

MINWAASHIN LODGE

AGM REPORT
2021



MINWAASHIN HONORS OUR

FOUNDERS

GRANDMOTHER LILLIAN
PITAWANAKWAT IS
THE FOUNDING ELDER OF
MINWAASHIN LODGE

We do our work to honour all Indigenous women and always to honour our founding Elder, Lillian Pitawanakwat.

From the beginning, Grandmother tirelessly traveled to Minwaashin Lodge, Ottawa to see how we were progressing. Lillian believed in us! She believed in the work we were trying to do. She visited our lodge bring guidance, healing, and support to our fledgling organization and to the small group of staff, who in the beginning, for the most part, were searching for their own identity and culture. Lillian prayed religiously for us and did many pipe ceremonies so that the Creator would help all of us to rebuild our strength.

MINWAASHIN HONORS OUR FOUNDERS

We must never forget the dedicated women that blazed the trail. The power of Irene Compton (Thunderbird Lady in the Sky) came to us from the west as Creator gave her the bundle of co-founding Minwaashin. Through Irene's Indian Name and strong cultural beliefs, she has managed to maintain a lasting presence in the community and at the Lodge. Irene stands as a witness and keeper of the stories of Minwaashin Lodge and we would like to honor Irene Compton for her 26 years of dedication.

IRENE COMPTON IS
THE CO-FOUNDER OF
MINWAASHIN LODGE



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Our Vision

WE ENVISION A WORLD WHERE ALL OF CREATION,
THE EARTH, THE AIR, THE WATERS, ANIMALS
AND PEOPLE ARE SAFE, HONORED AND
RESPECTED; WHERE CHILDREN AND ELDERS ARE
VALUED; WHERE CULTURE AND DIVERSITY
ARE CELEBRATED.



OUR FUNDERS

PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA
KAGITA MIKAM
BELL LET'S TALK
CANADIAN HERITAGE CANADA
CARING AND SHARING EXCHANGE
ONTARIO FEDERATION OF INDIGENOUS FRIENDSHIP
CENTRES
THE CITY OF OTTAWA
ONTARIO COUNCIL OF ARTS
THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL
SERVICES
INSPIRIT FOUNDATION
ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (ONWA)
CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY OF OTTAWA
INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH CANADA
ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION
UNITED WAY EAST ONTARIO
ACCENTURE INC.
LAIDLAW FOUNDATION: INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND
COMMUNITY FUTURES FUND (IYCFF)
ECCELESTICAL INSURANCE FOUNDATION

OUR COVID FUNDERS

UNITED WAY EAST ONTARIO
CANADIAN WOMENS FOUNDATION
OTTAWA NETWORK FOR EDUCATION
HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE CANADA
SPROTT FOUNDATION
J.W. MCCONNELL FAMILY FOUNDATION
INDIGENOUS SPORTS AND WELLNESS
CANADIAN RED CROSS
CITY OF OTTAWA
CANADALIFE.COM
HAPPY ROOTS FOUNDATION
WOMEN SHELTERS OF CANADA
ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION
OTTAWA NETWORK FOR EDUCATION
ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES
ROGERS FOUNDATION FUND
MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND SPORT
COAST CAPITAL SAVINGS
SPROTT FOUNDATION: SECOND HARVEST
EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA
INDIGENOUS SERVICE CANADA
MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
OTTAWA ABORIGINAL COALITION
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF CANADA
BELL LET'S TALK
ONTARIO FEDERATION OF INDIGENOUS FRIENDSHIP
CENTRES



OUR TEAM

BOARD

Velvet Migwans President
Jo McCutcheon Vice President
Pamela Wolfe-Roberge Treasurer
Christina Hodgins-Stewart Board Member
Lane Bourbonniere Board Member
Katelin Peltier Board Member
Irene Goodwin Interim Board Member

STAFF

Mary Daoust Executive Director
Frances Daly Director, Oshki Kizis Lodge
Florence Hiltz Manager, Child & Youth Programs
Irene Compton Manager, Culture/Employment Programs
Angela Jeffrey-Martincich Manager, Counselling Team, Art Therapist
Annie Kingston-Miller Acting Manager, Counseling Team, Children's Therapist
Barb Wolfe Kitchen Manager/Cultural Outreach/STORM support
Kate Holden Book Keeper/Human Resources
Ida Kakekagumick IT Maintenance/Reception
Paulette John Executive Assistant
Elaine Kicknosway Traditional Women's Counsellor
Cara Diamond Crisis & Intake/Youth Counsellor
Storm Burgoyne Women's Counsellor
Andrea Young Substance Abuse/Mental Health Wellness
Eunice Decontie Substance Abuse/Mental Health Wellness
Wendy Kitty-Milligan Child, Youth, and Women's Counsellor
Verna McGregor Employment Counsellor
Sabrina Gideon Employment and Training Project Coordinator
Frankie Pasap Culture Coordinator
Patricia Animikwan Maintenance Worker
Kateri Miles Youth Worker
Hayven Wawatie Family Support Worker
Rebecca Migwans Sacred Family Liasion Coordinator
Carrollynn Abour Cultural Youth Prevention Worker
Stephanie Gilipin Family Wellness Worker
Jeanette Jackson Residential Support Worker OKL
Ann Wesley Shelter Director Assistant
Tina Tremblay, Veronica Spade STORM HT
Marleny Velit, Agnes Kistabish STORM
Sunshine Roundpoint Court Worker
Diane Wolfe, Nicole Edwards, Lainie Sylvester, Karen Polson Housing First Case Manager
Sabrina Jones-Monette Housing First - Youth
Monica Slauenwhite-Stevens Residential Support Worker
Kayla Spagnoli Indigenous Provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Throughout all the ups and downs that Covid presented this past year, staff and volunteers continued to show their tenacity, resiliency, and dedication in everything they did for our community. Without them, Minwaashin would not be the safe place that community members rely on for services.

This year, we have been very successful with Covid funding to supply essential services, such as hotels, crisis support for youth, women and families, counseling, outreach, resources, phones, ipads and food security to all clients in need. Our numbers continue to escalate the longer Covid restrictions are in place, therefore, the pressure to meet these demands and secure funding has been ongoing. A very special thank you to community partners and the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition. Minwaashin was given a much-needed opportunity to purchase another Outreach van to keep up with the ongoing demand on services/crisis support/ emergency food security and delivery. Clothing donations had to be suspended due to the possible Covid health risks which impacted families who were in desperate need of basic supplies. We had to turn our donation 'ask' into supplying brand new items for families only. The community did not disappoint in delivering these new items in a timely fashion and we continue to hear from mainstream agencies, colleges, universities, and community who want to help in any way.

