

Arts and Entertainment

Indigenous artists paint new Maamawe city bus

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

A group of Indigenous artists were proud to see the artwork they created for Thunder Bay's new Maamawe Art Bus during the official launch ceremony.

"I just hope whoever sees this bus will fall in love with it and they will adore everything about it," says Athena Hudson, one of the Indigenous youth artists and a Bearskin Lake citizen. "I'm just really happy and proud of my crew and I."

Hudson says the Maamawe Art Bus project was “absolutely amazing” and a memorable experience.

"It was a lot of great work," Hudson says. "This project was really scary for me but I am really happy that I powered through it and I stayed despite all my fears. I mainly paint in acrylic and watercolours so this was quite a learning experience. I never knew how much went into digital artwork so it was really amazing to see the process and all the work."

The Maamawe Art Bus project was led by local Indigenous artists Shelby Gagnon and Morningstar Derosier with guidance from the City of Thunder Bay's Anishinaabe Elders Council in partnership with the Youth Inclusion Program, Cultural Development and Public Art Committee and Indigenous Relations Office. Graphic artist Chelsea Reid of Earth and Sky Studio also helped with the final concept of the artwork.

"Thank you to the incredibly talented artists that were part of this project with us," says Gagnon, an Aroland citizen. "Creating is medicine, art is healing and I think that's the purpose in which we are trying to come together and create a work of art together is to focus on healing, what is needed for our community, what is needed for ourselves and what is needed for just Turtle Island. There is a lot of healing that needs to be worked on and cultivated through this life that we live, but it's coming together to do beautiful things like this that impacts me and impacts the work that I do. I hope that people have a spark of passion or a drive to maybe create when they look at this bus and this art and the stories that go behind this."

Derosier, an Eagle Lake citizen, thanked the Thunder Bay councillors and the youth artists for their support and work on the Maamawe Art Bus project.

"We are so privileged and honoured to have worked with you all," Derosier says. "This has been a year in the making — it was about last February when Shelby and I were approached and it's been a really hard year. There's been a lot of challenges for everybody and then to be able to witness all of the artists we got to work with on this bring in their strength and their wisdom and their love for this community, it was just so incredible, so we are just so thankful."

Thunder Bay Mayor Bill



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Indigenous lead artists Shelby Gagnon and Morningstar Derosier, centre and second from left, and three of the five Indigenous youth artists involved in Thunder Bay's Maamawe Art Bus project gathered to celebrate during the official launch ceremony.

Mauro says this was the third city transit bus that had Indigenous artwork installed on the exterior since 2015.

"So this is continuing what's becoming a bit of a tradition here in Thunder Bay, and it's wonderful to see," Mauro says. "As a country, Canada is at, what I call when I have these discussions and conversation with people, a tipping point, a watershed moment when it

comes to its history with the Indigenous populations right across the country, including here in the City of Thunder Bay. It is overdue, it's necessary and these projects are small steps forward as we deal with reconciliation right across the country, and I'm proud to be part of this on behalf of the City of Thunder Bay."

Louisa Costanzo, supervisor cultural development and

events at Thunder Bay, says the main focus for the Maamawe Art Bus project was healing and reconciliation.

"The goal was to create a safe space to unify and empower Indigenous youth while also creating an art piece that would embody the creativity of the youth, expressing both healing and celebration of Indigenous culture," Costanzo says.

Tanis Thompson, manager

Indigenous relations at Thunder Bay, says the city's journey together towards reconciliation is a process.

"We are all a work in progress and each of us are in different stages of that process," Thompson says. "I hope this will be the first of many more steps forward that are needed as we continue to progress in the spirit of reconciliation 'maamawe,' all together."

Magnus Theatre students receive youth award

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

A group of Magnus Theatre 2019-2020 Collective Creation Project students were recently recognized with 2021 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards in the Youth Achievement Group Awards category for The Reconciliation Project (STOLEN, AZHEN). Collective Creation Project students Joshua Audley, Cornelius Beaver, Keira Essex, Emma Kaminawash, Chase Lester, Brook Malone, Jasmine McGuire, Asia Polhill, Alexa Sagutcheway and Calli Thompson were among 126 youth aged 24 and under from across Ontario who were recognized with Youth Achievement Awards for their exceptional voluntary contributions to heritage conservation.

"It was so exciting to find out that we received the award and to know that the work we spent two years doing really made an impact in our community and in Ontario's community as well," Essex says. "There's been a lot of excitement all around — everyone's pretty proud of the work that we've done."

The Reconciliation Project (STOLEN, AZHEN) is about a teenager from a First Nation community who attends high school in a larger urban centre and confronts the ongoing impacts of residential schools on both her immediate family and her community. The story explores themes of racism, colonization and cultural appropriation and highlights the rates of violence against Indigenous women and

girls.

“This play — which in itself is an act of reconciliation — highlights a few of the struggles Indigenous people face because of the colonial attitudes and violence that has been ingrained into our society for hundreds of years,” Essex says. “It is a call to action for the public to think more deeply about reconciliation and to work harder to achieve it. Reconciliation is the responsibility of everyone. It is something Indigenous and non-Indigenous people must work on together so that we can begin healing.”

Essex says the Collective Creation Project provides an opportunity for high school students to write and perform a play about a social justice topic. "It's a really great program — you get to build a really good community over the course of the year, in our case the two years, that you write and perform (the play)," Essex says. "And it's definitely a thing for the community as well because usually we have a one night performance and then two more day performances that classes, usually Grades 7-12, are able to attend."

The students worked on *The Reconciliation Project* (STOLEN, AZHEN) from November 2019 to March 2020 under the guidance of Elliott Cromarty, cultural consultant at Magnus Theatre, and Danielle Chandler, former education director at Magnus Theatre. Although the project was originally slated to be staged in June 2020, it was instead performed as a filmed

virtual read-through production due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has since been viewed more than 1,000 times and distributed to junior high schools and high schools province wide with an accompanying study guide.

