

AGM 2008-2009



Miziwe Biik
Aboriginal Employment and Training

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Miziwe Biik Acknowledges financial support and contributions from the following:

Human Resources and Social Development Canada
City of Toronto
Trillium Foundation
ALFDC
Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities

MIZIWE BIIK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Jimmy Dick
Vice President Steve Teekens
Treasurer/Secretary Mike White
Board Harry Willmot
Board Tom Morrison

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.

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.



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.

MIZIWE BIIK STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Executive Director
Nancy Martin
Finance Manager
Marina Elliott
Special Projects Manager
Jennifer Abbott
Building Maintenance
Carol Barker

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING

Manager
Ruby Dreger
Administrative Assistant
Lillian Wesley
Counsellor
Joseph McQuabbie
Counsellor
Brenna Lafrance
Trainer
Denise Davad
Job Developer
Gregg Bellerose
Administrative Assistant
Valerie Jacko

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Officer
Eileen Meawasige
Project Officer
Vickie Labranche
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Karine Ottawa

ABORIGINAL BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTRE

Manager
Kenn Ross

CARPENTRY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP

Job Coach
Tammy Bird
Coordinator
Osborne Farrell

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Cover

Toronto Firebirds "Stay in School" Hockey Program.
See feature on the back inside cover

FROM THE PRESIDENT



JIMMY DICK

I would like to begin by thanking my colleagues on the board of directors, for their ongoing commitment to the organization and to the community. I also wanted to acknowledge our Executive Director, Nancy Martin, and all of the Miziwe Biik staff for their hard work and dedication for their continued support and direction.

I also would like to extend my gratitude to our community members and partners and wish them and their families, good health and prosperity in the coming year. This year we were privileged to sponsor the Toronto Firebirds who had hockey clinic for Native Youth and children that were funded under our Stay in School Program. The Program is featured on the inside back cover of our AGM booklet. The clinic took place during the March Break, March 16 - 21, 2009, and it was great success. I extend a big thank you to all the player's and supporters of the Toronto Firebirds Hockey Team.

Thank you all and best wishes in the coming year of 2009/2010.

All Our Relations,

Jimmy Dick, President

Board of Directors

Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training

FROM THE DIRECTOR



NANCY MARTIN

It is said that the youth are our future, so in 2008/09 Miziwe Biik backed a number of programs that supported that affirmation including, the Stay in School Program and a number of construction trades initiatives that were complimented by academic upgrading modules. And, if the youth are the future, culture is the underlying strength that sustains the community and strengthens its spirit. Miziwe Biik supported this principle by funding a language-training program that included skills training and employment opportunities. A highlight of that program was a conference hosted by the University of Toronto's Ciiman language project, which honoured our Ojibway language speakers.

Community based training such as the "Youth Employment Building Skills" offered by Native Child and Family Services, the Community Health Worker program of Anishnawbe Health and the "Apaenmowinneen" at Native Men's Residence, are examples of programs that creatively leverage the strengths of the participants remain a part of Miziwe Biik's commitment to its members. These programs enhance the opportunity for future employment or further training for the participants.

Partnerships are a key factor in creating job opportunities and Miziwe Biik has many friends in government and the private sector with whom it shares common goals and objectives. Building a strong partnership network is an important part in the process to establish economic self-sufficiency for our community. Our partnership with First Nations Technical Institute has brought us training in Office Administration, First Nations Law Clerk and Public Administration and Governance Certificate. The Carpentry program continues to thrive in partnership with Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, George Brown College, Toronto Council Fire and key employers in the construction trades. In cooperation with Miziwe Biik Development Corporation (MBDC), we are looking at the connecting factors between employment and training and economic development. With MBDC, there are two proposed construction projects that will lead to employment and training opportunities in several sectors from construction to hospitality to the arts.

