



F N C A R E S

FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN'S ACTION
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT



This report reflects activities from October 2013 to September 2014

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Annual Report 2013/2014



First
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Children's
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Service



First Nations Child & Family
Caring Society of Canada



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF EXTENSION

ABOUT US

FNCARES Turns two years old

June 2014 marked the completion of the second year of operation for the First Nations Children's Action Research and Education Service, a partnership between the University of Alberta and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada. Using a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach, and drawing on well-established research on the structural drivers of disadvantage for First Nations children, youth, and families, FNCARES works to translate this research into practical, community-based solutions, and to involving youth in this process.

FNCARES has active collaborations with over 20 researchers throughout Canada, the USA and Australia in fields as diverse as economics, community development, education, social work and First Nations studies. We respect and support First Nations self-determination, and we are committed to engaging communities as partners and co-researchers in all stages of each project.

Along with research, we also organize public events to educate about the structural drivers of disadvantage and promote further discussion and action to ensure culturally based equity for First Nations children and youth.

FNCARES Staff

Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Director

Dr. Melisa Brittain, Research Administrator



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR, *Cindy Blackstock*

Children only have one childhood, and there is no other life stage where positive and negative experiences have so much influence on life outcomes. First Nations children experience a wide array of systemic challenges—leading to poorer holistic health outcomes—such as the multi-generational impacts of residential schools, deep levels of poverty, and inequitable education, health and child welfare services on reserves. While there are many First Nations children growing up in healthy and happy families, we know that many others struggle, and that is why FNCARES brings together the best research and community based engagement to address the systemic challenges that undermine First Nations children and their families.

We do that by bringing together First Nations ethics and values with leading research and public education. While there are some challenges facing First Nations children that require more study, the reality is that there are many promising solutions already available that need to be implemented and evaluated while this generation of First Nations children still has a childhood.

FNCARES is focusing on addressing child poverty by identifying areas where individuals, families, community service organizations and governments can make a difference.

We thank our partners in Canada and around the world, and we welcome others who want to make a positive difference into the circle.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT THIS YEAR

Educational Events

Film screenings of Alanis Obomsawin's Hi-Ho Mistahey!

FNCARES, in collaboration with Project of Heart, organized four screenings of *Hi-Ho Mistahey!* in Edmonton on February 24 and 25, 2014. *Hi-Ho Mistahey!* features the story of Shannen Koostachin and the Shannen's Dream campaign for equitable education for First Nations children. We screened the film at the following venues:

- ***Ben Calf Robe Elementary and Junior High School***

Over 300 students from Ben Calf Robe Elementary/Junior High and guests from other schools attended the screening and discussion, which was facilitated by Cindy Blackstock and Charlene Bearhead. Afterwards, Ben Calf Robe students presented their fantastic Jingle Dress and screened a film about their Jingle Dress project for guests

- ***The University of Alberta*** With sponsorship from the NFB, the Faculty of Extension and the Kule Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS), we hosted the director, Alanis Obomsawin, who introduced the film and participated in a panel discussion after the screening with Charlene Bearhead and Cindy Blackstock

- ***Jasper Place High School*** In collaboration with the Leading Spirits Aboriginal Youth Council at Jasper Place High School in Edmonton, we hosted two screenings and post-film discussions for local high school students

The film is a powerful way to educate about the effects of educational inequities for First Nations children and youth. The screenings and discussions afterward provided forums for discussing, as a community, how we can better address these inequities together.

Youth Dialogue Panels at TRC Events

FNCARES was honored to collaborate with Project of Heart and the University of Alberta to host youth dialogue panels during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's education days in Edmonton and Toronto.

At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final national event, held in Edmonton, Alberta on March 27-30, over 4,000 students and educators packed the Shaw Conference Centre for Education Day, where they learned about the history and lasting impacts of residential schools. Cindy Blackstock chaired the Youth Panel, where five youth leaders spoke powerfully about the responsibility we all have to educate others about the past and create ways to eradicate ongoing discrimination.

Academic and Public Lectures

We gave over 100 presentations and keynote lectures last year to audiences across Canada and around the world.

