



ANNUAL REPORT

2019

Minwaashin  
Lodge

# Minwaashin Honors Our Founders

## **Grandmother Lillian Pitawanakwat is the founding Elder of Minwaashin Lodge**

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



## **Irene Compton is the co-founder of Minwaashin Lodge**

We must never forget the dedicated women that blazed the trail. The power of Irene Compton (Thunderbird Lady in the Sky) came to us from the west as Creator gave her the bundle of co-founding Minwaashin. Through Irene's Indian Name and strong cultural beliefs, she has managed to maintain a lasting presence in the community and at the Lodge. Irene stands as a witness and keeper of the stories of Minwaashin Lodge and we would like to honor Irene Compton for her 25 years of dedication.



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# *Our Vision*

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





# *Thank you to our Funders*

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF OTTAWA  
SERVICE CANADA(PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA)  
(COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN)**

**KAGITA MIKAM**

**CARING AND SHARING EXCHANGE  
ONTARIO FEDERATION OF INDIGENOUS FRIENDSHIP  
CENTRES**

**THE CITY OF OTTAWA  
THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL  
SERVICES**

**ONTARIO COUNCIL OF THE ARTS  
THE UNITED WAY/CENTRAIDE OTTAWA**

**STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA  
NATIONAL INDIAN BROTHERHOOD  
ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (ONWA)  
INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA**

**SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH CANADA  
ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION**

**INSPIRIT FOUNDATION  
FAMILY SERVICES OTTAWA  
HERITAGE FUND OF OTTAWA**

**ACCENTURE INC.**



# President's Report

Happy 25th Anniversary!

Since 2017, I have witnessed many milestones while being Board President. I am still amazed with the staff and volunteers of Minwaashin Lodge. Words cannot express how proud I am of these women who dedicate their lives to helping others.

Our 25th Anniversary will have a grassroots approach by hosting two memorable events. On Saturday, October 19, 2019 we will focus on a Commemorative MMIWG2 Powwow. The theme of the powwow will be in honour of our beautiful spirit warriors who went missing and to provide reconciliation and healing for the families of the missing and murdered. The second event will be a Commemorative Dinner, entitled, 'Lifting Women's Hearts Feast & Gathering' planned for the near future. The theme of this event will be to honor Minwaashin Lodge's 25 years of service in Ottawa with a grassroots voice. It will bring leaders of justice, child welfare, social, health and economic systems together to build relationships to transform how we serve Indigenous women and girls. A special thank you to the Department for Women and Gender Equality - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commemoration Fund for a successful application in funding these two events.

Minwaashin will be wrapping up the project for the shelter renovations and new addition this fall. A special thank you to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) for their financial assistance in ensuring this project was consistently moving forward. The staff can now accommodate their clients in a more comfortable space. I have had the pleasure in viewing the new space and I was very impressed with the changes made.

Unfortunately, we lost funding for our Addictions Services Initiative program on July 31, 2019 through the cuts made by the Provincial government. We are currently looking for funding to replace this position as women continue to request treatment support. We hope to have this position back as soon as possible.

All of these achievements could not have been accomplished without the tireless dedication of our Executive Director, Mary Daoust, Management, staff, students and volunteers.

Again, thank you all for everything you do every day to make Minwaashin Lodge a place that many call home, and an organization that we can all be so very proud of.

Chi-Meegwetch,

Velvet Migwans  
Board President

# Executive Director's Report

Happy 25th Anniversary Minwaashin Lodge!

After twenty five years in operation, Minwaashin Lodge is the only specific Violence against Women (VAW) support centre in the Ottawa region who continues to deliver wrap around services to women, children, youth, Elders and families who have been impacted by violence and abuse. Our co-founder who has been here from the very beginning – Irene Compton is a true warrior sister who stands with conviction and strength in the honor of those who enter our doors.

We are so proud to be hosting two events starting with a 25th Anniversary Pow wow in Commemoration of the MMIWG2 and their families in the heart of Vanier on October 19, 2019. The second event will be a Commemorative Dinner, entitled, 'Lifting Women's Hearts Feast & Gathering.' The theme of this event will be to honor Minwaashin Lodge's 25 years of service in Ottawa and give a grassroots voice. More information to follow soon.

The Lodge has had a very busy year with programs and services running at full capacity while many still are on waiting lists to receive therapeutic support. Oshki Kizis shelter continues to feel the pressure due to zero options with little or no hope of women and children securing a bed in a safe shelter in the Ottawa region. Shelter staff continue to accommodate the needs of the women and children regardless of the challenges.



Minwaashin continues to search for funding for our much needed holistic Indigenous Women and Children Treatment Lodge. This is a need, not a want! When you continually witness and hear the women's stories, it is so disheartening to know there is no model of treatment care that works with both mom and child in the Ottawa region. This will come to fruition one day soon as we have many strong supporters in our corner who are advocating on our behalf.

Minwaashin Lodge continues to acknowledge the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) for their financial support in completing our renovations and addition to our VAW emergency shelter. The project team estimates the full completion will be done by late fall. Staff now have the proper space to accommodate clients from the community as well as the shelter.

This is the third year the City has graciously donated space to Minwaashin Lodge in hosting our Annual Children's Gathering and feast. We are so grateful to the City staff and upper management for their continued support. The space is always beautifully decorated for the season, and close to 300 families are given an opportunity to experience a beautiful Christmas feast hosted by The Mission and their wonderful chef experts. Minwaashin continues to have a wonderful partnership with The Mission. This past year we were honoured to have MP Mona Fortier, Senator Boyer and her family, and Minwaashin Board members who gave up their Sunday to be there. It meant the world to our families and to Minwaashin!

Our part time 'Children Who Witness' program which was funded by the United Way came to an end on June 30, 2019. Minwaashin has secured funding for a full time Children Who Witness Therapist with the Ontario Trillium Fund. This program meets a critical need for the children at Oshki Kizis Lodge and Minwaashin. However, we were devastated to lose our Addictions Services Initiative (ASI) position as this funding was cut July 31, 2019 by the Ontario government. Since 2008, many women went through this program and received treatment support. This has added pressure to the existing team who will accommodate the existing clientele so there is continuity with their ongoing wellness plan. We are in the midst of searching for more funds. A very special recognition to our amazing funders, donors, volunteers, volunteer board members, and our amazing staff who have given so much behind the scenes. I am extremely grateful for all you do on behalf of Minwaashin Lodge. Without culture there is no connection to spirit. Without spirit there is no connection to healing. Minwaashin is the core of both culture and healing.

