



OTTAWA ABORIGINAL COALITION
**INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY
GATHERING 2025**



Greetings!
Kwey Kwey!
Wahchay!
Waaciye!
Aaniin!
Ainngai!
Tungasugit!
Tanshi!
Tánsi!
Ninaskomitin!
Nooleelündam éel páyan!
Iyuskin!
Kuwa!
Wotziye!
Pee-piihtikweek!
Boozhoo!
Shé:kon!
Gilakas'la!
Kii-te-daas a!
Wa.é ák.wé!
Sgëno!

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the gift of being on Anishnabek territory and specifically on Algonquin Territory. We want to recognize the two closest Algonquin First Nation communities: Kitigan Zibi and the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan. We also recognize that today – Ottawa is a gathering place for First Nations, Inuit and Métis from across Canada. This land acknowledgement commits us to the original relationship we were building together – through friendship and peace.

Building Relationships of Belonging for Today and for Our Future Generations



Thank you • Merci • Miigwetch • Nakurmiik •
Qujannamiik • Hiy-Hiy • Nia:wen



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Governor General of Canada

Mary Simon



THE GOVERNOR GENERAL • LA GOUVERNEURE GÉNÉRALE

Message from the Governor General Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition Indigenous Community Gathering

It is with great respect and admiration that I extend my warmest greetings to the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC), its eight affiliated organizations, community members, partners and allies gathered this evening.

The OAC is a vital force in our nation's capital—a powerful alliance of front-line Indigenous service organizations delivering essential programs and providing a unified voice for the diverse issues facing Indigenous peoples in Ottawa. Your efforts, driven by culture, compassion and community-led solutions, embody the very best of the path toward reconciliation.

I also wish to offer my congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation. Achieving five decades of dedicated service to housing security and community well-being is a tremendous testament to unwavering leadership and persistence.

Let's also highlight the indispensable work done for the Inuit Violence Against Women Shelter. To the staff, volunteers and the VAW Advisory Committee: your commitment is rooted in courage and is essential to healing our families and communities. The presence of Susan Aglukark also reinforces the profound power of culture and art to uplift and sustain those doing this essential work.

As you reflect on your accomplishments and look to the future, know that this dedication to creating positive and healthy choices is deeply valued.

I wish you all a successful, inspiring and culturally rich evening.

Mary Simon

1 SUSSEX DRIVE • 1, PROMENADE SUSSEX
OTTAWA • CANADA • K1A 0A1 • WWW.GG.CA

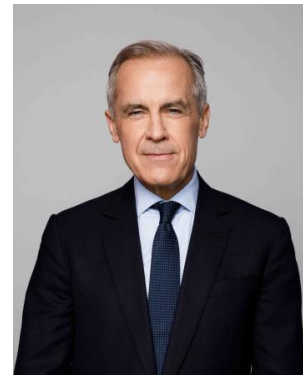
Welcome from Prime Minister Mark Carney



PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

I would like to convey my warmest greetings to everyone attending the Indigenous Community Gathering, hosted by the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC).

Since it was established in 2001, the OAC has been dedicated to supporting Indigenous communities by providing culturally sensitive programs and services. This event is a wonderful opportunity to recognize the important work of First Nations delivery organizations, and to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Indigenous communities in Ottawa and across Canada.



I would like to commend the members of the OAC for their commitment to the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals in the National Capital Region.

I wish you all a memorable gathering and continued success.

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., O.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada

Ottawa
2025

Welcome from Mayor Mark Sutcliffe



Mark Sutcliffe
Mayor | Maire

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Courriel : Mark.Sutcliffe@ottawa.ca

November 6th 2025

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of my colleagues on Ottawa City Council, to offer a warm welcome to the leadership and member organizations of the **Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC)**, along with their friends and allies, participating in the annual **Community Gathering**, hosted by the OAC and taking place on unceded Anishinabe Algonquin territory.

Indigenous peoples have inhabited the Ottawa region for millennia and the City recognizes Indigenous self-determination through work which is focused on being increasingly Indigenous-led, where Indigenous voices guide what we do with and for them.

The City of Ottawa, through the Indigenous Relations Branch, has supported the OAC's recommendation that municipal staff participate in tables, including the Indigenous Women's Safety Table and the Indigenous Employment Leadership Advisory Table, led by the OAC to address Indigenous priorities.

A wide host of City services, including Housing and Homelessness Services, Children's Services, as well as Community Safety and Wellbeing, in addition to Community and Sustainability Funding, have fostered relationships supporting Indigenous-led approaches to meeting the needs of Indigenous residents.

Ottawa Public Health's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan includes a renewed commitment to Reconciliation, working in partnership with Urban Indigenous Peoples to promote wellbeing through dental services, vision screening, immunization, and health promotion resources.

As Head of Council, I congratulate the OAC, speakers and performers for dedicating insights, expertise and talents to the successful organization of this annual Community Gathering.

Allow me to offer my best wishes to everyone present for a productive and rewarding Community Gathering.

Sincerely,

Le 6 novembre 2025

C'est avec un immense plaisir, au nom de mes collègues du Conseil municipal d'Ottawa, que j'accueille chaleureusement les dirigeants et les organismes membres de la **Coalition autochtone d'Ottawa (CAO)**, ainsi que leurs amis et alliés, qui participent au **rassemblement communautaire** annuel organisé par la CAO et qui aura lieu sur un territoire non cédé de la Nation Anishinabe Algonquine.

Les peuples autochtones habitent la région d'Ottawa depuis des millénaires, et la Ville reconnaît l'autodétermination des Autochtones dans le cadre de travaux qui sont de plus en plus pris en charge par les Autochtones et dans lesquels ces derniers ont voix au chapitre en ce qui concerne les actions que nous menons avec eux et en leur faveur.

Par l'entremise de la Direction des relations avec les Autochtones, la Ville d'Ottawa a appuyé la recommandation de la CAO voulant que des membres du personnel municipal participent à des tables dirigées par la CAO, notamment la Table ronde sur la sécurité des femmes autochtones et le Comité consultatif sur le leadership en matière d'employabilité des Autochtones, afin de traiter des priorités des Autochtones.

Un grand nombre de services municipaux, dont les Services du logement et de la lutte contre l'itinérance, les Services à l'enfance, Sécurité et Bien-être dans les collectivités, de même que le financement communautaire et de viabilité, ont favorisé l'établissement de relations soutenant les approches dirigées par les Autochtones pour répondre aux besoins des résidents autochtones.

Le Plan stratégique 2023-2027 de Santé publique Ottawa (SPO) comprend un engagement renouvelé à l'égard de la réconciliation, lequel s'appuie sur un partenariat avec les peuples autochtones urbains en vue de promouvoir le bien-être grâce à des services dentaires, des services de dépistage de problèmes de vue, des services d'immunisation et des ressources de promotion de la santé.

En tant que chef du Conseil, je félicite la CAO, les conférenciers et les artistes pour avoir mis leurs idées, leur expertise et leurs talents au service de l'organisation de ce rassemblement communautaire annuel afin d'en assurer la réussite.

Permettez-moi d'adresser à toutes les personnes présentes mes meilleurs vœux pour un rassemblement communautaire productif et enrichissant.

Cordialement,

Mark Sutcliffe, Mayor/Maire

Message from Our Elders



As we come together for the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition's 2025 Community Gathering, we do so with our hearts full of love and gratitude. On this night we witness how we as a community come together to care and learn from one another — we make real the intent behind *"all our relations."* All people carry the need to know they belong — to feel that connection to each other and to spirit. For Indigenous community members, that sense of belonging also guides us on our roles and responsibilities in community — what is being asked of us as part of Creation. And that starts with honouring who you are and where you come from.

Knowing where we come from grounds us in who we are and helps us understand where we are going. The stories of our parents and grandparents, and teachings from Elders in the community shape our journeys as they are links to past generational knowledge and wisdom. In our lives, our Elders have offered us guidance and stories to remind us of how we are a part of something larger than ourselves as we pick up our bundles, and our responsibilities to one another.

"Community is built through connection. Whether we are grieving together, healing together, or building together, our connection and being in relationship to one another is what keeps us strong."



Since the last Community Gathering, the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition continues to walk in the spirit of relationship and community building, ensuring the path forward is shaped by Indigenous leadership. Together with our partners, we have celebrated important milestones, including the VAW Inuit shelter workshops that are guiding the building of the shelter, two successful career fairs, the Grief workshops organized by the Indigenous Well Being team, Red Dress Day that honoured Indigenous Women and Girls and other initiatives that strengthened our community. The

accomplishments couldn't have been done without our partners. True partnership grows from relationships, and the understanding that we can accomplish more when we walk together.

"In our lives, our Elders have offered us guidance and stories to remind us of how we are a part of something larger than ourselves as we pick up our bundles, and our responsibilities to one another."

Through every effort, one teaching remains clear: it's important to work together and help one another. Community is built through connection. Whether we are grieving together, healing together, or building together, our connection and being in relationship to one another is what keeps us strong.

May this gathering remind us that no matter the challenges we face, we are never alone. We are a part of a living circle of relationships, carried forward by love, trust, and belonging.

With love and gratitude,

The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition Elders & Knowledge Keepers Circle



Welcome from OAC Co-Chairs

Mary Daoust and Mikki Adams

This year has been one of both growth and reflection for the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition. As Co-Chairs, we are honoured to witness with you the strength, collaboration, and commitment that continues to define our Coalition and the ever-growing urban Indigenous community we serve.

The OAC took an important step forward in supporting safety and healing with the development of our Violence Against Women Shelter. This initiative embodies our shared vision of creating spaces grounded in Indigenous values where women, children, and gender-diverse people can find safety, dignity, and care. It represents years of advocacy and partnership, and a continued belief that our communities deserve culturally grounded responses to violence.

"Together, our Coalition remains focused on advancing reconciliation in action through partnerships, systems change, and community-driven solutions. We celebrate the work of our member organizations, staff, and leadership who embody our shared values every day."



This year, we also experienced the heartbreaking loss of Karen Green, a long-standing ally and leader who was integral to relationship building for the OAC. Karen's wisdom, courage, and fierce advocacy strengthened our connections across governments, organizations, and communities. Her impact will continue to be felt for years to come, and we honour her memory by carrying her spirit of collaboration forward through the Karen Green Scholarship.