For our Christmas drive this past year, staff and numerous volunteers gathered to ensure families received a nice Christmas meal and gifts. It was heartwarming to see the faces of these families when their delivery arrived. We know Minwaashin is making a difference in a big way!

Mental wellbeing is important to Minwaashin and so the Lodge wanted to do something for the staff. A 'Rejuvenation' room with exercise equipment and a traditional space was created for all to enjoy and decompress. This room has been so beneficial to staff and volunteer's well-being and has quickly become a favourite place to be.

The uncertainty of these variants leaves one feeling that we are not over this pandemic any time soon. As we move through the continuing ebbs and flows, there is no doubt that the staff and volunteers of Minwaashin will not let the community down.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Executive Director-Mary Daoust, staff and volunteers for always stepping up to take care of our people in a good way.

Chi-Meegwetch,
Velvet Migwans
Board President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

“Run, Run, Run as fast as you can...”

And that is what we have been doing.. Living in a Covid world this past year presented many difficult challenges and barriers for Minwaashin Lodge and our clients. However, I knew our Indigenous community would be okay when I witnessed staff stepping up to do whatever was necessary to meet the immediate demand created by the pandemic. We are not done yet! We dug our heels in and overcame barriers one by one. Each roadblock made us more determined to forge ahead and still do what we needed to do for our families and women to feel safe and supported.

Most programming at Lola site have been serving clients curbside, virtually or with limited face to face such as, in-house culture groups, counseling, food security and CASO access visits for families. Covid has forced us to take stock and rethink outside the box. The new 'norm' going forward will be virtual and face to face programming for families and clients. This allows the Lodge to reach rural and remote families and women that would otherwise have had no supports while they remained isolated.

Minwaashin has seen a drastic increase in domestic violence cases; low mental well being; crisis; anxiety; depression and substance use. It is disheartening to see so many lapsing into old behaviors due to the lack of consistent services in the community since March 2020. On a positive note..Minwaashin has been successful in securing some critical funding to support the ongoing needs of youth/mental health/addictions and anti human trafficking.

The beat goes on.. Our Indigenous communities continue to lose mothers, aunties, sisters, grandmothers, and youth to substance use and violence. The long waiting lists continue to be a challenge for women who need treatment. Over the years, women have had to leave children, family, and community behind so they can attend a treatment centre outside of Ottawa. To expect women to go off to an environment that may not have culturally competent staff could leave one in a vulnerable state. This is a very tall order to ask of anyone, let alone someone who has no healthy supports to rely on.

The Indigenous Women and Children's Healing Lodge is a unique 360-degree holistic wellness residential program that focuses on healing the whole family. We need to secure long-term funding for a specific Healing Lodge right here in Ottawa! Part of our due diligence is to give our community a service that will not inhibit their wellness but enhance their ability to live a healthy and safe life free from abuse and violence.

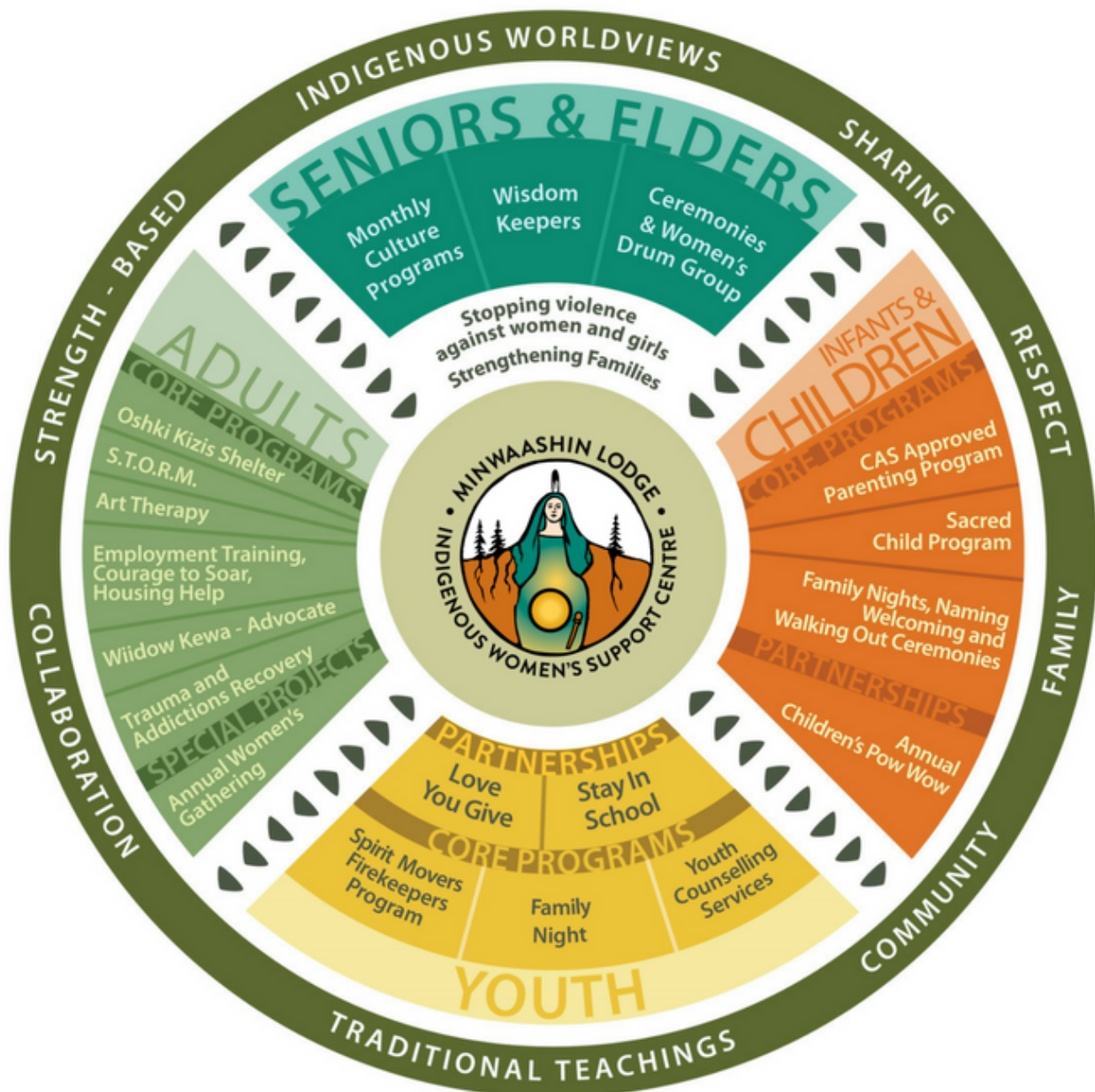
It is in the best interest of Minwaashin's staff and community to offer another curbside Children's Winter Giveaway for 2021. The past year we were so blessed to have *The Mission* support Minwaashin Lodge with our curbside Christmas delivery. There was 300 Christmas meals with all the trimmings dropped off on the day of our Giveaway. The outpour of support from worker elves, Board and volunteers was amazing! We also had a new opportunity to reach families in rural and remote areas as well, thanks to Covid funding. Without the generosity and deep commitment from our funders, donors, volunteers, community partners and sister agencies we could not have delivered quality services at 95% capacity.