"We are so proud of the achievement of these young people," says Jordan Blaxill, education director at Magnus Theatre. "To produce such a highly affecting and important piece of work against the background of a global pandemic and shifting to a virtual performance is a testament to their resilience and creativity. They are a credit to themselves, the theatre and the city."

The 2021 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards were presented by Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and John Ecker, chair of the Ontario Heritage Trust, during a virtual ceremony on Feb. 24.

"I am delighted to join the Ontario Heritage Trust in celebrating individuals and organizations that have made exceptional contributions to preserving Ontario's heritage," Dowdeswell says. "As the future of our province, it's essential for young people to appreciate and understand our collective history – both the good and the bad. That is why I am particularly moved by the curiosity of the more than 120 young people receiving awards this year who have sought out marginalized stories and experiences and have helped make them part of the fabric of our province."



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Commentary

Winter Ice Road Built By Experts



**Xavier
Kataquapit**

UNDER THE
NORTHERN SKY

Winter ice roads have been a big part of life on the James Bay coast for decades. The road has existed in one form or another since the 50s and 60s when the American and Canadian military sent men and material north to the Hudson Bay coast to build the Mid Canada Radar Stations for the Cold War effort. Since those early years, the seasonal ice road has been maintained as it was the only means to transport heavy material over land from the rail head in Moosonee to places north like Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Ka-shechewan.

My dad Marius Kataquapit was always an adventurous spirit and as a young man, he took part in the workforce that travelled up and down those first ice roads. After many years of work, he bought a modern Ford New Holland farm tractor with a heated cab in the early 1990s. It was powerful enough to hitch and pull a loaded wagon and a custom built heavy snow sled caboose. At the same time, he got his first contracts for constructing the winter road. These first contracts simply involved the use of snow-machines and a small troop of workers. Dad did not have any heavy duty machines back then.

These days the building of a winter road starts after a good layer of snow and ice have built up. Snowmachines are still used to tramp down the snow to drive the frost deep into the ground to pre-prepare the surface for the next phase.

Once the snow has been set, small tractors and trucks begin to move over the road. In successive waves, larger tractors smooth the road, grade it and keep it as level as possible.

In the late 1990s, dad began to hand over the family equipment business he had built up over the years to his youngest son Paul and in the early 2000s they purchased their first modern Caterpillar front end loader. Paul went on to acquire and purchase other pieces of heavy equipment including additional front end loaders, tracked tractors, excavators, graders, dump trucks, transport trucks and other support vehicles and machinery.

Our older brother Lawrence Rose has also developed a substantial transport trucking business and another brother Antoine Kataquapit has turned into a skilful operator and

business partner. Their work has also brought employment and experience for dozens of young people in the community including my nephews Willie, Joshua, Ekwana and Liam.

Over the past 20 years, Paul has taken on several contracts to build the winter road from the ground up.

The work has turned into a major effort using modern equipment, custom built pumps, water-ing trucks and new methods in constructing a winter road for use by all types of vehicles small and large.

To meet the challenge of river crossings and to deal with muskeg, bulk pumps spread hundreds of gallons of water on the ice.

Many of the river crossings also feature high steep banks that require constructing major ramps made of ice and snow. The winter road experts actually build snow ramps using tons of packed snow and then pump many gallons of water on to it to transform it into a solid block of ice that is capable of supporting a heavy tractor and its load.

Tanker trucks which have been specially built and prepared for cold weather are used to ice most of the road surface. The water tanker trucks transport their thousands of gallons of water and spread it over the road surface across the tundra and frozen swamp lands.

Much of the land is muskeg and is dangerous in that it can swallow any vehicle if not properly frozen to form part of the winter road.

If a heavy vehicle drives over a thinly frozen layer of mushkeg it can disappear and there is great difficulty in extracting it. Even once the frozen winter road is in place there are still possibilities for severe accidents as huge transport trucks sometimes slip and slide on the icy ramps and hills.

Thankfully my brothers, nephews and local workers have been having a good winter even though it has been very cold with -40 degrees and there has been heavy snowfall. We owe a huge Meegwetich (Thanks) to these ice winter road experts as they work long hard hours to provide for the movement of goods.

There are also other heavy equipment and transport companies in Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Kashechewan that are owned and operated by local Indigenous people to build and maintain these roads. I salute all the winter road companies and workers that deal with demanding work in such dangerous and hostile conditions. Stay safe boys.

www.underthenorthernsky.com



A day of winter ice road construction with his crew is Paul Kataquapit (front right) with his nephews Willie Wesley (front left), Joshua Kataquapit (back left) and Jonah Kataquapit (back right).
photo submitted by Paul Kataquapit

A Persistent Winter



**Graham
Saunders**

WEATHER

We are more than two months into 2022. It is not a big surprise for people that live in Northern Ontario ... winter conditions can continue into March. Maybe it is just the company I keep but many people are grumbling about the persistence of this particular winter.

Let's begin with a recap of February. The entire region experienced temperatures well below normal. The cold was especially pronounced in Northwestern Ontario and most locations recorded February mean (no pun intended) temperatures 4 to 7degrees Celsius below normal. Some daily record low temperatures were set across the region. Fort Frances had record lows on February 3 (-43.2° C) and 24 (-43.9° C). Thunder Bay set record lows on February 24 (-36.0° C) and the 25th (-34.5° C).

Daily temperatures across Northeastern Ontario during February were highly variable. They ranged from near-record lows to well above normal. Many record highs were set in mid-February including Sault Ste. Marie (7.6° C) on Feb. 16.

More about Alberta Clippers

The parade of clippers has continued, much more frequent than usual this winter. These fast-moving low-pressure systems, originating in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains can travel more than a 1,000 kilometres per day and reach Ontario quickly. They often bring some hours of windy conditions and warmer temperatures. This is followed by gusty winds and snow, usually in small amounts.

