



# Strengthening the Spirit enters its next phase

After three years of success, the Strengthening the Spirit project will continue following the end of its pilot phase. The program, funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre, was created to plant seeds of hope for urban and rural Aboriginals to reduce domestic and sexual violence within their families and communities.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Strengthening the Spirit was most recently awarded the George Blondeau Aboriginal Inclusiveness Award at United Way's 2011 Spirits of Gold Awards.

meet the needs of Aboriginals impacted by domestic violence. Programming runs out of Siksika, Morley, Tsuu T'ina and Stoney Nations.

The program began several years ago in collaboration with HomeFront, the Calgary Domestic Violence Collective (formerly the Alliance to End Violence), and Aboriginal serving agencies. Strengthening the Spirit built a comprehensive response to family bonds and has been highly successful in helping First Nations communities surrounding Calgary.



The Strengthening the Spirit committee, made up primarily of Aboriginal service providers, ensures that services are available to

Through the time that Strengthening the Spirit has operated, program workers have trained the agencies they work with in Calgary and on First Nations reserves to manage and sustain their own unique programs.

"We set out to provide counselling on the issue of domestic violence, but more importantly we really wanted to build sustainability and capacity in the community so they could run those programs by themselves," says Kevin McNichol, Executive Director of HomeFront.

Laura Ducharme, Community Mobilization Officer with HomeFront, calls the program, "highly successful."

Ducharme remembers one of the clients in the program, and how she learned and grew from the program operating on his reserve.

"He took a chair, had his arms folded the whole first evening, wore a frown and did not speak," she says. "The next session, he did his best not to take his eyes off the facilitator's, almost glaring during their teaching."

"At the third session, while the group was giving comments on how they felt about the session he cleared his throat and said, 'The first night of the group, I went home and stayed up all night. All night, because I was mad and tried to figure out what was taught. I did the same thing after our second session."



...(article continued on page four)

# Partners join together in celebration

**T**ogether we can... celebrate. In early April, approximately 80 frontline staff from 14 local organizations met together at the Coast Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre to celebrate their efforts in making our communities safer.

Over the last three years, a number of initiatives received funding from the Safe Communities Innovation Fund. As some of these projects approached the end of their pilot phase and looked to become sustainable, it was time to celebrate all the positive inroads that were made together to change the social landscape of Calgary.

After a delicious buffet breakfast and a warm welcome from Kevin McNichol, Executive Director of HomeFront, participants sat together in groups to create their interpretation of a photo of Calgary's skyline.

Each group was given a portion of a bigger picture to paint on a canvas. One group added their project title as the names on buildings. Another group labeled the buildings with values of their project. Each group stylized their piece of the Calgary skyline, showing how their project has made an impact on Calgary. They had an opportunity to give examples on how their projects assisted individuals and families in Calgary.

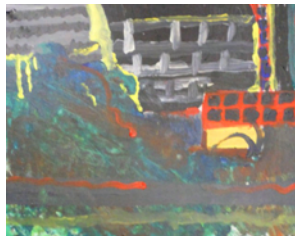
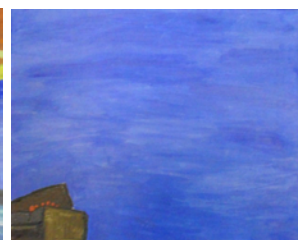
The morning wrapped up with cake cutting and a special message from the guest of honour, Chief of Police, Rick Hanson.



"I know our team had a lot of fun with the 'sky' we were given, and we are glad that we came out to participate," said Jennifer Gurke Elder Abuse Response Model Coordinator, Kerby Centre.

Together, we can... continue to make our community safer and make a difference for Calgary families.

*For a full list of participants, please visit [2getherwecan.ca](http://2getherwecan.ca).*



# In the know with...

## Simon Watts

Simon began his policing career in England, in July 1998, as Special Constable with the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary as an unpaid volunteer police officer, assigned to a neighbourhood policing team with the main tasks of high visibility patrol and public reassurance.

After a few years of voluntary service within the community, in March 2002 he successfully joined the ranks of the regular police service, where he spent six and a half years investigating various offences, ranging from minor thefts, right up to murder.

He then spent time in the public protection unit, which covered the investigation of child abuse, domestic violence, missing and vulnerable persons, and pedophiles. This is where he developed his passion for dealing with domestic violence and child abuse issues, and has strived to educate fellow officers over the years on how police can better deal with such incidents.

As a member of the police service in the United Kingdom, Simon moved to Canada in September 2008 to join the Calgary Police

Service. Shortly after, he became a member of the Domestic Conflict Response Team (DCRT) – where he was able to pick up where he left off, with regard to the investigation of domestic violence, and impart some of his previous knowledge and experience on his new colleagues and community partnerships.

