

The National Report On Aboriginal Inclusion

News & Solutions

INSIDE

WINTER 2004 ISSUE FOUR

- 1 The Inclusion Network Celebrates Its First Year of Success
- 1 Guiding Circles: Empowering Young Lives
- 2 A Message from the President
- 3 *The G.C. Book* by Tyler Blyan and Justine Dumais
- 4 Guiding Circles Demonstration Project Report
- 5 The Manitoba Aboriginal Employment Initiative
- 6 Sector Council Internship Programs
- 7 AHRDA – Sector Council Forum Ottawa
- 8 AAAP Celebrates 1-Year Anniversary
- 8 Upcoming Events

The Inclusion Network Celebrates Its First Year of Success

It has been a promising and fast-growing first year for the Inclusion Network, Canada's premiere Aboriginal employment website. As of late January 2004, the Inclusion Network boasts more than 60 new members. Both the job postings and responses have experienced remarkable growth over the year, as can be glimpsed in the chart of growing responses by AHRDA and LDM jobseekers on page 5.

As of January 2004, 148 Aboriginal training centres – both AHRDAs and LDMs – have been trained in use of the site. Technicians at all these centres know how to make their



CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 >

Guiding Circles: Empowering Young Lives

At the Council's Fifth Annual Champions' Meeting on December 11, there was a stirring highlight—the performance of the rap song, *The G.C. Book*, a remarkable song created and sung by 16-year-old Tyler Blyan and 17-year-old Justine Dumais. Equally remarkable is the story of how this song came to be.

June Howse is the Aboriginal Community Liaison, Education/Career Counselor with Strategic Training Initiatives at the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement, a community of 600 located 250 kilometers north of Edmonton. In 2001 Howse launched the Nepin (pronounced "knee-pin") Program, a six-week broad-based training program for youth in the Settlement. The Nepin (Cree for summer) Program has grown and by 2003 had absorbed 57 students, most between the ages of 14 and 18.



June Howse, of Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement, Alberta

Nepin has elements of summer camp, training camp, and boot camp. Students are expected to be prompt and present through all the activities, 9:00 to 4:00 each day. They are trained by suitable people in anything for which Howse can locate for them. "We can't go to libraries or museums," says Howse, "so let's do our own thing. We try to access what we have here." The result is a wide-ranging omnibus of training: in defensive driving, outdoor survival, anger management, time management, diet principles, bannock-baking, scrap-booking, and a range of other skills. The program included presentations by probation officers, an RCMP constable, and drug enforcement

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 >



A Message from the President

The Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada held its successful *Fifth Annual Champions Meeting* on December 11, 2003. Champions are part of the Council's governance structure. They are federal and provincial Ministers, Aboriginal chiefs and leaders, chief executive officers, and other leaders who meet once a year to provide guidance and direction to the organization at the annual meeting. Over the past few years the meeting has evolved into a kind of *think-tank* where Champions discuss national issues relating to Aboriginal employment, skills/learning, and other major issues. The forum is unique because of the many perspectives that are shared at the table. At this year's Fifth Annual Champions' Meeting leaders discussed the unique features of the Council's "cluster model" in its approach to Aboriginal employment and its emphasis on collaboration and partnership. The model stresses the need for relationship building, capacity building, and a multi-lateral effort to address the social, economic, and educational issues facing Aboriginal communities.

The Champions' Meeting featured speakers from government and industry. Following a welcome by Charles Coffey, Executive Vice-President for RBC Financial Group and Champion Co-chair, the Honourable James K. Bartleman, Lieutenant Governor for the Province of Ontario, spoke about Aboriginal youth and the necessity of education. The Honourable Ralph Goodale affirmed the value of partnerships and the role Aboriginal people can play in the skilled trades. The Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Minister of State (Children and Youth)

