



OSHKI-WENJACK

OSHKI-PIMACHE-O-WIN
THE WENJACK EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Eagle's Echo

A newsletter by
Oshki-Pimache-O-Win:
The Wenjack Education Institute

Summer/Fall 2025



Minister Quinn Visits Oshki-Wenjack for IAESC Accreditation Announcement



Oshki-Wenjack welcomed Ontario's Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, Hon. Nolan Quinn, to our Thunder Bay campus on Thursday, October 9, for the official provincial accreditation of Oshki-Wenjack as a recognized post-secondary institution through the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council (IAESC).

During his visit, Minister Quinn met with students and staff, and learned how Oshki-Wenjack's programs are rooted in First Nations knowledge and designed to support community success. Students shared their experiences and aspirations, highlighting the impact of Indigenous-led education.

The event brought together community leaders and representatives. President Lorrie Deschamps, NAN Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, and Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse thanked the Minister and the Province for recognizing Oshki-Wenjack's leadership and commitment to empowering learners across the North. They emphasized the importance of Indigenous control over education and the lasting benefits it brings to First Nations communities. Fort William First Nation Chief Michele Solomon and Thunder Bay Mayor Ken Boshcoff also attended to celebrate this achievement.

Oshki-Wenjack's accreditation affirms its role in advancing First Nations education and guiding future generations to achieve their goals while staying connected to their cultures.

Celebrating Carpentry Graduates in Weagamow Lake First Nation



On Friday, August 29, the Oshki-Wenjack Trades Department, together with Confederation College's Jordy Mallek, joined the community of Weagamow Lake First Nation to honour nine outstanding graduates of the Level 1 Carpentry program.

With their families and community cheering them on, these students strengthened their skills in safe tool handling, upgraded their math knowledge, and successfully completed utility sheds as their capstone project. Their hard work reflects not only personal achievement but also a commitment to building a stronger future for their community.

Weagamow Lake, Chief Nancy Sakchekapo presented awards and shared her support for the graduates, recognizing the impact of Oshki-Wenjack and Confederation College's partnership in creating meaningful training opportunities.

Oshki-Wenjack September 2025 Orientation



On Tuesday, September 5, Oshki-Wenjack welcomed more than 100 new and returning students for Orientation Day. With such an incredible turnout, the day was split into two sessions to ensure everyone had the chance to connect, ask questions, and learn about the supports available to them.

For many students, education at Oshki-Wenjack is more than working toward a degree, diploma, or certificate. It is a chance to grow, to create opportunities, and to carry forward the strength of their families and communities. Orientation Day set a strong beginning by introducing students to staff and the many supports that will help guide them through their studies.

Education is not limited to classrooms and textbooks. At Oshki-Wenjack, it is about building pathways, creating change, and embracing new beginnings.

