



# AHRN NT Spring News

May 18, 2008

## Youth Feature - Activities and Capacity Development in the North

This newsletter highlights ongoing health research activities in the NWT, this issue will feature youth lead research projects in the north.



### The Fort Good Hope Youth Video Research

**Team** partnered with the Oxford University Centre for the Environment Project 'Sustainability's Paradox,'

has been investigating the community health impacts of climate change and oil and gas development in Fort Good Hope. Since June of 2007, community round-tables and focus groups have guided this research project towards creating a video series that shares the stories of the K'asho Gotine community and how their culture, health and identity are impacted by the rapid and on-going changes in their region.

Five young women, **Jeanette Kakfwi, Cara Manuel, Courtney Kakawi, Tamara McNealey and Mary Grandjambe** have been training as community researchers and film makers, carrying out video interviews and video journals detailing the lessons, reactions and analysis of the community interviews. The Team members have earned a communications credit towards high school graduation and are becoming skilled interviewers with insightful

analysis skills. **Cara Manuel and Jeanette Kakfwi** were selected as two of three filmmakers for the **Arctic Winter Games**. The research team has found so far that increased cultural activities and awareness lead to a greater respect for the natural environment. Community members have seen changes in ice thickness, and increased forest fires, which affect travel safety and harvesting. The Youth Video Research Team scraped a moose hide as part of their response to elders' teachings that they needed to learn traditional skills in order to respect the land properly. While looking into such questions as: What does it mean to be Healthy? What changes are we seeing in the weather and how does this affect us? and What does 'development' mean to you? The team has been hearing repetitive stories of how much stress the community feels due to rapid changes and impending development, and how strong cultural ties and practices lead to increased health and confidence.

The Youth Video Research Team also travelled by winter road to the **Moment is Now Youth Conference** in Fort Simpson where they facilitated a video-research workshop. The youth team facilitated a 15 person workshop where the topics chosen as exemplary investigations were 'Why do youth take drugs'

and 'Why do people sew'. The workshop sessions led to the insight that youth were taking drugs due to peer-pressure and because they lacked purpose and encouragement and that people sewed because it led to cultural pride and love. The youth team shared their research project as well as basic video, interview techniques, analysis exercises and research overviews with youth from 8 NWT communities.

Looking forward to the summer, the team is editing their first video in the series and is completing their analysis of initial interviews and heading out to fish camps for more information! Looking forward to traveling to Tuk to carry out a youth training there and fundraising for a trip to the Indigenous Environmental Network Conference in July in Nevada, the team has their work cut out for them. Cara Mael, Youth Video Research Team Member says "Camera work is my favorite perspective of filmmaking. I really love this project because of what I am learning from my elders about the land and environment." She says she enjoys capturing her traditions and culture for future generations and hopes that making films about her community will give outsiders a view into what it's like living in a remote community in the far north.

**Aklavik Youth Dietary Project - community screening.** A community screening of the Dietary Choices video created in the community by **Bonnie Koe and Autumn Semple** from Moose Kerr School was held in Aklavik. The screening event was attended by over 50 community members and survey results indicated that the video was well received. Survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the video be shared with other communities across the NT and beyond to help raise awareness of the food-related challenges faced by northern communities.

A 15-minute condensed version of the video was also shared with delegates of the International Network of Indigenous Health Knowledge and Development conference in Rotorua, New Zealand. More

recently, the 15-minute trailer was screened by a group of health researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and community members at a lecture series hosted by AHRN-NT, CPHA & Northern Nutritionist Association in Yellowknife, NT. Two Aklavik students participating in the first phase of the project had the opportunity to travel to Rotorua, New Zealand and Yellowknife, NT to present the video and discuss their involvement in the Dietary Choices project. These students have also given several radio interviews (CBC North; CKLB) since returning from New Zealand.

Informal discussions and class evaluations indicate that students enjoyed participating in the Dietary Choices pilot project and the majority of students agree that a health research course be incorporated into the current school curricula. Although restricted access to in-school computers and limited software proved frustrating for students, many valued the opportunity to use digital equipment and computer technology to develop creative strategies to document and exchange diet and nutrition information. Plans are underway to partner and expand this project to other interested regions in the territory.

### **Community health research project gets underway in Cambridge Bay**



The Cambridge Bay Youth Committee is taking on a participatory photo and video project to explore youth identity in relation to embracing life and sui-

cide prevention, with the support of Qaujigiartiit.

Qaujigiartiit/Arctic Health Research Network-NU is supporting the work of Cambridge Bay youth to explore their identity in relation to embracing life and suicide prevention in their community.

This project was initiated by youth of Cambridge Bay, Qaujigiartiit/AHRN-NU is facilitating the development of the methods that will be followed for the project and providing some of the technical equipment and expertise. This project will:

Add to knowledge about the age group that is most at risk of suicide in Nunavut (young people under 30) - from the perspective of youth.

Provide an outlet for youth to express their feelings and their stories about culture, identity and suicide through a contemporary medium – video.

