A Gathering of Medicine Stones

22nd Annual International Two Spirit Gathering
September 3-6, 2010

Two-Spirited People of Manitoba Inc.
in partnership with
Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. - “Those Who Lead”

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

FINAL REPORT

November 2010
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction 1
2.0 Gathering Goals and Objectives 2
3.0 Community Engagement 2
4.0 The 2010 Manitoba Gathering 3
5.0 Recognition 11
6.0 Evaluation 12

**Appendices**

Gathering Location: Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre

Beausejour, Manitoba

Contact: twospiritedmanitoba@hotmail.com

www.kanikanichihk.ca
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ka Ni Kanichihk (KNK) and the Two-Spirited People of Manitoba (TSPM) partnered in 2010 to host the twenty-second annual gathering of Two Spirit people in North America. The gathering’s theme, A Gathering of Medicine Stones, was based on an Ojibway story that tells us about a time long before European contact. It is said that people from all directions were called to this central place and they were instructed to bring their healing medicines with them. Upon gathering, the people shared and mixed their medicines to create the most powerful medicine. After this was done, each of the travelers returned to their people taking a portion of the “big medicine” with them. To remind us of this event, stones circles (petroforms) were left upon the land, each stone representing one of the one-hundred medicines that was gathered. We are told that medicine people today are the gifted ones who can open the stones to release their healing medicine.

The hosting of annual International Two Spirit Gatherings began in 1988, in Minnesota, when a local group of Native American gay and lesbian community members in Minneapolis saw the need to launch a cultural revitalization movement. It was agreed that having alcohol and drug-free gatherings from that point forward would ensure the continuity of the movement and the building of healthy communities and relationships. The world-wide HIV pandemic had also reached the Two Spirit community at that time galvanizing many local activists to become involved in the HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention movement.

The Minneapolis gathering was organized with the support of allies such as the Minneapolis American Indian Center, Gay and Lesbian Community Action Council, and the Minneapolis Civil Rights Department, along with community businesses and private donors. For the past 21 years annual gatherings have continued to be supported by various levels of government, Aboriginal organizations, foundations and private donations. There is also a component of regional and local fundraising and in-kind support for this event. TSPM hosted the gathering in 1990 and 1998 with approximately 125 participants at each event.

Ka Ni Kanichihk’s mandate is to provide a range of culturally based education, training and employment, leadership and community development, and healing and wellness programs and services that are rooted in the restoration and reclamation of cultures. We believe that our ancestors left us a rich inheritance - traditional knowledge, languages, practices, customs and values. It is by embracing this legacy that we will be able to engage in a decolonization process. www.kanikanichihk.ca

Ka Ni Kanichihk was the auspicing body for this project, providing administrative support and financial accounting. A joint committee of Ka Ni Kanichihk and TSPM representatives led the planning and coordination, and oversaw fundraising efforts and the successful delivery of the project. A project financial audit will be included in Ka Ni Kanichihk’s annual report. As a registered charity Ka Ni Kanichihk was able to provide tax receipts for individual and corporate donations.
Two Spirit People – a term used to describe Aboriginal people who assume cross-, or multiple gender roles, attributes, dress and attitudes for personal, spiritual, cultural, ceremonial or social reasons. These roles are defined by each cultural group and can be fluid over a person’s lifetime. Modern terms like gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, [GLBT] transsexual and intersexed (in combination with, or exclusive to, Two Spirit) may be adopted by some Aboriginal people to define who they are.¹

2.0 GATHERING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

2.1 Project Goals:
- To strengthen the identity, dignity, integrity and wellness of Two Spirit (Aboriginal gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) people;
- To provide opportunities for Two Spirit people to learn about their cultures, heritage, ceremonies, healing practices and inherent and civil rights;
- To educate Aboriginal people about the traditional roles that Two Spirit people held in most communities.

2.2 Project Objectives:
- To invite and welcome Two Spirit people from across Turtle Island to the traditional territories of the indigenous peoples of Manitoba;
- To host a gathering of Two Spirit people focused on healing, ceremony, cultural revitalization and social strengthening;
- To promote awareness of indigenous and contemporary laws which prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation and perceived race.

