



Aboriginal Healing Foundation

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*Our mission is to encourage
and support Aboriginal people in
building and reinforcing sustainable
healing processes that address the
legacy of physical and sexual abuse
in the residential schools, including
intergenerational impacts.*

*Notre mission est d'encourager
et d'appuyer les autochtones afin de
bâtir et de renforcer les processus
de guérison souhaitables qui
s'attaquent aux séquelles
des abus physiques et sexuels
dans le système de pensionnats,
y compris aux séquelles
intergénérationnelles.*

Aboriginal Healing Foundation completes election of directors; Board to manage \$350 million healing fund

Ottawa, Ontario (June 23, 1998) Georges Erasmus, Chair of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, today announced the full slate of seventeen Directors that will oversee the Foundation and its management of a \$350 million healing fund to address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse in the Residential School System. The Foundation was incorporated on March 30, 1998. It was to have its full complement of Directors in place within 90 days, in order to proceed with the hiring of senior staff and - in consultation with the Aboriginal community and, victims/survivors groups - to commence the detailed design of healing programs and the development of criteria and processes for funding applications.

The appointments include the reconfirmation of seven of the original nine founding Directors, and the naming of two new Directors to replace two who retired from the Board upon completion of their task to help get the Foundation up and running. These nine will serve for an initial two-year term. Joining them are an additional eight new Directors selected following an extensive solicitation throughout the Aboriginal community. The eight will serve for an initial one year term.

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation is a not-for-profit Aboriginal-run organization supporting community-based initiatives designed to address the healing needs of all Aboriginal people affected by the legacy of sexual and physical abuse in the Residential School System, including intergenerational effects. It will support holistic approaches focusing on individuals, families and the community alike.

The Foundation will manage a \$350 million healing fund, secured under a contribution agreement with the Government of Canada. The healing fund contribution constitutes a significant element of Gathering Strength - Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan, announced on January 7, 1998. As part of that announcement, the Government of Canada offered a Statement of Reconciliation acknowledging the Government's role in the development and administration of the Residential School System, and said it was deeply sorry to those victims who suffered physical and sexual abuse.

In announcing the reconfirmed and incoming Directors, Chair Georges Erasmus enthused over the depth of experience of the Foundation's Board and its representatives of the diversity of Aboriginal peoples across the country. "In accordance with the Foundation's By-Laws, the composition of the Board offers broad-based representation from the First Nations, Metis and Inuit Populations, including good geographical and gender balance."

"Several of the Directors are victims or survivors of abuse, and their insights will be especially valuable to us as we design and implement programs to meet the diverse needs of those affected."

Mr. Erasmus added: "I am especially proud of the wealth of experience on the Board in such areas as healing and abuse issues, community development, social and legal issues, public communications and public affairs - all in the Aboriginal context."

The founding Directors whose positions have been reconfirmed for an initial two-year term are:

Georges Erasmus
Jerome Berthelette
Paul Chartrand
Wendy John
Teresa Nahanee
Gene Rheaume

Named as replacements for the two retiring founding Directors, also for an initial two-year term, are:

John Amagoalik
Viola Robinson
Grant Severight

Joining them are the eight new Directors elected to an initial one-year term:

Garnet Angeconeb
Charlene Belleau
Ken Courchene
Richard Kistabish
Carrie Lynn Lamouche
Annie Meekitjuk-Hanson
Cindy Swanson
Charles Weaselhead

The appointment of the above eight new Directors follows an open process of active solicitation of nominations throughout the Aboriginal Community with several hundred Aboriginal workers in the healing, social work and community development communities, and solicitation of nominations through the national aboriginal representative organizations. More than 160 nominations were considered. The Foundation Board screened all applicants and made its own selections in accordance with the criteria set out in its By-Laws.

In its first two and a half months of operation, the Founding Board was able to complete a considerable amount of basic Board, financial and administrative policies and infrastructure.

Now, with the full Board in place, attention will turn to the recruitment of an Executive Director and senior staff, program design, development of funding application criteria and processes, and establishment of an on-going communication program to keep the community aware of developments.