

### **Homeward Trust Presents the 2015 Aboriginal Gathering**

**March 9, 2015 (Edmonton)** – Today, Monday, March 9, Aboriginal agencies, service providers, organizations, and businesses are gathering to promote constructive dialogue and information sharing around housing and program supports for Aboriginal peoples who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

“The October 2014 Homeless Count reflected that 47% of Edmonton’s homeless population are Aboriginal peoples, which is alarming,” says Susan McGee, CEO of Homeward Trust Edmonton. “This annual event inspires meaningful and productive relationships and promotes constructive dialogue and information sharing around housing and program supports for Aboriginal people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.”

The keynote speaker Dr. James Makokis is set to speak at 12:15 p.m.. He is currently a Family Physician at Siksika Health Services on the Siksika Blackfoot Nation, having completed his residency in the Aboriginal Family Medicine Program (Victoria, BC) in 2012. Dr. Makokis also holds a Master’s degree in Health Science-Community Nutrition from the University of Toronto. Dr. Makokis is an active volunteer and currently serves on several boards including, the inaugural Aboriginal Wisdom Committee of Alberta Health Services, Indspire (formerly the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation), the Two Spirit Circle of Edmonton Society, and the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada. James is also the recipient of the 2007 National Aboriginal Achievement Special Youth Award, the highest recognition placed on an individual of the Indigenous community.

Homeward Trust partners with Edmonton’s Aboriginal community to improve service delivery and ensure culturally appropriate housing and supports are available for Aboriginal peoples, and support capacity building and knowledge sharing throughout the sector and community.

In Homeward Trust’s work to end homelessness, we partner with Edmonton’s Aboriginal community to improve service delivery and ensure culturally appropriate housing and supports are available for Aboriginal peoples. We also support capacity building and knowledge sharing throughout the sector and community. Since the start of the 10 Year Plan, Homeward Trust and our Housing First agencies have housed 1,620 formerly homeless Aboriginal adults and children.

#### **Highlighted Initiatives**

- Aboriginal Health Program, Alberta Health Services
- Ambrose Place (2015 ROOPH Award winner)
- Buffalo Sage Wellness House
- North Star Apartments
- Colonialism and Aboriginal homelessness in Edmonton

*Homeward Trust Edmonton is a not for profit organization that uses a community-based approach toward the goal of ending homelessness in Edmonton. Our primary role is to coordinate response to housing needs by working together with local agencies and all orders of government.*

- Morning Fire Protector

For more information, please contact:

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