

AGM

MIZIWE BIIK

2021



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Miziwe Biik acknowledges financial and in-kind support and contributions from the following:

ALFDC
Service Canada
Employment and Social Development Canada
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
Ministry of Indigenous Affairs
Employment Ontario
Ontario Trillium Foundation
City of Toronto
United Way

MIZIWE BIIK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Krystal Abotossaway
Vice President Michael White
Secretary Jimmy Dick

Our Vision

Miziwe Biik is committed to assisting all persons of Aboriginal ancestry to attain a better quality of life. We believe that community needs and aspirations are paramount. We are committed to strengthening the community through partnerships that promote equality and self reliance. We will provide training and employment opportunities in a supportive environment in which people can affirm their Aboriginal identities and develop to their fullest potential. We are committed to the belief that it is through traditional and cultural values, practices and resources that we will reclaim our destiny.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide services to the Aboriginal peoples in the Greater Toronto Area; to work with employers to secure employment opportunities; to deliver federal and provincial programs; and, promote Aboriginal entrepreneurship and the development of our economies. We will work with individuals, other agencies and groups to provide these services and achieve our mission.



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 Aboriginal peoples across the Greater Toronto Area

MIZIWE BIIK STAFF

MIZIWE BIIK ADMINISTRATION

Executive Director
Nancy Martin
*Building Maintenance/
Finance/Catering*
Carol Barker
*Human Resources
Manager*
Lillian Wesley
*Marketing &
Communications*
Savanna Chiblow
Digital Web Assistant
Adam Oakes

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

*Employment Services
Manager*
Vickie Labranche
Administrative Assistant
Kachina McCarty
Job Developer
Brenna LaFrance
Employment Specialist
Jessica Tabak
Employment Consultant
Ruby Dreger
Data Coordinator
Christine M. Smith
*Receptionist/
Administrative Assistant*
Melynda Kakepetum

PROJECTS DEPARTMENT

Project Officer
Ashley Boakye
Project Officer
Christy Martin
Project Officer Assistant
Denise Kimewon
**PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS
& SKILLED TRADES**
Special Projects Manager
Vickie Labranche
*Special Projects
Administrator -
Construction Trades*
Vickie Labranche

ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROGRAM

*Coordinator/Facilitator-
Operations*
Nicole Hare
*Coordinator / Facilitator-
Training*
Brenna LaFrance
Facilitator
Katherine Tippeneskum
**NGINDAASMIN
ACADEMIC UPGRADING**
*Academic Upgrading
Instructor*
Tim Millan
Administrative Assistant
Kachina McCarty

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Registered Charity No. 863056719RR0001

COVER

One of our featured success stories, Shelan Bird, Building and Construction
Art Direction/Graphic Design & Photography David Sherry, 2davoonline@gmail.com



**KRYSTAL
ABOTOSSAWAY**
President



NANCY MARTIN
Executive Director

Aannii Community members!

An unprecedented period operating under the restrictions of COVID-19 throughout 2019-2020 extended into another challenging year where in-person contacts and on-site operations were curtailed. Despite the many hardships that our families and community members had to endure through social isolation and the limitations for hands-on training, our sector is one that has been able to thrive during the pandemic. We have leveraged our online capabilities and resources to connect with a larger group of clients, employers, and training institutions. We have an exceptional group of clients who are tech and social media savvy and have challenged our staff and Board to persevere and continue to innovate. Our updated website reflects our commitment to accessibility, increased employment and training opportunities, and cultural promotion and integrity.

The diversified learning and support models that we continue to develop will be carried over to our new facilities in the West Donlands. The Miziwe Biik Training Institute will represent a new building reinforced by a robust and validated operational infrastructure. With a 20-year history of client successes to spur us on, we will continue to provide competitive roles for Indigenous workers, develop current and future job market training for our learners, and create worthwhile opportunities for our creative and innovative entrepreneurs. The Miziwe Biik Training Institute will support a growing urban Indigenous community made up of multi-generational families, as well as new members who have moved to the city to access exceptional academic and employment resources.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the staff and our Executive Director. Miziwe Biik has a modest but effective group of workers who we continue to rely on, and who's exceptional skills and competencies allow us to carry out the many activities required to fulfill the diverse aspirations of our clients. As always, I am overwhelmed by the diligence and fortitude of our Board of Directors who support our mission and mandate on a volunteer basis.

