



Aklavik Community Wellness Plan

Introduction

In December of 2012, members from the community met with Sabrina Broadhead, Team Leader, Community Wellness Planning with the Department of Health and Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories. The meeting was to present information on the initiative for the Department of Health and Social Services to engage with community leadership and residents in the development of community wellness plans. Sabrina presented information on the Health and Social Services Funding update in the three Clusters:

- Healthy Living and Disease Prevention
- Healthy Child and Youth Development
- Mental Wellness and Addictions

Sabrina presented options of how the community will approach on the development of a Wellness Plan, and the community members made the decision to work on this through the Hamlet of Aklavik. SAO, Evelyn Storr and Recreation Coordinator Dean McLeod will take the lead on this. This decision was strongly supported based on the fact that the skills of those involved are strong and it will also keep the funds in the community.

This initial meeting was a success and was attended by the following people:

Dean McLeod	Recreation Coordinator, Hamlet of Aklavik
Dean Arey	Board member, Aklavik Community Corporation
Rachel Munday	Nurse in Charge, Susie Husky Health Centre
Sheila C. Greenland	Teacher, Moose Kerr School
Jessica Eastman	Teacher, Moose Kerr School
Roxanne Dreilich	Corporal, RCMP
Rhonda John	Elders Program
Gladys Edwards	CHR, Susie Husky Health Centre
Sarah Ann Poliquin	Coordinator, Child Development Centre
Diane Archie	Community Development, IRC
Matilda DeBastien	Community Wellness, GTC

It is because of the vision, dedication of this group of people and the assistance of Sabrina that the Hamlet of Aklavik is on its ways to developing a Community Wellness Plan with funding provided by the Department of Health and Social Services through a contribution agreement with the Hamlet of Aklavik.

Aklavik Community Profile

The Hamlet of Aklavik is located on the Peel channel of the Mackenzie River Delta 113 km south of the Arctic Coast. The majority of Aklavik's population is aboriginal. Aklavik is unique in that the population is made up of Gwichin, Inuvialuit and other. Aklavik is governed by three leadership groups: Aklavik Community Corporation for the Inuvialuit, Aklavik Indian Band for the Gwichin and the Hamlet of Aklavik for the community as a whole. Each of these governing bodies has the ability to access funds to provide for the needs of their membership. Traditionally, Gwichin and Inuvialuit gathered in Aklavik to trade for goods and in 1912 the Hudson's Bay Company set up a post across the channel to trade for furs. Today, Aklavik is accessible by air, barge or winter ice roads. Winter ice road access is normally available from December until April, which is the ideal time for local stores to stock up on everything from groceries to building material and equipment for hunting, trapping and fishing.

Unemployment is an issue in Aklavik. People that are employed are employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories, Hamlet of Aklavik, Aklavik Housing Association, land claim agencies and the local stores. The Aklavik has a local contractor who employees people on a seasonal basis in the area of heavy equipment operators and truck drivers.

Aklavik offers education from kindergarten to grade 12. Although graduation rates have increased, students are not graduating with the appropriate education levels to enter postsecondary education institutions.

Crime rates seem to be going down and any time that there is an increase it is usually related to the involvement of alcohol and drugs. Whenever there are big events going on in Aklavik it is promoted that anyone under the influence of alcohol and drugs will not be able to participate, this is supported by the local RCMP members getting more involved in monitoring these events.

Preserving and promoting the culture is important to the people of Aklavik. Aklavik continues to host many traditional events and the promotion of language is important.

Aklavik is very fortunate to have an active Hamlet Council as well as a number of active community groups who get involved with community activities and events and as well supports many youth initiatives especially in the area of sports. With the help of these committees and the dedication of the Hamlet to implement this Community Wellness Plan, these issues and concerns can be addressed in a positive and healthy manner.

SAO, Evelyn Storr, Recreation Director, Dean McLeod and Youth Worker, Mary Gordon organized focus group sessions with the elders, leadership, youth and the community as a whole with the invite going out to all agencies and organizations.

