



2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

INFORMATION KIT





2024

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



AGENDA

August 29, 2024 | Quattro Hotel & Conference Centre, 229 Great Northern Rd, Sault Ste. Marie ON P6B 4Z2

8:00am	Breakfast	
9:00am	Opening Thanksgiving from Elder Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe Morning Song Opening Remarks from GCC Opening Remarks from the Director Opening Remarks from Koganaawsawin Board of Directors	Evelyn Stone, Michipicoten First Nation Duke Peltier, Anishinabek Nation Children's Commissioner Ronnie Teresinski, Prevention Services Coordinator Linda Debassige, Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Stan Cloud, Director of Social Development and Koganaawsawin April Cardinal, Wahnapiatae First Nation
9:30am	Introductions Review and Acceptance of Agenda	Meeting Chair, Stan Cloud, Director of Social Development and Koganaawsawin
9:50am	Koganaawsawin Annual Report	Meeting Chair, Stan Cloud, Director of Social Development and Koganaawsawin
10:50am	Morning Break	
11:00am	Negotiations Updates	Katrina Langevin, Assistant Negotiator and Implementation Manager Tracey O'Donnell, Anishinabek Nation Lead Negotiator
12:00pm	Lunch	
1:00pm	Selection of Board of Director Positions	Meeting Chair, Stan Cloud, Director of Social Development and Koganaawsawin
1:30pm	Input on Family Well-Being Program	Meeting Chair, Stan Cloud, Director of Social Development and Koganaawsawin
2:00pm	Door Prize Draw	
2:10pm	Closing Comments Closing Prayer from Elder Closing Song	Stan Cloud, Director of Social Development and Koganaawsawin Duke Peltier, Anishinabek Nation Children's Commissioner Linda Debassige, Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Evelyn Stone, Michipicoten First Nation Ronnie Teresinski, Prevention Services Coordinator
2:30pm	Adjourn	

KOGANAAWSAWIN ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Over the past year, Koganaawsawin, the central coordinating body of the Anishinabek Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being System, has continued to support all 39 member Anishinabek First Nations in the area of child, youth, and family well-being.

As more Nations exercise First Nations' inherent right to take care of our children, Koganaawsawin has also continued to support the Anishinabek First Nations who have chosen to enact the *Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law* within their communities. To date, 22 Anishinabek First Nations have chosen to enact the Law; acknowledging, respecting, and supporting the primary role of the parents, guardians, families, and communities in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of Anishinaabe children and youth.

Today, Koganaawsawin's path forward continues to be built on the strength of the Anishinaabe knowledge and values that exist within our Nations. As a collective, we remain dedicated to creating an environment that will see our children and families' connection to their Anishinabek communities grow as they embrace their Anishinaabe identities.

The following annual report provides a summary of highlights and accomplishments made by the Koganaawsawin Team over the 2023-24 year.



Our children deserve the best possible start within their family homes, supported by a system that is focused on and rooted in prevention – a system built by us and for us, so we can fully care for our children.

Our communities require a holistic approach, ensuring that our children receive the teachings and support they need from an early age to navigate the challenges of life. Our preventative systems must be culturally relevant to our communities, respecting our jurisdiction and authorities. This will underscore the external systems that we have always upheld our own laws when it comes to keeping our families together.

Before any agency takes action – whether considering the apprehension or placement of a child – there must be a clear, actionable plan in place, one that the family and community can fully support. The goal should always be to reunite the child with their family whenever possible.

Significant changes to reforming the child welfare systems through agreements at both the assembly First Nations and Nation will bring forward the responsibility to repair the systems that have harmed our people. This will require dedication, hard work and, most importantly, patience and time.

We remain committed to changing these systems because we know it's what we must do – our children come first with Koganaawsawin.



KOGANAAWSAWIN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Consisting of two directors per region, the eight directors of the Koganaawsawin Board of Directors manage and administer the affairs of the not-for-profit corporation. In August of 2023, directors from regions One (Bezhiik), Two (Niizh), and Four (Niiwin) were elected at Koganaawsawin's first Annual General Meeting (AGM). Directors from Region Three (Nswi) were elected electronically via email on April 26, 2024.

