

Sports



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News
A group of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School students, Thunder Bay leaders, staff and police, Fort William Chief Peter Collins and former NHL player Jason Simon pose for a photo before playing a floor hockey game at DFC.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News
A Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School student tracks down the ball during a floor hockey game between DFC students, Thunder Bay leaders, staff and police, Fort William Chief Peter Collins and former NHL player Jason Simon.

DFC hosts floor hockey game with former NHL player

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School students hosted a floor hockey game with former NHL player Jason Simon, Fort William Chief Peter Collins, Thunder Bay Mayor Bill Mauro and city councillors, staff and police officers. Mauro convened the floor hockey game as a “great way” to welcome students to Thunder Bay.

“What a great day to be able to get out with the (students) and especially with the mayor and police officers,” says Simon, a motivational speaker and Aamjiwnaang citizen from southern Ontario. “It was a great day, lots of fun.”

Simon, who played on the DFC students’ team, showed off his slap shot a few times during the game.

“I still play quite a bit on the ice,” Simon says. “I find that’s where I’m most happiest is out on the ice or in the gym getting those endorphins, exercising.”

Simon had earlier delivered three motivational sessions for the DFC students to inspire

them to exercise and burn their calories off.

“I promote health and wellness and staying away from drugs and alcohol,” Simon says. “We talked about drugs and alcohol, seven grandfather teachings, caring for one another, being healthy and respect yourselves.”

Mauro says Simon had a “heck of a shot” during the floor hockey game.

“I couldn’t find any volunteers to go shadow the guy,” Mauro says. “He’s big, strong and a lot younger than most of us, so I just talked to him a little bit and hopefully if we play again and he is here he’ll take it easier on us than he did today.”

Mauro says the floor hockey players had a “great time,” noting that he saw plenty of smiles throughout the game.

“I’m just seeing a lot of smiles out here and that’s all it’s about,” Mauro says. “I think the (students) enjoyed themselves and the staff from the city as well as the councillors — it was lots of fun, lots of smiles, just a good time.”

Mauro’s team included Col-

lins and a group of Thunder Bay councillors, administrators and police officers. Simon and Thunder Bay Police community inclusion team officer Bob Simon, an Elsipogtog citizen from New Brunswick, played for the DFC students’ team.

“I came out to have fun with the students at DFC and hopefully challenge them to a good hockey game,” Collins says. “It’s important to continue building that relationship and supporting the (students) who come from the north to get their education here in Thunder Bay and Fort William territory.”

Bob says he surprised the other players by switching teams during the game and scoring the first goal of the game against Mauro’s team.

“I planned it out with one of the organizers here at DFC to put on their jersey underneath my police shirt,” Bob says, noting he started the game on defence with Mauro’s team. “First shift out I scored a goal on (Mauro’s) side and then I took my Thunder Bay Police shirt off and underneath was the DFC jersey.”



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News
Thunder Bay Police officer Bob Simon scores the first goal of the game on Thunder Bay Mayor Bill Mauro’s team during a floor hockey game.

Bob says it is important for the Thunder Bay staff and police to build relationships with the DFC students and staff.

“It’s always been a great experience just hanging out with the (students) here making them feel welcome,” Bob says. “It’s their home away from home, and we try to make that as safe and comfortable as it can be.”

DFC principal Sharon Angecneb says the floor hockey

game was “a lot of fun” and a good time overall.

“It’s good to have fun again, it’s good to laugh together, it’s good to enjoy being back together again,” Angecneb says. “I was very glad to see the mayor and the chief here, and the chief of police as well. That’s leadership, spending time with young people, laughing with young people and just being part of our community.”

Norma Kejick, executive

director at Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, also emphasized the importance of the floor hockey game with city representatives.

“DFCHS is very excited to bring in prominent members and leaders from our community to interact with our youth,” Kejick says. “Hockey is a lifestyle in the north, and we look forward to creating lasting memories between our students and the community.”

Thank You, Airlines!

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

Sports



A Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School student aims to set up a scoring play. Rick Garrick/Wawatay News



Former NHL player Jason Simon and a group of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School students, Thunder Bay leaders, staff and police and Fort William Chief Peter Collins give elbow taps after playing a floor hockey game at DFC. Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

On behalf of Wawatay’s Board of Directors and entire staff we wish everyone a safe holiday season, especially during these trying times.

We also humbly thank all who have supported us during our historic past, and are grateful for the continued support into the next generation.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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Commentary

Back To The Land And Around The Fire



**Xavier
Kataquapit**

UNDER THE
NORTHERN SKY

Here we are all getting ready for Christmas and a new year. Most of us would have thought that we might be through with this Covid19 pandemic but that is sadly not the case. We are seeing a rise in numbers

all across the country and although the vaccines have protected us to a great degree new variants are making things difficult.

Combine that with the fact our vaccines are waning in strength after many months and a lot of double vaccinated people are getting sick.

The important thing to remember is that most of those who are vaccinated are not getting very sick, not ending up in hospitals, intensive care units or dying. That is a very big deal.

Still we have to deal with this pandemic and according to most experts vaccines will not be solving it anytime soon on a global basis.

Yet, as more people get vaccinated we will be able to manage things so that we can move back to a new normal that will allow us dine in restaurants, go to the movies, visit family and friends and even travel domestically and perhaps internationally.

The biggest strategy we will always rely on is to wear masks, keep two meters from others, stay home if we have flu or cold symptoms and wash hands often.

My partner has a lung disease and is very vulnerable to getting pneumonia so he can't get Covid19 or even any flus or colds. By following the rules for the pandemic he has not had any flus or colds with resulting pneumonia for three years. Neither one of us has been sick so obviously we know that following the rules and protocols to stay safe from Covid19 has in fact helped us stay healthy.

So far Covid19 in Canada has killed almost 30,000 people and in Ontario alone that number is almost 10,000. Even the flu is reported to kill about 3,500 people in Canada every year. This is why I encourage people to get a flu shot every year.

Indigenous people are very vulnerable to getting sick from Covid19, flus, colds and all kinds of infections because of the cramped living conditions, poor housing quality, negative health diets, limited

access to medical services in semi and remote First Nations and far spread mental health conditions as well as addictions. Many people living on First Nations are also impoverished.

The realities of these facts are somewhat depressing however some good things have come out of this challenging Covid19 pandemic.

For example we all now have a great respect for the power of the vi-rus, the danger of disease, flus and colds and more appreciation of what we need to do to stay safe and healthy. Everyone is also realizing that we have to follow the directions of world wide experts in epidemiology and virology and medicine in general to stay safe.

We have had to be creative to figure out how to see our family and friends in safe ways over the past couple of years and that has meant some sacrifice but we have all managed to a great degree.

One of my solutions to getting together safely with people has been to meet on the land around a fire. I have been doing this for some time now in the warmer and colder months and it has proven to be very successful.

This has taken us out of the house and onto the land often near lakes or rivers and with the comfort of relaxing chairs and appropriate clothing. We have enjoyed roasting marshmallows, hot dogs and bannock around a fire.

I have laughed so much at the antics of those around the fire and I have also been educated and moved by the stories I have heard from the young and Elders alike.

Under the sky at night I have picked up on my friend Don's passion for astrophotography and the wonder at being able to stare far into the universe with all its galaxies.

We are able to socialize safely, meet in our natural environment on the land and connect without the influence of television, the internet, electronic devices, social media and developing virtual realities.

We are kinder, more tolerant, benevolent with our time for others and connected to Mother Earth and each other as we sit in the soft, flickering glow of a friendly fire.

This has been one of the few benefits I have discovered through this Covid19 pandemic. In a way I feel that Mother Earth has beckoned us to come and join her to reconnect with what is really meaningful and valuable in our lives amidst this terrible pandemic. I am thankful for that.

