

ABORIGINAL
EMPLOYMENT &
TRAINING

MIZIWE BIK 2004/05 ANNUAL REPORT





**Miziwe Biik acknowledges
financial support and contributions from
the following:**

Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC)
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat
Ontario Works
Ontario Trillium Foundation
City of Toronto
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
Flavelle Foundation
Kaufman Foundation
McLean Foundation
Bank of Montreal
Centennial College

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*Employment Counsellor
Assistant*
Lillian Wesley

Project Officer
Eileen Meawassige

Our Mission and Vision



The Mission of Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training is manifold: to counsel Toronto urban native people on careers and paths and opportunities, to work with employers to secure employment opportunities, to deliver federal and provincial training programs, working with both groups and individuals to achieve these endeavours.

Jim Windigo, a respected Ojibway Elder gave us our name. Miziwe Biik is like a body of water where a ripple effect has been created; it is the ability to reach out and make positive change in the lives of the urban native people across the Greater Toronto Area.

Mission

Miziwe Biik is committed to assisting all persons of native ancestry in the Greater Toronto Area to attain a better quality of life.

Miziwe Biik believes that community needs and aspirations are paramount. We are committed to strengthening the community through partnerships promoting equality and self reliance.

Miziwe Biik strives to provide training and employment opportunities in a supportive environment in which people can affirm their native identities and develop to their full potential.

Miziwe Biik is committed to the belief that it is through traditional cultural values, practices and resources that we will reclaim our destiny.

Miziwe Biik Board of Directors



2004/2005 Board Members

Left to right: Michael White, Larry Frost, Harry Wilmot, Jimmy Dick

Missing: Alison Deer, Jenny Restoule, Steve Teekens



Report to the Community



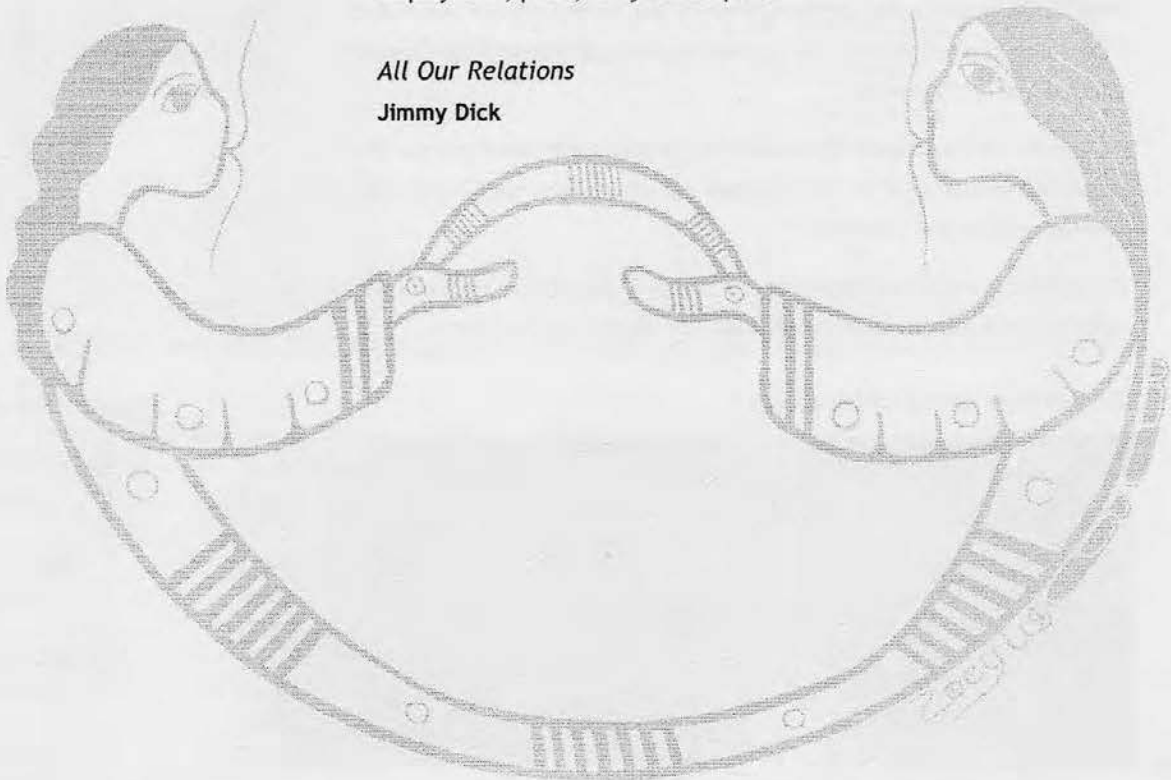
I'd like to begin by thanking you all for your continued support of Miziwe Biik this past year, and to all the staff for their hard work and commitment and believing in our vision for our community.

As we move forward to another year, we see good changes coming which will only benefit our community and its members.

I see our community members bettering their lives, their families and working proudly together. Let's achieve this vision together and make it a reality as it brings healing, wellness, employment, pride, unity and respect.

All Our Relations

Jimmy Dick



Strength in Numbers!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY FOR THE YEAR APRIL 1, 2004 TO MARCH 31, 2005

Another challenging year has come and gone. I want to thank the Board and staff of Miziwe Biik and say that, once again it has been a pleasure working with you.

This year there have been many successes in terms of community members advancing themselves in employment, training, and self employment. As staff, we have had the opportunity to work with many talented people. Although we are here to provide a service to the community, we get a lot back from the people we work with and are enriched from our experiences here.

