is telling us two things: service needs are increasing with more people moving into urban settings, and Friendship Centres are doing it right: providing a safe place to those seeking culturally supportive and



BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

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inclusive services.” – Leslie Varley, Executive Director of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

The 25 Friendship Centres across BC have over 1000 employees. Many Friendship Centre staff are long serving employees dedicated to serving. The service model is lean and client focused. Each centre is a not for profit society with a mandate to meet service need within their community.

The provincial government recognized the services of Friendship Centre and has this year begun to provide funding to support this increasing need of services for urban Indigenous people.

President Annette Morgan, and Executive Director of the Dze L K’ant Friendship Centre in Smithers, BC, said “Each Friendship Centre is a community centre providing a strong sense of culturally safe belonging within an urban setting. It doesn’t matter who you are or where you come from, we are here to be of service to all. All are welcome at Friendship Centres.”

BC’s 25 Friendship Centres:

- Cariboo Friendship Society
- Conayt Friendship Society
- Dze L K’ant Friendship Centre Society
- Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Society
- Fort St. John Friendship Society
- Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association
- Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert
- Hiiye’yu Lelum (House of Friendship) Society
- Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society
- Kermode Friendship Society
- Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society
- Lillooet Friendship Centre Society
- Mission Friendship Centre Society
- Nawican Friendship Centre
- North Okanagan Friendship Centre Society
- Ooknakane Friendship Centre
- Port Alberni Friendship Center
- Prince George Native Friendship Centre Society
- Quesnel Tillicum Society
- Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre Society
- Tansi Friendship Centre Society
- Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Society
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Center Society
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre
- Wachiay Friendship Centre Society

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