

"Celebrating our Past, Present and Future"



*Sagkeeng Child & Family Services Inc.
1st Annual Report
June 29, 2001*

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DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba hereby declares that the fundamental principles guiding the provision of services to children and families are:

1. The best interests of children are a fundamental responsibility of society.
2. The family is the basic unit of society and its well-being should be supported and preserved.
3. The family is the basic source of care, nurture and acculturation of children and parents have the primary responsibility to ensure the well-being of their children.
4. Families and children have the right to the least interference with their affairs to the extent compatible with the best interests of children and the responsibilities of society.
5. Children have a right to a continuous family environment in which they can flourish.
6. Families and children are entitled to be informed to their rights and to participate in the decisions affecting those rights.
7. Families are entitled to receive preventive and supportive services directed to preserving the family unit.
8. Families are entitled to services, which respect their cultural and linguistic heritage.
9. Decisions to remove or place children should be based on the best interests of the child and not on the basis of the family's financial status.
10. Communities have a responsibility to promote the best interests of their children and families and have the right to participate in services to their families and children.
11. Indian Bands are entitled to the provision of child and family services in a manner, which respects their unique status as aboriginal peoples.

CHAPTER C80 - THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT
(Assented to July 11, 1985)

TRADITIONAL INDIAN CODE OF ETHICS

- Give thanks to the Creator each morning upon rising and each evening before sleeping. Seek the courage and strength to be a better person;
- Showing respect is the basic law of life;
- Respect the wisdom of people in the council. Once you give an idea it no longer belongs to you, it belongs to everybody;
- Be truthful at all times;
- Always treat your guest with honour and consideration. Give your best food and comforts to your guests;
- The hurt of one is the hurt of all. The honour of one is the honour of all;
- Receive strangers and outsiders kindly;
- All races are children of the Creator and must be respected;
- To serve others, to be some use to the family, community or nation is one of the main purposes for which we are created. True happiness comes to those who dedicate their lives to the services of others;
- Observe moderation and balance in all things;
- Know those things that lead to your well-being and those things that lead to your destruction;
- Listen and follow the guidance given to your heart. Expect guidance to come in many forms: in prayer, in dreams, in solitude and in the words and actions of Elders and friends.

Four Winds Development Project

"Honesty"

**SAGKEENG CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES
AGENCY HISTORY**

The Sagkeeng First Nation established Sagkeeng Child & Family Services, the first Native Child & Family Services Agency in Manitoba, in 1976. It is founded on the beliefs, values and desires of the community with respect to the well being of its children and families. The Agency was consequently mandated by the community to provide locally based, culturally appropriate services, which used, strengthened and preserved traditional values. The mandate provided to Sagkeeng Child & Family Services by its community members required the development and delivery of services for the safety, protection and care of its children to be proactive, holistic and more encompassing than the specific requirements of provincial legislation.

Sagkeeng Child & Family Services, sanctioned by Chief and Council through the Agency's Board of Directors, was and is accountable to the community to provide services, which are compatible with the approach described above.

Sagkeeng Child & Family Services entered a conjunctive relationship with Eastman Region for Provincial involvement under the Manitoba Child & Family Services Act in Child and Family Services program delivery at Sagkeeng Child & Family Services. Guidelines had been established with respect to discharging responsibilities under each of our respective mandates. This relationship evolved out of a unique process of cooperation, which was developed over many years. Eastman Region extended its mandate to Sagkeeng Child & Family Services under the Manitoba Child & Family Services Act, combining and making available the resources of both Agencies.

First Nation people are striving to gain control of the Child Welfare Programs that most affect their lives. To understand the reason for this and the complexity of the cultural issues involved, one must understand the worldview common to Aboriginal people, cultures and societies. This spiritual worldview is based on the fact that all First Nation people have a unique and special relationship with the land and they must adapt to it enhancing a responsibility of respect. All traditional customs and traditions reflect and stem from this basic premise.

Sagkeeng Child & Family Services contributed in voicing Native Child Welfare concerns and played a role in the amendment of the Child Welfare Act. Legislation was passed that identifies the crucial importance of a child's heritage and cultural background. In November 1984 Directive No. 18 was established, which identifies Native Placement Procedures in the Child Welfare Act. This Directive was based on the emphasis and importance of family, community and culture, which led to the preference of placing Native children in care with Native families.

When the Child Welfare Act was amended in 1985, the Declaration of Principles recognized children's culture; language and heritage as being a key factor in their future and well-being.