Key academic presentations include:

- ***"Children's voice have power: Ending inequities affecting First Nations children and families."***

Cindy Blackstock's *Big Thinking* lecture at the annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Find the video here: <http://congress2014.ca/program/events/cindy-blackstock>

- ***"The Freedom Giveaway: Government surveillance of law abiding citizens."*** Plenary Address at the 2014 Access and Privacy conference at the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta

- ***"Addressing Indigenous children at the international level: Indigenous children's rights,"*** for 2014 National Indian Child Welfare Association conference, W.K. Kellogg Foundation American Healing Panel



•“The disadvantage of First Nations Children: By accident or by design?” at UAlberta’s 2013 Social Sciences and Humanities Annual Research Conversations. Watch here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3YtwF28ZD8>

To book a presentation or keynote, please complete the speaker’s request form at: www.fncaringsociety.com/presentation-request

RESEARCH

Researching in “a good way”

Summer Institute on Aboriginal Research Ethics

FNCARES attended and gave feedback on a pilot project on Aboriginal Research Ethics at Carleton University in August 2014. Organizers wanted feedback on the two-day pilot so they can better design a two-week annual program beginning in 2015. Their goal is to ensure that those involved in research affecting Aboriginal peoples have a strong understanding of, and commitment to, the ethical guidelines, protocols and practices specific to the communities they research with. This applies to both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal researchers.

The long history of unethical research carried out on Aboriginal people in Canada has created a deep mistrust of outside researchers in many Aboriginal communities. You may have heard about some of the more obvious examples of unethical research, including the government’s ‘starvation research’ on Aboriginal people in the 1940s and 50s, or the misuse of blood samples taken from a First Nations group in British Columbia. Fewer people know of the problems communities face when researchers ignore culturally appropriate ethical standards, or when they conduct research without considering whether or not it will benefit the community: *from the community’s perspective*, not only from the researcher’s perspective.

There is clearly a need to build trust, and this will only be done if researchers participate in processes that help create deep and mutually beneficial research relationships. Carleton’s two-week institute will hopefully provide an excellent forum for continuing the process of learning how to research in “a good way.”

Find the FNCARES Guidelines for Ethical Research here: <http://www.fncaringsociety.com/fncares-research> and the Touchstones of Hope principles here: <http://www.fncaringsociety.com/touchstones-hope>

Research in Progress

- *What Works? A Literature Review on First Nations Child Poverty and Intervention Trials*. Supported by a grant from the Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta and by the University of Alberta’s Grant Assist Program
- Co-Investigators on the SSHRC-funded project Building Research Capacity with First Nations and Mainstream Youth Protection Services in Quebec
- Co-Investigators on SSHRC-funded project Exploring the rights of the First Nations child through the arts: Our dreams matter too with Dr. Mary-Elizabeth Manley of York University.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Migration of FNCARES website to Caring Society Website

You will now find the FNCARES website nested comfortably within the Caring Society’s recently revamped website, making it more accessible to visitors and easier for staff to connect overlapping content and update and edit content to keep it current.

The website features academic articles and media stories that contribute to our knowledge of the effects of structural disadvantage on First Nations children and youth, and resources that help us address these disadvantages. You will also find a photo and video gallery, a news and events section, a link to our online journal, *First Peoples Child and Family Review*, and a link to our Research Database. Find the new website here: www.fncaringsociety.com/fncares

Online Journal

The *First Peoples Child & Family Review* is an interdisciplinary, peer reviewed, free e-journal that focuses primarily on First Peoples and Aboriginal child welfare administration, practices, policies and research. Supported by a SSHRC Aid to Scholarly Journals Grant. Find it here: www.fncaringsociety.com/first-peoples-child-family-review

Online Research Database

Our online research database features over 3500 annotated summaries of resources focused on Aboriginal children and families in Canada, including journal articles, reports, guides, literature reviews, films, booklets and presentations. Users can access resources by visiting the URL provided or by contacting the publisher. The database is updated regularly to ensure it includes the latest information on a variety of topics related to Aboriginal peoples, including health, child welfare, justice, children's rights, structural interventions and promising practices. Search the database at <http://www.fncaringsociety.com/publications/search>

Information sheets

In collaboration with the Caring Society, FNCARES creates reader-friendly information sheets that make our research and activities accessible to the public. For example, see "Jordan's Principle: A brief history" at <http://www.fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>. For a child-friendly summary of the "First Nations child welfare complaint at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal", visit <http://www.fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness>

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Honorary Witness, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Cindy Blackstock was named an Honorary Witness at the final event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in Edmonton (March 27-30, 2014). Cindy pledged to stand with the survivors' children and grandchildren, and the generations to come, against ongoing discrimination by the government of Canada. Watch her speech here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcsfTx3BMuk>

The Nobel Women's Initiative

In November 2013, Cindy Blackstock was recognized by the Nobel Women's Initiative for her work to expose and address the systemic injustices faced by First Nations children, youth and families.

