



Wellbriety!

White Bison's Online Magazine

Volume 5, Number 4

Coalition Building

Some words of teaching about coalitions by Don Coyhis



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White Bison Speaks

Native American Coalition Building



Native American Coalition Building

The next step in the Native American Wellbriety Movement is coalition building. Twenty-four executive directors from urban

Indian centers around the country will come to Denver for a technical assistance conference designed to build a coalition of leaders who will then build wellness coalitions in their own communities. The conference for urban Indian centers and Native American community and faith-based organizations will convene from April 13-15 at the Holiday Inn Denver West in Golden, Colorado.

“Wellbriety refers to sober living and a life that is balanced emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually.”

Coalition building in many Native American communities draws on the existing tradition of building alliances that always existed in American Indian and Alaska Native cultures. When today’s coalitions are understood in a cultural context it is easier for Native leaders to become emotionally and culturally committed to whatever projects the partnership takes on. Don Coyhis, Mohican Nation, President of White Bison, Inc. and an inspiration behind the Wellbriety Movement, explains the traditional context that will be presented at the Denver meeting.

“An arrow by itself can be broken. But when the arrows are put into a bundle none of them can be broken.”

“Coalitions existed in Native communities a long time ago but they were called clans or societies,” he says. “We are adding that clan knowledge to the current coalition training. The clan was always there to serve the people first. They provided a service to the people. The clan

“Every time the coalition meets we ask them to bring their arrow and create the bundle during the meeting. It means they’ve left their individual ego identities as separate groups or organizations at the door. They will make decisions and work together for the people.”

always knew who it was, it knew why it was there, and it knew where it was going. The clan was always identified by a symbol, something that was meaningful to the tribe.”

Connecting diverse sobriety, recovery and wellness coalitions by shared traditional experience helps them work for the common good, Coyhis explains. The meeting in Denver will plant the group identity in a traditional environment before it takes on organizational business. “I have an arrow for each coalition member,” Coyhis continues. “An arrow by itself can be broken. But when the arrows are put into a bundle none of them can be broken. Every time the coalition meets we ask them to bring their arrow and create the bundle during the meeting. It means they’ve left their individual ego identities as separate groups or organizations at the door. They will make decisions and work together for the people.”

The meeting agenda includes a review of the Wellbriety Movement; discussion about the Wellbriety Movement and the urban Indian Centers; a workshop on the National Native American Wellbriety Plan; a workshop on the use of technology to stay in touch; and a ceremonial framework, to name just a few topics. “Coalition building is not foreign to us, Coyhis said. “We knew it under a different name in the traditional times when these alliances were sealed in a ceremony. When we go intertribal, the other tribes bring their arrows to add to the bundle. This is the approach the Wellbriety movement is taking, he concludes.” ✚

White Bison Speaks

Native American Coalition Building



a non-profit American Indian organization

Presents:

Coalition Building

A Technical Assistance Conference

for Urban Indian Centers and
Native American Community
and Faith-based organizations

April 13-15 2004

at the

**Holiday Inn Denver West
14707 West Colfax Ave
Golden, Colorado 80401**

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White Bison, Inc.



*White Bison, Inc. is a proud
sponsor of the Wellbriety
Movement. Wellbriety refers to
sober living and a life that is
balanced emotionally,
physically, mentally, and
spiritually.*

*Implementing Wellbriety
programs and the
accompanying substance abuse
treatment and prevention
programs may require
communities to develop skills
in building coalitions.*

*This Conference can help you
implement culturally
appropriate principles for
developing community
coalitions, and will provide an
opportunity to help create a
National Native American
Wellbriety Plan.*

www.whitebison.org

White Bison Speaks

Native American Coalition Building



A Three Day Conference

Where you will...

Meet and network with Urban Indian Centers from around the country and other Native American community-based and faith-based organizations

Participate in an interactive coalition building exercise

Explore culturally appropriate principles for implementing coalitions in Native American Communities

Learn about the Coalition Building training opportunities available through the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

Meet Native American trainers who can provide technical assistance for coalition building in your community.

Participate in the review and development of a National Native American Wellbriety Plan

Agenda:

Tuesday and Wednesday, April 13-14, 2004

8:30am-5:00pm

Coalition Building and Community Readiness

Thursday, April 15, 2004

8:30am-5:00pm

Review of the National Native American Wellbriety Plan



Special Guest:



Don Coyhis, President,
White Bison, Inc.
Developing Coalitions as Clans

Workshop Presenters:

The two day Coalition Building training will be conducted by:

- Willie Wolf, MA from the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
- Don Coyhis, Mohican, President of White Bison, Inc.
- Jeri Brunoe-Samson, Wasco, Brunoe Training and Consulting, Inc.

The focus of the training is on building coalitions for community based strategic planning and for mobilizing the community.

Acknowledgement

This conference is supported, in part, through a contract from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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About White Bison, Inc.



White Bison, Inc. is an American Indian non-profit corporation. Its vision is to see 100 Native American Communities healing and free from alcohol, substance abuse and domestic violence by the year 2010. Since its beginning, White Bison has been developing programs, resources and sponsoring Wellbriety events for the Native American Recovery Community and for Treatment and Prevention grassroots and professional service providers. Our website is your Center for the Wellbriety Movement (www.whitebison.org) for services, products and Wellbriety! Online Magazine-where you will find reports of our recent conferences and journeys.

Registration for the Workshop:

Contact: White Bison, Inc.
toll free at 1-877-871-1495
to register for the Workshop

Please register before April 10, 2004

Hotel Accommodations

Rooms have been reserved at the
Holiday Inn, Denver West
14707 West Colfax Ave
Golden, CO 80401

*for Reservations call 303-279-7611
(use event code 2-WHB for the \$69.00 rate)*