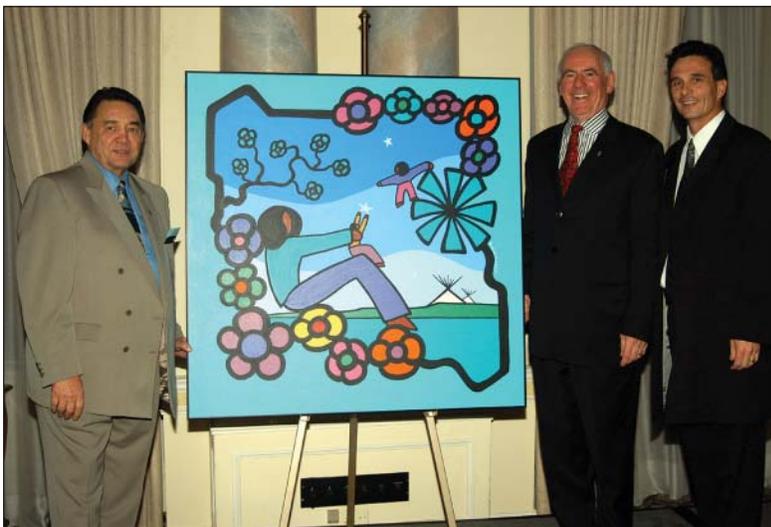
applauded the progress being made by the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders. And, in one of her final speeches as Minister for Human Resources Development Canada, Jane Stewart spoke about the skills and learning agenda and she thanked the Council for its work in this area. Another high point of the proceedings was a speech by entrepreneur John Kelly who spoke about the power of engaging employers in Aboriginal employment issues. After the luncheon meeting participants thanked Ray Ahenakew who has served as Champions' Co-Chair since the formation of the Council. The Council expresses its sincere appreciation to Ray for five years of leadership and for his continued commitment to national efforts to increase and accelerate Aboriginal employment in Canada. Ray is replaced by Chief Sophie Pierre as Champion Co-chair.

The Champions' Meeting showcased two projects in which the Council is a partner. Students of Willis College's TeKnoWave Project were applauded for their completion of successful Aboriginal information technology training. And, as another story in this newsletter relates, Tyler Blyan, 16, and Justine Dumais, 17, sang their rap song *The G.C Book* inspired by the Council's career awareness booklet *Guiding Circles*.

The Champions' Reception following the meeting was well attended by over 250 business leaders, politicians and Aboriginal representatives. The event was sponsored by ADGA Group Consultants Inc., the Aboriginal Workplace Participation Initiative, CGI, Mohawk Internet Technologies, Syncrude Canada Ltd., Willis College, Donna Cona and The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT). These organizations made it possible for many people to come together to celebrate the successes of Aboriginal employment and to share their views and perspectives about the power of partnership and collaboration.

The Champions' event provides a valuable forum to reflect on the achievements of the Council and its many partners and to seek new ways of achieving Aboriginal employment as a solution to Canada's growing skills gap shortages. We must amplify our efforts to address the social, economic, and educational issues facing Aboriginal people. The collaborative approach adopted by the Council's Champions and partners is the surest route to new solutions in Aboriginal skills learning and employment.

Kelly Lendsay
President



AHRDCC President Kelly Lendsay (right) and Charlie Coffey (centre) of RBC Financial Group award Champions Co-Chair and founding member of the Council, Ray Ahenakew, a large painting by Saskatoon artist Kevin Pee-Ace.

The G.C. Book

Tyler Blyan and Justine Dumais

Well first it was the R P S, War Party to be the best
 And Buffalo Lake they want to test
 They ain't never heard no rappers rip like us
 Métis Mafia now who's ready to bust
 I'm telling all you rappers put you mic straight down
 Because you're trying to beat a king
 and you got no crown.

I heard of four stabbings in Buffalo Lake
 Native, you end up in a body bag.
 Then first off it was AADAC Class
 And sometimes I wonder even if I did pass
 And if I didn't I'm just a kid with FAS
 But I'm trying to live my life just to make it the best

Yo! The GC Book
 Gotta' take a look
 Yeah, it helps me see
 It's okay to be me
 It's a real cool tool
 Says ya' gotta stay in school
 Don't get off track
 Gonna' land on your back
 But June our friend
 Will help us again
 Gotta' stay in gear
 Gotta' find my career
 So you need this tool
 Ya' gotta' stay in school
 Don't be you Mama's fool
 Get a job!

