



*Institute for the
Advancement of Aboriginal Women*

Annual Report

APRIL 1, 2016 - MARCH 31, 2017



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Presidents Message

Last year has brought good changes to our organization which assured us that the new government has set a new path it must follow to bring about meaningful change. Although we continue to hear the women's stories and the terrible tragedies that continue to happen, I have hope for the future.

Our formal partnership with the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) has marked our involvement in the Justice system. This system as you are aware, has proven itself extremely prejudicial toward Indigenous women.

As shown in the Cindy Gladue/Bradley Barton Appeal, Angela Cardinal case, and the forced resignation of Justice Camp, we have been successful at the getting the voice of Indigenous women to the courts as a joint intervener.

We await and prepare for our involvement in this Federal Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, although we see serious flaws in the administration.

We look forward to a brighter future for Ingenuous women and girls because of the strong women who have gone before us. To quote Rose Yellow Feet, from the south, who was giving us advice: "... As Aboriginal women, we have mountains to climb, rest if you must, but never give up! ..." She never gave up and we must never give up! Rose inspired us and many others to take up the challenge.

We are entirely grateful to our Circle of Honour Elders, now and through the years, as they have given us so much. In times of distress, we look to each other for strength and support. We must honour ourselves and the thousands of Missing and Murdered women and girls to finally stop the killings.

Respectively submitted, Muriel Stanley Venne C.M.B.A. (Hon.)





Organizational Profile

The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) recognizes the role, value, and achievements of Indigenous women in society and raises awareness around the challenges and obstacles faced by Indigenous women. Major strategies to improve opportunities for Indigenous women include: training and support services to achieve social inclusion; empowerment and independence; and economic and social security.

The IAAW is a non-profit organization with its head office in Edmonton and outreach to several Chapter communities throughout Alberta. The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) values the support and partnerships of its' 500 individual and corporate members. To honour and ensure long lasting cooperative relationships, the IAAW operates on the following philosophy:

- ▶ *Open and transparent decision-making processes*
- ▶ *Building the capacity and independence of both individuals and communities*
- ▶ *Established evaluative reporting procedures*
- ▶ *Administrative accountability and financial reporting are based on the principles of transparency and disclosure during the delivery of IAAW projects, services, and programs are developed by and for Alberta's Indigenous Women and are open to all First Nations, Métis, Inuit Women, and their families. Projects are specifically dedicated to Indigenous Women living on and off the reserves, on and off settlement lands, and within rural and urban settings. The IAAW is a non-profit organization with its head office in Edmonton and outreach to several Chapter communities throughout Alberta.*

Mandate of the Organization

Is to recognize and promote the leadership of Indigenous Women in the province of Alberta. To be actively involved, and to assist Indigenous Women to establish local representative groups, and to develop relationships which promote human rights and dignity for Indigenous Women and their families, and to address economic, social, cultural, and political issues of concern at the provincial, federal, and international levels and as they impact Indigenous Women in their communities.

Incorporation Information

- A. *Scope of Territory: Provincial/Territorial*
- B. *Incorporation Information: Non-Profit Society*
- C. *Charitable Status: Not registered as a Charitable Organization*
- D. *Date of Incorporation: September 29, 1995*



Objectives of the Organization

The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women is a vital resource for the Indigenous community and the public. Our Objectives are:

1. To establish, develop, and deliver educational programs and services that promote positive relationships.
2. With guidance from all our Elders, we recognize and respect the spiritual and the sacred nature of the role of women within Indigenous culture and traditions.
3. To develop and deliver support services to build the individual capacity of Indigenous women, their families, and communities.
4. To achieve "Social Justice" for Indigenous women by:
 - ▶ Research and development of resource materials
 - ▶ Identify opportunities to participate in policy development and decision making with the municipal, provincial, and federal governments
 - ▶ Challenge and eradicate discrimination of Indigenous women
5. Recognize and respect Indigenous women through celebrating their strengths and achievements.
6. To establish a forum and network for Indigenous women to exchange information and experiences.
7. To create an Indigenous Women's Centre in collaboration with other partners to increase the skills and abilities of Indigenous Women.
8. To establish a social enterprise facility that provides Indigenous women the opportunity to become self-sufficient.
9. To build collaborative relationships with like-minded organizations to advance Indigenous Women's issues.

Structure of IAAW

A BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- ▶ Muriel Stanley Venne C.M B.A (Hon) President & Founder, Edmonton
- ▶ Marggo Pariseau , Edmonton Vice President
- ▶ Martha Campiou, Edmonton Secretary
- ▶ Irene V. Loutitt, Wetaskiwin Treasurer (on leave)
- ▶ Vi Marten, Fort Chipewyan Director
- ▶ Josie Nepinak, Calgary Director
- ▶ Lisa Weber, Sherwood Park Director