(Bezhiik) REGION 1	(Niizh) REGION 2	(Nswi) REGION 3	(Niiwin) REGION 4
Chief Helen Angela Paavola (Namaygoosisagagun)	Chief Irene Kells (Zhiibaahaasing)	April Cardinal (Wahnapitae)	PJ Sandy (Beausoleil)
Chief Judy Desmoulin (Long Lake #58)	Elvis Mishibinijima (Sheguiandah)	Myrna Burnside (Moose Deer Point)	Ross Albert (Munsee-Delaware)

ANISHINABEK FIRST NATIONS IMPLEMENTING THE ANISHINABEK NATION CHILD WELL-BEING LAW:

Bezhiik - Lake Superior

- ★ Biigtigong Nishnaabeg
- ★ Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek
- ★ Long Lake #58
- ★ Namaygoosisagagun
- ★ Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg (Pic Mobert)
- ★ Red Rock (Lake Helen)

Niizh - Lake Huron

- ★ Ojibways of Aundeck Omni Kaning
- ★ Sheguiandah
- ★ Shesheganing
- ★ Wiikwemkoong
- ★ Unceded Territory
- ★ Zhiibaahaasing

Nswi - Lake Huron

- ★ Dokis
- ★ Henvey Inlet
- ★ Magnetawan
- ★ Moose Deer Point
- ★ Nipissing
- ★ Wahnapitae
- ★ Wasauksing

Niiwin - Southeast/Southwest

- ★ Alderville
- ★ Beausoleil
- ★ Munsee Delaware Nation
- ★ Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point



**Anishinabek First Nations can choose to enact the Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law at any time. Koganaawsawin continues to meet with, and support, all 39 Anishinabek First Nations in the area of child, youth, and family well-being.

*The Board of Directors for Koganaawsawin is comprised of two (2) representatives from each region.

MEET THE TEAM

Each member of the Social Development Team contributes their knowledge and skills with mutual respect, openness and understanding; collaborating as a cohesive unit that works together to support our member First Nations.



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Duke Peltier

Children's Commissioner



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Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law

In 2015, the Anishinabek Chiefs-in-Assembly approved the *Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law* in-principle and directed the Anishinabek Nation to present the Law to its 39 member First Nations for their individual review and approval.

To date, 22 Anishinabek First Nations have chosen to enact the Law within their communities. The Law acknowledges, respects, and supports the primary role of parents, guardians, families and communities in safeguarding and promoting the well-being of Anishinaabe children and youth.

Each First Nation sets the parameters under which their children, youth and families are to be served that respects the prevention first principle and ensures First Nation Community Standards are adhered to.

The Anishinabek Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being System

As of November 2022, Koganaawsawin has moved forward as a not-for-profit corporation.

Anishinabek First Nations can choose to enact the *Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law* at any time. Koganaawsawin continues to meet with, and support, all 39 Nations in the area of child, youth, and family well-being.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2023

In August of 2023, Koganaawsawin hosted its first Annual General Meeting. During the milestone two-day hybrid meeting, Koganaawsawin's Board of Directors, leadership of the Anishinabek First Nations implementing the *Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law*, and Koganaawsawin staff discussed Koganaawsawin's annual report, negotiations updates, the election of new directors, review of system structures, shared services, and collaboration with the Anishinabek Education System (AES), and First Nations approval process for self-government.

"Over the past several years, the Anishinabek Nation has worked tirelessly with Anishinabek communities to advance our own child well-being law and system – a law and system that will help our children, youth, and families to thrive." -Stan Cloud, Director of Social Development and Koganaawsawin.

Office of the Children's Commissioner

Appointed in 2019, Duke Peltier has continued in his role as the Abinoojiinyan Onjii E-bimiikang (Anishinabek Nation Children's Commissioner), providing high-level oversight over the implementation, compliance and enforcement of the *Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law* and the Anishinabek Nation Children and Youth Bill of Rights.

