



RETURNING TO SPIRIT

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2 JUNE 30, 2008

TRAINER TEAMS SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED!!

Last week, our First Nation and Church core teams successfully delivered simultaneous workshops at Aulneau Centre in Winnipeg!! Marc Pizandawac was present as coach, and gave helpful advice and feedback during briefings and debriefings. The job got done!!

The First Nation core team includes: Cecilia Opekokew, John Peter Flett, Dennis Chartrand, Robyn Hall and Lisa Raven. They were joined in Winnipeg by four support trainers. The First Nation team will be independently delivering

another workshop July 7–11 in Canoe Lake, SK.

The Church core team includes François Paradis, Olive Halpin, Gigi Jakobs and Tarianne DeYonker. They were joined in Winnipeg by four support trainers. The Church team will be delivering another workshop in Winnipeg the week of July 14. Marc Pizandawac will again join the Church team as coach.

The solo flights of the core teams are a crucial step in the development of RTS. Demand for the workshops at this point far exceeds our ability to lead workshops.



Additional core teams are being developed to increase our availability.

As we move forward into the future, we are preparing for a quantum expansion in the delivery of RTS workshops!

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Trainer Teams fly solo*
- *Website Development*
- *Leadership vs. Concept of Leadership*
- *FunD Development*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

LEADERSHIP STYLES	2
WEBSITE	2
TRAINER DEVELOPMENT	3
SEMINAR SERIES	3
COMMUNITIES CREATING POSSIBILITIES	4
RTS NEWS	4
FUND DEVELOPMENT	5
ORGANIZATIONAL TEAM	5
CONVERSATIONS INTO THE FUTURE	6

SASKATOON RECONCILIATION

In late March, Queen’s House Retreat Centre in Saskatoon hosted an RTS Reconciliation workshop. It was a powerful experience that left a deep and lasting impression all the participants as well as the trainers who attended.

I was touched again with the power of the Reconciliation Process. As I listened to individuals do their comple-

tion around Residential Schools, I was very moved.

I was reminded of how all this happened in 2000. It began with a question that I asked Marc.

“How could I make a difference around the Residential School issues? I am Church and white.”

He said, “We can do it in partnership”.

In March as First Nations and Church participants shared their experience of reconciliation in the debriefing process, I was very touched and grateful.

(contributed by Sr. Ann Thomson SSA, Victoria, BC)

CONNECTED
LEADERSHIP IS WHERE
PEOPLE LEAD BY
BRINGING THEIR
UNIQUE STRENGTHS
AND TALENTS
TOWARD
ESTABLISHING A
RELATIONSHIP AND A
DIRECTION THAT
FULFILLS LIFE. IT
CONNECTS WITH
OTHERS IN A WAY
WHERE THEY HEAR
WHERE YOU'RE GOING
AND WHERE YOU'RE
TAKING IT."
GAIL CANTOR

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Each of us has an image of who a leader is or what qualities and talents a leader possesses. This image is formed early on in life, formed from our interactions with parents, teachers and other authority figures. From our experience, we create an image of a leader.

We might say that a leader is someone who is in power, who is educated, who is strong, who is brave, who can call forth other people. A leader is someone who is organized and who can handle things. A leader knows where we should be going.

And we might even believe that leaders are born. We even speak of someone being a "natural" leader, as if it is something that they received as a gift when they were born. Often, we look at our image of leadership qualities, and think, "I don't have those gifts", so I am not a leader.

What we are dealing with here, is not leadership, but rather our "concept of leadership". This concept has actually prevented us from expressing our own leadership qualities, because they do not fit the model that we have!

The truth is, leaders are not

born, leaders are developed. Each of us is a leader! We just need to engage in a new conversation around leadership, a conversation that shifts us into a space of creation, rather than perpetuating the old models.

Leadership is a performing art—a collection of practices, behaviours and conversations that are developed over time. Through this performing art, there is a mobilizing of oneself and others to want to alter something that requires choice and intentionality.

Leadership is always in creation, never a static concept!

RTS WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

We are in the process of developing a public area of our RTS website!

Up until now, access to the website has been limited to RTS trainers and board members. Moving forward, we are in the process of developing a public area of our website.

We brainstormed a list of things that we would like to see on the public area of the website. This includes (but is not limited to!):

Home Page—what is RTS, why RTS, Who is RTS, etc., When/Where is the next workshop, How can I get involved

About Us—History, Organization Structure with bio's, Community Partnerships

Participate in RTS—how to participate/contribute, bring RTS to your community, fundraising, become a trainer, etc.