Together, our Coalition remains focused on advancing reconciliation in action through partnerships, systems change, and community driven solutions. We celebrate the work of our member organizations, staff, and leadership who embody our shared values every day.

As we look ahead, we do so with gratitude for the vision of those who came before us, the trust of our community, and the relationships that continue to grow stronger with every step we take together.

In unity and respect,
Mary Daoust and Mikki Adams

Together We Stand

We stand in circle where stories meet wind. Where the voices of our ancestors whisper begin again. Each step we take is guided by care. Each word is a bridge and each heart a prayer.

We build not from power, but from relation. Threading trust through each conversation. The work we do is not rushed and the spirit is not forced. For healing moves gently on its natural course.

Here, our Nations gather all distinct yet aligned. Rooted in memory and forward in mind. The laughter of children with the wisdom of years give us the courage to face our collective fears.

We must honour the ones who came before. Those who opened the path and unlocked the door. Their teachings remind us that their love remains strong and that belonging is built by the hands of us all.

So, in this city our circle stays whole. A living reflection of one shared goal. For the OAC is not only a name we are a heart and a flame carrying unity, respect, and love in its name.

Stephanie (Mikki) Adams



Elders and Knowledge Keepers

Community Gathering



Aigah Attagutsiaq

Aigah grew up in Arctic Bay (ᐃᑲᐱᐱᑦᑲᑲ), Nunavut. She has lived in Ottawa for more than 15 years and previously worked as a case manager and interpreter at Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team. Aigah is Reverend Canon in the parish of St. Margaret's Vanier, which has an Inuit congregation as well as a non-Inuit congregation.



Reepa Evic-Carleton

Reepa Evic-Carleton was born in an outpost camp in the Cumberland Sound of Nunavut and moved to the community of Pangnirtung at the age of five. She grew up there, eventually working as a housing manager and community social worker prior to arriving in Ottawa in 1989.

By her own estimation, she went through about two years of culture shock after moving to "the South." She works every day to make that transition easier for others.



Parm Burgie

Parm Burgie is a Métis Senator for the Ottawa Region Métis Council and has served with the community council for over nine years. "Watching my community grow, and being able to assist the citizens, has been an honor."

In her role as Senator, she helps foster bonds between community members at events and meetings, as well as helps to keep Métis culture vibrant within the City of Ottawa, by sharing Métis traditions and way of life.

In addition, Parm actively volunteers in many other organizations, and boards in Ottawa.



Thomas R. Louttit

Thomas is a member of the Moose Cree First Nation, whose traditional territory is located on the southwest side of James Bay, in northern Ontario. Thomas lives his life in service to others. He is an Elder, firekeeper, teacher, pipe-carrier, role model, lodge keeper, volunteer, and mentor. He demonstrates exemplary integrity, wisdom, humility, and leadership. Thomas with his characteristic modesty, describes himself simply as “a helper to the people.”



Marie-Louise Perron

Marie-Louise Perron was born on her grandfather's land in Saskatchewan. She is a descendant of the Red River Métis and early French newcomers. She holds Education and Fine Arts degrees from the University of Saskatchewan, and a master's degree in Ethnology from Laval University.

As an educator, visual artist, author, archivist and public servant at the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, Library and Archives Canada, and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Perron has maintained and promoted the traditions and cultures of Indigenous peoples.

In 2016, Perron was elected councillor to the Ottawa Region Métis Council.



Irene Compton

Grandmother Irene Compton is the Co-Founder of Minwaashin Lodge. For more than 30 years, she has shown an unwavering dedication to empowering women affected by violence, while fostering healing and cultural connections in our communities.

Grandmother Irene continues to build resilience, strength and a strong community for women and people who need it. She also enriches an understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities – a true bridge builder. She can be found at many tables in the City offering her wisdom and spirit to the deliberations.

Irene is the Keeper of the stories at Minwaashin's Sacred Lodge which connects Indigenous women to their culture, identity and pride.

All Our Relations: Caring and Learning from Each Other



COMMUNITY GATHERING AGENDA

November 6, 2025 at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre

5:00 PM

Opening

Ottawa River Singers

Elders

Zoey Vinette

Stan Wesley, Master of Ceremony

Welcoming Remarks

Mark Sutcliffe, Mayor of Ottawa

Mary Daoust, and **Mikki Adams**, Co-Chairs,
Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition

Dinner is Served

5:30 PM

The Story of a Year

Mary Daoust, Executive Director at
Minwaashin Lodge and OAC Co-Chair

Mikki Adams, Executive Director of
Inuuqatigiit and OAC Co-Chair

Joan Riggs, OAC Facilitator

Marc Maracle, Executive Director of Gignul

6:00 PM

Recognizing and
Honouring Community

Dolores Peltier-Corkey, Ottawa Indigenous
Children and Youth Pow Wow

Pauline McKay, Indigenous Child Care
Manager, Makonsag Headstart

Marc Maracle, Executive Director of Gignul

Mariah Miigwans, Dancer

6:20 PM

Recognizing Our Collective History: 50 Years of Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corp.

INPHC Current and Original Board Members

Sheila Ruttan, Executive Director of Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corp.

Mikki Adams, Executive Director of Inuuqatigiit and OAC Co-Chair

Nunavut Sivuniksavut Students, Throat Singers

6:50 PM

Recognizing Our Collective History: 30 Years of Minwaashin Lodge

Irene Compton, Co-Founder of Minwaashin Lodge, **Katherine Holden** and **Frances Daly**

Mary Daoust, Executive Director at Minwaashin Lodge and OAC Co-Chair

Amanda Fox, Jingle Dress Dancer

7:10 PM

Building into the Future – Inuit VAW Shelter

Honouring Our Partners and Acknowledging the Inuit VAW Advisory Committee

Mary Daoust, Mikki Adams, and Joan Riggs

7:30 PM

Susan Aglukark

Kihiani: A Memoir of Healing

8:00 PM

The Karen Green Scholarship

First three recipients of the Scholarship presented by:

- **Melissa Pigeau**, Executive Director of Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start and **Abe Hill** and **Kathy Green**, family members

8:15 PM

Closing

Community Circle with performance by **Susan Aglukark**

Ottawa River Singers



About Us

Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition

The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC) is an alliance of eight urban Indigenous service delivery organizations serving 20,000 of the 50,000 Indigenous community members in Ottawa. The OAC was established in 2001 to present a unified voice for the local Indigenous community in Ottawa, with an initial focus on homelessness. In 2005, the OAC was formally recognized as a Coalition of Indigenous service organizations providing front-line programs and services. In 2022 the OAC was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization.

The OAC advocates at the community, municipal, provincial, and federal levels, aiming to educate and raise awareness about Indigenous issues and the unique circumstances of Indigenous people in Ottawa. Our goal is to enhance the positive and healthy choices available to community members and their families across various areas, including health, housing, education, employment, training, and access to cultural activities. The OAC's mission is to establish community-based processes for ongoing dialogue, collaboration and coordination that can lead to informed action on urban Indigenous issues in the City of Ottawa.

For more information about who the OAC is visit our About Us page on our website: www.ottawaaboriginalcoalition.ca/about-us



The OAC staff team, Career Fair, October 2024

About Us

Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition

The Work of the OAC

The OAC is guided by a clear vision:

Ottawa is a place of belonging for Indigenous people.

We have four strategic priorities that guides our work:

- **Strategic Direction 1:**
 - To strengthen the **governance and administration** capacity of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition. **(Governance and Administration)**
- **Strategic Direction 2:**
 - To **build capacity** in the Indigenous community to respond to the needs identified in the Community. **(Capacity Building)**
- **Strategic Direction 3:**
 - To increase the number of **partners** who are working with the Indigenous community to respond to the needs identified in the Community. **(Partnership Development)**
- **Strategic Direction 4:**
 - To increase the **engagement** of the Indigenous community to identify and participate in responding to the needs of the Indigenous Community and to strengthen the relationships within the Indigenous community. **(Community Engagement)**

Current Priorities



Indigenous Housing & Homelessness Strategy Updates

It has been a year of relationship building and belief in our capacity as Indigenous people to make meaningful change around housing and homelessness in Ottawa.

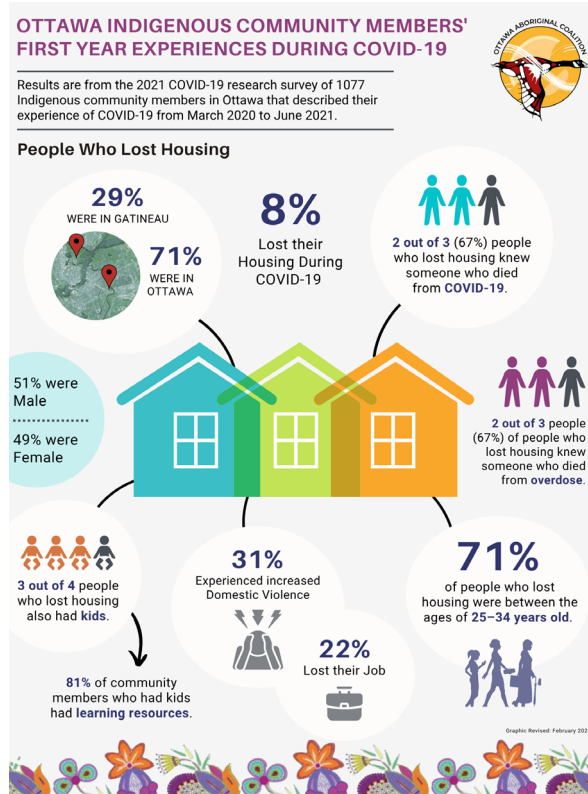
The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition was established in 2001 to respond to the crisis around Indigenous community members experiencing homelessness. Wabano's first presentation connected the relationship between homelessness, mental health and child poverty. Over the twenty years the city has become a critical partner with the OAC member organizations. While we have all been working hard over those twenty years, the last three Point in Time counts and our Aboriginal Community Advisory Board (ACAB) research has told us that we were not making progress.

A key finding from our 2022 COVID research – 2 out of 3 people who lost their home knew someone who died of covid or died of an overdose. Community members told us clearly – Mental health and housing intersect. Mental health and addiction disrupts the ability to get and keep a home. We cannot ask people to live in houses without supports. We cannot separate getting and keeping housing from mental health and addiction supports.

