



FOR RELEASE  
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## **Whitehorse Correctional Centre expands its First Nation programming**

WHITEHORSE—Management at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre has been working with contractors to expand culturally-relevant programming for First Nation inmates.

"Our government committed to First Nations that we would improve culturally-relevant programming for First Nation inmates as a way of reconnecting these inmates with their cultural heritage," Minister of Justice Mike Nixon said. "The combination of culturally-relevant and regular rehabilitation programming should reduce the chance of re-offending."

The Whitehorse Correctional Centre has partnered with Yukon College to pilot the Heritage and Culture Essential Skills (HACES) program. This is a twenty-module program delivered once a day that teaches essential skills and education about heritage and culture in Yukon, including:

- Reading, writing, document use and numeracy while completing a heritage-related project;
- Identifying ways to respectfully manage First Nation traditional cultural knowledge, land-based heritage, and oral histories;
- Applying professional standards in caring for heritage resources and conducting heritage research;
- Effectively utilizing computers to complete a heritage-related group project; and
- Communication and cooperation within a team to plan and execute a heritage-related group project.

There are a number of ongoing traditional activities at the correctional centre such as smudges, Elder visits, talking circles, traditional foods, traditional awareness workshops, solstice celebrations, and traditional teachings such as talking sticks and eagle feathers. Other activities offered include carving, beading, drum making, medicine pouches, button blankets, traditional medicines, and First Nations language classes (Southern Tutchone).

Whitehorse Correctional Centre has recently contracted with Council of Yukon First Nations to pilot a First Nations Reintegration Program. A First Nation worker has been hired and is working with the case management team on release planning for offenders.

"We are continually looking at new programs to offer at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre," Nixon added. "They are an integral part of the rehabilitation the inmates receive before they are released back in to the community."

First Nations programs are offered in addition to rehabilitative programs at Whitehorse Correctional Centre that target the underlying factors linked to crime. These programs focus on such issues as substance abuse, violence prevention/emotions management, cognitive skills, spousal and sexual assault prevention, educational upgrading, work and life skills programming.

For more information, visit the Corrections branch website.

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