Without you, there is no us. *You Rock!*

Without culture there is no connection to spirit. Without spirit there is no connection to healing. Minwaashin is the core of both culture and healing.

With warm regards,

Mary Daoust
Executive Director



MINWAASHIN LODGE: LIFE-CYCLE SERVICE MODEL

Respecting women is our culture



COUNSELLING SERVICES



Minwaashin Lodge-Indigenous Women's Support Centre provides a range of counselling services to First Nation, Métis and Inuit women, youth and children who are survivors of various forms of violence, many of whom are survivors or intergenerational survivors of the residential school system or 60s Scoop. Our services are client centered, holistic and culturally based.

The counselling program provides a full spectrum of therapeutic services including art therapy, traditional counselling, sand tray therapy and play therapy, which support healing from: sexual abuse, substance use, family breakdown, childhood trauma, mental health issues related to anxiety and depression, grief and loss, all forms of violence, anger management and sexuality and gender expression.

Children's Counselling is offered at our agency location, our Oshki Kizis shelter, as well as partner organizations within the city. Additionally, traditional healing such as sweats, fasts, circles and drumming are offered to children, youth, adults, and elders. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, counselling services are also being offered using secure video conferencing technology and by phone. As restrictions have been lifted, we have begun offering sessions outdoors, as well as on site, using appropriate safety measures.



STATISTICS: DURING THE PAST YEAR:

- **APPROXIMATELY 600 FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT WOMEN AND FAMILIES RECEIVED COUNSELLING SERVICES WITH OVER 7000 HOURS OF 1:1 COUNSELLING, ART/FAMILY THERAPY AND CRISIS INTERVENTION IN ADDITION TO PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS, TRADITIONAL SUPPORT, TEACHINGS, AND REFERRAL SERVICES. DUE TO COVID RESTRICTIONS SWEATS, FASTS AND CEREMONIES WERE PUT ON HOLD. THIS YEAR THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH RECEIVING INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING.**

Highlights:

- Through new funding from the *Department of Canadian Heritage's Commemorating the History and Legacy of Residential Schools Program*; a ten (10) week Family Therapy Program was offered by Zoom. Eight (8) families participated in the program which took place over Zoom and was organized around the Seven Grandfather Teachings. The program was facilitated by Alana McLeod, an Anishinaabe Creative Arts Therapist along with two Indigenous Art Therapy Students from the WHEAT Institute.
- New funding from *Bell Let's Talk Community Fund* supported the hiring of a Part-Time Youth Counsellor. This position has allowed Minwaashin to better connect and support Indigenous youth, particularly those in care, through a culture and empowerment based approach.
- Through various COVID-19 related funding programs, counsellors were able to participate in a range of professional development opportunities, due in part to the shift to online delivery of many training programs, including the *Canadian Association of Play Therapy's Foundation - Play Therapy Training*.
- The *Aunties on the Road; Indigenous Full-Spectrum Doula Collective* received four (4) year funding to scale up their programming through the *Youth Opportunities Fund*. This new funding will allow the group to hire a full-time doula, in addition to the current five (5) part-time doulas. Minwaashin acts as an organizational home and mentor for the collective, who provide full-spectrum doula services to Indigenous youth 12-29 and an annual full-spectrum doula training. Additional funding to support the online workshops related to sexual and reproductive health was received from the *Laidlaw Foundation*.
- The Counselling Team collaborated with the Sacred Child Team to create wellness and self-care bundles for hundreds of families and individuals within the Ottawa urban Indigenous community, recognizing the unique and disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on the Indigenous community.

Ongoing:

- Traditional Counselling: Through funding from the City of Ottawa and Ontario Council for the Arts, the Traditional Knowledge Keeper- Elaine Kicknosway continued to offer traditional counselling and healing for survivors of violence and abuse.
- Play and Art based Childrens Therapy: Funding from both the City of Ottawa and the Ontario Trillium Foundation support children's therapy programs. The Children's therapists work closely with families to advocated for their needs with educational, child welfare and health care institutions. The demand for services is high due to Minwaashin Lodge having the only Indigenous specific long term children's therapy program in Ottawa.
- Crisis and Women's Counselling; Long-term funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services supported our Crisis and Women's Counsellor Positions. These positions play an integral role in our women's wellbeing.
- Substance Use and Mental Wellness: Through one (1) year funding from both the United Way and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, two counsellors supported Indigenous women to manage problematic substance use and address underlying contributors through a culture based harm reduction approach, coupled with psychotherapy techniques. As both counsellors have full caseloads, finding continued long-term funding for these positions is a key priority for the Lodge.

The Strong Women's Support Group (*Mashkawizig Ikwewag*) resumed in a virtual format. The group is based on the Seven Grandfather Teachings and incorporates a holistic approach to healing for women who are struggling with substance use and abuse. This open group included psychoeducation around colonization, residential schools, intergenerational trauma and contemporary impacts including violence against women. Participants explored past and present coping skills to help them maintain their sobriety and continue their healing journeys.



The Sacred Child Program had a busy year providing family support and guidance to children 0-6 years. We work with many community partners to educate parents and families on topics such as nutrition, family violence, child development, and parenting skills through personalized goal and safety planning. Our team worked diligently to deliver programs virtually, face to face and curbside within the Ottawa Public Health (OPH) protocols.

We continued to address the isolation caused by Covid-19 and supported families in accessing other services provided by Minwaashin Lodge, including referrals to community organizations. Bi-weekly food delivery with monthly family resources, continued access /CASO/crisis support kept our team busy.

