
CELEBRATING OUR STORIES: □



Building a Healthier Yukon
Together

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WELCOME!

Welcome to the stories in this booklet. These stories offer readers insight into some of the creative, fun and inspirational initiatives that are contributing to building a healthier Yukon together. It is our hope that these stories will lead to discussions and actions that inspire others to create their own success stories!

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Why Share Stories

When we share stories, we invite others into the experiences and thoughts of the storyteller. Stories are powerful—they encourage social connections, share information, teach values, and instill beliefs. Although story telling is an ancient form of communication, it is everywhere: in the news, in magazines, on the radio and around the campfire. We can tell, write, blog, twitter, video, or paint our stories. And the stories that we share, teach, motivate, and inspire others.

“The head does not hear until the heart has listened. Stories open up the heart so the head can hear.” Italo Calvi

This booklet shares stories about healthy ways of living in Yukon communities. It shares stories from the people who were, and still are, engaged in making the stories happen. More than twenty healthy living initiatives across the Yukon were researched through this project. The initiatives tell stories about gardening and sharing healthy food; creating supportive relationships for young women; learning about First Nations culture and taking part in traditional activities such as hunting; supporting working adults to be active; and instilling in our youth the value of being active for life. A small selection of these stories is offered in this printed format for Yukoners to enjoy. Extra care was taken to represent the stories and the people accurately, and there was permission given for the stories to be shared.

When you read the stories, remember that each one started with one person and an idea. Powered by enthusiasm and commitment of people to an idea, a story emerges. The stories in this collection blossomed and were successful because of partnerships, community participation, volunteer involvement, leadership, supportive funders, and programming responsive to the needs and interests of the community.

These stories are shared as it is hoped that they may inspire others to be creative and to engage their communities in ways that foster healthy environments. Please read and enjoy these stories. Share them with others. Learn from them. And, celebrate the people, groups and communities who made them real.



LITTLE SALMON CARMACKS FIRST NATION GREENHOUSE & FARM OPERATIONS



Snapshot

Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation's Greenhouse and Farm Operation project has evolved over the past ten years. Its facilities include a greenhouse, garden and cold storage. With a supervisor and seasonal staff, the project takes pride in the quality and variety of vegetables produced. Vegetables are distributed for free in a way that promotes healthy eating habits. There are never enough vegetables to last into the winter.

With strong support of Chief and Council, this project continues to be a source of community pride and ownership. A good indication of its success is when visitors to Carmacks ask to see the greenhouse. Furthermore, other Yukon communities have asked Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation for help to develop their own community garden projects. If these projects can access funding, paid staff, volunteers and support of their community, it is likely that they too will experience the benefits of community gardening and growing.

Our Story

Back around 2000, we used to wonder what would happen in our small community of Carmacks if we couldn't get access to healthy foods, or to any food, for a while. We used to ask ourselves how we could support the health of pregnant and nursing mothers and their children. We used to wish that it would be easier for people living with diabetes to make healthy food choices. With some good thinking and hard work, and with Dawn Charlie to help secure funding from the Yukon government's Community Development Fund, Health Canada and Agriculture Canada, we developed our community greenhouse and garden.



garden produce potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, corn, turnips and celery. Believe it or not, in this Northern community, we also grow honeydew melons! The tomatoes we grow have been tested against tomatoes from British Columbia and found to be similar in nutritional value and quality.

Growing our own vegetables gives our community a local food source. The vegetables are safe to eat as we don't use any pesticides. Our vegetables are always fresh; they haven't spent seven days in a truck coming up the Alaska Highway to Carmacks! During the summer months, we encourage healthy eating habits in our community by giving our produce to people living with diabetes, to those receiving

Meals on Wheels, and to single and/or nursing mothers. As it is important to us that everyone enjoys quality, healthy food, we share any remaining produce with our First Nation citizens and the public. Even though we have a cold storage area, we never have anything extra to store as all our root vegetables are used long before they need cold storage.



Today, we are proud of what we have developed. We have built a greenhouse, a garden and a cold storage area. Our greenhouse and

Without full support from Chief and Council, the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation's greenhouse and farm operations would not be what it is today. Alice Boland, our Greenhouse and Garden Supervisor, manages the program and has been involved for more than ten years. As well as Alice, our project provides work to seasonal employees. It gives local students and social assistance recipients an opportunity to learn about the ways of gardening and greenhouse operations, to gain experience and skills, and to contribute towards the health of their community.

We are learning that the greenhouse project is an inspiration for other Yukon communities as well as our own. Many of our citizens have gained lots of knowledge and skill around growing and gardening. A number of our Elders now have raised garden beds on their own properties. Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation has even been approached by other Yukon First Nations to help develop and implement plans for similar greenhouse and garden projects in other communities.

In 2010, Alice was awarded "Yukon Farmer of the Year" for her work in Carmacks. Alice believes that gardening contributes more than just food to a community's well-being. Gardening offers healthy foods to nourish the body. The process of growing connects us to the Land. When we garden, we learn patience. Gardening can be physically demanding; requiring muscle strength and flexibility.

Gardening together year after year, in an effort to provide for our families, strengthens our social connections. As Alice knows, it is healthy and relaxing to be around plants and to visit with others at the local greenhouse and garden.





For More Info

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GIRLS NIGHT OUT

FARO



Snapshot

Girls Night Out is a volunteer-led initiative in Faro targeting girls aged 11-17. It aims to encourage general wellness and provide support for healthy development of girls in Faro. At GNO, girls meet other female role models/mentors who lead activities such as music and making moccasins, and facilitate discussions on topics such as sexual health or physical activity. Developing relationships with other women builds a network of support for girls in this remote community. In addition to these relationships, a broad range of activities fosters self-confidence, healthy life skills and leadership skills.



Based on the success of GNO, there are plans to develop and establish GNORTH. GNORTH will be a Yukon, girls-only organization housed in Faro supporting the development of girls' groups in all Yukon communities. Anyone interested in supporting GNORTH is invited to contact Heather or Kirsten.

Our Story

I started Girls Night Out—GNO as the girls call it—in Faro in 2005. With help from Kirsten, we volunteer our time to coordinate this support group for girls aged 11-18. I remember being that age!