Annual General Gathering 2016



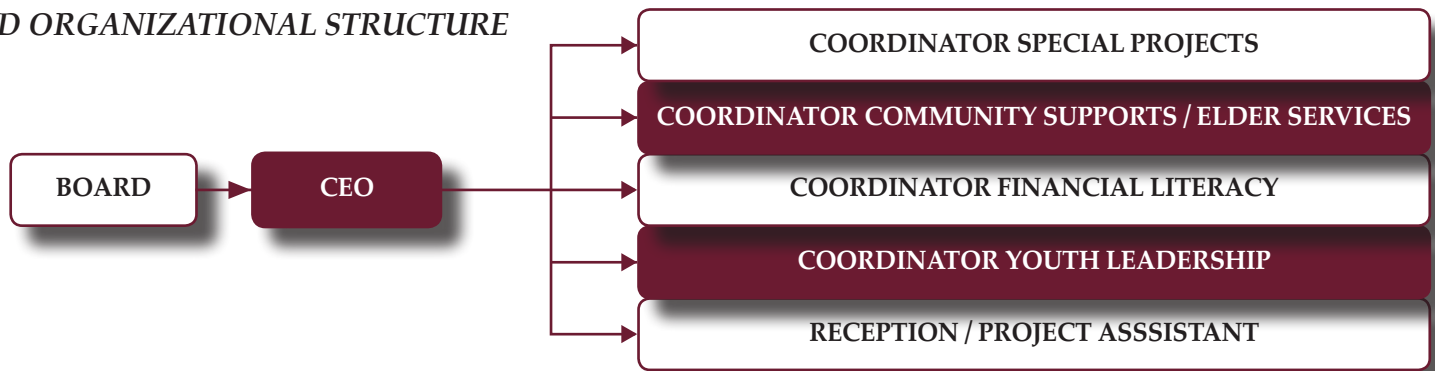
B IAAW CIRCLE OF HONOUR ELDERS:

- ▶ Mary Brown, Slave Lake
- ▶ Lorretta Bowen, Edmonton
- ▶ Myrtle Calahason, Edmonton
- ▶ Nellie Carlson, Edmonton
- ▶ Alma Desjarlais, High Prairie
- ▶ Cora Fedyk, Red Deer
- ▶ Marion Le Rat, Calgary
- ▶ Elsie Paul, Edmonton
- ▶ Lorraine Savard, Edmonton

C IAAW MEMBERSHIP:

The 'Request for Membership' form is available on all IAAW Brochures. A payment of \$25.00 is requested, however there is a subsidized rate of \$10 and should the individual not have the funds, the membership cost is waived.

D ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Community Outreach

IAAW provides services to groups of Indigenous women on request. In the past three years we have worked in the following communities: Calgary, Edmonton, Enoch, Ermineskin Cree Nation, Fort McKay First Nation, Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan, High Prairie Metis Settlement, High Level, Lac La Biche, and Lethbridge. Through the annual Esquao Awards, the IAAW has a connection to over 400 past recipients in over 90 communities in Alberta.

Services provided include:

- ▶ Short term workshops and training sessions on topics
- ▶ Referrals and connection to services they might not be aware of
- ▶ Networking and support services to women who would like to start community development activities in their area.



Leadership Development

Esquao Leadership Development Program

Although Indigenous women have accomplished a great deal, the IAAW recognized that an important part of community success is building new community leaders. The Esquao Leadership Development Program was developed to expand on the previous great work done by the IAAW. Therefore, in an effort to increase communication skills and improve opportunities for Indigenous women to become involved in a leadership role, our mandate is to:

- ▶ *Increase the participation of Indigenous women in their communities through mentorship, training, and intergenerational exchange*
- ▶ *Prepare young women for future leadership roles in their communities, or for participation in leadership activities such as serving on boards and committees*
- ▶ *Build confidence and foresight for young Indigenous women to utilize their leadership capabilities in partnered community service activities*

The Esquao Leadership Development Program was offered in partnership with the Amiskwaciy Academy. We received funding for this project from the City of Edmonton

The program uses a holistic approach that included community development, capacity building, technology, and relationships with our elders, as well as outreach participation with our partners. Program design focused on knowledge and a demonstration of leadership skills among participants. Increased awareness was also an objective: this included increasing awareness about the opportunities available to become involved in local community activities and among the various Indigenous community project partners.

Train the Trainer

Young Indigenous Women's Leadership and Empowerment Program

The IAAW hosted a four-day training workshop with a number of community partners and in collaboration with the University of Alberta, the RCMP, Dr. Nicolette Tufel-Shone from the University of Arizona. The Train the Trainer project provided follow-up support to the participants in an effort to reinforce their training and to support them as they attempt to get a youth focused program started in their community. Some of the communities that sent representatives are: Slave Lake, Lac La Biche, Hinton, and Calgary. The topics included, lively panel discussions as well as hands-on skill building exercises for designing and delivering youth leadership programs in their community.

The three main objectives for this project were completed and achieved:

1. Share IAAW's young women's empowerment and training program and camp
2. Facilitate and solidify partnerships to increase success for young Indigenous girls
3. Build networks of support for IAAW, other agencies, and young girls

Participant Testimony

"We received lots of useful information! Super excited to get back and implement all these ideas. I would like to have copies of all the PowerPoint presentations- the presenters were amazing! I wish our agency's youth representative could have been here. Also would have liked to have more 'movement' in the sessions. Sitting so long was getting uncomfortable. The icebreaker activities were fun. Enjoyed meeting such nice people – so many powerful Aboriginal women – was very empowering! Also loved meeting the beautiful young women from Arizona – and enjoyed having the time to spend with my co-worker and getting to know her better as well. Really appreciated the amazing hosts, and the time they took to organize these four days. I appreciate all they did and this time together. My mind is full with a million ideas – so much good info! Thank you all!!"