We, of course, could not succeed without the engagement of our many organizations and corporate partners. I look forward to seeing all of you at our next AGM.

Respectfully

Krystal Abotossaway

Good afternoon,

As a community, we continued to rise up and adapt to the challenges of working in a digital environment imposed by COVID-19. The Indigenous community of Toronto has remained resilient in the face of the variants that have delayed our return to on-site programming and in-person counselling and training. We are confident that full services will be re-established in advance of our much anticipated move to our new facilities in the West Donlands at Front and Cherry Street. In partnership with Anishnawbe Health we are building an innovative Indigenous service hub that will be home to the Miziwe Biik Training Institute.

Challenged by strict but essential health and safety regulations implemented at the on-set of the pandemic, Miziwe Biik was able to activate its current online programming with relative facility. The organization was an early adopter of new technology with the launch of the MB Online Campus in 2004. A connection place for GED courses, students, and tutors, the online service was a model for the type of programming instituted to stay in touch with our staff, clients, service providers and funders. To support delivery changes, Miziwe Biik was able to access existing as well as special COVID funding to ensure that learners and employment clients were provided with necessary technology, such as laptops, chrome books, cell phones and internet connections. Our website has been redesigned to be more user-friendly and to support the increase of traffic and forms fillable online.

Many existing Miziwe Biik programs, such as Academic Upgrading, Mental Health and First Aid, were adapted for online delivery, and a number of new digital ready programs were introduced, such as Personal Support Worker and a very popular Hairstyling course. In construction trades, such as Home Renovations, pre-apprentice Electrical and Plumbing students were able to safely attend physical classrooms. Although secondary and post-secondary programs suffered from irregular schedules, Miziwe Biik has been able to assist post-secondary apprenticeship students and high school students with educational supports and bursary programs. Our goal is to assist students with financial contributions to off-set some of their expenses and facilitate their successes. Employment Counsellors continued to be available daily by email and telephone to respond to clients and community members looking to fulfill their career dreams and to engage in an active and changing economy.

All the best wishes for the new year.

In Friendship

Nancy Martin

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training

Miziwe Biik is overseen by an elected Indigenous Board of Directors with the Executive Director reporting to the board. Our current board members are:



KRYSTAL ABOTOSSAWAY

President

Krystal Abotossaway is from Aundeck Omni-Kaning First Nation. She is an urban Ojibwe Anishinaabe. Krystal received her Honours Human Resource Management degree from York University. In her current role with the TD Bank, Krystal helps attract and retain top Aboriginal talent. As an Aboriginal Youth herself her primary focus is to create an environment for Aboriginal youth employees to have the opportunity to be the best they can be. Krystal quickly recognized the need to advocate for equality for Aboriginal people, disabled people, youth, and women. Her passion for diversity and inclusion will

continue throughout her career. She was an award recipient of the inaugural Minaake award where she was recognized in the youth challenger category, Krystal also volunteers for the Aboriginal Professional Association of Canada. Recognized as an expert in the field of diversity, she is regularly called upon by community partners and the media to share her professional insight on topics relating to Aboriginal recruitment and Aboriginal career development.



MICHAEL WHITE

Vice-President

Michael White, Bear Clan, M'Chigeeng First Nation. Michael has served on the Miziwe Biik board for over thirteen years. Michael has his Honours B.A from the University of Toronto and is currently working on his Master's in Education. Currently Michael serves as a Special Projects Officer in the Office of Indigenous Initiatives at the University of Toronto. In his spare time, Michael serves the community as a ceremonial conductor.



JIMMY DICK, Secretary

From Moose Cree First Nation and the community of Moose Factory Ontario, Jimmy is fluent in the Cree language and is a Teacher/Educator on Native Culture and Spirituality. Jimmy has been actively involved since moving to Toronto in 1975. Jimmy is well known as a member of the Eagleheart Singers drum group who have been based in Toronto for the past twenty six years. Jimmy has been a community organizer for many years involved in the Native Rights Struggle. He is an active volunteer in the Toronto Native Community and served as a board member with various agencies.



