·ᐊ·ᐊᑌ ᐊᒋᒍ·ᐃᓇᐢ

WAWATAY NEWS

PM#0382659799

Blending Tradition with Technology

6000 copies distributed

October 23, 2026 Vol. 53 No. 10 www.wawataynews.ca

NAN holds Orange Shirt Day Walk

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Orange Shirt Day Walk and Gathering in support of residential school survivors and their families was held on Sept. 30 from the NAN office to Vickers Park in Thunder Bay.

"The first thing I did this morning when I woke up is I messaged my older siblings because they were forced to go to residential school far away from home where they were living in Bearskin Lake at the time," says Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler. "And I remember my mom before she passed away, she finally shared with me her own experience as a mother of children that were sent to residential school."

Fiddler says his late mother and late aunt used to go to the lake and paddle to try to heal from the pain and loneliness when their children were sent to residential school.

"So I remember my siblings because today is about them and all those that were forcibly removed from their homes, from their families and sent far away, many of them … did not make it back and many of them have passed on," Fiddler says. "But there are some here even now amongst us that are still with us, so I acknowledge them and say miigwetch to all of them for being here to be able to walk with us."

Fiddler adds that he was reflecting on that morning about what First Nations people still go through even after all the years since the federal government officially established Sept. 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

"And yet in the NAN territory we have 15 communities that still do not have access to clean safe drinking water, we have many families that are still looking for a good home to live in and we have people like (the late) Miranda Mamakwa that die every year because they did not get access to the healthcare they needed when they needed it and they die," Fiddler says. "And we have a government, the federal government that continues to trample on who we are as a people, thinking that they have all the power to do whatever it is that they think that they want to do to make themselves richer, to come into our territories and extract our resources."

Fiddler says the federal government introduced a new bill on Sept. 21, Bill C-39, An Act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy.

"So my message to all of you, especially those that represent Ontario and Canada, is today is more than just the one day, it's more than just putting on your orange shirt and going for a march of a walk, it needs to be all year around," Fiddler says. "Because if you're serious about truth and reconciliation, you need to demonstrate all that in the work you do every day. And I hope that's something we can remember even in our own work in our own lives, in our own families, in our own homes and in our own communities that there is so much more to be done to truly honour those that went to residential school."



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin helps carry the Walk for Healing banner during Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Orange Shirt Day Walk and Gathering, held Sept. 30 from the NAN office to Vickers Park in Thunder Bay.

Indigenous Services Canada Minister Mandy Gull-Masty says she chose the NAN Orange Shirt Day Walk and Gathering as the location she wanted to be present at to shine the light on the history of what National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is in Canada.

"This day is also for me one that is very conflictual because I also come from a family impacted by residential school," Gull-Masty says. "I had the challenge of translating for my grandmother when she shared her story of her experience being at school, I had the opportunity to go with my mom when she went to her residential school and they participated in the destruction of that facility. I was not a residential school survivor myself but I have been very much shaped by the legacy of their participation in that institution."

Gull-Masty says she recently had an honest conversation with her daughter, and her daughter shared something that hit her very profoundly.

"My daughter's 25-years-old and she said, 'You know mom, we're really the first generation that's born free,'" Gull-Masty says. "And I thought that was so profound, that she is growing up in a place where she feels that she doesn't carry this weight forward. And I am sure she does in some ways and she doesn't realize it, but the fact that she speaks from a place of saying we are the first generation born free."

Gull-Masty says she wants people to realize and understand that while her family is in this space and having these conversations, this is not the conversation in every family because healing is not linear, healing is not a pan-national approach.

"Healing is what happens within your family unit and some people are still in a very hard space and place with that," Gull-Masty says. "So today is the day that we come together, that we honour the survivors who are still here, who are still telling their stories, who are still shining the light on a very hard truth in the history of Canada, and we honour them for their bravery, we honour them for their courage, we honour them for their survival."

ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐢᑭ ᐅᑭᒪᐃᐣ ᒥᐢᑯᐅᓴᐃᐣ ᔑᐱᑲᐣ ᑲᓇᑯᔑᑲᓂᑭᓇᐃᐣ ᐱᒧᓴᐃᐣ

ᕽᐃᐟ ᑲᕽᐃᐟ

ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐢᑭ ᐅᑭᒪᐃᐣ ᐱᒧᒋᑫᐃᐣ ᒥᐢᑯᐅᓴᐃᐣ ᔑᐱᑲᐣ ᑲᓇᑯᔑᑲᓂᑭᓇᐃᐣ ᐱᒧᓴᐃᐣ ᑲᓇ ᒪᒪᐃᐣᐢᑲᐃᐣ ᐁᐊᐟᑕᑊᐃᑕᐣ ᐅᑕᒋᐢᑲᒪᐃᐣᐟᓂᐊᐟ ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐢᑭ ᐅᑭᒪᐃᐣᐢᑲᒥᐃᐟ ᐃᒪ ᑲᑭᐃᐣᐢᑲᒪᐃᐣᐟᓂᐊᐟ ᐁᐊᐟᑕᑊᐃᑕᐣ ᐊᐢᑭ ᐅᑭᒪᐃᐣᐢᑲᒪᐃᐣᐟᓂᐊᐟ 30 ᐃᒪ ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯ ᐊᐢᑭ ᐅᑭᒪᐃᐣᐢᑲᒥᐃᐟ ᐃᒪ ᐱᑯᐃᐟᐢᐣ <ᐃᐟ ᑕᑐᐃᐟ V.

"ᓂᑕᑦ ᐣᑭᑐᑕᐣ ᑲᑯᓂᑯᓀᐣ ᑫᑭᐠᐁ ᓂᑭᒪᓀᓇᐣᐟᐊᒪᐊᐟᐁ ᓂᒥᔭᔭᐁ ᐊᐟᔭ ᑲᑭᐃᐣᐢᑲᒪᐃᐣᐟᓂᑕᐟᐣ ᑭᑭᓇᐣᐟᐊᒪᐊᐟᐁ ᐁᐊᐟᑕᑊᐃᑕᐣ ᐊᐢᑭ ᐅᑭᒪᐃᐣᐢᑲᒪᐃᐣᐟᓂᑕᐟᐣ ᐃᒪ

Community

Time change to follow permanent daylight saving time

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa, pictured at the Mamaw Kimiciminan Food Sovereignty Gathering, recently worked to get permanent daylight saving time implemented in the central time zone area in northwestern Ontario.

First Nations and communities across northwestern Ontario in the central time zone will now follow permanent daylight saving time after the provincial government announced the change on Oct. 13. The change came about after the Manitoba government announced its decision to follow permanent daylight saving time in their province beginning this November. Communities in the central time zone in northwestern Ontario and Manitoba will now have the same time as communities in the eastern time zone in Ontario during the winter months and will be one hour behind communities in the eastern time zone during the summer months.

"With the recently-announced changes to time observation across the provincial border, people across northwestern Ontario have been advocating for a common solution for time observation," says Kiiwetinoong MPP Sol Mamakwa. "This concern has also been reflected in a survey that our office conducted, to push the premier and his government to listen to northern communities and do the right thing. After bringing the voices of people across the northwest to the table, we are happy that daylight savings will be implemented permanently, bringing the northwest in line with our neighbours in Manitoba. We are proud of our collaborative efforts to deliver what works for the north."

Mamakwa says he collaborated with Kenora-Rainy River MPP Greg Rickford to have permanent daylight saving time implemented in the central time zone area in northwestern Ontario.

"We won't have to change our times anymore while we're over there," Mamakwa says. "And I know that we won't be an island of central time in northwestern Ontario where we could have been come Nov. 1. We're five hours from Winnipeg, four hours from Thunder Bay and they would have been both like eastern time."

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler had earlier raised concerns about how Manitoba's change to permanent daylight savings time would affect the NAN communities in the central time zone during an interview with Wawatay News on Sept. 29 at the Student Orientation for Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) high school students in Thunder Bay. The communities in northwestern Ontario in the central time zone would have been in a time zone area during the winter months where they were one hour behind the communities in the eastern time zone and one hour behind the communities in Manitoba if the switch to permanent daylight saving time had not been made.

"They'll be stuck in this weird time zone in the middle between Thunder Bay and Winnipeg," Fiddler says. "We need to coordinate a response to that along with Treaty #3 to ensure that everything is aligned, that there is no disruption of service and to ensure there is a coordination of timing for our communities in both time zones."

The Manitoba government announced their decision to stay on permanent daylight saving time on Sept. 17.

"We heard from Manitobans loud and clear – no more changing the clocks in Manitoba," says Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew. "Permanent daylight saving time is good for our health, good for business and good for parents. For families, especially those with young kids, that one-hour shift can disrupt sleep and routines for days. This change means one less adjustment families have to deal with each spring and fall. That's why this November, your clocks won't be changing."

Mamakwa says he did a survey in September to find out what people in his riding thought about the issue after Kinew's announcement.

"The response was over 1,000 people," Mamakwa says. "It was like at 91 per cent of the people wanted to join the Wab Kinew time. What happened as well was some of the municipalities did their own (surveys). The more I talked to people, it was the same — some of them were like 91 to 95 per cent that they wanted to change the time too."