Over the past year, the Children's Commissioner has continued helping Anishinabek citizens, families and communities with advocacy and support. Accomplished through the promotion and protection of the rights of all Anishinabek children and youth, with a focus on Anishinabek children and youth facing difficulties and/or challenges.



Getzit Mike Esquega gifts Duke Peltier with a floral vest and beaded medallion to honour his role as the Anishinabek Nation Children's Commissioner during Koganaawsawin's first Annual General Meeting held in August of 2023.

National Indigenous Child Well-Being Summit

First Nations across Canada [joined] Koganaawsawin for a National Indigenous Child Well-Being Summit: How We Govern and Maintain Jurisdiction Over Our Children and Youth. The three-day virtual event [took] place on April 24, 25, and 26, 2023.

“First Nations across the country need to create an evolutionary approach to addressing the systemic inequities that impede the rights of our children to flourish in healthy environments,” said former Grand Council Reg Niganobe. “Indigenous-led child welfare will lead us to tangible change, evolving the system, and heightening our representation and involvement in child, youth, and family well-being.”

[The virtual event was] organized by Koganaawsawin to provide an opportunity for individuals, agencies, and First Nations across Canada to participate in the exchange of ideas, experience, and knowledge on the jurisdiction of Indigenous child welfare.

Throughout the Summit, [speakers and participants discussed] the importance of asserting inherent jurisdiction over child welfare, the various processes used in developing Indigenous child well-being laws, how inherent jurisdiction is asserted, Indigenous self-government structures, coordination agreements, federal funding, and family advocacy.



National Indigenous Strategy

First Nations across Canada joined Koganaawsawin for a National Indigenous Strategy: Brining Our Children Home. The two-day in-person event took place on July 22-23, 2024, in Toronto, Ontario.

The Strategy was attended by lawyers, negotiators, leadership, and child well-being technicians from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

Throughout the two-day event, attendees discussed their child well-being work, various paths to jurisdiction, child well-being law development, approaches to fiscal negotiations, strategy for programs and services, and an overall approach to child well-being development.

Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being Negotiations

The Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Negotiations Team (Negotiations Team) continues to negotiate a Tripartite Agreement on Anishinabek Child, Youth, And Family Well-Being (Tripartite Agreement), and supporting bilateral fiscal agreements with the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada.

In December of 2023, the Negotiations Team met its goal of negotiating a first complete draft of the Tripartite Agreement. The negotiations are supported by the Main Table and four sub-tables, including: the Legal Counsel Table, the Implementation and Operations Committee, the Collaboration Agreement Table, and the Fiscal Negotiations Tables. The two bilateral fiscal tables operate independently, although all tables collaborate to ensure the progress of negotiations move forward in a timely and cohesive manner.

Main Table Negotiations

Representatives at this Table include the full negotiation teams from the Anishinabek Nation, Ontario, and Canada. This Table meets for two or three consecutive days per month.

This Table works on the Tripartite Agreement. Topics reviewed throughout 2023 and 2024 include: the fiscal chapter, relationship of laws, standards, adoption, information and privacy, enforcement and adjudication, approval of the agreement, amendments, negotiation timelines, and other relevant topics.