Architectural renderings of the new Indigenous Peoples space - North Plaza view with Miziwe Biik Training Institute on the left. Final designs may undergo modifications. *Credit: Stantec* (Simulated birch surface applied by MB)

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Career and Employment Counselling Services:

- Resume/Cover Letter Writing
- Interviewing Skills
- Mock Interviews
- Job Board
- Self-Assessment Tool
- Personality Dimensions

Employment Resource Centre Services:

- Virtual one-on-one with Employment Specialist
- Local Community Information Services
- Educational Information and Supports
- Computers/Internet
- Toronto Labour Market Information
- Second Career Information Sessions

Employment Placement Services:

- Job Board
- Local Indigenous Organization postings
- National Indigenous Employment Opportunities
- Referrals to Employment Opportunities
- Canada Ontario Grant Program (COJG)
- Employment Insurance Work Placements
- Summer Career Placement
- Personal Support Worker Program

Funding Services:

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

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EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTRE SERVICES ERC

The Miziwe Biik Employment Resource Centre (ERC) is the first stop for First Nations/Inuit/Metis clients in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to access a wide range of employment and training services, resources and supports. The ERC was extremely busy throughout 2020 despite its employee's continuing to work remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and has remained active.

We welcomed Melynda Kakepetum as our new receptionist, and Vickie Labranche, our Special Projects Manager has stepped in to take on the additional role of Employment Resource Centre Manager. Brenna Lafrance, our former Job Developer has moved onto Coordinator/Facilitator-Training in a new program Miziwe Biik is offering-Essential Skills. Former Employee Specialist/Job Developer Jessica Tabak has moved onto a new career path outside of Miziwe Biik,

Our services have been in great demand and the Employee Specialists' caseloads of clients looking for and/or obtaining work continues to grow from month to month. We provide effective career exploration tools that increase one's employment skills knowledge as well as assist with career decision making. Some of the services we offer to our more self-sufficient jobseekers are monthly workshops through the Employment Ontario Program.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the ERC has continued to offer workshops that we initially held only in person. These workshops include Mental Health First Aid, Food Handlers and First Aid/CPR. We have now included Microsoft training in Word, Excel and Power Point, Cannsell and Web Design.

Our job seekers have skills that are in demand in today's job market, and adding new training workshops and programs has made Miziwe Biik

even more important to the Indigenous community of the Greater Toronto Area.

Through the ERC, Miziwe Biik runs the Canada Ontario Job Grant Program which is an employer driven program offered by Employment Ontario. This is a cost share program that assists employers from different job sectors to enhance the skills of their existing staff. This year, in her first year co-managing the COJG program with Vickie Labranche, our Data Coordinator Christine M Smith was able to support a number of employers with acquiring new skills, that will help a diverse group of employees to advance in their current positions.

Once again, we congratulate all our clients who have taken the opportunity to enhance their skills and training by registering for our online workshops and webinars. We also congratulate all clients who were able to obtain employment despite all of the obstacles created by COVID-19, including summer students who obtained position with a variety of organizations in the GTA.

At the ERC, we are all looking forward to when we can return to the office and see everyone in person again!

New Program Essential Skills Program

Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training will be launching a twelve-week Essential Skills training program that will provide tools and resources to assist participants with the Nine Essential Skills which include Reading, Document Use, Numeracy, Writing, Oral Communication, Working with Others, Digital Technology, and Continuous Learning.

As soon as a participant completes the twelve-week training program, they will have the opportunity to apply for an Administrative trainee position with the City of Toronto.

PRE-APPRENTICESHIP AND SKILLED TRADES

CARPENTRY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

The Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program provides unemployed and underemployed Aboriginal people extensive training in General Carpentry to meet and surpass the trades' requirements. They will receive certification in health and safety which will include First Aid & CPR, WHMIS, and Working at Heights. Clients will complete the 12-week Intro to Home Renovations Program with Skilled Trades College of Canada. Finally, the client will complete an 8-week paid work placement.

CONSTRUCTION CRAFT WORKER PROGRAM

In partnership with LIUNA Local 183 Training Centre, Miziwe Biik will be offering an 8-week program in October 2021. We were unable to have a group in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Construction Craft Worker (CCW) Program is an extremely versatile program that offers the trainee the capacity to work in a variety of sectors and construction fields. The program covers a broad base of skills, including form setting, scaffolding, and concrete placement. Some of the tasks completed by CCW trainees included: erecting and dismantling concrete forms, scaffolding, ramps, catwalks, shoring and barricades, all of which are present on small and large construction sites.