The provincial government states in an Oct. 13 press release that the proposed regulatory change to implement permanent daylight saving time in the central time zone area in northwestern Ontario would be implemented by Nov. 1 to ensure there is no disruption for businesses, families and Indigenous communities in Ontario's central time zone.

"Providing certainty and predictability is essential to supporting strong communities and a competitive economy," says Attorney General Doug Downey. "By keeping this part of the province aligned with Manitoba, our government is taking a practical, common-sense approach to avoid unnecessary disruptions and ensure economic stability in communities that reside in Ontario's central time zone."

The provincial government states that the decision to follow permanent daylight saving time in the central time zone came after considerable engagement with communities throughout northwestern Ontario, including Indigenous leaders.

"Through the collective efforts of communities and First Nations across the northwest, we've led a process to build consensus the right way, with detailed and nuanced considerations," says Greg Rickford, minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation. "What has emerged is unanimous support across the region to move to permanent daylight saving time, and our government is proud to support the people of northwestern Ontario as we make this decision, together."



Community



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Fried sturgeon from the Albany River was one of the foods served during Lakehead University's Fall Harvest gathering.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Fried walleye from Lake Nipigon was one of the foods served during Lakehead University's Fall Harvest gathering.

Lakehead's Fall Harvest gathering featured cultural teachings



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Elder Beatrice Twance-Hynes shares a song.

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Lakehead University held its Fall Harvest gathering with a variety of cultural teachings and traditional foods for students and visitors on Sept. 19 at the Sweat Lodge Site.

"We are so fortunate that we have such a giving community in this area, we have people from all over, Fort William First Nation, the Métis Nation, Marten Falls and all along the north shore," says Denise Baxter, vice provost Indigenous Initiatives at Lakehead University. "We have people who are doing the Mushkegowuk style of cooking traditional goose and we have sturgeon from the Albany River and bannock. We've had Elder Beatrice (Twance-Hynes) do traditional singing and language classes with Charlotte (Marten) and water teachings with Elder Sheila (DeCorte)."

Baxter says they also had a visitor from Germany at the gathering.

"He said, 'I feel like I'm learning all the good things about Indigenous culture in a couple of hours,'" Baxter says. "But this is just a snapshot into part of the ways that we came together and gathered — fall harvest is an important time to really give thanks for the summer we've had and the bounty and getting ready for winter."

Twance-Hynes, from Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, says she shared some songs as well as some stories about how the drum came to the Anishinabek and how it first came to her during the gathering.

"I shared about tobacco as well," Twance-Hynes says. "(I was) even singing some children's songs, ABCs, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. I shared where I learned the songs from and translated the songs as well so that people know what I'm singing about if it's in (Anishinabemowin)."

DeCorte, from Fort William, says she shared her water reflections on her experiences as a water walker in Thunder Bay over the last eight years during the gathering.

"I'm going into my ninth year this year," DeCorte says. "This will be our first four-year commitment where we're solely focusing on the water. We'll be on the water this time, it's not going to be a walk, it's going to be a paddle."

DeCorte says they decided to do the paddle on the Kaministiquia River after a spill occurred on the river just after they had completed their last water walk in 2025.

"That just made me realize that our work is not done, and we need to focus more on the water itself," DeCorte says. "The Kaministiquia is the migration route of my ancestors and that river feeds into the largest freshwater lake in the world, Gichigami."

Jared Visitor, a student at Lakehead University, says they were serving goose and dumpling stew during the gathering.

"Some of them have never tried goose before and they were really open and really excited," Visitor says. "This smell I think is what is drawing a lot of people here, and then once we start talking about dumplings, they're like, 'Oh, yeah, we've got to try that.'"

Visitor says they used to eat geese when he was growing up in Moose Factory.

"Lots of Crees over there, we love our geese," Visitor says.

Métis Senator Grant Robbins, from the Thunder Bay and District Métis Council, says they were serving fried walleye from Lake Nipigon during the gathering.

"We do this every year at this event," Robbins says. "We have more volunteers this year, which is great, and I think this year we've got more people coming to the booth because we're having a hard time keeping up with the cooked fish."

Marten Falls Elder Catherine McGuire says they were serving fried sturgeon from the Albany River during the gathering.

"It's good, and we're cooking bannock and bannock dogs," McGuire says. "We've been doing this almost every year, ever since I was young I can remember doing this. It's healthy and good."

Celine Wick, an Indigenous Learning professor at Lakehead University, says they were harvesting sage and other medicines from the Gitigaan Medicine Garden during the gathering.

"The medicine garden helps to supply medicines that are used by students and staff and folks on campus in the Indigenous Student Services Centre throughout the year," Wick says. "So we're just working on harvesting sage right now, but we also have sweet grass and tobacco and some mint and some other things."

WEQUEDONG LODGE OF THUNDER BAY
Incorporated January 1984

38th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

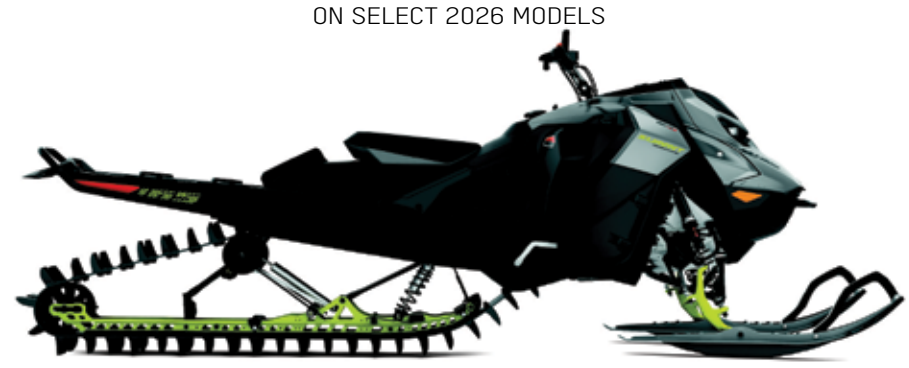
Date: Saturday, December 5, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Valhalla Inn
1 Valhalla Inn Road
Thunder Bay, ON

Applications for membership are available, please email:

info@weqlodge.org

or call 807-622-2977

GET UP TO
$1,000 OFF
OR **1.99%** FINANCING
FOR 36 MONTHS
ON SELECT 2026 MODELS



2027 MODELS
ARE ARRIVING!
OVER **140 IN-STOCK**
WITH MORE ENROUTE.



EXPEDITION



BACKCOUNTRY



SUMMIT

ASK ABOUT
NO PAYMENTS
FOR UP TO 6 MONTHS

ski-doo

Half-Way Motors POWERSPORTS
1230 Carrick St., Thunder Bay • 807-622-2626
halfwaymotorspowersports.com

©2026 Bombardier Recreational Products Inc. (BRP).
All rights reserved. Offers for a limited time while quantities last.

ᐊᐧᐊᐤ WAWATAY NEWS ᐊᑭᒧᐧᐃᓐᐧᐃᑲ

165th Avenue North P.O. Box 1180
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1B7

Serving the First Nations in Northern Ontario since 1974. Wawatay News is a politically independent monthly newspaper published by Wawatay Communications Society.

ᓂᑫᑦᑦ ᑲᑭᒪᑕᓄᑲᑌᐧ 1974 ᐁᐅᑭᐊᓄᑲᑌᑭᐧᐃᓐ ᑭᐧᐁᑎᓄᑌᐧ ᐅᐧᐃᑌᐧᐣᐃᓕᐦ ᑕᐃᑦᓯᕐᓂᐧᐃᓐᐧᐃᑲ. ᑕᓯᓂᔑᐱᒋᓀᐃᑲᑲᑌ ᐅᓯᑭᑲᑌ ᐊᐧᐊᐤ ᐊᓂᓯᓂᓂᐧᐃ ᐊᑭᒧᐧᐃᓐᐧᐃᑲ ᒥᓇ ᑲᐧᐃᐣ ᐅᓇᔑᐧᐁᐧᐃᐃ ᑲᓇᐧᐊᑭᓂᓂᐧᐃᓐᐧᐃᑲᑌᐧ ᑭᐃᓯ ᐸᐸᒥᓯᑲᓂᐧᐃᓐᐧᐃᑲ.

Commentary

Celebrating Our Aunt Celine



Xavier Kataquapit

UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

My aunt Celine Mary (Kataquapit) Nakogee passed away on September 28, 2026, at the age of 86. Her family will deeply miss her kindness, wonderful smile, and fun nature. She is survived by her husband of 61 years, past Attawapiskat Chief John B. Nakogee and their children George, Jenny, Mary, David, Roger, Beverly, Norman and Peter. She was also predeceased by their son John B Jr. She also leaves behind many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

I had a chance to speak to my uncle John B after the funeral. He talked about how deeply he was connected to his life partner and how much they loved each other. They both grew up in the north and they understood how hard their lives had been. They are both survivors of the residential school system. As a young girl, Celine was taken to southern Ontario to attend school and also to be treated for a lung disease.

