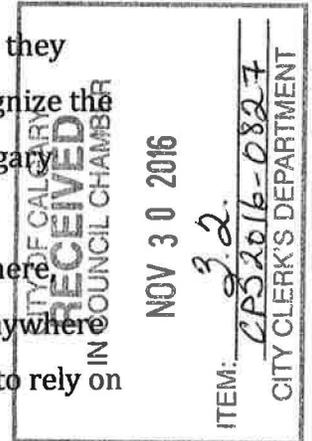


Good morning everyone, I would like express gratitude for the opportunity to share our perspectives and experiences with you today.

My name is Mark Laycock and I am the CEO of Programs for Metis Calgary Family Services Society, an independent, Aboriginal, nonprofit charity that has been serving our urban Aboriginal population since the early 1990's, over 25 years now.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional lands of the Blackfoot people, as they deserve to be recognized outside of the context of a treaty and as well, recognize the previous and current mutually positive relationships that exist in urban Calgary between local and neighboring First nation's communities, Métis, and other Aboriginal peoples in Calgary. For centuries prior to treaty's being in place here Rupert's Land had Métis activity all throughout the Foothills, particularly anywhere that the waters flowed towards the Hudson Bay. As in the past we continue to rely on and work together for the betterment of all Aboriginal people.



I would also like to thank Mayor and Council for recently honoring Métis Week and Louis Riel Day with a flag rising and ceremony just outside these doors. We want to thank Calgary for that, as it is these iconic events that set in play the atmosphere for authentic and meaningful reconciliation to unfold for all Aboriginal Calgarians.

When we look at our experience today we see a city of over a million people, and the dynamic of an urban Aboriginal population which is one of the most vibrant and diversified in North America, including Treaty, non-Treaty, Métis, Status, non-Status and Inuit people from across a variety of cultural groups that call Calgary home. We know that unofficially, urban Aboriginal folks make up over 40, 000 Calgarian's, across every community and neighborhood. Sadly, though we are overrepresented in social isolation, which compounds homelessness, suicide; domestic violence, poverty, school dropout rates, and the list go on. Last night in Calgary alone there where over 380 first, second, and third generation Residential school survivors homeless on our streets.

At our community level, the things I just referred to will play out in due course, but more importantly is the efforts that are at hand in real time as we respond daily to families in need and at risk. More specifically the bulk of at risk families in Calgary come from a variety of communities, including First Nation, Métis and Inuit, and in fact due to the diversity I just spoke of, tend to be disenfranchised from any healthy sense of identity, nationhood or community. FCSS has in fact responded well to this unfortunate circumstance, with the focus on supporting the unique cultural needs of Aboriginal people..

Recent impacts of the economic downturn with emerging needs in our Province has saturated our community, while at the same time challenging resource and support availability. It must be acknowledged that the response of FCSS to those emerging needs has been poignant, bold and substantial. The reported outcomes from within our organization more than demonstrate this positive result. The Aboriginal research brief and Aboriginal Indicator process alone, has allowed MCFS to target the most tangible and practical service models, specifically for us, Triple P parenting, and the results speak for themselves. This is work that could not have been undertaken without FCSS.

I also want to say that Metis Calgary Family Services operates across many sectors and geographically we have alliances and coalitions across the Nation. I am often afforded the ability to brag and show a sense of pride of Calgary as a community that is on the forefront of best practice and community engagement, particularly as it relates to our urban Aboriginal families. It must also be acknowledged that FCSS and the Municipality has embarked on a path of leadership, whether intentional or not, on a kind of work or strategy which supports Truth and Reconciliation Commissions call to action from a larger systems perspective. As one example, the simple engagement of Aboriginal specific indicators set in motion fundamentals that have migrated outward and influence others. We have witnessed this firsthand in Calgary with other Funders and stakeholders looking to the Calgary FCSS process as a

template. I often take the liberty of advising in regional and national forums that FCSS Calgary's process is a good example for consideration.

As for challenges, We know we have a great deal of work ahead of us from an urban Aboriginal context, for example, with the recent supreme court decision concerning Métis rights, we are poised to establish an organic local forum for governance and representation, of and for Non status and Metis within Calgary, a daunting task for sure; but as FCSS and the City remain champions and key stakeholders in the healthy development of our families, our cherished and fruitful partnership can move our collective forward.

*INTERESTS*

FCSS has undertaken some monumental tasks on our behalf that we as a community alone could not ~~do~~ due to circumstances of capacity, but with your help, we have witnessed positive growth, healthier citizens, and an enriched environment for our children to flourish.

Thanks.