In Faro, there are about 17 youth aged 12 to 18. Faro is 400 kilometers from a grocery store, a McDonalds or Starbucks, from a clothing store or pharmacy. We don't have hairdressers, dentists, doctors, or counseling services. We don't have a movie theatre, bowling alley or spa. We do have a youth centre and seasonal facilities: a swimming pool, golf course and skating rink. With the size of our population, team sports are out of the question. Our youth tend to become bored and comfortable with boredom, but this creates a fear to do anything outside of one's comfort zone; it makes it hard for our youth to imagine a different life.



Because of constant exposure to society's highly sexualized images of women, many young girls become highly critical of their bodies, undermining their confidence and increasing feelings of shame, anxiety and self-disgust. As girls approach their teen years, their self-confidence plummets and rates of depression soar; more than half of all girls say they wish they were someone else. Negative body image also makes girls less likely to be physically active.

Our goal at GNO is to help girls become strong, powerful Yukon women who will work to create positive change in our communities. We want to address the challenges of boredom and of stereotypical, sexualized images. The best way we can do this is through a girls- only program where girls feel free to talk, explore, create, and achieve without worrying about how they look or what boys think. With the right kind of help at the right time, girls can stay safer, improve their mental and physical health, challenge stereotypes, and successfully navigate adolescence. Through a variety of different strategies, we believe that our girls can discover their talents, their beauty and their strengths, and that they will be leaders in their communities working towards healthier futures.

GNO meets weekly for workshops, discussion, crafting and networking with other women and groups. We invite resource people to our meetings. We have made crafts with the Victim Service Worker and hosted a Q&A night with the Mental Health Worker. Some of the workshops on our Girls Nights have included Dating Violence, Nutrition, Smoking, Improv Theatre, Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Healthy Relationships, Birth Control Methods and Aerobics. Women have shared their talents and hobbies

with our group; we have made sushi, mittens, jewelry, lip balm and feather hair extensions. The result is that the girls now know a network of resource people and female mentors who are there to help and can be approached whenever needed.

To help combat isolation and boredom in Faro, we take trips and host special events. About four times each year, we explore Whitehorse. We shop, get our nails and our hair done, eat yummy food, attend plays and musicals, or go to a movie. We go swimming, skating, downhill skiing, horseback riding and sometimes rock climbing. These trips are a strong bonding experience and give us ways to learn new things. In June 2011, we coordinated the first Empowering Girls Through Music Camp. This brought 45 girls from across Yukon to our community for a weekend to learn music. Our activities are supported by fundraising and grants such as Yukon's Youth Investment Fund and Arts Fund.



At GNO, we try to be leaders in our community, making Faro a better place to live. We donate our time for community events, we host community lunches, and we make baking to donate to people. In our community of only 400, we have 28 past and present members of GNO; this represents 100% of girls who have lived in Faro during the past six years.

Our vision is to support all Yukon girls to become the healthy, vibrant and strong leaders we need now and in the future. We plan to accomplish this by expanding GNO and creating GIRLS NORTH, a non-profit society that will help girl-support groups start and thrive in all Yukon communities.

Join us... help us make this dream happen!



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WINTER CULTURE CAMP

ELIJAH SMITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WHITEHORSE



Snapshot

For more than a decade, the grade seven class at Elijah Smith Elementary School in Whitehorse has been privileged to go out on the land and share the culture, values and traditions of Yukon's First Nations people. Over the year, students build their knowledge and skills in preparation for the annual Winter Culture Camp and bison hunt. The experience combines academic work with an experiential component never forgotten by the students who participate. At school, at home and in the community, the students, staff, parents, businesses and governments work cooperatively to make this a true community-based learning experience.



Our Story

Our annual Grade Seven Winter Culture Camp/Bison Hunt has made history. Since 1999, grade seven students, school staff, parents and community members have planned, prepared and participated in Elijah Smith Elementary School's annual Winter Culture Camp, the highlight of which is the bison hunt. Last year, we expanded our title from what was known as the Bison Hunt to the Winter Culture Camp to better reflect the fact that the hunt is only part of a much larger endeavour. A core component of our school's grade seven curriculum, this activity takes students out on the land every March where they



learn and share the culture, values and traditions of Yukon's First Nations people. The opportunity provides hands-on application of science, English, physical education and math, and reinforces attitudes such as respect, patience and cooperation.

Students spend a majority of their grade seven year building their knowledge and skills in preparation for the winter camp and bison hunt. Whether around the campfire with an Elder, out on the hunt with a guide, or in the classroom with their Southern Tutchone language teacher, students learn about the history of the traditional territory of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. During school hours, students obtain their Hunter Education and Ethics Development (HEED) Certificate; participate in bison workshops at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve; learn about ecology, statistical analysis, report writing and biodiversity; and research the unique ecosystem which supports the Yukon's bison herd. The culmination of this learning is the hunt itself.

Students, teachers and adult supervisors leave Elijah Smith Elementary School (ESES) elated at prospect of spending time in the wilderness and with the opportunity to bring back a huge quantity of bison meat! Five days and nights at the north end of Aishihik Lake offers an environment for winter camping, hunting and harvesting bison. The hunt is scheduled for early spring while travel on snow and frozen lakes is possible yet when days are longer and usually warmer. The Aishihik Lake setting provides the additional experience of winter fishing—learning how to set nets and how to harvest a catch—as well as snaring, setting up a brush camp, and many other camp related activities. All the meat from the hunt is brought back to be hung and butchered by the students. The meat is then prepared by the group and shared in a community feast at school.



The teachings and experience the students learn are seedlings that we have been nurturing from the beginning of their time with us at ESES. We try to teach children how to care for and love our natural world. Through participation and listening, students are given the chance to learn the First Nation land based perspectives that hold the earth and its inhabitants sacred. At ESES, we envision students who have solid teachings on the interconnection of life, the impact of their actions on the

world, the power of nature and its inhabitants to survive and thrive, and the importance of cooperation and mutual respect that goes into running a culture camp.

Each year, we are fortunate to receive assistance from many people, businesses and organizations. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation allows us to camp and hunt in their traditional territory. Elders join us at our camp, willingly sharing their wisdom and knowledge of traditional ways. Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Elijah Smith School Council and RCMP lend support to the event as do Yukon's Departments of Education and Environment. Local businesses and organizations each contribute in their own way. It is doubtful, however, that we could pull off this annual event without the many parents who always pitch in ... cooking, packing, organizing, transporting, cleaning, putting away gear, and more.