Community Scholar Award, University of Alberta

On May 13, 2014, Cindy Blackstock received the University of Alberta's Community Scholar Award for the impact of her work with communities, organizations and government to ensure culturally appropriate and



equitable services for First Nations children in child welfare, healthcare and education. Read more in this *Vue Weekly* article: <http://www.vueweekly.com/cindy-blackstock-fighting-for-the-vulnerable/>

Director of Equity, Canadian Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences

This year, Cindy Blackstock was elected to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences as Director of Equity and Diversity. She recognizes the Federation's commitment to walking the road of scholarship reform with Aboriginal people to ensure meaningful and equitable spaces for diverse knowledge holders and systems.

Award of Excellence, Federation of Community Social Services of BC

Cindy Blackstock was honored with this award for her work and vision as a champion of equity for Aboriginal children, as a strong leader in building co-operation to address challenges and remove barriers to services, and for spearheading the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal complaint against the federal government for discrimination against First Nations children.

Human Rights Defender, Front Line Defenders

In 2013, Cindy Blackstock was named a Human Rights Defender by Front Line Defenders, an international organization that aims to protect human rights defenders at risk. Cindy joined 144 other Human Rights Defenders at the Dublin Platform, a celebration to acknowledge the risks they face as a result of their peaceful work defending the human rights of others.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 3, 2014: Keynote speaker, *Imagining Canada's Future: National Forum*. Cindy Blackstock will speak about how the experiences of Aboriginal Peoples are essential to building a successful shared future. Forum organized by the Federation of Social Sciences and Humanities, SSHRC, the Canada Council for the Arts, the National Arts Centre and the Council for Ontario Universities.



November 25, 2014: Presentation & Panel Discussion: "Followed" by Dr. Cindy Blackstock, with follow-up panel discussion involving Jill Clayton, Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta, and Mary Marshall, Health Privacy Law expert and former Alberta Health Advocate.

When: Tuesday, November 25, 2014, 12:30-2:00pm
Where: Telus Centre, Room 150, University of Alberta

Please join FNCARES and IAPP for a public lecture on "soft surveillance." Cindy Blackstock will speak about her experience of privacy invasion by two federal departments and what she did to challenge it. Panelists Jill Clayton and Mary Marshall will discuss social trends and privacy breaches that impact the rights of citizens to have their privacy protected.

IN THE WORKS

We are currently completing *What Works? A Literature Review on First Nations Child Poverty and Intervention Trials*. The Literature Review will be submitted for publication and will provide the foundation for our

design of a multi-year research project to address First Nations child poverty in Canada. In addition, both the Literature Review and information sheets informed by it will be used to foster learning and further discussion about First Nations child poverty, its effects, and possible solutions.

In the spring of 2015, we look forward to continuing our engagement of elementary and high school students through film screenings and discussion of equity for First Nations children and youth. We continue to engage students at the post-secondary and graduate levels, acting as external examiner for PhD student Sue Green of the University of New South Wales, and supervision of practicum student Vicki Anderson, who is with us for the Fall semester to fulfill requirements for her Bachelor of Social Work degree at the University of Calgary.

Spring, 2015: Ruling of the Human Rights Tribunal on First Nations Child Welfare

Watch for the Tribunal's ruling on the human rights complaint alleging that Canada's failure to provide equitable and culturally-based child welfare services to First Nations children on reserve amounts to discrimination on the basis of race and ethnic origin. The Tribunal heard testimony over the last year, and final arguments from October 20-24, 2014. The ruling is expected in the Spring of 2015. Visit the I am a Witness campaign page to learn the history of the case, read closing submissions, and watch video of the final arguments.