Native Child Welfare Agencies have made great strides in the movement towards self-governance. Stemming from the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, in 1999 the Province of Manitoba initiated a Memorandum of Understanding and Framework Agreement Initiatives were signed with the Province of Manitoba, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba Metis Federation and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak.

At this time Native Child Welfare Agencies are restricted by jurisdiction, and are only able to provide support and services to community members who reside within their own community. Outside of the community Native Agencies are restricted to only providing support and services to the children in care. The Memorandum of Understanding initiates the process for all Native Child Welfare Agencies to obtain jurisdiction anywhere in Manitoba. Once the Memorandum of Understanding process has been completed, we will then have the jurisdictional right to provide support and services to our families residing anywhere in the Province of Manitoba.

In the year 2000, Sagkeeng Child & Family Services initiated the process of seeking its own mandate under the Manitoba Child & Family Services Act. Timeless effort, commitment, dedication and team work were key in bringing this Agency to this monumental, historical event. On April 26, 2001 Sagkeeng Child & Family Services signed its Mandate with the Province of Manitoba.

Sagkeeng Child & Family Services recently established a satellite office in the City of Winnipeg, enabling us to geographically broaden support and services to our children in care outside of our community and eventually to our members residing anywhere in the Province of Manitoba.

Our goal for Sagkeeng Child and Family Services is to reclaim Child Welfare Service Delivery to our children and families. Through this we will continue to ensure children are safe and protected, promote family wellness and encourage community participation and responsibility. Children are gifts from the Creator and we need to realize that it takes a community to ensure their physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs are guaranteed.

***THE UNITED NATIONS
DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD***

- The right to a name and nationality.
- The right to affection, love and understanding and to material security.
- The right to adequate nutrition, housing and medical services.
- The right to special care if handicapped, be it physically, mentally or socially.
- The right to be among the first to receive protection and relief in all circumstances.
- The right to be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.
- The right to full opportunity for play and recreation and equal opportunity to free and compulsory education, to enable the child to develop his individual abilities and to become a useful member of society.
- The right to develop his full potential in conditions of freedom and dignity.
- The right to be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood.
- The right to enjoy these rights regardless of race, color, sex, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, and property, birth, or other status.



BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S:

Submitted by Mr. Richard Fewchuk

On behalf of the Board of Director's of Sagkeeng Child & Family Services I want to welcome all of our esteemed guests to our First Annual Report. The theme for this year's event is **"CELEBRATING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE"**.

The agency will be hosting this event in the community once a year, every year, within the month of June.

I have tried to keep my report brief, as the details will be outlined within the Executive Director's Report. This is the first Annual Report for the agency and we welcome any feedback so that we will be able to improve and enhance next years report, therefore ensuring success in the coming years.

I would first like to present and introduce to you the rest of the Board of Director's. They are:

- ❖ Myself, **Rick Fewchuk**, Sagkeeng Member, I serve the Board of Director's in the capacity of Chairperson.
- ❖ **Ms. Irma Pangborn**, Sagkeeng Member, She serves the Board of Director's in the capacity of Vice President.
- ❖ **Ms. Joan Bruyere**, Sagkeeng Member, who serves in the capacity of Secretary/Treasurer.
- ❖ **Ms. Theresa Gray**, Sagkeeng Member, Board Member at large.
- ❖ **Eric Bunn**, Sagkeeng Member, Board Member at large.

CELEBRATING OUR PAST, FUTURE AND PRESENT

The theme for this 1ST Annual Report is very appropriate for the agency, as many positive changes have been made during the year. After a year of on going negotiations and dedicated hard work, Sagkeeng Child & Family Services is now a legally mandated CFS agency under The Child & Family Services Act. The past Protocol Agreement with Eastman Region no longer exists. On April 26th 2001 the Agency, Chief and Council, the Board of Director's and the Province of Manitoba signed the official Agreements allowing for the creation of a new agency under The Child and Family Services Act. Sagkeeng Child & Family Services is now named in the CFS Act as they successfully completed all of the developmental requirements. This important step is viewed as a step toward community control over the area of child welfare.

