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**Ontario Association of Social Workers**

**Central Ontario Branch**

**E-NEWS**

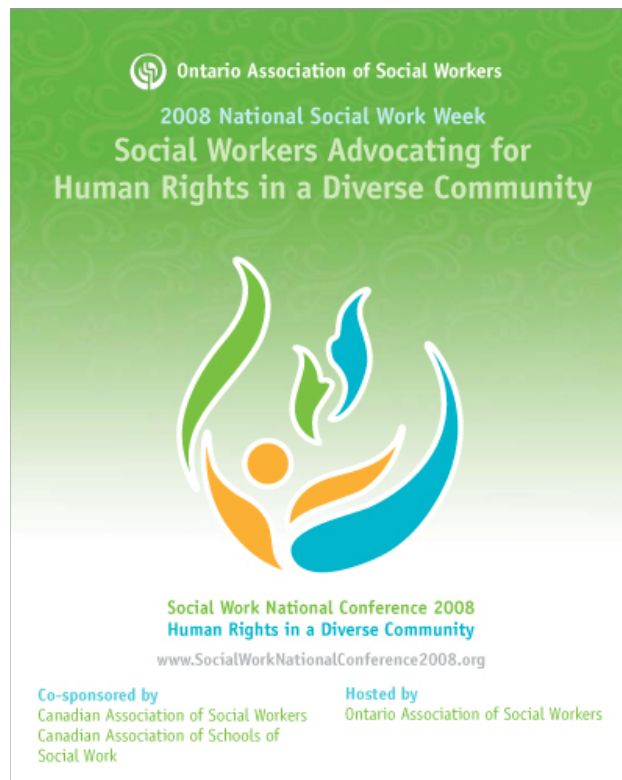
**March 2008**

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**Happy Social Work Week!**

from

**Ontario Association of Social Workers  
Central Ontario Branch**



The slogan for **National Social Work Week** (NSWW) 2008 is, "Social workers advocating for human rights in an diverse community". This slogan builds on the theme of the **Social Work National Conference 2008** "Human Rights in a Diverse Community" ( [www.socialworknationalconference2008.org](http://www.socialworknationalconference2008.org) ). In doing so, NSWW provides an important opportunity leading up to the conference to showcase the important work social workers do on a daily basis to advance the human rights of children, women, families and communities; to advocate for equality and equity for marginalized and minority groups; and to support ongoing struggles for civil rights and basic freedoms, economic well-being, and access to services.

Human rights are intrinsic to all the work social workers do. Linked to human dignity and social justice, human rights is a primary principle underlying social work ethics.

Every year, in honour of National Social Work Week, OASW profiles leaders in the social work community. This year's honorees include: **Cindy Blackstock**, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada; **Patricia O'Connor**, **Helen Wong**, and **June Ying Yee** of the Internationally Educated Social Work Professionals Bridging Program; and **Micheal Hardy**, Executive Director/Local Director of Tikinagan Child and Family Services. You can read the full text of the articles on the Social Work Week section of the OASW website at [www.oasw.org](http://www.oasw.org) .

Every year we write to the mayors of the towns and cities within the Central Ontario Branch, requesting that they proclaim Social Work Week in their municipalities. Fewer and fewer municipalities issue them, but **Social Work Week 2008** was officially proclaimed in the City of Brampton, the Town of Georgina, the Town of Newmarket, the Town of Richmond Hill and the City of Toronto. The proclamation from Toronto Mayor David Miller is posted on the city's website at: [http://www.toronto.ca/proclamations/2008/proclamation\\_socialworkweek2008.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/proclamations/2008/proclamation_socialworkweek2008.htm) .

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### **2008 OASW Day With The Jays!**

Mark your calendars for the 2008 *OASW Day With The Jays!* taking place at the Rogers Centre on **Friday, May 23rd** vs. the Kansas City Royals. Further details and ticket order forms will follow.

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## **OASW FAMILY AND FRIENDS NIGHT WITH THE **TORONTO RAPTORS****

The Toronto Raptors are pleased to bring back Ontario Association of Social Workers Night for the 2007-2008 season. Bring your family and friends to watch the Toronto Raptors face off against the Charlotte Bobcats at the Air Canada Centre and enjoy great savings.

As a member of the **OASW Central Ontario Branch**, enjoy up to **35% savings** on tickets for this game.