John B told me about how his wife described the trip south from the north. Children from farther north arrived in Attawapiskat by transport boat and more were loaded onto the craft there to go south. The boat travel was gruesome, as children got sick and latrines spilled, making a mess everywhere as they were tossed about in the ocean waves of James Bay. Celine was taken to Moosonee, where she boarded a train and instead of being placed among the passengers, was relegated to lying on the floor of a cargo box car for the journey.

She was the last of my father Marius Kataquapit's siblings. She had a younger brother, David and older brothers Marius, Gabriel, Alex, Leo, George and Thomas. Their families made up a grand Kataquapit family of children and grandchildren that all grew up together in Attawapiskat.

Celine and her brothers' parents were Janie (Wesley) Kataquapit and James Kataquapit. James was one of 23 young men who went overseas with the military in 1917 during the First World War. Many of us younger grandchildren didn't get to know our grandmother Janie, as she passed away in a tragic house fire on November 19, 1969. Life in the north was difficult and childhood mortality was common because there was no modern medical help. Their parents lost their first two sons, William and Peter and after all the children had arrived, they again lost their two youngest Mary and Gregory.

Celine and John B lived and worked in the north after their marriage on May 9, 1965 and they were happy to see their children being raised in the traditional culture of Ineeneenoo Peemahteeseewin (James Bay Cree life). They moved to Moosonee for a time, where John B first worked as a Social Hous-ing Manager and later for Indian Affairs Canada. When they returned to Attawapiskat to raise their family, John B became involved in local leadership and played an influential role in the development of our First Nation in many capacities.

Celine and John B were strong advocates for childhood education and youth supports. They had survived the traumas of residential school and they knew that a healthy childhood together with quality education was a way to raise a generation of people out of poverty and helplessness.

Their advocacy and the lessons they taught their children and grandchildren helped inspire their 13-year-old granddaughter, Shannen Koostachin, to take a vocal stand for Indigenous youth. Shannen, the daughter of Jenny (Nakogee) Koostachin and Andrew Koostachin, gained worldwide attention for her fight for a new elementary school for Attawapiskat. She was recognized for her efforts when she was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize. Sadly and tragically, Shannen died in a motor vehicle accident in 2010 but her work lives on in Shannen's Dream, a youth movement that advocates for equitable funding. In 2014, thanks largely to Shannen's efforts, the new Kattawapiskak Elementary School opened in Attawapiskat.

Even after the loss of their granddaughter, Celine and John B never stopped speaking up for In digenous youth. Celine and John B always shared with great pride how their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren moved on to higher education and professional careers.

Aunt Celine's funeral service was the first to be held at the newly opened St. Francis Xavier Church in Attawapiskat. In the absence of a local priest, local Elders Francis Hookimaw and Annabella Iahtail led the Catholic service and both were also dear friends of Celine. The service also included Traditional Leader Danny Metatawabin, who provided traditional song, drumming and ceremony.

The service was difficult for all of us but it was also filled with so many of our relatives, cousins and community members who still speak our Ineeneemoon (James Bay Cree language). The language is filled with so much humour. As I spoke to all of them, I couldn't help but think that our late Aunt Celine and all her brothers were speaking and laughing there amongst us all. Kee-sah-kee-eh-tee-nan Too-sis Seh-len (We love you Aunt Celine).

www.underthenorthernsky.com

Indigenous Water Law project connects Indigenous youth in Northern Ontario



submitted photo

An Indigenous approach to water management is at the heart of a two-year research project in Northern Ontario involving three universities and Cambrian College. The project brings together Indigenous youth in Northern Ontario to learn about Indigenous water law and its importance to protecting water and supporting sustainable development. It is made possible through $60,000 in funding from the Laidlaw Foundation. The Government of Ontario is also supporting the project.

Respecting The Land Is Reconciliation



Xavier Kataquapit

UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

This is the time of the year when Canada commemorates the Truth and Reconciliation process which was meant to address the dark period of cultural genocide created by the Indian Residential School system. The government of Canada established the residential school system through a network of church-run institutions to assimilate Indigenous children into European culture. It lasted well over a hundred years in Canada.

In 2008, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission led by the late Chair Justice Murray Sinclair spent six years gathering testimony from survivors across the country. It was meant to record their testimony and document the truth from actual survivors of this terrible period.

This process directly impacted my family and every family along the James Bay coast. Both my parents Marius and Susan Kataquapit were survivors of the residential school system and it was a deeply emotional period for our family to know that our parents had to share their experiences. Our parents never spoke about what happened to them because it was all buried behind a veil of shame, anger and fear. They had been victims as children in the 1940s and 50s and they spent the majority of their lives believing that their traumatic experiences never mattered.

The culmination of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was their final report which was released in 2015 and it was this document that stated that the entire residential school era constituted 'cultural genocide' through an intentional attempt to destroy Indigenous language, culture and familial ties. As part of the final report, 94 Calls to Action were presented to deal with the ongoing legacy of the residential school era and how it has affected and continues to affect Indigenous communities.

The first 42 Calls to Action address critical social systems, including child welfare, education, language and culture, health, and justice. The remaining 52 Calls to Action focus on transforming broader Canadian institutions to work towards long-term equality and respect.

Over the past decade, one of the most important developments for Indigenous communities in the north is in their ability to regain control of the lands and territories they call home. This is in part due to the developments of the Truth and Reconciliation process which has given Indigenous people more confidence in speaking out against past injustices. Indigenous groups, especially a new generation of young leaders and advocates, are now stepping up to fight against any future injustices that might happen on traditional lands.

The 92nd Call to Action specifically states: "We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following: Commit to mean-ingful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects."

I'm proud to say that young Indigenous leaders like Jeronimo Kataquapit of the 'Here We Stand' youth-led movement and Ramon Kataquapit, co-founder of 'Okiniwak', a youth-led group, are leading the charge in northern Ontario to uphold this vital Call to Action. They are leading the fight against ongoing development by both the Ontario and Canadian governments, which want to continue moving ahead with the proposed Ring of Fire mining region in northwestern Ontario. The federal government has pushed ahead Bill C-39, which builds on the foundations of Bill C-5, to move ahead with proposed mechanisms to exempt projects from assessment, permitting and protection measures.

Jeronimo and Ramon recently took part in the 'Together for Nature Tour', a multi-city tour through southern Ontario from September 15 to 18, which brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to raise their voices for nature and all our relations through story and song. Hosted by Ontario Nature and Legal Advocates for Nature's Defence (LAND), the event brought together Jeronimo Kataquapit, Ramon Kataquapit, the Friends of the Attawapiskat River and Juno award-winning Inuk singer Susan Aglukark to talk about pro-tecting the land and respecting Indigenous rights.

In the spirit of reconciliation, government, together with industry, has to take into account the active concerns and participation of Indigenous people regarding any major development on traditional lands. After a century of injustices inflicted on Indigenous people, the Canadian government should do its best to pave the way to a more economically equitable and respectful future with Indigenous people that respects First Nation rights and protects the land for generations to come. Respecting the land that Indigenous people call home is one of the most important aspects of reconciliation.

www.underthenorthernsky.com

CONTACT US

Sioux Lookout
Office Hours: 8:30 - 5:00 CST

Phone: ..... (807) **737-2951**
Toll Free: **1-800-243-9059**
Fax: .....(807) 737-3224
..... (807) 737-2263

Timmins
Office Hours: 8:30-4:30 EST

Phone: .....**(705) 3604556**
Toll Free: **1-877-929-2829**
Fax: ..... (705)360-1601

ACTING CEO/PUBLISHER
Mark Kakekagumick
markk@wawatay.on.ca

MANAGING EDITOR
Chris Kornacki
chrisk@wawatay.on.ca

NORTHERN LIGHTS BANNER
Dan Russell
http://NorthernLightsNow.com

SALES REPRESENTATIVE
Tom Scura
Phone: 807 622-6000
toms@wawatay.on.ca

CIRCULATION/PRINTING
Safeguard Business Systems
Thunder Bay, ON

TRANSLATION
Vicky Angees
vickya@wawatay.on.ca

DESIGN AND LAYOUT
Through the Sky Studio

CONTRIBUTORS
Rick Garrick
Xavier Kataquapit

Guest editorials, columnists and letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of Wawatay News.

Disclaimers: *All submissions to the Managing Editor must be in a Microsoft Word document, double spaced, and must adhere to Canadian Press style. Wawatay reserves the right to refuse to publish any unsolicited submissions.*

Wawatay Communications Society and all its affiliate media outlets are intended to provide general information and news to the public. The material expressed within is given for general information only and does not constitute professional, legal or medical advice. Where appropriate, users should seek their own professional advice. Wawatay accepts no responsibility for loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting as a result of material published or broadcast. Wawatay accepts no liability in respect of material contained on other sites which may be linked to from time to time.

Community



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Fort William Elder Sheila DeCorte and a group of paddlers completed the Kaministiquia Anishinabek Nibi Manidookewin water ceremony along the Kaministiquia River from Fort William Historical Park to the Thunder Bay Rowing Club on Oct. 3.