3.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Truth, Healing and Reconciliation:
Aboriginal people today are working hard to reclaim the important elements of their culture, history and healing technologies which have become lost, forgotten, hidden or forcibly removed during the past 500 years of contact with outside cultures. Two Spirit people are included in this movement, as we seek to rebuild the family circle that was de-constructed by the Canadian Indian Residential School and US Indian Boarding School systems; and to live according to our inherent rights. The impact of this intergenerational assault on indigenous views of sexuality and gender norms can be seen in the growth of gangs of alienated male youth and the exploited, missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

The location and timing of this year’s gathering provided an opportunity for Two Spirit people to tell their stories to the Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission (www.trc.ca), which aims, as one of its principles to be inclusive, and as one of its goals, to identify sources and create as complete an historical record as possible of the IRS system and legacy.

The participation of Two Spirit people is an important contribution to Canada’s truth and reconciliation process because myths persist that heterosexual students (males in particular) were turned gay because of the same-sex sexual abuse perpetrated against them by IRS staff and other students.

Debunking negative myths and stereotypes about Two Spirit will contribute toward the healing of broken families that suffer from homophobia and transphobia. The reality is that Two Spirit people are family; we are parents, grandparents, foster parents and integral members of extended family lineages.

The gathering committee applied to the TRC to co-fund the gathering as a “Community Event”. The submission was approved and Statement Gatherers were also invited to attend. A gathering coordinator met with the TRC Statement Gathering staff prior to the event in order to orient them to the gathering and the experiences of Two Spirit people.

4.0 THE 2010 MANITOBA GATHERING

"At the time of the first step to having a resource centre for Native theological students in 1984, I was standing at the opening ceremony, and it seemed to me that I saw a clear light around the people gathered there. Later on I saw many little lights--and I think that those lights are like many little stars and those lights are the lights of our young people as they begin training and become leaders in our communities."

"We are going into a brighter future. All those little stars are going to get bigger, they are going to shine brighter. There are going to be more and more Native leaders to serve in our communities."

Dr. Jessie Saulteaux

The four-day gathering was held at a retreat centre outside of Winnipeg. It was the 20th anniversary of the first Manitoba gathering which was held at the same site in 1990 and again in 1998. The land, as well as some of the original attendees, had matured well during the passage of time. The land encircled by the Brokenhead River had been purchased by the centre, increasing the site to 37 acres. The trees and plants had been allowed to grow naturally creating lush woods and fields to explore. A week of rain broke as the gathering began, giving way to four days of warm sunny weather.
Returning to the land is an essential aspect of healing and cultural reclamation. Dr. Marie Battiste from the University of Saskatchewan informs us that *indigenous knowledge can be attained when we develop relations with ecologies, establishing a pattern of renewal with the people, spirits and cosmologies that exist within those places.*

Our intent was to welcome Two Spirit people to the ecologies we know as *Manito-wapow* (Manitoba) which is at the geographic centre of Turtle Island (North America). From an indigenous perspective, invited guests from various societies bring with them the *good medicine* of their ancestors, sacred lands, ceremonies, and spiritual guides and entities. Their presence, gifts and offerings will then be merged into the ecology and cultural time-line of the people of this land. The Manitoba retreat was the twenty-second location on Turtle Island that has been made into a sacred, safe gathering place for the Two Spirit community.

As previously described, the gathering is guided by an alcohol and drug-free philosophy which stems from the sobriety movement ignited by the people of Esketemc (Alkalai Lake, BC) over thirty years ago. Because Two Spirit people are vulnerable to homophobia, transphobia, violence and racism, some are at risk of exploitation and addictions (using alcohol and drugs to cope). In order to facilitate participation in the following activities, participants are instructed to not use substances for the duration of the gathering. If situations arise they are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

The Two Spirit community has experienced the brunt of the HIV pandemic which began in Canada and the US in 1979. The Manitoba gathering welcomed Two Spirit people living with HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis C so they could share their strengths and challenges. Their experience is especially important for youth to learn about as they will become the next generation of leaders that will be addressing risk-behaviours, treatment and human rights issues.

