

# *Creating Hope Society of Alberta*



*An Indigenous home for every Indigenous child in care by 2025*

**BIENNIAL REPORT  
2018 – 2020**



*Creating Hope Society Mission and Vision:*  
Create hope, support healing, honour truth and reconcile our differences.

### PRINCIPLES

To build on the resiliency of survivors  
To not forget the past but look forward  
To Learn/Acknowledge the past history and move forward

This year it is Creating Hope Society's 14th anniversary, and Creating Hope Society continues to thrive. Why? Without our Funders, Board of Directors, Staff, Contractors, Practicum Students, Summer Students, and our Volunteers, the society would not have been prosperous. CHS's mission is to create Hope, support healing, honour truth and reconcile our differences and meet the needs of our families and communities.

Fourteen years ago, Creating Hope Society created a declaration "An Aboriginal Home for Every Aboriginal Child in Care by 2025". Why? It was about digging deeper into why our Indigenous children were removed from their homes and communities. It was about educating ourselves and the Community on the history and cycle of the child welfare system to address the intergenerational impact of the cycle of state control on Indigenous people and reduce the harmful effects within the Community.

It is time to create another declaration for the next ten years, only five years away from 2025. CHS goals are to continue to provide programs and services with our partners and collaborators for the best interest of families and communities at large.

### CHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Alyssa Bochansky

Secretary/Treasurer - Amanda Knight

Directors - Kerri Soto • Crystal McCarthy-Nelson • Nicole Baker

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## *A message from our President*

The Creating Hope Society of Alberta continues a journey that began in 2006 to strategically invest our interest to achieve specific goals. We know we are not alone on this journey. Instead, we are accompanied by many Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and individuals who work with us. Together, we are improving the lives of people involved in the child welfare system through our Early Interventions and Prevention programs.

Ending homelessness through our housing program, community luncheons and COVID-19 hampers. We also sought to bring awareness of other issues that affect our Indigenous populations, such as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+, Youth Programs and Adult Literacy.

So, how do we fuel this journey? We are grateful, patient and persevere through our challenges. We have excellent partnerships, collaborators, funders, and individuals who share our mission, passion, and determination to make meaningful, systemic changes that need our community folks' attention.

The Board of Directors is proud of the work facilitated by the staff, practicum students and volunteers. Our journey continues, and it is a work in progress, and we are committed for the long run.

As always, we believe this work is about Creating Hope for the future and the people we serve.

In the Spirit of Creating Hope,

President

Alyssa Bochansky



*Alyssa Bochansky*



## *Executive Director*

What a year it has been. At Creating Hope Society, we continue to embark on our philosophy “An Indigenous Home for Every Indigenous Child in Care by 2025”. Creating Hope Society’s approach has not changed. We continue to provide supports and services to our families, children, youth and Elders’ needs.

Before Covid-19, we were fortunate to celebrate and create events for the Community such as our Welcome Home Ceremony - “Our Families, Our Communities, Our Responsibility,” National Indigenous Month, children’s summer camp, National Child Day, The Heart of the Community, Kokum and Moshums Round Dance, Dad’s Matter Too charity golf tournament, Community Luncheon, Elders Community Luncheon, and Stories from Amiskwaciwaskahikan An Indigenous Gathering.

It has been a challenging time with Covid-19. Still, Creating Hope Society has been fortunate with the Government funding and other contributions to execute our old and new programs, and we continue to move forward. We are grateful to have dedicated staff who are committed to creating new opportunities for people. All of the staff practice the seven grandfather teachings: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. A sincere thank you goes to each and every employee for the beautiful work that you do. Without your dedication, CHS would not have been successful.

We wish to extend our gratitude to the Board of Directors, volunteers, families, and friends for your contribution and make a difference in our families’ and communities’ lives. With this continued support, I look forward to another successful year, 2020-2021. We are an organization that understands the importance of respecting all walks of life, and our doors are open to all who desire guidance, resources and a place to laugh or cry. We also understand that every human being wants to be acknowledged, loved and understood.

In The Spirit of Creating Hope,  
Bernadette Iahtail, RSW  
Co-founder/Executive Director



*Bernadette Iahtail*





## *Programs Manager*

Greetings! I have had the opportunity to work as a Contract Consultant with Creating Hope Society (CHS) for approximately 7 years, and my role as Programs Manager has evolved over time. My primary responsibilities include: promoting CHS programs to community stakeholders, developing CHS Programs Policies and Procedures for Accreditation purposes, to seek out funding opportunities with federal, provincial, municipal and foundations to secure long-range and sustainable sources of funding for the organization, and overseeing some CHS programs. I can only echo the Executive Director's comments on "what a year it has been." There is no doubt that our organization has faced challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like other service providers, we had to take a step back and re-evaluate our service delivery model to ensure staff and participant's safety. Suddenly I find myself with a whole new wardrobe of face masks to match my outfits. It is a new reality, and as a team, we have worked well together to overcome the barriers and continue to serve our families during these difficult times.

