

Community Healing and Intervention Program Newsletter: Winter 2004

Ki'su'k Kyukyit! Welcome to the **Winter 2004** edition of the Community Healing and Intervention Program (CHIP) Newsletter.

As we get ready for the Christmas holidays, CHIP invites you to take a moment to remember the individuals, families, and communities who are affected by FASD. During this holiday season, you can show your support for people with FASD by offering non-alcoholic beverages as an option for your guests. The holidays can be especially stressful and/or lonely for people with FASD; offering to share your time and friendship with these people can be a priceless Christmas gift.

Thank you for reading this newsletter, and thank you for the work that **you** do regarding FASD!



A Story of Strength & Perseverance: Part I

By M. Jason Louie & Anonymous
Citizen of the Ktunaxa Nation

(Due to popular demand, Part I is being reprinted from CHIP's Summer 2004 newsletter.)

This story is a sharing of one Ktunaxa woman's life and her struggles coping with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The young lady wishes to remain anonymous; however, she feels that by sharing her story, it may assist others who may be facing similar challenges. Throughout this story, we will refer to the young lady of the Nation as *nipqu* (bear) as the bear is an animal of great strength and has a deep love for family.

Nipqu was raised in a foster home by two very loving and supportive foster parents who lived within the Traditional

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Ktunaxa Territory. Still to this day, *Nipqu* refers to her foster parents as "mom" and "dad" as that is indeed what they are to her. Despite being raised away from her reserve, *Nipqu* and her parents made great efforts to maintain a "connection" to her Ktunaxa heritage. *Nipqu* knew who her biological family was, and met them occasionally during family functions.

At the very young age of three years old, *Nipqu* can recall that she learned in a unique way. *Nipqu* states "I had to be shown several times in order to learn something basic like brushing my hair." Although routines would take several demonstrations, *Nipqu* would persevere and grasp many concepts.

Nipqu would struggle in elementary school and found school to be very frustrating for her. The subject of math was particularly challenging for *Nipqu* who would struggle with the math equation $2 + 2 = 4$. She had challenges with reading and many other subjects throughout her schooling. The majority of her teachers had no knowledge of what FASD was. *Nipqu's* teachers would accuse her of being lazy and thought that by making her work harder, she would be a stronger student. Contrary to that belief, making *Nipqu* work harder just made her more frustrated and angry. One teacher noticed that *Nipqu* learned in a unique way. This teacher

changed his style of teaching and was supportive of *Nipqu*, and the outcome was success. By grade seven, *Nipqu* had gained a strong understanding of basic math, her reading comprehension had improved, and *Nipqu* gained confidence as a student.

By the time *Nipqu* was 18 years old, *Nipqu's* foster mother had learned about what was then known as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects. *Nipqu's* foster mom learned about *Nipqu's* learning style. This was helpful as *Nipqu* entered into post secondary to study in Early Childhood Education. *Nipqu's* instructors would learn what helped *Nipqu* with her unique style of learning and the outcome again was success. *Nipqu* would also learn the trade of hair dressing.



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A Story of Strength & Perseverance: Part II

**By M. Jason Louie & Anonymous
Citizen of the Ktunaxa Nation**

Although *Nipqu* did have the pleasure of feeling success, she would also feel the agony of despair in her life. Occasionally, *Nipqu* would not understand some basic concepts of life and would be ridiculed by her peers. *Nipqu* had been prenatally exposed to alcohol, causing her to have some deficits in life. In addition, *Nipqu* was a First Nation girl growing up in a predominantly white community. During the interview, *Nipqu* paused and said "this made life hard." Indeed, life was hard for *Nipqu* who wanted what any human being wants, to be accepted. *Nipqu* felt isolation and despair far too many times in her life. *Nipqu* realized who her true friends were and to this day remains in close contact with them. Her friends understand what her needs are, but, more importantly, her friends are exactly that, her friends!