Warmest regards,

Mary Daoust  
Executive Director



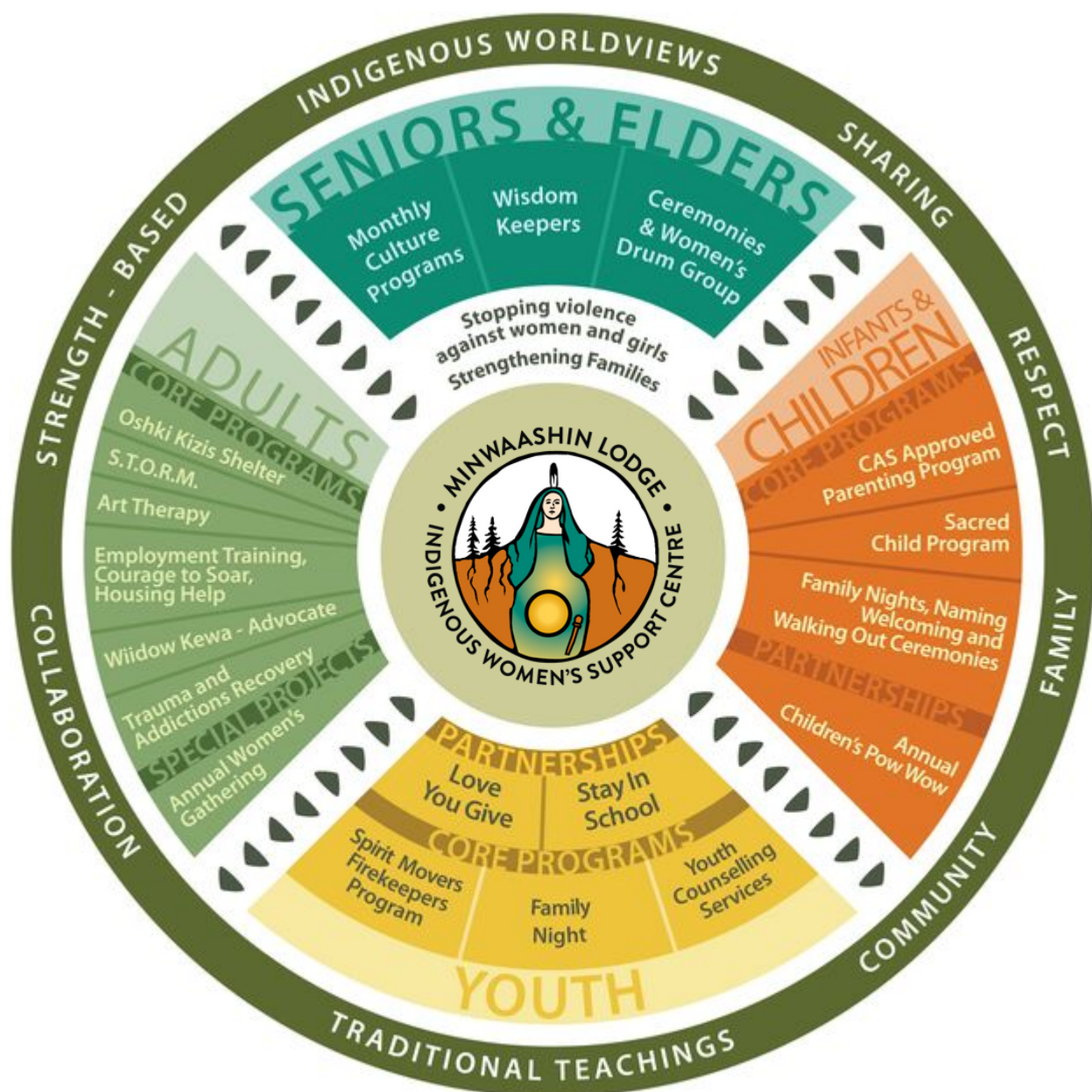
# Our Team

## Board Members

President **Velvet Migwans**  
Vice President **Jo McCutcheon**  
Treasurer **Pamela Wolfe-Roberge**  
Director **Christina Hodgins-Stewart**  
Director **Katelin Peltier**  
Director **Tracey Lindberg**  
Director **Lane Bourbonnière**

## Staff

Executive Director **Mary Daoust**  
Director, Oshki Kizis Lodge **Frances Daly**  
Manager, Counselling Team **Angela Jeffrey-Martincich**  
Manager, Child & Youth Programs **Florence Hiltz**  
Manager, Culture/Employment Programs **Irene Compton**  
Assistant Manager, Oshki Kizis Lodge **Barb Wolfe**  
Book Keeper/Human Resources **Kate Holden**  
IT Maintenance/Reception **Ida Kakekagumick**  
Executive Assistant **Paulette John**  
Communications & Events **Jenna Spagnoli**  
Art Therapist **Annie Kingston-Miller**  
Women's Counsellor **Elaine Kicknosway, Jane Keeler**  
Intake/Crisis Counsellor **Cara Diamond**  
ASI Addictions Counsellor **Storm Burgoyne**  
Employment Counsellor **Verna McGregor**  
Employment and Training Project Coordinator **Jennifer Bellaire**  
Culture/Cultural Outreach **Frankie Pasap**  
Maintenance Worker **Patricia Animikwan**  
Youth Worker **Kateri Miles**  
Family Wellness Worker **Rebecca Migwans**  
Residential Support Worker OKL **Jeanette Jackson, Ann Wesley**  
STORM HT **Vera Wabegijig, Tina Tremblay**  
STORM **Marleny Velit, Lainie Sylvester**  
Transitional Support Worker **Shar Chowdhury**  
Court Worker **Sunshine Roundpoint**  
Outreach **Boni Dean**  
Housing First Case Manager **Diane Wolfe, Nicole Edwards, Vicky Chief, Karen Polson**  
Housing First - Youth **Sabrina Jones-Monette**  
Family Support Worker **Monica Slauenwhite-Stevens**  
Indigenous Provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison **Kayla Spagnoli**  
Cook **Ania Paluch**