Elder Sheila DeCorte completes water ceremony

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Fort William Elder Sheila DeCorte and 11 other paddlers completed the Kaministiquia Anishinabek Nibi Manidookewin water ceremony in a canoe along the Kaministiquia River on Oct. 3. The water ceremony, which included youth from Fort William, experienced water walkers, experienced paddlers from Lakehead University's Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism program and Juan Sanchez, an assistant professor at Lakehead University who was one of the authors of the Indigenous Waterviews anthology, began at Fort William Historical Park and finished at the Thunder Bay Rowing Club in Thunder Bay.

"It's a water ceremony for the Kaministiquia Anishinabek — it started off with a beautiful sunrise ceremony we did this morning from Fort William Historical Park," DeCorte says. "We've been doing water walks for the last eight years, and when we do our water walks we can't always be close to the water as we would like to be because of private homes and industry."

DeCorte says they decided to do the water ceremony after there was an effluent spill on the Kaministiquia River from the Thunder Bay Pulp and Paper mill in August 2025, about two weeks after they had completed a four-year commitment for the For the Love of the Rivers water walks.

"The Kaministiquia, like many of our other creeks and rivers in the city (Thunder Bay), they all flow into our largest freshwater lake in the world, Anishinabe Gichigami (Lake Superior), and we can't have that happening," DeCorte says. "So that told me our work was not done and that we needed to continue our work, but this time we needed to focus a little bit more of actually being on the water."

DeCorte says the water ceremony, which was the first of a four-year commitment to do water ceremonies on the Kaministiquia River, was shorter than they had originally planned, as they had planned to launch near Kakabeka Falls.

"And then the water levels were much too low at Stanley where we would have put in there, so we decided to do (the launch at) Fort William Historical Park," DeCorte says.

Abi Stevens-DeCorte, one of the paddlers, says it was important to participate in the water ceremony because water is the basis of life.

"And it's our responsibility to protect it, especially a main waterway like the Kaministiquia," Stevens-DeCorte says, noting that she previously participated in a few other water walks, including the McVicar Creek and McIntyre River water walks. "This one is by far the best, I feel the most connected to my culture and ancestors when I'm on the Kaministiquia."

Keira Loukes, one of the paddlers and an assistant professor at Lakehead University, says DeCorte spoke to her Land Relations class a couple of years ago to introduce them to the work she had done with the water walks over the years.

"(She) said in that talk that it would be really great if we were closer to the river and we could go by canoe," Loukes says. "We shared with Sheila, 'Hey we've got canoes, we could go with you and support that dream.'"

Loukes says they did their first water walk trip with DeCorte down the Kaministiquia River in 2024.

"We walked for part of it and did the second part by raft for the first (half) because the water level was pretty high and then by canoe for the second half," Loukes says. "Sheila has started another four-year (commitment) and this is the first year of that, so we're hoping … to continue to support that work down the Kaministiquia River."

Sanchez, who is from the Andes in Columbia, says it felt good to be on the Kaministiquia River.

"It's good to show solidarity, so that's what we were doing, telling the water that we are here, that we feel, so she can continue her journey to the big lake, and for all of us she is our mother," Sanchez says.

ᔑᕀᐊ ᑎᑲ·ᕒ᙮ ᐅᑭᔑᑐᑋ ᓂᐱᓂ ᑲᐱᒧᓴᑲᑕᑦ

ᕒᐃᐦ ᑲᕒᐃᐦ

ᐸ·ᕒ᙮ Δ·ᕀΔᓴᑦ ᑭᑎϑ· ᔑᕀᐊ ᑎᑲ·ᕒ᙮ ᒥᓇ ძᑕᑭᓴᐦ ᐯᔑძᓭ' ᐅᐱᒪძᔑϑ·ᐦ ᐅᑭᑭᔑᑐᓇᐊ· ᑲᒥᓂᑎϑ·ᓴ ᐊᓂᔑᓇᐯᐦ ᓂᐱ ᒪᓂᑐϑ·ᑋ ᐃᒪ ᑲᒥᓂᑎϑ·ᓴ ᓭᐱᐦ. Ꮁᑲ·⁻ ᐅᐱᒪ"ᐊᒧᐃᐠᐱᓭᑦ 3. ᐅᐁ· ᓂᐱ ᐱᒥᓴΔ·ᔅ, ᑭᑕᑭ·ᐊᐦ ᐸ·ᕒ᙮ Δ·ᕀΔᓴᑦ ᐅᵘᑲᑎᓴᐦ, ᑲᓂᑕᐱᒧᓴᐊ·⁻, ᓂᐱᓴ ᑲᐃᒧᓴᑲᑕᒧᐊ·⁻, ᑲᓂᑕᐱᒪძᓂᐁ·ᐊ⁻ ᐃᒪ ᕒᐁᐠ"ᐁᐠ ᑭᑎᑭᑭᓂᒪᑲᒥᐦ ᐊᑲᑑ ᑲᐃᐦ ᐯᐱᒪᐊᑑᐦ ᐊᓂᑑᐦ ᐊᐁᑭᑲᑕᒧᐊ·⁻ ᐃᒪ ᕒᐁᐠ"ᐁᐠ ᑭᑎᑭᑭᓂᒪᑲᒥᐦ ᒥ"ᐊᐁ· ᐯᓂᐦ ᑲᐁᐅᑐᐊᐁ·ᑲᒥᐦ ᒪᓇᓂᐦ ᐱᒪᐊᑲᑑᐦ ᑲᐁᐅᑐᐊᐁ·ᑲᒥ



WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM COUNSELLING?

Counselling provides an opportunity to tell your story. We feel there are many important aspects to a helpful counselling session. It is important that our counsellors:

- Help clients to feel comfortable
- Be non-judgemental
- Be culturally sensitive
- Allow the client to decide what issues to talk about
- Teach coping skills for mental health
- Be a good clinical match for our clients

At Sullivan + Associates Clinical Psychology, we have 40 Master's and Doctoral-level Counsellors who provide service for children, adolescents, adults, couples and families.

We provide counselling services in-person, online and by telephone for all mental health issues with the most common issues being:

- Trauma
- Grief and Loss
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger
- Addictions

For counselling services, we are happy to help clients access funding through Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch *(FNIHB)* and Indian Residential School *(IRS)* programs.

Sullivan
+ Associates
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

WWW.DRSULLIVAN.CA

Email: admin@drsullivan.ca
Toll-Free: (888) 269-0237
Fax: (807) 683-7167

Business

Fednor and ABPA make major funding announcement

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Anishnawbe Business Professional Association (ABPA) and three other organizations in northern Ontario are being provided with $4,985,998 in federal government funding through FedNor's Northern Ontario Development Program, Community Futures Program and Economic Development Initiative. The ABPA is receiving $394,020 to enable the hiring of a procurement navigator for a three-year period.

"True economic reconciliation requires moving beyond policy targets to building actionable, Indigenous-led pathways to commercial success," says Jason Rasevych, president at ABPA. "Through our Procurement Navigator Project, the ABPA is serving as a catalyst to bridge the federal five per cent procurement gap and position our First Nation businesses at the forefront of major supply chains. Our partnership with FedNor establishes a scalable, high-integrity blueprint in northern Ontario that demonstrates how direct investment in Indigenous business capacity drives lasting economic self-determination across Canada."

Rasevych says the Procurement Navigator Project is the first of its kind in the country that tackles federal procurement for Indigenous businesses.

"The ABPA is going to hire a senior procurement expert that is going to be working with us to provide hands-on, one-on-one mentorship for up to 50 Indigenous businesses," Rasevych says. "They're going to deconstruct complex RFPs, prepare competitive bids with them and structure their strategic joint ventures."

Rasevych says the procurement navigator will also do 24 targeted master classes in partnership with other organizations, such as potentially NADF, to talk about contract bonding, project costing and cash flow management for Indigenous entrepreneurs.

"We're really excited about this because the federal government has mandated that five per cent of their federal contracts must be directed to Indigenous business, but that policy target alone does not put ink on the contracts," Rasevych says. "Across northern Ontario, First Nation businesses have faced these complex challenges with the administrative hurdles, the bidding process, the bureaucracy of the federal procurement. It wasn't designed for us, so now we've got a support mechanism that's been put in place that will unlock a lot of opportunity, it's going to stop regional economic leakage from happening and keep federal contracting capital working in the north for Indigenous businesses and families and it's going to create local employment and strengthen our northern supply chains."

Patty Hajdu, minister of Jobs and Families and minister responsible for FedNor, says northern Ontario's economy grows when more people have the chance to participate.

"These investments will help entrepreneurs build good jobs close to home and help communities create an economy that includes everyone who lives here," Hajdu says. "When talented people can build their careers in northern Ontario, they stay and the whole region is stronger for it."



submitted photo

Jason Rasevych, president at the Anishnawbe Business Professional Association (ABPA), participated in a FedNor funding announcement on Oct. 14 that included $394,020 for the ABPA to hire a procurement navigator for a three-year period.

The PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise is receiving $3,226,303 to support for strategy and business development as well as technology adoption for women-led businesses in northern Ontario.

"The world needs women to be leaders, and PARO is proud to be an organization that uplifts women in northern Ontario to thrive in our regional economy by seizing business opportunities and building the communities they call home," says Rosalind Lockyer, founder and CEO at PARO. "Thanks to FedNor's support, we can continue to provide a solid foundation for not just growth but also continued adaptation in a changing economy. Our mission is to empower women, strengthen small business, and promote economic development. Thanks to collaborative partnerships like this, we have supported nearly 50,000 businesses to date, and we look forward to bolstering many more."