As an adult, *Nipqu* has full-time employment, but there are times when her job can be stressful for her. Sometimes, *Nipqu* will forget what day it is, forget deadlines, or forget instructions from fellow employees. *Nipqu* found a strategy to combat this deficit by writing important information on paper as a reminder.

This helps her so that she won't forget what tasks she needs to do throughout the week. *Nipqu's* co-workers are also very supportive of her, and, at times, will provide reminders to *Nipqu* to aid with the many tasks of her job. *Nipqu* wishes to **dispel the myth** that persons affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) cannot be employed. *Nipqu* is an example of an ideal employee; she is committed, honest, and hard-working.

Another accomplishment in *Nipqu's* life is the ability to control and manage her anger. This is a task that has taken many years of work. *Nipqu* shared the importance of seeing the humour in stressful situations. Humour really helped her in learning to control her anger. After interviewing *Nipqu*, it is clear that she is a person with a great sense of humour who loves to laugh. Laughter is a great medicine.

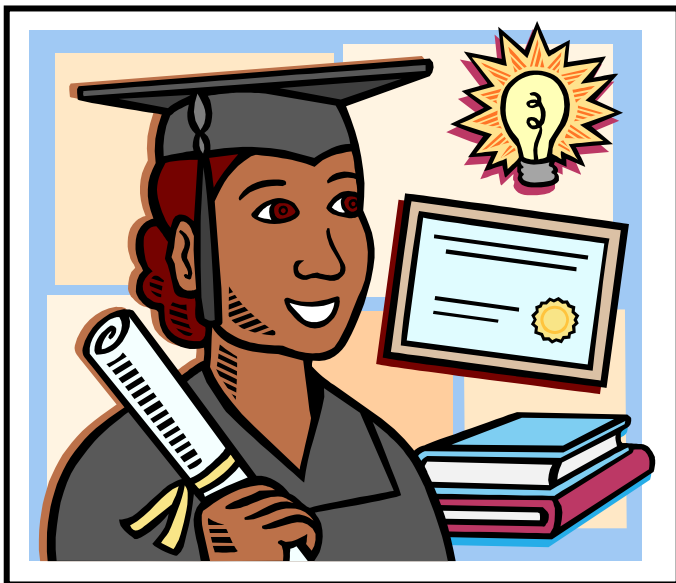
To conclude this story, *Nipqu* wishes to share these words with other individuals who may be experiencing hardship living with FASD: "*You are not alone out there. You need to realize your potential. Never believe that you will never get a job! You can! Family and friends are important. Socializing is important. FASD is not just a native problem; it is everywhere.*"

I wish to echo the words of *Nipqu*; our people should not have to be alone!

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These individuals are our family and friends; they are our people! *Nipqu's* story is a story of strength and hope. I commend *Nipqu* for her courage to share her story, and I hope that this story may help readers to understand this very complex issue that has deeply affected the entire Ktunaxa Nation. As Ktunaxa, we are strong; our name itself is fierce, and we will persevere!

Taxas!



NEW Additions to the CHIP Workshop Series

- ❖ CHIP has added 2 **new** workshops to the CHIP workshop series:
- ❖ ***Using Picture Schedules & Social Stories***
- ❖ ***FASD & Sexual Health***
- ❖ If you are interested in these **free** workshops, please contact CHIP.

Upcoming FASD Conferences & Courses

1. The 2005 FASD National Conference: Equality of Access—Rights and the Right Thing to Do

- ❖ Feb. 24-26, 2005
- ❖ Victoria, BC
- ❖ For details re: workshops, visit www.interprofessional.ubc.ca
- ❖ Register before Jan. 14/05 for early bird rate

2. Western Canadian Conference: Adults with FASD— Circles of Sharing, Successful Journeys Conference

- ❖ March 23-24, 2005
- ❖ Winnipeg, Manitoba
- ❖ For details re: workshops, see www.aclmb.ca

3. NEW On-Line FASD Course at the Justice Institute of BC

- ❖ Starting in 2005, the Justice Institute of BC will be offering its FASD course on-line
- ❖ The title of the course is "Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder—An Overview"
- ❖ For more information, visit their website at www.jibc.bc.ca

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CHIP Evaluation:

We Value Your Feedback!

