LEARNING FROM OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

“ABORIGINAL BEST PRACTICES IN CHILD WELFARE”

May 17–19, 2006

Keynote Speaker

Ernie Crey

Co-Author of: Stolen From Our Embrace

Registration (download form @ www.vacfss.com)

Early Bird (includes banquet) $350.00
(before March 21, 2006)

Regular (includes banquet) $400.00

Conference Only $350.00

Banquet Only $60.00

The Coast Plaza Hotel & Suites
1763 Comox Street, Vancouver BC
Ph: (604) 688-7711  Fax: (604) 688-5934
www.coasthotels.com

For more information contact the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society office:
4th Floor—210 West Broadway  Vancouver, BC  V5Y 3W2  Phone: (604)872-6723  Fax: (604)872-5274
Toll Free: 1-877-9-VACFSS  e-mail: info@vacfss.com  web: www.vacfss.com
LEARNING FROM OUR PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

"Aboriginal Best Practices in Child Welfare"

Overview

The theme of the conference is based on: our commitment to honour our histories, acknowledge the work of Aboriginal people, to provide a working foundation for present and future generation service providers working with Aboriginal children, families and communities.

In keeping with the philosophy and paradigm of the Medicine wheel, the conference will focus on four directions/areas that will strengthen and expand the knowledge base of culturally appropriate child welfare practice:

• History of First Nations People
• First Nations Traditional Healing Practices and Ceremonies
• Culturally Appropriate Social Work Practice
• Interdependence and Inclusiveness

History of Aboriginal People
Awareness of the historical context of current Aboriginal issues is the cornerstone of culturally appropriate social work practice. As Aboriginal people, it is customary for us to share gifts and knowledge during great gatherings. Our conference is a gathering of healers and visionaries with a common goal of providing the Aboriginal community with culturally appropriate opportunities to heal from a history of oppression and the intergenerational effects of colonization.

The conference will provide opportunities for service providers to demonstrate how the history of Aboriginal people is incorporated in program development and clinical practice when working with Aboriginal children, families and communities involved in the child welfare system.

Aboriginal Traditional Healing Practices and Ceremonies
The conference is an opportunity for service providers, practitioners, organizations, and academics to showcase service models and programs they have developed and utilized to facilitate the healing process of the Aboriginal community.
The conference will be a forum where:
- The diversity of Aboriginal people will be represented
- Traditional teachings and ceremonies will be recognized as a valid healing tools, and
- Conference participants will gain concrete skills and have an awareness and understanding of the importance of having Aboriginal traditional healing practices as part of the planning with children, families and communities

**Culturally Appropriate Social Work Practice**

Aboriginal people continue to be affected by intergenerational trauma as a result of our history. This trauma may be manifested in drug and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, suicide, and depression. This particular conference area will create an opportunity for:
- Service providers to share culturally appropriate best practices in First Nations child welfare
- To share innovative strategies that are both holistic and culturally relevant
- Using the medicine wheel as a model for individual, family and community planning, and
- Incorporating access to ceremonies and teaching to children and families

Participants of this conference will be provided with tools and approaches which will strengthen and enhance their skills in order to work respectfully and collaboratively with Aboriginal children, families and communities.

**Interdependence and Inclusiveness**

The philosophy of an inclusive practice is to develop a functional system that supports the children, families and communities. A teaching of the medicine wheel is that we are all interconnected and that our relationships are based on the value of interdependence. This area in the conference will showcase:
- Strategies that demonstrate the importance of involving all partners: children, families, communities and government

