

RECEIVED		CODE # <u>EXE-043239</u>
SEP 30 2013		C.C. 1. <u>G. Dooling</u> 4. <u>w. Lundrigan</u>
Hunt, Deanne From: DEPUTY MINISTER Klaus Muller <klausmuller@live.com> Sent: Sunday, September 29, 2013 2:11 PM To: Child, Youth & Family Services Johnson, Charlene, Dooling, Genevieve (Gig); O'Brien, Donna; Maidment, Donna; Gray, Karen; Chafe, Carol; debra.keays-white@hc-sc.gc.ca; bob.simms@hc-sc.gc.ca; anne.e.aberdeen@hc-sc.gc.ca; Andrew, Lyla; Gregory, Lynne; stshakapesh@gmail.com; kbenuen@gmail.com		2. <u>D. O'Brien</u> 5. _____ REGISTRY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject: Immediate Action Required on Gas sniffing Crisis in Natuashish Attachments: van2.jpg; van3.jpg; Van1.jpg; PROPOSAL border beacon place of safety.docx		

To all members who have the best interests of the children and parents of Natuashish in mind please consider the following! Please be advised as well that the picture attachments have been posted on Facebook and are considered public property and as such no confidentiality has been broken (having said this I have chosen to not identify the youth); please also be aware that similar pictures have been posted on the same venue, several of which I have forwarded to CYFS. The pictures submitted in this email were recorded/posted this weekend.

The pictures themselves speak more eloquently of the sadness and pervasive urgency of gas sniffing youth in Natuashish. The children themselves post these pictures, graphitized vandalism on community buildings put into words their feelings that no one cares and that they wish to die.

On September 4, 2013 an emergency teleconference occurred between Chief Tshakapesh, Kathleen Benuen, the on site social worker Christine Wells, myself and Deputy Minister Ms. Dooling and her staff. It was openly acknowledged and discussed that the situation in Natuashish has become unmanageable; recruitment issues, places of safety within the province, absent parenting all contribute to the increasing number of youth sniffing with the demographics of same widening to include very young children. It was in this teleconference that Chief Tshakapesh offered a solution that proposed Border Beacon be made a Place of Safety and I was asked to write the funding proposal. We had hope that day, the Deputy Minister Ms. Dooling and staff seemed open to the suggestion; those children that were chronic abusers and without parental support could be apprehended and their parents encouraged legislatively to attend parenting courses. The children removed to a traditional/cultural environment would be supervised by MIFN staff. I wrote the proposal and with the exclusion of the budget not yet calculated (but by all indicators would certainly be lower than the current Per Diem of a child in treatment) the submission was given to BC members. On Sept.10th a meeting was held at the Healing Lodge where BC member Mary Jane Edmonds and Healing Lodge Coordinator Christine Poker expressed that they wanted to be given the opportunity to "encourage" parents to supervise their children first. As you may be aware Chief Tshakapesh pulled out from frustration. I privately echoed his frustration. It seems that these 2 individuals did not seem to seriously consider the offer of a place of safety nor the benefit that a legislative intervention could secure. To my knowledge neither individual met with the affected parents and given that an AGM occurred almost immediately thereafter, it would seem unlikely, in either occurrence no measureable change has been seen as the attachments indicate. Almost 3 weeks post teleconference, this past Wednesday Sept.25, 2013 after speaking with Kathleen Benuen and learning of Christine Poker's plan to offer another mobile treatment; a repeat of what was termed "Co-Ed Treatment", I expressed strongly my frustration and questioned whether these individuals even lived in Natuashish and were concerned about the gas sniffing situation. It should be noted that during the intervening weeks the trailer across and beside of mine held nightly gatherings of up to 20 youth gas sniffing and that reports made to the RCMP were on-going and required nightly interventions. On Sept.26, 2013 I was directed to attend a meeting at the Healing Lodge to discuss implementation of the Parenting Program. Present were staff members of the Healing Lodge, Chrisitne Poker as Coordinator, Nympha Bryne HC and Mary Jane Edmonds BC member. For 40 mins I sat excluded from dialogue only to learn the proposed start date of a Parenting Program was to be Oct.28th, 2013. I left angered and hopeless. Later that same day I was to learn that Mary

Jane Edmonds, Christine Poker and Nympha Bryne discussed and planned setting up a youth mobile treatment in Kamestastin (country home of Christine and Prote Poker) and that I would be presenting the Parent Program separate. As 20 years of history has demonstrated, youth voluntarily going out to treatment return home and back to gas sniffing. Youth going to Kamestastin not placed in the ministers care could return at any time, attendance of parents to a parenting program would be voluntary...how is this in any way different than the past experiences? Mobile treatments do not work in this situation for a number of reasons, voluntary nature, commitment and recognition of the issue to name a few. LITHS funding, already limited would be spent ineffectively on a treatment model designed to possibly benefit via camp rental costs et al to Christine and Prote Poker. This seems to me as a conflict of interest? Nepotism?