**WHO MADE THE JOURNEY?**

The gathering was promoted across various communication networks, including the internet. Two Spirit groups in Canada and the US take turns sharing the coordination of the annual event. It was agreed in 2008, that Manitoba Two Spirits would host the 2010 gathering in recognition of the first regional gathering held 20 years earlier. Two Spirit people travelled to Manitoba from as far away as Seattle, Washington, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Kingston, Ontario and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Seventy-three per cent (59/81) of the attendees were First Nations, 21% (16/81) were Metis, 1% was Inuit (1/81) and 5% (4/81) were non-Aboriginal. Registration statistics reveal that in total there were:

- Eighty-one participants
- Sixteen youth participants
- Thirty registration scholarships provided
- Thirteen travel scholarships provided
- Five Elders present for the four days
- Five TRC Statement Gatherers, who collecting seventeen statements
- Four Resolution Health Support Workers (Aboriginal Health & Wellness Centre/Health Canada)

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2 Gaywish, Dr. R., Richard, R., Rocke, C. (Producers/Narrators). (2009). Nametwaawin (Making a Presence) – Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into Curriculum and Teaching Methodologies, [DVD]. Aboriginal Focus Programs, University of Winnipeg
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<th>Age Statistics Summary (n= 81)</th>
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**THE WORKSHOPS:**
Educational and interactive workshops were integrated into the four-day agenda. (See Appendix 1) The following workshop descriptions were provided by the facilitators.

**Tipi Raising**
Donna Glover, Winnipeg, Manitoba

**Two Spirits in Media**
Lorne Olson, Winnipeg, Manitoba

This workshop presents two films by and about Two Spirits and how media can be a very effective teaching tool and garner support for the Two Spirit movement. There is a quick intro to both films before they are screened and then an opportunity for discussion. Participants are asked to keep track of their reactions to what they are viewing and share with the group afterwards. This helps increase awareness of how this medium affects us and how we view ourselves. Discussions are centered on positive ways in which we can develop projects and begin to tell our story to the masses.

Award winning filmmaker Lorne Olson has been involved in the film and television industries throughout the past 20 years. He has worked in many capacities on feature films and TV shows. His first love is documentaries and he is best known for his films “Apples and Indians’ and his latest film “Deb we win Ge kend am aan - Our Place in the Circle” with the National Film Board. Lorne’s goals are to help bring Aboriginal filmmakers to the world stage. Lorne is a Two Spirited Ojibwa man from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation in Manitoba.
Two Spirit Youth - Reclaiming Our Power, Asserting Our Pride!
Jessica Yee

"In every decision - you must consider the impact on the seventh generation" - Great Law of Peace of the Haudenosaunee. Come out to this interactive workshop led by the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, the only organization of its kind working in the full spectrum of sexual and reproductive health by and for Indigenous youth throughout the United States and Canada. We'll talk about the realities Two-Spirit youth face, current projects we are engaged in at NYSHN involving Two-Spirit youth throughout North America, and share best practices as we reclaim our power for our next generations to both decolonize and reassert our ancestral pride in being!

Youth Panel: "Talk Two Spirit Show: With Youth!" - An interactive, talk show style panel featuring Two Spirit youth from all across Turtle Island sharing their stories, experiences, and most of all their truths.

Aboriginal Two Spirit & LGBTQ Migration, Mobility and Health Research Project
Lisa Passante, Project Coordinator and Cathy Denby, Advisory Committee, SERC

This workshop will focus on the findings of the research conducted in Winnipeg and Vancouver. The community based research principals included community consultations in Winnipeg with a guiding principal of “Ownership, Control, Access and Possession. The research project key principal was a commitment to producing and sharing knowledge.

The research focus will be the momentum for the workshop and will look at the various explorations into the “trajectories of migration and mobility of Aboriginal Peoples who identify as Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and or transgender and the impact on health and well being.”