The program also strives to recognize and respect the roles of women in the family. All programs are offered free of charge. Along with our Women's Parenting Group, we provide a Father's Support Group virtually as well. The Sacred Child Program is part of the dynamic circle of services that is vital to the wellness of the families of Minwaashin Lodge.

Highlights:

- *Annual Back to School Supplies Giveaway
- *Toys for Tots
- *Winter Xmas giveaway and feast-curbside delivery
- *Weekly access/visitation with CASO
- *Traditional teachings
- *FNIM Parenting
- *Nitawigin EarlyON Program - virtual cultural programming
- *Dad Central Learning
- *Bi-weekly food bank-curbside delivery
- *Curbside crisis supports/visits
- *Partnership with IEYC with quarterly family bundles

Gitchi- Miigwetch to everyone for your generous contributions, donations, volunteering, support, and prayers.

**FUNDING FOR THE SACRED CHILD PROGRAM
IS PROVIDED BY PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA**

We would like to acknowledge our partnerships as our community is stronger as a circle.

Partnerships:

- *Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition
- *Ottawa Public Health
- * Inuuqatigiit/Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre
 - *Tungasuuvingat Inuit
- * Odawa Native Friendship Centre
- * Wabano Aboriginal Health Centre
- * Aboriginal Makonsag Head Start – Nitawigin EARLYON Program
- *Southern Ontario Diabetes Worker
- * Metis Nation of Ontario
- *ONWA- AHBHC - Family Home Visitor/Child Welfare Worker
- *Circle of Care-Alternative Child Welfare Restoratives Justice Program
 - * Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
 - *City of Ottawa Public Health
 - *Ontario Best Start
 - * Ottawa Public Library
 - *Ottawa Food Bank
 - *The Mission
- *Ottawa School of Art Outreach Program
- *IEYC – Indigenous Early years
- *United Way-Gifts in Kinds Program
- *Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada)
 - *Ottawa First Words
 - *CMHA
- *Ottawa School breakfast Program/Ottawa Network for Education
- *Ottawa Lansdowne Farmers Market

Every Child Matters





THE SPIRIT MOVERS AND FIRE KEEPERS YOUTH PROGRAM

Is a First Nations, Inuit and Métis focused program for boys and girls aged 7-11 years old and youth 12-18 years. Activities are based on traditional cultural teachings. The youth gain knowledge of their Indigenous roots with age appropriate discussions and activities. Over the past year we have had to really change up the way we deliver the Youth Program. We continued to support youth and their families through video chat, check ins, talk and text, Facebook groups, curbside/backyard visits with activities and games to keep connected with 1:1 support, all while following Public Health guidelines to help prevent the spread of Covid-19.

In house cultural support has been put on hold since schools went virtual. The Youth program continued to meet with youth virtually through the Original Voices Youth Council and All Nations Youth groups. We are looking forward to providing cultural support by resuming modified outreach visits this fall with Gloucester High School, Ottawa Technical Secondary School and Woodroffe High School.

During the pandemic, the Youth program continued to advocate for youth in care, local childcare agencies, group homes, and The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa Carleton to ensure youth had access to their culture and stayed connected.

We also supported children, youth, and their families with continued essential services during the pandemic. This included deliveries of food bank, so our families stayed safe during the lockdowns. We delivered to over 90 families thanks to the dedication of Minwaashin staff and our beloved volunteers and students.

Times are changing and the Youth program is adapting to these new changes. Programming will look different with a mix of in person and virtual programming. The core program is to develop, promote and maintain healthy lifestyles and friendship, offer Indigenous teachings and ceremonies which will always remain the same.

"I really am hoping we can create a social movement so that we raise a generation of First Nation children who never have to recover from their childhoods again."

– Cindy Blackstock
Giga-waabannin miinawaa
(I will see you again)

NEW * GIIWITAASHKODE PROGRAM (AROUND THE FIRE)

The name Giiwitaashkode means “Around the Fire.” The name of this program is intended to be an extension of Minwaashin’s Youth program - The Spirit Movers and Fire Keepers. The philosophy behind the creation of this program is to base cultural learnings, understandings, and teachings to support Indigenous youth who will be participating in this new opportunity.

The Giiwitaashkode program serves Indigenous youth ages 12 – 29 years who are at risk of violence and victimization, including human trafficking. The overarching goal of this program will be to provide culturally based programming and support to youth while using a holistic well-being approach. This will strengthen and inform self-identity to enhance skills and resiliency with the Indigenous youth.

The program will have a mentorship element for participants to partake in due to the vast age range. The Youth Cultural Prevention Worker continues to settle into this new role and is excited to see the future of this Giiwitaashkode Program unfold along with its growth and progression! Creating a safe cultural space for those we work with is the foundation of this future program.





COURAGE TO SOAR

Career Development Training and diploma in Administrative Assistant - Advanced Studies

Project Target

The Courage to Soar (CTS) program targets survivors of domestic violence or women who are at risk of domestic violence and are ready to build economic self-sufficiency.

Ministry of the Status of Women has approved funding from April 2018 to March 2021 which secures training for 39 women.

Highlights

The Courage to Soar Program is a 24-week training program with a 90-day paid work placement with HRDC and CRA-Federal Government.

Stats for 2020-2021 fiscal year were impacted by Covid with: 8/13 participants graduated; 3 graduated with Distinction (92%-point average) and 1 with High Honors (86%-point average) from Willis College.

Partnerships

To enhance CTS in the delivery of support services and training opportunities, Minwaashin Lodge has partnered with other agencies and educational institutions:

- Willis College (training)
- Ontario Works (employment assistance benefits and job retention supports)
- Kagita Mikam (training & cost sharing)
 - Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
 - Job Connect (employment services)
 - Apatisiwin (training & cost sharing)
 - Ottawa Food Bank (emergency food)
- HRDC – Federal Government (Placements).

Enhancements and Supports

The Courage to Soar Program is focused on ensuring that each woman receives a range of supports leading to successful graduation of program.

- Intake and assessment identify the level of skills and supports needed for each applicant.
- Violence Against Aboriginal Women services and support, individual counseling, crisis-counseling, on-going culturally based psycho-educational workshops, safety planning and advocacy to assist women's participation in the training program.
- Individual Training Education and Employment Action Plans based on cultural models such as the Medicine Wheel and tipi pole teachings.
- Work placements to assist the participants to enhance their skills and exposure to a working environment.
- Office Administration Training tuition fees and books are paid by the Courage to Soar Program. Training prepares graduates for entry level positions.
- Tutoring, peer support and "first day at school" supports are provided by graduates of the Courage to Soar Program.
- Self care, team leading/modeling and confidence building workshops are delivered to strengthen soft skills.

