

Community



submitted photo

Jessica Mamakeesick (Robinson), owner at Mamakeesick Roots, was recognized with the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award.



submitted photo

Janet Fletcher, owner at Coffee and Catering Services, was recognized with the Small Business of the Year award.

NADF awards winners 2025

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Keewaywin's Jessica Mamakeesick (Robinson) and Moose Cree's Janet Fletcher were among the seven award recipients who were recognized at the 33rd Annual NADF Awards on Oct. 23 at Delta Hotels Thunder Bay.

"I'm very honoured to be a part of this and I just feel very grateful," says Mamakeesick, owner at Mamakeesick Roots, who was recognized with the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award. "I can't believe I've made it this far in such a short period of time — I just started this whole art journey four years ago."

Mamakeesick says one of her big achievements is when Ontario University Athletics asked her to design all of their

sports awards.

"So their MVP players received painted basketballs, volleyballs, hockey sticks," Mamakeesick says. "The MVP for two sports received a painted shoe, one of them was Taylor Elgersma who got signed on to the Green Bay Packers."

Mamakeesick says she was also asked to design volleyballs for the University of Windsor, which is hosting the 2026 national men's volleyball championship.

"I'm also doing some work with the Thunder Bay Airport, redesigning their front check-in counters," Mamakeesick says. "So the opportunities I've had through this are just really crazy to think about."

Mamakeesick says she always has some originals for sale in her shop at Goods and Co. in

Thunder Bay.

"They go pretty quickly so I try to keep up with those," Mamakeesick says. "I sell a lot of framed prints, planter pots are one of the biggest sellers. I carry jewelry now, I have hats, I'll have new hoodies coming out soon."

Fletcher, owner at Coffee and Catering Services, who was recognized with the Small Business of the Year award, says she is very appreciative of being recognized with the award.

"I'm happy to be here with my mom and thankful for the support that I have," Fletcher says. "I'm thankful for my moral support, the community support — everything's being going great and life is good."

Fletcher says her home base is in Smooth Rock Falls but she will travel anywhere in the

north to provide her catering services.

"Cooking was always a passion for me and one thing led to another," Fletcher says. "So far where I've worked is Hearst to North Bay, all the way up to Moose Factory/Moosonee. I started with one organization and they referred me to another organization that was looking for a caterer, and it went on from there."

Fletcher says she caters according to event she is doing.

"I don't have a certain menu I follow, I will change it to whoever I serve because once I've been doing it for a while I know what people want to eat," Fletcher says. "My most recent one was bannock, everybody loves the bannock, they like it all different ways, they like it when I put the sweets out with

it, sometimes it's dessert, sometimes it's the main meal."

The other award recipients were: Mississauga's Ryan Besiallon and Diane Pearson, partners at Clean Cut Contracting, with the Partnership of the Year award; Fort William's Craig Hyatt, owner at Rainy Lake Electrical, with the Start Up Business of the Year award; Oneida of the Thames' Jacob Dockstator, executive director at the Sioux Lookout Friendship Accord, with the Excellence in Leadership award; and Fort William's Kateri Banning, owner at MarKat Construction and Electrical Services, with the Business Excellence award.

"Indigenous entrepreneurs are shaping the economic future of our region with determination, creativity and purpose," says Brian Davey, CEO at

NADF. "Their success strengthens communities, inspires youth and reflects a long-standing spirit of leadership and vision. We are honoured to celebrate these leaders and the incredible impact they are making across northern Ontario."

Carlos Castillo, VP Northern Division at Perimeter Aviation, says Bearskin Airlines, a Division of Perimeter Aviation, has been proud to stand alongside NADF since the very first NADF Awards.

"For 33 years, these celebrations have honoured the dedication and innovation of Indigenous entrepreneurs across northern Ontario," Castillo says. "We're deeply proud to continue supporting this tradition and to celebrate the leaders who are building stronger, more connected northern communities."

Thank You, Airlines!

Your fast, courteous delivery of Wawatay News to our northern communities is appreciated.



Community

Presbyterian Church issues Apology

Allyson Carr
Special to Wawatay News

Representatives of The Presbyterian Church in Canada were invited to a gathering of residential school Survivors, hosted in Thunder Bay by Grand Council Treaty Three, on October 15/16 to present the church's recent apology for its complicity in colonization and for operating residential schools. Following that gathering, a gathering attendee from Treaty Nine invited the church to submit an article to Wawatay News about what brought the church to write the Apology. We write this in response to offer what led the church to apologize.

We recognize that the apology can be very disturbing for Survivors, and are not printing it here, so that people can choose to see it only if they wish. A link where it can be read is included at the end of the article. People can also request that a paper copy be mailed to them if they would like; to do so, please contact us at justice@presbyterian.ca

The special committee of Presbyterians who wrote the apology for the church's complicity in colonization and residential schools, adopted in 2024 at a national church gathering, began by listening and learning about the ongoing intergenerational impacts of colonization and residential schools. The committee heard and acknowledged that neither the words "apology" nor "sorry" appeared in the 1994 Confession that The Presbyterian Church in Canada had previously made regarding colonization and residential schools, and so an apology was still needed. It heard and acknowledged that the church was slow, for many years, to embody even the sorrow it had confessed in 1994, and that change had been slow too. This slowness is one of the things the 2024 apology names and apologizes for, and that the church is working to change.

The church's initial 1994 Confession set it on a path of reconciliation, but in learning to walk that path, the church began to understand more deeply the trauma and harm it caused. At the outset, the special committee writing the apology acknowledged that an apology must be set in the context of accountability. Members

of the committee were also explicit that it is inappropriate to ask for forgiveness, and that this apology must be offered without any expectation of response in return. It is trying to put the collective church's heavy heart, members' deeper understanding of the wrong we did, and members' repentance into words. The apology ends with five commitments because members also understood that words mean nothing without action.

Though the apology is new—it was adopted by the church's national General Assembly in 2024—it is only the most recent step as we work to redress the harm we caused. The church formally repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery (in 2019), and now affirms that doctrine and any like it are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust. Likewise, the church now affirms the importance of treaties and the need to uphold treaty rights. Lastly, as action to help repair the harm we caused, it has established a fund to support Indigenous-led initiatives for truth, healing and reconciliation, including supporting gatherings for Survivors of Presbyterian schools, as well as memorials and other projects identified by Survivors. The fund has already supported several initiatives and remains available. All work it supports is done only at the invitation of and in consultation with those the church has harmed.

We know words are inadequate, but we are deeply, deeply sorry. We are trying to listen, learn, and redress the harm we have done through actions such as advocacy, supporting Indigenous language revitalization, and offering funds for healing initiatives or gatherings.

