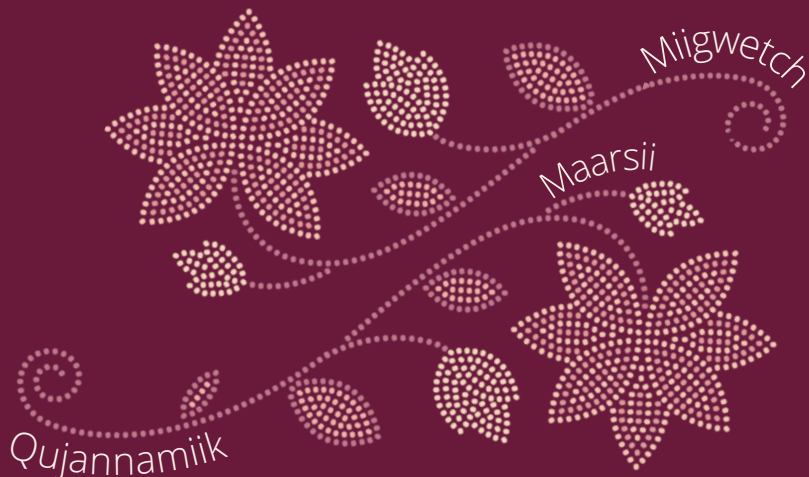




HONOURING
THE HELPERS IN OUR COMMUNITY



THE OTTAWA ABORIGINAL COALITION



The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition was formed in 2001 as a means of presenting a unified voice on behalf of the Indigenous community in Ottawa. The Coalition is made up of 10 Indigenous service organizations in Ottawa that provide front-line programs and services to the Indigenous people living in the National Capital Region.

The members of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition recognize that we have a shared responsibility to participate in the building of the community that we want to live in. At the OAC we are committed to ensuring that all Indigenous people experience a place of belonging while living in Ottawa.

We acknowledge that in Ottawa we live and work on unceded Algonquin Anishnabek territory. We recognize that other original people of Turtle Island - First Nation, Inuit and Métis have made Ottawa their home and bring their respect and friendship to this territory.

This land acknowledgement commits us to the original relationship we are building together – based on friendship and peace and mutual respect.



Mary Simon



That is what all of you at the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition have been doing.

Through your efforts and your optimism, you are working together to meet the promise of the future and to build stronger, healthier Indigenous communities for generations to come.

D P P L P A P L C L N ' ' b o L a d ' b e n o .
 C L a n g a y L C L ' A o r n o ' o a ' b ' L ' n ' .
 A j a r o ' b a y d L c o ' d o d r d n j ' d r c l c .
 d e r n c d c n o ' d n ' c d p l c o ' .
 b l ' r d o h d r d ' b e c a c A o r n o ' .
 b r h p n n ' b c r l y o ' d n ' r j n n r d b g n j ' .
 r o o h y d r c o a o h p c o c .
 d a d r a r ' b a d r b n n o d r j ' .

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OAC ELDERS CIRCLE

NIÁ:WEN • NAKURMIK • MAARSII • MIIGWECH



Dear staff of the OAC member organizations,

We understand that there are 450 staff in the OAC organizations that serve our Indigenous community in Ottawa. We want you to know that we have seen your hard work, we thank you and we acknowledge you as you served the community throughout COVID.

We have seen you take the time to acknowledge us and all other community members. We have seen you smile and reach out to members of our community who need help. You have reminded us of the teaching that Creator does not judge and nor should we.

We also know that your work came at a sacrifice – giving up time with your family, and doing your work through the computer which drains our spirits and mental health.

Sometimes there are times in our lives where we have to pause and rest. Please find time during the holidays to take care of yourselves.

During this time of year, we ask that you remember, with us, the community members that we have lost, including a number of Elders. We honour them when we carry on with our lives and live in a good way. Our ancestors are always with us. The legacy of intergenerational trauma may be with us but you have shown throughout COVID that the strength of our ancestors is carried in our DNA.

Remember that each day is a gift – and you have shown us that you are using that gift wisely.

For all of your gifts, for your spirits and for all that you do for us and the community, we say thank you.