## MINWAASHIN LODGE: LIFE-CYCLE SERVICE MODEL

*Respecting women is our culture*



# Counselling

Minwaashin Lodge - Indigenous Women's Support Centre provides a range of counseling services to First Nation, Métis and Inuit women, youth and children who are survivors of various forms of violence, many of whom are survivors or intergenerational survivors of the residential school system or 60s Scoop. Our services are client centered, holistic and culturally based. The counseling program provides a full spectrum of therapeutic services including art therapy, traditional counselling, sand tray therapy and play therapy, which support healing from: sexual abuse, substance use, family breakdown, childhood trauma, mental health issues related to anxiety and depression, grief and loss, all forms of violence, anger management and sexuality and gender expression. To support Indigenous women and children, counseling is offered at our agency location and our shelter Oshki Kizis Lodge, as well as at partner organizations within the city. Additionally, traditional healing such as sweats, fasts, circles and drumming are offered to children, youth, adults, and elders



## Highlights:

**March 2019:** Renewed our agreement with Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. Minwaashin Lodge entered into a partnership agreement with OCDSB which allows Minwaashin staff to work with Indigenous children within the school setting. This is particularly useful for the children's therapy program, as the children's therapists can meet with children at school, in instances where transportation is a barrier.

**April 2019:** Agreement with the Ottawa Catholic School Board. Minwaashin Lodge entered into a partnership agreement with OCSB which allows Minwaashin staff to work with Indigenous children within the catholic school setting. This is particularly useful for the children's therapy program, as the children's therapists can meet with children at school, in instances where transportation is a barrier.

**June 2019:** Traditional Counselling is offered through funding from the National Indian Brotherhood. Grandmother Irene Lindsey returned to Minwaashin to offer traditional counselling and healing for survivors of violence and abuse.

**June 2019:** Minwaashin's Annual Women's Gathering offered 26 cultural and holistic workshops to 76 women. Various community partners offered workshops at the gathering, including Tungasuvvingat Inuit, who offered workshops on Inuit cultural teachings.

(Counselling Continued)

**July 2019:** Children Who Witness Program (CWW) underwent some changes as the part-time funding from United Way ended June 30th, 2019. The program secured new funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Grow Grant. This enables Minwaashin to provide full-time programming to our children for a term of three years. This program provides play, talk and art therapy for children 3-12 who have witnessed or experienced violence or abuse.

**Ongoing 2019:** Throughout the year, three cycles of the Strong Women's Support Group (Mashkawizig Ikwewag) were held. The group is based on the seven grandfather teachings and incorporates a holistic approach to healing for women who are struggling with substance use and abuse. This open group included psycho-education around colonization, residential schools, intergenerational trauma and contemporary impacts including violence against women. Women also had the opportunity to explore past and present coping skills to help them maintain their sobriety and continue their healing journeys. The relationship with the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa continues to grow and improve. We have often partnered with the Society to facilitate circles and advocate for clients. We have established more effective forms of communication with the FNIM pods.

**Aunties on the Road Doula Collective:** The Aunties on the Doula collective continues to thrive thanks to the funding from Ontario Trillium Foundation - Youth Opportunities Fund. Minwaashin acts as an organizational home and mentor for the collective, who provide full-spectrum doula services to Indigenous youth ages 12-29 and an annual, full-spectrum doula training. Additional funding to support the training was received from the Ontario Indigenous Youth Partnership Project and Inspirit Foundation.

## Statistics:

Approximately 1200 First Nation, Métis and Inuit women and families received 1:1 counselling, art/family therapy, crisis intervention, psycho-educational workshops, traditional support, healing circles, teachings, sweats, fasts, ceremonies and referral services. This year there has been a large increase in the amount of children receiving individual counseling with extensive waiting lists.

Thank you to our funders: Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), City of Ottawa -Addictions Services Initiative program (ASI), National Indian Brotherhood, and United Way.



# Apatisiwin

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

**Objectives of program:** Funding is distributed to eligible clients for employment and training programs. Partnerships with community colleges, private training institutes and businesses across the province provide training and employment opportunities for Ontario's urban Aboriginal people. The Apatisiwin program matches eligible clients with potential employers. Provides employment and training opportunities to Aboriginal clients who are not eligible through First Nation, Inuit and Métis agreements.

**Progress to Date:** A total of 26 client files were processed in fiscal year ending March 31, 2019 with a total of 47 interventions. Interventions included the processing of training allowances, childcare, bus passes and the payment of tuition and books for training. The program funded 3 participants in Minwaashin Lodge's Courage to Soar program via Willis Business College. The program was extended from a 21 week program into a 27 week Executive Administrative Assistant diploma program. The new program is now delivered once per fiscal year as opposed to twice per fiscal year in the past. The Apatisiwin also co-funded 3 clients in the new Indigenous Personal Support Worker Program through Willis College. The tuition for applicants was paid through the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP). Pre-employment supports coupled with pre-employment training facilitated a number of women's successful entry into the labour market. The program funded 1 on-the-job-training interventions that also led to full-time employment for the client. This is done via a wage subsidy. In addition to the processing of interventions, the Apatisiwin Program was also part of Algonquin College's Aboriginal Education Committee (AEC) which included activities such as the participation in the development of the strategic plan to improve conditions and services for Aboriginal students attending the College



### ***The Process:***

- Intake and assessment to determine the level of skills and supports needed.
- The program works in conjunction with all the Violence against Aboriginal Women services at Minwaashin Lodge such as counselling, on-going culturally-based psycho-educational workshops, safety planning and advocacy to increase women's participation in training and education programs.
- The Apatisiwin Program triages with the Courage to Soar and Employment Readiness Program to prioritize and deliver best training and career options for each women registering with the Apatisiwin Program.
- The program ensures on-going monitoring of participants in training and employment interventions.
- Upon completion of training and employment interventions follow-up is done to assist in the entry into the labour market or provision of other opportunities.

## **Partnerships:**

Minwaashin Lodge's Employment Readiness  
Program

Courage to Soar

Willis College

Algonquin College

Carleton University

Accenture Inc. – Management & Consulting

Herzing College

Kagita Mikam

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

Academy of Learning

St. Nicholas Adult High School

Ontario Works Employment Centres

City of Ottawa

Various Aboriginal organizations in Ottawa for  
job placements and recruitment for example:

Assembly of First Nations (AFN)

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)

AFOA Canada etc.