We also learned that 71% of the Indigenous people who lost housing were between the ages of 25–34. Our older youth – our young people were the most vulnerable to being on the street and being exploited. We took that knowledge to build our plan.

Our strategy starts with what we were told from community:

- Put people in the middle not their housing
- Indigenous person has needs that extend into their home – food security, mental health, community and connection.
- People that were living in housing or owning homes still experienced food insecurity and still have intergenerational trauma. Indigenous people, particularly our youth



We took the CMHC continuum and put the person in the middle. We need to follow people into their home and ensure they have supports to succeed in their housing.

They also said they need different types of housing. Housing need to be connected to community, to connections, to services and to land for healing.

We set a goal to have 1,000 new homes exist for Indigenous people by 2034.

Our secondary goal is to build the capacity of Indigenous organizations and people to be able to build and maintain housing, starting with OAC's two housing providers – Inuit Non-Profit Housing and Gignul Housing.

To date, the following partners have supported us in making first year commitments to build 75 new houses for Indigenous community members:

- Sandy Hill Cooperative Housing (10)
- Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (60)
- Unitarian Church (50)
- Parkdale United Church (15)

Partnerships we have invested in the first two years:

- Salus, OCH (BumbleBee Project)
- Federal government and Confederation Heights committee (Charles Tupper Bldg and Land)
- Yasir Naqvi's Downtown Revitalization Project (Jackson Building)



Indigenous Women's Safety Table

Updates

The Indigenous Women's Safety Table has been focused on four key projects this last year.

Red Dress Day, May 5th, 2025

On May 5th, the OAC gathered with Indigenous community members and partners to recognize the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited People. Since our first event in 2024, the number of people doubled in attendance as people.



Family Healing Lodge

Imagine a place where Indigenous women can come and do their healing and receive treatment for addictions AND they can still live with their children. The Minwaashin Family Healing Lodge will provide Indigenous women with the opportunity to be in safe place for up to six months, without fear of losing their children to child welfare and be in a culturally based, trauma informed place to do their recovery work. The children will also have the opportunity to be counselled, loved and supported as their mothers restore their health.

This year the staff of Minwaashin Lodge met with the same architects to start describing what is needed to realize this vision. The City of Ottawa had offered a piece of land that was seriously considered but was later found to be not private or safe enough for the Lodge.

The Lodge continues to be a top priority for the OAC.

Aging Out Initiative

The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition is working to create a safe place for Indigenous young women to live for three years and restore their sense of identity through community, connection to Elders, opportunities for learning and



"Our children and youth are sacred. They are our future and they require our love and attention."

being loved. Each year will be an anniversary year of learning and support until they are able to move into the world in a good way – ready to take up their responsibilities as young Indigenous women.

The Aging Out Initiative was developed in 2022 with the intent to provide a safe space to house up to 30 young women (18–30 y/o) while they transition out of a child welfare service living situation and into a successful, participating member of society that can live independently and with a strong sense of well being. Throughout this journey, they will be immersed in wrap-around support to assist them in healing and learning. The program will connect them to Elders, culture, food and the land.

We are working with many partners including the City of Ottawa, the federal government and the Children's Aid Society Ottawa on this initiative.

Tree of Hope Initiative planned for November 17th, 2025

As an extension of the training that we have done with the Ottawa Police Services and to continue strengthening our relationship based on OPS having a deep knowledge of what is happening to Indigenous women in Ottawa, our next Initiative is the Tree of Hope on November 17th where we are with the Ottawa Police Services and the Parliamentary Protective Services to make Ottawa a safe place for all Indigenous women and girls.

The IWST also participated in a number of other conversations including the CEDAW Concluding Observations and recommendations for implementation and action to Canada and a number of initiatives with the Ontario Native Women's Association.



Indigenous Employment Hub Updates

Coming out of COVID 19, the leadership of the OAC member organizations meet monthly to discuss the priorities from community, including employment and training. Employment challenges such as, attracting Indigenous job seekers skilled in specific fields or those seeking entry-level opportunities is a recurring issue for Indigenous community members. In addition, many Indigenous community members are seeking employment, looking for support, asking about job fairs, training opportunities, and skills-based workshops. The current employment programs cannot reach the need that has been identified. Ottawa is home to more than 50,000 Indigenous people from across Canada and has the highest urban Inuit population. Addressing the impacts of colonization and intergenerational trauma is part of the employment journey for many Indigenous people, yet a venue to do so does not exist in Ottawa.

The United Way Indigenous Employment Leadership Advisory Table (IELAT)

The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition has Co-Chaired this table since its inception in 2020. This table has grown to include over 35 employers including the different governments to the private sector. They have been participants in key discussions in recruiting and successfully retaining Indigenous community members for employment. The United Way continues to be a valuable partner in supporting the OAC to build the Indigenous Employment Hub.

www.unitedwayeo.ca/our-impact/indigenous-employment-leadership-advisory-table

The Annual OAC Career Fair

October is the time for the OAC Career Fair. The first Career Fair was in 2023 and focused on the OAC member organizations and the development of a new job board on the OAC website. The recent job fair held on Thursday October 23, 2025, at the Ottawa Conference

and Events Centre had 76 employer booths including the OAC member organizations, 10 workshops including time with the Elder's Circle and a presentation by special guest actor Zorga Qaunaq from *North of North*, the Indigenous Marketplace which gave 16 local Indigenous vendors the opportunity to sell their products, and the Ontario Skills Trade Truck. Over a thousand job seekers were part of the 2025 Career Fair.



Spring of 2024

The OAC, its partners, allies, and friends envision an Indigenous Employment Hub in Ottawa and are working towards making this a reality. Relationship building and partnerships are key to the success of this new initiative. We are working closely with WCG Employment Services to finalize funding for an employment coordinator to take the OAC employment file to the next level.

We continue to seek new pathways and partnerships towards an employment hub in Ottawa that will provide employment services year-round and respond to the needs of Indigenous community members.

Indigenous Well Being Strategy Updates

Out of our 2021 Covid research, the OAC developed an Indigenous Well Being Strategy with four key elements for action:

- **Land** is available to Indigenous community members for ceremony and programming in the City of Ottawa.
- **Strengthen community connections** which in turn strengthens a sense of identity and builds resiliency.
- Increase the number of **Indigenous programs and services** in the City of Ottawa that are rooted in Indigenous knowledge and worldview.
- **Support the capacity of non-Indigenous partners** to better respond to Indigenous community members.

While we are working on all of these, we want to highlight a few of our activities.



Indigenous Well Being Workers

The Indigenous Well-Being program provides culturally sensitive, community-driven support for tenants in Inuit and Gignul Non-Profit Housing. Grounded in traditional wisdom and modern practices, the program promotes resilience and mental wellness. In addition to working closely with tenants to respond to their specific needs, the wellbeing workers also provided a number of wellness activities including:

- Christmas Sharing
- Honouring Wellness for Indigenous Women for International Women's Day
- Housing Provider Picnics



Workshops – Honouring Our Grief: Healing from Loss

Four Grief Workshops were held in the Spring of 2025 and over 120 Indigenous community members participated. The workshop facilitator, Terry Swan, is an energy healer who strongly believes in the capacity of the individual to heal themselves. Hosting a safe and supportive environment in collaboration with the OAC, she conducted four healing sessions where she explained the sacred journey of grief, holistic approaches in coping methods, supporting loved ones who are experiencing grief, and understanding when to seek professional help. Each session ended in circle, where everyone could share their story in a safe space and understand that they weren't alone. Each session ended in circle, where many could share their story in a safe space and understand that they weren't alone.

"Grief is the last act of love we can give to those we've loved. Where there is grief, there was great love."

Community members were grateful for the opportunity to address their grief in a safe space. Life moves quickly and there aren't many opportunities to face your grief and start your healing journey in a good way. We hope that through the grief workshops, we lit the spark for those individuals to heal and heal others.

Inuit Violence Against Women Shelter Updates

Thanks to a group of incredible people, the OAC Inuit VAW Shelter will open its doors in Ottawa in early 2027. With this dedicated team of Inuit community members, Indigenous Coalition members and other organizations, planners and architects, and government partners, the Shelter has undergone a collaborative development journey with much progress over the last year.



May 2023

The Inuit VAW Shelter initiative was originally held by Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI). Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada reached out to the OAC to pick up this responsibility when TI could not carry it forward. We all had the same commitment – to respond to the need for a safe and culturally affirming space for Inuit women and their children to live after fleeing violence.

Summer 2023

The Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition took on the project with three of our member organizations taking the lead, Minwaashin Lodge, Inuuqatigiit Centre and the Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation. Several factors contributed to this decision.

- Minwaashin Lodge had to annually turn away about 300-400 women a year, of which about 30 percent were Inuit.
- Increasing numbers of Inuit women were becoming homeless and finding themselves in the court system.

- A disproportionate number of Inuit children are in the child welfare system. When they leave that system, a significant number (14%) of them find themselves homeless

The focus of our work started and remains on restoring the strength of Inuit women.

Fall of 2023 to March 2024

The OAC began working with Fotenn Planning and Design and working with our federal partners and the incredible support team we were able to secure the funding for the Shelter: \$8.8 M for the capital build and annual operational funding of \$1.8M for 20 years.

30 Beds in 13 Rooms that are safe and centred in Inuit Culture.



February 2024

A group of 60 Inuit women with personal experiences in shelters attended an initial workshop to begin imagining what the Inuit VAW Shelter could look like.

Spring of 2024

The OAC hired two architects that knew how to work collaboratively: Formline Architecture and LGA Architectural Partners. This team have been incredible partners, truly understanding what it means to listen to community and create a shelter from the grassroots.

September 2024 and April 2025

Community members attended two more workshops in conversation with the Planning and Architecture team to deepen the design and programming. Community members provided invaluable insights to ensure the shelter is a home where women and children can heal and reclaim their safety alongside Inuit culture.



Throughout that period the City of Ottawa worked with the OAC to select a plot of land to develop and transfer that land to the OAC. The shelter will be located in a quiet residential neighborhood with local parks, recreational spaces, and nearby schools to support children.

April 2025

After an extensive search, the construction firm, McDonald Brothers was hired to build the building.

An Inuit VAW Shelter Advisory Committee was established composed of Inuit women who attended prior shelter workshops. They meet biweekly to provide detailed feedback to inform the Planning and Architecture team's work throughout the shelter's development.