<http://www.fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness>

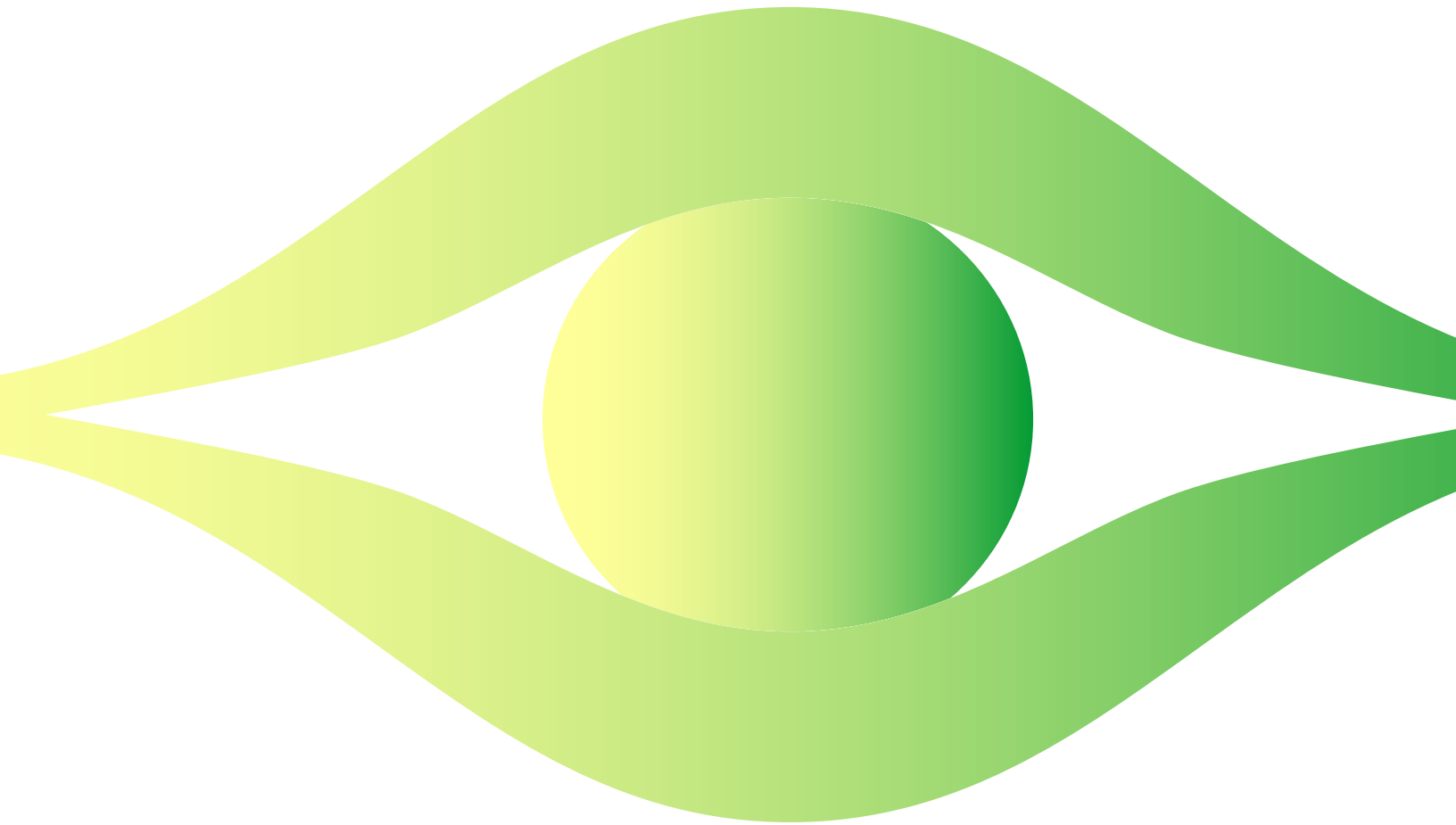
i am a witness



MANY THANKS

Many thanks to our collaborators over the past year for your generous support: Leading Spirits Aboriginal Youth Council, Nikki Houde, Lyle Tootosis, Julia Dalman and Kerry Maguire at Jasper Place High School; Emilie DeCorby at Ben Calf Robe School; Charlene Bearhead of Project of Heart; Shirley Mykituk of Aboriginal Learning Services, Edmonton Catholic Schools; Gail Gallagher at the University of Alberta; and our Collaborative Research Team members in Canada, the U.S., and Australia. Thanks, also, to the National Film Board of Canada, the Kule Institute for Advanced Study, the Faculty of Extension, Community-University Partnership (CUP), the Office of the Vice-President (Research), and the Research Services Office at the University of Alberta, for your financial, moral and infrastructural support. And thanks to everyone at the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society in Ottawa for your amazing guidance and support.





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