Beginning in early January, one or two Clippers per week passed through the Northwest and often tracked across open water on Lake Superior. Some continued over to the Northeast and into Quebec. Alberta clippers do not typically evolve into powerful winter storms but can interact and pick up moisture from Lake Superior if there is open water.

Each of those Alberta Clippers brought light or occasionally moderate amounts of snow resulting in above normal precipitation across much of the North this winter. Some areas have experienced record amounts. Enhanced snowfall occurred east of Lake Superior with 2 metres on the ground in February and into March. Areas near Lake of the Woods received over 150% of their normal February precipitation.

The conventional definition of the winter season groups December, January and February, the coldest months in the year on average. In 2021 December was warmer than typical with some new maximum daily records (Thunder

Bay, 10.1° C on Dec. 16). Both January and February were cold months and dragged the average temperature down and produced the coldest winter in several years across most areas in Northern Ontario.

Our winters can be profoundly different year-to-year. This does not tell you anything that you do not know already. Sometimes the contrast requires a few numbers for perspective. I examined some statistics for 3-month and 5-month versions of winter.

- December through February (DJF)

December 2021 was 2° C warmer-than-average (1971 to 2000 normals), but mean temperatures were 3° C below normal in January and 5° C below normal in February. The overall DJF winter was 2° C colder-than-average. It was the coldest winter since 2017-18 and 4° C colder than last winter.

- November through March

This is longer than the conventional definition of winter and is my own invention but often describes the reality of a Northern Ontario winter. The previous winter (November 2020- March 2021) was one of the warmest in records dating back to 1940s. There were numerous days with melting (warmer than 0° C), especially in March.

This March, days with melting have been scarce so far, but read on.

A Look at Lake Superior

Ice cover was well below average during January and most of February. This was a

combination of warmer than seasonal water temperatures in December and January, and then windy Clippers that likely disrupted ice formation. Persistent cold air temperatures into early March resulted in more ice coverage. It is now about 50 percent of the Lake which is a little above average for this time of year.

Outlook for March

The anticipated shift of warmer temperatures has been a little delayed. Currently March is expected to have above-normal temperatures after the middle of the month. Forecasting precipitation is even riskier than temperatures but I venture at least an occasional Alberta Clipper.

In Cree tradition, the March moon is Onaabdin-giizis, the Snow Crust Moon. The Sun is higher in the sky every day and is likely to combine with warmer air temperatures to melt the surface snow in the day. Overnight temperatures likely remain below zero. This melt/freeze process allows people on snowshoes to walk on the snow crust in the morning.

Usually, with sunshine and warmth in early afternoon, the crust becomes "rotten" and the walker breaks through. Each step can be difficult, especially if the snow is deep. It is motivation to enjoy the morning.

I saw the Weather Network poses a question their spring forecast, "Will the polar vortex be here to stay?" Hopefully they are just trying to attract attention.

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ONTARIO
Yours to discover

Education

Lenore Keeshig gives Stories From The Land presentation

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Indigenous journalist and storyteller Lenore Keeshig delivered a Stories of the Land from Residential and Indian Day School to Present Day presentation on March 8 during Lakehead University's Research and Innovation Week.

"I dedicate this to the survivors of residential school, to those children in resistance who would rather have been punished for speaking the language than to stop using it, children who would hide so that they could use the language, and children who survived residential schools to pass down stories to us even though there were times when they thought these stories were quaint and primitive," says Keeshig, a Chippewas of Nawash citizen from the Saugeen Peninsula. "They did not realize that these stories actually held bits of truth and fact."

Keeshig recalls speaking at one of the late Chippewas of Nawash Elder Rose Nadjiwon classes many years ago about how she was able to connect Anishinabe traditional stories with geologic research.

"Afterwards she came up to me and she had her hand over her mouth and she was giggling," Keeshig says. "She said: 'I didn't know those stories were true — I thought our parents just told us those stories to keep us quiet and to make us laugh.'"

Keeshig says her father also didn't think the traditional stories were true, and that she herself thought the advice of an Elder to only tell traditional stories during the winter was "quaint."

"Nevertheless I listened to her and I asked her why and she said: 'It's because black flies and mosquitos like to hear those stories, so we tell them in the wintertime when those little creatures are not around,'" Keeshig says. "And again this little voice went 'quaint.' It wasn't until years later as I was working my way through this myself that I came to understand that it is Mother Earth, when she is at rest and covered in her beautiful white blanket, that she is protecting the stories, she is ensuring the quality control."

Keeshig highlighted some geological findings by scientists that confirm some of the information provided in traditional stories, such as Lake Huron and Georgian Bay once having significantly lower water levels that were split up into separate sections, which was featured in a story that Nadjiwon told about Nanabush.

"She said his favourite nephew died — and Nanabush grieved, his tears fell like boulders, like rocks, and he cried so much that his tears turned the water in the bay salty," Keeshig says. "And yes, at one time the water level in Georgian Bay and Lake Huron was so low that it was like standing water, it was like a big swamp or a series of swamps, and swamp water is brackish water. Brackish water is slightly saline so we have a connection here."

Keeshig says she was told time and again by the teachers in Indian day school that traditional stories were "mere fabrications of a primitive mind."

"It has taken me a long time but I was able to find the truth in these stories," Keeshig says. "And I'm sure that other people can find the truth in their sto-

ries as well."

Keeshig's presentation was part of Lakehead University's Truth and Reconciliation: Community Dialogues series that began with a March 1 presentation by Marten Falls' Eli Baxter on Anishinaabay Tay-bway-win: Anishinaabay Truth.

