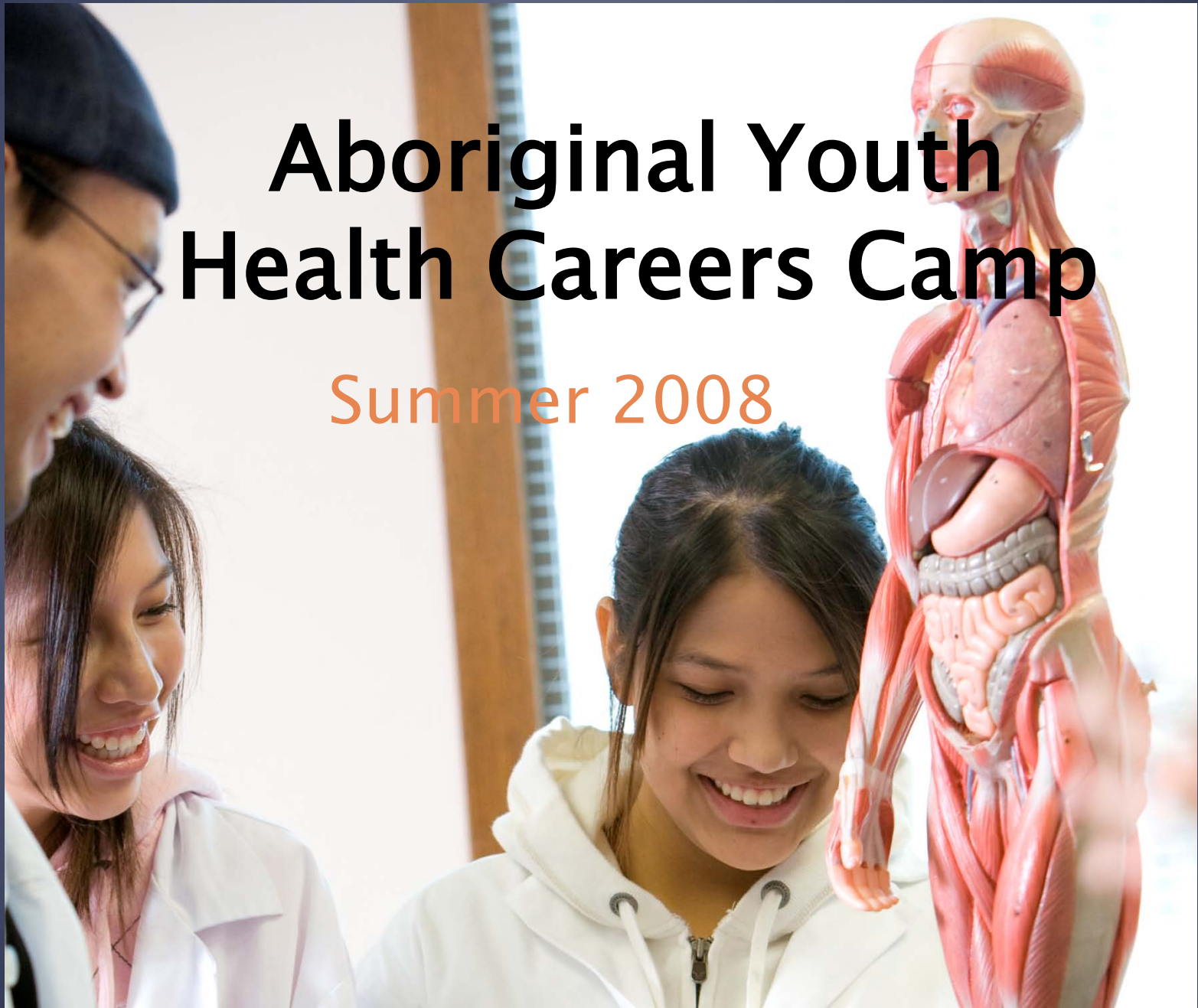


Aboriginal Youth Health Careers Camp

Summer 2008



Partners



- Alberta Association of Colleges and Technical Institutes (AACTI)
- Health Canada (Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative)
- Mount Royal College (MRC)
- Iniskim Centre
- Bow Valley College (BVC)
- Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)
- Chinook Lodge Aboriginal Resource Centre
- N.A.P.I. (Native Ambassador Post-secondary Initiative)

Challenges

- Recruitment to the camp was the greatest challenge (timeframe 21 weeks)
- Barriers: transportation costs (incurred by participants), camp fee (eventually waived)
- Communities requested partnerships in offering programming and more involvement in camp planning.
- 8 youths from central and southern Alberta attended