Last year, I renewed my commitment to work to the best of my ability, under the direction of the Board of Directors that you elected, to ensure employment and training resources were made available to the community. The funding allocation was increased by \$1.4 million because of the Misquadis case and the quality of the training was increasingly enhanced. Training opportunities for self employment assistance and youth have been strong. This year we are looking to increase our community's participation in the construction trades.

Although we are a client driven agency, statistics make the world go 'round and our accomplishments, as a community, are very impressive:

- 779 clients had training opportunities through our funding allocation and 502 of those clients were youth.
- 536 of our training participants became employed, returned to school or went on to further training
- Of our 1,000 community members who use the Employment Resource Centre, 40-50% got jobs.

We have strengthened our partnerships, increased our funding base and streamlined our administrative processes.

We are currently operating under our new 4 year AHRDA until 2009.

My experience at Miziwe Biik has proven to me that our community can influence change in a positive way. Miziwe Biik has relied on community support to navigate the funding challenges that we have faced. I am so impressed with individuals coming together for a common goal for the sake of our community. Miziwe Biik belongs to the community and I want to thank the community members for rallying around Miziwe Biik when we needed that support. Your voice was heard and you have made a positive contribution to this community, so that those who need employment and training services have a place to go for assistance.

I am looking forward to the new year and new challenges.

In Friendship,
Nancy Martin
Executive Director



MIZIWE BIİK ANNUAL REPORT

Financial Statements



Auditor's Report

To: The members of Miziwe Biik - Aboriginal Employment and Training

We have audited the balance sheet of Miziwe Biik - Aboriginal Employment and Training as at March 31, 2005 and the statements of revenue, expenses and surplus and cash flow for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at March 31, 2005, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles commonly used in not for profit organizations.

Toronto, Ontario
July 14, 2005

Fluss Silverberg LLP

Chartered Accountants

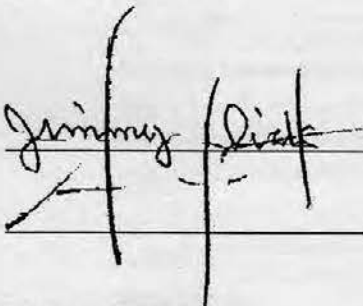


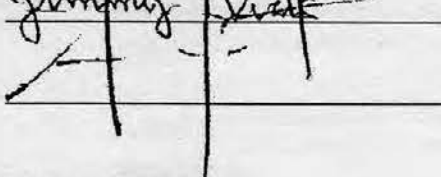
Balance Sheet

As at March 31, 2005

	2005	2004
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	\$ 379,836	\$ 403,351
Short term investments	59,984	59,098
Accounts receivable	2,194,989	248,901
Prepaid expenses	27,717	42,135
	<u>2,662,526</u>	<u>753,485</u>
Capital assets (Note 2)		
Land and building	1,149,822	1,145,294
Computer equipment (Note 3)	93,336	165,653
Furniture and fixtures	49,129	45,864
	<u>1,292,287</u>	<u>1,356,811</u>
Less: accumulated amortization	116,915	152,529
	<u>1,175,372</u>	<u>1,204,282</u>
	<u>\$ 3,837,898</u>	<u>\$ 1,957,767</u>
LIABILITIES		
Current		
Accounts payable	\$ 1,520,827	\$ 377,691
Deferred revenue	935,134	164,850
Current portion of mortgage payable (Note 5)	27,948	27,948
	<u>2,483,909</u>	<u>570,489</u>
Mortgage payable (Note 5)	469,771	495,140
SURPLUS		
Surplus	884,218	892,138
	<u>\$ 3,837,898</u>	<u>\$ 1,957,767</u>

On behalf of the Board:

 Director

 Director

See accompanying notes.

Statement of Revenue, Expenses and Surplus

Year Ended March 31, 2005

	2005	2004
Revenue		
Grants	\$ 6,385,510	\$ 3,782,678
Interest	5,367	9,266
Rental income	130,656	14,403
Other income	2,402	17,683
	<u>6,523,935</u>	<u>3,824,030</u>
Expenses		
Program expenses		
Community access programming (Note 3)	44,254	3,105
Consolidated revenue funding program	861,666	100
Employment insurance program	2,963,103	2,509,277
Homeless initiative	1,013,348	23,404
On line learning technology	64,116	141,674
Ontario Works Skills Development	41,068	53,113
UAS programs	106,678	-
Summer career placement	79,283	89,201
	<u>5,173,516</u>	<u>2,819,874</u>
Administrative Expenses		
Advertising and promotion	7,474	13,852
Amortization	38,063	49,349
Bank charges	3,743	1,105
Capacity building	97,094	91,778
Employment costs	119,044	101,842
Insurance	23,163	16,916
Office and general	32,605	12,085
Office rent and occupancy cost	174,997	81,511
Office supplies	25,981	19,642
Professional fees	33,804	22,510
Repairs and maintenance	30,635	18,696
Salaries	737,041	547,223
Staff training	1,547	5,880
Telephone	24,079	21,541
Travel	9,069	17,006
	<u>1,358,339</u>	<u>1,020,936</u>
Total expenses	<u>6,531,855</u>	<u>3,840,810</u>
Excess revenue over expenses	<u>(7,920)</u>	<u>(16,780)</u>
Surplus, beginning of the year	892,138	908,918
Surplus, end of year	<u>\$ 884,218</u>	<u>\$ 892,138</u>
See accompanying notes.		

Notes to Financial Statements March 31, 2005

1. Purpose of the organization:

Miziwe Biik - Aboriginal Employment and Training is a local organization operating programs providing training and employment opportunities in a supportive environment in which people can affirm their Aboriginal identity and develop to their full potential.