**TORONTO RAPTORS vs. CHARLOTTE BOBCATS**  
Friday, April 4, 2008 @ 7:00pm, AIR CANADA CENTRE

### Ticket Prices

**Balcony Prime** - \$46.59 (*Regular Price \$64.43*)

**Lower Bowl Endzones** - \$58.49 (*Regular Price \$96.16*)

**Tickets are available on a first-come first-served basis. Order soon before they are all gone!\***

For more information or to print off your order form visit:

<http://www.nba.com/media/raptors/OntarioAssociationofSocialWorkers.pdf>

Please submit your **Order by Friday, March 21, 2008**

**To Order, Fax the completed order form to (416)359-9198**

For more information or to book a group of 8+ please contact

**Maria-Anna Piorkowska at (416)815-5937 or**  
[mpiorkowska@mapleleafsports.com](mailto:mpiorkowska@mapleleafsports.com)

*Please do not hesitate to inquire about additional price points or games.*

**NO REFUNDS OR EXCHANGES\***

## **Call for Action**

Thank you to those of you who have already responded to our Call for Action and have sent a letter to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development regarding the funding cuts to the First Nations Technical Institute. In addition to Central Branch, we sent the call out to OASW members across the province, and have begun to receive copies of letters that have been sent in response. If you haven't already, we encourage you to send a letter this week. A sample letter is provided below, along with the original message, for your convenience.

### **RISK THAT FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS WILL CLOSE SOCIAL WORK DEGREE PROGRAMS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AT FIRST NATIONS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE**

*Immediate action requested*

#### **BACKGROUND**

The First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) is a long-standing post-secondary education institution on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. FNTI offers a very successful BSW program, in conjunction with Ryerson University, and is set to launch a similar MSW partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University. But both these programs, in fact potentially all programs at FNTI, could be closed down due to federal government funding cuts. The federal government claims the province is responsible for post-secondary education, while the province reminds the federal government of their national responsibility for First Nations programs, including education.

Further information is available in a Toronto Star editorial by Carol Goar at: <http://www.thestar.com/comment/columnists/article/300740> and on FNTI's website at [www.fnti.net](http://www.fnti.net)

As social workers, we are very concerned about these looming funding cuts. First, these cuts by the federal government represent yet another step in the dismantling of our social safety net in Canada, already seen in cuts to health prevention and women's issues and the elimination of the Court Challenges program, to name a few. Second, these cuts have a direct negative impact on our First Nations communities, which continue to be plagued by inaction on the part of our federal government with respect to issues such as housing, economic development and sanitation. Third, these cuts diminish the capacity for First Nations members to access and succeed in social work education and in turn to provide social work services in their home communities.

Our Code of Ethics (2005) reminds us of our commitment to the pursuit of social justice. We call upon our social work colleagues to take action now and demand that our federal government maintain funding to FNTI.

## **ACTION STEPS**

First, send a letter to The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. A sample letter is provided below. You can send your letter by mail (no postage required), by email: [Strahl.C@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Strahl.C@parl.gc.ca) or by fax: (613) 944-9376.

Second, send a copy of your letter to your own Member of Parliament. You can find your MP information online by entering your postal code at: <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

Third, if you have not received a response 10 days after sending your letters, contact Mr Strahl's office and the office of your MP, asking for their response. You also may want to request a meeting with your MP at their constituency office.

Thank you for your quick response to this call for action.

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The Honourable Chuck Strahl,  
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and  
Federal Interlocutor for Metis and Non-Status Indians  
House of Commons  
Room 100, Justice Building  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

I am writing to express deep concern about the impending closure of the First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) due to extreme funding cuts by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

Located on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory in southern Ontario, FNTI is a pioneer in community based education delivery and adult education methods. FNTI offers some of the most successful degree, diploma and certificate programs in Ontario for Indigenous people, in partnership with provincially recognized colleges and universities. Included within these is the Bachelor of Social Work degree offered in partnership with the Ryerson University School of Social Work and the planned launch of the Master of Social Work degree in partnership with the Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University. With over 2000 graduates, almost 400 Indigenous students per year, and a history of successful program development and delivery throughout Ontario, FNTI has contributed significantly to reducing the post-secondary attainment gap and increasing Indigenous human resource capacity.

Your government has a stated goal of improving First Nations education and socio-economic conditions. How better to demonstrate this commitment than to support a program that is a leader in Indigenous education, a significant economic contributor and the second largest employer in the community? By all measures, FNTI is a great success story – and not just because of its 90% graduate employment rate. Often coming from communities suffering from the effects of poverty, unsafe drinking water, substandard housing and a host of social problems, Indigenous students are accessing and completing post-secondary education programs, returning to serve their communities, and becoming role models in the process. Rather than cutting their funding, why not celebrate the successes of the longest-standing Aboriginal post-secondary institution in Ontario, and look at ways to facilitate the delivery of similar programs across the country?

FNTI students, staff, community members and the public at large await a positive intervention from your office. I urge you to take all necessary measures to ensure that FNTI is provided with stable and ongoing funding to support the continuation and growth of this essential resource.

I look forward to your response.