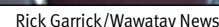


**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

"The doctors and nurses would be speaking only the language to the patients," Ningwance says. "Every-



Patricia Ningewance delivered a keynote presentation on Looking 50 Years into the Future: An Optimistic View for Our Languages at Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Best Practices in First Nations Education Forum, held March 28-30 at the Best Western Nor'Wester Plus Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

"The first decade, right now, it's a

very crucial time because people my age, we still live here, we still speak the language so you have to make use of us," Ningewance says. "You have to have us write scripts for movies, we have to act in these movies because we still speak the language, there's a lot of us still, and we make (the movies) in

"That is the only time we have to make this, we can't make them 40 years from now because we (fluent speakers) won't be here," Ningewance says. "So

The forum also included scheduled breakout sessions, a student panel, a teacher panel and a trade show. A variety of presentations were also scheduled, including *Fostering Indigenous Student Leadership* by Anika Guthrie and Alexa Sagutcheaway; *GR8 Success: Supporting FNMI Student Transitions to High School* by Victoria Matthews and Jennifer Hall; *Decolonizing Classroom Management and Instruction* by Candace Linklater; and *Putting Knowledge into Practice: Community Through Kinship and Allyship* by Keri Cheechoo.

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“**ΔΓΔΓ ΔΔ. Γβ- ΔΔΔ.ΔΔ**  
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**ΔΔΔΔΔ, ΔΔΔ.”**

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# Community



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Minodahmun Development LP, a partnership between Animiigoog Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek, Aroland and Ginoogaming, received the Partnership of the Year award at the 31st Annual NADF Awards Gala, held March 24 at the Valhalla Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

**Corey Anderson**, managing director at Ingaged Creative Productions Inc., received the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Thawikayhigan LP (TKG Group), owned by Kingfisher Lake, Kasabonika Lake, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, Wapekeka, Wawakapewin and Wunnumin Lake, received the Business Excellence Award.

# NADF adds three new excellence and planning awards in 2023

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

NADF added three new Excellence in Community Planning awards to its six business and leadership awards at the 31st Annual NADF Awards Gala, held March 24 at the Valhalla Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay. The inaugural Excellence in Community Planning awards were presented to Mitaanjigamiing, accepted by Chris Henderson, comprehensive community planning coordinator at Mitaanjigamiing; Moose Cree, accepted by Linda Trudeau, business development officer and former comprehensive community planning coordinator at Moose Cree; and Webequie, accepted by Gordon Wabasse.

"I was surprised but really happy and very proud of what we did," Trudeau says. "Now we have an awesome plan and we're just waiting for it to get approved and we can start implementing it. We had eight

topics, there was governance, health, education, economic, social, lands and resources, language and culture and housing and infrastructure.”

Trudeau says they asked questions to Moose Cree citizens about their concerns with the community's programs and how they could make them better.

“We had over 1,000 citizens that participated,” Trudeau says. “We did 57 events within two-and-a-half years and out of that we got 15,000 data entries.”

The NADF Awards were presented to Minodahmun Development LP, a partnership between Animbiigoo Zaagi'gan Anishinaabek, Aroland and Ginoogaming, for Partnership of the Year; Michelle Elliott, owner of Heart/Soul.co, for Startup Business of the Year; Corey Anderson, managing director at Engaged Creative Productions Inc., for Young Entrepreneur of the Year; Sister Bear Designs, Kathleen Sawdo, Valerie Sawdo and Malinda Staal, founded by Kathleen

Sawdo, for Small Business of the Year; Thawikayhigan LP (TKG Group), owned by Kingfisher Lake, Kasabonika Lake, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, Wapekeke, Wawakapewin and Wunnumin Lake, for Business Excellence Award; and Cory J. Meekis, executive director at Keewatinook Okimakanak, for Excellence in Leadership.

"It's always important to acknowledge and recognize the businesses in Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory and also in Keewatinook," says Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa. "We have to understand we are some of the richest people in northern Ontario because of all the lakes and the waters, the lands that we have, and we have to ensure that we maintain the land as much as possible without destroying those lands when we do business. I think it requires a lot more working together, the more we work together the more we rise as nations, and it's very important for business to do that."