Federal government departments such as  
Employment and Social Development Canada  
(ESDC)

have become partners in acquiring Courage to  
Soar graduates to integrate into positions with  
the federal government this fiscal year.

### ***Statistics***

A total of 47 interventions for funding was processed in the 2018-19 fiscal year; 15 Purchase of Training interventions, 3 Courage to Soar interventions, 3 child care assistance interventions, 9 EI reach back interventions, 17 CRF interventions and a total of over 160 client interviews / requests for information were completed throughout the year.

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



# Employment Readiness Program

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

## 2018/19 Highlights

### **Group Work**

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

### **Individual Support**

Participants received the following:

Individual career counseling and support

College and university entrance assessment

PLAR – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Assessments

Individual coaching and mentoring for interviews

Pre-employment services to identify career goals, develop and implement an Employment/  
Training Action Plan

Referrals to specific occupational skills training

Violence against Women counseling, support and safety planning

Support to navigate systems such as Ontario Works, housing, education etc.

### **Partnerships**

Accenture: has raised the profile of Minwaashin Lodge's Employment Readiness Program and increased our capacity to add more workshops and engage with professionals to assist Indigenous women. Dress for success has outfitted 48 women with professional clothing. Kagita Mikam: has increased our capacity to provide additional services & supports. Employment Ontario, St. Lawrence College, Algonquin College, Carleton University and Ottawa University: has increased Indigenous women's participation in education and training institutions. Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC): Our partnership has increased Minwaashin Lodge's inclusion in strategies with both the City of Ottawa and the Government of Canada via OAC's leadership, pursuance and implementation of economic advancement for Aboriginal peoples. City Of Ottawa/Ontario Works: has reduced barriers to employment by assisting participants with tangible needs such as bus passes, food and occupational clothing to become employment ready.

**Stats:** Fiscal year 2018/19 a total of 40 women participated in the Employment Readiness Program; 17 obtained jobs and 11 pursued further education.

The Employment Readiness Program is funded by the Ministry of the Status of Women

# Courage to Soar

## **Training and Career Options for First Nation, Inuit and Métis Women**

### **Project Target**

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



Ministry of the Status of Women has approved funding from April 2018 to March 2021 which secures training for 39 women in the Women's Economic Security Program.

### **Project Components**

Career Development Training and Diploma in Executive Administrative Assistant – Advanced Studies

### **Enhancements and Supports**

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

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

### ***Benefits to the Program***

The Courage to Soar Program has established itself as a model program and is highly recognized in the community.

- Our partner, Ontario Works continues to support the outcomes of Courage To Soar Program contributing to the success of the women.
- Willis College has nominated the Courage to Soar Program for an award in excellence with the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- Many applicants are referred by past graduates who have had a positive experience in the program.
- Graduates are proud of and use the leadership, self-esteem and confidence skills they have acquired as a result of the CTS Program.
- The program has a 80% graduation success rate; our graduates go on to employment or choose to pursue further training in colleges and universities.

## **Partnerships**

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

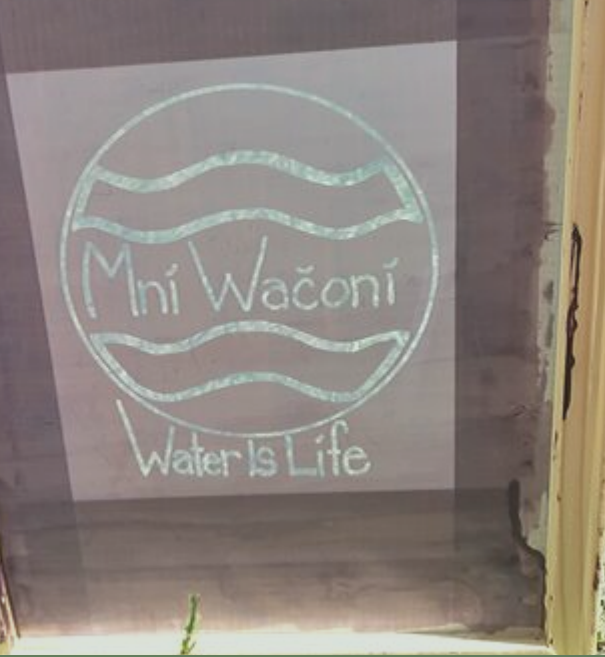
- Willis College (training)
- Ontario Works (employment assistance benefits and job retention supports)
- Kagita Mikam (training & cost sharing)
- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
- Job Connect (employment services)
- Adirondack and Maxsys (Aboriginal employment services)
- Apatisiwin (training & cost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

### ***Statistics***

To date, Courage To Soar Program has the following statistics: 12 participants graduated from the 2018/2019 year. In total from all programs 191 women registered for the program, 121 participated in the program, 107 women completed the program, 140 women got jobs; full-time, part-time and / or self employed, 45 women pursued further training.

Funded by the Ministry of the Status of Women's  
Economic Security Program





# Culture Program

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

**Accomplishments:** This year Minwaashin Lodge received a grant from National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) – Continuing Our Journey to deliver comprehensive, cultural programming that teaches specific cultural knowledge and cultural activities modeled around the four seasons. Further to this, and equally important, is the funding we received from the City of Ottawa and National Indian Brotherhood to deliver our Cultural Education Program and provide enhancement of traditional counseling services by our grandmother, Irene Lindsay.

## Highlights:

Women's Gathering Event provided a healing, on-the-land camping and ceremonial weekend integrating First Nation, Inuit and Métis workshops, sweats, pipe ceremony and cultural drumming and dance demonstrations and healings for women.

Acting Workshops led by Indigenous playwright helped women to improve their communications skills and empowered them to use their voices to heal, become more confident and connect to culture.

Weekly Craft Circles led by Gramma Irene Lindsay included: Traditional Skirt making, moccasin & vamps workshops, and beading workshops with talking circles, smudging, and traditional knowledge.

Traditional Ceremonies conducted for families included a walking out ceremony, changing of the flags, drum awakening, spirit names and traditional knowledge workshops/circles. Ceremonies were also held off-site that included monthly sweats during the spring, summer, and fall months.

