

NDAANACA team up to train local child professionals

The National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) and the Native American Children's Alliance (NACA) sponsored a two-day, much needed conference, Oct. 25-26, to the Blackfeet Nation. The training was called "Strategies for Justice," targeting all the professionals that deal firsthand with child abuse, neglect and sexual molestation.

As background, back in May, Alane Calf Looking received a forwarded email from coworker Raquel Vaile, requesting Tribes to support a proposal for NACA to submit a grant. They needed a draft resolution by our Tribe quickly.

After receiving permission to draft one up on behalf of the Blackfeet Nation, Alane typed and submitted it to the Interim Director of Family Services. The resolution looked good, so Ms. LaFromboise directed to send it to HESS Chairman Reis Fisher for permission to submit to NACA. Fisher's assistant, Elma Carlson, returned a call to the department saying the BTBC supported the resolution with a unanimous vote. They passed the resolution, signed and numbered the resolution the same day it was submitted.

Calf Looking, contacted the Executive Director of NACA, Linda Logan, and emailed the resolution. Once she received the document, she opened a door of opportunities of different types of funding and training available for the reservation. Logan also introduced our department to the NDAA Director, Suzanna Tiapula. They wrote the proposal for NACA and co-sponsored the trainings. As training opportunities become available, both NACA and NDAA will contact our department to inform and sponsor members to them.

Both organizations teamed up in August and sponsored the CPS Lead Investigator/Forensic Interviewer, Paul Calf Looking, to attend the "National Strategies for Justice Conference" in Virginia. Calf Looking learned a lot and lobbied for training to come to Browning. Once the NACA and NDAA agreed, they set a date for October.

Calf Looking went to all the first responders and programs associated with reporting or prosecuting crimes against children, shared his conference material, and encouraged them to vote on what type of training we, as a community,

should request and receive. The agenda was drafted and the request was sent to both NACA and NDAA.

The response was overwhelming. Not only did they agree to the agenda request, but paid for the entire training costs and presented materials and nice coffee cups. Local programs attending included the Indian Health Service, Head Start, Tribal Court, BCC, School District, Nurturing Center, CPS, Boarding School, BES, EMS, Domestic Violence, Alta Care, Blackfeet Housing and Blackfeet Child and Family Services (BC&FS).

Originally there were 150 individuals preregistered for the intense training. The room was still packed throughout both days. There was continental breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks served on both days.

Since the conference, BC&FS has had tremendous positive feedback from individuals that attended. There were only a few pictures taken by NACA and NDAA. The requests are overwhelming to bring more in-depth training back to our area.