Youth Leadership and Empowerment Camp - July 24 - 28, 2016

In the past couple years, the IAAW and our partners, have discussed various ways to create awareness on the topic of: Increasing Safety for Indigenous Women. The overall decision was a Youth Empowerment Camp. The violence against Indigenous women and girls is a reality; the leadership camp was designed to provide the young people with the skills that would assist them in helping to end the plight, of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls by encouraging them to put their own sense of well being, self esteem, and safety first.

The main components of the camp were:

1. *Healthy Self*
2. *Building Confidence*
3. *Safety Awareness*
4. *Relationships*

Principles of the camp were to:

- ▶ *Infuse cultural teachings into daily educational components by having three Elders participate in most of the activities*
- ▶ *Attract young women who were vulnerable, possibly in foster care or group care*
- ▶ *Ensure an alcohol and drug free environment - maintain close relationship with the local police*
- ▶ *Employ staff and support persons who are compassionate, yet firm*
- ▶ *Keep participants active throughout the day and allow time to debrief at the nighttime campfire*
- ▶ *Supply healthy meals and snacks*

Schedule

The curriculum included guest speakers, peer-to-peer discussions, exercise, and fortunately, both outside and indoor team building. The day started at 9:15 am and finished at about 9:00 pm.

Supplies

Participants were given a pillow, pillowcase, and sleeping bag if they needed it. A care package of toiletries, writing materials, a blanket for the campfire and a backpack were provided to all seven participants. Many of the items were donated from our community partners.

Participants (# - Age)

- ▶ *1=12 years*
- ▶ *2=13 years*
- ▶ *3=15 years*
- ▶ *1=16 years*

Staff & Resource Persons

- ▶ *Bernadette Swanson – Main facilitator, experienced with young people, especially those with FASD/ADHD, group leader*
- ▶ *Donna Akhimnachie – Social Work Graduate and co-group leader*
- ▶ *Sissy Thiessen – Youth Leadership Coordinator*
- ▶ *Michelle Nievadomy – Zumba, yoga and recreational activities with cultural teaching infused, group leader*
- ▶ *Elder services – Elsie Paul, Cathy, Thelma*
- ▶ *Volunteers (8) Total Hours 148. Duties included helping to pack supplies, cook and prepare meals, and activities. Thank you Fran Hyndman, Erin MacGregor*

Guest Facilitators

Jennifer McGregor, painting; Linda Whitebear, Aura Cleansing; Cst Clayton Bird, Cst. Gillian Dunn, Cst. Colleen Skyrpan, RCMP presentation on Gangs; Caura & Jaimie Wood, Self Defence; and Susan Goerz-Wilden, Corrections Canada -Emotions that put you at risk.



Financial Literacy

IAAW has integrated financial education into all its' programs, as it is important to building confidence and as a key component of our major poverty-reduction strategy. Workshops and support services are delivered 'by request' in the community.

Empower U

Financial Independence Training

Empower U is a collaboration between 12 organizations in Edmonton. It combines financial literacy programs with a 2:1 matched savings component. This means every dollar saved by group participants is matched by two dollars from Corporate/Philanthropic sponsors. Empower U at IAAW is delivered to Indigenous women over 18 years to refine and develop new skills that in turn help them to make informed decisions about their money. Matched savings can be used for items that increase their earning potential, including further education or to help to save in the future, like buying a freezer.

Date of Group	#	Saved & Accessed matched savings	Completed but no matching	Withdrew
Feb 16-May 03 2016	05	02	02	01
Feb 18-May 05 2016	17	06	05	06
May 18-Aug 03 2016	08	01	04	03
May 19-Aug 04 2016	07	04	03	0
Sep 29-Dec 22 2016	22	12	05	04
Oct 05-Dec 21 2016	09	03	02	03
TOTAL	68	28	21	17

Participant Testimony

"I feel like I gained a voice. I've gained the ability to get control of my finances. Not only my family's finances but, to know that I can have my own money saved. For the first time in years I believe I have the ability to change my future. I've gained so much! I know the importance of saving. The crucial meaning of debt repayment and that I can't fix it over night, but, I now have the tools to pay it [off] faster than I thought. I am in control of my financial future. I am so grateful and blessed to have been a part of the group!" (2016 Empower U Participant)



Financial Empowerment Champions (FEC)

The Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW), E4C, and the Bissell Centre are all dedicated to helping people who are struggling in poverty or experiencing homelessness. Throughout this project, the group will explore ways to encourage and support municipal and provincial governments as well as other large service providers to build financial empowerment solutions into existing programs for people with low incomes. All three organizations will work together to connect with vulnerable and marginalized populations; specifically homeless, housing insecure, and Indigenous communities. They will also collaborate with existing partners such as the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Financial Empowerment Collaborative, Financial Pathways Collaborative, and the United Way.