Each focus group was presented with the information for the Community Wellness Planning Engagement Project:

- Community Wellness Plans are an opportunity for communities to decide for themselves where wellness funding should be directed.
- The intention is to move away from single-year funding for specific wellness projects toward more flexible, multi-year arrangements in which funding can be directed toward community-specific wellness issues.
- Communities will no longer apply for funding through 7 separate programs. Federal funding will be allocated based on plans for use in 3 clusters:
 1. Healthy Living and Disease Prevention
 2. Health Child and Youth Development
 3. Mental Wellness and Addictions
- The changes in the funding framework mean that multiyear funding agreements will be in place; this will require less reporting and increased opportunity for long term planning activities.
- While the initial focus of community wellness plans will be built around federal wellness funding, in the long term community wellness plans should incorporate as much community based social program funding as possible.
- Community input and engagement in the development of wellness programs is critical to success in addressing health and social issues.
- The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to assisting communities in the development of their community wellness plans. Departmental assistance to communities will be provided in collaboration with regional Health and Social Service Authorities.
- Communities are asked to start from scratch to build their plans, it is anticipated that recent planning documents will be reviewed and the public engaged to answer the following questions:
 1. Where are we now?
 2. What do we have to work with?
 3. Where do we want to be?
 4. How do we get there?

Where are we now?

It was very hard to get the discussion going so the question was asked what do we have in Aklavik right now

Elder's comments:

We have many programs:

- Nutrition North
- Prenatal Program
- Brighter Futures
- Diabetes Program
- Youth Centre Initiative
- Sport and Recreation
- Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth
- Community Justice Program
- Community Recreation
- Homelessness Programs: i.e. Soup kitchen
- Elders Horizons for Senior Day Programs

Leadership Comments:

- Ages 21-30 there seems to be more issues with drinking etc. and this can be due to a lack of proper direction
- There is a loss of cultural and traditional values
- High unemployment
- Too many policy restrictions when people want to apply for funding for education purposes
- Education delivery is failing students because of social passing

Youth Comments:

- We have lots of after school sports and on the land programs
- Nutrition North Programs
- Take a Kid trapping
- North Games
- Square dancing
- Drum Dancing
- Curling, volleyball, hockey, baseball
- Lots of opportunities to travel outside the community, region
- Junior Rangers
- Students on Ice
- Dream Catchers
- Horton River Leadership Program
- Parks Canada Programs
- Northern Youth Abroad

What do we have to work with?

Elders Comments:

- Adequate facilities
- Good access for supplies and materials to deliver programs
- Good facilitators, instructors, program coordinators, cook
- Good volunteers that are committed
- Great recreation department
- Positive partnerships
- Desire by residents to do well
- Strong traditional and cultural values

Leadership comments:

- Leadership review the comments made by the elders and commented but did not have anything more to add

Youth comments:

- Social networking, cell phone service
- Spot locators for when they are out on the land

Where do we want to be in the future?

Elders comments:

Have sustainable funding for all programs

Multiyear core funding

To be a healthier community with healthy residents

Strive to provide healthy choices for the residents

To be committed and consistent in program delivery]

Improve social, economic factors in program delivery ie: Housing, community gardens

Community beautification

To maintain positive self esteem and pride in the community

Expand on existing facilities to build and allow for culturally relevant activities

Capacity building to ensure effective program delivery

Leadership comments:

Increase access to getting traditional food through organized community hunts and harvesting

To see more local people in Government positions

Leadership to be involved with identifying community positions and be involved with hiring

Sustainable community both socially and economically

After care programs- local treatment programs and support for residents re: grieving, health

Local detox centre

Spirituality issues and needs: this can be a sensitive issue so it can be addressed in the vision and mission statement of the plan

Youth comments:

To be successful

Independent, clean and responsible

Clean health

Educated

Working, find jobs

Be in a position to give back to the community

Year round access to Willow River and eventually to the Dempster Highway

How do we get there?

Elders comments:

- Be vocal and get involved: speak to leaders**
- Support and encourage the youth, through the people that are delivering the programs**
- Funding for adequate resources**
- Support for these resources**
- Encourage volunteerism**
- Input into well design programs**
- Have commitment from funders to recognize the uniqueness of each community wellness plan**
- Support community leadership**
- Have a Wellness coordinator/Administrator**
- We have to integrate life skills into the school curriculum at the elementary level**

Leadership comments:

- Ongoing assessments and research to validate success and monitoring of the wellness plan**

Youth comments:

- Keep trying even if you fail**
- Finish school and further your education by attending colleges and university**
- Have more community and regional tournaments in other communities**
- Stay politically active**
- Have a school counselor**
- Have photography workshops**
- Have safety courses for youth to prepare them for the work force**
- Have an active youth committee**

When the meeting was held with the community as a whole all the focus group comments were put in four areas focusing on the four questions and the following additional comments were added and in no particular order:

- Revive the traditional games
- Elders feel good when they get involved
- Would like to see agencies get involved by doing home visits to see what people are really dealing with
- We need to start recognizing the success of our residents
- Group of people between the youth and elders are a high risk
- Comment on integrating life skills to “re-integrating as it was helpful when we were in school
- Under spirituality it was suggested to put Values & Beliefs, honor, respect