The team effort created each year offers a valuable and exciting opportunity for our students and our school. It brings our school community together in a very traditional manner around the hunt. First Nations, local businesses and territorial government all work with students, staff members and parents to provide a genuine experience on the land. This activity succeeds because of the extensive cooperation on the part of all involved.

Our Winter Culture Camp is a highlight of the elementary school experience for many of our students. Students are exposed to the realities of living and surviving in winter conditions which include very cold temperatures, darkness, and general physical hardship. Through the process of the hunt and the traditions surrounding it, students gain a better appreciation of the traditional First Nations lifestyle and the need to work together.



For More Info

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WINTER SPORTS FOR LIFE: CROSS COUNTRY SKIING



Snapshot

In the fall of 2009, Cross Country Yukon and the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon initiated a project designed to foster a love of being active in the outdoors during winter months. Winter Sport for Life supports opportunities for school-aged children and youth living in Yukon's rural and First Nations communities to cross country ski. Designed to foster physical literacy and lifelong participation in physical activity; about 40% of Yukon's rural children and youth have already participated.

The partnership between these two organizations; a strong desire to foster active lifestyles in rural communities; and a dynamic, dedicated coordinator are key factors in the success of this program. Other elements contributing to its success include the Ski Lending Library, honoraria for local leaders, access to coaching courses, coordination within communities, and supportive school administration and staff. By far, the biggest challenge facing this project is the uncertainty of funding from one year to the next.

Our Story

Cross Country Yukon is the sport governing body for cross country skiing in the Yukon, and part of our mandate is to promote recreational cross country skiing throughout the Yukon Territory. We had been trying to establish successful, permanent programs in the communities for many years, but we found that sending out our volunteers to run clinics and development programs just wasn't effective in keeping the programs going. We needed to do more.

In 2009, we started talking with the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) about improving opportunities to cross country ski in rural Yukon. At the time, RPAY was concerned about a study they had commissioned that indicated most Yukoners were very active during the summer months, but not in the winter. In fact, the study found that during winter months, a significant number of school-aged children were not physically active except at school. They wanted to do something positive to change that statistic, and we felt that our sport could be part of the solution.



Cross country skiing fits in with Yukoners' values and patterns of physical activity. Cross country skiing doesn't require a team or even a partner; it doesn't require a facility or a set amount of time; it is a sport that can be enjoyed whether you are two or 92; and it is done out in the abundant, easily accessible Yukon outdoors.

The Northwest Territories Recreation and Parks Association had developed a program with a ski lending library and leadership training and delivered it successfully in many small communities. We thought that a similar model could encourage young Yukoners to be active in the winter through a sport that is easy to love.

So, in the winter of 2009-10, Cross Country Yukon (CCY) partnered with RPAY to develop physical literacy skills through the sport of cross country skiing. We increased our outreach to Yukon's rural and First Nations communities, developed a Ski Lending Library, and found local leaders willing to run ski programs in their own communities. And this winter, thanks to RPAY and Yukon Government's (YG) Sport For Life grant, we now have been able to hire a part-time Community Program Coordinator to work closely with all of our rural communities.



The Coordinator's job is to talk with communities and see where they are at in terms of cross country skiing. Does it happen? If yes, what are the local resources and strengths? If no, what are the challenges that are holding them back? Once the picture is painted, our coordinator then works with a variety of community members to come up with ways to get over or around those hurdles. Each community has its own challenges; from lack of equipment or warm clothing, to lack of appropriate trails, to lack of a committed community member to lead the program.

Last year, thanks to our amazing partnership, RPAY provided funding to help create the CCY Lending Library which our Coordinator manages. Today, we have a stock of over 120 boots ranging in sizes from child's 10 to men's 12+, and about 75 pairs of skis in hopes of finding that perfect fit for everyone. This brand new gear is loaned out to communities on a first come first serve basis with a small deposit which is refunded when the gear is returned. It's that easy. That's one major hurdle dealt with.

In addition to managing the library, our Coordinator promotes cross country skiing to rural Yukon's schools, recreation departments, First Nations and after school programs. Using local leaders to deliver local programs is encouraged. CCY has a mentoring program for rural coaches, and our hope is that after a few sessions with a visiting CCY coach, local individuals will gain skill and confidence and be inspired take a coaching course, which we can also provide, enabling them to develop and maintain their own local programs. In several cases, RPAY provides an honorarium to local leaders through its RHEAL Leader program (RHEAL stands for rural healthy eating active living). And here is another barrier overcome.

During the first season of our partnership, 165 children and youth from four communities participated in cross country skiing either during or after school. In our second season, 285 children and youth from the communities of Carcross, Champagne Aishihik First Nation, Dawson City, Haines Junction, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Tagish and Teslin skied. And this season, our numbers have skyrocketed. Already we have reached more than 400 youth in 11 rural communities thanks to our fantastic, energetic Coordinator and our partnership with RPAY and YG.

Our Winter Sport for Life program is still in its early stages of development. Our biggest concern for this program is the ongoing uncertainty about whether or not there will be funding from one year to the next to support it. It can be very disappointing for rural communities to plan for and benefit from a program like this, only to have it withdrawn the following year. We welcome any partnerships that may help us sustain this programming.

Any time a child is outside and being active rather than in front of a screen, it is healthy for the child and the community. Any time you get a sports organization supported by a group like RPAY partnering with First Nations, schools, Recreation Departments, community and family members, and all are working towards one goal of getting kids moving, it creates a healthy community environment. And seeing the smiles on the faces of the youth in our programs, enjoying skiing and being active during our Yukon winters—we know our program is working!



For More Info

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HOPE CENTRE ROSS RIVER



Snapshot

Ross River's HOPE Centre is a new, multi-purpose, drop-in facility. The centre was built with donations and with funding from Yukon Government's Community Development Fund and opened just before Christmas 2011. Development of the HOPE Centre was based on a vision of a safe, healthy community gathering place for all residents.

There were both successes and challenges in making this dream a reality. Funding took time to acquire. Acquiring building materials and skilled trades-people takes more time in a remote community. However, because of the dreams and vision; the commitment and perseverance; and over 6,000 volunteer hours invested by people who had a desire to see the project come together; the HOPE Centre is now a welcoming, warm location with programming that is bringing the community together.



