

May 2014

Kocihta Update

Since launching in October 2013, Kocihta has implemented two regional eMentoring pilots involving 33 high school and post-secondary Indigenous youth, and delivered a leadership experience to 48 Indigenous post-secondary grads from across Canada. Details on these initiatives are outlined in this update.

We are also in the process of building and implementing a digital donation platform that will allow us to accept online donations through a secure site. This platform is scheduled to launch, along with a small donation campaign, the week of National Aboriginal Day (June 21, 2014).

Fundraising efforts to bring corporations and foundations on board to support Kocihta's work are ongoing. Currently we have over 12 leads that we are pursuing.

eMentoring

The Kocihta eMentoring program is building bridges to empower disadvantaged Indigenous youth to reach their career potential by helping them to stay in school and transition into the workplace.

Indigenous high school and post-secondary students have been matched with mentors that work within their career-of-choice. Mentorship is occurring online through the guidance of Kocihta's partner, DreamCatcher Mentoring (DCM) - an eMentorship program operating with success in Northern Canada that has been recognized by the prestigious Ashoka Innovation Awards.

Students and mentors are connecting through a safe and monitored online environment at least once a week for a 12-week period (high school) and a six-week period (post-secondary).

DreamCatcher Mentoring staff monitor the online conversations for the safety of both student and mentor. Mentors are screened and expected to connect with their mentee at least once a week through a computer or mobile device via the comfort of their own surroundings.

Mentors are Indigenous and non-Indigenous professionals that work with Kocihta's partner organizations, and Indigenous Works (*formerly Aboriginal Human Resource Council*) Leadership Circle members. As required, mentors enrolled with DCM are being matched to students.

Continuous efforts are being made to engage/register more mentors into the Kocihta eMentoring program. Mentors are contacted as a match occurs, and given the opportunity to determine if the timing is right for mentorship at that time. Mentors can register at www.dreamcatchermentoring.ca/kocihta.

Oskayak High School Pilot

In February 2014, 28 high school students from the Oskayak High School in Saskatoon were matched to mentors from across Canada.

Each student went through an orientation process and a career exploration exercise that is part of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council's *Guiding Circles* career development program. Both the orientation and exercise helped students choose a career path that they would like to explore. Mentors were then matched to the chosen career path of each student for a 12-week period, ending May 30, 2014.

Indigenous high school students are learning about their potential, dream job, and career path. Examples of sharing include:

- what their potential dream job entails
- post-secondary schools that offer programs within their area of interest
- overcoming barriers
- connecting to job opportunities
- career-related facts, resources and stories.



Oskayak High School students participating in the Kocihta eMentoring pilot.

Oskayak Student Testimonials (halfway mark of pilot)...

- *“My mentor has helped me with post-secondary choices. I feel we have a lot in common”*
- *“I now have a different career choice because of my mentor”*
- *“It’s good that my mentors can share life and work experiences”*
- *“I’m learning many things from my mentor”*
- *“My mentor is good and is asking lots of questions”*

**Kocihta eMentor
Susan Aglukark
took time from
touring to meet
and inspire her
mentee... who
dreams of
becoming a singer.**



Simon Fraser University

A similar pilot, to that of Oskayak, is running for six weeks (May 15 to June 30, 2014) involving five post-secondary students from the Simon Fraser University in BC.

Indigenous post-secondary students are getting the encouragement and information they need to complete their education, and make connections that will actualize their dream job, and transition from school into the workplace.

National eMentoring Pilot Program

Prospecting work is being done to help finance a national eMentoring pilot program that will target Indigenous communities that serve the needs of disadvantage Indigenous youth.

To date, the RBC Foundation is supporting the national pilot with 60K, which will complement seed funding received through the Counselling Foundation of Canada.

As we build a new national framework for Kocihta eMentoring we will share lessons from each pilot location in order to bring greater value to Indigenous youth in communities across regions in the North (Nunavut, Yukon, Northwest Territories), Atlantic, Ontario, Quebec, the Prairies, and Pacific. The first pilot location will be in Southern Ontario.

Kocihta will continue to seek financial support and collective impact from new corporate partners, foundations and philanthropists to support its national eMentoring reach, which will grow as funding becomes available.

Leadership Experience Program

Working with Indigenous Works and its highly successful annual *Inclusion Works* national recruitment fair and management-learning event, Kocihta supported the leadership development of 48 Indigenous post-secondary graduates that were selected by Indigenous Works *Leadership Circle* members to attend the recruitment fair. Each grad had to meet the criteria of being a First Nations, Métis or Inuit Canadian and earned a post-secondary degree, diploma or certification between 2010 and 2014.

Through the event, held in Vancouver (April 28 - May 1, 2014), Kocihta provided grads with a life-changing leadership experience through the *Kocihta Leadership Skill Build*, the *Inclusion Works '14* management-learning events, and networking opportunities.

Grads, many who had never left their community/region, or flown in an airplane, were brought to Vancouver and coached to manage issues involving networking, media interviews, job interviews, accepting job offers, preparing resumes and cover letters, etc. Grads were also provided with onsite support from Kocihta staff and volunteer onsite mentors that once went through the same experience.

Grads left with a new sense of self-confidence, a new set of skills, and a network of employers/colleagues to help them advance their career. Many also left with a career within their field of choice, or a job offer. Details on the job offers and the grad experience are being gathered through a survey. Survey results will be available in Summer 2014.

Video testimonials from grads that participated in the 2014 Kocihta leadership experience will also be available in the coming month. A link to a video testimonial of 2013 grads is @ <http://www.indigenousworks.ca/files/Kocihta-Montage.wmv>.

Kocihta Leadership Grads

(Inclusion Works '14)



Indigenous post-secondary grads receiving benefit through the Kocihta leadership experience at *Inclusion Works '14*.

Mentor Testimonial

“I can vividly remember how I felt after *Inclusion Works '12* -- life long positive changes from the hands of an amazing experience! It's such an effective program that contributes to effecting and changing the lives of many Aboriginal youth across the board.”

“I feel lucky, I feel blessed, I feel proud to have had the opportunity to work with each one of you. I hope that I was able to affect your lives in a positive way. Please keep in close touch, keep me updated, as I'm hoping that next year I can provide an amazing and successful report back on how the Kocihta Charity and Aboriginal Human Resource Council's program is making a difference by reaching (Kocihta) out.”

- Deana Nicholson

Inclusion Works grad & Kocihta mentor @ Kocihta Leadership Skill Build (Inclusion Works '14).