**THIS SECTION CONTAINS THE BRIEF MINUTES OF ATTENDANCE AT THE FOCUS GROUPS AND
PRIORITIES FOR EACH GROUP:**

Elders Meeting

Tuesday, March 19th, 2013

Florence Furlong

Knute Hansen

Bob Buckle

Renee Biancolin Child/Youth Family Counselor

Eliza Greenland

Evelyn Storr

Dean McLeod

Mary Gordon

Evelyn Storr acted as the facilitator

Elders Priorities

1. Have sustainable funding
2. Life skills included with elementary school curriculum
3. Capacity building

Leadership Meeting

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Richard Storr

Hamlet Council

Billy Archie

ACC/ Hamlet Council

Lisa Norris

Renee Biancolin Child/Youth Family Counselor

Lorna Storr

Evelyn Storr

Dean McLeod

Mary Gordon

Evelyn Storr acted as the facilitator

Leadership Priorities

1. High unemployment
2. Sustainable community
3. Assessment & research to monitor plan

Youth Meeting

Thursday, March 21, 2013

Tara Lee Wedzin

Riley Furlong

Jessie O Pascal

Andrew Archie

Arnold Archie

Tyson Whitbread

Lyle Storr

Courtney Charlie

Ocean McLeod

Alicia Nickson

Deanna McLeod

Vicki Dykes

Bart Kalata

Renee Biancolin Child/Youth Family Counselor

Evelyn Storr

Dean McLeod

Mary Gordon

Evelyn Storr acted as the facilitator

**Public Meeting
March 25, 2013**

Facilitators: Evelyn Storr, Dean McLeod, Mary Gordon

In attendance:

Anna Lee McLeod	Deanna McLeod	Carol D. Arey
Roxanne Drielich (RCMP)	Florence Furlong	Lorna Storr
Kasey Arey	Renee Biancolin	Monica Arey
Annie B. Gordon	Faith Gordon	Jimmy John Meyook
Taylor McLeod	Madison McLeod	Nellie Arey
Mary Rinas	Agnes Tardiff	

An opening prayer was done and blessing for the meal.

Evelyn Storr presented the information on the Community Wellness planning process and also information from the focus group meetings. She explained that after the open discussion on what people wanted to add that everyone would have the opportunity to go to each of the four questions and prioritize their areas of concern. She explained that this can be done with the stickers that were available on each table.

Some of the additional comments were:

Carol D. Arey commented that the Justice Committee hosted 3 elder/youth day camps which was a success. She stated that she received calls from elders that participated and it made them feel alive again to go out. The elders shared traditional games with the youth. It was very good to see the elders and youth socializing out on the land.

Annie B. Gordon stated that the youth feel left out in what goes on. She suggested that the social workers should do home visits to see what the youth and their clients are actually going through at home. She suggested that elders and community members do on the land treatment programs instead of sending them out to treatment facilities.

The community needs good support groups for those that want to make a change in their lives.

Anna Lee McLeod commented that we should use our local facilities and programs as it is no good to send people away from the community. She suggested that we should have a hall of fame and take pictures of success stories and start recognizing those stories and the people involved. She also commented that the traditional and cultural games, dancing etc. should be revived.

Community priorities:

Where are we now?

- Education - delivery failing students , social passing not working
Policy restrictions to further their education- denied funding
- High unemployment
- Area of concern for ages 21-30- lack of direction, alcohol usage, lost of cultural and traditional values

What do we have to work with?

There were no additional comments in this area from the community, they supported what was listed from the focus group meeting

Where do we want to be in the future?

- Year round access to Willow River and eventually to the Dempster Highway
- Spirituality in the area of respect for beliefs, honor, values
- To be healthier community and have sustainable funding for wellness programs
- After care programs and have local treatment programs
- Expand on existing facilities to allow for culturally relevant activities
- Improve social, economic factors in program delivery
- To be committed and consistent in program delivery
- Capacity building to ensure effective program delivery
- To be independent and successful
- More local people in Government positions

How do we get there?

- Integrate life skills into the school at the elementary level
- Finish school and go on to post secondary institutions
- Have a Wellness Coordinator/Administrator
- Support and encourage the youth and people that are delivering programs
- Have funding for resources
- Encourage and support volunteerism

Moving forward

The community will meet again to develop the Vision and Mission statement for this plan and will develop an actual work plan once funding has been secured for implementation. The plan will be a working document and be a reference for future programs and services to the residents.

This document will be presented to leadership for their support and approval.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to our staff, Evelyn Storr, Dean McLeod ,Mary Gordon and the youth, elders, leadership , community members and Sabrina Broadhead from Health and social Services for assisting us with this project.