The Truth and Reconciliation: Community Dialogues series also features presentations by Chippewas of Georgina Island's Brian Charles on Stories of Wampum: Weaving

us Together on March 15 and Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, chair on Truth and Reconciliation at Lakehead University, on Enacting Reconciliation: Building on Truth to Make a Difference on March 22 and an Activists and Allies Panel - Mike DeGagné, Karen Kun, Ry Moran and Tracee Smith on March 29. Information about the series is posted at: www.lakeheadu.ca/about/orillia-campus/community-programs/community-dialogue.



screenshot

Indigenous journalist and storyteller Lenore Keeshig spoke about how geological findings about Lake Huron's lower levels in the past confirmed facts in an Anishinabe traditional story about Nanabush during her Stories of the Land from Residential and Indian Day School to Present Day presentation on March 8.

INSPECTION

Inspection of Approved 2022-2024 Contingency Plan and 2022 – 2023 Annual Work Schedule for the Lac Seul Forest

The **Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNRF)**, **Ondaadiziwin Forest Management Inc.** and the **Sioux Lookout Local Citizens' Committee (LCC)** advises you that the 2022 – 2024 Contingency Plan (CP) for the **Lac Seul Forest** has been approved by the NDMNRF Regional Director. The CP and the associated April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023 annual work schedule (AWS) for the **Lac Seul Forest** are now available for inspection.

Availability

The approved CP (including the supplementary documentation) and the AWS are available electronically for public inspection by contacting the Ondaadiziwin Forest Management Inc. Company Office during normal office hours and on the Natural Resources Information Portal at <https://nrp.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online> beginning **March 15, 2022** and throughout the period that they are in effect. Implementation of the CP and AWS will commence **April 1, 2022**.

Why is a Contingency Plan Required?

The CP is required to ensure that forest operations can proceed on the Lac Seul forest management unit while the development of the 2024 to 2034 forest management plan takes place.

Scheduled Annual Operations

The AWS describes forest operations such as access (e.g., forestry aggregate pits, road and water crossing construction, maintenance, and decommissioning), harvest, renewal (e.g., site preparation, tree planting), and tending that are scheduled to occur during the year.

Tree Planting and Fuelwood

Obishikokaang Resources Corporation is responsible for tree planting in the Lac Seul Forest. Please contact the Forest Company listed below for information regarding tree planting job opportunities.

For information on the locations and licence requirements for obtaining fuelwood for personal use, please contact the NDMNRF staff listed below. For commercial fuelwood opportunities; please contact the Forest Company listed below.

More Information

Interested and affected persons, organizations, and First Nation and Métis communities can arrange a remote meeting with the appropriate NDMNRF office to discuss the approved Contingency Plan. For more information on the AWS, to arrange a remote meeting with NDMNRF staff to discuss the AWS or to request summary information, please contact the NDMNRF staff below.

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Stay Involved

Further information on how to get involved in forest management planning and to better understand the stages of public consultation please visit:

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/participate-forest-management-ontario/how-get-involved-forest-management>

The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNRF) is collecting your personal information and comments under the authority provided by the Forest Management Planning Manual, 2020 approved by regulation under Section 68 of the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*, 1994. Any personal information you provide (home and/or email address, name, telephone number, etc.) may be used and shared between NDMNRF and/or the enhanced sustainable forest licensee to contact you regarding comments submitted. Your comments will become part of the public consultation process and may be shared with the general public. Your personal information may also be used by the NDMNRF to send you further information related to this forest management planning exercise. If you have questions about the use of your personal information, please contact Seanna Landry, A/District Business Co-ordinator, NDMNRF, at seanna.landry@ontario.ca or 807-738-5461.

Renseignements en français : Derek Johnson au 807 220-4273.

Education



Ginoogaming celebrated the opening of its new 550-square metre Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve facility.

submitted photos

Ginoogaming opens new Aboriginal Head Start facility

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Ginoogaming recently celebrated the opening of its new Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve facility with a smudge ceremony by Elder Victor Chapais on Feb. 22. The community plans to hold a ribbon cutting and grand opening at a later date when COVID-19 protocols allow for a full celebration.

“We’re really happy, this has been something we’ve been working on for some time,” says Ginoogaming Chief Sheri Taylor, who was the manager of the Aboriginal Head Start when it first started in 2000. “To see it come to fruition, it’s just a very big, happy positive feeling in

the community, and it’s well needed.”

Taylor says the capacity of the new Aboriginal Head Start, which is about 550 square metres in size, is a “lot bigger” than the previous building. The new facility can accommodate up to 71 children in regular programming, and the community plans to provide summer programs for school-aged children. Once the COVID-19 restrictions are eased, the community also plans to welcome children from the surrounding area.

“Our previous head start had a two-level type building and it didn’t have accessibility for children or Elders that had physical disabilities,” Taylor says. “Now that we have the new one, it’s all on one floor — it’s a big

open concept type facility so it’s really nice.”

Taylor says the Aboriginal Head Start has six components, including cultural and language-type programs.

“We get Elders involved and we have our staff that can bring in their own stories, legends,” Taylor says. “They also invite people in from the community to share that knowledge with the children.”

The \$3,850,423 Aboriginal Head Start facility was funded through \$3,080,423 from Indigenous Services Canada, \$750,000 from the Ginoogaming First Nation Timber Claim Trust and \$20,000 from Greenstone Gold Mines.

“We are more than pleased with the opening of our new

Aboriginal Head Start facility, and although it took some time to get to this point, the hard work and dedication put forth from both the First Nation and its funders ensured this would happen,” Taylor says. “It is so important for our children to have the environment needed to support their early learning years, for we know it helps to build a solid foundation for life-long learning. We know how crucial it is to support our children and youth with education programs and facilities. As we continue to look at ways to reduce the gap in First Nation infrastructure for our community, this marks the first of many projects we hope to get under way for Ginoogaming First Nation.”