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Year five report for First Nations Youth Inquest

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Aboriginal Legal Services' Jonathan Rudin highlighted that 95 per cent of the First Nations Youth Inquest jury's 145 recommendations are complete or in progress during his Dec. 9 Year Five Report Card presentation.

"Sixty-four per cent of the recommendations are now complete, 31 are in progress and (for) five per cent nothing has been done on them," says Rudin, program director at Aboriginal Legal Services in Toronto, during his Year Five Report Card presentation at Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law in Thunder Bay. "That's significant (progress) from when we started and it represents continued growth, slow but continued growth."

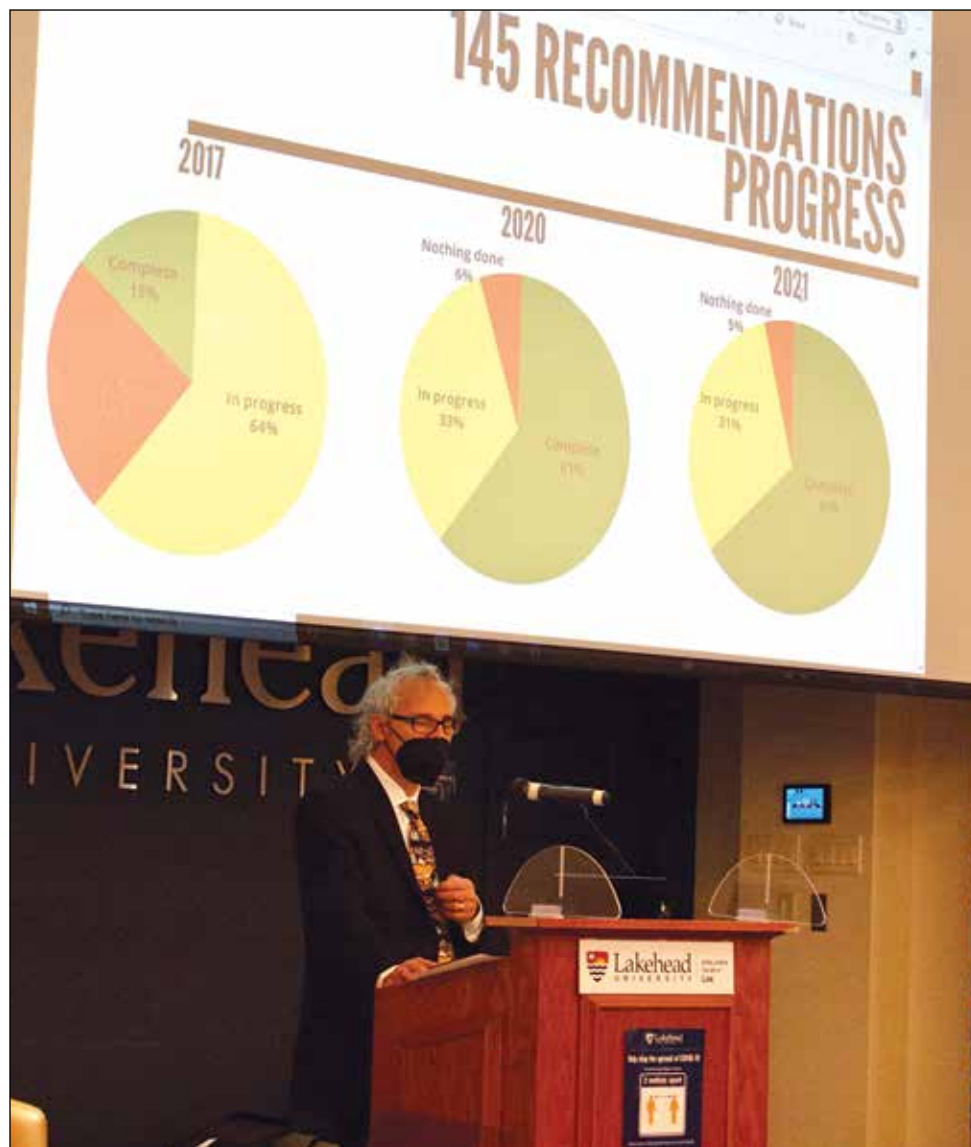
Rudin says the Year Five Report Card's overall grade for the efforts made to implement the First Nations Youth Inquest jury's 145 recommendations improved to an A-, compared to a B+ in 2020 and C+ in Year One. The grades improved from last year for Canada, from C+ to B-; the City of Thunder Bay, from B to A-; and Nishnawbe Aski Nation from B+ to A-; while the grades remained the same for Ontario at B-; Matawa Learning Centre at A+; Northern Nishnawbe Education Council and Dennis Franklin Cromarty at A+; and Keeywinotook Okimakanak at A+. The Thunder Bay Police Service was not given a final grade, as has been the case since the Year Two Report Card.

"It is certainly a good sign that the overall grade has improved from last year and that no party's grade dropped," Rudin says. "There is no question that everyone who was involved in the inquest understands how important this work is."

Rudin, who is also counsel for the families of Jethro Anderson, Reggie Bushie, Robyn Harper, Kyle Morrisseau, Paul Panacheese and Jordan Wabasse along with Caitlyn Kasper from Aboriginal Legal Services, says 17 of the First Nations Youth Inquest jury's 145 recommendations were long-term recommendations.

"And they are all in progress," Rudin says. "So the good news is work has started, none of them are complete which in some ways is not surprising because they are very comprehensive. Unfortunately some like that there be clean drinking water on all reserves in northern Ontario should have been completed but are not."

Rudin says 53 per cent of 39 medium-term recommendations were complete, work is ongoing on 44 per cent and



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Aboriginal Legal Services program director Jonathan Rudin highlighted the Year Five Report Card's A- overall grade on progress on the First Nations Youth Inquest jury's 145 recommendations on Dec. 9 at Lakehead University's Bora Laskin Faculty of Law in Thunder Bay.

nothing has been done on three per cent.

"The bulk of the recommendations were short-term recommendations, 89, and I'm pleased to say that at this point over 80 per cent of the (short-term) recommendations have been done, 12 per cent are still in progress and (for) seven per cent nothing has happened," Rudin says.

Rudin says the First Nations Youth Inquest jury's recommendations were directed at particular parties, but some of the parties have stated in their responses that some recommendations were wrongly directed to them.

"One example is, without giving the details, Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) had a recommendation directed to them and NAN believes that it was wrongly directed to them and they are not going to do anything because they can't," Rudin says. "It's not our job to second guess the recommendations, so if nothing is done nothing is done. We understand why NAN hasn't done that particular recommendation — we're not putting a value judgement on

it but if nothing is done we're just classifying it as ... nothing's done."

NAN stated in its Year Five response that recommendation 61, Duplication of Resources and Facilities, was rejected due to flaws and remains rejected due to flaws, noting that NAN respects the autonomy of partner organizations to coordinate activities and resources for their students.

NAN also stated that recommendation 35, Method for Measuring and Establishing Equivalence in Health Outcomes and Services, remains rejected and an alternative approach will be implemented.

The Year Five responses to the First Nations Youth Inquest jury's recommendations from NAN and the other organizations and governments are posted online at: aboriginallgal.ca/resources/first-nations-youth-inquest/year-five.

"Progress on the remaining recommendations will be hard but they are crucial to actually getting to a place where all First Nations youth in the north have a chance for a real education," Kasper says. "Families need

education options that do not require their children to go to Thunder Bay for high school."

Rudin says they plan to keep doing the annual report cards because they do not know if the funding that led to improvements in grades will continue and the reality that some families will not send their children out to high school in Thunder Bay due to concerns about their safety.

"People are legitimately concerned about sending a 15, 16, 17-year-old from a remote First Nation to Thunder Bay for school," Rudin says. "The families when we were meeting with them said: 'Where are the schools that we were promised, where are the options that we were supposed to have that would allow us to give our kids an education without having to send them to Thunder Bay.' And we're not there yet."