The objective of this partnership is to produce a cooperative environment that enables all three organizations to work collectively with the highly vulnerable and marginalized populations. The focus will be on initiatives that include:

- ▶ *Financial literacy*
- ▶ *Coaching*
- ▶ *Housing supports*
- ▶ *Community collaborations*
- ▶ *Training of volunteers*
- ▶ *Fill in service gaps in Edmonton*

The staffing plan for E4C is to have one full time Financial Empowerment Manager working on project coordination, financial literacy education, financial coaching, developing collaborative partnerships with other organizations as well as a Tax and Benefits Coordinator. The IAAW and Bissell will each have a part-time financial empowerment coordinator who will work alongside the E4C staff to develop tools, coordinate the implementation of Financial Empowerment interventions inside their organizations, and to train partner organizations' staff.

Financial Empowerment Champions (FEC) targets are as follows:

- ▶ *Train 480 frontline staff to deliver financial literacy to individuals*
- ▶ *Develop and run targeted financial literacy education programs for 1,900 individuals*
- ▶ *Support 1,000 individuals to meet with a financial coach and create a financial plan*
- ▶ *Support 400 individuals that did not previously have a bank account to open one*
- ▶ *Enable 300 volunteers to help 26,700 individuals to file their taxes*
- ▶ *Submit 8,250 applications for government benefits*
- ▶ *Help 1,430 individuals open RESPs*
- ▶ *Train 180 frontline staff in other organizations on benefits of the RESP, CLB, and CESC*

Overall, this project will develop, deliver, and promote financial empowerment interventions that will assist in building financial stability and well-being for those with low incomes.



Community Connections and Employment

Advocacy

Both Indigenous men and women reach out to IAAW for assistance to address barriers to accessing services, disputing a decision or receive support through a legal process. IAAW refers people to organizations that currently provide this assistance already and only take on cases where support is not available elsewhere. An average of 5 requests per month are received.

Objectives:

1. *Provide advocacy and individualized assistance to Indigenous women for access to services and programs.*
2. *Enhance and/or build new partnerships with service providers to ensure information on services and programs are accessible and available to Indigenous women.*

Housing

The Housing program at IAAW is not a walk-in program, in order to apply for the program the woman must be participating in one of our programs. The programs that are held continuously are the Financial Training and the Self-Management Program.

Through our programs at IAAW, we know that one of the biggest barriers in Edmonton is housing. It is difficult to attend any program unless you have a home to go to. We have an agreement with Homeward Trust Edmonton. After an assessment is completed, depending what their level of scoring is, this will dictate what services will be best for the person.

If the person qualifies for the Diversion program, IAAW is able to help. The Diversion program means they are able to manage financially and will require financial assistance one time. With the Diversion program I.A.A.W is able to pay for first month's rent, damage deposit, and if deposit is required for utilities and gas, and pick up used furniture (the beds are New) from FIND. Homeward Trust then reimburses IAAW.

To date we have had 15 applicants and 7 families that have been successfully housed. Success, according to Homeward Trust standards, occurs when a family is able to live independently for six months and does not default on their rent. According to this criteria, we have achieved a 100% success rate. Some of the factors that suggest the IAAW and the women have a successful partnership include a positive professional relationship with the women and the IAAW staff's desire and ability be empathic listeners, that hear the women's stories. The women honour us by believing that we will do our best to help them mover forward. This partnership enables us to follow through for the participants who in turn know we care about them and their families – we are just a phone call away.

Activities Undertaken

- ▶ Finding a safe place to live
- ▶ *How to manage transportation*
- ▶ *Managing housing: understanding rights & obligations, finding furniture*
- ▶ *How to find a doctor*
- ▶ *How to access services and which services to access*
- ▶ *Bus Tickets or transportation to appointments, when appropriate*
- ▶ *Securing a phone (essential as women often need to report every 2 to 3 hours)*



Pre Employment

Pre-employment services are provided throughout the project on a one-to-one basis and through our group workshop “Lighting your Fire.” Support and or referral was provided to 78 women over the term of the project, of those staff members who worked one-one with 17 women.

Activities Undertaken

- ▶ *Looking at why they leave jobs/programs*
- ▶ *Provide supports on job sites (Elders)*
- ▶ *Fit the person to the job*
- ▶ *Programs/preparation to help support prior to hiring*
- ▶ *Follow up with employees after hiring*
- ▶ *Financial aid in regards to equipment needed on the job*
- ▶ *Understanding importance of culture*
- ▶ *Building the team spirit, teaching more about the company and how they fit in*
- ▶ *Listening, resolving conflict before it becomes an issue*

Elder Services

In addition to the benefits of a group circle, this program has provided women with individual supports and encouragement. It is not uncommon to learn that these Elder services are the first time that a woman has received one-on-one, compassionate and non-judgmental support. The Elder works with women in many aspects of their life, and will be flexible to meet each individual’s need. The following provides examples of the types of assistance and supports that are offered:

Cultural / Traditional

- ▶ *Cultural medicines, sweet grass, sage, fungus, and rat root*
- ▶ *Cultural discussions, practices, teachings*
- ▶ *Personal reflections and discussions around culture and traditions*
- ▶ *Impacts of residential school system*

The Elders role is to offer Indigenous teachings, to bring back some of the culture that has been lost or taken from us. The seven sacred teachings that are introduced include: Respect, Love, Honesty, Humility, Wisdom, Courage, and Truth. They are asked what the teachings mean to them and how they will apply it to others and themselves. Sage and Lavender are provided to the ones that want to smudge; we take them to ceremonies or refer them to Elders that have sweat lodges. We also refer the women to other resources and encourage them to share their stories. We also let them know that there is always someone to call or text for help. IAAW Staff perspective: “I have been invited to attend family gatherings, introduced to their families. I am truly blessed to have been adopted, as their Kokum. I believe this is the way it was, historically; Grandmothers were the ones the community turned to for wisdom, a listening ear, understanding, and kindness. In turn I am treated with respect.”