We want to welcome all the participants whether they are child care workers, social workers, family support workers, child and family workers, youth workers, supervisors, managers or elders that they will have something to contribute and will also leave the conference with new tools to enhance their work with Aboriginal children and families.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The VACFSS Conference Planning Committee would like to acknowledge and express their gratitude to the following people, organizations and companies. Without their support this conference would not be a success: ● The VACFSS Board of Directors ● The Ministry for Children and Family Development ● Aboriginal Services Branch ● Vancouver/Coastal Aboriginal Planning Committee—Sandy Dallin ● The Coast Plaza Hotel and Suites ● Ray Charlie ● Garfinkel Publications Inc., Larry Garfinkel ● Target Specialty Advertising, Nick Chung ● The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre ● Chief Ian Campbell ● Clark’s Audio Visual Services Ltd. ● Elder—Audrey Rivers ● Foster Parents Dance Group ● Metis Jiggers ● All Nations Drum Group ● SkxwumishUxwumixw (Squamish) Nation Drum Group and Dancers ● All the workshop facilitators/presentors and the numerous volunteers who helped make this conference possible
**Hotel Information**
The Coast Plaza Hotel & Suites  
1763 Comox Street, Vancouver, BC V6G 1P6  
Phone: 604-688-7711 Fax: 604-688-5934  
Toll Free: 1-800-663-1144  
[www.coasthotels.com](http://www.coasthotels.com)  

Please make your own hotel reservations by contacting The Coast Plaza Hotel & Suites and identify yourself as attending the 2006 VACFSS conference.

**Parking**
Conference Hotel $12/day ● Valet Parking $17/day ● West End Community Centre – 870 Denman (entrance off Haro) $2/day

**Attractions**
- The world famous Stanley Park  
- The Aquarium  
- Science World  
- HR MacMillan Space Centre  
- Plus Several Destination Resort Casinos located in the Lower Mainland  
- Grouse Mountain  
- Capilano Suspension Bridge  
- The Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Gardens  
- Granville Island  
- World Class Dining and much, much more!

**Three Ways to Register!**
- By Telephone at (604) 872-6723 or Toll free at 1-877-982-2377  
- By Fax at (604) 872-5274  
- By Mail with cheque or money order

Registration fees include conference material, coffee breaks, lunch on Wednesday & Thursday.  
Please Note: The banquet on Thursday May 18th is a separate cost. Tickets are subject to availability.

**Cancellation Policy**
Refunds will be paid in full if written cancellation is received at VACFSS by mail (postmarked) or faxed prior to April 15th, 2006. There will be NO refunds after this date.

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Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society  
4th Floor 210 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 3W2  

All payments for registration must be in Canadian funds. Only cheques or money orders will be accepted. Personal cheques must be certified.

> “We must be willing to get rid of the life we’ve planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us.”  
- Joseph Campbell

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**Ernie Crey—Keynote Speaker**
Ernie Crey is the Senior Policy Advisor for the Sto:lo Tribal Council. He is the former President of the United Native Nations Society. Ernie has had a lengthy career in the field of social work and is a strong advocate on behalf of Aboriginal children and families.  
Ernie was also one of the founding members of the Mamele Benevolent Society in the late 1980’s, which later became VACFSS.  
Ernie is the co-author of the award winning book, “Stolen From Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities.” Ernie is a member of the Cheam First Nation.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bernadette Spence</th>
<th>Wally Rupert</th>
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<td>Laurie McDonald</td>
<td>Cynthia Sumner</td>
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<td>Lucy Rosman</td>
<td>Sandra Sotkowy</td>
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<td>Lucille Cote</td>
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**EVENTS AT A GLANCE**

**Wednesday May 17th, 2006**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00—8:30</td>
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<td>12:00—1:00</td>
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<td>1:00—2:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30—3:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<td>3:00—4:30</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions C</td>
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**CONCURRENT SESSIONS A**

**10:30—12:00 NOON**

**A1**  
*Introduction to Focusing and Dreams*  
*Alannah Young & Jeff Schiffer*

This workshop will introduce you to Focusing Oriented dream work. Often within the fabric of dreams lay opportunities for healing and messages for helping. Bringing attention to your dreams can also help in unraveling painful life situations and past hurts. Together we will learn to listen to our dreams with an open heart and curious mind.
Snap-Shots of Street Life: The Use of Group Photo Therapy with Aboriginal Street Youth
Jennifer Mervyn, M.A., Ph.D (cand.)

