

# ISHKUTEU

## Newsletter #2

Kuei, Kwe, Waachiyehkw, Kwai, Hi!

Our training session tour of Quebec is now wrapped up. Since June 2008, we have given the session in 10 regions of Québec. In our second newsletter of the Ishkuteu Project, we present the many initiatives undertaken by the L'Aquarelle Women's Shelter in Chibougamau as well as those in the region of La Tuque in the Upper Mauricie following our session. We also present the linkage strategies identified in the five other regions visited since our first newsletter.

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### Some Examples of Creating Ties

#### Region : Nord du Québec

The team of workers at the L'Aquarelle Women's Shelter in Chibougamou didn't lack ideas when it came to creating ties with the Cree communities of the region.

A team of three workers undertook a visit to three Cree communities to create ties between their shelter and Native resources. One of the workers even did an interview for the local radio to inform the communities about their services. Several Cree even bought membership cards in support of the shelter!

Ginette Laberge, director the the L'Aquarelle Women's Shelter, observed that the visits allowed many things to be demystified on all sides. Above all, it allowed the shelter's services to be better known and understood thus making them more accessible to women of those communities.

But the team didn't stop there! The shelter published an article on its services in the Cree newspaper, the Nation in addition to publishing an announcement of best wishes for the traditional Cree holiday of "Goose Break."

The efforts of the team also touch intervention work, activities and workshops. For March 8, the shelter organized workshops specifically about the Cree culture. Further, the shelter also increased considerably its bank of available translators.

According to Ginette Laberge, the shelter will definitely continue in its efforts along these lines. For them, it's inescapable. These ties must continually be reinforced and others must be created!

**Region : Upper Mauricie**

The Ishkuteu Project visited the region near La Tuque in October 2008 and since then, the Atikamekw are on the move!

The community of Opitciwan is aiming at setting up a women's shelter and following the training session, those responsible for the project were able to create closer ties with the Asperimowin Native shelter as well as the Québec shelter le Toit de l'amitié both located in La Tuque. Ties already existed between workers in Opitciwan and the other two shelters, but according to Sandra Marceau of the Opitciwan Social Services, the quality of the collaboration has changed by virtue of seeing and speaking with the other workers. The workers from Opitciwan went to La Tuque to visit the two shelters to see how they organized services.

In addition, according to Sandra Marceau, the contents of the training session on the phenomenon of residential schools and the impacts of colonization have been integrated into their practices. These are essential elements to take into consideration when working with members of Native communities.

As well, in La Tuque, ties have been strengthened between the shelter le Toit de l'Amitié and the Asperimowin Native shelter. Ties already existed between these resources, but according to Ginette Gérard, coordinator of clinical services of the Toit de l'Amitié, the training session helped create a more direct contact between workers of the two resources. The workers participated in a joint training session on domestic violence intervention for mothers given at Asperimowin.

According to Ginette Gérard, these contacts allow workers to see the similarities as well as the differences between the two shelters. The challenge now is to make sure this contact is maintained. According to her, one has to take care of these ties, improve them and never take them for granted.

### **The Last Training Sessions**

**Region : Montreal / Montérégie****Location of the Training Session : United Church Hall, Kahnawake****Dates : March 19 and 20, 2009**

The training session that was held on Mohawk territory took place in Kahnawake where women's shelters from Montreal and the Montérégie attended. Workers for the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal were also present as well as workers from Mamit Innuat Montreal (a service for Native medical patients) and a consultant on Native history and cultures from Kahnawake.

The discussions centred on the question of how to adapt the intervention offered by non Native resources to better work with Native women and better understand their reality. The Québec shelters of these regions are very familiar with the challenges of cultural differences. The workers were particularly attentive to the importance of understanding the historical and cultural origins of Native women and wanted to know how to make the stay of Native women more comfortable. In addition, the group emphasized what they could learn from Native women staying at their shelter. For example, she could show the others how to make bannock (a traditional Native bread) or handicrafts as well as talking about her culture.

The workers were also very interested in the possibility of doing field placements as well as continuing the initiative undertaken with the training session. While the creation of ties between Native and non Native resources presents particular challenges in Montreal, the participants of the session were certainly not lacking in interest.

**Region :** Capital Region

**Location of the Training Session :** Temporary Offices of the Missinak Community House, Québec

**Dates :** March 26 and 27, 2009

In the Quebec region, the women's shelters already collaborate in many ways. Together they have formed an alliance of shelters in the region, so there are already many ties between the Native shelter and the non Native shelters. Further, exchanges of expertise, services, references and support are common practices.

During the training session a need was identified by the non Native shelters to meet more Native resources of the Wendake community as well as the Native Friendship Centre of Québec. These resources had been invited to the training session but unfortunately were not able to come. The desire to enlarge the network of resources working in one way or another on domestic violence is a priority for this region because the fight against domestic violence cannot be undertaken alone, but rather must be undertaken with others.