With respect,

OAC Elders and Traditional Knowledge Holders

OAC Elders and Traditional Knowledge Holders



"The community resources are rich and worth choosing"

- Community Member, OAC COVID-19 Research Survey



"We draw strength through our connection to each other"

- Community Member, OAC COVID-19 Research Survey





Jim Watson
Mayor/Maire

Office of the Mayor
City of Ottawa

110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1
Tel.: 613-580-2496
Fax: 613-580-2509
E-mail: Jim.Watson@ottawa.ca

Bureau du Maire
Ville d'Ottawa

110, avenue Laurier Ouest
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 1J1
Tél. : 613-580-2496
Télé. : 613-580-2509
Courriel : Jim.Watson@ottawa.ca

December 6, 2021

I would like to offer my best wishes to all the staff of the member organizations of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition for this holiday season. This time of the year offers a moment to reflect on the important values that are family, friendship, love, caring and sharing. Values that I know are at the heart of the work you do, especially throughout the difficult years we've been through since the beginning of the pandemic. Thank you for your dedication to make Ottawa a better and safer place for Indigenous people, thank you for the incredible work you do every day to make our City a welcoming and supportive environment for all the Indigenous communities in Ottawa.

I am grateful for your tireless efforts and continued engagement, and I wish you all a very happy new year.

Jim Watson, Mayor/Maire

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CANVA STORIES



"Resilient and Strong and Dedicated"

- Community Member, OAC COVID-19 Research Survey



23

CANVA STORIES

CANVA STORIES

23

*"We are fighters.
When we stand together
We can persevere.
Our organizations care about us."*

- Community Member, OAC COVID-19 Research Survey





December 3, 2021

Kwey, Aniin,Shé:kon, Wachay, Aingai,Tawnshi, Hello and Bonjour,

Heading into this holiday season, I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone working at the organizations that contribute to the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition. In particular, I want to acknowledge your patience, persistence, expertise, and the extraordinary actions that you have taken to safeguard the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Ottawa.

You have been working so hard to anticipate and respond to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to support community members at a time when needs are on the rise. I can appreciate the toll that this has taken on you and your organizations. Your commitment, dedication and resilience have not gone unnoticed.

Thank you for everything that you have done to implement and maintain the recommended public measures to reduce COVID-19 infections, and for promoting and helping to deliver COVID-19 vaccines. Your conscientious efforts and innovative interpretation of Provincial guidelines to meet the needs of your clients and communities have made a difference.

Beyond the pandemic, I also realize that this has been a very challenging year for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. I want to thank you for all of the extra care and support that you have provided to the community, including your help in coordinating the sacred fire and sunrise ceremony that was held at City Hall in June to honour Indigenous children. I want to thank you for helping me, and others at Ottawa Public Health (OPH), to learn and reflect on Indigenous ways of knowing and being; on anti-Indigenous racism; and on the legacy and impact of colonization.

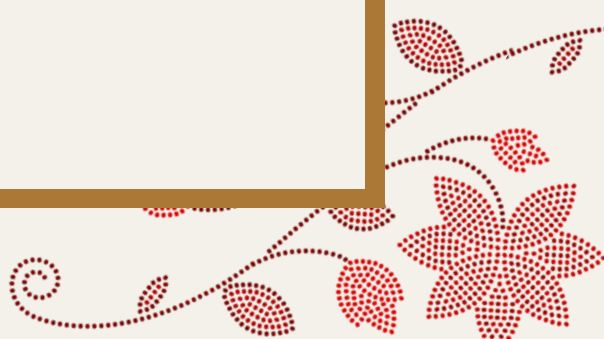
OPH aspires to be a culturally safe and humble organization. We will continue to listen, learn and acknowledge the truth about our collective history, and the current experiences for First Nations, Inuit and Métis community members and act on the call to justice. I am hopeful that commemorative events like the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation will ensure that the truth reaches more people and that this will continue to foster more respectful relationships. As I have heard from the OAC, we are stronger together. Your guidance and ongoing advocacy for justice are invaluable. We will stand in truth alongside you.

On behalf of OPH, chi meegwetch, nia:wen kowa, qujannamiik, marsee, merci and thanks again for everything that you do. You inspire us all. I hope that you will continue to look after yourselves and each other, and that there will be time this month to restore the balance in your lives. We wish you all a happy, healthy and safe holiday season!

With great respect and warm regards,



Vera Etches MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Ottawa Public Health





GIGNUL NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORP.