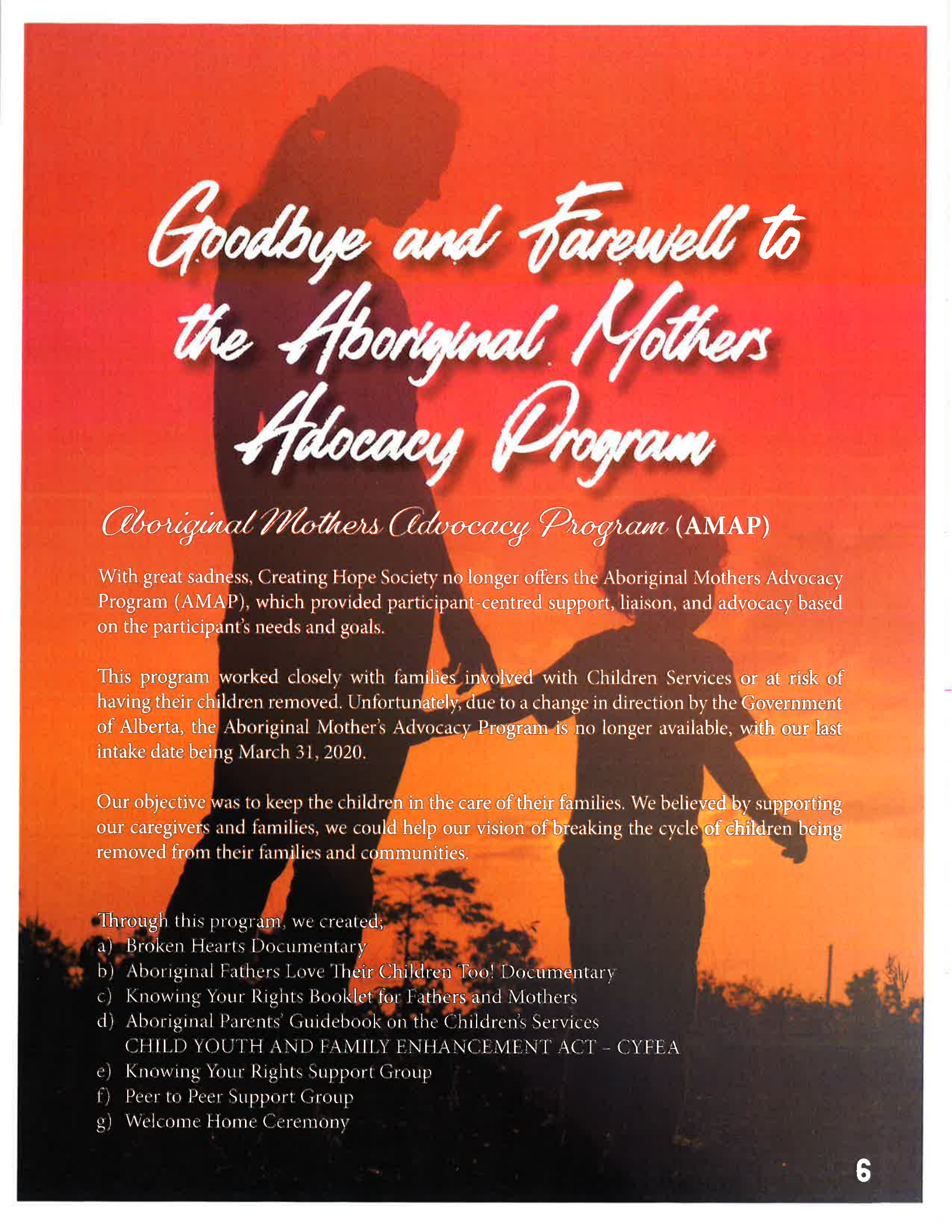
I am excited about overseeing our new Strengthening Homefires Cultural Support Program (SHCS). SHCS is designed to be an early intervention and prevention program for vulnerable families experiencing various risk factors. We work with families to reconnect them to traditional Indigenous parenting practices. We use Indigenous and Western philosophies and approaches to support Indigenous families in reducing vulnerability and risk and increasing resiliency and strengths. The Creating Safe Paths for Indigenous Women, Girls and LGBTQ2SA+ individuals in Edmonton and area research project is a new one-year project funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research. The project will conduct sharing circles and individual interviews with Indigenous women, girls, gender-diverse peoples, and service providers to share their experiences of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and to find meaningful ways they think GBV resources and programs in our community can be improved. I also wish to extend our gratitude to the Board of Directors, staff, contractors, volunteers, families, and friends for your contribution and make a difference in our families' and communities' lives.

Perdita Baier-Law B.S.W.  
Programs Manager



*Perdita Baier*





# *Goodbye and Farewell to the Aboriginal Mothers Advocacy Program*

## *Aboriginal Mothers Advocacy Program (AMAP)*

With great sadness, Creating Hope Society no longer offers the Aboriginal Mothers Advocacy Program (AMAP), which provided participant-centred support, liaison, and advocacy based on the participant's needs and goals.

This program worked closely with families involved with Children Services or at risk of having their children removed. Unfortunately, due to a change in direction by the Government of Alberta, the Aboriginal Mother's Advocacy Program is no longer available, with our last intake date being March 31, 2020.