Shelley Franceschini, program supervisor at Ginoogaming First Nation Aboriginal Head Start, says the new Aboriginal Head Start facility is state-of-the-art and spacious with tall ceilings.

“It is bright, it is airy, it is welcoming,” Franceschini says, adding that safety is not a concern as they are now located on one floor instead of the two floors in the previous facility. “We still have to make it our own — we need to fill the walls with new memories and art. The children have been resilient, they are happy, they are laughing, they are exploring their new environment, they think it’s beautiful. We’re just going to continue promoting an environment for our children

that promotes respect and kindness, embracing our culture and language.”

Franceschini adds that due to the COVID-19 protocols they plan to do private tours of the Aboriginal Head Start facility for parents.

“I congratulate Ginoogaming First Nation on their vision and work to design and build a new Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve facility,” says Thunder Bay-Superior North MP Patty Hajdu. “This new space will play a key role in providing rich and culturally appropriate early learning that fosters a strong sense of identity and belonging.”



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COLLEGE

Community



submitted photos

LEFT: A group of Gwich'in youth wear parkies during the Origin team's recent trip to the Northwest Territories to help the Gwich'in people to create an interactive virtual Gwich'in experience.
TOP: The Origin team worked with a group of Gwich'in people in the Northwest Territories to create an interactive virtual Gwich'in experience for the community to access with Oculus headsets.

Origin Team makes trip to Northwest Territories

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Origin team recently worked with a group of about 15 Gwich'in people in the Northwest Territories on the creation of an interactive virtual Gwich'in experience in partnership with Arctic Indigenous Innovations.

"We had a 15-year-old boy, Rylan, who was actually the caribou harvester, so he had gone out on a hunt the night before the scene, got caribou and then showed us and explained to us how to clean and skin (the caribou)," says Charmaine McCraw, lead of Indigenous engagement and training at Origin, which has a head office in Fort William. "He was part of the food preparation process too, so showing

us how to make dried meat. It was really kind of a beautiful opportunity to get to know the Gwich'in people."

McCraw says they also flew to the top of Tsiithaah Mountain in a helicopter with two Elders to capture video for the interactive virtual Gwich'in experience project.

"They spoke in Gwich'in about that spot and the importance of it to the Gwich'in people," McCraw says.

McCraw says the Origin team travelled to Fort McPherson, NWT, to work with the Gwich'in people for about a week to capture two-dimension and 360-degree footage for the project.

"We were out on the land for about a week," McCraw says. "We got to see how quickly the weather can change in the

mountains, why safety is of utmost importance and how the community worked together to prepare for the day, set up the tents, set up the fires. We got out there, cut poles and worked together, created snowshoe paths so people could walk in the snow. It was quite the amazing experience."

McCraw says the purpose of the project was cultural and language preservation for the Gwich'in people and to inspire the Gwich'in youth to continue on traditions that are sacred to the Gwich'in people.

"And to allow Elders, most of whom are between 80 and 100-years-old, to be able to virtually travel to the places that they grew up in within the territory," McCraw says, "and continue to carry on those traditions and tell those stories of

those locations that are sacred to their identity as a people.”

McCraw says the interactive virtual Gwich'in experience will include Porcupine Caribou harvesting, food and dried meat preparation, traditional Gwich'in clothing and sewing and the art of snowshoe making and its purpose to the culture.

"It will also host a 3D interactive map of historical Gwich'in travel routes," McCraw says. "That will all be put together within an interactive experience in the Oculus headsets."

McCraw says the Origin team worked with a group of Gwich'in youth to introduce them to the world of 360-degree film during the project.

"We had the youth help prepare, participate and assist in the actual filming of the activi-

ties while we were up there as part of our Indigenous perspectives project,” McCraw says. “We gave them 360 cameras and headsets — it’s really to inspire a generation to kind of create their own stories and experiences using this technology.”

McCraw says they will continue to meet with the youth on a bi-weekly basis to help them create their own stories with the three 360-degree cameras that were left with the community.

"Should we go back, because this could be a potential phased project, they would actually be some of the people capturing the footage and being part of that entire production on their own instead of outside people having to come in and do it," McCraw says.

McCraw says the experiences that were captured for the inter-

active virtual Gwich'in experience will be placed on Origin's newly developed interactive experience platform called ImmersiveLink Tours.

"We captured scenes on top of Tsiithaah Mountain, which is a sacred place for the Gwich'in people, we captured camp scenes near Sheep Creek past the Rock River in the Yukon and scenes on the height of land just before the Windy Pass," McCraw says. "The Gwich'in territory spans across the Northwest Territories, Yukon and up into Alaska."

McCraw says it will take about three to four weeks for the post-production phase to be completed, after which the Gwich'in community will be able to use the Oculus headsets to access the interactive experience.

OUR WAY FORWARD

Advancing Indigenous Relations in Thunder Bay

Do you want to see more Indigenous spaces?

Increased cultural awareness? More responsive City services? Additional community supports? A focus on anti-racism education?

Share your feedback on these and other initiatives.

Our new **Indigenous Relations & Inclusion Strategy** has identified important areas of focus. Your feedback will help us plan our yearly path forward as we make change in our community.

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Are you from a NAN First Nations community?
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Do you need Legal Assistance in submitting your claim?

If you need legal assistance with your Federal Indian Day School Claims Form, contact Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation Staff:

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Direct: 807-627-8083
Toll Free: 1-800-465-5582
Email: mwood@nanlegal.on.ca
Cheryl Suggashie

**Public Legal Education &
Communications Coordinator**
Thunder Bay Office
Cell: (807) 620-9253
Email: csuggashie@nanlegal.on.ca
**Who can assist in Direction and Resources*
Adam Mack

Public Legal Education
Timmins Office
Cell: (705) 262-3389
Email: amack@nanlegal.on.ca
**Who can assist in Direction and Resources*

Mental Health Support and additional helpful resources

With the recent and on going discoveries of the unmarked graves across the country, and even when you are filling out your “Indian Day School” application form, please know that talking or thinking about painful past experiences can trigger intense thoughts, and or feelings. It really helps to talk to a trusted person, such as a friend, family member or an Elder. In some cases you may not be aware of your own Trauma, and it can resurface. Triggers can happen at anytime time. If your feeling overwhelmed, anxious and or upset, please reach out to someone immediately. Take time out, practice self care, especially through these trying times.

