

# Minwaashin Lodge Organization Profile

## *Respecting Women is Our Culture*



### Minwaashin Lodge-Aboriginal Women's Support Centre (AWSC)

#### Head Office Address:

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Ottawa, Ontario K1K 4C1

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Website: [www.minlodge.com](http://www.minlodge.com)

Date of Incorporation: 1994

Date of Charitable Status: 1994

Executive Director: Mary Daoust

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#### Background

AWSC was created in 1992 by a determined and ***courageous group of women*** in Ottawa who envisioned violence prevention and intervention services run by and for Aboriginal women. Since then Minwaashin Lodge-Aboriginal Women's Support Centre has become widely known and highly regarded for working to end gendered inequality and violence by reclaiming First Nation, Inuit and Metis teachings of equality and respect for women.

#### Mission: *Lifecycle Services Model*

The mission of Minwaashin Lodge is to provide wholistic programs and services for grandmothers, women, children and youth impacted by family violence and residential schooling.

#### **Minwaashin Lodge Vision**

We envision a world where all of creation, the earth, the air, the waters, animals and people are safe, honoured and respected; where children and Elders are valued; where culture and diversity are celebrated.

**Cultural programming** is interwoven throughout all services and includes seasonal and sacred ceremonies, a Women's Drum Group, and traditional teachings from respected Elders and cultural teachers.

The Sacred Child and Wisdom Keepers programs were two of Minwaashin Lodge's foundational services. The ***Sacred Child*** program continues to provide support for children who have witnessed violence and healthy Native parenting skills for parents, caregivers and extended families.

The ***Wisdom Keepers*** program was created to empower women age 55+ to reclaim their traditional place of respect as decision-makers, problem solvers and cultural teachers. The 12 original Grandmothers from this program have become highly regarded Elders, traditional teachers and community leaders locally and nationally.

There are 4 pillars upon which all Minwaashin Lodge programs and services are built.



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Examples of 'Voice' are the *Travelling Song Blanket*, the *Relationships We Honour Blanket* and the various music videos and CDs produced by the *Women's Drum Group* and *Youth as Leaders* projects. The Travelling Song quilt was created by 14 women as a symbol of cultural beauty and strength to raise national awareness of missing & murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. The Honour Blanket was created by 10 youth and their families as a peer education tool to promote healthy equal relationships. These quilts and songs are featured at conferences and violence prevention events locally and nationally.



Travelling Song Quilt

The documentary, **Aboriginal Sex Trade: "Survival Sex" on Canadian Streets** was produced in 2011 to raise awareness of violence prevention and intervention through the voices of sex workers.

### Reach

Today Minwaashin Lodge programs and services reach over 3,300 community members annually.

### Recognition and Awards

In 1998 AWSC was nominated for the Drucker Award for innovation in programming and received the Community foundation Award "Good People Doing Good Things"; 2001 received the Joan Gullen Award for *Excellence in Service to the Community*; 2010 received Children's Aid Society of Ottawa's *Community Service Provider Award*; 2010 *Love You Give* recognized by the

Attorney General for innovation in Aboriginal youth leadership.

### Proven Track Record in Community Partnerships to Improve Services

Minwaashin Lodge promotes community partnerships and mutually respectful collaboration across all sectors.

1. *2012 United Way-Accenture* provides funds and access to volunteers to enhance Minwaashin employment training programs.
2. *2012 Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition/Urban Aboriginal Strategy* rejoined this interagency committee for planning and resource allocation.
3. *2008 City of Ottawa Police Services*: to initiate 12-member *Community Assisting Aboriginal Sex Trade Workers* committee.
4. *2007 City of Ottawa Aboriginal Working Committee* to address emerging issues impacting Aboriginal people in Ottawa and *Community Capacity Building Committee*.
5. *2006 Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, Inuit, Metis and First Nations Liaison Group* and *CAS-VAW Advisory Committee* for interagency planning and coordination on child welfare; also 2010-11 seconded the Sacred Child Program Coordinator to CAS for intercultural development assistance.
6. *2003 Amnesty International* launched their national *Stolen Sisters* campaign at Minwaashin Lodge to raise awareness of murdered and missing women.
7. *2003 Odawa Native Friendship Centre* planning the *Annual Children's Powwow*.
8. *2002 Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa* for teaching circles with clients and staff and linkages with programs for at-risk youth.
9. *2001 City of Ottawa Alliance to End Homelessness*, active member.
10. *1998 Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation* provides housing priority for abused women from Oshki Kizis.
11. *1996 VAW Management Committee* for shelter planning and resource allocation.
12. *1995 Family Service Centre of Ottawa*

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linking clients to a spectrum of essential VAW prevention/intervention supports.

13. 1995 OCTEVAW (formerly RCCEVAW) a coalition of VAW service providers, educators, police, and health services.

### **Creativity and Innovation**

#### ***Innovations in Addiction, Trauma and Mental Health Support Services***

- 2003-2010 first 2-Spirit support program in Eastern Ontario funded by AHF.
- 2001 hosted first 2-Spirit conference in eastern Ontario *Returning to the Circle*.
- 1998 conceived the first annual national women's gathering held at Victoria Island titled "*Bringing the Medicine Back to Women*" which drew 350 women from diverse cultures across Canada.
- 1998 conceived the first trauma recovery program in Canada specifically for Aboriginal women Survivors of residential school abuse. Since then, the Lodge has become a leader in culture-based programming for trauma/mental health and addictions recovery specific to the needs of urban Aboriginal women and their families.

