

KOKUM'S HOUSE

*Cold Lake Native
Friendship Centre*



WWW.CLNFC.NET

COLD LAKE NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE
5015 - 55 ST.
COLD LAKE, ALBERTA
T9M 1P4

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gendron.agnes@gmail.com

Kokum's House Men's Home

"It's your community, it's your home."



The only time you should look down on somebody is to pick them up.

Kokum's House Men's Home is a men's homeless shelter located in Cold Lake, Alberta, which opened its doors in association with Cold Lake Native Friendship Center in July of 2015. In the time since the shelter's opening, it has become a staple of the community and has worked in tandem with many local agencies and law enforcement to provide a safe, stable and substance-free home for transient men who are at risk for violence and substance addiction.

The home operates on traditional indigenous values of helping one another in both fortunate and less-fortunate times, and provides men with a safe environment to foster personal growth, sobriety and access to community resources, while also helping to grow relationships with the community that allow its residents to obtain employment, temporary work and volunteer experience, and give them a sense of purpose and drive to succeed. A great number of men have seen personal success in both sobriety and employment after their time at the shelter, and as a result of the staff's efforts to help them succeed, continue to live sober and productive lives.

As stated, Kokum's House has a strong relationship with many community organizations, many government and non-government organizations who refer clients to kokum's house, such as:

- Alberta Supports
- Alberta Health Services
- Dene Wellness
- Saddle Lake Wellness

- Frog Lake Services
- AADAC
- RCMP (Bonnyville, Cold Lake, St. Paul, and various others)
- FASD
- Bonnyville Hospital
- St. Paul Hospital
- Kehewin Health Center
- Metis Region

And many more. As you can see, Kokum's house provides services to not only the local Cold Lake area but to people as far as Edmonton and its surrounding areas. In turn, Kokum's House has a strong support network, including the community, the National Association of Friendship Centers, and the provincial, municipal and federal governments.

Currently, Kokum's House is looking to expand its facilities, in order to provide service to a greater number of people, including women as well. The current budget is as follows:

HOUSE AND SHOP RENT	\$3000.00 PER MONTH
GAS/UTILITIES	\$750.00 PER MONTH
PHONE/CABLE	\$250.00 PER MONTH
FOOD/AMENITIES	\$1000.00 PER MONTH
STAFF WAGES	\$2650.00 PER MONTH
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$7650.00 PER MONTH

Funding for Kokum's house is provided solely through Cold Lake Native Friendship Center, who organize bingo events several times a week to raise funding for the shelter. These events are staffed solely by volunteers, including those who reside at the shelter. Kokum's house is currently seeking funding in order to increase its capacity, hire more trained staff, and create a women's wing, to help provide shelter to at-risk women population in the community. It is the view of Cold Lake Native Friendship Center that although Kokum's house has had an extremely positive impact, it would be a further benefit to the community for the shelter to expand its services and provide aid to even more people in the community who are in need of not only a shelter but a home, where they can be treated like family, and put on the path to permanent recovery.



Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre

2018 marks 30 years of service by the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre (CLNFC) within the City of Cold Lake. Looking back to the past, the Grand Centre Native Friendship Centre (GCNFC) was incorporated as a non profit organization in 1988. Some indigenous leaders of the Metis, Dene, and Cree Nations saw a need in this community where they would feel accepted and know they could come to find whatever services they needed.

The first years, until 2001 they operated on a sparse Provincial grant of \$25 000 and donations from members and the community. The strength of the CLNFC from the start was to be innovative and to act on the needs of the community. The highlights of the centre are as follows:

1988- incorporated as a non-profit.

1988- Instrumental signee to start the Lakeland & District Bingo Association for non-profit community groups.

1993- Ernie Isley helped to get a grant to buy a building to house the Grand Centre Native Friendship Centre.

1994- GCNFC started the Food Bank which eventually went to other non-profit groups and Churches in the area.

1995- Supported the start of the Woman's Crisis Centre.

1997-Supported and partnered with the Cold Lake FCSS and provided a Social Worker liason to the Catholic Schools.

- Partnered with the Cold Lake FCSS to provide a school lunch program in all schools

1999- Hired a fulltime teacher so youth were able to upgrade especially when other schools were terminating them.

2000- The teacher and youth worked with the Museum Society to establish the Aboriginal part of the museum.

2001-2018- Developed two books "Before Doctors" and "Dene History"

2001-Name changed from GCNFC to CLNFC.