October 16, 2025

The OAC hosted a ground cleansing ceremony on the plot of land as advised by Inuit Elders. Community members, Coalition members, City representatives and staff, community partners, and local residents gathered together to recognize the groundbreaking. Inuit throat singers sang to honour the work that everyone has contributed throughout the Inuit VAW Shelter's journey.



October 17, 2025

A fourth workshop was organized with community members, focusing on the shelter interior's look and feel. The Architects provided a range of design mock-ups, material samples, paint swatches, and a 3D model of the building. Community members continued to guide the work by sharing their feedback and stories.

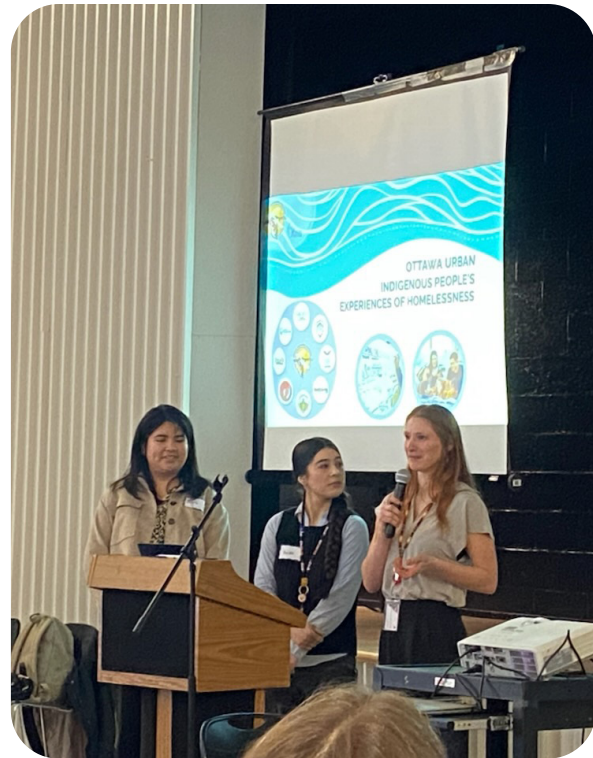
Research Team Updates

The OAC Research team conducts community based research responding to the needs voiced by Indigenous community members and our member organizations. Our research is grounded in Indigenous worldviews and storytelling traditions, valuing reciprocity, trauma-informed care, and community building. We strive to honour the stories that have been gifted to us by community and work towards long-term systems change for the betterment of Ottawa Indigenous peoples. We have been engaged in three primary research projects during the last year:

Collectively Caring for Indigenous Children and Youth

In partnership with CHEO and Kids Come First, the CCICY project was created to understand and respond to healthcare access barriers for Indigenous children, youth, and their caregivers. The Research team has interviewed fifteen Indigenous families who have faced barriers to accessing development and mental health assessments and services for their children and youth. A number of recurring themes have been shared across family stories. We are currently working with an Advisory Committee of community partners to create a holistic and cross-systems approach that responds to these barriers to ensure that all Indigenous families can access the healthcare they need.

www.ottawaaboriginalcoalition.ca/ccicy



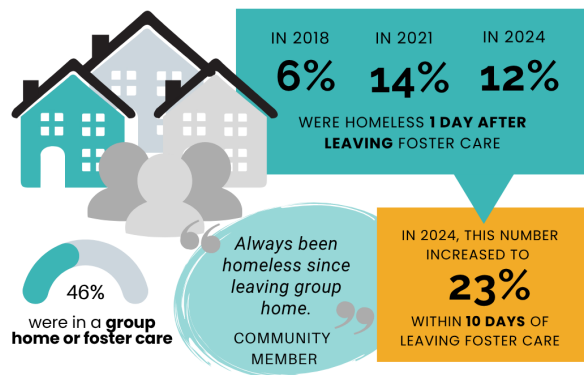
Indigenous Palliative Care

With funding from Ontario Health, the Indigenous Palliative Care research project will create an urban Indigenous palliative care framework, in part to respond to current gaps within Indigenous palliative care services in Ottawa. The project has been rooted in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Elders' traditional knowledge and lived experiences with palliative care. The Research team has worked closely with the OAC Elders and Traditional Knowledge Holders Circle and attended palliative care trainings, developed relationships with palliative care service providers, and is building an Indigenous palliative care knowledge bundle to support the Framework.

Point-in-Time Count

The OAC Research team has analysed the Indigenous data from the City of Ottawa's 2024 Point-in-Time Count, a national survey

Foster Care and Group Homes



conducted by municipalities to understand local experiences of homelessness. The OAC staff team also worked alongside the City and community partners to administer PiT surveys and enumeration with homeless community members. PiT Count analysis has reinforced the need for wrap-around supports, transitional housing, and care for Indigenous youth aging out of the child welfare system. The Research team presented these findings to the City of Ottawa Community Safety and Wellbeing Advisory Committee and to the broader community.

www.ottawaaboriginalcoalition.ca/pit-count

The team has been involved in many other research projects this last year:

- Covid-19 Research Reflections
- OAC Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy
- Aboriginal Community Advisory Board (ACAB) Housing Survey analysis
- City of Ottawa's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan
- City of Ottawa Downtown Street Outreach
- Indigenous Ontario Coalition Research and OAC Infographics
- Urban Indigenous Data Leadership Initiative with ONWA
- And much more with partners such as PLEO, United Way, and CHEO.





Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition

Member Organizations





Gignul

Non-Profit Housing Corporation

About Our Organization

At Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation, we are dedicated to addressing the pressing housing needs within the Indigenous communities. Through our sustainable housing solutions, we aim to prevent homelessness and provide affordable housing options that respect cultural traditions and values. By partnering with Indigenous leaders and organizations, we strive to empower Indigenous peoples to build a future where housing security is a reality for all.

Gignul works to:

- Provide affordable housing solutions to Indigenous individuals and families.
- Promote Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination in housing initiatives.
- Collaborate with Indigenous leaders, organizations, and government agencies to address systemic housing challenges.



What do we do?

Gignul continues to address the critical housing needs of our Urban Indigenous community members here in Ottawa. Through our sustainable housing solutions, we aim to prevent homelessness and provide affordable housing options that respect cultural traditions and values.

Working in partnership with other Indigenous and community led organizations, Gignul focuses on supporting our Indigenous community members to live independently and empower them to take positive steps to better build their futures. Last year, Gignul housed up to 500 community members in our 210 units across Ottawa.

"...We aim to prevent homelessness and provide affordable housing options that respect cultural traditions and values. By partnering with Indigenous leaders and organizations, we strive to empower Indigenous peoples to build a future where housing security is a reality for all."

Updates

Gignul was successful with increasing the number of housing units it provides to the Indigenous community. Out of the tragedy of a 3-unit building being severely damaged, Gignul was able to replace it with two - six unit buildings.

Gignul has been a leader for the Ottawa Bumblebee Project, an initiative that partners with Ottawa Community Housing, Options Housing and Salus. This collaborative initiative will see the establishment of a scalable supportive housing model that provides

appropriate wraparound services for community members so they can heal and work towards lasting independence.

Gignul Executive Director Marc Maracle continues to provide strong leadership as the Co-Chair of the OAC Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

This past June, Gignul, with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition's Indigenous Well-Being Team, hosted a community BBQ for our current tenants. We thoroughly enjoyed gathering.





Inuuqatigiit

Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families

About Our Organization

For two decades, Inuuqatigiit Centre has been a place of belonging, healing, and growth for Inuit families living in Ottawa. Founded in 2005 by a small group of Inuit community members, the Centre began with just seven staff and a vision: to create a space where Inuit children and families could access culturally grounded programs and services that reflect our values, language, and way of life.

Today, Inuuqatigiit Centre has grown into one of the largest Indigenous service organizations in Ottawa, employing over 150 staff and offering wrap-around programs that support children, youth, and families through every stage of life. Our work is guided by Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) principles values such as Inuuqatigiitsiarniq (respecting others and relationships), Pijitsirniq (service to others), Aajiiqatigiinni (decision-making through consensus), and Piliriqatigiinni (working together for a common purpose). These values shape everything we do, ensuring our programs are rooted in cultural strength, community connection, and compassion.

Our Programs and Services

Inuuqatigiit Centre offers a continuum of supports that meet the unique needs of Inuit families in the city. Our early years programs nurture the youngest members of our community in safe, caring spaces where



language and culture are celebrated daily. Youth and education programs empower Inuit students through tutoring, mentorship, and cultural engagement, helping them build confidence and reach their goals.

We also provide a range of family, health, and social services, including counselling, prenatal and parenting supports, employment training, housing navigation, and community wellness programming. Through partnerships with local agencies and governments, we ensure Inuit have access to the care, advocacy, and resources they deserve all delivered through an Inuit-led lens.



A Home Away from Home

At Inuuqatigiit Centre, we believe that connection to culture is the foundation of well-being. Our programs create space for Inuit to gather, share stories, speak our language, and pass on traditional knowledge to the next generation. From lighting the qulliq to celebrating community feasts and cultural days, the Centre is a place where Inuit identity shines.

Our Journey Forward

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we reflect with pride on how far we have come and look forward with hope to the path ahead. Our growth is a testament to the strength and resilience of the Inuit community in Ottawa, the dedication of our staff, and the support of our many funders, partners, and allies.

Inuuqatigiit Centre remains committed to advancing the vision of strong, healthy, and self-determined Inuit families. Together, through Piliriqatigiinni, we will continue to build a future where every Inuk child and family can thrive culturally, emotionally, and spiritually both in the city and beyond.





Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corp.

About Our Organization

Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation was incorporated in 1975 with the objective and mission to construct, hold, manage, facilitate, and maintain residential accommodation for Inuit and other Indigenous individuals and families of low income, as defined by the National Housing Act.

Since 1984 the Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation has been acquiring buildings in the Ottawa region and currently has 63 units with 1, 2, and 3 bedrooms. Last year Inuit Non-Profit Housing provided housing to 173 community members.



We strive together to work towards our goals around housing, with this in mind for our people, Angirragirajagtarā: A place to call my Home. We house singles, families, and seniors in our homes, and our buildings are low-rise apartment buildings, semi-attached units and a few single homes.