Our Story



“The Ross River HOPE Centre is committed to creating a space that is welcoming, healthy, and safe for all the people of Ross River. We strive to actively engage people in our community, so they feel a strong sense of belonging, by helping them find their God-given purpose in life.” It is managed by the Ross River HOPE Society, a charitable organization which believes that true HOPE can only come from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as is stated in I Peter 1:3 of the Bible. This verse reads, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”.

HOPE stands for “Helping to Overcome Problems Everyday”. When planning and fundraising for the Centre, the goal of the society was to have a place where young children could play under the watchful eyes of the Elders; a place where youth could have fun and feel safe. The desire was to have an-alcohol free place where adults could meet, share and learn from one another. It was to be a place which brought people together for intentional interaction with one another.

Funding came from a variety of sources. A large portion of the funding came from the Yukon Government’s Community Development fund and through a partnership with SEND International. The society held many local fund-raisers and raffles, and accepted local donations and help from generous Yukon Businesses. Without the generous support of many, the project would not have been completed.

Construction of the HOPE Centre began May 2nd, 2011. The majority of the construction was done with volunteer teams from the United States and Canada. Individuals and families came to help with the project from Teslin, Dawson City, Faro and Whitehorse. People from the community helped with unloading of materials, taking garbage to the dump, insulating, plumbing, painting, installing ceiling tiles and a variety of other jobs. Many times during the course of the construction it seemed as though the work would never end. But thanks to the many willing hands and dedicated hearts, the project continued to go forward.

On December 7th, the society held a community open house to proclaim the HOPE Centre (almost) finished. The next day, just in time for the Christmas season, the building was certified for occupancy by the Yukon’s Building Inspector. An official grand opening celebration is planned for March 17th, 2012 at 2:00 PM.

People in Ross River are excited to have a HOPE Centre. Now that it is open, it is offering a variety of programs and activities. Some of the programs include Healthy Cooking/Living classes, sewing/craft nights, an after school homework/play program, as well personal one-on-one counselling. Each Friday evening it offers a family game night/coffee house where families can enjoy a hot drink, play games, work on puzzles, play a guitar, electric piano or simply visit with others.

The HOPE Centre offers a carpeted area equipped with Lego, Little People, Mega Blocks and Lincoln Logs where young children can playing while mom and dad interact with others. There are many board games and a game table where young and old can challenge each other at checkers, Monopoly, chess, Scrabble, ping pong, table soccer and other games. It has homey, community meeting room, a fully equipped kitchen and two smaller meeting rooms. In the future it plans to be able to offer a café, a daily Elders Tea, concert or movie nights.

Although community building takes a lot of time and effort, it is important to involve the community right from the start. The idea, the planning, the building, and the programming need to belong to the people in whose lives it will make a difference. When we involve community in our plans, our actions and our projects, we inspire hope. Hope makes our communities a healthier place to live. The HOPE Centre is bringing the people of Ross River together.

Thank you to all in the Yukon and around North America who helped to bring this project to completion.



For More Info

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WHOLE CHILD PROGRAM

WHITEHORSE



Snapshot

Whole Child Program is a school-based, family support and recreation program. All recreation programs are free and offered on Tuesdays at Selkirk Elementary School, on Wednesdays at Whitehorse Elementary School and on Thursdays at Elijah Smith Elementary School.

Workshops for parents and youth are offered in partnership with many other community organizations. Free, confidential support is offered to all families in the greater Whitehorse area. For many families who do not have the resources to participate in organized activities, Whole Child Program (WCP) has provided access to recreation, including child care and transportation, for more than ten years. With seed funding from the RCMP, a long term funding agreement with Yukon Government and a core group of dedicated and caring volunteers, WCP provides opportunities in collaboration with other agencies that respond to the needs and interests expressed by families.



Our Story

The Whole Child Program was developed in 2001 to address barriers to learning created by issues beginning outside of the classroom. Whitehorse Elementary School administration, School Council and a Steering Committee representative of different organizations in Whitehorse understood that working closely with the whole family could improve the educational performance of at-risk children. WCP was developed to enhance present programs and raise further possibilities for families. With seed funding from the RCMP National Youth Strategy and multiple year funding from the Yukon Government, its emphasis continues to be on designing and coordinating programs that support families in ways proposed by the families themselves.

WCP is governed by a Board, operates through extensive community partnerships, and has an Executive Director and several contract positions. An office and Family Resource Room are housed at Whitehorse Elementary School (WES). Contract positions are dependent on funding available in any given year, but typically include an Outreach Worker and Recreation Worker(s). The Outreach Worker provides direct support to families by connecting families to the program, to resource people, and to services throughout the community. The Recreation Worker facilitates activities tailored to the different ages attending Open Gym Night, namely young children and teenagers. Through our partnerships, the school and service agencies collaborate to provide supportive programs and services to all students and their families.

For more than ten years, WCP has offered free, family recreation nights at WES. Activities include Open Gym and Computer Nights, Stone Soup Cooking Club, and a range of family-directed programming. Programs such as Red Cross Babysitters Certification courses, dance classes, stained glass workshops, scrap booking, literacy workshops, fly tying, annual gingerbread house building workshops, a variety of cooking classes for parents and children, Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program, Parent-Child Mother Goose, National Family Week Celebrations, and a broad range of workshops for parents are open to any family living in Whitehorse. Over the years, there has been a steady increase in participation from families whose children attend schools throughout the city as well as from families whose children are not yet school-age. It is inspiring to see the number of adults who come and participate with their children.

More recently, satellite programs have started at Elijah Smith Elementary School and at Selkirk Elementary School. In keeping with the philosophy of WCP, both satellite programs respond to the needs and interests expressed by their local community and families. Activities at Elijah Smith on Thursday evenings include Open Gym, Cooking Classes, Crafts for Kids, Open Computer Lab, Sewing and Storytelling.

Beginning in January 2011, Tuesday evening activities at Selkirk Elementary School feature Open Gym, Crafts for Kids, Open Computer Lab and a Red Cross Babysitting Course.



Open Gym Night, an important component of WCP, is made possible through volunteer efforts of school staff and the community and a contract Recreation Worker position of two hours per week. For some families, this is the only organized recreational activity in which they can afford to participate. Swim Nights are another core component of WCP and addresses the barrier of cost for and transportation to the Canada Games Centre. Offered once a month by each WCP program, these outings are great opportunities for children to interact with other youth in the community.

