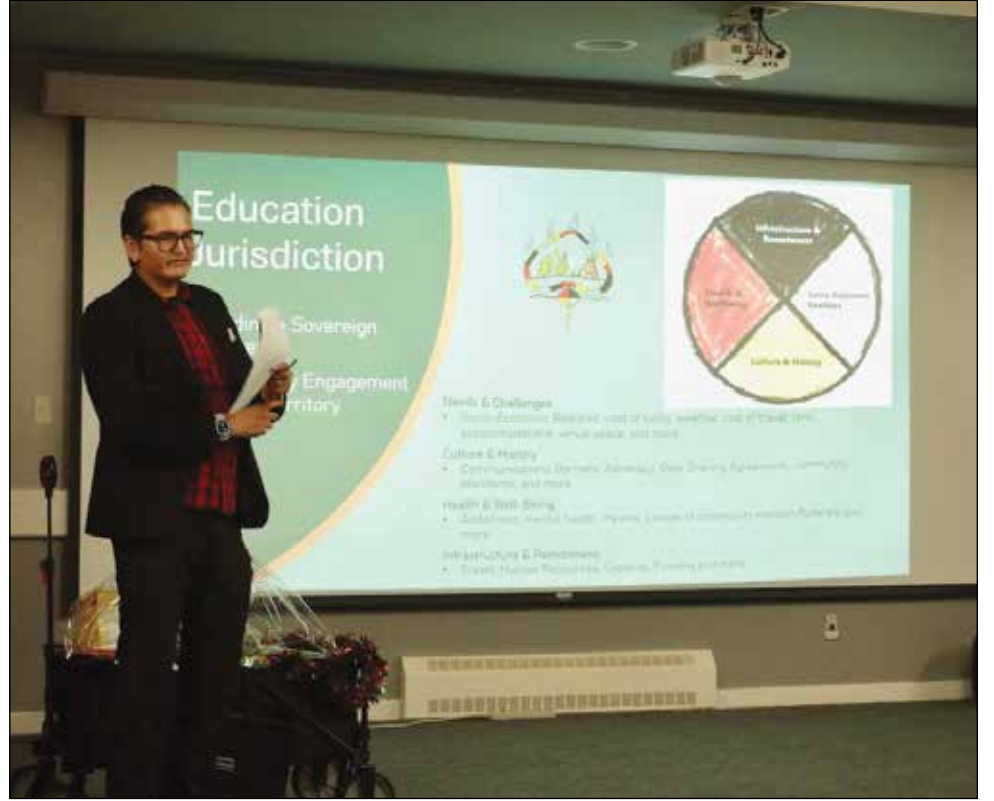


Education



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum delivers her opening remarks at Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Education Jurisdiction Regional Session at the Italian Cultural Centre in Thunder Bay.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Bryan Achneepineskum, Nishnawbe Aski Nation's education jurisdiction manager, speaks during NAN's Education Jurisdiction Regional Session at the Italian Cultural Centre in Thunder Bay.

NAN holds education jurisdiction session

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) held an Education Jurisdiction Regional Session to discuss the development of a First Nation Education System at the Italian Cultural Centre in Thunder Bay.

“For us as First Nation people, when we say education there’s a dark history there because we think about the Indian residential school which hurt and harmed so many of our people,” says Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum during her opening remarks. “For many of us, we were not encouraged to continue on in school, I know I wasn’t, because seven

of my older siblings went to the Indian residential school and in total they spent over 90 years within those institutions. I didn’t go, but yet it was very difficult for me to actually get that formal education because I didn’t get that encouragement from my parents because they saw education as a system that took their children away from them.”

Achneepineskum says she was about 24-years-old when she got her high school diploma and about 30-years-old when she graduated with a college diploma.

“Somehow I learned that education was very important and I encouraged my children, I have six children, they all got their high school education and

a few of them went on to post-secondary studies,” Achneepineskum says. “But one of the things that I had to do was I had to leave the reserve in order for what I thought for my child to get a better education, and today we’re still dealing with that where we have children leaving their home to get a high school education.”

Achneepineskum says it is very difficult for a parent to be separated from their 13-year-old child who has to leave the community to get their high school education.

“To me, this is one of the foundations as to why we feel we need to have a better system — we need to have schools that are structured to be able to accommodate all our children

and not just a selected few,” Achneepineskum says. “We need to have schools that will be able to accommodate special needs children, to have children that have physical challenges. And also our schools need to be able to have the language and the land-based (programs), which we have witnessed has really empowered our people when they are able to access and have those in their community and in their schools.”

Bryan Achneepineskum, education jurisdiction manager at NAN, says he has been involved with education jurisdiction at NAN since 2020. Information about NAN’s education jurisdiction process is posted online at: www.nan.ca/resources/governance-education-jurisdiction/.

“Within that time frame, so much has happened, from us beginning negotiations for an education agreement to our team going forward with that community engagement piece, assisting communities with beginning that community-led initiative to begin community engagement,” Bryan says. “That’s one of the important things we want to make sure that we continue moving forward is that we have communities driving the work, that we have members of the community leading and being the presenters, the discussion makers — we want to make sure that community members are a part of the planning, the coordination of events and activities.”