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

The Culture Program continued following the seasons and the medicine wheel and facilitated the creation of traditional drums, rattles, and regalia during the summer, fall and winter months. A number of visiting Elders delivered traditional knowledge workshops; one from Wisconsin to teach history and teachings of Ojibwa basket making, and; one from Kiti Gan Zibi – Algonquin First Nation to teach 2-day on-the land- skinning and tanning hides workshop.

**Partnerships:** Métis Nation of Ontario provided cultural workshops to teach us about Metis history and ways. Finger-weaving workshop to create a traditional Sash & Metis cultural celebration featuring jigging & fiddling. Oshki Kizis Lodge received bi-weekly Culture & Wellness programming for women and children. University of Ottawa, Centre for Global and Community Engagement provided 12 students from various studies to volunteer at Minwaashin Lodge. Family Services Ottawa (FSO) provided funds for Traditional Healing and Counseling by our Elder.

Women's Events Network Organizers of Ottawa provided opportunities for Indigenous women to participate in December 6th Vigil and the Annual Take Back the Night walk. Indigenous women demonstrated leadership, public speaking, and drumming at these annual vigils to raise awareness of the impacts of violence against all women. Ottawa Coalition to End Violence against Women provided opportunities for Indigenous women to attend several OCTEVAW events focussing on stories of survivors, missing & murdered women and campaigns to assert awareness and prevention of violence. Aboriginal Awareness Week provided opportunities for Indigenous women to demonstrate their leadership by actively participating in municipal, provincial and federal Aboriginal Awareness Week campaigns. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board supported our Sacred Child Program & Culture Program to deliver a very successful powwow honoring youth. Three hundred youth experienced Indigenous Culture and participated in powwow dancing. Youth were treated to Métis Culture Dance demonstrations, Inuit Throat Singing, traditional food and traditional crafts. City of Ottawa assisted Minwaashin Lodge and provided a spectacular venue to have our Indigenous Annual Children's Winter Gathering to support low-income families with gifts for their youth and children, feast and celebration of Happy Feasting Days.

**Stats:** Traditional Support Services 155; Cultural Arts & Crafts 250; Outings 89; Healing Circles 54; Hand Drum Circle 99; Ceremonies 145; and Cultural Special Events, 303.

The Culture Program is funded by National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) –  
Continuing Our Journey and City of Ottawa

# 55+ Program



***This program, entitled, Aboriginal Women Reclaim Their Culture and Power is based on the medicine wheel and follows the seasons to reclaim Indigenous identity and culture. This initiative primarily provides funding for our Culture Program Assistant, however, additionally it is generously supporting a part-time Elder position.***

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

## ***Statistics***

Traditional Support Services, 108; Cultural Arts & Crafts, 81; Healing Circles, 25; Outreach, 140; food bank 33.

## ***Group Work***

Spring Fasts, Sweat Lodge Ceremony, Pipe Ceremonies, Crafting & Beading Circles, Healing Circles led by Grandmother and Helper, Visiting Elders, Specific cultural events with Elders, Ancestry and Identity Workshops

## ***Individual Support***

Traditional support, guidance, Counselling sessions, Hospital visits, Food Bank

## ***Partnerships***

Gignul Non-Profit Housing: has assisted the seniors with affordable housing. It accommodates space in one of their buildings to conduct residential school survivors programming. Ottawa Food Bank: assists Minwaashin Lodge to reduce anxiety with respect to food security for seniors. Accenture: has provided Financial Literacy Information sessions. Eco Equitable: has empowered women 55+ with sewing skills and development of supplemental income. Carleton University and Ottawa University: has increased 55+ Aboriginal women's participation in continuing education. Urban Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition: has increased opportunities for Elders to take lead roles at public functions and cultural awareness events. City Of Ottawa: has reduced barriers to 55+ Aboriginal women by assisting with financial assistance to take part in different recreational programs throughout the city. Family Services Ottawa (FSO) provides funding for traditional support and guidance counselling.

55+ Program is funded by National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund and the City of Ottawa



# Volunteerism

**Minwaashin Lodge - Indigenous Women's Support Centre** provides a wide range of volunteerism opportunities for community members. Volunteers are from all walks of life and work. Students, grassroots and professional women work together to make sure Minwaashin Lodge's programs and services are effortlessly delivered. Volunteers provided support in areas of event planning and delivery, care giving, clerical, fundraising activities, education, mentorship and programming support.

## 2018/2019 Highlights

Volunteers assisted at various special events as follows:

**March:** Community speakers at Minwaashin Lodge - International Women's Day

**March-April:** Bi-weekly, food bank pick up and distribution

**March-April:** Income Tax Clinic and individual returns completed for low income women

**May:** Honoring Mother's Day - Brunch and Aboriginal Celebration

**June:** Women's Gathering Event

**July:** Cultural & Recreational Outings for women & children

**August:** Annual BBQ and Back to School Event

**September:** Take Back the Night Event/ September Back to School Supplies Drive

**October:** Farmers Harvest – providing fresh vegetables for women & children

**November:** Elimination of Violence against Women weekly events

**December:** Annual Children's Winter Gathering

**January:** Information booths at multiple venues

**February:** Professional Make Over Day for Women

### **Partnerships:**

UOttawa, Carleton University, Algonquin College and Willis College. Minwaashin Lodge hosted volunteer students from various programs of study. Salvation Army and Minwaashin Lodge provided Aboriginal specific options for completion of Community Service Orders. This past year, Minwaashin Lodge provided volunteering opportunities for 105 community members. Many have served behind the scenes, helping out at busy times of the year like Christmas, Halloween and Women's Gathering. Minwaashin Lodge depends on many individuals to enhance their programs and services.

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

# Sacred Child Program



The Sacred Child Program had an amazing and inspiring year! We work with many community partners to educate parents and families on topics such as nutrition, family violence, child development, and parenting skills through personalized goal planning. The Sacred Child Program provides family support and guidance for children aged 0-6 years old with home visits, support circles, family gatherings, and cultural development. There are 150 families registered in the program.

