

Fall 2013



Closer *to* Home

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Uniting vulnerable children, youth & families

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Dear Friends of Closer to Home,

It's the most wonderful time of the year! No, it's not back-to-school season, it's Christmas! And with December fast approaching, we will soon be braving the shopping malls to find that special something for the special people in our lives. For those of you who are already inquiring about how you can help families in need this holiday season, it is finally here: Adopt-a-Family 2013. In this newsletter you will receive information on how to participate in AAF 2013 and much more, including some major renovations in one of our Community Teaching Homes by an amazing group of volunteers, a brand new Aboriginal Program that we are excited to be a part of and National Child Day (November 20, 2013).

Happy Holidays!

Sponsor Energy

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Sponsor Energy is a socially responsible energy company that partners with local charities across Canada to empower their efforts to change the world.

It is simple. You switch your power provider to Sponsor Energy and they donate 50% of their profits from your energy bill to the charity of your choice. They have a list of many local charities to choose from, including Closer to Home. Plus their rates are probably lower than your current energy provider so you can save money at the same time.

Visit their website today for more information on rates and how to sign up www.sponsorenergy.com



Adopt-a-Family 2013 Launch

November 1, 2013

It's the most wonderful time of the year, so get your jingle bell rock on and have yourself a merry little Christmas! No, this is not an advertisement for a classic Christmas compilation CD. It is just a tiny fragment of our Christmas spirit here at Closer to Home and we want to share it with you. And what better way to launch our annual Adopt-a-Family program than to spread the excitement and anticipation we experience each winter as our office is transformed into something reminiscent of Santa's Workshop (minus the elves)!

Every year we run the Adopt-a-Family program and every year we surpass our expectations with the help of generous members of our community who want to spread the Christmas spirit to families who need a helping hand during the holidays. It has been a tough year for many families in Calgary and surrounding communities and it is likely that we will receive more family referrals to the program this year. Last year we were able to help 139 families have a merrier Christmas with the contributions of gifts and grocery gift cards from local individuals, families and businesses. That's a total of 588 people helped, 351 of which were children. That is also a 72.9% increase (from 2011). And we expect those numbers to increase again this year.

We are so lucky to live in such a prosperous city and we know that we will be able to meet the growing need with your amazing support. If you, your family and friends, or your workplace are interested in participating in Closer to Home's Adopt-a-Family 2013 program, you can visit our website at www.closetohome.com for more details and to see our Frequently Asked Questions page and the Donor Application Form. If you have any other questions, you can also email aaf@closetohome.com or call 403-543-0550 ext 251.

*You can adopt a family in need this Christmas!
Sign up today!*

Day of Caring

Teaching Home receives makeover from an amazing group of volunteers

Day of Caring is a United Way project aimed at pairing groups of volunteers from businesses in our community with local non-profit agencies to complete projects that the agency may not otherwise have the resources to do. Imperial Oil Ltd. is one of the businesses in Calgary that has been participating in Days of Caring for years. Closer to Home was fortunate to be chosen as a recipient of support with much needed renovations to one of our Community Teaching Homes, which houses 5 youth and 2 Teaching Parents.

Dennis Pinco, a technician with Imperial Oil Ltd., has been overseeing projects like this for more than 25 years. "Imperial Oil has completed 35 Day of Caring projects so far this year and has 15 upcoming projects. I organize one of these projects and there are many other volunteers that organize each project," says Dennis who likes to work on these because they unearth his inner handy-man. "I find it fun. I have been doing handy-man stuff and renovations for several years and enjoy helping and showing others how to do some of this stuff themselves."

The renovations project was executed on September 11th and 12th and engaged approximately 50 volunteers over two days, with the overall budget being about \$7,600.00.

Dennis is also a fan of the reactions of the Teaching Home's youth when the finished product is unveiled.

Achievement Place One (AP1) is the Community Teaching Home that received the makeover. The home is currently vacant with a planned move in day in the middle of November. By the time moving day arrives, the decorating, (phase 2 of Day of Caring) will already be complete. The decorating crew is scheduled to be on location November 5th and will be creating a warm and comfortable living space for the kids who are about to call it home.

On behalf of those kids and everyone at Closer to Home, thank you to Imperial Oil Ltd. and all the people who volunteered their time to transform this space with an essential makeover.



Visit our website www.closertohome.com in a few weeks to see pictures of the transformation and the finished project

National Child Day

November 20, 2013



Each year on November 20th the world celebrates Universal Children's Day to promote every child's right to be healthy, safe, protected and heard. This day was an initiative of the United Nations' (UN) in 1954 and has been adopted and adapted by nations around the globe. In Canada we call it National Child Day and have been proud promoters of what it stands for since 1993.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child consists of 4 fundamental values that align well with Closer to Home's own organizational vision and values. They are:

- That every child has basic rights to safety, food and shelter, and must be protected without discrimination of race, ethnicity or ability.
- That all decisions impacting children must take into account what is best for them.
- That every child should be protected from harm and receive needed support to grow and develop to their full potential.
- That all children should have their voices heard, and that their needs and views should be taken seriously.