Bryan says they look forward to bringing more communities on board with having CBCs (community-based consultants), noting that many communities have different services, supports and resources.

“We can’t approach this as a one size fits all process for education jurisdiction, we need to make sure that every community’s wants, needs and values are represented and considered when it comes to how we move forward with community engagement,” Bryan says.

NAN previously held its Education Jurisdiction Summit: Best Practices for Reclaiming Jurisdiction on July 23-24 at Delta Hotels Thunder Bay.

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Education

NOSM celebrates 20-years with open house

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

NOSM University held an open house to celebrate 20 years of educating health care professionals in the north in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. NOSM University also celebrated the graduation of its 1,000th MD this year as well.

“We opened our doors to the general public today in the hopes that people would come and see what’s going on at the school and get a little bit more connected with the work that we’re doing here at NOSM University,” says Joseph LeBlanc, associate vice president, Equity and Inclusion at NOSM University and Wiikwemkoong citizen. “We’re sharing our different departments, so we have our outreach, Mushkiki Miikan, which is our Pathway to Medicine for Indigenous learners and prospective applicants. People can check out that program, it’s a province-wide initiative that’s led here at NOSM.”

LeBlanc says the Mushkiki Miikan website is located at: www.mushkikimiikan.com/. The website includes High School Outreach Programs and Applying to Medical School sections as well as key information for interested applicants.

“If anybody is interested they can check out those websites and understand the pathway that does exist, but also to know that there is a pathway for existing health professionals as well,” LeBlanc says. “So if you’re considering applying to medicine and you are already in practice or you’re a student in high school or a student in undergrad, there’s lots of pathways into this school.”

LeBlanc says there are now more Indigenous learners enrolled in NOSM University’s residency and undergrad programs than have graduated over the years.

“We have put a lot of effort into our admissions pathways and a lot of that is attributed to the work that education leaders throughout the north are doing as well, so ensuring that students have access to the degrees and experiences that they need,” LeBlanc says. “So we’re really proud to share and welcome the Indigenous students as well.”

Dr. Michael Green, president, vice-chancellor, dean and CEO



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Joseph LeBlanc, associate vice president, Equity and Inclusion at NOSM University, participated in NOSM University’s 20th Anniversary Open House at the Thunder Bay campus.

at NOSM University, states in a 20 Years of NOSM University message that NOSM University today is the result of years of hard work and determination by those who believed in what it could become — a driving force for health equity and stronger communities in northern Ontario. Green previously practised family medicine for more than eight years in Moose Factory, where he also served as chief of staff.

“As we honour 20 years of progress and partnership, we are reminded that NOSM University’s greatest strength lies in its people: the 56 medical students who, in 2005, believed in a newly created model of distributed, community-engaged learning; the countless faculty, preceptors, staff and community partners who continue to carry its mission forward; and those who are now joining our community of learners,” Green states. “This anniversary is more than a milestone. It’s a testament to the strength that comes from being deeply connected to the people and places of the north, and to what we can achieve together. To everyone

who has been part of this journey, I say miigwetch, merci and thank you.”

Naomi Palmer, a first-year medical student at NOSM University, says it has been an adventure.

“I really enjoy it, I love our smaller class sizes, I love how it’s a really supportive environment, I love all the different aspects of our curriculum,” Palmer says. “We’re celebrating 20 years of NOSM and there’s a lot of different booths, so a lot of different people to talk to, staff, some other students as well, just getting a sense of what the school is like.”

Palmer adds that NOSM University has a social accountability mandate.

“We learn a lot about the social determinants of health,” Palmer says. “We have our integrated community placement where we’re sent to an Indigenous community to really immerse ourselves in the culture, and it’s a really different learning opportunity that we have.”

Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Kevin Holland says it was great to attend NOSM University’s

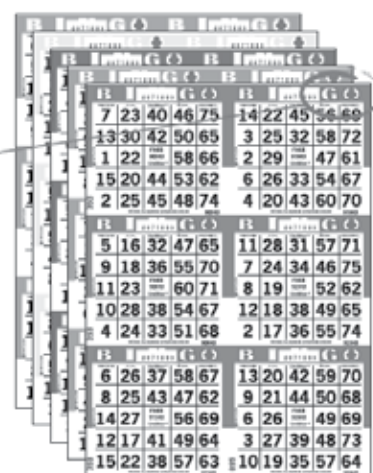
20th anniversary celebration.

“Our communities fought to make sure we had the campus located here in northwestern Ontario as well as the one in northeastern Ontario, so to be able to come back and see how much they’ve accom-

plished over the last 20 (years) is pretty special,” Holland says. “The whole vision behind creating NOSM was to be able to train local medical students here in the north that will stay in the north (as physicians) and provide that service and that care in

the north. They’ve put a lot of doctors through the university over the last 20 years and we’re seeing a difference in our communities in northern Ontario as a result.”