As part of the Indigenous community in Ottawa, the Inuit Non-Profit Housing Corporation works in conjunction with other organizations that provide services to our clientele so that we may collectively help to build up our lives. Our community partners are numerous and include but are not limited to Inuuqatigiit Centre, Wabano, Tungasuvvingat Inuit, St. Margaret's Church, and Akausivik Inuit Family Health team.

Kagita Mikam

Aboriginal Employment and Training



About Us and What We Offer

Kagita Mikam (in Algonquin means “*pathway to wisdom*”) is committed to ensuring that pro-active measures are taken to improve the recruitment, training, and employment of Aboriginal people.

We help registered clients seeking employment or training to meet their career goals by matching their needs with qualified employers and training organizations.

Registered clients also have access to other services such as computers, resume development assistance, employment referrals and a host of other services to aid in their journey to employment. Employment Officers are available at satellite offices to help registered clients with employment and/or training goals.

Other programs include:

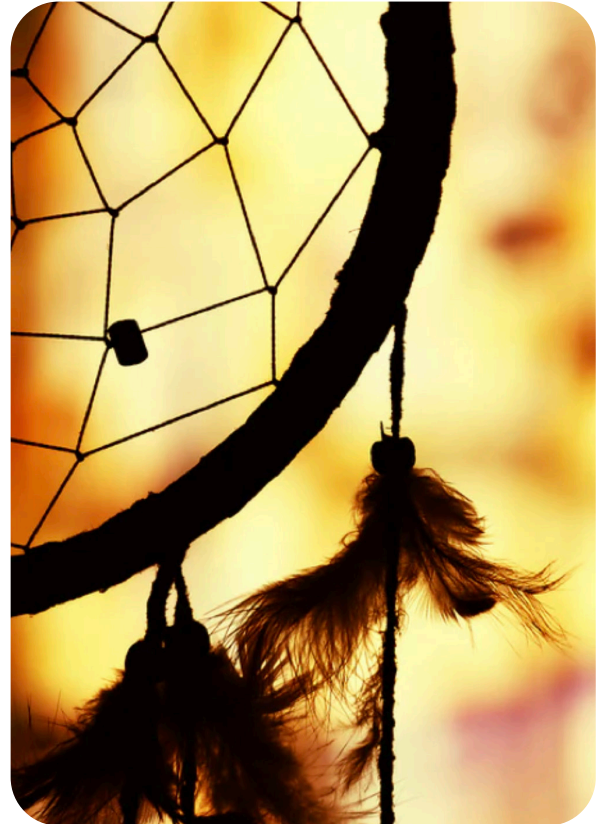
- Purchase of Training
- Mobility Assistance
- Targeted Wage Subsidy
- Labour Market Partnership
- Job Creation
- Self-Employment Assistance

Our Member Communities

We serve the status members of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation and Wahta Mohawks. Registered clients may receive services from one of our satellite offices or at an urban office close to their place of residence.

Ottawa and Area: Other First Nation & Non-Status Clients

There is funding available through our partnership with the Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) through the Apatisiwin program. This funding is available to help our



registered clients that are not affiliated with our 4 First Nation member communities but reside within the Kagita Mikam catchment area. We also work with many other Local Delivery Mechanisms (LDMs) and agencies to secure funding for registered clients when appropriate and available.

Getting Started

Individuals must first meet with one of our Employment Officers to become registered with Kagita Mikam to access services offered. Employers are encouraged to contact one of our Community Developers for further information. Visit www.kagitamikam.com.

Makonsag

Aboriginal Head Start Program

About Our Organization

Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start originally opened its doors to First Nations, Inuit and Métis preschool children in 1997 as the Ottawa Aboriginal Head Start program. Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start is licensed as a childcare center by the Ministry of Education through the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA). They currently have children in 73 licensed spaces. Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start provides a culturally-enriched educational environment that fosters early learning and enhances pride through education to ensure that Indigenous children have positive lifelong experiences and satisfaction as members of families and Indigenous communities. In other words, our educators and staff offer children love, acceptance and understanding while fostering the growth and development of each individual.



What do we do?

Makonsag provides an enriched early learning environment that provides culturally relevant programming in an urban setting. A significant amount of our programming takes place on the land with a commitment to culture and language, play-based, emergent, and inquiry-driven learning. Makonsag has served 488 children over the last year, not including parents and siblings.

Aboriginal Head Start Program: Based on a holistic approach to education which emphasizes the needs of the child within family, school and community through six Head Start principles of education, culture, language, caregivers involvement, social support, health promotion and nutrition. The Headstart program is for children ages 2.5 to 6 years old.

Courtwood Indigenous-Led Child Care Program: Indigenous-led child care at Makonsag is an enriched early learning

environment that provides licensed child care and culturally relevant programming in an urban setting. Our Courtwood location serves the needs of families with spaces for children in infant, toddler, and preschool years. This program is for newborn children to age 6.

Nitawigin Early On Program: Mobile programming for families to engage in culturally-enriched play groups and early years programming while facilitating connection with other families, parents and caregiver support and referrals to community resources.



A Few Highlights from this Year

Makonsag has contributed leadership in multiple ways over the last year. Executive Director Melissa has served as the chair of the Indigenous Early Years Circle and for the past year and a half, she has served as Co-Chair of the Collectively Caring for Indigenous Children and Youth (CCICY) project. This project is designed to reduce barriers when accessing healthcare for Indigenous children and families in Ottawa.

"Every child is a sacred gift from the Creator, carrying the spirit, stories, and strength of those who came before them. It is our joy and responsibility to walk beside each child as they grow, supporting their journey with love, patience, and understanding.

Together, as educators, families, and community, we create a safe and nurturing space where children can explore who they are and where they come from. In this circle of care, they learn to take pride in their culture, to honor their identity, and to grow with confidence and resilience.

Each day, we are reminded that our work is not just about early learning, it is about planting seeds of belonging, kindness, and hope that will continue to grow throughout their lives."



Minwaashin Lodge

Indigenous Women's Support Centre

About Our Organization

Minwaashin Lodge provides a range of programs and services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and children (regardless of status) who are survivors of domestic and other forms of violence, and who may also be suffering the effects of the residential school system. All programs and services are provided in the context of cultural beliefs and values to ensure a holistic approach is used as part of the healing journey.

The mission of Minwaashin Lodge is to provide prevention and intervention services and programs for grandmothers, women, children and youth who are survivors of family violence and the residential school system, including those impacted by intergenerational effects. A full range of violence prevention and intervention programs and services is provided in the context of reclaiming the wisdom of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural teachings.



What do we do?

Minwaashin Lodge provides services based on the Life-Cycle Service Model, meaning we provide support for infants and children through to seniors and elders. In addition to our programming at 2323 St. Laurent Blvd, Minwaashin also has a VAW emergency shelter (Oshki Kizis) for Indigenous women and their children who are fleeing violence.

Minwaashin Lodge continues to work towards creating the Family Healing Lodge, a space for Indigenous women, moms and children to access culturally specific trauma-informed healing when dealing with substance use, historical trauma and familial breakdown caused by the effects of intergenerational trauma.

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





Programs:

- Sacred Child Program that supports families, youth and children
- Family Support and Systems Navigation
- Indigenous trauma-informed counselling services for children, youth, and women
- Traditional knowledge keeper and culture program
- Culture programming for women
- Employment Readiness, Courage to Soar, Apatsiwin
- 2SLGBTQIA+ support group for youth
- Court Worker
- Outreach, Housing First, and Anti-Human Trafficking

“Respecting Women is Our Culture.”





Odawa Native Friendship Centre

This year was a very special one as we celebrated Odawa's 50th Anniversary. It was a true honour to gather with members of our community, partners and allies, to celebrate five decades of community service. Odawa has remained busy expanding and delivering our regular programming, serving our community from prenatal to golden years and beyond. We continue to offer over 200 hours of programming each week, meeting the evolving needs of our members with dedication and care.

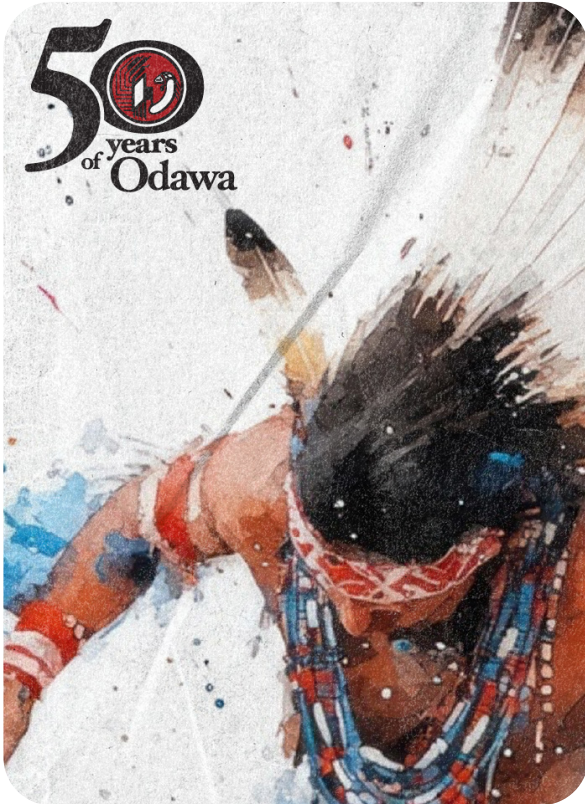
This past year marked several more exciting milestones for us. After two years of construction, we were thrilled to reopen our Outreach Centre at 510 Rideau Street. Now proudly named Ganawenindiwig, which means "Those who care for us" in Algonquin, this space continues to be a vital hub of support and connection for the community.



We also proudly opened a brand-new facility: Kinaagadiwendimin, another Algonquin phrase meaning "We take care of each other." This larger, welcoming space now houses our food pantry, free store, and café — a warm, safe place where community members can gather, connect, and receive support.

The Odawa team continues to evolve and grow and is made up of many community members who are volunteers, Board members, committee members and staff that understand the unique challenges our Indigenous people face living here in Ottawa. Our staff continuously support our community members to access the help they need to develop their wellness and improve their own life journey.

In May, we celebrated a truly special event — Odawa's 50th Anniversary Powwow, held right here in our own backyard. The weekend brought together over 7,000 attendees, with more than 45 Indigenous craft vendors, 10 community booths, and 4 trucks serving delicious food. It was an incredible celebration of culture, resilience, and community.



