

# AGM 2009-2010



**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

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*Project Officer Assistant*  
Karine Ottawa

### CARPENTRY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP

*Job Coach*  
Tammy Bird  
*Coordinator*  
Osborne Farrell

## 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.*

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### Cover

Ngindaasmin Academic Upgrading Program.  
(see feature on the back inside cover)

**Photo (left to right):** Tyler Pennock - teacher; Sylvia Plain - student; Natalie Clark - English Tutor; Marlene Rathbone - student; Liz Kataquapit - student; Leilani Morales - Math Tutor; Garrett Dupont - student; Miranda Legarde - student; Sheena Kitchemokman - student; Carol White - Program Coordinator

**Not pictured on cover:** Melanie Montour - student; Teresina Glanton - Biology Tutor

## 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. Also, I want to acknowledge our Executive Director, Nancy Martin, and all of the Miziwe Biik staff for their hard work and dedication.

I extend my gratitude to our community members and partners and wish them and their families, good health and prosperity in the coming year. We look forward to making more opportunities available for you and your families in the area of employment and training.

Thank you all again and may the Great Spirit bless and watch over all of you and your loved ones ■

*All Our Relations,*

**Jimmy Dick**, President

Board of Directors

Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



NANCY MARTIN

I am happy to be reporting to you on the activities of Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training for the fiscal year 2009/10, and to congratulate all of our participants for helping us to achieve another year full of successes.

The programs and services at Miziwe Biik continue to grow. As a community we seem to gravitate towards certain career options more than others. The top employment trends include: construction trades, self-employment, helping professions from health, housing, legal services, office administration, management training, and career development and training in the arts.

In our ongoing commitment to our youth, Miziwe Biik has strengthened its programs in the areas of upgrading and basic skills as a stepping stone to further education and training. One of our goals is to strengthen the Aboriginal cultural content in our youth programs and in our employment and training programs in general.

Future Directions:

*AHRDA to ASETS* Miziwe Biik undertook a community consultation to determine the future priorities for employment and training. They include construction trades, management training, basic skills and self-employment assistance. These priorities have been integrated into our programming and information updates, and application forms are available on our website at: [www.miziwebiik.com](http://www.miziwebiik.com)

The Employment Resource Centre has been working towards the implementation of an Employment Ontario full service centre. Client and employer incentives are available through this initiative and we will be updating our website to include employment updates.

Skills development, including academic upgrading and basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, continue to be available through Miziwe Biik. One of our partners is ILC, Independent Learning Centre. Participants have been receiving their high school certificates through this program and have been going on to colleges and universities.

Our new Green Energy Project provides instruction on how to install solar energy panels. This is an excellent skill enhancement, which is particularly well suited to our carpentry graduates. In the future, participants in the Green Energy program may apply this skill to one of several specialties in a small contracting business program through MB Works! ■

# PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

## Career and Employment Counselling Services

- Resume / Cover Letter Writing
- Interviewing Skills
- Hidden Job Market
- Personality Dimensions
- Self Assessment Tool

## Employment Resource Centre Services

- Computers/Internet
- Photocopier / Facsimile
- Telephones Postage / Mailing
- 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
- National Native Employment Opportunities Newsletter
- Referrals to Employment Opportunities
- Summer Career Placements

## Funding Services

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

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# EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTRE SERVICES



The Employment Resource Centre has had a busy year full of challenge and change as we continue to enhance our services to Aboriginal community members. Our client base has seen ongoing growth as Aboriginal people continue to relocate to Toronto from remote rural communities in search of employment and training opportunities.

Congratulations to all our clients who successfully secured employment throughout the 2009-2010 fiscal years. Our student clients were also successful securing interesting and meaningful summer jobs through the Summer Student Career Placement program.

The competition for employment in Toronto continues to grow as many of our clients realize they may not have the necessary skills, education or experience as other residents of the GTA who are job searching. Our 6-week Pre-Employment Skills Development Program continues to provide clients with the necessary skills, tools and techniques they require to be competitive and successful in their search for employment and training opportunities.

We have also seen significant growth in the amount of clients seeking to enter the construction trades. Our counselors continue to connect those clients to appropriate training and pre-apprenticeship programs with training providers in the GTA.

More clients are interested in obtaining their GED and moving onto post secondary education through the transitional year programs offered at colleges and universities across the GTA. This is encouraging for our clients who strive to further their academic careers.

Our Employment Resource Centre is busier than ever as our Employment Counselors continue encouraging clients to work towards achieving their career and academic goals. We also welcome all those who are new to the Aboriginal community in Toronto and encourage them to visit our Employment Resource Centre.

Meegwetch to the staff of the Employment Resource Centre including the ERC Coordinator, Employment Counselors, Facilitator, Job Developer and our Receptionist and Administrative Assistant who continue to be passionate about assisting our clients every day. Their dedication and commitment to the work we do is what makes us so successful and keeps our clients coming back.

Connecting with a Miziwe Biik Employment Counselor may be that one step that is required in helping you to land your dream job.

The Employment Resource Centre team looks forward to continuing their work with the community while striving towards another successful year.