2001- 2017- United way supported CLNFC for the soup and bannock program.

2003-2008- The centre was granted some funds to help all those that were affected by Residential Schools.

- Developed and published "Awakening our Spirit" a book of Residential School Survivors stories.
- Developed a CD with Dene Hymns sung by the late Scholastic Scanie and Elder Melanie Matchatis.

2009-2018- Teacher received funding from Services Canada for Youth Employment readiness.

2013-2018- The Centre launched fundraising campaign for our new building.

- Moved into our new building in October 2015
- Thanks to Value Master Homes for providing office space free of charge and moving us free of charge.

2014-2018- Thanks to a homeless man we opened the doors to homeless men in the community.

- With his help we were able to rent a house "Kukom's House" for homeless men.
- We saw a need for employment in the area so the CLNFC Temp Agency was created.
- Temp Agency is a liason to Alberta Support so people can get Safety tickets.
- Temp Agency also provides workers on a temporary basis to business in the area

Since the CLNFC opened its doors we have worked bingos to secure funds for our mortgage, insurance, utilities, supplies and wages which includes Kukom's House at this time. The CLNFC is a drop-in centre open to everyone in the community. We do not turn anyone away who needs help. All of our essential services are open to all citizens of Cold Lake and surrounding areas in Alberta and Saskatchewan and beyond.

Our services include; emergency aide, prepare taxes, fill out forms, referrals to other agencies, advocate for people, children services, native counselling, house search, advocate for seniors, provide on the job training for students, partner with schools and other community agencies. Provide emergency food bank, accept donations, advocate for homeless men and woman, take care of museum, provide cultural awareness, work bingos, provide free coffee, tea, phone and faxing, and soup and bannock Thursdays. Celebrate Heritage day, Canada Day, Thanksgiving Day, Aboriginal Day. Help people get safety tickets for employment. Refer people to work opportunities, and go to schools for Cultural teachings.

There is so much more the CLNFC provides to this community that can not be fully recorded, we are a very busy service to the community. The CLNFC is a vital and important service within the City of Cold Lake. We strive to be a self sufficient centre however with the growing needs of the community we are experiencing a lack of financial growth.

Our hope is by outlining our accomplishments and on going programs, we have demonstrated our value and need to this community.



Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre

January 9, 2017

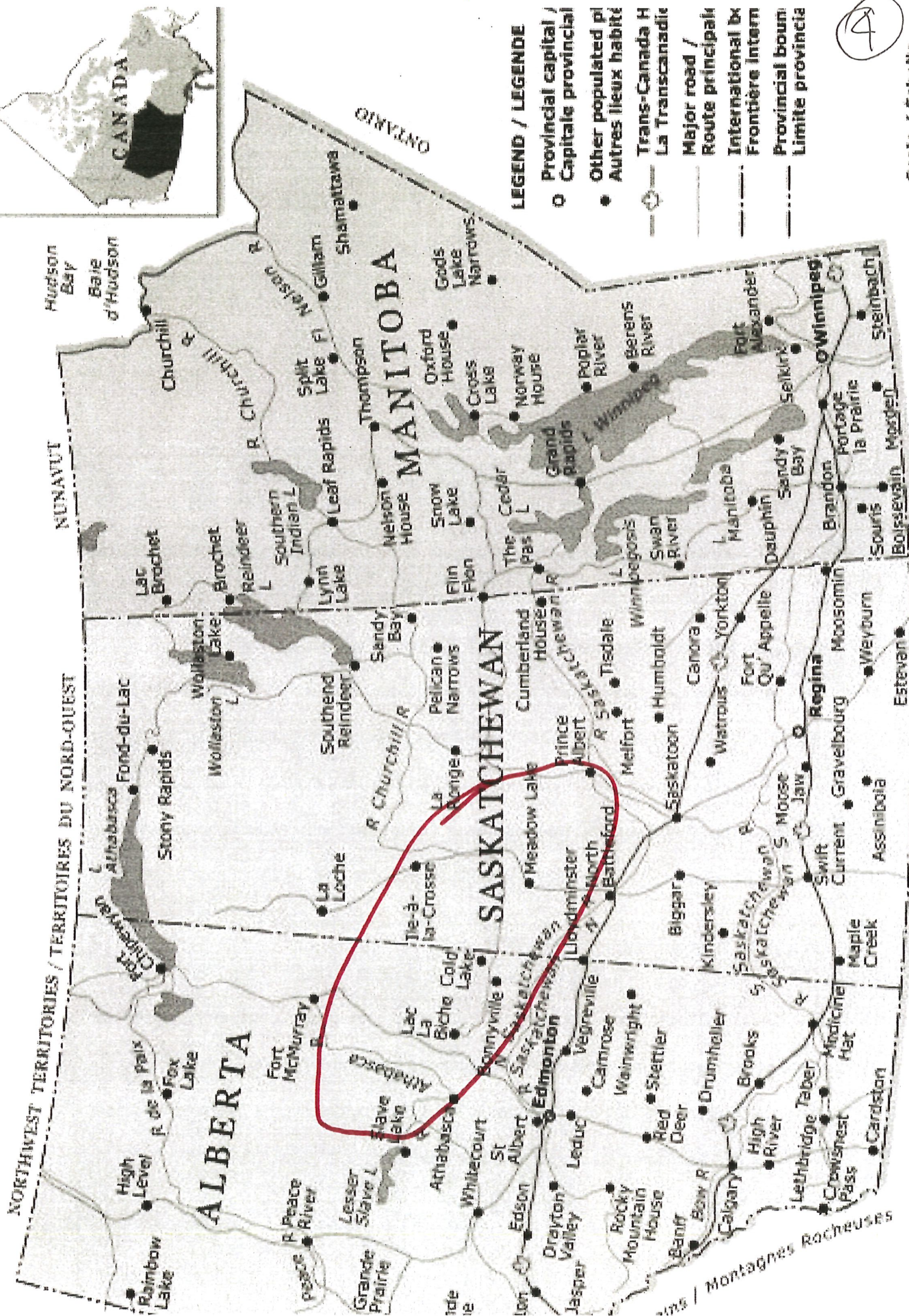
Report on Kokum's House 2015-2016

Kokum's House Men's Home was opened on July 1st 2015. This home was meant for temporary stay until the men found work, a place to stay or move on. This home was not meant for men who had substance abuse issues that would use the home just to sleep. The home was meant for men only but has housed women overnight, especially if it was an emergency.

As the year progressed, we have had men from Saskatchewan, St. Paul, Bonnyville, Kehewin, Edmonton, Vancouver, Fort McMurray, Elizabeth Settlement, Montreal, Cold Lake First Nations, Frog Lake, just to mention a few locations, come into Kokum's House.

Some of the men used Kokum's House as their home base while waiting to enter rehab centers within the area. Some felt it was too risky to find a place to live without funds before they could find permanent work. Others were on AISH but felt they were not equipped to find their own place, so have made Kokum's House their home. We have allowed them to stay on but on a room and board basis. Kokum's House is a stopover place for any man that finds themselves in a homeless situation. It is not a place just for indigenous men, as some would believe it to be.

There is room at Kokum's House for not more than 8 occupants at a time. We need to look at ways to expand so we can help more men in an effective way.



January 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dominique Fijal and I am the case manager of the Assertive Outreach Services (AOS) team in Cold Lake, AB. I am writing on behalf of my manager, Patrick Sesay. The following is a letter of support for Kokum's House in Cold Lake.

The AOS team is an extension of the inpatient psychiatry unit in St. Paul, AB, and works with people with diagnoses of severe and persistent mental illness in the community. Our multi-disciplinary team's mandate is to provide support for our clients in the community to help prevent (re)hospitalization using a recovery based model. Recovery in this context is described as a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life even with the limitations caused by illness.

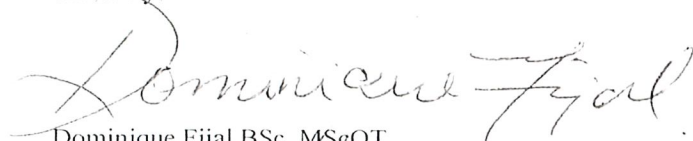
Unfortunately, many of the clients we work with experience challenges and barriers in regards to housing, food, and income security. If a person's basic needs are not met, it is difficult to function well in the community. This is additionally complicated if the person is also living with a severe and persistent mental illness. Resources are often limited in rural areas, and Cold Lake is no exception. Although there are programs and services available, they certainly do not meet the need of the general population, and are often severely lacking for people who experience additional barriers and challenges.