Sixteen Aboriginal youth between the ages of 14-21 participated in an 11 week photo therapy program in Surrey. The purpose of the group has been to promote the mental health and wellness of these youth by engaging them in a positive activity that facilitates discussion. The group has allowed for the youth to talk openly and ask questions about issues such as health and wellness, relationships, sexuality and self-care. The youth have had a chance to learn a skill, express themselves through art and gain confidence and self-esteem through their accomplishments. The end of the group was celebrated by a public art exhibition displaying their works.

Grief and Loss Recovery Outreach Program
S’Haast—William Blackwater

This is a program initially designed by the Grief Recovery Institute of Canada; I acquired a certificate in this program and I merely modified those teachings to meet the Aboriginal perspective in addressing Historical Cultural, Traditional and other losses in regards to Colonization/Assimilation, Indian Residential School and the Ministry of Child & Family Services foster care system. This is a twelve week program that reveals correlative phases in reaching a satisfactory completion of various losses, which includes death.

Aboriginal Family Preservation & Reunification Services — VACFSS
Betty Ann Clayton and Crystal Phillips

This workshop will demonstrate how the values of sharing, respect, caring and belonging are the foundation to the Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Services. The workshop will show case: a) cultural practices and ceremonies in clinical practice b) collaboration efforts with service providers to develop local community and neighborhood capacity to support families to prevent children coming into care and; c) promote the safe and lasting reunification of children with their families and communities.

Strengthening Families Program
Rob Smith and Margaret Jones

This workshop will help participants acquire: a) an understanding of the theoretical base underlying the program; b) knowledge of the effectiveness of this program with Aboriginal communities; c) skills in using the Children’s Game to build parent-child attachment and; d) information about making the program “beautiful” to First Nations participants.

Reflection
Reflect on everything you say and do.
It has the power to guide you on an honorable journey.

Being a Survivor is Not Enough
Wally Rupert

From the Indian Act to Residential Schools to the Sixties Scoop to the present, our people have experienced life as the oppressed, as victims, as survivors. Explore how this history interacts with our current need to build strong, vibrant, creative programs and solutions as we move forward to become “thrivers”.

Concurrent Sessions B
1:00—2:30

Home Coming Ceremony
Laurie McDonald
A facilitated workshop that tells the story using ceremonies and spiritual practices. The concept of a Home Coming Ceremony is not new, the process and philosophy that has been applied for this practice is when a child has been returned to the care of their parent or caregiver and we as a community get together to celebrate the accomplishments of the family and the people involved in the reunification process.

Inclusive Foster Care
Sandra Sotkowy—VACFSS Resources Supervisor
A panel of birth parents, caregivers and VACFSS social workers will present their experiences with Inclusive Foster Care, where family and foster caregivers work together to care for the child. They will describe the benefits, practicalities and struggles to work in true partnership. Questions, comments and discussion will be welcomed.

Engaging Communities in Child Welfare Elders’ Advisory for Children & Families Committee
Helen Joe and Melanie Scott
An Elders’ Advisory Committee can assist social workers by reviewing cases, concerns, and complaints regarding Guardianship and Child Protection issues and providing cultural and community-based advice. An Elders’ Advisory Committee can hear from all parties, including social workers, family and extended family, caregivers, community and others involved in each case.
B4 Aboriginal Family Preservation & Reunification Services — VACFSS
Betty Ann Clayton and Crystal Phillips
This workshop will demonstrate how the values of sharing, respect, caring and belonging are the foundation to the Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Services. The workshop will show case: a) cultural practices and ceremonies in clinical practice b) collaboration efforts with service providers to develop local community and neighborhood capacity to support families to prevent children coming into care and; c) promote the safe and lasting reunification of children with their families and communities.

B5 Cultural Planning & Voices of Experience
Panel—Workshop Presentation
Jacques Goutier and Rhonda Lee Ducharme
This presentation illustrates how to integrate Cultural planning and will highlight how the ROOTS program is instrumental in building foundations of cultural continuity, Family and Community relationships for life-long attachments, and modeling culturally appropriate practice.

