

Report to the Human Services Integration Forum
Northeast Regional Intersectoral Committee
December 2010

1. Highlights and Areas of Focused Attention

□ **Early Years**

- The 0-3 Years Early Childhood Task Force is an intersectoral group in the northeast whose purpose is providing leadership in raising awareness of the first three years as a foundation for a lifetime of healthy growth and development. The group is led by Kids First Regional Community Developer, Myrna Soonias. A grant through the Community Initiatives Fund enabled the 0-3 Years Early Childhood Task Force to complete a three 3 part project.
 - In Tisdale on November 5th and 6th Dr. Jean Clinton notable Canadian child psychiatrist conducted 3 workshops entitled: “The First R: Relationships How Love Builds Brains.” Over 180 attended from the region and throughout the province. Present a at the workshop were: professionals and service providers in public and mental health, social services, education, Indian Child and Family Services and early learning and child care. Also attending were parents, foster parents and grandparents. Dr. Clinton’s message that we are biologically wired to connect and relationships are the crucial building blocks for the architecture of the brain was extremely well- received.
 - To encourage parents in their role of supporting physical health and cognitive development the Task Force created 500 Book/parent resource and information bags. These will be distributed through the public health nurses at well- baby clinics.
 - In partnership with the Sunrise Health Region Kids First Community Developers 1900 prenatal calendars were published to be distributed through pre-natal classes, doctor’s offices, pharmacies throughout the region.

□ **Food Security**

- The Food For All Coalition is an intersectoral group working together for food security in the northeast. The coalition’s Northeast Saskatchewan states: “Food production is vital to the northeast region of Saskatchewan. Linking the consumer and the producer will strengthen our communities’ self reliance, growth and development.” This summer, the coalition created a Guide to Local Food Producers. Coalition member and Ministry of Agriculture Agrologist, Leroy Bader coordinated a NE Local Food Producer Forum on November 2 and a follow –up event on December 8th with the goal is to encourage the development of a local producers’ organization to market their products.

- **Fort a la Corne Education Development (FCED) Inc.**
 - **FCED** was formed to engage First Nations and Metis people in learning programs that are related to a proposed hydroelectric project near the James Smith Cree Nation. The federal government is funding the two year education development project and Cumberland Regional College has contracted with FCED to provide training through a campus established in Melfort for 100 students. Training programs in Melfort include electrical, welding, carpentry, Natural Resource technology and office education.

2. Challenges and Opportunities

- **Maternal Mental Health**
 - Kelsey Trail Health Region Mental Health and Addictions and Chronic Disease Management depression group are developing an education, screening and treatment strategy for the region. The Kids First Regional Community Developer is a member of the regional committee as well as the Maternal Mental Health provincial committee.
- **Food Security**
 - Local food banks in the region are reporting increased usage. Interagency and integrated services groups are also expressing concern in regards to increasing food insecurity. Communities have responded to the immediate need though community “food raising” to contribute to food bank supplies. Long term solutions are necessary.
- **Affordable suitable housing**
 - Cumberland College Students continue to experience challenges in finding affordable rental housing while pursuing studies. The college website has posted a call for citizens to offer rental accommodation for students attending courses in the area. A number of students attending Melfort based programs for Fort a la Corne Education Development have been housed in a local motel while taking courses because of the lack of affordable rental housing in Melfort.
 - The Northeast Housing Research Project Report commissioned by the RIC was shared with the Tisdale, Melfort and Nipawin municipal councils in June. Evidently the report has been useful. It has since been shared by Melfort City Council at the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities (SUMA) Northeast Regional meeting. The report influenced SUMA director (and mayor of Naicam) Rodger Hayward to lead the drafting of a housing resolution from SUMA. The resolution will be presented at the SUMA convention Jan 30 – Feb 2 requesting levels of government to provide incentives to increase the quantity of affordable rental housing.

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