Over the years, we have learned that despite challenges, there are a number of strategies which help ensure success. We know that success is likely when we listen and respond to needsexpressed by the community. We know that extensive partnerships and networking with other agencies are crucial to supporting needs of families. We know that a broad group of dedicated volunteers, with strong understanding of issues that go with poverty, is necessary to meet the diverse needs of families. We have also learned that the Outreach Worker position is essential to target families that might not otherwise feel comfortable participating; that activities must meet the needs of all family members and offer child care; and that providing all activities and services for free, and ensuring access to transportation, helps families overcome barriers and stigmatism related to cost. We recognize that seeking funding requires significant time and commitment and that receiving funds in a timely manner presents a further challenge.

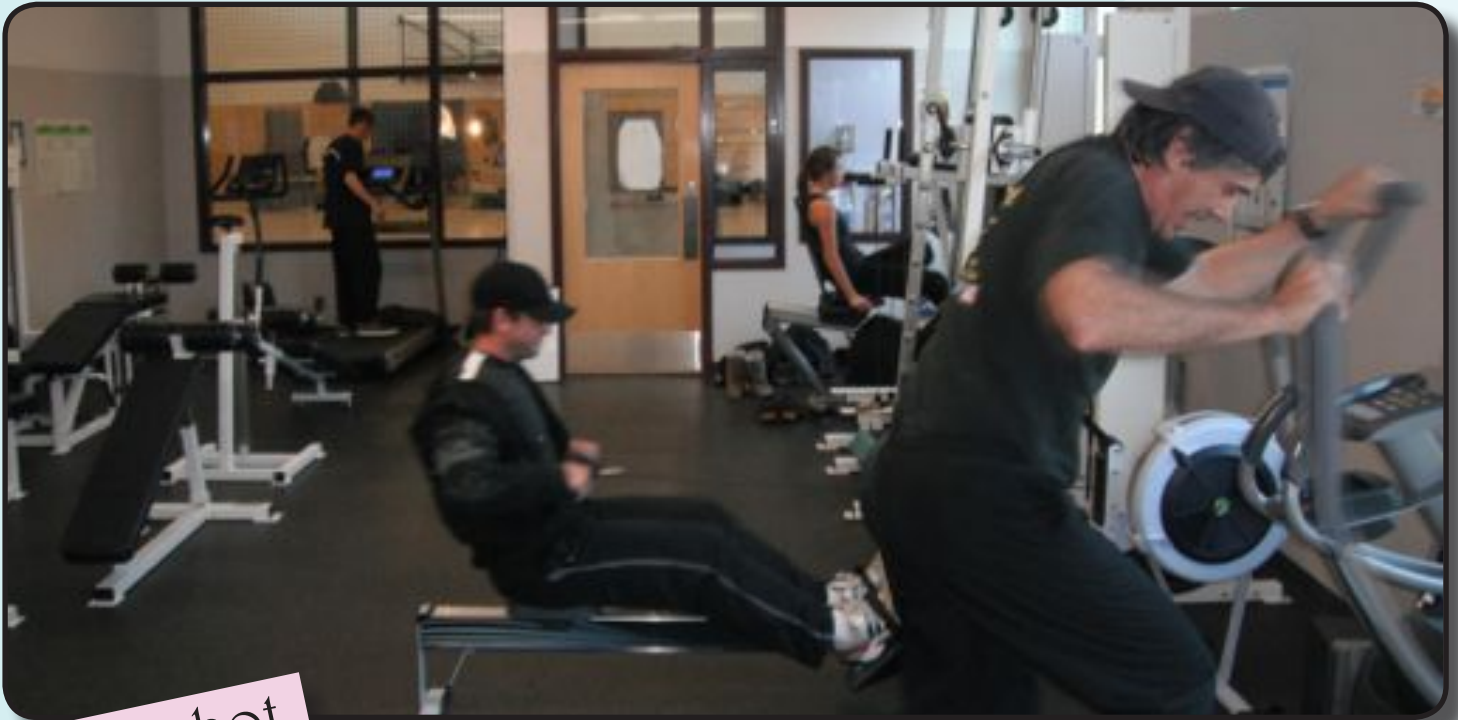
Regardless of the project you have in mind, remember to always design programs as expressed by the community itself and continue to do so no matter how long your program has been in place. People know what they want or need. Building healthy communities is all about developing relationships; the more a family is acquainted with you the more likely you will become more aware of what you can do to assist them. Going to a craft night, a swim night or a cooking class is not just about a night out with the family; it is about creating the informal support networks that we all need to raise healthy & happy children and it is in all of our interests to support families in our communities.

For More Info

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WORKING YOUR WEIGHT

FIRST NATION OF NACHO NYAK DUN, MAYO



Snapshot

Working your Weight is sponsored by the First Nation of Na'Cho Nyak Dun and is designed to encourage and support healthy lifestyles amongst working adults in the community of Mayo.

The program addresses the challenge of only one paid staff to meet a variety of community needs and interests by inviting local people to help lead activities such as cooking classes and walking groups. Involving employers has proven successful as some employers now allow time for employees to be active during the day or to join in healthy workplace luncheons.

Comments from participants illustrate how the program brings the community together and how this social aspect makes it easier to be active and to make healthy choices at work and at home.



Our Story

In our community of Mayo, we sometimes feel isolated and far away from the fancy gyms and big grocery stores found in Whitehorse. Although our community has been thriving in recent years—in terms of business and economics—it is challenging for any small community to provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles that meet the needs and interests of all our residents.

In 2010, the Na'Cho Nyak Dun's Social Department responded to a call for proposals from the Public Health Agency of Canada's Innovation Strategy. We decided it was important to increase opportunities for people to be physically active and to make healthier food choices. We wanted to create an environment that made it easy for families to learn about and choose a healthy lifestyle. Our project, Working Your Weight (WYW), would help make some of these changes by providing support to working adults during the work day.

Early in 2011 we learned that funding for WYW had been granted so we started out to find and to hire our very own Health Coach. Luckily, Danica was enthusiastic about experiencing a Northern community and could move to Mayo as soon as the paperwork to work in Canada could be arranged. Unfortunately, this process took about four or five months longer than anticipated and delayed the project's launch until June 2011.

