

Community



KOBE Indigenous games held in Fort Severn

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Keewatinook Okimakanak Board of Education (KOBE) recently highlighted the successes they had with the KOBE Indigenous Games and the pilot Educational Assistant program.

The KOBE Indigenous Games were held in Fort Severn with Grade 6, 7 and 8 students attending from March 30-April 2.

“These games were ... an opportunity for our elementary students in Grade 6, 7 and 8 to get together in one central location, take on a variety of challenges in the form of games, both traditional and non-traditional, more modern day, and get an opportunity to mix and mingle and kind of meet each other before they (go) out to high school as a way of kind of engaging the student and getting them excited for the years ahead,” says Mitch Simmons, retention services supervisor at KOBE. “We had games like floor hockey, broom ball, volleyball, all games that are really big up in our communities. We also had more traditional games such as the moccasin kick and snow snake competitions. It was a really successful event there for our students and they had such a blast.”

Simmons says the games were the first time that a lot of the students met each other.

“In that moment they were all cheering for each other, they were all on the same team and that was amazing,” Simmons says. “That’s what I really think is going to be the message that gets carried forward, is it’s not scary to try new things, it’s exciting, it’s a challenge, we all love a challenge.”

Simmons adds that many of their students are extremely athletic and competitive.

“Sometimes they don’t get that outlet to showcase, so these games, it really did foster that opportunity to showcase their athleticism, their physical prowess but also their compassionate side, helping each other out and their teamwork and the camaraderie that came with it too,” Simmons says.

Simmons says the games gave a renewed energy and restored faith for the students about the idea of leaving their community to pursue their high school education.

“It’s a really great opportunity for these students there and it’s something that I really think we can continue to grow and improve upon, and I think it will have a lasting impact there for generations,” Simmons says. KOBE is also looking for-

ward to celebrate the graduation of eight students from the pilot Educational Assistant program, which was designed to build local capacity and create pathways into education careers.

“Back in 2024, we started working with University College of the North out of Thompson, Man. — we formed kind of a partnership with them to offer an Educational Assistant program through remote learning,” says Charlene Hele, adult education coordinator at KOBE, noting that the students did the program for about 18 months. “(It) will help them better provide services into the elementary schools and support the teachers there.”

Hele says the program was provided on Fridays through the Zoom platform for students from Fort Severn, Poplar Hill and Sachigo Lake.

“The education assistant role supports the classroom teachers, and supports them in working directly with the students, continuing the learning process for them,” Hele says. “If there’s any higher needs, they’re there to support that as well and this training gives them the skills to better do that job.”

Hele says the students had a great time during the program.

“They loved their instructors, they joined in the class,

they participated,” Hele says. “They’re so excited to graduate and a couple of the students have said, ‘This is really going to help me in my job, so I’m so glad we had this opportunity.’”

Hele says she is proud of the students, noting they will be holding a graduation ceremony for them on June 18 at the Best Western Plus Nor’Wester Hotel and Conference Centre in Thunder Bay.

“We’ve done programs before but this 18-month commitment was a lot and they worked hard, they balanced their day jobs, their family life and they stayed committed to this,” Hele says. “I think it’s amazing and I can’t wait to celebrate with them in June.”

KOBE states that they remain focused on supporting students through key transitions, building confidence and creating opportunities that reflect each learner’s path.

“We are seeing the impact of creating opportunities that meet people where they are, whether that is a student preparing for high school or an adult returning to complete their education,” says Patrick Stoddart, director of education at KOBE. “When learners feel supported and connected, they are more confident in taking the next step forward.”



submitted photos

The Keewatinook Okimakanak Board of Education held the KOBE Indigenous Games for Grade 6, 7 and 8 students in Fort Severn from March 30-April 2.

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Community

Thunder Bay Friendship Centre holds walk for healing

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (TBIFC) held A Walk for Healing - Heartbeat of the Drum in Honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls on May 10 in Thunder Bay. The walk, which began at Waverley Park and followed along Red River Rd. to Marina Park's Spirit Garden area, was held in honour of Frances Wesley's 2016 A Walk for Healing - Heartbeat of the Drum.