With the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry/Child Welfare Initiative-Memorandum of Understanding, the agency in the very near future will have its jurisdiction extended to include off reserve services and programs. Chief and Council view this Provincial and First Nations Initiative as an interim step toward total jurisdiction. The Board of Directors and Chief and Council have been mutually supporting the agency through the different phases of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry/Child Welfare Initiative-Memorandum of Understanding. The agency has also been participating and working with the Child Welfare aspect of the Framework Agreement Initiative. Chief and Council view this as a step towards total self-government over Child Welfare matters. Further, we have been receiving reports of the recommendations of the National Policy Review. These recommendations will change the way the agency and all other First Nations CFS agencies are currently funded. The National Policy Review was a Government of Canada and First Nations endeavor. As it was a Canada wide policy review it affects all First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies.

In closing I would like to add on behalf of the other Board Members that it's been challenging and exciting to be a part of the agency in its accomplishments. Fairly soon all of the Sagkeeng membership on and off reserve will begin to benefit from those changes.

On behalf of the Board of Director's and myself, I would like to thank the past and present Chief and Council for their wisdom and for their support of the agency's endeavours.

Last but certainly not least, the Board of Directors and I would like to thank the staff at the agency for their hard work and commitment that they have given to the community in the past year. We, the Board of Director's look forward to the ensuing year.

Congratulations and Megwetch.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Submitted by Lois E. Thomas

CELEBRATING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Welcome to our 1st Annual Report. The agency is endeavoring to reach out to the community to provide information about the many changes we are presently undergoing. With the incoming of the new millennium the agency has been running to catch up with other First Nations Child and Family Service agencies within the Province of Manitoba. There have been many recent developments that have occurred that are going to change the way the agency provides services and to whom we provide those services.

For the past twenty years the agency operated with a borrowed mandate under the Protocol Agreement with Eastman Region. This was due mainly to the political will of the community at that time. The agency provided services out of the limited funding that we received and out of the protocols procedures. The Protocol Agreement served a purpose, provided support and training. It is now time for the agency to move forward. The new mandate means that we are now legally responsible and directly accountable to the Province of Manitoba.

May 1st 2001, Sagkeeng Child & Family Services became a legal mandated agency under The Child and Family Services Act of Manitoba. For the first time the agency was able to negotiate with the Province (where all agency's receive their legal mandate) its own funding base. This new funding formula while small and inadequate will put the agency in a firm position to be included in all future funding changes with respect to First Nation CFS agencies. Many times in the past the agency was excluded or received less dollars because it was not considered a legally mandated entity. This greatly affected the type of service we were able to provide either to children in care or to the families of those children in care. It also greatly limited our ability to provide support services to children and their families who do not need to be in care.

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry/Child Welfare Initiative-Memorandum of Understanding was signed in March 2000 with the then AMC Grand Chief Rod Bushie, MKO Grand Chief Francis Flett, President Dave Chartrand of the MMF, with the new Provincial Government. This strategy will also open a door of opportunities for the agency and for the Sagkeeng First Nation population living off reserve.

The main purpose of the AJI/CWI-MOU is to implement the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, which spoke to extending jurisdiction to include off reserve and membership for programs and services by all First Nations Child and Family Service agencies.

The vision statement of the AJI/Child Welfare Initiative – MOU is as follows:

“A child and family service system that recognizes and supports the rights of children to develop within safe and healthy families and communities, and recognizes that First Nations and Metis people have unique authority, rights and responsibilities to honour and care for their children”

The work and development on the MOU began in May of 2000. The First Phase of the process began with the establishment of seven different working groups. These different working groups were comprised of technicians from the three parties of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry/Child Welfare Initiative-Memorandum of Understanding. The main purpose of the seven working groups was to develop recommendations of required changes in the present Child Welfare system/structure.

In December 2000 the MOU process went into its Second Phase. This was to compile all of the final reports of the working groups, to identify the logical next step, and the common themes or building blocks upon which would provide the Draft Blue Print. These building blocks will create changes in the following areas within the present First Nations Child Welfare system.

- ❖ A central intake system;
- ❖ New funding methodologies;
- ❖ Changes in legislation;
- ❖ Changes within The Child and Family Services Act;
- ❖ Changes to the Adoption Act;
- ❖ Creation of First Nation Authority (replacing the existing Child & Family Services and Housing Support Branch).

The next phase of the AJI/CWI-Memorandum of Understanding is the community participation and consultation that is required. We have received notification that there will be a number of town hall meetings within Manitoba to inform the people of the work being done and about the restructuring. Pine Falls/Sagkeeng has been chosen as one of the sites for the town hall meeting. It is scheduled to happen on June 18th 2001 and the place is to be announced. There will be a number of focus groups held with individuals who have been or who are connected to the current Child Welfare system. These groups will be comprised of Foster Parents, Youth In Care, Youth Who Were In Care, and Women’s Groups.