Please see below for free available Mental Health Resources:

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<https://indiandayschools.com/en/support/community-support-program/>

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www.irsss.ca

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www.nwac.ca

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<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/>



Please stay tuned for our future “Virtual Gathering” as we will be discussing; Indian Day Schools, mental health topics, and the discoveries of the unmarked graves. More information to follow!

**For more information and or assistance on “Indian Day School Settlement” claims form, with Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation, please visit our website:
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JOSHANE, OF SANDY LAKE FIRST NATION, COMPLETED GOOD LEARNING ANYWHERE'S FIRST STEPS FOR NEW LEARNERS. HIS GOAL IS TO RETURN TO POST-SECONDARY STUDIES.

JOSHANE FIDDLER

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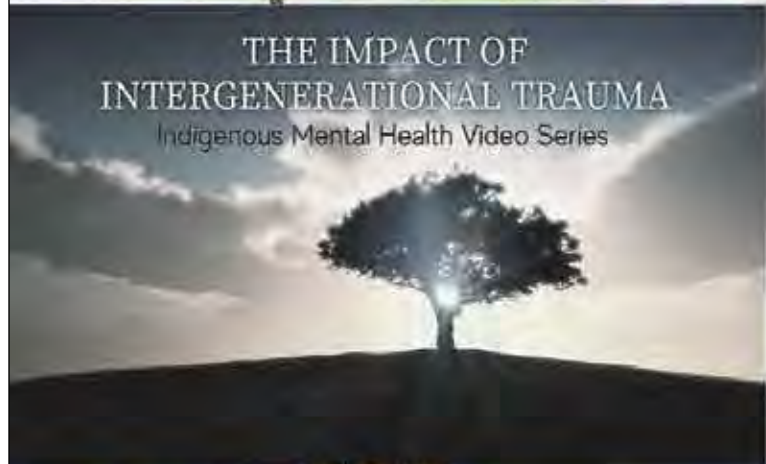
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Indigenous Mental Health Video Series

YOUTUBE CHANNEL: SULLIVAN + ASSOCIATES

About the Series

presented by Jasmine Peterson

The Indigenous Mental Health Video Series was designed to provide additional support for Indigenous people who have difficulty accessing mental health services due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, infrastructure limitations (i.e., poor telephone/internet connections), etc.

This video series discusses the impact of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous people and communities and how this has contributed to mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, addictions, and anger. This series provides important education and practical coping strategies, presented in a friendly, conversational manner by Jasmine Peterson.

Jasmine Peterson is a mental health professional of Indigenous descent. She has worked extensively with Indigenous clients over the past seven years at our clinic and in remote Indigenous communities. Jasmine works with children, teens, and adults, providing psychological assessments and counselling/psychotherapy.



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Community

Tikinagan celebrates Foster Parent Month

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Tikinagan Child and Family Services recently celebrated the commitment of 235 foster parents across 30 First Nations and urban areas during Foster Parent Month in March.

"Foster Parents play an important role in the lives of our children and youth, and they are essential to successfully delivering our services," says Thelma Morris, executive director at Tikinagan. "This March, we are showing our appreciation of our foster parents for Foster Parent Appreciation Month, and we invite our communities to join us in honouring the time, effort and energy they selflessly give to raising our children."

Tikinagan's foster parents come from all walks of life, including homemakers, band councillors, grandparents, uncles and aunts, and they often work at the community store, nursing station and school.

"Many of our foster parents have been with us for five, 10, even 15 years," Morris says. "Many of them will tell you they foster because they want to make a difference. And they do. They really do."

Mishkeegogamang's Jolene and Sims Roundhead began foster parenting with Tikinagan about six-and-a-half years ago with the care of a baby boy.

"We still actually foster him today," Jolene says. "It has been

amazing. To us, this little guy feels like our son."

Jolene says she feels like she was meant to be a foster parent, and she really enjoys foster parenting.

"You get to help the kids," Jolene says, noting that some have learning difficulties and others do not talk when they arrive. "I enjoy working with Tikinagan. They have a lot of really good workers and after a while you get to know them and it just feels like you're one big family."

Jolene says the important part of being a foster parent for her is about helping the children who need help and providing them with a loving, stable home.

"And showing them that there are people out there that do love them and care about them," Jolene says. "That's what it is to me."

Jolene says one of her foster children would not smile or laugh no matter what she did, but eventually the girl smiled when she started dancing around in a Sponge Bob halloween costume.

"So I just kept doing it, like putting on a different silly halloween costume until eventually she started laughing," Jolene says. "And that's when it started to turn around for her."

Jolene says they had to provide "a lot of love" to get her up and going.

"She is what I call my golden star," Jolene says. "She is one of the most beautiful children I



Foster parents Jolene and Sims Roundhead, from Mishkeegogamang, have been foster parenting with Tikinagan Child and Family Services for about six-and-a-half years since taking care of a baby boy.

submitted photo

have ever met in my entire life, after she came out of that shell. She is beautiful inside and out, that girl."

Morris says the key requirement for a foster parent is their willingness to help a child.

"It's often the simple things that the children remember, such as a meal, a place to sleep or just a listening ear," Morris

says. "It's about doing life with them. And like any child or youth, foster children need stability, guidance, structure, love and understanding."


Tikinagan provides support and services for families who are experiencing difficulties and works to help those families find resources to heal. Whenever possible, they work

to keep children and families together and to help parents care for their children.