In mid-June, WYW was launched with a big community gathering. One hundred and eighty-nine people came out to share in the community barbeque and to learn about Working Your Weight. At the community gathering, Danica listened to different requests from almost all the people she met. Requests were made for yoga, a white-water canoe course, Pilates, Aquafit, cooking classes, and orientation to the fitness centre along with requests for classes in the morning, at lunch and in the evening. It has been a bit of a juggling act to balance the diverse requests with the time that one Health Coach has to coordinate and deliver the program!

Since June, Danica has distributed a monthly calendar. The calendar lists fitness classes, cooking classes, walking groups and special events. Danica also makes time to offer individual coaching for people who may not be comfortable in group settings. Keeping track of participation and feedback has helped us learn what types of activities Mayo's adults prefer and what time of day they prefer to participate.

In a community as small as Mayo, it is a success when more than one person participates in a class or activity. Some of the WYW activities that are most popular are



yoga and women's-only fitness circuit classes. Of course, any time food is involved, people always show up. We recognize that even with good participation, there will be times when no one shows up; like a tennis class in the pouring rain, or a walk in the dark at -40°C.

Since June, adults participating in WYW have shared how the program has helped them to feel healthier on a day-to-day basis. Some adults have told us that they sleep better, that they are better able to manage stress. Other adults have talked about feeling stronger or about managing chronic pain through an activity like yoga. WYW activities happen during the work day which means that exercising or making a healthy lunch becomes a social activity. Engaging in healthy activities as part of a group motivates and encourages people to start and to continue participating.

In Mayo, it takes time for the community to get to know and trust someone new. It can be challenging to be a new person in a community and to have a heap of expectations placed upon you and your time. As this project continues, we are striving for a balance between relying on an expert to provide classes and activities and on finding ways to use our local resources—the skills and expertise of many people who have lived here for longer. Ultimately, it is our dream to have support from all employers in Mayo and to expand WYW to other communities. If employers and workplaces make it easy for working adults to be active and eat healthy, these adults will share what they have learned with their children, their Elders and their community.



For More Info

Manager of Social Programs
First Nation of Na'Cho Nyak Dun
Phone: (867) 996-2265, ext. 149

DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE ON ACHIEVING HEALTHY WEIGHTS FOR YUKON CHILDREN

Snapshot

This is a story about bringing people together from across the Yukon to talk and share their ideas and stories of success for promoting healthy living and achieving healthy weights for Yukon children. Close to 50 people came together to listen to inspirational stories and spend the day brainstorming ideas for action. We looked at methods of success and identified challenges. Our brainstorming included ideas that were simple and low cost, ideas that required more resources, and ideas that were just plain wild and crazy. Please check out the Appendix for more details on the results of the gathering.

Our Story

On June 28th, 2011 and again on December 8th, 2011, people from across the Yukon gathered for a "Deliberative Dialogue". This story is about the second meeting in December, where nearly 50 people from across the Yukon, including those from First Nation communities, municipal, territorial and federal agencies and non-government organizations came together in Whitehorse to share stories on community wellness initiatives and build relationships. It was also an opportunity to spark community action for working towards achieving healthy weights for children in the Yukon.

At the gathering, 25 plans for action were developed and committed to from a brainstorming session. The plans focused on key risk factors for obesity:

- o Reduced physical activity
- o Food choices and eating patterns (access, price, knowledge on how to cook healthy foods)
- o Sugar-sweetened beverages
- o Reduced sleep
- o Increased sedentary time (Computer, TV-time)
- o Built environment (Easier to drive than walk)
- o Parental obesity
- o Low income

With a commitment to taking action, it is now our responsibility to seek the funding and resources to develop our ideas and do our plans. For this we need to work together to share ideas, experience, and support.

Some of the stories in the collection of this book were introduced at the Deliberative Dialogue in December. During the day, we discussed the barriers, challenges and successes these initiatives have encountered. This has helped us recognize that each of these projects possess common elements, which contribute to their success. What makes a story successful?

Community Involvement: Projects that are successful involve building capacity within the community and form partnerships both within and outside the community. Community involvement helps ensure the sustainability of the project.

Leadership: A passionate and motivated leader with a vision to take the first step to action is a crucial aspect of successful activities. Recognition and appreciation are ways to keep leaders engaged. Leaders are important but so too are followers – particularly the first two or three who recognize a good idea when they see it, and help make the dream a reality.

Accessibility: Successful programs make it easy to everyone to take part; this means identifying and addressing barriers that make it difficult for some people to participate.

Creative: Activities which are fun, original and start small and build slowly work.

Resources: Although resources may be scarce, successful initiatives draw upon a variety of people and funding sources. Projects are more likely to be sustainable if they are supported at both the community and political level.

For More Info

For More Information
Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research
info@aicbr.ca
(867) 668-3393



How We Carried Out This Work

We began with the goal of sharing ideas and stories about taking action in Yukon communities to support health and well-being. We wanted to share stories about what is already being done and is working, and also think about what we could do in the future to build momentum for contributing to healthier people and communities.

We looked for ideas that told a story about building social networks, supporting healthy living, and connecting with land and culture. We wanted to capture the creativity and work that helped move these ideas to action. We were interested in ideas that involved no, or little cost as well as those that required new or significant funding. Our researchers spent many hours connecting with people in every community in the territory to gather over 20 stories of what is working. Healthy Living stories that have provided written permission will be compiled into an electronic database. The database is designed to add new stories over time and will be housed and managed by AICBR (See *Do you have stories to share?* in this booklet).

Seven of these stories appear in “Celebrating our stories: Building a Healthier Yukon Together”. In each case, our researchers worked with the storyteller to capture their ideas, hopes and challenges in their own words. All stories and photos in this booklet are being shared with permission. With limited time and resources, we recognize that this research is just the beginning and is meant to lay the foundation for future projects and activities. We hope you enjoy!

Do You Have Stories to Share?

AICBR invites you to share your individual and community stories about ways of healthy living and wellness in the Yukon. Share your stories about creative activities or programs, which help people to connect to each other, to the land, to their culture and to their community. Your initiative might target the whole community or just one group in the community such as Elders or youth. AICBR offers a database of stories about ways of healthy living in Yukon communities. If you would like to have your story included, please contact:

Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research

Email: info@aicbr.ca

Phone: (867) 668-3393

Fax: (867) 668-5543

Address: Suite 209, 100 Main St., Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2A7

Let us know...

Some details about how your project or program started and what it is about.

Who participates and how you encourage participation.

How individuals and/or organizations worked together to make it happen.

What challenges you have faced.

