

Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoon



**PAINTING A BRIGHTER
FUTURE**

Annual Report 2017-2018



**"BIG CHANGES IN THE
COMMUNITY START FROM
THE SMALL HANDS OF
CHILDREN AND YOUTH."**

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ABOUT US

Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoon (SAO) is a community-based organization helping Aboriginal children and youth paint a brighter future.

We work to improve, encourage and facilitate the scholastic and cultural education of children and youth, so they can contribute to a healthy community.

Our programs connect children and youth, from the ages of 2 to 6 years and 7 to 18 years, to the community and their culture. We do this in a fun, safe environment, empowering them with positive role models and inspiration.

Big changes in the community start from the small hands of children and youth.

Healthy children and families result in healthy communities.

VISION

Children are honoured as gifts from Creator. We are here to help guide their young spirits. Our responsibility is to see and nurture a strong Anishnabek identity in children, youth, with families, community members and partners.

MISSION

Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoon will exist to support children, youth and caregivers on their life journey by providing a healthy environment and experiences that reflects the cultural values of the extended family and community. In all of our programming, we will see and nurture the spirit/fire in every child, youth and family member through the presence of strong, caring people who share and carry on the love, skills, language and knowledge.

"ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH PAINT A BRIGHTER FUTURE."

CHII-MEEGWETCH!

To our Funders & Partners:

- Ministry of Education (Funder)
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS)(Funder)
- Royal Bank of Canada (Funder)
- Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (CSRP) (Funder)
- United Way (Funder)
- Public School Board
- Catholic School Board
- Anishnawbe Mushkiki (Heal Program)
- Thunder Bay Confederation College
- Lakehead University
- Dilico Anishinabek Family Care
- Thunder Bay Police
- City of Thunder Bay Aboriginal liaison
- Victoriaville Mall
- Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre
- Thunder Bay Regional Health Science Center
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Frontier College
- Maamaawisiwin Education & Research Innovation
- Firedog Communications
- Many other Thunder Bay businesses for field trips, supplies, and activities.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"ALTHOUGH THIS WAS A YEAR OF TRANSITION, SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES THERE WAS ALSO MUCH GROWTH."

Firstly, I would like to take this time to acknowledge the Board of Directors who have dedicated and volunteered many hours of their time throughout this past year. The staff of Aboriginal Head Start and Biwaase'aa have through their aspirations ensured the well-being of children and their families. It is through each of these people's dedication, motivation and inspiration that Aboriginal Head Start and Biwaase'aa programs have been able to maintain and expand their reach this past year. We also need to say Chif-meegwech to our funders, as without them, we would not have the opportunity to work with the children and students and see them grow, dream and achieve their goals.

I'd also like to acknowledge our Auditor from MNP LLP, Rob Mozzon and our Corporate Lawyer from Erikson and Partners, Ted Scollie. Their expertise has continued to be utilized and we look forward to continuing our relationship with them, as we have during the past number of years.

This past year has been one of transition, with a change in the leadership, the Executive Director, President of the Board of Directors and then shortly thereafter, the Biwaase'aa Program Manager. Throughout the year, new Directors joined the Board while others moved on to other ventures. We wish them well. Staffing for the AHS program also had a few changes in February/March 2018 with a new RECE and Family Support Worker beginning employment.

The new calendar year brought about the loss of one of beloved Elders Freda MacDonald on January 1, 2018. Shortly thereafter Delaney Gustafson, a Biwaase'aa YOW joined Freda in the Spirit World. Elders Ernie Kwandibens, Edna Wiigwaas and Gerry Martin guided us with their Wisdom and Love throughout our Sharing Circles, Sweat Lodges and discussion. With the advice of our Elders we respectfully closed the Biwaase'aa Program for the balance of that week for the traditional 4 days of mourning in respect of Delaney.

Last summer the garden started with Gerry Martin providing traditional gardening teachings to the families and their children. In mid-June the United Way's GenNext volunteer day occurred with 8 volunteers assisting with weeding and planting the garden. Two volunteers continued the weeding of the garden during the summer and early fall of the year so that the children could harvest the fresh produce and medicines when they came to school in the fall.

Last spring, we were approached by Oshki Pimache-o-win Education and Training Institute to work together on the Indigenous Early Childhood Educator's Leadership Professional Development Program (IECELPDP). The Maamaawisiwin Education Research Centre was the third party invited to establish evaluation mechanisms consistent with Indigenous learning and implementation. An advisory committee consisting of the 3 partner organizations and an Elder was established to develop a program of professional development that enhances the IECE's community development and research capacities that introduced new innovative ideas from educational leaders to the ECE's. This is a first of its kind model and is set up as an E-learning program with an in-person hands-on session for two – one week periods of time over two years. The first year in-person training was completed the last week of February 2018. The second-year funding application for continuation of the program has been submitted, with the next training to occur between AHS workers and IECELPDP students working together for five days at AHS in the fall of 2018.