We are fortunate, however, to have Kokum's House as a community service provider. Kokum's House provides short-term and long-term housing options for men in the community and the staff are flexible and very understanding of the barriers that many of our clients encounter and work diligently to facilitate potential residents' easy access to safe housing. Many of our clients are either past or present residents of Kokum's House, which has provided them with safe housing and affordable meals. Additionally, Kokum's House has rules in place which support our clients' recovery. Kokum's House prohibits the use of drugs or alcohol while a person is a resident of the establishment which provides our clients who may have challenges with substance use an affordable place to live that does not compromise their efforts to remain sober. Kokum's House also fosters a sense of belonging and community: all residents are expected to contribute to the upkeep of the shared spaces, and residents are also expected to volunteer at Bingos on a regular basis. Kokum's House's connection to the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre also facilitates the residents' ability to access resources and information through the Friendship Centre which is a community hub.

Kokum's House is not only a safe place for some of our clients to live, but it is also a safe place for our team members to work. We often visit Kokum's House while carrying out our work duties and myself and my team members have always felt safe and respected in this environment.

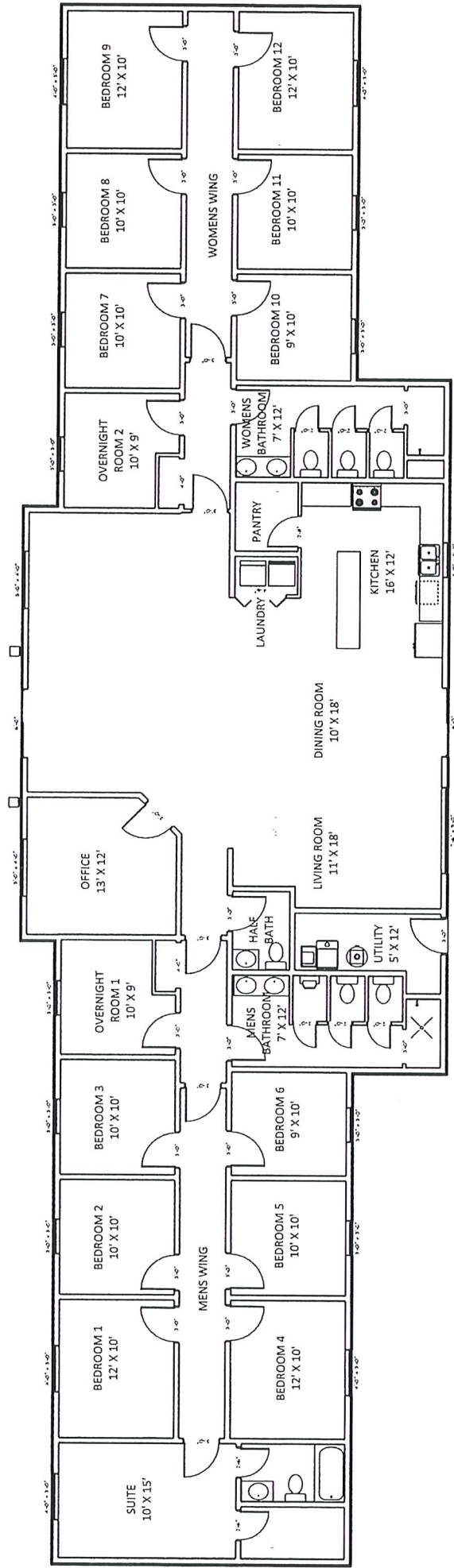
It is my hope that this letter has highlighted the necessary and much appreciated services that Kokum's House provides for the Cold Lake community at large, including the clients that the AOS Cold Lake team serves.

Sincerely,



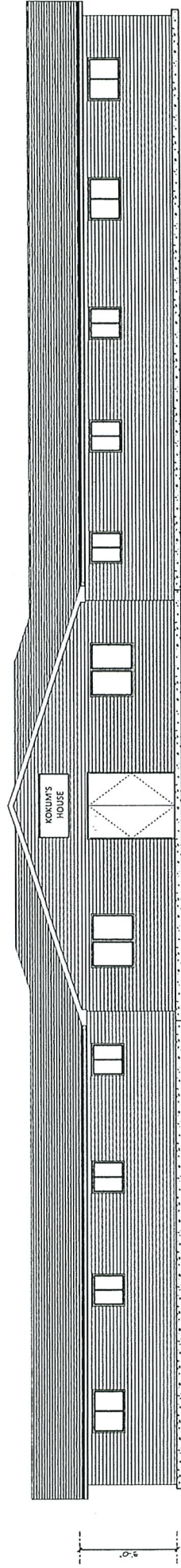
Dominique Fijal BSc, MScOT
Assertive Outreach Services- Case Manager/ Occupational Therapist
Cold Lake Mental Health, 314 25th Street, Cold Lake, AB T9M 1G6