A workshop format of interactive sharing and discussion will carry the workshop presentation components looking at issues such as “Description of Identities’, Reasons for Moving, Negative and Positive Impacts of Moving, Resilience and Recommendations as well as questions for consideration”.

What Does Harm Reduction Mean to Aboriginal Trans People?
Trevor Stratton, Project Coordinator, Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network

Purpose: To exchange knowledge of “Wise Practices” in terms of providing appropriate services to our Aboriginal Trans relatives using a Harm Reduction framework.

Methods: 1st half - Using a PowerPoint presentation Trevor will review and present Wise Practices learned from the 2-Spirits Trans Project and the CAAN Harm Reduction Project. 2nd half - Facilitated interactive discussion and dialogue with workshop participants on their first-hand lived experiences and knowledge of Wise Practices.

Results: Workshop participants and presenter engage in a review and dialogue of Wise Practices and shared experiences of other Aboriginal Trans people accessing services available to them in their communities.

Conclusion: This workshop will demonstrate that Trans people have been on Mother Earth forever. Aboriginal trans people have special roles and responsibilities in our...
communities. Aboriginal Two-Spirit and Trans people are part of a tradition and we are reclaiming our place in the circle.

Implications for Best Practice: “Wise Practices” in regards to providing services for Aboriginal Trans people have been established in the *2-Spirits Voices of Aboriginal Trans-People – Our Relatives Said: A Wise Practices Guide*. Harm Reduction has been identified as a Wise Practice and will be discussed extensively in this workshop.

**Friendship Bracelet-Making**
Shanee Qua Potts, Toronto, Ontario

I would be teaching workshop participants how to do macramé. It’s a friendship bracelet making technique and/or weaving. I can make an array of bracelets from easy to hard, it will cover the Physical part of the medicine wheel, as participants will walk away with a friendship bracelet by someone else who made it for them from within the group. I will partner up the participants in the beginning of the workshop. What I am going to do is teach with embroidery thread, safety pins & measuring tape, very easy very simple designs and some design concepts, I can share examples of my bracelets, which participants can then learn how to make for themselves.

Then as participants finally grasp the idea of how to make the bracelet, in the second part of the workshop they will finish making the bracelet for their partner they chose at the beginning of workshop. Then I am going to tell my life story as if I were speaking on a panel and speak about how we all need friends in our lives, the importance of friends and how some of us Two Spirits only have our friends as family members, or as our adopted families. Similar to what I shared in Fort Qu’Appelle Valley Two Spirit Gathering.

**Indian Residential Schools and Two Spirits**
Chris Saulteaux and Niya Sakebow, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

A sharing circle was held at the Sacred Fire to discuss the impact of Indian Residential Schools on the history and lives of Two Spirit people.

**RESOURCE MATERIALS**
Printed health-related materials and resources addressing HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, safer-sex, gender and cultural identity, etc. were provided by the following organizations:

- Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network Inc.
- The 595 Prevention Team Inc.
- Manitoba Harm Reduction Network
- Manitoba Hepatitis C Support Community Inc.
- 2-Spirited People of the 1s Nations Inc.
THE ACTIVITIES:

One of the primary objectives of the international gathering is to provide an opportunity for the Two Spirit community to learn about their history and culture.

Traditional teachings and ceremonies like the Welcoming Ceremony, Sacred Fire, Pipe Ceremony, Sweat Lodge and pow-wow were woven into the day-to-day rhythm of the gathering.

Two Spirit leaders were called upon to share the knowledge and gifts they had learned and earned from their mentors and their home territories.
Little Running Deer aka Alvin Komperdo (AJ)  
International Two Spirit Gathering Princess 2010-2011  

Junior Princess, Miss Twyla Starr  
Warrior, Mountana Lands  
Junior Warrior, Jasmine Redfern  
Warrior Woman, Miss Gayle Pruden

Smok’in Gals

The Kachinas

Irene Lovato, New Mexico
5.0 RECOGNITION
The Two-Spirited People of Manitoba and Ka Ni Kanichihk wish to thank the following individuals who generously donated their time and skills to ensure the gathering was a success.