Schedule, Calendar and Map—upcoming workshops, past workshops (with evaluations)

News—news, articles, stats, current & archived newsletters

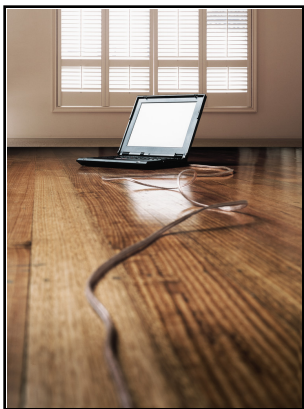
Contact Us—addresses, phone numbers, contact info for Board Members, Executive Directors, Organizational Team, comments/feedback form

FAQs—Frequently Asked Questions

Links—to articles about RTS, etc.

The private area of the website would have access to the same information as the public area, but would also include information on Trainer Development, trainer documents & information, updates from the Organizational Team & Executive Directors, FunD Development information, as well as a photo gallery. The private area would also have full access to the Web Forum.

It will include a content management system which will allow us to update it easily and quickly. We are hoping to have the website up and running (minus any bugs that might appear) by the end of the year.



TRAINER DEVELOPMENT

Since the last newsletter, we have had several Trainer Development events.

In early May, Hollow Water, MB hosted the second half of the training around the Seminar Series. Marc introduced us to the distinction leadership vs. concept of leadership, as well as the power of conversation in moving us forward in our lives. It was a powerful experience, expressed well by Sr. Ann Thomson ssa:

“When I think back on the Hollow Water Training in May, there are two areas that I continue to reflect on.

First of all I found it very

broadening having both First Nations and Church trainers living and attending the Workshop together in a local community. I was also very grateful for the organization and hospitality of the local people.

What has stayed with me is the meditation at the campfire, and reflecting on the vastness, openness of the universe in my life. I left Hollow Water with a sense of creativity and hope.”

In early June, the First Nations and Church core teams attended an Intensive Training in Calgary, for delivery of the RTS workshop. Ten trainers attended and found it a

rewarding and powerful experience. The theme of the week was “simplicity” and we were challenged to recognize the simplicity of the workshop experience: lecture, questions, exercises.

Trainers had breakdowns and breakthroughs during the course of the week! It was great for the two core teams to spend time working, eating and living together.

In August, Aulneau Centre is hosting a seminar training. This will be an opportunity for new and developing trainers to prepare to deliver the Seminar Series in their community. We are moving forward!



SEMINAR SERIES

The Seminar Series, developed as a follow-up to the RTS workshop, has been initiated in four communities.

The purpose of the Seminar Series is to empower the participants to continue to create the future powerfully in every area of their lives, as well as in the lives of their communities. Each participant takes on a project during seminar series. In implementing this project, the participants engage their community and create the possibility of transformation within the community.

The community of Hollow Water First Nation, MB completed their seminar series in

June with nine participants. Projects are assuming life and the transformation in the participants is inspiring the entire team! Hollow Water is planning another Seminar Series in the Fall of 2008.

In Prince George, BC, seven participants are in the seminar series. They have one seminar remaining, the completion seminar, which will take place in early September. In the meantime, they are creating their projects and the future!

In Winnipeg, MB, a group of seven participants completed Seminars 1 to 3 in May/June. The group is taking a hiatus over the summer. In the Fall, Seminars 1 to 3 will be of-

fered again and then the groups will be combined for Seminars 4 to 11.

In Saskatchewan, trainers from Canoe Lake, Waterhen Lake and Thunderchild First Nations, along with Meadow Lake delivered a seminar series to seven participants.

Delivering the Seminar Series was an experiential process for the trainers, enhancing their skills enormously. Trainers developed new insights into themselves and into the work.

The excitement of the participants was contagious as they stepped into the responsibility of creating their futures and their projects!

I IMAGINE THAT
THE PRESENT IS
AS IT SHOULD BE.
IT IS PERFECTLY
UNFOLDING
EVEN IF I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
WHY.
EVELYN
RODRIGUEZ

COMMUNITIES CREATING POSSIBILITIES

It is always inspiring to hear how individuals and groups are incorporating the principles of Returning to Spirit into their everyday lives as well as into the lives of their communities. The following is one such story...