Patrick Sesay RPN, BSc. Ed., MSc.
Manager -Psychiatry, Assertive Outreach & Crisis Team
St Therese Healthcare Centre, St Paul, AB T0A 3A3



KOKUMS HOUSE

Proposed Site for Kokum's House



Women are not the only ones left without somewhere to go. Kokum's House will often serve teens looking for a place to stay, whether it's for one night, or more.

"The house is getting smaller as we go, the more well known it gets, the smaller the house is getting," noted Thain.

It's not only homeless men and women in Cold Lake that are benefitting from the shelter, but also surrounding communities, with people coming from areas such as Pierceland, and Saddle Lake.

"We don't just serve the Cold Lake area, we get people from as far away as Frog Lake, St. Paul, Edmonton, Bonnyville... It's not just the people around here, it's everybody," explained Thain.

Gendron said if it were up to her, every community would have a shelter of its own for homeless men and women to call home.

The map shows the area
Kokum's House covers.

Local homeless shelter looking to expand

Tuesday, Nov 22, 2016 08:45 am

By: Meagan Pecjak

Comments | A A



Kokum's House is a local shelter currently offering services to homeless men, and is looking to expand their home and services to women and teens.

Meagan Pecjak

Kokum's House not only gives homeless men and women a place to rest their

heads, it gives them a place to call home.

The homeless shelter in Cold Lake takes in all walks of life, and acts as a temporary shelter for those trying to get on their feet, and since opening its doors last year, has averaged four or five people a day.

The house only has room for eight, and although it is not meant to serve women, staff never turns anyone away. This is one of the reasons why Kokum's House is looking to expand, so they can begin officially offering a shelter for women and teens.

Agnes Gendron, executive director for the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre, said the project is in its early stages, and is fundraising and accepting donations for what could be an expensive endeavor.

The City of Cold Lake has written the centre a letter of support for the expansion, and so far Gendron said, they have only begun the process of applying for government funding through the Alberta Rural Development Network grant, among others.

The project is important for the area, as it will help expand not only the physical building, but also the services the shelter would be able to offer.

The expansion would include a new wing, which would be dedicated strictly to women and teens, keeping the men separate with a shared kitchen and common area.

"It would be better if we had a wing for the men and a wing for the women," said Zane Thain, caretaker of Kokum's House, adding this helps protect both the men and women by preventing any potential unpleasant incidences.

"Right now, we are in a situation where because we sometimes accept women, that's pretty risky, for not only the caretaker but also other men living there," said Gendron. "I don't like that kind of situation. We don't want to have to shut down Kokum's House because of any incidences."

Women are taking drastic measures in order to ensure they have a roof over their head at night, Gendron explained, adding this is just one of the reasons why the expansion is so important, so they can offer them a place to stay.

"Women are falling through the cracks, because they don't have the requirements for the women's shelter," explained Thain. The shelter he is referring to is meant for women in abusive homes, where Kokum's House is for anyone who just needs a roof over their head.

"A lot of women that are on the streets, don't necessarily come to us, but we do get a few," he said, adding this may be because the shelter is commonly known as a men's shelter.

Over the past six months, Kokum's House has seen four or five women come into their care by various means. Some women are brought to the shelter by local law enforcement, while others find their own way.



NCO i/c Cold Lake Detachment
4710 55 Street
Cold Lake, AB
T9M 1N4

Your File

Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre
Box 1978, 5015 55th Street
Cold Lake, AB
T9M 1P4
Attn: Agnes GENDRON

Our File

2019-02-22

To whom it may concern

Re: Letter of support for Kokum's House

Kokum's House has been a valuable resource for individuals who come into contact with the RCMP and require an alternate place to stay. These clients encounter police for varying reasons, and some have needs that police services can't provide, like short term accommodations.

The staff are familiar with local high risk individuals and work closely with the police to ensure individuals are safe. The clients are also monitored to ensure individual wellbeing while in the residence.

Kokum's House, as a Community service provider, offers supports like addiction referrals, in house counselling, support in seeking employment. This service can contribute the decreased recidivism resulting in a decrease in police involvement.