If you wish to read the Apology, it can be found at <https://presbyterian.ca/justice/apology-colonization-schools/>. If you would like a copy of the Apology mailed to you, or to speak with someone from the church, please contact us at justice@presbyterian.ca

Apology by the Presbyterian Church

Mike Morris
Special to Wawatay News

At the October 15/16 Treaty 3 Residential Schools Survivors Gathering, the Presbyterian Church presented their Apology to the Gathering. One Survivor said right away she would not accept the Apology. The next day, one Survivor said he would accept the Apology.

The Apology was read by a Minister/Moderator and there was no feedback – no questions as per the direction of the Chair of the meeting.

This is the first time I was made aware of this 2024 Apology. Subsequently, Allyson Carr, Representative of the Church informed me there was also a 1994 Confession.

I have read and re-read the Apology and leaning towards accepting it if 2 items were mentioned.

One is the Doctrine of Discovery which is the source of all the evils that have befallen Indigenous Peoples all over the world.

The other is our James Bay Treaty aka Treaty 9 – Canada and the Presbyterian Church must acknowledge the Treaty Relationship that exists between our 2 Peoples. Canada breached Treaty 9 when they took the Children away from our People to their residential schools. The Presbyterian Church was complicit in this breach by Canada.

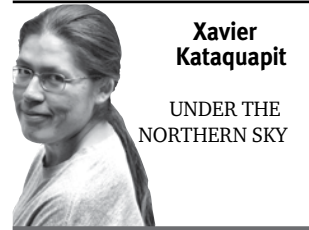
I never watched that spectacle when Prime Minister Stephen Harper read Canada's 2008 Apology.

When I compare Canada's Apology to the Presbyterian Church's Apology – the PC Apology is more acceptable as they articulate what they are apologizing for. This approach is more acceptable to Residential School Survivors.

It would be ideal for the Presbyterian Church to invite ALL Residential School Survivors from the Treaty 9 Territory who attended their Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School to Thunder Bay. At that Gathering, the Presbyterian Church can present their Apology directly to the Residential School Survivors and they would determine how we move forward together.

Email: mikeccmorris13@gmail.com
Cell: 807-633-1177
niin Mike Morris
Signatory to Treaty 9

Mushkegowuk Council Declares Emergency To Deal With Addictions



Xavier Kataquapit
UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

An epidemic of addictions has led Mushkegowuk Council in north eastern Ontario to declare a state of emergency. A crisis has occurred including issues of homelessness, limited access to shelters, the lack of mental wellness and too few addictions supports in the council's territory.

Things have gotten to the point where it is making our communities unsafe and resulting in so many tragic endings for my people. I see more of our people with addictions education and experience being involved in using their real life experience in recovery to help those with addictions. It is essential to have our people in place, who know the culture and traditions, speak the language and have the experience of being an alcoholic or drug addict now in recovery.

Mushkegowuk Council Grand Chief Leo Friday and his council recently issued a letter declaring the state of emergency and asking for support to Prime Minister Mark Carney and Premier of Ontario Doug Ford. The council is asking for the establishment of a task force to deal with this crisis. The council has also requested in a resolu-

tion for immediate funding for expansion of the emergency shelter (Living Space) and overflow capacity to ensure the safety and dignity of all community members during the winter months and beyond; support for new and existing landbased healing and treatment centres grounded in Mushkegowuk culture, language, and traditions; immediate funding for the establishment and operation of local First Nation community shelters, men's shelters, safe beds, and transitional homes to meet urgent needs in each community; sustainable funding for the Mushkegowuk Firekeeper program, ensuring the continuation of outreach, prevention, and harmreduction supports that meet members where they are and help bridge them to safety and care; establishment of 24/7 crisis response services ensuring coordinated, culturally grounded, and traumainformed care for Mushkegowuk members in urban areas within the territory; investment in longterm housing infrastructure and communityled solutions that address the needs of Mushkegowuk members both on and offreserve, creating safe and stable environments that promote healing, belonging, and family reconnection; hosting of a regional conference to hear directly from community members experiencing housing shortages, addictions, and mental health inequities, ensuring their lived experiences guide the direction of programming, policy, and healing pathways;

development of a comprehensive regional strategy to address the interconnected housing, mental health, and opioid crisis through a landbased and culturally grounded approach guided by the teachings of the Mushkegowuk people.

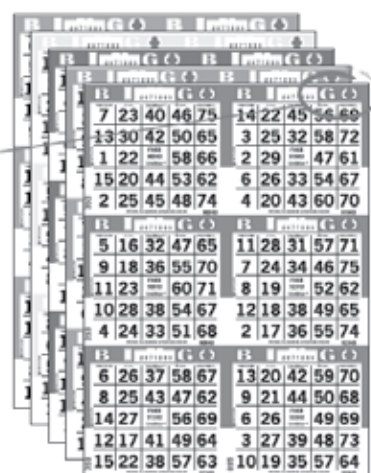
At a time when the federal and provincial governments are pushing ahead with all kinds of emergency bills dedicated to developing and funding billions in projects it is imperative they deal with this epidemic emergency and crisis involving addictions and health issues in our First Nations. I have lost family and friends to drugs and alcohol over the years and things are getting worse with new drugs like fentanyl, opioids and the easy access to these substances. It should be noted that part of the blame for this epidemic is with the huge pharmaceutical companies involved in producing and promoting opioids which resulted in the death of many thousands of people over the years. There have been successful law suits that resulted in billions of dollars in payouts from these companies but in fact nobody has ever gone to jail. However our prison system is bulging with First Nation and other minorities who ended up incarcerated due to their use of drugs. First Nations people have been affected by the historical abuses of colonization, residential schools system and systemic racism. It is time to make things right.

www.underthenorthernsky.com

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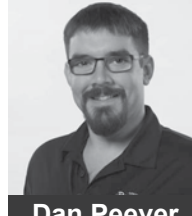


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Culture

Dilico hosts 7th annual Family Care Powwow



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

A jingle dress dancer shares her style at Dilico Anishinabek Family Care's 7th Annual Pow Wow on Nov. 14 at the Fort William First Nation Community Centre.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Two dancers share their styles.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

A men's traditional dancer and a jingle dress dancer share their styles.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

A group of jingle dress dancers share their styles.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

The Thunder Mountain drum group shares a song.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

A young woodland dancer shares his style.

Official Court Notice

If you smoked regularly before Nov. 20, 1998 and were diagnosed with a tobacco-related disease, you may qualify for \$14,400-\$100,000 from a landmark settlement.

