

# London's Urban Aboriginal Homeward Bound : The Indigenous Mother's Gateway Program



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Al Day, Executive Director, N'Amerind Friendship Centre

Lorie Arias, Homeward Bound Coordinator, N'Amerind Friendship Centre

Sydney Blum, Director of Community Impact & Strategic Relations, WoodGreen

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# Presentation Summary

- Introduction to N'Amerind
- Introduction to WoodGreen & Homeward Bound
- HB Program model
- Program Results & Recognition
- Context for WoodGreen, OFIFC & N'Amerind Partnership
- HB Fit with N'Amerind Priorities & Partnership Opportunities
- Next Steps
- Final Thoughts



We have an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty for single mothers and their children.

# N'Amerind Friendship Centre

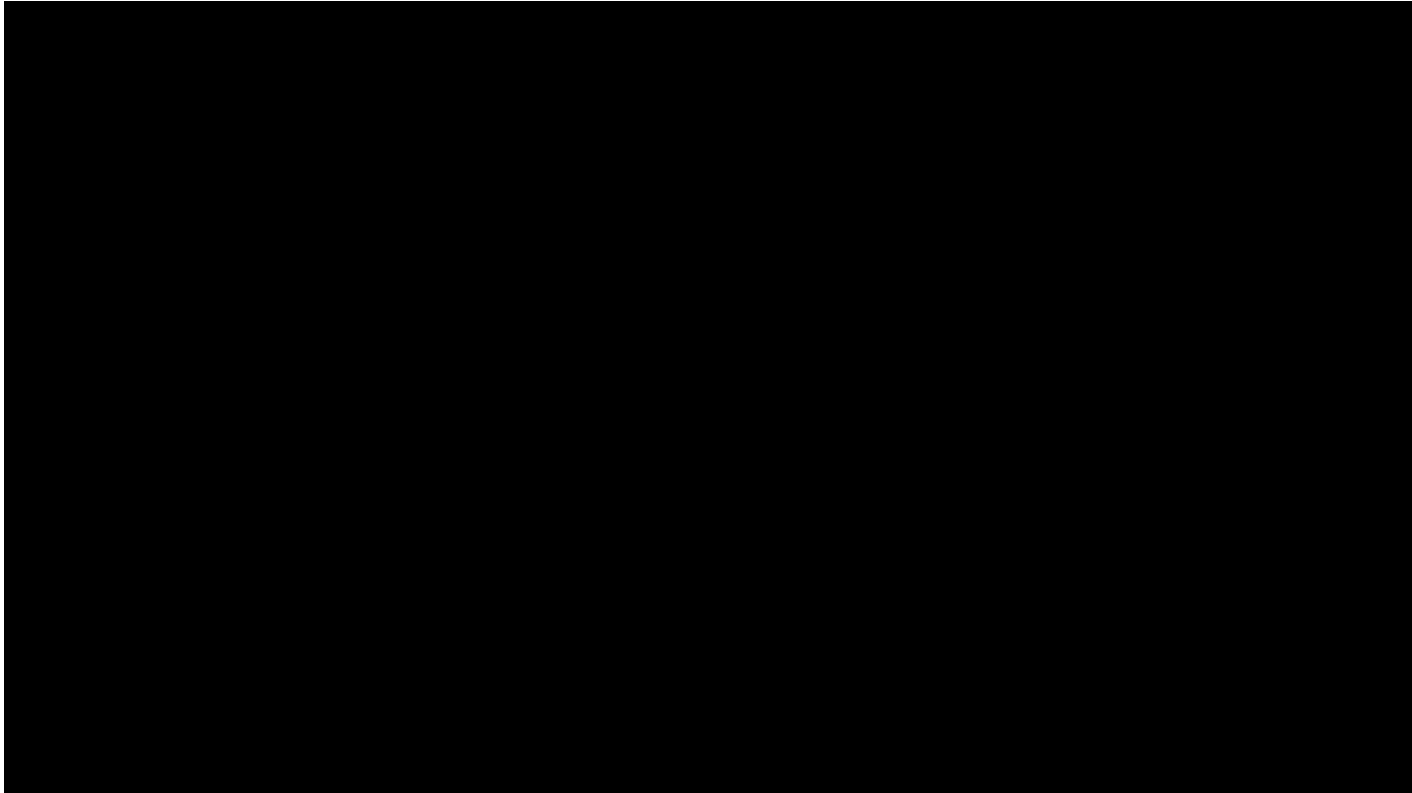
- N'Amerind operates based on the principles of providing guidance, counselling and referral services to Urban Indigenous people.
- N'Amerind promotes the spiritual well-being, mental strength, intellectual capacity, emotional stability and physical health which will enable individuals to take positive steps to promote and secure their own good health.
- N'Amerind provides 20 culturally relevant programs for local Indigenous people.
- Website: <http://www.namerind.on.ca/>



# WoodGreen Community Services

- One of the largest social service agencies in Toronto
- Celebrating more than 75 years
- Spans 36 locations and serves 37,000 people each year
- A founding United Way of Toronto member agency
- Spectrum of services : affordable housing, seniors services, settlement, childcare, after-school programs, employment and skills training, mental health services, wrap around supports
- Website: [www.woodgreen.com](http://www.woodgreen.com)

# Introduction to WoodGreen's Homeward Bound



# The Homeward Bound Model

"Being able to leave my kids with really good daycare staff is important. If I wasn't content where my children are concerned, I wouldn't be able to do anything."

