

TREATY 7 MANAGEMENT
CORP. #101,12111 40
ST. SE CALGARY AB

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Treaty 7 Special Education History
- Programming for SE students
- Sheena Jackson, T7MC
- LaVina Gillespie, T7MC
- Clarice Beebe, KBE
- Carol Blackbird, PBE
- Georgina Henderson, SEA
- Nadine Crowchild, TTBE

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Special Education

Treaty 7 Management Corporation

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Our Special Education History

Treaty 7 Management Corp. (T7MC) was one of the first RMO's in Alberta to develop a First Nation Special Education Policy in 1997.

The Special Education policy is based on the belief that children with special needs are given to us to make us better human beings and as a result, are viewed as gifts from the Creator.

Treaty 7 Management Corp. works closely with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and the province of Alberta. It provides Special Education advocacy and advisory services for the Blood tribe in Standoff Alberta, the Blackfoot Nation in Brocket, the Sarcee Nation in Tsuu Tina and the Stoney Nation in Morley, Eden

Valley and TaOtha. All the First Nation school jurisdictions in southern Alberta have a Special Education Coordinator who organizes and provides services



Treaty 7 Office

that range from Extra Ordinary Profound programming and supports, to contracting external second level services. Providing

strategies that support students in the classroom toward Inclusion and literacy are normal occurrences for the nation based coordinators..In addition, they meet on a bi monthly basis with the T7MC Coordinator. There are 16 schools in Treaty 7 territory which include elementary schools, high schools, alternative schools, outreach schools and one treatment center. The original Treaty 7 Special Education Policy Handbook is currently under revision to include the many progressive movements that have transpired in the area of Special Education over the last 14 years. Participation from every Nation, is an integral aspect of the revision.. The T7MC branch office is located in Calgary, Alberta.

Programming for Special Needs Students in T7MC

The needs and numbers of students requiring SE programming in Treaty 7 schools is diverse. Some are Extra Ordinary Profound students, other include Severe and Mild/Moderate students. Many receive specialized programming. funded under the Intervention umbrella of funding.

The growing incidence of rare exceptionalities in First Nation schools, has prompted coordinators and teachers alike to become creative in meeting the programming needs of their students. On a weekly basis special education students may take part in horse riding or other equine

activities, swimming lessons, special art classes, life skills training and access to First Nation elders for guidance and support. Other major challenges such as Low Literacy levels and absenteeism are categories that are addressed through aspects of special education programming.

T7MC Education Director



**Sheena Jackson ,
T7MC Director of
Education**

*Until a child learns
about the forces
which shape him
the history of his
people, their values
and customs , their
language, he will
never really know
his potential as a
human being.*

The Special Education Program at Treaty 7 Management Corporation (T7MC) is supervised by the Education Director, Sheena Jackson. Her background as a Teacher and Principal of a First Nation school prepared Sheena with a vision and direction based on First Nation cultural and linguistic experiences. Under her leadership Special Education programs have grown and maintain a solid link to all Nation schools through increased Coordinator meetings and

professional development.. Sheena is a strong advocate for Special Education students and was instrumental in the development of the Memorandum of Understanding for First Nations in Alberta which includes a section on Special Education. In addition ,Sheena is a voice for T7MC in ensuring that the services and quality of special education for First Nation students, either in T7 First Nation schools or those attending public school continue to improve and that

their special needs are met . Sheena also ensures provincial initiatives such as the *First Nation Metis and Inuit Partnership Council* hear the voice that represents T7MC. In addition, she is instrumental in forging partnerships with external organizations. who share a vested interest in the success of First Nation students . Sheena has been the recipient of two prestigious awards in improving First Nation Education in Alberta.

T7MC Special Education



LaVina Gillespie

LaVina Gillespie is the Special Education Coordinator for T7MC. She administers Special Education services and facilitates dialogue between the RMO, AANDC, Education Directors, and Principals, on matters that pertain to Special Education. She chairs bi monthly meetings to ensure all current Special Education information is relayed to the

Coordinators at the First Nation level . She is also responsible for the collection of funding requests and monitors the programming of special education students in T7MC. In addition, she acts as a resource for special education learning team meetings and assists in compliance reviews that are conducted by AANDC every three years.

KBE Special Education



The Kainai Board of Education (KBE) is the largest school board in T7MC. They have 2 Elementary schools, 1 High School, 1 Middle School, 1 Outreach School ,1 Alternative High School and 1 Treatment Center all located in the community of Standoff, Alberta. Special Education coordination

is the responsibility of Clarice Beebe, a member of the community. In the performance of her duties Clarice conducts regular team meetings, contracts external second level services , maintains contact with parents and caregivers, assists school personnel with resources as they implement

specialized programming. for the diverse needs of their students . Clarice has focused her goals on INCLUSION where schools/staff work together to ensure SE students are given every opportunity possible to be successful. Clarice is a Doctoral candidate at University of Calgary.