The families that participate in the numerous planned activities of Sacred Child have found encouragement in creating healthy family routines, friendships with other parents and support in accessing the other services provided at Minwaashin Lodge and referrals and partnerships with community organizations. The program also strives to recognize and respect the roles of women in the family. All programs are offered free of charge. The Sacred Child Program is part of the dynamic circle of services that is vital to the wellness of the families of Minwaashin.

## Highlights

Annual school supplies

Toys for Tots

Floatilla for Friendship

Annual Children/Youth Winter Gathering

Annual Minwaashin Lodge Women's Gathering

Weekly access/visitation with CASO

Traditional teachings with visiting elders,  
walking out ceremony, naming ceremony

Seasonal cultural activities,

Sweetgrass picking,

Pow wow dance presentations

Family feasts

Earth Day Celebrations

2nd Annual Gloucester Pow Wow

4th Annual Boys With Braids



Traditional teachings, 13 Moons Parenting  
Inuit and Metis teachings  
Elder Visits /Storytellers with Twice Upon a Time  
Teachings of the Rites of Passage, fasting and celebration of community growth  
Maple sugar/snowshoe outing  
Children and Youth Powwow  
Partnership with IEYC with monthly land-based family activities.

***Partnerships:***

Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition/Urban Aboriginal Strategy  
Ottawa Public Health  
Inuuqatigiit/Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre  
Tungasuuvingat Inuit  
Odawa Native Friendship Centre  
Kumik/Iskotew Elders Lodges  
Wabano Aboriginal Health Centre  
Aboriginal Makonsag Head Start  
Southern Ontario Diabetes  
Metis Nation of Ontario  
ONWA- AHBHC - Family Home Visitor  
Circle of Care-Alternative Child Welfare Restoratives Justice Program  
Children's Aid Society of Ottawa  
City of Ottawa Public Health  
Ontario Best Start  
Ottawa Public Library  
Ottawa Food Bank  
Ottawa School of Art Outreach Program  
Snowsuit Fund  
United Way-Gifts in Kinds Program  
Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada)  
Ottawa First Words  
National Aboriginal Day Funding  
Tribe Academ

Funding for the Sacred Child Program is provided by Public  
Health Agency of Canada

We would like to humbly thank everyone for your generous contributions,  
donations, support and prayers in keeping our community wellness.



# Spirit Movers and Fire Keepers Youth Program

The Spirit Movers and Fire Keepers is a First Nations, Inuit and Métis focused program for boys and girls aged 7-11 years and youth 12-18 years. There were over 600 First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth impacted by our programming. All activities are based on traditional cultural teachings and are very interactive. Guest speakers provide information on various topics such as internet safety, nutrition and art. The Spirit Movers and Fire Keeper youth gain knowledge of their Indigenous roots with age appropriate discussions and activities. Monday evenings are reserved for a Youth Access/Visitation night for any youth in care to visit with family. Tuesday nights the Youth Program partners with the Sacred Child Program to provide a culturally enriched program incorporating the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Access and visitation with any child/youth in care is also offered.

'Wednesday after School' programming ran for the 2018/2019 school year, providing youth with cultural teachings, crafts, life skills and physical activity. The Youth Program continued to offer Wednesday evening programming during the summer months to ensure consistency. This was open to all Indigenous, Métis and Inuit youth 7-18 years of age. All activities and programs focus on restoring the culture, beliefs and ceremonies to the next generation. Cultural Outreach support is offered at Gloucester High School and the Ottawa Technical Secondary School as well as advocacy to youth and their families.



## **Highlights**

Second annual Pow Wow at Gloucester High School  
Floatilla for Friendship Canoeing Day  
Original Voices Youth Council  
Boys with Braids  
Odawa Children and Youth Pow wow  
Annual Children's Winter Gathering

## **Partnerships**

Paint Therapy for Mental Health  
Odawa Native Friendship Centre (Akwe:go  
and Wasa-Nabin Programs)  
Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health Ottawa  
School of Art  
The Children's Aid Society  
Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth  
and Families  
Métis Nation of Ontario  
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

# Oshki Kizis Lodge

Oshki Kizis Lodge (OKL), our 21 bed shelter for Indigenous women and children fleeing abuse has been in operation since 2001. Oshki Kizis provides a safe place where traditional cultural values and practice are honoured. All programs and services are rooted in the Seven Sacred Teachings.

A holistic approach is used to support the women and children while they begin their healing journey. The staff team at OKL is comprised of a Shelter Director, Residential Support Workers, Housing First Case Managers, Youth Housing First Case Manager, Transitional Family Worker, Street Outreach Worker, Cultural Outreach Worker, Street Team Outreach Mobile (STORM), Anti Human Trafficking Team, Court Support Worker and a Cook/Cleaner. We work very closely with Minwaashin staff to ensure women and children access all services that they require, many Minwaashin programs are offered in-house to the women and children at the shelter.

## **Stats & General Information**

In 2018 we applied to MCCSS and received funding to build an addition onto Oshki. This addition provides us with 6 new offices for our Housing First, STORM and STORM HT programs, a new kitchen for the shelter, a boardroom as well as a new garage for our STORM van. The office addition is complete. This addition has allowed us to open 4 new beds at the shelter. The beds were full the first week we opened them. We have requested additional funds to support these beds as of this AGM our request has not been approved.

## **Statistics and General Information**

- This year Oshki Kizis Lodge provided shelter and services to 75 women and 57 children
- 40 women and 16 children were housed, some families returned to their home communities while others still wait for affordable housing
- Oshki staff continues to work closely with Children's Aid Society and other service providers to preserve, maintain and reunite families
- Oshki's Family and Transitional Support Workers continue to assist women in navigating systems and provide advocacy for housing and other critical basic needs. In the past year 114 Households were provided support through Transitional and Family Supports
- This year the shelter answered 1226 calls from women in crisis
- This year the shelter answered 1301 calls from women seeking help or referrals
- Staff answered calls from 187 women who could not be accommodated at the shelter because there were no beds available or because they did not meet criteria

## **Funders**

Funders: Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) - Oshki Kizis Lodge - Anti - Human Trafficking program .City of Ottawa – Housing First Case Management/Housing First Youth Case Management. Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) – Court Support Worker/Cultural Outreach/Outreach Worker. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada – Family Support Worker



# STORM

## Street Team Outreach Mobile

The Sex Trade Out Reach Mobile (STORM) Program began in 2008. It was renamed in 2017 at the request of women served by the van. It is now called Street Team Outreach Mobile. STORM is a mobile team of two staff that reaches out to First Nations, Inuit and Métis women who are street involved in the City of Ottawa. STORM provides individual support and advocacy to women. STORM is often the first point of contact for marginalized women in the sex trade who are often reluctant to access services. This year we received funding to hire a second team to serve STORM clients. This program is specific to providing supports and advocacy to women who are trafficked or at risk.