“I have found tools today that can guide me on a positive path. All I have to do is use them.”
- Author Unknown

C3 Aboriginal Health Challenges & HIV
Barby Ann Skaling & Guest Speaker
This presentation will utilize some humour, overhead materials for visuals, powerpoint presentation and stories exploring various ways of using traditional holistic approaches to encourage the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of healthy lifestyles. We will provide essential information regarding Holistic Approaches to Aboriginal Health Challenges and HIV.

C4 OSKAPEW: The Role of an Aboriginal Cultural Helper
Roxanne Tootoosis
In our story of Creation, we talk about each of us having our own path to travel and our own gift to give and to share. Roxanne shares her 12 years of experience working in varying capacities in First Nations communities. She shares how one can embrace one’s own spirituality to help facilitate healing.

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CONCURRENT SESSIONS C
3:00—4:30

C1 Balancing Child Welfare Practice: Learning from our Aboriginal Partners
Donna Jardine and Bunny LeBlanc
This presentation will outline the steps that the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Vancouver Aboriginal Network is taking to strengthen child welfare practice through the inclusion of Aboriginal culture, concepts and models. As we move towards governance in Child Protection we are developing relationships with our Aboriginal Partners to balance the mandated requirements of child welfare with the richness of traditional Aboriginal family practices.

C2 Sheway
Wilma Big Sorrelhorse & Aboriginal Mothers of the Program
Sheway is a multidisciplinary health and service program that supports pregnant women and women with infants under 18 months who are dealing with drug and alcohol issues. The focus of the program is to help women have healthy pregnancies and positive parenting experiences. This will be an interactive discussion with Sheway workers and Aboriginal mothers from the program, sharing successes and challenges in working with the child welfare system.

EVENTS AT A GLANCE
Thursday May 18th, 2006
8:30—10:00 Concurrent Sessions D
10:00—10:30 Coffee Break
10:30—12:00 Concurrent Sessions E
12:00—1:00 Lunch—Provided
1:00—2:30 Concurrent Sessions F
2:30—3:00 Coffee Break
3:00—4:30 Concurrent Sessions G
6:00—9:00 Banquet

CONCURRENT SESSIONS D
8:30—10:00

D1 Vicarious Trauma and Organizational Wellness
Shirley Turcotte R.C.C., S.F.T.T.
In this work we will explore why organizations wellness is so important. We will look at trauma in the workplace and how to interrupt workplace toxicity. We will identify when our own personal issues are inflaming our work and environment.
### D2 Strengthening Families Program
*Rob Smith and Margaret Jones*

This workshop will help participants acquire: a) an understanding of the theoretical base underlying the program; b) knowledge of the effectiveness of this program with Aboriginal communities; c) skills in using the Children's Game to build parent-child attachment and; d) information about making the program “beautiful” to First Nations participants.

### D3 Seven Step Sexual and Physical Abuse Trauma - Outreach Healing Program
*Si’Haast—William Blackwater*

This is a program initially designed by myself with the help of Dr. Charles Brasfield, a psychiatrist who is extremely knowledgeable in Indian Residential School trauma. This is a seven-step program which creates effective correlative steps in deactivating the triggering mechanisms of our sensory details (smell, sight, hearing, and touch/feel) of Sexual & Physical Trauma.

### D4 An Examination and Exploration of Social Work Education
*Joanne Armstrong, M.S.W., Nicola Valley Institute of Technology*

This workshop will consist of the facilitator presenting to the participants for approximately 30 minutes. Then the conference participants have the opportunity for 30 minutes to express their experiences around their social work education and its applicability around child welfare practice. And the last 30 minutes will be allotted for an opportunity to develop an Aboriginal vision of a culturally sensitive educational program.

### D5 Cultural Planning & Voices of Experience Panel—Workshop Presentation
*Jacques Goutier and Rhonda Lee Ducharme*

This presentation illustrates how to integrate Cultural planning and will highlight how the ROOTS program is instrumental in building foundations of cultural continuity, Family and Community relationships for life-long attachments, and modeling culturally appropriate practice.