"We believe the answer lies within the communities, and we are committed to keeping our children within their communities," Morris says. "But to make this happen, we need the help of individuals and couples who have a desire to make a dif-

ference. We need Indigenous foster families who want to help raise children while assisting them in maintaining their connections to their family, culture and community."

Information about becoming a foster parent or services at Tikinagan is available by calling 1-800-465-3624 or visiting tikinagan.org.



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TIKINAGAN.ORG

We ensure that our hiring process is accessible as possible. As a result, there are a few ways to apply for a job at Tikinagan:

Emailing your resume
and cover letter to hr@tikinagan.org

Mail your resume and cover letter to:

**Tikinagan Child &
Family Services Hiring
Committee
PO Box 627
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T
1B1**

Faxing your resume and cover letter to (807) 737-4550.

You can drop by any Tikinagan community office/unit and bring your resume/cover letter to the receptionist. Let them know you are applying for a job and ask them to fax it to Human Resources.

Community

Ontario to expand addiction services

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The provincial government recently announced an investment of \$3.8 million to enhance access to addictions treatment supports in Thunder Bay on March 14 through the new Addictions Recovery Fund.

"Our government remains steadfast in our work to provide Ontarians in the north with access to safe and effective mental health and addictions services as close to home as possible," says Michael Tibollo, associate minister of Mental Health and Addictions. "Investing in mental health and addictions services in Thunder Bay is just one more way our government is continuing to support vulnerable populations across the province with high-quality mental health and addictions care that addresses their unique needs on their journey to recovery."

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and St. Joseph's Care Group will use the funding to expand access to a total of 34 new addictions treatment beds and help hundreds of people in Thunder Bay and the surrounding region to access specialized addictions treatment. The funding will support 20 new supportive treatment beds at Dilico and access to 10 new addictions treatment beds and four new withdrawal management beds at St. Joseph's Care Group.

"This new investment will

provide a safe space in the local continuum of addictions treatment for Indigenous young people to address personal difficulties related to substance misuse," says Darcia Borg, executive director at Dilico. "They will be able to engage with other young people transitioning in to adulthood in a supportive living environment that is inclusive and provides other on-site support services such as cultural and land-based activities, life skill building, coping skill development, as well as access to individual and group counselling and supports with entry to education and employment opportunities."

The provincial government states that studies have shown that opioid-related deaths surged by 79 per cent during the first two waves of the pandemic, with rates being three times higher in northern Ontario.

"There is urgent and immediate need in Thunder Bay for people living with addiction, and the pandemic has added to what can only be described as a crisis," says Kelli O'Brien, president and CEO at St. Joseph's Care Group. "Today's investment of \$1.1 million through the Addictions Recovery Fund recognizes and helps meet that need. With our partners, we will ensure that funding is put to use by expanding access to care right now, and adding new withdrawal management and addictions beds. It means we



Fort William Chief Peter Collins, pictured in 2017, says his community celebrates the provincial government's recent announcement of \$3.8 million for 34 new addictions treatment beds at Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and St. Joseph's Care Group in Thunder Bay.

Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

can offer more to people who are struggling with addictions and their families."

Fort William Chief Peter Collins says his community celebrates the announcement of additional resources to help support those struggling with addictions.

"Our leadership, faced with the devastating impacts that addictions have on children and families, continue to work

to enhance the support available for our people," Collins says. "This additional support will be vital in our effort to provide young people a safe space to access culturally appropriate programs and services."

Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Judith Monteith-Farrell says people in Thunder Bay have "fought so hard for mental health and addictions services."

"Unfortunately, many loved

ones have died from opioid overdoses in Thunder Bay while Doug Ford waited to provide them help over the last four years," Monteith-Farrell says. "I recently told Mr. Ford that Thunder Bay had 15 overdose deaths in two days. It should not have taken four years for him to take this first step towards the mental health and addictions beds we need."

Monteith-Farrell adds that

there is plenty more that the provincial government can do, such as the funding of a Community-Based Crisis Centre that mental health and addictions stakeholders have called for.

"Families across Thunder Bay deserve access to mental health and addictions services," Monteith-Farrell says. "We cannot let more families be torn apart and more lives lost to the opioid crisis in our community."

March is

Foster Parent Appreciation Month

at Tikinagan

Foster parents are an essential to our children's circle of care. Foster parents make a difference everyday. From the Chiefs, Board and staff of Tikinagan Child and Family Services, Thank you for being there!

To learn more about Foster Parent Appreciation Month go to
Tikinagan.org/FPAM

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Matawa submits 2022 pre-budget to the Feds

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Matawa First Nations Management (MFNM) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) recently highlighted their submissions to the federal government's 2022 pre-budget consultation process.

Matawa First Nations Management stated in a Feb. 23 press release that they delivered their submission to the offices of Thunder Bay-Superior North MP Patty Hajdu and Thunder Bay-Rainy River MP Marcus Powlowski calling on Canada to begin a collaboration, negotiations and investment process in partnership with Matawa First Nations to maximize the benefits of the development of the north.

"The Matawa Chiefs Council have consistently stated the position that the development of the north including the Ring of Fire mineral deposit will require the participation of our people of the Matawa First Nations, the governments of Canada and Ontario, industry and investors to maximize the potential multi-generational benefits that are anticipated," says David Paul Achneepineskum, CEO at Matawa First Nations Management. "Now is the time for Canada to demonstrate its commitment to reconciliation and the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its approach

to its relationship with the Matawa First Nations, Canada's economic recovery and major project development."

National Chief RoseAnne Archibald says she supports regional initiatives driven by First Nations such as the MFNM submission for the 2022 pre-budget consultations during a virtual National Chief Press Conference on Feb. 23.

"The Ring of Fire is going to be one of the biggest developments in the history of Ontario so having them lead discussions around prosperity and building their economies is really important," Archibald says.