Mamakwa, a Kingfisher Lake

citizen, says he was proud that his community is part of the TKG Group because of the work they do as a general contractor, which includes working with Valard Construction LP as part of the Wataynikanepay Power Transmission Project.

"I think TKG is an example of what working together can look like," Mamakwa says. "We can prosper together on some of the spinoffs happening in the work in northern Ontario."

Jonathan Mamakwa, president at TKG Group, says they initially did right-of-way clearing and communications for all of the Valard camps as well as trucking and medic services and other services.

"It's a testament to what our (TKG Group) First Nations have been able to do and what their vision was," Jonathan says. "We're growing as an organization as our communities wanted this company to be used as a stepping stone for long-term businesses, which we've been able to do."

Jonathan adds that TKG

Group recently acquired Osh-tugon Computers Inc., which has stores in Sioux Lookout and Dryden.

"It was a strategic acquisition because it had memberships in a variety of buying groups that our communities need for their goods and services," Jonathan says.

Anderson says it was very exciting to be recognized with the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award.

"We've worked really hard over the course of the last four years and we're looking to make the most of everything that's going to come from this award and the recognition that goes with it," Anderson says, noting that their core focus is Indigenous engagement. "A lot of it is focused on gatherings, bringing people together, lots of events. A lot of it can also be around digital marketing, communications and work of that effect, things that build bridges, take down barriers."

Anderson says they pivoted towards digital communications

when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

"That's also when we started the Ingaged Creative Marketplace too to work (with) and support artists and that's been a big core component of our work since," Anderson says.

John Glover, CEO at Minodahmun Development LP, says Minodahmun Development LP is founded on collaboration.

"It's all about three First Nations who have shared territory coming together to create a business that benefits all three communities," Glover says. "We're very involved in the mining sector and the heavy construction sector. The thing we pride ourselves the most on is our employment and training programs. We're running the Indigenous Workforce Development Program, it's a large scale training and employment program that's trained over 200 community (citizens) and helped over 100 (citizens) find employment in mining or construction."

# Thank You, Airlines!

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





# Community



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Nicole Richmond, lawyer, wellness consultant, educator and Biiigtiigong Nishnaabeg citizen, delivered a presentation on governance at the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council's Gathering on Governance held at the Best Western Nor'Wester Plus Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

# OFN holds youth gathering on governance

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

Eabametoong's Riley Yesno delivered a presentation on leadership at the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council's Gathering on Governance, held at the Best Western Nor'Wester Plus Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

"I was trying to talk about the way that leadership doesn't have to take a specific role associated with a title or a position, that it happens in everyday acts

living up to your values and having the drive to actually go out and do things in your community," says Yesno, professor at Toronto Metropolitan University and PhD student at the University of Toronto. "And also just trying to show that leadership is a little bit more complicated than always the victories and doing the really good things, that there are challenges and ways that you're going to have to try and work through that."

Yesno shared two experiences she had on the Prime Minister's Youth Council during her pre-

sensation, the first where she felt she did not belong in that space with the other youth, one of whom had invented a robot that injects insulin into bedridden patients with diabetes and another who works with Drake and other leaders, and the other where she was the expert in the room.

"I remember being at that first meeting thinking there's nothing I could possibly contribute here that one of these brilliant people couldn't," Yesno says.

see **LEADERSHIP** page 5

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Commentary

How Did It Ever  
Come To This?



Xavier  
Kataquapit

UNDER THE  
NORTHERN SKY

It is that time of the year when the Niska – the Canada Goose, are flying north and the traditional hunt of we Cree happens out on the land.

This is something my people on the James Bay coast have been doing forever. We consider this time of the year as a way to walk in the trail of our ancestors and to spend some time out on our traditional lands.

None of this is easy but most of my family and friends these days are well prepared with modern luxury snowmobiles, all kinds of supplies and great camps on the land on the shore of the salt water James Bay. This time of the year the ice and snow is slowly melting and although we can still venture out to hunt we have to be careful as there are many dangers on our way.

