

SOARING EAGLE TEPACHIMOWIN



Photo Credit- <http://www.firstpeople.us>

RISING ABOVE ABUSE COUNSELLING AGENCY

July 2015

Regional Conference in Ouje-Bougoumou

“I feel free!” exclaimed an elderly gentleman after coming forward for prayer following the session on repentance. He remarked that he has never heard a healing conference address the need to repent of sinful responses to one’s abuse. That day he repented of his wrong choices and felt free.

In June a team of 7, including the Rising Above Band, conducted a regional Rising Above conference in the Cree community of Ouje-Bougoumou, in the James Bay region of Quebec. This conference focused on the generational impacts of the residential school experience. In the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission event in Ottawa the week prior, this conference was very timely. Again, as in all Rising Above conferences, we heard heart wrenching stories of the impact of residential schools and we witnessed God working in people’s hearts to move forward in their healing journey.

One such example was a lady who gave her life to the Lord, a significant breakthrough in a life of many losses. Praise the Lord for his mercy and healing.

Speaking of the impact of the conference, another person remarked, “I began to see where I am in my healing journey... how God has taken care of me and where I am now.” The stories and the sessions brought this person back to the time of the incidents of abuse at residential school but there was deep encouragement and gratefulness to realize the progress in healing.



The sharing circles at this conference were exceptional. These circles offer a safe place for attendees to share part of their story and/or how the conference sessions are impacting them. Their stories are validated and they receive

prayer. Of particular note was the openness and honesty with which the men shared in their circle.

Another highlight of the conference was the testimony and music ministry of Claudette Estelle. Claudette grew up in this community but moved away in her early teenage years after revealing her story of being sexually abused in her home. At 13 years old she birthed a child from that incestuous abuse. Years later she gave her life to Jesus and today God is using her story and her musical talent to reach hurting people.



Howard Jolly, Rising Above Speaker

There is something special happening in Ouje-Bougoumou. God is moving! Chief Reggie Neeposh, a committed Christian, invited Rising Above to conduct a regional conference the community in 2013. From the outset, the vision was to raise up caregivers in the community. Hence, 7 months after the conference a 5 day *Pains of the Heart* workshop was conducted by Northern Youth Programs to introduce basic counselling skills. Following this, 4 people went further to graduate with a diploma in counseling from Providence Theological Seminary facilitated by Northern Youth Programs. These people are the movers and shakers of their community’s own healing initiative. Most of them work in the Wellness Department of the Cree Nation of Ouje-Bougoumou which, in partnership with the Good Shepherd church, sponsored and organized the conference.

Many thanks to the Planning Team in Ouje-Bougoumou for doing a terrific job of organizing the conference and hosting the Rising Above team. Thanks to the Wellness Department and Good Shepherd church for their leadership and funding. Finally, thanks to Chief Reggie Neeposh, as the gatekeeper of the community, for opening the door for God’s healing.

Rising Above Band

The Band had the privilege of putting on a concert for the high school students at Pelican Falls First Nations High School. While we were somewhat apprehensive as to how a band of 55+ year olds would be received by teenagers, we were totally blown away by their responsiveness. Howard shared his heart and testimony between songs and that connected with the students. After the concert we had opportunity to hang out with them and enjoy pizza together. They were warm and receptive. The concert was part of a weekend tour that included a concert and singing at the breakfast fundraiser for Ishaawin Counselling Centre in Thunder Bay. We also took the Sunday morning service at Calvary Baptist in Sioux Lookout.





OCTOBER 3, 2015

A family friendly fundraising event that Rising Above engages in to raise money for Rising Above.

25+ official locations across Canada or you can "ride anywhere". See www.rideforrefuge.org/locations for details.

COME RIDE OR WALK.

Join a Rising Above team or start your own team in your location. Register at www.rideforrefuge.org

Contact Terry Martin for information. 204-371-5708.

Daren George Update

For the first 6 months after his stroke on October 1, 2014, Daren was making remarkable strides in his recovery. Then he regressed significantly, bringing him not only physical pain and discomfort but also much emotional distress. Upon the recommendation from his doctor, he has been admitted into a 6 week outpatient program at JF Strong Rehabilitation Centre in Vancouver. This was good news and what should have happened immediately following his stroke. Please hold him up in prayer through this time for his recovery.



Rising Above Together 2015 - Toronto

Over 20 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal churches, ministries and secular organizations came together on June 18-20 to network and to bring understanding and awareness of Aboriginal issues in order to fulfil the mandate for healing and reconciliation in our nation.

Organizations and denominations presented their ministries while others introduced and discussed on an introductory basis. Various ministries then compared notes and found areas of commonality in the fulfilling of their visions for ministry. Presentation topics included: Impact of Residential Schools on First Nations, Suicide, Racism & Discrimination, Forgiveness, Reaching First Nation communities through Missions Teams, Creating Self-Esteem in Women and Healing from Homelessness/Addiction to Ministry. Evangelist Lott Thunder spoke every evening with encouragement and inspiration from the WORD of God, very applicable to the theme of the event, "A three-strand cord is not easily broken." Ecclesiastes 4:12.



Rising Above is greatly indebted to Reverend Robert Johnston, Lead Pastor of Global Kingdom Ministries, for providing his church for this event.

Individual life-stories and pictures of many of those who spoke will soon be posted on our website at www.risingabove.ca

Ishaawin Counselling Centre

The year of 2015 started off with great expectation that God was doing something new at Ishaawin. The first five months of the year brought numerous changes and new opportunities.

The numbers of clients hours are growing - double what we were typically seeing in the years prior. There has also been a significant increase of intakes- in five months we have seen the amount of intakes that came in over the entire 2014 year. The percentage of aboriginal clients has also increased. Additionally we have seen an increase in couples and families that are coming for counselling. In April we were able to assist a family in crisis from one of the northern communities in a one week intensive counselling program. We witnessed amazing transformations in the family members and their relationships. This was super encouraging and we look forward to more such opportunities.

The partnership between Ishaawin and NorthWind Families Ministries has been positive. Both teams are very supportive of each other. There is more awareness of Ishaawin in the local and northern areas and a greater sense of momentum has also been felt.

In all the amazing things that have taken place, there a number

of challenges that we have faced or are facing. At the beginning of the year, our colleague, Liz Beardy ended her employment with Rising Above to care for her unwell aging father. Although the news did not come as a surprise we were certainly sad to see Liz leave her position as counsellor. We are extremely grateful for her many years of faithful service to Ishaawin.

Although we are presently maintaining our budget and counselling revenues have increased, the continuing challenge is to increase our monthly donor support base and revenues in order to carry us into the future. We came into the current year with a large reserve that will carry us for this year only. Please join us in praying as we continue to seek ways to increase our financial base going forward.

As the newly appointed (as of January 1, 2015) General Director I consider it a great privilege to work under Rising Above and am blessed with such an incredibly talented counselling staff. I am also so grateful for the incredible source of support that Terry Martin has offered since my appointment. I look forward to what the Lord has in store for the future.

Bonita Ledua, General Director