The Association des francophones du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario (AFNOO) is receiving $315,675 to help create matches between qualified bilingual workers and employers.

"Francophones provide countless economic and cultural contributions to northwestern Ontario, and AFNOO develops and provides access to resources in order to facilitate their integration into the region," says Élodie Grunerud, executive director at AFNOO. "We are proud to promote the Francophonie in several arenas, including entrepreneurship, educations, culture and more. Thanks to FedNor and the government of Canada, we can continue to represent Francophones in northwestern Ontario, providing the support they need to thrive in the region."

Thunder Bay Ventures is receiving $1,050,000 to support operations for a three-year period and to support the administration of an investment pool program delivered by seven Community Futures Development Corporations across northwestern Ontario.

Jason Rasevych raises resource concerns at United Nations

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Ginoogaming's Jason Rasevych recently raised concerns at the United Nations about how resource companies can list exploration claims on Canadian stock exchanges without informing investors if those claims face blockades, land disputes or revoked consent. Rasevych delivered his comments on Sept. 23 before the United Nations Human Rights Council at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

"I went to Geneva representing the Anishnawbe Business Professional Association to deliver a clear message to the international community that First Nations consent is not a barrier to economic development, it's a critical capital market issue," says Rasevych, president at the Anishnawbe Business Professional Association (ABPA).

"Consent is not an obstacle or a cost centre — it unlocks what Waawoono Consultancy's rightly dubbed the certainty premium in its landmark report, Beyond the IBA. When resource companies build genuine, consent-based partnerships with First Nations, they secure legal certainty, lower their cost of capital, and protect long-term shareholder value. The real financial threat is ignoring First Nations, which leads to blockades, lawsuits and written-off assets. Mandatory consent rules level the playing field for responsible businesses."

Rasevych says Platinex Inc. v. Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation (KI) is an example of what can happen in such cases. The Province of Ontario and Platinex Inc. entered into an agreement in 2009 to resolve the company's litigation against Ontario and KI over the company's Big Trout Lake Property. As part of the settlement, Platinex dropped its lawsuits against the Crown and KI, and surrendered all its mining claims and leases at Big Trout Lake. In return Platinex received $5 million and a potential future royalty interest. The provincial government also withdrew those lands from staking and mineral exploration.

"Six of the community leaders were jailed, and some of them were Elders," Rasevych says. "There was a lot of public backlash around … protests, public outcry and reputational damages."

Rasevych says there is value behind Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

"We made the business case in Geneva that Free, Prior and Informed Consent should not just be a regulatory hurdle or a cost centre, that there's business value in doing so, that there's a lower cost of capital and timelines for projects move quicker by 40 per cent," Rasevych says. "So when we bring that forward, there has to be some institutional will on the part of government and companies to say, 'If we want to do these projects right, we should be looking to honour that.'"

Rasevych says the ABPA has been attempting to advocate to the Ontario Securities Commission and the Canadian Securities Administrators to make those changes, for companies to need to disclose if a community is fighting their project or not and whether they have achieved FPIC.



submitted photo

Jason Rasevych, president at the Anishnawbe Business Professional Association, recently travelled to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland to deliver a clear message to the international community that First Nations consent is not a barrier to economic development, it's a critical capital market issue.

Rasevych says the Wabun Tribal Council has built a framework where agreements are mandatory from day one before a drill bit touches the ground.

"And they have successfully executed over 60 exploration agreements and major impact benefit agreements with global producers like Alamos Gold and Agnico Eagle," Rasevych says. "And those companies didn't face court injunctions or site blockades, they got their operational predictability and the lower cost to build and project bankability and that's certainly premium in action."

Rasevych also urged UNESCO and member states during his trip to Geneva to align financial rules with heritage protection to safeguard the James Bay Lowlands peatlands.

"Our ancestral lands in Ontario are not just speculative mining blocks on a stock ticker; they are living cultural heritage and one of the world's most vital carbon sinks," Rasevych says. "First Nations holds inherent jurisdiction over these waters. Global financial systems must respect Indigenous governance before capital is raised to disturb these critical landscapes."

Nishnawbe Aski Nation
◁σᔑᓇV ◁ᐦᑭ ᐅᑭᒪ·Δᵉ

A Message From Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse



I am honoured to serve as Deputy Grand Chief for the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (“NAN”) territory and to share information with you as we come together to advance the priorities of our Nations. I am pleased to see that implementation of the Ontario Final Agreement (“OFA”) is underway, with communities leading the development of Multi-Year Plans and working with our First Nation Agencies to co-develop the Child and Community Well-Being Plans. This work reflects our collective direction to reclaim jurisdiction and ensure that decisions impacting our children, youth, and families are made by our own people, grounded in our laws, values, and ways of life. OFA is about more than systems; it is about restoring our responsibility to our families, strengthening our kinship networks, and ensuring our children grow up connected to who they are.

Ontario Final Agreement

What is the Ontario Final Agreement?

The Ontario Final Agreement (OFA) is a significant agreement milestone that provides First Nations in Ontario with increased funding and greater control over child, youth, and Family Services. It enables communities to design and deliver supports that reflect their culture, values, and unique local needs.

The path to this agreement began in 2007 when concerns were raised about the inequitable treatment of First Nations children and families living on reserve. In 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal confirmed that Canada had discriminated against First Nations children and ordered systemic changes. Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) helped advocate for reforms that recognize the distinct priorities and remote realities of NAN communities.

In February 2025, Ontario First Nations leaders approved the OFA, and it came into effect on May 29th, 2026. The OFA provides communities with enhanced resources and decision-making authority to develop services tailored to their children, youth, and families. Its objectives are to keep families together whenever possible, prevent children from entering care, support youth as they transition into adulthood, and ensure services are equitable, culturally grounded, and community-led.

Through the OFA, First Nations are empowered to design and implement service delivery programs that are rooted in their own traditions, values, and community priorities.



What changed because of the OFA?

The OFA changes how funding works. Instead of an older, less flexible system, communities now receive funding that better matches their needs. First Nations have the funding and resources to plan and deliver prevention services, First Nations Representative Services, and supports for young adults who were in care or are aging out of care. The agreement also supports community needs like housing, household supports, and spaces to run programs. Communities can now plan supports based on their needs, instead of following a one-size-fits-all system. This is an important step toward recognizing that First Nations know best how to care for their children, youth, families, and communities.

What can OFA funding support?

Basic community services: funding for communities to be able to host and deliver services.

Prevention: supports that help families before a crisis happens.

First Nation Representative Services: help for children and families involved with, or at risk of being involved with, child welfare.

Post-Majority Support Services: financial support, where required, based on the unique needs of each youth, along with life-skills support and access to services up to age 26.

Household Supports: basic needs of the household.

Housing: funding for communities to build or repair houses in the community.

Top-up: Additional funding for information technology, reporting, and emergencies.

Remoteness: additional funding for higher service delivery costs in remote communities.

Capital: infrastructure to support the delivery of FNCFS programs.

What do communities need to do?

Communities are responsible for developing plans that clearly outline their priorities, goals, and spending plans. Two key planning documents are required:

- **A Multi-Year Plan (MYP)** that identifies priorities for prevention, First Nation Representative Services (FNRS), and Post Majority Support Services.
- **A First Nation Infrastructure Investment Plan (FNIIP)** that outlines capital and infrastructure needs.

Communities will also need to engage with their Agency to develop the Agency's Child and Community Wellbeing Plan.

The Child and Community Wellbeing Plan identifies community priorities for Agencies and is a form of accountability. This plan is the agency's responsibility, but it must be developed collaboratively and reflect the direction they receive from communities.

Plans must be completed and submitted by November 30, 2026.

Where can I learn more?

Visit FNCFS Reform:

https://www.fncfsreform.ca/

or NAN OFA Engagement:

https://www.nan.ca/ofa-engagement-and-pre-implementation-gathering/

Nishnawbe Aski Nation
◁σᔑᓇV ◁ᐠᑭ ᐅᑭᒪ·Δᵊ

For more information please email Asheley Wilson at awilson@nan.ca or Lyric Allin at lallin@nan.ca or ofainfo@nan.ca

Beginning September 9th, 2026, NAN will host weekly Information sessions from 2-3 pm. *Connect with the NAN team for the link!*

Education

Grand Chief Fiddler addresses new high school students

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler stressed the importance of looking after one's spirit during the Student Orientation for Nishnawbe Aski Nation high school students in Thunder Bay on Sept. 29. The orientation was held by the NAN Education Partnerships Program at the Superior Inn Hotel and Conference Centre.

"It was something that I never thought about when I was in high school," says Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler. "When I think back now, I wish I had done that sooner, to be able to look after my spirit. And how do you do that, you can go to church if that's what your parents or grandparents taught you to do, even going out to the land, going for a walk, going to sit on a bench on the lake, by the river, or going to ceremony, because that's who we are."

Fiddler says so many young people don't know what to do or where to go.