As part of a landmark settlement with Canadian tobacco companies, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice (Commercial List) has approved two compensation plans to provide payments to eligible smokers and ex-smokers diagnosed with certain tobacco-related diseases:

- The Pan-Canadian Claimants' Compensation Plan (PCC); and
- The Quebec Class Action Administration Plan (QCAP)

For those who have died that qualify, payments may be available for their estates.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBLE DISEASES AND DOLLAR AMOUNTS?

This table shows the diseases covered by the plans and the maximum payment amounts:

Disease	You started smoking before January 1, 1976	You started smoking on or after January 1, 1976
Primary Lung Cancer or Primary Throat Cancer	\$60,000 PCC \$100,000 QCAP	\$48,000 PCC \$80,000 QCAP
Emphysema or COPD (GOLD Grade III or IV)	\$18,000 PCC \$30,000 QCAP	\$14,400 PCC \$24,000 QCAP

Important: Payments may be reduced depending on the number of eligible claims in each plan. A person will only be entitled to one payment, under one plan, and for one disease.

WHAT ARE THE CLAIM DEADLINES?

The Claims Submission Periods commenced on September 3, 2025 and the plans have different claim deadlines:

- PCC claim deadline is **September 3, 2027**
- QCAP claim deadline is **August 31, 2026**

Important: QCAP deadline is one year earlier than PCC deadline.

HOW MANY CIGARETTES AND WHICH BRANDS?

Both plans require the smoker or ex-smoker to have smoked at least 87,600 cigarettes (for example, 20 cigarettes a day for 12 years) between January 1, 1950 and November 20, 1998. The cigarettes must be from brands sold by the tobacco

companies. The website has a list of the eligible brands, which include most legal cigarettes sold in Canada.

WHAT ARE OTHER PCC REQUIREMENTS?

In addition to the disease and smoking requirements, the smoker or ex-smoker under **PCC** must:

- reside in Canada (or if deceased, must have resided in Canada at the time of death);
- have been diagnosed **between March 8, 2015 and March 8, 2019**, inclusive of those dates;
- have resided in Canada at the time of diagnosis; and
- have been alive on March 8, 2019.

WHAT ARE OTHER QCAP REQUIREMENTS?

In addition to the disease and smoking requirements, the smoker or ex-smoker under **QCAP** must:

- reside in Quebec (or if deceased, must have resided in Quebec at the time of death);
- have been diagnosed **before March 12, 2012**;
- have resided in Quebec at the time of diagnosis; and
- have been alive on November 20, 1998.

HOW CAN I GET FREE HELP?

Agents are available **free of charge** to assist claimants under these plans. Agents will help you (a) complete your claim form; (b) commission your signature on the claim form; and (c) provide guidance on how to obtain the necessary information and documents for your claim.

PCC Agent 1-888-482-5852
is Epiq PCCAgent@TobaccoClaimsCanada.ca
QCAP Agent 1-888-880-1844
is Proactio tabac@proactio.ca

If you do not submit a claim by the applicable deadline, you cannot be eligible to get a payment.

If you are not sure whether you qualify, the website has a simple questionnaire to help you. The plans have been designed so that you **do not need a lawyer** to prepare and submit your claim. If you have already registered, you will be notified by an Agent about how to complete your claim.

Full information is available at the official website www.TobaccoClaimsCanada.ca and via the QR Code.

www.TobaccoClaimsCanada.ca



Education

NAN Chiefs honour the accreditation of Oshki Institute

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

An honouring ceremony for Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute was featured on the second day of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Chief's Fall Assembly, held Nov. 4-5 at the Superior Inn in Thunder Bay.

"I have the very distinct honour of sharing with you some very exciting news about a significant milestone recently achieved by Oshki-Wenjack to become an accredited Indigenous post-secondary institution," says Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, noting the NAN chiefs passed a resolution in 1996 calling for the establishment of a post-secondary educational institute, which became Oshki-Wenjack. "Their vision included being innovative and unique in addressing the post-secondary and training requirements of their (citizens) in the NAN territory. Their own post-secondary institute would allow students to follow their own path and achieve their goals, thereby ensuring greater student success."

Achneepineskum says Oshki-Wenjack began operating its first program, First Nation Business Administration, in 2000.

"In its first year, Oshki had just three graduates; since then Oshki-Wenjack's graduates have grown up to 114 students in 2025 for a sum approaching 900," Achneepineskum says. "It's always such a great honour

when the NAN executive get to participate in these graduations. The most recent was (when) we had 20 graduate from the Bachelor of Social Work and that took place just two Fridays ago."

Lorrie Deschamps, president at Oshki-Wenjack, says she is thankful for the vision of the past leadership who foresaw the need for NAN to establish its own educational institute.

"I would also like to make an honourable mention for our past leadership — Rosie Mosquito," Deschamps says. "Rosie was very instrumental in our getting recognized as the third pillar for post-secondary education, and this was a step towards completing our accreditation."

Deschamps says she is honoured to lead Oshki-Wenjack during this era of accreditation and to continue with the vision that the NAN leaders foresaw.

"It has been a journey of 25 years of being in service to our communities by establishing access and offering pathways to quality post-secondary education and training," Deschamps says. "How did we get to be here today and what does accreditation mean to Oshki-Wenjack and to Nishnawbe Aski Nation, by engaging directly with our communities and leadership, we've supported your needs in delivering programming that is needed to build capacity and bring brighter futures for our people and contributing to the economic growth of Nishnawbe Aski Nation."



Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum and Lorrie Deschamps, president at Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute, shared some remarks during the honouring ceremony for Oshki-Wenjack at the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Chief's Fall Assembly, held Nov. 4-5 at the Superior Inn in Thunder Bay.

Deschamps says Oshki-Wenjack recently celebrated the successes of 114 graduates this past June.

"We have now seen 879 successful graduates armed with the knowledge and skills that enable them to provide for their families and contribute meaningfully to our communities, with the majority being from our NAN First Nations," Deschamps says. "We have gone from holding our humble but prideful graduation ceremonies in a classroom at Oshki-Wenjack to having the

grand stage at our auditorium in Thunder Bay for our graduates to cross and receive their hard-earned certificates, diplomas and degrees."

Deschamps says Oshki-Wenjack's students deserve the best in quality post-secondary education and training.

"To date we have worked with partner colleges and universities, but now being accredited means we may deliver our own programming infused with our collective traditional knowledge and perspectives

and reflected with the lens of our people and nations within NAN," Deschamps says. "With accreditation, we will continue to reach our goals but now with more meaning and in fully keeping with the original vision for Oshki-Wenjack at the heart of all that we will accomplish."

