

THE CENTRE

JAN. 2016 NEWSLETTER/FAMILY & COMMUNITY WELLNESS CENTRE

TRC Final Report

CEO Felix Walker talks about its child welfare recommendations

New Year's goals: try the outdoor workout



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in this issue

After years of research, interviews and information gathering the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report in December 2015. It's first five recommendations all point to the country's child welfare system.

In this issue we speak with CEO Felix Walker about the report and the most contentious issues between the Family and Community Wellness Centre's Child and Family Service branch and the government.

You'll also see the some of the news about the FCWC as its CFS model continues to get provincial and national attention.

And if 2016 means changing a few bad habits, there are also some tips here for you.



Commissioned oil on canvas painting entitled "Indian Residential School" by artist and IRS survivor Alex Janvier, Cold Lake First Nation/via the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



All photos via the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, via the web.

For over a century, Aboriginal children were removed from their families and sent to residential schools. They were government-funded, operated by churches and made to eliminate parental involvement in the spiritual, cultural and intellectual development of Aboriginal children. More than 150,000 First Nations, Metis and Inuit children were force into the schools. The TRC says the cumulative impact of residential schools is a legacy of unresolved trauma passed from generation to generation, with a profound affect on the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians.

A call for action

Recommendations for sweeping changes to the child welfare system

There's a big cheque sitting in an NCN Family and Community Wellness Centre office, and CEO Felix Walker has been contemplating for years when he'll present it to the Government of Manitoba as a cheeky gesture showing the province how much funding it has pulled back. The oversized novelty cheque has a backdrop of children playing, representing the local youth the province is impacting by scaling back \$1.7 from the FCWC's Child and Family Services branch.

"A lot of the preventative work that we've been doing actually costs quite a bit more than what we're receiving in terms of prevention dollars," says Walker. "But once you apprehend the child money becomes secondary and you're in a much better position to provide the services. So I'd be more apt to having the same kind of process, but not having children under apprehension, but still being able to provide the services that we normally would have provided in the event of a apprehension."

The government's funding model is one of most contentious issues pointed out by the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. After years of interviews, testimonials and research, the document on the country's residential school system was on Dec. 15, 2015. It's top five recommendations all address the child welfare system.

The Centre's CFS branch has seen a 33 per cent decrease in the number of children in care over the last six years. It may not be able to maintain the progress as it juggles providing preventative services to youth, and keeping enough those programs operating with staff while funding is slashed. The TRC's list of recommendations, it calls on the government to change its model.



Statistics Canada says nearly half of the 30,000 children in the system are indigenous.

In Manitoba, there are over 10,000 kids in care — 85 per cent of which are indigenous.

A recent report says Winnipeg police deal with around 550 missing persons reports a month, and 83 per cent of them involve kids in care.





THE FLU SHOT

Protecting yourself, colleagues,
clients, and the community



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Flu shots can save lives! Stop by the
FCWC for your flu shot, no
appointment necessary! Your name will
be entered for monthly gift card draws.



Students working in the kitchen at the Cross Lake, Manitoba, school in the early 1920s. St. Boniface Historical Society Archives; Roman Catholic Archbishop of Keewatin-The Pas Fonds; N1826.

“It is clear that the way in which Canada has funded Aboriginal child welfare has hampered First Nations agencies in providing effective services. This shortfall continues to inflict pain on Aboriginal families and communities, and contributes to the continuing overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in foster care,” says the report.

A 2011 Statistics Canada study found that 14,225 or 3.6% of all First Nations children aged fourteen and under were in foster care, compared with 15,345 or 0.3% of non-Aboriginal children.

As residential school survivor himself, Walker attended facilities in Cranberry and Dauphin. He agrees the current system is enacting what can be described as a “headcount” policy, similar to residential schools; the more kids in care, the more kids in residential schools, the more money you make, the more resources you get.

