



RETURNING TO SPIRIT

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4 SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

MOVING FORWARD

This month marks endings and beginnings. The summer is ending, holidays are over, and all over Canada children, teachers and parents are getting ready for the start of a new school year.

Returning to Spirit is also beginning a new era in its development. The stuckness of our CCEPIRSS funding has given us a “summer break” of sorts and allowed us to back off and take a look at our program and our development.

Out of that look, we have a better sense of where we are being called and what our future will look like.

In order to accomplish that, we have undertaken several initiatives.

These last few months, we have applied for funding and in-kind contributions to a variety of organizations and are happy to report that we have been successful.

We have received funds from the United Church Justice and Reconciliation Fund which will support the combined Part 1 and Part 2 workshop in November in Beausejour MB. This work-

shop is for Aboriginal Church Ministers and a workshop in which their unique position as bridges between Aboriginal and Church can be honoured.

Several in-kind contributions have been received (Sisters of St. Joseph and Sisters of St. Hyacinthe) and are being finalized (Sisters of St. Ann, Diocese of Hudson’s Bay, Diocese of Pr. George, Diocese of Victoria).

In the area of planning, we spent the last couple of weeks of August engaging in a virtual World Café process. We have six areas where we requested input and feedback from our trainer body. We set up a series of on-line discussion groups and invited 53 trainers and Board Members to contribute their thoughts, ideas ,etc. in the areas of Communications Development, Organization Development, Workshop Development, Trainer Development, Fund Development and Office Development.

The results of the World Café discussion are now going to be taken to a Strategic Design Process in

Nanaimo in mid-September. Gail Cantor from Contegrity Design Programs is coming to facilitate the process.

Out of the strategic planning gathering, which will be attended by about 15 trainers, board members and staff, we will have a much clearer sense of where we are, what is called for, where we are going, and how to get there.

Prior to the strategic design process in mid-September, Gail will be phoning about 10 key people in Returning to Spirit, having a focused conversation about what is up for fulfillment with Returning to Spirit.

Finally, CCEPIRSS representatives are making efforts on our behalf to secure core funding for the next two years. We are hopeful that our funding will become unstuck sooner rather than later, and we will be able to move forward even more powerfully.

In the meantime, we are in a conversation of possibilities!!

COMING UP!

Special Event-October 09 in Saskatoon-details coming soon!

Part 3-Reconciliation- Oct 22-28-Queen’s House, SK

Check our website at www.returningtospirit.org for workshop schedule!



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WHAT CONVERSATION ARE YOU IN??

IF YOU HAVE A
STRONG MIND
AND PLANT IN IT
A FIRM RESOLVE,
YOU CAN
CHANGE YOUR
DESTINY.

PARAMAHANSA
YOGANANDA

Conversation is one of the key issues that we talk about in RTS, whether it is in conversation with ourselves or with others. Sometimes we think we are communicating, but we are really broadcasting. Sometimes we think we are listening, but we are really listening to a conversation that is going on in our heads. Sometimes we think we are participating in the conversation, but we are really talking to ourselves. We listen for an opening so that we can insert our own opinions, judgement, beliefs or relate our own story.

We talk about having a conversation and communicating with people, but are we really? It takes more than one person to have a conversation and if one person is not present to what is being said or

one person is doing all the talking, is that really communication? Not in RTS it isn't!

As trainers within the RTS program, are we really practicing what we speak? Are we owning our power and expressing what we need to say to be complete? Are we involved in the conversations regarding the building of the organization? Are we participating or are we observing what is happening? Is our conversation disempowering us or empowering us? Are we in a conversation of possibilities? As trainers we have a responsibility to walk our talk!

For RTS to become a powerful and life-transforming organization, OUR conversation is necessary to the creation of our future. Even the geese take turns leading and supporting each other in

keeping on the right track, as they fly towards their goal. As with the geese, we need to encourage each other to continue towards our goal of transformation, both as individuals and as an organization. We can bring forward ideas that create and inspire all of us to continue moving forward in a way that empowers all of us. RTS has contributed to each of us from our first workshop. What can we do to give back to the organization? How about we all become involved in the conversation!

You can be involved in the conversation by participating through e-mails; teleconferences; RTS Forum; the World Cafe process and contributing articles to the newsletter. Let's talk possibilities!

(Cecilia Opekokew)

END OF AN ERA—601 AULNEAU

Many RTS Trainers and participants are familiar with 601 Aulneau Street in Winnipeg, MB. 601 Aulneau was the Mother House of the Missionary Oblate Sisters of St. Boniface and also held the Aulneau Renewal Centre. Over the years, RTS has held quite a few workshops, business meetings, Seminar Series and trainings there and for many trainers it had become a "home away from home"! For those who went a bit off the beaten path in Aulneau, there was a hair salon, a pharmacy, an exercise room, laundry facilities and even ironing

boards and irons for those wrinkled shirts and pants!