As evidenced in the pilot project of the Parenting Program in November 2012 and expressed in a written critique of same sent to Bob Simms HC, close to 30,000 dollars were spent on so called treatment for 6 individuals over the period of 3 weeks, wherein both Nympha Bryne and her sister Christine Poker participated in same for only a week before leaving to attend a suicide conference in Montreal with other family members leaving Kathleen Benuen and myself to rescue what we could of the program. It was as a result of this and other factors that Christine Poker had failed her probation period as coordinator of the Healing Lodge only to have BC members re-instate her. HC has received numerous complaints this past year both from myself, Kathleen Benuen and Chief Tshakapesh re: Nympha Bryne's unethical and misrepresentation of HC, including the most recent complaint of Ms.Byrne writing Purchase Memo's and signing same for treatment programs wherein she had neither the authority nor the permission of Ms.Benuen and same orders had to be cancelled as a result.

As much as I at times admire Ms.Benuen's tenacity and commitment to her community, for the last year she has had no effective authority re: Healing Lodge....her decision to not pass Christine Poker's probation period was over turned by 3 BC members,, her multiple her mails and in person direction of staff to maintain record work plans and tracking tools have been ignored. If Miss Byrne as a HC representative did anything to encourage her sister Christine Poker to comply with HC expectations and standards required in the agreement for LITHS funding she failed miserably. As a result, in the most current 2012 LITHS Annual Report, the numbers submitted were generated by myself and approximations based on my memory of mobile treatments and the previous years numbers after 3 attempts to have Christine Poker complete the necessary details of clients serviced failed.

In summary and given the information previously mentioned in this email, I am urging HC to suspend all LITHS funding intended to support the Healing Lodge until such time that monies spent on programs are dispensed as intended and accountably (how does 2000 dollars worth of food get stolen twice after each re-supply??? chain saws go missing, wood cut and never used in one program need to be replaced for another....ATV's et al)...additionally funding from my perspective should go to dealing with the gas sniffing events and/in partnership with CYFS who have at least participated and worked with Kathleen Benuen, Chief Tshakapesh and at one point the Healing Lodge in Sept-Nov.2012 in designing a Parenting Program. There are other issues such as Home Support Workers accreditation and the Daycare which are at least in part if not wholly funded by HC that are affected by 3 BC members that seem resistant to capacity building that need to be examined but for nowhow are today's pictures any different in expressing the gas sniffing crisis first which made global awareness in 1993.

Respectively

Klaus

PROPOSAL
For
Funding
Of
Border Beacon
A
Place of safety/Treatment Facility

Introduction:

In 1993 the Mushuau Innu captured global attention with the release of a video depicting 6 children “gas sniffing” and shouting that they wanted to die; that same video could be released today and although the Federal Government response was to relocate the Mushuau Innu from Davis Inlet to Natuashish improving physical living conditions the inherent complex and multi-layered social conditions stemming from the loss of traditional life and the initial forced relocation of the Mushuau Innu still exist with a singular exception: the number of children “gas sniffing” as a coping mechanism to manage and distance themselves from parents/care-givers struggling with alcoholism, substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty and absenteeism has risen dramatically and has changed demographically.

At the time of this writing 105 open child protection files exist, managed by a singular social worker with the legislative authority to investigate reports of child abuse and to apprehend those children deemed “at risk” where after a Judge determines the status of the child/case. In those cases where it has been determined that the child cannot return home to the care giver for reasons of safety and supervision, placement must be found.

On September 4, 2013 a tele-conference was held between Deputy Minister Genevieve Dooling and members of her staff and Chief Tshakapesh, Kathleen Benuen Director Health Commission, Lynne Gregory Child Protection Supervisor, Christine Wells Natuashish Social Worker and this author. During this

conference Chief Tshakapesh reported increased incidents of children "gas sniffing", fire setting, vandalism and on-going reports of children roaming the community late at night unsupervised. In the past week, one 10 year old child was burned while "gas sniffing" and another child 8 years old was physically assaulted. Both children were Medi-vaced out of the community to meet their medical needs. In addition, 9 CPR reports involving 20 youth under the age of 16 were involved in gas sniffing events. RCMP report that they have responded to increased incidents of "gas sniffing" and property damage by same and in several cases parents asking that their "out of control" children be apprehended to ensure physical safety of their children who were "gas sniffing". At the time of this writing the RCMP have advised that they can no longer use jail cells to house children as a "place of safety" and only those youth involved in criminal activity will be placed in cells.