- ❖ As many of you may know, CHIP is evaluating its services.
- ❖ To participate in the CHIP evaluation, please contact Agnes Koch (the CHIP evaluation consultant) by phone 403-282-0305 or by email hillskoch@telus.net



Child Disability Benefit

Beginning in March 2004, the federal government will give more money to families caring for children with disabilities. The Child Disability Benefit will be paid with the Canada Child Benefit. To learn more and to see if you qualify, go to www.ccra.gc.ca/cdb or call 1-800-389-1193

NEW Name & NEW Phone Number for Options for Sexual Health Clinic in Cranbrook

- ❖ The Planned Parenthood Clinic in Cranbrook is now called Options for Sexual Health
- ❖ The new phone number is 250-420-2313

NEW Location for Cranbrook Better Babies

- ❖ Cranbrook Better Babies has moved!
- ❖ Their new location is across from the Rec Plex in the former Jr. Alternate building
- ❖ Their phone number remains the same: Ph. 250-489-5011

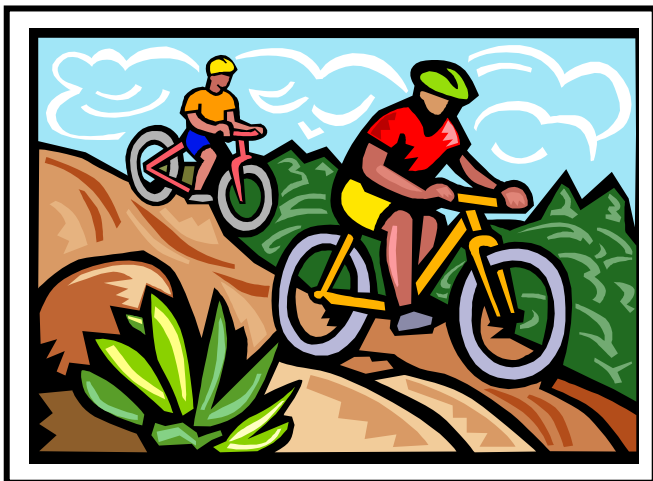
NEW Pamphlet re: FASD & Medications

- ❖ In response to requests from caregivers, CHIP is working on a new pamphlet re: FASD & Medications
- ❖ The draft pamphlet is now being reviewed by several pediatricians
- ❖ The pamphlet will be ready for distribution in January, 2005

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NEW Youth Mentorship Programs

- ❖ There are two new youth mentorship programs in the East Kootenay region
- ❖ Paulette Couperus is the Project Coordinator for the Aboriginal youth mentorship project which is sponsored by the Kootenay Region Metis Association; Paulette can be reached by phone at 250-426-0854 or by email at aboriginalmentorship@yahoo.com
- ❖ Melissa Bax is the Turnabout Project Coordinator for the crime prevention and youth mentorship project which is sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association for the Kootenays; Melissa can be reached by phone at 250-426-7477 ext. 33 or by email at mbax@cmhakootenays.org



Fast Facts About CHIP

Mandate: To prevent prenatal exposure to alcohol and to provide holistic, culturally sensitive support services to Aboriginal children (birth-12 yrs) and Aboriginal youth (13-29 yrs) who are affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol and who live in the East Kootenay region

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CHIP would like to thank the following organizations for their on-going support:

- ❖ Aboriginal Health Services of the Interior Health Authority of British Columbia for funding CHIP
- ❖ The Ktunaxa Kinbasket Tribal Council for administering CHIP
- ❖ The College of the Rockies for housing and maintaining CHIP's collection of FASD resources