



IndigenACTION:

Community Fitness and Health Through Sports and Recreation

Context:

In February 2010, the Four Host First Nations – Squamish, Musqueam, Lil'wat and the Tsleil-Waututh – welcomed the world to their territories in the spirit of mutual respect and recognition and in the name of sport, competition and togetherness. During the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games, the Four Host First Nations and the Vancouver Olympic Committee developed a true partnership exemplifying how First Nations and all Canadians can and must work together. They worked together with mutual respect, support, and a clear and dedicated commitment to find solutions required for success. These key elements form the basis of **IndigenACTION** – an initiative led by the AFN Youth Council to carry forward the energy of the Olympic Games into Indigenous communities and the realities/mind-sets of our people.

IndigenACTION:

IndigenACTION was launched July 18, 2010 by Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo and AFN Youth Council Co-chairs Ashley Julian and Joshua Gottfriedson in Winnipeg, Manitoba. *IndigenACTION* is a national effort to build on the spirit and energy of the 2010 Olympic Games. Through *IndigenACTION*, we will foster the partnerships required to ensure Indigenous peoples in Canada have an opportunity to grow themselves and their communities through community fitness, wellness, sports and recreation.

IndigenACTION will enhance existing relationships and develop new partnerships to help improve the quality of life for Indigenous peoples by promoting healthy lifestyles, community togetherness and community-based economic spin-off opportunities. This will include securing greater investment and support for our own athletes, as sport has great potential to encourage, motivate and create confidence in our young people.

Action:

Together with the leadership of Olympian Waneek Horn Miller, AFN and AFN Youth Council will facilitate the development of a national strategy to further support and stabilize new and existing initiatives and organizations supporting young Indigenous athletes and improve fitness and well-being in our communities.

Phase 1: Regional Roundtables – 2010

- Begin a dialogue
- Collect best practices
- Identify common goals and objectives for sport, fitness and wellness development and the unique issues facing First Nation communities in the development of these areas
- Understand the mandates of existing organizations, government supports and challenges
- Report to all First Nations – AGA, July 2011

Phase 2: National First Nation Sport, Fitness and Wellness Conference – Fall 2011

- Present information collected by the Regional Roundtables
- Present International Indigenous best practices
- Discuss and develop a National Strategic plan for First Nation Sport, Fitness, and Wellness
- Confirm linkages / awareness to related initiatives

Phase 3: Second Annual Aboriginal Sport Fitness and Wellness Conference – Fall 2012

- Launch National Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Sport, Fitness and Wellness
- Establish Overseeing body to compliment and coordinate individuals, organizations, governmental bodies

Phase 1 - Regional Roundtable Discussions:

We want feedback from the experts – leaders in our communities, athletes, sports institutions, organizations, the private and public sectors - to identify opportunities to improve and enhance existing resources for Indigenous youth in sport, while promoting active and healthy lifestyles at the community level.

Through regional roundtable discussions we will gather voices and coordinate efforts to identify opportunities, common goals and objectives. The first roundtable will take place January 2011 – location to be confirmed.

Sports and Fitness – Sparking change for Indigenous Youth and Communities

First Nations are the fastest growing demographic in Canada, yet we have the lowest level of educational achievement. It's an unfortunate reality that our kids are more likely to end up in jail than to graduate high school with a graduation rate that is almost half that of the rest of Canada. Sports, as the Olympic Games remind us, have the potential to fuel passion and motivation. But sports are very much more and can be part of the turning point for our people.

First Nations are united in an agenda for change and have set a priority on education. Education as the key to hope – hope that is the spark that fires the drive to strive and believe, and ultimately to thrive and achieve. Sport, including athletics and physical education, is linked to education outcomes and offers many other powerful contributions to our young people by improving health, academic performance, concentration and attendance at school. It also helps combat obesity and youth crime by increasing sense of identify, self-esteem and motivation.

We need to start in our communities – creating healthy places to live and raise families, inspire and empower our young people and spark change. From this starting place, we reach out, just as in our Treaty relationship, to establish partnerships for mutual benefit and advantage.

There are already many caring and amazing individuals, charities and foundations working together with and among our people. We want to recognize and support these efforts and grow them into a national movement. Whether it's building hockey rinks in the remote northern reaches of Ontario, sending sticks and balls to kids on the prairies, or giving kids on the streets of Winnipeg an option of joining a team instead of a gang – there is a great opportunity for us to build on existing initiatives and the momentum created by the 2010 Olympic Games.

We encourage everyone to become part of this movement donating time, expertise in coaching and organizing sports as well as corporations to build gymnasiums and the critical supports that our kids simply do not have. With a focus on our youth, we will also aim to bring in the parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles of our young people, sparking a ripple effect encouraging activity and healthy living within every household.

For more information on **IndigenACTION**, including upcoming events please visit www.afn.ca.