2. Summary of accounting policies:

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles commonly used in not-for-profit organizations.

a) Revenues and expenses

Revenue and expenses are accounted for on an accrual basis.

b) Contributed services

Volunteers contribute their services to assist the organization in its service delivery activities. Because of the difficulty of determining the fair value of, contributed services, they have not been recognized in the financial statements.

c) Capital assets

Capital assets acquired in prior years were charged to operations in the year of purchase. These assets have not been capitalized, as the necessary financial information is not readily determinable.

Capital assets have been stated at cost. Depreciation is provided on a declining balance basis at the following rates:

Building	- 50 years straight line
Computer equipment	- 30% declining balance
Furniture and fixtures	- 20% declining balance

d) Goods and Services Tax

In accordance with the rules regarding the Goods and Services Tax, this organization has claimed a G.S.T. refund representing 50% of the G.S.T. paid for purchases. The remaining 50% has been recorded as an expense.

e) Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities (if any) at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting periods. Actual results may vary from the current estimates. These estimates are reviewed periodically and, as adjustments become necessary, they are reported in operations in the periods in which such adjustments become known.

3. Computer equipment

Over the past few years computer equipment totaling \$103,323 was purchased through funding provided by Community Access Programming. Consistent with generally accepted accounting principles, these assets were capitalized and will be amortized in accordance with the rates as noted in note 2(c). During the year the equipment was disposed of.

4. Concentration of credit risk:

Cash and investments are on deposit with a Major Canadian Bank. Management does not believe that the organization is subject to any significant credit risk in this regard.

5. Mortgage payable

The organization entered into a long-term mortgage in 2003. The term is for 5 years at 7% per annum. The monthly payments of \$5,100 include both interest and principal repayment.

6. Comparative figures

The comparative figures were reported on by another firm of Chartered Accountants.

The comparative figures have been reclassified in accordance with the current years presentation.

Statement of Cash flows

Year Ended March 31, 2005

	2005	2004
Operating activities		
Cash from operations -		
Net revenue over expenses	\$ (7,920)	\$ (16,780)
Items not affecting cash		
Amortization	38,063	49,349
	<u>30,143</u>	<u>32,569</u>
Changes in non-cash components of working capital		
Short term investments	(886)	(1,094)
Accounts receivable	(1,946,088)	144,633
Prepaid expenses	14,418	12,340
Accounts payable	1,143,136	(171,842)
Deferred revenue	770,284	(60,833)
	<u>(19,136)</u>	<u>(76,796)</u>
Cash provided by (used in) operations	<u>11,007</u>	<u>(44,227)</u>
Financing activities		
Mortgage payable	<u>(25,369)</u>	<u>(23,116)</u>
Investing activities		
Purchase of Capital assets	<u>(9,153)</u>	<u>(53,172)</u>
Increase (decrease) in cash	(23,515)	(120,515)
Cash, beginning of year	<u>403,351</u>	<u>523,866</u>
Cash, end of the year	<u>\$ 379,836</u>	<u>\$ 403,351</u>

See accompanying notes.

Employment Services at Miziwe Biik has had a challenging and busy fiscal year



The Resource Centre serviced approximately 10,000 clients who used our Resource Center for job searching. Clients accessed the computers, including internet, fax, telephone, and photocopying as well as individual employment counselling.

The Employment Counsellors continue to support and encourage clients during their job searching, as it is very challenging for individuals who are new to the city and may have relocated from a small community. It is very expensive for transportation and living accommodations as well as day care.



However, it is very exciting to see individual clients reach their goal of employment and self-sufficiency.

The average client employment result is 40% of every 1,000 clients, who are able to obtain employment. We are all very proud for those who are able to get employment. It is very exciting and gratifying for all of us, especially when individuals feel they will never be able to obtain their goal of employment and self-sufficiency and then they do.

Workshops are provided to our clients, who are interested in enhancing their job searching skills, which include resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, improving self-esteem and self-confidence and true colors, which helps in choosing a career of their choice.

The year was very busy in providing Information Sessions for our clients to consider training opportunities or employment opportunities. Some of our clients are in very unique training sessions or exceptional employment positions that turned out to be excellent jobs.

The majority of our clients who attend the workshops are successful at obtaining employment, consider a training course or return to school to upgrade their grade twelve and eventually consider college or university. In the past year several clients have been accepted into the transitional program at University of Toronto.

Meegwetch, to all of our new and loyal clients who continue to use our services to job search, attend a training program or decide to return to further their education

Congratulations to all of you who were able to reach your goal, whatever it may be and continue to follow your dreams. We all look forward to another successful year servicing and supporting our unemployed clients to self-sufficiency. The employment department encourages all of the clients who are job searching to register and schedule an appointment to see one of our employment counselors.

Sincerely

Ruby Dreger

*Miziwe Biik
Employment Staff
(left - right);
Paul Sayers,
Lillian Wesley,
Joseph McQuabbie,
Caryn Brideau,
Marsha Owl,
Ruby Dreger,
Denise Davad*

M I Z I W E B I I K A N N A J U N I A L R E P O R T

Employment - Success Stories

Anderson Besito



Anderson Besito came straight out of the bush last winter after spending six months away from Toronto where he was born and raised. He went directly to

Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT) where they helped him find a place to live. He began helping out at Anishnawbe Health logging almost one hundred hours of volunteer service.

They liked his dedication and hard work and subsequently hired him as an intake worker.

