

Annual Report

2022 - 2023



SHK DAY
IGNITING THE SPIRIT WITHIN

About the Artist

CONNECTIONS, DEANNA THERRIAULT

"I struggle to make connections. But when they happen I get those butterflies. I feel a lightness and palpable energy. We have connections with everything in our world. Animate and inanimate, real and dreamed."

DEANNA THERRIAULT

Deanna Therriault is an Indigenous visual artist based in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Her spirit name is Giziizikwe ('Sun Woman') and her work has been inspired by the Indian Group of Seven, Picasso, Klimt, Frank Frazetta, and her own life and heritage. Her bold ink lines and interconnected subjects are reminiscent of the Woodland Art style, but with a clarity of inner reflection all her own.



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Mission & Vision

VISION

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

MISSION

Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoan 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.



A Message from the Executive Director

BOOZHOO, AANIIN, WACHAY, SAGO, HELLO

I would like to acknowledge and say Chii-meegwech to our Elders and Traditional Teachers who provided guidance and support to the Board of Directors, management and staff this past year. Connecting our children and youth with our Elders encourages the sharing of our teachings, traditions, language, values and beliefs. Shkoday does this through Indigenous-led governance, with our foundation being rooted in our culture, with strength-based programs and individualized and group services for our children, youth and their families.

This year has been eventful; therefore I would like to share a few highlights with you. In June 2022, the Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) program began our 25th year of graduating students. In late summer, we celebrated the 25th year anniversary of Shkoday which brought back students from the inaugural graduating class to current day graduates. I was very happy to see the connections between one family to another, from one generation to another, and to hear that some of the students from our Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) program went on to be participants in Biwaase'aa. This event also connected us with Deanna Therriault, an Indigenous visual artist who is based in Thunder Bay, who provided us with the artwork of Connections which is gracing the cover of this AGM book.

Challenges, such as the pandemic, global worker shortages, and funding restrictions did not stop us from creating new connections in our community. After a three year closure due to the pandemic, the AHS program re-opened our Toddler classroom and we hired a Family Support Cultural Coordinator which enabled us to reconnect with children aged 18 months and their caregivers. We also hired three additional workers to assist with the needs of the children in the AHS classrooms. The Biwaase'aa

program Youth Outreach Workers divided their time between two schools to enable us to work with as many youth as possible and to continue to provide the nutritional component of Biwaase'aa programming in all schools throughout the year. Through a partnership with St. Joseph's Hospital – N'doo'owe Binesi, Indigenous Health we were able to expand our health/wellness component of the Biwaase'aa program. Resuming in-person Powwow's at each of the schools was a great success with community members, dancers, drummers, students, teachers, principals attending these cultural healing and educational events.

In early winter, we expanded our continuum of educational programming to high-school aged young adults with the Pathways program. The connection to "Pathways to Education" provides us with the opportunity to provide educational support to youth so that they will graduate. The incentives, tutoring, mentoring and cultural teachings will benefit not only the youth themselves, but their families, community and future generations. These are the future leaders of our community!

I would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of our partners and sponsors. Through their continued support and collaboration we have been able to offer a safe space with quality programs and services.

Finally, I want to extend my extreme appreciation and thanks to the staff who continue to provide excellent and quality programming to our children, youth and their families, and to our Board of Directors for their work, dedication, leadership, devotion and time committed to improving the lives of Indigenous children, youth and their families in Thunder Bay and surrounding area.

Chii-meegwech,



Marilyn Junnila
Executive Director



A Message from the President

BOOZHOO,

Hot off the heels of our 25th Anniversary celebration in 2022, I am very excited to report that Shkoday is poised for some exciting endeavours in 2023. Our entire team at Shkoday from employees to the board members have been working tremendously hard this past year to help our organization grow. Grown we definitely have; this is evident by the fact that last year we brought the Pathways program on under the Shkoday umbrella to further serve and support our youth. Please ensure you take some time, when possible, to visit our newest site to support this program at 214 Red River Road.

Operationally, the Board of Directors have undertaken some major work to help improve our processes while ensuring we have the staffing to support our deliverables and ensuring we meet the needs of our clients, friends and families. We are deeply involved in policy and by-law reviews as well as recently completing a salary review for all of our employees and feel we are in a better position to help recruit and retain team members in a very competitive labour market.

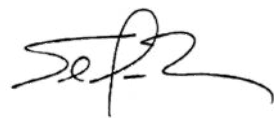
We are also very proud to share that we are currently under way in completing our next 5 year strategic plan. We have hired consultants to assist with this exercise and the information gathering process is underway, and we are very excited for the end result and developing this exciting plan.