“Once we reduce our workforce the number of children placed at risk because of it are going to go up. Agencies that are enjoying increases in funding, they’re enjoying because they have more kids in care,” says Walker.

Apprehension methods:

While still in the early stages, the FCWC is drafting its own legislation surrounding child apprehensions. It’s largely a document outlining the practices CFS workers are already doing, and it can likely be a guideline for other First Nations agencies who looking to adapt the “Apprehend the parent, not the child” concept.

The model was developed through the guidance of NCN elders, who pointing to parents in many cases. Child and Family Services staff remove parents and caregivers, enrol them in parenting programs and other initiatives to help deal with their own issues.



Children are placed with competent relatives until the FCWC sees the parents fit to go back to their homes and be a family. The practice is legal on reserve where Chief and Council essentially act as landlords and no one owns their own property. Walker will be speaking about his model further in Kamloops in February where a local community is looking to adopt it.

As for helping keep children in the community, that's something Walker hopes will be relieved in the construction of 10 five-bed specialized foster homes for kids with serious troubles. In these cases, youth are usually sent to Winnipeg for treatment at Marymount or MacDonald Youth Service at a cost of about \$3 million a year to the wellness centre. Construction is slated to start this spring.

International studies have flagged Canada's apprehension methods, especially in cases where there is frequent removal of children from families as a "first resort" in cases of neglect, financial hardship, or disability. The TRC report says child-welfare workers must bring to their work an understanding of Aboriginal culture as well as an understanding

of the lasting harms caused by residential schools.

Further recommends in the TRC Final Report call upon Aboriginal and all levels of government to commit to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care by monitoring and assessing neglect investigations, providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside. These recommendations are outlined further:

- *Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.*
- *Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.*

"Once we reduce our workforce the number of children placed at risk because of it are going to go up. Agencies that are enjoying increases in funding, they're enjoying because they have more kids in care."

-CEO Felix Walker on the province's funding model.

****the FCWC has seen a 33 per cent decrease in the number of kids in care over the last six years.***



in the news

Late last year, Winnipeg Free Press public policy reporter Mary Agnes Welch travelled from the capital city to head up north to Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation. These are the resulting stories which can be found on WinnipegFreePress.com



The kids are all right

NISICAWAYASIIHK CREE NATION — More than a decade ago, shortly after Felix Walker was hired to manage the wellness centre in Nelson House, he got a gentle chiding from elders about the way Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation was running...

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Case closed

NISICAWAYASIIHK CREE NATION — When Shirley Swanson talks about her five boys, she does so with a possessive. "My Silus" — the second-youngest, too shy to be in a family photo.

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Family and friends of those murdered in Northern Manitoba come together in vigil and feast

Some of the loved ones who were remembered last night. A vigil and feast to remember those who have been murdered was held last night. Chief Executiv...

THOMPSONONLINE.CA

In late December 2015, the Centre hosting a vigil and feast in Thompson which served as an event to support those who have loved ones that died by homicide. It also served as an advocacy event to bring attention to the north's many cases of homicide. The event was covered in the *Thompson Citizen*.



Family Community Wellness Centre (Nelson House)



On Dec. 1, 2015 the Public Health Department invited classrooms to promote World AIDS Day and HIV prevention and education. The Nine Circles Community Health Centre in Winnipeg named the FCWC a winner in the category of a centre outside Winnipeg.



say farewell to bad habits.

With the calendar flipping over to 2016, many people are looking at their waistlines, bank accounts and jobs thinking how they can improve upon them in the new year. But sometimes the “new year, new me” pressures can mount on, and people often in fail in many of their New Year’s resolutions. The key, is being realistic and setting attainable goals. Here’s a list of some of the common healthy resolutions. Now these are just ideas, but it’s up to you to set the goal.



Lose weight

Being the most common resolution suggest just how hard it is to commit to. You can succeed, but don't expect it to happen in a day or a week. Losing weight means a lifestyle change, so there's no rush. Stay away from trend diets promising fast results. Instead, visit the FCWC Public Health Department or our Diabetes Program for information about your losing weight the healthy way.

