



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Ktunaxa Nation

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**For Immediate Release  
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### **Grand Opening Creston Area Ktunaxa Kinbasket Child and Family Services**

On May 19<sup>th</sup> Ktunaxa Kinbasket Child and Family Services (KKCFS) is having its Grand Opening of its Creston Office, located at the Lower Kootenay Band. There is an open house at the KKCFS office from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm with a ribbon cutting ceremony. There will be speeches and entertainment followed by a celebration dinner at the Lower Kootenay Band Complex from 4:00 to 6:30. All are welcome.

Historic milestones in Aboriginal child welfare continue to be reached in the Kootenai. In 2003 a landmark agreement between the Ktunaxa Nation, Métis Nation, provincial and federal governments was struck. In 2004 the Ktunaxa Kinbasket Child and Family Services (KKCFS) assumed full responsibility for the delivery of child welfare services from the Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD) in the Cranbrook area. Today, in May 2006, Ktunaxa Kinbasket Child and Family Services is assuming responsibility for the delivery of child welfare services in the Creston area. This transition will be complete in the next few months. In essence, Aboriginal People can access services, like family support, reconnection support, child protection and kinship care, at the KKCFS office at Lower Kootenay Band. This is for all Aboriginal people regardless of whether they reside on or off reserve.

Lower Kootenay Chief Chris Luke states “I believe that history has a way of redeeming itself. The involvement of the Federal and Provincial government along with the Métis and the Ktunaxa Nation reached an agreement to take control and deliver Child Welfare Services from the Ministry of Child and Family Development. This transition is a commitment and effort to deliver Child Welfare, Social Services to the Ktunaxa Nation, Métis, and anyone living within the boundaries of this jurisdiction. Imagine, it has not been that long that I witnessed the apprehension, fostering, and adoption of our children from our communities. As a leader and Chief, the Child Welfare Services will become one of my main responsibilities. There will be the need to participate in the provision of support, child protection, and kinship care services within the boundaries of the Ktunaxa Nation.”

Ktunaxa Kinbasket Child and Family Services Society President Cheryl Casimer states “This initiative is a stepping stone towards establishing ourselves as the Aboriginal Authority over child welfare within our traditional territory. Today’s success is a tribute to what can happen when there is a willingness between First Nations and government to work together on a common goal to provide quality and accessible services to all Aboriginal children and families.”

Kootenay Region Métis Association President Mike Paradis states “The opening of the Creston office is a day of proven success for the Aboriginal people in the Kootenays. Since the agreement was signed between the Ktunaxa and the Métis people we have seen great advancement in being able to deal with our children and family issues. In order to be in touch with the community needs, we need to be in the community with our people. This will allow the people in the Creston area to access a culturally directed service for their needs. This new office is another large stone in the foundation to building stronger communities.”

KKCFS Director Debbie Whitehead states “The Creston KKCFS office, located on the Lower Kootenay Band, is our second of what will be at least three offices in the Kootenay area. We are actively working towards having our Invermere office fully operational by the fall of 2006. This transition of services will result in a holistic, integrated, culturally based service delivery system to Aboriginal peoples on and off reserve.”

If you know an Aboriginal child and/or family, in the Creston area, who may benefit from KKCFS services, please contact our Creston office at 428-7414. As well you can contact our toll free number at 1-888-489-4563.

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Further information on the Ktunaxa Nation may also be found at [www.ktunaxa.org](http://www.ktunaxa.org).

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