ELECTRICAL / PLUMBING / INTRO TO HOME RENOVATIONS PROGRAMS

In partnership with the Skilled Trades College of Canada, Miziwe Biik offered apprentice training in Electrical, Plumbing, and Intro to Home Renovations. The programs offered both theory and hands-on installations and processes.

Electrical Program outlines: Basic Electrical Theory, Intro to Electrical Safety Code, Intro to Blueprint Reading, and Residential, Commercial, & Condominium Installations.

Plumbing Program outlines: Intro to Plumbing Code, Intro to Blueprints, Fixture Installation, Maintenance Repair & Procedures, and Installation Procedures for Different Types of Pipes.

Intro to Home Renovations outlines: Work Site Safety, Intro to Concrete and Forming, Framing Insulation and Drywall, Electrical and Plumbing, Flooring Installation, and Tools, Measurements, Prints, and Intro to Ontario Building Code.

Graduates of these programs receive the skills, training, and experience needed to make them the most sought-after apprentices in their field. Graduates are viewed as qualified, competent and accomplished with the practical hands-on training needed. We had numerous clients complete all 3 of the programs – Electrical, Plumbing, and Intro to Home Renovations.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKER PROGRAM

In partnership with Marca College, Miziwe Biik has offered 3 cohorts of the 32-week Personal Support Worker (PSW) program. The PSW Program will provide clients with skills and competencies in a variety of clinical and interactive areas needed for employment in the health care field. The program is completely online for 24-weeks of the program and the remaining 8-weeks will be a Practical Job Experience and Externship Placement at a health care facility. In order to graduate from the PSW program, students must successfully pass the National Association of Career Colleges Board Exam.

NGINDAASMIN

Academic Upgrading Program

The academic upgrading department at Miziwe Biik has continued to support clients' academic needs throughout the lockdown. Supports include helping clients prepare for the General Education Development (GED) test, registering clients for Independent Learning Centre (ILC), supporting clients complete their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), high school credit courses and supporting their academic needs as they work through the course material, helping parents with resources to support their children's learning

during the lockdown, and academic support for clients who are enrolled in trades and college programs. The academic upgrading department was able to transition to a 100% online model. Clients are able to get support from our Ontario College of Teachers certified secondary school teacher from Monday to Friday (8:30-4:30) through our online academic support portal. Clients have also been provided with the tools they need to be successful including laptops, cell phones and textbooks.

Employment Essentials Program

In partnership with the City of Toronto (Ontario Works), Miziwe Biik offers a six-week program that will provide tools and resources to assist participants with job searching, career exploration, resumes and cover letters, and finding their next steps. This program covers: True Colours and

Essential skills, Communication skills, Career Exploration, Life skills and Self-Management, Job Search Tools, and Career Awareness and Research. We had 2 cohorts complete this program, the next program will take place in October of 2021.

Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship

The Self-Employment Program is for individuals looking to gain insight into building their own personal business. In this program, you will be guided by a business mentor as you navigate the process of writing a business plan. You will have various workshops on Self Employment Readiness

as well. This program is offered quarterly. We had 3 cohorts complete this program and will be having the next program take place in October of 2021.

MIZIWE BIIK ADMINISTRATION

The administrative department functions internally at Miziwe Biik as a support to the Employment Resource Centre, the Projects department, Academic Upgrading Program, and Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship and Skilled Trades Program.

Its primary responsibilities include:

- maintaining and fostering positive, productive and respectful working relationships within Miziwe Biik
- supporting and promoting the goals set out by the mission and vision statement
- ensuring that the goals and objectives of the organization are followed
- ensuring the growth and success of Miziwe Biik

Executive Director. The Executive Director manages the overall operation of Miziwe Biik. Under the direction of the Board of Directors, the ED manages the operations in a manner that promotes positive relations within the organization.

Human Resources. The Human Resources Manager is responsible for providing support

in various human resources functions, which include recruitment, staffing, training and development, wellness, safety and performance monitoring.

The Human Resources Manager oversees all aspects of the human resources practices and processes that contribute to the efficient operation of Miziwe Biik.