"Today we walk together for healing, we walk to honour the strength and resilience of our community, we walk to raise awareness about the wellness of Indigenous people here in Thunder Bay and to remind one another that no one has to walk this road alone," says Jay Blain, director of culture and wellness services at TBIFC. "The heartbeat of the drum is more than a name, it's a reminder that our culture, our traditions and our connection to one another are alive. That heartbeat is in each and every one of you standing here today."

Blain says the walk's roots go back to 2016 when the A Walk for Healing - Heartbeat of the Drum was held through Wesley's dedication.

"It was her spirit and her belief in the power of healing that gave this walk the beginning," Blain says. "Because of her we are all standing here today and that is something worth celebrating."

Wesley says the 2016 walk started from a dream she had 10 years ago.

"This dream that I had kept reoccurring and I went to speak to the late (Elder) Freda McDonald," Wesley says. "I told her about this dream I was having and she said, 'You have to



make it happen, just do it.' So I did and a lot of people came out to walk with us and to heal and to be together and to recognize each other as strong women. We're here to lead the walk and I'm happy again to see you all."

Wesley says she was happy to see the turnout for the walk.

"It's a beautiful day today for a good walk," Wesley says. "It's nice to see the young people here following that dream."

Fort William Elder Rita Fenton says it was a nostalgic memory from 10 years ago when Wesley had her dream and decided to make the 2016 walk a reality.

"The late (Elder) Freda McDonald was there and we were getting everything organized," Fenton says. "So when I was thinking about it, Mother's Day is a special day and on this day I'd like to remember the Elders that have passed on — they were great leaders and great Elders and carrying on teachings to us."

Maygan Diana, Akwe:go worker at TBIFC, says she was

grateful to be able to bring her drum out on the walk.

"I'm just learning to drum this past year," Diana says. "It's been very powerful and healing for me. It was a powerful moment to walk down and to hear the drums all together, it felt like a sense of unity today doing that."

Natasha Nicholls says the walk felt very powerful.

"I felt very empowered walking with these women and the drum, it was just great," Nicholls says, adding that it was important to raise awareness of the "unreasonably high rates of Indigenous women being attacked."

The federal government's Department of Justice states on its website at: www.justice.gc.ca/socjs-esjp/en/women-femmes/wgv-ffv, that: Indigenous women and girls are not only more likely to be a victim or survivor of crime compared with non-Indigenous women and girls, they are also at much higher risk of experiencing specific acts of violence.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

TOP: The walkers head down Red River Rd. during the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre's A Walk for Healing - Heartbeat of the Drum in Honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

ABOVE: Rita Fenton and Frances Wesley lead the walkers

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Community



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

ONWA's Audrey Deroy speaks during the opening of the Moose Hide Campaign Walk.



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

A group of participants walk along Oliver Rd. during the Moose Hide Campaign Walk.

Moose Hide Campaign Walk stands up against violence

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Thunder Bay's Moose Hide Campaign Walk was held on May 14 beginning at Lakehead University's Agora and following along Oliver Rd. and Golf Links Rd. to Confederation College. The Moose Hide Campaign is a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys who are standing up against violence towards women and children. Information about the 15th Moose Hide Campaign is posted online at: moosehide-campaign.ca/.

"This particular campaign was developed by a group of men who have taken on that

responsibility in that initiative to address violence on women," says Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum during the walk along Golf Links Rd. "Their messaging is that the men need to do their part in building awareness and education when it comes to ending violence. Within Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), when it comes to violence on women, we need to I would say step up that conversation, step up that education and awareness because right now there's still high rates of violence on women — it escalated during the pandemic and it continues to be at a high incidence so we need to do more education, awareness and prevention."

Matthew Richer, sexual violence awareness training coordinator at Ontario Native Women's Association, says this was the fourth year that they held the Moose Hide Campaign Walk in Thunder Bay.

"This year it's really grown, we went from two partners the first year to six and now we're at 14 partners, from Indigenous agencies but also we have first responders, police, paramedics have taken part, and education with Lakehead University and Confederation College and our healthcare with the hospital and the Thunder Bay District Health Unit," Richer says. "We really want to engage those boys and men into being part of the solution and standing with

us to end violence."

Richer says they had a lot of organizations reaching out and wanting to be a part of the campaign this year, and the kiosks they have across the city have been busier than they ever have.