Honouring Oshki-Wenjack's 2025 Practical Nursing Graduates



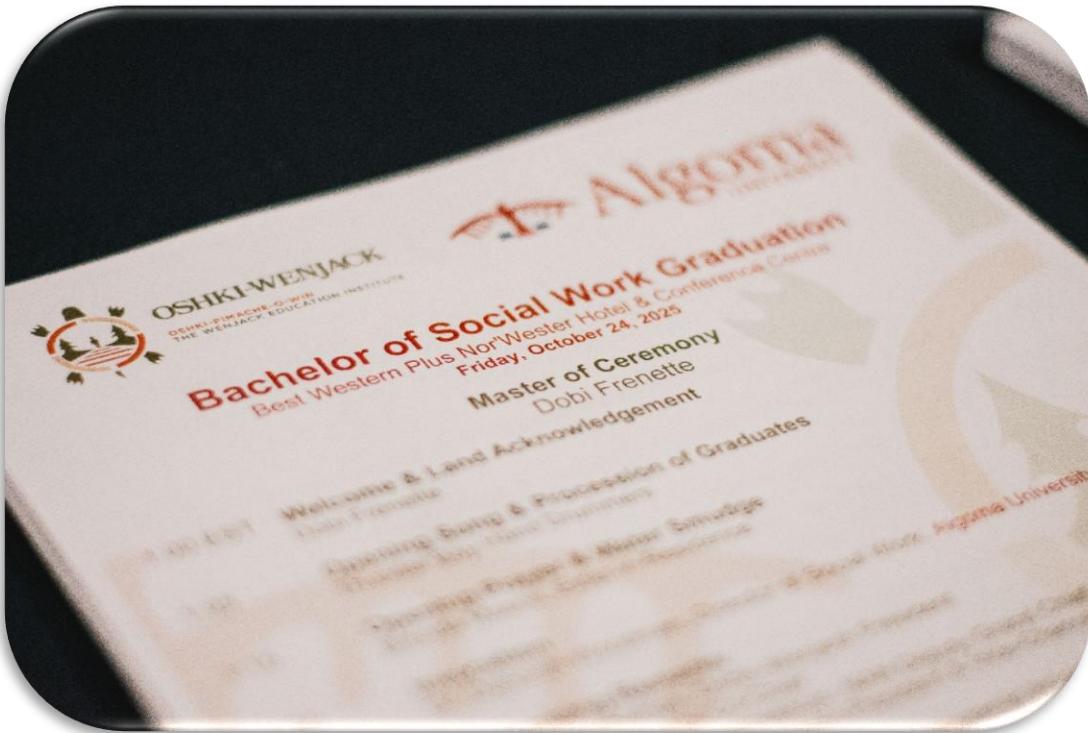
Oshki-Wenjack proudly celebrated its Practical Nursing students at the annual Pinning Ceremony on September 15 at the Best Western Plus Nor'Wester Hotel & Conference Centre. The event honoured students' dedication as they prepared to begin their healthcare careers, with remarks from President Lorrie Deschamps, Governing Council Co-Chair Arlene Jung, and NAN Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum. Family, friends, and community members joined in celebrating the graduates' achievements and commitment to caring for others.

Confederation College, Oshki-Wenjack's partner in program delivery, shared the following message from Shane Strickland, Dean of Academic Programming:

"As graduates of the Practical Nursing Program, you are joining a profession of lifelong learning and service. Through your studies, you've gained essential knowledge, hands-on skills, and a deep understanding of the values and ethics that guide compassionate, competent care. You are well prepared to meet the demands of a rewarding profession that promotes health, dignity, and justice. Congratulations on your accomplishments and on joining the nursing profession."

Oshki-Wenjack extends heartfelt congratulations to its graduates for their perseverance, compassion, and commitment to improving health and well-being in First Nations communities.

Oshki-Wenjack Celebrates First Bachelor of Social Work Graduates



Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute, in partnership with Algoma University, celebrated the first graduating class of its Bachelor of Social Work (Hons.) program on Friday, October 24, at the Best Western Nor'Wester in Thunder Bay.

This first group of students started the program in May 2023. The BSW program is community-based and designed to equip Indigenous learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to support and strengthen their communities.

“As graduates, you now have the tools to make a real difference,” said Lorrie Deschamps, President of Oshki-Pimache-O-Win. “You’ve learned in a program rooted in culture and community. Now you go back to your communities ready to lead and make positive change.”

Dr. Sheila Embleton, Interim President and Vice-Chancellor of Algoma University, said the program was created to remove barriers for learners. “It helps students from Northern Ontario, including Anishinaabe, Cree, Inuit, and Métis, and supports reconciliation through education,” she said.

The partnership between Oshki-Wenjack and Algoma University shows a shared commitment to Indigenous education and to helping students achieve their goals while staying connected to their culture, family, and community.

