



OSHKI-WENJACK

OSHKI-PIMACHE-O-WIN
THE WENJACK EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Eagle's Echo

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

Winter/Spring 2026 Recap



Celebrating the Class of 2026: A New Beginning



On June 12, Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute celebrated more than 140 graduates during a special Graduation Ceremony at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium. Held during Oshki-Wenjack's 25th anniversary year, the event honoured the dedication, perseverance, and achievements of First Nations learners from communities across Ontario.

The Class of 2026 represented a wide range of programs including Personal Support Worker, Practical Nursing, Bachelor of Social Work, Indigenous Classroom Assistant, DZ Driver Training, Level 1 Carpentry, and Level 1 Plumbing. While many graduates attended in person to cross the stage, others were unable to be there. Every graduate's achievement was recognized and celebrated.

The auditorium was filled with pride as families, friends, instructors, staff, and community members gathered to celebrate graduates. Special video messages from The Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Jobs and Families, The Hon. Nolan Quinn, Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, and The Hon. Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation recognized the achievements of graduates and the importance of Indigenous education.

As graduates move forward into careers, further education, and community leadership, they carry with them the spirit of Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: a new beginning

Celebrating the Dedication of our Instructors



The dedication and commitment of Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute's instructors were celebrated on Thursday May 7, during an Instructor Appreciation Dinner held at the Chantrelle.

The evening recognized the important role instructors play in supporting Oshki-Wenjack learners throughout their educational journeys. Instructors do more than teach; they encourage, mentor, and help students build the confidence and skills needed to achieve their goals.

Oshki-Wenjack's instructors create supportive, culturally grounded learning environments where students feel valued and empowered. Their dedication extends beyond the classroom as they guide students through challenges, celebrate successes, and contribute to stronger communities.

A highlight of the evening was recognizing Carrie McDaid, Practical Nursing Instructor, who received the Delbert Horton Award from the Indigenous Institutes Consortium. The award recognizes individuals who demonstrate a strong commitment to Indigenous education, leadership, and student success.

Oshki-Wenjack congratulates Carrie on this well-deserved recognition and thanks all instructors for the knowledge, care, and commitment they bring to student success.

Dr. Dan Longboat Shares Teachings Staff



Staff recently participated in a professional development workshop at the Da Vinci Centre led by Dr. Dan Longboat, Roronhiakewen, meaning “He Clears the Sky.” A respected Indigenous scholar, educator, and knowledge keeper, Dr. Longboat shared teachings rooted in knowledge and culture.

Throughout the workshop, staff explored Indigenous perspectives on education, leadership, community, and the environment. Through storytelling, discussion, and reflection, Dr. Longboat encouraged participants to consider the importance of relationships, responsibility, and respect in their personal and professional lives.

His teachings highlighted the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems and their connection to today’s world. Staff reflected on how these teachings can strengthen their work with students and communities while supporting a wholistic approach to learning.

The workshop provided an opportunity for cultural learning and professional growth, leaving participants with new insights and a deeper appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing. The experience reinforced the importance of continued learning and reflection as Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute supports student success through culturally grounded education.

Celebrating One Year of the Living Classroom Partnership with Grassy Narrows First Nation



A year of collaboration and shared commitment was recognized on Wednesday May 6, 2026, as Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute welcomed partners from Paapiiwaaniimaan Grassy Narrows Mercury Care Home, Grassy Narrows Chief and Council, and community members to celebrate one year of the Living Classroom partnership.

The gathering marked the first anniversary of the Memorandum of Understanding between Oshki-Wenjack and Grassy Narrows First Nation, an agreement built on a shared vision of creating community-based learning opportunities and supporting the future needs of the community.

Partners gathered to reflect on the progress made through the Living Classroom initiative, including learner success, program growth, and the continued work ahead. APTN was also present to capture the importance of this ongoing partnership and the impact it continues to have.

The partnership is deeply connected to the ongoing impacts of mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows and the importance of culturally relevant, community-based care. As the Paapiiwaaniimaan Grassy Narrows Mercury Care Home moves forward, partners continue working together toward a future grounded in education, care, and community.