The hunt these days is really an adventure for everyone however there are so many dangers and it takes skilled and experienced hunters to make sure that everyone out on the land for this activity are safe. It is important to know where to go when out on the vast ice surface of James Bay or travelling the tun-dra. Storms can come up quickly and trap people in blinding blizzards.

There is a lot of melting so water becomes a problem for safe operation of a snowmobile and often hunters get wet which is a serious danger in freezing temperatures. There are also Polar Bears out and about on their own hunt.

These days there is also transportation by helicopter for hunters so that they are delivered to their camps at various remote and inaccessible spots along the coast. People also stay in touch with cell and satellite phones. Hunters are also given some support for their hunt so that they can continue this important traditional and cultural pursuit and introduce new generations to this activity.

In the old days the hunt was all about survival and the coming of the geese meant our people would have food.

These days it is more of an annual cultural tradition as we rely less on hunts and gathering for our survival. Of course this is a good thing as most of us don't really want to return to such hard lives and cycles of

feast and famine that was the reality of our ancestors.

People actually starved to death back in those days from time to time. There was much more appreciation for the land, the animals and all life as we were directly connected to our world for survival. We knew that and we honoured that reality.

The spring arrival of the geese and a good hunt back then meant life and death for my people.

Sometimes geese arrived early, or late, or changed their travelling routes or landing locations. Sometimes late winter storms prevented people from travelling or early thaws made heading out impossible.

This time on the land for the hunt also means a break for many from the confines of communities, all the rules, regulations and stresses we feel. We deal with a lot of addiction problems and this time on the land is a good break from situations that are depressing, painful and sad.

When we are out on the land there is a feeling of freedom. We feel the spirit of the hunt.

We spend hours and days sitting in hidden blinds waiting for the geese to arrive. Everyone appreciates the silence of the land, the natural orchestra of the sounds of melting ice and snow while the geese sing their honking voices to herald their arrival. This experience out on the land is the very best thing we can do for our mental health. We find ourselves again on the land and in the wake of many hundreds of years of hunters that went before us.

I recall how enlightening it was for me as a boy and then a young man to be out on the land for the goose hunt. It was easy for me to grasp just how beautiful our planet is. Out there in a blind under a never ending northern sky, vast land and water stretching forever and the company of so many creatures.

These days here in the south I am reminded every day how fragile and precious Mother Earth is. Constantly I witness through news media how the leaders of so many countries, heads of huge corporations and all the billionaires in charge are out of their minds and continually finding ways to wage war, cause pollution that is wounding our planet and threatening us all with the loss of our wonderful world, just to make money and have power. How did it ever come to this?

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Matawa makes donation to Thunder Bay Shelter House



President Rosemary Moonias, on behalf of the Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) Board of Directors, announced an investment of \$20,000 to Shelter House Thunder Bay (SH-TB). MFNM provided the investment as an emergency interim measure to assist in the prevention of reduced services that SH-TB is currently considering.

This Spring features a see-saw of flood potential



Graham  
Saunders

WEATHER

This winter (dare I say “recent winter”) was comprised of extended periods of seasonally mild weather interspersed with relatively short periods of very cold temperatures. This pattern continued through the month of March. March is technically the first month of spring but, as anyone living in Northern Ontario knows, March easily qualifies as an extension of winter.

Some of the several ways to assess winter severity still work in March. A favourite of mine is to add up the number of days with temperatures that reach or are warmer than 0°C. Melting temperatures in March are not uncommon and, unlike a “January thaw”, are a right of passage into spring. Thunder Bay had 16 melting days, and with the factor of increased latitude, Moosonee had 9 and, at the western limit of the region, Kenora had 10 days.

I had never thought about longitude being a major factor over short distances but later in March the Weather Network and other media were talking about Winnipeg. They posed the question, “Is Winnipeg going to get through March without any temperatures of 0°C?” I dismissed this question because Kenora, albeit cooler than average in March, did have multiple days with thawing temperatures. The latitude of Winnipeg and Kenora is almost identical and the distance is only 200 km – I rest my case (or so I thought).

