

# SHK DAY

IGNITING THE SPIRIT WITHIN



  
*Annual Report*  
2021 2022



# Shkoday

(pronounced Ishkode)

'fire' in Ojibwe



## 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 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.



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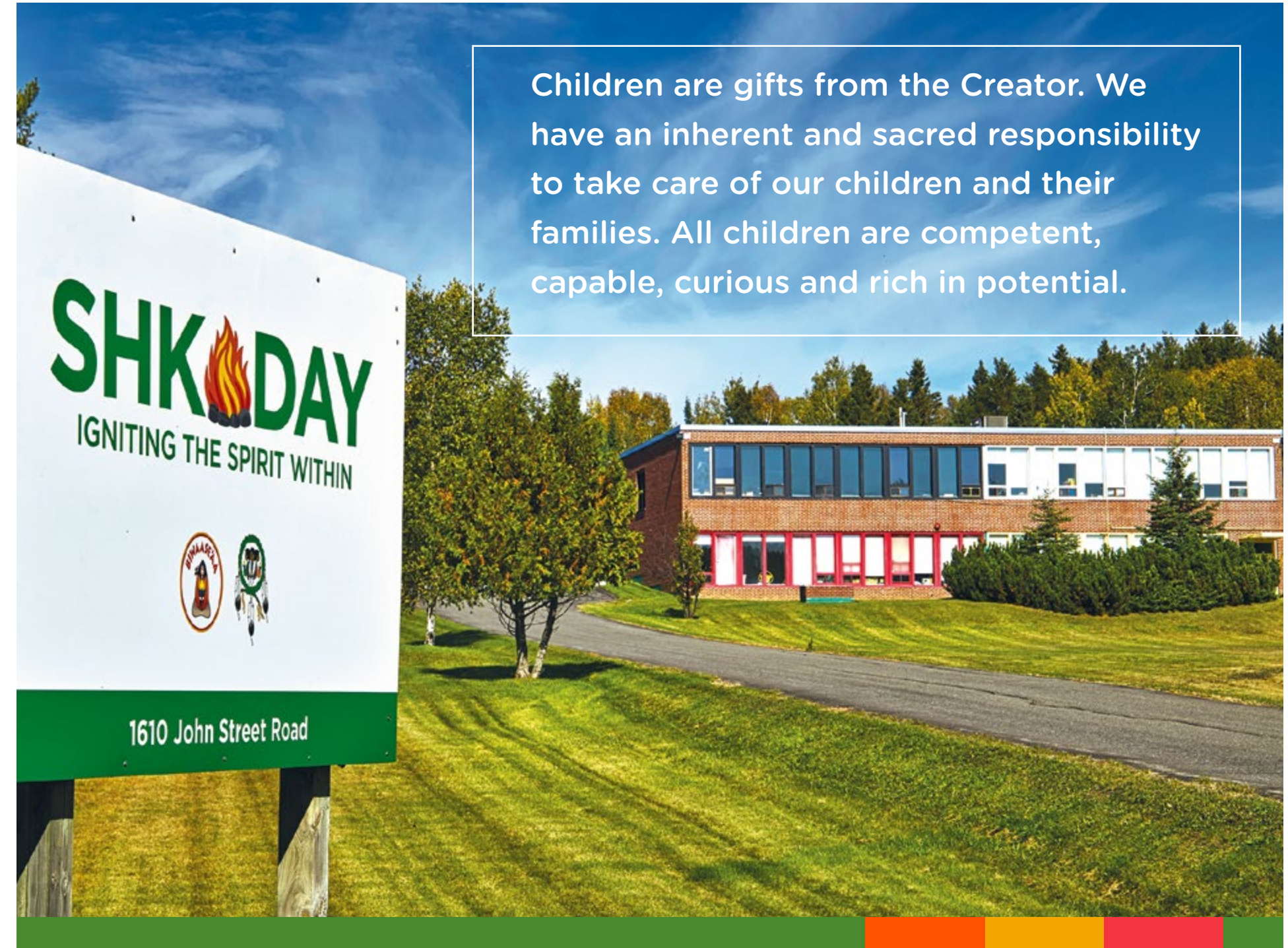
The name **Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoan** means that we are igniting that spark of (spiritual) fire within the children. This name was given by an Elder to the Aboriginal Head Start program in 1997.

## About Us

**Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoan** is a community-based organization that develops and delivers programs to 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 2-18 years of age. These programs and services include providing support for parents and caregivers, so everyone can contribute to 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 the knowledge of who they are and where they come from, which in-turn builds self-esteem and positive self-identity.





# Programs

## Aboriginal Head Start



The goal of this program is to develop school readiness skills in each child in the following areas: physical well-being and appropriate motor development, emotional health and a positive approach to new experiences, social knowledge and competence, and language and cognitive skills. It also provides children with a learning environment and varied experiences which contribute to their physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and social development. This program is for children 18-72 months of age.



