

The aim of Inuusivut is to learn, document and share how Inuit across Canada express and develop mental health  
**Youth exploring issues related to health and sharing their findings with their peers, families and communities**



The project focuses on activities that take a strengths-based, positive approach and is focused on maximum and lasting impacts for youth.

This work builds on and complements existing mental health promotion activities and initiatives already underway in Inuit communities.



The Inuusivut Project supports people in discussing issues related to mental health and contributes to a life affirming media campaign. More opportunities are created for youth and community members to share the successes that are occurring in our communities.



**Inuusivut, Our Way of Life, is youth driven and has the support of several key partners.**



For detailed **Background information on the Inuusivut Project** please visit our temporary website: <http://web.mac.com/inuusivut>  
Once set up is complete, the website address will be [www.inuusivut.com](http://www.inuusivut.com). There, you will find a full project description, previous updates and reports, photos, slideshows, videos and other project related resources.

### **Activities undertaken Multi-Media Equipment to help share the stories**

With support from Canon Canada and Merkle Photography, the Inuusivut project acquired 36 Digital SLR still cameras and 12 XH-A1 High Definition Video Cameras. The cameras are being used to deliver multi-media training workshops and are being distributed to Inuit communities across Canada for use in activities which help youth to explore and promote mental health. Before community groups can receive cameras through this project, they must complete an application form, indicating that they will be responsible for the equipment and use them for activities which are in line with our goals and objectives. Cameras distributed to communities are on loan from the Embrace Life Council. Application forms and additional information are available on our website, or by contacting our project coordinator.

### **Youth Leadership and Multi-Media Training - Rankin Inlet, Nunavut**

From June 16-23, 2008, youth from Rankin Inlet participated in Youth Leadership and Multi-Media Workshops, which took place at the Community Learning Centre. Facilitators with the Embrace Life Council worked with 12 local youth to learn the basics in photography, video camera operation, film production and editing. In addition, group discussions were facilitated to explore issues youth felt were important in their community. The participants met with representatives of Uqutaq, a local organization which provides counseling and crisis response services to members of the community during times of need. The group completed 2 photo slideshows and # video projects, edited by youth and shared them at a viewing with family, friends and community members. Initial discussions were held to begin the design of a brochure the youth would like to make to help further promote mental health. This will be followed up by further discussions, planning and the design and production process.

### **Qamani'tuaq Kids Shoot and Film to Stop Sniffing**

From July 31-August 4, twenty children and youth in Qamani'tuaq, aged 6-16, had the chance to learn skills in photography and film production. Our team from the Embrace Life Council worked with the kids to explore the issue of substance abuse, with a focus on preventing children and youth from sniffing inhalants. The Inuusivut multi-media training was part of a project coordinated by Qamani'tuaq's Tunnganiq Addictions Centre, in partnership with the National Aboriginal Health Organization's Ajunnginiq Centre and the Canadian Institute of Child Health. Additional details on the overall substance abuse prevention project can be obtained from the Inuusivut project coordinator or the Tunnganiq Addictions Centre. The children completed 4 photo slideshows and filmed video footage for a 30 second PSA highlighting the negative affects of sniffing. A script for a longer PSA was also completed and plans are being made to film and edit for this second video.

### **Kitikmeot Elder and Youth Cultural Camp**

Elders and Youth from each of the 7 communities across the Kitikmeot region participated in a Language and Culture Camp in Omingmaktok (Bay Chimo) and Hiraarvik from August 10-16. Youth learned traditional skills such as sewing, tool making, hunting and meat/skin preparation. Participants from across the region flew into Cambridge Bay, where a charter transported them to Bay Chimo. Following a one day delay due to weather, the campers moved by boat from Bay Chimo to a camping site called Hiraarvik, a short distance away from Hiukaktak, a proposed conservation area in the Kitikmeot region. Youth and Elders toured the proposed conservation area by helicopter and discussed traditional uses of the land. Drum dances and singing was done on a few nights and campers took responsibilities in all areas of camp duty. An elderly woman demonstrated the lighting of a qulliq to the group, using only traditional materials and methods, and despite light winds outdoors, was successful in lighting the lamp. Youth also received instruction in photography and video camera operation and assisted in documenting the whole camp experience through photography and film. A camp slideshow, accompanied by drum songs, was completed and a video project is being edited using the footage obtained during the week.