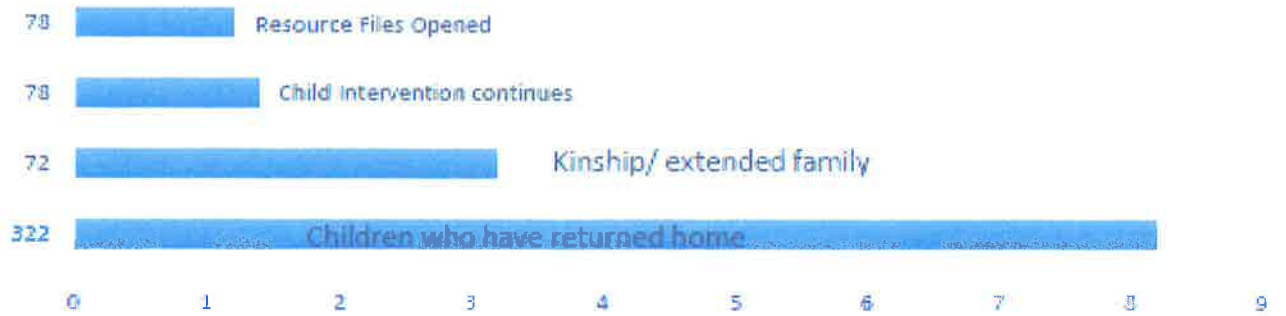
Our objective was to keep the children in the care of their families. We believed by supporting our caregivers and families, we could help our vision of breaking the cycle of children being removed from their families and communities.

Through this program, we created;

- a) Broken Hearts Documentary
- b) Aboriginal Fathers Love Their Children Too! Documentary
- c) Knowing Your Rights Booklet for Fathers and Mothers
- d) Aboriginal Parents' Guidebook on the Children's Services  
CHILD YOUTH AND FAMILY ENHANCEMENT ACT – CYFEA
- e) Knowing Your Rights Support Group
- f) Peer to Peer Support Group
- g) Welcome Home Ceremony



## Aboriginal Mothers Advocacy Stats since 2011



Without connecting and cultivating a trusting relationship with the people we served, AMAP would not have been successful.

Creating Hope Society wants to acknowledge Alberta Child and Family Services to have allowed us to deliver such a good program.

Over the years, these staff compassionate and understood the Indigenous ways of knowing and the importance of keeping families connected. Creating Hope Board of Directors and the Executive Director wants to thank the Family Liaison Support staff who worked with families and communities.

The team worked hard to deliver the AMAP program and followed the Creating Hope Society's vision, mission, and declaration "An Aboriginal Home for Every Aboriginal Child in Care by 2025".

- Jerry Melting Tallow • Sharon Gladue • Karen Delver • Crystal Beaverbones
- Elizabeth Perry • Delores Gladue • Teri Ann Sinclair

**FAREWELL TO BUILDING ECONOMICS THREE YEAR PROJECT...LOTS OF LEARNING**



# *Building Economic Prosperity Opportunities for Aboriginal Women Project*

Creating Hope Society was successful in their funding proposal to the Status of Women Canada for the project entitled 'Building Economic Prosperity Opportunities for Aboriginal Women.' The approved proposal resulted in a three-year project commencing September 2015 and ending August 1, 2018.

A Creating Hope Economic Prosperity Partnership Circle (CHEPP) "to steer the project's work was established. Partners included: Boyle Street CO-OP; Enbridge; Government of Alberta: Indigenous Relations and Status of Women departments; NorQuest College; Oteenow; Rupert land Institute; and Women Building Futures.

Through this Project, CHS had worked diligently with our partners to address the systemic challenges and barriers that Aboriginal women face in working with or seeking employment in the Industry and Trade sectors.

Three forums were held-October 14, 2016, October 19, 2017, and June 6, 2018. Approximately 300 participants attended. Each Forum had a specific theme. The first Forum, titled Indigenous Women Talent Forum, addressed barriers facing Aboriginal Women in the Industry and Trade Sector. The second Forum, titled Indigenous Women Talent Forum, focused on addressing these barriers and building on Mentorship programs. The third Forum, titled Moving Forward for Indigenous Women Working in Industry and Trades Forum, identified 4 promising practices that our Industry partners could implement.

The 4 promising practices include:

## *Promising Practice # 1:*

Blanket Exercise is an interactive learning experience that teaches Aboriginal history as it is rarely taught.

## *Promising Practice # 2:*

Implement a Mentorship Program to support Aboriginal employees. Lack of access to mentorship, sponsors, and networks is a barrier or women, particularly Aboriginal women's professional development and advancement in the labour force.

## *Promising Practice #3:*

Track and report on diversity and inclusion measures. Diversity and inclusion are not about quotas or affirmative action. Companies adopt intentional practice and culture to reduce or eliminate the systematic barriers and unconscious biases favouring certain groups and disadvantages.

## *Promising Practice #4:*

Review HR policies for flexibility and acknowledgment of Indigenous cultural practices. Ensure the entire workforce has had Aboriginal Education and Awareness training. A workforce that maintains an appropriate cultural awareness level will promote non-Aboriginal workers to understand and support cultural values and diversity.



# SUMMER CAMP

## *Summer Camp 2018 & 2019*

Creating Hope Society's (CHS) annual summer day camp started in 2010 for children ages 8-12. The original idea was to allow parents a break and give the kids something fun to do over the summer. We used that information to better camp for the following years based on what we learned from our previous summer camps.



**CREATING HOPE SOCIETY**

**COME AND JOIN US!**

- CRAFTS!
- FIELD TRIPS!
- GAMES!
- SNACKS!
- CULTURAL ACTIVITIES!

Maximum 15 Children/Camp Group  
To Register Call  
**(780) 477-7961**  
Hosted by Creating Hope Society

**SUMMER CAMP 2019**  
JULY 2-JULY 12 &  
JULY 15-JULY 26  
9:30 AM-3:30 PM  
AGES: 8-12 YEARS

Location:  
St. Alphonsus School  
11624 81 St NW,  
Edmonton, AB T5B 2S2

## *Length of Camp*

We host two camps during the summer. Weekly schedules were given to parents before camp start dates, so the parents and children knew what to expect at camp. In the initial first few days of camp, the staff introduced several different ice breakers and activities for the children to get to know one another. These activities were not only a great way to build group dynamics but also set the tone for the days following. With the children comfortable with us and each other, camp leaders were able to conduct activities in a respectful group atmosphere.