Anishinabek Nation – Canada Fiscal Negotiations Table Representatives at this Table include the fiscal negotiators and their supports from the Anishinabek Nation and Canada. This Table meets bi-monthly or monthly. This Table is drafting a Fiscal Agreement to support the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement. It sets out the funding obligations of Canada and the reporting obligations of the signatory Anishinabek First Nations.	Anishinabek Nation – Ontario Fiscal Negotiations Table Representatives at this Table include the fiscal negotiators and their supports from the Anishinabek Nation and Ontario. This Table meets bi-monthly or monthly. This Table is drafting a Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) to support the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement. It sets out the funding obligations of Ontario and the reporting obligations of the signatory Anishinabek First Nations.	Tripartite Fiscal Negotiations Table This is an ad-hoc negotiations table and meets as necessary. Representatives include fiscal negotiators and their supports from the Anishinabek Nation, Ontario, and Canada. This Table meets to discuss the fiscal chapter in the Tripartite Agreement, and the funding investments from Ontario and Canada.
Legal Counsel Table Representatives at this Table include one or two legal counsel from the Anishinabek Nation, Ontario, and Canada. The Main Table delegates topics to this Table that require legal analysis. This Table then reports back to the Main Table with their proposals on a regular basis. Current topics for discussion include: relationship of laws, definition of Anishinaabe decision and appeal, review of Anishinaabe decisions, purpose of the Agreement, liability, delegation, enforcement and adjudication, legal status and capacity of the Anishinabek Nation and Koganaawsawin, and information sharing and confidentiality.	Implementation and Operations Committee This Committee includes one or two implementation representatives from the Anishinabek Nation, Ontario, and Canada. This Committee is responsible for drafting the Implementation Chapter of the Tripartite Agreement, the Terms of Reference for the Implementation and Operations Committee, and the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan sets out the activities required for a smooth implementation of the Tripartite Agreement. This table reports to the Main Table with their proposals on a regular basis.	Collaboration Agreement Table Representatives at this Table include one or two negotiators from Anishinabek Nation, Ontario, and Canada. Canada is an observer at this Table. This Table was created for the Anishinabek Nation and Ontario to negotiate an agreement that sets out how the Anishinabek Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being System and the provincial child welfare system will operate together to deliver programs and services, and other operational concerns. The Anishinaabemowin name now given to this Agreement is Ge'ek maamwi enkijig wii-naadmaagewaa (those who work together to help).

Communications

In 2023, we transitioned to a modern cloud web hosting service - significantly improving the speed and reliability of Koganaawsawin's web servers, providing enhanced security, and streamlined operations, and enabling us to automate routine tasks and maintain focus on software development.

Our website, koganaawsawin.ca, launched in December of 2023 and has received over 3,000 visits within its first year. In this time, the website has been consistently updated with current information on Koganaawsawin, its services, the Anishinabek Nation Circle Process, the *Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law*, staff members, funding templates and forms, negotiations in the area of child, youth, and family well-being, career opportunities, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, and news.

We are now actively developing the First Nation (Band) Representative Website Portal. The Portal will support the critical work of First Nation (Band) Representatives by centralizing important information and tools and will be designed with a secure and confidential platform to access essential documents, best practices, resources, training and funding opportunities, events, and more. The projected launch date of the Portal is within the 2024 calendar year.

First Nation (Band) Representative Support

On October 17-19, 2023, Koganaawsawin hosted a successful in-person provincial First Nation Representative Conference in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Topics on the agenda included First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) funding, the Mooshum and Trout Class Action Settlement, the role of the Office of the Children's Lawyer

in child protection, litigation strategies and court procedures, Keira's Law, Devon's Principle, Jordan's Principle, the Anishinabek Nation Circle Process, and self-care for frontline workers.

"Prevention is really the application of our own teachings. The best interest of the child needs to be at the forefront. It is important for all of us to collectively put our heads together, along with our [child] well-being agencies, to create the best practices on how we can support our [member] First Nations." - Anishinabek Nation Children's Commissioner Duke Peltier.

In the 2024 calendar year, print and electronic copies of the Anishinabek Nation Child Welfare First Nation Representative Resource Manual will be available. The Manual will be updated annually to reflect any changes to legislation and serve as a training resource tool.

Throughout the year, the Band Representative (BR) Liaison has continued working with First Nation Representatives (FNR or FNRs) to:

- share contact information for collaboration and other important information, e.g. policy changes, training opportunities;
- coordinate Koganaawsawin's FNR Group;
- coordinate in-person and/or virtual engagements with FNRs, leadership, finance and health/social staff on FNCFS funding streams;
- assist with FNCFS funding applications, including advocating on behalf of the First Nation to assist with appeal decisions issued from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC);
- plan upcoming FNR events.