Finance. The Finance Manager ensures that the financial health and well-being of the organization is maintained. The Finance Manager administers the organization's annual budget and ensures compliance with spending guidelines by all staff. She is responsible for overall financial planning and cash flow and financial management of the organization. The Finance Manager prepares all financial documentation for the Annual Audit, and Annual General Meeting.

Maintenance. The Building Manager oversees all maintenance and janitorial functions to keep the services and structure of Miziwe Biik operating efficiently and safely. The Building Manager verifies payments for maintenance and cleaning contractors. She oversees catering duties, and catering payments.

Miziwe Biik SUCCESS STORIES

2021



THANE higgins

Operations Coordinator Ontario Power Generation (OPG)

As a youth, **Thane Higgins** enjoyed tinkering with things, repairing TVs, upgrading computers, and fixing bicycles. It's not surprising then that he found himself in 2019, participating on the behalf of York University's Lassonde School of Engineering at the American Society of Mechanical Engineer's (ASME), Human Powered Vehicle Challenge (HPVC). In the final year of his Mechanical Engineering degree program, he competed on one of two Canadian teams at the international event held at Michigan State University. In their first year at the event, York University placed a respectable 32nd out of 60 with their recumbent bike. In the final year of the engineering program, students participate in a Capstone project. Capstone consolidates everything a student has learned during undergraduate studies, drawing on the skills and knowledge they have already gained, while acquiring new levels of expertise.

A member of Constance Lake First Nation, Thane grew up in Toronto where in his high school years he focused on physics and math. Mechanical Engineering and exacting program which requires 4 years of post-degree experience before writing a licensing exam administered by the Professional Engineers of Ontario offered a perfect confluence of challenges, practical and theoretical, to engage the career-minded youth. Graduating with a Bachelors in Engineering (BENG), he struggled with the bleak job market for new graduates but was guided to an exceptional opportunity by his Miziwe Biik Employment Counsellor, Ruby Dreger. Through the Indigenous Opportunities in Nuclear (ION), Thane was able to complete a successful application to the Ontario Power Generation's (OPG). The program was set up to recruit and place skilled and qualified members from Indigenous communities across Ontario in jobs within the nuclear and energy industry.

Thane began his 1-year OPG contract in September 2020 in the Balance of Plant department which handles refurbishment projects at the Darlington Nuclear Plant. Due to the onset of the pandemic, he worked from home in Toronto, managing a number of projects to modify or replace components of the reactor and conventional side of units undergoing refurbishment. Shadowing a project engineer, Thane has also been able to gain important project management skills including preparing and revising reports, handling schedules and coordinating with different departments to manage the scope, planning and execution of projects. In June 2021, he expects to be able to start working at the Darlington site for project oversight and working with contractors. He is keen to begin the hands on experience, "working at the plant will provide a valuable understanding of projects beyond schematics."

Once he has completed his 1-year contract, Thane hopes to continue learning in similar entry-level positions at OPG. He is looking to gain a foothold in his career path as a project engineer.

Photo: York University Engineering Building





KALEIGH
jordan-macgregor

Operations and Development Associate The Gordon Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund

Kayleigh Jordan-MacGregor's grandmother was from a small Cree community in Fort Vermillion, Alberta. Kayleigh was born and raised in Perth, Ontario, just outside of Ottawa. A love of music took her to Montreal, Quebec where she enrolled in the Media program at Concordia University. Studying media, communications and culture, she felt at place in the creative environment. Kayleigh worked at the campus radio station and she aspired to career making music or working in public relations and marketing. Language barriers made it difficult finding work in the Montreal area so, Toronto was the next stop on the tour.

Working in retail to get by during the outset of the pandemic, Kayleigh began to re-evaluate what made her happy, leading her to Miziwe Biik, where she researched not-for-profit work opportunities. She was seeking a more balanced life, working towards a greater purpose and contributing to a better society while connecting with her culture. Through the assistance of a employment counsellor, she was fortunate to identify a number of positions available at the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund (DWF) and was hired on a 1-year contract as an Operations and Development Associate.