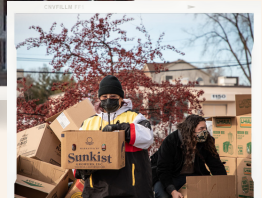
As a member of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC), I have heard and witnessed extraordinary actions in all of the organizations that comprise the OAC. In particular, the staff members of our organizations have displayed commitment, professionalism and passion for the work that you do day in and day out in serving our community.

The pandemic has been exceptionally challenging for many but your efforts to serve those in need and protect the most vulnerable are a reminder to all what we can accomplish if we work together.

The OAC is extremely proud of your efforts and actions and look forward to the opportunity to acknowledge you in-person when conditions are favourable to gather as a community.

Marc Maracle

Marc Wm. Maracle
Executive Director
Gignul Housing



"The Indigenous community in Ottawa is very connected and helpful"

- Community Member,
OAC COVID-19 RESEARCH SURVEY



INUIT NON- FOR-PROFIT HOUSING CORP.

What a great opportunity and honor it is to be able to communicate with each of you! These past two years have really shown us how all of our organizations are so very connected and how we all are doing our utmost for our community. It is incredible to see how much we support not only our community but one another as well.

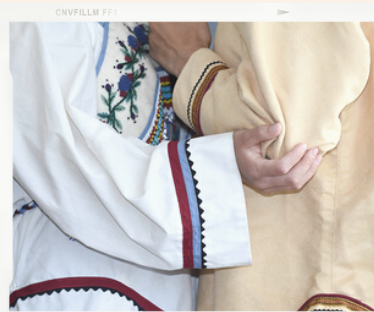
Thank you for being Loyal and Dedicated to your positions!!! You all are so very important and are very much appreciated. Thank you for all that you do for our community. Thank you for giving so much of yourself to our people. Hope we all remember to be loving and kind to our own personal selves as well.

You are valued just for being You!

Juullimi pilluarit !!!
(Wishing you and your family
the very best this Christmas!!)

Sheila Ruttan

Sheila Ruttan
Executive Director
INPHC



"There are so many supports within the Indigenous community that I was not aware of. I was happy to have discovered them"

- Community Member, OAC COVID-19 RESEARCH SURVEY



INUUQATIGIIT CENTRE

Dear staff of the OAC member organizations,

Thank you for showing up at work and caring for the
Ottawa Indigenous community.

In this last year, I took on the responsibility of being one of
the co-chairs of the OAC. Adding an additional
responsibility to an already busy schedule was an easy
decision because I knew that our work at the OAC better
supports all of the work that you all do everyday in the ten
Indigenous service organizations in Ottawa. Each of you
have truly shown the best of our community as we have
faced some of the hardest times in our lives.

Part of the work that I am so proud that we are doing is
ensuring that the Indigenous community in Ottawa has
access to land for programming and ceremony. In that
work, we are working with the City of Ottawa and the
National Capital Commission. We also connected with
Beechwood Cemetery to help us find ways as a community
to remember the many Indigenous community members
who have passed but left a lasting legacy in Ottawa.

I think that we have all been reminded this last year how
important we are to the community and to each other.
Remember to be kind each day and to know that you are
valued and so appreciated.

From all of us at the Inuuqatigiit Centre, we wish you a
wonderful holiday season and a happy New Year!!

With respect

Mikki Adams

Mikki Adams

Executive Director

Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families



"Indigenous
organizations stepped
up to support
community members
however they could.
This speaks to the
strength of our
community"

- Community Member,
OAC COVID-19
RESEARCH SURVEY



KAGITA MIKAM OTTAWA

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TEAM !!!

And what a team we are ! Every single employee of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition member agencies. It proved to be a difficult and stressful time since March 2020. Our essential service agencies being hit the hardest. During this time you all came together and worked tirelessly to deliver programs and essential services such as the food bank, food delivery and ensuring food security and extended ongoing supports for our member families. Providing technology to our community to those in need of phones and laptops to continue their work and school/training and to feel connected during lockdown. Kagita Mikam applauds you ! Thank you for your commitment to our urban families of Ottawa. This was dedication, commitment, longer hours, harder work and time away from our own families.

As the holidays approach some of us will be working through the winter break. This just proves how passionate you are. We hope you find time to sit, relax and enjoy special times with your circles of friends and families.

Thank you for your partnership, collaboration, support, and connections. We can't do it alone and we are stronger together, shoulder to shoulder.