Louva Hartwell, Artist, who graciously maintained the event’s promotion website via her location in Arizona.

Jessica Yee, founder and Executive Director of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, was instrumental in the development of a youth stream. Jessica worked with the 2010 planning committee to ensure there was significant youth participation. Jessica was recently appointed as Chair of the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network’s National Aboriginal Youth Council on HIV/AIDS.

Laverne Gervais, Assistant Coordinator, who provided consistent, timely and competent support in the planning, coordination and completion of the project.

Dr Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre, Norah, Gail, Bernice, Linda, and their staff who worked tirelessly alongside the volunteer participants to ensure the meals were prepared and resources were available for each of the activities.

Gayle Pruden, Shuttle Driver, who drove to and from the site continuously for the first few days, making sure all the participants arrived on time.

Lorne Olson, Film Maker, who maintained the technical equipment and sound for presentations and cultural activities.

Sharon Day, who led the making of ten hand-drums. Sharon attended the 1990 Manitoba gathering and on this occasion she drove from Minneapolis the night before and drove back after the workshop so she could go wild rice picking with her grandson.

Ma Nee Chacaby, Peetanacoot Nenakawekapo, Robert Nolin, Paul Bertrand, and Phoenix Benner, who helped conduct ceremonies and the sweat lodges.

IRS - TRC Statement Gathering:
Statement Gathering Team:
Lisa Michell, Julia Robson, Brad Crawford, Kayla Johnston, Ken Letander

Elder Support Team:
Sylvia Genialle, Deloris Abigoosis, Wilfred Abigoosis, John Kent, Bill Ballantyne

Resolution Health Support Team:
Janet Longclaws, Hector Ducharme, Lynda Neckoway, Daphne Lafreniere

2010 Planning Committee:
TSPM: Albert McLeod, Laverne Gervais, Donna Glover, Peetanacoot Nenakawekapo
Ka Ni Kanichihk: Jarred Baker, Dir. of Operations and Karen Stuart, Financial Manager
6.0 EVALUATION

A satisfaction questionnaire was distributed to participants at the close of the gathering. Thirty-five completed forms were collected, achieving a response ratio of 43% or (35/81). According to the respondents, it can be concluded that the gathering objectives were achieved to a satisfactory degree. (See Appendix 2)


Gathering participants visit the Bannock Point Petroforms at Whiteshell Provincial Park, 93 kilometers east of the gathering site. (See weblinks below for more information)

http://www.carvedrocks.com/Petroforms/encyclopedia.htm#Whiteshell_Provincial_Park

http://www.manitobaphotos.com/petroforms.htm
Acknowledgement of Financial Contributors

Government of Manitoba
Aboriginal & Northern Affairs
Culture, Heritage & Tourism
Healthy Living, Youth & Seniors

First Nations and Inuit Health, Health Canada
Manitoba Region

Indian Residential School
Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc.

New Directions
for Children, Youth, Adults and Families Inc.

Ma Mawi Chi Itata Centre Inc.

Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre Inc.

Winnipeg Rainbow Resource Centre Inc.

CUPE Local 500 Aboriginal Council

City of Winnipeg
APPENDICES

Appendix 1  22nd Gathering Final Program

Appendix 2  22nd Gathering Evaluation Summary

Appendix 3  22nd Gathering Site Map
### 22nd Annual International Two Spirit Gathering