Each step created and achieved within this process has to first follow a sequence of approved steps/ladders of authority. They are:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minister Tim Sale (Province)

Grand Chief Dennis Whitebird (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs)

President Dave Chartrand (President of the Manitoba Metis Federation)

Grand Chief Francis Flett (Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak)

JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Comprised of representatives from each of the Parties to the MOU (M.M.F. rep, Southern CFS rep, Northern CFS rep, Provincial rep, Winnipeg CFS rep)

IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Comprised of representatives from each of the Parties to the MOU (same group representation as mentioned above)

Consultation with the Southern Chief's Child Welfare Committee is ongoing and they are an integral part of the approval process. Sagkeeng First Nation, Chief Garry Swampy sits on the CCWC. The Manitoba Chiefs view the MOU process as an interim step to total self-government in the area of Native Child Welfare. The Southern Steering Group, which is comprised of the First Nations Child and Family Service agency Directors, are involved with the planning and recommendations, but rely on the process to make the final recommendations and necessary ratifications of each step of the process. There are Steering Groups as well for the North, the Metis and for the General population.

The Draft Blue Print was sent to the Executive Committee for final approval on May 12, 2001. This Blue Print maps out the final implementation stages of the MOU process. The stages identified for the restructuring of Child Welfare in the Province of Manitoba will be completed by late 2003.

Note: One of the challenges arising out of the entire process, was presented in December 2000 in a letter from the Minister of Child and Family Services to Grand Chief Dennis Whitebird of Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and to President Chartrand of the MMF, outlining a Work Force Adjustment Strategy. The Province was purposing a Secondment of its unionized employee's to the First Nations CFS and the newly created MMF CFS agencies to assist in the transition. If we choose not to take the secondments then we wait two years for any funding for those much needed positions.

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak consulted with a Labour Lawyer, and had several consultation meetings with the Province to get several questions answered. Though they are accepting of the unionized employee's, the final negotiations have to include an agreement of how it should look at the end of the day with the CFS agencies remaining as they were prior to the transition process.

It appears as though the Southern Chiefs and the Southern CFS agencies are in agreement with accepting those positions. When those seconded employee's return, the CFS agencies keep the salary dollars that are attached to those positions. Prior to the seconded employees leaving the CFS agencies will have to identify their trained pool of people.

Sagkeeng Child & Family Services will be taking case transfers from Winnipeg CFS the agency of jurisdiction. This will mean a number of Provincial seconded unionized employees assisting us with our transition, for a period of time.

There is a lot of deliberation occurring between the Provincial government and the Chiefs in Manitoba, because of the perceived fear of influence of Unions within the different FNCFS agencies. The First Nations leaders fully support the AJI/CWI-MOU; they were not prepared to consider Unions. On May 12, 2001 the Chiefs of Manitoba were to meet with the rest of the Executive Committee to agree to the Work Force Adjustment Strategy, but with certain conditions in place. These conditions would state that the FNCFS agencies would remain in tact once the seconded employee's left their identified positions. Without the acceptance of the secondments, the First Nations CFS agencies would have to wait the full two years before they could receive any type of Operations Funding to be able to hire the new staff required. With the acceptance of the seconded employee's, once the transition is complete and FNCFS agencies can identify and hire qualified aboriginal employee's the seconded employee's return and the FNCFS agencies are allowed to keep the salaries of each of those seconded positions.

The next item on this report is the **NATIONAL POLICY REVIEW**. This Canada wide policy review was initiated on the request of all First Nations CFS agencies within Canada; its goal was to review with Indian & Northern Affairs Canada the existing policies that govern the way in which FNCFS agencies are presently funded. The final recommendations include the development of a new funding formula. Another recommendation includes the end to existing funding formula, Directive 20.1. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada are willing to look at Block Funding or Multi Year Funding that would give us more flexibility. Prevention program dollars are also to be made available to all FNCFS agencies that would result in fewer children having to come into care. Prevention programs and support programs could then be identified, created and implemented.