Deschamps says Oshki-Wenjack has begun the process of designing curriculum according to First Nations customs, beliefs, traditions and languages.

"Once we have fully developed programs in place that are

certified with the Indigenous Advanced Education Skills Council, we can then proudly offer to our graduates the honour of conferring their certificates, diplomas and degrees with the Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute name inscribed within and not that of our partner institutions," Deschamps says. "This is education jurisdiction in action and I'm proud to share in this moment with everyone here in attendance today."



Can't move away for school?

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute has a flexible learning model just for you. Spend two weeks on campus, twice per semester for hands-on learning and cultural experiences, then continue your studies in the evening, online from home with support every step of the way.

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Education

Oshki graduates first ever Bachelor of Social Work class

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute celebrated the first graduating class of its Bachelor of Social Work program on Oct. 24 at the Best Western Plus NorWester Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay. Held in partnership with Algoma University, the graduation ceremony honoured the accomplishments of the Bachelor of Social Work students, who began their studies in May 2023.

“As Bachelor of Social Work graduates, you now carry with you the knowledge, skills and heart to make meaningful change,” says Lorrie Deschamps, president at Oshki-Wenjack. “You’ve learned alongside your classmates, rooted in community and culture, and now you return to your community, ready to lead with compassion and purpose. You have the power to see the gaps, create new paths and build programs that strengthen your nations and uplift the next generation.”

Oshki-Wenjack states that the Bachelor of Social Work program provides a culturally grounded, accessible education pathway designed to prepare Indigenous learners to serve and strengthen their communities through social work practice.

“The Bachelor of Social Work program, delivered collaboratively through Algoma Univer-

sity’s School of Social Work and Oshki-Wenjack, was created to remove barriers for learners by offering innovative, intensive and hybrid delivery models,” says Sheila Embleton, interim president and vice-chancellor at Algoma University. “It is rooted in Algoma University’s Special Mission, serving the needs of northern Ontario, uplifting Anishinabe, Cree, Inuit and Métis students, and advancing reconciliation through education.”

Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa congratulated the graduates, noting that Oshki-Wenjack’s Bachelor of Social Work program is one of the steps towards the betterment of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) people.

“This program is part of the betterment of our nations in the coming generations,” Mamakwa says during the graduation ceremony. “I’m a believer of change, that we can go back to our ways of thinking, our ways of life, going back to the language, and I say this to the class, do not forget where you come from, do not forget who you are, do not forget your language, do not forget the people that we represent and that we work for.”

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum says it is “quite a challenge” for First Nations people to make education a priority due to the residential schools.

“For many of us, our parents, our siblings were abducted into



Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute’s Bachelor of Social Work class valedictorian delivers her valedictorian address during the Bachelor of Social Work graduation ceremony on Oct. 24 at the Best Western Plus NorWester Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

the Indian residential school institutions where they faced trauma, abuse, and it became embedded into their lives that education was not a good place for us to go, that these institutions were not a safe place for us to go,” Achneepineskum

says during the graduation ceremony. “So here we are today, which is a testament of the great progress that we have made, to ensure and instil that value of education and I commend the people that make these choices to obtain post-secondary edu-

cation because for many of our First Nation citizens, obtaining a high school education is still a challenge because sometimes we have to leave our home at the age of 13 in order for us to go to an urban centre (to attend high school).”

Achneepineskum says one of the visions for Oshki-Wenjack was to provide an alternate education system where students can still work and take care of their families in their home communities while obtaining their post-secondary education.

“I’m very grateful for our partners who have also established that relationship and opportunity for us to be able to do that,” Achneepineskum says. “It’s such a wonderful thing to see that others outside of NAN choose Oshki-Wenjack as well.”

Class valedictorian Shannon Courchene, a Bigtigitong Nishnaabeg citizen, says she feels so proud and joyful for her and her classmates during her valedictorian address.

“Before I gush about my phenomenal class, I want to take this moment to praise Oshki-Wenjack and Algoma University for delivering such an important program and ensuring that our time together was meaningful, enriching and as smooth as possible,” Courchene says. “It is so inspiring how much Oshki-Wenjack believes in their people, their communities and their friends. It is crucial for Oshki to provide a space that not only understands what it means for an Indigenous person to reach educational goals but also the emphasis of the importance of offering holistic supports throughout these journeys.”

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ETHICAL ACCOUNTABLE EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-CENTRED

LEGAL NOTICE

Are You an Indigenous Person Who Was Assaulted at Any Time While Being Held in Custody or Detention by the RCMP Anywhere in Canada Except for the Northwest Territories, Nunavut or Yukon (the “Territories”)

**A class action may affect your rights.
Please read this notice carefully.**

The Federal Court has certified a class action lawsuit against the Attorney General of Canada on behalf of Aboriginal Persons (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis) who allege they were assaulted at any time while being held in custody or detained by RCMP outside of the Territories and were alive as of July 20, 2018 (the “Class” or “Class Members”). The claim alleges systemic negligence and breaches of sections 7 and 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

If you are a Class Member, you can choose to stay in or leave the Class.

Option 1 – Stay in the class action: To stay in the class action, you do not have to do anything. All Class Members are automatically included in the proceeding and bound by the result unless you opt out. If money or benefits are obtained, you will be told about how to make a claim. You will be legally bound by all orders and judgments in the class action, whether favourable or not, and you will not be able to sue Canada separately about the legal claims in this case.

Option 2 – Get out of the class action: If you want to leave the class action, you must submit an opt out form by **March 25, 2026**. Opt out forms are available on class counsel’s websites listed below. You can also opt out by emailing or sending a letter by mail to Cooper Regel LLP at the address below and telling them that you want to be removed from this class action. Please include your name, address, telephone number, and/or email address and, if sent by regular mail, have it postmarked by **March 25, 2026**. **If you remove yourself, you cannot get money or benefits from this lawsuit if any are awarded.**

The Court has appointed Murphy Battista LLP and Cooper Regel LLP (“Class Counsel”) to represent the Class. You don’t have to pay legal fees to participate. If the case succeeds, whether by trial or settlement, counsel will seek to be paid legal fees plus disbursements and applicable taxes. The Federal Court must approve Class Counsel’s fees and/or any settlement of the class proceeding.

This lawsuit is brought on behalf of the Class by the representative plaintiffs, Shirley Meguinis-Martin and Edie Joseph, who have addresses in this action c/o Murphy Battista LLP, 2020 – 650 W Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 4N7.