Rudin adds that some of the other issues that have not been resolved are clean drinking water and broadband access in the all of the First Nation communities.

"How do you get a good education without broadband," Rudin says.



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Commentary

Former DGC Goyce Kakegamic passes away

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

A moment of silence was held for former deputy grand chief, educator and artist Goyce Kakegamic at Oshki-Wenjack Oshki-Pimache-O-Win. The Wenjack Education Institute's Annual General Meeting on Dec. 10.

"I think each of us has a special place in our hearts for Goyce and the journey he went on for himself but in doing so he worked for his people," says Oshki-Wenjack Elder-in-residence Brenda Mason during her opening prayer. "I remember many years ago when one of the late Elders, we used to call him the Old Chief Tom Fiddler, I remember him one time talking and he (encouraged) us to see that there was a place in our lives (for education) and how education was so important for us to strive for. He said that's what's going to save you, that's what's going to carry through. I've never forgotten that and I believe Goyce carried that, what the old people used to encourage us to do, he carried that seriously and we saw that in the work he did and how he provided his inspirational stories, his guidance, his leadership and his artwork as well."

Kakegamic, 73, passed at his home on Dec. 2 after a brief illness. An accomplished artist and founder of the Triple K Collective, Kakegamic was influenced by his brother-in-law Norval Morrisseau and Cree artist Carl Ray. He also

served as principal and education director of the Keewaywin First Nation Elementary School, was elected to four terms as deputy grand chief and played an instrumental role in bringing the Northern Ontario School of Medicine to Thunder Bay.

“On behalf of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, I send our love and prayers to Goyce’s wife Lucy, his children, friends and the community of Keewaywin First Nation,” says Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse. “I had the pleasure of working under Goyce for many years and was moved by his determination to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our (citizens), especially our youth. Powered by conviction and grounded by faith, Goyce was not shy about expressing his feelings and never wavered from his convictions, no matter how great the challenge.”

Narcisse adds that Kakegamic was a loving father and husband who was passionate about education and the well-being of youth and their families. Among his accomplishments as deputy grand chief were the launch of the Embrace Life program, the development of Oshki-WenJack and the establishment of an Aboriginal trades school at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School.

"He was determined to close the significant gap experienced by students in our communities compared with those in urban centres," Narcisse says. "He led tremendous work to ensure that our youth received quality edu-



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

The Thunder Bay Art Gallery featured the late Goyce Kakegamic's Nativity painting on their Facebook page after he passed on Dec. 2.

cation opportunities and took every opportunity to encourage and support them throughout their academic careers. In addition to his acclaimed artistic talent, Goyce was also a visionary who helped advance NAN's work toward education self-governance in the early stages of negotiations with our federal treaty partner, which set us on the path towards Education Jurisdiction."

Kakegamic also co-founded the New Hope Fellowship in Thunder Bay along with Ken Funk, retired pastor at New Hope Fellowship.

"The Elders up north were concerned for their students coming to the city and they wanted a presence here that their students could come to

connect to a church or a caring group," Funk says. "That was the initial starting of the whole thing and then it kind of morphed into a church from that."

Funk says there has been "a lot of grief and loss" at New Hope Fellowship since Kakegamic passed on.

"We were not acting leaders anymore but we were attenders and I would say Goyce had tremendous influence," Funk says. "It was a place where he connected with people. He would do things like during church he would take a styrofoam cup and do an art painting on it and give it to somebody after church. He met people there and he would demonstrate his compassion for people in that context."



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Former deputy grand chief Goyce Kakegamic cuts one of the ribbons during the grand opening of the Aboriginal trades school at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in Thunder Bay in 2017.

Funk adds that one of Kakegami's paintings is featured at the front of New Hope Fellowship.

"He did a painting called *Metamorphosis* and the theme was these caterpillars turn into butterflies," Funk says. "He wanted youth to know that they were beautiful. Art was his way of communicating that."

Thunder Bay Art Gallery director Sharon Godwin says they featured Kakegamic's Nativity painting, one of his 15 paintings and prints that are in the permanent collection, on

the Thunder Bay Art Gallery Facebook page after he passed.

"It is a scene of the Nativity but in Woodland Style," Godwin says. "It's a really great painting. He had an influence on many young people, but the work with the Triple K Collective that he and his brothers founded had a real lasting impact and was a real contribution."

Kakegamic's funeral was scheduled for Dec. 14 at New Hope Fellowship with Funk officiating and burial to follow at Riverside Cemetery.

Happy Holidays

As a child back in my home community of Kasabonika, I used to cling to my kookum as she went door-to-door visiting other families to check in and say hello every Christmas season. I don't think she missed a home. We entered the homes carrying gifts, whether it was a pound of lard or a little bag of flour, because it was a tradition to bring a gift when we went visiting. Often, I would leave with a gift of my own.

My kookum wasn't the only one who carried out this tradition in my community. I also saw our Chief doing the same, checking up on the homes. He showed love and compassion to everyone.

Today, this is the same approach we take here at Tikinagan. As we visit and work in our communities, we show our love and compassion for the children and families we work with. The holiday season is always a special time when we come celebrate our togetherness – a perfect parallel to our service model Mamow Obiki-ahwahsoowin, which means “everyone working together to raise our children.” Being together and celebrating children at a time like this also makes me think of the Wise Men from the Gospels, who traveled to visit Jesus and his family (Matthew 2:1-11) upon his birth. They, too, also brought gifts when they visited!

This Christmas season, we celebrate how our staff have worked together to keep families and communities safe through this pandemic by following health guidelines. We also continue to work toward the reunification of families and keeping them connected to the family, culture, and community. And as we move closer to a new year, we look forward with faith, hope, gratitude, and joy. Faith that we are on the right path with our families, children and youth we work with. Hope that work that we continue to make a positive impact on someone's life. Gratitude to our Creator for our abilities to be apart of the work we do at Tikinagan. And let us be mindful of the joy that is coming and that is here.

On behalf of our Board, Elders, and Staff, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to you and yours.

Thelma Morris, Executive Director



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Education

Turtle Concepts delivers programs in Kashechewan

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Turtle Concepts recently delivered a Get Addicted to Loving, Caring and Sharing program for Grades 7-10, their parents and other citizens in Kashechewan after delivering other programs for Bingwi Ney-aashi Anishinaabek (BNA) and Lac Seul.

“It was flipping the discussion on the word addiction,” says Dave Jones, founder at Turtle Concepts and Garden River citizen. “We just want the young people in the school to know they still have to love the people who struggle with addictions, but we also need to learn as young people that it’s OK and it’s also more beneficial for your mental health and your emotional well-being to get addicted to healthy things, and don’t minimize what people have to say, don’t hide being healthy, don’t hide being positive.”

Jones says there was a “phenomenal” response from the students, parents and other citizens to the program, which was held from Nov. 28-Dec. 3 in Kashechewan on James Bay.

“They loved the idea, they weren’t afraid to be excited,” Jones says. “They were Kashechewan excited, which is unique to the James Bay.”

Jones says they have had a relationship with Kashechewan for about 25 years.

“So when we come in there is a legacy, there’s a relationship that gets reignited by the people,” Jones says. “There’s an expectation by Elders for us now, and on one of the days the Elders had us come out with youth and we made traditional Christmas wreaths and traditional Christmas garlands with cedar boughs, which led to storytelling which led to giggles. They just really engage into our energy, we’re quite loud, we’re quite noisy, we love to talk and (we’re) intrigued in talking to them about the old ways and

the new ways. So it was a really heartfelt uplifting project and the students want us back so we will return in January and in February under Choose Life funding through NAN (Nishnawbe Aski Nation).”