**Region :** Gaspé Peninsula

**Location of the Training Session :** Elders' Lodge, Listuguj

**Dates :** April 16 and 17, 2009

The workers from four Québec shelters in this region participated in the training session as well as workers from Haven House, the Native women's shelter in Listuguj. In addition we had representatives from the Mi'gmac communities of Listuguj and Gesgapegiag from the health and social services, a worker from native treatment centre, a Native courtworker as well as a police officer.

Several needs were identified during the session. The question of linguistic barriers was named and experienced as the Mi'gmacs speak primarily English and the Québec shelters are predominantly Francophone. There is a real need to have bilingual workers in the Québec shelters.

The Québec resources would like to have a phonebook of Native and non Native resources to help with referrals. In addition, the possibility of doing field placements raised a lot of interest. An opportunity such as that would allow the groups to create even closer ties. Further, the L'Émergence shelter situated near Gesgapegiag offered to come meet Mi'gmac women for external services in their two communities.

Finally, in addition to inviting participants to the annual pow-wow in Listuguj in July, the non Native resources were also invited to attend and promote their services during the Well-being Fair organized by Haven House the day before the pow-wow.

**Region :** North Shore

**Location of the Training Session :** Shaputuan Museum, Sept-Îles

**Date :** May 14 and 15, 2009

The representatives of Native resources and shelters were numerous at this training session. Members of several different communities participated, including Uashat, Maliotenam, La Romaine, Mingan and Schefferville. At the Shaputuan Museum in Sept-Îles, the training session took place in an emotion-filled

atmosphere. Several Innu women recounted their experiences in residential schools. The content of the session took on even more meaning. The intergenerational impact of colonization and residential schools are essential to understanding current Native realities.

The region around Sept-Îles offers a variety of services and resources to its inhabitants and the situation is similar in the communities of Uashat and Maliotenam. However, the reality of distant communities of the North Shore is completely different. The identification of the problem of accessibility of resources was of major importance during the discussion of how to create lasting ties. For example, transportation is a major problem for a person needing medical care or needing to go to the closest shelter situated in Sept-Îles. Further, since distances are so great between Innu communities of the North Shore and Sept-Îles, there is a need for transition resources for emergencies such as a situation of domestic violence during the night or in a crisis situation. In the short term, the Native and non Native resources present at the session established the importance of visiting all the Native communities of the North Shore in order to raise awareness and prevent domestic violence as well as promote their services.

**Region :** Outaouais

**Location of the Training Session :** Community Hall, Kitigan Zibi

**Dates :** May 19 and 20, 2009

Very strong ties already exist between the Québec shelter Halte-femmes of Maniwaki and the Native shelter Waseya House of Kitigan Zibi. Serving the same territory, the two shelters regularly help each other. For example, when one of the shelters is full, the other is always there to offer its support and offer temporary shelter to new residents. On several occasions, the coordinator of Waseya House replaced a worker at Halte-femmes. As well, a worker from Halte-femmes and the coordinator of Waseya House sat together on a committee that worked to set up a CALACS (an organisation that helps survivors of incest and sexual assault) in the region.

During the training session, a youth worker at one of the shelters said she would be very interested in doing a field placement in a Native shelter in order to better understand how they work with Native children.

In addition, since there are several Algonquin communities in the region, the shelters identified the need to promote their services in these communities in order to offer a wide range of services to the Native women facing domestic violence and associated problems. Visiting the communities would also help raise awareness of the Native populations concerning domestic violence.

Finally, the Wanaki Treatment Centre would like to visit Halte-femmes to promote their services and in return, a worker from the shelter could go to the centre to inform and raise awareness among its clientele regarding domestic violence, and this, on an on-going basis.

The efforts that you make towards improving services for Native women and their children facing domestic violence are greatly appreciated. We would like to encourage you to pursue your work and know that the Ishkuteu Project is happy to help support you in your efforts to create lasting ties between Native and non Native resources.

A big thanks to all of you! In every region the warm welcome we received and your participation were indispensable to the success of the project.

You've initiated other activities since the publication of the last newsletter? Let us know what you are doing by writing to us at : [ishkuteu@uqam.ca](mailto:ishkuteu@uqam.ca). Others may be inspired by your initiative.

For more information or to answer your questions, call us at 514-987-3000, extension 4877 (Julie) or 2479 (Jennifer).

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*ISHKUTEU is a project carried out in partnership between Québec Native Women, Inc., the Fédération des ressources d'hébergement pour femmes violentées et en difficulté du Québec, the DIALOG Network and the Community Services of UQAM.*

## **A Field Placement in a Native or non Native Women's Shelter would interest you?**

For its final year of activities, the Ishkuteu Project is offering the possibility to do field placements of several days in a Native or non Native shelter depending on your training needs in the field of domestic violence intervention with Native women.

- You are a Native or non Native counsellor who would like to improve her intervention skills with Native women and their children?
- You are sensitive to the realities of Native women and their children?
- You have initiative and you are ready for new experiences?

A field placement is for you!

### **How to participate :**

Send us a short texte by e-mail, fax or ground mail describing your interest in a field placement in either a Native or non Native shelter. We would like to know your needs and reasons that make you want to participate. The Ishkuteu Project may be able to assume some of the costs associated with the field placement.

**Please send us your request before September 4, 2009**

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