Oshki-Wenjack Graduates Contribute to Indigenous Language Learning



Story by Meagan McLeod

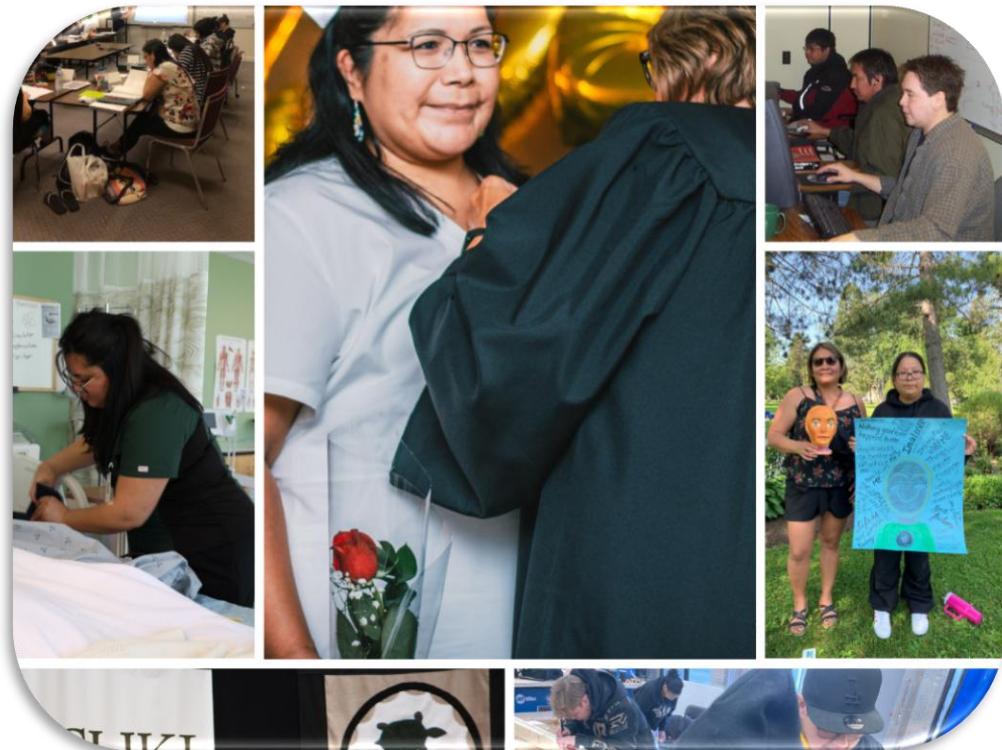
Ashley Kelly and Kimberly Kelly, graduates of Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute's Early Childhood Education (ECE) program, took part in the annual NOW Play Gathering in May 2025. They attended with Elder Brenda Mason, ECE Instructor Eugema Ings, and Meagan McLeod, Indigenous Child Education Programs Coordinator, to share their research focused on helping young children connect with their Indigenous languages and culture.

NOW Play (Northern Oral Language and Writing through Play) is an international project with members from Canada, New Zealand, and Sweden that supports Indigenous children's academic success, language and literacy learning, and teaching capacity in northern and other Indigenous communities.

For their research, Ashley and Kimberly interviewed Elders in their community about play and childhood. They continue to work with the NOW Play team to create lessons that connect language and play to be used in daycare settings and shared with other educators. The two graduates will also return to Oshki-Wenjack to present their work and share a lesson with the new ECE class, passing on their knowledge and experience.

Oshki-Wenjack is proud to be part of this meaningful project and to see our graduates contributing to Indigenous language learning locally and globally.

Celebrating 25 Years of Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute



2026 marks the 25th year of Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute serving First Nations learners and communities across northern Ontario.

The vision for the Institute began in July 1996, when the NAN Chiefs passed Resolution 96/64 to establish a post-secondary institution that would support Indigenous students in following their own paths and achieving their goals. Under the leadership of its first Executive Director, Ruth Baxter, and later Rosie Mosquito, this vision took shape and guided the Institute's early growth.