Provide an opportunity for youth and elders in one Nunavut community to work together to address an important health issue in the community

Will result in the development of resources: a video dvd; a report; and a summary guide for other schools/youth groups to learn from the experience and conduct their own health projects

At the conclusion of the project, the youth participants of this project would like to make a dvd of their films available to other youth committees and high schools in Nunavut if sufficient funding is available. The youth will also take advantage of opportunities to show the video within the community.

We are thankful for the financial support of the Isaksimagit Inuusirmi Katujjiqatigiit/Embrace Life Council and the Inuusiqatsiarniq Strategy (National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy) for this project.

**Youth sharing health information with community members** In 2008-09 Qaujigiartiit/ARHN-NU will be working on a knowledge sharing project with Nunavut youth. The goal of the project is to find ways to communicate health information about youth mental health and wellness issues to

community members. The youth will have an opportunity to talk about important health issues and share information through photo and video media. This project gets underway in Iqaluit in July 2008.

**International Polar Year Time Capsule.** A youth-led initiative to involve northern youth in International Polar Year (IPY) activities is underway. The Time Capsule Project is an initiative developed by the Canadian Youth Steering Committee (CYSC) for the IPY. The Project's aim is to capture life in the North through the perspectives of northern youth.

The Time Capsule will consist of youth photography, artwork and creative writing to document northern community life, surveys to collect youth perspectives on language, culture and recreation, and a photo contest complete with prizes. Youth from across the North are encouraged to participate. Upon completion of the IPY in 2009, the Time Capsule will be stored at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, to be re-opened during the next IPY.

To learn more about this exciting initiative, visit <http://timecapsule.edublogs.org/> or email Julia Christensen, Time Capsule co-director, at [julia.christensen@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:julia.christensen@mail.mcgill.ca)

**New Northern Network Links Students and Communities** Northern Students/Northern Research (NS/NR) is a network linking students from Canada's northern regions with one another and with northern community organizations. The group was formed in 2007 by graduate students from the Northwest Territories who were looking for a way to better connect with other people conducting research in the north as well as northern communities with identified research needs.

With support from the NWT Arctic Health Research Network, consultation meetings with students in Yellowknife and Inuvik in 2007 to determine what the first priority for the NS/NR network should be. The

outcome of these meetings was the development of a NS/NR website - a virtual "meeting place" where students can collaborate with one another, connect with community-based research projects, and draw on the knowledge and expertise of others conducting natural or social science research in this remarkable part of Canada. The website is now up and running and can be found at [www.northernresearch.org](http://www.northernresearch.org) . Please visit this website for more details on the goals and objectives of NS/NR and to find out how to get involved.

The group's next activity will be a lunch and information session from **12 - 1 p.m. on Friday, July 11th 2008 in the Greenstone Building in Yellowknife**. This meeting will be an opportunity for interested individuals and community groups who would like to be better connected to one another to learn more about NS/NR and share their ideas for how the goal of connecting students and communities through research can best be achieved. Interested individuals or community groups who are not in Yellowknife can also participate via teleconference in this meeting. If you are interested in taking part, either in person or via teleconference, please RSVP by emailing [northernstudentresearch@gmail.com](mailto:northernstudentresearch@gmail.com)

### **The Healthy Aboriginal Network releases new health literacy comic on staying in school**

**Level Up** is about Terry, a kid who is contemplating dropping out of school. But before he gets a chance, he's asked to spend some time with his cousin Dave, a successful game developer in the city. Dave knows better than to lecture Terry about school. So much so, he makes the importance of school relatable – he compares it to character strengths and weaknesses in a video game. Having put the importance of school into terms he can understand, Terry is better able to make a decision for his future. Pricing can be found at [www.thehealthyaboriginal.net](http://www.thehealthyaboriginal.net)

## Announcements



In partnership with the *CIHR team in Circumpolar Chronic Disease Prevention*, AHRN NT is offering a scholarship to NWT residents who are registered in a Masters or PhD program. The scholarship will be up to \$17,000 for masters and \$21,000 for PhD. Applications are due by July 18, 2008. For an application package contact [ahrn.ed@theedge.ca](mailto:ahrn.ed@theedge.ca) or [ahrn.fa@theedge.ca](mailto:ahrn.fa@theedge.ca)



**14th International Congress for Circumpolar Health Securing the IPY Legacy: From Research to Action** . Planning is ongoing for the congress to

be held in **Yellowknife July 11-16 2009**. Watch for the call for abstracts late summer on the website [www.icch2009.com](http://www.icch2009.com) or email [icch14@theedge.ca](mailto:icch14@theedge.ca) to be put on the distribution list and receive updates.

### Contact Us:

**Arctic Health Research Network - NT**  
**PO Box 11050**  
**Yellowknife, NT**  
**X1A 3X7**

[ahrn.ed@theedge.ca](mailto:ahrn.ed@theedge.ca)

**Phone (867) 873-9338**  
**Fax (867) 873-3152**