Stay in touch

Are you drifting away from some friends or family? It may be good for your health to

reconnect with them, if it's the case that you have healthy relationships with them. The digital world makes it easy to connect, so sent them a message on Facebook and follow up with a visit.

Quit smoking

Any former smoker can tell you how many times they've tried to kick the habit before finally butting out for good. Several attempts often leads to quitting for good, but if you haven't had luck in the past, try different methods. And don't just think about your health, keep in mind all the money you'll save.



Cut your stress

Jobs, school and other pressures in small doses may not cause detrimental effects on your health. However, chronic stress can increase the risk of insomnia, depression, obesity, heart disease and more. Take time for relaxation, sleep, socializing and taking vacations. Maybe the traditional and holistic approach can help you too. Visit the FCWC's Counselling Services for ways to reduce stress.

Go back to school

The classroom is not just for kids, so don't be discouraged to go back school because of your age. It can revamp your career, lead you to a wage increase and introduce you to new friends. There's also many options for night school, paid employment-education programs and part time class. You'll gain a sense of accomplishment and new knowledge.



Cut back on alcohol

The risks related to chronic heavy drinking, and even occasional binge drinking are enormous. Drinking alcohol excessively can affect the brain's neurotransmitters and can increase the risk of depression, memory loss or even seizure. In the long term, it boosts the risk of liver and heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and mental deterioration, among other things. If you're more of just a "weekend warrior" you'll notice a dramatic change when you wake up on a Saturday morning without the dreaded hangover. You'll be energized, more productive and will even lose some extra pounds.



Cold? No sweat.



Maintaining workouts goals during a frigid winter

Northern Manitoba's frigid temperatures could put a dent in your plans to stay healthy this year. Gripping for the cold means people lose even the lightest exercise time when they opt for a car ride instead of a walk to work or school. But exercising can actually crank up your energy and decrease, tension, frustration and depression. That means working up a sweat helps fight those winter blues.

The heat and humidity of summer can drag you down and tire you faster, but cold weather is invigorating. Your body has to work harder in the cold, so production of those feel-good hormones – endorphins – is boosted, leading to a happier state of mind. So bundle up, pull out

the snow shoes or hockey sticks and get out there.

A guide to winter workouts:

Map Your RouteA safe route with stable footing should be a priority. For early morning and evening workouts look for plowed roads or paths broken in by vehicles or skidoos. Start with a neighbourhood you can do loops around easily. In case you get too cold, become wet or slip on some ice, you're still close to home and take cover from the cold weather.

Warm Up Wisely

Take five minutes before any workout to walk around or jog in place indoors. And don't burst out the door. Give your body time to adjust to the conditions by taking 30-second breaks every few minutes for the first 10 minutes.

Take Cover

Try to avoid open roads and paths near water: Tree-lined trails can help protect you from biting winds and snow flurries.

Cool—Don't Freeze—Down

To avoid getting too chilled during your cool down, keep it brief: Slow your pace for three to four minutes, then go inside to stretch. Take off extra layers and keep moving for another five to 10 minutes before showering.

Start Small

If you're use to running five kilometres during the summer, start with half that amount in the winter. Everyone's body functions differently in the cold

If you have to stop, your body temperature will drop rapidly, increasing your risk for hypothermia. Easing into it can also help your airways acclimate. In subfreezing weather, it's helpful to wrap a scarf or neck gaiter around your nose and mouth to warm the air before you breathe it in, says Martinson.



Drink Up

You don't see your sweat losses in the winter like you do in the summer, so most people give little thought to staying hydrated. But you can still sweat just as much (especially if you're bundled up). Try putting your bottle under your layers to help keep it from freezing .