## *Moccasin is Motion Youth Mentorship*

The Moccasin is Motion is a mentorship youth program that was held at the (3) schools from last year Spruce Ave Jr. High, Britannia Junior High and H.E. Beriault) plus one new addition (Westlawn Junior High). In January, another school was added, John A. McDougall Elementary School. Both administrators and students from the partnering schools have spoken positively about the program. Our partners also included Edmonton Immigration Services

Some of the activities included healthy peer to peer relationship building and mentoring not only with Indigenous youth but also with their non-Indigenous peers.



### *Quick Facts*

76,205 Indigenous peoples live in Edmonton as of 2016  
232,195 Newcomers live in Edmonton as of 2011

This means that close to half of Edmonton's population are Indigenous and Newcomer peoples.  
(Statistics Canada, 2011.)





**CREATING HOPE  
FUNDRAISING  
ACTIVITIES AND  
EVENTS...**



**TO KEEP THE  
SOCIETY GOING!**





## *Dads Matter Too! Charity Golf Tournament*

In June 2018, we hosted our 4th Annual "Dad's Matter Too!" charity and golf tournament. This event has continued to prove a tremendous success and brings awareness to the need for resources and programs created specifically for fathers.



Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances in 2019, we had to cancel our Dad's Matter Too! Charity Golf Tournament. and in 2020, Covid -19 happened.



## *Authentic Living*

### *Taking Back your Power in Life, Health, Relationships and Work*

On behalf of Creating Hope President and on June 8, 2019, we were honoured to be part of the Authentic Living: Taking Back your Power in Life, Health, Relationships and Work event. All proceeds from this event were donated to our society. This was an evening full of learning from dynamic speakers who shared tools and tips for living an authentic life. We were very grateful to be a part of the event and receive this donation to support our organization. CHS staff would like to acknowledge Amanda Knight, who helped raise \$1,500 to go towards Creating Hope Society's Activities. Amanda Knight is a Board Member of the Creating Hope Society.





## *National Children's Day - Community Conversation and Round Dance*

In November of 2019, we celebrated National Children's Day with a community conversation and a Round Dance. The day started with a Pipe Ceremony and then community conversation. The discussion was centred around Truth and Reconciliation and the calls to Action #55-iv, specific children in poverty. We also discussed closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in a number of health indicators. We had a great turn out, and the day was a significant success!

## *Community Festive Gathering*

In partnership with Edmonton Police Services and the Edmonton Intercultural Centre, we hosted a festive community gathering in December 2019. We served lunch to approximately 100 community members and spread holiday cheer!





## Stories from Amiskwaciwaskahikan *An Indigenous Gathering*

In partnership with the Centre for Race and Culture, Edmonton Intercultural Centre, Multicultural Health Brokers, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association, Kings University and the Chinese Society, we hosted this fantastic event called the "Stories from Amiskwaciwaskahikan: an Indigenous Gathering."

The event was organized to bring diverse community members together to share in a day of learning and entertainment centred on Indigenous knowledge and perspectives with storytelling. We got a narrative approach to understand the rich history of our city while promoting reconciliation.

We kicked the day off with a morning Pipe Ceremony that flowed into a joyful time listening to contemporary and traditional performances. We invited Indigenous artisan market and discussed topics of reconciliation, Orange Shirt Day and the history of Papaschase, to name a few. This event was free to all.



I feel very privileged to learn about the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. I am deeply troubled by the ways that their livelihood, language and culture was destroyed by people who claimed that they were "teachers" who showed them the only way to worship and live. I would like to take any opportunity to learn more about Indigenous culture and assist with tasks that could promote the understanding of reconciliation.

#StoriesFromAmiskwaciwaskahikan  
#CreatingHopeSociety  
#OrangeShirtDay2019



## *"The Heart of the Community Kohkom, Moshum and Children's" Round Dance*

In 2017, Wilton Littlechild, Treaty 6 Grand Chief, recognized Creating Hope Society's is a society that bridges the gap between the Residential School survivors who have lost their children to the Child Welfare 60's scoop. It was then he said, "Bernadette, you are bringing the heart of the community back home, and the heart is our children."

"The Heart of the Community Kohkom, Moshum and Children's" gathering is about Hope for the future of nations and that Hope resides in the heart of the families. Our children are our greatest resource; our children are our strength; our children are indeed our future. It is through their experiences and understandings, which will shape those of the next generations.

We exceeded our expectations with participants, the entrance of the Abbottsfield Recreation Centre was a revolving door of people coming in and out. The capacity of the centre was 300 people. However, throughout the event, 400 children, youth and families attended. Family activities including; face painting, balloon animal making, Indigenous dancers and drummers and the best moose callers contest.

We finished the day with a traditional giveaway for children, including educational items such as colouring books, art supplies, balls and books.