Students Take Part in Land-Based Cultural Activity



Students from the Bachelor of Social Work and Business Diploma programs participated in an afternoon land-based cultural activity at Chippewa Park on May 21st with Jean Marshall, focused on moose hide teachings and the traditional practice of hide softening.

The afternoon began with an introduction circle and interactive prayer, creating space for students to connect, reflect, and prepare for the teachings. Students learned about the significance of the moose hide, its cultural importance, and the process of working with and softening the hide by hand.

This hands-on activity provided students with an opportunity to learn outside of the classroom while connecting with traditional knowledge, community, and the land. Through the teachings, students gained a deeper understanding of the patience, care, and relationship involved in this practice.

The afternoon was about more than learning a skill. Hide camp creates opportunities to share knowledge, strengthen relationships, and learn through time spent together. These land-based experiences support students in building connections and gaining a greater appreciation for the teachings and traditions that continue to guide learning and community.

Carpentry Students Put Skills to Work at Chippewa Park



Hands-on learning took center stage this spring as students in the Level 1 Carpentry program designed and built a traditional smoker as their final project. Created for use during the Moose Hide Tanning Camp at Chippewa Park, the smoker gave students an opportunity to apply the carpentry skills developed throughout their program while contributing to a culturally significant learning experience.

From planning and measuring to cutting, assembling, and finishing the structure, students worked together to bring the project to life. The smoker was designed to support the moose hide tanning process, an important traditional practice that connects participants to Indigenous knowledge, teachings, and cultural traditions.

The project highlighted the importance of combining skilled trades training with community-based and culturally relevant learning. Students saw the impact of their work while supporting a meaningful cultural activity.

The completed smoker became part of the Moose Hide Tanning Camp, demonstrating the students' technical abilities and commitment to learning through culture, community, and craftsmanship.

Projects like this reflect Oshki-Wenjack's commitment to providing students with practical skills connected to Indigenous culture, traditions, and community needs.

Oshki-Wenjack at PDAC 2026: Creating Pathways for Students



Oshki-Wenjack was proud to participate in the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) 2026, mineral exploration and mining conference held in Toronto. The Trades team, led by Nikki Louttit, Trades Manager, represented Oshki-Wenjack throughout the event, focusing on building partnerships, sponsorship opportunities, and networks that will open doors for our students.

During the conference, the team met with industry leaders, government representatives, and training partners to explore pathways for learning and career development in the trades and mining sectors. A highlight was when The Honourable Nolan Quinn, Ontario's Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, stopped by our table to meet the team and discuss the importance of Indigenous-led education and practical skills training.

PDAC 2026 provided an invaluable opportunity for Oshki-Wenjack to strengthen relationships, showcase our programs, and create opportunities for students to gain real-world experience. By connecting with industry and government partners, we continue to ensure our learners are prepared for meaningful careers and have access to the resources and pathways they need to succeed.

Oshki-Wenjack Open House



In early March, Oshki-Wenjack welcomed community members, partners, and future learners for our Open House, and we were grateful to see so many people come through our doors.

Visitors had the chance to explore our classrooms, meet staff and instructors, and learn about the programs and services available to support Indigenous learners on their educational journey. Throughout the afternoon, our team shared information about academic programs, student services, and the many supports in place to help learners succeed both in and out of the classroom.

At Oshki-Wenjack, education goes beyond the classroom. Students have access to a wide range of supports, including academic advising, cultural supports, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, counselling, tutoring, and other student services designed to help them stay connected, confident, and focused on their goals.

Miigwech to everyone who took the time to visit, ask questions, and learn more about what we offer. We also appreciate the media who joined us to help share the story of Indigenous-led education and the opportunities available to our learners.

Oshki-Wenjack at Lakehead University's 36th Annual Powwow



Oshki-Wenjack was proud to be one of the sponsors of the 36th Annual Powwow hosted by the Lakehead University Indigenous Students' Association, March 14 and 15th, at the Lakehead University Hangar. This two-day event was a vibrant celebration of Indigenous culture, featuring dancers, traditional music, and a lively marketplace of vendors showcasing crafts, food, and traditional crafts.