Although this was a year of transition, successes and challenges there was also much growth as it was a busy and highly productive year. With all the achievements that the Corporation accomplished, it not only directly enhances the children, youth, and their families but the community as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,



Marilyn Junnila
Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Boozhoo,

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I would like to welcome everyone to the 21st Annual General Meeting. I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional territory of the Anishinabek Nation of the Robinson Treaty, our local First Nation, Fort William First Nation. I am a member of Wiikwemikong Unceded Territory and belong to the Bear Clan. I am very humbled and honoured to serve as President of the Shkoday Abinojiwiak Obimiwedoon (SAO) Board of Directors this past year. I have been involved with the organization over the past 12 years as a staff, parent and now as a board member.

SAO reflects the common experience of Anishinabek people. This year as an organization we encountered struggle, conflict and loss. However, through it all, like our ancestors, our staff, management and the board have shown incredible resilience. We continued to move forward and deliver our programs; Aboriginal Head Start, Biwaase'aa and pilot a program at Sir Winston Churchill high school.

Late this year we contracted the services of Catalyst Research and Communication to develop our Strategic Directions:

Direction 1: SAO will reaffirm the cultural foundation of our organization and come together around a renewed vision and mandate.

Direction 2: Everyone in the organization has a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

Direction 3: Culture and language is the foundation to the work at SAO.

Direction 4: Planned stabilization and growth for all programs under SAO.

Direction 5: Funding strategy to support the planned growth and sustainability of SAO.

Another highlight this past year was when the board offered tobacco to Elder Ernie Kwandibens, who accepted and put up a sweat lodge for staff and the community. Under the guidance of our Elders, we will continue to serve the community and support our children, youth and families to embrace culture and identity.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow board members, SAO leadership and all our staff and volunteers for their continued dedication and commitment to the organization.

Paul Francis Jr.
President of the Board



OUR JOURNEY

1997

The land on John Street Rd was transferred to Shkoday Abinojiwak Obimiwedoon Inc in January.

Shkoday Abinojiwak Obimiwedoon (SAO) started with its sole program Aboriginal Head Start. Childcare, school programming, youth programming and program for parents had been continually added to adjust to the needs of the community.

2004

Biwaase'aa was introduced as the Urban Aboriginal Strategy Neighbourhood Capacity Building Project.

2005

After-school programs start at four local elementary schools.

2010

Shkoday is the first Aboriginal organization to receive funding from the City of Thunder Bay & United Way.

2012-2013

In 2012-13 Shkoday undertook a Comprehensive Program Evaluation (CPE) to demonstrate impacts on student success via student participation.

2014

Shkoday announced the release of the research report: A Holistic Study of the Biwaase'aa Program on Participating Students in Thunder Bay. It was recommended that increased funding is needed from federal, province, municipal, district, school boards and charitable sources to allow for expansion into senior elementary and high schools.

2016

Biwaase'aa expands to include senior high school.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

2018

Plans have begun to hold a Strategic Planning Session which will provide guidance and strategic direction to the organization for the next five years.

"CULTURE AND TRADITIONS WILL REMAIN THE HEART OF OUR WORK AS WE WORK TO STRENGTHEN CULTURAL IDENTITY IN EVERY PROGRAM."



THUNDER BAY ABORIGINAL HEAD START REPORT

Thunder Bay Aboriginal Head Start programming is designed for children aged 2 to 6 years of age. They are enrolled in an alternating half or full day program, that features structured play activities and experiences allowing for growth in a learning and nurturing environment.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To promote the health, education, nutrition, holistic development and well-being of Aboriginal children two to six years of age;
- To provide a community based program that is built on the identified needs and concerns of Aboriginal children and their families;
- To empower and encourage Aboriginal parents/caregivers as primary teachers to provide traditional and cultural parenting to Aboriginal children;
- To support the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical growth of each Aboriginal child in a cultural and academic learning environment;
- To encourage Aboriginal parent/caregiver involvement and the provision of parental support in all aspects of our program.

Aboriginal Head Start's licensing capacity still remains at sixty-two (62) allowing for a potential one hundred and twenty-four (124) children attending alternate day programming throughout our four classrooms. One classroom is funded by the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board. The other three classrooms and the entire Aboriginal Head Start program is fully funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

All classroom follow the PHAC AHS Program Principles: 1. Education; 2. Health; 3. Nutrition; 4. Social Support, 5. Parental/Caregiver involvement and 5) Culture and Language, and the Ministry of Education's supporting document "How Does Learning Happen, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014) four foundations: 1. Belonging; 2. Engagement 3. Expression and 4. Well-being.