Growing up outside of Kingston, Ontario, Kayleigh was familiar with the music of the Tragically Hip but also very aware of Gord Downie's charity work. "I actually named my dog after Gord, because we adopted him the day after he passed away in 2017. When he and the Wenjack family came together to create this organization, I was an early supporter and would make donations in my friends and family's names for birthdays or holidays because I found it was a great conversation starter with non-Indigenous people. Gord helped to make the topic of reconciliation a national interest rather than people assuming it was solely an Indigenous issue."

The fortuitous hire with the DWF has Kayleigh at the centre of the communications and social media efforts, involved in the implementing fundraising plans, and responsible for the stewardship of Legacy Space partners & third-party fundraisers. The Legacy Space program develops safe, welcoming places dedicated to providing education and spreading awareness about Indigenous history and the journey towards reconciliation. The Legacy Spaces program is an opportunity for corporations, government, organizations and educational institutions to play an important role in their communities. The photos accompanying Kayleigh's profile were taken outside of the Union Station Legacy Space which is co-funded by the TD Bank.

<https://downiewenjack.ca>

Photos: Union Station - Front Street



Celebrate

Photo of Amber Hein, Algonquins of Pikwikanongishnik by Anthony Dixon during a performance of the Jingle Dress Dance. This dance style originated in the Great Lakes area in the 1920s and is also known as a healing or prayer dance.



Culture

Photo of Amber Hein, Algonquins of Pikwikanongishnik by Anthony Dixon during a performance of the Jingle Dress Dance. This dance style originated in the Great Lakes area in the 1920s and is also known as a healing or prayer dance.



Honor

Photo of Gord Downie from one of his final performances by David Bastedo.

TERRANCE cann



Medical Device Reprocessing Technician St. Joseph Health Centre

Photos: St. Joseph's Health Centre - Toronto

Terrance Cann's family is from the Garden River First Nation near Sault Ste. Marie. Terrence grew up in Brampton and moved to Orangeville for high school where he felt isolated, not knowing anyone in the small town. Perhaps out of necessity, he developed an independent spirit, employed in his first job at the age of 14. From then on, he has always had a job, moving to Toronto when he was 18 for a hospitality position at his 1st hotel.

While enrolled in a George Brown Hotel Management program Terrence continued to work Front Desk and Guest Services proceeding on his hospitality career path until he was 25. He believes that one of the most important personal attributes that he developed during this period were his people skills. Interacting with diverse clients and workers and problem solving all day develops a set of highly transferable work and personal experiences. When he eventually moved away from the industry, spending the next 6-years in random jobs, the other experience he relied on was his familiarity with the varied room layouts and aesthetics which he applied to independent interior design work.

Ready for a more serious change in career directions, Terrance was encouraged by family members in the healthcare field to enter their profession. With the assistance of a job counsellor at Miziwe Biik, he received a number of helpful programs and services to advance his new interest including, interview and resume coaching, a start-up fund and bursary. Terrance was even fortunate enough to win an iPad Air at a guest speaker session that he attended at the Centre. After obtaining a 1-year certificate from Seneca College in Medical Device Reprocessing (MDR), a program that prepares you to apply principles of infection prevention and proper handling of reusable patient care equipment in healthcare settings, he was then able to obtain a position at St. Joseph's Health Centre. A porter for now, he is able to see first hand the variety of positions and responsibilities required for the day-to-day operations at the hospital, while he considers his next steps. His current position with its increased importance through the pandemic and his background in guest services has also given him an appreciation for how important healthcare, particularly culturally sensitive care, is to the Indigenous community.





SHELAN bird

Shelan Bird is from the Mathias Colomb Cree First Nation in Northern Manitoba. With her family, she left the community when she was 9, moving to The Pas to attend school. After high school, she enrolled in the Law Enforcement certificate program at the University College of the North with the intent of entering the RCMP. With the same goal in mind, she then traveled to Toronto to attend Seneca College's 1-year Advanced Investigations & Law Enforcement program.

Perhaps not convinced of her ultimate career choice, Shelan diverted from her course and began to get hands on building and construction training, home renovation carpentry work and pre-apprenticeship plumbing experience. That was followed by a return to Seneca College, this time for food industry courses and to bake organic cakes.