This letter highlights the valuable service that Kokum's House provides to the Community and to local residents. The RCMP fully support the funding required to continue for Kokum's house to continue to provide services to the public.

Sincerely,

S/Sgt. Scott BUCHANAN
NCO i/c Cold Lake RCMP Detachment

COLD LAKE VICTIM SERVICES



4710 – 55th Street, Cold Lake, Alberta T9M 1N4
Office: 780-594-3302 ext #3

October 12, 2016

Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre
Agnes Gendron
Executive Director
Box 1978
5015 55th Street
Cold Lake, Alberta, T9M 1P4

Re: Letter of Support

To whom it may concern,
Re: Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre – Kukum's House

On behalf of the Cold Lake Victim Services Society, I would like to express our strong support of the Kukum's House and their Alberta Rural Development Network Application. Kukum's House is Cold Lake's first non-profit home for homeless or transient men. They have wonderful plans for expansion. I have been the Manager of Cold Lake Victim Service Unit for the past 9 1/2 years and Cold Lake Victim Services believes that this is a much needed service in our community. We feel that the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre plays a significant role in helping people in need in our community and have an excellent reputation.

The Cold Lake Victim Services is a not-for-profit organization, which works in partnership with the Cold Lake RCMP Detachment to provide trained crisis intervention workers & volunteers who assist victims of crime and tragedy. This volunteer service is free, confidential and is available on a 24 hour, 7 day a week, 365 days a year basis.

The Cold Lake VSU sincerely supports the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre's Kukum's House in their expansions. Please consider Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre in their application for funding.

Sincerely,



Dave Zimmerman
Program Manager
Cold Lake Victim Services
780-594-3302 Ex. 3



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

David Yurdiga

Member of Parliament
Fort McMurray–Cold Lake

Re: Letter of support for Kokum's House (Cold Lake Native Friendship Center)

People that live on the streets and engage in substance use have many risks, one of which is difficulty obtaining and maintaining employment and housing. The frequency of such problems suggests the potential viability of harm reduction programs that provide a safe environment for stabilization to clients who are unable to maintain abstinence. As well, stable supportive housing is needed to give people an environment in which they are better able to deal with their substance use problems. Kokum's House has helped many people by providing a safe environment for homeless men recovering from addictions, in the City of Cold lake, and directly addresses this homelessness and provides a solution for men, without domestic shelter.

The Cold Lake Native Friendship Center is an active leader and a valuable asset to the Community of Cold Lake and surrounding area, by providing community positive initiatives such as Kokum's House. I would like to express how this type of initiative is critically needed in The City of Cold lake, and wish to provide this letter of support.

Respectfully

Mr. David Yurdiga

Member of Parliament Fort McMurray – Cold Lake

Ottawa

Room 810, Justice Building, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-992-1154 Fax.: 613-992-4603



Constituency Office

Suite 112, 10021 Biggs Avenue, Fort McMurray, Alberta
T9H 1S4 Tel.: 780-743-2201 Fax.: 780-743-2287

David.Yurdiga@parl.gc.ca



Bonnyville Canadian Native Friendship Centre

**Box 5399, 4711 – 50th Avenue
Bonnyville Alberta T9N 2G5
{P} 780 826 3374 {F} 780 826 2540**

October 18, 2014

Dear Sir/Madam:

RE: Kokum's House – Cold Lake Friendship Centre

I am providing this formal letter of Support on behalf of the Bonnyville Friendship Centre. A place like Kokum's House is greatly needed in the area. It is utilized by a number of community members who need a safe place to stay. We do not have such a place in Bonnyville therefore we sent people there who had nowhere else to go. One of the clients we sent there received counselling and was able to go to a Rehabilitation Centre to address his problems. He is now sober and is a contributing member in his community.

We have seen the need for upgrades in their building and programs, we believe that the improvements proposed will meet more of the challenges that they face. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at the telephone number above or by e-mail.

In friendship,

Lauri Fitzpatrick
Executive Director
bcnfc@incentre.net



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ALBERTA

SCOTT CYR
M.L.A. BONNYVILLE-COLD LAKE CONSTITUENCY

August 21, 2015

Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre Society
5015 – 55 Street
Cold Lake, Alberta T9M 1P4

Attention: Agnes Gendron


Re: Support Letter – Men's Shelter

To Whom It May Concern:

As MLA for the Bonnyville Constituency, I am pleased to support the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre Society with the development of a proposal for a Men's Shelter in the Bonnyville-Cold Lake Constituency.