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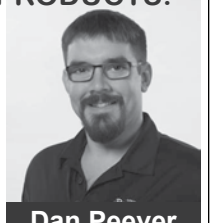
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Education

Lakehead and KCDSB launch achievement program

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Lakehead University and the Kenora Catholic District School Board (KCDSB) launched an Achievement Program for Grade 4 students at St. John Paul II School with an MOU signing on Nov. 21. A group of 10 Grade 4 St. John Paul II School students will be the first from KCDSB to join the program, which is Lakehead University's early-access initiative that helps expand opportunities and pathways to post-secondary education for equity-deserving students.

"The Achievement Program reflects Lakehead University's deep commitment to access and opportunity for young people across northwestern Ontario," says Gillian Siddall, president and vice-chancellor at Lakehead University. "It is wonderful to be here today to celebrate this new partnership between Lakehead University and the Kenora Catholic District School Board and to welcome a new group of students and families into our Lakehead community. To our Grade 4 students joining us from St. John Paul II School in Kenora, I want to say how proud we are of you — today marks the beginning of a journey that could one day bring you to Lakehead as a university student."

Sandy Lake's Nevaeh Rae, an Achievement Program alumna and third-year Indigenous Education student at Lakehead University, says she first started with the Achievement Program when she was in Grade 4.

"I graduated high school about four years ago and then I came to Lakehead in 2022, completed the Indigenous Transition Year Program and then went into my Indigenous

Education program," Rae says. "The days on campus when we were kids really helped pave the way to Lakehead University. I already knew where all of my classes were, where the buildings were, I knew Amanda (Stefanile, Achievement Program manager at Lakehead University), I knew so many other people, it already felt like home here."

Rae says her goal is to be a teacher in a First Nations school.

"I'm studying to be a teacher," Rae says. "It's been pretty good, there's been challenges obviously but it's really a close-knit program so I have a lot of supports there."

Rae says it was amazing to see the enthusiasm of the Grade 4 students at St. John Paul II School about participating in the Achievement Program.

"I worked with the Achievement Program for a number of years and just seeing the kids grow up and learn about university and what they want to do in life, it honestly just makes my heart warm," Rae says.

Jamey Robertson, director of education at KCDSB, says the partnership with Lakehead University is an important opportunity for their students and families.

"The Achievement Program strengthens the connection between KCDSB and Lakehead University and supports students as they work toward the goals they hold for their future," Robertson says. "We value this collaboration and look forward to the opportunities it will create in the years ahead."

Stefanile says the Achievement Program has built strong connections between Lakehead University and families across the region since it was launched in 2011.

"Starting in Grade 4 ... students partake in yearly activities that focus on recreation, academics, community involvement and personal growth," Stefanile says. "By the time they graduate high school, Achievement Program participants will earn the equivalent of first-year tuition to Lakehead University, and by initially connecting through sport and recreation, it offers a natural pathway for students to feel at home and included on our campus and begin that sense of belonging. We're so proud to welcome our new group of students into this program today, and I can't wait to learn from them, listen to them and hear what they yearn to be when they grow up."

Jade Fadden, a student at St. John Paul II School, says they are excited to be part of the program.

"I really want to go to university, and one day I hope to be a baker because there is only one bakery in Sioux Narrows," Fadden says. "Being chosen makes me feel excited for the future."

Tammy Bush, principal at St. John Paul II School, says the launch of the Achievement Program represents a future filled with new opportunities for their students and families.

"The Achievement Program gives students a clear path toward post-secondary education and invites them to dream even bigger about what comes next," Bush says. "This is such an exciting moment for our school community, and I couldn't be prouder of each student and their journey ahead."

The Achievement Program currently supports about 500 students across six school boards and 45 schools, with 70 per cent of participants self-identifying as Indigenous.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Sandy Lake's Nevaeh Rae, a third-year Indigenous Education student at Lakehead University, speaks about how she got involved with the Achievement Program in Grade 4 during Lakehead University and the Kenora Catholic District School Board's MOU signing ceremony for the launch an Achievement Program for Grade 4 students at St. John Paul II School.