From November of 2023 to March 2024, the BR Liaison helped raise awareness amongst FNRs regarding an opportunity to engage with the Office of the Chief Coroner (OCC) and Anishinabek Nation Legal Department to bring forward recommendations to reframe the OCC's model and processed of their child and youth death review. In addition to developing a funding source with tips and techniques to assist with First Nation funerals and burials.

The BR Liaison also collaborated with the Anishinabek Educational Institute (AEI) to review the Child Welfare Advocate Program's curriculum and delivery. Moving forward, there will be Koganaawsawin representation on the AEI's Program Advisory Council (PAC).

Child and Family Services

Over the past year, the Child and Family Services Team has participated in several activities, meetings, and events, including:

- Prevention-Focused Customary Care (PFCC) Program information sessions;
- Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Working Group meetings;
- *Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law* information sessions;
- Anishinabek Nation's Family Violence Prevention Conference;
- presentations on community standards;
- presentations on child welfare and court practices;
- Nijjaansinaanik Child and Family Services' Elders Conference;
- providing support to the Anishinabek Nation Circle Process;
- Koganaawsawin's Provincial First Nation Representative Conference;
- Anishinabek Nation's Fall Assembly;
- meeting on Post-Majority Support Services (PMSS) with Chiefs of Ontario (COO);
- First Nations Technical Table meetings with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) on youth justice, data governance, prevention-focused regulations, youth justice task force engagement, and complex specials needs; and
- Family and Community Wellness Conference with Chiefs of Ontario; and
- Anishinabek Nation's Family Well-Being Conference.

The Child and Family Services Team also continue to provide support to the Office of the Children's Commissioner, and attend meetings with the MCCSS to discuss topics, including:

- Technical Table – Youth Justice Task Force;
- Child Development and Specialized Services;
- Child Welfare Outcomes and Data for Equity;
- Technical Table – Kinship Service; and
- Technical Table – Customary Care and Record Checks.

Through the 2021 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) order 41, First Nations can now access funding for the purchase, construction or renovation of capital assets that are needed to:

- support the delivery of Child and Family Services to First Nations children;
- provide safe, accessible, confidential, cultural and age-appropriate spaces that are needed to support the delivery of Jordan's Principle services; and/or
- provide First Nation (Band) Representative Services.

Funding applications to buy, build or renovate capital assets or carry out a needs assessment for a feasibility study can be made by:

- First Nation (Band) Representative Services;
- Prevention Programs;
- Indigenous Child Welfare Agencies; and/or
- Jordan's Principle Service Providers.

Child, youth and family services have the ability to combine resources to purchase, construct or renovate multi-service capital assets.

The "Capital Funding Request – First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle" can be found online at: www.sac-isc.gc.ca

The Child and Family Services Coordinators will continue to provide ongoing support and services to Anishinabek First Nations to amend and enhance community standards as needed by each, individual, Anishinabek First Nation. In addition to liaising with Anishinabek First Nations, and federal and provincial governments responsible for the delivery and/or funding of Child and Family Services.

Prevention Services

The 2023 year marked significant milestones and challenges for Prevention Services.

The Prevention-Focused Customary Care (PFCC) Program saw a surge in community involvement, resulting in more children remaining within their family and community networks. Despite facing financial constraints, the Anishinabek Nation remains committed to seeking alternative funding sources and optimizing existing resources to ensure the continuity and growth of the PFCC Program.

In response to the evolving needs of Anishinabek First Nations, a Community Standards Workbook has been developed. The comprehensive resource was designed to assist communities in formulating and implementing their community standards in alignment with the *Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Law*. The Workbook aims to facilitate dialogue, collaboration, and consensus-building amongst community members while fostering a collective commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children and promoting culturally-appropriate care practices.

Repatriation

During the 2023 year, Repatriation staff participated in several activities, meetings, and events, including:

- Koganaawsawin's National Indigenous Child Well-Being Summit: How We Govern and Maintain Jurisdiction Over Our Children and Youth;
- Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Working Group meetings;
- Koganaawsawin's Provincial First Nation Representative Conference;
- Anishinabek Nation's Health Conference;
- Koganaawsawin's Legal Forum for First Nation (Band) Representatives;
- presentations on the Repatriation Program;
- community engagements on the Repatriation Program;
- Anishinabek Nation's Veteran's Golf Tournament;
- Nogdawindamin Family & Community Services' golf tournament; and
- community hunt with Namaygoosisagagun First Nation.