However, it turns out that the “warmest” temperature recorded at the official weather station at Winnipeg Airport was -0.8°C. Winnipeg does have a reputation for winter cold. The centre of the city did have 4 days warmer than 0°C, which confirms the “urban heat island” effect.

The average temperature for March varied considerably from west to east. It was about 6°C colder than normal to the southwest of Winnipeg, 3°C below in Kenora, near average in Thunder Bay and slightly above average in most of north-east Ontario.

There were two major winter storms in March that brought

mainly snow to most of the region. A powerful low pressure system with origins in Colorado slowly tracked from March 16 to the 18th (I took the liberty of naming this the St. Patrick storm because it changed some of my plans). Widespread heavy snow and blowing snow resulted in many road closures, including parts of Highways 11, 17, Highway 577 near Timmins and Highway 631 near White River. Nagagami reported the highest snowfall amount of 40 cm. Other locations reported 25 cm to 30 cm.

On March 21-22: another Colorado low brought a wintry mix – freezing rain, ice pellets and snow to Northwestern Ontario. School bus service in communities from Thunder Bay to Kenora and Red Lake were cancelled because of treacherous road conditions. Parts of Highway 17 from near Thunder Bay to Wawa were closed for extended times.

**April weather and Outlook**

April began with considerable snow on the ground (SOG) and concerns about potential flooding in some areas. Snow amounts ranged from 60 cm in many places to slightly more

than 100 cm around Nagagami and similar amounts in snow belts next to Lake Nipigon and Lake Superior.

The first week of April featured minor declines in the snowpack. Warm temperatures combined with bright sunshine in the second week resulted in significant declines of 40 to 50 cm in SOG in some rural areas. In Thunder Bay SOG went from 38 cm to a trace by April 15. Some record high temperatures were set on Wednesday, April 12. Atikokan reached a balmy 23.8°C, Geraldton 20.1°C and temperatures of 20°C and warmer were common in the Thunder Bay area and west to the Manitoba border. Favourable weather conditions produced a fast and convenient snow melt. Flood potential was of less concern.

Another winter/spring storm that moved west to east brought more rain, freezing rain and some snow at the beginning of week three. It is not over yet, forecast models include a potent Colorado Low later in week three. Flood advisories or warnings have been posted in some communities such as Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and North Bay as I complete writing this column.

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# Sports

## ISWO holds north central tryouts

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

Indigenous Sports and Wellness Ontario (ISWO) held Team Ontario tryouts for the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG), scheduled for July 15-23 in Kijipuktuk (Halifax), Dartmouth and Millbrook First Nation, from March 24-26 in Thunder Bay. The tryouts included soccer and archery on March 24, basketball, athletics and baseball on March 25 and softball and rifle shooting on March 26.

“We want to hit as many cities and towns and communities as we can with our tryouts to give as many youth an opportunity to make Team Ontario,” says Marc Laliberte, president at ISWO. “We’re getting a lot of kids coming out. We are curious to see what the final numbers will be because COVID-19 has

had some kind of effect, we feel it's been a negative effect on our kids in particular. Some of them have gone away from sports and we want to reverse that trend."

ISWO also had Team Ontario tryouts scheduled for Kapuskasing and Six Nations in October 2022, Sudbury in November 2022, Oshawa in December 2022, Six Nations and Timmins in January, Kenora, Moose Factory and Sioux Lookout in February, Guelph and Sault Ste. Marie in March and Online Submissions from Sept. 26-Jan. 31.

"We're really looking forward to getting to Halifax and taking our full contingent, it'll be close to 600 people that we're taking from Ontario to compete at the Halifax North American Indigenous Games," Laliberte says. "We feel we've got a good cross section of the province covered. For most kids that I've talked

to that have been to the North American Indigenous Games, it's been in a lot of cases the highlight of their life. It's a huge esteem booster for these kids to get to compete with other kids and to see their culture celebrated and to know that they're valued and to know that there are people that are looking out for them."

Alex Laliberte, who competed in basketball at the 2008 NAIG in Cowichan, B.C. and the 2014 NAIG in Regina and coached the rifle shooting team at the 2017 NAIG in Toronto, says it was fun and exciting to compete in the NAIGs.