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### E3 True Confessions of a Family Group Conference Coordinator—Everything you wanted to know & more
*Lucy Rosman, B.S.W. & Lucinda Ferdon, B.S.W., M.S.W.*

Lucy Rosman and Lucinda Ferdon will present the fundamental principles of the Family Group Decision Making process. We will share many stories from the perspective of the various participants, focusing primarily on our experiences with Aboriginal families and their social workers. This will be an interactive session with much discussion about this strength based, collaborative planning process.

### E4 Aboriginal Health Challenges & HIV
*Barby Ann Skaling & Guest Speaker*

This presentation will utilize some humour, overhead materials for visuals, powerpoint presentation and stories exploring various ways of using traditional holistic approaches to encourage the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of healthy lifestyles. We will provide essential information regarding holistic approaches to Aboriginal health challenges and HIV.

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*Jacques Goutier and Rhonda Lee Ducharme*

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**CONCURRENT SESSIONS E**

**10:30—12:00**

**E1 Shakes the Dust**
*Bev Bagnall*

Shakes the Dust is a residential service for Aboriginal youth who have exhausted all other placement options. Shakes the Dust is a traditional and cultural program that meets the needs of the diverse urban Aboriginal population. This workshop will demonstrate how the program philosophy incorporates ceremony, story telling, use of extended family and elders to provide youth with a sense of belonging.

**E2 Sheway**

Sheway is a multidisciplinary health and service program that supports pregnant women and women with infants under 18 months who are dealing with drug and alcohol issues. The focus of the program is to help women have healthy pregnancies and positive parenting experiences. This will be an interactive discussion with Sheway workers and Aboriginal mothers from the program, sharing successes and challenges in working with the child welfare system.

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**CONCURRENT SESSIONS F**

**1:00—2:30**

**F1 Post Traumatic Stress (P.T.S.D.)**
*Shirley Turcotte, R.C.C., S.F.T.T.*

In this workshop we will explore Complex Trauma and the symptoms related to trauma. We will see how trauma memory is stored differently in the brain and why trauma memories seem so difficult to resolve. We will discuss what is really needed to unravel the memory and what we should be looking for in our healing to ensure our recovery.
F2 Bringing Balance to Fostered and Adopted Children with Art and Play Therapy

Jeff More and Jann Derrick

This workshop will experientially show how Fostered/Adopted children are the "third generation" created by the removal of children to the Residential Schools. Typically these children find it difficult to attach and become reactive in relationships. Fostered adults often find themselves repeating the fostering cycle with their own children. Art and play therapy can allow reconnection within the child and the child can begin to trust. Normal developmental stages can then begin to unfold naturally. The two facilitators work with fostered and adopted children and families. There will be a brief time for experiential art therapy tools and discussion.

F3 Inclusive Foster Care

Sandra Sotkowy—VACFSS Resources Supervisor

A panel of birth parents, caregivers and VACFSS social workers will present their experiences with Inclusive Foster Care, where family and foster caregivers work together to care for the child. They will describe the benefits, practicalities and struggles to work in true partnership. Question, comments and discussion will be welcomed.

F4 OSKAPEW: The Role of an Aboriginal Cultural Helper

Roxanne Tootoosis

In our story of Creation, we talk about each of us having our own path to travel and our own gift to give and to share. Roxanne shares her 12 years of experience working in varying capacities in First Nations communities. She shares how one can embrace one’s own spirituality to help facilitate healing.

F5 Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Inc.

Diane Redsky and Josie Hill

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata’s 1984 birth and journey as an Aboriginal controlled and directed non-mandated organization in the city of Winnipeg is a story of inspiration that honors the role of everyone working together to help one another. Josie Hill and Diane Redsky will share the challenges, strength and learning when delivering services to urban Aboriginal children and families.