His reason for going to Miziwe Biik, says Anderson was "all in the boots." This past April, he was sent to Miziwe Biik to request assistance with the cost of boots to do his job. Although he was doing mostly clerical work as a volunteer at AHT, he was asked to stack the wood that's used for ceremonies. He gladly took on the responsibility. However, he needed safety boots to protect his feet from the mud, rain and wood. Employment Counsellor and Trainer Joseph McQuabbie provided the help and support he needed.

Anderson also took the opportunity to participate in Miziwe Biik's resume and cover letter writing workshop.

Anderson believes his background, qualities and skills makes him well-suited to his position. He has a positive personality and an optimistic outlook on life. His life experiences make him personally aware of what life is like for many of the clients at AHT. He hopes to stay in his job for a long time.

In recounting the upward trend his life has taken since landing the Intake

Worker position at AHT, Anderson confided he is getting married September 24th 2005. His fiancée is Judy Rheaume and they are planning a traditional Aboriginal wedding ceremony at his home reserve of Saugeen #29 First Nation.

Rick Crognale



Rick Crognale, an Ojibway from Curve Lake First Nation says he was an easy client for his Employment Counsellor Denise Davad at Miziwe Biik. He registered as a

client then talked with Denise who told him of available jobs that were a good match for his skills and experience. Rick submitted his resume to Human Resources Managers and started going out to interviews. In addition to Miziwe Biik, Rick used other resources for his employment search. He went to quite a few interviews before landing his current job as the Finance Coordinator with the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC). It's a job he enjoys and finds satisfying. And it's close to his home community.

Rick's education, work experience and personal qualities made him the ideal candidate for the position with the ALFDC. He's completed courses in Business Administration and HR Management at Sir Sanford Fleming College in Peterborough. Through Athabaska University Online Learning he's earned BA credits. His work experience includes five years in the administration office of the National Tourism Organization in Ottawa.

His advice to others looking for work is to investigate careers that are in high demand now or will be in the near future. For example, research information on computer courses, which can be accessed through Local Delivery Mechanisms like Miziwe Biik. Rick says nursing is in demand right now and so is the apprenticeship route.

Sandi Boucher-Nielsen



With a little help from Miziwe Biik, Sandi Boucher-Nielsen has achieved her career goal. She started her career as a receptionist. Then she got a

job where she was second in command. Now, she's the Executive Director running the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC), an organization that is made up of several agencies that deliver employment and training services. It's a complex job that requires multi-tasking competence, top-notch people skills and the ability to work under pressure. Sandi found the job through an Employment Counsellor at Miziwe Biik, E.J. Kwandibens. When she first moved to Toronto, she tried the mainstream employment offices but found there were too many people applying for the same jobs. Her previous job experience had been in the Aboriginal non-profit sector in Thunder Bay. However, she couldn't find any such job postings in the Toronto area - at least not until she visited Miziwe Biik.

When asked how her present job changed her life, she says, "How doesn't it?" She's found it to be a phenomenal opportunity that enables her to use all her skills, experience and education. It's also a great opportunity, she says, to work with top level Aboriginal, business and government officials.

Her advice to someone looking for a job

is simple. They should definitely consider Miziwe Biik in their search because it's the connection to other Aboriginal agencies. What takes months to accomplish in the mainstream can be more easily and quickly accessed at Miziwe Biik. On getting a job through Miziwe Biik, she says "It's like going back to your people. You feel like you're connecting." Sandi is a member of Seine River First Nation in northern Ontario.

William Lavell

William Lavell, a member of the Wikwemikong First Nation on Manitoulin Island, says getting a full-time job has changed his life in several significant ways. "It's allowed me to learn," he says, "go on trips, open my eyes to business, and to plan instead of going from paycheque to paycheque." He's working at the University of Toronto. He's the Information Desk Administrator & Resource Coordinator in the Resource Centre for Academic Technology. He gets along with his co-workers, one of whom describes him as "a good guy to work with."

He first heard about Miziwe Biik from relatives last year. When he started looking for a job in Toronto after spending a year travelling in Europe, he remembered Miziwe Biik and headed for 167 Gerrard Street East. He hooked up with Employment Counsellor, E.J. Kwandibens who helped him do an inventory of his skills and interests and to refine his job search. In March of this year, E.J. helped him get the job at U of T as a training opportunity.



Miziwe Biik and the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC)

Miziwe Biik is a member of the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC).

The ALFDC is an umbrella organization for member First Nations and one urban board. The ALFDC is the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement holder between the First Nations and the Federal Government.

The ALFDC administers the funding, reports to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, develops programs, policies and procedures for members, and lobbies for funding. The Board of Directors of the ALFDC is made up of representatives of the member First Nations and urban boards.

Membership of the ALFDC is comprised of twelve First Nations and one urban board. The ALFDC is chaired by Steve Williams.

ALFDC Programs and Services

The programs and services offered by Miziwe Biik are similar to existing Human Resources and Skills Development Canada programs. These programs and services focus on both groups and individuals by providing training to Aboriginal people seeking to enter the workplace after periods of education/training or periods of unemployment. Training for groups or individuals is generally sponsored by community based Aboriginal organizations or private sector businesses.

Individual training is eligible to be taken at any recognized training institution/organization or delivered by an employer with on-the-job experience.

The type of programs and services offered are able to be adjusted to local situations and requirements, yet they must relate to both, a) the skills development interests of the individual and b) current labour market needs.



