

Native Women's Association of the N.W.T.

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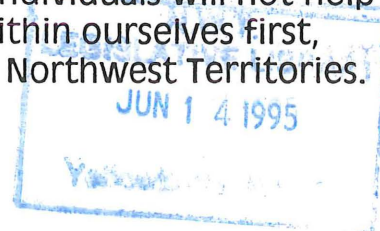
PUBLIC STATEMENT: 19th Annual General Meeting

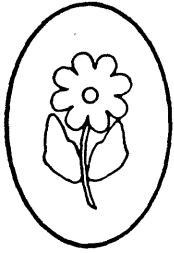
Delegates representing 34 communities gathered in Fort Norman for the 19th Annual General Meeting. They brought their concerns and willingness to start building healthy and safe communities in the N.W.T.

Reflecting the Vision Statement of the Association, training and education for the native women and families, the delegates expressed their concerns in the following areas:

1. We must begin making changes ourselves by first admitting that our communities have become dysfunctional over the generations;
2. We must encourage our political and community leaders who are in an unhealthy lifestyle to practice traditional healing methods, treatment programs, and to seek guidance from elders;
3. We urge the Department of Health and Social Services to use culturally relevant methods and resources in the health care system for both providers or receivers of health care;
4. We must develop and deliver traditional healing programs involving both youth and elders in the communities;
5. We urge communities and government to work together in the areas of treatment and recovery for solvent, drug and alcohol abuse; and
6. We urge our Aboriginal leaders at all levels of government to abstain from gambling, drugs and alcohol.

The community delegates sent strong messages that healing begins within ourselves as individuals. They encourage individuals in the communities to deal with their own issues which will lead to healthy leadership. Blaming and criticizing governments, organizations, or individuals will not help us to build safe communities. Work must begin within ourselves first, families next, then communities and finally the Northwest Territories.





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RESOLUTIONS PASSED DURING The 19TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FORT NORMAN, NT MAY 16-18, 1995

1. Whereas our communities have, over the generations, become dysfunctional;

And whereas we, as Aboriginal people, have to make changes for our children and ourselves;

And whereas we need to learn and relearn parenting skills, inner child workshops, healing from sexual abuse and solvent, alcohol and drug and gambling, recovery, grieving and healing and spirituality.

Therefore be it resolved that each community work toward delivering workshops in our communities

An further be it resolved that we utilize our community resources in delivering these workshops and resources are not available, we access training from our community people to be able to provide workshops. Through Dene Cultural Institute, fundraising, treatment centres, healing centres, friendship centres, 12-step programs, talking circles, healing circles, traditional healers, churches, the land, focus on healing and grieving.

2. Where as there is concern regarding the unhealthy state of the political leaders of the NWT.

And Whereas we have traditional healing methods in each of our Aboriginal cultures

Whereas, the people of the NWT are making progress in their lives, there is a concern regarding the unhealthy state of the political leaders of the NWT

And Whereas they also need to start using the resource, practising traditional healing methods, such as fasting for clear direction and

commitment to those they serve, attending treatment programs, seeking guidance from elders, or taking the time to work on weaknesses and humility in a traditional way.

3. Whereas there are many social problems within our communities

And whereas fiscal restraint means less money for program development and delivery

And whereas we have many resources within our communities and ourselves that we can offer

And whereas music and dances are part of our culture

And whereas music and dance are recognized traditional healing methods

And whereas we have the talent in our communities to deliver this traditional healing methods,

Therefore be it resolved that we encourage and volunteer for music and dance therapy for all people in our communities, that we bring the elders, the adults, and the youth together by encouraging jigging, square dancing, fiddling and drumming groups.

4. Whereas our communities have many health problems;

And whereas many resources are available in the area of general health services

And whereas HIV/AIDS is becoming a major problem among our people

And whereas there are few resources to assist people, both physically and mentally, who are HIV/AIDS infected;

Therefore be it resolved that we urge the Department of Health and Social services to provide information on HIV/AIDS in a manner that is culturally relevant

And further be it resolved that we work at the community level to gain knowledge to be able to provide support to our people suffering from HIV/AIDS via support meetings, developing, and

distributing information and workshops that help alleviate fear and alienation of infected people.

5. Whereas the young people of our communities need programs to teach them positive life styles and healing;

And whereas our healthy elders have many gifts to offer all of our people and traditional healing

And whereas it is recognized that we must develop and deliver effective programs to support all members of our communities

Therefore be it resolved that we all work to develop and deliver traditional healing programs in our communities involving our youth and elders

And further be it resolved that we begin by delivering an "on the land" for youth and healthy elders; and will include sharing of traditional values and healing, storytelling, respect for the land and each other, and drum making.

6. Whereas many of our people have attended recovery programs for solvent drug and alcohol abuse;

And whereas there are few resources in our communities to be provided to people in recovery and their families upon their return

And whereas the existing resources are not used effectively

Therefore be it resolved that the Native women's Association of the NWT urge communities and government to work together to best utilize resources to support people and their families in recovery and to provide follow up services through alcohol and drug workers, social workers, counsellors, treatment centres, the land, spiritual leaders, talking circles, health centres, and healing workshops.

7. Whereas the native people are working towards leading healthier lifestyles;

And whereas here is a concern regarding the gambling, alcohol and drug abuse among the Aboriginal leaders of the NWT

Therefore be it resolved that the Native Women's Association of the NWT urge our Aboriginal leaders at all levels of government to abstain from gambling, drugs and alcohol.