Benefits to the Program

- The Courage to Soar Program has proven to be a model program gaining high recognition in the Indigenous community and establishing continued support from the Ministry of the Status of Women and Ontario Works.
- Willis College has nominated the Courage to Soar Program for an award in excellence with the Ontario Ministry of Education for 2013
- Many applicants are referred by past graduates who have had a positive experience in the program.
- Graduates are proud of and use the leadership, self-esteem, and confidence skills they have acquired as a result of the CTS Program.
- The program continues to experience an 80% success rate; our graduates go on to employment or choose to pursue further training in colleges and universities.

Statistics

To date, Courage to Soar Program has the following statistics: 8 Graduates 2020-2021.

Overall statistics: 221 women registered for the CTS program, 144 participated in the program, 124 women completed the program, 148 women got jobs; full-time, part-time and /or self-employed, 51 women pursued further training.

Currently, all eight (8) graduates of the 2020-2021 are in their paid placements within government agencies and many are receiving job offers after their placement period ends.

One student was awarded the Employee Spotlight for her amazing work ethic and bubbly personality. Referrals and intakes are currently underway for the 2021-2022 Courage to Soar Participants!



CULTURE PROGRAM

The Culture Program empowers women to seek a healthy and culturally enhanced lifestyle – Mino Bemaadziwin /The Good Life - for themselves and their families. The mandate of the program is to assist First Nations, Inuit and Métis women find, cultivate and develop cultural leadership and traditional skills. Further, the program provides opportunities for women to participate in traditional gatherings, recreational outings and ceremonies.

Accomplishments

This year Minwaashin Lodge received a grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation and City of Ottawa, Heritage Fund.

Highlights

Programming for most of the year was delivered virtually. As the Covid-19 allowed we did have intervals of face-to-face programming allowing 5 women to attend each session. We stopped and started several times to follow the Covid 19 restrictions.

Women were empowered to do their own ceremonies. Due to Covid restrictions spring fasts, sweats and all our communal ceremonies were put on hold. Women were guided on how to do their own ceremonies at home.

Monthly Women's Drum Circles were conducted online to provide a safe space for women to connect with the drum, songs, teachings, and with their voice. Also, a drum handle making workshop was delivered.

The Culture Program continued following the seasons and the Medicine Wheel and facilitated the creation of traditional drums, rattles, and regalia during the summer, fall and winter months.

Visiting Elders delivered traditional knowledge workshops from Kitigan Zibi and Wiikwemkoong online.

Partnerships

Oshki Kizis Lodge received bi-weekly Culture & Wellness programming for women and children. Women's Events Network Organizers of Ottawa provided opportunities for Indigenous women to participate in December 6 th Vigil and the Annual Take Back the Night walk online. Indigenous women demonstrated leadership, public speaking, and drumming at these annual vigils to raise awareness of the impacts of violence against all women.

Aboriginal Awareness Week provided opportunities for Indigenous women to demonstrate their leadership by actively participating in municipal, provincial and federal Aboriginal Awareness Week campaigns virtually.

Stats *(impacted by Covid)*

Traditional Support Services 255; Cultural Arts & Crafts 175 (groups/virtual); Healing Circles 15-virtual; Hand Drum Circle 49 (virtual) - Ceremonies 15-virtual.

APATISIWIN

The Apatisiwin Program is a training and employment program funded by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) through an agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ISETS). The ISET Program provides funding to Indigenous service delivery organizations that design and deliver job training services to First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban/non affiliated Indigenous people in their communities. Indigenous service delivery organizations can be found across Canada.



Objectives of program:

Funding is distributed to eligible clients for employment and training programs. Partnerships with community colleges, private training institutes and businesses across the province provide training and employment opportunities for Ontario's urban Indigenous people.

The Apatisiwin program matches eligible clients with potential employers.

Provides employment and training opportunities to Indigenous clients who are not eligible through First Nation, Inuit and Metis agreements.

Progress to Date:

A total of 23 client files were processed in fiscal year ending March 31, 2021 with a total of 46 interventions. Interventions included the processing of training allowances, childcare, bus passes and the payment of tuition and books for training.

The program funded 3 participants in Minwaashin Lodge's Courage to Soar program via Willis Business College. The program was extended from a 21 week program into a 27 week Executive Administrative Assistant diploma program. The new program is now delivered once per fiscal year as opposed to twice per fiscal year in the past. The Apatisiwin also co-funded 3 clients in the new Indigenous Personal Support Worker Program through Willis College. The tuition for applicants was paid through the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP).

Pre-employment supports coupled with pre-employment training facilitated a number of women's successful entry into the labour market.

Funded by the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC)

The Process

Intake and assessment to determine the level of skills and supports needed.

The program works in conjunction with all the Violence Against Aboriginal Women (VAAW) services at Minwaashin Lodge such as counselling, on-going culturally based psycho-educational workshops, safety planning and advocacy to increase women's participation in training and education programs.

The Apatisiwin Program triages with the Courage to Soar and Employment Readiness Program to prioritize and deliver best training and career options for each woman registering with the Apatisiwin Program.

The program ensures on-going monitoring of participants in training and employment interventions. Upon completion of training and employment interventions follow-up is done to assist in the entry into the labour market or provision of other opportunities.

Partnerships:

Minwaashin Lodge's Employment Readiness Program

Courage to Soar

Willis College

Algonquin College

Carleton University

Accenture Inc. – Management & Consulting

Kagita Mikam

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

Academy of Learning

The Beauty Academy

Ontario Works Employment Centres

City of Ottawa.

Federal government departments such as Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) have become partners in acquiring Courage to Soar graduates to integrate into positions with the federal government this fiscal year. In addition to ISC and CIRNAC (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada).

STATISTICS: A total of 46 interventions for funding was processed in the 2020-21 fiscal year; 18 Purchase of Training interventions, 3 Courage to Soar interventions, 1 child care assistance intervention, 9 EI reach back interventions, 14 CRF interventions and a total of over 30 client interviews / requests for information were completed throughout the year.

COVID Pandemic:

The Covid pandemic resulted in a decrease in the number of interviews in the 2020-21 fiscal year as a result of safety precautions which also led to the closing of Minwaashin Lodge to outside visitors who did not have pre scheduled appointments when restrictions allowed.