Project Budgets



CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUNDS

\$1,217,784.00

Breakdown of funds spent by Program:

Employment Assistance Support Measure	\$ 699,453.94
Stay in School Initiative	\$ 47,843.00
Job Creation Partnership	\$ 132,703.00
Direct Course Purchase	\$ 281,064.67
Self Employment Assistance	\$ 3,728.00
Targeted Wage Subsidy	\$ 29,502.00

Sponsors:

First Rain 3877281 Canada Inc.
 Big Soul Productions
 Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle
 Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto
 Moccasin Flats Inc.
 Aboriginal Business Resource Centre
 Adanac Truck Driver Training Ltd.
 Toronto Hostels Training Centre
 Native Women's Resource Centre
 Native Child & Family Services
 Native Men's Residence
 Fiona Jarvis Barrister & Solicitor
 Digital Distance
 Individual Client Requests

YOUTH FUND \$ 882,219.00

Breakdown of Funds Spent by Program:

Employment Assistance Support Measure	\$ 187,201.33
Job Creation Partnership	\$ 262,754.00
Targeted Wage Subsidy	\$ 47,108.00
Youth Work Experience Program	\$ 89,048.00
Direct Course Purchase	\$ 63,075.31

Sponsors:

Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
 Native Child & Family Services
 Lucy's Hair Design & Spa
 Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
 Individual Client Requests
 Anishnawbe Health Toronto
 Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto
 Aboriginal Voices Radio
 Red Sky Performance
 Bell Canada Contact Solutions
 Native Women's Resource Centre
 Native Men's Residence
 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
 The University of Toronto

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND \$1,983,299.78

Breakdown of funds spent by Program:

Employment Assistance Support Measure	\$ 943,133.03
Job Creation Partnership	\$ 213,980.00
Direct Course Purchase	\$ 14,928.66
Targeted Wage Subsidy	\$ 185,055.00
Self Employment Assistance	\$ 22,749.02
Stay in School Initiative	\$ 53,454.07

Sponsors:

Centre for Indigenous Theatre
 Aboriginal Legal Services Toronto
 Big Soul Productions
 TANSI
 Community Information Toronto
 Anishnawbe Health Toronto
 Spirit of the People
 Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
 Aboriginal Business Resource Centre
 Anduhyaun Inc.
 Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
 Native Skills Centre
 Individual Client Support and Training requests
 Aboriginal Voices Radio
 Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle
 Red Pepper Spectacle Arts
 Wash 21
 Association for Native Development
 in the Performing & Visual Arts
 Imagine Native
 Evergreen
 Native Men's Residence
 Native Child & Family Services
 Invert Media
 Harbourfront Centre
 Digital Distance
 Nishnawbe Homes Inc.
 Johnston Research Inc.
 Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation
 CESO Aboriginal Services
 White Wind
 Waterfront Productions Inc.
 First Nations House (University of Toronto)

SUMMER CAREER PLACEMENTS (2004)

Total Allocation **\$ 90,653.00**

Sponsors:

Giizhaadaawgamik Daycare
 Native Men's Residence
 CESO Aboriginal Services
 Aboriginal Voices Radio
 Native Child & Family Services
 Native Women in the Arts
 Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
 Noojimawin Health Authority
 Red Pepper Spectacle Arts
 Ontario First Nations Technical Services

URBAN ABORIGINAL HOMELESS (UAH) 2004

Total Allocation: **\$1,500,000**

Aboriginal Voices Radio
 Anduhyaun Inc.
 Anishnawbe Health Toronto
 Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
 Native Child & Family Services
 Native Men's Residence
 Native Women's Resource Centre
 Nishnawbe Homes
 Spiritwatch
 Toronto Council Fire Cultural Centre

M I Z I W E B I K A N N U A L R E P O R T

Projects - Success Stories



Kira Thompson Shapeshifters

Outgoing, dynamic and highly motivated, Kira Thompson's career choice is ideal for her. Her newly established business, Shapeshifters, specializes in eyebrow waxing. Once this is up and fully operational, she plans to develop her own line of cosmetics and the use of indigenous plants will integrate the concept of balance with the earth.

Kira moved to Toronto from New York City in January of this year. With her business idea, she was accepted into the Aboriginal Entrepreneur Development Program (AEDP) being offered at Miziwe Biik. The program is a partnership between Native Child and Family Services, Centennial College and Miziwe Biik. "I've been poor ever since," says Kira. "It's a struggle." All joking aside, she can't say enough about what she gained from the AEDP. It gave her insight, hope and the motivation to take those important steps towards her economic independence.

Staff of Miziwe Biik including Project Officer Alissa Marshall and Kenn Ross, Manager of the Aboriginal Business Resource Centre have been working with Kira, encouraging her to realize her vision. Not only has she participated in the AEDP, she's also accessed funding through the Self Employment Assistance Program. Of her relationship with Miziwe Biik, Kira says, "It was a partnership to self-employment."

Kira's career path has led her naturally to Shapeshifters. At the age of eighteen, she attended a school for esthetics. For four years, she took courses at M.A.C. learning cosmetic techniques and applications. Previous employment in the United States included holding the

position of district manager/salesperson for a major cosmetics line where she felt she was "making it." She took care of corporate cosmetic accounts on the eastern seaboard for six years.

Being a single mother has meant many sacrifices to improve the satisfaction she gains from her life. She says, "I'm amazing and I know I am!" And this is what she wants to convey to the world. The Spring and Summer issues of *Wish* and *Fashion* magazines feature her as makeup specialist in an eight-page layout.

Kira doesn't feel her future is limited. Her advice is to "take what you're good at. Life is like a tree with branches that represent an extension of more to come." She has a son Isa whom she describes as her strength, inspiration and love.