I am Happy to report that it truly is my pleasure to be serving my second term as President of the Shkoday Board. The hard work of our team does not go unnoticed by our board, and we Thank all of our team for their amazing work. I would like to give a special Chi-Miigwetch to Marilyn, our Executive Director, for her hard work and dedication to our organization. Without her commitment, we would not achieve the success we have enjoyed.

We are also blessed with an amazing Board of Directors that works tirelessly to ensure the success of Shkoday and all its programming. Our board brings with dedication to the organization that is unwavering and for that as the Board President I am truly grateful for the support and passion that is brought to our board.

In closing, I am truly optimistic for what the future holds for our organization and for our Indigenous People in general. I believe we are in an era of reconciliation and that for me holds great hope for all of us as Indigenous People.

Chi-Miigwetch (Thank-You),



Jason Thompson

About Us

Children are gifts from the Creator. We have an inherent and sacred responsibility for taking care of our children and their families. All children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential.

Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoos is a community-based organization that develops and delivers programs that promote the healthy development of Anishnawbe children and youth while supporting their families and respecting their parents and guardians as their primary teachers. Our culture and traditions are the foundation of our work with families and the community.

Shkoday endeavours to bring hope to children and youth through our holistic and cultural programming which encourages, improves and facilitates scholastic and cultural education. Our programs are offered in a fun, safe and nurturing environment, with care provided by qualified Educators and Cultural workers. These programs are designed specifically for Anishnawbe children and youth to support them and their families in the development of their cultural identity.

Shkoday's knowledgeable, warm and caring staff share and follow the Grandfather Teachings while encouraging and facilitating cultural education and programming for children ages 2-18 years of age. These programs and services include providing support services for parents/caregivers, so everyone can contribute to being healthier themselves which creates a healthier community. Elders and Traditional Teachers are invited to share experiences, stories and cultural teachings with the children and youth. This instills a sense of pride and knowledge of who they are and where they come from, which in-turn builds self-esteem and positive self-identity.

Shkoday – (Ishkode) means fire in Ojibwe. The name Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoos means that we are igniting that spark of spiritual fire within the children. This name was given by an Elder to the Aboriginal Head Start program in 1997.



Our Programs

The **Aboriginal Head Start** program's goal is to assist each child and family develop school readiness skills in the following areas: Physical well-being and spiritual wellness; emotional health and well-being by providing a positive approach to new experiences; social skills; enhancing small and gross motor skills; and increasing language and cognitive skills. We provide the child with a positive learning environment and varied experiences which contribute to his/her physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and social development. Aboriginal Head Start is geared to children ages 18 months – 72 months of age.

The **Biwaase'aa** program is located in eight schools and is designed to increase life skills of Indigenous children, youth and their families through an in-school, after-school, Little Eagles Mentorship and Food Security Programs. The Biwaase'aa program is geared to 7-13 years old children and youth.

Pathways Thunder Bay is our most recently acquired program, which is located at 214 Red River Road. Pathways is designed to increase high school graduation rates by offering tutoring, mentoring, cultural programming, financial support and advocacy to help students graduate from high school. Together with partners including volunteer tutors, Elders and Knowledge Keepers we encourage and assist students on their educational journey.

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.

Aboriginal Head Start

2022 - 2023 ACTIVITY REPORT

Thunder Bay Aboriginal Head Start provides holistic programming that is designed for Aboriginal children ages 18 months to six years of age. Preschool children are enrolled in an alternating full-day program based on the Public Health Agency of Canada's Head Start program objectives and Provincial Ministry of Education supporting document "How Does Learning Happen, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)".

This program features structured play activities and experiences allowing for growth in a learning and nurturing environment, as well as the promotion of health, education, nutrition, and holistic development. Our community-based program is built on the identified needs and concerns of the children and families attending the program. Parents and caregivers are our children's primary teachers, and we empower and encourage them to provide traditional and cultural parenting. We support the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth

of each individual child in a cultural and academic learning environment. The provision of parental support and involvement in all aspects of our program are encouraged.