## *Bannock Contest:*

This is Creating Hope's second bannock making contest. Due to the great success last year, we thought it would be great to bring out all the bannock makers again this year for 'The Heart of the Community Kohkom, Moshum and Children's Round Dance.' There were a total of 28 people registered for the bannock making contest. Of the 28 contestants, four (4) contestants made baked bannock, and seven (7) contestants made fried bannock; seventeen (17) people made both fried and baked bannock, which resulted in forty-two (42) bannock taste testing that took place that day. There were five judges for the bannock contest. A score sheet focused on appearance, texture, flavour, and aroma that guided the judging. There were variations in both the fried and baked, with some contestants adding herbs and spices to their bannock.





**FREE** The Heart of the Community  
Kohkom, Moshum and Children's **FREE**

# ROUND DANCE

ABBOTSFIELD RECREATION CENTRE  
3006-119 AVE- EDMONTON ALBERTA

**MAY 5, 2019 - 3PM - 10PM**  
Feast: 5pm - 6pm  
Round Dance: 6pm - 10pm

## Bannock Contest & Entertainment

**3pm-5pm**

**CASH PRIZES FOR BEST BAKED AND BEST FRIED!**

Bannock must be made in advance & brought to the contest for judging  
TO REGISTER FOR BANNOCK CONTEST  
Call Cheryl at 780-477-7961 or [info@creatinghopesociety.ca](mailto:info@creatinghopesociety.ca)

Need A Craft Table? (\$50.00) Call Cheryl at 780-477-7961

Creating Hope Society of Alberta  
ABSOLUTELY NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL PERMITTED

Edmonton

## The Winners

### *Baked Bannock:*

- 1st Place: Alvina Yellowknee  
2nd Place: Colleen Cardinal  
3rd Place: Holly Sound

### *Fried Bannock:*

- 1st Place: Roxanne Halfe  
2nd Place: James Gladue  
3rd Place: Toni Cardinal



### *Fried Bannock:*

- 1st Place: Roxanne Halfe  
2nd Place: James Gladue  
3rd Place: Toni Cardinal



*The Judges*



# *Thank you to our Funders and Sponsors*

*Creating Hope Society would like to thank our funders from the past and the present. (In no particular order)*

- ◆ National Crime Prevention
- ◆ Community Investment Operating Grant (CIOG)
- ◆ Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services
- ◆ Human Rights Citizen and Multiculturalism Education Fund
- ◆ Canadian Heritage
- ◆ City of Edmonton – Hosting and Operating Grant
- ◆ Status of Women Canada
- ◆ Alberta Health Services
- ◆ Alberta Foundation of the Arts
- ◆ The Anglican Church of Canada
- ◆ New Horizons for Seniors
- ◆ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
- ◆ Government of Alberta – Employment and Immigration
- ◆ Reach Edmonton Council for Safe Communities
- ◆ Christmas Bureau
- ◆ Public Safety Canada
- ◆ Edmonton Community Foundation
- ◆ Correctional Services Canada
- ◆ ECALA
- ◆ Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- ◆ Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- ◆ Department of Justice Canada










*We would also like to thank all our partners and supporters and those who help us continue our mission:*

- ◆ Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- ◆ Canadian Native Friendship Centre
- ◆ Alberta Native Friendship Centre Association
- ◆ The Works Festival
- ◆ Edmonton Food Bank
- ◆ Norquest College
- ◆ Edmonton Police Services
- ◆ Centre for Race and Culture
- ◆ Multicultural Health Brokers
- ◆ Jasper Place Health and Wellness
- ◆ Yellowhead Tribal College
- ◆ Kings University
- ◆ Child and Family Services
- ◆ University of Calgary – Faculty of Social Work
- ◆ The City of Edmonton

If we have forgotten anyone we offer our sincerest apologies



# *CHS Programs and Services for 2020*

-  Strengthening Homefires Cultural Support Program, In partnerships with the HUB “The city of Leduc, County of Leduc, Families First Society Fort Saskatchewan, & YMCA North Central Family Resource Network”
-  Connect the Dots Housing Program
-  Youth, Elders and Parents Cultural Support Program
-  Planting the Seeds of Reconciliation
-  Indigenous Story Telling (MMIWG+)
-  Creating Safe Paths Evaluation Research
-  You Speak Cree Youth Program
-  COVID-19 Projects
-  Adult Literacy Program – Learning Our Indigenous History

## *Creating Hope Society Staff*

Executive Director - **Bernadette Iahtail**

Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper - **Cheryl Petherbridge**

Communication Officer - **Crystal Auger**

Strengthening Homefires Staff - Team Lead - **Delores Gladue**

Cultural Support – **Danielle Beaulieu**, Cultural Support – **Tanya Hogan**, and

Cultural Support – Vacant, Youth, Elder, Parent Cultural Program - **Peggy Nepoose**

Connect the Dots Housing Coordinator - **Verna Fisher**

Contract Specialist - **Perdita Baier-Law, Joanne Swampy and Akira Iahtail**



## *Creating Safe Paths For Indigenous Women, Girls And Lgbtq2sa+ Research Project*

Creating Hope Society of Alberta was successful in receiving a grant from the Canadian Institute of Health Research through the Indigenous Gender and Wellness Development Grant. Creating Hope Society of Alberta/Bernadette Iahtail Executive Director, is the Principal Investigator, Dr. Raven Sinclair/ Professor of Social Work, University of Regina, is the Co-Applicant and Dr. David Long, Professor of Sociology is the Research Collaborator, from The Kings University.

We intend to engage members of our Community in the development and implementation of a Gender Based Violence (GBV) program evaluation titled Creating Safe Paths. This Community engaged research project will invite Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse peoples to share their experiences of GBV and their insights into GBV resources and programs.