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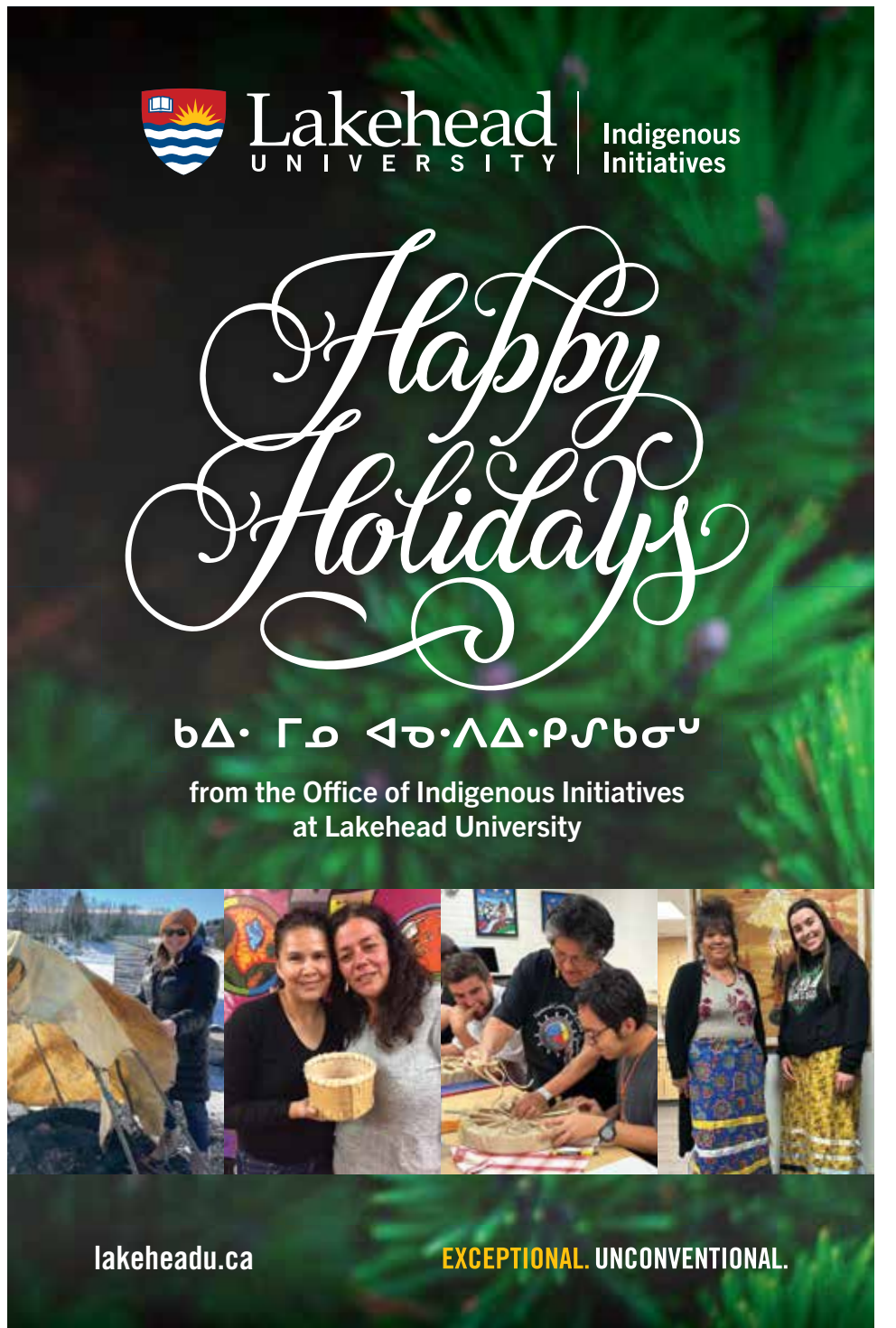
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Arts & Entertainment

Morrisseau art donated to Thunder Bay Art Gallery

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Thunder Bay Art Gallery celebrated the donation of Norval Morrisseau artworks by the Sharon and Ken Whent Joint Partner Trust for the Kenny Alwyn Whent Family. The Thunder Bay Art Gallery's permanent collection now includes the largest public art museum collection of Morrisseau's artworks in the world after the donation. Morrisseau, who passed in 2007, was considered to be the grandfather of contemporary Indigenous art in Canada.

"We're humbled by the trust of the family and the (Sharon and Ken Whent Joint Partner Trust) in donating this to the care of the collection," says Matthew Hills, executive director at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery. "One of the reasons we're humbled is it represents a significant cultural heritage for our region, for our territory, and one of the greatest creative forces Canada has known, Norval Morrisseau. We at the Thun-

der Bay Art Gallery feel that we hold these works in trust for our community and we're honoured by this gift and to be showing these works off."

Hills says Morrisseau's birch bark scroll artwork is fascinating. It is part of the Thunder Bay Art Gallery's Copper Thunderbird Survives with the Help of Water Spirits: Gift of the Sharon and Ken Whent Joint Partner Trust for the Kenny Alwyn Whent Family exhibition that is on display until March 1, 2026.

"It's over 12 feet in length, it's a whole narrative," Hills says. "Morrisseau was a deeply compelling visual storyteller and I think what you see in this show is some of his early works as he's starting to figure out his main players, and that scroll is just full of interesting images and stories and there's so much to unpack there. So for me that's the most exciting to dive into in terms of research and in terms of what it means to our collection."

Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek Councillor Marcel Donio says the donation of Morrisseau's artworks was wonderful.

"It's a long time in coming — he was a member of our community, he spent a lot of time up in the north but he came back and we were always very proud of him," Donio says. "I think the world deserves to see it and it's nice that people like the Whent family are donating it for all to see. We're very happy and I think Norval would be if he were still with us."

Donio says all of Morrisseau's artworks stand out for him.

"There's such a story behind every one that I just love them all," Donio says, noting that he appreciated seeing Morrisseau's birch bark scroll artwork. "That is very interesting and very detailed, there is so much history and story in that, it's nice to see."

Michael Harris, executor of Ken Whent's estate and trustee for the Ken Whent Joint Partner Trust for the Kenny Alwyn Whent Family, says the donation had been in works for a while.