Aboriginal Head Start's licensing capacity 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 classrooms follow the PHAC

- AHS Program Principles:
- Education
 - Health
 - Nutrition
 - Social Support
 - Parental/Caregiver involvement
 - Culture and Language

The Ministry of Education's supporting document "How Does Learning Happen, Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years (2014)" four foundations of Belonging, Engagement, Expression and Well-being.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO STAFF:

- Ojibwe Language Class
- Media Training – Fire Dog
- Professional Learning – Ministry mandated via The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
 - Pine Needle Pendant
 - WHIMIS
 - Repairing the Sacred Circle – St Joe's Hospital – N'doo'owe Binesi Indigenous Health
- Pedagogy – The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
- Healthy Eating – Thunder Bay District Health Unit



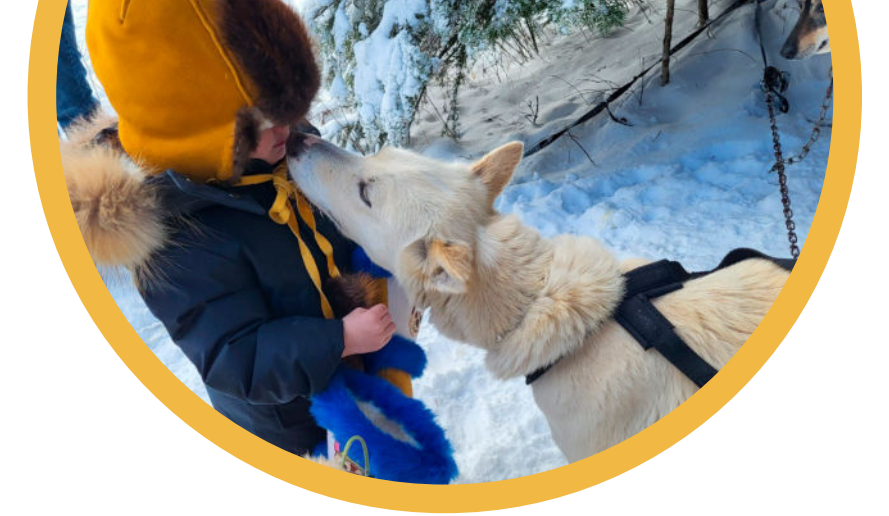
PROGRAM OPERATION CAPACITY

21 CHILDREN RETURNED TO HEAD START
from the 2022 - 2023 program year

49 NEW CHILDREN entered the program throughout the year

16 CHILDREN WERE WITHDRAWN

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board classroom had 2 returning children who attended our AHS program from the prior school year and 5 entered the program with access to subsidies throughout the year.



70 HOME OUTREACH SERVICES
via phone, e-mail, or site visit

Aboriginal Head Start was able to reach 103 children who had experience in our Toddler, Preschool or Kindergarten Program. We did not run the toddler program from April until June due to Covid regulations. We resumed the toddler program in September 2022. Due to the needs of the children, each classroom was intentionally not filled to capacity.



COMMUNICATION

As of March 31, 2023,

718

COMMUNICATION
NOTES SENT HOME
via email or hard copy



539

MONTHLY PLANNING
calendars and newsletters

354

EVENT INVITATIONS

Social media was frequently used as a tool to promote communication with families and caregivers of our program via our Shkoday website and Facebook page.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Developing partnerships with various agencies and community services is important in assisting our families and staff. Over the course of the 2nd part of the year, we had guests who participated or visited our program by sharing their services with children and families. We also had opportunities to engage within the community by visiting or setting up booths.

There were 148 visits at our center from various stakeholders within the community. They came to tour, volunteer, participate in our program or meet with children, staff, and parents. 5 opportunities were outside of our center, including field trips, staff training, invitations, community partners, and meetings.



Biwaase'aa

PERCEPTION OF OUTCOMES & SUCCESS STORIES FROM STAFF

// One grade three student and their family were very excited when they found out the Biwaase'aa Program was hosting a powwow at St. James school. This student is a grass dancer, and he said he couldn't wait to have the opportunity to show his regalia to his teacher and friends and to teach them a few steps. During the powwow, he radiated pride in his culture and confidence in his dancing. His mother, grandma and brother also got to share this moment with him.

// One student's face lit up when our Youth Outreach Worker started reading a legend, and "I know this one!" was excitedly shared. This student shared that his papa told him "back home" in his community, and he shared his knowledge with the class and helped the YOW to finish the teaching. During the week, this student visited the YOW a few times before the end of the day to share other stories he learned from his papa, and our YOW learned legends that they had never heard before, leading to a learning experience for the YOW as much as for the student.

// A grade 2/3 student was having some behavioural problems in school and at home, and the principal and her caregiver requested positive peer mentorship to support her. She was selected for the Little Eagles Mentorship Program (LEMP), and after only a few days of working with the YOW, she began to show great improvement and worked together with her peers as well as in helping to prepare and distribute lunches... A new responsibility that helped her to feel that school was fun! Her caregiver shared that this helped the student to show an increased interest in helping with daily chores at home and an excitement to come to school.