Supports for Women leaving Correctional Institutions

- ▶ IAAW is in a partnership with the Corrections Canada – Edmonton Area Parole Office to provide community connections, support, encouragement, and advocacy to Indigenous Women in Edmonton.
- ▶ Elizabeth Fry Canada reports 90-99% of our provincial jails and up to 45% of our federal female prison population is comprised of Indigenous women. IAAW is committed to providing innovative, compassionate services to reduce recidivism.

Aboriginal Self-Management Program Information

The program offers a 12-week program for Women entering the community, after being released from the Edmonton Institution for Women. The program is a condition of release.

It is sometimes a hard sell, because most women have taken the program several times, and do not understand why they have to retake the program. The difference is that they have taken the program while incarcerated, and now they are in the community and may have barriers and the teachings are not just a theory, they must apply what they have been taught. Repetition is the key. If a person consistently is being taught the same things, they will eventually understand the teachings and begin to incorporate what they learnt into their lifestyle.

Activities Undertaken

- ▶ *Develop a service plan based on each participant's unique needs (note the Elder contributes to a larger plan led by a facilitator)*
- ▶ *Host a Woman's Circle to connect with women and build/enhance the relationship with the participants. The group meets once a week for 12 weeks*
- ▶ *Provide path-finding assistance for women to help them transition to life after incarceration.*
- ▶ *The women are typically incarcerated from two to eight years*
- ▶ *Provide spiritual and cultural teachings to participants*
- ▶ *Work with community organizations to better meet the needs of Indigenous women*
- ▶ *Working with courts to get visitation with Children. Attend the supervised visits*
- ▶ *Attend Parole hearings, as a support person in the community.*
- ▶ *Meeting with Judicator of Residential Schools*



Objective 2:

Enhance and/or build new partnerships with service providers to ensure information on services and programs are accessible and available to Indigenous women.

As outlined in the previous section, the Elder (and IAAW at large as required), works with the women to re-integrate into the city and to settle into their lives. IAAW has developed partnerships with many organizations, which has helped to ensure that programs and services are available to Indigenous women. This program has enhanced linkages with 17 organizations / supports.

We believe that the Community Connections have benefited this objective through:

- ▶ *Increasing awareness and understanding of partner organizations around Indigenous women*
- ▶ *Ensuring women learn how to access services and how to seek out what they need in a positive way*
- ▶ *Contributing to the health and well-being of the women*
- ▶ *Helping women come out of the corrections system and stay out.*

Project Impact and Importance

The impact and importance of this project is difficult to measure, but it cannot be overstated. Becoming part of the IAAW provides these women, often for the first time in their lives, a positive and safe connection with the community. Women are proud to be associated with our organization and provide them with a sense of belonging. Contact with the IAAW offers hope and role models, demonstrating that not all Indigenous Women are incarcerated. It is inspiring for women to see other Indigenous women who have succeeded, despite having overcome obstacles and difficulties. The women we work with draw inspiration and pride from their association with our organization.

The IAAW firmly believes that the path to wellness will be achieved one woman at a time. We will help those women. In turn, they will be able to raise themselves up, then help those around them. We see first-hand the positive impact this type of specialized programming has on the women.

Most of these women tell stories filled with devastation, hopelessness, and no knowledge of their culture. They all experience poverty and addictions. Most are traumatized at a very young age.

Here are two examples of women we have worked with, to show the importance of having a program such as Community Connections:

- 1) *A 37 year old woman was thin and seemed to be in pain. The Elder spoke with her several times. She finally shared that she had cancer and didn't want anybody to know. She did not want anyone pity, nor did she trust any one. The Elder started spending time with her, taking her to her appointments, visiting her brother who was also dying. She died before making full Parole.*
- 2) *A 54 year old participant reports being incarcerated since she was 8 years old. When asked what she meant, she said she was having terrible nightmares and afraid of the dark. Her mother took her to see a doctor about her nightmares and fear of the dark only never returned to pick her up. She lived in 60 different foster homes, none that she wants to remember. She doesn't remember much of the adult life because she was intoxicated most of her adult life. Today she has her own apartment. She is very careful as to who she lets into her life, spends many hours alone. Laughs and says she is still afraid of the dark and keeps all her lights on at night.*