“Something exciting for me here in my community is the work by our grassroots committee of First Nation and Metis members called Kateri Returning to Spirit Committee who put together community events as well as create fundraising opportunities.

Most of the members attend Kateri Aboriginal Catholic Parish but we are open and have members outside of this. Most of them also attended

the workshop on June 19-23. All the fundraising efforts are placed in a fund to support community members in future Returning to Spirit activities.

To date our committee has created and contributed to Kateri Celebrations, Sunday Fellowship, A Mother's Day Merchandise Bingo, Aboriginal Superstar Showcase, National Day of Healing and Reconciliation Gathering.

The committee also ordered a banner consistent with organization with the logo in black background rather than brown, with KATERI Returning to Spirit written on it to display at events.

The have also indicated that they will come on board with me on my Project with my monthly community gathering which will be starting very soon. The community gathering came out of our training with the seminar series in bringing a possibility into a reality.

At this time I am incredibly excited for this event and the future of our community. The more I talk to people about it the greater the anticipation grows for everyone to come and gather. It's awesome!”

(contributed by Denis Chartrand, Winnipeg, MB)



RTS NEWS

There are lots of little bits of news and this is the place to share them!

This fall, several communities will be hosting the RTS Seminar Series (Winnipeg, Hollow Water and St. Theresa Point in Manitoba, Queen's House Retreat Centre, Thunderchild and Canoe Lake, SK).

With the successful launch of the First Nations and Church teams, our ability to facilitate additional workshops moves forward. At this point, the Church team will be delivering workshops:

July 14-18	Winnipeg, MB
Aug 11-15	Dauphin, MB
Nov 3-7	Victoria, BC
Dec 1-5	Saskatoon, SK

The First Nation's team will be delivering workshops:

July 7-11	Canoe Lake, SK
July 21-25	Hollow Water
Aug 4-8	St. Theresa Pt
Sept 22-26	Pr. George, BC
Oct 6-10	Teslin, YT
Nov 3-7	Dauphin, MB
Nov 17-21	Winnipeg, MB
Nov 17-21	Yellowknife
Dec 1-5	Regina, SK

In addition, we are delivering a Reconciliation in Prince George, BC (Oct 23-29).

There are lots of exciting things happening and our overall plan going forward is to implement our FunD Development plan and increase delivery of workshops of outstanding caliber. With that in mind, we are looking at the

possibility of expanding our Winnipeg office to become the base of RTS. We need to expand our volunteer base and Winnipeg is the logical choice, since there are many RTS alumni in the area! We are always looking for people to help us with RTS. If you have any ideas or talents that you'd like to share, we encourage you to bring those forward.

Finally, we are still looking for new names for the “Organizational Team” and the “Executive Director”. We are in development with “creation of organization” rather than “concept of organization” and would like the title to reflect that!

TALK ABOUT THE
JOYS OF THE
UNEXPECTED, CAN
THEY COMPARE
WITH THE JOYS OF
THE EXPECTED, OF
FINDING
EVERYTHING
DELIGHTFULLY
AND COMPLETELY
WHAT YOU KNEW
IT WAS GOING TO
BE?
ELIZABETH
BIBESCO

FUND DEVELOPMENT

Earlier this year, we commissioned a report from Ross W. Marsh and Associates Inc to assess our FunD Development strategy.

Their report has outlined several key areas where we need to focus our energy.

To date, most of our funding has come from the Church (Settlement Corporation, Religious communities, other churches). Such funding is time-constrained and will not be available in the future. As our intention is to grow and develop RTS, we need to develop a long-term fundraising strategy that focuses on donor support (individuals, groups, corporations). Ross W. Marsh recommended that

we focus our attention on developing our donor support base, primarily through special events & direct mail.

They also recommended that RTS increase its public awareness profile. Those familiar with RTS support it enthusiastically. Outside of that small circle, however, people are generally not aware of what RTS does. Even if they do know, they feel that it is an organization that is limited to Residential School issues which is seen as being limited in scope and time. We need to demonstrate the effectiveness of RTS in other areas (e.g. youth). External and internal communications are crucial to growing RTS.

Major donors are also interested in knowing that their support is creating lasting transformation. Ross W. Marsh recommended that we develop our evaluation process, so that we can show the long-term benefits and transformational effects of RTS.