### **Upcoming Activities**

-**Native Mental Health Association of Canada (NMHA)** hosting Conference in Charlottown, Prince Edward Island. Representatives from the Inuusivut project, and members of the Spirit of Life Network plan to attend the NMHA conference and participate in panel presentations to share activities and successes of our activities and to network with other service providers focusing on Mental Health and Mental Health Promotion

-First Nations and Inuit Health Branch is hosting a **National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy (NAYSPS) conference** in Vancouver (dates to be confirmed). Inuusivut representatives will also be on hand for this event to network with other NAYSPS funded project representatives and share information on the Inuusivut project

- **Spirit of Life Network** meets in Iqaluit week of October 13. Representatives from each of the 5 National Demonstration Projects will gather in Iqaluit to update each other on progress made in each of the projects. The Embrace Life Council and the Inuusivut project are hosting and coordinating this event, with support from the First Nations & Inuit Health Branch and the Spirit of Life Network.

**Communication with potential partners** - the Inuusivut project staff is in communications with representatives from a number of government departments, organizations and other groups/businesses to secure additional partnerships.

The **Pangnirtung Youth Drama Group** is hosting the next Inuusivut training project, on the land outside of Pangnirtung. The youth will receive training in photography and film production and will conduct a recording of drama projects the group has been working on, which address issues faced by youth in the community. Training will take place from the end of August to the first few days in September.

### **Why this project is needed and why we need your support**

The collaborators and directors of this project include organized and recognized, major health and youth agencies nationally and from the Inuit regions in Canada. Individual youth, youth councils and gatherings of community members have guided this project and the work leading to it. Consultations directly with youth, elders and community members provide the specific direction to pursue project activities.

Youth participants from each of the projects Inuusivut delivers learn technical and creative skills in photography, film production and multi-media. Youth also develop leadership skills including: positive self-expression, teamwork and leadership, problem solving and project planning. In addition to the skills and positive experiences workshop participants gain, the skills gained by youth enable them to actively promote mental health and wellness within their communities and across the country. Their work also attracts media attention and stimulates proactive discussions in the area of suicide prevention and mental wellness, yielding concrete examples of "Best Practices" in Mental Wellness Promotion and demonstrating hope.

By providing the workshops, it supports youth in developing life skills and establishing and building on support mechanisms, including Youth Media Teams, in their communities and regions. Youth Media Teams are a network of youth who are working together, using teamwork and the media as a tool to explore and express themselves and issues they care about. We all benefit from more open and responsible discussion about matters of public health.

Youth and supporting organizations have initiated and driven all the activities that we are building on with the assistance of this program. *There is a clearly stated and proven need to implement measures which help to protect against mental unwellness, including the factors which lead to suicidal feelings.* That is what the Inuusivut project is doing. In order to continue this work and build on the success we have been met with so far, additional financial and other assistance is required.

**Please contact the Inuusivut project if you are in a position to provide support or know where we can access funding and other forms of assistance.**

The Embrace Life Council and the Inuusivut Project team extends a **HUGE THANK YOU** to our **partners and supporters**, without which we could not carry out the activities described in this report:

**First Nations and Inuit Health Branch** for core project funding

**Merkle Photography & Canon Canada** for assistance with production equipment

**Kivalliq Inuit Association, Uqutaq Elders Group and community of Rankin Inlet** for assistance with the Rankin Inlet Youth Leadership and Multi-Media Workshops

**Tunnganiq Addictions Centre, National Aboriginal Health Organization-Ajunnginiq Centre, Canadian Institute of Child Health and community of Qamani'tuaq** for assistance with the Qamani'tuaq Kids Anti-Sniffing project

**Kitikmeot Inuit Association and elders and youth from across the region** for assistance with the Kitikmeot Elder and Youth Culture Camp

**First Air** for travel discounts