In June to welcome the summer season, we hosted a beautiful Summer Solstice Feast, attended by over 200 community members – a meaningful way to mark the season and come together in ceremony and celebration.

At the end of September, we hosted our best-attended-yet, Flag Raising Ceremony where we invited our wonderful ally Friends of Odawa to learn about the importance of Truth and Reconciliation. As well as our annual partnership with Ottawa Atletico for the Every Child Matters game, where players were donned in orange jerseys for their warm up session and over 4000 spectators were in attendance for our traditional opening ceremony and drumming/dancing performance.

We want to share a heartfelt Chi Meegwetch to our partners and funders who help make all of this possible, to our Board of Directors for your guidance and tireless support year after year, to our dedicated and talented staff, and lastly to our amazing community.





Tewegan

Housing for Aboriginal Youth

About Our Organization

Tewegan offers a culturally safer place of welcome with Indigenous young women ages 16 to 29 years of age who are living Indigenous homelessness in urban Indigenous Ottawa.

We strive to restore and renew Indigenous Well Being in the lives of residents, alumni, and community by increasing relational connection & interrupting the risks of 'Right Now' harms of colonization in the daily lives of Indigenous young women.

Our 'tool' of choice to interrupt these harms, including Indigenous Homelessness, is Home – not only the physical site but the connection and relationship to All Our Relations. 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Services Offered:

Live in Occupancy

Tewegan offers a 24/7 staffed communal living house with 10 Indigenous young women ages 16 to 29 years of age that are seeking to enhance or stabilize their experience of wellness in transitioning to quality, secure, and affordable housing.

IHR Short Term Stabilization

IHR ST Stays offer a 4 to 7 day stay accessed by Indigenous Young Women ages 16 to 29 yrs who are being impacted by some form of chaos that is jeopardizing their immediate wellness.

IHR Youth Wellness Navigation

IHR Short Term community based support in navigating transit & Connection Pathways, Medical Accompaniment, Food Security, Routines and Purpose, In-Home Stabilization Support (housing loss prevention, retention, diversion).



Service Criteria:

Living in 'Transition' (8 rooms):

- 'Single' FNMI young women or folks who identify as ages 16 to 29 yrs of age
- Is not experiencing moderate to severe psychosis,
- Priority to FNMI young folks ages 16 & 17, pregnant young folks, and person who have been in Ottawa for less than 2 years.
- Are willing to 'work with' to support house medicines/guidelines or develop/practice the skills to do so.

IHR Stabilization Support:

- Eligible for service: Alumni and FNMI young women & folks who identify as, 16 to 29 yrs of age
- Prioritized for Indigenous Young Women 16 & 17 yrs, pregnant young folk, and folks who have been in Ottawa <2 yrs and do not have an accessible established support.
- IHR Short Term support 4 to 7 days with focus on interrupting precarity

IHR Youth Wellness Navigation Support:

- Eligible for service: Alumni & incoming service users 16 & 17 yrs of age, or who have been in Ottawa less than 2 yrs, and do not have an identified support.

Honouring Community



Dolores Peltier-Corkey

Honouring Community

Dolores is an Odawa, Ojibway, Pottawatomi (Three Fires Confederacy) from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory located on beautiful Manitoulin Island. She is married, has two adult sons and two grandchildren.

Dolores has worked with Gignul Non-Profit Housing as a Tenant Relations Officer since October 1997 and has been active in the Ottawa Indigenous Community.

As part of her involvement in the community, Dolores served as a Board Member with Odawa Native Friendship Centre for 1 term and has been a volunteer for over 20 years in such roles as Chairperson of the Ottawa Aboriginal Family Festival (Children & Youth Pow Wow), Life Long Care, Food for Friends Christmas Hamper Campaign, Annual Arts and Crafts Sale, and Aboriginal Justice Circle.



Dolores has been a board member of Minwaashin Lodge (1999–2009), chartered member of Odawa Neeskak Toastmasters Club and the first Indigenous graduate of Leadership Ottawa (2007).

Outside of the Indigenous Community, Dolores recently completed her long-standing term (2012 to 2025) on the Steering Committee and Board of Directors with the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) and graduated from the Advanced Facilitator Training in February 2012.

In 2023, Dolores was highlighted from Capital Current for her work as part of the Odawa Children's Pow Wow. She described how the Children's Pow Wow, started by local community organizations was a way to give Indigenous children and youth the opportunity to participate in and celebrate their cultures.

"A majority of our families and individuals who have moved to Ottawa have lost that connection to their culture and their traditions. This is what this event was meant to be: to bring them together so they can see this. It's all a part of who they are, where we come from."



"We were not visible in the city of Ottawa as Indigenous people. So that's where I see the big change now, compared to what it was 20 years ago. Our communities are becoming resilient, they're becoming vibrant, they're becoming stronger. We are being seen."

Inuit Non-Profit Housing

Honouring Community



Inuit Non-Profit Housing is celebrating 50 years of being incorporated and 41 years of having homes in the Nation's Capital. INPHC has 63 units in 28 properties. The makeup of the buildings is mainly low-rise apartment buildings with a couple of duplexes and some townhomes throughout the Ottawa area.

In the seventies, Inuit community members saw the need and value of obtaining truly affordable and welcoming homes. The Board of Directors today, like the Board in the seventies, continue to see the need for truly affordable housing. The directors and staff work diligently to keep the units in the best repair with the limited funds available, along with applying for funding to help with Capital replacements of the current properties.

Given the original Board's vision, commitment and dedication to house Inuit, INPHC has seen many success stories providing housing for families in desperate need at the time of move-in. Such families have been able to attend schooling, find work they were passionate about, and for some move into their own homes.

The directors of the INPHC Board are being congratulated and honored for keeping the vision and mandate alive. INPHC has some incredible people serving on the Board. Thank you to all the directors that have served, are serving, and will serve on the Board. So many have been serving the community for over 20 to 30 years and now some families have had multiple generations serve on our Board.

Minwaashin Lodge

Honouring Community



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.

Minwaashin Lodge celebrated 30 years working toward a vision of the world we all want to live in. Minwaashin Lodge provides a range of programs and services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and children (regardless of status) who are survivors of domestic and other forms of violence, and who may also be suffering the effects of the residential school system. All programs and services are provided in the context of cultural beliefs and values to ensure a holistic approach is used as part of the healing journey.

In the last year, Minwaashin has provided leadership at the OAC and in the community in multiple ways:

- The Executive Director of Minwaashin, Mary Daoust is one of the OAC Co-Chairs.
- Grandmother Irene Compton, the co-founder of Minwaashin is one of the First Nation Elders that supports multiple community events and gatherings and helps bring people together.
- Frances Daly has been a consistent leader and guide at the Inuit VAW Advisory Committee and in supporting the Inuit VAW Shelter.
- Katherine Holden held the financial management of the OAC together as we grew from a budget of \$150,000 in 2020 to a budget of over \$3M.
- The STORM van team supported the OAC research team to provide feedback to the City of Ottawa on safe outreach to Indigenous women in downtown of Ottawa.
- Minwaashin is the lead for the establishment of the Family Healing Lodge.

Helpers to the Inuit VAW Shelter

Honouring Community

Inuit Elders

This project has been supported and guided by two incredible Inuit Elders, Aigah Attagutsiaq and Reepa Evic-Carleton. They consistently created a space for honest conversation and emotion to be present in the room – and for the compassion and love that is motivating this project to manifest.

Inuit Women from the Community

To date over 80 Inuit women have participated in the VAW shelter workshops and Advisory Committee. A special acknowledgment needs to go out to these incredible women who have been true advocates for what Inuit women will need in this shelter. In our commitment to keep their privacy, we cannot name the women who have supported us all the way throughout this process. Their dedication shines through in their willingness to share their time, experiences, and hearts to help other Inuit women.

Counsellor Jessica Bradley

The shelter sits in the Ward of Counsellor Jessica Bradley. She has been an extraordinary ally and advocate to move the shelter forward in many planning and community processes. She is open and kind and moves things forward with a gentle hand.



Helpers to the Inuit VAW Shelter

Honouring Community



Formline Architecture and Urbanism

Alfred Waugh, the founder of Formline Architecture specializes in culturally and environmentally sensitive projects and has extensive experience with First Nations, cultural societies, and educational institutions. Alfred is First Nation and part of Treaty 8. He was born and raised in Yellowknife, North West Territories, Canada, and was the first Aboriginal person to graduate with honours from UBC School of Architecture in 1993.

Denisse Aguilera has also been part of the team. She is currently on maternity leave.

Formline recently was selected to do the Vancouver Art Gallery. www.formline.ca



Fotenn Planning and Design

Throughout this project Saide Sayah and Genessa Bates of Fotenn have been working with us. Fotenn is an integrated team of planners, urban designers, landscape architects, and ecologists. They have become our friends and allies as we navigated so many processes to achieve this dream. www.fotenn.com



LGA Architecture

"We tell the unique story of a place and its people, through the careful shaping of space, and the resourceful detailing of materials." Angie Michail and Danny Bartman have helped realize what the women have wanted by listening with such fierceness. Their ability to listen has created beauty and life in the building. www.lga-ap.com



MBC

Our most recent and valued partner is MBC. On their website they have a philosophy and process section that states that *"Although we place strong emphasis on superior quality, attentive service, competitive cost and aggressive scheduling, the magic to our success lies in our creative problem solving and ingenuity. We foster this creativity by establishing a collaborative work culture of intelligent people working within effective systems."* www.mbc.ca/about-mbc



Karen Green (1957 – 2025)

Honouring Community

On January 10th, 2025 colleague and friend, Karen Green went to the spirit world. Karen Green was an extraordinary woman who dedicated her life to making life better for Indigenous people in Canada and particularly Indigenous women. She was an advocate and leader who left an incredible legacy. At the OAC we honour her by continuing her work, being a humble leader that she was, remembering her laugh and kindness and brilliance and knowing our worth.