"And I just encourage you, that you begin this new school year to talk to an Elder, to talk to a knowledge keeper, to talk to your parents, to talk to a healer because you need to be able to find your way as you experience this crazy life called high school," Fiddler says. "You need to be able to ground yourself because you will see and experience a lot of things, good things and bad things, and when you experience those bad days you need to be able to ground yourself with something that will help you make it through that bad day."

Fiddler says his youngest daughter, who attended Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School and college and is now in university, has found her spirituality through ceremony.

"And I've been so honoured to join her in that journey," Fiddler says, noting they went to a sun dance and a shaking tent ceremony this fall. "And it was in one of those ceremonies where I was blessed with my own spirit name, and to me it is a way of reclaiming who we are. The English name that we were given is part of our identity, but it's not our true identity, we all were born with a spirit name."

Fiddler says his spirit name is Leaping Red Thunderbird, noting that it keeps him grounded whenever he struggles with his work.

"If there is one thing you will remember about this day, it's just think about your spirit and how important it is to look after it because if you do that, everything else will be a bit easier, getting up in the morning and going to school, doing your homework, making it through the week, making it through the semester and making it through the school year," Fiddler says. "You can do it, I know you can do it, and there are so many people here that love you and care about you and we will do everything we can to make sure that you succeed in your schooling."

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum says she encourages the students to participate in the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation events on Sept. 30.

"I encourage you to listen and I encourage you to honour our relatives who were taken into the Indian residential school system," Achneepineskum says. "They survived because they wanted you to be here and they wanted you to succeed. So remember that, honour yourself, love yourself and always remember that there are many of us that want you to succeed, and we will be there in the shadows always to help you, to support you, applaud you and to care for you."

Tisha Duncan, a member of the NAN Oshkaatisak (All Young People's) Council, says that starting school and adjusting to a new environment is not always easy, but it could also be very exciting.

"One thing I really want to encourage you all to do while you are here is to look out for one another, get to know the people around you, build meaningful relationships and learn about the supports and resources available to you here in Thunder Bay," Duncan says. "You don't have to figure everything out on your own, and there are people and organizations here who want to see you succeed. Most importantly, I hope you enjoy yourself today, meet some new people and leave knowing a little bit more about the supports in community available to you."



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler speaks during the Student Orientation for Nishnawbe Aski Nation high school students in Thunder Bay on Sept. 29.





Education

Oshki celebrates 25 years with Memengwaa Gala

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Lorrie Deschamps, president at Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute, speaks during the Memenquaa Social Oshki-Wenjack Fundraising Gala, held Oct. 16 at the Valhalla Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute celebrated 25 years of service by holding the Memenquaa Social Oshki-Wenjack Fundraising Gala on Oct. 16 at the Valhalla Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

"Tonight is a celebration, a celebration of our students, of our communities, a celebration of transformation and possibilities and a celebration of 25 years for Oshki-Pimache-O-Win The Wenjack Education Institute," says Lorrie Deschamps, president at Oshki-Wenjack. "For 25 years Oshki-Wenjack has worked alongside First Nation communities to create opportunities through education, education that is accessible, culturally grounded and connected to the needs and aspirations of the people of our communities that we serve. Tonight we have the opportunity to celebrate how far we have come and to look forward with excitement on how far we can go."

Rosie Mosquito, a former executive director at Oshki-Wenjack from 2004-2018, says she was asked to join Oshki-Wenjack by the late Goyce Kakegamic.

"He had a passion in education, he was not only a leader with Nishnawbe Aski Nation but he was an educator before he entered the political arena," Mosquito says, noting that when she joined Oshki they had a staff of five and an annual budget of $600,000. "By the time I retired, we probably had about 30 full-time staff, we probably had about 30 part-time sessional staff, we probably had graduated over 300 students from across the north with various post-secondary education credentials, probably another several hundred in skills and trades training. And that $600,000 budget that we started off with, by the time I left that annual budget was in excess of $6 million and we had also negotiated that Indigenous Institutes Act with the province."

Michael Fox, president/CEO at Indigenous Community Engagement and presenting sponsor at the gala, says he originally travelled to Thunder Bay to pursue his college and university education.

"I always say what's the point of education if you can't assist someone, what's the point of leadership if you can't create opportunities for others and what's the point of success if you can't reach back and help someone move forward," Fox says. "I'm very proud to be here and work with you and the previous leadership and staff and inspiring all the Nishnawbe Aski young folks that opportunities around them are there and there's a pathway to move forward and to realize those."

Fabian Batise, chairperson at the Oshki-Wenjack Governing Council, stressed the importance of Oshki-Wenjack's learning environment for the students.

"The big thing about our institute for me that shines very much is how close the students are to the faculty and vice versa," Batise says, noting how a teacher or professor can spark a student's interest in a topic or subject. "And all of a sudden the engine goes on and the learning experience happens. I believe that Oshki has that drive and that key in all of their faculty in how they approach their students, the students are not afraid to approach their teachers. And that is something that is very special in that environment."

Terry Copenace, senior regional manager for Ontario with the Indigenous Banking Group at TD Bank, says it has been 15 years since he worked at Oshki-Wenjack. TD Bank was the silent auction signature sponsor at the gala.

"Some of the memories are very vivid, I always remember sitting in my office and smelling the food coming down the hallway and hearing the laughter and the students gathered eating a meal of moose meat and bannock," Copenace says. "Memenquaa, the butterfly, represents change and transformation, it reminds us that transformation takes courage, time and hope. Education has been a game changer for so many of us as Indigenous peoples, not only changing individual lives but strengthening families, communities and generations to come. Many learners have overcome incredible barriers along the journeys — tonight we honour their courage, celebrate their perseverance and recognize every achievement as proof of what is possible."

Shannon Marie Courchene, an Oshki-Wenjack alumni from the Bachelor of Social Work program, says she is now an instructor in the Bachelor of Social Work program through Algoma University.

"It still feels surreal to say that, this is a full circle moment," Courchene says, noting that she previously studied in Oshki-Wenjack's Social Service Worker program. "It was challenging but with Oshki's holistic support, I rocked it. Oshki sparked a passion for social work education in me that I didn't know I needed or wanted. As soon as they posted the Bachelor of Social Work program I transferred from a mainstream online program to Oshki because I yearned for a connection and to return to the classroom. I thrived in the classroom and in both programs we were a collective, ensuring we could all be our best and make the most of our time together."

ONE OF YOURS NEEDS SUPPORT. ONE OF OURS CAN HELP.

You care for your loved ones. When one of yours needs one of ours, social workers and social service workers are ready to provide trustworthy and quality care.

We are the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. As the provincial regulator, we ensure all our registrants follow the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice to protect the public, and provide ethical, effective and community-centred care.

If you or someone you love needs help,
you can trust one of ours with one of yours.

Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers

Learn more at OCSWSSW.org



Scan

ETHICAL ACCOUNTABLE EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-CENTRED

CN is Hiring

CN is looking for Indigenous talent to join our team!



What We Offer:

- Competitive salary and benefits
- Paid training and development
- Medical, vision, dental insurance
- Employee Share Investment Plan
- CN pension plan
- Employee & Family Assistance Program
- Employee discount program
- Scholarship and tuition reimbursement

Get your career moving

cn.ca/**careers**

Community

NAN holds 2026 Keewaywin Conference in Apitipi Anicinapek Nation

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) held the 2026 Keewaywin Conference on Sept. 22-24 at Apitipi Anicinapek Nation, with the Keewaywin Awards held on the evening of Sept. 23.

"The main message from our leadership last week is that the land, the resources, the water that's in our territory is ours," says Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, during a Sept. 29 interview with Wawatay News. "When we heard about the federal government introducing Bill 39 (An Act respecting certain measures to strengthen the economy) on Monday (Sept. 21), on the creation of regions as opposed to single major projects, our chiefs passed a resolution opposing the proposed legislation. In that resolution, I think there's a strong message to Canada that in order for any project to move forward in Nishnawbe Aski Nation, that they need to respect and honour our treaty but they also need to respect and honour the right that we have under UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) on Free, Prior and Informed Consent. That's something that Canada agreed to many years ago, and they need to have people that will be impacted by these proposed major projects at the table right from the beginning."

Fiddler says health was another major item that was discussed during the conference, noting that Miranda Mamakwa had passed about two weeks before the conference.

"And how it is no longer acceptable for Canada to allow their policy on medical transportation to remain in place," Fiddler says. "They should realize or they should know by now that their policy is harmful and that it has caused needless and preventable deaths in Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and Miranda Mamakwa is unfortunately the latest example of that broken policy."

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum says there were some very hard conversations during the conference about some of the realities that NAN citizens face in their lives, including Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), during a Sept. 29 interview with Wawatay News.

"We had lost a young woman (Miranda Mamakwa) because of the failures of NIHB, so the leadership had the opportunity to talk about that and to plan some action, which is very necessary to do that," Achneepineskum says. "We have a plan, so I just think that we need to ensure that we follow through with the plan we have."

Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse says Apitipi Chief June Black and her community did a great job of hosting the conference during an Oct. 16 interview with Wawatay News.