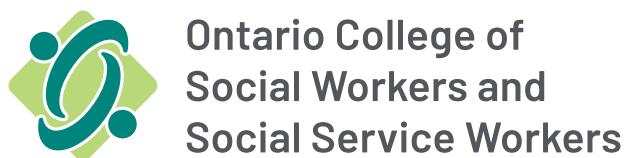
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Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek Councillor Marcel Donio speaks during the Thunder Bay Art Gallery's celebration of the donation of Norval Morrisseau artworks by the Sharon and Ken Whent Joint Partner Trust for the Kenny Alwyn Whent Family.

from page 6

"We were happy to see it come to fruition — this is an amazing display and I'm proud to be part of it," Harris says. "The trustees talked about a

sale, and as I mentioned, it was a very brief discussion because we decided that this was something that needed to be shared with as many people as could see it. That's what Ken would

have wanted, and as I mentioned, that would be a big part of his legacy."

Maggie Whent, Ken's daughter, says it was pretty amazing to see the artworks on display at

the Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

"Most of these were in my childhood house my entire life, so it's really nice to see this," Whent says. "It's definitely what (my father) always wanted."

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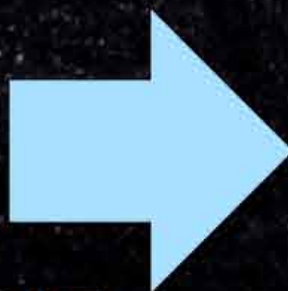
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Arts & Entertainment



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

David Anderson (Wahwahbiginojii) shows some of his books during the Lakehead University Indigenous Students' Association's Winter Market.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Michelle Boucher shows some of her ribbon skirts and other items.

Lakehead University Indigenous Students' Association 2025 winter market

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Indigenous author David Anderson (Wahwahbiginojii) recently highlighted his books at the Lakehead University Indigenous Students' Association's Winter Market, held Nov. 27-28 at the Agora on the Thunder Bay campus.

"My goal is to spread the words of our ancestors, they left so many stories for us, so many teachings for us," Anderson says, noting that his books are published by Indigenous Education Press and are available at GoodMinds.com. "It's up to us to begin our own road to knowledge for each of us learning about who we are and our relationship with all of creation. These books are kind of a first step for everybody, not just kids but adults. Our ancestors left us so much, and it's for them, it's for everybody."

Anderson says he wrote one of his stories as a play for his Grade 6 class when he was teaching.

"It's a story of our ancestors celebrating Biboon (winter) and these newcomers bringing this thing called Christmas and our families coming together and just sharing, which is what we were supposed to do," Anderson says. "I've got five more books in my head that's coming out slowly."

Lac des Mille Lacs' Michelle Boucher says she began making her ribbon skirts and other items about a year ago.

"I can custom make skirts for people with the colours they want, these (ribbon skirts) are just visions that come to my head," Boucher says. "It's very healing for me and it's very powerful just to be able to create for Indigenous people."

Caroline Derouin, who grew up in Hudson and worked with Tikinagan Child and Family Services for about 31 years, says



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Caroline Derouin shows some of her earrings and other items during the Lakehead University Indigenous Students' Association's Winter Market, held Nov. 27-28 at the Agora on the Thunder Bay campus.

she picked up her sewing and other skills from her mother.

"Mom used to sew and bead and do her own vegetable gardens and fishing and snaring rabbits — I watched and saw her doing all those things and kind of picked that up," Derouin says, noting that one of the items she had for sale was a sewing kit. "It's full of sewing stuff and I just made it out of pieces of material I had left over. A lot of this stuff I try to make on my own and not copy anybody."

Ginoogaming's Joan Esquega says she had a variety of hoodies and t-shirts for sale.

"I started my own printing business with my own designs so I have hoodies and t-shirts," Esquega says. "I do men and women's vests, jackets as well. I just started some children's t-shirts as well and I have some pillows with my art on them."

Esquega says she has been very busy with her business, noting that she took a break from teaching to start up the business.

"I just thought now is the time to start with my art and just start creating again," Esquega says. "I also do corporate wear, so I've been getting orders from organizations and communities wanting hoodies with their logos and stuff. I bought a machine back in February, an industrial printer, so it's been busy ever since."

Natasha Broadbent, treasurer at the Lakehead University Indigenous Students' Association, says they held the Winter Market when the Indigenous Student Resource Centre was not able to hold it this year.

"The Indigenous Students' Association has a brand new executive council this year, so it's kind of their first time hosting an event at Lakehead through the club," Broadbent says. "It's been a good time, we had a few struggles with it since it was our first time as the club doing it but I think it's going pretty well."

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Community



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The Underground Gym and Youth Centre's Peter Panetta recently delivered an anti-bullying workshop in North Caribou Lake.

Underground Gym hosts anti-bullying workshop in North Caribou

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Underground Gym and Youth Centre's Peter Panetta recently delivered an anti-bullying workshop for students from Junior Kindergarten to high school at the schools in North Caribou Lake.

"I was invited by Sheila Gabrie," Panetta says, noting that her son Zachary Gabrie, land-based mentor at the North Caribou Lake Elementary and High School, was one of the youth who participated in the

Underground Gym's boxing program about 20 years ago in Thunder Bay. "He and a few other boxers went to the North American Indigenous Games in 2006 in Denver, Colorado. He's (also) part of our Underground Gym board of directors as well, so they invited me to come up and speak and do my thing on bullying and also possibly do some self-defence, teaching boxing skills."