Throughout 2023-24, work continued on the establishment of a new Repatriation Program.

Through the Repatriation Program, the Anishinabek Nation supports and promotes the development of connection(s) for Anishinabek children and youth that have been separated from their family and community as a result of child welfare involvement or adoption.

The Program includes:

- advocacy and support;
- referral services;
- program development and support;
- assistance with planning and reunification; and
- connection to culture.

The Repatriation Coordinator continues to develop the Repatriation Working Group with representation from all four Anishinabek regions and build relationships with various services providers that are essential to the successful operation of the Program.

The Repatriation Coordinator has also attended community engagements, including the Pic River and Mississauga Pow Wows held in July of 2024. In August of 2024, Repatriation will also have staff present at community engagements in Chippewas of the Thames, and Chippewas of Rama First Nation. In September of 2024, community engagements are expected to be held at the Toronto Metropolitan University, and Curve Lake First Nation (pending event(s) confirmation).

COLLABORATIONS

Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Working Group

Comprised of representatives from the 39 member First Nations of the Anishinabek Nation, and six (6) affiliated Indigenous child well-being agencies; the Working Group continued to hold meetings to discuss child well-being initiatives over the past year.

Alderville First Nation | February 2-8, 2024



From left to right, former Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Reg Niganobe, Elder and Anishinabek Nation Kwe-Wuk Advisory Council Member Nora Sawyer, Alderville Chief Taynar Simpson, and Director of Social Development and Koganaawsawin Stan Cloud.

During a two-day hybrid meeting, hosted by Alderville First Nation on February 7-8, 2024, the Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Working Group discussed collaborations with Kinoomaadiwin Education Body (KEB), a proposed Navigator position for First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) and Jordan's Principle, updates on community standards, updates on negotiations, Koganaawsawin branding, updates on the Anishinabek Nation Circle Process, review of Koganaawsawin's draft organizational chart, repatriation services engagement, an overview of Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) FNCFS funding, and review of the Anishinabek Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being Action Plan Report.

"Child, youth, and family well-being is of the utmost importance to us. Without this we cannot create healthy communities," says Grand Council Chief Reg Niganobe. "We [will] build our way to a healthier, equitable future where our younger generations can thrive."

"It's a hard time for our communities. It's a hard time for our families," expresses Elder and Kwe-Wuk Advisory Council Member Nora Sawyer. "The work will never stop. We have to keep working in this area. When our thoughts are with our children and our families that keeps it all worthwhile."

"We're all here because we want to the best for our children," states Alderville Chief Taynar Simpson. "The children are our future. They represent the best of us, and we need to make sure that we give them the best shots moving forward. We know in the past things haven't always been good for our People. It's the [members of this Working Group] that are interested and invested in making changes that are going to lead to the positive future that we always hoped that we would get to."

Wasauksing First Nation | May 15-16, 2024



From left to right, Anishinabek Nation Children's Commissioner Duke Peltier, and participants of the Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Working Group meet at the Gathering Place in Wasauksing First Nation.

During a two-day hybrid meeting, hosted by Wasauksing First Nation on May 15-16, 2024, the Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being Working Group discussed First Nation engagement sessions, prevention-focused customary care, and updates on: negotiations, community approval processes, implementation, the Kinadinwendaagnak Program, the Anishinabek Nation Circle Process, the Anishinabek Child, Youth, and Family Well-Being Action Plan, and the proposed final settlement agreement for the First Nations Child and Family Services Program Reform.

"It is timely that we continue to establish our own jurisdiction in relation to our children. I speak from a number of situations that have come across the [Office of the Children's Commissioner] that are requiring the full attention of the Anishinabek Nation, as well as all of the leadership," states Children's Commissioner Duke Peltier. "The opportunity is here with the [Anishinabek Nation Child Well-Being] Working Group to provide guidance and support in creating the foundation for all of our communities to establish what the rules are for our children on a go-forward basis."