Homeward Bound Participant



## Intake & Outreach



The Homeward Bound intake process focuses on proven indicators of success (such as motivation, self determination and academic readiness) to ensure that participants are prepared for the program's rigorous demands, particularly the commitment of returning to school. While much of the outreach is conducted directly with shelters, in recent years WoodGreen has begun to promote Homeward Bound at schools, colleges, and other non-profit organizations in the wider community.

## Program Orientation

WoodGreen has improved program results by refining the intake process to ensure that participants are well-informed through a series of orientation sessions that have been integrated into the outreach process.

The Homeward Bound orientation sessions include:

- An overview of Ontario Works;
- Housing information (projected dates, lease signing process, furniture and storage, parking, visitor policy, gift certificates for household purchases, internet and laptops, contact information of housing workers);
- School information
- After 4 Program details;
- Daycare facilities and child subsidies, and;
- A review of program and services

## Phase 1

### Skills Training and Academic Upgrading

This includes training in life skills, computer skills (through International Computer Driving License certification), financial literacy and an academic upgrading program for college entrance and planning.

## Phase 2

### Formal Education

Homeward Bound women attend a two-year college diploma-granting program for free, in a discipline compatible with Industry Council needs and geared to meet current demands of the labour market.

## Phase 3

### Internship

Homeward Bound's Industry Council provides 14-week unpaid professional internships to help participants gain work experience in their chosen profession.

## Phase 4

### Employment

Homeward Bound connects women to opportunities for full-time employment with our industry partners. Participants are also offered support in transitioning into their new lives.

## Key Supports

### Housing

Participants live in furnished apartments while they are enrolled in the program or until they graduate and find permanent employment (to a maximum of four years). During this time, rents are set at approximately 30 per cent of participants' household incomes. The building is adjacent to the daycare and training centre.

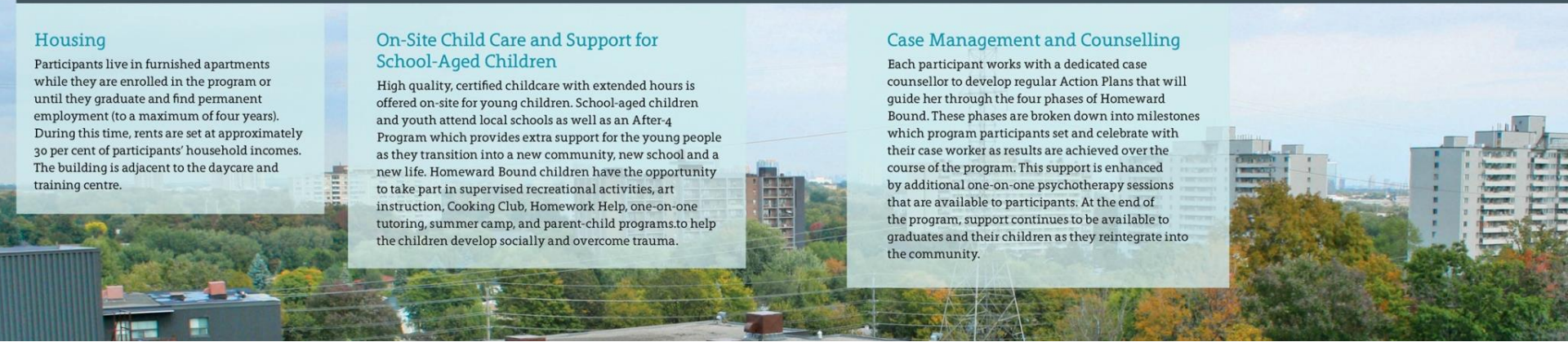
### On-Site Child Care and Support for School-Aged Children

High quality, certified childcare with extended hours is offered on-site for young children. School-aged children and youth attend local schools as well as an After-4 Program which provides extra support for the young people as they transition into a new community, new school and a new life. Homeward Bound children have the opportunity to take part in supervised recreational activities, art instruction, Cooking Club, Homework Help, one-on-one tutoring, summer camp, and parent-child programs to help the children develop socially and overcome trauma.