The Apatisiwin Program also aided in the purchase of laptops for 4 individuals because of the need to train on-line.



EMPLOYMENT READINESS PROGRAM

The Employment Readiness Program works in tandem with the Courage to Soar and Apatisiwin Program. This has strengthened Employment Readiness Program's capacity to deliver more effective supports and increase economic advancement for Indigenous women.

2020/21 Highlights

Group Work

- Four, 10-week cycles of Employment Readiness Programming were delivered. Women received professional supports such as career counseling, resume writing, confidence building, education/training information, job interview skills and peer support.
- Delivered monthly workshops via our partner Accenture. To increase employability, women received, "Skills to Succeed" workshops and information sessions.
- Delivered two Basic Computer Skills workshops to increase employability.

Individual Support

Participants received the following:

- Individual career counseling and support
- College and university entrance assessment
- PLAR – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Assessments
- Individual coaching and mentoring for interviews
- Pre-employment services to identify career goals, develop and implement an Employment/ Training Action Plan
- Referrals to specific occupational skills training
- Violence Against Women counseling support, and safety planning
- Support to navigate systems such as Ontario Works, housing, education etc.

Partnerships

Accenture: has raised the profile of Minwaashin Lodge's Employment Readiness Program and increased our capacity to add more workshops and engage with professionals to assist Aboriginal women. Accenture will be launching their Learning Exchange digital platform to provide extended training in 2021.

Kagita Mikam: has increased our capacity to provide additional services & supports. Employment Ontario, St. Lawrence College, Algonquin College, Carleton University and Ottawa University and Willis College: has increased Indigenous women's participation in education and training institutions.

Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC): Our partnership has increased Minwaashin Lodge's inclusion in strategies with both the City of Ottawa and the Government of Canada via OAC's leadership, pursuance, and implementation of economic advancement for Indigenous peoples.

City of Ottawa/Ontario Works: has reduced barriers to employment by assisting participants with tangible needs such as bus passes, food and occupational clothing to become employment ready.

Stats: (impacts of Covid)

Fiscal year 2020-21: 32 women participated in the Employment Readiness Program; 3 obtained jobs and 10 pursued further education.

**Funded by Ministry of Children,
Community and Social Services –
Women's Issues**

VOLUNTEERISM

Minwaashin Lodge-Indigenous Women's Support Centre provides a wide range of volunteerism opportunities for community members.

Volunteers are from all walks of life and work. Students, grassroots, and professional women work together to make sure Minwaashin Lodge's programs and services are effortlessly delivered. Due to Covid 19 restrictions, we did not have our usual number of volunteers. We did however have about 50% capacity of volunteers that helped with Drop In, Food Security, Safe Centers, (Heat and Cooling Centre in winter and summer) and program support.

2020/2021 Highlights:

Volunteers assisted in various activities such as:

- April-March Bi-weekly, food bank pick up and distribution
 - April-March Program Support
 - April-March Drop in Programs
 - March-April Safe Centres Support
- April-March Income Tax Clinic and individual returns completed for low-income women
 - September Back to School Supplies Drive
- October Farmers Harvest – providing fresh vegetables for women & children
- November Elimination of Violence Against Women weekly events online
- December Annual Children's Winter Gathering – curbside foodbank/Christmas dinner/gifts
 - December Dec 6 Vigil online

Partnerships:

UOttawa, Carleton University, Algonquin College and Willis College. Minwaashin Lodge hosted volunteer students from various programs of study.

Salvation Army - Minwaashin Lodge provided Indigenous-specific options for completion of Community Service Orders.

This past year, Minwaashin Lodge provided volunteering opportunities for 51 community members.

The bulk of the support was through food bank preparation and delivery.

Minwaashin Lodge depends on many individuals to enhance their programs and services throughout the year.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Irene Compton, 613-741-5590 ext. 224





55+ PROGRAM

This program, entitled, Aboriginal Women Reclaim Their Culture and Power is based on the Medicine Wheel and follows the seasons to reclaim Indigenous identity and culture.

This initiative primarily provides funding for our Culture Program

Assistant, however, additionally it is generously supporting a part-time Elder position.

Subsequently, we are honored to have Irene Lindsay, Cree Grandmother from Saskatchewan deliver traditional programming and services in our Sacred Lodge specifically for women aged 55+. This has strengthened our Lodge because it has filled many needs for this age group.

2020/21 Highlights

Group Work

Due to Covid restrictions our 55+ Program shifted to virtual programming for the year.

- Crafting & Beading Circles
- Drumming & Singing
- Circles (individual and group)
 - Visiting Elders
 - Specific cultural events
- Ancestry and Identity Workshop

Individual Support

Due to Covid restrictions our 55+ Program shifted to virtual programming for the year.

Participants received the following:

- Traditional support, guidance
- Counselling sessions
- Food Bank

Partnerships

Gignul Non-Profit Housing: has assisted the seniors with affordable housing. It accommodates space in one of their buildings to conduct residential school survivors programming.

Ottawa Food Bank: assists Minwaashin Lodge to reduce anxiety with respect to food security for seniors.

Accenture: has provided Financial Literacy Information sessions.

Eco Equitable: has empowered women 55+ with sewing skills and development of supplemental income.

Carleton University and Ottawa University: has increased 55+ Indigenous women's participation in continuing education.



OSHKI KIZIS LODGE PROGRAMS

This year the impacts on the community due to Covid-19 continued to challenge our services. Street involved and trafficked people continued to require more services and supports as other agencies and services remained closed. Food insecurity increased exponentially for all our clients and access to basic services became more difficult. This resulted in the need to bring in additional staff to meet the increased needs. Our food community delivery program continued; the number of households served increased over this year from 34 at the beginning to 120. As costs rose, we switched to a biweekly delivery model to meet the increased need while ensuring we could continue to support households. The shelter has faced many challenges to address safety and maintain compliance with the required measures put in place to prevent the spread of the virus. Oshki does not have the physical space to accommodate isolation, so we maintained new intakes at hotels with staff supervision until they could be safely tested and brought into the Shelter. Ottawa Public Health and Inner-City Health have supported and informed us throughout this Pandemic, answering questions and supporting us with emerging issues.

Oshki remains open and all programming from Oshki has continued to provide essential services. Despite additional challenges due to the Pandemic, Housing First continued to support clients to find housing.

The staff team at Oshki Kizis shelter is comprised of;

Shelter Director, Residential Support Workers, Transitional Support Worker, Housing First Case Managers, Youth Housing First Case Manager, Family Support Worker, Street Outreach Worker, Cultural Outreach / Kitchen Manager, Street Team Outreach Mobile (STORM), Human Trafficking Team (STORM HT), Court Support Worker and Human Trafficking Liaison.