Archibald says the AFN has also made pre-budget submissions and talked with the federal government about major investments into economic development in all areas.

“One area that we have been advocating for is a national prosperity table similar to the Ontario prosperity table that began when I was the regional chief in Ontario,” Archibald says. “So it would be a national table to look at national funding for First Nations and to also look at ways of rebuilding economies in First Nations. It’s important to note that economies did exist prior to contact and those were decimated by colonialism, and it is incumbent upon governments to help rebuild those economies that they destroyed.”

The first point on MFNM's submission calls for Crown-



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Matawa First Nations Management CEO David Paul Achneepineskuk stressed that the development of the north including the Ring of Fire mineral deposit will require the participation of Matawa First Nations citizens, governments of Canada and Ontario, industry and investors.

Indigenous Relations Minister Marc Miller to be designated as the lead federal minister to work alongside Matawa First Nations on the development of northern Ontario's storehouse of natural resources, with a specific recommendation for the establishment of a Matawa/Canada Northern Development Table.

The second point on MFNM's submission calls for "the role of the Crown of Canada, the

prime minister and the minister responsible for Indigenous-Crown Relations must be more transparent as our Treaty partner,” noting that the demands of the provincial government and the mining industry are secondary.

MFNM also recommends that the federal government commits to ongoing funding for the collaboration, negotiations and investment process as part of Matawa First Nations re-

establishing their governance over lands and resources.

"As a Treaty partner - First Nations must be funded to ensure equitable decision-making processes in this new era of partnerships and regional development," the submission states.

"Economic recovery '... that benefits all Canadians ...' must include the Matawa First Nations as equal and joint partners in development, enabling

investor certainty and participation in the emerging new northern Ontario economy from within the Matawa traditional territories and homelands.

Canada's commitment to begin this process would be a substantial legacy for Matawa First Nations - and all Canadians - on our joint efforts towards reconciliation and forging a new path forward for Indigenous-Crown relations."

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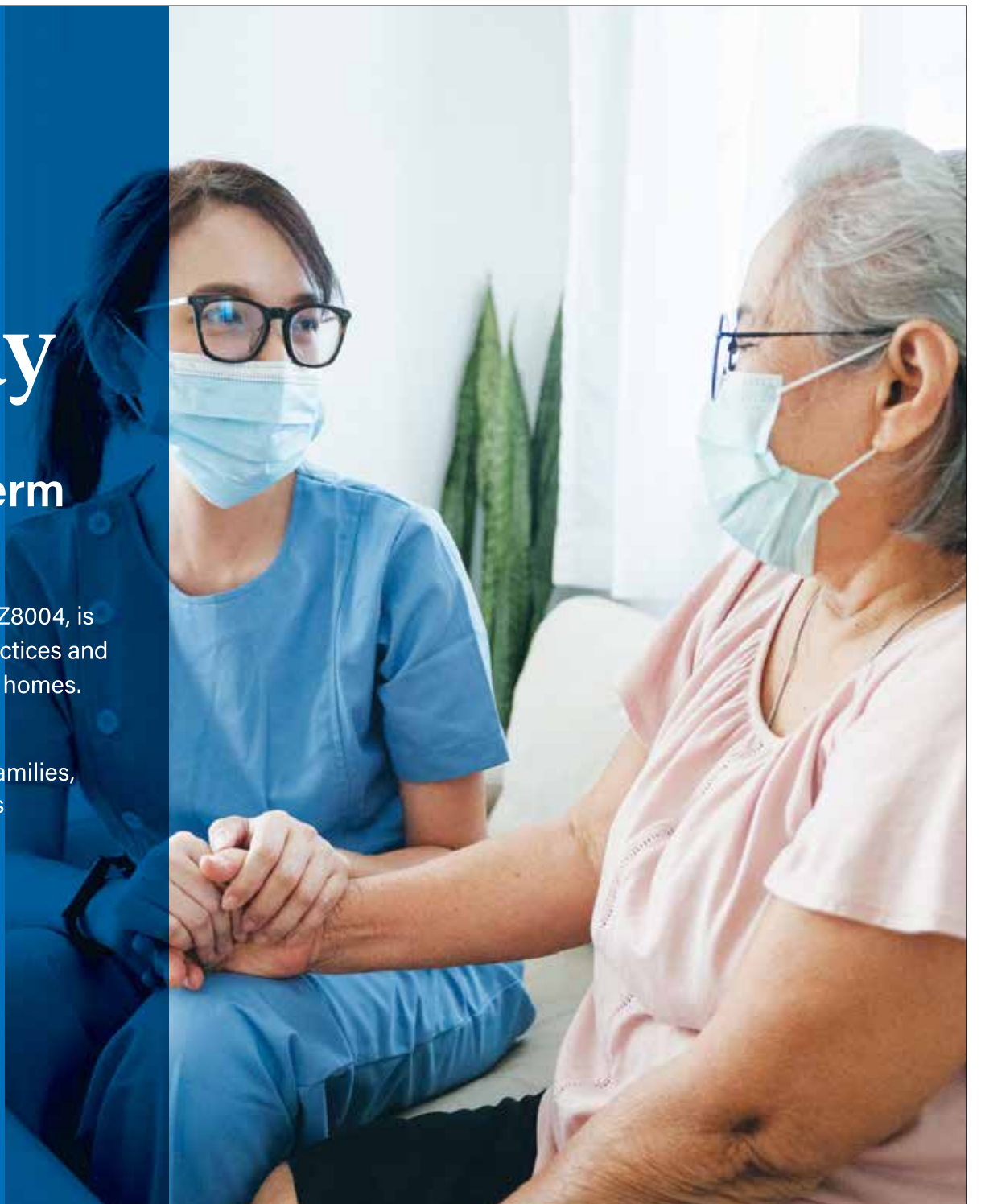
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