At 25, in a "what am I doing with my life," moment, Shelan connected with Miziwe Biik to explore career options. At first, she was suspect of the services being offered because they seemed to offer

so much with regards to counselling, employment assistance and start up support. She was convinced once Vickie Labranche was able to get her into the pre-apprenticeship carpentry program at George Brown College. Unfortunately, the pandemic temporarily closed down that program but the Skilled Trades College offered an attractive hands-on alternative. Their Home Renovation program was in a way more ideal because it fast tracks the training process by throwing you into all of the trades required to build a small structure. Skills College also offered a plumbing course that Shelan was able to take in tandem with her program.

Shelan excelled in her courses. She impressed everyone with her skillful mudding techniques which were drawn from her experience of spreading out organic crackers on a tray. This validated the experience that she had acquired while attending her earlier food courses at Seneca. It also supported her personal motto of, "I'll try it. Every experience is worthwhile."

Currently, Shelan is working full-time at Fix It Female Inc. an all female home renovation company. She plans to keep renovating houses for another 4-5 years then perhaps return to her community to build homes and teach her niece and next generation of young women her unconventional food based construction techniques.





EVAN accetola

Academic Support

Miziwe Biik

Aboriginal Employment and Training

Evan Accetola loves studying and going to school, he has foregone any summer holidays in the last several years to maintain a steadfast focus on academic advancement. On his journey, he has been racking up achievements at the post secondary level but connected with Miziwe Biik in order to complete his Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), a mandatory prerequisite for acceptance into most college and university programs and institutions. Evan excelled in his course work, receiving a 94% average in English, the last required subject that he completed.

Prior to embarking on his academic odyssey, Evan spent time growing up in Harriston and Guelph, Ontario before moving to Toronto in 2017. Of Métis descent (Ojibway-French), his family originated from the Drummond Island area, eventually settling in Penetanguishene. His grandfather was a part of his formative Indigenous cultural education which included accompanying him to a pow wow in the BruceGreySimcoe area. Evan's strong connection to his community has made it possible for him to access important funding through the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) to support a portion of his post secondary education. He was a volunteer post secondary liaison for MNO at George Brown College in their Infinite Reach program, assisting incoming students by helping them adjust to university life and maintaining a sense of community among Métis students. Established during COVID-19, Evan also worked with the Métis Nation Youth Council's, Two-Spirit Kid's Help Line.

Prior to completing his OSSD, Evan was enrolled at George Brown College, where he completed 2 years of a practical nursing program. The Miziwe Biik funded OSSD program supported his next pursuit, acceptance in a Bachelor of Sociology and Criminology at "University X" (the name Ryerson students and staff adopted to denounce residential school ties). His attendance confirmed at the onset of the pandemic, Evan enrolled in the Aging and Gerontology program at the Chang School of continuing education, to fill the academic void created by the delayed start up of his double major.

With a diverse base of academic goals in place, and his degree program about to get underway, Evan is already considering his next steps, trying to visualize his future educational/career path. On one hand, he is considering leveraging his existing knowledge in healthcare by applying to medical school. On the other hand, academia has always been a draw to the committed student and a PHD in Philosophy, the PHD is often considered as a teaching degree, is also a contender in a plan that keeps the perpetual learner ensconced in the hallowed halls of learning.





COVID Response - Indigenous Navigator Na-Me-Res – Auduzhe Mino NeseWINong

Sabrina Cicansky is from the Tl'ast'en Nation in Fort St. James, B.C. She grew up in Vancouver then, later moved to Victoria where she began her education and career path at Camosun College, obtaining a Certificate in Indigenous Family Support. The practical experience that she received in her subsequent position as a K-12 Aboriginal Support Worker in the local school system, confirmed a lot of the theoretical work that she had done. Within the school system, she also witnessed a considerable amount of racism which instilled a cultural empathy that would also guide her learning journey.

Sabrina's experience in Victoria led her back to Vancouver where she worked in a number of Indigenous community and social employment positions with First Nations organizations. She worked as an employment counsellor with at-risk youth, a housing support worker, a Director of Aboriginal Connections to Employment, and a Native Education Life Skills Instructor. The importance of the positions which she undertook, encouraged her to continue taking post-secondary courses particularly in the area of psychology.

After establishing a solid employment record with community organizations Sabrina sensed a need to focus more on her studies and prepared for her next move. Determined and organized, Sabrina put together a successful plan that included curating a solid profile of studies and work in order to receive Band support to move to Toronto. After arriving in the city, she first entered a 2 year Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities program at George Brown, in order to acquire the math and science pre-requisites that she needed to get into York University.

