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## New projects promote hope, confidence and belonging among Aboriginal youth

### ***Safe Communities initiatives aim to steer at-risk youths away from crime***

Calgary... Building hope and confidence among at-risk Aboriginal youth is the focus of three new Safe Communities Innovation Fund pilot projects.

"Strong, confident young people help build strong, safe Aboriginal communities," said Aboriginal Relations Minister Len Webber. "Thanks to the commitment of entire communities, at-risk Aboriginal youths will get the support they need to feel good about themselves and to make positive choices."

The community-based projects are receiving funding for three years through the province's Safe Communities Innovation Fund:

- **Circle of Courage Youth Intervention Program:** \$443,850 to the Kainai Community Corrections Society (KCCS) to implement a crime-prevention pilot for Aboriginal youth age 12-17 who are members of the Kainai Nation (Blood Tribe) near Standoff. The pilot is based on the promising practice model, the *Circle of Courage* and focuses on enhancing belonging, mastery, independence and generosity through participation in cultural ceremonies and traditions.
- **Eden Valley Crime Prevention Youth Empowerment Strategy:** \$278,000 to the Stoney Nation to address the impacts and causes of violent crimes among youth and young adults age 13-30 in the First Nation community of Eden Valley. The pilot aims to increase self-esteem by enabling youths to develop skills, complete tasks and have a voice in the community. It is expected this will reduce the likelihood an individual will become involved with the criminal justice system.
- **Stoney Nation Music Factory:** \$150,000 to the Legacy Children's Foundation to work with local partners to provide musical experiences and mentorship to at-risk Aboriginal youth in the Stoney First Nations communities of Morley, Eden Valley and Big Horn. Youths age 11-20 will build self-esteem as they learn musical skills and are mentored by community volunteers.

"Mentors have a tremendously positive influence on youth in their community and research shows that young people with positive adult role models are more confident, more likely to stay in school, and less likely to become involved with drugs or crime," said Yvonne Fritz, Minister of Children and Youth Services. "I commend the leaders of these programs for their commitment to helping young people build on their strengths, make positive life decisions, and become more independent and successful."

"Some of the most important crime prevention we ever do takes place in our homes and in our communities," said Frank Oberle, Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. "Intervention programs such as those being funded through these Safe Communities grants are at the heart of our action plan for a safe and secure Alberta."

The projects are led by the following Safe Communities partner ministries: Aboriginal Relations, Children and Youth Services, Education, Health and Wellness, and Solicitor General and Public Security. These pilots are three of the 14 projects designed to build safer communities, reduce crime and address the needs of at-risk members of Alberta's Aboriginal community.

The Safe Communities Innovation Fund builds on the work of the Safe Communities initiative to address crime on an immediate basis, as well as over the long term. For more information please visit: <http://www.safecommunities.gov.ab.ca/scif>.

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