"I was able to pass a few resolutions as well giving us the mandate and marching orders to pursue further negotiations with various levels of government pertaining to child and family services," Narcisse says. "It was a great week, the hospitality there was great and we were able to pass many of the resolutions that were very important in high priority areas like lands and resources, child and youth services — health was a very important discussion area."

Narcisse says he was able to host the Keewaywin Awards this year.

"We were very happy and we were proud of all the award recipients," Narcisse says. "Although we couldn't give an award to all those different champions at the community level, these individuals that got the awards were really leaders and champions in their own communities."

Keewaywin Award recipients were: Mattagami Chief Jennifer Constant with the Emile Nakogee Award for Outstanding Leadership; Matachewan's Bertha Cormier with the Helen Cromarty Memorial Award for Women; Missanabie Cree's Cheryl Macumber with the NAN Elder Award; North Caribou Lake's Memekwe Morriseau with the Shannen Koostachin Youth Leadership Award; Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg's Ryan Desmoulin with the Joe Wheesk Legacy Award; and Apitipi Anicinapek Nation with the Host Community Award.

NAN has posted videos of the Keewaywin Conference on its Youtube page at: www.youtube.com/@nishnawbeaskination/streams.



screenshot

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler speaks during the 2026 Keewaywin Conference, held Sept. 22-24 at Apitipi Anicinapek Nation.

Some Neskantaga evacuees returning home

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Neskantaga evacuees were still in Toronto as of Oct. 14 but some had returned to the community to prepare their homes for the coming winter months. Neskantaga was forced to evacuate on Aug. 4 due to raw sewage in the community's nursing station.

"We're still in Toronto, we've been taking some people home for winterizing their homes," says Neskantaga Chief Gary Quisess during an Oct. 14 phone interview with Wawatay News. "We did finally receive a result for our air quality testing — there was some chemical found in the testing so they've got to do more testing and find out what it is."

Quisess says work has been done around the outside of the nursing station.

"They removed the plywood, the insulation," Quisess says. "They fixed the foundation part where the leak was. Right now they're just going to do more testing and hopefully Health Canada will approve for the nursing station to be open."

Quisess says they are not getting a temporary functional clinic in the community.

"We did request it but it was on denial," Quisess says.

Quisess says they will probably be back in the community in the next two or three weeks, as of Oct. 14.

"It's very congested (in Toronto) because a hotel is not a place to live in," Quisess says. "I think it's 71 days (of evacuation) today."

Quisess says the school they set up in the hotel is congested as well.

"They have only hotel rooms they're using for school," Quisess says. "So it's very congested for the students. The students are happy to go to school because they've been missing quite a bit already."

Quisess says they have also sent some people back to the community to do some of the harvesting on the land for the Elders.

"Before the water gets too cold, we have to send our people out to do some of that (harvesting)," Quisess says.

Quisess says there was a lot of food that was destroyed during the time they were evacuated out of the community.

"A lot of people went to clean their fridges and they're checking their homes to make sure everything is good," Quisess says. "A lot of stuff they had in the fridge has been thrown away."

Quisess says there are still about 167 community members in Toronto as of Oct. 14.

"I've got two flights going home, one today and one on Friday (Oct. 16)," Quisess says. "That's my fourth load of people going back and forth to check their homes, so every household has a chance to go home and check their house, and a lot of people are staying behind. They don't want to go back to the city, they're just staying back home."

Quisess says the community members are happy to see their homes.

"The mental health of having this evacuation, it takes a lot of toll for everybody," Quisess says.

Quisess says there are about 45 students who are still in Toronto.

"Once everything is cleared from Health Canada, the school will start preparing to mobilize their education staff," Quisess says. "So the preparation will take time, and they've been losing school time already."

Quisess says they have been getting support from ISN Maskwa, Canada's first Indigenous Emergency Operations Centre that is owned by Missanabie Cree First Nation and operated in partnership with Investigative Solutions Network Inc. (ISN), during the evacuation.

"They support us with the help from ISC (Indigenous Services Canada)," Quisess says. "I would like to thank everybody that's been thinking about us during our evacuation. Right now I'm travelling to Thunder Bay and I'll be heading to the community on Friday."

·◁·◁U WAWATAY COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

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

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

Mission

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

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

Location: Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Timmins

Position Summary:

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

The Position will be Posted until Filled Start Date: ASAP

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

Board Chair Nick Day **nickday@sandylakefn.com**

Board Vice Chair Vivian Waswa **vivianw@wunnumin.ca**

For full job description please visit ***www.wawataynews.ca***

reBOOT CANADA
Computers • Community • Connection

Professional
Computer Refurbishing, ITAD, & IT Solutions
for the community!

Learn how we help organizations like yours at:
(705) 749-5815 | rebootcanada.ca/resource

REGISTERED CHARITY #89111 4043 RR0001

Community



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Fort William Chief Michele Solomon speaks during Thunder Bay's Community Gathering Honouring the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin.

Residential School denialism raised at Hillcrest Park gathering

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The residential school denialism issue was raised during Thunder Bay's Community Gathering Honouring the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, held Sept. 29 at Hillcrest Park. The gathering was held to honour the survivors of residential schools, remember the children who never returned home and acknowledge the systemic impacts that continue to affect Indigenous families and communities.

"I really want to hold up the survivors of residential school and the children of survivors of residential school that have shared their stories," says Fort William Chief Michele Solomon. "Today I really want to honour those voices because yesterday (Sept. 28) we saw on the news where there was a group of masked men that disguised themselves and they were in … Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. Learning of that event, it being 11 years after the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, it really speaks volumes of the ignorance and the racism and the violence and the denialism of those voices, those experiences that still exist and that people feel the need to go out and protest those voices, to deny those experiences, those very experiences that have been documented in church and government records."

Solomon says the records are available for anybody to look at.

"I hope that somehow this finds the ears and the heart of somebody who hasn't been listening or hasn't heard or doesn't know because people need to know," Solomon says. "We need to stop focusing on denialism and start focusing on how we can move forward together and build healthy relationships with each other, because those healthy relationships are going to be the thing that makes society better all around."

Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin says he wanted to acknowledge the children who were in attendance at the gathering.

"That's how old we were, and I just wanted to put that in perspective for people that don't know or don't understand, that's how old we were when they came and got us," Metatawabin says. "That's how young we were when they put us in institutions, in the school, just so you have an idea."

Metatawabin says September is a difficult time of the year for the survivors of residential schools.

"It is the time when we all had to return to the schools, by law, by policy and by fear," Metatawabin says. "It wasn't a choice, the scars and experiences suffered come to haunt us. Only now have we begun to understand the effects, the impacts caused by the experience. Only now we are aware the trauma — it is from the suffering and experience we endured, isolation, sexual abuse, a learnt behaviour learned and experienced while inside the residential school."

Metatawabin says the survivors continue to be triggered, noting the scars and pain never heal.

"It lives in the grief carried by survivors, it lives in families separated by trauma, it lives in communities working every day to heal wounds," Metatawabin says. "Today we honour the courage of survivors who carried these truths, often alone, long before the rest of the country was willing to listen. And we honour the children who never came home, this is our truth. Despite every effort to silence our languages, we still speak them, our songs are still sung, our legends are still shared, our ceremonies are still alive."

Metatawabin says reconciliation is not a destination that is arrived at once a year.

"It requires governments, institutions, municipalities to confront systemic barriers, and governments to honour their commitments," Metatawabin says.

The gathering included teachings shared by Dave Simard and Dean Nooshquash and songs by the Charging Thunder Singerz.

"National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is an important time for our community to come together to honour survivors, remember the children who never returned and reflect on the ongoing impacts of the residential school system," says Annika Gregg, engagement and partnerships lead at the City of Thunder Bay. "As we gather in reflection and remembrance, we must also recognize that reconciliation extends beyond a single day. It is an ongoing responsibility to listen, to learn, to build meaningful relationships and to carry these commitments forward through our actions throughout the year."

Business Directory

Safeguard
Business Systems by Herman Hanschke
6 Court Street S.
P.O. Box 10175
Thunder Bay, ON
P7B 6T7
HERMAN HANSCHKE
herman@safeguardthunderbay.com
Commercial Printing
Office Supplies
Computer Services
Promotional Materials
Tel: (807) 344-2983
Toll-Free: 1-877-544-2983
Cell: (807) 627-6414
Fax: (807) 344-1581

BUMPER TO BUMPER™
Auto Parts Professionals
Sioux-Per Auto Parts
For Fast, Efficient Service
P.O. Box 1457, Sioux Lookout, ON, P8T 1B9
Phone: 807 737-1991 Fax: 807 737-2728
Email: siouxper@siouxperautoparts.ca
Ken Schultz, Manager/Owner

Za-geh-do-win
Information Clearinghouse
Information About Health, Healing & Family Violence
For Indigenous Communities In Ontario
1-800-669-2538 | zicresources.ca

Are you feeling lonely? Depressed?
Need to talk? We're here to *listen.*
We-Chee-Way-Win
is a 24-hour Telephone Answering Service.
Why not give us a call?
1-800-465-2600
"All calls are kept strictly confidential."