For more information about your rights and/or to opt out please contact Cooper Regel LLP:

Cooper Regel LLP

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Education



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

TOP: Rainy River’s Molly Smith created a ribbon shirt with green ribbon for her nephew during Lakehead University’s ribbon shirt workshop, which was taught by Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg’s Crystal Pirie and Marlene Sabourin on Nov. 15 at the Gakina Nindinawemaaganag lounge.

ABOVE: Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg’s Crystal Pirie and Marlene Sabourin taught a group of Lakehead University students how to make ribbon shirts.

Lakehead students learn to craft ribbon shirts

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

A group of Lakehead University students recently enjoyed learning how to make ribbon shirts during a Lakehead University Indigenous Student Services Centre workshop on Nov. 15 at the Gakina Nindinawemaaganag lounge.

“This is the first (ribbon shirt) I completed — I started one before and I didn’t get around to finishing it because I don’t have my own sewing machine,” says Jared Visitor, a first-year education student and Sachigo Lake citizen, noting that patience was the key to making the ribbon shirt. “You make mistakes and you learn, like when I was going down the front strip I had two lines of stitching going down but I didn’t like the way it looked so I took one out and reinforced the (other line of stitching), so you don’t see the stitching (when the shirt is buttoned up), you just see the ribbon.”

Miriam Achneepineskum, an Indigenous Nursing Entry program student and Marten Falls citizen, says she likes dream-catcher designs so she incorporated that into the ribbon shirt she made, which she plans to give to her father as a gift.

“I wanted to learn how to make a ribbon shirt because I haven’t made ribbon shirts before, only ribbon skirts,” Achneepineskum says. “I like the

environment here — I came here last week to the ribbon skirt workshop as well, it was fun. I enjoyed it, I like crafting.”

Molly Smith, an Indigenous Nursing Entry program student and Rainy River citizen, says she enjoys sewing.

“I just started this year, I feel like it connects me back to my culture and I’ve been really enjoying making ribbon skirts and shirts, so when I saw they were having this I had to come,” Smith says, noting that she was making the ribbon shirt for her nephew. “He wanted green so I got the green on the collar and on the sleeve. I really enjoyed coming here, they’re really nice and I feel welcome.”

The ribbon shirt and ribbon skirt workshops were delivered by Crystal Pirie and Marlene Sabourin, two Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg citizens who have been making regalia for about eight years, with the ribbon skirt workshop held on Nov. 8 at the Gakina Nindinawemaaganag lounge.

“It’s about design, so you’ll see up on the wall up there a number of shirts that I created at home just to kind of give some inspiration to the students — it’s really about picking out your ribbons,” Sabourin says. “It could take you a good hour just to design it, sewing is a lot easier.”

Sabourin says they had a good response from the students, noting that she was

pleased about helping to students to bring their creations to light.

“Having the ability to teach and be able to make these Indigenous regalia, ribbon shirts, ribbon skirts, kind of ties me back to my Indigenous roots,” Sabourin says. “So this for me is kind of my tie back to my culture.”

Pirie says there was more of a learning curve for the students in the ribbon shirt workshop.

“It’s nice to see the men working hard for their creations and being patient with the machine to be able to realize what they’re trying to design,” Pirie says. “Once you pull your design and your colour scheme together, to me that’s the most challenging part, and then once you start sewing, that’s the easy part.”

Yolanda Twance, coordinator of the Indigenous Student Services Centre at Lakehead University, says it was nice to see some male students at the workshop.

“It’s not often that we get guys out sewing, so it’s good to see that,” Twance says. “They’re here making ribbon shirts, so they’re going to look really nice. Students were provided the material they needed to complete a ribbon shirt, including the shirts and the ribbons, and then they designed the way they wanted to have their shirt turn out with colours and things like that.”

Arts & Entertainment



submitted photos

Attawapiskat musician Adrian Sutherland recently completed a book, *The Work of Our Hands: A Cree Meditation on the Real World*, which is set to be released by Penguin Random House Canada on Dec. 30.

Adrian Sutherland launches new book in December

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Attawapiskat's Adrian Sutherland is set to release his debut book *The Work of Our Hands: A Cree Meditation on the Real World* through Penguin Random House Canada on Dec. 30. He has previously earned JUNO nominations for his music in 2022 and 2025, and he won Best Americana Album at the 2025 World Entertainment Awards for his sophomore album, *Precious Diamonds*.

"The book idea is something I've thought about for probably the last decade or so and there was an opportunity back in 2019," Sutherland says, noting he had a discussion with a musician he had been doing some shows with at that time. "He was talking about life here in the north where I'm from in Attawapiskat, and that sort of sparked the interest. From there a colleague of mine connected one of these publishing companies with my manager and they kind of pitched an idea to the publishing company and that's the kind of where it all started back in 2020."

Sutherland says he thought it would be interesting to share the perspective of somebody who grew up and lived in Attawapiskat their entire life. He paints a portrait of a world that few have known by exploring his world through the concrete experience of his hands – as they hold a guitar, a hammer, a rifle, a canister used to carry water and materials to construct the traditional Cree sweat lodge.

"Growing up in a remote (community) or on the land certainly gives you a different sort of outlook on life and I got to explore some of those views and I'm really glad I was able to do that," Sutherland says. "The main theme of the book is really about learning — there's something about learning and the doing when you work with your hands, or whether it's learning from the land and how those things teach us different things in life."

Sutherland's book was selected by Indigo as one of their Most Anticipated Canadian Books for 2026.

"Writing the manuscript allowed me to reflect on things in a way that I'd never done before," Sutherland says. "While it was a challenging process, and sometimes emotional, too, I felt supported by the team at Penguin who helped shape the story. I'm excited for the book's release and looking forward to finally seeing it come to life."

Nick Garrison, publishing director at Penguin Canada, is also thrilled with how the book turned out.

"Adrian Sutherland is what you hear in his music – some rough edges, but so hauntingly honest it stays with you," Garrison says. "His book is like that too. It is like an unforgettable song you can't get out of your head once you've heard it."

Sutherland says he is also putting out his sixth studio album, which is inspired by his book.

"I'm glad I was able to make an album to accompany that book because it just made sense

for me to do that, make music out of some of the things that I was talking about in the book," Sutherland says.

Sutherland says the writing process was a huge learning experience for him.

"This was the first book I'd written so I had to really kind of catch my groove and learn how to shape and make the story flow, so that was probably the biggest challenge for me," Sutherland says. "I tried to write a little bit every day, sometimes I was doing 500 words a day, sometimes I was doing 1,000 or more. That's kind of how I approached it, I just tried to chip away at it and I delivered quite a bit of stuff."