This is the final year in for the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) agreement. The replacement program, Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy (ASETS) is being rolled out by HRSDC and Miziwe Biik/ALFDC will prepare a business plan to deliver the new program in Toronto. I am confident that the future program will continue to provide the Aboriginal community with skills and experience, which will allow our community to participate fully in the opportunities that most Canadians take for granted. ■

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
- Toronto Labour Market Information
- Local, National and Native Newspapers
- Local Community Information Resources
- Educational Information / Calendars

Employment Placement Services

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

Funding Services

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

Aboriginal Business Resource Centre

- Business Advisory Service
- Small Business Certificate Course
- Entrepreneur Training
- Subject Matter Experts
- Toronto Aboriginal Business Association
- Computers
- Resource Library
- Referrals to Funding Sources

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTRE SERVICES

RUBY DREGER



the challenge of working with the largest and the most diverse Aboriginal population in Canada.

Congratulations to all of our registered clients who completed their Training Goals and, most significantly, to those able to find positions consistent with their employment goals. Clients were able to find meaningful employment throughout the year and our Summer Students, were able to get great summer jobs.

One of the most successful Training initiatives that was run during the year was the Pre Employment Training program. The program was held at Miziwe Biik in the Employment Resource Centre for a six week period. The program prepared clients for job search techniques. Everyone who completed the six week program received a certificate during an awards ceremony.

Clients continue to register on line for the General Education Development (GED) program. Some of our clients have found the learning program very challenging, and others have gone through the process with more ease. For those who have completed the program there has been a great sense of accomplishment.

The Employment Staff encourages clients to continue using the services of the Employment Resource Centre in 2009-2010. By working with the Employment Counsellors, attending ongoing and special training programs/workshops, and by participating in courses like the GED, we hope that you will be able to achieve your employment and training goals.

The Employment Resource Centre had a very busy 2008-2009. There was a noticeable increase in the number of clients accessing our services. The Employment Counsellors were kept very busy with all of the contacts from our new and existing clients. As an overview of the requests that we received, there seemed to be an equal interest expressed in both our training and employment programs and resources.

The economy in the Toronto area was very different this year. We saw a lot of layoffs in a number of sectors and organization that had hired Miziwe Biik clients in the past. Many were not taking on any new employees. Despite this down turn, the Resource Centre was successful in finding positions for many of our job-ready clients. Our success rate has been consistent with the pre-recession. Thanks to the hard work of our staff and the confidence expressed by our clients.

Meegwetch, to all of the Employment Staff, who continue to work with our Unemployed Clientele, assisting them with reaching their employment goals. Clients continue to relocate to Toronto from across Canada in search of a more active labour market, and our counsellors have to meet

Photo (left to right): Valerie Jacko, Gregg Bellerose, Brenna Lafrance, Ruby Dreger, Joseph McQuabbie, Denise Davad, Lillian Wesley



Success Story

OSBORNE FARRELL

Carpentry Apprenticeship Program

Originally from Bear River, Nova Scotia, Osborne Farrell spent most of his formative years in Toronto. Married, an exhausted father of 5 boys, ranging in ages from 3 to 14, he works as the Job Coordinator with Miziwe Biik's Carpentry Apprenticeship Program.

His current position is a logical step forward his work and education background. He was a graduate of the Business Administration program at Centennial College and a graduate and class valedictorian from George Brown's Job Developer program. He spent time between programs and waiting for the right position, working in the construction trade. There he utilized the woodworking skills that he had acquired at an alternative high school program that included work placements.

Osborne was a client at Miziwe Biik when he was offered a training position, which became a full-time opportunity with the Carpentry Apprenticeship Program. Working alongside the Carpentry team, he says that he has replaced his sense of job entitlement with a strong community spirit and a desire to help others. In a program environment where it feels like a family, he says that, "Now when I go home, I feel like I've had a positive impact on the community. This year we've placed 22 of our Apprentices in worthwhile positions. Each day we receive 3-4 new calls asking about the program."

Getting participants positions through resume assistance, job contacts, and other forms of one-on-one support is just a small part of the program and the services offered by the Apprenticeship team. This year a link has been established with the Toronto District School Board, which has agreed to allow participants to use the George Brown Academic Upgrade credits in English and Math, acquired through the program, towards Grade 12 Diplomas. Negotiating this type of enhanced service on a broader scale is what Osborne is interested in pursuing next. He is interested in eventually moving into advocacy and lobbying positions that promote and support creative community initiatives. ■

This year, we've placed 22 of our Carpentry Apprentices in worthwhile positions. Each day we receive 3-4 new calls asking about the program

Success Story

MAYA CHACABY

Ojibway Language Program

The program has similar characteristics to Miziwe Biik in that, it sends ripples out into the community. Successes within the program have a big outward effect.

