

Kwanlin Dän Ch'a

"Kwanlin people of Whitehorse, how are you?"



KDFN General Assembly October 29-31, 2010 Nàkwät'à Kų

The General Assembly (GA) for Kwanlin Dün will start with a dinner at 5:30 on Friday, October 29th.

The business of the GA will take place on Saturday and Sunday, starting at 9:00 in the morning.

This year, each department will be presenting their three-year workplan to citizens.

People can learn more about the purpose and powers of the GA by reading chapter 6 of KDFN's constitution. Copies are available in our administration office or online at www.kwanlindun.com.

If people attending the GA need childcare they must reserve spaces in advance. People can also arrange for rides to the GA. Please call 633-7800 and ask for the GA coordinator.

Information packages for the GA will be available as of October 22nd. They can be picked up at our administration office.

Message from Chief & Council

Kwanlin Dün had some great successes this past summer. On June 21st, we wrapped up our Beneficiary Referendum and Council was very pleased to see the best voter turnout KDFN has ever experienced. Work on new laws and policies dealing with investments, land and consultation is a priority for the coming year.

We also carried out two very successful land-based healing camps at Jackson Lake. These camps demonstrated the value of using traditional teachings and spending time on the land to help our people heal. Many of the people who attended the camps are continuing to meet together, drawing strength from each other and being supported by KDFN staff. Our staff are also working to secure long-term funding to allow for ongoing programs out at Jackson Lake.

We are also dealing with some significant challenges. We need to renew our Financial Transfer Agreement with the federal government and are concerned

about positions they will bring to the table. A significant amount of energy and time is required to ensure our new agreement will meet the future financial needs of KDFN.

Child welfare is another pressing concern for our First Nation. After numerous negative experiences, we recently made the difficult decision to ban Yukon government social workers from our lands. Our goal is to ensure the safety and well-being of our children and our families and we are taking all steps possible to make this happen.

Many of these successes and challenges will be discussed at the upcoming General Assembly. The GA is an important way for citizens to review KDFN's progress and have a say in our future direction. Chief and Council look forward to having the same level of informed and active participation in this important annual meeting that we had in our recent referendum.



Putting the Family back in Dusk'a

Last year, the Dusk'a Learning Centre underwent an extensive review and in April 2010 responsibility for the Centre moved from Kwanlin Dün's department of Health to the department of Education.



This means education for our citizens, from early childhood to adulthood, now falls under one department.

During the summer the Dusk'a Head Start Family Learning Centre went through some

physical changes, both inside and outside. The Centre's kitchen was expanded and fresh paint was applied throughout the building. The playground is nearing completion which means both the toddlers and the preschoolers will have their own play area with brand new equipment!

Community members, staff and Chief and Council have all been instrumental in renewing the building and the program. We want to thank all the parents for their patience and understanding during the Learning Centre's transitional period.

New name

Given that the first circle around a child is the family, the name of the Learning Centre has been changed to include "Family". This change reflects the vision of the Centre which recognizes the family as a child's first teacher, the most important one in their lives.

The Family Learning Centre works to bring the family circle into the life of the Centre, and bring the support of the Centre into the family circle.

There was a Parent's Meet & Greet in late September where families had an opportunity to meet with the staff, visit the classrooms, and enjoy stew and bannock. Each family took home a Parent and Child Activity Calendar, an Aboriginal cookbook, quarterly newsletter, and the monthly Southern Tutchone picture language cards

The Healing Journey:

This summer, after many months of planning by Kwanlin Dün Justice and Health staff and community members, two land-based healing camps took place at the Jackson Lake Healing Centre. These camps were part of a pilot project called *Caring for the Circle Within*.

The women's camp, took place over five weeks in July and August. A group of men spent three weeks in September at the centre.

The camps integrated traditional and contemporary approaches to healing. The program was carefully designed to address the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical needs of participants dealing with issues stemming from substance abuse, the effects of the Indian Residential School, grief and loss, violence and/or trauma.