"CHILDREN LEAVE THE PROGRAM WITH SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS, ARE EXCITED ABOUT LEARNING AND ARE READY TO SUCCEED."



PROGRAM OPERATION CAPACITY



100

Children had some experience with the Head Start Toddler, Preschool, and Kindergarten Program

The DSSAB classroom had

4

returning children from the 2016/17 program year

8

entered the program throughout the year

67

completed their access to subsidy throughout the year

COMMUNICATIONS

As of May 31, 2018

3,120

Communication Notes sent home

660

Monthly Planning Calendars and 660 Newsletters

432

Event Invitations

To promote communication a Facebook page has been set up for Family/Caregivers of the children who attend the program.

BIWAASE'AA REPORT

The name Biwaase'aa

'speaks to that early part of the day when the sun is coming up and there is a feeling of hope in people's hearts'.

Through ceremony Biwaase'aa was given its name by Elder Agnes Hardy sabun (the late).

Established in 2004, Biwaase'aa is a holistic program designed to increase the life of Aboriginal children, youth and their families through strategies of academic improvements, emotional development, cultural awareness and nutritional support. Inclusive to all students in Thunder Bay, both In-School and After-School programming is delivered by traditionally knowledgeable Youth Outreach Workers. Biwaase'aa – is helping to build an extended family within the community of Thunder Bay.

Biwaase'aa delivers three main programs: In-School, After-School and the Food Security programs. These programs run in the following schools: McKellar Park School, Sherbrook School, Ogden Community School, St. Ann School, St. James School, Vance Chapman School, Our Lady of Charity, and Churchill High School.



IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Biwaase'aa partners with seven schools and one high school in Thunder Bay to provide a safe place for students to increase their academic and life skills inclusive of cultural teachings and cultural sensitivities. Indigenous Youth Outreach Workers and their Assistants build and establish trust with the students which in turn increases student success and achievements through Mentoring/Role Modeling, Literacy and Numeracy support, cultural outreach services, PowWows and feasts, cultural teachings and presentations, and parental/caregiver engagements.

The **Little Eagles Mentorship Program** is a part of the In-School programming, which is a seven week program designed using the 7 Grandfather Teachings: Respect, Love, Wisdom, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. Through traditional teachings, stories, sharing circles and interactions with community leaders and Elders, youth learn about the importance of cultural identity, values, beliefs and tradition. **Students experience improved self-esteem and confidence; learn life and living skills that help deal with racism, bullying and peer pressure all the while improving their academic performance.**

All sites held three Little Eagle sessions throughout the year having a minimum of two and a maximum of eight students in attendance at each session. Some students attended all three sessions, while some students only attended one.

The In-School Mentorship Program had an attendance of

**849
STUDENTS**

Topics included:

- 7 grandfather teachings
- Sharing circles
- Skirt and shirt & teachings
- Drum making & teachings
- Grandfather drum frame & teachings
- Beading lanyards
- Medicine wheel making and teachings
- Quilt star blanket & teachings
- Traditional food making & teachings
- Sacred bundle & teachings
- Rattle making & teachings
- Pow wow arbor and protocols
- Regalia making & teachings
- Feasting ceremonies & teachings
- Speakers & Presentations



on average are assisted each month with their literacy skills at the eight schools sites which translates to approximately 18 students per school.