**Sept. 3-6, 2010, Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre, Beausejour, Manitoba, Canada**

**PROGRAM**

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<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
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<td><strong>Thur - Sept 2</strong></td>
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<td>8:00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Youth Day Stream</td>
<td>Transgender Activism</td>
<td>Civic Holiday Canada</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lighting of the Sacred Fire</td>
<td>&quot;Two Spirit Youth Reclaiming Our Power, Asserting Our Pride!&quot;</td>
<td>Harmony Knott</td>
<td>Sharing Circle</td>
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<td>Youth Panel</td>
<td>Youth Panel</td>
<td>Harm Reduction and Trans</td>
<td>Women's Sweat Lodge</td>
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<td>1:00 – 5:00</td>
<td>Welcome Ceremony</td>
<td>Women's Drum-Making</td>
<td>Two Spirit Mobility Study Report</td>
<td>Give Away and Closing Ceremony</td>
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<td>Tipi Workshop</td>
<td>Sharon Day</td>
<td>Cathy Denby/Lisa Passante</td>
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<td>Donna Glover</td>
<td>Friendship Bracelets</td>
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<td>Shane Potts</td>
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<td>Niya Sakibow</td>
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<td>5:00 – 6:00</td>
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<td>Set-up Registration</td>
<td>Sweat Lodge</td>
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<td>Feast</td>
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<td>Deb-we-win Ge-ken-am-aan, Our Place in the Circle DVD – Lorne Olson</td>
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<td>Two Spirits DVD (Fred Martinez Jr.)</td>
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<td>8:00 pm</td>
<td>Sharing Circle</td>
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<td>Daily Activities</td>
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<td>Indian Residential School Truth &amp; Reconciliation Commission</td>
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EVALUATION SUMMARY

The following is a summary of responses to the rating scale below which was a component of the evaluation questionnaire.

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). (n=35)

a. I learned a lot about Two Spirit people at this gathering. 4.91 (n=35)
b. I would use the information I learned to educate others about Two Spirit people. 5.91 (n=33)
c. I am more interested in Two Spirit people than I was before this gathering. 5.94 (n=33)
d. I still have a lot of unanswered questions 3.23 (n=35)
e. This event was interesting. 5.94 (n=34)
f. This event was well-organized. 4.77 (n=35)
g. The speakers were effective. 5.45 (n=33)
h. I would have liked more hands on practice. 4.94 (n=33)
i. This event was too long. 1.62 (n=34)
j. I am excited to learn more about Two Spirit people 5.47 (n=34)
k. I would recommend this event to others. 5.89 (n=35)

1. What were the most useful parts of the gathering?
   - networking, meetings, new friends, learning techniques from peers, having sweats.
   - talking, meeting new people, the Gatherings
   - main hall, Medicine Wheel centre
   - meetings others out of my home area
   - meeting other people from all over
   - listening to other peoples life stories
   - no-talent contest, getting people to share and laugh together is great
   - the provided meals is a wonderful commitment
   - the information about youth and sex-ed
   - the Gathering itself, getting time to make new friends, singing by the fire, playing silly games, and swimming, some of us went to the beach
   - learning around the fire
   - the traditional teachings, the sacred medicines, elders support
   - the sharing
   - all was useful, gratefully, the films were significant, the sharing circles taught me a lot
   - being accepted
   - having a building to eat in, a lot of elders to talk to
   - sweat lodge ceremonies, sunrise ceremonies
   - the lectures, sharing circles
   - to feel all the heartwarming love, caring and happiness was a much needed energy I need
   - educational workshops, sharing circles, social events
- workshops, sharing circles, pow wow, sacred fire and memorial, the memorial was a bit rushed
- pow wow was awesome, the visiting
- the spirits! Everywhere! The awesomeness of having them together!
- the DVD'S, sharing circles
- knowing proper etiquette around sacred fire
- the teaching’s, support and friendships
- ceremony and teachings, socializing, workshops, and crafts
- I would say most of it
- sunrise ceremonies, smudge, ages, genders, nations, friends
- I enjoyed meeting new people, I love hearing everybody's stories in sharing circles
- ceremonies and sharing circles. More drum making also. Everyone wants to make a drum
- the fun, laughter and socializing, TRC taking stories from the IRS survivors.