"People either know what the campaign is already and come over to engage us or they see it and they're just kind of intrigued by it and they come by to ask questions," Richer says about the kiosks. "It takes all of us to end violence, we know the stats in Thunder Bay, stats around intimate partner violence, and they've been climbing year after year. The solution is all of us working together and it really makes my heart glow when I see how many organiza-

tions are working together and banding together to do something."

Roman Nodin, one of the drummers with the Charging Thunder drum group, says it was important to help with the drumming at the walk.

"We all come from different backgrounds and we all know the drum can heal people," Nodin says. "The drum just brings everyone together and makes a better energy and impact on the community."

Nodin says the turnout for the walk was great.

"I think there's a lot of supporters for a lot of good reasons," Nodin says. "I'm happy everyone's here to come support."

Joe Hunter, a hand drummer from Rainy River First Nations, performed the drum song during the opening remarks at the walk.

"It's always important to always try and spread the message wherever I am to be kind to one another, love one another, especially in relationships, those ones that are close to you, the ones that are watching, the children," Hunter says. "That drum song, I heard it from an Elder that taught me that song — it talks about that woman spirit that is watching you, so I thought it would be appropriate to sing that song today."

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Arts & Entertainment



submitted photos

Pikangikum's Dallas Peters-Turtle and Javen Keeper were among 110 Indigenous youth from across the country who were preparing for Outside Looking In's 19th Annual Showcase, scheduled for May 15 at the Bluma Appel Theatre in Toronto.

Pikangikum students enjoyed Outside Looking In camp in Toronto

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Students from Pikangikum recently enjoyed preparing along with Indigenous youth from 10 other remote communities for Outside Looking In's 19th Annual Showcase, scheduled for May 15 at the Bluma Appel Theatre in Toronto.

"I really pushed myself to be here today, so I'm really proud of that," says Dallas Peters-Turtle, a Grade 11 student from Pikangikum. "Being here at the camp is really rewarding for me because I've been working really hard for the past seven years to be here, so making it here, travelling down here feels like an accomplishment."

Peters-Turtle says they were preparing for the showcase at a camp located near Brant, about two hours away from Toronto.

"We work pretty hard to keep our dances pretty clean, preparing for the big show," Peters-Turtle says.

Peters-Turtle says the youth in each of the communities had been working on their dances for over the past seven months.

"There's three different groups, there's C1, C2, C3, which contain four different communities, and then they all learn each other's dances," Peters-Turtle says. "When we all come down here, we actually put the whole thing together, so we have three different dances to showcase at our show. It's actually really interesting to watch and collaborate with the other communities."

Javen Keeper, a Grade 10 student from Pikangikum, says he enjoys being involved with Outside Looking In.

"Outside Looking In has really changed me a lot, it's given me an identity and it's like a passion of mine that I discovered when I first joined Outside Looking In," Keeper says. "I absolutely love it, I just love meeting other people, hearing their stories and hearing about their background. I'm a big culture person, so I like hearing from other Indigenous communities on what their nations are, just stuff like that, it really interests me."

Keeper says he was excited about performing with the other youth at the showcase.

"I'm really hyped up to see the show because we've been doing this for seven months," Keeper says. "It's really exciting to see all of our hard work to be finally implemented into an actual show, and it's just exciting to finally get ... other people to see our dance."

This year's showcase will feature 110 youth performers, a 25 per cent increase from last year, along with special guest performers Rebecca Strong, an Indigenous singer from Prince Albert, Sask.; Nucky JMC (Jordan Connelly), a rising Métis rapper from Winnipeg; Gabriel Ayala, an internationally-recognized, award-winning classical guitarist from Tucson, Arizona; Dobby, a Filipino-Murraywarri rapper, drummer, composer and producer from New South Wales, Australia; Alyssa Delbaere Sawchuk, a Métis fiddler; Ascension Harjo, a world champion hoop dancer; and Alexandra Anaviapik, an Inuk throat singer.

"The annual showcase is a truly moving performance unlike any other," says Candace

Scott-Moore, the returning artistic director for the showcase. "It is a powerful fusion of culture, artistry and storytelling that celebrates pride, resilience and the strength of every young person on the stage."

The showcase, which was themed around water as a sacred traditional element, incorporates tap dance and classical guitar for the first time, blending those art forms with hip-hop and traditional Indigenous dance and music.