PBOE Special Education



Carol Blackbird

The Peigan Board of Education

(PBOE) is located in southern Alberta in the community of Brocket. The jurisdiction consists of an Elementary School, Napi's Playground, and Pikani Nation Secondary School, as well as an Alternative School. **Carol Blackbird** is responsible for the coordination and provision of Special Education services. For a small school system the diversity of Special Education needs is noteworthy. She provides support in and out of the classroom to meet the needs of students. As well as meeting the needs of EOP,

Severe and M/M students Carol offers individualized programming heavily based in Literacy. Her extensive background in Literacy includes expertise in Guided Reading and Leveled books. As part of the learning team in both schools Carol is responsible for and coordinates the school wide assessments in Literacy and Numeracy. The Special Education goal for PBOE schools is full inclusion in order that students can learn with their peers on a daily basis.

“Special needs children are our treasures, they guide and teach us to respect and care for each other.” Johnny Dayrider, 2011

Tsuu Tina Special Education

The Tsuu Tina Board of Education is located on the Tsuu Tina First Nation in Tsuu Tina, Alberta. Tsuu Tina is located on the south western edge of the city of Calgary. This jurisdiction has two schools: Chiila Elementary and Tsuu Tina Jr/Sr High School. **Nadine Crowchild**, a member of the community, is the half time Special Education Coordinator for this jurisdiction. In addition to meeting the needs of Severe and Mild/Moderate students in her school, Nadine has focused on providing expertise on Balanced Literacy to classroom teachers. New to this position this year, Nadine will play a role in contracting external second level services in order that teachers can have professional insight into meeting the needs of students in their class-

rooms. As part of the learning team Nadine, a fluent speaker of the Sarcee language, assists in a liaison role between parents, community members and the school. In addition, Nadine brings a wealth of experience to Tsuu Tina from teaching assignments in other First Nation schools and communities.

SEA Special Education



Georgina Henderson

The Stoney Education Authority (SEA) is located on the Morley Reserve in Morley, Alberta. **Georgina Henderson** is the Special Education Coordinator. This First Nation school jurisdiction is the second largest in Treaty 7 territory with approximately 950 students. One school is located in TaOtha near Nordegg, Alberta, another in Eden Valley. The community of

Morley currently has one school. A new elementary school is under construction. Like all schools in T7MC the SEA has a variety of Special Education students who require individualized programming. SEA is in the process of restructuring their special education programs.

Schools in the SEA will be undergoing a Compliance review from AANDC in April of 2012. The close proximity of the school to the Rocky Mountains provides many activities for outdoor experiences for SE students.

Treaty 7 Management Corp.

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Treaty 7 Management Corp was established in 2005. It serves as a an advocacy and advisory body for Education, Health, Housing, and information technology for the Nations that make up Treaty 7. It has established itself as a leader in all the aforementioned areas. Treaty 7 has developed good working relations with all Treaty 7 First Nations including all levels of government as well as the private sector.

Ryan Robb is the CEO of Treaty 7 Management Corp.

For more information on Treaty 7 Management Corp. please contact Ryan Robb at RRobb@treaty7.org.

T7MC Special Education Challenges

- Federal funding allocations inhibit the development and expansion of meaningful (work preparation) partnerships.
 - SE requirements from AANDC do not address assessments costs.
 - Current funding and program models do not allocate for transition planning.
 - Funding prohibits interaction between SE children in care and their home First Nation communities.
 - No sustainable funding (reapplication yearly) even though exceptionalities will not change).
- Growing incidences of FASD, Autism, Downs Syndrome .
- Severe shortage and escalating costs for second level services.
- Lack of equity, resources and support between Provincial and First Nation funding .
- Funding and resources unavailable to address growing issues of mental illness. As a result, often misdiagnosed as bad behaviour resulting in suspension rather than therapy.
- Limited resources for true community or interagency collaboration, to address and build on community capacity and cultural capital.
- Low Literacy and Numeracy levels .
- Lack of a positive nation wide vision for the improvement of Special Education services that shares a First Nation view that all children are gifts and treasures .
- Vision to include Owership, Control Access and Possession (OCAP) of student records.
- Isolation and polarization felt when reviewing worthwhile initiatives implemented at a provincial level in neighbouring schools.
- First Nation parents recognize the funding and resource shortfalls in First Nation schools.
- “In an effort to formalize school, our proven methods have been squeezed out.” Rose Crowshoe**