During the tele-conference 4 items were clearly recognized by all parties. Absent or uninvolved parenting/care-giving of children has and continues to be a major contributor to placing children at risk, a 105 case load by a single social worker was unmanageable, recruitment of social workers remains a priority and problematic in fulfilling and that a saturation point has been exceeded in finding placement and homes for children already identified as needing a place of safety.

In response to the latter item, the following is a workable proposal and solution to meeting the needs of placement of anticipated and current children at risk, is respectful of tradition and culture and involves the Mushuau Innu of Natuashish and allows for the development and participation of parents/care givers in a Parenting Skills Program.

PLAN:

History has taught us that whether airlifting 18 children from Davis Inlet as in 1993 and sending same to addiction centers removed and outside of Mushuau Innu culture and support or as in practice at present sending children to treatment centers/foster homes out of province has negative and long lasting effects both on the child and the community and that in almost all cases, once the child has returned home "gas sniffing" resumes.

Supporting this truism has been the learnings of service providers funded through federally funded programs such as LICHs/LITHS that without Mushuau Innu participation and inclusion capacity building and change does not occur and is un-meaningful to the Mushuau Innu of Natuashish.

Border Beacon was built of independent funds and designed to serve in part as an addictions treatment center. Physically the location has 5 cabins capable of housing 20 individuals; each cabin equipped with a Kitchen/common area. The Ceremonial Hall is equipped with 2 showers/bathrooms, offices and a large common media room designed for multiple purposes in the healing process. Located 40 mins by flight, border beacon also has significant historical, cultural and traditional importance. The remoteness and isolation of Border Beacon serves to focus on healing and traditional spirituality; since its construction it has served as a successful venue for mobile treatments.

The proposal and plan is to use the accommodations, facilities and resources of Border Beacon in conjunction with counselors, elders and security to provide a "place of safety" for those children currently identified at risk with "gas sniffing" issues.

There is a four-fold benefit in supporting this plan:

- 1) The remoteness and isolation of Border Beacon along with supportive staff will ensure that the children remain in a safe environment without familial or community distraction. The focus would be on dealing with the issues, recovery and skills preventing relapse.
- 2) The removal of at high risk children who "gas sniff" will reduce peer pressure to join in "gas sniffing" activities, reduce community concern re: fire setting events, likelihood of another child burned and vandalism and will provide parents/care-givers a respite to focus on existing children in their home and participate in programs.
- 3) Will reduce the demands made on service providers (Medical Clinic, RCMP, School) and Social Worker.
- 4) Recognizes and is respectful of Mushuau Innu tradition, culture and inclusion and encourages an active participatory role of community members. In addition would improve the relationship between the

Mushuau Innu and the province's CYFS dept. which has recently experienced a breakdown in relations as evidenced in the Shesh. Protest.

Program:

The details of the program are defined by the number of participants and involve grossly two focal points; the safety of the children in care and the provision of services to the children and to their parents/care-givers.

In the former, not only is physical safety a factor but spiritual, emotional and cultural healing becomes the priority so as to reduce the rate of recidivism. Individual programs will be designed by counselors and elders to meet the needs, age appropriate of the children and to teach and foster coping skills.

In the latter, this author will in conjunction with CYFS will identify and provide a Parenting Skills Program to those parents/care-givers whose children have been placed in safety at Border Beacon. Part of this program will recognize and include a re-integration component between child/parent/care-giver when a determination has been made by CFYS that a child should or can return home.

Costs:

Natuashish Monthly Update - February 2013

Area	Total Number of Children in Care	Custody Status					Number of children in Custody by age group				No. of children In Care for Solvent Abuse
		Continuou s Custody	Temp Custody	Interim Custody	Interim Care	PCA	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 12	13 to 15	
NSH	49	18	10	3	18	0	18	12	6	13	19
Solvent Abuse		2	7		9			2	4	12	18

*Continuous Custody includes two clients who are placed in the Eastern Region

Total Number of Children in Protective Intervention	Number of children on Protective Intervention by age group				No. of children on Pi for Solvent abuse	Total Number of Children on a CWA	Number of children on CWA by age group					No. of Children in an Out of Province Placement	Total Number of Youth in Care	Youth in an out of province placement	Total No. Out of Province for Solvent Abuse
	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 12	13 to 15			0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 18				
113	44	35	19	15	21	16	0	4	7	5	0	13	1	0	13
Solvent Abuse		5	9	7	21								1		