## Biwaase'aa

This program is located in nine schools and is designed to increase the life skills of Indigenous children, youth and their families through an in-school, after-school, Little Eagles Mentorship, as well as to offer Food Security Programs. The Biwaase'aa program is geared to 7-13 year old children and youth.



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.

# Executive Director

**In reflecting about this past year,** Shkoday has been able to adapt to the unique needs of children, youth, and family members. At the same time, we shifted our services and priorities to meet the changing needs of families, and community. The fact that we were still addressing issues and uncertainties related to COVID-19 was challenging and could have been an obstacle, but instead staff used it as a means to work closer with families and their children.

We know that supporting a child's and youth's needs are complex. As we proceeded to work through this pandemic, we noticed emerging trends with children and families that we served, such as the increased need of socialization skills, mental health services, and addressing abandonment issues. Through creativity, determination and collaboration of our staff, the places in which we work and live and with the community, we have been able to adapt our services to support those needs.

Throughout the year, children who attended in-person learning began to learn how to socialize with one another; adapt to daily school-readiness routines, and learn about their culture and way of life. Simultaneously, other children and youth, continued to learn the same skills through virtual learning.

This past year, we have had many changes. Staff have transitioned to other workplaces, with new employees coming on board. Staff have continued to work virtually while others have worked front line. Other staff have had to take time off due to COVID-19 or other health related issues. This created a variety of situations, where we had to creatively adapt our workplace environment, and staffing on an ongoing basis.

Shkoday staff and management continued to maintain and build relationships with community organizations, funders, and community allies. This year we partnered with Shania Kids Can in expanding our Biwaase'aa program to St. Vincent School. To highlight this program expansion, we hosted a premiere night of the film "For Love" which Shania Twain narrated. "For Love" tells the story of how Indigenous Leaders across Canada are working together to heal generations of colonial harm by revitalizing our culture, traditions, and ceremonies to protect and empower our most vital asset, our children. Similarly, to the film, by working with others, we can build a stronger community of friends, neighbours, leaders, and advocates. We believe that change comes from a collective effort. By sharing resources and working closely with other like-minded organizations and community allies, we raise the voices of Indigenous children and youth, and find solutions to provide these needed services to them. We will continue to grow our reach in the coming years.

I want to say Chii-meegwech and acknowledge the families and caretakers of our participants, our Board of Directors, and our incredible employees for their patience, kindness, creativity, and support during this year. Even through the challenges we have continued to support Indigenous children, youth and their families, and continued to build our community linkages. This has given me an unending amount of gratitude and hope for the future.

Chii-meegwech to each of you!

**Marilyn Junnila, Executive Director**



“Grown men can learn from very little children for the hearts of the little children are pure. Therefore, the Great Spirit may show to them many things which older people miss.”

- *Black Elk,*  
*Oglala Lakota Sioux*

# President's Message

**Boozhoo:** It is truly my honour to be serving as the President of Shkoday. Although I haven't been with the organization all that long, what I have witnessed and where I see the organization going is inspiring and has me truly excited for what the future holds for us, as Indigenous people and especially our youth.

As a proud member of the Red Rock Indian Band, and leaving the reserve to pursue my career many years ago, having an organization like Shkoday active in the community gives those that have the same or a similar journey to mine, peace of mind that they have a safe place to grow and prosper. Bringing culture and the sharing of knowledge has been the cornerstone of our being as Indigenous people, and this is evident every day at Shkoday. We may not be perfect, but we are striving each and every day to be better than the day before.

The past couple of years have definitely not been without challenges as we all know too well, and as members of the board, we are very proud as to how our team and the Shkoday community have worked very hard to meet those challenges and exceed our expectations. Chi-Miigwetch to our entire team and the families and community members that support Shkoday.

I have always been a person who values the concept of teamwork, hard work and perseverance. This is something we know all too well as Indigenous People and we have proven to be the definition of resilience. In an era of reconciliation for the horrors of our past, I believe Shkoday is in a great position to make some very positive change and be a very active partner to that change. You will be hearing of some very exciting changes

and additional programming to come from our organization, which is quite exciting for everyone.

Twenty-five years is quite an accomplishment, and with that I say Chi-Miigwetch to all past and present employees, board members, elders, and volunteers as we know without you this would not have been possible. I am confident that the next 25 are going to be exciting times.

Chi-Miigwetch for providing me the opportunity to act as the President of the Board, and I wish you all a very safe and prosperous year ahead.