The In-school Cultural Outreach services were provided through

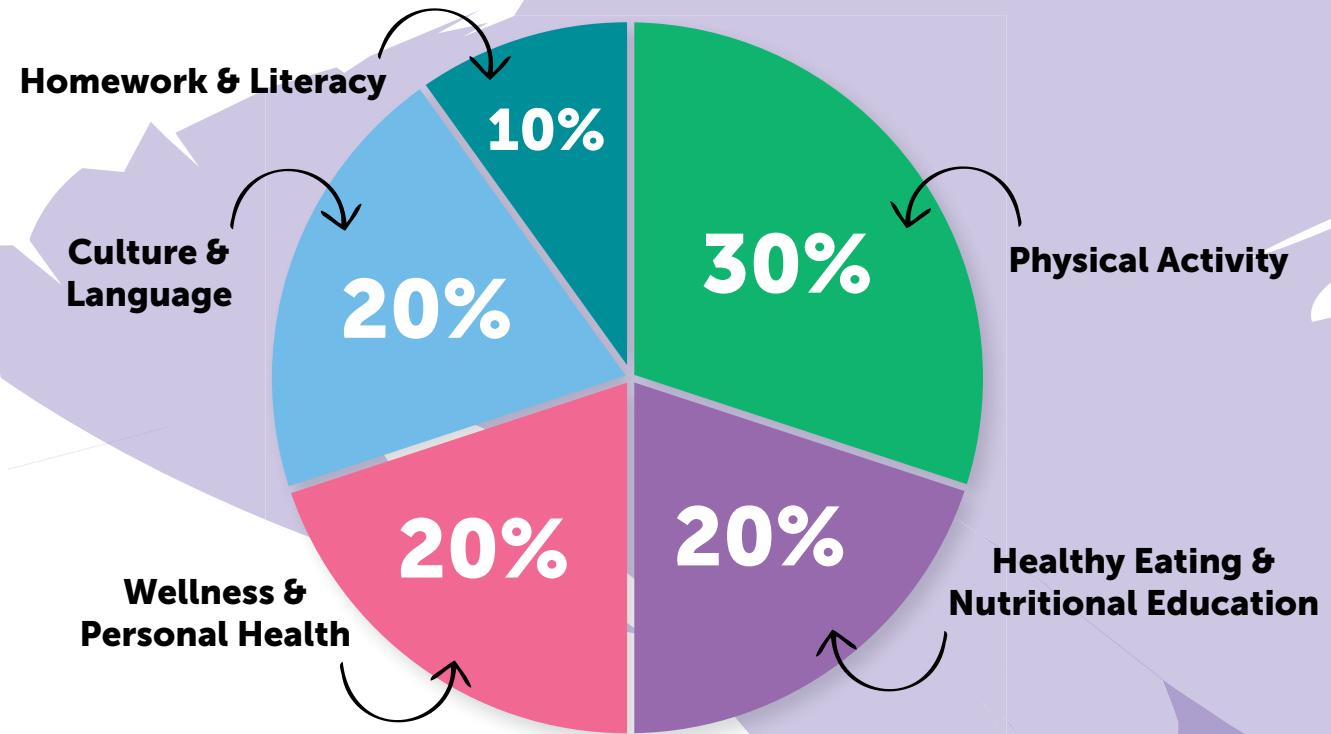
360 SESSIONS **12,424 STUDENT/FAMILIES/CAREGIVERS.**

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The After-School Program is held for two hours following the school day, and features activities immersed in Aboriginal culture and traditions. The objectives of the programming is to provide opportunities to the youth that may not otherwise have access to these activities, that strengthen their physical, cultural, mental, and emotional well-being through:

- Physical - developing healthier and more active youth
- Cultural - fostering identity and pride in culture
- Mental – increasing school attachment and engagement
- Emotional – improving leadership, life skills, and cultivating friendships

THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM CURRICULUM:



All YOW/ASA sites worked together to develop a monthly calendar with topics related to: recreational activities, cultural teachings, health and wellness, and field trips or Fun Fridays.

Over a 10-month period the average school attendance in the Afterschool Program was

1632
STUDENTS

AVERAGING
→

204
STUDENTS PER SCHOOL

188
STUDENTS & CAREGIVERS

on average, attend each special event hosted by the Biwaase'aa Program.

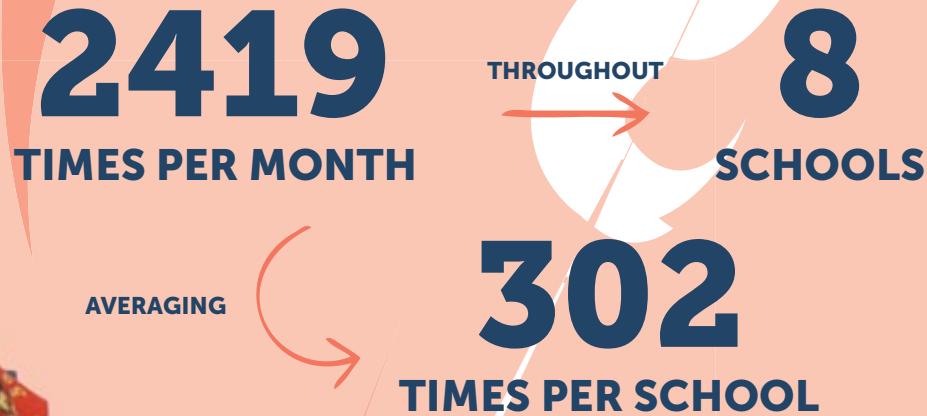


FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

The provision of healthy food supplement helps to meet the student's nutritional need, which in turn will improve their ability to learn, engage in physical activity and develop positive eating habits that will aid their growth and development to adulthood.