Can't get a job cause I see the PB, that means
 The probation officer if you know what I mean,
 June helped me out to make one cheque
 Now I owe her my trust and all my respect

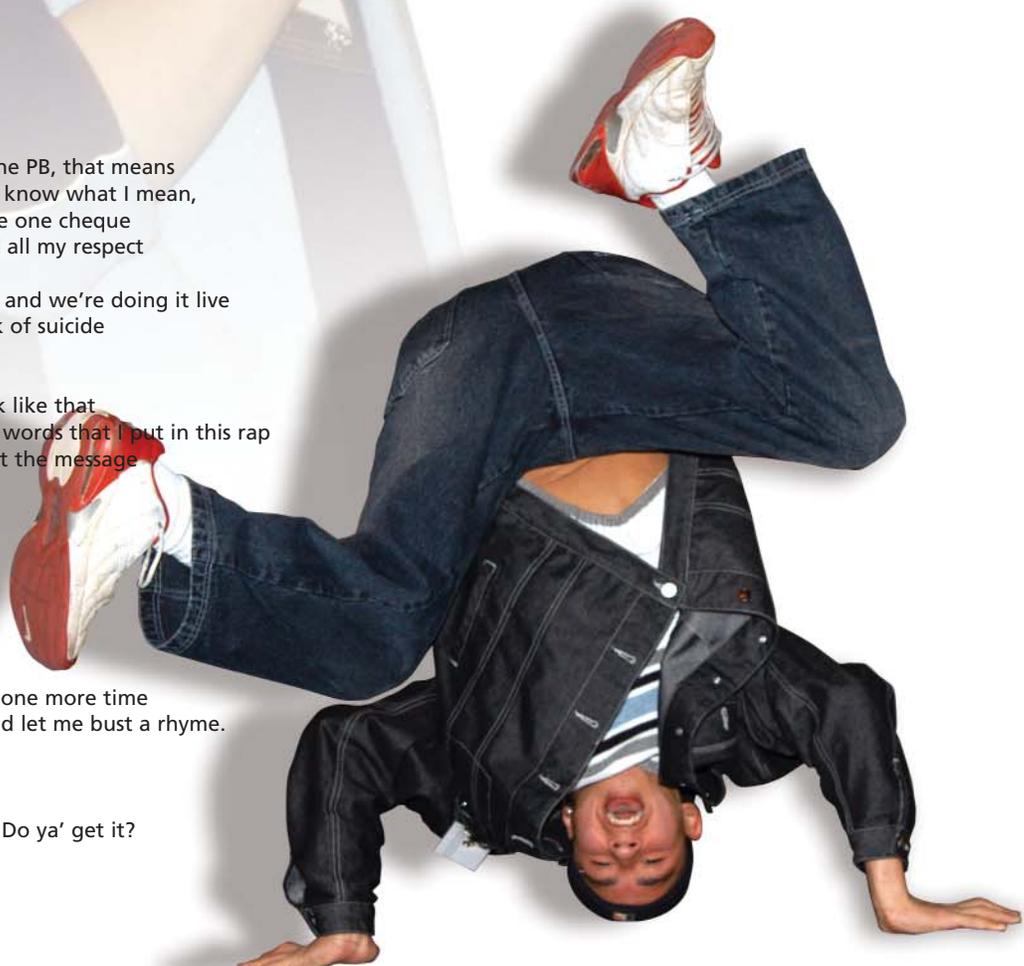
Now we're rappin' on stage and we're doing it live
 I'm telling you all who think of suicide
 Think of who you know
 Before you're ready to die
 I don't want no one to think like that
 That's why you listen to the words that I put in this rap
 I'll rap all day just so you get the message
 Of what I'm trying to say.

BREAK DANCE

Well, did you get it
 Or did you even think
 Don't you get the message
 That we're trying to bring
 If you didn't let me tell you one more time
 So let's kick it up a notch and let me bust a rhyme.

BREAK DANCE

Do ya' get it? Do ya' get it? Do ya' get it?