Given the dependence of Anishinaabemowin on traditional ways of teaching, it is not surprising that Coordinator, Maya Chacaby compares her innovative urban-based Ojibway language program to a canoe trip. "Participants stay in for as long as required, travel to different places, gain experience and share knowledge during their travels." What she is describing is a process in which individuals in the Ciimaan Language community, a joint initiative of Miziwe Biik and the University of Toronto's Aboriginal Initiatives Program, participate while they acquire skills that allow them to go out into the community as speakers and leaders. "The program has similar characteristics to Miziwe Biik, in that it sends ripples out into the community. Successes within the program have a big outward effect."

Anishinaabe, Beaver clan, from Kaministiquia in the Thunder Bay Area, Maya encourages the urban youth who attend the program to value their contemporary views and knowledge and to apply them to traditional teachings in order to keep them relevant and alive. An example of how this works in a practical way is the Tehsopitaasowin project. A Tehsopitaasowin is a traditional storage platform upon which a community would store food and essential survival items. The Ciimaan Tehsopitaasowin is an open source server that stores and protects digital cultural archives from the GTA and several First Nations communities from across Ontario.

Language program participants enter Ciimaan at different levels of fluency and they develop their language ability through a job-training model, which has them developing projects with language revitalization opportunities. Participants must search out the resources and acquire all of the skills needed to deliver and lead the project or event. Past events have included an Ojibway theatre project in partnership with Native Earth Performing Arts, Ojibway Speed Dating, a Summer Language Camp, and an Honoring Ceremony for Ojibway Learners at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. Seventy awards were distributed and over 150 community members were in attendance at the Honoring Ceremony <http://ciimaan.org> ■



ABORIGINAL BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTRE

KENN ROSS



During the 2008 fiscal year the ABRC served over 130 clients and offered both one-on-one business coaching as well as its ever-popular Small Business Certificate Course. The ABRC is also responsible for the small business loan portfolio and two such loans were made in fiscal 2008. Further, the ABRC continued to build on its partnership with Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC) so that ABRC clients can access ABC's grant pool.

The ABRC continues to take on special projects. One of these was a pilot program for youth skills development, Mekanayzn, a partnership between the ABRC and the Youth Office of HRSDC. Outcome expectations included employment, a return to school, apprenticeship and entrepreneurship. Fourteen Aboriginal youths aged between 15 and 29 were recruited for this 12 weeks program that ran between January and March 2009. The youth were challenged to learn various life skills such as problem-solving, team work and budgeting while also undertaking field trips and job shadowing assignments to understand possible career choices. A highlight of the program was a field trip to the CBC where Carla Robinson took the group on a tour and discussed her career in journalism. Also, the youth attended a taping of The Hour. Out of this intensive program there were 8 graduates while four other found employment or training opportunities during the program. The program culminated with the graduates being recognized at the 7th annual Toronto Aboriginal Business Awards.

The TABAs capped of the fiscal year on March 26th when the Toronto Aboriginal business community recognized outstanding achievements by Aboriginal entrepreneurs and youth. Invited guests came from the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business communities as well as representatives from all levels of government. Among the guests was the Honourable Brad Duguid, Ontario Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

This year the Awards were presented by RBC, part of its ongoing commitment to Aboriginal entrepreneurship. The TABA recipients were:

Aboriginal Businesswoman of the Year
Denise Bolduc, arts consultant

Aboriginal Businessman of the Year
Shane Belcourt, film production

Aboriginal Youth: graduating class of Mekanayzn employability skills program

ABRC would like to thank its partners for their continuing support: City of Toronto, Enterprise Toronto, Henry and Bernice Kaufmann Foundation, McLean Foundation, FK Morrow Foundation, and RBC. ■

PROJECT BUDGETS

CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND \$1,780,269.45

Breakdown of funds by Program:

Targeted Wage Subsidy \$650,079.58
Direct Course Purchase \$594,058.89
Stay In School Initiative \$89,434.00
Employment Assistance Support Measures \$321,546.25
Local Labour Market Partnerships \$89,276.00
Self Employment Assistance \$21,114.80
Youth Work Experience \$14,760.00