The First Nation Business Administration program was launched in 2001, with a graduating class of just three students. As of today, nearly 900 learners have completed programs at Oshki-Wenjack, which now offers more than a dozen academic and training pathways leading to degrees, diplomas, certificates, and trades training.

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win — “a new beginning” — continues to grow through strong community partnerships, Indigenous knowledge, and a deep commitment to learner success. Miigwetch to everyone who has supported this journey over the past 25 years.

Employee Spotlight: Jodi Judd Student Navigator - Trades



From her first job in road construction at 15, Jodi Judd of Couchiching First Nation built a career defined by hard work, determination, and a passion for the trades. Inspired by her father, a tradesman, she discovered early on that she belonged in this field.

Over the years, Jodi worked with several companies, gaining experience as a flag person, labourer, equipment operator, and eventually running job sites. One of her proudest achievements was leading the roadwork project in Kakabeka Falls—a milestone that reflected her skill and leadership.

She later became a Safety Coordinator, overseeing operations across Northwestern Ontario. Although she was successful, Jodi felt a strong pull toward work that would allow her to help others. That path led her to Oshki-Wenjack, where she now serves as Student Navigator – Trades.

“I want students to feel empowered, to know their value, and to strengthen their communities through the trades,” she says.

As an Indigenous woman in the trades, Jodi is proud of the progress made and remains passionate about ensuring Indigenous learners know that trades are accessible, rewarding, and full of opportunity. Today, she brings her experience and heart to every student she supports, helping them build their own future paths.

Graduate Spotlight: Felicia Miles

Level-Up Carpentry



Felicia Miles, a resident of Weagamow Lake (North Caribou Lake), is a graduate of the Level-Up Carpentry Program. Originally from Fort Severn First Nation, Felicia moved to North Caribou Lake with her husband, Bentley Kakekayash, where they are raising a family of seven.

During the program, Felicia demonstrated a strong ability in carpentry and approached her work with focus and determination. She was among the first participants to complete her shed, earning recognition from both her instructor and classmates. When the roof was raised, the class celebrated the achievement, while Felicia's young son looked on.

Balancing family responsibilities alongside her training, Felicia remained committed to the program from start to finish. Her steady work ethic and quiet confidence were evident throughout the build, reflecting her dedication to learning new skills and applying them in practical ways.

Felicia shared that she intended to take her completed shed "out on the land." Immediately following graduation, Felicia and her family departed for a three-week stay on the land, where she was able to put her new skills into practice beyond the classroom setting.

Oshki-Wenjack invites First Nation students, education staff, and community leaders to share their voices through a short survey. Your feedback will help Oshki-Wenjack better understand the challenges learners face in accessing education and support the development of courses and programs that reflect the needs, priorities, and strengths of our communities.

The survey is anonymous and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Miigwetch for sharing your voice and helping us build stronger, more accessible education for present and future generations.

[**Survey Here**](#)



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Oshki-Wenjack : Needs Assessment Survey

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute is inviting First Nation students, education staff, and community leaders to share their voices through a short survey. Your feedback will help Oshki-Wenjack better understand the barriers to students attending our courses, and to understand the types of courses/programs Indigenous communities and learners/students would like delivered. The survey is anonymous and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Miigwetch for helping strengthen education for our future generations!

To access the survey please visit:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KM2C6J7>