Guiding Circles CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

specialists. Students were also given community projects such as building garbage containers for the elders and helping elders clean their yards. Students were paid at the rate of about \$165 per week.

In the six weeks of the 2003 Nepin Program, only one of the 57 students dropped out. This ratio may not appear remarkable, but it is extraordinary when set against the troubles that plague the Settlement. As Howse says, "Prior to our starting the Nepin Program last summer, within about a three-week period, we had four stabbings and within the previous six months, we'd had a murder, two suicides, and several overdoses that resulted in death."

One of Nepin's training programs, lasting about

half of the six weeks, was a guidance class which used the Council's career guide, Guiding Circles. "The kids loved the book," says Howse. "Answers were never right or wrong and with every answer the youths seemed to resonate with the book's central idea, 'it's okay to be who I am.'"

Near the end of the program, two of the Nepin students came to Howse's office. "I was super, super busy. They said, 'Can we talk to you for a minute? Can we use your CD player? Can we close the door?' And they sang the rap song they had just written. I sat there, honestly, and the tears were rolling down my face. I was bawling. I said, 'I can't believe this, this is phenomenal.'"

The songwriters are Tyler Blyan and Justine Dumais, and their song lyrics can be found on page 3.

Guiding Circles Demonstration Project Report: "Flexible, Innovative, and Practical" Approach to Counselling

In December, at the Annual Champions Meeting and Reception, the AHRDCC released *The Guiding Circles Demonstration Project Final Report and Recommendations*. The Report consolidates the results of training with Guiding Circles by eleven Aboriginal career development practitioners from Métis, Inuit, and First Nations communities.

Site Coordinators described Guiding Circles as "a valuable self-exploration tool" that "nurtures confident decisions" among users in a "non-threatening fashion". Likewise, they acknowledged that the Guiding Circles approach helps create an atmosphere of exploration which respects varied learning styles and different level of career maturity.



Guiding Circles Demonstration Project Team. Back row (l-r): June Howse, Buffalo Lake Métis Settlements, AB, Tina Mathew, First Nations Employment Society, Vancouver, BC, Roberta Hewson, Partners for Careers, Winnipeg, MB, Bruce Herney, Membertou First Nation, NS, Peter Garrow, Akwesasne Mohawk Board of Education, ON, Danny Egeesiak, Kakivak Association, Iqaluit, NU. Middle row (l-r): John McCormick, Project Manager Betty Juselius, Manitoba Métis Federation, Winnipeg, MB, Myrna LaPlante, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Saskatoon, SK, Rose-Anne Gosselin, First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec, Montreal, PQ, Elaine Reitsma, Sto:lo Nation Human Resource Development, Chilliwack, BC, Elder Irene Lindsey, Ottawa, ON. Front row (l-r): Gabe Lafond, Métis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc., Saskatoon SK, Gray Poehnell, *Guiding Circles* author, Rod McCormick, *Guiding Circles* author.

The final report also contains seven recommendations about where the future direction of Guiding Circles could lead, including supporting Guiding Circles with additional content and tools on the new website. Another concept a site coordinator voiced is the prospect of developing additional workbooks which could take the client through the rest of the career journey. In addition to these recommendations, the final report also suggests a concept of sponsorship in which booklets be donated to schools, AHRDAs, and other Aboriginal organizations that assist in career development.

To access the entire report, in either official language, please visit www.guidingcircles.com. The Council welcomes your feedback on the report. Please address comments or questions to Trina Maher, Manager, Aboriginal Skills & Learning at trina.maher@ahrdcc.com.

Where Manitoba Businesses and Aboriginal Communities Intersect: The Manitoba Aboriginal Employment Initiative

The Manitoba Aboriginal Employment Initiative (AEI) began in March 2000. At the time of its launch, the project was the first of its kind in Canada. AEI's central objective is to bridge the gap between employer awareness and employer action in building strategies to connect with the Aboriginal population in the region. The AEI strategy is to bring everyone to a common "meeting ground" thereby encouraging all players to develop trust and confidence in people from those communities and cultures that historically have been distant or isolated from them. The "meeting ground" approach has gone far, not only in changing attitudes, but in encouraging the parties to increase the energies and efforts needed to build more bridges between their communities.