F6 Culturally Appropriate Child Welfare as Peacemaking* and Cultural Interpretation

Dr. Catherine Richardson

In this presentation, Cathy Richardson formulates Aboriginal child welfare practice as an act of peacemaking and cultural interpretation, built on a foundation of dignity and decolonization. Participants will learn new ways of negotiating solutions to child safety issues with Aboriginal families, re-interpreting problems, and practicing response-based interviewing.
G4 Balancing Child Welfare Practice: Learning from Our Aboriginal Partners

Donna Jardine and Bunny LeBlanc

This presentation will outline the steps that the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Vancouver Aboriginal Network is taking to strengthen child welfare practice through the inclusion of Aboriginal culture, concepts and models. As we move towards governance in Child Protection we are developing relationships with our Aboriginal Partners to balance the mandated requirements of child welfare with the richness of traditional Aboriginal family practices.

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G6 Traditional Parenting Encompasses Principles of Creation and Reproduction

Maisie Wright

Traditional parenting encompasses principles of creation and reproduction. There is a natural order to the universe and parents and children are a part of this order. Cultural ideals represent these roles and show respect to a natural order. Family values carry out cultural ideals and children are taught to live by family values. Cultural ideals are the foundation of traditional parenting.

H2 Culturally Appropriate Child Welfare as Peacemaking* and Cultural Interpretation

Dr. Catherine Richardson

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H3 Home Study Tools Based on “Round Thinking”

Joe Marcotte

Creating tools for foster home studies based on aspects of “Spherical Dynamics”, a wholistic concept. To ensure a Strength-based approach when evaluating potential homes caring for Aboriginal children in care. Attaining information from applicants that will benefit the specific needs of the children we must place. The purpose of this workshop is for participants to take with them ideas including cultural relevant materials into their everyday work for Aboriginal children in care.

H4 Engaging Communities in Child Welfare Elders’ Advisory for Children & Families Committee

Helen Joe and Melanie Scott

An Elders’ Advisory Committee can assist social workers by reviewing cases, concerns, and complaints regarding Guardianship and Child Protection issues and providing cultural and community-based advice. An Elders’ Advisory Committee can hear from all parties, including social workers, family and extended family, caregivers, community and others involved in each case.

H5 Shakes the Dust

Bev Bagnall

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H6 Clearing Spiritual Space for Working with Individuals and Groups

Doreen Sinclair

It has become an expectation for Aboriginal service providers to incorporate Aboriginal practices within their practice with Aboriginal people. This workshop will provide Aboriginal service providers the awareness of the protocol in asking elders to come in and carry out the protocol of creating sacred space for traditional healings and practices.

EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Friday May 19th, 2006

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<td>10:00—10:30</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30—</td>
<td>Closing Ceremonies</td>
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CONCURRENT SESSIONS H

8:30—10:00

H1 Home Coming Ceremony

Laurie McDonald

A facilitated workshop that tells the story using ceremonies and spiritual practices. The concept of a Home Coming Ceremony is not new, the process and philosophy that has been applied for this practice is when a child has been returned to the care of their parent or caregiver and we as a community get together to celebrate the accomplishments of the family and the people involved in the reunification process.
Learning From Our Past, Present and Future
Registration Form

Mr./Mrs./Ms. (circle one) LAST NAME FIRST NAME

JOB TITLE ORGANIZATION

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY, PROVINCE POSTAL CODE E-MAIL

Special/Dietary Needs:

CONCURRENT SESSIONS: Please refer to workshop descriptions for more information. Concurrent sessions are filled on a first come, first served basis. Please indicate 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices for each session.

**Day One, Wednesday May 17th:**

Session A: A1 □ A2 □ A3 □ A4 □ A5 □ A6 □
Session B: B1 □ B2 □ B3 □ B4 □ B5 □
Session C: C1 □ C2 □ C3 □ C4 □ C5 □

**Day Two, Thursday May 18th:**

Session D: D1 □ D2 □ D3 □ D4 □ D5 □
Session E: E1 □ E2 □ E3 □ E4 □ E5 □
Session F: F1 □ F2 □ F3 □ F4 □ F5 □ F6 □
Session G: G1 □ G2 □ G3 □ G4 □ G5 □ G6 □

**Day Three, Friday May 19th**

Session H: H1 □ H2 □ H3 □ H4 □ H5 □ H6 □

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$________ Total Payment

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