"Outside Looking In is more than a dance program, it's a life-changing experience that helps young people unlock their potential and open the door to new opportunities," says Hope Sanderson, CEO at Outside Looking In. "Dance is the hook that keeps kids in school and education is the foundation that builds new pathways to meaningful careers, stronger communities and positive self-esteem."

In addition to the OLI Dance program, Outside Looking In also has the OLI Future Leaders program, a dynamic, high school-accredited mentorship program for students in Grades 10-12 that fosters leadership, career education and personal growth while counting as a credit towards graduation, and the OLI Future Leaders Next Level program, a six month certificate program in professional studies designed to support Outside Looking In participants after high school graduation.

Information about Outside Looking In, which was founded in 2007, is posted online at olishow.com.

Arts & Entertainment



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

NNEC executive director Norma Kejick and a group of DFC students hold up t-shirts with the lineup for the 2026 Wake the Giant Music Festival on April 17 at Superior Screen Print and Ungalli Clothing Co. in Thunder Bay.

Wake The Giant announces 2026 artist lineup



Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Wake the Giant announced the 2026 festival lineup featuring Flo Rida, The Wallflowers, Plain White T's, Tia Wood, Sebastian Gaskin, Shawnee Kish and LOV on April 17 in Thunder Bay.

"We wanted a lineup that hits from every angle," says AJ Haapa, co-founder and organizer at Wake the Giant. "It's fun, nostalgic and has so much Indigenous talent behind it. This year is going to be unreal."

The 2026 Wake the Giant Music Festival lineup was announced at Superior Screen Print and Ungalli Clothing Co., where a group of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School (DFC) students helped screen print the lineup onto plain white t-shirts and DJ Whirlwind, who created a mix of the 2026 performers, played a live set.

"Wake the Giant has always been about community and partners like Superior Screen Print who continue to show up in meaningful ways, from donating equipment to DFC students so they can create at the school, providing internships, to printing backstage festival merch year after year," says Greg Chomut, co-founder and organizer at Wake the Giant. "We couldn't do this festival without our community supporters."

Norma Kejick, executive director at Northern Nishnawbe Education Council (NNEC), says they originally thought the Wake the Giant Music Festival



Rick Garrick/Wawatay News

A DFC student screen printed one of the t-shirts with the lineup.

would be held for just one year. "I really have to thank the NNEC Sioux Lookout district chiefs, the NNEC board of directors for their continued support for us to continue doing what we're doing with this music festival," Kejick says. "Music brings people together, music is healing, music is therapeutic and what better way to bring the community of Thunder Bay, our students together (than) by having different genres of music, different artists, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, coming together to support our students and to make this a welcoming place."

Kejick says one of the DFC students said after the first Wake the Giant Music Festival was held in 2019 that it was the first time they felt safe when walking around the marina on the Thunder Bay Waterfront.

"So it really says a lot," Kejick says. "There's a lot of people

who helped make Wake the Giant a success. I'm just grateful for everybody who works behind the scenes, our students, their performance on stage whether it's singing, whether it's with their jingle dresses, the drum group that comes to welcome everybody, it takes a lot of work. I just want to thank everybody that works so hard to continue to make Wake the Giant a success, and I just can't wait for the lineup because it's going to be a good one."

Eric Gray, a Grade 12 DFC student from Sandy Lake, says he had never heard of the Wake the Giant Music Festival when he first attended DFC, but the buildup with the Amazing Race and DFC Experience and then the Wake the Giant Music Festival made him feel better about pursuing his high school studies at DFC.

"All these booths, the music,

all the people (at the festival), it was a little overwhelming at first but then the more I walked around, the longer I was there, the more comfortable I felt, the more safe I felt being there," Gray says. "I felt like me, as an Indigenous person, was being heard through the festival."

The Wake the Giant organizers also stressed that there

would not be a Wake the Giant Music Festival in 2027 due to the City of Thunder Bay's upgrading of the Waterfront festival grounds.

"This is the year to definitely show up," Chomut says. "It's a chance to come together, celebrate what we've built, and honour the land that's hosted us."

The Wake the Giant Music Festival is scheduled for Sept. 12 at the Thunder Bay Waterfront, with tickets on sale at wakethegiant.ca. Tier 1 tickets are available for \$125 and limited VIP tickets for \$180. Kids 11 and under are free but they require a ticket to attend via the ticket site.