"We have our own systems. We used to monitor, we used to keep our children home, we used to look after the situations that happened in our communities," Kwe-Wuk Advisory Council Member Nora Sawyer remembers and shares teachings from former Head Getzit Gordon-baa. "We have the roots, foundations, Clan systems, and cultural ceremonies. We have our ways, we just have to bring it back - that connection to who we are. We are getting there."

Family Well-Being Program

In 2023-24, the Family Well-Being (FWB) Program continued to support and strengthen Indigenous families through culturally grounded services that build resilience, healing, and community well-being.

The FWB Development Worker provided training opportunities and established a FWB Advisory Group. The FWB Coordinator coordinated community visits to assist, train and support the reporting needs of FWB Programs within member Anishinabek First Nations.

In May of 2024, the Team conducted tours across several locations, gaining insight into the unique infrastructures and challenges faced by each community. This hands-on approach allowed the Team to tailor Program supports to the specific needs of each community.

Established in 2024, the FWB Advisory Group includes representation of community FWB staff from each region of the Anishinabek Nation. Ensuring community voices are heard in the development of current and future family-focused initiatives.

On June 25-26, 2024, the FWB Program organized and hosted a two-day hybrid Family Well-Being Conference in Chippewas of Rama First Nation. The Conference – Cultivating Resilience in Families and Strengthening Community Safety – focused on family and community safety across the Anishinabek Nation. Over the course of the two-day Conference, participants were introduced to strawberry teachings, WrapAround Training with Wrap Canada, strengths, and safety needs for neurodivergence, self-care activities, community safety and policing including a newly launched drug initiative, and human trafficking.

Weshkiniijig (Youth Program)

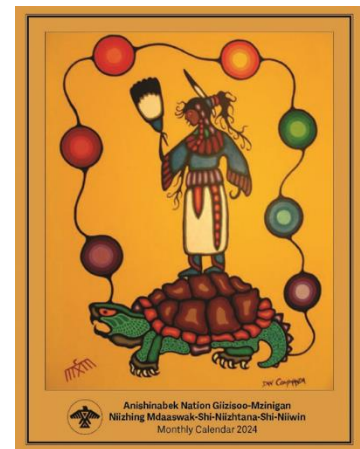
This past year, Weshkiniijig hosted the following for Anishinabek youth:

- Thirteen Moons and Solstices teaching;
- Traditional Anishinaabe Teachings on blueberry medicine;
- Traditional Anishinaabe Teachings on naming ceremonies;
- Traditional Anishinaabe Roles teaching;
- Healing through Painting Workshop;
- Paint Night workshop; and
- Bracelet Making Workshops for emotional well-being.



Weshkiniijig also hosted two Youth Culture Camps for Anishinabek youth aged 15-29 in July of 2023 and March of 2024. Youth left the Camps carrying with them new knowledge, skills, and connection. The Camps were designed to be an empowering, enriching, and exciting camp experience that will continue to resonate with all of the participants who came together, sharing their common desire to connect with other Indigenous youth and the Anishinaabe culture.

In July of 2023, participants engaged in various activities that included rattle making, a medicine walk, medicine making, canoeing, kayaking, drumming, storytelling,



Contact your community's Family Well-Being Program to get a free copy of the new Anishinabek Nation Giizisoo-Mzinigan monthly calendar.

and survival skills. Traditional fire and striker teachings were also provided by Perry and Laurie McLeod-Shabogesic. The three-day retreat, hosted by Weshkiniijig and Koganaawsawin, was held at Spirit Point Wilderness Academy in South River, Ontario.



In March of 2024, participants engaged in various activities that included teachings with Elder Virginia Goulais, paint night with Nikki-Jo Mattinas, survival skill training with Kevin Gee, hand drum and stick making with Perry McLeod-Shabogesic, and crafting with Connor Lafortune. The three-day retreat was also held at Sprit Point Wilderness Academy in South River, Ontario.