Chi-Miigwetch (*Thank-You*);

**Jason Thompson**, President





# Funders

For 2021-2022 Current funders and donors of Shkoday programs include:

- Alumni Association of Lakehead University
- Gateway Casino and Entertainment Staff Fund
- IG Wealth Management
- Joan Forbes
- Johansen Larsen Foundation
- Maverick Entertainment Group
- The McLean Foundation
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
- Port Arthur Rotary Club Children's Centre
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Shania Kids Can
- Shaw Communications
- Sherbrook School donated in Honor of Jessie Mattinas, Nora Nancy, Jane Tait and Mary Quill
- The United Way of Thunder Bay
- Thunder Bay District Social Services Administrative Board
- Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre
- And miscellaneous donations processed through United Way and Canada Helps



# Our Staff

April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022



2021-2022

## Board of Directors

- Jason Thompson, President
- Betty Kennedy, Vice President
- Bryanna Scott-Kay, Treasurer
- Annette Klement, Secretary
- Megan Clark, Director
- Paul Francis, Director
- Sarah Nelson, Director
- Lana Ray, Director
- Diane Walker, Director



### Shkoday Staff

- Marilyn Junnila, Executive Director
- Michael Hull, Program Director
- Joanne Blackstar, Finance Officer
- Randi Cameron, Finance Officer
- Shourya Nagar, HR Intern to September 10, 2021
- Kelechi Iwuorie, IT Intern to July 23, 2021

### Biwaase'aa Staff

- Dannell McGinnis, Interim Program Supervisor as of February 8, 2021 prior to that Youth Outreach Worker
- Angela Rae, Youth Outreach Worker
- Brittany Baxter, Youth Outreach Worker
- Krista Lee, ASA to June 18, 2020, Youth Outreach Worker
- Leona Meekis, Youth Outreach Worker
- Lyndahl McGinnis, Youth Outreach Worker
- Ziigwan Moses, Youth Outreach Worker
- Caitlan Visser, Youth Outreach Worker to August 26, 2021
- Elton Beardy, Youth Outreach Worker to June 14, 2021
- Fallon Poile, ASA to June 18, 2020, Youth Outreach Worker to July 1, 2021
- Fern Chisel, Youth Outreach Worker to June 2, 2021
- Jordan Bilmer, Youth Outreach Worker to December 10, 2021
- Lloyd Meekis, Youth Outreach Worker to November 3, 2021
- Richard Jourdain, Youth Outreach Worker to February 4, 2022
- Tia Scott-Bedard, Youth Outreach Worker to August 12, 2021
- Tyarra Goodman, Youth Outreach Worker to April 14, 2022
- Evelyn Sheriff, ASA
- Ester Maud, ASA to January 25, 2022

### Aboriginal Head Start Staff

- Eugema Ings, RECE Supervisor
- Bailey VanderWees, RECE
- Lorraine Mashongoane, RECE
- Melinda Siemens, RECE
- Tara Ottertail, RECE
- Karly Stewart, RECE to March 24, 2022
- Marissa Rocco, RECE to June 30, 2021
- Morgan Bannon-Ogima, RECE to November 5, 2021
- Willow Lem, RECE to June 30, 2021
- Melissa Girardin, Family Support Cultural Coordinator/RECE - resigned June 2, 2021
- Erin Scott, Child Care Assistant
- Laura Bruno, Child Care Assistant
- Martina Nagotchi, Child Care Assistant
- Sierra Wilson, Child Care Assistant
- Nicole Meekis, Child Care Assistant to August 12, 2021
- Fred Caputo, Transportation Driver
- Robert Baillie, Transportation Driver
- David Klaus, Transportation Driver
- Chris Moorhead, Transportation Driver
- Mark Vidotto, Transportation Driver
- Rose Card, Transportation Driver/Cleaner to June 30, 2021
- Connie Pugliese-Kellar, Cook
- Robert Scarbrough, Cook to June 30, 2021
- Chelsea Capay-Kwandibens, Administrative Assistant



Although there were a number of months in which programming did not occur due to lockdowns, many youth were still able to participate in online learning.



# By the Numbers

Biwaase'aa Program  
2021-2022

9694

youth attended the in-school program

358

food hampers (feeding 4-8 people) were distributed

13106

youth were provided with lunches

434

youth participated in the Little Eagles Program



“Children learn from what they see. We need to set an example of truth and action.”

– Howard Rainer,  
Taos Pueblo-Creek



# By the Numbers

Aboriginal Head Start Program - 2021-2022

<b>1188</b> Meals served	<b>635</b> Food hampers distributed
<b>93</b> Families involved in Aboriginal Head Start throughout the year	<b>44</b> Children enrolled in the program
<b>88</b> Staff training sessions	<b>140</b> Children on our waitlist
<b>22</b> Community meetings	<b>72</b> Stakeholder visits



# SHKODAY

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