Be Flexible

You may be an a.m. exerciser, but on extremely cold days, your best (and safest) bet is holding off until mid-afternoon, if possible, when temps are at their highest and paths are more likely to be plowed. And yes, there is such a thing as too-lousy weather. If there's snow, wind, ice and darkness to face, adjust your exercise time. This may be too many challenges stacked up against you.





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2015 AT A GLANCE

MOVING
FORWARD
WITH A
LOOK

JANUARY NEW

We started 2015 hoping to encourage and support the community to work on a better you. That included the start of the yearly Biggest Loser competition. Here's our staff heading to work in their new commuter van.



FEBRUARY NEW LOOK

Since the spring of 2013, the NCN has been giving readers an inside look at what's been going on at the centre. We thought it was time for a makeover with our new cover to help bring the stories and information to you.



MAY TRUTH

May marked a portion of the release of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's report on residential schools. The Centre's newsletter examined the impact of the schools on Manitoba's Child and Family Services system.



JUNE HEAT WAVE

A heat wave breaks out in Northern Manitoba, bringing with it scorching temperatures and sparking wildfires and clouds of smoke. The June issue shared warnings and precautions during this



MARCH ANTI- VIOLENCE

This month was dedicated to the anti-violence efforts coinciding with a provincial campaign to educate Aboriginal men. The CFWC held a youth conference about the issue, and helped spread the word about stopping cycles of violence.



JULY PRESS PLAY

By now, NCN members and beyond have already clicked on our new series "Cree Word of the Day" which bridges a gap by spreading traditional culture through modern means. I think it helped even our seasoned Cree speakers brush up on their language skills.



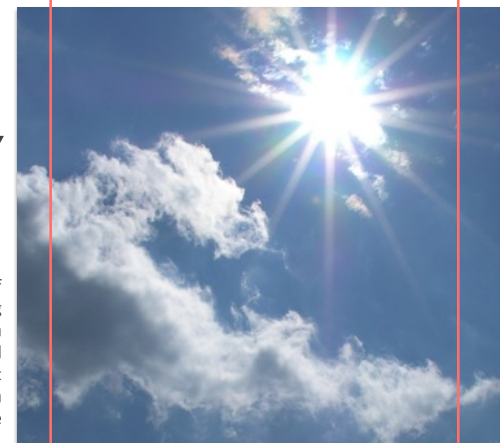
APRIL CUTS

The public gathered at the Centre to share their stories of loved ones who died by cancer. Some people took the extra step and took more than a trim off their long locks in a hair cutting ceremony.



AUGUST SUNNY DAYS

It was the last days of summer, but the rising temperatures from early in the season were still sticking around. The public was reminded to check on their elders during the prolonged heat.



SCHOOL

It was back to class and back to the clinic for many school children. A new school year also meant a visit the Public Health Department for an update on their vaccinations.



OCTOBER SAFE

We're so grateful that NCN members stay alert and take extra precautions during events such as Halloween, when it's important to keep kids safe. Our staff also joins in on some of the Halloween fun every year.



NOVEMBER AGM

While the Centre remembered our ancestors who are honoured every year during Aboriginal Veterans Day, FCWC staff was also doing final preparations for the AGM which was held early in the month.



DECEMBER VIGIL

The holidays are about being with family and friends, but for those who've lost loved ones to homicide, it can be a tough time. The Centre helped honour those loved ones with a vigil in Thompson.



find us on

For the latest on updates, events and information check out the Family & Community Wellness Centre on Facebook.



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About

The Family and Community Wellness Centre was established to support holistic wellness by providing different opportunities to members of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation. The Centre provides services in Public Health, Child and Family Services, Counselling and other family and community needs programs. It has sub-offices in Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson and South Indian Lake.

Vision

Nisichawayasihk Mithwayawin

Mission

In unity, we promote community awareness, empowerment, and a safe environment towards holistic wellness.

***For more information and resources on the FCWC visit us on Facebook and find links to our website.