Happy Holidays from

Kagita Mikam Ottawa



"In regards to cultural programs we seem to be very adaptable. I actually attended more this year because it was online and I didn't have to bus anywhere. Prayers and gratitude work. I'm not one who really enjoys social media but there is a strong community presence on there. Lots of work being done in different ways including meal deliveries to people in need"

- Community Member, OAC COVID-19 RESEARCH SURVEY





MAKONSAG ABORIGINAL HEAD START

Dedication, resiliency, strength, are all words I think about when I reflect on all of the amazing work you have put in to supporting our community on a daily basis, however the word that stands out the most is humility. You all walk with such quiet humility as helpers in the direct and indirect work you do, the impact is felt like a wave. The smallest kindness such as lending a sympathetic ear, a wave or a smile makes such a profound difference. I am humbled every day by the work you do and that I have the opportunity to work along side you in the community.

I invite you to join me in my yearly one-word challenge. What is a one word challenge you might wonder? It's a self-reflective process that involves choosing one specific word to guide your thoughts, feelings, intentions, and actions throughout the year. Take a moment to check in with yourself and jot down a few words that come to mind. Without over thinking, circle the word that jumps out at you, that's your word for the year! And when our paths cross in 2022, I hope that you will share with me your chosen word for the year as I am excited by the many ways we can work together to continue to support each other and our wider community.

Miigwetch, Marsi, Nakurmiik, Nia:wen, Hiy Hiy,

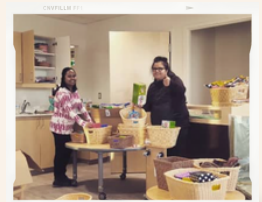
Melissa Pigeau

Melissa Pigeau

Executive Director Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start Inc.

"It was good to see the community services continue. I saw beading circles take flight and also saw a lot of friends start beading and post their wears. People didn't stop creating, instead they created more and supported others to join in"

- Community Member
OAC COVID-19 RESEARCH SURVEY





MINWAASHIN LODGE

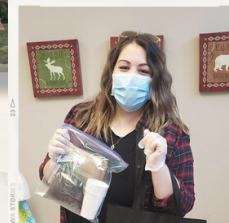
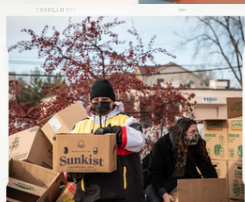
Thank you/Chi-Meegwetch/Matna to all the Boards/Staff/Management and Executive Directors who work tirelessly day after day ensuring our people are safe and supported, regardless of the barriers and challenges that are presented due to the pandemic. Our families, women, children, youth, seniors, elders are in a better place.. all because of you. Your dedication and hard work is truly an inspiration to all those who witnessed what it takes to care for a whole village even when the odds are against us. We never abandoned or walked away when times got tough, we dug our moccs in deeper into Mother Earth and was ready to take on whatever met us at the door.

Can you imagine a city we call 'home' that did not have the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition; the Makonsags; the Kigita Mikams; Minwaashin Lodge; the Wabanos; Tewegan; Tungasuvvingat Inuit; Inuuqatigiit; Gignul Housing; Inuit Housing and the Odawas of the world? It is time to recognize, validate, honor and respect our brothers and sisters who stand united in this circle!"

With much respect,

Mary Daoust

Mary Daoust
Executive Director
Minwaashin Lodge-Indigenous Womens Support Centre



"What did you learn about the strengths in your Indigenous community this year? - Minwaashin Lodge"

- Community Member,
OAC COVID-19 RESEARCH SURVEY



ODAWA NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE



"Odawa dropped off
bison burgers for
Indigenous Day and
food support and
supplies"

- Community Member
OAC COVID-19 RESEARCH SURVEY



I would like to extend my utmost appreciation and thanks to all of the Odawa Native Friendship Centre staff who deliver supports in numerous capacities to our community members. Your hard work and devotion do not go unnoticed and we recognize your commitment to the Indigenous community.

Our community members are fortunate to have you advocating on their behalf to provide them with family supports, mental well-being, healthy living, creating safe spaces, outreach services, supporting the homeless, navigating the justice systems, working towards ending violence against women, assisting the elderly, programs for youth and children, and so much more, all in a culturally appropriate way.

To ALL the staff of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition's member organizations, Odawa recognizes your tireless efforts to support the whole of the Indigenous community of Ottawa. Our people are well supported by you all and your dedication to them is valued dearly.