The community of Cold Lake and area would definitely benefit such a facility.

Yours truly


Scott Cyr, MLA
Bonnyville-Cold Lake Constituency

/cb

To whom this may concern:

I, Abbey Cheung, am a registered psychiatric nurse actively practising and working with mental health consumers in the northeast Alberta region from Vilna to Cold Lake. The mental health population in this area has faced great challenges with affordable housing and homelessness. Housing is limited and there are essentially no homeless shelters for men in the area. Moreover, suitable housing for those with mental health illness is inadequate and could substantially deteriorate one's mental state. Suitable, supportive housing could greatly benefit those within the community, reducing emergency services and hospital admissions.

I came into contact with Kokum's House when one of my clients moved in about a year ago. I observe both his physical and mental health to have improved throughout the year, attributing his improvement to the supportive and compassionate care he receives at Kokum's House. In addition, this supportive environment encourages its tenants to socialize, enhance life skills, and to be involved in the community through events associated with the Cold Lake Friendship Centre.

I believe it is imperative to maintain a safe environment for those vulnerable to relapse or psychiatric symptoms. Meanwhile, I am in the process of referring a segregated individual to Kokum's House. Unfortunately, the home is at full capacity and cannot handle new clients at this time. I strongly recommend the expansion of Kokum's House and the services they provide. This program could improve the well-being of many individuals across this region, improving their quality of life.

Please contact me at abbey.cheung@ahs.ca if you have any further questions. Although I am an employee of Alberta Health Services, this letter reflects my personal opinion and not of the health authority's.

Thank you,



Abbey Cheung, RPN
Assertive Outreach Case Manager
St. Paul Mental Health Clinic

Box 7550
Bonnyville, AB T9N 2H8



Ph: (780) 826-2913
Fax: (780) 826-1915

October 12, 2016

Agnes Gendron
Executive Director
Cold Lake Friendship Centre
Cold Lake, Alberta

RE: Kokum's House

Dear Agnes:

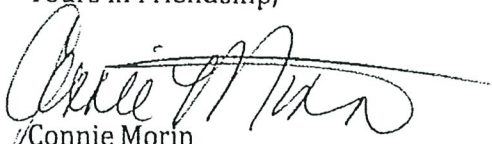
As the Health Director of Kehewin Cree Nation for the past 11 years, the NNADAP program falls under the umbrella of Mental Wellness and as such we deal with the whole spectrum of addictions and mental wellness for our community members.

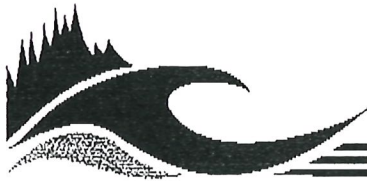
We have recognized a lack of resources and services for First Nations men in and around our communities. While a tremendous amount of resources and services are available for FN women, it has been our experience that men are excluded from that equation. Thankfully, with the inception of Kokum's House, we have been able to access services for FN men who are experiencing homelessness, transience and addictions.

It is my professional opinion that this service must be expanded to meet the urgent need that is identified with additional supports in place.

We sincerely thank you for opening your doors for our community members in their times of need.

Yours in Friendship,


Connie Morin
Health Director



City of Cold Lake

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 9, 2016

Via Fax (780) 594-1599

Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre
Box 1979
Cold Lake, Alberta
T9M 1P4

Attention: Agnes Gendron, Executive Director

Dear Ms. Gendron:

Re: Letter of Support - Kokum's House

On behalf of the members of Council and the City of Cold Lake, I would like to express support of the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre's (CLNFC) application for funding available through the Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN). This funding is being sought for the expansion of Kokum's House.

The CLNFC plays a key role in providing support to indigenous people within our community. Kokum's House helps indigenous homeless or transient people with a place to sleep over night, and offer other services that will help them start their life on a better positive plane; doing it in a way that will make them feel respected and supported in a dignified manner.

The expansion would not only increase the capacity for men, we understand that the CLNFC would also like to expand services to women and youth.

The City of Cold Lake Mayor and Council are proud to continue to work with the CLNFC in their efforts to enhance our community.

Sincerely,

Craig Copeland,
Mayor

cc: Council
Chief Administrative Officer K. Nagoya
MLA Scott Cyr

/cjr

KOKUM'S HOUSE

