



Department of Justice and Correctional Services Message from the Director

The Department of Justice and Correctional Services under the Cree Regional Authority works to provide for the implementation of Section 18 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, and the Justice Agreement signed with the Government of Quebec on May 30, 2007. Within these agreements, there is a clear recognition of the Cree circumstances, usages, customs and way of life.

The Cree values and traditions have provided guidance and wisdom for generations to our institutions. In the past year, we have focused on community-based facilities, justice officers, justice committees, programs and services. The purpose of a justice system is to represent the people it seeks to serve, and answer their concerns. Therefore, we seek to engage and employ local resources as a foundation. There are many important issues that have not been addressed in the past by the justice and correctional systems within our traditional territories. We are working in collaboration with these systems, Cree communities and Cree entities to build better programs and services together.



Justice Facilities

We have engaged in the construction of four justice facilities within the Cree communities, and in the spring will begin three more. The Mistissini Justice Facility will open in the summer of 2010, with facilities in Waswanipi, Wemindji



and Whapmagoostui opening later in the year. Each facility will include space for mediation, family counselling and court proceeding purposes, and will also host local justice officers, programs and services. These community-based facilities will be a focal point for the administration of justice, but also a resource for Community Justice Committees and a number of initiatives to provide better access and service to each community.

Justice Employees

In the past year, a majority of community-based positions within the Department of Justice and Correctional Services have been filled including that of Community Justice Officer, Community Reintegration Officers and Crime Victims Assistance Centre support workers. These community-based positions were ideally filled with people from those communities to ensure sound local knowledge and availability. There are some outstanding positions yet to be filled, but these will be done at a pace that works well for the community.

Community Justice Officers (CJO) are a local liaison between the community and the justice system. CJOs work closely with organizations in the community to develop a local resource group to identify issues within a community and collaborate on solutions. CJOs also support Community Justice Committees, which are a local diversion initiative, as well as develop community-based programs and implement and monitor local awareness and crime prevention efforts. In contrast, Community Reintegration Officers (CROs) are a local liaison between the community and the corrections system. Community members who are returning from detention or have conditions placed upon them by the court require extra support in the community, which can be offered in conjunction with other local resources such as social services, public health, police services and indeed Elders, the latter of which to ensure Cree values are part of the healing and redemption process. CROs work closely with these resources to develop re-integration plans for individuals that will help with their rehabilitation, therefore reducing recidivism and improving public safety. And finally, Crimes Victims Assistance Centre (CAVAC) support workers provide support and services for victims of crime requiring assistance, including but not limited to providing advice on the court process, identifying counselling or social services, and generally ensuring that they have the support they need before, during and after their involvement with the criminal justice system. While these CAVAC positions are new to our communities, there are centres to assist victims of crime located throughout all regions of Quebec.

Community Justice Committees

Community Justice Committees are an essential component of our Cree Justice apparatus. These are comprised



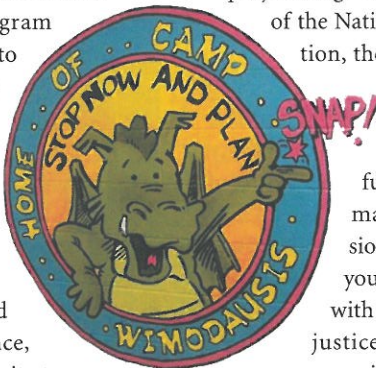
of local members of the community nominated by Council to work on local diversion, restorative justice and related matters, who are supported in their important work by the local CJO. Justice Committees are empowered to create protocols with crown attorneys to have less serious offences diverted to them for resolution outside the traditional justice system in a way that recognizes Cree values, customs and ways, as well as assist Judges in the sentencing phase of trials by preparing Community Impact Statements. In the past year, the Department of Justice and Correctional Services has provided funding and a guide to each community for the establishment of Community Justice Committees. Further, through a separate agreement with Canada and Quebec, we have provided an introductory training for all Justice Committee members designated



by local communities. In the coming year, we will provide additional training and resource materials to support these essential local justice bodies.

Justice Programs

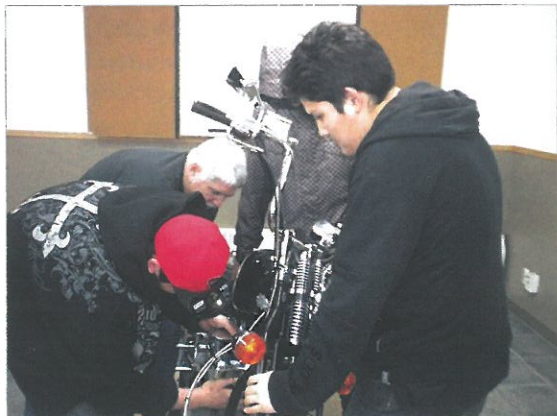
Last year we made steady progress on the program front. Through a substantial grant from Service Canada, we launched the Cree Reintegration, Education and Employment (C.R.E.E.) pilot program in January. The goal of the program is to help members of the Cree Nation, who either have a criminal record or are completing a custodial sentence in a provincial or federal detention facility, to make a successful transition back into Cree society through education, employment and counselling supports. By addressing the factors that contributed to offending behaviour in the first place, and by mobilizing the employer community to give current or former offenders a second chance, the program seeks to reduce repeat offending, improve community safety, and help communities heal. In addition,



classic automobiles, which will then be sold or raffled to raise money for various youth programs.

This year also saw preparation work completed for the introduction of the internationally acclaimed SNAP® Program, designed to equip children aged 6 to 11 in conflict with the law or at very high risk of offending, with the skills they need to avoid trouble. This program will be in a pilot project stage for the next few years, with the support of the National Crime Prevention Centre. In addition, the Department partnered with the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association to commence planning for a major Family Violence Symposium in the future. Moreover, excellent progress was made piloting a police-led youth diversion program in Nemaska, which will help young people under the age of 18 in conflict with the law to avoid the traditional criminal justice system in favour of an appropriate, community-based resolution to their behaviour.

The Department has also supported the drugs/gangs/crime education and awareness agenda of the 2010 Native Inter-Band Games in Mistissini, and in the coming year,



in partnership with CHRD and the Cree First Nation of Oujé-Bougoumou, we commenced the “Ozzy’s Garage” youth mentorship program in Oujé. This program involved former outlaw motorcycle gang member, drug addict and 24-year federal prison inmate Rick Osborne, who worked with approximately 20 youths to re-build a custom Titan Motorcycle chopper. Through the program, participants learned future employment skills, but most important, had the opportunity to discuss their challenges and concerns with someone who has made many mistakes along the way but redeemed himself to now work productively with thousands of youths every year. The program has been credited with greatly reducing youth-on-youth violence in Oujé, and in stimulating the formation of the new “Restoration Program”, where Mr. Osborne will teach youths, Elders and other community members to work together to restore

will continue to roll-out new programming efforts in collaboration with our partners including those related to youth engagement, youth centre animation, crime prevention and others.

It is our goal to provide a justice system that integrates ideas, values and ways from within Cree society, and ensure that the contemporary justice and correctional systems recognize, respect and reflect those in the delivery of justice within our communities and territory. We will work collaboratively with other organizations and departments to ensure that we provide services that create healthier communities within our Nation, and make justice more accessible.

Sincerely,
Donald Nicholls