To address the complex issues associated with this task, the AEI employs multiple approaches. Activities include partnership building, innovative employment development strategies, information sharing, and research and education. In all its activities, the AEI acts as a facilitator and catalyst helping to connect the membership of agencies such as the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and Business Council, to Aboriginal stakeholder groups, service providers, and AHRDA Holders.

To learn more about the AEI approach to creating inclusion strategies in the business sector, go to the AEI project summary at www.ahrdcc.com or contact Crystal Laborero, Director, Aboriginal Employment Initiative at (204) 942-3011.

Inclusion Network Celebrates CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

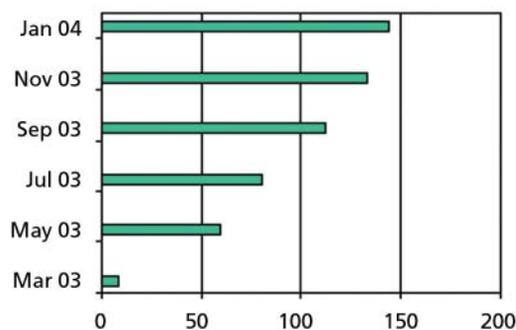
clients aware of the Inclusion Network, both in seeking out job opportunities and posting their resumes. One unexpected boon of the site is that it is now being used by numerous Aboriginal employment centres for posting their own job needs.

Member employers have been increasingly active in using the Inclusion Network, particularly its Opportunity Exchange. Members have posted 531 opportunities for a total of 1545 positions with the top three users being: RBC (278 positions with 39 responses and 2 hires); Spirit Staffing (56 positions with 26 responses and 2 hires); and Canada Post (39 positions with 16 responses and 1 hire). The Opportunity Board continues to expand its number of offerings. To date, in total, there have been 226 responses to the opportunities and from those responses, 14 hires.

One source of very good news is the growth of the Aboriginal Talent Database, a feature installed last April, now containing more than 800 resumes from the more than 1800 jobseekers who have registered on the Inclusion Network. What kinds of jobseekers can be found in the Talent Database? Here are some samplings: 3 Lawyers, 20 Human Resource Professionals, 12 Economic Development Professionals, 7 Executive Directors, 7 Marketing/Public Relations candidates, 10 Apprentice Welders, 11 Truck Drivers, 100+ Social Service Workers, and 150+ Administrative Assistants.

The Inclusion Network is making inroads into institutions of higher learning. At community colleges, colleges, and universities across Canada,

**AHRDA Responses to Opportunities Posted on the Inclusion Network
March 2003 – January 2004**



Aboriginal students are learning to take advantage of the Inclusion Network. The iN staff has contacted Aboriginal counselors, heads of Aboriginal student centres, and Human Resource managers in 88 institutions of higher learning, encouraging them to introduce the potential of the Inclusion Network to graduating Aboriginal students. More than 90 packets of promotional cards have gone out to these institutions and more will be going out in coming months.

Anyone seeking more information about the Inclusion Network, please call 1-866-711-5091.

Kick-Starting Industry-Wide Inclusion: Sector Council Internship Programs

Building an inclusive workplace takes a well-thought out human resource plan that should contain multiple entry points for new workers. One such approach is to engage post-secondary graduates in a workterm through an internship program. This method engages the employer and intern to “try on a job” with both sides benefiting from the work experience. An employer has the benefit of getting to know a new employee and the positive attributes that employee brings to the workplace and the intern benefits by learning how to apply their new skills in the workplace and trying a challenging new job to see how well it fits with their talents, skills, and career plan.



Two Sector Councils that are promoting this approach within their industries are the Canadian Council for Human Resources in the Environment Industry (CCHREI) and the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC). Both Councils have partnered with their industry members and the AHRDCC to develop internship programs that welcome the participation of Aboriginal youth.

