



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDSHIP CENTRES REACTS TO THE MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF THE CANADIAN NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE IN EDMONTON

For Immediate Release

OTTAWA, ON, August 19, 2008 – The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) is disturbed by the media portrayal of the Canadian Native Friendship Centre (CNFC) in Edmonton, Alberta. Yesterday, the Edmonton Sun reported on the shooting death of a man in his mid-20's at around 4:45 am (Sunday) just outside the CNFC.

Of particular concern is the Sun's statement that the troubles in this downtown Edmonton area are "*exacerbated by the centre*". To insinuate that this young man's death was related to the Centre is completely unfounded and devoid of credibility. The young man was not a client of the Centre nor was he affiliated with the family reunion which took place at the Centre prior to the fatal shooting. According to Centre officials, the young man had attempted to enter the Centre during the clean-up of the reunion but was quickly escorted out.

The Canadian Native Friendship Centre strives to provide a safe and healthy environment for Aboriginal community members to access culturally relevant and essential programs and services. Recognizing that the area in which they are located is known for criminal and unhealthy activities – they had already initiated the process of finding a new facility prior to this incident.

“This tragic incident had nothing to do with the Centre besides taking place in front of our building,” said Dean Brown, acting Executive Director of the Canadian Native Friendship Centre. “The media should be helping the police find out who is responsible for pulling the trigger.”

In an era where Aboriginal issues are coming to the forefront of the news agenda there should be a particular emphasis put on ensuring that media coverage is not distracting or misleading to what the real Aboriginal issues are.

“This deceptive and inaccurate coverage cultivates a negative public perception of Aboriginal people,” said NAFC President Vera Pawis Tabobondung. “Despite Canada’s most recent advances towards reconciliation, it seems as though the media is largely not interested in building a positive relationship with Aboriginal people.”

If the Edmonton Sun considers itself a reputable and reliable news source, they will rescind their article and publish an immediate apology to the Canadian Native Friendship Centre.

The article may be found at the following address:

<http://www.edmontonsun.com/News/Edmonton/2008/08/18/6487576-sun.html>

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The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) represents the service delivery interests of 118 of Canada’s Friendship Centres and their urban Aboriginal membership.

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