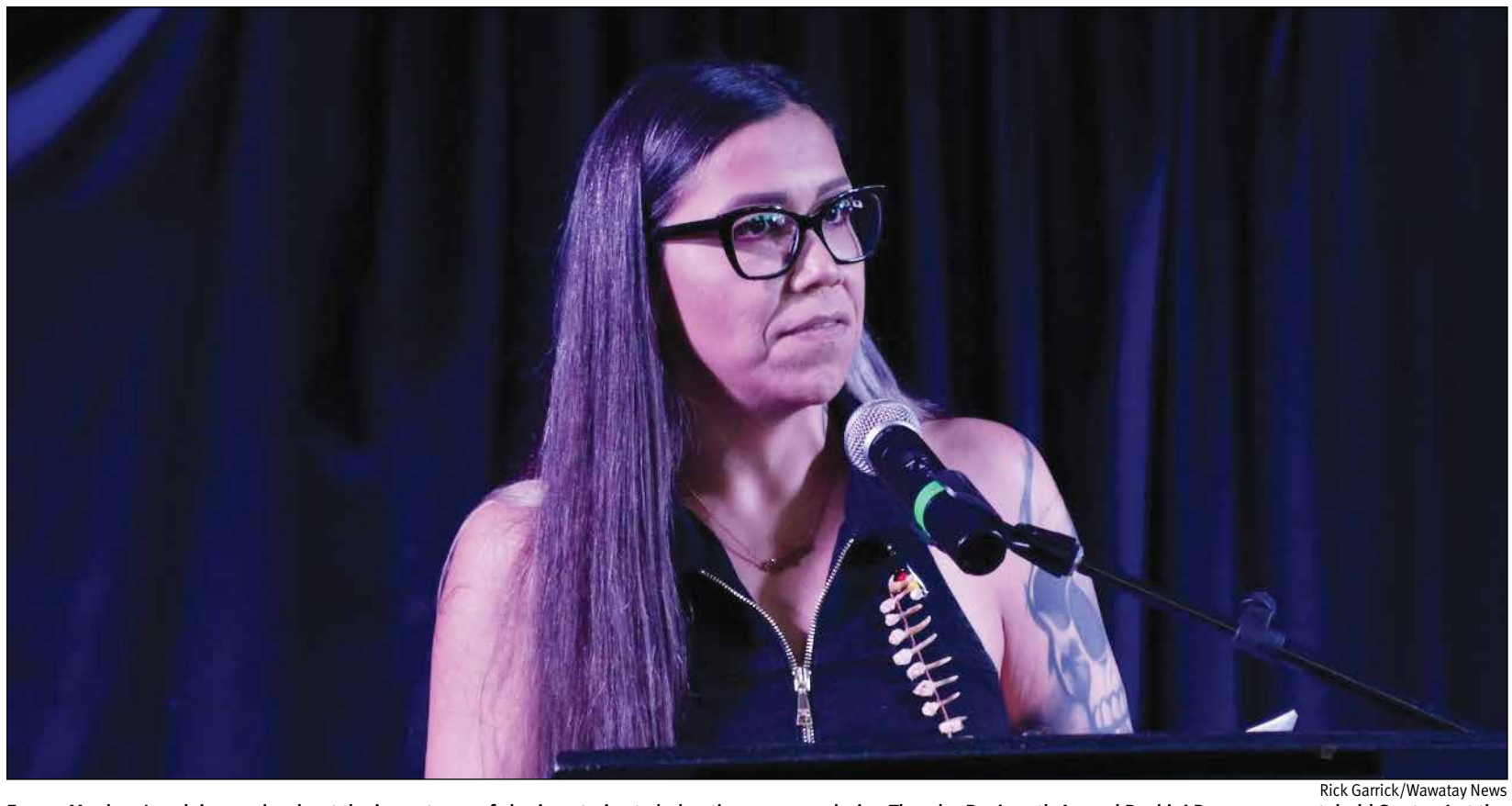
Alcona Storage
Email: info@alconastorage.ca
Phone: 807-738-8888
Web site: www.alconastorage.ca
Sioux Lookout, ON

H&M c.a.r.s
Licensed Service & Repair Facility
Automotive, Truck & Coach
Heavy Equipment
807-737-4643
MTO Safety Inspection Station ◦ Napa Autocare Centre
Tires ◦ Manuli Hydraulics Authorized Dealer
Flatbed Towing ◦ Welding ◦ Linde/Praxair Depot
1-877-337-4643

Arts & Entertainment

Rockin' Recovery 2026 held at CLE Coliseum

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

Emcee Meghan Jourdain speaks about the importance of sharing stories to help others recover during Thunder Bay's 13th Annual Rockin' Recovery event, held Sept. 26 at the CLE Coliseum.

Thunder Bay's 13th Annual Rockin' Recovery event featured personal stories of recovery, live music and activities on Sept. 26 at the CLE Coliseum in Thunder Bay.

"I was a storyteller before and I returned as an emcee so it's a full-circle moment for me," says Meghan Jourdain, emcee at Rockin' Recovery. "I believe it is important to share our stories and pass along our experiences to help the next person who may be struggling in recovery and to break stigma — breaking stigma is a huge thing that we need to conquer and get past. So that's why we have organizations come out here and show how much support and resources are out here for everybody."

Jourdain says addictions can affect any family in the community.

"Addictions affects everybody," Jourdain says. "As a recovering addict myself, I know how hard it is to find help and to believe that you can get sober. If people are starting to think about recovery, the first step is just admitting that you have a problem and you want help. We have 40 organizations here today showing all their support for addictions and recovery here in Thunder Bay, it all just takes that one little step of saying, 'I need some help,' and it's all out there, it's just a matter of finding it."

Jourdain says she celebrated nine years of recovery this past July.

"I am incredibly honoured to now help welcome this year's storytellers and hold space for their stories," Jourdain says.

Robin Johnson, one of the storytellers who shared their personal stories of recovery, credits another person's story for opening her eyes to the fact that recovery was possible.

"At events like this we get to share many different stories because it's not always the same," Johnson says. "Trauma is usually the underlying cause but we deal with things differently and recovery looks different for people too."

Melissa Quinn, one of the storytellers who shared their personal stories of recovery, says she has been substance free since 2013.

"I stand before you as proof that the cycle of trauma and addiction can be broken," Quinn says. "This room is filled with incredible individuals who are ready to support you, you just need to reach out."

Kara Wiljala, one of the storytellers who shared their personal stories of recovery, says she began her recovery journey in 2020.

"I am not going to stand here and say that recovery is easy, because it's been one of the hardest things I've ever done but it has been the best decision of my life," Wiljala says. "What I've learned is recovery can look different and be different for each individual. It is truly a personal process in discovering what feeds your soul and what feels right to you, it is not found in programs or generic tools, it resides within waiting to be discovered only by you."

Katie Methot, one of the storytellers who shared their personal stories of recovery, says she discovered that recovery simply isn't about removing something harmful from your life.

"It's about filling your life with purpose, hope, truth and the people who help you become who you are meant to be," Methot says. "If you are listening today and you feel trapped by addiction, shame, regret, fear or circumstances that seem impossible to overcome, I want you to know this — your life is not over, your worst mistake is not your identity, the chapter you're living today does not have to be the ending of your story. Sometimes the greatest miracle isn't that our circumstances change overnight, sometimes the greatest miracle is that we wake up, we wake up to hope, we wake up to grace and we wake up to the possibility that life can be different."

Methot says she woke up in a jail cell in 2021 believing that her life was over.

"Looking back now I realize that wasn't the day my life ended, it was the day that I finally woke up," Methot says.

Keewaytinook Okimakanak Board of Education

Enjoy 12 weeks Summer Break plus:

- Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan
- Comprehensive Benefits Package
- Generous Sick Leave
- 2-week paid Christmas Break
- 1-week paid March Break

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Native Language Teacher

Salary Range: up to $120,369 per annum (based on QECO rating, experience, and experience

Location: Any KOBE office (Thunder Bay, Balmertown, Sioux Lookout, or Dryden)

The Native Language Teacher is responsible for delivering high-quality, culturally immersive Indigenous language programming (Oji-Cree, Ojibwe, and Cree) for KiHS students.

Qualifications and Requirements

Language Fluency: Must be fully fluent in speaking, reading, and writing the local language (Oji-Cree / Anishininiimowin, Ojibwe / Anishinaabemowin, or Cree / Ininiwmowin).

Education & Certification:

Possession of (or eligibility for) a valid Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) Certificate.

Alternative: Successful completion of an accredited Indigenous Language Teacher's Diploma program (e.g., Lakehead University's KITEP/Anishinaabemowik program) or equivalent certified elder/knowledge keeper status recognized by the Board.

Cultural Knowledge: Deep lived experience and a profound understanding of Northwestern Ontario First Nations heritage, values, and community dynamics.

Visit koeducation.ca/jobs for full description and application information

JOIN NAPS AND BECOME A COMMUNITY LEADER!

Did you know? NAPS officers are among the highest paid in Ontario, enjoy unparalleled work-life balance with two-week-on two-week-off rotations, and receive unrivaled promotional opportunities.

YOU can be a police officer in YOUR community, or travel to one of our 34 communities across Northern Ontario.



Start your journey today and

Apply NOW at joinnaps.ca