"You meet a lot of people, there were teams from across Canada, pretty much all the provinces plus quite a few states," Alex says.

**con't on next page**

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# Arts and Entertainment

# Wake the Giant announces 2023 performers

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

Deadmau5, Dean Lewis and X Ambassadors were announced as the headliners for the 2023 Wake the Giant Music Festival at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in Thunder Bay. Ruby Waters, Mattmac, Sagatay, Sara Kae and Thunder Spirit were also announced as performers at the festival, scheduled on Sept. 16 at the Thunder Bay Waterfront.

DJs in the world and he's Canadian, we've got Deadmau5," says AJ Happa, one of the organizers at Wake the Giant. "This year's lineup is lit like the Northern lights. You have one of the biggest DJ's in the world joining a superstar list of artists and some unreal performers from First Nation communities."

Deadmau5, which is pronounced as dead-mouse, has won five Beatport Music Awards, four DJ Awards, three International Dance Music

Awards and three Juno Awards. “We also have rock pop band X Ambassadors coming here,” says DFC Student Chief Derek Monias. “I’m sure you had one of his songs, Renegades, stuck in your head at one point.”

X Ambassadors, from Ithaca, New York, are also known for their songs *Jungle* and *Unsteady*.

Happa says they are also excited to have Lewis, an Australian singer-songwriter known for his songs *Waves* and *Be Alright*, as a headliner.

"We'll also be joined by Indigenous powerhouse Ruby Waters," Monias says. Singer-songwriter Waters was nominated for a Juno Award for Alternative Album of the Year at the 2022 Juno Awards for her second EP, *If It Comes Down* to It.

Happa says music producer and recording artist Mattmac's story is absolutely inspiring. Mattmac, who was born blind and is originally from Garden Hill in Manitoba, won the Broadcast Dialogue Emerging Artist Radio Award and took home the Rap/Electronic Album Of The Year at the Summer Solstice Indigenous Music Awards in 2021.

Monias adds that Sagatay will be joined by former DFC alumni Lewis Chapman, a Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug citizen, during their performance.

"We're super excited to have Lewis back," Happa says. "Lewis is a virtuoso with the guitar and a lot of students are



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Dennis Franklin Cromarty (DFC) High School Student Chief Derek Monias and Wake the Giant organizer AJ Happa announced the headliners and other performers, including the DFC jingle dress dancers, for the 2023 Wake the Giant Music Festival at DFC in Thunder Bay.

really excited to have him back.”

Kae, a Red Rock Indian Band citizen who has been singing since she was 12-years-old, looks forward to performing a song with DFC students at the festival.

"I'm so honoured to be performing at this show but I'm more honoured to be given a chance to do a song with the students," says Kae, who has been working with DFC students to create a new song for the festival. "It's really great to see their faces light up when we create a lyric that everybody's enjoying."

Happa adds that the DFC jingle dress dancers will be per-

forming again this year at the festival.

“Every time it’s amazing dancing up there especially with the dancers and being surrounded by the support that a jingle dress dancer would need, especially with new dancers that come up front, and this year I think it will be just as comforting and astonishing,” says Saf-ron Fiddler, one of the DFC jingle dress dancers who now attends Confederation College. “When I get to meet some of the performers, it is truly an honour when I get to actually talk to them and see them as a person.”

The artwork for the 2023

Wake the Giant Music Festival poster was created by DFC student Harmony Fiddler.

"I created this with my mom in mind, and how she guided me with her wisdom and experiences," Fiddler says. "In Indigenous culture, bears represent medicine, and my mom is my medicine — she's helped me in ways she'll never know. I'm away from home to finish school, so this has helped me with my time here."

Tickets for the festival are available at: [wakethegiant.ca](http://wakethegiant.ca). Children 12 and under are free but still need a general admission ticket to attend via the ticket site.



