

Grand opening for Pine Tree's new location



Mayor of Brantford, Robert Taylor, Six Nations elder Mona Staats and board member Bruce Demaria cutting ribbon for official opening of Pine Tee Native Centre.

BRANTFORD -- Despite a bit of rain, the grand opening for the new location of the Pine Tree Native Centre of Brant, went well with the mayor, Robert Taylor, of Brantford on hand to cut the ribbon on Saturday, April 11.

The Pine Tree Native Centre is a non-profit voluntary organization to offer programs and services to encourage the development of understanding and mutual respect between Native and non-Native people. The Center also assists and supports Native people moving to and living in Brantford and surrounding area to improve their social, economic and spiritual well-being. Another goal is to promote respect and understanding of Native cultural and heritage among Natives and non-Natives.

The Centre was incorporated in 1985 after the need for a Native centre was identified in 1982 when the Native population of Brantford and surrounding area numbered about 3,000. The Centre operated out of a building on Colborne Street until it's move to 154 Dalhousie in February of this year.

The current building is bigger and brighter, especially with the help of an interior paint job with some paint donated by Styres Lumber. Another improvement to the Centre is a lovely white and green sign, materials donated by Gerry's Demolition, painted by Butch Robinson.

The ribbon cutting ceremony was held in the foyer of the building due to the wet weather. The ribbon was held by Jaime Powless, age 6, and her little sister, Jerrica, age 4. The actual cutting was done by the Mayor, Mona Staats, an elder from Six Nations, and Bruce Demaria, a member of the board of directors.

Also on hand were Gary Sault with his drum, Calvin Sault to do a pipe ceremony, Peter Isaacs as well as all the staff of the center and board members.

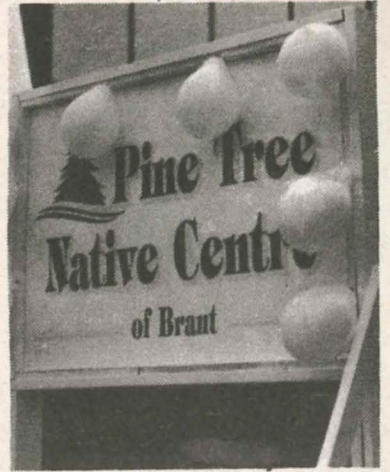
The damp weather did not stop a planned first season barbaque and everyone was in great spirits.

Winners of the fund raising draw were Alexandra Demaira, who walked away with a color television, Mr. R. Vasiliauskas won a VCR, and Tamara Deperry won a brunch for two at Danny's HoHo.

The Centre offers a wide variety of programs for children, youths and seniors. For the children ages 6 - 12 are the Lil' Turtles, with Native crafts, sports, field trips, story telling and seasonal parties, all with a Native theme. Lil' Turtles runs wednesdays from 6 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.

The Youth Group offers year around activities with a Native theme for teens 13 - 19 including dances, sports and seminars. This group meets Tuesdays from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m.

The Centre offers a summer camp in July and August for children 6 - 14. They attend daily



for a one week period with one camp-over per week.

In addition to the services for the children, the Centre offers a Seniors Group with activities including social and cultural tours, visits to museums, fairs, plays and special events. There is also transportation available for seniors in need of medial appointments and other services.

A recent addition to the Centre is the Native Inmate Program which offers social, educational and recreational activities for Native inmates in Burtch and Guelph Correctional Institutes and Brantford Jail. This program is to promote Native values and culture and to offer liaison services for a wide range of services.

The services of a Native Court worker are available through the Centre for community members in trouble with the law.

In conjunction with the programs, there are other services, for example, information on community resources, assistance in filling out forms for reinstatement, status cards, etc.; a bulletin board with job postings, social and cultural activities, Native newspapers and a video library.

At present, the Centre is gearing up for the summer programs.