Traditional teachings related to food and hunting, gathering, and harvesting are also shared with youth and their families at special cultural events.

On average the Biwaase'aa Program provided food:



WE REMEMBER

Delaney Gustafson

Shawhino Binayshee (Southern Bird)

Delaney Gustafson was an accomplished, beautiful and extremely talented young person who brought light and laughter to all who met her. Delaney was very proud of her culture; she showed that through her love of dance. She was a gorgeous dancer, and her footwork was effortless – true gracefulness. Her style of dance took her all over Turtle Island, and as far as the Great Wall of China.



Delaney was not only beautiful on the outside, but on the inside as well. She had an enormous heart, and always put others before herself. She was the kind of person who would never turn her back on a person, who would go beyond what was asked of her, and always made you feel happy with her bubbly personality.

Delaney also brought beauty into the world through her beading, sewing, and singing. Her beadwork can be seen and recognized all over Turtle Island. She would use a variety of colors and designs inspired by Sioux and Ojibwa artwork. She incorporated those designs into her beautiful butterfly regalia. Delaney really embodied the beauty of the butterfly with her work. She loved to listen and sing round dance songs; by her favorite drum group Northern Cree.

To know this beautiful soul was truly a honor. Delaney shared her love for her culture, her experiences and knowledge in the work she did with the students of the Biwaase'aa program at Sherbrook School. Those students and the staff and Board of Directors of Shkoday Abinojiwak Obimiwedoon will truly miss Delaney.

Freda McDonald

Freda McDonald was a well-respected Elder in Thunder Bay and across the country serving on several committees and involved in various community groups. As an expert in her culture, she touched the lives of many children and families at Shkoday Abinojiwak Obimiwedoon. Freda was a part of the organization since the very beginning, always providing guidance, cultural teachings, and this past year, even created the vests for the graduation ceremony. Freda was a very special person to everyone at Shkoday Abinojiwak Obimiwedoon.



SHKODAY

SHKODAY ABINOJIWAK OBIMIWEDOON BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-2018:

Paul Francis
President, appointed April 4, 2017

Tiffany Jenkin
Resigned February 2018

Lindsay Tyance
Secretary/Treasurer, appointed April 4, 2017;
resigned April 2018

Touchan Fiddler
Vice President, appointed February 20, 2018

Tannis Smith
Director, Appointed, January 11, 2012

Cherity Calder
Director, Appointed January 11, 2012

Sarah Nelson
Director, Appointed September 12, 2017

Ex-officio – Marilyn Junnila
Executive Director, March 1, 2017.

ABORIGINAL HEAD START STAFF:

Carmen Michon
RECE Supervisor

Michael Belmore
Transportation Driver and
Maintenance/Cleaning

Rose Card
Transportation Driver and
Maintenance/Cleaning

Nicole Beardy
Meekis, RECE, resigned February 2018

Kitty Duchene
Family Support/Cultural Coordinator
resigned February 2018.

Eugema Ings
RECE

Karly Stewart
RECE started March 1, 2017

Morgan Bannon-Ogima
Rece Started February 22, 2018

Kayla Vecchio
RECE

Tina Gardener
RECE

Sharon Mendowegan
Family Support/Cultural
Coordinator,
February 2018

Tuula Granholm
Cook

PART – TIME AND CASUAL STAFF

Lenore Perreault
On Call Cook

Chrissy Hamlin

Bailey Vanderwees

Kevin Redsky
Program Manager,
August 2017 to current

Sarah Wright
Program Manager,
April – August 2017

Mary Jane Wolfe
Program Manager Assistant
Current

Wendy Ignace
April-June 2017

Youth Outreach Workers, After School Assistants and On-Call staff:

- Trivena Andy
- Victoria Barber
- Kayla Berthlette
- Tyrel Bruyere
- Coral Chisel
- Lisa Chum
- Lisa Marie Esquega
- Danielle Frykas Montgomery
- Dustin Gagne
- John Gagnon
- Delaney Gustafson

- Sage Laliberte
- Christy Meeseetawageesic
- Dannell McGinnis
- Agnes McGuire
- Isaac Meekis
- Dakota Meshake
- Clyde Moonias
- Sage Moses
- Leona Morris
- Kimberley Noland
- Alynne Peacock

Aila Drazonovich
Receptionist/Finance Assistant

Alex Copenance
Cultural Coordinator

- Faith Redsky
- Gabrielle Richardson
- Ryan Saarinin
- Tia Scott-Bedard
- Doug Turner
- Rheal Twance
- Lara Wesley
- Stephanie Wesley
- Sarah Wright



NOTES

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