On July 31, 2009 the sisters left the Mother House and scattered to various temporary living accommodations in Winnipeg and St. Boniface. For the next two years or so, 601 Aulneau will be renovated into individual apartments. Part of the building will house seniors (55+) and part of the building will become the new living quarters of the Sisters when they return.

On May 9, 2009 many of the Sisters and RTS trainers gathered together in the audito-

rium for a celebration. The trainers expressed their thanks for the many years of hospitality on the part of the Sisters and the Centre. The Sisters expressed their thanks for the spirit and energy that RTS people always brought with them when they came. This gathering was greatly appreciated by all and was important in the process of letting go. The Sisters will continue to carry Returning to Spirit in their prayers. Please say a prayer for them during this time of transition! Thank You! Merci! Megwetch! (Olive Halpin)



Sr. Rita and Sr. Cecile—
Missionary Oblate Sisters

RTS GOES NORTH OF 60

Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut hosted a Part I Returning to Spirit workshop this past August.

Chesterfield Inlet was the site of Turquetil Hall Residential School. Twenty-six of its former students came back to Chesterfield Inlet from across Nunavut, as well as from Ottawa and Winnipeg to be a part of an opportunity to heal and move forward from the past.

As team and participants departed in Chesterfield Inlet, there was much emotion from the passengers. We would come to know each other very well in the days ahead. This would be an experience like no other!

As I write this, I am still deeply inspired by the courage and honesty I met in Chesterfield Inlet. The intention on the part of the participants to move beyond the legacy of Residential School was so strong that the week unfolded almost magically. At every turn we experienced ample opportunities to demonstrate the power of incompleteness, reaction/practices and the disempowering energy of our stories.

These people shared from their hearts, shared their pain and their lives with us. They weren't there to dwell on the past but to let it go and to move forward with their lives. In a spirit of partnership, everyone worked together to create a workshop that was transformational.

Each day unfolded another layer revealing the beauty of each person's spirit.

We came together, and despite language barriers, the team consisting of Lisa Raven, Dennis Chartrand, Cecilia Opekokew, Ruth DeVries, Gela Pitsiulaki, Marie-Lucie Uviluq and Charlotte Kattegatsiak created RTS history.

Lisa Raven—Trainer

The best part for me was watching the participants shift, letting go of moods of doom and bloom and opening up like a beautiful rose, eager and excited to learn more about healing.

It was awesome to watch. Even non-participants from Chesterfield Inlet thanked us for bringing the workshop there for helping to take away some of the ugliness that the Residential School brought to the community.

One elder said to me at the airport, "maybe now Chesterfield Inlet will not be remembered as a horrible place anymore".

I was especially touched by some couples who did their completions in front of the groups. They demonstrated that even after years of living in dysfunction, things can turn around for the better and couples can actually look forward to every single day they have together.

You could practically feel the hunger for these people to

heal from the past and I believe the workshop blew them away.

I am so totally impressed by their willingness to share the horrible things they went through and to start their healing journey to be able to love, trust & to finally live in peace.

Thank you to all the trainers for their excellent work.

I can't wait to bring the workshop to other communities!!

Ruth DeVries—Trainer

It was a great honour to host the Returning to Spirit Healing Workshop in Chesterfield Inlet.

The team did an excellent job in sensing the atmosphere of the room and of the speed desired by the participants.

The need for the people of Nunavut to heal from the effects of the Residential School legacy was strongly felt and seen.

I am deeply grateful for the participants because of their willingness to open up and to let go of what was weighing them down in their life.

Charlotte Kattegatsiak
Seminar Series Trainer

I was going to this course more for the trip than anything else, but from the course I feel like I'm a human again with a human heart of understanding.

Simeoni Natsock, Repulse Bay

AN ACT OF LOVE
THAT FAILS
IS JUST AS MUCH
A PART OF THE
DIVINE LIFE
AS AN ACT OF
LOVE THAT
SUCCEEDS,
FOR LOVE IS
MEASURED BY ITS
OWN FULLNESS,
NOT BY ITS
RECEPTION.

HAROLD LOUKES



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Newsletter articles are welcome!

Send to:
communications@returningtospirit.org

Thanks to Cecilia Opekokew, Lisa Raven, Charlotte Kattegatsiak, Ruth DeVries, Gigi Jakobs and Anne Taylor, for contributions & photos in this edition.

Next edition—October 1, 2009



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.

UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Have you moved recently? Changed your phone number or your email address?? Do you want to keep up to date with RTS workshops and information? Want to know when the next Part 3 is going to happen in your area?

If YES, then we invite you to fill out this change of address information and either fax it to us (403-270-3963) or mail it (to one of the addresses above), or email the info to us (info@returningtospirit.org). Otherwise... we can't reach you!

Please print neatly (especially email address)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Ph # (H): _____ Ph # (W): _____

Email: _____

A THANKFUL
PERSON IS
THANKFUL
UNDER ALL
CIRCUMSTANCES.

A COMPLAINING
SOUL COMPLAINS
EVEN IN
PARADISE.

BAHA'ULLAH