// I recently started a beading club two days per week. I work with 3-5 students each time. I worked with the teachers to specifically select students that require additional support, or a brain break during the day. We are beading flowers and medicine wheels. Two students are natural beaders and quickly finished their first piece. They wanted to wait to start their second piece because they want to be "just like me" and help teach the other students. Their teachers are reporting an increase in effort and completing work during class time. Some of the students will ask to bring their classwork to the Biwaase'aa room to work on it with me in-between beading. In addition, another student reminds us daily that she wants to gift her finished pieces to her auntie because she is sad after going to a "bad school" a very long time ago. This student says she is happy she can be herself at her school, in contrast to her auntie's experience.

// One student made a comment while I was delivering teachings during St. Vincent's in-school cultural presentations that made me proud to share my knowledge and to be a YOW. I shared a Jingle Dress teaching and taught students how to sidestep. I asked students to stand up and join in a circle to dance together and this student stood up and said, "I am dancing for my gitchikokum (grandmother) because she wasn't allowed to." This student expressed interest dancing in a jingle dress, and I helped him to try on a jingle dress during after-school program. He said, "this is the best day ever and I feel happy when I think of my kitchikokum when I dance." This student is learning about self-identifying and what it is to be two-spirited. I feel honored to be able to give him this experience and be a positive role model.



Biwaase'aa By the Numbers!

The **In-school component** of the Biwaase'aa program allows for the Youth Outreach Workers to establish a relationship with the students built on trust, rapport and security which increases student academic performance. The program includes going into the classrooms to speak about various topics relevant to Indigenous people and education. Students have access to role modeling/mentorship, literacy and numeracy support, cultural teachings and presentations, powwows, feasts and cultural outreach services.

Unique Students Registered - 1125

Program Attendance - 8860

Healthy foods help meet students' nutritional needs which in turn will improve their ability to learn, engage in physical activities and develop positive eating habits that aid in growth and development. Traditional Teachings related to food and hunting, gathering and harvesting are shared with the students and their families at special cultural events.

Number of Snacks/Lunches Provided - 17,848

The Little Eagles Mentorship Program is a seven-week program designed using the Seven Grandfather Teachings: Respect, Love, Wisdom, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth. Utilizing traditional teachings, stories, sharing circles and interactions with community leaders and Elders, youth learn the importance of their cultural identity, values, beliefs and traditions. Students learn life and living skills that assist with dealing with racism, bullying, and peer pressure while improving academic performance and improved self-esteem.

Little Eagles Program Attendance (Participation Rates) - 319

Activities in the after-school program are immersed in Indigenous culture and traditions. Recreational and educational activities provide youth the opportunity to build and support their physical, cultural, mental and emotional well-being.

After School Attendance (Participation Rates) - 3,608

Parental interactions are an integral part of the Biwaase'aa program. Parents are involved in the youth's experience at Biwaase'aa, and at times will attend powwows, family fun nights, traditional ceremonies, and other recreational events.

Parent Interactions for Individual Students - 2,510



Pathways Thunder Bay

Shkoday's Pathways Program is one of 31 locations across Canada that supports and encourages youth to graduate from high school. Across Canada, 69% of Pathways graduates transitioned to post-secondary education or training in the 2020-21 academic school year. Research shows that the Pathways program increases annual income by 19% and that employment rate of Pathways graduates was 14% higher compared to their peers.

Shkoday's Pathway Program provides educational programs to Indigenous youth that are rooted in the Anishnabek culture. Our holistic approach builds self-awareness, confidence and overall well-being. The Pathways program has four main components:

After-school Tutoring: Youth have access to Pathway tutors who are passionate about the subjects they teach and bring this enthusiasm into their sessions with them. Tutoring sessions are regularly scheduled throughout the week and/or weekends.

Mentoring, Leadership and Cultural Programming (MLC): Mentorship from adult allies, leadership development from community leaders and staff and Indigenous cultural programming delivered by Elders and Knowledge Keepers takes place weekly after school and/or on weekends. These sessions focus on identity, purpose, build pride and belonging to assist our students to rise up and succeed.

Financial Support and Advocacy: Student incentives for attending tutoring sessions are ongoing throughout the year. These may include food vouchers, bus tickets, coffee cards, recreational passes and other incentives suggested by the students.

Scholarships: Upon successful completion of the Pathways Program, students also earn a scholarship towards their post-secondary education or training. Scholarships are only awarded to youth who begin the Pathways Program in Grade 9 and continue through Grade 12 graduation.