Panetta says Zachary helped him with the anti-bullying workshop.

"I spoke on it for four days,"

Panetta says. "I started realizing that even to this day, I am almost 76-years-old, and I'm still being bullied. Bullying never stops, it comes in different forms."

Panetta says he has built up a lot of self-esteem and self-confidence over the years, so the bullying just bounces off of him.

"So what we need to do is focus on building self-esteem and self-confidence in the individuals," Panetta says. "When the bullying comes, you are able to deal with it. Whether it's physical, whether it's psycho-

logical, whether it's emotional, you can deal with it because you have built up so much self-confidence and so much self-esteem that you're able to deal with it."

Panetta says they have been able to eliminate bullying at the Underground Gym.

"I've got well over 50-60 kids there, there is no bullying," Panetta says. "I've built a family type atmosphere at the gym where the kids support each other."

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Middle row: (Trainer David Sutherland), Reign Gray, Matthew Waboose, Shandon Moonias, Nigel Wesley, Adam Patterson, Zeke Wesley, (Manager Jonathan Chum).

Bottom row: Kennifer Winter, Ashlyn Mckay, Kaiya Beardy, Allora Kirk.



Community

Self-esteem and self-confidence keys to end bullying

from page 10

Panetta says one of the students in North Caribou Lake was very interested in the self-defence training.

“She searched for me every day for three days to teach her more and more and more,” Panetta says. “When I have a willing student like that, I spent a lot of time with her and I even actually had her help me coach the other kids because she was so talented and picked it up so well.”

Zachary says the students liked Panetta’s workshop and training.

“I noticed the shy kids and the kids that don’t like to play on teams kind of got more involved,” Zachary says. “Usually the sports around here are hockey and broom ball and volleyball, they’re all team sports.”

Zachary says they did the anti-bullying workshop as part of Bullying Awareness and Prevention week on Nov. 16-22.

“(The students) enjoyed it, some of them really liked it especially on the high school side,” Zachary says. “Some of them really wanted to get involved and learn the techniques and everything.”

Zachary says he first met Panetta at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School

and began training at the old Underground Gym building in Thunder Bay.

“It taught me a lot of things, it gave me a good work ethic to be responsible,” Zachary says. “You’ve got to make sure you do the work.”

“It taught me a lot of things, it gave me a good work ethic to be responsible...”

– Zachary Gabriele, land-based mentor

Zachary says he enjoyed his experience at the North American Indigenous Games in 2006.

“I had one fight but I lost,” Zachary says. “It was a really good experience, we hung out with the Taekwondo team and we went to the soccer field and helped them out. I remember it like it was yesterday, it was fun. I saw the mountains over there, it was nice.”

Information about the Underground Gym is posted online at: undergroundgym.ca/.



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Community

Semple Enterprises donates \$10,000 to Tikinagan

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Semple Enterprises recently made a \$10,000 donation to Tikinagan Child and Family Services for Christmas gifts for children in care on Nov. 25 in Thunder Bay.

"It's amazing, I'm so grateful to receive this donation, this gift, especially at this time of year," says Thelma Morris, executive director at Tikinagan. "We have a limited budget to be able to provide Christmas gifts to our kids in care, but this is going to be a tremendous help for us to be able to make our kids happy. Every child should have a gift at Christmastime and especially our kids who may not be with their moms or dads. It's a big support for our kids in care just to enjoy Christmas and open their gifts at Christmastime."

Morris says she felt very emotional when Titus Semple, president and CEO at Semple Enterprises, called her about the donation.

"It's such a caring and compassionate thing to do for children," Morris says. "(Christmas) is a very special time of year, kids look forward to Christmas morning, opening gifts, and I think this will help us to provide more for our kids in the City of Thunder Bay and surrounding area. We do have other children that are placed in the north but in particular we've been getting

more kids in care in the urban settings so this is a huge help for us to be able to bring Christmas to our kids that are in care."

Morris adds that Tikinagan's service model is about Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin, which means Everybody working together to raise our children.

"This is an example of what Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin is all about, Semple Enterprises being part of care giving," Morris says. "It may not seem like Christmas gifts are part of child rearing but it is part of making a child feel loved and cared for and feeling special, especially during Christmas and Christmas morning. This is exactly what our Indigenous communities are about, getting together to look after our kids who may be in need of care and extra love so I'm really happy that Semple Enterprises has come to us to be able to donate this for our kids in care."

Tikinagan released a statement that the contribution from Semple Enterprises will help ensure that all Tikinagan's children and youth feel seen, supported and cared for this Christmas. Whether through gifts, activities or special experiences, this donation will help create moments of connection and care, helping to make the holiday season a little brighter for everyone.

Semple says the idea for the donation came from the team at Semple Enterprises.



Semple Enterprises recently donated \$10,000 to Tikinagan Child and Family Services for Christmas gifts for children in care in Thunder Bay.

Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

"A couple of weeks ago we were (discussing) if there was something we could do or any organizations out there that we could assist during this time of the year," Semple says. "We know that Christmas is a happy time but it's also a tough time for other people as well, and we want to help the organization to be able to distribute some gifts to some of the kids that are in care. We just want to hopefully bring a smile to their faces even

for a few minutes." Semple says Tikinagan had previously helped them with the Tournament of Hope, so they decided to return the favour and help Tikinagan with helping the children they support.