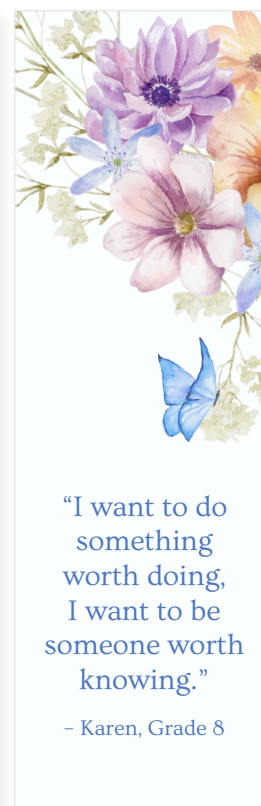
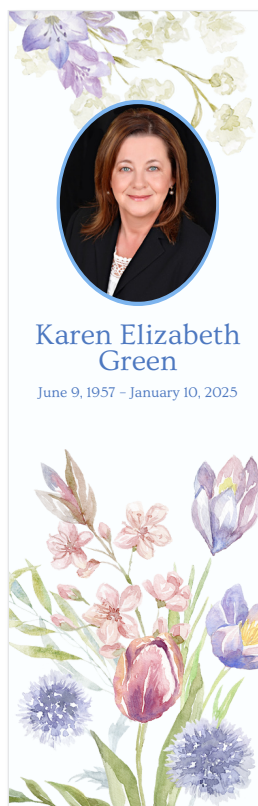
To honour Karen, we established the Karen Green Scholarship Fund.



"Karen Green was a humble kindred person, small and mighty. She embodied the perfect blend of humility and inner strength. Her capacity to build bridges and facilitate understanding between individuals was a testament to her compassionate nature and her unwavering commitment to the well-being of others. She was a powerful source of good. Community meant the world to Karen; she was passionate about her work, adored her colleagues, and loved her family deeply.

Her legacy will continue to inspire myself and the OAC along with our communities, leaving a lasting impact that will be deeply felt. Karen's remarkable legacy reminds us that even in absence, her courageous heart continues to beat within us. May Karen's memory be a blessing, inspiring us to live with love, kindness, and purpose."

– Mikki Adams, OAC Co-Chair



"In life, we are gifted a few gems... sometimes those gems come in people. The majick is in knowing that we've been gifted and acknowledging those gems. For me, probably for many, Karen Green was one of life's gems.

Karen taught me so much over the years. From organizing my thoughts to doing the right thing. She had a lot of integrity. She felt deeply and considered things with intent. She took time to know people, and she cared for the people around her. And we loved her for that.

I am honoured for the time life allowed us to spend together. I miss her, still hear her voice, see her smile; it makes me smile. She is still making me smile, and I hope her memory also makes you smile."

– Irene Goodwin, OAC Project Coordinator

Karen Green Scholarship

Honouring Community

Each year the Karen Green Scholarship fund will provide \$1,000 to five Indigenous students who are in the first two years of their education journey in the fields of Early Childhood Education, Indigenous Midwifery or Law. The Scholarship is intended to support Indigenous students who brought the same energy, passion and love for community into their learning.

The scholarship fund is held at the Ottawa Community Foundation and is managed by the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition and the family of Karen Green.

The first Recipients of the Karen Green Scholarship are three incredible Indigenous women. We have taken excerpts of their submission letter to showcase their amazing dedication to community.



Tia Adams

As an Indigenous woman, mother, and student currently pursuing my Early Childhood Education diploma at Algonquin College, I am deeply committed to supporting and empowering Indigenous children and families

within the Ottawa community.

My education is more than a personal goal, it is part of a greater purpose. Through my ECE studies, I am learning how to create inclusive, culturally grounded learning environments that honor Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Every assignment, observation, and practicum experience reminds me that representation and cultural safety matter. Especially for our youngest learners. I want to ensure that Indigenous children grow up seeing their identities reflected, their languages respected, and their spirits celebrated in the classroom.



Sonya Howard

As a member of self-governing Tsawwassen First Nation, BC and a second-year law student in the University of Ottawa's Common Law, English program, my interest in Indigenous people's experiences with criminal law is inherent.

I build skills in Indigenous restorative justice by volunteering with the Ikajuriallattiit Restorative Justice Committee (IRJC), housed in Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI).

I also volunteer with the Ottawa Police Service's (OPS) Community Equity Council (CEC) and it's Indigenous working committee.

After law school, I aim to write the Ontario bar exam. Then, I aim to article with MAG Ontario, Criminal Division, preferably at the Ottawa courthouse. Should articling positions not be available there, I would explore Kenora, Kingston, Belleville, Napanee, or possibly MAG's Indigenous Justice Division. After gaining 5 year's experience with the Ontario Crown, I aim to explore opening my own criminal defense practice in Ottawa focused on serving Indigenous and marginalized people.



Mimiges Francis

I am Wolastaqwiyyik from Sitansisk First Nation in New Brunswick.

I started in education in 2019 as a Classroom Assistant in the same elementary school I attended on my reserve. After moving to Ottawa in 2022, I became a parent at Makonsag. In 2024, I became an Educational Assistant with Makonsag, and in 2025, I am now an Educator Apprentice working towards

my RECE. Every day I spend in my classroom is a reminder of the women that came before me like my own HeadStart teacher Ms. Bev. Her inspiration has never stopped propelling me forward in my journey in education. Ms. Bev was a safe space for so many children, including myself.

My experience as a parent at Makonsag is what initially sparked my desire to return to education. I had started working at the school on my reserve when I was pregnant and worked my way from classroom assistant to a special needs EA. While I am an educator and mother, I am also a jingle dress dancer and traditional artist. I spend my free time mostly figuring out how to make boys regalia after having all sisters.

Since starting as an EA with Makonsag I have decided to enroll in my apprenticeship to obtain my RECE. Eventually, I hope to bridge that to my teaching license. My ultimate goal is to be the Indigenous educator I had in my early years but also the educator I wished I had when I eventually went into the public education system.

Memorial Tree Project

Created by Community, for Community

Within the Ottawa Indigenous community, there is a rich heritage of Indigenous – First Nation, Inuit, and Métis – traditional knowledge and cultural diversity. The community is a growing population and plays a dynamic role in the mosaic of Ottawa. We come from all over Canada, have the highest population of Inuit people in any urban setting, and we all call Ottawa our home.

Many Canadians have come to understand the history of residential schools and other colonial harms done to Indigenous people. What is less understood is that Indigenous people continue to experience high levels of grief and loss. This can be related to violence, suicide, addictions, health issues. However, it is also caused by the unintended consequences of both historical and current policies and processes from colonial institutions.

"As Indigenous people, we are all born grieving." – Inuit Elder

When we came out of COVID in 2022, the Elders asked us to acknowledge and find a way to express this grief through Indigenous ways of healing. It resulted in the first OAC "memorial"



tree that was curated during the 2023 OAC Community Gathering. The memorial tree enabled community members to create a memorial leaf of their loved one, which was added to the memorial tree.

The Memorial Tree grew to become a mosaic of memorial leaves, each honouring someone special. The impact was deeply moving, and we only then began to see what community needed. The second OAC Memorial Tree was created at the 2024 Community Gathering, and the third at the 2025 OAC Red Dress Day event. Recognizing its importance, the OAC is working towards developing a full exhibition.

The OAC is committed to supporting a healthy and thriving Indigenous population in Ottawa, which includes responding to the grief and loss in community and building a strength-based response.

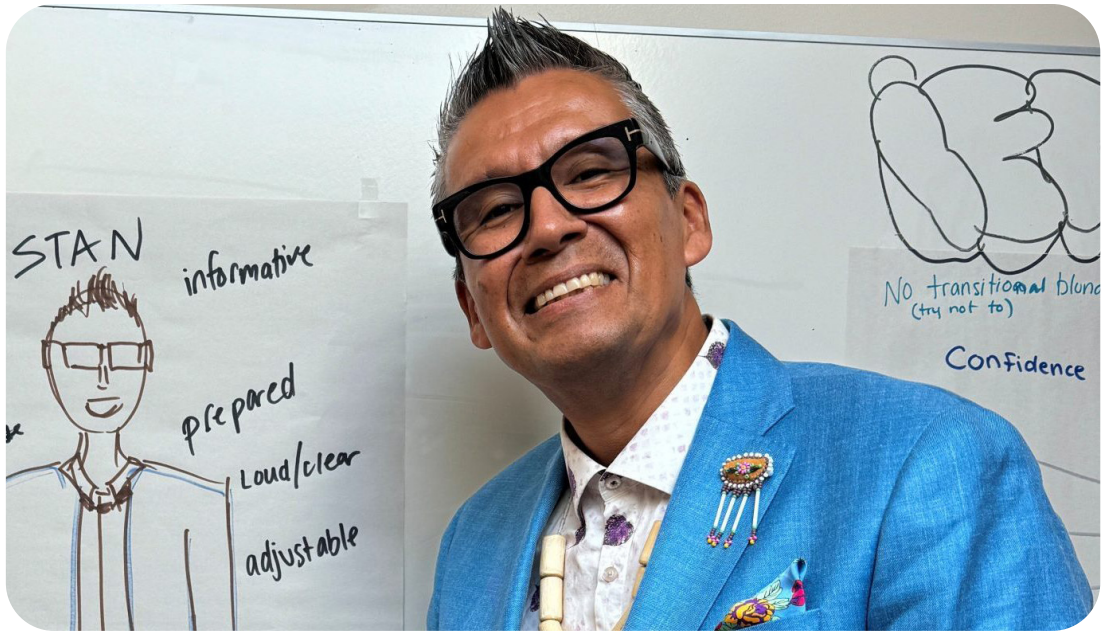
"We are connected to each other in many ways and are often the first to respond when something happens in our community."

Cultural Performers



Master of Ceremony

Kahnekahnekahtahk Stan Wesley



Stan Wesley, a proud member of Moose Cree First Nation from Moose Factory, is a multi-faceted entrepreneur and a dynamic force in the Indigenous business community. He is the driven owner and CEO of Shape Shifter Events, the largest Indigenous event audio-visual production company in the country. His entrepreneurial spirit extends to his role as co-owner of Tabahon, a modern revival of an ancient Cree game, and as the owner and hat maker at 1905 Andrew + Patrick, where he crafts unique and cool hats.

Currently residing in Six Nations Territory with his wife, Mandy, and their two wonderful children, Maya and Tenona, Stan brings his passion for community and culture into everything he does.

With his high-energy and sincere professional approach, he's considered by many to be one of the most electrifying speakers on the circuit. He is thrilled to be back with the OAC.

Ottawa River Singers

Cultural Performers



The Ottawa River Singers is a drum group of First Nations men and women singers.