As a sponsor, we were thrilled to see both current and former students stop by our table to talk and reconnect. These moments highlighted the strong bonds within our learning community and reminded us why supporting events like this is so important.

Being part of the powwow also gave us the chance to engage with community members, support local vendors, and celebrate Indigenous traditions alongside our partners. We thank the Lakehead University Indigenous Students' Association for hosting such a memorable event and look forward to continuing our work in promoting Indigenous-led education and fostering strong community connections.

Oshki-Wenjack and Confederation College Partner on Hands-On Try a Trade Program



The Oshki-Wenjack Trades Department, in partnership with Confederation College, recently completed a 6-week Try a Trade: Home Renovation and Preventive Maintenance Program. This opportunity offered students hands-on experience in several skilled trades.

The program was designed to introduce learners to a range of trades while also building practical skills that can be used in everyday life. Interest in the program was strong, with many applicants eager to take part in the opportunity.

Over the six weeks, participants explored a variety of trade areas including carpentry, interior finishing, plumbing, electrical work, HVAC, and exterior finishing. The training focused on safe tool use, basic repairs, and preventative maintenance—skills that can help participants maintain their homes and better understand how residential systems work.

For some participants, the program provided a first step toward exploring future training or careers in the skilled trades. For others, it offered valuable life skills that support independence, safety, and confidence in caring for their homes.

Delivered through a partnership between Oshki-Wenjack and Confederation College, the program brought together trades expertise and community-based education.

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 Nishnawbe Aski Nation 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, Rosie Mosquito, this vision took shape and guided the Institute's early growth.

The First Nation's 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.

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.

Meagan McLeod, Academic Manager



Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute is pleased to announce that Meagan McLeod has stepped into the role of Academic Manager. Meagan joined Oshki-Wenjack in 2019 as a Student Success Officer and became a Coordinator in 2020, supporting students in a variety of ways across the Institute.

Many know Meagan from her time as the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Coordinator. “I loved working with students and instructors in a program essential to Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities,” she says. “Many students are already running daycares and classrooms in their communities, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge to the classroom.”

Meagan holds a Master of Education with a specialization in Women’s Studies. Her studies in history, social systems, and advocacy continue to guide her approach to teaching and academic leadership. “I come to work every day hoping to positively contribute to Indigenous education for the students of Nishnawbe Aski Nation,” she explains.

Looking ahead, Meagan is energized by Oshki-Wenjack’s full provincial accreditation through IAESC and the opportunity to create and deliver new programming

Graduate Spotlight: Martine Kanakakeesic Home Community Care Nurse



Martine Kanakakeesic of North Caribou Lake First Nation is part of the first graduating class of the Registered Practical Nursing (RPN) program at Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute in 2019. Today, she works as a Home Community Care Nurse with Keewaytinook Okimakanak, supporting patients and families in northern communities.

Martine began her nursing journey at Confederation College in 2016. During her first semester, a college strike and family responsibilities caring for a loved one made balancing school challenging, and she was unable to complete one course.

In January 2017, Martine joined Oshki-Wenjack, completed her remaining course, and continued into the RPN program. She found the smaller class sizes and one-on-one support from instructors helped her succeed. “The instructors were very supportive and helped me with my studies,” she says.

Martine also valued the support of classmates who shared similar experiences from remote First Nations communities. Cultural supports helped her stay connected to her identity and community while studying away from home.

As a single mother, graduating changed her life. After dreaming of becoming a nurse since she was 17, Martine is now living that dream and caring for people across the North.

Memengwa Social
Fundraising Gala 2026

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DATE

OCT 16, 2026
THUNDER BAY
VALHALLA INN

Join us on Friday October 16, 2026, in Thunder Bay as Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute celebrates 25 years of transforming lives through Indigenous education.

This special anniversary gala will bring together graduates, community leaders, partners, supporters, and friends for an evening of celebration, connection, and inspiration. Together, we'll honour the achievements of our students, recognize the impact of Indigenous-led education, and celebrate the partnerships that have helped create opportunities for First Nations learners across Ontario.