"But we also wanted to issue a challenge to other businesses and organizations that have work and do business in the north," Semple says. "We have so many companies that work within our First Nation commu-

nities and there's a lot of extraction that takes place without any substantial returns coming back to our communities, and I felt that this would be a good opportunity as well to issue a challenge to those companies that work in the north too, especially at this time of the year, to find a way to give back."

Nishnawbe Aski Nation also stepped up with a donation of \$1,500 to Tikinagan for Christmas gifts for children in care on

Dec. 5. "It's great to see the organization step up and contribute to this initiative," Semple says. "It's going to go a long way in terms of providing that additional support for Tikinagan to provide that support to the kids that need Christmas gifts this season. I just want to say thank you to them, and it's big of them to step up and contribute."



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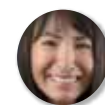
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Community

Semple Enterprises shares fire resistant home designs

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Semple Enterprises president/CEO Titus Semple shared his fire-resistant home designs during the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Housing Conference 2025, held Nov. 19-20 at the Valhalla Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

"We've designed homes so they are virtually fireproof, we are about 95 per cent fire-proof," Semple says. "Our wall systems are non-combustible so if you put a torch to it, it will not catch flame. Obviously no home is 100 per cent fireproof due to its contents and some of the products that are used in the construction process, however our wall system protects the structure of the home. Our wall structure kind of encases the whole interior of the home, both floor and ceiling get encased with our non-combustible system so that protects the structure if there is a fire from the interior of the home."

Semple says if a couch or bed catches fire, that would cause some damage to the drywall in the fire-resistant homes.

"But drywall can be easily

replaced as opposed to having an entire structure be destroyed by the fire," Semple says.

Semple says they are currently having homes built in Sachigo Lake and Wunnumin Lake.

"We launched our housing initiative here about two years ago and we started getting our first work about a year or so ago and now we are just completing our first 15 homes," Semple says. "We use metal studs — we try to limit our use of combustible materials."

Semple says they also use steel exteriors and roofs on the houses.

"We designed it so that any chance that there's a fire, like whether it's an exterior fire, if there's forest fires happening nearby, that it's protected as much as possible," Semple says.

Semple says the material they are using is also mold resistant.

"It doesn't retain water, it's something that could be wiped down," Semple says. "The other thing with it is, we've

designed our homes so that we're not limited to winter road use. Should we be required to transport our system during the summer months, we are able to

do that. Obviously it's always cheaper and a little more cost effective to use the winter roads, which is what we prefer at the end of the day, but should an emergency arise where a community is in need of a home being built over the summer months we are able to mobilize and ship our product up into the communities by air."

Semple says they also have access to fire suppression units that are designed to be installed in the ceilings of homes.

"These units go into the ceilings of homes and should a fire pop up in let's say the kitchen and the temperature exceeds 130 degrees, our fire suppression unit will expel a fire retardant that will put out the fire," Semple says. "And a good thing with our fire retardant is they don't damage the interior of the homes. They are easily wipeable after the fire is extinguished, so the product will be able to be wiped down or be able to be vacuumed up. And it's non-toxic as well."

Semple can be reached for more information at: titus@sempleinc.com.

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation Housing Conference 2025 fea-



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Semple Enterprises president/CEO Titus Semple holds up a sample of the fire resistance of the building materials in his fire-resistant home designs during the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Housing Conference 2025, held at the Valhalla Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

tured a variety of scheduled presentations by Sandy Lake First Nation; Ministry of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities; Build Canada Homes;

Canada Mortgage and Housing; and Indigenous Services Canada. The conference also featured a variety of scheduled panels, including two Skills Pan-

els; a Community Success Panel; a First Nation Owned Supplier Panel; and a Housing Design Panel.

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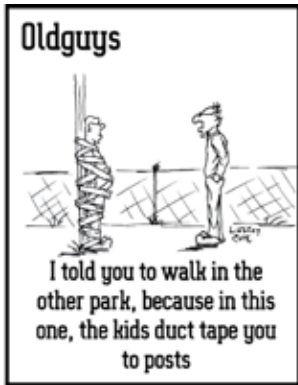
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

Wawatay Communications Society is currently looking for a dynamic and results-driven Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who brings management expertise and embodies the mandate and mission in service of Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities.

Wawatay Communications Society serves the communication needs of First Nations people and the communities of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. It does this through the distribution of a monthly newspaper, daily radio programming, other communication services and a multimedia website that seeks to preserve and enhance indigenous languages and cultures of Indigenous people in northern Ontario.

Mandate

"Wawatay Communications Society is a self-governing, independent community-driven entrepreneurial Indigenous organization dedicated to using appropriate technologies to meet the communication needs of people of Indigenous ancestry in Northern Ontario, wherever they live. In doing so, its founders intended that Wawatay would serve their communities by preserving, maintaining and enhancing Indigenous languages and culture."

Mission

"To provide media capabilities and content that address the unique needs of the Nishnawbe people."