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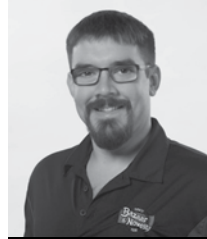


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Arts & Entertainment

Aysanabee announces upcoming performances



screenshot

Aysanabee performs We Were Here during the 2023 JUNO Awards, in a Youtube video posted at www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbxmO1WzyxY.

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

Award-winning musician Aysanabee is looking forward to performing at the Kaha:wi Dance Theatre and Woodland Cultural Centre's Continuance Immersive Commemoration on May 30 and Toronto's Luminato Festival on June 14. Continuance runs from May 29-30 on the grounds of the former Mohawk Institute residential school and Luminato runs from June 3-28 at venues across Toronto.

"I'm really honoured to be a part of that (Continuance Immersive Commemoration)," says Aysanabee, a Sandy Lake citizen who was the first Indigenous artist to be recognized with both JUNO Awards for Alternative Album of the Year and Songwriter of the year, for Here and Now. "They're putting together a very beautiful show out in front with the museum as the backdrop. The show itself I think will be a really beautiful gathering and the lineup they have is a lot of really incredible musicians."

The Kaha:wi Dance Theatre artists, Derek Miller, Lacey Hill and Semiah are scheduled to perform at Continuance, with Aysanabee and Jeremy Dutcher scheduled as special guest performers, Dutcher on May 29 and Aysanabee on May 30. Continuance was created to mark the reopening of the former Mohawk Institute residential school.

"I was really honoured to be

invited to perform at that and play a couple of songs," Aysanabee says. "I think songs especially from my first record ... in that space will kind of have a lot more impact. It's really beautiful that the Mohawk community has taken that space and created something very meaningful."

Aysanabee says his grandfather went to residential school, noting that his first album speaks about some of his grandfather's experiences in residential school.

...His first album speaks about some of his grandfather's experiences in residential school...

"I think it's important for us to kind of acknowledge those spaces, and to not ignore them, which is easier said than done," Aysanabee says. "I feel like the way they had kind of created the Mohawk Institute to carry that but also take back that space and create something their own, I think that's something very important."

Aysanabee recalls hearing people saying, when he was growing up in the north, "When will they get over it," about the residential schools.

"That's not how it works, it becomes a part of us and it's things we need to acknowledge," Aysanabee says. "I'm

sure there will be a mix of emotions playing that show."

Aysanabee says he will be performing at the Harbourfront Centre for the Luminato Festival.

"I'm excited to play there," Aysanabee says. "I've never actually played there but I've seen a bunch of shows there, it's a nice big space."

Aysanabee says he's excited about getting back into the rehearsal space with the band after touring in Taiwan, Germany and the Netherlands.

"I'm excited to do that again because I've been doing this last run of shows solo," Aysanabee says. "I play with really incredible session musicians who are all friends of mine."

Aysanabee says he is putting together a show for Luminato with songs from his last three albums.

"And I think we're probably going to put in a song or two from the new Timelines EP," Aysanabee says. "I've been really enjoying playing those reimagined songs."

Aysanabee says the Timelines EP features two songs from each of the three records he has put out over the past four years.

"It gave me a moment to kind of pause and reflect a bit," Aysanabee says. "Taking the time to reimagine each of these songs kind of brought me back to where I was at when I was making those songs, so it was kind of crazy to think about how far I've come in the last four years, and then to be playing all these songs in Germany, to be playing all these songs in the Netherlands and to be playing all these songs in Taiwan, it was pretty wild just to see how the songs carried the same impact and weight so far from the place they were written."

Aysanabee says he was really excited to go back to Taiwan because it was his second tour there.

"This one was quite a bit different than the last one because the last one I played a festival," Aysanabee says, noting he spent his off days with the local Indigenous communities of Taiwan. "I just got to hear their stories and learn a lot about their culture."

Aysanabee says an Elder from southern Taiwan showed him a traditional song from his people.

"He had a hand drum and he was standing in front of what kind of looked like a longhouse," Aysanabee says. "He was singing a traditional song and it sounded so similar to the traditional songs you would hear in North America."

Aysanabee says he also went to the first Indigenous post-secondary school in the south in the mountains in Taiwan.