In 2020, at the onset of the COVID-19, Sabrina completed her first year of her Psychology at York University. Her eventual goal is to complete her Masters degree and possibly work with an insurance company in a counselling role through employee benefits programs. For now those aspirations have been curtailed by a study gap created by the growing pandemic which also caused a difficult employment environment. Fortunately, after a long search,

Sabrina with the assistance of Miziwe Biik, was able to find a worthwhile community position along with start up funding.

A number of community and health partners including Anishinawbe Health, Unity Health and Auduzhe Mino NeseWINong (Place of Healthy Breathing) developed a response to Indigenous testing and vaccination in the GTA and were creating support teams. Sabrina was able to obtain the position of COVID Response Indigenous Navigator with the Auduzhe Mino NeseWINong program at Na-Me-Res's Assessment and Vaccine Centre. She finds the position of organizing the program activities extremely rewarding and meaningful in such difficult and challenging times.

SABRINA cicansky

Photos: Na-Me-Res - Vaughn Rd



PROJECTS DEPARTMENT

The 2020/2021 fiscal year has brought forward many accomplishments for the Projects Department with clients completing training programs, workshops and securing employment. The department consists of three Projects Officers and an Assistant who work diligently as a team to ensure client needs are consistently met and ongoing budgets are continuously maintained.

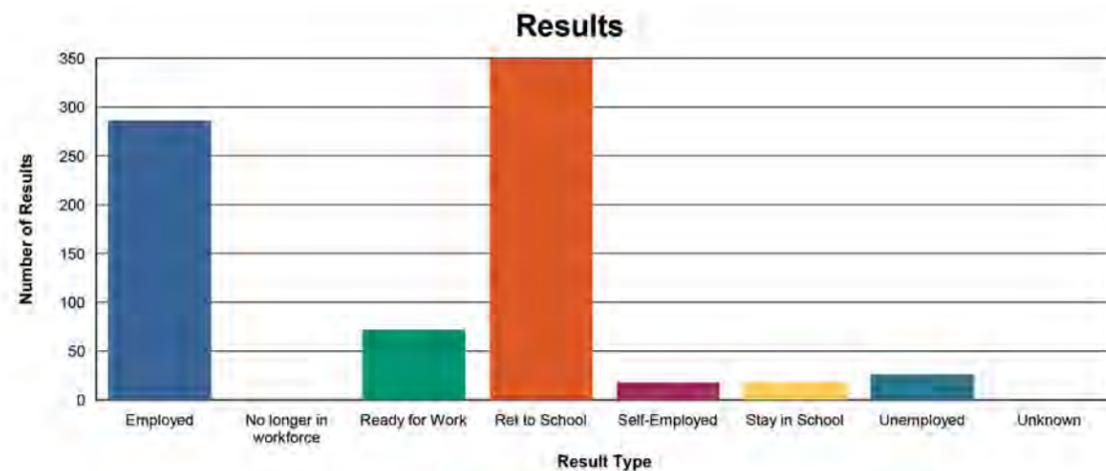
We have a Project Officer who works to support individual requests such as Employment Assistant Support Measures (EASM) and Purchase of Training (POT). Through individual requests clients are supported in education, skills development and employment.

Additionally, our other two Project Officers are designated to building relationships with organizations located within the GTA. In partnership with these organizations, Miziwe Biik is able to support employment opportunities for clients through Miziwe Biik programs (Targeted Wage Subsidy, Self-Employment Assistance and Local Labour Market Partnerships). It is through working together as a community that Miziwe Biik is able to fulfill our vision and prepare clients for their journey into the workforce.

We thank all the organizations we work with, the diverse opportunities presented and training initiatives we successfully fulfill together.

ISSET Results Report 2020-2021

| Results | Clients |
|------------------------|---------|
| Employed | 286 |
| No longer in workforce | 0 |
| Ready for work | 72 |
| Returned to School | 349 |
| Self-Employed | 18 |
| Stayed in school | 18 |
| Unemployed | 26 |
| Unknown | 0 |



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.





Miziwe Biik

Aboriginal Employment and Training