Jones says the BNA program, held from Nov. 22-25 at the Courthouse Hotel in Thunder Bay, was “really overwhelming” for the community.

“They had a full packed house, and from the council to the staff and the families that came to the parents, it was overwhelming how well they responded to it,” Jones says. “We had goose calling contests, moose calling, jigging contests — I just told them these are things that our people do to make them feel good, whether it’s hand drumming or whether it’s jigging or whether it’s hunting or whether it’s doing something healthy with crafting.”

Jones says the premise of that BNA program was about letting people know to be public with healthy behaviours.

“You can actually stand up for yourself and know the public support is there,” Jones says. “We love it when you’re addicted to being loving, we love it when you’re addicted to caring, we love it when you’re addicted to sharing, and maybe if we get more addicted to those positive behaviours we will prevent some negative behaviours in others.”

Jones says the Lac Seul fashion show-youth conference program, held Oct. 20-25 in the community, was “really refreshing.”

“They wanted us to do a youth conference on confidence, so being leaders in confidence building and energy and positivity we knew the kids needed that after the (COVID-19) pandemic,” Jones says. “So going in and working with a former Turtle, who we met at Pelican Falls (First Nations) High School and now sits on the Choose Life team, her name is Rhoda Shingebis Trout and she

was instrumental in bringing us in.”

Jones says Trout recalled how the Turtle Concepts team “boosted me up so much” when she met them about 20 years ago.

“She wanted these kids in Lac Seul First Nation to have that same feeling,” Jones says. “So it was great to have an old Turtle connection establish new Turtle connections, and the kids were willing — they couldn’t believe the numbers that came out in the evening and the Saturday. There was just a whole bunch of themes in our little celebration

at the end, and the community came out in numbers and supported us, they clapped, they laughed, and different department heads came and were just inspired by watching the children be so kind and receptive.”

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Turtle Concepts had a phenomenal response to the Get Addicted to Loving, Caring and Sharing program they delivered from Nov. 28-Dec. 3 for Grades 7-10, their parents and other citizens in Kashechewan.



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Education

Oshki-Wenjack Education Institute holds first ever AGM



Oshki-Wenjack chair Arlene Jung speaks about Oshki-Wenjack's goal of seeking accreditation to deliver their own certificates, diplomas and degrees during their first Annual General Meeting on Dec. 10.

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Oshki-Wenjack Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute held its first Annual General Meeting at the Delta Hotel and Conference Centre and virtually for interested stakeholders and communities on Dec. 10.

"In the past we have always done our accountability to the chiefs directly by attending the (Nishnawbe Aski Nation) Keewaywin gatherings," says Arlene Jung, chair at Oshki-Wenjack. "That's not possible

in the face of the (COVID-19) pandemic and we wanted to make sure we gave everyone an opportunity to understand what Oshki has been doing over the past year and just have that interaction and give that ability to have some of that accountability.”

Jung says the past year has been challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic but also a “real growth year” for Oshki-Wenjack.

“Our blended learning model helped us kind of just go right into it and hit the ground running in a way that a lot of other

institutions weren't able to do," Jung says. "It's still a real challenge, we still miss that person-to-person contact that we've always had in the past but I think we were far more prepared for it than a lot of other people."

Jung says they thought this was the time to grow at Oshki-Wenjack by beginning to hold Annual General Meetings.

“Especially since we are seeking accreditation to be able to deliver our own certificates, diplomas and degrees, we needed to step out and provide that accountability to our NAN communities in a new way,” Jung says. “Over the past few years we’ve been undertaking a lot of different initiatives as we prepare for this accreditation process. When our Indigenous institute has the ability and the authority to grant our own certification, because we have put in the work but do it in a way that makes sense for our people, I think we are going to see a real transformation of the entire educational system and that to me is really thrilling. We plan to add university programs for teachers, social workers and others.”

“It’s taken many years of hard work and dedication to ensure the quality programs and unique supports...”

– Lorrie Deschamps,
Oshki-Wenjack president

Lorrie Deschamps, president at Oshki-Wenjack, adds that this year is Oshki-Wenjack's 20th anniversary.

"It's taken many years of hard work and dedication to ensure the quality programs and unique supports for our institute to grow and ensure great achievements for our graduates," Deschamps says. "We're carrying on this vision of leadership who sought to have a post-secondary education and training institute for all (citizens) of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. Oshki-Wenjack continues to respond to community needs and provide support for our students who are working towards a better future for themselves and their families."

Grand Chief Derek Fox says NAN appreciates the work that Oshki-Wenjack staff have done

to support students and help them achieve their dreams.

"Oftentimes sitting in a university or a college does not work for them and I could relate to that," Fox says. "I struggled a lot through university and having to work in that kind of environment. If I had Oshki at the time when I was going to school I probably would have took advantage of it, to be able to sit there in a smaller classroom and sit amongst my peers."

Fox says he has a vision of NAN's leaders not only being educated but also speaking their language to each other at the chiefs assemblies and within the organizations and circles.

“That would empower us as a nation, as a culture, as students, as organizations,” Fox says. “That just all comes back to that thing we call nationhood and governance and vision for both Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Oshki.”

Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse says it is important to build on the work that is happening now and empowering the vision of Oshki-Wenjack and its governing council.

"Our citizens are life-long learners and due to the evolving economy and due to the effects of even COVID-19, a lot of things are changing," Narcisse says. "Many of our citizens will require retraining (and) looking at a curriculum also that is very reflective of the needs and the evolving environment of our communities within Treaty 9 and Treaty 5."

Indigenous Services Canada Minister Patty Hajdu says that she believes education is what unlocks better futures for everyone.

“We want every single person in this country to feel like and to have that fair chance of success,” says Hajdu, Thunder Bay-Superior North MP. “So the work that you do is about economic reconciliation, it’s about empowering Indigenous people to take their place in whatever role they want in their future and to building healthier communities. Thank you so much for everything you do and know that you have a partner in me.”

The Annual General Meeting also featured discussions on the 2021 Financial Statements and current Strategic Plan and a presentation on Ensuring the Success of Our Students by Dorothy Roberts, director of student success at Oshki-Wenjack.



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Education



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News
The group of girls were the first to get their campfire going during the Algonquin Avenue Public School's outing on the land to learn about making an outdoor shelter and starting a campfire.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News
A group of boys enjoy the campfire in their shelter.

Algonquin students learn life skills on the land

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

A group of Algonquin Avenue Public School Grade 8 students recently enjoyed learning about making an outdoor shelter and starting a campfire during an outing on the land south of Thunder Bay.

"It is a new experience — we've never really done anything like this before but from how it's been so far it's very fun," says Jack Baxter, a Grade 8 student. "We found a dead tree and we kind of leaned all of our stuff up against it and we had a little tarp to put over it for shelter."

Grade 8 student Noah Gibbins says the outing was a good

learning opportunity for those students who had not been out on the land before.

"I also feel like it's a great experience to build strength as friends, so I feel it is a very good learning experience," Gibbins says. "We picked up a lot today (about starting campfires) and I hope we can use it in our future."

Grade 8 student Connor Williamson says they put logs around their shelter to keep warmer.

"It was very fun coming out and building shelters and a fire because you get to experience new opportunities with your friends and you learn a whole bunch of new stuff," Williamson says.

Algonquin Avenue Public School principal Darren Lentz says the students had been reading a book in class that relates to survival and land-based learning.

"We wanted to connect that learning from inside the classroom and the reading they are doing to real life experiences on the land so they have some knowledge and experience to write about and when they are reading the book to think about what the character in the book is experiencing when he is lost out on the land," Lentz says.

Lentz says the students, who broke up into three groups to set up a shelter and get a fire going with branches and wood from the land for each of their

groups, did an "amazing job."