"These students were showing us this traditional dance and it was very similar to a round dance, so it was kind of wild," Aysanabee says.

Aysanabee says he also went to a prehistory museum, where three different tribes came and did some presentations.

"I played some songs and I shared some stories," Aysanabee says. "People were asking me questions until this one grandmother asked me some questions and just wanted to say something. She wasn't allowed to speak her traditional language either because they wouldn't allow it when she was growing up, so now she only speaks her language, which I thought was a really cool thing."

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Arts & Entertainment



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Lakehead University visual art student Natasha Broadbent poses with one of her art pieces during the 41st Lakehead University Honours and Juried Student Exhibition Awards Reception, held March 27 at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

Thunder Bay Art Gallery holds 41st annual student awards

Rick Garrick
Wawatay News

The Thunder Bay Art Gallery held the 41st Lakehead University Honours and Juried Student Exhibition Awards Reception on March 27 with about 30 awards presented to Lakehead University art students. The Juried Student Exhibition, which featured a mix of media, including sculpture, textile, painting, drawing and ceramics, was scheduled from March 6-April 5 while the Honours Exhibition, which featured works of sculpture, painting, ceramics and drawing, was scheduled from March 13-April 12.

AJ Carney, a second-year visual arts and education student and Shoal Lake #40 citizen who received one of The Framing Post and Design Studio Awards, says it was great to be recognized with the award for her art piece Torn, which features two ceramic wings with a different colour on each wing.

"They are about two-to-three feet each totalling for five feet in size," Carney says. "It is a piece about my relationship with religion and in terms of my culture as well, so the colours represent the complex feelings I have, the size represents the childhood aspect, and they are laying flat on the table so they are no longer in flight."

Carney says she was always interested in art since she was young.

"My mom and father like to say that I started picking up a pencil at two-years-old," Carney says. "And ever since then art has been kind of my practice. I'm also looking to be an educator so I'm also looking to spread that to other youth in the future."

Jesslynn Friday, a third-year fine arts student and Seine River citizen who also received

one of The Framing Post and Design Studio Awards, says it was amazing to be recognized with the award for her art piece Ruona. Friday also received a Dean of Social Sciences and Humanities Award and the Thunder Bay Art Gallery Award.

"...I have found art to be a place where I can start to experience some resurgence in my culture..."

- Natasha Broadbent

"It's a drawing which depicts my niece in her jingle dress dancing to show her wholeness as kind of half spirit, half human, as the way children come into this world," Friday says. "It's in colour and in black and white, half of it is made from black Stonehenge paper and white Chinese pencil and half is made from watercolour paper with Beam watercolour paints, which are from Manitoulin Island, and using ink. The entire series that I was making this piece for is about wholeness and how Anishinabe people kind of show their wholeness and their relation to spirit through their artwork, and the way I do that is to represent my family through my artwork and represent them as like stardust, since we are all stardust, and I want to represent myself and my family and my friends through that kind of worldview."

Natasha Broadbent, a third-year visual arts student and Rainy River citizen who received the Co.Lab Solo Exhibition Award and the Lake-

head University Student Union Award, says it was really great to be recognized with the awards.

"I wasn't really expecting an award, especially the Co.Lab Solo Exhibition Award because it's quite a big responsibility I think to throw your own exhibition, and I feel really honoured and excited for that opportunity," Broadbent says.

Broadbent says she had always been into art and painting but didn't start thinking about doing it as a career until after high school.

"Since then I have found art to be a place where I can start to experience some resurgence in my culture," Broadbent says. "A lot of the inspiration that I get to create artwork is trying to find a way for me to understand new things that I learn about myself and my culture and ways that I connect to different parts of my culture."

Penelope Smart, curator at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, says the Lakehead University Honours and Juried Student Exhibition Awards Reception is one of their most anticipated and well attended events of the year.

"The gallery is always full to the brim with friends and family of the artists and faculty from LU," Smart says. "It's a chance for them to get recognized for their work, all different kinds of work. There's a lot of awards across disciplines like painting and sculpture and ceramics, there's different local companies that support artists and have been doing so for a long time. It's a really nice tradition and legacy in terms of an awards ceremony, and the Thunder Bay Art Gallery is part of that, we give a Thunder Bay Art Gallery Award to one student every year for a piece of work in the Juried (Student Exhibition) and the staff votes as a group."



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