Our purpose in doing so is to both honor their lived experience and invite them to contribute in meaningful ways to the improvement of GBV resources and programs in our Community. Listening to the Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse persons that participate in our project will give us insight not only into their unique as well as their shared experiences of GBV, but also their experience with and insights into current GBV resources and programs in Edmonton and surrounding areas. A significant benefit of the Community engaged approach we are taking in this research project is that our community members will have the opportunity to share their knowledge and clarify their needs for policy developers and service providers, which will enable them to contribute directly to the development of the GBV supports they need and want rather than having them be externally imposed.

The insights we gain from their experiences as well as their familiarity with GBV resources/programs in Edmonton and surrounding areas will therefore help us to evaluate and improve the cultural safety as well as the accessibility, usefulness and benefit of current resources and programs that are offered in our Community, and to understand what kinds of resources and programs may need to be developed in order to create and maintain stable and healthy environments in which women, girls, and LGBTQ2SA+ peoples feel safe and are protected from violence and abuse.





## *Strengthening Homefires Cultural Support Program*

Strengthening Homefires Cultural Support Program is an early intervention and prevention program to support and enhance family's capabilities. Using a strength-based approach we will work with families to build on their strengths, identify their needs and assist with their goal setting.

Our vision is to enhance their capabilities in:

- ◆ Household management (budgeting, family scheduling, rules and boundaries)
- ◆ Family dynamics (blended families, communication, unifying approaches)
- ◆ Addiction and family violence awareness
- ◆ Decision making and conflict management (impact and consequences)
- ◆ Defining traditional parenting roles
- ◆ Loss and grief supports

Upon referrals from Family Resource Network (FRN), Strengthening Homefires Cultural Support Worker (SHCW) will consult with Indigenous participants (clients) to provide and connect them with a range of Indigenous specific supports. Using a culturally informed model that is rooted in early intervention and prevention, the SHCW will walk alongside clients in their self-identified and self-determined goals for healing, culture and community integration, while providing and accessing resources as needed.

We are currently working with fourteen participants in the Edmonton area and expanding our connections outward into City of Leduc, County of Leduc and Families First Society Fort Saskatchewan. Strengthening Homefires Cultural Support Program currently hosts an online Zoom session – Kokum's Bannock and Tea.



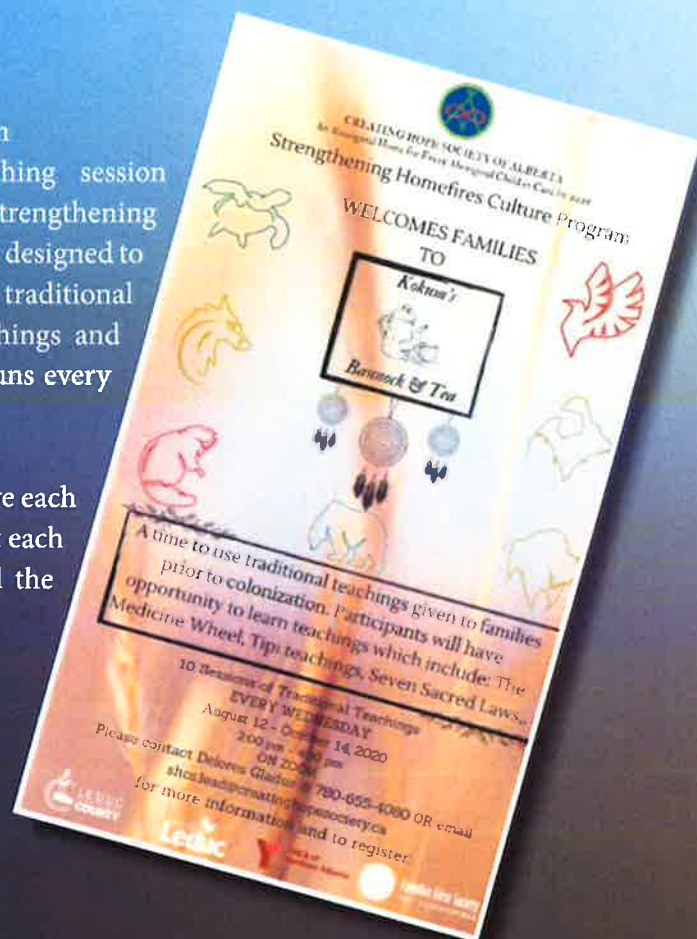


## *Kokum's Bannock and Tea*

### A Strengthening Homefires Cultural Support Program

Kokum's Bannock and Tea is a 10-week teaching session hosted virtually on Zoom presented by our Strengthening Homefires Cultural Support Program. The sessions are designed to provide participants an opportunity to learn traditional teachings including the Medicine Wheel, Tipi teachings and the Seven Sacred Laws to name a few. The session runs every Wednesday from August to October 2020.

Currently there are fourteen participants and they have each provided positive feedback. The teachings provided at each session have been well received and have deepened the knowledge of traditional teachings and their value.