2. What additional information would you have liked to receive at this Gathering?
- friendship and love, meeting others of my kind
- separate sacred fire, sacred fire to be sacred and other fire for hanging out
- more traditional 2 spirit teachings, women’s teachings, men’s teachings
- more sharing circles, more workshops
- self-defense training, families living with trans, queer, youth, etc
- I always enjoy a historical idea or presentation of the 2 Spirit history
- social media network, internet website
- pamphlets on sex-ed from all sorts of organizations across province to educate people what’s going elsewhere or other gatherings
- for me this was a lot
- more games and a week off work sounds good
- orientation for newcomers, tours, 2 spirit organizational development, local, federal
- more workshops on residential schools effects on Two Spirit identity
- the workshop on two spirit res school was powerful in spirit
- the memorial was rushed and it would be nice to respect our sisters/bro’s that have passed on to the spirit world
- information on marriage, two spirit songs, ceremonial rights and protocol for 2 spirits
- I know everything is pretty well covered
- the connections made via internet
- more information and skills building, teachings, traditions, sexual health etc
- more medicine teachings about two spirit peoples, sacred healing
- from more youth
- incorporate a way we can protect ourselves from physical harm like self-defense classes
- to have more youth speakers
- more historic info, more about what two spirits are doing now

3. How could this Gathering be improved?
- more workshops
- using paper plates and disposable cutlery, scheduling the people to do chores, cooking and cleaning
- more sweat leaders
- more and varied workshops, varied foods
- bigger Gatherings, don’t limit the people, keep alcohol and drugs out of poster
- promote more, dry dance, guest speakers who are high profile
- more word of mouth
- more interactive activities, Jessica Yee’s presentation
- exercise program
- have one for whole week
- more info to all reserves all over, I heard about this last week, never heard of this Gathering
- showers, at least 4 full days to absorb
- it was real good, I have no complaints, maybe the showers
- handout about protocol, sacred fire is not a play area to fool around
- advertise
- org. capacity, community development
- access to more support, AA meetings, more youth activities, separate woman presentations
- hands-on mask making
- to have more people participate in the presentations and activities
- maybe with showers
- shower facilities, I stink
- more diversity, woman, men, youth trans, AA meetings, support for individuals,
- to know who’s in charge, when activities happen, and who can participate
- I enjoyed it through and through
- the memorial was too rushed
- ensure that it is safe for all, all those who teach basic protocol
- tell others about it!

Additional comments or questions:
- enjoyed my first gathering, loved it
- thank you very much, always love one another, never give up
- awesome place to meet other like-minded people
- include alcohol and drugs, more people will come, don’t judge, be honest, be real
- thank you for such a wonderful first time experience at this event, much love and appreciation
- I loved being involved in this event! It was the most amazing experience in my life.
- I would definitely encourage others to participate
- personally I prefer more interactive/hands on activities to help create more bonding between others
- more sports for example or exercise, I even heard an opinion on a self defense class
- self defense would be empowering since many face violence a lot in their lives
- the sacred fire held everything together, meegwetch
- Awesome! I’m glad I heard about this
- my life is enriched immensely, No matter what needs came up we met them on the spot!
- we are very resourceful, skills and talented than we ever give ourselves credit for
- I would like to participate in more gatherings as I’ve never been to one
- I wish I could have been more involved, but what I did was very informative for me
- I felt like another door was opened for me, all I had to do was walk in
- I was so proud to be a part of this gathering
- I would like to be involved next year
- thank you so much to the organizers
- Could we create a how to manual for those interested in hosting a gathering?
- I believe those who receive a scholarship could/should be forced to do more volunteer work
- meegwetch, I hope we all see each other
- as a new found ally, I would support a regional annual gathering ie: traditional to help and support those that want to continue the traditional aspect of a way of life
- activities rushed, need more development workshops for local province groups
- I would like to see more circle, workshops like the residential school workshop-very positively done, very strong presenter
- how do we entice more woman to attend the gathering
- the memorial could have been longer for those who were struggling or everyone could have said the names all at once then tied the ties, more planning but it was needed and sincerely appreciated
- I respect and admire the non stop effort of Albert McLeod who is our political voice that needs to be recognized, very important person to us
- I want to give my thanks to the organizers of this program and the cooks plus the IRS group
- there are a lot of youth that came, I am very excited to see that
- 100% loved it
- thank you so much for all your hard work, I am excited to come back next year
- increased planning and organizing. Also require people to sign up for all the activities in advance so the presentations won’t be empty
- just to see more youth input
- this was my first Gathering and it certainly won’t be the last, meegwetch