Kira is Sioux-Assinaboine, from the Carry the Kettle First Nation, in Saskatchewan.



Wanda Nanibush A Commitment to the Arts

Setting career goals helped Wanda Nanibush, a "creative Native" from the Beausoleil Ojibway First Nation, land her current job. She's the youth editor of *SAY - Spirit of Aboriginal Youth* - a lifestyle magazine for Aboriginal youth. *SAY* features profiles of inspiring role models and insightful articles about entertainment, sports, careers, entrepreneurship, health and youth culture. The magazine regularly publishes three times a year and has an impressive annual readership of one million.

Wanda graduated from York University's Arts Administration Program. It's a one-year program that prepares you to work in the arts field. Her education combined with help from Miziwe Biik along with her own determination has helped Wanda progress along her chosen career path.

She explains that she first became involved with Miziwe Biik when she heard about Danis Goulet, the Executive Director at ImagineNATIVE Film and Media Arts Festival. The organization hosts an annual four-day film festival of works by emerging and established Aboriginal artists. Since its inception in 1998, it has become highly regarded as one of the most important film and media festivals in the world.

Wanda was impressed with what she heard about the festival and its Executive Director. Working with ImagineNATIVE became a goal for her. Arlene Caribou, former Project Officer with Miziwe Biik helped her obtain a six-month training position as the Festival's Special Events Coordinator. From there she moved into the editorial position with *SAY*.

To succeed in the arts, a strong commitment is important along with making connections says Wanda. She can be reached at wanda@saymag.com.



Projects Staff (left-right);
Alissa Marshall, Leslie Keddie,
Eileen Meawassige, Rob Ryan

Aboriginal Business Resource Centre (ABRC)

Kenn Ross



The ABRC acts as a one-window access point for both Aboriginal entrepreneurs and agencies/institutions who provide services to entrepreneurs. The ABRC staff provide critically-needed business skills development through one-on-one business counselling, workshops and seminars, among other initiatives.

The ABRC had a busy and successful 2004 fiscal year. ABRC accomplishments include:

- The ABRC had 922 client contacts where 122 first and follow up meetings were held with Aboriginal entrepreneurs.
- We held twenty-nine workshops, information sessions and forums that were attended by 414 participants; topics ranged from networking, understanding cash flow, website development, procurement and tax preparation for small business. This has led to partnerships on skills development delivery with Aboriginal Business Canada, CESO Aboriginal Services, Enterprise Toronto, and the Toronto Business Development Centre.
- We held numerous in-depth consultations regarding the development of small office/home office businesses as well as medium sized business and social purpose enterprises. The types of business opportunities include landscaping, wireless communications, motorcycle repair, courier operations, and cleaning product distribution.
- 16 Aboriginal participants undertook the Small Business Certification Course offered by the ABRC through Centennial College.
- We were a part of the organization and delivery of the inaugural Aboriginal Entrepreneur development program (AEDP) with sponsor Native Child and Family Services and partner Centennial College for 23 clients.



ABRC Staff; Veronica Johnny, Kenn Ross

- Fifteen new jobs were created through the ABRC.
- The ABRC is one of three partners operating Toronto's Social Purchasing portal (www.spptoronto.org), launched in May 2005; in association with the Learning Enrichment Foundation and the Information Technology Association of Canada; this web-based database is a business-to-business (B2B) matching service between community economic development organizations (CEDOs), their clients, and community enterprises run by Aboriginal people, new arrivals to Canada, women, youth and other populations at risk in the economy, leading to jobs and increased social capital which benefits the city as a whole.
- The ABRC is now a community partner with the Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF), marketing this innovative youth entrepreneur loan program to Aboriginal youth in the Greater Toronto Area; an Aboriginal board will assist entrepreneurs in the application process in order to access loans up to \$15,000.
- The ABRC organizes the Toronto Aboriginal Business Association (TABA) and celebrated the third annual TABA Awards, which celebrates the spirit of Aboriginal entrepreneurship.

Special mention must go to the Ontario Trillium Foundation who has approved a three year grant for the ABRC in June 2004.



Aboriginal Business Resource Centre - Success Stories

Mary Lou Linklater, President Abormedia

The President of Abormedia, Mary Lou Linklater has a dream - to be the top Canadian Aboriginal multi-marketing corporation. With the discipline and hard work that she's shown in her business so far, it's just a matter of time before she realizes that dream.

Mary Lou spent a year planning her business without benefit of any funding. What she did have were mentors who helped her gain the confidence needed to forge ahead with her vision. Abormedia began as a products company focusing on communications - print products and web design, and later evolved to include the media technology sector.

Staff are hired on a seasonal basis because the business is project-oriented. At any given time, she has about ten people working in the print and graphic design component of her company. She participates in the Employer Information sessions at Miziwe Biik, letting participants know what type of jobs are available at Abormedia. Participation in Job Fairs is something else she considers important.

Mary Lou sees herself as an entrepreneur/activist. She wants to see other Aboriginal people start their own businesses and she conducts information sessions to encourage the development of Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Her advice to them is based on her own experience. She tells them to stay committed because standing firm is the foundation of your business. Be prepared to be rejected. Hang in there because you can change a no into a yes. The same people who say

no at first may change their minds and seek out your services next week. One of Mary Lou's other projects is a National Aboriginal Leadership Conference that she's planning. It's scheduled for November and will be held in Toronto. The theme is social and economic development and leadership for the 21st Century using information and education to strengthen the global economy. With Mary Lou at the helm, it's certain to be a dynamic exchange of fresh and innovative ideas.