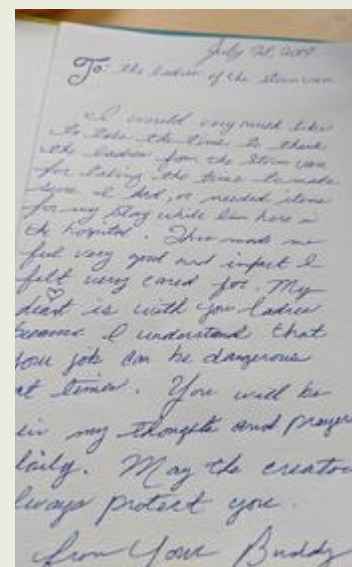
STORM HT Human Trafficking Program: 366 women served, 137 identified as trafficked and 4 women were assisted to return home with additional dollars given for rural supports.

**Funded by Anti-Human Trafficking  
Community Supports Indigenous-Led  
Initiatives Fund - Ministry of Children,  
Community and Social Service**

- Referrals to Minwaashin Lodge for Crisis and Addiction Counseling
- Referrals to Elders and Traditional Healing
- Referrals to Health Centers and/or transport to hospitals
- Supports and advocacy for trafficked women
- Referrals to Housing First Case Managers (HFCM), housing and other community services
- Safety planning for all women, including exit planning
- Transportation and bus tickets
- Health and hygiene products, condoms and various other harm reduction supplies
- Needle exchange and crack pipe distribution
- We also provide bagged lunches, snacks, juice or hot chocolate, clothing, shoes, winter coats and boots
- Provide women with updated "Bad Date" lists (generated by Salvation Army)
- Distributes 911 phones to clients to be used to access emergency services
- Provides personal alarms to women

STORM Program: 895 women were served over the last year, 199 transports to for safety reasons were provided.

**Funded by the City of Ottawa**





# Family Wellness Worker



This is a part time position specifically to serve families in the shelter.

***Duties include:***

- Develop a relationship with clients
- Assisting clients to apply for financial supports (ie Ontario Works, ODSP)
- Making appropriate referrals to required services at Minwaashin and in the community ie counselling, medical, legal
- Assist with access to school registration
- Planning to address the families needs
- Helping women get the paperwork and identification needed to apply for housing
- Facilitating their application for Housing Registry status

- Accompaniment to house viewings
  - Hands on assistance with obtaining furniture
  - Secure available subsidies for housewares, and shop with the client
  - Develop a safety plan for clients that addresses their concerns
  - Help clients to move into new home
- In the first year this program has served 45 women, 22 children and worked in collaboration to house 22 families

***Family Support Worker is funded by  
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada  
(INAC)***



# Indigenous Court Worker

This year Oshki Kizis Lodge received funding for an Indigenous Court Worker position. This position is intended to assist and support Indigenous clients who are involved in Criminal Court and /or Family Court System. This worker accepts referrals from Minwaashin and our various partners. She also attends court regularly and offers to assist indigenous clients without other supports. This program meets a critical need for the people we serve, therefore, as a result, the caseload for this position has increased steadily.

***Services offered by Court Worker include:***

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

In this past year, the court worker provided service to: 30 clients involved in Family Court, 22 involved in Criminal Court, 31 without charges (family members, victims & witnesses)

***This position is funded by Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres***



Minwaashin Lodge is now in our fourth year providing Housing First Services to Homeless Indigenous Women. In addition to the services we provide to homeless adults we have a Youth Housing First worker who serves homeless Indigenous Youth. HBCM Workers provide the following services:

- Providing guidance and support, make a housing plan with the client that includes their preferences and needs
- Helping people get the paperwork and identification needed to apply for housing
  - Facilitating their application for Housing Registry status
  - Liaison with prospective landlord's
- Searching for available housing that meets the clients needs
  - Accompaniment to house viewings
  - Hands on assistance with obtaining furniture
- Secure available subsidies for housewares, shop with the client
- Develop a safety plan for clients that addresses their concerns
  - Help the client to move into new home
  - Assist with initial grocery shop with the client
  - Provide ongoing support in the form of visits
  - Provide telephone crisis support
- As needed support clients in disputes with landlords / other tenants
  - As necessary find secondary accommodations

It is imperative that HBCM workers establish supportive relationships with the people they serve. This has resulted in increased success for the clients we serve and has meant that workers have been able to provide many supports that are not specific to housing but essential for housing to be successful. Our Housing First Workers average caseload is 16 many of whom are high acuity. We have one worker dedicated to serving youth aged 17-24 years. Homeless youth require additional supports and often more assistance with life skills.

Our Youth Housing First Case Manager (YHFCM) currently has a case load of 15, she continues to support her housed clients

HBCM /YHBCM are funded  
by the City of Ottawa



# Indigenous Provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison

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

## **Statistics and General Information**

The role of the Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison worker is to support these women who are at risk, being groomed, or looking to exit from exploitation, primarily through the STORM program, as well as the new weekly drop-in, Supporting Our Sisters. The worker also educates service providers, community members, teachers, and students on Human Trafficking through an Indigenous Perspective through presentations and discussions. Since starting at Minwaashin, the drop-in has increased from one or two women attending, to upwards of 15. We have served and supported approximately 20 women total so far. Many of the women are also STORM clients, who have heard from us from other Indigenous organizations, or from word of mouth.



The worker co-founded and co-chair ACTION (Anti-violence & Coercion Taskforce for Indigenous Organizations and Networks) along side the Manager of Exiting Sex Work and Human Trafficking. This past February, ACTION held the first Annual Indigenous Human Trafficking Awareness Day at the Hilton Gardens Inn, which hosted over 100 attendees including city Councillor Mathieu Fleury and former Minister of Community, Children, and Social Services, Lisa McLeod.