Our Community Partnerships

St. Joseph's Hospital – N'doo'owe Binesi Indigenous Health

- Cultural practitioners partnered with YOWs to provide cultural support and teachings during in-school and after-school program time. Some teachings include powwow, regalia, smudging, traditional medicines, and 13 moons.

Total Sessions: 23 Total Powwows: 4

Healthy Living Program – Thunder Bay District Health Unit

- Public health nutritionist and the program interns provided nutritional training to Biwaase'aa and Aboriginal Head Start staff. Training included healthy recipes and alternatives, how to prepare and cook healthy snacks and meals, and learning about traditional foods.

Total Sessions: 3

- Public health nutritionist visited Ogden ASP to teach youth how to make healthy smoothies.

Total Sessions: 1

- Provides on-going support to staff if they want to partner during in-school or after-school program time or have questions at any time.

Frontier College – unofficial partnership this year

Lakehead District School Board

Catholic District School Board

Children's Centre Thunder Bay

Thunder Bay Public Health Unit

Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre

George Jeffrey Children's Centre

Shania Kids Can

United Way

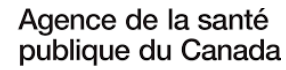
Confederation College

Dew Drop Inn



Our Funders

CHII-MEEGWENCH TO OUR FUNDERS



A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Julie and Trevor Nash
Tanis and Rob Minor
Peter Knudson
Impala Canada

& all who have supported us this year with small donations, or volunteering their time or services!

2022-2023

Board of Directors

Jason Thompson, President

Betty Kennedy, Vice President

Diane Walker, Secretary/Treasurer

Sarah Nelson, Director

Lana Ray, Director

Brenden Mawakeesick, Director



SHK DAY STAFF

FROM APRIL 1, 2022 – MARCH 31, 2023

Marilyn Junnila, Executive Director

Joanne Blackstar, Finance Officer – June 2022

Michael Hull, Program Director

Randi Cameron, Finance Officer

Aboriginal Headstart

Eugema Ings,
RECE Supervisor

Bailey VanderWees,
Registered Early Childhood Educator
to February 23, 2023

Chris King,
Family Support Cultural Coordinator

Karly Stewart-McKee,
Registered Early Childhood Educator

Lorraine Mashongoane,
Registered Early Childhood Educator

Meagan St. Amand,
Registered Early Childhood Educator

Sierra Wilson,
Registered Early Childhood Educator

Tara Ottertail,
Registered Early Childhood Educator

Crystal Hamlin,
Child Care Assistant to January 20, 2023

Laura Bruno,
Child Care Assistant

Martina Nagotchi,
Child Care Assistant

Shaheena Tanveer,
Child Care Assistant

Sydney Pehkonen,
Child Care Assistant

Fred Caputo,
Transportation Driver

Robert Baillie,
Transportation Driver

David Klaus,
Transportation Driver

Chris Moorhead,
Transportation Driver

Daryle Youmans,
Transportation Driver

Connie Pugliese-Kellar,
Cook

Roy Aho,
Cook casual

Chelsea Capay-Kwandibens,
Administrative Assistant

Lynnette Williams,
Administrative Assistant
to March 31, 2023

Leonard Achneepineskum-Holt,
IT Assistant until March 28, 2023

Isiah Kinnavanthong,
P/T Assistant

Joshua Morton,
P/T Assistant

Biwaase'aa

Krista Lee,
Program Supervisor

Angela Rae,
Youth Outreach Worker to May 27, 2022

Bella Gerolami,
Youth Outreach Worker

Belle Brotchie,
Youth Outreach Worker

Eric Bouchard,
Youth Outreach Worker

Faith Bottle,
Youth Outreach Worker to May 19, 2022

Jordyn Koski,
Youth Outreach Worker as of March 21, 2023,
prior After School Assistant

Kora Moses-McWatch,
Youth Outreach Worker

Leona Morris,
Youth Outreach Worker to June 30, 2022

Leslie Ann,
Katchen to October 14, 2022

Lyndahl McGinnis,
Youth Outreach Worker

Tawnee Thompson,
Youth Outreach Worker, to January 31, 2023

Tyarra Goodman,
Youth Outreach Worker to April 14, 2022

Ziigwan Moses,
Youth Outreach Worker to September 27, 2022

Cayla Wesley,
After School Assistant as of January 30, 2023

Destiny Linklater,
After School Assistant as of November 7, 2022

Evelyn Sheriff,
After School Assistant to June 30, 2022

Pathways

Yvonne Farquhar,
Pathways Supervisor

Dannell McGinnis,
Student Parent Support Worker

Loretta Kwandiben,
Student Parent Support Worker

Melinda Siemens,
Student Parent Support Worker







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