More details, including ticket information, sponsorship opportunities, and event programming, will be announced soon. Stay tuned as we prepare for an unforgettable evening celebrating 25 years of success and looking ahead to the future.



Fall 2026

Early Childhood Education

Learn child development, plan fun activities, and build safe, nurturing environments, grounded in Indigenous knowledge and culture.

Understand child development
Plan fun, engaging learning activities
Learn through Indigenous knowledge and perspectives



Your new beginning starts here.



25 Years of Empowering New Beginnings

oshki-wenjack.ca



Fall 2026

Pre-Health Sciences - Pathway to Certificates and Diplomas

A one-year certificate program offered in partnership with Confederation College

Thinking about a career in health care?
Start here.

Get prepared with:

- Biology, chemistry, and math foundations
- Health-focused learning
- Strong study and academic skills



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Fall 2026

Personal Support Worker

Train for a rewarding health care career with our PSW Certificate in an Indigenous-led program. Classroom learning, hands-on labs, and practical placements prepare you for real-world care in homes, long-term care, and community settings.

You'll gain the skills to support clients across the lifespan, assisting with daily living, promoting independence, and providing compassionate, culturally safe care.

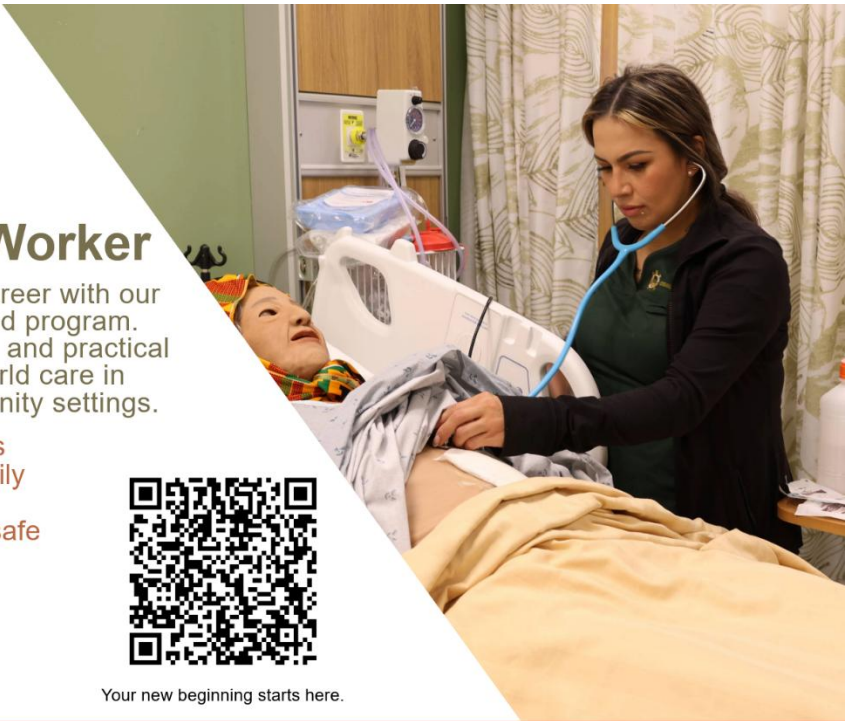


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Fall 2026

Practical Nursing Diploma Program

Train for a career in health care through Indigenous-led post-secondary education.

Hands-on lab training and clinical placements to prepare you for practice. Build the skills to support patients in a variety of settings.



Your new beginning starts here.



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Fall 2026 Business Diploma Program

Learn core business skills in Accounting, Marketing, Communications and Management

Smaller classes. Real support. A different experience from mainstream education.



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Trades Programs Available

LEVEL-UP is a fully funded skilled trades program designed to address infrastructure needs in Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities.

Electrician - Construction & Maintenance, 309A

Heavy Duty Equipment Technician - Mechanic, 421A

Industrial Mechanic Millwright, 433A

General Carpenter, 403A

Welder, 456A

Plumber, 306A

Industrial Electrician, 442A



25 YEARS OF EMPOWERING NEW BEGINNINGS



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THE WENJACK EDUCATION INSTITUTE

25

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