"That's part of the other skills they are learning is those skills we want our young people to have, the problem solving skills," Lentz says. "The land teaches you all the skills you need to survive in life, and some of those skills are problem solving, teamwork, working together, figuring things out with the resources you have."

Lentz says the students enjoyed their outing on the land, noting they were "super happy" and talking with each other.

"You can see how they love

being out here," Lentz says. "They're engaged in school, they want to be here and when they go back they get that much more engaged in the writing back in the classroom. Those kind of skills and engagement and problem solving and getting into their learning is super important for future years. I think it's really important to get kids out on the land and experiencing those experiences out here because the land in a lot of situations does the teaching."

The group of girls were the first to get their fire going next to their shelter.

"The girls have quite the shelter and spot going over there," Lentz says. "They were very resourceful and they did an excellent job."

Lentz says the two groups of boys built shelters in different locations, one against a fallen tree and one where they made a shelter using resources from the land.

"They're using nature to help them with their building of the shelters," Lentz says. "Those are the experiences we're going to pull away and talk about back in the classroom."



Oshki-Wenjack Management, Staff and Students would like to wish everyone a safe and Merry Christmas.

Remember to keep checking our for upcoming programs in 2022:

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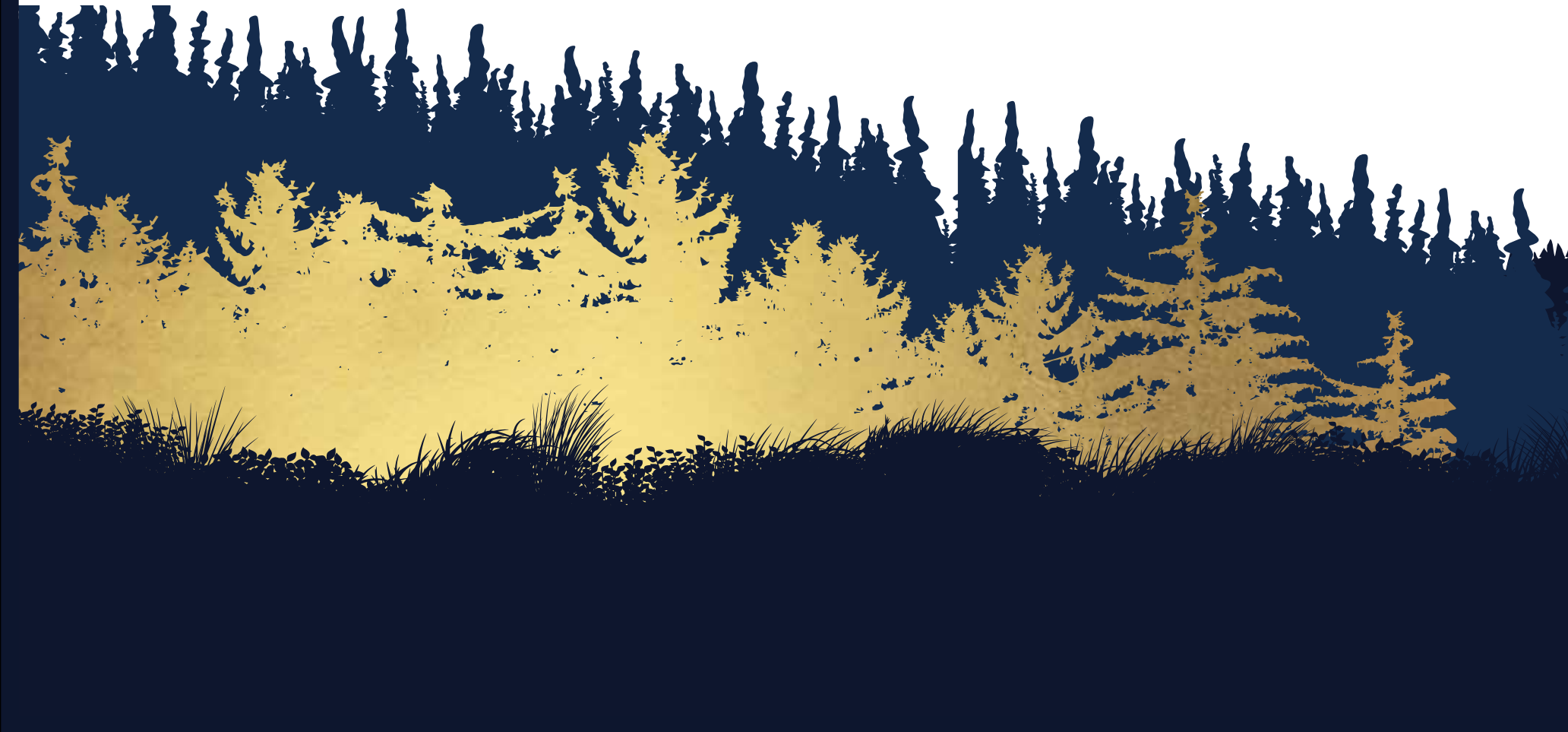
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Community



Ma-Nee Chacaby
Elder Ma-Nee Chacaby was recognized with the Community Hero Award at Thunder Bay's 11th Annual Mayor's Community Safety Awards on Dec. 6.



Cornelius Beaver
Cornelius Beaver was recognized with the Young Leader Award.



The Indigenous Food Circle was recognized with an Outstanding Community Project award.

Indigenous organizations honoured at Mayor's Community Safety Awards

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Thunder Bay's 11th Annual Mayor's Community Safety Awards were presented to Elder Ma-Nee Chacaby, Cornelius Beaver, the Matawa Safe Sobering Site, Northern Nishnawbe Education Council's On-Call Crisis Response service, Thunder Bay's Care Bus and the Indigenous Food Circle on Dec. 6.

"We sit with the city when they're making decisions (and) we kind of help them if that's the right decisions for the programs they have," Chacaby says during the Community Safety Awards video. "I also work with the young people — when I look at them and the way they look at things it's really more good ideas than the adults see

what the city should be like." Chacaby, a two-spirit Elder, storyteller and author of A Two-Spirit Journey who was recognized with the Community Hero Award sponsored by Apex Investigation and Security, says she was surprised when she was named as the Community Hero. She has extensive experience in community work and volunteering and has counselled youth, individual struggling with addictions and homelessness and people living with HIV.

"I thought, well, the heroes are my young people," Chacaby says. "(There's) a lot of young people that deserve some of that award."

Beaver, a Nibinamik citizen who was recognized with the Young Leader Award sponsored by Generator, says he has been

involved with many organizations in Thunder Bay, including Roots to Harvest, Regional Multicultural Youth Council and Magnus Theatre, during the Community Safety Awards video.

"Back in Grade 10 I started working with Magnus Theatre in the Creative Collective project, which is a program for high school students to come in and write a play on a social issue that is affecting Thunder Bay and to perform it on stage," says Beaver, an Onajigawin Indigenous Services student at Confederation College. "I did that for four consecutive years before I left high school — it was really impactful for igniting my passion for community involvement."

Beaver worked with Roots to Harvest in the Urban Youth

Farming and Seasonal Horticultural Outdoor Worker programs, which led to collaborating with other youth to produce a podcast series, Growing Through it: Stories from the Ground Up, and he volunteered with the Regional Multicultural Youth Council to plan and lead community events for peers at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School.

"It's been exciting to see the changes I've made in my life and how it creates changes in the community," Beaver says. "With Roots to Harvest I've done a lot of work surrounding food and food security. It inspires me to create changes not only in the Thunder Bay community but also the communities up north."

The Matawa Safe Sobering Site, which supports Matawa

students from Aroland, Constance Lake, Eabametoong, Ginoogaming, Long Lake #58, Marten Falls, Neskanetaga, Nibinamik and Webequie who need safe and supervised detoxification and stabilization support, was recognized with an Outstanding Community Project award sponsored by Enbridge Gas Inc.