What elements have led to your success.

Photos help tell the story. If you would like to share your photos with others, please email us written permission to post the photos electronically. It is important that you have permission of each person in each photo before granting permission to us.



Acknowledgements

A big thank you to...

All the people who were willing to share their stories about how their communities engage in healthy ways of living.

Shannon Duke RN, CDE for seeking stories of success, making numerous phone calls, requesting information, and listening to the stories that were shared.

Caroline Sparks of C. Sparks Project Consulting for compiling information, cataloguing photos and writing the stories with guidance from the story tellers.

Our partners, Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) and Yukon Government-Health and Social Services (Health Promotion and Wellness Strategy) who shared their ideas, provided feedback, and helped to make the celebration of success stories happen.

Participants of the Deliberative Dialogue-Achieving Healthy Weights for Children (DD2), who listened to a sample of the stories, asked questions, expressed a keen interest, and considered just what it is that makes these stories a success.

Lauren Boulanger, graphic design of document.

Avril Orloff, graphic facilitation for Deliberative Dialogue 2.

Bree Blottner, Katelyn Friendship, project management, AICBR.



Resources

The **Everybody Gets to Play™** Northern Supplement shares stories from across the three territories. You can download a pdf version at:

<http://www.yukondiabetes.ca/resources/>

or get one in hard copy from RPAY by calling 668-3010.

Let's Be Healthy Together is a “toolkit” developed by Aboriginal people to focus on preventing childhood obesity from the perspective of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis parents and role models. <http://www.beststart.org/aboriginal/index.html>

The Walk This Way resource guide has been adapted for use by the Ontario Aboriginal population ages 20 and up to make walking a stronger part of their daily lives.

<http://ophea.net/category/topic/physical-activity>

Northern Links is a recreation connection for rural, remote and Aboriginal communities. The website is full of ideas, direction and supportive programming information to help support provide culturally relevant and physically engaging opportunities.

<http://www.northernlinks.org>

10 out of 10 Deadly Health Stories about Nutrition and Physical Activity is a compilation of successful community programs that aim to educate and increase healthy eating, and participation in sport, physical activity, and recreation amongst Australian Aboriginal people.

<http://www.ahmrc.org.au/Downloads/Publication/10outof10healthstories.pdf>

Yukon Government's Community Development Fund has multiple funding opportunities for Yukon-based community projects. Funding opportunities and more information are available at:

<http://www.cdf.gov.yk.ca/>

Yukon Government's Youth Directorate has funding opportunities, such as the Youth Investment Fund listed at: <http://www.eco.gov.yk.ca/youthdirectorate/index.html>

Community Contacts

Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation Greenhouse & Farm Operation

Reach: Dane Dan K'anete (Director) at:

Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation at 867-863-5576

Read more about their project at:

www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/.../vnm08_1318529288952_eng.pdf

www.taiga.net/yourYukon/col427.htm

Girls Night Out, Faro

Reach Heather Grantham at:

(867) 994-2006

tjandheather18@gmail.com

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Faro-Girls-Night-Out/29896724393>

Read more stories about GNO at:

<http://girlsactionfoundation.ca/en/member/faro-girls-night-out>

<http://www.yukon-news.com/life/25225/>

Winter Culture Camp, Elijah Smith Elementary School

Reach Principal of Elijah Smith Elementary School at: 867-667-5992

PO Box 2703, Whitehorse YT Y1A 2C6

Read more stories about Winter Culture Camp at:

<http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/elijahsmith/hunt.html>

Winter Sport for Life; Cross Country Skiing

Reach Cross Country Yukon at: 867-633-8420

4061 4th Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1H1

Reach the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon at: www.rpay.org

Read more about CCY at:

<http://www.crosscountryyukon.com/>

HOPE Centre, Ross River

Reach the Ross River HOPE Society at: 867-969-2111

7 Ross River Ave., Ross River, YT Y0B 1S0

Read more about the Centre's development at:

<http://www.send.org/Colwell/>

www.whbc.ca/wp.../Missions-Newsletter-August-September-2011.pdf

Whole Child Program, Whitehorse

Reach Crystal Pearl-Hodgins, Executive Director at: 867-456-3871

4181 Fourth Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1J7

Find WCP Newsletters/Notices at:

www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/wes/whole_child/newsletters.html

Working Your Weight, First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, Mayo

Reach the Manager of Social Programs, First Nation of Na'Cho Nyak Dun at:

867-996-2265, ext. 149

Find out more about WYW at: <http://www.facebook.com/wywmayo>

Deliberative Dialogue on Achieving Healthy Weights for Children

Reach the Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research at: 867-668-3393

or email: info@aicbr.ca

Find out more at: www.aicbr.ca

ACHIEVING HEALTH WEIGHTS for CHILDREN

DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE #2 - DECEMBER

The purpose of this gathering was to build on the momentum of the dialogue from Agency of Canadian Health Care in their focus on increasing children's physical activity. Other factors contributing to overweightness and child obesity include poor eating habits, sedentary lifestyles, and access to unhealthy food and drinks in the home and schools.

The following factors affect weight in children as identified in group discussions:

- Parents' behaviours at the home
- Video games
- Price of healthy foods
- Access to healthy foods
- Not having time to cook
- Not knowing how to cook
- Addictions
- Trauma
- Social problems and eating disorders
- Social media
- Stress in life
- School environments (and school teachers, choosing food over going for buying unhealthy foods)
- Change in children's physical activity levels (not walking to school, less other kids in the neighbourhood)
- Challenges reading food labels
- Sleep