Sutherland says he used both typing while travelling and the speech-to-text feature on his computer at home to write the book.

"When I was home in my studio I just mostly spoke and told stories and then went back and kind of edited everything at the end of the writing session," Sutherland says. "I would get into it here in the studio and I would start getting animated and I would just tell these stories like I'm telling it to a bunch of people or I'm talking to my kids or my friends or whoever. I used to get really excited about storytelling, especially being out on the land with my grandparents or my uncles or whoever — there was always somebody telling stories."

Sutherland says an audio book version of his book will also be available.



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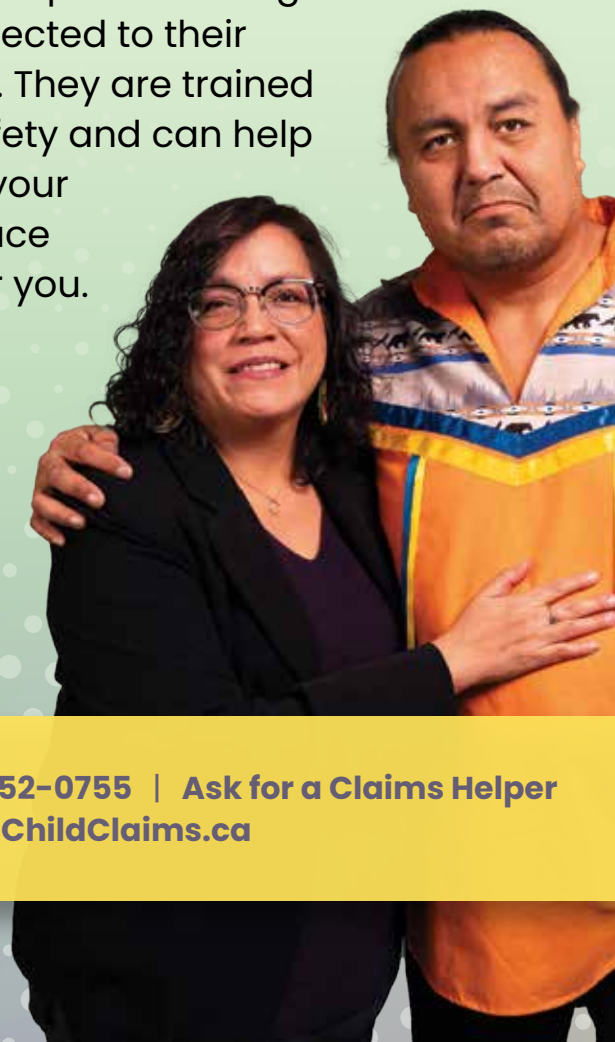
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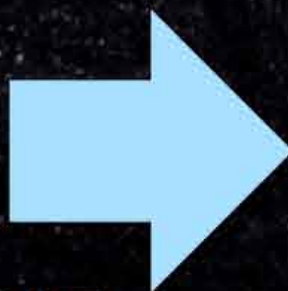
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Politics



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Aroland Chief Sonny Gagnon speaks about the Bill 5 challenge resolution on the second day of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Chief's Fall Assembly, held Nov. 4-5 at the Superior Inn in Thunder Bay.

Chiefs set to challenge Bill 5

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Aroland Chief Sonny Gagnon delivered a presentation on the Bill 5 challenge resolution at the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Chief's Fall Assembly, held Nov. 4-5 at the Superior Inn in Thunder Bay.

"These bills affect all of us, all First Nations, and saying that, I can't ... see why there's only nine First Nations challenging this as this will affect pretty well all of us," Gagnon says during his presentation. "I can only speak on behalf of Aroland First Nation and express my thoughts on why it is that we're challenging this bill that is being imposed on us without any consultation, without any input, and see if we can look at how can we do this collectively. We're 49 strong and I think if we're going to challenge a bill that's going to affect us now and into the future, we should all be rolling up our sleeves and saying, let's do this collectively."

Gagnon says the resolution passed on the afternoon of Nov. 5.

"I asked for the support for the 49 communities to challenge that," Gagnon says, noting there is power in numbers. "There's only nine First Nations currently, but we're going to be hopefully joined by some other First Nations that heard my plea for them to come on board."

Gagnon says his main issue is that nobody talked with him about what they want to do on his community's land.

"They have to come and talk to us if they want to pass something or if they want to do something in my backyard," Gagnon says.

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler says in an interview at the conclusion of the assembly that he witnessed the public viewing of Treaty #9 and the adhesion that was made in 1929-1930 on Nov. 3 in Toronto.

"It was just a good reminder for me about Nishnawbe Aski Nation's mandate to uphold and defend the treaty," Fiddler says. "It was important for me to see that in person because I knew coming back from Toronto that that would be the focus of our discussion, which it was. Both yesterday and today we talked about the constitutional and the treaty obligations that both

Canada and Ontario have to meaningfully engage with all our communities when it comes to resource development in our territories."

Fiddler says another point he made is that while the NAN communities have respected and adhered to the terms of the treaty, Ontario and Canada have not.

"We are issuing a statement today to remind them of their obligations because we know that they continue to fail at fulfilling their obligations," Fiddler says. "We saw that yesterday for example with the federal budget that was announced, that there's going to be cuts right across the board and meanwhile we have been calling for increased investments in all these different sectors, including infrastructure, housing, clean water, to address the gaps that have been there for a long time. If Canada is proposing cuts, then we know those gaps will continue to widen and that's unacceptable."

NAN issued the statement at the conclusion of the assembly, stating that the chiefs had gathered during Treaties Recognition Week and reaffirmed their shared commitment to the protection of treaty and inherent rights.

"Treaties Recognition Week should be a time to honour the sacred agreements that built this country," Fiddler says in the statement. "Instead, we are watching those commitments weaken. In Parliament, in budgets, and on the lands our ancestors protected for all future generations."

Fiddler also spoke in the statement about how the federal and provincial government's are pushing ahead with resource and infrastructure projects while funding for Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and Crown-Indigenous Relations has been reduced.

"At the same time, both Canada and Ontario are pushing ahead with resource and infrastructure projects across our territory, citing 'nation-building' while failing to uphold the constitutional duty to consult," Fiddler says in the statement. "We have always said that we are not opposed to development, but that means truly together, not us left behind while others drive through our lands toward their own prosperity."

The statement adds that the chiefs want peaceful co-existence, mutual benefit and prosperity for all.

"Our members want to work, thrive and prosper," says Eabametoong Chief Solomon Atlookan in the statement. "We are not opposed to development, but that means truly together, not us left behind while others drive through our lands toward their own prosperity."

Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse says at the conclusion of the assembly that another key point was the importance of advocating for the supports to children, youth and families across NAN territory.

"Funds such as the Jordan's Principle and Choose Life have been in jeopardy this year, so we've been given a mandate to really pursue active discussions with all levels of government to ensure we come to a regional process for Jordan's Principle and also look at some of the outstanding priorities within Choose Life," Narcisse says. "Many of the programs and services that are funded by Choose Life have been in jeopardy for the past six-to-eight months, so we're raring to get back to the table with Indigenous Services Canada, especially in lieu of the budget coming down I think we need some answers from ISC in terms of how that is going to affect funding for Choose Life."

Narcisse says they are also very enthused that they working with individual First Nations with respect to the Ontario Final Agreement (Final Agreement on the Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program in Ontario), which commits ISC to provide \$8.5 billion over nine fiscal years from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2034.

"We're trying to get ready for the OFA (Ontario Final Agreement) to be approved standing at the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal," Narcisse says. "We feel this will happen in February, so hopefully the funds will get rolling by April 1 of next year. We have informed the chiefs that we are holding a chiefs forum on the OFA implementation on Jan. 13, 14, 15 in Thunder Bay, but even before that we'll be having virtual sessions as well."

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Community

Mikinakoos Fund to donate 1,200 winter coats

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Mikinakoos Children's Fund announced they were distributing about 1,248 new winter coats to children in need across northern Ontario through \$40,000 in donations and support on Nov. 13 in Thunder Bay.

"Snow is already on its way to northern Ontario," says Stephanie Paxton, executive director at Mikinakoos Children's Fund. "There are so many families in need of quality winter gear across the 33 First Nations we serve, and these coats make a huge difference in helping them prepare for a long, northern winter."

The Mikinakoos Children's Fund raised \$20,000 for winter coats this year through the support of generous donors, and the Knights of Columbus fully matched the \$20,000 through their Coats for Kids program, doubling the impact for children living in some of the most remote areas of the province.

"This is one of our favourite programs and it's really been driven by our board of directors, many of whom are from the northern communities and identified this need with the kids living in their home communities," Paxton says. "We're so grateful to the support of our donors and to the Knights of Columbus for being able to provide this level of support for our communities."

Paxton says the coats would be sent to Sachigo Lake, Cat Lake, Deer Lake, Poplar Hill, Keewaywin and Aroland during the third week of November.



A group of Mikinakoos Children's Fund and Knights of Columbus representatives show some of the about 1,248 new winter coats that are being shipped to some of the Nishnawbe Aski Nations.

"We have coats for kids at about four or five-years-old all the way up to 18-years-old, so we do cover quite a range of ages and we work with a lot of schools and band councils to distribute the coats," Paxton says.

Paxton says they ship the coats via land and air transport to the First Nation communities.

"We have a lot of great shipping partners but the costs are still very high to ship up there," Paxton says. "I believe last year we spent close to \$15,000 alone on shipping costs, so we are always grateful for any support that anybody is willing to provide. If anybody is interested in making a donation to help with the shipping costs, they can visit our website at: www.mikinakoos.com/"

Craig Murphy, grand knight of the Knights of Columbus Bishop Norman Gallagher Council 7332, says the Mikinakoos Children's Fund reached out to them a few years ago

when they realized the Knights of Columbus had good quality winter coats available for children at a "very good cost."

"The Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids program reflects our mission of charity and supporting the most vulnerable," Murphy says. "Since 2009, over 1 million coats have been provided to children in need across North America and overseas. We're proud to help Mikinakoos provide warm winter coats to children in need and to double their order through a matching donation."

Murphy says the coats are sourced through a Canadian supplier and are designed for the Canadian winter.

"For the Canadian Coats for Kids program we make sure we source coats that are more durable for the colder Canadian climates," Murphy says. "We're here to provide assistance wherever we can and we're just very happy to be able to leverage the buying power that the Knights of Columbus organization has

for the Coats for Kids program to be able to pass those savings directly on to organizations such as Mikinakoos."

Colleen Martin, chair of the board for Mikinakoos Children's Fund, says they are very grateful about receiving the matching donation for two years in a row from the Knights of Columbus.

"For me, it just fills my heart with joy because impacting the children in the north has been a goal of mine for many years," Martin says, noting the reaction she saw from a girl who had received one of the new coats. "She said, 'It never was anyone else's,' I said, 'No, it's just for you,' and she was like, 'Wow,' and she walked away — I thought how impactful is that for a child to be so overwhelmed by receiving a new coat."

Mikinakoos Children's Fund distributed about 1,400 coats through its Warm Clothing Program last year.

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Politics

NAN Chiefs call for the establishment of Men's Advocacy Council

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

A resolution calling for the establishment of the Men's Advocacy and Advisory Council for Healing (MAACH) was carried by consensus on the first day of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Chief's Fall Assembly. A video of the MAACH resolution, which was moved by Marten Falls proxy Darrin Spence and seconded by Wunnumin Lake Chief Archie Wabasse, is posted online at NAN's Youtube page at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LrSafJJtw0. The Chief's Fall Assembly was held on Nov. 4-5 at the Superior Inn in Thunder Bay.

"As part of my file, we do have the Men's Healing Initiative and it gives me great honour to request that we would like to establish a Men's Advocacy and Advisory Council for Healing," says Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse. "First Nations men across Nishnawbe Aski Nation continue to experience the lasting impacts of colonization, harmful policies and abuse, including the crimes of Ralph Rowe. A critical service gap exists in healing and advocacy supports specifically designed for men despite the existing programs for women, youth and Elders."

Narcisse says MAACH is a survivor-led community-based initiative created by survivors to promote men's healing, advocacy and leadership restoration.

"They provide peer support,

advocate for men's wellness and advise organizations on policy and program development affecting men," Narcisse says. "MAACH represents a long-term culturally grounded movement to restore balance, strengthen families and promote wellness. Establishing MAACH is an essential step towards empowering First Nations men, advancing healing which our communities desperately need and building stronger healthy communities across Nishnawbe Aski Nation."

Clarence Fisher, program manager of the Men's Healing Initiative at NAN, says he works with a remarkable group of men who have experienced trauma but emerged with the power to continue.

"These men come to you today as beacons of hope, survivors whose experience has shaped what we have titled as the Men's Advocacy and Advisory Council for Healing," Fisher says. "They've navigated dark places that many men from Treaty 9 territory still struggle with, and they encounter that alone, those dark places. Yet despite everything, despite addictions, despite suicidal ideation, incarceration, isolation and the long shadow of trauma, despite all those things these men have risen to serve their families and communities in ways that deserve to be seen."