RTS relies heavily upon volunteer support. We have a large pool of participants who have completed the workshop. We intend to create opportunities for them to participate in RTS.

Finally, they recommended that the position of FunD Development Coordinator be expanded to Director of FunD Development. We are moving forward!

NEVER DOUBT
THAT A SMALL
GROUP OF
THOUGHTFUL
COMMITTED
CITIZENS CAN
CHANGE THE
WORLD. INDEED, IT
IS THE ONLY
THING THAT EVER
HAS.
MARGARET MEAD

ORGANIZATIONAL TEAM

The RTS Organizational Team is composed of: Anne Taylor, Lisa Raven, Olive Halpin, Gigi Jakobs and Val Taylor. We have recently redistributed some areas of responsibility.

Val maintains our databases which include: workshop participants, evaluations, addresses, etc. Val coordinates any mail-outs.

Olive is the Church Workshop Coordinator. She is the liaison between communities wishing to host Church workshops and RTS. Olive manages the Winnipeg RTS office and is the keeper of all RTS documents (e.g. workshop & seminar manuals, etc).

Lisa is the First Nations Workshop Coordinator. She is the liaison between communities wishing to host a First Nations workshop and RTS.

Gigi is responsible for public relations, community education, grant applications and FunD Development.

Anne is responsible for overseeing the overall development and management of the organization. In addition, she oversees the training of facilitators, budgeting, financial reports, liaison with NiGann Training Group (Marc) and reporting to the Board, Constituencies & Funders.

Our areas of priority are the development of the RTS web-

site, FunD Development, ongoing evaluations of RTS workshop alumni, volunteer base and communication development.

Communication development is crucial if we are to move forward rapidly. How do we promote communication with the RTS community? How do we communicate with you?

We are also examining the possibility of developing the Winnipeg office. We would be more centrally located, closer to a broader base of RTS supporters and the timing just seems to be right. As we become more widely recognized across Canada, Winnipeg just makes sense!



RETURNING TO SPIRIT—RESIDENTIAL
SCHOOL RECONCILIATION INC.

2024 34th Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta
T2T 2C3

Phone—403-244-3963
Fax—403-270-3963
Email: info@returningtospirit.org
www.returningtospirit.org

Newsletter articles are welcome!
send to: gjakobs@shawcable.com

Thanks to Ann Thomson, Lisa Raven, Olive Halpin, Cecilia Opekokew, Denis Chartrand, Gigi Jakobs and Anne Taylor for contributions & photos in this edition.



Returning to Spirit (RTS) is a non-profit organization that designs and delivers workshops and training programs for reconciliation within the context of residential school issues that have negatively impacted First Nations People, Religious communities and Canadian society in general.

Our focus is on moving people forward through the principles of personal empowerment. This defines all our work, including coaching sessions and consulting, which are designed to support individuals, families, organizations and whole communities to move forward in life.

Our work goes beyond healing. It provides conditions for transformation in personal, family, community, and organizational life.

CONVERSATIONS INTO THE FUTURE

We are all aware of the power of language, the power of our words. Our words have the power to create or the power to destroy. Our conversations have the power to create possibilities or to keep us stuck in no-possibilities.

The truth is, the conversation that we are having today, is the conversation we are having in the future, the conversation we are creating in the future. The words that we speak today are creating the future.

If our conversation is one of resentment, discouragement and despair, then that is the conversation we are creating in the future. That is the mood that we are creating in the future.

Conversely, if we are speak-

ing inspiration or acceptance into the future, then that is the mood that will be created.

What conversation do you speak into the future? Does your conversation create chaos and confusion? Or does it create something else?

So often, we are not even aware of the conversations that we are speaking. "We've always done it this way." "That would never work". Conversations of no possibility that will never allow anything else to appear. Or we can speak conversations of possibility: "We can do it." "Let's try something different." We have the choice. We have the power.

Become aware of your conversation. Become aware of the conversations of those

around you.

Awareness is the first step in transforming your conversation, in transforming the words that you speak, in transforming your future.

Our future rests on the words that we speak. The future of our children rests on the words that we speak. Our children aren't even born, and yet they are already speaking the conversation that we are having today.

We can choose to hang onto the past and to drag more of the past in the future. Or we can let go of the past and create the future. The choice is yours.

Alter your conversation and you alter your life.



BE THE CHANGE
YOU WISH TO
SEE IN THE
WORLD.

MAHATMA
GANDHI