



For Immediate Release: February 6, 2018

Seeking Our snaqsilx Gathering to Connect Syilx Youth with Employment Opportunities

Westbank, Okanagan Territory: From February 5-6, 2017, Okanagan Nation Alliance's (ONA) BRIDGE's program, in Partnership with Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, and Okanagan Indian Band's Pre-Employment Support team, are hosting a networking event at the Penticton Lakeside Resort, which brings *Syilx* youth and front line workers (youth, social, education, employment, HR, Syilx organizations and industry) for a 2 day event that will connect youth with the various programs that can holistically support them in pursuing their educational and employment dreams.

This event has 54 Syilx youth from all Okanagan communities, 9 industry partners and 33 frontline staff all participating. The event includes engaging workshops, interactive panel discussions, cultural activities, inspirational Okanagan youth speakers, resource presentations and display tables from Bands, organizations and industry that want to connect with youth.

"The event is special because the youth have assisted in setting the agenda and identified the topics. And the opportunity to bring youth and those that provide the services within the community to have a dialogue about the gaps and barriers to services is a critical conversation that we hope will improve services and access for youth," states Brenda Baptiste, ONA BRIDGES Program Manager.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, ONA Chairman applauds these efforts, stating that, "This event signifies the importance of these partnerships in ensuring our youth are successful. It exemplifies the progress being made by our Nation in addressing the gaps and barriers that have prevented our youth past and present in gainfully benefiting from employment and training programs and services that were meant to serve them".

There are a number of barriers and challenges for youth to gain employment. This includes the number of different agencies and systems that youth are expected to find their way through. This event is an opportunity to hear from the youth what they see as the barriers and seek input from them about how to address these barriers.

"snaqsilx refers to all syilx people and their connection to one another, to their land, and all living things".

Building Resources for Innovative Development, Growth and Economic Stability (BRIDGES) program is built upon the understanding that by creating a program that is rooted in culture, our youth will experience an increase in confidence and personal strength. This project is designed for youth ages 15-30 that may require assistance before accessing standard training programs and/or educational outlets.

For more information please contact:
Brenda Baptiste, BRIDGES Program Manager
T: 1.250.469.1791
E: PMBridges@syilx.org

Okanagan Nation Alliance

101-3500 Old Okanagan Hwy Westbank, BC V4T 3L7: (250) 707-0095 www.syilx.org