

# Elders

## Relevant Details

- In Canada 3,888,550 or 13% of the population are 65+, for Aboriginal population 39,680 or 4% of the overall Aboriginal population.
- In BC 533,090 or 13.6% of the population are 65+, compared to 7,240 or 4.3% for the Aboriginal population.
- In Vancouver, all individuals 65+ account for 12.9% of the population (Social Indicators Report, COV), for Aboriginal population in Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area 1,285 or 3.5% (Statistics Canada, 2001).
- Aboriginal Elders comprise a lower percentage of the Aboriginal population due to shorter life spans due to poor health, poverty, and the ongoing issues that many Elders face due to their personal experience in residential schools, or the intergenerational impacts passed on through their families.

## Who's Involved?

### ***Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre (1607 East Hastings Street)***

- Our Elders Speak Wisdom Society has an Elders Council that helps to plan, fundraise, and host events that promote Elders.
- Hosts a weekly luncheon for Elders.

### ***Indian Residential School Survivors Society (100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver)***

- Many of the survivors of the Indian Residential Schools are now Elders
- Support includes crisis counselling, court support, info and referrals, workshops, media, conferences, supports & conducts research, advocates for justice and healing.

### ***Vancouver Native Housing Society (1726 East Hastings Street)***

- Bridging the Generations brings youth and Elders together through social and recreational activities, health-related workshops, mentoring, and participation in Aboriginal traditions. Open to all VNHS residents ages 12 to 15 years and 65 years and older.
- A 35 unit Elders opened in 1987. Located at 1545 East Broadway.

### ***Aboriginal Front Door Society (384 Main Street)***

- Training is provided to increase the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health of Elders through increased knowledge and understanding of traditional health and healing practices.

### ***Vancouver Native Health Society (449 East Hastings Street)***

- ADAPT Program hosts an Aboriginal Elders Healing Circle three times a month.
- Produced and sold an Elders From All Nations Cookbook.

- Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project. Musqueam shares their garden plot at the UBC Farm with Aboriginal people living in East Van.

### ***Musqueam Elders Centre (Musqueam)***

- A place for elders to visit with one another, as well as to gather and have lunch and dinner together. The coordinator identifies social needs of the Elders as well as organizes activities, daily outings, and longer trips for those who can travel.

### ***First Nations House of Learning - Elders in Residence Program (1985 West Mall, UBC)***

- Want to create a \$1.5 million endowment fund to enable them to invite Elders to share their knowledge of history, culture, language, and to offer counselling and advice to students.

### ***Aboriginal Elder's Conference***

- Elders throughout the province develop inter-social and community links that bind them together as a Nation. It allows them to intermingle with like-minded, like-aged individuals and their families, to reveal common grounds that strengthen those links. It offers the opportunity to interface with youth, which helps to mitigate the generation gap, and allows the younger generations to demonstrate respect, regard, and honour for their Elders.

### ***BC Elders Communication Centre Society (Online Resource)***

- A central communication office for Aboriginal Elders, their family and support workers in B.C.
- Fulfills purpose by organizing a network of Elders representatives who act as the liaison to their Elders population, a toll-free number, email, fax, and address where people can contact someone whose job is solely to help with Elders related matters, publishing the monthly provincial newsletter the "Elders Voice", and hosting the first ever B.C. Elders Website - "Preserving the Past" (Aug. 31, 2002).

### ***Pacific Association of First Nations Women (96 East Broadway)***

- Aboriginal Elders Support Program helps Aboriginal women ages 55 years and over, to access and participate in health care services and other activities; offers liaison, referral, consultation, advocacy, education, and research.

### ***Native Education Centre (285 East 5th Avenue)***

- Aboriginal Resident Care / Home Support Attendant Program trains people to work as Home Support Attendants and Resident Care Aides to provide appropriate supportive assistance to Elders, people with special needs, Aboriginal families and people in residential care facilities.

## **Partnerships**

- The Vancouver Native Health Society and the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre work together to bring urban Elders to the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project

## **Committees**

The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre has the Our Elders Speak Wisdom Council. They plan, host, and fundraise for Elders events at the VAFCS and for outings such as the Annual Elders Conference.

## **Trends**

- Statistics show that the overall population of people aged 65 and over is 13% of the population, while the Aboriginal population is only 4% (A Portrait of Elders, Statistics Canada, The Daily, February 2007).
- More Aboriginal organizations and committees are engaging Aboriginal Elders to provide leadership and encourage Aboriginal ways of governing themselves.

## **Gaps**

- There are not many Aboriginal Elder specific programs.
- There are very few opportunities to fulfill the great need for generational interaction between Elders and youth in order to ensure the passing on of cultural knowledge and practices.

## **Contact Information**

Addresses, phone, fax, email, and website information for any of the organizations above can be found in the Contact Information section of this manual.