**Photo (insert):** Joseph McQuabbie

**(left to right):** Valerie Jacko, Rob Lebel, Brenna Lafrance, Lillian Wesley, Sarah Belisle, Ginny Boissonneau, and Denise Davad,



Jason Jenkins

Luke Parnell



## Success Story

# RED RUNNERS

## Curatorial Apprenticeship Program

In 2009-10, with the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council, Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training funded the first Thunderbird Aboriginal Arts, Culture and Entrepreneur Centre, Aboriginal Curatorial Apprenticeship Program.

The program had as its intent, to develop professional arts resources in an area that was unrepresented by the community and to provide training opportunities to young Aboriginal artists through a traditional Elder and youth mentorship model.

Chosen from a group of young hopefuls, Jason Jenkins and Luke Parnell stood out with their keen interest in exploring issues in contemporary Aboriginal art while developing a critical language that was clear, accessible and culturally relevant. Jason, who is of French-African and Ojibway heritage, is originally from Windsor but arrived in Toronto via Vancouver where he was working in the television and film industry. In Toronto, he was developing a reputation as a up-and-coming DJ and was beginning to explore photography. Luke, Nisga'a and Haida heritage, graduated with a BFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design and apprenticed for three years with a master carver. His work is contemporary but firmly based in a Northwest coast style.

Along with their mentors, renowned artists Robert Houle and Bonnie Devine, members of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, Jason and Luke went about an intense training and learning process. Of this period, Jason noted that, "when Robert asked me if I was ready to change the face of contemporary Native art, I knew this was going to be big." The final goal of the program was for the two interns to develop and present an art exhibition including critical essays. The result was the highly successful Thunderbird show Red Runners, presented in Toronto in June 2010.

A second offering of the Curatorial program is planned for 2010-11. Details will be announced at [mbdc.ca](http://mbdc.ca). Luke is currently at Emily Carr University working on his MFA and Jason is in Toronto working on his photography and is discussing upcoming projects with Thunderbird ■

When Robert (Houle) asked me if I was ready to change the face of contemporary Native art, I knew this was going to be big

**Photos:**

(top): by Nadya Kwandibens  
(bottom): by Jason Jenkins  
Runners by Morgan Green

## Success Story

# J'NET CAVANAGH

## Partnership Facilitator andpva

Miziwe Biik provided me with a training opportunity and a chance to acquire important management experience

J'net AyAy Qwa Yak Sheelth Cavanagh (One who gives away and still stands tall). Nuuchah-nulth from the Ahousaht First Nation on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, BC.

Currently the Partnership Facilitator at the Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts (andpva), J'net has come a long way from her position as a trauma counsellor in Vancouver and has entrenched herself in the Aboriginal arts and cultural community in the Greater Toronto Area where she now lives with her husband and three children.

On her journey to Toronto, J'net accumulated an impressive list of honours and experiences including a number of arts awards and scholarships through the Ontario Arts Council, the Banff Centre and the Aboriginal Achievement Foundation. In the field of Education, J'net received a Masters of Arts in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University, where her thesis advisor was National Chief Shawn Ainchut Atleo. She hopes to build on this achievement and on her teaching experience at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), in Indigenous Approaches to Community Engagement, by eventually pursuing a Doctoral degree at OISE.

Originally hired at andpva as an Aboriginal Arts Resources Manager, involved in developing and digitizing a library of arts information and reference materials, J'net then moved into the Miziwe Biik funded position of Executive Assistant. Now, as their Partnership Facilitator, one of her responsibilities is to manage four summer students during an 8 week Miziwe Biik funded training program. While working at andpva, J'net explained how, "Miziwe Biik provided me with a training opportunity and a chance to acquire important management experience."

While her own success has been remarkable, propelled by her drive and ambition, her most rewarding projects are the ones that seek to empower communities, develop networks and nurture up-and-coming arts leaders. "Through youth, train the trainers programs, Aboriginal specific curriculum development and cultural training, our future generations will prosper" ■



# PRE-APPRENTICESHIP CARPENTRY PROGRAM

This was the Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Program's most successful year. Twenty participants completed and graduated from the rigorous skills based program which also includes academic and cultural components.

Participants self esteem and sense of community was enhanced during the program, with its team building, group work activities, cultural activities, and hands-on experience. A revised communications component as well as, a more focused Math curriculum were introduced in order to eliminate the multiple barriers that some of our participants had experienced in prior programs.

This year Miziwe Biik partnered with "The Mill Centre" a Dixon Hall affiliate which gave our participants a chance to experience hands-on woodworking in a shop environment. Dixon Hall is an established centre in the Regent Park area and over the years has been offering a variety of training services to the community. "The Mill Centre" was created to address some specific needs in the fields of carpentry and home renovations. The participants attended "The Mill Centre" every Monday during the course of Academic Upgrading and Tuesday through Friday attended Toronto Council Fire for academic upgrading.