***This program is funded by Ontario Native Women's Association***



# Street Outreach

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

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

## Continuing Initiatives

Street Outreach supports women at St Joe's Women's Centre; maintains a partnership with ODAWA and Youth Services Bureau (YSB) to provide cultural support to youth. Visits the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre, providing drumming and cultural supports and participates in discharge planning for incarcerated women being released. Supports Minwaashin's new Human Trafficking drop in including providing transportation to clients who otherwise could not attend.

895 individuals received supports and advocacy and this includes 225 who were living in homeless shelters, 199 transports and 782 referrals to services at Minwaashin and in the community.



*Reflecting on this past year.....*



*Here's to many more!*



# Financial Report

## MINWAASHIN LODGE INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTRE

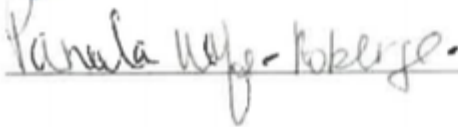
### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT MARCH 31, 2018

	2018	2017
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 680,626	\$ 564,322
Accounts receivable	218,644	244,106
Prepaid expenses	18,207	20,377
	<u>897,477</u>	<u>828,805</u>
<b>CAPITAL ASSETS (note 3)</b>	<u>367,295</u>	<u>308,099</u>
	<u>\$ 1,264,772</u>	<u>1,136,904</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 99,518	\$ 127,242
Deferred revenue (note 4)	112,242	113,028
	<u>211,760</u>	<u>240,270</u>
<b>DEFERRED FUNDING OF CAPITAL ASSETS (note 5)</b>	<u>280,234</u>	<u>219,474</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Invested in capital assets	87,061	88,625
Unrestricted	685,717	588,535
	<u>772,778</u>	<u>677,160</u>
	<u>\$ 1,264,772</u>	<u>\$ 1,136,904</u>

Approved on behalf of the Board of Directors:



Board Member



Board Member



**MINWAASHIN LODGE  
INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTRE**

**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2018**

	2018	2017
<b>REVENUE</b>		
MCSS - non-shelter funding	\$ 362,366	\$ 362,364
Shelter funding (schedule)	1,586,885	1,456,165
Donations	48,344	60,962
Interest Income	9,138	6,358
Other	102,161	67,517
	<b>2,106,894</b>	<b>1,953,364</b>
<b>PROGRAM REVENUE (schedule)</b>	<b>946,933</b>	<b>990,209</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>3,053,827</b>	<b>2,943,573</b>
<b>CORE EXPENDITURE</b>		
MCSS - non shelter (schedule)	362,346	362,359
Shelter (schedule)	1,578,894	1,456,171
PROGRAM EXPENDITURE (schedule)	946,752	990,721
	<b>2,885,992</b>	<b>2,809,251</b>
<b>AMORTIZATION OF CAPITAL ASSETS</b>	<b>45,460</b>	<b>48,582</b>
<b>OTHER</b>	<b>26,757</b>	<b>8,616</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2,958,209</b>	<b>2,866,449</b>
<b>NET REVENUE FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 95,618</b>	<b>\$ 76,824</b>

# Letter from the Auditor



July 22, 2019

## **Audit Findings Letter**

The Board of Directors  
Minwaashin Lodge  
100-1155 Lola Street  
Ottawa ON K1K 4C1

Dear Board Members:

We have been engaged to audit the financial statements of your organization as of March 31, 2019 and for the period then ended. Canadian generally accepted standards for audit engagements require that we communicate any significant findings to you in relation to our audit.

### **Evaluation of Internal Controls**

Audits include a review of internal control relevant to the entity's preparation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.

During the course of our audit, we encountered a specific internal control matters that we wish to bring to your attention.

#### ***Approval of Executive Director Credit Card – repeated from prior year***

We understand that the Executive Director's credit card statement and receipts are reviewed by a board member prior to payment however there is no evidence of review on the statement. We recommend that the board member initial as evidence of approval.

### ***Bank Reconciliations – repeated from prior year***

We had difficulty auditing the bank reconciliation during our audit as changes had been made to the original bank reconciliation without support to identify the changes made. We understand that a cleanup was done on older items and this was done after the bank was reconciled. We recommend that older items be reviewed monthly and corrected monthly rather than at year end and that any changes made to a bank reconciliation be properly documented.

### **Significant Accounting Policies**

Management is responsible for the appropriate selection and application of accounting policies. Our role is to review their appropriateness and application as part of our audit. The accounting policies used by your organization are described in the notes to the financial statements.

There was no new accounting policies adopted or changes to the application of accounting policies of the organization during the year.

### **Significant Unusual Transactions**

There were no unusual transactions identified during the audit.

### **Accounting Estimates**

Management is responsible for the accounting estimates included in financial statements. Estimates and the related judgments and assumptions are based on management's knowledge of the business and past experience about current and future events.

Our responsibility as auditors is to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence to provide reasonable assurance that management's accounting estimates are reasonable within the context of the financial statements as a whole. An audit includes performing appropriate procedures to verify the:

- Calculation of accounting estimates;
- Analyzing of key factors such as underlying management assumptions; and
- Materiality of estimates individually and in the aggregate in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

During the audit we did not identify any significant accounting estimates that we considered to be unreasonable.

### **Disagreements with Management**

We are required to communicate any disagreements with management, whether or not resolved, about matters that are individually or in aggregate significant to your organization's financial statements or auditor's report. Disagreements may arise over:

- Selection or application of accounting principles;
- Assumptions and related judgments for accounting estimates;
- Financial statement disclosures;
- Scope of the audit; or
- Wording of the auditor's report.

We are pleased to inform you that we had no disagreements with management during the course of our audit.

### **Issues Discussed**

The auditor generally discusses, among other matters, the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, and fees, etc. with management during the initial or recurring appointment of the auditor during the normal course of business. There were no major issues discussed during our audit with regards to our retention that were not in the normal course of business.

### **Difficulties Encountered During the Audit**

We encountered no significant difficulties during our audit that should be brought to the attention of the Board.

We shall be pleased to discuss further with you and at your convenience any matters mentioned above.

This communication is prepared solely for the information of the Board and is not intended for any other purpose. We accept no responsibility to a third party who uses this communication.

Yours truly,

OHCA LLP.





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*Celebrating 25 Years*