The On-Call Crisis Response service, which was established by Northern Nishnawbe Education Council to provide respectful, culturally-appropriate after-hours support to ensure students' well-being and safety, was recognized with an Outstanding Community Project award sponsored by Circle K.

The Care Bus, which was launched by the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board in collabora-

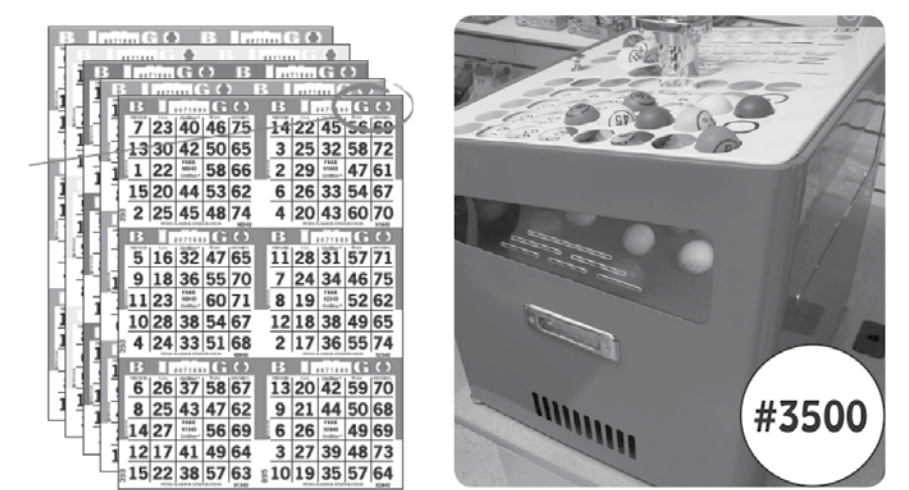
tion with NorWest Community Health Centres, Thunder Bay Drug Strategy and People Advocating for Change through Empowerment and in partnership with Thunder Bay City Transit to provide a safe, warm, dry place for individuals to seek shelter, rest, supplies and supports, was recognized with an Outstanding Community Project award sponsored by Matawa First Nations Management.

The Indigenous Food Circle, which is a coalition of Indigenous-led and Indigenous-serving organizations in the Thunder Bay region that are working to increase Indigenous food security and food sovereignty, was recognized with an Outstanding Community Project award sponsored by the Thunder Bay Police Services Board.

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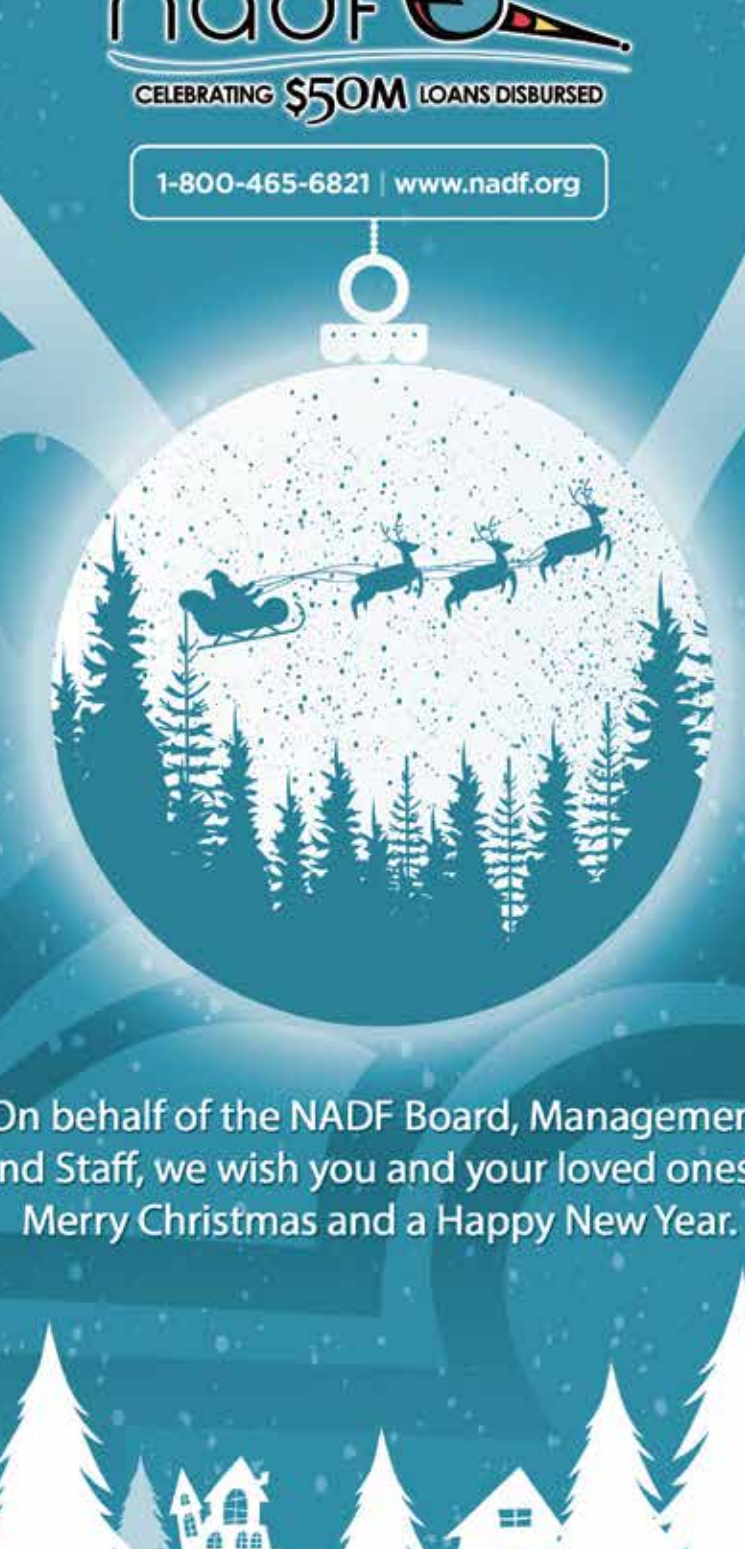
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Community



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care's 13th annual Christmas Wish campaign.

Dilico Christmas Wish campaign fills 700 gift bags

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care's 13th annual Christmas Wish campaign was another success with about 700 Christmas Wish bags filled with essential items, toys, books, warm clothing and learning tools for babies, children and youth.

"All the shopping and packing bags by the Dilico elves is finishing up today," says Tina Bobinski, director of mental health and addiction services at Dilico, on Dec. 10. "We're pleased to officially launch our Christmas Wish campaign commencing on Monday (Dec. 13). We were able to fill 700 bags for children in our communities this year."

The Christmas Wish campaign is known for its bright red Christmas Wish bags that are filled by people, organizations and businesses in the community and gifted to children for Christmas.

"We're very thankful to our community (citizens), businesses and organizations who participated in the Christmas Wish campaign," Bobinski says. "The bags received for the children have been overwhelmingly full and it just really shows the care of (citizens) in our community for children in need. One volunteer was brought to tears seeing how much thought and care was put into the gift, that included a baby jumper in an amazing bag full of everything for a newborn. It was incredible to see how much thought

and care went into selecting items and the worker knew how appreciative the family would be to receive such amazing things for their baby.”

Bobinski says there was a variety of gifts this year, including winter sleds, large play kitchens for toddlers and art supplies.

"One child is even going to receive an authentic Montreal Canadiens jersey," Bobinski says. "So a lot of variety and a lot of thought and care to get kids what they wanted, and that's something unique about our Christmas Wish campaign is the bags are individual to the child."

con't on next page...