#### ***Innovations in Promoting Women's Safety***

- 2011 Ottawa Police Service held a press conference at Minwaashin to publicly announce the threat of a serial killer in Ottawa targeting sex workers.
- 2008 the first STORM (Sex Trade Out Reach Mobile) project assists sex workers with immediate medical, safety and shelter needs.
- 2001 opened Oshki Kizis Lodge the first urban shelter for abused Aboriginal women in Eastern Ontario.

#### ***Creatively Engaging and Empowering Youth***

- 2008 produced *Time to Shine* Inuit music video fusing hip hop and throat-singing.
- 2007-8 provided youth leadership training through media arts skills.

- 2006 produced hip hop music video Love You Give as a peer education tool to promote healthy equal relationships among youth.
- 2006 Engaged 90 youth, families and service providers in creating an **Action Plan for Aboriginal Youth and Their Families in Ottawa**.

### **Commitment to Knowledge Sharing**

Minwaashin Lodge is deeply committed to the principles of lifelong learning through professional development for staff and externally for stakeholders and the general public. Intercultural education is provided nationally, provincially and locally for teachers, educators, students, service providers and associations. New knowledge is co-created and shared through partnerships with universities.

#### ***Achievements in Promoting Indigenous Knowledge and Best Cultural Practices***

- 2011 presentation to *Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions*, Ontario
- 2011 presented on the *Lifecycle Service Model* at the global conference *Women's Worlds* at University of Ottawa; also 2013 *Family Resource Programs* national conference.
- 2011 submission to High Commission for Human Rights, UN re *Best Practices from the Front Lines of VAW Prevention*
- 2010 plenary presentation on *Post-Colonial Child Welfare* for the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies
- 2010 *Strengthening Cultural Connections* a 2-day VAW service provider symposium
- 2010 *My Grandmother Taught Me to Be a Leader* a 1-day IWD event.
- 2009 *From Paper to Practice: Anti-Oppression-an Aboriginal Perspective*, a 1-day community building forum in partnership with Immigrant Women's Services of Ottawa
- 2009 *Better Policy Outcomes Through Community-Based Collaboration*, National Aboriginal Policy Research Conference

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### ***Achievements in Partnerships with Universities and Centres for Excellence***

- 2010-13 BC Centre for Excellence in Women's Health: national consultation on best practices in FASD prevention and intervention.
- 2012 published article in the Journal of The Arts in Psychotherapy 39: 192– 200 titled ***Journey women: Art therapy in a decolonizing framework of practice***, Lucy Lu and Felice Yuen.
- 2011 University of Ottawa School of Nursing, research project to improve access to preventative services for Aboriginal families.
- 2010 'Journey Women' art exhibit of 'body-maps' created by Aboriginal women in a 3-day arts-based healing workshop in collaboration with Concordia University.

### **Funding Base and Annual Budget**

Core funding is provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The ***Annual Report 2012*** shows an operating budget of \$1,200,377.00 (includes project funding).

### **Board of Directors**

Minwaashin Lodge is governed by a 11-member volunteer Board of Directors comprised of respected, long-standing Aboriginal community members drawn from legal, research, academic, housing, entrepreneurial, and executive government sectors.

### **Staff**

Minwaashin Lodge employs a fully qualified Aboriginal staff of 25 and 119 volunteers.

### **Accountability**

The Board of Directors establishes the organization's direction, sets policy, confirms annual organizational activities and approves financial plans in accordance with its mandate. The Board of Directors hires and oversees the Executive Director. A senior staff team works under the direct supervision of the Executive Director. Program and administrative staff work

under the supervision of each Program Manager. The Executive Director presides over all senior staff team meetings; decisions are taken in a participatory manner.

1. The Executive Committee is the body accountable to the Board for efficient functioning of the organization. The President Chairs this committee and oversees the Executive Director.
2. The Finance Committee monitors financial activities and accounting practices in accordance with approved policy.
3. The Executive Director is accountable for effective day-to-day management of the organization and its services including proper and efficient utilization of financial resources.
4. Minwaashin Lodge is accountable to: funders through regular reports on all activities and expenditures; and to the community it serves through detailed reports to members at its Annual General Meeting each November.

### **Buildings and Facilities**

Minwaashin Lodge operates at two sites. The head office and all day programs are located at a 10,000 square foot, 29-room leased location on Lola Street. The 12,000 square foot, 21-bed women's shelter, Oshki Kizis Lodge is located in a 3-story building purchased through privately donated funds in 2000.

### **Evaluation**

A comprehensive Risk Management Assessment was conducted by the Ministry of Community and Social Services in 2011-12 and an Agency Review by the City of Ottawa, Homelessness Programs Unit in 2012. Findings of both reports show a high level of organizational performance across all indicators including: Governance and Organization, Service Delivery and Operations, Stakeholder Satisfaction and Public Perception, Finance, Legal, Technology and Information Management, and Human Resources.