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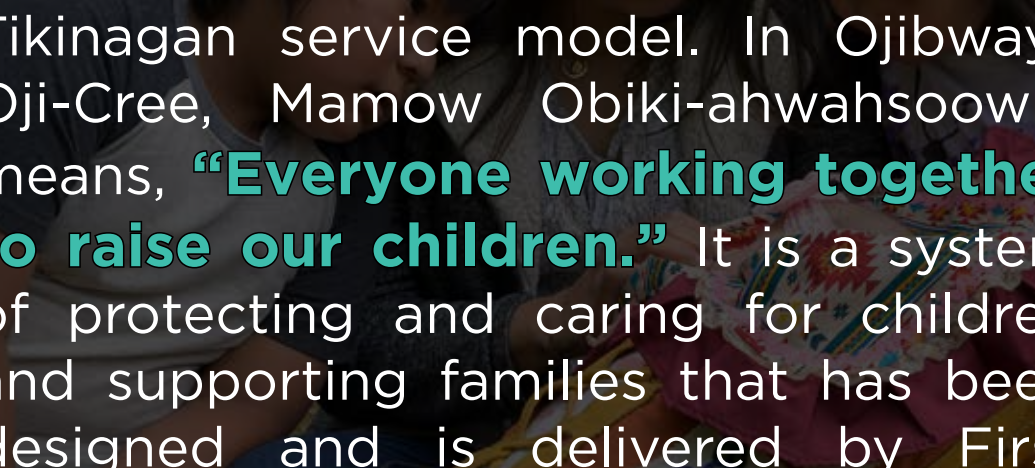
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“Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin is the Tikinagan service model. In Ojibway/Oji-Cree, Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin means, **“Everyone working together to raise our children.”** It is a system of protecting and caring for children and supporting families that has been designed and is delivered by First Nations people in our 30 communities.”

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# Education

## Revitalizing Indigenous laws focus at Lakehead workshop

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

The revitalization of Indigenous laws was the focus of a Lakehead University Bora Laskin Faculty of Law Mino-Waabandan Inaakonigewinan Indigenous Law and Justice Institute workshop on March 31 at the John N. Paterson Auditorium.

“The main goal of today was to engage with communities (and) organizations that are local and find out what they want in terms of their law revitalization initiatives,” says Robin Sutherland, director of Indigenous relations at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, co-director

of the Mino-waabandan Inaakonigewinan Indigenous Law and Justice Institute and Fort Albany citizen. “We have a lot of information, a lot to go through and a lot to think about, and it was very productive. We’re going to go through that, provide a report back to those communities and use that report to try to implement some of their visions.”

Sutherland says the workshop participants, which included representatives from Treaty #3, Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation, Nokiwin Tribal Council, Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre and Lac Seul, were asked two questions about Indigenous law revitalization during an afternoon group

session.

“We were asked about what our organizations do to support our Indigenous peoples and clients in our own communities and our future goals,” says Kieran Davis, Indigenous Sport Network coordinator at Grand Council Treaty #3 and Lac Seul citizen. “What we see for the future in big part is to have Indigenous-led courts systems and have our people stay in community and use our own community teachings for our own law and to keep us out of the colonial system.”

Davis, who is also a member of the Treaty #3 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council, the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council and the

national 2SLGBTQ Council, says the workshop was very informative.

“I really enjoyed learning about how other institutes use and incorporate Indigenous law,” Davis says. “I do victim services in my community and to be able to take what I’ve learned today back to the work I do in my community is pretty great.”

Davis says he also will be able to share the information he learned during the workshop with the different councils he sits on.

“I was just recently appointed the national 2SLGBTQ Council rep for Ontario, so (I will) be able to use what I’ve learned here about Indigenous law

when I get to go to all these leadership events,” Davis says.

Larissa Speak, assistant professor at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, co-director of the Mino-waabandan Inaakonigewinan Indigenous Law and Justice Institute and Fort William citizen, says the information they gathered was vital for the Mino-waabandan Inaakonigewinan Indigenous Law and Justice Institute.

“The other thing too is we now are building some relationships so we should be thinking about whether there’s opportunities here to engage in land-based activities together with some of these communities and get our students involved as well,” Speak says. “I haven’t

looked in detail at what the groups came up with but I saw land-based teaching as something that they want to focus on and also ideas like we want to go back to our sort of matriarch legal structure and abandon the colonial one, so that’s really interesting.”