Mary Lou is Cree from Nelson House First Nation in Manitoba and is currently living in Toronto. Mary Lou can be contacted at Abormedia 346 Regal Briar St. Whitby, ON L1N 6N1 (905) 723 1627

David McIntyre: Federal Wireless Communications Inc.

"Plan your work and work your plan." That's the advice David McIntyre offers to aspiring entrepreneurs. He's the President of Federal Wireless Communications Inc., a 100% Aboriginal-owned company that's been operating for five years.

He's got fifteen staff with eleven based in Toronto, two in Montreal and two in Sault Ste. Marie. Services and products offered by Federal Wireless include broadband data to remote communities, two-way radios, satellite phones and other products. To stay competitive, his products need to be on the cutting edge.

Anyone wanting to run their own business has to be prepared to do everything to ensure that their business

grows, thrives and survives. That's what David does. Sales, hiring, human resource management are all tasks he takes on. A solid bookkeeping background and work ethic is also necessary. Knowing your product is crucial. You need to keep on top of what's new and upcoming.

When asked how operating his own business has changed his life, David says he doesn't really have a life other than coping with the brutal realities of running a business!

David is frequently asked to conduct information sessions about job opportunities in his company. It's difficult to find qualified candidates, he says, because his products are cutting edge technology and the skill set is lacking in this field.

For people interested in working for his company, he suggests they pursue a technical education so that they understand the product he's selling. For example, employees would need to know about radio frequencies whether they are looking for a job in customer service or doing sales. He recommends that candidates, at minimum, attend an institution such as Radio College of Canada to learn the basics of radio repair. David's hard work and competitive spirit have paid off.

His business is thriving and growing and in March of this year, he was named the Aboriginal Businessman of the Year by the Toronto Aboriginal Business Association (TABA). TABA is coordinated by Miziwe Biik and offers business development and support as well as networking opportunities for Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the Greater Toronto Area.

*David McIntyre at Federal Wireless Communications
5250 Finch Ave. E Suite 11
Toronto, ON M1S 5A5
(416) 321 6606*

David is a member of Timiskaming First Nation.

Darren Williams Operations Manager, Speedtrek Courier

Darren Williams, the Operations Manager at Speedtrek Courier Services is Pottawatomi from Moose Deer Point First Nation. In 1999, he merged his business Nomad Express with Speedtrek. Being an Operations Manager, Darren says, has its own challenges. They're different from owning your own business but the biggest plus, he says, is that now he gets to go home at a reasonable hour.

Miziwe Biik has been a client of Speedtrek for four years, he says. However, his main reason for approaching Miziwe Biik was for assistance to hire additional staff. As an entrepreneur, he was referred to the Aboriginal Business Resource Centre (ABRC) and Kenn Ross, the ABRC Coordinator. The ABRC provides developmental assistance and support and networking opportunities to established and aspiring Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

For anyone interested in becoming a courier, he says, a good knowledge of the city is a definite requirement. You need to be dependable as well as responsible. In order to handle calls for service, a candidate should at least have basic computer and good keyboard skills.

Darren can be reached at Speedtrek Courier 111 Peter St. Toronto, ON M5V 2H1 (416) 361 0881



M I Z I W E B I I K A N N U A L R E P O R T





Online Aboriginal Campus

Pat Latham and Dawn Dumont

After years of development which involved writing, designing and editing content, MB Campus has been focused on marketing the GED Program.

Potential students and their tutors/mentors from the following aboriginal organizations in Toronto were therefore invited to the initial launch of the Miziwe Biik Campus. The attendees had a lot of questions about the site and some of these students volunteered to try the courses and provide feedback.

Our Coordinator (Dawn Dumont) is notified whenever someone wants to register to the site. After notification, the applicant goes through an approval process. The person is then automatically registered in the course. They have since worked with the programmers to streamline the registration system and to assist the newly registered clients.

Demonstrations of the online campus have been done at various locations and events in the GTA. Some of those are:

- While at the Aboriginal Voices E-Learning and Government Conference held in Toronto, the coordinator showed a demo of the Miziwe Biik Campus to an audience of around eighty participants
- Tumivut, a youth shelter that is managed by Na-Me-Res - which has turned into four new registrations
- Native Women's Resource Centre
- Native Child and Family Services - the Native Learning Centre
Coordinator arranged to buy 20 accounts for his students for the fall semester

Marketing has also taken place across Canada. Billie Jo Tabobondung was brought in as a temporary employee to build two databases of Aboriginal organizations and First Nations. She also created marketing materials and organized their production and implemented a massive mail-out to over 600 bands and Aboriginal organizations.

A presentation was also made to the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Hon. James Bartleman, who is of aboriginal ancestry and highly interested in the educational betterment of aboriginal people, especially those on remote reserves. His office has offered assistance in further marketing in Ontario.

We have now appointed a new part-time member of staff, Lena Recollet, to work with our Campus Community Coordinator to continue to market the Program.

Future Dissemination Efforts

As soon as we have included the first phase of feedback from our initial wave of students and tutors into Version Two of the course, they will be contacting the official GED Testing Services in each province and territory, many of which include details of available preparation courses on their web sites.

For more information on this program please visit www.mbcampus.com or contact Dawn Dumont at 416.977.4675 ext. 235

2004-05 Season in the Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Community Garden



Now in its third year, the Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Community Garden is not just a pretty presence at Pembroke and Gerrard. The garden also provides free programming on a variety of themes, including plants significant to Aboriginal traditions; Native plant species that provide habitat, bio-diversity and natural history lessons; vegetable beds that provide access to healthy eating and lifestyle activities; as well as linkages to landscape trades employment training.