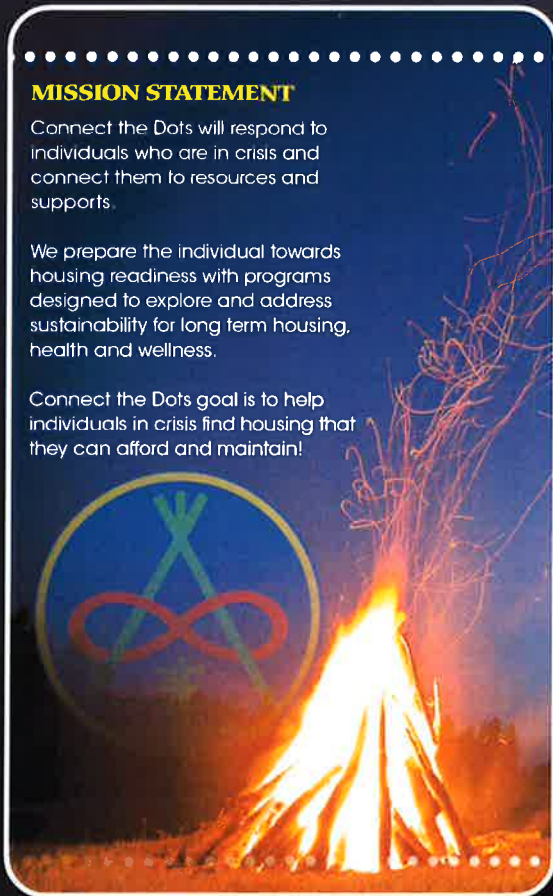


### MISSION STATEMENT

Connect the Dots will respond to individuals who are in crisis and connect them to resources and supports.

We prepare the individual towards housing readiness with programs designed to explore and address sustainability for long term housing, health and wellness.

Connect the Dots goal is to help individuals in crisis find housing that they can afford and maintain!



## *Connect the Dots Housing Program*

Connect the Dots housing project started in 2016 and is a grassroots community based service designed to connect Edmonton's Indigenous community to housing supports and culturally relevant resources for long-term health and wellness. Our services empower the Indigenous Community and provide a solution-focused approach to the housing barriers.

The Connect the Dots project is going well and has been an asset to the Edmonton community. Last year the project goal was to house twenty-five participants and we were able to surpass that number with forty-eight participants housed.

COVID-19 has created a few challenges for our participants as some leasing agents are still doing walk-throughs and applications virtually and online. This creates an additional challenge for those who do not have access to a phone, secure internet connection, or are not familiar with the online platforms. Despite these challenges, we are able to adapt and work with our participants to ensure they receive the supports they need.



## Community Luncheon

In partnership with St. Faith's Prayer Works, we are resuming our community luncheon beginning in September. This is an opportunity for community members to join together to share, laugh, and enjoy another's company. At the beginning of the pandemic, the community luncheon was cancelled but continued to provide support to families in need. From March to May, we assisted 8 families with hampers every 2 weeks. We are pleased to be resuming our community luncheon as it provides a social aspect to the Community during an isolating time.



## Elders Sharing Circle Community Luncheon

Starting in September, we are resuming our Elders Sharing Circle Community Luncheon on the last Tuesday of every month. This is an opportunity for Elders and Knowledge Keepers to connect and come together as a community. During the start of the pandemic, we began to deliver hampers to Elders throughout Edmonton as a way to offer support to them during this challenging and isolating time.



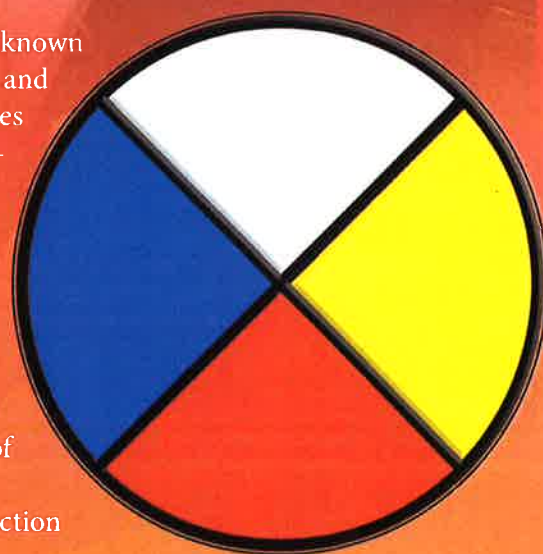
## *Youth, Elder, Parent Cultural Program (YEP)*



The YEP Cultural Program collaborates with the working group known as 'Wapekin,' which includes: Paul First Nation, Edmonton Child and Family Services, McMan Youth Family and Community Services Association, and Native Counselling Services of Alberta. The program works towards increasing confidence, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual health in youth. Our goal is to reduce the risk of youth participating in unhealthy behaviour and to encourage positive leadership.

The YEP Cultural Program provides in-school support, programming, and nurturing children, youth and families to strengthen their cultural identities and what it means to be Indigenous. This is achieved through the seven grandfather teachings, the circle of courage model, and the medicine wheel, to name a few.

YEP's goal is to increase cultural ties and nurture a deeper connection with one's Indigenous cultural identity.





Since 2015, YEP has worked with thirty participants to enrich their cultural identity and foster their emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual health.



## *You Speak Cree Youth Mentorship Program*

ISKÔTÊW ÊKWA AYÂWÂSTAN – Fire and Wind is a youth program open to Indigenous youth ages thirteen to eighteen. This program is an opportunity for youth to gain personal, traditional, and Cree language skill development. It is designed to encourage self-awareness and empowerment for youth. It is also intended to encompass both worlds that Nehiyaw youth face in their daily lives.

The youth mentorship program's overall goal is to enhance youth's cultural language, knowledge, leadership, communication, and self-presentation skills while supporting them in becoming mentors and role models to their peers and the younger generation. The program follows the "Circle of Courage model," based on the principles of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. Elders are an essential part of the program to help youth reconnect with their culture through sharing circles, smudging, basic Cree language, and traditional teachings.