SPONSORS:

- Native Child and Family Services
- Native Women's Resource Centre
- Big Soul Productions
- Nishnawbe Homes
- Red Sky Performance
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- University of Toronto
- Amberlight Productions Inc.
- Spirit of the People
- Ontario First Nations Technical Services
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto
- First Nations House (UofT)
- Centre for Indigenous Theatre
- Anduhyun Inc.
- Native Men's Residence
- Toronto Council Fire Cultural Centre
- Red Pepper Spectacle Arts
- Seventh Generation Midwives
- Kevin Boudewyn Consulting
- Small Theatre Administration Facility
- Toronto Bail
- Neegan Burnside
- The Brow House
- Youthlink
- Native Woman in the Arts
- Individual Client Requests

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND \$1,987,583.80

Breakdown of funds by Program:

Targeted Wage Subsidy \$1,027,734.40
Self Employment Assistance \$79,657.60
Skills Development \$215,547.74
Employment Assistance Support Measures \$387,252.96
Local Labour Market Partnerships \$104,566.50
Stay In School Initiative \$172,824.67

SPONSORS:

- Centre for Indigenous Theatre
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto
- Anduhyun Inc.
- Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Toronto Council Fire Cultural Centre
- Reel World Film Festival Inc.
- Native Women's Resource Centre
- Aboriginal Business Resource Centre
- Spirit of the People
- Association for Native Development in the Arts
- D. Bruce McChesney
- Lifestyle Information Network
- Nishnawbe Homes
- Individual Client Requests

YOUTH FUNDS \$431,751.10

Breakdown of funds by Program:

Individual Skills Enhancement \$27,650.00
Work Experience \$404,101.10

SPONSORS:

- Native Child and Family Services
- ImagineNative
- Evergreen
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Purple Hearts
- John Howard Society of Toronto
- Harbourfront Centre
- Big Soul Productions
- GAA Dibaatjimat Ngaashi
- Spirit of the People

SUMMER CAREER PLACEMENTS

Total Allocation \$76,342.00

SPONSORS:

- Toronto Council Fire Cultural Centre
- Gizhaadaawgamik Daycare Centre
- Japanese Canadian Centre
- Native Child and Family Services
- Artic Co-Operators
- Red Pepper Spectacle Arts
- Noojimwin Health Authority
- University of Toronto
- Ontario First Nations Technical Services
- Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training



Project Staff (left to right): Vickie Labranche, Karine Ottawa, Eileen Meawasige

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 urban boards.

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 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 two urban boards. The ALFDC is chaired by Steve Williams.

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 interest of the individuals and b) current labour market needs.



Feature Program

STAY IN SCHOOL PROGRAM

As a part of the Stay in School Program, Miziwe Biik sponsored a youth hockey clinic organized by the Toronto Firebirds.

The March Break (March 16-21) clinic was offered to Aboriginal youth from the ages of 7 to 18. The clinic provided Hockey Skills, Training and Development, including on-ice games and practices, dry-land training, a family and community skate-day and healthy meals.

The clinic was designed to not only provide recreational activities for the Children and Youth of our community, but also to provide future employment and training opportunities for the Firebirds participants. Some Firebirds will have the opportunity to gain Hockey Training Certificates as a coach, trainer or referee. Once they receive this training they can work within Toronto's Hockey Network. Additionally, the Firebirds team is working to become an established Not-for-Profit Hockey Club and to build a strong network that will allow future generations to

take on leadership roles.

For Miziwe Biik, an additional objective of the program is to keep young people active and engaged in positive activities during their free time. Youth who are healthy and active are more likely to stay in school longer, and to have a positive attitude when it comes to putting in the effort required to succeed. Providing opportunities for youth to accomplish tasks and do well helps to build strong individual and collective spirit.

The Toronto Firebirds hockey players are our future entrepreneurs, trainee applicants and employees. It is important to establish early on the character and personal commitment required to do well in post-secondary and specialized training programs, as well as the workforce.

We would like to thank the Toronto Firebirds for establishing such a worthwhile program and for encouraging our youth to stay in school.