We work very closely with Minwaashin staff to ensure women and children access all services that they require. Many Minwaashin programs are offered in-house to the women and children at the Shelter.

Funders

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services - Oshki Kizis Lodge/Transitional Support;
Anti-Human Trafficking Indigenous Led Initiatives Fund - S.T.O.R.M. HT;
City of Ottawa - Housing First Case Management/ Housing First Youth Case Management/;
Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres - Court Support/Cultural Outreach/Outreach;
Indigenous Services Canada - Family Support; and
Ontario Native Women's Association - Human Trafficking Liaison.

OSHKI KIZIS SHELTER

Oshki Kizis Lodge (OKL), our 21-bed shelter for Indigenous women and children fleeing abuse has been in operation since 2001. Oshki Kizis provides a safe place where traditional cultural values and practice are honoured. All programs and services are rooted in the Seven Sacred Teachings. A holistic approach is used to support the women and children while they begin their healing journey. Oshki has had to reduce the number of people we served due to Ottawa Public Health directives. Rooms normally shared were available to one family or one single woman at a time. This drastically reduces the number of women we served in shelter which in turn increased the need for outreach and hotel accommodation. Oshki staff continues to work closely with Children's Aid Society and other service providers to preserve, maintain and reunite families.

- This year Oshki Kizis Lodge provided shelter and services to 88 women and 36 children
- 20 women and 13 children were housed, some families returned to their home communities while others still wait for affordable housing.
 - Oshki's Family and Transitional Support Workers continue to assist women in navigating systems and provide advocacy for housing and other critical basic needs. In the past year, 27 households were provided support through Transitional and Family Supports.
 - This year the Shelter answered 1211 calls from women in crisis.
 - This year the Shelter answered 2089 calls from women seeking help or referrals
 - Staff answered calls from 276 women who could not be accommodated at the Shelter due to capacity or eligibility. These women were assisted in finding alternative accommodations..

Please note that due to Covid-19 emergence in March 2020 our numbers dropped significantly to adhere to Ottawa Public Health Guidelines. We were extremely challenged to provide isolation off site for new intakes and access testing. We continue to place women and families in hotel to isolate, a negative test is required before coming to OKL. Many of our previously housed ex-residents have been supported by our food delivery program which has been in operation since March 2020.





STREET OUTREACH

Street Outreach

The Street Outreach worker mainly services Central Downtown and Vanier including community shelter and food banks and drop-in centres. The Outreach Worker partners with other Homeless Outreach teams to provide services to women who are homeless or at risk. The Outreach Worker also facilitates client's access to cultural, spiritual, and practical supports. Outreach connects homeless clients with a Housing First Case Manager (HFCM) at Minwaashin and other Indigenous agencies for housing assistance. Outreach establishes and maintains relationships with other service providers to ensure service and accessibility for clients.

Duties include:

- Housing referrals
- Hospital visits, court
- Medical accompaniment
- Police support, Ontario Works advocacy
- Ontario Disability Services Program advocacy
 - Facilitates access to legal supports
 - Informal mental health support
 - Promotion of harm reduction
 - One on one individual support
 - Distribution of clothing,
- Providing hygiene and feminine products
 - Snacks, drinks
- Bus tickets to provide transportation to appointments

Continuing Initiatives:

Many of our Outreach initiatives have been suspended due to the Pandemic. We will restart as soon as it is safe to do so with the approval of OPH. Outreach has pivoted to serving and supporting women and families in hotels as well as providing supports to women in our shelter.

While partner agencies have been closed or operating with very restricted access, our Outreach Team has assisted STORM and continues to provide cultural supports to community.

Our Cultural Outreach worker has done some small group activities with women including those housed at Cornerstone - Princeton Residence. Outreach supports Minwaashin HT Drop-In by providing transportation to clients who otherwise could

not attend. It has not been possible to go into Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre to support incarcerated women. We look forward to re-engaging in the Discharge Planning for incarcerated women who are being released post COVID.

STORM / STORM HT

STORM is a team of two staff that reaches out to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or trafficked in the City of Ottawa. STORM provides individual support and advocacy to women.

STORM is often the first point of contact for marginalized women in the sex trade who are often reluctant to access services. In 2017, we received funding to hire a second team (STORM HT) to serve STORM clients. This program is specific to providing supports and advocacy to women who are trafficked or at risk.

- Referrals to Minwaashin Lodge for Crisis and Addiction Counseling
- Referrals to Elders and Traditional Healing
- Referrals to Health Centers and/or transport to hospitals
- Supports and advocacy for trafficked women
- Referrals to Housing First Case Managers (HFCM), housing and other community services
 - Safety planning for all women, including exit planning
 - Transportation and bus ticket
- Health and hygiene products, condoms and various other harm reduction supplies
 - Needle exchange and crack pipe distribution
- Provides bagged lunches, snacks, juice or hot chocolate, clothing, shoes, winter coats and boots
 - Provides women with updated "Bad Date" lists (Generated by Salvation Army)
 - Distributes 911 phones to clients to be used to access emergency services
- Provides personal alarms to women. Phones were given to STORM clients in March 2020 once the Pandemic set in to keep them connected with services. This allowed them to access emergency services and to receive remote counselling. We continue to offer this service to the women in need.



STATS

STORM Program: 1439 individuals were served over the last year, 83 transports for safety reasons were provided.

STORM HT (Human Trafficking) Program: 1326 individuals served, 761 identified as trafficked for sex.

Rural/ Remote Funding

5 women were assisted to return home; 2 were set up in apartments; 3 were assisted in coming to Ottawa to escape HT. This funding allowed us to travel to some rural locations to provide services. This funding also allowed us to assist women in rural areas with transport, referrals, food and Cultural supports.



HT LIAISON POSITION

Minwaashin Lodge received funding for a new Indigenous Provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison position in 2018. This role works with other Anti-Human Trafficking workers across the province. Indigenous women comprise 51% of all trafficked people. This is a significant portion of Indigenous communities, who comprise only 4% of the population of Canada.