Fisher says the survivors are now chairs of boards, teachers, social workers and tradesmen.

"They're providers and they're protectors," Fisher says.



Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Clarence Fisher, program manager of the Men's Healing Initiative, speaks during the resolution calling for the establishment of the Men's Advocacy and Advisory Council for Healing at the NAN Chief's Fall Assembly, held Nov. 4-5 at the Superior Inn in Thunder Bay.

"They raised their children and their grandchildren and carry out their work with humility and integrity, but their greatest achievement isn't their titles or their roles, it's that they're survivors, they survived these dark places, they have turned trauma into survival, pain into purpose. They've shown us that healing isn't simply textbook or clinical, it's unique to our own personal stories as men."

Fisher says the men came to the realization that they must

build a legacy that far outweighed the hurt, a movement rooted in healing, honesty and accountability.

"They asked what comes after an apology — we could say we're sorry but when we show people we're sorry, it goes much further," Fisher says. "They asked themselves how do we use this moment to repair what was taken, not just from them but from their families and their communities. That's when the Men's Advocacy and

Advisory Council for Healing was born. It was never meant to be another committee or a line in policy, it was meant to be a living body of men who understand through lived experience what true healing requires."

Muskat Dam Chief Carla Duncan thanked the men who stood with Narcisse and Fisher and shared their stories during the resolution process.

"It gives me hope as a leader — it impacted me too, it impacted all our communities,

as sisters, as partners, as daughters," Duncan says. "It just gives me hope that you guys are up there and you are telling your truth. Our men in our community are very important, you're fathers, you're grandfathers, you're uncles, and I'm very thankful that you are continuing with this initiative, we really need it in our communities. Even to today, I'm supporting a community member because he was a victim of Rowe too."



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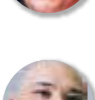
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WELL, I THINK WE GOT THIS WEIGHT LIFTING THING GOING

WELL THEN, NEXT TIME WE ACTUALLY PICK THE DAMN THING UP

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Oldguys

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Oldguys

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Oldguys

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Community

Starting A Cree Learning Podcast

Lenny Carpenter
Special to Wawatay News

My family visited my grandparents a lot when I was growing up in Moosonee for radio bingo or stop by after church on Sundays. Other times, they watched over us or came over for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners.

Most of my interactions were with my granny, who was the only English speaker of all my grandparents. My mooshoom was always there, sipping tea from his steel cup and grinding his teeth. Since I didn't know Cree and he didn't know English, we were never able to have a conversation. Any words we exchanged beyond my simple Cree words were done through my granny or parents.

Still, we bonded with mooshoom through non-spoken means. With me, he imitated the shrill calls of the Greater Yellowleg, a small aquatic bird that came by our goose hunt-

ing blind on occasion, which I'd shoot to give to my granny. He'd watch for my reaction and when I looked, he'd chuckle and we'd share a laugh.

He passed away in 2003 when I was 19 years old. We never had a conversation.

About 15 years later, I started to read "Treaty No. 9: Making the Agreement to Share the Land in Far Northern Ontario in 1905" by John Long, a book chronicling the treaty commissioners' journey to obtain signatures from the northern Ontario "Indians" in 1905 and 1906. Near the beginning in a section called "Meegwetch," John Long gives thanks to various people and organizations that helped him produce the book.

I was struck when I read the following: "I appreciate Alfred Carpenter's generosity in sharing a windigo story that was recorded and translated in 1984..."

Alfred Carpenter – that's my mooshoom's name. Could that be him? I had never heard of

these recordings. My only documentation of him were in photos and perhaps a few clips from old VHS hunting videos.

John Long continued, and in thanking the Ojibway and Cree Culture Centre, he added: "where Alfred's narrative is on deposit..."

I was living in Toronto at the time, so on my next visit to Timmins, I stopped by the Ojibway and Cree Culture Centre and asked if they had these recordings. I gave my mooshoom's name and my mailing address and they said they would look into it. A few weeks later, I received an envelop in the mail containing a USB drive. I inserted it into my laptop and it contained two audio files and a Word document. I played the audio and recognized my mooshoom's voice. He sounded different but I knew that was him.

On my next visit to Moosonee, I played the audio for my dad and uncles. They confirmed that was him, noting

that he sounded "younger." My mooshoom would have been 62 years old at the time.

While this feels like an incredible discovery where I can listen to his voice – which I thought had been long lost in time – I still cannot understand him. I told myself back then, well, I'll learn Cree someday and then I'll be able to understand him. So I sat with these recordings since then with a vague, non-committal promise to myself to learn Cree.

Around that time, I had an idea to do an interview podcast featuring guests from my home region. I enjoyed long-form interview podcasts and found people's lives interesting – where they came from, their upbringing, the challenges and struggles, and how they got to where they are. I wanted to feature those types of stories from our communities to a wider audience. Too often our communities are under- and misrepresented in the Canadian media

and society at large, with stereotypes and tales of crises and tragedies. We have resilience and successes too.

Like with learning Cree, that also sat in the back of my mind for years. And last year, I had the idea: why don't I combine these two – learning Cree and an interview podcast – into one.

Almost a year later, I launched Apisheesh: A Cree Learning Podcast and I have three episodes out so far with three guests. It's a longtime coming and it's a ways to go.

My Cree learning is a work in progress but I'll get there. As for the recordings, I'm going to wait until I feel comfortable enough before I listen back to them.

When I was having lunch with an Anishinaabe friend who is on her language learning journey, she said she was enthralled by the premise of the podcast. And she asked, "who is your mooshoom?" I said, "well, he's Alfred Carpenter..."

She said, "But, like, why was he asked to be recorded? Was he known for that?" I honestly don't know.

I plan to dedicate a future episode on my mooshoom – who he was and how these recordings came to be. I hope to talk to family members and people who might know the background behind John Long's project.

Stay tuned for that and more guest interviews and updates on my language learning journey at www.apisheeshpodcast.ca.

Lenny Carpenter is a member of Attawapiskat First Nation who grew up in the community of Moosonee. He has worked in media as a reporter/editor/publisher with Wawatay News, a reporter intern at CBC Thunder Bay, and the Indigenous Reporters Program manager at Journalists for Human Rights. Apisheesh: A Cree Learning Podcast can be found at www.apisheeshpodcast.ca.

Job Posting



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 Ojji-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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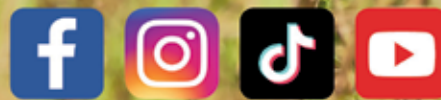
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