I would also like to express Odawa's sincerest gratitude to the staff of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition for all that you do to support the member organizations which allow us to better serve our Indigenous community. Your advocacy is much needed and highly valued.

COVID-19 has challenged us all and these last 2 years have been strenuous in learning how to deal with this pandemic and you have all risen to and overcome these challenges in an incredible way.

Strength comes in numbers, working together makes us better, and being supportive of one another makes us stronger.

Thank you for all that you do and Odawa wishes you well during this holiday season.

Chi-Meegwetch

Randy Mayes

Randy Mayes, CAFM, CAPA
Executive Director, Odawa Native Friendship Centre



TEWEGAN HOUSING FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH

In Urban Indigenous Ottawa, helpers are holding words to being and to relation. This is part of the healing that young folk carry. They remind us of our courage, and of our responsibilities to relation, to truth, and to forgiveness. Your wellness matters to the young women in ways that are never fully honored. At times, of uncertainty, who you are and how you are serves as an anchor, and sometimes, as their proof of connection to their own future, to the present, and to their past. Right Now.

When I think of Tewegan Mentors and community helpers over the past year, I am humbled by the grace, skill, kindness, and sheer steadfastness that each of you adeptly utilize to shine a light on the innate value of each young person you spend time with. You stand with. You are weavers of possibility. Every. Single. Day. And, working in a 24/7 setting brings it own set of unique opportunities and challenges.

It is no simple feat to:

- ✓ Deftly plunge a toilet at 3 am while also 'casually' having a meaningful & restorative conversation with a young woman
- ✓ Hold hope with young folks when spaces that diminish their value have muddled individual experiences of purpose, capacity, and hope
- ✓ Be a generalist and a specialist in all things and at all times of day!
- ✓ Witness as systems casually create very real harms in the lives of incredibly capable and resourceful Indigenous young people, and respond relentlessly and tirelessly, building new pockets for resistance and change
- ✓ Be a student, an adventurer, a gardener, an IT tech, an advocate, a witness, a budding artist, a fire keeper, a seamstress, a coach, and a gentle warrior ...
- ✓....and all of that before 7:37 am.

Renewal, urgency, purpose, unconditional forgiveness, and kindness-these are only some of the teachings that Indigenous young people share with each of us in the day to day. Chi-Miigwetch, for being students, helpers, and intergenerational role models and bringing connection, deep listening, proof of innate value, possibility - your gifts - to bear with the young women, your co-workers, and to this community.

With deep regard and humility,
Miigwetch,

Karina Skov
Karina Skov



"Our ability to rally round one another, to protect our elders and to make sacrifices on our personal levels to protect the greater community."

Community Member
OAC COVID-19 RESEARCH SURVEY





TUNGASUVVINGAT INUIT

It is the time of year to reflect on the incredible achievements of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition that have benefitted and will continue to benefit our respective communities. Collectively, our voices, knowledge and perspective amplify our goals and leads us forward to a stronger future. Tungasuvvingat Inuit is honoured to be a part of this group and are looking forward to the year ahead to build a brighter future for our Indigenous communities and people.

From the staff and management of Tungasuvvingat Inuit we wish for you a healthy, prosperous, and joyful year ahead. Thank you, for sharing your gifts.

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Merry Christmas

Quviasugitsi Quviasuvingmi

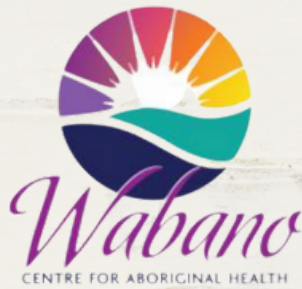
Amanda Kilabuk

Amanda Kilabuk
Executive Director
Tungasuvvingat Inuit



"TI has been extremely helpful with handling my mental and physical health. They have given us proper resources to battle a screen addiction we developed during the pandemic. They have also provided employment services, housing applications have been filled and they have also worked my sons mental health and medical health"

- Community Member,
OAC COVID-19 RESEARCH SURVEY



WABANO CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH

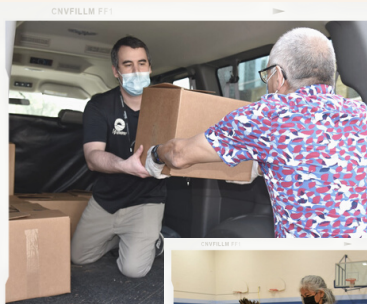
To the staff and volunteers of all our sister organizations within the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition family, This is the time of year when, traditionally, we would be entering storytelling time. That beautiful blanket of snow covering Mother Earth inviting to us settle in while our Old People filled us up with teachings, laughter, and love. Storytelling was how we learned and how we grew together as a people.