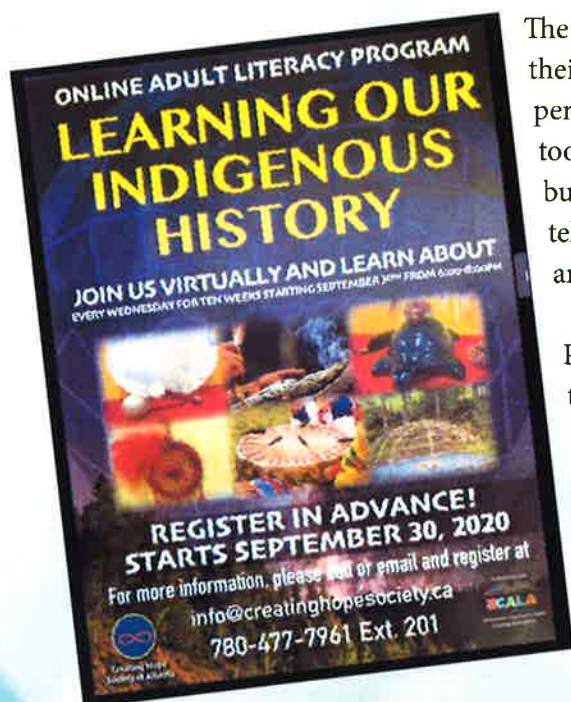
COVID-19 has created challenges for us, but as an organization, we persevered and reached out to our Community, youths and elders to develop and produce a documentary. The documentary will be created in Cree by the youth, telling stories about their experience and journey towards language revitalization and reconciliation. This process will enhance the youth's knowledge and skills in their history and cultural learnings.





## *Adult Literacy Program – Learning Our Indigenous History*

The adult literacy program – Learning Our Indigenous History intends to merge adult and family literacy components to include adults, parent(s)/caregivers, children and youth.



The program's objective is to enhance Indigenous people's understanding of their culture and history while giving them space to contribute their own personal history and story. The program intends to equip participants with tools to share, collect, and record stories that support Indigenous adults to build capacity in literacy and support social interaction. By sharing and telling stories, we want to recognize and validate participants' experiences and histories.

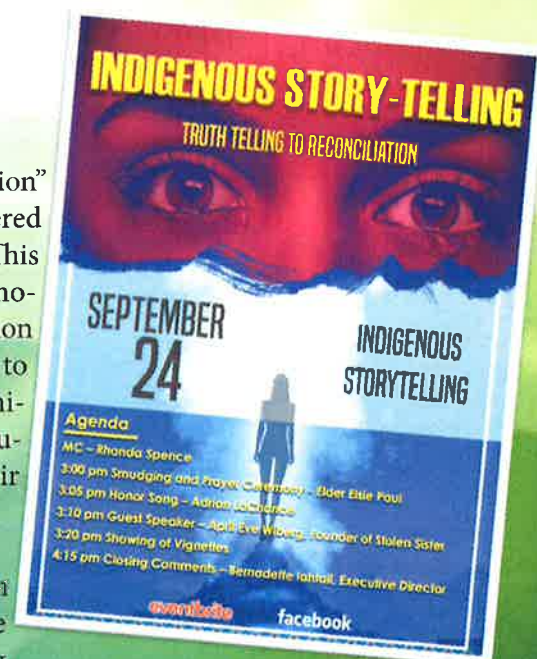
Participants attending will learn things such as the teepee, the traditional family, dancing, drumming and much more. Family literacy is an intergenerational education program that integrates adult literacy instruction and early childhood education for under-educated families. The program has 4 essential elements: basic skill instruction for parent(s)/caregivers, parent and child time together to share in learning experiences, and parent education and support groups.

Due to COVID-19, we will be hosting this program virtually on Zoom. We are conducting two (2) ten-week workshops with approximately twenty participants.

## *The Indigenous Storytelling: Truth Telling to Reconciliation*

The "Indigenous Story Telling: Truth Telling to Reconciliation" was designed to bring awareness to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and LGB TQ2SA+ (MMIWG+). This issue has been described as a national crisis and a Canadian genocide. This project directly responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, highlighting the need to bring forward Indigenous storytelling, truth-telling, and Community approached to reconciliation. Through sharing circles, individuals, families and community members could safely speak about their experiences and their connection to the missing and murdered.

With this project, we created a Resource Handbook for the Edmonton area and a documentary of mini-vignettes. On September 24, 2020, we premiered our documentary The Indigenous Storytelling: Truth Telling to Reconciliation. This documentary is a collection of mini-vignettes dedicated to the families of MMIWG+ (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Girls+). This was a national event hosted online via Facebook and Zoom and had a great turn out with even better feedback and reaction to the stories of all those who shared. It was a positive and powerful experience. We are excited to have produced this documentary and honoured to have received funding from Status of Women Canada to create awareness and educate, not only at a grassroots level but for all Canadians.





# *Creating Hope Society participating in the Convoy4Action*

## *Volunteers*

Creating Hope Society acknowledges and appreciates our volunteers who have helped us in so many ways. Without your volunteerism, we would not be who we are today. Thank you to those who helped us in the past and in the future.

*Thank you!*



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*"An Indigenous Home for Every  
Indigenous Child in Care by 2025"*



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