



OFFICIAL OPENING of the Gwich'in Wellness Camp  
Wednesday, April 16, 2008



Event Coordinator Denise Kurszewski (standing) welcomes Gwich'in Beneficiaries, dignitaries (including NWT Commissioner Anthony Whitford, busily scribbling) and the public to the official opening ceremonies.

Gwich'in Tribal Council President Fred Carmichael receives a standing ovation for his vision and drive in realizing the dream of a wellness camp for all people of the Beaufort-Delta region and beyond.





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Fred relates how a stand on healing had to be made in order for the Gwich'in to have healthy communities and economy



NWT Premier Floyd Roland makes a commitment to work with the Gwich'in on wellness issues.



Health & Social Services Minister Sandy Lee "accepts" a marriage invitation from Master of Ceremonies William Greenland (below left with Margaret Gordon broadcasting the event live on CKLB-FM radio.)



Chief Richard Nerysoo relates how the Nihtat Gwich'in Council helped realize Fred's dream of a wellness camp.



Prayers and Blessings from the Muslim Community, Our Lady of Victory Church, Anglican Church of the Ascension, First Bible Baptist Church, Lighthouse Community Church, and the Inuvialuit.



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Respected Gwich'in Elder Elizabeth Greenland - flanked by son William, Chief Richard Nerysoo, President Fred Carmichael and Tsiigehtchic Youth Sasha Blake - cuts the "ribbon" (moosehide cord) to officially open the wellness camp.



LET THE FEASTING  
BEGIN!

Mackenzie Delta MLA David Krutko NWT Justice Minister Jackson Lafferty (left) are served by GTC staff member Debra English while GTC staff member Evelyn Bullock (top right) and Gwich'in cook Ruby Edwards (bottom right) keep the food a'comin'.





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Inuvialuit Elder Tommy Thrasher hails President Fred Carmichael (top left photo), while GTC staff members Mardy Semmler and Charlene Ross keep Courtney Perry peeling (top right photo); Gwich'in Elder JOHN-ny Jerome keeps warm while GTC staff member Jozef Carnogursky and volunteer chef Stephen Charlie keep the home fries burning' (middle left photo); Youths Sasha Blake and Andrew Greenland (CKLB, CKLB) cut the ceremonial cake made by GTC staff member Evelyn Bullock (middle photo right); cousins Alestine Andre and Lorraine Lokus ham it up (bottom left photo) while NWT Commissioner Tony Whitford surrounds himself with a bevy of Gwich'in beauties (Treena Nerysoo, Greta Sittichini and Reverend Georgina Baldwin).





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Tetlit Zheh fiddler Dennis Thompson (top middle) strings the bow accompanied by Richard Nerysoo and Wilbert Kendi while Tony Whitford and Sandy Lee (left) do the 'Commissioner's Jig'.

Not to be outdone, GTC's Mary Ann Ross and Youth Andrew Greenland kick up the "Vice-President Jig"!



Decho Grand Chief Jerry Antoine (top right) shows his steps with NWT Education Assistant Deputy Minister Pauline Gordon while NWT Justice Minister (bottom right) kicks up his heels with Inuvik's Mariah Arey.

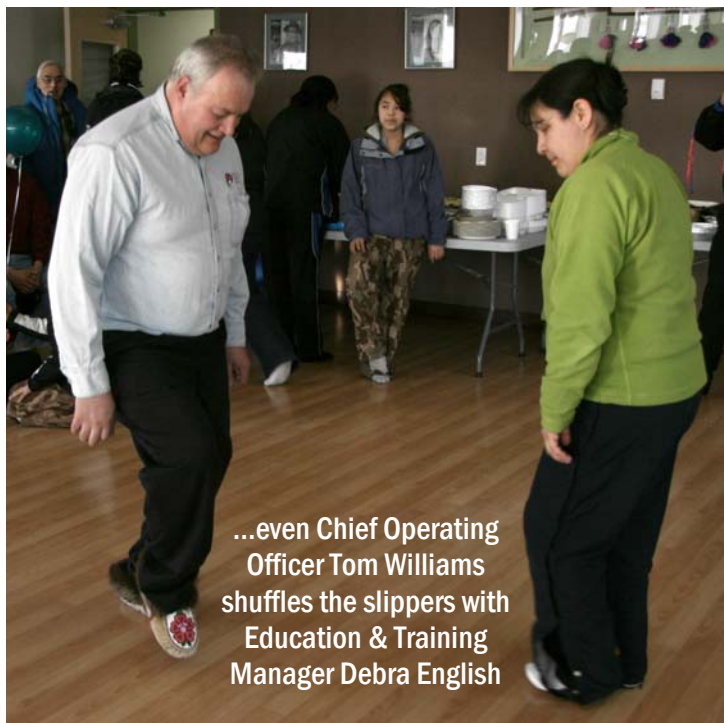




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An Honour Jig for Fred



...even Chief Operating Officer Tom Williams shuffles the slippers with Education & Training Manager Debra English



Iron Chef Victor "Silalee" Stewart takes time out from the kitchen to do the Frying Pan Jig with Elder Elizabeth Hansen



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The Aklavik Youth Dancers perform the Rabbit Dance, Red River Jig and Hankerchief Dance, amongst other dances, for the crowd. The dancers included Katrina ("I know you!") Semple, Riley Edwards, Deanna McGee, Gerald Joe, Trudy Kigoak, John Jake Koe and Lina Peterson.





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A great big "Mahsi Cho" to all those who came out for this prestigious event. A long time ago, the People of the Delta built their own cabins, scows, fish stages and other utensils to survive on the Land. This day marked when the Gwich'in built their own wellness and healing camp to not only survive the coming winds of change but to progress into the 21st century as proud and strong People. As our motto says:  
*Gwich'in land, culture & economy for a better future.*