This year as a community, we certainly have been stretched to learn and grow. Our shared journey through the pandemic has required us to think and act for the good of all, even when the path wasn't always clear or an easy one. Each one of you gave so generously of yourselves, your time and your skills to help create a new community story.

For this, I say chi miigwetch for giving as generously as our Old People did with their stories. For we know our stories are never one-time lessons, but themes that we circle around as we journey together.

All my relations,

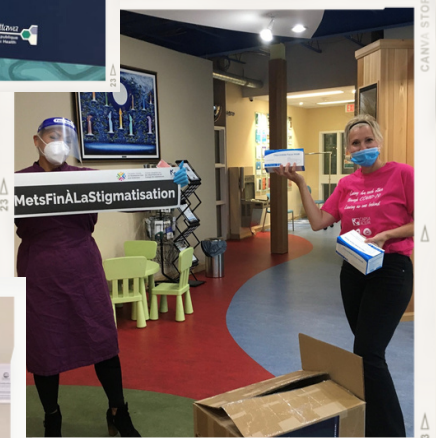
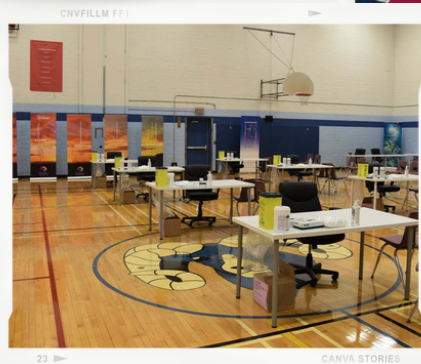
Allison Fisher
Executive Director
Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health



"The community has been strong through all of this. It has supported its members and has welcomed new ones too."

- Community Member,
OAC COVID-19 RESEARCH SURVEY

WABANO CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINICS



"I'm very proud of Wabano for organizing the vaccine clinic. I'm proud of the Indigenous workers who were there to help - staff who came around to check on you and give you snacks, staff who offered to sign you up for services through Wabano, etc. Being surrounded by artwork and traditional music was a really great experience"

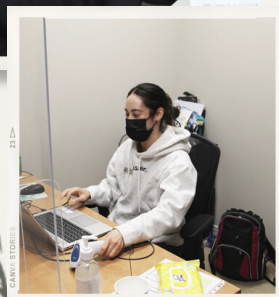
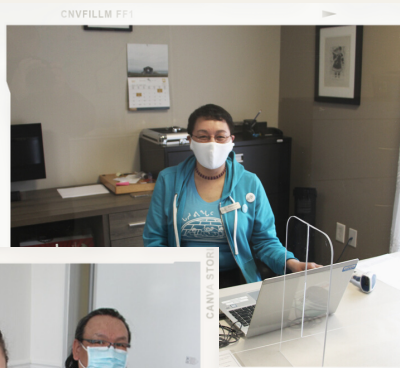
- Community Member, OAC COVID-19 Research Survey



Wabano Vaccine Clinics - February 15, 2021 to December 1, 2021

	1ST DOSE	AGE 5-11	2ND DOSE	BOOSTER	TOTAL DOSES
St Laurent Complex	9,867		1,427		11,294
Rideau HS	1,318		9,935		11,253
Tungasuvvingat Inuit	176		261		437
Vanier Richelieu		212		132	344
Wabano	1,049		119	365	1,533
TOTALS	12,410	212	11,742	497	24,861

In 2021 Wabano did a number of clinics across Ottawa including two pop-up clinics at the main office of Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) on April 15th and 17th. We thank Wabano for their commitment to Indigenous community health. The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition would also like to acknowledge the Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team for the close to 10,000 vaccines that they did for the Indigenous community.



"The medicine in laughter with Indigenous friends, the power of kind words from friendship centre staff and seeing the smiles in people's eyes while we waited for vaccines at the Indigenous clinic really spoke to our resiliency and care for one another even during bad times"

- Community Member,
OAC COVID-19 Research Survey





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CANVA STORIES



CANVA STORIES

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CANVA STORIES

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THANK YOU!

NIÁ:WEN • NAKURMIK • MAARSII • MIICWECH