The land-based component of the program was a core part of its design. "The land heals," said one counsellor. "Everything is moving, alive and healing. It knows what we need."

Caring for the Circle Within participants stayed in wall tents that were set up for this project at the Jackson Lake Healing Centre.



Jackson Lake and Beyond

As part of the camps, people also learned to work together, to solve their problems collectively rather than getting direction from the staff.

Healing continues after the camps

During the program, camp participants worked on detailed healing plans, based on the medicine wheel, to guide them on their ongoing healing journey.

At both camps, participants said they wanted the opportunity to get together regularly, for continued support. In response, Kwanlin Dün First Nation started holding weekly women's and men's sessions for people to come together. Participants are continuing to learn new skills, practice crafts and, most importantly, to talk with and support each other.

KDFN recently hired new facilitators to continue this follow-up with camp participants. They are continuing cultural and land-based activities and providing therapeutic support.

Participants are also encouraged to call each other and on the camp counsellors if they need support.

To help Kwanlin Dün learn more about what worked and what could be improved, an intensive evaluation process was built into the program. During the women's camp, participants were interviewed weekly to gather information on the difference the program was making in their lives. Additionally, there are follow-up interviews being done in the months after the program to help evaluate the longer-term impact of the camps.

The First Nation's goal is to offer programs year round at the healing centre. Staff are developing funding proposals and exploring options for keeping the centre open all year so that we can offer ongoing support and services to people on their healing journey. As a first step, a caretaker will be staying at the camp this winter.

The pilot program was funded by Kwanlin Dün, the Northern Strategy Trust Fund, the Government of Yukon and Health Canada.

At the Jackson Lake camps, people participated in activities like drum making, knife making, and butchering and drying meat. People also learned and taught each other about sewing and beading, harvesting traditional medicines, cooking gopher, stick gambling, singing, hunting and fishing



Standing up for our future, together

This past summer, Kwanlin Dün and three other First Nations (Ta'an Kwach'an Council, Carcross/Tagish and Kluane) met with very senior federal government officials to raise a number of concerns about financial issues and intergovernmental relations.

Our four First Nations were the last four to settle land claims agreements in the Yukon. In 2008, we formed a Coalition to represent our common interests. We face significant implementation challenges arising from our mostly urbanized locations, our population size and diversity, and the demands on our programs and services.

The Coalition First Nations are currently concerned that financial negotiations with the seven Yukon First Nations that settled land claims in the 1990s might have negative effects on our future financial negotiations.

Staff and Council members have been working hard to develop and build support for our positions at the federal level. This will be a strong focus in the coming months as we work to renegotiate our Financial Transfer Agreement to ensure appropriate funding for our operations, programs and services.



The National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, spoke at the Building on Success Conference in September. Kwanlin Dün representatives met with Chief Atleo to discuss concerns with the Government of Canada's position on financial agreements and seek AFN support.

KDFN's Report to Policing Review

In September, KDFN submitted a detailed report to the review of the Yukon's police force currently being carried out by the Yukon Government, the RCMP and the Council for Yukon First Nations (CYFN).

The police review was launched last April in response to concerns raised by Yukon citizens about the RCMP and the Yukon government and RCMP's recognition that public confidence in the RCMP is weak.

The review committee has been holding public and private meetings with concerned citizens, stakeholders, and First Nations to gather feedback on things like how to make the RCMP more responsive and accountable to the needs of Yukon people, how complaints about the RCMP are dealt with, what training and skills police officers should have to work in the communities and how the RCMP work with victims of violence, intoxicated people and other vulnerable people.

Kwanlin Dün received funding from the Yukon Government to talk to our elders, leaders, staff and other citizens about their views of the RCMP. The timing for our work was very tight and had to take place in August when many were on holidays or on the land. However, over 100 people participated in seven meetings and interviews that were hosted by the review team. Five more filled out surveys.

We heard positive feedback about police "walking the beat" and getting involved in community events. And we heard many negative stories about racist, rude and abusive officers and the lack of care and safety in jail. In their input, people contributed thoughtful and realistic ideas for improvement and on how to build on current strengths. Our final report to the police review summarizes this helpful input and provides many recommendations.