Simon Watts is currently the sergeant of DCRT, and his role is to assign the files and then oversee the investigations. He says, "On occasion, if I'm lucky, I get to be 'hands on' too."



**CALGARY  
POLICE  
SERVICE**

### **HF: Why did you decide to become involved with DCRT?**

**SW:** Having been a police officer for a number of years in England, I knew how important it was to treat domestic incidents very seriously and how intervention can help to greatly reduce the cycle of violence. So, when I had the opportunity to join a forward thinking team such as DCRT, I jumped at the chance.

### **HF: What sets DCRT apart from other or past efforts to combat domestic violence?**

**SW:** Historically, families will only receive help after an incident has happened and criminal charges have been laid. With DCRT however, the families can get help before any court processes are initiated and become connected to services that can help relieve whatever stressors are present.

### **HF: What is the most important thing you've learned thus far while working with DCRT?**

**SW:** I suppose that would have to be the collaboration aspect of the project. By working together in partnership with the other stakeholders, it really is amazing what the team achieves on a daily basis.

### **HF: What do you think is the most important message of DCRT?**

**SW:** There is a way out and help is available - if, and when you need it.

### **HF: What has been the most rewarding experience while on the job?**

**SW:** There are so many rewarding experiences. Some, where we get a letter of thanks from a client, and others where you just know you have done a great job. The most memorable one for me was having the chance to rescue a young female from being sent out of the country for allegedly shaming her family honour. It was a very challenging case with lots of unknowns, but very rewarding to see how she is now thriving and enjoying life, as she should.

### **HF: What can people in the community do if they know of someone involved in a domestic-related situation?**

**SW:** Domestic violence is a community issue and we all have a responsibility to help our friends, family members and loved ones, if they are in need.



One great way for people to find out information is to call Connect Family & Sexual Abuse Network at 403.237.5888. With one phone call, they can be connected to a mass of useful information and resources.

# Taking our brand to the next level

When HomeFront began, we were determined to combat the issue of domestic violence. At the time, we were throwing ourselves headfirst into a war that had been fought for years.

With our aggressive determination to break the cycle of domestic violence came an equally aggressive logo; a logo that reflected how HomeFront wanted to attack the problem with an "in-your-face" attitude.

No longer do we feel that this accurately represents our organization. We canvassed, did research with funders, clients, our board of directors and employees to get their views on how they view us, and actively engaged them in the creative process of our rebrand and building who we are today.

*"We want to be known as a welcoming place. We want people to know we're a safe haven."*

*-Candice Fulgencio, Communications Manager*

With the help and expertise of Kelsey McColgan, our volunteer student from Mount Royal University, we worked together to create a brand that would take our organization to the next level.

After eight months of anticipation, we are excited to introduce the launch of our new brand.

Since our foundation more than a decade ago, our focus has evolved into a collaborative and relationship-based solution to defeating domestic violence.

Our new tagline, "Where collaboration saves lives," invokes a sense of safety and has a softer feel than our previous tagline of "United in breaking the cycle of domestic violence."



Candice Fulgencio, Manager of Communications at HomeFront says, "We want to be known as a welcoming place. We want people to know we're a safe haven."

The arch of the new logo can be seen as a symbol of protection, keeping the home a safe place. It can also be seen as a bridge, connecting the many organizations we work with in the community.

"With this change we hope people better understand who we are," Fulgencio says. "Not HomeFront as an organization, but HomeFront as a community."

With the new website, we invite a friendlier sense of appeal with softer colours, a fresh logo, and the introduction of the mosaic. Just as HomeFront works with other organizations to create solutions for victims of domestic violence and find resources to help offenders, the mosaic symbolizes different pieces coming together to create a whole. We feel that this is a more accurate representation of who we are today, and where our future is headed.

Check out our new website at [www.homefrontcalgary.com](http://www.homefrontcalgary.com) and send any feedback or comments to [communications@homefrontcalgary.com](mailto:communications@homefrontcalgary.com)

## Stengthening the Spirit continued from page one...

"Tonight I feel ashamed and I would like to apologize for my behaviour to you, the facilitators and you too, guys. I didn't want to hear that I could be the problem in my relationship, but you people didn't judge me. You came from a similar background as I did growing up. Now I want to know everything about how I can change. I have been angry at a lot of things that have happened to me in my life, and I take it out on my wife and kids. I don't like me anymore. Thank you for even wanting to help a guy like me.'

*strengthening the spirit*

"This man successfully completed the program and went on to meet with a psychologist for further support. As First Nation facilitators, we understand the issues and the commitment it takes to strengthen our people's spirits away from family violence."