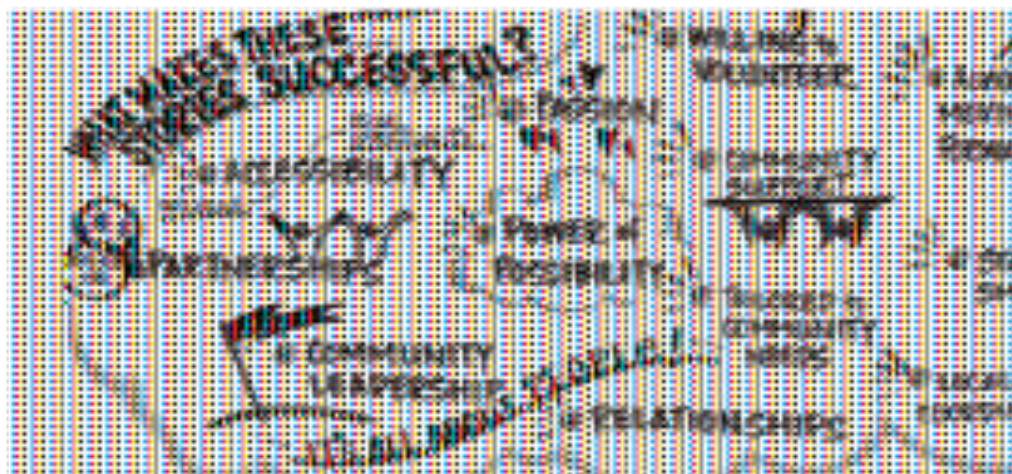
Some areas for intervention

- Non-smoking in front of TV
- Eat together as a family
- Reduce/eliminate sugary and sweetened beverages
- Teach families to prepare to eat healthy
- Build routines and motivate people to make a conscious effort
- One hour of physical activity for children and adults
- Be a motivated and active role model

Some class implementation

- Policy for
- Low cost
- Good of
- It's a cost
- not just
- activity
- Multiple
- Parents
- Learning
- skills
- Schools
- program
- could be

Low cost/ no cost ideas for intervention	Good ideas that require more resources	Wildest ideas for intervention
Family geo-caching, hiking, neighbourhood block party	Teach kids to grow and cook food	Adult playgrounds
Walking School Bus – kids walk the last two blocks to school	Food Pantry training for parents and youth- meal planning and budgeting for healthy foods	Recreation Facilities (like CGC) in all communities with free access, childcare and meals
Community Shopping list with someone going in to town	30 minute of physical activity for all kids in school every day	Use geothermal energy to grow bananas in the Yukon
Dining with Dad classes	Programs classes for women Transition trail system	Sedentary behavior zipper (shocking collar)
Fun, smart family day on a regular basis (kitchen-based)	Learn about composting (including new techniques such as bokashi), gardening, teaching where food comes from and knowing what local sources of food are available	Start circus training and establish a Yukon circus
Fitness challenges at school or work (uses available resources, self-reporting, no prizes-purely motivational)	Cooking classes/community dinner (central location in evenings, daycare provided, cook healthy foods, teach reading labels, fun activities like dancing and music)	Community food bank- includes dry storage, community gardening, and wild game and is free.
Yukon traditional activities: On-the-land gathering/hunting from small children to grandparents	Daily physical activity in schools	Edible landscape
Chalkboard evening programming (i.e. midnight sledding)	Regular community dinners and activity (no blage)	Community "play day" one time a week (no work, no school)



The following were identified as the key elements for activity/program

- **Community Involvement:** Every group identified that programs capacity building within the community, build sustainability in community, build partnerships in and outside the community or interventions.
- **Leadership:** Every group identified that having a passionate and with a vision to move forward is an important aspect of success. Recognition and appreciation are new way to keep leaders motivated.
- **Accessibility:** Most groups identified that programs need to be everyone and that barriers need to be identified and addressed successfully.
- **Change:** also identified that programs need to be fun, original, & build slowly.

What next? Where do we go from here and how can we keep the momentum growing?

- Create a listing of resource people, which people can use for particular expertise: (Inventory of skills and knowledge in the Yukon)
 - DD: steering committee will create a list of the people at DDs
- Make Wellness Strategy website as a resource, attractive
 - Paula Pasquali, Yukon Government
- Send out deliverables and follow up from DDs
 - Jim Langford, Yukon Government
- Create a food security group and work on having a food policy for the Yukon
 - Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research (AICBR) will submit proposal
- Keep connected...people from this meeting and then grow the network
 - Everyone
- Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon's annual Healthy Living Retreat a way to stay connected (October 2011)
 - Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon
- Expand on groups that want to work on ideas together, and keep up the discussions
 - Everyone
- Host theme-based webinars (through Yukon College?)
 - Health Promotion will explore
- Update inventory of vacant low cost housing and accommodation (off market)
 - Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition will explore
- Where are the youth voices? Share the responsibility and engagement with youth
 - Health Promotion and AICBR will explore
- Get together again- annual/bi-annual get together to learn from each other, plan, do, evaluate, and discuss
 - Steering Committee will discuss
- Find funding to figure out where we're at in the Yukon with obesity rates-do an accurate study - Yukon Government
- Kate Swales-peer reviewed research abstracts- happy to send out on a monthly basis if people are interested (kswales@yukoncollege.yk.ca)

TAKING ACTION IN MY COMMUNITY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a vision for the future of your community. • Engage all parts of the community in the planning process. • Determine the need for a strategic plan and set priorities. • Develop an implementation plan with measurable goals and objectives. • Establish a committee or task force to lead the development of the plan. • Identify the resources and funding needed to implement the plan. • Monitor and evaluate the progress of the plan. • Review and update the plan as needed. • Communicate the plan to the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of a strategic plan for your community. • Provide input and feedback on the plan. • Participate in the planning process. • Identify the resources and funding needed to implement the plan. • Monitor and evaluate the progress of the plan. • Review and update the plan as needed. • Communicate the plan to the community. • Support the implementation of the plan. • Participate in the implementation of the plan. • Identify the resources and funding needed to implement the plan. • Monitor and evaluate the progress of the plan. • Review and update the plan as needed. • Communicate the plan to the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a vision for the future of your community. • Engage all parts of the community in the planning process. • Determine the need for a strategic plan and set priorities. • Develop an implementation plan with measurable goals and objectives. • Establish a committee or task force to lead the development of the plan. • Identify the resources and funding needed to implement the plan. • Monitor and evaluate the progress of the plan. • Review and update the plan as needed. • Communicate the plan to the community. • Support the implementation of the plan. • Participate in the implementation of the plan. • Identify the resources and funding needed to implement the plan. • Monitor and evaluate the progress of the plan. • Review and update the plan as needed. • Communicate the plan to the community.
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Action Plans

- Participants in the deliberative dialogue developed action plans for their communities.
- The action plans were collected and shared.
- The action plans were shared with the community.

The Deliberative Dialogue was hosted by:

- Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research
- Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon
- Council of Yukon First Nations
- Tłı̄chǝ Council
- Yukon Government Health and Social Services
- Yukon Government Community Services

With funding from the Yukon Government Community Development fund

For more information or copies of this document please contact info@aicbr.ca