Statistics and General Information

The role of the Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison worker is to support these women who are at risk, being groomed, or looking to exit from exploitation, primarily through the STORM program, as well as through the two weekly Drop-Ins, every Monday, and Friday on Montreal Road. The worker also educates service providers, community members, teachers, and students on Human Trafficking through an Indigenous perspective through presentations, movies, and discussions. Due to COVID, many of the presentations were moved to Zoom and other online platforms. In June, the worker and STORM staff presented on Indigenous Outreach, highlighting the efforts of both STORM and the Drop-In. This event was hosted by Crime Prevention Ottawa, and had over 183 people from across Canada, in attendance. This past year, the worker received a monetary donation of thirty thousand dollars and was able to fundraise over ten-thousand dollars in essential items through an online wish list.

The worker is co-founder and co-chair of Anti-Violence & Coercion Taskforce for Indigenous Organizations and Networks (ACTION) alongside the former Manager of Exiting Sex Work and Human Trafficking at Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI). ACTION was re-activated due to the vaccine roll out and looks forward to planning their 3rd Annual Indigenous Human Trafficking Day event sometime in 2022.

Drop-In

Renamed “The Drop-In” to simplify that everyone is welcome. The Drop-In reopened September 2020 after months of being inactive due to St. Margaret’s being closed. The Drop-In has been running every Monday and Friday, including holidays, since then. Thanks to the support of Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Advisory Strategy (OAHAS), the Drop-In provides harm reduction, hygiene, food, clothing, and support. Some of the Drop-In highlights include being part of a Harm Reduction Blitz in November, having a chicken take out dinner on Christmas Eve, training students from Algonquin College, hosting an online Narcan training, and hiring a peer. In the most recent weeks, the average evening will bring 40 people to our door, and to date, no one has ever walked away empty handed. The Drop-In would not be possible without the continued support from Parkdale Food Centre (for all the frozen meals, bagels, and food rescue donations), part-time Oshki staff, St. Margaret’s Parish, and community donations.



HOUSING FIRST

Minwaashin Lodge provides Housing First services to homeless Indigenous women. In addition, we have a Youth Housing First worker who serves homeless Indigenous youth.

HFCM Workers provide the following services:

- Guidance and support, making a housing plan with the client that includes their preferences and needs
 - Helping people get the paperwork and identification needed to apply for housing
- Facilitating their application for Housing Registry status
 - Liaison with prospective landlords
- Searching for available housing that meets the clients needs
 - Accompaniment to house viewings
- Hands on assistance with obtaining furniture
- Secure available subsidies for housewares, shop with the client
- Develop a safety plan for clients that addresses their concerns

- Help the client to move into new home
- Assist with initial grocery shop with the client
- Provide ongoing support in the form of visits
 - Provide telephone crisis support
- Support clients in disputes with landlords / other tenants as needed
- Find secondary accommodations as required.

HFCM workers establish supportive relationships with the people they serve. This has resulted in increased success for the clients we serve and has meant that workers have been able to provide many supports that are not specific to housing but essential for housing to be successful.

We have four (4) adult Housing First Workers - average caseload is 19, many of whom are high acuity.

We have one (1) Youth Housing First Worker serving young people ages 17-24 yrs -average case load is 15.

Last year Housing First successfully housed 20 women and 13 children despite COVID challenges.

INDIGENOUS COURT WORKER

This position supports Indigenous clients who are involved in Criminal Court/ Family Court system. This worker accepts referrals from Minwaashin and our various partners. She also attends court and assists those Indigenous clients who are without other supports. This program meets a critical need for the people we serve and as a result, the caseload for this position has increased steadily. As courts closed due to the Pandemic, this worker continued to provide guidance, referral and support whenever possible.

Court Worker services include:

- Assistance in completing paperwork and applying for Legal Aid
 - Accompaniment to hearings
- Assistance with documentation and preparing for meetings with lawyers
 - Providing support before and after court appearances
 - Providing professional visits to incarcerated clients.

Stats:

This year the Court worker provided service to:

41 clients involved in Family Court

90 involved in Criminal Court

34 without charges (family members victims & witnesses)

51 without charges provided with referrals, justice related information.

ZOOM
MEETING
IN
PROGRESS





FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER

Part-time position specifically to serve families in the shelter.

Duties include:

- Assisting clients to apply for financial support i.e. Ontario Works, ODSP
 - Assist the in access to school registration
 - Planning to address the families needs
- Helping women get the paperwork and identification needed to apply for housing
 - Facilitating their application for Housing Registry status
 - Accompaniment to house viewings
 - Hands on assistance with obtaining furniture
- Secure available subsidies for housewares, shop with the client
- Develop a safety plan for clients that addresses their concerns
 - Help the client to move into new home.

In the past year this program has served 79 women, 40 children and worked in collaboration to house 19 women and families. This position continued to be vital once the Pandemic emerged as client needs remained high.



THSP (TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND SUPPORT WORKER)

This past year has been very challenging as Covid restrictions and lockdowns have reduced the access to services in all agencies and have increasingly made Zoom or other communication methods the practical choice. This has significantly reduced frequency of face-to-face meetings. The Transitional Support Worker, while serving clients at Oshki Kizis Lodge and community clients, reports to the Shelter Director of Oshki Kizis Lodge. The Transitional Worker's main focus and responsibility is to provide support for the practical needs of women who have left the shelter and have been in the community for two to three months along with women from the Indigenous, Metis, and Inuit community who may need practical support resulting from domestic violence but are not necessarily in the shelter. Provision of service to current shelter residents will be determined by their readiness to begin planning to move to independent living or those requiring complex system navigation to address time sensitive matters (legal, CAS, police).

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- To work with women to develop transition plans that will enable them to move to independent living and to assist with their departure plans
- To assist in identifying natural and formal support systems to achieve goals

To assist ex-residents in referral to legal, financial, housing, employment, educational upgrading, training, parenting support, counselling, and health and wellness services, court support, and any other healing services deemed appropriate

- To bridge clients to other community services
 - To network and build strong working relationships with other community services and relevant organizations
- Accompany clients to appointments (OW, ODSP, housing, legal, police, CAS)
 - Assist client with systems navigation
 - To advocate on behalf of clients for the services they need
- Provide advocacy letters and letters of support
 - To act as a resource person for other staff members
 - To assist in safety planning for women and their children
- To work within the context of the Framework for Services for Abused Women in Ottawa-Carleton (understanding and practice from an anti-oppression framework)
- To maintain clear and professional boundaries.

Stats:

- 40 women were supported by this position
 - 4751 contacts were supported (txt/ phone/email)
- 56 (Face to face meetings /accompaniments)



Remembering & honoring those

who didn't make it home.





Designed by Jenna Spagnoli
Photos by Kayla Spagnoli and Karen Joyner