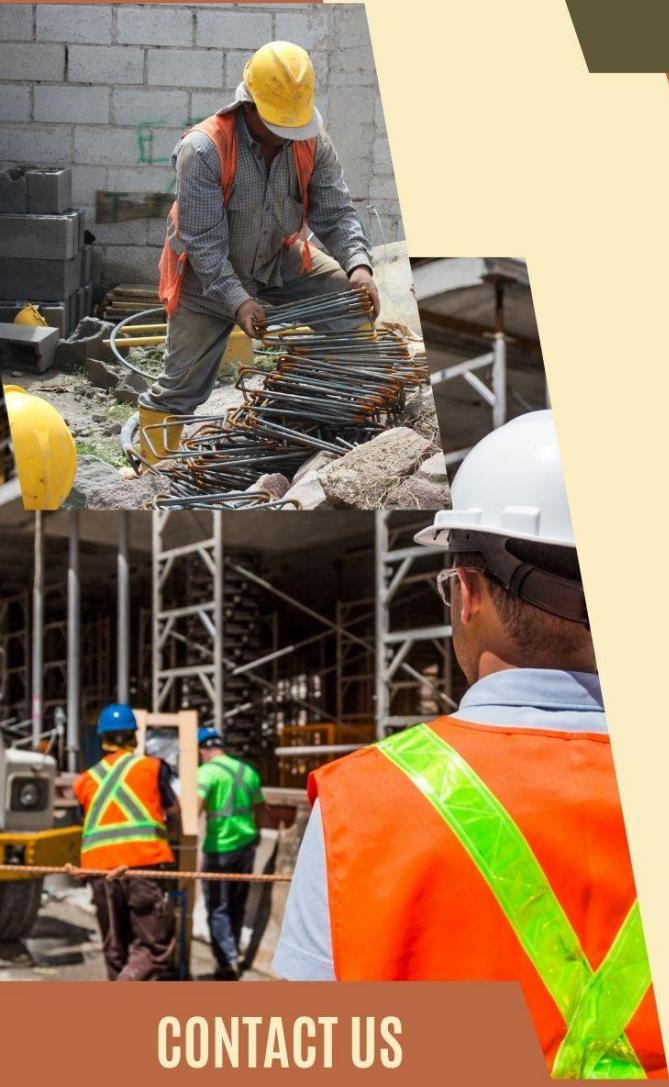


OR SCAN:





OSHKI-WENJACK LEVEL UP



Oshki-Wenjack is now scheduling meetings for the fully funded Level Up skilled trades training initiative.

Interested communities contact: **Nikki Louttit, Manager of Trades**, to discuss the preferred Trade training needed for the community and other details.

Contact: **(807) 626-1881**
Email: **nlouttit@oshki.ca**

CONTACT US



807-626-1881



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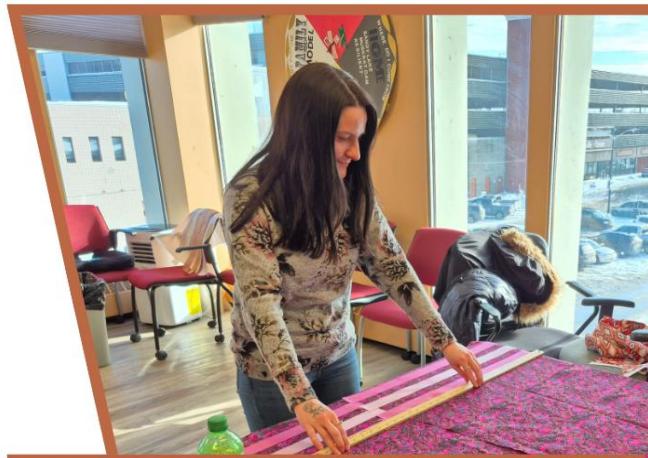
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Indigenous Birthworker 1: Pregnancy

MICRO-CREDENTIAL

LENGTH

45 hours of online self-paced content + community-based activities

INTAKE

Currently accepting applications.



Indigenous Birthworker 2: Labour

MICRO-CREDENTIAL

LENGTH

30 hours (online self-paced content + community-based activities)

INTAKE

Currently accepting applications.



Indigenous Birthworker 3: Postpartum

MICRO-CREDENTIAL

LENGTH

45 hours

INTAKE

Currently accepting applications.



Indigenous Birthworker 4: Lactation Support

MICRO-CREDENTIAL

LENGTH

45-hours of online self-paced content

INTAKE

Currently accepting applications.



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THE WENJACK EDUCATION INSTITUTE

25 Years

of New Beginnings

2001 - 2026

25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA
SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2026





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