
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Indigenous-led project giving voice to women to help end violence

VICTORIA – As the Province observes the United Nation’s 16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the Minister’s Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW) is marking the occasion with a call for new applicants for its Giving Voice project to help address the issue of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Since 2013, MACIW’s respected Indigenous female membership has been advising the provincial government on ways to end violence against Indigenous women and girls - who are two-and-a-half times more likely to report being victims of violence than non-Indigenous women - and the Giving Voice project is one of the Council’s most effective initiatives to carry out that work.

Giving Voice projects promote healing from gender-based violence by providing safe spaces for women and girls to speak about issues of violence and create community-based solutions, both on- and off-reserve. MACIW recognized that Indigenous communities understand best how to heal themselves and that given access to financial support and the right tools, they could heal by addressing violence at the community level.

“To end violence against Indigenous women and girls, we have to bring the issue into the light and talk about it,” said Chastity Davis, chair of the Minister’s Advisory Council on Indigenous Women. “Giving Voice is an important community based program that provides an opportunity for Indigenous women to co-create safe spaces to share experience, knowledge and support that will contribute to individual and collective healing.”

Communities can create programs to suit their specific needs. For example, many communities throughout the province brought women and girls together to engage in cultural activities including making potlatch blankets, participating in sweat lodge ceremonies and going on medicine walks with Elders. In this safe, familiar environment, the women felt more at ease sharing their experiences of violence and inter-generational trauma. The women were able to practise self-care while making healing connections and reinforcing their resilience.

Giving Voice projects are delivered in communities with support groups, organizations and individuals to connect women and girls who have experienced violence and abuse, and offer them a platform to share and learn from each other’s stories of resilience and strength.

“We know that many women suffer violence in silence. It’s time we changed that culture of silence by providing women with safe places to use their voices,” said Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. “I raise my hands to the community champions who are helping Indigenous women and girls to heal in this way, and I congratulate MACIW for its hard work and dedication to taking a leadership role on eradicating gender-based violence

in communities.”

Between 2013 and 2016, Giving Voice supported 50 projects that made a difference in the lives of over 2,000 participants throughout British Columbia. With \$400,000 in provincial funding available to support projects in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, applications for the current intake of Giving Voice can be made until Jan. 14, 2019.

Learn More:

Giving Voice call for proposals: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/indigenous-people/minister-s-advisory-council-on-indigenous-women-maciw/giving-voice>

To learn more about the Giving Voice project, read its 2013-2016 report: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/giving_voice_2013-2016_final_report.pdf

Giving Voice video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qk4m4Vw2zc&feature=youtu.be>

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