Advocating for Justice

- ▶ *Alberta has the second highest number of missing or murdered Indigenous women in Canada, second only to British Columbia, according to Native Women's Association of Canada research.*
- ▶ *Alberta has the second highest reported rate of spousal assault in Canada*
- ▶ *Aboriginal women were almost three times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to report they had been a victim of spousal abuse in the past five years.*
- ▶ *Rate of homicide for Aboriginal females was six times higher than non-Aboriginal females*
- ▶ *In 2007, the population of Aboriginal women increased to 31.7% of all federally sentenced women while still representing only 3% of the Canadian population*
- ▶ *Aboriginal women make up 45% of the overall prison population and are estimated to account for 90-99% of the population in some provincial jails.*
- ▶ *Elizabeth Fry reports, Aboriginal women are 9 times more likely to go to prison than the majority of the non-Aboriginal population.*
- ▶ *Further, Elizabeth Fry reports 80% of incarcerated women are there for poverty-related crimes, 39% of which are for failure to pay a fine.*
- ▶ *Approximately 70% of incarcerated women are single mothers*

More basic financial support given to foster parent than moms

Basic	Mom 2 children on Income Support	Foster Parent Two kids
Core Essentials	431	
Shelter	566	
Food, clothing, personal expenses, basic financial support given to foster parent for household costs (30 days x 23.51 min)		1410
Total Per Month	997	1410
Other Supports Given	Mom & two kids	Foster Parent - Two Kids
Christmas/Birthday gifts	0	21.35 - 46.35 x 2
Spending allowance	0	\$2.75 - 15.15 x 2
Camp/Vacation	0	\$675-775/child
Clothing (each child)	minimal	\$600-1200
Infant care	minimal	\$150/mo
Initial allowance kinship/foster	0	\$800

Alberta Human Services 2014 budget

- \$199 million supporting 5000 foster children
- The average expenditure \$39,800/foster child

What would change if we gave that support to Indigenous moms?



IAAW Partnership with LEAF

In 2016, LEAF and IAAW partnered to advance strong arguments against the systemic discrimination of Indigenous women in Canada's justice systems.

2016 Justice Camp Inquiry – LEAF worked collaboratively as part of a national coalition of women's organizations committed to ending violence against women to form recommendations to the Inquiry Committee appointed by the Canadian Judicial Council regarding misconduct of Justice Camp during a 2014 sexual assault trial (*R v Wager*). During the course of the sexual assault trial, Justice Camp made a number of comments that upheld sexual assault myths, stereotypes, and victim blaming in the court, including his statement towards the complainant, a 19 year old Indigenous woman who was homeless at the time of the assault, "Why couldn't you just keep your knees together?" The committee seems to have agreed with the coalition's submission, indicating that Justice Camp's comments at trial evidenced "antipathy towards laws designed to protect vulnerable witnesses, promote equality, and bring integrity to sexual assault trials." The committee's recommendation of the removal of Justice Camp sends a clear message that women in Canada are entitled to fair treatment and there is no place for myths about women and sexual assault in our judicial system.

2016 Cindy Gladue (R V Barton) – LEAF worked collaboratively with IAAW to intervene in Alberta's court of Appeal and welcomed the decision to order a new trial. The dehumanization of Cindy Gladue during the trial process led to mass outrage and protests of women across Canada. As Muriel Stanley Venne, President and Founder of IAAW, has stated: "This is the most important case in my lifetime." The joint efforts of LEAF and IAAW, who were proudly represented by Lisa Weber, were recognized in the Alberta Court of Appeal decision, which acknowledged that "myths and stereotypes continue to stalk the halls of justice in cases involving sexual offences." The decision to order a retrial further detailed how "this case has exposed the flaws in the legal infrastructure used for instructing juries on sexual offences in Canada." IAAW is grateful to continue to work alongside LEAF in monitoring the retrial.

2016 "Angela Campbell" (Inquiry) – LEAF continues to work in partnership with IAAW to form a submission into the recent Inquiry into the treatment of Angela Cardinal by Alberta's criminal justice system. Collectively, the work of LEAF and their strong ability to collaborate with Indigenous-led organizing in cases of continued discrimination against Indigenous women provides a strong foundation for the much needed systemic changes to the criminal justice system in Alberta.

The IAAW is pleased to participate in this partnership in our effort to address the ongoing violence against Indigenous women and girls.





Esquao Awards 2016



Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women Circle of Honour Elders and IAAW Board members welcome Ashley Callingbull-Burnham into the 2016 Circle of Honour

2016 Esquao Award Recipients

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

*Lisa Ground
Krista Laboucan
Joanne Lethbridge Pompana
Shirley Reid
Michelle White-Wilsdon*

EDUCATION

*Ona Fiddler-Bertieg
Delores Pruden-Barrie
Rhonda Metallic*

ART

Angelina Gutierrez-Rain

TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY

Cheryl Williams

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Eva Cardinal

BUSINESS

Beatrice Carpentier

CULTURE

*Holly Fortier
Dr. Joyce D Hunt*

CHILDREN'S FUTURE

Mildred Supernault

JUSTICE

Priscilla Sharpe



Background

The IAAW has coordinated and hosted the Esquao Awards Gala for 21 years. The Esquao Awards are regarded as one of the most prestigious events in Alberta, for recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of Aboriginal women. Over the years, it has inspired Indigenous women from all across the province to get more actively involved in their own communities, both on and off First Nation Reserves and Métis Settlements. The Awards have grown to be the single largest recognition event of Aboriginal women in the country. This wonderful event shines a light on women who serve their community in a variety of capacities and highlights the significant contributions of Aboriginal women in the development of healthy communities.