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Community



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News
Dilico Anishinabek Family Care's 13th annual Christmas Wish campaign, which reached its goal of filling 700 Christmas Wish bags for babies, children and youth as of Dec. 10.

Dilico delivers Wish bags

from page 20

Each of the Christmas Wish bags have a special tag attached with details about the recipient's age, interests and Christmas wishes.

"You get a little information about the children behind the wishes, like a little girl who loves to play with dolls, or a toddler who could really use some development toys," says Darcia Borg, executive director at Dilico. "Dilico wants every child and family to feel the joy and magic of the holiday season. We want to show every child that wishes can come true."

The Christmas Wish campaign was sponsored by Sovereign Dental, and the Redwood Park Church, which has partici-

pated in the campaign for the last six years, committed to fill 175 Christmas Wish bags this year.

"Year after year we just keep getting a larger amount of organizations and groups that are contributing and supporting the campaign," Bobinski says. "We're very proudly sponsored by Sovereign Dental and we also have other donors and organizations that are noteworthy because of the size of the donation they make is just incredible."

Bobinski says the Christmas Wish campaign received generous donations from Mortgage Connection Thunder Bay, Unifor, Dilico staff who donated through payroll deductions, Elks Lodge, Starbucks on Arthur St., Redwood Park

Church, Winners, LCPS Chartered Accountants, Calvary Lutheran, Impala Canada Lac des Iles Mine and Biigtigong School.

"TacoTime on Arthur St. also made a big donation of toys," Bobinski says.

Bobinski says the Christmas Wish campaign has provided Christmas Wishes to about 7,400 babies, children and youth over the years since the campaign was launched in 2008.

"It really does warm their hearts," Bobinski says. "It shows them that the community cares for them, that they're special, that they deserve toys like every other child in our community, and they are very grateful and very humbled by the experience."

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Community

Ontario's Rangers stand at the ready to help with First Nations' vaccination campaigns if requested

Ranger MCpl Chris Vernon
Special to Wawatay News

Local Ranger Patrols and two "Ranger Go Teams" consisting of approximately 100 members of the Third Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (3CRPG) are standing ready to assist in a large-scale COVID-19 vaccination effort underway in 32 Northern Ontario First Nations communities, if requested.

3CRPG's preparation for the Indigenous Services Canada-led Operation Remote Immunity 3.0 (ORI 3.0) began on November 13, after Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair and Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino approved Ontario's request for the Rangers to provide logistical support during vaccination campaigns in Northern Ontario. The operation is slated to conclude March 31, and this the third time Ontario Rangers have assisted with a community vaccination drive.

"We have stood up two Ranger Go Teams and 3CRPG is prepared, if requested by the community, to help in this current vaccination roll-out," said 3CRPG's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Shane McArthur.

The goals of ISC's ORI 3.0 are to:

- Give third doses to all eligible individuals;
- Provide first and second



doses for children ages 5 to 11;

- Provide first and second doses for those aged 12 and over that have not yet been vaccinated and have indicated they want to receive a dose.

Members from 3CRPG, with assistance from army personnel, will help provide local transportation co-ordination, translation, assist mobile vaccination teams, distribute information materials, and provide administrative support, including conducting COVID-19 pre-screening questionnaires.

"In the past, we have arranged transportation for elders to the vaccination clinic or transported the vaccination teams to and from the clinics, or supplied them with water. Whatever they needed. We are

pleased to help them in their vaccination campaigns. Whatever is in the best interest of the community," said Lieutenant-Colonel McArthur.

3CRPG operates patrols in 29 Ontario First Nations communities and will send a Ranger Go Team to support a vaccination campaign if requested by the band council. In addition to its

29 patrol areas, 3CRPG will also assist three communities that do not have patrols, if the assistance is requested.

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has received and responded to 70 COVID-19-related requests for assistance from provincial or federal partners since the pandemic began in 2020.



photo submitted by Ranger MCpl Chris Vernon/Canadian Rangers

The 3CRPG operates patrols in 29 Ontario First Nations communities and will send a Ranger Go Team to support a vaccination campaign if requested by the band council. In addition to its 29 patrol areas, 3CRPG will also assist three communities that do not have patrols, if the assistance is requested.

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- Nihdawin Aftercare Worker (Full Time Contract until March 31, 2022)
- Nihdawin Family Support Worker (Full Time Contract until March 31, 2022)
- Social Media & Website Coordinator (Full Time Contract until March 31, 2022)

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ABPA hosts virtual mining conference

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

A group of Anishnawbe Business Professional Association (ABPA) directors recently delivered presentations at the Nov. 30-Dec. 2 Mining the Northwest Virtual Conference hosted by TradeX, publisher of Mining Life Magazine.

“We co-hosted the event (and) we also took the lead on putting together the program for what we are calling Inclusion Day to wrap up the event,” says Jason Rasevych, president and co-founder of ABPA and national leader for Indigenous Services at Deloitte Canada. “We had presentations from four of our representatives that are on our board of directors.”

Rasevych says he focused on ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) investment frameworks and how that (has) implications for the mining sector, government and First Nations.

“(ESG) is a way companies are tracked and rated related to corporate social responsibility and it’s a big trend related to access to sustainable and socially responsible investments into major developments,” Rasevych says. “There is quite the movement across Canada to Indigenize this framework because there’s challenges with the current standard where the only way Indigenous people or First Nations could impact a company’s rating is if they litigate the company, which lowers their rating on the ESG framework. But that is counter-productive to reconciliation, so there is a lot of work that Indigenous professionals are doing to advocate to change the standards to support more involvement of measures that support Indigenous reconciliation.”

Rachael Paquette, vice president at ABPA and founding partner of Paquette and Associates Lawyers, and Fiona Blondin, director of Indigenous Strategy at Cormorant Utility Services and board director for chromite exploration mining firm KWG Resources, discussed the critical importance of Indigenous perspectives on corporate boards for mining sector firms during their presentation.

"The Indigenous population continues to grow faster than



screenshot

Anishnawbe Business Professional Association president Jason Rasevych, pictured in an ABPA video, delivered a presentation about ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) investment frameworks and how that has implications for the mining sector, government and First Nations on Dec. 2 at the Mining the NorthWest Virtual Conference.

any other in Canada so to me it makes sense that we would have increasing representation on boards across the country," Paquette says. "We often see one Indigenous person on a board which is not enough, but we have to start somewhere. It is positive to know Indigenous people such as Fiona are getting a seat and a voice at the board room table. Companies such as KWG Resources bringing in First Nations or Indigenous people to their boards will allow for critical and meaningful Indigenous perspectives and insights to be included in key decision-making processes."

Paquette says the ABPA received a “very positive” response from the organizers of the Mining the NorthWest Virtual Conference.

“A recognition is emerging in the mining industry that First Nation inclusion, participation and ownership is key to moving projects forward,” Paquette says. “The reality is that we as Indigenous people are stewards of the land and must protect it, but we must also balance that stewardship with the economic needs of our communities. We are at a turning point where corporations are recognizing the importance of Indigenous perspectives in the board room, but corporations have a long way to go in this regard.”

Jason Thompson, secretary/treasurer at ABPA and president and owner of Warrior Supplies, spoke about best practices for leading change through action with attention to procurement

and building effective partnerships with Indigenous partners during his presentation.

“We are a 100 per cent Indigenous-owned business but we’ve been battling with challenges in cracking different resource-based sectors probably since inception,” Thompson says. “We’ve always said that change happens by action. Our businesses are about 40 employees strong, the majority are Indigenous and the majority are female, so we are walking the talk.”

Thompson says they are currently working with Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment to do some cultural sensitivity training to build their knowledge of Indigenous people.

"We've got some cultural sensitivity training scheduled with them in the New Year," Thompson says. "So that's how things are changing."