Sutherland says people who are interested can contact them through their e-mail at: [ilji.law@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:ilji.law@lakeheadu.ca).

“If you are interested in collaborating on Indigenous law revitalization through your community or organization, please reach out to us at our e-mail address,” Sutherland says.

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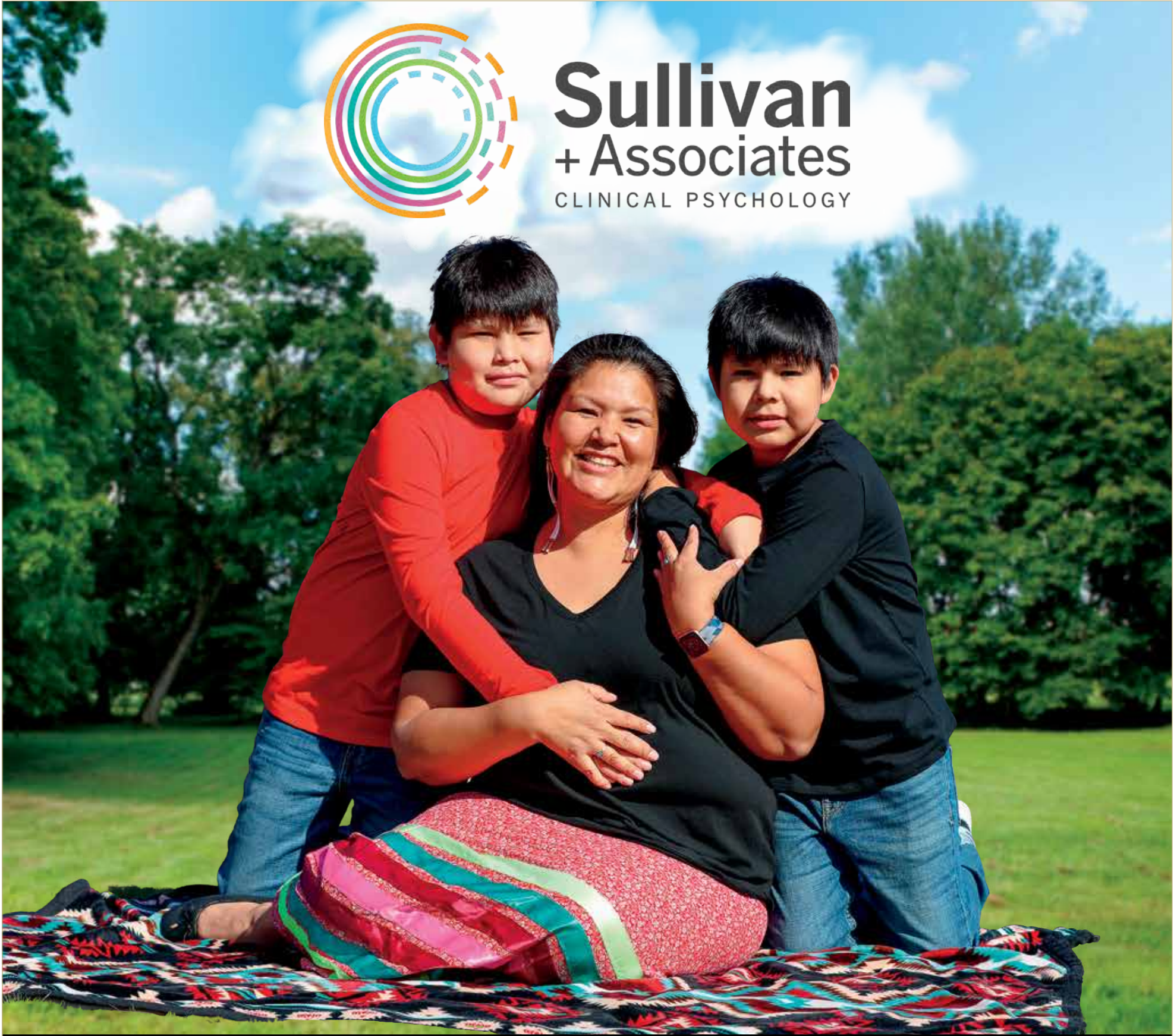
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# Education

# KI signs child family law agreement

**Rick Garrick**  
Wawatay News

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) celebrated the signing of a trilateral coordination agreement with the federal and provincial governments for the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Dibenjikewin Onaakonikewin (KIDO), which means Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Family Law in Anishiniimowin, on April 11. The agreement, which was signed by KI Chief Donny Morris, Patty Hajdu, minister of Indigenous Services Canada, and Michael Parsa, Ontario's minister of Children, Community and Social Services, supports the exercise of KI's jurisdiction in relation to their child and family services under KIDO.