The Esquao Awards are unique in that there is no competition between nominees. The nomination form is distributed widely and is available by calling the IAAW toll-free number or accessing the website. When the community nominates an Aboriginal woman and provides three letters of support she is then deemed a 'community champion' in a certain category and subsequently honoured with an Esquao Award. This policy has worked miraculously to reduce the division between women, recognizing our women as 'Angels Among Us'.

Nominees are placed in one of the following categories: Arts - Performing or Literature, Business, Children's Future, Community Involvement, Culture, Education, Environment, Health and Medicine, International Influence, Justice, Political Involvement, and Lifetime Achievement. Special awards such as the Dorothy Daniels Award for Justice and the Clara Woodbridge Community Involvement Award are bestowed in memory of special Aboriginal women who have passed on.

On the evening of the Awards Gala, a dignitary such as a Chief, a Métis leader, a Minister (MLA or MP), a Mayor or a representative from a major corporate sponsor will present the recipient with the Esquao Award. This is a very touching part of the event when sponsors and community leaders gain insight into the obstacles overcome by the recipient and is able to congratulate them personally for their work. The event also features local and national Indigenous entertainers, including comedians, hypnotists, musicians, and dancers.

The Esquao Awards event promotes the self-determination of Indigenous Women who contribute to the well being of their communities, encourages the personal growth of the recipients and other women in the audience.

Benefits/Outcomes of the Event

- ▶ Corporations and government leaders participate in recognizing positive work in the Indigenous communities
- ▶ A connection is made to women who could be consulted on upcoming policies and/or community involvement activities, thereby increasing their social inclusion
- ▶ A negative stereotype of Indigenous women is counteracted with positive examples of how women play an important role in building strong communities
- ▶ Women and girls are inspired to make positive changes in their lives
- ▶ The Indigenous community comes together to recognize the accomplishments of their local women
- ▶ An opportunity for communities to showcase, celebrate and embrace their beautiful cultures and traditions





About the 2016 Esquao Awards

Attendance

Five hundred people attended this years' event, including entertainers, crafters and volunteers. Families of the recipients attended from around the province and community leaders came from First Nations, the Métis Nation of Alberta, and the Alberta Métis Settlements. Members of Parliament, City, and Town Councilor's, and representatives from both corporate and service organizations also attended.

Production

Masters of Ceremonies Michelle Thrush and Fred Keating led the four-hour event, which was videotaped by a local public station, Shaw TV, and televised in two separate one-hour broadcasts. The national broadcaster CTV also supported the event by interviewing the recipients and airing short vignettes throughout their regular programming and on commercial breaks for the American talent show "The Voice." Three live cameras projected onto two large screens to enable all the recipients to watch the proceedings. Promotional pictures were also taken. IAAW staff prepared the program; developed the agenda, wrote the script, and provided the Master of Ceremonies with support and direction.

Entertainment

The 'Maskekosak Young Ones' Drummers from the Enoch Cree Nation honoured the guests and ushered in the Grand Entry. Amanda Lamothe on flute and Kethra Stewart on cello entertained throughout the meal, then singer Kristen McArthur performed as an introduction to the Award Presentations. The Metis Child & Family Jiggers and Brianna Lizotte showcased some fancy footwork and The Stephanie Harpe Experience; a Rock and Roll Blues Band energized the room between Award presentations. Finally, Howie Miller closed the evening and was a hit with his hilarious comedy routine.

Honour Guard

Representatives from the RCMP, the Edmonton Police Services, and the Calgary Police Services formed the Honour Guard. The Canadian Armed Forces also participated and accompanied recipients and special guests to and from the stage to receive their award.

Contributions from Major Sponsors

- ▶ *Syncrude Canada Ltd.*
- ▶ *Suncor Energy*
- ▶ *Government of Alberta Indigenous Relations*
- ▶ *The City of Edmonton*

Sponsors received verbal recognition at the event and complimentary tickets. Major sponsors were also eligible for a speaking opportunity during the presentation of their sponsored award. Additional partners include provincial government departments, small businesses, and private individuals who provided door prizes and ticket sponsorship. Devon Energy and Enbridge Pipelines sponsored tickets for women and youth and there were several other businesses and government departments that donated items.



Media

Media sponsor was Shaw TV, who provided full coverage on the day of the Gala. IAAW sent news releases and short biographies to weekly newspapers in the community where the individual recipients reside. Press releases announcing the recipients were sent out to all the media outlets.

Recipients

Sixteen Aboriginal women received Esquao Awards in 2017, bringing the total honoured over 21 years to four hundred and four.

