

Second home for Native youth

By WARREN FREY
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Aboriginal youth in Vancouver may soon have a home away from home.

The Native Youth Centre, a facility planned for indigenous youth in East Vancouver has launched its capital campaign.

The centre, working through the Urban Native Youth Association, has already raised more than \$4.6 million, but still needs \$30 million before the doors can be opened and local youth welcomed.

The centre is also unique because all of the planning and fundraising was done by native youth, a point noted by Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell as he addressed a gathering earlier this week.

"This isn't a bunch of white guys telling you what to build, and isn't even a bunch of people who lived. It's a bunch of people who are going to live, and who are putting their dreams and ambitions into this project," Campbell said.

Jerry Adams, the executive director of UNYA, said the nine-person board includes seven young members.

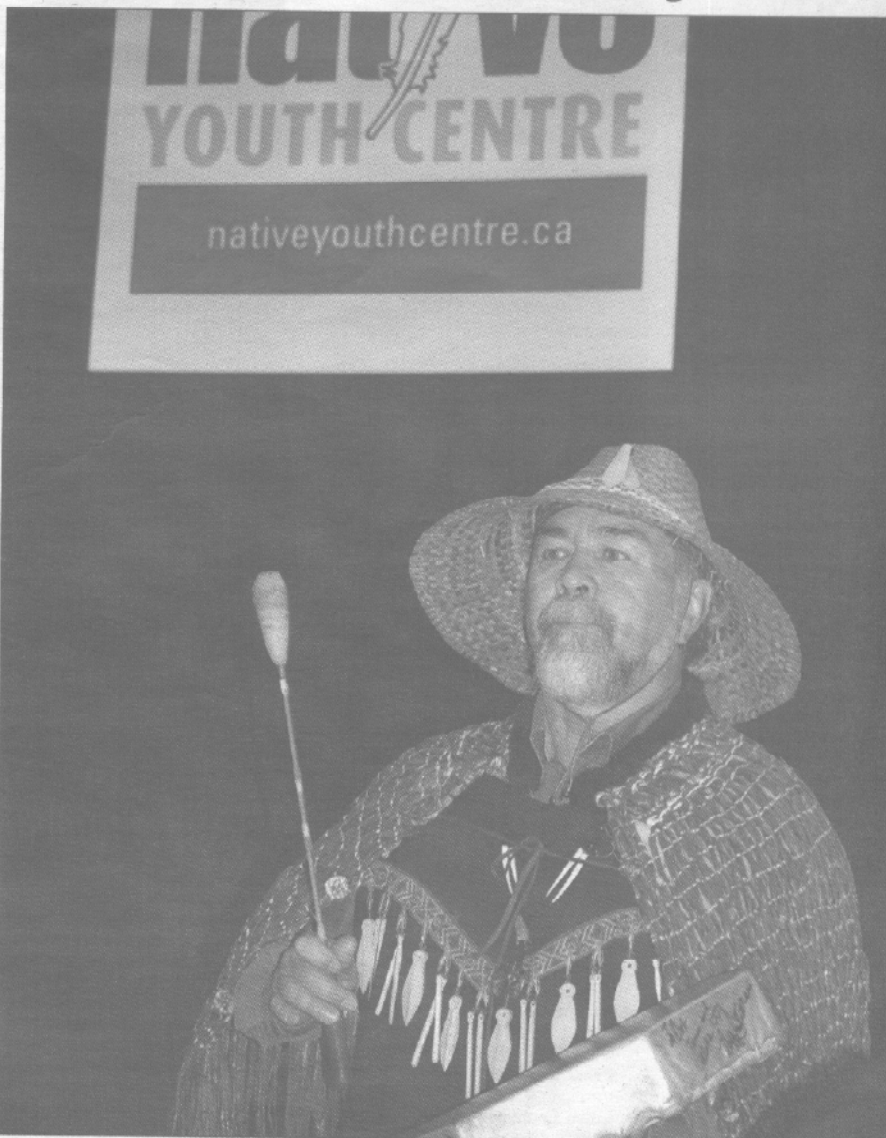
Campbell also announced the City of Vancouver has the option to buy an adjoining Petro Canada station, which would provide enough room in the area to build the centre.

Campbell said the land would be "a start," but he would continue to speak with the federal and provincial governments about supporting a native youth centre.

CIBC announced it will donate \$200,000 to the facility. The provincial government is also chipping in \$1 million.

Plans for the centre include a sweat lodge, a room for elders to teach youth about culture and spirituality and areas for physical activity.

But the main thrust of the centre is to provide support for native youth, as well as prevention and crisis-intervention services.



Aboriginal musician Bob Baker rang in the Native Youth Centre's capital campaign with ceremonial drumming and song. The centre has already raised more than \$4 million.

WARREN FREY/METRO VANCOUVER