

“Targeting Safety from Community to Classroom”

March 9, 2009

On April 1st, 2nd and 3rd Saskatchewan’s 4th Annual Safe Schools Conference “*Targeting Safety from Community to Classroom*” will be held in Meadow Lake at Carpenter High School and the Northwest Regional College (806 5th St. W). This conference, the second major provincial conference to be held in Meadow Lake in the past two years, has been put together by a committee that includes administrators and staff members of the Northwest School Division, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Multiworks, the Fourth R, and the RCMP.

This year’s conference features an outstanding group of speakers and seminar leaders who will be presenting on a wide variety of topics. This conference is of interest to all people, from parents and teachers through to social workers and police officers, with an interest in helping and safeguarding our young people.

The conference will begin with a presentation by Jerry Goebel entitled, *The Deepest Longing of Young People*, for parents and conference delegates from 7:00-8:00 P.M. on Wednesday. This presentation is free to any parent who wishes to attend. He will follow up this initial address with two keynote sessions the next morning. Jerry has worked for the past thirty years to address the needs of high-risk youth, and to help young people become vital participants in their communities. He believes not only in the importance of helping today’s youth to develop a sense of value, mission and purpose, but also in the necessity to train adult volunteers, mentors and professionals to work with needy and troubled youth.

The keynote speaker on Thursday afternoon will be Ray Hughes. Ray’s presentation *The Impact of Media Violence on Child & Adolescent Development* will focus on the proliferation of media violence in all its forms and the link to aggression and desensitization of young persons – a problem that is immediately apparent to anyone who has followed the increase in gang violence in our country. Ray is the National Education Coordinator of the Fourth R Project across Canada, and has helped implement violence prevention programs for some 190 schools and 80,000 students. He has also developed and implemented school-based programs related to substance abuse, domestic violence, gender equity, dating violence, human sexuality, interpersonal violence, conflict resolution, and anti-bullying.

On Friday morning people attending the conference will have the opportunity to hear Ms. Tina Keeper, the M.P. for Churchill up until the last election, speak on how she has utilized her skills and her profile to raise awareness on the issues of Aboriginal youth suicide and violence against Aboriginal women. Member of the Order of Manitoba, and full time member of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Ms. Keeper is perhaps most familiar to Canadians as a star on the hit CBC series *North of 60*. Very active politically, her recent work has focused on supporting and producing initiatives in public education to participate in building bridges and improving the well-being of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the province of Manitoba.

Prolific author and international speaker, Dr. Avis Glaze, will provide the keynote address on Friday afternoon. Member of the Order of Ontario, recipient of honorary doctorates from several Canadian universities, Dr. Glaze played a pivotal role in the student achievement gains in Ontario. Her speech, *Our Schools, Our Communities, Our Country - The Role of Educators*, will examine how schools are organizations that not only reflect their community, but also have the capacity to shape those communities and to contribute to nation building.

Participants will be also being able to choose from a very wide variety of excellent sessions and seminars that will run during the conference. Some of the topics to be covered in the 32 sessions include Character Education, Engaging Aboriginal Youth, The Whole Child Initiative, Youth Gangs, Empowering Parents, and the Seven Habits of Effective Teens.

In addition to the main conference a Student Conference, centered on Forum Theatre, will also be held on Thursday, April 2. Students from Grades 8 to 12 from across the province have been invited to participate. Facilitators from Saskatoon will be leading the students in drama activities related to school and community safety.

Persons interested in finding out more about the conference or registering should access this link: http://www.nwsd.ca/Conference_pkg/Safe%20Schools.html.