Thompson says Indigenous people want to be a part of the prosperity that is taking place across northern Ontario and the country.

"As part of my presentation I said we're not anti-development as Indigenous people, we're anti-exclusion," Thompson says. "We want to be a part of it, we want to be a willing participant in the prosperity."

Brian Davey, director at ABPA and executive director at NADF, spoke about further guidelines and recommendations for non-Indigenous parties seeking to work with Indigenous businesses and communities.

Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area

Public Comments Invited & Virtual Information Sessions

What is happening?

December 3, 2021 — In February 2020, the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change made a decision to undertake, under the federal *Impact Assessment Act*, a Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area, located approximately 540 kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay and 1,000 kilometres north of Toronto, in Ontario.

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) and the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry have been in discussions on a potential agreement that describes how the Regional Assessment would be conducted.

The Agency is holding a public comment period on a draft Agreement to conduct the Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area (draft Agreement). Indigenous communities, organizations and the public are invited to review and provide feedback on the draft Agreement that sets out the goal, objectives and planned outcomes of the regional assessment, as well as key aspects of its governance and administration. It also contains the draft Terms of Reference for the independent Regional Assessment Committee that, once appointed, would be responsible for conducting the Regional Assessment.

How can I participate?

Comments can be submitted online by visiting the Regional Assessment's home page on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (reference number 80468). Participants who wish to provide their input in a different format, or schedule an online meeting, can contact the Agency by writing to regionalrof-cdfregionale@iaac-aeic.gc.ca.

Written comments in either official language will be accepted **until February 1st, 2022**. All comments will be published online as part of the Regional Assessment file.

Virtual information sessions

The Agency will host virtual information sessions, between December 9, 2021 and January 19, 2022, to provide an overview of the draft Agreement, including the draft Terms of Reference. These sessions will consist of a presentation on key sections of the document, followed by a question and answer period. Links to the information sessions can be found in the Public notice on the regional assessment registry home page or by sending a message to the email address above.

Following the comment period, all comments will be considered. Additional opportunities for the public to participate in the Regional Assessment in the Ring of Fire Area will be announced in the future.

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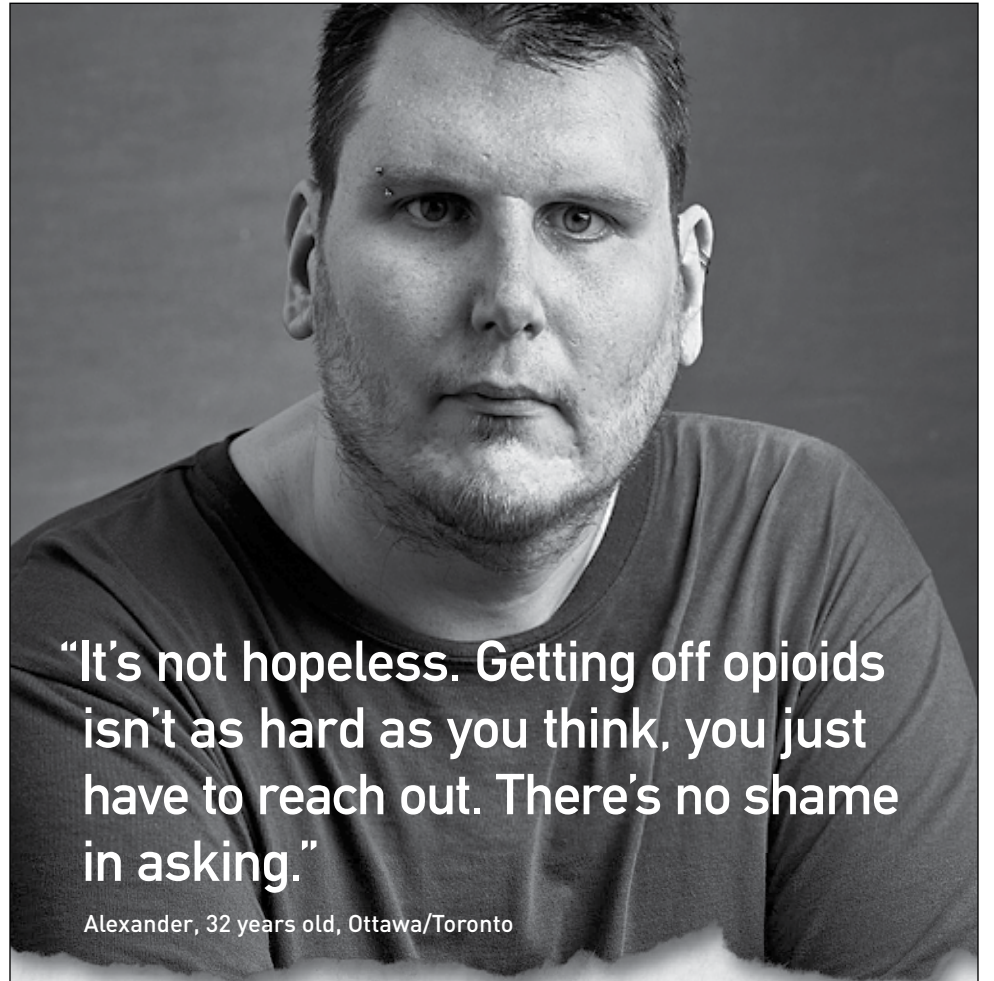
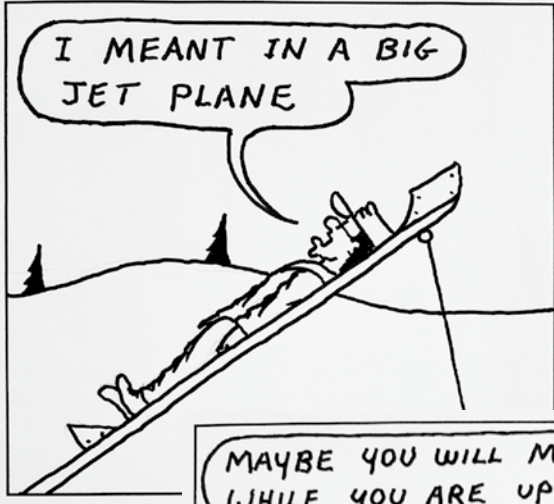
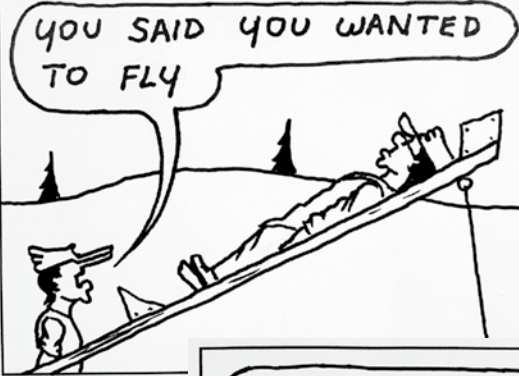


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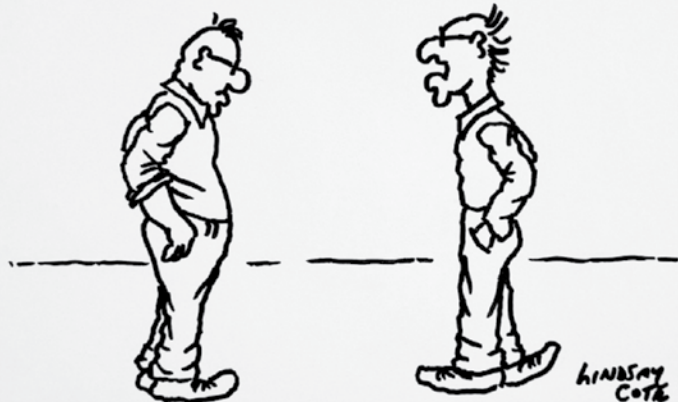
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