

# Skydancer Indigenous Cultural Society

## Submitted by

Dianne Meili

## Title of submission

Skydancer Shares Indigenous Culture in Spruce Grove

## Purpose

The purpose of this project is to create an Indigenous cultural “hub” for the City of Spruce Grove (at Rotary Centennial Park) which will act as an Aboriginal cultural centre and art gallery, a welcoming “gathering place” for residents to learn about and experience Indigenous culture, and a venue for educational programming for Indigenous arts and environmental topics.

This cultural hub will also facilitate conversations with local Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents and municipal government regarding needs and potential facilities and programs in Spruce Grove and the Tri-Region.

Skydancer Indigenous Cultural Society (SICS) is an organization which:

- champions reconciliation, diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging by sharing Indigenous culture with everyone
- provides opportunities for tri-region residents to interact and learn from Indigenous wisdom keepers in a safe, welcoming atmosphere so the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is reduced as understanding and empathy prevails
- facilitates meaningful conversation with local Indigenous residents and local government regarding needs, potential facilities, and programs focusing on the local region
- fosters appreciation of Indigenous culture and creativity through art gallery shows and facilitating regular Indigenous artisan markets and art workshops

## Description of project

- In order to develop an Indigenous cultural “hub” for the City of Spruce Grove, SICS is requesting: funding for facility rental, staffing and program/gallery outfitting. (see attached draft first year budget)
- This project will require ongoing assistance for operations while the Indigenous cultural “hub” develops over the next five years.
- The intent is to see the SICS coordinate and operate the Indigenous centre and associated programming, in concert with the City of Spruce Grove, in order to support the Spruce Grove Strategic Plan and “New Beginnings – An Indigenous Engagement Improvement Strategy” undertaken by council in 2018. Indigenous residents of the Parkland area repeatedly asked for, in focus groups, a “Gathering Place”. The need for a gathering place was listed as number two in the list of “priority areas” the strategy identified
- The SICS will also be looking to partner with local organizations, such as the Rotary Club, public libraries, schools, Horizon Theatre and businesses

## **Financial impact**

In order to develop, with the City of Spruce Grove, the proposed Indigenous centre at Rotary Centennial Park, SICS:

- requests from the City of Spruce Grove \$59,404.00 to cover start-up costs and the first year of operation; for years two to five, we request \$41,304.00
- has applied for Society Status and once that is granted, will be able to seek other funding opportunities by leveraging the funds received from the City of Spruce Grove
- offers volunteer hours, from its board and membership, as an “in-kind” contribution toward matching City of Spruce Grove’s fiscal support. Members will volunteer 16 hours per week X 52 weeks for a total of 832 hours per year (@ \$23/hr = \$19,136) to staff the cultural centre and art gallery. During the first five years of Skydancer’s operation, this will result in a total of 4160 hours @ \$23/hr = \$95, 680.
- will channel art gallery commissions back into operating budget

## **Community benefit**

The SICS will create community benefits through:

- creating entrepreneurial opportunities for Indigenous leaders in culture and art
- drawing people to Spruce Grove, especially since the cultural centre and art gallery is located on Highway 16A, a major tourist route
- the development of a welcoming “gathering place” for people to learn about and experience Indigenous culture, in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, and fostering appreciation for traditional knowledge, diversity, and wisdom. This relationship will help expand the concept of reconciliation from an organizational responsibility to include families and individuals.
- facilitating and supporting community connections by entering into meaningful partnerships with Spruce Grove and Tri-Region organizations and businesses
- reducing barriers that have traditionally kept Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from understanding and celebrating each other
- undertaking programs that give back to the earth and protect our natural environment. For example, a “water warriors” program will teach Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth to care for lakes and rivers, how to live off the land, and share lessons of reciprocity while medicine picking