Toronto Council Fire has been a great shoulder to lean on during Academic Upgrading, the high level of professionalism played a huge role in this years successes. Along with their regular classes, participants were offered tutoring services to



enhance their Math skills. Other forms of support, to ensure the well-being of the participants, included food bank services, housing assistance computer access and technology services.

The George Brown College segment of the program was enhanced this year with increased supervision by program staff, George Brown faculty assistance and with the addition of student representative. The student rep's overall duties included; in-class attendance, communication with fellow students, fielding complaints, acknowledging positive achievements and developing mentorship and leadership opportunities ■

**Photo (left to right):** Tammy Bird, *Job Coach*, Wendal Martin, *student*, Rock Trudeau, *student*, and Osborne Farrell, *Program Coordinator*. The two students from last years program are pictured at one of their placement sites.

## PROJECT BUDGETS

**CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND \$1,467,179.38**

**Breakdown of funds by Program:**

Targeted Wage Subsidy \$685,473.34  
 Direct Course Purchase \$247,844.22  
 Employment Assistance Support Measures \$473,882.82  
 Local Labour Market Partnerships \$42,650.00  
 Self Employment Assistance \$17,329.00

**SPONSORS:**

- Native Child and Family Services
- Stone Artisan Studios
- Aboriginal Business Resource Centre
- Association for Native Development & the Arts
- D. Bruce McChesney
- Evergreen
- Miziwe Biik Development Corporation
- Big Soul Productions
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Toronto
- John Howard Society of Toronto
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto
- Urban Rez Solutions
- Noojimawin Health Authority
- Harbourfront Centre
- Native Men's Residence
- Toronto Council Fire Cultural Centre
- Red Pepper Spectacle Arts
- Seventh Generation Midwives
- Kevin Boudewyn Consulting
- Centre for Aboriginal Initiatives
- ImagineNative
- The Brow House
- Canadian Mothercraft Society
- Youthlink
- Dundurn Group
- Individual Client Requests

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND \$1,577,673.39**

**Breakdown of funds by Program:**

Targeted Wage Subsidy \$655,038.76  
 Self Employment Assistance \$61,371.40  
 Skills Development \$98,858.59  
 Employment Assistance Support Measures \$701,375.64  
 Local Labour Market Partnerships \$61,029.00

**SPONSORS:**

- Centre for Indigenous Theatre
- ImagineNative
- Evergreen
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto
- Big Soul Productions
- Anduhyaun Inc.
- Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto
- Native Men's Residence
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Toronto Council Fire Cultural Centre
- Reel World Film Festival Inc.
- Native Women's Resource Centre
- Aboriginal Business Resource Centre
- Miziwe Biik Development Corporation
- Canadian Mothercraft Society
- Niagara International Children's Society
- Nii Wi Wog Ina Mon
- Small Theatre Administration Facility
- Nishnawbe Homes
- Individual Client Requests

**YOUTH FUNDS \$431,751.10**

**Breakdown of funds by Program:**

Individual Skills Enhancement \$127,736.55  
 Work Experience \$413,662.93

**SPONSORS:**

- Native Child and Family Services
- Association for Native Development & the Arts
- Toronto Council Fire Cultural Centre
- Royal Ontario Museum
- Youthlink
- GAA Dibaatjimat Ngaashi
- Individual Client Requests

**SUMMER CAREER PLACEMENTS**

**Total Allocation \$76,342.00**

**SPONSORS:**

- Native Child and Family Services
- Greenest City
- Japanese Cultural Centre
- Neegan Burnside Ltd.
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Community Centre 55
- Anishnawbe Health
- National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation
- CESO



**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

### NGINDAASMIN ACADEMIC UPGRADING

Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training initiated the Ngindaasmin Academic Upgrading Program in March 2010. Information sessions were held to discuss the program one-on-one with First Nations people that wanted their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Participants were asked to bring a copy of their high school transcript; be interviewed by the Program Coordinator to determine eligibility; and then appointments were made to meet with the Guidance Counsellor at the Independent Learning Centre (ILC). The ILC was chosen to deliver credit courses because the courses are flexible, convenient and independent wherein the students control their studies. Based on their career goals and the number of high school credits needed, students choose their courses.

What makes this upgrading program unique is that the students learn about who they are as First Nations people: the history, treaties and traditions of the Anishnawbek. This course is designed to bring about an understanding of the complex issues facing First Nations people in Canada today. By the end of the course students

were able to: define the concept of Nationhood; identify key indigenous figures that have contributed to the history of Indigenous people; identify some traditional forms of governance alongside elected forms of governance and identify some of the causes of past government and Crown policies and how they affect Indigenous peoples in Canada today – ie. Royal Proclamation 1763; White Paper 1969; Constitution Act 1982. Tuesdays are set aside for that class. Wednesdays and Thursdays are for assigned high school work.

Another major highlight of the program is having volunteer tutors on site. Specialized in Biology, Math and English, they are an invaluable program resource.

Registration is limited to ten students at a time and as of July 2010, four of the Ngindaasmin students have been accepted into university. They showed commitment and courage in completing the important first step towards their advanced studies and we wish them every success in the future ■

Ngindaasmin Ojibway word meaning "reading and counting"