In November of 2020, the Youth Program created a mail-out initiative to bring smiles to the faces of Anishinabek youth 29 years and under impacted by school closures, remote learning, and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This past year, staff successfully completed distribution of the “Weshkiniijig Wellness Boxes”. The Boxes reached thousands of young people, families, schools, and remote communities.

Anishinabek Nation Circle Process

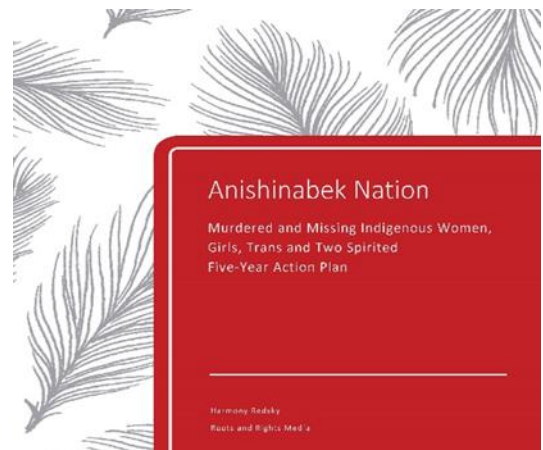
As a culturally-based, child-centered, confidential circle, providing Anishinabek First Nation families with the support needed to create a plan that addresses child and youth well-being issues; the Circle Process can be accessed at any step of the care process.

Following successful completion of the year-end 2023 sessions, over 100 individuals have received training. Applicants to become Elders are Indigenous with lived experience. Applicants to become Facilitators are Indigenous and possess relevant experience, e.g. social services, mediation. Training is delivered in two one-week periods (totalling 60 hours across 10 sessions).

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG2S+)

The MMIWG Policy Analyst and Kwe-Wuk Advisory Council have continued their work to complete a strategic action plan for the Anishinabek Nation, supporting full implementation of Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Including the 231 Calls to Justice.

Together, the MMIWG Policy Analyst and Kwe-Wuk Advisory Council have developed the Anishinabek Nation’s Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls, Trans and Two-Spirited Five-Year Action Plan.



The Plan will go forward to the Chiefs-in-Assembly to be adopted and implemented across the Anishinabek Nation, ensuring the overall health, safety and ongoing care of Anishinabek women, girls, unborn, two-spirited, their families and those left behind.

On April 9-10, 2024, the Social Development Department organized and hosted its first Family Violence Prevention Conference in North Bay, Ontario. Over the course of the two-day Conference, participants identified priorities for family violence prevention, were introduced to star teachings – constellations and clans-bagone-giizhig (the hole in the sky) led by Joseph Sutherland (Mishkiki), and held in-depth

discussions during a comprehensive exercise to answer key questions. The Conference also featured traditional teachings by Elder Couchie and Everlyn McLeod, as well as a workshop led by Jared BigCanoe (Mishkiki) entitled, Madoodiswan: Teachings About Sweat Lodge Building and Ceremony.



In 2023, Canada continued with their commitment to renew and provide ongoing support for Family Information Liaison Units (FiLUs). FiLUs work with families of MMIWG2S+ to overcome barriers and ensure they have all the available information they are seeking from various justice agencies and other sectors, as well as access to all other available supports they may require.

To contact the Family Information Liaison Unit (FiLU), call toll-free: 1-844-888-8610 or email ontariofilu@ontario.ca

Upcoming Projects

Koganaawsawin

- The Koganaawsawin Team is currently developing a comprehensive Information Kit that will set out the background of Koganaawsawin, its role, structure, path to becoming a not-for-profit corporation, programs, and frequently asked questions.

Social Development

- The Family Well-Being Program has established an Advisory Group comprised of two representatives from each region of the Anishinabek Nation. The Group is scheduled to begin meeting in September of 2024.

OUR VISION

A sovereign Anishinabek Nation with healthy children, youth and families. Connected to culture by exercising our inherent rights, bestowed upon us by the Creator.



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