Although funding for the program has ended, and the pilot has been completed, this is not the end. The Strengthening the Spirit committee will continue to meet, and Ducharme is now working with Siksika first responders on a new pilot project that looks very similar to HomeFront's Domestic Conflict Response Team.

# The Evolution of HomeFront

- 
- 2000
    - Calgary Justice Working Project (CJWP) begins
    - CJWP is nominated for our Together We Can project in the United Way's Spirits of Gold Awards
  - 2001
    - After being nominated the previous year, we win the United Way's Spirits of Gold Awards for First-Time Employee Campaign
    - We also win the United Way Platinum Award for Campaign Excellence
  - 2002
    - CJWP co-locates with Calgary Police Service's (CPS) Domestic Conflict Unit (DCU)
  - 2004
    - First four-year evaluation complete: CJWP proves its success and becomes HomeFront – an official incorporated non-profit
    - We are the recipient of Alberta's Promise Certificate for our contribution to Alberta's Children and Youth
  - 2005
    - HomeFront begins co-location with Crown
    - Early Intervention and Outreach Program (EIOP) begins
  - 2006
    - The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association presents us with a certificate for our outstanding support to CIWA programs
  - 2008
    - Second four-year evaluation takes place
  - 2009
    - Domestic Conflict Response Team (DCRT) is initiated
    - We win the Calgary Police Commission Community Policing Award
  - 2010
    - High Risk Management Initiative (HRMI) begins
    - Government of Alberta presents HomeFront with a 10th Anniversary plaque
    - We receive Axia NetMedia Corporation Alberta's SuperNet Award for Innovative Use of Technology
    - We are awarded the Partners for Life – Canada Blood Services Certificate of Recognition
    - Kevin McNichol is featured in Avenue Magazine's Top 40 Under 40 issue
  - 2011
    - HomeFront wins the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations Calgary Non-Profit Innovation Award
    - For the second time, we receive the Partners for Life – Canada Blood Services Certificate of Recognition
  - 2012
    - The Strengthening the Spirit program is awarded with United Way's Spirits of Gold George Blondeau Aboriginal Inclusiveness Award
    - We receive the Calgary Police Service's Victim Assistance Unit Medal for Recognition of Service
    - HomeFront launches a new brand, logo, tagline and website

# Why HomeFront?

Patricia Thistle donates to HomeFront.

"I'm always inspired to hear how we kept a family safe, gave them the tools to be better for each other, and in those extreme cases - literally saved a woman's life.

"It's personal for me. I grew up in a world where children weren't allowed to be children. I was always wary of what might happen next and it almost always seemed better to tell a lie, than to risk a reaction to the truth."

As a child, police and child services attended Thistle's home and school, but nothing ever came of it.

"If police had connected us to a social worker, someone who came to our home, someone to support and help my mother make different choices, maybe our lives would have been different." Thistle suggests. "Maybe I wouldn't have had to learn the hard way, maybe life would have been easier for my mother.

"That's why I give to HomeFront," Thistle says. "Because I think we as an agency provide families and individuals with options that my family didn't have."

## Corporate Partners



## HomeFront is funded by:

Alberta Children's Services  
Alberta Health Services  
The Calgary Foundation  
The City of Calgary  
Community Incentive Fund  
Community Spirit Fund  
JRG Family Fund at the Calgary Foundation  
National Crime Prevention Centre  
Safe Communities Innovation Fund  
Urban Aboriginal Strategy  
United Way of Calgary and Area  
Victims of Crime Fund

## YES! I want to help HomeFront save the lives of those affected by domestic abuse.



I would like to make a:

- Monthly donation\*  
 One-time donation

Amount:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Monthly donations are processed from your credit card on the 15th of each month.

Please direct my contribution to:

- Coordinated Justice/Domestic Court Program  
 Early Intervention and Outreach Program  
 Partner Support Program  
 Wherever needed most

Optional

- My company will match my gift  
Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please contact me about volunteer opportunities

Mail cheques to: HomeFront, #501, 620 - 7 Ave. SW, Calgary, AB T2P 0Y8  
For credit card donations, phone 403.206.2100 (ext. 221) or  
fax your form to HomeFront at 403.206.2106.

Charitable Registration #: 88272 1111 RR0001

Method of payment:

- Mastercard  Cheque enclosed  
 Visa

Cardholder's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry (mm/yy): \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Details

Individual donors, please provide your name and address for us to send you an income tax receipt. Corporate donors, please provide the name and address of your firm. HomeFront protects the confidentiality of your information. We do not share or sell donor lists or information.

- Tax receipt required  Non-tax receipt required

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_