The membership of the Society – 49 First Nation communities within the territory of Nishnawbe Aski Nation– formally adopted the above mandate and mission statement at an Annual General Membership Meeting on May 5-6, 2004.

Location: Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Timmins

Position Summary:

The CEO serves as the chief executive of Wawatay Communications Society and in partnership with the Board, is responsible for the success of the Wawatay Communications Society. Reporting directly to the Board of Directors, the CEO is responsible for creating and implementing a clear sense of direction for the Wawatay Communications Society and its related businesses by defining, communicating, and overseeing the Corporation's mission, goals, operating principles, and strategic actions.

This position is the senior management position in Wawatay Communications Society, with responsibility for:

- The overall management of the business including its overall strategic direction, preparation of agendas and background information for Board meeting and Executive Committee meetings.
- Keeps the Board fully informed of the conditions of Wawatay Communications Society and on all important factors influencing it.
- The development of annual works plans and related capital and operating budgets.
- Development of operational policies and procedures.
- The day-to-day operations management, human resources recruitment and management and budget and financial oversight and monitoring.
- Overall planning, design and implementation of projects and programs within the mandate; and
- Communications and marketing for the purpose of business development

Governance, Strategy Development, Planning and Reporting

- Formulates and updates annual business plan and strategies, policies and procedures for Wawatay Communications Society and brings these to the Board for input, and decision as to ratification.
- Ensures strong strategic and annual planning processes and procedures are undertaken and effective budget and plans are prepared for Board approval.
- Seeks out and develops business opportunities and presents such opportunities to the Board for consideration and decision.
- Oversees fiscal activities, ensuring that all financial and non-financial reporting requirements are met on a timely and accurate basis, and
- Ensures that reports to the Board are always transparent and timely basis.

Community and Relationship Management

- Initiates, develops, and maintains effective strategic relationships and networks with key stakeholders including the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, government agencies, business owners, contractors, customers, potential customers, partners, suppliers, residents, and the business community in relation to their interests in the Corporation.
- Examines and recommends partnerships with private and public entities in support of projects that will assist the Corporation in fulfilling its mission and objectives; and
- Promotes and advocates the profile of the Wawatay Communications Society.

Operational Management

- Schedules Board meetings, prepares agendas, information and reports for consideration and decision by the Board, and ensures the completion of minutes of all Board meetings.
- Ensures the operation of Wawatay Communications Society follows all appropriate legal, regulatory and internal policies as approved by the Board, and are not contrary to policies, bylaws, and relevant government legislation and regulation.
- Prepares an annual performance management plan for approval by the Board.
- Analyzes, prepares reports, presents information and recommendations, and ensures timely completion of all activities.
- Implements the decisions of the Board in an efficient and effective manner,
- Ensures the day-to-day operations of Wawatay Communications Society are effectively and efficiently coordinated, implemented, and conducted within the policy and procedure framework approved by the Board.
- Implements stringent project management processes to ensure the timely, cost effective and profitable development and completion of projects.
- Determines limitations of authority for employees of Wawatay Communications Society covering expenditures, contracts personnel actions, etc.; and
- Establishes policies and procedures for Board approval in relation to consultants and contractors being retained by Wawatay Communications Society and exercises appropriate controls to ensure their use is managed cost effectively.

Staff and Contractor Management and Leadership

- Builds and maintains a high-performance culture through effective performance management, communication and coaching of staff,
- Recruits appropriately skilled staff to all positions and establish appropriate remuneration levels and performance-based conditions for each employee.
- Establishes performance management plans with employee and undertakes performance reviews, recommends salary and benefit changes, promotions and dismissals as appropriate within the authority of the position; and
- Recruits and appoints with the approval of the Board, where necessary.

Financial Management

- Prepares and presents an annual budget to the Board for approval complete with all supporting background information and documentation; and
- Establishes financial controls in relation to undertaking and monitoring the activities of Wawatay Communications Society against the approved budget and provides monthly (or more frequently, as necessary) reports to the Board on the performance of Wawatay Communications Society against the approved budget.

Job Knowledge:

The work requires the following knowledge, skill and/or abilities:

- Significant and proven leadership skills developed through at least five (5) years in a senior management role and experience related to media, communications and business.
- Substantial knowledge of business operations, asset management, marketing, finance, and business processes related to economic and business development activities.
- Proven ability to build effective relationships with external stakeholders and collaboration, inspire and motivate high performance and effectively resolve conflict.
- Knowledge and experience with the First Nations of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory.
- Ability to speak and understand one of the languages of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities;
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Post Secondary MBA in Business Management, Commerce or Finance.
- 5 – 10 years of experience in Business Development and Senior Management.
- The ability to communicate in English and Ojibway, Cree or Oji-Cree is an asset.
- Ability to work with both Macintosh and Windows computer platforms.
- A valid Ontario driver's license and cell phone.
- A combination of education and/or experience will be considered.

The Position will be Posted until Filled Start Date: ASAP

Applicants can send their resume, cover letter and contact information for references (in confidence) to:

Board Chair Nick Day nickday@sandylakefn.com

Board Vice Chair Vivian Waswa vivianw@wunnumin.ca

Note: Only applicants considered for an Interview will be contacted.

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