Research

- 100% of the camp attendees consented to the research (which was not required for them to attend).
- Participants were asked to complete 3 anonymous online surveys (pre-camp, immediately post-camp, and 9 months post-camp – Apr/May '09)
- Response rate: 8/8 pre-camp survey; 7/8 immediately post-camp survey

July 20–26, 2008 Program

- ❑ Sunday, July 20 Arrive at MRC Residence for research sign-up.
- ❑ 3 Days on MRC Campus (Monday, Tuesday and Friday) Included Workshops from
 - ❑ Nursing
 - ❑ Physical Education/Nutrition
 - ❑ Health Workshops ('Energy' workshop, recreational use of facilities, Medicinal Herbs and Plants/Alternative Health)
- ❑ Wednesday: Southern Alberta Institute of Technology
 - ❑ Highlighted health programs in documentation, and paramedics
- ❑ Thursday: Bow Valley College
 - ❑ Highlighted health programs in nursing (LPN) and pharmacy technician
- ❑ Native Ambassador Post-Secondary Initiative – Students all earned a Leadership Certificate
- ❑ Evening Events included Shakespeare in the Park, Dinners on Campus with Keynote Speakers focusing on Post-Secondary Education, Belief in Self and Personal Success



Emerging Themes: The Participants

1. Independence: Being away from home communities and living in residence.
2. Personal confidence and Aboriginal identity
3. Healthy living
4. Expanded view of health and careers in the health field
5. Collegiality and Support

1. Independence

- Balance of supervision and room to experience independence (excellent staffing by mature MRC Aboriginal students)
- Living in residence a personal highlight
- Opportunities to explore multiple offerings of the camp program with peers
- “It was great to get away... and have a fun learning experience”.

2. Personal confidence and identity

- Hearing the personal stories of academic and career progression from several Aboriginal individuals was “inspirational”.
- “Never give up and always move forward”
- “I liked how everything was based around the Aboriginal perspective on health care”.
- I feel “confident and comfortable with my identity”.

3. Healthy Living

- I feel better about going back to school, learning how to prioritize and study helped.
- “Going to the gym [was great]”.
- Workshops on ‘Energy’, fitness and leadership really stood out.
- “I believe in myself”
- I need to “choose to eat healthier foods and maintain a more active lifestyle”.
- I will focus on “maintaining my spiritual and mental health”.

4. Careers in Health Fields

- “[The camp] broadened my horizons, I was considering [just one option]”, but there are so many options to pursue in healthcare.
- “I am very inspired to work in the healthcare field”.
- “The [health] field is so versatile, and important for Aboriginal youth to enter”
- I now have a realistic time frame of several academic programs.
- I have an increased knowledge of the work I need to do to get into various programs.

5. Collegiality and Support

- It is good to know that “help and resources” are available on campus for students.
- “I had such a good time here, I don’t really want to leave. I am going to miss the guides and friends I made here”.
- “Aboriginal support centres give a strong sense of unity, and support. It is important to have a place where our culture is understood”.
- Funding sources for post-secondary is seen as a **SIGNIFICANT** barrier (delaying application)

Factors Contributing to Success

- Workshops that received the highest praise from participants were hands on, activity oriented (rather than didactic).
- Currently registered students being involved in offering workshops were approachable and had 'real' advice for the participants – this gave the workshops more credibility.

Overall Camp Rated Highly with Participants.

“Taught me a great deal”

“The best I’ve ever been to”

“Amazing”

“Awesome”

“I would recommend it to anyone”

“[The camp had a] strong impact on me
– I see how important
health careers are [in society]”

“It really helped me a lot”



Surprise Finding: An Area for Future Research

- Several students participated in offering coordination, supervision and assisted with workshops.
- These students were also positively affected by the camp experience.
 - For some it helped them connect with their culture
 - For some it helped confirm their choice to pursue a health career and share their passion for the career choice they've made
 - Recruitment activities that involve current students can potentially have an impact on retention of those students

Expanding the Workshops Audience

- Positive reviews by the 8 participants and funding remaining
- Career workshops from the 3 institutions were taken out to 3 separate First Nations community High Schools (completed March/09 >100students attended).

Future Plans

- Organizing and holding another collaborative summer camp
 - Having three involved institutions made the camp a rich experience that had something to consider for students of various academic aptitudes and interests
 - Community requests for another camp have been received.

Future Plans

- Involvement of recruited (new) Aboriginal students in social and academic supports offered at the Aboriginal Support Centres
- Mentorship with self-identified Aboriginal senior nursing student (3rd year) arranged for one participant who has already been accepted to MRC Nursing
- Possible development of a 'Science – for health programs' course for Aboriginal Education Program (current bridging program at MRC)