The singers of the group live in Ottawa, but their families are from Northern Ontario and Manitoulin Island. They have been singing together in the Capital Region for over 8 years. The songs they sing have many different meanings often including uplifting words of encouragement to those who are listening.

The drum is the heartbeat of mother earth and is the center of our culture. The beat of the drum combined with the collective sounds of our voices is a medicine that can uplift and carry others in a positive way.

Group Members are Brad Picody, Sage Picody, Isaiah Naveau, and Moise Dreaver.

Zoey Vinette

Cultural Performers



Zoey Vinette is a 14 year-old Cree First Nations student from Ottawa, currently studying in the Visual Arts Program at Canterbury High School. She loves expressing her creativity through art and music.

Helene Avingaq-Choquette, Hayley Totalik, and Raegan Tattuinee

Cultural Performers



Nunavut Sivuniksavut (NS) is an award-winning post-secondary program recognized by the Canadian Council on Learning and the Tides Canada Foundation for its excellence. Designed to empower Inuit students, NS combines academic education with hands-on learning, offering a transformative journey of self-discovery, personal growth, and cultural connection.

Throughout the journey of the Inuit VAW Shelter, we have had the honour of having different students throat sing to celebrate with us and honour key people who have been part of the Inuit VAW Shelter journey.

For the 2025 OAC Community Gathering we will have the honour of hearing from three students: Helene Avingaq-Choquette, Hayley Totalik, and Raegan Tattuinee.

Mariah Miigwans

Cultural Performers



Mariah is Algonquin First Nation and grew up in her community of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, surrounded and mentored by many skilled crafters, beaders and dancers. She is a multi-visual artist and has been crafting since 6 years old. As she walks through her 29th year around the sun, she has been able to use different methods of art in various capacities to connect with people and to share and bring awareness to the values and teachings of Anishinabe ways of being.

Mariah is essentially a self-taught and inspired artist; her late great grand parents and her great-aunties and uncles, being a huge inspirations of her learnings and discoveries. She focuses on teachings of the land and coming back to Our Creation stories. Mariah uses art as a way of storytelling and expressing emotions through promoting healthy living through mind, body and spirit and the power and relationships of 'giving back'.

She is a fancy shawl dancer, jingle dress carrier, as well as a hoop dancer. She has been invited to countries like Trinidad and France as a representative for her community and her nation to share about Indigenous peoples and culture.

Mariah has engaged herself around community in many capacities, striving to showcase towards 'Indigenous Success' and bringing forward Mino-Pimodizowin. Through storytelling, Mariah vows to continue to raise awareness about Indigenous culture, as we heal through 'Reconciliation'.

I am passionate for working for our Indigenous culture; more specifically music, art and dance. I have been working on establishing my name, Miigwans Creations through various types of work that I do. I have been able to host and facilitate in many schools within the Gatineau-Ottawa area and the connecting areas.

I have also been hired with Indigenous Experiences Tourism as a Cultural Ambassador for the last 10 years, where I have been able to conduct my skills in a high professional manner.



Amanda Fox

Cultural Performers

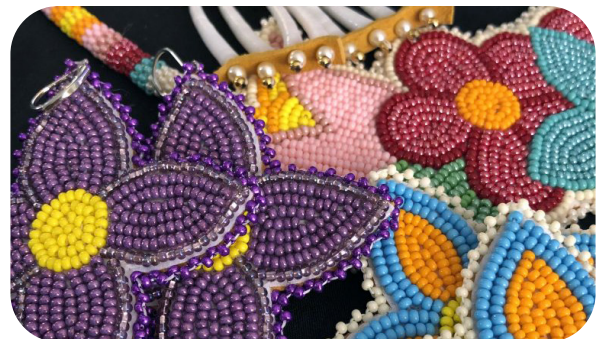
Amanda Fox is Ojibwe and a proud member of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, currently residing in Ottawa, Ontario. With over 30 years of experience, having danced pow wow since she could walk, Amanda is a cultural advocate dedicated to preserving and sharing Indigenous stories and traditions through dance, beadwork, sewing, and public education.

Combining her love of pow wow, storytelling, and movement, Amanda founded Pow Wow FitNish, a business that offers an innovative wellness experience rooted in Indigenous knowledge and culture. Her unique approach promotes wholistic wellness while celebrating the strength and resilience of Indigenous identity through dance and story.



Beyond her fitness programs, Amanda is deeply involved in community outreach and education. She regularly delivers workshops, presentations, and collaborations that foster cultural understanding, uplift Indigenous voices, and support wellness across diverse communities. She has traveled across Canada, offering her expertise at conferences, community gatherings, and private events.

Amanda's work is grounded in a deep respect for her culture and a strong commitment to keeping Indigenous traditions vibrant and relevant. Whether through creative expression or public engagement, she strives to inspire others to embrace their roots, honour their stories, and lead balanced, empowered lives.



Susan Aglukark

Cultural Performers



Susan Aglukark's 25 year journey as a singer-songwriter has led her to reflect on who she is, where she comes from and the importance of discovery – discovery of history, culture and self.

Susan is the first Inuk artist to win a JUNO, winning three in total, as well as a Governor General's Performing Arts Award for lifetime artistic achievement. She is an officer of the Order of Canada, holds several Honorary Doctorate degrees and has held command performances; but Susan also acknowledges the path has not been easy.

"Here I was, living a life I never imagined, but I was struggling to understand who I was. There was no opportunity growing up to learn about who we were, the Inuit, from our own perspective. In essence, we were institutionalized by being told who we were, how we would live, and when you are told a story for so long, you learn to believe it," explains Susan.

During the past 25 years of reflection and songwriting, Susan kept coming back to one area of profound knowing – Inuit are an extraordinary people deeply grounded in a culture forged by their Ancestors, their journey is what shaped them.

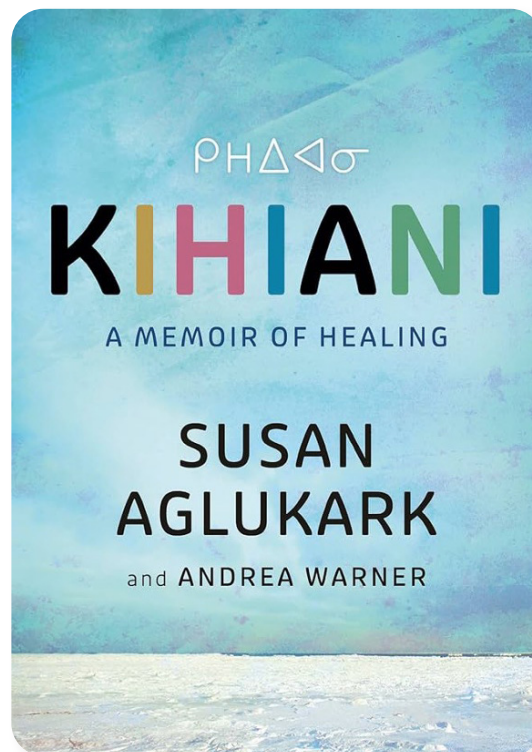
"Their life experience is the foundation on which our precepts of determination, adaptability and love for life are built, they began the journey to our present-day Nunavut."

Kihiani – A Memoir of Healing

Born in Fort Churchill, Manitoba, but raised in Arviat, a predominantly Inuit community on the western edges of Hudson Bay, Susan and her six siblings grew up in a humble but loving home. But while living in Rankin Inlet, when she was eight years old, Susan's life was disrupted by a life-changing event, a distinct separation that created a schism inside her for many years and from which she continues to heal.

At fifteen, she started writing poems that spilled out of her, and when Susan had the choice to leave her community, she grabbed it like a lifeline. Eventually, Susan was approached by a producer at CBC who was making a compilation album of Arctic artists and years later signed with a major label for her third album, *This Child*.

The disruption and milestones, the turmoil and joy, the devastation and healing—this is Susan Aglukark's story of discovering her Inuk self.



Thank You

Thank you to the following for making this community gathering a success!

- All OAC Member Organizations
- OAC Co-Chairs, Mary Daoust and Mikki Adams
- Advantage Audio Visual Rentals
- Bill Worb Furs
- City of Ottawa and Mayor Mark Sutcliffe
- Elm Printing
- Harper Collins Publishing
- Igloo set up by Inuuqatigiit
- Indigenous Collection
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Katari Imaging
- Kokumoon
- Lou Lou Lounge
- Métis Trading Post
- MINI TIPI
- Ottawa Events and Convention Centre
- Ottawa Public Health
- Star Register LTD
- Tipi set up by Tewegan
- Tracey Lynne Photography
- Turtle Lodge Trading Post

We thank **Stan Wesley** for being the amazing MC for the event.

A very special thanks to the **Big Drum – Ottawa River Singers** who opened and closed our gathering.

We are honoured to have Community Elders, **Grandmother Irene Compton, Thomas Louttit, Aigah Attagutsiak, Parm Burgie, and Mary-Louise Perron and Reepa Evic-Carleton** who opened with the Big Drum and the Ottawa River Singers. We are also honoured to have other community Elders and Knowledge Keepers who came to be with us.

Thank you to the many performers who honoured us: **Zoey Vinette**, the Inuit Throat Singers from **Nunavut Sivuniksavut, Mariah Miigwans, and Amanda Fox** for bringing their gifts, passion and energy to community. A special thank you to **Susan Aglukark** for the sharing of story and her powerful songs.

We would also like to thank our **volunteers**, and the **Indigenous Community members** and **partners** who came out to be with us this evening.

Special thank you to **Stacey Johnstone** for creating this beautiful booklet.

Finally, we want to take a moment to also thank the people we honoured at this community gathering for the incredible work they do every day to support Ottawa becoming a community of belonging for all Indigenous people: **Inuit Non-Profit Housing, the Inuit VAW Building Team & Advisory Committee Members** and **Minwaashin Lodge**. A special thank you to **Karen Green's family** for sharing her with the Ottawa community.

With respect from the OAC team:

Joan Riggs, Irene Goodwin, Julie Aziz, Kate Carroll, Kyra Hagerty, Jennifer San, Stacey Johnstone, Rayjean Palluq, Heidi Lucas, Randy Mayes, Jennifer Cada, Kayla Melanson, Appa Mark, Vema Ho and Christine Hele.

Building Relationships of Belonging for Today and for Our Future Generations



Thank you • Merci • Miigwetch • Nakurmiik •
Qujannamiik • Hiy-Hiy • Nia:wen



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