The **FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT INITIATIVE** was signed in 1995 between the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Grand Chief (of the day Mr. Phillip Fontaine) of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. The FAI/CFS goal was to develop the steps leading toward total jurisdiction and control over Child Welfare (self - government) within the Province of Manitoba. The work is still in its developmental stage. The Southern First Nations CFS agency Director's work together as a Working Task Group making recommendations to the Work plans as they are developed and delivered to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada via Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

In conclusion, with the proposed changes of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry/Child Welfare Initiative-MOU the agency will be able to first provide services to off reserve Band Members of Sagkeeng First Nation, with the restructuring with the entire CFS system within the city of Winnipeg. Secondly the agency will improve the way in which it provides services to on reserve Band Members of Sagkeeng First Nation. To further enhance those changes are the National Policy Review and the Framework Agreement Initiative. For the first time the agency will have the adequate funding to be able to provide services to children and families that will prevent children from coming into care.

Megwetch

PROGRAM MANAGER'S REPORT

Submitted by Lloyd Bunn

It has just been a little over a year since this position was newly created and I had the good fortune of being hired as the first Program manager for Sagkeeng Child & Family Services. This past year has been a whirlwind of activity and growth for the Agency and myself. Initially there was reorientation to the Agency and community, as well as getting to know staff and finding out where they were in terms of development and their future aspirations.

One of the initial goals that the Agency had was to become legally mandated under the Child & Family Services Act, and this was an area that Lois and I spent a lot of time and energy on. We, at the start, envisioned this happening within a year. There were so many meetings, reviews of documents, legalese and interpretations and of course the involvement of key collaterals. We had to consider the needs of the community and ensure they continued to receive the same level of services that they had in the past and not jeopardize any existing and future rights.

We had tremendous support from both the past and present Chief and Council and our Board of Directors. They were kept informed each step of the way and they attended a lot of extra meetings to ensure that we met all requirements and they helped us stay focused on what was best for the community. The mandate was officially signed by the three levels of government on April 26, 2001 at our community office here in Sagkeeng.

While the quest for a legal mandate was happening there was also the March 2000 signing of the Memorandum of Understanding which will be addressed in greater detail by Lois, our Executive Director, in her report. This was a follow up from the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, which was to address full jurisdiction for Aboriginal Agencies and equity in funding. We had to free up a lot of staff to ensure representation of Sagkeeng at all the different committees established to oversee all areas of this process. I, along with our financial officer was assigned to the group that was looking at technology. We attended meetings bi-weekly, two days at a time, over a four-month period to review what systems each other had and made recommendations on what we thought would work for all of us in the future.

I was also involved in the recruitment of our Board of Directors. We consulted with the previous Chief and Council and they gave us their written support to establish a whole new Board of Directors. We wanted to ensure that this new Board of Directors had adequate support and training in their respective roles as Board of Directors. We explored what was available for Board training and found that at no cost to the Agency, the Province would provide this training. Training will be offered once more for those new board members who did not receive it initially.

"Commitment"

The Agency Director and I also sat in for this training and we found a lot of useful information and also had the opportunity to familiarize ourselves with the new Board of Directors.

I am also involved in staff recruitment, advertising, screening and interviews. We hired many staff this past twelve months in all areas. We have three new supervisors, one acting supervisor, one child abuse program coordinator, three new child & family service workers, one new secretary/receptionist, one financial clerk, two foster resource workers, one support worker and one contract escort driver.

Another area that I have spent a considerable amount of time on is the setting up of our Winnipeg Satellite office. The Board of Directors gave their approval to lease property at 1948 Main Street in Winnipeg. At the time of this writing, we are in the process of hiring a contractor for renovations of the new space. This again was a learning experience for our Agency, as they do things a lot different in Winnipeg with regards to securing an office and meeting specifications for renovations. It's a far cry from the way we do things in Sagkeeng.

We are constantly exploring ways to meet the growing and changing needs of Sagkeeng. In the past years we had an in-house support program for staff, utilizing Elders for support and guidance. This program ended in late March of this year but will be reviewed and considered for renewal. We are also creating a position for a cultural development worker. This person will be working with children in care who have been away from the community as well as those who have suffered loss through no fault of their own.

I also work as the Assistant Director and am involved in all senior management matters, attend meetings with and/or the Executive Director. I attend all financial meetings and try to keep abreast of all the new and up coming changes in funding that impact our Agency.

All things considered, I am very grateful to my community, the Agency and the Board of Directors for giving me this opportunity to return home, work with and for them. These are exciting times and I look forward to the many opportunities and challenges that lay ahead.