Since our report was done, we have learned that the timeline for the police review has been extended. Submissions are being accepted until October 31st and the final review report is due by December 31st.

People can request a copy of KDFN's submission to the Police Review by calling KDFN's Department of Justice at 633-7850. Or read it online by going to www.policereview2010.gov.yk.ca. You can find KDFN's report on the "What We Heard" page.



HoL Students Make Dean's List

Full-time college students who maintain a "A" average or better are placed on Dean's List in recognition of their academic achievement,

Delores Grant (*far left*) and Georgina Dawson (*middle*) achieved Dean's List status for their studies at Kwanlin Dün's House of Learning in the fall of 2009. Delores went on to study at Yukon College for the winter semester in 2010 and once again made the Dean's List.

Jason Charlie (*far right*) was named to the Dean's List for both semesters of the 2009/2010 school year at the College. Jason had done his upgrading and worked as a teacher's math assistant at the House of Learning.

Student feedback from last spring

It is easier to do studies through the House of Learning as I am a mother of three children.

The House of Learning is a great place to get back into school and then doors open.

[My College Prep courses] gave me lots of confidence to go on to the College to gain a trade in welding.

The instructor, the material and how it was presented were all very good.

The computer course and writing skills have really helped me at work.

I have gained higher level math and writing skills.



House of Learning instructor Cathy Borsa works with Rachel McLeod on College Prep studies.

Gaining Skills & Confidence

Last spring, the House of Learning wrapped up its second year of the College Prep Program. Fourteen students completed their studies.

This program has proven to be a significant stepping stone in the lives of students who have made the commitment to return to school to improve their lives, and those of their families and community members.

Whether they are KDFN staff members who are upgrading

their computer or writing skills, or they are full-time students starting on a journey to careers in renewable resources, early childhood development, journeyman trades, culinary arts, or Native teacher education, students have said the House of Learning has given them the skills and confidence to move forward.

If you are interested in taking courses in the winter of 2011, come talk to us at the House of Learning in November.



Nathan Jones of Ta'an Kwach'an and Rae Mombourquette of Kwanlin Dün worked this summer on an archeological dig in the McIntyre Creek area.

Digging into our history

Heritage, Lands & Resources staff worked on archeological projects in both the McIntyre Creek area (*pictured above*) and M'Clintock River area this summer.

The McIntyre digs were conducted as part of a University of Alberta graduate project along the creek and in advance of the Whistle Bend road development. The project involved people from the Government of Yukon, Kwanlin Dün and the Ta'an Kwach'an Council. One of the McIntyre digs uncovered one of the largest microblade sites ever found in the Yukon.

This summer, Kwanlin Dün also carried out the first season of a two year archeological project in the M'Clintock area, funded by the Northern Strategy.

The project focussed on the M'Clintock and Michie lowlands and found many sites with points, scrapers and flakes from tool making. They also found many pine trees where the bark had been stripped in the springtime by First Nations people who ate the energy rich inner bark. Since the Mt. Byng ice patch was known to have been used in the past, additional ice patches in the watershed were examined, but no new artefacts were found. The field program will continue in 2011.

Judicial Council is in operation!

An important part of Kwanlin Dün's government is the independent Judicial Council. The Council is made up of five Kwanlin Dün citizens. These people have been appointed to help citizens and the KDFN government resolve disputes outside of the courts.

The Judicial Council was set up to protect the rights of Kwanlin Dün citizens. The Council can deal with a citizen's challenge of a decision of Chief & Council or another branch of KDFN's government. It can deal with concerns about how the Citizenship Code or the Elections and Referendum Code are applied.

If you would like to learn more about how to make an appeal to the Judicial Council, call Sandi Gleason, Administrator for the Council, at 335-6726.

Justice Open House & Book Release

KDFN's Department of Justice is holding an Open House and releasing the booklet *UyidYnji Tl'äku (I let it go now)* in November.