CCHREI's Environmental Youth Corp is a national initiative designed to improve the school-to-work transition for post-secondary graduates. These

internships have had a 98% success rate and have resulted in the employment of over 1800 youth since its beginning in 1997. CCHREI has designated that 25% of their internships will go to Aboriginal people through the BEAHR (Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resource) project. The opportunities available fall into the responsibilities of an environmental practitioner, that is, “any person who performs work activities that contribute to the protection of the environment, the conservation of its natural resources (including the prevention, abatement and control of pollution), and environmental communications, research and education.” In a survey sponsored by CCHREI, 80% of environment industry employers indicated they would hire qualified Aboriginal environmental practitioners. However, a major hurdle in hiring new graduates is the lack of hands-on experience. Through the BEAHR Internship Program, AHRDCC and CCHREI look to create opportunities for graduates to get that experience and lead to full-time employment. To apply to be a sponsor company or to register as an intern, visit the BEAHR website for an online application (www.beahr.com) For more information on the BEAHR Internship Program contact: Jeremy Brown at (403) 233-0748.

The Canadian trucking industry is a \$33 billion business employing over 500,000 people. This industry has opportunities for interns not only as professional drivers, but also as driver trainers, transportation safety professionals, dispatchers, mechanics, accountants, sales and marketing professionals, information technology support, and human resource staff. There are multiple career options available that may interest a recent graduate. For more information please

contact: Sylvie Pépin, Project Coordinator, by email at yes@cthrc.com.

Both programs are available for placement terms of six to twelve months. Companies interested in applying must be Canadian companies that can offer the intern a meaningful work experience. The intern must be under the age of 30 and be a recent graduate from a post-secondary institution. For additional criteria please contact either of the Sector Council's intern program administrators as presented above.

AHRDA - Sector Council Forum Ottawa

The first of two AHRDA-Sector Council Bridging Forums was held November 19 and 20, 2003 in Ottawa, Ontario. The conference brought together nearly 75 participants from across the country, including AHRDA representation from every province.

The main objective of the forum was to provide an opportunity for AHRDAs and Sector Councils to discuss the various types and levels of engagements that could be undertaken between them. The forum offered the first opportunity for both groups to meet, learn about each other, and develop strategies for possible future partnerships.

Twelve sector councils made presentations on the various issues, opportunities, and challenges within their respective industries. Participants then joined in small group discussions, called "Creating Engagements" sessions, that encouraged more dialogue. While a number of the issues discussed were industry-specific, several human resource themes recurred within virtually every industry. Among those themes are:

- **The Aging Workforce.** Many sectors are experiencing and/or forecasting shortages of skilled workers.
- **Technology.** Many workers do not know how to adapt, and in numerous situations, appropriate training/upgrading is not available.
- **Youth.** For many sectors, attracting young people is a main concern.
- **Cultural Diversity.** Many Sector Councils stated the lack of immigrants, Aboriginal people, and visible minorities in a number of careers.
- **Training.** Many Sector Councils offer skills assessment, on-site training, or distance learning, as well as partnerships with educational institutions.
- **Aboriginal Awareness.** In most industrial sectors, employers have little understanding of Aboriginal training and employment issues but all indicated an eagerness to learn.

The "Creating Engagement" Sessions also provided AHRDA participants the opportunity to ask questions of the Sector Councils and offer suggestions and recommendations for possible future opportunities. Highlights included the need for more:

- **Best Practices.** AHRDAs would like to hear about best practices already in place, particularly those



which can be adapted to other Aboriginal-specific projects.

- **Aboriginal-Specific Products.** Any product, package, training, or other initiative that is aimed at Aboriginal people should have Aboriginal-specific products and services.
- **On-Site Training.** This is especially relevant for those who live in rural or northern regions or on Reserves.
- **Community-Based Partnerships.** Partnerships between AHRDAs, Sector Councils, business, and government should be initiated at the community level.
- **Aboriginal involvement.** When jobs or active industrial centres are accessible to nearby Aboriginal communities, those communities should be invited to hear what is available.
- **Role Models.** Everyone agreed on the need to see more Aboriginal people in a wide variety of jobs, especially in under-represented sectors.