Presenters

- ▶ *Alberta Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Brian Mason*
- ▶ *Alberta Minister of Indigenous Relations, Richard Feehan*
- ▶ *Alberta Minister of Seniors and Housing, Lori Sigurdson*
- ▶ *Chief Leonard Jackson*
- ▶ *Chief Billy Morin*
- ▶ *Ft. McKay Councilor, Raymond Powder*
- ▶ *Ft. McKay Councilor, Peggy Lacord*
- ▶ *Mayor of Edmonton, Don Iveson*
- ▶ *MLA for Edmonton Whitemud, Dr. Bob Turner*
- ▶ *MLA Calgary- Loughheed, Dave Rodney*
- ▶ *MLA Lesser Slave Lake, Danielle Larivee*
- ▶ *MLA and Deputy Speaker, Debbie Jabbour*
- ▶ *Metis Settlements General Council, Stan Delorme*
- ▶ *President of the Metis Nation of Alberta, Audrey Poitras*
- ▶ *RCMP Inspector, Honey Dwyer*
- ▶ *Suncor Director of Engineering, Doug Kingdon*

Other special guests: Dignitaries

- ▶ *Lieutenant Governor, Lois Mitchell*
- ▶ *Grand Chief Treaty Six, Tony Alexis*
- ▶ *Chief Jim Boucher, Fort McKay First Nation*
- ▶ *Edmonton City Councilor, Bev Esslinger*
- ▶ *Edmonton City Councilor, Tony Katerina*
- ▶ *Edmonton City Councilor, Scott McKeen*
- ▶ *Edmonton City Manager, Linda Cochrane*
- ▶ *Edmonton Fire Service, Chief Ken Block*
- ▶ *MLA Red Deer South, Barb Miller*
- ▶ *MLA and Chair Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Robert Wanner*
- ▶ *MLA Lac La Biche/St. Paul, Dave Hanson*
- ▶ *MLA Edmonton Whitemud, Dr. Bob Turner*
- ▶ *MLA Wetaskiwin-Camrose, Bruce Hinkley*
- ▶ *Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples, Father Jim Holland*
- ▶ *Stakeholder Relations Advisor, Syncrude Canada, Lana Hill*



Indigenous Women's Engagement

The Government of Alberta engaged IAAW to establish and execute an engagement process for Indigenous women on proposals under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Gender Based Analysis Plus, and other government priorities as requested by government.

The intention of the Indigenous Women's Engagement Committee (IWEC) is to provide briefings to the government on the Indigenous women's point of view and priorities as they pertain to government policy, programs, and service delivery, according to: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Gender Based Analysis Plus in Canada, as well as other priorities as requested by government.

Project Benefits

Project benefits would be to provide a method for the point of view of Indigenous women to be considered in the development of programs, policy, and services that impact them directly. This engagement process would honour the Alberta government's commitment to a renewed relationship with Indigenous people. As well as, raise awareness and understanding of the UN Declaration among Indigenous women in Alberta.

Partnerships and Collaborations Made:

Additionally, the IAAW and the Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association (ANFCA) agreed to work collaboratively around the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Our two organizations worked to advise the GOA on implementation of UNDRIP, and shared the GOA's activities around UNDRIP with Indigenous communities. Through the development of the IWEC Terms of Reference, the IAAW also made valuable connections with Tribal Colleges in Alberta. With additional coordination, the Tribal Colleges may be an excellent vehicle to reach Indigenous women for future engagements.

Valuable Policy Insights gathered:

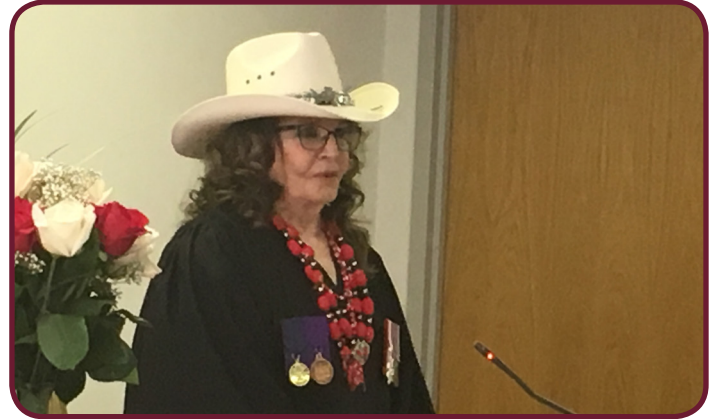
The IAAW was able to hold an initial engagement session around off-reserve Indigenous housing in Alberta. Existing reports on off-reserve housing were examined, and it became extremely clear that the reports were greatly enhanced by adding an Indigenous women's lens to the information. For example, linkages between housing insecurity, violence and justice were highlighted – information that was not directly addressed in other reports. The addition of a gender-based analysis provides another dimension of information for policy and decision makers.

Project Recommendations

The IAAW believes there is a great deal of significance in continuing the engagement sessions into the future. Valuable groundwork has been laid, including a framework, terms of reference and collaborations with other organizations located across Alberta. The objectives of the program were met, without many changes to the original work plan.



Grateful for the IAAW car donated by ATB Financial, main sponsor of Empower U



Muriel Stanley Venne hosted the Citizenship Ceremony on June 21



Esquao Youth Leadership Program participants



Citizenship Ceremony attendees



IAAW received award for one of top 100 Women's organizations in Calgary



Muriel, Marggo and Rachelle attend the Olga Blondheim breakfast to celebrate women entering politics



Muriel and Rachelle with Amnesty International's Alex Neve



Muriel presents at national safety conference with national Indigenous leaders



2016

Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women



*"Yours in
Strength & Beauty"*

Contact Us

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