This healing booklet contains some of the presentations made at the very successful gathering and celebration potlatch that KDFN hosted one year ago. The event commemorated the demolition of Yukon Hall.

Everyone is invited. Call 633-7850 for information.

WHEN: Monday, Nov. 15th at 1:30

WHERE: #7 O'Brien Place (Justice Building)

Reorganizing KDFN

In April, KDFN made some organizational changes. We restructured some of our departments to group similar services under one umbrella.

For example, responsibility for the Dusk'a Head Start Learning Centre moved from Health to Education. This allows for a more unified approach to education in the community. Human Resources moved under Administration as that department is responsible for central services. Social Assistance moved from Education to the expanded department, Community and Social Services.

The new departments are:

- Heritage Lands & Resources
- Education
- Community & Social Services (*includes Housing and Social Assistance*)
- Capital & Special Projects
- Justice
- Health
- Economic Development
- Administration (*now includes Human Resources*)
- Finance
- Governance Secretariat (*This is not a full department - it provides support to Chief & Council*)

Youth Camps

This past summer, the Kwanlin Dün Health Centre once again organized and implemented youth summer camps. It was an incredible summer filled with a sense of accomplishment, engaging activities and pure fun.

The youth participated in a wide variety of activities, such as; swimming in beautiful lakes surrounding Whitehorse; spending two weeks learning how to make and set gopher snares at Rosie's camp near Fish Lake; enjoying a soak out at Takhini Hot springs; and having a blast at Paint Ball Yukon.

About 30 youth from 5 to 14 years old participated in the activities. The project's youth leader was Roxanne Johnnie and the youth workers were Chris Vance and Taylor Vance.

These summer camps reflect the Department of Health's goal to provide more fun and engaging activities within the community for youth.

On June 21st, Kwanlin Dün community members celebrated the success of the Beneficiary Referendum. KDFN Beneficiaries had voted on three policies dealing with money, land and consultation

The official results of the referendum were announced that day.

The results showed that over 70% of eligible voters cast a vote! And, of the people who voted, over 90% said "Yes" to the three policies being voted on!

The great turnout and the hard work on the campaign by KDFN staff, fieldworkers and others was celebrated with a dinner, cake and dance.





Going up!

At the foot of Black Street, the look of the waterfront is changing every day. With the help of employees like Kumie Shorty (*on left*), Kwanlin Dün's Cultural Centre is taking shape! The trusses were put on in October and the building will soon be clad to the weather.

Behind the scenes, new staff have been hired to manage the project, market the centre, get exhibits ready, and develop programs.

David Leverton has been hired as the project manager for two years. As part of his job, he will assist in training Kwanlin Dün member, Rae Mombourquette, so she can become the centre's full-time Executive Director.



New Counselling Services at Health

A few months ago, the Health Centre started up a new clinical counselling program. Citizens now have access to professional counselling right in the Kwanlin Dün community.

We have three counsellors with degrees in counselling psychology and social work. We also have a temporary Clinical Supervisor with extensive experience who is available to guide and support our counsellors and clients.

KDFN's counselling team members have many years of experience working with First Nations communities and with other groups, such as street-involved youth

and adults, women and children affected by violence, and survivors of residential school.

Our counsellors are knowledgeable about culturally relevant practices. They use a variety of therapeutic approaches including art therapy, narrative therapy, response-based counselling, and solution-focused therapy.

KDFN counsellors also incorporate new ways of working with First Nations communities that were recommended by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

How we can help

Many people ask how counselling could help them. Some people tell

us they like having someone to talk to who listens and helps them see themselves differently, in ways that provide greater choices and freedom.

Other people tell us that they start feeling more confident, stronger, and calmer by meeting with a counsellor. Sometimes when someone has been dealing with an addiction or difficult relationship for a long time they might start to lose hope that life can be any different.

The counsellors work closely with people to build hope for a better future.

If you would like to talk to a KDFN Health Centre counsellor, please call 668-7289.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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