The Next AHRDA-Sector Council Forum – Halifax

Building on the success of this first forum, a second forum will be held February 25 and 26 in Halifax, Nova Scotia to further explore ways in which AHRDAs and Sector Councils can collaborate on these issues. For further details or to attend the Halifax forum, please contact Rob Harasymchuk, Manager, Research & Program Development, 306-956-5367 or rob.harasymchuk@ahrdcc.com. A report of the Proceedings from the Ottawa event is available at www.ahrdcc.com.

AAAP Celebrates 1-Year Anniversary

Celebrating its first year, the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAAP) has registered over 50 Aboriginal apprentices in 11 different trades, including Cabinetmaker, Carpenter, Electrician, and Welder. Apprentices credit the innovative project with helping them prepare for apprenticeship training and finding employment that will lead to a satisfying career in the trades.

"The process was quick and helped prepare me for what to expect on the job," said Richard Tuccaro, apprentice welder with Collins Industries Ltd. Richard turned to the AAAP in Edmonton when he wanted to make a career change.

Created in 2001 in response to labour market and training needs, the AAAP promotes apprenticeship and industry training to Aboriginal people, communities, and organizations in Alberta. The AAAP continues to earn a reputation in other jurisdictions as a model for encouraging Aboriginal participation in the trades. With its partner, the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada, the AAAP serves as a model to other jurisdictions across Canada.

Rob Egan, Coordinator of the Vancouver-based Coordinated Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy (CAAS) says, "The AAAP is an example of an effective collaborative model that encourages more Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship and informs employers about the benefits of hiring Aboriginal peoples. Over the long term, the AAAP and projects like it will increase employment in Aboriginal communities, increase the self esteem of their youth, and allow Aboriginal people to maintain a good quality of life.

The main emphasis over the coming year will focus on attracting qualified Aboriginal people ready to start an apprenticeship program; through presentations to employers and industry continuing to spread the word about the benefits of hiring Aboriginal apprentices; and promoting the trades as a viable career option to Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal organizations, industry partners, educational institutions, Western Economic Diversification Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and the Alberta Government support the AAAP through financial and in-kind contributions. Visit www.thinktrades.com for more information on this innovative initiative.

The National Report On Aboriginal Inclusion

Brought to you by the...

Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada
820 – 606 Spadina Cres. East, Saskatoon SK Canada S7K 3H1
Toll free: 1-866-711-5091
Email: contact.us@ahrdcc.com • Website: www.ahrdcc.com

Upcoming Events

AHRDA - Sector Council Forum, Halifax

On February 25-26, 2004 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the AHRDCC will be hosting the second of two forums to bring together AHRDAs and a group of national Sector Councils. For more information, please contact Rob Harasymchuk at 306-956-5367 or by email at rob.harasymchuk@ahrdcc.com.

Guiding Circles Training Sessions

Facilitated by author Gray Poehnell, the Guiding Circles Training Session offers employment and training counselors a comprehensive understanding of the Guiding Circles workbook. In March, sessions are scheduled for Toronto, Vancouver, and the Atlantic Region. Contact Trina Maher at 1-866-711-5091.

Diversified Human Capital: The New Profit Centre - Vancouver, BC

This one-day workshop, facilitated by the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC) demonstrates the powerful business case for an inclusive and Aboriginal-friendly workplace. This workshop identifies the historic forces that have created a society of exclusion and then shows how the drivers of exclusion can be transformed into drivers of inclusion. The workshop also presents exercises that help participants identify exclusionary practices within their workplace and encourages the development of inclusionary strategies that can be applied in their organization. To be held in the Spring of 2004. For more information, call 1-866-711-5091.

AHRDA/LDM Inclusion Network Training Sessions

Training sessions in the Inclusion Network to all AHRDA and LDM members are provided every week. Please contact Trainer Bill Kuhns for further details at (819) 459-3438.

Other Aboriginal events are listed at the website of the Alberta-based Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (AMMSA) at www.ammsa.com.

Canada

The Council wishes to acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada and our private sector sponsors.

Submissions and letters to the editor are welcomed. Please send your comments and requests to:

Managing Editor: Bill Kuhns
Toll free: 1-866-711-5091 • Email: bill.kuhns@ahrdcc.com