"It has been a long time in coming, but KIDO will help our Awaashishag, Oshkaadizag egwa Dibenjikewinan (Children, Youth and Families), it will provide jobs within KI and it will provide an opportunity

for growth within the community," Morris says. "We are looking forward to seeing the benefits of the new onaakonikewin (KIDO) in the years to come."

Morris says it was a very emotional day for him and the community with the celebration of the trilateral coordination agreement signing.

"I have not played a part in this process but I still feel proud on behalf of the (citizens)," Morris says. "And by that I mean officially getting our own organization that's going to look after our children, working towards how we're going to move our community forward into the future, going back to the days our parents taught us as to how we should bring up our children even though those days are gone now."

Morris says he kind of misses those days, noting that many of the people in attendance can still recall how their parents raised them in the wilderness at their camps and traplines.

"Now that we are in a com-

munity, we can easily say we're taking back how we used to raise our kids," Morris says. "It's always told it takes a community to raise all our children, so I'd like to welcome the community for accomplishing this milestone that we pursued."

Morris says they do not know what the future holds but as a community they have to be successful.

"We are here today, we are going to be moving forward and moving forward means everybody has to play a role, chief and council, families, organizations," Morris says. "Each and every one of us will come together to make our community go forward to a brighter future, a prosperous community and our children to have stable homes growing up."

Hajdu says the agreement marks a huge milestone for First Nations children and families in KI. KI began drafting its modern KIDO in 2007, with Kichiihaak and community citizens that was based on Maamao

Dibenjikewin Kanawaabajikewin, the traditional practice of child-rearing and care involving all members of a Dibenjikewin (Family) and community. KI held a community referendum in 2019 to pass KIDO, which was ratified by KI chief and council after a 97 per cent acceptance rate.

“Indigenous peoples have always known what is best for their children and families, but decades of colonial and racist policies have pulled families apart and undermined their ability to take care of their own children,” Hajdu says. “The trilateral coordination agreement signed with Canada and Ontario marks a new chapter in our history that will ensure KI has the resources and tools they need for their children to have the best opportunities ahead of them while remaining connected to their families, community, language and culture. Congratulations to everyone who worked tirelessly to make this happen.”

Through the agreement, the second coordination agreement in Ontario and the seventh in Canada, KI and the federal and provincial governments have established a path forward that puts the best interests of KI's Awaashishag, Oshkaadizag egwa Dibenjickwin first.

“This agreement, a first of its kind in Treaty 9 territory, is a testament to Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) First Nation’s steadfast commitment to developing a law that places the safety and security of their children, families and community at the forefront, while also addressing their unique needs,” Parsa says. “Ontario is pleased to be part of this collaborative process to ensure that KI’s treasured values, customs, languages and spiritual teachings are deeply integrated into their child and family services.”

Thelma Morris, executive director at Tikinagan Child and Family Services, says she is looking forward to working with other communities if they need

collaborative partnerships.

“We are very eager to work with our communities to develop their own child and family services laws or whatever they want to call them,” Thelma says. “I’ve always said for far too long we’ve lived under a belief system that doesn’t belong to us, and that included all our children, the history, the legacy of the residential school system, the 60s Scoop, the oppression of the laws that we live under currently. Now our children are going to be safe within their own communities, safe under the laws of their own communities. What greater achievement is there, this is for our future.”

KI and the federal government have also entered into a fiscal relationship agreement that provides \$93.8 million over four years to support KI in implementing its law and service delivery model. Negotiations for a funding agreement are also underway between KI and the provincial government.

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