## Key Supports

### Case Management and Counselling

Each participant works with a dedicated case counsellor to develop regular Action Plans that will guide her through the four phases of Homeward Bound. These phases are broken down into milestones which program participants set and celebrate with their case worker as results are achieved over the course of the program. This support is enhanced by additional one-on-one psychotherapy sessions that are available to participants. At the end of the program, support continues to be available to graduates and their children as they reintegrate into the community.



# Program Results & Recognition

80%

of the women who have entered Homeward Bound have either successfully completed the program, or are on track to meeting the program's milestones.

ONPHA Housing  
Excellence Award (2005)

Conference Board of  
Canada Community  
Learning Awards –  
Honourable Mention  
(2005)

Approval to build  
44 more units –  
Homeward Bound  
Phase II (2007)

CMHC Award of  
Excellence (2006)



"WoodGreen's Homeward Bound changed everything. Here someone was telling me they would give me a subsidized two-bedroom apartment, access to top-of-the-line daycare my son could attend and an opportunity to go back to school and get a good job. I did not have to be poor forever. I would be able to have the life I had dreamed of – a normal life. That's all I wanted... someone was giving me a chance."

**Homeward Bound participant**

# Context for London Partnership Project

- History of OFIFC relationship with WoodGreen
- Goals of Urban Aboriginal Feasibility Project:
  - Explored feasibility for an adapted Urban Aboriginal Homeward Bound in 5 Friendship Centre communities, including London
  - Engaged in dialogue and sharing of wise practices with local organizations and service providers
  - Produce an adapted Homeward Bound model specifically for the urban Aboriginal context
  - Applied to Urban Partnership fund for resources to hire a Program Development Coordinator





# URBAN INDIGENOUS Homeward Bound Continuum

## Orientation to the Continuum

The Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound Continuum is a cycle. Beginning from the centre with **Cultural Supports**, the cycle moves outward in a spiral formation. Each ring of the Continuum starts in the east and reads clockwise. This Continuum represents the **Friendship Centre Program Development Process** as well as the core components of the Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound (UIHB) program. All of these elements are embedded in and based on **Cultural Supports**.

The Continuum's design is informed by Indigenous approaches of expressing concepts as non-linear cyclical processes.



## Cultural Supports

During the *Friendship Centre Program Development Process*, Friendship Centres identify existing *Cultural Supports* at the Friendship Centre and in the community that will support Indigenous people in the UIHB. If *Cultural Supports* do not exist, but are identified as a priority for the UIHB, the Friendship Centre will incorporate the development of *Cultural Supports* into the Program Design, to be implemented during the Program Implementation.

## Housing & Program Supports

During all stages of UIHB, housing and wrap-around supports are provided to participants as they move forward. By coordinating supports for participants, UIHB helps remove barriers that have historically kept mother-led families in poverty and provides stability, support and resources so that families can become independent.

## Friendship Centre Program Development Process

### Community Program Vision

Identifies need, interest and vision for UIHB

### Engagement, Relationship, Partnership

Engages with community to determine fit of UIHB, how it could look, develops relationships for UIHB (i.e. colleges, housing, providers, etc.) and formalizes partnerships

### Program Design

Designs UIHB based on community guidance, local culture and context, organizational capacity, and funding opportunities

### Program Implementation

Implements culturally appropriate wrap-around program aligned to local need, capacity and context

## Community-Driven UIHB Program

### Outreach & Orientation

Information sessions for referral partners, individual applications to the program, applicant orientation sessions

### Intake/Program Start

Program welcome, families begin to receive supports

### Action Planning

Individual case management, service coordination, goal setting

### Education & Skill Building

Life skills training, academic upgrading, post-secondary application and preparation

### Formal Education

Individuals begin post-secondary programs geared to local labour market

### Employment Supports

Employability skills training, workshops, internships, job search

### Employment

Continued employment supports, transition to economic independence

### Mentorship & Stability

Individuals mentored by employers, families are stable as they transition out of UIHB, former participants mentor new cohort of women

# Fit with Current N'Amerind Priorities & Local Partnership Opportunities

- Demonstrated need for holistic approach to housing, education and employment supports for Aboriginal single mothers
- Alignment with N'Amerind priority to increase housing for urban Aboriginal people in London as well as to link employment opportunities for urban Aboriginal people
- Organizations engaged in HB: City of London, Fanshawe College, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, At^lohsa Native Family Healing Services, and many others
- Participant intake in early 2017 for September college start



# Final Thoughts

- Open Discussion and Q&A
- Thank you!

Please stay in touch:

➤ Contact Al Day at [aday@namerind.on.ca](mailto:aday@namerind.on.ca) and Lorie Arias at [larias@namerind.on.ca](mailto:larias@namerind.on.ca); to learn more about N'Amerind please visit <http://www.namerind.on.ca/>

➤ Contact Sydney Blum at [sblum@woodgreen.org](mailto:sblum@woodgreen.org); to learn more about WoodGreen visit [www.woodgreen.org](http://www.woodgreen.org)