Work on the garden began in 2003, when Miziwe Biik partnered with Evergreen (the environmental organization). Funding has come from a City of Toronto Food and Hunger Action grant; the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, administered by the City of Toronto; Human Resources Skills

Development Canada; and Trillium.

Throughout, the collaboration of volunteers has been essential in planning, planting, maintaining and animating the garden. Volunteers have come from many communities: staff and clients of Miziwe Biik; neighbouring First Nations agencies (Anishnawbe Health Toronto; Native Women's Resource Centre); the wider Toronto Aboriginal community (Council Fire; Native Canadian Centre; Native Men's Residence; Tumivut Youth Shelter); and the immediate neighbourhood, as well as the general Toronto population.

The garden provides life and job skills training for volunteers and an employment opportunity in the seasonal position of Garden Coordinator. 2004's Garden Coordinator, Walter Lindstone, demonstrated leadership and vision in the way he developed the garden



programming with Elder teachings and talking circles. The Elders linked spirituality and the stewarding of the land; and drew analogies between the need to care for the environment and to steward one's body and spirit.

Highlights of the 2004-2005 Season

- 12 events at the garden over June, July & August 2004, engaging 155 volunteers including:
 - "lunch and learns" featuring salads from the garden
 - 2 day camp groups from the John Innes Community Centre at Moss Park (50 children in total)
 - volunteers with Serve Canada youth service organization (28 youth in total)
 - teaching circles with First Nations elders,
e.g. 2 Sweetgrass Workshop with Elder Pauline Shirt (47 attendees)
e.g. Potluck Teaching workshop with Elder Pete Keshane (8 attendees)
- The garden was featured in NOW Magazine's "Greenspiration" column: the garden was described as one of "T.O.'s unheralded eco-inspirations, glorious green commitments that prove we don't have to be at the mercy of monster pollution solutions." November 25 - December 1, 2004, p.17
- The garden was featured on tours including:
 - Shanghi Urban Planners group (visiting as part of a U of T course) (30 people)
 - Anishnawbe Heath Toronto's Post Natal Program (7 people)



- the American Community Garden Association's tour on Oct 2, 2004 (16 people)

- the Toronto Field Naturalists, Oct. 23, 2004 (35 people)

- The garden was featured at two conferences:
- a presentation at City of Toronto Municipal Day Training on Community Gardens: co-presented with Hillcrest Aboriginal Community Garden team, "How to use gardening to engage Aboriginal communities."
(50 in attendance on Sept. 30, 2004)
 - a presentation at the American Community Garden Association's 2004 conference in Toronto: same partners as above, "First Nations Gardens."
(50 in attendance on Oct. 2)
- Aboriginal Community Gardens Harvest Fest: over 100 people in attendance; co-hosted with Na-Me-Res & Tumivut's Hillcrest garden. Tall Pines Drummers & Dancers performed and spoke about the significance of harvest time.
- 4 Landscape Trades Employment Opportunities Workshops:
 - "What Its Like to Work in a Greenhouse" with the Operations Manager of Sheridan Nurseries
 - "A Career in Tree Care" with Al Miley of Al Miley & Associates, Professional Tree Services
 - "Working in Horticulture for the City of Toronto" with Arthur Beauregard, Manager of Horticulture and Naturalization, City of Toronto
 - "What It's Like to Work on a City Crew" with Steve Gimblet, Manager, Parks & Recreation

Miziwe Biik Programs and Services



Career and Employment Counselling Services

- Resume / Cover Letter Writing
- Interviewing Skills
- Hidden Job Market
- True Colors Workshops
- Basic Computer Skills Training

Employment Resource Centre Services

- Computers / Internet
- Photocopier / Facsimile
- Telephones / Postage / Mailing
- Toronto Labour Market Information
- Local Newspapers, including National Native Newspapers
- Local Community Information Resources
- Educational Information / Calendars

Employment Placement Services

- Job Board / Local Native Organization Postings
- Federal Government Temporary Employment Placements
- National Native Employment Opportunities Newsletter
- Referrals to Employment Opportunities / Summer Career Placement

Funding Services

- Employment Insurance Funding for Clients
- Community Project Training Available
- Advocacy for Employment, Education, Housing / Ontario Works



*The name Miziwe Biik
is associated with the
female water spirit,
and means
"water which flows
all around us".*

*The overall spirit of change
has been an ongoing
atmosphere at Miziwe Biik.*

Featured Cover Artist Zoey Wood-Salomon



THE ART OF ZOEY WOOD-SALOMON is painted in the traditional Woodland style that reflects Zoey's Odawa heritage. The originality of her paintings are marked by a combination of everyday experiences around her and the traditional legends of her heritage. Zoey is a self-taught artist.

Also, figuring heavily in her work is her own spiritual odyssey as a Christian. Says Zoey, "For a long time I was lost. I tried to blend into the dominant society but I never found a place where I felt good about myself. My Creator in His great love for me saw this and He opened up a way for me to get back in touch with who I am and where I come from. Today He is leading me gently back to my culture, my heritage and my people. He has done this through my art. My art and faith have become integral parts of my self discovery. When I paint, I pray. I find I get very dissatisfied with myself when I do not paint because I pray better when I paint; and so, if I am not painting, I am not praying."

Today Zoey and her husband Jim have made Bawating-the Rapids-Sault Ste. Marie their landing spot-their home. Together they have six grown children and many grandchildren. Jim is Zoey's greatest supporter. Says Zoey, "My family is very important to me. They have always believed in me, in my capabilities. They are part of my Sacred Circle. Gifts from God."



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