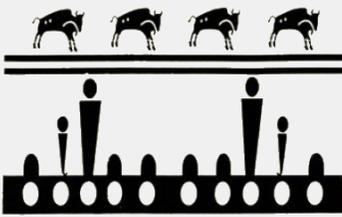
Our children are shaped by their surroundings: their families, their culture and their communities. They are constantly growing and learning and every child has unlimited potential that should be supported and celebrated! Celebrate the children in your life, not just on November 20th, but every day!

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Attend a special event with a child.
- Send a card to a child, caregiver or teacher in honour of the day.
- Share a book or story with a child.
- Ask a child for advice.
- Donate time or money to a children's charity.
- Consider ways you can make your community a better place for children.

To learn more about Closer to Home's organizational mission, vision and values, visit our website at www.closertohome.com

To learn more about the UN Declaration or Convention on the Rights of the Child visit the UN website at www.un.org/en/events/childrenday



EE-DES-SPOOM-OOH-SOOP CTH launches new Aboriginal Services program

Ee-Des-Spoom-Ooh-Soop (EDSOS). In the Blackfoot language means “*The environment that gives opportunity to guide our lives forward in a positive direction.*” This is the name of the new Aboriginal Services program that started on September 1, 2013 at Closer to Home (CTH).

The name was given to the program at a special Naming Ceremony facilitated by Elders Leonard Bastien, former Chief, and Grant Little Mustache, Ceremonialist Elder, both from the Piikani Nation and members of the Blackfoot Confederation of Alberta and Montana.

The purpose of the program is to help strengthen the skillsets of the urban Aboriginal population. “The goal is to identify families in the community that are at risk but not to the level where they have already come into contact with Child and Family Services. Our goal is to find those families or individuals and to help them develop skillsets *before* they come to the attention of Child and Family Services.” Kandi Santerno, Aboriginal Services Manager at CTH continues “I think for the people that attend, it means a space and an opportunity for them to learn skills that they’ll need to be successful, and a safe place for them to share information with each other, to learn from each other’s experiences and to make some goals to move forward, in a direction that is more positive, with their new skillsets.”

Marsha Hanson, EDSOS Program Facilitator, hopes to achieve healing for the families and individuals who attend the workshops and events. “We help them develop cultural awareness so they become more connected to their culture and proud of who they are. We help families learn, grow, find strength within their community and become leaders in their family.”

The following is a list of workshops within the EDSOS program:

- **Healing Circles** – an opportunity for individuals to get together to talk about struggles they have had and to help each other problem solve, overcome and move past those struggles (held every Wednesday).
- **Elder Support** – can be within the group or individually. Marsha and an Elder meet with the family/individual to identify goals that they want to achieve, such as increasing positive parenting skills, life skills, and spiritual goals, such as connecting to their culture.
- **Traditional Teaching** – ranges from traditional parenting techniques to customs and protocol for going into ceremony. It reflects the way of life of the First Nations population.
- **Traditional Ceremonies** – Traditional Teaching is done prior to a ceremony so that everyone is clear on the protocol, what they should wear, who they should bring, etc. Traditional Ceremonies encompass Sharing Circles, Sweats and Prayer Ceremonies.
- **Life Skills** – includes everything from budgeting to nutrition; general life skills to enrich the lives of the families.
- **Positive Parenting Skills** – Using the Teaching-Family Model, the Facilitator teaches the parents how to reinforce their children when they are doing well and how to address inappropriate behaviour in a positive way.
- **Aboriginal Arts and Crafts** – features workshops on traditional beading, drum making and moccasin making.
- **Traditional Dance and Drumming** – CTH connects families to these events such as the upcoming Tiny Tots Pow Wow and Round Dance, to name a few.

About 50% of the families who have participated have already been involved in CTH programs like Kiwehtata (Aboriginal Parenting Program for families with children under 3) or Healthy Families (for new parents of newborns). “Attendance has been pretty good so far. We’ve held one *Stiletto to Moccasins* workshop, one *Big Smoke* and one *Cultural Teaching* with one of the Elders to name a few, and altogether we’ve had about 15 attendees so far,” says Kandi. Attendees must be of Aboriginal descent and urban (living in the city). They can be referred through CFSA or other agencies, or they may sign up to the program directly. The workshops and classes will be held at Pekewe House, the CTH office and other venues within the community.

CTH would like to thank Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, The Calgary Foundation and Canadian Heritage for funding this program. We would also like to thank the Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative (CUAI) for its continued support and partnership.

For more information on the program and how to sign up, please contact Marsha Hanson at mhanson@closerhome.com or call 403-615-8598.



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Donor Appreciation

Closer to Home would like to recognize our supporters from the last quarter
(July 1, 2013 - September 30, 2013)

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- Calgary Currie Constituency
- Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank
- Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church
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Does Closer to Home have your permission to publish your name in the Donor Recognition section of CTH publications such as our quarterly newsletter and Annual Report? Yes No

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